

FRESH TRICKS FOR OLD HOUSES P.31

Sunset

BEST PLACES TO LIVE

in the WEST

Where to
start out,
step back,
launch
a business,
buy a house,
find bliss

P.46

HIKING
WASHINGTON'S
WATERFALL
TRAIL

COMFORT FOOD
OUR NEW
FAVORITE
NOODLE

CAMBRIA,
CENTRAL COAST
of CALIFORNIA
(Reader favorite!)

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February

FEATURES

46

24 BEST PLACES TO LIVE AND WORK

Looking to launch a career, start a family, or just relax? We've found the ideal city, town, or neighborhood for you.

60

FRONDS IN HIGH PLACES

They're amazing, graceful, and iconic: five palms that define our Western skylines.

By Joel Stein and Kathleen N. Brenzel

68

AMERICA'S NEXT TOP NOODLE

Ramen has had its share of glory. Now meet udon—and the man who'll show you how to make it a star in your kitchen.

By Jessica Battilana

Backed by the San Jacinto Mountains, a Mexican fan palm towers over Palm Springs, CA.

“Our real symbol is the palm tree, not the grizzly bear some early rebels hastily put on California’s state flag.”

FRONDS IN HIGH PLACES, p. 60



6 CONVERSATIONS

BEST OF THE WEST

9
THE TOP 12 Locavore flowers, seafood CSAs, the next big food halls, Valentine's gifts, and more

TRAVEL

15
BE HERE NOW Snowboarding the pristine peaks of Mt. Baker Wilderness, Washington

16
DISCOVER
A perfect day in:
Manhattan Beach, CA (SoCal edition)
Port Costa, CA (NorCal)
Lake Chelan, WA (Northwest)
Loveland, CO (Mountain)
Florence, AZ (Southwest)
Read all five on Sunset's tablet edition (sunset.com/allaccess).

20
ASK A LOCAL Behind the scenes in Hollywood: what to see, where to eat, play, and shop



24
WANDERLUST Hiking the waterfall trail in Washington's Olympic Peninsula. By Mac McClelland

HOME & GARDEN

31
STEAL THIS LOOK A family brings a modern edge—and major personality—to a traditional Santa Monica home.



38
IDEA GARDEN Plant now, feast later: Follow our plan for a summer bounty of strawberries, blueberries, and raspberries.

42
IN THE SUNSET GARDEN Dog-scaping, mild-winter peonies, a jump-start for seedlings, and a green valentine

44
GARDEN CHECKLIST What to do in your garden this month

FOOD & DRINK

79
PEAK SEASON Winter kumquats brighten salad, soup, and sweets.

84
MASTER CLASS How to make shrubs—tasty, drinkable vinegars—to flavor cocktails and salads

88
FAST & FRESH Recipes in 30 minutes or less: coffee and chile skirt steak, chicken sandwiches, sweet potato and chorizo tacos



92
IN THE SUNSET KITCHEN Treats to buy, noodle cheat sheet, a reader's winning baklava

94
SIP Adding wine to the brew gives craft beer a new dimension.

102
ASK SUNSET Your questions answered: how to grow grevilleas, what to sub for coconut milk, where to find romance

THIS MONTH'S RECIPES

DRINKS

Grapefruit Shrub.....	86
Island Breeze.....	87
Pineapple Ginger	
Mint Shrub.....	86
Shrub Fizzy	87

SALADS & SOUPS

Chilled Udon Noodle Salad (Hiyashi Chuka Udon) LC.....	76
Kumquat Mint Salad with Jasmine Dressing GF/LC/LS/VG	80
Lentil and Kumquat Soup GF/LC	81
Strong Bonito Stock (Katsubushi Dashi) GF/LC/LS	77
Udon Broth (Iriko Dashi) LC ..	74

MAIN COURSES

Beef Curry Udon Noodles (Kare Udon) LC	76
Coffee and Ancho Chile Skirt Steak with Green Chile-Apple Relish GF/LC	88
Open-Face Chicken Sandwiches with Celery Root Salad	91
Roast Duck and Mushroom Udon Noodles (Kamo Kinoko Udon) LC	75
Sweet Potato and Chorizo Tacos GF	90
Udon Noodles with Soft Egg and Green Onion (Onsen Tamago Udon) LC	74

DESSERTS

Hazelnut Meringues with Kumquat Conserva GF/LS/V	82
Indian Baklava LC/LS/V	93

PRESERVES & SAUCES

Kumquat Conserva (long-keeping version).....	82
Pickled Ginger (Beni Shōga) GF/LC/VG.....	77
Pineapple Salsa	87
Pineapple Shrub Glaze.....	87
Pineapple Shrub Vinaigrette.....	87

RECIPE GUIDE

GF: Gluten-free; LC: Low calorie;
LS: Low sodium; V: Vegetarian;
VG: Vegan

Our full guide to nutrition and good cooking:
sunset.com/cookingguide.

This month's covers

Best places to live 46 Fresh tricks for old houses 31
Hiking Washington's waterfall trail 24 Our new favorite noodle 68

On newsstands: Waterfront living in Cambria, California (see page 59). Photograph by Thomas J. Story. For subscribers: Paddling toward the Bay Bridge and the San Francisco waterfront (see page 48). Photograph by Brown Cannon III.



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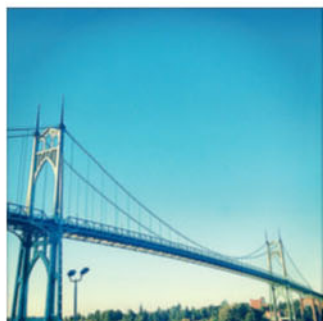
WHEN I DESCRIBE the joys of living in the West to friends back East, I usually focus on our accessible wilderness and reliably glorious weather. (I try not to be too smug about the latter—and usually fail.) When we asked readers and Facebook fans to praise their own Best Places, I was reminded of an even more crucial ingredient in loving where you live: community. None of our local poets failed to mention the importance of friends to help you enjoy it all. Here, excerpts from some of our favorites, plus beloved views from Instagrammers. —**PEGGY NORTHROP, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF**



[@Peggy_Sunset](#)

readerletters@sunset.com

WILLITS, CA My husband and I live just outside the city limits in an oak and pine woodland. I love observing the seasons in these woods, photographing fall leaves, mushrooms, mosses, lichens, ferns, ice, and snow. Watching everything unfurl in spring (the birds, bees, and other pollinators; the return of cottage garden flowers); planting heirloom tomatoes that love the inland heat; going to the river for a swim; the sound of cicadas and crickets singing in someone's backyard. I love the people. This town has all types—thinkers, talkers, doers, complainers, conservatives, liberals, eccentrics. We've got ranchers, square dancers, belly dancers, rodeo riders, musicians, artists, historians, clowns, and I'm just getting started ... —**CHERYL JORDAN**



PORTLAND

Food, lively events, and unique inhabitants plus forests, mountains, and waterfalls make it the best of both worlds. —**@JUJUROO**

NEWPORT BEACH, CA

Thank you to Newport Beach for giving me so many memories. Sun, surf, and sand. Riding my bike to school along the boardwalk, going to a school on the beach. Wonderful people and beautiful weather. —**ISLAND GIRL CRAFTING**

GRANADA DRIVE, SOUTH SAN FRANCISCO

I love my neighborhood because we are really a family. We have taken care of each other's children, pets, and homes. We cook together and have garage dinners and porch parties. We pull in each other's trash cans. We proudly display our country's flag. We lost the patriarch of our block in October; he walked me down the aisle at our daughter's wedding. This block is the best place to live on Earth! —**ALICE NYHAN**

DURANGO, CO

Often praised for its beautiful setting, Durango is a great place to live, raise a family, run a business, and vacation. There is an incredible arts scene, not to mention restaurants, trails, skiing, and craft beer—and it comes with Mother Nature's sunny seal of approval. —**ANNE**

GLACIER, WA

You are funky and fiendish, full of mystical nature and supernatural snowboarding. Beautiful people, unbelievable food, and I can find my coffee cup when I forget it anywhere in town. —**PAELLAWORKS**

CARSON VALLEY, NV

Wide-open spaces, mountain vistas to die for, best people in the world. And did we mention the skiing? —**GARY WEIDNER**



DENVER

It has it all—Denver's a convenient, walkable city where vintage meets modern in a stylish way. —**@EMPRINTS**

SANTA ROSA, CA

Minutes from Highway 1 and the Sonoma Coast and its foggy rock beaches and mind-blowing views. We're in the heart of California's finest wine-growing region, lush, historic, and a foodie paradise! We're close to San Francisco and all its glory as well as Mendocino County to the north. Great craft beers, redwoods ... I absolutely love where I live. —**TEIGHLOR KAI EDIE**

NAPA I love how quiet and peaceful it is Monday through Thursday. So many great perks from wineries and restaurants for just being a "Napa neighbor." —**KATHLEEN O'BRIEN CRAIG**



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BEST OF THE WEST

FEBRUARY 2014

◀ OUR 12 FAVORITE THINGS THIS MONTH ▶

1. *Pedaling petals*

Three years ago, Christina Stembel, a development officer at Stanford Law School, wondered why the flower arrangements she was buying for fund-raising lunches cost so much. The answers—perishable inventory and high transportation costs (most blooms are flown in from abroad)—convinced her to start her own ultra-local flower-delivery service in San Francisco. Farmgirl Flowers offers one stylish assortment each day (you can order it in varying sizes and containers) sourced from California growers. Delivery is by bicycle or scooter; Stembel sells about 100 arrangements a day and has a staff of 13. In March, she plans to start shipping weekly bouquets throughout California—though not by bicycle, alas.

From \$30; farmgirlflowers.com.



2



SMOKIN'

Spice up Valentine's Day (or stoke the home fires any day) with Colorado Crafted's Hot Springs Box—handmade, small-batch, hard-to-get-your-hands-on edibles from, yes, Colorado: kettle-roasted chipotle almonds, a crunchy yet smoky condiment called Chile Crunch, tequila-jalapeño preserves (no more boring grilled cheese!), caramels infused with cinnamon and chiles, and a Mexican-spiced chocolate bar. \$65; coloradocraftedbox.com.



4 MOD WORLD

When San Franciscan Michael Murphy returned from a decade spent working as an architect overseas, he felt a new appreciation for his hometown's unsung modernist masterpieces—such not-universally-beloved structures as the Hyatt Regency and the recently demolished Cathedral Hill (née Jack Tar) Hotel on Van Ness. He began painting some of them. Lately he's been casting his eye southward, creating bold, refreshingly retro images of Palm Springs, LAX's flying-saucerish Theme Building, and that icon of 1950s Hollywood, the ever-groovy Capitol Records Tower. 16- by 20-in. signed print \$150; supersonicmodern.com/store/store.html.



5 Blanket statement

This beauty of a blanket from Oregon's Pendleton Woolen Mills, woven of black and white wool, will warm your heart: Part of the proceeds goes to the American Indian College Fund and to Nike's N7 Fund, which encourages young Native Americans to stay active and healthy. Twin size \$298; pendleton-usa.com.

3 Big-city bounty

Three great new urban food halls inspired by San Francisco's Ferry Building Marketplace:

Across the bay in **Oakland**, **Swan's Market** has returned to its 1917 roots. Long abandoned, it was rescued in the 1990s by a non-profit that created housing and offices. Now there are also three top eateries—Miss Ollie's, Rosamunde Sausage Grill, and Cosecha—with more coming. The landlord asks that tenants offer something on the menu under \$5. ebalddc.org/property/swans-market.

Last fall, **Denver's** Zeppelin Development company converted an empty 1880s iron foundry into **The Source**; early tenants include the artisanal butcher shop Meathead, Babettes Bakery, and the Crooked Stave Artisan Beer Project, plus hot restaurants Acorn and Comida. The Denver chapter of the Slow Food movement has rented office space here. thesourcedenver.com.

In downtown **L.A.**, the owners of aging but still popular **Grand Central Market** (like Swan's, born in 1917) wanted to revitalize it without losing authenticity. So they're filling empty stalls with such hipster favorites as the breakfast bar Eggslut and the Thai restaurant Sticky Rice, while keeping old favorites such as Las Morelianas, known for its free sample tacos. grandcentralmarket.com.



7 Greener vino

Growlers—refillable glass or ceramic containers usually holding 64 ounces—have become a popular way to bring home craft beer. Now wine is the new growler frontier. A few Santa Barbara wineries have been selling growlers for a few years, and as of last spring, Oregon legalized the sale of bulk to-go wine from any wine bar, restaurant, liquor store, or grocery that offers kegged wines on tap. Reusable growlers are greener; making and shipping fewer bottles means a smaller carbon footprint for the wine industry. Denver's Infinite Monkey Theorem urban winery is embracing sustainability: Not only is owner Ben Parsons kegging his Syrahs, Malbecs, and Petit Verdots (made from Colorado grapes) for local restaurants and putting his rosés and Moscatos in light, recyclable cans, but he's selling his wines in liter growlers too. 250-ml. can \$6; 1-liter growler \$35 (at winery only), refills \$25; theinfinitemonkeytheorem.com.



6 Art meets commerce

Geniuses have to pay rent too—so even the likes of painter Georgia O'Keeffe and photographer Ansel Adams took the occasional gig for hire. Some of the gorgeous by-products can be seen in *Georgia O'Keeffe and Ansel Adams: The Hawaii Pictures*, opening this month at Santa Fe's Georgia O'Keeffe Museum. O'Keeffe spent two months touring the Islands in 1939, illustrating pineapple ads; Adams visited in 1948 on the Department of the Interior's dime, and in 1957 to shoot for the First Hawaiian Bank. The friends' noncommercial work in Hawaii, from portraits to vibrant botanical studies, shows a shared reluctance to buy into hula-dancers-in-Waikiki cliché. \$12; Feb 7–Sep 14; okeeffemuseum.org.

8

SPANTASTIC

Robby Cuthbert's Suspension Shelf may seem an homage to the new San Francisco–Oakland Bay Bridge, but the Palo Alto designer has long been inspired by Spanish architect Santiago Calatrava (whose Sundial Bridge you can walk in Redding, California). Cuthbert, who moved from Massachusetts in 2012, also credits a nearby TechShop, the public-access fabrication studio where he perfected the steel-cable tensioning that holds the shelf together without nails, bolts, or glue. \$300; robbycuthbert.com.



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(see page 4 for instructions)
to shop for items online.



9 MAN CRAVE

Finding a Valentine's Day gift for a fella can be tough. Hot stuff might work (see page 10). Or try guy-friendly Makers-Kit gift boxes, created by a pair of San Francisco entrepreneurs. The 16 semi-DIY options include an old-fashioned shaving set, a collection of cocktail tools with recipes (above), and everything he'd need to plant a mason jar herb garden. Really, the kits are unisex; the shaving set works for legs too. From \$18; makerskit.com.

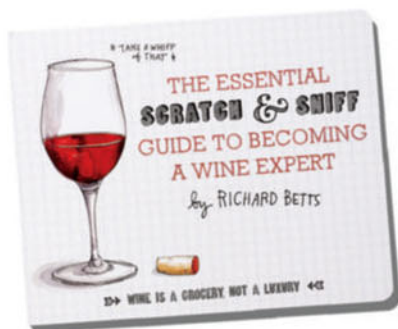


10 Quite a catch

Impressed by the way Community Supported Agriculture programs have helped small farmers stay in business, advocates for sustainable seafood are updating the concept, seeking the same support for independent fisherfolk. These briny equivalents of CSAs—often called Community Supported Fisheries—have been surfacing up and down the West Coast, from Sitka-based Alaskans Own to San Francisco's Sea Forager Seafood to Santa Barbara's Community Seafood (that's its box above), which has pickup sites as far south as Santa Monica. (Random fact: The first CSF in Northern California was founded by... Google. Brain food, of course.) Some offer weekly deliveries of locally caught seafood, others every two weeks. Figure on paying anywhere from \$12 to \$20 a pound. To find a CSF near you, go to localcatch.org.

12 Missed ya, Misha

This won't be the first time that Mikhail Baryshnikov has shone in a non-dancing role: The dancer/choreographer/heartthrob was nominated for a Tony in Kafka's *Metamorphosis* in 1989, he romanced Carrie in the final season of *Sex and the City*, and he appeared in Ivan Bunin's *In Paris* at Berkeley Rep last year. Now he's back in *Man in a Case*, adapted by New York's Big Dance Theater from two Chekhov short stories that examine fear and love. Hey, we'd happily pay to watch him cross the street; a play infused with music, movement, and video is a bonus. From \$45; through Feb 16; berkeleyrep.org.



11 AROMA-RAMA

Targeting adults but using a technique more commonly associated with the preschool set, Boulder-based winemaker and master sommelier Richard Betts has written *The Essential Scratch & Sniff Guide to Becoming a Wine Expert*. Ignore the gimmick for a sec: The witty text really does help demystify the world of wine-speak, and the illustrations, by San Francisco watercolorist Wendy McNaughton, contribute a quirky charm. And that gimmick? It's actually a fine way to introduce beginners to the basic components of wine, notes more easily smelled than tasted. Among the 14 scent patches in the book are grass, leather, butter, stone fruit, bacon, and dirt. Cheers! \$20; myessentialwine.com/book.

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—CONNOR FOLLEY, SNOWBOARDER, SEATTLE

DISCOVER



1



2

1. View of the Carquinez Strait from Port Costa.
2. The relaxed bar scene at The Bull Valley Roadhouse.
3. Earl Flewellen presides over the coffee counter at the Burlington Hotel.
4. Mussels and frites at The Bull Valley Roadhouse.
5. An antique santo figure at Theatre of Dreams.



3



4



5

A PERFECT DAY IN

PORT COSTA, CA

A big-time restaurant opening and revamped hotel breathe life into a tiny town on the Carquinez Strait. *By Eric Smillie*

Starting where the buzz started

Mornings begin gently at the **Burlington Hotel's** cafe, with damn good pour-over coffee and fat slices of cornbread drizzled with manager Earl Flewellen's homemade honey—a topping

so sweet it helped put Port Costa back on the map. A couple of years ago, Flewellen started processing and selling the honey on the first floor of this Victorian hotel. "It got so popular, the owner asked me to help run things," he says.

Flewellen and partner Samuel Spurrier are now restoring the 19-room hotel one guest room at a time, an undertaking that led to co-ownership of The Bull Valley Roadhouse next door. 2 Canyon Lake Dr.; thehotelburlington.com.

A game-changing restaurant

Can a single restaurant turn a never-heard-of-it town of 200 people into a serious dining destination? Earl Flewellen and Samuel Spurrier believe it can. Last year, the two reopened

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Options shown.

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GETTING HERE

Port Costa is 30 miles northeast of San Francisco. From I-80, take the Pomona St. exit and turn left on Canyon Lake Dr.

The Bull Valley Roadhouse, Port Costa's biggest to-do since its glory days as a busy shipping port in the late 1800s. Judging by its aesthetic, you'd think little has changed in 150 years. Victorian furniture fills the dark-paneled room. Walls are covered with daguerreotypes. Then there's the food—rustic American classics by way of Slanted Door alumnus David Williams: buttermilk fried chicken and mashed potatoes, crisp green beans sprinkled with chili salt, and tender pork ribs in a peppercorn sauce so rich, it's tempting to polish it off with a spoon. \$\$\$; 14 Canyon Lake; bullvalleyroadhouse.com.

An easy hike with killer views

When you're standing at the trailhead of the **Carquinez Overlook Loop**, it's hard to believe you're only 10 minutes

from the hum of Interstate 80. The breezy 1.5-mile hike sweeps you up a hill just west of town, past lupines and coyote brush. Look out for red-tailed hawks and ospreys overhead. The big payoff is the blufftop view: grassy pastoral scenes complete with a red barn, and beyond, barges inching across the Carquinez Strait with Mt. Diablo in the distance. ebparks.org/parks/carquinez.

A stiff drink in a sturdy bar

Back when Port Costa was one of the busiest harbors on the West Coast, dozens of saloons, hotels, and brothels lined the waterfront. Now only the posts of piers remain. But the **Warehouse Cafe**—built in 1876 to store wheat, hay, and potatoes—still stands, thanks to concrete walls some 3 feet thick. The building has withstood at least four fires, three major earthquakes, and decades of bikers and other revelers primed on cocktails such as the Tsunami—a potent blend of Captain Morgan, amaretto, peach schnapps, and orange and pineapple juices—as well as selections from the 300-plus kinds of beer in the legendary walk-in cooler. 5 Canyon Lake; (510) 787-1827.

Sweet hearts

This month, artist Wendy Addison tilts the displays at her **Theatre of Dreams** toward Valentine's Day. She fills the



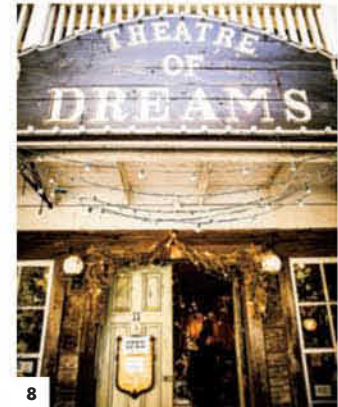
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9



8

6. Warehouse Cafe, standing strong since 1876.
7. The Burlington Hotel steps up its game with renovated rooms. 8. Theatre of Dreams, Port Costa's retro treasure chest. 9. Cocktail time at The Bull Valley Roadhouse.

studio/shop with letterpress cards and decorative paper banners bearing loving slogans, chipboard hearts, and other shapes coated in red and pink glass glitter from Germany. "It's the original glitter, invented in 1880," says Addison, whose designs appear in Anthropologie's

wedding line and have graced the Christmas tree at New York City's Lincoln Center. "I abhor anything from the plastics age," she says. "I try to keep the experience in the shop like a trip to a world gone by." *Open Sat only; 11 Canyon Lake; wendyaddisonstudio.com.*

THE STAT

0: The number of stoplights in Port Costa

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THE REAL HOLLYWOOD

You need more than a map of the stars to get to the heart of Tinseltown. Two locals roll out the red carpet. *As told to Erin Klenow*



ASK A
LOCAL

DAN LEVY
Comedian

ALISSA WALKER
Design writer
and blogger at
awalkerinla.com

For a dose of classic Hollywood?

PARAMOUNT PICTURES STUDIOS

DAN LEVY: It sounds cheesy, but to really feel like you're in Hollywood, you have to visit the Paramount lot. **ALISSA WALKER:** It's the only studio that's still in Hollywood, and they have the most beautiful campus and back-lot sets. They cart you around to see all the sets and stages. It makes you appreciate what built this city.

What are your favorite ethnic eats?

LOTERÍA GRILL

AW: Amazing tacos and delicious stewed meats like *cochinita pibil*. Plus vegetarian options like squash tacos. They have a *chicharrón de queso*, which is basically a fried cheese appetizer. I like that with the jalapeño margarita, made with fresh jalapeño juice.

How about for a health food fix?

M CAFÉ

DL: It's been around as long as I can remember. You come here



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HOLLYWOOD FARMERS' MARKET
8-1 Sun; Hollywood Blvd. at Ivar Ave.; seela.org.

"The market is known for its local produce, but there are also oysters, fish, bison steaks, cheese, spices, and great bread."



LOTERÍA GRILL
\$\$; 6627 Hollywood Blvd.; loteriagrill.com.

"They have a *chicharrón de queso*, which is basically a fried cheese appetizer."



to eat kale with peanut sauce or soba noodles while sitting next to models talking about auditions they didn't get. There's nothing better to feel like you're living in L.A.

The best place for spotting celebrities?

HOLLYWOOD FARMERS' MARKET

AW: Celebs need their veggies too, including the city's celebrity chefs. They show up early with their carts, and pepper vendors with questions. The market is known for its local produce, but there are also oysters, fish, bison steaks, cheese, spices, and great bread. I love Delmy's *pupusas*, made with pork and cheese with a little *crema* and pickled vegetables on top.

If you want to shop like an Angeleno?

FLIGHT CLUB

DL: The strip of Fairfax between Melrose and Rosewood has been completely redone. I collect sneakers, and all the sneaker stores are in that area. Sportie LA has been around since the '80s. You can find anything

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from rare Jordans to the latest Asics running shoe. Nearby is Flight Club, a consignment shop for sneakers. That's where maniacs go to spend \$1,200 on a pair of vintage high-tops. *Sportie LA: 7753 Melrose Ave.; sportieLA.com. Flight Club: 503 N. Fairfax Ave.; flightclub.com.*

LOST & FOUND

AW: A boutique off the tourist track, in this little cluster of buildings. They feature excellent designers, both local and international, and there's a Scandinavian influence in some of the stuff. You can almost always find a one-of-a-kind present for someone. I got these amazing plates with animals painted on them, and baby clothes for friends.

Who's making the best cocktails?

THE ROGER ROOM

DL: I don't know if this bar is as cool as it was a few years ago, but it's less crowded and I still love it. Walking through the drapes, you kind of feel like you've been transported to a time of suspenders and mustaches. I'm a modern man and I'm not afraid to say I like lots of cucumber in my drinks. I normally have them make me a cucumber-vodka situation.

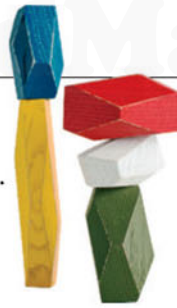
Where do you go to see live theater?

UPRIGHT CITIZENS BRIGADE THEATRE

AW: The famous improv comedy troupe has this great little theater, and if you go there's a good chance of seeing *Saturday Night Live* alums. Stars are usually in the audience. Jon Hamm popped up recently, and so did Kevin Nealon. Each night is

LOST & FOUND
6320 Yucca St.;
lostandfoundshop.com.

"You can almost always find a one-of-a-kind present for someone."



M CAFÉ
\$; 7119 Melrose Ave.;
mcafedechnaya.com.

"EAT KALE AND SIT NEXT TO MODELS TALKING ABOUT AUDITIONS THEY DIDN'T GET."



RUNYON CANYON

N. Vista St. at Runyon Canyon Rd.; laparks.org.

"You'll see pretty people run and walk their dogs."



THE ROGER ROOM
370 N. La Cienega
Blvd.; theroger
room.com.

"You feel like you've been transported to a time of suspenders and mustaches."



NERDMELT SHOWROOM
\$10; 7522 W. Sunset Blvd.;
nerdmeltila.com.

"It's the best place to see comedy right now."

different, but you can always count on audience participation. The theater sits in this cool little strip of restaurants and bars that makes you feel like you're in the East Village or something. *From \$5; 5919 Franklin Ave.; losangeles.ucbtbeatre.com.*

NERDMELT SHOWROOM

DL: I do a monthly show at this venue in the back of Meltdown Comics on Sunset between Fairfax and La Brea. It's really the best place to see comedy right now. Comedians like Tig Notaro and Aziz Ansari drop in during shows here. The comedy clubs are incredible in L.A., but it's sometimes fun to see comedy in a different space.

What's your favorite neighborhood hike?

RUNYON CANYON

DL: This is my favorite trail through the Hollywood Hills. You'll see lots of pretty people running and walking their dogs. You can go the hard way, up the steep west side of the hill. Or you can opt for the easy way up, where it's a more gradual climb. I once saw Mario Lopez running here without a shirt on.

BEACHWOOD CANYON

AW: Most people drive up to the Hollywood sign, but a better way to get there is by taking the public staircases in Beachwood Canyon. Start north of the Beachwood Cafe, just past Woodhaven Drive, and follow the stairs. The staircases were used before there were cars, to help folks get from the trolley to their homes. They're beautiful, with intricate stonework. You can wander up them and see the whole neighborhood. *Near 2800 N. Beachwood Dr.; secretstairs-la.com.*

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CHASING WATERFALLS

On Washington's wet and wild Olympic Peninsula, a couple in search of the perfect cascade learns to go with the flow.

By Mac McClelland

JUMPING THE GUARDRAIL to get a better look at Hamma Hamma Falls doesn't seem like a bad idea, at first. Not until we reach the edge of the mossy outcroppings above it and we, too, seem likely to tumble into the cerulean plunge pool do I consider that the weak sapling I'm grasping is my only safeguard against falling to my death. Or that my husband is perched on a 75-foot cliff covered in slippery flora. It's then that I wonder: Why are we risking our lives for this?

The water does roar. It does rush big and hard and beautifully, sucking all the energy of the surrounding gorge into its vortex, leaving a rare stillness in the space. But we did just see another waterfall, with a 125-foot drop, an hour ago. And over the past two days, eight more before that. Also, we're going to see three more this afternoon.

It was my sister who had beckoned us to Washington's Olympic Peninsula—a mass of thick green beauty to the west of Puget Sound, all glittering straits and canals and ocean on the sides and temperate rain forest in the middle. Since she moved here a year ago, she's been swearing that the area's scenery rivals that of any place in the country. It was the Olympic Peninsula Waterfall Trail that cemented my interest in fact-checking her claims.

The idea of the trail was conceived six years ago when the visitor bureau realized there are at least 26 cascades spread all around the Olympic Peninsula's 5,316 square miles. It hasn't been well publicized, but that doesn't deter people who walk into the area's visitor centers: "We can't keep the brochures on the rack," an assistant told me over the phone.

A few weeks later, my husband and I had multiple copies of said brochure, plus a slew of maps, spread across the bedsheets of the Ravenscroft Inn in Port Townsend. The city of 9,000 two hours

Madison Creek Falls: "Breath-taking—as in, we were taking deeper breaths."



northwest of Seattle—with the lightly heartbreaking slogan “*One of the coolest small towns in America*”—served as our gateway to the lost-world remoteness of Olympic National Park. In the newly renovated B&B, we plotted our course. The waterfall trail isn’t meant to be done in one trip, as it would take several weeks and criminal amounts of gas, but we resolved to cover three of its seven legs, 13 waterfalls, in three days.

Like most sentient beings, my husband and I love waterfalls. Together, we’ve trekked to the end of many a long trail to witness even a sad little summer trickle along a rock face. In the year-round wetness of the Olympic Peninsula—where even the comparatively dry areas get 20 inches of rain a year, and where the rivers and creeks of Olympic National Park swell with precipitation that can top 180 inches a year—I wondered if our wonderment might abate and we’d start taking them for granted. And yet even at the outset, each one we chose to skip felt like an opportunity missed.

“What if it’s beautiful?” we asked each other when we reluctantly decided Striped Peak Falls was too far out of our way. We knew plenty of the others would also be beautiful. But: “What if it’s *the most beautiful*?”

THE NEXT MORNING, we set off west on U.S. 101 across the peninsula, starting a loop around the outside edge of the park that would end at my sister’s place south of Port Townsend. Several dozen miles of mostly empty roads later, we arrived at our first waterfall. I was instantly sure this one would be the most beautiful.

Some of the falls on the trail are visible right from the road. One of them sits behind a hike that is 13 miles each way. This first one required parking and walking a 200-foot paved trail, and then there it was, in the clearing, almost close enough to touch: Madison Creek Falls. She was loud. She was complex, descending into countless streams that united as one stream through the surrounding greenery. She was breathtaking, as in, we were taking deeper breaths.

A middle-aged couple strolled up the path and joined us in our admiration. They were voluble about their origins—lived in Oregon, he was British by birth. And their plans—explore the amazing Elwha River Valley that runs through the middle of the park. Then we asked them if they were waterfall hunting too, following the map of the waterfalls in the region, and they fell silent.

It was the silence of jealousy. Of panic, I was sure, over a mismanaged vacation. “There’s a map of waterfalls?” the woman asked meekly, a look of concern on her face. It wasn’t like she’d never seen

a waterfall before. In fact, she was standing in front of a stunning one right then.

What was it about a waterfall? Why was our thirst for them so unquenchable? Invariably, upon reaching a waterfall, we stood there too long. When our feet finally started walking away, our heads were the last thing to come around in the direction we were moving, even as we departed; you did not turn your back on a waterfall. You didn’t feel like you’d soaked in enough of its magic yet. Not that you believed magic was a commutable property. After all, I’d gotten married in the pool of a waterfall, Bouma Falls, Fiji. But that husband was not the husband I was standing next to in front of Madison Creek Falls.

Back in the car, we couldn’t wait to cover the three dozen miles to the next one, Sol Duc Falls. A completely different kind of waterfall at the end of almost a mile hike, it raged like Niagara, the Sol Duc River rushing off the edge in four close but distinct places, spraying our faces as it thundered into a gorge. A tourist who was visiting her daughter in the area was telling another couple of tourists from Idaho that she’d never seen such beautiful scenery in her entire life.

When I mentioned that this was our second waterfall and asked her if she’d encountered others in her days on the peninsula, her beaming ended abruptly. “No,” she replied, frowning.

Around here, you didn’t even need them, the waterfalls. The trail to Sol Duc was cut between old-growth fir trees dripping with moss,

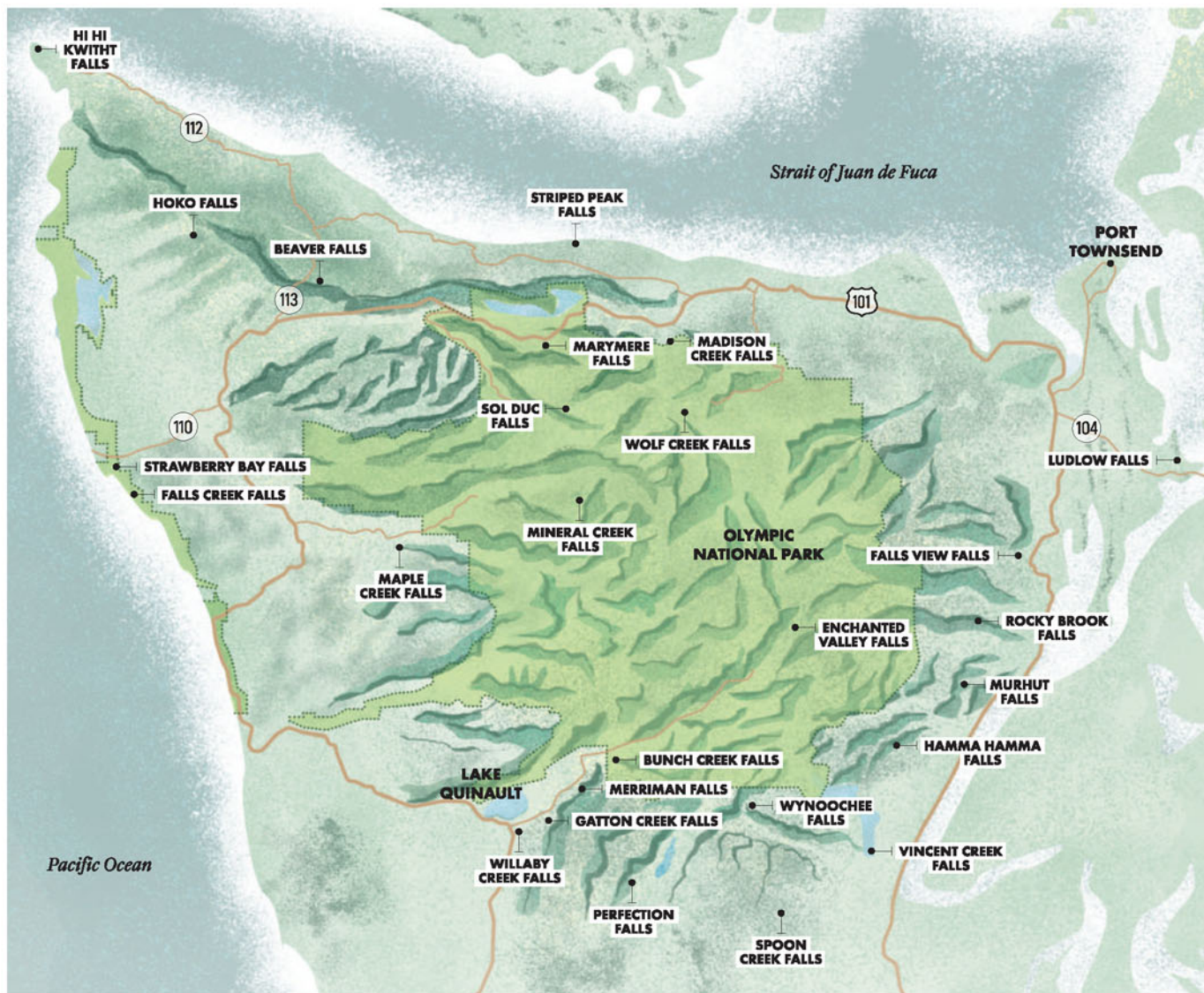
the moss itself covered in water droplets that clung like diamonds. It’s not for nothing that Olympic National Park, which just celebrated its 75th anniversary, is a UNESCO World Heritage Site. On the road between Madison and Sol Duc, we’d stopped at a sign that said SALMON CASCADES EXHIBIT and got out to watch wild salmon leap from the river, flinging themselves upstream against the rapids.

The next day, we happened upon Ruby Beach, a Pacific cove as dramatic as anything Big Sur has to offer, then retired to a 1926 lodge built on the shores of Lake Quinalt. That morning, we came across three bears sitting in someone’s front yard, eating apples fallen from a tree. When they spotted us, they took off, two of them running into the woods and one right up a tree, each fast enough to make you always re-

member the advice about never running from a bear.

But these were mere sideshows to the falls. At Marymere, our third cascade, my husband cried, “Babe! It’s the most beautiful one!” as it free-fell a third of its 90 feet before slapping against a rock face and breaking into a thousand more little falls, sopping moss on all sides. Then at Beaver Falls, he insisted, “People shouldn’t miss this

What you’re staring at is actually not that impressive a trick: water plus gravity. That the elements come together so simply and spectacularly is evidently the ultimate distraction.



MEET THE RUSH

Most of the 26 cascades that make up the Olympic Peninsula Waterfall Trail flow all year long. Some require backcountry excursions, others a boat trip. Here are three you can hike to in a day.

SOL DUC FALLS

The most stunning waterfall (or is it?) on the trail is also one of the most accessible. At the end of Sol Duc Road, follow the 0.8-mile path to a footbridge that puts you above the stream. Once you've had your fill, take the 6-mile Lover's Lane Trail as it traces the Sol Duc River, where coho make their spawning runs late summer through fall.

LUDLOW FALLS

This two-tier waterfall descends a staircase of boulders into a creek just outside the village center in Port Ludlow. The half-mile interpretive trail has a few steep patches, but if you get winded, you can rest at one of the benches made from felled trees that sit above the falls. Come back in autumn when the maples and alders blaze with color.

STRAWBERRY BAY FALLS

Named after the bay into which it plunges, this is the trail's only hikeable waterfall right on the coast. Start your trek at the Third Beach trailhead, then curl 1.3 miles through lowland forest before getting spit out on the sand. At the southern end of the beach, you'll see the falls as it cascades 100 feet into the Pacific.

Find maps and directions at olympicpeninsulawaterfalltrail.com. For info on road closures and fees, visit www.fs.usda.gov/olympic and nps.gov/olym.



Sol Duc Falls:
“It raged like
Niagara, the
river rushing off
the edge, spray-
ing our faces
as it thundered
into a gorge.”

we’ve basically been drowning in for three days: waterfalls.

Two of the final three waterfalls we visit, Murhut and Rocky Brook, are truly earth-pounding. Life-changing. Far from having anything close to waterfall fatigue, my husband declares at Murhut Falls, “Winner.” But then at Rocky Brook Falls, not more than an

one.” And at Willaby Creek Falls, as he stood among 200-foot trees, “That’s nice!” And “Wow!” at Bunch Creek Falls, and some variation of the above exclamations at Merriman Falls and Gatton Creek Falls and Vincent Creek Falls, and still, here we find ourselves at Hamma Hamma Falls, nearly killing ourselves just to better see a thing

they were after the falls specifically—just trail-running around the park, and the waterfalls were happy surprises. The last time we saw them, they were appreciating one at least as much as we self-styled obsessives. They’d seen others that day, and they’d arrived at this one before us, but there they stayed, even as we walked away, not talking, staring straight ahead into the water, chins in hands, elbows propped on the railing, gazing. 🌲

Mac McClelland is the author of a forthcoming memoir. Her stories have appeared in Mother Jones, Rolling Stone, and The New York Times.



Get our full guide to Olympic National Park:
sunset.com/olympic.

hour later, he shakes his head and asks, “Number one?”

“What do you think about when you look at a waterfall?” I ask him. I already figured it out myself, after being mesmerized by Marymere, and doing nothing but being mesmerized by Marymere—then noticing the chatter in my brain pick back up as we walked away. I know what he’s going to say, even before he says, “Nothing.”

Nothing. People go on serious journeys to get this kind of uninterrupted inner continuity. Athletes build whole careers around perfecting it—*Get out of your head*—and monks make a lifelong discipline of mastering it. But at a waterfall, all you have to do is show up. And there it is. Suddenly, after spending the hike thinking about how much farther it is or the drive making mental to-do lists about work, you are present, in your body, in a moment.

No wonder every fall is long engaging, though what you’re staring at is actually not that impressive a trick: water plus gravity. That the elements come together so simply and spectacularly is evidently the ultimate distraction. In a waterfall’s presence, your presence is its own enough. And who ever gets enough of that?

No one, not even people who aren’t bona fide waterfall hunters. At a few of the falls, we ran into the same couple. They said no when we asked them if

Home & Garden

*Wallpaper's
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FIVE MORE
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p. 36

STEAL THIS
LOOK

OLD HOUSE, NEW TRICKS

*A family brings a modern
edge—and major personality—
to a traditional Santa
Monica home.*

E

VEN FROM OUTSIDE, Kerry Kane and David Scarpa's house stands out. The 1940s American colonial revival feels almost exotic among the bunga-

lows in Santa Monica. "Neither my husband nor I thought we'd wind up buying a place that looked just like what we'd each grown up in out East," says Kane. But the familiar white house with black shutters felt like the perfect place to raise their "Irish triplets"—5-year-old daughter Dahlia and 4-year-old twins Rex and Dean. "I'd always been a renter, so I was eager to nest and create a homey place for the kids."

To Kane, "homey" meant wallpaper, upholstery, carpets, and draperies. But Scarpa was wary. "He's a midcentury guy. We'd always lived with solids, neutrals, and *maybe* an odd splash of red." So the couple hired designer Frances Merrill to help them hit a style sweet spot—traditional but with a youthful edge. "I loved the house right away because it was a series of little rooms," says Merrill. "You can see into several of them from one spot, so I wanted to find interesting patterns that would define each space but also speak to one other."

Merrill's first suggestion was to paint the staircase risers and banisters blue to highlight the scalloped woodwork. Other bold elements—graphic wallpaper, taxidermy, multicolor upholstery fabric—respect the home's origins while feeling fresh enough to coexist with the modern pieces the couple already owned.

"We just went for it," Kane says. "It's definitely a huge departure from the way we had been living, but it's eclectic and reflective of who we are."

DESIGN Frances Merrill, Reath Design, Los Angeles; reathdesign.com.



"We try to be minimalistic in the way we live, to keep things neat. An extra ornamental layer keeps the house from feeling cold."

—KERRY KANE

REFRESH YOUR STYLE—HERE'S HOW

TURN SHELVES INTO ART

Instead of paintings, red custom shelves fill a wall in the living room (above). "We decided to OD on color," says Kane. Many items displayed, like the stuffed bird, were chosen to reflect the nature-themed curtain fabric and the wallpaper in the neighboring playroom.

HIDE THINGS IN PLAIN SIGHT

In the entryway, the family stashes shoes, dog leashes, and other coming-and-going items in an old marble-topped dresser Merrill found at an antiques mall. "It's perfect," Kane says. "I never worry about the kids running their toys into something that was already a little beat up." The Indian soumak rug pulls in the blue of the banister. Banister paint: Hamilton Blue PM-6; benjaminmoore.com.



IDEA

Large-scale photos add a modern look to a traditional space.



EMBRACE THE DARK SIDE

The windowless dining room is made even cozier with a dark green sea-grass wall covering, hand-made walnut furniture, and an earthy antique Turkish rug. "We figured it's a cave so we may as well keep it dark," says Kane.



IDEA

Layer light
at different
levels to make
a room glow.

“My husband had seen me gush over wallpaper with big, blooming flowers. He was there through the whole process to make sure it didn’t go too girly.” —KERRY KANE



START WITH A BLANK CANVAS

Painting the brick wall white brightened the family room and allowed Merrill to layer on a variety of patterns and styles. The designer covered a sofa with map fabric to satisfy Kane’s desire for pattern, but balanced it out with her husband’s modern lounge chair. The colors in the antique wool Moroccan rug help bring the room together. Sofa fabric: Global.1635; kravet.com for information.

SET UP A MULTIPURPOSE STATION

The kids’ playroom includes two white lacquer tabletops on collapsible sawhorse bases. “They serve mostly as frames for blanket forts now,” says Kane. “But when the kids grow up, they’ll make great desks.” Wallpaper: Apothecary’s Garden, \$7/sq. ft.; trustworth.com.

RETHINK THE FRONT DOOR

Instead of standard-issue colonial red, the family’s front door is painted kelly green. “I wanted something a bit more organic that would tie into the trees,” Kane says. The original molding surrounding the door pops even more when painted black. “You get that this house is young and fun, but also in line with the architecture,” says Merrill. Door paint: Bottle Green 3022; finepaintsof europe.com. →



Wallpaper revival

Inspired by this family's playroom, we chose five made-in-the-West patterns that move way past toile.

These indigo interlocking circles only look hand-painted. *Knots in Indigo*, \$195/roll; kremelife.myshopify.com.

Groovy plant life in saturated colors. *Succulent in Red*, \$200/roll; shop.makelike.com.

Metallics update scroll patterns. *After Chinterwink in Silver/Gold on Charcoal*, \$200/roll; jujupapers.com.

Stripes, only cooler, and silk-screened by hand. *Tapestry in Zuni*, \$155/roll; cavernhome.com.

A leaflike print based on mussels. *Michelle in Adirondacks on the Porch*, \$175/roll; madisonandgrow.com.

 Blipp to buy these wallpapers (see page 4 for instructions).



"Caravan has put together an outstanding package at a very reasonable price. Costa Rica is a great destination!"—Mr. & Mrs. M., California

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Volcanoes, Beaches and Rainforests

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All meals included

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Day 2 Visit Poás Volcano
From an overlook, see inside the active Poás Volcano. Hike Escallonia Cloud Forest Trail. Visit a coffee plantation on the slopes of the extinct Barva Volcano.

Day 3 Rainforest Aerial Tram
Glide through the jungle canopy on the Rainforest Aerial Tram. Visit a pineapple plantation. Enjoy scenic countryside to the San Carlos Valley for a two night stay in Fortuna.

Day 4 Caño Negro, Hot-Springs
Cruise Rio Frio through Caño Negro. Enjoy a relaxing soak in volcanic hot springs. See majestic Arenal Volcano.

Day 5 Hanging Bridges
Enjoy an unforgettable adventure as you hike on six suspension bridges through the tropical rainforest canopy. Relax 2-nights at JW Marriott Resort.

Day 6 Guanacaste Beach Resort
All day leisure at your magnificent beach resort and world-class spa.

Day 7 Tropical Dry Forest
Explore the only tropical dry forest in Costa Rica. Enjoy the beaches just outside your hotel at the entrance to the Manuel Antonio National Park.

Day 8 Manuel Antonio Park
Hike rainforest trails and beachcomb world famous Manuel Antonio Park. Crocodile cruise on the Tarcoles River.

Day 9 San José
Your Caravan tour ends with breakfast at your hotel. Thanks for vacationing with Caravan.

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IDEA
GARDEN

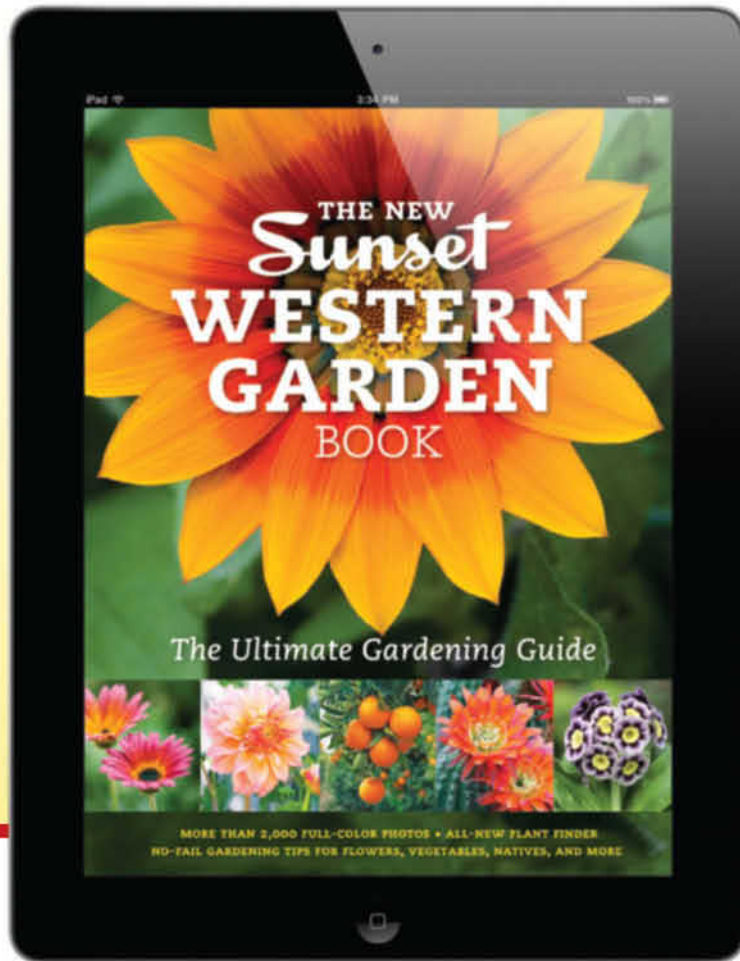
Plant now, feast later

In the Test Garden, we turned a little patch of land into an entire berry “room.”

Follow our small-space plan for a big summer bounty. *By Johanna Silver*

SWEET REWARDS
Our favorite varieties

GREEN THUMBS GO DIGITAL!

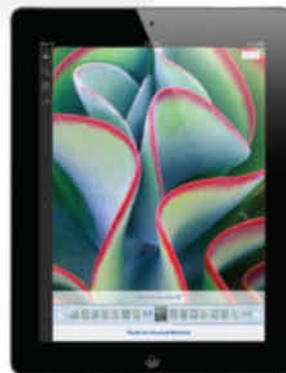


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LAUREN DUNEC is such a connoisseur of fruit that she talks about berries the way our wine editor talks about Pinot. In musk strawberries, she detects undertones of melon; in the alpine variety, a hint of pineapple. "When it comes to flavor, I'm always looking for something more than just sweet and juicy," says Dunec (above).

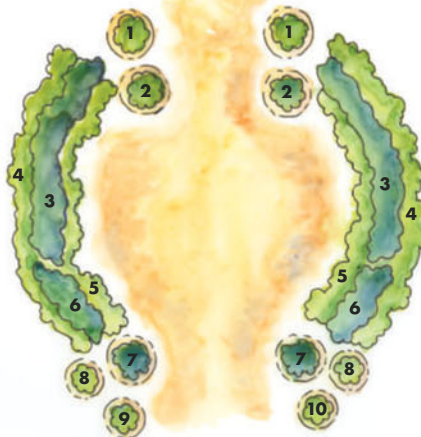
It's little surprise, then, that for her first project as *Sunset's* garden design assistant, Dunec created a berry "room," with two beds framed by walls of fruit, in the Test Garden. "Berries usually get planted in the back of a large yard, in a tangled mess, but many new varieties are so compact, you don't have to hide them."

In her quest for the tidiest and tastiest strawberries, blueberries, raspberries, and blackberries, Dunec scoured nurseries and talked to growers at farmers' markets, like Dan Lehrer in San Francisco. (In Lehrer, she found a kindred spirit who dug up some 'Mara des Bois' strawberry plants from his garden to share with her.) Though flavor was her primary criterion, she also selected berries based on staggered ripening times—so she could graze on them from early summer all the way through fall.

the PLAN

In the 12- by 12-foot patch, each 3-foot-wide bed is slightly curved inward "to create a sense of enclosure," Dunec says. Taller berries grow in the middle of each bed; they're trained against wire trellising.

Beds are underplanted with strawberries to create an edging, and pots frame each corner.



PLANTING and CARE

BUY

Shop for bare-root plants now. If you can't find what you want, ask your nursery to order from a grower such as Monrovia (monrovia.com), or check one of the sources cited below.

PREP

Store bare-root plants in moist newspaper until you are ready to plant; submerge the roots in a bucket of water the night before planting.

PLANT

Amend the soil with compost, then dig a planting hole that's wide enough for the roots to spread out evenly. Spacing varies by variety, so consult the plant tags; avoid overcrowding.

TEND

Berries appreciate some afternoon shade. Give them all regular water. Dunec loves the maintenance; she says, "I get to snack as I go."

the PLANTS

1

RASPBERRY
'Raspberry Shortcake'



Topping out at just 12 to 24 inches high and wide, this plant thrives in a large container without trellising. Order from brazelberries.com.

2

STRAWBERRY
'Mara des Bois'



Dunec calls this variety's flavor "the essence of a strawberry." It's a favorite at Berkeley restaurant Chez Panisse. Order from edenbrothers.com.

3

THORNLESS BLACKBERRY
'Apache'



In summer, these 6- to 8-foot-tall plants yield hefty crops. The upright canes are thornless. Train them on stakes that are 4 feet apart.

4

STRAWBERRY
'Sequoia'



Large red berries of this June-bearing variety taste sweeter than most you can buy at the grocery store.

5

STRAWBERRY
'Seascape'



This everbearing variety produces large, juicy berries all summer. It does exceptionally well along the coast. Plant in containers or in the ground.



ILLUSTRATION: MARGARET SLOAN



6

RASPBERRY
'Indian Summer'



This raspberry grows 5 to 6 feet tall and 6 to 8 feet wide; it needs trellising to stay tidy. Plants produce both a spring and fall crop of berries.

7

BLUEBERRY
'Bountiful Blue'



A great choice for small gardens, this compact plant (3 to 4 feet tall and wide) produces a giant crop of sweet berries and ornamental foliage.

8

BLUEBERRY
'Jelly Bean'



This plant has a spherical shape that's pretty in a pot. "It's as neat as a boxwood," Dunec says. Berries ripen from early to midsummer.

9

STRAWBERRY
Musk Variety



The best way to get these tasty, aromatic berries—so fragile they rarely show up at markets—is to grow them yourself. Plants spread by runners.

10

ALPINE STRAWBERRY
'Golden Alexandria'



You'll get tiny red berries all summer long from these everbearing plants. Lime green leaves brighten up the understory of shaded beds. ▲



Plant now! Watch our Test Garden video on your iPad or at sunset.com/berriesvideo.

In the **SUNSET** GARDEN

**TIPS
FROM OUR
TEAM**



"Every spring, our Itoh peony wows us with 50 or more blooms in just a few weeks."

JOHANNA SILVER,
ASSOCIATE GARDEN EDITOR

GARDEN WISDOM DOGSCAPING

Readers ask us about dogs in the yard almost as often as they ask us for planting advice. Our top tips? First, if your dog is fenced off from your garden, give him visual access with wide openings between slats (or a window in a gate, as below). If your dog is allowed in the garden, choose soft but sturdy plantings (like ornamental grasses) and leave room for a natural running path.



More ways to create a dog-friendly yard: sunset.com/petlandscaping.



PLANT IT NOW

Superpower peony

Like many gardeners in mild-winter climates, we've struggled to grow peonies over the years. But with the Itoh (or intersectional hybrid) peonies, we've finally found big-bloomed success. A cross between tree and herbaceous forms, the thick-stemmed plants don't require the deep chill that most other varieties do, blooming vigorously in spring and turning beautiful colors in fall. Yellow 'Bartzella' is pictured above. monrovia.com for retailers.

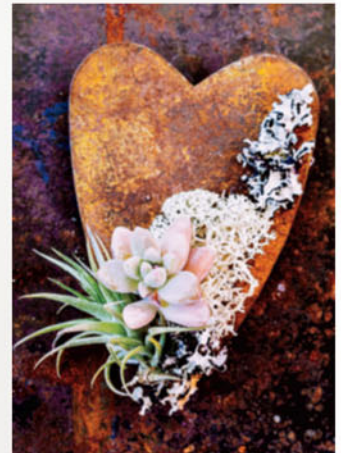
WE'RE LOVING ...

Garden-fresh valentine

We think this tin heart affixed with an air plant and a succulent is as romantic as any card. The air plant will thrive as long as it's misted once a week; root the succulent in a small pot filled with cactus mix after three weeks. \$24; about 3 in. by 4 in.; floragrubb.com.



Blipp to buy (see page 4 for instructions).



KNOW-HOW

Start seeds indoors

Jump-start gardening by sowing eggplant, pepper, and tomato seeds by a bright window this month.



POKE a foil pan with a nail for drainage holes. Rest pan on a tray and fill it with fresh potting soil.



MAKE shallow furrows for seeds with the side of a tongue depressor. Sprinkle in seeds and pinch the trenches shut.

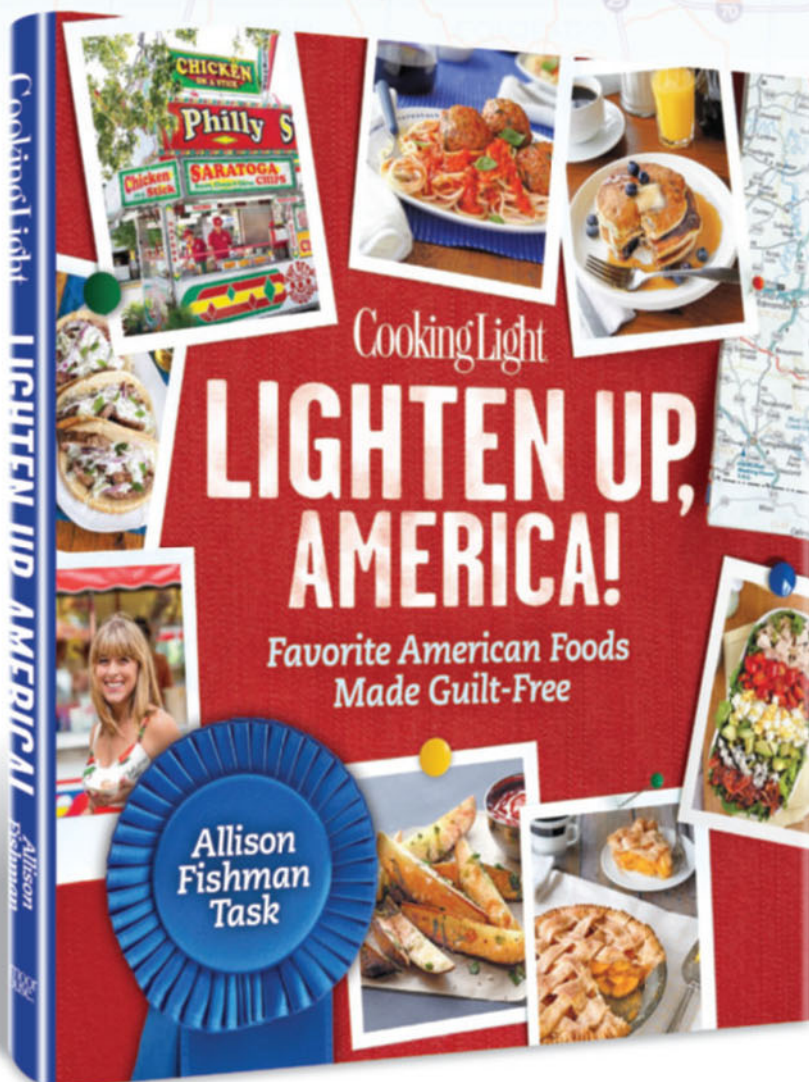


USE a spray bottle to gently mist the seedbed. Keep the soil evenly moist until the seeds sprout. ▲



“This book is too much fun!”

—Sandra Lee, host of Food Network's Semi-Homemade Cooking



Great Food Adventures from Coast to Coast.

Join intrepid food hunter Allison Fishman Task as she discovers 150 of America's favorite dishes—and makes them lighter, healthier, and tastier! *Lighten Up, America!* reveals the secrets of keeping every last drop of creamy, gooey goodness. It is a celebration of indulgence done right.

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Discover the Fascinating History and Stories Behind Beloved Regional Foods.

Taste the Crazy-Good Treats Made Famous at Local Food Festivals and State Fairs.

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NORTHERN
CALIFORNIA

Your CHECKLIST



"All it takes to soften the look of concrete is a touch of warm wood."

KATHLEEN BRENZEL,
GARDEN EDITOR

**PLANT**

In small spaces (around patios, for example), plant slow-growing and dwarf varieties of conifer, dogwood, ginkgo, and Japanese maple. Wildwood Farm carries a wide selection and ships anywhere. wildwoodmaples.com.

Start tomato seeds indoors now so they'll be ready to plant outdoors in April. Find heirloom varieties from Territorial Seed Company (territorialseed.com) and Baker Creek Heirloom Seeds (rareseeds.com).

After the last frost, replace your lawn with a native, no-mow, water-wise grass blend such as Native Mow Free or Native Preservation Mix from Delta Bluegrass Company (from seed or sod). deltabluegrass.com.

Continue to sow seeds of cool-season vegetables such as broccoli, chard, and lettuce.

**MAINTAIN**

Later this month, prune artemisia, butterfly bush, and lavender 6 to 12 inches from the ground to decrease

woodiness and encourage growth. Cut branches just above outward-facing new buds.

Regularly check for snails and slugs under boards, pots, and cool, moist plantings. Remove them by hand and toss them into soapy water, then discard.

Prune fuchsias. Blooms appear on new wood, so make cuts before spring growth begins. Remove broken or crossing branches, then prune to maintain desired shape and size.

Fertilize houseplants with soluble organic fertilizer according to package directions.

**PREP**

To create reusable plant markers, dip the tops of wooden stakes in chalkboard paint. Use them now to mark the spots where you've sown seeds and in the spring to identify herbs in your garden. *Paint available from craft stores.*

**HARVEST**

Pick lettuces and winter greens often to encourage new tender foliage.

Once oranges are plump and fully colored, pick one and taste. If it's sweet, the tree's fruit is ripe for picking. And if you're looking to add more citrus to your garden, buy fruits now to taste-test before you purchase the trees. 🍊

IDEA WE LOVE

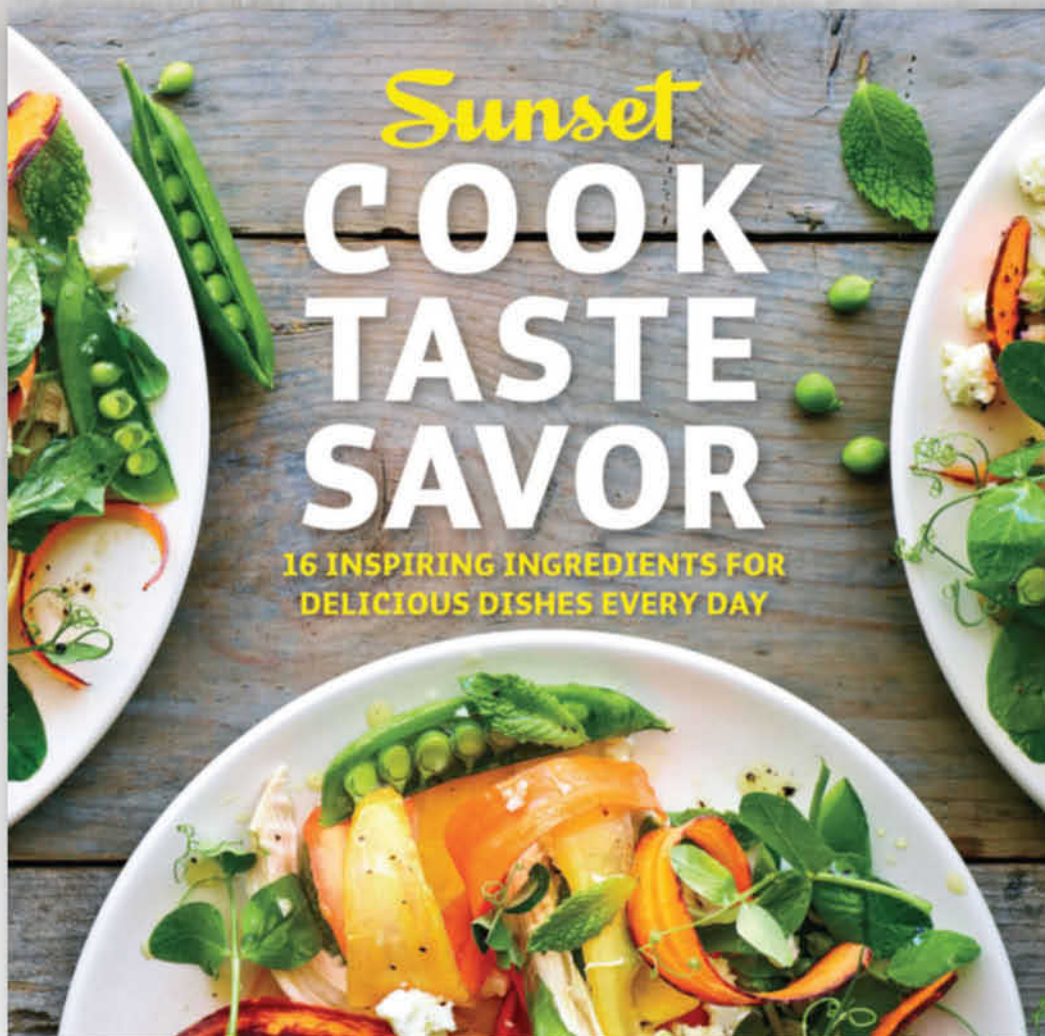
All-seasons retreat

As much as she sought any planting, Diane Lam wanted a piece of her childhood in her San Marino, California, backyard. "I have fond memories of gathering around a firepit after a night swim with my sisters and friends," says Lam, an interior designer. With that in mind, landscape designers Darren Shirai and Mark Mariano created an ipe wood-framed concrete firepit, which Lam uses year-round. The generous bench-style seating doubles as a retaining wall for the garden bed behind it, which is planted with evergreen currant and striped fortnight lily. **DESIGN** Darren Shirai and Mark Mariano, Bosque Design, Pasadena; bosque-la.com.



What grows where you live? Find your Sunset climate zone at sunset.com/zonefinder.

Great Cooking Starts With Great Ingredients



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In *Cook Taste Savor*, you'll learn the secrets to selecting, cooking and enjoying 16 of the West's most versatile — and iconic — foods, from avocados and artichokes to berries, chiles, fresh lamb, crab, and more. With guidance from the editors of *Sunset* magazine, the region's premier lifestyle resource, you will discover the secret to 'Western chefs' and home cooks' success in the kitchen: starting with the freshest ingredients is the easiest way to delicious meals.

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BEST PLACES TO LIVE



Looking for the perfect place to launch a career? Start a family? Just relax? We've found the ideal city, town, or neighborhood for you. To compile our list of the West's 24 Best Places to Live and Work (6 top winners and 18 runners-up), *Sunset* editors interrogated urban experts around the West—indeed, around the country—about what makes a great place to live in 2014. We hit the road (and the phone) to talk to the real authorities who know these places best: the people who live there. Once we found our semifinalists, we asked *Sunset* readers to vote on their favorites—and got more than 19,000 responses. One of these 24 Best Places, we know, is just right for you. Now go try on some dreams.

BY MIRANDA CROWELL, PETER FISH, AISLYN GREENE, MATTHEW JAFFE, SARAH MAX & ANDREA MINARCEK

OKAY, WHERE SHOULD I GO?

ARE YOU ...

Just out of college?

YES

NO

Fired up for your career?

YES!
BRING IT!

DEFINE
"FIRED UP"

SAN FRANCISCO,
CA

HONOLULU,
HI

Ready to put down roots?

YES

NO

Are the burbs calling?

YES! I'M
READY

NOT
AT ALL

Are you sure?

YES
#BurbsAreCoolToo

UH, MAYBE
NOT

ISSAQUAH,
WA

SUGAR HOUSE,
SLC, UT

Craving a fresh start?

YES

NO

Still need to work?

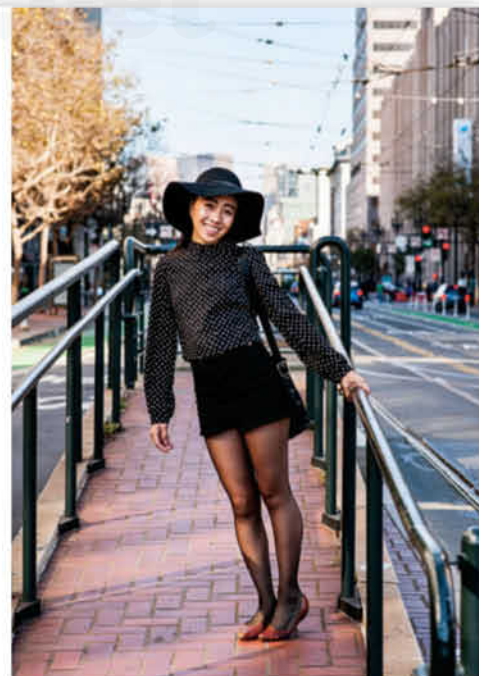
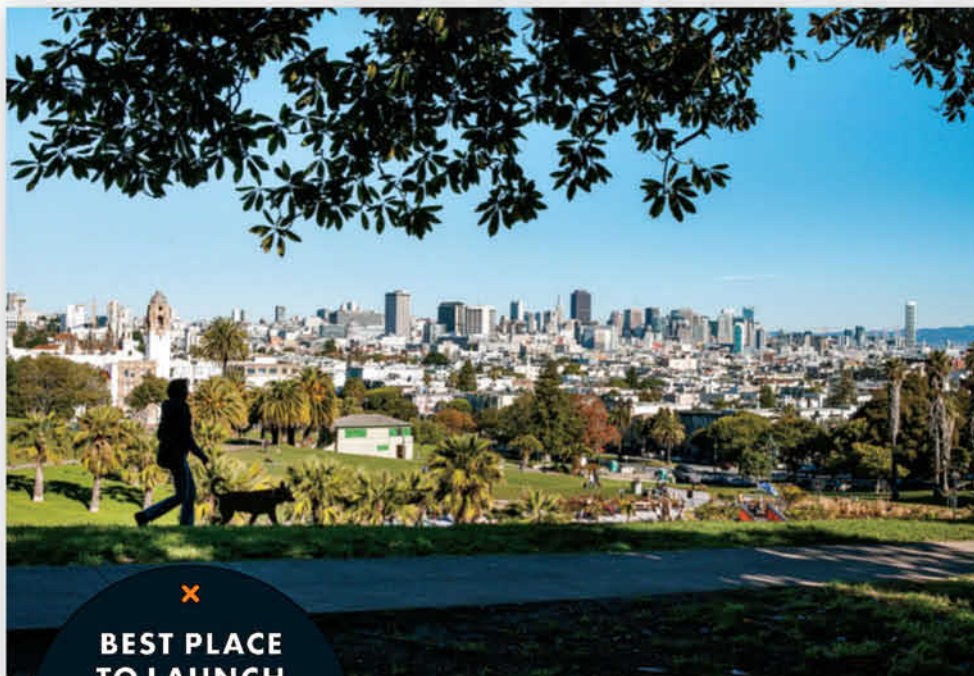
Lucky you.

YES, BUT AS
MY OWN BOSS

ONLY WHEN
I'M IN THE MOOD

BOZEMAN,
MT

FLAGSTAFF,
AZ



BEST PLACE TO LAUNCH A CAREER

You're out of school and eager to make your mark (and have some fun too). Here's where you go.

SAN FRANCISCO



THE BIG PICTURE

"There's a big sort going on. A generation ago, college grads were evenly distributed based on population density—the same percentage everywhere. That is no longer true. Highly educated young people are clustering in a few major metro areas."

—ED MCMAHON,
URBAN LAND INSTITUTE,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Clockwise from top left: Dog-walking in the Mission District's Dolores Park; recent arrival Stella Tran on Market Street; lunchtime on Twitter's rooftop patio.



Want to visit our winning towns? Get a travel planner on your iPad.

WorldMags.net

Last summer, Camilla Boyer, 22, turned down a lucrative financial job in Manhattan to accept an internship with San Francisco-based Twitter. "I wanted to make a meaningful impact," the London native says, "and banking didn't seem like the way to do it. At Twitter, we're connecting people all over the world." The Stanford grad's gamble paid off. She was hired on full-time within a few months. "People used to aspire to more conventionally prestigious jobs," she says. "But now that just seems old-fashioned—we'd rather be really doing something."

Young hopefuls have swarmed to San Francisco for the Gold Rush, for the Summer of Love, and now for the new Tech Boom. The tech industry shifted in recent years from Silicon Valley up to S.F. proper, as giants like Salesforce, Twitter, Pinterest, Zynga, Dropbox, and Yelp established headquarters in the city. (Google and Facebook have growing branch offices there as well.) "We're seeing this renaissance of companies starting, staying, or moving to the city," says Karen Wickre, the editorial director of Twitter. "It's more efficient to be close to public transportation, potential partners, and employees."

Last year, there was more venture-capital investment in S.F. than in any other place in the country, including Silicon Valley. "It's not that you can't create a successful start-up somewhere else," says 24-year-old Javascript developer Trey Griffith. "It's just, why would you? This is where the scene and investors are." Griffith migrated to S.F. in June, after working briefly in Chicago, to generate funding for his recruiting start-up, Endorse.me. "Putting myself in S.F. was the best possible thing I could've done."

The city's tech boom has downsides. Housing costs are at an all-time high, and competition for landing a lease is fierce. A Craigslist post this summer advertising a patch of sidewalk in the Mission as an "apartment rental" for \$900 a month went viral because people weren't sure if it was a joke or not. It was—but the reality can be nearly as grim. The average monthly rent for a one-bedroom apartment topped \$2,900 in November.

And for those who don't work in a tech-related field, "it can feel isolating" too, says Stella Tran, 23, who works for a nonprofit focused on fighting human trafficking. "If I hear another start-up guy say, 'Google me,' as a pickup line, I'm going to barf," she says. "My parents think it's ridiculous that I choose to pay the high rents here, but I do love the creativity and ingenuity that tech helps bring to the city."

The boom also introduces more opportunities; it's estimated that every high-tech job creates another 4.3 jobs throughout the community—in health care, education, hospitality. "As a nonprofit employee?" Tran says. "Peanut butter. I eat a lot of peanut butter." —A.M.



POPULATION
825,863



AVERAGE
MONTHLY
RENT
FOR A
1-BEDROOM
APARTMENT
\$2,911



MEDIAN
TECH SALARY
\$123,497

*(the highest in
the U.S. and
nearly 21 percent
higher than in the
country's second-
biggest tech hub,
Boston)*

20- TO 24-
YEAR-OLDS
AS % OF
POPULATION

7.4%



BARS PER
1,000
PEOPLE
0.72

MORE WINNERS



LAS VEGAS

POPULATION **596,424**

AVERAGE MONTHLY
RENT FOR A 1-BEDROOM
APARTMENT **\$657**

Jackpot! Zappos CEO Tony Hsieh has invested \$350 million in the Downtown Project, with \$100 million slated for small-business and tech development. And Vegas is no budget-buster: A nice 1-bedroom can be had for less than \$700 a month.



SANTA MONICA

POPULATION **91,812**

AVERAGE MONTHLY
RENT FOR A 1-BEDROOM
APARTMENT **\$2,304**

It still has a pier and surf, but start-ups, VC firms, and tech incubators like Launchpad have earned Santa Monica the nickname Silicon Beach. Only drawback: the cost of housing, which is nearly as astronomical as in San Francisco.



SEATTLE

POPULATION **634,535**

AVERAGE MONTHLY
RENT FOR A 1-BEDROOM
APARTMENT **\$1,453**

Microsoft, Amazon, and start-ups make this a tech hub, but health care is big too. Minus: 150 days of rain annually. Pluses: access to the outdoors and culture. And a 1-bedroom apartment is \$1,400 less per month than in San Francisco.

THREE QUESTIONS...

BEFORE YOU MOVE TO START YOUR CAREER

1. BEST WAY TO FIND AN APARTMENT? Start with Craigslist, of course. Newer tools like Padmapper (padmapper.com) and Lovely (livelovely.com) alert you when units in your requested price range and neighborhood are posted.

2. BRING THE CAR? Think about not. Gasoline, parking, and insurance eat rent money. And cities like S.F. and Seattle are making it easier to be auto-free, with bike-share systems and car-share taxi services like SideCar and Lyft.

3. WHAT SKILLS DO YOU NEED? Computer literacy and social-media prowess. Software engineers and designers rule. If you majored in anthro, prove yourself through internships and start-ups—your own or others'.



THE BIG PICTURE

“The generation in their 20s want to live in an urban environment. They want to spend their income on engaging each other, on entertainment, not so much on, say, acquiring an automobile. We have a whole new generation of people who really like cities.” —JEFF SOULE, AMERICAN PLANNING ASSOCIATION, WASHINGTON, D.C.

Clockwise from top left: A Honolulu day off; poolside tropical drink; hitting the surf at Waikiki; Town restaurant, Oahu’s farm-to-table favorite.

✕
**BEST PLACE
TO POSTPONE
YOUR CAREER**

Not ready for 9-to-5 life?
These towns will satisfy
your urge for adventure.
(Note to parents:
Nobody says you can’t
move here too.)



HONOLULU



**READER
PICK**



RANK IN
STUDY
OF 100
HAPPIEST
CITIES
1ST



AVERAGE
YEAR-ROUND
TEMPERA-
TURES

**HIGHS
OF 84°
AND
LOWS
OF 70°**



POPULATION
345,610



AVERAGE
MONTHLY
RENT FOR
A 1-BEDROOM
APARTMENT
\$1,500

20- TO 24-
YEAR-OLDS
AS % OF
POPULATION



THREE QUESTIONS...

BEFORE YOU MAKE A
POSTPONE-CAREER MOVE

1. WHAT SKILLS DO YOU NEED BEFORE YOU GO?

In tourism hubs, experience working in hospitality helps. Bonus points for foreign language fluency.

2. HOW DO YOU ACCOUNT FOR THIS TIME ON YOUR RÉSUMÉ?

Own it. "Studying winemaking in Walla Walla, Washington" can break the ice in interviews—even for a job in finance.

3. WHAT CAN YOU DO TO EASE THE TRANSITION INTO THE WORKFORCE LATER?

Volunteer work is good. And don't dismiss what you're doing now—overseeing a team of ski instructors is valuable managerial experience; phrase it as such on your résumé.

n 2014, the national economy may be (slowly) rebounding. But for millennials, the stats are still discouraging. Just 46 percent of 2013 college graduates exited the campus grounds with a job offer. Faced with such prospects, many 20-somethings are choosing to put off climbing the corporate ladder and, instead, focus on climbing the Sierra, perfecting their surf skills, or pursuing a passion for wine.

Here's a surprise. A really good place to postpone that career is Honolulu.

The Hawaiian capital's physical attractions are no secret: a lush mountain backdrop, blissfully sunny weather, and some of the prettiest beaches and best surf breaks in the country. It's a place that encourages exercise and healthy eating—there are 25 farmers' markets across town. And there's a built-in community of young people (the University of Hawaii's main campus is located here).

But Honolulu also turns out to be a pretty practical escape hatch. There are ample jobs in tourism, retail, and service-related industries, and unemployment here (4.3 percent) is lower than the national average (7.0 percent).

It's true that Island living can be pricey. Groceries are more expensive than on the Mainland, for instance, because 80 percent of Hawaii's food must be shipped in. But there are deals to be found on housing. For example, one-bedroom apartments rent in the \$900 range in the inland Makiki neighborhood, where a young Barack Obama lived during his high school years. And in nearby Manoa, where the University of Hawaii's main campus sits, four-bedroom houses rent for as little as \$620 per person, including Internet service and utilities.

One millennial who made the leap is Jack Wallace, currently working in Waikiki as a surf instructor and surf-school manager. Wallace, who grew up surfing off New York's Long Island and attended college in San Diego, bought a one-way ticket to Honolulu after graduation—without having ever visited. "I knew I wanted to be by the water, and this seemed like the dream," he says. "I'm not building up a big résumé, but I make enough to support my lifestyle and now I surf every day."

The going-out scenes in Honolulu center on Waikiki and the 12-block Arts District, bordering Chinatown, which hosts big Halloween and Cinco de Mayo festivals along with a monthly First Friday. "It's like a big block party with lots of music and art," says Chelsea Lewis, another 20-something who moved to Honolulu from New Jersey. "And then everyone meets up at the bars after."

There are pluses and minuses to living in a tourist town. It can feel transient. Says Lewis, "It can be hard to build a core base of friends, with so many tourists and people coming and going, working odd jobs." Still, she adds, there's a bright side to all the traffic. "You don't have to travel to experience all the different cultures. They come to you, on their vacation." —A.M.

MORE WINNERS



CARBONDALE, CO
POPULATION **6,489**

AVERAGE MONTHLY
RENT FOR A 1-BEDROOM
APARTMENT **\$972**

Aspen for the rest of us: world-class skiing, mountain biking, and fly-fishing, and a vastly lower cost of living than in the resort town 30 miles away. Some Carbondale residents bike to jobs in Aspen. Others work in Carbondale's growing green-energy economy.



KINGS BEACH, CA
POPULATION **3,796**

AVERAGE MONTHLY
RENT FOR A 1-BEDROOM
APARTMENT **\$793**

Lake Tahoe's North Shore ski resorts are just minutes away; for summer fun, Kings Beach has a wide stretch of sand and (for Tahoe) warm water. Downtown is tiny, but you can get good burgers at the Char-Pit. And rents will leave you cash for a season lift ticket.



WALLA WALLA, WA
POPULATION **31,864**

AVERAGE MONTHLY
RENT FOR A 1-BEDROOM
APARTMENT **\$534**

This college town is isolated (four hours from Seattle), but it has a buzzing culinary scene. You can sip world-class Cabernets and learn to make them at College Cellars, a teaching winery.

✕
**BEST
BURBS**

You want the house,
the lawn, the schools, but
you don't want to be
bored out of your mind.
Behold—suburbs
that are anything but
cookie-cutter.

ISSAQUAH, WA



THE BIG PICTURE

“The suburbs
that are doing
the best are the
ones that have
public gathering
places, that
have a heart
and soul.”

—ED MCMAHON,
URBAN LAND INSTITUTE,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

Clockwise from top left: Paraglid-
ing off Tiger Mountain; the Cow-
ans (from left, Indiana, Tony, Cole,
Teresa, Sage, and dog Tully); the
Cowans at play; downtown.



London, Amsterdam, San Francisco, Issaquah. The Seattle suburb may sound like an unlikely stop on that list, but Teresa Cowan and her husband, Tony, settled here after years of moving from city to city. Like many young couples, the Cowans—who have three children, ages 7, 9, and 11—were dazzled by Issaquah's schools, but moved here for another reason: "It's a suburb that doesn't feel like suburbia," Teresa says.

Yes, there are the cul-de-sacs, the Costco (in fact, the company is headquartered here), and other hallmarks of suburban life, but Issaquah defies ticky-tacky stereotypes thanks to 1,700 acres of parkland, walkable neighborhoods, historic buildings, and increasingly urban amenities (read: indie coffee shops, wine bars, and a Tony Award-winning theater). Ask locals to describe the place and they'll tell you it feels like a small town—or a vibrant city neighborhood.

Even more impressive, the former coal mining town 22 miles southeast of Seattle managed to hold onto its distinctive character while growing exponentially. The turning point came in the late 1980s: "We didn't want to give up our historic neighborhoods or open space, but we knew we had to make room for new residents," says Ava Frisinger, who just finished 16 years as the mayor of Issaquah. Instead of the typical suburban sprawl, the town decided to go urban, green-lighting the construction of compact, sustainably built communities on the east side of town.

Today, Issaquah feels like both a time-warp version *and* a new edition of Main Street U.S.A. In the old town, some of the late-19th- and early-20th-century buildings still stand, now home to museums sitting alongside shops and restaurants. A vintage trolley runs along newly revitalized railroad tracks. The planned communities, particularly Issaquah Highlands (where the Cowans live), replicate that village feel, but with shiny-new parks, grocery stores, and a movie theater within walking distance of homes. Issaquah's not a perfect town. Not everyone sees development as a good thing. Some neighborhoods remain car-dependent. And commuters bemoan the lack of a light rail to Seattle. But it is a good model for how a suburb can grow without losing its sense of place.

And for every condo complex that opens, so, it seems, does a new park or trail. When it comes to outdoor recreation, Issaquah's stats are as impressive as its school ratings: There are three mountains within city limits. The (unfortunately named) Poo Poo Point on Tiger Mountain draws paragliders from all over; trails in Duthie Hill Park, five minutes outside of town, attract mountain bikers. "We used to drive from Seattle to hike and bike, and now we have a forest around the corner from our house," Teresa says. "If you have kids, it's basically a wonderland." —M.C.



POPULATION
32,633



MEDIAN HOME
PRICE
\$470,000



COMMUTE
TIME
TO SEATTLE
BY CAR
30 MIN



WALKABILITY
SCORE
26



GREAT SCHOOLS
SCORE
9

THREE QUESTIONS ...

TO HELP YOU
FIND YOUR
SUBURB

1. DOES IT HAVE PLACES WHERE NEIGHBORS CAN MEET UP?

Successful suburbs have public spots where people gather—a weekly farmers' market, say.

2. HOW WALKABLE IS IT? CAN YOU GET TO A PARK OR GROCERY STORE WITHOUT DRIVING?

That will make your life easier—and add to your home's value.

3. WHAT'S THE COMMUTE REALLY LIKE?

Don't just trust Google Maps; do a practice run during commute hours between your potential home and your workplace.

MORE WINNERS

ALAMEDA, CA

POPULATION **75,641**

MEDIAN HOME
PRICE **\$617,500**

GREAT SCHOOLS
SCORE **8**



Its abiding charms include tidy Victorians and a main drag, Park Street, that has blossomed with restaurants like Burma Superstar. And on Saturday, food trucks roll into town. There's no BART, but ferries take commuters to S.F. and Oakland. Drawback: Homes aren't inexpensive, although a condo will set you back less.

LOUISVILLE, CO

POPULATION **19,074**

MEDIAN HOME PRICE
\$396,000

GREAT SCHOOLS
SCORE **9**



This Denver suburb regularly scores high on Best Places lists because of its schools, historic downtown, and 1,800 acres of open space. What's new is an influx of restaurants (like farm-fresh Empire Lounge) that, say Louisville fans, rival the best in nearby Boulder. Cons? You mostly need a car to get around.

SOUTH PASADENA, CA

POPULATION **25,546**

MEDIAN HOME PRICE
\$852,750

GREAT SCHOOLS
SCORE **9**



Oak-shaded bungalows, good schools, and a pretty little downtown: South Pasadena feels like a village set in greater L.A. It's famous for successfully battling a freeway that would have cut it in half. Now commuters hop on the Gold Line metro, and Caltrans is set to sell houses along the former freeway right-of-way.

READER
PICK



✕
**BEST
CITY
HOODS**

These urban neighborhoods mix metro amenities with high quality of life.



THE BIG PICTURE

“The new American dream is urban during the week, outdoors on week-ends. Western cities are ideally suited for that.”

—WILLIAM FULTON,
PLANNING DIRECTOR,
CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Clockwise from top: Sugar House Monument; summer jogging (and mountain views) in Sugar House Park; Salt Lake City's streetcar system, recently extended to Sugar House.

SUGAR HOUSE, SALT LAKE CITY



Jim and Dawn-Marie Tabery didn't intend to make Salt Lake City their permanent home. When Pennsylvania-born Jim, 35, accepted a teaching position at the University of Utah in 2007, the plan was to stay until he was tenured and then be "open to the idea of leaving."

That was, until he and Dawn-Marie, a Bay Area native and his then-girlfriend, found Sugar House, a historic neighborhood southeast of downtown known for its early-1900s brick bungalows and open-minded community. "I felt the same way the rest of the world feels about Utah," says Dawn-Marie, 32, a graduate student at U of U. "I wondered, 'Where am I going to get a beer? Are they okay with gay people?' But Jim showed me this little oasis of diversity in Sugar House."

One of Salt Lake's oldest neighborhoods, Sugar House draws its name from a 19th-century sugar beet factory (which never produced any sugar). Today it encompasses quiet residential streets; a thriving business district; Westminster College, a private liberal arts school; and five parks, including the 110-acre Sugar House Park, where Olympic cross-country skiers train in the winter and, come summer, valley farmers sell local raspberries and honey at the farmers' market. And all of SLC's fabled outdoor attractions—bike trails, craggy canyons, and seven ski resorts—are within reach.

It's qualities like these that lure residents who might otherwise have chosen suburbs. "Sugar House has everything we're all striving for: walkable shops, parks, and some of the top-rated schools in Utah," says Mark Isaac, a resident and local developer. "In the summer, we don't really drive," says Benny Keele, a realtor and community council member who moved here in 1999. "We have whatever we need right here."

Adding to its appeal: a new 2-mile streetcar line that connects Sugar House with Salt Lake's extensive light-rail system. Local investors have poured \$405 million into the neighborhood in the form of condos—nearly 1,000 units are under construction—commercial space, and restaurants like The Annex, a new outpost by Utah's gold medal-winning Epic Brewing.

While the construction testifies to Sugar House's appeal, it's also the source of community angst as congestion increases, rents rise, and chains threaten to push aside mom-and-pop stores. "Sugar House is going through some growing pains right now," says Tricia Pilny, the Utah district council chair of the Urban Land Institute. But the community has rallied to preserve Sugar House's historic storefronts and, though a few chains have moved in, "I think the community is loyal to the faces they recognize," says Jim Tabery.

Clearly the Taberys have no plans to leave. They've tied the knot—married by the first neighbor they met—and, says Dawn-Marie, "We're about to have a baby and we don't live near our families and that kills us. But what we've found in Sugar House makes it worth staying." —A.G.



POPULATION
30,661



MEDIAN
HOME PRICE
\$322,595



GREAT
SCHOOLS
SCORE
7



WALKABILITY
SCORE
55



COMMUTE
TIME TO
DOWNTOWN
SLC (ON NEW
STREETCAR
LINE)
15 MIN

THREE QUESTIONS...

TO HELP YOU FIND YOUR PERFECT CITY NEIGHBORHOOD

1. WHAT'S THE COST/LIFESTYLE TRADE-OFF? How much house you get for your money is important. But don't ignore other factors meaningful to you, such as walkability and access to the outdoors.

2. HOW STRONG IS THE COMMUNITY? Check out local neighborhood associations to determine how close-knit (or not) a neighborhood is. Watch for community-bonders: farmers' markets and block parties.

3. HOW ARE THE SCHOOLS? Even if you don't have kids, school quality is key to your new home gaining value over the years. GreatSchools, a national nonprofit, is a good resource. greatschools.org.

MORE WINNERS

READER
PICK



**RICHMOND,
PORTLAND**
POPULATION **11,659**

MEDIAN HOME PRICE
\$350,000

GREAT SCHOOLS SCORE **6**

It's home to the sizzling culinary corridor Division Street. But walk a few blocks from the buzz and you'll find a leafy neighborhood with two community gardens, movies in the park, and plenty of bike lanes.



**HIGHLAND,
DENVER**
POPULATION **8,603**

MEDIAN HOME PRICE
\$366,450

GREAT SCHOOLS SCORE **3**

Hipsters and retirees mingle in this diverse neighborhood transformed by nearby Coors Field and a pedestrian bridge that links to downtown. Watch for improving schools and, in 2016, a commuter-rail station.



**THE NORTH END,
BOISE**
POPULATION **9,833**

MEDIAN HOME PRICE
\$233,000

GREAT SCHOOLS SCORE **6**

Boise's original "suburb," it's a kid-friendly refuge close to downtown where families slurp milkshakes in Hyde Park (the bustling business district) or bike in the nearby foothills.



Clockwise from top left:
Downtown; Pine Creek Lake,
southeast of town; Mariah
Talbot and Serena Rundberg
in The Nova Cafe; the Mon-
tana Ale Works grill and bar.

THE BIG PICTURE

“More and more people are able to live where they want to live, because the technology allows jobs to be done wherever people want to do them.”

—JONATHAN SCHECHTER,
CHARTURE INSTITUTE,
JACKSON, WY



**BEST PLACE
TO REBOOT
YOUR LIFE**

You're weary of the big-city corporate world. You want a slower pace. You want to be your own boss. We've got the towns for you.

BOZEMAN, MT



After more than a decade in software sales in Santa Cruz, California, Serena Rundberg was ready for a change from quarterly quotas and traffic. Exactly how or where to go she didn't know until she visited a relative in Bozeman, Montana, and "fell in love with the community and the mountains."

So Rundberg made the leap. In 2005, she sold everything she owned, left California, and bought a restaurant on Main Street in downtown Bozeman, transforming it into what is now a local favorite, The Nova Cafe. The move was scary, and not just because most new restaurants fail. "Being gay and moving to a small town in Montana was a concern," says Rundberg, 42, who met her spouse, Mariah Talbott, 32, in Bozeman; they wed in New York almost two years ago. "But people here have traveled and lived all over the world. They have open minds and big hearts."

The southwestern Montana university town does a lot of things big. Set between the Gallatin and Bridger Ranges, Bozeman offers easy access to thousands of acres of Gallatin National Forest, hundreds of miles of blue-ribbon trout streams (the nearby Yellowstone and Madison Rivers are ranked among the best in the world), and three downhill ski areas, including non-profit Bridger Bowl, just 18 miles north of town. "And we can nordic ski out our back door," says Jeff Wyatt, 44, who moved from the Bay Area with his wife, Paige, 43, and their three children in 2006. They traded private schools for superb public schools and swapped scheduled activities for the freedom to "play in the woods and get dirty." Jeff runs consumer products design firm Pinion Engineering & Design and frequently taps the talent of students and graduates of Montana State University.

Between 2000 and 2012, Bozeman's population grew more than 40 percent, and a good deal of that growth came from urban refugees seeking a smaller-city pace and daily access to the outdoors. For some, the move is part of a grand plan to finally work on that big idea. For others, new ventures are born out of necessity; in the absence of major metro jobs, many newcomers create their own.

Culture? The Museum of the Rockies is one of the best natural history museums in the West. And Bozeman's strong in galleries, public art, and festivals. Winters are long and cold—think average lows of 15° in February—but locals bundle up and embrace them. They flock to such events as the Wild West WinterFest ("Flakes Welcome!"), a February tradition that includes everything from a quilt show to a dog keg pull, in which Fido hauls a sled loaded with one or more kegs of beer.

"You can raise kids here, the commute is nothing, and the fun factor is very high," says Andreas Scherer, a former Washington, D.C., tech executive who now runs Bozeman genetic software company Golden Helix. "As a result, when people do go to work, they can put their heads down and be focused." —S.M.



GREAT
SCHOOLS
SCORE

9



MEDIAN
HOME PRICE

\$282,168



POPULATION

38,695



NUMBER
OF SKI
RESORTS
WITHIN
ONE HOUR

4

FLIGHT TIME TO NEAREST
BIG CITY (SALT LAKE CITY)



1 HR,
20 MIN

THREE QUESTIONS...

TO HELP YOU FIND
THE IDEAL PLACE
TO REBOOT YOUR LIFE

1. DOES YOUR BUSINESS PLAN FIT THE LOCATION?

If you're launching a local business, be sure the market can support it; \$5 cupcakes might sell in the city but fall flat in a small town.

2. WHAT'S THE TRUE COST OF DOING BUSINESS?

Factor in everything from local rents and taxes to the availability of labor.

3. HAVE A BACKUP PLAN? If your business flops, make sure you can find suitable work in your dream town; employment options may be limited.

MORE WINNERS



BELLINGHAM, WA

POPULATION 82,310

MEDIAN HOME PRICE
\$240,584

This waterfront city is home to Western Washington University. A legion of techies have relocated here; start-ups range from farm-to-table restaurants to app developers. The city's annual gathering of Linux developers is one of the world's largest. Bonus: There is no state income tax.



READER
PICK

BEND, OR

POPULATION 82,000

MEDIAN HOME PRICE
\$366,910

It's known for outdoor fun. But new businesses range from food carts to medical device manufacturers. And Bend has drawn Silicon Valley transplants, who bring expertise and seed money. Transportation has improved with flights to six international airports.

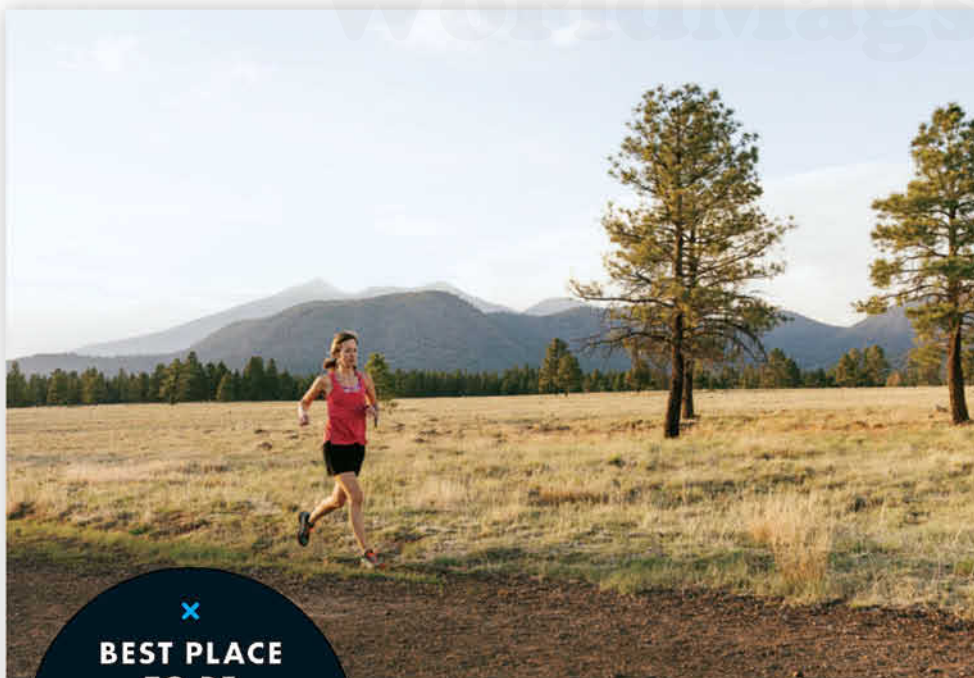


CHICO, CA

POPULATION 86,949

MEDIAN HOME PRICE
\$263,512

Beauty and brains: Chico has a charming downtown and the 3,670-acre Bidwell Park. It's also fertile ground for budding businesses, thanks to support from groups like Innovate North State, plus the tech-savvy students at California State University, Chico.



✕
**BEST PLACE
TO BE
FINALLY FREE**

No work (unless
you want to).
All play (and we know
you want to).

FLAGSTAFF



THE BIG PICTURE

“People buy 40 acres on the edge of town and realize they’re bored and wish they were closer in. Make sure what you buy matches your desire for community or isolation.”

—LUTHER PROPST, FOUNDER,
SONORAN INSTITUTE, TUCSON

Clockwise from top left: The Buffalo Park Loop; wood-fired pizzas at Pizzicletta; Flagstaff’s revived historic downtown.

n Flagstaff, it's the mountains you notice first. The San Francisco Peaks loom over the Arizona city, topping out at 12,633-foot Humphreys Peak, the state's highest point. This time of year, the peaks are covered with snow; in summer, their aspen stands glow green, and in fall, the trees marble the slopes with gold and orange.

"We're up there at least every couple weeks," says Paul Thomas, who moved to Flagstaff with his wife, Jill, last year. "I never get tired of seeing the peaks."

For the Thomases, the move represented a major life change, and at first glance a surprising one. Their previous home was Pebble Beach, the golf lover's retreat on the Monterey Peninsula, generally considered one of the most beautiful places in the world. But that life came with a cost. Paul had spent his career in the tech industry, moving so often that his daughter calculated she'd lived in 16 places before leaving for college. His most recent CEO position required frequent travel to Ireland; even at home, he estimates he drove 150 to 200 miles a day.

So the Thomases downshifted—from high-powered CEO to something lower key and from the California coast to Flagstaff.

For people looking to relocate for their postcareer life, says Luther Propst, "Flagstaff can be a great choice." Propst, an environmental planner who founded the Tucson-based Sonoran Institute, has spent his career studying how Western cities succeed (and fail). Flagstaff, he says, has real strengths.

The city's setting—at the base of those mountains, with the Grand Canyon 90 minutes away—makes it as good as any in the West for outdoor recreation. But Propst also notes that Flagstaff has a diverse economy: tourism, education (it's home to Northern Arizona University), and government offices. The robust economy brings amenities like shopping and restaurants. And that means if you decide you really aren't finished with working life, you have options for full- or part-time work.

The Thomases felt another pull: Both had been students at Northern Arizona University, and they had retained fond memories of Flagstaff. Says Paul, "We asked ourselves, If we had to pick one place to live, where would we really want to be?"

So far the move has been a success. Paul parlayed his corporate expertise into a teaching post at NAU in its Executives in Residence program. Here he can plug into Flagstaff's youthful energy—the town's average age is 27—while bringing his real-world perspective to his students.

In a pre-Skype age, he says, it would have been much more difficult to make the move. But now he's able to enjoy what he calls "the best of all worlds." He can bring Google execs to campus, then see elk wandering into his backyard. "Literally every night," he says, "we wonder why we waited so long to live here." —M.J.



THREE QUESTIONS...

BEFORE YOU MAKE YOUR POSTWORK MOVE

1. HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED YOUR PROSPECTIVE NEW HOME IN ALL FOUR SEASONS?

You can love a place in July but not in January.

2. HOW HARD IS IT TO GET IN OR OUT OF TOWN?

Some Western resort towns have great air service three months a year, nothing the other nine.

3. WHAT'S THE ACCESS TO MEDICAL CARE?

In your 50s, you still feel invincible. Ten years from now, you may want to know there are good doctors and hospitals nearby.

MORE WINNERS

CAMBRIA, CA

POPULATION
6,032

MEDIAN HOME PRICE \$536,000

READER PICK



If living in a California coastal village with world-class wineries nearby and a college town (San Luis Obispo) 40 minutes away sounds appealing, look no further. Cambria is small, but the steady flow of Highway 1 travelers bound for nearby Hearst Castle nurtures a sophisticated dining scene.

CORVALLIS, OR

POPULATION
54,998

MEDIAN HOME PRICE \$255,500



Portland is 90 minutes north, the coast an hour west, and wine country is all around. But you may find it hard to leave town. The historic downtown is handsome, and Oregon State University brings both sports and culture. Corvallis even has a program that helps people relocating here: yescorvallis.org.

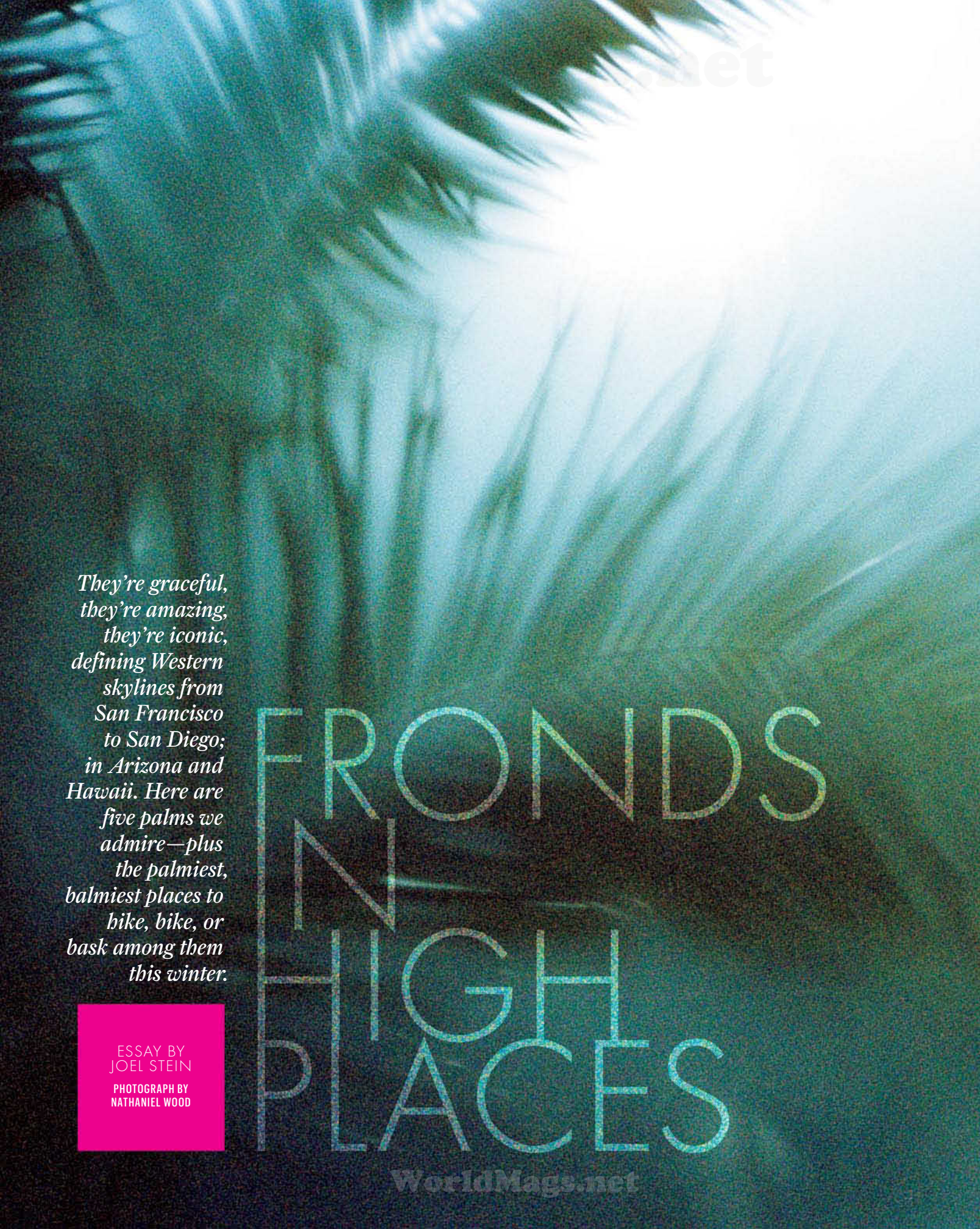
DURANGO, CO

POPULATION
17,216

MEDIAN HOME PRICE \$330,000



Along with winter skiing and mountain biking, there's kayaking on the Animas River, which runs near the city's downtown, a National Historic District. The city's setting—backed up against the San Juan Mountains—is spectacular, but Durango is a bit isolated: The nearest major city is Albuquerque, three hours away. 🏔️



*They're graceful,
they're amazing,
they're iconic,
defining Western
skylines from
San Francisco
to San Diego;
in Arizona and
Hawaii. Here are
five palms we
admire—plus
the palmiest,
balmiest places to
bike, bike, or
bask among them
this winter.*

ESSAY BY
JOEL STEIN

PHOTOGRAPH BY
NATHANIEL WOOD

FRONDS IN HIGH PLACES

PALM TREES SEEM TO SIGNIFY ONLY one thing: laziness. No one calls a meeting to plan a hostile takeover under a palm tree. No one has ever said, "We settle this at high noon. Under the palm tree." Beavers, obviously, never congregate near palms. The reason palm trees appear in desert island cartoons is that those punch lines are based on the assumption that the castaways have nothing to do. Take away the palm, and the joke no longer works because you're forced to picture fishing, shelter building, *Survivor*-style infighting, and whatever they were trying to accomplish on *Lost*.

That's the draw of California: Not having to shovel your driveway. IPO'ing your dot-com for a billion bucks. Getting discovered at the drugstore. Closing the shop, selling the house, buying a ticket West, and giving them a stand-up routine in L.A. Our real symbol is the palm tree, not the grizzly bear some early rebels hastily put on our state flag. No, the majority of palms aren't indigenous to California, but then neither are most Californians.

When I was in my senior year at a New Jersey high school, I toured all the Ivy League colleges with their gargoyles and gothic buildings. Then I drove up Stanford's Palm Drive, the long entrance to the university lined with massive Canary Island date palms, and saw the Mexican fans scattered across the campus, and thought, This looks easy. And it was. Teaching assistants would sometimes let us vote on whether to hold class outside, always by a palm tree. The people

A CALIFORNIA WITHOUT PALMS
WOULD BE A CALIFORNIA WITHOUT DREAMS.



MEXICAN
FAN PALMS,
NEAR LAX

PHOTOGRAPH BY
JOSEPH HOFLEHNER

MEXICAN
FAN PALMS,
ELYSIAN PARK,
LOS ANGELES

PHOTOGRAPH BY
AMANDA MARSALIS

who raised their hands against the idea were always the ones who got A's.

After you've lived here a little while, though, you have another kind of palm tree experience. You hear a rush of air and see a blur like a falling piano: a 40-pound palm frond plunging 60 feet, and you think, My god. I almost died ironically. In a way that my mourning friends and family back East would secretly find validating. Or maybe you drive over a shed frond, thinking it will be as soft as it looks six stories up, only to find it's an iron saw eager to shred your tires. Palm trees are also the earthquake that cracks the driveway; the long, un-lucrative hours working at your floundering Internet start-up; the endless auditions without ever getting a part; forcing your friends to listen to your jokes on open mike night at Flappers in Burbank.

Which is why some politicians and businesspeople and civic-minded folk in Los Angeles want to replace the matchstick Mexican fans with something oak-ish that needs less water, gives more shade, releases more oxygen, is more local, and other things California is always nagging us about.

But they're wrong. They forget what brings people here. A California without palms would be a California of truth. It would be a California for someone other than the lovers, the dreamers, and me. We may have oversold the illusion of ease since Horace Greeley told young men to go West, but by wishing that palm trees would make us happy, we have allowed them to do just that. The brave who left their homes and their safe career paths to move here just have to learn to watch out for a few falling fronds. We can handle it.

Joel Stein is a Los Angeles-based journalist, a columnist for Time magazine, and the author of Man Made: In Which a Dad Learns to Be a Man for His Son.

MEXICAN FAN PALM

(*Washingtonia robusta*)

BIO Planted to beautify L.A. streets for the 1932 Olympics, Mexican fan palms are the city's most visible symbols of the sun-and-surf good life. Phoenix has a passel of them too.

WHO LOVES 'EM Tourists and die-hard Angelenos, native and transplanted.

WHO DOESN'T People who dismiss them as invaders that do nothing to cleanse or cool the air, or as costly nuisances (L.A. spent about \$400,000 in one year cleaning up fallen fronds). Some city foresters prefer native shade trees such as oaks and sycamores.

IN THEIR DEFENSE "Studies show that Mexican fans are as effective as other trees at cleansing the air," says Donald R. Hodel, palm and tree expert and environmental horticulture adviser for the University of California Cooperative Extension. "But each tree has a smaller canopy, so you need more of them." With proper pruning, they aren't messy or dangerous, he says. "They don't block street signs or views. No other plants can bring that graceful motif to the Southern California skyline."

AMAZING FACTS They grow 100 feet tall and can live for 100 to 150 years.

GO

Beachfront bike path. Rent a bike by the Santa Monica Pier, then follow the paved trail north to Santa Monica State Beach or south to Venice. Beaches and cliffs along the way are studded with fan palms. *Sea Mist Rentals:* \$18/day; 1619 Ocean Front Walk, Santa Monica (in front of the pier); (310) 395-7076.

Los Angeles County Arboretum & Botanic Garden.

More than 100 fan palms surround the Queen Anne cottage of 19th-century mogul Lucky Baldwin and the nearby lagoon (where TV's *Fantasy Island* was filmed). \$9; 301 N. Baldwin Ave., Arcadia, CA; arboretum.org.

CALIFORNIA FAN PALMS, INDIAN CANYONS, CA

PHOTOGRAPH BY
AMANDA MARSALIS

CANARY ISLAND DATE PALMS, BEVERLY HILLS

PHOTOGRAPH BY
MARTIN ADOLFSSON



CANARY ISLAND DATE PALM

(*Phoenix canariensis*)

BIO Native to the Canary Islands, they can grow to 60 feet tall and spread their canopies 30 feet across.

WHO LOVES 'EM Birds, which live in the canopies. Landscapers who've lavished them on Vegas pools, Beverly Hills streets, the east end of the new Bay Bridge, and San Francisco's Embarcadero.

BIGGEST THREAT A disease called fusarium wilt—spread by pruning tools—that's killed some street trees in San Francisco and L.A. Victims are replaced with fusarium-resistant types such as Chilean wine palms. Pruning practices have since changed for the better.

AMAZING FACT "The fibrous leaf bases hold moisture," says San Francisco palm broker Jason Dewees, "so little gardens take root in them. I've seen tiny coast live oak and ferns up there."

GO

The Huntington Library, Art Collections, and Botanical Gardens. Among the 100 species of palms on the 207-acre property is a stately survivor of the 1906 S.F. earthquake. From \$20; 1151 Oxford Rd., San Marino, CA; huntington.org.

CALIFORNIA FAN PALM

(*Washingtonia filifera*)

BIO The only palms native to the West, they cluster around springs and streams in rocky desert canyons from southwestern California to southeastern Arizona and northern Baja. They're shorter than Mexican fans—up to 60 feet tall—with fatter trunks.

WHO LOVES 'EM Hikers, painters, and photographers; the Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians, who once lived among these trees and still own Indian Canyons. Birds, which make their home in the palms' thatch "skirts."

AMAZING FACT Their trunks are so limber that some specimens have grown sideways as much as 20 feet before shooting skyward.

GO

Palm Canyon. A short drive from downtown Palm Springs, it's the biggest of the Indian Canyons, site of the world's largest natural California fan palm oasis. From a bluff with stunning views, a footpath leads down into the canyon, which has a seasonal stream, picnic tables, and trading post. Go early in the day to avoid crowds. \$9; end of S. Palm Canyon Dr.; indian-canyons.com.

DATE PALM

(*Phoenix dactylifera*)

BIO Brought to the Southwest from the Middle East in the late 1800s, date palms grow to 100 feet and thrive in desert heat. Ninety-five percent of the dates sold in the United States—55 million pounds last year—come from California's Coachella Valley.

WHO LOVES 'EM Growers. Palmeros, workers who climb them often, in spring to transfer pollen from male to flowering female trees, in summer to bag the fruit stalks, and in fall to harvest the dates. Chefs who prize the dates' honey-caramel flavors.

BIGGEST THREAT Developers; urban sprawl is pushing agriculture down the valley.

AMAZING FACT Female trees bear their first fruits at 7 to 10 years old and continue bearing for decades.

GO

Oasis Date Gardens. A 176-acre date ranch with a cafe and educational talks twice daily. 59111 Grapefruit Blvd., Thermal, CA; oasisdate.com.

Shields Date Garden. Tour the new date palm gardens; view a video about the sex life of the date; sip a date shake. 80225 State 111, Indio, CA; shieldsdategarden.com.

WorldMags.net



DATE PALMS,
COACHELLA VALLEY, CA

PHOTOGRAPH BY
BROWN CANNON III

WorldMags.net

COCONUT PALM

(*Cocos nucifera*)

BIO With their slender trunks and languidly drooping fronds, coconut palms are “the defining trees of tropic islands,” says David Lorence, botanist at the National Tropical Botanical Garden on Kauai, Hawaii. They thrive only in warm, humid climates, where they can grow 70 feet tall.

WHO LOVES ‘EM Native Hawaiians, who call them *niu*, meaning big. Tourists, who love their laid-back vibe. Producers, who find the Islands’ palm groves perfect sets for movies from *Blue Hawaii* to *Pirates of the Caribbean IV*.

AMAZING FACT “These palms bow in winds that would snap less agile trees,” says Donald Hodel. “In 1999, Hurricane Iniki destroyed the hotel Coco Palms in Kauai. But its coconut palm grove barely flinched.”

GO

Allerton Garden of the National Tropical Botanical Garden, Kauai. A scenic palm grove hugs a cove at the mouth of Lawai Valley. You can tour the historic estate, once a retreat of Hawaii’s Queen Emma. *Tours from \$35; 4425 Lawai Rd., Poipu; ntbg.org/tours.*

Kipuaīwa Coconut Grove, Molokai. One of the last remaining royal coconut groves, it was planted in the 1860s during the reign of King Kamehameha V. The best place to view the trees, given the danger of falling coconuts, is near the Kamehameha sign. *Off State 460 across from Church Row in Kalamaula; gobahawaii.com/molokai.*

A Place of Refuge (Pu‘uhonua O Hōnaunau National Historical Park), Big Island. The oceanfront park’s groves and carved wooden images offer a glimpse of Hawaii’s past. *\$5/vehicle; off State 11 south of Kailua-Kona; nps.gov/puho. 🌴*

By KATHLEEN N. BRENZEL





COCONUT PALMS,
WAIMEA BAY,
OAHU

PHOTOGRAPH BY
BROWN CANNON III



AMERICA'S NEXT TOP Noodle

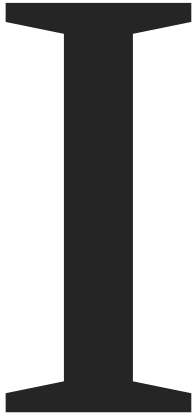
Ramen has had its share of glory. Now meet
udon—and the man who'll show you
how to make it a star in your kitchen.

A man with short dark hair, wearing a blue button-down shirt and a dark brown apron, is smiling at the camera. He is standing behind a wooden table covered with a light-colored cloth. On the table, there are several long, thin, pale yellow udon noodles. One hand is holding a bundle of them, while the other rests on the table. To the left of the man, there is a wooden box filled with more udon noodles, lined with a white cloth. The background is a kitchen with white wooden shelves. On the shelves, there are various items: a round woven basket, a metal strainer, a yellow sponge, and some other kitchen tools. A sink with a black faucet is visible behind the man. The overall atmosphere is warm and inviting.

*Sylvan Mishima
Brackett, making
udon noodles.
Opposite: Roast
duck udon.*

BY JESSICA BATTILANA

Photographs by Aya Brackett



t should be almost too hot to eat,” says Sylvan Mishima Brackett, setting a bowl of his homemade udon soup in front of me. The noodles lie coiled in a steaming, caramel-colored broth, topped with a soft-cooked egg and a mound of thinly sliced green onions.

Brackett brings the bowl to his mouth and slurps, his eyes watering from the heat. Following his lead, I slurp too: The wheat-flour noodles are silky and chewy, flavored by the smoky broth. It’s robust and hugely satisfying—comfort food at its best. “Here in the States, ramen has become a cult thing,” notes Brackett, “but in Japan, there are just as many people obsessed with udon.”

Brackett, the owner of Peko Peko, an Oakland-based catering company that specializes in Japanese food, developed his own passion for udon over a lifetime. Born in Kyoto to a Japanese mother and an American father, he grew up in an off-the-grid 17th-century-style Japanese home near Nevada City, California, that his dad, an architect, built by hand. His family ate what he calls “typical Japanese house food,” including udon, and spent many summers visiting relatives back in Japan.

Brackett loved to eat—so he learned to cook. For his senior project in high school, he launched a pop-up restaurant, serving his classmates everything from Japanese beef curry to pizza. After a post-college gig at Chez Panisse as Alice Waters’s assistant, he decided to start Peko Peko. “I wanted to cook something I had a native understanding of,” he explains.

But first, he wanted to study with the masters in Japan. At 29, “I was already too old to apprentice as a sushi maker or a *kaiseki* chef,” he says (the Japanese believe that both require a lifetime of training). So he learned to make udon noodles instead, during a six-month apprenticeship at a Tokyo countryside restaurant called Soba Ro. “The food at Soba Ro wasn’t fussy, but it was precisely done,” says Brackett. “I try to emulate that.”

In his Japanese-style home kitchen, which he constructed in an outbuilding behind his Oakland house, Brackett makes that precision look effortless. He mixes the dough—just flour, water, and salt—rapidly with his fingers in a giant metal bowl. Then he wraps a square of the dough in oilcloth and—here’s the fun part—kneads it by foot. He works the wrapped square with his stockinged feet until the dough within is smooth, uniform, and has, he says, “the texture of an earlobe.” In udon production facilities, the kneading has been mechanized, but in restaurants, this traditional method is still the norm. “It’s kind of like Pilates,” Brackett jokes.

After letting the dough rest overnight, Brackett rolls it out with a fat wooden dowel and cuts it into thick noodles. The kneading and resting give the noodles their signature texture: “Slippery but also chewy is the Japanese ideal,” says Brackett. In the world of Japanese noodles, udon is the most versatile. Ramen tends to have multiple toppings and ultra-rich broth; thin, delicate somen and buckwheat soba are usually presented simply. Udon can go both ways.

To show me just a fraction of what’s possible with udon, Brackett serves bowl after bowl of variations. We try a simple egg-and-scallion version first. A more elaborate bowl with slices of roasted duck and simmered mushrooms follows, and then a thick Japanese-style beef curry with dense chunks of kabocha squash. Our final bowl: a cold udon salad drizzled with sesame-miso dressing and topped with slivered vegetables, a bright antidote to this gray winter day.

Brackett plans to open a restaurant in San Francisco later this year, with udon on the menu. But he’s modest about his talents, swearing that even the home cook can master the art of udon. Using store-bought noodles, you can “make dishes that are at once traditional, exciting, and delicious,” he says. And for the truly obsessed: “You can make udon noodles from scratch that almost exactly replicate the best in Japan.”

Silky, chewy udon noodles in a bowl of steaming broth is comfort food at its best. Udon can be served hot or cold, simply or with lots of different toppings—and all are easy to make.



For Brackett’s from-scratch noodle-making method, go to sunset.com/bomemadeudon. For recipes, see page 74.



*Toppings
for Chilled
Udon Salad.*

*Udon with
Soft Egg and
Green Onion*





Chilled
Udon
Salad



A mix of
mushrooms
for the duck
udon.

UDON ESSENTIALS

You can find most of these ingredients in well-stocked grocery stores. A few, marked by asterisks, are sold only at Asian markets or online—but you can simply substitute the alternative ingredient listed in the recipe.

DRIED BONITO FLAKES (KATSUOBUSHI)

Dried smoked skipjack tuna (often called bonito), shaved into fluffy pink flakes and sold in cellophane packets. Buy bonito flakes that have a pinkish hue—they're fresher.

DRIED BABY SARDINES (IRIKO)*

These tiny silvery fish have a surprisingly clean, sweet taste.

DRIED SHIITAKE MUSHROOMS

Choose thick, firm caps for the most flavor.

JAPANESE GREEN ONIONS (NEGI)*

Like green onions (scallions) but up to 2 feet long and slightly drier.

JAPANESE WHITE SESAME PASTE (SHIRO NERI GOMA)*

Very smooth; from toasted sesame seeds.

KOMBU (DRIED EDIBLE KELP)

Look for uniformly shaped pieces lightly coated with a whitish powder, which is very flavorful and occurs naturally as the kelp dries.

MIRIN (SWEET RICE WINE)

Used for seasoning and glazing food. Look for true mirin without added sugar or corn syrup.

S&B'S CURRY POWDER

Made in Tokyo since 1923, curry has a warm sweetness from orange peel, nutmeg, and cloves. S&B Golden Curry Sauce Mix (actually a pressed block) is more widely available but includes thickeners. If you use it, don't add flour or cornstarch.

SEVEN-SPICE POWDER (SHICHIMI TOGARASHI)*

A blend of red chile, tangerine peel, sesame seeds, ginger, and other spices.

SOYBEAN PASTE (SHIRO MISO)

Also known as light or white miso; packaged in clear cellophane and stocked with the tofu, in the refrigerated section.

UDON (WHEAT-FLOUR NOODLES)

Store-bought fresh-frozen noodles have a supple texture that's closest to homemade, while the dried ones tend to be thin and flabby. To cook store-bought fresh-frozen udon, drop the frozen block into boiling water. When the water boils again, drain. Cook udon right before serving; the noodles get sticky as they sit.



Homemade
Udon

UDON BROTH (Iriko Dashi)

**MAKES 7 CUPS / 45 MINUTES, PLUS
OVERNIGHT TO STEEP**

The rich broth called *dashi* may be the most important ingredient in the Japanese kitchen, used daily for soups. This version calls for *iriko* (dried baby sardines), which give the stock a surprisingly mellow flavor, but if you can't find them, add another ounce of dried bonito flakes. Steeping the ingredients overnight brings out the sardines' savory taste—when boiled, they get bitter.

- 1½ oz. dried sardines (*iriko*)
- 2 dried shiitake mushrooms
- 3-in.-long piece kombu (dried edible kelp)
- 1½ oz. dried bonito flakes (*katsuobushi*)
- ⅓ cup mirin
- ¼ cup soy sauce

1. Break heads off sardines and remove the small black pellet of innards just beneath each head (they're dried, so this isn't

messy). Put cleaned sardines, mushrooms, kombu, and 8 cups water into a medium pot. Cover and chill overnight.

2. Set pot over medium-low heat and bring to a simmer. When small bubbles form along sides and bottom of pot, but before it actually begins to simmer, remove sardines, mushrooms, and kombu.
3. Increase heat to high and bring to a boil. Add bonito flakes, pressing down with a spoon to submerge, and return to a boil; then immediately turn off heat. Let flakes settle to bottom of pot, about 15 minutes.
4. Strain broth through a cheesecloth-lined strainer into a bowl. Wring out all liquid from cheesecloth into bowl. Rinse pot, pour in strained broth, and heat over medium-high heat. Add mirin and soy sauce; simmer 5 minutes.

MAKE AHEAD Up to 2 days, *chilled*.

PER CUP 47 Cal., 3% (1.4 Cal.) from fat; 3.5 g protein; 0.2 g fat (0 g sat.); 4.8 g carbo (0.1 g fiber); 600 mg sodium; 1.4 mg chol. LC

UDON WITH SOFT EGG AND GREEN ONION (Onsen Tamago Udon)

SERVES 4 / 40 MINUTES

This simple dish is a gateway to the world of udon. It has a complex flavor and a range of textures—chewy udon, crunchy green onions, and custardy egg.

- 4 large eggs, at room temperature
- ¾ lb. fresh or frozen udon noodles
- ¼ cup very thinly sliced Japanese green onions (*negi*) or regular green onions, white and pale green parts only
- 3 cups Udon Broth (recipe at left)
- ¼ tsp. seven-spice powder (*shichimi togarashi*) or cayenne

1. Try this method for custardlike eggs, based on a Japanese tradition of cooking them in an outdoor hot spring: Heat a large pot of water to 160°. Gently lower eggs into water and simmer 30 minutes,



keeping water temperature between 152° and 156° (add a tablespoon of ice water to control the heat's rise). Chill eggs in cold water, then carefully crack into a small, shallow dish. Or soft-cook eggs the way you like.

2. Boil udon (see "Udon Essentials," page 73). Using a large strainer, scoop out noodles into a large bowl and save water to heat soup bowls.
3. Meanwhile, put green onions in a bowl of cold water and vigorously swish around with your fingers to separate into rings. Drain; repeat twice.
4. Bring broth to a boil in a saucepan.
5. Warm 4 soup bowls by dipping them in hot udon-cooking water. Divide noodles among bowls. Scoop an egg into each, leaving behind most of white, and ladle broth over noodles. Top with green onions and a pinch of seven-spice powder.

MAKE AHEAD Eggs in shell, up to 2 days, chilled. Green onions, up to 1 day, chilled.

PER SERVING 207 Cal., 24% (50 Cal.) from fat; 11 g protein; 5.5 g fat (1.6 g sat.); 26 g carbo (1.2 g fiber); 616 mg sodium; 213 mg chol. LC

ROAST DUCK AND MUSHROOM UDON (Kamo Kinoko Udon)

SERVES 4 / ABOUT 1½ HOURS, PLUS OVERNIGHT TO MARINATE DUCK (1 HOUR FOR CHICKEN)

Pekin duck breasts are tender and small but can be hard to find; you can also use more widely available Muscovy duck breasts (double the cooking time) or boned chicken thighs instead.

- 1 lb. Pekin or Muscovy duck breast, or boned, skin-on chicken thighs
- 2 tbsp. each soy sauce, mirin, and sake
- 2 whole Japanese green onions (negi) or 12 regular green onions
- ¼ cup very thinly sliced Japanese or regular green onions (white and pale green parts)
- ¾ lb. fresh or frozen udon noodles
- 3½ cups Udon Broth (recipe on page 74)
- 7 oz. mixed wild and cultivated mushrooms, such as chanterelle, shiitake, and trumpet, tough stems trimmed off and mushrooms cut into bite-size pieces

1. Heat a medium frying pan (not nonstick) or cast-iron skillet over medium heat until very hot. Meanwhile, if cooking duck, score skin in a crosshatch pattern with a very sharp knife, being careful not to cut through the meat. (If cooking chicken, there's no need to score skin.) Pat duck or chicken dry and put in pan, skin side down. Immediately reduce heat to low.
2. Cook duck slowly, without turning, until most fat has rendered and skin is crisp, 7 to 10 minutes for Pekin (20 for Muscovy), reducing temperature if skin is getting too dark. Turn over and cook until medium-rare (cut to check), 4 to 5 minutes more (8 to 10 for Muscovy). Cook chicken until well browned, 7 to 8 minutes. Turn over, reduce heat to medium-low, and cook through, 7 to 8 minutes more.
3. Meanwhile, bring soy sauce, mirin, and sake to a boil in a small saucepan over medium-high heat and boil 2 minutes. Let cool. Put poultry in a resealable plastic bag, pour in soy sauce mixture, seal, and chill overnight (1 hour for chicken).
4. Preheat broiler for poultry and bring

a large pot of water to a boil for udon.

5. Meanwhile, prepare green onions: Cut whole onions into 12 (2-in.) lengths (white and pale green parts only). Heat a small (not nonstick) dry frying pan over medium heat. Cook green onions until charred on two sides, 3 to 4 minutes per side.
6. Put sliced green onions in a bowl of cold water and vigorously swish around with your fingers to separate into rings. Drain in a fine-mesh strainer. Repeat twice.
7. Boil udon (see “Udon Essentials,” page 73). Using a large strainer, scoop out noodles into a large bowl and save water to heat soup bowls.
8. Bring broth to a simmer in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat. Add mushrooms and simmer 2 minutes. Meanwhile, broil duck or chicken, skin side up, until skin begins to crisp, 2 to 4 minutes. Very thinly slice poultry crosswise (if using Muscovy breasts, halve lengthwise first to make small slices).
9. To serve, warm 4 soup bowls by dipping them into hot udon-cooking water. Divide noodles among bowls and top with duck slices. Arrange 3 charred green onions in each bowl and ladle broth over noodles. Top with sliced green onions.

MAKE AHEAD *Broth, up to 2 days, chilled. Green onions, up to 1 day, chilled.*

PER SERVING 359 Cal., 9.1% (33 Cal.) from fat; 39 g protein; 3.6 g fat (0.7 g sat.); 35 g carbo (3.1 g fiber); 1,202 mg sodium; 163 mg chol. LC

BEEF CURRY UDON

(*Kare Udon*)

MAKES 4 SERVINGS / ABOUT 1½ HOURS

Although it has some ingredients in common with Indian curry, Japanese curry is slightly sweet as well as spicy, with a thick, almost clingy sauce. Brackett adds kabocha squash, which can be eaten peel and all.

- 2 tbsp. vegetable oil
- 12 oz. beef chuck eye, cut into ½-in. cubes
- 1 large yellow onion, diced
- 1 Granny Smith apple, peeled, cored, and grated
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 2 tsp. minced fresh ginger
- ¼ cup sake

- 2 tbsp. mirin
- About ½ tsp. kosher salt
- 2 tbsp. S&B curry powder or a 3.5-oz. block of S&B Golden Curry Sauce Mix (medium or hot), chopped
- 1½ tsp. garam masala*
- 2 tsp. soy sauce
- 1 tbsp. dark brown sugar
- 4 cups chicken broth
- 1 large carrot, peeled and cut into ½-in. dice
- 1 large Yukon Gold potato, peeled and cut into ½-in. dice
- ¼ kabocha squash (about 8 oz.), seeded and cut into ½-in. dice, or ½ small butternut squash (8 oz.), seeded, peeled, and cut into ½-in. dice
- 1 lb. fresh or frozen udon noodles
- 1 tbsp. each cornstarch and flour

1. Heat a medium, heavy pot over medium-high heat 2 minutes. Swirl in oil to coat bottom. Add beef in a single layer, working in 2 batches if necessary, and brown well all over, about 10 minutes.
2. Reduce heat to medium-low. Add onion and apple and cook, stirring often, until onion is very soft and golden brown, 15 to 20 minutes. Add garlic, ginger, sake, mirin, and ½ tsp. salt and cook, stirring, until liquid is almost evaporated, 3 to 5 minutes.
3. Add curry powder or chopped block curry, garam masala, soy sauce, brown sugar, and chicken broth and simmer, uncovered and stirring occasionally, until beef is tender, about 30 minutes. Add carrot, potato, and squash and cook until vegetables are tender, about 20 minutes. Season with salt to taste.
4. Meanwhile, boil udon (see “Udon Essentials,” page 73). Using a large strainer, scoop out noodles into a large bowl and save water to heat soup bowls.
5. Mix cornstarch, flour, and 2 tbsp. water in a small bowl until smooth. (Omit this step if you are using chopped block curry.) Set a fine-mesh metal strainer in pot of curry and slowly pour in cornstarch mixture, stirring within the strainer (this will prevent lumps). Remove strainer and continue simmering, stirring often, until curry thickens, about 5 minutes.
6. To serve, warm 4 soup bowls by dipping

them into hot udon-cooking water. Divide noodles among bowls and top with curry.

**Find garam masala, an Indian spice blend, in the spice aisle of well-stocked grocery stores and at Indian markets.*

MAKE AHEAD *Curry, up to 4 days, chilled.*

PER SERVING 494 Cal., 22% (110 Cal.) from fat; 23 g protein; 13 g fat (1.9 g sat.); 67 g carbo (6.4 g fiber); 1,481 mg sodium; 47 mg chol. LC

CHILLED UDON SALAD

(*Hiyashi Chuka Udon*)

SERVES 4 / 1 HOUR

Typically made with ramen noodles, this salad is also delicious with udon. Use leftover dressing on ordinary salad greens.

- ¼ lb. haricots verts or green beans, trimmed and cut into 2-in. lengths
- 3 eggs
- 2 tsp. sugar
- 1 tsp. cornstarch
- ¼ tsp. salt
- Vegetable oil
- ¼ cup Strong Bonito Stock (recipe at right)
- ¼ cup Japanese white sesame paste (*shiro neri goma*) or ¼ cup toasted sesame seeds, ground to a sandy paste in a clean coffee grinder
- 1 tbsp. toasted, ground sesame seeds
- 1½ tsp. shiro miso
- ⅓ cup soy sauce
- 6 tbsp. rice vinegar
- 1½ tsp. toasted sesame oil
- 1 tsp. sugar
- ¾ lb. fresh or frozen udon noodles
- ½ small red bell pepper, cut into very thin matchsticks
- ½ seeded Japanese or English cucumber, cut into very thin matchsticks (about 2 in. long)
- 1 large carrot, peeled and cut into very thin matchsticks (about 2 in. long)
- 4 tbsp. pickled red ginger, homemade (recipe at right) or store-bought

1. Blanch haricots verts in boiling water 2 minutes; drain and rinse with cool water.
2. Mix eggs, sugar, cornstarch, and salt in a bowl with chopsticks or a fork. Strain through a fine-mesh strainer.

- Heat an 8-in. nonstick skillet over medium heat. When hot, very lightly oil with an oiled paper towel (if you have too much oil, the egg will not form a pancake). Pour 1 tbsp. egg mixture into pan, swirling it around the bottom to form a thin, even omelet with no browning (lower heat if it starts to brown). Cook 1 minute, until surface of omelet is dry; no need to flip. Carefully lift out onto a plate, trying to avoid folds and wrinkles. Repeat with remaining egg mixture, layering each onto the one below, until you've made 10 omelets. Roll omelets and slice into 1/8-in.-thick ribbons of egg.
- Whisk broth, sesame paste, ground sesame seeds, miso, soy sauce, rice vinegar, sesame oil, and sugar together in a bowl.
- Boil udon (see "Udon Essentials," page 73). Rinse well in a large bowl of ice water.
- Arrange udon on a platter. Top with alternating piles of haricots verts, bell pepper, cucumber, carrot, and egg ribbons, with pickled ginger in center. Serve with a pitcher of dressing on the side, or pour the dressing over the salad.

MAKE AHEAD Broth, up to 2 hours at room temperature. Vegetables and egg, up to 1 day, chilled.

PER SERVING WITH 3 TBSP. DRESSING 367 Cal., 30% (109 Cal.) from fat; 16 g protein; 12 g fat (1.7 g sat.); 49 g carbo (6.9 g fiber); 1,684 mg sodium; 159 mg chol. LC

STRONG BONITO STOCK (Katsubushi Dashi)

MAKES ABOUT 1 CUP / 45 MINUTES

Made with dried smoked bonito (skipjack) tuna, this makes a flavorful main ingredient in salad dressing.

2-in.-long piece kombu (dried edible kelp)
1 oz. bonito flakes (katsubushi)

- Put kombu and 2 cups water in a small pan. Bring to a simmer over medium-low heat, about 20 minutes. Just before water begins to bubble, discard kombu.
- Increase heat to high and bring to a boil. Add bonito flakes, pressing with a spoon to submerge, and immediately shut off heat. Let flakes settle to bottom of pot, about 15 minutes.

- Strain through a cheesecloth-lined strainer into a bowl. Wring out all liquid from cheesecloth into bowl.

MAKE AHEAD Up to 2 hours at room temperature.

PER CUP 45 Cal., 4.2% (1.9 Cal.) from fat; 5.2 g protein; 0.2 g fat (0.2 g sat.); 4.5 g carbo (3.3 g fiber); 412 mg sodium; 4.7 mg chol. GF/LC/LS

PICKLED GINGER (Beni Shōga)

MAKES ABOUT 3/4 CUP / 25 MINUTES, PLUS OVERNIGHT TO STEEP

Pickled ginger is easy to make and tastes fresher than store-bought. Brackett prefers young ginger because it's juicier and less fibrous (a very thin skin makes it easy to identify). Regular ginger is fine too.

1 small red beet
4 oz. fresh ginger, peeled and cut into very thin 1-in.-long matchsticks
1/4 cup rice vinegar
1 tbsp. kosher salt

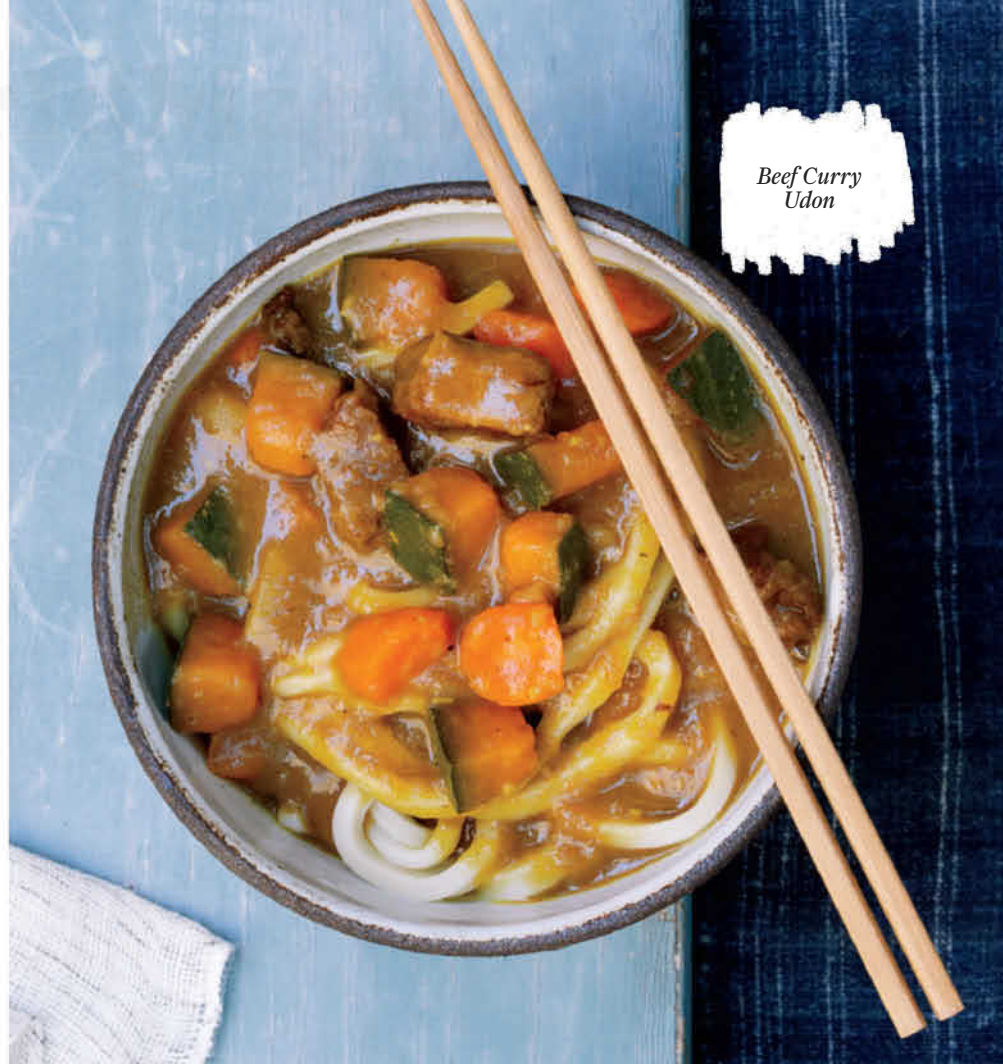
- Put beet in a small saucepan with water to cover by 1 in. Bring to a boil, then simmer until tender when pierced with the tip of a small knife, about 25 minutes. Drain. When cool enough to handle, peel and cut into quarters.
- Meanwhile, put ginger in a medium saucepan with water to cover by 2 in. Bring to boil. Drain and repeat process once or twice more, depending on the spiciness of the ginger. It should have a strong taste but not be too spicy.
- Combine rice vinegar and salt with 1 cup water in a small bowl, stirring to dissolve salt. Add ginger and beet, cover, and chill overnight.

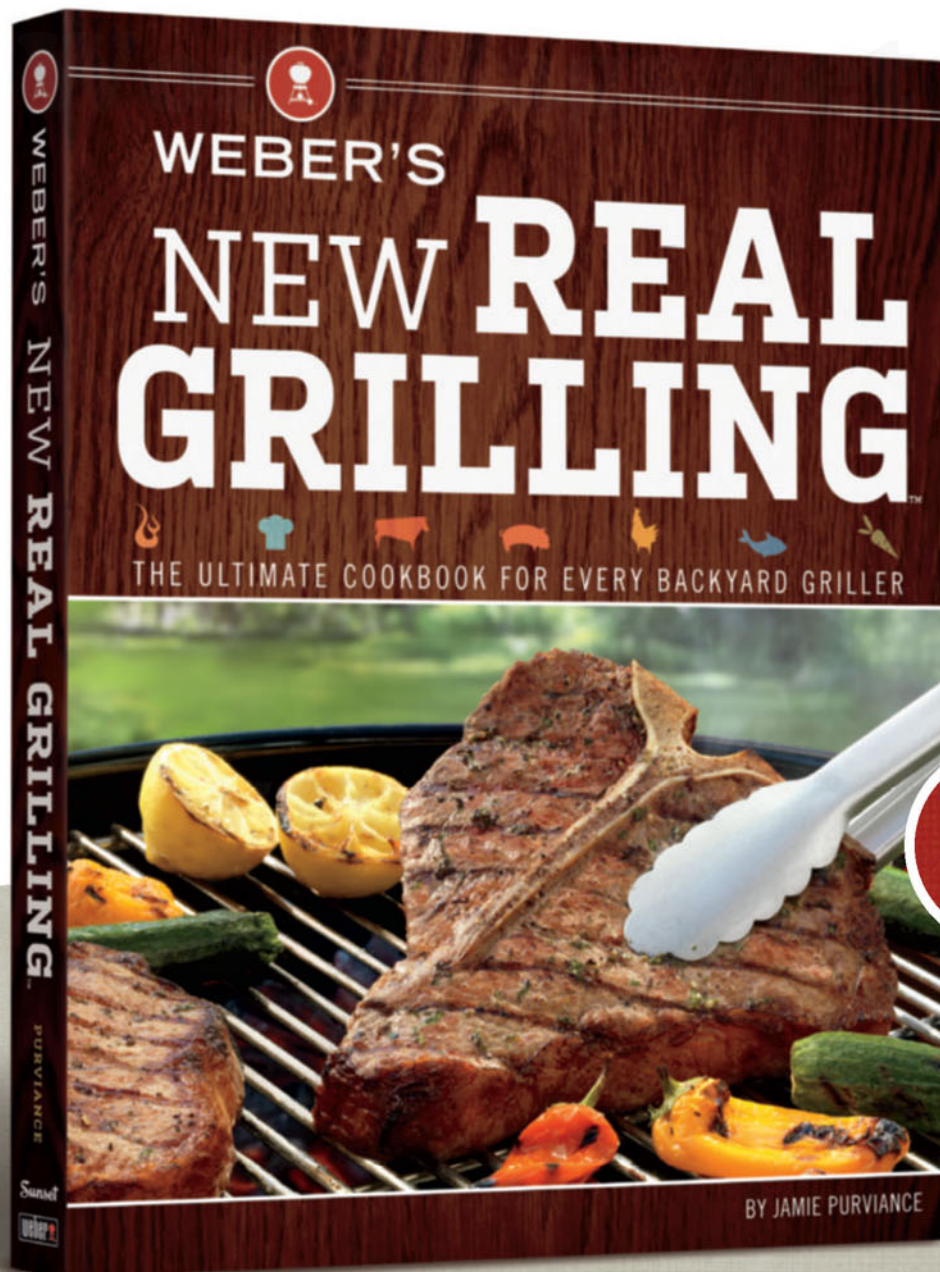
MAKE AHEAD Up to 2 weeks, chilled. ▲

PER TBSP. 11 Cal., 7% (0.7 Cal.) from fat; 0.3 g protein; 0.1 g fat (0 g sat.); 2.3 g carbo (0.4 g fiber); 387 mg sodium; 0 mg chol. GF/LC/VG



Other great Japanese recipes:
sunset.com/japaneserecipes.





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Get ready to get inspired! *New York Times* best-selling author Jamie Purviance takes you on an exploration of food and flavor with 200+ all-new recipes, retro grilling recipes, and how-tos on stir-frying, smoking, using a pizza stone, and more. Take your grill skills to a new level and ignite your fire all over again with *Weber's New Real Grilling*™—the ultimate grill-side companion. **See more at newrealgrilling.com**

Oxmoor
House

Sunset



Bold & bright
KUMQUAT MINT SALAD
p. 80

PEAK
SEASON

FLAVOR BURST

*Wake up your winter cooking with
tart-sweet kumquats.*

KUMQUAT MINT SALAD with JASMINE DRESSING

SERVES 4 / 35 MINUTES

This salad may be simple—note the very short ingredient list—but is full of exotic, refreshing flavor.

- 2 bags jasmine tea
- 5 oz. kumquats (about 15)
- 1 tbsp. canola oil
- ½ tsp. kosher salt
- ¼ tsp. pepper
- 1½ qts. butter lettuce torn into large pieces
- ½ cup small whole mint leaves, or torn larger leaves
- ⅓ cup toasted slivered almonds

1. Heat $\frac{2}{3}$ cup water in a small saucepan over high heat until small bubbles form. Add tea and remove from heat. Steep 3 minutes and stir. Strain tea and let cool; discard tea bags.
2. Meanwhile, seed and thinly slice kumquats (see “How to Seed Kumquats,” below). Finely chop one-third of them; set aside remaining sliced fruit.
3. In a small bowl, make dressing: Combine chopped kumquats, jasmine tea, oil, salt, and pepper.
4. Put lettuce, mint, sliced kumquats, and almonds in a salad bowl. Add dressing and toss gently to coat.

PER 2-CUP SERVING 121 Cal., 62% (75 Cal.) from fat; 3.8 g protein; 8.4 g fat (0.7 g sat.); 10 g carbo (4.6 g fiber); 199 mg sodium; 0 mg chol. GF/LC/LS/VG

HOW TO SEED KUMQUATS

Either slice each kumquat crosswise about a third of the way into the fruit or

quarter the fruit lengthwise; then remove seeds with a knife tip.

PEAK SEASON

 More delicious ways to cook with fresh winter citrus: sunset.com/citrus.

Recipes by ELAINE JOHNSON

Worldkings.net



LENTIL and KUMQUAT SOUP

SERVES 5 OR 6 (MAKES 2 QTS.) / 1 HOUR

This soup has two layers of kumquats—cooked in the soup to become mellow and tender, and finely chopped with parsley for a bright topping.

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup (4 oz.) chopped pancetta or bacon
1 tbsp. olive oil
1 large onion, finely chopped
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup each diced carrots and celery
1½ tbsp. chopped fresh thyme leaves
1½ cups French green*, black beluga, or regular lentils, sorted from debris and rinsed

About 6 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth
 $\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. pepper
8 oz. kumquats (about 24)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. kosher salt, divided
9 tbsp. chopped flat-leaf parsley, divided

1. Sauté pancetta in oil in a medium pot over medium-high heat until browned, 4 to 5 minutes. Discard all but 2 tbsp. fat. Add onion, carrots, celery, and thyme; cook, stirring often, until vegetables start to brown, 8 to 10 minutes.
2. Add lentils, 6 cups broth, and the pepper to pot. Cover and bring to a boil, then reduce heat and simmer until lentils are almost tender, 25 to 30 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, quarter kumquats and seed (see page 80). Finely chop $\frac{3}{4}$ cup. Thinly slice remaining kumquats crosswise.
4. Stir sliced kumquats into soup and add $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. salt. Simmer until lentils are tender, about 5 more minutes. Stir in 3 tbsp. parsley and a little more broth if you like.
5. In a small bowl, combine chopped kumquats and remaining 6 tbsp. parsley and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. salt; spoon onto bowls of soup.

**French green lentils (also called Du Puy lentils) and black beluga lentils hold their shape after cooking. Find them at well-stocked grocery stores and purcellmountainfarms.com.*

PER 1½-CUP SERVING 382 Cal., 28% (108 Cal.) from fat; 25 g protein; 12 g fat (3.3 g sat.); 45 g carbo (21 g fiber); 715 mg sodium, 47 mg chol. GF/LC

HAZELNUT MERINGUES with KUMQUAT CONSERVA

SERVES 6

2¼ HOURS, PLUS 1 HOUR TO COOL

From Jenn Louis, chef at Portland's Lincoln and Sunshine Tavern restaurants, these nut meringues topped with marmalade-like *conserva* and crème fraîche are irresistible (the dessert's Italian name, *brutti ma buoni*, means "ugly but good"). For crisp meringues, bake them on a dry day.

2 large egg whites, at room temperature

⅔ cup sugar

1¼ tsp. vanilla extract, divided

¼ tsp. cinnamon

1¼ cups roasted hazelnuts, skins rubbed off; coarsely chop 1 cup

1 cup each whipping cream and crème fraîche

Kumquat Conserva (recipe follows)

1. Preheat oven to 300°. Beat egg whites with a mixer on high speed until frothy. Beat in sugar, adding 1 tbsp. every 20 to 30 seconds, until meringue holds firm peaks when beaters are lifted. Beat in ¾ tsp. vanilla extract and the cinnamon. Fold in all the nuts. Scoop meringue into 6 mounds on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper.

2. Bake meringues 30 minutes. Reduce oven to 200° and bake until meringues are firm and crisp, 1¼ hours more. Turn off oven; let meringues sit at least 1 hour or overnight.

3. Beat cream with remaining ½ tsp. vanilla extract in a bowl until thick. Fold in crème fraîche and spoon into 6 shallow bowls. Set a meringue on each and spoon conserva on top.

MAKE AHEAD For meringues, up to 5 days, stored airtight at room temperature.

KUMQUAT CONSERVA

MAKES 2¼ CUPS

1 vanilla bean

1½ cups sugar

1 lb. kumquats,

seeded (see

"How to Seed

Kumquats," page

80) and sliced

crosswise ⅛ in.

thick (3 cups)

1. Split vanilla bean lengthwise; scrape out seeds with a knife tip. Put pod and seeds in a medium saucepan. Add sugar and 1½ cups water and bring to a boil; reduce heat and simmer 5 minutes.
2. Stir in kumquats, return to a simmer, and cook until skins are translucent, about 15 minutes.
3. Strain kumquats over a bowl. Return syrup to pan with vanilla pod and boil until reduced to 1¼ cups, 10 to 12 minutes. Stir in kumquats and let the conserva cool.

MAKE AHEAD Up to 2 weeks, chilled; or see page 92. ▲



PER SERVING WITH ⅓ CUP CONSERVA 791 Cal., 48% (405 Cal.) from fat; 8.4 g protein; 45 g fat (20 g sat.); 94 g carbo (7.3 g fiber); 42 mg sodium; 89 mg chol. GF/LS/V

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DIY SHRUBS

These intensely flavorful drinking vinegars are great in cocktails—and that's just for starters. *By Elaine Johnson*

AS A FORMER fashion designer, cooking teacher Mary Karlin keeps an eye on trends. So when she saw shrubs—a sweet-tart infusion of vinegar and fruit—appearing on cocktail menus, she was intrigued. Soon, her counters were covered with jars of homemade shrubs, and eventually, her experiments blossomed into a topic for her latest cookbook, *Mastering Fermentation* (Ten Speed Press, 2013; \$30).

“I love shrubs’ vibrancy and versatility,” says Karlin, a founding staff member of Ramekins Culinary School in Sonoma, California. “They reflect all the seasonal brightness of the fruit, herbs, and vinegar in each combination.” And their applications go far beyond mixology. At her home kitchen in Petaluma, Karlin showed us her basic shrub-making method and then used the zingy results in a spritzer, seafood glaze, salad dressing—and a fine cocktail.

MASTER CLASS



Mary Karlin in her kitchen in Petaluma, CA, with a cocktail made from her homemade shrub (page 86).



PINEAPPLE
GINGER MINT
SHRUB

Building blocks of shrubs



“Once you’ve got the basics of making a shrub,” says Karlin, “look at cocktail menus to riff on the formula with different fruit-vinegar combos.”

FRUIT Start with any seasonal fruit—strawberries in spring, say. “You want something ripe that can give off juice,” Karlin says.

RAW VINEGAR An unpasteurized vinegar that still has its “mother,” or starter, is the key for fermenting. Karlin uses store-bought raw cider vinegar (for big flavor) or

coconut vinegar (which is more subtle).

FLAVORINGS Add ginger, fresh mint or basil, or even savory herbs or hot chiles for complexity.

SUGAR This provides the sweet to go with the sour of the vinegar and creates a syrupy texture.

CLEAN EQUIPMENT To keep any undesirable bacteria from ruining your shrub, sanitize your workspace with 1 tbsp. bleach dissolved in 2 qts. water. Wash jars and cooking tools in hot soapy water, then rinse in bleach solution followed by tap water; air-dry on a cooling rack set over a baking sheet.

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PINEAPPLE GINGER MINT SHRUB

MAKES 1 QT. / 20 MINUTES, PLUS 15 DAYS TO FERMENT AND MELLOW

Once you create this tropical-flavored shrub, you will be able to use it for months in the recipes that follow. You'll need a widemouthed 1-qt. canning jar and a piece of cheesecloth.

- 1 cup thinly sliced fresh ginger with peel scraped off (use a spoon)
- 1 cup packed fresh mint leaves, plus a sprig
- 2 cups fresh pineapple chunks (½ by 1 in.)
- About 1¾ cups raw (unpasteurized), unfiltered apple cider vinegar*, such as Bragg, or raw coconut vinegar, such as Coconut Secret
- 1 cup freshly squeezed lime juice (7 or 8 limes)
- 1 cup raw, unrefined cane sugar*

1. Put ginger and mint leaves in a clean widemouthed 1-qt. canning jar. Bruise them with a wooden potato masher or pestle (if you have one; or use a wooden spoon) until very fragrant (A). Add pineapple and enough vinegar to cover (B). Close jar tightly and shake vigorously for 10 seconds. **"This gently macerates the fruit, releasing the flavors into the**

vinegar," says Karlin. Push pineapple, mint, and ginger down so they're completely covered by vinegar and it can draw out their flavor. (It's also important to keep the fruit completely submerged to prevent undesirable bacteria or mold from growing on it.)

2. Replace lid with a piece of cheesecloth (so air can get in and help start fermentation) and securely attach with a rubber band or the jar ring. Leave at room temperature about 12 hours.
3. Discard cheesecloth. Replace lid and ring, secure tightly, and repeat the shaking daily for 3 days, keeping at room temperature. **"I usually stick a Post-it on the jar that allows me to keep track of where I am in the process,"** says Karlin.
4. Pour mixture into a wide strainer set over a bowl. Discard mint, then return solids and liquid to jar (C). Shake well each day for 4 more days at room temperature. **"There's not much of a visual indicator, but it will be done after 7 days total,"** Karlin assures.
5. Strain out solids over a bowl and set aside for salsa (recipe on opposite page), or another use. Return liquid to jar, using a funnel. Add lime juice and sugar (D), cover, and shake until dissolved, about 2 minutes. Add the mint sprig.
6. Chill 7 days for flavors to meld, giving the bottle a good shake every day to be

sure sugar is dissolved. Discard mint. Use, or chill up to 4 months (shake before using). The shrub will get more syrupy with time.

**Find raw, unfiltered cider vinegar at many grocery stores and natural-foods stores, and raw coconut vinegar at natural-foods stores (see a store locator at coconutsecret.com). Karlin likes Trader Joe's raw organic evaporated cane juice sugar.*

MAKE AHEAD Up to 4 months, chilled.

VARIATION

Grapefruit Shrub

Follow directions for Pineapple Ginger Mint Shrub, but omit ginger and mint, and don't bruise fruit. Instead of pineapple, use supremes* from 3 large red grapefruit. Use coconut vinegar (about 1⅓ cups). In step 5, use 1 cup freshly squeezed red grapefruit juice instead of lime juice.

**To make supremes, cut off outer peel and membrane of fruit, then cut between inner membranes to free segments.*

TIP

"For a bright color in the shrub, use a raw sugar that's on the light side."



A



B



C



D



"You can swap in rum for vodka, or leave out the alcohol for a mocktail."

TIP

COCKTAIL

Island Breeze

With a shrub as the foundation for this drink (shown above), "you've got the sweet and the tart covered," says Karlin. "It doesn't take much more to create a cocktail."

SERVES 1 / 5 MINUTES In a cocktail shaker, shake 2 tbsp. **Pineapple Ginger Mint Shrub**, 3 tbsp. **vodka**, and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. **grenadine** with ice. Strain into a chilled rocks glass, top with 6 tbsp. **tonic water** (Karlin likes Q tonic), and garnish with a **mint sprig**.

SPRITZER

Shrub Fizzy

Five parts mixer to 1 part shrub is a good place to start for this spritely drink (inset above), but feel free to play with the ratio so the flavor is milder or more bracing.

SERVES 1 / 5 MINUTES Pour $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cold **Pineapple Ginger Mint Shrub** or **Grapefruit Shrub** into a tall glass. Top up with $1\frac{1}{4}$ cups cold **sparkling water** and stir. Taste and adjust proportions if you like. Garnish with a **pineapple spear** or red grapefruit wedge.



More ways with shrubs

PINEAPPLE SHRUB GLAZE

Karlin marinates shell-on shrimp with a generous splash of the shrub for 20 minutes.

She drains and cooks them in a lightly oiled cast-iron skillet, brushing them with this glaze, and serves extra on the side.

MAKES $\frac{1}{2}$ CUP / 15 MINUTES In a small frying pan, cook 1 cup **Pineapple Ginger Mint Shrub** (preferably made with coconut vinegar) and $\frac{1}{8}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. **red chile flakes** at a low boil, swirling often, until reduced to $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{1}{4}$ cup, 12 to 15 minutes. Sauce thickens as it cools.

PINEAPPLE SHRUB VINAIGRETTE

The shrub's flavors add complexity to this easy dressing. Karlin likes it over a salad of romaine, radicchio, red onion, avocado, feta, and toasted pumpkin seeds.

MAKES 1 CUP / 10 MINUTES In a small bowl, whisk together $\frac{1}{3}$ cup **Pineapple Ginger Mint Shrub** and 3 tbsp. **lime juice**. Stir in 2 tbsp. minced **shallot**.

Vigorously whisk in $\frac{1}{2}$ cup **fruity extra-virgin olive oil** in a stream.

Whisk in $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. **kosher salt** and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. **pepper**. Taste with a piece of lettuce; add more lime juice, salt, and pepper as needed. *Make ahead:*

Up to 1 week, chilled.

PINEAPPLE SALSA

Karlin turns the strained fruit into a tart salsa that's especially good over seared pork chops.

MAKES $1\frac{1}{2}$ CUPS / 45 MINUTES In a medium bowl, combine 2 tbsp. *each* **honey** and **lime juice**. Stir in 2 tbsp. diced, seeded **jalepeño chile**, 1 cup drained **pineapple chunks** (from step 5 of Pineapple Ginger Mint Shrub; discard ginger), $\frac{1}{4}$ cup *each* diced **red onion** and **red bell pepper**, 1 tsp. grated **fresh ginger**, $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. **whole coriander seeds**, and $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp. **fine sea salt**. Let sit 20 minutes. Adjust salt to taste. Just before serving, stir in 2 tbsp. roughly torn **fresh mint leaves**. ▲

FAST & FRESH

WEEKNIGHT COOKING

Recipes in 30 minutes or less



COFFEE and ANCHO CHILE SKIRT STEAK with GREEN CHILE-APPLE RELISH

SERVES 4 TO 6 / 30 MINUTES

It's an unusual combination, but when coffee and chile mingle with meat, the flavor is extraordinary. The relish adds an exclamation point.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 tbsp. each finely ground coffee and ancho chile powder* | ½ tart apple, such as Granny Smith, quartered and cored |
| About 2 tsp. kosher salt | ½ small onion, cut into thick slices |
| 1½ tsp. packed light or dark brown sugar | 1 tbsp. vegetable oil |
| 1 skirt steak (1½ to 2 lbs.) | Pepper |
| ¼ lb. mild green chiles, such as Anaheim or poblano, cut in half and seeded | ½ tsp. each chopped fresh oregano leaves and lime juice |

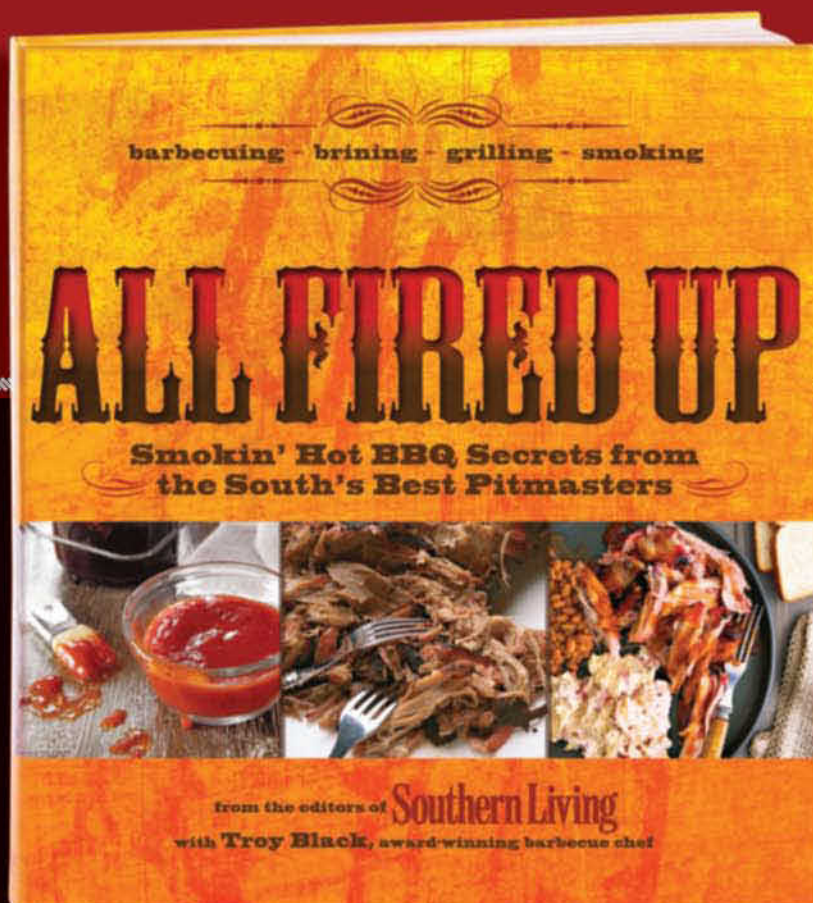
1. Heat a grill to medium-high (350° to 450°). In a small bowl, combine coffee, chile powder, 2 tsp. salt, and the brown sugar. Rub all over steak and let sit. Rub green chiles, apple, and onion with oil and season to taste with salt and pepper.
2. Grill steak, turning once (dry rub on meat will be very dark), 8 to 10 minutes total for medium-rare. Meanwhile, grill chiles, apple, and onion until lightly charred all over, 6 to 8 minutes.
3. Transfer everything to a cutting board, tent steak with foil, and let rest 5 minutes. Meanwhile, chop chiles, apple, and onion and transfer to a medium bowl. Stir in oregano and lime juice and season to taste with salt and pepper.
4. Thinly slice steak against the grain and top with chile-apple relish.

*Find ancho chile powder at well-stocked grocery stores.

PER SERVING 216 Cal., 49% (107 Cal.) from fat; 21 g protein; 12 g fat (4 g sat.); 3.4 g carbo (0.4 g fiber); 571 mg sodium; 48 mg chol. GF/LC

RELISH REDUX
Chop relish fine and
put in a grilled
cheese sandwich.

PITMASTER SECRETS REVEALED



In the South, barbecue is king and every Southerner looks forward to the “firing-up” season. This all-new book from *Southern Living*, filled with expert techniques and know-how enables every grill cook to barbecue like an award-winning pit master in his own backyard.

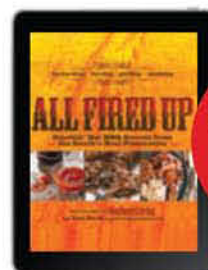
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SWEET POTATO and CHORIZO TACOS

SERVES 4 / 30 MINUTES

We never stop experimenting with tacos, and this sweet and savory version is our new favorite. To give the tortillas a smoky edge, char them over a gas burner, under the broiler, or on the grill.

- 1 small white onion
- 1 medium orange-fleshed sweet potato (often labeled "yam")
- 1 tbsp. canola oil
- ½ tsp. kosher salt
- 1 lb. Mexican chorizo*, such as Silva brand, removed from casing
- 12 corn tortillas (6-in. diameter)
- 6 romaine lettuce leaves
- 1 lime, halved
- 2 oz. *cotija* (crumbly white Mexican cheese)* or feta
- 2 firm-ripe avocados

1. Peel onion and sweet potato and dice into ½-in. cubes. Heat oil in a large pan over medium heat. Add onion, potato, and salt and cook until onion begins to soften, about 2 minutes. Reduce heat to medium-low, cover, and cook, stirring occasionally, until potato is just tender, 8 to 9 minutes.
2. Increase heat to medium-high and add chorizo. Cook, breaking up sausage with the back of a spoon, until cooked through, 7 to 8 minutes.
3. Meanwhile, heat tortillas in an oven or a microwave, or char over an open flame until warmed and softened. Wrap in foil or a clean kitchen towel to keep warm.
4. Stack and thinly slice lettuce; combine in a bowl with juice of a lime half and *cotija*. Halve, peel, pit, and thinly slice avocados; put in another bowl and toss with juice from remaining lime half.
5. Spoon about 3 tbsp. chorizo-sweet potato mixture into each warm tortilla. Divide lettuce and avocado among tacos.

*Find Mexican chorizo and *cotija* at well-stocked grocery stores and Latino markets. Avoid the very soft, bright orange chorizo—it's too oily.

PER SERVING 1,006 Cal., 61% (615 Cal.) from fat; 37 g protein; 68 g fat (21 g sat.); 63 g carbo (11 g fiber); 1,961 mg sodium; 115 mg chol. GF

GO VEGETARIAN
Swap mashed
cooked black beans
for chorizo.



OPEN-FACE CHICKEN SANDWICHES with CELERY ROOT SALAD

SERVES 4 / 25 MINUTES

Knobbly celery root (also called celeriac) looks a little wild, but it has a mild, woodsy taste. Here we've used it to make the classic French salad *céleri rémoulade*, but given it an unexpected role as a topping for chicken sandwiches.

- 1 lb. celery root, peeled*
- 1/3 cup mayonnaise
- 1/4 cup crème fraîche
- 2 tbsp. Champagne vinegar
- 1 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 1 small shallot, thinly sliced
- About 2 tbsp. coarsely chopped chives
- 1 tsp. kosher salt, divided
- 3/4 tsp. pepper, divided
- 2 boned, skinned chicken breast halves (about 10 oz. each)
- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 4 slices sourdough bread, toasted

1. Coarsely shred celery root in a food processor fitted with the shredding attachment. Transfer to a medium bowl. Add mayonnaise, crème fraîche, vinegar, mustard, shallot, and 2 tbsp. chives and mix well. Season to taste with 1/2 tsp. salt and 1/4 tsp. pepper. Set aside while you cook the chicken.
2. Slice each chicken breast in half horizontally to make 4 thin chicken

scaloppine. Season chicken with remaining 1/2 tsp. each salt and pepper.

3. Set a large (not nonstick) frying pan over medium-high heat; when hot, add oil. Cook chicken until browned, 2 1/2 to 3 minutes. Turn and cook until fully cooked through, 2 to 3 minutes.
4. Top toasts with chicken and spoon on celery root salad. Slice each toast in half and sprinkle salad with more chives if you like.

**To prep celery root, cut off the ends, then set the root flat. Following the curve, cut off all the peel. If you're not going to use it soon, set the trimmed root in a bowl of water with a couple of tablespoons of lemon juice added to prevent it from turning brown.* 🍴

PER SANDWICH 582 Cal., 36% (212 Cal.) from fat; 39 g protein; 24 g fat (6.8 g sat.); 53 g carbo (3.7 g fiber); 1,146 mg sodium; 96 mg chol.



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In the SUNSET KITCHEN

VALENTINE'S DAY JOY

Love at first bite

OVER-THE-TOP CHOCOLATES

As if Charles Chocolates' heart-shaped truffles and salted caramels weren't gift enough, they're enclosed in a dark-chocolate box with a white-chocolate lid (right). Made in San Francisco. \$65/17-oz. box; charleschocolates.com.

TOP-NOTCH TOFFEE

Just five ingredients go into Toffee Talk's crisp, buttery hunks, studded with toasted nuts and capped with semi-sweet chocolate. Made in San Rafael, California. \$20/1/2-lb. box; choice of almond, pecan, red walnut, or peanut; cjsstoffeeatalk.com.

PASSION FRUIT CURD

What better Valentine's Day breakfast than this sweet-tart curd on warm biscuits? It's made by Monkeypod Jam of Kauai, Hawaii, using liliko'i (aka passion fruit) from local farmers. \$10/7.1-oz. jar; monkeypodjam.com.

 **Blip this page** (see page 4 for instructions) to shop for items online.



After a happy week of taste-testing in the Food department, we came up with this short list of sweets—all made in the West and all utterly swoon-worthy.



OBSESSION CONSERVA, FOR KEEPS

We got hooked on the marmalade-like kumquat conserva on page 82, but its shelf life is short. So we figured out how to preserve it—and enjoy it up to a year. We spread conserva over ricotta cheese on toasted challah, or spoon it into a bowl of oatmeal. **PRESERVE IT:** Ladle the conserva into 4-oz. canning jars, filling them to 1/4 in. from top. Attach lids and process in a boiling water bath 5 minutes.

SHOPPING SMARTS

Know your noodles

If our feature on udon ("America's Next Top Noodle," page 68) got you wondering how it stacks up against other Japanese noodles, here's a cheat sheet. To find a variety of noodle recipes, go to sunset.com.



SOBA Often made of pure buckwheat flour (thus gluten-free), these thin noodles have a nutty aroma and a pleasant chewiness. Eat cold or hot, with *dashi* (Japanese soup broth; recipes, pages 74 and 76) and minimal toppings.



RAMEN The cult noodle these days, ramen is made of wheat and often alkaline mineral water, giving the noodles a firm texture and yellow hue. Serve in rich, rib-sticking broth with lots of toppings.



SOMEN These ultra-thin wheat noodles are popular in Japan in summer, when restaurants send somen floating past tables in a chute of icy water, to be plucked out with chopsticks. Serve cold, with *dashi*, ginger, and green onion.



TIPS FROM
OUR TEAM

from
PRITI GOGTE
Schaumburg,
IL

WINNING READER RECIPE

INDIAN BAKLAVA

Greece meets India in this filo pastry, fragrant with warm spices and a hint of rose. We only marvel that it hasn't been invented before.

MAKES 35 PIECES / 3¼ HOURS, PLUS AT LEAST 3 HOURS TO ABSORB SYRUP

⅛ tsp. saffron threads*
1½ cups sugar
4½ tsp. rose water*
½ cup each raw walnuts and raw almonds
1 tsp. cardamom
½ tsp. nutmeg
1 pkg. (1 lb.) frozen filo, thawed
1 cup ghee* (toasted clarified butter)
3 tbsp. shelled unsalted pistachios,
finely ground

1. Crush saffron with a mortar and pestle or on a plate with the handle of a wooden spoon. In a small saucepan, mix sugar, ¾ cup water, and the saffron. Cook over medium-low heat, stirring often, until liquid is reduced to 1½ cups, about 5 minutes. Let cool, then stir in rose water.

2. Preheat oven to 325°. In a food processor, whirl walnuts, almonds, cardamom, and nutmeg until nuts are coarsely ground.
3. Unroll filo with a long side facing you and cut in half into two 9- by 13-in. pieces. Stack pieces and cover with a kitchen towel to keep from drying out.
4. Brush bottom and sides of a 9- by 13-in. baking dish with ghee. Peel off 1 sheet filo, lay in pan, and brush with ghee. Layer 12 more sheets on top, brushing each with ghee (it's okay if some sheets are torn or not fitting evenly in pan).
5. Sprinkle half the nut mixture over filo. Lay another sheet of filo on top, gathering it to fit into pan and brushing with ghee. Repeat with 12 more sheets of filo, buttering each. Sprinkle on remaining

nut mixture. Layer remaining sheets of filo on top, buttering each as before.

6. Cut baklava into 35 squares. Bake until top is golden and crisp and edges pull away from pan sides, 1½ to 1¾ hours. Cool pan on a rack 30 minutes.

7. Pour saffron syrup over baklava. Let sit to absorb most of the syrup, at least 3 hours (overnight is better). Sprinkle each square with ¼ tsp. ground pistachios.

**Find saffron, rose water, and ghee at well-stocked grocery stores and Indian markets. To make ghee, simmer butter until golden, 10 to 20 minutes. Pour through a cheesecloth-lined strainer and store airtight. ▲*

PER PIECE 153 Cal., 54% (82 Cal.) from fat; 1.6 g protein; 9.2 g fat (4.5 g sat.); 16 g carbo (0.6 g fiber); 63 mg sodium; 18 mg chol. LC/LS/V



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CRAFT BEER GETS CRAFTIER

Adding wine to the brew gives it a whole new dimension. And it's great with food.

By Sara Schneider

HYBRIDS WE WISH hadn't happened: jeggings, infomercials, sporks. A much more promising mashup: beer brewed with wine.

"I'm surprised you don't see it more," says Scott Kendall, co-owner and executive chef of Carpe Diem Wine Bar in Napa and maker of various beer-wine hybrids. "Wine adds a whole new dimension to beer. It gives it complexity, aromatics."

As it turns out, it's not exactly a new thought. A beverage residue found in a Turkish tomb—possibly that of King Midas—inspired the brewers at Dogfish Head Craft Brewery to launch a modern version: "Midas Touch," an ale brewed with Muscat grapes.

Recipes for beer-wine hybrids differ, but in general, a little grape must (crushed grapes, including skins, seeds, and juice) is fermented, at least partially, with the beer, so the fruit flavors are well integrated with the grain. The base beer might be a Belgian-style ale, an IPA, even a sour. And the grape varieties that are added range from Sauvignon Blanc and Riesling to Pinot Noir and Syrah.

Kendall calls beer-wine hybrids "a chef's dream." On his list of foods better matched to hybrid brews than to traditional beers or wines: flatbread, seafood, salads, burgers, cheeses, even dessert. We tested his theories here at *Sunset*, and we agree. (See our favorite pairings at right.)

These beer-wine hybrids are just starting to proliferate, so they can be hard to find. Watch for them at the cutting-edge taps and beer lists near you.



Three great beer-wine hybrids

Dogfish Head "Sixty-One"

India Pale Ale (\$8.75/four-pack). The Syrah added to this Delaware beer comes from California. It's a bittersweet IPA with a strong herbal hop character integrated with sweet strawberry and raspberry fruit.

PAIR WITH Sausage pizza, bacon burgers, hot dogs with caramelized onions.

The Bruery "Confession"

(\$25/750 ml.; sold to The Bruery club members). A collaboration with Fess Parker Winery & Vineyard, this sour ale brewed with Riesling has an earthy, yeasty character softened by Riesling's apple fruit.

PAIR WITH Cobb salad, fish tacos, calamari, and oysters.

Firestone Walker "Li'l Mikkell"

(on tap only). A collaboration with Mikkeller Brewery, made with Sauvignon Blanc and Chenin Blanc, then aged in barrels. The most winelike hybrid of the three, it's spicy and citrusy, with delicate apple and toasty oak flavors.

PAIR WITH Crab Louis, fish 'n' chips, white-sauce pizza, onion rings. 🍷



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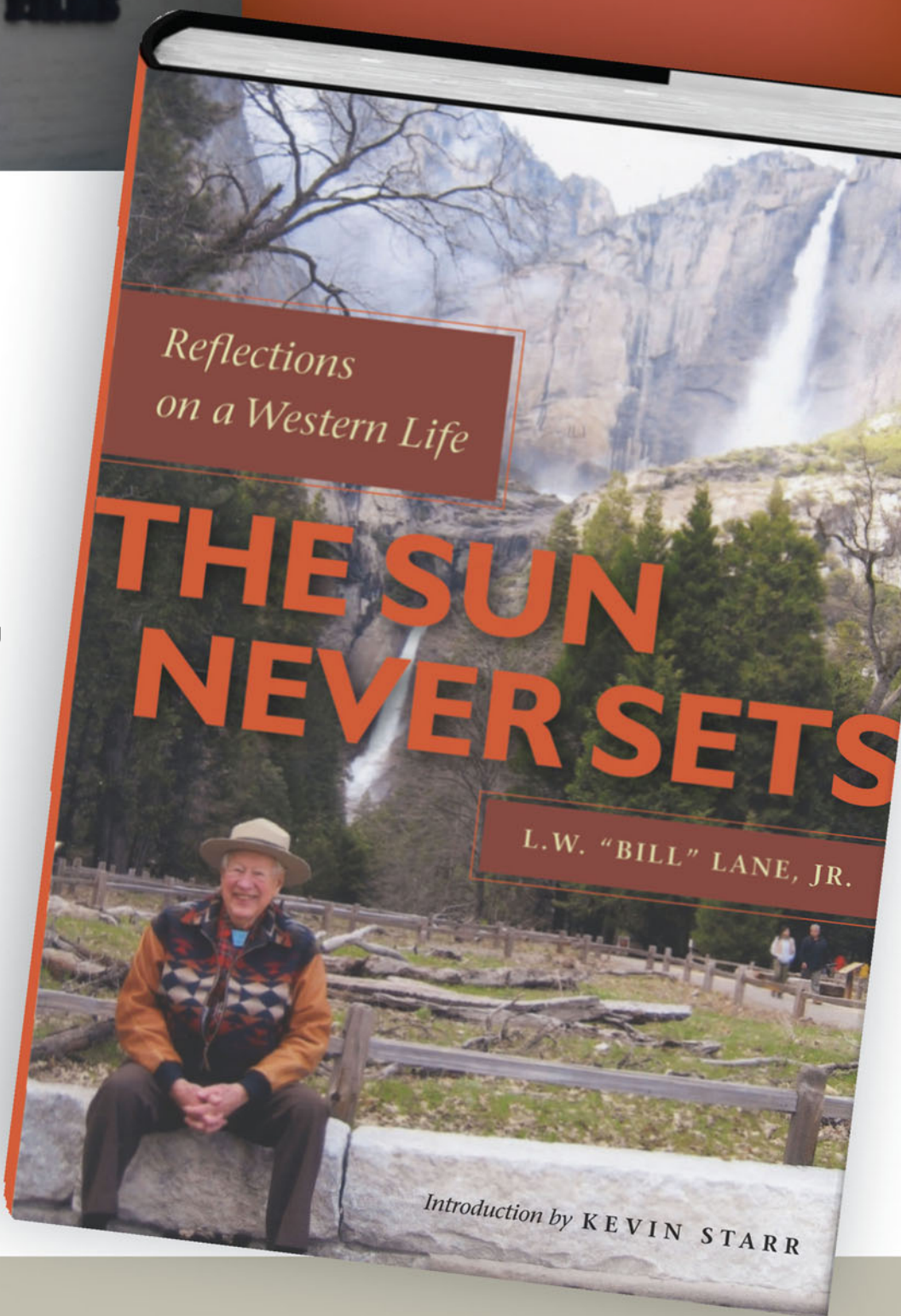
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Q: Last year you featured exceptional plants, one being an apricot grevillea. Please remind me which one you recommended. I'd also appreciate help in tending my grevilleas. What are their soil and fertilizer needs?

—KATHY, APTOS, CA

DEAR KATHY That grevillea's name is 'Superb', and its blooms are indeed a striking, unusual apricot. The Australian native is drought tolerant, and because it's smaller than many other grevilleas, it shines as a hedge or in containers. It needs full sun 6 to 8 hours a day, and fast-draining soil; if you have heavy clay soil, you'll need to dig in lots of compost. As for fertilizing, grevilleas are part of the protea family, which means they don't like phosphorous. Feed them lightly at the start of the growing season, and avoid high-phosphorous fertilizers.



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Grevillea 'Superb'

Q: My husband and I have never made a big deal about Valentine's Day. But this year, I want to book an all-out, romantic retreat. Where should we go?

—D.K., REDMOND, WA

DEAR D.K. For snowy and romantic, Run of the River (runoftheriver.com), not far from you in Leavenworth, Washington, has rustic charm, a pretty setting on Icicle Creek, and no kids. Want warm and glamorous? In Baja's Cabo San Lucas, Esperanza Resort (esperanzasort.com) has drawn A-list celebrities (Gwyneth Paltrow and Chris Martin honeymooned here) with a private beach and couples' spa treatments. Finally, Phoenix's Royal Palms (royalpalmsotel.com) scores high on our romance scale, maybe because its palm-shaded courtyards bring to mind Disney's Aladdin and Jasmine.



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Dramatic, romantic Esperanza Resort overlooks Baja's Sea of Cortez.

Q: I have a monumental birthday in February and I'd like to celebrate by combining a strenuous day hike with dinner in San Francisco. Can you recommend a trail north of the city—say, something in the redwoods—and an Italian restaurant that's not too trendy?

—HOLLY WILLIAMSON, SAN DIEGO

DEAR HOLLY Marin's Mt. Tamalpais State Park is just the ticket. The 7-mile loop from the Pantoll Ranger Station on the Matt Davis, Dipsea, and Steep Ravine Trails will give you big trees and ocean views (friendsofmitam.org for info). As for that S.F. Italian dinner, SPQR (spqr.com) on Fillmore Street may be a tiny bit trendy, but its semolina gnocchi with lamb ragù is so delicious, you won't care. And North Beach Restaurant (northbeachrestaurant.com) does old school Italian delightfully.



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A big-deal birthday calls for a big-view hike on Mt. Tam.

Q: So many Asian and curry recipes call for coconut milk. Unfortunately, I'm allergic to it. Is there a good substitute?

—CARLITA, PINE GROVE, CA

DEAR CARLITA The taste and creamy consistency of coconut milk are tough to duplicate exactly. For flavor, almond milk comes pretty close—but you'll need to thicken it with a little cornstarch before you add it to the recipe (try 2 tsp. per cup of cold almond milk). If you're allergic to almond milk too, use heavy cream. ☹

Email your questions about Western gardening, travel, food, wine, or home design to asksunset@sunset.com.

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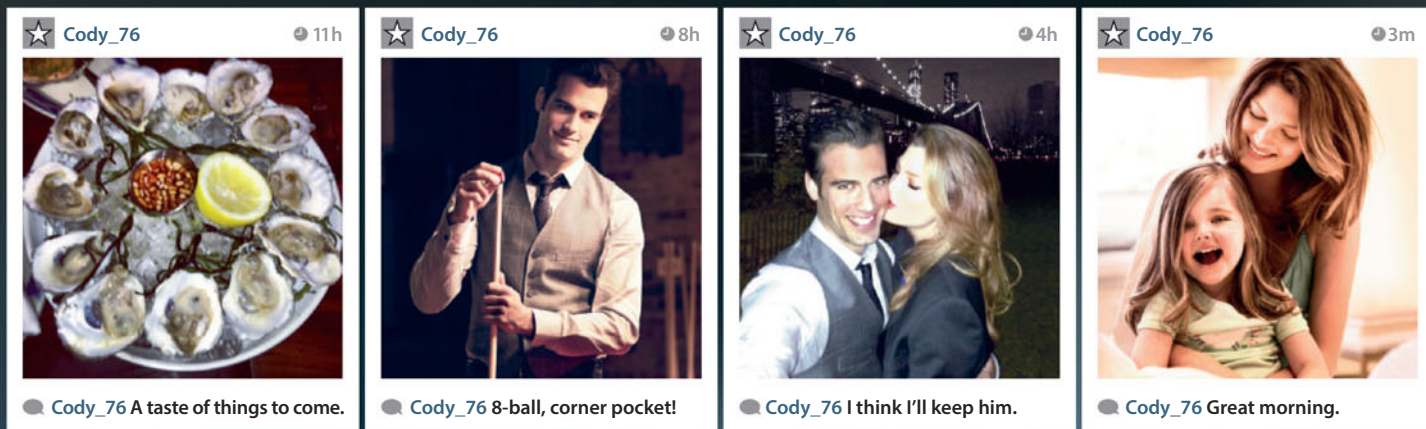
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