

# The Flavor Thesaurus

*A Compendium of Pairings, Recipes and Ideas for the Creative Cook*

NIKI SEGNET

B L O O M S B U R Y

LONDON • BERLIN • NEW YORK • SYDNEY

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Published by Bloomsbury USA, New York

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LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CONTROL NUMBER: 2010910372

ISBN 978-1-59691-604-3

First U.S. Edition 2010

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Typeset by Hewan Text UK Ltd, Edinburgh  
Printed in the U.S.A. by Quad/Graphics, Fairfield, Pennsylvania

It seems fitting to dedicate this book to a pair:  
my cooking adviser and mother, Marian Stevens,  
and my writing adviser and husband, Nat Segnit.

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“ . . . lamb and apricots are one of those combinations which exist together in a relation that is not just complementary but that seems to partake of a higher order of inevitability—a taste which exists in the mind of God. These combinations have the quality of a logical discovery: bacon and eggs, rice and soy sauce, Sauternes and *foie gras*, white truffles and pasta, *steak-frites*, strawberries and cream, lamb and garlic, Armagnac and prunes, port and Stilton, fish soup and *rouille*, chicken and mushrooms; to the committed explorer of the senses, the first experience of any of them will have an impact comparable with an astronomer’s discovery of a new planet.”

John Lanchester, *The Debt to Pleasure*

# Introduction

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I hadn't realized the depth of my dependence on cookbooks until I noticed that my copy of Elizabeth David's *French Provincial Cooking* had fingernail marks running below the recipes. Here was stark evidence of my timidity, an insistence on clinging to a set of instructions, like a handrail in the dark, when after twenty years of cooking I should surely have been well enough versed in the basics to let go and trust my instincts. Had I ever really learned to cook? Or was I just reasonably adept at following instructions? My mother, like her mother before her, is an excellent cook but owns only two recipe books and a scrapbook of clippings, and rarely consults even those. I began to suspect that the dozens of books I owned were both a symptom and a cause of my lack of kitchen confidence.

It was at a dinner around the same time that a friend served a dish using two ingredients it would never have occurred to me to pair. How, I wondered, did she know *that* would work? There was something in the air about surprising flavor matches, the kind of audacious combinations pioneered by chefs like Heston Blumenthal, Ferran Adrià and Grant Achatz. What lay at the heart of their approach to food was, as far as I could see, a deeper understanding of the links between flavors. Being an ordinary, if slightly obsessive, home cook, I didn't have the equipment or resources to research these; what I needed was a manual, a primer to help me understand how and why one flavor might go with another, their points in common and their differences. Something like a thesaurus of flavors. But no such book existed and so, with what turned out in hindsight to be almost touching naivete, I thought I might try to compile one myself.

My first task was to draw up the list of flavors. Stopping at 99 was to some extent arbitrary. Nonetheless, a flavor thesaurus that accounted for every single flavor would be as impractical as it would be uncomfortable on the lap. Other than potatoes, the staple carbohydrates have been omitted. The same goes for most common condiments. There are, of course, plenty of interesting things to say about the flavors of rice, pasta, black pepper, vinegar and salt, but their flavor affinities are so wide as to exclude themselves by virtue of sheer compatibility. Other omissions, like zucchini, might strike you as odd: all I can say to the zucchini fan is (a) sorry, and (b) this book makes no claims to be the last word on the subject. Any book on flavor is going to be at least in part subjective, and in writing about the pairings I find most interesting or like to eat the most, I will inevitably have left gaps that come down to nothing other than a matter of taste.

The majority of flavors appear under their own heading. In a few instances, where it seemed to make sense, some very similarly flavored ingredients share a heading. Anise, for example, covers anise seeds, fennel, tarragon, licorice and pastis. Similarly, neither bacon and ham nor Brussels sprouts and cabbage could easily be separated, so they labor slightly uncomfortably under composite categories. When it came to a choice between untidiness and boring the reader with repetitions, I chose untidiness every time.

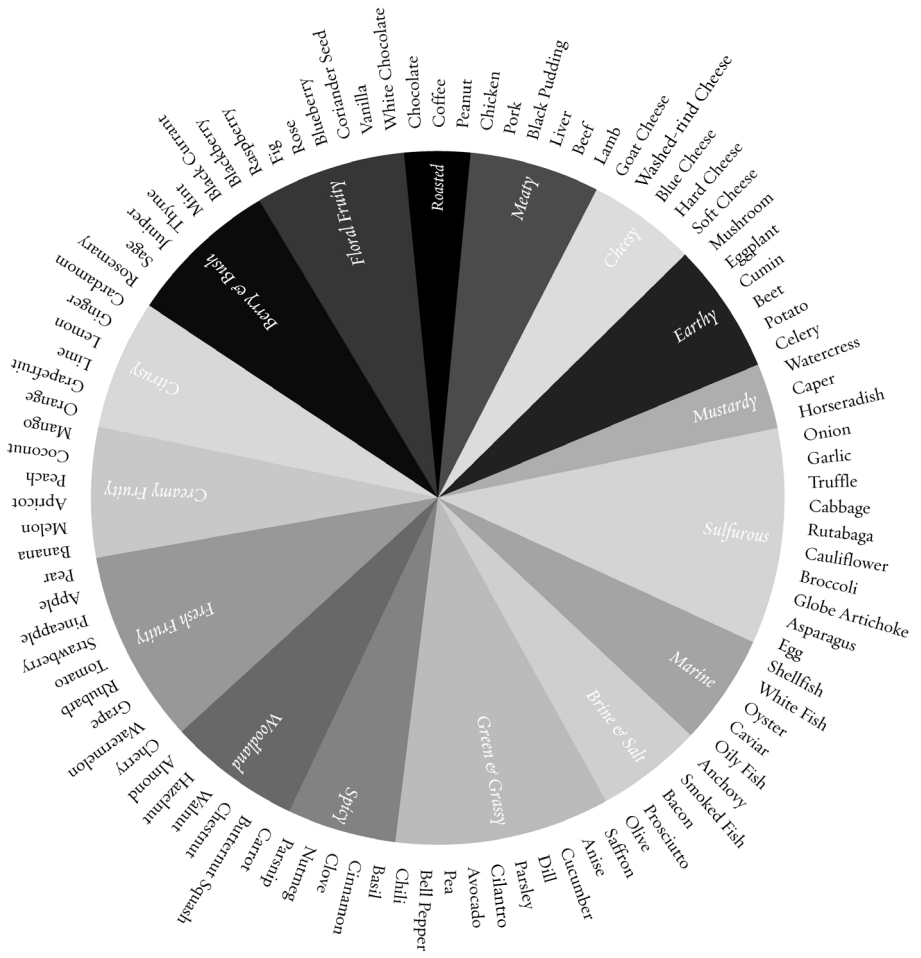
Then I sorted the flavors into categories. Most of us are familiar with the concept of flavor families, whether we know it or not. Floral, citrus, herbaceous: the sort of descriptors you might encounter on the back of a wine bottle, to help conjure an idea of how something might taste. And it's into these, or adjectival headings like them, that the flavors are divided. The flavors in each family have certain qualities in common; in turn, each family is linked in some way to the one adjacent to it, so that, in sum, they comprise a sort of 360° spectrum, represented opposite as a flavor wheel.

Take the Citrusy family, for example. This covers zesty, citric flavors like orange, lemon and cardamom. Cardamom, in turn, has flavor compounds in common with rosemary, which is the first flavor in the next flavor family, Berry & Bush. At the other end of that family, blackberry leads to the first flavor in the Floral Fruity family: raspberry. And so on around the wheel, flavor leading to flavor, family to family, in a developing sequence of relations you might enter at lemon and leave at blue cheese.

I acknowledge that this methodology has its limitations. Some flavors resisted easy categorization: coriander seed, for instance, ended up under Floral Fruity, but might as easily have sat in Citrusy or Spicy. And how an ingredient is prepared can make all the difference to its character. The flavor of cabbage, for example, is mustardy when raw, sulfurous cooked. The flavor wheel, in short, is by no means intended to be an inarguable, objective framework for understanding flavor—but it does provide a stimulating and intriguing means of navigating your way around the subject.

Next came the pairings. Clearly, dishes often have more than two primary ingredients, but a couple of considerations led me to make pairs of flavors the organizing principle of my *Flavor Thesaurus*. First, sanity (mine). Even restricting myself to 99 flavors, if I had set out to write about flavor *trios* I would have been faced with 156,849 possible combinations; the 4,851 possible pairings seemed more to scale with the sort of book it would be both possible to write and pleasurable to read. Second, clarity. To assess, in the mind's palate, the compatibility of two flavors is exponentially easier than imagining the interplay of three or more. Necessarily, I often discuss a flavor combination in the context of a dish that contains other ingredients (for example, parsley and mint in tabbouleh), but the emphasis is always on the main flavor pairing under discussion.

The entries elaborate on each of these pairings, drawing promiscuously on flavor science, history, culture, chefs' wisdom and personal prejudice—anything





that might shed light on why certain flavors work together, what they bring out in each other, how the same flavor pairings are expressed in different cuisines and so on. I've given any recipes in the briefest possible terms, rather in the manner of Victorian cookbooks—compressed in the expectation that you have some experience in the kitchen. If you're tempted to cook anything in the pages that follow, it's best to read the recipe through before you start (see Beet & Pork, page 75, if you need convincing). I've assumed you know that you usually need to add salt to savory dishes, taste them and adjust before you serve, turn off the stove when you're finished, and fish out any ingredients that might choke your loved ones. If something in a recipe isn't clear—stop, think, and if the solution still isn't forthcoming, find a similar recipe and see if that sheds any light.

Most often, I guarantee, the answer will just dawn on you. One of the great satisfactions of discovering more about flavor combinations is the confidence it gives you to strike out on your own. Following the instructions in a recipe is like parroting pre-formed sentences from a phrasebook. Forming an understanding of how flavors work together, on the other hand, is like learning the language: it allows you to express yourself freely, to improvise, to find appropriate substitutions for ingredients, to cook a dish the way you fancy cooking it. You'll be surprised how rarely things go seriously wrong. Although the author takes absolutely no responsibility for anything that ends up in the trash.

Flavor is, of course, notoriously subjective and hard to describe. Still, there are a few things worth noting before you try. As anyone who has been on a wine course will tell you, flavor is not the same as taste. Taste is restricted to five qualities detectable on the tongue and elsewhere in the mouth: sweetness, saltiness, sourness, bitterness and “umami” (or savoriness). Flavor, on the other hand, is detected mainly thanks to our sense of smell, by the olfactory bulb and, to a lesser extent, orally. Pinch your nose and you can tell if an ingredient is sweet or salty, but not what its flavor is. Your sense of taste gives you a back-of-an-envelope sketch of what a particular foodstuff is like: flavor fills in the details. Nonetheless, in its general, broadest use, the term “flavor” tends to incorporate taste, as well as the “trigeminal” qualities of ingredients—that is, the sensation of heat from chili, pepper and mustard, the cooling properties of menthol and the drawstring pucker of tannins in red wine and tea.

Beyond the basic taste elements, to characterize a flavor can be as elusive a task as describing any other sort of feeling. Inasmuch as the flavor of an ingredient is attributable to the chemical compounds it contains, we might with some degree of objectivity observe that two ingredients that share a compound have similar flavors. Holy basil and clove, for instance, both contain a compound called eugenol—and holy basil has a clove-like flavor. But what do we mean by a clove-like flavor? To me, it's a bit like sucking on

a sweet, rusty nail. However, no person's taste buds, or olfactory systems, are quite the same, and neither are their faculties for converting sensory input into words.

Where you come from and what you're accustomed to eating are also important determinants of how you sense and describe flavor, and of which flavors you tend to pair with others. I've used expert opinions to lend to my own judgments as robust an edge of objectivity as possible. But there's no escaping the fact everyone's flavor thesaurus would to some extent be different. Flavor is, among other things, a repository of feeling and memory: just as smell is said to be the most redolent sense, so the flavor of a certain dish can transport us back instantaneously to the time and place we first experienced it, or experienced it most memorably. *The Flavor Thesaurus* may look like, and even sometimes read like, a reference book, but for all its factual content it's an inescapably subjective one.

Writing *The Flavor Thesaurus* has taught me many things, not least to take a more open-minded approach to combinations that other cooks, in other cultures, take for granted. But as a naturally untidy person, I'm always looking for patterns, some means of imposing order on unruly reality. And in part I suppose I expected the book to add up, over its length, to something along these lines, a Grand Unifying Flavor Theory that would reconcile the science with the poetry and my mother's thoughts on jam.

It didn't. Or not quite. I *did* learn some broadly applicable principles, like how to use one flavor to disguise, bolster, temper or enliven another. And I'm now far more alert to the importance of balancing tastes—salt, sweet, bitter, sour and umami—and making the most of contrasting textures and temperatures. But what *The Flavor Thesaurus* does add up to, in the end, is a patchwork of facts, connections, impressions and recollections, designed less to tell you exactly what to do than to provide the spark for your own recipe or adaptation. It's there, in short, to get the juices flowing.

Niki Segnit  
London, March 2010



**ROASTED**

*Chocolate*

*Coffee*

*Peanut*

# Chocolate

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The complex processing undergone by most chocolate explains the huge variation in flavor. The untreated cocoa beans are astringent and bitter but fermentation gives rise to fruity, wine-like or sherry flavors, and the roasting process can introduce a nearly infinite variety of nutty, earthy, woody, flowery and spicy notes. The flavor of good-quality chocolate is best appreciated by pushing a piece to the roof of your mouth and letting it melt. The more sweetened the chocolate, the quicker it will reveal its flavor. As you work your way up the cocoa percentages you'll notice that it takes longer for the flavor to develop, and that there's an increase in bitterness and length—the time the flavor lingers in your mouth. When you get to 99 or 100 percent cocoa content, you may also note that the experience is like running your tongue along the main London–Edinburgh railway. In this section, “chocolate” is taken to cover dark chocolate, milk chocolate and cocoa. White chocolate is dealt with separately (see page 335).

**CHOCOLATE & ALMOND** What does parental guilt taste like? Chocolate and almond, the ingredients in the Toblerone your dad grabbed at the airport instead of a pair of maracas or a genuine bear's paw. The secret of its success must have something to do with the genial compatibility of chocolate and almond. A wealth of nutty flavor notes is formed when cocoa beans are roasted during the chocolate-making process. Similarly, the flavor of almonds is intensified by toasting, which helps them stand up to chocolate's strength of flavor. Put this to the test in Christopher Tan's chocolate soup with salted almonds. Melt 1 tbsps unsalted butter in a skillet over a medium-low heat, add 1½ oz sliced almonds and sauté with care for 4–5 minutes, until golden brown. Set aside. Whisk 8 fl oz water, 3 fl oz whipping cream, 1 oz superfine sugar and 1¼ oz sifted cocoa powder in a saucepan over a medium heat until the sugar has dissolved. Let the mixture bubble gently for 2–3 minutes, then add 3½ oz chopped dark chocolate containing at least 60 percent cocoa solids. Stir with the whisk until smooth, then pour into little bowls, top with the almonds and sprinkle over a few grains of *fleur de sel*. Divide between 4–6 bowls and serve immediately.

**CHOCOLATE & ANISE** See *Anise & Chocolate*, page 170.

**CHOCOLATE & APRICOT** See *Apricot & Chocolate*, page 267.

**CHOCOLATE & AVOCADO** See *Avocado & Chocolate*, page 185.

**CHOCOLATE & BACON** Chocolatier Katrina Markoff, founder of Vosges Haut-Chocolat, combines applewood-smoked bacon and smoked salt with a dark milk chocolate in her Mo's Bacon Bar. She says she was inspired by eating chocolate-chip pancakes with maple syrup and bacon when she was six. You might see how the classic combination of savory and sweet would work and be made that bit more unusual by the smoky element in the bacon. Taking the combination a step farther, Tee and Cakes in Boulder, Colorado, makes maple-flavored cupcakes topped with a slightly salted dark chocolate ganache and a sprinkle of chopped-up bacon.

**CHOCOLATE & BANANA** See *Banana & Chocolate*, page 263.

**CHOCOLATE & BEET** See *Beet & Chocolate*, page 74.

**CHOCOLATE & BLACK CURRANT** Dark and heavy as Finnish Goth poetry, but not quite as popular. A few British brand names (Matchmakers, Jaffa Cakes) have given

the pair a whirl, announcing them with a fanfare before ushering them silently out of the back door. The combination is more likely to work with the soothing influence of dairy—say, in a black-currant mousse, parfait or fool with a chocolate sauce, or a chocolate gâteau with a fresh cream and black-currant filling.

CHOCOLATE & BLACK PUDDING See *Black Pudding & Chocolate*, page 29.

CHOCOLATE & CARDAMOM Like a puppeteer's black velvet curtain, dark chocolate is the perfect smooth background for cardamom to show off its colors. Use the cardamom in sufficient quantities and you can pick out its enigmatic citrus, eucalyptus and warm, woody-floral qualities. I find adding a pinch of ground cardamom can make even the most ordinary dark chocolate taste expensive. This tart is spectacularly delicious and very quick to make but needs a couple of hours in the fridge to set. Prepare and bake a 9-in sweet pastry shell. Slit open 10 cardamom pods, grind up the contents with a mortar and pestle, add to 1¼ cups heavy cream in a pan and scald. Remove from the heat and add 7 oz dark chocolate, broken into pieces, and 2 tbsps unsalted butter. Stir until melted and well mixed. When cooled a little (don't let it set), pour into the pastry shell and place in the fridge for two or three hours. When it has hardened, sift a little cocoa powder over it and serve with a modest dollop of crème fraîche.

CHOCOLATE & CAULIFLOWER See *Cauliflower & Chocolate*, page 112.

CHOCOLATE & CHERRY See *Cherry & Chocolate*, page 235.

CHOCOLATE & CHESTNUT Charles Ranhofer, chef at Delmonico's restaurant in New York in the nineteenth century, used to fashion potatoes out of chestnut ice cream, with almond slivers for eyes, and the whole thing rolled in grated chocolate for an authentic muddy look. Tempting, perhaps, to make these and bury them in a deep soil of finely grated chocolate, then let your guests dig for the potatoes with spoons. For fear of friends thinking you've lost it completely, a chocolate sauce on a chestnut ice cream would be tasty, if less fun. If you're on a chestnut bender, use the egg whites left over from making the ice cream to make a Mont Blanc, the classic dessert of meringue topped with a mound of sweetened chestnut purée, a summit of whipped cream and a light dusting of confectioners' sugar.

CHOCOLATE & CHILI One of the original “wow” flavor pairings to have made its way around the world. As chilies turn red, they develop a sweet, fruity flavor that combines harmoniously with bitter chocolate—even more so when the chili is dried and has taken on still sweeter, raisiny, leathery notes. Look out for mulato and ancho dried chilies, which are considered inherently chocolatey themselves. Besides flavor compatibility, the fattiness of chocolate offsets some of the chili heat, as in a chili-rich Mexican *mole*. *Mole* simply means “sauce,” and there are many different types. Most of them contain dried chilies, but as a rule chocolate turns up only in “red” or “black” *moles*. As well as chili and chocolate, these contain various dried fruits, bread, nuts, tomato, onion, garlic, seeds, dried and fresh herbs, spices, oil, lard and stock. As you might imagine, the result is a complex, sweet-piquant sauce that requires much pounding, grinding and toasting to prepare. Incidentally, the meat is either browned and added to the sauce to finish cooking, or cooked (usually roasted) separately and served with the sauce draped over it. Fresh *moles* are primarily confined to special occasions. If you

fancy making one to an authentic recipe but don't have Mexican chocolate (which is coarse, dark and often blended with cinnamon and vanilla), the cookbook writer Rick Bayless suggests using a third as much unsweetened cocoa powder instead. Aside from *moles*, American spice shops sell prepared blends of cocoa, chipotle and paprika to add to chili con carne, stews or even cakes and brownies. You might also try adding a few pinches of dried red chili flakes to chocolate cornflake clusters—I call these mini Krakatoa cakes. The corn flavor is very harmonious with the chili and chocolate, and the crunchy texture adds to the fun. Get the basic recipe from a five-year-old. But best not to serve him or her the results.

CHOCOLATE & CINNAMON See *Cinnamon & Chocolate*, page 203.

CHOCOLATE & COCONUT Just as government health departments warn that using marijuana can lead to harder drugs, so sweet tobacco led to my addiction to cigarettes. You could, with rice paper, make a rollie out of these strands of cocoa-flavored coconut. “Don't let's ask for the moon,” I puffed at the dog, à la Bette Davis. From there it was only a few fake hacking coughs to the truly rank taste of real cigs. Crikey, I thought, as I inhaled my first. These are *terrible*. If, as I'd been led to believe, the cigarette companies were so dastardly, why didn't they learn something from the candy companies and make their products irresistible? I soon learned that they had, but it had nothing to do with the taste. Years later, I was back on the candy again, this time in the form of fancy chocolate with notes of tobacco and smoke. If you're looking for a hit, try Pralus's Tanzanie (tobacco, treacle, molasses, raisin) or their Vanuatu (smoke, spice, licorice). For a chocolate with notes of tobacco and coconut, try Michel Cluizel's Mangaro Lait 50%, a milk chocolate that, as the name suggests, contains a whopping 50 percent cocoa.

CHOCOLATE & COFFEE See *Coffee & Chocolate*, page 13.

CHOCOLATE & FIG See *Fig & Chocolate*, page 324.

CHOCOLATE & GINGER See *Ginger & Chocolate*, page 295.

CHOCOLATE & GOAT CHEESE See *Goat Cheese & Chocolate*, page 46.

CHOCOLATE & HAZELNUT We have the scarcity of cocoa in late-nineteenth-century Piedmont to thank for the popularity of this heavenly combination. The bulking out of chocolate with ground hazelnuts led (eventually) to the invention of Nutella, although it was originally sold as a solid loaf and called *pasta gianduja*. *Gianduja*, which means something along the lines of “John the wandering man,” is a carnival character representing the typical Piedmontese, and still the generic term for the sweet paste made from chocolate and hazelnut. In the 1940s mothers would cut a slice off the loaf, put it between slices of bread and give it to their children, who were smart enough to throw away the bread and just eat the chocolate. Piedmontese ducks must have been very fantastically plump mid-century. In 1951 a technique was developed to soften the mixture, and the product was renamed *Supercrema Gianduja* and sold by the jar. Finally, in 1964, its name was changed to the more internationally pronounceable Nutella, and today it outsells peanut butter worldwide. If you find Nutella too sweet, you might like to get your *gianduja* fix from a Ferrero Rocher or from Baci—or, if you prefer something a little more unusual, try Valrhona's Caraibe Noisettes or Amedei's milk chocolate with Piedmont hazelnuts. See also Nutmeg & Walnut, page 210.

CHOCOLATE & LEMON See *Lemon & Chocolate*, page 290.

CHOCOLATE & LIME Chocolate limes are a classic British sweet. In your mouth, the lime candy falls away in sharp, slaty layers to reveal a dry, crumbly chocolate center. Sadly the combination rarely crops up in other forms, although I once ate a spectacular dark chocolate tart with a sharp lime sorbet at one of Terence Conran's restaurants.

CHOCOLATE & MINT See *Mint & Chocolate*, page 313.

CHOCOLATE & NUTMEG Few recipes call for milk chocolate. It's more difficult to work with than dark chocolate, usually doesn't have as much cocoa flavor and is, in most cases, achingly rich. If you genuinely can't bear dark chocolate, consider a milk chocolate and nutmeg tart. The nutmeg boosts the flavor of the chocolate and freshens its cloying sweetness (nutmeg has a similar effect in creamy custard tarts and eggnog (see *Egg & Nutmeg*, page 124)). The milk chocolate needs to be at least 30 percent cocoa solids. Follow the recipe in *Chocolate & Cardamom*, page 8, but scald the cream with  $\frac{1}{4}$  of a whole nutmeg grated into it instead of the cardamom. Cool the chocolate a little before grating in an additional  $\frac{1}{4}$  nutmeg. Taste for strength, then pour into the pastry shell and leave to set in the fridge. Grate over a little more nutmeg before serving.

CHOCOLATE & ORANGE See *Orange & Chocolate*, page 280.

CHOCOLATE & PEANUT According to Alexandre Dumas, the Spanish called peanuts *cacahuete* because of their resemblance in flavor to cocoa. He goes on to note that they took advantage of this flavor harmony by mixing small amounts of expensive cocoa into a peanut mixture to make a sort of cheap chocolate. Fifty years later, in 1912, the Goo Goo Cluster, a mixture of chocolate, peanuts, caramel and marshmallow, became the first combination chocolate bar in the U.S. By the close of the 1920s, Reese's and Mars had respectively launched Peanut Butter Cups and Snickers, the latter becoming America's favorite chocolate bar, a position it holds to this day. Unroasted peanuts actually don't taste very good with chocolate, since (being legumes) they have a greenish, vegetal taste; the success of most peanut-chocolate combinations is down to the formation of pyrazines during the roasting process, which are harmonious with roasted notes in the chocolate. Use the combination at home for diner-style treats like a sundae made with vanilla ice cream topped with chopped, roasted peanuts and chocolate sauce, or a milkshake made with liquefied peanut butter and chocolate ice cream. Chef Paul Heathcote uses dark chocolate instead of the usual milk in his salty chocolate, caramel and peanut tart.

CHOCOLATE & PEAR A little chocolate will highlight pear's sweetness; too much and you swamp the fruit's flavor. *Poires Belle Hélène*—poached pears with chocolate sauce—is frequently a case in point. Too often a thick blanket of chocolate overpowers the dish, so use it sparingly and be sure to poach the pears in vanilla syrup to create a connection between the two flavors. Nuts fulfill a similar bridging role; pear and chocolate both love hazelnut, and the trio make a great cake. Or follow Nigel Slater's decadent tip of stirring broken-up florentines into whipped cream and spooning it into the cored cavities of poached pears. Use bought florentines or the recipe in *Ginger & Chocolate*, page 295.

CHOCOLATE & PINEAPPLE See *Pineapple & Chocolate*, page 253.

CHOCOLATE & RASPBERRY Raspberry is a reflex pairing for chocolate tarts and puddings. Too often, in my humble opinion, berries are strewn on a chocolate dessert plate for no better reason than to pretty it up. All very well if there's enough cream to smooth the transition between the two, but if there's not, or if the raspberries aren't perfectly ripe, the combination is like being offered a soothing cuddle only to be pinched hard on the fleshy underside of your arm. A more balanced chocolate-raspberry experience is to be had in chocolate with strong raspberry notes, such as Valrhona's gorgeous Manjari or Amano's Madagascar.

CHOCOLATE & ROSE See *Rose & Chocolate*, page 326.

CHOCOLATE & ROSEMARY See *Rosemary & Chocolate*, page 301.

CHOCOLATE & STRAWBERRY Not all it's cracked up to be. Strawberry's heart-like shape and color have seen it unimaginatively match-made with that default love token, chocolate. But doesn't a strawberry dipped in chocolate just look like a fruit wearing big underpants? And aren't they the sort of thing corporate raiders feed to call girls in cream-colored hotel rooms? I'd take chocolate and hazelnut over these two any day.

CHOCOLATE & THYME See *Thyme & Chocolate*, page 310.

CHOCOLATE & TOMATO A hint of chocolate flavor in spicy tomato recipes such as chili con carne, caponata, ketchup or meatballs is recommended by the American food historian Alice Arndt. Mexican cooks think of cocoa/dark chocolate as spices as well as sweet ingredients; for them, chocolate is a flavoring that, used in moderation, adds richness and depth to savory dishes and smooths the raw edges of sharp ingredients such as tomato.

CHOCOLATE & VANILLA See *Vanilla & Chocolate*, page 332.

CHOCOLATE & WALNUT A classic in brownies. It's also worth throwing a handful of walnuts into a chocolate bread-and-butter pudding. Or add caramel to chocolate and walnuts to make what is sometimes called "turtle" flavor. Turtles are a popular candy in Canada and the United States. The name comes from the shape: a small pile of nuts (usually pecan or walnut) is held together with caramel and covered with a smooth shell of chocolate under which some of the nuts stick out like the head and legs of a turtle. Add a swirl of caramel to the recipe in *Chocolate & Almond* (see page 7) and you might call it turtle soup.

CHOCOLATE & WATERMELON See *Watermelon & Chocolate*, page 237.

CHOCOLATE & WHITE CHOCOLATE See *White Chocolate & Chocolate*, page 335.





# MEATY

*Chicken*

*Pork*

*Black Pudding*

*Liver*

*Beef*

*Lamb*

# Chicken

---

Chicken has a reputation for being bland—the magnolia of foods—and yet standing up to 40 cloves of garlic (see *Garlic & Chicken*, page 102), or to big flavors like rosemary, thyme and lemon, takes some serious meatiness. The well-exercised joints—legs, thighs—are the tastiest, even more so when cooked skin-on and bone-in. It’s the skinless, boneless breast meat, especially from intensively farmed birds, that has earned chicken its pale reputation. It’s like a sort of dry tofu for carnivores. The best that can be said of it is that it adds bite to dishes and doesn’t get in the way of more interesting flavors in a sauce—salty, sweet, nutty, fruity, spicy, even fishy. This chapter also touches on turkey, goose, quail and the odd game bird. And swan.

CHICKEN & ALMOND See *Almond & Chicken*, page 231.

CHICKEN & ANISE See *Anise & Chicken*, page 169.

CHICKEN & AVOCADO Good together, if a little blandly healthy, like those smug couples you see jogging in the park. Give the chicken a smoke and things could start to look up. Or throw them some toasted pine nuts and a handful of raisins, toss through some leaves and dress with something sharp.

CHICKEN & BACON See *Bacon & Chicken*, page 157.

CHICKEN & BANANA See *Banana & Chicken*, page 263.

CHICKEN & BASIL See *Basil & Chicken*, page 199.

CHICKEN & BELL PEPPER One of the easiest, most foolproof combinations in this book. Seed 6–8 peppers (red, yellow or orange, not green), chop them into generous chunks and put in a large non-stick saucepan with 8 chicken thighs, skin-on and preferably bone-in too. Leave over a medium heat. Keep an eye on it for the first ten minutes, giving it the odd stir to prevent it sticking. Then all of a sudden the peppers release their juices and you can leave it alone. Put a lid on and cook over a low-medium heat for 30 minutes, or until the pan is half-full of sweet, oily, autumn-colored stock. It’s a bit of a miracle, this—you can hardly believe the rich complexity of the sauce comes from just two ingredients. Season and serve with rice, couscous or French bread, whichever you prefer to mop up with.

CHICKEN & BLUE CHEESE See *Blue Cheese & Chicken*, page 52.

CHICKEN & CABBAGE See *Cabbage & Chicken*, page 108.

CHICKEN & CAVIAR In Sylvia Plath’s *The Bell Jar*, Esther Greenwood attends a smart luncheon where she hatches a plan to monopolize an entire bowl of caviar. If, she observes, you carry yourself with a certain arrogance when you do something incorrect at the table, people will think you’re original rather than bad-mannered: “Under cover of the clinking of water goblets and silverware and bone china, I paved my plate with chicken slices. Then I covered the chicken slices with caviar thickly as if I were spreading peanut-butter on a piece of bread. Then I picked up the chicken slices in my fingers one by one, rolled them so the caviar wouldn’t ooze off and ate them.”

CHICKEN & CELERY See *Celery & Chicken*, page 83.

CHICKEN & CHESTNUT See *Chestnut & Chicken*, page 221.

CHICKEN & CHILI The Portuguese went to Mozambique and came back with chicken peri peri (or piri piri), a simple dish of flame-grilled chicken marinated in oil, chili, salt and citrus juice. *Peri peri* is a generic African word for chili, but usually refers to the hot, simply flavored bird's eye variety. Having taken to the dish themselves, the Portuguese exported it to their colonies, including Goa, where it's particularly popular. The peri peri diaspora has been accelerated in recent years by the South African chain, Nando's, which, spotting the mass-market appeal of chicken that can make tears run down your cheeks, has opened restaurants in five continents since 1987. See also *Ginger & Chili*, page 295, and *Peanut & Chicken*, page 15.

CHICKEN & CILANTRO Cilantro is widely used in Thai chicken dishes such as green curry, and in Vietnam, *rau ram*, or "hot mint," is included in chicken salads and summer rolls. Unrelated botanically to cilantro, *rau ram* nonetheless has a similar, if slightly more peppery, citrusy flavor. In Malaysia it's known as the "laksa herb," after the noodle soup, called *laksa lemak*, that it's often used to garnish.

CHICKEN & COCONUT See *Coconut & Chicken*, page 272.

CHICKEN & EGG See *Egg & Chicken*, page 123.

CHICKEN & GARLIC See *Garlic & Chicken*, page 102.

CHICKEN & GRAPE See *Grape & Chicken*, page 239.

CHICKEN & HARD CHEESE In the 1980s there was something of a vogue for chicken Cordon Bleu, a somewhat unbalanced dish of skinless, boneless chicken breasts stuffed with slices of Gruyère and ham. This recipe for *poulet au Comté* is an improvement, not least because the skin-on, bone-in roasted chicken has enough character to take on the weight and fruity, nutty, caramelized flavors of the cheese. Joint a chicken into 4 pieces and lightly dust with seasoned flour. Brown the pieces in butter, remove from the pan and keep warm. Deglaze the pan with 1¼ cups dry white wine and 2 tbsp strong mustard. Pour this sauce over the chicken in an ovenproof dish and bake for 40 minutes at 400°F, turning a few times. Sprinkle with 4 oz finely grated Comté and put back in the oven for about 5 minutes, until the cheese starts to brown. Serve with boiled potatoes or rice.

CHICKEN & HAZELNUT See *Hazelnut & Chicken*, page 228.

CHICKEN & LEMON See *Lemon & Chicken*, page 290.

CHICKEN & LIME Citrus fruits are paired with chicken in cuisines the world over. I love the tang of lime juice in spicy chicken soups such as the famous *sopa de lima* of the Yucatán peninsula. Shredded chicken, chili and strips of tortilla are served in a chicken and tomato broth seasoned with cinnamon, garlic, allspice, and black peppercorns and finished with a generous squeeze of lime and some cilantro.

CHICKEN & MUSHROOM *Grifola frondosa*, or hen of the woods, is a species of mushroom named for its resemblance to a chicken ruffling its feathers. Chicken of the woods, *Laetiporus sulphureus*, which looks more like a flattened chicken nugget than anything, is perhaps the closest to actual chicken in texture, but opinion is divided as to whether

the flavor bears much comparison. Add a handful or two of mushrooms to the pot with your chicken and they will contribute a gamy flavor that makes the bird taste as if it really did come from the woods, as opposed to the middle shelf of your refrigerator. Add them to a braising pheasant or partridge and you'll almost be able to hear the twigs snap underfoot. The pairing of morels with chicken in a cream sauce is altogether less rustic; morels are often said to be closer to truffles in their complexity and refinement of flavor. Like truffles, they come in white and black forms, both of which the late American food writer Richard Olney thought were "exquisite." He added that while dried morels have their uses in sauces and terrines, they can never quite measure up to fresh. The general feeling is that the drying process robs morels of some of their honeyed sweetness. Fresh or dried, black or white, morels must be cooked.

CHICKEN & ONION Brillat-Savarin wrote that "poultry is to the kitchen what canvas is to the artist." In its neutrality, the chicken finds common ground with the leek, a native not of Wales but, appropriately enough, of Switzerland, according to the *Encyclopaedia of Domestic Economy* (1855). Offend no one (but the vegetarians) with a cock-a-leekie soup—a traditional Scottish preparation of leeks, prunes and chicken stock.

CHICKEN & OYSTER See *Oyster & Chicken*, page 141.

CHICKEN & PARSNIP Roasted parsnips make a welcome side dish to roast chicken, and they're essential with the roast turkey at Christmas. Some cooks swear by the use of parsnip to flavor a really good chicken broth, although if you don't have a parsnip at hand, chef Robert Reid says a pinch of curry powder will improve your stock at a subliminal level, while some mushroom peelings will give it a meatier quality. As will chicken feet, which also give the finished article a pleasantly gelatinous texture. Easy and cheap to put to the test if you have a Chinese supermarket nearby.

CHICKEN & PEA See *Pea & Chicken*, page 188.

CHICKEN & PEANUT See *Peanut & Chicken*, page 15.

CHICKEN & PEAR Chicken and pear might not sound like much to sing about, but when braised together in good stock with bacon and shallots, partridge and pear is. The pear pieces absorb the rich cooking liquid but retain their subtle, fruity sweetness. For a Christmastime dinner, heat 1 tbsp oil in a hefty casserole and brown 4 small partridges. Set the birds aside and in the same pan cook about 5 oz chopped smoked bacon with 2 tbsp butter, 20 peeled whole shallots, 4 peeled, cored and quartered pears and a chopped garlic clove. When the shallots are golden and softened, return the partridges to the pan and pour over  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup hot chicken stock. Season, cover, and cook in the oven at 325°F for 20–25 minutes. You can serve this straight from the pot, but it's better to remove the partridges and rest them under foil while you put the casserole back on the heat and stir in 7 oz cooked, peeled chestnuts until they're warmed through. Five gold rings in the form of hot apple fritters would make the perfect pudding—see *Vanilla & Apple*, page 331.

CHICKEN & POTATO In Antibes, on the Côte d'Azur, I lost my heart not to a life-guard in a striped swimsuit but to a humble, freestanding rotisserie. Strolling along

the rue Aubernon, I was stopped in my tracks by a bizarrely beautiful contraption of black iron and brass, like one of Jean Tinguely's creaking kinetic sculptures, except it smelled of roast chicken. Rows of birds levitated in different stages of readiness, goosebump-raw to bronzed, reaching the top of their elliptical cycle before gravity turned the skewer and the birds adjusted to the downward part of their journey, with a jolt that shook free molten droplets of fat. The machine had a similarly hypnotic effect to the Penny Falls in amusement arcades, as if by pushing a raw chicken into a slot at the top a cooked one might be displaced into the tray at the bottom. In fact the tray at the bottom was full of potato chips. Could there be anything more delicious in the world? Chicken and roast potatoes, maybe, or Portuguese-style chicken and fries, but there was something particularly irresistible about the chips from the bottom of the rotisserie, chewy and glisteningly coated in the fat dripping from the chickens above.

CHICKEN & ROSE Chicken served with rose petals, or rosewater, was popular in Moghul, Moorish and medieval English kitchens. In Laura Esquivel's novel *Like Water for Chocolate*, the heroine, Tita, brings her sister, Gertrudis, to an orgasmic boiling point with a dish made from rose petals and quail. Brillat-Savarin would *not* have approved. In his opinion, the flavor of quail was the most exquisite, but the most fugitive, of all game, and therefore to serve it any way other than plainly roasted or *en papillote* was nothing short of barbaric. If you subscribe to this view, you might find chicken an acceptable substitute in quail dishes that call for sauce; many cooks do. The psychologists Hollingworth and Poffenberger claim that with "tactual" qualities eliminated, most people fail to distinguish between the flavors of chicken, turkey and quail. But tactual qualities are not to be sniffed at. Would Gertrudis have had such a good time chomping through a skinless chicken breast as gnawing on a sticky little quail's leg?

CHICKEN & SAFFRON See *Saffron & Chicken*, page 167.

CHICKEN & SAGE Sage, usually paired with onion in a stuffing or a sauce, bolsters the savory quality of chicken, although gamier turkey is better able to roll with the pungent herb's punches. Sage is also good with goose, as the bird has more fat, something with which sage has a particular affinity, as the writer Harold McGee points out. Goose stuffed with sage and onion and served with applesauce was the classic Christmas dish in the UK from the reign of Elizabeth I to the Second World War, although by the end of the Victorian era most people, particularly in the south of England, had switched to turkey. Victoria herself didn't care for either bird, preferring beef or a bit of roast swan. If you're curious, Peter Gladwin, once chef to Elizabeth II, compares swan's dark, tough meat to undernourished goose.

CHICKEN & SHELLFISH See *Shellfish & Chicken*, page 130.

CHICKEN & THYME Thyme is often used to flavor roast chicken, pushed under the skin or into the cavity. Brining a chicken before roasting it, however, makes the meat juicier and lend an extra intensity of flavor, not only because the salt penetrates the meat but because the brine can be flavored with herbs, spices and/or vegetables. Put about 2½ oz sea salt and ¼ cup sugar in a pan with 2 cups of water and a dozen sprigs of thyme (or 1 tbsp dried thyme), heat gently till dissolved, then leave to cool. Add 6 cups of cold water to the salt water and refrigerate. When the brine is good and cold,

wash the chicken and put it in a large roasting bag, big enough both to hold it and to immerse it totally in brine. Pour in the brine, then seal the bag, smoothing out as much of the air as possible. Leave in the fridge for 4–8 hours, moving it around from time to time. Give the chicken a thorough rinse in cold water before patting it dry. It can then be roasted as normal, immediately or after a day or two left covered in the fridge.

CHICKEN & TOMATO Hard to get that excited about, once you've grown out of drenching your dinosaur-shaped chicken bites in tomato ketchup. Tomato and chicken are the controlling partnership in chicken tikka masala and in chicken cacciatore, or hunter's stew—which is not, sadly, the invention of pockmarked Sicilian peasants, returning home with a brace of feral chickens slung over their waistcoats, but an English recipe from the 1950s, taught to nice girls by their mothers in the hope they'd bag the sort of chap who'd be neither too unadventurous nor too suspiciously cosmopolitan to object to a lightly herbed slop of chicken in tomato sauce.

CHICKEN & TRUFFLE See *Truffle & Chicken*, page 105.

CHICKEN & WALNUT Ground nuts make an excellent basis on which to build a stew, contributing their own light, buttery background flavor as well as absorbing the rich flavors of meat and spice to make a thick, luxurious sauce. The popular kormas of northern India (and every curry house in the world) are based on ground almonds, cashews or coconut, an idea dating from Moghul times. The same principle applies to the Turkish dish of Circassian chicken. Poached chicken is shredded and served at room temperature in a sauce made with onions, garlic, ground walnuts, soaked bread and maybe some ground coriander or cinnamon. In Georgia, *satsivi* is made with chicken, fish or vegetables cooked in a mixture of walnuts and a long list of spices, including cinnamon, cloves, coriander, paprika and cayenne. Unlike Circassian chicken, no bread is used to supplement the nuts, but a sour flavoring such as vinegar or pomegranate juice will be added for balance—as it is in Iranian *fesenjan*, sometimes made with chicken but more often with duck. The combined tannic punch of walnut and pomegranate counters duck's fattiness deliciously. See also Almond & Chicken, page 231.

CHICKEN & WATERCRESS See *Watercress & Chicken*, page 87.



# CITRUSY

*Orange*

*Grapefruit*

*Lime*

*Lemon*

*Ginger*

*Cardamom*

# Orange

All citrus fruits lead double lives, the flavor of their juice being quite different from that of the peel. In the manufacturing of juice and other orange products, once the juice has been pressed from the ripe fruit, the peel is pressed separately to extract the aromatic liquid from its oil glands. Another oil, of a different character again, is distilled as a by-product when the juice is concentrated. These oils are used in soft drinks, or blended back into orange juice to improve the flavor without recourse to synthesized additives. All freshly squeezed fruit juice deteriorates pretty rapidly, so it's always best to squeeze it on demand. Of all citrus fruits, orange is by far the most popular, especially when the term extends, as it does in this chapter, to mandarins, satsumas, blood and bitter oranges, as well as the dominant sweet orange. Its breadth of flavor characteristics guarantees that orange is highly compatible with other flavors. Sweet orange has the fruitiest flavor of all citrics, containing hints of mango and pineapple among its layers of generic citrus flavors, along with mild hints of spice and herb. Mandarins share the pleasing sweet-sourness of sweet orange, although the zest has a more noticeable herbal accent. Blood oranges usually add a berry, specifically raspberry, note to the sweetness. The zest of bitter oranges, such as Sevilles, has a stronger, waxy flavor with a hint of lavender. With the addition of plenty of sugar, their extremes of bitterness and sourness are what make marmalade so full-flavored and interesting. Bitter oranges are also used in most orange-flavored liqueurs, including Cointreau, Grand Marnier and Curaçao, and orange-flower water is made from their blossoms. Dried orange peel, for use as a flavoring, can be bought in Chinese and Middle Eastern supermarkets.

ORANGE & ALMOND Claudia Roden's legendary orange and almond cake is unusual in that it calls for pretty much every part of the orange save the seeds: the zest, with all its oil glands, the pith, the segment membranes and the vesicles—those wondrous juice-containing structures that look like tiny eyedroppers. It's this thorough exhaustion of the fruit's possibilities that gives the cake its deeply musky, spicy character, redolent of marmalade but without the sticky sweetness. The almond contributes the dense texture that makes the cake equally at home on the pudding plate as on the afternoon tea plate, especially if served with cream or a compote. In a nutshell, you boil 2 oranges in water for nearly 2 hours, until completely soft. Once cool, quarter them, discard the seeds and process the oranges to a pulp. Beat 6 eggs in a large bowl, then mix in 2¼ cups ground almonds, 1¼ cup sugar, 1 tsp baking powder and the orange pulp. Pour into a greased and lined, deep, round 9-in cake pan. Bake at 375°F for an hour. Between you and me, the oranges can be microwaved in a few minutes if you're short of time.

ORANGE & ANISE See *Anise & Orange*, page 171.

ORANGE & APPLE See *Apple & Orange*, page 257.

ORANGE & APRICOT See *Apricot & Orange*, page 267.

ORANGE & ASPARAGUS Gangly asparagus might seem an unlikely match for voluptuous orange but it works. *Sauce maitaise*, a hollandaise flavored with blood oranges, was created especially for asparagus. Boil ½ cup blood orange juice until reduced to about 2 tbs, then add the zest of 1 orange and simmer for 1 minute. Stir into a hollandaise made with 4 egg yolks and serve immediately.



ORANGE & BACON A marmalade-glazed ham is a thing of wonder. Use a marmalade that's made with plenty of Seville oranges; if it's too sugar-heavy, you're in danger of making ham with jam, which will please no one but Dr. Seuss. Seville orange marmalade has a deep, bitter tang that will counter the ham's saltiness. Eating this is only part of the fun. Rubbing a whole jar of marmalade into a large joint of meat is a rare sensual pleasure.

ORANGE & BEEF A bouquet garni of pared orange zest, bay leaf, thyme and parsley is often recommended for slow-cooked beef dishes, such as Elizabeth David's beef and wine stew with black olives. In case you need *two* good reasons to try it, Fiona Beckett writes that dried orange peel used in this way enhances the richness of medium-bodied red wines.

ORANGE & BEET At The Fat Duck, Heston Blumenthal teases diners with an orange-colored jelly candy that has the flavor of beet and a crimson jelly candy with the flavor of orange. The beet candy is made with golden-colored beets and the orange one with dark red blood oranges. The waiters playfully suggest you start with the orange one.

ORANGE & CARROT See *Carrot & Orange*, page 216.

ORANGE & CHILI Rick Bayless describes a ripe, orange habanero chili as having an aroma of passion fruit, apricot, orange blossom and herb, with a noticeable piquancy. The flavor is similar to the aroma, with added notes of sweet, tangy tangerine. You may be able to detect these notes in the teacup of tears you will have shed trying this most fearsomely fiery of peppers. Fruit flavors are often detectable in dried chilies too, and not just habanero: prune and raisin are commonly cited. If habanero's too hot, infuse olive oil over a low heat for about half an hour with a strip of orange peel and a couple of dried chilies. Strain off the peel and chilies and drizzle the oil over fish.

ORANGE & CHOCOLATE Both orange zest and orange-flower water have been used to flavor chocolate since at least the seventeenth century. The combination of orange and chocolate has endured where other once-common flavorings, like black pepper and anise, have faded into obscurity. Surprising, then, that Terry's famous Chocolate Orange was originally an apple. Launched in 1926, the apple proved so popular that an orange version was launched four years later. When both went back into production after the war, orange quickly overtook apple in popularity and the latter was discontinued in 1954. The Chocolate Orange finally grew up in 1975 when the dark chocolate version was introduced, its bitter astringency complementing the sweet muskiness of orange oil far better than frumpy, facetious milk.

ORANGE & CILANTRO See *Cilantro & Orange*, page 183.

ORANGE & CINNAMON See *Cinnamon & Orange*, page 204.

ORANGE & CLOVE In *The Size of Thoughts*, Nicholson Baker comments on the sensuous pleasure of writing on an eraser with a ballpoint pen. I get a comparable kick studding a firm orange with cloves. Some use these as pomanders, but I let them bob around like limpet mines in a sea of mulled wine. The fresh citrus and smoky spice can give the dullest grog a spark.

ORANGE & COFFEE See *Coffee & Orange*, page 14.

ORANGE & CORIANDER SEED Look at a coriander seed close up. It could be a peeled mandarin from the kitchen table in a doll's house. Bite it and you'll find it has an orange flavor too; like marmalade or Seville orange peel with a cedar background. Serve orange segments in a syrup flavored with coriander seed for a layered orange flavor (and an update on the classic oranges in caramel), or explore coriander's spicy orange character by pairing it with some of the fruit's classic flavor affinities, such as cinnamon, duck, lemon or cranberry.

ORANGE & FIG See *Fig & Orange*, page 325.

ORANGE & GINGER See *Ginger & Orange*, page 297.

ORANGE & GRAPEFRUIT See *Grapefruit & Orange*, page 284.

ORANGE & HARD CHEESE Cheese with all sorts of fruits—grapes, apples, pears, quince—is, of course, completely uncontroversial, as are citrus fruits on cheesecake, yet Cheddar with marmalade is apt to raise eyebrows. But think about a rich, salty, mature Cheddar and how delicious it might be cut through by the bittersweetness of marmalade—there's a real balance of flavor there. For a sandwich, try grating the cheese and using a fine-cut marmalade, as thick hyphens of orange might prove too dominant. Walnut bread would be excellent. Alternatively make “jam” tarts using marmalade mixed with grated Cheddar. Fill little cheese pastry tarts and bake at 425°F for about 15 minutes, taking special care not to burn them.

ORANGE & JUNIPER See *Juniper & Orange*, page 309.

ORANGE & LEMON St. Clement, the patron saint of designated drivers, lends his name to the mix of orange juice and bitter lemon. Bitter lemon's bitterness comes not only from lemon but from quinine, the colorless, odorless alkaloid that puts tonic water in such agreeable ill temper. The adult palate can generally take only so many sweet drinks before tiring of them. This is less of a problem with alcoholic drinks, which generally have a balancing bitterness to them. Orange and lemon zest (or the harder-core mixed peel) are also used to flavor, and balance the sweetness of, puddings and cakes. The Meyer lemon, big in the United States but a rare find in the UK (because it doesn't travel well), is a lemon-orange hybrid, with a pronounced floral nose and flavor. It's low in acid, so is seen as a sort of sweet lemon, as Sevilles are sour oranges—see Orange & White Fish, page 283.

ORANGE & LIME See *Lime & Orange*, page 288.

ORANGE & MANGO See *Mango & Orange*, page 276.

ORANGE & MELON See *Melon & Orange*, page 266.

ORANGE & MINT See *Mint & Orange*, page 315.

ORANGE & OLIVE *La Cucina Futurista* was published in 1932 by the poet Marinetti, after he'd spent a few years traveling around Europe organizing banquets that featured wild flavor pairings and recipes with titles like Excited Pig, Elasticake, Steel Chicken and Piquant Airport. My favorite is called Aerofood. While the sound of an airplane motor and something suitable by Bach plays loudly from the kitchen, the diner is served, from

the right, a plate of kumquats, black olives and fennel. Rectangles of silk, sandpaper and velvet are served from the left and the diner must eat with the right hand while simultaneously stroking these with the left. Meanwhile the waiter spritzes the nape of the diner's neck with a carnation perfume. Carnations have a rose-clove fragrance—try Santa Maria Novella's Garofano. The plane might prove trickier to source.

ORANGE & ONION See *Onion & Orange*, page 99.

ORANGE & PEACH See *Peach & Orange*, page 270.

ORANGE & PINEAPPLE All the *joie de vivre* of a Hawaiian shirt without the stigma of wearing one. Pineapple blinds you to orange's dark side—the bitterness, the complexity, the just-detectable whiff of sulfur. The two share tangerine, fruity, green flavors, and pineapple juice is sometimes added to orange juice to give it a more natural orange flavor.

ORANGE & RHUBARB Orange zest and rhubarb are often paired, especially in crumble, but not in my kitchen. I find the neediness of super-sour rhubarb and the belligerence of orange zest pull in different directions; the flavor equivalent of patting your head and rubbing your stomach. Even when rhubarb is cooked in milder orange juice, which doesn't have the pushy bitterness of zest, my palate can detect neither harmony nor pleasing contrast.

ORANGE & ROSE Orange-flower water and rosewater are often treated as interchangeable in recipes. Unsurprisingly, floral notes are dominant in both, but there's a citrus lick to orange-flower water, which is extracted from the blossoms of the bitter (Seville) orange tree. Good flower waters are made in Iran, while in Lebanon an artisan company called Mymouné uses traditional distillation methods and no artificial ingredients. The key for both is to use them by the drop, not the teaspoon, so they bring a mysterious background note to the dish, like a shimmer from a zither, not the thudding of the drum. They're traditionally used in North African cooking in lamb and chicken tagines and all sorts of almond puddings and cakes; in France to flavor madeleines; and to add a floral note to fruit juices (especially orange) and grated carrot salads. See also Cinnamon & Orange, page 204.

ORANGE & ROSEMARY See *Rosemary & Orange*, page 303.

ORANGE & SAFFRON Citrus flavors pair well with saffron. Orange and saffron turn up in Mediterranean fish stews and North African tagines but also make a great couple in cakes and cookies. Soak a pinch of saffron in a tablespoon of warm milk and add it to a Victoria sponge cake mixture. Sandwich together with marmalade. Very Moorish.

ORANGE & STRAWBERRY Strawberries Romanoff was created for Tsar Alexander I by the legendary chef Marie-Antoine Carême. It's a sparkling combination. Hull some strawberries, marinate them in a 50:50 mixture of orange juice and orange liqueur, then stir through some crème Chantilly—see Vanilla & Raspberry, page 333.

ORANGE & THYME See *Thyme & Orange*, page 311.

ORANGE & VANILLA See *Vanilla & Orange*, page 333.

ORANGE & WALNUT Use the walnuts and clementine in the toe of your Christmas stocking to make a relish with cranberries or a salad with bitter green leaves, or mix them with thick yogurt and a whirl of maple syrup for breakfast.

ORANGE & WATERCRESS Check the sweet, sour and bitter boxes. Add something salty (olives, perhaps) for a perfect salad. Good with duck. See also Apple & Walnut, page 258.

ORANGE & WHITE FISH Until the eighteenth century, oranges were used with fish much as lemons are today. At that time most oranges were sour Sevilles, as opposed to the sweet varieties that have dominated the market more recently. For an authentic eighteenth-century experience when Sevilles are hard to come by, a mixture of two sweet oranges to one lemon is an effective substitute, even if the aromatic quality isn't quite the same. In a similar vein, Mark Hix adds a little bitter-orange-flavored Curaçao to his sole Véronique. As for sweet oranges, Alan Davidson notes their great affinity with a firm, strong-flavored fish called *mérou* (grouper), and gives a recipe for a sauce made with 1½ oz each of butter and flour whisked with 1⅛ cups meat stock/bouillon, ½ cup orange juice and a pinch of salt. *Sauce maitaise*, flavored with blood orange, is often paired with firm white fish—see Orange & Asparagus, page 279.