

Making & Using Mustards

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Introduction

Mustard seeds are so small that Shakespeare gave the name “Mustard-seed” to one of the tiny fairies in *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*.

These little seeds scatter widely and grow easily. Archeologists have found mustard in prehistoric sites in Europe, Africa, and Asia. Ten thousand years ago, Stone Age people gathered mustard from the wild, and it was one of the first crops cultivated by Iron Age farmers. They probably did not have to cultivate it very strenuously. Each plant produces so many vigorous, fast-germinating seeds that ancient Hindus used mustard as a symbol of fecundity.

Indian cooks still value mustard. They use the seeds whole or crushed as a spice, and vast acreages of mustard plants grow in northern India to produce the mustard oil which is a favorite for deep-frying. In the classical world, both the Greeks and Romans loved mustard, using it to make powerful sauces and pickles. By the thirteenth century, the town of Dijon, France was already a center of mustard production. Similarly, in medieval England and northern Europe mustard gave flavor and zest to all sorts of foods. It was especially prized during the dark days of winter, when it enlivened a dreary diet of root crops and salt meat. Unlike most other spices and flavorings, it grew locally, so was inexpensive and available to those who could not afford most other spices, which were all imported from the East.

Until the sixteenth century, when the hot chili peppers of Central America arrived in Europe and Asia, nothing rivalled the mustard’s firepower in the kitchen. But it was not valued only for its familiar pungent bite. Like most spices, it was credited with all sorts of medicinal merits. Pliny, who wrote in the first century A.D., gave forty remedies based on mustard. John Evelyn, the seventeenth-century English scientist who wrote a book about salads, summed up the health benefits of mustard as having “Incomparable effect to quicken and revive the Spirits; strengthening the Memory, expelling heaviness, preventing the Vertiginous Palsie, and is a laudable Cephalic. Besides it is an approved Antiscorbutick; aids Concoction, and cuts and dissipates Phlegmatic Humours.” In some nineteenth- and early twentieth-century American cookbooks, “home remedies” sections recommended mustard foot-baths or mustard plasters for rheumatism and colds. Indians used mustard-oil massages to relieve arthritis, and mustard-oil tonics to improve the sheen of their hair. Today’s herbalists still recommend mustard for colds and inflammation, though they warn that it can irritate the skin of sensitive people.

While mustard no longer reigns in the medicine cabinet, it is valued in the kitchen as much as ever. The seeds inhibit the growth of some yeasts and molds. This was important before refrigeration and preservatives, and it is still significant in the pickling process. Commercially packaged pickling spice always contains a good supply of mustard seeds, and if you make your own mixtures for spicing vinegar, you should never omit them, though you can add or delete other spices to achieve the flavor you like.

The other little-noted culinary virtue of mustard is that it emulsifies other ingredients into smooth mixtures. It even does a good job at holding oil and vinegar together, so sauces that include oil, vinegar, and mustard don’t separate. For this reason many salad dressings and egg- or cheese-based sauces often specify a little mustard, both to pique the flavor and to keep them smooth.

Because of these diverse qualities, mustard is growing in popularity. As Americans cut calories and cholesterol, mustard is taking over the role mayonnaise once held as an all-purpose condiment. Mustard works as a sandwich spread, a sauce base, a salad dressing ingredient, and a coating medium, as well as a spice.

You can buy mustard in several forms. The most basic form is the seed. There are three types of mustard seeds: black (*Brassica nigra*), brown (*Brassica juncea*), and white (*Brassica hirta*). The black and brown seeds are tiny and hard, while the so-called white seeds, actually a golden beige, are larger. Black seeds are hard to find. Confusingly, the brown seeds, which are deep reddish black, are often sold as black mustard seeds. You can buy them, and also the milder white mustard seeds, packed in small bottles in the spice section of supermarkets, or more economically, in bulk in health food stores and oriental groceries.

Another way to buy mustard is to purchase the yellow powder, which is commercially prepared from the seeds. The English brand, Colman's, is widely available, and it now also comes in a coarse-ground form. You may also find powdered mustard in bulk in health and other specialty food shops.

The third way to buy your mustard is ready-made. Until a few years ago that meant buying the bright yellow ballpark mustard popular for slathering on hot dogs, or for gentler tastes, choosing a sweetish German-style mustard or a mild Dijon mustard from France. Today, mustard comes in many varieties. It may be spiked with wine or spirits, fired up with chilies or horseradish, or sophisticated with herbs or spices. It can be smooth or coarse. It may be European, but it's just as likely to be American, made by a small company specializing in interesting food.

To use mustard as a flexible multipurpose ingredient, it helps to understand the way it works. The fiery bite comes from the reaction of liquid with chemicals in the seed. The reaction is most intense about 10 minutes after the mustard is mixed, then declines quickly. From this it follows that the hot Chinese mustard served with egg rolls or the powerful paste mustard the British eat with their roast beef must be made fresh. For milder tastes, mustard can be made ahead of time. Salt and sugar both preserve the flavor. Acid and heat both weaken the fire-reaction, so mustard made with vinegar or wine, and mustard used in a cooked sauce, are milder. Add mustard near the beginning of the cooking time if you want flavor without pungency; towards the end if you want it strong and hot.

Perhaps surprisingly for something with such a powerful impact, mustard keeps good company with other flavors — with meat, with fish, with vegetables. This explains why we now have mustards concocted with such an array of different ingredients. The popularity of mustard in so many countries and over such long spans of time also owes much to its compatibility with all sorts of food. In most ways, the diets of the Stone Age and today have little in common. Both the Stone Age person who chewed a mustard seed along with a mouthful of meat and today's sophisticated diner who savors mustard with champagne or favorite herbs and spices share a pleasure in the seasoning power of the tiny mustard seed.

Making Your Own Mustard

Until a few years ago, mustard occupied only a modest stretch of space on supermarket shelves, and the glowing, yellow ballpark mustard reigned supreme. Now, the mild Dijon-style mustard jostles for customers' dollars at the checkout, and, for fun and adventure, you can get all sorts of magical mustard confections. You can buy mustard spiked with wine, champagne, whiskey, or beer. You can choose mustards made extra-hot with chilies, peppercorns, or horseradish. You can get mustards with herbs and mustards with honey. Some mustards are velvety smooth; others are coated, even crunchy.

These mustards positively invite you to experiment. They also make lovely hostess gifts, especially because many of them come packed in attractive jars with pretty labels.

But they do have a couple of drawbacks. One is their premium price. The other is that such fancy items often wait for buyers for many weeks. Since mustard loses its flavor over time, jars held too long can be insipid.

Fortunately, homemade versions of today's imaginative mustards are easy, and they are as good or better than store-bought mustards. And since the basic ingredients — mustard seeds and powder — are inexpensive, they are cheap to make at home.

John Evelyn, author of *Acetaria: A Discourse of Sallets* published in 1699, told his readers that mustard seeds should be “bruis'd with a polished Cannon-Bullet, in a large wooden Bowl-Dish.” Don't let a shortage of cannon-bullets prevent you from grinding your own mustard. An electric coffee or spice grinder does a fast and perfect job. You can also use a pestle and mortar.

The recipes below make small quantities, usually enough to fill a container about the size of a small baby-food jar. But you can multiply the quantities so you have enough to give to friends.

You can keep mustard 3–4 weeks in the fridge, though remember, it loses its potency the longer you keep it.

BALLPARK MUSTARD

2 tablespoons powdered mustard

1 tablespoon turmeric

¼ teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon sugar

water or mixture of water and white vinegar to mix

Put the mustard, turmeric, salt, and sugar into a small bowl. Gradually add water or water and vinegar, stirring to make a smooth paste of the consistency you want. This is the mustard for hot dogs and other sausages. It can also be used in potato salads.

HONEY MUSTARD

4 tablespoons mustard powder

2 tablespoons water

1 teaspoon vinegar

1 tablespoon vegetable oil

2 tablespoons honey

Mix the mustard to a stiff paste with the water and vinegar. Stir in the oil until the mixture is

smooth, then stir in the honey. Pour into a sterilized jar. This mustard is a good spread for sandwiches made with boiled ham or other cold cuts. Serve it also with baked ham, pork, and barbecued meats.

SPICE MUSTARD

1 tablespoon curry powder

1 teaspoon cinnamon

¼ teaspoon powdered cloves

1 tablespoon vegetable oil

3 tablespoons mustard powder

1 teaspoon sugar

¼ cup water

Put the curry powder, cinnamon, and cloves in a small frying pan over medium heat. Let them heat through for about 4 minutes, stirring to prevent them from burning. Stir in the oil. In a small bowl, combine the oil and spice mixture with the mustard and sugar. Add the water and stir to a smooth paste, adding a bit more water if necessary. Good with barbecues and with Indian or Middle Eastern food.

HORSERADISH MUSTARD

½ cup powdered mustard

⅛ teaspoon white pepper

¼ cup water

1 teaspoon salt

1 teaspoon brown sugar

1 clove of peeled garlic

½ cup white wine or cider vinegar

1–2 tablespoons grated or prepared horseradish

Combine the powdered mustard, pepper, and water in a bowl. Put the salt, sugar, garlic, and 1 tablespoon of horseradish in a blender, and blend them together, then strain into the mustard mixture. Transfer to a small pan, and simmer over low heat, stirring all the time, until it has slightly thickened. When the mustard has cooled, stir in half the additional horseradish to add texture. Add the remainder if you like. If the mixture is too thick, thin with additional water or vinegar.

This startlingly hot mustard is definitely only for those who like strong condiments. It's good with beef, ham, and hearty sausages.

LEMON MUSTARD

½ cup yellow mustard seed

4 teaspoons mustard powder

grated zest and juice of 1 medium lemon

1 tablespoon white sugar

¼ teaspoon salt

pinch cayenne or red pepper (optional)

¾ cup water

Grind the mustard seeds in a spice grinder or a blender until they look like coarse corn meal. In a small saucepan, mix them with the mustard powder, lemon zest and juice, sugar, salt, and cayenne (if using). Stir in the water and then place over medium heat and bring to simmering point. Cook for 5 minutes, stirring all the time. Let cool. To store, pack into a small sterilized jar and keep in the fridge.

This is a good mustard to serve with chicken, fish, and steak. Note that at first it tastes pungent but cools down and tastes very lemony after a day or so. For a hotter mustard, add more cayenne.

QUICK GREEN PEPPERCORN MUSTARD

One 8-ounce jar Dijon mustard

1 teaspoon mustard powder

1–2 tablespoons green peppercorns

Mix 1 tablespoon of Dijon mustard with the mustard powder. When it is smooth, stir in the remaining Dijon mustard. If using green peppercorns packed in brine, drain them, discarding the liquid, then add them to the mustard. If using dried green peppercorns, soak them for ½ hour in water before adding to the mustard.

Put the peppercorn-mustard mixture into a blender and blend until smooth. For a coarser mixture, simply mash the peppercorns into the mustard. Good with steak and as a sandwich spread.

TARRAGON MUSTARD

½ cup coarse-ground mustard

1 teaspoon powdered mustard

½ cup dry wine

¼ cup red wine vinegar

1 tablespoon brown sugar

½ teaspoon salt

2 teaspoons dried tarragon

Put the coarse-ground mustard, the mustard powder, the wine, and the vinegar into a small saucepan; stir over low heat until the mustard powder is blended in, then cover and cook over the lowest possible heat for 20 minutes. Check and stir occasionally to make sure it doesn't stick to the pan. Remove the cover, add the sugar and salt, increase the heat, and let the mustard bubble, stirring often for another 5 minutes. Stir in the tarragon.

You can use this mustard right away as a warm sauce with chicken, broiled pork chops, or fish. Or, let it cool and pack into a small sterilized jar. It thickens as it cools. You can replace the tarragon in this mustard with other dried herbs. Try it with thyme, oregano, or basil.

MAPLE MUSTARD

¼ cup white mustard seed

½ cup mustard powder

2 tablespoons white cider vinegar

½ cup pure maple syrup

pinch salt

Grind the mustard seed until it is medium coarse. In a small bowl mix it with the mustard powder, the vinegar, and the maple syrup. Taste and add salt to season. Pour into a sterilized jar. This mustard is good with ham, sausages, and pork.

Hors d'oeuvres & First Course Dishes

Often the nicest hors d'oeuvres are those you invent as you go along, assembling pretty bits of vegetables and tasty morsels of seafood and meat into attractive little packages. Complicated or time-consuming recipes help you less than inspiration. But of course, inspiration is of no use if you don't have some interesting ingredients to work with — among them a stock of different sorts of mustards. A light spread of mustard holds toppings on bread or crackers. Mustard peps up cheese, fish, or meat mixtures. And many of the milder mustards are perfect ready-made dips for raw vegetables or little sausages.

Soups and other first course dishes also benefit from inspired additions. And, as the following recipes show, mustard can be one of them.

DUTCH MUSTARDSOEP

½ cup flour

1 tablespoon dry mustard powder

6 cups well-flavored homemade beef or vegetable broth

1 teaspoon salt

pepper to taste

4 scallions, washed and chopped

2 ounces ham, diced

Mix the flour and mustard in a bowl. Make a well in the center and pour in ¼ cup of cold broth. Gradually stir in the flour, adding more broth until you have a smooth paste. Heat the remaining broth, and stir ½ cup into the paste, making sure it remains smooth. Stir in another ½ cup of hot broth and then add the mixture to the pan of broth.

Cook over medium heat, stirring all the time until the mixture boils and thickens. Reduce the heat and let it simmer for 15 minutes, stirring often to prevent sticking. Add salt and pepper to taste.

To serve, pour into bowls and scatter a little chopped scallion and chopped ham on the surface.

SERVES 4

BEEFY MUSTARD SOUP

3 cups beef stock

2 large baking potatoes, peeled and diced

8 peppercorns

3–4 medium onions, peeled and chopped

1–2 tablespoons mustard powder

½ cup cold water

salt (optional)

Put the beef stock, potatoes, peppercorns, and onions into a large saucepan and simmer for 25 minutes. Drain and reserve the liquid. Mash the potatoes and onions together and then pass them through a sieve. (Don't mash them in a food processor because they may develop an undesirable texture.)

Mix 1 tablespoon of mustard to a paste with the water. Return the mashed potatoes and the liquid to the saucepan and bring back to simmering point over medium heat. Stir the mustard into the soup. Taste for flavor.

If you would like a stronger mustard flavor, add the remaining powder, stirred to paste with a little more water. Salt may not be necessary if you use a pre-seasoned stock, but add some if the soup needs it.

You can also make this soup from vegetable or chicken stock, in which case it is less hearty and you may want to emphasize its delicacy by using less mustard.

SERVES

SMOKED SALMON ROLLS

6 ounces cream cheese, at room temperature

2 teaspoons lemon or green peppercorn mustard

2 teaspoons drained capers

8 slices of smoked salmon, each about 3" × 5"

lettuce and thin cucumber slices

Mix the cream cheese with the mustard and 1 teaspoon of capers. Take a slice of salmon and spread $\frac{1}{8}$ of the cheese mixture along one end. Roll up the salmon as you would for a jelly roll. Repeat until you have 8 rolls. Arrange a bed of lettuce and sliced cucumber on each of 4 plates. Place 2 rolls of salmon on each. Scatter the remaining capers on top. This elegant first-course dish is spectacular, easy, and delicious.

SERVES

SMOKED FISH AND MUSTARD PASTE

8 ounces smoked mackerel or bluefish

2 tablespoons butter, at room temperature

4–5 teaspoons ready-made Dijon or green peppercorn mustard

1 tablespoon lemon mustard

1 teaspoon fresh lemon juice

freshly grated black pepper to taste

Remove and discard the fish skin. Mash the fish with the butter. Stir in 4 teaspoons of Dijon mustard and the lemon mustard. When these are thoroughly blended, stir in 2 teaspoons of lemon juice. Taste the mixture and add the additional Dijon mustard if you want a stronger mustard flavor. Add more lemon juice if you want to sharpen the taste. Season with pepper to taste.

For a whole-mustard variation on this recipe, omit the mustards called for above, and the lemon juice and black pepper. Substitute 3 teaspoons of whole-grain beer mustard, such as the Canadian Honeycup brand, and a pinch of cayenne pepper.

Serve the paste on sandwiches or crackers, or in canapes, celery sticks, or endive leaves as an hors d'oeuvre.

MAKES ABOUT 1 CU

POTTED HAM

6–8 ounces boiled ham, ground or finely chopped

3 ounces butter, at room temperature

1 teaspoon maple syrup or ½ teaspoon brown sugar

⅛ teaspoon powdered cloves

1–2 teaspoons maple or honey mustard

Mix all the ingredients together with a fork, mashing them into a paste. Use this in canapes or on crackers for hors d'oeuvres, or serve scoops of it with toast points as a first course.

Potted ham is a good way to use up leftovers from a large ham. The recipe can be multiplied or reduced depending on what you have available. To store, cover with plastic film or a layer of melted butter, and keep in the fridge for up to a week.

MAKES 10–12 OUNCES

DILLY DEVILLED EGGS

12 hard-boiled eggs

1 tablespoon soft butter

1 teaspoon mustard powder, mixed to a paste with a little cold water

2 teaspoons chopped dill

salt to taste

tiny dill sprigs for garnish

To make sure that hard-boiled eggs don't develop an unsightly green ring around the yolk, transfer them from their boiling water into cold water. Cool them under running cold water, and if you don't need to use them right away, keep them in cold water until you are ready to work with them. To shell them, roll the egg around the bottom of the sink, pressing down slightly so that the shell cracks all over. Peel under running water. Slice the eggs in half lengthwise; extract the yolks and put them in a bowl.

Add the butter and mustard and mash to a smooth paste. Stir in the chopped dill. Taste for seasoning and add salt to taste. Cut a tiny sliver from the center of each egg-white half so that it will sit steadily on a serving dish. Pile a little of the egg yolk mixture into each cavity and arrange the halves on a platter.

Top each one with a little feathery sprig of dill, and surround with curly lettuce, radishes, and cherry tomatoes.

Vegetable Dishes

The traditional vinaigrette dressing depends on the emulsifying power of mustard to hold the olive oil and vinegar together. Similarly, America's favorite coleslaw and potato salads need mustard to zing the taste. Still, mustard is rarely used as a condiment with vegetables. Yet it enhances their flavor wonderfully, adding a little fieriness to mild vegetables, such as potatoes and dried beans, and deepening the impact of members of its own family, such as turnips, cauliflowers, and cabbage.

It's worth experimenting with mustard and vegetables. As vegetarians point out, vegetables have an enormous range of flavor. Given today's range of mustards, the number of possible combinations is immense.

Some of the following recipes use mustard seeds rather than paste or sauce-type mustards. These recipes are inspired by Indian dishes, in which mustard seeds are common. Use the small purply brown seeds — sold as black mustard seeds — and lightly fry them first. Do this quickly, only until they turn grey, not until they are burned black, and use a spatter guard so you won't be hit by a sputtering seed. Indians often add a tablespoon or so of mustard seeds prepared in this way to garnish soup — yet another mustard idea worth adopting.

ASPARAGUS IN MUSTARD-CHIVEBLOSSOM VINAIGRETTE

24 stalks asparagus

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

1 tablespoon chiveblossom or white cider vinegar

3–4 tablespoons light olive oil

1 teaspoon snipped chives

4 chiveblossoms plus extra for garnish

Wash the asparagus and trim away the woody ends. Drop the asparagus into a shallow pan of boiling salted water and cook for 4 minutes. Drain and cool in chilled water. In a small jar mix the mustard, vinegar, oil, and snipped chives together. Replace the lid and shake to blend.

To serve, pour the dressing over the asparagus and turn them gently in it. Place in a shallow platter. Wash the blossoms then scatter the petals on top of the asparagus. If you have extra flowers, arrange them around the dish. To make chiveblossom vinegar, pack a Mason jar with chiveblossoms and fill with white vinegar. Leave on a sunny windowsill for 2 weeks, then strain the vinegar into another jar.

SERVES 4

BEAN AND ANCHOVY SALAD

two 15-ounce cans cannellini or other white beans

½ cup chopped yellow or Bermuda onion

2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

pinch dried sage

2 tablespoons lemon juice

2 tablespoons Dijon or lemon mustard

2 cans flat packed anchovies or 1 can flat packed anchovies and

1 can rolled anchovies

salt and black pepper to taste

Discard about half the liquid from the beans. Toss the beans and remaining liquid with the onions, half the parsley, sage, lemon juice, and mustard in a bowl. Drain 1 can of flat anchovies and cut each anchovy into 3 or 4 pieces. Toss these with the beans. Scatter on the remaining parsley, then place the remaining anchovies on top. Serve with bread as a hearty lunch dish, or in smaller amounts as part of an antipasto platter.

SERVES 4

CARROT SALAD WITH MUSTARD SEEDS

2 tablespoons safflower oil

1–2 teaspoon grated fresh ginger

2 teaspoons black mustard seeds

2 cups grated fresh carrots (about 4 carrots)

½ cup walnuts, or peanuts, or cashews, or raisins

⅓ cup orange or pineapple juice

Heat the oil over medium heat in a frying pan. Stir in the grated ginger and the mustard seeds. Cover and cook for 15 seconds or until the seeds no longer pop. Add the carrots and the nuts or raisins. Stir to mix; add the orange juice, and cook for 1 minute. Tip into a serving bowl and chill. Toss before serving.

SERVES 4

CAULIFLOWER IN MUSTARD SEEDS

1 tablespoon mustard oil or vegetable oil

2 teaspoons black mustard seeds

¼ teaspoon turmeric

1 tablespoon chopped onion

1 small to medium cauliflower, broken into florets

⅓ cup water

salt to taste

Heat the oil in a large frying pan. Add the mustard seeds and cover for about 15 seconds until they have finished popping and look ashy grey. Add the turmeric and stir briefly, then add the onion, cauliflower, and water. Stir, turning the cauliflower florets over and over until they are colored. Cover tightly and simmer for 5 minutes, checking once or twice to make sure the water has not evaporated. Season with salt if desired, but the dish is already flavorful, so salt is not really necessary.

SERVES 4 AS A SIDE DISH

POTATOES BRAVAS

6 medium potatoes, peeled

½ cup olive oil

salt

4 teaspoons powdered mustard

1 cup tomato sauce

4–6 drops Tabasco

Cut the potatoes into bite-sized chunks. Heat the olive oil in a shallow pan over medium-high heat. Drop in the potatoes and cook, occasionally turning them, for 10–15 minutes or until the potatoes are tender when tested with a skewer and lightly golden, though not browned. Remove them with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels. Sprinkle with salt.

To make the sauce, mix the mustard to a taste with a little of the tomato sauce, then add the remaining sauce. Bring to simmering point, stirring to blend. Add the Tabasco. Pour over the potatoes.

This dish is one of Spain's best-loved *tapas*, the "little dishes" of snack food served with drinks. You can follow the Spanish custom, or serve these potatoes as a side dish. They are perfect with barbecued meats.

SERVES 6 AS A MAIN DISH, 4 AS A SIDE DISH

CAULIFLOWER IN CHEESE AND MUSTARD SAUCE

1 large cauliflower

1 cup warm milk

1½ tablespoons butter

2 tablespoons flour

1 tablespoon mustard powder

1 cup grated or sharp cheddar cheese

pinch cayenne

salt to taste

2–3 tablespoons breadcrumbs

Preheat oven to 350°F. Trim any hard bits of stalk and dark or dis-colored leaves from the cauliflower. Cut it into 6 or 8 wedges, depending on its size. Drop these into a large pan of boiling water and simmer for 8 minutes. Drain, reserving 1 cup of the cooking liquid. Place the cauliflower in a greased casserole.

In a saucepan melt the butter. Turn off the heat, stir in the flour and mustard. Return the pan to a low heat and continue stirring, gradually add in the warm milk. When it is blended, add the reserve cooking liquid and increase the heat. Continue stirring until the mixture boils and the sauce thickens. Stir in the grated cheese and the cayenne. Cook gently, stirring, as necessary to prevent the mixture from sticking, for 5 minutes. Taste and add salt if necessary.

Pour the sauce over the cauliflower. Sprinkle with breadcrumbs and bake for 20 minutes. This can be served as a vegetarian main dish. It is also good with roast meat.

SERVES 4 AS A MAIN DISH, 6–8 AS A SIDE DISH

COLESLAW

- 1 tablespoon dry mustard**
- 1 teaspoon sugar**
- ¼ cup white vinegar**
- ½ cup mayonnaise**
- 3 cups shredded white cabbage**
- ½ cup shredded carrots**
- ½ cup shredded red or green pepper**
- salt to taste**

Put the mustard and sugar in a large bowl. Stir to a paste with the vinegar. Stir in the mayonnaise. Toss the cabbage, carrots, and pepper together. Add to the mayonnaise mixture and toss again. Chill and serve with fish or cold cuts.

SERVES 4

EGG SALAD

- 3 hard-boiled eggs**
- salt and pepper to taste**
- 1–2 radishes, washed and sliced**
- 1 tablespoon tarragon mustard**
- 1 tablespoon mayonnaise**
- tomatoes or endive for stuffing**

Shell and chop the eggs. Put them in a small bowl and season with salt and pepper to taste. Add the radish slices and then the mustard and mayonnaise, and mash. Use to stuff tomato halves or endive leaves for an hors d'oeuvres tray. Also good in sandwiches.

SERVES

POTATO SALAD

- 6–8 large baking potatoes**
- pepper and salt to taste**
- 1 medium onion, chopped**
- 12 radishes, washed and quartered**
- 2 teaspoons powdered mustard or 1 tablespoon of ballpark mustard**
- 1 cup mayonnaise**
- 4 hard-boiled eggs**
- 3 radishes, washed and sliced**

Put the potatoes, unpeeled, in a large pan; cover with water and boil until fork tender. Drain. Peel the potatoes. (Keep an oven mitt on your hand to do this.) Cut each into 5 or 6 pieces and put them in a salad bowl, seasoning them with salt and pepper as you go. Scatter the chopped onion and quartered radishes among the potatoes. Mix the mustard to a paste with a little of the

mayonnaise, then stir in the remaining mayonnaise. (If using ready-made ballpark mustard, blend it with the mayonnaise.) ~~Pour the mayonnaise mixture over the potatoes and toss gently.~~ Taste for seasoning and add more if necessary.

Cover the salad with a cloth and cool in the fridge. Shell the eggs and cut into slices or quarters. Arrange the egg and the radish slices on top of the salad and serve.

SERVES 6

SEEDY POTATOES

Kalonji seeds are black and look like onion seeds, so they are sometimes called onion seeds. Get them in Indian or health food stores.

8 red or yellow Finn potatoes, cleaned and boiled in salted water

1 tablespoon vegetable oil

1½ teaspoons black mustard seeds

1½ teaspoons kalonji seeds

1½ teaspoons sesame seeds

salt to taste

As soon as the potatoes are cooked and drained, heat the oil in a shallow-lidded pan. Working quickly, put in the mustard seeds and cover the pan. After about 15 seconds, the seeds should stop popping. They will look grey, not black. Add the potatoes and stir. Add the kalonji and sesame seeds and stir for another minute or until the potatoes are coated. Add salt to taste. Serve with meat or fish. Especially good with barbecued foods.

SERVES 4

TURNIPS IN A MUSTARD COAT

1½ pounds purple-top turnips or rutabaga

⅓ cup green peppercorn or spice or other mustard

1 cup whole wheat breadcrumbs, freshly ground

¼ cup olive oil

Peel the turnips or rutabaga, cut them in big chunks, and cook in boiling salted water until they are fork tender, but not falling apart (about 10 minutes for purple-top turnips; 20 minutes for rutabaga). Drain. Have the breadcrumbs spread on a plate. Rush the turnip or rutabaga pieces with the mustard, then place each piece in the crumbs. Scatter crumbs on top. Move each piece to one side of the platter as it is crumbed. Heat the oil over medium high heat. Sauté the crumbed vegetables for 2–3 minutes each side, turning gently so as not to disturb the coating. Serve with meat or with bean dishes.

SERVES

Main Dishes

Since cooks have used mustard for hundreds of years, it's not surprising that some mustard dishes have become classics. The French have long served rabbit with mustard sauce. Germans love it on their sausages. Devilled chicken appeals to the English taste for dramatic condiments. The English also like mustard with oily fish, such as mackerel. On this side of the Atlantic, it goes just as well with bluefish, the mackerel's bigger and fiercer cousin.

While these classic mustard dishes still delight modern diners, cooks now use mustard in inventive new ways. Spreading a mild mustard on a rack of lamb before crumbing and roasting avoids slathering on high-calorie oil for the job. Similarly, mustard can glue coatings onto fish, adding flavor while reducing the calories and fat found in the more typical mayonnaise.

DEVILLED CHICKEN

2 tablespoons mustard (made by mixing powdered mustard with a little water plus 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard, or 3 tablespoons green peppercorn mustard)

1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce

4 baked or barbecued chicken legs, each halved, or 2 whole boneless chicken breasts cooked and halved or quartered

½ cup dried breadcrumbs

1 cup fresh breadcrumbs

1 tablespoon oil

4 slices bacon

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Mix the mustard and Worcestershire sauce. Combine the 2 types of breadcrumbs. Coat the chicken pieces with the mustard mixture and then with the crumb mixture. Allow to stand for ½ hour before cooking, then place in a shallow baking pan and drizzle with the oil. Cut the bacon slices in 2 pieces and roll each half. Stick the rolls with a toothpick and arrange them among the chicken pieces. Cover with foil and bake for 15 minutes. Remove the foil and bake for another 5 minutes to brown the chicken and crisp the bacon.

SERVES

ROASTED LEMON-MUSTARD CHICKEN

One 5–6 pound roasting chicken

2 cups dry breadcrumbs

grated zest and juice of 1 lemon

2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

2 tablespoons butter

1 cup boiling water

1 tablespoon lemon mustard

For the sauce:

4 teaspoons lemon mustard

¾ cup white wine

4 teaspoons flour

½ cup water

¼ cup juices from the chicken salt to taste

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Remove the giblets from the bird. Rinse the cavity and rub lightly with salt. Set aside.

To make the stuffing, place the breadcrumbs in a bowl with the lemon zest and juice, and the parsley. Put the butter in another bowl and pour the boiling water on it. Stir until the butter has melted, then mix in the mustard. Combine the 2 mixtures and pack into the cavity of the bird. (If the stuffing is too dry, add a little more water.)

Put the chicken into a Dutch oven; cover, and cook for 30 minutes. Baste with the juices; reduce the temperature to 350°F; cover and cook for another 30 minutes. Baste again and cook uncovered at 375°F for another 20 minutes, or until the skin is golden and a thin skewer inserted into the thickest part of the thigh produces a clear (not pink) juice. Do not rely on pop-up timers; they don't emerge until the bird is overcooked and dry.

While the chicken is in the final stages of roasting, make the sauce. Put 3 teaspoons of mustard in a small saucepan with the wine. In a bowl, mix the flour with the water, starting with half the water and gradually adding more until you have a thin paste. Add this mixture to the ingredients in the pan and bring to a boil, stirring all the time. When the mixture has thickened, add the ¼ cup of juices from the roasting chicken and simmer for 6–7 minutes, stirring as necessary to prevent sticking. Taste for seasoning and add salt and the remaining spoonful of mustard. Serve in a sauce boat with the sliced roasted chicken.

SERVES 6

BEEF ROLLS WITH PEPPERCORNS AND MUSTARD

1 cup finely chopped mushrooms

1 small onion, finely chopped

2 teaspoons green peppercorns

2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

1¼ cups red wine

2 slices wheat bread, crusts removed

2 teaspoons horseradish or green peppercorn mustard

8 sandwich steaks

1 tablespoon Dijon or an additional tablespoon of the horseradish or green peppercorn mustard

Preheat the oven to 375°F. If the peppercorns are dry, soak them in water for ½ hour; if packed in liquid, use them straight from the bottle. Put the mushrooms, onion, 1 teaspoon of peppercorns, and the parsley into a small saucepan with ¾ cup of the wine. Cover and simmer for 5 minutes or until the mushrooms and onions are tender. Crumble the bread and add to the mixture. Beat each sandwich steak with a rolling pin or mallet. Spread a little of the hot mustard onto the steak, then spoon on a portion of the mixture and roll up the steak into a sausage shape. Place each one, seam side down, in a greased baking dish.

Pour the remaining ½ cup of wine over them, cover with a lid or aluminum foil, and bake for 8

minutes. Pour the accumulated liquid into a small saucepan and keep the beef rolls hot. Stir the remaining peppercorns into the liquid in the pan and boil for 3 minutes. Remove from the heat and add the Dijon or other mustard. Spoon the sauce over the beef rolls. Serve with vegetables.

SERVES 4–8, DEPENDING ON THE SIZE OF THE SANDWICH STEAK

BLUEFISH IN MUSTARD DILL SAUCE

- 1½–2 pounds bluefish**
- 1 tablespoon olive oil**
- 2 tablespoons lemon mustard**
- 1 tablespoon melted butter**
- ⅓ cup hot milk**
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh dill**
- few drops fresh lemon juice**

Preheat the broiler. Place the bluefish in a greased shallow pan and sprinkle the surface with olive oil. Place 2–3 inches from the broiler and cook for 5 minutes for ½-inch-thick fish, up to 10 minutes for inch-thick fish. While it is cooking, put the mustard into a warmed sauceboat. Just as the fish is ready, stir in the butter, milk, and dill. Taste and add a few drops of lemon juice to sharpen the sauce to your taste. Serve with the fish. (This sauce also goes well with salmon, mackerel, and shrimp.)

SERVES

CREAMED LOBSTERS

- 1 tablespoon butter**
- 1 shallot, chopped, or 2 teaspoons finely chopped onion**
- 4 tablespoons dry white vermouth**
- 2 teaspoons flour**
- 1 cup cream**
- salt, pepper, and nutmeg to taste**
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard**
- 1 tablespoon grated Parmesan cheese**
- 2 small to medium boiled lobsters**
- ¾ cup fresh breadcrumbs**
- 1 tablespoon cold butter, cut into tiny bits**

Preheat the oven to 300°F. Heat the butter in a saucepan and add the shallot (or a little onion). Pour in the vermouth (or dry white wine) and let it bubble for a minute. Lower the heat and stir in the flour. When it has thickened, slowly add the cream, stirring all the time. Season to taste with salt, pepper, and nutmeg. Cook over a very low heat, stirring often for 10 minutes. Stir in the mustard and Parmesan.

Remove the flesh from the lobsters and cut the meat into bitesized pieces. Pour some of the sauce into each shell. Arrange the lobster on top. Cover with a little more sauce, a sprinkling of

breadcrumbs, and some of the bits of cold butter. Cover and heat for 15 minutes in the oven. Turn on the broiler; remove the cover and cook under the broiler until the surface is bubbling.

SERVES 2—

FLOUNDER ROLLS

4 flounder fillets

¼ cup lemon, tarragon, or horseradish mustard

1 cup crumbs, made from Ritz or other crackers

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Place the fillets on a work surface, with the skinned side up and the head end (i.e., the wider end) towards you. Brush this surface with the mustard.

Starting with the head end and working towards the tail, roll the fillets up as you would a jelly roll. Brush mustard on all the exposed surfaces of the rolled fillets, then place them in the cracker crumbs. Sprinkle crumbs on top so that all surfaces are coated. Place in a greased shallow baking dish and bake for 15 minutes.

SERVES

PORK CHOPS WITH APPLE-MUSTARD SAUCE

4–6 pork chops

1 tablespoon olive oil

½ teaspoon salt

2 medium apples, peeled and diced small

pinch powdered cloves

⅓ cup apple juice

one 8-ounce jar Dijon mustard or the equivalent amount of homemade lemon or maple mustard

2 teaspoons maple syrup or dark corn syrup

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Remove any excess fat from the chops, leaving just enough to moisten the meat. Rub a little salt into the remaining fat. Brush the chops all over with the olive oil. In a pan that will go on top of the stove and in the oven, quickly brown the chops over high heat. Remove the pan; cover with a lid or foil, transfer to the oven, and bake for 20–25 minutes, or until the chops are cooked through.

While they are baking, make the sauce. Simmer the apples and cloves in the apple juice in a small covered saucepan until they are crisp tender, not soft (about 4 minutes). Stir the apples and the juice into the mustard along with the syrup. Serve hot with the chops. This sauce can also be used with ham or spareribs.

SERVES 4—

DAISY ROLL HAM WITH PINEAPPLE MUSTARD SAUCE

1 daisy roll ham, 2–3 pounds

1 small can crushed pineapple in juice

1 tablespoon brown sugar

1 teaspoon mustard powder

½ cup maple or spice mustard

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Remove the wrappings from the ham. Drain the pineapple, keeping the juice and the fruit separate. Put the brown sugar and mustard powder in a small bowl and add 1 teaspoon or so of the pineapple juice to mix to a medium-thick paste. Brush this all over the ham.

Place the ham in a shallow baking dish. Pour 2 tablespoons juice in the bottom of the dish. Cover with foil or a lid and bake for 30–40 minutes. Slice the ham onto a platter.

To make the sauce, mix ½ cup of drained crushed pineapple with the maple or spice mustard. Add 1 tablespoon of the juice. If you want a thinner sauce, add extra juice or a little vinegar.

SERVES

RACK OF LAMB WITH MUSTARD HERB COATING

1 rack of lamb, bone ends trimmed and exposed

¼ cup Dijon or green peppercorn mustard

1½ cups fresh breadcrumbs

2 cloves garlic, chopped

½ teaspoon rosemary or herbes de Provence

1–2 tablespoons olive oil

Preheat the oven to 425°F. Grease a shallow baking pan. Score the fat of the lamb and brush with the mustard. Mix the crumbs, garlic, and rosemary or herbs together and press onto the mustard. Let the rack sit for 15 minutes, then transfer to the pan, taking care not to disturb the crumb coating.

Sprinkle the olive oil on top and cover the pan loosely with foil. Bake for 25 minutes, then remove foil and bake for another 5–10 minutes to crisp the coating.

SERVES 3–

TWO TORTELLINIS WITH TWO MUSTARD SAUCES

½ pound meat-filled tortellini

½ pound cheese-filled spinach tortellini

For Cream Sauce:

1 egg yolk

½ cup low-fat milk

2 tablespoons Dijon or tarragon mustard

1 tablespoon chopped fresh tarragon

For Hot Mustard Sauce

3 tablespoons horseradish or green peppercorn mustard

½ cup white wine

Garnishes:

2 medium radishes, washed and coarsely chopped

1 additional tablespoon or a couple of sprigs of tarragon

Cook the 2 types of tortellini separately, using 2 quarts of boiling salted water with a few drops of oil for each type. Drop the tortellini into the rapidly boiling water and cook for 8 minutes or until tender. (Or cook according to package directions.)

While they are cooking, make the sauces. For the cream sauce, beat the egg yolk and milk in a bowl. Mix in the mustard and the tarragon. For the hot mustard sauce, stir the mustard and white wine together. Drain the tortellini and return each to a saucepan. Pour the Dijon cream sauce on the cheese-filled spinach tortellini and stir over a low heat until the sauce has thickened slightly and coats the tortellini. Serve on heated plates, allowing the tortellini to cover only half the plate.

Pour the horseradish mustard sauce over the meat-filled tortellini and stir until they are coated and the sauce is heated through. Serve these tortellini on the other half of the plate. Sprinkle the radishes on the meat tortellini and the chopped tarragon or the sprigs on the cheese-filled tortellini.

SERVES

SAUSAGE AND CARROTS IN MUSTARD SAUCE

1 pound carrots

1 pound kielbasa or Italian sausage

1 tablespoon oil

1 large onion, chopped

½ cup green peppercorn or spice mustard

2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley salt to taste

Scrape the carrots, cut into 1-inch pieces, and boil for 15 minutes. While they are cooking, prepare the sausage by cutting it into 1-inch sections. If using kielbasa, simmer it in water. If using Italian sausage, sauté it in a frying pan. Put the oil in a frying pan and heat it over medium heat. Gently cook the chopped onions in oil. Drain the carrots, reserving some of the liquid, and add them to the onions along with the sausage.

Toss everything together, then remove to a heated serving dish. Add the mustard to the empty pan, stirring to scrape up bits and heating over medium heat. Add ¼ cup of the liquid from the carrots. Stir and taste for seasoning; add a little salt if necessary, but remember that sausage is already salted, so you won't need much.

When the mixture boils, add half the parsley and a little extra carrot liquid if you want a thinner sauce. Pour immediately over the sausage and carrots. Scatter the remaining parsley on top and serve.

SERVES 4—

Pickles & Condiments

When you want to light a fire in your mouth, only chilies beat mustard. Not surprisingly, mustard is one of the oldest and most basic ingredients in pickles, relishes, and chutneys. Even when we don't spot its presence by its telltale yellow color, mustard adds flavor to every pickle because its seeds are a basic component of pickling spice. They deter some unwanted organisms, so they are also a natural preservative.

A recipe for spiced vinegar for pickles follows. You can use this in any pickle or chutney recipe. In the other recipes below, mustard moves out of its supporting role in the pickling vinegar and into center stage as a major relish and key ingredient.

BEER AND MUSTARD BARBECUE SAUCE

Because it has little sugar, this sauce doesn't burn. You can add an extra tablespoon if you want a sweeter sauce to use with pork.

2 tablespoons mustard powder

1 tablespoon brown sugar

1 cup beer

1 cup tomato puree or sauce

4–5 drops of Tabasco

Put the mustard powder and brown sugar into a large bowl. Pour on the beer and stir to mix. Stir in the tomato puree or sauce and add the Tabasco. Use as a marinade and brush-on sauce for barbecued chicken and pork.

This amount is plenty for 6 chicken legs or pork chops, or 8–10 country-style spareribs.

MAKES 1 CUP

WOW-WOW SAUCE

2 tablespoons butter

1 tablespoon flour

1¼ cups beef or chicken stock

1 tablespoon vinegar

1 tablespoon Worcestershire sauce

**1 tablespoon powdered mustard, mixed to a paste with a little water
salt and pepper**

2 tablespoons chopped parsley

2 pickled cucumbers, chopped finely

Melt the butter in a small pan. Stir in the flour and cook briefly. Gradually add the stock, stirring all the time to make a smooth sauce. Add the vinegar, Worcestershire sauce, and mustard. Cover and cook gently for 10 minutes. Add salt and pepper to taste, more mustard if you like it, parsley, and the chopped cucumbers.

As its name indicates, this sharp hot sauce has quite an impact. Those with robust tastes will enjoy it with sausages and with rich and oily food.

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