

# Food



Banana pudding fits individual cups. F2

Blueberry salsa complements grilled chicken. F2

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## Southern in a jiffy

Athens cookbook author at home with no-fuss cuisine.

Hands-on recipe time under 30 minutes.

By Wendell Brock  
For the AJC

Growing up in the small town of McRae (about three hours southeast of Atlanta), Rebecca Lang learned about Southern cooking at her grandmothers' apron strings. One granny could whip up a batch of divinity without a recipe and kept a dish of fried fatback on her stove for snacking. The other was famous for Friday night fish fries and iced tea as sweet as syrup.

Though her family matriarchs left an indelible imprint on Lang's culinary philosophy, today the 34-year-old mother of two small children hardly has time for elaborate meals and complicated recipes. In her latest book, "Quick-Fix Southern: Home-made Hospitality in 30 Minutes or Less" (Andrews McMeel, \$16.99), the Athens author presents an indispensable blueprint for time-starved foodies: 115 recipes of astonishing simplicity and maximum flavor such as Real Tomato Soup, Divine Chicken and Dumplings and Double Chocolate Scoop Pie. Grounded in the classics but crafted with panache, all of Lang's recipes require a half-hour or less of hands-on kitchen work.

"Quick-Fix Southern" is an invaluable resource for well-seasoned cooks and novices who need gentle guidance in finding their way around the kitchen. It is a rebuttal to anyone who believes Southern food requires hours of labor and vats of fat. And it is a celebration of fresh summer produce that is coming

Southern continued on F3



Rebecca Lang of Athens, author of "Quick-Fix Southern," prepares a plate of Stuffed and Baked Chicken and Okra Fritters. See recipes, F3. Styling by Rebecca Lang Special; photos by Renee Brock Special



Bob Townsend  
Beer Town

## Brewer restarts at new venue

Atlanta's newest brewpub, the Wrecking Bar, is set to open June 19 in Little Five Points.

Owners Bob and Kristine Sandage bought the turn-of-the-century mansion that was formerly home to the Wrecking Bar Architectural Antiques store and lovingly restored it to create an events space and bar-restaurant with an onsite brewery in the basement.

Chris Terenzi, a well-known figure in the Atlanta home-brewing and craft-brewing community, is the brewmaster, returning from a stint in the information technology world to get back to the business of mash tuns, brew kettles and rubber boots.

"Even though I was disconnected from brewing for a while, I was still thinking about making beer," Terenzi said. "I'd be sitting in my cu-

Beer Town continued on F2



Today's insert

Learn how to make the perfect burger and great side dishes.

## 5:30 Challenge 5 ingredients / 30 minutes

**Tonight's solution**  
Cuban Pork Stew

To make the meal  
Sliced tomatoes, yellow rice

By C.W. Cameron  
For the AJC

This recipe from Liz Coyle, an Atlanta Journal-Constitution reader in Virginia-Highland and frequent contributor to "5:30 Challenge," is another delicious meal that makes smart use of convenience products to get a meal on the table quickly. It's the kind of dinner that works perfectly for a working mom who has spent years juggling a heavy schedule of volunteer activities while still serving delicious dinners for her two

teenage boys.

Coyle buys everything she needs for this dish from Trader Joe's. One of the great features is that you can keep the components on hand so you can put it together at a moment's notice. The pork carnitas are a fully cooked product that can sit in your refrigerator for up to three weeks, or in your freezer for up to two months. Keep the beans and salsa in the pantry, and you're ready to make this stew whenever the mood hits.

Start your dinner preparations by getting the yellow rice under way, then warm up the pork with its flavorings. In 15 minutes, dinner is ready. Garnish everything with cilantro if your household likes that flavor.

### Cuban Pork Stew

Hands on: 5 minutes Total time: 15 minutes Serves: 4

- 1 (15.5-ounce) can Cuban-style seasoned black beans
- 1 (12-ounce) package pork carnitas (Mexican-style)
- oven-roasted pork (1 (12-ounce) jar salsa verde
- 1/2 (12-ounce) bottle of beer
- Lime wedges

In a large saucepan, combine the beans, pork, salsa verde and beer. Warm over medium heat for 10 minutes or until everything is heated through. Break up pork into serving-size pieces as it warms. Serve hot, garnished with lime.

Per serving: 242 calories (percent of calories from fat, 16), 24 grams protein, 22 grams carbohydrates, 6 grams fiber, 4 grams fat (1 gram saturated), 55 milligrams cholesterol, 661 milligrams sodium.

Take the 5:30 Challenge. If you have a great-tasting main-dish recipe that uses no more than five ingredients and can be made in 30 minutes or less, tell us. (Salt, pepper, water and oil for greasing a pan don't need to be included in the ingredients.) You can also suggest a side dish if it can be made within the same time. Send recipes to 5:30 Challenge, The Atlanta Journal-Constitution, Sixth Floor, 223 Perimeter Center Parkway N.E., Atlanta, GA 30346. Or by email to fivethr@ajc.com.



Styling by C.W. Cameron Special; photo by Renee Brock Special

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## Food

# Recipes

These recipes from Rebecca Lang's "Quick-Fix Southern" are all you need for a delicious supper worthy of company. Put the cobbler in the oven first; then stuff and bake the chicken. While the cobbler and chicken cook, fry the okra fritters. We did it all in about an hour and a half – 30 minutes per dish. Wendell Brock, for the AJC



Styling by Rebecca Lang Special; photos by Renee Brock Special

### Okra Fritters

Hands on: 30 minutes Total time: 30 minutes Serves: 6

Rebecca Lang attributes this recipe to her paternal grandmother, Sarah Dopson, who was famous for her fish fries, creamy grits and sweet tea.

- 1/2 pound okra
- 3/4 cup cornmeal
- 1/2 cup self-rising flour
- 1/2 cup plus 2 tablespoons buttermilk
- 1 large egg
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil

Cut the okra into 1/4-inch slices. You should have about 2 cups. Set aside. Combine the cornmeal, flour, buttermilk, egg, salt and pepper in a large mixing bowl. Stir in the okra. Heat the vegetable oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Scoop out heaping tablespoons of the okra batter and carefully place in the hot oil. Use the back of the spoon to flatten slightly in the pan. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes per side, or until browned and crispy. Drain on paper towels. Repeat with the remaining batter.

From "Quick-Fix Southern" by Rebecca Lang (Andrews McMeel Publishing, \$16.99)

Per serving: 204 calories (percent of calories from fat, 46), 5 grams protein, 23 grams carbohydrates, 3 grams fiber, 11 grams fat (1 gram saturated), 32 milligrams cholesterol, 305 milligrams sodium.



### Lazy Girl Berry Cobbler

Hands on: 10 minutes Total time: 50 minutes Serves: 6 to 8

You can make this with any kind of berries or fruit. Don't hesitate to have vanilla ice cream or whipped cream at the ready. Rebecca Lang apprenticed under Southern culinary icon Nathalie Dupree, who is the mother of the Lazy Girl Cobbler.

- 1/4 cup unsalted butter
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup packed light brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon baking powder
- powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/4 cups buttermilk
- 4 cups fresh blackberries (or other fruit)

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. In a 10-inch cast-iron skillet, melt the butter in the oven while it is preheating. Once the butter is melted, remove skillet from the oven. Meanwhile, combine the flour, brown sugar, baking powder and salt in a medium mixing bowl. Whisk the buttermilk into the flour mixture.

Pour the batter over the melted butter in the hot skillet. Sprinkle the blackberries evenly over the batter. Bake for 50 minutes. Serve hot, warm or at room temperature.

From "Quick-Fix Southern" by Rebecca Lang (Andrews McMeel Publishing, \$16.99)

Per serving: 204 calories (percent of calories from fat, 46), 5 grams protein, 23 grams carbohydrates, 3 grams fiber, 11 grams fat (1 gram saturated), 32 milligrams cholesterol, 305 milligrams sodium.

### Also recommended

Summer has brought us a fine lineup of new Southern cookbooks. A look at some of the best:

"A Southerly Course: Recipes & Stories From Close to Home" by Martha Hall Foose (Clarkson Potter, \$32.50) The follow-up to the Mississippi writer's James Beard Award-winning "Screen Doors and Sweet Tea," this book is as essential as a tomato sandwich, Blackberry Jam Cake, Peanut Slaw, Hominy Salad, Bacon Crackers: We can't wait to try Foose's deliciously inventive recipes.

"Cooking in the Moment: A Year of Seasonal Recipes" by Andrea Reusing (Clarkson Potter, \$35) The chef at Lantern in Chapel Hill, N.C., Reusing just won the James Beard Award for best chef in the Southeast and is known for spiking indigenous Southern ingredients with Asian flavors. Written like a journal, this lovely book will put you in the mood for Crispy Pan-Fried Catfish With Hot Slaw, Chilled Berry Pudding With Cream (it's made from a loaf of white bread) and a Homeward Angel cocktail, which is a resuscitated Manhattan laced with sour cherries and named for Thomas Wolfe's classic novel.

"Southern Biscuits" by Nathalie Dupree and Cynthia Graubart (Gibbs Smith, \$21.99) Like a coffee-table book for biscuit-heads, this pretty tome features recipes for fat, skinny, tall, hard, moist, crumbly, tender, stuffed, flavored, tart, tiny, sweet, cheesy and creamy biscuits. Plus embellished biscuits (pimento cheese, benne seeds, cranberry and orange rind) and things to do with leftover biscuits.

"Sarah Foster's Southern Kitchen: Soulful, Traditional, Seasonal" (Random House, \$35) From the North Carolina chef and road-tripper, this wins the prize for books I most want to curl up with. Does it get any better than Pea and Bacon Pirlou made with summer field peas, Summer Corn Cakes With Chopped Tomato and Avocado Salad or Farm-stand Peach Ice Cream? Want it all. Foster also makes side trips to the likes of Athens' famed the Grit restaurant, chronicling its Hummingbird Cake, Grilled Pineapple Upside-Down Cake and Lemon Rub Pie (with cornmeal crust).

## Regional cuisine in a jiffy

### Southern

continued from F1

into season now. Peach Salsa, Quick Icebox Pickles, Lazy Girl Berry Cobbler, Watermelon Margaritas. Makes you want to run to the farmers market, right?

Arriving at Lang's house on a recent day, we found the perky, petite author barefoot and ready to cook up a spread: Stuffed and Baked Chicken (with country ham and goat cheese); her grandmother Sarah Dopson's signature Okra Fritters; and Lazy Girl Berry Cobbler, which brought back memories of Lang's time as an apprentice with Southern food icon Nathalie Dupree.

The author of "Southern Entertaining for a New Generation" (Cumberland House, \$17) and "Mary Mac's Tea Room: Stories & Recipes From Atlanta's Classic Southern Kitchen" (Looking Glass Books, \$28), Lang knew in college she wanted to be a food writer. But there was no map of how to get there.

So she got a journalism degree from the University of Georgia (1998)

and then a culinary degree from Johnson & Wales University, which then had a Charleston, S.C., campus (2000). Before heading off to cooking school, however, she worked with Dupree. "I just called 411 and asked for Nathalie Dupree's number," Lang says of her pluck – and luck. "That one phone call changed my life."

She has worked as an assistant food editor at Oxmoor House, the publishing company affiliated with Southern Living, Oprah magazine and other brands; and today she represents Southern Living magazine in the cooking segments of the nationally syndicated show "Daytime."

"Quick-Fix Southern," with its Short-Cut Barbecue and Fast Brunswick Stew, is her answer to being a busy food professional and mother of 5-year-old Camden and 21-month-old Adair. (Husband Kevin is an Athens attorney.)

"I just feel like a lot of people who are about my age end up going through the drive-through or getting something out of the freezer that's already prepared," she says.

"I really wanted this to be a manual for easy weeknight suppers. You don't have to spend hours in the kitchen. But you can still have homemade food. And it can be something you are proud of and that's made from scratch."



### Stuffed and Baked Chicken

Hands on: 15 minutes Total time: 40 minutes Serves: 4

For this wonderful main course, studded with salty country ham, goat cheese and sage, Rebecca Lang suggests asking the butcher to debone the chicken breast. But she insists on using the skin. "Leaving the skin on keeps the meat moist and adds flavor," she writes in her book. Agreed. Love that crispy skin, y'all.

- 3 ounces country ham
- 4 ounces goat cheese, softened
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh sage
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- squeezed lemon juice
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 4 boneless chicken breasts, skin on
- 1 tablespoon olive oil

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Finely dice the ham. Heat a small frying pan over medium heat. Add the ham and cook until slightly browned, about 4 to 5 minutes.

While the ham is cooking, combine the goat cheese and sage in a small mixing bowl. Removed the skillet from the heat and add the lemon juice to the pan. Scrape up any browned bits from the bottom of the pan. Add the ham and pan drippings to the goat cheese. Stir in the pepper and mix well.

Place the chicken breasts on a rimmed baking sheet. Stuff about 1/4 of the goat cheese mixture under the skin of each chicken breast. Rub the olive oil on top of the skin.

Bake at 425 degrees for 25 minutes, or until the skin is brown and crispy.

From "Quick-Fix Southern" by Rebecca Lang (Andrews McMeel Publishing, \$16.99)

Per serving: 354 calories (percent of calories from fat, 62), 31 grams protein, 2 grams carbohydrates, trace fiber, 24 grams fat (11 grams saturated), 100 milligrams cholesterol, 435 milligrams sodium.