



AMBER'S KITCHEN

Seasonal Recipe Pack

Summer 2026 Edition

Twelve recipes I actually make when the evenings run long and the tomatoes are finally worth it. Bright, unfussy, and every one Amber Approved.



Pull up a chair.

Summer cooking should feel like an exhale, not a project. This pack is the shortlist — the dishes I come back to when it's hot, when people drop by, when I want the table to look like I fussed even though I didn't.

Everything here leans on peak-season produce and a short ingredient list, because the best summer food gets out of its own way. Each recipe has a timing strip up top so you know exactly what you're signing up for, and an **Amber's Note** at the bottom — the little thing that makes it better, learned the hard way so you don't have to.

Cook it loosely. Taste as you go. Make it yours.

— *Amber*

AMBER'S WORLD · AMBER APPROVED

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MORNINGS & BRUNCH

Peach & Burrata Toast

The five-minute breakfast that tastes like a restaurant brunch. Ripe peaches, cold cream, hot honey, done.

PREP

5 min

COOK

3 min

YIELD

Serves 2

LEVEL

Easy

Ingredients

- 2 thick slices country sourdough
- 1 ball fresh burrata (about 4 oz)
- 1 ripe peach, thinly sliced
- 2 tbsp honey
- Pinch red pepper flakes
- Flaky sea salt
- Fresh basil leaves
- Good olive oil, for drizzling

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Method

- 1 Toast the sourdough until deeply golden — you want a sturdy base that won't go soggy.
- 2 Warm the honey with the red pepper flakes in a small pan over low heat for 60 seconds, just until loose and fragrant. This is your hot honey.
- 3 Tear the burrata open over the warm toast and let the cream spill out. Don't be neat about it.
- 4 Fan the peach slices on top, drizzle with the hot honey and a little olive oil.
- 5 Finish with flaky salt and torn basil. Eat immediately, standing up, over the sink if you have to.

AMBER'S NOTE — Room-temperature burrata tastes twice as good as cold. Pull it out of the fridge 20 minutes before you build the toast.



MORNINGS & BRUNCH

Lemon-Ricotta Pancakes

Cloud-soft, tangy from the ricotta, and dressed with blueberries you cook for exactly 90 seconds until they burst.

PREP
10 min

COOK
15 min

YIELD
Makes 10

LEVEL
Easy

Ingredients

- 1 cup ricotta
- 3 large eggs, separated
- 3/4 cup milk
- 1 cup flour
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 1 tsp baking powder
- Zest of 1 lemon
- Pinch salt
- 1.5 cups blueberries
- 2 tbsp maple syrup
- Butter, for the pan

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Method

- 1 Whisk ricotta, egg yolks, milk, and lemon zest until smooth.
- 2 In another bowl, combine flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt, then fold into the wet mixture just until barely combined.
- 3 Beat the egg whites to soft peaks and gently fold them in — this is what makes them tall and light. Stop while you still see streaks.
- 4 Cook on a buttered griddle over medium-low, about 2 minutes a side, until golden and set.
- 5 Meanwhile, warm blueberries with the maple syrup until they burst, about 90 seconds. Spoon over the stack.

AMBER'S NOTE — Low and slow is the secret with ricotta pancakes. Too much heat and the outside browns before the middle sets.



SALADS & SIDES

Heirloom Tomato & Peach Panzanella

Peak-summer on a platter. The bread soaks up tomato juice and vinaigrette until every bite is loaded.

PREP
15 min

COOK
10 min

YIELD
Serves 6

LEVEL
Easy

Ingredients

- 4 cups torn day-old bread
- 1.5 lbs heirloom tomatoes, wedged
- 2 ripe peaches, wedged
- 1/2 red onion, thin-sliced
- 1/3 cup olive oil, plus more
- 3 tbsp red wine vinegar
- 1 tsp Dijon
- 1 cup torn basil
- Salt & black pepper

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Method

- 1 Toss the bread with a little olive oil and salt; toast at 400°F for 8–10 minutes until crisp at the edges but chewy inside.
- 2 Soak the sliced onion in cold water for 10 minutes to take the bite off, then drain.
- 3 Whisk olive oil, vinegar, and Dijon with a good pinch of salt into a loose vinaigrette.
- 4 In a wide bowl, combine tomatoes, peaches, onion, and toasted bread. Pour over the dressing and toss.
- 5 Let it sit 15 minutes so the bread drinks everything in. Fold in basil right before serving.

AMBER'S NOTE — Salt the tomatoes on their own first and let them weep for a few minutes — that juice is the whole point, don't lose it.



SALADS & SIDES

Charred Corn & Cotija Salad

All the flavor of elote, spoonable. This is the side dish that disappears first at every cookout.

PREP
10 min

COOK
10 min

YIELD
Serves 6

LEVEL
Easy

Ingredients

- 6 ears corn, husked
- 2 tbsp mayo
- 2 tbsp sour cream
- 1/2 cup crumbled cotija
- 1 lime, juiced
- 1/2 tsp chili powder
- 1/4 cup chopped cilantro
- 1 jalapeño, minced (optional)
- Salt

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Method

- 1 Char the corn directly over a grill or gas flame, turning, until blackened in spots all around. No grill? A dry cast-iron skillet, screaming hot.
- 2 Cool slightly, then cut the kernels off into a bowl.
- 3 Stir together mayo, sour cream, lime juice, and chili powder.
- 4 Fold the dressing through the warm corn with most of the cotija and cilantro.
- 5 Top with the rest of the cheese, the jalapeño if using, and a final squeeze of lime.

AMBER'S NOTE — Warm corn grips the dressing better than cold. Dress it while it still has some heat, then serve at room temperature.



SALADS & SIDES

Cucumber-Melon Salad

The most refreshing thing on the table. Cool cucumber and cantaloupe, salty feta, a whisper of mint.

PREP
15 min

COOK
0 min

YIELD
Serves 4

LEVEL
Easy

Ingredients

- 1 English cucumber, half-mooned
- 1/2 cantaloupe, cubed
- 4 oz feta, cubed
- 1/4 cup mint, torn
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1 tbsp lime juice
- 1 tsp honey
- Flaky salt & black pepper

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Method

- 1 Whisk the olive oil, lime juice, and honey with a pinch of salt.
- 2 Combine cucumber and melon in a serving bowl.
- 3 Pour over the dressing and toss gently.
- 4 Scatter the feta and mint over the top; finish with flaky salt and a few cracks of pepper.
- 5 Serve cold — it's best within an hour of making it, while everything's still crisp.

AMBER'S NOTE — A pinch of Tajín or chili-lime salt across the top turns this from lovely to unforgettable.



THE MAIN EVENT

Honey-Lime Grilled Chicken Thighs

Juicy, lacquered, a little smoky. Thighs forgive you on the grill in a way breasts never will.

PREP

10 min +marinate

COOK

15 min

YIELD

Serves 4

LEVEL

Medium

Ingredients

- 8 bone-in, skin-on chicken thighs
- 1/4 cup honey
- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 3 tbsp lime juice
- 4 cloves garlic, grated
- 1 tbsp grated ginger
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- Sliced scallions, to finish

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Method

- 1 Whisk everything but the chicken and scallions into a marinade. Reserve 3 tablespoons for later.
- 2 Marinate the thighs at least 30 minutes, ideally 2–4 hours in the fridge.
- 3 Grill skin-side down over medium heat, 6–7 minutes, until the skin is crisp and releases easily. Flip.
- 4 Cook another 6–8 minutes to 175°F internal, brushing with the reserved marinade in the last few minutes.
- 5 Rest 5 minutes, then shower with scallions and an extra squeeze of lime.

AMBER'S NOTE — Keep one side of the grill cooler. If flare-ups char the skin too fast, slide the thighs over to finish gently.



THE MAIN EVENT

Chili-Garlic Grilled Shrimp Skewers

Ten minutes start to finish once the grill is hot. Big, garlicky, just enough heat to keep it interesting.

PREP
15 min

COOK
6 min

YIELD
Serves 4

LEVEL
Easy

Ingredients

- 1.5 lbs large shrimp, peeled
- 3 tbsp olive oil
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp chili-garlic sauce
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 1 lemon, juiced + wedges
- 2 tbsp chopped parsley
- Salt
- Skewers

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Method

- 1 If using wooden skewers, soak them in water 20 minutes so they don't burn.
- 2 Toss the shrimp with olive oil, garlic, chili-garlic sauce, paprika, lemon juice, and salt.
- 3 Thread onto skewers, 5–6 shrimp each, so they cook evenly.
- 4 Grill over high heat 2–3 minutes per side, just until pink and opaque. Shrimp go from perfect to rubbery fast — stay close.
- 5 Finish with parsley and lemon wedges for squeezing.

AMBER'S NOTE — Don't crowd the shrimp on the skewer. A little gap between each one means they sear instead of steam.



THE MAIN EVENT

Summer Squash & Basil Orzo

A one-pan main that's happy hot, warm, or straight from the fridge the next day. Zucchini finally has a purpose.

PREP
10 min

COOK
20 min

YIELD
Serves 4

LEVEL
Easy

Ingredients

- 1.5 cups orzo
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 2 medium zucchini, diced
- 1 yellow squash, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, sliced
- 1/2 cup grated parmesan
- 1 cup basil, torn
- Zest + juice of 1 lemon
- Salt & black pepper
- Chili flakes (optional)

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Method

- 1 Cook the orzo in well-salted water until just al dente; reserve 1/2 cup pasta water, then drain.
- 2 Meanwhile, heat olive oil and sauté the squash over medium-high until golden at the edges, 6–8 minutes. Don't stir too much — you want color.
- 3 Add the garlic in the last minute until fragrant.
- 4 Fold the orzo into the squash with the lemon zest, juice, parmesan, and a splash of pasta water to make it glossy.
- 5 Off the heat, stir through the basil. Season well and finish with chili flakes if you like a little heat.

AMBER'S NOTE — That starchy pasta water is liquid gold — it pulls the cheese and lemon into a light sauce that clings to every grain.



POUR SOMETHING

Watermelon-Basil Agua Fresca

Blended, strained, barely sweet. The pitcher that keeps everyone hydrated through a long afternoon.

PREP
10 min

COOK
0 min

YIELD
Serves 6

LEVEL
Easy

Ingredients

- 6 cups cubed watermelon
- 1/2 cup water
- 2 tbsp lime juice
- 1 tbsp honey or agave
- 6 basil leaves
- Ice, to serve
- Lime wheels + basil, to garnish

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Method

- 1 Blend the watermelon, water, lime juice, honey, and basil until completely smooth.
- 2 Strain through a fine-mesh sieve into a pitcher for a clean, silky texture (skip this if you like it rustic).
- 3 Taste and adjust — more lime for brightness, a touch more honey only if the melon was under-ripe.
- 4 Chill at least an hour. Serve over plenty of ice with lime wheels and a basil sprig.
- 5 For grown-ups: a splash of tequila blanco or white rum turns it into a very civilized cocktail.

AMBER'S NOTE — Freeze some of the agua fresca in an ice tray and use those cubes to chill glasses — nothing gets watered down.



POUR SOMETHING

Sparkling Peach & Rosemary Spritz

The house drink of the season. A quick rosemary syrup, ripe peach, and something bubbly. Reads fancy, takes minutes.

PREP
10 min

COOK
5 min

YIELD
Serves 4

LEVEL
Easy

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup water
- 2 rosemary sprigs
- 2 ripe peaches, plus slices to garnish
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- Chilled sparkling water or prosecco
- Ice

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Method

- 1 Make the syrup: simmer sugar, water, and rosemary for 5 minutes, then let it steep off the heat 15 minutes and discard the rosemary.
- 2 Purée the peaches with the lemon juice until smooth.
- 3 In each glass, stir 2 tablespoons peach purée with 1 tablespoon rosemary syrup.
- 4 Fill with ice and top with sparkling water (or prosecco for a spritz worth toasting).
- 5 Garnish with a peach slice and a small rosemary sprig laid across the rim.

AMBER'S NOTE — The rosemary syrup keeps for two weeks in the fridge and is just as good in lemonade or iced tea — always make a double batch.



SOMETHING SWEET

No-Churn Honey-Vanilla Ice Cream

Three ingredients, no machine, absurdly good. The freezer does all the work while you're outside.

PREP
10 min

COOK
0 min +freeze

YIELD
Serves 8

LEVEL
Easy

Ingredients

- 2 cups cold heavy cream
- 1 can (14 oz) sweetened condensed milk
- 1/3 cup honey
- 2 tsp vanilla extract
- Pinch flaky salt

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Method

- 1 Whip the cold cream to stiff peaks — it should hold its shape when you lift the beaters.
- 2 In a separate bowl, stir together the condensed milk, honey, vanilla, and salt.
- 3 Fold a third of the whipped cream into the milk mixture to loosen it, then gently fold in the rest. Keep it airy.
- 4 Pour into a loaf pan, swirl the top, and press plastic wrap directly onto the surface.
- 5 Freeze at least 6 hours, ideally overnight. Let it sit 5 minutes before scooping.

AMBER'S NOTE — Warm the honey slightly before mixing so it blends in smoothly instead of sinking to the bottom in a ribbon.



SOMETHING SWEET

Grilled Peaches with Mascarpone

The dessert that closes the cookout. Caramelized peaches, cool cream, a thread of honey — and the grill's already hot.

PREP

5 min

COOK

6 min

YIELD

Serves 4

LEVEL

Easy

Ingredients

- 4 ripe but firm peaches, halved & pitted
- 1 tbsp melted butter
- 1/2 cup mascarpone
- 2 tbsp honey, plus more
- 1/4 tsp cinnamon
- Toasted sliced almonds
- Flaky salt

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Method

- 1 Brush the cut side of each peach half lightly with melted butter.
- 2 Grill cut-side down over medium heat for 4–5 minutes, until deep grill marks form and the fruit softens. Don't move them early — let the caramel set.
- 3 Stir the cinnamon into the mascarpone.
- 4 Plate the peaches cut-side up, add a spoon of mascarpone to each hollow.
- 5 Drizzle with honey, scatter almonds, and finish with the smallest pinch of flaky salt.

AMBER'S NOTE — Firm-but-ripe is the sweet spot. Too soft and they collapse on the grate; too hard and they never turn tender.



That's the **shortlist.**

If one of these earns a spot in your rotation this summer, it did its job. Tag **@ambersworld** when you make it — I love seeing your table.

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