

Food

for

US

welcome to

FOODS for US

a cookbook by
Ruby Beech

PICNIC

4

Heirloom Tomato Tart

6

Pasta Salad

10

Blueberry Betty

14

DINNER PARTY

18

Enya Pasta

20

Eggplant Parmesean

24

Grilled Fish Tacos

28

CELEBRATION

32

Challah

34

French Onion Pot Pie

38

Orange Chocolate Bundt Cake

42



For as long as I can remember, my parents have ingrained in me the value of good food. My mom cooked dinner every night and my brother and I turned our noses at picky eaters at a young age. I also come from an extended family that is obsessed with food. Even on family vacations when we are eating breakfast, we talk about what we will eat for lunch, and when we are eating lunch we wonder what we will order for dinner. As I have gotten older, my love and appreciation for food has only grown.

These days, I am lucky enough to have friends and a girlfriend who share this passion with me. We plan elaborate meals, often sifting through the internet and consulting old family recipes to cook and serve for our friends for no occasion at all. My girlfriend and I spend our weekends seeking out new and exciting restaurants and buying fresh ingredients from the farmers market. Overall, it is when I find myself cooking in the kitchen with my loved ones that I am the happiest.

My love for food ties into every aspect of my life but it has especially influenced my illustrations. I love personifying food and assigning different dishes their own unique personalities. This book centers around recipes that have made many appearances in my life and have been formative in my love of food. I was also sure to choose recipes that even the most novice cook could feel confident making so Food for Us can be for everyone! The book has been separated into three sections; Picnic, Dinner Party, and Celebration to highlight occasions that center around cooking and sharing food. Feel free to plan a gathering specific to the recipes but also to ignore the categories completely and make each recipe for whatever occasion you want!

Making this cookbook has been a dream of mine. I want to share my appreciation for food and more importantly, I want to share my favorite recipes with you! Each of these recipes is special to me and represents an important memory or a relationship that I cherish. Thank you so much for reading, I hope these meals will become as special to you as they are to me.



Picnic

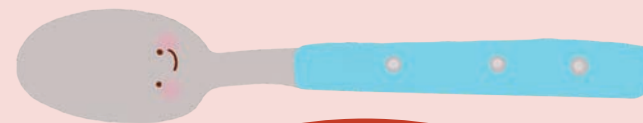


Picnic recipes are beautifully simple and easy to transport and share.

Heirloom

Tomato

Tart



In the summer of 2022, I decided to start gardening for the first time ever. I carefully chose what I wanted to grow and I knew I wanted heirloom tomatoes. I went with the Kellogg's Breakfast variety because of their beautiful and vibrant orange color. I loved the process of gardening and I checked their progress everyday. The summer flew by... and no tomatoes appeared.

My girlfriend Cammy was a witness to my dismay and my eventual wonder when huge orange tomatoes came seemingly out of nowhere during an unusually warm October. Cammy's biggest flaw happens to be that she doesn't like tomatoes and I made it my job to change that. Despite her dislike for tomatoes, Cammy was excited by my prowess as a novice gardener so I decided I had to make something truly delicious to sway her feelings towards tomatoes. We both have a deep love for puff pastry and (of course) for cheese so a tomato tart seemed the obvious choice and the best way to showcase the beauty of my homegrown tomatoes.

Cammy loved the tomato tart because of the subtle flavor of the tomatoes and the way baking them made them more palatable texturally. This is a surprisingly easy recipe that makes tomatoes its star and I recommend it (maybe even prescribe it) for tomato haters.





Heirloom Tomato Tart

Ingredients

- 2-3 large heirloom tomatoes (I use the kellogg's breakfast variety)
- 1 sheet frozen puff pastry, thawed
- salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
- 4 grated cloves of garlic
- 1 cup of fresh ricotta cheese
- Flour for rolling
- 1 tbsp grated lemon zest
- ½ cup grated parmesan
- ¼ tsp sugar
- 2 large eggs
- basil for garnish



Notes

- The recipe calls for a lot of garlic because I love garlic, if you don't love garlic use less!
- Frozen puff pastry can be thawed in the microwave.
- You can substitute goat cheese for ricotta or another soft cheese of your choice.
- Add pesto to the mixture if you're a pesto lover

- 1 Preheat the oven to 450 degrees.
- 2 Grease baking sheet or line with parchment paper.
- 3 Roll out thawed puff pastry on a floured surface. Roll it out to a roughly 14x11in rectangle. Trim edges and transfer to your baking sheet. Score the edges of the crust with your fork and use a fork or knife to prick the center of the puff pastry.
- 4 Slice your tomatoes as thick or thin as you would like. Line them on a dry paper towel, salt them and wait 5 minutes. Pat excess moisture off with a paper towel.
- 5 For the filling; beat one egg and add ricotta, garlic, lemon zest, and ¼ cup parmesan. Season with salt and pepper to taste and mix well.
- 6 Beat the remaining egg and brush it onto the puff pastry. Spread the filling mixture inside the pastry. Sprinkle the remaining parmesan on the crust. Add the sliced tomatoes in one layer on top and sprinkle with salt and pepper and top with honey.
- 7 Bake for 25 minutes or until the pastry is golden brown. Let cool for 10-15 minutes. Add basil and serve!



Pasta

Salad



I am not sure if I could even decide on the instance in which I made this dish that stands out the most to me, that is how much of a staple it has become. I have enjoyed this pasta salad in the park, at the beach, in my best friend's car while it was pouring rain outside, and in my backyard.

Of all of the Picnic dishes this one is definitely the most practical, and it is also the most versatile. You can adjust every aspect of the recipe to make it suit your preferences!





Pasta Salad

Ingredients

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 cup halved kalamata olives | Dressing |
| 1 pound dry rotini | salt and freshly ground pepper to taste |
| 1 cup halved cherry tomatoes | ½ cup vinegar of your choice |
| 1 cup mozzarella balls (chopped or whole) | ½ cup olive oil |
| 1 cup chopped cucumber | ½ tsp dried oregano |
| | ½ tsp dried basil |
| 1 cup sliced bell pepper | |
| 1 cup chopped pepperoni or salami | |
| 1 cup grated parmesan cheese | |


Notes

⚠ I use a vegetarian version of pepperoni or vegetarian lunch meat!

- 1 Cook rotini until al-dente, drain and rinse with cold water. Set to the side.
- 2 Add vinegar, olive oil, dried oregano, dried basil and salt and pepper to a large bowl. Mix.
- 3 To the dressing mixture add rotini, olives, tomatoes, mozzarella balls, cucumber, bell pepper, meat of choice, and parmesan to the bowl and mix well.

Blueberry

Betty



I am in no way a picky eater but something about the texture of blueberries really throws me off. However, this is a dessert that I will never turn down. When I would go to visit my grandma in the summer, there would always be a blueberry betty waiting for my brother and I. My grandma loves this dessert because it is simple to make and really highlights the taste of the fruit. It is almost like a deconstructed pie and is best with a heaping scoop of ice cream. This dish is great to take to a picnic because there is no risk of damaging the structure of the dessert in transport and it's customizable so if you're like me and don't like blueberries, you can use any fruit you like. But, if your Grandma made it you should probably just eat the blueberries.





Blueberry Betty

Ingredients

Pastry Mixture

½ cup flour

½ cup sugar

½ cup softened butter

½ cup slivered almonds, for the top

Blueberry Mixture

4 cups of blueberries; washed with stems removed

1 heaping tbsp cornstarch

juice of half a lemon plus zest

Notes

You might need more butter to blend lumps and you can use 4 cups of other fruit or berries: raspberries, blackberries, strawberries, peeled and sliced peaches and apricots, diced apples or pears with cinnamon and sugar mixed into cornstarch.


- 1 Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.
- 2 Butter 2 quart glass casserole dish.
- 3 Mix blueberries, cornstarch, lemon juice and zest.
- 4 Add mixture to the buttered dish.
- 5 Blend flour, sugar, and butter together with a fork until coarse crumbs appear.
- 6 Top the berries with the pastry mixture
- 7 Sprinkle with the almonds
- 8 Bake for 45 minutes or until brown on top and the berries are bubbling.
- 9 Serve with ice cream or whipped cream.

Dinner Party



Dinner party recipes are meant to be shared around the table and involve more planning and labor.


Enya Pasta



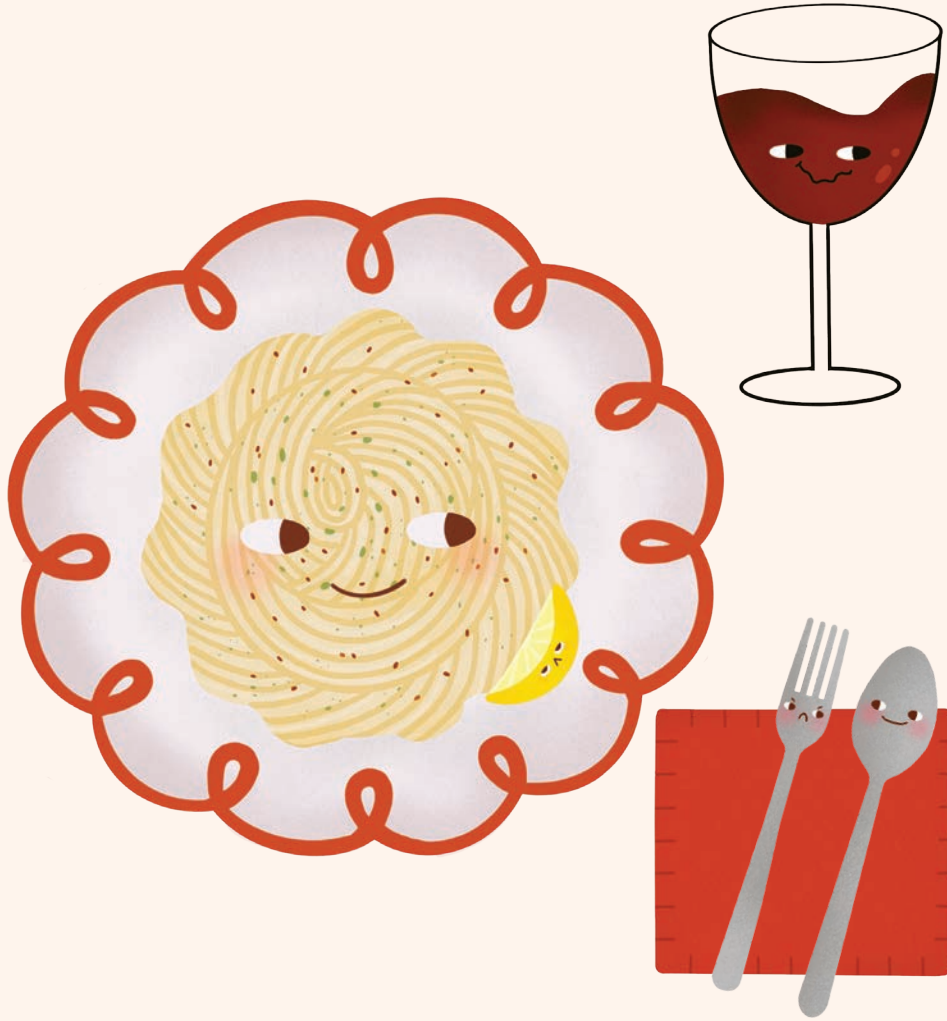
My friend Enya is an amazing cook and, luckily for me, she loves to cook for her friends. Her most iconic dish has been lovingly titled Enya Pasta by those she has made it for.

On multiple occasions Enya has brought a huge mixing bowl of Enya Pasta to parties for it to be devoured straight from the bowl by hoards of drunk people. When my friends and I gather at Enya's house more often than not Enya Pasta is being carefully concocted in the kitchen.

As excited as I am to share with you Enya's beautifully simple recipe, I do have to warn you from my own personal experience that it is never as good as when Enya makes it herself.



Enya Pasta



1. Cook spaghetti until al-dente, save $\frac{1}{2}$ cup pasta water for later.
2. Finely mince garlic, can be 1 small bulb or $\frac{1}{2}$ of a large one.
3. Lightly heat olive oil in a large pan.
4. Add red pepper flakes according to preference and minced garlic.
5. Turn off heat when garlic begins to brown.
6. Add noodles and pasta water to the pan along with the parsley, parmesan, $\frac{1}{2}$ the lemon juice, and salt.
7. Taste and add more lemon juice, red pepper, cheese and salt as desired.

Ingredients

1 box spaghetti
1 garlic bulb
shredded
parmesan cheese
1 handful of chopped
parsley
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup olive oil
red pepper flakes to
taste
salt to taste




Notes from Enya


“Step 6 is the most important. You keep adding salt, lemon juice, red pepper flakes, and cheese while tasting the pasta until it is very flavorful. You might feel like you’re overdoing it, but you’re not.”

Eggplant

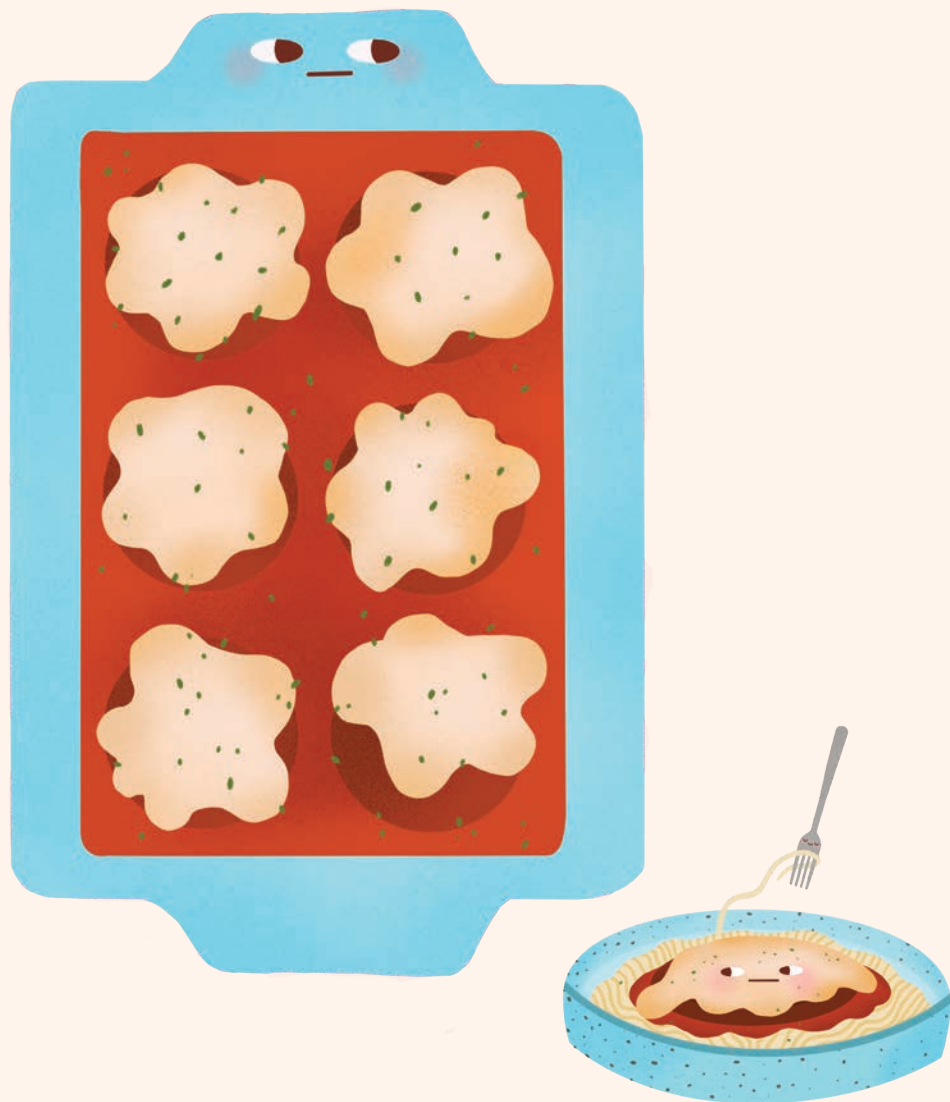
Parmesean



While this is a simple and classic eggplant parmesan recipe, it is special to me because I felt so accomplished after I made it for my mom, girlfriend and I. It was a little more labor intensive than the typical recipe I would choose for a weeknight dinner but I wanted to do something a little more involved. It ended up perfect and everyone loved it, I was so happy! Eggplant parmesan is something I usually order at restaurants and I felt happy knowing that it was just as good when I made it myself.



Eggplant Parmesean



1. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees and grease sheet pan with oil or cooking spray.
2. Slice eggplant into $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ inch slices.
3. Sprinkle salt onto eggplant slices, wait 10-15 minutes and pat off moisture with paper towels.
4. Arrange three bowls one with whisked eggs, one with bread crumbs, and one with flour.
5. Coat eggplant slice in flour first, then dip into the whisked eggs, and then pack on breadcrumbs brushing off the excess. Place each slice onto a sheet pan.
6. Bake eggplant for 25 minutes.
7. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.
8. In a large casserole dish spread marinara on the bottom. Next layer eggplant, mozzarella, marinara, and parmesan. Continue layering until there is no eggplant left.
9. Bake for 30 minutes, top with basil and serve.

Ingredients

Eggplant

2 large eggplants

3 eggs

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup flour

breadcrumbs

Topping

1 24 oz jar of your favorite marinara

1 lb fresh mozzarella (sliced)

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup parmesan cheese

2 tbsp fresh basil (chopped)



Notes

I like to make spaghetti and a salad to serve alongside the eggplant!

Grilled Fish Tacos



Last summer I officially deemed fish tacos my food of the summer. They are the perfect meal; not too heavy but still filling, they make wonderful use of seasonal produce, and they are perfect to eat outside. One sweltering day last August, I decided to have an impromptu casual dinner party with some of my closest friends so we could enjoy the weather outside together.

I had actually never grilled fish before and I forgot to grease the grill. The fish was unevenly charred and it seemed a quarter of the fish was still stuck on the grill making for some pretty light tacos. I felt so disappointed in my extremely imperfect result but was happily surprised when no one noticed the imperfections and instead happily enjoyed their tacos while we sat outside talking for hours.

While the idea of making fish tacos was what motivated me to invite people over, it was nowhere near the most important part of the night. That being said, I have since improved my grilling technique and I couldn't recommend this recipe for a summer dinner party more.



Grilled Fish Tacos



Cabbage Slaw

1. Combine ingredients in a medium serving bowl.
2. Adjust lime, vinegar, and salt to taste

Corn Salsa

1. Combine all ingredients in a medium sized serving bowl.
2. Adjust salt and vinegar to your preference.
3. Let sit for 15-20 minutes before serving

Fish

1. Combine chili powder, garlic powder, paprika, cumin, coriander, chipotle, and olive oil in a gallon sized plastic bag.
2. Add the fish to the bag making sure each piece is covered in the marinade. Let marinate for at least 15 minutes but the longer the better.
3. Grease the grill well. Turn heat to medium and grill each side for a few minutes until grill marks are developed. Cook until the center of the fish is flaky.
4. Sprinkle with the lime juice when it comes off the grill.

Ingredients

corn kernels from 4 cobs
of raw sweet corn
2 diced avocado
1/2-1 cup chopped cilantro
(packed)
2 cups sliced
cherry tomatoes
1 tbsp vinegar

1 lb shredded
purple cabbage
salt to taste
1/2 cup chopped cilantro
(packed)
2 tbsp olive oil
1/4 cup fresh lime juice
1/4 cup mayonnaise

corn tortillas
1 1/2 lb cod
(fresh or frozen)
3 tsp chili powder
3 tsp garlic powder
3 tsp paprika
3 tsp cumin
1 tsp coriander powder
1/2 tsp chipotle powder
juice of one lime
3 tbsp vegetable or
olive oil

Notes

Typically I use frozen tilapia but any white fish like cod or tilapia will work as well.

Celebration



Celebration recipes are for special occasions like birthdays and holidays

Challah



Technically my family is Jewish, but we aren't really *that* Jewish. So we like to have challah during special occasions and holidays even if they aren't necessarily Jewish holidays. Honestly it is the only bread recipe I have ever attempted and as you can tell from the recipe I don't even make it from scratch!

In highschool I brought a loaf of challah for my anthropology class and taught my classmates how to make it, it has proved to be such a fun tradition to share. This recipe is especially fun because of the braiding process and the aspect of attention to detail that is integral to making a beautiful loaf of challah.



CHALLAH



- 1 Thaw frozen bread until it can be cut but has not started to rise. Cut each loaf into thirds.
- 2 Take the thirds and roll them out to about 12 inches in length and about 1 inch in diameter. The length and width are not that important, but they should all be the same length and width.
- 3 Braid all six strands together to make one loaf. Tuck the ends under so they will stay together and not burn.
- 4 Place the loaf on a baking sheet that has been sprayed with non-stick spray and coated with corn meal. The corn meal is not necessary but adds a homemade look.
- 5 Spray a piece of plastic wrap with cooking spray and loosely cover the braided loaf. Let rise in a warm area of the kitchen until doubled in size (approx. 45 minutes)
- 6 Brush the egg wash on the bread and sprinkle with the sesame seeds.
- 7 Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.
- 8 Place loaf in the center of the oven and bake for 25-30 minutes or until the bread tapped sounds hollow. Option-at the end of 15 minutes turn the bread around. This ensures even browning.
- 9 Remove the bread from the baking sheet and cool on a wire rack.

BREAD

2 loaves frozen white bread dough
(I use Rhodes brand, found in the frozen food section of most grocery stores)

cornmeal, for dusting on the baking sheet

EGG WASH

1 egg, mixed with
2 tablespoons water

sesame seeds

nonstick cooking spray

French

Onion

Pot Pie



One Christmas Eve, I was tasked for the first time with making the celebratory dinner for my family. My mom is typically the chef for holidays so I felt a little out of my depth, I also knew that the expectations would be high. Going into the cooking I was prepared to have to prove myself and to construct the meal with no help. Of course, I should've known, no one in my family has the ability to stay out of the kitchen for long. My cousin Jodi appointed herself as my sous chef and she helped me as I crafted the recipe almost on the fly as I cooked. She told me that onions caramelize faster in butter than in oil and helped me chop veggies for the accompanying salad. It was my first time making this recipe and it came out exactly as I had envisioned it and it was made better by the fact that I didn't make it alone.



FRENCH ONION POT PIE



NOTES

- I use Impossible brand ground beef because I don't eat beef but regular ground beef, turkey, or chopped mushrooms would work just as well.
- When I make this pot pie I like to cut a cute design like a heart or star on the puff pastry top to make it extra special.
- I make my own condensed french onion soup since the kind in the can is made with beef broth but one 10.5 oz can of condensed french onion soup works as well.

- 1 In a soup pot, heat olive oil over medium heat.
- 2 Add the onions and garlic. Cook for **10** minutes until the onions are very soft and translucent.
- 3 Add in the spices and the flour. Stir. Slowly add in the stock and keep stirring until the "soup" thickens.
- 4 Add in the Impossible beef and continue to cook until it's cooked through.
- 5 Stir in mozzarella cheese.
- 6 Pour into a round baking dish
- 7 Roll out the puff pastry dough into **1** sheet and lay over the top of the dish. Crimp the edges to the dish.
- 8 Bake at **350** for **15** minutes. Let cool for at least **10** minutes before serving.

INGREDIENTS

- | | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 lb impossible ground beef | 2 white onions | 1 tsp pepper |
| 1 chopped onion | 2 cups stock of choice | 4 tbsp flour |
| 1 1/2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese | 1 tablespoon minced garlic | 1 tablespoon thyme |
| 1 sheet puff pastry | 1 tbsp olive oil | 1 tablespoon italian seasoning |
| | 1 tsp salt | |

Orange Chocolate Bundt Cake



My mom discovered this recipe when I was a child and after the first time she made it I decided that it was my favorite cake ever. She brought it to potlucks and made it for birthdays and family dinners. It's the perfect flavor combination and it is the most moist cake I have ever had.

When I was thirteen, I decided that I wanted to be vegetarian, when my birthday came around I was faced with a dilemma. There is JELL-O mix in this cake which notoriously contains gelatin, thus making the cake not vegetarian. I had been one hundred percent committed to my vegetarianism up until this point, I never strayed or had any cheat meals. I couldn't not have my favorite cake on my birthday and my mom encouraged me to indulge just this one time.

This is the cake my mom makes for me and I could never forgive myself if I missed out on experiencing it. I also would never want to miss it because it's delicious and my favorite... but that's besides the point.



ORANGE CHOCOLATE BUNDT CAKE



Cake

- 1 Preheat oven to **350** and spray a bundt pan with cooking spray.
- 2 Mix dry cake mix and JELL-O powder. Add vegetable oil, orange extract, orange juice, and orange zest. Mix.
- 3 Add **4** eggs one at a time, mixing after each one.
- 4 Beat by hand for **3-4** minutes then fold in chocolate chips.
- 5 Pour into a Bundt pan.
- 6 Bake for **45-55** minutes or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.
- 7 Cool on a wire rack for **25** minutes.
- 8 Turn the cake out onto a serving platter

Orange Fudge Frosting

- Add butter and chocolate chips into a glass measuring cup and melt in the microwave. Add orange extract. Add orange juice **1** tsp by **1** tsp, stirring after each addition.
- 2 Pour frosting over the cake, letting it run down the sides.
 - 3 Refrigerate the cake to set the frosting for at least **20** minutes.

CAKE

- 1 box yellow cake mix
- 1/2 cup vegetable oil
- 1 3 oz package orange JELL-O powder
- 1 tsp orange zest
- 1 cup no pulp orange juice
- 4 eggs
- 1 tsp orange extract
- 1 cup semi-sweet chocolate chips

FROSTING

- 2 tbsp chilled butter
- 1 cup chocolate chips
- 2 tbsp no pulp orange juice (cold)

About Ruby



Ruby Beech is a Pacific Northwest based illustrator who creates art inspired by the whimsy and joy that is hidden within everyday life. Ruby's strengths lie in shape-based imagery and limited color palettes, she loves depicting playful characters, food, and animals.

contact Ruby
@rubybechillustration
rubybechillustration.com
rubybechillustration@gmail.com

thank you endlessly to everyone who has supported and helped me in making *Food For Us!*

