

# *10 Best Restaurant Recipe Hacks:* **Make Your Restaurant Favorites at Home**



Kitchen

Tested



Famous restaurants serve delicious meals, but it can be expensive to eat out all the time. That doesn't mean you have to wait for a special occasion to enjoy your favorite dishes. You can get them right at home. These simple restaurant hacks will help you indulge in the tastes you crave without the expense of a night out. Now you can have your favorite menu items just about any day of the week.

Whether you are cooking for one or entertaining a crowd, these recipes are sure to please everyone. They are so delicious; your guests won't believe that they are homemade. While they may look complicated, the truth is, these recipes could not be easier to make. You will be so impressed that you may never need to eat out again.

From P.F. Chang's delectable Mongolian Beef to Olive Garden's famous bread sticks, you can make all of your restaurant favorites right at home. Just follow these simple recipes and enjoy.

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# Sweet and Spicy Corn Salsa (Chipotle Corn Salsa)

Sweet and savory with the perfect amount of heat, this salsa is a crowd favorite. Enjoy it with your favorite tortilla chips, or use as a topping on some of your favorite recipes. This chipotle corn salsa recipe works perfectly as a topping for salads, a delicious addition to sandwiches and wraps, and a perfect garnish on all sorts of entrees.

Yield: About 1 cup salsa



## ***Ingredients:***

- 1 medium poblano chile
- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 1 small red onion
- 1 large jalapeño pepper
- 5-6 sprigs fresh cilantro
- 2 tbsp Lime juice
- 1 cup can corn (or you can use thawed, frozen corn as well)
- 1/2 tsp sugar
- 1/2 tsp salt

## ***Instructions:***

Cut the poblano chile into two and remove the seeds. Brush with olive oil inside and out. Broil at 400F for about 5-10 minutes. Remove chile from oven/broiler and let cool. Peel the skin and chop it.

Chop red onion, jalapeño peppers, and cilantro.

In a bowl, mix all ingredients, including the corn, sugar and salt together. Serve chilled.

Adapted from: <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/food-network-kitchens/almost-famous-corn-salsa-recipe/index.html>

# Homemade Rosemary Dinner Bread (Macaroni Grill Rosemary Bread)

If you've ever been to Macaroni Grill, you know just how delicious their rosemary bread is, especially when it is warm from the oven and dipped in a delicious mix of olive oil, herbs and spices. You can now recreate this delicious appetizer in your own home to enjoy whenever you please. As good as this bread is simply on its own, try slicing it for gourmet sandwiches or dipped in your favorite soup.



Yield: 2 large loaves

## ***Ingredients:***

- 2 teaspoons active dry yeast
- 2 teaspoons sugar
- 1 cup warm water
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for brushing and serving
- 2 tablespoons dried rosemary
- 1/2 teaspoon fine salt
- 2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
- 1 teaspoon fine salt
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- Freshly ground pepper

## ***Instructions:***

Combine the yeast, sugar and 1/4 cup of water in a large bowl. Let stand for 5 minutes, until foamy.

In the same bowl, add 1 tablespoon of olive oil, 1 ½ tablespoons rosemary, fine salt, ¾ cups warm water and all the flour. Mix with large spoon until dough forms. Then work dough by hand on a lightly floured surface for about 5-7 minutes. Rub olive oil on the inside of a clean bowl and put the dough in, cover with saran wrap or a cloth and let stand for 1 hour. The dough should have doubled in size by this time.

Place a sheet of parchment paper on a baking sheet. Next, place the dough on a lightly floured surface and divide into 2 halves. Knead each piece for a minute or so, sprinkling with flour, as needed and work into a ball. Place each loaf on the prepared baking sheet. Let stand, uncovered, for about 1 hour or until dough has doubled.

Preheat oven to 400 F. Bake the loaves for 10 minutes. Remove them from the oven and brush with the remaining olive oil. Sprinkle with the kosher salt and crumble the remaining rosemary over top of the loaf. Return to the oven and bake for another 10-12 minutes, or until golden brown.

Let cool slightly and serve warm.

Adapted from: <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/food-network-kitchens/almost-famous-rosemary-bread-recipe.html>

## Sweet and Tart Strawberry Lemonade (Red Robin Strawberry Lemonade)

Just the right amount of tang and sweet refreshment, this tasty beverage is nothing short of perfection. This drink is perfect for a summer's day, a get-together with friends, or just to enjoy because it's delicious. It's super easy to whip up fast. This homemade version is possibly even better than the original because you can tailor it to your own tastes if you prefer something a little more sweet or sour.

Yield: 6 servings

### **Ingredients:**

- About 12 large fresh strawberries
- 9 - 10 lemons
- 2 cups sugar
- 1 1/2 cups water

### **Instructions:**

Squeeze juice out of lemons. Save the rinds of one lemon. Refrigerate.

In a saucepan, bring water, 1 1/2 cup sugar, and saved lemon rind to a boil, stirring regularly to dissolve sugar. Set syrup aside to cool.

Chop the strawberries into large chunks.



Add the remaining 1/2 cup sugar to strawberries. Mix well and set aside for about 45 minutes.

Strain the strawberries out. Refrigerate the strawberries until ready to serve.

In a pitcher, combine lemon juice, syrup and strawberry syrup. Refrigerate.

When ready to serve, add about a tablespoon of strained strawberries to the drink for extra flavor and garnishing.

Adapted from: <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/food-network-kitchens/almost-famous-strawberry-lemonade-recipe/index.html>

## Simple and Easy Chow Mein (Panda Express Chow Mein)

Sometimes that craving for really good Chinese food hits you at the most inopportune moments. But that's ok because you can now make your own right at home whenever you like. These noodles are absolute perfection. They are simple to make, savory, and addictive. To make it a meal, simply add shrimp, chicken, or tofu.



Yield: 4 large servings

### Ingredients:

- 4 servings dried chow mein noodles
- 4 servings chow mein noodles
- 1 tbsp brown sugar
- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 3 cloves garlic, minced

- 1 tsp ginger, minced
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 tbsp sesame oil
- 1/2 medium onion, chopped
- 2 large stalks celery, chopped
- 3 cups napa (or other) cabbage, chopped

**Instructions:**

Prepare the chow mein noodles according to package instructions. Set aside.

Combine brown sugar, soy, garlic and ginger, salt and pepper in a small bowl. Set aside.

Heat oil in a wok or skillet over medium heat. Saute the onion and celery for a few minutes, until soft. Then the cabbage and continue to saute until tender. Finally, add the cooked noodles and soy sauce mixture, tossing constantly until heated through and serve.

Adapted from: <http://eatcakefordinner.blogspot.com/2013/01/copycat-panda-express-chow-mein.html>

## Fried Pickles with a Kick (Texas Roadhouse Fried Pickles)

There are some things in life that are simply too good for words. These fried pickles are a divine example of just that. The salty tang of the pickles is balanced perfectly with a delectable dipping sauce that has just the right amount of kick. Believe it or not, you can make these easily at home to surprise your guests, or your family.

Yield: 1 appetizer serving

**Ingredients:**



**For the Dip:**

- 1/4 cup mayonnaise
- 1 tbsp horseradish
- 1 tbsp ketchup
- 1/4 tsp Cajun seasoning

**For the pickles:**

- Vegetable oil
- 1/4 cup flour
- 1 tsp Cajun seasoning
- 1/4 teaspoon oregano
- 1/4 teaspoon basil
- 1/8 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- Kosher salt
- 2 cups dill pickles, drained and sliced

In a small bowl, mix all the dip ingredients. Set aside.

Place about 1 1/2" of vegetable oil in a wide pot and heat over medium high heat.

In a medium bowl, mix flour, Cajun seasoning, oregano, basil, pepper and salt.

Depending on how big your pot is, you may have to fry the pickles in 2 batches. You don't want the pickles to overlap when they're frying, so make sure you have enough space. Coat the pickles with the flour mixture and shake off excess. Gently add the pickles to the oil, one at a time. Fry for about 2-3 minutes or until golden brown. Remove pickles with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towel. Repeat with another batch, if necessary.

Serve right away with dipping sauce.

Adapted from: <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/food-network-kitchens/almost-famous-fried-pickles-recipe/index.html>

## **Cajun Popcorn Shrimp with Peppers (Bubba Gump Popcorn Shrimp)**

The secret to any good popcorn shrimp is in the batter. This recipe gets it right, with just a touch of sweetness to make your mouth water. The trick to perfectly cooked popcorn shrimp is making sure your oil is at the right temperature and keeping an eye on the shrimp as they are cooking, taking them out when they are golden brown.



Yield: 4 servings

### ***Ingredients:***

- 1 lb shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 1 tsp sugar
- 1 tsp salt 2 tsp Cajun seasoning

- 5 pepperoncini
- 2 jarred roasted peppers
- 3/4 cup all purpose flour
- 2 tbsp corn starch
- 1 tsp icing sugar
- 1/2 cup beer
- Vegetable oil
- Salt

***Instructions:***

In a bowl, mix shrimp, sugar, salt, and 1/2 tsp of the Cajun seasoning. Cover and refrigerate for about 2 hours.

Drain and cut pepperoncini in half lengthwise. Drain red pepper, cut into pieces.

Heat a couple of inches of oil in a wide pot over medium high heat.

In a large bowl, mix flour, corn starch, icing sugar, and remaining Cajun seasoning. Add pepperoncini, red pepper, and beer. Whisk into a smooth, creamy batter. Add shrimp to the batter, mix until well coated.

Add shrimp, pepperoncini and red peppers to oil one at a time, remove excess batter before frying. Fry. Cook in one layer only and avoid any too many shrimp or the oil will cool and the batter becomes lumpy and sticky. Fry until golden brown, about 3 minutes. Remove shrimp and peppers with a slotted spoon, drain on paper towel and season with salt. If you're doing more than one batch, make the oil is fully heated before frying more food.

Serve with tartar sauce, cocktail sauce or lemon.

Adapted from: <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/food-network-kitchens/almost-famous-popcorn-shrimp-recipe/index.html>

## **Chinese Mongolian Beef (P.F. Chang's Mongolian Beef)**

Another Asian inspired wonder, this recipe balances sweet and savory into the most delicious dish. It is certainly a crowd pleaser and is easy to make in large quantities for when you are entertaining. Mongolian beef is not actually Mongolian, but rather a Chinese-American dish.

Serve over rice or noodles, and pair with a healthy side of delicious sautéed vegetables.

Yield: 4 servings

***Ingredients:***

1 pound flank steak, cut in long strips  
1/4 cup cornstarch  
2 green onions, sliced

2 teaspoons sesame oil  
3 garlic cloves, minced  
1/2 teaspoon ginger, minced  
1/2 cup soy sauce  
1/2 cup water  
1/3 cup brown sugar  
Vegetable oil



***Instructions:***

Coat beef strips in cornstarch and place on a plate. Let stand for about 5-10 minutes.

Slice the green onions and set aside.

Heat the sesame oil in a wok or frying pan, over medium heat, being careful not to let it get too hot. Add the garlic and ginger and saute for about 1 minute, being careful not to let it burn. Then add the soy sauce, water and brown sugar, stirring until sugar is dissolved. Remove from heat and set aside.

Heat about 2 inches of oil in a wide pot over medium heat. Add the beef in one layer and fry until browned, about 2-3 minutes. Carefully remove the beef slices with a slotted spoon and let them drain on a paper towel.

Put the wok or pan with the sauce back over medium heat and add the beef strips and bring to a simmer. Add the green onions, simmer for another minute or so. Serve over rice.

Adapted from: <http://www.sixsistersstuff.com/2012/03/pf-changs-mongolian-beef-copycat-recipe.html>

## Classic Fried Chicken Sandwich (Chick-fil-A Chicken Sandwich)



You don't need to visit a drive-thru to enjoy one of America's favorite guilty pleasures. The trick to this famous sandwich is the batter that the chicken is fried in. Of course, you can't forget the pickle. Now you just have to grab some waffle fries from your grocer's freezer and you are set.

Yield: 4 sandwiches

### ***Ingredients:***

- 2 boneless chicken breasts
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 1/2 tsp pepper
- 1 1/2 tsp paprika
- 1 large egg
- 1/2 cup milk
- 3/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/4 cup whole wheat flour
- 1 tbsp malted milk
- 1 heaping tbsp icing sugar
- 1/4 tsp baking soda
- 1/4 tsp mustard powder
- 1 tbsp softened butter
- 4 hamburger buns
- Jarred sliced pickles

**Instructions:**

Split chicken breast into half horizontally to make 4 thin pieces. Tenderize with meat mallet between two sheets of plastic wrap. Season chicken with 1/2 tsp pepper and 1/2 tsp paprika.

Heat oil in large skillet over medium high heat.

In a medium bowl, whisk egg and milk together.

In another bowl, combine all-purpose and whole wheat flour, malted milk powder, icing sugar, baking soda, mustard powder, 1/2 tsp paprika, 1 tsp salt, 1 tsp pepper.

Dip chicken into egg mixture, then dredge in flour mixture, coating both sides evenly.

Carefully place each piece of chicken in the oil, one at a time. Fry the chicken in the hot oil until golden, about 4 minutes. Remove with slotted spoon and drain on paper towel.

Spread butter on hamburger buns and toast lightly.

Place pickles on a bun bottom, add chicken and cover with bun top.

Adapted from: <http://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/food-network-kitchens/almost-famous-chicken-sandwiches-recipe.html>

## **Butter Herb Breadsticks (Olive Garden Breadsticks)**

The perfect starter and accompaniment to soups, salads, pastas, and entrees of all types, these bread sticks keep you coming back for more. They are addictive and delicious. The light seasoning makes them practically melt in your mouth. You might as well plan on making a double batch because the first few will be gone before you know it.



Yield: 12-14 breadsticks

***Ingredients:***

- 1 packet dry, active yeast
- 1 1/2 cups warm water
- 2 tbsp sugar
- 1 tbsp salt
- 2 tbsp melted butter
- 3 1/2 cups bread flour

***For brushing:***

- 1/4 cup melted butter
- 2 teaspoon Olive Garden garlic seasoning, or regular garlic powder
- 1 tsp salt

***Instructions:***

In a warm bowl, dissolve sugar and yeast with warm water. Let sit for about 5-10 minutes, until foamy

Add salt, melted butter and about 2 cups of the flour. Knead dough for about 5 minutes, adding more flour as necessary.

Spray baking pan with cooking spray. Divide dough into small balls, large enough to fill about 1/3 cup. Make larger if desired but not too large as your bread will rise.

Roll and shape dough into cigar shapes. Place in baking pan at least 1 inch apart. Let stand for about 1 hour, covered a clean cloth.

Bake 7 minutes at 375F. While baking, combine melted butter, garlic powder/seasoning and salt for brushing.

Pull baking sheet out of oven, brush the bread sticks with the seasoned, melted butter. Return to oven, bake another 8 - 10 minutes.

Brush with remaining seasoned butter. Serve warm.

Adapted from: <http://www.chef-in-training.com/2012/02/olive-garden-breadsticks/>

## **Best Vegetarian Pizza (Papa Murphy's Gourmet Vegetarian Pizza)**

There are few things in life better than really good pizza. This healthy take on a classic is topped with delicious fresh veggies and a to-die-for creamy garlic sauce. You may never view pizza the same way after you taste the garlicky savory sauce balanced with the sweetness of tomatoes and artichokes.

Yield: 1 pizza

**Ingredients:**

- 1/2 ranch dressing
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tbsp fresh parmesan
- 1 tsp oregano
- 1 tsp basil
- 1 pre-baked pizza crust
- Fresh spinach
- Zucchini, sliced
- Mushrooms, sliced
- Artichoke hearts, slices
- Tomatoes, diced
- Onions, diced
- Mozzarella, grated
- More fresh parmesan

**Instructions:**

Preheat oven, according to pizza crust instructions.

In a small bowl, combine the ranch dressing, minced garlic, 1 tbsp parmesan, oregano and basil. Spread on pizza crust as this is your pizza sauce.

Add the toppings as you'd like, including plenty of mozzarella and parmesan.

Bake 12-14 minutes, or as noted on the pizza crust instructions.



Adapted from: <http://www.sixsistersstuff.com/2012/08/papa-murphys-copy-cat-gourmet.html>



All of your favorite restaurant addictions hacked for your homemade pleasure. Impress your friends and family or just revel in your own delicious talent. Do not despair, these restaurant hacks are truly simple recipes that can be done at every level of cooking ability. Simply follow the recipes step-by-step, relax and enjoy.

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