

FOUR OF OUR FAVORITE, EASY ANCESTRAL MEALS

BY ALISON KAY AND ANDREA HUEHNERHOFF

In 2023 we wrote our first cookbook together, *Meals at the Ancestral Hearth*. It was released to our audience with podcast [episode 56, *Preparing Nutrient-Dense Meals From Scratch Every Day*](#), and we were totally blown away by the sales and the response!

Visit our website at www.ancestralkitchenpodcast.com/shop to purchase this cookbook as well as our additional cookbook, *Spelt Sourdough Every Day*.

Meals at the Ancestral Hearth includes many of our favorite staple meals including Alison's Italian-influenced Bone Marrow Risotto alla Milanese, a rustic Sourdough Egg Pasta, Alison's heritage Naturally Fermented Staffordshire Oatcakes, Andrea's farm-fresh Lacto-Fermented Ice Cream, and many more. We also included the Ancestral Kitchen Challenge, descriptions of our pantries, a detailed Water Kefir 101 with your FAQs and other useful essays and resources.

Spelt Sourdough Every Day covers the basics of baking with ancestral grains, Alison's weekly, classic Everyday Spelt Loaf, a rich Milk Kefir Spelt Bread, the very Italian Pane con Ciccio, a special Chocolate Malt and Hazelnut Spelt Bread, and much more - including a spelt birthday cake! This cookbook has been cited by many listeners as either their doorway into working with spelt, or - as already proficient spelt bakers - a deepening of their love and understanding of the grain with improvements for their existing baking practice. Alison wrote a variety of essays and resources for this cookbook as well, including a note on the economy of spelt and how she got started using it; she also created video resources which are linked in the cookbook.

Many of the recipes we are sharing now on the podcast are being tested and re-tested by listeners and supporters and ultimately may end up in our next podcast cookbook - an even larger compilation of classics from our kitchens and ancestral kitchens around the world!

To participate in our thriving group of ancestrally-minded cooks and creatives, jump over to www.ancestralkitchenpodcast.com/join and see what we have to offer. Your voice is needed! There are other people out there just as excited and nerdy as you about ferments and bubbling bottles and slowly rising ancient grain loaves, and they are ready to commune and cook with you, even if it's from across the globe!

CALDO VERDE

BY ANDREA HUEHNERHOFF

Original Source: Twelve Months of Monastery Soups by Brother Victor-Antoine d'Avila-Latourette

Serves: 6

This is a long-standing favorite, one of my comfort foods, and always a reliable fallback; it can be added to with any number of variations based on what you have on hand, or what you like! I first made this in about 2000 when I was cooking for my family when I was 13 years old - I am not actually sure when I first made it, but it was around then!

If you want big hearty, chunky vegetables, do large coarse chops (this pairs well with shredded meat). For a delicate, finely-diced soup, mince everything pretty small (this pairs well with cooked crumbled meat) - these are two different experiences and both delicious.

Ingredients

1/2 cup fat or drippings

3 small onions, chopped or diced

We often add chopped or diced carrots, celery, turnips, and more

6 potatoes, chopped or diced (red, purple or yellow hold up best - russets tend to get very soft)

1 small cabbage, or half a large cabbage, chopped, diced or shredded

8 cups bone broth

Cooked meat (optional) - shredded chicken or turkey, bratwurst slices, cooked crumbled sausage, small meatballs

Noodles or grains (optional) - millet, rice, emmer, or any shape pasta, dumplings or runsas work here

Shredded cheese (optional) - for topping after serving. Shaved parmesan is particularly good.

Hard-boiled egg, or egg to poach in broth (optional)

Sauerkraut or kimchi (optional) - for topping after serving

Salt and pepper, and any other fresh or dried herbs you love (parsley, if you're Alison!)

Method

1. Pour fat into a soup pot and sauté onions (and any other vegetables except potatoes and cabbage) to soften and lightly brown the edges. (Okay, you can add the potatoes if you want! Slightly browning and crisping their outsides produced a different and also delicious aspect of the soup. You do you.) Stir often.
2. Add potatoes, cabbage, broth, salt, and pepper. If using dried herbs, you could add them here; for fresh herbs, I like adding them at the end. If you are planning to add meatballs that need to cook, throw them in here. If you are adding sliced bratwurst or cooked crumbled sausage, I would also add it here. Bring the soup to a boil, then lower heat and cover the pot. Simmer soup for about 1 hour. (I have also simmered it for 20 minutes and served immediately when I am in a hurry.) Turn off the heat, add fresh herbs if using, and let soup rest for 10 minutes. Serve hot.
3. Stir in cooked shredded chicken and serve over noodles, if desired. Sprinkle bowls with Parmesan if you like.
4. Note: You can also add raw and/or soaked barley, rice, millet, quinoa, noodles, etc to the broth and cook it all in one pot. I tend to prefer to keep the grains and pasta separate, but you don't have to. Obviously, you don't have to do any of this, but you're reading the recipe, so I'm just making suggestions.

LIVER IN A MUSHROOM CREAM SAUCE

BY ALISON KAY

Serves: 4

We love making liver pate in our house, and everyone enjoys it, including my 10 year old son. But sometimes, I just don't have the time to make pate. This quick liver dish – which can be made with any type of liver – evolved out of me realising that if I served stewed apple with fried liver, my son would eat it. The dish cooks everything in butter and has cream added at the end – both extra points from his point of view.

This can be served with rice, millet ([listen to our podcast episode on millet](#)), potatoes or a big portion of greens and a [buttered slice of spelt sourdough bread](#).

Ingredients:

Butter, for frying
1 large onion
1 stick of celery
8 or 10 mushrooms
1 tart apple
250-300g (9 - 10 oz) any type of liver (if you want to appeal to non-liver eaters, start with chicken or duck)
Generous pouring of cream
Fresh parsley, if desired, to top

Method

1. Melt the butter in a cast-iron pan and add the chopped onion and celery. Cook for five minutes, stirring occasionally.
2. Slice the mushrooms and add to the pan, stir well and cook for another five minutes.
3. Chop the apple into a small dice. Add this to the pan and again stir well. Cook for 10 minutes.
4. Push all the cooking vegetables that are in the cast-iron pan to the outside edges of the pan, add more butter if needed then place your liver in the centre of the pan.
5. Cook for about five minutes per side, depending on the thickness of your liver. Whilst this is cooking, if you are using it, chop the parsley.
6. Returning to the pan, use a knife and fork to chop the liver into small pieces. Once done, stir everything together.
7. Turn off the heat and pour in a generous serving of cream, remembering to also season the dish with salt and pepper.

For more on liver, listen to [How to Get More \(& Tastier\) Liver into Your Diet!](#)

RICOTTA CHEESE LASAGNA WITH MARINARA

BY ANDREA HUEHNERHOFF

Serves: A 9x13" baking pan

This recipe took me 20 minutes to assemble and get in oven when baby was down for a nap, using a store-bought marinara sauce. Naturally, a fresh marinara sauce will only improve matters! We made this, and variations of this, once a week for quite a while after our 4th baby was born! It's a speedy dinner because there is no cooked meat, which saves time; I use fresh home-made ricotta but I usually make it a day or two ahead, not in the moment; but if you have the luxury of time, cooking crumbled meat, sauteing diced or sliced vegetables like squash, or cheese you made on the spot, is a delightful addition. For a gluten-free version (aside from using gluten-free lasagne noodles which I have not tried yet), you can use long slices of zucchini and use up some of those bad boys in the summer!

Ingredients

1 large egg (or two, if you have lots of eggs)
2 cups whole milk ricotta cheese (about 20 ounces, or for fresh about 1 gallon of milk worth)
Salt and pepper to taste
1 cup chopped parsley
1 - 2 quarts marinara sauce (I like lasagna really saucy, not dry)
16 no-boil lasagna noodles or 1 pound fresh lasagna noodles rolled and cut into slices (for pre-made, I use Bionaturae noodles, which say to pre-boil. I only pre-boiled once, never again)
2 cups grated Parmesan or Romano Pecorino cheese, or a mixture of hard shredded cheese
2 cups shredded or ripped-up mozzarella cheese (12 ounces)

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 400F (200C). Whisk egg in a bowl, and add ricotta, salt, pepper, parsley, and any other desired herbs and combine.
2. Spread marinara sauce in the bottom of the pan and place noodles across the sauce. Layer with more sauce, crumbled ricotta or Parmesan mix; then another layer of noodles, sauce, and the alternate cheese mixture; and continue on up, layering noodles, sauce and alternate cheeses until you get to the top of your pan. Top with noodles, more sauce, and sprinkle whatever cheese you have left across.
3. If you have a covered dish casserole, put the lid on and bake for 30 minutes. Remove the lid towards the end and bake 10 - 15 minutes more to toast the cheese.
4. I typically don't have a lid so my cheese gets very toasty and brown; if you have the luxury of time to be in the kitchen during baking, you can reserve your topping cheese until the last 10 - 15 minutes and put it on to toast. Lasagna should be bubbling and the edges should be curling and brown and the cheese nice and melty when it's all done.
5. Cool for a few minutes if you can stand the wait, and serve hot!

SIMPLE CARROT SOUP

BY ALISON KAY

Serves: 6

This is a wonderful-tasting, easy, so-good-to-freeze staple in our house. I think it's a winner because of how straightforward it is – not many brain cells are needed to put it on the table, meaning that, on a day that I'm feeling overwhelmed, I can just get on with it. The added bonus is that I usually have a lot of leftovers that go in the freezer to be eaten on another busy day.

The only thing that takes foresight here (other than ensuring you have enough carrots!) is having some broth ready. I usually manage this by having a batch of chicken carcasses in the freezer and taking one out the day before I intend to make soup. By lunchtime it's defrosted and I use it to make meat stock. This short-cook broth takes just one and a half hours (and also leaves us with lots of chicken scraps to have for dinner). Then I put the resulting broth in the fridge, ready for soup the next day.

You can serve this with crusty sourdough, pour it over rice or eat with crunchy warm oatcakes.

Ingredients

Olive oil, butter or lard for frying

2 onions

Optional but nice: 1 stick of celery

At least 12 big carrots (I have been known to use up to 20)

Meat stock or bone broth (I usually use chicken but you could use any broth)

Herbs and/or spices: I like to use the green leaf of coriander (cilantro), which I often have in the freezer. I also often use dried coriander seed, which I will crush lightly in a mortar and pestle. I have been known to use other flavourings such as caraway seed or fresh parsley.

You will also need a blender.

Method

1. In a big saucepan, heat the fat. Chop the onions and celery roughly and cook gently, stirring occasionally, as you chop the carrots. Roughly chop the carrots and add to the pan. Cook everything gently for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally.
2. Pour on the broth, bring to the boil then turn the heat down to low. If you're using dried spices add them now. Put a lid on your pot and leave the soup to cook for as long as works for you – sometimes I leave it 40 minutes, other times a couple of hours.
3. Turn off the heat, take the lid off and leave the soup to cool. It will cool more quickly if you are able to stir it every 15 minutes.
4. When your soup is cool enough to be blended, blend it in batches, tipping the smooth soup into a heatproof bowl. (*Note from Andrea: If you have an immersion blender, you could use it here directly in the pot, if your pot is a type that can withstand metal tools.*) If you're using fresh herbs add them now. Taste, and season generously with salt and pepper.
5. By now, hopefully, you are hungry; measure out the soup for serving immediately and reheat it (for less washing-up, in the same saucepan you cooked it in).
6. For even more deliciousness drizzle in some cream and top with fresh herbs.