½ teaspoon pepper in another large bowl, then spread in baking pan and roast, stirring once, until onions are golden, 8 to 10 minutes. Transfer to bowl with squash.

▶Move oven rack to middle position and reduce oven temperature to 400°F.

▶Melt 3 tablespoons butter in a saucepan and remove from heat, then add bread crumbs and a pinch of salt, tossing to coat crumbs. Spread evenly in cleaned baking pan and bake, without stirring, until pale golden, about 5 minutes.

▶Melt remaining 4 tablespoons butter in a 3-quart heavy saucepan over moderately low heat, then whisk in flour and cook roux, whisking constantly, 3 minutes. Add broth, whisking, and bring to a boil, whisking. Reduce heat and simmer, whisking occasionally, 3 minutes. Remove from heat and cool 5 minutes, whisking occasionally, then whisk in sour cream and salt and pepper to taste. Pour sauce over squash mixture and stir gently until combined well.

▶Butter a 13- by 9- by 2-inch glass or ceramic baking dish (3-quart capacity), then spread squash mixture evenly into it and sprinkle with bread crumbs. Bake casserole until golden and bubbling, 15 to 20 minutes. Serve immediately.

Cooks' note:

Casserole (without bread crumbs) can be assembled 1 day ahead and cooled completely, uncovered, then chilled, covered tightly with plastic wrap. Let stand at room temperature 1 hour before sprinkling with bread crumbs and baking.

SLOW-COOKED COLLARD GREENS

SERVES 12

Active time: 15 min Start to finish: 2 hr

Cooking collards slowly is the traditional approach in the South, producing tender greens and the bonus of pot likker, the pale green pork-flavored broth left in the pot after the collards are served up. Many people sip a small cup of the pot likker as a cure for the common cold, while others dunk their corn muffins in it. For more information on collards, see Kitchen Notebook, page 169.

- **4 qt water**
- **1 smoked ham hock (¾ lb), rinsed**
- **4 lb collard greens (preferably small)**
- **½ teaspoon dried hot red pepper flakes**

▶Bring water with ham hock to a boil in an 8-quart pot, uncovered, skimming any froth, then reduce heat and simmer, covered, 1 hour.

▶While hock simmers, discard coarse stems and center ribs from collards, then wash leaves and drain. Coarsely chop collards. ▶Add collards and red pepper flakes to ham hock broth, then simmer, partially covered, stirring occasionally, until greens are very tender, about 45 minutes. Remove hock from cooking liquid and let stand until cool enough to handle, about 15 minutes. Discard skin and bones and coarsely chop meat. Stir meat and salt to taste into collards.

Cooks' note:

Collards can be cooked 1 day ahead and cooled completely, uncovered, then chilled, covered.

SKILLET CORN WITH BACON AND ONION

SERVES 12

Active time: 40 min Start to finish: 45 min

- **12 ears of corn, shucked**
- **6 bacon slices, cut crosswise into 1-inch pieces**
- **1 large onion, chopped**
- **4 garlic cloves, finely chopped**
- **1 cup water**
- **¾ cup finely chopped scallion**

▶Stand 1 ear of corn upright, pointed end down, in a large bowl and cut kernels from cob using a sharp paring knife. Scrape any remaining corn with its milk from cob into bowl using back edge of knife and discard cob. Remove kernels from remaining ears in same manner.

▶Cook bacon in a 12-inch heavy skillet (2 inches deep) over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, until crisp, about 8 minutes, then transfer with a slotted spoon to paper towels to drain. Cook onion in fat remaining in skillet over moderately low heat, stirring occasionally, until softened, 2 to 3 minutes. Add corn, garlic, and water (skillet will be very full) and cook over moderately high heat, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until corn is tender, 10 to 15 minutes. Stir in scallion and salt and pepper to taste, then sprinkle with bacon.

Cooks' note:

Corn can be cooked 6 hours ahead and chilled, covered (without scallion or bacon). Reheat in skillet or a 4-quart heavy saucepan over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, then stir in scallion and salt and pepper to taste. Bacon can be kept at room temperature, then reheated on a small baking sheet in a preheated 400°F oven until hot, about 2 minutes.

BLACKBERRY PEACH COBBLER

SERVES 12

Active time: 25 min Start to finish: 1½ hr (includes cooling)

If you're making this entire menu in a single oven, we recommend baking the cobbler ahead of time—that way you can reheat it while clearing the table. Otherwise, you can just whisk together the dry ingredients beforehand, but you'll have to excuse yourself during dinner to assemble and bake the dessert. For more information on preparing a cobbler with drop biscuits, as we do here, see Kitchen Notebook, page 168.

- **2 tablespoons cornstarch**
- **1½ cups plus 1 teaspoon sugar**
- **1¼ lb blackberries (5 cups)**
- **2 lb peaches (6 medium), peeled, pitted, and cut into ½-inch-thick wedges**
- **3 cups all-purpose flour**
- **1 tablespoon baking powder**
- **1 teaspoon salt**
- **2 sticks (1 cup) cold unsalted butter, cut into ½-inch cubes**
- **1 cup plus 3 tablespoons whole milk**

▶Put oven rack in middle position and preheat oven to 425°F. Butter a 13- by 9- by 2-inch glass or ceramic baking dish (3-quart capacity).

▶Whisk together cornstarch and 1½ cups sugar in a large bowl, then add blackberries and peaches and toss to combine well. Transfer to baking dish and bake until just bubbling, 10 to 15 minutes.

▶While fruit bakes, whisk together flour, baking powder, and salt in another large bowl, then blend in butter with your fingertips or a pastry blender until mixture resembles coarse meal. Add milk and stir just until a dough forms.

▶Drop dough onto hot fruit mixture in 12 mounds (about ⅓ cup each), then sprinkle dough with remaining teaspoon sugar. Bake cobbler until top is golden, 25 to 35 minutes. Serve warm.

Cooks' note:

Cobbler can be baked 6 hours ahead and cooled completely, uncovered, then chilled, covered. Before serving, let stand at room temperature 1 hour, then reheat in a preheated 350°F oven until warm, about 20 minutes.

WINE ADVICE is on page 54.
For the CHOCOLATE WHISKEY BUNDT CAKE recipe, see page 170.