

## NOT YOUR GRANDMOTHER'S

# Fruitcake



**'I'm not much of a planner. I tend to bake on a whim.'**

Dorie Greenspan, about how her simple recipes capitalize on everyday ingredients and minimal tools

New York Times bestselling author Dorie Greenspan shares recipes from her latest book. COURTESY OF KATIE DONNELLY PHOTOGRAPHY

## Renowned author shares 3 unconventional cakes that celebrate fall flavors.

By Susan Puckett | For the AJC

Dorie Greenspan, bestselling author and renowned baking authority, has never baked the dense, achingly sweet traditional fruitcake that is an icon of the Southern holiday season.

But the drop in temperature puts her in a similar cake-baking frame of mind: One that stirs cozy memories and fills the kitchen with aromas of fruit, nuts and spices, but without the labor, expense and potential for ridicule.

We recently talked about her newest (and 15th) book, "Dorie's Anytime Cakes" (Harvest, \$35), on sale Tuesday, on a Zoom call from her part-time Paris home. She was preparing to launch her book tour, which includes a stop in Atlanta.

Many of the book's recipes, Greenspan explained, take her back to the kitchen of her Brooklyn childhood, where there was always a cake on the counter. Others were inspired by her daily life in Paris and worldly travels.

What they all have in common is their simplicity.

"I'm not much of a planner," Green-

### Recipes, E14

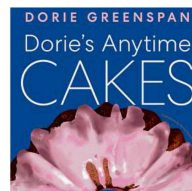
» Fall Harvest Cake  
» Morning, Noon and Night  
» Thanksgiving Cake  
» Gingerbread: Apple butter

span said. "I tend to bake on a whim." These recipes are designed for spontaneity, relying on everyday ingredients and minimal tools.

These are the cakes she makes regularly and on repeat, she said. But being an "incorrigible tinkerer," she can't resist adding dashes of surprise to beloved favorites and encourages "playing around" with formulas throughout the book.

Greenspan said she had originally planned to call the book "Kitchen Cakes," to suggest the kinds of cakes that can be served right out of the pan and nibbled on throughout the day or night. But since she'd "also be happy to put any of these cakes in the center of the table," the title she settled on felt more inclusive. "I gave

Cakes continued on E14



Greenspan says that many of the recipes in her new book take her back to her childhood, where a cake in the kitchen was customary. COURTESY

### IF YOU GO

Dorie Greenspan will discuss "Dorie's Anytime Cakes," with New York Times food journalist Kim Severson. The program is part of the 34th MJCCA Book Festival.

1 to 2 p.m., Nov. 7, \$43.50, includes book, "Dorie's Anytime Cakes," and a cake flight.

■ Marcus Jewish Community Center of Atlanta, 5342 Tilly Mill Road, Atlanta. [acappellabooks.com/pages/events/1424/mjcca-book-fest-presents-dorie-greenspan-in](http://acappellabooks.com/pages/events/1424/mjcca-book-fest-presents-dorie-greenspan-in)

## DINING NEWS

### Eats on Ponce to close after 32 years

Legacy comfort food restaurant Eats on Ponce de Leon Avenue will close Saturday after 32 years in business.

Owner Bob Hatcher told The Atlanta Journal-Constitution that he decided to close the restaurant because "it's been losing money."

"There's lots of reasons, but the main one is there's not enough people coming through the door," he said. "Nothing was the same after COVID."

The restaurant has been located at 600 Ponce De Leon Ave. NE since 1993, when Hatcher opened it alongside business partner Charlie Kerns.

It is known for offering an affordable menu of comfort food dishes such as jerk chicken, collard greens, sweet potatoes and chicken lasagna.

Hatcher said he has no plans to reopen the restaurant and expects to sell the property, though he did not provide a timeline or details about a sale.

OLIVIA WAKIM



Jerk chicken from Eats.

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## Why doesn't Atlanta have a signature cocktail?

Three local beverage experts discuss what drinks might best represent the city.

By Caroline Eubanks  
For the AJC

Several American cities are recognized for their drinks and their role in the way we imbibe. New Orleans has the Sazerac, the Ramos Gin Fizz and a half-dozen others. San Francisco is the home of the original Irish coffee, and its neighbor, Oakland, created the Mai Tai. Washington has the Rickey. But what about Atlanta?

"It's been a topic that circles my head probably every year," said Tiffanie Barriere, a master mixologist and spirits educator based in Atlanta.

It's not as if the city doesn't have a long history of drinking. Taverns set up shop in the area before it was even called Atlanta, and the first mayoral race was



Given that bourbon certainly "fits" Atlanta, some version of a bourbon-based Old-Fashioned could be a potential signature cocktail for the city. KRISTA SLATER FOR THE AJC

between pro- and anti-drinking factions. The Moral and Rowdy parties. An 1899 menu from the original Kimball House Hotel offered Imperial Punch to its well-to-do patrons. The claret-based

punch, popularized around the time of the Civil War, was made with sugar, soda water, cherry liqueur and nutmeg.

Whiskey always has had a strong influence in Atlanta, making its

way to the state from Virginia and Kentucky. And long before a home-brew kit could be ordered online, corn liquor was made in homes and hollers when the city still was known as Terminus. Both were enjoyed at the Atlanta Exposition of 1895.

John Pemberton, the inventor of Coca-Cola, developed the iconic soft drink after first experimenting with French coca wine, a Bordeaux infused with traces of cocaine. In Pemberton's era, a popular pharmacy drink was the "don't care," a mix of different flavoring agents, typically fruit-based, with whatever hard liquor was available.

"The Georgia mint julep actually is like the first documented julep," said Eric Simpkins, who runs the bar program at Nádair.

In fact, the cocktail, made with peach brandy, appeared in "Jerry Thomas' Bartender's Guide" — first published in 1862.

Despite the city's legacy of

Cocktails continued on E15

## MORE INSIDE



### A flavorful inspiration

Moist Pumpkin Blondies are sure to become a fall favorite. E12

### Meatless comfort food

Mercer Street Meals' Ricotta Polpetta are perfect for a cold or rainy night. E13



## FOOD &amp; DINING

## Colorful sumac sauce levels up turkey meatballs

By Gretchen McKay  
Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

Meatballs are pretty much an "everybody" food.

They can be made with almost any type of ground protein — including poultry, beef, pork and lamb — and sometimes there's no meat at all. Instead, they're rolled together with legumes, beans, grains, mushrooms and/or a whole host of vegetables.

They're just as versatile when it comes to serving. Often plopped on top of pasta, meatballs can be tucked into a hoagie roll or sandwiched between two pieces of sturdy bread, piled high on mashed potatoes or a hearty grain like polenta, or stirred into soup to help flavor the broth and add some heft to every spoonful.

The size can also vary depending on what's being dished onto a plate or into a bowl — they can be so big with a side of marinara that they have to be shared, or so small they're best served on the end of a toothpick as an appetizer.

In this gluten-free recipe from Israeli British chef and cookbook author Yotam Ottolenghi, the tender meatballs are made with ground turkey, fresh mint and a prolific summer veggie we can't seem to use fast enough: shredded zucchini.

The veggie-heavy recipe is something of a weeknight warrior, or perhaps the better word is lifesaver. The meatball mixture comes together very quickly in one bowl, is full of fresh, herbal flavors and is incredibly easy to portion if you use a spring-loaded cookie scoop. Also, the meatballs can be made in advance and stored in the fridge or freezer until you're ready to cook and eat them. In other words, it's ideal for busy people.

Used as a replacement for bread crumbs, the shredded zucchini both adds moisture to the mix (making the meatballs tender) and acts as a binder. It also adds fiber without also adding a lot of calories.

What makes the dish extra special is the colorful sauce that

## TURKEY AND ZUCCHINI MEATBALLS

I slightly smashed the meatballs into patties after I put them in the pan to cook so they wouldn't roll around when tucked into a pita. The tangy sumac sauce and fresh herbs add a bright kick of flavor.

## FOR SAUCE

Scant  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup sour cream  
Scant  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup Greek yogurt  
1 teaspoon grated lemon zest  
1 tablespoon lemon juice  
1 small garlic clove, crushed  
1  $\frac{1}{2}$  tablespoons olive oil  
1 tablespoon sumac  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon black pepper

## FOR MEATBALLS

1 pounds ground turkey, preferably thigh meat  
1 large zucchini, coarsely grated (scant 2 cups)  
3 green onions, thinly sliced  
1 large egg  
2 tablespoons chopped mint  
2 tablespoons chopped cilantro  
2 garlic cloves, crushed  
1 teaspoon ground cumin  
1 teaspoon salt  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon cayenne  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup neutral oil, for cooking

Make sour cream sauce: Place all the ingredients in a small bowl. Stir well and set aside or chill until needed.

In a large bowl, combine all meatball ingredients except the neutral oil. Avoiding overworking, mix gently with your hands until just combined.

Shape into 1  $\frac{1}{2}$ -ounce meatballs (you can gently flatten them into patties to make them easier to cook), making roughly 18. A spring-loaded scoop is quick, but using your hands or a pair of spoons works well, too.

Cook the meatballs: Set a large cast-iron skillet or nonstick pan over medium heat. When the pan is hot, add a thin layer of oil and, when it shimmers, carefully lay in about half of the patties, leaving space between them for steam to escape.

Let meatballs begin to brown before using a thin, flexible metal spatula to rotate and move



These gluten-free turkey meatballs include shredded zucchini. PITTSBURGH POST-GAZETTE/TNS

them around the pan.

Flip patties after 3–5 minutes, when they are a deep golden brown, and continue cooking in the same way on the second side.

The zucchini will keep the meatballs very tender even once fully cooked, so it might be hard to tell when they are done by pressing on them. Feel free to cut into one or two with a paring knife and take a peek to get a feel for the texture of a cooked patty. You'll know the meatballs are done when there's no sign of pink inside.

Serve these warm or at room temperature, with the sauce on the side. Or make a sandwich on pita, with mint and cilantro tucked in for a fresh crunch.

**Per serving, including sauce, based on 4:** 526 calories (percent of calories from fat, 75%), 26 grams protein, 7 grams carbohydrates, 4 grams total sugars, 1 gram fiber, 44 grams total fat (11 grams saturated), 122 milligrams cholesterol, 837 milligrams sodium.

YOTAM OTTOLENGHI

goes on top. Made by mixing sour cream, yogurt and lemon with ground sumac, a tangy spice with

a lemony kick made from pulverized dried sumac berries, it's a beautiful purplish pink that might

make you think of cotton candy or raspberry ice cream. They can be served as a main

course with sauce on the side for dipping. Or, tuck them into a warm pita for a sandwich.



The Citrus Gold cocktail, created by Tiffanie Barriere, features aged rum, mandarin juice and spiced pear liqueur. A.J.C. 2025

## Cocktails

continued from E11

boozy experimentation (and likely intense hangovers), none of these beverages became indelibly linked to Atlanta. And in the absence of a naturally ascendant signature cocktail, marketers proposed their own concoctions. None of those caught on, either.

Online listicles claim Georgia's official cocktail is the Scarlett O'Hara, reportedly created in 1939 by New Orleans-based Southern Comfort to promote the release of the "Gone With the Wind" film. But the drink,



John Pemberton, the inventor of Coca-Cola, developed the soft drink after first experimenting with French coca wine, a Bordeaux infused with traces of cocaine. LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

made with the spirit plus lime juice and cranberry juice, has no connection to Atlanta except for the name of Margaret Mitchell's heroine. You're unlikely to find it on a menu in town.

And despite the city's love for lemon pepper wet wings, the flavor combination has not taken off in cocktail form, no matter how many creative attempts are made, Barriere said.

"I see them popping up here and there," she said. "I've never had it perfected, and I felt like it doesn't need to be perfect because I don't want lemon pepper with liquor."

Even if Atlanta doesn't have one specific cocktail, a city with such strong cultural currents provides plenty of cues for how its signature drink might be made. Atlanta's cocktail could be, like the city itself, "too busy to hate." It would be quick to prepare, without over-the-top techniques or ingredients. It would have to be approachable and easy-to-love, but with plenty of character and depth.

"I think Atlanta as a whole definitely got the bourbon fever for a while," said Jerry Slater, a restaurateur, beverage shop owner and columnist for The Atlanta Journal-Constitution with his wife, Krista. "If you combine cognac and bourbon (like in the Vieux Carré), you add some peach, you could start to see something come together."

Simpkins agreed. "I would say bourbon really is still kind of like the main-



The question of a signature Atlanta cocktail "circles my head probably every year," says Tiffanie Barriere, a master mixologist and spirits educator based in Atlanta. COURTESY OF MONDAY NIGHT BREWING



An 1899 menu from the Kimball House Hotel (shown in 1875) offered Imperial Punch to its well-to-do patrons. The claret-based punch was made with sugar, soda water, cherry liqueur and nutmeg. A.J.C. ARCHIVE AT GSU LIBRARY

stay," he said.

The Old-Fashioned is found at just about every bar in town, but it's also popular across the country and doesn't trace its roots to Atlanta. In Georgia, many include a local twist like the Cola Old-Fashioned created by Greg Best in the mid-2000s as a nod to the influence of Atlanta's global beverage behemoth, Coca-Cola.

Barriere makes an argu-

ment for tea-based drinks and the use of fruit brandies. She uses seasonally available ingredients in her own cocktails.

"Early settlers and foragers making their own stuff was great because the brandy definitely was readily available," she said. Simpkins took the same approach at his former Midtown restaurant.

"When I had The Lawrence,



The Martini, including this one at Kimball House, is iconic but doesn't say "Atlanta." KIMBALL HOUSE

every year we would take a case of the last of the summer peaches and use it in case of brandy," Simpkins said.

Perhaps the great Atlanta cocktail is yet to come because no single drink has been invented that properly reflects the city's complexity.

"There are so many themes, so many layers to Atlantans," Barriere said.