

# Cast Iron: Quality and Elegance



Once again, it turns out that your mother was right. You should always have quarters in your pocket-book. (What if your cell phone battery dies?) You should turn off the lights when you leave the room. (It's a good way to save electricity!) And that old cast iron skillet really is the best pan. (There are new concerns about the chemicals in nonstick cookware.)

That old workhorse, cast iron, is seeing a resurgence these days. It's not only the eternal standard for cornbread, but also is becoming a haute cuisine favorite. Chef David Bull of the legendary Driskill Hotel in Austin used a cast iron skillet to create a recipe for peach cobbler that pairs the sweetness of peaches and caramel with the earthiness of cornmeal. You'll find this and other tempting recipes in the new cookbook, *The Driskill Hotel*, by Bull and Turk Pipkin ([www.driskillhotel.com](http://www.driskillhotel.com), (512) 391-7133).

## Peach Cobbler With Cornmeal Streusel and Vanilla Ice Cream

### Peach Cobbler Filling

7 medium fresh peaches, cut into wedges  
1 cup sugar  
2 tablespoons cornstarch  
1 tablespoon cinnamon, ground

Peel and cut up peaches. Place into a bowl. Add sugar, cornstarch and cinnamon to peaches and toss together. Set aside.

### Cornmeal Streusel Topping

2 cups + 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour  
1¾ cups cornmeal  
¼ cups sugar  
2½ tablespoons baking powder  
½ teaspoon salt  
½ teaspoon baking soda  
⅓ cup butter, unsalted  
1¾ cups heavy cream  
8 cups Peach Cobbler Filling

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a mixer with paddle attachment, combine the all-purpose flour, cornmeal, sugar, baking powder, salt and baking soda. While the mixer is on low speed, slowly add the butter. Mix until it

resembles a coarse meal. Add the cream slowly on low speed until well combined. Place the peach cobbler filling into a greased cast iron skillet. Crumble dough on top of peach filling. Bake for about 20 minutes or until golden brown. Reserve hot for assembly.

### Caramel Sauce

1¼ cup sugar  
1 tablespoon water  
1-2 tablespoons heavy cream

Combine water and sugar in a saucepan. Heat on high until sugar begins to caramelize and turn an amber color. Carefully pour heavy cream into saucepan and stir. Remove from heat; reserve warm for assembly.

### Vanilla Ice Cream

Store-bought vanilla ice cream will be fine for this recipe, but for the adventurous chef:

4 cups heavy cream  
1⅓ cups sugar  
12 egg yolks  
2 vanilla beans  
2 cups milk

Prepare an ice water bath and set aside. Whisk the yolks and the milk together and set aside. In a pot, bring the heavy cream, sugar and vanilla beans to a boil. Slowly add the heavy cream mixture to the egg mixture while you whisk it. When combined, place back into pot over low heat and stir constantly until it thickens slightly. Quickly place in ice water bath and stir slowly until cool. Chill for about 2 to 3 hours. Turn in an ice cream machine until firm but soft. Ice cream will continue to set in the freezer; freeze for about 2 hours before serving.

### For the assembly:

Serve the peach cobbler in the cast iron skillet hot. Using a spoon or serving utensil, scoop the peach cobbler out of the cast iron skillet and place onto a plate. Top with a scoop of vanilla ice cream and drizzle with caramel sauce. Serves 8.

Getting good cast iron recipes from our readers was like shooting fish in a barrel! Texans love cooking with cast iron skillets and Dutch ovens. In fact, I've decided to save all the Dutch oven recipes for a future contest because camp cooking is so different from kitchen cooking. All the winning recipes below are for cast iron skillets.

Before announcing this month's winner, I want to share a bit of humor with you from the general manager of Lighthouse Electric Cooperative in Floydada, **BILL HARBIN**. This is his "easy" recipe for gravy, which captures the fickle nature of that creamy accompaniment:

### Uncle Bill's Cowboy Gravy

Mess of quail

Lard or vegetable oil

Flour

Salt

Pepper

Milk

Fry up mess of quail (breaded in flour) in an experienced black iron skillet in lard or oil. Pour off some of the oil but leave just enough with the crumbles from the quail. Put some flour in your real hot skillet. Put in some salt and pepper and stir until it is scorched a little bit. By now you should have sort of a paste. If it is too thick, you may want to add a little more of the drippings (you should have kept them), or if it is too thin, maybe add just a little more flour (or maybe not).

Now add milk. If it doesn't go "Shhhhhh!", your skillet was not hot enough. Keep stirring while the milk is boiling. Now this is the

tricky part: The gravy will get thicker as it cooks, but you don't want it to get too thick, but you want it to cook long enough for it to be gravy and not just milk with flour in it. So if it gets too thick too quick, you just add a little milk, but if it doesn't get thick enough, you maybe add a little flour (or maybe not), and you probably want to add some more salt (unless it is already too salty). Take it off the fire at just the right time. It will also get thicker as it cools down. Add more pepper if you want to. It's easy.

Makes about 2 to 40 servings unless it is not fit to eat, in which case you will want to feed it to the dogs, but sometimes they won't eat it either. (Sometimes it's real good!)

This month's recipe contest winner is **GAYNELLE FARQHAR**, a member of Wise Electric Cooperative, for her Ranch-Style Meatloaf. This was a real favorite of the guys!

### Ranch-Style Meatloaf

1½ pounds ground beef  
 ¾ cup bread crumbs (leftover hot dog or hamburger buns are great for this)  
 5 tablespoons ketchup  
 3 tablespoons prepared mustard  
 3½ tablespoons brown sugar  
 1 teaspoon salt  
 1½ teaspoons black pepper  
 3 tablespoons red wine vinegar  
 2 teaspoons minced fresh garlic (or ¼ teaspoon garlic powder)  
 2½ teaspoons onion flakes (or ¾ teaspoon onion powder)  
 ⅔ cup chopped celery  
 4 tablespoons chopped onion



⅓ cup each chopped red and green bell pepper  
 ⅓ cup water

Mix together all ingredients, using your hands, until they are mixed evenly into the meat. Spray a 9- or 10-inch cast iron skillet with canola oil. Pat meat mixture into skillet evenly. Bake at 375 degrees for 45 to 50 minutes, until top is very brown.

If you like a sauce, use your favorite tomato sauce, or for a nice cheese sauce, mix 1 cup dry white wine and 1 can cheese soup. Mix and heat in a saucepan and serve on the side. Serves 6-8.

Serving size: 1 wedge. Per serving: 344 calories, 16 grams protein, 23 grams fat, 17 grams carbohydrates, 605 milligrams sodium, 72 milligrams cholesterol

### Traveler's Rest Skillet Apple Pie

1¼ cups sugar  
 ¼ cup all-purpose flour  
 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
 ¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg  
 ⅛ teaspoon salt  
 3 tablespoons butter, melted  
 7 cups peeled, cored and thinly sliced apples  
 Pastry

Combine first 6 ingredients in large bowl, mixing well. Add apples and toss gently. Roll half of pastry to ⅛-inch thickness on a lightly floured surface; fit into a 10-inch cast iron skillet. Spoon filling evenly into pastry shell. Roll remaining pastry into

## JULY RECIPE CONTEST



Some people like it green and mild. Others like it red and hot. Some prefer roasted, others fresh. We want to try them all in July's recipe contest! Send your favorite **Salsa** recipes to Home Cooking, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704. You may also fax them to (512) 486-6254 or e-mail them to [recipes@texas-ec.org](mailto:recipes@texas-ec.org). Be sure to include your name, address and phone number, as well as the name of your electric co-op. The deadline is April 10. The top winner will receive a copy of the *Texas Co-op Power Cookbook* and a selection of spices from Adams. Others whose recipes are published will also receive spices from Adams.

1/8-inch thickness. Cut into 3/4-inch-wide strips, and arrange in lattice fashion over filling. Seal edges to side of skillet. Bake at 400 degrees for 40 minutes or until crust is golden brown. Serves 8-10.

**Pastry**

- 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 cup shortening
- 1/2 cup cold butter, cut into small pieces
- 6-8 tablespoons cold water

Combine flour and salt; cut in shortening and butter until mixture resembles coarse meal. Sprinkle water evenly over mixture; stir gently with fork until mixture forms a ball. Chill 30 minutes.

Serving size: 1 slice. Per serving: 424 calories, 4 grams protein, 18 grams fat, 63 grams carbohydrates, 263 milligrams sodium, 34 milligrams cholesterol

**LAURA MONTGOMERY**  
Wise Electric Cooperative

**Texas Goulash**

- 1 pound ground chuck
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1/2 medium green bell pepper, chopped
- 2 stalks celery, sliced
- 1 can (14.5 ounces) petite-diced tomatoes
- 1 can (8 ounces) tomato sauce
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon dried basil
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon fresh ground black pepper
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tablespoon ketchup
- 1 1/2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1 1/2 teaspoons steak sauce
- 1 cup uncooked elbow macaroni

In 3-quart saucepan, heat 2 cups water on medium heat.

In a deep (3-inch) cast iron skillet, crumble ground chuck. Cook over medium high heat, stirring and breaking up meat, until there is no longer any pink.

Remove meat from skillet and drain fat; set meat aside.

Add olive oil to skillet; heat over medium heat. Add onion, bell pepper and celery. Cook, stirring often, until vegetables are translucent. Add meat to vegetables and pour in hot water and remaining ingredients, except macaroni. Let sauce simmer for 20 to 30 minutes.

While sauce simmers, refill saucepan with water and cook macaroni according to package directions. Drain macaroni and add to meat/sauce mixture and stir. Serve with crusty, homemade bread, French bread or cornbread (cooked in a cast iron skillet, of course). Serves 4-6.

Serving size: 1 bowl. Per serving: 298 calories, 16 grams protein, 18 grams fat, 17 grams carbohydrates, 716 milligrams sodium, 57 milligrams cholesterol

**MARILYN O'DONNELL**  
Wood County Electric Cooperative

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We're looking for the best recipes from your holiday celebrations. All recipes must be original and the ingredients must include Pioneer Brand Gravy Mix, Pioneer Brand Biscuit & Baking Mix, or Pioneer Brand Frozen Biscuit or Roll Dough. Winners will be announced in our December issue.

Up to three entries are allowed per person. Each should be submitted on a separate piece of paper and include your name, address and phone number, plus the name of your electric cooperative. All entries must be postmarked by September 8, 2006. Send entries to Holiday Recipe Contest, 2550 S. IH-35, Austin, TX 78704, or fax to (512) 486-6254. To enter by e-mail (recipes@texas-ec.org), you must include "Holiday Recipe Contest" in the subject line and submit one recipe per e-mail (no attachments). For official rules, visit [www.texascoopower.com](http://www.texascoopower.com) or send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to the address above.