

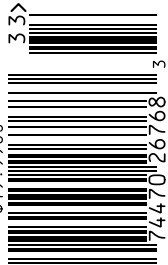
GATHER

JOURNAL

C O C O O N
Seasonal Recipes and Exceptional Ideas

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JOURNAL



Casing V, 2009; 12 x 12 inches; Chromogenic print

Artwork by Jennifer Brandon

In the opening scene of Robert Lepage's play *The Blue Dragon*, the audience watches, rapt, as the protagonist Pierre kneels before a giant canvas, dips a plush-tipped brush into a pot of soot-colored ink, then traces a single, distinct line diagonally across. The Chinese symbol for one. Whole. All. Serenely moving his brush from pot to canvas, and back again, as if second nature, he says that in Chinese calligraphy, "if a picture is worth a thousand words, it can be said that a word is worth a thousand images."

Cocoon is just that—a word of a thousand pictures. There are cocoons in the most literal sense. Those silken pockets methodically woven by the larvae of insects which act as a shield when they are in the pupa or chrysalis stage, those most naked moments of development. There is the very action of cocooning, when we are swaddled tightly in any kind of covering or, of course, against each other. And there is the feeling that the word evokes: a sense of coziness, of familiarity, of protection. All these definitions, accompanied by a myriad of images.

And the cocoon is not without mystery. Though there is endless footage chronicling the insect life cycle, it still has a magical, otherworldly quality—the silkworm spinning relentlessly, focus unwavering, hour after hour, until surrounded by a downy fortress of gossamer threads in which it will burrow for two weeks before emerging a moth. Even in fictional accounts, the cocoon mystifies. Ron Howard's 1985 film *Cocoon* follows a group of seniors who swim with alien cocoons from the planet Antarea to restore their youth. And in Haruki Murakami's *1Q84*, his character, Tengo, ghostwrites a book, *Air Chrysalis*, about a girl visited by thumb-sized creatures who sew cocoons from which human clones will emerge. While Howard's and Murakami's may be the stuff of pure fantasy, even the cocoon's natural reality has a similar sense of the extraordinary.

That same sense is translatable to the table. And the timing couldn't be more apropos. As the temperature drops and winter begins its deliberate approach, we instinctively seek shelter, burrowing into our own personal cocoons. What's on our plates often reflects that impulse—we want food that wraps itself around us like a blanket. As the kindling for this, the fourth edition of *Gather Journal*, we explored every facet of the cocoon. From the dishes that visually mirror the cocoon's bound and bundled shape to those that impart an identical feeling: a cozy, warming sensation to the belly. We have a chapter dedicated to silk—the material's luscious texture is as covetable in the kitchen as it is in the closet—and one on transformation, since the cocoon itself is the greatest vessel of change. There is an ode to the healing powers of comfort food, specifically one very cocoon-like variety, and a visual study of meat casings that pays beautiful, and slightly twisted, homage to an oft-ignored butchery accoutrement. A cocoon is an instrument of metamorphosis, and that is something that happens often in the kitchen. May this issue inspire an evolution in yours; as they say, change is good.

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AMUSE-BOUCHE & COCKTAILS

Small and mighty. The best way to describe what lies here, at the threshold of the meal—tiny bites and cocktails that pack a powerful punch. A sausage-stuffed olive crowns a new receptacle for fried goodness; coeur à la crème is an ethereal mound; our devils on horseback reincarnate a classic, albeit with a spin; pani puri is an airy blast of spicy and sweet Indian flavors; and two cocktails, one mezcal-, the other whiskey-based, demand to be kept close at hand.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY Grant Cornett FOOD STYLING BY Maggie Ruggiero
PROP STYLING BY Theo Vamvounakis



THE BRAVE & THE NEW AND IMPROVED WHISKEY COCKTAIL

Mezcal and whiskey, respectively, take the lead in these aromatic cocktails sure to immediately thaw winter's chill.

THE BRAVE

Dallas bartender/restaurateur **Michael Martensen** of Cedars Social, Smyth, and Establishment married the smoky warmth of mezcal with herbaceous Cocchi Rosa, cinnamon, and sherry.

Makes: 1 cocktail

- 1.5 oz (3 Tbsp) Del Maguey Vida Organic Mezcal
- .75 oz (1½ Tbsp) Cocchi Rosa
- .75 oz (1½ Tbsp) Manzanilla Sherry
- .25 oz (½ Tbsp) Cinnamon Syrup*
- 2 Dashes of Angostura bitters
- orange twist for garnish

Add mezcal, Cocchi Rosa, sherry, syrup, and bitters to a mixing glass. Stir in cracked ice. Strain over 1 large ice cube. Garnish.

Cinnamon syrup: Bring 1 cup of water and 1 cup of sugar to a simmer, stirring to dissolve sugar. Remove from heat and steep 3 cinnamon sticks, 10 minutes. Discard cinnamon and chill syrup.

ONE FROM THE HEART

Para todo mal, mezcal, y para todo bien también. Mezcal could qualify as the ultimate hipster spirit: artisanal, in the unadulterated sense of the word; coaxed from hand-harvested *silvestres*, spiny wild plants; and produced in small batches with the help of pack animals. From the smoldering remains of charred agave hearts emerges a complex liquor with origins in pre-Columbian Mexico. To increase the alcohol content of the local *pulque*—an indigenous fermented agave drink—Spanish conquistadors cooked the pulp to sweeten it before distilling it for potency. In a process that has changed little over the centuries, the nectar-rich hearts are split open and piled into a *palenque*, a fire pit covered with earth. Days later, their flesh emerges syrupy and infused with wood smoke. It is then broken down in a shallow circular well with a millstone pulled by a donkey or horse. The mash ferments in the open air for up to a month, then undergoes two distillations, in copper or ancient clay stills. Time, terroir and the idiosyncrasies of the *palenquero* all help determine the rich, bittersweet notes that balance the lingering smokiness. And the worm? That's another story altogether. LAURA SILVERMAN

THE NEW AND IMPROVED WHISKEY COCKTAIL

Co-owner/head bartender at New York's Dead Rabbit Grocery & Grog, **Jack McGarry**, created a singular take on the archetypal whiskey drink, absinthe giving it a shot of intensity and an anise-laced aroma.

Makes: 1 cocktail

- 2 oz (¼ cup) Jameson Black Barrel Irish Whiskey
- .5 oz (1 Tbsp) Combier Elisir
- .5 oz (1 Tbsp) Luxardo Maraschino
- .25 oz (½ Tbsp) Pernod Absinthe
- 3 dashes Bittertruth Creole Bitters
- 3 dashes Bittermens Orange Cream Citrate
- lemon peel

Add whiskey, liqueurs, absinthe, and both bitters to a mixing glass. Add ice and stir until ice cold. Strain into a pre-chilled cocktail glass and finish with oils squeezed from a piece of lemon skin. No garnish.

SAUSAGE-STUFFED OLIVES

As the age-old expression goes, extending an olive branch is a means of calling a truce or asking for reconciliation. We suggest, instead of the proverbial branch, extending one of these bread-crumbed, sausage-crammed, fried olives—the crispy little pleasure bombs make for a far more effective peace offering.

Makes: 24 bites

24 jumbo pitted green olives

1 link hot Italian sausage,
casing removed

1 Tbsp olive oil

½ cup all-purpose flour

2 large eggs

½ cup dry bread crumbs

about 2 to 3 cups
vegetable oil for frying

If your olives are pimento stuffed, save the pimentos for another day. Soak olives in cold water 5 minutes. Drain and soak again then pat them dry. Using a chopstick, stuff each with sausage. Toss with olive oil.

Put flour, eggs, and crumbs in 3 separate shallow bowls. Season crumbs with black pepper. Dredge each olive first in flour, then in egg letting the excess drip off. Lastly dredge in crumbs, transferring olives to a plate. Keep chilled until ready to fry.

Heat 1½-inches of oil in a medium saucepan to 350°F. Fry olives in batches until sausage is cooked through, about 3 minutes. Drain on paper towels. Serve warm or at room temperature.

HOG HEAVEN

In the annals of little and stuffed appetizer history, none is more iconic than pigs in a blanket, those petite cocktail wieners ensconced in all manner of puffy carbohydrate. Gourmands may roll their eyes at the ubiquity of these little guys. I, on the other hand, look forward to attending the weddings, bar mitzvahs, and graduation parties where I'll get to pluck them from roving platters by their impaled frilly toothpicks and scarf them down by the half-dozen. To me, the appeal of pigs in a blanket is a no-brainer: They're at once flaky and buttery and salty and savory. They're celebratory in nature, with a powerful dose of retro-chic nostalgia. And, amidst a culinary moment where we obsessively revere addictive, porky snacks like soft pork belly bao and crunchy chicharrones, I find it curious that pigs in a blanket haven't received their own proper, high-style comeback. There's one notable exception in Wylie Dufresne's Alder in New York, whose pig in a blanket, a compressed hot dog bun-wrapped nub of Chinese lap cheong sausage, shows the creative potential that lies in this party staple. So, a plea to restaurants the nation over: bring on the hogs in afghans, the boars in throws, the swines in quilts! I'll be waiting, frilly toothpick in hand. LEAH MENNIES



PANI PURI

Delectable, bite-sized fried snack food abounds in Indian cuisine, and pani puri is a shining example. In ours, miniature puri crepes are fried until the dough puffs up, then the hollow sphere is pierced and stuffed with chickpeas, potatoes, onion, and tangy tamarind chutney.

Makes: about 45 bites

PURI DOUGH

- ½ cup fine semolina flour
- ¼ tsp baking powder
- ¼ cup water
- 1 Tbsp all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp plus 3 cups vegetable oil for frying

TAMARIND CHUTNEY

- 1 (2-inch) chunk tamarind pulp
- ¼ cup brown sugar
- ¼ tsp ground cumin
- a pinch cayenne

SUGGESTED FILLINGS

chopped red onion, cooked chickpeas, small cubes of boiled potato, chopped cilantro, sprouted beans, and yogurt for drizzling

Puri Dough: Mix semolina with baking powder and a pinch of salt. Stir in water until absorbed. Stir in all-purpose flour and knead until dough is smooth and elastic, about 5 minutes. Add oil and knead 3 minutes more. Wrap in plastic and rest 20 minutes at room temperature.

Roll out dough on a lightly oiled surface as thinly as you can. Cut out 1½ to 2-inch rounds, keeping rounds between 2 damp towels while cutting more.

Heat about 1½ inches of oil in a saucepan to 350-360°F. Fry puri in batches, turning as they rise to the surface and puff until pale golden, about 2 minutes. Transfer to a tray lined with paper towels. Heat 20 minutes in a 200°F oven to crisp before serving if needed.

Tamarind Chutney: Mash tamarind in 1½ cups water and let soak 30 minutes. Strain pushing pulp through a sieve into a saucepan. Stir in sugar, spices, and season with salt and pepper. Warm to dissolve sugar then cool.

Poke a fingertip-sized hole in puri top and add desired fillings. Drizzle with yogurt and tamarind chutney.

LITTLE INDIA

Samosa. Pakora. Paratha. The ubiquitous all-stars of Indian snack food are deserving of their spots in the pantheon, but they're only a fraction of the delight on offer when it comes to the region's scrumptious street cuisine. Take the somewhat elusive pani puri. Sweet, spicy, tangy, and delicately hot, these golf-ball-sized globes of fried, paper-thin dough filled with chickpeas, potatoes, and spices possess the kind of seductive texture many a big-industry food tech has spent years trying to emulate. Unseasoned, the sweet chutney that flavors the filling can give pani puri a cloying taste, so the traditional fix is to top them off with fragrant pepper water, usually served in a dainty little pitcher or a bowl big enough for scooping; instead, we infused the chutney itself with spice to save the extra step. Both pani puri versions create the same burst of culinary magic when crunched between your teeth: Savory steadies sweet, and the gush of perfectly balanced flavor evokes the snacky splendor of a well-executed soup dumpling—and rivals the way those addictive Chinese buns get gustatory neurons singing. *SARA CARDACE*





DEVILS ON HORSEBACK

Birthed in the 19th century and adopted by many in the 1960s, the heyday of finger food-laden soirees, the devil on horseback has saddled many interpretations. Its core principle remains the same, though: a date or prune (its antithesis, the angel on horseback, uses an oyster), stuffed most often with cheese and nuts, and wrapped in a bacon cape. Our devilish take uses Medjool dates because their squishy texture and plump figure allow for maximum stuff-age.

Makes: 24 bites

¼ cup roughly chopped
tamari almonds

about 2 oz Stilton,
cut into 24 slivers

24 large pitted dates
(we like Medjools)

12 strips of bacon,
halved crosswise

24 toothpicks

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Press almonds into slivers of cheese and push into each date. Don't get greedy and overfill.

Wrap dates in bacon and secure with a toothpick.

Bake on a rimmed baking sheet lined with parchment until bacon is crispy, about 20 minutes.

DEVIL'S ADVOCATES

An evil genius on your plate should be paired with something equally hellacious on your stereo. Here, a playlist (available via *Gather Journal* on Spotify) with a few of our devilish favorites. FIORELLA VALDESOLO

Friend of the Devil Grateful Dead

Run Devil Run Jenny Lewis with the Watson Twins

Me and the Devil Blues Robert Johnson

Sympathy for the Devil The Rolling Stones

Devil Inside INXS

Handsome Devil The Smiths

Devil's Haircut Beck

Runnin' with the Devil Van Halen

The Devil's Been Busy The Traveling Wilburys

Christine's Tune (AKA, Devil in Disguise)

The Flying Burrito Brothers

Devil Song Beth Orton

That Ole Devil Called Love Billie Holiday

Devil Woman Marty Robbins

COEUR À LA CRÈME

It's true; our take on the so-called "heart of the cream" appears heartless. But, we can assure you, the smooth, cocoon-like (non heart-shaped) mound of herb-strewn ricotta and mascarpone, once freed from its cheesecloth web, will quickly earn your affection.

Serves: 8 to 10

1 cup fresh ricotta,
best quality you can find

1/3 cup mascarpone

1/4 cup heavy cream

2 Tbsp finely chopped chives

1 Tbsp finely chopped
flat-leaf parsley

1 Tbsp chopped thyme

1/2 tsp salt

10 grinds black pepper

cheesecloth

crackers for serving

1 Stir together all the ingredients.

2 Line a small colander with two layers of cheesecloth and place on a plate. Spoon cheese mixture onto cloth and twist into a tight bundle. Refrigerate until some of the whey drains away and the coeur is well chilled, at least 2 hours or overnight.

3 Serve with crackers.

A PARISIAN EDUCATION

I spent my formative years in East Asia, where dairy isn't part of the traditional diet. Cheese came in two forms: an orange, plastic-wrapped square or a mystery substance melted on pizza. Years later, I studied abroad in Paris, and on one of my first nights there, found my way to a wine bar with friends. The cheap Pinot we ordered wasn't very inspired. The Swiss it was served with was something you might find on toothpicks at a house party. But for me, as I went back and forth between bites and sips, the pairing felt like a revelation. After that, most of my cultural intake occurred in cheese shops, bakeries, and restaurants—there's no place like Paris to start a love affair with cheese. We'd have picnics of Camembert, crackers, and a 2-euro bottle of wine near the Eiffel Tower. I discovered a new love for salads, when lightly fried chèvre was dotted on top. My go-to lunch was a buttery sandwich of ham and Emmentaler. And, oh, the fondue! The mixture of wine, Comté, and Gruyère mesmerized me. When I'm in the mood to relive my student days, I'll sit down with a fragrant hunk of cheese and a crusty baguette. There's no better snack—or yes, I'll admit, dinner—in the world. STEPHANIE WU







GATHER

STARTERS

The meal's first real chapter is all about the senses. There are aromatic surprises: cut into a plush dumpling's translucent flesh to reveal a gingery heart; untie a tamale's bow and let the earthy scent of masa waft out. And visual ones: a harissa-painted cauliflower emerges from the oven a crimson bouquet; a winter salad acts as a venue for vegetables to show off their natural beauty. And the gnocchi? They are about touch—the feel of each cushioned nugget as it passes your lips.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY Will Anderson FOOD STYLING BY Maggie Ruggiero
PROP STYLING BY Theo Vamvounakis

DUCK DUMPLING SOUP

This soothing soup is more than meets the eye—the seemingly simple broth is reinforced with duck bones; the pillowy dumplings hide delicate cores of confit, ginger, and scallions.

Serves: 4

- 2 confit duck legs
- 1 (2-inch) piece ginger, peeled
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 4 scallions, 2 finely chopped and 2 cut into 1-inch pieces
- 4 cups chicken broth
- ½ cup water
- about 16 wonton wrappers
- ½ lb bok choy, roughly chopped
- Sriracha or chili garlic sauce for serving

1 Separate duck into meat, bones, and skin reserving all. Finely chop ginger to measure 2 tsp, then slice the rest into ¼-inch thick coins. Finely shred enough duck to make 1 cup. Coarsely shred the rest. Gently heat skin in a skillet until fat is rendered. Discard the skin. Stir garlic, finely chopped ginger, and scallions into fat and cook, stirring, 2 minutes. Stir in finely shredded duck; cook, 1 to 2 minutes. Season with black pepper; set aside to cool.

2 Heat broth and water with reserved bones and ginger coins. Gently simmer covered while forming dumplings.

3 Working with three at a time, lay out wonton wrappers and place a rounded tsp of filling in the center of each. Run a finger or brush dipped in water along the border of each wrapper and fold into a triangle, pressing to seal well. Make a small indentation in the long side then fold along dent sealing points together with water. Form remaining dumplings keeping them loosely covered as assembled.

4 Discard bones and ginger from broth. Stir in greens, remaining duck, and scallion, simmer, about 2 to 3 minutes. Add dumplings and simmer until wrinkly, about 2 minutes. Serve as desired with condiments.

SOUP'S ON

Considering their etymological similarity, it should come as no surprise that cold weather breeds colds. For those of us who live in condensed, urban areas and possess weak immune systems, these bouts with shivers, fevers, and congestion come part and parcel with the arrival of winter; ditto a constant supply of Saltines, tea, and chicken soup to subdue them. But a lack of time and energy to make a homemade batch of our grandmother's cure-all broth has given us a taste for something decidedly more...exotic when sniffles commence. Blame it on proximity to a wealth of Asian take-out spots, but what started as an unwavering craving for Vietnamese Pho—the sinus-clearing aroma of the cinnamon stick, clove, coriander pods, star anise, and cardamom that infuse its knucklebone-simmered base—evolved into an irrepressible urge for any kind of soup with Asian origins. Hot & Sour? Please and thank you. Wonton? Well done. Whether it's a psychosomatic response or not, the spice-spiked potage with some derivation of protein-rich meat and the comforting texture of glutinous rice noodles, somehow manages to always soothe what ails us—and it tastes pretty good going down, too. CELIA ELLENBERG

SWISS CHARD TAMALE

The act of assembling tamales—spreading the masa, spooning in the filling, tying them like a gift—is as revered a ritual as eating them.

Makes: 10 tamales

- 30 dried corn husks
- 2 small poblanos
- 1 jalapeño
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup plus 1 Tbsp lard, divided
- $\frac{1}{2}$ medium white onion, finely chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$ bunch swiss chard, leaves and stems separated, and finely chopped
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup cilantro, chopped
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup crumbled queso fresco (about 2 oz)
- 2 cups masa (instant corn masa flour)
- 1 tsp salt

1 Set a pot of boiling water off heat and soak husks, weighted down with a plate, 30 minutes. Broil poblanos and jalapeño until blackened. Transfer to a bowl and cover with plastic wrap. Steam 10-15 minutes then peel, stem, seed, and finely chop.

2 Heat 1 Tbsp lard in a skillet over medium heat. Sauté onions until soft. Add chard stems and cook until soft. Add chard leaves and cook until just wilted. Cool, then stir in peppers, cilantro, and cheese. Season to taste.

3 Whisk together masa and salt. Add $1\frac{1}{2}$ cups of hot water and remaining $\frac{2}{3}$ cup lard. Mix well.

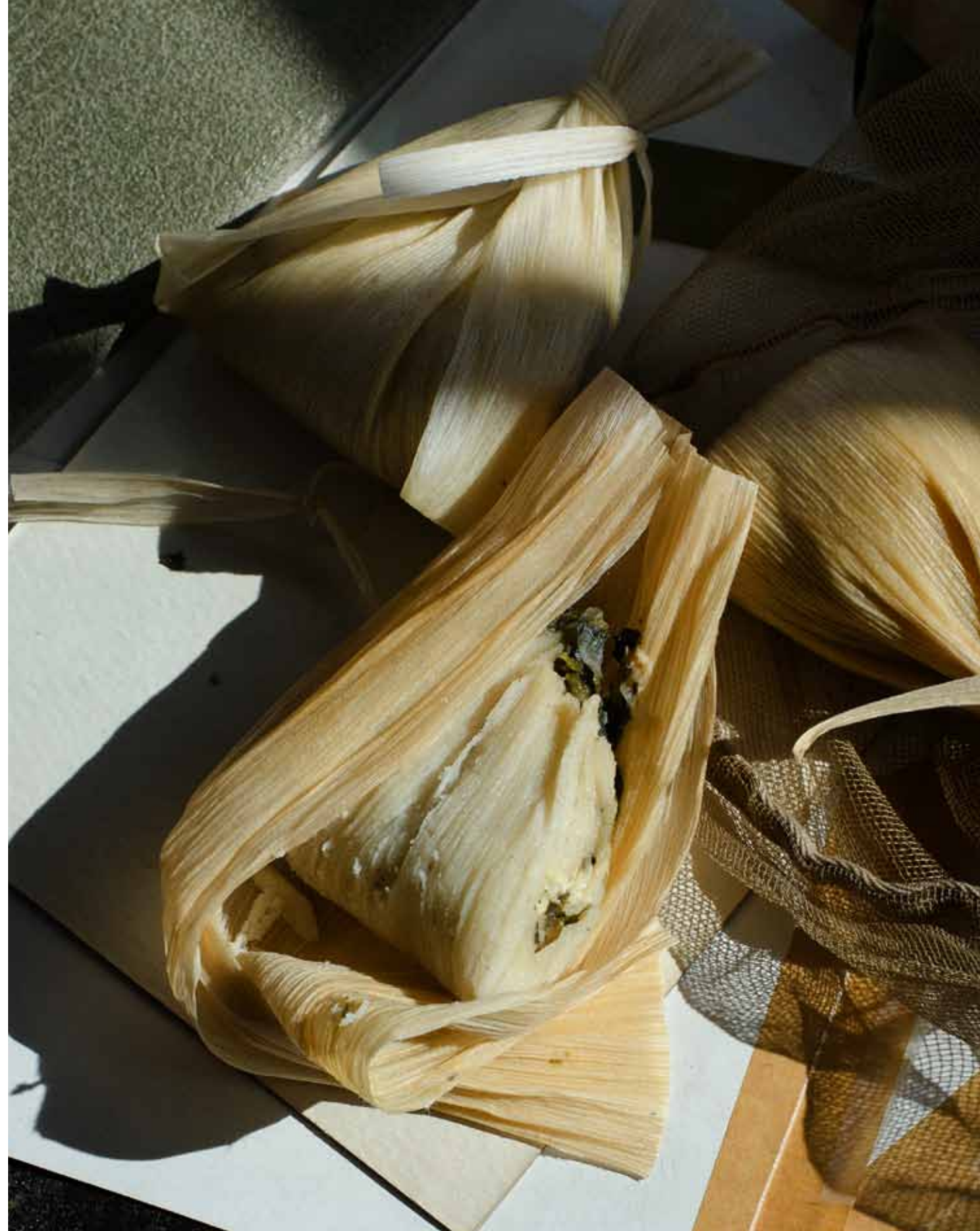
4 Drain husks and rinse well with cold water. Fill a large pot fitted with a steamer basket with water up to the bottom of steamer. Line steamer with some smaller husks.

5 Choose the 12 largest husks. Place $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of dough into center of each husk's smooth side and flatten until about $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch. Add 2 Tbsp filling to center, then carefully bring up the bottom to fold in half, then fold in sides. Tie with a thin strip of husk to make a bundle. Repeat.

6 Bring steamer to a simmer. Layer in tamales, slightly overlapping. Top with remaining husks and cover with a tight fitting lid. Steam until masa separates easily from a husk and dough is tender, about 40 minutes.

HULL COUNTRY

At age 16, I went on a trip to Ecuador with my family. I didn't especially care about travel or food then—instead, I devoted that portion of my sheltered adolescence to a newfound fascination with indie rock (a Superchunk tour shirt became my uniform that summer). But this would be my introduction to *humitas*—basically, steamed Ecuadorean tamales, made from freshly ground corn, eggs, and cream, that come tightly wrapped in husks. From the first bite, I became obsessed with their rich, sweet-maize flavor, and wherever we visited afterward, I had to try the *humitas* to see how they stacked up. It didn't occur to me until years later that, before Ecuador, I'd never paid much attention to food, and certainly not to hunting down foods previously unknown to me in areas beyond my immediate vicinity. So, in a sense, my first taste of *humitas* on that trip set me on a lifelong path of culinary adventuring, in my own city and anywhere else that I might find myself. DIEGO HADIS





HARISSA-ROASTED CAULIFLOWER

A ubiquitous presence in Tunisian households, harissa—a fiery red paste made from pounding chili peppers with caraway, coriander and garlic—is a worthy pantry occupant, no matter what country you call home. And cauliflower makes an ideal canvas for its uniquely complex spice; we generously massaged it across the ruffled florets, and let the oven’s heat help the flavor penetrate.

Serves: 6

1 medium head cauliflower,
(about 2½ lb)

½ cup chicken or vegetable stock
a few sprigs thyme

3 Tbsp harissa
(we like the Belazu brand)

¼ cup olive oil,
plus extra for drizzling

½ cup green olives,
pitted and chopped

1 lemon, zest and juice

Preheat oven to 375°F. Place cauliflower in a shallow baking dish or pie plate. Pour stock into dish and scatter with thyme. Rub harissa over cauliflower (add a little olive oil to loosen if the harissa is pasty). Season with a little salt and cover with foil. Roast 1 hour.

Remove foil and drizzle with a little olive oil. Return to oven uncovered and roast until tender, about 20 minutes.

In a small saucepan, gently heat ¼ cup olive oil, olives, lemon zest, and juice until heated through. Serve alongside cauliflower.

FLOWER POWER

Though it has its own distinct flavor, cauliflower takes direction very well. It is the character actor of vegetables: Almost never a main course, but always very good at its job, and up for whatever challenge you might care to throw at it. It complements fish; it complements meat; and I have found that most of all, it complements roast chicken. And so these are all the ways I have eaten cauliflower: roasted, sautéed, steamed, fried, grilled, broiled, raw, mashed, puréed, as a pizza crust, as a soup, in a sauce, in a casserole, and in a bowl on my couch watching a movie, like popcorn. I’ve had white cauliflower, purple cauliflower, green cauliflower, and cauliflower that is a lovely yellow-orange color; all have been, in their own ways, delicious. I have also eaten cauliflower’s half-sister, the broccoflower, which has its own cruciferous charms, though when pressed, I will admit that I much prefer the real thing. DOREE SHAFRIR



GNOCCHI WITH SPICY GREENS

That gnocchi comes from the Italian word for knuckle (*nocca*) is fitting, since crafting them is a real show of hands. One where everyone has personal flourishes—when my nonna Filomena Giampa made them, she sometimes used a wicker basket to imprint their subtle ridges.

Serves: 6 as a starter or 4 as a main

- 1 ¼ medium Yukon Gold potatoes
- ¾ to 1 cup all-purpose flour plus more for forming
- 4 Tbsp unsalted butter
- 3 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 6 anchovy fillets
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- ¼ tsp hot red pepper flakes
- 5 cups chopped kale or mustard greens
- ¼ cup toasted bread crumbs

Put potatoes in a saucepan covered with cold water. Bring to a boil and cook until tender, about 20 minutes. Drain and briefly cool. While still hot, peel and force through a ricer onto a lightly floured surface.

Add ¾ cup flour and gently fluff into potatoes then knead with your hands briefly to form a soft dough. Cover with a kitchen towel to keep warm.

Bring a pot of salted water to a boil. Form a few ¾-inch long ovals as guinea pigs and roll along fork tines or a gnocchi board to imprint grooves. Boil until they bob up to the surface, then 15 seconds more. Fish out. If they hold their shape, continue to form the rest the same way; if not, knead in a little more flour without over handling.

Divide dough into 4 pieces and form into ¾-inch thick logs. Cut each log into 1-inch pieces and roll along the grooves. Keep gnocchi on a floured sheet pan dusted with more flour until ready to cook.

Heat butter, oil, anchovies, garlic, and pepper flakes in a large skillet stirring to dissolve anchovies. Add greens and cook until wilted, about 5 minutes. Boil gnocchi as above and stir into skillet. Serve topped with bread crumbs.

HAND OVER FIST

The Godfather: Part III is, most would agree, basically without merit save for one scene: when Mary and Vincent make gnocchi together. Set aside the kissing cousins (first cousins, at that) aspect, and focus on their hands. Flour-dusted, working mindlessly, rolling each thimble-sized nugget with a gentle nudge of the fingertip—a beautiful, albeit brief, interlude soon ruined by them making out. The hands-on crafting that gnocchi requires has a primal quality, and it is indeed an ancestor in pasta history. In Boccaccio's *Decameron*, circa 1350, he details the mythical land of Bengodi where hand-cut dumplings are cooked in capon broth at the peak of a mountain of grated Parmesan, then bathed in butter and rolled down the hill, gathering a coating of cheese with each tumble before falling into the awaiting mouths of the townspeople below. A gloriously bizarre gnocchi image. Now, when I am presented with a plate of this primitive pasta, back to Bengodi I go. *fv*

WINTER FARRO SALAD

As The Byrds song (and the Biblical book whose lyrics it mirrors) goes, to everything there is a season. Some contest that salad's season drops off when the temperature does, but we think this medley of farro, fennel, and endive is well-suited for the wintry months.

Serves: 4

- 1 Tbsp cider vinegar
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- ½ tsp finely chopped fresh thyme
- ¼ tsp minced garlic plus 1 clove, finely chopped, divided
- ¼ tsp salt
- a few grinds black pepper
- ¼ cup plus 2 Tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- ⅔ cup farro
- ⅓ cup walnuts, chopped
- 1 small red onion, finely chopped
- 1 endive, thinly sliced
- 1 small head fennel, thinly sliced

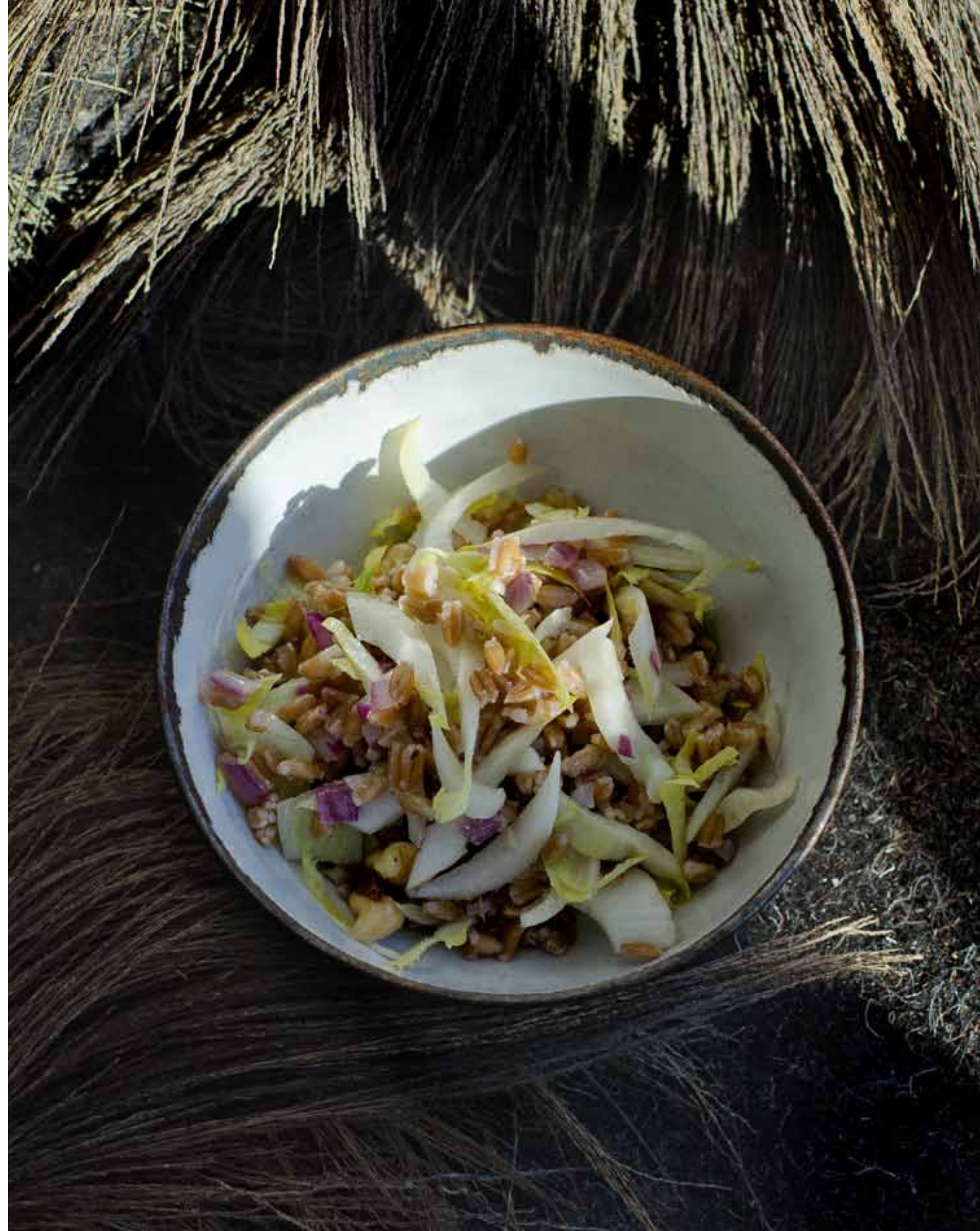
Whisk together vinegar, mustard, thyme, minced garlic, salt, and black pepper. Slowly whisk in ¼ cup oil until emulsified.

Cook farro in 3 cups lightly salted boiling water until tender, about 15-20 minutes. Drain and transfer to a serving bowl. Toss with 2 Tbsp dressing to get the flavor in while the farro is hot.

Heat remaining 2 Tbsp oil in medium skillet. Fry walnuts just until golden. Transfer with a slotted spoon to bowl with farro. Add chopped garlic to oil in skillet and cook, stirring, 30 seconds. Add onion and lightly season with salt and pepper. Sauté until onion is softened and starting to color, about 7 minutes. Stir into farro. Cool completely. Stir in endive, fennel, and additional dressing, salt, and pepper to taste.

AGAINST THE GRAIN

"Cleopatra stood at one of the most dangerous intersections in history: that of women and power," writes Stacy Shiff in *Cleopatra: A Life*. "A capable, clear-eyed sovereign, she knew how to build a fleet, suppress an insurrection, control a currency, alleviate a famine. She nonetheless survives as a wanton temptress..." Hollywood may remember only her seductions of Caesar and Mark Antony, but the enigmatic queen sated the Romans in other ways. She held sway over the Mediterranean's fertile lands and the Nile River—the lifeblood of ancient Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans. Among the exports—from linen to lentils, oils to unguents—was farro. Alexandria reaped the sphinx's share of the harvest; the rest was rationed to the warring West. So while Cleopatra feasted on spiced wine and roast peacock, Rome's avaricious legions were sustained by the spartan grain (rich itself, in fiber and protein). But its patron pharaoh fed more than the mouths of the burgeoning Empire. Upon returning to Rome from his sabbatical in Alexandria, Caesar adopted the Egyptian calendar, laid the foundations for a public library, commissioned an official census, and planned engineering innovations—which goes to show there wasn't only one thing on his mind. For a time, the ancient world was in the hands of a raven-haired, sharp-witted woman. Shiff puts it plainly: "It's not difficult to understand why Caesar is history, Cleopatra a legend." SAMANTHA GURRIE





MAINS

Presenting the meal's attention hogs. A baked pasta bucks the traditional format in favor of something with more bravado; a dramatic chicken bastilla is a present wrapped in buttery flakes; a bubbling, redolent shakshuka is the definition of a one-pot wonder; a horseradish-encrusted roast beef claims major morning-after appeal; and a kabocha miso stew is as soothing to the eye as it is to the belly.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY Keirnan Monaghan FOOD STYLING BY Maggie Ruggiero
PROP STYLING BY Theo Vamvounakis

CHICKEN BASTILLA

In our version of this sweet and salty Moroccan pie with Berber roots, shredded chicken is doused with a coterie of heady spices and shrouded in a Phyllo cocoon—wrapped and burrowed deep beneath translucent diaphanous sheets, then dusted in cinnamon.

Serves: 6

- 3 Tbsp olive oil, divided
- 1 (3½ lb) whole chicken, cut into pieces
- 1 tsp each ground coriander, cardamom, and turmeric
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 1 onion, chopped
- ⅓ cup dried currants
- 1½ cups sliced almonds, toasted
- ⅓ cup confectioners sugar
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- ¼ cup lemon juice (about 2 large lemons)
- 8 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 6 Tbsp butter, melted
- 9 sheets from a box of frozen Phyllo dough, thawed

Season chicken generously with salt, pepper, and the ground spices. Heat 2 Tbsp oil in a large skillet and sear until golden brown all over. Add cinnamon sticks and 3 cups of water; bring to a boil. Cover and simmer until chicken is just cooked, 10-12 minutes. Transfer chicken pieces to a bowl, then boil broth until it's reduced to 1½ cups. Reserve in skillet. Discard cinnamon.

Meanwhile, shred chicken, discarding skin and bones, and keep covered. Sauté onion in another skillet with remaining Tbsp oil until softened, 10 minutes. Stir in currants and season with salt and pepper. In a small bowl, toss almonds with the sugar and cinnamon.

Return reduced broth to a simmer. Whisk in lemon juice and eggs and simmer, whisking, until thickened and most of the liquid is absorbed and eggs are finely scrambled, about 15 minutes. Let drain in a colander until ready to assemble.

Place a baking sheet in the oven and preheat to 425°F. Brush a 9-inch springform pan with butter. Layer three sheets of phyllo, brushing with butter between each layer, and place in bottom and up sides of pan. Repeat with another 3 buttered sheets and lay horizontally across the first layer, pressing to fully line the pan.

Layer fillings; first, half the almonds, then chicken, onion-currant mixture, egg, and remaining almonds. Fold in phyllo to encase. Trim long side of last 3 sheets of phyllo to make a square then butter each and top bastilla gently tucking in the edges. Lightly dust with cinnamon. Bake on pre-heated baking sheet until golden brown, 30-35 minutes.

KABOCHA MISO STEW

Miso, rich in vitamins and antioxidants, is “Dr. Feelgood” in condiment form. Wellness aside, it’s the taste—an elusive umami quality at once rich, savory, salty, and nutty—that’s the real phenom. And it’s packed into our hearty stew alongside spinach and kabocha.

Serves: 4

- 1 Tbsp dried hijiki
 - 1 (14 oz) container firm tofu, drained
 - 3 Tbsp mirin
 - ½ cup plus 1 Tbsp soy sauce, divided
 - 1 smashed clove garlic and 2 cloves, finely chopped
 - 1 lb piece kabocha pumpkin, unpeeled, seeded, and cut into thin (¼-inch) wedges
 - 1 onion, thinly sliced
 - 2 Tbsp canola oil, divided
 - 2 carrots, thinly sliced
 - 4 cups sliced Napa cabbage
 - a handful spinach leaves
 - ¼ cup white miso paste (not sweet)
- 1 Rinse hijiki in cold water. Place in a small bowl and cover with cold water. Set aside. Cut tofu into 8 slices and blot between paper towels.
 - 2 Bring mirin, ½ cup soy sauce, 1½ cups water and smashed garlic to a simmer. Add kabocha; simmer until tender, about 8 minutes. Remove from heat and let stand.
 - 3 Meanwhile, sauté onion in 1 Tbsp oil in another saucepan over medium heat until soft and translucent. Stir in carrots and chopped garlic, and cook 2 minutes. Add 4 cups water and remaining Tbsp soy sauce. Bring to a simmer and cook 5 minutes.
 - 4 While broth simmers, heat remaining Tbsp oil in a skillet and sear tofu until golden.
 - 5 Gently stir cabbage into broth and cook until almost tender, about 3 minutes. Drain hijiki and stir into pot along with spinach. Mix miso with a little broth to loosen, then stir into pot.
 - 6 Drain squash, reserving cooking liquid. Serve tofu and squash in bowls with miso broth. Sprinkle with a little soy cooking liquid as desired.

COPY AND PASTE

If you, like me, didn’t grow up with a jar of miso perched inside your refrigerator, even the containers themselves may seem mysterious. You might ask, “Can I possibly make use of all that paste?” The answer, as I’ve learned, is a resounding yes. From flavoring soup to glazing fish to smearing the inside of a ham sandwich—a tip I learned from Japanese chef Hiroko Shimbo—miso is as versatile as mustard, and just as easy to enjoy. Variations abound, but the traditional base is made from fermented grains and soybeans, combined with salt and a kojikin fungus. Depending upon the length of fermentation and other ingredients, miso can range from mild and sweet to rich, earthy, and unctuous. But all versions impart a subtle umami that will enhance even the simplest dish. Which means a jar is a constant presence in my grown-up fridge. JOANNA PRISCO



SHAKSHUKA

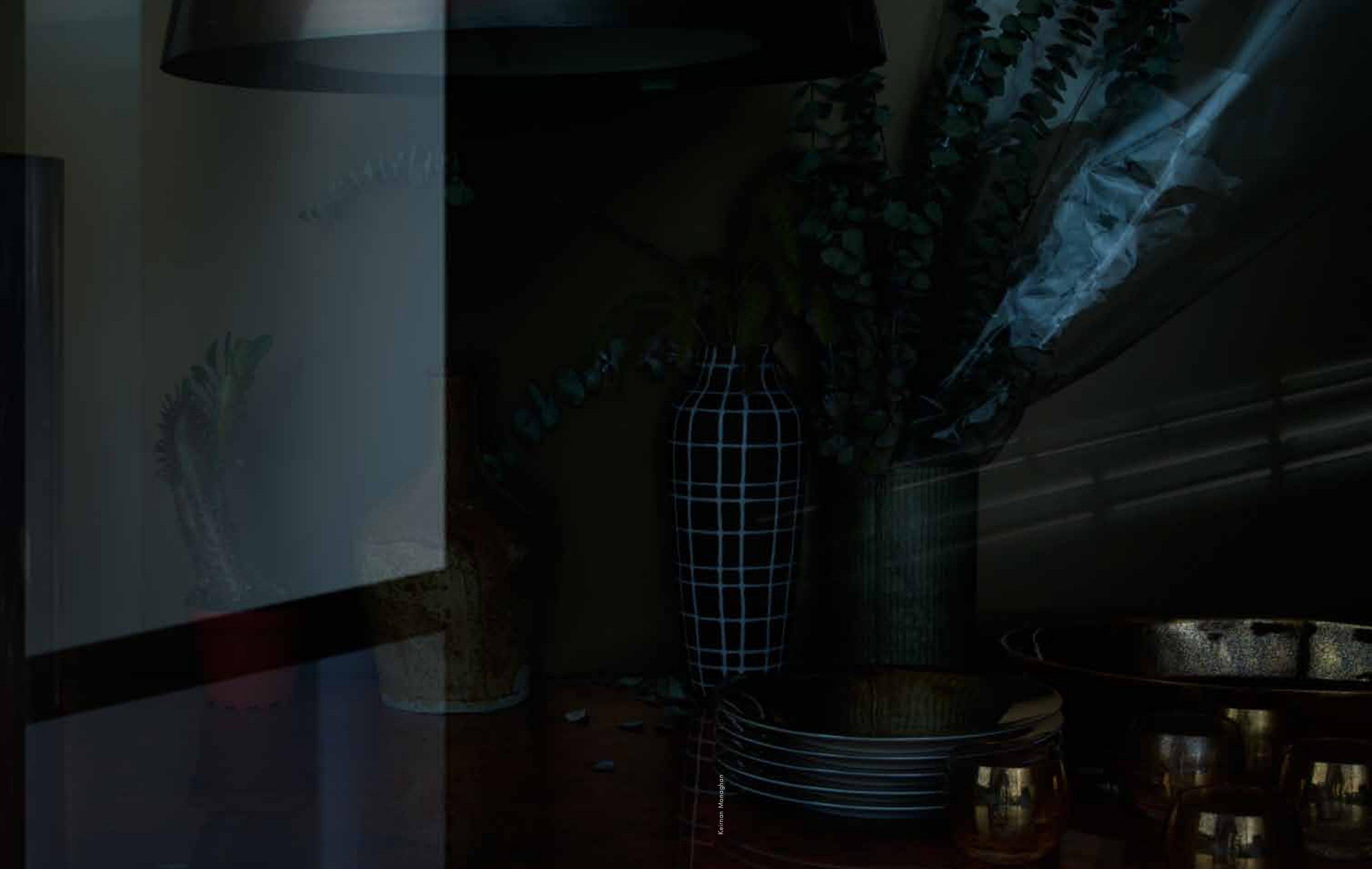
Shakshuka's name is satisfying in itself—go ahead, holler it à la Geronimo! or swap it for “Hooked on a Feeling’s” ooga chakas. But the real contentment comes on the plate: just-set eggs nuzzled in an aromatic tomato sauce imbued with coriander, paprika, and cayenne. Begin with the fork, finish with bread for optimal sopping.

Serves: 4

- 1 onion, thinly sliced
 - 3 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil, plus more for drizzling
 - 5 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
 - 3 Anaheim or cubanelle peppers, seeded and cut into thin strips
 - ½ tsp coriander seeds, crushed
 - 1 tsp paprika
 - ¼ tsp cayenne
 - 1 (28 oz) can diced tomatoes
 - 1 small bunch flat-leaf parsley, chopped
 - 4 oz creamy feta, crumbled
 - 4 large eggs
 - flatbread, for serving
- 1 Cook onion in oil in a large sauté pan over medium heat until translucent. Add garlic and peppers, and sauté until peppers begin to soften. Stir in coriander, paprika, and cayenne, and cook, stirring, until fragrant, about 1 minute. Stir in tomatoes, ¾ cup water, and half of parsley. Simmer until fairly thickened, about 25 minutes.
 - 2 Reduce heat to a very gentle simmer. Scatter the feta. Using a spoon, make four indentations in the sauce. Crack an egg into each indentation, partially cover pan, and cook just until eggs are set, about 10-12 minutes. Check seasoning.
 - 3 Sprinkle with remaining parsley and drizzle with olive oil. Serve with plenty of flatbread.

DOCTOR'S ORDERS

In the summer after my junior year of high school, I spent six weeks traveling in Israel. Compared to my bucolic New England home, Israel was impossibly exotic—all craggy desert, primeval ruins, and bauhaus modernity. After a week in the Negev, my best friend and I went to visit her brother, my childhood crush, in Tel Aviv. He promised the best shakshuka in the city. Though I had no idea what he was talking about, I feigned a vague coolness—pretty much my strategy for the entire trip. We followed him through the ancient, winding alleys of Jaffa, the sun burning the blond stone out of which the city seemed to emerge, until we reached Dr. Shakshuka, where multiple generations of a Libyan family presided over the kitchen. It was there that I discovered the wonder of eggs barely cooked in tomato sauce laced with such exotica as cumin, chilies, and coriander, served bubbling furiously in a pan just whisked off the flame. I have eaten and cooked shakshuka many times since, but it's the experience of my 17-year-old self sopping up the spicy sauce with thick, fragrant pita in the middle of that dizzying summer for the very first time that cannot be recreated. LARA BELKIN



STUFFED & CRUMBED ROAST BEEF

Our tender roast beef cocooned in a crumb crust, riddled with black pepper and horseradish will inevitably draw a crowd. And it happens to taste just as good sliced cold on a sandwich the next day.

Serves: 6 to 8

- 2/3 cup finely chopped flat-leaf parsley
- 1/3 cup prepared horseradish, drained
- 1/2 cup dried breadcrumbs
- 6 Tbsp unsalted butter, softened
- 5 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 1/2 Tbsp Dijon
- 1 Tbsp fresh thyme, chopped
- 1 1/2 tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 1 1/2 tsp salt, divided
- 1 (4 1/2 to 5 lb) bottom-round beef roast

1 Preheat oven to 425°F. Stir together parsley, horseradish, crumbs, butter, garlic, mustard, thyme, pepper, and 1/2 tsp salt.

2 Cut lengthwise into middle of roast without going all the way through. Open the roast like a book and make a few additional cuts to score meat. Spread inside with 1/3 of crumb mixture. Fold roast back up. Sprinkle outside of roast all over with remaining tsp salt and crust top with remaining crumb mixture. Tie roast up securely and set on a rack in a roasting pan.

3 Roast 20 minutes, then turn oven down to 325°F and continue roasting until thermometer inserted into center of roast registers 120°F, 35 to 45 minutes longer.

4 Let roast stand 15 minutes before thinly slicing.

FOUND IN TRANSLATION

Northern Europeans have a special understanding for the rituals of winter. The Danish word “hygge” describes something that the English language has never bothered to name: that feeling of warmth, security, and comfort that inhabits cold-weather gatherings with friends and family. More than just coziness, it’s about making time for each other, deliberately slowing down, appreciating and thereby elevating the simple routines of daily life. My mother would marinate a leg of lamb the night before a gathering, and then roast it to tenderness over several hours. There would be candles in every corner and an inexpensive red wine glowing in the decanter like some pagan offering to the goddess of simplicity. We never bothered with a tablecloth but there were always flowers. Often the only side dish was a sauté of string beans, but it was served on grandma’s good china. Every detail mattered but there were no expectations. In the North I grew up in, letting loose and living with abandon are reserved for the summer months, or perhaps for people in warmer climates, but winter brings its own sense of renewal as freezing temperatures reduce the physical space we inhabit, nudging us to curl up and rediscover the things that truly nourish us. The English “hug” likely shares its etymology with hygge, and like the physical gesture, the comforts of these well-lived moments are varied and beyond description. ANJA RIEBENSAHM



BAKED PASTA HIVE

Baked pasta reaches new heights, literally, in this vertical rendering of the oven-bound dish that takes on a honeycomb-like appearance in the pan. Choose a wide-hipped pasta, the most fitting vessel for navigating a sea of velvety béchamel and hearty Bolognese.

Serves: 6

- 2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 3 oz pancetta, finely chopped
- 1 carrot, finely chopped
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 1 celery rib, finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 1 lb ground beef
- 3 Tbsp tomato paste
- ¾ cup dry white wine
- 2¼ cups whole milk, divided
- ¾ lb paccheri or rigatoni
- 2 Tbsp unsalted butter
- 1½ Tbsp all-purpose flour
- ½ cup finely grated Parmigiano

1 Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Cook pancetta, carrot, onion, celery, and garlic until tender, about 10 minutes. Add beef and cook, stirring, until it starts to brown. Add tomato paste, wine, and ¾ cup milk. Simmer, uncovered, until slightly thickened but juicy, about 25 minutes. Lightly season with salt and pepper.

2 Preheat oven to 375°F. While sauce is cooking, boil pasta in salted water until al dente. Drain well. Melt butter in a small saucepan. Stir in flour and cook, stirring, until pale golden. Whisk in remaining 1½ cups milk and bring to a boil. Simmer, whisking, 2 minutes, until lightly thickened. Season with pepper and stir in half the cheese.

3 Pour meat sauce into a 2-qt baking dish and arrange noodles standing up pushing into sauce. Spoon white sauce over pasta and sprinkle with remaining cheese.

4 Bake until sauces are bubbling and top is golden, about 20 minutes.

BIG LOVE

Here's the secret to figuring out how much someone loves you. Divide the amount they do for you by the amount you know they do for you. Growing up, my Zia Rosina would cook my favorite baked pasta dish—penne with tomato sauce, small cubes of mozzarella, sopressata, hard-boiled eggs, and miniature meatballs—whenever my parents dragged me over to visit (sometimes, being an unappreciative preteen boy, I'd refuse). Every time, she would set to the mind-numbing task of rolling armies of tiny meatballs. Tiny, as in, thumbnail size. The repetitive monotony of which I can only hope was a deeply meditative distraction for her. I expressed no appreciation beyond a brief "thanks." Nothing more than a presumption that this meal was my proper compensation for the willingness to tear myself away from the busy work of adolescence. Only when I tried to replicate the dish years later as an adult could I fully appreciate her efforts. The first few times my impatience would result in a frustrating assortment of increasingly large meatballs, reminding me of the unsettling fact that others had done for me what I would not do for them. Two kids later, the payoff is clear. Even the joyless tedium of unappreciated labor is trumped by the intrinsic value of seeing someone you love eat something they love. PIERCARLO VALDESOLLO



DESSERTS

The time has come for the meal's final embrace. A sticky toffee pudding and drunken, fall fruit upside-down cake are dense and comforting; a mont blanc with chestnut purée is a soaring crest of delicate sweetness; a creamy, tea-infused cocktail has a literal warming effect; while apricot-fennel rugelach and jam-filled bomboloni are the dessert embodiments of this issue's theme—each one of them distinctly cocoon-like in their construction.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY Martyn Thompson FOOD STYLING BY Maggie Ruggiero
PROP STYLING BY Theo Vamvounakis

APRICOT-FENNEL RUGELACH & ESKIMO KISS COCKTAIL

Our take on the crescent-shaped treat adds sour cream—a tip passed down to our co-recipe editor Molly Shuster by her grandmother Gertrude—for extra oomph. We think they are best enjoyed with a warm, boozy drink (like, say, our Eskimo Kiss) on a chilly winter day.

Makes: 4 dozen cookies

- 2 sticks unsalted butter, softened
- 1 (8 oz) block cream cheese, softened
- ⅓ cup sour cream
- ½ cup plus 2 Tbsp sugar, divided
- 1½ tsp fennel seeds, chopped
- 2½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 cup apricot jam, strained if chunky
- 1½ tsp cinnamon, divided

ESKIMO KISS COCKTAIL

This belly warmer with chai tea-infused rum was dreamt up by **Yana Volfson**, the head bartender at downtown New York's brother and sister haunts, Freeman's and Peels.

Makes: 1 cocktail

- 1.5 oz (3 Tbsp) chai-infused rum*
- .5 oz (1 Tbsp) walnut liqueur (we like Nux Alpina)
- .5 oz (1 Tbsp) honey syrup*
- .25 oz (½ Tbsp) ginger syrup*
- 1 oz (2 Tbsp) heavy cream
- 1 oz (2 Tbsp) whole milk
- Freshly grated orange peel for garnish

With an electric mixer, beat butter, cream cheese, and sour cream until smooth. Add ½ cup of sugar and the fennel seeds, and beat until light and fluffy. Whisk together flour and salt in a small bowl, then beat into butter mixture just until combined. Divide dough into four pieces then wrap in plastic and chill at least two hours or overnight.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment. Mix jam with 1 tsp cinnamon. In another small bowl, mix remaining ½ tsp cinnamon with remaining 2 Tbsp sugar.

Working with one portion at a time (keeping others chilled), roll dough on a floured surface with a floured pin into an ⅛-inch thick round. Spread evenly with ¼ cup spiced jam. Cut round into 12 wedges. Starting from the wide end of a wedge, roll each like a little croissant. Transfer to baking sheet. Repeat with remaining dough. Sprinkle with cinnamon sugar and chill 20 minutes.

Bake rugelach until pale golden, about 22 minutes. Transfer to a rack to cool.

ESKIMO KISS COCKTAIL: Combine cocktail ingredients and gently heat over a low flame until warm. Garnish with grated peel and serve.

Infused rum: Add 3 Tbsp chai tea (we like Pursuit of Tea Crimson Chai) to 1 (750ml) bottle gold rum (we like Brugal Anejo); it's a cold infusion so the process never goes over heat. Allow to sit for 20 minutes and then strain. You will have enough for 15 cocktails.

Honey syrup: Stir together ¾ cup honey with ¼ cup warm water until combined then chill. Extra syrup will keep in the fridge; you will have enough for 15 cocktails.

Ginger syrup: Simmer 2 oz peeled sliced fresh ginger (about ⅓ cup) and ½ cup sugar with ½ cup water stirring until sugar dissolves. Gently simmer another 15 minutes, then strain and chill. Extra syrup will keep in the fridge; you will have enough for 15 cocktails.





STICKY TOFFEE PUDDING

British by birth, this moist date cake drowned in a sticky toffee sauce will find fans among the sweet-toothed on both sides of the pond.

Serves: 8

CAKE

- 1 cup boiling water
- ½ tsp baking soda
- 1 cup pitted dates, finely chopped
- 1½ cups flour
- 1 tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 stick unsalted butter, plus more for greasing the pan
- ½ cup sugar
- ½ cup dark brown sugar
- 2 large eggs, room temperature
- ½ tsp vanilla extract

TOFFEE SAUCE

- 1¼ cups light brown sugar
- ¾ cup heavy cream
- ½ stick unsalted butter
- ½ tsp vanilla

Cake: Preheat oven to 350°F. Lightly butter a 9-inch springform pan.

Stir together boiling water, baking soda, and dates. Let cool. In another bowl, whisk together flour, baking powder, and salt.

Beat butter with white and brown sugars until light and fluffy. Beat in eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition, then beat in vanilla. Beat in half of flour mixture, then dates along with any liquid, then remaining flour until just combined. Spread into pan and bake until a toothpick comes out clean, 30-35 minutes.

Toffee Sauce: When cake is almost out of the oven, make sauce. Bring sugar, cream, and butter to a boil and continue to boil, stirring constantly, 3 minutes. Stir in vanilla and a pinch of salt and keep warm.

Cool cake 5 minutes, then poke the top of the cake with a skewer about every inch. Generously pour toffee sauce over cake reserving some for serving. Let stand 10 minutes before removing sides from pan.

BRITISH INVASION

Growing up in the suburbs of Detroit, I was charmed by all things British. It started with music. A serious Beatles obsession in fifth grade led to regular trips to Harmony House, a local record store. I'd head straight for the imports: Style Council, Kirsty MacColl, Madness. My love of British songs inspired me to pick up the guitar and start writing my own. A college friend, Mary Timony, asked if I played keyboards too. Her band, Helium, was opening for Sleater Kinney on their European tour and she needed a player. I lied and said I could. I bought a blue Yamaha and covered it with reminder notes and strips of colored tape—I wasn't going to mess this up. Our first show was in London. I recall the pigeons flying around Paddington Station, mounds of dying flowers for Diana at Kensington Palace, cheese n' pickle sandwiches, the austere décor and thin walls of the Columbia Hotel, my first taste of sticky toffee pudding, schlepping our gear to Camden Town, watching Mary, Corin, Janet, and Carrie mesmerize from the stage. Everything felt inspiring, exhilarating, brand new. I was exactly where I wanted to be. KENDALL MEADE

DRUNKEN UPSIDE-DOWN CAKE

The season's bounty is on glorious display in this moist cake of juicy, nestled-together pear halves, and currants, figs, and cranberries that have taken a nice, long whiskey bath. We like to think of it as a lazy, fall fruit cake—short on effort, long on pleasure.

Serves: 8 to 10

½ cup dried cranberries
 2 Tbsp dried currants
 4 dried figs
 1 cinnamon stick
 ½ cup rye whiskey or bourbon
 1¾ sticks butter, softened, divided
 ¾ cup packed light brown sugar
 3 pears, halved and cored
 1½ cups all-purpose flour
 1½ tsp baking powder
 ¼ tsp salt
 1 cup granulated sugar
 2 large eggs
 1 tsp vanilla
 ½ cup whole milk

1 Simmer cranberries, currants, and figs in whiskey with cinnamon stick 5 minutes then let stand 1 hour or overnight. Drain, reserving liquid. Slice figs in half.

2 Preheat oven to 350°F. Lightly butter sides of a 9-inch cake pan. Smear a layer of butter using ¾ of a stick on bottom of pan. Sprinkle evenly with brown sugar. Arrange pears, cut sides down, and dried fruit over sugar.

3 Stir together flour, baking powder, and salt.

4 Beat granulated sugar and remaining butter with an electric mixer until pale and light. Add eggs, 1 at a time, beating well after each. Beat in vanilla and reserved whiskey. On low speed, beat in half of flour mixture, then milk, then remaining flour. Gently spread batter over fruit.

5 Bake until cake is golden brown and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, about 45 minutes.

Let cake stand in its pan set on a rack 10 minutes before inverting onto a plate to cool completely.

A SEPARATE PIECE

It was the ultimate treat at my house growing up: A freshly-baked, made-from-scratch sour-cherry pie, redolent of almond extract, extra chewy, with tapioca pearls and a little burnt around the edges—just the way Dad liked it. We didn't come by them very often, but on my dad's birthday, we were guaranteed to see my mom rolling out the pie dough. Later, we would all hover by the oven, waiting to swoop in for a taste of the tart, gooey treat as soon as the timer went off. My mom eventually learned to make the pies in sets of two so we could all partake in Dad's favorite post-birthday tradition: pie for breakfast. But when you go from a household of six to a household of two (as I have), pie-making becomes a weighty endeavor. Literally. Recently, I came by the perfect solution, just in time for the advent of fall fruit season: hand pies. The right size for an individual serving of pear or apple goodness, and easily freezable for anytime enjoyment. Plus, there's the instant gratification factor: pop one in the microwave for two minutes and you've got a little slice of heaven, just right for one. TOMMYE FITZPATRICK





Maryn Thompson

JAM-FILLED BOMBOLONI

The language of doughnuts is an international one. That sweetened cushion of fried dough has incarnations, and fans the world over—there are *churros*, sugar-dipped batons, in Mexico, *balushahi* yogurt fritters in India, and jelly-stuffed *sufganiyot* in Israel, to name a few. But for our doughnut inspiration we went to Italy, home of the *bombolone*. Translation? Big bomb. And our sugar-dusted, jam-packed *bombas* are just that. They would even pass muster with the most devout acolyte of all: Homer Simpson. Mmm...doughnuts.

Makes: 12 doughnuts

- 1½ tsp active dry yeast
- 1 cup warmed whole milk, (105° to 115°F)
- 2 large eggs, at room temperature
- ½ vanilla bean, scraped
- 3 Tbsp unsalted butter, melted and cooled
- 3½ cups all-purpose flour, divided, plus more for dusting
- ¼ cup sugar
- 1 tsp salt
- 6 to 8 cups vegetable oil for frying
- confectioners sugar and raspberry jam for serving

1 Sprinkle yeast over milk in the bowl of a stand mixer. Let stand 5 minutes until creamy. If yeast doesn't foam, start over with new yeast.

2 Whisk eggs with vanilla seeds and add to mixer bowl along with butter, flour, sugar, and salt. Beat with paddle attachment at medium speed to combine, then switch to a dough hook (if you have one), increase speed, and beat until smooth and elastic, 5 minutes. Scrape dough from sides of bowl and cover with a clean kitchen towel. Let stand until almost doubled, about 1 hour.

3 On a lightly floured surface, roll dough into a ½-inch thick round. Using a 3-inch ring cutter, cut 12 rounds and transfer them to a lightly floured baking sheet. Cover with a kitchen towel.

4 Heat 2-inches of oil in a large saucepan to 350°F. Have a paper towel-lined plate and a baking sheet lined with a cooling rack by the stove. Fry bomboloni in batches, 3 at a time, until golden and puffed, about 1 minute per side. Dab on paper towels then transfer to rack to cool.

5 Dust bomboloni with confectioners sugar. Poke a small hole in top of bomboloni and using a piping bag fitted with a small tip or a resealable plastic bag with small corner cut off, pipe 1 or 2 tsp of jam into each. Serve immediately.

A DOUGHNUT HAIKU

Sweet. Glazed. Morning jewel.
A doughnut is forever.
To this ring, be true. *FV*



Maryn Thompson

CHESTNUT MONT BLANC

The perpetually snow-capped peaks of this dessert's namesake, the highest mountain in the Alps, are recast on the plate as a mound of sweetened chestnut ribbons—truly, a sight to behold.

Makes: 6 individual pastries

¼ cup granulated sugar

1 (15 oz can) unsweetened chestnut paste (crème de marrons), divided

5 Tbsp unsalted butter, softened, divided

1 large egg

⅛ tsp almond extract

3 Tbsp all-purpose flour

½ cup confectioners sugar

½ tsp vanilla

2 oz bittersweet chocolate, chopped

Preheat oven to 400°F. Butter and flour a standard 6-muffin tin.

Cakes: Beat granulated sugar and 2 Tbsp chestnut paste with an electric mixer until smooth and light. Add 3 Tbsp butter and beat until fluffy. Beat in egg and almond extract. Slowly beat in flour and a pinch of salt until combined. Spoon into tin, about 2 Tbsp in each well.

Bake until set with darker edges, 9 to 11 minutes. Cool completely on a rack.

Chestnut Strands: Beat together remaining chestnut paste (about 1½ cups), confectioners sugar, and vanilla until pale and fluffy. Beat in remaining 2 Tbsp butter until smooth. Transfer all but 2 Tbsp to a piping bag fitted with a multi-opening or spaghetti-style piping tip (we like Wilton/Ateco 134 or 234). Chill until ready to serve.

Melt chocolate in a small bowl set over simmering water or carefully in a microwave until just melted. Stir in reserved 2 Tbsp chestnut mixture. Cool to room temperature. Spoon or pipe about 1 Tbsp chocolate filling onto each cake and pipe over with strands of chestnut.

ON CHESTNUTS AND FAMILY

"There is probably a smell of roasted chestnuts and other good comfortable things all the time, for we are telling Winter Stories...round the Christmas fire; and we have never stirred, except to draw a little nearer to it." So wrote Charles Dickens. Nat King Cole would further bond the humble nut and the holidays when he crooned about roasting them over an open fire, Jack Frost nipping at your nose. For my parents, though, chestnuts hold memories beyond the Christmas calendar. In his Veneto town, my dad's grandmother would prepare them *caldaroste* in a perforated pan over the hearth every fall; once charred, she laid them out on cotton cloths to absorb any perspiration, my dad standing guard. As a child, my mom spent autumn days in her Calabrian village gathering fallen chestnuts with her grandfather cracking their spindly outer shells with a rock, and tucking the nuts in her pockets. Once home, she would boil her bounty; then, one by one, cut a hole in the top of each, squeezing the sweet nutmeat into her mouth. They are stories I recall on my lazy holiday afternoons spent fireside with a bowl of blackened chestnuts and a glass of Amarone. As good and comfortable a thing as Dickens described. *FV*





ON PATIENCE, HOT DISHES, AND COLD NIGHTS

THE LONG WAIT When I first moved in with my boyfriend years ago, my mom sent me three boxes from Crate & Barrel, which included a wooden cutting board, a set of knives, and a cast iron roaster. The latter item I was, I will admit, totally unprepared to use. My MO in the kitchen up until then was to push and prod ingredients around in a pan over the stovetop where I had complete control. Little did I know that time and space can have their own transformational job to do. In cooking, whether it's a daylong-braised meat, a slow-simmering sauce, or a loaf of grainy bread, patience could lead to the best kind of metamorphosis. The oven, then, was the key to a softer and sweeter meal. When we moved to L.A. this year, my dad gave us a set of pots and pans, which while thoughtful, was a symbol of the immediate-gratification mentality I was trying to grow beyond. He did, I know, have a message to send—when you make a big change, sometimes you have to go back to basics. The truth is, I left the cast iron roaster at a friend's, thinking it was too big and heavy to bring along, and the pots and pans are still in storage—my mom's gift had come too early, my dad's too late. And me, I'm still struggling to employ the patience and trust to let my new life emerge, both in and out of the kitchen. EMILY KRAMER

IRON WILL

One side of my family goes back to the Choctaw Nation, one of five civilized tribes who had a written language and took on the white man's ways, including style of dress and education. My great-grandmother traveled on the "Trail of Tears" when the tribe was forced to relocate from Mississippi to Oklahoma, eventually marrying and settling in the tiny town of Red Oak. There, she and her husband ran a farm and raised eight children. Great-grandma Davis was the anchor: the keeper of the flame and the cooker of the food. They raised everything they ate—organic farmers in the truest sense—and the main cooking utensils in her kitchen were all cast iron, among them skillets and a lidded, Dutch oven. Cast iron is special. Cast iron must be cared for like a home and a child. Cast iron will last forever, like the love it brings through food. As the years went by the skillets and Dutch oven were handed down to her daughters, then granddaughters, and finally great-granddaughters—and that's how they ended up with me on the Colorado ranch I call home. Although I used and cared for the skillets, the Dutch oven sat forlornly in the barn. Rather than let it rust, I gifted it to one of my girlfriends who enjoys camping and cooking over an open fire. She cleaned it up, gave it some love, and now uses it all the time to make food for her own family. And that's exactly what Great-grandma Davis would have wanted. LINDA MANNIX

Photograph by Winona Barton-Ballentine

WARMING TREND

Duluth, Minnesota was hit with a storm in March 2012 that turned the city into the manifestation of a Christmas card's winter wonderland. My thin windowpanes shook loudly within their cracked, wooden frames; the floor and walls creaked as the house bent to the gusts; and the snow began to fall in sheets. Neighbors skied past my window on their way to get boxes of Kraft Mac and Cheese from a gas station. Snow piled up over every inch of our neighborhood while behind closed doors steam fogged crockpot lids. This was the Minnesota many had warned me about when I left the Pacific Northwest to study the Midwestern casserole, a.k.a the "hotdish." But the focus of my studies was born out of these winters and the lifestyle that they invoke. Following the demise of Duluth's steel industry in the 1980s, church basements and dining rooms flooded with community members looking for a place to utilize the canned foods they could afford and simultaneously heal broken spirits in the company of friends. Today, the "hotdish" still manages to hold communities together through hard times and winter months, giving purpose to leftovers buried deep in freezers and affordable corner market simplicities like Campbell's Cream of

Anything soup or tin-can tuna. Plastic-bag mystery meats, gelatinous soups and, yes, even tater tots are transformed into casseroles hearty enough to satisfy an entire rec room full of people. While many Minnesotans will admit that the "hotdish" is rarely a culinary masterpiece—more an attempt to feed hordes of hungry people while cutting corners—its ability to warm the belly on those blustery winter nights is masterful enough.

ALICA FORNERET

TRANSFORMATION

Some say yoga is a path towards an unbound state—the practice transforming the student until they reach transcendence. Something achieved, as with most kinds of transformation, with time and experience. But in the kitchen, an oven, a few hours, and patience are all you need for metamorphosis. A classic toad in the hole and profiteroles crescendo slowly; an ancho-braised pork takes advantage of a lengthy oven stint to develop layers of flavor; fish in cartoccio's wrapping paper allows ingredients to mingle and emerge as something singular; and an herb-and-cheese soufflé and chef Jim Lahey's famous no-knead bread gradually balloon until they reach a full swell. A boundless state.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY Johnny Miller FOOD STYLING BY Maggie Ruggiero
PROP STYLING BY Theo Vamvounakis

FIRST PLAIT When it comes to cooking, I'm more of an assembler than a technician. It's why I've never followed in the bread-baking footsteps of my mother, convinced that it requires a level of patience and perfection that I simply do not possess. Although I watched her bake challah hundreds of times—often helping to braid the ropes of fluffy dough—I'd never attempted it on my own. But I couldn't imagine a Jewish High Holidays away from home without it this fall—even if it meant having to go it alone. With trepidation, I tentatively incorporated all of the flour into the egg, vanilla, and oil mixture. I kneaded the dough while stealing nervous glances at the timer that I set up on my iPhone, and checked on the bread as it rose every 20 minutes, convinced, until it finally doubled in size, that it never would. But when it came time to braid, my brain turned off and my hands took over, softly weaving the airy, delicate dough into loaves, memory guiding each rope into place. And the outcome? The warm, just-torn hunks of my own challah tasted almost like my mother's, and I felt a sense of accomplishment in the kitchen beyond anything I've ever experienced. There are a couple things that I'll need to fix—my salt levels, the rack placement in my oven—but that's okay. That's for next time. LEAH MENNIES

IN PANE VERITAS
Chefs reflect on bread.

HELIN JUNG

"Bread starts a meal. It's an announcement. We've begun. You're alerting your brain and mouth that there is more to come. It's one of the most satisfying feelings in the world. We're all starving. Bread is a relief."

—Chris Pandel, *The Bristol, Balena, Chicago, IL*

"My father would wake up at 5 AM every day to pick up the first baguettes from the bakery as they were coming out of the oven. He was very particular about the crust. It needed to be blonde, and the inside had to melt in your mouth. Beautiful."

—Dominique Crenn, *Atelier Crenn, San Francisco, CA*

"Every loaf you make is an investment—of time, material, emotional management. There's a lot of waiting

involved. That it takes at least a day for really great bread makes the payoff that much greater. Good things come to those who wait."

—Peter Endriss, *Runner & Stone, Brooklyn, NY*

"It's alive. There are things happening with it constantly. It's why people name their starters—I've definitely heard people call it a bitch."

—Seth Siegel-Gardner, *The Pass & Provisions, Houston, TX*

"When I started making bread, I had only failures. I had to start treating it like a parent. You understand that there are outside forces you can't control, but you do everything you can. It's not perfect every day, but that's why the success is so enjoyable."

—Nancy Silverton, *La Brea Bakery, Los Angeles, CA*

"Almost nothing rivals a proper, warm, rustic loaf.

I don't care what it is—French bread, ciabatta—it's all good. With butter and some sea salt: It's the highlight of your day."

—Karen Hatfield, *Hatfield's Restaurant, Los Angeles, CA*

"Baking bread is like having a girlfriend and being in a storm at the same time. You have to dress for the weather and be open to communication. If you're paying attention, it's spectacular. If you're not, and only thinking about yourself, it's not going to work out."

—Matthew Dillon, *Bar Sajor, Seattle, WA*

"We're always searching for new pleasures but there's a reason we've been making bread for so long. It's the simplest, most seemingly basic combination, and yet it's still one of the most rewarding. Everything else is just a novelty. Bread is life."

—Zak Pelaccio, *Fish & Game, Hudson, NY*

WE ARE SCIENTISTS

There's a chill in the air, the hours of sunlight are waning, and the hands of the clock move slower. Fall softly sets foot and the oven bids for your presence. The process of making bread contains layers of dedication: formulating the starter, mixing the dough to the proper consistency, letting it rise at the perfect temperature, and baking it just so. In my father's eyes, there was always my sister, me, and his sourdough starter—his third child that must be fed and nurtured with nearly as much love and respect as the two of us girls. Saturday mornings at my parents' house means enjoying coffee while witnessing the ritual that is my dad feeding his starter in the makeshift kitchen lab. Wearing an apron that is more scientist than baker, his hands covered in the precisely balanced mixture of aging flour and water. Kneading the supple dough on the table, every movement careful and deliberate, soon becomes second nature—muscle memory at its finest. And yet, there is an all-important factor that extends beyond any baker's time, watchful eye and attentive hands. Bread-making is, quite simply, trusting the science. Fermentation promises the yeast will eat the sugar, carbon dioxide will form airy pockets, your bread will rise. Chemical changes rapidly transform dough to bread in the heat of the oven. No scientific process can ever explain the miraculous sensory overload when you open the oven door, but your life will be all the better for it.

EMILY KASTNER



JIM LAHEY'S NO-KNEAD BREAD

The loaves from New York's Sullivan Street Bakery are the stuff of carb legend, so for a dough recipe we felt compelled to go to the bread trailblazer himself, Jim Lahey. Here, he shares the one for his much-loved, no-knead, long-fermented rustic bread.

Yields: One 10-inch round loaf; 1 ¼ pounds

3 cups (400 grams) bread flour
 1 ¼ tsp (8 grams) table salt
 ¼ tsp (1 gram) instant
 or other active dry yeast
 1 ⅓ cups (300 grams) cool
 (55 to 65°F) water
 wheat bran, cornmeal or
 additional flour for dusting

EQUIPMENT

An ovenproof 4½ to 5½-quart
 heavy pot (cast iron or enamel)

Stir together flour, salt, and yeast in a medium bowl. Stir in water with a wooden spoon until you have a wet, sticky dough, about 30 seconds. Make sure it's really sticky to the touch; if not, mix in another 1 to 2 Tbsp of water. Cover bowl with a plate or plastic wrap and sit at room temperature, out of direct sunlight, until the surface is dotted with bubbles and dough more than doubles in size, 12 to 18 hours. This slow rise—fermentation—is the key to flavor.

Generously dust a work surface with flour. Scrape dough out in one piece. The dough will cling in long, thin strands and will be loose and sticky—do not add flour. Use lightly floured hands to lift the edges of dough in toward the center, tucking them in to make a round.

Place a tea towel (not terry) on your work surface and generously dust it with wheat bran, cornmeal, or flour. With floured hands gently transfer dough onto towel with seam side down. If the dough is tacky, dust the top lightly with the bran, cornmeal, or flour. Fold the towel loosely over the dough and place it in a warm, draft-free spot until almost doubled, 1 to 2 hours.

At least 30 minutes before the end of the second rise, preheat the covered pot on a rack in the lower third position in a 475°F pre-heated oven. Carefully remove the preheated pot and uncover it. Unfold the towel, lightly dust the dough with flour or bran, and quickly but gently invert it into the pot, seam side up. Cover the pot and bake 30 minutes.

Remove the lid and continue baking until the bread is a deep chestnut color but not burnt, 15 to 30 minutes more. Very carefully lift the bread out of the hot pot and place it on a rack to cool thoroughly. Let cool at least 1 hour before eating.

TOAD IN THE HOLE

This centuries-old British dish was so named for its appearance, which suggested, well, toads peering out from holes. For ours, we blanketed plump sausages in a rich, eggy batter, then let the oven nudge its gradual rise. Rest assured a few licks of our so-called toads might just have a narcotic effect on the palate.

Serves: 4

1 cup all-purpose flour

2 large eggs

$\frac{2}{3}$ cup whole milk

$\frac{3}{4}$ tsp dried mustard powder

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup beer, preferably pale ale

2 Tbsp olive oil

6 large mild fresh pork sausages

1 Tbsp unsalted butter,
at room temperature

Preheat oven to 425°F. Add flour, eggs, milk, dry mustard, and $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt to blender and blend until frothy. Stir in beer. (Alternatively, you can whisk it all together like a mad person.) Let stand while roasting sausages.

Heat oil in a large ovenproof skillet set over medium heat. Brown sausages then transfer pan to oven and roast 8 minutes.

Melt butter in hot skillet and pour batter over sausages. Roast until pudding is puffed, crusty, and deep golden, about 25 to 35 minutes.

WHAT'S IN A NAME

When I was growing up, my family rarely visited restaurants. If we ate out it was usually pub grub returning from a summer fête, or from a trudge around the grounds of a manor house. My aperitif was always the froth from the top of my father's pint; my main, a cheese and onion roll washed down with Panda Pop lemonade, usually battling envious wasps. I distinctly remember the first time I heard of Toad in the Hole. It was listening to my parents' discussion of what seemed palatable from Dog & Duck's limited culinary offerings. A toad? In the whole? Don't get me wrong, I wasn't just some naïve eight year old, oblivious to extreme cuisine; I'd seen *Temple of Doom* by now. Frogs legs could be forgiven at a push, but this was a toad in the whole! That included the face and unmentionables, warts and all. Maybe it came out on a skewer or perhaps slapped between two slices of bread? Who knew? My parents never did order it; they weren't insane, after all. I was, however, left incredulous at their idea to share what sounded even worse: a bowl of Spotted Dick. WILLIAM MORLEY



FISH IN CARTOCCIO WITH FENNEL

Call it *in cartoccio* or *en papillote*; the meaning, and preparation, are the same. A gift-like presentation—here with white fish, fennel, fronds and all—carefully wrapped in a round of parchment paper, then left to intermingle in the oven. Once ready, tear it open with the same gusto employed for holiday presents.

Serves: 4

- 1 medium head fennel, quartered, cored, and sliced ¼-inch thick, reserving a handful of fronds
- 4 (6 oz) pieces of filleted white fleshed fish (we like haddock)
- 1 large lemon, zested and halved
- 4 Tbsp capers
- extra virgin olive oil, for drizzling
- parchment paper

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Cut 4 large pieces of parchment, about 15-inches long. Scatter ¼ of the fennel horizontally across each sheet, about ⅓ down the length of the paper. Top each with a piece of fish. Squeeze lemon halves over and sprinkle with zest, capers, and chopped fennel fronds. Drizzle lightly with olive oil and season with pepper.

Bring the long side of parchment over, then fold edges together, inch by inch, twisted in a rope style to form an airtight packet, much like a calzone. Place packets on a rimmed baking sheet and bake until fish is just cooked through, 12-15 minutes.

THE SEA INSIDE

Growing up, my mother spent her childhood summers—her childhood, if story volume is any judge—in a rickety house on the shore of a bay in New Jersey. It was the summer castle of six sunburnt children. On the dock just down from the house, they would go crabbing and fishing, the six kids and my grandfather, their savage chieftain. He once caught a flounder with his bare hands. When the fish was brought in and fried in butter, they'd stand around the stove and eat from the skillet. My mother is still the fastest eater I know. Sometimes the bay would rise up and beat at the castle, yowling, trying to get its fish back. Eventually the kids abandoned the castle to raise their own children, which is how my brother and I came to spend summers on the Jersey Shore: Granddad baking clams over the grill, my cousins and I racing lobsters, naming them and then boiling them, the yowling bay having done little to blunt the barbaric tendencies of large groups of hungry Irish-Catholic children. Older now, wintering in the city and housebound by cold, we serve fish *en papillote*. In January, the fish is clear-eyed on its ice beds. At the table we revel in the unwrapping of brown parchment packets damp with steam, smelling the bright flavors of lawless childhood summers. Only now we use plates. MAUD DOYLE

HERBY SOUFFLÉ

A soufflé can be dish as metaphor—successful preparation, an emblem of one’s kitchen prowess. That it means “puffed up”, is fitting then, since cooking one without collapse can do just that for the ego.

Serves: 6

- 7 large eggs
- 3 Tbsp unsalted butter
- 1 large clove garlic, finely chopped
- ¼ cup all purpose flour
- 1 cup whole milk
- ⅓ cup plus 2 Tbsp grated Parmigiano, divided
- 1 cup grated Gruyère
- ¼ cup chopped parsley
- 1 Tbsp finely chopped rosemary
- 1 tsp chopped thyme
- ¼ tsp ground nutmeg
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp black pepper

Carefully separate the eggs, reserving 5 yolks in a small bowl and 7 whites in a larger bowl.

Melt butter with garlic in a medium saucepan over medium heat, cooking just until fragrant, about 1 minute. Add flour and cook, stirring constantly, 1 minute. Slowly whisk in milk. Cook, whisking constantly, until thickened, about 1 minute. Remove from heat. Stir in yolks one at a time, stirring well after each addition. Transfer to a medium bowl. Cool completely, stirring occasionally.

Preheat oven to 375°F. Butter a 6-cup soufflé dish and sprinkle with 2 Tbsp Parmigiano, knocking out excess.

Stir Gruyère, herbs, spices, and remaining ⅓ cup Parmigiano into cooled soufflé base. Using an electric mixer, beat the whites with a pinch of salt at medium speed until frothy. Increase the speed and beat until you have stiff peaks. Fold ¼ of the whites into the base, then gently fold the lightened base into remaining egg whites. Spoon into prepared pan and bake until risen and golden-brown, 35-40 minutes. Serve immediately.

PRACTICAL MAGIC

When my father, a magician by training, took over the household cooking, my siblings and I were more than a little nervous. Until then, Dad’s dishes were of a haphazard, one-pot nature (once, when my mother was gone, we survived for a week on scrambled eggs dotted with cut-up hot dogs). To add to our anxiety, Dad, a consummate showman, only wanted to attempt splashy, ambitious dishes: spanakopita, vol-au-vents and, the centerpiece of his new pursuit—a delicate cheese soufflé. Once a week, a menu heralding the fare to come would be tacked to the fridge. Every week, there was the soufflé and every week, there was the inevitable failure—a too-runny soufflé, one that fell, one that burned around the edges. Though the failures were frequent, they never ceased to be painful for my father (and for us, who had to eat them). Of all the things he could be to the family, it seemed the role of nourisher-in-chief, would not be one of them. And then, one day, it happened. Through the glass door of the oven, we watched as the soufflé began to rise up over the top of the porcelain dish into a perfect, delicate pouff. They say that there are nine categories of magic tricks. Levitation is only one. As we tucked into the delicate, airy, perfect soufflé, we knew Dad had also managed the art of transformation. AERIEL BROWN





ANCHO-BRAISED PORK

A brief prep lays the foundation for a very leisurely braise—about four episodes of whatever TV show you are catching up on—when the real transformation happens: a melding of flavors, a rendering of meat into fall-off-the-bone tenderness. Have something starchy on hand (like corn tortillas or mashed potatoes) to sop up that sauce.

Serves: 6 to 8

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| <p>1 (4 to 5 lb) skinless bone-in pork shoulder</p> <p>1¾ tsp salt, divided</p> <p>3 ancho chiles, seeds and stems discarded</p> <p>3 cups boiling water</p> <p>1 onion, chopped</p> <p>3 garlic cloves, chopped</p> <p>3 Tbsp brown sugar</p> <p>about 2 Tbsp canned chipotles in adobo</p> <p>2 Tbsp tomato paste</p> <p>3 whole cloves</p> <p>2 Tbsp olive oil or vegetable oil</p> <p>1 Tbsp unsweetened cocoa</p> <p>1 cinnamon stick</p> | <p>Preheat oven to 350°F. Sprinkle meat with ¾ tsp salt and let stand at room temperature while making purée.</p> <p>Soak anchos in boiling water to soften, about 15 minutes. Transfer chiles to a blender with a slotted spoon with ½ cup chili soaking liquid (reserving the remainder). Blend with onion, garlic, brown sugar, chipotles, tomato paste, cloves, and remaining tsp salt. Purée until very smooth.</p> <p>Heat oil in a large Dutch oven over medium heat. Add purée and cook, stirring, until it turns a rich brick color, about 8 minutes. Stir in remaining soaking liquid and cocoa. Add pork and cinnamon and bring to a simmer. Cover and braise in oven, basting occasionally, until very tender, 3½ to 4½ hours.</p> <p>Skim fat from sauce. If sauce is thin, transfer meat to a bowl and loosely cover. Simmer sauce until thickened. Ease meat from bones with a fork and pour sauce over.</p> |
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SLOW MOTION

Sundays in my household are slow-cooking Sundays. A day dedicated to the therapeutic task of chopping and the alchemical art of braising, simmering, and roasting. Ingredient prep segues into a rhythmic dance set to the sounds of Talking Heads (David Byrne, it turns out, provides the perfect tempo for dicing and julienne-ing). Ginger and toasted Indian spices for Ayurvedic moong bean daal, a classic *mirepoix* for lentil stew, garlic cloves galore for Moroccan lamb shanks. The whole place fills with the aromas of onions caramelizing, juices oozing, skin browning. Michael Pollan's *Cooked* is my stove-side companion. I'm convinced the time, patience, and discipline involved (refrain from poking or lifting the lid too much, but never stray too far from the pot!) is what makes the results so flavorful. You can taste the care imparted in every morsel. But the real joy of slow cooking is giving over to the process; putting it all in a pot and trusting that it will come together, deliciously, just as the universe (and indeed, the evolution of human civilization, argues Pollan) intended. NATALIE SHUKUR



CHOCOLATE-DRENCHED PROFITEROLES

The ultimate dessert triumvirate: airy golden puffs meet decadent chocolate sauce meet ice cream, each ingredient transformed, elevated into something greater by the very virtue of being together.

Makes: about 18 two-bite sized puffs

¼ cup whole milk

6 Tbsp unsalted butter,
cut into pieces

1 tsp sugar

¾ cup all purpose flour

3 large eggs

⅓ cup heavy cream

4 oz bittersweet chocolate,
finely chopped

1 Tbsp light corn syrup

¼ tsp vanilla

vanilla ice cream or sweetened
whipped cream for filling

Preheat oven to 400°F. Prepare a pastry bag with a ½-inch tip or cut a ½-inch opening in the corner of a resealable plastic bag.

Line 2 baking sheets with parchment. Bring ½ cup water, milk, butter, sugar, and a pinch of salt to a boil in a medium saucepan, stirring to dissolve sugar and melt butter. Add flour and stir vigorously with a wooden spoon until doughy. Continue stirring over low heat until dough is shiny and pulls away from the sides of the pan, 2 to 3 minutes. Remove from heat and cool 15 minutes.

Vigorously beat in eggs with the wooden spoon, one at a time, beating thoroughly between each addition. It'll be squidgy at first, but then egg will absorb into dough.

Transfer dough to pastry bag. Pipe walnut-size mounds onto baking sheets about 2 inches apart. Flatten any peaks with a moistened fingertip. Bake until puffed and golden brown, 20 to 25 minutes. Cool completely.

Meanwhile, bring cream to a boil. Remove from heat and stir in chocolate until smooth. Then stir in corn syrup and vanilla. Keep warm. Slice profiteroles open and fill with ice cream or whipped cream. Slather with warm chocolate and serve.

SWEET CHARITY

Many years ago, while living in London, I traveled to Paris with the man I was dating at the time to meet his parents. We took the Eurostar and the closer we got, the more the butterflies in my stomach flit around in anticipation. They met us at Gare du Nord and we walked to a nearby bistro for dinner. I barely touched the bloody steak I ordered, while trying to make polite half-English, half-French conversation. Then, dessert arrived. A beautiful plate of profiteroles stuffed with vanilla ice cream that the waiter ceremoniously bathed in glistening chocolate until they were practically swimming on the plate. One bite, and I was at ease, my nerves instantly soothed by this divine puff of sweetness. Profiteroles: the greatest butterfly tamer of all. MICHELE OUTLAND

THE WAY OF THE FLESH



A sopressata's dusty white sleeve, a labyrinthine web of caul fat, a supermarket lunch meat's waxy red sheath, a pair of nude pantyhose. Casings which, much like those found in nature, protect the abundance inside. Like a second skin. Because, as the saying goes, no glove, no love.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARCUS NILSSON
FOOD STYLING BY MAGGIE RUGGIERO PROP STYLING BY THEO VAMVOUNAKIS

IN COLLABORATION WITH RECENTLY-OPENED NEW YORK BUTCHERSHOP HUDSON & CHARLES











SILK

Silk. The word alone is a provocation. When uttered, the word whispers like the texture itself. A lush cascade—against the skin and on the plate it has a come-hither quality. Here, the tactile fabric inspired a ginger and chili-drenched silken tofu; a delicate screen of melting potatoes; a sumptuously draped handkerchief pasta; a web of diaphanous, vegetable-threaded Korean noodles; and, the silkiest dessert of all, a chocolate mousse, here permeated with cardamom and coffee. All beckon; all will prove hard to resist.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY Gentl and Hyers FOOD STYLING BY Maggie Ruggiero
PROP STYLING BY Theo Vamvounakis

MATERIAL WITNESS

As silk goes, so goes civilization. Silk is power, silk is money; like both, it tends to be slippery in our grasp. Its use in China dates back as early as 4000 B.C.E. For millennia, it was earmarked for emperors, and it remains a luxury good. The Silk Road brought the prized fiber to India, the Ottoman Empire, Rome, and France. It is the path through which Alexander the Great and Genghis Khan expanded their empires, through which spices and scents reached the West, through which bubonic plague dispersed.

Silk is a pleasure obtained by means of violence. *Bombyx mori* worm larvae are in most cases boiled alive, their cocoons unspooled, to harvest threads with greater tensile strength than steel. The fiber's structure is prismatic, reflecting color in the light. But silk is more than fabric; it's a texture, a mood, the very quality of ethereality. Silk is a solid that moves and feels like liquid. Since the advent of petroleum, scientists have tried to replicate it. They can't. Silk is natural. Silk is special. Silk is decadent, and has, at times, been associated with moral decay. Islamic law forbids men from wearing it; the Roman Senate tried to ban it. Declared Seneca the Younger (3 B.C.E.—65 C.E.): "...I [cannot see how] clothes of silk, if materials that do not hide the body, nor even one's decency, can be called clothes... Wretched flocks of maids labour so that the adulteress may be visible through her thin dress, so that her husband has no more acquaintance than any outsider or foreigner with his wife's body."

Silk, in other words, is sexy. And so is food, and silken foods especially so. A pliant homemade tofu or dessert mousse delivers flavor in its purest form. Glass noodles have the crystalline beauty and deceptive resilience of silken strands of hair. Elegantly folded *mandilli de seta* evoke fine Italian pocket squares, treasure tucked inside, waiting to be undressed. These dishes, like lovers, delight the eye and the body, and send the mind someplace else—to the memory, or the fantasy—of the richest or happiest or most beautiful you've ever felt. Seduce a dinner companion, or yourself.

EVIANA HARTMAN

CARRY ON

You can't make a silk purse out of a sow's ear. The old adage by Jonathan Swift implied that something precious cannot be born of something common. But, in 1921, Massachusetts chemist Arthur D. Little aimed to do just that. After much experimentation, he found a way to transform pork by-product into silk-like strands, then, wove said strands into two purses (one is in the Smithsonian). Quite literally making silk purses out of sows's ears. Proving there is always room for innovation. Call it, silken words of wisdom. *EV*

ONCE MORE, WITH FEELING

Eating is performed in four acts: taste, appearance, smell, and texture. When we talk about food we tend to focus on the first three, but what about texture? How food feels—in our fingers, at the bottom of a fork, at the tip of our tongues—affects how it tastes. Texture provides character, identity. Boiled eggs with firm whites and jiggly yellows. Crisp sheets of toasted nori. A raw oyster that wiggles when you pick up its shell. The holy trinity that is gooey marshmallows, melted chocolate, and coarse graham crackers. Texture also creates sound—the loud crunch of graham crackers softened by the hush of biting into that marshmallow. Foods with distinct textures will always be the most polarizing. Lucky for the hesitant among us though, cooking itself is an act of transforming textures. We mash, roast, char, and chop, and each gesture reveals a new side to an ingredient. It may be the case that a rose is a rose is a rose, but that doesn't hold true for a carrot—whole and raw is certainly not the same as shredded in a salad, roasted not the same as mashed into a purée. Shellfish, particularly that of the slimy, fleshy, briny variety can often find itself on the losing texture team. But perhaps silk can make it more appealing? In her 1968 silk collage, "Fish Balls in Lobster Sauce," the Swedish artist Marie-Louise Ekman paints a more convincing argument. On a dusty pink tablecloth lies a plate of floppy fish balls. A few crescent-shaped shrimp are scattered between the fish cakes, and to the right of the plate, lettuce dangles over the edge. The food itself looks quotidian, unappetizing even; however, its texture? That is most intriguing. *SASHA GORA*



SPICY SILKEN TOFU

Tofu, that quivering opaline block of soaked soybean curd, first arrived in Japan around the 12th century AD, shepherded there by vegetarian Buddhist monks from China. But in the States, it had a most unlikely proponent: Ben Franklin. In a letter written to friend John Bartram in 1770, he describes a “special cheese” made from beans he called “Chinese caravances.” Cheese not so much, special definitely—particularly our version wherein the silken cube is set afloat in a pool of chili, ginger, and soy.

Serves: 4

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1 (14 oz) container silken tofu | Drain tofu, cover with plastic wrap, and bring to room temperature. |
| 1 clove garlic, finely chopped | |
| 1 Tbsp finely chopped ginger | Sauté ginger and garlic in canola oil in a small skillet over medium-low heat, stirring, 1 minute. |
| 2 tsp canola oil | Add chili paste, soy sauce, and sesame oil, and bring to a gentle simmer. Turn tofu block into skillet and gently warm through, 2 minutes. |
| 1 tsp hot chili paste (such as sambal oelek) | |
| ¼ cup low-sodium soy sauce | Carefully transfer tofu to a serving dish and |
| 1 tsp sesame oil | spoon sauce over. Scatter with scallions and serve immediately. |
| 2 scallions, thinly sliced on bias | |

DIVINE ORDER

1798. Mootori Norinaga, the renowned Japanese scholar, writes his famous 49-volume commentary on the myth *Kojiki* and brings his theory of *mono no aware* to prominence. It is in nature’s transience that we find true beauty. The translation is usually said to be “the pathos of things.” In Japan several years ago, I traveled to a mountain village called Koya-san, taking two trains, a bus, and then a long upwards-moving tram through forests of ancient cedars as straight and thick as columns. At the temple that night, the monks provided a meal of tofu. One after another, alone in our bare room, we were presented with courses of the staple protein in all its various forms: bean curds, nests of skin and rind, earthy broth, silky tofu aged and served in precise porcelain bowls on a square lacquer tray. *Mono no aware* is at the heart of the haiku form. It’s the conviction that through close observation, we find something of the world in the most unremarkable moments. Each bowl contained no more than two or three bites of curd. And years later, I remember that a candle lit beneath a fine porcelain bowl illuminated the silky threads of tofu skin in broth. They tasted of the earth. MAUD DOYLE

SILK HANDKERCHIEF PASTA

We cloaked languidly folded pasta swatches (known in Liguria, Italy as *mandilli di seta*) with wild mushrooms, mascarpone, and shallots.

Serves: 4 as a main or 6 as a starter

PASTA

- 1 1/3 to 1 3/4 cups Italian 00 flour or all-purpose
- 2 extra-large whole eggs
- 1 extra-large yolk

SAUCE

- 1 shallot, finely chopped
- 1 clove garlic, finely chopped
- 3 Tbsp unsalted butter
- 12 oz wild mushrooms, torn or sliced
- 2/3 cup mascarpone
- 2 Tbsp finely chopped flat-leaf parsley
- finely grated Pecorino for serving

Pasta: Process 1 1/3 cups flour, eggs, and yolk in a food processor until it forms a dough. Knead on a lightly floured surface, adding more flour, until dough is elastic and barely sticky, 3 to 5 minutes. Let it rest 30 minutes on a lightly floured surface covered with an inverted bowl.

Divide dough into 2 pieces. With a rolling pin, roll each piece on a lightly floured surface, dusting with flour as needed, until almost thin enough to read a newspaper through. If dough becomes difficult to roll, rest covered with plastic wrap a few minutes. Cut dough into 3-inch wide strips and let dry until a little leathery, then cut into rough squares. (If not using immediately, lightly dust with flour and stack on a tray. Chill, covered up to 3 hours.)

Bring a pot of salted water to a boil.

Sauce: Cook shallot and garlic in butter in a large skillet until softened. Add mushrooms and sauté until golden. Add mascarpone and remove from heat.

Boil pasta until al dente, 2 to 3 minutes. Take 1 cup cooking liquid and add to skillet, then drain pasta and toss in sauce along with parsley and a few grinds of black pepper. Serve sprinkled with cheese.

ITALIAN FOR BEGINNERS

It all began with the discovery of Parmesan cheese in block form. Prior to my stint living in a medieval town in Tuscany, I hadn't cooked much of anything. Pasta, the boxed kind, was doused with bright red jarred sauce, topped with powdery pre-grated cheese. But over there, with no microwave and a handful of dull knives on loan along with my 700-year-old apartment was where my cooking journey began. I learned the magic of garlic, fresh tomatoes, and Parmesan, and, most of all, pasta. Every trip to the grocery store was an exercise in discovery. My instruction manual, an Italian-English dictionary. I'd sweat all the way home, carefully cradling my tomatoes; the rest of my goods (blood orange juice, thinly sliced manzo, the biggest hunk of cheese I could afford) shoved into my backpack. Back in my apartment, where the hallways were cold and smelled of marble and worn wood, I'd use every pot, dish, and cutting board I temporarily owned, to master my own tomato sauce and try out all sorts of pasta shapes—bucatini, strozzapreti, cavatelli—that I'd never seen on the shelves back home. KASEY FLEISHER HICKEY







JAPCHAE

Slippery glassine noodles, like long strands of iridescent silk, rumble with slivers of vegetables in this age-old Korean dish.

Serves: 6

- 2 large eggs
- ¼ cup plus 2 tsp canola oil, divided
- ¾ lb Korean sweet potato noodles (dang myun) cut into roughly 6-inch pieces
- 1 medium onion, thinly sliced
- 2 carrots, cut into thin strips
- 4 oz shiitake, sliced
- 3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 3 scallions, cut into 2-inch pieces
- 5 oz baby spinach
- 6 Tbsp soy sauce
- 2 Tbsp sesame oil
- ¼ cup sugar
- salt and pepper
- toasted sesame seeds

1 Beat eggs with a little salt and pepper. Heat 2 tsp oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Add eggs, swirling pan so eggs thinly coat the bottom. Cook, without stirring, tilting pan as needed, until eggs are just set. Slide onto a cutting board and slice into strips. Reserve skillet.

2 Cook noodles in boiling water just until al dente, about 5 minutes. Drain and rinse under cool water. Set aside.

3 Heat remaining ¼ cup oil over medium high heat. Cook onion, carrots, mushrooms, and garlic until vegetables are crisp-tender. Add scallions and spinach, and cook until just wilted. Stir in soy sauce, sesame oil, and sugar. Simmer, stirring, to dissolve sugar. Season lightly with salt and pepper.

4 Gently stir in noodles and egg strips.

5 Serve japchae sprinkled with the sesame seeds.

Our version comes courtesy of our creative director's mom, Chong-Won Outland.

LOST AND FOUND

I realize now that I've taken japchae for granted my whole life. It's just that it was always around—hanging out at church wedding receptions, 100-day-old baby celebrations, and other Korean gatherings at musty-smelling banquet halls. When my parents had people over for karaoke night, food was served buffet-style in crinkly aluminum containers my mother would cram along the kitchen island, and japchae was always there. Those faintly sugary, sesame-oil-slicked sweet potato noodles piled high like rolling hills were as sure a presence as kimchi. I loved putting too much food on my plate, the kimchi staining the rice red, the bulgogi mingling with the spicy pork. But the japchae, I never went for it. How could I not have seen it then? I passed right by, ignoring the endless strands of glimmering softness tangled up with squishy mushrooms, julienned carrots, emerald green spinach, and crisp slices of onion here and there. And one bite, a single spoonful of japchae was all it would have taken for me to become Scrooge McDuck doing a deep dive into a sparkling pile of unctuous pleasure. What a fool I was then. I know better now. HELIN JUNG

MELTING POTATOES

A silken bed with tiers of slight potato rounds enveloped in a creamy blend of Taleggio, rosemary, onion, and bacon, and tucked into the oven for a warm nap. With a side of sautéed leafy greens (we like escarole or broccoli rabe), it makes for a warming winter dinner.

Makes: 6

- 3 oz bacon, chopped
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 1 small clove garlic, finely chopped
- 1 sprig rosemary
- ¾ cup crème fraîche
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 1¾ lb Yukon Gold potatoes
- 6 oz Taleggio, sliced (rind removed)

1 Preheat oven to 350°F. Butter a 1½ to 2-qt baking dish.

2 Sauté bacon, onion, garlic, and rosemary in a skillet until onions are soft and just starting to color, about 12 minutes. Season with a pinch of salt and a few grinds of pepper, and discard rosemary. Stir in crème fraîche and cream.

3 Peel potatoes and slice very thinly. Arrange half of potatoes overlapping in baking dish. Lightly season and spread with half of creamy onion mixture. Repeat with remaining potatoes and onions. Cover dish with foil and bake until potatoes are meltingly tender, 45 to 55 minutes.

4 Top with cheese, cover, and bake until cheese is melted, about 5 minutes longer. Serve at once.

HOT POTATO

Cheese and potatoes: they just go together so magnificently. The stodgy, heavy starch of the potato juxtaposed with the sinewy compliance of the cheese. Oh boy. The context of the meal may change, but the satisfaction is unilateral. My first encounter with the pair was at a diner, ordered as a treat to split with my grandma and sister: crispy potato skins oozing with cheddar, Monterey Jack, bacon, green onion, and sour cream. Greasy, artery-annihilating, awesome. During my college years in Montreal, I swiftly learned that Québécois pride is essentialized in one dish: *poutine*. This culinary pin-up is a hot mess of limp fries, russet-hued gravy, and cheese curds. Nothing neutralizes a night of beer-slugging like coating your stomach with the stuff. I didn't even like it so much as it was simply a standby. It was an automatic part of the night before its finish line: pawed at drunkenly with friends, everyone licking *sauce brune* off their fingers. The slightly more refined cheese/potato platter that entered my gullet later, in France, was the *tartiflette*, a specialty of the Haute Savoie region. Potatoes are layered with lardons and onions, swimming in cream and white wine, and covered with cheese: a dish conceived for ski lodges and firesides and willful counterattacks on winter bluster. Sure you can pull a thick blanket over yourself, but hearty cheese-and-potato dishes warm you from where it works: the stomach. SARAH MOROZ



CHOCOLATE ESPRESSO CARDAMOM MOUSSE

Mousse. The word itself is emblematic of the texture: delicate, foamy, smooth. Ours is light in feel, ample in flavor—a twist on the classic chocolate variety intertwined with espresso and aromatic cardamom.

Serves: 8 to 10

- 4 cardamom pods, crushed
- ¼ cup dark roast coffee beans, crushed
- ¾ cup sugar
- 4 cups heavy cream, divided
- 8 oz bittersweet chocolate, finely chopped (60% to 70% cocoa)
- 4 large egg yolks
- ½ tsp vanilla

1 Combine cardamom, coffee, sugar, and 2 cups cream in a medium saucepan and bring to a boil. Remove from heat and steep 15 minutes.

2 Meanwhile, place chocolate in a medium bowl set over a pan of gently simmering water (water should not touch the bowl.) Stir chocolate occasionally until melted. Remove the bowl from heat and set a fine sieve over it.

3 Put yolks in a small bowl. Reheat unstrained cream mixture to a bare simmer. Whisk about a half cup of the hot cream into the yolks then whisk them back into the saucepan. Cook over low heat, stirring constantly, just until cream thickens slightly. Strain into the bowl with the chocolate. Add vanilla and stir thoroughly to combine. Cool completely, stirring occasionally, about 45 minutes.

4 Beat remaining 2 cups of cream to stiff peaks. Whisk about a third into the chocolate and then gently fold in the rest. Cover and chill at least 4 hours before serving.

CUSTARD'S LAST STAND

My mother's hand, gripping the well-worn wooden spoon, circles the saucepan in meditative figure eights. Scalding milk dissolves each powdered cluster of My-T-Fine pudding mix, until all that remains is thick, bubbling chocolate. She unfurls the mixture, undulating ribbons of cocoa gracefully arcing into custard cups, and I watch—hypnotized and hungry. Into the refrigerator the steaming cups go. It will be several hours before they set and I can thrust my spoon into one of them—two if I eat my green beans—puncturing their leathery dark skin and sinking into the creamy, cool layers beneath. When you are seven, a box of pudding plucked from the grocery store shelf is all it takes to instill joy. A visit to my grandmother's house elicits the same easy bliss. My arrival is always welcomed by her *biancomangiare*, a delicate, ivory-hued Sicilian pudding she makes from scratch, thickened with cornstarch. Sometimes Grandma layers it with strips of Sara Lee pound cake, sometimes she pours it into a pie crust dressed with chocolate sprinkles, sometimes there is my very own dome—naked and quivering. She passed away this summer. The image of her standing over a pot, calmly stirring and transforming mere milk and vanilla extract into silk; that is now my happiness. ALIA AKKAM



COMFORT ME WITH EGGS

On one food's power to console. By Fiorella Valdesolo

Two weeks before my nonno died of Alzheimer's, I visited him in Friuli. We sat on his porch, shaded from summer's sticky veil; I read, he dozed. He would awake intermittently, staring at me with limpid, faraway eyes, straining to recall who I was, reverting instead to his stories of being a prisoner of war; the only memory, however garbled, that would briefly center him. Kissing his wan cheeks on the day I had to go, I knew it would be the last time. But when the news I anticipated would soon arrive, finally did, my heart and body contorted in response. I wept, drank tea, then something stiffer, combed old photos studying the lines of his face, and, when my tummy began to grumble after hours of ignoring its pleas, shuffled to the kitchen and stood, dumbstruck in front of the fridge. I knew, though, that there was only one thing I could manage to eat: a soft-boiled egg.

It wasn't the first time I sought comfort in eggs. As a child, my family made yearly pilgrimages to the farmhouse where my dad grew up. Each morning, early, my brother and I would scurry to the chicken coops to scoop up the hen's still-warm eggs. Then, my grandmother would crack them with a quick flick of her wrist, deposit one yolk each in two bowls, stir in a pinch of sugar, and, smiling broadly, hand over the crystallized concoction to us to quickly devour. In high school, many a crisis was confronted at Denny's over "sunshine slams"—for the uninitiated, that's 2 eggs, 2 pancakes, and a maze of crispy hash browns—where Bev, our regular waitress with the hoarse smoker's rasp, would keep our coffee cups full and cigarettes lit, as we chattered incessantly. Moving to New York I quickly grew to appreciate the hangover-assuaging marvel that is the deli egg and cheese, a greasy misshapen disc shoved into

a squishy Kaiser roll and swathed in foil. And no winter goes by without nights spent hibernating at home with my boyfriend over plates of sticky, pancetta-flecked carbonara, a crusty loaf between us ready to soak up any yolky remnants.

You see, the egg is itself a miracle—a remarkable feat of nature and food's most common "cocoon," its paper-thin shell protecting the embryonic orb inside. As MFK Fisher once, so elegantly, put it, "one of the most private things in the world is an egg before it is broken." On the plate the egg can astonish in its simplicity. It has for me. I can recall the giddy wonderment of my first egg-yolk raviolo—that immense envelope of pasta, the shivering yolk intact inside, until the tines of a fork release it in a sunny swirl across the plate. Or my encounter, in Japan, with *oyakodon*, a.k.a. "parent and child" donburi: a rice bowl draped with a velvety blanket of eggs, chicken, and scallion slivers as nurturing as the name implies. Or the taste of a traditional local breakfast at a roadside stand in Piedmont at the height of truffle season: dense tomato slices, a salt-strewn pile of anchovies, and fried eggs—the yolks a deep coral hue (Italians call it "rosso"), buried under a mound of truffle shavings.

We often hear about comfort food. The label too frequently affixed to dishes solely for their preparation—rich, heavy, rib-sticking concoctions. But comfort food in its truest sense should have less to do with filling the belly, and more about the emotional effect. And that is entirely individual—what consoles one is not the same for another. At its heart, comfort food is what you turn to for solace, for relief, for peace. It is what reminds you of home and of family. It is food as happy place. And it can be as simple as a soft-boiled egg.

Photograph by Winona Barton-Ballentine

DEEP COVER

There are those brisk fall and winter evenings when the destination is none at all and your sanctuary is a warm meal. It's those nights-in that we had in mind when we asked two musicians we currently have in heavy rotation to design the ideal accompanying dinner playlists. Think of it as music you can retreat into. Both mixes can be streamed via Spotify at gatherjournal.com.

AU REVOIR SIMONE

The Brooklyn-born trio (Heather D'Angelo, Erika Forster, and Annie Hart) are known for their wispily beautiful harmonies, electro undercurrent, and keyboard flourishing. And on their latest album, they are more self-assured than ever, experimenting with new sonic territory to infectious result. *Move in Spectrums* (Instant Records) was released in September.

Blacks Dawn Golden and Rosy Cross

Country of the Future Mirah

Don't Vote Cass McCombs

Wish He Was You Best Coast

Brand New Start Little Joy

In the Kingdom Mazzy Star

All My Stars Aligned St. Vincent

The Black Arts Stereolab

You Make Me Weak At The Knees Electrelane

I Follow You Melody's Echo Chamber

Left Bank Air

In Ear Park Department of Eagles

DIANE BIRCH

The singer-songwriter with the lilting, soulful voice that seems to defy her age first caught the public's ear with her 2009 debut *Bible Belt*, a series of thoughtful sweeping ballads. On her latest effort, Birch's rhapsodizing feels even more emotional and, in turn, powerful. Her new album, *Speak A Little Louder* (S-Curve Records), was released in October.

The Smile David Axelrod

Rise Herb Alpert

Gee Wiz Kindness

Cherry Pie Sade

Detroit Cheeky Things Lee Webster

Last Dance Rhye

Nipple to the Bottle Grace Jones

Chamakay Blood Orange

The Main Thing Roxy Music

That's Us / Wild Combination Arthur Russell

Cactus Tanlines

Fame David Bowie

She's Got Claws Gary Numan

Leopard Tree Dream Giorgio Moroder

Don't Be Cruel Billy Swan

Artwork by Jennifer Brandon

Accumulation I, 2010; 48 x 35 inches; Chromogenic print



THE MARKETPLACE

Hibernating accoutrements made for serious shut-in time, kitchen requisites that will prove handy no matter what the season, and a few offbeat extras (including a cheekily customized *Gather Journal* flask) are what you'll find now in our makeshift store. Treat yourself or make it a gift. Shop for everything online at gatherjournal.com.

Photograph by Keirnan Monaghan Prop Styling by Theo Vamvounakis

1. Gnocchi Board
by Walton Woodworks
A necessity for gnocchi perfectionists, these hand-crafted maple wood boards will create uniformly beautiful ridges. Finished with orange oil and beeswax, each features its own unique handle design. \$10

2. Onion Basket
by Basketry Botanica
The ideal storage solution for onions, but also potatoes or citrus, the open weave allows for plenty of air circulation to prevent spoilage. Made from durable fibre rush, a tautly twisted Kraft paper material, it will hang out in your kitchen for years to come. \$30

3. Boulder Mug
Needless to say, mugs get extra mileage in the colder months. We are particularly fond of these ones because of the earthy color palette and lovingly worn-in feel. Available in dark green and white. \$14

4. Teepee Incense Burner
by Inscents
A teepee can itself be considered a cocoon—a small dwelling that

protects its inhabitants—and scent has a similarly enveloping quality. A fitting mood-setter in the winter and beyond, the teepee burner comes with classic natural wood incense. \$8

5. Bread knife
by Opinel
No kitchen cutlery collection is complete without a serious bread knife, and in the colder months when carb-loading picks up speed, its presence is mandatory. Crafted from varnished beech wood and stainless steel, it is gently curved for optimal slicing. \$37

6. Wool Camp Blanket
by Topo Designs
This dense 100% wool blanket may have been conceived of with campsites in mind, but it is just as effective for couch-bound snuggling, backseat naps, and draped at the foot of the bed, ready to ward off nighttime chills. \$169

7. Assorted Seed Packets
by Kitazawa
Courtesy of America's oldest seed company (established in 1917), these packets of mizuna, scarlet red carrot,

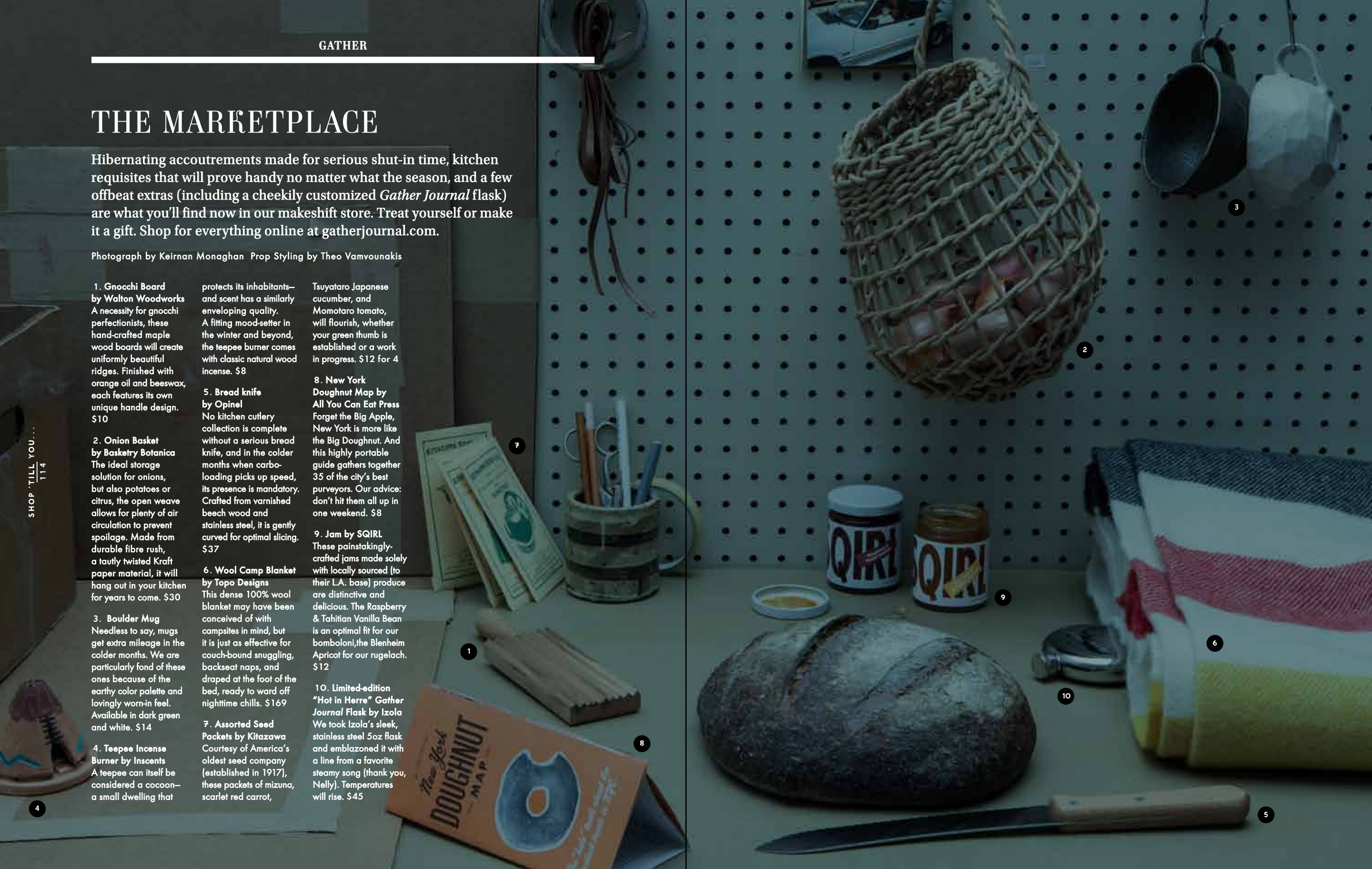
Tsuyataro Japanese cucumber, and Momotaro tomato, will flourish, whether your green thumb is established or a work in progress. \$12 for 4

8. New York Doughnut Map
by All You Can Eat Press
Forget the Big Apple, New York is more like the Big Doughnut. And this highly portable guide gathers together 35 of the city's best purveyors. Our advice: don't hit them all up in one weekend. \$8

9. Jam by SQIRL
These painstakingly-crafted jams made solely with locally sourced (to their L.A. base) produce are distinctive and delicious. The Raspberry & Tahitian Vanilla Bean is an optimal fit for our bomboloni, the Blenheim Apricot for our rugelach. \$12

10. Limited-edition "Hot in Herre" Gather Journal Flask
by Izola
We took Izola's sleek, stainless steel 5oz flask and emblazoned it with a line from a favorite steamy song (thank you, Nelly). Temperatures will rise. \$45

SHOP 'TILL YOU...
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Will Anderson

The Brooklyn-based photographer from Newcastle Upon Tyne, England originally trained as a graphic designer before getting behind the lens. He has published three books (*Apt. 301*, *Death in a Good District*, and *Garden*) and his clients include Salvatore Ferragamo, Michael Kors and Nylon. See his work at willandersonphotography.com.

Favorite cold weather warmer: I like to hold onto the summer as long as possible so prosciutto and Pimm's work quite well at warming my thoughts.

Winona Barton-Ballentine

Photographer Barton-Ballentine uses her work to explore the idea of "home." Her clients include Urban Outfitters, *Wilder Quarterly*, *Nylon*, and *Dazed and Confused*. When not making beautiful images, you can find her dancing, eating, or singing alongside her parents in the Roadhouse Revival Band. See her work at winonabartonballentine.com

Favorite cold weather warmer: Vanilla Roobios tea with milk and honey (or red wine, of course) and spicy pork-belly ramen with a boiled egg and lots of scallions!

Jennifer Brandon

Brandon studied art, with an emphasis on painting, at California State University, then Mills College, where she happens to now be a teacher; she also teaches at San Francisco State University. Her work has been included in exhibitions in San Francisco, L.A., and San Jose. See her work at jenniferbrandon.com.

Favorite cold weather warmer: Nothing warms me up more than a savory lentil soup with bits of cured bacon.

Grant Cornett

Photographer Cornett lives by a lake in upstate New York with his great loves: a beautiful, pregnant, inspiring wife, and two standard poodles. He is currently shooting for *Vogue*, *The New Yorker*, and *Cadillac*, among others. You can get a glimpse of his life's goings on at thelivest1.com. See his work at grantcornett.com.

Favorite cold weather warmer: Black tea with cream, honey, and Calvados.

Gentl and Hyers

Partners in photography and life, Andrea Gentl and Martin Hyers first met while students at the Parsons School of Design. Focused primarily on food, travel, interiors, and portraits, their clients include *Condé Nast Traveler*, Bergdorf Goodman, and Grey Goose, and they've picked up a number of SPD awards. Martin is also a fine-art photographer. His work can be seen at hyersandmebane.com. Andrea shoots and writes the blog hungryghostfoodandtravel.com. See the couple's work at gentlandhyers.com.

Favorite cold weather warmer: Gentl: A good, old-fashioned fire cider—it's a fermented mix of apple cider vinegar, ginger, garlic, turmeric, and cayenne. Hyers: A shot of whiskey.

Eviana Hartman

Writer Hartman is an incurable multi-hyphenate. She writes about culture, style, and design for *T and Dwell*; has held editorial positions at *Nylon* and *Vogue*; and was a sustainability columnist for the *Washington Post*. Hartman is the designer of Bodkin, which won the Ecco Domani

Sustainable Design award. Currently she is also at work on two screenplays (both feminist comedies) with a partner and a book about textiles and fashion with Mood Fabrics.

Favorite cold weather warmer: If I'm cooking, kabocha squash and celery root soup. If I'm not, the gnocchi with wild mushrooms at Il Buco Alimentari & Vini. In either case, accompanied by a glass of red wine.

Leah Mennies

Originally from Philadelphia, writer Mennies moved to Boston to study journalism, and ended up sticking around. After a stint at *The Feast*, she landed her current post as food editor for *Boston* magazine, where she covers the local dining scene.

Favorite cold weather warmer: A bowl of caramelized vegetables like squash and Brussel sprouts tossed with olive oil and spices; right now, a mix of sumac, za'tar and Aleppo pepper flakes.

Johnny Miller

Originally from Lawrence, Kansas, Miller came to New York to study photography at Parsons; after graduation he went on to assist Mary Ellen Mark. Nowadays Miller's clients include West Elm, Common Good, *Martha Stewart*, Target, *Field + Stream*, *Texas Monthly*, and *Stella Artois*; and his work is part of the permanent collection at The New York Historical Society and the George Eastman House. Miller is also the co-author of *Coney Island* (Trans Photographic Press). See his work at johnny-miller.com.

Favorite cold weather warmer: Shepherd's pie and a dry martini.

Keirnan Monaghan

The Brooklyn-based, New York City-raised photographer decided on his chosen craft early on. As a young boy, Monaghan could be found late at night at the bodega on the corner of 35th and Third Ave perusing the magazines on display. It was while paging through copies of *Hit Parader* and *Circus* that he first considered his passion for photography. See his work at keirnanmonaghan.com.

Marcus Nilsson

Born in Malmö, Sweden, Nilsson moved to New York to attend culinary school. After working as a chef, he decided to pursue a degree in photography. Since 2006, when Nilsson first combined his passions, making food his subject, his client list has grown to include *Bon Appétit*, *Departures*, *New York, Travel + Leisure*, *Swallow*, and *The New York Times Magazine*. When he's not shooting, the avid wine collector enjoys throwing dinner parties in his Bushwick digs. See his work at marcusnilsson.com.

Favorite cold weather warmer: I love a big Barolo and a big roast, with affogato for dessert.

Maggie Ruggiero

Gather's food stylist and co-recipe editor entered the gastronomical world after selling her East Village bar and using the proceeds to attend culinary school. She logged time in the kitchens of a number of the city's most esteemed restaurants before shifting her focus to food styling and recipe development. Simply put, she lives to style food for print and video, and cook. See her work at maggieruggiero.com.

Favorite cold weather warmer: I'm a steel-cut oatmeal driven life form. On weekends, it can get fancy.

Molly Shuster

Gather's co-recipe editor, Shuster started off her career in publishing at Harper Collins before changing courses completely to attend the Institute of Culinary Education. Since earning her degree, she has worked as a freelance food stylist and recipe developer, dividing her time between New York and Boston. See her work at mollyshuster.com.

Favorite cold weather warmer: Tea with milk and honey, and homemade chicken noodle soup.

Martyn Thompson

The Australia-born, New York-based image maker started out creating avant-garde, glam rock-influenced clothes before he turned his attention to documenting them instead, working as a fashion photographer in Paris, then moving to London and into the world of interiors. He is a founder of "the Tree," a New York art collective; contributes to *Architectural Digest*, *W*, *The New York Times Magazine*, and *British Vogue*; and authored the book *Interiors* (Hardie Grant). Thompson's most recent book, *Working Space: An Insight into the Creative Heart*, an intimate look at a diverse collection of work environments, was published by Rizzoli in October. See his work (and sign up for his newsletter) at martynthompsonstudio.com.



Favorite cold weather warmer: Black tea is always my favorite and I love a good stew.

Wai Lin Tse

The longtime fashion designer and creative director changed paths for a photography career four years ago. Besides shooting for herself, Lin counts Urban Outfitters, Oysho, and Doo ri as clients. See her work at wailintse.com.

Favorite cold weather warmer: A croissant dipped in Suizo, a hot, thick chocolate drink topped with whipped cream.

Theo Vamvounakis

Canada-born, Brooklyn-based Vamvounakis studied photography at the Rochester Institute of Technology before embarking on a career as a prop stylist. Her clients include American Express, Anthropologie, West Elm, Estée Lauder, and *Bon Appétit*.

And also...

Alia Akkam, Au Revoir Simone, Lara Belkin, Diane Birch, Aerial Brown, Sara Cardace, Andrea Cusick, Maud Elizabeth Doyle, Celia Ellenberg, Tommye Fitzpatrick, Kasey Fleisher Hickey, Alica Forneret, J. Fox, Adam Gale, Sasha Gora, Samantha Gurrie, Diego Hadis, Hudson & Charles, Pearl Jones, Helin Jung, Emily Kastner, Emily Kramer, Jim Lahey, Molly Langmuir, April Long, Linda Mannix, Michael Martensen, Jack McGarry, Kendall Meade, Nicole Michalek, William Morley, Sarah Moroz, Joanna Prisco, Sasha Gora, Anja Riebensahm, Scot Schy, Doree Shafir, Natalie Shukur, Laura Silverman, Piercarlo Valdesolo, Yana Volfson, Stephanie Wu.

WE ARE



Michele Outland
Creative Director

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Favorite cold weather warmer: A super-strong ginger tea, and my Grandma Outland's recipe for chicken and dumplings.

Fiorella Valdesolo
Editor

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Favorite cold weather warmer: A glass of Cynar, neat, and a big bowl of steaming hot pho... just not together.

Maggie Ruggiero and Molly Shuster
Contributing Recipe Editors

Isabel
Staff Mascot
Favorite cold weather warmer: Boiled white rice.

We'd like to give an extra special thanks to everyone who contributed their talent and time to this issue of *Gather*, particularly all those listed to the left. Plus, these other awesome folks for their endless support: the Outland family, the Valdesolo family, Nate Martinez, Scot Schy, Ellen Morrissey, the Brothers Mueller, the entire Vamvounakis-Monaghan family.

Ten percent of the profits from the sale of each issue of *Gather Journal* will be donated to Growing Chefs and The Food Bank for New York City. Growing Chefs (growingchefs.org), a farm-based education program was founded in 2005 with the goal of connecting people with their food, from field to fork. The Food Bank for New York City (foodbanknyc.org) has been committed to providing hunger relief to people in the five boroughs since 1983.

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JACK OF HEARTS

In St. Louis, my friend TaraShea and I shared the second floor of a drafty run-down Victorian. We had meager salaries, so that fall we went as long as possible without turning on the heater, a flimsy contraption. In November, we tried, but after an hour it wasn't warmer. So, with what in retrospect seems a wildly over-accepting attitude, we decided we'd simply go the winter without heat. In December, a sleet storm blanketed the area in ice. In January, a cold front moved in. And by February, the temperature had dropped to zero. Our pipes froze and we could see our breath inside. We were aware, dimly, that it was all a bit absurd, but that was also what made it fun. TaraShea had a tiny space heater, and most nights we would set it up and sit and talk, but most of all drink whiskey—which I know doesn't actually make you warmer, but it sure feels like it does. When we'd finish a bottle, we'd rinse it out and leave it along the living room wall.

By winter's end we had lined the space with Jack Daniels. In March, we talked about how funny it would be if the heat worked all along. So we turned it on and let it run all day. Slowly, very slowly, the house warmed up. We simply hadn't left it on long enough. At least we had saved money, we figured. Actually, we had probably spent all the money we saved on whiskey, but this seemed like a pretty fair trade. MOLLY LANGMUIR

Photograph by Winona Barton-Ballentine

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