

Compliments of Tobin Seven, Principal Broker / Army Veteran

AMERICAN LIFESTYLE

THE MAGAZINE CELEBRATING LIFE IN AMERICA

ISSUE 117



Designing CONNECTIONS

PAGE 24 | A dazzling apartment revamp

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light from the shadows | 16

best foot forward | 30

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Front of Tear Out Card 1



**one-pot
MAC N' CHEESE**

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Back of Tear Out Card 1

**MAKES ABOUT 3 CUPS
(3 SERVINGS)**

one-pot MAC N' CHEESE

ingredients:

- 1½ c. water
- 1 c. unsweetened nondairy milk
- 2 tbsp. nutritional yeast
- 1 tbsp. apple cider vinegar
- 2 tsp. tomato paste
- 1 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp. sea salt
- Pinch cayenne pepper (optional)
- 1¾ c. elbow macaroni
- ¾ c. vegan Cheddar shreds
- 1 tbsp. vegan butter
- Ground black pepper, to taste

instructions:

1. In a pot over medium-high heat, add the water and nondairy milk and bring to a low simmer, 5 to 6 minutes, whisking occasionally to prevent burning. The mixture will get foamy.
2. Turn the heat down slightly to keep the liquid at a low simmer. Whisk in the nutritional yeast, apple cider vinegar, tomato paste, Dijon, sea salt, and cayenne, until well combined. Add the macaroni and stir. Cook the mixture over a low simmer, uncovered, for 7 to 8 minutes, until al dente. (Double-check your pasta's package directions because the cook time will vary depending on the brand and what the pasta is made from.) Stir the mixture constantly to prevent sticking.
3. When the pasta is done, the sauce will look a little thin. Take the pot off the heat and stir in the vegan Cheddar shreds, vegan butter, and black pepper. Cover the pot for 1 to 2 minutes and then stir with a wooden spoon until the sauce thickens up and the cheese is completely melted.
4. Serve with extra ground black pepper, if desired. To reheat leftovers, add 1 to 2 tablespoons of nondairy milk and heat over medium-low until warmed through.

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AMERICAN LIFESTYLE

Not to discount the glorious sun-drenched days of summer, but sunshine isn't exclusively tied to the weather; many people also embody this light and warmth through their desire to build a better world. And this issue of American Lifestyle magazine gives them space to shine.

Child's Play was founded in 2003 by two gaming enthusiasts who believe in the power of play and have raised millions of dollars to purchase games and toys for hospitalized children and teens. Their motto, "Play Games, Feel Better," is at the heart of their fundraising missions.

When Chef Jose Andres began World Central Kitchen, he wanted to bring his experience as a chef and businessperson to the world of disaster relief. The organization provides hot, fresh meals, food-safety training, and more to those in need. It has also played a large role in supporting local businesses during the pandemic, paying small restaurants in four hundred cities across America to produce meals in 2020, resulting in \$150 million going back into the industry.

Unlike food, footwear is an often-overlooked basic need across the globe. Soles4Souls aims to change this reality through its micro-enterprise model, which empowers people living in poverty abroad by selling them used shoes to resell, and donations of new, branded athletic shoes to American kids who need them, resulting in better school attendance and increased confidence and self-esteem.

When people look around and seek to help, the rays of compassion uplift everyone. As always, it's a pleasure to send you this magazine.

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“KRAHULIK AND HOLKINS UNDERSTOOD THE MENTAL AND PHYSICAL BENEFITS OF PLAYING GAMES, AND THE PAIR WAS COMMITTED TO SHOWCASING THE ADVANTAGES OF ALL TYPES OF PLAY FOR CHILDREN AND TEENS—IN PARTICULAR, INTERACTIVE PLAY LIKE VIDEO GAMES.”

THE HEALING POWER OF PLAY

written by **alexa bricker** | photography by **child's play**



The joy that children experience while playing games is priceless. However, access to play is not available to all children. When a child is sick and requires an extended hospital stay or their family experiences hardship, items like toys, books, and games can be out-of-reach luxuries. However, one organization is looking to change that.

Mike Krahulik and Jerry Holkins of Penny Arcade, a video game culture website, founded the gaming-industry charity Child's Play in 2003. As gaming enthusiasts, Krahulik and Holkins understood the mental and physical benefits of play, and the pair was committed to showcasing the advantages of all types of play for children and teens—in particular, interactive play like video games.

The organization's first fundraiser helped raise over \$250,000 for Seattle Children's Hospital, and the charity has since expanded worldwide, donating over \$44 million to more than 180 children's hospitals around the world and 200 domestic violence shelters in the United States.

Child's Play gathers donations for its network hospitals through an Amazon Wish List program that allows donors to buy items that are then sent directly

to the hospital of their choice. The organization also provides an annual monetary donation to partner hospitals that the staff can use to buy the games and technology its patients need. Special events and programs help raise additional funds for the organization throughout the year. The annual Child's Play Charity Auction, held virtually in 2020 and 2021, is an event for the “geeky and nerdy community” to dress up and bid on memorabilia, art pieces, and experience packages.

The donations Child's Play provides to children's welfare centers are invaluable, but this is not the only impact the organization is making. Through its capacity building grants and equipment grants, Child's Play helps technical specialists modernize gaming technology in wellness facilities that are used to improve the lives of the children staying there, as well as fund updates to existing equipment.

Although toys and games are not a cure for the problems many children face, they can offer an escape, a creative outlet, and a glimmer of hope for those who need it most. Child's Play's mission, “Play Games, Feel Better,” is a testament to just how powerful play can be in a child's journey toward healing.

For more info, visit childsplay.org

MAKE YOUR HOME COZY FOR FALL

IF YOU LOVE MAKING YOUR HOME A RELAXING, WELL-DECORATED SPACE, FALL IS A SEASON FULL OF POSSIBILITIES. SHORTER AND COOLER DAYS PROVIDE PLENTY OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENTERTAINING AND ENJOYING DOWNTIME AT HOME.

written by **lauren kim** | photography by **getty images**, unless noted



The annual approach of winter makes autumn an ideal time to bring in fun decor elements like fluffy throws and pillows, candles, and warm autumnal colors. Follow these tips to make your home the coziest it can be.

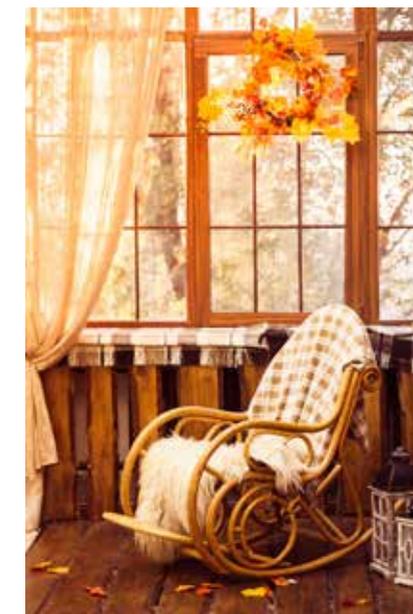
ADD LAYERS AND TEXTURES

We put on extra clothing when autumn temperatures drop, and it's a good idea to dress your home with additional elements of warmth too. A thick fabric welcome mat by your front door will provide something soft to sink your feet into, while long curtain panels in cotton or velvet will help insulate your home from the cold. Soft throws on your sofa and chairs will warm up the look of your room and provide a cozy spot for reading, napping, or watching TV. A fuzzy shag rug will warm up a floor. You can make your bedroom more comfortable by swapping out lightweight summer sheets and blankets for heat-trapping flannel sheets and winter-weight comforters. Drape a fleece throw across the foot of your bed for luxurious comfort on cold nights.



ACCENTUATE YOUR FIREPLACE

Nothing says warm and cozy like a crackling fire. If you love the look of a wood fire but not the cleanup afterward, fill your fireplace with thick pillar candles and light those instead. Dress your fireplace mantel with natural elements like autumn-hued gourds and leaves, succulents, or pine cones. Lanterns, potted mums, or a basket filled with a comfy blanket can add extra texture and color to your hearth when it's not in use. If you don't have a fireplace, you can use these same decorating ideas to add fall flair to any spot in your home. Or you could make yourself a faux decorative fireplace by hanging a floating wood shelf above a vertical wood-fence panel that's attached to the wall.



TOSS SOME PILLOWS

Once you get your fireplace roaring or your candles burning, you'll want to settle into a comfortable place nearby to enjoy the warm glow. A few pillows on your sofa and chairs or some oversized floor pillows and poufs can provide just the spot for comfortable lounging. Pillows can add beauty, warmth, and texture to a space—look for pillows in knobby knits, autumn hues, or fun fall prints. When you have people over, you can put a few extra pillows on the floor to provide additional seating.

DIM THE LIGHTS

Give long fall nights a cozy ambience by filling your space with soft, flickering candles and carefully chosen lighting. Place candles around the room, or add smart light bulbs to your light fixtures. Some smart bulbs have their own apps that will allow you to dim or change the color of the lighting, while others can be paired with Google Assistant, Apple's Siri, or Amazon Alexa to operate. String lights strewn across a wall or stuffed into Mason jars or lanterns can create a comfy or romantic atmosphere.



BRING THE OUTSIDE IN

Even if you aren't the outdoorsy type, you might find it calming to have natural fall elements in your home. Appealing fall items you could use include autumn leaves, seasonal flowers like mums and sunflowers, sea glass and driftwood from the beach, or apples, decorative squashes, and corn husks from a local farm. Use houseplants, such as a large, leafy fern or a collection of easy-care succulents, to freshen and soften your interior's look and feel.



"APPEALING FALL ITEMS YOU COULD USE INCLUDE AUTUMN LEAVES, SEASONAL FLOWERS LIKE MUMS AND SUNFLOWERS, SEA GLASS AND DRIFTWOOD FROM THE BEACH, OR APPLES, DECORATIVE SQUASHES, AND CORN HUSKS FROM A LOCAL FARM."

“FRAMED PHOTOS OF FRIENDS AND FAMILY MEMBERS WILL MAKE YOU SMILE AND ARE A SIMPLE WAY TO BRING PERSONALITY AND JOY TO YOUR HOME.”



© Anastasiya Vragova

INFUSE THE AIR

Fall is filled with many pleasant scents you can use to make your home cozier, such as pumpkin spice, apple pie, and cider. Try simmering slices of apples and oranges with cinnamon in a pot on the stove, burning fall-scented candles, or decorating your home with bowls of potpourri made with cinnamon sticks, bay leaves, and dehydrated oranges.

PERSONALIZE WITH PHOTOS

Framed photos of friends and family members will make you smile and are a simple way to bring personality and joy to your home. You could feature these photos on a gallery wall in your living room or display them on a coffee or console table. Your friends and family will feel welcome in your home when they see these memories on display.

SET OUT BOOKS AND BOARD GAMES

When you have folks over to visit this fall, you will want them to stay awhile. Put out a board game or two and perhaps some coffee-table books to encourage conversation and hours of entertainment.

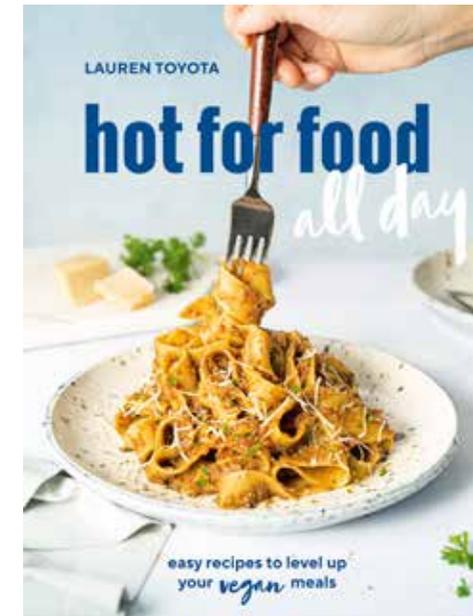
By adding just a few decorative and fun elements to your interior spaces, you may find yourself getting more enjoyment out of the cozy moments you spend at home this season. ■



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YUMMY VEGAN

recipes by **lauren toyota** | photography by **lauren toyota and eugenia zykova**



I had to level up my already-perfect versions of mac n' cheese! With so many ways to make the same thing, I can't stop myself. So I present to you the easiest mac n' cheese ever, and it's all made in one pot.

Makes about 3 cups (3 servings)

- 1½ cups water
- 1 cup unsweetened nondairy milk
- 2 tablespoons nutritional yeast
- 1 tablespoon apple cider vinegar
- 2 teaspoons tomato paste
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon sea salt
- Pinch cayenne pepper (optional)
- 1⅔ cups elbow macaroni
- ¾ cup vegan Cheddar shreds
- 1 tablespoon vegan butter
- Ground black pepper, to taste

one-pot mac n' cheese

1. In a pot over medium-high heat, add the water and nondairy milk and bring to a low simmer, 5 to 6 minutes, whisking occasionally to prevent burning. The mixture will get foamy.
2. Turn the heat down slightly to keep the liquid at a low simmer. Whisk in the nutritional yeast, apple cider vinegar, tomato paste, Dijon, sea salt, and cayenne, until well combined. Add the macaroni and stir. Cook the mixture over a low simmer, uncovered, for 7 to 8 minutes, until al dente. (Double-check your pasta's package directions because the cook time will vary depending on the brand and what the pasta is made from.) Stir the mixture constantly to prevent sticking.
3. When the pasta is done, the sauce will look a little thin. Take the pot off the heat and stir in the vegan Cheddar shreds, vegan butter, and black pepper. Cover the pot for 1 to 2 minutes and then stir with a wooden spoon until the sauce thickens up and the cheese is completely melted.
4. Serve with extra ground black pepper, if desired. To reheat leftovers, add 1 to 2 tablespoons of nondairy milk and heat over medium-low until warmed through.



Makes about 3 cups

tofu scramble

- ¼ cup minced shallot (about 1 shallot)**
- 1 tablespoon avocado oil, neutral vegetable oil, or vegan butter**
- 1 brick (16 oz.) medium-firm or firm tofu (about 3 cups crumbled)**
- 2 teaspoons minced garlic (about 1 large clove)**
- 2 tablespoons nutritional yeast**
- ½ teaspoon ground turmeric**
- ½ teaspoon smoked paprika**
- ½-1 teaspoon sea salt**
- ½ teaspoon ground black pepper**
- Unsweetened nondairy milk**

OPTIONAL MIX-INS

- Use veggies you have on hand that need to get eaten, such as spinach or kale, grape tomatoes, mushrooms**
- ¼ cup finely chopped chives**
- ½ teaspoon kala namak**

Tofu comes both in water-packed and vacuum-packed styles. Water-packed tends to have a lot more moisture and you'll need to squeeze out some of the excess moisture. In the case of vacuum-packed tofu, which is drier, you might want to reconstitute your tofu at the end with some nondairy milk to get more of a scrambled egg texture. Either way works—it's really entirely up to you and what texture you prefer.

- 1.** In a cast-iron or nonstick pan over medium heat, sauté the shallot in oil or vegan butter for about 1 minute, until soft.
- 2.** Using your hands, crumble the tofu into small chunks, like scrambled eggs, directly into the pan. Add the garlic and sauté for 2 to 3 minutes. Then stir in the nutritional yeast, turmeric, paprika, ½ teaspoon sea salt, and black pepper.
- 3.** If you're bulking up your scram with veggies, add them in just after you mix in the seasonings. Continue frying for 3 to 4 more minutes. If you used a water-packed tofu, it's usually perfect at this point. If the mixture is too dry for your liking, add a little bit of nondairy milk, up to ¼ cup, until the desired consistency is achieved. If you add the nondairy milk, you'll likely need to cook the scramble for another 2 minutes or so.
- 4.** Stir in the chives during the last 30 seconds. Remove the pan from the heat and stir in the kala namak. Add up to another ½ teaspoon of sea salt to your taste if necessary. Using kala namak often makes it salty enough, but if you don't use it, you will likely need to add more salt to taste.
- 5.** Store in the fridge and consume within 3 days.



I don't want to knock oatmeal—it's filling and healthy—but I'm not the biggest fan of mushy porridge for breakfast. I make it 'cause it's quick, but with a little planning you can bake that oatmeal with peanut butter into a bar dolloped with your fave jam ... now we're talking. These are just the right amount of soft and chewy and make another great grab n' go brekky.

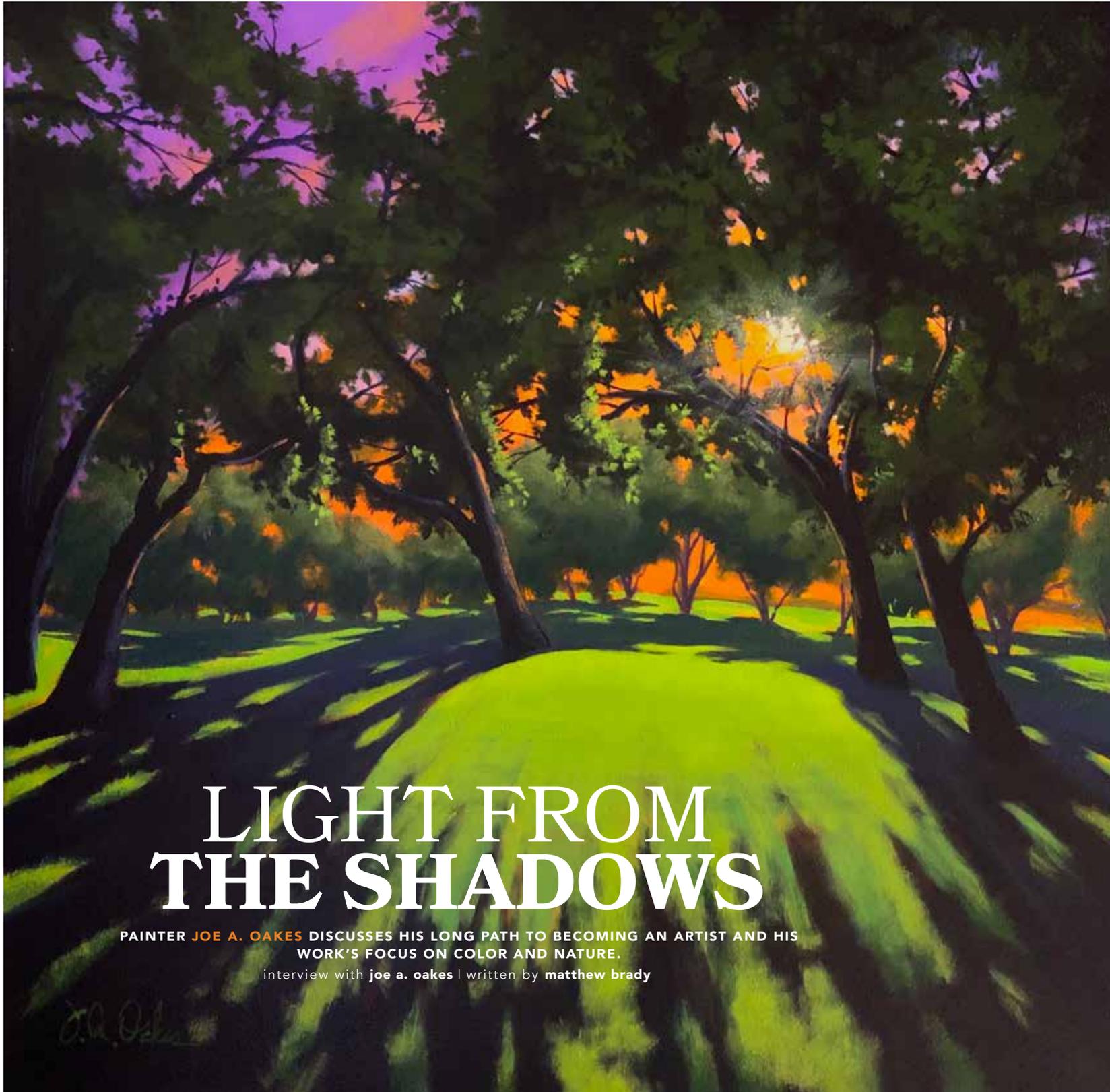
baked peanut butter and jam oat bars

Makes 16 bars

- 1 tablespoon golden flax meal**
- 3 tablespoons water**
- 2 cups gluten-free rolled oats (not quick cooking)**
- 1 cup gluten-free all-purpose flour**
- 1 cup coconut sugar**
- ¼ cup tapioca flour (can substitute arrowroot flour)**
- 1 tablespoon baking powder**
- 1 teaspoon sea salt**
- 1 cup natural crunchy or smooth peanut butter**
- ¾ cup nondairy milk**
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract**
- ¼ cup favorite jam**

HOT TIP: If you don't require these to be gluten-free, then you can use rolled oats that aren't specifically labelled as such, and you can substitute 1¼ cups of all-purpose flour for the GF and tapioca flours.

- 1.** Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line an 8 by 8-inch baking pan with parchment paper by cutting two strips both 8 inches wide and crossing them in the pan to create clean edges. Trim the excess overhang, if needed.
- 2.** Combine the flax meal and water and set aside to thicken, 5 to 10 minutes.
- 3.** In a large mixing bowl, combine the rolled oats, all-purpose flour, coconut sugar, tapioca flour, baking powder, and sea salt.
- 4.** In a large liquid measuring cup or another mixing bowl, combine the peanut butter, nondairy milk, and vanilla with the thickened flax meal mixture until smooth. Add this to the mixing bowl of dry ingredients and fold together until fully combined.
- 5.** Spread the mixture evenly into the baking pan all the way to the edges. Take a dough cutter or knife and lightly score or mark every 2 inches across in each direction, creating the indented lines for 16 square bars. Do not cut through the pan of oat bars at this stage.
- 6.** Dollop about ½ teaspoon of jam on top of each square and gently press it with the back of the teaspoon into the top of each bar.
- 7.** Bake for 25 minutes, until the edges are golden brown and the bars look soft and raised. Cool in the baking pan on a wire rack for 20 minutes before lifting out by the parchment paper edges and placing onto the wire rack. Slice bars where you made the scores.
- 8.** Cool completely before storing leftovers in the fridge. You can warm slightly in the microwave for 30 seconds before eating. Consume within 7 days.



LIGHT FROM THE SHADOWS

PAINTER **JOE A. OAKES** DISCUSSES HIS LONG PATH TO BECOMING AN ARTIST AND HIS WORK'S FOCUS ON COLOR AND NATURE.

interview with **joe a. oakes** | written by **matthew brady**



Has art always been part of your life?

My parents encouraged my artmaking, and I was even tagged as “the artist” of the family. Back then, art was encouraged in school, so that was a way for me to excel. I received a lot of positive feedback from my teachers, which always stuck with me.

It hasn't always been easy, of course. I wasn't the greatest student in high school. And it wasn't until I got married and moved to California in the early nineties that I went to college. At the time, my wife said, “You can't just get a degree in painting” (which secretly was my plan), so I got my bachelor's degree from Cal State Fullerton with a concentration in

graphic design and then went into design. In fact, I didn't even take a painting class in college.

You've also dealt with personal tragedies: cancer and the loss of a child. Would you elaborate on how they affected you?

When you go through something like cancer, you always say that you're going to be a better person and do things you want to do. And that's what I thought. But then you get right back into life and lose a little bit of that motivation. In contrast, when my son passed away, I was so numb. Your thinking is so different, and you don't really consider what-ifs. I don't think my wife would have ever let me go down this art path if it wasn't for that situation.



What helped you grow as an artist?

I've learned a lot. In the beginning, I had a good grasp of composition, color, and balance from college, but I took the process of painting for granted and struggled with it. Thankfully, I started doing workshops. There my failure was invaluable because I could look at somebody's work and say, "I know exactly where you're at, and I'm going to tell you what you need to do to get better." That helped me improve my work because it made me think about my process.

You didn't paint at all in college, so how did you become an acrylic painter?

I want to approach things in the simplest, most straightforward way I can. I started with pastels, figuring it would be an easier transition from drawing because they're like pencils. Well, that wasn't true. I enjoyed





pastels, but I had a hard time because you're not mixing color; you're layering it, which I couldn't make happen. Plus, pastels are messy, and I don't like to clean anything. Don't get me wrong—I love oil paint, even the smell of it. But we only had acrylics in high school and they're easy to use, so that seemed like a natural place to start.

How has California inspired you?

I have a good story about this. In Chicago, where I grew up, it's almost all flatland. Still, when I was ten years old, I did a painting of mountains and a lake. After we moved to California, we eventually settled in Orange County, which has a man-made lake with mountains as a backdrop—the exact scene that I painted as a child. Somehow, I was inspired by these mountains and lakes and trees that I knew existed but had never seen. I feel like I was meant to be here.

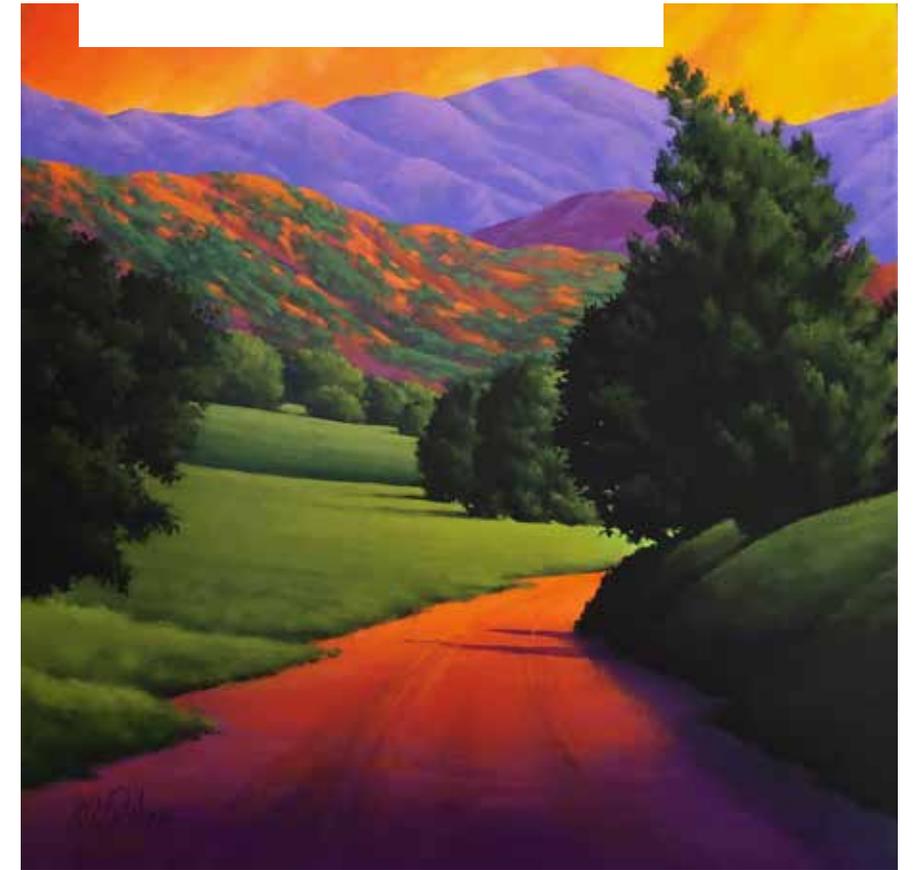
Is there an artistic mantra you live by?

Perfection is the killer of creativity. When you focus on being perfect, it takes all the life out of art. So I try to avoid that and take a lot of artistic license.

What inspired you to try architectural paintings?

When I was a kid, old buildings fascinated me. At some point, I thought I wanted to be an architect. So coming out here and seeing a whole different style of architecture, especially Spanish style, inspired me. I haven't been as successful with it because I worked on my landscapes so much. If you're going to survive in this business, you must master a primary style.

// PERFECTION IS THE KILLER OF CREATIVITY. WHEN YOU FOCUS ON BEING PERFECT, IT TAKES ALL THE LIFE OUT OF ART. SO I TRY TO AVOID THAT AND TAKE A LOT OF ARTISTIC LICENSE.





Your work features dichotomies like sunrises and sunsets, and shadow and light. Is that something you focus on?

Photographers wait for the perfect light and the perfect shot, but artists must be able to look at things as they *could* be. In art education, you're taught that if you want to make things lighter, like a highlight, you add white to it, and if you want to make things darker, like a shadow, you add black to it. But most people add too much white or dark, so the color's essence is lost. After working on this a lot, I decided to just use colors I like to make shadows and figure out which objects and shapes they lend themselves to before I start blocking.

It was like a light bulb went on for me, and people responded to it. I'm not sure how I did it, but for paintings that are so vibrant, people always tell me they're both happy and calming. I also don't want to include anything that indicates they're looking at a real scene, so I minimize distractions like objects and animals in my paintings. I want them to feel like they could walk into it. To me, a painting, no matter what size, is like a window—there's a whole other part of the world outside the frame.

What messages do you try to convey about nature?

We take it for granted. I could have twelve people in my workshop, and I guarantee you 90 percent of them would say the sky is blue and the grass is green. That's what you see, but most

people don't really look at the colors because they're busy, don't think about them, or don't appreciate them. Our brains are like supercomputers, always trying to find the quickest answer.

So I want to get people to think about nature more deeply, especially its colors. I want to help create conversations, internally and externally, about nature through art. Nature is amazing; we can't even completely grasp it.

How has outside-the-box thinking served you well?

If you want to be successful at anything, you should think a little differently about it to create some interest, reveal who you are, and explain where you're coming from. As artists, we can take something that may seem mundane, that people drive by a million times and never think twice about, and make it interesting and unique. I think true artists understand this, and that's what they're always working toward.

For more info, visit joeaokes.com

"[STUART GELLER] HAS AN INNATE ABILITY TO SEE THE MAGIC IN WHAT YOU ALREADY HAVE AND REINVENT IT IN A COHESIVE WAY."



A few minutes before our agreed-upon interview time, I found a one-sentence email from designer Stuart Geller in my inbox. It read, "I'm ready for my close-up," à la Gloria Swanson in the 1950 film *Sunset Boulevard*. When I called him, his animated voice followed up with the punchline, "Is this Mr. DeMille?" It's hard not to be charmed by his playful and larger-than-life theatrical personality. It's no surprise then to hear that Geller has built a career around close friendships with his clients.

Even more than the traditional milestones of fame and success, Geller is proudest of these relationships he has forged: "They know I can capture what their needs are, their tastes, and their



DESIGNING CONNECTIONS

interview with **stuart geller** | written by **shelley goldstein** | photography by **robert catasus**



“ THE MASTER BEDROOM AND LIVING ROOM ARE SITUATED ON THE EAST SIDE OF THE BUILDING TO CATCH THE SUNRISE, AND THE OTHER THREE BEDROOMS AND KITCHEN ARE ON THE WEST SIDE WITH THE SUNSET.

sensibilities. Especially in today’s world, having repeat clients is the benchmark of trust, confidence, and even love—I’m not afraid to use that word.”

Geller grew up in Queens in New York City and was always drawn to architecture and interior design. The homes in the area were Tudor style, piquing his interest in the traditional English style of architecture and design. While attending Southampton College of Long Island University, he was fortunate enough to be invited to many beautiful homes in the Hamptons and exposed to a style that was timeless and comfortable. After graduating with a dual degree in elementary education and clinical psychology, Geller headed to the warmer climes of Miami in the mid-1970s.

It’s there he began teaching elementary school while completing graduate work at Barry College (now University) for guidance and counseling. The school system was ineffective, though, and Geller found himself turning to art to bolster his students’ self-esteem. “The students were just passed from grade to grade. Some couldn’t read by fifth grade,” he says. “The kids responded really well to drawing and color. Art was the key to opening their minds.” Out of frustration with the stress of teaching in a broken system, he also turned to creative endeavors, designing patterns that translated well into wall coverings and fabric. This would become a line called Esbeget, named for his initials, SBG.

The line took off, and Geller pivoted to designing full time. “I had already started working with some clients, so I was very lucky. If you’re passionate about what you do, you are ahead



of the game.” In 1979, he got his first major design gig and was being interviewed for *Florida Designers’ Quarterly*. Geller’s eschewal of design trends was apparent in this project, and it was just the beginning of a lucrative career that would reward him for his out-of-the-box style of designing. He laughs as he tells the story of the magazine’s publisher, Gloria Blake, playing devil’s advocate as she looked at the photos of his project, asking him, “What is this? This is not what they’re using. What did you do here?” Geller says, “I looked at her like I was the most experienced designer in the world and told her it was my client’s home

and these are the things she loves. She doesn’t care what they’re using. Who are ‘they,’ anyway?”

This attitude has become Geller’s credo of turning houses into homes. He has an innate ability to see the magic in what you already have and reinvent it in a cohesive way; many of his clients already have quite a collection of art, antiques, and furniture when they come to him for a personalized design.

This was the case for the couple who commissioned him to design their double apartment in Aventura, Florida. They were moving from a two-bedroom

"THE ROOM IS HUGE, SO GELLER DESIGNED VERY THIN, TAPERED STAINLESS-STEEL COLUMNS WITH GLASS PANELS THAT ARE BETWEEN THESE AREAS."



townhouse full of artwork and sculptures that unfortunately left the home looking cluttered and chaotic. In contrast, their new 4,700-square-foot apartment spans the entire twenty-seventh floor of the building. The master bedroom and living room are situated on the east side of the building to catch the sunrise, and the other three bedrooms and kitchen are on the west side with the sunset.

After several discussions with his clients, Geller established the flow of the apartment and explained how the art would be showcased and well-lit throughout the space. In the living room, there are two walls slightly angled with one painting on each wall, creating a place that differentiates the living room area from the dining room area. The room is huge, so Geller designed very thin, tapered stainless-steel columns with glass panels that are between these areas. The panels are subtly etched with elements of Matisse—enough to notice them, but not so much that they compete with the red sculpture in the dining area.



Old friends who are visiting their new apartment for the first time can often be heard exclaiming, "I didn't know you had this!" Geller's expert placement and lighting of the art collection has allowed everyone to see the clients' carefully curated finds through fresh eyes.

Geller also designed the stunning floating bed that anchors one-half of the expansive bedroom. The clients had seen a previous iteration of the bed in another of his client's homes and fell in love with it. It's a complicated design, coordinated with electrical and Wi-Fi for the tech-savvy way people live today. The nightstands are oval, so they flow with the bed in a very lucid design.

Geller's priority is listening to how his clients want to live. He explains, "Anyone can go out and buy furniture. That's not what interior design is about. Interior design is about you and how you want to live and what you want to be surrounded by." When one of the clients pointed out it was such a long walk from her bedroom to the kitchen, he created a coffee bar within the master bedroom suite, complete with a microwave, fridge, and sink.

Now in his early seventies, Geller looks back on his career feeling very blessed. "It's one thing to be capable and another thing to get the right clients who allowed me to express my abilities," he muses. "I traveled the world studying art and architecture

and antiques. I worked for two major developers doing model homes. It's really been the most wonderful run." For twenty-five years, he's also taken care of his community through philanthropy, fundraising millions for AIDS, Alzheimer's, and the arts. He has kept a close eye on what matters most in life. "If life is like an arena, there are only two places to be," he theorizes. "Either you're out on the field playing or you're sitting on the bleachers." For Geller, he'll always be out on the field trying to do his best—for his clients, for his community, and, most importantly, for himself.

For more information, visit stuartgeller.com



BEST FOOT FORWARD

WHEN IT COMES TO BASIC NEEDS, FOOTWEAR ISN'T ALWAYS TOP OF MIND. BUT MILLIONS OF PEOPLE LACK IT. BUDDY TEASTER, THE CEO AND PRESIDENT OF SOLES4SOULS, DISCUSSES HOW HIS ORGANIZATION TACKLES THIS PROBLEM WHILE ALSO CREATING OPPORTUNITIES.

interview with [buddy teaster](#) | written by [matthew brady](#) | photography by [soles4souls](#)

How did Soles4Souls begin?

The founder was inspired to start Soles4Souls because of the tsunami disaster in Southeast Asia in 2004. For the first few years, we provided new shoes for people in need. But it didn't take long for people to offer used shoes as well.

What changes have you made since coming aboard in 2012?

Things were rough by 2011. We were in bad financial shape, our board was falling apart, the founder/CEO was gone, and we were getting bad press. By any measure, we were going in the wrong direction, and we had to rebuild our reputation. The biggest change we made was getting crystal clear about our values: we told people what we'd do and then do it.

This included our micro-enterprise business model, where we sell used shoes to impoverished people, mostly women, in over fifty countries so they can resell them. We came right out and said, "This is what we do." We then found local nonprofit partners who were aligned with our mission and wanted



improve the dynamics in their families and their communities, which is life-changing. And, to this day, it is their work; it isn't charity. They are customers, so they come to the table as equals and negotiate.

You have a different model in America. Would you talk about that?

Over 1.5 million kids experience homelessness in our public-school systems. Food and shelter are the most important priorities, but shoes are vital as well. Kids whose shoes don't fit or who don't have the "right" brand can get bullied and feel inadequate, and many don't go to school because of it.



Anything we give away domestically is new. However, we often can't donate our brand partners' products in the United States because they don't want items returned to stores, which would create problems with their retail partners and brand.

So, in 2020, we did a pilot with Foot Locker for a now-permanent program called 4EveryKid, through which we donated 17,000 pairs of new, branded athletic shoes in the US. Our goal was to maintain the kids' dignity while they enjoyed new shoes. In our follow-up research, many kids tell us it's their first pair of new shoes ever and they feel like they belong. That makes a huge impact on their education because they want to keep attending class and participating in other activities.

Foot-related health is another big issue, correct?

One hundred percent. In many places outside the US, shoes help with health concerns like parasites. Here shoes help with longer-term problems. We do a fair bit of work with homeless shelters, and we found that a lack of proper footwear is a hindrance to work.

to help people on the ground earn a living. We took all the middlemen out, and the product went right from people's closets to the entrepreneurs.

Did that model have an immediate impact?

We saw how, in some cases, women quickly went from just barely making it and experiencing lots of instability to buying land, building a house, and feeding their families. They can



Simply put, if people don't have the right shoes, they can't work. Other times, they're afraid to take them off because they'll get stolen, but wearing shoes and socks day and night does terrible things to feet. Many of us don't consider such things because we look at our closet and ask, "Which pair of shoes am I going to wear today?"

Do you offer socks and other clothing?

We work with brands across both footwear and apparel. Bombas makes great socks, and their focus has always been on how to get socks to the homeless population across the country. We're one of their biggest nonprofit partners. For every American kid, a pair of shoes comes with two pairs of socks. We also have a wonderful partnership with Macy's in the fall called Share the Warmth, through which the company donates one winter coat for every one bought.

Could you survive without your partners?

Not a chance. For example, Zappos will pay the shipping for donated shoes. That's huge. DSW customers can drop off shoes in-store and get points toward their loyalty program; they've collected over five million pairs of shoes from their customers in the last four years, which is unbelievable.

We also have partnerships with non-footwear and apparel companies that



want to engage their employees in sustainability or do something for their community. One of the things I love is that anybody can do this. You don't need money or complicated logistics. We've had seven-year-olds collect 25,000 pairs of shoes in their community. This is my favorite kind of story because I believe that business can be a force for good.

Would you talk more about your sustainability impact?

It breaks my heart to think about what consumer waste means for our land, water, and air. Fortunately, more consumers value eco-consciousness today, so it's worth it for companies to do so as well. We've helped keep over seventy-three million pairs of shoes and pieces of apparel—over seventy-one million pounds—from going to landfills by distributing them to people in 129 countries and all fifty states.

One real challenge is that footwear is super hard to recycle because it's made from various materials. One to two percent of the shoes we get are unusable, and we were storing them

in a warehouse in Alabama until we discovered a company that turns waste into energy by burning it at high temperatures. What comes out is 99.5 percent clean. The next step for us will be figuring out how to extend the life of shoes, maybe by six to eighteen months, in other countries.

It seems like sharing stories is vital to Soles4Souls. Would you agree?

To me, that's one of the most beautiful things about Soles4Souls. There are countless stories of people who didn't know how they were going to make it but now have a path and feel the dignity of being able to earn their own way. No statistic can convey what it means for a kid to run around the gym with a feeling of *I'm as good as the other kids*. So combining the stories and the data is really impactful and honest.

What are the organization's goals for the future?

Our goal is still to make \$1 billion in economic impact by 2030, and we're almost halfway there. I feel great about that and how we've already helped so



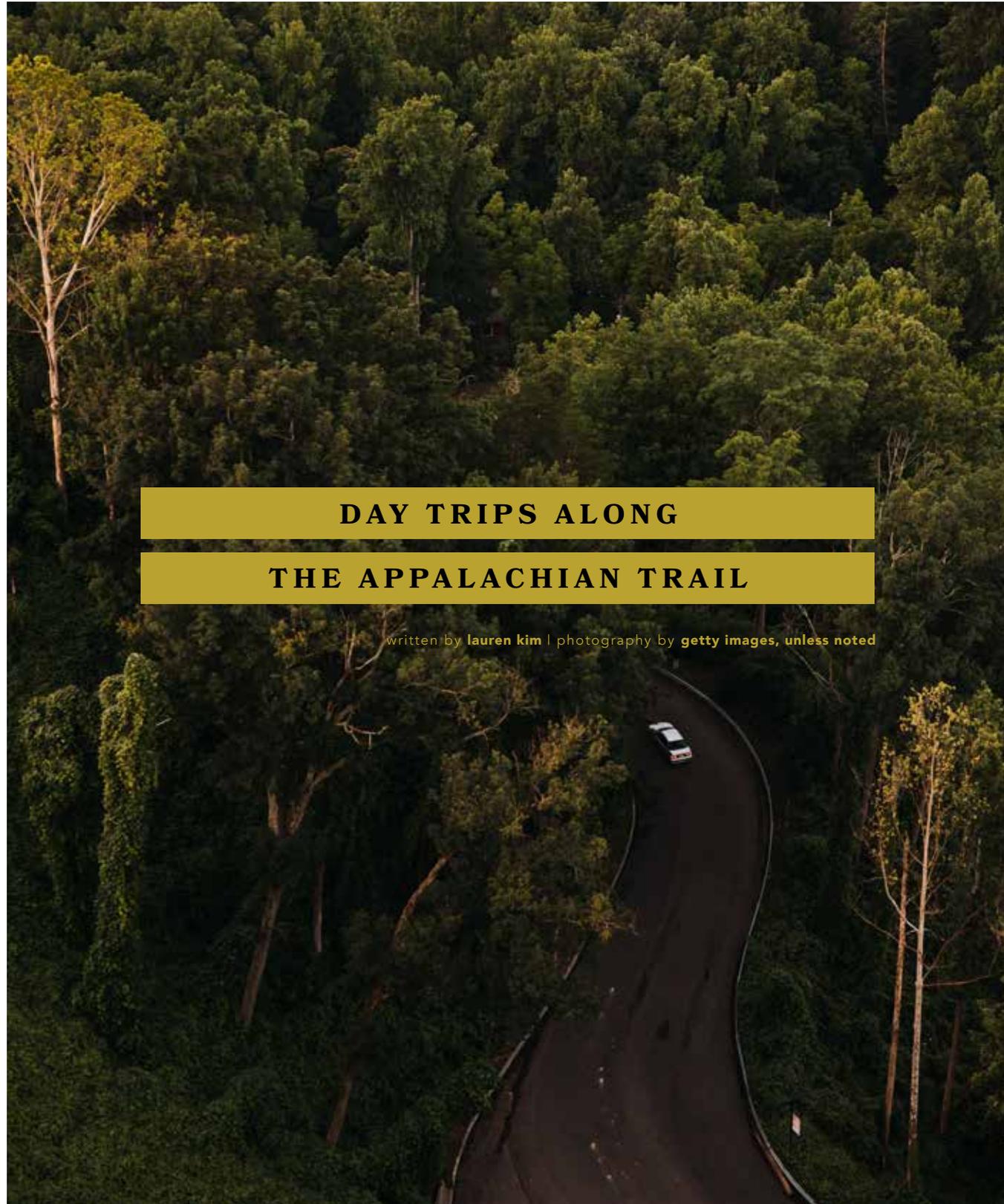
“NO STATISTIC CAN CONVEY WHAT IT MEANS FOR A KID TO RUN AROUND THE GYM WITH A FEELING OF I'M AS GOOD AS THE OTHER KIDS.”



many vulnerable kids and empowered so many people. It makes me happy every day; I have never loved work as much as I do right now.

However, something that we'll get better at is making sure we're doing what the communities want by engaging with them even more. If we can do that, while continuing to change lives by meeting needs and providing opportunities, I'll consider that a victory.

For more info, visit soles4souls.org



DAY TRIPS ALONG

THE APPALACHIAN TRAIL

written by **lauren kim** | photography by **getty images**, unless noted



The Appalachian Trail (the AT), which traverses fourteen states from Georgia to Maine through idyllic forests, wildflower fields, and lofty peaks, presents many opportunities to experience small towns, American history, and local culture. However, you don't have to hike the 2,193-mile-long footpath in its entirety to benefit from its many offerings. You could explore just a short section of the AT during a day trip and then travel off the trail to enjoy fine cuisine, wine-tasting tours, museums, and more. Think of the AT as your personal tour guide to some of the most beautiful areas of the United States.

EXPERIENCE THE THRILL OF NASCAR
Dawsonville, Georgia, which is just fifty-eight miles north of Atlanta, is located close to Springer Mountain, the AT's southern endpoint. From Dawsonville, you can take an 8.5-

mile trail from Amicalola Falls State Park, home to a 729-foot waterfall, to Springer Mountain and view mountaintop vistas. After your hike, visit the Georgia Racing Hall of Fame to take in vintage NASCAR race cars and memorabilia, or stop by the Atlanta Motorsports Park and race karts on a hilly, twisting track at exhilarating speeds. Savor buffalo wings, pulled pork, or traditional hickory-smoked ribs at Big D's Barbecue, or follow the Dablonoga wine trail of eight wineries for wine tastings, dining, and live music.

HIKE THE GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS
Experience the Great Smoky Mountains National Park on the North Carolina-Tennessee border, and hike or drive a half-mile paved road to Clingmans Dome, the highest point in Tennessee at 6,643 feet. Take the pedestrian ramp to the Clingmans

"FROM DAWSONVILLE, YOU CAN TAKE AN 8.5-MILE TRAIL FROM AMICALOLA FALLS STATE PARK, HOME TO A 729-FOOT WATERFALL, TO SPRINGER MOUNTAIN AND VIEW MOUNTAINTOP VISTAS."



Dome Observation Tower, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, for lofty mountain vistas. Or take the AT to Charlies Bunion, a stone outcrop at 5,565 feet with amazing panoramic views. In nearby Gatlinburg, Tennessee, you can stroll the Gatlinburg SkyBridge, an almost 700-mile-long pedestrian suspension bridge that's 1,800 feet above sea level and looks down on the city below. Later, head downtown to taste local cuisines, visit museums, take in the sights atop the Gatlinburg Space Needle observation tower and ride up a mountainside incline rail to play a round of miniature golf at Hillbilly Golf. Or drive to Pigeon Forge, Tennessee, and spend the day at Dollywood.



SCALE MOUNT MITCHELL

In North Carolina, drive about an hour north of Asheville to hike to Mount Mitchell, the highest summit east of the Mississippi at 6,684 feet. Climb to the peak's observation deck to see as far as eighty-five miles. Enjoy the 360-degree sights atop Max Patch Mountain and explore downtown Asheville, or visit the luxurious 8,000-acre Biltmore Estate in town. Head to the town of Beech Mountain to drive the Avery Barn Quilt Trail and see the fifty-plus colorfully painted Appalachian quilt blocks that adorn barns, homes, and other structures throughout Avery County.

MOTOR ALONG SKYLINE DRIVE

Another picturesque road trip is Virginia's 105-mile-long Skyline Drive. This two-lane highway crosses the AT multiple times in Shenandoah National Park's Blue Ridge Mountains. This National Scenic Byway, which runs from Rockfish Gap to Front Royal, is dotted with many observation points ideal for taking in mountaintop views for fall foliage. After your tour, you can



ANOTHER PICTURESQUE ROAD TRIP IS VIRGINIA'S 105-MILE-LONG SKYLINE DRIVE. THIS TWO-LANE HIGHWAY CROSSES THE AT MULTIPLE TIMES IN SHENANDOAH NATIONAL PARK'S BLUE RIDGE MOUNTAINS.

© Beech Mountain TDA



drive the Blue Ridge Parkway, another gorgeous mountain roadway, toward Roanoke, Virginia, one of the largest cities on the AT. There, stop for a meal, visit art galleries and museums, go shopping, or hike to the top of Mill Mountain to see the Roanoke Star, a man-made, freestanding structure that is illuminated at night and is one of Virginia's most recognizable landmarks.

RELIVE HISTORY AT HARPERS FERRY

History buffs will want to visit West Virginia's Harpers Ferry National Historic Park, which is the spot raided by abolitionist John Brown in 1859. The AT goes through the park, which is in the state's Eastern Panhandle. The historic site is home to the Appalachian Trail Conservancy Headquarters and Visitor Center, John Brown's Fort, Civil War battlefields, and natural rock formation Jefferson Rock, which boasts views of the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers and is where President Thomas Jefferson stood in 1783. There are plenty of bakeries, cafés, and shops to enjoy in Harpers Ferry

and neighboring Bolivar in Jefferson County, West Virginia.

OVERLOOK THREE STATES

In New Jersey's Sussex County, just south of the New York-New Jersey border, hike the Appalachian Trail or drive the paved road up to the state's highest elevation in High Point State Park, where you can climb to the top of the peak's giant granite-obelisk monument to see expansive views of the Pocono and Catskill Mountains, farmlands, and forests in New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania.

GLIMPSE MANHATTAN SKYSCRAPERS

If you would like to see where the AT got its start, visit the portion of the trail in New York's Hudson Highlands between Bear Mountain and Harriman State Park, which became the first section of the trail to officially open in 1923. At Bear Mountain, you can visit the Trailside Museums and Zoo, rent paddleboats, take a spin on the merry-go-round, and cross the Hudson River by foot over the Bear Mountain Bridge. New York City and all it has to



offer is located on the other side of the river. For views of Manhattan, head to Harriman State Park, which boasts lake and mountain vistas.

SOAK IN ART

The AT runs down Main Street in Hanover, New Hampshire, in the Upper Connecticut River Valley. Downtown, stroll the campus of Dartmouth College. While on campus, visit the Baker-Berry library to view the *Epic of American Civilization*, a 3,200-square-foot mural and national

historic landmark by painter José Clementé. Art aficionados will also enjoy Dartmouth's Hood Museum of Art, which houses paintings, sculptures, and artifacts from around the world. Nearby you can hike to the moss-covered Velvet Rocks, a moderate section of the AT perfect for a short day hike.

REACH THE NORTHERN PEAK

In Maine, just outside the town of Monson, you can take the Appalachian Trail up a very strenuous section to

scale Mount Katahdin, the northern end of the AT. Or you can stay downtown to enjoy the atmosphere of this rural trail community, where you can shop for pottery and real maple syrup, sample craft beer, pile your plate with barbecued ribs, and chat with hikers who are about to start or complete a monthslong trek on the trail.

You can use the Appalachian Trail as your inspiration to travel north or south along the East Coast or visit

"IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE WHERE THE AT GOT ITS START, VISIT THE PORTION OF THE TRAIL IN NEW YORK'S HUDSON HIGHLANDS BETWEEN BEAR MOUNTAIN AND HARRIMAN STATE PARK, WHICH BECAME THE FIRST SECTION OF THE TRAIL TO OFFICIALLY OPEN IN 1923."

trail-proximate locations one state at a time—it's up to you! No matter how you tour the AT, you are bound to discover many amazing destinations.

For more information, visit appalachiantrail.org



WHEN A DISASTER STRIKES, WORLD CENTRAL KITCHEN (WCK) IS OFTEN THE FIRST ORGANIZATION HELPING ON THE GROUND. ITS CEO, NATE MOOK, DISCUSSES CHEF JOSÉ ANDRÉS'S VISION FOR WCK, HOW IT MOBILIZES FOR SUCH SITUATIONS, AND WHAT A HOT MEAL MEANS TO THOSE IN CRISIS.



For example, the United States sent a huge amount of rice to Haiti. This seemed great, but it destroyed the local market. Haitian rice farmers couldn't compete with the free rice flooding in, which caused long-term damage.

Does the mission go beyond feeding people?

WCK runs the gamut of food issues, from access to healthy and nutritious food to food safety. José saw people cooking with dirty fuels like charcoal, holding their children while cooking, and inhaling toxic fumes. So one of the tenets became working within communities and leveraging what's already there to find solutions around food.

What happens after an initial crisis dies down?

It depends on timelines. During an emergency response, you make sure to get food to those who need it. When things start to stabilize, there are sometimes ongoing needs, such as in Guatemala and Honduras, which were hit by two major hurricanes in 2020 that caused tremendous damage. We provided food for displaced people, but after the immediate emergency faded, we saw the longer-term impact of those storms. Families lost their crops, so they didn't have any income and couldn't grow anything to eat themselves. As part of our recovery program, we helped these communities get on their feet by providing food kits so families could cook. This

What was the inspiration for World Central Kitchen?

Chef José Andrés didn't have a preconceived notion of what the organization would be. However, his core principle was that food should be seen as both a solution and an opportunity. José wanted to learn how he, as a chef and businessperson, could bring his expertise to the table.

WCK was founded in the aftermath of the 2010 earthquake in Haiti, so there was a disaster response impetus. In those early days, José learned where the needs and gaps were and where things could be improved. He also felt that the people who know food best often weren't part of the solution. Who do you send to medical crises? Doctors and nurses. And yet, for food crises, culinary experts weren't being utilized.





type of assistance usually lasts from three months to a year after a disaster has taken place. Finally, there's our resilience program, a long-term option that started in the aftermath of Hurricane Maria. There was such little food in Puerto Rico because the country imported 90 percent of it. So we launched our Food Producer Network there in 2018, which helps people do more self-sustaining agriculture work.

How do you go about planning so quickly?

It's critical for us to get to a location as soon as we can, and if we can plan for a catastrophe, we'll try to set up beforehand. When Hurricane Ida hit Louisiana, we already had a big team on the ground and a kitchen cooking in New Orleans. We have equipment stored in various warehouses and high-capacity food trucks that we can deploy very quickly.

We also leverage what's already there. Communities almost always have restaurants, and if they're still functional, we can pay the restaurants to produce meals. This has a double impact because we're not only getting meals to folks in need but also supporting local businesses during a trying time. For example, in 2020, we paid restaurants in four hundred cities across America to produce meals during COVID. We had hoped to put \$10 million back into small restaurants by doing this, but by the end of the year, the number was \$150 million.

Does the culinary world come together when a disaster hits?

One of the magical things about the culinary industry is its strong



interconnectedness. With a simple phone call, people jump in and help. They know their community better than anyone else, have distributors and suppliers for food, and potentially have kitchen space and staff to utilize, so we'll come in and work side by side with them. Chefs are also very good at operating in turmoil—restaurant kitchens are controlled chaos, so chefs must be good under pressure, move fast, and adapt.

Is there an element of danger in what you do?

That's a great question. We factor that in, and everybody we employ is trained. But there will always be uncontrolled situations. During the earthquake in Haiti, for example, we had to be very careful about our teams' safety, not only because there could be

additional earthquakes but also because of the political instability. Gangs would often shut down roads, so we had to use helicopters and planes to get food to many places.

The safety of our teams is our number one priority. If it's too dangerous, we won't go in. For hurricanes, we make sure that we are hunkered down in secure locations that are hurricane-rated and have backup generators. We also have satellite phones and trackers. Nonetheless, there will always be an element of danger.

That includes COVID. None of us have contracted it during a relief operation, which is a testament to how careful we are. In spring 2020, we were extensively supporting families on the Navajo Nation, which had the highest

rate of COVID in the world at the time. It was a big challenge, but that work needed to be done.

Is social media vital to your mission?

We are often the first people on the ground—and sometimes the only ones. So if we're not sharing what the circumstances are, nobody is. We become the eyes and ears of the general public when a disaster strikes. I also think it's important to be radically transparent. If you donate, we want you to see exactly how we're spending your money and foster trust because WCK is a people-powered organization. If we didn't have that support, we wouldn't be able to do the work we do every single day.

How does providing hot meals impact people?

We're big believers that a hot, fresh-cooked meal is more than just what's on the plate. It says that somebody is here to support you and cares about you. That hot plate of food during a time of crisis is a message of hope. At the end of the day, that's what's so important about what we do.

How much has World Central Kitchen's mission grown, and how will it continue to do so?

We have had three phases. The initial phase was when José founded the organization and learned what was needed. In phase two, after Hurricane Maria, we applied that learning and created our model for disaster response. COVID has led to the third version of World Central Kitchen. We've shown that we can scale and operate with a



massive reach—in 2020, we served over thirty-five million meals in the United States during the pandemic and got food to people in hundreds of cities simultaneously.

Going forward, we're engaging in policy and legislation and targeting the systemic issues that lead to food insecurity because the communities most impacted by disasters are often the most vulnerable. The fact that food touches everything, such as schools feeding children, has been a big wake-up call during the pandemic. We also need to do everything possible to ensure that we're ready to respond soon after an emergency strikes so we can meet people's needs immediately.

For more information, visit wck.org

“ ONE OF THE MAGICAL THINGS ABOUT THE CULINARY INDUSTRY IS ITS STRONG INTERCONNECTEDNESS. WITH A SIMPLE PHONE CALL, PEOPLE JUMP IN AND HELP.”





written and photographed by **shelley goldstein**

PANCAKE UPGRADE

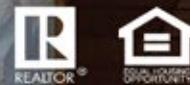
When I was growing up, Saturday mornings always meant Bisquick pancakes. After we poured some regular circles, we'd use the rest of the batter to spell out our names. As an adult, I like to experiment with new ways to spice up my boxed pancake mix. My latest hack? Kombucha!

Hear me out. Replacing the milk with this bubbly beverage makes for a fluffy and slightly sourdough-tasting pancake. I used raspberry lemon, but other flavors would also work well.

eight

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Front of Tear Out Card 2



**baked peanut butter and jam
OAT BARS**

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Back of Tear Out Card 2

MAKES 16 BARS **baked peanut butter and jam OAT BARS**

ingredients:

- 1 tbsp. golden flax meal
- 3 tbsp. water
- 2 c. gluten-free rolled oats (not quick cooking)
- 1 c. gluten-free all-purpose flour
- 1 c. coconut sugar
- ¼ c. tapioca flour (can substitute arrowroot flour)
- 1 tbsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. sea salt
- 1 c. natural crunchy or smooth peanut butter
- ¾ c. nondairy milk
- 1 tbsp. vanilla extract
- ¼ c. favorite jam

instructions:

1. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Line an 8 by 8-inch baking pan with parchment paper by cutting two strips both 8 inches wide and crossing them in the pan to create clean edges. Trim the excess overhang, if needed.
2. Combine the flax meal and water and set aside to thicken, 5 to 10 minutes.
3. In a large mixing bowl, combine the rolled oats, all-purpose flour, coconut sugar, tapioca flour, baking powder, and sea salt.
4. In a large liquid measuring cup or another mixing bowl, combine the peanut butter, nondairy milk, and vanilla with the thickened flax meal mixture until smooth. Add this to the mixing bowl of dry ingredients and fold together until fully combined.
5. Spread the mixture evenly into the baking pan all the way to the edges. Take a dough cutter or knife and lightly score or mark every 2 inches across in each direction, creating the indented lines for 16 square bars. Do not cut through the pan of oat bars at this stage.
6. Dollop about ½ teaspoon of jam on top of each square and gently press it with the back of the teaspoon into the top of each bar.
7. Bake for 25 minutes, until the edges are golden brown and the bars look soft and raised. Cool in the baking pan on a wire rack for 20 minutes before lifting out by the parchment paper edges and placing onto the wire rack. Slice bars where you made the scores.
8. Cool completely before storing leftovers in the fridge. You can warm slightly in the microwave for 30 seconds before eating. Consume within 7 days.

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minimalism sells

Too much furniture can clutter a home (among other things).

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