

Compliments of Jodee Harris

essential living

508

Take on Portland in
48 Hours



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The summer sun is high, the days are long and the call of adventure beckons.

We're kicking off this month by whisking you away to Portland, Oregon, for an unforgettable 48-hour adventure. From eclectic neighborhoods to mouthwatering bites and hidden gems, this vibrant city will captivate your heart in just two days.

Back at home, stay cool with heatless dinners that are perfect for those sweltering summer nights. These simple, refreshing recipes will satisfy your cravings without turning up the heat in the kitchen.

And while you are home, why not indulge in some mini remodels that make a big impact? These simple yet transformative updates will refresh your space and make it feel brand-new — without the hassle of major renovations.

With travel, culinary creativity and home updates all on the horizon, this issue is packed with ideas to help you make the most of this sun-soaked season.

— From the Publisher



What's the best kind of salad for a hot summer day?

Scan the QR code to cast your vote!



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“WOULD YOU RATHER PARTY GAME”

Each player takes turns reading a question aloud and then shares their answer with the group. Get ready for some funny responses and surprising explanations!

Here are 5 fun “Would You Rather” questions to keep the laughter going:

- Would you rather have to sing everything you say for an entire day or only be able to communicate using interpretive dance?
- Would you rather have super strength or super speed?
- Would you rather only be able to eat sweet foods or savory foods for the rest of your life?
- Would you rather have a pet dragon or unicorn?
- Would you rather time travel to the past or the future?



Contents

02 Summer Salads
Refreshing salads to savor this season

06 Mini Remodels
Small updates that bring big style

10 How to Make the Most of Your Spare Bedroom
Turn an empty room into something spectacular!

13 48 Hours in Portland
Vibrant culture, amazing food and outdoor adventures await

18 DIY Movie Night
Turn your backyard into a cinematic escape

21 Heatless Dinners
Cool down with a chilled meal

25 The Power of Gratitude
Reveal the joy in being thankful

28 The Low-Maintenance Guide to Faux Plants
Freshen up any space with faux florals

30 Visual Guide to Sand Sculpting
Explore the fascinating world of sand sculpting

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SUMMER SALADS

From juicy fruits to crisp veggies, these salads bring a burst of color and taste to any meal. Light yet full of flavor, they're the perfect way to savor summer's finest ingredients. Whether you're lounging by the pool or hosting a dinner, these salads offer a refreshing and delicious addition to any occasion.

Grilled Peach and Burrata SALAD

Smoky peaches and creamy burrata make this summer salad irresistible.

INGREDIENTS

- 3 ripe peaches, sliced thick
- ½ c. cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 tomato, sliced thick
- 3 c. mixed salad greens
- 1 ball of burrata cheese
- ¼ tsp. sea salt
- Olive oil, for grilling
- 1 tbsp. balsamic glaze

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Place the mixed salad greens in a large serving bowl. Add ¼ teaspoon sea salt and toss well.
2. Brush the grates of the grill with a little olive oil. Then, preheat your grill to medium-high heat.
3. Grill the peach and thick tomato slices for 2-3 minutes on each side, until you see grill marks.
4. Remove from the grill and place on top of the mixed salad greens. Place the ball of burrata cheese on top.
5. Drizzle the balsamic glaze over top. Serve immediately and enjoy!



Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 10 minutes
Yield: 2 servings



Grilled Chicken & Blueberry

SALAD

A light and flavorful salad, perfect for lunch or dinner.

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cook time: 15 minutes

Yield: 2 servings

INGREDIENTS

For the Salad

- 2 boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 4 c. mixed greens
- ½ cucumber, thinly sliced
- ¼ c. pecans, chopped
- ¼ c. goat cheese, crumbled
- ½ c. fresh blueberries

For the Dressing

- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 tbsp. balsamic vinegar
- 1 tsp. honey
- Salt and pepper, to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

For the Chicken

1. Preheat grill to medium-high heat. Season the chicken breasts with salt, pepper and a drizzle of olive oil.
2. Grill the chicken for about 6-7 minutes on each side or until fully cooked. Let it rest for a few minutes before slicing.

For the Salad

1. In a large bowl, combine mixed greens and cucumber slices. Toss to combine.
2. In a small bowl, whisk together olive oil, balsamic vinegar, honey, salt and pepper until well combined.
3. Divide the salad mixture and plate in two bowls. Place the sliced chicken breast on top of each. Then, top with blueberries, pecans and goat cheese.
4. Drizzle the balsamic dressing over the salad before serving.



Zesty Grapefruit Shrimp SALAD

Bright, refreshing and full of zing — this salad is a burst of flavor in every bite!

Prep time: 15 minutes | Cook time: 5 minutes | Yield: 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

For the Salad

- ½ lb. shrimp or prawns, peeled and deveined
- 1 large grapefruit, segmented (reserve any extra juice)
- Olive oil, for cooking
- 1 avocado, diced
- 1 cucumber, sliced thinly and rolled
- ½ head of lettuce, chopped

For the Dressing

- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 tbsp. grapefruit juice (from the segmented grapefruit)
- 1 tbsp. lime juice
- 1 tsp. honey
- Salt and pepper, to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

For the Shrimp

1. Heat a skillet over medium-high heat and add one tablespoon of olive oil. Once hot, add the shrimp in a single layer. Cook for two to three minutes on each side until the shrimp are pink and opaque. Remove from the skillet and set aside to cool slightly.

For the Dressing

1. In a small bowl, whisk together olive oil, the reserved grapefruit juice, lime juice, honey and salt and pepper.

For the Salad

1. In a large salad bowl, combine the mixed greens and avocado. Add the grapefruit segments and cucumber rolls, arranging them evenly over the greens.
2. Place the cooked shrimp on top of the salad.
3. Drizzle the dressing over the salad, tossing gently to coat the greens and distribute the ingredients. Serve immediately and enjoy!





Chickpea **SALAD**

This salad is quick, healthy and loaded with vibrant flavors.

Prep time: 10 minutes | Yield: 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

For the Salad

- 1 15-oz. can chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1 c. cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 cucumber, sliced
- ¼ red onion, thinly sliced
- 4 c. spinach
- ½ c. feta cheese

For the Dressing

- 3 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 tbsp. fresh lemon juice
- 1 tsp. red wine vinegar
- Salt and pepper, to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

For the Salad

1. In a large bowl, combine the chickpeas, cherry tomatoes, cucumber and red onion. Stir to combine.
2. Next, add in the spinach, tossing gently to mix.

For the Dressing

1. In a small bowl, whisk together olive oil, lemon juice, red wine vinegar, salt and pepper.
2. Drizzle the dressing over the salad, tossing gently to coat all ingredients.
3. Top with feta before serving.



mini RE- MODELS

You don't need a full-scale renovation to breathe new life into your home. Sometimes, small changes can make a huge difference in the feel and functionality of a space. These mini remodel ideas offer quick and budget-friendly ways to elevate your home without the hassle of a full remodel.

ADD WAINSCOTING FOR TIMELESS CHARM

Wainscoting is a classic design feature that brings elegance and texture to any room. Whether you opt for traditional raised panels or a more contemporary beadboard style, wainscoting adds a polished look to entryways, dining rooms or bathrooms. Beyond aesthetics, it also protects walls from scuffs and damage, making it as practical as it is beautiful.



A new backsplash can completely revitalize your kitchen without a major overhaul. Whether you go for classic subway tiles, bold patterned designs or sleek glass tiles, a backsplash upgrade can inject personality and style into your cooking space. Plus, it's a relatively easy DIY project that can make a significant impact in terms of both function and design. Choose materials that complement your countertops and cabinetry for a cohesive look.

REFRESH YOUR KITCHEN WITH A NEW BACKSPLASH

ADD STYLE AND STORAGE WITH BUILT-IN SHELVES

Adding “built-in” bookshelves is a clever way to introduce both storage and style to your home. If you’re handy with a saw and drill, you can create a custom look in your living room, office or even your closet. These shelves help declutter and make the most of your space, especially in rooms with limited storage.





UPGRADE **LAUNDRY** **SHELVES** FOR FUNCTIONALITY

Transform your laundry room into a more efficient and inviting space with upgraded shelving. Adding floating shelves or cabinet-style units provides extra storage while keeping laundry essentials easily accessible. With just a coat of paint and a few simple hardware updates, you can turn your laundry room from purely functional to stylish and organized in no time.

SWAP OUT **LIGHT FIXTURES** FOR INSTANT AMBIANCE

Light fixtures can quickly become a focal point in any room, making them one of the easiest ways to update your space. Swap out outdated or builder-grade light fixtures for something more modern or unique. Consider statement chandeliers, pendant lights or stylish sconces to add personality and illumination. The right light fixture can completely alter the ambiance of a room, whether you're looking for something cozy and warm or bright and airy.



With just a few updates, you can enjoy a more stylish and functional living space – no major renovations required!

HOW TO MAKE THE MOST OF YOUR

Spare Bedroom

Transforming a spare bedroom into a functional and inviting space can enhance your home's overall appeal. Whether you want to create a guest room, a home office or a personal retreat, here are eight creative ideas to inspire your transformation.



BUILD A Home Library

If you're a book lover, turn your spare room into a home library. Install bookshelves along the walls to display your collection and create a comfortable reading corner with a cozy armchair or small sofa. Add soft lighting with a floor or desk lamp and throw in a few cushions or a blanket for extra comfort. This space will be your personal retreat, ideal for diving into books and escaping into your favorite stories.

MAKE A **Multi-Use Room**

Not sure what you'll need the most? A multi-use room might be the solution. Invest in modular furniture, like a Murphy bed or a wall-mounted desk that can be tucked away when not in use. This type of space can serve as a guest room, a home office or a small gym, depending on the time of day. Add a few storage solutions to keep things tidy, like hidden drawers or collapsible storage bins. The idea is to create a room that adapts to your needs.



ARRANGE AN **Entertainment Space**

Make the spare room the ultimate hangout spot by transforming it into an entertainment room. Set up a large screen or projector for movie nights and add comfy seating like a sectional or bean bags for everyone to relax. Install shelves or a small cabinet to store games and other entertainment essentials. Finish it off with some colorful lights to create a fun and inviting atmosphere.



Sometimes, the best thing you can do with a spare room is turn it into a personal retreat. Whether you're looking for a spot to meditate, journal or simply escape the noise of the rest of the house, make sure to create a peaceful, clutter-free space. Add comfortable seating, soft lighting and maybe a few calming elements like a diffuser. Keep the space simple, so it's easy to unwind and reset.

CREATE A Relaxation Escape



DESIGN A Music Lounge

Convert your spare room into a vibrant music sanctuary. Set up a high-quality sound system or a vintage record player to fill the space with your favorite tunes. Add cozy seating like floor cushions or a comfortable chair, creating the perfect spot to relax and enjoy the music. Personalize the space with musical instruments, framed album covers and vintage posters to add character and create the perfect atmosphere for everything from mellow melodies to upbeat tracks.



There's no right or wrong way to use a spare bedroom. The goal is to create a space that fits your lifestyle and needs, whether it's for work, relaxation or fun. So, let your creativity take over and turn that empty room into something you'll actually want to spend time in.

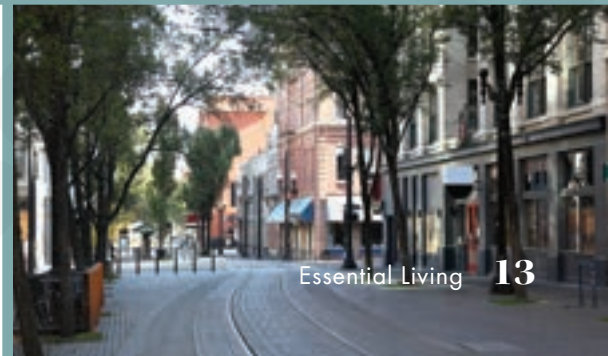
48 Hours

in Portland

Spending 48 hours in Portland offers a whirlwind adventure of must-see sights and hidden gems. Famous for its stunning outdoors, funky culture, unique neighborhoods and vibrant food scene, it's no secret why the Rose City is such a popular travel destination.



Nestled between the Columbia and Willamette Rivers, Portland is surprisingly easy to traverse thanks to its public transportation system, walkability and centrally located attractions. So let's take a walk around Portland; we can check out the highlights, along with a few hidden gems!





Day 1

Begin your trip with a donut. Obviously. Pick up a gourmet donut from the legendary Voodoo Doughnuts in Portland's Old Town. Known for their unique flavors and crazy creations, Voodoo's donuts are always worth waiting in the line that stretches out the door. Pair your donut with a locally roasted coffee from Stumptown Coffee Roasters. This iconic roastery first opened in Portland in 1999, and today, it's a staple of the city. Voodoo not your jam? Have a Blue Star donut, instead! The shops are immaculate, the ingredients all of the highest quality and also, yum!

Once you secure your coffee and sweet treat, continue your walk over to Chinatown, Portland's oldest neighborhood and the location of the original city downtown. Spend a morning exploring this iconic district, home to some of Portland's most interesting landmarks, including the Lan Su Chinese Garden, the Portland Chinatown Museum, the Japanese American Historical Plaza and Portland's Union Station. Don't miss the "Shanghai Tunnels," infamous catacombs that once connected old downtown to the waterfront.



Following your time beneath Chinatown, make your way back over to Pine Street Market for a late lunch. This food hall features local vendors serving everything from ramen to mini donuts. If you're there on a weekend, head down to the Portland Saturday Market after lunch. Located in the Waterfront Park and Ankeny Plaza, this hub boasts local handcrafted goods, unique streetwear and live music. After perusing the booths, follow the Waterfront Park Trail along the Willamette River. There, you can check out the stunning views of Portland's bridges and the downtown skyline as you walk a mile to the iconic Hawthorne Bridge. Then, head west into the hustle and bustle of Downtown Portland. Don't forget to visit the Portland Art Museum, which houses a diverse collection of artwork from around the world.

End your first day in Portland with a night of entertainment in Goose Hollow. This Southwest Portland neighborhood blends historic buildings with modern residences and offers plenty of unique eateries to choose from. Perfect for sports fans and theater lovers alike, here you'll find Providence Park, home to both the Portland Thorns and Portland Timbers soccer teams, and Artists Repertory Theatre in Goose Hollow.



Day 2

Start your second day with breakfast at the acclaimed HunnyMilk, a sweet and savory brunch spot that features New American eats like Crème Brulée Pancakes and Baked Egg Surprise. After fueling up, it's time to embrace Portland's outdoor beauty at the signature Washington Park. The Oregon Zoo, International Rose Test Garden, Hoyt Arboretum and Portland Japanese Garden all reside in this 410-acre parkland. Spend your morning following walking paths among the redwoods as you take in all the wonders that Washington Park has to offer. After you get your fill of nature, it's time to see some city again. Check out Nob Hill, a northwest neighborhood of Portland known for its local shops and eateries of every cuisine. From French cuisine at St. Jack to Japanese at Bamboo Sushi and Moroccan flair at Marrakech Restaurant, there's a little something for anybody seeking a delicious lunch break.



Walk off lunch as you stroll through the Pearl District, a former industrial area turned artsy neighborhood filled with galleries, boutiques and parks. Of course, no visit to Portland is complete without a brewery stop! Just south of the Pearl District sits 10 Barrel Brewing Portland, Backwoods Brewing Company and Deschutes Brewery & Public House. Enjoy a flight or two as you sample a variety of some of Portland's best local brews.

Cross the Willamette River to close out your trip in East Portland. Visit the Oregon Museum of Science and Industry, peruse Powell's City of Books, explore the immersive Hopscotch Art Experience or catch a sunset at Mt. Tabor Park. This public space offers breathtaking views of the city and surrounding mountains.

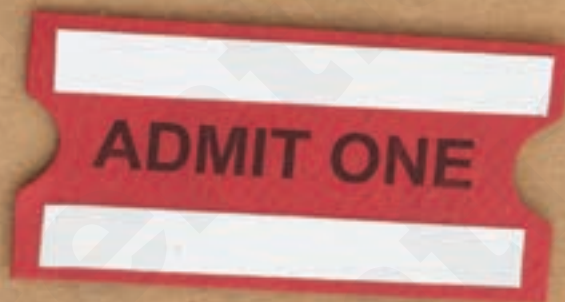
Finally, end your night with a taste of Portland's famous food cart scene. Food carts are so popular in Portland that distinct pods, or permanent collections of carts, form to create a unique dining experience. Cartopia, Springwater Cart Park and Lil' America at Fracture Brewing Taphouse are the three most well-known options in East Portland. Each offers a diverse blend of carts with their own notorious bites. Happy walking and happy eating!



DIY

Movie Night

Transform your backyard into a magical movie theater under the stars with a little planning and creativity. An outdoor movie night is a fantastic way to bring family and friends together for a fun and cozy evening. From picking the perfect spot to serving delicious snacks, here's how to create an unforgettable experience that everyone will enjoy.





Picking Your Spot

Kick off your movie night by picking the perfect location in your yard. Choose a cozy corner that provides a clear view for everyone, ensuring it's a flat area free from bright lights and distractions. Remember to allow enough space for comfortable seating, your movie screen and any fun extras like a snack station.

Setting the Scene

Creating a warm and inviting atmosphere is key to an enjoyable movie experience. Layer your setup with comfy blankets, cushions or even inflatable chairs to maximize relaxation. Add some fairy lights or lanterns to enhance the ambiance and provide soft lighting. If your movie night falls on a chilly evening, consider using outdoor heaters or a fire pit to keep everyone warm and cozy.

Choosing the Right Movie

Now comes the fun part — selecting the perfect movie! Aim for family-friendly films that will entertain everyone. Create a short list of options and let everyone vote for their favorite or make it a double feature for an extra treat!





Snack Time

No movie night is complete without delicious snacks. Prepare a variety of treats to satisfy everyone's cravings. Here are two fun and easy recipes to elevate your snack game:

RECIPE S'mores Dip

INGREDIENTS

- 1 ½ c. semi-sweet chocolate chips
- 1 c. mini marshmallows
- 1 box graham crackers

DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 350° F.

Pour the chocolate chips into an 8- or 9-inch skillet.

Bake for 3-4 minutes or until chocolate is melted.

Arrange the marshmallows over the top of the chocolate chips.

Bake for 2-3 minutes or until marshmallows are browned.

Serve immediately with graham crackers, cookies or fruit for dipping.

RECIPE Snack Mix

INGREDIENTS

- 4 c. popcorn, popped
- 2 c. mini pretzels
- 1 c. mixed nuts
- ½ c. of chocolate chips or M&Ms
- ½ tsp. sea salt

DIRECTIONS

Combine all ingredients in a bowl. Mix and enjoy!

Enjoy the Show!

With the perfect location, cozy setup and delicious snacks, your outdoor movie night is sure to be a hit with family and friends.

HEATLESS DINNERS



When summer's heat is at its peak, the last thing you want to do is turn on the oven. Luckily, you don't have to sacrifice flavor for comfort. This collection of heatless dinner ideas is perfect for those warm nights when you want something light, refreshing and effortless.

POKE BOWL

This fresh recipe is ideal for seafood lovers and comes together in just minutes with three easy steps!

Prep Time: 15 minutes | Yield: 2 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 12 oz. sushi-grade tuna
- 1 tbsp. tamari
- 1½ c. sushi rice, cooked
- ½ c. edamame, shelled
- ½ avocado, sliced
- ½ c. carrots, shredded
- ¼ c. green onions
- 3 tbsp. ahi poke seasoning

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Slice the tuna into ½-inch cubes, then add to a medium mixing bowl. Pour tamari over top. Set to the side to marinate for a few minutes.
2. Assemble the bowls by dividing the rice between two bowls. Top with the edamame, avocado, carrots and green onions.
3. Spoon the tuna on top of the rice and garnish with the ahi poke seasoning. Then, enjoy!

SHRIMP SPRING ROLLS

Say hello to a fun and delicious recipe that's ideal for a hot day!

Prep Time: 35 minutes | Yield: 4 servings



INGREDIENTS

For the Spring Rolls

- 8 pieces of cooked shrimp
- 1 c. butter lettuce leaves
- 1 medium carrot
- ½ cucumber
- ¼ c. mung bean noodles

- ¼ c. red cabbage
- 4 rice paper wrappers

For the Sauce

- ¼ c. peanut butter, creamy
- 3 tbsp. rice vinegar
- 2 tbsp. soy sauce

- 2 tsp. hoisin sauce
- ½ tsp. red pepper flakes
- ½ tsp. sesame oil



INSTRUCTIONS

For the Spring Rolls

1. First prepare all your ingredients. Set your cooked shrimp to the side. Then, tear the butter lettuce leaves and set them to the side in a different bowl.
2. Use a vegetable peeler to make thin ribbons from the carrot before setting to the side.
3. Prepare the cucumber by slicing it into long, thin pieces. Set to the side with the mung bean noodles and red cabbage.
4. Add two cups of lukewarm water to a large bowl. Dip one rice paper at a time in the bowl for roughly 15 seconds. After the allotted time, it should be slightly softened but still able to hold its form.
5. Then, place the rice paper on a plate. Put the lettuce down first, then lay down two pieces of shrimp and about two to three pieces of carrots and cucumber. Add roughly a tablespoon of mung bean noodles and red cabbage.
6. Roll the wrapper from left to right, folding in the top and bottom sides of the wrapper towards the middle, like a burrito. Once rolled tightly and secured, set to the side and repeat with the rest of the rice paper sheets.

For the Sauce

1. Add all of the ingredients to a small bowl and whisk together until smooth. Then, serve and enjoy!



TOMATO & WHITE BEAN SALAD

This simple salad with cucumbers and feta cheese is a must-make dish for those hot summer days.

Prep Time: 10 minutes | Yield: 4 servings

INGREDIENTS

- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- 2 tsp. Dijon mustard
- 2 tsp. lemon juice
- 1 tsp. lemon zest
- 2 garlic cloves, grated
- 115-oz. can of white beans, drained and rinsed
- 1 tsp. pepper
- 1 tsp. oregano
- ½ tsp. dried basil
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1 c. cherry tomatoes, halved
- 1 c. heirloom tomatoes, quartered
- 1 c. cucumber, quartered
- ¼ c. feta cheese, crumbled
- 2 tbsp. parsley, minced

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Drain and rinse the white beans, then add them to a large mixing bowl. Next, add in the olive oil, Dijon mustard, lemon juice, lemon zest and grated garlic.
2. Season with pepper, oregano, dried basil and salt. Then mix to combine.
3. Add the sliced cherry tomatoes, heirloom tomatoes and cucumber to the bowl.
4. Sprinkle in the cheese and minced parsley, then stir again to thoroughly incorporate all the ingredients.
5. Serve chilled and enjoy!



INGREDIENTS

For the Spread

- ½ can of chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1 ripe avocado
- ¼ c. hummus
- 2 tbsp. lemon juice
- 1 tsp. olive oil
- 1 tsp. Dijon mustard
- Pinch of salt and pepper

For the Sandwich

- 4 slices of bread
- ½ c. sprouts
- ½ c. cucumber slices
- ¼ c. arugula

INSTRUCTIONS

For the Spread

1. Add the chickpeas, avocado, hummus, lemon juice, olive oil, Dijon mustard, salt and pepper to a food processor. Pulse on low until the ingredients are combined. There may still be lumps or pieces of chickpeas and that's okay.

For the Sandwich

1. Lightly toast the pieces of bread. Then, lay flat and spread the chickpea mixture on all four pieces of toast.
2. Top with a light layer of arugula. Then, layer one side with the cucumbers and the other with sprouts.
3. Top with the other pieces of bread, then cut in half. Serve with chips and enjoy!

GREEN GODDESS SANDWICH

This sandwich is the perfect option for lunch and a great way to get in all your vegetables.

Prep Time: 20 minutes | Yield: 2 servings



THE POWER OF *Gratitude*

Gratitude, a simple yet profound practice, can significantly enhance our mental, emotional and physical well-being. It's more than just a fleeting feeling of thankfulness; it's a **conscious choice to focus on the positives** in our lives, no matter how small they may seem. This intentional shift offers more than just a boost in mood — it helps **ease stress**, cultivates resilience and even benefits physical health by lowering blood pressure and improving sleep. Practicing gratitude over time allows us to build a more positive, balanced outlook that extends into our relationships and daily interactions.



EVERYDAY HABITS TO *Grow Your Gratitude*

Incorporating gratitude into daily life can be simple and rewarding. Here are some effective practices to help you embrace gratitude every day:

Savoring the Moment

Instead of rushing through life, slow down and savor the present moment. Fully immerse yourself in the experience, whether it's a delicious meal, a good book or a conversation with a friend. Savoring helps us appreciate the present and find joy in life's small details.

Expressing Gratitude to Others

Take the time to express your appreciation to people in your life. Whether it's a heartfelt thank-you note or simply a kind word, expressing gratitude to others strengthens relationships and creates a positive environment that inspires those around you to do the same. Recognizing others can foster a cycle of positivity.

Gratitude Journaling

Set aside a few minutes each day to jot down things you're grateful for. These could be anything from a warm cup of coffee to an encouraging conversation or even the sunlight streaming through your window. The act of acknowledging these moments helps you slow down and recognize small joys you might otherwise overlook.

CREATE A *Gratitude Jar*

A gratitude jar is a simple, visual way to keep track of moments of appreciation. Write notes about things or people you're grateful for and place them in a jar. Over time, these notes become a collection of positive experiences. On difficult days, revisit the notes to recall the good moments in your life.



By practicing gratitude, you'll not only improve your mood and outlook on life, but you'll also attract more positive experiences into your life. Remember, gratitude isn't about pretending everything is perfect. It's about acknowledging the good in our lives, even amidst challenges.

THE LOW-
MAINTENANCE
GUIDE TO

FAUX PLANTS

CRAVING A TOUCH OF NATURE'S BEAUTY BUT LACKING A DEDICATED GARDENER'S THUMB? FEAR NOT! BREATHE LIFE INTO YOUR SPACE WITH THESE TIPS FOR USING ARTIFICIAL GREENERY TO CREATE A STYLISH, LOW-MAINTENANCE HAVEN.



PICK THE PERFECT PLANT:

Gone are the days of dusty plastic ferns. Instead, look for materials like silk or latex that mimic the texture and color of real plants. Choose varieties that complement your existing decor. For a modern vibe, try a spiky aloe or a sculptural fiddle leaf fig. Craving a touch of the tropics? Lush monstera leaves or a hanging vine will do the trick.



POT WITH PERSONALITY:

Don't settle for the plastic planter that comes with your faux plant. Invest in a stylish pot that reflects your taste. This adds instant polish and makes your greenery look more natural.

- **Classic Ceramic:** For a timeless look, choose ceramic planters in neutral tones.
- **Woven Wonders:** Wicker baskets add a natural, earthy vibe and pair well with trailing plants or overflowing blooms.
- **Modern Marvels:** Elevate your space with geometric concrete pots or sleek fiberglass planters.

PLACEMENT IS KEY:

Think strategically! Utilize faux plants in low-light areas where real ones would struggle. Tall plants work wonders in corners, while trailing varieties soften bookshelves or add life to mantels. Don't be afraid to go big! A statement floor plant can become a stunning focal point.

BREATHE LIFE INTO DETAILS:

For a truly realistic look, take a cue from nature. Fluff out leaves, gently bend stems and arrange them for a natural flow. Tuck in decorative moss or pebbles around the base of the plant to add depth and texture.

BONUS TIP

Don't forget to periodically dust your faux foliage to keep them looking fresh!

With these tips, your faux plants will transform your home into a stylish and serene oasis, all without the worry of watering.

VISUAL GUIDE TO

SAND SCULPTING



Imagine transforming a pile of sand into a towering castle, a mythical creature or a detailed scene. Sand sculpting is a captivating art form that lets you do just that, turning ordinary beach grains into extraordinary works of art.

- The first evidence of sand sculpting dates back **500 years ago**.
- The **world's largest sandcastle** was built in Denmark in 2021. It stood at an impressive height of **69 feet 3 inches** tall with a base of over 98 feet.
- When made correctly, outdoor **sand sculptures can last months**.
- Sculptures can be sprayed with a mixture of **glue and water** to help **protect them** from elements.

Sandy Spectacles

Prestigious competitions and unbelievable exhibitions showcase the incredible talent of artists from around the globe. Here's a glimpse into some of these sandy spectacles:

SAND CITY

Lagoa, Portugal

- The largest exhibition of sand sculptures in the world
- 60 professional sculptors from around the globe
- 120 sculptures featured
- Spans over 12 acres
- Some sculptures tower nearly 40 feet
- Past themes have included Hollywood, World Wonders and Dreamland



NEPTUNE'S INTERNATIONAL SAND SCULPTING CHAMPIONSHIP

Virginia Beach, VA

- 15 countries represented
- 32 professional sculptors
- 450+ tons of sand used
- 30 hours of sculpting time
- \$58,000 prize purse

HAMPTON BEACH MASTER SAND SCULPTING CLASSIC

Hampton, NH

- 10 sculptors participate by invite only
- 100-ton sponsor sculpture
- \$25,000 prize purse
- The largest master's competition in the Northeast

Sculpting Your Own Masterpiece

With a little creativity and patience, you can create a stunning sculpture of your own!



GATHERING ESSENTIAL TOOLS

To start your sand sculpting journey, you'll need a few essential tools:

- **A SHOVEL:** For digging and moving sand.
- **A TROWEL:** For shaping and smoothing the sand.
- **A SPRAY BOTTLE FILLED WITH WATER:** To help the sand stick together.
- **CARVING TOOLS:** Pencils, spatulas and brushes work great for creating fine details.

BUILDING YOUR SCULPTURE

- **FORM A SOLID BASE:** Use the “volcano method”—dig a moat around your building area and create a mound of sand in the center. Pour water on the mound and stomp it down to compress the sand. This creates a firm, elevated base to build on.
- **USE WATER WISELY:** As you build your sculpture, spray water on the sand to help it stick together, but avoid oversaturating it.
- **CARVE WITH PRECISION:** Start with more sand than you need, packing it tightly and then carefully carving away to reveal shapes.
- **USE THE PANCAKE METHOD:** For sturdy towers, take handfuls of your sand-water mixture, flatten them into thin layers about an inch thick, then stack them.
- **ADD FINISHING TOUCHES:** Once your main shapes are carved, add details from top to bottom to avoid ruining earlier work. Use a straw to gently blow away excess sand and smooth out edges.



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MINI NO-BAKE MASCARPONE CHEESECAKES

INGREDIENTS

- 1 c. graham cracker crumbs
- 3 tbsp. butter, melted
- 4 tbsp. honey (divided)
- 1 c. mascarpone cheese
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
- Fresh mixed berries

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a bowl, combine the graham cracker crumbs and melted butter. Add 2 tbsp. of honey and mix until the crumbs are evenly coated. Spoon the mixture into the bottoms of mini tart pans or muffin tin liners, pressing down firmly to form a crust. Place in the fridge to chill for 15-20 minutes.
2. In a separate bowl, whisk together the mascarpone cheese, the remaining 2 tbsp. of honey and vanilla extract until smooth and creamy.
3. Spoon the mascarpone mixture over the chilled graham cracker crusts, smoothing the tops with a spatula. Refrigerate for at least 2 hours, or until the cheesecakes are firm and set.
4. Before serving, top each mini cheesecake with the fresh berries.

DUTCH OVEN BREAD

PREP TIME: 15 MINUTES

COOK TIME: 40 MINUTES

YIELD: 1 LOAF

INGREDIENTS

3¼ c. all-purpose flour
1 tsp. active dry yeast
1 tsp. salt
1½ c. warm water (approx. 100° F)

INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a large bowl, whisk together warm water, yeast and table salt until they are almost dissolved.
2. Add flour to the bowl and stir until a sticky dough forms.
3. Cover the bowl with a towel and leave in a warm place for two to three hours and allow to rise.
4. Preheat oven to 450° F, place Dutch oven with lid onto the center rack and heat for 30 minutes.
5. Place the dough onto parchment paper dusted with flour. Use the parchment paper to shape the dough into a round loaf.
6. Using a sharp knife, make ¼-inch deep slashes across the top of the loaf. Gently lower the bread into the heated Dutch oven, cover and bake for 30 minutes. Remove the lid and bake for an additional 5-10 minutes until golden brown.
7. Allow to cool for 20 minutes before slicing.



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Homemade Crêpes



- 3 tbsp. unsalted butter, melted
- 1 c. all-purpose flour
- 1 tbsp. granulated sugar
- $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp. salt
- $\frac{3}{4}$ c. whole milk, room temperature
- $\frac{1}{2}$ c. water, room temperature
- 2 large eggs, room temperature
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. pure vanilla extract

1. Melt three tablespoons of butter in the microwave or on the stove. Set aside and let cool for five minutes.
2. Combine the cooled melted butter, flour, sugar, salt, milk, water, eggs and vanilla in a blender. Blend on medium-high speed until batter is smooth. Refrigerate in an airtight container for at least 30 minutes.
3. Heat an 8-inch skillet over medium heat and generously grease with butter. Once the skillet is hot, pour $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of batter into the center of the pan. Tilt the pan from side to side, forming an even circle. Cook until lightly browned, approximately one to two minutes, then flip. Cook the other side for 30 seconds until set. Repeat with the remaining batter, making sure to grease the pan between each crepe.



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