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WINTER 2020
#HolidayFood

MAGAZINE





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Letter from the Editor

Food is necessary for life. Eating well is a way to care for ourselves and others. Sure, we can slap together enough calories to get us through the day, but isn't it better to savor a well-constructed meal? Whether a late-night snack while standing over the sink or a multi-course meal, our foods tell something about our lives. Like most pleasures in life, it should be moderate, varied, and shared.

In this month's issue, we take a deeper look into food because eating involves more than flavor. There's nothing quite like a beautiful cake or simple fried egg to make you feel like a success. Beyond our amazing recipes, we want you to feel at home in the kitchen. An organized and accessible kitchen removes frustration. Sometimes frustration is worth it, though. Children are eager learners. Teaching them can be slow and messy but is ultimately rewarding. How wonderful to help someone become more independent. From home-grown gardens to appliances to help you cook, there are many ways to celebrate the human conditions of hunger and satiety. Food is intention turned into reality. ■

Heather Roulo / *Editorial Director*



Dear SEARCH,

The holidays bring great meaning in society. It is seen as an opportunity to spend time with family and friends. The holiday season is a time to express one's love to everyone from close friends and family to those who are less fortunate. Gifts are exchanged to show appreciation for those we care about.

During these season my home is decorated with the smell of cinnamon spices in the air. We prepare a big feast for invited family and friends to enjoy. Knotted bread is one of my favorite things to make during the holiday season. I always add different seasonal flavors to spice up my dinner. It's always a feeling of love and warmth in my home during this season. ■

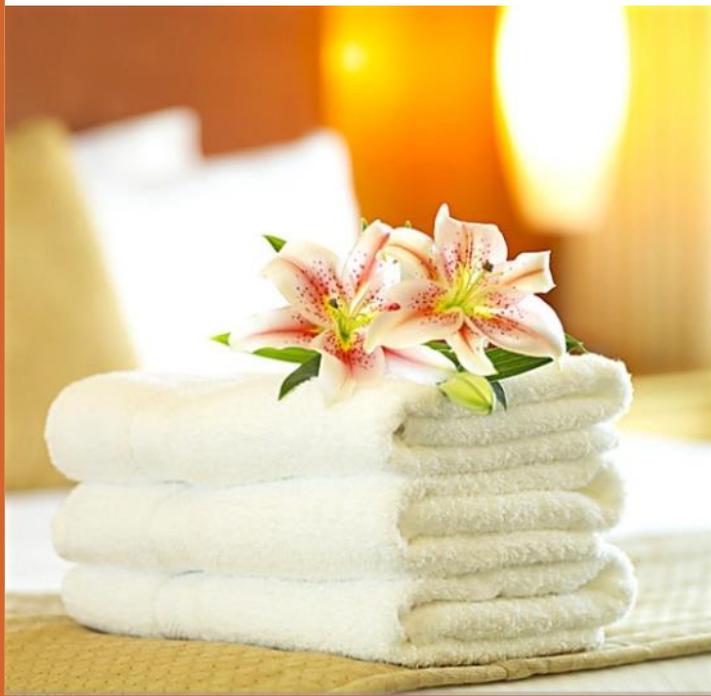
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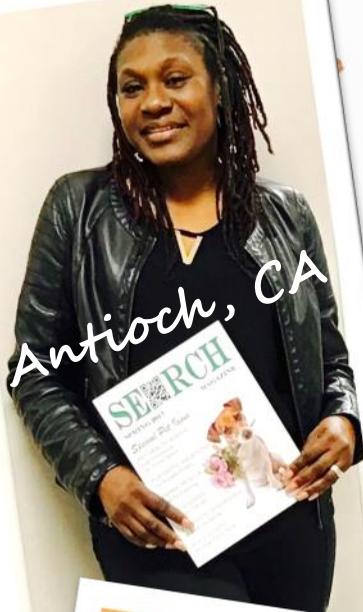


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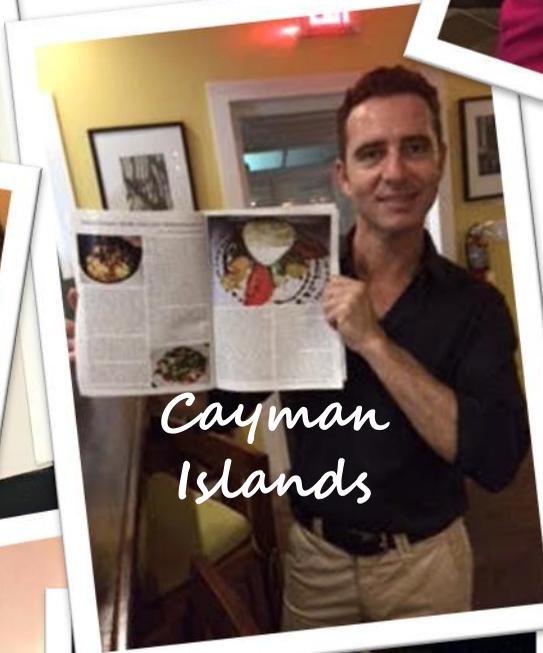
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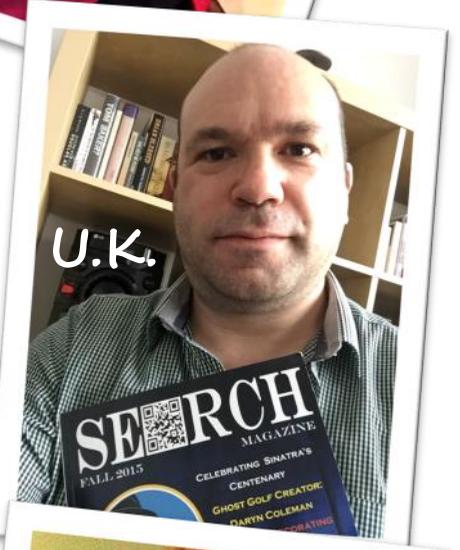
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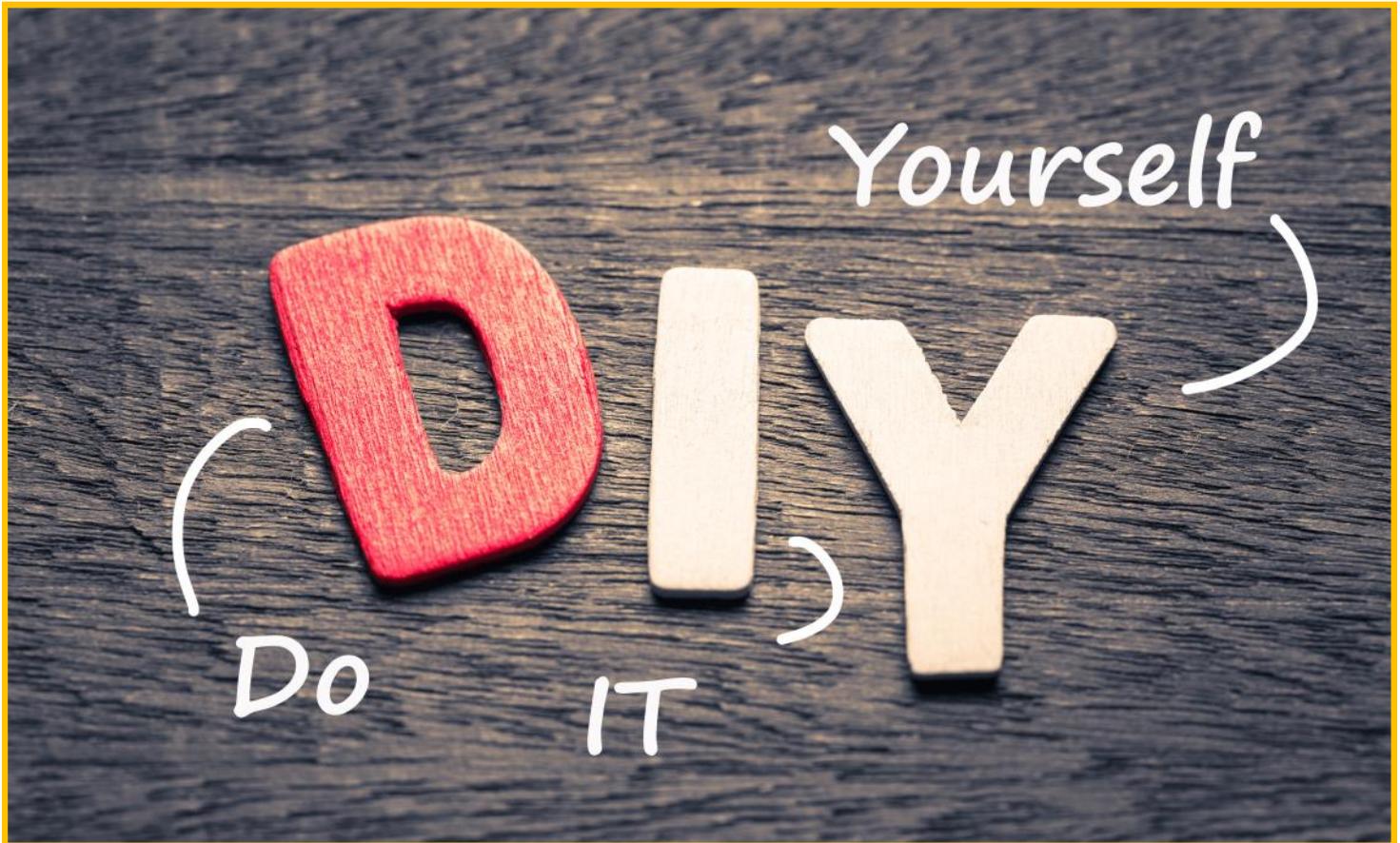
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It's almost time to dig seldom used pots and pans, specialty baking dishes, and decorating kits out of the back corners of your cabinets.

If you've got arthritis, COPD, bad knees, or you're just getting old, you know how hard it is to reach into the bottom cabinets, especially the dead corners where turkey roasting pans live. If you're on a budget, you've likely never indulged in a remodel to install fancy, pull-out drawers or slide-out shelves.

Here's an inexpensive and quick way to keep you off your knees and your head out of the cabinets. Find a measuring tape. Measure the width of the cabinet opening, inside edge to inside edge, and subtract an inch for clearance. Measure the height and depth. Write those measurements down, maybe draw a diagram.

Take your tape and head to stores for boxes. Boxes are free. If you can't find what you need or can invest a small amount, dollar stores are good for inexpensive racks and containers. For instance,

dish pans. They're just the depth of upper cabinets. You can adjust the shelves to their height and load them. Load lighter weights the higher you go. They're great for spices. Two of those, side-to-side, fit in one of the less-used lower cabinet shelves. Thrift stores provide those things as well, usually as cheap and sometimes better quality for the money. An old refrigerator crisper drawer is strong and just the right size to hold the heavy attachments for a stand mixer, including the manual. Load them side by side with the items you use the least the furthest back. Those in front remove easily when you need those behind.

High-sided boxes work well for small, tumble-some items like plasticware. One exception for a high-sided box holds my soup pot and saucepans. The high sides keep the saucepan lids where I can find them.

That's what's nice about this method, you can adjust to fit your needs. With commercial drawers and slide outs, a degree of space is wasted in side by side cabinets.



You can't slide them out of the way or to the side to utilize that space. With boxes, that's not an issue. Slide the box out or to one side, put the narrow items—pitchers for example—in that narrow space, and slide the box back in. To assist in the sliding in and out, be sure to keep the height of the boxes down a few inches to give you room to grasp them or add rope pulls.

Rope pulls are especially useful with that horrid, dead corner many manufacturers don't fit with a lazy Suzy. I had two turntables the right size, but none of the cabinet doors were large enough for them to pass through. Instead, I found two boxes the depth and half the width of the corner, added a pull at one end, loaded in items I hardly ever use (but can't get rid of in case I someday need them) and shoved them back to the deepest part of the shelves. A second box, short of the depth, also with a pull, went in beside them. This left a small space for things I use most often to reach easily. Three boxes filled the square. On the top shelf, my pots and pans sit in front of those on one side, plastic items on the other, both of which easily slide out the few times I need back there.

If you don't like bland cardboard boxes filling your cabinets, fancy them up. You can paint them, cover them with contact paper, even cover them

with fabric. The latter two will do double duty in strengthening them. You can also fortify them for longer use by taping the corners with duct or packaging tape.



If you managed to find boxes with lids, fold those flaps inside to reinforce the sides. You can print pretty labels—downloaded from the net—or buy them to name each box. Even if you don't have arthritis, COPD, bad knees, or are getting old, or just don't like standing on your head to reach those back corners, these things will make it easier. ■

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We've traced our Rich family heritage all the way back to English royalty and beyond. The other side of the family got the castle, but we poor Americans have managed to keep the traditional family desert recipe going.

Supposedly handed down from those living at Warwick Castle—and cousins to King Richard the Lionhearted—this recipe has been passed through the early American days as Quakers, to the Colorado Rockies where my grandmother and grandfather finally settled, to our house in California. Although I am sure the recipe has changed over the years—each generation substituting what was easier or available—when we make this dish, we always feel closer to our roots.

If you read my article in the Fall 2020 issue about creating a “Dumb Supper” to honor your ancestors, you might be wondering what we serve to honor our ancestors. I'm happy to share the recipe below.

Ingredients:

- 1 angel food cake
- 1 12 oz Cool Whip tub*
- 1 16 oz sour cream tub
- 1 jar strawberry glaze (we prefer Marie's brand)*
- 1 large strawberry bin
- ½ cup sugar*

*For a less sugary version, use Lite Cool Whip, leave out the ½ cup of sugar, and serve the glaze on the side.

#HolidayFood

HOLIDAY DESSERT

1. In a large bowl, mix Cool Whip, sour cream, and sugar until well blended.
2. In a glass display bowl, rip up chunks of the angel food cake and cover the bottom about ½ inch.
3. Place in amongst the cake sliced strawberries.
4. Cover the angel food cake and strawberries with a layer of the Cool Whip mix about ½ inch thick and until all cake and strawberries are covered. Leave no spaces, especially around the edges that will show against the glass.
5. Repeat steps 2-4 until you either run out of angel food cake or your bowl is filled until there is only ½ inch left on the top.
6. With a smooth layer of Cool Whip on top, place cut strawberries in a decorative pattern all over the top of your dessert.
7. Spread a thin layer of strawberry glaze over the top of the strawberries, making a clear red, smooth surface that you can see the strawberries through.

8. Place just a few uncut strawberries in the center of the cake and around the side if you still have some left.

9. Chill either uncovered or with tented saran wrap so the glaze does not become stuck to the covering. Chill in the fridge until serving time.

10. At dinner, bring it out and watch the surprise on the faces around you as you present this visually appealing dessert, and it tastes great, too. ■



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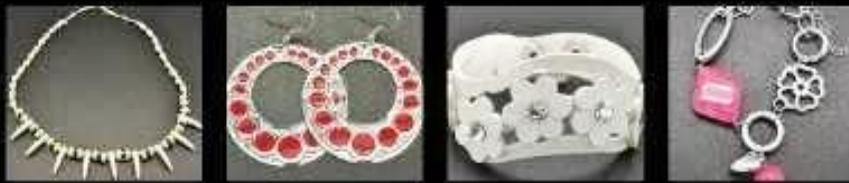
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Gather ye 'round and hear the tale of the Holiday Discomfort Foods. You ask what, pray tell, are discomfort foods? Well, they look much like the traditional holiday foods of a family with British and Scottish decent, but rather than comforting a soul over the holidays, they cause discomfort.

Let's start with the very Canadian butter tarts. They're wonderfully sweet, gooey, and chewy, but I like mine with...raisins. Yes, raisins, but there are people who are so discomforted by the mere idea of raisins in butter tarts that they get flustered and angry and refuse to be in the same room with me, which is fine because that leaves more tarts for me.

Then there's Christmas Fruit Cake. Yes, that dense, fruit-filled, rum-soaked delight gives me great discomfort.

Not because of the cherries, rum, or calories, but because of the cost. The smallest of marzipan-topped grocery store fruit cakes requires a down payment and a second mortgage. I suppose it's not too bad if you buy just one, but what kind of madman buys only one fruit cake? That's like having just one butter tart!

It wouldn't be the holidays without eggnog, of course, yet this is a big discomfort food on my buffet. It's not the raisins nor the cost, but rather the richness of the creamy nog. Yes, this holiday party animal is lactose intolerant and one simple glass of the nog gives me great physical, boweltastic discomfort lasting all the way to New Year's Eve.

Actually, one glass only discomforts me for one day, but in my family having only one eggnog is a bigger crime than having just one ounce of rum.

Even if I manage to find almond-based nog, my intolerance for lactose will next rear its ugly, gut-twisting head when the heavenly slice of hot apple pie magically appears with its requisite scoop of vanilla ice cream. Sure, I could have the pie sans la mode, but why would I insult both my hosts and the baker at Costco? I am not a barbarian.

Wait. That's not quite true. I am a barbarian...if someone dares to utter the words "Get yourself seconds. There's plenty." Plenty? Oh, there's plenty when they utter the words, and there's still plenty when I heave myself up off the bench and waddle to the sideboard, but once I've scooped up my serving of seconds, there's definitely not enough for my son-in-law to have turkey sandwiches at work for the rest of the week. Yet I can't resist, and I inhale that second serving at an almost polite and modest speed.

So, how is the turkey-and-all-the-fixings a discomfort food? Well, sometime after midnight my horribly distended gut shouts me awake with a plaintiff, "Are you trying to poison me with all that rich food?! I'm dying here! Where's the Pepto and the heating pad?!"

Of course, this year Covid-19 might force me to go it alone with a turkey from a box, gravy from a mix, and a phone call from the family saying "We miss you Grampa, but at least we have leftovers this year!" ■



Name: Brian & Patricia Dake

Location: Napa Valley, California



You are both listed on the articles. Are you a team? How does that work?

Patricia and I write these recipe articles as a team. I usually have 5 to 10 recipes in development and pitch to Search Magazine based on their requirements. Issue theme and the time of year influence our recipe choice.

I do the kitchen testing and rough draft of the recipe. Patricia does taste testing and offers feedback.

I often collect fun facts about the recipes, equipment and/or ingredients. Patricia writes the introduction and copyedits the recipe. Four times a year, we transform our home kitchen into a photo studio.

Patricia designs the table settings and adjusts the setting for each step. I photograph each step from six angles, taking three shots of each. We review the 180 to 372 photos and eliminate until we have the best photo of each angle to edit and crop.

We pick the best photo for each step until we have 20-25 finalized photos. Of these, Search Magazine staff will select two to five photos for use along with the edited recipe.

Patricia and I enjoy doing these articles as it gives us something creative to do together. And, of course, we get to eat the food once the photoshoot is completed. And trust me, none of that wine you see in the photos goes to waste.



Do you have a recommendation for us?

I have been having great fun learning to cook with a Dutch oven. I have come to this later in life because a Le Creuset Signature Enameled Round Cast Iron Dutch Oven can easily cost over \$300. But I found an incredible deal at Cost Plus World Market on a 5 Quart Indigo Blue Enamel Cast Iron Dutch Oven for \$59 and have not looked back since. ■





According to my chef daughter, Elizabeth, a playlist makes all the difference as she motivates her kitchen to complete the day's orders and rushes.

I'm just an average home cook, but music definitely is a source of inspiration. When I'm not writing, I'm a harpist.

From cookie platters to videos teaching me to braise to baking with my friends via Skype, the holidays seem to have become "cooking season" for my family.

After a summer of quarantine, I've learned that anything that can inspire a dance party in the kitchen is worth nurturing. Here is my ultimate playlist.

*Please note, I've edited the list so that it is family and kid friendly. You can email me directly for the unedited list. *

***I am the Grinch* by Tyler, the Creator and Fletcher Jones.**

Kicking off the list with lyrics about our favorite holiday character is a good place to start. No matter if you're celebrating Christmas, Winter Solstice, or Hanukkah, I guarantee "Twenty-five, twenty-five, twenty-five days" is your new earworm.

***God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen* by the Barenaked Ladies and Sarah McLachlan.**

Careful, you might just find yourself directing a three-part harmony with your kids or your friends online with this one. Wooden spoon handles make excellent batons.

***Six White Boomers* by Rolf Harris.**

South of the equator, folks living in New Zealand and Australia have a slightly different story of Santa. It's too hot at Christmas for Santa's reindeer and hence, it's are delivered by six old man kangaroos called boomers.

***Saint Stephen's Day Murders* by the Chieftains and Elvis Costello.**

Saint Stephen is the first martyr of the Catholic Church, and his feast day is the first day of Christmas. More of a European holiday, it's celebrated in all kinds of macabre ways from children chasing each other and singing songs, to dressing up in old clothes and hats or beating farm animals with branches of holly.

***The Home Alone Theme* by John Williams.**

There is an entire generation who grew up with this movie as part of their holiday movie tradition. John Williams is a master composer for film, and I just couldn't have a playlist without him.



Rockabilly Christmas by Big Bad Voodoo Daddy.

If you weren't dancing before, this one will do the trick. If you've never heard rockabilly music, it's one-part swing, one-part rock with a smidge of country. Much like a granger cookie, it's filled with some of the best things to be enjoyed all in one bite.

Eight Little Candles by Daria Music.

What's not to love about this song? Dance worthy—think tango—this version of Eight Candles is a far cry from the tinkling tune taught to children in school. Get your kids to learn this version They'll love it. Whisking sauces, drizzling glaze, or tapping of powdered sugar is raised to an art form with this song.

Polar Express Audio by Tom Hanks.

This is the official audio of Tom Hanks introducing the Polar Express. Another family tradition for many, it's also a great intro to the book if you've not read it yourself or to your kids. After a day of cooking, the Polar Express theme is good. Note, I did not put the hot cocoa song on this list. Why? It used to be on this play list, but it inspired the "Great Batter Splatter of 2019." I won't go into detail but let's just say that in July, one can still find December batter up in the lighting tracks when changing a light bulb.

Holiday Hormonal Rhapsody by Four Bitchin' Babes

I end this list with this song as the grand finale. So much of the holiday work and stress falls on the matriarchs of the family. While we are happy to make magical memories, help the elf, snap the photos, and skip a few hours of sleep here and there to wrap, assemble, and sparkle our way into the season, it's a thankless job. Ladies of all ages, this one is for you.

The winter holidays might just mean a bit more to us this year than any other. 2020 has been difficult in ways we never could have predicted. I am counting my blessings. Please remember to be gentle with one another. Some of us will have empty chairs at our holiday tables for one reason or another. Reach out digitally. Laugh, sing, dance whenever you can. Remember, to cook anything is to create a little bit of magic. After all, cooking is taking humble, single ingredients and transforming them into something better. Sounds like magic to me. I hope this playlist helps. ■



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A vibrant city of 2.7 million people, Toronto, Ontario sits on the north shore of Lake Ontario, approximately eighty miles from Niagara Falls and the US border.

One of the most cosmopolitan and multicultural cities in the world, Toronto has over two hundred distinct ethnic origins. While English is the primary language of most Torontonians, over 160 languages are spoken there.

From the Royal Ontario Museum to the Ontario Science Centre (both places I hung out at in my misspent youth) Toronto is full of museums and galleries large and small. Culturally, it's home to dozens of ballet and dance companies, a half-dozen opera companies, symphonies, and world class theaters.

There are film festivals galore, including the world-class TIFF, music festivals like Caribana, and Pride Week, the LGBTQ+ Festival that is one of the largest in the world. In addition to a low crime rate that makes T-Dot one of the safest cities in North America, the city is an education destination with five public universities, four colleges, and the Royal Conservatory of Music.

My personal list of spots to hit when I'm home are the Toronto Islands with its beaches and walking paths, the 1815-foot-tall CN Tower, Ripley's

Aquarium, and Casa Loma, the urban castle with secret passages and a tunnel to the stables.

You can get to Toronto by plane (Toronto Pearson International Airport), train by VIA Rail, or automobile in an 8-hour drive from either NYC or Chicago. It has four distinct seasons with eleven professional sports teams, including the Raptors and the Blue Jays, providing a game for each of those seasons.

Like any metropolis, Toronto has shops and restaurants to provide for every taste and budget, making the biggest question now, when are you going? ■





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Sweet and Savory Holiday Sides



It isn't often we have the opportunity to feature our favorite side dishes. The recipes we share focus mainly on entrees, and for holiday dinners, the emphasis is often on turkey, ham, or roast beef.

For most people, Thanksgiving doesn't feel like Thanksgiving without a turkey, but let's be honest. A holiday feast is more than the meat. What makes those meals special is family, friends, and a variety of foods for everyone to enjoy. Today, we are going to share with you three of our family's favorite holiday sides.

Garlic-Rosemary Mashed Parsnips

Consider a tasty alternative to the usual mashed potatoes. Parsnips are a member of the Apiaceae family, closely related to carrots and parsley, but unlike carrots or parsley, you can't eat the greens. Parsnips, eaten solely as a cooked root vegetable, are often added to soups and stews for extra flavor. It's how we first discovered them. Because we enjoy how much they enhance other dishes, we've created



Ingredients

*Sprigs of Rosemary, fresh, enough for 2 teaspoons minced

*4 large cloves Garlic

*1 teaspoon Salt

*2 pounds Parsnips

*10 tablespoons Butter (1 1/4 sticks)

*Cooking spray



Preparation

*Rinse the fresh rosemary with water and shake off excess before using your hands to strip off the rosemary leaves from the harder stems.

*Place rosemary leaves on a cutting board and using an 8-inch chef's knife, mince rosemary leaves to make 2 teaspoons of minced rosemary.

*Cut dried ends from each garlic clove.

*Lay the chef's knife flat over each clove, and using your hand, apply even pressure to the flat of the blade to lightly crush clove. This will loosen the paper-like skin from around the clove.

*Peel skin from garlic cloves and discard.

*Use knife to mince garlic into small pieces.

*Combine minced garlic and minced rosemary in a pile on a cutting board and mix in 1 teaspoon of salt. Let mixture rest while you work with the parsnips.

*Using a vegetable peeler, remove and discard the parsnip skins.

*With a cutting board and an 8-inch Chef's

knife, cut and discard both ends from each parsnip. Cut the parsnips into 3/4-inch pieces.

*Place parsnips in a stock pot that holds at least 5 quarts. Add enough water to the pan to cover the parsnips and place on stovetop with burner set to high.

*Cover pan with lid. Once steam begins to escape lid, turn burner to low and let simmer for 30 minutes or until parsnips are soft.

*Carefully drain hot water from parsnips and allow to cool just enough to safely handle.

*Place the warm parsnip pieces into a large mixing bowl. Slice 1 stick (8 tablespoons) butter into 8 equal pieces and add to mixing bowl along with garlic mixture.

*Using a handheld potato masher, mash together parsnips, butter, and garlic-rosemary mixture.

Cook

*Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

*Coat baking dish with cooking spray.

*Using a cooking spoon or spatula, place parsnip mixture in baking dish. Spread the top of the parsnips flat.

*Cut remaining 1/4 stick (2 teaspoons) of butter into thin slices and distribute across the top of parsnips.

*Bake for 50-60 minutes or until the top and edges begin to brown.

Serve

*Remove from oven and serve from baking dish.



Cranberry Sauce

Many of you may share my own childhood memories of cranberry sauce from a can. I was a teenager before I tasted real, homemade cranberry sauce. Sweet and tangy, homemade cranberry sauce is delicious served warm or cold. For holiday meals, we usually make it up a day ahead and chill overnight, but I usually can't resist a small dish of it served warm the night before. Using fresh cranberries is preferred, but frozen cranberries are an acceptable substitute. What makes this recipe special is the added orange zest and a balsamic vinegar finish to balance out the flavor of the cranberries.



Ingredients

- *Cooking spray
- *12 oz. bag Cranberries, whole, fresh, or frozen
- *1 cup Water
- *1 cup Coconut sugar
- *2 Oranges, medium, firm
- *2 teaspoons Balsamic Vinegar

Preparation

- *Apply cooking spray to inside of serving bowls.
- *Place cranberries in strainer and rinse with water.
- *Drain cranberries and place in small stockpot.
- *Using citrus zester, remove zest in strips from one orange.
- *Using chef's knife, mince zest strips into small

square pieces, yielding about 2 teaspoons of minced zest.

*Add minced orange zest to cranberries.

*Add coconut sugar and water to cranberries, stirring to mix ingredients.

Cook

*Place stockpot over high heat, bringing mixture to boil while stirring with cooking spoon.

*Continue to stir mixture as needed, until cranberries begin to split.

*Reduce heat as mixture begins to foam, maintaining enough heat that mixture still bubbles.

*Once the mixture begins to thicken, remove from heat and stir in balsamic vinegar.

*Spoon cranberry sauce into serving dishes.

*Garnish dishes with twisted strips of orange peel, cut from the second orange, and place dishes in refrigerator to cool.

Serve

*Serve as a side with roasted poultry or as a condiment on turkey sandwiches.



Sweet Potatoes

Sweet potatoes are a fairly common holiday side. I've experienced them with all kinds of added ingredients—everything from tiny marshmallows to peaches, but I like them prepared best like this. Our secret ingredient is beer.

Don't worry, the alcohol cooks out during baking process, leaving a subtle flavor that melds deliciously with the sweet potatoes. Holiday dinners can be a challenge to prepare. There are so many dishes and so little oven space. Why does it seem like everything needs to go in the oven all at the same time? Pre-cooking the sweet potatoes in a slow cooker and finishing them in the oven frees up that precious oven space to make room for all those other dishes.



Ingredients

- *3 lbs. Sweet Potatoes, whole, large
- *1 cup Water
- *8 tablespoons Butter (1 stick)
- *12 oz. Sour Cream
- *8 oz. Beer

Preparation

*Thoroughly rinse sweet potatoes, removing any dirt or string-like roots.

*Place sweet potatoes in slow cooker with 1 cup water.

*Place lid securely on slow cooker and turn heat to high.

*After 1 hour, reduce heat to low and continue cooking 4 hours or until sweet potatoes are soft to the touch.

*Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees.

*Carefully remove sweet potatoes from slow cooker and allow to cool until they can be safely handled.

*With a chef's knife, split each sweet potato in half lengthwise.

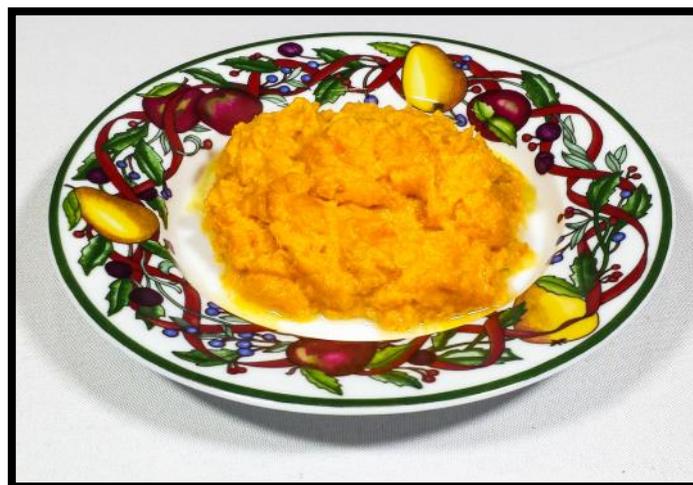
*Using the metal, cooking spoon, scoop out the sweet potato flesh and place in a mixing bowl. Be careful not to include any potato skin. Discard skins.

*Add 1/2 cup butter to mixing bowl and using a potato masher, mash warm sweet potatoes until butter is mixed in.

*Add sour cream and beer. Mash mixture until well blended.

Cook

*Place sweet potato mixture in baking dish. With cooking spoon, spread the top of the mixture flat.



*Place lid on baking dish and bake mixture for 40 minutes.

Serve

*Remove baking dish from oven and serve as side dish. ■





A Hangi is a traditional, Maori way of cooking food from New Zealand. It's also become a twenty-year tradition at my house with up to 350 people from all over the world in attendance. Typically, one only experiences a Hangi when in New Zealand. But my husband and his friends have been hosting one in Detroit, creating a "home away from home" for ex-pats and Kiwis abroad throughout the United States and Canada.

You'll need

- 1 large, steel lined pit
- River rocks
- Steel, wire baskets
- New, white, cotton sheets
- Large hemp coffee sacks

Food

- 8 legs of lamb
- 3 shoulders of beef
- 2 pork butts
- 12 chickens
- 20 lbs of onions



Hangi

- 30 lbs of carrots
- 30 lbs of potatoes
- 1 case of baby leaf spinach
- 24 cabbages
- 8 lbs of sweet potatoes
- Several jars of minced garlic
- Salt and pepper

The night before the Hangi, they gather friends and family to chop all the vegetables. Set them to soak in coolers filled with water. In clean barrels, place the sheets and sacks in cool water. While everything soaks overnight, spend the rest of the evening with those gathered, joking and laughing and maybe singing a song or two.

The next morning, collect the male friends of last night and head down to the Hangi pit at about 5 am and build a huge fire. When the embers are glowing rocket hot, remove some of the ash. Place river rocks on the glowing embers and let them heat up.

Head back to the vegetables and set up tables where you rub the meat with chopped garlic, salt, and pepper. Line each basket with one soaked sheet. Inside the sheet, layer spinach leaves, cabbage leaves, carrots, sweet potatoes, white potatoes, cabbage chunks, several chickens, more vegetables, one shoulder of beef, more vegetables, one butt of pork, more vegetables. Top with a couple of legs of lamb and a final layer of cabbage leaves and spinach. Fold the top of the sheet over the layers of meat and vegetables.

When the baskets are filled, transport them to the Hangi pit, where the river rocks should be glowing. Place each basket inside the pit, atop the glowing rocks and embers. Place the wet sacks, soaked the night before, over the sheet-covered baskets and tuck along the sides. Next, shovel dirt from the pit over the sacks and baskets and bury the food.



Everything in the fire pit is pressure cooked as well as steamed for the next five hours. While waiting, it's time for a bit of fun.

We are fortunate to have talented friends. Hence, we have live music all day. Many songs are from New Zealand bands mixed with music from the US and Canada. Next, several women help to set up games. Games aren't just for kids, either.

While little ones are invited to the "lolly scramble" where adults throw candy from New Zealand into the air, and kids six and under are invited to catch or gather them up, that is the only "kids" game. Competition runs fierce as my husband announces the favorite game of the day, the Gumboot Throwing Contest. Originating in New Zealand, Gumboot throwing is no easy sport. Men, women, and kids compete in heats to see how far they can get a gumboot across the field. Some throw toe first. Some grip the very top of the boot. Over hand, under hand, and my favorite, backwards throw, all seem to have their advantages. I hand out bottles of NZ wine as prizes to the men and women and "chocolate fish" to the children for first, second, and third place.

Next, we are honored to have a group of Kiwi men and some of their children perform a Haka. A Haka is a traditional Maori chant with movement that imparts a lesson or tells a story. It's sacred. We're humbled to have it as part of our Hangi.

By the time the games and Haka are finished, it's time to take the food out. A blessing is said in Maori and English to show gratitude for the food and the chance to be together. Men and boys coming of age dig the hot earth from the top and surrounding area of the pit. Men wearing thick gloves lift the steaming baskets and take it to tables.

Men serve the food while the women and children are invited to eat first in keeping the tradition with NZ culture. Men follow afterwards. Children playing, music, and laughter of nearly 200 people grows a bit louder as we continue into the evening. While we were not able to gather in 2020, it is my sincere wish to celebrate twenty years of Hangi gatherings in Michigan in 2021. ■



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Dutch Oven Citrus Chicken with Potatoes



We looked at Dutch ovens for years before we bought one. They'd been recommended highly by friends and family. With the prospect of learning a new cooking technique, we did our research and learned that Dutch ovens originated some three hundred years ago.

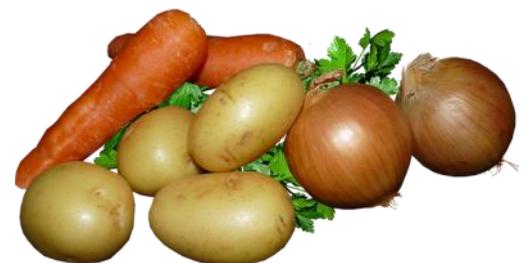
With the idea of making cookware more cost effective, and since cast iron cost less than brass, Abraham Darby planned to sell more cookware by making it from cast iron. In 1707, he obtained a patent for the process of casting iron in sand, derived from the Dutch process of casting brass in sand. Thus, the name Dutch oven was given to the lidded cookware he produced. That name has stayed with the product.

The American Dutch oven changed over time to include a shallower pot, legs to hold the oven above the coals, and a lid flange to keep the coals on the lid.

The Dutch oven has further transformed into the modern ridge-less, leg-less enameled variety we find in modern kitchens.

Essentially a modern Dutch oven is a slow cooker, used on the stovetop and in a baking oven. As enamel is prone to cracking if the pot gets too hot, it's important not to overheat an enamel Dutch oven. Do not exceed 300 degrees when placing it in an oven or cooking on medium heat on a stovetop. Always keep in mind a Dutch oven is heavy and hot when cooking. Be sure to use adequate hand protection, such as oven mitts or heavy hot pads. Cook times specified may need to be adjusted for your cooking environment, as all Dutch ovens, stovetops, and baking ovens vary.

What we've most enjoyed about our Dutch oven is the taste and texture of the food. Meats and vegetables don't fall apart and lose their shape, yet come out tender and fork ready.





Ingredients

- *1 Shallot
- *1 Onion, yellow, large
- *1 Green Bell pepper
- *2 Carrots
- *2 pounds Potatoes, Yukon Gold
- *2 Chicken Breast, boneless, skinless
- *4 tablespoon Olive Oil
- *1 Lemon
- *4 teaspoons Italian Seasoning
- *2 teaspoons Garlic Salt
- *2 tablespoons Corn Starch
- *3/4 cup water
- *1/2 stick butter (1/4 cup)

Preparation

*Cut ends from shallot and remove dry outer skin. Dice shallot into 3/8-inch squares.

*Cut ends from onion and remove dry outer skin. Cut onion in half pole-to-pole. Slice each half to make *1/4-inch-wide half-rings.

*Cut ends from bell pepper and remove core, ribs, and seeds. Cut bell pepper into roughly 1-inch square pieces.

*Rinse carrots with water and remove ends. Cut carrots into inch rounds.

*Rinse potatoes with water. Using a peeler remove any "potatoes eyes," sprouts, or dark green skin, leaving the potato skin mostly intact. Cut potatoes into 1 1/2-inch cubes.

*Cut chicken breasts into 1-inch cubes and place in a metal mixing bowl.

*Add 1 tablespoon olive oil and mix until each piece of chicken is coated.

*Using a lemon zester remove the zest from the lemon, reserve lemon and mince lemon zest into small pieces.

*Cut lemon into quarters.

*Add half of lemon zest, Italian seasoning, and garlic salt to the mixture and stir. Add remaining half of lemon zest, Italian seasoning, and garlic salt. Mix well.

*Sprinkle cornstarch on chicken a little at a time while mixing, until cornstarch evenly coats chicken.



Cook

*In a 12-inch, non-stick frying pan, add 2 tablespoons olive oil and place on stovetop at medium-high heat.

*Add chicken pieces to frying pan in small batches and cook until browned. Turn chicken pieces to insure they are cooked on all sides. When browned, turn off heat and remove chicken from frying pan. Set chicken aside in a bowl.

*Add 3/4 cup water to frying pan. Return pan to heat to deglaze. Using a wooden spatula, scrape the pan bottom to free all the bits stuck to the pan. When pan is deglazed, remove from heat and pour thickened liquid over chicken.



Preheat oven to 300 degrees.

*Place a Dutch oven on the stovetop burner at medium heat. Add 1 tablespoon of olive oil and 1/2 stick of butter. Place lid on Dutch oven until butter is just melted.

*Remove lid and add shallots and onions, spreading onions evenly over shallots. Replace lid. Let cook for 5 minutes.

*Remove lid and add green peppers, carrots, potatoes, and lemon pieces, distributing them evenly across the onions.

*Distribute browned chicken pieces and drippings over vegetables and replace Dutch oven lid.

*Remove Dutch oven from stovetop and place in preheated oven for 60 minutes.

*Remove lid from Dutch oven and continue to cook in oven for 15 more minutes.

*Turn off oven and remove Dutch oven.

*As an option, you can remove what is left of the lemon quarters before serving.

Serve

*With a serving ladle, mix contents of Dutch oven and spoon into bowls. ■



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Fitness doesn't begin and end at the gym. Most of what composes our body really happens when we eat.

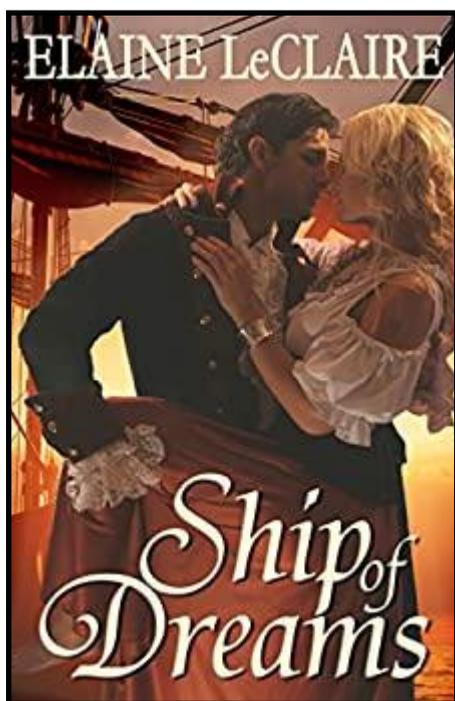
The Covid-quarantine forced people out of gyms and into their kitchens. Sit down restaurants became take-out, whether we wanted it to or not. Studies showed that without buses to catch and office buildings to walk between in the course of daily life, people were walking roughly 1,000 steps less per day in March.

With our normal routines broken, we should consider this an opportunity to examine the nutrition and calories of the food making its way into our bodies. Without group parties, travel, and off-site events, we're more in control than ever before.

Calories and nutrition don't inevitably go hand-in-hand. Unfortunately, many bulky foods are satisfying calorically but not nutritionally dense. The key is to look for variety in food groups and even in color. Potatoes, rice, pasta, and bread are quick ways to consume high calories. Meanwhile, lowly sweet peppers, blueberries, and green leafy vegetables don't pack much energy to satisfy hunger for long. Sensibly mixing calorically dense foods with nutritionally varied sources and lean protein to keep up muscle mass, will offer your body the nutrition it

needs to repair itself, grow, and keep up the immune system.

It's also possible to overdo self-denial. Despite what you may have been led to believe, we require a certain amount of fats and oils each day to keep healthy. Do not fear the burger, if that's your craving. Just remind yourself that nutrition isn't what you eat in a single day, it's the flux and flow of the body's requirements versus the input over a much longer span. ■



Master of his destiny, terror of the Caribbean, the pirate Black Angel is also elegant, charming and seductive.

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The holiday season is upon us. We know that parties and family celebrations can pose one of the greatest health risks during the pandemic. How will we manage the usual events and gatherings?

Restaurants and businesses have had to change their customer service methods. Santa Claus himself might be switching to curbside service. No matter how many different ways we have to find to get the usual shopping, decorating, and cooking done, one aspect of the holiday season will still be there, friends or relatives ready to offer advice about raising autistic children. Just like that legendary fruitcake nobody really wants to eat; some folks just keep on giving the gift of their opinions. How do we handle these well-meaning know-it-alls without getting coal in our stockings?



Why people give advice

They need emotional validation, which means helping someone feel heard and understood. On the positive end of this spectrum we find the people who really do just want to help. They feel anxious when they see our kids struggling. On the negative end dwell people determined to control everyone and everything around them. Susan Saint-Welch, LMFT, explains why these people need so much control. "Sometimes they just wear 'good people' down. They are not bad people usually. They have learned or believe that the only way to get what they want is to 'corner' someone and pressure them to do what they want. Sometimes they will adopt another tactic and become emotionally upset, thereby making you feel guilty and responsible for their upset feelings. However, no one is ever 'responsible' for how someone else feels. How we feel is our own response."



How to respond

Don't take it personally. The motivation for giving unsolicited advice has a lot more to do with what the giver needs. Stay cheerful and polite. Thank the person for their input and just keep on with whatever you were doing. Say no thanks in a positive way. If need be, mention an appropriate authority figure. Example: "It's kind of you to take an interest. Our doctor/speech therapist/behavioral consultant has helped us create a treatment plan." Then decline to answer any further questions or efforts at debate.

Avoid being manipulated. If the advice giver tries to escalate, this might attract attention of a third party. That person might try to play peacemaker. Oddly enough, instead of telling the person who is being intrusive to go away, the peacemaker all too often tells the person on the receiving end to play nice. "Don't hurt their feelings," we're told again and again. Amy Morin, LCSW and author of *13 Things Mentally Strong People Don't Do*, recommends we stand our ground. "Giving in to guilt trips or refusing to speak up for yourself, gives power to other people. Rather than blame them for wasting your time or 'forcing' you to do something, recognize that you're in charge of yourself. Establish healthy physical and emotional boundaries that give you control over how you spend your time and with whom you spend it."

Be prepared for people who expect immediate compliance. If Great Aunt Cecelia wants to pull rank on you and demand you act on her advice right then, don't try to reason with her. The more you engage, the longer the conversation goes on and the likelier it is to turn into an argument. It may be necessary to remove yourself and your child from the situation. If that means getting in your vehicle and leaving, do it.



If they go too far

Clarify your boundaries. Give them a simple, "I'm not going to discuss that," then walk away. Keep in mind this advice from Dr. Brad Burklow, MS, LCPC, LPHA, "Don't feel obligated to spend time around people that make you feel bad about yourself and know that you can step away from a conversation whenever you need to, or whenever your boundaries are not being respected."



Create a conversational diversion. If the person causing the problem is doing so for attention, then get them talking about their main focus—themselves. Work progress? A favorite restaurant? A new personal possession? Give this person another way to stand in the spotlight.

Have a list of plausible excuses ready. Autistic kids do get overstimulated easily, so circumstances might provide an opportunity. If not, then keep it simple. It's a busy time of year, and people get tired more quickly. There's no need for blame, just fact. You're worn out, and it's time to go home.

Have a rescue team standing by. This doesn't mean dialing 911 (unless that really is what the situation calls for). Before you attend the event, be it online or otherwise, make arrangements with somebody who will also be at the gathering, somebody who knows how to intervene in an appropriate manner. That way, if you and/or your child gets cornered by the persistent advice giver, you can count on a timely rescue.

Enjoy the holidays. Do what feeds your heart, your mind, and your spirit. ■



GARDENING | Reflecting & Replanning BY SUZANNE MADRON



As the growing season comes to a close, it's time to think of garden cleanup and prepping for next year. In my case, it means re-evaluating my garden layout and planting scheme.

Since I wasn't quite sure where the plants from the old garden ended up after the garden overhaul, I was hesitant to pull anything that might be a resurrection of something I had already established in the old plot. Add in delayed shipping times from plant sellers and it took a bit longer to get everything up and running. Once everything was planted and took hold, however, it all took off. The taller-than-me jimson weed is a perfect example of both why it's good to pull weeds and why next year I won't have a 'let's see what this is' attitude. The volunteer plants, such as the flower-of-an-hour, garlic, mustard, and single corn stalk have overtaken some areas while other areas are now bare at the end of the season.

Another problem was after taking the garden down to the roots earlier this year, I fell into the common trap of overplanting. My eyes were bigger than my garden space, and I ended up with a lot of gladioli, which was fine, but a bunch of other transplanted plants were crowded out in the process.

As the annuals clear out and the perennials fill in, it's clear there is definitely room for improvement. A reflection of each year's garden influences the next year's planting. The peas have all died off and have been put back into the garden as mulch, sans peapods. The dried peas will be used as seeds for next year's crop since they were plentiful and delicious.

Fertilizer has been applied to the current plants to help them through the second half of the growing season and markers have been placed to indicate where flowers were planted and where the bulbs are located in order to facilitate rearranging them in the fall after the growth has died off. I've also created a list of things I'll need for next year in way of garden trellises, planters, etc. Plans have begun to form around ways to insulate the fig trees and rosemary for the winter and when in the fall would be a good time to fertilize and mix in vermiculite to break up the clay soil. I will also need to prune and shape the jasmine, akebia, wisteria, and grapevines so they stay under control next year. I'll also need to trim back the fruit trees, though I'm not quite sure if my one pawpaw tree will survive its transplant.

When I redid the garden, I knew it would take time to recuperate, so both the lack of fruit on the trees and minimal plant growth were not a surprise. Patience is the key to any successful garden, after all. What I didn't anticipate was a spider mite attack, a literal flood, and that goji berries don't taste as good when they're fresh versus dried.

Lessons learned from this year? Leave more room for the plants that were intended and pull weeds sooner. ■



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Big Appliances Fight for Your Counter Space



Every industry has its advancements. Pets, babies, and cooking are among those for which people will endlessly come up with new ideas.

Cooking combines both necessity and hobby. When you're looking to make something delicious, convenience and speed become a priority. Check out various cooking options to make your life easier but remember you only have so much counter and storage space in your kitchen.

Rice Cooker

A rice cooker doesn't sound like a necessity at first, but the ease of adding rice, salt, and water, closing the lid, and letting it cook to fluffy or sticky perfection can't be overstated. Rice is such a common staple, figure out how frequently you have it and accept that the rice cooker is meant to be in most people's lives. Branch out into new types of rice. Most rice cookers can also steam vegetables. Some can do even more.

Crockpot

The classic device for easy cooking, a crockpot is a set it and forget it device that lets food combine, typically in four or eight hours, until it is a lovely amalgamation of flavor. Endless recipes abound. It's lovely to put in your ingredients and leave it to cook with the smell gradually growing as the hours pass. This is generally best for foods where the texture will be soft, though some recipes call for you to add a few last ingredients toward the end of the cooking

time. There's nothing new or unique about slow cooking, but it's nice to come home to a finished meal on a cold winter day.

Sous Vide

Sous Vide cooking sounds fancy, but it literally means "under vacuum". Food is vacuum sealed in waterproof plastic and submerged in hot water. The water circulates at a constant temperature, ensuring a slow and perfectly even cooking. Of the methods listed here, it has the smallest footprint for storage, though it requires a tub or sink of water to cook. It is best when you need precision, such as a perfectly done steak.

Instant Pot

The instant pot is the modern answer to the pressure cooker. Usually equipped with a variety of features, you can sauté in the pot, then switch to pressure cook, slow cook, or even cook rice. The shape and size aren't necessarily optimized for any one of these features, but it's nice to have a multi-purpose device in the kitchen. The best part is the amazing speed of the instant pot, which can cook potatoes and vegetables as a side in less than ten minutes if you use the pressure cook setting. Be sure to include time to get up to pressure and depressurize if using that feature as the recipes can be deceptive.

Air Fryer

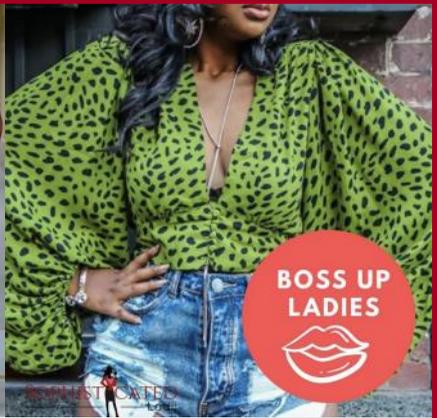
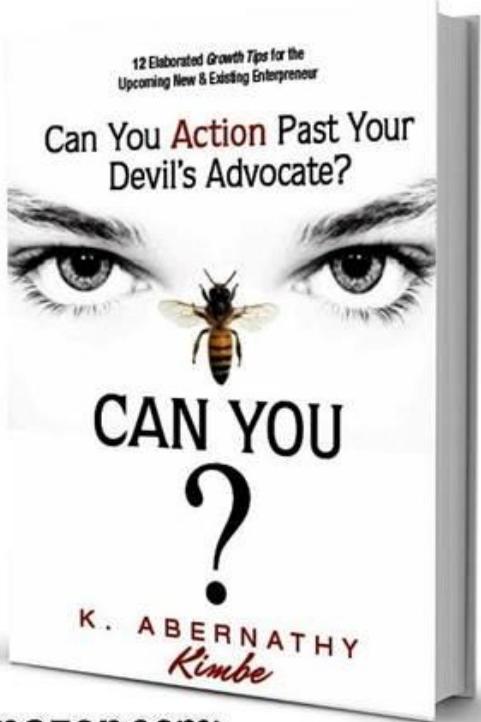
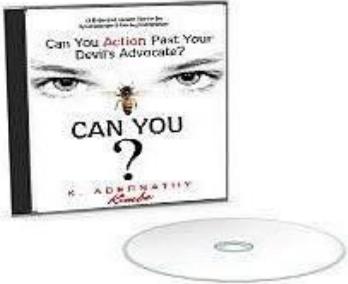
The idea behind air frying is to reduce the amount of oil needed to create crisp food. Working much like a convection oven, the air fryer has a slotted basket that allows air to flow all around. It's quick and fantastic for the right foods. Anything you need crispy, like French fries, taquitos, and frozen corn dogs, are left warm and crunchy. Teenagers love it. It's quick to get hot and good for reheating leftovers. However, if you don't like fried foods you might be happier using that counter space for something else. ■



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My stepchildren and I started cooking together when they were 3 and 5. Early lessons included cutting hot dogs with a safe butter knife, making Pylsur Pasta, stirring sauces, and baking cookies.

Along the way, they learned to stir without a splash and how to crack eggs without adding shells.

There are many reasons to cook with your children. Most importantly, it allows you to bond in time spent together and provides them a sense of accomplishment from making something and being able to eat it. It's an opportunity to teach hygiene, like washing hands properly and cleaning up afterward. You can also sneak in math when they measure, double, or halve a recipe.

They'll learn even if they don't know it. Dropping pasta into the boiling water from too high is not a good idea but wearing an apron and long sleeves is. Tool use, from cutting fruit or vegetables to frosting a cake, helps with hand-eye coordination. Decorating cookies at Christmas is a fun way to engage the children, even if they lick frosting off their fingers.

We spent a summer in California cherry-picking and making jelly. Watching the mixture set up and listening to the ring of the cans as they sealed was almost more fun for them than eating the jelly. All the grandparents got jelly that Christmas.

Today my stepchildren are 7 and 12, and while there are still some messes to clean up, they help bake, make pancakes, and prepare pizza dough.

They know how to measure. They can make whipped cream, and the youngest started using a sharp knife a few years ago. Sure, we still get some eggshells now and then, and I have plenty of stray flour to clean up, but they get to help with that, too. There are occasional fights over who gets to turn on the dishwasher, but I am pleased to say I am helping raise them to do more than get takeout and use a microwave.

The youngest likes her *Egg Bread*, the American version of *Toad in a Hole*. The oldest likes waffles with whipped cream and jam but revisits an old cookbook for *Cocoa Soup*. I like that they get to have fun while learning, even if it took me a while to accept that mess is part of the process.

Egg Bread

- 1 Piece of bread
- 1 Egg
- 1-2 Tablespoons of butter



Take a piece of bread and cut or tear a medium-large hole in the middle. I try to have them leave about 3/4 inch of bread inside the crust. Melt butter in a frying pan. Add the bread with the hole and the piece on the side to toast a little in the butter.

Crack your egg into the hole, and let it cook some, turn it over with the spatula and let it finish cooking, your little piece of bread too. Serve and enjoy!

Kako (Cocoa) Soup

- 3 Tablespoons of cocoa powder
- 3 Tablespoons of sugar
- 1 Tablespoon cornstarch or potato starch
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 3 cups milk
- 2 cups water
- Salt to taste



Put the cocoa, sugar, and cinnamon into a saucepan. Add the water and bring to a boil, stirring to mix. Add the milk and bring back to a boil, then turn down to medium heat.

Use a little water to mix the starch and add it to the pot, stirring to thicken to a creamy chocolate soup.

Add a little salt to taste and enjoy on a cold night. ■

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