



The
**Category 5
Cookbook**
A Memoir

Lessons Learned on St Thomas
during and after
Hurricanes Irma and Maria:
September 2017

Beth Hayes

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by
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 **Hurricane Irma**
Sept 6



 **Hurricane Maria**
Sept 20

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FOR ROY.

*You are my dearest friend &
my deepest love.
You are the best of me.*

About the Author

Beth Hayes has been cooking and baking ever since she escaped from her family's estrogen-fueled kitchen. With mom and both grandmas in residence, she just stayed outdoors.

She has lived in and visited many locales with fabulous food and is always learning about new cuisines and ingredients from the people living in those environments. A vacation to a new country is not complete without a visit to the local farmers' market, grocery store and fishmonger.

As a St Thomas homeowner who stayed during Hurricanes Irma and Maria, as well as their aftermath, she looked around, took a deep breath and chose to start writing.

This is her first book.

Table of Contents

Preface.....	7
Serving Size.....	8
Recipes [odd pages]	9 - 145
Lessons Learned [even pages]	10 - 146
Glossary.....	147
Recipe Index	150
Acknowledgements	154

Preface

In the early days after the storms, meals were whatever was quick & easy with on hand ingredients. When we ran out of those options & had to rely on poorly stocked stores, I made many recipes more than once. Writing down details for successful dishes meant not having to remember which spices & combos worked.

These recipes can be used by folks who camp - RV or car camping - vacationers renting condos or efficiency suites, and anyone who needs to be able to "create something from nothing" using pantry staples & a few fresh ingredients. An Airbnb kitchen may not have much besides salt & pepper. But if you plan a couple of meals, premeasure the spices into baggies & make a quick shopping trip when you arrive at your destination, you'll have more money to spend doing the fun things that make a vacation memorable. And you can splurge on more fabulous restaurant meals when you don't need to dine out every night.

As we went through the days, weeks and months of recovering and rebuilding, I started to record observations as they occurred to me. There was no need to cover what happened during the storms or relate the destruction as this had been described by many others. Besides, I didn't want to look back at the pain, I wanted to look forward to a brighter future for us and everyone in our tropical paradise.

Stay Safe - Assess - Forage

Serving Size

All recipes serve 2, unless otherwise noted,
and may be multiplied.

5-Spice Coconut Chicken

- 1 Chicken Bouillon packet or cube
- 4 Carrots - sliced
- 2 medium Potatoes - cubed
- 1 Shallot - sliced
- 1/2 c Coconut Powder
- 2 tsp 5-Spice Powder - Chinese Style
- 5-oz can Evaporated Milk
- 12.5-oz can Chicken Breast - reserve liquid
- 3/4 c Rice - cooked in 1-1/2 c water

1. Boil 1-1/2 c water; add bouillon & dissolve; add carrots & potatoes, bring to boil; reduce heat to medium, cover & cook 5-15 minutes, til al dente.
2. Add shallot, coconut powder, 5-spice powder, milk & broth from chicken; boil 5 minutes to reduce sauce slightly.
3. Add chicken, stirring gently.
4. When warm, serve over rice.

- *2 burners (or cook & hold rice first)*
- *Rice pan w/lid, Sauce pan (large) w/lid, Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Cooking/serving spoon*



You May Need Small Things

Blue Painter's Tape - to label anything with permanent marker.

Vitamin C - Most canned food + MREs, other than tomatoes, do not provide any; consider boxes of fruit nectar...Great with rum.

Candlesticks - Wooden doors + drawers expand + stick in high humidity; rub wax onto both surfaces a couple of times a day until they shrink back to their normal state.

Water Containers - Buckets, bowls, bottles - for catching drips + storing cistern water.

Power Regulator - to even out generator power fluctuations.

Grill Lighter - Either piezoelectric or butane to light stove + candles.

Battery-Powered Clock.

Camp Stove - Powered by LP or Coleman fuel for all-electric homes.

Playing Cards, Board Games, Books, Magazines.

Solar Shower or 1.5-Gallon Watering Can - Leave in the sun all day for an afternoon shower or add 1 qt boiling water to can if the weather isn't cooperating.

Silicone Sealer Tubes + Caulking Gun for sealing seams + leaks before the blue roof gets installed.

Rice & Beans w/Vienna Sausages

- 1 TBSP Olive Oil
- 1 Shallot - sliced
- 3 Cloves Garlic - sliced
- 1 can Black or Red Beans
- 1 can Vienna Sausage - sliced, reserve liquid
- 1 Bay Leaf
- 1/2 tsp Cumin
- 1/2 tsp Oregano
- 1 c White/Jasmine Rice: add to 2 c cool water; boil; simmer 13 minutes; do not rinse before or stir during cooking

1. Sauté shallot & garlic in oil til soft 1 minute.
2. Add beans: if drained & rinsed, add 1/2 can water & sausage liquid; if not, just add sausage liquid.
3. Add bay leaf, cumin, oregano, bring to boil; reduce heat; simmer covered 5-10 minutes; add sausages.
4. Remove bay leaf, adjust seasonings & serve over rice.

- *2 burners (or cook & hold rice first)*
- *Rice pan w/lid, Sauce pan (medium) w/lid, Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Cooking/serving spoon*



You May Need Large Things

Gas or cordless chainsaw, bow saw, pole saw: if everyone works together, you can clear neighborhood access roads + driveways instead of waiting for help.

Generator; gas cans / propane tanks.

Mini refrigerator - less drain on generator for condiments, beer, leftovers + tomorrow's dinner.

Grill with side burner - if you have an electric stove, you need somewhere to cook.

Solar-powered lighting system: one power cell runs multiple hanging lights wired together.



Linguini with Clam Sauce

1/2 lb Linguini or other Noodles
2 TBSP Olive Oil
3 Cloves Garlic - chopped
1/4 c Dried Onion Flakes (or 1 small - chopped)
1 can Chopped Clams - reserve liquid
White Pepper to taste

Use 2 cans of clams if you have crusty bread to sop up the sauce.

Keep sauce warm while pasta cooks; add clams to sauce when pasta is ready to drain.

1. Sauté fresh onion in olive oil til soft; if using dried, sauté onion & garlic 30 seconds.
 2. Add clam juice from can(s) & pepper; bring to boil; simmer 3 minutes; cover & turn off heat if pasta isn't ready.
 3. Add clams just before draining pasta; heat through.
 4. Add drained pasta to clam pan, toss & serve.
- 2 burners
 - Pasta pot w/lid, Sauté pan (large) w/lid, Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Strainer, Cooking/serving spoon



Food Safety + Kitchen Hygiene

- Duration of power outage determines what to keep, cook or toss.
- Refrigerator:
 - < 4 hrs - Everything's okay
 - 4 - 8 hrs - Serve leftovers immediately or discard
 - > 8 hrs - Keep butter, adult beverages + anything unopened or not requiring refrigeration
- Freezer:
 - Cook, serve or toss everything within 3 - 4 days
- Cistern water (if you don't ordinarily drink or cook with it)
 - Shock system: Add 6 oz bleach/1,000 gal
 - Purify water: Boil 1 minute
- Cooking temperatures
 - Pork 140° + rest 3 minutes *
 - Chicken 165°
 - Lamb 145° *
 - Beef well 170°
 - Beef med 160°
 - Beef rare 140°
 - Ground meat 160°
 - Vea 145° *



*Cook to 160° if no rest time allowed

Pasta with Sun-Dried Tomatoes

1/2 lb Pasta - cooked al dente
1/2 c Sun-Dried Tomatoes (3-oz package)
2 TBSP Olive Oil
1 small Onion or 2 Shallots - sliced
4 Cloves Garlic - chopped
1/2 tsp Oregano
Red Pepper flakes to taste
1 tsp dried Basil or 1/2 c leaves - sliced
1/2 c Red Wine

1. Julienne sun-dried tomatoes:
If oil-pack - use as is.
If very tender dry - use as is.
If less tender - reconstitute in hot water or pasta water.
2. Sauté onion/shallots in oil til soft; add garlic & cook 30 seconds.
3. Add oregano, pepper, dried basil (if using), tomatoes & wine; simmer covered while pasta cooks, stirring often.
4. Drain pasta reserving 1/2 c cooking water; return to pot; toss with tomato mixture & reserved liquid; add fresh basil (if using).
5. Serve with lots of grated Romano cheese.

- 2 burners
- Pasta pot w/lid, Sauce pan (small) w/lid, Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Strainer, Cooking/serving spoon



Sound Track (Ear Worms)

- Star Trek Voyager Theme - The soaring horns occupy the mind when things get scary.
- Hot Rod Lincoln - Commander Cody
- Man-Eater - Hall + Oates - Bought Manwich at the store by mistake + returned it
- "We can share the women; we can share the wine." No idea which Grateful Dead song it's from or what the rest of the lyrics are
- You've Got a Fast Car - Tracy Chapman
- Like a Virgin (Moulin Rouge version with choreography)
- Sylvia's Mother - Dr Hook
- Rosalita - Bruce Springsteen
- I Who Have Nothing - Tom Jones
- Lady Godiva - Peter + Gordon
- Soundtrack from "The Sound of Music" no doubt inspired by my memory of the song "How Do You Solve a Problem Like Maria?" - We're doing our best
- I Will Survive - Gloria Gaynor

Chili with Beans

- 12.5-oz can Chicken Breast (broth reserved) OR
- 3/4 lb Ground Meat (fresh)
- 1 TBSP Olive Oil
- 1 small Onion - chopped
- 4 Cloves Garlic - chopped
- 1 TBSP Chili Powder
- 1 tsp Paprika
- 1 tsp Cumin
- 1 tsp Black Pepper
- 1/2 tsp Oregano
- 1/8 tsp Cayenne to taste
- 1 can Black/Red Beans

If using fresh meat, brown & pour off fat; reserve meat.

1. Sauté onion in olive oil until soft; add garlic & sauté 30 seconds.
 2. Add herbs & spices; stir to coat veggies; add 1/2 c water/broth & meat.
 3. Bring to boil & simmer, covered, 20 minutes.
 4. Add beans; heat & serve over rice or wrapped in tortillas.
- 1 burner
 - Large sauté pan w/lid, Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Cooking/serving spoon



Definitions

Conspicuous Consumption

Your generator makes your house the brightest in the neighborhood making your power-challenged neighbors green with envy.



Immediately

Within 2 weeks

Soon

Before Hell freezes over

Later

Never

Coconut Rice – Side Dish

10.5-oz can Coconut Water with Pulp (sweetened or unsweetened)
2/3 c Jasmine or Basmati White Rice

1. Measure rice into pan; add coconut water.
2. Bring to boil.
3. Lower heat to lowest simmer; cover & cook undisturbed for 8-13 minutes. It's done when you tilt the pan & see no water left.

- 1 burner
- Rice pan w/lid, serving spoon



I've been making rice with this no-stir technique since reading about it in a paperback Chinese food cookbook. It's worked for me for 40 years.

If you're making fried rice, chill cooked rice overnight. Do you have power yet?

Communications

- Radio Station WSTA 1530 AM broadcast the GOVERNOR'S + VICE GOVERNOR'S press conferences and took calls from people seeking/providing information. Addie Ottley was great.
- FEMA disaster assistance.gov 800-621-3362
- VIFEMA 772-2224 (773, 774 + 776)



Couscous with Chick Pea Stew

- 1 TBSP Olive Oil
- 1 Onion - thinly sliced
- 1 tsp Cumin
- 1 tsp Paprika
- 1 tsp Chili Powder
- 1/2 tsp Cardamom
- 1/2 tsp Cinnamon
- 1/2 tsp Turmeric
- 1/4 tsp White Pepper
- 4 Carrots - sliced OR 1 can - drained
- 2-3 c Veggies - Combination of what's available:
 - Summer Squash - 1-inch slices
 - Rutabaga/Turnip - 1/2" cubes
 - Parsnip - 1/2-inch slices
- 1 Chicken Bouillon cube or packet
- 15-oz can Chick Peas - drained
- 2/3 c Couscous (small grain)



1. Heat olive oil in pot; add onion & cook til soft.
2. Add spices & stir to coat onion.
3. Add harder veggies, bouillon & 1-1/2 c water; bring to boil; cook at medium heat, covered, 10 minutes.
4. Add softer veggies & chick peas; cook, covered, 10 more minutes.
5. While softer veggies are cooking, bring 1-1/3 c water to a boil in a small pan; add couscous, stir, cover & remove from heat; water will be absorbed in about 5 minutes; fluff with a fork.
6. Mound couscous in bowls; spoon on veggies & broth.

- 2 burners
- Medium pot w/lid, Sauce pan (small) w/lid, Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Cooking/serving spoon

Governor Implements 4 pm to Noon Curfew Citing Public Safety

Some power poles and lines with solar panels remained in place after Hurricane Irma. Anyone out foraging (or sightseeing?!) had to try different routes + navigate many sections of road that were limited to one lane.

As the people cleared their own streets, local contractors came out to help on the main roads. Everyone was polite + patient. If a section of road was closed ahead, someone coming from that direction shared the info + suggested alternate routes.

In some places a Y-shaped tree branch was "installed" to lift low-hanging wires allowing passage underneath.

Power outage lessons learned:

1. Drive over down lines - don't cut them. (Makes power restoration more difficult)
2. When power is out island-wide, report any live wires/transformers.

Pasta w/Mushroom Garlic Sauce

1/2 lb Rotelli or other Pasta - cooked al dente
3 TBSP Unsalted Butter - divided
5 Cloves Garlic - chopped
1/2 lb Mushrooms - sliced
1 tsp dried Basil
1/8 tsp White Pepper
1 TBSP Olive Oil
Romano Cheese - grated

1. Melt 2 TBSP butter in small fry pan; brown garlic.
2. Add mushrooms, basil & pepper; sauté until mushrooms are tender.
3. Add remaining 1 TBSP butter & olive oil.
4. Add cooked pasta & toss.
5. Serve with grated cheese.

- *2 burners*
- *Pasta pot w/lid, Sauté pan (medium), Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Strainer, Cooking/serving spoon*



Power Will Not Be Fully Restored for Months

Mom + Dad DuVerger went to an incredible effort to get us a dual-fuel generator. It arrived at our mail service - 2 days after the airport reopened - after its vacation in Puerto Rico during Hurricane Maria.

The next day found us at St Thomas Propane getting a 20-lb tank filled. Our spare tank that had come with the house rusted out, so...no spare.

We're using the generator:

- To pressurize the water system
- To recharge devices + tool batteries
- To run power tools and, occasionally, the coffee maker

We're heating shower water in a watering can when the sun's out. The sprinkler head makes it just right for the job.

The refrigerator's freezer compartment is for food storage; wine + simple syrup are in the fridge. Needless to say, it hasn't been plugged in for weeks now.

Scampi Sauce with Pasta

1/2 lb Capellini or other Pasta - cooked al dente
4 TBSP Unsalted Butter
2 TBSP Olive Oil
12 Cloves Garlic - sliced
6-oz can Shrimp - drained & rinsed
1/4 tsp White Pepper
1 tsp dried Chives - garnish

1. Melt butter w/olive oil in skillet; add garlic & sauté - do NOT brown.
2. Add shrimp & white pepper.
3. When shrimp is heated through, add drained pasta to skillet; toss & serve garnished with chives.

Canned shrimp have little taste but add nutrients & a hint of pink.

- 2 burners
- Pasta pot w/lid, Skillet (medium), Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Strainer, Cooking/serving spoon



Someday We'll Look Back on This + It Will All Seem Funny

...but in the meantime:

- Amuse each other + laugh whenever possible.*
- Make fun of the cats - they have no idea what you're saying about them.*
- Look for little things to make each other smile.*
- Share tasks you don't usually do together or take on the responsibility to do something the other person always does.*



Chicken - Carrot Stir Fry

14.5-oz can Chicken Breast - drain & reserve broth
1 TBSP Soy Sauce
1 TBSP Vegetable Oil
1 tsp Sesame Oil
2 large Carrots - julienned
1/2 tsp 5-Spice Powder - Chinese style
1 small Onion - sliced
3 Cloves Garlic - sliced
1 can Straw Mushrooms - drained & rinsed
3/4 c Rice - cooked in 1-1/2 c water

1. Mix reserved chicken broth w/soy sauce.
2. Heat oils over high heat; add carrots & stir fry til tender; sprinkle w/5-spice powder.
3. Add onion, stir fry 3 minutes; add garlic, stir fry 1 minute.
4. Add mushrooms & chicken; stir fry 2 minutes.
5. Add broth/soy sauce mixture; reduce by half.
6. Serve over rice.

- *2 burners (or cook & hold rice first)*
- *Skillet (large) OR wok, Rice pan w/lid, Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Cooking/serving spoon*



The "Go Bag"

If there's any difference between where you are before the storm + during or after it, you need a go bag.

This essential should be filled with both short- + long-term needs:

- Computer backup files
- Pet food
- 2-days' clothing
- Passports, other IDs, charge cards, cash
- Irreplaceable jewelry
- Flashlight + lighter
- Eyeglasses + sunglasses
- Prescription + OTC drugs (analgesic, anti-diarrheal, anti-histamine, After Bite)
- Phone + tablet charging cables
- Extra keys for everything
- Compact carry-all bags

Kielbasa & Veggies on the Grill

2 TBSP Vegetable Oil

12-oz package Hillshire Farm Polska Kielbasa - halved lengthwise, 1/2" slices

8 oz Mushrooms - quartered

3 carrots - 1/2" slices

2 small Zucchini - halved, 1/2" slices

3 medium Potatoes - quartered, 1/4" slices



1. Coat baking pan bottom & sides w/oil.
 2. Add remaining ingredients to baking pan & mix; pour in 1/2 c water.
 3. Cover pan tightly w/foil & place on preheated grill - do NOT bake in oven!
 4. Test potatoes after about 10-15 minutes; if they're cooked through, remove pan from heat & serve. If not done, test again after 5-10 minutes.
- *Barbeque Grill - high heat*
 - *Baking pan (9x13 for 2 servings OR turkey pan for family size meal), Aluminum foil, Kitchen knife, Cutting board, Serving spoon*

It's All Just Stuff...and then It's Gone

- Mom's dining room table: warped, delaminated
- Beth's computer desk: MDF disintegrated
- Roy's 3-drawer chest: warped, waterlogged
- Large 5-drawer chest: warped, waterlogged
- Two office chairs: rusted out, waterlogged
- Ceiling fan: water-damaged
- Two bookcases: MDF disintegrated
- Bath + kitchen towels: mold
- Kitchen cabinet: MDF disintegrated
- Reference books + fiction: mold
- Rug: 10x12 wool, hand-knotted Oriental: waterlogged, mold



Rice, Grains & Other Starches

Other than Couscous & Chinese Noodles: combine starch & water/broth in pan; bring to boil; cover & simmer over lowest heat.

Couscous: Add to boiling water or broth. (If large couscous, simmer 10-12 minutes until tender.) Remove from heat, cover & let rest 5 minutes. Fluff with a fork & serve.

Chinese Noodles: Rice, Wheat or Mung Bean, e.g. Ramen: Boil water; add noodles; remove from heat; cover & allow noodles to absorb water. Drain & serve.

Bulghur 3/4 c : 1-1/2 c water - simmer 10-15 minutes.

Large **Couscous** 1 c : 1-1/3 c water - simmer 10-12 minutes.

Small **Couscous** 2/3 c : 1 c water - do not simmer.

Lentils 1 c : 2 c water - simmer 20 minutes.

Orzo (as rice) 1-1/4 c : 1-3/4 c broth - simmer 10-15 minutes.

Quinoa 3/4 c : 1-1/2 c water - simmer 10-15 minutes.

White **Rice** 3/4 c : 1-1/2 c water - simmer 10 minutes.

Brown **Rice** 1 c : 4 c water - simmer 60 minutes.

Wild & brown **Rice** (1:4) 1 c : 3 c water - simmer 45 minutes.



The Daze After the Storm

Luckily Irma was forecast to be closest to St. Thomas during the day. We put the cats in their carriers, grabbed the go bag + umbrellas, and headed downstairs. We had set up 2 chairs in the back corner next to the cistern on the one side and the wall that backs up to the hillside behind us.

Once it was safe, we unnailed the door and stepped out into a very different landscape: all the leaves had been torn off their branches, many branches had torn off their trees, and a large number of trees had either broken off at the trunk or been laid flat on the ground.



Previously we could see about 20 square feet of our closest neighbors' white roof. Now we could see houses in all directions except directly downhill. With so many trees gone the water view to the west was now wide open.

Angel Hair Pasta & Tomato Crab Sauce

1/2 lb Angel Hair Pasta - cooked al dente (cooks fast!)

1 TBSP Olive Oil

6 Scallions - chopped

2 Cloves Garlic - chopped

2 large Plum Tomatoes - seeded, chopped

6-oz can Crabmeat - reserve liquid

1/4 tsp Red Pepper flakes - to taste

1. Sauté scallions & garlic in oil til soft.
2. Add tomatoes & reserved crab liquid.
3. Bring to boil - stirring constantly; reduce heat & simmer 2 minutes.
4. Add crabmeat & red pepper to taste; heat through & serve over pasta.

- *2 burners*
- *Pasta pot w/lid, Sauce pan (medium), Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Strainer, Cooking/serving spoon*



Electronics + Water Don't Mix

We lost:

- 2 keyboards*
- Dell laptop*
- Breaker box*
- outlets in perimeter walls*
- Hair blow dryer*

We were lucky the list is so short!



Fettuccini w/Broccoli & Pine Nuts

- 1/2 lb Fettuccini - cooked al dente
- 4 TBSP Olive Oil - divided
- 3 Cloves Garlic - sliced
- 1/8-1/2 tsp Red Pepper flakes (to taste)
- 1 lb Broccoli Florets - raw or blanched & drained
- 1/3 c Romano Cheese - grated
- 1/4 c Pine Nuts - toasted or raw

Start cooking garlic & broccoli about 5 minutes before pasta is done.

1. Sauté garlic in 3 TBSP oil til tender; add red pepper & stir 30 seconds.
 2. Add broccoli & stir fry til heated through.
 3. Add pasta to sauté pan w/1 TBSP olive oil; toss to coat w/oil; add cheese; remove from heat when cheese melts.
 4. Mound pasta in bowls & sprinkle w/pine nuts; pass additional cheese.
- *2 burners*
 - *Pasta pot w/lid, Sauté pan (large), Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Strainer, Cooking/serving spoon*



Care Packages

If you have family and friends concerned about your well-being, you'll be asked: What do you need? What can we send you?

Here's my supply list for rounds 1 + 2:

- Skippy peanut butter
- Canned chopped clams, chicken breast
- Dry pack sun-dried tomatoes
- C + D batteries
- Breakfast
- Canned water chestnuts, asparagus, baby corn, 4-bean salad
- Work gloves
- Silicone sealer
- Tarps
- Microfiber cloths

Other things I'd ask for now that stores are selling out quickly:

- Dinty Moore Beef Stew
- Fruit Pop-Tarts



Pasta w/Mushroom Cream Sauce

1/2 lb Pasta - cooked al dente
2 TBSP Unsalted Butter
2 TBSP Olive Oil
1/2 lb Mushrooms - sliced
4 Cloves Garlic - chopped
1/2 tsp dried Rosemary
1/8 tsp White Pepper - to taste
1/2 c Evaporated Milk OR Whipping Cream
1/2 c Romano Cheese

1. Heat butter w/olive oil in sauté pan - medium-low heat; add mushrooms, garlic, rosemary & white pepper; cook 5 minutes.
 2. Add milk or cream & simmer until slightly thickened, about 3-5 minutes.
 3. Add pasta & cheese to sauce, stirring until cheese melts.
- *2 burners*
 - *Pasta pot w/lid, Sauté pan (large), Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Strainer, Cooking/serving spoon*



Notes on Spicy + Savory Ingredients

Shallots: If available, they're a good onion substitute if you do not have refrigeration.

Onion: Adds taste plus substance to some recipes, e.g. chili + couscous stew. Substitute dried onion for fresh @ 1 handful = 1 small onion.

Garlic: Use fresh whenever possible. If garlic powder has caked, scrape some out + add to liquid ingredients.

Scallion: Substitute with onion if not available; add dried chives if a green ingredient is desired.

Crushed red pepper flakes: Not as spicy as cayenne, but still hot.

White pepper: I use this when making a white meat or cream sauce recipe.

Fresh ground pepper: Add to anything that isn't dessert.

Salt: I rarely add salt to my recipes, except for adding salt to boil the pasta water. Feel free to use as much or as little as you usually do when making the recipes in this book.

Pasta w/Tomato Sauce

1/2 lb Pasta - cooked al dente
14.5-oz can Whole Plum Tomatoes
2 TBSP Olive Oil
3 Cloves Garlic - sliced
1 Shallot - chopped
3 fresh Basil leaves - chopped - OR 1 tsp dried
1 tsp dried Oregano
1/8 tsp Black Pepper - to taste
Romano Cheese - grated

1. Open can of tomatoes & use a sharp knife to cut them into smaller chunks while still in the can.
2. Heat oil & cook garlic & shallot over medium heat til tender.
3. Add basil, oregano & pepper, stirring to coat veggies; add tomatoes & bring to boil; reduce heat & simmer until sauce is desired thickness, breaking up tomatoes w/back of spoon for a smoother sauce - if desired.
4. Serve over pasta & sprinkle w/cheese.

- *2 burners*
- *Pasta pot w/lid, Sauce pan (medium), Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Strainer, Cooking/serving spoon*



ABOUT PASTA

- Buy Italian dried pasta. Even if it's made elsewhere with semolina flour, it's not the same!
- Have lots of shapes on hand. Recipes that call for pasta can be made with any shape that will carry the sauce from the plate to your mouth.
- Noodles include angel hair, linguini, fettuccini, spaghetti; they're mostly interchangeable.
- Store dried pasta in tightly sealed plastic containers with a bay leaf or two.

Cooking 1/2 lb pasta:

1. Add water to pot to make up 3/4 of vessel's capacity, but at least 2 quarts.
2. Add 1/2 to 2 tsp salt.
3. Allow to boil 1 minute if you're using cistern water.
4. Add all pasta at once + stir until water boils again.
5. Set timer + cook until al dente.

Always check the package directions. If a 7- to 9-minute cooking time is given, start tasting for doneness at 7 minutes. Reset timer for a minute or two if it's not done yet. Repeat as necessary.

More Than Dinty Moore® Beef Stew

2 medium Potatoes - quartered & sliced

2 Carrots - sliced

2 - 16- or 20-oz cans Dinty Moore Stew

1/2 tsp dried Thyme

1. Put potatoes & carrots in pan & cover w/water; bring to boil; cover & cook over medium-low heat until desired tenderness is reached.
2. Add stew & thyme to pan; cook over medium-low heat until warmed through; adjust seasoning & serve.

- *1 burner*
- *Sauce pan (medium) w/lid, Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Cooking/serving spoon*



Storage + the Hurricane Zone Home

- Cardboard boxes may not hold up to the high humidity; go with plastic if possible.
- Louvered doors on closets allow better air flow.
- Do not pack books or fabrics too tightly - Let them breathe.
- Odo-Ban, Damp Rid + Febreze are your new best friends.
- Store extra sheets, towels + other fabrics in Ziploc/Space Bags that create a "vacuum seal" - Keep out of kitties' reach.
- Create daily or weekly backups of computer files - see "go bag."
- Use/Save/Reuse Styrofoam peanuts for long-term storage; environmentally-friendly corn starch peanuts shrink + harden into pellets when box is exposed to moisture.

Lentils & Carrots

1/4 c Olive Oil
1 medium Onion - thinly sliced
4 Cloves Garlic - chopped
1 tsp ground Coriander
1/4 tsp Red Pepper flakes
1/2 c Green or DuPuy Lentils
6 large Carrots - sliced
4 Sun-Dried Tomatoes - diced OR 2 TBSP Tomato Paste
2 tsp Sugar
1-1/4 c Bouillon

1. Sauté onion in oil til soft; add garlic & spices; cook 2 minutes.
2. Add everything else; bring to boil & simmer, covered, until liquid is absorbed - about 30 minutes.

- 1 burner
- Sauce pan (large) w/lid, Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Cooking/serving spoon



Humor + Courtesy Will See You through

You're in this together, so be kind and bring some levity to your days:

- "These MREs are much better than last night's. Did you do something different?"
- "Did you catch the submarine races last night off the Brass Islands?"
- "Well, we DID want to redecorate."
- "Our bedroom canopy is from the FEMA Fall disaster collection."
- "I just spent 2 hours trying to download photos from my camera to the battery backup system instead of the computer!"

These phrases are unnecessary:

- "I don't know why you..."
- "Why didn't you...?"

You cannot say these words too much:

- "Please" + "Thank You"
- "Excuse Me" + "I'm Sorry"
- "I Love You"
- "I'm Proud of You"
- "You did a great job!"

MRE: Meal Ready to Eat as provided by FEMA / distributed by National Guard

Peanut Butter Chicken

- 1 c large Couscous - cooked in 1-1/3 c water
(Add couscous to boiling water; simmer 10-12 minutes, til tender, remove from heat, cover & rest 5 minutes)
- 12.5-oz can Chicken Breast OR 1-1/2 - 2 lb Chicken Parts (fresh)
- 3 TBSP Olive OR Peanut Oil
- 1 small Onion - thinly sliced
- 1/4 c Chunky Peanut Butter
- 1/8 tsp Cayenne OR Red Pepper flakes to taste
- 10.5-oz can Coconut Water
- 1/4 c Peanuts - chopped

Brown fresh chicken in oil over medium-high heat, turning occasionally, til tender (165°); remove to platter reserving oil & drippings.

1. If using canned chicken - or after fresh chicken is tender - sauté onion in oil til soft.
 2. Stir in peanut butter & pepper; gradually mix in coconut water.
 3. When smooth, add canned chicken or return fresh-cooked chicken to pan; simmer til sauce is slightly thickened.
 4. Serve over large couscous & sprinkle with chopped peanuts.
- 2 burners (or cook & hold couscous first)
 - Sauté pan (large), Rice pan (medium) w/lid, Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Cooking/serving spoon



The New Normal

Some habits + routines change regardless of how much you were affected by the storms.

- Refill water jugs; either by hand or from the taps when the generator is running.
- Refill green watering can + put it in the sun to warm for your shower.
- Arrange all rechargeable devices in one area for generator recharging.
- Make dinner early, before the sun sets, around 6PM.
- Go to bed early because it gets dark early.
- Plan your most important phone calls for times when you're in town so you don't lose the signal.



Joe's Grecian Eggplant w/Chicken

1 c large Couscous - cooked in 1-1/3 c broth/water

9.9-oz can Trader Joe Grecian Eggplant with Onion & Tomato

2 - 5-oz cans Chicken Breast

1. Drain broth from 1 can chicken into measuring cup; add water to equal 1-1/3 c; bring to boil; add couscous; simmer 10-12 minutes, til tender; remove from heat, cover & rest 5 minutes.
2. Heat eggplant.
3. Heat chicken w/broth remaining from 2nd can.
4. Mound couscous on plates; serve chicken & eggplant separately.

- 3 burners
- Rice pan (medium) w/lid,
Sauté pans (2 small),
Serving spoons



A Word or Two about Clams

Whether they're littlenecks, steamers, cherrystones or quahogs, just dug or freshly bought is the way to go.

If fresh clams aren't available, canned will work in many recipes. Here's the scoop on what to use:

- **Minceed:** Smallest pieces; good for smooth dips + to add more clam juice and/or flavor to recipes made with chopped or whole clams, shrimp or other seafood.
- **Chopped:** Some large clam chunks recognizable as clam pieces; good for clam sauce + chunky dips.
- **Whole baby clams:** The best choice for clam sauce; may be packed in water; if so, add minceed clams for their juice.

Other canned shellfish:

- You get what you pay for; whether they're whole, pieces or soup, buy the best you can find or afford.
- Canned tiny shrimp have little taste but work in dips or to just add a hint of pink to white sauce.

Beef / Peanut Butter Stir Fry

1/3 c Peanut Butter

2 TBSP Soy Sauce

1 tsp Sugar

1/4 - 2 tsp Red Pepper flakes - to taste

1/2 TBSP Fresh Ginger - peeled & chopped

1 tsp Sesame Oil

2 Cloves Garlic - chopped

1 TBSP Rice Vinegar

2 TBSP Vegetable Oil

3/4 lb Flank Steak - thinly sliced

4 c Veggies: (Mix of Sugar Snap or Snow Peas, Broccoli, Carrots, Bell Peppers, Mushrooms, Onion, Cauliflower, etc.)

1. Combine 1st - 8 ingredients in a small bowl; add water - 2 TBSP at a time - & whisk til sauce is the thickness of heavy cream.
2. Stir fry beef in vegetable oil until cooked through, about 3 - 4 minutes; add veggies & stir fry until al dente.
3. Stir in sauce & cook, stirring, about 1 - 2 minutes; add water if sauce is too thick to coat veggies.
4. Serve over rice or Chinese noodles.

- *1 burner*
- *Sauté pan (large) OR wok, Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Small bowl, Whisk, Cooking/serving spoon*



Sure, We've Got a Generator, But...

- All the perishable food in the fridge + freezer was thrown out before the generator arrived. No sense wasting fuel to run the fridge to keep some salad dressing + mustard chilled. However, we'd consider it to have ice cream.

- Heat and cold-generating appliances use the most power.

Does anyone remember Green Acres?

So, who needs to keep the hot water tank running all the time? We can boil



water to wash dishes and keep the watering can full + in the sun for warm showers.

- It's a Pavlovian response: If the generator is on, it's time to fill our containers with cistern water.

Braised, Apple-Stuffed Pork Chops

- 1 Granny Smith Apple - peeled, cored
- 1/2 tsp dried Sage OR 2 fresh leaves - chopped
- 1/2 tsp White Pepper
- 2 large Butterflied, Boneless Pork Chops (1 - 1-1/4 lb)
- 2 TBSP Olive Oil
- 1 Chicken Bouillon packet OR cube
- 1 tsp dried Celery Flakes OR 1 Celery Rib - chopped
- 1/2 tsp Filé Powder (dried Sassafras)
- 1/2 tsp Savory
- 1/4 tsp Allspice

1. Cut apple into 4 rounds; sprinkle insides of each chop w/sage & pepper; stuff 2 apple rounds into each chop; secure w/toothpicks.
2. Brown chops well on both sides; remove from heat & tent w/foil to keep warm; reserve drippings.
3. Add 1-1/2 c water & bring to boil; add bouillon, stirring to dissolve; add celery, spices & herbs; return chops to pan; simmer 5 - 10 minutes.
4. Test pork at thickest point - it's done at 140°; let rest 3 minutes.
5. Offer broth as a thin gravy or thicken w/corn starch or flour.
6. Serve w/garlic mashed potatoes.

- *1 burner*
- *Sauté pan (large), Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Spatula/tongs, Cooking/serving spoon*



The Dog Is Dead



NOTE: Trigger Alert! This story may disturb some readers, but it did happen + needs to be said.

Our neighbors' dog was very lonely. He was chained up all day + night, all the time. He howled, cried, barked for hours at a time. No one cleaned up the yard, so it smelled awful. Yes, they have children who play in the yard.

After Hurricane Maria some workers were hired to make repairs on the damaged house. The dog barked at them non-stop while they were working. They were there a few days.

Midday there were 2 shots. A woman exclaimed, "Oh, my god! Oh, my god!"

A man threatened to call the police; they arrived to investigate. The workers are no longer here, and the house is now quiet.

Linguini w/Whole Clams

1/2 lb Linguini - cooked al dente
1 TBSP Olive Oil
2 Shallots - chopped
4 Cloves Garlic - chopped
10-oz can Whole Baby Clams - reserve liquid
6.5-oz can Minced Clams - reserve liquid
1/8 tsp White Pepper - to taste

1. Sauté shallots in oil until tender; add garlic & cook 30 seconds; remove from heat.
2. Add clam liquid from both cans; add pepper; return to heat & bring to boil; simmer, covered, 3 minutes. Turn off heat if pasta isn't done.
3. Add clams to sauce & drain pasta.
4. Add drained pasta to clam sauce pan; toss & serve.

This recipe yields plenty of sauce for dunking crusty bread.

- 2 burners
- Pasta pot w/lid, Sauté pan (large) w/lid, Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Strainer, Cooking/serving spoon



Communications are First to Fail and Last to Recover

- After the storms one radio station stayed on air to take listener calls + disseminate both real + fake news. There was no true schedule... they did their best.
- Filing for disaster assistance is a disaster! With internet access unreliable for many, the online filing process had not been optimized for either loading speed or ease of use. Pretty graphics are not required at all.
- Send a fax! Really!? Land lines are down. How many citizens own or have access to a fax machine?
- AT+T is struggling + Sprint is AWOL.
- Word of mouth reports are like the Tallahassee Democrat...we hear about local events after they've happened. Our neighbors' tenant works for the VI Daily News, so we heard some news while it was still relevant.

Salmon "Timbales"

- 3 TBSP Soy Sauce
- 1 TBSP Sugar
- 3 TBSP Dry Sherry OR Tomato Wine OR Mirin
- 1 tsp White Pepper
- 2 TBSP Unsalted Butter
- 2 - 5-oz cans Salmon

1. Combine soy sauce, sugar, wine & white pepper; set aside.
2. Melt butter in skillet over medium-high heat; when it sizzles, invert salmon cans carefully to maintain round shape as you transfer their contents to pan.
3. Pour wine sauce over salmon & cover; lower heat & simmer 5 minutes.
4. When salmon is heated through, uncover & baste w/sauce for about 1 minute.
5. Serve w/remaining wine sauce over rice, couscous or bulghur, or with sweet potatoes & carrots for an antioxidant-rich "orange meal."

- *1 burner*
- *Skillet (medium) w/lid, Small bowl, Cooking spoon, Serving spatula*



What DO YOU Think ABOUT When There's NO Music? A Quiz

I have a running stream of product ads, jingles + songs going through my mind as memories are triggered. Can you identify the products associated with each of these characters, mentioned by name, in their respective ad?

- a. Mikey
- b. Wilhelmina
- c. Mr. Whipple
- d. Ed McMahon
- e. Edie Adams
- f. Morris
- g. Charlie
- h. Crazy Rabbit
- i. OJ Simpson
- j. Marlo Thomas
- k. Michael Jordan
- l. Dave Thomas

Answers: a. Life Cereal; b. H.O. Farina; c. Charmin Bath Tissue; d. Publisher's Clearing House; e. Muriel Cigars; f. Nine Lives Cat Food; g. Star-Kist Tuna; h. Trix Cereal; i. Hertz Car Rental; j. St. Jude's Hospital; k. Hanes Underwear; l. Wendy's Restaurants

5-Spice Chicken w/Onion Rice

- 1 TBSP Peanut or Vegetable Oil
- 1 medium Onion - chopped
- 3/4 c Rice - uncooked
- 1 tsp 5-Spice Powder - Chinese style
- 1/2 tsp Turmeric
- 12.5-oz can Chicken Breast - broth reserved
- 1 Chicken Bouillon packet OR cube
- 8-oz can Water Chestnuts - sliced

1. Stir fry onion in oil til tender; stir in rice, 5-spice powder & turmeric.
2. Add water to reserved broth to make 2 cups liquid; add to pan w/bouillon & water chestnuts; bring to boil.
3. Add chicken to pan; reduce heat & simmer, covered, 15-30 minutes or til rice is tender & liquid has been absorbed.

Turmeric can stain clothing & cooking utensils.

- 1 burner
- Skillet (large) w/lid, Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Cooking/serving spoon



MREs? They're Not Awful

The National Guard was offering assistance + we had no drinking water. We got in line at the fire station with no preconceived ideas and answered "family of two" to their question. A box was filled, and we brought it home along with a half-case of water.

MREs* are self-contained, self-heating cardboard packs. Open the box; remove contents; set aside cutlery, condiments + dessert.

1. Put heating unit in plastic pouch.
2. Add a little water to marked lines.
3. Add food pack.
4. Put plastic pouch back in the cardboard pack to heat.
5. Remove pouch, discard water + heating element, squeeze food pack to mix contents, open + eat.

American companies prepare, assemble + distribute these packages to the military + to disaster aid agencies. They provide calories to people in places where there is no refrigeration + no means to cook hot meals. Mac + Beef or Beef Chili, PopTarts, crackers + jelly; it's something in places where there's nothing else.

*MRE = Meal Ready to Eat

Egg in a Hole - Single Serving

1 slice dense Bread

1 Egg

1 TBSP Butter - softened

1. If bread is square, cut out 2-1/2" - 3" circle in the middle w/biscuit cutter or rim of a glass. If bread is circular or oval, match cut out hole to shape of bread leaving 1-inch border.
2. Lightly butter both sides of bread.
3. Melt remaining butter over medium-low heat.
4. Place bread in skillet & break egg into hole.
5. Cook about 1-2 minutes & sprinkle w/salt & pepper; flip w/spatula.
6. Cook until yolk is desired firmness.

· 1 burner

· *Skillet (small), Biscuit cutter OR Kitchen knife, Spatula*



Vienna Sausages + the Poet

The most readily available source of animal protein just before + immediately after the storms was Vienna Sausage. The stores offered it by the case at the ends of aisles. It was in handouts from the National Guard, church groups + groups of citizens who set up roadside tents offering: "Water, Food + Hugs."

Has anyone ever compiled a Vienna Sausage cookbook? I'll pass.

Every time I make my Rice + Beans + Vienna Sausage recipe, I think of my friend, Donna, the Poet. She wrote about being in the local "scratch + dent" store in a part of north Florida that isn't technically L.A. (Lower Alabama). The predominant accents are Dixie + Yankee.

So... A customer asks the cashier where she can find the Vienna Sausages, but her accent leaves the cashier confused. Donna, a born New Yorker, translates + another culinary disaster is either averted or enabled; passed on your point of view.

Sausages w/Peppers & Onions

2 TBSP Olive Oil
1 large Spanish Onion - thinly sliced
1 large Bell Pepper - thinly sliced
1 tsp Black Pepper
1 tsp Chili Powder
1/4 c Red Wine
4 Italian Sausages Hot, Sweet or Combo
Sub Rolls or Italian Bread

1. Sauté onion & pepper slowly in oil, stirring until onion is deep yellow; add wine & spices; simmer until liquid is reduced by half.
2. Perforate sausage casings with a fork & either boil or grill til done.
3. Serve as sub sandwiches or over bread, pasta or rice.

- *1 burner + BBQ grill OR 2 burners*
- *Sauté pan (large), Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Tongs, Cooking/serving spoon*



In Praise of Wood Furniture

When Hurricanes Irma + Maria took the galvanized metal off our 3 roofs, the rain came inside. Water puddled on the tops of furniture. If something was made of plywood, it delaminated. Particle board absorbed water like a sponge + expanded with its pieces pulling away from the fasteners.

Not so our solid wood furniture, both antique + modern. After the blue roof installation, a coat of oil soap prestored the antiques. The modern, handcrafted pieces were protected by many coats of polyurethane + just needed a wipe with a mild cleaner. Even the bent-wood Ikea Poang chairs survived the deluge.

Angela's Beef Stroganoff

1/4 c Unsalted Butter
1 lb Beef Round Steak - cut in cubes
1 packet Low Sodium Chicken Bouillon
1 tsp Black Pepper
7-oz can Mushrooms
1 - 2 TBSP Flour - optional
8-oz container Sour Cream
1/4 lb Farfalle Pasta or Egg Noodles - cooked al dente

1. Melt butter in large sauté pan over medium heat; add beef & sauté, stirring frequently, until no longer red; sprinkle w/bouillon & pepper.
2. Add mushrooms; cover & simmer 15 minutes while pasta cooks.
3. If the meat is swimming in liquid, add 1 - 2 TBSP flour & cook 5 minutes.
4. Remove from heat & stir in sour cream.
5. Serve over pasta/noodles.

- 2 burners
- Pasta pot w/lid, Sauté pan (large) w/lid, Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Strainer, Cooking/serving spoon



Cold Showers + Warm Beer

Running the generator to heat the hot water tank wasn't as important as running the clothes washer, water pump + our electronic device chargers. A one-and-a-half-gallon watering can with sprinkler head was adequate for short showers + hair washing. Leaving the green watering can out in the sun all day ensured a nice warm shower. For early showers, and less than sunny days, a quart of boiling water added to the can produced the same effect.

But without using the generator to run the fridge, adult beverages were generally served at a tropical room temperature. Warm beer wasn't bad - sort of British-style - but buying it locally just before drinking it, once their coolers were turned back on, was the best.



With no ice available, we got our doses of vitamins C + R - fruit nectar + rum - at ambient temperature during Happy Hour once the workday was done.

Rigatoni w/Salami & Eggs

1/2 lb Rigatoni or other Pasta - cooked al dente
2 TBSP Olive Oil
3 Cloves Garlic - crushed
14.5-oz can Peeled Plum Tomatoes*
1/2 tsp dried Basil OR 4 Fresh Leaves - ribbon cut
1/4 tsp Oregano
Pinch Red Pepper Flakes
3-oz package Genoa Salami
2 - 4 Eggs
Romano Cheese - grated

1. Sauté garlic in oil til mushy; add tomatoes, breaking them with spoon; add seasonings & salami; cook over medium heat until pasta is almost ready.
2. Make one well in the tomatoes to hold each egg & break eggs directly into sauce; cover & cook 4-5 minutes to desired doneness.
3. Arrange pasta in serving dishes; add half of salami & sauce to each; top with eggs. Serve w/grated cheese.

Italian brands of Pomodoro Pelati are best for this & other Italian recipes.

- 2 burners
- Pasta pot w/lid, Sauté pan (large) w/lid, Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Strainer, Cooking/serving spoon



Refrigerate After Opening

Some products normally displayed in the markets' refrigerated sections don't need to be there. People are just used to finding them there. Look for the words "Refrigerate after opening" on these types of items.

These products are "shelf-stable" + can be held in the pantry until opened:

- Cured meats: pepperoni, salami
- Processed cheese: Velveeta
- Oil-packed foods: Sun-dried tomatoes, garlic, olives (anything that doesn't have lemon or citric acid)
- Canned milk: evaporated, condensed
- Boxed or bottled juice or nectar, and box milk
- Maple syrup: The real stuff
- Condiments + sauces: BBQ + pasta sauce, ketchup + mustard (soy sauce need not be refrigerated)
- Mayonnaise: One item that should be stored in the refrigerator door - it's fine stored after opening up to 70° (if a clean utensil is always used or it's in a squeeze container)

Thanksgiving Dinner: Cornish Hens, Acorn Squash, Cranberry Sauce, Pecan Pie & Prosecco

- 2 Cornish Hens (2 - 2.5 lb each) - fresh or defrosted
- 1 small Onion - cut into chunks
- 2 TBSP Olive Oil - divided
- 1 TBSP Poultry Seasoning
- 1 Acorn Squash - halved & deseeded
- 2 tsp Butter
- 2 TBSP Maple Syrup, Molasses or Corn Syrup
- 1 can Whole Berry Cranberry Sauce
- 1 bottle Prosecco
- 1 Pecan Pie

1. Wash & dry hens; stuff cavities w/onion; coat outsides w/olive oil - reserve 1/2 TBSP for squash; sprinkle seasoning on outside of hens; bake @ 425° 1 hour or per package directions.
2. Spread remaining 1/2 TBSP olive oil on cut edges of squash; place cut side down on cookie sheet; bake @ 425° 1/2 hour; flip squash & prick interior with fork; add butter & desired sweetener; bake @ 425° 1/2 hour.
3. Serve hens & squash with Whole Berry Cranberry Sauce after a heartfelt Thanksgiving toast w/Prosecco. Save some wine to serve w/Pecan Pie for dessert.

- *Oven preheated to 425°*
- *Baking pan (small), Cookie sheet, Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Cooking/serving spoons*



Taking Care of Wildlife

Storms also adversely affect the other



creatures with whom we share our island home.

With no natural food sources, we need to

provide what we can for them.

Here are some suggestions.

- Commercial bird food in feeders for the seed-eaters.
- Simple syrup mixture in glass or plastic hummingbird or bananaquit feeders.
- Bananas + fruit scraps for fruit + berry eaters, like thrashers, during the day + bananas for fruit bats at night. Bats eat lots of mosquitos, so remember to feed them too.
- Cracked corn broadcast on the ground for doves + free-range chickens. Set up a nesting area + you could get free eggs.
- Water with BT dunks for everyone including dragonflies who also eat mosquitos. BT is harmless to all EXCEPT pests, such as mosquitos, blackflies + some midges.

Simple Syrup for Mojitos, Hummingbirds & Bananaquits (makes 3 cups)

1 part Sugar, e.g. 2 cups
1 part Water, e.g. 2 cups

Combine in sauce pan & bring to boil; boil for 5 minutes;
refrigerate once syrup cools.

Mojito

2 oz Rum
1-1/2 oz Syrup
12 Mint Leaves
1 oz Lime Juice
Lime Seltzer

Crush mint w/simple syrup & lime juice; add ice & rum; fill glass
w/lime seltzer.

For Hummers & Sugarbirds

1 part Simple Syrup, e.g. 1/4 c
3 parts Water, e.g. 3/4 c

Combine & pour into hummer feeder w/red accents. The red will
get their attention without adding any artificial colour.

- *1 burner*
- *Sauce pan*
- *Mojitos: Cutting board, Kitchen knife*



One-Eyed Kate + Her Free-Range Buddies

Last year two hens with multiple fluffy, white chicks came to our yard. We gave them cracked corn + the chicks grew through their "bald eagle" phase to become adults: 9 hens + 4 roosters. They're our permanent, free-range flock.

After Irma Maria they all returned with an ever-changing cast of chickens who had lost their homes. With no vegetation left, they were all very hungry + appreciated the daily meals.

Then there was Kate - one eye missing, a scar across her head, she'd had a rough youth. She was alone + very hungry. She'd follow us around + was underfoot at meal times. The others could be mean to her, so she got fed her own little pile of food on the deck. She learned to use one foot to "mark the spot" so she wouldn't lose track on her blind side. Gradually she was fully accepted by the original eagles + is a fulltime "resident."

She's also the only one with a name.

Red Beans & Rice (3 - 4 servings)

- 1/2 lb dry Red Kidney Beans
- 5 c Water
- 3 Chicken Bouillon cubes
- 2 TBSP Olive Oil
- 1 medium Onion - chopped
- 3 Cloves Garlic - chopped
- 1 TBSP Celery - chopped OR 1 tsp Seeds
- 2 Chorizo Sausages (0.5 lb, fully-cooked) - sliced lengthwise then in 1/4" slices
- 1 large Bay Leaf
- 1 TBSP Cumin
- 1/2 TBSP Thyme
- 1/2 TBSP Black Pepper
- 1/2 TBSP Paprika
- 1/2 TBSP Oregano
- 1/2 tsp Red Pepper Flakes to taste
- 3/4 - 1-1/2 c Rice - cooked



1. Rinse & sort beans (remove any stones or shriveled beans).
2. In medium pot, boil water & add bouillon; add beans; boil 10 minutes.
3. In olive oil, sauté onion til soft; add garlic & celery; sauté 1 minute.
4. Add meat, veggies, herbs & spices to beans; add water to cover; bring to boil; reduce heat, cover & simmer, stirring frequently, til tender, 2 - 3 hours. Add water as needed.
5. Crush some beans against side of pot for creamier consistency.
6. Serve over white or brown rice.

If you've always pre-soaked and/or pre-boiled beans, feel free. Research has shown it's not necessary.

- 2 burners (cook rice when beans are ready to serve)
- Medium pot w/lid, Skillet (small), Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Cooking/serving spoon

No Shirt, No Shoes, No Service

Tank tops + bare feet are the usual warm weather, at home choice. But it's hard to adopt a laid-back attitude when day-after-day the iPhone says, "No Service."

The initial story on the radio was that the AT+T generator at their tower had been stolen. It was quickly returned. Then the service was so bad on the north side that our neighbor's deck was the only place in the neighborhood with a signal. There were other random spots around the island where you'd see a group of people gathered to use their phones.

My husband and I have different iPhone models + sometimes he has service, sometimes I do; or, most frequently, neither of us do. It's rare that we both have phone + internet at the same time. Let's just say we have more conversations with each other + also talk to strangers whenever possible to relieve the feeling of isolation.

Creole Seasoning (makes 1/2 cup)

- 1/4 c Sweet Paprika
- 2 TBSP Kosher Salt
- 1/2 TBSP Black Pepper
- 1/2 tsp Onion Powder
- 1/2 tsp Garlic Powder
- 1/2 tsp Thyme
- 1/2 tsp Oregano
- 1/2 tsp Cayenne (or less to taste)

Thoroughly combine & store in an airtight container in a cool, dark place for up to 3 months.

Cajun Seasoning (makes 1/3 cup)

- 1-1/4 TBSP Sweet Paprika
- 1 TBSP Kosher Salt
- 1 TBSP Garlic Powder
- 1/2 TBSP Black Pepper
- 1/2 TBSP Onion Powder
- 1/2 TBSP Oregano
- 1/2 TBSP Thyme
- 1/2 TBSP Cayenne (or less to taste)

Thoroughly combine & store in an airtight container in a cool, dark place for up to 3 months.



Cash Only, Please

One of the most frustrating things about the loss of power is the loss of internet service. With no online communication, there's no ATM service. No internet means no debit or credit cards can be processed. Any stores that don't have satellite communications accept cash only - no checks, no plastic.

But with the ATMs down, how is one to get the green stuff?

Be prepared! If a storm is coming fill up your wallet + the gas tank. Make sure you have extra propane. Buy tarps. If you don't need them - trade them with someone who does.

The in-bank ATMs were the first to come online. A few of the major banks' offsite units worked but restocking them with currency wasn't a priority. Know which national + local stores will allow cash back on a debit card sale + visit them often.

Lamb Kebabs

8-oz container Plain Yogurt

2 TBSP Lime Juice

1 TBSP Rosemary

3/4 lb Top Round Lamb - cut into 1-1/2" chunks

1 Red Onion - large chunks

1. Combine 1st 3 ingredients in glass bowl; add lamb; put mixture in large, sealable plastic bag, squeeze out air & refrigerate 8 - 48 hours.
2. Loosely thread lamb, alternating w/onion, onto skewers; discard marinade.
3. Grill skewers 10 - 15 minutes, turning 2 - 3 times, til lamb is medium rare: 145°, rest 3 minutes, or 160° if no rest time allowed.
4. Serve over couscous or bulghur.

- *BBQ Grill - medium-high heat*
- *Metal or bamboo skewers; Tongs; Small bowl; Large, sealable plastic bag; Cutting board; Kitchen knife; Cooking/serving spoon*



Post It Maria Laundry Blues

When the roof failed, everything in the bathroom that wasn't in a cabinet got wet. That included the laundry. Then it rained every day for what seemed like a month. There was no power for the washing machine + we had to draw water out of the cistern manually. This called for a laundry triage system. Once the roof was tarp-covered, we created 3 piles:

- Clean but wet: Hang on line til dry.
- Dirty but dry: Hand wash + hang to dry.
- Dirty but wet: Hang on line til dry, then add to dirty but dry pile.

Hand washing was done whenever the weather looked good, but sometimes laundry got rained on, so it took a long time to dry. It took weeks to catch up.

Why bother drying dirty clothes before washing them?

- Mosquitos are attracted to their "aroma" - let's not spread Zika.
- Jeans are too bulky to hand wash in our kitchen sinks - good thing we had plenty.

Quinoa Black Bean Salad

- 1 c Quinoa
- 4 Green Onions - thinly sliced
- 15-oz can Black Beans - drained & rinsed
- 3 TBSP Olive Oil
- 2 TBSP Lime Juice
- 1 TBSP Balsamic Vinegar
- 1 TBSP Soy Sauce
- 2 tsp Honey
- 1/2 tsp Kosher Salt
- 1 Clove Garlic - chopped
- 1/4 tsp Cayenne (to taste)

1. Bring 2 c water & quinoa to a boil; simmer, covered, 15 minutes; remove from heat.
2. Stir in green onions & black beans.
3. Whisk together remaining ingredients; pour over quinoa & stir to coat.
4. Serve warm or at room temperature.

- 1 burner
- Sauce pan (medium) w/lid, Small bowl, Whisk, Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Cooking/serving spoon



Cooler Challenges

The cats haven't had their canned tuna treats for more than 2 months + they're getting whiny. Since a small can of tuna lasts them 5 days, we went with the cooler + ice solution.

Issues + benefits:

- New ice gets added to the top so it's hard to find anything buried...everything is buried.
- Upright beers are easy to find.
- The ice may not have been made with potable water; anything not in a sealed container needs a ziplock type bag. Line cooler edges with the bags so they're easier to find.
- Top load lettuce to prevent freezer burn.
- Finding anything that has sunk can cause what feels like frostbite.
- We could buy food for 2 or more days rather than what we'd use on shopping day.
- Mayo + salad dressing were now on hand - Yay for fresh veggies!
- The cooler lid slammed down while I was in search mode - raised a bump on my forehead - but, luckily, no bruise.

Broccoli-Peanut Salad

- 1 lb Fresh Broccoli (raw or steamed)
- 2 Green Onions - thinly sliced
- 1/2 c Raisins
- 1/2 c Dry-Roasted Peanuts
- 1/2 c Mayonnaise
- 2 TBSP Honey

1. Remove broccoli leaves & tough lower ends; cut stalks into 1/4" slices & separate remainder into bite-size florets.
2. Add green onions, raisins & peanuts to broccoli.
3. Combine mayo w/honey & spoon over broccoli; toss gently to coat.
4. Cover & chill 2 hours.

· *2 Bowls, Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Serving spoon*



Would You Like Some Cheese with Your Whine?

Immediately after the storms I did not have reliable phone or internet service. But whenever there was a signal I would send a text or two and visit Facebook.

One of the local group pages offered helpful information as well as a forum for people to express themselves. Some people were trying to contact loved ones but couldn't understand why the police department wasn't helpful. Well, folks, they were kind of busy doing the best they could with the little they had; no land line phones, no access to various neighborhoods or properties due to downed trees + cables, plus a few landslides for variety.

Later when businesses could bring in armed security, people complained that they didn't feel safe.

But the complaint that sticks in my mind 3-plus months later is that, "Home Depot abandoned us!" Sorry. But like the rest of us they're doing the best they can.

Pork Kebabs

1/3 c Olive Oil
1/4 c Rice Vinegar
2 TBSP Cider Vinegar
1 tsp Garlic Powder
1 tsp dried Sage
1/2 tsp Black Pepper
3/4 lb Pork - cut into 1-1/2" chunks
1 large Bell Pepper - cut into 1-1/2" chunks
1 medium Red Onion - cut into 1" chunks
8 Mushrooms - White or Baby Portobello

1. Combine 1st 6 ingredients in small bowl; whisk together & pour into large, sealable plastic bag; add pork, squeeze out air & set aside while cutting veggies; flip bag occasionally.
2. Thread meat & veggies onto 4 long metal skewers, alternating evenly; discard marinade.
3. Grill 6 - 7 minutes, turning once.
4. Serve over rice or bulghur.

- *BBQ grill - medium-high heat*
- *4 long skewers; Small bowl; Large, sealable plastic bag; Cutting board; Kitchen knife; Whisk; Tongs*



On Hand Suggestions - Stock up on:

- Batteries: All shapes + sizes; if you don't need them, trade them.
- Shelf-stable foods: See "Care Packages" page for my item list, but you may prefer others.
- Potable water: Preferably in gallon or 5-gallon containers; the landfill has more than enough small plastic bottles.
- Large, heavy-duty trash bags: You'll probably need to clean up.
- Bins, buckets, microfiber cloths + mops: In case the roof leaks.
- Rope: To tie down the plastic tarps + tie up any fallen trees.
- Sunscreen + bug spray: No leaves for shade + standing water breeds mosquitos.
- Generator fuel + additional containers to get more.
- Nails, screws, hammers, screwdrivers, ladder.
- Rice, beans, pasta, toilet paper.
- Tote bags for foraging: Bring them everywhere you go.
- Patience: We're all in this together.
- Freeze-dried ice: Just kidding.

Fresh Salad Dressings

Whisk together any of these combos w/salt & fresh ground pepper.

2 TBSP Lime Juice (1 lime)
2 TBSP Olive Oil
1 TBSP Apple Cider Vinegar
1/2 TBSP Honey

2 TBSP Red Wine Vinegar
1/2 TBSP Dijon Mustard
1/4 c Olive Oil
1 tsp Sugar

3 TBSP Olive Oil
1 TBSP Flavored Vinegar, e.g. Raspberry, Sherry
1 Shallot - chopped
1 tsp fresh Herbs, e.g. Basil, Chive, Tarragon

1/2 c Sour Cream
1 TBSP Wine Vinegar
1/2 TBSP Shallot - chopped
1-1/2 TBSP Light Cream

1/2 c Plain Yogurt
1/2 tsp Dijon Mustard
1/4 c Chicken Stock
2 TBSP Lime Juice

1/3 c Creamy Peanut Butter
2 TBSP Soy Sauce
2 TBSP Maple Syrup
1 Clove Garlic - minced
Water - to thin dressing



Day 103 - Let There Be Light

Early Sunday evening, December 17, we heard vehicles in the neighborhood with people cheering, hootin' + hollerin'. The crew had energized the lines they'd been working on for the past week or so + we now had POWER!

First order of business was making sure the essentials were working: refrigerator, water pump + water heater. Then we got the lights on, connected the computers + selected the movie "Love Actually" as our after-dinner DVD.

Some of the homes in the neighborhood could not be energized due to:

- Damaged weatherhead (the point where power wires enter the building)
- No roof
- No walls
- No house

We're thankful for the crews who worked on-island 7 days a week, away from their families, to make this happen.

Tuna Salad

2 - 5-oz cans Solid White Tuna (water pack)

1/4 c Mayonnaise

1 TBSP Sweet Pickle Relish

1. Drain tuna & give water to the cats.
2. Mix all ingredients together with a fork until well combined.
3. Serve w/greens, veggies & tomatoes as a salad OR on sliced bread.

· *Small bowl, Serving spoon*



I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU MANAGED SOOOOOOO
LONG!



(Text from a friend on Wednesday
after power was restored on the
previous Sunday - Day 103)

The most important factor for
me was ignoring dates or any form
of "It's been X days/weeks/months..." whatever.

One day followed the previous. We planned for
tomorrow without looking back at yesterday.

Sure, we entertained each other with
reminders of past vacations, restaurant
visits + events, but that all happened elsewhere.

This entire book has been written at my dining
table while looking out at the Inner + Outer
Brass Islands north of our, somewhat worse-for-
wear, home.

Our most frequent refrain has been + continues
to be: It will all work out... somehow.

Meatloaf (6 - 8 servings)

1 envelope Onion Soup Mix

1/3 c Dry Breadcrumbs

2 Eggs

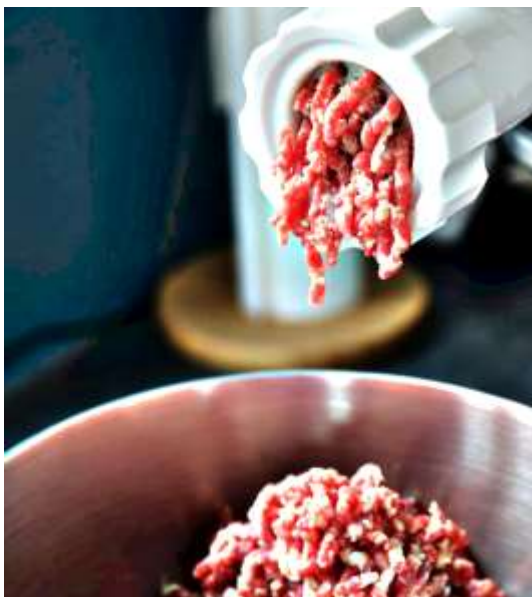
1/3 c Water

1/3 c Chili Sauce

2 lb Ground Beef (sirloin or 85-97% lean)

1. Combine soup mix w/remaining ingredients - except beef - until well mixed.
2. Add beef & mix well; shape into loaf & place into 13" x 9" or 9" square baking pan.
3. Bake uncovered @ 350° 1 hour or until done. Let stand 10 minutes.
4. Serve w/sweet, baked or garlic mashed potatoes & green veggies.

- *Oven preheated to 350°*
- *Baking pan, Large bowl*



Substitutions

Sometimes in the post-storm world, you'll be missing one or more recipe ingredients. Substitute freely based on flavor, texture or personal taste. Some hints:

Andouille sausage = Chorizo sausage

Brown sugar = White sugar 1 cup plus
2 Tbsp molasses

Citrus Gatorade plus coconut rum =
Umbrella drink

Cornstarch = Arrowroot

Dried cranberries = Raisins

Dry sherry = Mirin

Fresh herbs 1 Tbsp = Dried 1 tsp

Half + half = 1 part whole milk plus
1 part light cream

Honey = Corn syrup

Light cream = 3/4 evaporated milk plus
3 Tbsp butter OR 1 part whole milk plus
1-1/2 parts heavy cream

Lime juice = Lemon juice

Low fat sour cream = Yogurt

Meat stock = Bouillon*

Onions, scallions = Shallots

Parmesan cheese = Romano cheese

Pork = Chicken

Water chestnuts = Jicama

White wine vinegar = Rice vinegar

* Unless you like salty food, use a low-sodium bouillon if liquid is to be reduced.

Spicy Volcano Shrimp

- 1 TBSP Sesame Oil
- 1/4 c Soy Sauce
- 2 Cloves Garlic - chopped
- 1/2 c Marmalade OR Jelly
- 1 TBSP Chili Powder
- 2 TBSP Green Onion - sliced thin
- 1 tsp Ginger - fresh, peeled & minced - OR 1/4 tsp dry
- 1/4 - 1 tsp Red Pepper Flakes to taste
- 3/4 c Raw Shrimp - shelled
- 3/4 c Rice - cooked in 1-1/2 c water

1. Place first 8 ingredients for sauce in large skillet; bring to boil; lower heat & simmer 5 minutes.
2. Add shrimp; simmer 5 minutes or til shrimp are opaque.
3. Serve over white rice with a salad.

- *2 burners (or cook & hold rice first)*
- *Rice pan (medium) w/lid, Skillet (large), Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Cooking/serving spoon*



Water Matters

If we had a whole-house filtration system, we'd drink our cistern water. We don't; so, we use it only after it's boiled for 1 minute (for pasta + simple syrup, yes; veggies + rice, no).

We buy our drinking water, but don't want to send all those plastic jugs to the landfill. So, on shopping day we'd bring 6 empty gallon jugs to Cost-U-Less + fill them up.

But Cost-U-Less is gone + not expected to be rebuilt for a couple of years. Getting refills at PriceSmart was a pain. We had to wait in the check-out line just to pay for our water. Their lines get incredibly long on the weekends.

This week we discovered that Pueblo in Sub Base has a water refill station. So that's the new plan going forward.

Additionally, the cistern is not as full as it could be. The blue roof doesn't channel all the rain water into the remaining gutters + Home Depot's rain gutters are out of stock.

No Bake Stuffed Peppers

Either decide how many bell peppers will fit snug & upright in your chosen covered pot OR get the peppers & choose a pot to fit.

For **each pair** of large, tall peppers:

1/3 lb Ground Beef - lean,

i.e. 5-10% fat

1/3 c White Rice - uncooked

1/2 TBSP Chili Powder

2 TBSP Dry Onion Flakes

2 Cloves Garlic - chopped

1 tsp Cumin

1/2 tsp Black Pepper

Dash of Nutmeg

8-oz can Tomato Sauce, e.g. Hunts

Sour Cream for topping



1. Cut around pepper stems w/paring knife; remove & discard leaving pepper whole; reach in to remove any inner ridges & seeds; pierce outer skin with fork about a dozen times.
2. Mix meat w/remaining ingredients, except tomato sauce & sour cream; divide into equal parts based on number of peppers; stuff peppers loosely.
3. Stand peppers up in pot; add tomato sauce around peppers; add water to come within 1" of the top of the shortest pepper.
4. Bring to boil; lower heat & simmer, covered, over medium-low heat until rice is done - test from top - about 45 minutes.

- 1 burner
- Pot w/lid, Medium bowl, Cutting board, Paring knife, Cooking/serving spoon

"We Don't Ship Outside the U.S."

...but they mean 'outside the Mainland'

So, you find a local company to use as a freight forwarder. The vendor ships the items to you in care of the company's mainland address. It's loaded into a container, put on a ship + arrives in St Thomas in a few days. This is what we did/encountered:

- Set up an account w/ freight forwarder. (FF)
- Email vendor's invoice to FF as notice delivery is in progress.
- FF accepts delivery, measures/ weighs item, secures insurance, computes total cost + calls or sends email w/ cost + expected arrival date.
- Once item arrives, get bill of lading + bring it to the STT Excise Tax office. (Nisky Center next to SSI)
- Provide your SSN (no tax on personal items) or FEIN. (Tax due for business items? Unknown)
Also - go to the window on the left; ask waiting patrons who's a head of you (very informal); ignore empty "Take a Number" dispenser.
- Bring stamped bill of lading + "Excise and Container Tax Return" to Customs office. (Sea plane airport - Veteran's Drive)
- Return paperwork to FF, load item - they can help - and return home.

Seared Scallops w/Tropical Slaw

1-1/2 TBSP Salad Oil - divided
1/2 c Pineapple - julienned
1/2 c Fennel Bulb - julienned
1/2 c Red Bell Pepper - julienned
1/2 c Snow Peas - julienned
1/3 c Red Onion - julienned
1 TBSP Orange Juice
1 TBSP Vinegar - Cider OR White Wine
Dash of ground Cardamom
8 large Sea Scallops
2 TBSP Cajun Spice Mix

1. Combine 1 TBSP oil w/8 following ingredients & toss lightly; set aside.
2. Season scallops w/Cajun spices OR Old Bay Seasoning & add salt to taste.
3. Heat sauté pan over high heat & add 1/2 TBSP oil; add scallops once oil starts to smoke slightly; sear 2 minutes on 1st side; flip & turn off heat; let rest 2 - 3 minutes.
4. Add half of slaw to each of 2 plates; top w/scallops.

- *1 burner*
- *Sauté pan (medium), Medium bowl, Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Tongs, Cooking/serving spoon*



Internet + Phone Service Restored

After 134 days I can walk around the property with my AT+T phone in my pocket. Yay!

Unfortunately, not everyone w/AT+T has service now. My husband has only intermittent service on his iPhone + iPad, and many folks have posted on Facebook that they're still offline. It seems odd, but it's been this way since Irma. Sometimes I'd have service for a short while + sometimes my husband would, but rarely at the same time.

Some people are reporting a problem getting the promised 2-months free. There are also customer service issues, perhaps due to so many St Thomians switching from Sprint to AT+T. They're overwhelmed by the demand.

So, once Broadband V1 installs + switches on their Inner Brass Island tower - beginning of March - we'll be able to get Netflix again.

Bisquick™ Impossible Quiche (4 - 6 servings)

- 1-1/2 c Ham - 1/2" cubes
- 1 c Swiss Cheese - shredded
- 1/3 c Scallions - chopped
- 1 c Bisquick
- 2 c Milk
- 4 Eggs
- 1/2 tsp Salt
- 1/8 tsp Pepper

1. Lightly grease 9" pie pan; sprinkle bottom w/ham, cheese & scallions
2. Blend remaining ingredients until completely smooth; pour slowly over ham mixture & submerge any floating ingredients.
3. Bake @ 400° 35 - 40 minutes, until knife inserted in center comes out clean; cool 15 minutes.

Semi-soft crust forms while quiche is baking.

- Oven preheated to 400°
- 9" Pie pan, Blender, Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Serving spatula

DIY Bisquick

Combine the following ingredients in a food processor & store in airtight container or freezer bags.

- 1 c Flour
- 1 TBSP Shortening
- 1-1/2 tsp Baking Powder
- 1 tsp Sugar
- 1/2 tsp Salt



Incremental Traffic Light Progress

Imagine driving in a familiar city or town that has 4-lane roads with cross streets + some center left-turn lanes. Now imagine driving there with NO traffic lights - for many months. Scary! Traffic was backed up; many drivers were courteous, but tempers did flare, and there were some accidents.

Now imagine the poor tourists + other pedestrians trying to navigate this mess. Very scary!

For a while there were uniformed personnel directing traffic at the most congested spots: Airport, Nisky, Mandela Circle, the Lockhart + Tutu Malls. But they went off duty around 5:00 so rush hour was a challenge.

Now each time we drive to town we see progress. Many light poles had been destroyed + are now being replaced. Traffic lights get installed, blink yellow for a while + are then put into service. This week the new arrivals were Frenchtown + Courthouse. I hope the MS11 Pueblo + Caheryn School lights are working soon.

April brought new light deliveries + we certainly need them in place for Carnival.

Lamb Sausage w/Roasted Chickpeas

15.5-oz can Chickpeas - drained, rinsed
1 TBSP Olive Oil
3 Cloves Garlic - chopped
1 tsp Cumin
1 tsp Smoked Paprika
2 Lamb Sausages - links OR patties - about 8 oz

1. Combine all ingredients - except sausages - on baking sheet; toss well; spread out in single layer.
2. Nestle sausages among chickpeas.
3. Bake @ 350° about 30 minutes, tossing ingredients again halfway through.

- *Oven preheated to 350°*
- *Baking sheet w/rim, Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Cooking/serving spoon*



Rain on the Roof

Doesn't everyone love hearing the sound of a gentle rain falling on the roof? It's sort of romantic.

Hurricane Maria - a rain event - shattered this idyllic notion. The metal roofs were ripped off our house, so everything indoors that hadn't been plastic covered got drenched: Oriental carpets, chairs, bureaux, chests of drawers, even the laundry and toilet paper.

Until we got our blue roof, if it rained outside - it rained inside. We set up our beach canopy over the table + created an inverted tarp canopy over the bed. As water collected, we'd channel it down to a small hole above a bucket using a broom + walking stick. Empty the bucket, repeat. Water that came in through the plywood seams was mopped up where it didn't fall into our bowl collection. We'd sleep between showers.

Now, every time there's a nighttime shower we awaken, wondering if we need to mop + bail.



Pulled Pork - Slow Cooker (6 - 8 servings)

- 2 medium Onions - thinly sliced
- 4 large Cloves Garlic - thinly sliced
- 1 c Low Sodium Chicken Bouillon
- 1 TBSP Dark Brown Sugar
- 1 TBSP Chili Powder
- 2 tsp Kosher Salt
- 1/2 tsp Cumin
- 1/4 tsp Cinnamon
- 3 - 4-1/2 lb Boneless Pork Shoulder/Butt
- 2 c Barbeque Sauce



1. Place onions & garlic in bottom of slow cooker & add bouillon.
 2. Combine sugar, salt & spices in small bowl.
 3. Remove any netting from pork & pat dry; rub spice mixture over all sides of pork & place meat atop onions & garlic.
 4. Cover & cook 6 - 8 hours - high OR 8 -10 hours - low; turn off cooker.
 5. Remove pork to cutting board or bowl & shred w/2 forks, discarding large pieces of fat.
 6. Set mesh strainer over heat-proof bowl; pour onion mixture thru strainer & return, with pork, to cooker; reserve liquid.
 7. Add barbeque sauce to cooker & stir to combine.
 8. Add reserved liquid, 1/4 c at a time, if pork is too dry.
- *Slow cooker w/lid*
 - *Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Small bowl, Strainer, 2 Forks, Cooking/serving spoon*

Talking 'bout My Generator

Let's say you live in a rural area + a wind event takes down the power lines. You know it could be a while before a line crew fixes the poles + wires. You don't want your freezer food to thaw + it's always nice to have running water. Cisterns, wells + toilets require a pump, or pressure, to circulate water - not a huge issue for those who have city water pipes.

So, you head down to the local big box store + buy a generator, get fuel + you're good to go.

But on an island after 2 Category 5 hurricanes, not only were the stores that sold generators closed - so was the air port.

Our generator was purchased by phone from Kansas + shipped to our parents' house in North Carolina. They drove it to their FedEx shipping center to get it here to us - once the air port opened. It took a while + cost a lot. We were so grateful to get one before the stores here had any.

Omelet w/Sherried Lobster or Shrimp

- 2 TBSP Unsalted Butter
- 1 lb Cooked Lobster OR Shrimp - sliced
- 3 TBSP Dry Sherry
- 1/8 tsp White Pepper
- 1/2 c Light Cream
- 1 TBSP Chives - chopped
- 1 Egg Yolk
- 6 Eggs + 2 TBSP Butter for Omelet

1. Set small heat-proof bowl over simmering water; melt butter & add lobster/shrimp, sherry & white pepper; simmer 5 minutes or til shellfish is heated through.
 2. Add cream & chives; when cream is hot, whisk 1 egg yolk well & mix in 1 TBSP cream mixture to prevent curdling; add egg yolk to cream/shellfish mix - stir constantly - until sauce is thickened; remove from heat.
 3. Heat remaining 2 TBSP butter in 1 large omelet pan, or 2 smaller ones, over medium-low heat.
 4. Whisk eggs & add to pan when butter begins to sputter; lift edges to let uncooked egg flow underneath; when top is moist & frothy add half of shellfish to middle of omelet; fold, plate & add remaining shellfish mix to top.
- 2 burners
 - Sauce pan (small) & Small bowl OR Double boiler, Omelet pan (1 large OR 2 small), Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Whisk, Spatula



Options - Keep 'em Open

Even though things get closer to normal every day, many businesses remain closed or are partially open. Home Depot opened in October with just some lumber + cleaning supplies available to those who waited in line to get in. Now, in mid-January, half of the aisles are open + about 80 percent restocked.

So, when we needed semi-transparent deck stain/sealer, it had not yet been restocked. Since it's necessary before we can install the new roof, we ordered it online + got it here via our freight forwarding company.

When it was time to put up + decorate the Christmas tree after Thanksgiving, we still had no power. We put up the tree + outdoor decorations anyway. We've never celebrated Christmas without a tree. Even if it was a little Norfolk Island pine with a few ornaments, we had a tree.

When we didn't have enough tarps to keep the great room dry, we put up our beach canopy over our table + chairs and dined by candlelight.

Fettuccine Carbonara w/Peas

1/2 lb Fettuccine - cooked al dente
2 Egg Yolks - beaten well
1/4 c Whipping Cream
1/4 c Frozen Peas - thawed
2 TBSP Butter
1/4 c Ham - cubed
1/4 c Romano Cheese - grated
White Pepper

1. Add cream to beaten egg yolks & whisk until well combined; set aside.
2. Cook pasta & add thawed peas during last minute of cooking; drain & return to same pot.
3. Add butter to pasta & stir to coat; add ham & toss well; add cheese and cream & egg mix; toss well.
4. Divide pasta between 2 bowls; sprinkle w/some white pepper & additional cheese.

- *1 burner*
- *Pasta pot w/lid, Small bowl, Whisk, Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Strainer, Cooking/serving spoon*



Online Ordering from the USVI

My most recent purchases - Nations Photo Lab - yielded the usual comedy caused by short-sighted software developers. In their zeal to protect unaware users from typing the wrong state abbreviation, most companies offer the same choices: The A-K-WY list of 50 states, and maybe DC.

Although their order address page stated that shipments to PR + VI would go out via mail, neither abbreviation was listed.

This is also an issue at various major companies, such as Ally Bank + some charge card banks. Changing my address online is not an option when VI is not on the list.

The phone conversation with customer service usually goes like this: "The screen accepts your zip code, but I can't enter your state."

"Okay, let's try this... Leave the state blank and add the letters 'VI' to the city entry to read 'St Thomas VI'."

"Wow! That worked!"

Yep. That's what 25-plus years of software testing can do to your brain.

Omelet Fillings

Whisk & cook 6 - 8 Eggs. When set, fill with one of these combos & fold eggs over filling.

1/4 lb Honey Ham - thinly sliced
4 slices Provolone Cheese - folded in half
1 TBSP Scallion - chopped

1/4 lb Mushrooms - sliced (precook w/Marjoram, Savory, Basil & Oregano)

8 - 10 Mini-Peppers - sliced (precook w/1/4 c Onion - sliced)
1 TBSP Romano Cheese - grated

1 small Bell Pepper - chopped (precook w/2 chopped Scallions,
1/4 tsp Savory & 1/4 tsp Marjoram)
2 oz Cheddar - sliced



Measure for Measure

When following the recipes in this book, consider that they're similar to the "Caribbean Pirate Code" - more like guidelines. Whether it's post-storm, camping or outdoor cooking, it's not rocket science or brain surgery.

Small measurements are included to indicate the proportions of one ingredient to another: 1 Tbsp is 3 times as much as 1 tsp. If a recipe calls for 1 cup of something + 2 cups of something else, it doesn't matter what size cup you use - just use the same size container to measure both ingredients.

I went with weight rather than volume for food items sold in cans + bags - except rice + grains. If you have some other method you use to measure pasta - rather than weight - feel free to stick with the familiar.

Pepper Steak Stir Fry

- 1 TBSP Cornstarch
- 1 c Water
- 2 TBSP Salad Oil
- 1/2 - 3/4 lb Beef (Chuck or Round) - thinly sliced
- 1 Bell Pepper - 1" chunks
- 1 large Onion - 1" chunks
- 2 Cloves Garlic - chopped
- 2 tsp Fresh Ginger - peeled & chopped
- 1/4 c Soy Sauce
- 3/4 c Rice - cooked in 1-1/2 c water

1. Add water to cornstarch; mix well & set aside.
 2. Heat oil in large skillet OR wok over medium-high heat; stir fry beef until brown; add pepper & onion; stir fry until tender crisp - about 5 minutes.
 3. Add garlic & ginger; stir fry 1 minute; stir cornstarch w/water to recombine & add to skillet w/soy sauce; stir & cook until thickened; add more water if there's not enough sauce & continue cooking 1 - 2 minutes.
 4. Serve over rice.
- *2 burners (or cook & hold rice first)*
 - *Rice pan (medium) w/lid, Skillet (large) OR wok, Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Cooking/serving spoon*



What Hotel?

If insurance pays for a hotel stay when a home becomes unlivable... Where can you go if the hotels + resorts were destroyed by the event? Some properties will be closed for 2 or more years. This is a major hardship for many in the hospitality business. To get some people back to work, the governor worked with the travel industry to resume the cruise ship visits to our shores as soon as possible. Other tourists who could get flights to the island were able to book Airbnb, Home Away + smaller local hotels, guest houses or B+Bs.

The linemen were given cabins aboard the semi-permanent cruise ships docked at Crown Bay for their use. The National Guard set up their camp on the University of the Virgin Islands soccer field adjacent to the airport.

Restaurants opened as soon as they could to accommodate everyone - local, tourist or hero.

Ham Steak w/Currant Glaze

1 lb Ham Steak
1/3 c Currant Jelly
1 TBSP White Vinegar, e.g. Wine, Rice
1/2 tsp Dry Mustard
1/2 tsp Cinnamon
Dash of ground Cloves

1. Put ham steak into foil baking pan; bake @ 350° for 15 minutes; flip ham over.
2. Whisk jelly until it's liquid; add remaining ingredients; spoon over ham & bake until glazed - about 20 minutes.

- *Oven preheated to 350°*
- *Small foil baking pan, Small bowl, Whisk, Cooking spoon*



The Hurricane Diet

- Maybe the curfew caused them to miss a few restaurant meals.
- Maybe they were eating leftovers from the freezer + the food wasn't as good the 2nd time around, so they ate less of it.
- Maybe the stress made even thinking about food unappealing.

Whatever the reason, we heard people lost weight in the storms' aftermath. One neighbor said she was wearing clothes that hadn't fit in years.

We definitely lost a few unneeded pounds. For the first couple of weeks until the airports + docks reopened, assembling a 2,000-calorie daily input was a challenge. The "main course" in an MRE is around 300 calories. Even if you add the crackers with jelly, PopTarts or granola bar, the numbers just aren't there.

So... was it the MREs + slim-pickings in the stores? Was it forgoing a chunk of cheddar with crackers or bowl of ice cream after dinner? I, too, am wearing jeans that haven't fit in a while.

Gumbo w/Shrimp & Ham

1 TBSP Olive Oil + 1 TBSP Butter
1 large Onion - chopped
2 TBSP Flour
2 Cloves Garlic - chopped
1 TBSP Chili Powder
3 large Plum Tomatoes - seeded & chopped
3 c Chicken Stock
1/2 lb Ham - 1" cubes
9-oz package Salad Shrimp - thawed
2 tsp Filé Powder (Sassafras)
3/4 c Rice - cooked in 1-1/2 c water

1. Sauté onion in oil/butter mix; lower heat to medium and add flour once onions are soft; add garlic & chili powder; cook 10 minutes, stirring often.
2. Add tomatoes & simmer 10 - 15 minutes.
3. Add stock & bring to boil; add ham, shrimp & filé powder; cook until slightly thickened.
4. Serve over rice.

- *2 burners (or cook & hold rice first)*
- *Sauce pan (medium), Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Cooking/serving spoon*



They're Throwing Money at Us

When we heard that FEMA had opened an assistance center at the Bordeaux Farmers Market we made plans to check it out. Everyone was friendly, helpful + sympathetic. It took a couple of hours to complete our application, and then we waited. Since the phone service was spotty, we figured they couldn't reach us. So, we went back - more than once - with additional documents, receipts, whatever they asked. Then - as if by magic - money appeared in our savings account. No call, no email, no letter, just electronic money.

We went back to Bordeaux for more information and were told we could dispute the amount and, most assuredly, could get more. It was a grant, not a loan, and we were advised to keep our receipts for the building supplies we would buy. Okay. No problem there.

This week we have an appointment to close on our approved SBA loan. Communication has been bad, but the money's good.

Pasta w/Ricotta Pecan Sauce

1/2 lb Conchiglie or other Shell-Shaped Pasta - cooked al dente
3 TBSP Olive Oil
2 Cloves Garlic - chopped
1/2 c Ricotta Cheese
1/2 c Tomato Wine or Dry Marsala
1/4 c Pecans - chopped
2 tsp Black Pepper

1. Add olive oil to large skillet over medium-low heat; add garlic, ricotta & wine; stir until ricotta is creamy.
2. Add pecans & pepper.
3. Drain cooked pasta & add to skillet; stir until pasta is well covered.
4. Serve w/additional fresh pepper.

- *2 burners*
- *Pasta pot w/lid, Skillet (large), Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Strainer, Cooking/serving spoon*



The Amazing, Unyielding Cooler

To prepare for Irma we secured the shutters, boarded up the sliders, put the plants in the outdoor shower and tied the outdoor furniture + grill to the deck railings. After the storm we undid everything. Then we heard Jose was coming + we retied everything. When Jose was a "no show" we left everything secured, just in case. Then came Maria.

A few weeks later when I untied the outdoor items, I found that a cooler full of plastic cocktail glasses, tumblers + cutlery had been left unsecured next to the grill - most likely during both hurricanes. Although some water had leaked in, it had remained on the deck just waiting for the next party.

We were lucky that the cooler had stayed put + that the sections of deck railing where the tables + chairs had been tied were not the railings Maria "relocated."

Crescent Turkey Casserole (4 - 6 servings)

3 c Cooked Turkey - cubed
1-1/2 c Frozen Peas - thawed
1-1/2 c Carrots - thinly sliced
3 Celery Stalks - sliced
1/4 lb Sharp Cheddar - shredded
1/2 c Dry Bread Crumbs
1/4 c Onion - chopped
1-1/2 c Mayonnaise
1/4 tsp Black Pepper
3 - 4 dashes Tabasco - to taste
8-oz can Crescent Rolls

1. Mix all ingredients, except rolls, in large bowl; pour into baking dish.
2. Separate rolls into 2 rectangles, pressing seams together; cut into 4 long & 4 short strips; cover casserole ingredients in a lattice design.
3. Bake @ 350° for 35 - 40 minutes until crust is golden brown.

- *Oven preheated to 350°*
- *12" x 8" Baking Dish, Cutting board, Large bowl, Kitchen knife, Cooking/serving spoon, Serving spatula*



SBA Comes Through with Cash

We met with an SBA rep for our closing. She was a 12-year Marine Corps veteran from Atlanta with a great sense of humor. Her advice was to sign the papers for the full, approved loan + to notify our case worker we wanted only the unsecured amount after the initial money was deposited in our account. Okay. We can do that.

So, we'll be using the FEMA grant for roof + safety-related issues, and the SBA Loan for other damage.

SBA has called a few times since the closing for more info + to schedule an inspection.

The SBA inspector did a walk-through with us + listened to our "rebuild it better" plans. Nice guy - didn't take any photos + was willing to listen without interrupting. Not sure what he was inspecting. He was here from California + had "met interesting people." We ended up chatting about chickens, skiing + what we each considered good places to live.

Pasta w/Cream & Sun-Dried Tomatoes

1/2 lb Creste di Gallo or other Shell-Shaped Pasta - cooked al dente

8 Sun-Dried Tomatoes - chopped

1 TBSP Butter + 1 TBSP Olive Oil

1 small Onion - chopped

1/4 c Pine Nuts

1/2 c Whipping Cream

1 oz Grappa OR Vodka

1/4 tsp Red Pepper Flakes

1. Reconstitute tomatoes in 1/4 c water - microwave @ 80% for 1 minute; reserve water.
2. Melt butter w/oil over medium heat & sauté onion til translucent; add pine nuts & tomatoes; reduce heat to medium-low & add reserved water.
3. Add cream, grappa & red pepper and bring to boil; simmer until thickened to sauce consistency - about 2 minutes.
4. Drain pasta & add to skillet; toss to coat.

- 2 burners
- Pasta pot w/lid, Skillet (large), Small bowl, Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Strainer, Cooking/serving spoon



Tarp-Folding with 35 MPH GUSTS

It's always been a challenge folding anything larger than a washcloth outside - even on a "calm" day on the breezy north side. Add 20 MPH winds with occasional stronger gusts + a bath sheet could become a magic carpet taking you to PR or the BV. Refolding the canopy of our beach sunscreen usually involves using a pair of sandals to weigh down 2 points of the triangle while adjusting the 3rd. Roll it all up + it's done.

But a n 18' x 20' heavy duty blue tarp is a wild ride. Once it gets airborne anything can happen. If you can keep your footing - standing on level ground helps - and keep a tight hold on the edges, there's a chance of success. As much as I'm a "keep the corners neat" sheet folder, tarp folding in high wind calls for Plan B...

While keeping the tarp on a flat surface + standing with the wind at your back, gather together the corners of the closest edge + repeat until the edge is about 2 feet wide. Then just roll the sucker into a ball and call it done!

No Bake Moussaka (6 servings)

3 TBSP Salad Oil

1-1/2 lb Zucchini - sliced 1/4" thick

1-1/2 lb Eggplant - quartered, sliced 1/4" thick

1 medium Onion - sliced

7-oz can Mushrooms - drained & rinsed

1-1/2 lb Ground Meat; e.g. Beef, Lamb

2 tsp dried Oregano

Pinch of Nutmeg

1/4 - 1 tsp Red Pepper Flakes - to taste

6-oz can Tomato Paste

10-3/4-oz can Condensed Cheddar Soup

A large ovenproof pot can be used for cooking the veggies; add cooked meat & cheese sauce and broil.

1. Heat oil & add zucchini, eggplant & onion; cook over medium heat, covered, 15 minutes or til veggies are tender; stir in mushrooms.
2. Sauté ground meat until no longer pink; pour off fat; add oregano, nutmeg, red pepper & tomato paste; cook, stirring, 5 minutes longer.
3. Heat cheese soup until boiling.
4. In 2-quart casserole, add veggies making a well in the center for the meat; add meat & cover w/cheese soup; run under broiler 2 - 3 minutes or til lightly browned on top.
 - 2 burners, Preheated broiler OR Oven broiler
 - Large Dutch oven w/lid, Skillet (medium), Sauce pan (small), 2-quart casserole dish, Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Cooking/serving spoons



The Search for Roof Plywood

According to the SBA inspector, most of the roofs that failed on St Croix were metal. We had already decided to go with 3/4" T1-11 with a lime-washed interior + Tough Coat roll-on, white polymer exterior. Of course, after lucking out + getting 12 sheets a builder had returned to MSI, no more were available. The plant in PR that pressure treats lumber was damaged by Hurricane Maria. MSI couldn't take orders or even guess when the next shipment would arrive. Steel Plus had some 5/8" with 8" channels, so we bought 24 sheets + schlepped them home on the Jeep's roof rack 6 at a time.

The next day we were back at MSI + what to our wondering eyes should appear, but a pallet of 3/4" T1-11! Our salesman came out to have a look + told us it's V-groove + more expensive. In use it looks more like tongue + groove planks + is also more of an interior-grade finish. In any event...works for us. Four more trips + it was time for a well-deserved Happy Hour toast.

Grilled Pork Tenderloins w/Peaches or Mangos

(4 - 6 servings)

- 1/4 c Olive Oil
- 2 TBSP Lime Juice
- 2 TBSP Brown Sugar
- 2 TBSP Soy Sauce
- 2 tsp Ginger - fresh, peeled & minced OR 1/2 tsp dry
- 1 tsp Cinnamon
- 1 tsp Kosher Salt
- 2 Pork Tenderloins
- 4 Peaches - pitted & halved (unpeeled) OR 2 Mangos - halved, pitted & peeled
- 3/4 c Rice - cooked in 1-1/2 c water

1. Whisk together first 7 ingredients in bowl; add half of this marinade to each of 2 large, sealable plastic bags.
2. Put pork in one bag & peaches in the other; seal & refrigerate at least 6 hours - or overnight - turning occasionally.
3. Prepare barbeque - medium heat.
4. Remove pork from bag, discarding marinade; grill - turning often - to 140° at center, about 35 minutes; let rest 3 minutes.
5. Remove peaches from bag, reserving marinade; grill peaches - cut side down - 3 minutes; turn & pour peach marinade into pit holes & grill 3 minutes longer.
6. Serve over rice.

- *Barbeque grill - medium heat, 1 burner*
- *Cutting board; Kitchen knife; Small bowl; Whisk; 2 large, sealable plastic bags; Tongs*



Making Meals out of Nothing at All

The early recipes in this book reflect the scarcity of ingredients after an island-wide disaster. The stores that were open offered canned goods + most protein sold out fast. Beans + Vienna sausages were readily available; chicken + seafood not so much. Breakfast became the hardest meal of the day; no refrigerator means no milk, so no cereal. Once the port reopened, perishables started trickling in. Roy would forage while I waited at home for the Blue Roof Team.

So, what can you cook when the main fresh ingredients are carrots, potatoes + shallots? I opted for beans; rice, pasta + other starches; and lots of spices - all from my pantry. When something worked, I wrote it down, tweaked it the next few times around, proofed it + called it done.

As care packages arrived from our wonderful "tribe," + we started getting free-range chicken eggs, the later recipes herein became a sampling of my go-to dishes to be shared with these scribblings.

Chicken & Peppers w/Balsamic Vinegar

1/4 c Olive Oil - divided

1 large or 2 small Boneless Chicken Breasts - cut in 1" slices

2 c Mini Peppers - cut in 1" chunks

1 medium Onion - thinly sliced

4 Cloves Garlic - chopped

2 tsp dried Basil

1/4 c Balsamic Vinegar - divided

3/4 c Rice - cooked in 1-1/2 c water

1. Heat 2 TBSP oil over medium-high heat; sauté chicken until brown; remove from pan & set aside.
2. Heat remaining 2 TBSP oil in same skillet over medium heat; add peppers & onion; cook til tender, about 5 minutes; add garlic & cook, stirring, about 1 minute; mix in basil & 2 TBSP balsamic.
3. Return chicken to skillet; reduce heat to low & simmer, covered, 10 minutes or until chicken juices run clear.
4. Stir in remaining 2 TBSP balsamic & serve immediately over rice OR couscous.

- *2 burners (or cook & hold rice first)*
- *Rice pan w/lid, Skillet (large) w/lid, Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Cooking/serving spoon*



Pantry Products New to Us

How did we not know about using:

- Cafe Bustello Instant Espresso - so much better than instant coffee.
- Gatorade powder - reduces plastic waste.
- 4-lb jars Skippy Peanut Butter - sure hope Super Chunk is available.
- Muesli with almond milk - any time of the day.
- Chorizo - shrink-wrapped links need no refrigeration til opened.
- 5-grain Kovita Export Soda Crackers - a local brand, readily available.
- Maftoul - large pearl couscous.
- Vienna sausages - canned chicken mystery meat; rice + beans filler.
- Evaporated milk - tropical climate fresh milk substitute for recipes.
- Jiffy mix - better pancakes than Bisquick.
- Chai black tea - there is a taste difference between loose + bagged tea.
- Pane Tura ho - presliced Italian bread made like sourdough; maintains great crust in the freezer.

San Francisco Pork Chops

1/4 c Beef Broth or Bouillon
1/4 c Soy Sauce
2 TBSP Brown Sugar
1-1/2 TBSP Salad Oil - divided
1/4 tsp Red Pepper Flakes - to taste
2 - 1" thick Pork Chops
2 Cloves Garlic - minced
2 tsp Corn Starch dissolved in 2 TBSP Water

1. Whisk together broth, soy sauce, sugar, 1/2 TBSP oil & red pepper, dissolving sugar.
2. Brown chops in 1 TBSP oil over medium heat about 5 minutes per side; remove pork & reserve drippings in skillet.
3. Cook garlic 1 minute, stirring.
4. Return chops to skillet & pour sauce over pork; bring to boil; cover & reduce heat to low; simmer chops until tender & 140° - about 10 minutes - turning once.
5. Transfer chops to plates; keep warm.
6. Whisk cornstarch w/water until smooth; stir into sauce & simmer til thick; pour over chops.
7. Serve w/egg noodles.

- 1 burner
- Skillet (medium) w/lid, Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Small bowl, Whisk, Cooking/serving spoon



Closer to Being Connected

Broadband VI sent an installer to mount a dish on our roof a few months ago. We were too far to get an internet signal from the Peterborg tower + the one on Inner Brass had been destroyed by the storms. Their estimate for installing the new tower was end of February to mid-March.

Today Roy called my attention to a manmade object on the east end of the Inner Brass. Yep, looks like a tower. A call to the company confirmed work was in progress, and we should contact them to align our dish on Friday, March 2nd. Here's hoping...

Our neighbor called today to let us know that he had been connected on Friday. We have a Monday appointment - baby steps.

Monday afternoon Sam + Courtney arrived + connected our router to their Inner Brass tower. Joy was in the air + the World Wide Web was accessible from our devices...for a few hours anyway. Something failed at their tower + the high surf has made fixing it impossible. So, we're just waiting - again.

(3/14/18 - fully restored)

Quick Chicken Cassoulet (6 servings)

- 2 TBSP Salad Oil
- 12 Bone-in Chicken Thighs - skinless
- 1 large Onion - chopped
- 1 Bay Leaf
- 2 tsp Rosemary
- 2 tsp Thyme
- 1/2 c White Wine
- 5 cloves Garlic - chopped
- 14.5-oz can Peeled Plum Tomatoes - drained
- 2 - 15.5-oz cans Cannelloni/White Beans - drained, rinsed
- 14 oz Kielbasa - cubed
- 1 TBSP Real Bacon Bits

1. Heat oil at medium-high; add chicken & cook til brown, 3 - 4 minutes per side; remove chicken & keep warm.
2. Add onion to drippings; reduce heat to medium-low & cook til soft; add herbs, wine, garlic & tomatoes.
3. Return chicken to pot w/any juices & bring just to boiling; reduce heat & simmer, covered, 20 minutes; add beans, kielbasa & bacon; simmer uncovered 10 minutes more.

Optional topping: Combine 1c dry bread crumbs w/1 TBSP oil; spread over cassoulet & broil 4" from heat source 45 - 60 seconds, til golden.

- 1 burner,
Preheated broiler
OR Oven broiler
- Dutch oven w/lid,
Cutting board,
Kitchen knife,
Cooking/serving
spoon



DO YOU HAVE ANY HOBBIES?

This must be a trick question; my mind is blank.

A high school classmate and I met for lunch when her February cruise stopped in St Thomas. "I enjoy reading," was my initial, and only, response. We've been in recovery mode so long that pre-17 Maria activities are in what seems to be the distant past. So, how have I spent my time in the 1st part of 2018, besides writing this book?

- Hauling, rearranging + staining plywood
- Touring Home Depot, MSI, Ace + Steel City
- Rewatching the first 3 seasons of Game of Thrones + DVDs from the library - mostly A+E
- Folding, unfolding + securing tarps
- Learning Turbo Floor Plan to redesign the kitchen on my computer
- Being the on-demand "builder's assistant"

What would I rather be doing?

- Taking, GIMPing + Inkscaping photos for Red Frog Gallery
- Sipping a umbrella drink on a Caribbean beach we haven't visited yet
- Painting decorative furniture

Chicken Rice Soup

1 TBSP Onion - chopped
1/2 TBSP Olive Oil
2 - 5-oz cans Chicken Breast
1/4 tsp Celery Seed
1/4 tsp Sage
1/4 tsp White Pepper
2 packets Chicken Bouillon - 1 salted, 1 low sodium
1/2 c Rice - uncooked

1. Sauté onion in oil til soft.
2. Add chicken w/its broth, herbs & pepper and 6 c water; bring to boil.
3. Add bouillon & rice; reduce heat & simmer, covered, til rice is fully cooked, about 20 minutes.

- *1 burner*
- *Sauce pan (large) w/lid, Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Cooking/serving spoon*



VIIA con Dios - Landline Phone Blues

Although we've had AT+T phone service since Irma, VIIA's phone lines were destroyed.

Imagine you're looking for a mobile glass service to replace a windshield. You look in the phone book + see a few listings with only their phone number + maybe their estate name / neighborhood. There's a recording on the line that it's temporarily unavailable. You can either drive around the estate in search of the business or post a query on Facebook to learn if they're still in business + where they're located. We chose to visit the FedEx depot to ask them for directions. Of course, they pointed us to the right place.

So, we're on an island with no landline phone service + no way to get a business's cell phone number without visiting its physical location.

Dinner reservations? Try Facebook. Has Walgreens reopened, or what hours is Office Max open? Try Facebook. In an area without Uber + only 5 open table listings, the community has come through many times. Toss the phone book; your neighbors are more than willing to share their knowledge.

Peruvian-Spiced Pork (4 servings)

1/2 c Apple Cider Vinegar
1 tsp Cumin
1 tsp Achiote Paste (Annatto & Spice Mix)
5 cloves Garlic - sliced
1/2 tsp Kosher Salt
1/4 tsp Black Pepper
2 Pork Tenderloins
2 TBSP Salad Oil
1 medium Onion - thinly sliced
1/2 lb Mini Peppers - halved & sliced

1. Whisk together vinegar, cumin, achiote, garlic, salt & pepper; pour into large, sealable plastic bag; add pork & ensure marinade evenly covers meat; refrigerate at least 1 hour; flip bag halfway through.
2. Heat oil & add pork; reserve marinade; brown pork on all sides; add onion & sauté til transparent; add peppers & marinade, bring to boil; reduce heat to medium-low & simmer, covered, til pork is done, about 15 minutes.
3. Serve w/rice or sweet potatoes.

- *1 burner*
- *Skillet (large) w/lid; Small bowl; Whisk; Cutting board; Large, sealable plastic bag; Kitchen knife; Cooking/serving spoon*



So Long: We Hardly Got to Know You

It's been 8 months since Irma and her business casualties are reported weekly on Facebook. Long and short-time business owners post their thoughts + sometimes the situation that caused them to pack it in. Some are leaving the island, but others are not ready to leave home + plan to reopen in a new location.

Places we've been that will be missed include: Kokopeli's - best midday shopping break for beer, pizza + papa gha housh; Off-the-Grid - best burgers + dinner before a show at Pista rkle Theater; Latitude 18 - our favorite on-island tiki bar at Red Hook; High Dive Bar - great dinner with a fabulous view toward Sub Base; Gallery St Thomas - loved meeting the artists on their opening nights; Gourmet Gallery - my go-to grocery store for ingredients no one else carries; Molly Malone's - wonderful conch chowder + one of the best servers on-island.

Last, but not least: Ma Folie Inn is for sale. Will the food still be as fantastic as the view with new owners?

Shrimp & Grits

- 1 c Grits - not instant
- 3 TBSP Unsalted Butter
- 2 c Sharp Cheddar - shredded
- 1 TBSP Salad Oil
- 3/4 lb Shrimp - peeled
- 1 c Chorizo - halved lengthwise & sliced
- 1 c Scallions - sliced
- 2 cloves Garlic - chopped

1. Boil 4 c water; add grits & cook on medium til water is absorbed, stirring frequently, 20 - 25 minutes; remove from heat; stir in butter & cheese.
2. Stir fry shrimp in oil til pink; add chorizo*, scallions & garlic; sauté 1 minute.
3. Spoon grits into bowls & top w/shrimp mixture; serve immediately.

** If using uncooked chorizo, add it first & stir fry 4 minutes before adding shrimp.*

- 2 burners
- Sauce pan (large), Sauté pan (medium), Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Cooking/serving spoon



"Where Was It Made?"

...The U.S. customs official asks when we're clearing the windows shipped by Home Depot. Very strange.

Since they're coming here from a stateside business, any duty due would have been paid at its original import point, if manufactured elsewhere.

The women who run the tile store shared their shipping stories with us. They said that if a customs official decides to play hard ball with a shipment, you'll need to provide documentation showing country of manufacture.

Okay, so where was your car, phone, computer, stuffed teddy bear made? Individual components are assembled somewhere to make the item. Is that the origin? Or maybe it's where the iPhone was packed into its cute little white box. You can't buy one without the accessory-containing box.

Luckily, it appears that only one local customs official feels the need to go "above + beyond."

St Patrick's Day Dinner (4 servings)

- 2-1/2 - 3-1/2 lb Corned Beef Flat Cut Brisket
- 2 lb Red Potatoes - 1" chunks
- 1 TBSP Olive Oil
- 1 TBSP dried Rosemary
- 1 tsp Kosher Salt
- 2 lb Carrots - 1/2" slices
- 1/2 tsp White Pepper
- 2 TBSP Cider Vinegar



1. Place beef - fat side up - in baking pan with its juices; sprinkle spice packet over beef; add 3/4" water; cover tightly with lid or foil & bake 2-1/2 - 3 hrs @ 325° - to 160° on meat thermometer; cool 15 minutes before slicing.
2. Toss potatoes in oil, rosemary & salt on a rimmed cookie sheet; raise oven temp to 425° 1 hour before beef is done; roast potatoes, stirring twice, for 45 minutes.
3. Add carrots to large saucepan, sprinkle w/pepper; add vinegar & 2 TBSP water; bring to boil & cook medium-high, stirring often, until liquid has evaporated & carrots are tender but firm - about 15 minutes.

If it's not St Patty's Day in your home without cabbage, try a couple jars of Greenwood or Aunt Nellie's Red Cabbage, warmed, instead of plain boiled cabbage. It's a sweet & sour taste treat.

- Oven preheated to 325°; 1 burner
- Baking pan, Rimmed cookie sheet, Sauce pan (large), Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Cooking/serving spoon

What Did They Do With All the Money?

One Billion Dollars - So Far

- Virtually nothing required for recovery is made on St Thomas. Add shipping costs.
- A number of roads + bridges were undermined. Add engineering studies.
- Almost all traffic lights were damaged + their supporting poles toppled. Add 6-8 months' lead time for delivery plus expedited handling charges.
- With 12 hours of daylight to get things done, add in overtime for local DPW, WMA + police who worked more than 8 hours a day for as long as it took to get their jobs done.

Ir Maria didn't only destroy private vehicles. The government's trucks + heavy equipment were in need of replacement and supplementation, since so many crews were deployed to deal with surveys and repairs.

There were enough potholes in the roads after Ir Maria to make everyone bob + weave like drunken cows. And there WERE cows, goats, horses + other livestock on the roads who had escaped their original pens + fields when the fences were destroyed.

Chicken w/Honey & Coriander

- 1 large Tomato - seeded & coarsely chopped
- 1 medium Onion - coarsely chopped
- 1/4 tsp Turmeric (or pinch of Saffron)
- 2 TBSP White Wine - slightly warmed
- 2 TBSP Honey
- 2 TBSP Soy Sauce
- 1 TBSP Coriander Seeds - crushed
- 1 tsp Oil
- 2 Boneless, Skinless Chicken Breasts
- 2 tsp Red Wine Vinegar



1. Combine tomato & onion in small bowl; add turmeric/ saffron to warm wine & steep 10 minutes; add to combined tomato & onion mixture; set aside.
2. Combine honey, soy sauce & coriander in a small bowl; mix well & set aside.
3. Heat oil in sauté pan over high heat until smoking; sear chicken on both sides; reduce to medium-low heat & cook 2 minutes more.
4. Add honey mixture & continue cooking over low heat - turning once - about 8 minutes, until chicken is cooked; remove from pan & keep warm.
5. Raise heat to high, add vinegar & tomato/onion mixture; cook, stirring til heated through, but not mushy.
6. Serve chicken over tomato/onion.

- 1 burner
- Sauté pan (medium), 2 Small bowls, Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Cooking/serving spoon

And So, It Begins

Yesterday was the start of the 2018 Hurricane Season; Tropical Storm Alberto has brought high tides + rain to Florida and the southeast. People are posting their fears for our island home on Facebook; destroyed buildings' materials could become airborne missiles + the number of blue roofs indicate a hungry, but well aware, populace. Our fears are much closer to home. The main roof is done, but the patio above the downstairs area is under construction. We're still all dealing with unreliable availability of construction materials. The mantra is, "If you see it - buy it!" No one can even guess when their store will have something back in stock. Our one semi-flat patch of grass has 2 sets of sawhorses covered with primed lumber awaiting cutting + installation.

The top of the driveway holds the interior tile + pine planks for the walls. The back deck is reserved for salvaged lumber, the exterior patio tile + our barbeque grill. It's a tight fit.

We plan to leave for Miami, with the cats, in 2 months for a 3-month North Carolina visit. We'll do what we can.

Veal/Chicken Marsala

1/4 c Unsalted Butter

3/4 lb Veal or Chicken Cutlets - thinly sliced

1 TBSP Flour

1/4 tsp White Pepper

Mushrooms - 1/4 c fresh, sliced, or 7-oz can, drained

3/4 c Marsala or other sweet wine

1. Melt butter in large skillet over med heat; quickly fry veal (1 - 2 minutes per side); remove & set aside.
 - 1a. If using chicken, cook until juices run clear; remove & set aside.
2. Combine flour w/white pepper & 1/2 c water to make smooth paste; add to drippings, stirring; add fresh mushrooms (if using); bring to boil, reduce heat & simmer, stirring, 3 minutes.
3. Add wine & can mushrooms (if using); simmer, stirring, 1 minute.
4. Return meat to pan, turning to coat in sauce.
5. Serve over brown/wild rice mix or egg noodles.

- 1 burner
- Skillet (large), Small bowl, Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Cooking/serving spoon



The Builder's Assistant

My tasks generally fall into the support category: fetch, carry, hold, finish + employ psychic abilities as required. After 30 years of marriage we have our own shorthand + private jokes, none of which are helpful when deconstructing or reconstructing any part of the house. Rather than ignore anything that looks odd to me, I become a hodge - asking about questionable stuff. My assistant mantra is: "If you see something, say something." More than once if necessary. Roy says that explaining things gives him the chance to think through any situations + come up with alternate plans. Sometimes we're up to Plan D before the best solution with available materials appears.

But the main task of the builder's assistant in our renovation projects is herding cats. Zarina is under the furniture as soon as power tools come out. Markai watches everything between naps. However, if there's a hole in a wall - neither one can be trusted.

Coquilles St-Jacques (Scallops)

1 lb bay scallops
2 TBSP Unsalted Butter
2 TBSP Onion - finely chopped
1/4 lb Fresh Mushrooms - thinly sliced
1/3 c Flour
1 c Light Cream & 1/2 c Milk (or 3/4 c each Milk & Heavy Cream)
1/2 c Gruyere Cheese - grated
1/4 c Dry White Wine
1/4 c Packaged Dry Bread Crumbs
1 TBSP Unsalted Butter - melted

1. Poach scallops in 1 c water in small saucepan 2 - 3 minutes; drain.
2. Melt 2 TBSP butter; sauté onion & mushrooms until tender; remove from heat; stir in flour & pinch of white pepper til well blended; gradually stir in cream & milk.
3. Bring to boil, stirring; reduce heat & simmer, stirring frequently, 4 - 5 minutes or until quite thick; add cheese & stir til melted; remove from heat.
4. Carefully add wine & scallops; divide between 2 ovenproof dishes; mix breadcrumbs w/melted butter; sprinkle over scallops; broil 4" from heat 2 - 3 minutes til golden.

- 2 burners, Preheated broiler OR Oven broiler
- Sauce pan (small), Sauté pan (medium), 2 Ovenproof dishes, Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Cooking/serving spoon



Why a Book?

In the early days after the storms, meals were whatever was quick + easy with on hand ingredients. When we ran out of those options + had to rely on poorly stocked stores, I made many recipes more than once. Writing down details for successful dishes meant not having to remember which spices + combos worked.

These recipes can be used by folks who camp - RV or car camping, vacationers renting condos or efficiency suites, and anyone who needs to be able to "create something from nothing" using pantry staples + a few fresh ingredients.

An Airbnb kitchen may not have much besides salt + pepper. But if you plan a couple of meals, premeasure the spices into baggies + make a quick shopping trip when you arrive at your destination, you'll have more money to spend doing the fun things that make a vacation memorable. And you can splurge on more fabulous restaurant meals when you don't need to dine out every night.

Sunday Pot Roast w/Carrots (4 - 6 servings)

- 1/4 c Flour + 2 TBSP
- 3 - 4 lb Beef Chuck Roast - boneless
- 2 TBSP Salad Oil
- 1/2 c Onion - chopped
- 1/2 c Celery - chopped
- 2 cloves Garlic - crushed
- 1 c Tomato Juice
- 2 TBSP Worcestershire Sauce
- 2 tsp Oregano - dried
- 1 lb Carrots - halved & sliced lengthwise



1. Mix flour w/salt & pepper - coat roast.
2. Brown roast well on all sides in oil on medium heat - about 20 minutes; add onion, celery & garlic; sauté til golden.
3. Add tomato juice, 1/4 c water, Worcestershire sauce & oregano; bring to boil; reduce heat & simmer, covered - turning meat once - 2 hours.
4. Add carrots & simmer, covered, 30 minutes longer or til meat & carrots are tender; remove from pan & keep warm.
5. Pour pan drippings into a 2-cup measure; skim off fat & discard; add water to drippings to make 1-1/2 c; return to pan.
6. In small bowl, mix 2 TBSP flour w/2 TBSP water til smooth; stir into pan juices; bring to boil, stirring; reduce heat & simmer 3 minutes.
7. Serve w/egg noodles.

- 1 burner
- Skillet (large) w/lid OR Electric fry pan w/cover, 2-cup measuring cup (heat-resistant), Small bowl, Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Cooking/serving spoon

Have, Have Nots + Do It Yourselfers

St Thomas has 3 types of homeowners. The first group has all their contractors on speed-dial. Storm damage - no problem, just throw money at it. Expenses are prepaid + reimbursed once the insurance checks roll in - if they even make a claim.

The next group is people with few resources, few DIY skills, or both. They can't do much repair work until money arrives, materials are available, AND workers show up, hopefully taking the job through to its satisfactory completion. This group is still living in homes with blue roofs or, if there's no roof, living with relatives.

The final group is homeowners, or their friends or relatives, with real or imagined construction experience. They're in the aisles of home improvement + building supply stores with overloaded carts - finding all the supplies needed for a project or three, or just stopping in for a nitem or two that got left behind or discovered to be necessary once the project was underway.

Moroccan Spiced Chicken Tagine (4 servings)

- 2 TBSP Olive Oil
- 2 lb Boneless, Skinless Chicken Thighs - cut in 1/2" strips
- 1 small Red Onion - chopped
- 2 medium Zucchini - shredded
- 1/3 c Sun-Dried Tomatoes - chopped
- 2-1/2 c Chicken Broth
- 2 - 15-1/2-oz cans Chick Peas - drained & rinsed
- 6 TBSP Raisins
- 1-1/2 TBSP Cumin
- 1-1/2 tsp Nutmeg
- 1-1/2 tsp Allspice
- 1 tsp Turmeric
- 1/2 tsp White Pepper
- 1 c Couscous - small, uncooked

1. Heat oil over medium heat; add chicken, onion, zucchini & tomatoes; cook, stirring, until chicken is no longer pink & veggies are tender, about 4 - 6 minutes.
2. Add remaining ingredients - except couscous - bring to boil over high heat; stir in couscous, cover & remove from heat.
3. Let stand 5 minutes til liquid is absorbed; fluff couscous w/fork & serve.

- 1 burner
- Dutch oven (large) w/lid OR Tagine, Cutting board, Kitchen knife, Coarse grater, Cooking/serving spoon



We're Buggin' Out

The phrase reminds me of M-A-S-H + definitely applies to our hurricane season plan: secure house, pack up the cats + head for NC for 3 months. With 8 days to go, here's what is still in progress or last minute tasks:

- Finish building, painting + installing shutters on all windows + doors.
- Move moose table + telephone cabinet upstairs.
- Pack + ship computers + hard drives.
- Tie down grill + outside tables.
- Relocate kitchen door.
- Install more tile; move remainder inside.
- Install more pine siding; move remainder downstairs.
- Get cats vaccinated + secure their health certificates.
- Eat stuff in fridge + freezer; clean + turn off power.
- Take remaining construction debris to dump.
- Rent car for drive to the airport.
- Notify Fortress to forward mail.
- Mount front railing on eastern deck.
- Rehang clothesline.

Glossary

Al Dente - Tender to the teeth, but not mushy.

Blue Roof Project - Temporary roof. Army Corps of Engineers staff measures for + dispatches local crews to install very heavy, blue plastic FEMA sheeting over damaged roofs. A solid, walkable deck is required for eligibility + the blue roof will be attached over any-and everything already there - including some gutters. A blue roof is expected to last 45 days.

Cistern - Water storage tank. If concrete, may be part of a home's foundation. Collects water by gravity feed from rain gutters. Many people install various filters to use the water for drinking; others use it as is.

Curfew - Travel restriction. A period of the day when both drivers + pedestrians cannot use roads or sidewalks unless previously authorized, e.g. EMT, police, road crews, etc.

DPW - Virgin Islands' Department of Public Works.

Generator - Outdoor device that converts fuel - gasoline, diesel or liquid propane - into electricity. A generator inverter creates power that can be used by solar electric systems.

MRE - Meal Ready to Eat - Meal ingredients sealed in a thick pouch are heated in a plastic pouch powered by a small amount of water which activates a heating unit.

SSI - Supplemental Security Income aka Social Security.

VITEMA - Virgin Islands Territorial Emergency Management Agency.

WMA - Virgin Islands' Waste Management Authority.

Recipe Index

- 5-Spice Chicken w/Onion Rice, 57
- 5-Spice Coconut Chicken, 9

- Acorn Squash, 67
- Angel Hair Pasta & Tomato Crab Sauce, 33
- Angela's Beef Stroganoff, 63

- Beef/Peanut Butter Stir Fry, 49
- Bisquick Impossible Quiche, 95
- Braised, Apple-Stuffed Pork Chops, 51
- Broccoli-Peanut Salad, 79

- Cajun Seasoning, 73
- Carrots, Glazed, 135
- Chicken
 - 5-Spice Chicken w/Onion Rice, 57
 - 5-Spice Coconut Chicken, 9
 - Chicken - Carrot Stir Fry, 27
 - Chicken & Peppers w/Balsamic Vinegar, 123
 - Chicken Cassoulet, Quick, 127
 - Chicken Marsala, 139
 - Chicken Rice Soup, 129
 - Chicken w/Honey & Coriander, 137
 - Chili with Beans, 17
 - Cornish Hens - Thanksgiving Dinner, 67
 - Joe's Grecian Eggplant w/Chicken, 47
 - Moroccan Spiced Chicken Tagine, 145
 - Peanut Butter Chicken, 45
- Chicken - Carrot Stir Fry, 27
- Chicken & Peppers w/Balsamic Vinegar, 123
- Chicken Cassoulet, Quick, 127
- Chicken Rice Soup, 129
- Chicken w/Honey & Coriander, 137
- Chili with Beans, 17
- Coconut Rice, 19
- Coquilles St-Jacques, 141
- Cornish Hens, 67
- Couscous with Chick Pea Stew, 21
- Creole Seasoning, 73
- Crescent Turkey Casserole, 115

- DIY Bisquick, 95

- Egg in a Hole, 59

Fettuccine Carbonara w/Peas, 103
Fettuccini w/Broccoli & Pine Nuts, 35

Grilled Pork Tenderloins w/Peaches or Mangos, 121
Gumbo w/Shrimp & Ham, 111

Ham Steak w/Currant Glaze, 109

Joe's Grecian Eggplant w/Chicken, 47

Kielbasa & Veggies on the Grill, 29

Lamb Kebabs, 75
Lamb Sausage w/Roasted Chickpeas, 97
Lentils & Carrots, 43
Linguini w/Whole Clams, 53
Linguini with Clam Sauce, 13

Meat

Angela's Beef Stroganoff, 63
Beef/Peanut Butter Stir Fry, 49
Bisquick Impossible Quiche, 95
Braised, Apple-Stuffed Pork Chops, 51
Corned Beef, 135
Crescent Turkey Casserole, 115
Fettuccine Carbonara w/Peas, 103
Grilled Pork Tenderloins w/Peaches or Mangos, 121
Gumbo w/Shrimp & Ham, 111
Ham Steak w/Currant Glaze, 109
Kielbasa & Veggies on the Grill, 29
Lamb Kebabs, 75
Lamb Sausage w/Roasted Chickpeas, 97
Meatloaf, 87
More Than Dinty Moore Beef Stew, 41
Moussaka, No-Bake, 119
Pepper Steak Stir Fry, 107
Peruvian-Spiced Pork, 131
Pork Kebabs, 81
Pot Roast w/Carrots, 143
Pulled Pork - Slow Cooker, 99
Red Beans & Rice, 71
Rice & Beans w/Vienna Sausages, 11
Rigatoni w/Salami & Eggs, 65
San Francisco Pork Chops, 125
Sausages w/Peppers & Onions, 61
Stuffed Peppers, No-Bake, 91

Meat, cont.

Veal Marsala, 139

Meatloaf, 87

Miscellaneous

Cajun Seasoning, 73

Chicken Rice Soup, 129

Creole Seasoning, 73

DIY Bisquick, 95

Mojito, 69

Omelet Fillings, 105

Rice, Grains & Other Starches, 31

Salad Dressings, Fresh, 83

Simple Syrup, 69

Mojito, 69

More Than Dinty Moore Beef Stew, 41

Moroccan Spiced Chicken Tagine, 145

Moussaka, No-Bake, 119

Omelet Fillings, 105

Omelet w/Sherried Lobster or Shrimp, 101

Pasta

Angel Hair Pasta & Tomato Crab Sauce, 33

Fettuccine Carbonara w/Peas, 103

Fettuccini w/Broccoli & Pine Nuts, 35

Linguini w/Whole Clams, 53

Linguini with Clam Sauce, 13

Rigatoni w/Salami & Eggs, 65

Scampi Sauce with Pasta, 25

with Cream & Sun-Dried Tomatoes, 117

with Mushroom Cream Sauce, 37

with Mushroom Garlic Sauce, 23

with Ricotta Pecan Sauce, 113

with Sun-Dried Tomatoes, 15

with Tomato Sauce, 39

Pasta w/Cream & Sun-Dried Tomatoes, 117

Pasta w/Mushroom Cream Sauce, 37

Pasta w/Mushroom Garlic Sauce, 23

Pasta w/Ricotta Pecan Sauce, 113

Pasta w/Sun-Dried Tomatoes, 15

Pasta w/Tomato Sauce, 39

Peanut Butter Chicken, 45

Pepper Steak Stir Fry, 107

Peruvian-Spiced Pork, 131

Pork Kebabs, 81

Pot Roast w/Carrots, 143

Potatoes, Roasted, Red, 135

Pulled Pork - Slow Cooker, 99

Quinoa Black Bean Salad, 77

Red Beans & Rice, 71

Rice & Beans w/Vienna Sausages, 11

Rice, Grains & Other Starches, 31

Rigatoni w/Salami & Eggs, 65

Salad Dressings, Fresh, 83

Salmon "Timbales", 55

San Francisco Pork Chops, 125

Sausages w/Peppers & Onions, 61

Scampi Sauce with Pasta, 25

Seafood

Angel Hair Pasta & Tomato Crab Sauce, 33

Coquilles St-Jacques (Scallops), 141

Gumbo w/Shrimp & Ham, 111

Linguini w/Whole Clams, 53

Linguini with Clam Sauce, 13

Omelet w/Sherried Lobster or Shrimp, 101

Salmon "Timbales", 55

Scampi Sauce with Pasta, 25

Seared Scallops w/Tropical Slaw, 93

Shrimp & Grits, 133

Spicy Volcano Shrimp, 89

Tuna Salad, 85

Seared Scallops w/Tropical Slaw, 93

Shrimp & Grits, 133

Sides

Acorn Squash, 67

Broccoli-Peanut Salad, 79

Carrots, Glazed, 135

Coconut Rice, 19

Couscous with Chick Pea Stew, 21

Lentils & Carrots, 43

Potatoes, Roasted, Red, 135

Quinoa Black Bean Salad, 77

Rice, Grains & Other Starches, 31

Tropical Slaw, 93

Simple Syrup, 69

Spicy Volcano Shrimp, 89

St Patrick's Day Dinner, 135

Stuffed Peppers, No-Bake, 91

Thanksgiving Dinner

Cornish Hens & Acorn Squash, 67

Tuna Salad, 85

Veal/Chicken Marsala, 139

Vegetarian

Acorn Squash, 67

Broccoli-Peanut Salad, 79

Carrots, Glazed, 135

Coconut Rice, 19

Couscous with Chick Pea Stew, 21

Egg in a Hole, 59

Fettuccini w/Broccoli & Pine Nuts, 35

Lentils & Carrots, 43

Pasta w/Cream & Sun-Dried Tomatoes, 117

Pasta w/Mushroom Cream Sauce, 37

Pasta w/Ricotta Pecan Sauce, 113

Pasta w/Sun-Dried Tomatoes, 15

Pasta w/Tomato Sauce, 39

Pasta with Mushroom Garlic Sauce, 23

Potatoes, Roasted, Red, 135

Quinoa Black Bean Salad, 77

Rice, Grains & Other Starches, 31

Tropical Slaw, 93

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