

Still Southern good without the wait

Not all dishes made in the South require hours at the stove. Author tells how.

BY GREG MORAGO
 Houston Chronicle

You don't need to be from the South to know Southern cooking can be time consuming. All that stewing, simmering and baking can't be rushed for palates that appreciate authentic down-home flavors and techniques.

Even the movie "My Cousin Vinny" features a memorable scene about grits: "No self-respecting Southerner uses instant grits." Southern cuisine isn't hurried.

Still, not all Southern flavors are accom-

plished by long turns at the stove. Rebecca Lang, contributing editor for Southern Living, knows it's entirely possible to make mouth-watering Southern meals that don't require hours in the kitchen. That's the thrust of her cookbook, "Quick-Fix Southern: Homemade Hospitality in 30 Minutes or Less" (Andrews McMeel, \$16.99), which promises jiffy great-tasting, from-scratch meals without sacrificing flavor.

"I am the mother of two young children, a wife, a working woman, a daughter, a friend, a sister, a volunteer, and it seems any other role that needs filling. Needless to say, I know the necessity of a busy weeknight supper," Lang writes. "Between bath times, deadlines, homework, sports, and supper, putting a meal on the table you can be proud of is an art all in itself."

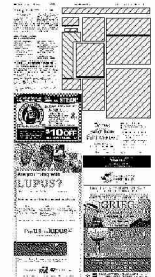
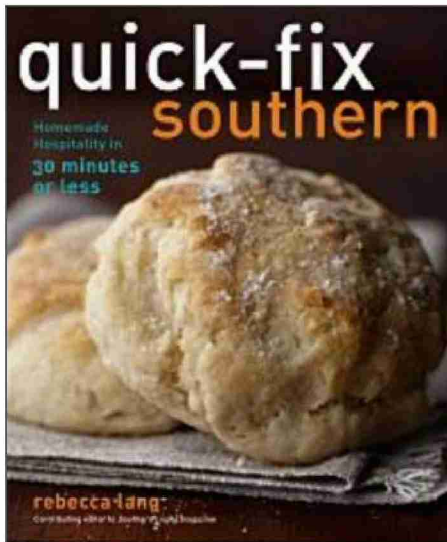
All of Lang's time-saving tips and recipes are in her cookbook. As someone who enjoys cooking, Lang also is aware that cooks need to get a good meal out so they can "attend to all the other 8,000 things" they need to do. Sound familiar?

Sweet-Potato Biscuits

From "Quick-Fix Southern: Homemade Hospitality in 30 Minutes or Less," by Rebecca Lang (Andrews McMeel, 2011).

- 1/2 cup buttermilk
- 2 (6-ounce) jars sweet potato baby food
- 2 tablespoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt

- 4 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for the counter and your hands
- 1 cup cold unsalted butter, cut into pieces



PREHEAT the oven to 425 degrees. Line a rimmed baking sheet with parchment paper or a silicone baking mat.

STIR together the buttermilk and baby food in a small bowl and set aside.

COMBINE the baking powder, salt, flour and butter in the bowl of a food processor fitted with the metal blade. Pulse 7 times or until the butter is cut into very small pieces. Add the buttermilk mixture and process until the dough comes together, about 15 seconds.

SPRINKLE some flour on the countertop. Turn the dough out onto the floured counter. Flour your hands well and pat the dough to about $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch thick.

CUT the biscuits with a floured 3-inch round cutter. Flour the cutter again before cutting each biscuit. Place the biscuits, about 1 inch apart, on the prepared baking sheet.

BAKE 16 to 18 minutes, until slightly browned. Yield: 13-15 biscuits

Chicken And Wild Rice Casserole

From "Quick-Fix Southern: Homemade Hospitality in 30 Minutes or Less," by Rebecca Lang.

1 rotisserie chicken	1 (8.5-ounce) can quartered artichoke hearts, drained
3 cups cooked long-grain and wild rice or 2 (8.8 ounce) packs ready-to-serve long-grain and wild rice, cooked according to package directions	1 cup sour cream
1 tablespoon unsalted butter	1/2 cup chicken broth
3/4 cup diced red onion	1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 cup diced celery	1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
	1 1/2 teaspoon curry powder

PREHEAT oven to 350 degrees. Lightly spray an 11-by-7-inch baking dish.

REMOVE the skin from the chicken and pull the meat off the bone. Use your fingertips to shred the meat by pulling it apart in strips. Place the meat and the rice in a large mixing bowl.

HEAT the butter over medium heat in a small skillet. Add the red onion and celery and cook 5 minutes, stirring often.

STIR the onion and celery, artichoke hearts, sour cream, chicken broth, salt, pepper and curry powder into the chicken and rice. Spoon into the prepared baking dish.

BAKE 30 minutes. (Can be topped with grated cheese before going into oven.)
