

THE JOY ISSUE

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Our 2025
holiday cookies
are here!

P 50

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about giving

P 32

JOIN THE JOY RIDE

Our favourite
Canadians
share their
happiest
moments of
the year

P 40



This showstopping
dessert features a
major store-bought
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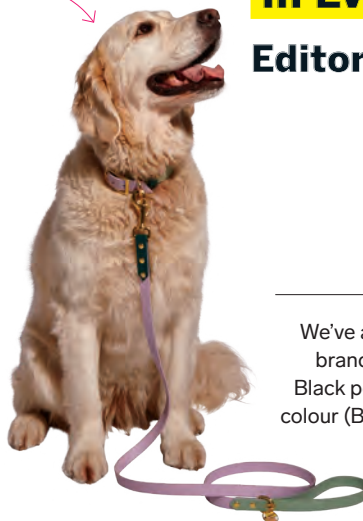
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The Joy Index

AT **THE END OF THE YEAR**, it's natural to take stock of what you've achieved, whether it's a hard-won promotion or running your first 5K. But I'd suggest another metric: joy. In our first-ever Joy Issue,

we asked 27 of our favourite Canadians to share their most exuberant moments of the year. And despite the challenges of 2025, not a single person turned us down. Lisa LaFlamme talked about becoming a great aunt, Tracy Moore shared the "peak joy" of daytime dance parties and Jann Arden described meeting the love of her life at an Icelandic writers' festival.

It's impossible to hear other people recount their happiest moments and not feel uplifted yourself. In that spirit, my own most joyful moment of 2025 happened in Cavendish, P.E.I. I visited the island in September with my niece, Mikayla, who is 25. That was joy enough in itself (I love 25-year-old energy!) but this trip was extra special as my mom was born in St. Peters Bay, and Mikayla had never been. On our final day on the island, we toured the house that inspired *Anne of Green Gables*. The last time I visited was with my mom, who passed away in 2022, so she was on my mind. As Mikayla and I were walking the nearby Haunted Wood trail, a blue jay—my mom's favourite bird—swooped between us. It was completely magical, and reinforced my belief that our loved ones are always watching over us.

Turn to page 40 for more joy, including an essay from Ann Porneil of *The Great Canadian Baking Show*. (If you watch, you already know that Ann is pure happiness in human form.) You'll find lots of other dopamine-inducing content in this issue too, including our all-Canadian holiday cookies (page 50), our Made in Canada Gift Guide (page 32) and Chantal Braganza's decadent Feliz Navidad menu (page 60). Wishing you a joyful holiday season!



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 **ROGERS**

THE DISH

A LITTLE BIT OF THIS, A LITTLE BIT OF THAT

Welcome to Weeknight Hero—a delicious, slam-dunk recipe you'll want to cook again and again, any night of the week.



Sumac and lemon add pep to this roasted halloumi and veg salad.



Roasted Sweet Potato, Halloumi and Kale Salad

PREP 25 MIN; TOTAL 45 MIN

SERVES 4. *This warm winter salad has it all: crispy kale, roasted sweet potato and salty pops of halloumi. I top it off with pita chips and sumac-pickled onions as a nod to my favourite Middle Eastern salad, fattoush.*

- ½ cup white-wine vinegar
- 1 tsp granulated sugar
- ½ tsp sumac (turn to page 74 for more on sumac)
- 1 ¾ tsp kosher salt, divided

- 1 ½ cups thinly sliced red onion, divided
- 1 bunch curly kale, stems removed and roughly torn
- 1 large peeled sweet potato (300 g), diced into ½-in. cubes (see tip)
- 1 cup canned chickpeas, drained
- 1 ¼ cups cubed halloumi (300 g)
- 6 tbsp olive oil, divided
- 1 large lemon, juiced
- 3 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- ½ tsp cumin

- ¾ tsp black pepper, divided
- 1 large, thin pita, torn or sliced into bite-sized pieces
- ½ cup pomegranate seeds
- 3 tbsp roasted pistachios, chopped
- Fresh mint, for garnish
- Lemon wedges, for garnish

1. Position racks in top and bottom-thirds of oven, then preheat to 475F. Line two large baking sheets with parchment.
2. Stir vinegar with sugar, sumac, 1 tsp salt and ½ cup warm water in a large bowl

until sugar dissolves. Add ½ cup onion and submerge in brine. Set aside.

3. Spread kale on one baking sheet, then top with sweet potato, chickpeas, halloumi and remaining 1 cup onion.

4. Whisk 4 tbsp oil with half of lemon juice, garlic, coriander, cumin and ½ tsp each salt and pepper in a bowl. Drizzle over vegetables and cheese and toss to coat.

5. Bake on top rack, stirring halfway through cooking, until sweet potato is tender, 20 to 25 min.

6. Meanwhile, toss pita bread with remaining 2 tbsp oil and ¼ tsp each salt and pepper on second sheet. Bake on bottom rack until golden and crispy, 8 to 10 min. Set aside to cool.

7. To serve, transfer roasted vegetables to a platter. Pour remaining lemon juice and 2 tsp onion pickling brine evenly over roasted vegetables. Top salad with pickled onions, pita chips, pomegranate seeds and pistachios. Serve with torn mint leaves and lemon wedges.

Kitchen tips

- Sweet potato can be swapped out for squash, pumpkin or even cauliflower.
- Serve salad with a dollop of hummus on the side.



JILLIAN BARRECA IS A TORONTO-BASED RECIPE DEVELOPER WHO LOVES TO CREATE NOURISHING, EUROPEAN-INSPIRED DISHES.

St. Kitts

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Cockleshell Beach



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* **STYLE CRUSH** *

Snow Suit

Meet a ceramist who puts a festive spin on her signature monochrome palette.

Trudy Crane

@trudy.crane

66, THE LAURENTIANS, QUE.

It's fair to say that ceramist and cookbook author Trudy Crane has a favourite colour. Her affinity for shades of white and cream—often accented with other neutrals—is obvious in the organically shaped dinnerware she crafts for her brand, Lookslikewhite, in the snapshots of her home and wardrobe that she shares on social media, and even in her signature hair hue. "I've always gravitated toward this sort of simplicity," she says.

Crane's aesthetic is undeniably classic, but always with a twist to keep things fresh—an unexpected metallic detail, a sharp pleat or a hot trend that piques her interest. For the holidays, she pairs flowy suiting with a long silk top trimmed with lace, a look borrowed from fashion week street style that brings just the right amount of festive glimmer to the ensemble. Also on her radar for the season: silk scarves and chunky bangles, two staples from her days as a fashion marketing executive that are making comebacks. "I've kept a lot of pieces that were special to me, so I wear my own vintage." 



Agenda

Read the Room

Everyone on your list wants the same thing this season: permission to get lost in a great book. These 10 recent releases—which run the gamut from buzzy memoirs to gorgeous cookbooks to singular works on identity—provide just that. **WRITTEN BY Emily M. Keeler**



The Art of the SNL Portrait by Mary Ellen Matthews, \$69

For 25 years, Matthews has photographed the hosts and musical guests of *Saturday Night Live* under extremely tight deadlines. Known as bumpers, these striking photos are only displayed for seconds in between commercial breaks—until now. In this hefty coffee table book, her artistry gets the attention it deserves.



A Steady Brightness of Being: Truth, Wisdom and Love from Celebrated Indigenous Voices edited by Sara Sinclair and Stephanie Sinclair, \$32

This anthology of letters from Indigenous writers, artists and activists across Turtle Island (including artist Ken Monkman and novelist Jessica John) is an intimate and polyphonic address to the history and future of Indigeneity. 📖 📧



Everything I Know About Love: Fifth Anniversary Special Edition by Dolly Alderton, \$37

This anniversary edition of the British writer's wildly funny (and occasionally heartbreaking) memoir chronicles her life as a young woman in London going on dates and making friends, lovers and many, many mistakes.



Something From Nothing by Alison Roman, \$51

The woman behind *The Stew* and *The Cookies* is back with a paean to the power of the pantry. Roman's latest contains over 100 cozy, highly cookable recipes destined to take over your Instagram feed, including Kimchi-Tomato Soup and Forever-Roasted Squash with Brown Buttered Dates.



Bread of Angels by Patti Smith, \$38

Smith is the doyenne of lyrical memoirs, and this luminous meditation on coming of age and turning toward art is her most intimate book yet. She revisits her post-war childhood and wanders through her wayward teens, before arriving at the person she became when writing *Horses* and building her family.

BOOKS PHOTOGRAPHY: JON LLOYD (THE ART OF THE SNL PORTRAIT, A STEADY BRIGHTNESS OF BEING, BOUSTANY, WE MIGHT JUST MAKE IT AFTER ALL, THE BOOK OF ALCHEMY, THE DAD ROCK THAT MADE ME A WOMAN, LA CUCINA DI TERROR);



Boustany: A Celebration of Vegetables from My Palestine by Sami Tamimi, \$45

Ottolenghi co-founder Tamimi's first solo cookbook is a verdant ode to the vegetarian cooking he grew up with. Boustany is Arabic for "my garden," and Tamimi's is storied, colourful and packed with flavour—think Jerusalem Sesame Bread, Eggplant and Chickpeas with Green Lemon Sauce (shown above) and Sumac Roast Plums with Cardamom Cream and Pistachios.



A handful of intimate photos from Elyce Arons's memoir.



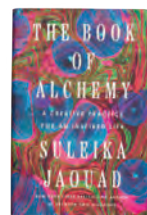
We Might Just Make It After All: My Best Friendship with Kate Spade by Elyce Arons, \$39

Arons's memoir captures the particular intimacy and joy of growing up with her best friend and eventual business partner, Kate Spade. Detailing their 37-year-long friendship, Arons grieves and celebrates life with "Katy," from the dirty glamour of making It-bag prototypes in 1990s New York to Spade's struggles with depression and eventual suicide.



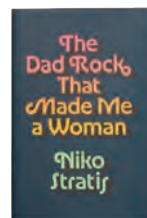
Code Noir by Canisia Lubrin, \$25

The original Black Code was a series of laws enacted in France in 1685, meant to govern Black people all over the world. Lubrin's ecstatic, miraculous novel writes over and through and around the language of colonialism—from magical realist tales of women going grey overnight to playful formalist riffs on language. Featuring original art from [Torkwase Dyson](#). 📖 📱



The Book of Alchemy: A Creative Practice for an Inspired Life by Suleika Jaouad, \$40

Bestselling author Jaouad has journalled for "as long as [she] can remember," including through a leukemia diagnosis and multiple recurrences. *The Book of Alchemy* is part investigation, part invitation to take up what she calls the "utterly alchemizing" practice, with short essays and prompts from 100 other creative types.



The Dad Rock That Made Me a Woman by Niko Stratis, \$35

Growing up as a closeted trans woman in the Yukon, Stratis lost and found herself over and over in the music of tender-hearted rock and rollers; as much music criticism as memoir, *Dad Rock* invites queer readings of REM and paints a tender portrait of a genre (which, as she notes, is French for "gender") in flux. 📖 📱



La Cucina di Terroni: The Cookbook by Cosimo Mammoliti, \$50

This striking tome reveals the magic behind Toronto's beloved southern Italian restaurant empire. Want to make Meghan Markle's favourite hot sauce? Craving a Nutella bomboloni? This is your book. Many recipes are multi-day affairs; the time-pressed should head straight to the expansive cocktail section. 📖 📱



Scan to shop!

* BEST OF THE BEST *

Crème de la Crème

Seven Canadian-made cream liqueurs to give this season (or just savour yourself).

WRITTEN BY **Chantal Braganza** PRODUCED BY **Sun Ngo** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **Jon Lloyd**
PROP STYLING BY **Tricia Hall**

Best for Coffee

Broken Oak Brûlée Bliss
A little on the sweeter side, this vanilla-forward liqueur, from Grande Prairie, Alta., pours like a dream into a cup of black coffee. \$46, latitude55.ca.

Best for Sipping on the Rocks

JD Shore Rum Cream
Halifax Distilling Co. makes one of the most delicious cream-based liqueurs we've tried, bar none. Boozy, extra creamy and tinged with a subtle spiciness from the rum base, it's perfect for serving in a short glass with ice. \$35, jdshore.ca.

Best for Dessert Drizzle

Hansen Distillery Morning Glory
Thick, rich and laced with chocolate and hazelnut, this Edmonton, Alta.-brewed cream treat has a dessert-coffee kick that would make an excellent ice cream topping or affogato booster. \$32, hansendistillery.com.

Best Signature Flavour

Cabot Trail Maple Cream
Sweet and subtle, this made-in-Quebec cream liqueur has maple syrup's rich, full flavour without a cloying or artificial taste. \$35, lco.com.

Best Dairy Taste

Vodkow Classic Vanilla Cream
This vodka-based cream sipper, made in Almonte, Ont., had the freshest dairy flavour of the roster we tried. Bonus: it's lactose-free. \$35, lco.com.

Best Crowd Pleaser

Forty Creek Original Cream
With its strong rye notes, this is the ideal analogue for lovers of traditional Irish whisky cream. Forty Creek—based in Niagara-on-the-Lake—was purchased by Campari Group in 2014, but it hasn't lost its Ontario roots. \$34, lco.com.

Best for a Sweet Tooth

PJ's Original Cream
This Belleville, Ont.-made bottle is the sweetest option of the bunch—perfect for adding a touch of vanilla cream to a hot chocolate. \$34, lco.com.



Scan to shop!





White House Bay

CREATED FOR *St. Kitts*

soothing the nervous system and restoring calm. Treatments feature tropical ingredients like aloe, raw sugar and coconut oil. Guests can enjoy couples' massages or immerse in hydrotherapy circuits that include hot and cold plunge pools. Whether you're visiting solo or with a partner, the experience is designed to help you slow down and sink into the moment.



St. Kitts Marriott

Let The Island Heal You

The St. Kitts Reset

At just 168 square kilometres, St. Kitts may be small, but it offers a refreshingly expansive experience for travellers seeking equal parts adventure and restoration. Rainforests here are still growing, winding up the slopes of Mount Liamuiga in lush, mist-covered layers. Walk beneath the canopy where birdsong replaces traffic or unwind along beaches that range in colour from champagne to volcanic black. On this island, you're invited to slow down, breathe deeper and reconnect—with nature, with others and with yourself.

Wellness in the Wild

Serenity isn't staged in St. Kitts—it's part of the living, breathing landscape. The rainforest doesn't just surround you; it envelops you. The scent of flowering hibiscus hangs in the air, and time seems to stretch out. It's a place where stillness feels purposeful—and healing happens without effort.

High in the hills above Dieppe Bay, Belle Mont Sanctuary Resort blends natural beauty with intentional wellness. Its Mango Walk



Belle Mont Sanctuary Resort

Spa offers warm bamboo massages, herbal poultice therapies and restorative baths scented with coconut milk and fresh petals. You can enjoy treatments in the spa or right from your hillside cottage, with the rainforest soundtrack playing softly outside.

Wellness extends beyond the spa too. Guests can meditate beneath the trees, experience sound healing or try Rope and Belt Therapy, an adaptive, supported form of yoga. There's also a playful approach to self-care: think workshops on DIY body scrubs made with ingredients sourced from the island.

Seaside Rituals and Spa Indulgence

For a more luxurious take on island healing, Park Hyatt St. Kitts Christophe Harbour offers oceanfront calm with a side of sophistication. The Sugar Mill Spa and Sanctuary features advanced facials with vitamin C, marine algae and collagen boosts, along with standouts like the Antioxidant Vibrancy Revival Facial and the Heirloom Rose Ritual. The resort also offers St. Kitts's only cacao ceremony—a heart-opening experience that blends tradition, scent and guided intention.

Prefer something more active? Morning yoga, CrossFit and even pickleball are available. But here, too, there's no pressure—just space to move and reconnect, at your own pace.

Spa Days for One—or Two

At the recently refreshed Emerald Mist Spa at St. Kitts Marriott Resort, the focus is on

Adventures with Intention

Even the island's wildest experiences come with a sense of calm. Zip-line above the tree-tops, snorkel around sunken wrecks or hike up Mount Liamuiga for panoramic views—all at a pace that feels grounded and unrushed. Locals often say "rush slowly"—a phrase that perfectly captures the island's laid-back approach to living.

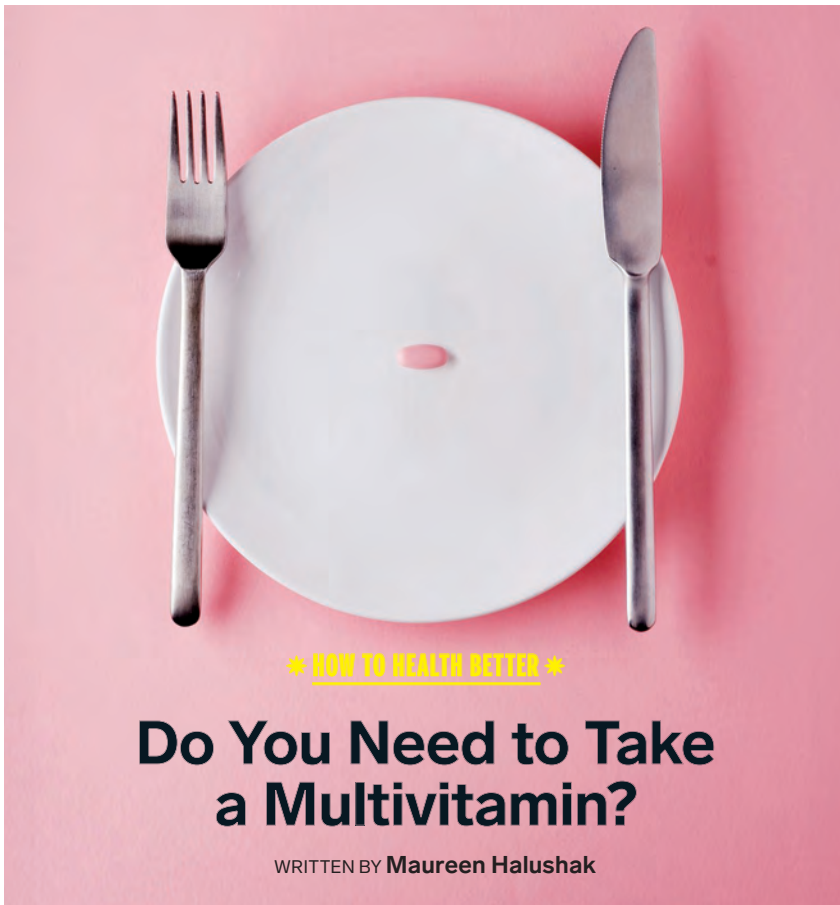


Turtle Beach

Return to Yourself

In St. Kitts, connection is the ultimate luxury. Visit Liamuiga Natural Farm to learn about local agriculture and sample sun-warmed fruit straight from the source. Or simply wander the local markets and meet the people who infuse every corner of this island with generosity and warmth.

This isn't just a vacation. It's a return to yourself. And here, that return begins with stillness, space and the simple choice to begin again—slowly.



I'M A MULTIVITAMIN skeptic who has reported on women's health for more than two decades, but even I occasionally fall prey to a buzzy headline. Most recently, an article about the relationship between multivitamins and cognitive health sent me straight to the supplements aisle. But before I spent \$20 on something I wasn't sure I needed, I decided to ask a few experts for their advice. Here's what they told me.

Spoiler: You probably *don't* need a multivitamin

The idea of multivitamins as "nutritional insurance" has been around since the first multis hit shelves nearly a century ago, says Jonathan Jarry, a science communicator at the Office for Science and Society at Montreal's McGill University. "We're still buying into that marketing," says Jarry, whose work involves making scientific research more

accessible to the general public. "The vast majority of people do not need multivitamins."

While getting enough nutrients through diet is the ultimate goal, there are a few circumstances in which a multi makes sense, says Jamila Kanji, a Vancouver-based registered dietitian and Menopause Society-certified practitioner. "People who have digestive disorders—such as Crohn's—and have issues absorbing certain vitamins and minerals could benefit from a multivitamin." As could someone follows a restrictive diet, which is common among midlife women. (This would be a temporary measure as they work up to eating a more varied diet.)

What's the latest research?

The article that sent me to the supplements aisle references findings from the COSMOS-Mind three-year

trial, part of the Cocoa Supplement and Multivitamin Ongoing Study conducted at Brigham and Young Women's Hospital in Boston. After three years of daily multivitamin use, subjects—whose average age was 71—experienced improved overall cognition, episodic memory and executive function. Sounds great, but Jarry notes that these were "tiny improvements due to statistical noise."

"Can we really extrapolate from this data that healthy midlife women should take multivitamins?" asks Kanji. "I don't think so." In terms of cognitive health, she recommends the MIND diet, which focuses on leafy greens, berries, whole grains, nuts and legumes.

There just isn't any major scientific proof that multivitamins have significant benefits for the average person, seconds Jarry. "Instead, it's the same boring stuff that will keep you healthy as you age: getting enough sleep, eating well, building muscle, keeping your brain active."

How can I tell if I have a nutritional deficiency?

Kanji recommends midlife women ask their doctors to have their iron, B₁₂ and vitamin D levels analyzed in their routine bloodwork—and then bring these results to a registered dietitian for insight on how to improve any deficiencies either through diet or supplementation.

The final word on multivitamins

"If you're not eating a varied diet and you want to take a multivitamin, make sure [it contains] enough of the key nutrients," says Kanji—including iron (menstruating women need 18 mg daily), vitamin B₁₂ (2.4 mcg) and vitamin D (consult your doctor for your ideal dosage). "Otherwise, taking the nutrient as its own supplement is probably going to benefit you more." 🍷

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Gifts That Go Beyond the Holidays

From cozy comforts to the latest tech to small culinary appliances, there's something for everyone on your list—including you!

Simplify holiday chaos by creating an Amazon Holiday Gift Registry, which takes the guesswork out of shopping and helps family and friends work within their budget—all while being sure their choice will spark joy. And who knows, you might be inspired to select one of your finds for someone else in your life.

LUXURIOUS HOME UPGRADES

De'Longhi Rivelia Automatic Espresso Machine

It's easy to up your at-home barista game with this espresso machine that takes customization to the next level. Plus, it even has an automatic milk frother.



Amazon Basics Pinch Pleat Down-Alternative Comforter

Wrap yourself in the year-round comfort of this lightweight microfibre comforter set. Perfect for cozy nights during the hectic holiday season and for every season that follows.

Google TV Streamer

Looking to level up those at-home movie nights? Watch those festive family favourites right on your TV with Google's 4K Streamer.

EVERYDAY ESSENTIALS

All-Clad Fry Pan Cookware Set

Cooking skills aside, a good frying pan set is a kitchen must-have. Whether preparing a huge holiday feast or hosting a small dinner party, these nonstick pans will come in handy.

KitchenAid 7 Quart Bowl-Lift Stand Mixer

This stand mixer is perfect for the baker in the family. Plus, they might just share some of their homemade gingerbread cookies with you.



BLACK+DECKER Honeycomb Collection Kettle

A quality kettle is essential to a good cuppa. This one is cord-free and even has an automatic shut-off feature for peace of mind when busy multi-tasking.

Dyson V15 Detect Plus Cordless Vacuum

Dreading the cleanup after a big holiday party? This vacuum's green laser reveals hidden dust, auto-adjusts suction and runs up to 60 minutes—perfect for prepping for the next festive fete.

MOMENTS THAT MATTER

FUJIFILM INSTAX MINI 41

Instant Camera

Capture all the fun family memories with this instant camera that even has a built-in selfie mirror. Yes, cheesy holiday photos are allowed.



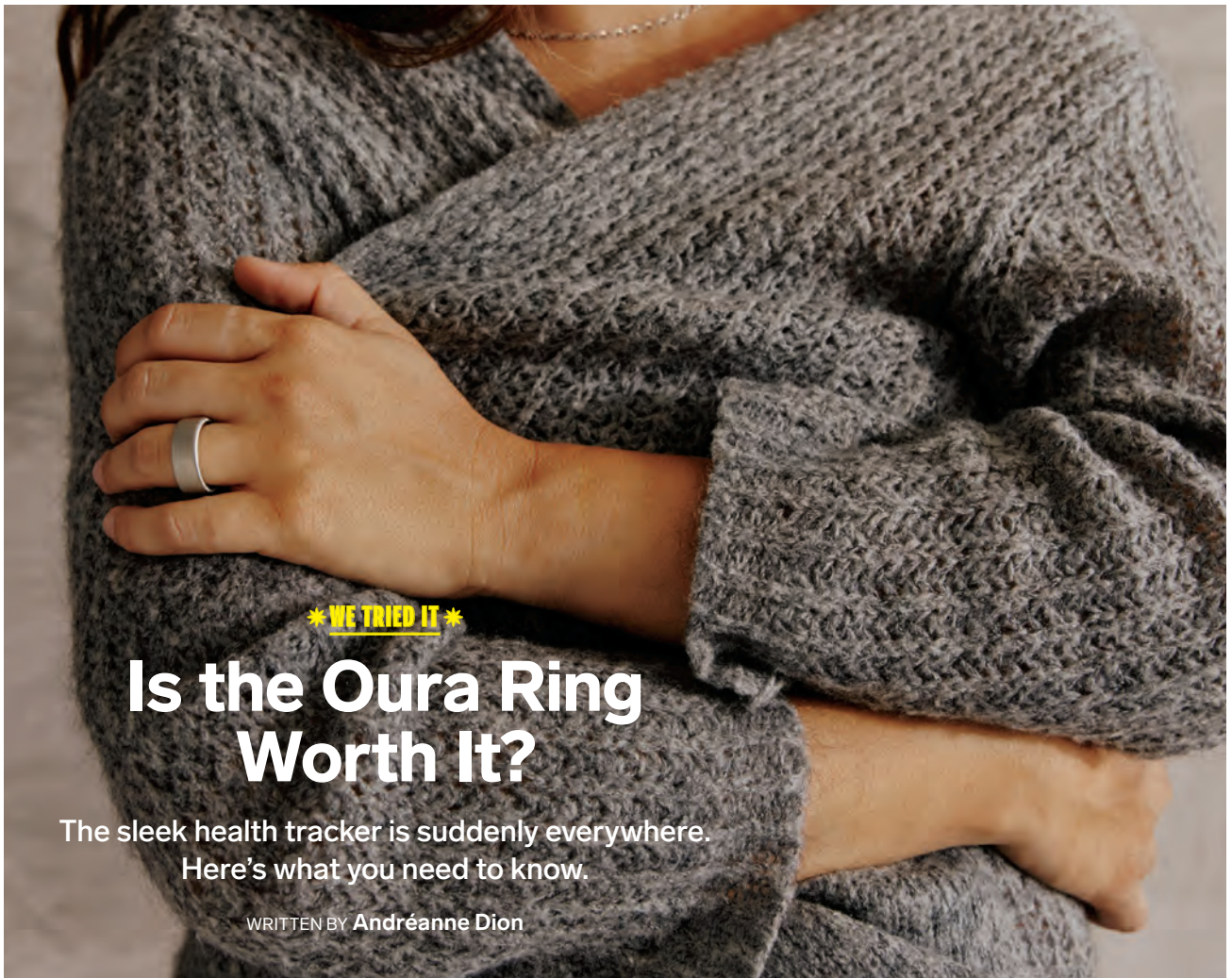
Amazon Kindle 16 GB

Finally ready to make the switch to an e-reader, or need a gift idea for that book club friend? This lightweight and compact Kindle is especially great for reading on the go.

Breville the Smart Oven® Air Fryer

Love trying out new recipes? You don't need a deep fryer to enjoy crispy turkey skin or perfect potatoes. This smart oven air fryer has got family dinners covered.





* WE TRIED IT *

Is the Oura Ring Worth It?

The sleek health tracker is suddenly everywhere. Here's what you need to know.

WRITTEN BY **Andréanne Dion**

I'VE WORN VARIOUS iterations of the Apple Watch to track my workouts and sleep over the years, but I have a love-hate relationship with its bulky face and rubber band. I often take it off (then forget to put it back on) when its sporty vibe clashes with my outfit. So my interest was piqued when one of my most stylish—and health-obsessed—friends introduced me to her new piece of hardware: the Oura Ring, a sleek tracker that's worn on your finger like jewellery. Once I knew what to look for, I started noticing Oura Rings everywhere—at my local coffee shop, on my commute to work, at glitzy industry events. But could it replace my Apple Watch?

WHAT MAKES THE OURA RING DIFFERENT?

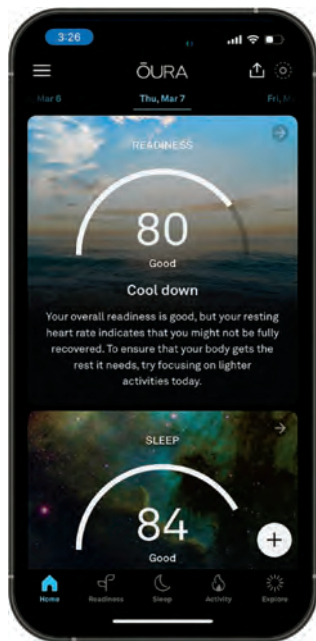
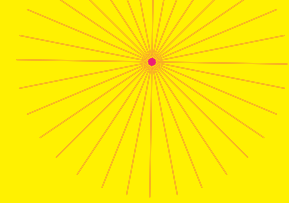
Many health and fitness trackers emphasize activity levels and performance, but Oura takes a more comprehensive approach to well-being, focusing on sleep, recovery, stress management and cycle tracking. It also gives the option of hiding calorie information entirely. “The tone of some fitness trackers is really aggressive, all about goals. The Oura is more gentle,” says Avery Swartz, the founder of Camp Tech, a Toronto-based company that teaches technology skills. Swartz has worn her ring every day for the past two years and tested countless other health trackers.

Another bonus? The Oura Ring is so unobtrusive that you might forget you're wearing it: It doesn't have a screen or buzz with notifications. Instead, data is accessed via an app. You can shower while wearing it, and it holds a charge for up to eight days.

WHO IS THE OURA RING BEST FOR?

Everyone can benefit from wearing a health tracker, says Plinio Morita, an associate professor at the School of Public Health Sciences at the University of Waterloo, though what metrics are most useful depends entirely on the user. The Oura measures respiratory rate, heart rate, heart-rate variability, blood-oxygen levels, body temperature and movement, and it aggregates these data points into three different scores between 0 and 100: Readiness (a measure of recovery showing how prepared you are for the day), Sleep and Activity. Over time,

MAIN PHOTO AND APP SCREENSHOT, COURTESY OF OURA.



The Oura app provides easy-to-interpret health information, including Readiness, Sleep and Activity scores.

the algorithm gets to know your body, schedule and habits with eerie accuracy. It can even detect that you're sick before you know it and alert you via its Symptom Radar feature. The first thing I do every morning is look at my Readiness and Sleep scores to see how energized I can expect to be throughout the day.

IS THE OURA RING ACTUALLY WORTH IT?


Having access to the kind of information the Oura Ring tracks—and the overarching trends it shows—can help users take control of their health. “Wearable trackers like the Oura Ring are very powerful from a public health point of view,” says Morita. “In order to empower people

to be more proactive about their own wellbeing, you need to provide them with data.” I’m someone who tends to push through fatigue and mild illness. So when the Oura gently suggests—based on data—that I take it easy, it gives me permission to skip a workout or stay in bed a little longer when I need to.

But access to all that personal data doesn’t come cheap. The most recent model, the Oura Ring 4, ranges in price from \$470 to \$650, depending on the finish, plus the cost of the membership required to unlock virtually every feature worth having (\$8 per month, or \$90 per year).

And when it comes to fitness tracking, the Oura Ring falls short. The activity detection feature is sluggish and often inaccurate, and having to go through the app to begin or end a workout is inconvenient. Apple Health easily syncs to the Oura Ring and imports workouts done while wearing your watch but, unless you already own one, that means buying yet another pricey device. (You can also sync Android trackers.)

Also worth noting is the fact that Oura, a Finnish company, announced a partnership with the U.S. Department of Defense in August, which they say is focused on supporting the military’s “efforts to enhance human performance.” This news was met with alarm from many users, including Swartz. The brand has issued several statements saying that it will not share consumer data with the U.S. government, but as a precaution, Swartz recommends reading the terms and conditions thoroughly before you agree to data sharing.

I originally planned to cancel my Oura Ring subscription after I filed this piece. Now that I’ve worn my ring for a few months, I’ve come to rely on the insights it gives me; I’ve even committed to an annual subscription. But my Apple Watch isn’t going anywhere—unless I have a fancy party to go to. OURA RING 4, FROM \$470, BESTBUY.CA. 



Scan to shop!

THE \$140 TRACKER THAT TRULY IMPRESSED ME

I’M A FITNESS OBSESSIVE and I don’t leave the house without my Apple Watch. But like the Oura Ring, the watch—and its plethora of features, from fall detection to hypertension notifications—is expensive. (The Apple Watch SE 3, the brand’s most affordable offering, starts at \$329.) So I put a cheaper and more basic tracker to the test. Here’s how it stacked up. —Maureen Halushak



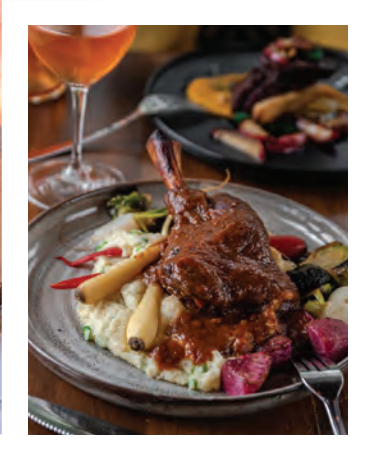
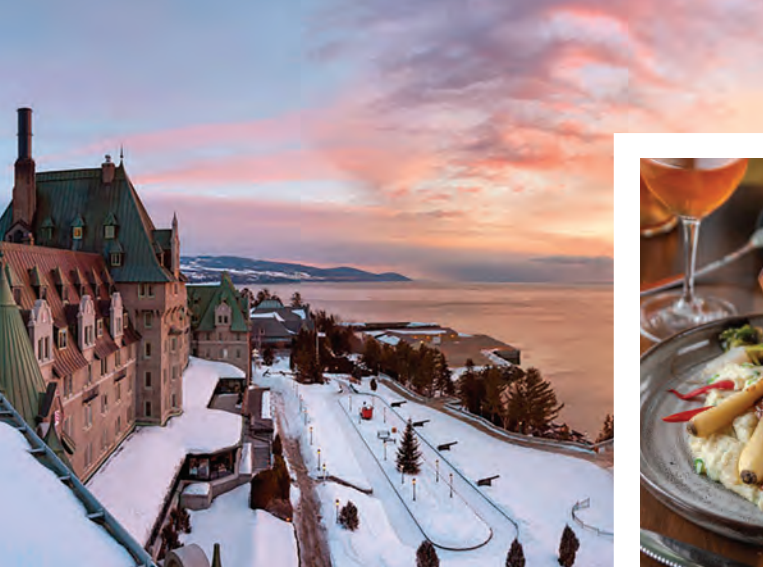
Amazfit Helio Strap Fitness Tracker \$140, [bestbuy.ca](https://www.bestbuy.ca).

What it is This screenless black band uses a sensor to monitor heart rate, blood oxygen, sleep quality and more, then feeds the data to an app. It can be synced to other apps including Apple Health and Strava, and like the Apple Watch, it’s subscription-free. It holds a charge for up to 10 days.

What I liked The Helio Strap is incredibly easy to set up and use. I wore it on my wrist, though it can also be worn on the upper arm with a band extension that’s sold separately. As with my Apple Watch, I used it primarily to track my strength and running workouts (it has 27 workout modes). I especially loved the audio pace updates on my runs.

What I didn’t like The band isn’t terribly stylish; you need to start and stop your workouts within the app.

My final verdict The price tag trumps any minor annoyances with this tracker. It’s perfect for someone who doesn’t need (or will never use) the bells and whistles of more expensive wearables.



CREATED FOR CHARLEVOIX

Why La Malbaie in Charlevoix Should Be Your Next Family Destination

Enjoy the natural winter beauty and cozy charms of this Quebec region

Imagine waking up to crisp mountain air and the soft crunch of snow outside your window. The St. Lawrence River sparkles in the morning light, and quiet nature scenes are all around. This is La Malbaie, a scenic riverside town in Quebec's Charlevoix region, just over two hours from Quebec City. Surrounded by mountains and forest, it's a place where families can trade their usual routines for meaningful time together in nature.

WHERE TO STAY: Comfort Meets Unique Experiences

You'll find stays in La Malbaie that mix character, comfort and easy access to outdoor fun. For those looking for a classic and elegant winter resort experience, Fairmont Le Manoir Richelieu blends historic charm with unexpected thrills, like a rooftop zip line and a via ferrata climbing course on the cliffs in front of the hotel.

If a quiet, nature-focused stay is more your pace, Domaine Frais Air features cozy, self-contained units with river views, ideal for families who want their own space.

For something a little off the beaten path, Yourte Expérience Charlevoix offers heated yurts, complete with a stargazing dome, tucked in the woods near Mont Grand-Fonds.

Finally, Le Petit Manoir du Casino strikes a balance between convenience and comfort, with family-friendly amenities like indoor pools and spa facilities, all just steps from restaurants and local attractions.

WHERE TO PLAY: Winter Adventures for All Ages

La Malbaie is a true winter playground, with options for every energy level. At Mont Grand-Fonds, families can enjoy skiing in a safe environment with exceptional snow conditions. The resort has also installed a speedy, state-of-the-art ski lift, reducing the time spent going up the hill to maximize the fun of the descents. Don't ski? Families can also venture out on snowshoes or cross-country skis, or even alpine hike along wooded trails with heated shelters

for breaks with a warm drink. The day's adventure naturally spills into cozy après-ski festivities at the lively chalet, where you can taste local flavours by the fire.

Just minutes from downtown La Malbaie, the Centre de plein air Les Sources Joyeuses is a charming winter retreat for families. This vast playground combines the thrill of tubing and skating with more tranquil options like snowshoeing and cross-country skiing along beautiful trails. With wide-open landscapes and a warm, welcoming atmosphere, it's easy to spend an unforgettable full day outdoors.

WHERE TO EAT: Flavourful Family Dining

La Malbaie's dining scene includes more than 30 restaurants that specialize in cooking with passion using Charlevoix products. Try Bistro Local 245 for a warm, relaxed dinner made with seasonal local ingredients, or head to the family-friendly Resto-Pub Belles & Bum to catch a game on the big screen while savouring the wild boar burger, a house specialty.

Stop by Confit Épicerie-Buvette for a casual lunch made entirely with local produce or pick up some regional specialties from their little market to enjoy once you get home.

Plan Your Escape to La Malbaie
 La Malbaie's gentle rhythms encourage families to pause, reconnect and make memories.



Visit tourisme-charlevoix.com to start planning your getaway today.


Photography by Fairmont Le Manoir Richelieu, Chris Sanchez; Tourisme Charlevoix, Bon Appétit QC; Tourisme Charlevoix, Magalie Massey

Mood Board

* All the Trends to Have on Your Radar This Winter

PRODUCED AND WRITTEN BY **Andréanne Dion**

Merry and Bright

Whether you match your hosiery to your outfit for a statement-making monochrome look or experiment with daring colour combinations, let a pair of dopamine-boosting tights do all the leg work this holiday season. We swear by Canadian brand Sheertex's thick, ladder-proof styles. SHEERTEX SEMI-OPAQUE RIP-RESIST TIGHTS IN CHERRY (LEFT) AND WINE (RIGHT), \$49 EACH, SHEERTEX.CA. 

PRODUCED BY AIMEE NISHITOBA. PHOTO: JON LLOYD. STYLIST: TRICIA HALL. ON MODEL (LEFT): DRESS: AHIRI.CA.  BAG: AI-CO.CA.  SHOES: ALDOSHOOES.COM.  ON MODEL (RIGHT): SEQUINED BLAZER: OFURE.COM.  DRESS: ISRAELAKOBLA.COM.  GLOVES: STYLIST'S OWN. SHOES: ALDOSHOOES.COM. 

MEOW FACTOR

Every year, one shoe emerges as the party-season favourite. Last winter was all about silver pumps. And this year? We're slipping on a pair of kitten heels. In the form of a mule, a slingback or a boot, the low-key silhouette is the perfect compromise between comfort and polished glam. A short heel looks impossibly chic paired with anything from wide-leg denim to mini dresses to ankle-length skirts—plus, you won't need to kick off your shoes before you hit the dance floor.



Azizza Slingback Kitten Heels, \$112, aldoshoes.com.



Slingback Pumps, \$44, joefresh.com.



Deesha Booties, \$235, naturalizer.ca.



Rynn Boots, \$298, lntervalle.com.

COS AUTUMN/WINTER 2025 RUNWAY



BOMBER JACKET, \$200, AND CARGO PANTS, \$185, HILARYMACMILLAN.COM.



ASYMMETRICAL SKIRT, \$525, SHOPSMYTHE.COM.

If you invest in just one piece, make it an asymmetrical pencil skirt.



BELTED TRENCH COAT, \$130, WINNERS.CA (IN STORES).



CONVERSE PLATFORM SNEAKERS, \$95, BROWNS SHOES.COM.



ZW COLLECTION WOOL PANTS, \$149, ZARA.COM.

Well Plaid

It's festive, it's cozy, it's making a big comeback... we're talking about plaid, of course! With Burberry and Vivienne Westwood leading the print's renaissance, we're seeing both its heritage and quirky sides this winter. More is more when it comes to plaid, so take a cue from the styling at COS and don't be afraid to mix and match your pieces for a high-impact ensemble.

NEW
BEAUTY
BUYS



A plumping and firming serum with hyaluronic acid, peptides and ceramides in biodegradable capsules designed to maintain the formula's potency. (They're great for travel!) Elizabeth Arden Hyaluronic Acid + Peptides Ceramide Capsules, \$125 for 60 capsules, shoppersdrugmart.ca.



This vintage *Chatelaine* cover from April 1974 proves that polka dots never go out of style.



1



2



3

SPOT THE DIFFERENCE

Polka dots have always had timeless appeal, but now they transcend seasons, too. On Fendi and Altuzarra's Fall/Winter 2025 runways, dots were rendered in dark hues and luxe materials like faux fur and leather, and brought to life via 3D embellishments. To bring a touch of whimsy to your winter wardrobe, opt for silk, sheer layers or dramatic draping.



9



6



5



4

1. WHIMSICAL DRESS, \$348, THEREFORMATION.COM.
2. POLKA DOT TIE-NECK TOP, \$78, MELANIELYNE.COM. 🇨🇦
3. BOAT-NECK TOP WITH RHINESTONES, \$40, MANGO.COM.
4. ZW COLLECTION MIDI SKIRT, \$100, ZARA.COM.
5. MAGUIRE CARPI MINI LEATHER BAG, \$175, MAGUIRESHOES.COM. 🇨🇦
6. PRESS-ON NAILS IN STRAWBERRY TRUFFLE, \$24, FACILE-NAILS.COM. 🇨🇦
7. POLKA DOT BLOUSE, \$78, LAURA.CA. 🇨🇦
8. SHEER MAXI DRESS, \$158, GAPCANADA.CA.
9. POLKA DOT NARROW SCARF, \$19, SIMONS.CA. 🇨🇦



Warm Wishes

With creamy notes of vanilla, this season's most-wanted scents are comforting and irresistibly indulgent.



Vanilla buttercream icing, maple caramel crème and tonka bean make for a decadent sweet treat.

THE 7 VIRTUES BUTTERCREAM HAZE EAU DE PARFUM, \$127 FOR 50 ML, SEPHORA.COM. 🇨🇦



Caramel, pistachio and vanilla are paired with ginger and sandalwood for a grounded, slightly spicy juice.

RARE BEAUTY RARE EAU DE PARFUM, \$104 FOR 50 ML, SEPHORA.COM.



Neroli and pink pepper give this blend of chantilly vanilla, tonka bean and cocoa shell a sophisticated twist.

HENRY ROSE DAVE EAU DE PARFUM, \$165 FOR 50 ML, SEPHORA.COM.



An elegant lip-scrub alternative that pairs chemical exfoliation with hydrating ingredients to smooth dry pouts. *The Ordinary PHA 5% Exfoliating Lip Serum*, \$12, theordinary.com. 🇨🇦



A rich, fragrance-free moisturizer with a dewy finish by Dieux, the brand co-founded by no-BS beauty expert Charlotte Palermino, which recently launched at Sephora Canada. *Dieux Instant Angel Lipid Rich Facial Moisturizer*, \$62, sephora.com.



A genius hot tool that can do it all, thanks to a combo of straightening plates and curved ceramic arms for curls. *T3 Micro 2-in-1 Curling Straightener*, \$280, t3micro.ca. 🇨🇦



Cloverdale Paint



WHAT'S YOUR

Narrative®?



DISCOVER YOUR COLOUR STORY

cloverdalepaint.com/Narrative



New Year, New Hue

Every year, leading paint brands and decor experts make their Colour of the Year announcements, an insider look at the hues that will define how we decorate for the months ahead. Without further ado, here's your 2026 colour forecast.



This earthy neutral pairs well with other nature-inspired hues to create a tranquil retreat. *Universal Khaki* by Sherwin-Williams, sherwin-williams.com.



A rich blue with endless depth, this serene pick is perfect for a bathroom makeover. *Day Spa* by Cloverdale, cloverdalepaint.com.



Pick this grounding green for a bedroom accent wall or Dark Academia library nook. *Muse* by BeautiTone, homehardware.ca.



Described as a "smoky jade", this shade of green manages to be sophisticated *and* snug. *Hidden Gem* by Behr, behr.ca.



CREATED FOR *Lilly*

BREAKING THE BIAS: Why Women Should Stop Blaming Themselves for Obesity

Debunking common myths and societal biases to uncover the true nature of obesity and why medical support is vital

For many Canadian women, a weight management journey can be filled with challenges that extend far beyond diet and fitness trends. It's a battle against societal pressures, low self-worth and barriers to accessing essential care, thanks to long-held misconceptions surrounding obesity and weight.

Characterized by abnormal or excessive amounts of body fat, obesity is a complex, progressive and relapsing disease that can harm an individual's health and is linked to more than 200 chronic illnesses, including cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, respiratory diseases, osteoarthritis, cancer and certain mental health conditions. It's not a "condition" or a "lifestyle choice."

Dr. Sasha High, a board-certified internal medicine and obesity physician, explains that obesity involves physiologic dysfunction in how the body regulates energy, appetite, hormones and even fat storage. This biological complexity means that for many, diet and exercise alone, although essential for overall health, are often not enough to treat this chronic disease.

The progressive nature of obesity means it tends to worsen over time. The body's adaptations after weight loss often favour weight regain, making it a relapsing disease. Essentially, your body actively fights to return to its previous highest weight, even after successful weight loss. This also classifies it as a chronic disease, requiring ongoing long-term management rather than a quick fix.

"When we label it as just a condition or an illness, or a symptom of poor lifestyle choices, it really downplays the science and physiology that are driving the dysfunction," says High. "That reinforces all the harmful stereotypes that we have around obesity today."

The weight of misconceptions

The societal stigma surrounding obesity creates significant psychological and systemic barriers, especially for women. Many women internalize this bias, believing they "did this to themselves" and "should be able to fix it" through sheer willpower. This often prevents them

from seeking necessary medical treatment. Sandra Elia, a certified food addiction counsellor and board chair of Obesity Matters, identifies obesity as a unique chronic disease burdened by decades of shame. "Patients are often dismissed with unhelpful advice like 'just eat less and move more,' which further hinders their access to appropriate care," she says.

Beyond personal well-being, the misconceptions around obesity have tangible socio-economic consequences as well. The Cost of Inaction report by Obesity Canada, which examines the economic implications of failing to recognize obesity as a chronic disease, starkly highlights these disparities. The results uncovered that women living with obesity face significant economic disadvantages, earning 12 per cent less annually, which leads to nearly \$3.8 billion in lost income. They are also 5.3 per cent less likely to be employed, a difference far less pronounced for men living with obesity at only 0.3 per cent.

Elia experienced first-hand how these negative tendencies play out, recalling a corporate trip to Bermuda. During a *Survivor*-style team-building game, she expressed concerns about being able to keep up with the pace, to which the leader responded, "Okay, so you're out. Those are the rules. If you don't participate in a game, you're out." Along with an older colleague, they were the first to be unceremoniously "kicked off the island." This lack of inclusivity, especially in a corporate environment, can foster feelings of unworthiness while also exposing deep-seated systemic biases.

A new horizon in obesity care

Obesity care is evolving thanks to the growing inclusion of multi-faceted care approaches. This includes advancements in medical intervention, offering individuals—including busy working women—a powerful new tool. These new medications help to regulate appetite and sustain long-term weight loss by addressing the underlying biology of obesity in the brain.

As High points out, taking medication isn't "cheating" or "the easy way out." It's about treating biology that was not previously addressed, helping people manage their disease and regain control over aspects of their lives that had been limited by obesity.

"If I told my patient that they have breast cancer and to seek chemotherapy, there would be no resistance because there is an acknowledgement that this is a disease and we have effective treatment for it," says High. "It's just not the case with obesity because of that ongoing bias, so there's an avoidance of seeking care."

Breaking down barriers, building compassion

For Canadian women living with obesity, understanding that it is a complex chronic disease, not a personal failure, is the first step toward empowerment. High emphasizes that women deserve to be taken seriously and given access to treatment.

Health care professionals play a critical role in destigmatizing obesity by checking their own biases, leading with empathy and curiosity and educating themselves on the science behind the disease. Simple changes, such as using people-first language (for example, "person living with obesity" instead of "obese person") and creating safe, non-shaming health care environments, can foster greater trust with patients. If you are an individual living with obesity, consider speaking with your doctor about new advances in obesity care.

Visit obesitycanada.ca and obesity-matters.com to learn more.



WHY COPENHAGEN IS A GREAT GIRLS' TRIP DESTINATION

- There's a good mix of popular attractions and under-the-radar gems to explore, no matter your group's interests.
- Whether you're in the market for unique vintage finds or luxury purchases, the shopping is unparalleled.
- It's a foodie paradise with options for every budget, ranging from Michelin-starred restaurants to hot-dog stands to pastries that rival France's best croissants.
- The city is safe, compact and easy to navigate, especially by bike.

* WE WENT THERE *

Copenhagen

A joy-sparking guide to the happiest city in the world.

WRITTEN BY **Andréanne Dion**

DESPITE ITS LONG AND DARK winters, Denmark consistently ranks among the world's happiest countries, and its capital, Copenhagen, recently topped the Institute for Quality of Life's Happy City Index. In search of a little happiness of my own before the cold set in, I hopped on a plane with a jam-packed itinerary filled with all of my favourite things.

A typical day on my trip started with a leisurely bike ride to the harbour for a bracing swim in one of city's open-air swimming zones (a beloved local ritual no matter the season), followed by sightseeing, shopping and, of course, eating. The highlight of my visit? Cardamom buns, a Swedish export that's a mainstay in every crowd-drawing bakery in town, of which there are many.

EXPLORE

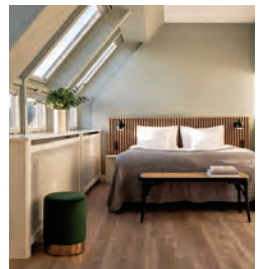
The all-inclusive Copenhagen Card (\$122 for 72 hours) is a must for first-time visitors; it gives access to over 80 attractions, as well as free public transportation. First up: Beat the jetlag at one of the city's many world-class museums—don't miss the **Designmuseum Danmark**, where you can deep-dive into the history and impact of Danish design on modern culture.

Break for lunch at **La Banchina**, an intimate snack and wine bar, complete with its own dock and sauna, in trendy Refshaleøen.

I spent the morning swimming, sweating and lounging, before warming up with pumpkin soup

and a glass of natural wine from a menu crafted from in-season Danish ingredients. If you'd rather take your thermal circuit indoors, opt for **Sofiebadet**, a beautifully restored, marble-clad bathhouse from 1909, hidden on a quiet Christianshavn side street.

Tivoli Gardens—a quaint, circa-1843 amusement park that's said to have inspired author Hans Christian Andersen's *The Nightingale* and served as a blueprint for Disneyland—makes for a fun night out. It's home to Rutschebanen, the oldest operating roller coaster in Europe, but even if you're not a thrill-seeker, the lush, manicured gardens festooned with fairy lights are the perfect spot for an evening stroll.



STAY

I stayed at **Coco Hotel**, a cozy boutique property located in the heart of the hip Vesterbro neighbourhood, within easy walking distance of the city's main transportation hub. The on-site café's breakfast buffet—a traditional Danish spread of bread, butter, cheese, jam, soft-boiled eggs and pastries—was the perfect way to fuel up for a day of sightseeing. I loved sipping my morning coffee in the hotel's courtyard, which turns into a lively hang-out spot in the evenings.



SOUVENIR SHOP

Heaven Scent

I've long been a fan of Danish fashion designer Henrik Vibskov's use of bold colours, graphic patterns and exaggerated shapes. At his eponymous label's Copenhagen boutique, I fell in love with Cedar Root Black, a fresh, woody fragrance with notes of leather, jasmine and black pepper.



Flower Power

Pico is a boutique dedicated almost entirely to hair accessories, which are displayed in glass cases like bedazzled pastries. I left with a few things, including one of the oversized rose-shaped clips that the store is known for.



Happy Feet

One of my favourite finds were these fun multi-coloured glitter socks from Danish brand Beck Søndergaard that I came across in a gift shop in Tivoli Gardens. I bought four pairs in different patterns.



Cold Comfort

I couldn't resist this jaunty cotton scarf from Mads Nørgaard, which I'm planning to wear tied around my neck to elevate plain white tees and cardigans this winter.



SHOP

With plenty of big-name designers and cool-girl brands, like Henrik Vibskov, Cecilie Bahnsen and Ganni, Copenhagen is a bona fide fashion destination. There are countless curated vintage stores peppered around the city, but I especially loved **Reseller**, where I found an impressive selection of preloved Ganni pieces at good prices, and **Von**, a concept store across from my hotel that sells a mix of unique vintage clothing and small local brands. Antique and vintage markets—like the **Frederiksberg Loppetorv** or the popular **Veras Market Under Buen**—are also great spots to score one-of-a-kind treasures.

WHEN TO GO

☀️ In winter, days are short and cold, which is prime time to embrace the Danish concept of *hygge* (a feeling of cozy contentment). Summer brings bustling energy to the city. You'll get the best deals and lowest crowds in fall and winter. When I visited in mid-September, the temperatures were comfortable, hovering between 17C to 22C in the daytime.

HOW TO GET AROUND

🚲 The metro and buses are fast and reliable, but the best way to see the city is to take a cue from the locals and ride a bike. Many hotels offer rentals at affordable prices, and short-term, app-based bike-share services, like Lime and Donkey Republic, are also widely available. (Brush up on the city's cycling rules and etiquette before you hop on.)

WHAT TO PACK

👜 Plan to wear a lot of light layers and bring a water-resistant jacket—the weather is unpredictable year-round. If you're planning on shopping at vintage and antique markets, you'll want to have Danish kroner on hand.



EAT + DRINK

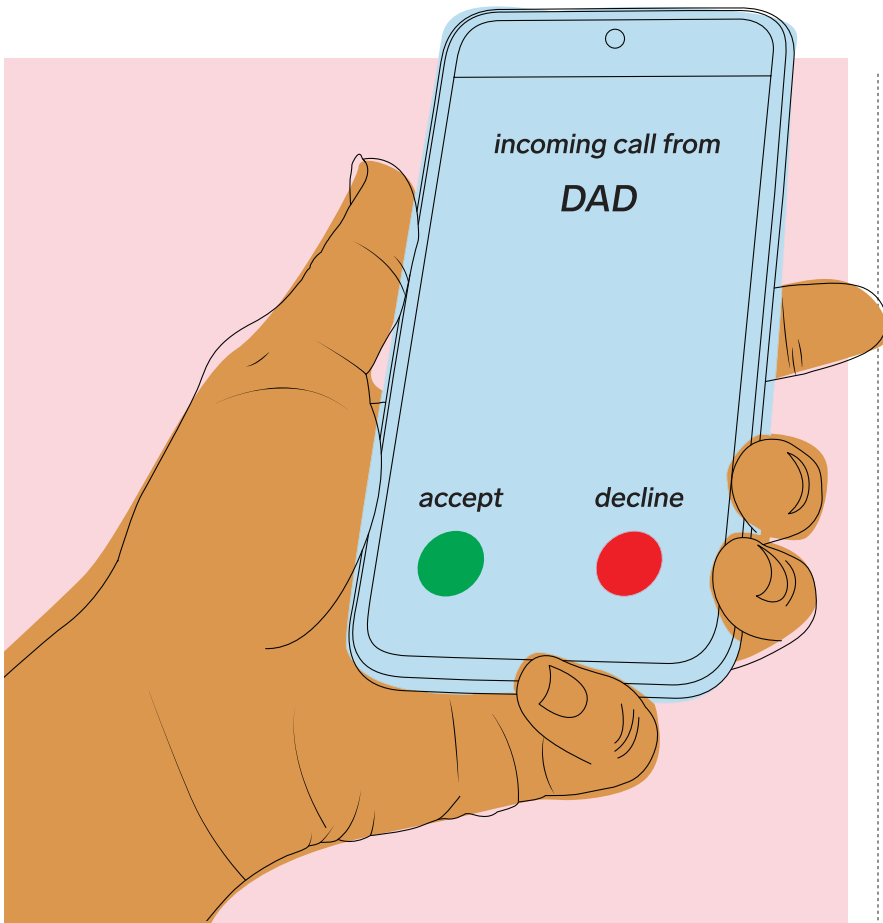
From street stalls that sling hot dogs topped with rémoulade, pickles and fried onions to innovative New Nordic cuisine focused on hyper-local ingredients, Copenhagen has a famously thriving food scene. (*The Bear* even dedicated a whole episode to it.) If a reservation at **Noma**, the five-time World's Best Restaurant winner that now operates as a pop-up, was on your bucket list, book a table at **Ark**. The nine-course, plant-based set menu (from CAD \$285) showcases mushrooms grown at a nearby farm. The team devises new techniques to cut down on food waste with every seasonal menu change, a commitment that earned them a Michelin Green Star.



For a more laid-back vibe and significantly more affordable fare (\$13 to \$22, depending on the day), try *fællesspisning*, or communal dining. At **Absalon**, a community space where dinner is served family-style every night, I shared *palak paneer* with feta and spinach—one of my favourite meals of the trip—with locals, expats and a group of women on their own girls' trip.

There's no shortage of cool brunch spots serving up local favourites like *bolle med ost* (a sourdough bun topped with butter and cheese) and *smørrebrød* (an open-faced sandwich on rye bread), but I headed to **Apotek 57** in the pretty Nyboder district to sample their most popular dishes: a savoury waffle topped with a bright green herb emulsion and a flaky croissant filled with miso caramel. The croissant-like cardamom bun I had at **Hart Bageri** was one of the best pastries I've ever had: perfectly flaky with a caramelized bottom layer that was to die for.





A Clean Break

I thought my relationship with my father was over. But cutting off a toxic family member, as I discovered, doesn't have to be all or nothing.

WRITTEN BY **Kim Pittaway**

"I'M DONE," I thought as I hung up the phone. "I'm never speaking to him again." After a lifetime of arguments and anger and a blow-up I was certain marked the end, my relationship with my father was over.

It wasn't that simple. Of course.



Going "no contact" is having a moment. Counsellors with huge YouTube followings offer advice on how to

write a no-contact letter to toxic family members. Reddit forums, such as "raisedbynarcissists," offer support to people coping with narcissistic parents. In the U.K., the charity Stand Alone offers support and conducts research on family estrangement, while in the U.S., the Cornell Family Estrangement and Reconciliation Project, under sociologist Karl Pillemer, studies how "reconcilers" manage reconnection after periods of limited or no contact.

A 2014 Ipsos study conducted for Stand Alone found that one in five U.K. families were affected by estrangement, while Pillemer's U.S. research, the basis for his 2020 book *Fault Lines: Fractured Families and How to Mend Them*, found that 27 percent of respondents were currently estranged from a close relative. Relationships with fathers are particularly vulnerable: One U.S. study suggests that one in four adults will be estranged from their father at some point, while just one in 20 will be estranged from their mother. And with growing political polarization further complicating family relationships, those numbers could be even higher.

As awareness of emotional abuse and healthy boundaries have grown, the kind of emotionally corrosive behaviour that may have once been tolerated is getting called out. "We've been sold this notion that blood is thicker than water," says New York-based Eamon Dolan, author of *The Power of Parting: Finding Peace and Freedom Through Family Estrangement*. It's a notion that pressures family members into accepting toxic behaviours they would reject in any other relationship.

While Dolan's childhood relationship with his mother was marred by physical abuse, for many of the people he interviewed for his book, emotional toxicity was central to their decision to cut a relative off.



My father was a bully. Even now, my fingers stumble on the keyboard as I type that word, tripping over the bluntness of my betrayal. We weren't beaten, though like many kids raised in the 1970s, we were spanked. We had a roof over our heads, good food, vacations. But our emotional lives were shaped by the gravitational pull

of my father's anger and insecurity. He loved an argument, was gleeful as he tied you in conversational knots until you conceded he was right. And he was, in his opinion, always right. He hated bragging—any sharing of an accomplishment counted as “blowing your own horn”—and his precisely aimed takedowns were sure to deflate your puffed-up ego. By my 20s, I'd learned how to fight and how to hold my breath when sharing good news, always fearing a withering look or piercing sarcasm.

My solution to my family troubles was geographic: I spent my adult life more than a thousand kilometres away from my father, he in New Brunswick and me in Toronto. I came home for holidays—until I gave that up too, exhausted by the fights that flared as alcohol and close quarters added pressure to family fault lines. Through it all, my mother did her best to mend fences, patch egos, soothe hurt feelings. Still, her first-aid efforts were no match for our fractures.

Then, after 26 years in Toronto, I made the move back to the East Coast. My parents were aging, and I didn't want to regret time I hadn't spent with them. Or more accurately, time I hadn't spent with my mother. My father? Well, I'd just have to deal with him.

And then, in 2014, Mom left Dad.

It was early September, and I was waiting for a friend at a café when the email popped up on my phone. It was addressed to my two siblings and me. She wasn't crazy, Mom wrote, but she'd decided to leave our father. They'd been married 51 years. She was just about to turn 75.

I was still absorbing the words when my friend arrived. She'd known our family for decades, knew the challenges we'd faced dealing with Dad, shared our affection for Mom. I showed her the email. “Holy shit,” was all she could muster.

I love you and support you no matter what you do, I typed back to Mom. Will call later.

Calls with my siblings followed. No one was surprised Mom was leaving, but at the same time everyone was surprised she was *finally* leaving.

I realized their separation might mean I'd no longer need to navigate my own toxic relationship with Dad. When I mentioned this to a friend whose parents had also split up later in life, he had a different take. “Aren't you going to have to give him more support now that he doesn't have your mom?” he said. “Her parole is not going to be my life sentence,” I snapped back. Once Mom moved out, I said, I wouldn't have to deal with Dad again.

It wasn't that simple. Of course.



“One of the myths about estrangement is that it's all or nothing, and that it's permanent,” says Dolan. “But now is not forever.” Choosing to distance yourself from a family member can happen in stages, and it can be revisited if circumstances change. “You can break the cycle. You can make sure what was passed down to you stops with you. That's a staggeringly powerful thing to do.”

And shifts in one relationship may cause shifts in another. When we've grown used to orbiting around an unhealthy relationship, we can imagine its loss will send all the planets in the family solar system spinning out to the edges of the universe. “It's often not true,” says Dolan. “Most of the survivors I talked to retained relationships with their [other] family members.”

In his own case, Dolan was worried that his relationship with his sister would be damaged if he retreated from their mom. It wasn't: His sister supported Dolan in his choice.



In the months after Mom left Dad, our family universe continued to wobble. Despite my plan to limit contact with my father, my friend hadn't been completely wrong: Dad and I were still enmeshed in the sticky glue of my mother's guilt and worry. While she didn't want to be with Dad, she also couldn't ignore his unravelling. His bills went unpaid. His apartment was a hoarding nightmare. He was in danger of eviction. My siblings were two provinces away, so I was the one closest to the fallout.

Dad, in turn, shouted down phone lines at me, my siblings and anyone else he thought responsible for sabotaging his marriage. “You're delusional,” I told him in what I soon labelled our “last” conversation. “You're accusing people of things you've done. I'm not listening to this.” “No more,” I thought. “I'm done.”

Still, my boundaries shifted. I visited him to get his bills paid and his lease sorted out but declared conversations about Mom and criticisms of other family members out of bounds. I took his calls—until I couldn't anymore, and that burden shifted to another family member. I granted myself the flexibility to have contact that made sense to me.

I felt grief. I felt guilt. And I felt flashes of freedom, as I learned to recognize that the inner critic who had whispered in my ear for decades often spoke in my father's voice. As our orbits shifted, that echo diminished.


It wasn't that simple, of course. I never managed the clean break of “no contact,” a phrase I didn't hear until after Dad died in 2016. But with each boundary, each self-aware decision, each choice for self-care, I fought less. I breathed easier. And I broke the cycle. 

Table for One

I've built up my moxie from years of dining solo. It's a practice I suggest everyone get comfortable with—you never know when hunger will strike.

WRITTEN BY **Marlowe Granados**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **Sandro Altamirano**



“Why are you unaccompanied?” You have no companion today?,” asked the server at one of my favourite tavernas in Athens. The taverna was perfectly unfussy, and a block away from my temporary apartment, where I was on a self-imposed retreat to finish my second novel. I joke that I used this taverna as my personal canteen (the apartment being unequipped for cooking). The staff begrudgingly became familiar with me, and the way this particular server phrased his question was amusing, hearkening back to Jane Austen: An unaccompanied woman is one without a chaperone. It didn't faze me. “I was too impatient,” I told him. “I'm hungry *now*.”

I've built up an enviable amount of moxie from years of going to bars and restaurants alone, and I am an unflappable solo diner. It is like a muscle, one I suggest everyone exercise, because you never know when hunger will strike.

I've spent much of my life travelling by myself, living alone in one place or another. Dining solo did not start out intentionally, but it was necessary. Depending on what city I was in, I'd often find myself between engagements and needing a bite. Even now, at home in Toronto, it's rare I muster enough enthusiasm to cook something intricate just for myself. In addition to the convenience, going out for dinner alone is like staying at a hotel: you do it to be coddled when the mundanity of being a working adult becomes too much. Sometimes all I want is a temporary pause from chores like making my own bed, and it's not like I'll ever make steak tartare at home. Sometimes I simply want someone else to fill my glass.

The privilege of dining alone is being able to order whatever I feel like without concessions. When I dine with friends, the food always plays second or third fiddle to

the conversation and drinks. I often get a little unsteady, realizing that in the heat of a story I forgot to eat my share of an entrée and had a disproportionate number of cocktails. (Those sharing-style restaurants really get you when it's four friends versus five small plates!)

Solo dining is the only time I can concentrate on savouring the food at my own pace, and that freedom outweighs any discomfort I have with being seen alone. In the beginning I felt a bit awkward—it was like not knowing where to place your hands when posing for a photo. Now, I'll have two martinis to give me the right kind of tilt that feels luxurious on my own, and I'll eat until I'm full. I love to over-order. I think of Daniel Day-Lewis in *Phantom Thread* ordering an ample breakfast for one and falling in love with the woman waiting on his table: “with a poached egg that is not too runny...and jam—but not strawberry.”

I like the differing levels of alarm that come with asking for a table for myself. In New York and Toronto, it's easier to get by, though restaurants sometimes bristle at giving up a table for a single cover. In Berlin, once, the host was so perplexed when I came in alone at 10 p.m. that he periodically stopped by the table and asked if I was alright. (It's hard to know the cultural precedent for dining alone.) By the end of the meal, the kitchen staff sent over a cherry tart as a gift. I must give the impression that a woman



“Scrolling on my phone at the table is a faux pas.” Granados enjoys a ribeye with salsa verde while seated at the bar at Zia’s Place in Toronto. Clothing and styling courtesy of Regolare.

Sometimes I simply want a pause from life, for someone else to fill up my glass.



dining alone is seeking refuge from her life, and that is not completely untrue.

But I won't seek refuge by scrolling on my phone at the table—to me, that's a faux pas. And I rarely have the foresight to have a book in tow. I also rarely need the distraction: It can feel restorative to pause and assess, to really pay attention to the world around you. Dining alone is an opportunity to be a spy, to take in the scene as an observer, much like Maeve Brennan did in “Long-Winded Lady,” her *New Yorker* column that chronicled New York social life in the 1940s. She often pretended to read in order to overhear conversations. Like Brennan, the most fun I ever have is eating alone next to a couple on a date, especially when it is clear they are early into knowing each other. Documenting one such date, Brennan writes of a man explaining to his guest, “All right, if you must have a definition, I am a Socialist interested in lust.” There is a rich social text to discover at almost every restaurant, every night of the week.

If taking up a table feels too advanced for those embarking on solo dining, I recommend heading to the bar. Nothing feels more glamorous than sitting at that high countertop with my kitten heels locked onto the footrest, popping a french fry into my mouth. It's the perfect place to open you up to encounters, or to be left alone, as you wish. Though I have only ever seen them in dim, post-8-.p.m. light, there are at least five bartenders who are up to date with my personal life as though they are a best friend on speed dial. Behind their curmudgeonly façade, I know they enjoy my company during their shift.

Ultimately, why do I need to make plans with someone in order to be out in the world? I want to see and be seen—at my leisure. There are times on my way home from a party when I dip into a place for a snack, slowly recalibrating myself for bedtime after the whirl of a social gathering. It's become a habit, and I urge people to try it. It's worth the practice, because if you can dine alone confidently, what can't you do? ☺

THE CONVERSATION

BIG ISSUES. INSPIRING STORIES. LET'S GET INTO IT

Shop Canada this Christmas with 42 glorious gifts from homegrown makers and brands.

PRODUCED BY **Andréanne Dion**,
Maureen Halushak AND **Sun Ngo**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **Christie Vuong**
STYLING BY **Chad Burton**



1. EASTERN TOWNSHIPS, QUE. This flask of dark amber maple syrup was aged in oak barrels that once held rye. *Rye Maple Syrup*, \$25 for 250 mL, sevedemars.com. **2. TORONTO** End the bagel debate without saying a word. *Montreal Bagels Hat in Denim*, \$56, provinceofcanada.com. **3. VANCOUVER** Add a one-of-a-kind blown glass tree trimmer to their collection—or yours. *Rainbow Ornament*, \$50, mariaidadesigns.com.



4. HALIFAX Housed in a beautiful envelope designed by lettering artist and *Chatelaine* collaborator Kristen De Palma, these hardy annual seeds don't require a green thumb to thrive. *True North Red & White Poppies Seed Packet*, \$12, toandfrom.ca. **5. MULMUR, ONT.** Serpents are associated with transformation and rebirth; gift this slinky pair to a friend on the cusp of change. *Mini Serpent Earrings in Bronze*, \$75, hawkly.ca. **6. TORONTO** A chic tube of hand cream makes the perfect stocking stuffer. This heavenly smelling one is formulated with cupuaçu butter, sea kelp and green tea extract to nourish skin. *Artifact Hand & Nail Cream in Souvenir*, \$35, boutiqueunicorn.com. **7. VICTORIA, B.C.** The frequent flyers on your list will appreciate this mess-free, easy-to-pack solid perfume, with an uplifting blend of mandarin, coriander, patchouli and tonka. *Solid Perfume in Tonka Temptation*, \$48, 828aroma.com. **8. MONTREAL** This sweet pouch made from leather scraps is just the right size to hold coins, cards or even earbuds. *Chou Mini Pouch*, \$39, veinage.ca.



9. VANCOUVER This wildly stylish satin bag is the perfect finishing touch to any night-out 'fit. The frilly ruched top handle is right on trend for winter, but the classic shape has staying power. *A Bronze Age Halo Bag in Leopard Glossy*, \$175, shopslowlyslowly.ca. ■ **10. MONTREAL** Thanks to its bright and uplifting scent, this sophisticated all-purpose cleaning spray will have them looking forward to chore day. *All-Purpose Cleaner in Eucalyptus + Grapefruit*, \$13, sojaco.ca. ■ **11. OTTAWA** It's a fact that coffee tastes better in a cute mug. Wrap it up with your favourite beans (or a fancy new coffee maker, if you're feeling splurgey) to start their day off on a strong note. *Prairie Mug in Plaid 10 oz*, \$40, michelemaconnaldstudio.com. ■ **12. TORONTO** Your little dumplings will love these super-cute soy wax candles that are available with or without a scent. *Cute Dumpling Candles with Steamer*, \$28, artketgoods.com. ■ **13. BURNABY, B.C.** For the wee ones on your list: a sweet mushroom rattle made from soft fabric that promotes sensory exploration. *Mushroom Rattle*, \$7, littledreamstoy.myshopify.com.



- 14. KELOWNA, B.C.** Pups will strut their stuff in this colour-blocked pastel collar, which features all-brass hardware. *The Zoë Collar in Wisteria*, from \$38, okanaganhound.com. **15. WINNIPEG** Heads up! These plush earmuffs made with leftovers from the brand's faux-fur coat production will turn any icy sidewalk into a runway. *Earmuffs in Merlot*, \$175, freedandfreed.com. **16. LANGLEY, B.C.** This soothing soap features the delicate, vanilla-like scent of sweetgrass, a sacred plant in Indigenous cultures that's often associated with healing and peace. *Sweetgrass Soap*, \$13, sweetgrasssoap.com. **17. WHITEHORSE** Give the gift of indoor forest bathing with this cedar, spruce and clary sage foaming bath powder that comes in a pouch designed by artist Meghan Hildebrand. *Spruce Foaming Bath Soak*, \$10 for 100 g, antoyukon.com. **18. LINCOLN, ONT.** This creamy fudge made with wildflower honey and goat milk is the perfect mid-afternoon pick-me-up. *Honey Fudge*, \$13, rosewoodwine.com. **19. TORONTO** These gorgeous bonbons—in flavours like Vietnamese Coffee, Yuzu Caramel and Key Lime Pie—are a Team Chatelaine favourite. *9-Piece Chocolate Box*, \$31, chocolatedekat.com.



20. WHITEHORSE Made with fox fur ethically sourced from Indigenous trappers, these show-stopping hoops are heirloom pieces. *Fox Giant Hoops in Grey*, \$195, aegirsdottir.com. **21. THORNHILL, ONT.** This pretty two-tone card holder will keep their essentials organized. *SereniiKey Geometry Card Holder*, \$62, etsy.ca. **22. EDMONTON** This sophisticated soap on a rope smells like blackberry, lemon and bergamot. *Soap on a Rope in Violet Drip*, \$15, soapsoco.com. **23. TORONTO** Adorned with a bouquet of colourful wildflowers, this charming linen bow will add a little whimsy to their day. *Embroidered Hair Barrette*, \$29, rumoonhandmade.com. **24. TORONTO** This grounding, Japanese bathhouse-inspired soak features notes of cinnamon, spearmint and hojicha tea, and comes with a playlist and guided breathwork practice. *Ancient Forest Tea Bath*, \$70 for full size, inokibathhouse.com. **25. EMBRUN, ONT.** Pair this spoon and plate with a jar of locally made jam for a sweet hosting gift. *Strawberry Teeny Plate*, \$35, and *Charcuterie Spoon*, \$10, valerie-daoust-ceramics.square.site.



26

29

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26. FREDERICTON Help them make summer last forever with this pretty birch flower press. *Flower Press*, \$38, livcandesign.ca. **27. ST. JOHN'S** These precious corduroy baby shoes are made by a company that provides sewing classes and mentorship to refugee women looking to gain employable skills. *Winter Shoes in Bordeaux Corduroy*, \$30, newbornlander.ca. **28. TYENDINGAGA MOHAWK TERRITORY, ONT.** This invigorating blend of cinnamon, ginger, dandelion root, star anise and peaflower brews a delicate blue cuppa. *Kebaonish Ginger Cinnamon Herbal Blue Tea*, \$17 for 30 sachets, proudlyindigenous.com. **29. WHITEHORSE** They won't be able to stop eating this smoky-sweet kettle corn. (Same goes for the Birch Syrup Caramel flavour.) *Kettle Corn in Maple Bacon*, \$10, klondikekettlecorn.com. **30. HALIFAX** Our favourite rum cream—see page 14—comes in a variety pack of single-serve shots that are perfect for stocking stuffers. *Cream Collection Shore Shots*, \$17 for 10 30-mL shots, jdshore.ca.



TORONTO

These quirky striped stems will add a touch of whimsy to any pillow stack. *Flower Pillow in Pink Red Stripe*, \$50 each, kateaustindesigns.com.



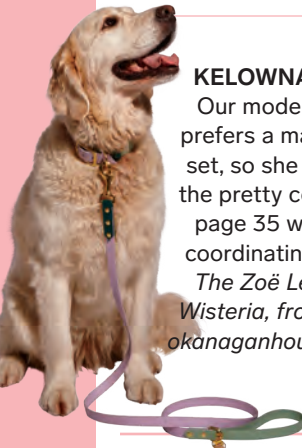
HALIFAX

Give blooms that last a lifetime. *Sarah Sears Tulip Sterling Silver Earrings*, \$165, shopslowlyslowly.ca.



SASKATOON

Let the sweet tooth in your life rep their favourite Canadian dessert. *Saskatoon Berry Pie Crewneck*, \$105, hardpressed.ca.



KELOWNA, BC.

Our model Meg prefers a matching set, so she paired the pretty collar on page 35 with its coordinating lead. *The Zoë Lead in Wisteria*, from \$55, okanaganhound.com.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST



CHARLOTTETOWN

We love that this small-batch shaving cream comes in a refillable stein. *Luther Lather Shave Stein in Original Ole Barbershop*, \$70, lutherlather.com.



BLOOMFIELD, P.E.I.

This cozy wool blanket is made in a family-run mill. *MacAuslands Woollen Mills Green Tweed Throw*, \$140, kokito.ca.



CAPE BRETON, N.S.

Transport them from their kitchen to the East Coast with this vibrant ocean print. *Kautzi Into the Waves Tea Towel*, \$28, craftshop.ca.



SASKATOON

Too many keys? This intricately handbeaded lanyard by Indigenous artist Ellen M. is the answer. *Peyote Wrist Lanyard*, \$80, wanuskewingiftshop.com.



TORONTO

Crafted from the softest organic cotton and padded for comfort, this gingham tote fits all the essentials. *Large Quilted Tote Bag*, \$180, sienavida.ca.



VANCOUVER

Add to their budding art collection with a series of nature-inspired lino prints by artist Gena Rawson. *GenaRawsonArt Lino Prints*, from \$10 each, etsy.ca.



MONTREAL

This roll-on scent is floral and woody, with notes of ylang-ylang, vetiver and cedarwood. *La Tombée Ylang Perfume Oil*, \$60 for 15 mL, boutiqueunicorn.com.



Scan to shop our favourite Canadian-made gifts.

LOCAL LOVE

Need more gifting inspo? Check out these editor-loved Canadian boutiques.

1.

KOKITO

Bloomfield, Ont.

Kokito—a play on the postal code of owner Shelley Durnin's nearby cottage—showcases “Canada-forward” gifts including tweed blankets and Nova Scotia-made embroidery kits. kokito.ca

2.

CROFT

Charlottetown

This jewel box of a shop is located in a motel run by owner Meg Ferris's family. Visit for vibrant made-in-Canada finds and slow-fashion brands. craftshop.ca

3.

SLOWLY SLOWLY

Halifax

With a mix of quirky fashion, accessories, beauty and home goods masterfully curated by owner Hannah Sears, this is the perfect one-stop shop for everyone on your list. shopslowlyslowly.ca

4.

BOUTIQUE UNICORN

Montreal

This Mile-End boutique, founded by Amélie Thellen and Mélanie Robillard, stocks local and international makers and labels. boutiqueunicorn.com

DIABETES IS A NEVER-ENDING JOURNEY



Living with diabetes means no breaks
and still crushing your workouts.
For support you can trust along the
way, visit: Diabetes.ca/TypeResilient

WE ARE TYPE RESILIENT

DIABETES
CANADA

WELCOME

to the

JOY

Club

Whatever type of year you've had, we bet you wouldn't say no to squeezing a little more joy out of 2025. For inspiration, we asked 27 of our favourite Canadians—including comedian **Ann Pornei**, whom we've appointed president of the Chatelaine Joy Club—to share their most exuberant moments of the year. Here's what they told us.

PRODUCED BY **Chantal Braganza, Andréanne Dion, Maureen Halushak, Erica Lenti** AND **Aimee Nishitoba**

How I Find Joy

WRITTEN BY **Ann Pornei**

THE WORLD IS IN ITS FLOP ERA. I'm not typically a pessimist, but there's no amount of delulu that exists that can convince me otherwise. I also wouldn't say I'm an optimist—I have five working senses and access to the Internet, after all. But despite 2025 flaming out to absurd lows, I can confidently say that I live a life that is abundant in joy. And that's all thanks to Little Ann. ▶



PHOTO: CHRISTIE VUONG. MAKEUP AND HAIR: WENDY RORONG.
HEADBAND: HELLODARLINGCO.CA.

My job as a comedian means I'm constantly chasing a good time. Comedy has kept me in touch with my inner child—whom I call Little Ann—and it has ingrained in me a “follow the fun” mentality. And there's no one I trust more to tell me what's fun than Little Ann. All the silly things, big and small, that I do to cultivate a joyful life are in service of her—from wearing obnoxiously bright outfits to collecting adorably grotesque Labubus to roaming the world like a thick Pinay Carmen Sandiego.

Growing up in an immigrant household, my amazing parents worked hard for a better life for us, which meant our family didn't go on a lot of vacations. We would take the occasional road trip to Atlantic City or Buffalo to see the Our Lady of Fatima Shrine, but rarely did we board a plane. Let's just say Little Ann did not consider seeing statues of saints a vacation, but I also never felt like I was missing out because driving for hours through upstate New York into New Jersey *was* a fun adventure, and so was eating Burger King at road stops.

It wasn't until 2018 that I went on an overseas vacation. I had just finished my first big job at Second City Toronto, which allowed me to pay off my debt. And so I booked a six-week trip to Bali, Vietnam, Laos, Thailand and the Philippines. I was exposed to different ways of living, I ate incredible food, I saw some of the most beautiful and scenic countrysides, rice terraces, volcanos, waterfalls and beaches.

And, for the first time since I moved to Canada from the Philippines in 1989, I was surrounded by people who actually looked like me. Locals would often talk to me in their language, mistaking me as one of them. The second I opened my mouth to reply, they realized, “Oop, she's not,” and we would share a big laugh. It's these small moments of connection that can feel the most powerful and life affirming.

I haven't stopped travelling since that epic, worldview-changing trip. This past March, I visited Busan, South Korea. It



was cherry blossom season and while I was in a taxi to the train station, my driver pointed to the tree and said “벚꽃” (“cherry blossom” in Korean). Despite my three-and-a-half-year streak on Duolingo, my Korean language skills remained woefully lacking. But of all the words I didn't know, I happened to know that one! I mustered the courage to say, “예쁘다” which means “beautiful.” My driver was delighted at my attempt to communicate, and he began talking a mile a minute. I could feel his excitement that a foreigner was trying to speak his language, and I was thrilled with the generous compliments he gave on my (paltry) vocabulary. It was such a pure and joyful exchange. Travelling is intimidating, overwhelming and difficult. But finding that moment of recognition with someone? Or seeing something you've never seen before? The joy that floods your system is so pure and wholesome. You see how lovely this world can be when you're paying attention.

Finding joy is an intentional practice, one that relies on flexibility, creativity, zero judgment and an open heart—traits that come naturally to kids but that we somehow lose on our path to adulthood. I challenge that we didn't lose those things, we just forgot about them. We stopped listening to our younger selves because we have those pesky things called “responsibilities.” But the world is feeling pretty heavy these days, and I think it's fair and reasonable to want an escape from that, even temporarily. You don't need to go across the globe to have a novel experience. Maybe it's hiking a new trail or trying a different cuisine. Ask yourself: What's something your inner child would be excited to do?

Joy can be found in most places if you allow yourself to be curious and vulnerable. Anyway, I gotta go. Little Ann needs me to find more Labubu outfits on Etsy. She's demanding, but boy, is she fun. ☺



Anna Lambe,
Ottawa

Actor in *North of North*, the hit series from APTN, CBC and Netflix

“2025 has been one of the most exciting, scary, daunting and exhilarating years of my life—and I have felt so grateful to celebrate community and be celebrated. I strongly believe that we all succeed together, and seeing so many Inuit and Indigenous folks taking up space and owning their space in every industry this year has been both empowering and inspiring. As much as I hope my work may inspire others, I am deeply inspired by my community and always hope to continue growing alongside it.”



Jen Gunter,
San Francisco

Ob-gyn and author of *The Menopause Manifesto*

“My husband and I are in the process of moving back to Canada. Moving back home is very joyful, obviously. But we bought our house on Vancouver Island in the winter, when nothing was sprouting. When I got up there for the first time this spring, the garden was a sea of dahlias in pinks and yellows and reds. And I just was looking at them thinking, ‘Oh my god, nature. Like, what the fuck?’ The dahlias are preposterous in the greatest way, and they bring me an extreme amount of joy.”



Jann Arden, Calgary

Canadian musician, actor and author

“I met the love of my life in April. Her name is Thordis Elva, and she’s an amazing Icelandic author and speaker. We met at a writers’ retreat in Iceland, we started corresponding—and we’ve been together ever since. It’s been one of the biggest surprises of my life. I’d been single for 10 years, and I’d just been very determined to never get involved with anybody again in my life. And I was really happy, being sober and being creative and writing and doing [the comedy TV series] *The Jann Show* and touring and writing music. Love wasn’t even on my radar. Now I wake up every day and I just think, *God, what a life I am living.*”



Mary Berg,
Toronto

Television host, *MasterChef Canada* judge and cookbook author

“I’ve never had a better year for strawberries in terms of flavour and brightness. There was a two-month span where the whole strawberry was red—no white centre! This year I also perfected a recipe for what I call grocery-store strawberry shortcake*: a vanilla cake with stabilized whipped cream and strawberries. I was born in December and I always had that cake on my birthday when I was growing up. Being able to recreate that memory—but with summer-fresh strawberries—was an absolute thrill.”

**find the recipe in Mary’s next cookbook, out in Fall 2026*



Louise Penny,
Knowlton, Que.

Author (her latest release, *The Black Wolf*, is out now)

“My most joyous moment of the year was when my golden retriever rescue, Charlie, arrived from the good folks at Golden Rescue. She was a two-year-old scraggly, thin little girl, a golden retriever scooped from a puppy mill. She was scared, defensive. Even though I was told she loved other dogs, my own golden, Muggins, discovered that was not totally true. The first night was a disaster: I had to separate them, with Mugs looking at me like I’d just ruined her life. But we persevered and little by little Charlie relaxed. And now they are inseparable. Charlie has proven loving, loyal, indefatigable; a ball-chasing bundle of happiness. And she takes Muggins along for the ride.”





Lesley Hampton, Toronto

Fashion designer and model

“Being one of the designers featured in *FASHION Magazine’s* The Ones September 2025 cover story, which celebrates trailblazing Canadians in the arts and fashion, was a big moment for me. It was exciting to get the call sheet the day before the shoot and see a lot of names that I’ve looked up to and worked alongside over the years—it was a moment for us all to shine.”



Jillian Harris, Kelowna, B.C.

TV personality, business owner, cookbook author

“Our sweet dog, Nacho, passed away earlier this year and our hearts were completely broken. After he passed, we somehow found Nacho’s lineage and learned that there was a new litter, so we were able to adopt our puppy, Churro, who we’re pretty certain is related to our first boy!”

Vardā Étienne, Montreal

Media personality, author, mental health advocate and cover model for *Châtelaine’s* Winter 2025 issue

“I was born in Quebec but I’m of Haitian descent. Every time I close my eyes and think about the magnificent country of Haiti, where we find hibiscus—its emblematic flower—I feel a sense of calm.”



Ardra Shephard, Toronto

Author and host of *Fashion Dis*

“I published my first book, *Fallosophy: My Trip Through Life With MS*, in March. Women are conditioned to believe that we’re done at a certain age. So, discovering this new chapter in my 40s—especially while living with a condition that is as limiting as multiple sclerosis—is a really joyful thing. Just to feel like you can still have dreams and can still do big things.”



Sook-Yin Lee, Toronto

Filmmaker, actor, producer

“I THINK THE IDEA OF JOY is not unlike when people want a happy ending. It sounds nice to think about, but real life is more tricky. Maybe it’s because I’m Chinese-Canadian and raised in a Confucian/Taoist ideology, but emotions are often mixed up; there’s never a purity of one emotion.

“My most recent moment of joy underscores the complication. Several days ago, I wanted a coffee. I was with a friend who swore that the coffee from the machine at my local laundromat was delicious, so I gave it a go. I tried to figure out the buttons because I couldn’t tell how much money it wanted; it took me a couple of times to try to figure it out. Finally, the cup dropped and it started to make a double Americano—but it was just this tiny bit of hot water. Immediately I was like, ‘What is this?! This is terrible!’

of pissed. So, I called up Amir, and he answered his phone, and I said ‘Amir, this machine of yours is malfunctioning.’ His response: ‘What are you talking about? I have nothing to do with that!!’

“So, I talked to the people running the laundromat and told them Amir was upset. The laundromat owners were trying to shoo me off the phone. It turned out that they had bought this old machine second-hand and were using it to sell coffee, and Amir had been in the coffee business like 20 years ago.

“First, I was angry at Amir, then I defended him, then I was able to broker an understanding between him and the owners so they could get the coffee machine fixed. Going through all those emotions and finding a way to make it work; it was a small but really happy moment.”



Lisa LaFlamme,
Toronto

Award-winning
journalist

“This year I became a grauntie—a great aunt—for the fourth time, and there are two more babies on the way. My mother, sisters and I are part of a group chat called Baby Watch, where every day they post videos of all their grandkids. I love seeing how the whole family lights up around them. I am mesmerized by these little guys, and I love watching them grow. All this new life has really changed the dynamic of our family.”



Jilly Black,
Toronto

Singer, songwriter, actor

“This summer, 120 loved ones flew to Jamaica to witness me marry Valentine, the love of my life, at the beautiful age of 47. This didn’t just bring me joy, it added to my ‘joy bank.’ I think of it like a savings account that I can draw from and pour into others. I was surprised that so many people made the trip, not because they don’t love us, but because we’re in a time where every dollar and day off matters. Every single person we hoped for attended our wedding, and that filled me with so much gratitude. The experience inspired us to plan a couples’ retreat, especially after seeing over 30 couples show up to celebrate with us.”



Jennifer Whalen,
Toronto

Actor, writer, producer; stars in *Small Achievable Goals*

“My husband and I spent our 10th anniversary in Ireland, and the moment that made the trip took us by surprise. We were trudging to our hotel in the rain, stepped into a pub, and wound up in the middle of a singalong. It was so pure: people singing songs they love just for the pleasure of it!”



Jessica Lanyaño,
British Columbia

Astrologer (read her column on Chatelaine.com)

“After living in California for the last 30 years, I moved to British Columbia in late 2024, and I cannot count the times that my partner and I have turned to each other to marvel at how absolutely breathtaking it is here. Cultivating a relationship to the nature of this place has been so joyful!”



Vivek Shraya,
Toronto

Multidisciplinary
artist

“My partner and I moved back to Toronto after six years in Alberta. While apartment hunting, we had one condition: we had to relocate to a neighbourhood we’d never lived in before. We settled on Leslieville, and it’s where I’ve found most joy this year: in the snacks (Masa Deli breakfast sandwiches; Ed’s Real Scoop ice cream), the parks where people gather to watch the sunset, even the beautiful tree that’s across from our apartment. I use an app to track moments of joy—and 95 percent of those moments have happened in Leslieville.”



Shayla Stonechild,
Vancouver

Global yoga ambassador, Lululemon; founder, The Matriarch Movement

“This year I championed a book, *A Two-Spirit Journey* by Ma-Nee Chacaby with Mary Louisa Plummer, on CBC Canada Reads—and it won. It was a really big challenge, competing against other very talented people. The book is a memoir of Ma-Nee Chacaby’s life, and I was really inspired by her journey as a Two-Spirit Ojibwa-Cree elder. I found out live on air that her book won, and I broke down crying. Afterwards, I finally met Ma-Nee in person in Winnipeg. She reminded me of my own kôkom.”



Farah Alibay,
Los Angeles

Canadian aerospace engineer and author

“Since 2022, I’ve been working on an infrared space telescope called SPHEREx, and it finally launched in March. I got to be onsite for the launch and host the broadcast. The telescope has since returned some fantastic images, and the team had a party to celebrate. When you work on these big projects, the moments that you remember the most aren’t the scientific achievements, but the people that you were with in that moment.”



Uzma Jalaluddin,
Toronto

Teacher and author (her new holiday romance, *Yours for the Season*, is out December 1)

“My very first mystery novel, *Detective Aunty*, came out this year. One of my greatest joys as an author is getting emails from readers, and I’ve gotten so many thanking me for constructing a character who is an older woman—Kausar Khan is in her late 50s—who is smart and savvy and isn’t silly. I feel like I’ve tapped into this conversation that we’re having as a society about the way that older women are made to feel invisible. I want to bring aunties back into the spotlight.”



Musemo Handahu,
Halifax

Photographer and content creator, @missionhunter

“I spent three weeks in Mexico City with my best friend this year. We live in different cities and we were both burnt out and in need of an escape. The trip was a way of finding our way back to our creative selves.

We would journal in the morning, dissect it together, then go explore. We got to experience the food, the fashion, the boutiques and the galleries. Experiencing different sights, sounds and smells filled my cup.”



Damhnait Doyle,
Toronto

Canadian singer and CBC Music morning radio host

“I took my oldest daughter to see *Hamilton* in Ottawa last August. I bought the tickets because she is an absolute *Hamilton* freak, she loves it so much. I didn’t know the plot or what to expect—I was just along for the ride. But the show absolutely blew me away. My daughter said, ‘I’d never seen you nod your head for two hours like that.’ It was a joy to experience something that she introduced to me. My kids are my teachers.”



Olivia Chow,
Toronto

Mayor of Toronto

“I’m reminiscing about a school visit I had, where these kids were so excited that, instead of two days a week, every single day they’d be getting a mid-morning snack: a fruit or vegetable, a grain and a protein. When I walked in to help deliver the food, they all cheered.

Making sure that every child in every school in Toronto under the age of 18 has a nutritious meal every day is a personal priority for me. At the end of my visit, the kids gave me cards covered in stickers of fruits and hearts to say thank you. I still have them.”



“The joy of this year has been bringing joy to other people. I’ve been running women’s retreats out of my Tuscan villa for more than 10 years, and I recently started running classic car rallies. I’m used to seeing the joy among our female participants, but men don’t typically embrace retreats like women do. One of our car rally guests recently told me that he hadn’t smiled that much since his wedding day. When you give joy, it’s not about money or prestige. It’s about seeing people living in the moment, making new friends and saying, ‘Wow, best day ever.’”



Debbie Travis,
Tuscany

Television personality, retreat host and bestselling author of *Joy: Life Lessons From a Tuscan Villa*

DOYLE PHOTO: KAYLA ROCCA; ALIBAY PHOTO: KRISTEL V. MORIN; HANDAHU PHOTO: MUSEMO HANDAHU; TRAVIS PHOTO: JOHN VAN DER SCHILDEN; JALALUDDIN PHOTO, ANDREA STENSON.



Soleen Mitton,
Vancouver

Founder of Vancouver Indigenous Fashion Week, co-founder of Supernaturals Modelling, community leader and activist

“My mother grew up feeling shame around her Indigenous heritage, and I have always wanted to show her there is nothing to be ashamed of—that she and I and all Indigenous peoples are beautiful, skilled and important creators in this world. That happened this year when my entire family joined me on stage for the closing event of Vancouver Indigenous Fashion Week. For the first time, my mother truly saw herself reflected in the thousands of Indigenous people sitting in the audience. To witness her pride, surrounded by generations of our family, was pure joy. It was a moment of healing, belonging and strength that I’ll carry forever.”

MOORE PHOTO, SHUBILA K. VANASSE PHOTO, GAËLLE LEROYER.



Tracy Moore,
Toronto

Television personality

“I’VE GOT ONE ARM UP and my index finger is bobbing to the beat. Eyes closed, two-step going, shout-screaming lyrics. It’s 5 p.m., the sun is still up and I’m in sneakers on a dance floor. This type of peak joy may be a novelty at 50, but it’s a tale that started more than three decades ago.

I didn’t have a curfew growing up. As long as my grades stayed high, I was out in the streets Friday to Sunday. From the age of 15, as long as I had a few subway tokens and a quarter for the pay phone, I was set.

This was how it went: beg parents for a ride or jump on the subway. Get in line (unless we knew the bouncers). Shove our coats into a dark corner. Get thee to the dance floor. It could be a quad burning slow whine, a fast-paced ‘mock the dread’ or a tootsie roll—we weren’t coming home until we heard the last bars of SWV’s “Weak” and the lights were on. As the DJs packed their records back into crates, the crowd would make its way out of the club, slow as molasses. We had to get the hell outta there but were we ready to go home? No.

The post-club ‘lime’ in the parking lot was as good a time as the party. Digits were exchanged, jokes were run, corn soup consumed. This was club life and it was dope. So good, in fact, many of us

grown-ups decided not to let go. Bless up the DJs and club promoters who grew up, got married, had kids, thrived in careers and decided they still wanted to party.

These culture-curators are the reason I still leave my house to sweat it out on a dance floor. The parties are in the daytime and our high-energy moves have been replaced with two steps, but the joy is still capital J palpable. When I look around, I feel blessed to have these roots, these people and this culture to fold myself into whenever the world feels cold.”



Hayley Wickenheiser, Toronto

Canadian women’s hockey hall of famer and assistant general manager for the Toronto Maple Leafs

“My entire family lives in Western Canada. This year, I was able to spend more time with them than in years past. They came east a few times to see some Leafs games (all of which the guys won!), and I saw my son, who lives in Sweden, a couple of times, too. Time with loved ones is the most joyful commodity for me.”



Karine Vanasse, Knowlton, Que.

Actor and host of *The Traitors Canada*

“For years, I’ve been feeling in my entire body that I need to dance. I’ve planned to go dancing with friends so many times, but it never worked out. Over the summer, I went on vacation with my seven-year-old son and, as we were walking back to our cabin one night, we heard drums. The performers from the Cirque de la Pointe-Sèche were having a big party to celebrate the end of their season. My son and I ended up spending the evening dancing together. To finally be able to dance freely and ecstatically—and to share that moment with him—was amazing.”

Highlights from the 2025 Chatelaine Wellness Retreat

The annual event—held at a serene, Finnish-inspired Nordic day spa—is dedicated to relaxation, self-care and personal growth.

ON a gorgeous day earlier this year, *Chatelaine* readers and editors gathered for the second-annual Chatelaine Wellness Retreat at Vettä Nordic Spa in Oro-Medonte, Ont.

Hosted in partnership with TENA—the world’s leading incontinence brand dedicated to empowering women who experience incontinence to live fearlessly and without compromise—the event delivered both inspiring conversation and the opportunity to relax and rejuvenate.

To kick off the day, guests enjoyed breakfast overlooking the outdoor Finnish-style spa circuit, before taking advantage of the various hot and cold therapies.

At midday, Maureen Halushak, editor-in-chief of *Chatelaine*, led a candid conversation on how to smash the stigma surrounding aging, menopause, incontinence and more.

From there, guests enjoyed a grazing lunch before heading back outdoors to bask in the sun and surroundings.

They departed feeling relaxed and reinvigorated—and already looking forward to doing it all over again at next year’s event.



Guests gathered for a lively discussion with media personality and mental health advocate Varda Étienne, as well as Leslie White and Cynthia Heyd (a.k.a. The Twinagers), twin sisters who are on a mission to change society’s narrative around aging.



Thank you to our wonderful sponsors:

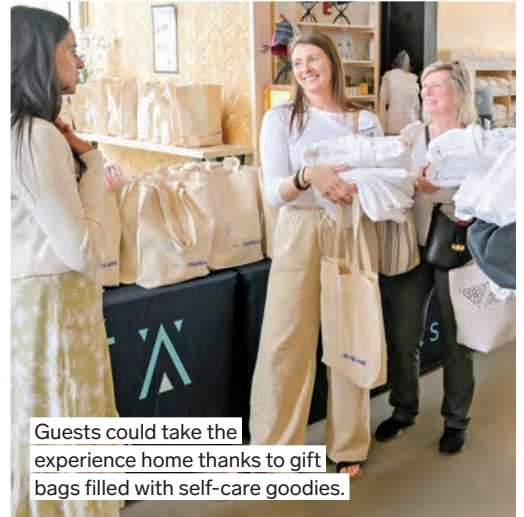




Above: Guests were invited to take selfies for the *Chatelaine* x TENA Wall of Confidence. Below: Vettä's extensive circuit includes multiple hot pools, saunas, steam rooms, cold pools and relaxation zones, surrounded by peaceful woods.



From left: *Chatelaine* editor Maureen Halushak alongside panelists Cynthia Heyd, Varda Étienne and Leslie White.



Guests could take the experience home thanks to gift bags filled with self-care goodies.



From left: Guests enjoyed a welcome breakfast before embarking on the hydrotherapy circuit. Lunch was served alongside crisp Stoneleigh Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc and Stoneleigh Lighter Sauvignon Blanc. At the end of the day, attendees left with gift bags filled with skin- and body care from NEOSTRATA, Lotus Aroma and Bath & Body Works, as well as a TENA affirmation journal and TENA Sensitive Care Pads.

THE SPREAD

17 DELICIOUS, DOABLE RECIPES

NANAIMO BAR
THUMBPRINTS
P 52

The Great Canadian Cookie Road Trip

RECIPES AND TEXT **Camilla Wynne**
PRODUCED BY **Aimee Nishitoba**
ILLUSTRATIONS BY **Jacqui Oakley**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **Christie Vuong**
FOOD STYLING BY **Eshun Mott**
PROP STYLING BY **Madeleine Johari**



NANAIMO, BC

This year, in a feat of holiday magic, we transformed six iconic Canadian sweets into cookie form!

The flavours of Nanaimo Bar, Prairie Flapper Pie and yup, even East Coast Moon Mist ice cream, show up in nutty sablés, tender dacquoise and crunchy shortbread. Your cookie platter will be a riot of texture and colour—and a bite-sized tour of the country's most celebrated desserts.



Nanaimo Bar Thumbprints

PREP 25 MIN;
TOTAL 2 HRS 30 MIN

MAKES 20 COOKIES

Undoubtedly the most classic Canadian bar cookie, Nanaimo bars hail, of course, from Nanaimo, B.C. Here, they are reimagined as sophisticated thumbprints. A rich cocoa base full of coconut, walnuts and graham crumbs is filled with the classic custard filling and finished with a drizzle of dark chocolate.

- 2/3 cup unsalted butter, softened (153 g)
- 1/3 cup brown sugar (73 g)
- 1 large egg yolk
- 3/4 cup all-purpose flour (105 g)
- 1/4 cup cocoa (30 g)
- 1/8 tsp salt
- 1/3 cup unsweetened desiccated coconut

- 1/4 cup finely chopped walnuts
- 1/4 cup graham cracker crumbs

Filling

- 1 cup icing sugar (125 g)
- 1/4 cup unsalted butter, softened (58 g)
- 4 tsp 35% cream
- 1 tbsp custard powder

Garnish

- 42 g melted dark chocolate, to finish
- 1 tbsp unsweetened desiccated coconut
- 1 tbsp finely chopped walnuts

1. Position rack in centre of oven, then preheat to 350F. Line two baking sheets with parchment.
2. Beat 2/3 cup butter and brown sugar in a large bowl, using an electric mixer on medium, until light and fluffy. Beat in egg yolk. Sift

in flour, cocoa and salt. Beat until just combined, then stir in coconut, walnuts and graham crumbs.

3. Roll dough into 1 tbsp-sized balls, then arrange at least 1 in. apart on prepared sheets. Use a damp thumb or the end of a wooden spoon to make an indent in the middle of each cookie. Freeze for 10 min.
4. Bake cookies until set, 14 to 16 min. Transfer cookies to a wire rack to cool completely.
5. Filling: Beat icing sugar with 1/4 cup butter, cream and custard powder in a medium bowl, using an electric mixer on medium, until smooth and fluffy. Transfer filling to a piping bag fitted with a large star tip. Pipe filling into the indent of each cooled cookie.
6. Garnish: Drizzle cookies with melted chocolate, then sprinkle with coconut and walnuts. Let stand until chocolate is firm, at least 1 hr. Cookies will keep well stored in an airtight container at room temperature up to 5 days.



Saskatoon Pie Cookies

PREP 20 MIN;
TOTAL 2 HRS 45 MIN
PLUS COOLING TIME

MAKES 16 TO 18 COOKIES

Based on Dorie Greenspan's classic Jammers, these cookies take flavour inspiration from a Prairie classic: Saskatoon pie. Saskatoons (also known as service berries) have an almond flavour that is amplified by an almond-scented sablé Breton base and an almond crumble.

- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened (115 g)
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar (50 g)
- 1/4 cup brown sugar (55 g)
- 1 large egg yolk
- 1/4 tsp almond extract
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour (70 g)
- 1/2 cup whole-wheat or all-purpose flour (70 g)

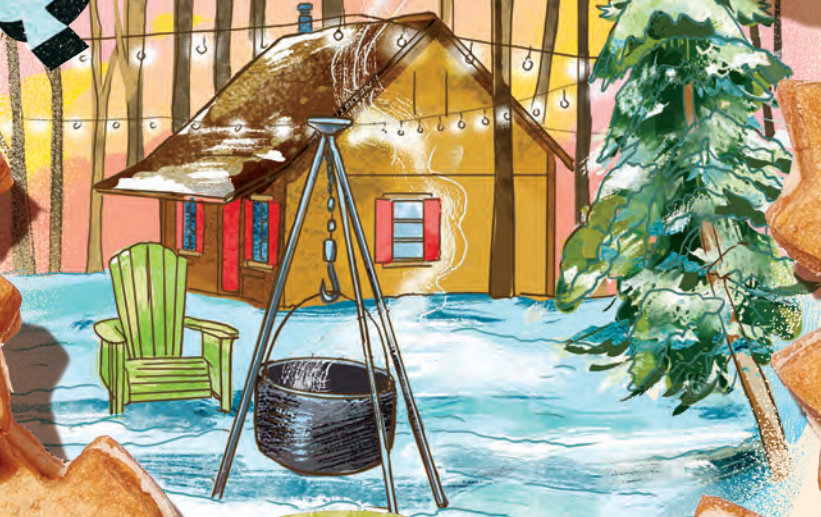


SASKATOON
PIE COOKIES
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SASKATCHEWAN

MAPLE CREAM
COOKIES P 56

QUEBEC



MOON MIST
SUGAR COOKIES
P 56

THE EAST COAST



- ½ tsp baking soda
- ¼ tsp salt

Streusel

- 6 tbsp all-purpose flour (53 g)
- 3 tbsp almond flour (18 g)
- 2½ tbsp granulated sugar (31 g)
- Pinch of salt
- ¼ cup cold unsalted butter, cubed (58 g)
- 1½ tbsp toasted almonds, finely chopped
- ⅓ cup thick Saskatoon jam (see tip)

1. Beat softened butter, ¼ cup granulated sugar and brown sugar in a medium bowl, using an electric mixer on medium, until light and fluffy. Beat in egg yolk and almond extract. Add ½ cup all-purpose flour, whole-wheat flour, baking soda and ¼ tsp salt. Beat until well combined.
2. Transfer dough to a sheet of parchment and roll into a 2-in. wide cylinder. Twist ends. Refrigerate until firm, about 2 hrs.
3. Streusel: Meanwhile, stir 6 tbsp all-purpose flour with almond flour, 2½ tbsp granulated sugar and pinch of salt in a medium bowl. Rub in cubed butter with fingertips until you have crumbs the size of peas. Stir in almonds. Refrigerate until ready to use.
4. Position rack in centre of oven, then preheat to 350F. Spray 18 muffin cups with oil.
5. Slice chilled dough into ¼-in. thick rounds, then place each one in the

bottom of a muffin cup. Top centre of each cookie with a heaping ½ tsp jam, then sprinkle about 1 tbsp streusel around jam.

6. Bake until golden brown, 22 to 25 min. Cool completely in pan before using a knife or mini offset spatula to unmold. Cookies will keep well stored in an airtight container at room temperature up to 3 days.

Kitchen tip

- If you can't find Saskatoon jam, try blackcurrant.



Maple Cream Cookies

PREP 20 MIN;
TOTAL 2 HRS 20 MIN

MAKES 16 COOKIES

You're sure to find this Canadian classic at any airport gift shop. They're particularly popular in Quebec, the maple syrup province. Once you make your own using maple sugar and a little nutty whole-wheat flour, you'll never go back to store-bought. If you don't have a maple leaf cookie cutter, use any shape of a similar size.

- 1 cup unsalted butter, softened (230 g)
- 1 cup maple sugar (160 g)
- ½ tsp salt
- 2 cups all-purpose flour (280 g)
- ½ cup plus 2 tbsp whole-wheat flour (88 g)

Filling

- 1⅔ cups icing sugar (200 g)

- ¼ cup unsalted butter, softened (58 g)
- 1½ tbsp maple syrup
- Pinch of salt

1. Beat 1 cup butter, maple sugar and ½ tsp salt in a medium bowl, using an electric mixer on medium, until light and fluffy. Beat in both flours until well combined.
2. Have two baking sheets at the ready. Roll out dough to ¼-in. thick between two large pieces of parchment. Place on a baking sheet and refrigerate until firm, about 30 min.
3. Position rack in centre of oven, then preheat to 325F.
4. Place firm dough on counter. Peel off top parchment, then flip over and peel off bottom parchment. (Use the parchment to line your baking sheets.) Use a 2¾-in. maple leaf cookie cutter to cut out cookies, then arrange at least 1 in. apart on prepared sheets. Use the back of a paring knife to draw leaf veins, if desired. Re-roll dough scraps, refrigerate briefly and cut out more cookies.
5. Bake until set and lightly golden around edges, 12 to 14 min. Transfer cookies to a wire rack to cool completely.
6. Filling: Beat icing sugar, ¼ cup butter, maple syrup and pinch of salt in a large bowl, using an electric mixer on medium, until light and fluffy. Spread bottom of half the cooled cookies with 1 tbsp filling, then sandwich with remaining cookies. Cookies will keep well stored in an airtight container at room temperature up to 5 days.



Moon Mist Sugar Cookies

PREP 15 MIN; TOTAL 30 MIN
PLUS COOLING TIME

MAKES 24 COOKIES

Moon Mist is an iconic Atlantic Canada ice cream flavour that swirls together vibrant yellow banana, blue bubble gum and purple grape. Neither kids nor adults will be able to resist the cookie version of this childhood summer classic. If you use a scoop to portion them, they almost look like ice cream.

- 2½ cups all-purpose flour (350 g)
- ¾ tsp baking powder
- ¾ tsp salt
- 1 cup unsalted butter, softened (230 g)
- 1½ cups granulated sugar (300 g)
- 2 large egg yolks
- ½ tsp banana extract or bakery emulsion, such as LorAnn (see tip)
- 4 drops bubble gum super strength flavouring oil
- 4 drops grape super strength flavouring oil
- Yellow, blue and purple food colouring

1. Position rack in centre of oven, then preheat to 350F. Line two baking sheets with parchment.
2. Combine flour with baking powder and salt in a medium bowl. Beat butter and sugar in a large bowl, using an electric mixer on medium, until



FLAPPER PIE
COOKIES P 58

THE PRAIRIES

light and fluffy. Beat in egg yolks, one at a time, then beat in dry ingredients until well combined.

3. On a clean surface, divide dough into three equal portions. Knead banana extract and yellow food colouring into first portion. Then bubble gum flavouring and blue food colouring into second portion. Then grape flavouring and purple food colouring into third portion. Tear 1 to 2 tbsp-sized pieces of dough at a time from each colour and toss back into bowl. Gently press pieces together.

4. Use a 1-oz scoop to portion cookies, then arrange at least 1 in. apart on prepared sheets. (Or roll into 2 tbsp-sized balls.)

5. Bake until set and lightly golden around the edges, 12 to 14 min. Transfer cookies to a wire rack to cool completely. Cookies will keep well stored in an airtight container at room temperature up to 5 days.

Kitchen tips

- A bakery emulsion is similar to an extract, and works particularly well in baked goods. Look for this and flavouring oils at cooking and restaurant supply stores, or retailers like Bulk Barn.
- Save this recipe for ice cream sandwiches! Flatten cookies to ½-in. thick before baking; sandwich with ice cream when cool.



Flapper Pie Cookies

PREP 30 MIN;
TOTAL 6 HRS 50 MIN

MAKES 28 TO 30 COOKIES

Let's just say it was a challenge to transform this classic Prairie pie—which features a graham crust filled with custard and topped with meringue—into cookie form. The key is a dry meringue-based dacquoise cookie made with graham crumbs instead of the traditional nuts. A few hours after being sandwiched with custard filling they soften up for the perfect bite-sized treat.

Filling

¾ cup 3.25% milk

3 large egg yolks

¼ cup granulated sugar
(50 g)

1½ tbsp cornstarch

½ tbsp all-purpose flour
Pinch of salt

1½ tbsp unsalted butter
(22 g)

¾ tsp vanilla

Cookies

1¾ cups graham crumbs,
divided

1 tbsp unsalted butter,
melted

¾ tsp salt, divided

6 large egg whites

1 cup granulated sugar
(200 g)

2 tbsp cornstarch

1. Filling: Pour milk into a small saucepan set over medium. Heat until milk starts to steam. Meanwhile, whisk egg yolks with ¼ cup sugar, 1½ tbsp cornstarch, flour and pinch of salt in a medium bowl. Gradually pour hot milk in a steady stream into yolk mixture, whisking constantly.

Return mixture to saucepan. Cook, whisking constantly, until mixture comes to a boil. Remove from heat and whisk in 1½ tbsp butter and vanilla until smooth. Scrape mixture into a clean bowl and cover the surface directly with plastic wrap. Refrigerate until chilled, at least 3 hrs, preferably overnight.

2. Position rack in centre of oven, then preheat to 350F. Line two large rimmed baking sheets with parchment.

3. Cookies: Stir ¼ cup graham crumbs with melted butter and ¼ tsp salt in a small bowl. Set aside.

4. Combine egg whites with remaining ½ tsp salt in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the whisk attachment. Beat on medium speed until foamy and opaque. Increase speed to medium-high and gradually add 1 cup sugar. Continue to beat until stiff, glossy peaks form. Fold in remaining 1½ cups graham crumbs and 2 tbsp cornstarch.

5. Transfer egg white mixture to a piping bag fitted with a large round tip. Pipe rounds that are 2-in. wide and ⅓-in. high onto prepared sheets. Sprinkle tops generously with graham-butter mixture. Bake until golden and set, 16 to 19 min. Transfer cookies to a wire rack to cool completely.

6. Whisk chilled filling until smooth, then transfer to a piping bag fitted with a large plain tip. Pipe filling onto bottoms of half the cookies, leaving a ¼-in. border all around. Sandwich with remaining

cookies. Transfer cookies to an airtight container and refrigerate for at least 2 hrs before serving. Cookies will keep well refrigerated up to 4 days.



Thunder Bay Persian Sablés

PREP 25 MIN;
TOTAL 4 HRS 30 MIN

MAKES 16 COOKIES

The original recipe for the persian, a beloved Thunder Bay, Ont., delicacy, is a closely guarded secret. This cookie spin-off keeps the spirit of the original cinnamon-scented fried dough topped with berry-tinted icing.

½ cup unsalted butter,
softened (115 g)

¼ cup brown sugar
(55 g)

¼ cup granulated sugar
(50 g)

1 large egg yolk

½ tsp vanilla

1 cup all-purpose flour
(140 g)

¼ tsp cinnamon

¼ tsp salt

Icing

1½ cups icing sugar (186 g)

3 tbsp unsalted butter,
softened (43 g)

3 tbsp frozen
raspberries,
thawed

Pinch of salt

Sprinkles
(optional)

1. Beat ½ cup butter, brown sugar and granulated sugar in a large bowl, using an



THUNDER BAY
PERSIAN SABLÉS
P 58

THUNDER BAY, ONT

electric mixer on medium, until light and fluffy. Beat in egg yolk and vanilla.

Add flour, cinnamon and ¼ tsp salt. Beat until well combined.

2. Transfer dough to a sheet of parchment paper and roll into an 8-in. long cylinder. Twist ends. Refrigerate until firm, about 2 hrs.

3. Position rack in centre

of oven, then preheat to 350F. Line two baking sheets with parchment.

4. Slice chilled dough into ½-in. thick rounds, then arrange 1 in. apart on prepared sheets. Bake until set and lightly golden, 15 to 16 min. Transfer cookies to a wire rack to cool completely.

5. Icing: Beat icing sugar, 3 tbsps butter, raspberries

and pinch of salt in a medium bowl, using an electric mixer on medium, until light and fluffy and raspberries break down.

6. Frost cooled cookies generously with icing, then top with sprinkles if using. Let cookies stand for 30 min before serving or storing.

Cookies will keep well stored in an airtight

container between layers of waxed paper at room temperature up to 3 days.



CAMILLA WYNNE IS A RECIPE DEVELOPER AND WRITER IN TORONTO. HER LATEST BOOK IS *NATURE'S CANDY*.

Feliz Navidad!

Spending Christmas with family in Western Mexico while I was growing up was identity-forming for me. I loved the colours, the flavours and the way everyone in the neighbourhood seemed to take nochebuena (Christmas Eve) festivities more seriously than December 25 itself. It's hard to recreate the experience for my own kids, who have never spent a holiday abroad—but cooking from those memories gets me pretty close.

PUMPKIN SPICE
CHOCOFLAN
P 65



GREEN WATER STEM GLASS, SAUDADETORONTO.COM.
SCALLOPED DESSERT PLATES, SOCCOLIVING.COM.



JICAMA AND
ORANGE SALAD
P 64

RECIPES AND TEXT BY **Chantal Braganza** PRODUCED BY **Sun Ngo** PHOTOGRAPHY BY **Christie Vuong**
FOOD STYLING BY **Eshun Mott** PROP STYLING BY **Rayna Marlee Schwartz**

PINK AND RED STRIPED TEXTILE BY KATEAUSTINDESIGNS.COM

BLUE VINTAGE STEM GLASS, SAUDADETORONTO.COM.
CANDLE HOLDER, SOCCOLIVING.COM.



POZOLE
ROJO
P 64

SCALLOPED BOWL AND MINI PLATE - SOCCOLIVING.COM.



BLUE VINTAGE STEM GLASS, SAUDADETORONTO.COM; CANDLE HOLDER AND SCALLOPED DESSERT PLATES, SOCCOLIVING.COM

PONCHE NAVIDEÑO
(HIBISCUS CHRISTMAS
PUNCH) P 64

Jicama and Orange Salad

PREP 25 MIN; TOTAL 25 MIN

SERVES 6 *This tart and juicy salad comes together in minutes and acts as a zippy counterpoint to the rich spiciness of pozole. There's no oil or emulsifier to dress the salad; make it immediately before serving. Chilling the produce just before prep is a nice touch.*

- 1 medium jicama, peeled and cut into 1-in. cubes, about 1½ cups
- 3 to 4 medium Cara Cara oranges, peeled and sectioned (see tip)
- 2 to 3 ripe avocados, peeled and cut into chunks
- 1 large carrot, peeled and grated
- ½ large cucumber, diced
- 2 to 3 limes, juiced
- 2 tbsp chopped cilantro
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp chili powder

1. Combine jicama, orange sections, avocados, carrot and cucumber in a wide, shallow bowl. Sprinkle with lime juice, cilantro, salt and chili powder. Gently toss to combine. Serve immediately.

Kitchen tip You can swap out oranges for grapefruit, or use a mix of both.

Pozole Rojo

PREP 30 MIN; TOTAL 3 HRS

SERVES 8 TO 10 *You will have a hard time finding two Mexican households*

that agree on how to make this beloved pork and chili soup. Cumin? No cumin? Whole onion or chopped? Two things everyone knows, though, is that it's always worth the effort, and it always tastes better the next day.

Broth

- 1 large onion, peeled
- 1 whole clove
- 1.36 kg pork shoulder, cut into 2 to 3 large pieces and trimmed of fat
- 1 pig's foot, cleaned and trimmed
- 8 to 10 black peppercorns
- 8 garlic cloves
- 2 fresh bay leaves
- 1 tbsp kosher salt

Chili Paste

- 4 guajillo chilies, stems and seeds removed
- 3 pasilla chilies, stems and seeds removed
- 2 ancho chilies, stems and seeds removed
- ½ cup chopped white onion
- 4 garlic cloves
- ½ tbsp kosher salt
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 4 439-g cans white hominy, drained and thoroughly rinsed (see tip)

For serving

- Thinly sliced radishes

Thinly shredded iceberg lettuce or cabbage

Sliced avocado

Diced white onion

Crumbled cotija cheese

Corn chips

½ bunch chopped fresh cilantro

Dried oregano

Lime wedges

1. Broth: Cut onion in half, then stick whole clove into one of the halves. Combine pork shoulder, pig's foot, onion halves, peppercorns, 8 garlic cloves, bay leaves and 1 tbsp salt in a large pot. Cover with fresh cold water by 1 to 2 in. and set over high. Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to medium-high. Simmer for 10 to 12 min, skimming off any foam that floats to the surface. Reduce heat to medium-low. Cover and continue gently simmering until meat is tender and broth is fragrant and thick with collagen from the pork, about 1 hr 30 min.

2. Chili Paste: Meanwhile, boil a kettle of water. Using kitchen scissors, cut through each dried chili to lay them flat in a large bowl. Cover with 1½ cups boiling water and let soak until chilies are very soft and water is darkly coloured, about 30 min. Pour chilies and soaking liquid into a blender, along with chopped onion, 4 garlic cloves, ½ tbsp salt, cumin and oregano. Blend until smooth. Set aside.

3. Remove and discard onion, pig's foot, peppercorns, garlic and bay leaves from broth. Transfer pork pieces from broth to

cutting board. Set aside.

4. Strain chili paste through a fine-mesh strainer into broth. Stir to combine, then add hominy. Shred the still-warm pork pieces and add to broth. Reduce heat to low. Continue gently simmering until flavours have harmonized and meat and hominy are fully cooked through, up to 1 hr.

5. Ladle into bowls and serve alongside garnishes.

Kitchen tips

- For another layer of flavour, sear the pork and pig's foot on each side for about 1 to 2 min until they form a bit of crust before making the broth. Toast the dried chilies on a hot, dry pan for 1 to 2 min before soaking, but be careful not to burn them.

- Pork broth can be made one day before making pozole, and is in fact preferable: after cooking, remove and discard the pig's foot and refrigerate broth until ready to continue the recipe. Before reheating, you may wish to remove the solidified fat overtop for a clearer broth.

- In Canada, hominy—also called pozole or mote in Latin American countries—is mostly sold canned. If you're lucky enough to find it dried, use it! Cook according to package instructions before using in pozole.

Ponche Navideño (Hibiscus Christmas Punch)

PREP 15 MIN; TOTAL 1 HR 30 MIN

SERVES 6 *Known as sorrel in Caribbean cuisines, and zobo drink in Nigeria, hibiscus tea often makes its way into Mexican ponche*

around the holidays, served as a heated drink with plenty of fresh and dried fruits (and sometimes a cheeky pour of rum).

- 1 cup whole dried hibiscus flowers (see tip)
- ½ large piloncillo cone (see tip)
- 1 orange, cut into large chunks
- 1 apple, cored and cut into large chunks
- 1 pear, cored and cut into large chunks
- 6 to 8 prunes
- 6 to 8 dried red jujube fruits (see tip)
- ¼ cup sultana raisins
- ¼ cup unsalted whole almonds
- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 3 whole cloves

1. Combine hibiscus, piloncillo and 2 cups water in a medium saucepan set over high. Bring to a boil, then turn off heat immediately. Let mixture stand until piloncillo is dissolved and flowers are fully steeped, at least 15 min.
2. Strain hibiscus mixture into a pot set over high. Discard flowers. Add orange, apple, pear, prunes, red jujubes, raisins, almonds, cinnamon sticks, cloves and 6 cups water. Bring to a simmer (not a boil), then reduce heat to medium. Simmer for 5 min, then reduce heat to low. Steep until fruit is softened, 40 to 60 min. Taste and add more piloncillo, if desired.
3. Ladle into mugs while still hot, making sure to include fruit in each cup.

Garnish with a cinnamon stick, if desired.

Kitchen tips

- Hibiscus is often sold dried in whole flowers or broken-up pieces. Use 1 cup whole flowers in this recipe or ⅔ cup pieces.
- Often sold in cones or pucks at Latin American grocery stores, or as palm sugar in South Asian or Asian grocery stores, piloncillo can be substituted with ½ cup dark brown sugar.
- Found in Asian grocery stores, dried red jujube fruits are used here as a replacement for tejocotes, which aren't easily found in Canada.

Pumpkin Spice Chocoflan

PREP 30 MIN; TOTAL 6 HRS
30 MIN

SERVES 8 TO 10 *Sometimes called “pastel imposible,” which translates to impossible cake, chocoflan is a dessert for the chocolate lovers, the cooking science nerds and the efficient home cook who wants the wow-factor of a layer cake without the work of actually making one. After pouring an eggy milk custard over a dark chocolate cake batter in a bundt pan, the layers reverse during baking, as if by magic.*

Flan

- 113 g cream cheese, at room temperature
- 1 354-mL can evaporated milk
- 1 300-mL can sweetened condensed milk
- 4 large eggs, at room temperature

- 1 tbsp pumpkin pie spice
- 1 tsp vanilla
- ½ tsp salt

Cake

- 1 ⅓ cups all-purpose flour (140 g)
- 1 cup granulated sugar (200 g)
- ½ cup black cocoa powder (55 g) (see tip)
- 1 tsp baking soda
- ½ tsp baking powder
- ¼ tsp salt
- 2 large eggs, at room temperature
- ¾ cup buttermilk
- ¼ cup melted butter
- 1 tsp vanilla

1. Position rack in centre of oven, then preheat to 350F. Generously coat a 10-cup bundt pan with non-stick cooking spray, ensuring every crevice is coated well. Place pan in a large, deep roasting pan. Spray a piece of foil large enough to cover bundt pan with cooking spray.
2. Flan: Combine cream cheese, evaporated and condensed milks, 4 eggs, pumpkin pie spice, 1 tsp vanilla and ½ tsp salt in a high-speed blender. Blend until very smooth (without over-blending eggs), up to 20 sec. Set aside.
3. Cake: Sift flour, sugar, cocoa, baking soda and powder, and ¼ tsp salt into a large bowl. Whisk 2 eggs with buttermilk, butter and 1 tsp vanilla in a medium bowl. With a large spoon or fork, stir egg mixture into flour mixture until combined. Carefully scrape

batter into bundt pan, ensuring drips don't end up on the sides. Wiggle and tap bundt pan to remove any air pockets from batter and even out surface.

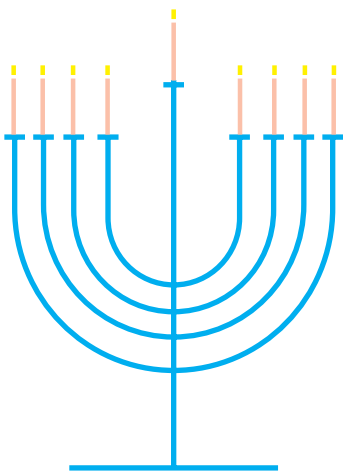
4. Very carefully and very slowly, pour flan mixture over the back of a large spoon onto cake batter layer. (You want to avoid disturbing the cake batter as much as possible.) Cover bundt pan tightly with greased foil, oil-side down. Place roasting pan in oven. Fill roasting pan up to 3-in. deep with boiling water.
5. Bake until chocolate cake layer has risen to the top of bundt pan, about 1 hr. Insert a toothpick to test the cake layer for doneness. (Bake up to 15 min more if needed.)
6. Carefully remove bundt pan from roasting pan. Let cake cool completely in bundt pan for at least 1 hr. Then refrigerate cake until chilled, at least 4 hrs (or preferably overnight).
7. To serve, run a small silicone spatula or flexible knife around edge of pan to loosen cake. Place a large platter ovetop, then flip. Wait until cake drops from bundt pan, then carefully remove pan.

Kitchen tips

- Found in specialty baking shops or online, black cocoa powder is simply Dutch-processed cocoa taken up a notch. Regular cocoa will also work fine in this recipe.
- Don't stress about getting a perfect result: many factors can affect a chocoflan's layers. Even if spots or swirls at the top are noticeable after inverting, we guarantee it will still taste delicious!



RECIPES AND TEXT BY **Raegan Steinberg**, **Alexandre Cohen** AND **Evelyne Eng**



A Good Nosh

Put together a classic Hanukkah brunch with this guide from the owners of the always-bustling Arthurs Nosh Bar in Montreal.

ILLUSTRATIONS, IAN SULLIVAN CANT.

In its loosest sense, a smorgasbord is simply an array of foods. The Arthurs' smorg draws inspiration from this concept and scales it down to a single plate. It is our most diverse breakfast dish, a colourful gathering of challah, latkes, scrambled eggs, gravlax (an original feature of the Swedish smorgasbord) and cucumber salad. Here's how we do it.

—Raegan Steinberg, co-founder, Arthurs Nosh Bar



Perfect Scrambled Eggs

PREP 10 MIN; TOTAL 20 MIN

SERVES 4

12 eggs

1 tsp salt

3 tbsp butter or fat of choice, preferably at room temperature

1. Crack the eggs into a bowl. Whisk them well, preferably with an immersion blender to incorporate minimal air, until zero streaks remain.
2. Whisk in salt. Let the eggs sit for 5 to 10 min, which will ensure the egg proteins don't bind too tightly during cooking, resulting in a creamier scramble.
3. Add the butter and salted eggs to a nonstick pan on low heat. Slowly whisk (preferably with a silicone whisk to not scratch your pan) until the butter is melted. As you whisk, small curds will begin to form, then the mixture will thicken slightly as larger ones form. Grab a heatproof spatula and use it to slice through the big curds and scrape along the sides and bottom of the pan. Slide the pan on and off the heat as needed to ensure even cooking. If the eggs are cooking too quickly, remove pan from heat, tilt it, scrape the eggs to one side, and keep mixing. Low and slow is key!

4. Just before you reach perfect doneness, remove pan from heat. The eggs should look a tad runny, but when you run a spatula through them, there should be no liquid at the bottom of the pan. It is important that they're a bit underdone, as they will continue to cook on your plate.
5. Plate the eggs and crack some black pepper on top.



Latkes

PREP 15 MIN; TOTAL 45 MIN

MAKES 15 LATKES

2.4 lb peeled russet potatoes (1.1 kg)

18-oz Spanish onion

2 eggs, yolks and whites separated, at room temperature
 ¼ cup + 2 tbsp matzo meal (preferably Streit's)
 3¾ tsp salt
 Clarified butter, for frying

For serving

14% sour cream
 apple sauce
 Chives, finely sliced
 Freshly grated horseradish

1. Roughly grate potatoes into a bowl filled with cold water. Set aside while you grate the onion into a separate bowl.



2. Remove grated potato from water with your hands and transfer to the bowl with the grated onion. Reserve potato water.

3. Working in batches, use your hands, a cheesecloth or a kitchen towel to squeeze the potato and onion together, removing as much liquid as possible. Discard the liquid and transfer the strained potato and onion to a clean bowl as you go.

4. By now, the starch will have settled in the bottom of the bowl containing the potato water. Carefully pour out the water while leaving the starch in the bowl.

5. To the bowl with the wrung potato and onion, add the reserved starch, egg yolks, matzo meal and salt. Mix together until well combined.

6. In a separate bowl, using a hand-held or stand mixer, whip the egg whites to semi-stiff peaks. Do not overwhip—once you hit soft peaks, whip for an extra 5 to 10 sec, then stop. Fold into the potato mixture.

7. Fill a large cast-iron or nonstick skillet about ¼ in. deep with clarified butter. Set over medium-high heat.

8. Once the fat is hot, use a ⅓ cup measuring cup or cookie scoop to scoop the batter in a mound-like shape into the pan. Repeat, working in batches to prevent crowding. Lower heat to medium. Using a spatula, lightly flatten each mound. Generously salt the side facing up. Fry until golden brown, about 3 to 5 min, then flip each latke and salt the other side. Each side of the latke should be a deep golden brown.

9. Place the latkes on a paper towel-lined plate to absorb excess fat, then transfer to a wire rack set over a sheet tray.

10. To serve the Arthurs way, top the latkes with a dollop each of sour cream and applesauce, a sprinkling of chives and some freshly grated horseradish.



Smoked Salmon and Gravlox

PREP 10 MIN; TOTAL 36-48 HRS

MAKES 18-LB FILLET

Smoked Salmon

8 lb skin-on salmon fillet
(3.5 kg)

4 ½ cups coarse salt

3 ½ cups granulated sugar

3 cups + 2 tbsp packed light
brown sugar

2 tsp juniper berries

1 ½ tsp black peppercorns

Whole or chipped
cherry, maple and
apple wood, for
smoking

Gravlax

3 ½ cups peeled, shredded
red beets

½ ruby red grapefruit,
cut into 1-in. pieces

⅓ cup London dry gin

½ bunch fresh dill

1. Smoked Salmon: Trim off any fatty, white pieces around the sides and surface of the fillet. On the wide end of the fillet, cut a small slit in the skin so the cure can penetrate through.

2. In a bowl, mix together all remaining ingredients, minus the wood; this mixture is the cure. Lay a generous piece of plastic wrap in the bottom of a large, shallow pan. Coat the plastic with a thin layer of the cure.

3. Lay the fillet on top, skin side down.

TIP

If preparing a large number of latkes in advance, you can keep them warm on a wire rack in an oven at low heat for a maximum of 1 hour.



Blanket the flesh with the remaining cure so that none peeps through. Wrap the fillet with the plastic wrap. Cover the pan and leave it in the fridge for about 36 hrs, depending on the thickness of the salmon—if you are using a very thick fillet, leave for 48 hrs; for a very thin fillet, such as the tail end, leave for only 12 hrs (we don't recommend curing the tail, as it doesn't contain much fat).

4. Rinse off the cure with water, then pat dry. Place the fillet, skin side down, in a smoker. Cold-smoke for 2 to 3 hrs with the mix of cherry, maple and apple wood.

5. Transfer the salmon to a tray and let air-dry in the fridge for a few days before consuming (this is optional, but it intensifies the flavour and makes slicing easier).

6. Gravlax: Complete the Smoked Salmon recipe up until the fish has been blanketed with the cure. Before wrapping with the plastic, blend the beets, grapefruit, gin and dill in a blender until a smooth puree forms. Coat the cure-covered salmon flesh with the mixture. Wrap the fillet with plastic wrap. Cover the pan and leave it in the fridge for 48 hrs. If you prefer a well-cured salmon, press it with something heavy as it cures.

7. Rinse off the cure with water, then pat dry. Transfer the salmon to a tray and let air-dry in the fridge for a few days.

8. To serve, position a long and sharp knife at about a 45-degree angle from the fish. Using the whole length of the blade, slice the salmon crosswise as thinly as possible, transferring the slices to a plate as you go, and stopping when you hit the skin.



Arthurs Cucumber Salad

PREP 10 MIN; TOTAL 15 MIN

MAKES 2½ CUPS

5 Persian or Lebanese cucumbers, finely diced



- 2 Roma tomatoes, finely diced**
- ½ Vidalia onion, finely diced**
- 1½ tsp minced fresh dill or parsley, mint or whatever is fresh in your region**
- 1 tbsp red wine vinaigrette**
- 1½ tbsp extra-virgin olive oil**
- 1 clove garlic, crushed (optional)**
- Juice of ¼ lemon**

1. Place the diced cucumbers and tomatoes in a colander set over a bowl, and season with salt to drain excess water. Transfer to a large bowl and add the onion and dill.

2. In a small bowl, whisk together the vinaigrette and olive oil. Pour it over the veg mixture and add the garlic. Toss until evenly distributed. Season with salt and lots of black pepper to taste, and adjust dill and vinaigrette levels as desired. Right before serving, stir in the lemon juice.

How to Assemble the Arthurs Latke Smorgasbord

1. Slather 4 challah rolls on all sides with butter and season with salt.

Place in a skillet and toast on each side, pressing the rolls with a heavy object, until deeply golden brown. Set aside and cover with a kitchen towel to create steam and keep the rolls tender inside and crispy outside.

2. Cut each challah roll in half. Plate 4 slices of gravlax and ½ cup of cucumber salad first on one side of the plate, then 2 latkes, a serving of scrambled eggs, and challah on the other side of the plate to avoid mixing hot and cold. Top the gravlax with a small amount of caviar, and the latkes with sour cream, apple-sauce and chives. Season eggs with black pepper.



Wife-and-husband team Raegan and Alex opened Arthurs Nosh Bar, named after Raegan's father, Arthur, in 2016. Arthurs: Home of the Nosh is their first cookbook.



CREATED FOR

Natural
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Your Winter Wellness Guide to Better Sleep

Sleep deeper, ease stress and feel more grounded this season with a few easy lifestyle shifts.

As daylight hours dwindle and darkness creeps in earlier and lasts even longer, it's natural for our bodies to crave more rest during winter. Feeling truly refreshed and rejuvenated can feel challenging as we move from season to season, but helping your body adjust doesn't have to be taxing. Often called the "relaxation mineral," magnesium is an essential nutrient that calms the nervous system, relaxes muscles and helps the body slip into sleep mode. "Magnesium plays a key role in regulating GABA, a neurotransmitter that lowers anxiety, and balancing cortisol, the body's stress hormone," explains an expert from Natural Calm. "Taken consistently, it helps both body and mind unwind, especially at bedtime."

To best optimize your rest this winter, try these tips for creating a sleep-friendly routine so you feel relaxed and refreshed all season long.

Build your ultimate pre-sleep ritual

A good night's sleep begins before your head even hits the pillow. Try layering calming activities into your evening, such as journaling, gentle yoga or stretching, meditation, or even a refreshing magnesium drink. Natural Calm Magnesium Citrate Powder is an effective, better-absorbing powder you can stir into a glass of warm water for a peaceful ritual that signals bedtime. For convenience, there are also magnesium gummies that you can easily throw into your bag and take on the go. For deeper sleep support, Natural Calm's Calm Sleep is a powder supplement powerhouse made with a blend of magnesium, L-theanine, GABA and melatonin.

Create a soothing bedroom environment

Your space plays a big role in how well you sleep. Think of your bedroom as a sanctuary: dim the lights an hour before bed, swap scrolling for reading and keep the temperature cool but cozy. A weighted blanket, calming playlist or lavender spray can also set the tone for rest.

Pair these rituals with topical magnesium from Bolton's Naturals to truly pamper yourself from head to foot. Their sprays, balms, gels and lotions absorb through the skin, making them perfect for easing sore muscles, soothing dry winter skin and creating a spa-like bedtime massage. Made in Canada with ultra-pure magnesium chloride derived from pure seawater, these products offer a skin-friendly way to add magnesium to your nightly wind-down.

Nighttime versus daytime

When it comes to magnesium, timing is flexible. A nighttime dose supports sleep and a morning or midday serving promotes calm focus. Many people take half in the morning and half at night for balance throughout the day.

Topical options are even more adaptable: spritz on your tired legs post-workout, massage a balm into your tense shoulders before bed or smooth lotion onto your skin any time you need a moment of calm.

Wellness with purpose

Choosing Natural Calm and Bolton's Naturals isn't just about personal wellness—it's also about impact. Natural Calm donates 100 per cent of its profits to Thrive for Good, a non-profit that provides educational programming to underserved communities to help participants grow their own nutritious food and embrace natural medicine.

"Every time someone chooses Natural Calm or Bolton's Naturals, they're investing in their own health and helping another family gain the tools and knowledge to thrive," says an expert from Natural Calm.

This winter, give yourself permission to slow down and recharge. By pairing comforting rituals with the calming support of magnesium, you set yourself up for better rest and less stress no matter the weather outside or the time of day.



1. Natural Calm Sleep Mixed Berry
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Ready to embrace magnesium this winter? Explore the Natural Calm Canada collection and Bolton's Naturals topicals.

THE TAKEAWAY

OUR ADVICE FOR BEING YOUR BEST COOK



Are you planning a cookie exchange this holiday season? Here's how to host an inclusive and allergen-safe swap in style.

PRODUCED BY AIMEE NISHITOBA. PHOTO, CHRISTIE VUONG. STYLING, MADELEINE JOHARI.

Cookies for All

How to host a holiday swap in the age of food allergies.

WRITTEN BY Chantal Braganza

MY

introduction to the magic of a cookie exchange wasn't during the holidays, but when I got married. My husband's extended Italian family has long hosted cookie tables for bridal showers and weddings, a boisterous affair that involves many families bringing trays of cookies to a buffet from which guests fill up take-home bags. It's lavish, extremely competitive and over time has had to adapt to allergies and dietary restrictions. Nearly 14 years of cookie tables later, here's what I've learned.

Hosting a swap means setting (and enforcing) the rules.

A cookie exchange has slightly different stakes than a dinner party: You need to ensure everyone can enjoy their spoils safely during and after the event. Send invites at least a month in advance, and have guests drop dietary restrictions and intended contributions into a group document a few weeks before the big day. A group of eight to 12 is ideal for a varied and flexible cookie table: fewer can be limiting, and more can be an administrative nightmare. Ideally, everyone bakes enough for at least two cookies per guest.

Dietary restrictions are serious...

An allergic reaction is an avoidable worst-case scenario. Ask contributors to keep cookies on a single, labelled tray; keep trays on separate tables if necessary. Eshun Mott, a *Chatelaine* Test Kitchen contributor and our resident cookie whiz, suggests sticking to shortbread for nut allergies, almond-based cookies for gluten issues and meringue for multiple sensitivities. Anyone with anaphylactic allergies already knows this, but: no host can guarantee complete ingredient purity on behalf of every guest's kitchen. It's best to clarify this from the get-go.

...but they don't have to dictate the entire event.

Let's be real: a completely allergen-free cookie swap is going to be a one-note flavour party. Unless everyone has exactly the same restrictions, some give is necessary. Open up the field to candies, toffees and other sweets. Ratios can help, too. When I host, I offer the option for guests with allergies to only bake the amount of cookies they're able to take home. Most are happy to bake for everyone, regardless—especially if you've already demonstrated that you're taking their dietary needs seriously.

The real party is in the presentation!

Once you've handled the dietary logistics, the delivery is a breeze, and happens to be my favourite part. To ensure everyone gets a similar experience, allergies or not, I like to provide each guest with cardboard takeout boxes and a big pink ribbon to wrap up their haul. With a generous pour of coffee and a Sharpie for everyone to sign the boxes or just make a cute doodle, it's picture-perfect—and completely allergen-safe. ©



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Nice Spice

Sharp, citrusy and shelf-stable, sumac adds a pleasantly sour pop to marinades, salads, drinks and more.

WRITTEN BY **Larayb Abrar**

SUMAC IS A VERSATILE SPICE, offering zesty, tangy and fruity notes to savoury and sweet dishes alike. And while it's commonly used in Middle Eastern cooking, it doesn't have to be limited to it.

What are the origins of sumac?

Sumac comes from the dried berries of the *Rhus coriaria* shrub, which grows abundantly across the Middle East and Mediterranean regions. Interestingly, sumac grows in North America as well. When chef Fadi Kattan of the Toronto Palestinian restaurant Louf first visited the city, he was surprised to find sumac trees growing near the city's midtown Evergreen Brickworks ravines.

At Arbequina restaurant in Toronto, chef Moeen Abuzaid uses sumac sourced from across Jordan (the spice varies in flavour depending on where it's grown).

What is sumac's flavour profile?

"Sumac tastes like citrus in powdered form," says Abuzaid. It's vibrant, tangy and tart. "Think lemon zest but more nuanced and earthy," he adds. The spice has been used for centuries in cooking to brighten up dishes when citrus wasn't readily available. Sumac also has a grainy texture, so you can feel it move around and dissolve in your mouth as you eat.

How is sumac used in cooking?

Kattan's favourite way to use sumac is in traditional Palestinian dishes like musakhan, roasted chicken served over taboon (a Palestinian flatbread) topped with onion and spices. For everyday cooking, he suggests marinating chicken skewers in lemon juice, parsley and sumac before grilling. It also works beautifully as a garnish, he notes; he loves to sprinkle sumac on sunny-side-up eggs.

Abuzaid suggests tossing sumac with thinly sliced onions, olive oil and a pinch of salt to create a quick pickled onion-style topping for wraps or salads (as we do in our recipe for Roasted Sweet Potato, Kale and Halloumi Salad on page 7). Or stir it into thick yogurt with a squeeze of lemon to make a tangy dip.

Both chefs warn: Be careful exposing the spice to heat, as it burns quickly. When barbecuing, Kattan suggests sprinkling it on just after the meat or vegetables are removed from the grill.

How do you shop for and store sumac?

Kattan is wary of sumac that looks a little too red. "Put a pinch of that sumac in the palm of your hand and rub it," he says. If it leaves red marks, then it may have had food colouring added to it. "Sumac has to be a shiny Bordeaux colour," says Kattan.

Ground sumac can last several months, while whole berries can last up to a year. To check for freshness, give it a sniff. A bright, fruity aroma means it's good to use. If it smells like nothing, it's time for a new batch. Store it in an airtight container, tucked away in a cool, dark place. **C**

CREATED FOR **Gelusil**^{®/m}

STAY A FOODIE AT 50+:

How Gelusil[®] Lets You Say Yes to Seconds (and Dessert) Without Regret

Antacids, anyone? Don't let your digestive woes stop you from enjoying feasts and festivities.

AS YOU GET OLDER, your stomach develops opinions. Loud ones. One minute you're blissfully twirling forkfuls of perfect pad Thai, and the next your digestive system files a formal grievance and cc's the gas, bloat and heartburn departments.

That's where Gelusil[®] comes in. For more than 70 years*, its 3-in-1 formula has helped food lovers savour every bite by quickly tackling multiple symptoms—heartburn, acid indigestion, upset stomach and gas—before they spoil the party.

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The holidays are prime time for digestive drama: rich gravies, decadent desserts and endless trays of “just one more” appetizers. Having Gelusil[®] at the ready means you can enjoy it all without regret.

“I keep a pack in my bag,” says Rita, 63[†]. “I started bringing them to every dinner party, and now half my friends do too. I've even seen people slip one under the table to a friend like a secret handshake.”

Your appetite didn't get the aging memo

Sure, your digestive system might be a little more high-maintenance these days. But your taste buds are still living their best life. Whether it's a fiery curry, a slow-roasted Sunday lamb or a legendary turkey stuffing (complete with an entire stick of butter), food is more than fuel—it's connection, tradition and pure pleasure.

“I got tired of ordering plain grilled chicken just to avoid feeling lousy,” says Andre, 56[†]. “Now I take Gelusil[®] and eat what I actually want.”



Holiday meals are for memories, not missed bites

Plenty of people are told to avoid acidic sauces, spicy dishes and anything “risky” as they age. But what's the point of a holiday table without garlic bread, a towering cheese board and a dessert that could double as a centrepiece?

“During the holidays, I want it all,” says June, 69[†]. “Stuffing, gravy, pie, wine, the whole deal. I don't want to sit there calculating what's ‘worth it.’ It's one of the few times my whole family is around, and I'd rather focus on them.”

No more belly-clutching on the couch while everyone else has coffee and cake. With Gelusil[®], your focus stays where it belongs—on food and the people you're sharing it with.

Everyday food freedom

Of course, life isn't just about holiday feasts. Weeknight pizza, Saturday dim sum or that refreshing ice cream cone on a summer walk can all be digestive minefields. Gelusil[®] helps you say yes with confidence, so you can enjoy special treats and celebrations when the moment calls for it.

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Growing older isn't a sign to eat less—it's a sign to eat smarter. And smarter means having Gelusil[®] in your pocket.

*Gelusil[®] has been available in Canada since 2014.

[†] Respondents were surveyed on their general use of antacids in their lives and diets. Their responses have been edited and anonymized.

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Cabernet
Franc Icewine**

This Niagara pick tastes like a summer farmstand: apricots, strawberries and cherries.
\$55, pillitteri.com



**Reif Estates
Grand Reserve
Riesling Icewine**

The 12th-generation winemaker owners of Reif Estates brought their knowledge over from Rheinpfalz in the 1960s. Their now-iconic icewine layers on notes of tropical fruit and butter tart with a crisp acidity.
\$75, lcbo.com



**Martin's Lane
Riesling Icewine**

This Northern Okanagan winery doesn't make icewine very often—it's a fickle process, and the right weather only comes around every few years. When they do produce it, it's richly honeyed, coated with notes of mountain freshness.
\$100, martinslane.winery.com

Liquid Gold

The always-cool appeal of icewine.

WRITTEN BY **Kate Dingwall**



ICEWINE HAS THREE crucial ingredients: grapes, alchemy and a *lot* of luck.

The process starts in the dead of winter. To make the silky-sweet wine Canada is globally known for, grapes must be picked when the temperature dips below -8C. A degree higher won't do. "You want to make sure grapes have the consistency of a frozen pea," says Eric Pearson, winemaker at Reif Estate Winery in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ont.

But chilly temperatures like that often hit in the dead of night. Winemakers will wait, watching the thermostat, until it's cold enough to head out, with cloudy breath and headlamps strapped on, to quickly pick the grapes before the temperature ascends. It's a harvest that's always racing against the clock—and the mercury.

After the harvest, the grapes need to be pressed almost immediately so the juice is extracted at the same temperature from when they were picked. "It's very cold, and very sticky," Pearson laughs.

There are more annoyances. Icewine requires 10 times more grapes per bottle than regular wine. Even if winemakers are out all night picking grapes, they'll produce only a small amount of icewine.

But Pearson, and Reif Estates owner Klaus Reif, love the process. There's a magic to moving through the winter nights to make a wild, wickedly sweet wine that can only be captured in dramatic conditions.

As global temperatures shift and change, icewine is becoming even more of a fleeting phenomenon.

"In the last 100 years, Germany and Austria were the main producers of icewine—Canada didn't join until the '80s," says Reif. "Now, icewine is rarely made in Germany or Austria—you just don't get the cool temperatures. Ontario may be one of the only places in the world that icewine will be made in 10 years, due to climate change."

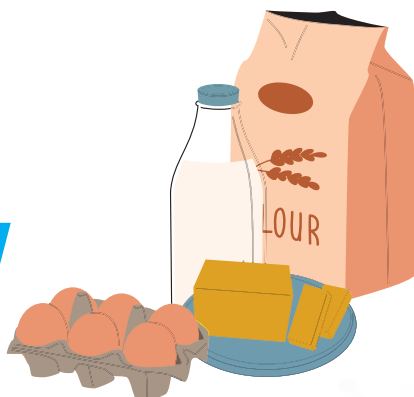
But another side effect of the climate crisis: more unpredictable weather. "We're still guaranteed to have a good icewine window, but one week it will be five degrees, the next it could dive to negative 12," says Reif.

Climate change won't spell the end of icewine production as we know it; it just makes it even more special. Icewine is gloriously golden, like it's spun from sunshine in the darkest depths of the Canadian winter. It pairs well with desserts, but also spice—while other wines get lost alongside high-heat dishes, the sweetness of icewine cleanses the palate after a bite of something spicy.

"It's the most concentrated form of wine—the aromatics, flavours and sugars are all amplified from harvesting it at such a cool temperature," says Pearson. "It's liquified gold in a glass." ☺



Four Editor-Approved Stand Mixers for Every Kind of Baker



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BEST FOR BREAD

With this new mixer from Ooni, both the bowl and attachments rotate. It has a 7L capacity and a breaker bar to push the dough down as you mix. It handled double batches of bread and pizza doughs with ease, and has a cover and a timer, making it very hands-off. It boasts 58 speeds, an interior light and a chute that makes it easy to add liquids while you're mixing. If you're a devoted bread or pizza maker, it's definitely worth the hefty price tag.

—Gillian Grace, deputy editor digital

Ooni Halo Pro Spiral Dough Mixer, \$1,100, ooni.ca.



HI-TECH

My daughter and I made brownies with this mixer and the process went smoothly from start to finish.

We used the 5-qt glass bowl that comes with the mixer; the kit also includes a 4-qt stainless steel one, which is handy for smaller batches or batters that require a cold bowl. The built-in light made it easy to check the dough's texture and the timer helped us stay on track with each step. We liked how the speed dial listed techniques like folding and aerating.

The tilt release was the only part that felt a bit stiff; it didn't always unlock smoothly. But one feature we really appreciated was the motor protection. When the mixer senses it's being overloaded, like with a dense dough, it automatically shuts off to prevent damage. It's easy to reset and it gives you peace of mind that you're not pushing the machine too hard.

—Sun Ngo, creative director

Breville Bakery Chef, \$650, breville.com.



JACK OF ALL TRADES

I've used my trusty KitchenAid in every kitchen I've cooked in for over 15 years.

It comes in an array of colours and boasts a variety of attachments. I've turned mine into a pasta roller, a meat grinder and a spiralizer. While there are mixers that do a more professional job of kneading bread doughs, this handily powers through almost any other kitchen job. Bonus: it's easy to find repair professionals for this model.

—C.B. *KitchenAid Artisan Series Stand Mixer, \$545, kitchenaid.ca.*

BEST ON BUDGET

When our EIC mentioned she'd been using her Hamilton Beach mixer for 20 years, we had to try one out. While her all-metal model is no longer made, this 7-speed, 4-qt capacity mixer gets close, though its body is cased in plastic. The trade-off is a light and compact mixer that can easily be moved around. It's ideal for cake batters, cookie doughs and whipping egg whites; its capacity and speed functions rule it out for doubling recipes or for dense breads. For a casual baker, though, this may not matter—and at this price, it's more than worth it.

—Chantal Braganza, deputy editor food

Hamilton Beach 7-Speed Stand Mixer, \$160, walmart.ca.



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The Science of Eggnog

Rich, delicious—and totally food-safe!

RECIPE AND TEXT BY Jennifer Pallian
PRODUCED BY Sun Ngo
PHOTOGRAPHY BY Christie Vuong
FOOD STYLING BY Eshun Mott
PROP STYLING BY Rayna Marlee Schwartz

EMERALD DIAMOND MOOD RING, BLUBOHO.COM.

There's something deeply satisfying about the ritual of making eggnog from scratch. It's creamy and rich, with just the right amount of spice and a silky texture that puts the carton stuff to shame. Whether you spike it or not, it's a cozy classic worth slowing down for.

But behind that smooth sip is a bit of kitchen science. Eggnog is essentially a stirred custard, and getting it right depends on understanding a few simple—but important—concepts.

CUSTARD 101

Egg Yolks: The Backbone of Custard

Egg yolks thicken eggnog through a process called coagulation. When gently heated, the proteins in the yolks unfold and bond together to form a smooth network that traps liquid—creating that luscious, spoon-coating texture.

Too hot, though, and they'll curdle, leaving you with scrambled egg(nog). It's crucial to cook it low and slow and to stir constantly.

Tempering: Insurance Against Curdling

If you've ever added eggs straight into hot liquid, you've seen what not to do. Tempering means gradually warming the yolks by whisking in the hot milk mixture slowly. This keeps the proteins from seizing up and ensures a silky finish.

Chill Time Matters

Once thickened and strained, the eggnog is chilled for several hours or overnight. This not only cools it to the ideal serving temperature but also gives the flavours time to meld. The nutmeg mellows, the vanilla deepens, and the alcohol—if used—rounds everything out.

Why Use Whole Milk and Cream?

The mix of whole milk and heavy cream gives eggnog its ideal balance of richness and drinkability. Cream alone would be too thick, while milk alone is not quite decadent enough. The combination brings body, and the fat from the cream smooths out the texture and enhances the custard's mouthfeel.

Does Alcohol Make Eggnog Safe?

To kill bacteria like Salmonella, alcohol needs to be at least 60% alcohol by volume (ABV) and in direct contact with the bacteria for an extended period of time. Most spirits used in eggnog (including rum, brandy and bourbon) are around 40% ABV, and once they're mixed with dairy and eggs, that percentage drops. In a standard eggnog recipe, there simply isn't enough alcohol—or enough exposure time—to make it safe.

For peace of mind, I prefer to serve cooked custard-style eggnog rather than the old-fashioned version that uses raw egg. Heating the eggnog to 160F is high enough to kill any potential pathogens in the raw eggs but low enough to avoid curdling.

CUSTARD-STYLE EGGNOG

PREP 15 MIN; TOTAL 4 HRS 15 MIN

SERVES 6

- 6 large egg yolks
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- 2 cups 3.25% milk
- 1 cup 35% cream
- ¼ tsp ground nutmeg
- Pinch of salt
- ⅓ cup rum, brandy or bourbon (optional)
- 1 tsp vanilla

1. Beat egg yolks and sugar in a large bowl, using an electric mixer on medium, until thick and pale, about 1 min. (Or 2 min done by hand with a whisk.)
2. Combine milk, cream, nutmeg and salt in a medium saucepan set over medium. Heat just until mixture steams (do not boil).
3. Slowly whisk hot milk mixture into yolk mixture to warm it up, then return mixture to saucepan.
4. Reduce heat to low. Cook, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon or spatula, until it reaches 160F on a thermometer. (It will be steaming and thick enough to coat the back of the spoon.)
5. Remove from heat, then stir in rum and vanilla. Strain into a bowl through a fine mesh sieve. Set aside to cool, then cover and refrigerate until chilled, 4 hrs or overnight. Stir well before serving. Pour into glasses and garnish with a cinnamon stick and a sprinkle of cinnamon or nutmeg. Leftover eggnog will last in the refrigerator for up to 4 days.



JENNIFER PALLIAN IS A FOOD SCIENTIST, RECIPE DEVELOPER AND BLOGGER AT FOODESS. SHE LIVES IN VANCOUVER.



Want a towering croquembouche like this one? Just double the recipe!



* DEAD SIMPLE DESSERT *

Get Stacked

SHORTCUT CROQUEMBOUCHE

PREP 1 HR; TOTAL 1 HR 15 MIN

SERVES 8 TO 10 *This festive centerpiece uses premade cream puffs, so you don't have to spend all day in the kitchen. Wearing latex gloves is a good idea to protect yourself from the hot caramel while dipping the puffs. Croquembouche is best enjoyed soon after assembly, but can be refrigerated up to 4 hours before serving.*

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup toasted sliced almonds
or finely chopped pistachios

2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups granulated sugar

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup white corn syrup

$\frac{1}{4}$ tsp salt

1 625-g pkg profiteroles,
thawed in refrigerator
(about 50)

Candied orange peel,
cranberries and/or sprinkles
to garnish

1. Line two baking sheets with parchment. Place almonds in a shallow bowl. Fill a very large heat-safe bowl with ice water. Set aside.
2. Gently stir sugar with corn syrup, salt and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water in a large, heavy pot until combined. Set over medium-high. Cook, without stirring, using a wet pastry brush to dissolve any stuck-on sugar crystals from the sides of the pot, and gently swirling if needed, until honey in colour, 12 to 14 min. Remove from heat and immediately plunge bottom of pot into ice water to stop caramelization, 20 sec. Remove pot from water, then place onto a heat-safe trivet.
3. For half of the profiteroles, working with one profiterole at a time, very carefully dip tops into caramel, then set on prepared baking sheets. For the remaining half, immediately press tops into nuts after dipping. When caramel becomes too thick, re-warm on medium until thinned out. (Do not overcook.)
4. Trace a 6-in. circle with a pencil, using a cake pan as a guide, on a sheet of parchment. Cut out circle, then set on a serving plate, pencil-side down.
5. Arrange 10 profiteroles around the outer edge of the parchment circle, alternating the types of coating, to map out the bottom layer. Working with one profiterole at a time, dip half of the bottom of each into caramel, then set back into place on parchment, with the freshly dipped edge facing down and the coated side facing out. Keep the profiteroles as upright as possible to secure the structure of the tower. Once the bottom layer is finished, repeat the process, stacking to fill the gaps from the layer before, gradually reducing the number of profiteroles in each layer to form a tower.
6. Arrange candied orange peel among any gaps in croquembouche. Once remaining caramel has cooled to a honey-like consistency, use a fork to drizzle strands of caramel around the tower. Serve immediately or refrigerate up to 4 hrs.



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