

Follow Your Senses To Up Your Game

BY JUDY HEVRDEJS

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Before you slice into a tomato, chop an onion, pull out a skillet — before you even turn on the stove — turn on your senses.

Your ability to use all your senses — to see, hear, smell, feel and taste — may be the simplest way to up your culinary cred.

To ignore that is to deprive yourself of some of the natural, most basic pleasures of the craft," said Lauren Braun Costello, New York-based chef-stylist and cookbook author during a phone chat. Most important, she said, learn to taste.

You peel a carrot. It feels firm, and you say OK, it's crunchy. You bite into it, and it's not that sweet, it's not that full of flavor or it has an odd texture. You're tasting before you start cooking," said Costello, who has written "Notes on Cooking" and "The Competent Cook." "You're a conductor and you've got all these musical instruments and you're going to create a melody. You have to really taste and see and feel and touch and smell how all that is coming together."

For Marcus Samuelsson, chef at restaurants Aquavit, in New York, and C-House, in Chicago, that might mean incorporating vinegar or lime juice into a savory sauce to brighten its flavor.

For Thomas Keller, chef at Napa Valley restaurants French Laundry and Ad Hoc, that might mean getting comfortable with touching food.

"I've found a lot of people are afraid to touch food," he writes in "Ad Hoc at Home." "Touching food is good. It ... gives you results impossible to achieve when you're using long metal utensils."

Tips to follow:

Season as you go: "Season meat before you brown it. Season meat as it comes off the heat. Season the meat as you slice it," Costello said.

Season correctly: "When you season food ... whether the food is raw or cooked, always season from high above the food to ensure even distribution," writes Keller.

Sweet, too: In "New American Table," Samuelsson mixes Dijon mustard, maple syrup, lime juice and olive oil for brushing on grilled tuna. For salmon, a similar sauce uses honey instead of syrup. Balsamic vinegar adds its sweetness to a toasted sesame oil, olive oil and lime juice mix he splashes on grilled chicken.

Balance a plate: "The contrast and repetition of shapes, colors, textures and sizes provide a powerful form of culinary communication," Costello writes.

CRISPY BRAISED CHICKEN THIGHS

Prep: 20 minutes Cook: 45 minutes
Makes: 6 servings
A one-pan dish adapted from chef Thomas Keller's "Ad Hoc at Home."

Ingredients

- 12 chicken thighs



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Turkey meat loaf with a tomato-spinach sauce can be prepped in 20 minutes and bakes for an hour and a half.

- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/4 cup canola oil
- 1 cup coarsely chopped onion
- 1 tablespoon finely chopped garlic
- 3 large fennel bulbs, trimmed, cored, cut into 2-by 1/2-inch batons (about 3 cups)
- 1/4 cup dry white wine
- 1 cup large green olives
- 1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 4 fresh or 2 dried bay leaves
- 4 strips lemon zest
- 8 sprigs thyme
- 1 cup chicken stock
- 1/4 cup flat-leaf parsley leaves

Instructions

1. Heat oven to 375 degrees. Season the chicken thighs on both sides with the salt. Heat 2 tablespoons of the oil in a large ovenproof skillet over medium-high heat. Cook the thighs, skin side down, in batches if necessary, until brown, about 6 minutes per batch. Turn the thighs over; cook 1 minute. Transfer to cooling rack set in a baking sheet. (Add more oil to skillet if needed to cook second batch.)
2. Reduce the heat to medium low; add the onion. Cook 1 1/2 minutes. Add the garlic; cook 1 minute. Cook, stirring often, until the onion is translucent, about 5 minutes. Stir in the fennel; turn the heat up to medium. Cook, stirring often, until the fennel is crisp-tender, about 10 minutes.
3. Pour in wine; simmer 2 minutes. Stir in the olives, red pepper flakes, bay leaves, lemon zest, thyme and chicken stock. Heat to a simmer; cook until the fennel is tender, about 1 minute.
4. Taste the stock; season with salt as needed. Return the chicken to the skillet, skin side up, in a single layer (if your skillet is not large enough, use a roasting pan). When the liquid returns to a simmer, transfer to the oven; cook until the chicken is cooked through, about 20 minutes. Turn on the broiler; put the pan under the broiler to crisp and brown the chicken skin, about 2 minutes. Transfer to serving platter; garnish with parsley.

TURKEY MEATLOAF WITH TOMATO-SPINACH SAUCE

Prep: 20 minutes Cooking: 1 hour 35 minutes

Makes: 4 to 6 servings
Adapted from chef Marcus Samuelsson's "New American Table"

Ingredients

- 3/4 cup water
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 3/4 cup uncooked semolina couscous
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 red onion, chopped
- 8 tomatoes or 1 can (28 ounces) crushed tomatoes
- 1 green bell pepper, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon mild chili powder
- 1 teaspoon thyme leaves
- 1 large egg
- 1 pound ground turkey
- Freshly ground pepper
- 2 cups baby spinach
- 4 basil leaves, torn in small pieces

Instructions

1. Heat water and 1/2 teaspoon of salt to a boil in a medium saucepan; turn off the heat. Add the couscous; cover and let sit 5 minutes. Fluff with a fork.
2. Heat olive oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add onion; cook until translucent, about 3 minutes. Stir in the tomatoes, bell pepper, garlic, chili powder and thyme; simmer until the tomatoes are broken down and softened to a sauce, about 25 minutes.
3. Heat oven to 350 degrees. Remove 1 cup of the tomato sauce; let it cool. Let the rest of the tomato sauce continue to simmer over low heat, stirring occasionally, about 20 minutes.
4. Meanwhile, combine the 1 cup tomato sauce with couscous, egg and turkey. Season with 1/2 teaspoon of the salt and pepper to taste. Shape the mixture into a loaf. Arrange the loaf on a parchment-lined sheet pan; bake 1 hour.
5. Five minutes before the meatloaf is ready, reheat the tomato sauce. Fold the spinach and basil into the sauce. Season with remaining 1/2 teaspoon of the salt and pepper to taste. Serve the sauce with the meatloaf.

TUNE

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guild, you only have to pay annual dues. I felt I wanted to face the challenge of passing their test too, which includes hearing the right pitch for the piano strings," Voigt said. "By passing the test, I was able to become a Registered Piano Technician. That meant I had to pass three tests — a written exam, a repair and action regulation test and a tuning test. Once I finished that, I use an electronic tuner when I'm turning pianos but the ear has the final say."

As Voigt provided services for area pianists, his customers began inquiring about his interest in other pianos. The first one, which now sits in his living room, spent several weeks in an empty hog confinement before he persuaded his son to help him bring it home.

"The secret to moving pianos is finding a number of strong, healthy people to help," Voigt said. "The weight of the old upright pianos is one thing that prevents many people from restoring and moving them. Sometimes they're in bad enough condition and it takes more to restore them than they're worth."

What prompted Voigt to bring home his first upright piano was the desire to learn more about pianos in general and test his ability to restore the instrument. "I really planned to practice tuning techniques and learn what it took to repair an old piano," he said. "I learned a lot of things from it and was pretty happy with the way it turned out."

Voigt took his time in restoring that first upright. He had to build a shop where he could work before he started. During

the last four years, he completed restoration of his first grand piano, doing some veneer repairs, work on the soundboard and bridge and then restring the piano.

Since he restored that first upright, Voigt has had opportunity to bring home many more. He doesn't accept every invitation to purchase or simply bring home an unwanted piano. He searches for those with redeeming qualities that make his refinishing efforts worthwhile and will appeal to those searching for an older instrument.

"The original quality of the piano determines just how good it will be once it's restored," Voigt said. "I usually replace the strings, hammers and dampers. Most of the time, that really affects the final tone of the piano, but not necessarily."

"So far, I've restored the one upright and I'm just about finished with the first grand piano. I have a second grand piano and another upright in the workshop now. I'll start working on one of them later this year. There are some pianos that are old enough or unique enough that you can't get repair parts for them anymore. I'm pretty selective in what I bring home."

In his tuning work, Voigt has discovered that owners sometimes put their pianos at great disadvantage by placing them close to heat registers or south-facing windows. The heat from either source dries out wood and negatively affects the piano.

"I came across one piano that was manufactured for the Japanese climate," Voigt said. "It was in constant need of tuning and repair because the wood it was made out of was never intended to be in a dry, cold climate. It should have been in a more humid place."

Although he didn't really plan it out, Voigt's tuning and restora-

tion work fits nicely with his farming occupation. Most of his tuning orders come during the winter months. Repair tasks keep him busy inside when winter weather makes outdoor activities uninviting.

"It's mostly a hobby, one that pays for itself," Voigt said. "I enjoy the mechanical and musical part of the restoration more than actual refinishing of the wood. I really appreciate hearing pianists tell me how much they enjoy their instrument once it's tuned up. One lady called me before I was five miles down the road just to tell me how wonderful the piano sounded when I finished tuning it. The next time I tuned her piano, she left me a plate of cookies to enjoy while I worked."

Voigt has never advertised his tuning or restoration skills, although he and his wife Myrna do underwrite a program on Nebraska's Christian radio station KGRD.

"Most of my business comes from word-of-mouth," he said. "I usually tune about two pianos every week through the winter. Once I passed the Registered Piano Technician test, the Piano Guild listed my name on their Web site as a piano technician and that's resulted in a few calls, too."

"I generally just play for my own personal enjoyment and I'm probably the only person who enjoys hearing me play," Voigt notes. "I'm always interested in hearing what a piece of music sounds like. Now I know how to keep my own piano in tune and I can make other people's playing more enjoyable too. I'm happy with that."

Add Some Tang To Your Raw Eggs With Sauce

This tangy, spicy sauce is used at Penny Cluse Cafe in Burlington, Vt., for among other things topping the "Ham Randy," a grilled sandwich made with locally produced ham, cheddar cheese and tomatoes.

PENNY CLUSE CAFE ROCKET SAUCE

Start to finish: 5 minutes
Makes about 3 cups
1/3 cup white vinegar
2 tablespoons chopped jarred jalapenos
1 large egg
1 large egg yolk
1 tablespoon chopped garlic
2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon ground white pepper
1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
2 cups canola oil
In a food processor or blender, combine the vinegar, jalapenos, whole egg, egg yolk, garlic, mustard, salt, white pepper and cayenne pepper. Process until blended, about 10 seconds.
With the processor or blender running, slowly drizzle in the canola oil and process until emulsified, about 45 seconds. Refrigerate in a covered container for up to 5 days.
Nutrition information per 2-tablespoon serving (values are rounded to the nearest whole number): 172 calories; 168 calories from fat; 19 g fat (1 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 16 mg cholesterol; 0 g carbohydrate; 0 g protein; 0 g fiber; 102 mg sodium.
(Recipe from Charles Reeves, chef and owner of Penny Cluse Cafe in Burlington, Vt.)

Time To Organize Your Personal Records

BY SHARON GUTHMILLER
Extension Educator



SHARON GUTHMILLER

This time of year during tax time is a good time to take a look at getting your records and papers in order. Taking the time to organize your important papers and records can prove to be a valuable investment for you. Records are a real and vital part of life for each of us. Good records are the key to your credit standing, essential to help you save money on taxes and provide an indication of your financial progress.

Other reasons for the "why's and wherefores" of keeping important papers include life's transitions. Change is inevitable. Change can be sudden. Family records may soon be out of date. Life has many events, stages and changes. Each change brings the need to add, remove, or update family records. If the records are in order, changes can be easily made.

Natural disasters, fire and any potential emergency can be unexpected and occur at relatively short notice and are not respecters of persons or families. Knowing what important papers are; how to organize them and how to protect them are important steps in overall organization of your important papers.

Evaluate the need for storage of all papers to determine which should be discarded and which should be stored and where. Make the decision and file each paper accordingly. Do not just stack papers and plan to return them later. This is the way things become lost and cause you to waste valuable time in searching for a replacement.

Important papers include: Family records: baptismal and confirmation records, medical history, insurance policies, passports, wills, funeral documents, employment records, education records, and key to safe deposit box.

Property records: include real estate titles, deeds and mortgages, vehicle titles and household inventory.

Household inventory: an itemized list of your personal belongings. This should be among your important papers. It provides information for recording the approximate value and identification details of items owned; purchasing homeowner's or renter's insurance; listing personal property and its value in a net worth statement and planning the distribution of your estate.

Legal records: Birth certificates, marriage/divorce papers, adoption papers, social security card, citizenship or naturalization papers, living will and durable power of attorney.

Where you choose to keep these records is important. Some may be kept at home

while others should be left with your attorney, placed in a safety deposit box or a fire-proof water-proof secure home safe. A good rule to follow is to keep the item in the home unless it is a legal document or is difficult to replace or duplicate. Then it should be kept in a safe deposit box.

It is important for all members of the household and designated family members to know where papers or records are kept and who to turn to for advice in case of an emergency.

Other considerations include keeping cash or rolls of quarters on hand in a secure place. Cash and quarters could be kept in waterproof packaging for easy pick up and use in case credit card or checks are not available.

Keep emergency phone numbers posted and visible for easy access. Cell phones are great places to store phone numbers of individuals to contact in case of emergency. For example, a spouse or family member could be listed as who to contact in case of personal emergency. Photos should be kept in a secure place for easy retrieval.

Consider scanning your documents and photos. Store them on a jump drive or CD.

Computer files are not 100% safe so always have a back up. Other valuable information such as household inventory can be photographed or videotaped and saved on your computer and jump drive.


It is a good idea to place copies of your important papers into a sealed, water-proof plastic bag. Choose a portable container such as a tote bag or back pack, a plastic tote, or a fireproof and water-proof portable safe. Store this container in a location easy to access in your home. Notify family members of its location and also who to turn to for advice in case of emergency.

If an emergency happens, grab your container of important papers and take it with you. Keep the container with you at all times. Do not leave the container of important papers unattended in your car. For further information, go to the extension Web site: http://www.extension.org/pages/Organize_Your_Important_Papers

Thought: You can take the day off, but you cannot put it back.

Sharon Guthmiller is a Yankton County Extension educator specializing in family and consumer sciences.

Murtha-Schmidt



Tom Taylor, Father Chester Murtha and Father Michael Keating officiating.

Parents of the couple are William Murtha and the late Betty Murtha of Parkston, SD, and the late Henry M. and Cecelia Schmidt of Wynot, NE.

The bride is a graduate of Dakota State University. She is employed by Avera Sacred Heart Hospital as the Medical Staff Coordinator.

The groom is a graduate of Wynot Public High School. He is employed at Well Construction Company and engaged in farming.

The couple resides in St. Helena, Nebraska.

Jean Marie Murtha and Myron Gerald Schmidt were married Saturday, June 13, 2009, at Immaculate Conception Catholic Church, St. Helena, Nebraska, with Father



Knutson-Lyngstad

Stephanie Knutson and Wes Lyngstad were married October 23, 2009, at Christ the King Catholic Church, Sioux Falls, SD, with Father Richard Fox officiating.

Parents of the couple are Steve and Vicki Knutson of Philip, SD, and Carla and Michael DeLeon of Rapid City, SD; and Robert and Marilyn Lyngstad of Volin, SD.

Maid of honor was Tricia Knutson. Bridesmaids were Shelby Knutson, Shana Hennies, Sara Wilson and Laura Kessler. Flower girl was Emerson Mead.

Best man was Matt Lyngstad. Groomsman were Tim McDonald, Rob Sylaassen, Jeremy Mead and Jason Knutson. Ushers were Kendall Johnke, George Sees, Brock Smith and Jason Hirschhoff. Lane Knutson was ring bearer.

The bride is a 1st Grade/Reading Recovery Teacher in the Sioux Falls School District. The groom is Special Projects Coordinator at the South Dakota School for the Deaf.

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- One dozen long-stemmed roses for only \$20 to be picked up on April 6th at the Benedictine Center - 1000 W. 4th St.
- Variety of colors available - first come/first choice

Roses can be ordered at the following places in Yankton:
before Thursday, March 11th, 2010

Benedictine Health Foundation Office, 668-8310
Avera Sacred Heart Hospice Department, 668-8327
OR

Order online at www.averasacredheart.com and click on "Roses...Just Because"