

► Carefully tilt turkey so juices from inside large cavity run into pan. Transfer turkey to a platter (reserve juices in roasting pan) and let rest, uncovered, 30 minutes (temperature of thigh meat will rise to 170 to 175°F). Discard string.

MAKE GRAVY WHILE TURKEY RESTS: Strain pan juices through a fine-mesh sieve into 2-qt measure and skim off fat (or use a fat separator), reserving fat. Straddle roasting pan across 2 burners, then add remaining 1½ cups water and deglaze pan by boiling over high heat, stirring and scraping up brown bits, 1 minute. Strain through sieve into measuring cup containing pan juices. Add enough turkey giblet stock to pan juices to bring total to 5 cups.

► Put 5 Tbsp reserved fat (if there is less, add melted butter) in a 4-qt heavy saucepan and whisk in flour. Cook roux over medium heat, whisking, 3 minutes. Add stock mixture in a fast stream, whisking constantly, then add cream, 1 tsp salt, and 1½ tsp pepper. Bring to a boil, whisking, then stir in any turkey juices from platter and simmer 5 minutes. ► Serve turkey with gravy.

TURKEY GIBLET STOCK

MAKES ABOUT 4 CUPS

ACTIVE TIME: 10 MIN START TO FINISH: 1 HR

Browning the neck and giblets, as well as the vegetables, produces a wonderfully rich stock and, subsequently, a much more flavorful gravy.

- 1 Tbsp vegetable oil
- Neck and giblets (excluding liver) from a 12- to 14-lb turkey
- 1 celery rib, coarsely chopped
- 1 carrot, coarsely chopped
- 1 onion (not peeled), quartered
- 1¾ cups chicken stock or reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 4 cups water
- 1 Turkish or ½ California bay leaf
- 1 tsp black peppercorns
- 1 tsp dried thyme, crumbled

► Heat oil in a 12-inch heavy skillet over medium-high heat until it shimmers. Cut neck into 1-inch pieces. Brown neck, giblets, celery, carrot, and onion, turning occasionally, about 6 minutes. Add chicken stock, scraping up brown bits.

► Transfer mixture to a 3-qt saucepan. Add water, bay leaf, peppercorns, and thyme and simmer, uncovered, until liquid is reduced to about 4 cups, 40 to 45 minutes. ► Strain stock through a fine-mesh sieve into a bowl (discard solids). Skim off and discard any fat.

COOKS' NOTE: Stock can be made 3 days ahead and chilled (covered once cool).

SMOKED SAUSAGE JAMBALAYA

SERVES 8 (SIDE DISH)

ACTIVE TIME: 30 MIN START TO FINISH: 1¼ HR

Andouille, the heavily spiced and smoked sausage that is a linchpin of so many Cajun dishes, adds its inimitable heat to an able stuffing stand-in. A swirl of cream gravy (above) can help quell the spice.

- 1 lb pork andouille sausage, sliced crosswise ½ inch thick
- 1 Tbsp vegetable oil
- 2 green bell peppers, finely chopped
- 2 celery ribs, finely chopped
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 3 scallions, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 2½ cups long-grain white rice (1 lb)
- 1 (28-oz) can diced tomatoes
- 3½ cups water

► Cook sausage in oil in a wide 6- to 8-qt heavy pot over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until golden-brown, about 5 minutes. Transfer to a bowl with a slotted spoon.

► Cook peppers, celery, onion, scallions, garlic, and ½ tsp salt in fat remaining in pot, stirring occasionally, until golden-brown, 10 to 12 minutes. Stir in rice, sausage, tomatoes with their juice, water, 1 tsp salt, and ½ tsp pepper and bring to a rolling boil.

► Reduce heat and cook at a bare simmer, covered tightly with lid, until rice is tender and water is absorbed, about 25 minutes. Remove from heat and let stand, covered, 10 minutes. Fluff rice with a fork.

COOKS' NOTE: Jambalaya can be made 1 day ahead and chilled.

Reheat, sprinkled with water, in a microwave or over low heat.

OYSTER CASSEROLE

SERVES 8 (SIDE DISH)

ACTIVE TIME: 15 MIN START TO FINISH: 1 HR

Instead of oyster dressing or scalloped oysters, try an ethereal bread-crumble pudding packed with plump, perfectly cooked bivalves. Their brininess helps to cut the richness of the custard.

- 4 cups coarse fresh bread crumbs (from 8 slices firm white sandwich bread)
- 4 large eggs
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 cup whole milk
- 2 tsp fresh lemon juice
- 1 tsp Worcestershire sauce
- ¼ cup finely chopped flat-leaf parsley
- 3 dozen shucked oysters (preferably medium; halved if large; about 1 cup), drained if necessary and gently patted dry

► Preheat oven to 375°F with rack in middle. Butter a 2-qt shallow baking dish.

► Spread bread crumbs in a 4-sided sheet pan and bake, stirring occasionally, until golden-brown, about 15 minutes. Transfer to a plate to cool slightly.

► Whisk together eggs, cream, milk, lemon juice, Worcestershire sauce, parsley, and ¼ tsp each of salt and pepper in a medium bowl. Gently stir in oysters and bread crumbs.

► Pour into baking dish and bake until custard is set and top is golden, 25 to 30 minutes.

COOKS' NOTE: Bread crumbs can be toasted 3 days ahead and kept in an airtight container at room temperature.

BRAISED TURNIP GREENS WITH TURNIPS AND APPLES

SERVES 8

ACTIVE TIME: 25 MIN START TO FINISH: 1 HR

Spicy, sharp turnip greens, braised gently with a smoked ham hock, are a time-honored accompaniment on southern tables at any time of the year. Add in the turnips, plus lots of apple, and the dish tastes lighter and more delicate. It's also very pretty, with the ivory turnips, golden apple, and pink ham nestled among the dark greens.

- 2 lb turnip greens or other braising greens (see cooks' note, below), tough stems discarded and greens torn into small pieces
- 1 (¾- to 1-lb) ham hock, rinsed
- 3½ cups water
- 3 Gala apples
- 1¼ lb turnips, peeled and cut into ½-inch pieces
- 2 tsp cider vinegar
- 2 tsp sugar
- 2 Tbsp unsalted butter, cut into pieces >