

THE SAN ANTONIO
KARDASHIANS
BY ERIC BENSON

THE RELUCTANT HERO OF
SUTHERLAND SPRINGS
BY MICHAEL J. MOONEY

MONEY CAN'T CHANGE
JIMBO FISHER
BY ANDY LANGER

Texas Monthly

A GLOBAL FEAST

(TEXAS-STYLE!)

Tandoori turkey. Peruvian potatoes. Chile pequin jelly.
With these **41 recipes**, your holiday spread will never be the same.

BY PATRICIA SHARPE



HOUSTON CHEF
KIRAN VERMA'S
THANKSGIVING
TABLE, P. 94

VANILLA
ROAST DUCK
WITH PECAN
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GRAPEFRUIT
AND CHILE
PEQUIN JELLY

AVOCADO
AND
GRAPEFRUIT
SALAD

MESQUITE-
FLOUR TRES
LECHES
CAKE WITH
CHERRY
COMPOTE



HUNTING AND GATHERING



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teve McHugh gets a little sentimental when hunting season rolls around. “I grew up on a farm in Wisconsin,” he says, “and we had a small lake on our property. My six brothers and I would get up before dawn and go sit in the blind, drinking hot chocolate, while we waited for ducks to fly over.” When the young chef moved to New Orleans, in 1996, he found rowdy people, rambunctious flavors, and a whole new way of life. His horizons expanded yet again when he relocated to San Antonio, in 2010. But that year also brought an unexpected crisis—health issues that had dogged him for months turned out to be non-Hodgkin’s lymphoma. After almost a year of intensive treatment, he was back on his feet, and in December 2013 he fulfilled a longtime dream: opening his own restaurant. Its name, Cured, is a deliberate reference to both its menu of cured meats and his own recovery. Today, McHugh is an enthusiastic explorer of all things Texan. The menu for his holiday feast is punched up with native ingredients like Texas grapefruit, chile pequins, and mesquite flour. But he couldn’t resist slipping in an old favorite from his Wisconsin boyhood. Luckily, Texans like roast duck too.

VANILLA ROAST DUCK WITH PECAN CORNBREAD DRESSING

SERVES 6

DUCK

2½ cups light brown sugar

2½ cups kosher salt

5 tablespoons black
peppercorns5 tablespoons whole
coriander seeds

4 tablespoons vanilla extract

3 bay leaves

3 whole ducks, about 4 pounds
each, excess neck
fat and giblets removed

Dressing (recipe follows)

In a large pot, add the first 6 ingredients to 2½ gallons of water and bring to a simmer. Remove from heat and allow to cool; refrigerate until completely chilled. Brine the ducks in 3 brining bags for 8 hours in the refrigerator.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Remove the ducks from the brine, rinse inside and out, and pat dry with paper towels. Discard the brine. Fill cavity of each duck with Dressing (don’t pack it too tightly; extra dressing can be baked in a pan alongside the ducks). Tie the legs of the ducks together with butcher’s twine and roast, breast side up, on a rack in a roasting pan until an internal thermometer inserted in the thickest portion of the thigh reads 180 degrees, about 1 hour (more for larger birds). Remove from oven and let rest for 10 minutes before carving.

CORNBREAD1½ cups stone-ground
cornmeal

2 teaspoons baking powder

2 teaspoons baking soda

1 teaspoon salt

1½ cups buttermilk

1 large egg

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Grease a 10-inch cast-iron skillet or baking pan and put it in the



oven. In a mixing bowl, combine the cornmeal, baking powder, baking soda, and salt. In a small bowl, whisk the buttermilk and egg together, then mix with the dry ingredients. Pour the batter into the heated skillet and bake until a toothpick inserted in the middle comes out clean, about 15 minutes. Set aside to use in Dressing.

DRESSING

3 tablespoons unsalted butter
½ cup chopped onion
1 large Granny Smith apple, peeled, cored, and cut into ½-inch dice
1 cup pecan pieces, toasted
3 tablespoons chopped parsley
2 cups chicken stock
3 large eggs, beaten
½ tablespoon salt
½ tablespoon freshly ground black pepper
1 pan Cornbread, crumbled

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a large skillet over medium-high heat, melt butter and sauté onion until translucent, about 3 minutes. Add apple and pecans and cook briefly, just enough to combine with the butter and onion mixture. Transfer to a large mixing bowl and toss with remaining ingredients.

GRAPEFRUIT AND CHILE PEQUIN JELLY

SERVES 6

½ to 2 cups (1 to 4 ounces) dried whole chile pequins, rehydrated (available packaged in produce section)

1 cup grapefruit juice
1 (1.75-ounce) box pectin powder (about ⅓ cup)
5 cups sugar

Put the chile pequins, grapefruit juice, and pectin powder in a large saucepan and bring to a rolling boil, stirring constantly. Stir in the sugar and return to a boil. Cook for 1 minute, stirring. Remove jelly from heat and skim off foam (texture will be semi-solid). Cool and pour into 1 or more bowls. Serve alongside duck.

AVOCADO AND GRAPEFRUIT SALAD

SERVES 6

3 Rio Star grapefruits, peeled and sliced into supremes
3 avocados, peeled and sliced salt and pepper to taste
good olive oil, from Texas if possible, to taste
2 serrano chiles, seeded and sliced into rings
1 to 2 shallots, sliced into rings
1 to 2 cups loosely packed cilantro leaves

To serve, arrange the grapefruit and avocado slices on a large platter. Season with salt and pepper, and drizzle with olive oil. Top with sliced serranos, shallot, and cilantro.

MESQUITE-FLOUR TRES LECHES CAKE WITH CHERRY COMPOTE

SERVES 12

COMPOTE
2½ cups cherries, pitted

(thawed if using frozen; can substitute fresh fruit of your choice)

¼ cup sugar
1½ tablespoons cornstarch
3 tablespoons lemon juice

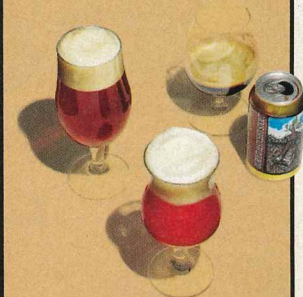
Put all ingredients in a large saucepan with ¼ cup water and bring to a simmer over medium-high heat. Cook for 10 minutes, stirring frequently adding water if it gets too thick. It should have a syrupy consistency. Remove from heat, cool, and reserve.

CAKE

1 cup cake flour
½ cup mesquite flour, plus some for dusting top of cake (available online)
1 cup sugar
¼ teaspoon salt
12 egg whites, room temperature
1½ teaspoons cream of tartar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Mix the cake flour, mesquite flour, sugar, and salt together, and set aside. Using a mixer, beat the egg whites, cream of tartar, and vanilla until stiff peaks form. With a rubber spatula, gently fold the dry ingredients into the egg whites. Line an ungreased 9-by-13-inch pan with parchment paper, pour the batter in, and bake until done, about 30 minutes. Texture will be spongy. Invert on a rack to cool, in the pan.

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THREE CHEERS

With Texas's wealth of craft breweries, it's easy to plan an entire holiday meal around just beer pairings. These are some of chef Steve McHugh's favorites for his feast.

Buried Hatchet Stout

From Southern Star Brewing, in Conroe, this stout is almost as dark as the coal in your stocking. It hits you with aromas of coffee and chocolate up front, followed by malty sweetness and nuttiness.

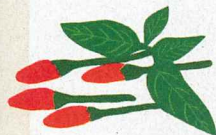
Apocalypse

Made by Save the World Brewing, in Marble Falls, Apocalypse is a Belgian-style quad (ale). McHugh likes to pop it open and share it with friends.

Cerveza de Mezquite

Located on the outskirts of Austin, Jester King Brewery has a national reputation for wild-yeast fermentation. Its brewers add mesquite beans to this agreeable ale, which has a subtle natural sweetness, with tart undertones and a little smoke.

INGREDIENT SPOTLIGHT CHILE PEQUIN



All this time, we thought Texas's beloved chile pequin was unique. It turns out to be just another so-called bird pepper, a group of teeny wild chiles that our feathered friends have spread from the Southwestern United States to the Andes. At 30,000 to 60,000 Scoville units, chile pequins are five to eight times as hot as jalapeños, with a quick, sharp bite and a sweet, slightly smoky taste. The reason you won't see vast bins of chile pequins in grocery stores is that they stubbornly resist being farmed. To this day, they are mainly harvested by hand, in the wild. Which is as it should be.