

cook like a chef

### PATTY CAKES

"These pattles work great as burgers or cakes, and they're also nice topped with an egg for brunch rather than sandwiched between a bun."



# the secret gardens



VIRGINIA WILLIS wants you to know how diverse, delicious, and produce-heavy Southern cooking really is. "There is a misperception that the South is all fried chicken and biscuits," says the James Beard Award-winning author and chef. "I love those, but we are more than that. Our cuisine is vegetable-based, and reflects so many cultures." Her latest book, Secrets of the Southern Table (she has a PBS series of the same name, too), explores all the influences on Southern food—from Vietnamese to African to Italian. "My Southern cooking is very vegetable heavy," says Willis, herself a Weight Watchers member. Here, she spills a few favorite recipes and cooking tips. BY MELANIE MANNARINO

### SHRIMP BURGERS

PREP 30 MIN // COOK 18 MIN // SERVES 6

- 2 Tbsp canola oil
- 1 medium celery stalk, diced
- 1/2 sweet onion, diced
- ½ jalapeño, seeded and chopped, or to taste
- 1/4 tsp kosher salt, or to taste
- 1/8 tsp black pepper or to taste
- 1 garlic clove, finely chopped
- Ib medium shrimp, peeled and deveined
- 1 c panko (bread crumbs)
- 2 Tbsp chopped fresh parsley
- 1 tsp finely grated lemon zest
- 1½ tsp Old Bay seasoning
- 2 tsp unsaited butter
- 6 reduced-calorie hamburger buns, toasted
- 12 lettuce leaves
- 2 plum tomatoes, cut into 6 slices each Hot sauce (optional)

1 Preheat oven to 200°F.

2 Heat 1 Tbsp oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add celery, onion, and jalapeño; cook, stirring often, until light golden, about 5 minutes. Season with ½ tsp salt and pinch pepper; add garlic and cook until fragrant, stirring, 45–60 seconds. Remove from heat; transfer to a bowl to cool.

3 Meanwhile, place 8 oz (about 1 cup) shrimp in a food processor fitted with blade attachment; puree until very smooth. Add remaining 1½ lb shrimp; pulse until coarsely chopped.

4 Transfer to bowl with cooled vegetables; add panko, parsley, lemon zest, and Old Bay. Gently mix; season with 1/2 tsp salt and pinch pepper. (To test for seasoning, zap a spoonful of the shrimp in the microwave to cook it through first.)

5 Heat ½ Tbsp oil with 1 tsp butter in same skillet over medium heat until shimmering. Using a two-third cup measure, shape mixture into 6 burgers. Working with 3 burgers at a time, add to skillet and cover. When bottom is golden, about 3 minutes, flip and cook 3 minutes more. Transfer to a rimmed baking sheet; place in oven to keep warm. Repeat with remaining ingredients. Place on toasted buns with lettuce and tomato, Serve immediately, with hot sauce, if using.

per serving (1burger): 331 cal, 10 g total fat, 2 g sat fat, 1,400 mg sod, 35 g total carb, 5 g sugar, 5 g fib, 27 g prot. SmartPoints value: 6

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-Gigi R.





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eat it up

cook like a chef



# in Virginia's kitchen

THE SEAFOOD IS SUSTAINABLE Over the years I've tried to educate people about overfishing, and I support and encourage people to look for Gulf-caught or at least American wild shrimp. I am very passionate about this. I learned to fish as a little girl, and my grandfather taught me to respect the pond. Now I'm on the board of the Monterey Bay Aquarium Seafood Watch.

### EATING SOLO IS EASY AND DELICIOUS My

go-to is seared boneless skinless chicken thighs over sautéed cabbage with thyme. I pop it in the oven so you get a little char on the cabbage. It's good and good for you. It's a 30-minute skillet meal, all in one.

### SUMMER SQUASH CAN DO ANYTHING

I love to grill it, maybe with a drizzle of oil, and then toss it with fresh herbs afterward. I also eat it raw, spiralized, or chopped up in a salad.

These recipes by Virginia Willis, originally published in Secrets of the Southern Table, have been modified for Weight Watchers with permission.

## SUMMER SQUASH WITH SPICED LEMON

- 1 lb small yellow squash
- 2 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- mashed to a paste with a pinch of salt
- tsp harissa or chile paste, or to taste
- ¼ tsp ground cumin
- tsp coarse kosher salt, or
- tsp freshly ground black pepper, or to taste
- 2 Tbsp chopped fresh parsley

7 Trim squash; use a chef's knife to quarter each one lengthwise. Using tip of knife, trim away seeds (the seeds can make the dish watery). Cut squash into 1-inch pieces.

2 Heat a large nonstick skillet over medium-high heat. Without crowding, add squash to dry skillet; cook, stirring often, until lightly blistered on both sides and tender to the point of a knife, 5-7 minutes. 3 Meanwhile, in a small bowl or iar with a lid, combine lemon zest and juice, oil, garlic, harissa, and cumin to make dressing. Stir or shake to combine; season with salt and pepper.

4 Place squash in a large bowl and drizzle some dressing over top; toss to coat and combine, adding more as needed. Sprinkle with parsley.

PER SERVING (rounded 1/4 cup): 71 cal, 5 g total fat, 1 g sat fat, 221 mg sod, 6 g total carb, 5 g sugar, 2 g fib, 2gprot. SmartPoints value: 1

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