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THE TOMATO

food & drink



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SOBER?
Curious!



THE TOMATO TOP 100

BEST THINGS TO EAT OR DRINK IN EDMONTON

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- a farmers' market specialty,
- a product from your favourite local farmer,
- a snack food, or
- a condiment.

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The Top100 Best Things to Eat and Drink will be featured in the March April issue of *The Tomato food & drink*.

*For the purposes of this competition, Edmonton includes Sherwood Park, St. Albert and surrounding communities—we'll drive for food!

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For advertising information
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The Tomato is published six times per year:

January/February

March/April

May/June

July/August

September/October

November/December

by BGP Publishing

Edmonton, AB T6E 2G1

780.431.1802

Subscriptions are available
for \$25 per year.

thetomato.ca

The *Tomato food & drink*
is located in Amiskwaciwâskahikan
on Treaty 6 territory, the territory
of the Papaschase and the
homeland of the Métis Nation.

Canada

Funded by the Government of Canada

Alberta
Government



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latest cookbook from the smart cookie

Cookies I Have Loved is a compilation of Julie Van Rosendaal's best cookies, her 12th cookbook and second in the series of small format books. Julie published it right before Christmas last year and she's doing something different. The book is only available from local indie books stores (Audreys and Knifewear), or from dinnerwithjulie.com. She is bypassing large retailers like Amazon and using the money saved to donate \$1/book to local food community initiatives. The other reason? She hopes to encourage all of us to go to our local bookstores more often. If your copy of *One Smart Cookie* (her first book) is as bedraggled and flour-dusted as mine, you'll want this book.



new bottlings from lone pine

Lone Pine debuts two new spirits early this year. "Keeping it a bit secret, but not totally," says Bryan Anderson, proprietor. What we do know? To look forward to an oak barrel-aged gin (14 months) and a young whisky.



new resto in cameron heights come spring

"I can't believe I'm opening another restaurant," says chef Paul Shufelt (Workshop Eatery, Woodshed Burger and the Greenhouse). "But a friend told us about a space in Cameron Heights. It turned out to be a good fit; we will open Hayloft Steak and Fish in early March."

The lounge will be a Woodshed Burger, offering a casual, affordable menu for everyday, with take-out and delivery.

The main room's focus is on steak and fish. "We will expand the Nonay beef program, offer different cuts and playing with aging, from 30-day dry-aged to 60-100-day Wagyu Holstein cross." The seafood: "We have a great working relationship with Effing Fish and expect to offer oysters, crab lobster, seafood towers, fresh fish, a daily catch."

"Our idea to go to the neighbourhoods (Workshop Eatery in Summerside has been open for six years) has worked so far," says Paul. "Cameron Heights only has about 800 homes and across the overpass is another 1000." Hayloft Steak + Fish, 637 Cameron Heights Drive.



Curtis Comeau Photography

dine at may

A new restaurant called May has opened in the Art Gallery of Alberta. Expect really tasty food from exec chef Doreen Prei, sous chef Shane Loiselle and team. The idea is seasonal, mostly local food, like a grilled salad chock full of local veg, toothsome quail and a sublime wild mushroom dish. Experienced hospitality veteran Flavius Iulian Joita is the GM and Happy Byrne heads up the bar program.

Jimmy Shewchuk's company Prairie Catering (and all catering at the AGA) operates May. "It's a never-ending question, what is Canadian food? To us it's the land and all the people who have come here—Vietnamese, Europeans, Middle Eastern, south Asian—who take local ingredients and make it taste like home."

Why May? "Everyone talks about the harvest. But I remember growing up in Vegreville; my grandparents were farmers and we looked forward to May after the long winter," says Jimmy. "It was a positive time, time to plant the gardens and the fields. It was the rebirth, optimistic, the vision forward."

The room has a simple and sleek look, 55 seats in a flexible layout, an improvement on the former Zinc, where chef Prei also headed up the kitchen, so a homecoming of sorts. May is a serene, less corporate space. "We wanted to brighten it up," says Jimmy. "We wanted it to be clean and to reflect the locally driven menu roots in Alberta and Canada."

Expect a rotating selection of art on the wall. The pieces are from Art Rental, a project of the AGA which has been running for over 60 years. Lunch, dinner and weekend brunch. It's wonderful to have this space back on downtown dining scene, #2 Sir Winston Churchill Square, 780-392-2501, restaurantmay.ca.

monolith tap room now open

Check out the new intimate space at Monolith, the other Blind Enthusiasm project, 9918 78 Avenue. Barrel-aged beers and bar menu by exec chef Christine Sandford.

jasper dreaming: a skate on lake mildred

Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge debuts La Cabane, a spot to warm up after skating and pond hockey, with fire pits, hot choc and mulled wine; s'mores or chili, beside Lake Mildred. If gazing upon the winter wonderland is more your style, take the strawberry or apple-themed Afternoon Tea (with a glass of Cliquot) in the Great Hall, Saturday and Sundays. ☺



From top: Julie Van Rosendaal's latest cookie book; world headquarters of Lone Pine Distillery; Paul Shufelt (L) and Jeff Nonay at the Nonay ranch; a quintessential Canadian experience, ice skating on Lake Mildred at Jasper Park Lodge.

Are you Sober? Curious?

The rise of alcohol-free drinking: exploring the world of no alcohol wine and beer.

A few years ago, Mark Kuspira decided he was drinking too much. An Alberta-based wine and spirits importer of note, Mark knew it was an occupational hazard. He spent a week in the mountains in British Columbia hiking, kayaking and not drinking and resolved to do that more often. Maybe even a week a month.

In early 2020, a supplier told him about Oddbird, a Swedish-based non-alcoholic brand.

“The story was good, the samples were good, I was reading more and more about people turning to alcohol free brands; it seemed to be slapping me in the face,” said Mark. “It was the trend.”

Mark began to explore the world of alcohol-free (af) beverages. He didn’t see the fit between the two categories so, rather than adding af brands to his current line up (his importing agency, Crush, has been in business for almost two decades), he started a completely new company, called Soft Crush. “Our newest and biggest clients don’t even know who Crush is. We needed it to

be focused and separate. It’s the food business, not the alcohol business.”

He calls it ‘rethinking drinking’. And, it’s a big market. “Over 25 per cent of people around the world don’t drink,” he says, “and one in four people under 25 don’t drink or want to drink less.”

Mark is working with several European and UK-based suppliers. As well, Benjamin Bridge, a wine producer in Nova Scotia that Mark has had a long association with, just debuted a new non-alcoholic Piquette called Zero.

Is Mark onto something here? Many people say yes.

“I was accustomed to having a glass of wine at night, or a few drinks when I was out. It wasn’t a problem. I turned 40 and I couldn’t handle it anymore,” says Christine Webber. “I would do some work with my husband in the yard, have a beer and then I needed a nap.” Christine, a neuroscientist and UofA associate professor, started to look for alternatives. She wanted to set an example too. “I’ve got teenagers so I wanted them to know adults can get

together even without alcohol.” She is such a fan, Cristine created alcohol free advent calendars this Christmas and plans to continue with Dry January, Dry July and Sober October boxes. (Find her on Instagram @bigbluebirdaf).

Does that sound familiar? A lot of people are saying that drinking just isn’t the same.

What exactly does alcohol-free mean? At present there is no world standard. According to Soft Crush, the term alcohol free must be less than 0.05 per cent alcohol. Low alcohol has less than 1.1 per cent alcohol. But there is still a bit of alcohol so those who cannot drink at all need to stay clear. This burgeoning new category is more for those who are thinking about lifestyle changes and want to be able to have a decent beverage when they go out.

How do you make a wine with no alcohol? First you have to make the wine, otherwise it’s simply grape juice. Starting with excellent grapes and wine is the basis for a quality finished product. Alcohol, a byproduct of

fermentation, provides many things to wine—weight, mouthfeel, a delivery system for aromas—as well as being an ancient and relatively natural process.

Alcohol-free wines are reverse engineered—most producers are using some form of vacuum distillation, which separates out the water and alcohol. Then, essentially, the wine is rebuilt, without the alcohol. I recall visiting a producer in the south of France in the late ‘90s who was using spinning cones to reduce the alcohol in the wines. The results were, well, not that interesting. The technology has come a long way—lower temperatures preserve more flavour and texture.

“We use a patented solid phase extraction process for dealcoholization,” says André Stork, co-founder, Undone.

“We preserve the aromas by separating them from the water and alcohol. We then add natural aromas and spiciness as the alcohol is no more enforcing the taste of the pure essence. After re-adding water we have a liquid where the pure essence is preserved.”

Do af wines taste exactly like wine with alcohol (ranging from 8-14 per cent)? Well, no, but they are quite drinkable, especially if you have a compelling reason—weight loss, social pressure or if you, like Mark, think you may be drinking too much.

Amanda Thomson of Thomson & Scott has always been interested in healthy food and drink. She created the sparkling wine Noughty from organic grapes. Noughty was a big winner at the Alberta Beverage Awards this year. Oddbird, created in Sweden by a former social worker, is making some delicious af alternatives including wines made from organic, hand harvested grapes in the Veneto.

Lietz in Rudesheim, Germany crafted their first no-alcohol wines in 2007 for a

Danish chef who wanted a good wine to pair with food and allow people to drive home from the restaurant. (Denmark has strict drinking and driving laws with large penalties.) There is a Pinot, two sparkling wines (in cans too), a Rosé and a delicious Riesling, Eins Zwei Zero.

Alcohol free beer on the other hand has a much easier go. Perhaps because beer is less alcoholic to begin with, or because of the way beer is made, the results taste like beer. The best brewers use specially selected yeast (Mark calls them lazy yeasts) that don't ferment to a high degree of alcohol. Most brewers call the system they use proprietary, but the advantage seems to be what they don't do—stop fermentation, or dealcoholize, dilute or otherwise change things.

“Sharing a beer with somebody is so much different than other social things,” says Graham Matheos, One for the Road Brewing. “People who aren't consuming alcohol should still be able to have those experiences. It would be a horrible world if we cut beer out entirely.”

Rob Fink and James Kindred had the same motivation. They had become fathers, wanted to drink less and were frustrated by the lack of quality low-alcohol beer choices. In response they launched English company Big Drop in 2016. The beers clock in at just under the 0.5 per cent and are big on taste.

Calgary-based One for the Road makes only non-alcoholic beer. “Someone close to me needed to stop drinking,” said Graham Matheos, physiotherapist

and co-owner. “I stopped drinking with them to support. Turned out I could still be an idiot with lampshade on my head without being drunk. What I wasn't— not hungover, not grumpy with my kids. But I missed beer, I missed the culture. We (with business partner Kevin Young) started researching brewers and beers. It's taken off. We thought we were going to have a garage full of beer, but now two and half years later we are selling across Canada and internationally. We contract brew in Calgary; always below 0.5 per cent. People can still participate in beer culture without limitations or repercussions.

“We'll never be exactly the same as beer with higher alcohol, but our goal is not that. We still can contribute to happiness.”



Amanda Thomson of **Thomson & Scott** created **Noughty** out of a desire to create a wine with low sugar and low- or no-alcohol that was vegan and halal certified. Noughty is all that. The **Sparkling Rosé** is made from Spanish Tempranillo and has lovely fresh berry sweetness. The **Sparkling Chardonnay**—green apple flavours and a light sweetness—from fruit grown in La Mancha. The non-alcoholic bubbles can be a bit foamy. Drink chilled, 4-6 degrees.

The **Leitz Eins Zwei Zero** displays citrus notes, especially lime, along with some interesting red apple and rhubarb notes. The Riesling character is especially noticeable in the long finish. Have with salmon or the cod with lentils on page 20. The light-bodied Pinot Noir has fragrant berry fruit—cherries and currants. Your orange juice has a new partner for Mimosas in the **Zero Sparkling Riesling** and the **Rosé Sparkling** is a blend of Merlot, Portugieser, Pinot Noir.

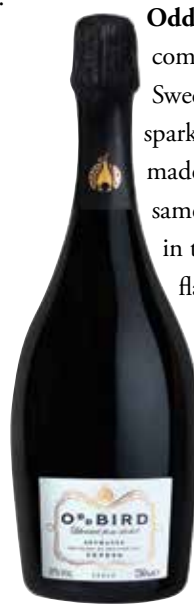


Benjamin Bridge harnesses two current trends in wine—piquette and no-alcohol—to make their first no-alcohol wine. They use the piquette technique (wines made from grape pomace—skins, seeds, pulp, stems—aka the leftovers) to create this refresher. The skins have colour, aromatics and structure to give. The result? **Benjamin Bridge Piquette Zero**, a world of citrus aromas and flavours with a slight bitterness and fizz, delicious with brunch or as a pre-dinner cocktail.

Undone No.7 Not Orange Bitter Undone starts with gin and rums distilled in copper pot stills (the aperitifs start with an essence extracted from fermented grape juice) and add natural flavours, cane sugar and critic acid to replicate intensity, mouth feel and drinkability. Four German hospitality professionals wanted to drink great tasting cocktails, but without the problems associated with over imbibing. We can't wait to



make the January Negroni—equal parts **#7 Not Orange Bitter**, **#2 Not Gin** and **#9 Not Red Vermouth**, over ice with a big slice of fresh orange.



Oddbird, the alcohol-free company based in Göteborg, Sweden, makes three different sparkling wines. The **Spumante**, made with Glera grapes (the same grapes used in Prosecco) in the Veneto, has pretty flavours of grapefruit and elderflower with a pleasant fizziness. The **Blanc de Blancs**, made with Chardonnay from the south of France (Languedoc-Roussillon), possesses the green apple and citrus flavours characteristic of that grape variety. The **Rosé** has lovely strawberry notes. It's also made in the Languedoc of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir base wines. Oddbird's process includes 12 months aging before the wine's alcohol is removed.

The **One for the Road Stone Sofa Kolsch** is an ideal after ski beer—crisp and refreshing with some presence. Made with ale yeast in the fermentation.



Graham's favourite bonfire beer? The **Espresso Stout**.

Fahr Alkoholfrei, the first non-alcoholic beer for Fahr, the wonderful brewery in Turner Valley, garnered a silver medal in the non-alcoholic category at the 2020 Canadian Brewing Awards. They make it like all their other beers but use a unique mashing technique combined with a special yeast to make this 0.4 per cent stunner. The Alkoholfrei hit the spot after mowing last summer—crisp and aromatic.

Big Drop Pine Trail Pale Ale is citrusy and hoppy. The **Galactic Dark Noir Milk Stout** is made with cocoa nibs, think honey and chocolate. The **Paradiso IPA** crafted from Chinook, Cascade, Simcoe, Citra and Columbus hops, is citrus on steroids. Big Drop beers are contract brewed in London, Ontario for the Canadian market and are gluten free. 🍷





Cheap and Cheerful Lentils

Winter is a good time to eat lentils.

Need convincing? Lentils are easy on the budget, packed with nutrients, low in calories and lend themselves to the soups, stews and braises of the winter menu. And, they are a local food. Alberta grows red, yellow, green and brown lentils, primarily in the south of the province and ships worldwide. Here's what's what.

Mild tasting and slightly sweet, red and yellow lentils (often sold split) are found in middle Eastern and Indian cuisine where they are called *daal*. Versatile and easy to make (they cook in 12-15 minutes). They don't need to be soaked or precooked and are best for soups or spreads, due to the mushy factor (a good thing). Black lentils, often called beluga lentils, are chock full of anthocyanins (found in blue and purple foods.) They are slightly shiny, with a full-bodied flavour similar to black beans and hold their shape well during cooking. Mild-tasting brown and green lentils also hold their shape well.

Then there is the *Puy* lentil harvested in the French region of Puy. Considered to have the best flavour (distinctive, a bit peppery) and texture (smaller than other green lentils), generally the most

expensive too. Puy take longer to cook, use about two cups of water to every cup of lentils and cook for about 45 minutes. Generally, brown, green, Puy and black lentils are best for dishes where the lentils will stand alone.

A Big Pot of Puy Lentils

Kaelin Whittaker of Awn Kitchen likes to make a big pot of lentils to serve with sausage patties and home-made aioli, roasted vegetables, or to make soup.

2 T	olive oil
1 lg	onion, finely diced
3 stalks	celery, finely diced
2	leeks, sliced
2-3	carrots, finely diced
5	bay leaves
	a few sprigs of thyme
500 g	Puy lentils
	a generous glass of wine
1.2 L	stock
1 T	Dijon mustard
Big	handful of chopped parsley
	salt and pepper

Heat the olive oil in a large cast iron pan. Add the onion, season with salt and pepper. Cook for ten minutes before adding the rest of the vegetables, adding

a bit more salt and pepper, cook for a further 10 minutes. Add the wine, cook off and then add the lentils with the stock, season again. Bring to a gentle simmer and cook for 1 hour until lentils are tender but still soft. Keep adding more stock (or water) as needed. When lentils are ready turn off the heat, add the mustard and parsley. Taste and correct the seasoning. These will keep for four or five days in the fridge and can be added to soups, stews, or served with lots of lovely roasted roots.

Fava Yellow Lentil Spread

Move over hummus, here comes fava, the Greek lentil spread, not to be confused with fava the bean.

1 sm	onion, finely chopped
1 c	yellow or red lentils
1 t	ground cumin
½ sm	red onion, diced
	salt and fresh-cracked pepper
1 c	parsley leaves with tender stems, plus more for serving
¼ c	olive oil, plus more for drizzling
2 T	fresh lemon juice, plus more for serving

Combine onion, lentils, cumin and 4 cups water in a medium pot and season. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to medium-low, and simmer until lentils are tender, even mushy, 25-30 minutes. Let cool. Blitz lentil mixture, parsley, oil and lemon juice in a blender until smooth. Season to taste. Spoon into a bowl. Drizzle with more oil and lemon juice and top with more parsley and diced red onion.



Two Rooms Lentil Soup

The Two Rooms Café on Whyte Avenue made the most amazing lentil soup. Sisters Julia Kundera and Zofia Trebaczkiewicz ran this wonderful restaurant. This is an updated version by Zofia, now with the Edmonton Public Library.

2 med onions
 3 cloves garlic
 3 T olive oil
 1 T ginger-tumeric paste
 2 t cumin
 2 t coriander
 1 sm can tomato paste (150 ml)
 2 c red lentils
 1 c mixed vegetables, chopped (carrots, parsley root, peppers)
 juice of 1 lemon
 favourite chili flakes (Ufra, Aleppo), fresh dill or dukkah

Sauté onions, garlic in olive oil until translucent. Add ginger-tumeric paste. Add the cumin and coriander and cook until the mixture turns golden. Add the tomato paste. Add 6 to 7 cups of water. Add rinsed lentils and bring to a boil. Add the vegetables. Cook on low heat until the lentils are soft (about 20 minutes). Blend some of the soup, so the texture is chunky and smooth. Add salt and pepper if necessary, and the juice of 1 lemon. Finish with your favourite pepper flakes or dukkah, some dill and a splash of good olive oil.

Serves 6-8.

Masoor daal (Brown lentil) Khichadi

Khichadi is my ultimate comfort food. I can eat it every day. Don't have brown lentils? Make it with other pulses—the options are endless. And, using a pressure cooker, it only takes 20 minutes to make a delicious, hearty and soul satisfying meal. My mom Renu always says 'Khichadi ke four yaar—dahi, mooli, ghee, achaar.' Loosely translated—khichadi has four friends, yogurt, radish, ghee (clarified butter) and pickles. We also add papadam as a fifth side that adds a nice crunch to the dish. This recipe can be adapted for the InstaPot. —Damini Mohan, Mini Kitchen.

¾ c Masoor daal (brown lentils) soaked in warm water for 1 hour
 1¼ c basmati rice (washed in cold water, thrice, gently wash the rice, do not crush the grains)
 2 T ghee, butter or neutral oil
 1 t cumin seeds
 ½ t asafoetida (heeng) optional, but highly recommended
 ¼ onion, diced
 3 cloves garlic, finely diced
 1 t ginger, finely diced
 1 t turmeric

2 bird's eyes chilies, finely diced, optional
 2 t sea salt
 ¼ t garam masala, good quality
 2½ c water
 1 lime juice

Dice and prep all the vegetables. In a pressure cooker, add the ghee.

Once the ghee is warm and is emitting smoke, add cumin seeds. They should crackle. At this point add asafoetida, diced onion, garlic, ginger and chilies if using. Sauté. Once the onions are translucent, add rice, lentils, turmeric, sea salt, garam masala, lime juice and water to the pressure cooker. Stir and close the lid. Once the pressure cooker whistles, turn down to the lowest heat possible. Put the timer on for 10 minutes.

While the pressure cooker is doing its magic, make the sides:

Accompaniments

Quick pickled radishes. Julienne radishes, sprinkle with salt and squeeze lime juice over.

Raita. Add finely chopped cucumber mint and ½ beet root (grated), sea salt, black pepper to 1 cup yogurt. Mix.

To serve. Add a giant dollop of ghee to the khichadi and serve with crispy papadam, radish, raita and pickles of your choice.



Red Lentil Burgers

Who needs beyond meat when you can make these tasty burgers? Chef Julia Kundera serves these delicious burgers at the Glasshouse Bistro in St Albert.

1 c red lentils
 1 onion, chopped
 ¼ c chopped curry leaves
 1½ c chopped spinach
 ½ c chopped mint
 1 t red chilies
 ½-inch grated ginger
 4 cloves garlic, minced
 1 t cumin
 salt to taste

Please see "Lentils" on page 20



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FONDUE

The joys of huddling over a bowl of melted cheese.

MARY BAILEY

Maybe it's because of Covid and not being able to see a lot of people. Maybe it was having cheese fondue this summer at the incomparable Walliser Stube at Chateau Lake Louise. Maybe it's the '90s vibe happening in food right now.

Whatever it is, it wasn't hard to put together a small group to visit the Northern Light Dining Experience, three-course gourmet fondue, at the University of Alberta Botanic Gardens. We gathered around a table in a heated dome to enjoy cheese fondue, then hot broth fondue with dipping sauces, followed by chocolate fondue, which we poured as a sauce over the fruit, as our fondue forks were hopelessly muddled by that point. An embarrassment of riches? Yes! But it was fun and just frosty enough to welcome the warmth of the cozy domes.

Cheese fondue dates back to 18th century Switzerland. Cheesemaking villages like Gruyère knew that a pot of gooey cheese was just right for dipping stale bread, small potatoes and other winter vegetables. Broth-based fondues are from further east, think Chinese hot pot or Japanese shabu-shabu. Yes, you can make a hot oil fondue too, but we're not going to do that, too messy and potentially dangerous to do at home.

Carl Charest, director of the Botanic Gardens, grew up in Quebec City and Drummondville. "I love fondue," he says. "My mother made it on Sundays, we would sit around with family and friends. My dad is done after 30 minutes, but we spend the entire evening chatting and enjoying each other's company over fondue. We tried them all—cheese and fondue *Bourguignonne* (dipping meat in boiling oil), but we preferred fondue *chinoise* (hot broth).

"Our focus at the Botanic Garden is community engagement. Our experience is all about slowly reconnecting with nature and creating experiences that stimulate the happy hormones. The concept of fondue is the perfect match. Fondue aligns with our concept of calming (not trying to stimulate the senses) so people can

relax. They can focus on a good glass of wine, eat some very good fondue, celebrate with being with loved ones."

Hospitality professionals Cindy Lazarenko and Sherry Honey operated the Northern Light Dining Experience. "I was new to fondue," said Cindy. "I had always thought it was awkward with too many pieces. Then we did this. Making fondue from scratch wasn't possible given the circumstances and the distance between the kitchen area and the domes. Carl sourced two products he was familiar with, Chic! Cheese Fondue and Canton Broth,

both from Quebec. We had our hands full with that, preparing the accompaniments, heating the fondues and bringing them to the food truck near the domes to keep warm.

"When I walked into the dome area for the first time I was transported," says Cindy. "Seeing people tucked into the domes, gathered around the pots, all steamy and warm—it was magical."

If you have made mayonnaise, making fondue from scratch is similar. Essentially it is an emulsion of oil and water. The wine, which adds moisture and flavour, helps the structure of cheese fondue due to its tartaric acid which alters the *casein* (protein found in cheese) allowing the cheese mixture to emulsify into a lovely, runny, tasty, cohesive mass. The alcohol cooks off. The citric acid in lemon juice works the same as does sodium citrate (often found in cheese fondue mixes) which kitchen scientists might want to play around with for their fondue.

The cornstarch helps stabilize the cheese mixture. You can use flour and some recipes call for it, but generally cornstarch is best, leaving less of a flavour imprint.

Cheeses that melt are best for fondue—Swiss chesses such as Gruyère and Emmentaler and Italian mountain cheese like a young Asiago or Taleggio. Cheeses that don't melt (aged cheeses, goats cheese, feta) are not good candidates for cheese fondue.

A good bread is key—sourdough, baguette (the Paysanne baguette from Bonjour Boulangerie is lovely with fondue). You are going to taste the bread so buy or make something nice. As well, dip small cooked potatoes, cornichons, cherry tomatoes, sausage or air-dried beef, like the Swiss. Some recipes say to stir in one direction only, others say a figure eight. Do what feels best—the key is constant stirring.

And mind your forks. Our friend Greg had to remind us to use our fondue forks for dipping only, depositing the dipped items onto our plates.

CINDY'S FONDUE TIPS

- Cheese fondue is tricky, do a little bit at a time, don't try to melt all the cheese all at once.
- Make it in a heavy-bottomed, stainless steel pot. Rub the pot with garlic, the garlic should be subtle.
- Add more white wine if it breaks, or is too thick low and slow, it shouldn't look like mozzarella.
- When it's super hot and runny, put it in the fondue pot.
- Finish with fresh cracked pepper.

CHEESE FONDUE

Classic Swiss Cheese Fondue

½ lb	Gruyère, shredded
½ lb	Emmental, shredded
2 T	cornstarch
	fresh-cracked pepper, to taste
	freshly grated nutmeg, to taste
1 clove	garlic, peeled and halved
1¼ c	dry white wine with good acidity (Riesling, dry Furmint, Sauv Blanc)
1 T	fresh lemon juice
1 oz	kirsch (or brandy) optional, but deepens flavour

Get the accompaniments ready or have someone else do it while you are making the fondue mixture on the stove top.

Place the shredded cheese in a small bowl with the cornstarch, pepper and nutmeg and toss to coat. Reserve. Rub the inside of the pot with garlic. Discard the garlic. Add the wine and lemon juice and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to a low simmer. Add the cheese, gradually, a handful at a time, stirring constantly. When very smooth and hot, add the kirsch and season. Transfer to a fondue pot over low heat and serve.

Accompaniments

Chunks of good quality bread, cornichons, small par-cooked potatoes, broccoli and cauliflower florets, cherry tomatoes, sliced Meuwly's or Italian sausage or air-dried beef.

Beer Fondue

The lactic acid in the buttermilk acts like the tartaric acid in the wine.

1½ c	buttermilk
½ c	beer (we used Blindman Long Shadows, or use malty dark beer like Alley Kat's Beuna Vista)
1 lb	Taleggio, Swiss, Comte or Jack cheese, shredded or a mixture to equal a pound
2 T	cornstarch
2 T	Dijon mustard
¼ t	white pepper, to taste

Heat the buttermilk and beer on medium heat until it bubbles. It might look curdled but it will come back together.

Mix the cheese and cornstarch together. Add by handfuls to buttermilk mixture, stirring constantly until the cheese melts. Stir in the mustard and white pepper, taste and adjust seasonings. Transfer the cheese mixture to a fondue pot and keep warm over low heat.

Accompaniments

Chunks of good bread or German pretzels, bits of sausage and cornichons are terrific to dip in beer fondue.

BROTH FONDUE

Broth fondues are easy, but here are a few tips to get you started.

"Heat up the broth, bringing it to a boil, then turn down to low. If it stays on a hard boil, it will reduce too much," says Cindy.

"If you are using potatoes, par boil in salted water. I like to use sirloin, cut the beef thin and roll it up. Don't marinate the meats, it will change the flavour of the broth. Additional flavour comes from the dips."

If you have leftovers, drink it, or do like Carl Charest: "When I'm done my fondue, I put in a few eggs and make soup. Or add rice noodles, to make a delicious pho-style soup."

Roasted Garlic Broth

This recipe (adapted from Ricardo) is ideal for a beef or game hot broth fondue. You could also dip potatoes and green beans or broccoli florets.

3 heads	garlic
3 T	olive oil
1	onion, finely chopped
½ c	red wine
6 c	home-made beef stock
	salt and pepper

With the rack in the middle position, preheat the oven to 400°F. Slice the top of each garlic head. Place them individually on aluminum foil sheets and drizzle with 1 tablespoon of oil. Close the foil. Bake for 50 minutes or until the garlic is tender and caramelized. Squeeze the garlic purée out of each head and reserve.

Meanwhile, in saucepan, brown the onion. Deglaze with the wine and reduce by half. Add the broth and garlic purée. Bring to a boil and simmer about 5 minutes. Season to taste and transfer to the fondue pot.

Please see "Fondue" on next page




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Fondue

Continued from page 10

Asian-style Broth

The beautiful aromatics and flavours of this broth work well with pork tenderloin, beef, par-boiled carrots, Asian vegetables such as bok choy.

- 1 T sesame oil
- 8 shiitake mushrooms, stems and caps separated
- 3 cloves garlic, smashed
- 3 green onions, sliced, greens and whites separated
- 2-inch fresh ginger, peeled and sliced
- 1 stalk lemongrass, smashed
- 4 c homemade beef or chicken stock
- ½ c water
- 3 T soy sauce
- 2 whole star anise
- few sprigs of cilantro
- 1 T sesame seeds

Heat the sesame oil on medium low. Add the mushroom stems, garlic, the whites of the green onions, ginger and lemongrass. Stir for 2 minutes, then add broth, water, soy, star anise and cilantro. Bring to a boil. Turn off the heat and let the flavours infuse for 20 minutes. Strain the broth and discard the aromatics. Return the broth to the fondue pot and bring to a boil. Place the fondue pot on the fondue stand and light the burner. Add the tops of the green onions and sesame seeds to the broth.

Serves 4-6.

Blue Flame Kitchen's Chicken Broth Fondue

Use with pork, chicken, shrimp or vegetables.

- 8 c home-made or no-salt-added chicken stock
- 1 c water
- 1 T grated fresh ginger
- 2 green onions, sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 8 black peppercorns
- salt to taste

In a large saucepan, combine broth, water, ginger, onions, garlic and peppercorns. Bring to a simmer over medium heat. Remove from heat; let stand for 30 minutes. Strain; season with salt. Transfer to a metal fondue pot and keep hot. May be prepared and refrigerated up to 24 hours.

DIPPING SAUCES FOR BROTH FONDUE

Place a dollop of each sauce on each plate or, better yet, divide into small bowls and give each person a set. Three dipping sauces is a good start for a hot broth fondue.

Vietnamese-style Dipping Sauce for Shrimp, Chicken, Pork or Veg

- ½ c grated carrot
- 2 T sugar
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- ½ c water
- ¼ c fish sauce (or to taste)
- ¼ c lime juice
- 1 T rice vinegar
- 2 serrano chilies (or Thai chilies), seeded and thinly sliced
- ¼ t black pepper

Mix all the ingredients until the sugar has dissolved, then divide into four little bowls.

Blue Cheese Dipping Sauce for Beef or Chicken

- 4 T crème fraîche (or mayonnaise)
- 2 t lemon juice
- dash (or to taste) Spanish smoked paprika
- ½ c crumbled blue cheese
- 2 T chives (snipped, optional)
- dash salt to taste

Mix all the ingredients together and divide into four little bowls.

Miso Dipping Sauce for Shrimp, Pork, Beef, Vegetables

- 1 c mayonnaise
- 2 T white miso
- 1 T mirin
- 2 t sesame oil
- ½ lime, zest and juice
- salt and fresh-cracked pepper, to taste

Mix all the ingredients, then divide into four little bowls.

Please see "Fondue" on page 17

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Fondue pots are no longer flimsy things lit with a votive candle. The new pots are sturdy, made from cast iron or stainless steel and are meant to last.

The **Swissmar cast iron fondue set**, suitable for meat, cheese and chocolate fondues, available in three colours with a wood base. Six colour-coded forks, rechaud (the stand with burner) and removable splatter guard included, \$132.

The **Swissmar Arosa stainless steel fondue set** has a ceramic insert that acts as a double boiler, so you can use it for meat, cheese, and chocolate fondue. The set include the stainless bowl, ceramic insert, six numbered forks, rechaud and removable splatter guard, \$135.

The **Swissmar Lausanne copper fondue set** is similar to the Arosa set except is it made from copper-plated stainless steel, \$165. Fire gel sold separately and replacement ceramic inserts are available.

The **Staub cast iron fondue set** matches all your other lovely Staub cocottes and Dutch ovens, with rechaud, cast iron base and six forks, on sale until the end of January, \$300.

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Beer Guy

New beers resolutions

Good beer can make a bad year better. So, let us resolve to fill this new year with good beer.

1. Drink local. As the Sea Change Brewing folks put it, we have great beer from right here. World-class beer is made here at home—down the block, down the road, or just across town. Local beer is brewed by local people, men and women with a dream to bring people together in community around well-made ales and lagers. These are hard-working entrepreneurs putting it all on the line, giving back to their communities by buying local ingredients like first-class Alberta barley and employing local people. Chances are good that the friendly person behind the bar at the taproom had a hand in making the beer you're enjoying—how cool is that?

life some dry days must fall. Or should fall. We've seen the rise of Dry January and then Sober October, as well as the Sober Curious trend. To me, this is all intentional or mindful drinking—thinking before drinking. A tip—even just one dry day a week adds up to 52 dry days a year. Another tip—the new non-alcoholic beers from Alberta brewers like Partake, Fahr, Village and SYC can be quite good, allowing you to enjoy the fun without the alcohol.

4. Drink better. Fear no beer. Drink something awesome instead of something ordinary. Drink outside your safe zone. Try a style you haven't tried before. My non-beer drinking wife tried a sour and found she liked it. This has made beer travels much better for both of us!



2. Drink Alberta. One small silver lining in the dark cloud of Covid-19 has been rediscovering our own backyard. I dearly miss traveling far and wide, checking out other local beer scenes. I look at a photo of me on the sun-drenched patio of La Quinta Brewing in Palm Springs from February 2020 and think, "You have no idea what is coming, buddy." But our Alberta craft breweries have patios too! They're a bit chilly this time of year, but kudos to Alberta beer people rising to the challenge. Resolve to visit one of the 130 or so breweries in this scenic province of ours. I'm thinking the three Medicine Hat breweries for me this summer.

3. Drink less. Wait, what? Isn't this a beer column? Sure, but everything in moderation. Into each beer drinker's

5. Drink green. No, not that terrible St. Patrick's day green beer, I mean drink sustainably. And drinking local craft beer is the environmentally-friendly choice. Alberta brewers source supplies close to home and when you're drinking a beer in a taproom inside a brewery, you can assume the beer didn't have to be shipped very far.

6. Drink an old friend. We all like the fun new thing, the latest beer innovation, the milkshake IPA or the fruity gose, but a spare a thought for the pioneering beers that paved the way for the craft beer revolution. Toronto beer writer Stephen Beaumont created Flagship February as a time to remember those old school flagship beers and pay homage.

In summary, in 2022 let's resolve to drink good beer, as life's too short not too.

New Year's beer six pack

In 2020 let's resolve to really support our Alberta craft breweries with a visit in person.



Arcadia Go Back to the West Coast IPA, Edmonton

Drink local. Lucky me, I have four craft breweries within walking distance of my house, including Irrational Brewing just 800 metres away. Arcadia is a favourite, with its patio beside a fountain catching the evening sun. This IPA is a delicious, citrusy-piney, hoppy throwback to the pioneering Pacific west coast IPAs of yesteryear.

Dandy Dead Moon Night Imperial Stout, Calgary

Drink Alberta. Big cities or small towns, Alberta craft breweries are always worth a visit. In Calgary I love the spectacular Central Library, the National Music Centre, then walking on into Inglewood to Cold Garden, Ol' Beautiful and Dandy Brewing. Dandy's Imperial Stout is big beer with notes of chocolate, coffee and roasted malt.



SYC Phantom Buzz Non-Alcoholic Pale Ale, Edmonton

Drink less. More and more non-alcoholic beer options is a good thing. SYC's Phantom Buzz is a crisp pale ale with a nice balance of malt and hops. It has a light grain taste with a mild citrus zest. Very quaffable!

Cabin Simple Pleasures English Dark Mild, Calgary

Drink better. Trying a new style doesn't have to involve the big, supercharged monsters, it can be reacquainting yourself with the shy, unassuming beer with subtler charms. This English mild ale is a throwback to a simpler time, a light beer at 3.8% ABV but with good flavor and aroma, with notes of chocolate, caramel, and raisin.



Blindman Super Coffee Stout, Lacombe

Drink green. Blindman Brewing leads in sustainable brewing, going beyond solar arrays and water conservation into AI-enhanced techniques to recover carbon dioxide from fermentation and re-use the CO2 to carbonate beer. This stout is dark, dry and delicious, with pronounced coffee flavour from Red Deer's Birdy Coffee Co. beans.

Alley Kat Full Moon Pale Ale, Edmonton

Drink an old friend. Full Moon is a stone-cold classic, the OG of Alley Kat, their first beer produced when the brewery opened in 1995. An American Pale Ale hopped with Cascade and Centennial hops, Full Moon was shockingly hoppy back in the day but now tastes perfectly balanced between crisp bitterness and mellow maltiness. 🍷



Peter Bailey is going to make it through this year if it kills him. He's @Libarbarian on Twitter and Instagram.

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EL GRINGO

For drinking in winter, wines have to be more than just crisp and bright. They need to be deeper, more defined. They need to work with the richer, more elemental flavours of winter—the earthy soups and stews, the braised meats, the root vegetables, the long and slow cooked dishes. They need to have flavour. And a point of view is always nice. These wines are made from organic grapes and are easy on the budget too, another key January factor.

The Gérard Bertrand 2017 806 Corbières is lovely.

The Syrah in this GSM underwent carbonic maceration before being blended with traditionally fermented Grenache and Mourvèdre, then aged in small barrique for eight months. The 806 is approachable now, with loads of red berry fruit and soft-ish tannins, elegant and harmonious with a very long finish. Wonderful balanced acidity. There is tremendous diversity in Corbières, with layers of schist, limestone and pebbles depending on the vineyard. “Corbières is often called the small Châteauneuf-du-Pape due to the pebbles,” said Nicolas Galy, import director, during a zoom tasting. The new labels in the Heritage Range reflect a date which is important to the development of each particular region, in this case, the establishment of the first vineyard at Château de Peyrepertuse in 806. Wines from the south of France are generally bargains, this is a steal for organic fruit in a wine of this calibre, around \$25.



Orange wines (white wines made with extended skin contact)

with their deeper, bolder flavours and hint of tannins, work so well with winter food. The **2020 Orange Gold** is Gérard Bertrand’s first orange wine, made as a tribute to Georgian wine. It’s a winner. The style may have originated in Georgia but these grapes are typically south of France—Grenache Blanc, Viognier, Marsanne, Mauzac and Muscat along with Chardonnay. The Mauzac and Muscat are most prominent in the highly aromatic nose—honey, orange blossom, white flowers and white pepper—while Chard and Viognier provide depth and backbone. All organic grapes, of course. It’s also not as orange (bitter and overly acidic) as some wines in this category. It’s quite delicious! Never had an orange wine? This is a good place to start, the Orange Gold is accessible in both flavour and price, around \$25.

Neleman Nucli Organic wines are made by a Dutch guy,

Derrick Neleman, in Valencia, Spain. Nucli means core in Catalan—these are not complicated wines, but they are refreshing and tasty. The 2019 Nucli White is a blend of Sauvignon Blanc and Macabeo, trade this for your summer Sauv Blanc and have with Japanese food. The 2019 Nucli Red, a blend of Tempranillo and the less well-known Bobal, both Spanish natives. Juicy, a little bit spicy, drink slightly chilled, fantastic with charcuterie, about \$22. 🍷





DESSERT FONDUE

Chocolate Fondue

The Northern Light team served the Jacek fondue with fresh (mandarin orange segments, strawberries) and dried fruit and large marshmallows. You could add chunks of panettone, fruitcake or cookies.

- 1 lb high quality chocolate (a mix of milk and dark, or bittersweet and semi-sweet) chopped
- 2 c heavy (35 per cent) whipping cream
- 1 T vanilla extract or the seeds scraped from 1 vanilla pod
- 1 T liqueur or other spirit (raspberry, orange or hazelnut liqueur, Kahlúa, Scotch, brandy) optional

Place the chocolate in a large bowl. Heat the cream and vanilla until just starting to simmer, then pour over the chopped chocolate. Wait a minute before stirring, then stir with a spatula until the chocolate is incorporated in the cream and no visible streaks remain. The mixture should be silky smooth. Pour into the fondue pot. Place the fondue pot on the fondue stand and light the burner. Keep the heat low and stir occasionally to keep from sticking.

The University of Alberta Northern Light Dining Experience has been extended into the spring. Visit botanicgarden.ualberta.ca for details. 🍷

Mary Bailey, editor of The Tomato, is a born again convert to fondue.

Fondue

Continued from page 12

Honey Mustard Dipping Sauce for Pork, Chicken, Veg or Beef

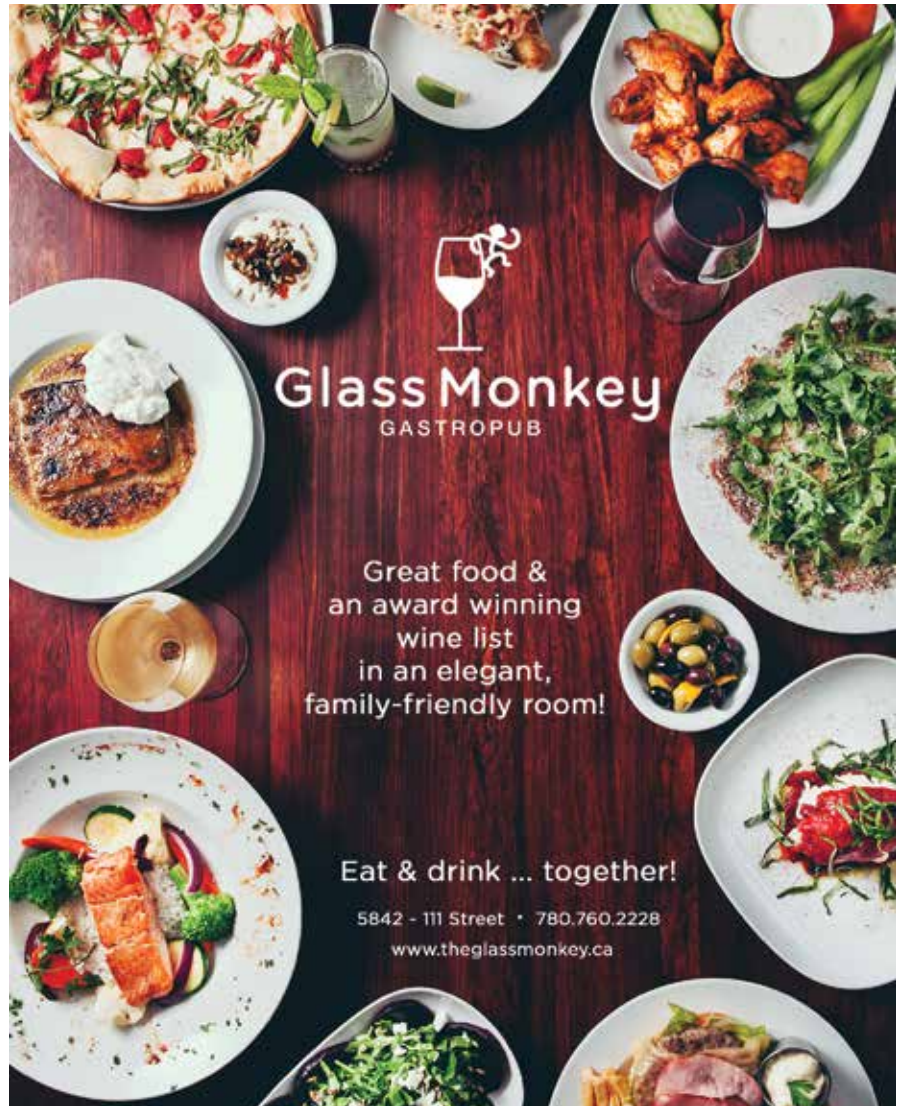
- 6 T mayonnaise (or crème fraîche or Greek-style yogurt)
- 2 T Dijon mustard
- 2 t honey (or to taste)
- 2 t lemon juice
- pinch salt and fresh-cracked black pepper

Mix all ingredients together and divide into four little bowls.

Asian-style Dipping Sauce for Shrimp, Pork or Beef

- ½ c mirin
- ½ c rice vinegar
- ¼ c tamari
- 2 T chopped fresh coriander
- 1 green onion, thinly sliced
- 2 t sambal oelek (or to taste)

Mix all ingredients together and divide into four little bowls.



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Feeding People

Black bear for the menu

The choice to hunt used to be simple—hunt or go hungry.

I am a late onset hunter, passing my 39th birthday before I borrowed my brother's Remington 270 pump-action rifle, loaded the silver cartridges into the breach, closed the action, found the deer's chest in my scope's crosshairs and squeezed the trigger. It was final. Walking up on that deer was tough. I just killed a lovely four-legged animal that weighed nearly as much as me. Killing an animal isn't fun. But it is delicious.

My first hunt was ducks—the result of me trying to spend some valuable adult-time with my mountain-man brother. Ducks progressed to geese, and then I ended up with a deer in my freezer. I was hooked. I have had twenty-two hunting seasons since then. I continue to hunt with my brother—this shared activity and passion has improved our brotherly connection. Hunting is also a direct connection with my food.

I wanted to hunt more animals and expand the variety of game in my freezer. I tagged mule deer, white-tailed deer, antelope, moose and elk. Bear was the only game I hadn't hunted and I wanted one.

That first bear hunt I walked over freshly emerged grass, stepping over recently laid bear scat, following tracks in the mud created by melting snow. I extended my bipod, found a solid rest, placed the crosshairs on the bear's shoulder, and squeezed the trigger. It was a good-sized black bear. I cut fresh steaks, roasts, loins and made sausage and charcuterie. Guests bragged up the fare and I knew I would go back for more.

The eastern edge of boreal forest roughly follows a line northwest of Calgary through Rocky Mountain House and up through Drayton Valley all the way to Athabasca. The combination of dense spruce and poplar with undergrowth of grasses, sedges and berries provide good nutrition and thermal cover for bears.

Boreal forest black bears are delicious. My son says that bear is the dark meat version of domestic pork—an extra furry, wild and mature boar version with teeth. It is worth noting that male bears are called boars and females are sows.

Bear fur is luxurious. My chair at my writing desk is draped in a fourteen-year-old black bear fur. My custom bear mitts keep my hands nice and warm even when walking at -40°F.

Alberta black bears add variety to my pantry and give me many more meal planning options. Bear tags are easy to get and seasons are liberal. Any qualified



hunter can purchase a general tag that can be used for both spring and fall seasons of the same year. Spring bears are lean and fall bears are gloriously fat. The fat is like fatback and perfect for pastry and other baking. The hunting part makes my heart pound—this game can eat me.

I do every part of the handling of the animal myself, from skinning the animal and salting the hide in the field to butchering the animals and preparing the cuts. When I break down a bear, I think about there being three parts: tough, and tougher and a few tender parts. I prepare the cuts based on the dishes in which the bear will be used. Bear shanks can be braised; whole legs hot smoked; tenderloin grilled or fried as schnitzel.

Low and slow is the best approach to most bear preparations and the minimum internal temperature needs to be 160°F, the same as pork. Bear responds well to wet and dry cures, rich spices, hot smoking as well as braising. The toughest parts of our bears are ground for andouille, chorizo and Italian sausages. I wet-cure shanks for several days, then hot smoke them—perfect for baked beans or with sauerkraut. Dry-cured and cold smoked loins make Canadian-style back bacon for eggs Benedict. I confit (cook slowly in fat)

shoulder, seasoned with rosemary, garlic and juniper berries for cassoulet. Fast dry-cured and blackened leg steaks make Tasso-style ham for jambalaya.

Hunting has become a big passion for me. Every spring and fall for seven to 10 days, I set up my canvas outfitter tent in a clearing a good way from the end of the road. This puts us right in bear country. I hunt six to seven weeks each year from the tent.

Let's be clear. This is not a fair fight. I hunt bears with a stainless-steel Remington bolt-action scoped rifle with the powerful .300 Remington Ultra Magnum. But spot and stalk remains my preferred method of pursuing bears—quietly hunting on the ground while carefully searching for a suitable bear. I am successful about half of the time, some years I don't get a bear.

I can tell you that hunting black bear adds tremendous variety to my table. It pushes my culinary talent to explore the best spice combinations and cooking methods to honour the animal. It is a delicious adventure. 🐻

Timothy Fowler is on a mission of sorts. He uses his cook's training to make wild food delicious, and to share this with anyone who is brave enough to join him at the table. Follow him on Instagram @timothydfowler.



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Lentils

Continued from pg 9

Soak the lentils for 2 hours. Drain well. Sauté onions in 2 tablespoons of oil until translucent. Add the garlic, ginger, cumin, chilies and sauté for 2 minutes on low heat. Blend the onion mixture and lentils in the food processor. Add the chopped spinach, mint, coriander and curry leaves.

Mix until combined. Chill for at least 2 hours. Form patties.

Fry on medium heat until golden and crispy. Serve with your favourite chutney.

Lexa's Lentil Shepherd's Pie

Comfort food deluxe from cupboard ingredients.

1 lg	onion, chopped
3 cloves	garlic, peeled and chopped
6	tomatoes, chopped
4 med	carrots, chopped
2 c	pre-cooked green lentils
2 c	pre-cooked rice
3 T	soy sauce or Tamari
3 T	cornmeal mixed with $\frac{2}{3}$ c water
$\frac{1}{4}$ c	chopped parsley
1 t	thyme
1 c	peas (frozen is good)
2 T	tomato paste
	top with leftover mashed potatoes

Pre-heat oven to 375°F.

In a large pan, sauté the onions and garlic until limp, then add the tomatoes, carrots, lentils and rice. Sauté for another five minutes. Add the soy sauce and cornmeal mixture, then the parsley, thyme, peas and tomato paste. Cook for 10 minutes adding more water if the mixture is too dry. Transfer to a casserole and top with mashed potatoes. Bake until the mashed potatoes have begun to brown and the edges are bubbling, about 30 minutes. Let stand at room temperature for 15 minutes before serving.

Serves 6.

Pan-fried Cod with Lentils

First you make a lentil stew with aromatic vegetables and herbs. Then you cook a little pancetta or bacon, then pan fry four cod fillets. The recipe seems long, but it comes together quickly and uses mainly cupboard ingredients. The lentil stew could be used with roast salmon or a grilled pork chop too.

4	cod fillets (skin on)
300 g	green (Puy) lentils
1	bay leaf
1 med	carrot, diced
1 sm	onion, diced
1 stick	celery, diced
1 clove	garlic, crushed
4 sprigs	fresh thyme
2 strips	bacon or pancetta
	butter or oil
	salt and fresh-cracked pepper
	parsley and lemon

Put the lentils and bay leaf in enough cold water to cover by about 2 inches. Bring to a boil, then simmer, uncovered, until lentils are just tender, 12-25 minutes. Drain and reserve $\frac{1}{2}$ -cup cooking liquid.

Meanwhile, cook the bacon until just crispy and drain excess fat, then chop coarsely. While the lentils and the bacon are cooking, melt the butter in a heavy saucepan over medium low heat, and stir in the carrot, celery, onion, garlic, thyme and salt. Cook, covered, stirring occasionally, until the onions are pale gold, about 10 minutes. Remove lid and cook, uncovered, stirring occasionally, until the carrot is soft and onions are deep gold, 5 to 10 more minutes. Fish out the thyme sprig and add the lentils and the chopped bacon. Add reserved cooking liquid if necessary. Keep hot.

Pat the cod fillets dry and season. Heat the butter in a cast iron skillet. Place the skin side down in a moderately hot cast iron skillet and cook for about 4-6 minutes. Turn the fish over once and cook until just cooked through, another 2-3 minutes. Season. Just before serving, squeeze a quarter lemon over the lentils, stir in the parsley and check for seasoning. Spoon a mound of lentils on each plate and place the fish on top. Serve immediately.

Serves 4.

Bonnie Stern's Lentil Salad with Goat Cheese and Pine Nuts

The warm dressing melts the goat cheese into the lentils, entirely satisfying.

2 c	brown or green lentils, picked over
2	bay leaves
$\frac{1}{4}$ c	extra-virgin olive oil
$\frac{1}{4}$ c	pine nuts
$\frac{1}{3}$ c	soft goat cheese, crumbled
handful	parsley, chopped
2 c	cleaned arugula (optional)

Place the lentils and bay leaves in a large saucepan and add water to cover by 2 inches. Bring the lentils to a boil, cover and reduce to a simmer. Cook until the lentils are tender but not falling apart, about 20 minutes. Drain in a colander and remove the bay.

Heat a small skillet over medium-low heat. Add the pine nuts and toast carefully, stirring and tossing until they are evenly gold, 4-5 minutes. Do not let them burn. Reserve.

While the lentils are cooking, prepare the warm shallots and vinaigrette.

Shallots

6 med	shallots, finely diced
2 T	olive oil
$\frac{1}{4}$ c	red wine vinegar
$\frac{1}{2}$ t	salt

Heat a large skillet over medium heat and add the olive oil. Add the shallots and the salt. Reduce the heat to low and sauté until the shallots are caramelized, about 15-20 minutes, stirring often. Stir in the red wine vinegar and cook for another 3 minutes, or until the vinegar is absorbed. Remove from the heat and reserve warm.

Vinaigrette

$\frac{1}{4}$ c	extra virgin olive oil
2 T	red wine vinegar
2 t	salt
$\frac{1}{2}$ t	Dijon mustard
2 t	fresh-cracked pepper
1 clove	garlic, crushed

Whisk together the vinegar, salt, mustard and pepper in a small bowl. Slowly whisk in the $\frac{1}{4}$ -cup of olive oil to emulsify. Add the crushed garlic and set aside. Just before using, remove the garlic from the vinaigrette.

To serve: arrange arugula on a large platter or individual plates if using. Gently stir the warm shallots and vinaigrette into the lentils. Place on the arugula and top with the goat cheese, toasted pine nuts and parsley. Serve immediately.

Serves 4-6.

Ottolenghi's Mujadara

This popular Levantine dish is one of my childhood flavours. It evokes memories of heaps of this stuff being sold both in restaurants and by street vendors. Whether eaten hot or cold, the combination of sweet spices and bitter-sweet onion is as comforting as can be. Spoon over some Greek yoghurt and tuck in but watch out—it's not easy to stop. —Yotam Ottolenghi

$\frac{1}{2}$ c	sunflower oil
4 med	onions, thinly sliced
250 g	green or brown lentils
2 t	cumin seeds
$1\frac{1}{2}$ T	coriander seeds
200 g	basmati rice
2 T	olive oil
$\frac{1}{2}$ t	ground turmeric
$1\frac{1}{2}$ t	ground allspice
$1\frac{1}{2}$ t	ground cinnamon
1 t	sugar
	salt and black pepper
350 ml	water

Heat the sunflower oil in a medium-size heavy-based saucepan. When very hot, carefully add a third of the sliced onion. Fry for five to seven minutes, stirring occasionally with a slotted spoon, until the onion takes on a nice, golden-brown colour and turns crispy. Use the spoon to transfer the onion to a colander and sprinkle with salt. Repeat with two more batches of onion.

Meanwhile, put the lentils in a small saucepan and cover with plenty of water. Bring to a boil and cook for 12-15 minutes, or until the lentils have softened but still have a little bite. Drain and reserve.

Wipe clean the saucepan in which you fried the onion and drop in the cumin and coriander seeds. Place over medium heat and toast the seeds for a minute or two, until they release those distinctive aromas. Add the rice, olive oil, turmeric, allspice, cinnamon, sugar, half a teaspoon of salt and plenty of black pepper. Stir to coat the rice with oil, then add the cooked lentils and water. Bring to a boil, cover and simmer on very low heat for 15 minutes.

Remove from the heat, lift off the lid and cover the pan with a clean tea towel. Seal tightly with the lid and set aside for 10 minutes. Finally, tip the rice and lentils into a large mixing bowl. Add half the fried onion and stir gently with a fork. Pile up in a shallow serving bowl and top with the rest of the onion.

Serves four. 🌱

Just add marshmallows

I was a hot chocolate-deprived child—I honestly don't remember ever having one.

I'm sure I did, but it was probably the water-plus-hot-chocolate-mix kind that always gets served at outdoor winter events. It was almost undoubtedly served in a Styrofoam cup. Probably completely satisfying at the moment, but also completely forgettable.

My lack of hot chocolate consumption can be directly attributed to my mom. She did not make us hot chocolate. Ever.

That may sound harsh and even a wee bit cruel. After all, hot chocolate is an iconic rite of childhood. But I never felt deprived. She made us something that was, in my opinion, infinitely better.

She made us cocoa.

The process was always the same. She would haul out her big orange pot, one that was exclusively dedicated to cocoa, turn on the stove and get busy pouring and mixing and stirring. In went heaps of cocoa, big dollops of farm honey (never sugar) and generous glugs of milk and cream. Lots of everything—it had to be enough for five kids after all—but nothing was ever measured. She just knew.

Once the cocoa was steaming hot, she would carefully carry the pot to the table (where our five little faces were waiting rather impatiently) and pour it into our waiting mugs. We'd dip our noses down, inhale and savour that first sip before passing around a bag of mini marshmallows. We each plunked exactly ten marshmallows on top (dictated and closely monitored by my mom), and they were the crowning touch. The whole thing was rich and creamy and sweet and absolutely heavenly.

Cocoa was always an event—it was perfect all by itself. But on really special nights, when we were lucky enough to have them, my grandma's buns shared the spotlight. Three-day buns she called them, and they were white, slightly chewy and sweet and absolutely addictive. We'd slather them with homemade butter and dunk them in our cocoa. They would soak up some of the rich, chocolaty mixture and the warmth would soften the butter. Each bite was exquisite. After the buns were

demolished, we'd still have most of our cocoa left, only now it was cocoa with a rich, glossy layer of melt-y butter on it—so good! Ah, the good old days, when I could consume as much butter and cream as my heart desired.

I still drink cocoa. We all do, actually. I'm an end-my-day-with-cocoa kind of person, whereas for two of my sisters it's a first-thing-in-the-morning kind of thing. Over the years we've all revised my mom's version. Numerous times. One of my sisters ditched the milk for just water before cutting out the honey as well. Not exactly my ideal cocoa, but it made her happy—for a while. She's now back to honey and milk, albeit nut milk.

My many iterations of cocoa have included cinnamon and vanilla, as well as various types of cocoa. But the version I make now seems to be the keeper: a mix of natural and Dutch process cocoa, honey, skim milk, skim milk powder, a dash of salt (when I remember). That's it. I've never added cream (it seems far too decadent to consume on a daily basis), but the skim milk powder gives it body and a surprisingly luxurious richness.

I'm not sure where my mom's love of cocoa came from and unfortunately, it's too late to ask her. I've kept up the family tradition by making cocoa for my girls, though. And both of them, now in their twenties, still drink it on a regular basis.

Hot chocolate has its merits (multitudes of them, actually), and I've consumed my share of those over the years as well (post-childhood, of course). I've had everything from so-so coffee shop renderings to Jacek's indulgent sipping chocolate to the ultra-thick, rich, almost spoonable concoction at Angelina Paris. And I've enjoyed them all, even the so-so ones. They all seem to work in the moment.

Cocoa, however, has cemented its place in my heart as the drink of choice. The memories, the process of making it, that first sip—nothing can ever replace that. ☺

Jan Hostyn never counts her mini marshmallows anymore—pours them on with reckless abandon.



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Kitchen Sink what's new and notable

January is a special time to go to the mountains, especially during **Jasper in January** from January 14-30. **Retro Shred Cinema Ski** (Jan 24) and **Snowboard Nights** (Jan 25); skating, sleigh rides and dog sledding at Pyramid Lake; as well as **Jasper Dining Week**, January 16-23. **The Wine in Winter** tasting is January 14 and **Whisky & Hops-the Ultimate Après** (tix, January 4) is on January 15. For info visit jasper.travel/january/events.

Jasper Park Lodge has several cool events planned for this winter starting with the **PJ Party with Kaitlyn Bristowe**, January 7-9. The two-night package includes all meals (Sunday brunch with Caesar & Mimosa Bar anyone?) dance parties, classes, demos and live entertainment, \$799/p+, jasper-park-lodge.com/offers/jasper-pj-party to book. JPL will be featuring their very own JPL Lager and signature cocktail during **The Jasper Beer & Spirits Festival**, February 11-13.

Century Park Cellars (2349 111 Street, 780-395-0503) is having a drop in **Gin Tasting** on Friday, January 21, 5-7pm and a sit-down version on Saturday, January 22, 5-7:30 pm. They are also keen to host private tastings for between six to 14 people any night of the week. Great for book clubs, birthdays, office get togethers, from \$25/p+. Call the store or email info@centuryparkcellars.com for more info.

Edmonton Public Library's (EPL) teaching and community kitchen opens with a virtual launch on January 22. Check EPL's website for more information about programming and hours.

Check out the **Vinyl Swap** with the **Dead Vinyl Society**, 3-6pm, Sunday, February 6, at **Three Vikings** (10713 124 Street, 780-249-6302, threevikings.ca). There will be Guinness and mimosas on special along with those delicious Danish pancake balls called *aebleskiver*. Giddy up!

Look what's new on Whyte Ave! **Café Bel-Air** (8020 101 Street, 780-441-1149, cafelair.ca) has moved into the La Boule space. Best known for their popsicles at the farmers' market, this location offers

vegetarian and vegan food and tea, coffee, pastries. The look is bright and sunny, all the better to enjoy their High Tea. **The Butchers Son** (10158 82 Avenue, 587-525-3869, thatbutchersson.com) is a proper German butcher in the Flirt Cupcake space. They offer a cut and wrap service for farmers and hunters too. The **Next Act Group** is opening a sandwich shop called **Pals** in the old Packrat Louie space. **The Woodrack** is now on the main floor of the **Dominion Hotel** (entrance off the alley, 102, 10324 82 Avenue, 780-977-3787, thewoodrackcafe.com). Open daily 8am-6pm. **Bandits**, the pandemic alternative for **Smokey Bear** (8223 104 Street, 587-759-0209, smokeybearveg.com) continues to offer fried chicken and beers in the basement, Wednesday-Saturday, 5-9pm. **Pact Coffee and Baked Donuts** opens in the old Starbucks' space and **Mash Craft Beer and Craft Pizza** in the Second Cup across the street, which makes pizza crust from Half Hitch Brewing's spent grains. More on Mash in the next issue.

Darling Wine Bar that, yes, darling, spot nestled in **Take Care** (9621 82 Avenue, 825-512-5631, takecarecafe.co) is moving to a new (and as yet undisclosed at our press time) location. We will miss them at Take Care, there was something special and urban about a spot where you can have coffee and a haircut during the day and enjoy a wine bar at night. We're sure the new spot will have just as much charm.

Heart of the Home (12539 102 Avenue, 780-705-4928, heartofthehomeveg.ca) is going back to regular hours this month—closed Mondays, Tuesday-Saturday, 11am-5pm and Sunday, noon-4pm. Closed January 31 for inventory. What about raclette and fondue for Valentine's Day?

Jasper Beer & Spirits Festival at the Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge happens February 11-13 this year. For details and tickets visit albertabeerfestivals.com/festivals/jasper-beer-spirits-festival. And stay for the **Superbowl Sunday Tailgate Party**, \$85/p+, call 780-852-6091 to book. 🍷

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