

# MIDSOUTH

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# cooking and entertaining

## Simply Delighted About *Simply Suppers*

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With the release of *Simply Suppers*, chef and author Jennifer Chandler has made all of our lives a lot less complicated—at least when it comes to mealtime. The cookbook continues Chandler's idea of preparation of great meals with ease, an idea first established in her debut publication, *Simply Salads*. She's moved on to suppers and has ideas about every food group and course: vegetables, desserts, pastas, poultry and much more.

*Simply Suppers* is full of truly mouth-watering supper ideas, including Beef Tostadas, Creamy Garlic Chicken and Parmesan Roasted Tomatoes. However, the book also includes recipes for meals to stock in the freezer; meals that can be made in half an hour; meals that work with leftovers; and even recipe basics—from pie crust to chicken stock. Want to cook supper, but only have a small amount of time? Chandler's Crawfish Étouffée recipe works perfectly. Need to know what to leave your children when you have to work late? Freeze some Italian Sausage and Spinach Lasagna for the babysitter to re-heat.

In the book, Chandler outlines tips and variations for many of her recipes. She also notes under each offering if it freezes well or is quick to prepare. This seasoned chef and mother has published recipes that she's been feeding her family for years, and her readers are now the lucky recipients of this great information. Chandler's *Simply Suppers* is proof that the



busiest mid-Southerner can prepare and enjoy a substantial, delicious dinner, and her recipe variety ensures that every palate is pleased.

### PAN-ROASTED SEA BASS WITH CHIVE-GARLIC COMPOUND BUTTER

*This is one of Chandler's recipes that can be prepared in half an hour.*

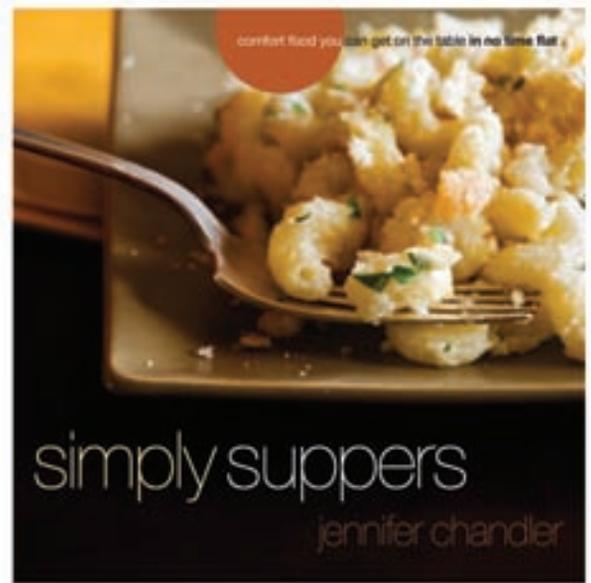
#### For the Chive-Garlic Compound Butter:

- 1 cup unsalted butter (2 sticks), at room temperature
- 2 tbsp. finely minced fresh chives
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- Pinch of Kosher salt

#### For the Pan-Roasted Sea Bass:

- 4 sea bass fillets (4 to 6 ounces each)
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tbsp. olive oil

**To make the compound butter:** In the bowl of an electric mixer, using the paddle attachment, beat the butter until light and fluffy. Add the chives, garlic and salt, and mix until thoroughly combined. Spoon the mixture in the shape of a log onto a piece of parchment paper. Fold the paper over itself. Using your hands, shape the butter into a cylinder about 1½ inches wide (almost like making a Tootsie Roll™.) Once it is shaped, twist the edges to seal it.



Place in the freezer to set, about 20 minutes, then refrigerate until ready to serve. When ready to serve, slice the roll into ¼-inch rounds and remove the parchment. (Only 4 slices of compound butter are needed for this recipe.)

**To cook the fish:** Preheat the oven to 375°. Generously season the sea bass with salt and pepper. In a large ovenproof skillet over medium heat, warm the oil until a few water droplets sizzle when carefully sprinkled in the skillet. Sear the sea bass, skin side up, until the meat is well browned and easily releases from pan, about 4 minutes. Flip over and cook until seared, about 1 minute. Transfer the pan to the oven and roast until the fish is medium rare, about 5 minutes, or until desired doneness.

Serve with a slice of compound butter on top. Serves 4.

**Cooking Tip:** Compound butter is simply butter with an added flavor or two mixed in. These butters are a very easy way to look as if you went to a lot of trouble. Compound butter is also delicious with potatoes, corn on the cob, vegetables and steaks. Experiment with your favorite flavors. Some of my other favorite compound butter combinations are lemon chive, fresh herb, bacon and bleu cheese and Parmesan and toasted pine nut.

**Do Ahead:** The rolled butter can be stored for up to 1 week in the refrigerator and up to 1 month in the freezer.

### CHEDDAR-PECAN GREEN BEAN CASSEROLE

*Chandler puts an elegant twist on classic dishes, including vegetable side dishes. Her version of green bean casserole is refined yet recognizable.*

- 4 tbsp. unsalted butter, divided, plus extra to grease the baking dish
- Kosher salt
- 1½ pounds fresh or frozen haricots verts, trimmed

Pan-Roasted Sea Bass with Chive-Garlic Compound Butter



8 ounces button mushrooms,  
trimmed and thinly sliced  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
¼ tsp. freshly ground nutmeg  
2 tbsp. all-purpose flour  
¾ cup chicken stock  
¾ cup heavy cream  
½ cup shredded sharp white  
cheddar cheese  
Freshly ground black pepper  
¾ cup French-fried onions  
¼ cup panko bread crumbs  
¼ cup chopped pecans



Cheddar-Pecan Green Bean Casserole

Preheat the oven to 395°. Lightly grease a 9 x 13 casserole dish with butter and set aside. Fill a large pot with water and add 1 tbsp. of salt. Over high heat, bring the salted water to a boil. Add the beans and cook until just tender, about 2 minutes. Drain and immediately plunge the beans into a large bowl of ice water to stop the cooking. Drain again and set aside. In a large saucepan over medium-high heat, melt 2 tbsp. of the butter. Add the mushrooms and cook, stirring occasionally, until the mushrooms begin to give up some of their liquid, about 5 minutes. Add the garlic and nutmeg and cook until fragrant, about 2 minutes. Sprinkle the flour over the mushrooms and stir to combine. Slowly stir in the stock and heavy cream. Reduce the heat to medium-low and cook, stirring frequently, until the mixture thickens, about 8 minutes. Remove from the heat and stir in the shredded cheese. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Add the green beans and stir until well coated. Spoon the mixture into the prepared pan.

In a medium mixing bowl toss together the French-fried onions, bread crumbs and pecans. In a small saucepan, melt the remaining 2 tbsp. of butter. Stir the melted butter into the onion mixture. Sprinkle the topping evenly over the green beans. Transfer to the oven and bake until golden and bubbly, about 10 to 12 minutes. *Serves 6.*

**Cooking Tip:** What are haricots verts? Quite simply, they are very small and slender French green beans. (*Haricot verts* is French for green beans.) They tend to be more tender and flavorful than the thicker, American green beans. Most markets now carry them both fresh and frozen. American green beans, fresh or frozen, are an acceptable substitute.

## PRALINE BREAD PUDDING

*Chandler also offers delectable desserts in her cache of recipes. This selection is a simplified version of a recipe created by Chandler's former co-worker, pastry chef Heather Bugg Ries.*

### For the Bread Pudding:

Unsalted butter to grease the baking dish  
1 cup milk  
1 cup heavy cream  
½ cup firmly packed dark brown sugar  
2 large eggs  
2 large egg yolks  
1 tsp. pure vanilla extract  
½ tsp. ground cinnamon  
½ tsp. freshly grated nutmeg  
6 large croissants, 1 day old, cut in 1-inch cubes and set aside in a large mixing bowl (about 8 cups)  
2 cups coarsely chopped praline pecans

### For the Praline Sauce:

1 cup dark brown sugar  
¼ tsp. baking soda  
¼ tsp. pure vanilla extract  
1 tbsp. dark corn syrup  
½ cup buttermilk  
½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, cubed  
Pinch of salt

**To make the bread pudding:** Preheat the oven to 375°. Lightly grease a 9- x 13-inch baking dish with butter and set aside. In a large mixing bowl combine the milk, cream, brown sugar, eggs, egg yolks, vanilla, cinnamon and nutmeg. Whisk until combined. Pour the pudding over the croissants and coat evenly. Let stand until the croissants have soaked up the pudding, about 5 minutes. Stir in the praline pecan pieces. Pour the mixture into the prepared baking dish and cover with aluminum foil. Place the dish in a roasting pan with at least 2-inch sides. Place the pan on the middle rack of the oven. Very carefully pour enough hot water around the dish to come halfway up the sides of the baking dish. Slide the rack into the oven, being careful not to slosh water onto the bread pudding. Bake until set, about 25 minutes. Remove the foil and bake until the bread pudding is puffed and golden brown on top, about 15 to 20 minutes.



Praline Bread Pudding

**To make the praline sauce:** In a medium saucepot with tall sides, place the brown sugar, baking soda, vanilla, corn syrup, buttermilk, butter and salt. (This mixture tends to boil over if not watched.) Whisk to combine. Place over medium heat and cook, without stirring, until the sugar starts to bubble, about 3 minutes. Whisk until well combined. Raise the heat to medium-high and bring the sauce to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer, whisking occasionally, until it starts to thicken, about 10 to 15 minutes. Remove from the heat. Serve the bread pudding warm with the sauce on the side. *Serves 8.*

### Cooking Tips:

—Praline pecans are pecan halves that have been candy coated. They are sometimes also called candied pecans or bourbon pecans.  
—Dark brown sugar and dark corn syrup lend a rich molasses flavor to the dessert. It is fine to substitute light brown sugar and light corn syrup if that is what you have on hand.

**Variation:** Ideally you should use day-old bread for this dish. It is okay to use fresh bread in a pinch. Day-old brioche or French bread can be substituted for the croissants.

**Do Ahead:** The sauce can be stored in the refrigerator for up to 1 week. Reheat in a double boiler or a microwave.

**Time-Saving Tip:** It's not as rich in flavor, but you can use store-bought caramel sauce in place of praline sauce. ■