the simple-talk.com cookbook

warming winter recipes for geeks

simple-talk.com

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Foreword

I was first inspired to compile this collection of warming winter recipes for Simple-Talk readers when I realized that some of our keenest forum readers and writers also have a considerable appetite for cooking and home-grown recipes. It's not the first time that recipes have featured in the Simple-Talk zone. In recent months, both Andrew Clarke and Adam Machanic have posted superb recipes for greengage jam and a mean fish curry on the forums. Their popularity finally convinced me that here was an opportunity not to be missed.

Food is a passion amongst many of us who work at Red Gate Software and I felt sure this would be replicated across the IT community. I wasn't mistaken. The recipes contributed to this cookery book have always been sent with enthusiasm for food and for the dish itself. My hope is that this book will provide inspiration for all those IT geeks out there who survive on whatever meals their microwave is prepared to frazzle for them.

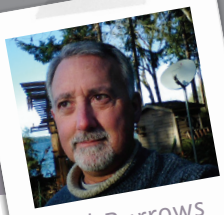
Most of the recipes have a winter theme, designed for you to savor after a cold, brisk walk (even if it's only a few steps from the office to the car door). There are dishes to suit all tastes. You can even go from starter to dessert without ever having to leave the Simple-Talk.com cookbook's suggestions! Why not try Bill Burrow's "Lake Chitan Campbell's Beer Bread" for an appetizer, followed by Gaidar Magdanurov's "Beef Olive Rolls", with some gooey "Deep Fried Mars Bars" by Simon Galbraith for a chocolatey finish to the meal?

I have tried to provide American and European (metric) measurements where possible. I apologize in advance if any conversions are erring on the more generous side (I cannot be held responsible for any growing waist-lines after the recipes have been sampled, though ☺). Still, you can never go too wrong, with a splash more beer or a few more almonds, right?!

Happy cooking!

Claire Brooking
Assistant Editor Simple-Talk.com

Simple-Talk Chef:



Before accepting the position of Senior Lecturer in Information Systems, William Burrows was the project manager for the acquisition and implementation of the University of Washington's campus-wide interactive instructional system. He has also worked as an independent consultant to private and government organizations, providing assistance in systems requirements, acquisitions, and contract negotiations.

Professor Burrows was honored for his outstanding contribution to undergraduate education in 1997, 1998, 2000, and 2001. Together with Joseph Langford, he is a co-author of Learning Programming Using Visual Basic.NET, Irwin/McGraw-Hill that is in its fourth edition.

In his spare time, Bill enjoys golf, reading and gardening. He also creates web sites for friends and maintains a small internet business providing on-line programming instruction in Visual Basic.

Lake Chitan Campbells Beer Bread

As our mouths begin to water at Simple-Talk, Bill tells us that this recipe comes from a small general store and restaurant near Lake Campbell, located on Vancouver Island in British Columbia, Canada. Bill's advice is to serve the bread with a hearty soup, it being just the right thing after a long (often rainy) day fishing on the lake.

American measurements	**European measurements**
3 cups self-raising flour	450g self-raising flour
3 tablespoons sugar	45g sugar
12oz beer	330ml beer

Keep the method for this rustic recipe nice and simple. Just mix all the ingredients together, put them in a loaf tin before baking in the centre of the oven at 375˚F / 190˚C for 35-40 minutes.

Aunt Ann's Beef Stew

This recipe was the recipe that Bill's favorite aunt who lived in the northern Sonora Desert in Arizona used to cook when Bill visited in the winter. Believe it or not, the desert was not as hot as some are led to believe; Ann would prepare the ingredients ahead of time, then heat and serve after a long walk in the very cool desert.

American measurements	**European measurements**
3lb braising beef	1.35kg braising beef
1 packet of dry onion soup undiluted	1 packet of dry onion soup mix - mix - undiluted
1 can of mushroom soup - undiluted	1 can of mushroom soup - undiluted
¾ cup dry Sherry	165ml dry Sherry
¼ teaspoon thyme	¼ teaspoon thyme
¼ teaspoon black pepper	¼ teaspoon black pepper

If you can't wait for a hearty meal after a brisk hike in the wintry air, then this easy method makes Aunt Ann's stew ideal. Mix all the ingredients together in a heavy-based casserole or stewing pot. Cover the pot with a lid and place in the oven at 325˚F /170˚C for approximately 3 hours to let the beef become tender and the sauce to absorb the meat juices. Serve over rice.

Simple-Talk Chef:

Jesse Liberty

The president of Liberty Associates, Inc and a Microsoft MVP, Jesse Liberty is the author of the international best-selling Programming C#, Programming VB 2005, Programming ASP.NET and numerous other books, including the forthcoming Programming .NET 3.

He has written dozens of articles for leading industry publications and has been a featured or keynote speaker at international industry events. Jesse's biography is listed on Wikipedia and he maintains a political blog, a technical blog, and a free private forum on which he provides support for all his writing.

Vegetarian Shepherd's Pie

Jesse's family are vegetarians and have adapted a recipe loved worldwide. Advising on quantities, Jesse recommends that this pie will feed a family of hungry Americans, or half of London.
NB: This is a variant on a recipe from the Enchanted Broccoli Forest by Mollie Katzen. Jesse's version is out of print, but the recipe may still appear in the updated version.

American measurements	European measurements
2 large potatoes	2 large potatoes
1 tablespoon butter	15g butter
½ cup vanilla yogurt	110ml vanilla yogurt
½ cup freshly minced chives or ¼ cup dried chives	110ml freshly minced chives or 55ml dried chives
½ cup minced parsley	110ml minced parsley
1½ cups chopped onions	225g chopped onions
3-5 large cloves garlic	3-5 large cloves garlic
1½ cups butter	340g butter
12 oz chopped mushrooms	340g chopped mushrooms
1 1lb eggplant	1 450g eggplant
½ teaspoon basil	½ teaspoon basil
½ teaspoon oregano	½ teaspoon oregano

¼ teaspoon thyme	¼ teaspoon thyme
1 cup peas (fresh or frozen)	200g peas (fresh or frozen)
1 inch TVP (textured vegetable protein/tofu)	2.5cm TVP (textured vegetable protein/tofu)
½ cup grated cheese	55g grated cheese
3 tablespoons wheatgerm	40g wheatgerm
1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar	15ml apple cider vinegar
Paprika to taste	Paprika to taste
Salt and pepper to taste	Salt and pepper to taste

Cook the 2 large potatoes in their skin in boiling water until soft, drain and smash with the following: 1 tablespoon/15g butter, salt and pepper, ½ cup/110ml vanilla yogurt, ½ cup/110ml freshly minced chives (or ¼ cup/55ml dried), ½ cup/110ml minced parsley. Set aside.

In a large, heavy skillet, sauté 1½ cups/225g chopped onions with 3-5 large cloves garlic in 1½cups/340g butter with salt and pepper until the onions are soft (5-8 min). Add 12 oz/340g chopped mushrooms, and one 1 1lb/450g eggplant that is cut into small chunks. Cook over a low heat, stirring occasionally until eggplant is completely cooked through and soft (covering skillet between stirrings helps). Add ½ teaspoon basil, ½ teaspoon oregano, ½ teaspoon thyme, 1 cup/200g fresh (or frozen) peas, and cook for another 5 minutes.

Butter a deep-dish casserole, and cover the bottom with about 1 inch of TVP (textured vegetable protein). Pour the contents of the heavy skillet into a deep casserole dish and then toss with ½ cup/55g grated cheese, 3 tablespoons/40g wheat germ and 1 tablespoon/15ml apple cider vinegar. On top of this, spread the potato mix prepared earlier. Add a bit of extra cheese on top of the pie along with some paprika. Bake the entire casserole uncovered for 35 minutes at 375˚F / 190˚C until the potato topping is golden brown and the filling is bubbling.

Simple-Talk Chef:

Gaidar lives in Moscow, Russia. His primary job is scientific research in INEOS RAS. Gaidar also works as a software developer/consultant and is editor-in-chief of the VBStreets web site, dedicated to Visual Basic and Microsoft .NET technologies. From time to time Gaidar enjoys speaking at user group meetings and he is a member of the Russian Speakers Bureau and an active member of the Russian GotDotNet community.

For Gaidar's activities in the developer community, Gaidar has also been awarded MVP status in Visual Basic. As for non-techie related activities, Gaidar likes to listen to music, play the guitar, go to the theater, walk in the park and visit his friends. Spare time is a rare treat, though, so Gaidar recommends these recipes for all the techies in a rush who need a tasty, filling meal to keep them fueled!

Gaidar's Cheesy Baked Potato

This is one of Gaidar's favorite recipes after a bitterly cold Moscow walk home.

American measurements	European measurements
2½ lb potatoes	1.5kg potatoes
1½ cups grated cheese	150g grated cheese
1 cup mayonnaise	250g mayonnaise
Salt and pepper to taste	Salt and pepper to taste

Peel and slice potato. Lay out sliced potato in a big frying pan or a baking form. Sprinkle with salt and pepper to your taste. Grate cheese and strew potato with cheese. Fill up the gaps left between the potato and cheese with mayonnaise. Put into heated oven at 400˚F / 200˚C for 45 minutes until golden brown on the top.

Beef Olive Rolls

Eating this dish makes Gaidar smile. You could even try it with Gaidar's cheesy baked potato as a complete meal.

American measurements	**European measurements**
2 cups minced beef	½ kg minced beef
½ onion	½ onion
10 pieces of ham	10 pieces of ham
2 cups wild mushrooms	½ onion kg wild mushrooms
Tomato sauce / passata	Tomato sauce / passata

Combine the minced beef with salt, pepper and your favorite herbs to taste. Chop ½ of an onion and add to the meat mixture. Place a dollop of the minced meat mixture onto each piece of ham and roll the ham up to form a sausage shape. Lay out the rolls of ham with minced meat inside on a baking tray. Fill up the dish with your preferred sauce (Gaidar recommends a tomato based sauce, such as passata) and sprinkle the chopped wild mushrooms over the top of the dish. Place dish in a heated oven at 400˚F / 200˚C for 50 minutes.

Simple-Talk Chef:

Simon is joint CEO of Red Gate Software and an ex-physics geek who lives in Cambridge with his family. The first computer Simon owned was the Vic 20, as he grew up in the Newcastle area and learned to speak Geordie. The Redundancy of Courage by Timothy Mo is one of Simon's favorite reads, which he enjoys with a cup of tea.

Barre de Chocolat Frit à l'Ecossaise or Deep Fried Mars Bars

Simon shows us a special way to eat a chocolate bar enjoyed the world over. Simon also insists that his recipe will serve 8 as a dessert at a dinner party, or maybe 2 hungry geeks as a gluttonous mid-afternoon snack.

American measurements	**European measurements**
4 Mars Midnight/Mars dark chocolate bars	4 Mars Midnight/Mars dark chocolate bars
1 egg	1 egg
3 fl oz cold milk	75ml cold milk
2 fl oz cold water	55ml cold water

You will also need a pan or device for deep fat frying and at least 2 litres/½ gallon fresh oil suitable for frying.

This dish is claimed to originate in Glaswegian Fish and Chip shops (although Wikipedia suggests the small town of Stonehaven is the original location) and is primarily a dish for the poor of Scotland. It seems to be sneered upon by all who have heard of it. Dr Mark Petticrew and Dr David Morrison of the University of Glasgow researched the phenomenon in 2004 and discovered that 22% of Scottish Fish and Chip Shops stock the dish. Despite the opprobrium a lot of poor marginalised people love this dish.

The vast majority of desserts involve heroic quantities of sugar and saturated dairy fat. If you consider profiteroles, chocolate cake, meringue, posh ice creams and numerous others, they are all about empty calorific

excess. Simon's view is that the sneers and expressions of disgust about deep fried Mars bars are better explained by class prejudice rather than an honest appraisal of the taste and eating experience. Therefore, Simon advises that it is vital you don't tell your guests what they are having until after they have experienced eating it. Unless they are very cosmopolitan, use the French name above. Even if they are cosmopolitan, it should at least raise a smile from those who do speak the language.

Take your dark chocolate Mars bars and put them in the freezer; do this at least 4 hours before cooking the dish. While this dish is fine with milk chocolate, for amazing results it is better to go for another form of dark chocolate coated snack than it is to stick with Mars.

Put the flour, egg, water and milk into a bowl and use an electric whisk or hand blender to mix into a smooth paste. Place into the fridge to cool for a minimum of 20 minutes prior to cooking.

By freezing the Mars bar and chilling the batter mixture you are going to:
a) Allow the batter mix to stick fairly well to the bar
b) Allow the Mars bar to be fried without turning into a sticky gooey mess.

Now shut the kitchen door and turn the radio on loud…

Put your deep fat fryer on and set it at the 'tempura' heat setting or -350°F. Make sure that the batter has reached the correct temperature before cooking.

Take one bar and lower it gently into the batter. Leave it there for approximately two minutes, or until the batter is lightly browned. Then remove bar and use a slotted/perforated spoon or a basket to place the bar immediately into the hot oil. Fry one bar at a time and do not let the oil cool as you fry the bars.

Repeat until all bars are cooked.

Slice each bar into slices about ½ inch thick. Arrange 5-10 per serving. Serve with posh vanilla ice cream.

Sit back and watch everyone exclaim how much they like it! Then tell them they've just enjoyed a deep fried Mars bar…

Simple-Talk Chef:

Aneesh Retnakaran

Aneesh comes from the beautiful city of Attingal, Kerala in South India. For the past seven years, Aneesh has worked closely with SQL Server and right from his college days, his interests have tended towards DB technologies. Aneesh currently works as Senior Database Developer at Authoria India Development Centre in Bangalore.

Much of Aneesh's spare time is spent contributing to online community activities, one of his favorite sites being experts-exchange.com, where he has been awarded 'SQL Server Genius' and 'Database guru' for his work. A moderator for www.sqlknowledge.com, Aneesh also writes many articles for the same site. SQL Art is one of Aneesh's techie hobbies, and you can view his pictures created with SQL Server at his blog: www.sequelserver.blogspot.com.

When Aneesh isn't working with SQL Server, he enjoys cooking, playing cricket (claiming to be the biggest fan of both Lara and West Indies) and listening to music. Aneesh also likes the rain and will take any opportunity to go walking or driving in it!

Carrot Peda

American measurements	European measurements
3 cups grated carrot	330g grated carrot
1½ pints milk	675ml milk
3½ cups sugar	785g sugar
1 cup ghee	225g ghee
1¼ oz raisins	30g raisins
½ fl oz cardamom powder	1 tablespoon cardamom powder
¼ cup chopped cashew nuts	3 tablespoons chopped cashew nuts
Vanilla essence to taste	Vanilla essence to taste

Add milk and carrot into a saucepan and boil together until the carrot is soft. When ¾ of the milk has evaporated, add the sugar and vanilla essence. Keep stirring until mixture thickens. Add cashew nuts, raisins and cardamom powder. Mix well, gradually adding the ghee to the mixture. Pour into a greased tray when the mixture is thick. Leave to cool and cut into shapes to eat as sweets.

Simple-Talk Chef:

Andrew Kelly

Andrew J. Kelly is a mentor with Solid Quality Mentors who lives in Plaistow, New Hampshire. He has over 20 years' experience with various forms of databases ranging from 4GL to VFP and SQL Server.

He still does some application design and development, but he focuses now on SQL Server itself. His main areas of interest are database performance tuning, scalability and maintenance. He speaks at several conferences each year and has been a SQL Server MVP since 1999. You can find his blog online at: http://sqlblog.com/default.aspx.

Almond Honey Crisps

This versatile recipe from Andrew can be baked to make delicious biscuits, or can be used as an unusual pie crust.

American measurements	**European measurements**
1 cup whole almonds	200g whole almonds
¼ cup butter	55g butter
⅓-½ cup honey	115-175g honey
2 teaspoons vanilla extract	1 teaspoon vanilla essence

Process almonds in a blender for a few seconds until nuts are very coarsely chopped. Do not over chop or you'll reach a flour-like consistency that is not suitable for this recipe. Place chopped almonds in a bowl and set aside. Put butter, honey and vanilla in blender, pushing ingredients down to bottom of container before turning on. Process for about 30 seconds until ingredients are whipped. Transfer mixture to the bowl containing the chopped almonds and mix together thoroughly with a spatula. Spread the mixture in a shallow cake pan and bake at 375°F / 190°C until golden brown. Cut into squares while still warm.

Simple-Talk Chef:

Paulo Morgado, MVP, read Electronics and Telecommunications (Digital Systems) at the Instituto Superior de Engenharia de Lisboa and also has a licentiate degree in Informatics from the Faculdade de Ciências da Universidade Nova de Lisboa.

Paulo has been awarded an MCSD for Microsoft .NET certification. Currently working for a financial company, Paulo has maintained and developed composite UI applications for the past two years.

One of Paulo's hobbies is answering questions about software development, as posted in the Microsoft Portuguese newsgroups (with a special focus on the .NET framework) and (when time permits) on the PontoNetPT community (http://www.pontonetpt.com).

Heaven's Bacon

The recipe Paulo has submitted was given to him by his mother-in-law and it's one of the many convent sweets (so named because they were 'invented' by nuns) available in Portugal. It's Paulo's favorite, because it is extremely sweet and contains almonds (one of Paulo's favorite nuts).

American measurements	**European measurements**
1¾ cups sugar	500g sugar
12 egg yolks	12 egg yolks
4 egg whites	4 egg whites
¾ cup whole almonds (crushed)	150g whole almonds (crushed)
Cinnamon powder	Cinnamon powder

Boil the sugar until it becomes a pearly mass (when you drop the mix, it forms pearl-like drops). Peal and crush the whole almonds, then add them with some cinnamon powder (just enough to add some color) to the pearly sugar mass. Let the mixture boil a little longer. Meanwhile, mix the egg yolks and whites together and add them to the sugar and almonds mixture. Boil until a consistent mixture forms. Pour mixture into a greased dish and bake it in a pre-heated oven at 375°F / 190°C for approximately 5 minutes (without letting mixture dry out). Remove mixture from oven and sprinkle with powdered sugar before serving.

Simple-Talk Chef:

Adam Machanic is an independent database software consultant, writer, and speaker based in Boston, Massachusetts. He has implemented SQL Server solutions for a variety of high-availability OLTP and large-scale data warehouse applications, and also specializes in .NET data access layer performance optimization.

Adam has written for SQL Server Professional magazine, serves as SQL Server 2005 Expert for SearchSQLServer.com, and is co-author of 'Pro SQL Server 2005'. In addition, he regularly speaks at user groups, community events, and conferences on a variety of SQL Server and .NET-related topics. He is a Microsoft Most Valuable Professional (MVP) for SQL Server and a Microsoft Certified IT Professional (MCITP). Adam's latest book, 'Expert SQL Server 2005,' is due out in early 2007.

Spice Cape Gooseberry Jam with Chile Pequin

Near Adam's home is a market with a wide and seemingly ever-changing variety of spices, fruits, and ingredients from all over the world. Adam often goes there, browses around, and picks up one or two items that he's never tried before, just to see what they taste like.

It was on one such excursion that Adam discovered the dried cape gooseberry. He had never heard of a cape gooseberry and was intrigued by the deep golden hue of the berries. Upon returning home he tried one and discovered it to be mouth-puckeringly sour, yet something about the flavor captivated him, and he began putting small amounts into recipes. It wasn't until a few months later that he realized that something about them reminded him of fresh figs -- he decided to try combining them with brown sugar in order to bring out some of the richness that figs provide. The peppers came later when he was looking for a sweet, spicy glaze for some chicken, and Adam thought of the gooseberry jam. He decided to use chile pequins because they are extremely hot but without a deep pepper flavor. Habaneros will also work, as their citrus flavor profile compliments the berries well.

This jam has a soft, spreadable consistency, and can be used as a glaze or served with a soft ripened cheese such as a brie or camembert.

Alternatively, after blending the berries and peppers add 1½ teaspoons ground cumin, ½ teaspoon ground black pepper, and ½ teaspoon ground ginger. Adam recommends not thickening it quite as much as you would if making jam. The result will be a tasty and fiery chutney, great with samosas, pakoras, or other fried foods.

American measurements	**European measurements**
2 cups dried cape gooseberries	400g dried cape gooseberries
15 dried chile pequin peppers/ 3 dried habanero peppers (stems removed)	15 dried chile pequin peppers/ 3 dried habanero peppers (stems removed)

Combine gooseberries and peppers in a heavy-bottomed saucepan and fill with water until berries are just covered. Add salt and brown sugar.

Gooseberries tend to vary widely in terms of sweetness, so if yours aren't especially sour, go a bit easier on the sugar. The dried berries Adam gets at his local market are extremely sour, and the four tablespoons are needed to take the edge off.

Bring to a simmer uncovered over medium heat, then reduce to low. Cover, and continue to simmer for 30 minutes. Remove from heat and using either an immersion blender or a food processor, blend until fairly smooth. Check and adjust sweetness and salt level. Pass the blend through a chinois or cheesecloth-lined strainer in order to remove the seeds and any bigger chunks of fruit or pepper. Return strained mixture to the stove. Simmer uncovered over low heat until the mixture thickly coats the back of a spoon.

Remove from heat and allow to cool. Store jam in the refrigerator.

Adam's Fish Curry

American measurements	European measurements
1 tablespoon butter	15g butter
1 large yellow onion	1 large yellow onion
1 jalapeño pepper	1 jalapeño pepper
2 dried red chilies	2 dried red chilies
1 tomato	1 tomato
2 teaspoons coriander seeds	2 teaspoons coriander seeds
2 teaspoons mustard seeds	2 teaspoons mustard seeds
1½ teaspoons cumin seeds	1½ teaspoons cumin seeds
¼ cinnamon stick	¼ cinnamon stick
½ teaspoon ground turmeric	½ teaspoon ground turmeric
1 teaspoon ground black pepper	1 teaspoon ground black pepper
1½teaspoons garam masala	1½ teaspoons garam masala
1 tablespoon tamarind paste	1 tablespoon tamarind paste
Juice of ½ lemon	Juice of ½ lemon
1 14oz can of 'light' coconut milk	1 400g can of 'light' coconut milk
3 potatoes	3 potatoes
5 scalions	5 scalions
1 large handful cilantro/coriander	1 large handful cilantro/coriander
1lb fish	450g fish
Salt to taste	Salt to taste

De-seed and chop up dried chilies. Soak the chilies in just enough boiling water to cover. Now toast the whole spices (coriander, mustard seeds, cumin and cinnamon) in a pan over a high heat. Chop the onion finely and start sweating the onion with butter in a large pan over a medium heat. When the onion is translucent, add finely chopped/de-seeded/de-veined jalapeño. Cook for a while until the onion is browned. Next, add the chilies and the water they had been soaking in. Keep simmering whilst you de-seed the tomato and chop it finely before adding it to the mixture. Cook for a while longer, then add tamarind, lemon juice, and all other spices.

Add a bit of extra water to loosen the mixture. Put the mixture in a blender and blend. Add coconut milk and enough water to make the curry fairly loose. Bring to a simmer. Next, cut potatoes into bite-sized chunks and dice the scallions. Add both to the simmering mixture. Cook covered over a low heat for 1 hour, or until potatoes are soft. Add salt to taste. Then add cilantro, roughly chopped. Add fish, chopped into bite-sized chunks. Bring back to a simmer for a few minutes until the fish is cooked. Serve over basmati rice.

Simple-Talk Chef:

Chrissy LeMaire, an 8-year SQL Server DBA and programmer, is a displaced Cajun living and working in San Francisco. An MCDBA since 2001, she is currently finishing her BSc in Information Systems at the University of San Francisco.

When not busy scripting, playing Nintendo or reciting old school rap lyrics, Chrissy spends her time preserving and spreading information about her Cajun heritage. She also maintains a technical blog at http://netnerds.net.

Chrissy's Favorite Bread Pudding

The following bread pudding recipe is one of her favorites and can be found on her website, RealCajunRecipes.com, which she co-founded in 2002 with her mother and best friend.

American measurements	**European measurements**
8 bread slices, broken up	8 bread slices, broken up
4 cups milk, warmed	880ml milk, warmed
4 eggs, separated	4 eggs, separated
1 can evaporated milk	1 can evaporated milk
1 tablespoon vanilla	1 teaspoon vanilla essence
¼ teaspoon tartar	¼ teaspoon tartar
1½ cups sugar	335g sugar
1 can crushed pineapples	1 can crushed pineapples, drained
½ stick butter, softened	55g butter, softened

Soak the bread in warm milk. Separate the egg yolks from the whites. Beat 4 egg yolks and 1 egg white. Gradually add evaporated milk, vanilla and sugar. Add this mixture to the warm milk and bread. Add the pineapple and butter, then stir until mixed well. Pour into a 13x9 inch cake pan and bake in a 300°F / 150°C oven for 40 minutes. Let it cool.

While pudding is cooling make meringue: take 3 egg whites, 1/2 teaspoon vanilla and 1/4 teaspoon tartar and beat until fluffy. Add 6 tablespoons of sugar, 1 spoonful at a time until peaks form. Put meringue on top of cooled pudding and return to oven. Bake at 325°F / 170°C for 5-7 minutes.

Simple-Talk Chef:

Helen Joyce

Helen has been a software tester at Red Gate Software since 2001. She has been involved in the development of applications from the design stage to release, and has worked on nearly all of the products in the current Red Gate suite. She is currently project managing the development of SQL Backup version 5.

Helen's Guacamole

This is Helen's favorite recipe for dips. Enjoy with nachos, celery sticks or sliced peppers. The dip is also an ideal accompaniment to Mexican meals (Helen particularly recommends fajitas and guacamole)! Helen has adapted the recipe from a Sunday paper magazine, and guarantees that her version is far tastier than supermarket-bought guacamole (and better value for money).

It takes only five minutes to make and it's always impressive to have a large bowl of homemade guacamole on offer.

Why will Simple-Talk readers enjoy Helen's guacamole? Well, Helen says it's both simple to make (no cooking required!) and is at its best with a cold Mexican beer.

American measurements	**European measurements**
2 ripe avocados	2 ripe avocados
Juice of half a lemon	Juice of half a lemon
½ cup plus 2 tablespoons natural yoghurt	150ml natural yoghurt
4 tablespoons mayonnaise	4 tablespoons mayonnaise
1 clove garlic, finely chopped	1 clove garlic, finely chopped
½ onion, finely chopped	½ onion, finely chopped
½ teaspoon paprika	½ teaspoon paprika
2 tomatoes, peeled, seeded and chopped	2 tomatoes, peeled, seeded and chopped

Put all the ingredients in a blender and turn it on until a creamy, but slightly chunky dip emerges! Sprinkle paprika over the dip to decorate.

Simple-Talk Chef:

Grant is a database administrator for a major insurance company. He has 18 years' experience in IT including time spent in support and development.

He has been working with SQL Server since 6.0 back in 1995. He has developed in VB, VB.Net, C# and Java. Grant currently works on methods for incorporating Agile development techniques into database design and development at his company.

Cinnamon Fried Chicken

Created out of a passion for both chicken and cinnamon, Grant's own recipe is said to be best enjoyed with good ale, preferably a home-brew version of Sam Smith's Winter Welcome. Grant's warning to Simple-Talk readers is that it's not a recipe to cook every day if you're going easy on the calories, but it is tasty and it is simple, making it a pretty tempting dish!

American measurements	**European measurements**
Bone-in chicken (Grant uses the legs)	Bone-in chicken (Grant uses the legs)
¼ cup flour	38g flour
Cinnamon to taste	Cinnamon to taste
Corn oil	Corn oil
1 large, sealable bag	1 large, sealable bag

Pour the flour into the plastic bag. Add cinnamon to the flour until a light to medium brown color appears as you shake the bag to mix the contents. Place the chicken in the bag. Seal it. Shake the bag, so that the chicken becomes well and truly coated.

Put some corn oil into a skillet. Fry the chicken in a skillet on a low heat.Occasionally sprinkle extra flour and cinnamon mix onto the chicken as it cooks.

Fry until the chicken is thoroughly cooked. The chicken should also have a dark brown coating when it's ready to eat.

Simple-Talk.com is an online technical magazine for professional SQL Server and .NET developers and administrators, as well as enthusiasts and those taking their first steps with Microsoft technologies. *Simple-Talk* combines the content quality and editorial values of a technical magazine with the interactivity of the Internet. While it prides itself on the quality and comprehensiveness of its technical content, *Simple-Talk* also discusses the everyday life and career issues faced by the IT professional. Within the virtual pages of *Simple-Talk*, you can find everything from articles on building a SQL Server 2005 CLR, to tracing leaks in .NET applications, to advice on the responsibilities of a cancer-suffering software developer.

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If you like what you read in this book, do visit the *Simple-Talk* website **(http://www.simple-talk.com)** where, alongside a warming winter collection of recipes, you'll find technical tutorials, opinion, workbenches, and scripts for SQL Server and .NET people.

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