

Recipes... ONIONS



TIPS & TRICKS: Perhaps no other ingredients, except maybe salt, is as amiable as the onion. The workhorse of the kitchen, onions add texture, flavor and nutrition to a variety of dishes. In fact, we can't think of a single cuisine that doesn't utilize them. Not all onions are created equal. Georgia's Vidalia is sweet and the white onion will make you cry more than most - blame the tears on sulfuric compounds. The shallot is so delicate that it disappears into French sauces. And leeks, well they're just a leafy onion unto themselves. Here's a handy guide to common onions.

1. **CHIVES:** We think of chives more as herbs but they are a relative of the onion, along with garlic. They add a delicate heat to dishes and taste better fresh than dried. Snip into green salads and anything with sour cream.
2. **PEARL ONIONS:** The small white onion is associated with the creamed dish served at holidays, with or without peas. Pickled, they garnish a Gibson cocktail. They can be quite hot when raw and the devil to peel. Plunge into boiling water for a few seconds then shock in ice-cold water and skins will slip off.
3. **SHALLOT:** This is a small relative of the onion with dry, coppery skin. The flavor combines onions and garlic. Somewhat hot when raw, but it cooks to a delicate flavor. The skin may remove easier if soaked in warm water.
4. **YELLOW ONIONS:** Golden color with relatively strong flavor. May be used cooked or raw, depending on your taste. Long, slow sauteing at very low heat brings out sweet, mellow flavors. Also called Spanish onion.
5. **RED ONIONS:** Purple in color rather than true red, they are relatively mild. Appealing raw in salads or sauteed in a stir-fry. Also good for other cooking. Adding a bit of vinegar, wine or lemon juice helps keep color from fading or turning purplish-blue.
6. **SWEET ONIONS:** You see them as Vidalia, Walla Walla, Maui, Oso Sweet. High sugar content and mild flavor. A good choice for raw use, such as in salads and sandwiches or in salsa. Because of high water content, sweet onions don't keep as long as others.
7. **LEEKs:** A leek looks like a large, fat scallion with a white root and dark green leaves. Mild flavor. Usually only the white root and a small bit of the tough leaves are used. Careful trimming and cleaning are needed because dirt accumulates in the leaves.
8. **SCALLIONS / GREEN ONIONS:** This is a variety of onion that is harvested at an immature stage before the bulb has formed. Mild flavor. A green onion is not the same as a scallion, though the names are often interchanged. Green onions have tiny white bulbs at the bottom while scallions have straight white sides at the root end. Scallions are thought to be the younger of the two as the bulb has not begun to form.
9. **WHITE ONIONS:** One of the more pungent onions. Use raw on burgers, sandwiches, salsa and similar dishes. They can be used in any recipe that calls for cooked onions.

CARMELIZED ONIONS

6 slices bacon, chopped
2 sweet onions, cut into thin strips
2 tablespoons molasses
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper

Place bacon in a heavy skillet. Cook over medium-high heat until crisp. Remove bacon, reserving 1 tablespoon drippings in skillet. Crumble bacon, and set aside. Cook onions in reserved drippings for 15 minutes, or until onion is soft and caramel colored. Stir in molasses, salt and pepper. Place in a serving dish, and sprinkle with crumbled bacon.

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ONION SAUCE

2 tablespoons butter
3 medium onions, coarsely chopped
1 teaspoon sugar
1/2 teaspoon paprika
1 tablespoon white vinegar
1 cup chicken broth
1 slice dark rye bread, torn into pieces
salt and pepper to taste

Melt the butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add onions, cook and stir until lightly browned. Sprinkle in the sugar, and continue cooking until onions are deep golden brown, about 10 minutes. Stir in the chicken broth and vinegar and season with paprika. Mix in the bread until dissolved. Bring to a boil, then simmer over low heat for 3 minutes.

Transfer the mixture to a blender or food processor, and blend until smooth. Serve with pork or beef.

ONION CASSEROLE

5 large sweet onions, cut into 1/4 inch slices and separated into rings
1/4 cup margarine
1/4 cup sour cream
3/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
10 buttery crackers

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C). Grease a 9x13 inch baking dish.

Melt the margarine in a large skillet over medium heat. Add onions; cook and stir until tender. Turn off the heat, and stir in the sour cream and Parmesan cheese. Transfer to the prepared baking dish, and crumble the crackers over the top.

Bake uncovered for 30 minutes in the preheated oven, until the top is browned and the sauce is bubbly.

OUTBACK ONION SOUP

2 quarts water
8 cubes beef bouillon, crumbled
2 large onions, quartered and sliced
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon coarsely ground black pepper
3/4 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 cup cold water
1 cup heavy cream
1 1/2 cups shredded Colby-Monterey Jack cheese

In a large, heavy pot over medium heat, bring 2 quarts water to a boil. Stir in bouillon cubes and let boil 10 minutes, until dissolved. Place onions in boiling water, reduce heat and simmer 30 minutes. Stir in salt and pepper and simmer 30 minutes more. Stir the flour into 1/2 cup cold water to make a paste. Gently whisk this mixture into the simmering soup, being careful not to break the onions. Simmer 30 minutes more. Stir in cream and cheese until cheese is melted and mixture is thoroughly heated. Thin with water if necessary. Serve hot, garnished with croutons, if desired.

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SWEET ONION PIE

1 1/2 cups buttery round crackers, crumbled
6 tablespoons butter, softened
2 cups thinly sliced sweet onions
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 tablespoon minced fresh chives
3/4 cup whole milk
2 eggs
1/2 teaspoon salt
3/4 cup shredded Cheddar cheese
1 pinch paprika
1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).

In a mixing bowl, combine crackers and 4 tablespoons of butter in a bowl until well blended. Press into the bottom and 1 inch up the sides of 8 inch pie plate to form a shell. Refrigerate until needed.

Melt remaining 2 tablespoons butter in heavy skillet over medium heat. Saute onions and garlic slowly until tender, about 12 minutes. Arrange onions in the cracker crust.

Beat eggs, whole milk, chives, and salt in a bowl until blended. Pour the mixture over the onions. Sprinkle with cheese and paprika.

Bake in a preheated 350 degrees F (175 degrees C) oven for 35 minutes, or until a knife comes out clean. Garnish with the parsley. Serve hot or at room temperature.

ROASTED ONIONS

4 medium unpeeled yellow onions
2 tablespoons olive oil
Salt and fresh ground pepper
Balsamic vinegar (optional)

Adjust oven rack to lowest position; heat to 425 degrees. Cut onions in half; toss with oil and a generous sprinkle of salt and pepper. Place, cut-side down, on a lipped cookie sheet. Roast until tender and cut surfaces are golden brown, 25 to 30 minutes. Adjust seasonings; drizzle with balsamic vinegar.

ONION SOUP GRATINEE

6 tablespoons olive oil
4 medium yellow onions, sliced 1/4 inch thick
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
1 clove garlic, thinly sliced
4 sprigs fresh thyme
1 bay leaf
salt to taste
1/4 teaspoon ground white pepper
3/4 cup dry white wine
2 quarts chicken stock
1/2 cup port wine
6 slices French bread

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2 cups shredded Gruyere cheese

Heat the olive oil in a heavy pot over medium heat. Add the onions; cook and stir until golden brown, about 30 minutes.

Add butter, garlic, thyme, bay leaf, salt, and white pepper. Cook and stir for about 10 minutes. Increase the heat to high, and stir in the white wine. Bring to a boil, and cook until wine has reduced by half, 3 to 5 minutes. Pour in the chicken stock, and simmer over medium heat for 45 minutes.

Preheat the oven's broiler. Remove the thyme sprigs and bay leaf from the soup, and stir in the port wine. Ladle soup into 6 crocks or heat proof bowls, top each with a slice of bread, and a generous helping of Gruyere cheese. Place the bowls on a baking sheet for ease in handling.

Place under the broiler for 2 to 3 minutes, until the bread and cheese are toasted and bubbly. Serve immediately.

ONION RICE

1 tablespoon vegetable oil
1 red onion, chopped
1 cup long-grain white rice
1 teaspoon ground black pepper
2 cups chicken broth

Heat the oil in a saucepan over medium heat. Stir in the onion, and cook until almost tender. Stir in rice, and continue cooking until coated with oil. When onion is tender and rice begins to brown lightly, season with pepper, and pour in the broth. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low, cover, and simmer 20 minutes.

CREAMY ONION GRAVY

2 tablespoons vegetable oil
1 medium onion, finely chopped
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
3/4 cup buttermilk
1/3 cup water
salt and pepper to taste

Heat vegetable oil in a medium saucepan over medium heat, and stir in the onion. Cook onion until tender, then set aside. Stir flour into the saucepan. Slowly cook and stir in the remaining oil 15 minutes, or until golden brown. Whisk the buttermilk into the flour mixture. Blend in the water, adjusting the amount as necessary to attain desired consistency. Season with salt and pepper. Serve with the reserved onions.

ONION QUICHE

1 tablespoon butter
1 large onion, diced
3 eggs
1/3 cup heavy cream
1/3 cup shredded Swiss cheese
1 (9 inch) unbaked pie crust

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C).

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Over medium-low heat melt butter in a large saucepan. Add onions and cook slowly, stirring occasionally, until onions are soft.

In a small bowl, beat together eggs and cream. Stir in cheese. Spread onions in bottom of pastry shell. Pour egg mixture over onions.

Bake in preheated oven for 30 minutes, or until eggs have set.

ZUCCHINI & ONION LATKE

3 zucchini
1 large onion
1 teaspoon dried oregano
salt and pepper to taste
1/4 cup butter

Grate zucchini and onion into a medium bowl, and drain off excess juices. Stir in the oregano and salt and pepper to taste.

Heat a frying pan over medium high heat and melt butter in the pan. When butter has coated the pan, arrange the zucchini in a flat layer over the bottom of the pan. Fry until golden brown on both sides, about 5 minutes per side. Serve warm.

CREAMY VIDALIA ONION SOUP

4 Vidalia onions, thinly sliced
3 tablespoons margarine
1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 cups chicken broth
1 cup milk
1/2 cup heavy whipping cream
3 egg yolks, beaten
1 1/2 teaspoons paprika
ground black pepper to taste
1/8 tablespoon hot pepper sauce
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

In a saucepan, melt butter or margarine over medium heat. Add onions: saute until golden brown, about 10 minutes.

Stir in flour and salt, and mix thoroughly. Gradually add chicken broth, stirring constantly. Cover, and simmer over low heat for about 10 minutes.

When onions are very tender, stir in milk and cream. Heat through. Remove 1/2 cup soup, and mix in egg yolks. Slowly stir egg yolk mixture into soup in pan. Heat through, but do not allow soup to boil. Stir in paprika, black pepper, and red hot pepper sauce. Serve hot, and garnish with chopped parsley.

SWEET VIDALIA ONION RELISH

1/2 large red bell peppers
1/2 large green bell peppers
1/2 large yellow bell peppers

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5 cups grated Vidalia onions
1-1/2 teaspoons kosher salt
1/4 large head cabbage, finely shredded
1 teaspoon kosher salt
1 cup and 2 tablespoons white sugar
1 cup apple cider vinegar
1 teaspoon ground turmeric
1 teaspoon mustard seed
1/4 teaspoon celery seed

Roast red, green, and yellow bell peppers over an open flame or in broiler, turning frequently, until skins are charred and blistered. Place in a bowl and cover with plastic; let sit 5 to 10 minutes. Remove skins. Cut peppers in half, lengthwise. Remove seeds and stem, and chop into small pieces. Set aside.

Place grated onions in a colander to drain liquid. Place them in a large bowl, and sprinkle with 1/4 cup kosher salt. Mix by hand. Mix in cabbage and 3 tablespoons salt by hand. Let sit 1 hour.

Place onions and cabbage into colander, and squeeze out as much liquid as possible. Place in cheese cloth or towel, and squeeze out additional water.

Place cabbage and onions into a large pot over medium-high heat. Add roasted bell peppers. Stir in sugar, apple cider vinegar, turmeric, mustard seed, and celery seed. Bring to a low boil, stirring constantly to prevent onions from sticking to the bottom. Reduce heat to medium, and simmer for 45 minutes, stirring often.

To prepare jars you first need to wash jars then place them into the canning pot with rack and boil them in water to sterilize them. Fill a small pot half way with water and bring to simmer; place the lids into water. Taking one jar out of the water at a time put on canning funnel and fill with hot relish about 1/2 inch from the top. Then take a kitchen knife a stick down to the bottom of jar and work the knife around to remove all air bubbles. Wipe off top of jar very well and clean then place a hot lid on jar the screw ring on top. Repeat until all relish is gone. Jars and relish must stay hot throughout this canning process.

Place in a bath of simmering water, covering the jars by one inch. Process for 10 minutes. When jars start to seal and vacuum, the lids will make a pop sound and your canning was a success. Once jars have been opened, store in the refrigerator and use within two weeks.

BAKED STUFFED ONION

1/2 cup uncooked long-grain rice
6 large Spanish onions, peeled
1/2 pound spicy ground pork sausage
1/4 cup chopped green bell pepper
1 egg, beaten
1/2 cup soft bread crumbs
1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley
2 tablespoons butter, melted
1/2 teaspoon paprika

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C). Lightly grease a shallow baking dish.

In a saucepan bring 1 cup water to a boil. Add rice and stir. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 20 minutes.

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Slice tops off of onions. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add onions and cook until tender but still firm, about 15 minutes. Drain, cool and remove centers of onions, leaving shell intact. Chop centers and reserve 1/2 cup of the chopped flesh.

Place sausage in a large, deep skillet. Cook over medium high heat until evenly brown. Drain, reserving drippings, crumble and set aside.

In the reserved drippings saute green pepper and reserved 1/2 cup chopped onion until tender. Combine with sausage, egg, cooked rice, bread crumbs, oregano and parsley. Spoon mixture into onion shells and place in prepared dish.

Combine melted butter and paprika; brush or spoon over onions. Bake in preheated oven, covered, for 15 minutes. Uncover and bake an additional 5 minutes.

ROASTED RED ONIONS WITH MASCARONE CHEESE

4 large red onions, unpeeled
1 cup mascarpone cheese
4 cloves garlic, minced
1 shallot, diced
1 teaspoon minced fresh thyme

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F (220 degrees C).

Cut both ends off onions and place onto a baking sheet. Roast in preheated oven until centers are soft, about 15 minutes. Remove, and let onions cool.

Reduce heat to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).

Peel onions and remove center core leaving 1/2 inch outer shell intact. Mince the center flesh and place in a bowl. Combine with mascarpone cheese, garlic, shallot, and thyme. Fill onion shells with cheese mixture and replace onto baking sheet.

Bake until the surface of the cheese bubbles, about 10 minutes. Serve hot.

CORN-ONION PUDDING

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 large yellow onion, thinly sliced
1 1/2 cups whole kernel yellow corn (fresh or frozen)
1 cup finely chopped bell pepper
3 eggs
1 cup fat-free half-and-half
salt and pepper, to taste
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

Heat oil in large skillet. Add onion; cook over low heat, stirring regularly, until golden and slightly caramelized, about 20 minutes.

Place onion in a shallow 9-by-9-inch ovenproof dish. Add corn and bell pepper.

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Beat eggs; stir into half-and-half. Pour egg mixture over casserole, add salt and pepper, and stir. Sprinkle cheese on top.

Bake at 400 degrees for 30 to 35 minutes until firm. Brown top under a broiler. Let cool for 10 minutes. Cut in squares and serve.

SAVORY ONION BREAD

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
3 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons margarine
1/2 cup shredded sharp Cheddar cheese
1/2 cup finely diced onion
1 tablespoon margarine
1 egg
1/2 cup milk
1/2 cup shredded sharp Cheddar cheese

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F (205 degrees C). Grease one 8 inch round or one 8x8 inch square pan.

Combine flour, baking powder and salt, cut in 2 tablespoons of the butter until mixture is crumbly. Stir in 1/2 cup of the grated cheese. Make a well in the center of the mixture.

Fry the onion in 1 tablespoon of the butter or margarine until clear and golden. Set aside.

In a small bowl beat the egg and stir in the milk and the cooked onion. Pour egg mixture into the well in the flour mixture. Stir until just moistened. You will have a soft dough. Pat dough into the prepared pan. Sprinkle remaining 1/2 cup grated cheese over top.

Bake at 400 degrees F (205 degrees C) for 25 minutes. Serve hot.

GRILLED ONIONS

4 large onions
1/2 cup butter
4 cubes chicken bouillon

Preheat grill for medium heat.

Peel outer layer off onions. Slice a small section off of one end of each onion, and make a small hole in the center. Fill the center of each onion with a bouillon cube and 2 tablespoons butter or margarine. Replace the top of the onion, and wrap in aluminum foil.

Place onions on grill over indirect heat, and close the lid. Cook for 1 hour, or until tender. Remove the tops, and cut into bite size chunks. Place in a serving dish with all the juices from the foil.