

# FOOD FUN

4 - H W Y O M I N G

## WHAT IS A ROUX? AND WHAT IS A ROUX USED FOR?

A roux (pronounced ROO) is a blend of a fat and flour and is used as the basis of sauces and soups. It is used to thicken and flavor sauces and soups.

You can use any type of fat, different types of fat will give you different flavors (more on that later). Typically, a roux has equal amounts, a 1:1 ratio, of fat and flour.

**Fun Fact:** Roux is both singular and plural! Even though it sounds wrong when you're reading it :-)

### Things to Consider

When making a roux first ask yourself, what am I using this roux for? Are you using it for a simple country gravy or are you making dark brown roux for a rich gumbo? What you are using your roux for will influence what color of roux you are making and what kind of oil or fat you are selecting for your roux.

Other things you'll want to consider when selecting the fat for your roux are flavor, smoke points, price, and availability.

### Flavor

Different oils and fats give dishes different flavors. For instance, sesame oil although it has a higher smoke point of 410 degrees Fahrenheit has a strong flavor that would not be ideal for something like a gumbo or a cream sauce.

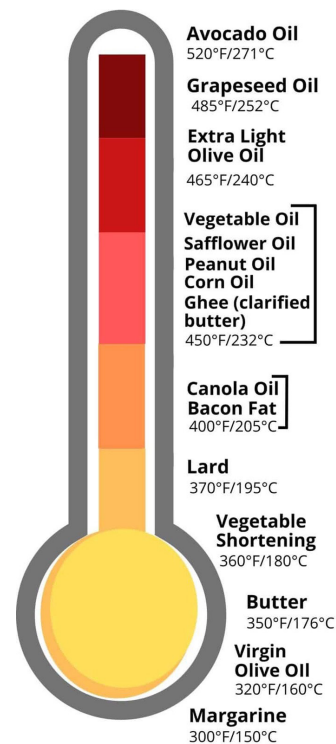
I typically prefer to use a neutral flavored oil in my roux. The exceptions would be using butter, ghee, and lard. Which although not completely neutral in taste work wonderfully for roux.

### Smoke Points of Oils and Fats

What is a smoke point? A smoke point is the temperature at which an oil or fat starts to burn and smoke. The oil will impart a bitter and burnt flavor to whatever it flavor becomes bitter and burnt.

If you intend to make a brown or dark brown roux you'd be well advised to use an oil with a higher smoke point so your roux is less likely to burn during the long cook time.

Please take a look at this smoke point guide with common oils and fats before selecting one for your roux.



### Smoke Points of Oils & Fats

#### Best Oil for a Gumbo Roux

This is a highly debated subject. If you are making a Creole gumbo, butter is the most traditional. It will give a delicious flavor in a blond roux.

In a Cajun gumbo, you'll want to use an oil that has a neutral flavor with a high smoke point. I typically go for vegetable oil for its affordability and the fact that I always have it on hand.

Olive oil, while often popular in cooking, is not recommended for a gumbo roux. Virgin olive oil has a relatively low smoke point at 320 degrees Fahrenheit and does not have a neutral flavor. It tends to burn easily and gives the roux an unpleasant flavor.



# WHAT KIND OF ROUX IS RIGHT FOR YOUR RECIPE?



## The Perfect Roux: A Color Guide

White Roux:	Blond Roux:	Brown Roux:	Dark Brown Roux:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 2-5 minutes</li><li>• Light tan color</li><li>• Adds a little flavor</li><li>• Good for country gravy or bechamel sauce</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 5-10 minutes</li><li>• Color of peanut butter</li><li>• Can smell toasted flavor</li><li>• Good for bisques or creamy soups</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 15-30 minutes</li><li>• Milk chocolate color</li><li>• Starts to thin out</li><li>• Good for etouffees and gumbo</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• 30-45 minutes</li><li>• Dark chocolate color</li><li>• Rich complex flavor</li><li>• Good for gumbo</li></ul>



infinetaste.com

Different recipes warrant different roux! We're giving you a quick summary of each roux flavor and what you might use it for. Don't forget to pin this color guide for later.

### White Roux

A white roux is cooked just enough to remove the starchy flavor from the flour. It is neutral flavored and works wonderfully as a thickener in recipes. It is ideal for sauces, creamy soups, country gravy, bechamel sauce, and chowders. A white roux takes 2-5 minutes to achieve.

### Blond Roux

A blond roux has a slightly nuttier flavor as the flour is toasted together with the oil or fat. It still thickens recipes and is great for sauces, bisques, creamy soups, and creole gumbo. A blond roux takes 5-10 minutes to achieve.

### Brown Roux

A brown roux has a nutty flavor and at this point it begins to lose its ability to thicken recipes. It is ideal for etouffees, gumbo, seafood gumbo, gravies, and espagnole sauce. A brown roux takes 15-30 minutes to achieve.

### Dark Brown Roux

A dark brown roux has a rich complex flavor. It no longer helps thicken recipes. It is mostly ideal for gumbo and seafood gumbo. A dark brown roux takes 30-45 minutes to achieve—it can take longer depending on your heat level—low and slow is best. What temperature to cook a roux? It is best to cook a roux of low or medium heat. Never go any higher than medium! Low and slow is best. This ensures your roux has little risk of burning.

## Expert Tips

- **Use a Heavy Bottomed Pot.** Using a heavy bottomed pot will help prevent your roux from burning. I prefer cast iron or enamel coated cast iron pots or pans to make my roux. Cast iron is not only thick, but it heats evenly and you won't get hot spots. Thinner pots, like stock pots, are almost a guarantee you will burn the roux.
- **Cook over Low or Medium heat.** Never high. It's tempting to turn the heat up to high when making a roux to speed up the process, but you run the risk of burning your roux. Remember: it is better to take your time cooking your roux than burning it and having to start over.
- **Whisk and Watch Constantly.** I usually whisk my roux at the beginning and then change to a wooden spoon with a flat edge. Stirring constantly will keep your roux smooth, but also keep any bits from sticking to the bottom and burning.
- **Be patient.** It's tempting to multitask and start chopping vegetables, but the second you do I promise you'll burn your roux and be scrubbing a scorched pan.
- **Make it Ahead of Time.** You can make your roux ahead of time and store it until you need it. Cool the roux and store it in an airtight container. If using a vegetable oil, the roux will keep at room temperature for several weeks, even a month. If using butter or fat, store it in an airtight container in the fridge for up to two months.

Source: [www.infinetaste.com](http://www.infinetaste.com)



# Cornbread (Sweet & Moist)



**TOTAL TIME: 38 minutes** (Prep: 10 minutes, Cook: 28 minutes)  
**YIELD:** 10 Servings

This cornbread very moist thanks to a little oil added to the batter, and extra sweet thanks to some sugar and honey. No more dry cornbread! This skillet cornbread is baked in a hot cast iron skillet for that extra crispy edge, perfect for dunking in a bowlful of chili.

## INGREDIENTS

- \_ 1 cup flour spooned and leveled
- \_ 3/4 cup yellow cornmeal
- \_ 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- \_ 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- \_ 2 teaspoons baking powder 1 teaspoon for 8x8 pan, SEE NOTE
- \_ 1/2 cup butter (1 stick)
- \_ 1/4 cup vegetable oil
- \_ 1 cup granulated sugar
- \_ 1/3 cup honey
- \_ 2 large eggs
- \_ 1 & 1/4 cups buttermilk\*

## Equipment

- \_ 9-inch cast iron skillet
- \_ 9x9 square pan

## NOTE

- \_ **IMPORTANT! If you plan to make this recipe in an 8x8 or 9x9 inch square pan:**
- \_ Only use 1 teaspoon baking powder. (Your cake will overflow the pan if you use 2 teaspoons.)
- \_ Do not put the pan in the oven while it is preheating. Spray the pan with nonstick spray. There is no need to set aside the 1/2 tablespoon of butter from the stick of butter called for in the recipe.

## DIRECTIONS

- 1.** Preheat your oven to 375 degrees. Place your 9-inch cast iron skillet in the oven while the oven preheats. (If you are baking this in an 8x8 or 9x9 inch square pan, see note.)
- 2.** In a small mixing bowl, combine 1 cup flour, 3/4 cup yellow cornmeal, 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt, 1/2 teaspoon baking soda, and 2 teaspoons baking powder. (Use 1 teaspoon baking powder if using a square pan.)
- 3.** Slice off about 1/2 tablespoon from your 1/2 cup (1 stick) of butter and set aside (you will grease the pan with it soon).
- 4.** Melt the remaining butter in a large bowl in the microwave.
- 5.** Add 1/4 cup oil, 1 cup of sugar, and 1/3 cup honey to the large bowl with the melted butter. Stir well until combined.
- 6.** Add 2 eggs and 1 and 1/4 cups buttermilk.\* Whisk until fully incorporated.
- 7.** Use a wooden spoon or spatula to stir the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients (then wipe out the dry bowl and put it back in your cupboard!) DO NOT over mix! Make sure the dry ingredients are fully incorporated but don't worry if there are a few lumps.
- 8.** Remove the cast iron skillet from the oven and shut the door. Grease the bottom and sides (all the way to the top) with the remaining half tablespoon butter. I use a butter knife. If it melts too fast, use a pastry brush to spread it around.
- 9.** Pour the batter into the hot pan and smooth out the top.
- 10.** Use hot pads to place the skillet back in the oven. Bake at 375 for 28-32 minutes. The cornbread is done when a toothpick inserted in the center comes out with no wet batter on it. You can also shake the skillet a little, and if is at all wobbly, leave it in a couple more minutes. The top should be golden brown and the edges should pull away from the edges of the pan.
- 11.** Remove from the oven and let cool for 5-10 minutes before slicing and serving. This is best served right away so the edges are nice and crispy! Top with butter and honey, and/or serve with The Best Chili Recipe I've Ever Made!
- 12.** Store the cornbread tightly covered on the counter for up to 3 days. If you made it in a cast iron pan, remove the cornbread from the cast iron once cool, and store in a sealed container (otherwise it will start to taste all iron-y. no thanks.)



# Cornbread (Continued) (Sweet & Moist)



## Making this cornbread recipe in a 9x13 inch pan

There have been a lot of reviews saying that a doubled recipe overflows. This never happened for me, but I experimented with reducing the amount of batter for a 9x13 and am happy with the results. If you bake in a metal pan, the edges will still get pretty crispy, which is awesome. Below is my updated recipe for a 9x13 pan; it's 1.5x the recipe, not a full double.

Grease a metal 9x13 inch pan and do not put it in the oven while preheating. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees, not 375. **1.5x all the ingredients except for the baking powder:**

- \_ 1 and 1/2 cups flour, spooned and leveled
- \_ cup + 2 tablespoons yellow cornmeal
- \_ 3/4 teaspoon kosher salt
- \_ 3/4 teaspoon baking soda
- \_ 2 teaspoons baking powder
- \_ 3/4 cup butter (this is 1 and 1/2 sticks)
- \_ 6 tablespoons vegetable oil
- \_ 1 and 1/2 cups granulated sugar

### Equipment

- \_ 9x13 pan

### Buttermilk:

\*You can use cheater buttermilk for this recipe. For 1 cup of cheater buttermilk, add 1 tablespoon white vinegar or lemon juice to a liquid measuring cup, then add milk until you reach 1 cup. Stir and let sit 5 minutes before using. (For the 1 and 1/4 cups that the recipe calls for, use 4 teaspoons vinegar and fill to the 1 and 1/4 cup mark.)

## NUTRITION FACTS

Calories: 366kcal | Carbohydrates: 49g | Protein: 5g | Fat: 17g | Saturated Fat: 8g  
Polyunsaturated Fat: 4g | Monounsaturated Fat: 5g | Trans Fat: 0.4g  
Cholesterol: 65mg | Sodium: 376mg | Potassium: 115mg | Fiber: 1g  
Sugar: 31g Vitamin A: 387IU | Vitamin C: 0.1mg | Calcium: 93mg | Iron: 1mg

Recipe source: [www.thefoodcharlatan.com](http://www.thefoodcharlatan.com)









# Crockpot Gumbo

**TOTAL TIME: 6 hours, 10 minutes** (Prep: 10 minutes, Cook: 6 hours)

**YIELD:** 6 Servings

A delicious crockpot gumbo that is easy to 'dump' and cook. With an optional roux base for a more authentic flavor this traditional Creole dish can now be a weeknight favorite.



## INGREDIENTS

- \_ 1 red bell pepper, diced
- \_ 1 onion, diced
- \_ 3 celery stalks, diced
- \_ 28 ounce can diced tomatoes (the big can)
- \_ 1 ½ pounds chicken thighs, boneless skinless
- \_ 1 package andouille sausage, sliced
- \_ 1 pound raw shrimp (add at the end)
- \_ 1 tablespoon cajun seasoning
- \_ 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- \_ ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- \_ 2 cups chicken broth
- \_ 1 teaspoon minced garlic
- \_ 2 cups cooked rice for serving

## NUTRITION FACTS

Calories: 501 | Total Fat: 22g | Saturated Fat: 9g  
Trans Fat: 0g | Unsaturated Fat: 11g | Cholesterol: 327mg  
Sodium: 2443mg | Carbohydrates: 27g | Fiber: 4g | Sugar: 6g  
Protein: 50g

## DIRECTIONS

- 1. Optional:** Make a roux using the optional butter and flour. On the stovetop add the butter to a skillet over medium heat. Once melted and starting to bubble add the flour to the butter. Whisk to combine and continue to whisk until the mixture becomes a dark brown color about 4 minutes. Remove from the heat, set aside until you are ready to add the the crockpot.
- 2.** Add the diced red bell pepper, onion, celery, diced tomatoes, chicken thighs, sliced andouille, cajun seasoning, salt, thyme, broth, minced garlic, and if you are using it the optional roux from step one. Do NOT add the shrimp yet.
- 3.** Stir to combine and cook on LOW 6-7 hours or HIGH 3-4 hours.
- 4.** During the last 15 minutes of cooking stir in the shrimp. I recommend leaving the shells on for maximum flavor but it isn't absolutely necessary. Once the shrimp is pink and no longer translucent the gumbo is ready to eat. Shred the chicken thighs into bite size pieces. Serve over a bed of rice.

## NOTES

- \_ **ADD THE SHRIMP AT THE END**, for artistic purposes I took the ingredients photo with them in the crockpot, they will turn out better if you add them at the end.
- \_ The package of andouille sausage I used was 13 ounces, anything from about 12-16 ounces should work perfectly fine here.
- \_ While the shrimp is cooking is a good time to make the rice, use my Foolproof Stovetop Rice Recipe [HERE](#).
- \_ You can use any color bell pepper in place of red. I use red because I think the sweetness adds to the dish a lot although a green bell pepper might be more traditional.
- \_ The roux can be made ahead of time and stored in the refrigerator.

Source: [theschmidtywife.com](http://theschmidtywife.com)



# Cajun Gumbo

**TOTAL TIME: 2 hours**

Enjoy your flavorful journey to the bayou with this Authentic Cajun Gumbo!



## INGREDIENTS

### **For the Roux**

- \_ 1 cup all-purpose flour
- \_ 1 cup vegetable oil

### **For the Gumbo**

- \_ 1 cup onion, finely chopped
- \_ 1/2 cup green bell pepper, diced
- \_ 1/2 cup celery, diced
- \_ 3 cloves garlic, minced
- \_ 1 pound andouille sausage, sliced
- \_ 1 pound chicken thighs, cut into bite-sized pieces
- \_ 8 cups chicken broth
- \_ 1 cup okra, sliced (fresh or frozen)
- \_ 1 can (14 ounces) diced tomatoes
- \_ 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- \_ 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- \_ 2 bay leaves
- \_ 1 teaspoon paprika
- \_ 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper (adjust to your spice preference)
- \_ Salt and black pepper, to taste
- \_ 2 cups cooked white rice
- \_ Chopped green onions and parsley (for garnish)

## DIRECTIONS

### **Making the Roux**

- 1.** In a heavy-bottomed pot or Dutch oven, combine the flour and vegetable oil over medium heat.
- 2.** Stir continuously to prevent burning. The roux should become a deep, chocolate-brown color. This will take about 30-40 minutes. Be patient; the roux is the heart of the gumbo.

### **Sauteing the Holy Trinity**

Stir in the andouille sausage and chicken pieces. Cook until the chicken is no longer pink, about 5-7 minutes.

### **Incorporating the Broth and Spices**

- 1.** Slowly pour in the chicken broth, stirring to combine all the ingredients.
- 2.** Add the diced tomatoes, okra, thyme, oregano, bay leaves, paprika, cayenne pepper, salt, and black pepper. Stir well.
- 3.** Bring the mixture to a boil, then reduce the heat to a simmer. Cover and let it cook for about 45 minutes to an hour, or until the gumbo thickens and the flavors meld.

### **Serving**

- 1.** Serve the Authentic Cajun Gumbo over cooked white rice.
- 2.** Garnish with chopped green onions and parsley.



# Lemon Bars

**TOTAL TIME: 1 hour, 20 minutes** (Prep: 30 minutes, Cook: 50 minutes)

**YIELD:** 24-30 Bars

Lemon Bars are the classic lemon lover's treat. Tart and sweet at the same time, and loaded with luscious lemon flavor -- what's not to love? As a bonus, they're truly not hard to make either.



## INGREDIENTS

### For the Crust

- \_ 2 cups all-purpose flour
- \_ 1 cup butter, softened
- \_ 1 cup granulated sugar
- \_ 1/4 tsp. salt

### For the Filling

- \_ 6 eggs
- \_ 2 cup granulated sugar
- \_ 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- \_ 1 Tbsp lemon zest, finely chopped
- \_ 2/3 cup fresh lemon juice
- \_ confectioners' sugar for dusting

## DIRECTIONS

### For the Crust

- 1.** Line the bottom and sides of a 9x13-inch baking pan with foil, leaving about a 1 to 2 inch overhang on each side of the pan (you'll use the foil overhang to lift the baked squares out of the pan). Lightly spray the foil with non-stick cooking spray.
- 2.** Mix the flour and sugar together in a small mixing bowl. Cut the butter into chunks; add butter to the flour mixture and cut in until the mixture resembles coarse crumbs.
- 3.** Press evenly into the bottom of the prepared baking pan, building up about a 1/2-inch lip around the edges to hold in the filling.
- 4.** Bake at 350°F for 20 minutes.

### For the Filling

- 1.** Beat together the eggs, sugar, flour, and lemon juice with an electric mixer until well blended. With the mixer on low speed, add the lemon zest; beat until just blended.
- 2.** Spread the lemon mixture over the partially-baked crust.
- 3.** Bake for an additional 25-30 minutes until set and the edges are lightly golden brown. Cool completely in the pan.
- 4.** When cooled, use the foil overhang to lift the bars from the pan. Place on a cutting board, peel the foil away from the edges.
- 5.** Dust the top with a coating of confectioners' sugar. Cut into small bars with a sharp knife.

*Recipe source: [www.thekitchenismyplayground.com](http://www.thekitchenismyplayground.com)*





# December Photo Challenge

December 1 - Festive Selfie	December 17 - Red and Green Color Splash
December 2 - Cozy Winter Scene	December 18 - Handmade Gift Exchange
December 3 - Holiday Lights	December 19 - Nutcracker
December 4 - Holiday Tree Close-Up	December 20 - Candlelight Glow
December 5 - DIY Holiday Decor	December 21 - Seasonal Socks or Slippers
December 6 - Favorite Holiday Treat	December 22 - Simple Moment
December 7 - Family Traditions	December 23 - Vintage Holiday Decor
December 8 - Winter Wonderland Landscape	December 24 - What Brings You Joy
December 9 - Wrapping Paper	December 25 - From Where I Stand
December 10 - Holiday Pajamas	December 26 - Post-Feast Family Time
December 11 - Festive Pet Photo	December 27 - Afternoon Tea or Coffee
December 12 - Hot Cocoa Moment	December 28 - Sparkling New Year's Eve Decor
December 13 - Ornament Close-Up	December 29 - Reflections on the Year
December 14 - Holiday Movie Night	December 30 - Resolution for the Upcoming Year
December 15 - Ice Skating Adventure	December 31 - Cheers to the New Year
December 16 - Snowy Day Scene	January 1 - Happy New Year!

