

# FOOD & WINE®



## Take the Cake!

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## Now That's Classic

REMEMBER IN THE NIGHT KITCHEN, Maurice Sendak's book about a child who descends from his bed into a pillowy dreamworld kitchen? Mickey and the book's jolly bakers have found new life in San Francisco on a wall outside Omnivore Books on Food, where curious passersby now stop to gander at the whimsical mural of food flying out of skillets and children mixing a giant bowl of cake batter.

Shop owner Celia Sack commissioned the mural on Cesar Chavez Street last year as a way to thank her neighborhood for supporting the bookstore and adjoining pet store that she and her wife own. Gestures like this are just one of the many things that make them one of the most beloved cookbook shops in the country. Like Sendak's book, Sack's small but mighty store sparks imagination. It's a launchpad for culinary adventure.

Omnivore carries signed copies of blockbuster books by authors like Yotam Ottolenghi alongside rare antiquarian titles like cocktail books from the Roaring '20s, all displayed with a keen eye for color and smart cover design. Sack keeps modern classics on hand, too, including one from another local institution that makes up the fabric of the city: *The Zuni Café Cookbook* by the late San Francisco chef Judy Rodgers. First published in 2002, the book continues to resonate because Rodgers worked so diligently to teach home cooks what she knew and to put it all down on paper in a style that was both lilting and authoritative. "It's a book that people take to bed with them," Sack says. "[Rodgers] tells you what and why you're doing in a poetic and concise way. She explains the science but not in a science-y way."

Food & Wine first published Rodgers' recipe for roast chicken and bread salad 25 years ago, now famous and known to many simply as "Zuni Chicken." I make a version of it at home several times a year, and we recently took the



original recipe for another spin through the F&W test kitchen for our new F&W Classics column to see how it holds up. (Spoiler: It still rocks.) In her story on p. 104, Chandra Ram, F&W's associate editorial director of food, writes about why Rodgers called for pre-salting the chicken at least one day before roasting to deepen the flavor and dry out the skin—one of the most important takeaways from the Zuni cookbook and a groundbreaking lesson in its time—as well as about how iconic recipes like this one evolve over time.

Another recipe that scored rave reviews from our testers is our cover star, the chocolate cake that debuted during the first season of FX on Hulu's breakout hit *The Bear*. Associate Editor Amelia Schwartz interviewed the Chicago chef Sarah Mispagel-Lustbader, who shared the story behind her ultra-moist, chocolate mousse-filled cake that she made for the show, which kicks off season two early this summer.

Enjoy the mix of stories and recipes in this month's issue, folks. Just like at Omnivore, you'll find plenty of new ideas and inspiration, along with admiration and respect for the enduring classics.

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### Books for Cooks

Omnivore Books on Food owner Celia Sack shares a list of the new cookbooks she's looking forward to the most.

#### Win Son Presents a Taiwanese American Cookbook

BY TRIGG BROWN, JOSH KU, AND CATHY ERWAY

"The more Taiwanese cookbooks published, the better."

#### Food of the Italian Islands

BY KATE PARLA

"The depth of her exploration into Italian regional foods is incomparable."

#### Lume

BY KATE REID

"Elegant pastries from the renowned Australian bakery."

#### For the Culture

BY KLANCY MILLER

"A celebration of Black women in food."

#### Ever-Green Vietnamese

BY ANDREA NGUYEN

"Hands down the best Vietnamese cookbook author ever."

#### Sweet Enough

BY ALISON ROMAN

"Finally, a baking book from one of my favorite cookbook writers."

#### DON'T HAVE A COOKBOOK STORE NEARBY?

Ordering online from Omnivore is easy, as it is from the four cookbook stores that Sack recommends as her favorites, starting with the shop that inspired her to open Omnivore.

**Rabelais**  
Biddeford, Maine

**Bold Fork Books**  
Washington, D.C.

**Now Serving**  
Los Angeles

**Kitchen Arts & Letters**  
New York City



## EASY BAKES

## Just Beet It Beets and brown butter are the secret to chef Tanya Holland's decadent red velvet cake.

**CHEF, RESTAURATEUR,** and TV personality Tanya Holland is known for her soulful and seasonal cuisine. In her most recent cookbook, *Tanya Holland's California Soul: Recipes from a Culinary Journey West*, she puts her mark on red velvet cake, incorporating a hearty beet puree into the batter to create a batch of red velvet beet bars with a sweet yet earthy flavor and a dense, blondie-like texture. "I love that they aren't overly sweet," says Holland. "And I like that the beets add a hint of nutritional value." For a special version of the bars for F&W, Holland includes brown butter in the batter as well as in the tangy sour cream frosting to suffuse each slice with a toasty, nutty aroma and flavor, playing up the indulgence factor. "For the home cook, this recipe might get them out of their comfort zone a bit," she says. "But once people make it, they will discover that it's simple and worth the effort." —ANDEE MCKENZIE

## Red Velvet Beet Bars with Brown Butter Sour Cream Frosting

ACTIVE 50 MIN, TOTAL 2 HR 20 MIN  
SERVES 12

In chef Tanya Holland's red velvet bars, a puree of beets adds earthy flavor to the batter while a tangy sour cream frosting heightens the bars' sweetness. Brown butter in the frosting, as well as in the batter, adds toffee-like richness. The beets lend a softer natural hue to the bars that can range from dark pink to warm red; for a deeper ruby color, add a small amount of red gel food coloring to the batter.

### Cooking spray

- 1½ cups unsalted butter (12 oz.)
  - 1 large or 2 small red beets (about 12 oz.), peeled and chopped (1½ to 1½ cups)
- 2 tsp. white vinegar
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup packed light brown sugar
- 1 large egg, at room temperature
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract, divided
- ½ tsp. red gel food coloring (such as AmeriColor) (optional)
- 2¾ cups all-purpose flour (about 11¾ oz.)
- ¼ cup unsweetened cocoa powder
  - 1 tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. fine sea salt
- ¼ cup sour cream
- 2 cups powdered sugar (about 8 oz.), divided

1. Preheat oven to 350°F. Coat a 9- x 13-inch baking pan with cooking spray; line bottom and sides of baking pan with parchment paper, leaving a 2-inch overhang on all sides. Coat parchment with cooking spray.

2. Melt butter in a medium saucepan over medium-low. Once butter is melted, increase heat to medium; cook, whisking constantly, until butter solids smell nutty and turn golden brown, 7 to 12 minutes. Transfer ½ cup brown butter to a small heatproof bowl. Refrigerate, uncovered, until solid, about 1 hour. Transfer remaining brown butter (about ¾ cup plus 1 to 2 tablespoons) to a separate small heatproof bowl; let cool in refrigerator until butter is slightly warm to the touch, about 20 minutes.

3. Process beets and vinegar in a food processor until very finely chopped, about 2 minutes, stopping to scrape down sides of bowl as needed. Measure and reserve ¾ cup processed beet mixture; discard any remaining beet mixture.

4. Process the slightly warm brown butter, reserved beet mixture, granulated sugar, and brown sugar in food processor until well combined, about 15 seconds. Add egg, 1 teaspoon vanilla, and food coloring, if using; pulse until smooth, about 5 pulses, stopping to scrape down sides of bowl as needed.

5. Whisk together flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, and salt in a medium bowl until combined. Add flour mixture to butter mixture in food processor; pulse just

until combined, 10 to 12 pulses, stopping to scrape down sides of bowl as needed. (Mixture will be thick, like cookie dough.) Transfer dough to prepared baking pan, and pat into an even layer, using a sheet of plastic wrap to prevent dough from sticking to your hands.

6. Bake in preheated oven until top is set, edges are just starting to pull away from sides of baking pan, and a wooden pick inserted in center comes out mostly clean, 22 to 26 minutes. Remove from oven; let cool completely in baking pan on a wire rack, 45 minutes to 1 hour.

7. Meanwhile, beat reserved ½ cup chilled brown butter in a medium bowl with a hand mixer on medium-high speed until smooth and fluffy, 2 to 3 minutes, stopping to scrape down sides of bowl as needed. Add sour cream and remaining 1 teaspoon vanilla; beat on medium speed until well combined, about 15 seconds. Add ½ cup powdered sugar; beat on low speed until well incorporated, 30 seconds to 1 minute. Add remaining 1½ cups powdered sugar, and beat on low speed until combined, about 45 seconds. Increase speed to high, and beat until fluffy, about 30 seconds. Spread frosting onto cooled red velvet bars. Using parchment paper overhang as handles, lift bars out of baking pan. Cut into 12 squares, and serve.  
—TANYA HOLLAND, ADAPTED FROM TANYA HOLLAND'S CALIFORNIA SOUL

**MAKE AHEAD** Beet puree and brown butter can be made 1 to 2 days in advance. Store in separate airtight containers in refrigerator.

