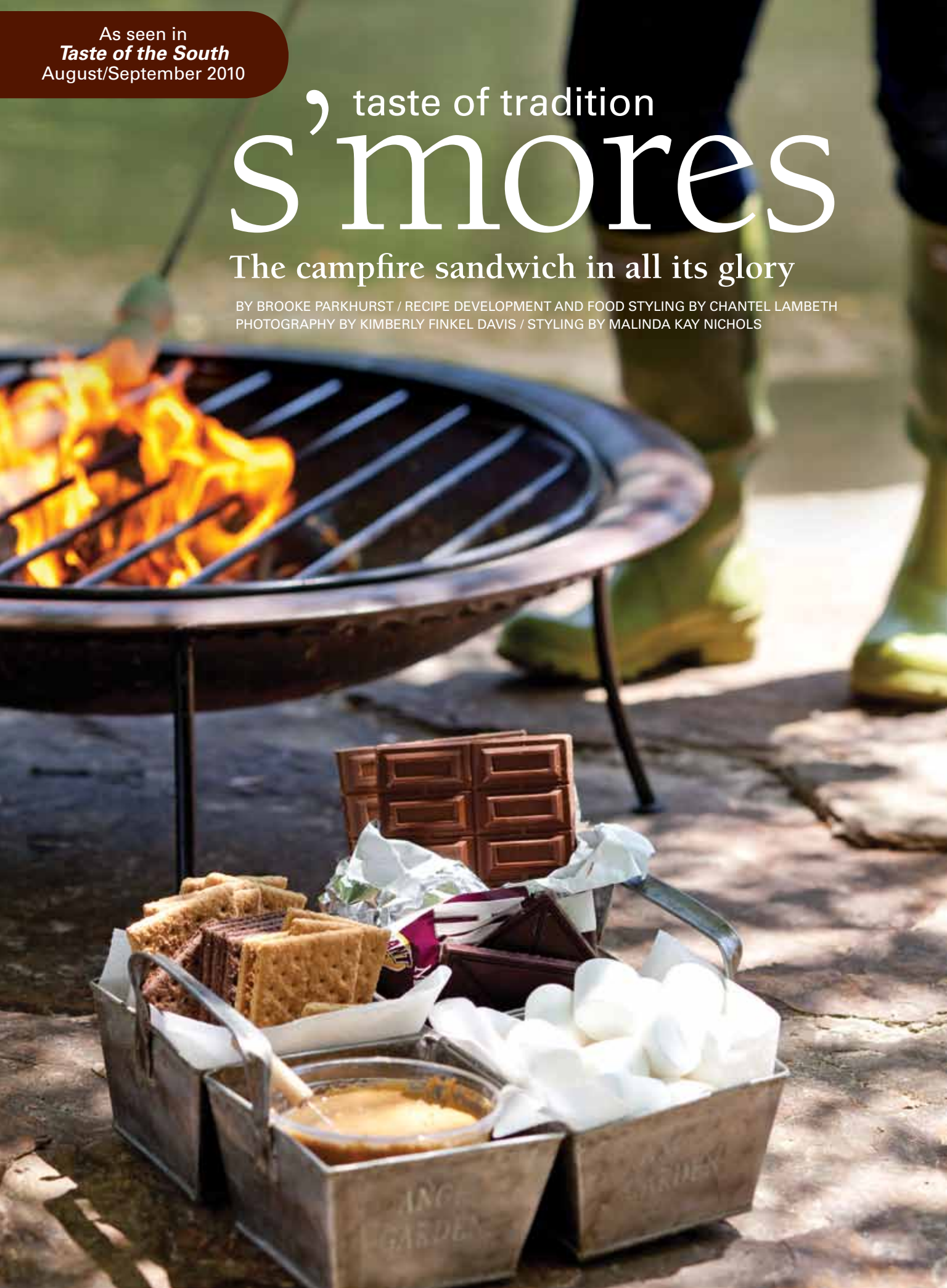


# ‘ taste of tradition s’mores

The campfire sandwich in all its glory

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I COULD FUSS ALL I WANTED, BUT S'MORES WERE never sliding beneath Mama's broiler. As a self-proclaimed kitchen purist (*ahem*, food snob), she made sure that I was a proper Gulf Coast girl who knew my way around a bag of Royal Reds and a rolling pin. But the fun food—the kind that came from boxes and bags and the Hershey Corporation—would have to wait. A different chef would have to teach me the glories of the graham-cracker sandwich, stuffed to capacity with little squares of melted chocolate and golden toasted marshmallows.

At summer camp, sometime in the early 1990s, I met my first s'more—and my future husband, Jamie. I suppose I owe a lot to that small Episcopal camp on Week's Bay. I remember Jamie was a long-legged, shy boy who let his best friend take me to the dance. I also remember that my first bite of s'more felt a bit naughty. The warm chocolate coated my tongue as the downy, white marshmallow oozed from the corners of my mouth; the graham crackers were a crisp reprieve.

"Mama would *not* approve of this," I told myself, bite after luscious bite.

But before any sort of real love could develop—either between me and the decadent campfire sandwich or between me and Jamie—minivans and station wagons descended on the camp's sandy lane. Time to return home, to tetherball in the backyard and my sisters, to seafood gumbo and lattice-topped blueberry pies. Not a bad fate, of course. But I left Alabama with a distinct longing for summer's gentle sweetness.

The next year, Mama switched camps on me. She put Alabama on the back burner and set her sights on North Carolina. The midday air was cooler, and the mountain streams were clearer. (I think she also liked the fact that the camp session lasted *twice* as long.)

While the s'mores were delicious as always—both rich and light, creamy and crunchy—I missed Alabama. I missed what I remembered of Jamie.

But I should have had faith. Because 15 summers later, Jamie and I would find each other again in Alabama. Life is circular and funny that way; it makes you scrunch up your nose and say, "Really?" Although I was living in New York City, we met accidentally at Highlands Bar & Grill, the Birmingham restaurant where he was chef de cuisine. He didn't send a platter of s'mores to my table, though. It's as if he knew to wait.



PHOTO BY SARAH DUNLAP

"Mama would not approve of this, I told myself, bite after luscious bite."

Every night of our November honeymoon, at the Palmetto Bluff Resort in South Carolina, Jamie and I left our warm cottage along the banks of the May River and followed the flickering lights to the main lawn. Two blazing bonfires and buffet tables laden with long, elegant bamboo skewers, dark chocolate bars stacked like gold bricks, and platters of neatly arranged graham crackers awaited us. Happy Hour was reinvented as the S'mores Hour. I don't think I need to tell you that we felt like kids again. We felt like we were at summer camp. We felt like we had a lifetime to get to know the children we once were. 🍫

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## traditional s'more

Yield: 1 sandwich

- 1 whole graham cracker, broken in half
- 2 squares milk chocolate, such as Hershey's
- 1 to 2 warm toasted marshmallows

1. Place chocolate on one graham-cracker half. Top with toasted marshmallows and second graham-cracker half, pressing together so warm marshmallow melts chocolate.

## untraditional toppings

Here are some of our favorite add-on toppings for s'mores:

- Freshly ground almond or peanut butter
- A variety of chocolate bars, jams, and preserves
- Pretzel crisps
- Honey-roasted peanuts



## toasted marshmallow sundae ice cream

Yield: 3 quarts ice cream

- 2 (10.5-ounce) bags mini marshmallows
- 6 cups heavy whipping cream
- 2 cups whole milk
- 2 cups sugar, divided
- 24 egg yolks\*
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- Garnish: chocolate sauce, graham-cracker crumbs, and maraschino cherries

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Scatter 1 bag marshmallows on each baking sheet.
2. Bake until marshmallows are completely toasted and puffed, 8 to 12 minutes. Set aside to cool completely.
3. Break marshmallows into pieces. In the work bowl of a food processor, pulse marshmallows until fine and powdery.
4. In a medium heavy saucepan, combine cream, milk, and 1½ cups sugar. Heat mixture over medium-

high heat until it just begins to boil; remove from heat.

5. In a medium bowl, whisk egg yolks and remaining ½ cup sugar until light and fluffy. Using a ladle, pour 1 cup hot cream mixture in a slow steady stream into yolks, whisking constantly. Add another cup of hot cream mixture, whisking to combine. Return mixture to saucepan.
6. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until thick enough to coat the back of a wooden spoon or temperature reaches 170° on an instant-read thermometer. Strain mixture through a fine-mesh sieve into a stainless-steel bowl set in an ice-water bath. Whisk in toasted marshmallow powder. Let cool completely, stirring often. Refrigerate for 2 hours before freezing.
7. Freeze mixture in batches in a 1-quart gel-type ice-cream

maker according to manufacturer's instructions. Transfer ice cream to an airtight container, and freeze until firm, approximately 4 hours.

8. Place two or three small scoops of ice cream in a serving dish. Garnish with chocolate sauce, graham-cracker crumbs, and a maraschino cherry, if desired.

\*For instructions on how to freeze egg whites to use later, visit [tasteofthesouth.com/webextras](http://tasteofthesouth.com/webextras).



## grilled s'more sandwiches

Yield: 6 sandwiches

12 (1/2-inch-thick) slices brioche  
6 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened  
1 cup plus 2 tablespoons chocolate hazelnut spread, such as Nutella  
1 cup plus 2 tablespoons marshmallow crème  
1 1/2 teaspoons kosher salt

1. Butter 1 side of each brioche slice.
2. Preheat a cast-iron skillet over medium-high heat.
3. On unbuttered side of 6 slices brioche, spread 3 tablespoons Nutella. On unbuttered side of remaining 6 slices of brioche, spread 3 tablespoons marshmallow crème. Sandwich together 1 Nutella slice and 1 marshmallow slice, butter side out.
4. Grill until golden brown and Nutella and marshmallow crème are melted, 3 minutes per side. Sprinkle each sandwich with 1/4 teaspoon salt. Serve warm.



## chocolate pudding with toasted marshmallows and homemade graham crackers

Yield: 4 to 6 servings

1 cup sugar  
1/3 cup Dutch-processed cocoa powder, such as Hershey's Special Dark  
1/4 cup cornstarch  
3 cups whole milk  
2 (1-ounce) squares semisweet chocolate, chopped  
1 cup mini marshmallows  
1 recipe Homemade Graham Crackers (recipe follows)

1. In a medium saucepan, combine sugar, cocoa, and cornstarch. Add milk, whisking until smooth. Cook over medium heat, whisking constantly, until thickened, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat. Add chocolate, stirring until chocolate is melted and mixture is smooth. Cover and refrigerate.
2. Spoon pudding into 4 to 6 individual serving dishes. Top each evenly with marshmallows. Using a kitchen torch and using caution, toast marshmallows. Top each serving with a Homemade Graham Cracker.

## homemade graham crackers

Yield: about 18 crackers

2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour  
1 cup brown sugar, lightly packed  
2 tablespoons finely ground toasted almond slivers  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
3/4 teaspoon kosher salt  
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon  
7 tablespoons unsalted butter, chilled and cut into cubes  
5 tablespoons heavy whipping cream  
1/4 cup orange blossom honey  
1 tablespoon molasses  
2 teaspoons vanilla extract

1. In the work bowl of a food processor, pulse together flour, brown sugar, almonds, baking soda, salt, and cinnamon until mixture is well combined. Add butter, and pulse until mixture resembles coarse crumbs.

2. In a small bowl, whisk together cream, honey, molasses, and vanilla. With processor running, slowly add cream mixture to flour mixture until dough just comes together. (Dough will be soft and sticky.)
3. Turn dough out onto a sheet of plastic wrap, and shape into a thick disk. Wrap tightly in plastic wrap, and refrigerate until firm, 3 to 4 hours.
4. Preheat oven to 350°. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Set aside.
5. On a floured surface, roll dough out to 1/8-inch thickness. Using a 2 1/2-inch square cutter, cut into squares, and place 2 to 3 inches apart on prepared baking sheets. Prick squares with a wooden pick.
6. Bake until golden brown and slightly firm to the touch, 16 to 20 minutes.



### origin of s'mores

The Girl Scouts of America aren't just do-gooders—they're great little chefs. The first recorded s'mores recipe appeared in their 1927 publication, *Tramping and Trailing with the Girl Scouts*. Today, renditions of the much-loved chocolate bar and toasted marshmallow sandwich are turning up on menus and in kitchens all over the country.

## peanut butter s'more cookie sandwiches

Yield: 12 sandwiches

- 1 cup creamy peanut butter
- 2½ cups unsalted butter, softened, divided
- ¾ cup sugar, divided
- ½ cup firmly packed brown sugar
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 large egg
- 1¾ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- 2 cups confectioners' sugar
- 2 (7-ounce) jars marshmallow crème
- 16 (1-ounce) squares semisweet chocolate, melted

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper. Set aside.
2. In a large bowl, combine peanut butter, ½ cup butter, ½ cup sugar, brown sugar, and vanilla. Beat at medium speed with an electric mixer until light and fluffy, approximately 4 minutes. Add egg, beating well.
3. In a small bowl, combine flour, baking soda, and salt.
4. With mixer on low speed, add flour mixture to peanut butter mixture, beating until just combined. Turn dough out onto a sheet of plastic wrap, and shape into a thick disk. Wrap tightly, and refrigerate until firm, approximately 2 hours.
5. Roll dough into 1½-inch balls, and roll balls in remaining ¼ cup sugar. Place 2 inches apart on prepared

- baking sheets. Using a flat-bottomed glass, slightly flatten each dough ball.
6. Bake until lightly browned around the bottom edges, 8 to 12 minutes. Let cool on baking sheets for 5 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack, and let cool completely.
7. In a large bowl, beat remaining 2 cups butter and confectioners' sugar at medium-high speed with an electric mixer until light and fluffy, approximately 4 minutes. Add marshmallow crème, and beat until mixture is fluffy, about 2 minutes.
8. Spread a thick layer of marshmallow mixture on flat side of 1 cookie. Top with flat side of another cookie. Repeat with remaining cookies and marshmallow crème. Place on a baking sheet, and refrigerate until firm, approximately 1 hour.
9. Dip one side of cookie sandwiches in melted chocolate; tap to remove excess chocolate. Place on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper until chocolate hardens.



## brownie s'mores

Yield: 12 to 16 brownies

- 1 (12-ounce) box vanilla-wafer cookies
- 2¼ cups sugar, divided
- ¾ teaspoon kosher salt, divided
- 1 cup plus 5 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted, divided
- 5 (1-ounce) squares unsweetened chocolate, melted
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 5 large eggs, at room temperature
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 (16-ounce) bag large marshmallows, each cut in half

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Line a (13x9-inch) pan with aluminum foil, letting foil hang over sides of pan. Set aside.
2. In the work bowl of a food processor, pulse together cookies, ¼ cup sugar, and ¼ teaspoon salt until mixture is fine. With processor running, slowly add 5 tablespoons melted butter, and continue blending until mixture is well combined. Press crumb mixture firmly into the bottom of prepared pan.
3. In a large bowl, whisk together remaining 1 cup melted butter and melted chocolate until mixture is

- well combined. Whisk in remaining 2 cups sugar and vanilla. Add eggs one at a time, whisking constantly, until mixture is smooth and glossy. Whisk in flour and remaining ½ teaspoon salt. Pour batter into pan, smoothing top.
4. Bake until a wooden pick inserted in the center comes out with just crumbs, 30 to 35 minutes. Let cool slightly.
5. Preheat oven to broil. Place marshmallow halves on top of brownies, in rows, as close as possible. Broil until tops of marshmallows are golden brown and puffed, approximately 5 minutes. Let cool slightly before cutting brownies into squares. Serve warm.

