DOWNRIGHT DELICIOUS THANKSGIVING!

Southern EXPOSURE

Celebrate America's yummiest holiday with twists on tradition, care of top chefs in new culinary cities like Charleston, S.C., and Nashville. From a creamy brussels sprouts gratin to honey-butter cornbread and a decadent dark-chocolate dessert, these comforting sides are elevated to artisanal showstoppers.

PHOTOGRAPHED BY GENTL & HYERS
SERVES 6–8
TOTAL TIME: 1 hour, 10 minutes
ACTIVE TIME: 20 minutes
MAKE AHEAD: Cornbread (1 day)

1¼ cups cornmeal
1½ cups all-purpose flour
2 tbsp sugar
1½ tsp baking soda
½ tsp baking powder
1 tsp salt
1 egg
1½ cups buttermilk
6 tbsp unsalted butter, melted, divided
2 tbsp honey
1 scallion, thinly sliced

1 Preheat oven to 350°F. 2 Whisk cornmeal, flour, sugar, baking soda, baking powder, and salt in a large bowl. 3 Whisk egg, buttermilk, and 4 tbsp melted butter in a small bowl. Add wet ingredients to dry ingredients, stirring until just combined. 4 Heat a 10” cast-iron skillet on high heat with 1 tbsp melted butter. Pour batter into pan. Transfer to oven and bake until golden brown and a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean, 25–30 minutes. 5 Just before the cornbread is done baking, make the topping: Combine honey and 1 tbsp melted butter. 6 Remove cornbread from the oven and immediately brush on topping, then sprinkle with scallions. Serve warm.

COOKING 3 Remove, and transfer to a bowl. (Sprouts will continue to cook in the oven, so do not worry if they seem undercooked.) 4 Repeat with remaining batches, adding 2 tbsp olive oil, as needed. Set aside. 5 Meanwhile, heat remaining 2 tbsp oil in a medium-size sauté pan over medium heat. Add bacon and cook, stirring occasionally, until crispy, 8–10 minutes. Transfer bacon to a plate, leaving fat in pan; set aside.
6 Reserve ¼ cup bacon fat; set aside.
7 Return pan to medium heat; add shallots and thyme. Cook, stirring often, until shallots are tender, 3–4 minutes. Add wine to pan; increase heat to high.
8 Cook, stirring often and scraping the bottom of the pan to incorporate bacon bits, until wine evaporates, 2–3 minutes.
9 Stir in cream, mustard, and butter. Reduce heat to medium; stir in two thirds of the cheese. Season with ¼ tsp each salt and pepper. Stir in reserved bacon and brussels sprouts. Transfer to a 9” x 13” baking dish. (If making ahead, cover tightly and refrigerate.)
10 When ready to bake, toss bread crumbs with reserved ½ cup bacon fat. Season with ¼ tsp each salt

and pepper. Distribute evenly over brussels sprouts. Top with remaining cheese.
11 Bake until cream bubbles and bread crumbs turn golden brown, 20–30 minutes. Serve hot.

Cornbread with HONEY BUTTER & SCALLIONS

“When I was a kid, my grandmother’s cornbread was always my Thanksgiving favorite,” says Jeremiah Bacon, chef at the much-loved Macintosh eatery in Charleston. "I love this version because the scallions offer a fresh, green contrast to the cornmeal." He prefers the coarse, more textured cornmeal from local Anson Mills ($6.12 oz.; ansonmills.com) to more finely ground varieties, which can be lower-grade. Using a round cast-iron pan makes it easier to coax the bread out; Bacon suggests brushing his honey butter immediately after baking so that the flavor soaks right in.