

Compliments of Joseph C. Collins

# *start* HEALTHY

ISSUE 40

*merry*  
Christmas



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## Front of Tear Out Card 1



### MASTER THE KITCHEN: *Baking Conversions*

Baking is a science, and like all sciences, numbers play an important role. If your baking soda is off by even one teaspoon, you'll wind up with a real mess!

**Keep this guide of common baking conversions on hand to bake like a pro.**



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## Back of Tear Out Card 1

### *Spoons & Cups*

c.	fl. oz.	tbsp.	tsp.
1/8 c.	= 1 fl. oz.	= 2 tbsp.	= 6 tsp.
1/4 c.	= 2 fl. oz.	= 4 tbsp.	= 12 tsp.
1/2 c.	= 4 fl. oz.	= 8 tbsp.	= 24 tsp.
1 c.	= 8 fl. oz.	= 16 tbsp.	= 48 tsp.

### *Grams*

oz.	g
2 oz.	= 57 g
4 oz.	= 113 g
6 oz.	= 170 g
8 oz.	= 227 g
16 oz.	= 454 g

### *Extras*

1 stick butter	=	1/2 c.	6 oz. choc. chips	=	1 c.
1 lemon	=	1-3 tbsp. juice	1 c. honey	=	12 oz.





# start HEALTHY

ISSUE 40

Dear Bill and Judy,

Giving back offers some surprising health benefits. This issue of Start Healthy provides tips for how to make an impact, with a list of resources to help you connect with the perfect volunteer opportunity, a look at a nonprofit supporting military families, and an interview with the founder of a health-focused clothing brand.

There are countless avenues for volunteering out there, but finding the one that resonates the most with you can be difficult. The guide in this issue is here to help with four different ideas for how you can search for causes to give your time to.

Servicemen and women give so much for our country, but military life can come with many challenges. Inside, you'll learn about Project Sanctuary, a nonprofit offering support to active-duty military members, veterans, and their loved ones by hosting restful retreats across the country and connecting them to health and wellness resources.

Many of us don't think twice about what goes into making the clothing we wear every day; however, for people with sensitivities, it's always top of mind. Q for Quinn founder Melita Cyril discusses how her organic clothing brand found a solution, offering healthier and more comfortable options that benefit us all.

How will you make a positive impact this time of year? As always, it's a pleasure to send you this magazine.

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Mary's Rock

Photo credit: Nick Palastro

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Discover what this region has to offer visitors throughout the year. | **PAGE 22**



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Recipes from *Oh My Gourd!* by Jack Hallow. Smith Street Books, 2023. Photography © Shutterstock.com and Alamy.com.





written by: BONNIE JOFFE

# Finding *fulfilling* Volunteer Opportunities

**WHILE ONE PERSON MAY NOT** be able to solve all the world's problems, you can still make a positive impact on your own by contributing to your local community through volunteering. But with around 1.5 million charities in the country, it can be hard to narrow down your options to those that resonate most. Check out the following resources to help get you started.

*Engage*

The nonprofit Points of Light calls its Engage platform the world's largest digital volunteer network. By serving as a facilitator, it connects people with places to donate their time to. In addition, other nonprofits use this platform to provide real-time information about their programs and current needs.

*Point app*

This collaborative platform helps people find volunteer opportunities for areas such as environmental conservation, social impact initiatives, and education. It only partners with reputable nonprofit organizations to ensure that volunteers engage in quality-driven

causes. You can download it from the Apple App Store or Google Play.

*VolunteerMatch*

Established in 1998, this organization has connected 18.4 million volunteers to nonprofits and generated more than \$14 billion in volunteer time. By parsing through its thousands of current opportunities and projects on the horizon, you're sure to find one near you to embrace.

*Other options for altruism*

In addition to using the tools mentioned here, you can discover ways to assist others by simply reaching out to local organizations. For instance, you could help seniors by spending time with those in a retirement home or participating in Meals on Wheels. Or contribute to positive community change by supporting local area schools and libraries, joining a neighborhood watch group, or participating in your local board. Whatever your passion, there are numerous causes that await your help.

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# PROJECT SANCTUARY:

## *Healing Military Families*

*interview with:* KAYCIE TAYLOR  
*written by:* LAUREN KIM  
*photos courtesy of:* PROJECT SANCTUARY

Military personnel, veterans, and their loved ones can face a variety of stressors, such as unemployment, addiction, and depression, that can significantly test familial relationships. Kaycie Taylor, director of family support for Project Sanctuary, discusses how the charity helps active-duty members, veterans, and their families through its therapeutic and recreational retreats and long-term support services.

**Tell us about Project Sanctuary's retreats:** Project Sanctuary hosts both couples-only and family therapeutic retreats. They're held from Fridays through Wednesdays in Colorado, Georgia, Maryland, Texas, and Washington State; the lodging depends on the location and type of retreat. We host roughly twenty per year, during which we provide a series of two-hour classes and activities suitable for all ages. All retreats are staffed with Project Sanctuary staff







If they require additional counseling, we can provide referrals to collaborating partners who can provide those services.

*We'll do everything within our power to find a solution.*

and volunteers, many of whom are military-connected individuals; some have also completed a retreat themselves. Additionally, there are certified therapeutic recreational specialists (CTRSs) and licensed, professional counselors at each. We encourage military-connected families and couples to attend one family retreat and one couples retreat in a lifetime and wait a year between retreats.

### Who does Project Sanctuary serve, and how?

We assist anyone who is military connected—veterans, active-duty members, their caregivers, and family. Our Family Support department is led by licensed staff members, and before and after our retreats, they will make referrals for care, provide crisis support, and help families explore short- and long-term goals and navigate resources.

### What types of classes are offered at the retreats?

For the first two days, adult attendees participate in relationship-reset workshops to focus on communication building. We concurrently provide age-appropriate workshops for kids and teens. On the other days, workshops are led by licensed counselors, who discuss pursuing wellness and mental well-being.



### Do the retreats also include recreation?

Yes; recreational activities are created by the CTRSs. Often, the recreation is scheduled around the workshops. For instance, at a winter retreat, we might offer snowmobiling, tubing, or snowshoeing. I participated in a family retreat at St. Simons Island, Georgia, not far from Savannah. My family and I played games, spent time in the pool, and fished off the pier—that was my favorite part. The activities allow families to work as a team and collaborate. They enjoy all their meals and recreation together; we only split families up for the workshops.

### How can a family participate in a retreat?

They can apply through our website, and we'll set up a phone call to go over their application. We will then pair them with a retreat that's closest to their home since they need to get themselves there. We cover the cost of their lodging, meals, and activities.

### What kind of long-term support does Project Sanctuary provide?

Family Support continues to work with the families even after a retreat, typically for two years—we're here if they need us. For instance, if they require additional counseling, we can provide referrals to collaborating partners who can provide those services. We'll do everything within our power to find a solution.

*For more info, visit* [projectsanctuary.us](http://projectsanctuary.us)





# THE HOPE

## of Health

*interview with:* HOWARD SCHIFFER  
*written by:* MATTHEW BRADY  
*photos courtesy of:* VITAMIN ANGELS

### VITAMIN ANGELS FOUNDER AND

president Howard Schiffer discusses the impact of his organization, which provides essential nutrients to underserved mothers and children across the globe.

### How did Vitamin Angels come about?

I was in the vitamin business when the 1994 Southern California earthquake hit. One of the local relief groups asked if I could help provide vitamins for displaced kids, so I contacted a friend who ran the largest mail-order company in the country. Three days later, the relief group excitedly called back because a truck had just unloaded three *pallets* of vitamins. I felt a desire to continue meeting this need, so I founded Vitamin Angels that same year.

### Concerning children's nutrition, you focus on vitamin A. Why?

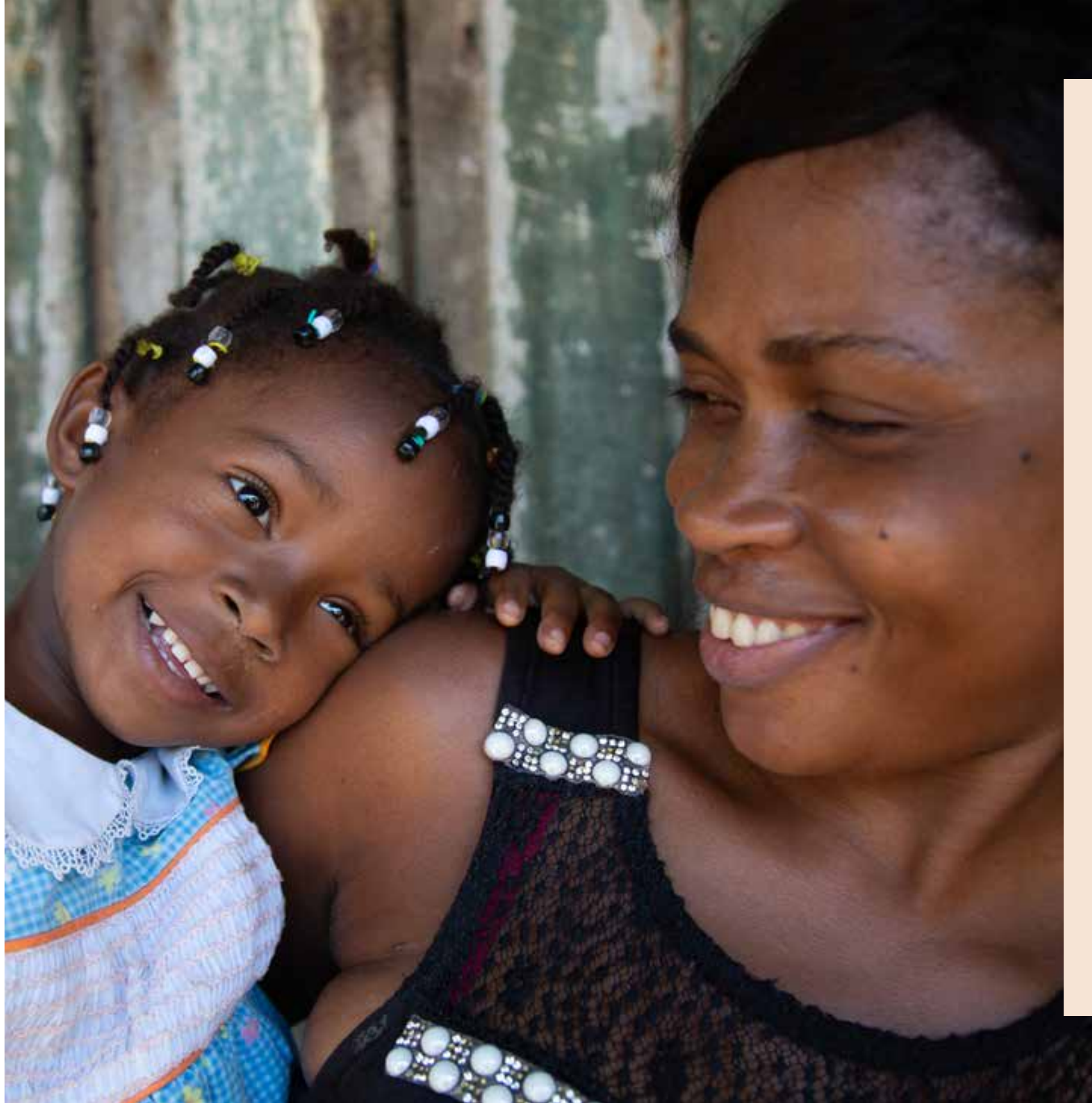
First, vitamin A deficiency causes up to a half million children to go blind every year, and high-dose vitamin A interventions can prevent this. In addition, Dr. Alfred Sommer of Johns Hopkins discovered that when kids' health is in bad shape, their immune systems can get so weak that a common cold, infection, or diarrhea could be life-threatening—and that high-dose vitamin A could save them. I've visited communities all over the world and witnessed this firsthand.

### Is awareness of malnutrition lacking?

Malnutrition is often called "hidden hunger" for a reason. Many folks don't realize that billions of people globally are malnourished and have







vulnerable immune systems. It largely gets buried until kids are severely ill due to malnourishment and can't recover.

Plus, even though the US food supply has been fortified for decades, we have the highest maternal mortality rate of any developed country in the world—more than twice the average rate of our peer countries. So the problem exists here, especially in underserved communities; it just doesn't get the visibility it deserves.

### **How else are women uniquely impacted by it?**

There's often a gender bias in other countries. For example, women are expected to eat last, so they get the least nutrition. Their babies are then born malnourished, and the cycle continues to spiral. If you can get essential nutrition to a mother early enough in her pregnancy, though, you can change the trajectory of both her life and her children's lives.

We see this generational impact all the time through our work. We'll set up distribution sites in places like Kenya or Uganda, and women will show up chewing on clumps of dirt—their only source of minerals. Within a week of taking Vitamin Angels' prenatal vitamins and minerals, they'll tell us that they no longer crave dirt. And when we go back six months or a year later, they'll say that their pregnancies were easier and show us their big, healthier babies compared to their previous ones.



### The Stories section on your website stands out. How important is shared experiences to your cause?

It's essential. When I visit other countries, it's clear that I'm from a different culture. I don't speak the language, and I don't look or dress the same—but the stories and experiences we share are completely relatable. When a mother tells me about losing her child because he got a cold and they couldn't get to a clinic, that hits me hard as a dad.

And a mother's dedication is amazing. We can start distributing at 7:00 a.m. in the most remote region of a country, and moms will walk for three or four hours, with one or two kids in tow, to get to our site because they know it's going to make a difference to their children's health. No matter what country, region, or village we are working in around the world, we see this same burning desire from all mothers to give their children the best chance at a healthy future.

### How has Vitamin Angels expanded beyond vitamins?

We provide a comprehensive package of nutrition interventions: vitamin A and prenatal vitamins, of



course, but also deworming, breastfeeding, and complementary feeding support.

All these efforts are part of an impactful long-term solution that changes lives in a big way. In 2023, we reached around seventy-one million underserved women and children in all fifty states and about sixty-five countries around the world, thanks to our dedicated team and 1,200 partners.

### What are Vitamin Angels' goals going forward?

I've asked women from Mississippi to Mozambique what they want for their children. The answer's always the same: they want their kids to be healthy and have productive lives. Everyone deserves a chance at that.

So we're here to give a voice to these families and tackle a problem that we have the wherewithal to solve. The goal of our latest campaign is to double our impact and reach 140 million women, infants, and children annually by 2033. We know it's possible, we know what it takes, our team is committed, and we will get there. I have the best job in the world because I get to see the best in humanity—a lot of good people trying to make a difference.

*For more info, visit* [vitaminangels.org](https://www.vitaminangels.org)



No matter what country, region, or village we are working in around the world, *we see this same burning desire from all mothers to give their children the best chance at a healthy future.*





# *crafting* CLEAN CLOTHING

*interview with:* MELITA CYRIL *written by:* ALLISON GOMES *photos courtesy of:* Q FOR QUINN



Q for Quinn founder Melita Cyril with her family



**M**elita Cyril, founder of the organic clothing brand Q for Quinn, discusses her company and why her products are a healthier and more sustainable option for both children and adults.

#### **Tell us about Q for Quinn:**

My idea for the business formed in 2017, when my son, Jacob Quinn, was about ten months old. He suffered from eczema, and, though organic clothing was becoming more prevalent, I still struggled to find organic cotton socks for him. So I decided to make some myself. I started brainstorming ideas and searched for potential manufacturers, eventually finding one in

Sri Lanka, where I'm from. Q for Quinn launched in 2018 with a few patterns of socks, eventually expanding into adult socks, merino wool socks, and underwear.

I started the company with the simple goal of getting socks for my son, but as I did more research, I found that many clothes often contain chemicals and toxins that are harmful not just to our skin but also to those who make the clothes and the environment. As a result, I made it my company's mission to create clean clothing. We like to think of ourselves as a health-and-wellness company that just happens to make socks and underwear.







### What makes your products unique?

A lot of things come together to make us different from the rest. I think that the little details, like not having a tag or seam, help our products stand out. But the comfort does too. When we design, we want each item to be perfect for us and our customers. We need it to be better than everything else that's out there. Yes, our items are healthier options, but ultimately there's no point in developing a healthier item that's not comfortable to wear.

Additionally, an important part of our business is our commitment to giving back with every pair of socks and underwear we sell. We've donated more than 200,000 meals to some of the world's poorest children through an organization called Mary's Meals. It offers kids a meal at their place of education, which encourages them to go to school and gives them the chance to get out of the poverty trap.

### Why is it important for consumers to know what's in their clothing?

We're not a scientific body and don't make any claims, but some research out there indicates that what you wear can greatly impact your health due to the chemicals and dyes used in clothing. For instance, one study a few years back found the chemical BPA in baby socks. You don't want your child to be exposed to it because it's a hormone disruptor that can have a long-term impact on their well-being. And since babies are always putting their feet in their mouths, you need to give them different socks.







SCAN HERE to find your next pair of socks!



That's why we're so focused on making sure our products are clean and made of very high-quality and natural materials. In fact, a few years ago, we became Global Organic Textile Standard (GOTS) certified, which is the highest global standard for natural textiles like cotton, wool, linen, and hemp. By having that certification, we signal to our customers that each product is truly clean and that all the parties involved in making them, from the farms to us as a brand, are clean as well. This means everything we offer is traceable and tested for hundreds of different chemicals and GOTS-prohibited substances. We maintain transparency with our customers about what goes into each item. We're not the only ones making organic clothing, but we're doing it at the highest possible standard.

### What's your favorite Q for Quinn product to wear?

I have lots of them! I think my favorite, especially this time of year, is our merino wool socks. They're so comfortable, and they have a midweight terry cushion, making it feel like you're wrapping your feet in a warm towel. They're also great because the wool helps regulate your temperature and dries quickly. So if they get wet when you or your kids play in the snow, for instance, they won't stay wet all day.

### What's next for Q for Quinn?

We want to expand our offerings because we feel like there isn't a lot of natural-material clothing that is high quality but still comfortable. Socks and underwear are obviously our

focus, but we're considering looking into other garments like tank tops. All these items are also worn against the skin, so we want to create clean alternatives to help our customers feel comfortable in everything they wear. But, in the end, it's not about just selling as many items as possible. It's about sustainability and looking after the environment and the people who live in it.

*For more info, visit* [qforquinn.com](https://qforquinn.com)



# exploring the apex of virginia

*written by:* ALLISON GOMES

*Bearfence Mountain*

Photo credit: Sarah Ann Atkins

*Shenandoah National Park*

Photo credit: Jeff Mauritzen

**A STATE RICH WITH HISTORY AND A** diverse range of experiences, Virginia has no shortage of regions worthy of exploration. At the forefront lie two neighboring ones: Northern Virginia and the Shenandoah Valley. Within reach of both our nation's capital and the Blue Ridge mountains, these areas are bursting with charming small towns, significant landmarks, and stunning natural landscapes. A journey through them promises to provide a mix of history, culture, and natural splendor you won't get anywhere else.

## historic gems and quaint towns

Among Virginia's numerous appeals are its centuries-old towns, where you can feel echoes of the past lingering in the cobblestone roads and preserved architecture. The crown jewel of these in Northern Virginia is arguably Alexandria, George Washington's hometown. Stroll through its streets to discover boutiques, galleries, and historic sites that will transport you back in time. A noteworthy example is the Stabler-Leadbeater Apothecary Museum, one of the city's longest-operating businesses (from 1792 to 1933), which extends visitors a look into an eighteenth-century pharmacy.

Just a short drive away from Alexandria, you'll find the famous sites of Mount Vernon, which offers candlelight tours in November and December, and Arlington National Cemetery. The cemetery participates in National Wreaths Across America Day each December, allowing visitors to place wreaths at the base of headstones to honor the legacy of America's veterans.



Meanwhile, in the Shenandoah Valley, take a trip to Winchester—a city known for the abundance of produce available at its many orchards, farms, and markets. The Homestead Farm at Fruit Hill Orchard in particular is a must-visit; you can take a picture by its sunflower fields and indulge in freshly baked apple-cider donuts in fall. During the holiday season, the shop transforms into a Christmas market where you can decorate a fresh wreath and taste homemade goods like sugar cookies and decadent hot chocolate. For a different type of experience, make sure to visit one of the Shenandoah Valley’s many exquisite wineries. There’s a multitude of award-winning options to choose from, including Shenandoah Vineyards and Bluestone Vineyard. Take a seat outside by a warm fire, and experience the unique flavors that make the region so special.

### outdoor expeditions

A trip to Northern Virginia and the Shenandoah Valley isn’t complete without a stop at Shenandoah National Park. Offering over 200,000 acres of protected wilderness, this area is an expansive haven for nature lovers at any point of the year, so prepare to leave behind the hustle and bustle of everyday life and enjoy Mother Nature at its finest.

You can start your journey by taking a picturesque drive along Skyline Drive, a 105-mile scenic byway that winds through the park; it’s open year-round and only closes for snow and ice. Make sure to stop at one of the many outlooks along the way to catch a panoramic view of the Blue Ridge Mountains, which become a patchwork of red, orange, and gold in fall and are often covered with snow in winter.

The allure of Shenandoah lies not only in its stunning vistas but also in its extensive network of hiking trails. Whether you’re a novice or an experienced hiker, there’s a trail for you. Treks to Old Rag Mountain are the most popular, and for good reason. Though the voyage may not be for the faint of heart, with Old Rag Circuit being a demanding 9.4 miles, the rewards are unlike anything else—the summit puts you on top

of the world, providing a jaw-dropping view of the valley and surrounding mountains.

For a chance to get up close to the area’s numerous waterfalls, consider embarking on the Dark Hollow Falls or Cedar Run-Whiteoak Circuit. At only 1.4 miles, the former is one of the park’s most-traveled trails (though be warned it is steep and rocky). The latter, on the other hand, is an 8.1-mile hike that involves numerous stream crossings but offers a glimpse at multiple cascades and waterfalls.







Old Rag Mountain

Photo credit: Nick Palastro



These areas of Virginia offer a harmonious blend of history and nature, *creating a destination that captivates the souls of those both young and old.*

If you hike between November and February, all the leaves will likely have fallen, giving you unique, enchanting views along the way that aren't visible during warmer months.

As you travel throughout the park, whether on foot or in your car, keep your eyes peeled for the diverse wildlife that call Shenandoah National Park home. Deer, black bears, foxes, and a myriad of bird species are just some of the inhabitants you might witness. Dawn and dusk are optimal times for sightings, with the sunrise or sunset adding an extra layer of magic to your experience. Just be sure to stay at least 75 feet away from any animals you encounter other than bears—you should double that distance between you and them.

*These areas of Virginia offer a harmonious blend of history and nature, creating a destination that captivates the souls of those both young and old. Whether you're exploring old town streets, hiking mountain trails, or simply enjoying the tranquility of the great outdoors, a journey through Northern Virginia and the Shenandoah Valley promises to leave you with memories you'll cherish for years to come.*

For more info, visit [virginia.org](https://virginia.org)





The joy of brightening  
other lives...becomes  
for us *the magic of  
the holidays.*

W.C. JONES



# Pumpkins Aplenty

recipes by: JACK HALLOW    written by: MATTHEW BRADY

There's no produce like pumpkin during autumn. One of the few downsides? It does tend to get a bit overexposed rather quickly unless you get creative with it—which the book *Oh My Gourd!* does in spades.

Try its pumpkiny twists on classic dishes to create unique, delicious eats.

▶ MAKES ABOUT 2 CUPS

## Pumpkin Hummus

*This silky hummus is prime for the dipping. Whether your weapon of choice is pita bread, fresh falafel, any manner of veggie stick or even the humble human finger, hummus is universal.*

### measure

- 14 oz. peeled and cleaned pumpkin (winter squash), cut into ¾-in. cubes
- 1 tablespoon olive oil, plus more for drizzling
- 1 head garlic
- 14 oz. tinned chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- Juice of ½ lemon
- ⅓ cup tahini
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon chili powder (optional)
- 1 tablespoon toasted peanuts
- 2 sage leaves, thinly sliced

### make

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F.
2. Place the pumpkin in a roasting tin and drizzle over the tablespoon of olive oil. Break up the garlic head and toss the cloves in the tin, then season everything with salt and cracked black pepper. Roast in the oven for 20–25 minutes, until the pumpkin is soft. Remove from the oven and allow to cool slightly.
3. Place the pumpkin into the bowl of a food processor. Squeeze the garlic flesh from the skins, and add to the bowl, along with the chickpeas, lemon juice, tahini, salt, cumin and chili powder, if using. Turn the processor on, then with the motor running, slowly add up to ½ cup cold water. Check the texture as you go, stopping when it reaches your desired texture.
4. Transfer to a serving bowl and garnish with the toasted peanuts, sliced sage and a drizzle of olive oil.

scan here



to get the  
full activity and  
recipe book.



► SERVES 4

## Pumpkin Risotto

Load your guests up with this carb-loaded bowl of pumpkin, rice and parmesan. A few artfully placed sprigs of rosemary on top does more than look classy, this pop of flavor really puts the OH in risotto.

### *measure*

- 1 lb. 5 oz. butternut or kent pumpkin (winter squash), peeled and cut into ¾-in. chunks
- 2½ tablespoons olive oil
- 5 cups vegetable or chicken stock
- 2¾ oz. butter
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 large garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 thyme sprigs
- 1½ cups arborio rice
- ½ cup dry white wine
- ½ cup finely grated parmesan
- A few rosemary sprigs

### *make*

1. Preheat the oven to 340°F. Line a baking tray with baking paper.
2. Put the pumpkin in a large bowl. Drizzle with 1½ tablespoons of the olive oil, sprinkle generously with sea salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper and toss to combine. Place on the lined baking tray and roast for 30 minutes, or until golden.
3. Pour the stock into a saucepan and bring just to the boil. Turn off the heat.
4. In a large shallow saucepan or deep frying pan, heat the remaining olive oil and a third of the butter. Cook the onion over low heat for 5 minutes. Add the garlic, bay leaf, thyme sprigs and rice, stirring to coat the rice in the oil.
5. Stir in the wine. Gradually add the hot stock, a ladleful at a time, stirring until the stock has been almost absorbed. Keep adding the stock gradually, cooking over low heat.
6. Stir in the pumpkin with the last addition of stock, mashing about half the pumpkin lightly with a fork as you add it. Remove the bay leaf and thyme sprigs, discarding the bay leaf, and stripping the leaves off the thyme and adding them back into the risotto. Taste the rice to ensure it is cooked then stir through the parmesan and remaining butter. Serve garnished with rosemary sprigs, if you like.







► SERVES 6

## Pumpkin Soup

*The fountain of youth and the place I most want to dip my crouton: pumpkin soup is the GOAT of the Stew Culinary Universe. When served in a hollowed-out gourd, everyone's favorite starter takes on a whole other dimension. Come on in, the soup's fine.*

### measure

- 3 small pumpkins (winter squash), such as sugar or pie pumpkins
- 2 tablespoons olive oil, plus more for rubbing
- 1 onion, roughly chopped
- 2 garlic cloves
- 1 teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon chili powder (optional)
- 2 lb. 3 oz. pumpkin (winter squash), peeled and cut into chunks
- 3 cups stock of your choosing
- ½ cup cream
- Pumpkin seeds, chili flakes and thyme, to garnish

### make

1. To make a pumpkin bowl, preheat the oven to 350°F. Line a baking tray with baking paper. Slice the pumpkins in half lengthways through the stem. Use a spoon to remove the seeds. Depending on the size of the cavity, you might need to hollow out a bit of the flesh.
2. Transfer to the baking tray, cut-side up—if the pumpkins don't sit flat on the tray, slice off a small slice to ensure they sit evenly. Rub a little olive oil inside each cavity, then transfer to the oven to cook for about 15 minutes—they should be tender but not so soft that they collapse. Set aside and keep warm.
3. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a heavy-based saucepan over a medium heat. Add the onion and cook for 5 to 6 minutes, stirring often, until translucent but not browned. Add the garlic, cumin and chili powder (if using) and cook for a further minute, then add the pumpkin and stock and bring to the boil. Boil for 15 to 20 minutes, until the pumpkin is completely tender.
4. Use a stick blender to puree the soup, then stir in the cream.
5. Transfer the pumpkin halves to plates, ladle some soup into each half, then scatter over the pumpkin seeds, chili flakes and thyme. Serve immediately.





 *listen up:*  
**ear health**  
**tips**

*written by:*  
MATTHEW BRADY

**HEARING IS ARGUABLY THE MOST** overlooked and underappreciated way we take in the world—but it shouldn't be. This sense enhances our lives by allowing us to take in information, communicate with others, enjoy music, recognize our loved ones' voices, and much more.

Learn more about the fascinating, intricate auditory system along with ways to help keep yours healthy so you can maximize every day.





## How hearing works

When you really think about it, the way we hear is amazing. Sound waves enter the outer ear and travel through the ear canal before encountering three basic structures: the eardrum and ear bones (the malleus/hammer, incus/anvil, and stapes/stirrup) of the middle ear and the snail-shaped cochlea of the inner ear. These systems work in harmony to vibrate the sound waves, translate them into electrical signals, and disseminate them to your brain via the auditory nerve.

## Ear condition causes and effects

This harmony can be impacted by many factors, including illness, infection, injury, and medicine, all of which can cause damage even temporarily. You can also be genetically predisposed to hearing issues. That said, a distressing number of such cases are the result of loud noises. (More on that later.)

Hearing complications range from minor annoyances such as earaches to severe problems such as deafness, and they can impact one's life in a myriad of ways. For example, it can be socially isolating when conversations are hard to engage in and feel burdensome having to constantly ask others to repeat themselves. In addition, poor hearing is linked to learning and development issues for kids and employment opportunities for adults, while tinnitus, or ringing in the ears, can severely hinder one's quality of life, including the ability to sleep.

While many measures are being taken to help support individuals with hearing struggles and mitigate their challenges, the best solutions are preventative. Around forty-eight million Americans suffer from some level of hearing loss, meaning it's likely that you may develop auditory problems in your lifetime. This gives you all the more reason to begin looking after your hearing today.





### Dos and don'ts

As with any other aspect of your health, caring for your auditory system requires adopting optimal habits, performing routine maintenance correctly, and avoiding potentially damaging behaviors.

#### **See a physician**

By the time you begin experiencing hearing problems, the damage may already be done. So, in addition to getting your ears checked at your annual physical exam, experts suggest having your hearing tested every few years. And if you're older, the World Health Organization recommends screenings more frequently: once every five years between the ages of fifty and sixty-four and once every three years thereafter. Specialists such as otolaryngologists (aka ENTs) and audiologists can help with ear-related conditions and hearing loss, respectively.

#### **Protect your ears from loudness**

Hearing loss is the third-most common physical condition in America, and the older you get, the more likely you'll experience it. But the impact on younger generations, who wear earbuds constantly, is a big concern—the World Health Organization estimates that over a billion young adults are at risk for hearing loss because of their audio entertainment habits. To help minimize damage, the CDC recommends that adults keep the volume limit below 60 percent/80 dB on personal audio devices. In addition, if your job requires you to be near blaring sounds for long periods, be sure to take steps to muffle them; noise-canceling headphones are particularly effective.



#### **Don't jam things into your ears**

Many of us are used to excavating our ears with cotton swabs, but virtually every expert advises against using them to clean your ear canal. Earwax exists for a reason, after all: it prevents both impurities from entering your ear and dryness from occurring. A swab is likely to just push the wax farther down the canal, potentially causing a blockage (which can lead to other issues), and it can even damage your eardrum.

#### **Don't ignore symptoms**

It's estimated that people wait anywhere from seven to ten years to do anything about their hearing issues. Simply put, the sooner you act, the better your chances of salvaging your hearing—and quality of life.

Our ears are often relegated to supplemental organs, merely cartilage to hold our glasses or adorn with eye-catching piercings. But hearing is as vital as our other senses. Be diligent about your ear health, and you can enjoy the rich symphony of sounds life has to offer for years to come.

***Be sure to talk to your physician about any ear-related issues you experience.***







# *Dive into* FITNESS SUCCESS

*written by:* ANDRE RIOS

**IF YOU'RE SEEKING AN ENJOYABLE, LOW-IMPACT EXERCISE THAT** can add some fun to your fitness, consider a routine that may cover all these perks at once: swimming. In addition to being a wildly popular recreational activity, swimming is also highly regarded for its incredible benefits to the body. It improves muscle tone, burns fat, and, if you can access an indoor fitness center or community pool, is potentially a year-round activity. But why exactly is swimming such an impactful fitness solution? Take a deep dive into the incredible whole-body benefits of this thrilling exercise.



## Checks the box

The CDC recommends that adults get at least two and a half hours of moderate physical activity and two muscle-strengthening sessions per week. Breaking up a sedentary lifestyle in this way can provide tremendous benefits to the body, namely a sharply reduced risk of serious conditions, including obesity, type 2 diabetes, many cancers, and heart disease.

Swimming for five thirty-minute sessions per week can easily satisfy these health guidelines and improve your quality of life. Alternatively, if you live a busy lifestyle, you can engage in less frequent but higher-intensity sessions, such as performing freestyle laps. The CDC categorizes this as a “rigorous activity” that satisfies the physical-activity recommendations in only seventy-five minutes per week. And due to the repetitive muscle movement required to propel your body through water, swimming can also satisfy the organization’s muscle-strengthening recommendations.



## Helps your heart

Heart disease is the leading cause of death in the United States, so it’s crucial to live a heart-healthier lifestyle. Thankfully, swimming itself can make a major impact, whether you enjoy a leisurely pace or intense laps in a pool. According to Harvard Medical School, the activity offers many positive cardiovascular health outcomes, such as increased blood flow to your extremities, boosted cardiac output, improved blood pressure, and a lower overall risk of heart disease.

However, if you currently suffer from a heart condition, consult with your doctor about any risks and precautions to take. For instance, try to avoid swimming in very cold water; this may cause “cold

shock,” or a temporary spike in your heart rate and blood pressure upon first entering the pool.

## Protects your joints

Splashing around in the lanes can not only bolster your heart but also cushion your joints against excessive strain or weight. While strenuous exercises on land can apply pressure to the body, exercising in water allows the liquid to absorb your weight, which reduces the impact on major joints like your knees and the ones in your spine. This makes swimming an excellent choice for elderly individuals, especially those with joint issues like arthritis that can make other exercise routines challenging—or even punishing the next day.





### *Mends your mind*

The CDC reports that living an active lifestyle via exercises like swimming can help reduce your risk of depression, anxiety, and dementia. Each fitness session can also provide an instant mood boost. While these advantages may be true of various regimens, the uniquely soothing sensation and calming rhythm of gliding through water can help you breathe your stresses away. This might make swimming the ultimate wellness activity.

### *Considerations and obstacles*

Despite its incredible range of benefits to the body, swimming may not be the ideal exercise for everybody. After all, it requires a specific and potentially prohibitive piece of equipment: a swimming pool. If you don't own a pool at home, you could access one at a local fitness center or community pool, though you may need to pay a membership fee to do so.

Another barrier that may hold you back is technique. Swimming isn't overly complicated, but if you've never learned how to swim or are out of practice, you may be intimidated by the idea of doing laps and may need special training before venturing off on your own. Some people may also have physical limitations that prevent them from engaging in top-form techniques like the freestyle or butterfly.

If the access, cost, or required skills put you at odds with a swimming regimen, don't worry—there are other low-impact solutions to try that may be more accessible to you, including hiking, cycling, and yoga. These exercises offer many of the same benefits as swimming and could also be easier to implement regularly. The key to a proper fitness routine is consistency, so choose an activity that you will enjoy and can stick to, whether or not that involves going for a swim.

***Be sure to talk to your doctor before starting a new activity like swimming.***







## Embracing the Power of Social Connections

written by: BONNIE JOFFE

You may understand the importance of caring for your physical, mental, and emotional well-being, but there's another aspect of your health you should pay equal attention to: your social wellness.

This concept relates to your ability to create meaningful connections that foster a sense of security, belonging, and trust. Beyond boosting your confidence and satisfaction, it may also boost your health in numerous unexpected ways. For instance, social interactions may help protect against isolation, which can contribute to low self-esteem, anxiety, and depression, in turn mitigating the risk of dementia.

Here are some key indicators of good social wellness.

### You're able to balance socializing

Regardless of whether you're an extrovert or introvert, the ability to identify and balance how much alone time and social time you need—and feeling comfortable with that balance—indicates that you're a socially healthy individual.

### You have fun without feeling self-conscious

Being able to freely express yourself and fully engage with others contributes to a positive self-identity. This includes being comfortable in your communication skills, such as making eye contact, and actively listening to others.

### You form strong bonds

It's relatively easy for you to build and maintain meaningful connections with loved ones. Moreover, you feel grateful for these relationships and can express your appreciation for them. You can also distinguish between healthy and unhealthy relationships.

### You are sensitive to others

You have compassion, are forgiving in nature, and possess awareness and acceptance of your own and others' feelings. You are also adept at placing healthy boundaries regarding your needs and do not feel guilty or have the need to apologize for doing so.

*For assistance enhancing this aspect of your well-being, consider reaching out to a life coach or therapist, who can guide you on developing the skills to do so.*



## LESS IS MORE THIS Holiday Season

Balance modern simplicity with classic holiday joy using these easy decorating tips.



### GO MONOCHROME

A neutral color palette featuring white, black, and tan can help create a serene atmosphere. Shop for festive decor in these shades for a perfectly compatible color scheme. You can then choose a single accent color, such as red or blue, for your ornaments, throw pillows, and other decor to make them pop.



### WRAP GIFTS IN BROWN PAPER

Go the old-fashioned (and eco-friendly!) route by using brown paper and twine to wrap presents. This look is simple yet classy and will make your tree stand out when all the presents are under it. This minimalist choice is easy to personalize, too, and the receiver will be instantly charmed by the extra effort.



### CONSIDER NATURAL ELEMENTS

Holiday decorations don't have to come from a store. Feature natural elements like pine cones, evergreen branches, and holly for their soothing seasonal sights and pleasant natural aroma. Incorporate these pieces into wreaths, garlands, table centerpieces, or empty vases.



### HONE YOUR FOCUS

For the ultimate minimalist design, choose only a few holiday pieces for your decor and let those be the focal points of your home. Switching out your everyday sofa pillows for holiday-themed ones or placing winter plants in the corners of your home can help you achieve stylish simplicity.



## Front of Tear Out Card 2



### Apple-Cranberry Streusel Pie

#### FOR THE FILLING

5 c. medium-tart baking apples, such as Empire, Rome, or Northern Spy (about 5 medium), sliced, peeled, and cored

1 c. fresh or frozen cranberries (do not thaw)

$\frac{2}{3}$  c. white granulated sugar

2 tbsp. instant tapioca

2 tbsp. all-purpose flour

*Ingredients continued on back*



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## Back of Tear Out Card 2

#### FOR THE STREUSEL

8 tbsp. (1 stick) unsalted butter, cut into small bits

$\frac{1}{2}$  c. all-purpose flour

$\frac{1}{4}$  c. packed dark brown sugar

2 tbsp. white granulated sugar

$\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. ground cinnamon

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

#### FOR THE CRUST

1 c. all-purpose flour, plus additional for dusting

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

10 tbsp. (1 stick plus 2 tbsp.) cold unsalted butter, cut into small bits

$\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. solid vegetable shortening

At least 3 tbsp. very cold water

$\frac{1}{2}$  tsp. apple cider vinegar

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F. Place oven rack in the center.

2. **To make the crust:** Mix the flour and salt in a small bowl; then cut in the butter and shortening with a pastry cutter or a fork until the mixture resembles coarse cornmeal.

3. Stir 3 tbsp. of cold water and the vinegar in a small bowl or cup. Add it to the flour mixture, and stir with a fork until a soft, pliable, smooth dough forms, adding more cold water in  $\frac{1}{2}$ -tbsp. increments as needed. Gather the dough into a ball, dust it with flour, and roll it into an 11-in. circle. Center and set the crust into a 9-in. pie plate. Trim and crimp the edge, fluting it or otherwise creating a decorative pattern at the rim, if desired.

4. **To make the filling:** Mix the apples, cranberries, white sugar, tapioca, and flour in a large bowl. Set aside for 10 minutes while you make the streusel.

5. **To make the streusel:** Process the butter, flour, brown sugar, white sugar, cinnamon, and salt in a food processor until crumbly, like coarsely ground cracker crumbs.

6. **To put it all together:** Pour and scrape every drop of the filling into the prepared crust. Crumble and sprinkle the streusel evenly over the filling.

7. Bake the pie for 20 minutes. Reduce the oven temperature to 350°F, and continue baking until the streusel is lightly browned and the filling is bubbling underneath, about 40 minutes more. If the streusel starts to brown too deeply, drape a sheet of aluminum foil loosely over the pie to protect it. Cool the pie on a wire rack for at least 1 hour or to room temperature before slicing into wedges. Store tightly covered with plastic wrap on the countertop for up to 2 days.

YIELD: ONE 9-IN. PIE

Recipe excerpted from *À la Mode: 120 Recipes in 60 Pairings* by Bruce Weinstein and Mark Scarbrough (St. Martin's Griffin, 2016).



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**ECO-FRIENDLY**

# FESTIVE LIGHTS

Holiday lights add sparkle to the season, but they also consume significant electricity. According to the Department of Energy, strings of holiday lights burn up to 6.6 billion kilowatt hours nationwide—approximately the amount of power that 500,000 homes use in one month. Try these eco-conscious options to be festive and more planet friendly.

## Get LED lights

Putting up LED lights instead of traditional incandescent ones uses 90 percent less energy. Plus, they come in just about as many styles and applications as other lights.

## Use a timer

You can reduce your energy consumption by utilizing a timer on your holiday lights. New string lights often have built-in ones so you can set them and forget them.

## Go solar

Solar-powered string lights aren't plugged into an outlet but instead draw energy from a solar panel. Place them in a sunny spot during the day, and they will power on at night.

## Recycle them

If you purchase new lights this year, don't toss your old ones. Your township or municipality might recycle them for you, and some retailers even offer coupons for trade-ins.

## Try unique alternatives

For a quirky option, place rechargeable votive candles along your walkways and railings. You can operate these faux flickering lights via a remote control and recharge them in their own base.

**When you add a little more green to your holiday decor, you'll cut your energy costs, reduce your impact, and still create style that sparkles.**