

# Magnolia Table

A COLLECTION OF RECIPES FOR GATHERING | VOLUME 3



Joanna Gaines

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VOLUME 3

JOANNA GAINES

PHOTOGRAPHY BY AMY NEUNSINGER



WILLIAM MORROW  
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## Dedication

*For my dad,*

*You have always been one of my favorite people to cook for. Growing up, I loved making your lunches for work every day. You always brought home an empty lunch pail and praise for every last bite. Nowadays, it's a warm dinner or pan of fresh cinnamon rolls that I enjoy surprising you with, and then that picture you send when you've cleared the plate. My love for cooking has always been about the moments that unfold after the meal is made—the connection, the gift it is to nourish the people I care for—and that love took root with you.*

*It will always be a great joy of mine to cook for you, Dad.*



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*Also by Joanna Gaines*

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# Introduction





My parents were married on the front steps of a San Francisco courthouse. It was 1972, a Saturday afternoon, and only a few hours earlier my mom had landed in America for the very first time. She wore jean shorts and sandals. My dad donned a white tank top and denim bell-bottoms.

They met during my dad's service in South Korea and fell in love long-distance, through a year of letters that were read to them by a translator. Twelve years after their wedding day, they wanted to renew their vows with a more formal ceremony—one with friends and food and a traditional wedding cake—so invitations were mailed out and my two sisters and I were the flower girls.

My mom had ordered this elegant white cake for the reception. The cake felt like it was half my six-year-old size, five tiers tall with smooth icing on top.

My Korean mother made a point to embrace a few American wedding traditions, which included preserving the top tier of the reception cake for the first anniversary. So when the party was over, my mom covered the cake in plastic wrap and slid it onto the bottom shelf of our kitchen freezer.

Just low enough for me to reach.

I can't explain what came over me, but that first night, once everyone was asleep, I tiptoed down the hallway and into the kitchen. In one hand I held a fork, and with the other I carefully opened the freezer. You can put together the rest.

I can still place myself there now, standing barefoot on our carpeted kitchen floor. Nothing but the refrigerator light casting a glow in the dark. And that *taste*: White vanilla cake, thick buttercream icing. Perfectly chilled. After a few bites, I washed the fork, placed it back in the drawer, and rewrapped the cake. Until a couple nights later, and a few more after that.

The day of their anniversary came the following year, and when my mom went to grab the cake, what was left was basically the plastic she'd wrapped it in, which I'd stuffed behind bags of frozen peas. My poor mom—she immediately burst into tears. I can't remember another time she was more mad than at that moment when I confessed it was me who had eaten her wedding cake. I regretted it instantly, of course. It was out of character

for me to be sneaky like that. But that small act of rebellion sparked within me a love of taste. It's the earliest memory I have of truly savoring something delicious. I don't remember the price I paid, but I never forgot the taste of that single tier of white wedding cake.

I can count a few other memories like this one, moments I can still feel, that are *part of me* because I remember intimately the way they tasted. The chocolate chip cookies I'd bake with my dad on Saturday afternoons. Sundays at my grandparents' house, sharing plates of rolled grape leaves. Watching my mom cook alongside my grandmother—the scent of Korean food filling our kitchen. Every time my grandfather on my dad's side let me roll out the dough for his famous Syrian donut recipe, and the way my hands would carry the scent of cinnamon and sugar for days after. The hospital chicken cordon bleu Chip and I shared after our first son was born.

More than any of the other senses, it seems that taste is what sticks with me. It's what I remember minutes, months, years later. It's what I carry forward. Flavor is how I mark the changing of seasons. Give me spring veggies, crisp and bright. Summer berries, juicy and dripping. Give me autumn's harvest to pickle and preserve and make those flavors last. Give me a winter filled with tradition: casseroles and Christmas candy. Give me a taste of something meaningful, and I know to savor it.

I've chased that word a thousand times over: *savor*. The definition is “to enjoy completely.” Imagine that. Imagine unfettered delight. Imagine breathing, deeply, until it sinks in fully. Imagine a wholehearted moment. Taste that truly satisfies. Imagine saving the best of something—a moment, a sound, a feeling, and carrying it forward.

Savor has only ever come naturally to me when I'm cooking. I've chalked this up to food being a love language of mine. I've been chopping and whisking for decades. I've said it a million times before—my kitchen is my favorite place to be. It hasn't always been this way, but it gets truer with time. It's become second nature to relish flavors and think curiously about ingredients. Over the years, my kitchen itself has become a place I crave. And my island, an anchor.

It's this space that keeps my feet firmly planted despite a world turning. Despite the instinct to give myself in pieces in every direction. I've looked to the kitchen and the food I make here to ground me, upholding the

promise of pulling all my senses into harmony.

Here, I am only the moment in front of me. I can slow down long enough to enjoy completely what's unfolding: the pulling out of a well-loved recipe, a favorite among the bellies I feed daily. Anticipation for the meal to come, and the voices it inevitably draws to the table, one and then another, always with stories to tell about their day. The familiar smells rising from the stove as I catch the timer tick to its finish.

And I can feel it: the weight of an ordinary moment becoming something more.

I can feel its charge brimming at the edge. *Savor this*. It's equal parts tangible and intangible, sometimes dissipating as fast as it forms. But I've learned not to brush it off. Not to move on to whatever is next. Not yet. Because moments like this are often only noticed in pause. Where we can glean the gold worth carrying forward: connection, communion, *delight*.

It's a fragile thing, in a world filled with interruptions. A world filled with expectations. Where what's ahead is promised to be better than what's present. A world where one look toward a distraction can abandon even our best-laid plans. I have half a lifetime's experience of letting worthy moments slip through my fingers.

I love to create, always have. Watching something go from nothing to something, and being part of it, really fuels me. In the garden, in the kitchen. In my work, especially. And in some ways, I feel like I was made for this side of life. To work with my hands. To build and help things prosper. But beyond the kitchen, I haven't always been so great at the harvesting part, in savoring what I've sown. Relishing the process, or even celebrating the finish. Instead, I've been quick to move on to whatever is next, ready to set my mind to something new.

And it's tempting, isn't it? To think there's always something better waiting around the corner. And maybe there is, but our hands were made to hold only one moment at a time. So I'm learning to hold on tight while it's mine. In a gentle whisper I remind myself as often as I think to: *enjoy this completely*.

I'm still a work in progress, but the practice is what I'm after. When it feels like too much is slipping through my fingers, I know I can always

return to my island. Where instinct tells me to slow down. With hands mixing and pots of water bubbling, the life that resounds on this three-by-eight-foot table draws me in. And I feel it once again, that inner rebellion, this time to risk the interruptions and the distractions for the *right now*, the *right here*. To quiet everything around me so I can enjoy this completely.

I hope you sense that intention throughout the book. That what you find in the recipes and stories will feel like an invitation to pause. That they might pave the way for more connection and delight. Whether it's in the making, the gathering, or where it all began for me, the taste of something truly delicious, this is a collection I hope you'll savor.

The recipes, yes. But also the moments they shape.

Enjoy!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Janne". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, elegant loop at the beginning.

## Chapter One

# Breads





LET IT REST, WATCH  
IT RISE, SAVORING GROWTH  
THAT'S EARNED GRADUALLY

## Popovers



*I doubt I'm the only one who gets excited when the bread basket arrives at the table of a good restaurant. Typically, I'll reach for any kind of bread that's in front of me, but traditional popovers have never been my favorite.*

*I always found that the tried-and-true recipe tasted more like crust and the insides seemed just too hollow. So I thought we'd create a recipe that brings together the best of what bread has to offer: a crispy, flaky exterior and delicious, bready insides.*

**prep:** 10 minutes

**cook:** 30 minutes

**cool:** 5 minutes

---

1 tablespoon coarse salt  
2 teaspoons fresh rosemary, left whole or roughly chopped  
1½ cups whole milk, at room temperature  
1½ cups all-purpose flour  
4 large eggs, at room temperature  
1 teaspoon kosher salt  
½ cup grated Parmesan cheese (about 2 ounces)  
3 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted  
Nonstick baking spray  
Softened butter and/or jam, for serving (optional)

Position a rack in the middle of the oven and preheat the oven to 425°F. Place a popover pan or muffin tin in the oven while it is preheating. Once the oven reaches about 350°F, start mixing the popover batter.

In a small bowl, stir together the coarse salt and rosemary and set aside.

In a blender, combine the milk, flour, eggs, and kosher salt and blend for 30 to 45 seconds. (The more air is incorporated into the batter, the better the rise.) Add the Parmesan and melted butter, and blend for about 10 more seconds.

Carefully remove the hot pan from the oven and spray with nonstick baking spray. Pour the batter into the wells until they are about two-thirds full. Sprinkle with the rosemary salt and carefully return the pan to the oven.

Bake for 20 minutes, then lower the oven temperature to 350°F and bake until deeply golden brown, another 10 minutes. Do not open the oven during baking, as this could deflate the popovers. Allow the popovers to cool for 3 to 5 minutes before serving. Repeat as needed with the



remaining batter.

Serve with butter or jam, if you like.

Store in a sealed bag at room temperature for up to 2 days.

*Makes 10 to 12 popovers*

## Garlic-Cilantro Naan



*I love the discovery that comes with cooking. Over the years, I've come to love naan, a traditional Indian bread, more and more. I've started to pair it with any dish that has a rich sauce base, or I'll use it to make a wrap*

*with meat and veggies. I've learned that baking it in the oven tends to give it a hard and crispy texture while cooking it on the stove at a high temperature for less time allows the bread to stay soft.*

**prep:** 2 hours

**cook:** 20 minutes

**cool:** none

---

2 tablespoons warm water (about 110°F)  
1 tablespoon active dry yeast  
1 teaspoon sugar  
3 cups all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting  
½ cup full-fat plain Greek yogurt  
¼ cup plus 1 teaspoon olive oil  
3 teaspoons kosher salt  
Cooking spray  
4 tablespoons (½ stick) unsalted butter, melted  
2 teaspoons chopped fresh cilantro  
2 garlic cloves, minced

In a small bowl, stir together the warm water, yeast, and sugar. Let stand until foamy, about 5 minutes. (If the yeast mixture does not foam, your water was too hot or too cold, or your yeast was expired.)

In a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook, combine the flour, ⅔ cup of water, the yogurt, ¼ cup of the olive oil, and 2 teaspoons of the salt on low speed. With the mixer still on low speed, slowly add the yeast mixture, then increase the speed to medium. Continue to mix until the dough is smooth, about 5 minutes. Remove the dough from the bowl and shape into a ball. Lightly grease a large bowl with the remaining teaspoon olive oil, add the dough, and cover with plastic wrap. Allow the dough to proof for 2 hours, preferably in a warm area of the kitchen.

Heat a 10-inch skillet over medium heat and spray lightly with cooking spray. On a lightly floured surface, portion the dough into 8 pieces. Using a rolling pin, roll each piece into an oval shape about ¼ inch thick. Place a single rolled-out piece into the pan and cook until both sides are deep golden brown, about 1 minute per side, adjusting the temperature as needed. Transfer the cooked naan to a wire rack. Repeat, spraying again

lightly before adding more dough, until all are cooked.

In a small bowl, stir together the butter, cilantro, garlic, and the remaining 1 teaspoon salt. Brush the tops of each naan with the garlic butter and serve immediately.

Store in an airtight container at room temperature for up to 2 days. Reheat in a nonstick skillet over medium-high heat for about 10 to 25 seconds per side.

*Makes 8 naan*