

00:00:00	Sound Effect	Transition	Three gavel bangs.
00:00:02	Jesse Thorn	Host	It's the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast. I'm bailiff Jesse Thorn.
00:00:06	John Hodgman	Host	I'm Judge John Hodgman!
00:00:08	Jesse	Host	Well, we have a special episode this holiday. It's our first ever <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> office holiday party. Long time listeners may remember this episode. I was, unfortunately—I believe I was very ill on this day. Yeah.
00:00:23	John	Host	We've all had a lot of things going on, and this was one of those cold winter days where Jennifer Marmor and Joel Mann and I got together in person and virtually up in Maine, and we shared holiday recipes that had been submitted by you, the listener, responding to the prompt "what is your grossest family holiday traditional recipe". And this brought in a lot of interesting foods that we made and ate and shared, including the famous tomato soup salad.
			<i>[Jesse chuckles.]</i>
00:01:06	Jesse	Host	Haven't you ever wanted to combine tomato soup with gelatin and cream cheese? 'Course you did! And I feel like I have not stopped hearing you two <i>[chuckling]</i> talk about combining eggnog and orange soda! Which you loved!
00:01:18	John	Host	It was really great! It was really great. This year, everybody—Jesse and listeners—if you haven't tried it already, while you're listening to this episode, pause this episode. Go and see if your supermarket still has some eggnog left. Check the date. Get some orange soda—Fanta, Crush. I don't care what kind it is. Boylan's. Mix it up. You figure it out. One to one, two to one. Try it. It's truly a delicious delight. And I'll tell you something else that happened between this episode and now. I added a little Jägermeister to mine.
			<i>[Jesse "wow"s.]</i>
			And it became a true holiday in my mouth. But there's a lot of—there's a lot of fun, disgusting stuff. There's a lot of disgusting stuff disgusting stuff. And then, there's some really delicious stuff that takes us by surprise in this episode. We had a really good time. And we also have some wonderful messages from your friends of the court on their holiday favorites. So, I hope that you enjoy this rerun of our holiday office party. Happy New Year, if you celebrate it! If this is your calendar! To you, our audience, our listeners—to you, Jesse Thorn, to you, Jennifer Marmor. I see you there! Happy New Year, and I hope that 2023 is better than the last one and as okay as possible. Here we go!
00:02:49	Sound Effect	Transition	Three gavel bangs.
00:02:51	Music	Transition	"Poppers and Prosecco" by Kevin MacLeod.
00:02:57	John	Host	Welcome to the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast. Do not adjust your podcast set. I am not bailiff Jesse Thorn. I'm Judge John Hodgman! Unfortunately, bailiff Jesse Thorn had a headache today. But we miss him, and we hope that he's feeling better. I am joined by another member of the J squad, Jennifer Marmor. Hello!
00:03:19	Jennifer Marmor	Host	Hi!

00:03:20	John	Host	Hello to Los Angeles. How are you, Jennifer Marmor?
00:03:22	Jennifer	Host	I'm doing great! Got the holiday spirit.
00:03:25	John	Host	Doing as okay as possible?
00:03:26	Jennifer	Host	I would say I'm okay+.
00:03:28	John	Host	Okay+! Terrific, me too. Even though I've been cooking all morning, because—
00:03:33	Jennifer	Host	Me too.
00:03:34	John	Host	Today is our big virtual holiday office party for the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> offices. They are closed for the day, so that we may virtually enjoy each other's company and say and do things that we're going to regret in the office. No, everything's gonna be great!
00:03:51	Jennifer	Host	Yes. That's what an office holiday party is all about.
00:03:54	John	Host	Exactly so. And! As—even though we are missing Jesse very much, we have a surprise member of the J squad: Joel Mann is here! Hello, Joel.
00:04:02	Joel Mann	Guest	Happy holidays, Judge.
00:04:04	John	Host	Happy holidays to you as well, Joel! It's the happiest I've ever seen you, frankly.
00:04:08	Joel	Guest	Well, it's dark outside.
00:04:09	John	Host	<i>[Chuckling.]</i> Okay. Back to—we are in Maine.
			<i>[Jennifer chuckles.]</i>
			It is 1:36PM in Maine. So, it is starting to get dark. That is true. And here I am again, as it is holiday time. Here I am again, in the state of Maine, in the wonderful solar powered offices of WERU Community Radio in Maine, 89.9 Blue Hill. 99.9 Bangor. And of course, on the web at WERU.org . And Joel, I gotta tell you. The radio station's looking really spiffy.
00:04:38	Joel	Guest	We've been working hard since you left!
00:04:41	John	Host	You've been building a lot of walls. You built a new front reception area.
00:04:45	Joel	Guest	Keeping people safe.
00:04:46	John	Host	You closed the—you closed off a window to make a merch shelf.
00:04:50	Joel	Guest	That's right. I can't see when you drive up anymore.
00:04:53	John	Host	No. And you've got a very fancy new board.
00:04:54	Jennifer	Host	Oh, that's sad.
			<i>[Joel agrees.]</i>
00:04:57	John	Host	I mean, I spied a look at it through the—we, of course, are in separate compartments, here at WERU.
00:05:04	Joel	Guest	You're just a glare to me.
00:05:05	John	Host	But I did— <i>[chuckling]</i> I did catch a glimpse of it, and it looks very—I think—you know what I think? That this is <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> listeners' donation money in action. Right?
00:05:16	Joel	Guest	Possible. Possible. Very possible.
00:05:17	John	Host	WERU.org . Check it out.
00:05:18	Jennifer	Host	Probable, I'd say.
00:05:20	John	Host	Yeah, that's right. I'm sure we've raised dozens and dozens of dollars. And that board—that board—you know what? You should name one knob after me on that board.
00:05:30	Joel	Guest	We'll give you the Bluetooth. <i>[Chuckles.]</i>
00:05:31	John	Host	The—alright. What are my other options?
00:05:36	Joel	Guest	Um. You're on mic three. We could call you mic three.

[John “hmm”s skeptically.]

00:05:43	John	Host	We'll put your name on mic three. How about that?
00:05:45	Joel	Guest	Just the Judge John Hodgman Memorial Mic?
00:05:47	Jennifer	Host	Yeah. We'll put a little something there.
00:05:49	John	Host	Memorial?!
			Yes, in memory of me.

[Jennifer laughs.]

You don't have to be—have passed this mortal coil in order to have a memorial, do you?

[Joel makes an “I don't know” sound.]

00:05:58	Jennifer	Host	I feel like it's—
00:05:59	Joel	Guest	Kinda.
00:06:00	Jennifer	Host	Probably.
00:06:01	John	Host	Okay, then just the Judge John—look, I don't know, 'cause I'm not a donor to things where I make people name things after me, like certain people who donate to colleges that I aware of. Yeah, I want to be—I wanna be slider number three. That's the Judge John Hodgman slider.
00:06:15	Joel	Guest	Okay. We'll make it happen.
00:06:17	John	Host	And we'll put one down for Jennifer Marmor and bailiff Jesse Thorn as well. We'll pick those out later in the episode. We'll figure out what they're gonna be.

[Joel agrees.]

00:06:26	Joel	Guest	Memorialized—not memorialized on. In honor of.
00:06:27	John	Host	In honor of. Honorary.
00:06:28	Jennifer	Host	Honored by. Honorary!
00:06:29	Joel	Guest	Yeah, there you go. There you go.
00:06:30	John	Host	There you go.
00:06:31	John	Host	There we go.
			So, this episode was inspired by a letter that we received some time ago from a listener named Dan. I don't know where Dan was writing from, Jennifer Marmor. But you know what letter this is.
00:06:44	Jennifer	Host	I do. I don't think he said where he was writing from.
00:06:47	John	Host	No, I'm sure he was embarrassed. Well, at least his friend should be. He wrote, “I'd like to request your sage wisdom regarding an issue that arises for me every single holiday season. My friend—” Excuse me. “My dear friend, Matt, insists that the best way to drink eggnog is to mix it with Sprite. I believe this is egregiously vile. Please. I'm not asking for a ruling that Matt should stop liking or drinking his weird, arguably curdled Yuletide beverage, but I also believe that there are some things that we can and should freely deem not good. Like eggnog with Sprite.”

And I talked about this on the podcast, and I put out a call for listeners' weird, unusual, or simply traditional holiday drinks, beverages, aps, and snacks. And in fact, not only is eggnog enjoyed with Sprite by some people, but Pam—near Seattle—

drinks eggnog with orange soda. So, Joel? We're gonna try these nog—these nog-coctions. And I will finally offer Dan the justice he requests, but not 'til the end of the episode. We have some other things to try first, 'cause that'll be the big finale.

00:08:01 Jennifer Host
00:08:05 John Host

What a tease! What a professional radio person.
You wanna know how professional I am? I already thought of a title for this episode.

[Jennifer "ooh"s excitedly.]

00:08:12 Jennifer Host
00:08:15 John Host

Yeah. You wanna know what it's called?
I would love to know what it's called.
"The Egg, The Nog, and the Holy Sprite".

[They laugh.]

I think I even got Joel to laugh. We're gonna open with cocktails. Then we'll have a break, and then we'll move on to mains. And then, we'll have a break. And then, we'll have our dessert—which is very exciting.

[Jennifer agrees.]

I'll give you a teaser, Joel. The dessert—our dessert course was submitted by a listener, and it involves an ingredient that is well beloved or tolerated at least, in New England. A native New England ingredient, called fluff. Marshmallow fluff. That's for a little while. First, we're gonna start with an opening little cocktail. 'Cause I think we should get the one alcoholic thing out of the way first so that, by the time this is over, we can drive safely home.

[Joel agrees.]

00:09:08 Jennifer Host

So, please get your bottle of—your mini bottle of Jägermeister. Are you joining us in this tippie, Jennifer Marmor? Or no?
I'm not. It's—it's, uh, 10:40AM where I am. I know it's 5 o'clock somewhere, but I gotta drive to Arizona tonight. So, *[laughing]* I'm good.

00:09:17 John Host

Oh, okay. Yeah. Then you don't wanna drink this. This, of course, is—

00:09:22 Joel Guest

I've never drank this.

00:09:23 John Host

You've never had Jägermeister?

00:09:24 Joel Guest

No. I've heard about it, but no, I haven't.

00:09:25 Jennifer Host

Really!?

00:09:26 John Host

This is—this was—I discovered this, guess what, in college. Surprise, surprise.

00:09:32 Jennifer Host

What? So did I!

00:09:33 John Host

It is a German—what you would—it's an equivalent of an Italian amaro. I'll open it up.

00:09:41 Joel Guest

Smells good.

00:09:42 John Host

Yeah. It's a highly aromatic, German—I guess you would call digestif for it. And back at the time when monks would cook up herbal remedies, alcohol was a universal solvent. And when you thought that you could be healed by drinking nuts and

berries and stuff, you would dissolve herbal remedies into alcohol. And the monks would give it to you. And that's why—you know—chartreuse started as a herbal remedy. Bitters—all the bitters that you have, that you put in cocktails—those were all a way of preserving patent medicine. And so, I don't know if this was—you know, Jennifer Marmor, you ever have Fernet-Branca? Or—

[Jennifer confirms.]

Yeah. Same deal. That was composed by an apothecary to heal various ailments you might have. Much like Moxie Soda was originally billed as Moxie Nerve Food, 'cause it had gin-gin root in it. So, this is an aromatic. It smells like—it smells like pinecones steeped in gin. Pour that into your cup. I gave you on cup in there, Joel.

00:10:56 Joel Guest

All of it?

00:10:58 John Host

Yeah. 'Cause you're gonna have one initial sip just of it regular.

00:11:03 Joel Guest

Oh, okay, yeah. I usually never drink before noon, but...

00:11:10 John Host

Well, it's 1:44PM here, remember? So, maybe you shouldn't have anything. Just a sip. Sweet, licoricey.

00:11:23 Joel Guest

Very. Very licoricey. That's what it is.

00:11:25 John Host

Yeah, one—you know, because one dare says—one dares to say x-mas-y. You know? And this is—this is reputed to be disgusting enough on its own. That was always the deal, that you would—you would drink it to prove that you would drink it.

[Jennifer confirms.]

But listener Tom wrote in, in response to our call for interesting holiday drinks, snacks, traditions, etc., to say that he was introduced to a concoction by an east German exchange student, Norbert—I don't know if I have permission to use his whole name, but I'm going to. Norbert Wolfgang Franzel—known as Nobby, to his mates. During Norbert's stay with listener Tom's family in 2001, "Nobby told us of his alleged Christmas tradition of watching the German U-boat movie, *Das Boot*." You ever see that submarine movie, Joel?

[Joel confirms.]

How many thumbs up?

00:12:25 Joel Guest

I'll give it a three and a half out of five.

00:12:28 John Host

Three and a half out of five, *Das Boot*. Okay. Great. This is a great movie podcast. And they would watch *Das Boot* and they would drink Jägermeister with orange juice. And this [inaudible] me feels like—I mean, you're already drinking something that tastes like toothpaste. So, I don't know how much you wanna add to this. But I'm gonna add this orange juice.

00:12:49 Joel Guest

Until it looks like orange juice.

00:12:51 John Host

Well, I'm gonna just do like a half and half mixture, to see if these things go.

00:12:55 Joel Guest

It's not terrible.

00:12:57	John	Host	No, it definitely tastes like something that will be rationed to you if you lived on a— <i>[chuckling]</i> you lived in a German submarine and were trapped.
			<i>[Jennifer laughs.]</i>
00:13:07	Joel	Guest	<i>[Ominously.] Das Boot.</i>
00:13:08	John	Host	<i>Das Boot. Das Boot</i> to you, Nobby and Tom. Hm.
00:13:12	Joel	Guest	My family had a cocktail tradition at this time—holiday time.
00:13:16	John	Host	Oh yeah, I neglected to ask you before this episode if you had any traditions. So, I guess it's too late. Moving on!
			<i>[Joel agrees.]</i>
00:13:25	Joel	Guest	What? No, go ahead. You can say your thing.
00:13:29	John	Host	We made a cocktail Christmas Eve, called the red Russian.
00:13:30	Joel	Guest	Go on.
			It's Kahlua and tomato juice.
			<i>[John groans into a laugh.]</i>
00:13:34	Jennifer	Host	No...
00:13:35	John	Host	<i>[Amused.]</i> That's not true. Joel.
00:13:38	Joel	Guest	My wife used to tend bar in New York City. I forget where. And they had the worst bar tender night. And people would come in to make these horrible things. And that was one of them.
00:13:49	John	Host	Tomato juice and Kahlua.
00:13:50	Joel	Guest	And Kahlua. Yep.
			<i>[John shudders.]</i>
00:13:51	Jennifer	Host	Yikes.
00:13:52	John	Host	Jennifer Marmor, I seem to recall going to a Max Fun—speaking of tomatoes. Jennifer Marmor, the last Max Fun holiday party that I attended in Los Angeles in the American Cement building, who was it there who made the tomato soup cake that was all the rage?
00:14:09	Jennifer	Host	That was K.T.
00:14:11	John	Host	Yeeeeah! K.T. made that tomato soup cake! You ever had tomato soup cake, Joel?
00:14:15	Joel	Guest	Never.
00:14:16	John	Host	It's a cake. It's a cake made with a can of tomato soup! Keep this in mind. Might come up later. It was actually pretty delicious! It was very wintery.
			<i>[Jennifer agrees.]</i>
00:14:31	Jennifer	Host	It had a lot of spices in it and so forth. What do you—
00:14:32	John	Host	Warming spices.
			What do you—someday we'll go back to have a in-person holiday party, I hope.
			<i>[Jennifer agrees.]</i>
00:14:44	Jennifer	Host	What do you—what do you like to have at the holiday party? Do you like to have a little punch? Holiday punch? I'm not a big holiday punch—a lot of the holiday punches, at least at like my friends' parties that they throw for the

00:14:56	John	Host	<p>holidays—involve like a bourbon. And I don't do well with <i>[chuckling]</i>—with dark liquors. Right. That's headache in a bowl.</p> <p><i>[Jennifer agrees.]</i></p> <p>Plus, we can't—we can't have an open bowl of punch anymore. That has to stop, right? There's no way that's gonna work.</p>
00:15:03	Jennifer	Host	No, that's done. I tend to go for just like a red wine. Just a classic, you know, red wine.
00:15:09	John	Host	Classic red wine! You can't get into too much trouble with red wine. Let me tell you—speaking of the color red and speaking of mulling, warming spices—Joel, you have a thermos. This is filled with a concoction we've talked about on the show many a time. This is mulled Dr. Pepper.
			<i>[Joel chuckles and "ugh"s.]</i>
00:15:35	Jennifer	Host	Are you having any mulled Dr. Pepper with us, Jennifer Marmor?
00:15:38	Joel	Guest	I am. I've got a mug. Yeah.
00:15:40	John	Host	It's too bad, John, but I just can't—this won't open up. <i>[Laughs.]</i> No, I closed it up tight so it wouldn't spill in the car, but you can open it.
			<i>[Jennifer chuckles.]</i>
00:16:15	Joel	Guest	It's still warm. I mulled this myself. Now, there are many recipes for mulled Dr. Pepper out there, Joel and Jennifer. Oh, he's having a sip. The things that the listeners write in about—well, you can say whatever you want. You can be as mean about this as you like, because this is—this is a Dr. Pepper creation. This is not some listener's improvisation. This is not Nobby with his Jäger and OJ or the other fella with the eggnog and Sprite.
00:16:16	John	Host	No, this is just wrong. <i>[Laughing.]</i> Oh no!
00:16:18	Joel	Guest	<i>[Jennifer laughs.]</i> This is just wrong.
00:16:19	John	Host	You don't—you don't care for it?
00:16:22	Joel	Guest	Mm. I'll try it again, but—
00:16:23	John	Host	Well, I mean—okay, so, I'll explain to you. Maybe if I gave you some historical context, you might be more interested in it. In the 1950s, soda pop sales were plummeting. And so, Dr. Pepper came up with this idea to sell more Dr. Pepper. And they took out big, full-page ads in magazines suggesting hot Dr. Pepper for the holidays. And it tried very hard to catch on. They tried for many years. Now, there are recipes all over the place for warm Dr. Pepper or mulled Dr. Pepper that involve a lot of extra sugar and all kinds of different aromatics. The classic recipe, according to the Dr. Pepper full-page magazine ads, is just heat up some Dr. Pepper on the stove, then pour it

			over a lemon. I did that, but I also added some cloves, 'cause—you know.
00:17:12	Joel	Guest	Yeah. I—yeah.
00:17:13	John	Host	You detected the cloves?
			<i>[Joel confirms.]</i>
00:17:14	Jennifer	Host	Fancy.
00:17:15	John	Host	And I also added some dried orange peel. So, maybe I'm the one who messed it up.
00:17:20	Jennifer	Host	I just did the classic Dr. Pepper over lemon slices. I didn't wanna mess with the recipe too much.
00:17:25	John	Host	Have you tried any yet?
00:17:27	Jennifer	Host	I just took a sip, because I couldn't wait any longer. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:17:32	John	Host	Cheers. Well, then I'll have some. Cheers. Yeah, I don't—I don't mind it, Joel.
00:17:38	Joel	Guest	Yeah, I guess.
00:17:39	Jennifer	Host	Yeah, it's not as—it's not as offensive as I thought it was gonna be.
00:17:44	John	Host	I think that I may have messed up this batch, Joel, because I mulled it with lemon instead of just pouring it over the lemon. So, the lemon is a little overpowering in this one, to me.
00:17:54	Joel	Guest	It's not as bad as it sounds.
00:17:55	Jennifer	Host	I did that too, but I like that lemony-ness.
00:17:59	John	Host	I like the lemony-ness, but it's really—it's really hitting a no man's land where Dr. Pepper and Theraflu meet, for me. It's not—
			<i>[Joel chuckles.]</i>
			You know? You get that feeling, right?
			<i>[Jennifer agrees.]</i>
			I mean, Dr. Pepper is a delicate blend of different—Dr. Pepper also started as a patent medicine. That's why it's a Dr. Pepper and not a Mr. Pibb. But you know, all Coca Cola—Moxie, Dr. Pepper, they were all non-alcoholic patent medicines that just were full of—
00:18:27	Joel	Guest	Cocaine.
00:18:28	John	Host	Yeah, cocaine and cola nut. Right? Literally cocaine and cola nut is Coca Cola. And you would sell it out of—that's why they had soda fountains at pharmacies, 'cause you went there to do cocaine. Oh, those were the days, I guess.
00:18:41	Jennifer	Host	My only reference for this type of drink for a very long time was the movie <i>Blast From the Past</i> , from like the '90s, starring Brendan Frasier and Christopher Walken.
00:18:51	John	Host	Ooh, is that the one where he's stuck in the—in the bomb shelter?
00:18:55	Jennifer	Host	In the fallout shelter? Yeah.
00:18:57	John	Host	Riiight. He grows up in a bomb shelter.
00:18:59	Jennifer	Host	Exactly. And the dad would drink hot Dr. Pepper. And I thought that was just a weird quirk from the movie, like this weird character. And then later in life, I learned that that was a real thing!

00:19:10	John	Host	It's a real thing! Here's a question. Jennifer Marmor. Would you ever do it again? Would you have it and serve it to a guest?
00:19:19	Jennifer	Host	I don't know if I would. I don't know—if I were throwing a party, I don't know if I would make it an option unless it was like a "isn't this fun and kitschy? I'm so goofy! Warm Dr. Pepper! Woo-hoo!" <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:19:31	John	Host	Yeah. I'm gonna say that I would give it another try. We're not having any guests for the holiday this year, for reasons that should be obvious. But uuuh, in what I hope is a year's time, when we have someone over for a winter tête-à-tête, I might try it again. 'Cause I'm afraid that I messed it up. You know? I think that I went overboard when I shouldn't have.
00:19:53	Jennifer	Host	So, you wanna do a redemption mulled Dr. Pepper?
00:19:55	John	Host	Mm-hm. A redemption—uh, I believe this doctor deserves—I think this doctor is malpractice. This doctor deserves a second chance.
00:20:06	Joel	Guest	There's no reason for it.
00:20:07	John	Host	There's no reason for it. Joel, I was gonna ask you how many thumbs up do you give to—what's the name of the movie again?
00:20:13	Joel	Guest	<i>Das Boot.</i>
00:20:14	John	Host	No, the other one. Jennifer Marmor.
00:20:16	Jennifer	Host	<i>Blast From the Past.</i>
00:20:17	John	Host	<i>Blast From the Past.</i> Brendan Fraser. How many thumbs up?
00:20:19	Joel	Guest	I never saw it.
00:20:20	John	Host	Never saw it. So, how many thumbs up would you say? Probably would you guess one?
00:20:24	Joel	Guest	Maybe.
			<i>[John affirms.]</i>
00:20:28	John	Host	If it has this drink in it, yeah, maybe one. <i>[Chuckles.]</i> It has this drink in it, that's for sure.
			<i>[Jennifer laughs.]</i>
00:20:37	Jennifer	Host	Alright, well—hang on one second while I just—I'm gonna have—you know what? I'm gonna have another sip! I'm not moving on. Hang on.
00:20:41	John	Host	Yeah, I drank multiple sips of it, even though I'm neutral at best about it, but.
00:20:49	Jennifer	Host	Yeah. It definitely has the feeling—the taste of Theraflu, which has a taste that I like.
00:20:59	John	Host	Well, yeah, I do like a hot lemon water. So, I think that's where that—that's scratching that itch for me. But then, the sweetness of the Dr. Pepper makes me wanna keep coming back.
			Yeah. I wonder what would happen if you put a little headachy bourbon into this. I don't know. Kids who are listening, don't try that. But if you do, let me know how it tastes. Yeah.
			<i>[Jennifer agrees.]</i>
			So, we were going to move on to appetizers. And we will, I promise you. But before we do, because—Joel, you said the

magic words: tomato soup—anytime someone says tomato soup, scream real loud. I actually have *[chuckles]*—I added to the menu—Jennifer Marmor doesn't even have this. I added to the menu, just for fun, a last-minute addition that I received from a listener named Will. This is something I'm very excited to try. For obvious reasons, I made it last night.

Will writes, "One of my favorite family dishes is, quote, 'tomato soup salad' that we serve at Thanksgiving and Christmas or whenever there's a big, indoor spread. It probably comes from some sort of horrible 1950s gelatin mold-based cookbook, but we don't have the original source. My grandmother always made it, and she's from Milo, Maine." What do you know about Milo, aside from their love of tomato soup salad, Joel?

00:22:10 Joel Guest

Nothing.

00:22:11 John Host

Nothing. Me neither. That's all we know. That's what it's known for.

[Joel agrees.]

It can be served as a side. And Joel, man, I'm here to tell you: it is in the oblong, rectangular Tupperware container that you should have in front of you. I'm gonna get mine. Now, don't eat it yet.

00:22:27 Joel Guest

This is a salad?

00:22:28 John Host

[Chuckling.] Standby. Wait a minute. Woah. Now, Joel, first of all, I do apologize for the presentation. I have served this to you in a small, glass—not Tupperware, but you know, food saving rectangle. It's supposed to be served—you're supposed to make it in a ring mold. Like any other gelatin salad—like an ambrosia salad you might have in the 1950s or '60s.

Jennifer Marmor, I'm showing you the consistency of it. What does it look like to you, Jennifer Marmor?

00:22:57 Jennifer Host

Oh, wow. It looks like just a solid brick of like a tomato bisque soup color.

00:23:05 John Host

Yeah, well, it starts with cream of tomato soup. That's the first ingredient. Listener Will recommended Amy's Organic brand of cream of tomato soup. And then, you heat that up and then you add two packets of unflavored gelatin. And then, after that all dissolves—and it takes a little while; try to sprinkle in the gelatin first, 'cause I know you're all gonna wanna make this. So, don't—you know, you don't wanna make a mistake. Then you add four ounces of cream cheese, and you let that soften.

[Jennifer reacts with surprise and Joel reacts with disgust.]

00:23:41 Joel Guest

Okay, you might wanna turn down slide—what's your slider?
[Chuckling.] Mine?

[John confirms.]

00:23:46 John Host

Uh, the memorial—Joel Mann. Yeah.

00:23:48 Joel Guest

The Joel Mann Honorary Slider?

Yep. 'Cause this is gonna kill me.

00:23:50	Jennifer	Host	It's honorary now. Will become memorial very shortly.
00:23:53	John	Host	No, this isn't gonna kill you. After you soften up the cream cheese in there, you add three quarter cups of mayonnaise. I used Hellman's. If you're west of the Mississippi, you can use Best Food's. Then you can add a quarter cup finely chopped green pepper and a quarter cup finely chopped onion. And then, a quarter cup diced celery, which is optional, and I chose not to do it, 'cause I wanted to be done with this. And then, you put it into a ring mold, and you—you know, refrigerate it overnight like any gelatinized salad.
			<i>[Jennifer agrees.]</i>
			It's not a diaphanized kitten. It's a gelatinized salad.
			<i>[Joel snorts.]</i>
			So, this is—this is it. So, it looks like—it looks like a beautiful, placid lake of cream of tomato soup. Now, Jennifer Marmor. This is gelatin. Do you dare me to turn this over above my computer keyboard?
00:24:48	Jennifer	Host	Uuuh, I double dog dare you!
00:24:52	John	Host	I did it! It didn't fall out! It's not going anywhere.
00:24:54	Jennifer	Host	Wow, it's like the DQ Blizzard of soup salads.
00:24:58	John	Host	It doesn't jiggle. It barely moves. And now, we're gonna try—you and me, Joel. We're gonna try it.
00:25:04	Joel	Guest	<i>[Sighing.]</i> Alright. This is <i>[trailing off]</i> ...
00:25:05	John	Host	What would you say—how would you say it smells? It smells like tomato soup.
			<i>[Joel agrees.]</i>
			It smells like—it's weird, because it's a cold gelatin that has savory elements in it.
00:25:18	Joel	Guest	This is weird.
00:25:19	John	Host	I agree with you.
00:25:20	Joel	Guest	I mean, this is—why?! Why do people do this?
00:25:22	John	Host	Because people did this aaaall the time. There's so many gelatin salads.
00:25:26	Joel	Guest	<i>[Disgusted.]</i> Oh my god.
			<i>[John chortles.]</i>
			I'm astounded. But you know, the aftertaste really isn't that bad!
00:25:36	John	Host	No, it tastes like—yeah.
00:25:38	Joel	Guest	Yeah, let me try another one.
			<i>[Jennifer "oh!"s in surprise.]</i>
00:25:39	John	Host	Oh wow! Second bite!
00:25:42	Joel	Guest	Well, the first one was just barely a bite.
00:25:44	John	Host	And Will says that this can be served as a side or sliced thick and put on a sandwich.
			<i>[Jennifer "eww"s.]</i>

With even more mayonnaise. I mean, I'll tell you what. If you ever—if you wanted to have a tomato soup sandwich, this is the only way to do it.

[Jennifer agrees.]

It tastes like pretty good tomato soup. But I'm gonna need to rinse this off with some Jägermeister. Hey, let's take a break. We'll be back in a moment with more *Judge John Hodgman*.

00:26:13	Sound Effect	Transition
00:26:16	Sound Effect	Transition
00:26:17	Music	Transition
00:26:18	John	Host

Three gavel bangs.

Three gavel bangs.

"Crinoline Dreams" by Kevin MacLeod.

Hey, we're back on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast. This is our holiday office party. It's me, Judge John Hodgman, with producer Jennifer Marmor. Hello, Jennifer.

00:26:27	Jennifer	Host
00:26:28	John	Host

Hello!

And we're coming to you from the solar powered studios of WERU in Orland, Maine. WERU.org. And that means Joel Mann is also here. Hello, Joel.

00:26:38	Joel	Guest
00:26:40	John	Host

Bonjour. Ça va?

Oh! *[Chuckles.]* I forgot.

[Jennifer "ooh"s on a laugh.]

I didn't—Maine is a—Maine is a partially Francophonic state.

Bonjour. Oui, ça va? Ça va bien. Et tu?

00:26:50	Joel	Guest
00:26:51	John	Host
00:26:53	Joel	Guest
00:26:56	John	Host

Merci.

[Laughing.] Okay. D'accord!

Ooh, voila! *[Laughs.]*

Jennifer Marmor, it wouldn't be a holiday party without some surprise guests dingdong-ing at the door. Did anybody happen to come by?

00:27:04	Jennifer	Host
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Yeah! We heard from frequent guest bailiff and friend of the court, Jean Grae. She wanted to tell us some of her favorite holiday foods. And her New Year's resolutions.

00:27:15	Sound Effect	Sound Effect
00:27:16	Jean Grae	Guest

Doorbell.

Hi. I'm Jean Grae. Um, holiday foods. This time of year—winter foods, my favorite thing. Stuff that can simmer all day. I love anything that makes the house smell great. And you know, it just makes you feel cozy and great like a braised short rib. Oh man, like a red wine braised short rib. And when you're cooking that, don't—just use the bottle of red wine. Don't—you know, you don't have to do a broth. What are you, a punk? What are you doing? And also, don't ever cook with anything you wouldn't drink. And I guess, yeah, wines. I like a wine. I like a Beaujolais when I'm cooking, so I'm not like getting hammered, and I can still make it all the way through to the end of the evening where I wanna do something a lot heavier that feels like—that tastes like a library. That's what I'm into. It tastes like a library and some leather chairs.

[Chuckles.]

And if I want something more refreshing, I've gotten back into one of my old favorite drinks—a Corpse Reviver #2, 'cause I like a coupe glass, and especially in the holidays. And it makes me feel like I'm outside. You know. And it's also got a

			little—an absinthe rinse, which is funny to say. Oooh. Resolutions? I've been doing the one-minute thing where, if something around the house or whatever it is, is just gonna take me like one minute or two minutes to do, I just go ahead and get it done. Like, I think all line up so many things, and then when you do them you realize how quickly it could've gotten done. And then, when you look back, you're like, "Now I have 300 things." But it's been great to do it and look back and be like, "Oh, I only have 50 things." Still things. We're all still gonna have things, but it helps so you're not just—your motivation for doing everything isn't anxiety. And then, you can make yourself a Corpse Reviver or pour yourself a giant glass of really good wine. <i>[Whispering.]</i> And eat short ribs.
00:29:21	John	Host	Oh, Jean Grae, friend of the court, friend of me personally, friend of the world. Thank you so much for saying hi. I miss you so much. And that's good advice. Drink what you—if you drink, and it's fine if you don't, drink what tastes like a library? Is that what she said?
			<i>[Jennifer confirms.]</i>
			Yeah. That's a good—that's good advice. Okay, now we are ready to move on to appetizers. Here comes the tray of past aps, starting with Iowa dill pickle spears, but it's not just pickle. This one comes from a listener named Samantha, who writes, "My family in Iowa has a couple of weird holiday foods for you—both are Easter traditions." Okay. So, this is an Easter tradition. "First, a classic appetizer." <i>[Stammering.]</i> Uh, I'll decide. <i>[Chuckling.]</i> "Dill pickle spears wrapped in cream cheese and deli ham, rolled up and sliced like sushi. Fancy toothpicks encouraged." And I did—Joel, you will note that I did use the l'elegance toothpicks—the ones that have the little—yeah, they have a little design carved into them.
00:30:31	Joel	Guest	I give you very high marks on presentation. Very nice.
00:30:33	John	Host	Thank you very much. How would you describe what you're looking at right now, Joel? And I'm holding it up for Jennifer Marmor to see, in Los Angeles.
00:30:39	Joel	Guest	Scary as hell.
00:30:40	John	Host	Okay, but can you describe it?
			<i>[Jennifer laughs.]</i>
00:30:42	Joel	Guest	Well, like you say, the really fancy toothpick. That's always a plus.
00:30:46	John	Host	Now, look down from there. You'll see the food on the end.
00:30:49	Joel	Guest	And you have a pickle. I'm just taking your words, From Iowa. Some kind of cheese something around that—
00:30:55	John	Host	Cream cheese.
00:30:56	Joel	Guest	Oh, cream cheese wrapped around the pickle. And bite sized. Yeah.
00:31:00	John	Host	Right, and then what's wrapped around the cream cheese?
00:31:02	Joel	Guest	Ham.
00:31:03	John	Host	Alright. Now, listen, Samantha. I'm gonna try this. This was very difficult to make.
00:31:09	Joel	Guest	I'm gonna eat the whole thing, not just a bite.
00:31:10	John	Host	Yeah, no, go for it. Alright, I'm gonna cover my microphone while I eat mine.

00:31:15	Jennifer	Host	Let the record show, Judge Hodgman is covering his microphone. Very responsible, Judge. Chewing.
00:31:21	John	Host	Huh. Huh! I'm gonna have another—I'm gonna have another one.
00:31:27	Jennifer	Host	Oh yeah! I didn't opt to join you two on this one, because A) don't like pickles. Don't like dill. It's something that's like really difficult for me.
			<i>[John "woah"s.]</i>
			It's like you know how people have that cilantro thing? I think that's how I feel about dill. But anyway. And I also don't eat pork. Not a Jewish thing; I just don't eat it. But I had all the supplies ready to make some Iowa dill pickle spear sushi rolls for bailiff Jesse but didn't make them. <i>[Laughs.]</i>
00:31:55	John	Host	Uh, well, bailiff Jesse has dodged this dilly bullet. But I'm gonna say there's only one—like, the fact that you don't like dill is fascinating to me. And you don't like pickles. Like, what if it's not a dill pickle?
00:32:08	Jennifer	Host	I like pickled—other pickled things. Like, you know, like a Mediterranean pickled veggie. You know, on the side of like a—that I can, you know, get down with.
00:32:18	John	Host	You're not against vinegar and salt.
00:32:21	Jennifer	Host	Nooo. Salt and vinegar's my favorite potato chip.
00:32:23	John	Host	Right. There you go. It's basically a pickled chip. But don't get a dill pickle chip! 'Cause that's gonna be very dilly.
00:32:30	Jennifer	Host	No, I won't do it.
00:32:31	Joel	Guest	I think it should be a different kind of pickle. I think this pickle is a little bland. If you had a Kosher or something with a little more pop, it'd be better.
00:32:39	John	Host	This is—I'm gonna tell you that these are fresh dill pickle spears. The Taste of Inspirations, which is the house brand for the upscale stuff that they sell at the Tradewinds, Joel. And I—and you know something, Joel? I'm feeling a deep regret. Do you know why?
00:32:56	Joel	Guest	Why?
00:32:57	John	Host	Well, do you know—and this is not a sponsor of the podcast, but Grillo's pickles? They come from Boston. They come in tubs. They have a little cartoon pickle on the front. It's a cartoon of a pickle hanging out on a lawn chair. You've never seen these? They have them there at the trade winds.
00:33:15	Joel	Guest	I think I have, yes.
00:33:16	John	Host	Yeah. And I had my hand—yesterday—on one of those, 'cause I like those Grillo pickles quite a bit. And I noticed that they were the hot brand—that they were spicy.
00:33:25	Joel	Guest	Yeah, there you go. That's what it needs.
00:33:26	John	Host	And that probably would've worked better, right? Shoot.
00:33:28	Joel	Guest	Yep. Absolutely. 'Cause it's not bad.
00:33:31	Jennifer	Host	That probably would've worked great, but it wouldn't have been consistent—I think—with the Iowa tradition.
00:33:37	John	Host	I guess not. I suppose. I mean, I don't know how lowan this really is. But I was gonna say, like when you said, "I don't like pickles and I don't like dill," that was fascinating to me. It stopped me in my tracks, 'cause the tracks were heading directly to me having another bite. So, I'm covering the microphone.

00:33:54	Jennifer	Host	Yeah. Have another bite. My husband grew up in the Midwest, in-you know, a small town in central Illinois. And I think his family did these types of pickle spears as well.
00:34:07	John	Host	You know, you don't have to be in the Midwest to have midwestern food. What this reminded me of—and it was a very deep sense memory—Proustian, <i>Ratatouille</i> style sense memory—was when I grew up and went and visited my grandmother and grandfather in Philadelphia, they would have what's called Lebanon Bologna, which is named for Lebanon, Pennsylvania. Which is like a kind of highly smoked salami, really, more than a bologna and has a very deep, smoky flavor. And they would wrap that around cream cheese and put little whatchamacallit, uh, l'elegance toothpicks in. And boy, I would eat like 25 of those at a sitting. That would be very good. I—you know, if you don't eat pork—and why should you?—I'm not sure—I'm not sure—and you don't like dill pickles. This is not for you, Jennifer Marmor, for sure.
00:35:05	Jennifer	Host	No, no. But that's fine! Good for you, not for me.
00:35:08	John	Host	Yeah. And I'm gonna tell you this, listener Samantha. This was... I'll say it's classic. This is a classic flavor. Sure, why not? But this was not easy to make. You should thank whoever taught you this or made it for you. Because spreading—first of all, you don't—you can't put cream cheese on a pickle and then wrap ham around it. That's not how it— [stammering] the cream cheese's gonna slide off that pickle.
			[Jennifer agrees.]
			You have to do—you have to—you have to spread cream cheese onto the ham and then put the pickle in it and then roll it up like a sushi. But even then, you're gonna—first of all, you gotta have the softest room temperature cream cheese in the world. You gotta have some really tough ham. I mean, you gotta have some tough ham that's not gonna fall apart, 'cause you're spreading cream cheese all over it. And I would suggest not using a full—cut those spears in half. Make them a little smaller.
			Okay, we're gonna take a little break. And speaking of the Midwest, when we come back after this little break, we're gonna be going out to—where did Shane grow up? Where did your husband grow up?
00:36:12	Jennifer	Host	Tuscola, Illinois.
00:36:14	John	Host	For a Pangburn family favorite! This is Jennifer Marmor's mother's-in-law chicken and noodles and mashed potatoes. We'll be right back.
00:36:23	Sound Effect	Transition	Three gavel bangs.
00:36:25	Sound Effect	Transition	Three gavel bangs.
00:36:27	Music	Transition	"Barbara" by U.S. Army Blues.
00:36:28	John	Host	And we're back! It's the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> holiday office party. I'm here in the studios of WERU, in Maine. Joel Mann is across the glass from me. Jennifer Marmor is in Los Angeles. We've been trying some of the family favorite holiday, dare I say, oddball food traditions of our listeners, including the tomato soup salad, which is—I really should not have it in front of me, 'cause it's very distracting. This recipe comes to us

from Hollis. As in “Christmas in Hollis” by Run DMC. And also, this person.

“Every Christmas morning, my family had waffles with gravy and waffles with ice cream. You had to have one with gravy before you had any with ice cream. The ice cream flavors ran the gambit, and we frequently had three or five cartons open for breakfast. As the youngest of 11 children, this was not an unreasonable amount.”

[Jennifer “wow”s.]

But you had to have that waffle with gravy first. And they had to two kind of gravy. One was your classic sausage gravy, which is what you eat over biscuits. And the other was something I had never heard of and cannot find on the internet, called penny gravy. Which is sausage gravy, but instead of sausage, it’s hotdogs. Joel?

00:37:40 Joel Guest
00:37:41 John Host
00:37:44 Joel Guest
00:37:45 Jennifer Host
00:37:47 John Host

[Chuckling.] God.

Jennifer Marmor. This is what it looks like.

Very appetizing.

Looks like sliced hotdogs, alright.

It’s sliced hotdogs in a white gravy—a cream gravy with black pepper. And I made this this morning, Joel, with love and a mask on and brought it to you in your own, separate container. We’ve taken turns to heat it up in the microwave. I’m gonna tell you right now, it probably could’ve used some more time in the microwave. It is obviously no longer creamy, ‘cause it has traveled 22 miles in the Maine winter. But why don’t you—you can try it with the waffle if you want, or just on its own.

00:38:15 Joel Guest
00:38:17 Jennifer Host
00:38:19 John Host

I’m gonna try the whole thing.

Get the perfect bite.

Now, it’s called penny gravy. And I can only imagine because the hotdog slices look like pennies. They have that brown copper penny look.

[They agree.]

Now, Joel, this is Hollis’s family tradition. Hollis is a listener. Probably a supporter of Maximum Fun. Maybe someone who even donated to WERU.org during your pledge drive, to buy you that new, fancy sound mixing board you got. And I’ll also remind you, Joel, I made this myself, this morning. So, what do you have to say about it?

00:38:53 Joel Guest
00:38:56 John Host

This is one of the best things I’ve ever eaten.

[Laughing.] Wow! Wait a minute!

[Jennifer laughs.]

00:38:58 Joel Guest
00:39:04 John Host
00:39:06 Jennifer Host
00:39:08 John Host
00:39:10 Joel Guest

I didn’t think you’d—

If! If, if, if. If I was lost in the Maine woods and starving and it was cold and dark.

How dare you? How. Dare you.

[Slow clapping.] There we gooo!

I’m gonna tell you something, Joel.

Yes, Judge.

00:39:11 John Host Jennifer Marmor.
00:39:13 Jennifer Host Yeah.
00:39:14 John Host I don't like to pat my own back here, but this is one of the best things I've ever eaten.

[Joel laughs.]

00:39:32 Joel Guest Now, I had the benefit of having it before it congealed in a paper bowl on its way up here. I covered it with cling wrap, but I didn't have that press and seal, my favorite stuff.
00:39:33 John Host You cook, right?
00:39:35 Joel Guest I—well, I did this!
00:39:36 John Host But normally, do you cook?
00:39:37 Joel Guest Yeah, I cook all the time.
00:39:41 John Host Yeah, that's what I thought. And this is the best thing you've ever had.
00:39:44 Joel Guest No, I'm just saying I was very surprised that I liked this.
00:39:45 John Host That you liked it. Okay.

Now, here's the thing, Hollis. I'm going to offer you a tremendous amount of thanks, because I have never made a milk gravy or a cream gravy—that white gravy that is part of sausage gravy before and never knew how to do it. This has been my year of making roux. Everyone else was making sourdough the past two years. I was making roux. And a roux, of course, is a mixture of flour and a fat of some kind as a thickening agent. You cook flour and fat together, roughly equal proportions, and it's there to thicken a gravy or a stew or a soup or something like that. And it's a little—it seems very tricky, but it's not. And you cook the flour and the fat together, and it gets darker in color. And that's how you make like a gumbo—like a really dark gumbo. You let it go very, very what they call chocolate roux or a dark chocolate roux. But with a light gravy like this, you just barely cook it, and then you add milk, and it forms a gravy.

00:40:56 Joel Guest Now, normally, you would do this with sausage. Oh, by the way, Joel, I got you a fresh biscuit from the chicken place at the gas station on my way here. Try it with a biscuit.
00:40:57 John Host No chicken?
00:40:59 Jennifer Host No, no chicken.
00:41:00 John Host He's off the chicken!
00:41:08 Jennifer Host You know, I am off the chicken. But Jennifer Marmor, this reminds me. You know what a big tradition is on Christmas Eve, in Japan?
00:41:09 John Host Oh, what's that?
00:41:14 Joel Guest Joel, you have a guess? It's right in front of you, buddy.
00:41:15 John Host Hotdogs?
Close!

[They chuckle.]

00:41:17 Joel Guest Fried chicken!
00:41:18 John Host Oh, fried chicken.
KFC! It is a big tradition in contemporary Japan to eat Kentucky Fried Chicken on Christmas Eve. I don't know how it started, but people reserve their KFC meals in advance—

weeks, maybe months. I don't know! To make sure that they got their Christmas Eve Kentucky Fried Chicken. So, I could've brought you some fried chicken from the place, but instead I brought you a biscuit. Try putting this on a biscuit—this penny gravy on a biscuit.

00:41:45 Joel Guest I think it would be better with sausage. The hotdog kind of—you know.

00:41:49 John Host Well, Joel, I know. I do know.

00:41:51 Joel Guest You need to elevate it a little bit.

00:41:53 John Host Well, I know a sausage gravy is what you would traditionally put on a biscuit. I don't know where they got this waffle idea. I just put a couple of Eggos on a plate. That the worst part out of that, I would say.

00:42:02 Jennifer Host I was gonna ask what your waffle method was.

00:42:04 John Host Alright. Turn down my slider so I can have another bite, and you talk to them for a second, Joel. Tell me one of your favorite holiday traditions.

00:42:10 Joel Guest Well, that's funny you should ask that. My favorite holiday tradition that happens the week before Christmas—you guessed it, I'm getting my gallon of scallops today.

00:42:22 John Host *[Laughing.]* Oh no!

00:42:23 Jennifer Host Ooooooh! That's sooo excitiiiiing!

00:42:26 Joel Guest I tell you! I'm really excited.

00:42:28 John Host I forgot about your scallop gallons.

00:42:31 Joel Guest He walks right out of the water and hands them to me.

00:42:33 John Host That's what you said last time. That's not true. He doesn't walk right out of the water.

00:42:35 Joel Guest He dives! He's out there diving right now for my scallops, in Castine Bay.

00:42:39 John Host And you go down to the Castine Bay and—

00:42:41 Joel Guest Down to the dock, yeah.

00:42:42 John Host You wait for him to come out of there?

00:42:43 Joel Guest He calls me. He says, "Come on down."

00:42:45 Crosstalk Crosstalk **John & Jennifer:** *[Not quite in sync.]* He calls you from the water?

00:42:46 Joel Guest Yeah. When he's up, you know. With the scallops. Yeah.

00:42:51 John Host Right. So, you don't see him arise from the deep like a creature from the Black Lagoon with a gallon of scallops for you.

00:42:55 Joel Guest No, he's just—

00:42:57 Jennifer Host That's what I pictured! *[Laughs.]*

00:42:58 Joel Guest He's just sitting on his boat.

00:43:01 John Host Uuuh, I might have to get some of those scallops.

00:43:03 Joel Guest I'll tell you, nothing better.

00:43:04 John Host And how do you cook them?

00:43:06 Joel Guest Well, there's this old women's club cookbook from the '70s in Castine.

00:43:12 John Host I love those.

00:43:13 Joel Guest And it's called *Scalloped Scallops ala Castine*. And you—

00:43:17 John Host Wait a minute, you say scalloped (skāl-upped) scallops (skoll-ups)?

00:43:20 Joel Guest Right. Scalloped (skāl-upped) is not a scallop (skoll-up). Scallop (skāl-up) is a pattern.

00:43:23 Jennifer Host No, you don't say a scalloped (skoll-upped) potato. I would assume.

00:43:26	John	Host	I know, but even in Maine? You don't even—New England, you don't say scalloped (skāl-upped)?
00:43:31	Joel	Guest	Scalloped (skoll-upped).
00:43:32	John	Host	Scalloped (skāl-upped) scallops (skoll-ups)—
00:43:34	Joel	Guest	A la Castine.
00:43:35	John	Host	A la Castine. I understand. Okay.
00:43:38	Joel	Guest	Yeah. And you cut them up—the scallops—like in half, and then you put them flat. You don't pile them on top of each other. And then, you pour Ritz crackers—crumble them up all over that and work them into that. And then, you take heavy cream and sherry and pour it over that until it's above the scallops. And then, you put another coating of Ritz crackers into the oven, thirty minutes. You'll never taste anything like it.
00:44:02	John	Host	You didn't make any for me and bring it all the way up here for us to microwave?
00:44:06	Joel	Guest	I don't have them! Maybe next week. Maybe next week.
00:44:07	John	Host	Yeah, maybe next week. But we got—hey, we got something else to microwave. And I think it's gonna microwave a lot better than this gravy did. Sorry to microwave it, Jennifer Marmor, but this is Shane, your husband's, mom's recipe for Amish—question mark—Chicken Noodles? Tell me about this thing.
00:44:27	Jennifer	Host	They call them chicken noodles. I mentioned this to you when we were talking about this episode, because Bailey in Coralville, Iowa, sent in a recipe that her wife's family uses, called Amish Noodles. And it's very similar to my mother-in-law's family's recipe.
00:44:44	John	Host	Right. Bailey wrote, "My wife and her family have converted me to liking Amish Noodles on mashed potatoes. The noodles are boiled and cooked down in chicken stock to cover, so they're almost in a gravy. I was skeptical of this, quote, 'carbs on carbs' concoction, but I am now firmly onboard." And you said that this is something that your mother-in-law makes. 'Cause I think I was saying to you, Jennifer Marmor, this sounds like the most disgusting thing I could ever think of. And you said, "I'm insulted."
00:45:15	Jennifer	Host	I—no, no, no, no, no. I didn't say that.
00:45:16	John	Host	I hadn't heard of tomato soup salad yet. So, I didn't know.
00:45:19	Jennifer	Host	Right. Right. It's all up from tomato soup salad. But yeah, so my in-law's family—it's on my mother-in-law's side. So, the Mason side. They do these chicken noodles. They don't do the mashed potatoes, but talking with my husband, Shane, about it, that is something that they've heard of. They know of people who do this type of noodle on mashed potatoes. Our recipes are pretty similar, between Bailey's in-laws and my in-laws. We use chicken in the noodles as well as a can of cream of chicken soup.
00:45:58	John	Host	Yeah, and a whole stick of butter!
00:46:00	Jennifer	Host	A <u>whole</u> stick of butter. That is the classic Grandma Mason addition. Whole stick of butter.
00:46:06	John	Host	Alright, I'm gonna—
00:46:07	Jennifer	Host	Listeners of this program may remember Grandma Mason as the woman who would wrap up a Vidalia onion for her husband to take to restaurants with him.

[They laugh.]

00:46:17 John Host I can't remember, was this just to gnaw on? Or was he gonna cut it up and add it to his salad or something?

00:46:22 Jennifer Host It was sliced and added to his like burger or whatever. You know, he had to have that Vidalia onion.

00:46:29 John Host Gotta have that—yeah. This is the recipe that you shared with me, and the one that I made this morning. "Jen's mother-in-law's family chicken noodles recipe, colon: boil chicken broth. Add egg noodles. Parenthesis. (She does not make these noodles from scratch, but her mother usually did and would buy them from time to time.) Cook for 20 minutes, stirring every five. Add a stick of butter. Add a can of cream of chicken soup. Add shredded chicken." Jennifer Marmor, you suggested grocery store rotisserie chicken.

[Jennifer confirms.]

"Then let simmer." Now, I do enjoy cooking. And I know that you do too, Joel. What would you say is missing from this recipe?

[Jennifer chuckles.]

I'm gonna answer it for you.

[Joel thanks him.]

Amounts. Amounts of things. Boil chicken broth, unspecified amount. Add egg noodles, unspecified amount. A stick of butter and a can of cream of chicken soup. Those are both standards—reasonable standards. The can of cream of chicken soup is kind of a gross one, but they're reasonable. I know what those are. So, I wrote to you, Jennifer Marmor, and I said, "How much noodles and how much broth?" And basically, your answer was "shrug". But that's because you—

[They chuckle.]

00:47:59 Jennifer Host Because your mother-in-law doesn't use recipes is what you said. Correct?

No. You know, we asked my mother-in-law. You know, and she generally does adhere to a recipe very specifically. Like, the cooking for 20 minutes, it is going to be exactly 20 minutes. Like, I cut it a little bit short because I was like this is cooked. The broth is going away. We need some of this broth. So, like I kind of eyeballed it. This is the only recipe that she is comfortable having it be a guessing game, because that's what her mother did. Her mother never used a recipe. So, when I asked for clarification, she essentially said "shrug" to me.

00:48:35 John Host Wow. Well, and you know, it makes sense. 'Cause I'm sure it's one of these recipes that we're taught from generation to generation in person. And so, it was taught by eyeball, basically. And had not been translated into a Castine women's cookbook for scalloped scallops or anything like that. So, I had to improvise a little bit! So, I knew that—both via your mother-in-law and Bailey's letter, the idea was to have just enough

broth to cover the noodles, which is a very small amount of liquid for pasta. That is not normally what you would do. And second of all, like so you're gonna cook it for 20 minutes. I don't understand how that doesn't turn into just mush.

But I did not have a rotisserie chicken handy, so I boiled two quarts of chicken stock that I bought at the supermarket, Kitchen Basics, my favorite. I poached three chicken tenders that I had in a package from a former sponsor of the podcast—frozen, I defrosted it. Took those out after four and a half minutes. They were just done. And then, I put in enough egg noodles from a bag that they just were underneath the surface of the chicken stock. And that ended up being about a 12-oz bag.

00:49:57 Jennifer Host

Yup! That sounds right.

00:49:59 John Host

And I'm gonna say this, 'cause—you know, your mother-in-law and grandmother-in-law were making their noodles from scratch. I bet that's terrific. I sent someone that I live with, who is younger than me, to go get some egg noodles from the egg noodle aisle at the Tradewinds, and came back with yolk-free, egg white only noodles. Woof. Some people are still learning how to be. I get it. I get it.

[Jennifer laughs.]

Some people are still learning how to be, and I know this person—

00:50:33 Jennifer Host

They tried.

00:50:34 John Host

—does not listen to her dad on any podcasts, so I can say safely I meant get the egg noodles, not the no yolks version. And then, I simmered that for ten minutes. 'Cause the stock was already hot. I put it into hot stock, let it cook for ten minutes, stirring every five. Just like your mother-in-law said. And then, after ten minutes though, I started to panic. Because my dad, whom I adore, makes a wonderful pasta fagioli—pasta fagioli or pasta fazool, as we called it, growing up. Now, this is made often with a smoked ham hock, Jennifer Marmor, so it's not for you. But this is a tomato-y, bean and pasta and ham soup that is so delicious. And my dad makes it so well, and there's a whole hunk of parmesan in there. It's terrific. Very hearty. You ever had that? Pasta fazool, Joel?

00:51:34 Joel Guest

Pasta fi-Joel?

00:51:35 John Host

Pasta fi-Joel. Pasta via Joel.

00:51:37 Joel Guest

Something else they named after me.

00:51:39 John Host

Yeah, that's right. *[Snorts a laugh.]* Terrible. Terrible. But my dad got a slow cooker and didn't realize you can't add the pasta 'til the end. Right? You put in the pasta at the beginning—at the end of the slow cooker, 'cause it just is a new thing. The pasta fagioli came out, and I think it's ditalini—the little tubes, the little tubetti. The little—you know, whatever they are. They were—they were like—they—you pick one up, and it would just fall apart in your fingers. It was gross. He understands it. He's never made the mistake again. That's what I thought was gonna happen. I was so traumatized by pretending to like this, years ago, that I was like, "I'm not

gonna let this happen to the noodles, no matter what Jennifer's mother-in-law says." Sorry, Shane.

[Jennifer agrees.]

00:52:30	Jennifer	Host	Ten minutes is fine. Maybe it's different if you got yolks in your noodles, but for the no yolks? Ten minutes.
00:52:45	John	Host	I will say, I love—I love my in-laws dearly. It's a mushy dish. I think that they just—it's—they intend—it ends up mushy. I don't know if that's the intent, but it's mushy.
00:53:01	Joel	Guest	They don't even put it on mashed potatoes. Like, you gotta have some—you gotta have some bite to these things. They can't be falling apart. Because they're gonna continue to cook, 'cause—after ten minutes, I added that cream of chicken soup. Which was—I've never opened a can of cream of chicken soup. Have you, Joel?
00:53:02	John	Host	No.
00:53:35	Joel	Guest	Yeah! The cream of chicken soup was not for me to look at. I didn't enjoy it. The stick of butter, I've seen those plenty of times and I'm comfortable with those. And then, I mixed it all up and I shredded my tendies, as Nick Wiger would say on the <i>Doughboys</i> —the podcast that I really wish we had started from the very beginning, 'cause we would be very famous now. But we're happy where we are, this fantastic family of listeners. I love you so much. But the point is, I mix it all together, and I just let it simmer. Oh, there was one other thing that was not in the recipe. Did you notice it, Joel?
00:53:36	John	Host	No.
00:53:40	Jennifer	Host	Salt and pepper. Zero seasonings. Zero seasonings.
00:54:02	John	Host	Yeah! I called Shane in to say, "Does this look right to you?" 'Cause I was thinking, I'm like, "I feel like I remember using pepper in this before." Maybe not salt, because the rotisserie chicken is seasoned and there's probably salt in the cream of chicken. And there's salt in the butter, so maybe that's okay.
00:54:04	Jennifer	Host	And Shane—and the stock. I use Kitchen Basics as well.
00:54:15	John	Host	Yeah, that's the only kind. The only kind you need.
00:54:19	Jennifer	Host	And Shane said, "You know, you could also put some pepper in there." And I was all too glad to take my pepper grinder and go <i>[pepper grinder noises]</i> all over the place.
00:54:20	John	Host	I did take the liberty of trying—of adding some salt and pepper.
			Good.
			And in a moment, we're gonna go taste it. Joel and I are gonna take another little microwave break, and we're gonna hear from friend of the show Josh Gondelman, who sent in some holiday greetings from his neck of the woods. New York City, I don't know why I'm making a big deal of it. It's like where every podcaster lives that's not in Los Angeles. Alright, let's go microwave, Joel.
00:54:40	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	<i>[Joel agrees.]</i>
00:54:42	Josh Gondelman	Guest	Doorbell rings. Hi, Judge John Hodgman and bailiff Jesse Thorn and producer Jennifer and the whole <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> team. This is Josh Gondelman. I hope I'm not too presumptuous to say friend of the show. I'm a comedian. I'm the host of the

podcast *Make My Day*, which is on hiatus. A writer and producer for *Desus & Mero* on Showtime, which is also on hiatus. And I'm thrilled to be here, at your virtual holiday party.

My favorite things to eat or drink over the holidays—gosh. I've gotta go with potato latkes, possibly Judaism's greatest carbohydrate. And then—this'll make me controversial—peppermint stick ice cream, which I think should not even be seasonal. We can get peppermint all year round. And people say it tastes like toothpaste—we should be so lucky! Toothpaste? You mean a flavor that we put in our mouths several times a day without complaint or adjustment, every day?! Yeah. We could do worse than toothpaste.

Also, my New Year's resolution for next year is to use my procrastination time to like enjoy my life instead of scrolling online for hours at a time, thinking I'll do work, just to cut bait on the idea of being productive and just like finally watch *The Sopranos* or something. That's what I wanna do. If I'm not doing the things I'm supposed to be doing, I at least wanna be doing the things I wanna be doing.

Happy holidays, John, team, listeners! Be well in the new year. Bye!

00:56:11 John Host

Oooh, thank you so much, Josh Gondelman. Unfortunately, I didn't hear what Josh had to say, 'cause were microwaving up some noodles. I'm sure it was very sweet, though. Am I right, Jennifer Marmor?

00:56:19 Jennifer Host

It was sweeter than peppermint stick ice cream.

00:56:22 John Host

Jennifer Marmor, Joel and I are now back from the microwave. I have microwaved up the noodles. I'm stirring them around.

[Jennifer affirms.]

Three minutes seemed to be the right amount. This is what it looks like. It came out nice and creamy. I think the noodles still have basic structural integrity. Joel?

00:56:44 Joel Guest

Yes, Judge?

00:56:46 John Host

You go ahead and slide down, take a bite, and then slide back up and tell me what you think of just the noodles—just the noodles.

00:56:51 Joel Guest

Just the noodles, okay.

00:56:52 John Host

Yeah. Joel is taking a bite. He's off-mic for the moment, because we're trying to be less disgusting for once in our lives. He's chewing. Wait, Joel! Don't—you know, finish. He's nodding. He's—

00:57:05 Joel Guest

They're good! I like the noodles.

00:57:06 John Host

They're good. They're good.

00:57:07 Joel Guest

They seem to be seasoned well. I like a good yolk, but it's alright.

00:57:11 John Host

Well, yeah, I couldn't put a whole yolk in there for you. I'm sorry. Next time. Slide me down. I'm gonna take a bite. *[Beat.]* Slide me up! Slide me up!

00:57:20 Joel Guest

You're there.

00:57:22 John Host

I'm gonna tell you something right now, Jennifer Marmor. I think this is God-or-Whatever damn delicious.

[She agrees.]

You know the only thing that would make it better? It's creamy. It's not too salty. It's very nicely peppery.

[Joel agrees.]

00:57:39	Joel	Guest	You said you would add something to it, though. Right?
00:57:41	John	Host	Uh, smoked paprika.
00:57:42	Joel	Guest	Smoked paprika would be nice!
00:57:44	John	Host	Just to give it a little more kick.
			That would give it a little something. And it would give it a little bit—a little bit of color.

[Jennifer echoes him, and Joel agrees.]

00:57:49	Jennifer	Host	Like, if you have this—
00:57:51	John	Host	Yeah, very beige.
00:57:56	Jennifer	Host	Yeah, it's a pallid—a very pallid entrée.
			Yeah. You know, Bailey said something in her letter that I thought was interesting—that, you know, it—her wife and her family have converted her to liking these noodles. And you know, I also was an outsider coming into a family where this was a traditional food. And it didn't take much converting, but like—you know, I really look forward to these noodles every Christmas Eve!
00:58:21	John	Host	This is some very classic midwestern soupy casserole deliciousness. And I think that if you were to put this into a casserole and then dusted it with that smoked paprika on top, it would not only taste a little bit better, it would look a lot better. But I don't mean to correct you. What Bailey was converted to was not merely the noodles, but also the carb on carb—putting the noodles on top of mashed potatoes.

Now, Joel, I didn't get you any chicken from the chicken place at the gas station, but they do have mashed potatoes. And I picked some up. Have you tried the combo?

00:58:57	Joel	Guest	No.
00:58:58	John	Host	Alright. Let's try the combo. I'm putting the noodles on the mashed potatoes.
00:58:59	Jennifer	Host	I haven't tried the combo yet, either. I made some mashed potatoes, as well.
00:59:03	John	Host	Oh, you made your own, right?
00:59:05	Jennifer	Host	I did, yeah! Here it is. It's a nice beige... mush.
00:59:07	John	Host	Let me see yours. Yeah, that looks really good! That looks really nice!
00:59:14	Jennifer	Host	I made a lot of mashed potatoes, but I don't know how not to make a lot.
00:59:18	John	Host	Here's how you don't make a lot of mashed potatoes: get them from the gas station.

[Joel agrees.]

That's the best way to do it. I went through the same thing, and I realized, "I'm passing by the gas station." Jennifer Marmor's having her bite. Joel, slide me down.

[Joel agrees.]

00:59:33	Joel	Guest	Have you—wait a minute. Have you had your bite of the combo?
00:59:34	John	Host	No. No. Alright, slide down, take a bite. He's taking a bite. Jennifer Marmor has taken her bite.

[She confirms.]

00:59:46	Jennifer	Host	What do you think about the combo, Jennifer Marmor? 'Cause you're done. I like it! It's a little heavy on the mush, because I did as my mother-in-law tends to do. So, it's a lot of mush and it's a lot of beige. And you know what they say: you eat with your eyes. But it does taste good to me.
01:00:02	John	Host	It has the creamy color of a 1981 wall-to-wall carpeting in a Conran's décor book.

[Joel chuckles.]

01:00:15	Joel	Guest	You like that one, Joel? You love those Conran's jokes. Yeah. Alright, slide me down. I'm taking my bite.
01:00:19	John	Host	Go.
01:00:20	Joel	Guest	Slide me up. Slide me up.
01:00:21	John	Host	You're there.
01:00:23	Joel	Guest	There shouldn't be mashed potatoes in this dish. It's not necessary.
01:00:35	John	Host	No. It's the best gas station mashed potatoes ever. And the noodles are really delicious, but you're right, it'd be better in a casserole. But together, I would never. Bailey, this is your judge speaking. Your wife's family's got it wrong. Just make the noodles right. You don't need the mashed potatoes. Jennifer Marmor? This is your judge speaking. Your mother-in-law does it right except cut the time in half.

Alright, I gotta eat some more of these incredible noodles. Uh, let's take a break. We'll be back for the conclusion of our office holiday party, here on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast—including eggnog with Sprite!

[Joel groans.]

01:01:04	Sound Effect	Transition	Three gavel bangs.
01:01:07	Sound Effect	Transition	Three gavel bangs.
01:01:09	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	Doorbell.
01:01:12	Valerie Moffatt	Guest	I'm Valerie Moffatt. I'm a production fellow, here at Maximum Fun. And I edit the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast. My favorite thing to eat or drink during the holiday season is just a hot cup of coffee on Christmas morning. My parents have always been big coffee drinkers, and I have never been much of a morning person. And so, having just a hot cup of coffee first thing in the

01:01:43	John	Host	<p>morning on Christmas morning really—there’s just something special about it. And it’s real nice. That’s all!</p> <p>Hey, that was Valerie Moffatt! She introduced herself, obviously, but I just wanted to say thank you, Valerie, for editing so deftly over the past year. Is it a year or longer, Jennifer Marmor?</p>
01:01:54	Jennifer	Host	<p>At least I would say a year. I don’t know! It’s hard to keep track of time these days. <i>[Chuckles.]</i></p>
01:01:58	John	Host	<p>It is hard to keep track of time. It feels like forever and just 30 seconds, but Valerie, thank you so much for being part of the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> team and the Maximum Fun team and we really, really appreciate you. And a cup of coffee on a early or even late holiday morning, that sounds very, very good—especially after I’ve eaten all those noodles. I could really use a cup of coffee, now. So, thank you very much, Valerie. This is the <i>Judge John Hodgman</i> podcast—the last segment of our last episode of the year 2021. Our office holiday party is coming to a close with dessert. And then, of course, eggnog with Sprite!</p>
01:02:53	Jennifer	Host	<p>But first, dessert. This concoction was suggested to us by listener Danna—pronounced like banana, it says here. Thank you very much, Jennifer Marmor. Cool, Danna like banana.</p>
01:02:54	John	Host	<p>That was Danna. That was all Danna’s doing.</p> <p>That was all Danna? I’m sure Danna’s been having to say “Danna like banana” for many, many years. Good job, Danna. Danna’s family has traditionally had pineapple—</p>
			<p><i>[A whistle phone notification.]</i></p>
01:03:06	Joel	Guest	<p>Oh!</p>
01:03:07	John	Host	<p>Sorry.</p>
01:03:09	Joel	Guest	<p>That’s okay. Let’s keep it on there!</p>
01:03:10	John	Host	<p>It’s my scallop guy.</p>
01:03:16	Joel	Guest	<p>It’s the scallop guy—is texting. Are the scallops ready? Do you gotta go right now? Is he on the dock?</p>
01:03:19	John	Host	<p>No, he’s coming over to Bucksport, so he’ll drop them off.</p>
01:03:21	Joel	Guest	<p>He’s gonna drop them off. You don’t have to go down to the dock?</p>
01:03:22	John	Host	<p>I think so!</p>
			<p>Alright, well, that was a timely text, because this is the dramatic moment where I say: pineapple and marshmallow fluff! On Christmas Eve. Joel, stop texting with your scallop guy for a second.</p>
			<p><i>[Joel agrees with a chuckle.]</i></p>
01:03:38	Joel	Guest	<p>You know what marshmallow fluff is.</p>
01:03:40	John	Host	<p>I’ve tried to avoid it, yeah.</p>
01:03:45	Jennifer	Host	<p>It is a New England staple. Jennifer Marmor, you know what marshmallow fluff is.</p>
01:03:46	John	Host	<p>I do!</p>
01:03:49	Jennifer	Host	<p>Did you ever have it, growing up?</p>
			<p>Not growing up. In the west coast, we had marshmallow cream, which was—you know, made by Jet Puff or whatever. And it was just—I think it’s a similar idea, but it’s not—</p>

01:03:57	John	Host	Same deal, though? Spreadable marshmallow in a jar?
01:03:59	Jennifer	Host	Same deal. Yes, exactly.
01:04:03	John	Host	And would you combine marshmallow cream with peanut butter to make a marshmallow and peanut butter sandwich? What we call here a fluffernutter?
01:04:10	Jennifer	Host	I had heard about it, but I never did that.
01:04:12	John	Host	But you've never done it. But you found some marshmallow fluff.
			<i>[Jennifer confirms.]</i>
			In California, and you are also gonna join us in dipping pineapple chunks in marshmallow fluff.
			<i>[Jennifer confirms.]</i>
			So, Danna grew up in Sacramento. They don't know if this is regional to someplace other than Sacramento or who made it up. Apparently it comes from Danna's mom's parents. And Danna writes—says it comes from her parents and she mentioned adding a little water to the fluff to improve dipping texture. I'm gonna say, all I did was cut up a pineapple and put some fluff in a paper bowl. And I'm gonna have one of these fancy l'elegance toothpicks, and I'm gonna dip it right in the fluff, because I tried adding water to it, and it turned into a real mess. So.
01:04:55	Jennifer	Host	I tried adding water to it. I did it in this little plastic cup. It looks like in art class when you have like a cup of glue or paste. <i>[John agrees.]</i> And I—you know, tried to mix it with the water. And it did make a little bit of a mess, but it was successful. I don't have the same toothpick that you do. I have the kind with the little cellophane thingy on top.
01:05:13	John	Host	Oh, you got a frilly—you got a cellophane frill. Very nice.
01:05:16	Jennifer	Host	Yeah. It felt seasonally appropriate.
01:05:17	John	Host	Well, I'll say this. Just from the aroma, it's not as gross as I worried it would be. And now, I'm going to try one. Slide me down!
01:05:28	Jennifer	Host	Oh, I was gonna try it and I lost my pineapple in the fluff! It just doesn't wanna stick to that toothpick. The fluff is too strong! Okay. I'm gonna taste it as well.
01:05:36	John	Host	Alright, I just tried it. This is about the best pineapple you can get in Maine in December. I'll tell you that, first of all.
01:05:45	Jennifer	Host	Yeah, I was skeptical of buying a pineapple in December, even in California. It was slim pickings at the Gelson's.
01:05:52	John	Host	Yeah. But I found the pineapple. I chopped it up. I'm gonna say, I like this! This isn't bad.
01:05:58	Jennifer	Host	I do, too!
01:05:59	John	Host	Joel, have you tried yours?
01:06:00	Jennifer	Host	I like it a lot!
01:06:01	Joel	Guest	No, here I go.
01:06:02	John	Host	Alright. Joel is trying his. He has dipped the pineapple into the fluff. There is something light and cool and tropical breezy about it.
01:06:13	Joel	Guest	I love pineapple. Even on pizza.
01:06:16	John	Host	Oh boy, that's a controversial point of view, as you know.

[Jennifer agrees.]

01:06:18 Joel Guest Fluff, I just don't wanna go there.

01:06:20 John Host It's not for you. You don't like it. Okay.

01:06:23 Joel Guest Even smoky paprika won't fix it.

01:06:25 John Host I had a case of fluff that I was gonna donate to the station. But no, it sounds like—no, okay. What about on scallops? You ever have a—

01:06:34 Joel Guest Pineapple on scallops?! Oh, fluffer.

01:06:35 John Host A fluffer—a fluff—instead of a fluffernutter sandwich, a fluffer—

01:06:41 Joel Guest On a seared scallop.

01:06:42 John Host A fluffer scallop po'boy?

[They chuckle.]

01:06:46 Joel Guest On a ciabatta.

01:06:48 John Host Dial me down again. Jennifer Marmor, talk, 'cause I'm gonna go in for another bite, here.

01:06:51 Jennifer Host I gotta say, I really like this one a lot. And unlike Joel, I'm a big fan of the marshmallow fluff. I haven't had it a ton in my life, but when I was getting the—you know, fluff water sauce ready for this tasting, earlier today, I licked the spoon, and I was very pleased. [Chuckles.] I was super into it.

01:07:14 John Host Joel is too busy eating another piece of pineapple. Did you put fluff on it?

01:07:18 Joel Guest No.

01:07:19 John Host No. Just straight up pineapple.

01:07:20 Joel Guest Mm-hm! [With his mouth full.] On the rocks.

01:07:21 John Host Pretty good pineapple for Maine, in December. I have to say. Thank you, global supply chain. Ugh. We need to survive. Hey, if combining pineapple and marshmallow fluff helps you to survive, go ahead and do it. What I would suggest is cube the pineapple and toss it in fluff. And then, have it with a little fork. Does that sound okay? What do you think, Jennifer Marmor?

01:07:52 Jennifer Host Sure! That sounds fine. There's something a little bit fun about having it like dipped, but I did have some difficulty. I lost the pineapple chunk in the fluff. It was just bringing it down.

01:08:05 John Host I would say that that—that fluff has such a unique and strange texture when you open up that jar of fluff. And of course, I had forgotten the jar of fluff weighs nothing. If you have a jar of peanut butter and a jar of fluff, like it's—the fluff feels like it's gonna lift out of your hand, 'cause it's just whipped sugar.

[Jennifer confirms.]

And when you open it up, it's got that very uncanny texture that's so strange and mesmerizing. I wouldn't mess with that with water or anything like that. Let the pineapple water the fluff. That's always been my motto, anyway.

01:08:42 Jennifer Host It's a good point!

01:08:43 John Host Well, I am looking at this feast, and here's what I've got in front of me. I have got some congealed penny gravy over a completely untouched Eggo waffle. Two pieces of pineapple in a paper bowl full of fluff. A carton of mashed potatoes from the chicken place at the gas station. The empty cup of Jägermeister and orange juice. [Singing to the tune of "12

Days of Christmas.”] And one bite of tomato soup salad—
[continuing to sing but going off-melody] vacant from this
otherwise sea of tomato soup salad, which is gross. I mean it
really is just only four-by-three inches or so of glass container,
but it looks like a terrible ocean that wants to kill me, as
though it were the ocean of Maine.

That’s a little song that I made up. We are now at the eggnog
portion, and then we will say happy holidays and farewell on
this, the very night of the winter solstice. As we are recording
this, this is the longest night of the year. Joel is so ready. He’s
grabbing that eggnog and that cup. So, let us get set up here
while you play one more greeting from our friend, Monte
Belmonte, down in western Massachusetts. Wintertime, no
sun time, lots of holiday fun time, guest bailiff Monte
Belmonte. I am not—I have not had enough Jägermeister to
endure the puns I’m sure he has put into this. So, let it roll.
Doorbell.

01:10:05 Sound Effect Sound Effect
01:10:06 Monte Belmonte Guest

Well, hello! I’m so happy to be invited to the *Judge John
Hodgman* holiday office party. I’m summertime fun time guest
bailiff, Monte Belmonte. But I guess I’m wintertime fun time
guest bailiff, Monte Belmonte, right now. My favorite thing to
eat during the holidays is—it’s difficult to go and get this at a
store. I don’t know if it exists. But since I was born, with my
Italian family on Christmas Eve, we have had lobster sauce.
So, it’s a tomato base sauce, but instead of like meatballs and
sausages with it, it is made with lobsters. Instead of my
grandmother making it, like when I was a kid—and then after
my grandmother died, my uncle taking it over, and because of
the pandemic these last two years in a row I have made it now
for the family.

So, you basically get as many lobster bodies from a fish
market—that they’re usually willing to give you for cheap—as
can fit into your pot. And then a couple of live lobsters that you
kill. And then, bake, stuff their tails, put their bodies in the
tomato sauce, and eat it with linguini. It’s the best. And that’s
my favorite thing to eat during the holidays. To drink? This
year, I’m going to have a bottle of Montenidoli Il Garrulo
Chiante. It’s made by this wonderful little old lady in Chianti—a
real pioneer when it comes to the world of winemaking. And
she reminds me so much of my grandmother, so I’ll be having
it with a bottle of that. And then, for the following week—on
New Years Eve—I’m hoping to get a bottle of my favorite
champagne, which is Billecart-Salmon. And if you can afford
the rosé version of it, you’ve been having a really good year.
And I can’t, so you can get me one if you want to. Thanks.

01:11:47 John Host

Have a happy holiday!

Thank you very much, Monte Belmonte. I hope to get to
western Mass soon and go to the Shea Theater. The Shea
Theater is a terrific community theater that does lots of local
presentations that Monte is on the board of, and it deserves
your support if you can offer it. In the meantime, there’s no
more putting this off, Joel. Do you have your eggnog before
you?

[He confirms.]

I have my eggnog before me. This is a quality New England brand—a quality New England dairy, called Hood. And this is just their—the stuff they sell at the supermarket. I couldn't get any of the fancy pants eggnog, and I didn't—even if I could, I didn't wanna mix it with Sprite.

01:12:20 Joel Guest
01:12:21 John Host

What's the ratio here, Judge?

I think we're just gonna have to make it up. But before we do the Sprite, we're gonna do the orange juice. Jennifer Marmor, do you have—? Let's taste the eggnog first, and then we'll add the orange juice.

01:12:31 Joel Guest
01:12:32 Jennifer Host
01:12:33 John Host
01:12:34 Joel Guest
01:12:35 John Host

Orange juice?

Wait, orange juice or orange soda?

Sorry, let me—

Orange soda. Yeah.

Let me reset. Let me—well, Joel's already on his way. Never mind. Things at this holiday party are getting out of hand. It's orange soda. Jennifer Marmor, do you have eggnog?

01:12:43 Jennifer Host

I do. I prepared my drinks and then brought them into the studio, so I don't have the plain eggnog with me. It's in the refrigerator. I did sample it before I mixed it with anything, earlier today. It's the—I don't—you know what? I've never said this brand out loud. Broguiere? Brogur? I don't know. It has a cow on it. "Milk so fresh, the cow doesn't know it's missing" is their tagline.

[Joel laughs.]

01:13:06 John Host

Broguiere. Um, okay. *[Chuckles.]* Well, I'm in a bit of a pickle here, because Joel, did you open both of these, by any chance?

01:13:17 Joel Guest
01:13:18 John Host

No.

Okay. 'Cause I—*[chuckles]* I have opened this brand-new carton of eggnog that I got at the supermarket yesterday and did not touch, but it doesn't have the pull tab in it and it's—clearly some has been taken out.

01:13:28 Joel Guest
01:13:30 John Host

Ugh. You want some of mine?

Uuuh, yeah. *[Chuckles.]* You didn't drink from the carton, did you?

01:13:33 Joel Guest
01:13:34 John Host

[Chuckling.] No.

Okay, masks on and you can pour some into my cup.

[Beat.]

01:13:42 Jennifer Host

Just one of those unpredictable things at an office holiday party.

01:13:46 John Host

Okay, my guess is that the young person who is in my family who got the no-yolk egg noodles may have sampled some of this eggnog before I left the house. So.

01:13:59 Jennifer Host
01:14:01 John Host

They were missing the yolks.

Yeah, that's right. Uh, let's hope that it's that and not someone at the Tradewinds trying to poison me. Alright, now I'm just gonna test this eggnog just as a default. I've never had this brand before. Definitely tastes like grocery store eggnog. It has its charms. Now, I'm going to add—save some for the

Sprite experiment. Now, I'm going to add orange soda, Joel, is the first thing up.

01:14:36 Joel Guest I'm doing like a 1:1.
01:14:38 John Host Yeah, I think that's right. 1:1.
01:14:40 Jennifer Host That's about what I did.
01:14:42 Joel Guest Wow! It's like a dreamsicle.
01:14:45 John Host I was just gonna say, like a creamsicle right?
01:14:47 Joel Guest Creamsicle, yeah. I don't like eggnog. This makes it better, the orange soda.
01:14:50 John Host Woow! Jennifer Marmor—
01:14:52 Jennifer Host Yeah, I also am not a big nog fan. Very thick.
01:14:56 Joel Guest *[Shocked.]* That's—that's good! I'm gonna drink the whole thing!
01:15:01 John Host I've never seen Joel Mann get so excited about a non-scallop food or beverage in my life! Who suggested the orange soda and eggnog?
01:15:10 Jennifer Host Pam near Seattle. She told you to forget eggnog and Sprite. The answer is eggnog and orange soda.
01:15:17 John Host Pam near Seattle, thank you for suggesting that! Now, I'm going to try it. It sure smells terrific, I have to say.
01:15:28 Jennifer Host Gee, your nog smells terrific!
01:15:30 John Host Gee, your nog smells—you're making reference to the 1970s shampoo commercials for the—where everyone said, "Gee, your hair smells terrific!" The product itself was called Gee, Your Hair Smells Terrific. And it promised you that if you washed your hair with it, strangers would be smelling your hair all the time and commenting on it.
01:15:49 Jennifer Host It sounds like a thing I don't wanna try!
01:15:50 John Host No, I know, exactly!
01:15:52 Joel Guest It happens to me all the time.
01:15:53 John Host *[Chuckles.]* Joel is follicular-ly challenged, as a weird dad might say. Boy, oh boy! This is—this is a—this is a real—
01:16:00 Joel Guest It's dreamy!
01:16:02 John Host It is dreamy! This is a real discovery, Pam near Seattle. Alright! You lose a little nog, but it certainly—it's good. I like it. I sign off on that.
01:16:11 Joel Guest A little vodka, you're all set.
01:16:13 John Host Woah, okay! If that's your—right?! I don't know how that would change the—
01:16:21 Joel Guest I don't think much.
01:16:22 John Host Yeah, it would thin it out a little bit. Yeah.

[Joel and Jennifer agree.]

Huh. Alright, I'll have to go tell the nog thief at my house to try adding some orange soda to it next time. Okay. Here we are. This is it. There's nothing left but the nog and the Sprite. There comes a time when the holiday office party must come to an end. Luckily, this year none of us embarrassed ourselves. We all will go home with dignity and to enjoy this winter solstice in peaceful contemplation with our friends and loved ones. I hope that you may do so too, whether you are with friends and loved ones or all by yourself. I love you and I wish you a very, very peaceful solstice and okay+ new year.

That's my toast, but I forgot to put the Sprite in the eggnog. So, I'm gonna do that now. You can also use 7UP, according to Chad. Chad, I didn't get to try your fried bologna appetizer recipe, 'cause it's basically fried bologna. That was the recipe. It's probably pretty good. Fried bologna, roll it up, put an elegant toothpick into it? That's a good thing you can do. An Up Nog is what he enjoys. That's eggnog with 7UP. I'll note right now that the eggnog with Sprite is much foamier for some reason. Did you notice that?

[They confirm.]

01:17:34	Joel	Guest	Yeah. And it kind of does the same thing, but it's not as good as the orange soda, I think. I'd go with the orange.
01:17:40	Jennifer	Host	Milder.
01:17:42	John	Host	Yeah. And it veers—it's weird, 'cause it veers into kind of a pepperminty vibe, for me. I mean, there's no peppermint, obviously. But it's got that kind of—a light, effervescent, minty vibe.
01:18:00	Jennifer	Host	It's like the minty vibe of a shamrock shake, at McDonalds.

[John agrees.]

01:18:09	John	Host	The light mojito-y minty. Alright. Here's what I'm gonna say. I'm the judge. I'm gonna tell you what. Dan, your dear friend Matt may be a dear friend, and he can like whatever he likes. But this tastes like toothpaste to me, and I don't like it. I would be more impressed if I hadn't just had eggnog and orange soda, which was truly one of the most surprising holiday miracles I've ever put in my mouth. Sorry! This nog got overshadowed by Pam near Seattle. She's right, forget eggnog with Sprite, Matt! Dan's correct. I find in his favor. This is the sound of a gavel. Judge John Hodgman rules.
01:18:50	Sound Effect	Sound Effect	Three gavel bangs.
01:18:51	Music	Transition	"Auld Lang Syne" by United States Marine Band.
01:18:52	John	Host	That is basically all for 2021! Thank you so much, Jennifer Marmor, for being our producer. Thank you, Joel, for being here with me in Maine today and trying all these foods. Thank you so much to Valerie Moffatt for being the editor. Thank you so much to Jesse Thorn. I hope you're getting some rest and recovering swiftly. And thank you to all of you listeners for being with us this year. Who knew that 2021 I would be back in this radio station hiding in the cold and snow.
01:19:25	Joel	Guest	Dark.
01:19:26	John	Host	I do—it's dark. It's dark. But this is the winter solstice. Let us hope that there are longer, brighter, sunnier, warmer days ahead. I have a feeling we'll get there. You can listen to WERU, of course, at WERU.org . You can follow Joel on Instagram. His handle is @TheMaineMann . You can follow us on Twitter. I'm @Hodgman . Jesse is @JesseThorn . We are also on Instagram, and you can be sure that there are gonna be a lot of photos of a lot of foods over at @JudgeJohnHodgman on Instagram. If you want a chance to

name one of our cases, follow us on Twitter. Make sure to hashtag your *Judge John Hodgman* tweets #JJHo. Oh! You can also check out the Maximum Fun subreddit to discuss this episode and share your own unusual or very, very usual favorite holiday memories, treats, traditions, whatever they may be.

Submit your cases at MaximumFun.org/ijho or email hodgman@maximumfun.org. We'll talk to you next time in a whole new year, on the *Judge John Hodgman* podcast.

[Music continues and ends.]

01:21:06	Sound Effect	Transition	Three gavel bangs.
01:21:09	Sound Effect	Transition	Cheerful ukulele chord.
01:21:10	Speaker 1	Guest	MaximumFun.org .
01:21:12	Speaker 2	Guest	Comedy and culture.
01:21:13	Speaker 3	Guest	Artist owned—
01:21:14	Speaker 4	Guest	—audience supported.