

Delicious and Riffable Holiday Recipes

Hi! I'm Jane. I work as a private chef, caterer, and recipe developer. I want to help people learn to love cooking with approachable, easy to follow recipes that taste comforting and impressive.

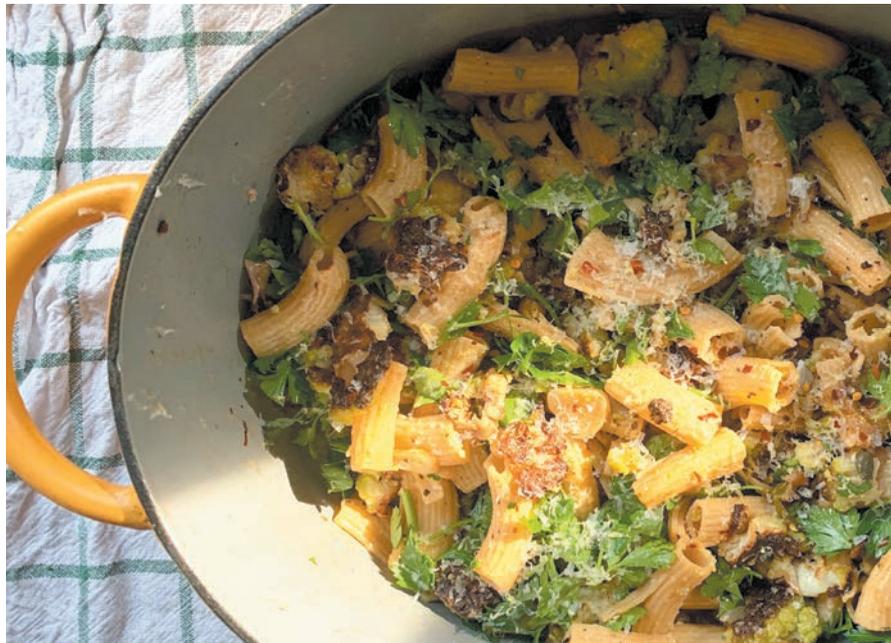
Cooking at home should never feel monotonous or intimidating. All it takes is a few delicious and riffable recipes in your arsenal that you can whip up for yourself, your family or your guests, and you'll be a more confident home cook in no time. This column is a place to start.

This month, we're cooking for the holidays. Holiday cooking can feel intimidating, especially when you're hosting groups larger than you're used to, or bringing a dish as you meet people for the first time. These recipes will cover your appetizer, main dish, and dessert, and they're all scalable to feed a crowd without adding



too much time in the kitchen. They're adaptable, so you can easily sub in ingredients you already have or prefer.

More than anything, what I love about these recipes is how communal they feel, encouraging groups to huddle around a spread with a dip in the middle, pass around a big pot of pasta, and go back to the tray of cookies for seconds (and thirds). Cooking this way embodies



what the holidays are all about for me—spending time with loved ones and coming together to have cozy, nourishing, and low-stress meals.

I love making some variation of this herby yogurt dip just about every time I have people over for dinner. It has all the bright, acidic flavors I crave this time of year when so much of the food is heavy and rich. It holds its own as the shining star of any snack spread, and works as a perfect distraction if you're running a little behind on the rest of your cooking. Don't fret—everyone's too busy eating snacking on the dip to realize.

Rigatoni with delicata squash and kale is my go-to winter pasta. It tasted so warming and nourishing, with all my favorite fall flavors on display. Pasta is my favorite thing to make for a crowd because it's easily modifiable for allergies and dietary restrictions. It's also just usually what people want to eat. Serves 4-6.

Jane Morgan is a personal chef, caterer, recipe developer and writer from Destin currently living in Brooklyn. You can see more of her recipes on Instagram [@janecooksforyou](#). And sign up for her newsletter at [janedeanmorgan.com/newsletter](#).

HERBY YOGURT DIP WITH LEMON AND GARLICKY OLIVE OIL

INGREDIENTS

2 cups full fat Greek yogurt or sour cream	1/3 cup olive oil
1 lemon	Sliced carrots, cucumbers, radishes, crusty bread, pita chips, kettle chips, or anything else you'd like to dip
3 cloves of garlic	1/4 cup distilled white, white wine, or apple cider vinegar
1 shallot or 1/2 of a red onion	
1 cup of chopped herbs (any combination of parsley, dill, chives, mint, cilantro, and basil is perfect here)	

PREPARATION

- 1 Wash and chop the herbs, and thinly slice the garlic and shallot.
- 2 Combine the yogurt with the juice of one lemon, salt, and pepper in a medium bowl. Then, add 3/4 of the chopped herbs and stir well to combine.
- 3 In a small skillet, heat the olive oil over medium. Add the garlic and half of the shallots and saute, stirring occasionally, until golden brown and starting to crisp. Remove from heat and set aside to cool.
- 4 Meanwhile, combine the remaining shallot slices in a small bowl with the vinegar and season with salt and pepper. Set aside until ready to serve. (This is a quick pickle, so they only need to sit for a few minutes if you're in a rush)
- 5 Combine the garlic, shallots, and the olive oil they simmered in with the dip and gently swirl it in. Season with salt and pepper to taste, and top with remaining herbs and quick pickled shallot.

RIGATONI WITH DELICATA SQUASH AND KALE

INGREDIENTS

1 delicata squash (butternut works too)	1 lb rigatoni or other pasta
1 bunch of Tuscan kale	Olive oil
5 cloves of garlic	Parmesan for serving (optional)
1 shallot	Red pepper flakes (optional)

PREPARATION

- 1 Preheat your oven to 425.
- 2 Prep your ingredients! Smash the garlic cloves until they break down, thinly slice the shallot, wash and scrub the squash, and wash the kale. Cut the squash down the middle and spoon out the seeds if you'd like (I leave them in! They add a nutty crunch and a nice texture), then slice it into 1/4-inch pieces. They will look like little Cs or crescent moons or parentheses. Try to keep the thickness consistent so they cook more evenly. Cut the bottoms of your kale stems off and chop or tear your kale into smallish pieces.
- 3 Toss the squash with salt, pepper, red pepper flakes if using, and olive oil on a baking sheet and arrange in a single layer. Cook for about 20 minutes or until tender and golden, then remove from oven and set aside.
- 4 While your squash is roasting, bring a pot of heavily salted water to a boil and cook your pasta until it's just al dente, making sure to reserve at least a cup of pasta water before draining.
- 5 Meanwhile, heat about 2 tablespoons of olive oil in a Dutch oven, large pot, or skillet over medium, and add the shallots and garlic. Sauté, stirring occasionally, until golden brown, then add kale, salt, pepper, and cook until kale wilts and is tender.
- 6 When your pasta and squash are finished cooking, add them to the kale with at least 3/4 cup of pasta water and toss vigorously until the pasta is glossy and evenly coated. Grate as much parmesan as your heart desired into the mix and combine until it's melted and evenly distributed, adding more pasta water as needed.
- 7 Top with some flaky salt, more red pepper flakes if desired, and more parm!