

ANNA


comfort | ISSUE 20

MAKE EVERYDAY SPECIAL

"From morning till night, sounds drift from the kitchen, most of them familiar and comforting."



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Chicken drenched in silky coconut milk sets the stage for a gathering of girlfriends.



The summer of my amazing luck.

Sometimes a writer can sum up exactly how I feel in just a few short words. This summer, it was the title of Miriam Toews' novel *The Summer of My Amazing Luck* that did just that.

Now that I am settling into fall and have time on the couch to reflect with pencil and notepad, I realize the most beautiful things happen without a lot of planning. My summer was no exception.

When I got an invitation to visit Alabama in early August, it sounded like just the adventure we needed. So with *Irma Voth* and *The Help* stuffed in my bag and two teenagers in tow, we set out. The moment we stepped from the plane, a heavy, humid heat greeted us. That sultry weather was the backdrop of a week of lazy poolside days and incredible southern cuisine. From baskets of beignets in the morning to baskets of deep-fried seafood at night, we were able to experience the warm culture of this faraway, yet somehow familiar, place.

Guiding us along the way was Joe Bob, a neighbouring condo owner who decided to take us under his wing. Our week culminated with a boat ride, which took us through the Bayou from Orange Beach into the Gulf of Mexico where we saw dolphins jumping all around our boat. Every few hours or so, Joe Bob would steer to shore, and we'd jump on the dock and head to charming restaurants where we had Royal Red shrimp straight from the sea.

Immediately upon returning home, we were invited to a Lake of the Woods cottage for a weekend sleepover with friends. It turned out to be a royal weekend of feasting, with just a few hours of sun tanning, a couple of boat rides and a workout or two thrown in for good measure. One evening, we decided to have a night-long tasting party, which started with Campari cocktails and baked ribs. The evening was as much about cooking as it was about eating so we just stayed in the kitchen, grazing as we went. In the end, we'd sampled everything from seared scallops and fennel-infused meatballs to blackened porterhouse and crème brûlée.

In both cases it was about the right people, at the right place and pairing both with good food and life's lovely surprises.

This issue, as fall beckons us back into our kitchens, there's more opportunity for amazing luck. I'm going to savour every bite.

Enjoy!

Mari



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Comfort me with dinner.

A few weeks ago, I was going to my girlfriend Celina's house to play this rather ridiculous dice-rolling game called Bunco. Each month, 11 other women and I gather at someone's home to do so, with each of us enjoying the conversation, the wine and the food. But this month, I was running extremely late and, knowing I was making the other women wait, I arrived at Celina's completely frazzled.

But as soon as I stepped into the kitchen and tripped over apologies, Celina just handed me a margarita and a plate.

I went to the counter and noticed sliced, grilled chicken and black beans were waiting to be hugged in tortillas. Celina had also made several different varieties of salsa — tomatillo, classic, even fruit — and nacho chips were spilling out of a big bowl. Over on the counter sat a key lime pie, the peaks of its snowy meringue curled and gilded.

I sat down, started to eat and, almost immediately, felt calmer. I turned to the other ladies and exhaled.

"Man, sometimes I forget how nice it is to have someone cook for you," I said.

They just nodded, and we started our game. But the thought has stayed with me. Though I love to cook for others, and just being in the kitchen can bring me peace, there is nothing more comforting than when someone sits you down and feeds you a home-cooked, from-scratch meal. I forget sometimes that food has that power, that it can make you stop, reflect, redirect your mood.

Every issue, we come up with an emotional theme, something that encompasses the moment of the season as well as the features inside the magazine. Over the years, that's meant issues have been defined by joy or hope or brilliance.

But as I looked over this issue, I realized comfort is the theme that runs through every part of it, from the steamy windows of a French bistro (page 73) and ease of female conversation (page 25) to a warm harvest supper (page 65), preparing meals for future dinners (page 41) and even coming up with different ways to prepare the most basic of comfort foods, chicken (page 51).

Interestingly, as Celina's Mexican meal showed me, the term comfort food applies to a much broader variety of dishes than it used to. No longer is it just grandma's chicken noodle soup or macaroni and cheese. As the traditions of other cultures have become cemented in our food memories, our palates have come to crave nutty pad thai or rice soaked in coconut milk (page 36). French pâté and baguettes (page 76). And the tang of sweet and sour chicken (page 58).

This issue, during this season of pumpkin patches, cloudy afternoons and school schedules, we invite you to bring this comfort into your kitchen. Serve these special meals thinking about how nice it feels when someone serves you. And, if you're lucky, someone will return the favour.

Eat well,

Tara Kaprowy
Editor

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manners and etiquette



Kids at the table.

Instilling table manners in your children is an important job, but not an easy one.

My husband and I have told my stepdaughter Gabrielle to chew with her mouth closed about a hundred million times. It's a reasonable command, we feel, and not too hard to follow, especially since she's nearly mastered the rest of table manners protocol. But each night at dinner, as she takes a bite of food, there it is: a disgusting picture of what the meal I just cooked looks like incinerated into a mash.

So, each night at dinner, my husband and I try to come up with memorable ways to make her close her mouth while she's eating. We've tried being stern, we've tried pleading with her, we've tried chewing with our mouths open too. One night my husband told her about a doctor he knows who eats in the cafeteria each day and smacks his food so intently he is always sitting alone, so I suppose we've suggested the possibility of being ostracized too.

But each evening, even seconds after we've just chirped the "chew with your mouth closed" mantra, that mouth opens.

Instilling table manners in children, I know from experience, is tough. It's work, it creates unrest at the table and you end up feeling like an ogre. But when I see adults in restaurants hunched over the table and shoveling in their food, exhibiting what happens when parents don't provide table manners guidance, I know it's the right thing to do.

So let's review the basics. According to the experts, kids should:

- Wash their hands before eating.
- Sit down and put their napkin in their lap.
- Have good posture at the table. No slouching, no elbows.
- Use their cutlery as it's intended.
- Know to chew with their mouth closed and avoid talking while chewing.
- Ask to be excused from the table.
- Take their plates and cutlery to the kitchen.

(Continued on page 20)

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your mouth.



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One expert I consulted said kids should know to do this stuff by the age of 6. To me, that seems on the young side, but the basics should probably be in place by age 8 or 9.

Now, knowing the rules and getting kids to follow them are two different things. The key, the experts say, is to model the behaviour as parents. When the children follow suit, parents should tell the child specifically what he or she did right so they know to do it again. When they do the right thing, be sure to praise long and loud — remembering these picky rules and following them automatically isn't easy for kids.

If problems persist, small punishments like having them sit at a different table from the family or clean up the kitchen after dinner can work.

It's also important to explain to kids why table manners are important so they don't think they're following a random set of rules. Kids need to know good manners are intended to make dining as a family or group more comfortable and, frankly, less accident prone. They also need to know that manners equip them for adulthood so they can feel comfortable in any type of dining situation. Obviously, no four-year-old can conceptualize that idea, but a 10-year-old can.

Parents should also be realistic. Manners are only instilled over years of time, not over the dinner hour. Correct, but don't over-correct so the kid just gives up. Also, pick your battles. Manners should be instilled on a daily basis at home and at restaurants, which are exceptional testing grounds. But if your children are sitting at the kids' table at Thanksgiving — and, in my view, kids' tables are a brilliant way to make celebratory dining more enjoyable — you need to leave them alone to go nuts with their cousins.

With school back in session, it's the perfect time to resume table manners education. We've done that at our house and Gabrielle ate an entire piece of toast the other morning with that little mouth closed. Small victory, sure, but important nevertheless.

friends over





Back from the lake.

With one last look at summer and the smell of school and smoke already in the air, you all pile into the car to make the long drive home.

But as you get closer to the city, and notice that pale, yellow leaves now decorate the inukshuks perched on the side of the road, you feel yourself letting go of the lake and looking forward to being back.

For, after weeks of waterskiing, shore lunches and campfires, there are plenty of people to catch up with. And as you drive home, you find yourself planning the meal that will bring you all together.

For this, we see no better answer than Thai, a cuisine that seems almost custom-made for in-the-city girlfriend gatherings. The meal we propose starts with celebratory lychee martinis, which should establish the effervescence so important to a night of good gossip. Then it's on to salad rolls, at once chewy, light and surprisingly buttery thanks to chunks of avocado. Soup follows with crunchy shrimp bobbing in a hot, sour, tangy broth. Then comes the spice of green curry and supple pad thai. Airy, refreshing coconut custard closes the meal, though the conversation is still in full swing.

And there is just nothing like that conversation, is there? Perhaps because there was the summer distance, there is now so much to say. And so you say it and find yourself expressing things you perhaps hadn't been able to formulate yet just on your own. But your friends listen and share and eat the food you cooked for them. And as you talk, about marriage and kids, parents and in-laws, books, movies, trips, you all truly listen to each other, ask good questions, get to the heart of the matter, make soft suggestions, share similar stories, laugh.

And you realize how nice it is to be back to city life.

Fresh spring rolls

2 small ripe avocados, peeled, pitted and sliced into wedges
1 teaspoon sesame oil
1 teaspoon fresh lime juice
 $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon coarse salt and $\frac{1}{8}$ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
8 (4-inch) rice paper wrappers
4 butter lettuce leaves, torn in half
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup fresh cilantro leaves
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup julienned carrots
 $\frac{1}{4}$ cup chopped green onions

In small bowl, gently combine avocado, sesame oil, lime juice, salt and pepper; set aside.

Cover work surface with damp kitchen towel. In medium bowl of warm water, immerse one rice paper sheet; let soak 15 seconds until soft. Remove and transfer to work surface. Place lettuce leaf on bottom third of wrapper. Place 2 avocado slices on lettuce; top with cilantro, carrots and green onions. Fold in sides then roll tightly into log. Cover with damp cloth. Repeat with remaining wrappers. Serve immediately. Makes 8.









Lychee martinis

1 ½ cups gin
 3 ounces dry vermouth
 1 can whole lychee nuts in juice
 Lemon balm, to garnish

Combine gin and vermouth in a cocktail shaker with 1 cup ice. Add 6 tablespoons lychee juice from can. Stir gently until cold; strain into chilled cocktail glasses. Garnish with one lychee nut per martini and sprig of lemon balm. Serves 6.

Shrimp in hot and sour broth

2 stalks lemon grass
 3 cups homemade chicken stock
 5 kaffir lime leaves, soaked in water
 6 bird chiles or Thai chiles, stemmed, halved, seeded and sliced
 5 dried Chinese mushrooms, soaked in boiling water for 10 minutes and sliced
 ½ pound black tiger shrimp, peeled and deveined
 4 tablespoons fresh lemon juice
 2 tablespoons fish sauce
 Fresh cilantro, to garnish

Trim off and discard grassy upper stalks of lemon grass and hard root stumps. Peel off and discard tough outer layer. Flatten stalks with flat side of knife or cleaver, cut stalks into ¼-inch pieces; set aside.

In medium saucepan, bring stock to boil over medium heat. Add lemon grass, kaffir leaves and chiles. Reduce heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Add mushrooms, cook for 5 minutes. Add shrimp and cook for 3 minutes longer. Stir in lemon juice and fish sauce. Serve in shallow bowls. Garnish with cilantro. Serves 6.







Green chicken curry

2 tablespoons canola oil
 3 (5-ounce) boneless, skinless chicken breasts, sliced
 ½ cup green curry paste (see recipe below)
 1 cup canned coconut milk
 Salt and pepper, to taste
 ½ cup fresh holy basil or Thai basil, chopped

Heat oil in wok over high heat. Add chicken and cook 3 to 4 minutes, or until slightly pink. Add curry paste and cook 2 minutes. Stir in coconut milk and cook 7 to 8 minutes or until sauce thickens. Season with salt and pepper and stir in basil leaves. Serves 6.

Green curry paste

8 small fresh bird chiles or Thai chiles
 1 tablespoon minced frozen galangal
 4 pieces kaffir lime leaves, soaked and chopped
 1 cup fresh holy basil or Thai basil
 2 stalks lemon grass (bottom third only)
 3 cloves garlic, minced
 1 medium onion, finely chopped
 ¼ cup chopped coriander root
 2 tablespoons whole coriander seed
 ½ cup canola oil

Place all ingredients except oil in food processor and pulse to smooth paste, scraping sides of bowl with spatula. Turn on processor and add oil in slow, steady stream. Transfer mixture to glass jar. Mixture can be refrigerated for up to one week. Makes 1 cup.

Pad thai

1 (12-ounce) package medium-thick pad thai noodles, also referred to as Sen Chan noodles
 ¼ cup canola oil, divided
 2 cloves garlic, minced
 ½ pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts, thinly sliced
 1 (4-ounce) package firm tofu, drained and cut into ¼-inch dice
 2 eggs, beaten
 ½ cup tamarind juice
 3 tablespoons fish sauce or oyster sauce
 3 tablespoons rice vinegar
 1 tablespoon palm sugar or brown sugar
 1 teaspoon sambal olek or Sriracha sauce
 1 pound large shrimp, shelled and deveined
 ½ cup crushed, salted peanuts
 ½ cup bean sprouts, to garnish
 ½ cup cilantro, to garnish

Bring medium saucepan filled with water to boil. Add noodles and cook 3 to 5 minutes. Drain and rinse under cold water. Toss with 1 tablespoon oil; set aside.

Heat remaining oil in wok over high heat. Add garlic and chicken; cook 2 to 3 minutes until chicken is only slightly pink. Add tofu and cook 1 minute longer. Stir in eggs. Add noodles, tamarind juice, fish sauce, vinegar, sugar and sambal; cook for 3 minutes. Add shrimp and cook 2 to 4 minutes longer. Add peanuts; toss to coat. Remove from heat. Sprinkle with bean sprouts and cilantro. Serves 8.





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event.



Coconut custard with mango sauce

5 egg yolks
 $\frac{1}{3}$ cup sugar
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups heavy whipping cream
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup coconut milk
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 cup mango juice
2 teaspoons cornstarch, mixed with 1 teaspoon water

In medium bowl, whisk together egg yolks and sugar until smooth; set aside. In small saucepan, heat cream, coconut milk and vanilla over medium heat for about 3 to 4 minutes. Remove and slowly pour hot cream mixture into egg mixture, whisking constantly to prevent eggs from curdling. Strain mixture through fine-mesh sieve into clean bowl. Cool bowl over ice bath, whisking constantly to prevent film from forming.

Preheat oven to 300°F. Pour custard mixture into 6 ramekins. Place in 13 x 9-inch baking dish and fill dish with $\frac{1}{2}$ inch water. Bake for 35 to 45 minutes or until custard jiggles slightly when shaken. Chill 2 hours.

For mango sauce, in small saucepan, add juice and cook over medium heat until reduced by half. Whisk mango juice in cornstarch mixture and cook 2 minutes longer. Spoon sauce over custard. Serves 6.



FRIENDS OVER

everyday easy



EVERDAY EASY MAKE AHEAD

Freezing for the future.

If you're like us, you get enormous satisfaction out of a freezer chock-full of food in the fall.

Maybe it's a nesting thing or an ancient evolutionary throwback we inherited from the squirrels, but comfort comes along with the knowledge that, on those cold, dark evenings when you get home late from work, a home-cooked dinner is ready if you just warm it up.

Given that it's harvest season, there is all the more reason to get cracking on readying the stores for our long winter. While there's nothing better than eating something fresh from the garden, the next best thing is preserving produce that is local, grown sustainably and at its peak.

After you've gone through the effort of preparing these meals, you'll want to be thoughtful about your freezing process. The goal here is to freeze things as quickly as possible because the faster they freeze, the fresher they'll taste. As such, be sure the meals are cooled to room temperature before you put them in the freezer. This not only lets them freeze faster, but it protects the items you already have in your freezer from warming up. Also, freeze in smaller portions. If you've made a whole casserole, you may want to consider dividing it up and freezing it accordingly. This also saves your casserole dish from being stuck in the freezer for weeks on end. When you do place the items in the freezer, leave space around them, rather than tucking them in tight next to each other. This will also allow them to freeze faster.

Also, make sure to use the right containers. Buy bags meant for the freezer. If you're using glass, make sure it's freezer safe. When filling the containers, be mindful that trapped air will cause freezer burn. As such, squeeze the air out of your bags or, if you're using glass or plastic containers, fill them up full. But with soups or stews, make sure to leave space at the top of the container; they will expand once they freeze. The following four meals will keep well in the freezer for up to three months.

Shepherd's pie

1 pound lean ground beef
 1 small onion, chopped
 3 cloves garlic, minced
 2 medium carrots, peeled and cut into 1/2 -inch pieces
 2 celery stalks, chopped
 1 tablespoon flour
 1/3 cup red wine
 1 cup good-quality beef stock
 1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme
 Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

Mashed potatoes

2 pounds red potatoes, peeled and chopped
 1 cup warm milk
 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
 Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

Preheat oven to 400°F. Heat heavy skillet over high heat. Cook beef, breaking up meat with wooden spoon, until no longer pink, 4 to 5 minutes. Add onion and garlic, cook until softened, about 5 to 6 minutes. Add carrots and celery, cook for 4 minutes. Sprinkle with flour. Add red wine and beef stock. Cook for 4 to 5 minutes, stirring often, until slightly thickened. Add thyme and season with salt and pepper. Spoon beef into 4 small, ovenproof dishes, such as 1-cup ramekins.

Cook potatoes in large pot of boiling, salted water until very tender, about 15 minutes. Drain and return to pot. Add milk, butter, salt and pepper and mash until smooth. Spread potatoes over beef. Bake for 10 to 14 minutes or until potatoes are lightly brown. Serves 4.

TO FREEZE: Cool pies to room temperature, cover ramekins with plastic wrap and foil, and place ramekins in freezer.

Minestrone


2 tablespoons olive oil
 1 small onion, chopped
 3 cloves garlic, minced
 2 tablespoons dried oregano
 1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme
 1 teaspoon chopped fresh rosemary
 2 medium carrots, peeled and cut into 1/2 -inch pieces
 1 large zucchini, cut into 1/2 -inch pieces
 2 cups fresh or canned whole, peeled Roma tomatoes
 4 cups good-quality chicken stock
 2 cups cooked white navy beans
 3/4 cup cooked pasta, such as fusilli or macaroni
 1 cup fresh spinach leaves, chopped
 Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste
 Parmesan cheese, optional

In large, heavy saucepan, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add onion, garlic, oregano, thyme, rosemary and carrots; cook for 8 to 10 minutes. Add zucchini and cook 2 minutes. Add tomatoes and chicken stock; bring to boil. Stir to break up tomatoes; lower to simmer. Add beans and cook 15 minutes or until vegetables are soft. Stir in cooked pasta and cook for 5 minutes. Add spinach and season with salt and pepper. Ladle into bowls and serve with Parmesan cheese, if desired. Serves 6 to 8.

TO FREEZE: Let soup cool to room temperature. Portion soup in freezer bags, remove as much air as possible, seal.



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**TURNING
SMART
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GOLDEN.**

Pork with apples and Dijon

1/2 cup all-purpose flour
Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper, to season
2 pounds boneless pork shoulder, trimmed of excess fat,
cut into 1-inch cubes
1/4 cup canola oil
1/2 cup chopped leeks, white and pale green parts only
2 cloves garlic, minced
1/4 cup good-quality chicken stock
1/3 cup cider vinegar
2 tablespoons Dijon mustard
1/2 cup heavy whipping cream
2 Gala apples, cored and diced
Fresh thyme, to garnish

Preheat oven to 325°F. Combine flour, salt and pepper in medium bowl. Dredge pork cubes in flour and shake off excess. In large, ovenproof Dutch oven, heat half oil over high heat. Cook pork in batches, until browned all over, adding remaining oil as needed. Transfer to large plate.

Reduce heat to medium low. Add leeks and garlic and cook for 4 minutes or until softened. Add chicken stock, vinegar and Dijon; scrape up brown bits on bottom of pan. Return pork and any accumulated juices to pan. Pour in cream. Bring to boil; cover and transfer to oven. Cook for 40 to 45 minutes, or until meat is tender. Remove from oven. Add apples. Place on stovetop and cook over medium heat, 10 to 15 minutes or until sauce has thickened and apples are slightly soft. Adjust seasoning. Sprinkle with thyme. Serves 6.

TO FREEZE: Allow pork stew to cool to room temperature. Portion stew in freezer bags, remove as much air as possible, seal.

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TURNING SMART GIRLS GOLDEN

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Baked eggplant with ricotta, Parmesan and mozzarella

- 3 large Japanese eggplants, each sliced lengthwise into 5 pieces
- ¼ teaspoon coarse salt
- 2 eggs
- 1 tablespoon water
- 2 cups dry breadcrumbs
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 ½ cups homemade tomato sauce
- 2 cups ricotta cheese
- 2 cups shredded mozzarella cheese
- ¼ cup chopped fresh basil

In large bowl, add eggplant slices and sprinkle with salt; cover with cold water. Soak 30 minutes; drain and rinse under cold water. Pat dry.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Beat eggs with water in shallow bowl; set aside. In a second shallow bowl, combine breadcrumbs with Parmesan cheese. Dip eggplants in egg mixture, then in breadcrumb mixture, pressing to coat. Place on parchment-lined baking sheet. Bake 20 minutes, turning midway.

Meanwhile, grease 8 x 11-inch pan. Spread bottom of pan with ½ cup tomato sauce. Place half of eggplant slices on tomato sauce. Top with 1 cup ricotta, 1 cup mozzarella, 1 cup tomato sauce and half of basil. Layer with remaining eggplant, ½ cup tomato sauce, 1 cup ricotta, and ½ cup mozzarella. Top with remaining tomato sauce and mozzarella. Bake 35 to 45 minutes. Serves 8.

TO FREEZE: Freeze cooked or raw in casserole dish, cover with plastic wrap and aluminum foil. To reheat, remove plastic wrap and recover with foil. If casserole was frozen after being cooked, reheat at 325°F for 45 minutes. If casserole was frozen with raw ingredients, heat oven to 325°F and bake for 1½ hours.



EVERYDAY EASY - MAKE AHEAD



EVERDAY EASY : CHICKEN

Casserole dish, The Bay

Chicken. reinvention.

One of the best parts of this season is re-experiencing the comfort of routine.

The kids go back to school, piano lessons resume, Friday night is pizza night and Sundays are for football.

While every other part of our life is settling back into place, we tend to do the same in the kitchen, bringing back old recipes that we've missed over the crazy summer months.

But after you've cooked the Sloppy Joes, standing rib roast and butternut squash soup, by the middle of the season, you might find yourself wandering through cookbooks feeling experimental. So we chose the best of both worlds: an ingredient that harkens to the comfort of routine but can be reinvented so it stays new.

The following recipes go around the world — Georgia, China, Italy, Japan, Persia — to make chicken, that trusty standby, interesting again.

In China, we add pineapple for tangy sweetness. In Japan, we brush skewered bites with a rich mirin, tamari and rice vinegar glaze. Heady garam masala, slivered pistachios and the silk of coconut milk dress up a Persian meal. In Italy, we place capicola, mozzarella and basil inside a breaded version. And in Georgia, it's chicken and dumplin's, the ultimate Southern comfort food.

These relatively easy dishes can make their way into your weeknight routine, whether you're tossing in a wok, heading to the barbecue (yes, it does still work after Labour Day) or opening the oven door.



FOOD STYLING/RECIPES MARISA CURATOLO COPY TARA KAPROW PROP STYLING KARI WARDROP PHOTOGRAPHY JERRY GRAJEWSKI FOTOGRAF INC.

Braised chicken and dumplings

4 chicken thighs and 4 drumsticks, skin on
 1 teaspoon salt
 2 tablespoons canola oil
 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
 1 medium onion, finely chopped
 1 small carrot, chopped
 1 celery stalk, chopped
 ¼ cup all-purpose flour
 Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste
 ½ cup dry white wine
 2 cups good-quality chicken stock, heated
 2 tablespoons chopped fresh thyme
 2 bay leaves
 ½ cup heavy whipping cream
 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
 1 tablespoon chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

Dumplings

1 ½ cups cake flour
 1 tablespoon baking powder
 ½ teaspoon coarse salt
 1 egg
 ¾ cup milk

Preheat oven to 375°F. Season chicken with salt. In large, ovenproof Dutch oven, heat oil over medium-high heat. Add chicken and cook 3 minutes or until browned on all sides. Transfer to plate. Set aside.

Melt butter in Dutch oven and add onion, carrot and celery. Cook, covered, over medium-low heat for about 5 minutes or until softened. Stir in flour and season with salt and pepper to taste. Cook, stirring, for 2 minutes. Increase heat to medium high. Whisk in wine, then chicken stock, 1 cup at a time, whisking constantly to avoid lumps. Cook, stirring, until boiling and slightly thickened, about 8 minutes (sauce will be thin). Add thyme and bay leaves.

Return chicken to sauce; cover and bake in oven about 20 to 25 minutes. Remove chicken from sauce. Whisk in cream, mustard and parsley. Taste and adjust seasoning. Return chicken to pot.

To make dumplings, sift cake flour, baking powder and salt into bowl. Beat together egg and milk and stir into flour mixture just until moistened. With two spoons, drop batter onto chicken stew. Cover and simmer on stovetop for 10 minutes or until dumplings are cooked through. Serve immediately. Serves 4.

Yakitori with chicken and mushrooms

⅓ cup tamari soy sauce
 1 tablespoon mirin
 1 tablespoon rice vinegar
 2 teaspoons sugar
 1 ½ pounds boneless, skinless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch cubes
 12 small cremini mushrooms
 Asian chili sauce, to serve
 4 large metal skewers

In small saucepan, combine tamari, mirin, rice vinegar and sugar. Bring mixture to boil; lower to simmer and cook mixture until slightly thickened, about 2 to 3 minutes; set aside.

Alternately, thread chicken and mushrooms onto skewers. Brush skewers generously with tamari marinade. Place on oiled grill over medium-high heat or under broiler; cook, turning once, for about 4 to 6 minutes or until chicken is no longer pink. Serves 4.



Persian-style chicken with bananas and coconut

8 skinless, boneless chicken thighs
Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper, to season
2 tablespoons canola oil
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
½ cup chopped onions
3 cloves garlic, minced
2 teaspoons garam masala
1 teaspoon ground cumin
2 teaspoons chili paste
1 ½ cups canned coconut milk
2 teaspoons sugar
2 tablespoons lime juice
¼ cup golden raisins
1 large banana, sliced
½ cup shelled pistachios, chopped
Fresh cilantro, to garnish

Season chicken with salt and pepper. Heat oil in large skillet over medium-high heat. Add chicken and cook 3 minutes per side or until crispy brown on exterior. Remove and set aside.

In same skillet, melt butter over medium heat. Add onion and garlic; cook over medium-high heat for 2 to 4 minutes. Add garam masala, cumin and chili paste; cook for 4 to 5 minutes. Stir in coconut milk and sugar, stirring constantly until thickened, about 7 to 9 minutes. Return chicken to skillet and cook 3 minutes longer or until heated through. Add lime juice, raisins and banana slices. Add water if sauce is too thick. Sprinkle with pistachios and cilantro. Serves 4 to 6.

Plate, West Elm; Bowl, The Bay; Napkin fabric, Noble Savage Interiors







Stuffed chicken

4 (5-ounce) boneless, skinless chicken breasts, butterflied
Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper, to season
12 slices capicola ham
4 (1-ounce) slices mozzarella cheese
8 small, fresh basil leaves
2 eggs, beaten
1 ½ cups panko breadcrumbs
Canola oil, for frying

Preheat oven 350°F. Line baking sheet with parchment paper.

Place each butterflied chicken breast between two sheets of wax paper. Pound gently to flatten; sprinkle chicken with salt and pepper. Place 3 pieces capicola, 1 slice cheese and 2 basil leaves on one side of chicken breast. Fold other side of breast over like a book. Secure with toothpicks.

In shallow bowl, add eggs. In another shallow bowl, pour in panko. Dip chicken into egg, then into panko, pressing to coat. Heat oil in large skillet over medium-high heat. Fry chicken in batches 2 to 3 minutes or until golden on the outside, adjusting toothpicks as necessary.

Place on prepared pan and repeat with remaining chicken. Bake 10 to 12 minutes or until chicken is no longer pink inside. Serves 4.

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Pineapple chicken with sweet and sour sauce

2 egg yolks
2 tablespoons cornstarch mixed with 1 tablespoon
cold water
1 teaspoon sesame oil
1 teaspoon minced ginger
½ teaspoon coarse salt
⅛ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
4 (5-ounce) boneless, skinless chicken breasts,
cut in 1-inch cubes
Canola oil, for frying
1 small onion, chopped
1 red pepper, cut into 1-inch pieces
1 yellow pepper, cut into 1-inch pieces
1 (14-ounce) can cubed pineapple in juice
1 tablespoon cornstarch
2 tablespoons ketchup
2 tablespoons soy sauce
1 tablespoon rice vinegar
1 tablespoon honey
2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro

In medium bowl, whisk together egg yolks, cornstarch
mixture, sesame oil, ginger and salt and pepper;
toss chicken in mixture and coat well.

Heat 2 inches oil in wok or deep frying pan over
medium-high heat. Deep-fry chicken in batches
for 2 to 3 minutes or until crisp and golden; drain
on paper towels. Drain oil from wok, leaving
1 tablespoon oil. At medium-high heat, add onions
and peppers, cook 2 to 3 minutes or until slightly soft.
Drain pineapple, reserving juice, and add pineapple
cubes to wok. Cook 2 minutes and remove from heat.

Meanwhile, mix together cornstarch and pineapple
juice in small bowl; add ketchup, soy sauce, rice
vinegar and honey. Pour sauce into wok and bring to
boil, add chicken and lower heat to simmer. Cook 5
to 7 minutes or until sauce is thickened and chicken
is cooked through. Check seasoning. Sprinkle with
cilantro. Serves 4 to 6.

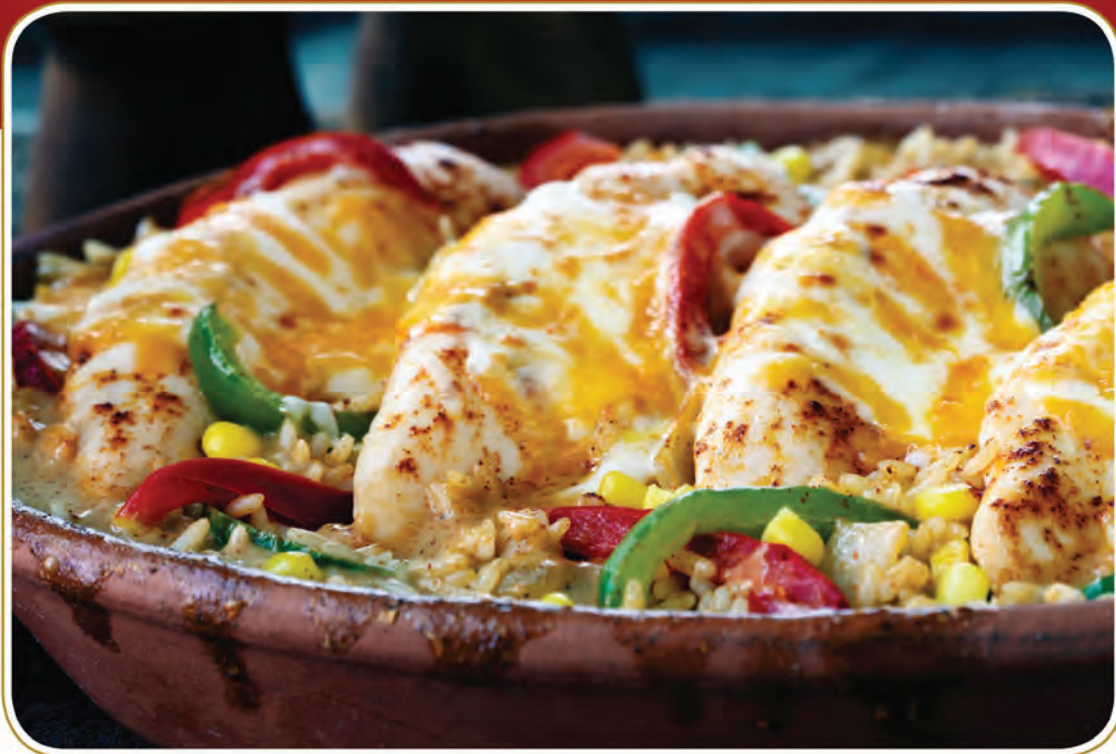
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1 can (10 oz/284 mL) CAMPBELL'S® Condensed Low Fat Cream of Chicken Soup
1 soup can 1% milk
¾ cup uncooked regular long-grain white rice
1 ½ tsp chili powder
1 ½ cups mixture of red and green pepper strips, chopped onion
½ cup frozen corn
4 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves (about 1 lb)
½ cup shredded Tex Mex cheese (or Cheddar and Monterey Jack mixture)



Prep: 10 min Cook Time: 45 min Serves: 4

1. Mix soup, milk, rice and chili powder in shallow 2 qt (2 L) baking dish. Spread evenly with vegetables.
2. Top with chicken. Sprinkle chicken with cheese and additional chili powder, if desired. Cover.
3. Bake at 400°F (200°C) until chicken is cooked through and rice is tender – about 45 minutes. Remove cover and broil until cheese is golden and bubbly – about 3 minutes. Remove chicken and stir rice before serving.

Per serving: 360 kcal, 8g fat, 570mg sodium, 42g carbohydrates, 3g fibre, 30g protein, 15% DV calcium

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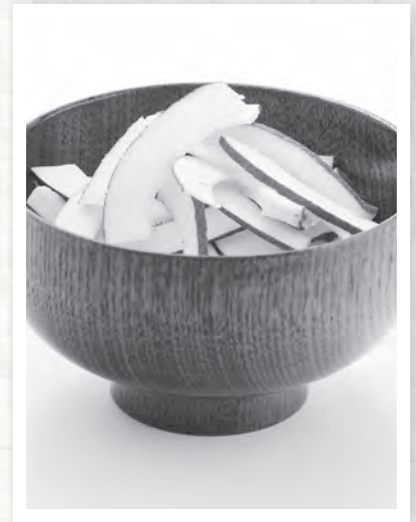
cooking lesson



As the straw inserted into the coconut eye implies, coconut water, a thin, opaque juice, makes a terrific drink on its own. It is a good source of potassium and minerals, such as magnesium, and is increasingly being marketed as an all-natural sports drink. Coconut water can also be used as a base for tropical cocktails. It's particularly good when combined with rum or gin.



This bowl contains both coconut milk and cream. It's common to see them combined, as is the case in many varieties of canned coconut milk. If you note that the two have separated from each other in the can, know this is a normal process and the contents have not soured. On its own, coconut cream can be used as a replacement for oil or butter when frying. Combined coconut cream and milk are commonly used as a marinade base (try it with soy sauce, grated ginger, and lemon juice), a curry base, and in desserts, such as custards and mousses.



These coconut meat shavings can be used in everything from a stir-fry to a salad and are welcome additions in a bowl of cereal or as a garnish for a dessert. One medium coconut should yield about 3 to 4 cups of meat. Toasting raw coconut in a 350°F oven on a baking sheet brings out the nutty flavour of the meat while retaining its sweetness. It also makes it both chewy and crunchy. If you do toast it, watch it closely; it burns easily.

Coconut 101.

We've all gone to the grocery, perused the produce aisle and noticed those hairy, mysterious coconuts.

While they evoke pleasant thoughts of sandy beaches, balmy breezes and fragrant sunscreen, most of us have kept pushing our cart by.

But, since coconut figures into green curry, custard drizzled with mango sauce and Persian chicken this issue, we decided it was time to crack the mystery of the coconut and examine all the fascinating ways it can be used.

First, you should know the coconut isn't technically a nut, it's a drupe, which is a fleshy fruit that encloses a hard-shelled seed. That seed is what you generally see at the grocery and has two edible parts: the meat, which is the dense, white substance that lines the shell, and coconut water, which drains from the seed after it's been punctured. The meat and varying amounts of water can be used to additionally make coconut milk and cream. Coconut milk is made by combining equal parts water and shredded meat and, in a pot, simmering it until it's foamy. The mixture is then strained through cheesecloth. Coconut cream is made the same way but with 4 parts meat to 1 part water.

To open a coconut, drive a nail through the indented, dark circles at the base of the seed, which are called the eyes of the coconut. Once you hammer the nail through, pull it out and drain the liquid from inside the seed into a bowl. Behold the coconut water. Now, wrap the coconut in a dishtowel and grab a hammer. Strike the coconut firmly, but try not to shatter it. Then pare off the firm meat from the shell.



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A harvest supper.

Every season has its magic, but when it comes to the table, fall is a cook's dream.

Everywhere you look, there are the fruits of summer's labour, from juicy, crunchy apples to sweet, buttery squash.

Best of all, after a break this summer, you feel like cooking. There is a chill in the air, it's warm inside and the kids come in smelling like the leaves they've just been jumping in. Spend the afternoon preparing this harvest supper, perfect for a simple gathering with friends or just Sunday dinner with your family.

It has all the elements of comfort so important to an autumn meal: warm, creamy leek and potato soup; roasted pork loin with a red wine-infused apricot sauce; nutty wild rice and chunks of zucchini scattered with fresh rosemary and thyme; and the grand finale of apples and homemade butterscotch.

The meal sets the scene for a relaxed evening at home, where you'll toast to each other, the harvest and the season.

Wild rice and squash

1 cup wild rice
 4 cups water
 ¼ cup unsalted butter
 1 cup chopped onion
 1 cup cubed zucchini
 ½ cup cubed yellow squash
 ½ teaspoon salt and ⅛ teaspoon
 freshly ground pepper
 1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme
 1 tablespoon chopped fresh rosemary
 ½ cup apple cider vinegar
 ⅓ cup extra virgin olive oil

In medium saucepan, combine rice with water; bring to boil and reduce to simmer. Cook rice uncovered 40 to 45 minutes or until grains are tender. Drain and set aside.

Melt butter in large skillet over high heat. Reduce heat to medium. Add onions and cook until golden. Add zucchini and yellow squash and cook 5 to 7 minutes longer or until slightly soft. Sprinkle with salt and pepper. Remove from heat and add wild rice, chopped thyme and rosemary. Add cider vinegar and olive oil; mix well. Serves 6 to 8.

Pork roast with apricot sauce

1 (3-pound) boneless center cut pork loin,
 trimmed and tied
 1 teaspoon coarse salt
 1 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
 2 tablespoons olive oil

Apricot sauce

1 cup red wine
 ½ cup water
 ¼ cup sugar
 2 tablespoons rice wine vinegar
 ¾ cup dried apricots
 ½ cup apricot jam
 Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper, to taste

Preheat oven to 350°F. Season pork with salt and pepper. Heat oil in ovenproof skillet at medium-high heat; sear pork in pan on all sides until golden brown. Transfer pan to oven and roast pork, 1 to 1½ hours or until internal temperature reaches 155°F. Let meat rest 5 minutes before slicing.

Meanwhile, in small saucepan, combine red wine, water, sugar, vinegar and dried apricots. Cook over low heat until apricots are soft and liquid has reduced by half. Remove from heat. Purée apricot mixture in food processor. Stir in jam. Season with salt and pepper. Makes 1¼ cups.

Spoon warm sauce over pork. Serves 8.



Leek and potato soup with frizzled leeks

3 large leeks, washed
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
4 medium potatoes, peeled and cubed
¼ cup dry white wine
5 cups homemade chicken stock
Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper
1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme, plus extra to garnish
¼ cup milk
Canola oil, for frying
Sour cream, to garnish

Chop the white and pale green parts of two leeks. In large, heavy saucepan, melt butter over medium-high heat. Add chopped leeks and cook until golden, about 3 to 4 minutes. Add potatoes and cook for another 10 minutes. Add white wine and chicken stock. Bring to boil; simmer for 30 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Purée soup with hand-held blender. Season with salt, pepper and thyme. Add milk and heat through.

Cut white and pale green parts of remaining leek lengthwise into thin strips. Fill saucepan with 2 inches oil and bring to 375°F on a deep-fat thermometer. In small batches, fry leeks about 10 to 15 seconds or until golden. Remove from oil using a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels.

Garnish soup with dollop of sour cream, thyme and frizzled leeks. Serves 4.



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Apple griddle cakes and butterscotch sauce

Butterscotch sauce

1 cup packed brown sugar
2 tablespoons light corn syrup
½ cup heavy whipping cream
2 tablespoons unsalted butter

Griddle cakes

2 Gala apples, peeled, cored and diced
½ cup water
½ cup sugar
1 cup all-purpose flour
⅓ cup whole wheat flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon salt
1 egg, lightly beaten
1 cup buttermilk
¼ cup melted butter, plus more for frying
Icing sugar, to garnish
Sliced dried apples, to garnish

For butterscotch sauce, heat brown sugar and corn syrup over medium heat in small, heavy bottom saucepan. Cook until mixture is golden brown, stirring constantly with wooden spoon, about 6 to 8 minutes. Remove from heat; slowly add cream and butter. Return to heat and stir until smooth, about 6 minutes. Set aside to thicken and cool. Makes 1 cup.

For griddle cakes, in small saucepan, add diced apples and ½ cup water over medium heat; cook 2 to 3 minutes or until apples are soft but still in chunks. Set aside to cool.

Whisk together sugar, flours, baking powder, cinnamon and salt in large bowl. In another bowl, beat together egg, buttermilk and butter. Pour over dry ingredients. Mix in cooked apples and stir until batter is almost smooth.

Heat large skillet or griddle over medium heat; brush with butter. Drop large spoonfuls of batter into skillet; cook 1 to 2 minutes per side or until underside is golden brown and centres are cooked. Repeat with remaining batter, brushing skillet with more butter as needed. Dust tops of griddle cakes with icing sugar. Serve warm with butterscotch sauce and dried apples. Serves 6 to 8.

Griddle cakes can be made ahead and warmed in 350°F oven for 4 to 5 minutes.



traditions



A bistro frame of mind.

A few years ago, my husband and I found ourselves ordering dinner in Paris at 11:30 at night.

We'd just arrived in that most lovely of cities that morning and spent the day marveling at la Tour Eiffel, strolling along the Seine and feeling, all-around, very much in love. Finally, by late afternoon, jetlag swallowed us whole, and we crashed in our room for a nap. We awoke completely refreshed but starving.

The concierge at our hotel didn't flinch at the late hour, however, and directed us to a little French bistro around the corner. We walked over hand in hand and expected to eat quickly, apologetically so they could shut down for the evening. As soon as we walked in though, we were amazed to discover it wasn't late at all, but, in fact, dinner hour. The place was packed, with cheerful chatter echoing off every piece of the terrazzo tile floor.

We were seated by an elegant woman wearing all black but for a frilly, white apron. Immediately, she opened a bottle of Burgundy, pocketing the cork after giving it a quick inspection. We sipped and delighted at the menu, which was filled with classic French fare: escargots, frog's legs, coq au vin, boeuf bourguignon.

I chose the beef, William the cassoulet and both were divine: warm, comforting, rich, the perfect kick-off to our trip.

After taking a few bites, I looked around and saw that the windows had steamed with the warmth of the atmosphere. Beside us were two little girls, one asleep in her mother's lap, the other drawing quietly while her parents talked with friends. Edith Piaf sang in the background, our waitress brought us more wine and then an old wooden cheese cart covered in sweating wedges rolled past.

I would have felt like I was in a movie — and it almost sounds like I was — except a subconscious authenticity rode over the entire room. The goal of that restaurant was to give the diner the opportunity to savour: savour the food, the wine, time with friends, the evening, the season. It didn't matter that it was now 1 in the morning. Nothing was rushed, everything was honoured. And that is the magic of the French bistro.

When I host dinner parties, I try to remember the atmosphere that was created in that room that night. I try to let go, shrug off the dishes awaiting me in the kitchen, the fact that the CD has ended. I also try to remember the honesty of the food, dishes that were free from ostentation and spoke instead of tradition and integrity. The recipes on the following pages will put you in a bistro frame of mind, allowing you to put a little bit of Paris on your table.

House pâté

2 tablespoons unsalted butter
 1 cup finely chopped onion
 1/3 cup brandy
 2 cloves garlic, minced
 1 teaspoon coarse salt
 1 tablespoon chopped fresh thyme
 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
 3/4 pound lean ground pork
 1/2 pound ground veal
 1 egg, beaten with 1 tablespoon water
 1/4 cup shelled pistachios, chopped
 Gherkin pickles, to serve

Preheat oven to 350°F. In large skillet over medium heat, melt butter. Add onion and cook until golden, about 6 minutes. Carefully add brandy to skillet; simmer until liquid is reduced to 1 tablespoon. Transfer mixture to large bowl. Mix in garlic, salt, thyme, pepper and cloves. Add meats, egg and pistachios to mixture; mix well. Spoon pâté mixture into 8 x 4 -inch loaf pan; smooth top.

Place loaf pan in 13 x 9-inch baking dish. Add enough hot water to dish to come 1 1/2 inches up sides of loaf pan. Bake until meat thermometer inserted into center of pâté registers 180°F, about 1 hour, 15 minutes.

Remove loaf pan from water. Pour off any liquid from pâté. Top with foil and chill overnight. Turn out onto platter to serve with gherkins. Serves 8.

Herb potato galette

1/4 cup unsalted butter
 1/4 cup canola oil
 1/2 cup finely chopped onion
 3 pounds potatoes, peeled, cut into 1/8 -inch thick slices
 4 large cloves garlic, minced
 2 teaspoons minced fresh rosemary
 1 teaspoon coarse salt
 1/4 cup finely chopped parsley

Preheat oven to 350°F. Add butter and oil in large, nonstick skillet and cook over medium heat until butter melts. Add onion and cook until translucent, about 5 minutes. Increase heat to medium high. Add potatoes, garlic, rosemary and salt and cook until potatoes are light golden, turning often, about 10 minutes. Using metal spatula, press and flatten potatoes into uniform thickness. Cover and bake in oven 20 to 25 minutes, or until golden brown. With large spatula, slide galette out onto large platter. Sprinkle with parsley. Serves 8.



Pan-fired sirloin steak with mustard crust

¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
½ teaspoon freshly ground pepper
1 clove garlic, minced
½ cup grainy Dijon mustard
2 teaspoons brown sugar
2 teaspoons ground ginger
4 (6-ounce) sirloin steaks
¼ cup cold unsalted butter, cubed
½ cup red wine

Mix olive oil, pepper, garlic, mustard, sugar and ginger together in medium bowl, adding a few drops of water if necessary, to form a thick paste.

Rub steaks with paste. Cover and chill for 30 minutes.

Heat cast iron skillet over medium-high heat. Add steaks and cook for 4 minutes on each side. Transfer to platter. Add red wine to skillet, scraping off brown bits at bottom of pan. Add juices from steak and reduce sauce by one third. Swirl in cold butter cubes to thicken sauce. Serve immediately. Serves 4.

Green bean salad with endive and walnuts

2 heads Belgian endive
½ pound French green beans, washed and trimmed
¼ cup whole walnuts, toasted
⅓ cup extra virgin olive oil
Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper

Trim ends of endive. Separate leaves and cut once lengthwise if large. In large saucepan of boiling, salted water, cook beans for 5 minutes. Drain and refresh in ice water; drain well. Pat dry.

To assemble salad, toss beans, endive slices and walnuts together in large bowl. Drizzle with oil and season with salt and pepper. Serves 4 to 6.





Knife and fork, Food stylist's own

Chocolate cake with raspberry sauce

¾ cup melted butter, plus extra for greasing
 1 cup sugar
 ¼ cup packed brown sugar
 2 large eggs
 1 tablespoon brandy
 1 ½ cups strong brewed coffee, cooled
 2 cups all-purpose flour
 1 cup unsweetened cocoa powder
 1 teaspoon baking soda
 1 teaspoon baking powder
 ½ teaspoon salt
 ½ teaspoon cinnamon

Chocolate glaze

8 ounces good-quality semisweet chocolate, chopped
 ½ cup unsalted butter, at room temperature
 1 tablespoon corn syrup

Raspberry sauce

2 cups frozen raspberries, thawed
 ½ cup sugar
 2 teaspoons cornstarch
 1 tablespoon cold water

Preheat oven to 350°F. Grease one 8-inch spring form pan. Line bottom with parchment paper; set aside.

In large bowl, beat melted butter with sugars. Add eggs, 1 at a time. Add brandy and coffee. In another bowl, whisk together flour, cocoa, baking soda, baking powder, salt and cinnamon. Stir flour mixture into egg mixture. Pour batter into prepared pan. Bake 55 to 60 minutes or until skewers inserted in centre come out clean. Remove from oven and let cool. Turn out onto rack and peel off paper.

For glaze, melt chocolate with butter in bowl over simmering water. Remove from heat and whisk in corn syrup. Continue to whisk until smooth. Use glaze warm. To assemble, place cake on wire rack over large baking sheet. Slowly pour warm glaze over centre of cake. Glaze will cover surface and spill evenly over edges and down sides. Chill until ready to serve. Serves 8.

For raspberry sauce, in small saucepan, combine raspberries and sugar. Cook over low heat for 5 minutes. Let cool. Place raspberries in blender and process until smooth. Strain purée into bowl. Discard seeds in strainer. Return raspberries to clean pot. Mix cornstarch and cold water together. Add to raspberries and cook over low heat for two minutes or until mixture thickens slightly. Sauce can be stored in refrigerator for up to one week. Serve with raspberry sauce on the side. Makes 1 ½ cups.





Cake plate, Food stylist's own; Forks, Anthropologie; All other props throughout issue, prop stylist or ANNA Magazines own.

TRADITIONS

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Good to know.

Using a potato peeler on the curves of ginger root can feel like the challenge is as much in removing the ginger skin as saving your own. Here's a trick: scrape the edge of a teaspoon along the ginger to remove the skin.

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