

COPYCAT SPICES

SAMPLE EDITION

A TASTE OF THE FULL COOKBOOK

THE COPYCAT *COOKBOOK*

Your favorite restaurant dishes, made in your own kitchen — hand-picked, researched and fact-checked by the Copycat team.

● 5 RECIPES

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A taste of the full cookbook

The Copycat Cookbook

SAMPLE EDITION • 5 RECIPES

October 31, 2026

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Source Serif 4, and Source Sans 3.

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— FOREWORD

A Note From Our Kitchen

There's a particular kind of magic in recreating a dish you love. The first bite of something homemade that tastes right. The moment your kitchen fills with a smell that makes everyone wander in to ask what's cooking.

That feeling is why Copycat Spices exists. We spend our days reverse-engineering the dishes people crave most — studying brines, chasing the exact ratio in a signature sauce, and figuring out how a restaurant gets that crust, that pull, that color — so you can make them at home for a fraction of the price, exactly how you like them.

This sample is a taste of the real thing — five of our favorites, put together exactly the way your own book would be. Each recipe here was researched and fact-checked by the Copycat team and written to be genuinely easy to follow on a busy weeknight. No mystery steps, no restaurant secrets held back — just the real technique that makes each dish work.

When you build your own, you choose every page. The sauces your family asks for, the comfort food that tastes like a road trip, the dessert that ends every holiday — pick them free at copycatspices.com/cookbook.

Thank you for cooking with us. We can't wait to see what you put on your table.

Warmly, the Copycat Spices team

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Nº 01

— CHIPOTLE · COPYCAT

Chicken Burrito Bowl

Make Chipotle's chicken burrito bowl at home — adobo-marinated grilled chicken, cilantro-lime rice, black beans, corn salsa, and guacamole. Under \$4 per serving vs. \$12+ at the counter.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
25 min	25 min	4	Medium	680

01 Ingredients

FOR THE CHICKEN MARINADE

- 2 lbs boneless skinless chicken thighs
- 2 tablespoons adobo sauce (from a can of chipotle peppers in adobo)
- 1 chipotle pepper, minced (from the same can)
- 1 tablespoon ancho chile powder
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt

FOR THE CILANTRO-LIME RICE

- 2 cups long-grain white rice
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 tablespoon neutral oil (rice bran or vegetable)
- 2 bay leaves

- 2¾ cups water
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ⅓ cup fresh cilantro, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice (about 1 lime)

FOR THE BOWL

- 1 can (15 oz) black beans, drained and rinsed
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin (for the beans)
- 1 cup corn kernels, fresh or frozen
- ¼ cup red onion, finely diced
- 2 roma tomatoes, diced
- 2 ripe avocados
- 1 jalapeño, minced (optional)
- 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice (for guac)
- ½ cup sour cream
- 1 cup shredded romaine lettuce
- 1 cup shredded Monterey Jack or cheddar cheese
- Hot sauce, for serving

Chicken Burrito Bowl CONTINUED

02 Method

- 1 **Marinate the chicken (at least 2 hours ahead).** Combine the adobo sauce, minced chipotle pepper, ancho chile powder, cumin, oregano, black pepper, garlic, olive oil, red wine vinegar, and salt in a large bowl. Whisk until combined. Add the chicken thighs, turn to coat, cover, and refrigerate for at least 2 hours — overnight is noticeably better.
- 2 **Make the cilantro-lime rice.** Rinse the rice under cold water for 90 seconds until the water runs mostly clear. Heat the butter and oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat. Add the bay leaves and toast for 30 seconds. Add the rice and stir to coat. Cook, stirring, for 2 minutes — this toasting step is what gives Chipotle's rice its subtle nuttiness. Pour in the water and salt, bring to a boil, then reduce heat to low, cover tightly, and cook for 15 minutes. Remove from heat and rest covered for 5 more minutes. Discard bay leaves, fluff with a fork, and fold in the cilantro and lime juice. The lime goes in last — adding it during cooking destroys the brightness.
- 3 **Grill the chicken.** Pat the chicken dry with paper towels — surface moisture prevents char. Heat a cast iron skillet or grill pan over medium-high heat until it's just starting to smoke. Cook the chicken 5–6 minutes per side without moving it. You're looking for distinct char marks and deep browning where the marinade has caramelized. Internal temp should hit 165°F. Rest 5 minutes, then chop into bite-sized pieces and season with a small pinch of salt.
- 4 **Prepare the beans and corn.** Combine the drained beans, 2 tablespoons water, and cumin in a small saucepan over medium heat. Warm for 3–4 minutes, stirring, until heated through. In a separate dry skillet over high heat, char the corn kernels for 2–3 minutes without stirring — you want some blackened spots for the flavor Chipotle's roasted corn salsa has.
- 5 **Make the quick guacamole.** Mash the avocados in a bowl, leaving some chunks. Stir in the minced jalapeño, lime juice, and salt. Keep it simple — Chipotle's guac is just avocado, lime, cilantro, jalapeño, and salt.
- 6 **Assemble the bowls.** Start with a scoop of rice (about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup). Add the chicken, then beans, charred corn mixed with diced tomato and onion, shredded lettuce, cheese, guacamole, and sour cream. Serve with hot sauce.

WHY IT WORKS

Chipotle marinates their chicken in chipotle peppers in adobo sauce combined with cumin, dried oregano, garlic, black pepper, and oil. The adobo sauce — the thick, smoky, slightly spicy liquid in a can of chipotle peppers — is the defining element.



Nº 02

— IN-N-OUT • COPYCAT

Double-Double Burger

Make the In-N-Out Double-Double at home — thin smash patties, the real Thousand Island-style spread, American cheese, fresh iceberg, and a toasted bun. 25 minutes, serves 4.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
10 min	15 min	4	Medium	660

01 Ingredients

PATTIES (8 TOTAL FOR 4 DOUBLE-DOUBLES)

- 1½ lbs 80/20 ground beef chuck
- Kosher salt and black pepper

THE SPREAD

- ½ cup mayonnaise (Hellmann's or Best Foods)
- 2 tablespoons ketchup
- 2 tablespoons sweet pickle relish (not dill)

- 1½ teaspoons white distilled vinegar
- 1 teaspoon granulated sugar

ASSEMBLY

- 4 soft hamburger buns (potato buns work well)
- 8 slices American cheese (Kraft Deli Deluxe or Land O'Lakes)
- 4 leaves iceberg lettuce
- 1 large ripe tomato, sliced into 4 rounds

Double-Double Burger CONTINUED

02 Method

- 1 **Make the spread.** Stir together mayonnaise, ketchup, sweet relish, white vinegar, and sugar until smooth. Refrigerate until needed. Makes enough for 4 burgers with a little leftover.
- 2 **Portion the beef.** Divide 1½ lbs of beef into 8 equal balls of about 3 oz each. Do not overwork — keep them loose. Do not season yet.
- 3 **Heat the skillet.** Place cast iron over high heat for 3–4 minutes. The pan is ready when a drop of water evaporates immediately on contact. Add a tiny scrape of butter or brush of neutral oil.
- 4 **Smash and sear.** Place 2–3 beef balls in the skillet and season the tops with salt and pepper. Immediately smash flat with a heavy metal spatula — press firmly and fast to about ¼-inch thickness. Let sear undisturbed for 90 seconds to 2 minutes until the edges are deeply browned and crispy.
- 5 **Flip and cheese.** Flip each patty in one firm motion. Immediately place a slice of American cheese on each. Cook 60–90 more seconds. The cheese should be fully melted by the time the patty is done. Remove to a plate.
- 6 **Toast the buns.** In the residual fat left in the skillet, place buns cut-side down. Toast over medium-high heat for 60–90 seconds until golden. The buns should pick up a little of the beef fond.
- 7 **Assemble.** Bottom bun → generous smear of spread → iceberg lettuce leaf → tomato slice → first patty with cheese → second patty with cheese → small dollop of spread on top → top bun. Press gently and serve immediately.

WHY IT WORKS

Thin smash patties maximize the ratio of caramelized crust to interior.



Nº 03

— OLIVE GARDEN · COPYCAT

Olive Garden Breadsticks

Olive Garden breadsticks are the reason half the people walk through that door.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
20 min	14 min	12	Hard	180

01 Ingredients

- | | |
|---|---|
| ● 1 cup warm water (105-110°F) | ● 1 tablespoon olive oil |
| ● 2¼ teaspoons active dry yeast (1 packet) | ● 4 tablespoons salted butter, melted |
| ● 1 tablespoon granulated sugar | ● ½ teaspoon garlic powder |
| ● 3 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting | ● ¼ teaspoon dried oregano |
| ● 1½ teaspoons kosher salt | ● ¼ teaspoon salt |
| ● 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened | ● Pinch of dried parsley (optional, mostly for looks) |

Olive Garden Breadsticks CONTINUED

02 Method

- 1 **Activate the yeast.** Combine the warm water, yeast, and sugar in a large bowl. Stir gently and let sit for 5-7 minutes until foamy. If it doesn't foam, your water was too hot or your yeast is dead — start over with fresh yeast.
- 2 **Start the dough.** Add 1½ cups of the flour and the salt. Stir with a wooden spoon until combined.
- 3 **Add butter and more flour.** Add the softened butter and another 1 cup of flour. Mix until a shaggy dough forms.
- 4 **Knead the dough.** Turn out onto a floured surface and knead for 6-8 minutes, adding the remaining ½ cup flour as needed. The dough should be smooth, slightly tacky, but not sticky.
- 5 **Oil and cover.** Coat a large bowl with the olive oil. Place the dough in the bowl, turn it once to coat, and cover with a damp kitchen towel or plastic wrap.
- 6 **Let the dough rise.** Let rise in a warm spot for 1 hour, or until doubled in size.
- 7 **Preheat the oven.** Preheat your oven to 400°F. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper.
- 8 **Punch down the dough.** Punch down the dough and turn it out onto a lightly floured surface.
- 9 **Divide into pieces.** Divide the dough into 12 equal pieces. A kitchen scale helps here — each piece should be about 2½ ounces.
- 10 **Shape the breadsticks.** Roll each piece into a rope about 7 inches long. Place them on the baking sheet about 1 inch apart. They should almost touch — this helps them stay soft on the sides.
- 11 **Let them rest.** Cover loosely with a towel and let rest for 15 minutes. They'll puff up slightly.
- 12 **Bake the breadsticks.** Bake for 12-14 minutes, until the tops are just barely golden. You want them pale, not brown. Olive Garden breadsticks are deliberately under-baked by normal bread standards.
- 13 **Make the garlic butter.** While the breadsticks bake, stir together the melted butter, garlic powder, oregano, salt, and parsley.
- 14 **Brush with garlic butter.** The moment the breadsticks come out of the oven, brush them generously with the garlic butter. Use all of it. Don't hold back.

WHY IT WORKS

The technical steps — activating yeast correctly, kneading to the right texture, proper dough rise, and precise baking time — are all points of failure for newer bakers.



Nº 04

THE CHEESECAKE FACTORY · COPYCAT

Original Cheesecake

Make the Cheesecake Factory's classic Original Cheesecake at home — a dense, ultra-creamy New York-style cheesecake on a sweet graham cracker crust. No flour, water bath, overnight chill. Feeds 10 for the price of one restaurant slice.

PREP
30 min

COOK
70 min

SERVES
10

LEVEL
Hard

CAL
830

01 Ingredients

FOR THE CRUST

- 2 cups graham cracker crumbs (about 15 full double rectangles)
- ⅓ cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, melted

FOR THE FILLING

- 4 packages (8 oz each, 32 oz total) full-fat cream cheese, softened to room temperature
- 1¼ cups granulated sugar
- 4 large eggs, room temperature

- 1 cup full-fat sour cream, room temperature
- 1 tsp pure vanilla extract

FOR THE SOUR CREAM CAP (THE SIGNATURE FINISH)

- 1 cup full-fat sour cream, room temperature
- 3 tablespoons granulated sugar
- ½ teaspoon pure vanilla extract

FOR SERVING

- Whipped cream
- Fresh strawberries or strawberry topping (optional)

Original Cheesecake

CONTINUED

02 Method

- 1 **Bring everything to room temperature.** Set cream cheese, eggs, and sour cream out at least 2 hours before baking. Cold cream cheese creates lumps that are very difficult to beat out and a lumpy batter leads to a dense, uneven texture.
- 2 **Make the crust.** Preheat oven to 325°F. Combine graham cracker crumbs, sugar, and melted butter in a bowl and mix until the texture resembles wet sand. Press firmly and evenly into the bottom and 1½ inches up the sides of a 9-inch springform pan. Use the bottom of a flat measuring cup to press the crust smooth. Bake for 10 minutes until the crust is lightly golden and set. Remove and let cool while making the filling.
- 3 **Prepare the water bath.** Wrap the outside of the springform pan in two tight layers of heavy-duty aluminum foil, pressing the foil snugly up the sides to prevent any water from seeping in. Place the wrapped pan inside a large roasting pan. Bring a kettle or pot of water to a boil.
- 4 **Beat the cream cheese.** Using a stand mixer with the paddle attachment (or a hand mixer), beat the softened cream cheese on medium speed for 3 to 4 minutes, scraping down the bowl twice, until completely smooth with zero visible lumps. This step is the foundation — do not rush it.
- 5 **Add sugar.** With the mixer on low, add the sugar and beat just until incorporated, about 1 minute. Scrape the bowl.
- 6 **Add eggs one at a time.** Add eggs individually on low speed, mixing for about 20 seconds after each egg until the yolk is just absorbed. Do not beat vigorously — you are not trying to incorporate air. Excess air means cracks. Scrape the bowl between additions.
- 7 **Add sour cream and vanilla.** Add the sour cream and vanilla extract, mixing on low just until the batter is smooth and uniform. Stop the mixer as soon as everything is combined.
- 8 **Bake in the water bath.** Pour the filling over the cooled crust. Smooth the top with a spatula. Place the roasting pan on the middle oven rack and carefully pour the boiling water into the roasting pan until it reaches halfway up the sides of the springform pan. Bake at 325°F for 60 to 70 minutes. The cheesecake is done when the outer 2 inches are set and the center (roughly a 3-inch circle) still has a slight jiggle when you gently shake the pan.
- 9 **Cool in the oven.** Turn off the oven and crack the door open about 2 inches. Leave the cheesecake inside for 1 full hour — this gradual cool prevents the rapid temperature change that causes cracks and sinking. Do not skip this step.
- 10 **Apply the sour cream cap.** While the cheesecake is cooling in the turned-off oven, whisk together 1 cup sour cream, 3 tablespoons sugar, and ½ teaspoon vanilla until smooth. After the cheesecake has cooled in the oven for 1 hour and the center is no longer hot to the touch, spread this sour cream mixture evenly over the surface with an offset spatula. Return to the 325°F oven (turned back on) for 5 minutes — this sets the cap lightly without baking it. This sweetened sour cream layer is what gives the top its smooth, crack-free finish and an extra note of tang — the step most home recipes skip and the best copycat versions keep.
- 11 **Chill overnight.** Remove the cheesecake from the water bath. Run a thin knife around the edge of the pan (between the cheesecake and the side of the pan) to release any sticking. Let it come to room temperature on the counter for 30 minutes, then refrigerate uncovered for at least 6 hours, preferably overnight. Cover lightly with plastic wrap after the first 2 hours in the fridge.
- 12 **Slice and serve.** Release the springform sides. Dip a sharp knife in hot water, wipe dry, and slice cleanly. Serve with whipped cream and strawberries or a plain whipped-cream swirl as Cheesecake Factory does with the Original.



Nº 05

PANDA EXPRESS · COPYCAT

Beijing Beef

Panda Express Beijing Beef features crispy strips of beef tossed in a sweet, tangy, mildly spicy sauce with bell peppers and onions — addictively good.

PREP	COOK	SERVES	LEVEL	CAL
20 min	15 min	4	Medium	550

01 Ingredients

- 1 pound flank steak, sliced thin against the grain
- ½ cup cornstarch
- ¼ cup ketchup
- 3 tablespoons soy sauce
- 3 tablespoons brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons rice vinegar
- 1 tablespoon hoisin sauce
- 1 tablespoon Sriracha
- 1 red bell pepper, cut into strips
- ½ medium onion, sliced
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- Vegetable oil, for frying
- 2 large eggs, beaten

02 Method

- 1 **Prep the beef.** Slice the flank steak into thin strips, about ¼ inch thick, cutting against the grain. Dip the strips in beaten egg, then dredge in cornstarch, shaking off excess.
- 2 **Make the sauce.** In a small bowl, whisk together the ketchup, soy sauce, brown sugar, rice vinegar, hoisin sauce, and Sriracha. Set aside.
- 3 **Fry the beef.** Heat 1 inch of vegetable oil in a large skillet or wok to 350°F. Fry the cornstarch-coated beef strips in batches for 2-3 minutes until golden and crispy. Drain on paper towels.
- 4 **Cook the vegetables.** Drain most of the oil, leaving 1 tablespoon. Over high heat, stir-fry the bell pepper and onion for 2 minutes until slightly softened but still crisp. Add the garlic and cook for 30 seconds.
- 5 **Combine everything.** Pour the sauce into the wok with the vegetables. Bring to a simmer and cook for 1 minute until the sauce thickens slightly. Add the crispy beef and toss quickly to coat.
- 6 **Serve immediately.** Plate over steamed white rice. The beef should still be crispy on the outside — don't let it sit in the sauce too long or it gets soggy.

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From a browser tab to *your kitchen counter.*

Every recipe in this book was researched and fact-checked by the Copycat team — so the dishes you love from your favorite restaurants are yours to make at home, any night you want.

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