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THE

HEALTHYISH

ISSUE

bon appétit

The Feel
Good
Food Plan

by DEVONN
FRANCIS



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February

VOLUME 66 NUMBER 1

◆
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BREAKFAST. OR
DESSERT.
OR SNACK
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Chicken Salad With Chicory, Citrus, and Chile (for recipe, see p. 49). Photograph by Emma Fishman. Food styling by Adriana Paschen. Prop styling by Elizabeth Jaime. Casa Verde candy cane stripe dinner plate, pomelocasa.com. Typeface by Jasmina Zornic.

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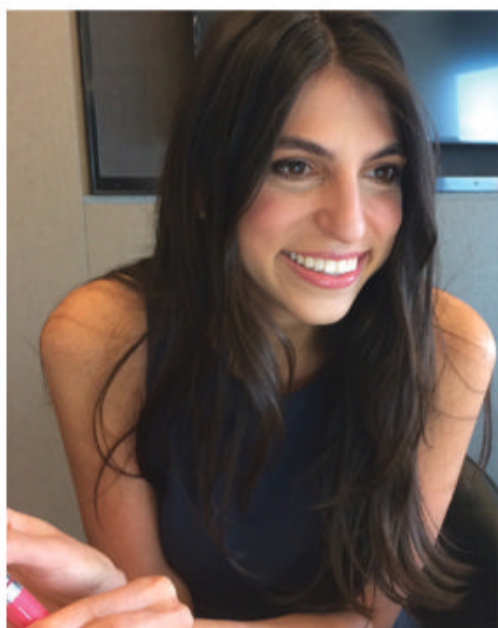
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allure BEAUTY BOX

WHAT THE BEAUTY EXPERTS WANT NOW

ELIZABETH SIEGEL
DEPUTY BEAUTY DIRECTOR

Tip: "When you run out of conversation, ask someone about their lipstick. Beauty can be a great connector."

Must haves: "When I was in high school, my mom offered me blush. I told her I didn't need it, and her answer? 'Honey, everyone needs blush.' It's been my go-to ever since."

Confession: "I love to geek out over the science-y and tech-y sides of beauty products, like the 3D-modeling software behind ManiMe's custom-fitted gel nail stickers."



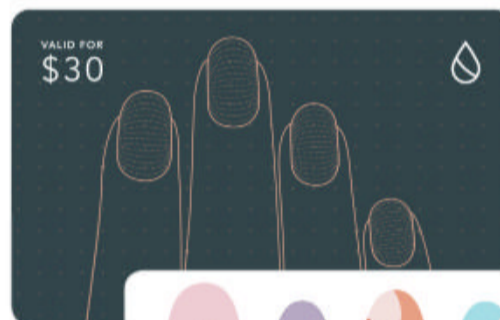
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Editor's Letter



Brighten Up

► **IT WOULD BE DRAMATIC** to say I hate February, but sometimes in the dead of winter, dramatics are necessary. February (here in New York, at least) is dreary, cold, dark. It's cancel-plans weather, wear-the-same-sweatpants-every-day weather. Needless to say, it's not a month that inspires great creativity in me. But this year, on the heels of a very long stretch of canceling plans and wearing the same sweatpants, I'm trying to stay positive and reframe how I feel about it.

Which is why I love this month's Healthyish issue so much. It's bright and fun, and it makes me want to get out of my comfort zone and try some new things. Take the "Feel Good Food Plan" (page 44), for which we asked the mega-talented DeVonn Francis to develop eight fresh, vegetable-forward recipes perfect for the season.

◀ Get your fridge winter-ready with these recipes from Maricela Vega, p. 83.

He took the prompt and came back with some true beauties—extremely cookable dishes that are bright in both flavor and color, like the delightful Crispy Rice With Ginger-Citrus Celery Salad. That egg-topped dish is exactly the kind of thing I always want for brunch, so I was glad to learn that I already had all the ingredients on hand to make it at home. I feel the same way about Atlanta chef Maricela Vega's Pumpkin Hot Sauce and her Allium Confit (page 83), two condiments I would definitely zero in on if I saw them on one of Vega's restaurant menus but would have never thought to make myself. Now that I have, though, I can tell you with pleasure that they keep well in the fridge for a week or two and can be used to punch up pretty much any meal you're making.

Outside of cooking I'm finding inspiration for some small but exciting household projects in the "Healthyish Home" feature (page 22), which got me to buy a few more beginner-level plants, take my storage solutions to the next level—kitchen hooks! pantry turntables!—and finally hang up some art. It was a good reminder that sometimes it's okay to upgrade things simply because they bring joy and order to your life. (Speaking of order, as an Aquarius who really identifies as a Capricorn, I laughed through MacKenzie Chung Fegan's wonderful essay on page 72 about seeking solace in tarot—something she previously held only deep skepticism for.)

For you, taking care of yourself this winter might not mean propagating your plant babies or trying your hand at allium confit. But during this drab and gloomy season I hope you are finding ways to make things brighter wherever you can—starting with your cooking.

SONIA CHOPRA
executive editor
@soniachopra



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*Fares are per guest and apply to August 14, 2021 7-day Mexican Riviera cruise on Crown Princess®, August 14, 2021 7-day Voyage of the Glaciers cruise on Royal Princess®, July 17, 2021 7-day Eastern Caribbean cruise on Caribbean Princess®, and October 23, 2021 7-day Classic California Coast cruise on Majestic Princess® for minimum lead-in categories on a space-available basis at time of booking. Fares for other categories may vary. Fares are non-air, cruise- or cruise tour-only, based on double occupancy and apply to the first two guests in a stateroom. These fares do not apply to singles or third/fourth-berth guests. Taxes, Fees & Port Expenses of \$120 to \$270 are additional. This offer has limited space regardless of cabin availability and may not be combinable with any other public, group, or past guest offers. Offer is not transferable and may not be combinable with other select offers and onboard credits. Offer is available to residents of the United States, Canada, Puerto Rico, Mexico, Bermuda, and the District of Columbia who are 21 years of age or older. Fares quoted in U.S. dollars. Please refer to princess.com for terms, conditions, and definitions that apply to all bookings.



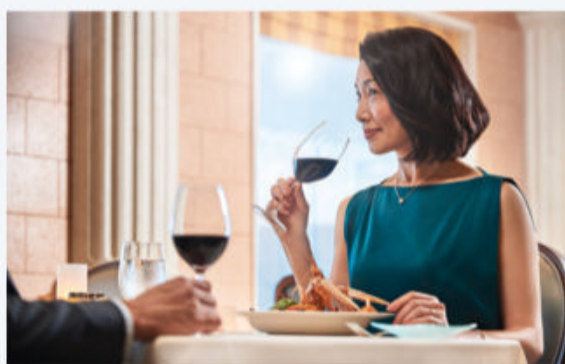
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Family Meal

Cheesy squash, saucy chicken, and more comfort dishes to get you through the rest of winter



→ **A WINTER SQUASH** is the cozy sweater of the vegetable world, but peeling one can be a cumbersome job—which is why we often skip the process entirely by using varieties with edible skins. You can make Molly Baz’s cheesy squash gratin (p. 12) with virtually any winter squash, but choosing types you don’t need to peel, such as colorful delicata or sturdy acorn, keeps prep to a minimum. Mix and match a few different varieties to make the finished dish pop.

Cheesy Winter Squash Gratin

Whether you use a mix of squash or just one kind, slice the pieces all the same size so they cook evenly

RECIPE BY MOLLY BAZ

4-6 SERVINGS

- 5 Tbsp. unsalted butter, divided, plus more for pan
- 3½ lb. delicata and/or acorn squash, halved, seeds removed, cut crosswise ¼" thick
- 1 large white onion, thinly sliced
- 10 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 2¼ tsp. kosher salt, divided

- 6 oz. frozen kale, thawed, squeezed well
- ½ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- 1 Tbsp. thyme leaves, plus sprigs
- 2 cups heavy cream
- 4 oz. Parmesan, finely grated, divided
- 6 oz. sliced rye or country-style bread, torn into ½" pieces (about 3 cups)

► **1.** Place racks in upper and lower thirds of oven; preheat to 400°. Butter a 13x9" baking dish and arrange squash in dish. Heat 2 Tbsp. butter in a large high-sided skillet over medium. Add onion, garlic, and ½ tsp. salt and cook, stirring often, until onion is softened and starting to turn golden brown, 8–10 minutes. Stir in kale, red pepper flakes, and 1 Tbsp. thyme and cook, stirring, 1 minute. Using tongs, scatter onion mixture over squash, making sure to get it into all the crevices.

2. Combine cream, three quarters of Parmesan, and 1½ tsp. kosher salt in skillet (no need to wipe out) and cook, stirring, until hot but not simmering, about 3 minutes. Carefully pour over squash, using tongs to turn squash to coat evenly. Cover tightly with foil, transfer to lower rack of oven, and bake until squash is just shy of tender, 25–30 minutes. Remove foil and continue to cook until cream is thickened and no longer liquid-y and squash is very tender, 18–22 minutes.

3. Meanwhile, wipe out skillet and melt remaining 3 Tbsp. butter in skillet over medium heat. Add bread and remaining ¼ tsp. salt; toss to coat. Transfer to top rack in oven and bake, stirring once or twice, until golden brown and crisp, 14–16 minutes. Let cool.

4. Heat broiler. Scatter breadcrumbs over gratin, crushing into smaller pieces as you go, then top with remaining Parmesan. Transfer gratin to top rack and broil until bubbling and browned at the edges, about 3 minutes. Top with a few thyme sprigs to serve.

Frozen spinach or blanched greens are also great instead of kale.





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Seared Short Ribs With Mushrooms

When we crave beef but don't want a capital-S steak, we opt for a smaller cut (hello, short ribs!), then pile on lots of meaty mushrooms

RECIPE BY MOLLY BAZ

4 SERVINGS

- 1 lb. 1 1/2"-thick boneless beef short ribs
- 1 tsp. kosher salt, plus more
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1/2 cup finely chopped hot cherry peppers or other hot pickled chiles, plus 3 Tbsp. brine

- 1 1/2 tsp. honey
- 5 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 1/4 lb. mixed wild mushrooms (such as maitake and/or oyster), stems removed, torn into 1 1/2" pieces
- 1 large shallot, thinly sliced crosswise
- 5 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 1/2 cup finely chopped dill
- Flaky sea salt

► **1.** Pat short ribs dry with paper towels; season all over with kosher salt and pepper. Let sit at room temperature at least 10 minutes and up to 1 hour (go the full time if you can).

2. Whisk hot cherry peppers, brine, honey, and 1 Tbsp. oil in a small bowl to combine; season vinaigrette with kosher salt.

3. Heat a large heavy skillet over medium-high 5 minutes. Pat meat dry again and rub all over with 1 Tbsp. oil. Cook meat, turning occasionally, until deeply browned and crusty, 6–8 minutes. Transfer to a cutting board and let rest while you cook mushrooms.

4. Wipe out skillet and return to medium-high heat. Add mushrooms and remaining 3 Tbsp. oil and toss well to coat. Sprinkle in 1 tsp. kosher salt, toss to incorporate, and cook, undisturbed, until mushrooms are golden brown and crisp underneath, about 5 minutes. Stir mushrooms and continue to cook until golden brown all over, about 5 minutes longer. Remove skillet from heat and add shallot, garlic, and dill; stir until shallot is softened, about 1 minute. Season with more kosher salt if needed.

5. Slice short ribs against the grain; transfer to a platter. Pile mushrooms on top, spoon vinaigrette over, and season with sea salt.

These pickle-y mushrooms would also be delicious piled on top of toast. Just sayin'.



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RECIPE BY CHRIS MOROCCO

4 SERVINGS

- 1 14-oz. block firm or extra-firm tofu
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- Kosher salt
- 2 garlic cloves, smashed
- 2 tsp. ground coriander
- 1 tsp. ancho chile powder or smoked paprika

- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- ½ tsp. ground fennel seeds
- 1 Tbsp. double-concentrated tomato paste
- 2 tsp. hot sauce
- Cooked white rice, shredded red cabbage, sliced avocado, crumbled queso fresco, chopped cilantro, and lime wedges (for serving)

► **1.** Firmly squeeze tofu to expel as much excess water as possible (don't worry if it begins to crack or come apart). Tear into 1"-2" pieces. Heat oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high. Add tofu, season with salt, and cook, tossing occasionally, until golden brown and crisp around the edges, 5-7 minutes. Using a heatproof rubber spatula, break up tofu into ½"-1" pieces. Add garlic and cook, tossing occasionally, until tofu is crisp all over, about 3 minutes.

2. Reduce heat to medium. Add coriander, ancho chile powder, cumin, and fennel. Cook, stirring, just until spices deepen in color, about 20 seconds. Add tomato paste and cook, stirring, until paste slightly darkens in color, about 1 minute. Add hot sauce and 1 cup water. Bring to a simmer and cook, stirring occasionally, until sauce thickens, 5-7 minutes. Season with salt.

3. Divide rice among bowls. Top with tofu mixture, cabbage, avocado, queso fresco, and cilantro. Serve with lime wedges for squeezing over.



This would also be delicious in tacos or sloppy joes.

Saucy Chicken Puttanesca

We reimagined pasta puttanesca as a luxurious sauce that clings to fall-apart braised chicken legs for a cozy one-skillet supper

RECIPE BY ANDY BARAGHANI

4 SERVINGS

- 3 lb. skin-on, bone-in chicken thighs and drumsticks or whole legs
- Kosher salt
- 2 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling
- 6 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 4 oil-packed anchovy fillets
- ½ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes

- 2 Tbsp. double-concentrated tomato paste
- 1 cup Castelvetrano olives, crushed, pits removed
- ¾ cup dry white wine
- 2 Tbsp. drained capers
- 3 2"-wide strips lemon zest
- 2 fresh bay leaves (optional)
- Lemon wedges (for serving)

► **1.** Preheat oven to 350°. Pat chicken dry with paper towels, then season all over with salt. Heat 2 Tbsp. oil in a large skillet over medium-high. Cook chicken, turning occasionally, until skin is golden brown, 7–10 minutes. Transfer chicken to a plate. Pour off all but 3 Tbsp. fat from pan. (Save extra for roasting potatoes or adding to cooked bitter greens or stewed beans.)

2. Reduce heat to medium and add garlic and anchovies to skillet. Cook, stirring often, until garlic is softened and anchovies have disintegrated, about 3 minutes. Add red pepper flakes, then stir in tomato paste. Cook, stirring occasionally, until tomato paste begins to split and stick to pan, about 3 minutes. Add olives, wine, capers, lemon zest, and bay leaves (if using) and bring to a simmer (still over medium heat). Cook, stirring occasionally, until most of the wine is evaporated, 5–7 minutes.

3. Return chicken to pan, arranging skin side up in a single layer. Pour in 1 cup water and bring to a simmer. Transfer skillet to oven and bake, uncovered, until sauce is thickened and chicken is cooked through, 20–25 minutes (if using whole legs, it'll take closer to 30–35 minutes). Taste sauce and season with more salt if needed—it should be plenty salty between the anchovies and capers, so you most likely won't need any.

4. Transfer chicken to a platter and spoon sauce over. Drizzle with oil and serve with lemon wedges for squeezing over.



Buy pitted olives for even faster prep.

Bravus Brewing Raspberry Gose

Perfectly tart, a tad salty, and filled with big bright raspberry, this is sunshine in a can. \$13 per six-pack; bravus.com

Athletic Brewing Co. Golden Ale

Notes of lemon peel, fresh-cut grass, black tea, and toasty baguette keep things interesting in this Belgian-inspired ale. \$13 per six-pack; athleticbrewing.com

Bauhaus Brew Labs Amber Lager

Slightly heavier in body and darker in color, this brew is all about smooth toasted malt flavor. \$13 per six-pack; bauhausbrewlabs.com

Two Roots Brewing Co. Helles Lager

This is french fries beer, light-bodied and clean, with just enough bready malt flavor to stand up to salty, fatty food. \$12 per six-pack; tworootsbrewingco.com

Surreal Brewing Creatives IPA

A classic West Coast-style IPA, with hops that bring notes of mango, grapefruit, and resinous pine trees. \$14 per six-pack; surrealbrewing.com



By law, nonalcoholic beers must have alcohol percentages of less than .5% ABV, similar to most kombuchas.

No Booze, No Problem

A new, more flavorful class of nonalcoholic craft beers is waiting to be cracked open

► **NONALCOHOLIC BEER** used to feel like an afterthought, thrown at the bottom of beer lists or onto the most out-of-reach shelf at the liquor store. Because, to be quite frank, booze-free beer was an afterthought. As the availability and quality of craft beer skyrocketed over the past decade, nondrinkers and the sober-curious were stuck with

a watery not-quite-beer product. But that's not the case anymore. There's been massive progress in the field of nonalcoholic craft beer, which now includes plenty of products that could pass unnoticed in a lineup of fully alcoholic offerings. Fruit-forward unfiltered IPAs, crisp, clean lagers, and lip-smacking sour ales are being produced

by breweries with varying proprietary methods of removing alcohol from their beer. While some of these companies also brew regular craft beer, most have been founded by traditional brewers who are embracing a broader cultural shift to a low-alcohol lifestyle. These are a few of our favorite nonalcoholic cans to crack right now.

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6 Ways to Make Your Space Feel Great

We consulted the experts to save our houseplants, bring order to our kitchens, and spark joy in our decor



Go maximalist with tips from designer Ellen Van Dusen (page 26)

Romance by the spoonful.

Fall in love with the deliciously rich texture of Oui French Style Yogurt.



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1

Got Plant Questions? Ask the Plant Kween

Winter is a critical time for greenery, and **Christopher Griffin** is here to help
by **HILARY CADIGAN**

● **SINCE THE BEGINNING OF** quarantine, Christopher Griffin, a.k.a. @plantkween, has acted as my digital wellness tonic. Their glowing self-portraits (always mid-laugh, decked out in something fabulous, and surrounded by an indoor jungle of 185-and-counting houseplants) and videos (along with a salutatory “daaahlings!”) are the moments of verdant bliss my gloom-and-doom-filled Instagram feed needs. But facing down a long, cold winter lockdown, I realized what I needed even more was an IRL space as green as Griffin’s. So, desperate for advice, I caught up with the Kween herself for answers to all my most burning botanical questions.

What are the easiest-to-keep-alive houseplants for noobs and known plant murderers like myself?

The snake plant is the queen of all plants. She is a wonderful air purifier and desert-resistant, so you don’t need to water her often—I have about 25 of those gurls! The pothos is a fast grower and really easy to propagate, so if you want to green up your space with plants you already have, just snip, snip, snip, put them in water, wait three weeks, and bam! You have a new plant. And the ZZ plant is one of my faves because of

its glossy leaves and ability to survive in all lighting conditions—she can really bounce back from those plant parent mistakes we all make in the beginning.

Where should we buy plants?

I prefer independent plant nurseries, but I won’t denounce anybody. Just make sure you thoroughly check those plants for pests before you buy. Larger shipment sizes mean they likely spent a lot of time touching each other in transit, which can spread creatures, so you want to dig around in the soil a bit, looking for bugs or even mice. Make sure you’re not bringing anything home besides the plant!

This plant by my bed is growing some scary yellow mushrooms that look straight out of *Alice in Wonderland*. What do I do?!

Okay, first off: Don’t eat them, honey! They might be poisonous, so just pick them and throw them out, especially if you have pets. Mushrooms are usually a sign of overwatering—when soil is too moist it allows fungus to grow. So reduce the watering and then, after you make your next cup of tea, sprinkle those leftover tea leaves over the topsoil as a fungus deterrent.

2

GRUNT ALL YOU WANT IN YOUR HOME GYM

by ALEX BEGGS



Welcome to my basement gym! The ceiling is low and spiderwebby here, the temperature is COLD. But hey, it works. Once a devout member of the YMCA—I’ll miss the locker-room gossip, and my Spin friend, Dan—now I’ve got my own low-budget gym without the commute/risk of COVID infection. Plus, it gives me reason to shower every day. Here’s how I did it.



Okay, let’s talk about watering. Because I’m pretty sure I’ve drowned every plant I’ve ever owned. How much water is juuust right?

My general rule is once a week, but in winter lots of plants are going dormant—trying to conserve energy and not sucking up as much liquid—so I push it to once every two weeks. Cacti and succulents? Every three weeks to a month.

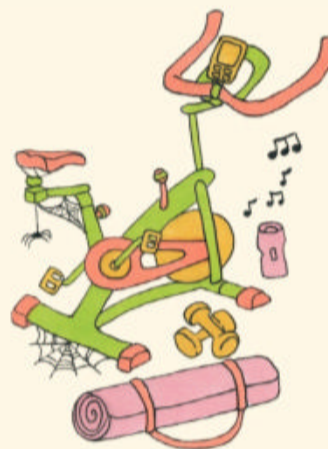
I bought a really cute pot, but there’s no drainage hole on the bottom. Do I have to get rid of it?

No! You have two options: One is to drill a hole in the bottom of the pot if you’re handy with a drill. (I am not, so I don’t do that.) The other is to put lava rocks at the bottom of the pot so the roots will sit above any excess water. Just be extra careful about overwatering from then on!

If you name your plants and talk to them, do they live longer?

My plants are all my Green Gurls, but I do like to call them by their scientific names. They remind me of drag queen names. I mean, Ms. Ficus Elastica? Oh, my goodness. I don’t talk to my plants unless I’m in a mood, like, “You better grow, girl.” But if I knock into them, I always say sorry.

Equipment



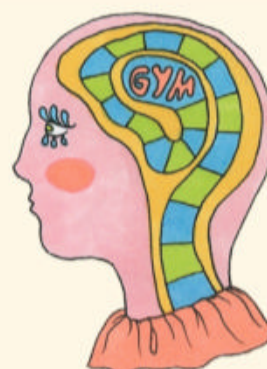
I bought a Schwinn IC3 stationary bike on sale at Dick’s Sporting Goods. Then I picked up some pandemic-surge-priced eight-pound dumbbells. I stacked up stolen sweat towels from the country’s finest Hampton Inns. Dented Bluetooth speaker, yoga mat...check. Instead of the steam room, I steam up my shower. Instead of the locker-room gossip, I think about what’s for lunch and where my life is headed. I named a spider on the stairwell Dan (sorry, Dan).

Workouts



YouTube, Aaptiv, and the Cindy Crawford workout tape from 1992 where she does crunches in jean cutoffs. But I decided that any movement counts as “going to the gym” now, and switching it up keeps things from getting boring in these very repetitive times. I like walking a loop around the neighborhood, checking out everyone’s new yard decor.

Mind Games



The final piece of equipment everyone ready to work out from home needs is that little push button in your brain that decides I’m working out NOW. This is hard for me, so I designated three “gym” days a week to be reasonable with myself. I also read that it helps to build a habit if you reward yourself for the workout, whether that’s with a granola scone (page 69), a post-workout nap, or a rerun of *Sister, Sister*. This is training your brain; it’s science. The good news is that this gym is open whenever you need it to be, and towel service is included.

3

Live in Technicolor

If months of staring at the same walls didn't weaken minimalism's appeal, one look at designer **Ellen Van Dusen's** gloriously over-the-top Brooklyn brownstone did. "Not everyone has the same relationship with color, but little objects can really shift the mood of a room," Van Dusen says. "It's an easy way to change things up." Here's how she combines patterns, colors, and tchotchkes.

—ALIZA ABARBANEL



Van Dusen used broken tiles—which are plentiful online and affordable, and they don't require cutting—to cover damaged tiling with a free-form mosaic.

This mismatched roster of patterns was designed by Van Dusen to contrast, not clash. Set of four napkins, \$42; dusendusen.com



Take every opportunity to cultivate color. Sure, this trippy resin clock by Italian architect and designer Gaetano Pesce is functional, but it's also fun. Watch Me Clock, \$300; comingsoonnewyork.com

White walls and neutral appliances keep small, colorful objects from being overshadowed.

Walls aren't just for prints and paintings. Van Dusen used a dowel rod to hang this silk scarf from Massif Central, designed by painter Jonas Wood.



Playful planters, like this geometric one from Recreation Center, draw the eye while drainage holes keep their occupants happy.

The kitchen island doubles as a display case for favorite items, like this cheeky toothpick dog by ceramist Eleonor Boström. Matchstick Dog, \$88; mociun.com



4

(RE)ORGANIZE YOUR KITCHEN

by EMMA WARTZMAN

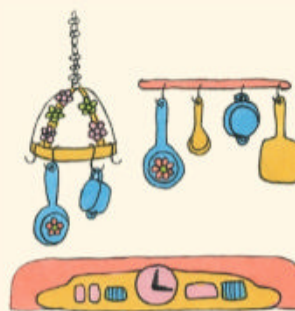


Professional organizer **Faith Roberson** is here to restore order in our overworked, undercleaned kitchens



Go Multipurpose

Keep an eye out for versatile items that free up your shelves and your budget. Use a salad spinner insert as a colander, and mason jars for storing dried goods or drinking.



Use That Wall Space

Install hooks on empty kitchen walls to hang pots and pans. Your most-used kitchenware will be at the ready and bulkier equipment (like that clunky blender) will have more cabinet space.



Just Add Turntables

Revolving trays maximize space in cabinets, under the sink, and inside your fridge. Measure your shelves before buying, then rotate as needed. You'll never lose a jar of mustard again.



Relocate the Junk Drawer

Move that rubber band ball into another less-trafficked room, then use the newly empty kitchen drawer to store small appliances, utensils, and spices.



Clear Out the Fridge

Before you grocery shop, take everything out of your fridge and wipe down the empty shelves. This keeps things clean and helps you see what you actually need to get at the store.



5

Use Food to Heal

Calm that winter cough with a warming drink from **Felicia Cocotzin Ruiz**. The Arizona-based *curandera*, or "healer," uses cultural ingredients like local I'toi onions here—but shallots are a good substitute.

SCRATCHY THROAT SOOTHER

Coarsely chop white parts of **1 small bunch I'toi onions** or **2 large** or **3 medium shallots**. Peel **one 2" piece ginger**; slice ¼" thick. Place in a small saucepan to cover bottom. Pour **¾ cup runny honey** over to submerge. Bring to a boil over medium-high, then immediately reduce heat to low. Simmer gently, running a heatproof rubber spatula across the bottom from time to time, 30 minutes. Let cool slightly. Strain honey through a fine-mesh sieve into a small heatproof jar. Let cool and cover. (Save onions and ginger separately to eat, if you'd like.) To use, mix 1 Tbsp. elixir into tea or hot water, or eat directly off the spoon. (Use 1 tsp. for children.)

DO AHEAD: Syrup can be made 1 month ahead. Keep at room temperature. *Makes about ½ cup*





6

Set Boundaries to Stay Sane

Do they teach personal space in virtual kindergarten?

by ANGELA GARBES



● **WE ARE A FAMILY** that never closes the bathroom door. The habit started back when my spouse and I began dating—I resented anything getting in the way of our running conversation. Thirteen years and two children later, it's for practical reasons: Someone might fall into the toilet or squeeze a tube of toothpaste onto the floor.

During the pandemic, my family's world is our house. My husband works in our garage. My daughter attends kindergarten on an iPad next to her bed while I work in the guest room. But the door is always open, my neck craned as I half-listen for panicky cries: "My screen is frozen!"

In an attempt to give each other uninterrupted time, my spouse and I split the weekdays. On a recent Thursday (my day "off"), I craved a long hot shower. I closed the bathroom door. I swayed in the steam, my muscles and mind starting to soften. Then I opened my eyes to find the shower curtain peeled back, my daughter standing there. "Mama, can you help me with my art class video?"

It would be unfair to say that my daughter is a black hole of need, hell-bent on destroying every boundary I set. She's simply a child, and all children are opportunistic when it comes to their grown-ups' attention, even during years not steeped in loss and uncertainty.

Recently, as I made frozen dumplings for lunch, she asked, "After this maybe we can read some *Baby-Sitters Club* before math?" I gently explained that while she's always welcome to ask me to do things with her, I'm already giving her a lot of my time and energy, and I need to save some of that for myself. She furrowed her brow and nodded. Right now, clarifying boundaries can seem awkward and selfish, but how else do we preserve our sanity and cultivate our children's independence?

Lately, my daughter chooses to read alone in a nook under the stairs. The rest of us are blocked from entry by a kind but firm sentinel: an oversize stuffed unicorn. The other day I found her on the toilet. I asked if she needed anything. "No," she replied, before asking me to close the door. "Maybe just a little privacy."

✧
Introducing our new
column **All on the Table**,
where writers share
stories of food, conflict,
and community



Memories of Pilaf

Dolma, borek, and pilaf connect writer **Nadia Owusu** to a mother, and a culture, she had lost

► **I WAS IN SEDONA** to forgive my mother. After over a decade of estrangement, this trip was the first time we would spend more than a few hours together since I was eight years old.

My mother's house had a stunning view of red rock canyons. How beautiful, I thought as I stepped out of the car. In my gut resentment gurgled, but I tried to ignore it. That resentment, I reminded myself, didn't serve me. That was why I had found my mother's phone number on the internet and dialed it; why I had agreed to fly here from New York.

My mother showed me to the room where I would be staying. One of my half sisters—Wahida—would be arriving soon. She lived in Tucson. My half brother was still in high school. He'd be



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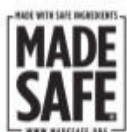
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↑ Writer Nadia Owusu at home in Brooklyn

home after track practice, coached by my mother's third husband.

My mother said that she was making Armenian food for dinner.

"All your favorites," she said. "Pilaf, dolma, cheese borek, stuffed eggplant."

I did not tell her that, other than pilaf, I could not remember her preparing any of those things for me. I didn't know what cheese borek or urfa kebab were.

"Pilaf was the second word you ever said," my mother told me. "Your first word was *shoes*."

"Really?" I asked. I had not known that. To marry another man, my Armenian-American mother left my father, my younger sister Yasmeen, and me when I was two and Yasmeen was a baby.

My Ghanaian father was a diplomat with the United Nations, so Yasmeen and I grew up traveling the world with him, from post to post in Africa and Europe. Twice, as a child, I visited my mother in the United States. Other than that she was mostly a voice on a long-distance call. Sporadically, she sent letters.

When I was 13 my father died. I called my mother to ask her to come to Rome for the funeral. She said she couldn't because she had my half siblings to look after. There were three of them now—I had never met my half brother who was a baby then. My heart broke. The pain burst from me as rage. Yasmeen and I were her

children too and we needed her. I vowed never to speak to her again and hung up. Yasmeen and I moved with our stepmother to Uganda, where I lived until I turned 18 and moved to New York for university.

While my mother cooked in the kitchen, I sat in an armchair in her living room, pretending to read. This was not the house where I had visited my mother as a child. Still, I recognized the coffee table and a portrait of a woman in a traditional Armenian headdress. The portrait was inscribed with words in the Armenian alphabet I couldn't read. How strange it was, I thought, to know so little about the culture that made up half of my DNA. I was raised in many countries, among many cultures, but for comfort I turned to food from my father's homeland: fufu and peanut soup, jollof rice.

But the smells wafting from my mother's kitchen did carry memories. I closed my eyes and conjured the few summers spent with her: the Slip 'N Slide in her backyard, eating spicy skewered meats under the stars, sleeping on a mattress on the floor with Yasmeen and our two half sisters because we all wanted to be together.

When I called my mother to end our silence, I was coming out of a long period of depression. Repair felt necessary to my survival. We did not speak much of the past on that phone call or on subsequent ones. She cried and

told me she was happy to hear from me, that she had been waiting, that she was sorry. We told each other about our current lives. Now, in her living room, I was afraid. What sort of relationship could we have with so few memories as a foundation?

Later, sitting around the table with my mother, her husband, and my half siblings, the conversation started out polite and stilted, but the food warmed and loosened us. I could sense us all trying to become family. My half sister kept saying, "I can't believe you're here."

"The eggplant is delicious," I told my mother. Flavors of onion, tomato, cinnamon, Aleppo pepper, and lemon mingled in my mouth.

"Do you remember this food?" my mother asked.

"Yes," I said, and I realized it was true. Memories do not form only in the mind.

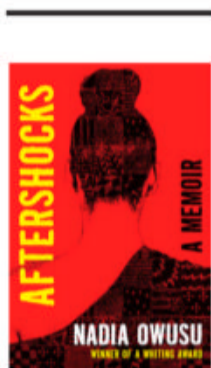
What did it mean that my tongue remembered? I wasn't sure. I took another bite and my mother smiled. Between us there were many words unspoken. There was distance. But between us on the table, there was a meal. In that meal I could taste hope—my mother's and mine. That, I decided, was worth savoring. ■

Pilaf With Vermicelli

4-6 SERVINGS This recipe takes its cue from Nadia's mother's pilaf. Dry vermicelli is toasted in lots of butter to create extra nutty flavor and richness, a method used in pilaf traditions across communities.

- 4 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- 2 oz. angel hair pasta or vermicelli, broken into 1"-2" pieces (about $\frac{3}{4}$ cup)
- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups basmati or other long-grain white rice, rinsed well
- 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ cups low-sodium chicken broth or water
- Kosher salt

Melt butter in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add pasta and cook, stirring often, until golden brown and very fragrant, about 4 minutes. Add rice and gently stir to coat in butter. Add broth and a big pinch of salt, increase heat to medium-high, and bring to a simmer. Stir once, then cover and reduce heat to low. Cook until broth is absorbed and rice is tender, 18-20 minutes. Remove from heat, uncover, and fluff rice gently with a fork. Cover and let sit 5-10 minutes before serving.



Owusu's debut memoir, 'Aftershocks,' is out now.

W O M E N

W H O

T R A V E L

P O D C A S T

W O M E N

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Spread Your Wings

In her new book, **Mashama Bailey** explores the joy and pain of opening a restaurant and delivers this irresistible recipe for lemony, crispy wings

Greek Wings With Lemon and Feta

4 SERVINGS These wings, inspired by the Greek wings at Bailey's local bar, Crystal Beer Parlor, require at least two hours to marinate, so make sure you plan accordingly.

WINGS

- Zest and juice of 1 lemon
- 6 garlic cloves, crushed
- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 Tbsp. cracked black pepper
- 2 tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1 ¼ tsp. Morton kosher salt
- 2 tsp. dried oregano
- 3 lb. chicken wings or 32 separated flats and/or drumettes

ASSEMBLY

- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 1 small garlic clove, finely grated
- ½ tsp. cayenne pepper
- ½ tsp. cracked black pepper
- Kosher salt

- ¼ cup chopped parsley
- 3 oz. feta, crumbled

WINGS Whisk lemon zest and juice, garlic, oil, black pepper, salt, and oregano in a large bowl to combine. Add wings and toss to coat. Cover and chill at least 2 hours and up to 12 hours.

Place racks in upper and lower thirds of oven; preheat to 375°. Line 2 large rimmed baking sheets with foil; set a wire rack in each one if you have them. Remove wings from marinade; arrange on baking sheets. Bake wings, rotating baking sheets front to back and top to bottom halfway through, until deeply browned and crisp, about 1 hour.

ASSEMBLY Whisk oil, lemon juice, garlic, cayenne, and black pepper in a small bowl; season dressing with salt.

To serve, stir parsley into dressing. Arrange wings on a platter, drizzle dressing over, and scatter feta on top.





FOOD STYLING BY D. MYTREK BROWN. GREEK WINGS WITH LEMON AND FETA EXCERPTED WITH PERMISSION FROM BLACK, WHITE, AND THE GREY BY MASHAMA BAILEY AND JOHN O. MORISANO (LORENA JONES BOOKS, A DIVISION OF PENGUIN RANDOM HOUSE, LLC). COPYRIGHT © 2021.

Bailey usually enjoys these with a glass of Grenache, but a lager would do just as well if you're a beer-and-wings purist.

Find this chicken wing recipe (and more!) in Bailey's new memoir, *Black, White, and The Grey*, coauthored by her friend and business partner John O. Morisano.

Fighting the Nutrition Divide

Dietitian **Vanessa Risetto** wants a health care system that works for all

► **MY FAVORITE BREAKFAST** as a kid was a toasted English muffin with Cheez Whiz. In college I went through a six-pack of Pepsi every three days. Now I'm the acting director of New York University's Dietetic Internship program.

— **BACK WHEN I WAS A STUDENT** in NYU's nutrition program, my class was all rich, skinny white women. Years later not much has changed: 81 percent of registered dietitians are white. This creates an unbalanced system that lacks cultural competence. Every day, as these dietitians cry about diet culture and post expensive collagen powders on Instagram, Black people are dying because of structural racism in health care.

— **AS I WATCH PROTESTS** across the world against the devaluation of Black lives, it strikes me that this is not just true for the justice system; it's true for *all* our systems. Black households are 2.5 times as likely to be food insecure as white households. Black people have higher rates of obesity, heart disease, and cancer—not because of the color of their skin but because they're systemically undertreated and 1.5 times less likely to have health insurance. That's the real reason they're considered "prone to chronic disease." But health care functions as though race itself is a biological factor.

— **I AM COUNSELING** a couple, Harold and Jess, who are Black. Harold has diabetes and had worked with a white physician for four years without success. They told me they sought me out so they would be seen and heard. I worked on a nutrition plan with them, and after a few weeks, Harold had regained control of his blood sugar and lost 20 pounds. Jess lost 10 by association. It should make us all sad that they needed a Black practitioner to get that basic level of support.

— **TO DIVERSIFY THE FIELD**, the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics needs to limit barriers to entry. New rules will require that to sit for the registered dietitian exam you'll need to have completed your master's degree—another two years of school (whereas nurses only need an associate's degree). Then you have to do an unpaid internship for a year while paying off \$103,000 in tuition. So far the academy has been noncommittal when discussing how to break down these barriers.

— **I BECAME A DIETITIAN** because I was inspired by one who saw me as an individual. She listened to my story and made no assumptions based on my race. I do the same for my patients, but we need more. We need to make nutrition education accessible for everyone. We need to produce more than two Black dietitians out of every 100 who qualify. We need health care that listens to Black people when they need our help.

— AS TOLD TO ALEX BEGGS



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Eat Your Luck

At Jackrabbit Filly in Charleston, chef Shuai Wang ushers in the Year of the Ox with a very lucky Lunar New Year feast

by JENNY LIAO

The Noodles

During Lunar New Year, long noodles represent longevity and happiness. Wang stir-fries his lo mein with beech, oyster, and shiitake mushrooms grown by local farmers, topping them with a generous dollop of butter and crispy garlic anori—an unseasoned seaweed powder that gives the noodles a deep green-tea flavor. “Never bite down on the noodle,” Wang instructs. Eating each strand in one slurp without breaking it is believed to maximize your good fortune.



The Pork Trotters

“Trotters are about wealth,” Wang says. “My mom always told me they’re meant as another foot or hand to grab more money for next year.” Traditionally, for Lunar New Year pork trotters are served whole, but the chef’s reimagined version involves braising, shredding, and shaping them into cakes that get breaded with panko and fried to form a crispy katsu.





The Fish

For continuous prosperity in the new year, Wang says you have to serve a whole fish: head-on, bone-in. Here he opts for flounder caught off the coast of Mount Pleasant, South Carolina, by local fishery Abundant Seafood. Steaming brings out the fish's natural sweetness, so seasoning is kept light: Chinese cooking wine with a bit of soy sauce and fermented black beans. Raw julienned leeks and ginger finish off the dish, with a ginger-scallion chimichurri on the side.

The Dumplings

Dumplings also symbolize wealth due to their likeness to *yuanbao*, an ancient form of Chinese currency. Wang fills his with Napa cabbage and rich Mangalitsa pork (sustainably sourced from Holy City Hogs on nearby Wadmalaw Island) seasoned with Chinese cooking wine and soy sauce. Once boiled they're garnished with vinegar, chili oil, cilantro, and peanuts.

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Eating With an Eye Toward the Past

Food historian **Jessica B. Harris** shares dishes, books, and ingredients she considers integral to Black culinary traditions



Chef Edouardo Jordan's **JuneBaby** restaurant in Seattle is an edible praise song to the genius of African American cooks. The menu offers classic dishes like fried chicken and greens along with specials—like chitlins and Momma Jordan's oxtails—not usually tasted outside of home kitchens.

REQUIRED READING

Two invaluable resources for those who want to deepen their knowledge: **Black Culinary History** (blackculinaryhistory.com) and **Cuisine Noir** (cuisinenoirmag.com). Both websites preserve and promote the past and present contributions of chefs of color throughout the African diaspora.

FOR THE BUCKET LIST

The food of **São Salvador da Bahia de Todos os Santos** in northeastern Brazil is a linchpin between the food of western Africa and that of the Western Hemisphere. To taste a fish stew called a moqueca or nibble on an acarajé, a street food bean fritter, is to understand the connections.



MORE OKRA, PLEASE

Okra, which originated on the African continent, is a love/hate vegetable. Its detractors hate the "slime" and the lovers delight in the way it thickens a soup or stew and its crunch when blanched. Get recipes, history, and gardening tips in *The Whole Okra* by Chris Smith.

Vintage Postcards From the African World: In the Dignity of Their Work and the Joy of Their Play (\$25; University Press of Mississippi)



You can find incredible images of African Americans and food on **vintage postcards** in my latest book. They not only present the faces of ancestors but also tell amazing, often harrowing, stories of survival and triumph over adversity.

TOUR THE ARCHIVES

Toni Tipton-Martin's **The Jemima Code** reclaims and celebrates the heritage of Black America's controversial "aunt" by documenting 200 years of African American cookbooks from her personal collection. Familiar figures such as Edna Lewis show up alongside unexpected personalities such as activist Bobby Seale and singer Mahalia Jackson in this must-own compendium.

EAT LIKE AN ICON

The late New Orleans chef Leah Chase served **Gumbo z'Herbes** once a year on Holy Thursday. The dense green meaty gumbo is essential to the rich culinary history of the area's Creoles de couleur. It's still served annually at Dooky Chase's, her iconic family restaurant.



PHOTOGRAPHS: SUZI PRATT (RESTAURANT INTERIOR), MIKE LORRIG (OKRA), EMMA FISHMAN (GUMBO). FOR DETAILS, SEE SOURCEBOOK.

FEEL GOOD FOOD PLAN

This year we're craving comforting good-for-you food that keeps thrift and flexibility in mind. And no one does this kind of cooking better than chef **DEVONN FRANCIS**. These weeknight dinner recipes are bright, bold, crispy, creamy, and healthyish enough to cook on repeat for the rest of 2021 and beyond

photographs by EMMA FISHMAN

◆
CHICKEN SALAD
WITH CHICORY,
CITRUS, AND CHILE
P. 49



See more of Francis
over on BA's
YouTube channel.



"I'm kind of a salad boy all year round," says DeVonn Francis, chef, entrepreneur, and the brains behind these eight new recipes. "Especially in January, when I'm indoors a lot, I want to feel really good about what's going on in my kitchen." That doesn't mean only salads, he goes on to explain, just balanced veg-forward meals—like the shrimp and cabbage curry at right—that get everything he needs and wants into one dish.

Francis, who is also the founder of Yardy, a food and events company in NYC, gets a lot of cooking inspiration from his upbringing. That influence shows up in his dishes' Caribbean inflections as well as his emphasis on resourcefulness (his mom fed three kids and a husband while working full-time). "The basis of all these recipes is that they can stretch for a really long time," he says. "And you can throw them together quickly with ingredients you maybe have in your cabinets already—with a few tweaks that

bring in a healthy-ish, more modern vibe." For example, sticky glazed chicken and potatoes get

made with vitamin-A-rich sweet potatoes and a salad of citrusy collard greens on the side (page 55). And Francis's spin on pasta Alfredo (page 56) is a glossy, creamy bowl of comfort food that also happens to be dairy-free.

Pasta aside, Francis is out to dispel the myth that winter cooking is all about meats and starches. "You can treat a vegetable like a protein in a lot of ways," he says, especially sturdy winter produce like cabbage, which he quarters and browns like stew meat before tossing it into a red coconut curry (page 50). "You can go in on the warm spices too—spicy, sweet, savory, and earthy," he adds. "And hardy greens like collards take to acids really well compared to lighter lettuces."

You could make these recipes back-to-back as a new year reset, but Francis hopes they'll stay in your repertoire long after. —AMANDA SHAPIRO



◆
SHRIMP AND
CABBAGE CURRY
P. 50

◆
CRISPY RICE
WITH GINGER-CITRUS
CELERY SALAD



Crispy Rice With Ginger-Citrus Celery Salad

4 SERVINGS Leftover rice is ideal for this dish (and a great way to use up any takeout that's hanging around), since fully chilled rice tends to be drier and will become crispier and browner in the skillet.

DRESSING

- 1 2" piece ginger, peeled, finely grated
- 1 small garlic clove, finely grated
- Juice of 1 orange
- 2 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- 1 Tbsp. coconut aminos or low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- ¼ tsp. toasted sesame oil
- Kosher salt

FRIED RICE AND ASSEMBLY

- 1 medium head of broccoli
- 6 Tbsp. (or more) vegetable oil, divided
- Kosher salt
- 2 cups chilled cooked brown rice



NOT SOY FAST

Francis often turns to coconut aminos instead of soy sauce because the seasoning, made from the fermented sap of coconut palm trees, offers some of the same flavor notes but with less sodium and no soy or gluten. The coconut gives this crispy rice a subtle sweetness (it makes appearances in his salmon and tamarind chicken recipes as well). Look for Bragg coconut liquid aminos in health food stores, Whole Foods, or online.

- 4 large eggs
- 3 celery stalks, thinly sliced on a steep diagonal
- ½ cup cilantro leaves with tender stems
- ½ cup mint leaves
- Crushed red pepper flakes (for serving)

DRESSING Whisk ginger, garlic, orange juice, vegetable oil, coconut aminos, lemon juice, and sesame oil in a small bowl; season with salt and set aside.

FRIED RICE AND ASSEMBLY Trim about ½" from woody end of broccoli stem. Peel tough outer layer from stem. Cut florets from stems and thinly slice stems about ½" thick. Break florets apart with your hands into 1"–1½" pieces.

Heat 2 Tbsp. oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium. Working in 2 batches if needed, arrange broccoli in a single layer and cook, tossing occasionally, until broccoli is bright green and lightly charred around the edges, about 3 minutes. Transfer to a large plate.

Pour 2 Tbsp. oil into same pan and heat over medium-high. Once you see the first wisp of smoke, add rice and season lightly with salt. Using a spatula or spoon, press rice evenly into pan like a pancake. Rice will begin to crackle, but don't fuss with it. When the crackling has died down almost completely, about 3 minutes, break rice into large pieces and turn over.

Add broccoli back to pan and give everything a toss to combine. Cook, tossing occasionally and adding another 1 Tbsp. oil if pan looks dry, until broccoli is tender and rice is warmed through and very crisp, about 5 minutes. Transfer mixture to a platter or divide among plates and set aside.

Wipe out skillet; heat remaining 2 Tbsp. oil over medium-high. Crack eggs into skillet; season with salt. Oil should bubble around eggs right away. Cook, rotating skillet occasionally, until whites are golden brown and crisp at the edges and set around the yolk (which should be runny), about 2 minutes.

Toss celery, cilantro, and mint with 3 Tbsp. reserved dressing and a pinch of salt in a medium bowl to combine.

Scatter celery salad over fried rice; top with fried eggs and sprinkle with red pepper flakes. Serve extra dressing alongside.

COOK THE COVER

Chicken Salad With Chicory, Citrus, and Chile

4 SERVINGS With protein, plenty of texture, juicy citrus, and a garlicky spiced oil that'll become your new back-pocket condiment, this salad is made for dinner.

- 3 skin-on, bone-in chicken breasts (about 1½ lb. total)
- Kosher salt, freshly ground pepper
- 2 Tbsp. plus ⅓ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 2 tsp. paprika
- 1 tsp. coriander seeds, coarsely crushed
- ½ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- 2 medium endive, leaves separated
- 1 large head of radicchio, leaves separated, torn if large
- 4 satsumas or blood oranges or 3 medium oranges, peeled, sliced into rounds, seeds removed
- 2 Tbsp. white wine vinegar or red wine vinegar
- 2 tsp. toasted sesame seeds, lightly crushed

Preheat oven to 450°. Pat chicken breasts dry with paper towels; season on all sides with salt and pepper, then rub with 2 Tbsp. oil.

Heat a large ovenproof skillet over medium-high. Arrange chicken, skin side down, in pan and cook, undisturbed, until skin is deep golden brown, about 3 minutes. Turn chicken over with tongs and transfer skillet to oven. Roast chicken until cooked all the way through, 15–17 minutes. Transfer to a cutting board and let cool 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, cook garlic and remaining ⅓ cup oil in a small skillet over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until garlic is fragrant and pale golden, about 4 minutes. Immediately pour garlic oil into a small bowl and stir in paprika, coriander seeds, and red pepper flakes; season with salt.

Cut chicken off the bone, then slice ½" thick; discard bones.

Toss endive, radicchio, and satsumas with vinegar and half of spiced garlic oil in a large bowl to combine; season salad with salt and pepper.

Divide salad among plates or shallow bowls; top with chicken and drizzle with more spiced garlic oil. Sprinkle sesame seeds over.

Shrimp and Cabbage Curry

4 SERVINGS Making your own curry paste ensures tons of flavor with controllable heat; start with one chile and add more according to taste.

CURRY PASTE

- 1 red bell pepper, ribs and seeds removed, coarsely chopped
- 2 red Thai chiles or 1 small red Fresno chile, seeds removed if desired, coarsely chopped
- 1 lemongrass stalk, bottom third only, tough outer layers removed, finely chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, smashed
- 1 4" piece ginger, peeled, finely grated
- 2 Tbsp. smoked paprika
- 2 tsp. ground coriander
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- 1 tsp. ground turmeric
- Kosher salt

ASSEMBLY

- 3 Tbsp. (or more) virgin coconut oil
- ½ medium head of green cabbage, cut into 4 wedges through root end
- 1 13.5-oz. can unsweetened coconut milk
- Kosher salt
- 1 lb. large shrimp, shelled, deveined
- 4 scallions, chopped
- 2 tsp. finely grated lime zest
- 2 Tbsp. fresh lime juice
- Small handful of torn tender herbs (such as cilantro, basil, and/or mint)
- Lime wedges (for serving)

CURRY PASTE Blend red bell pepper, chiles, lemongrass, garlic, ginger,

paprika, coriander, cumin, turmeric, and a couple of big pinches of salt in a blender until a smooth paste forms.

ASSEMBLY Heat oil in a large pot over medium-high. Cook cabbage until deeply browned on both cut sides, about 2 minutes per side. Transfer to a plate.

If pot looks dry, add another 1 Tbsp. oil. Add curry paste to pot (still over medium-high heat) and cook, stirring often, until paste is slightly darkened in color and beginning to stick to bottom of pot, about 5 minutes. Pour coconut milk and 2 cups water into pot and reduce heat to medium; season with salt. Cook, scraping up any curry paste stuck to pot until flavors come together and curry is slightly thickened, 10–12 minutes.

While the curry is cooking, coarsely chop cabbage.

Season shrimp with salt and add to curry. Cook, stirring, until shrimp are just cooked through, about 3 minutes. Remove pot from heat; stir in cabbage, scallions, and lime zest and juice.

Divide curry among bowls and top with herbs. Serve with lime wedges.

Skillet Salmon With Pickle-y Salad

4 SERVINGS The award for best supporting actor goes to this bright, tart root vegetable salad. Francis slices the daikon and carrots as thinly as possible so there's tons of surface area to absorb all the flavors.

GLAZE

- 2 garlic cloves, finely grated
- ⅓ cup sherry vinegar or red wine vinegar

- ¼ cup coconut aminos
- 1 Tbsp. fish sauce
- 1 ½ tsp. sugar

SALMON AND ASSEMBLY

- ½ cup almonds
- 3 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 4 5–6-oz. skin-on salmon fillets
- Kosher salt, freshly ground pepper
- ½ medium daikon radish (about 1 lb.), peeled, halved lengthwise, thinly sliced on a diagonal
- 3 medium carrots (about 8 oz.), peeled, thinly sliced on a diagonal

GLAZE Cook garlic, vinegar, coconut aminos, fish sauce, and sugar in a small saucepan over medium-high, stirring occasionally, until reduced enough to coat a spoon, 7–9 minutes. Let cool.

SALMON AND ASSEMBLY Toast almonds in a dry small skillet over medium heat, tossing occasionally, until slightly darkened and fragrant, 5–8 minutes. Let cool, then coarsely chop.

Meanwhile, pour 2 Tbsp. oil into a cold large nonstick skillet. Season salmon with salt and pepper and place, skin side down, in oil. Set over medium heat and cook, pressing fillets gently with a spatula so skin makes good contact with the pan, until skin is browned and crisp, 5–7 minutes. Press down in the center of fillets if they begin to lift from pan. Turn fillets over and cook on flesh side until just cooked through, about 1 minute.

Combine daikon, carrots, almonds, half of the glaze, and remaining 1 Tbsp. oil in a medium bowl and toss to coat. Add a pinch of salt and toss again.

Serve salmon and pickled daikon and carrots with remaining glaze alongside.

SWAP YOUR HEART OUT

Francis designed these recipes for winter produce, but we have a feeling you'll want to cook them well into spring—and beyond. Luckily, they're as adaptable as they are delicious. Here's how to swap for the seasons.

SPRING

Creamy Pasta (p. 56)

→ Instead of mushrooms and leeks, try fava beans or peas.

Marinated Tofu (p. 55)

→ Sub raw cucumbers for the sprouts (skip the scallions).

SUMMER

Skillet Salmon

→ Use radishes instead of carrots for the salad.

Tamarind Chicken (p. 55)

→ Swap the collard greens for spinach.

FALL

Shrimp Curry

→ Add cooked cubes of pumpkin (or kohlrabi!) in place of cabbage.

Braised Beans (p. 56)

→ Use mushrooms instead of fennel.

◆
SKILLET SALMON
WITH PICKLE-Y
SALAD



◆
BRAISED BEANS
AND FENNEL
WITH SARDINES
AND LEMON
P. 56





★
MARINATED TOFU
WITH BRUSSELS
SPROUTS
AND FARRO
P. 55



◆
TAMARIND CHICKEN
THIGHS WITH
COLLARD GREENS
SALAD

Tamarind Chicken Thighs With Collard Greens Salad

4 SERVINGS Tamarind concentrate gives this chicken its sticky, glossy quality, not to mention its sweet-and-sour flavor. Try it with skin-on pieces of chicken, brush onto whole fish before roasting, or lacquer onto bone-in pork chops.

- 8 skin-on, bone-in chicken thighs (about 2½ lb.), patted dry
- Kosher salt
- 2 serrano chiles, coarsely chopped
- 1 2" piece ginger, peeled, chopped
- 3 garlic cloves
- ⅓ cup tamarind concentrate
- 3 Tbsp. coconut aminos
- 2 Tbsp. agave nectar
- 2 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp. ground nutmeg
- ½ cup plus 3 Tbsp. fresh orange juice (from about 2 oranges)



ABOUT THAT TAMARIND

Native to Africa and common in tropical regions across Asia, this fruit's pulp lends an unmistakable sour-sweet taste to everything from stir-fries to candy. It's commonly sold as blocks of pulp or in jars of concentrate. This recipe calls for the latter, which is thin and seedless, but if you can find only the pulp, cook it down with equal parts water for 10–15 minutes until it's the texture of caramel, and then strain out the seeds. Francis recommends Swad brand concentrate, which you can find at South Asian and West Indian grocery stores, Whole Foods, or on Amazon.

- 3 Tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 2 medium Japanese sweet potatoes or other sweet potatoes (about 1 lb.), scrubbed, thinly sliced into rounds
- Half a bunch collard greens (about 6 oz.), stems removed, leaves cut or torn into bite-size pieces
- Freshly ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 375°. Place chicken in a large bowl and season all over with salt; set aside.

Blend chiles, ginger, garlic, tamarind concentrate, coconut aminos, agave, cinnamon, nutmeg, and ½ cup orange juice in a blender until smooth. Transfer to a small saucepan and place over medium heat. Cook, stirring often, until glaze is sticky and easily coats a spoon, 6–8 minutes. Let cool. Pour glaze over chicken and toss to coat.

Pour 2 Tbsp. oil into a large skillet and, using tongs, arrange chicken, skin side down, in pan, leaving excess glaze behind in bowl. Cook, undisturbed, over medium heat, until skin is browned and crisp, 10–12 minutes. Transfer chicken to a plate.

Let skillet cool 5 minutes, then arrange sweet potatoes in an even, slightly overlapping layer in pan and season with salt. Place chicken, skin side up, on top. Transfer pan to oven and roast until chicken is cooked through and juices run clear when flesh is pierced with the tip of a small knife, 10–12 minutes. Let rest in pan 10 minutes.

While the chicken is resting, toss collard greens, remaining 3 Tbsp. orange juice, and remaining 1 Tbsp. oil in a large bowl to combine; season with a pinch of salt and a few grinds of pepper. Lightly massage greens with your hands to soften slightly.

Serve chicken and sweet potatoes with collard greens salad alongside.

Marinated Tofu With Brussels Sprouts and Farro

4 SERVINGS Firm tofu quickly soaks up flavor from an intense marinade, helping it get crispy seared edges while staying soft and tender inside.

- 1 cup semi-pearled farro or cracked freekeh, rinsed
- Kosher salt

- 1 14-oz. block extra-firm tofu
- 1 1½" piece ginger, peeled, finely grated
- 2 Tbsp. tamari or low-sodium soy sauce
- 1 Tbsp. fish sauce
- 1 tsp. ground cumin
- 6 scallions, coarsely chopped
- 12 oz. brussels sprouts, trimmed, halved through stem end
- 4 Tbsp. vegetable oil, divided
- ½ lemon
- ⅓ cup coarsely chopped parsley or cilantro

Preheat oven to 425°. Toast farro in a large wide pot over medium heat, stirring often, until golden brown, about 4 minutes. Remove from heat and pour in cold water to cover grains by 1"; season generously with salt. Set pot over medium-high heat and bring water to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer, skimming foam from surface, until grains are tender but still have some bite, 25–30 minutes. Drain farro and return to pot off heat; cover to keep warm.

While farro is cooking, cut tofu lengthwise to create 2 wide, flat slabs. Pat dry with paper towels to remove as much moisture from surface as possible. Arrange in a single layer in a large shallow bowl.

Whisk ginger, tamari, fish sauce, and cumin in a small bowl to combine. Pour half of marinade over tofu and gently turn to coat evenly.

Toss scallions and brussels sprouts with 2 Tbsp. oil and remaining marinade on a large rimmed baking sheet to coat well; season with salt. Spread out vegetables to ensure everything cooks evenly and roast, tossing halfway through, until deeply browned in spots, 20–25 minutes.

Finely grate zest from lemon over vegetables, then squeeze juice over. Add parsley and toss well to combine.

Heat remaining 2 Tbsp. oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium-high. Working in batches if needed, cook tofu, undisturbed, until dark brown and very crisp, about 2 minutes. Carefully turn over and cook on other side until dark brown and very crisp, about 2 minutes. Transfer tofu to a cutting board and slice as desired.

Divide farro and tofu evenly among bowls. Scatter brussels sprouts mixture on top.

Braised Beans and Fennel With Sardines and Lemon

4 SERVINGS *The sardines on top of this brothy bean soup can be left whole or broken up and folded into the soup. The choice is yours!*

- 1 fennel bulb with fronds, stalks and fronds removed
- 1 lemon, halved
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 medium shallots, thinly sliced
- 6 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- Small handful of mixed hardy herb sprigs (such as bay leaves, thyme, and/or rosemary)
- ½ tsp. crushed red pepper flakes
- ¼ cup dry white wine
- 6 cups low-sodium chicken broth
- 2 15-oz. cans cannellini (white kidney) or cranberry beans, rinsed
- 1 4.4-oz. tin oil-packed sardines, drained
- 1 (loosely packed) cup very coarsely chopped parsley
- Kosher salt
- Toasted seeded bread (for serving)

Slice fennel bulb in half lengthwise and cut each half lengthwise into 3 wedges. Thinly slice 1 lemon half into rounds and wriggle out and discard any seeds; leave remaining half intact and set aside.

Heat oil in a medium pot over medium-high. Add fennel, shallots, garlic, hardy herbs, lemon rounds, and red pepper flakes and cook, stirring occasionally, until fennel and lemon are softened slightly and golden brown in spots, 5–7 minutes.

Using tongs, transfer lemon rounds to a small bowl; set aside. Add wine to pot and cook until reduced by half, about 2 minutes. Pour in broth and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer, stirring occasionally, until fennel is tender, about 5 minutes. Add beans and simmer until beans soak up some of the broth and are warmed through, 8–10 minutes.

Meanwhile, working one at a time, slice open each sardine with the tip of a paring knife and remove any visible bones; discard. Separate fillets from one another and place in a small bowl. Squeeze juice from remaining reserved lemon half over fillets.

Remove and discard any hardy herbs and stems you can from braise. Stir in parsley; taste and season broth with more salt if needed.

Divide braise among bowls; top with reserved lemon slices and sardines. Serve with bread alongside.

Pasta With Mushrooms and Cashew Cream

4 SERVINGS *This creamy pasta dish gets its ideal silky-creamy texture from cashews blended with pasta water and nutritional yeast.*

- 1 cup cashews
- 4 Tbsp. (or more) extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 6 oz. maitake mushrooms, torn into bite-size pieces
- 6 oz. shiitake mushrooms, stems removed, torn into bite-size pieces
- Kosher salt
- 1 medium leek, white and pale green parts only, halved lengthwise, thinly sliced crosswise
- 2 medium shallots, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 12 oz. spaghetti or other long pasta
- 2 Tbsp. nutritional yeast
- 2 Tbsp. finely chopped parsley
- ½ lemon
- Freshly ground black pepper

Preheat oven to 350°. Toast cashews on a rimmed baking sheet, tossing halfway through, until golden brown, 7–9 minutes. Let cool.

Heat 2 Tbsp. oil in a large Dutch oven or other heavy pot over medium-high. Arrange half of mushrooms in a single layer in pot and cook, undisturbed, until edges are brown and starting to crisp, about 3 minutes. Give mushrooms a good toss, then continue to cook, tossing occasionally, until all sides are brown and crisp, about 5 minutes more. Using a slotted spoon, transfer mushrooms to a plate; season with salt. Repeat with remaining 2 Tbsp. oil, remaining mushrooms, and more salt.

Reduce heat to medium-low and return all of the mushrooms to same pot. Add leek, shallots, and garlic and cook, stirring often and adding another 1 Tbsp. oil if pan looks dry, until leek and shallots are translucent and softened, about 4 minutes. Remove from heat.

Meanwhile, cook pasta in a large pot of boiling salted water, stirring occasionally, until very al dente, about 2 minutes less than package directions (the pasta will finish cooking in the pan). Drain pasta, reserving ¾ cup pasta cooking liquid.

Blend cashews, nutritional yeast, and pasta cooking liquid in a blender until very creamy. Set cashew cream aside.

Return drained pasta to pot with mushroom mixture and add reserved cashew cream. Place over medium heat and cook, stirring well to coat, until pasta is al dente, about 3 minutes. Remove from heat. Add parsley and squeeze in juice from lemon half. Toss well to incorporate.

Divide pasta evenly among shallow bowls or plates and top with several grinds of pepper.



LIKE CHEESE BUT NOT CHEESE

Francis first tasted this dried deactivated yeast, also known as brewer's or baker's yeast, at a restaurant job when chef Gerardo Gonzalez used the nutty yellow flakes to make homemade vegan Doritos dust. Now it's a staple for Francis, an inexpensive, shelf-stable ingredient that lends a distinct cheesiness when you don't want or have the real thing. To create the creamy sauce for this dish, Francis hydrates the yeast by blending it with cashews and pasta water until smooth. Might you mistake it for actual Alfredo sauce? Maybe. Maybe not. It's delicious either way.

★
PASTA WITH
MUSHROOMS AND
CASHEW CREAM



THE
HEALTHYISH
ISSUE

THE FUTURE IS ANCIENT

All-purpose has its purpose, but these recipes from ROXANA JULLAPAT'S forthcoming cookbook, *Mother Grains: Recipes for the Grain Revolution*, make baking with the world of ancient grains (think spelt, sorghum, and buckwheat flours) more accessible and exciting than ever

by ALEX BEGGS ✦ photographs by JENNY HUANG

★
BLUEBERRY
SPELT
MUFFINS
P. 67



SPLENDID SPELT

Of all the grains featured in this story, spelt behaves the most like all-purpose flour; swap it in a 1:1 ratio in most baked goods.

R

oxana Jullapat is a total grain-head. After I spoke with the co-owner of L.A. bakery Friends & Family last fall, her enthusiasm for really old grains rubbed off on me like rice flour on a black apron. It wasn't long before I was scouring my local co-op for spelt flour, sorghum flour, and multiple cornmeals.

Soon I was cooking my way through her fantastic forthcoming cookbook, *Mother Grains*, which focuses on eight domestically grown whole grains: barley, buckwheat, corn, oat, rice, rye, sorghum, and certain species of wheat. These are widely considered "ancient grains" because they've remained largely unchanged over hundreds of years. The book features a mix of savory dishes and baked goods, many of which are homespun favorites enlivened with nutty-delicious whole grain flours, like blueberry muffins that use spelt flour both in the batter and the crispy streusel topping. "Spelt brings a little bit more texture but also more oomph, more dimension to your baking," Jullapat says. I made them twice.

Whole grain flours are delicious, full stop. But maybe you'll also appreciate that they're healthier than industrialized flour, packed with vitamins and minerals and everyone's favorite—fiber. "Just buy a bag of buckwheat flour," she says. We'll help you figure out what to do with it.



Crazy for Cornmeal

There are a lot of cornmeals out there. Yellow or white or purple or blue. Coarse or fine. Each color brings its own flavor and each grind brings a different texture. But which should you bake with? **Corn flour** is a superfine cornmeal that adds a melt-in-your-mouth quality to cookies and some cakes. **Fine cornmeal** is best for tender cakes (like the pound cake at right), muffins, scones, and biscuits. **Medium cornmeal** is neutral good and works in most recipes that call for cornmeal. It might add a toothy crunch to your cakes, but isn't that exciting?! A bit of **coarse cornmeal or polenta** adds body and texture to cornbread and pancakes made with finer flours.

HOW TO USE IT → Replace up to half the flour in olive oil cake, scones, or pancakes.

SWAPPABLE SPELT

"I call spelt a gateway grain because now you can go to any average supermarket and buy a bag of spelt flour," Jullapat says. A type of wheat, spelt adds a wholesome, nutty flavor to whatever you're baking, plus you can brag about getting your fiber, iron, and manganese from it. Note for the bread bakers: Spelt flour is lower in gluten than all-purpose, so if you want to work it into your loaves, start with a small percentage of spelt before you go for the full loaf.

HOW TO USE IT → Use in place of all-purpose flour in pie crust, pizza dough, croissants, empanadas, or blondies (try spelt instead of barley in the blondies on p. 67).





★
RICOTTA
CORNMEAL
POUND CAKE
P. 68

YOU'VE GOT OPTIONS

Try semolina, a coarsely ground durum wheat, in place of cornmeal for a wheat-y flavor reminiscent of Italian pastries. Add orange zest or anise to up the effect.



◆
GRANOLA
SCONES
P. 69



LOCAL OATS

Oat's flavor varies based on where the grains were grown. Seek them out locally or try Bob's Red Mill.



Roll With the Oats

These hearty scones are packed with rolled oats, which are whole oat kernels, or groats, that have been steamed and pressed between steel rollers. But Jullapat also loves baking with oat flour made from finely ground groats. “To me they evoke warmth. They taste creamy, like cereal milk,” she says.

HOW TO USE IT → When baking with oat flour, replace up to a quarter of the flour in streusel toppings, banana bread, or doughnuts.



EINKORN
SHORTBREADS
P. 68



EINKORN OF MY EYE

• Einkorn is the great-great-great-great-great-(you get the picture)-grandmother to all other wheats. It’s the oldest wheat variety out there. It’s also high in protein, iron, thiamine, dietary fiber, B vitamins, and the antioxidant lutein. “It tastes bran-y,” Jullapat says. “It can get a little milk-chocolaty too. Shortbread is a good canvas for it because it brings out that richness. And einkorn loves butter.” Relatable.

HOW TO USE IT → Replace up to a quarter of the flour in sticky buns, pie crust, madeleines, or cake.



Flours Don’t Last Forever

Like nuts and seeds, whole grain flours stored in your pantry can go rancid and attract mites within a few months. (If it’s gone bad it

will smell off the second you open the bag.) Your gorgeous speckled Turkey Red (a type of wheat!) deserves the longest possible life, so start storing your flours in the fridge— or freezer if you don’t bake

that often. (They’ll stay good for a year in there; no need to defrost.) We love storing loose flours in no-nonsense Cambro containers, which are easy to scoop from and stack (from \$4; webstaurantstore.com).



SOMETHING ABOUT SORGHUM

● Long, stalky sorghum arrived in the Americas from Africa as a result of the slave trade. Prevalent in the South, it is a highly nutritious and resilient crop that can stand up to droughts, floods, and extreme weather; it also remains a primary source of nutrition for many food-insecure populations across the globe, Jullapat points out. Sorghum flour is naturally gluten-free, so it generally needs an assist from all-purpose flour to add structure to baked goods.

HOW TO USE IT → Replace up to a quarter of the flour in any cookie (especially peanut butter), gingerbread, or carrot cake.



Better With Buckwheat

Buckwheat is actually a fruit (related to rhubarb) whose grain-like seeds can be ground into a gluten-free flour that's packed with vitamins, minerals, protein, fiber, and flavor. Jullapat describes its flavor as "deeply earthy, like a garden after the rain, and nutty, like toasted sesame seeds, with subtle aromatic notes of green tea and rose." Can you tell it's her favorite?

HOW TO USE IT → Replace up to a quarter of the flour in crepes, tart crusts, anything with chocolate, baozi, or waffles.



Good for Everyone

When you buy small-batch grains, you're not only supporting the local economy, you're also advocating for agricultural biodiversity and more

sustainable farming methods. For example, Maine Grains in Skowhegan, Maine, mills "certified organic and heritage grains that are grown in rotation with crops that balance nutrients in the soil," founder

Amber Lambke says. "The restoration of grain growing in the northeast serves bakers, brewers, and chefs, and is a step toward restoring balanced agricultural practices that leave the earth better than we found it."

WHAT IS AVAXHOME?

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WHAT THE HULL?

If you come across both light and dark buckwheat flour, buy the dark stuff. It's been ground with the edible outer hull, where all the healthy business is.

GET THE BOOK!

Jullapat's cookbook
'Mother Grains: Recipes
for the Grain Revolution'
(\$40; W.W. Norton)
comes out in April and is
available for preorder.



◆
MACADAMIA
AND BROWN
BUTTER
BLONDIES



Beautiful Barley

More love for barley flour! It gives baked goods a silky, chewy texture, dense crumb, and butterscotch-y flavor. “It has a warmth and a wintery feel,” Jullapat says. Oh, and barley is the grain with the highest amount of fiber. Take that, spelt.

HOW TO USE IT → Replace up to a quarter of the flour in pumpkin bread, dinner rolls, millionaire bars, or spice cakes.

Macadamia and Brown Butter Blondies

MAKES 12 Baking these blondies in a round cake pan ensures each piece has a chewy, toasted edge and soft center.

- Nonstick vegetable oil spray
- ½ cup (65 g) whole raw or toasted macadamia nuts
- ½ vanilla bean, split lengthwise
- 18 Tbsp. unsalted butter
- ¾ cup plus 2 Tbsp. (105 g) all-purpose flour
- ¾ cup (85 g) barley flour
- 1¾ tsp. baking powder
- 1½ tsp. Diamond Crystal or ¾ tsp. Morton kosher salt
- 1 cup plus 7 Tbsp. (packed; 285 g) dark brown sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1 tsp. vanilla extract
- 2 pints ice cream of choice (optional)

Preheat oven to 350°. Lightly coat a 9"-diameter cake pan with nonstick spray and line bottom with a parchment paper round. If using raw macadamia nuts, toast on a rimmed baking sheet, tossing once, until golden, 8–10 minutes. Let cool, then coarsely chop.

Scrape vanilla seeds into a small saucepan; add pod and butter. Set over medium-low heat and cook, stirring occasionally, until butter foams, then browns, 6–8 minutes. Transfer to a medium bowl, scraping in all of the browned bits. Using tongs, remove and discard vanilla pod.

Whisk all-purpose and barley flours, baking powder, and salt in another medium bowl. Add brown sugar to brown butter and stir to combine. Add eggs one at a time, stirring well after

each addition. Stir in dry ingredients, then vanilla extract and nuts. Scrape batter into prepared pan; smooth top.

Bake blondies, rotating halfway through, until top is golden brown and a tester inserted into the center comes out clean, 40–45 minutes. Let cool.

Turn out blondies, remove parchment, and cut into 12 wedges. Serve each with a scoop of ice cream if desired.

Blueberry Spelt Muffins

MAKES 8-10 Jullapat prefers to use frozen blueberries in these muffins because the fruit doesn't get smashed while mixing the batter. If you're using fresh berries, just fold them in extra gently.

STREUSEL

- Nonstick vegetable oil spray (optional)
- 3 Tbsp. spelt flour
- 2 Tbsp. granulated sugar
- 2 tsp. dark brown sugar
- Pinch of ground cinnamon
- 2 Tbsp. chilled unsalted butter, cut into ½" pieces

MUFFINS

- 1½ cups (195 g) spelt flour
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. baking soda
- ¼ tsp. ground cinnamon
- ¼ tsp. kosher salt
- 1 large egg
- ⅔ cup (packed; 133 g) dark brown sugar
- ⅓ cup vegetable oil
- ⅓ cup buttermilk
- Zest of 1 lemon
- ½ cup (85 g) fresh or frozen blueberries

Great Grains

All of Jullapat's favorite mills listed here sell their products online. But when in doubt, Bob's Red Mill makes almost every specialty flour mentioned in this story (sorry, einkorn) and is also Roxana-approved.



Grist and Toll
PASADENA, CA

"I have not used better flour in the entire country," says Jullapat (and she would know!).

From \$10;
gristandtoll.com



Anson Mills
COLUMBIA, SC

Jullapat's go-tos include the toasted oat flour and all of the cornmeal varieties.

From \$6;
ansonmills.com



Capay Mills
RUMSEY, CA

This is Jullapat's one-stop shop "for rare wheats like Sonora White flour."

From \$10;
capaymills.com



Maine Grains
SKOWHEGAN, ME

"Get the Øland wheat flour, an heirloom from Scandinavia."

\$9;
mainegrains.com

STREUSEL Place a rack in middle of oven; preheat to 350°. Lightly coat a standard 12-cup muffin pan with nonstick spray or line with paper liners. Whisk spelt flour, granulated sugar, brown sugar, and cinnamon in a medium bowl. Add butter and toss to coat. Working quickly, smash in butter with your fingers until pieces are about pea-size. Chill streusel until ready to use.

MUFFINS Whisk spelt flour, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, and salt in a medium bowl until there are no lumps. Make a well in the center with your hands. Whisk egg, brown sugar, oil, buttermilk, and lemon zest in a small bowl. Pour into well and whisk to combine. Using a rubber spatula, gently fold in blueberries. Evenly divide batter among 8–10 muffin cups, filling each with about ¼ cup batter. Top each muffin with about 1 Tbsp. streusel; bake, rotating pan halfway through, until golden brown and a tester inserted into the center of a muffin comes out clean, 24–27 minutes. Let muffins cool in pan 20 minutes. Turn out onto a wire rack; let cool completely.

DO AHEAD: Muffins can be baked 2 days ahead. Store airtight at room temperature.

Ricotta Cornmeal Pound Cake

8 SERVINGS Ricotta adds a buttery richness and bit of tang to this cake, but you can substitute full-fat cottage cheese.

Nonstick cooking oil spray
1 cup (125 g) all-purpose flour
1 cup (160 g) fine-ground white or yellow cornmeal
1¾ tsp. baking powder
¾ tsp. Diamond Crystal or ½ tsp. Morton kosher salt
10 Tbsp. unsalted butter, room temperature
1 cup (200 g) granulated sugar
2 large eggs
1 large egg yolk
¼ cup sour cream
1 cup whole-milk ricotta
2 tsp. vanilla extract
Lightly whipped cream and/or lemon curd (for serving)

Place a rack in middle of oven; preheat to 325°. Lightly coat an 8½x4½" loaf pan with nonstick spray, then line with parchment paper, leaving overhang on long sides.

Whisk flour, cornmeal, baking powder, and salt into a small bowl. Using an electric mixer, beat butter and sugar in a large bowl on medium speed until light and fluffy, about 5 minutes. Add eggs and egg yolk one at a time, mixing to fully incorporate before adding the next. Scrape down sides of bowl, add half of dry ingredients, and beat on low speed just to combine. Add sour cream and remaining dry ingredients and mix 1 minute. Scrape down sides of bowl, add ricotta and vanilla, and mix until well combined. Scrape batter into prepared pan; smooth surface.

Bake cake 40 minutes. Rotate pan and continue to bake cake until golden brown all over and a tester inserted into the center comes out clean, 20–30 minutes more. (Baking the cake slowly at a lower temperature yields a tender and creamy crumb and will prevent it from drying out.) Let cake cool in pan on a wire rack, at least 1 hour.

Carefully run an offset spatula or paring knife around sides of cake and use parchment paper to lift cake from pan; remove parchment. Cut cake into slices and serve topped with whipped cream and/or lemon curd if desired.

DO AHEAD: Cake can be baked 2 days ahead. Store tightly wrapped at room temperature, or freeze up to 2 weeks.

Einkorn Shortbreads

MAKES ABOUT 12 Make sure to use einkorn flour labeled "whole grain," which has been ground with the whole kernel. All-purpose einkorn flour isn't the same.

¼ cup (packed; 50 g) dark brown sugar
¼ cup (28 g) powdered sugar
½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, cut into ½" pieces, room temperature
¾ cup (85 g) whole grain einkorn flour
½ cup plus 1 Tbsp. (70 g) all-purpose flour
1 tsp. Diamond Crystal or ½ tsp. Morton kosher salt

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: A 2"–2½"-diameter cookie cutter; ½" triangle, heart, clover, or other shape cookie cutter (optional)

Place a rack in middle of oven; preheat to 300°. Pulse brown sugar and powdered sugar in a food processor to combine.

Add butter and pulse just until combined. Add einkorn flour, all-purpose flour, and salt and pulse until dough comes together. Turn out onto a clean surface; press into about a 6"-diameter disk.

Place dough between 2 sheets of parchment paper and roll out to a ⅓"–½"-thick round. Remove top sheet of parchment and punch out cookies with larger cutter. If using smaller cutter, punch out center of each cookie. Carefully transfer cookies to a large parchment-lined baking sheet, spacing 1" apart. Reroll scraps; punch out more cookies.

Bake cookies, rotating baking sheet front to back halfway through if browning unevenly, until golden and firm around edges, 25–35 minutes. Let cool on baking sheet.

DO AHEAD: Cookies can be baked 2 days ahead. Store airtight at room temperature.

Trouble Cookies

MAKES 16 "Once you eat one, you just can't stop," Jullapat says of how these cashew-and-toffee-loaded cookies got their name. Naturally sweet sorghum flour becomes caramelly when combined with butter and brown sugar.

¼ cup plus 2 Tbsp. (60 g) raw cashews
½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, room temperature
¾ cup (packed) plus 2 Tbsp. (175 g) dark brown sugar
1 large egg
1 tsp. vanilla extract
½ cup plus 2 Tbsp. (80 g) sorghum flour
½ cup plus 2 Tbsp. (78 g) all-purpose flour
1 tsp. baking soda
½ tsp. baking powder
¼ tsp. kosher salt
¾ cup (70 g) unsweetened shredded coconut, plus more for serving
½ cup (90 g) English toffee chips (such as Heath Bits O' Brickle)

Place a rack in middle of oven; preheat to 350°. Toast cashews on a rimmed baking sheet, tossing halfway through, until golden, 8–10 minutes. Let cool before chopping into pea-size pieces.

Beat butter and brown sugar in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment on medium speed until light and fluffy, about 5 minutes.

Add egg and vanilla and beat 1 minute. Add sorghum flour, all-purpose flour, baking soda, baking powder, and salt and beat just until combined. Add cashews, coconut, and toffee. Mix just until combined. The dough will be very soft at this point. Wrap tightly and chill at least 30 minutes or up to 2 days (if chilling for more than 30 minutes, transfer to a sheet of parchment paper or plastic wrap, flatten into a disk, and wrap tightly to prevent drying).

Place racks in upper and lower thirds of oven; preheat to 375°. Divide dough into 16 equal portions (about 1½ oz.; 45 g each). Working quickly so that the dough doesn't warm up, roll each portion into a ball with your hands. Divide cookies between 2 parchment-lined baking sheets, spacing at least 3" apart. Press gently with palm of your hand to flatten and decorate with a sprinkle of shredded coconut.

Bake cookies, rotating baking sheets top to bottom and front to back halfway through, until edges are brown but centers are still a little gooey, 12–14 minutes. Let cookies cool on baking sheets before serving.

DO AHEAD: Dough can be formed into balls 2 weeks ahead; freeze on a baking sheet until solid. Transfer to an airtight container or freezer bags and keep frozen. Bake from frozen; cookies may take a few minutes longer to bake. Cookies can be baked 2 days ahead; store airtight at room temperature.

Granola Scones

MAKES 6 *"These scones are full of flavors and textures reminiscent of a granola bar," Jullapat says. "They're rich in fiber, omega-3s, antioxidants, and protein, with a sweet kick from copious dried fruits and a sprinkle of raw sugar."*

- ¼ cup plus 2 Tbsp. (53 g) whole wheat flour
- ½ cup plus 1 Tbsp. (57 g) old-fashioned oats
- ½ tsp. ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp. baking powder
- ¼ tsp. baking soda
- ⅛ tsp. kosher salt
- 6 Tbsp. (¾ stick) chilled unsalted butter, cut into ½" pieces
- ¼ cup plus 2 Tbsp. (47 g) all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
- 2 Tbsp. raw sugar, plus more for sprinkling

Zest from 1 orange

- 1 cup (145 g) chopped pitted Medjool dates (about 16)
- 1 cup (145 g) golden raisins
- ½ cup (80 g) flaxseed
- ½ cup (45 g) sliced almonds
- ⅓ cup (30 g) unsweetened shredded coconut
- 6 Tbsp. (55 g) dried black currants
- 5 Tbsp. (50 g) pumpkin seeds (pepitas)
- ⅓ cup heavy cream, plus more for brushing

Place a rack in middle of oven; preheat to 350°. Pulse whole wheat flour, oats, cinnamon, baking powder, baking soda, salt, butter, ¼ cup plus 2 Tbsp. (47 g) all-purpose flour, and 2 Tbsp. raw sugar in a food processor until butter is no larger than pea-size, 5–7 pulses. Transfer to a large bowl; mix in orange zest, dates, raisins, flaxseed, almonds, coconut, currants, and pumpkin seeds. Toss by hand until well combined, then make a well in the center. Pour cream into well and toss vigorously with your hands (like a salad) until mixture comes together to form a dough.

Transfer dough to a lightly floured surface and pat into a 6"-diameter disk about 1" thick. Using a large chef's knife, cut disk into 6 equal wedges. The dough will be crumbly and may fall apart as you cut it; don't be afraid to compact it back together.

Arrange scones on a parchment-lined baking sheet, spacing at least 2" apart. Lightly brush top of each scone with cream and sprinkle with raw sugar. Bake scones, rotating baking sheet front to back halfway through, until light golden, 25–30 minutes. Let scones cool on baking sheet before serving.

DO AHEAD: Scones can be made 3 days ahead. Store airtight at room temperature.

Chocolate Buckwheat Cake

8–10 SERVINGS *The soufflé-like texture of this gluten-free cake comes from whipped egg whites and a sponge of yeast and buckwheat. The result is a decadent, moist cake with a light and airy crumb.*

SPONGE

- 1 tsp. instant yeast
- ½ cup (63 g) buckwheat flour
- 1 Tbsp. honey, preferably buckwheat

CAKE

- Nonstick vegetable oil spray
- 4 large eggs
- ¾ cup (135 g) bittersweet chocolate chips
- ½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, cut into pieces
- ¼ cup (25 g) Dutch-process unsweetened cocoa powder, sifted
- 1 Tbsp. vanilla extract
- Pinch of kosher salt
- ½ cup (100 g) granulated sugar, divided
- 2 Tbsp. powdered sugar

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: A 9"-diameter springform pan

SPONGE Place ¾ cup lukewarm (98°–105°) water in a medium bowl and sprinkle yeast over. Whisk in buckwheat flour and honey. Cover with a kitchen towel or plate. Let sit at room temperature until surface of sponge looks frothy with big and small bubbles across the top, about 1 hour.

CAKE Place a rack in middle of oven; preheat to 350°. Coat pan with nonstick spray. Separate yolks from eggs over a large bowl to catch egg whites. Place yolks in another small bowl; set egg whites aside. Combine chocolate and butter in a medium heatproof bowl and set over a medium saucepan of simmering water (do not let bowl touch water). Melt chocolate, stirring occasionally, until smooth. Remove from heat and whisk in cocoa powder, vanilla, salt, and ¼ cup (50 g) granulated sugar. Add egg yolks one at a time, whisking until smooth after each addition. Stir in sponge.

Add remaining ¼ cup (50 g) granulated sugar to bowl with reserved egg whites. Using an electric mixer on medium-high speed, beat until soft peaks form, about 4 minutes. Fold half of egg whites into batter until smooth, then fold in remaining egg whites until just combined. Scrape batter into prepared pan and smooth surface.

Bake cake, rotating pan halfway through, until a tester inserted into the center comes out clean, 40–45 minutes. Let cake cool in pan. Run a paring knife around edges of cake, then unmold and place on a plate. Dust with powdered sugar just before serving.

DO AHEAD: Cake (without powdered sugar) can be made 1 day ahead. Store tightly wrapped at room temperature.

CONFORT in CREAM

This cream of
broccoli soup (without
the cream) gives
the classic a run for
its money.

THE
HEALTHYISH
ISSUE





We love the velvety texture of broccoli soup, but we couldn't resist a crunchy addition: a turmeric-peanut-shallot topping.

Broccoli Soup With Turmeric, Peanuts, and Crispy Shallots

4 SERVINGS You won't find a drop of dairy in this bright green version of the cafeteria standard. It gets extra color from spinach and a perfectly creamy texture from potato. To make the soup vegan, replace the fish sauce with a spoonful of white miso.

- 2 medium shallots, thinly sliced into rings
- ½ cup plus 3 Tbsp. vegetable oil
- ⅓ cup unsalted dry-roasted peanuts, coarsely chopped
- ½ tsp. ground turmeric
- Kosher salt
- 2 small heads of broccoli (about 1 ½ lb. total)
- 1 large onion, finely chopped

- 1 serrano or other green chile, thinly sliced
- 4 garlic cloves, coarsely chopped
- 1 medium Yukon Gold potato, peeled, cut into 1" pieces
- 1 bunch mature spinach, thick stems trimmed
- 1 Tbsp. fish sauce
- ½ cup mint leaves and/or cilantro leaves with tender stems

Combine shallots and ½ cup oil in a medium pot and set over medium heat. Cook, stirring occasionally, until shallots turn pale golden, 7–9 minutes. Add peanuts and turmeric and cook, stirring occasionally, until shallots are golden brown and mixture smells very nutty, about 2 minutes. Remove pot from heat and strain

through a fine-mesh sieve set over a medium bowl. Let oil cool, then stir shallot mixture back in. Season with salt; set aside. Clean pot and reserve.

Trim 1" from bottom of broccoli stalks, then peel. Remove stalks from crowns and thinly slice; set aside. Coarsely chop florets into 1"–2" pieces; set aside separately.

Heat remaining 3 Tbsp. oil in reserved pot over medium-high. Add onion and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened and beginning to brown in spots, 7–9 minutes. Add chile and garlic and season with salt. Cook, stirring, until garlic softens, about 3 minutes. Add potato and reserved broccoli stalks to pot and stir to coat in onion mixture. Pour in 5 cups water, season with salt, and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover

pot, and simmer until potato and broccoli stalks are tender, 12–15 minutes.

Add two thirds of reserved broccoli florets to pot, cover, and cook until bright green, about 4 minutes. Add spinach and cook, stirring, until wilted, about 1 minute. Remove pot from heat. Working in small batches, purée in a blender until very smooth. Transfer to a large bowl as you go, then return to pot. (Or use an immersion blender if you have one and blend directly in the pot.)

Set pot over medium heat and add remaining broccoli florets. Cover pot and cook until florets are bright green, about 4 minutes. Stir in fish sauce; taste and season with more salt if needed.

Divide soup among bowls and top with herbs and reserved shallot mixture.

DESPERATELY **SEEKING**

I'd never been into astrology. But you probably didn't care about perfecting your sourdough technique until recently either. A global pandemic has us seeking order in places we'd never expect

by MACKENZIE CHUNG FEGAN
illustrations by PATRICIA DORIA



G CERTAINTY

THE
HEALTHYISH
ISSUE




THE WEEKEND BEFORE THE WORLD SHUT DOWN

I was told to prepare for judgment. It was Friday, March 13. By Monday, New York City schools would close, bars would shutter, theaters would go dark. But on Friday there was relative normalcy upstairs at Raoul's, a 45-year-old SoHo bistro known as much for its legendary parties as for its steak au poivre.

As New York City hit 150 reported COVID-19 cases, my fiancée and I decided—with baffling arbitrariness in hindsight—to keep our anniversary dinner reservation but to forgo the subway. We had our Greek wine-themed dinner, and before walking back over the Brooklyn Bridge we stopped for a nightcap at Raoul's. Drinks in hand, we spiraled our way up the staircase and slid into a booth, dimly lit by the glow of the fish tank. A few minutes later a tarot reader with long braids and a kind round face set up next to us and unpacked her decks, a celestial-themed tablecloth, and, in a nod to the moment, a bottle of hand sanitizer. In the spirit of the Last Night on Earth, my fiancée and I bought each other readings—my very first.

The reader laid before me a series of nine cards, all but two of which were major arcana, the most significant cards in a tarot deck, I would come to learn. There was the Emperor, a stern, bearded elder robed in red with strong Evil Santa vibes. Death(!), a skeleton on a horse greeting children and kings alike. Judgment, a golden-haired Gabriel rousing the dead with his horn. Even as a tarot

virgin I could tell that these cards were intense. The reader sensed my alarm. The Emperor, she told me, was about structure and a sense of control. Death, she reassured me, didn't literally mean dying, and Judgment needn't be ominous. It's a wake-up call, she said, perhaps signaling a new beginning or heightened awareness. It could be a good thing—look at those well-preserved corpses rising joyously from their coffins. Ha ha, nothing to worry about!



DESPITE BEING both a queer 30-something Brooklynite and the granddaughter of a Chinese face reader who conversed with ghosts, I have always been skeptical of various forms of mysticism and divination. I'm bullish on science. I don't know my moon sign. The only crystals in my home are pyramids of Maldon sea salt. How many times have I peered intently into my drink while friends discussed the Scorpio-ness of their exes? That a series of cards laid out in a specific pattern can divine the future runs counter to my sense of personal agency. My destiny is controlled not by the harmony of the spheres but by the choices I make, and even if I could know the future, who likes spoilers? "That's so Aries," some of you are clucking right now, but I prefer to see my "energy" on any particular day as

a reflection of my hormones and whether or not I've consumed enough water. If my future is already written in the stars, why bother getting out of bed?

But my end-of-the-world-as-we-know-it tarot reading kept coming back to me through months heavy with death, judgment, and a loss of control. Near constant ambulance sirens gave way to a summer of protest and reckoning, and as we canceled our wedding and watched my home state of California burn and obsessed over the outcome of the upcoming presidential election, I began to feel crippled by uncertainty and stasis. By nature I don't consider myself a control freak. But in a year without linear progress, when the hubris of planning something as simple as a meeting with a friend was punished by rain or a rising line on a graph of infection rates, I felt trapped in a state of suspension. My life was on hold for the foreseeable future, and my usual coping tools—community, access to nature, and a relentless focus on finding solutions—were out of reach. What was going to happen? I needed guidance.

Entire civilizations have sought clarity and comfort in organized religion during times of strife, but a traumatic semester at Catholic school ruled out that option for me. What about the spiritual practices that seemed to work for so many of my peers? My friends are no dummies, and if they tote crystals around in their pockets, chat with their dead ancestors, and commune with the full moon, should I too? Could mysticism be the antidote to a year that felt like swinging at a piñata, blindfolded and dizzy, and the piñata may or may not be a hologram?

In November 1918, as the influenza pandemic raged across the U.S. and people sheltered at home, the *Los Angeles Times* published a piece about the creative ways in which Angelenos were entertaining themselves. "Here's a queer light on human nature," Grace Kingsley reported. "Many persons are buying decks of cards with the statement they want them to tell fortunes with! No wonder, either, is it,

that in these hazardous days, we should want to find out what's going to happen to us and ours?" No wonder indeed. According to Google Trends, search volume for *psychic* reached a five-year peak the week of March 8, 2020, and the *New York Times* reported that the websites AstrologyZone, CafeAstrology, and Astro.com saw jumps in traffic in March.

Since I already celebrate Chinese New Year and its accompanying menagerie of zodiac animals, astrology seemed like a gentle enough entry point for me. I downloaded the Co—Star app, which purports to use NASA technology to deliver a highly personalized daily horoscope. I liked the look of it—sleek with a Dada vibe, designed to appeal to millennials who were in Poetry Club in high school—but was almost immediately foiled when it asked me to input the time of my birth. This was important, Co—Star scolded, so if I didn't know it I should text my mom. (I was heretofore unaware that eye rolls could be audible until I called my mom, an actual retired NASA scientist, to tell her that *afternoon* wouldn't

cut it.) The first day, Co—Star told me to seek out the desert but avoid elderberry. The next, I was to lean into bunk beds but shun supermarkets. In one section it told me I was the type of person unlikely to make the first move, but in another that I was intrinsically the type of person who felt compelled to make the first move. "Well, which is it?" I snapped, startling my dog.

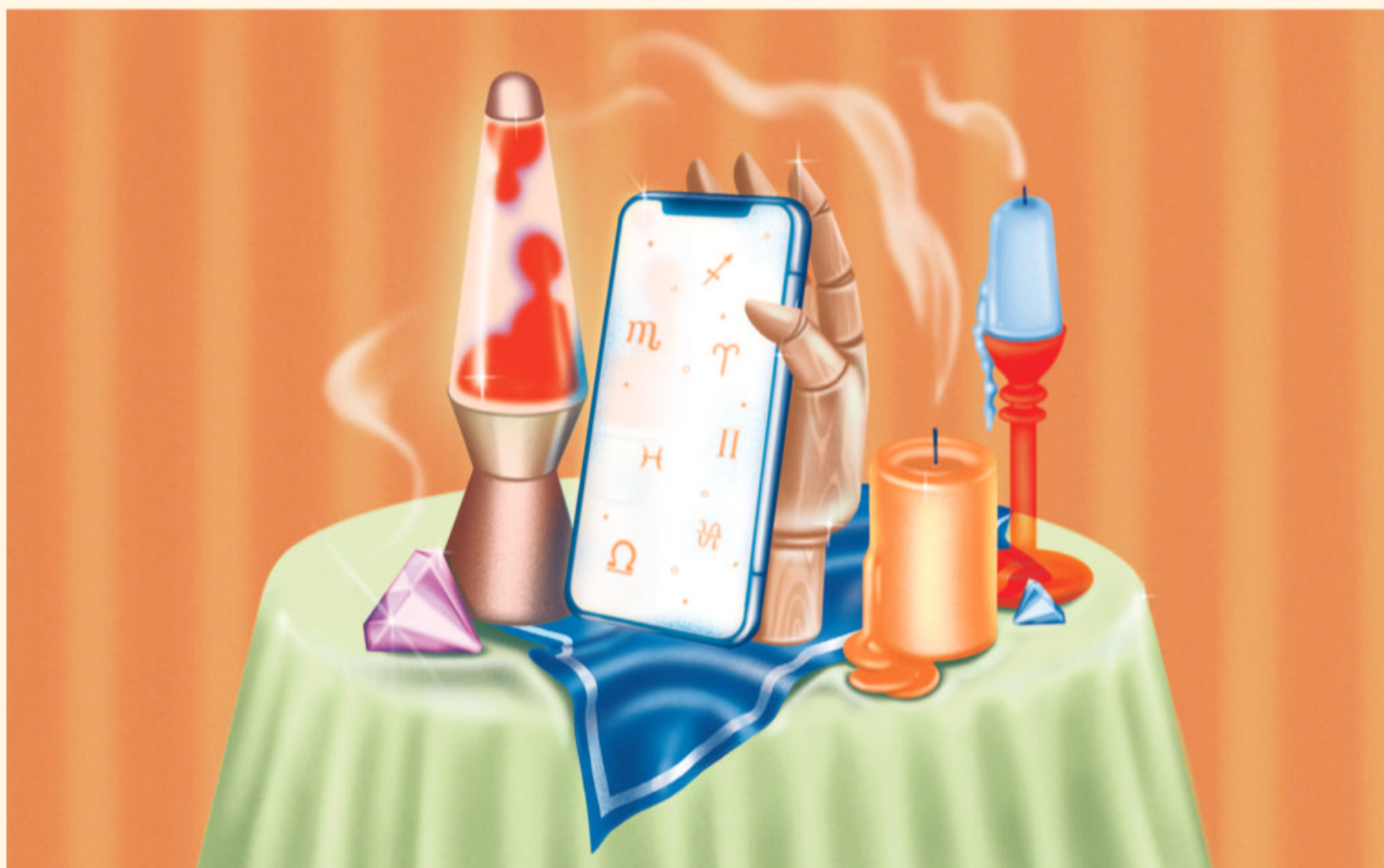
Perhaps I needed the guidance of a real human, someone whose approach to the world of woo was more relatable. I consulted a few friends eager to serve as Virgils on my descent into the spiritual realm, and they pointed me toward a handful of astrology accounts on Instagram. Whether it's thanks to Harry Potter's mainstreaming of the mystical, the wellness movement's focus on introspection, or the decline of organized religion, Western astrology—which 20 years ago was largely relegated to an occult-hippie ghetto—has proliferated across social

According to Google Trends, search volume for *psychic* reached a five-year peak the week of March 8, 2020.



media. For the politically active there's author and now Netflix star Chani Nicholas (378K Instagram followers), who follows a post about the new moon in Libra with a primer about state-sanctioned violence in Nigeria. Just here for the memes? Try @notallgeminis (584K), a pop culture romp through the 12 signs of the zodiac. There are even sign-specific accounts like @cancerdailyhoroscope (195K) and the Spanish language @libra_horoscoponegro (1.1M), I suppose so that sensitive Libras don't have to absorb the energy of an Aries horoscope. With so many options, I'd be sure to find someone who spoke my language.

That someone was Alice Sparkly Kat, author of the forthcoming book *Postcolonial Astrology* and an organizer of the Queer Astrology Conference. Sparkly Kat was recommended to me by several friends; if anyone could reach me, perhaps they assumed, it would be a political, queer Asian with a sense of humor. Most of their posts about conjunctions





and retrogrades whizzed far above my head, but I chuckled at the astrology cat memes and the chart ranking the signs on a “Dad” to “Daddy” spectrum.

I asked Sparkly Kat if they’d seen an influx of people seeking astrological readings during this time of deep uncertainty. They had, and the average age of their clients was skewing younger—more Gen Z’ers. “Many are coming to me looking for a sense of hope,” they told me. “Jupiter is the planet that rules institutions, and right now it’s in Capricorn, which means it’s debilitated. We’re feeling cynical about institutions like capitalism. Plus, there’s a grand conjunction of Jupiter and Saturn, which Renaissance astrologers would have seen as a transitional time.” I felt my skepticism fluttering.

But the more I talked to Sparkly Kat about their approach to astral charts, the more I relaxed my preconceived notions. “Astrology isn’t about making predictions,” they emphasized. “My role is to tell a story about the position of the planets and facilitate a conversation so that you can go and make your own decisions. It’s one part therapy, one part

science fiction.” This, I thought, I could get down with—archetypes and agency, not forecasting and fate. Perhaps I could approach a spiritual reading like therapy, a jumping-off point for knowing myself better, deeper. No predictions, just self-reflection.



“YOU’RE GOING to have problems with your feet in the future. Arthritis runs in your family.”

I know Heather Carlucci from a previous life—an imprecise turn of phrase in this case because she is a psychic medium. I met her when she was the chef-owner of an Indian restaurant in the West Village called Lassi. Before that she was a celebrated pastry chef at some of New York’s top restaurants in the ’80s and ’90s like Union Square Cafe, Mondrian, and Judson Grill. Carlucci left the industry after nearly 30 years for a career that wouldn’t keep her on her feet for 10 hours at a time. What she turned to was the skill she’s had for as long as she can remember—psychic intuition and the ability to communicate with dead people.

I booked a session with Carlucci because as much as the phrase *psychic powers* caused my eyebrows to fly toward my hairline, I’ve never known her to be anything but down-to-earth. “I am not crunchy,” she confirmed. “I feel very strongly that what I do is completely scientific. We just don’t understand that science yet.” She’s a skeptic’s psychic, if such a thing exists.

“Thousands of years ago it was accepted that some people are tuned in to something that not all of us can see clearly,” Carlucci said. “Now that we’re in this moment of existential panic, people who wouldn’t have sought me out before are letting down their guards. They’re thinking, ‘There’s something I’m not listening to, apparently.’” Ninety percent of Carlucci’s clients these days are new, and she’s been tickled to see the names of chefs she worked with decades ago pop up on her calendar. “And they thought I was crazy when I left the industry,” she laughed.



Kat's explanation of astrology allowed me to envision a more Jungian, less magick way into mysticism, but once my session with Carlucci began, I realized this was a different thing altogether. An hour with Carlucci is decidedly not therapy. She tells you what she hears, smells, and sees—in my case, the click of my grandmother's mah-jongg tiles, my grandfather's cigarette smoke, the colony of chipmunks that she says will invade my house. Her predictions are not metaphors; her claim is bigger. There was no archetypal father in the form of the Emperor card—only my literal father, four years dead, chatting with Carlucci and sporting a sizable mustache.

As Carlucci channeled, pausing to take in what she perceived before delivering messages in a matter-of-fact tone, she brought insights from my ancestors. My grandmother was especially pushy about airtime—which absolutely checks out—wanting me to know about her own encounters with ghosts and a forbidden love for a mah-jongg partner. And although Carlucci said the concept of linear time wasn't really a thing, energetically, she delivered predictions from the future. There's another dog coming. Consider seeing a kinesiologist. Write down the words *Rockefeller Foundation*. It wasn't so far off from Co-Star telling me to give myself over to the desert, but Carlucci invited questions and encouraged my active participation. This time I was surprised at how relaxing it was to be told exactly what would happen. Who wouldn't like the directive to buy jewelry in preparation for "queendom," especially after spending the last seven months at home in sweats? This, I thought, must be what it feels like to believe in fate or that there is a grand plan for us. I have no idea when I will see my mother next, but at least I can ready myself for chipmunks.

MY TAROT READER from Raoul's proved difficult to track down. She was a substitute, and none of the normal readers seemed to know who had filled in. Only on close examination of a photo from that evening did I catch a corner of a business card—the name Gina and a phone number with a Brooklyn area code.

Gina Jean appears in my Zoom room wearing a crisp white shirtdress, a visual oasis amid the vibrant tapestries and posters—Frida Kahlo, Yves Klein, Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Cats*—on the mango yellow wall behind her. She remembers March 13 because, like me, she hasn't been inside a restaurant since. I remind her of the cards I pulled. "2020 has been a year of judgment," she reflects.

"This was a long time coming, and now it's the day of reckoning. Either we deal with it, or we run."

Jean comes from a family of Haitian-American doctors. Her mother was a pediatrician; her sister has a practice in Arizona. She sees what she does as an extension of the family business of healing and, like Carlucci, connects her work as an intuitive seer to hard science. "The foundations of so many medicines are derived from plants," Jean says. "Crystals

are, like, Earth Science 101!" Because crystals are also present in computers, Jean says that making the transition from in-person to virtual readings has been easy—although sometimes screens will pixelate or otherwise act up when the energy of a session is especially potent.

Jean shuffles her deck and asks me to tell her when to stop. She cuts the deck into thirds, has me select a pile, and begins my reading. The two of cups: "Your relationship is good!" The four of swords: "Take advantage of this time to rest." And then...the Hanged Man. He dangles by an ankle upside down from a tree, a method of capital punishment popular in the Middle Ages. He is mere inches above a body of water, suspended, immobilized. Relatable! But his expression is

serene, and a luminous halo surrounds his head. "This card is about sacrifice," Jean says. "You see here he's hanging upside down, but he does not suffer." She asks me what I'm willing to sacrifice. The deck Jean is using features circular cards, and her question lingers as she rotates the Hanged Man 180 degrees. She asks me what I see now. What before looked like torture now looks different. The man balances *en pointe* on the slender branch, seeming to levitate, weightless.



IN EARLY OCTOBER, Kate McKinnon appeared on *Saturday Night Live's* Weekend Update as Dr. Wayne Wenowdis, a mustachioed pipe-smoking medical expert. Breezily confident, his feet kicked up on the desk, Dr. Wenowdis answers all of Colin Jost's COVID questions with an assured "We know dis." But eventually McKinnon breaks character, dissolving into manic giggles. "Kate. Kate. Are you okay?" Jost asks. "I'm obviously not," she responds. McKinnon tells him that the character Dr. Wenowdis is a coping mechanism, that in the face of all these things we don't know—"who will win the election, when the pandemic will end, what will happen to the world"—it's refreshing to pretend to be someone who "knows dis."

It is terrifying to be certain of nothing, and I thought cosplaying someone who believes in a divine plan might calm my fears. And at times, especially while talking to Carlucci, letting go of my skepticism did feel like a small present to myself, an indulgence like getting a pedicure or buying the fancy peanut butter. But of all the things I learned during my hesitant foray into mysticism, the image of the Hanged Man is what's helped me the most. When I'm clenched with frustration waiting for the pandemic and a million other uncertainties beyond my control to be done so I can move forward with my life, I think of him. The Hanged Man doesn't know his future, but what at first appears to be a depiction of torment can be seen as something else entirely. From one angle, he's waiting in submission. But with a shift of perspective, he is unbound, floating upward toward the sky. ■

◆
There was my literal father, four years dead, chatting with Carlucci and sporting a sizable mustache.

THE
HEALTHVISH
ISSUE

HOW
TO  EAT
PLANTS
IN  WINTER
(AND LOVE IT)

Chef MARICELA VEGA proves that the secret to creating delicious, filling vegan meals in the middle of February is to do like the ancestors did—work with what you got

by HILARY CADIGAN ✦ photographs by JESSICA PETTWAY



CARROT AND HABANERO TAMALES P. 84

MARICELA SAYS → Tamales, to me, are the ultimate comfort food. They originated in Mesoamerica long before colonization and have been evolving ever since. Because farmers tend to cure and store the maíz tamales are made from by November, they've become a staple dish for the cold winter months. This particular tamal, filled with carrots, habaneros, and garlic, is my celebration of how the harvest from summer and fall floats into wintertime.

ASK **MARICELA VEGA** what drives her cooking and she'll talk about relationships. Relationships with farmers, with community, with family and ancestors and the earth itself. "Food doesn't just magically appear," she says. "I rely on so many to do what I do."

For the chef at Atlanta restaurant 8ARM and founder of Chicomecōatl, an organization centering Indigenous foodways, using mostly vegetables—and only when they're local and in season—is a form of empathy. Vega's strong farmer ties yield lush peach pound cakes in summer and crispy-cushiony squash empanadas come fall. "If you're eating a tomato in the middle of February, someone is feeling the consequence," she says. "To me, cooking well is about making the most of what's here now, and not asking for more."

Of course, this philosophy is nothing new. It's the way people ate for millennia, before mechanization and monoculture became the norm, and its Indigenous roots run parallel to Vega's own. Her parents both come from farming families in Guanajuato, Mexico; they met washing clothes in the river that divided their villages. And though they didn't talk much about their Indigenous heritage during Vega's childhood ("I think there used to be some shame there," she says), reclaiming it has become her personal mission as a chef. In the years since, she's traced corn's cultivation back to Mesoamerica and studied how modern agriculture both devastates the planet and relies heavily on exploitative immigrant labor, including that of her own uncles and cousins. "It's all connected," she says. "You need to learn from the past to create a better future."

And that's what Vega does, both in 8ARM's tiny kitchen and the pages that follow, with healthy, seasonal, plant-based staples electrified by a colorful array of swappable condiments. From tender tamales drizzled in fiery pumpkin hot sauce to grilled mushrooms studded with crunchy spiced pecans, she shows that eating ethically can be seriously tasty—even in the dead of winter.



Warm Sorghum Salad With Pickled Beets

4 SERVINGS *This salad turns ancient grains into a dish that reflects Mexico and the South. For Vega it meshes both of their histories while making the most of the foods she is surrounded by.*

SORGHUM

- 2 cups sorghum, soaked overnight, drained
- 2 sprigs thyme, marjoram, or oregano
- 2 bay leaves
- 8 cups vegetable stock or water
- 2 Tbsp. plus 1 tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1 Tbsp. plus ½ tsp. Morton kosher salt

GUAJILLO OIL

- 4 dried guajillo chiles, halved, seeds removed
- 1 tsp. Diamond Crystal or ½ tsp. Morton kosher salt, plus more
- 4 whole black peppercorns

- 1 cup oil from Allium Confit (see recipe, p. 83)
- ¼ cup apple cider vinegar

ASSEMBLY

- 2 Tbsp. (or more) grapeseed oil
- 1 large bunch mustard greens (about 1 lb.), coarsely chopped
- 2 Tbsp. cilantro leaves with tender stems
- 1 ½ cups mixed tender herb leaves (such as parsley, mint, and/or dill), plus more for serving
- 1 cup Sesame Crème (see recipe, p. 83)
- 1 cup drained Pickled Beets (see recipe, p. 83)

SORGHUM Bring sorghum, thyme, bay leaves, stock, and salt to a boil in a large pot over medium heat. Reduce heat and simmer until sorghum is tender, 80–90 minutes. Drain and transfer sorghum to a large bowl. Pick out and discard thyme and bay leaves.

GUAJILLO OIL Place chiles and 1 tsp. Diamond Crystal or ½ tsp. Morton kosher salt in a medium bowl. Pour 2 cups hot water over chiles and cover; let sit 15 minutes to soften.

Drain chiles and transfer to a blender; add peppercorns, allium oil, and vinegar. Blend on high speed until smooth and bright red; season with salt. Pour over sorghum, tossing to coat. Taste and season with more salt if needed.

ASSEMBLY Heat oil in a large cast-iron skillet over medium-high. Add mustard greens a handful at a time, letting wilt slightly before adding more. Cook, stirring occasionally and adding more oil if needed, until wilted and charred in spots, about 4 minutes. Add greens to sorghum and toss to combine, then toss in cilantro and 1 ½ cups tender herbs.

Smear Sesame Crème in shallow bowls, dividing evenly; mound sorghum salad over and top with Pickled Beets and more tender herbs.



WARM SORGHUM SALAD WITH PICKLED BEETS

MARICELA SAYS → Sorghum is an ancient African grain that came here through the transatlantic slave trade; Gullah farmers in South Carolina have continued its legacy. It's nutty and chewy and good for agroecology—providing positive benefits to soil and ultimately helping to reverse the effects of climate change. In colder months I pair it with hardy greens for their high mineral content. Spicy guajillo oil, zesty pickled beets, and lush sesame crème round out a perfect winter grain bowl. No sorghum? Sub wheat berries or even brown rice in a pinch.

ALLIUM CONFIT

Garlic, leeks, and chives are all you need to make this savory infused oil, great on its own or as a base for just about any sauce or dressing—including that pumpkin hot sauce to the right!



PUMPKIN HOT SAUCE

This spicy, velvety elixir works on everything from tamales to scrambled eggs. Mix in olive oil, vinegar, and honey to make vinaigrette, or simmer a cup with a can of coconut milk to start a curry-like sauce.



GUAJILLO OIL

Dried guajillo chiles bring mild heat and smoky, fruity flavor. Dip tortillas in this bright red oil before pan-frying them for enchiladas, or add crushed peanuts, fried garlic, and extra chiles for salsa macha.



PICKLED BEETS

Quick-pickling is an excellent way to punch up and preserve mild root vegetables like beets. Add them to grain bowls for flavor and texture and use the leftover pickling liquid to dress sautéed vegetables for a colorful side dish.

FLAVOR MAKERS

With this versatile artillery of mix-and-matchable, make-in-bulkable sauces and toppings, Vega turns February produce into meals that wow



SESAME CRÈME

You can adapt this dairy-free recipe for just about any seed or nut you have. Use it on its own as a savory dressing or blend it with Dijon mustard for a vegan aioli that's good on fried potatoes, sandwiches, burgers, fish, you name it.



SPICED PECANS

Pecans get an upgrade with garlic, honey, and fresh ground spices. Eat them by the fistful or sprinkle them liberally on salads or grilled veggies for deep flavor and crunch.

Allium Confit

MAKES ABOUT 4½ CUPS Alliums thrive in the South almost year-round and are available as a storage crop when not in the ground. Vega likes to confit them in oil, a simple technique that creates fatty-rich full-on flavors in a range of condiments and sauces.

- 1 large bunch of chives, coarsely chopped (about ½ cup)
- 1 large leek, white and pale green parts only, coarsely chopped
- 1½ cups coarsely chopped green garlic or whole garlic cloves
- 4 cups vegetable oil

Bring chives, leek, green garlic, and oil to a simmer in a large saucepan over medium heat (this will take some time—be patient!) and cook 2 minutes. Let cool (alliums will soften and finish cooking as they sit).

Transfer to an airtight container; cover and chill.

DO AHEAD: Alliums can be cooked 1 week ahead. Keep chilled.

Sesame Crème

MAKES ABOUT 3 CUPS When seeking a creamy vegan sauce, Vega steered clear of cashews as they aren't local in Georgia. Sesame Crème was born out of her desire to work with regional harvests, even for pantry goods.

- ¼ cup grapeseed oil
- 1½ cups sesame seeds, divided
- 1 Tbsp. Diamond Crystal or 1¾ tsp. Morton kosher salt
- 4 garlic cloves
- ¼ cup fresh lemon juice
- 1 cup Allium Confit (see recipe)

Bring oil and ½ cup sesame seeds to a simmer in a small saucepan over medium heat. Cook, swirling pan constantly, until seeds are golden, about 2 minutes. Transfer oil and seeds to a small bowl and let cool; reserve saucepan.

Bring remaining 1 cup sesame seeds, salt, and 1 cup water to a boil in reserved saucepan over medium heat; cook 2 minutes. Drain seeds in a fine-mesh sieve; let cool.

Combine garlic, lemon juice, and boiled sesame seeds in a blender and blend on high speed until a coarse purée forms. Add sesame seeds in oil, Allium Confit, and 1 cup ice water and blend on high speed, adding more ice

water a little at a time if needed, until very smooth and thick. Season Sesame Crème with salt and pepper.

DO AHEAD: Sesame Crème can be made 3 days ahead. Cover and chill.

Pickled Beets

MAKES ABOUT 1 QUART Quick-pickling is an ideal technique for both preserving vegetables in their prime or giving new life to ones in their last days. Beets can aid liver function, and whether it's because of excess drinking or stress (or, um, both), the liver always needs love and support.

- 1½ lb. medium mixed beets (such as Chioggia, red, and/or golden), scrubbed
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 2 bay leaves
- 2 Tbsp. black peppercorns
- 2 cups apple cider vinegar
- 1 cup honey, preferably local
- 2 Tbsp. plus 1½ tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1 Tbsp. plus ¾ tsp. Morton kosher salt

Thinly shave beets on a mandoline into a large bowl.

Toast cinnamon stick, bay leaves, and peppercorns in a large pot over medium-high heat, shaking pan often, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add 3 cups water, followed by vinegar, honey, and salt. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer, whisking often, 5 minutes, to infuse. Immediately pour brine over beets. Cover and let cool, 4–6 hours. Transfer to an airtight container; cover and chill until ready to use.

DO AHEAD: Beets can be pickled 2 weeks ahead. Keep chilled.

Pumpkin Hot Sauce

MAKES ABOUT 3 CUPS The pumpkin holds tremendous meaning in Vega's life as a spiritual reminder of Indigenous innovation and as a culinary staple. She uses as many varieties as she can find to produce an array of umami-rich pumpkin-based sauces.

- 1 2-lb. heirloom pumpkin or butternut squash
- 6 garlic cloves
- 4 oz. ginger, peeled, coarsely chopped
- ¼ cup apple cider vinegar
- ¼ cup fresh lime juice

- 2 Tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 2 Tbsp. Allium Confit (see recipe)
- 2 tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1 tsp. Morton kosher salt
- 2 ají limo chiles or 1 small habanero chile, halved

Preheat oven to 425°. Place pumpkin on a large rimmed baking sheet and roast until tender (a paring knife should pierce flesh easily), about 1 hour. Let cool.

Halve pumpkin through stem end; scoop out and discard seeds. Scoop 1½ cups flesh into a blender; reserve remaining pumpkin for another use. Add garlic, ginger, vinegar, lime juice, lemon juice, Allium Confit, salt, half of chiles, and ½ cup ice water and blend until very smooth and bright yellow. Taste and add remaining chile if you'd like a spicier sauce; season with more salt if needed.

DO AHEAD: Hot sauce can be made 2 weeks ahead. Transfer to a jar; cover and chill.

Spiced Pecans

MAKES ABOUT 4 CUPS Pecans are one of Vega's favorite Southern sources of protein. Growing up, she would eat them straight-up raw or lightly toasted, but as a grown-up this is her go-to preparation: sweet, salty, and spiced.

- 1 tsp. fennel seeds
- 1 tsp. ground coriander
- 1 tsp. freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tsp. paprika
- 5 garlic cloves, finely grated
- 4 cups raw pecan halves
- 1 Tbsp. grapeseed oil
- 1 Tbsp. honey, preferably local
- 2 tsp. Diamond Crystal or 1 tsp. Morton kosher salt

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: A spice mill or mortar and pestle

Preheat oven to 350°. Grind fennel seeds in a spice mill or with a mortar and pestle. Transfer to a medium bowl and mix in coriander, pepper, and paprika. Add garlic, pecans, oil, honey, and salt to spice mixture and toss to coat.

Spread out pecan mixture on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Bake, rotating baking sheet and stirring pecans halfway through, until golden brown and toasted all the way through, 13–15 minutes. Let cool.

DO AHEAD: Nuts can be made 1 week ahead. Store airtight at room temperature.

Grilled Mushrooms and Root Vegetables

4 SERVINGS *This is a multistep recipe but perfect for long winter days when you want to flood the house with toasty, irresistible aromas. When you chop the mixed herbs, save the stems and throw them into the blanching water for the vegetables to add flavor.*

SESAME SAUCE

- 1 cup Sesame Crème (see recipe, p. 83)
- 2 Tbsp. Allium Confit (see recipe, p. 83)
- 2 Tbsp. finely chopped mixed tender herbs (parsley, oregano, and/or mint), stems reserved for blanching vegetables
- 2 Tbsp. apple cider vinegar
- Kosher salt, freshly ground pepper

ASSEMBLY

- 1 cup finely chopped mixed herbs (parsley, oregano, and/or mint), stems reserved for blanching vegetables
- Kosher salt
- 4 medium carrots (about 1 lb.), preferably rainbow, scrubbed, halved lengthwise, cut crosswise into thirds
- 4 lb. baby potatoes, halved
- 1 head of radicchio, coarsely chopped, divided
- 1 lb. lion's mane, king trumpet, or oyster mushrooms, cut into 2" pieces
- ½ cup Pumpkin Hot Sauce (see recipe, p. 83)
- ½ cup grapeseed or vegetable oil
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup Spiced Pecans (see recipe, p. 83)
- 1 lemon, halved

SESAME SAUCE Purée Sesame Crème, Allium Confit, chopped herbs, and vinegar in a blender on high speed, adding ice water by the tablespoonful as needed to achieve a pourable consistency, until smooth and creamy. Season sauce with salt and pepper.

ASSEMBLY Fill a large pot three quarters full with water, add reserved herb stems, and season heavily with salt. Bring water to a boil, then add carrots and cook until just tender, about 3 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, immediately transfer carrots to a large bowl of ice water and let cool.

Place potatoes in same pot and return to a boil. Cook until tender (flesh should be easy to pierce with a fork), about 10 minutes. Using slotted spoon, transfer potatoes to bowl of ice water and let cool. Drain carrots and potatoes; place in a clean large bowl and add half of the radicchio. Place mushrooms in a medium bowl.

Whisk Pumpkin Hot Sauce, oil, and chopped herbs in another medium bowl. Pour half of mixture over carrots and potatoes and the other half over mushrooms; toss each to coat. Season with salt and pepper.

Prepare a grill for medium-high heat. (Alternatively, heat a large cast-iron skillet over medium-high.) Grill mushrooms, turning occasionally, until deep golden brown and crisp around the edges (or cook in batches, stirring often, if using a skillet), 12–14 minutes. Transfer mushrooms to a large shallow serving bowl.

Grill carrots, potatoes, and radicchio, turning occasionally, until deep golden brown all over (or cook in batches, tossing often, if using a skillet), about 4 minutes. Transfer vegetables to bowl with mushrooms and toss to combine.

To serve, drizzle generously with sesame sauce; top with Spiced Pecans and remaining radicchio. Squeeze juice from each lemon half over.

Carrot and Habanero Tamales

MAKES 8 *Vega describes these tamales as the heartbeat of her life during cold weather months, especially with a hot, steamy atole de chocolate alongside.*

DOUGH

- 1 cup masa harina (about 5 oz.; preferably Bob's Red Mill or Masienda)
- 1 tsp. Diamond Crystal or ½ tsp. Morton kosher salt
- ¼ tsp. baking powder
- 2½ cups vegetable stock or low-sodium vegetable broth
- 2 Tbsp. grapeseed or vegetable oil

CARROT FILLING

- 4 medium carrots (about 1 lb.), preferably rainbow, scrubbed, sliced ¼" thick on a diagonal
- 1 habanero chile, halved
- 3 garlic cloves
- 1 Tbsp. grapeseed or vegetable oil
- Kosher salt

ASSEMBLY

- 8 dried corn husks, soaked in hot water 5 minutes, or eight 10x5" pieces parchment paper
- 1 carrot, preferably rainbow, peeled
- ½ cup Pumpkin Hot Sauce (see recipe, p. 83)
- 4 cups mizuna or arugula
- Flaky sea salt

DOUGH Whisk masa harina, salt, and baking powder in a large bowl to combine. Whisk stock and oil in a medium bowl to combine, then gradually add to dry ingredients, mixing with your hands until thick and oozy (dough should be about the consistency of fresh ricotta)—you may not need all of the stock mixture. Cover dough tightly and let sit at room temperature until ready to use.

CARROT FILLING Place a rack in middle of oven; preheat to 450°. Spread out carrots, chile, and garlic in a single layer on a rimmed baking sheet. Drizzle vegetables with oil; season with salt. Turn to coat, then roast until carrots are tender and starting to brown, about 10 minutes.

Let vegetables sit until cool enough to handle, then transfer to a food processor and pulse to a coarse purée. Taste and season filling with more salt if needed. Transfer to a medium bowl.

ASSEMBLY Place a steamer basket inside a large pot and pour in water just until it reaches basket. Bring to a simmer.

Working one at a time, lay a corn husk vertically on your work surface. Place a golf-ball-size amount of dough just above the center of the husk. Spoon about 1 Tbsp. filling on top and enclose in dough. Fold sides of corn husk up and over dough, then fold the flap closest to you upward to meet the top edge of the upper flap. Turn over so tamal stays closed. Repeat with remaining husks, dough, and filling.

Arrange tamales in steamer, flap side down (it's okay if you need to layer them). Reduce heat to medium, cover pot, and steam tamales 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, fill a medium bowl with ice water. Using a vegetable peeler, shave carrot in long ribbons into bowl and let sit until ready to use.

To serve, place 2 tamales on each plate and unwrap. Drizzle some Pumpkin Hot Sauce over and top with a big mound of mizuna and some carrot ribbons; sprinkle with sea salt.



GRILLED MUSHROOMS AND ROOT VEGETABLES

MARICELA SAYS → My great-grandmothers were Indigenous and mostly nomadic, which means lots of fungi foraging. When I serve lion's mane mushrooms to vegans they sometimes mistake them for chicken, but they're more affordable, better for the planet, and help strengthen your immune system! They grow wild during Georgia winters, but at-home cultivation kits (\$34; smallhold.com) are easy for those without forest access. I use pumpkin hot sauce, oil, and fresh herbs as a marinade, then bust out a baby grill or cast-iron skillet to get them nice and crispy.

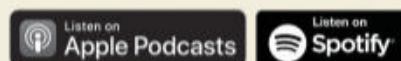
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TIPS &
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Almost everything you need to know (and nothing you don't)



Store-bought deep-fried tofu is airy and spongy, perfect for sopping up sauces and broths.

Tofu Does It All

Silken or super-firm. Blocks or sheets or knots. Baked or fried or braised. There are countless types of tofu (and even more ways to eat it), so we asked some soy experts for their best shopping and cooking tips

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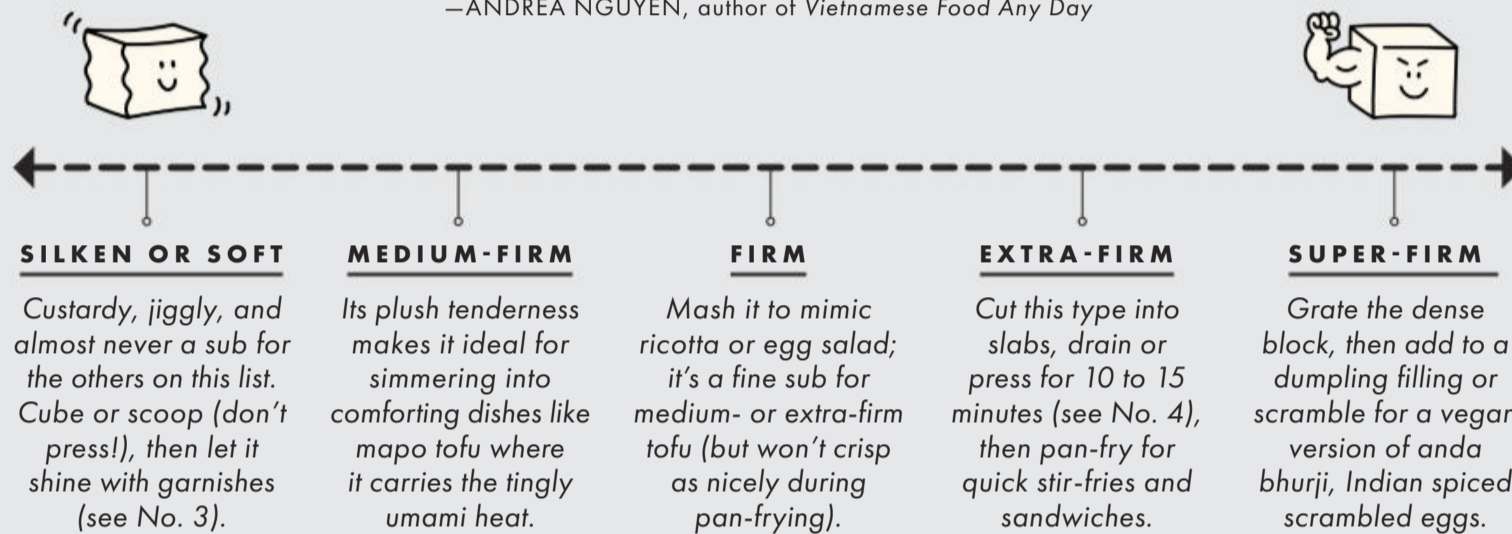
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1

THERE'S A TOFU FOR THAT

If you gravitate toward extra-firm tofu for searing or frying or softer varieties for stewing and slurping, expand your horizons: There's a tofu for every application. Here are my two rules of thumb: Tofu is a flavor sponge—the softer it is, the more it will take on seasonings. And like jeans sizing, tofu texture varies by brand—"firm" can seem like "extra-firm" depending on the maker, so shop and cook often to find a favorite.

—ANDREA NGUYEN, author of *Vietnamese Food Any Day*



2 Get Yourself to an Asian Supermarket

Nowhere is the wide and wonderful world of tofu more visible than in large Asian supermarkets, where aisles and aisles of tofu await. Let purpose (see No. 1) and freshness rather than brand dictate the style and form you choose. For that prized aromatic, delicate beany soy flavor, look for freshly made tofu from a local producer in plastic-wrapped blocks, twist-tie bags, or bulk tubs. For dinner insurance any day of the week, reach for packages of commercially made tofu, which may not taste as fresh but will hold up for many weeks in the refrigerator. —HSIAO-CHING CHOU, author of *Vegetarian Chinese Soul Food*



3 Lavish Silken Tofu With Accessories

Despite its simplicity, silken tofu can be decadent. Take hiyayakko, the Japanese dish of creamy chilled tofu with toppings. I especially love the contrast of cold tofu with warm, luscious garnishes, but the real key is that the accompanying ingredients be flavorful, saucy, and at least a little salty to counter the mild tofu:

- Grated ginger + soy sauce + sesame seeds + scallions + bonito flakes
- Fried garlic shrimp + grated radish/daikon + yuzu kosho + soy sauce
- Grilled eggplant + miso sauce + toasted sesame oil

—KATIE OKAMOTO, writer



4 Get a Tofu Press, Eat More Tofu

Listen, I know there's a way to DIY: Lay thick slabs of tofu—firm, extra-firm, or super-firm only—on a towel-lined sheet tray (because more surface area = faster moisture expulsion), then place another towel over top, plop on a cutting board, and weigh down with stuff like canned tomatoes and cast-iron pans for at least 15 minutes. But as a vegetarian who presses tofu multiple times a week for salads, stir-fries, and banh mi, my **TofuXpress** (\$43; amazon.com) was worth the investment: It does a faster, neater job (tofu juices, contained), and I can leave the heavy objects on the shelf. —SARAH JAMPEL, *Basically* editor



5 Cook First, Sauce Second

With the exception of previously frozen tofu (see No. 6), most firm tofu won't soak up all that much flavor from a marinade. "Even after marinating for a week," says Hodo CEO Minh Tsai, "the penetration of the flavors will only be on the surface." Plus, that excess moisture impedes crisping. The faster, bigger impact route is to add sauce after you've cooked the tofu. Try this: Pan-fry cubed tofu until golden, then mix soy sauce with a touch of maple syrup and rice vinegar. Add to the pan and cook over medium heat, basting tofu occasionally, until sauce is thick enough to coat the back of a spoon. —S.J.





6

YOU DON'T HAVE TO PAN-FRY

Crispy straight from the oven and squishy-chewy once cool, baked tofu is a great alternative to fried. Toss cubes of drained, pressed extra-firm tofu with neutral oil and salt, then bake at 375°, tossing occasionally, until golden and puffed, 25–50 minutes depending on size. Or you can...

BLANCH IT

Simmer extra-firm cubed tofu in salted water for 60 seconds to pull out excess moisture and tighten the proteins on its surface. When folded into sauces, it's dense and creamy; when blotted and fried, it's crispy-crunchy. —LUKAS VOLGER, author of *Start Simple*

FREEZE IT

A preservation technique that originated in Northern China, freezing and thawing a block of firm or extra-firm tofu before cooking yields a spongy texture perfect for soaking up sauce in braises and stews. —L.V.

STEAM IT

To maintain its nutty softness, place a block of medium or firm tofu in a bowl with 1 Tbsp. water, cover, and microwave for about 2 minutes. Sliced and fanned out, it's a beautiful canvas for stir-fried kimchi and pork belly. —ERIC KIM, writer

7

THINK OUTSIDE THE BLOCK

Soybean curd comes in many forms besides a brick (and scallion-studded vegan cream cheese alternative). Below are some of the varieties you'll likely find in the refrigerated aisle of an Asian supermarket.

—CATHY ERWAY, author of *The Food of Taiwan*



Five-spice dry tofu (dougan or tofu gan)

Very popular in China and Taiwan, it's made by braising extra-firm, or dry, tofu pieces (gan means *dry* in Chinese) in a five-spice-and-soy-sauce-based broth. Slice and stir-fry or drop into stews.



Tofu skin (yuba)

These thin pliable sheets can be wrapped around slivered veggies and/or ground meat to make dumplings or rolls. Furled up on their own, they absorb sauce and lend great chew.



Tofu knots

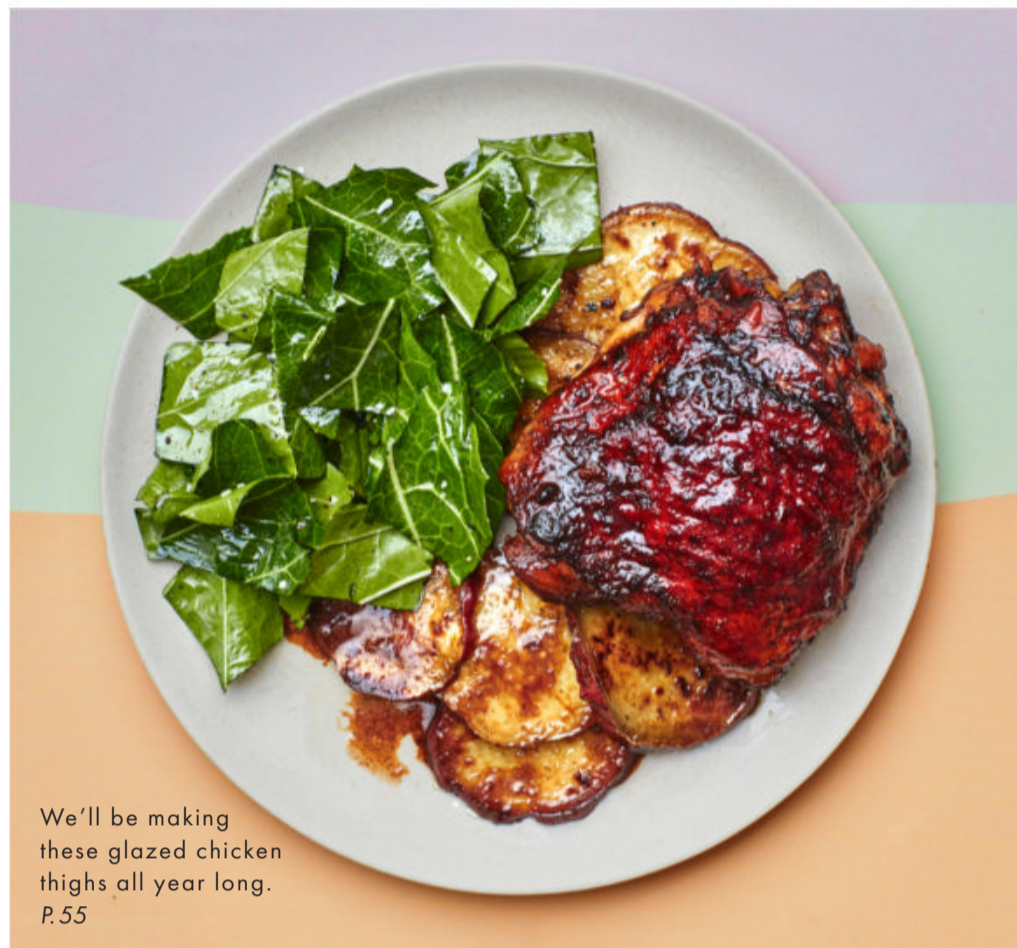
Rolled-up logs of tofu skin tied into knots, these bite-size morsels of protein are ready to toss into stir-fries and soups.



Tofu strands

Noodle-like tofu is often made with tofu skin sliced into long ribbons. Serve as noodles or chop and toss with preserved mustard greens, a popular preparation in China and Taiwan.

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We'll be making these glazed chicken thighs all year long. P. 55

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BRAVUS BREWING RASPBERRY GOSE, \$11 per six-pack; store.bravus.com

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TWO ROOTS BREWING CO. HELLES LAGER, \$12 per six-pack; tworootsbrewing.com

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P. 26 DUSEN DUSEN NAPKINS SET, \$42 for four; dusendusen.com

P. 27 ELEONOR BOSTRÖM MATCHSTICK DOG, \$88; mociun.com

P. 27 WATCH ME CLOCK, \$300; comingsoonnewyork.com

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VINTAGE POSTCARDS FROM THE AFRICAN WORLD: IN THE DIGNITY OF THEIR WORK AND THE JOY OF THEIR PLAY, \$25; amazon.com

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THE WHOLE OKRA, \$21; amazon.com

THE FEEL GOOD FOOD PLAN pp. 44–57

P. 48 CASA VERDE CANDY CANE STRIPE DINNER PLATE, \$74; pomelocasa.com

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P. 60 MOTHER GRAINS: RECIPES FOR THE GRAIN REVOLUTION, \$40; amazon.com

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TRAVEL PLANNER

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THE FUTURE IS ANCIENT pp. 58–69

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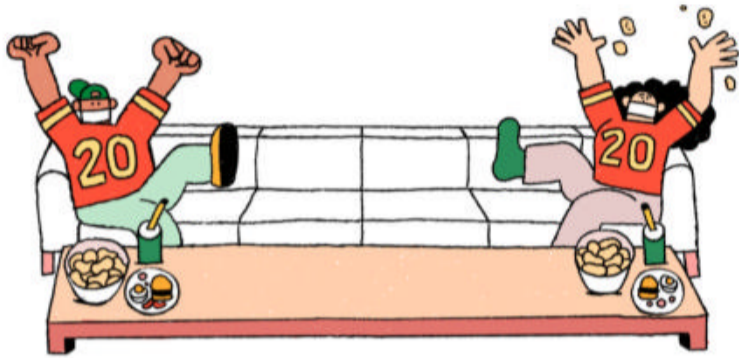
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Is It Ever Okay...to Eat Just One Layer of Seven-Layer Dip?

Solicited advice from **Alex Beggs** for whatever your Super Bowl party looks like this year



How do you have a socially distant Super Bowl party?

—SOCIAL SHAWNA

When we have our friend Noah over to watch football (my comfort level for guests is one), we watch outside on a TV atop a card table. Extension cords everywhere, individual plates of food. Not for you? Make yourself a personal serving of queso and revel in the fact that you can actually watch *The Great British Baking Show* instead. (And you might have to, because I'm writing this in November and who knows if the game is even going to be on?!)



Is it legal to make the snacks but not watch the game?

—ABNORMAL ANA

I am here for the superior snacks of sport. How many grown adults have you seen wearing sweat-wicking jerseys to watch a game on a couch? Same principle, we're just fans of different teams. Team bread bowl all the way. Whoop for the open kitchen concepts on *Fixer Upper*, boo at the 15-car garages on *Selling Sunset*, watch whatever you want. What's important is that we get a random winter day to gorge on cheesy, saucy snacks all because we have something, at least ONE THING, to cheer for.

As a registered dietitian, am I expected to serve a plate of vegetables?

—MISDIRECTED MAGGI

Yes! This is your MOMENT. "Plate of vegetables" is just bad marketing. There are so many snazzy healthy Super Bowl snacks out there on behealthyish.com, from broccolini cheesesteaks to ranch fun dip to crunchy seaweed snack things. I have been intrigued by buffalo cauliflower for years, though admittedly I don't get out much.

Can I ask if there's canned chicken in the buffalo chicken dip?

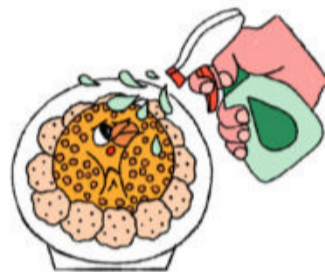
—REALISTIC RYAN

What's the point? You're going to eat a pound of it regardless and say things like, "Why don't we eat this year-round?" "I just can't STOP eating this!" "The diet starts tomorrow!" Enjoy it!

You can't double-dip in the era of COVID-19. But will we ever return to double-dipping?

—LONGING LADKI

Even in a post-pandemic world, humans will never get over the double-dipping taboo. I think every time we see someone double-dip, we picture ourselves tongue-kissing that person, which can be horrifying or super cool depending on the person. But now that we know what power microscopic spittle can wield, shared dips are a thing of the past, like Costco samples and the term *tongue-kissing*.



What are the most sanitary Super Bowl snacks?

Does everyone get their own cheeseball?

—BRAINSTORMING BRIANNA

Here are some past offerings from my exclusive backyard sports bar:

- Crispy peppercorn wings, distributed by tongs (recipe on eatbasically.com)
- Personal. Pan. Pizzas
- A quarter-sheet tray of nachos per person
- BYO lamb gyros
- Pigs in a blanket but the blanket is a Lysol wipe
- Deconstructed seven-layer dip, one layer per person
- Those hotel breakfast-size boxes of cereal where the box is also a bowl
- Hot Pockets

Are you allowed to eat your sister's leftover wings when she disgraced them by not eating all the meat?

—MOOCHING MARIAH

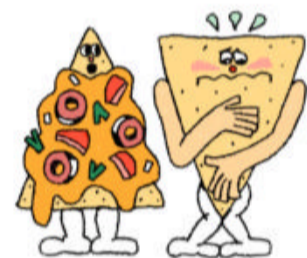
This is beyond the scope of my invented expertise.



Can I eat only the guacamole layer of the seven-layer dip?

—SACRILEGIOUS SADIE

This offends me to my Tex-Mex core! No! My Aunt Yolanda didn't spread lard-fried refried beans, drain homemade pico de gallo, evenly sprinkle cheddar cheese (not easy!), and sculpt seven symmetrical layers into an aluminum pan to be disrespected like this. Now this isn't as bad as people who blot the grease off pizza, but it's getting close. Savor the chaotic symphony of textures and flavors!



What about this one: Can I eat the top layer of nachos and then leave the bottom layer of bare chips?

—BOTTOMLESS BECCA

Yeah, this checks out. But people: Cheese the first layer, then cheese the second layer. Full-coverage nachos are easier to come by than full-coverage bikinis these days, but I want to believe in a world that has both.

My partner loves wings. LOVES them. Is it ever okay to tell him that the way he eats them is disgusting? Licking of fingers included.

—KRITICAL KARA

Everyone eats wings like a flesh-starved vulture; that's part of the beautiful carnivorous experience. It's not just your partner. (It's me.) Let us have this!



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