

5 *Sunday Dinners,* *No Salt Missed*

All the soul, less sodium.

These are five plates I grew up on — the ones that *are* Sunday. After my stroke, I had to learn to cook them a whole new way, without the salt that used to carry everything. So I did. Not new food. The *same* food, built from different bricks.

Every recipe here is rebuilt to taste like home: the browning, the smoke, the acid, the herbs — the things that were doing the real work all along. Pull up a chair.

— *Carol*

THE ONE RULE FOR EVERY PLATE

Build your flavor with the herbs first, brighten it with a splash of acid (vinegar or hot sauce), **then taste before you add anything else.** Nine times out of ten, you won't reach for the salt at all.

RECIPE ONE

Smothered Chicken & Carol's Flour-Free Gravy

A real brown gravy with no flour at all — just browned powder.

SERVES 4 · ABOUT 35 MIN

YOU'LL NEED

- 1½ lb chicken thighs (or turkey)
- 2 tbsp oil
- 1 tbsp garlic powder (*divided*)
- 1 tbsp onion powder (*divided*)
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- ¼ tsp thyme · pepper
- 1½ cups low-sodium broth
- 1 tbsp tomato powder

MAKE IT

- 1 Season chicken both sides with half the garlic & onion powder, smoked paprika, thyme & pepper.
- 2 Heat oil; brown chicken both sides. Remove, leaving the drippings.
- 3 **Flour-free trick:** sprinkle the remaining garlic & onion powder into the hot drippings; stir 30–60 sec until golden-brown and nutty. That browned powder is your thickener and your color.
- 4 Slowly whisk in broth & tomato powder, scraping up the browned bits, into a smooth gravy. Bubble 1 min to thicken.
- 5 Return chicken, cover, simmer 15–20 min until tender.
- 6 A tiny splash of vinegar brightens it; taste before adding anything else.

CAROL'S TIP

If the gravy's thin, brown a little more onion powder in a dry spot before adding liquid — that's where the body comes from.

RECIPE TWO

Smothered Greens

Collards, mustards, or cabbage — smoky "pot likker," no ham hock needed.

SERVES 4–6 · ABOUT 35 MIN

YOU'LL NEED

- 1 tbsp oil
- 1 large bunch collard or mustard greens, sliced (or 1 head cabbage)
- 1½ tsp garlic powder
- 1½ tsp onion powder
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- ½ tsp thyme
- 2½ cups water or low-sodium broth
- 1 tbsp apple cider vinegar
- Pepper & a pinch red pepper flakes (*optional*)

MAKE IT

- 1 Heat the oil over medium heat.
- 2 Stir in garlic & onion powder.
- 3 Add smoked paprika & thyme.
- 4 Add greens & liquid. Cover and simmer gently — 25–30 min for collards, ~15 for cabbage — until tender and the pot likker is rich.
- 5 Finish with vinegar; add pepper & red pepper flakes, then taste.

CAROL'S TIP

Greens love acid — don't skip the vinegar. Another shake of smoked paprika deepens the smoke.

RECIPE THREE

Real Pantry Red Beans & Rice

Smoky and savory — no sausage, no ham hock, less salt.

SERVES 4-6 · ABOUT 40 MIN

YOU'LL NEED

- 1 tbsp oil
- 2 cans (15 oz) low-sodium red or kidney beans, drained
- 1½ tsp garlic powder
- 1½ tsp onion powder
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- ¾ tsp thyme · ½ tsp oregano
- 1 tbsp tomato powder
- 2 cups low-sodium broth or water
- 2 tsp vinegar or a few dashes hot sauce
- Pepper · cooked rice for serving

MAKE IT

- 1 Warm the oil over medium heat.
- 2 Stir in garlic & onion powder; bloom 1 min until fragrant.
- 3 Add smoked paprika, thyme, oregano & tomato powder; stir 30 sec.
- 4 Add beans & broth. Simmer 20 min, then mash some beans against the pot for a creamy, cooked-all-day feel.
- 5 Stir in vinegar or hot sauce, taste, and serve over rice.

CAROL'S TIP

Soul food is bold — be generous with the garlic, onion & smoked paprika, then finish with a splash of vinegar to wake it all up.

RECIPE FOUR

Sweet-Kissed Cornbread

Golden, moist, crisp-edged — the way Sunday smells.

SERVES 8 · ABOUT 30 MIN

YOU'LL NEED

- 1 cup cornmeal
- 1 cup flour
- 1 tbsp sodium-free baking powder (*this is the salt secret — regular baking powder & soda are where most sodium hides*)
- 2–3 tbsp honey
- 1 cup milk or buttermilk
- 1 egg
- 3 tbsp melted unsalted butter (*plus a little for the pan*)
- *Savory:* add 1 tsp garlic powder + roasted green chiles or onion

MAKE IT

- 1 Heat oven to 400°F and put a greased cast-iron skillet in to get hot.
- 2 Whisk cornmeal, flour & baking powder.
- 3 Whisk milk, egg, honey & melted butter.
- 4 Fold wet into dry just until combined — don't overmix.
- 5 Pour into the hot skillet (it should sizzle) and bake 20–25 min until golden and the edges are crisp.

CAROL'S TIP

That crisp, buttery edge from a screaming-hot cast-iron skillet is half of what "familiar" means — don't skip preheating the pan.

RECIPE FIVE

Creamy Baked Mac & Cheese

Rich, gooey, browned on top — the plate everybody reaches for.

SERVES 6 · ABOUT 40 MIN

YOU'LL NEED

- 8 oz elbow macaroni, cooked in **unsalted** water (*the pasta water is a hidden salt source*)
- 2 tbsp unsalted butter
- 2 tbsp flour
- 2 cups warm milk
- 1½ cups shredded **sharp** cheddar
- 2 tbsp nutritional yeast (*cheesy, savory*)
- 1 tsp dry mustard powder
- 1 tsp garlic powder + 1 tsp onion powder
- ½ tsp smoked paprika + black pepper

MAKE IT

- 1 Melt butter over medium heat; whisk in flour and cook 1 min into a paste.
- 2 Slowly whisk in the warm milk; bubble gently until it thickens into a smooth sauce.
- 3 Off the heat, stir in cheese, nutritional yeast, dry mustard, garlic & onion powder, smoked paprika & pepper until melted and creamy.
- 4 Fold in the macaroni.
- 5 *Optional but familiar:* scatter a little cheese on top, broil 3–4 min until browned and bubbly.

CAROL'S TIP

*A **sharp** cheese and a spoon of nutritional yeast do the work salt used to — and the browned top is the part everyone's really after.*

The "Soul Sprinkle"

Your natural, herb-based salt substitute. No sodium, no potassium chloride — friendly for high blood pressure and most kidney diets. Use like seasoned salt, on everything. Stir together and keep in a jar (airtight, cool & dry, up to a year).

STIR TOGETHER

- 2 tbsp garlic powder
- 2 tbsp onion powder
- 1 tbsp smoked paprika
- 1 tbsp tomato powder
- 2 tsp thyme · 1 tsp oregano
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1 tsp dried lemon peel or celery seed (*the brightener that makes it taste "seasoned"*)

CAROL'S TIP

This is your Foundation 6 plus a little brightness — the whole Real Pantry method in one shaker.

Ready to rebuild your whole pantry?

These five plates are a taste of the full **Real Pantry™ 30-Day Reset** — a month of familiar food rebuilt without the salt, with a guided app and my voice walking beside you. The doors open August 3.

Come home to sowsoulful.com

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Foundation 6™: Garlic · Onion · Thyme · Oregano · Smoked Paprika · Tomato Powder