

FOOD & BEVERAGE

3
NEW WAYS
REVAMP OLD
FAVOURITES WITH
SOME CULINARY
CREATIVITY



A WHOLE NEW CLASS OF COMFORT FOOD



Mackenzie Smith grills up some gourmet genius

Foodies share their tips for **taking the classics from simple to stunning**—and always satisfying

PHOTO: GRILLED CHEESE SOCIAL

A sweet spot
Tea transforms from breakfast staple to dessert



Tools of the trade
Food bloggers spill on their must-have gadgets



CHALLENGES



With a bevy of fresh ingredients and an adventurous culinary spirit, the opportunities to live in good taste are endless. Whether you're preparing a holiday feast or just a feel-good bite, **expand your horizons.**

Make holiday entertaining easy—and enjoy yourself!

Creating a fun and festive gathering where you have time to enjoy the company of your guests always seems to be an impossible task. A few of these suggestions may help get you on track to create a holiday party that will leave guests in awe of your party-planning “je ne sais quoi.”

Over a decade of event planning, including the annual Gourmet Food & Wine Expo coming this November 17 to 20th at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, we've learned a few things about gourmet food, fine wine and planning one heck of a party!

Warming up to refreshments

The first drink rule: The biggest rush of the night is getting that first drink in the hands of your guests. Make life a little easier by offering a selection of winter beers and sleek, ready-to-drink cocktails. The Vice Icewine Martini and the Bassano Lemon Sanguinelli offer a light and refreshing start to the night. Add in a few winter beers like the Samuel Adams Winter Ale, the seasonal Creemore Springs UrBock; the Mill Street Coffee Porter, and Gran-

ville Island Brewing Winter Ale. You can try a practice round of all of these great drinks at the Gourmet Food & Wine Expo.

During cocktail hour, unveil your selection of fine Canadian cheese. Explore your options at the Expo by attending a free seminar at the All You Need is Cheese Stage. Add in stellar chorizo, fire roasted peppers, marinated artichokes and freshly sliced baguette served with aged balsamic and Nova Oliva extra virgin olive oil. This easy hors d'oeuvre will satiate your famished guests and leftovers may come in handy later if your guests tend to stay until the wee hours.

Get “sets” for success

Offering pre-set pairings with your dinner is a surprisingly easy way to plan your wine list. Guests will be wowed by your efforts and aside from a little pre-planning and a few extra glasses, it's almost effortless once the meal begins. Pour a sample for everyone and leave the bottle on the table so guests can fill up on their favourites.

While we adore gourmet cuisine, it often requires skilled professionals to execute the vision, so hire a great sous chef and let the party begin. Work with your chef to plan



Jennifer Campbell
Show Manager, Gourmet Food & Wine Expo

A TASTY EVENT

Gourmet Food & Wine Expo

- Metro Toronto Convention Centre
- November 17 6-10pm
- November 18 2-10pm
- November 19 12-10pm
- November 20 12-6pm
- Buy tickets now at and find out more at www.foodandwineexpo.ca

Sample from over 1,500 wines, beer and spirits and savour incredible gourmet cuisine from Toronto's best chefs.

the menu and select two wines per course. Start with a root vegetable soup like butternut squash, which is perfect for a wintery night, and pairs nicely with the Stoneleigh Sauvignon Blanc or the Lailey Vineyard Chardonnay. A second course could include a delectable duck confit which pairs easily with many wines including the D'Arenburg Shiraz Grenache or the classic Masi Chianti. Follow this up with a main course of seared tenderloin and seasonal vegetables where you can go big with new Vintages release Clos du Marquis Bordeaux or splurge on an aged Cabernet from the infamous Cakebread Cellars.

Reconnect with your party people

Your chef can pack up or join the party while guests resume mingling. A selection of bite-sized pastries and petite pies can sit pretty on a platter for your guests to help themselves. Put the coffee on and break out your best liqueurs like the St-Rémy Cream, Luxardo Amaretto and classic Grand Marnier for the ideal indulgence to complete the evening. When all is said and done, send your guests home in a taxi and call it a sensational night. Cheers!

Special occasions inspire holiday spirits

There's no way around it—planning an event over the holiday season requires a lot of preparation.

By selecting the perfect alcoholic beverage to set the tone and enhance your social gathering, you will leave a lasting impression. Serving wine to your guests creates a calm atmosphere, brings people together and is a great way to stimulate conversation. “Socializing and having fun come to mind when people think about wines and spirits. It also adds flavour to your meal and I often encourage people to think of wine as one of the food groups because it compliments absolutely everything,” says **Kathy Cannon**, director of Wines at the LCBO.

Tickle your taste buds

There's no right or wrong answer to selecting a brand of wine. Discovering your preference is the most pleasur-



“Socializing and having fun come to mind when people think about wines and spirits.”

Kathy Cannon
Director, Wines, LCBO

able part of the wine tasting experience and to get your guests involved, don't be afraid to explore different flavour profiles that are associated with the essence of various produce, such as raspberry, grape, apples, pears and strawberries. In most cases, the bottle will tell you the story behind the wine and what's in it. “There is something out there for everyone. Choose something that no one has tried before. A lot of people tend to purchase what they think is the safest, but taking a new

and exciting route with good company is always fun and entertaining,” states Cannon.

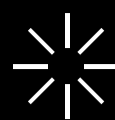
The ideal gift for any occasion

Gifting wine and spirits sends a unique and personal message to its intended recipient. It's an opportunity to give a luxurious, yet flavourful beverage to someone you care about and will gladly be treasured because most people don't take the opportunity to spoil themselves. “We have over 1400

different wines and have put together several prepackaged gifts for consumers who are confused about what to buy,” says Cannon. “We've boxed together great brands and products to make things easier too.”

Beverage trends that are big this season are classic liquors including Cognac, Grand Marnier, Baileys, Premium Vodka, and American and Irish Whisky. “People also tend to be drawn to red wine at this time of year, but surprisingly the popularity of white wine is growing because it is crisp and fresh,” Cannon affirms. “Another huge trend that is highly recommended for eggnog is Spice Rum because it enhances the flavour,” she suggests. “These all make great gifts and aren't just in style around the holiday season, but all year around.”

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WE RECOMMEND



Gear up for gastronomic greatness
Food bloggers share their tools of the trade.

PAGE 7

“A recent trend has been the proliferation of specialized tools once only found in high-end restaurant kitchens and now available to the home cook.”

The ooey goey gourmet p. 4
Grilled Cheese Social takes this savoury classic to new levels.

Recipe spotlight p. 6
Fill your evenings with scrumptious dinners and desserts.

MEDIA PLANET

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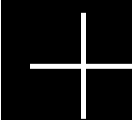
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DON'T MISS!



Perfect pairings

Enjoying these dishes this holiday season? Here are some tips for pairing your favourite meals with delicious beverages.

- **Caviar:** Pair with Frozen Vodka
- **Smoked Salmon:** Pair with Highland Single Malt Scotch
- **Oysters:** Pair with Chablis
- **Veal:** Pair with Oak Aged Chardonnay
- **Steak:** Pair with Côtes-du-Rhône or Sémillon

COURTESY OF LCBO (LCBO.COM)

INSPIRATION

NEW TRENDS IN BEVERAGE PAIRING

TIP
1
TRY AN UNEXPECTED FLAVOUR



INSPIRATION

Brew up something beautiful

Forget your fancy latte—the latest way to mug it up brings about a new twist on a centuries-old beverage—gourmet teas. Tea boutiques, such as Montreal-based DAVIDS TEA, are springing up and offering their fragrant wares country-wide. With these teas, the pairing options go way beyond breakfast—they're becoming an increasingly popular accompaniment to sweet and savoury desserts.

For more information on the gourmet tea movement, check out Page 7!

PHOTOS: DAVIDS TEA



TOP IT OFF
This recipe packs an extra hit of protein with a savoury egg addition.
PHOTO: THE TOMATO SNOB

Not a recipe to snub

Pasta with Ricotta and a Fried egg, courtesy of The Tomato Snob

Being “The Tomato Snob”, my love of pasta and tomato sauce is a force to be reckoned with. This quick and delicious recipe packs some much-needed protein into a carb-laden meal.

Get prepped

You'll need a large can of crushed plum tomatoes, four cloves of minced garlic, two tbs. of olive oil, four fresh basil leaves, one tsp. of dried oregano, some chopped parsley, one tsp. of red pepper flakes, two grated carrots, one cup of low fat ricotta cheese, salt and pepper to taste, four eggs, and two tbs. of butter.

In a large pot, heat olive oil to medium, sauté the garlic and chili for a minute, then add oregano. Reduce temperature to medium before adding tomatoes. Toss in basil and bring sauce to a low simmer for 30 minutes. Before serving,



Jaime Verk-Perez
Food Blogger,
The Tomato Snob

whisk in ricotta and add parsley. In another pot, boil heavily salted water with a drizzle of olive oil for the pasta. While the pasta is cooking, fry eggs in butter with a pinch of salt and pepper. When all is ready, add the cooked pasta to the sauce to coat and serve with the fried egg, and parsley on top. Chow for now.

Read more on the web:
www.thetomatosnob.com

JAIME VERK-PEREZ
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RECEPIES

Pasta with Ricotta and a Fried Egg

- Serves 4
- Can of plum tomatoes—San Marzano are best
 - 4 cloves garlic, minced
 - 2 carrots, grated
 - 2 tbs olive oil
 - 4 fresh basil leaves—whole
 - 1 tsp dried oregano
 - 1 handful parsley— chopped
 - 1tsp red pepper flakes
 - 1 cup of low fat ricotta
 - Salt & pepper to taste
 - 1 package spaghetti
 - 4 eggs
 - 2 tbs butter

1. In a large pot, heat olive oil to medium, sauté the garlic and chili for a minute, then add oregano.
2. Reduce temperature to medium before adding tomatoes.
3. Toss in basil and bring sauce to a low simmer for 30 minutes. Before serving, whisk in ricotta and add parsley.
4. In another pot, boil heavily salted water with a drizzle of olive oil for the pasta.
5. While the pasta is cooking, fry eggs in butter with a pinch of salt and pepper.
6. Add the cooked pasta to the sauce to coat and serve with the fried egg, and parsley on top.

A MEATLESS WONDER!

INSPIRATION



1 Warm, toasty and always satisfying, the grilled cheese is the epitome of comfort food. Swap in some unique ingredients, however, and this **pan-fried classic goes from simple to stunning.**



The ooey gooey gourmet

HOW I MADE IT

If you've ever bitten into a perfectly cooked grilled cheese, chances are you understand what real comfort food should taste like.

Little can go wrong with toasted bread and a slice of oozy, gooey melted cheese. **MacKenzie Smith**, a counselling psychology major-turned blogger, turned full-time foodie, understands that concept better than anyone. She's dedicated an entire blog, Grilled Cheese Social, to the sandwich she grew up eating. Her site includes dozens upon dozens of high-end grilled cheese concoctions, all starting with bread and some kind of cheese and made in her bite-sized kitchen in Williamsburg, New York. She now works at *Savour* magazine and is a cheesemonger-in-training at *Depanneur*, a specialty store in Brooklyn.

Reinventing savoury staples

If you think grilled cheese is simply white toast and processed cheese singles, think again. Grilled Cheese Social has brought this North American staple to the next level, and then some. MacKenzie adds grilled veggies, salsas, and

quality-cheeses to her sandwiches and experiments with different types of breads to achieve a unique version of a grilled cheese that transforms into a complete meal. She gives each final piece a quirky name that matches her larger-than-life personality and then shows you step-by-step pictures to help you make the same sandwiches in your own kitchen. Her favourite of the 70 she's blogged about? "I guess it's a battle between the 'East Villager', which uses butternut squash, bacon, gouda, and lard bread, and the '(F) unemployment Special', which is made with pound cake, brie, fig preserves, and a rosemary-infused butter. They're both totally different but I love the sweet-yet-savoury flavour profile that they both have."

A cheesy beginning

MacKenzie's love for grilled cheese began when she was

a toddler, living on Captiva Island in South Florida. Allergic to seafood—the island's staple—she began a love affair with bread and cheese and hasn't looked back since. It's this shared emotional connection with grilled cheese that makes her blog such an original, quirky and fun read. "I just love the emotional tie that people have to grilled cheese, and how enthusiastic they get when they talk about the special way their family did it and how amazing it was. It's bizarre how compelling a sandwich can be and it inspires me."

Skipping on the skinny

With current trends leaning towards more healthy and nutritious lifestyles, Grilled Cheese Social is an ultimate resource for indulgent eats. "I actually only eat grilled cheese about twice a week" MacKenzie confesses, but when she does she really makes it count. Favourites include her 'Hodge Podge' grilled cheese, which layers sautéed kale, wild mushrooms, roasted beets and goat cheese or her over-the-top, carb-filled Poutine grilled cheese—a sky-high arrangement of greasy, curds and fries tightly sandwiched by two thick pieces of beer bread really elevate the grilled cheese.

What's MacKenzie's advice to make the best grilled cheese—or GC, as

MacKenzie calls it? "Get creative and use real butter!" The quality of the ingredients is always a prime concern—you do need good quality cheese and bread to make the ultimate grilled cheese. Once the ingredients are there, don't be afraid to experiment. MacKenzie has come up with some of her most successful sandwiches by drawing inspiration from her favourite meals and transforming them into grilled-cheese form. Another word of wisdom is never to use margarine instead of butter: "You need the real full fat stuff to create an amazing crispy shell that locks in all the goodness. Sure, using the fake stuff may be healthier and save a few calories, but if you're eating a grilled cheese in the first place, then why try to make it super healthy?"

Jennifer Bartoli is a Toronto-based writer, photographer and recipe developer who grew up in Paris, France. Her long-standing passion for food took her to New York City, where she studied at the French Culinary Institute. For delicious recipes and more, check out Jennifer's blog, [Chocolate Shavings](#).

BE MINE
MacKenzie created the La La Love You, which is loaded with strawberries, Nutella and Mascarpone cheese, for her boyfriend on Valentine's Day.
PHOTO: GRILLED CHEESE SOCIAL

INSPIRATION



CELEBRATE
INGREDIENT
AND FLAVOUR
COMBINATIONS

4

TIPS

Experience Ontario's wine country

Taste responsibly

1 Have a designated driver who is not consuming alcohol, taste small samples, feel free to spit and use dumping bins, don't taste on an empty stomach.

Give your senses a chance

2 Refrain from chewing gum or eating strong tasting foods before you taste and avoid wearing heavily scented perfumes. These things will change how the wine tastes and smells.

Look, swirl & smell before you taste

3 Start by noticing the color of the wine as it will give you a hint on its age and style. Next swirl the wine in its glass as this aerates the wine and releases aromas for you to smell. Much of a wine's charm comes through smell so smelling is really important (it's polite to put your nose right over the rim of the glass).

Ask lots of questions

4 Wine people are always excited to share their stories and help people learn and discover new things about wine. Find a new favourite variety like Chardonnay, Riesling, Pinot Noir or Cabernet Merlot.

COURTESY OF WINE COUNTRY ONTARIO
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1. Each of Mackenzie's creations starts in her bite-sized kitchen in Williamsburg, NY.
2. The Little Devil on Horseback, which features blauschimmel cheese and bacon-wrapped eggs.
3. Team Cream, a concoction assembled on an Everything bagel and filled with heirloom tomatoes and organic cream cheese.
PHOTOS: GRILLED CHEESE SOCIAL



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Please drink responsibly

RECIPE SPOTLIGHT

NEW TWISTS ON OLD FAVOURITES

Toasty and tasty

Sass up some traditional warm weather staples

Udon Noodles with Vegetable Broth

4 stalks of chopped green onion
4 heads of baby bok choy
5 oz. udon or soba noodles
1 vegetable stock cube
1 litre of water
Freshly ground black pepper to taste

1. Add the water and vegetable stock to a pot and bring it to a boil.
2. Next, add the noodles (keeping them long), and cook for 8-10 minutes.
3. Add the baby bok choy when there is about about 2-3 minutes of cooking time left.
4. Serve in deep bowls and garnish with fresh, chopped green onion.
5. Grind fresh peppercorns on top for additional flavour.

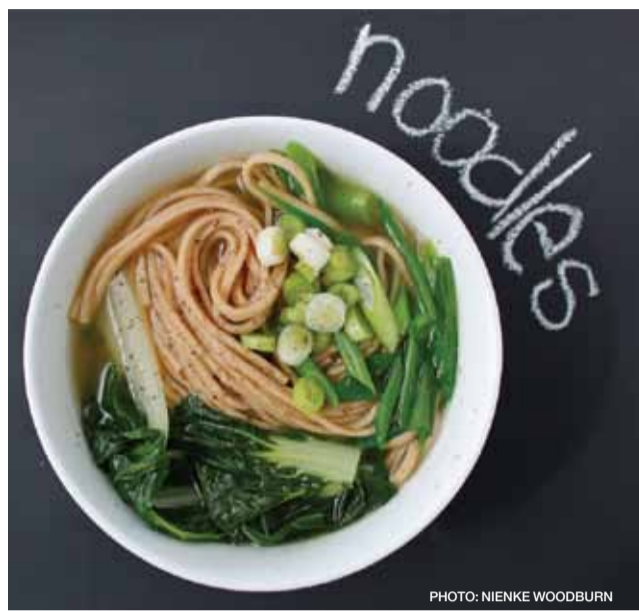


PHOTO: NIENKE WOODBURN

NIENKE WOODBURN

Revel Blog
revelblog.com
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Mini Pita, Haloumi and Zucchini Pizzas

6 mini whole wheat pitas
1/4 cup + 2 tablespoons of olive oil
1 tablespoon of grated parmesan
1 clove of garlic, very finely minced
1/4 tsp of dried oregano
1 small green zucchini
1 small yellow zucchini
12 cherry tomatoes, quartered
1 good squirt of lemon juice
Salt and freshly ground pepper
1/4 cup of pitted Greek olives
6 medium thick slices of Haloumi cheese

1. Preheat your oven to 400F. Carefully cut each pita in half lengthwise to get two round bases. Lay out the pitas on a parchment-lined baking sheet, inside facing up.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together the 1/4 cup of olive oil, Parmesan, garlic and oregano and generously brush the mixture on each pita half. Using a vegetable peeler, peel thin strips of zucchini and place in a bowl. If the strips are too large, cut them in half lengthwise using a small paring knife. Add the quartered cherry tomatoes and olives. Add the 2 tablespoons of olive oil, lemon juice, a pinch of salt and pepper and gently toss to coat. Don't add too much salt as the Haloumi and olives are both quite salty.
3. Evenly distribute the zucchini, tomatoes and olives on each piece of pita, leaving a small border. Cut each slice of Haloumi cheese into 2 or 3 pieces and add them evenly to each pita. Cook for 8-10 minutes or until the cheese has melted and the zucchini just starts to wilt.



PHOTO: JENNIFER BARTOLI

JENNIFER BARTOLI

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Get delectable

You'll be tempted to skip your dinner with these desserts waiting in the wings

Extravagantly Rich Chocolate Mousse with Merangues

Mousse:

3 egg yolks
1 cup of whipping cream
150 grams of dark chocolate

1. In a double bottom pan, melt the chocolate.
2. In a large bowl, whip the egg yolks until stiff.
3. Add the melted chocolate to the whipped egg yolks and mix.
4. In a separate bowl, whip the cream until stiff.
5. Now add the whipped cream to the egg and chocolate mixture—mix until blended.
6. Keep the mousse in the fridge until it is time to serve.

Merangues:

3 egg whites
1/2 cup of sugar
1/2 teaspoon of vanilla extract
1 teaspoon of whiskey

1. Preheat the oven to 200F
2. Combine the egg whites, vanilla and whiskey in a large bowl and whip together.
3. Add the sugar bit by bit and whip until the mixture is stiff and shiny.
4. Line a baking tray with wax paper and use a piping bag to pipe dollops of the mixture onto the paper.
5. Place in the oven for 3 hours



PHOTO: NIENKE WOODBURN

NIENKE WOODBURN

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Poached Pears with Chocolate Ganache

4 Bosc pears
1 piece of fresh ginger, 1/4 inch thick, peeled
1 lemon
4 cups of water
1 1/2 cups of heavy whipping cream
12 ounces of bittersweet chocolate
1 teaspoon of vanilla extract

1. Add the water and sugar to a large saucepan on medium heat. Let cook for 3-4 minutes or until the sugar has dissolved into the water (you can swirl the pan to help it dissolve). Using a vegetable peeler, peel a couple strips of lemon zest and add to the water. Then, juice 1/2 lemon and add to the water. Add the ginger. While the sugar is dissolving, peel the pears. Be careful to leave the stem intact and to neatly peel the skin around it.
2. Add the pears to the water mixture and simmer for 15-18 minutes or until the pears are soft but still hold their shape.
3. To make the ganache: finely chop the chocolate and add to a heat-proof bowl. Place the cream in a little pot and bring to a strong simmer. Right before the cream starts to boil, remove from the heat and pour over the chocolate. Whisk until the chocolate and cream form a homogeneous mixture. Fold in the vanilla extract. To plate, add a couple ladles of chocolate sauce to each serving plate and place a well drained poached pear at the centre.



PHOTO: JENNIFER BARTOLI

JENNIFER BARTOLI

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"GREAT FOOD
deserves
GREAT FRIENDS"

Or is it the other way around? We always try to wait for our guests to arrive before serving the appetizers, but Sam can never wait. She enjoys making appetizers almost as much as she loves sharing them. Whether she's entertaining a few friends or hosting a large get-together, the door isn't even closed before everyone's asking about the delicious aroma coming from her kitchen.

SAM LOVES TO SHARE

Whether she prepares them in advance or on the fly, Sam believes you need to start with the best food and a simple idea. Of course Sam has a few misses now and then, but almost every story starts where the food starts, the appetizer...even the wine waits.

DO YOU KNOW
SAM?

"It wasn't hard putting the appetizers together. I steamed the asparagus, doused them in cold water to stop the cooking and dried them. Next I spread out three slices of San Daniele prosciutto from the deli, put down a thin layer of arugula so the prosciutto wouldn't soak up any moisture, and wrapped five or six spears of asparagus into a prosciutto roll. I cut them across so they looked like sushi, only tasted better. When everyone wanted to know how to make my 'Italian sushi,' we all laughed."

Enjoy San Daniele and Mastro deli meats with your friends

Like Sam, you can prepare simple, yet elegant appetizers with a little help from San Daniele and Mastro, traditional Italian-style deli meats. From Prosciutto to pancetta and salami, you'll find this and other appetizer recipes at ShareMastro.com. Let us know what you think and share your stories. Enter our Share Mastro, Share Italy contest on Facebook @ ShareMastro.



Visit us on Facebook.

Looking for a fresh
take Holiday feast?
Spice it up!

Want to impress your friends and family this Christmas? Why not try out some of the dishes that our winemaker will be cooking up on Christmas Day—enjoy!

■ Entrée : Spicy BBQ Prawns (a family favorite)

Marinate peeled king prawns with chili, oil and garlic overnight and cook on the BBQ.

Serve with Kim Crawford Pinot Gris

■ Main : Herb & Garlic BBQ Lamb with Roast Veg

Marinate a butterflied leg of lamb with olive oil, garlic, wholegrain mustard, Kim Crawford Chardonnay and rosemary over night. Wrap the lamb in foil and cook on BBQ until just cooked. Brush lamb with mint jelly and cook uncovered until a glaze forms, cover and rest the lamb. To make a gravy, take what is left of the marinade, add some chicken stock and simmer for five minutes.

Serve with Kim Crawford Pinot Noir

■ Dessert: Mincepie Icecream Sundaes with Hot Buttered Rum Caramel

Soften some good quality vanilla bean ice cream, crush up some mince pies



and stir into ice cream. Freeze until required. Pour over hot buttered rum caramel. Serve with Inniskillin Sparkling Ice wine.

Merry Christmas and happy holidays everyone. Cheers!

ANTHONY WALKENHORST

Kim Crawford Winemaker
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NEWS

Gear up for gastronomic greatness

TIP
3
AVOID GIMMICKY GADGET TRENDS AND OPT FOR HIGH QUALITY

■ Question: How can you update your kitchen arsenal in the most effective way possible?

■ Answer: Learn from food bloggers' tools of the trade—and avoid seemingly convenient gimmicks.

Every season, especially during the holidays, a multitude of new kitchen tools flood already crowded kitchen-store shelves.

It can be difficult to distinguish gimmicky kitchen gadgets from the items that are worth the splurge—as well as the counter space. Should you buy into the latest craze? Or invest in the essentials? Who better to ask than three savvy food bloggers who spend the better part of their free time in the kitchen concocting delicious feasts to share with their readers? **Kevin Lynch** is the author of Toronto-based food blog "Closet Cooking", a repository for international recipes made in a closet-sized kitchen. **Deeba Rajpal** runs "Passionate about Baking" from just outside New Delhi, India, showcasing hundreds of gorgeous pastry and cake recipes. **Matt Wright**, from "Wrightfood", cooks from Seattle and shares many rustic seafood dishes as well as ways to make cured meats at home.

Tools of the trade

Despite their widely diverse backgrounds, all three bloggers agree that the one item universally worth spending money on is a good chef's knife. For everyday essential tasks like slicing vegetables, dicing onions or chopping fresh herbs, a good chef's knife is a treasured tool. It will help hone your knife skills while making you more efficient and confident in the kitchen. Matt uses primarily Wüsthof knives for chopping. "I like heavy German knives for regular chopping—the weight feels good and the handle fits my hands well," he says. "For more delicate work I like Japanese knives, however their handles are often too small for my hands for long periods of chopping."

Deeba likes Ergo chef knives, which she prizes for their sturdiness and design, while Kevin prefers Zwilling

J.A. Henckels knives. Finding a good chef's knife is similar to finding the perfect shoe—it really has to fit and feel right.

What gets shelved

When asked about their most useful tools were in the kitchen, the bloggers offered a variety of responses from smaller essentials to higher-priced equipment: Kevin most values his stainless steel pans and food processor, while Deeba could not cook without her microplane grater—an ingenious tool used to finely grate citrus zest, chocolate, and cheese, as well as her stainless steel mixing bowl. Matt uses his tongs and cutting board the most—all inexpensive items that make everyday cooking much easier. The most useless tools for these bloggers? A cherry pitter, a garlic press and a five-hole citrus zester all made the list as tools that end up collecting dust in a kitchen drawer.

A recent trend has been the proliferation of specialized tools once only found in high-end restaurant kitchens and now available to the home cook. Matt, who often blogs about his adventures making charcuterie, owns a pH meter to check the acidity of salami during fermentation, and ultimately to help create a safe and delicious end-result. Kevin, who enjoys making many different ethnic foods, has purchased a gnocchi board to make these little potato dumplings the old-fashioned way. On the other hand, Deeba, a busy stay at home mother, prizes the efficiency of her Thermomix, an almost futuristic food processor that also chops, whips, blends, steams and cooks.

These bloggers have best equipped their kitchen by first investing in good quality essentials for everyday use and then indulging in more specialized items that tailor to the types of dishes they enjoy making most.

Read more on the web:
closetcooking.com/
passionateaboutbaking.com/
mattikaarts.com/blog/

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STAYING SHARP
Deeba Rajpal, author of food blog "Passionate about Baking" includes high quality knives among in her prized kitchen tool box.
PHOTO: PRIVATE

Tea's company: A new take on a classic beverage

Everyone seems to be buzzing about tea these days, and it turns out, it's warranted—the traditional brewed beverage has come a long way over the last few years.

While many Canadians might be accustomed to breakfast tea, a new—and sweeter—craze is becoming popular. Brands such as DavidsTEA are now serving dessert tea. With over 150 varieties of tea, from traditional straight teas to exclusive blends and flavours, DAVIDS TEA definitely has something for everyone.

A new-found favourite

It might just seem like the latest food trend, but tea has been popular around the globe for thousands of years. Every culture has its own traditional infusion, from Chinese green tea to South African rooibos to Argentinean maté. Now Canadians can



experience the world's love affair with tea right here in North America with a unique, modern twist.

DAVIDS TEA's resident tea guru, Richard Guzauskas, explains this traditional drink's new-found appeal. "We strive to make tea fun and accessible to everyone," he says of the brand's modern take on tea.

"Some people try to stay away from caffeine after dinner, but our vast selection of caffeine-free herbal teas offers a perfect solution for evening tea drinkers," the tea guru explains. Dessert teas are a no-brainer after a meal, but traditional teas are also a great addition to a dessert course. "Our Wild Black Yunnan tea is delicious with chocolate, white tea is the perfect palate cleanser, and green tea goes extremely well with fruits and cheeses," says Guzauskas.

A healthy choice

In addition to being great tasting, many Canadians simply sip to enjoy the many health benefits of tea. According to Mighty Leaf, studies have shown that the free amino acids in tea leaves have helped improve mental wellness by reducing stress



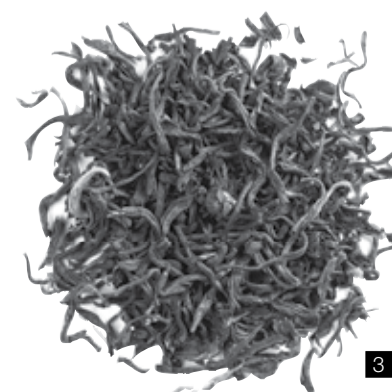
NO CRUMPET NEEDED
Dessert teas bring bold new flavours to your cup.
1: Buttered Rum
2: Creme Caramel Rooibos.
3: Wild Black Yunnan
PHOTOS: DAVIDS TEA

and anxiety. The same amino acid, L-theanine, helps aid the immune system battle virus and infection, making tea a perfect drink for the upcoming winter season. Tea also contains vitamins such as B12, B6, E, and minerals including potassium and calcium.

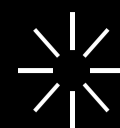
Perfectly paired

Author of the award-winning book "Tea with a Twist: Entertaining and Cooking with Tea", Lisa Boalt Richardson knows how to enjoy the perfect cup. "Teas are wonderful to serve with desserts," she says, noting the move away from serving traditional coffee and dessert. "The best teas to serve with desserts that are high in fat are those that are high in astringency which cuts through it and gives your palate a resting place. An example of those teas would be Japanese Sencha or an Indian Darjeeling." Some of

Richardson's favourite tea and dessert pairings include dark chocolate truffles with a Pu'erh tea, which is great for digestion as well as taste. "Milk chocolate cake with an Earl Grey—the bergamot citrus in the tea pairs nicely with milk chocolate", she adds.



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RECIPE



Baked Baby Potatoes with Acadian Caviar

Enjoy the following recipe with a glass of Champagne—experience with beloved people near a real fire on a cold winter night.

- 1 pound baby potatoes
- 200 ml organic crème fraiche
- 2 tbsp chives, finely chopped
- 100 ml olive oil
- 50 g unsalted butter
- 100 g Acadian Caviar
- freshly ground black pepper



1. Wash the baby potatoes and boil them for 20 minutes. Drain, let cool and cut in halves.
2. Preheat the oven to 200 Celsius (430 F). Set the butter in a pan and heat it for approx. 2 min.
3. Coat one baking tray with aluminum foil and oil it with melted butter. Arrange the baby potatoes with the cut part down, and bake in the oven for 15 minutes or until golden.
4. Mix the crème fraiche, chives and ground pepper. Place the mixture in the fridge.
5. On a serving plate, arrange the baby potatoes with their cut sides facing up. Add a teaspoon of the crème fraiche mixture and a generous dollop of caviar on top.
6. Serve with vintage Champagne or vodka, chilled in the freezer for 2 hours before serving.



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