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*start*HEALTHY

ISSUE 43

The Treasure *of the* Gulf Coast



WHAT'S YOUR HOME
REALLY WORTH?



SCAN TO SEE
YOUR ESTIMATED
HOME VALUE!



Stacey Shanner
REALTOR®

Front of Tear Out Card 1



kong sik nai cha
*hong kong-style
milk tea*




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Back of Tear Out Card 1



- 5 English Breakfast tea bags
- 5 Ceylon Orange Pekoe tea bags
- 3 Earl Grey tea bags
- 10 fl. oz. evaporated milk (preferably Black & White brand)
- 3½ oz. caster (superfine) sugar, or to taste

1. Pour 1½ qt. of water into a medium saucepan and bring to the boil over high heat. Add the tea bags, then reduce the heat and simmer for 20 minutes. Remove from the heat, cover and set aside for 10 minutes.
2. If you want to go all out, strain the tea from a height through a fine cloth a few times. (Traditionally you strain it from a height so the water pressure extracts more of the tea flavour, while the fine cloth catches the tannins and impurities.)
3. Pour evaporated milk into each cup until it is one-quarter full, then pour in the tea (the golden ratio is one part evaporated milk to three parts tea). Add sugar to taste and enjoy the moment.

SERVES 6

Recipes excerpted from *A Day in Hong Kong*, by ArChan Chan, published by Smith Street Books. Photography © Alana Dimou.



start HEALTHY

ISSUE 45

Dear Bill and Judy,

The dog days of summer are brimming with possibilities, whether you choose to relax in your backyard, participate in a local event, or take a weeklong getaway. This issue of Start Healthy offers both sensible and adventurous ways to make the most of the season, including tips for better mental and physical health, a guide to RV travel, and advice for getting involved in kickball games.

You can't enjoy summertime if you don't care take of yourself. A pair of articles inside can help: one providing simple steps to improve your mental well-being and another offering suggestions for what to eat and drink for healthier skin.

When it comes to trekking to a destination, you may think of planes, trains, and automobiles, but don't discount recreational vehicles. The enclosed article explains why this mode of transportation is an exciting option for vacation excursions.

Kickball, one of the most beloved childhood activities, is more popular than ever, with organized competitions even shown on national TV. Discover why it's a surprisingly good workout and how you can join the fun in your area.

What types of uplifting experiences will you have while summer lasts? As always, it's a pleasure to send you this magazine.

Stacey Shanner



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Healthy Foods for Glowing Skin

Choose these nutritious options, and you may be rewarded with a radiant complexion.

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featured recipes

Simple Hong Kong Cuisine | 24

Recipes excerpted from *A Day in Hong Kong*, by ArChan Chan, published by Smith Street Books. Photography © Alana Dimou.

summer Self-Care Tips

written by: ANDRE RIOS

Summer is typically associated with fun family bonding and sunny escapes, but for many, the season may be as stressful as it is exciting. Follow these self-care practices to help reclaim a recreational spirit and breathe a little easier in the months ahead.

Make travel planning cooperative

The pressure to make vacations enjoyable for everyone, including any antsy kids, stoic teenagers, or less mobile elderly relatives, could induce major anxiety, so avoid

taking the full planning upon yourself. Instead, ask your spouse or other travel companions to assist with tasks like booking flights and scheduling activities. Even better, consider hiring a travel agent to make arrangements for you, saving you the hassle of spending hours researching unfamiliar destinations yourself.

Enjoy moderate sunshine

Hot summer days can take as much of a toll on your mind as your body. According to the American Psychological

Association, overheating may result in feelings like irritability, anxiety, and even aggression, causing a drag on outdoor activities ranging from backyard barbecues to scenic hikes. Taking breaks from sunlight, seeking shady or air-conditioned areas, and keeping water handy can help moderate your mood—and protect your physical wellness.

Treat yourself

These months are rife with obligations, including Fourth of July gatherings and back-to-school shopping. To avoid

becoming overwhelmed, add some recharging alone time into your daily routine, such as by curling up with a book you enjoy, taking a walk while listening to music, or meditating on your patio. Even if this requires staying up later or waking up earlier than your family members, prioritizing this time will be integral to preserving your mental health and slashing seasonal stress.

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All photos in Start Healthy are provided by Getty Images unless noted.

the allure of RV TRAVEL

written by: LAUREN KIM

Are you looking to enjoy a unique adventure this summer that won't break the bank? Consider hitting the open road in a recreational vehicle! By cruising in a comfortable RV, you can see all that the United States has to offer while avoiding pricey airfare and lodging. Discover the pluses of renting one along with some best practices for ensuring an unforgettable getaway.

Benefits of RVing

For many, the idea of renting an RV may be intimidating, whether due to the complexity the process may seem to involve or the vehicle's generally larger size. However, it can be the perfect solution for whatever vacation you might be envisioning. For one, you can take it virtually anywhere in the country—with RV campsites in every state, it's easy to get within steps of your destination no matter the time of year. Park your rig in Las Vegas for easy access to all sorts of entertainment, stay on amusement park grounds at the Fort Wilderness Resort right outside Walt Disney World in Florida, or even take a tour of several national parks on one big road trip, experiencing all the wonders nature has to offer.





Furthermore, an RV may provide immense convenience, helping to reduce a lot of the stress that can come with planning and budgeting for a getaway. Looking to do a multistop vacation with friends or family members and don't mind close quarters? Rent an RV with several sleeping areas to avoid the hassle and cost of booking various hotel rooms. And if you want to bring a pet, many large RV rental companies like Cruise America permit you to do so for no additional charge.

On top of that are the comfort-focused amenities many RV options offer. With a kitchen, bathroom, and electricity, you can spend the day hiking through a forest or exploring a city and then retreat to your air-conditioned or heated RV to clean off and cook up a delicious, low-cost meal. Afterward, you can crawl into bed to dream of other amazing spots to visit—besides all the other perks, this type of travel also comes with enticing flexibility, allowing you to easily pack up and head off to wherever the whim hits.





Renting an RV

For your first trip, you may want to consider renting a Class B or C vehicle. The former is about the size of a van, making it compact and fuel efficient, while the latter is akin to driving a truck, typically featuring a bunk area over the cab for extra sleeping or storage space. Neither type is overly difficult to drive, and each may have all the features and room you need, including a kitchen, bathroom, and sleeping areas; some can even sleep up to eight people. Renting a Class B or C RV will generally cost you about \$100 to \$400 a night, depending its age and size.

Another option you could consider is a Class A vehicle, though this isn't often an ideal choice for newbies since these are much larger and heavier and drive like a bus, making them more difficult to maneuver. Or you could go with a towable RV, such as a pop-up camper or teardrop

trailer. Just keep in mind that you'd have to hitch it to another vehicle to transport it, so you'll want to make sure your car is equipped to handle that.

There are two main ways you can rent an RV: connect with a private owner through a website like RVshare, which may give you access to more quirky and customized vehicles, or go with a large company like Cruise America for a consistent, reliable rental experience. In addition, consider your pick-up and return choices. For instance, you could have your vehicle delivered directly to your campsite so you can don't have to drive it or opt for a one-way rental if you'd prefer to take another mode of transportation home. Not all rentals offer every option, though, so always do your research before making your final decision.



Other considerations

The key to avoiding hiccups on your trip is to plan it carefully. To start, you'll need a driver's license to operate an RV, which in most cases will suffice. However, you may need to earn a specialized license and complete a safety course if your vehicle is over 26,000 pounds or longer than forty feet, as is often the case for Class A RVs—another reason to go smaller with a Class B or C. Check your state's regulations ahead of choosing your vehicle to verify its requirements.

In addition, make sure to build your budget carefully, factoring in any other fees outside your rental expenses. For instance, rental insurance costs an average of \$10 to \$30 per day, while campground fees may range from as low as \$20 to over \$100 a night depending on the season, location, and amenities, including hookups for electricity and water. You may also want to consider forking over the extra \$50 to \$150 to have your RV's wastewater disposed of at the end of your journey; otherwise, you'll have to dump it yourself. Some other basics to assess include fees per miles driven, a posttrip cleaning charge, and, of course, fuel.

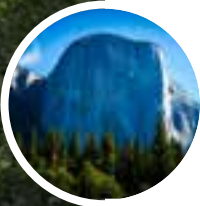
Finally, be sure to map out your route and stops in advance. Besides fuel efficiency, you'll need to consider road width and overhead clearances to ensure that you don't have a mishap as you travel. Further, campsites can fill up early at some popular destinations and may not accommodate all types of RVs or have every feature you desire, so make sure to look at all the details and reserve your reservations well before your departure date.

No matter where you adventure, renting an RV can make for a thrilling vacation. Start planning yours today so you can soon make new memories traveling cross-country or enjoying the great outdoors.

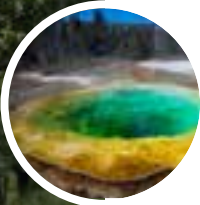


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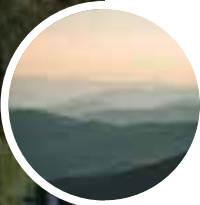
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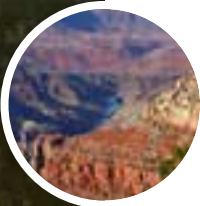
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FOR THE SOLITUDE SEEKER:
Glacier National Park *(Montana)*
Remote beauty, fewer crowds, and serene mountain views

Design

with the
Senses

written by: FAITH FIORILE

IN TODAY'S FAST-PACED SOCIETY, THE QUEST FOR COMFORT AND peace has become more prominent than ever before. And one of the best ways to achieve both is by thoughtfully designing your spaces with a sensory focus—the careful application of certain stimuli can help you unwind, lower your tension, and experience emotional equilibrium. Use these tips for engaging all five senses, and you can enhance any room in your home for an optimal environment.



Sight

Our mood can be greatly influenced by visual elements, especially when it comes to lighting. According to numerous studies over the past decades, natural light in particular can help boost feelings of happiness, improve work performance, and prevent circadian rhythm disorders, ensuring better sleep. To capitalize on these benefits, consider removing your window coverings in common areas such as the living room; you could also opt for a window film or lighter-colored or sheer shades or curtains to keep the space bright while maintaining privacy. As for when the sun *isn't* out, install warm and adaptable in-home lighting. Instead of harsher cool-toned hues, choose soft white or yellow bulbs to replicate the glow of natural light, and consider dimmers to let you vary the brightness depending on your desired ambience.

Sound

Perhaps nothing feels quite as disruptive or distracting as the noisy thrum of nearby traffic or the steady bass of a neighbor's too-loud music. Research has shown that noise pollution might cause disturbed sleep patterns as well as increased stress and anxiety. Conversely, calming noises can help establish a greater feeling of peace. For rooms where you need to concentrate or want relaxation, set up a white noise machine with a selection of comforting sounds, such as a nature scene or heavy rain, or a Bluetooth speaker to play soothing instrumental music. You could also incorporate a sight element by exploring aesthetically attractive options, including retro bookshelf speakers or decorative sound bars. Such pleasing noise paired with an accent piece to suit to your style can make for an ideal sensory experience.

Touch

Many interior designers are very picky about the materials they use, especially in areas designed for social interaction and relaxation—and for good reason. Different textures each have varying associations that can shape a room's vibe, even if you don't physically touch them. For instance, if you want a friendly and inviting atmosphere, you should use soft materials like plush velvet for couches and cozy cotton for pillows and throws. In contrast, to create a more stimulating environment, you might incorporate rougher textures, such as woven jute or reclaimed wood accents. And combining several types—smooth, rough, soft, and hard—can pique interest while still providing comfort.

Smell

Because the olfactory bulb is intimately connected to the limbic system, the brain's emotional center, smells can arouse strong memories and emotions. Further, according to a study published in the chemistry journal *Molecules*, ones such as coffee beans, lavender, and cypress can dramatically raise mood and lower stress. So make sure to imbue your spaces with optimal aromas, such as through essential oils, candles, or even houseplants. Lavender is especially advised for bedrooms due to its relaxing qualities, and citrus smells like orange and lemon can stimulate the mind, making them suitable for a home office. Try testing out a few scents to see which evoke the reaction you wish to experience in your rooms, helping to ensure that you select the ideal one for each.



Taste

With food being a universal language, it's no surprise that it can make an instant positive impact on your enjoyment of a space, whether you're hosting a themed dinner party or savoring a cozy night in alone. Given its perishable nature, this element may not be as easy to decorate with, but there are still a few ways you can go about it. For one, consider placing artsy bowls filled with candy, nuts, or seasonal fruit on tables for you and your guests to snack on as you unwind. Or set up a decked-out coffee, tea, or bar station that will allow you to indulge everyone in a delicious beverage while providing a luxury experience. And don't be afraid to get creative with your recipes, seeking out inspiration from cuisine around the world to find fresh ways to delight and satiate your palate.

By purposefully incorporating the five senses into your design, you can transform your home into a sanctuary that enriches your daily life with comfort and joy, creating spaces that are sure to welcome both you and your guests.



HEALTHY FOODS FOR *Glowing Skin*



written by: LAUREN KIM

WHILE SUMMER IS A TIME FOR RELAXATION

and fun, it can also be rough on your skin—the sun's UV rays, chlorine from swimming pools, and even your home's air-conditioning can zap moisture from it, dulling its appearance and accentuating fine lines. Unfortunately, many of these factors may be outside your control, but there is still plenty you can do to improve your skin's health and appearance. By getting lots of hydration and eating a balanced diet full of essential nutrients, you can enjoy a bright complexion both this season and throughout the year.



Hydration

Especially in the summer heat, perhaps the most important action you can take is staying hydrated. Drinking too little water can lead to skin dryness and encourage wrinkles and other signs of aging, while keeping on top of your intake can promote smoothness and suppleness. How much you need will depend on factors like your age, sex, and general health, but the general recommended amount is about fifteen cups daily for men and eleven for women, according to the Mayo Clinic.

For variety, try infusing your water with refreshing fruit-and-herb combinations, such as cucumbers and mint or berries and basil, to make it more flavorful. Snacking on water-rich foods like celery and oranges is another delicious way to satisfy your thirst. Or take it up a level by blending ice, watermelon, strawberries, lime juice, and a bit of honey for a revitalizing smoothie or freezing berries mixed with vanilla yogurt and some water for amazingly creamy and hydrating frozen pops.



Vitamins

With farm stands—and perhaps even your own garden—bursting with colorful foods like bell peppers and tomatoes, summer is a perfect time to enjoy all sorts of fruits and veggies that offer skin-enriching vitamins A, C, and E. Each of these can help protect against sun damage, with A and C also working to stimulate collagen production and C and E supporting hydration.

You can easily get all three vitamins in one meal, such as by making a salad with some spinach, berries, and a touch of an oil-based dressing. To add extra nutrition and flavor, top it with unsalted walnuts or sunflower seeds, both of which are excellent sources of vitamin E. After your meal, consider treating yourself to a fruity, nutrient-rich dessert, such as an apple drizzled with honey for natural sweetness.



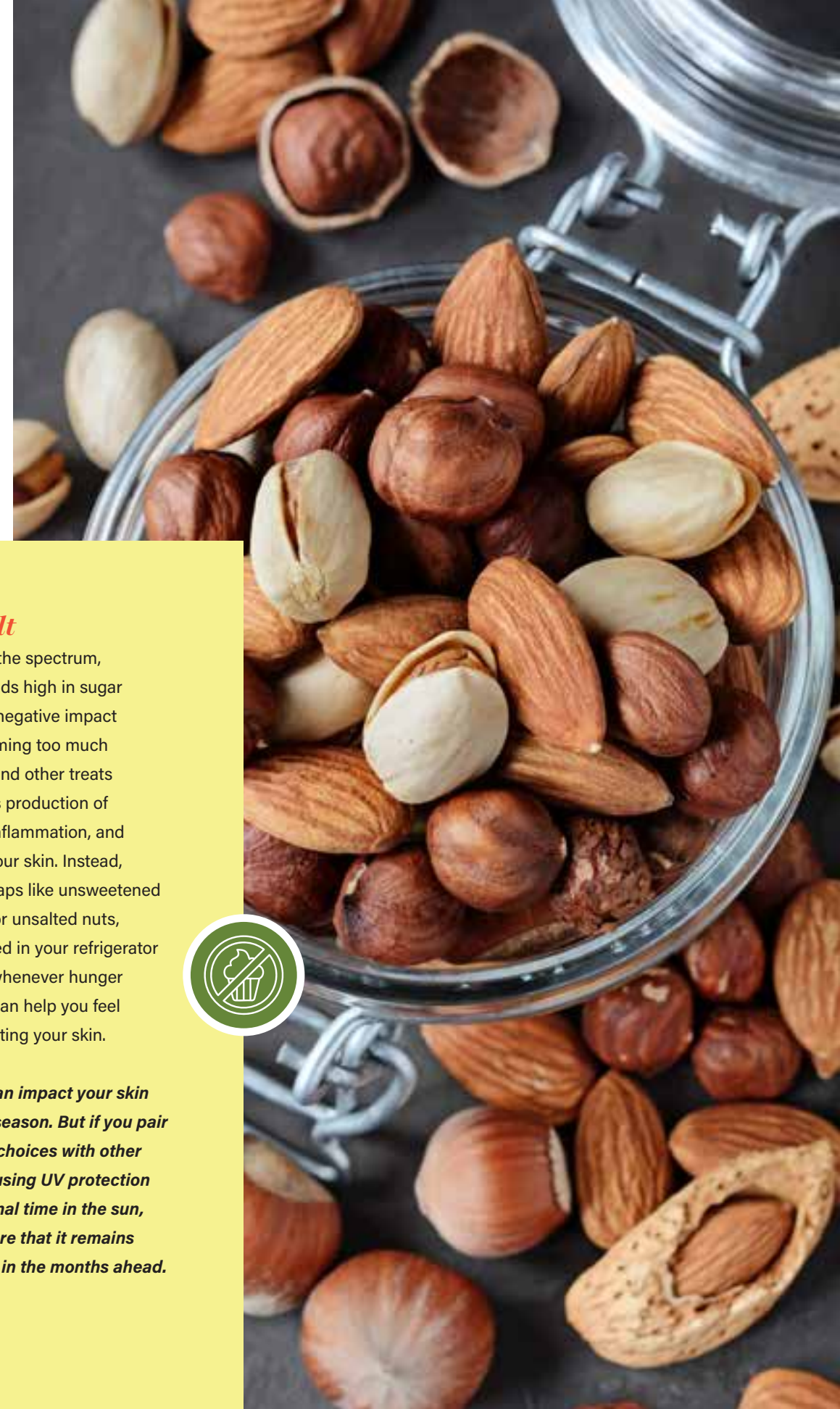


Healthy fats

To get extra-radiant skin, be sure to include foods that contain omega-3 and omega-6 essential fatty acids in your diet. The former can help lower inflammation and the latter improve skin-cell growth, and both may prevent your skin from getting dry and flaky after sun exposure. Note that your body cannot make these fats, meaning you can only get them through the foods you eat. However, there are several unhealthy sources of them you should avoid, such as fast food, and you must be careful about balancing

the two; it's much easier to consume omega-6s, which may actually *increase* your inflammation.

That said, there are plenty of good options for boosting your intake of healthy fats. For instance, it can be as easy as spreading smashed avocado on your toast or grilling a piece of salmon with some olive oil. And for a snack, reach for a handful of nuts, seeds, or even a hard-boiled egg.



Sugar and salt

On the other end of the spectrum, frequently eating foods high in sugar and salt can have a negative impact on your skin. Consuming too much soda, candy, chips, and other treats can limit your body's production of collagen, heighten inflammation, and zap moisture from your skin. Instead, choose healthier swaps like unsweetened tea, carrots, plums, or unsalted nuts, keeping them stocked in your refrigerator and pantry to grab whenever hunger hits. These options can help you feel satisfied without hurting your skin.



There is a lot that can impact your skin come this summer season. But if you pair making smart food choices with other sensible steps like using UV protection and spending minimal time in the sun, you can better ensure that it remains healthy and radiant in the months ahead.

Simple Hong Kong CUISINE

recipes by: ARCHAN CHAN

photography by: ALANA DIMOU

KONG SIK NAI CHA

Hong Kong–Style Milk Tea

SERVES 6

Unlike a lot of countries with a strong coffee culture, the people of Hong Kong focus on tea made with evaporated milk. Some industry statistics report that Hongkongers consume about 1 billion cups each year. So what is so special about this milk tea?

Influenced by British afternoon tea, this East-meets-West in a drink is also called si mat lai cha or 'silk-stocking milk tea' as it is made by repeatedly straining the tea through a very fine cloth; in the process the cloth turns brown, taking on the appearance of a silk stocking. In addition to the technique, the use of Black & White evaporated milk (imported from Holland and the only brand Hong Kong cha chaan teng use) makes this rendition of milk tea particularly rich and fragrant. If you are a coffee lover, try a cup of yuenyueng—coffee mixed with milk tea.

measure

- 5 English Breakfast tea bags
- 5 Ceylon Orange Pekoe tea bags
- 3 Earl Grey tea bags
- 10 fl. oz. evaporated milk (preferably Black & White brand)
- 3½ oz. caster (superfine) sugar, or to taste

make

1. Pour 1½ quarts of water into a medium saucepan and bring to the boil over high heat. Add the tea bags, then reduce the heat and simmer for 20 minutes. Remove from the heat, cover and set aside for 10 minutes.
2. If you want to go all out, strain the tea from a height through a fine cloth a few times. (Traditionally you strain it from a height so the water pressure extracts more of the tea flavour, while the fine cloth catches the tannins and impurities.)
3. Pour evaporated milk into each cup until it is one-quarter full, then pour in the tea (the golden ratio is one part evaporated milk to three parts tea). Add sugar to taste and enjoy the moment.

scan here



to get the full *A Day in Hong Kong* cookbook.



MA LAI GO

Malay Sponge Cake

SERVES 4

Some say this golden, airy sponge cake is originally from Malaysia, while others believe it was adapted from the British sponge cake by a Chinese chef who emigrated to colonial Malaysia. Whatever its origins, US news outlet CNN named it the national cake of Hong Kong. If you prefer a lighter alternative for sweet dim sum, this cake is definitely a good choice, especially when it is served steaming hot!

measure

- 5 eggs
- 7 oz. brown sugar
- 7 fl. oz. evaporated milk
- 2½ tablespoons vegetable oil
- ¼ oz. instant dry yeast
- 1⅓ cups cake flour
- 3 tablespoons custard powder
- 2½ teaspoons baking powder
- 2½ tablespoons milk powder

make

1. Whisk the eggs and sugar together in a mixing bowl until fluffy. Add the evaporated milk and oil and mix gently. Sprinkle with the yeast and sift in the remaining ingredients. Gently fold in until combined. Set aside to rest at room temperature for 1 hour.
2. Line a 6 in. bamboo steamer, about 2 in. deep, with baking paper.
3. Pour the batter into the prepared steamer (it should be about three-quarters full).
4. Pour water into a saucepan to a depth of about 1¼ in. and bring to the boil. Add the bamboo steamer, then cover and steam for 20–25 minutes, until the cake is light and fluffy.
5. Serve hot.



YEUNG CHI KAM LO

Sago with Coconut, Mango and Pomelo

SERVES 4

This refreshing mango soup was created by a Hong Kong chef in the 1980s. Served chilled, its popularity lies in just the right balance of flavours and textures—the soft, sweet mango, light coconut cream, chewy sago pearls and slightly bitter pomelo popping in the mouth. Hongkongers consider it a staple in the dessert world.

measure

- 5½ oz. sago (tapioca) pearls
- 5 fl. oz. evaporated milk
- 3 ripe mangoes, peeled, flesh finely diced
- 1 pomelo

Coconut syrup

- 3½ oz. yellow rock sugar, or to taste
- 7 fl. oz. coconut cream
- Tiny pinch of fine sea salt

make

1. To make the coconut syrup, place the sugar and 4 cups of water in a medium saucepan and gently bring to the boil over low heat, stirring occasionally to dissolve the sugar. Remove from the heat. Add the coconut cream and salt and mix well, then set aside to cool.
2. Pour 4 cups of water into a medium saucepan and bring to the boil. Add the sago and boil for about 8 minutes, stirring occasionally to stop it sticking to the bottom of the pan. Remove from the heat, then cover with a lid and set aside for 15–20 minutes, until the sago is just cooked and translucent.
3. Drain and rinse the sago under cold running water to cool it to room temperature, then add it to the cooled coconut syrup.
4. Blend the evaporated milk and two-thirds of the mango until smooth, then add to the sago mixture and mix well. Scoop it into a serving bowl, then cover and chill in the fridge for 1 hour.
5. Peel the pomelo, then gently separate the flesh into small pieces. Add to the sago mixture, along with the remaining mango and serve cold.



TOMATO AND EGG STIR-FRY

SERVES 2

I know tomato and egg might seem like an odd combination, but they go together so well in a stir-fry. Cheap, simple and full of nostalgia, this is a childhood dish that most Hong Kong mums cook at home. It can be tricky to achieve a good tomato flavour—you're after a well-balanced sweet, savoury and tangy sauce to coat the fluffy eggs. When it is done well, it tastes great on a bed of steaming hot rice.

measure

- 2 vine-ripened tomatoes
- 3 eggs
- ¼ teaspoon fine sea salt
- 2 tablespoons canola oil (or other cooking oil)
- ½ onion, sliced
- 2 slices ginger
- 2 red shallots, roughly chopped
- 1 garlic clove, roughly chopped
- 1 oz. Chinese brown sugar or soft brown sugar
- 3 tablespoons ketchup
- 1 teaspoon light soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
- ¼ teaspoon dark soy sauce
- 1 tablespoon chopped spring onion (scallion)
- 1 tablespoon chopped coriander (cilantro) leaves

make

1. Cut each tomato in half lengthways, then cut each half into three slices.
2. Whisk together the eggs and salt in a bowl.
3. Heat a medium wok or non-stick frying pan over high heat until hot. Add 1 tablespoon of the oil, then reduce the heat to low and pour in the egg mixture. Cook, stirring, until the egg is nearly cooked. Transfer the scrambled egg to a bowl.
4. Wipe out the pan and return it to low heat. Add the remaining oil, then the onion and ginger and stir-fry for 30 seconds. Add the shallot and garlic and stir-fry for another 30 seconds. Toss in the tomato and stir-fry for another 2 minutes, then stir through the brown sugar. Add ½ cup of water and simmer for 3 minutes.
5. Pour in the ketchup and light soy sauce and cook for another 5 minutes. The tomato will start to release its juices, helping the mixture to form a sauce. Add the Worcestershire sauce and dark soy sauce, then the scrambled egg and stir for another 30 seconds. During this time the egg will finish cooking and thicken the sauce.
6. Remove from the heat, sprinkle with the spring onion and coriander and serve immediately.



finding a loophole: TREATS FOR SENSITIVE EATERS

interview with: KATARINA CERMELJ *written by:* ANDRE RIOS *photography courtesy of:* THE LOOPY WHISK



If I can help somebody recreate a cookie or cake that their grandma used to make so they're able to savor it again, **that means I've succeeded.**

From her days in the chemistry lab at Oxford to gaining international popularity for her innovative recipes, Katarina Cermelj has always been passionate about baking. Here she discusses her focus on allergy-friendly foods, reveals how she started her blog *The Loopy Whisk*, and shares a creation from her latest cookbook.

How did you discover your knack for baking?

I don't have any formal cooking or baking education, but I've always loved the latter. My mum is the most amazing cook and baker, so homemade bread and desserts were a constant part of my childhood. And I loved helping out—that initially meant stealing bits of cookie dough and licking the bowl clean, but I was still part of the process. So my passion for baking was always there. Once I started incorporating my science background and chemistry knowledge into recipe development, everything just clicked.



What got you interested in creating allergy-friendly recipes?

During my undergraduate studies at Oxford, I was battling quite a few health issues. In the process of trying to figure out what was wrong, I decided to avoid gluten and dairy. However, I simply wasn't satisfied with the gluten- and dairy-free recipes I found. That's when I started to experiment and create my own. Eventually, I managed to develop ones that were just as good as the regular bakes I remembered. Since then, I've expanded my scope, crafting recipes suitable for all sorts of dietary requirements.

What led you to found *The Loopy Whisk*?

I'd been playing around with the idea of starting a food blog for years, but it never felt like the right time. Then I had a stretch of a couple of months with no school or

work between finishing my undergraduate studies and beginning my PhD in inorganic chemistry at Oxford. So I thought to myself, *If I don't create a blog now, I never will.*

I initially struggled to find time for recipe development, taking photos, and writing the blog posts. I would be in the lab on weekdays and working on the blog during evenings and weekends. But even though it was tons of effort and my sleep schedule suffered, it's been 1,000 percent worth it.

How have you merged chemistry with your baking skills?

I'd say that my chemistry background has helped in two ways. First, it's given me more insight into ingredient properties, how they interact with each other, and the role they play in bakes.

That’s especially important for allergy-friendly recipes, where you need to understand how gluten, eggs, and dairy affect a bake before you can successfully replace them.

Second, I’d grown used to setting up experiments in the lab and looking at variables and trends and so on, which translated into a very analytical, systematic approach to recipe development. That’s been essential to everything from measuring the height of cake sponges to looking at how ingredient ratios affect things like the diameter of cookies. Basically, I’m still setting up experiments and spreadsheets and looking at variables, but the outcome is (usually) far more delicious.

Would you explain the importance of crafting recipes for people with food sensitivities or allergies? Food is such a central part of our lives. If you can eat anything you want, you might take that for granted—people who don’t have issues with gluten, eggs, or dairy don’t have to think twice about buttering their bread, eating a slice of cake, or ordering something at a restaurant. But as soon as you’re allergic or sensitive to one or more of those ingredients, that all changes. I’ve received messages from people who can no longer enjoy family-favorite recipes, and that really shouldn’t be the case. Everyone ought to be able to eat delicious food, even if they have to avoid certain ingredients.

That’s why creating allergy-friendly recipes is so essential, and it’s the main reason I decided to write my second cookbook, *The Elements of Baking*—I wanted to give people all the tools and knowledge necessary to adapt treasured recipes to their diets and lifestyles. If I can help somebody recreate a cookie or cake that their grandma used to make so they’re able to savor it again, that means I’ve succeeded.

For more info, visit [TheLoopyWhisk.com](https://theloopywhisk.com)



gluten-free
**RASPBERRY &
ALMOND MUFFINS**

Makes 12 | Prep time: 30 mins | Bake time: 22 mins

INGREDIENTS

- 2⅓ cups + 1 tablespoon plain gluten-free flour blend
- ½ cup almond flour
- 1 cup caster (superfine) or granulated sugar
- 1½ teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 teaspoon xanthan gum (Use only ½ teaspoon if your gluten-free flour already contains binders.)
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ stick unsalted butter, melted and cooled until warm
- ¼ cup sunflower or vegetable oil
- 1¼ cups + 1 tablespoon buttermilk, room temperature
- 2 large eggs, room temperature
- ½ teaspoon vanilla paste (or 1 teaspoon vanilla extract)
- A few drops of almond extract (optional)
- 1½ cups fresh or frozen raspberries (If using frozen, don’t thaw.)
- ⅔ cup flaked almonds

Recipe from *The Elements of Baking: Making Any Recipe Gluten-Free, Dairy-Free, Egg-Free or Vegan*, published by Mobius (October 2024).

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Adjust the oven rack to the middle position and pre-heat the oven to 375°F. Line a 12-hole muffin pan with paper liners.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together the gluten-free flour blend, almond flour, sugar, baking powder, baking soda, xanthan gum and salt.
3. In a separate large bowl or jug, whisk together the melted butter, oil, buttermilk, eggs, vanilla and almond extract (if using).
4. Add the wet ingredients to the dry and use a rubber spatula or a wooden spoon to fold them together into a smooth batter with no flour clumps.
5. Add the raspberries and mix briefly to evenly distribute them throughout the batter.
6. Using an ice cream or cookie scoop, or a spoon, divide the batter equally between the 12 liners, filling each to the brim.
7. Sprinkle the top of each muffin with about 1 tablespoon of flaked almonds.
8. Bake for about 22–24 minutes if using fresh raspberries, or 26–28 minutes if using frozen, or until well risen, golden brown on top with slightly darker edges, and an inserted toothpick comes out clean or with a few moist crumbs attached.
9. Allow to cool in the muffin pan for about 5–10 minutes, then transfer them out of the pan and onto a wire rack to cool. Serve warm or cooled completely to room temperature.

Storage: 3–4 days in an airtight container in a cool, dry place.

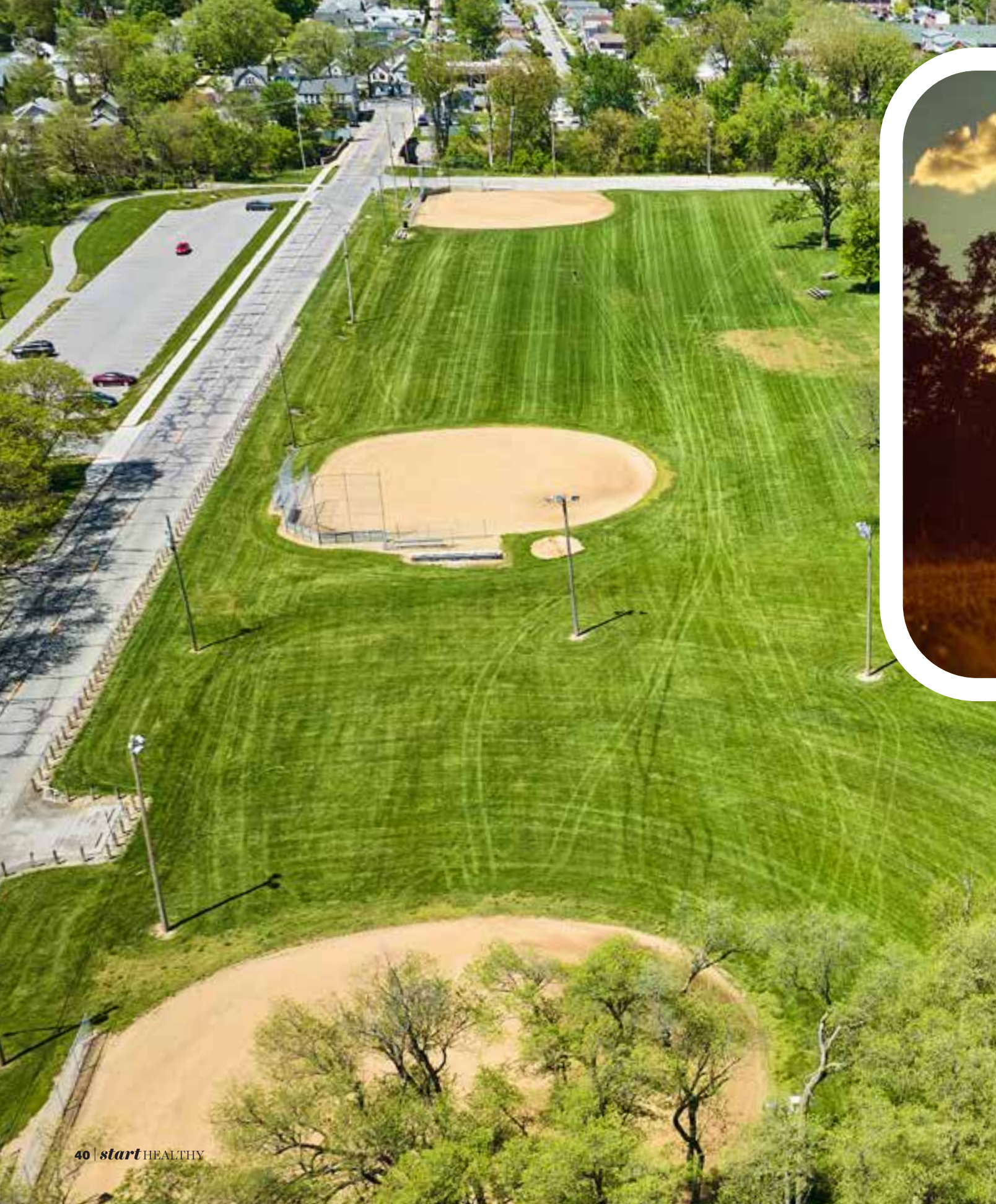
Rolling Along with Adult Kickball

written by: MATTHEW BRADY

MANY OF US HAVE FOND memories of playing kickball as kids. The game was not only a bonding experience with classmates and neighbors but also, though likely unappreciated by us at the time, a fun way to get exercise and let off some youthful steam.

The same joys can still be found as grown-ups—this simple sport with its legendary red ball is played all over the country, from college campuses to community parks to even church organizations. Learn more about how kickball got to this point and how you can keep your love of the game going.





Then and now

Kickball has been with us for over a century, but its official origins are a bit fuzzy. Some trace it to Dr. Emmitt Dunn Angell, who mentioned a sport called “kicking baseball” in his 1910 book on children’s games. Others, meanwhile, credit Cincinnati park supervisor Nicholas C. Seuss for truly inventing it seven years later.

Regardless of its roots, the game quickly caught on starting in the 1920s as a simple tool to teach baseball basics to schoolchildren, and two decades later, it became a popular way for World War II soldiers to bide their time. By the 1970s, it was practically ubiquitous among both kids and kids at heart thanks to its easy setup and minimal equipment.

Today, kickball is frequently offered as part of sports clubs’ and parks-and-recs’ packages of offerings; in fact, it’s grown so popular that competitions have even aired on media outlets like ESPN. The rules may vary depending on which league you join, but the basics are probably close to what you remember. Teams of up to ten compete on a baseball field, where the ball is rolled to kickers. Like baseball, there are three outs per inning (though usually only seven innings, not nine), and they can be made by catching a kicked ball, tagging a runner with it, or throwing them out. A kicker can also be called out after three foul balls. And, of course, the team that scores the most runs wins.

Why play?

While you may think it silly to participate in something that's associated with childhood, you should seriously reconsider your stance. The first reason why is clear: it's an opportunity to get out (possibly outside) and be active on a regular basis. In fact, an hour playing the sport can burn about 400 to 600 calories. There's also a huge social aspect to the endeavor. Yes, gameplay can get super competitive, but kickball is renowned for being a welcoming sport that people of all ages and abilities can enjoy, with coed teams often being the norm. Join one near you, and you may just forge amazing new friendships.

How to get started

It's surprisingly easy to find places dedicated to helping adults connect with or found a kickball league. However, who to contact somewhat depends on where you live. For instance, GO Kickball, which is self-proclaimed to be "America's premier social experience," has chapters mostly in western and southern parts of the country. Another popular club, CLUBWAKA, offers leagues in around a dozen states from Rhode Island to California.

And Main Attraction Recreational Sports (MARS) sponsors a handful of Turf Wars tournaments each year; some of them have even been on national TV. But if you find your area missing from these options' locations, don't fret—there may very well be an organized local league taking place at a park, gym, or campus near you, or you can always start your own.

Being an adult often necessitates having to let go of certain juvenile joys. Fortunately, thanks to the omnipresence of people and organizations dedicated to the sport of kickball, you can still get a kick out of playing this treasured game.

This simple sport with its legendary red ball is played all over the country, from college campuses to community parks to even church organizations.



overcoming *Impulse Spending*

written by: FAITH FIORILE

FINANCIAL SECURITY IS A SOMETHING WE ALL

strive for, and one of the easiest ways to veer off that path is by succumbing to impulse spending. Though unplanned purchases may be satisfying in the moment, they can make it all the more difficult for you to maintain your budget and reach your savings goals. But with just a few sensible strategies, you can get a better hold on this inclination and take firm control of your funds.

Identify your personal triggers

Studies have shown that many shoppers tend to impulse-buy when they are under a higher level of stress or experiencing a period of social isolation, using it as a way to get a temporary mood boost. Given this, a crucial first step is determining your personal spending triggers through self-reflection. Take some time to really think about your buying behaviors to see what



trends you can spot. Ask yourself questions such as "What emotional state am I usually in when I shop?" and "When do I most tend to make spontaneous purchases?"

These internal examinations can assist in identifying particular circumstances that are causing you to make

unwarranted expenses. You may even want to try keeping a diary dedicated to writing down every purchase along with the emotions experienced at the time to help you better track any patterns. Such awareness will enable you to not only recognize your behaviors but also take more control of your decision-making.

Develop practical strategies

Once you figure out your triggers, put sensible plans into action to mitigate their power. One idea is to implement a twenty-four-hour rule where you wait at least a day before deciding to make any nonessential purchases. This will give you time to weigh whether you *really* need the item or if it's just a fleeting desire.

Another way to combat impulsivity is by establishing spending limits. Clearly outline your wants versus your needs, set a strict budget for the former, and take out this amount in cash to help ensure that you stick to it. With these deliberate

moves, you can become more conscious of your expenditures and therefore more able to make mindful decisions that support your long-term financial goals.

And make sure to take advantage of the wealth of tools available designed to assist with financial management. Apps like YNAB and Goodbudget offer an easy approach to keeping an eye on your overall income and spending thanks to their handy features, such as an alarm for when you're reaching your limits in certain categories and restrictive settings on your bank accounts.



Build a supportive environment

A key to breaking any habit is accountability, so enlist a few friends or relatives to help you stay on track with your budgeting goals. Doing so will create a system of checks and balances—knowing that someone will be asking about your progress might make you less likely to veer from your road map.

You could also join a financial support group or book an appointment with a financial adviser. Interacting with others looking to control their expenditures can provide support and a feeling of camaraderie to boost your motivation, while working with a professional can give you expert guidance and analysis to fine-tune your approach. Further, if you find yourself struggling to rein in your emotional triggers or behaviors, a therapist or counselor may be another good resource to connect with.

Overcoming impulse spending calls for a diverse strategy, combining knowledge of your underlying motivators with useful management techniques. Take into account these conscious spending practices, and you can not only curb your unplanned shopping but also feel more empowered about your financial future.



WHY DO WE YAWN?

written by: MATTHEW BRADY

There are many fascinating mysteries about our shared human existence, and arguably one of the most intriguing is the act of yawning. We yawn when we are tired or bored or even when we merely see others, including animals, doing it—but why? Discover what science has to say about the subject.

CAUSES AND EFFECTS

While experts don't have all the answers for this phenomenon, they offer some theories, many of which are related to the brain. One posits that yawning's main purpose is to simply perk up the mind when it's understimulated or drowsy, primarily by causing the face and neck muscles to stretch, which then increases heart rate and blood flow. (This hypothesis would also explain why we sometimes do a full-body stretch during or after yawning.) Another belief is that yawning may serve as a self-defense mechanism of sorts for the brain by cooling it down when its core temperature rises.

CURIOUSLY CONTAGIOUS

We've all experienced contagious yawning: the tendency to involuntarily mimic others, even a four-legged friend, engaging in the act. This is thought to be a reflexive form of empathy, much like how we may mirror someone's actions when they laugh or cry—especially if we personally know them.

WARNING SIGNS

Nobody would normally complain about having a good yawn; however, it may be a red flag if it happens in excess. In general, regularly yawning three times within fifteen minutes is considered extreme unless there's an obvious cause, such as watching TV or listening to a boring lecture. If you notice that you're yawning all the time, discuss the situation with your doctor since it could be a sign of a serious medical condition, such as stroke, heart attack, or sleep apnea.



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Back of Tear Out Card 2



- 5 eggs
- 7 oz. brown sugar
- 7 fl. oz. evaporated milk
- 2½ tbsp. vegetable oil
- ¼ oz. instant dry yeast
- 1½ c. cake flour
- 3 tbsp. custard powder
- 2½ tsp. baking powder
- 2½ tbsp. milk powder

1. Whisk the eggs and sugar together in a mixing bowl until fluffy. Add the evaporated milk and oil and mix gently. Sprinkle with the yeast and sift in the remaining ingredients. Gently fold in until combined. Set aside to rest at room temperature for 1 hour.
2. Line a 6 in. bamboo steamer, about 2 in. deep, with baking paper.
3. Pour the batter into the prepared steamer (it should be about three-quarters full).
4. Pour water into a saucepan to a depth of about 1¼ in. and bring to the boil. Add the bamboo steamer, then cover and steam for 20–25 minutes, until the cake is light and fluffy.
5. Serve hot.

SERVES 4

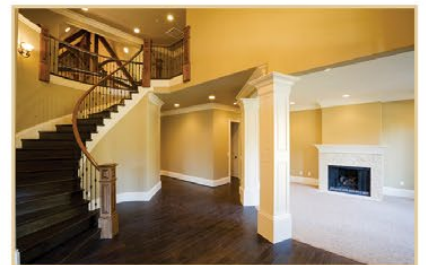
Recipes excerpted from *A Day in Hong Kong*, by ArChan Chan, published by Smith Street Books. Photography © Alana Dimou.

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