

Compliments of Jodee Harris

# essential living

411

## Trek America's Wonders



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This month, we're all about creating a sense of well-being that extends from your inner self to your surroundings. Forget the pressure of pristine interiors. We're diving into the world of wabi-sabi, a Japanese design philosophy that embraces the beauty of natural imperfection.

Speaking of nature's beauty, we've curated a list of the best hiking trails across the U.S. Whether you're a seasoned adventurer or a weekend warrior, there's a perfect path waiting to be explored. Then after a day of conquering mountains, what better way to unwind than with yoga poses that will help you drift off to dreamland?

But before you settle in for the night, treat yourself to a delicious apple feast. From savory mains to sweet treats, this issue is bursting with mouthwatering apple recipes.

So, get ready to discover a world of peace, adventure and deliciousness.

— From the Publisher



**What's your all-time favorite apple treat?**

Scan the QR code to cast your vote!



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## Set Up a **Mindful Morning Routine** in 5 Easy Steps

1. Breathe deeply to center yourself.
2. Reflect on gratitude.
3. Stretch/incorporate gentle movement.
4. Set intentions for the day.
5. Start without technology.



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# APPLE EVERYTHING

Crisp, juicy and bursting with flavor, apples are autumn's quintessential fruit. This season, apples are here to tantalize your taste buds and conquer your cravings. From sweet treats bursting with juicy goodness to savory dinners, we're diving into a world of recipes that go far beyond just an apple a day.

## Apple Cider PUNCH

Sparkling with fall flavors, this apple cider punch is perfect for all your autumn festivities.

### Ingredients

- 6 c. apple cider
- 1 c. orange juice
- 4 c. ginger ale or club soda
- 3 medium Honeycrisp apples, thinly sliced
- 10 cinnamon sticks
- 6 tbsp. raw cane sugar
- 1½ tsp. cinnamon
- Thyme sprigs for garnish (optional)

### Instructions

1. Combine the apple cider, orange juice, ginger ale and apple slices in a large pitcher or punch bowl. Stir well.
2. Cover and refrigerate for at least two hours.
3. In a small shallow bowl, mix the raw cane sugar and cinnamon until well combined. Dip rims of glasses in water, then dip and roll in cinnamon-sugar mixture to coat.
4. Garnish glasses with cinnamon stick and thyme.

Prep time: 15 minutes  
Inactive time: 2 hours  
Yield: 8 servings

# Baked APPLES

Warm, spiced and bursting with flavor, these baked apples are the perfect cozy treat.

## Ingredients

- 4 large crisp-tart apples (like Pink Lady, Honeycrisp or Golden Delicious)
- 5 tbsp. unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
- ½ c. packed light or dark brown sugar
- ½ tsp. ground cinnamon
- ¼ tsp. ground nutmeg
- ½ c. old-fashioned whole rolled oats
- 2 tbsp. all-purpose flour
- ¼ c. raisins or cranberries
- ¼ c. chopped pecans
- Honey for drizzling
- ½ c. boiling water, for baking

## Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 375° F.
2. In a medium bowl, mash the butter, sugar, flour, cinnamon and nutmeg together until combined. Then, stir in the oats, raisins, cranberries and pecans. Set aside.
3. Using a sharp paring knife, carefully cut around the core, leaving about one inch from the bottom of the apple. Use a melon baller or teaspoon to help dig out the core. Once removed, use a spoon to get out any remaining seeds.
4. Place cored apples in the prepared baking dish. Stuff the filling into each apple, filling all the way to the top. Pour the boiling water into the pan around the apples to help prevent the apples from drying out or burning.
5. Bake for 20-25 minutes, then loosely cover with foil and bake for an additional 15-20 minutes. Apples should be tender when pierced with a knife but not mushy.
6. Remove from oven and drizzle honey over top. Enjoy!

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cook time: 45 minutes

Yield: 4 servings



Prep time: 10 minutes  
Cook time: 35 minutes  
Yield: 8 servings



# Easy Apple MONKEY BREAD

Warm, gooey and full of cinnamon-spiced apples, this easy apple monkey bread is perfect for enjoying any time!

## Ingredients

- 2 large apples, peeled and diced
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1 tbsp. water
- 2 cans cinnamon roll dough
- 6 tbsp. butter, melted
- ½ c. brown sugar, packed

## Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 350° F and grease a nine-inch cake pan.
2. Add apples, cinnamon and water to a large microwave-safe bowl. Heat for two minutes in microwave, then drain. Let cool for five minutes.
3. Cut each cinnamon roll into six slices and add to the cooled apples. Gently toss to combine.
4. Transfer dough and apples to the prepared pan.
5. In a small bowl, mix the melted butter and brown sugar until well combined.
6. Pour butter mixture over the dough, then bake for 30–35 minutes.
7. Drizzle with the cinnamon roll frosting from the package if desired.

# Sausage and APPLE SKILLET

Savory sausage meets sweet and tangy apples in this flavorful skillet dish.

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cook time: 15 minutes

Yield: 4 servings

## Ingredients

- 3 ½ tbsp. butter
- 4 large, pre-cooked sausage links
- ½ sweet onion, sliced
- 2 tart apples, peeled and sliced
- 2 tsp. parsley, finely chopped
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 tbsp. apple cider vinegar
- ½ c. water

## Instructions

1. Slice the sausage into half-inch rounds and set aside.
2. In a large skillet, melt the butter over medium heat. Once skillet is hot, sear the sausage pieces for 2–4 minutes, until brown on both sides. Remove sausage from skillet and set aside.
3. Add the onions to the skillet. Cook to slightly soften, about two minutes, then add the apples and parsley. Cook until apples and onions are soft and brown, but not mushy, about 5–7 minutes, stirring occasionally. Salt and pepper to taste.
4. Add the sausage, apple cider vinegar and water to the skillet. Let simmer on medium-low for 3–4 minutes.
5. Serve warm and enjoy!





Prep time: 20 minutes  
Cook time: 50 minutes  
Yield: 8 servings

# French APPLE CAKE

Bursting with tender apples and fragrant spices, this classic dessert captures the essence of French pastry perfection.

## Ingredients

- 1 c. all-purpose flour
- ¼ tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 2 eggs
- 1 c. milk
- 2 tsp. vanilla
- 1 c. granulated sugar
- ¾ c. butter, melted
- 2 medium Honeycrisp apples, peeled, cored and cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 2 medium Honeycrisp apples, cored and sliced thinly
- ¼ c. powdered sugar for dusting

## Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 350° F. Grease a nine-inch pan with butter and line the bottom with greased parchment paper.
2. In a small bowl, combine flour, salt and baking powder; set aside.
3. In a large bowl, cream the butter and sugar until light and fluffy, about three minutes. Add in the eggs, one at a time until well combined. Beat in the milk and vanilla.
4. Add the flour mixture and mix on low speed until just combined.
5. Using a spatula, fold in the chopped apples until completely coated.
6. Scrape the batter into the prepared pan and even the top. Place the apple slices skin-side up on top of the cake in a circular pattern. Sprinkle evenly with one tablespoon of granulated sugar. Bake for about 50 minutes, or until the cake is golden and a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. Allow the cake to cool on a rack in the pan.
7. Using a fine sieve, dust with confectioners' sugar. Served warm or at room temperature.

# DISCOVER YOUR **Birth Month Palette**

Ever wonder what colors perfectly show off the captivating characteristics of your birth month? Get ready to immerse yourself in a kaleidoscope of hues that beautifully capture the essence and spirit of your special time of the year.



## **January**

### **DETERMINED AND AMBITIOUS**

A rich maroon evokes a go-getter attitude, ready to tackle any challenge. The deep blue injects a touch of intellectual curiosity and a thirst for knowledge, while a shimmer of gold adds some optimism, reflecting the forward-thinking nature of January babies.





# February

## CHEERFUL AND COMPASSIONATE

Calming pink radiates their remarkable ability to empathize and cultivate peaceful environments, balanced by a whimsical wisteria that infuses creativity and brings out their ability to see the world in a unique way. The soothing green reflects the introspective nature that February birthdays are known for.



# March

## DRIVEN AND FIERY

Crimson red symbolizes their relentless drive to take action, harmonizing effortlessly with a radiant golden sunburst that embodies their steadfast determination. A grounding charcoal completes the palette, symbolizing their ability to channel their energy with focus and practicality.



# April

## ADAPTABLE AND OPTIMISTIC

An earthy green beautifully reflects their innate talent for nurturing and uplifting others, while the delicate cream captures the patience and tranquility synonymous with April birthdays. Their unshakeable strength is elegantly portrayed through a matte black, adding depth to their character.



# May

## CARING AND STEADFAST

Rosy pink embodies the ability May birthdays have to connect with others, with their zest for life shining through in a stunning yellow. Meadow green brings a nurturing energy, completing this harmonious palette with its soothing presence.



# June

## OUTGOING AND CURIOUS

A vibrant seafoam green perfectly matches the bright and cheerful personality of those born in June. A lively coral adds a playful touch to mirror their love for social interaction. A dusty blue hue subtly reveals their depth of emotional intelligence, adding a layer of complexity to their vibrant character.





# July

## CONFIDENT AND SPIRITED

Cool gray exudes the confidence inherent in those born during this summer month, while brilliant blue highlights their sharp intuition. This dynamic palette culminates with a fiery yellow, perfectly complementing their enthusiastic and vibrant nature.



# August

## DEPENDABLE AND CHARISMATIC

A deep green mirrors the reliability that August birthdays are renowned for, complemented by an inky blue symbolizing their loyalty and trustworthiness, while a calming lavender hue beautifully underscores their empathy and understanding.



# September

## BALANCED AND WISE

A lush forest green embodies the thirst for knowledge that September-born individuals possess. The sophisticated charcoal gray reflects their ability to navigate social situations with ease. The finishing touch of plum captures their diplomatic nature and unique ability to see all sides.



# October

## EXPRESSIVE AND TENACIOUS

Vibrant turquoise captures the magnetic and adventurous spirit of October birthdays, as a golden amber radiates their warmth and sociability. Finally, a streak of ocean blue symbolizes the boundless creativity that flows freely from them.

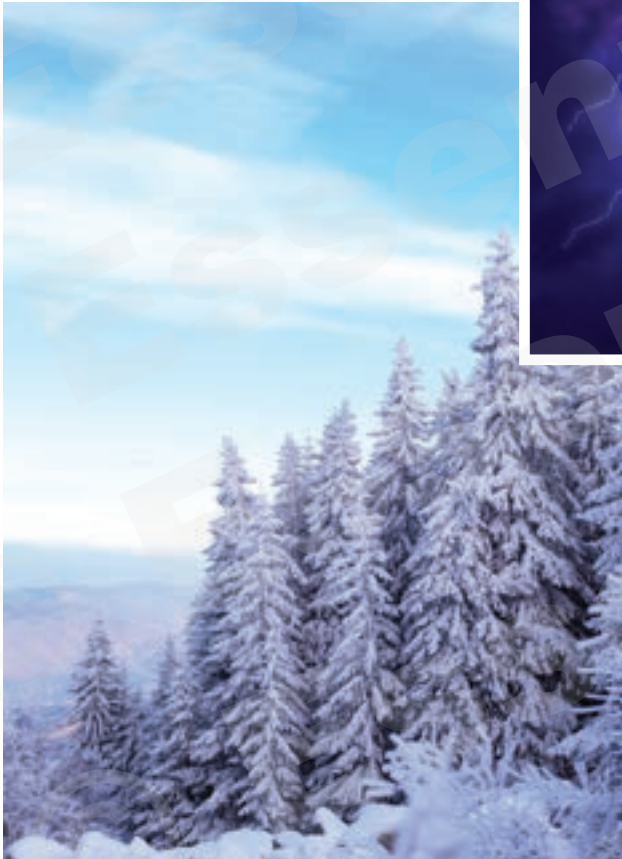




# November

## FREE-SPIRITED AND RESOURCEFUL

A rich burnt sienna underscores the independence and pioneering spirit of November-born individuals, reflecting their desire to carve their own path. A deep chocolate brown signifies their ability to delve beneath the surface. Their resilience stands out with a dusty pink.



# December

## IMAGINATIVE AND SERENE

A serene sky blue embodies the calm and peaceful nature of the December-born. Shimmering silver highlights their ability to navigate life's twists and turns with grace and poise. Finally, a deep royal purple symbolizes their depth of insight.

EXPLORING AMERICA'S MOST SCENIC

# HIKES



The United States boasts a wealth of stunning landscapes, and what better way to experience them than on a hike? From coastlines to canyons, alpine meadows to ancient forests, these trails offer scenery that will leave you breathless. Lace up your boots and get ready to explore!

## Mist Trail to Nevada Falls

Yosemite National Park,  
California

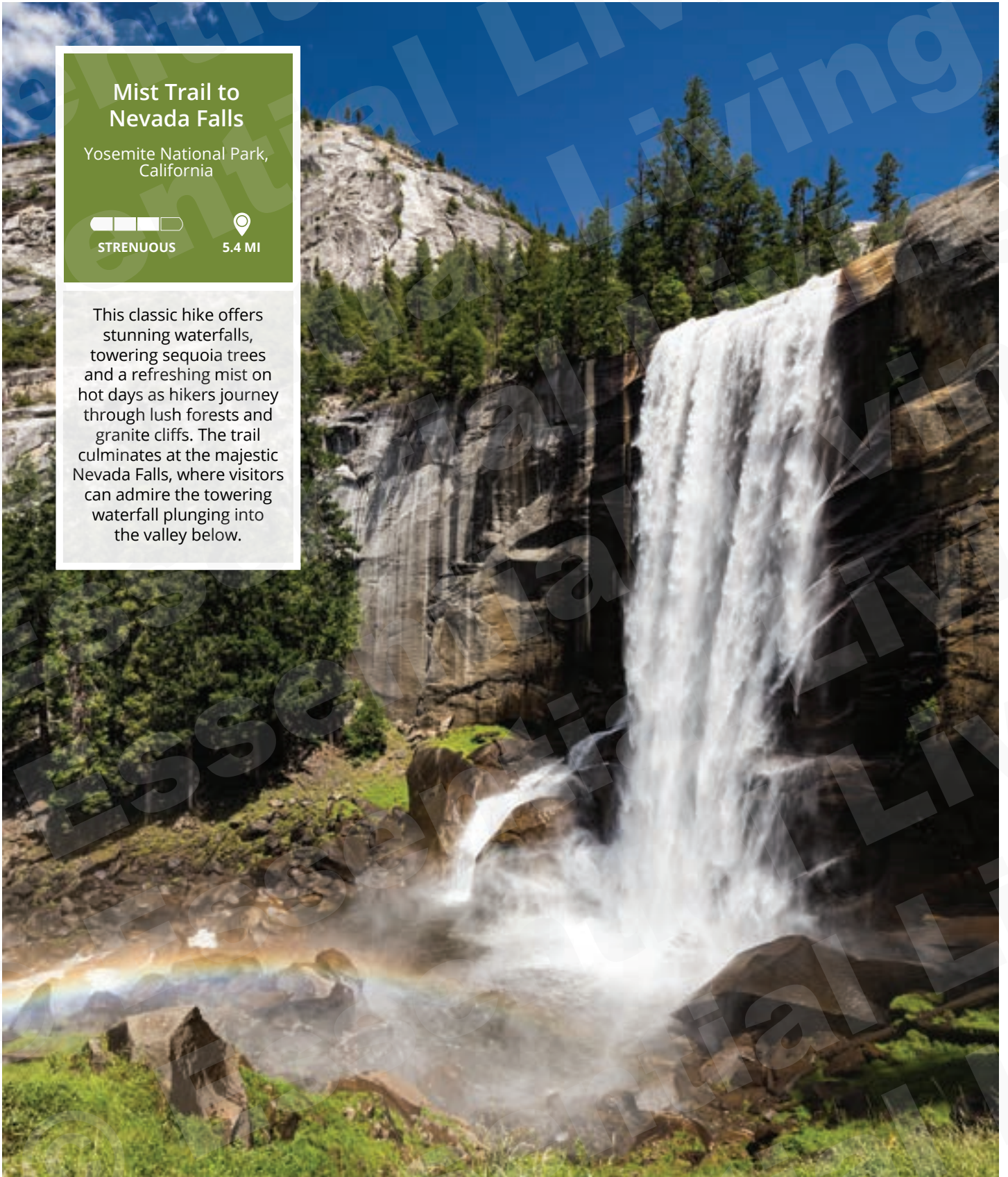


STRENUOUS



5.4 MI

This classic hike offers stunning waterfalls, towering sequoia trees and a refreshing mist on hot days as hikers journey through lush forests and granite cliffs. The trail culminates at the majestic Nevada Falls, where visitors can admire the towering waterfall plunging into the valley below.





## The Wave

Coyote Buttes South,  
Arizona



MODERATE



6.7 MI

The Wave's swirling sandstone formations captivate visitors with their swirling patterns and kaleidoscopic colors, carved over centuries by wind and water erosion. However, getting a permit to witness this geological marvel is all the luck of the draw. Only 68 lucky hikers get to experience this trail daily, with permits issued four months in advance.



## Hidden Lake Overlook

Glacier National Park,  
Montana



EASY



2.7 MI

This hike treats hikers to panoramic views of rugged peaks, alpine meadows and pristine waters. The trail begins at Logan Pass and ascends through wildflower-filled slopes to a stunning overlook. Visitors may encounter mountain goats and other wildlife along the way, adding to the allure of this picturesque alpine hike. The trail is well-maintained and a great option for families.

## Ice Lake Trail

Rocky Mountain National Park, Colorado



CHALLENGING



7 MI

This trail starts off with an intense ascent of 1,600 feet in just two miles. The initial climb takes you through alpine meadows and verdant forests before arriving at the breathtaking Lower Ice Lake Basin. Here, the world opens up, revealing a panorama of majestic peaks: Fuller, Vermillion Peak, Golden Horn and Pilot Knob.

Hike past cascading waterfalls and snowfields tumbling down the rocky slopes and a tapestry of wildflowers. A steeper climb leads to the Upper Ice Lake Basin, where the turquoise waters of Ice Lake shimmer against a backdrop of sculpted ridges and peaks that pierce the 13,000-foot mark.





## Queen's Garden and the Navajo Trail

Bryce Canyon National Park, Utah



MODERATE



2.9 MI

The adventure begins on the Navajo Loop, where you'll be rewarded with stunning panoramic views of the colorful canyon as you hike towards Sunset Point. Take a thrilling detour through Wall Street, a narrow passage between towering cliffs. As you continue along the main trail, keep an eye out for iconic formations like Thor's Hammer, a precariously balanced rock. Then ascend Queen's Garden.

## Cadillac South Ridge Trail

Acadia National Park, Maine



MODERATE



7 MI

This iconic trail offers a thrilling ascent to the summit of the tallest peak on the East Coast. As you hike, the trail winds through lush forests and rocky terrain, revealing stunning views of the surrounding landscapes and the sparkling waters of the Atlantic Ocean. Upon reaching the summit, hikers are treated to panoramic vistas of the rugged coastline and nearby islands, making it a truly mesmerizing experience for outdoor adventurers.



# Wabi-Sabi

Have you ever found beauty in a chipped teacup or a well-worn armchair? This appreciation for imperfection lies at the heart of wabi-sabi, a Japanese philosophy that transcends aesthetics. It celebrates simplicity, the passage of time and the natural world's constant flow. Today, wabi-sabi's timeless principles resonate globally, influencing everything from fashion to interior design.

Wabi, the essence of simplicity and living with less, and sabi, the wisdom of accepting the natural lifecycle of all things, flaws and all, come together in wabi-sabi. This philosophy celebrates the impermanent nature of life and the unique beauty that emerges from it.





## BRINGING WABI-SABI INTO YOUR HOME

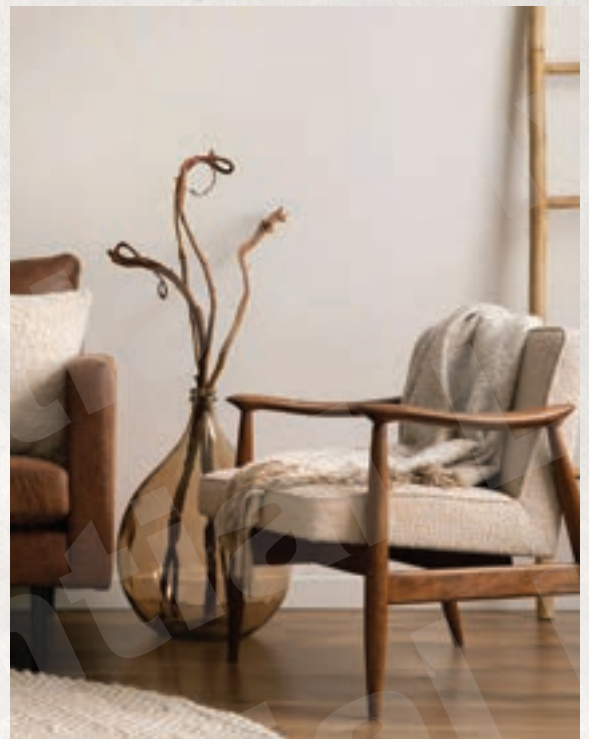
The beauty of wabi-sabi is that it can be incorporated into your home in a variety of ways, big or small. Here are some tips to get you started:

### Declutter and Simplify

Start by decluttering your space and removing unnecessary items that clutter the visual landscape. Embrace negative space and allow your belongings to breathe, creating a sense of tranquility and openness.

### Mindful Curation

As you decorate, approach your space with intention. The objects you surround yourself with and how you place them impact your daily experience. Consider the story each object carries and how it contributes to the overall atmosphere. Choose pieces that spark joy and inspire peace.



## Embrace Natural Materials

Opt for furniture and décor made from wood, stone, bamboo or clay. Look for pieces that show the natural grain or texture of the material. Think of exposed brick walls or a reclaimed wood dining table — each piece becomes a connection to the natural world.

## Worn Beauty

Don't shy away from objects with a bit of history. Vintage finds, chipped pottery or even stones collected on a nature walk can all add a touch of wabi-sabi charm. Imperfect decor, even with chips or cracks, can become a conversation starter and a captivating focal point in your home.

## Bring Outdoors In

Maximize natural light whenever possible. Incorporate plants throughout your home or display organic materials like driftwood.





### Earthy Tones

Embrace a muted color palette inspired by nature. Bold or bright colors are replaced by calming earth tones inspired by nature itself. Think subtle beiges, muted browns and soft grays. These colors work in harmony, creating a tranquil and grounding atmosphere that fosters a sense of connection to the earth.

### Handcrafted Charm

Custom, handcrafted furniture and decorative accessories fit perfectly into wabi-sabi design. Each piece is unique, showcasing the artist's touch and the natural variations inherent in handmade objects. These "imperfections" become the very essence of their charm, adding depth and character to your space.



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Wabi-sabi is a journey, not a destination. Let it guide you towards creating a space that reflects your unique perspective on beauty and imperfection. As you curate your haven, remember, wabi-sabi is not about achieving a perfectly styled look. It's about embracing the beauty of the natural world, finding peace in imperfection and surrounding yourself with objects that spark joy and inspire a sense of tranquility.

# Party-Pleasing Snacks

Planning a gathering and looking to impress your guests with delectable snacks? Look no further! From savory bites to sweet treats, we have a quartet of irresistible party snacks guaranteed to steal the show. Whether you're hosting a casual get-together, a celebratory party or a game night with friends, these mouthwatering creations will satisfy every craving and leave your guests asking for more.

## Strawberry Oat Crumble Bars

### Ingredients

- 1 c. old-fashioned rolled oats
- 1 c. all-purpose flour
- ½ c. light brown sugar, packed
- ¼ tsp. salt
- ½ c. unsalted butter, melted
- 10-oz. jar strawberry preserves

### Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 350° F and line an 8×8-inch baking pan with parchment paper so that the paper overhangs two sides.
2. In a medium bowl, combine the oats, flour, brown sugar and salt. Pour in the melted butter and stir until it forms clumps and the dry ingredients are evenly moistened. Set aside one heaping cup of the crumble mixture, then press the rest into an even layer in the bottom of the prepared pan.
3. Evenly spread the strawberry preserves over the crust. Sprinkle the other half of crumble mixture on top, gently pressing it down.
4. Bake the bars for 35 – 40 minutes, until crumble is golden brown. Let cool completely before serving.



Prep time: 15 minutes  
Cook time: 40 minutes  
Yield: 16 bars

# Cannoli Dip

## With Chips

**Prep time: 10 minutes**

**Cook time: 10 minutes**

**Yield: 10 servings**

### Instructions

#### For the wontons

1. Cut wontons diagonally.
2. In a heavy-bottom pan, pour  $1\frac{1}{2}$  – 2 inches of oil into it and set the stove to medium to medium-high heat. To test if the oil is hot enough to start deep frying, stick a wooden spoon handle — if it starts to bubble, the oil is ready to be used.
3. In batches, add the wontons to the pot in a single layer. Flip the wontons once or twice until golden brown on both sides, 1–2 minutes.
4. Remove the wontons with tongs or a slotted spoon and drain on a wire rack set over a rimmed baking sheet. Repeat until all the wontons are fried.
5. Allow to cool completely, then dust with powdered sugar.

#### For the dip

1. Beat ricotta cheese and cream cheese together in a bowl until smooth; add sugar and vanilla. Continue to stir mixture until sugar is completely incorporated. Fold in chocolate chips until well-blended.
2. Cover bowl with plastic wrap and place in the refrigerator until chilled, at least 20 minutes.
3. Serve with wonton chips and enjoy!



### Ingredients

#### For the dip

- 2 c. ricotta cheese, drained
- 1 8-oz. container mascarpone, at room temperature
- $1\frac{1}{2}$  c. confectioners' sugar
- 2 tsp. vanilla extract
- 1 c. miniature semisweet chocolate chips

#### For the wontons

- 1 pack wonton wrappers
- Oil for frying



# Air Fryer Pizza Rolls

This easy, cheesy snack is ready in under 20 minutes with minimal effort!

Prep time: 5 minutes  
Cook time: 10 minutes  
Yield: 10 servings

## Ingredients

- 1 13.8-oz. can of pizza dough
- 1/4 c. grated Parmesan
- 1/4 c. fresh basil, finely chopped
- 1/2 c. marinara sauce
- Pepperoni
- 1 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 c. shredded mozzarella cheese

## Instructions

1. Lightly flour your workspace and roll out pizza dough into an 8" x 12" rectangle.
2. Evenly spread the marinara sauce on top of the dough. Make sure to leave a one-inch gap around the edges so you can seal the roll. Layer the pepperoni on top, then sprinkle with mozzarella cheese, Parmesan and basil.
3. Starting on the long end of the rectangle, tightly roll the dough, like a jelly roll, the tighter the better. Carefully adjust the roll so the seam side is face-down on your countertop. Use a wet knife to cut the roll into 10 slices.
4. Pinch the bottom of each roll to seal the sauce and cheese inside, then lightly brush each roll with olive oil.
5. Spray the bottom of air fryer with nonstick spray and place a piece of parchment paper down.
6. Place rolls in an air fryer, making sure they do not touch. Leave about half an inch of space between each. Cook in batches if needed.
7. Cook for 8-10 minutes, or until cheese is melted and dough is golden brown.
8. Remove from air fryer and enjoy!

# Bacon-Wrapped Jalapeño Poppers



Deliciously spicy jalapeño halves stuffed with creamy cheese, wrapped in crispy bacon and baked to perfection.

**Prep time:** 10 minutes

**Cook time:** 25 minutes

**Yield:** 12 servings

## Ingredients

- 12 fresh jalapeño peppers
- 8 oz. cream cheese, softened to room temperature
- 1 c. shredded cheddar cheese
- 1 clove garlic, chopped
- ½ tsp. paprika
- 12 slices bacon, cut in half

## Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 400° F. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper. Place a baking rack on top of the baking sheet and set aside.
2. Wash the jalapeños thoroughly and cut them in half lengthwise. Remove the seeds and membranes using a spoon.
3. In a bowl, mix the softened cream cheese, shredded cheddar cheese, garlic and paprika until well combined.
4. Stuff each jalapeño half with the cheese mixture, pressing it in gently.
5. Wrap each stuffed jalapeño half with a half slice of bacon, making sure to cover the entire surface. Secure the bacon with toothpicks.
6. Place the bacon-wrapped jalapeños on the prepared baking rack and bake for 20-25 minutes, or until the bacon is crispy and the cheese is melted and bubbly.
7. Remove from the oven and let cool for a few minutes before serving.



# Yoga Poses

## FOR A RESTFUL NIGHT'S SLEEP

Yoga is renowned for its ability to calm the mind and relax the body, making it an excellent practice to help prepare for a restful night's sleep. If you're struggling to catch those elusive Zs, incorporating these six yoga poses into your bedtime routine might just be the remedy you need.

### Viparita Karani

#### (Legs Up the Wall Pose)

This restorative pose promotes relaxation and improves circulation. Lie on your back and scoot your hips close to a wall. Swing your legs up the wall and rest them comfortably. Allow your arms to fall open at your sides, palms facing up. Breathe deeply and hold for at least five minutes.



## Savasana

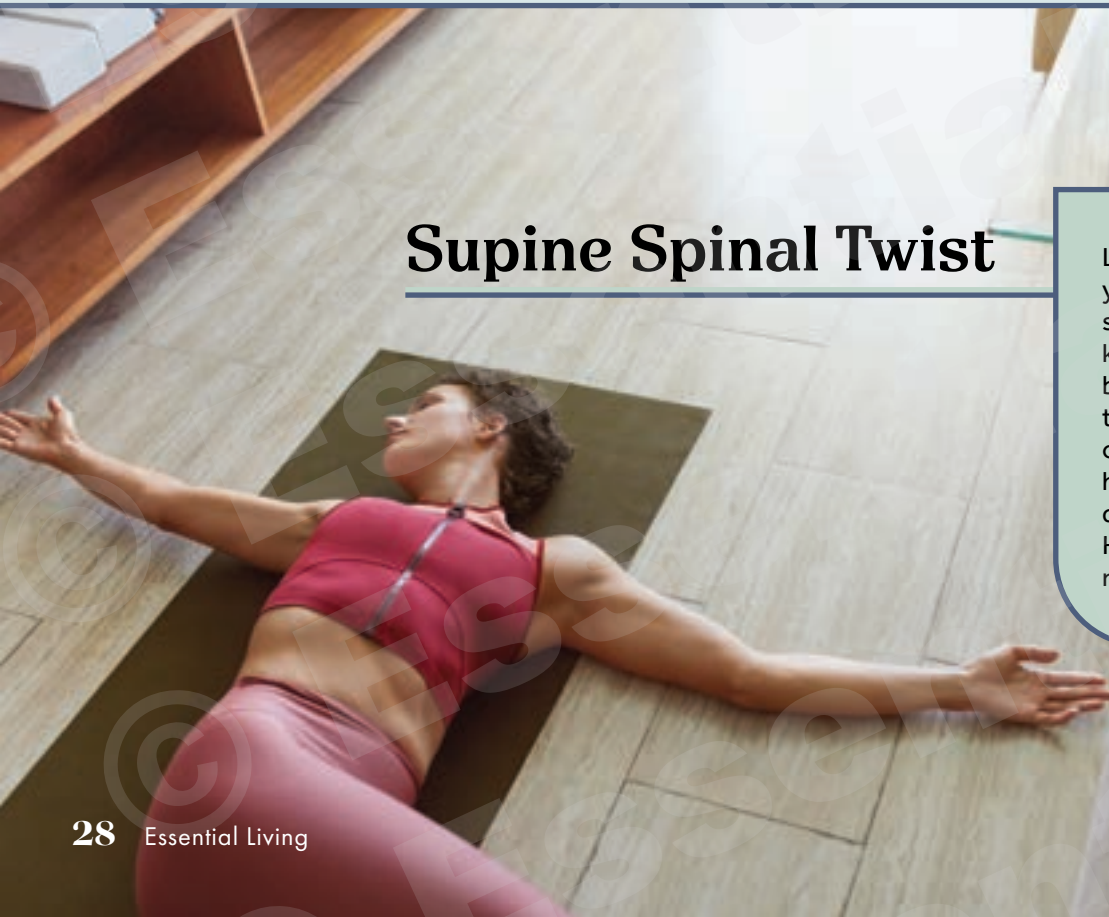
### (Corpse Pose)

The ultimate relaxation pose, Corpse Pose allows your body and mind to fully surrender to rest. Lie on your back with your legs extended and your arms by your sides, palms facing up. Close your eyes and focus on releasing tension from every part of your body, starting from your toes and working your way up to the crown of your head. Hold for 5-10 minutes or as long as feels comfortable.



## Supine Spinal Twist

Lie down on your back with your arms outstretched at shoulder height. Bend one knee and bring it across your body, placing the foot flat on the floor on the opposite side of your hip. Gently turn your head to look in the opposite direction of your bent knee. Hold for several breaths before repeating on the other side.





## Bridge Pose

Lie on your back with your knees bent and feet flat on the floor, hip-width apart. Place your arms by your sides, palms facing down. Lift your hips off the ground, forming a bridge with your body. Hold for a few breaths, then slowly lower yourself back down.



## Seated Forward Bend

Sit on the floor with your legs extended in front of you. Fold forward from your hips, reaching for your toes or shins. If your hamstrings are tight, place a folded blanket or bolster under your thighs for support. Hold for a few breaths, focusing on your breath and releasing tension in your back and shoulders.

# Squashes



VS.

# Gourds



Squashes and gourds are both members of the Cucurbitaceae family, but they have different purposes. Here's a quick guide to tell them apart.

## SQUASH

Grown for their edible flesh. They come in two main types: **SUMMER SQUASH** and **WINTER SQUASH**



**Chayote Squash** — Light and refreshing, this summer squash tastes like a cucumber. You can grill, sauté or bake it or add it raw to salads for a crunch.

## SUMMER SQUASH

Have thin skins and are harvested when immature for a milder flavor.

**Here are some summer squash you should try:**

**Tatuma** — Also called calabacita, this squash is very similar to zucchini but tends to be denser and sweeter with fewer seeds. They are typically club-shaped but can also be spherical.

**Pattypan Squash** — This squash looks like it just landed from outer space! This saucer-like veggie can be prepared steamed, sautéed, fried, grilled, baked or even stuffed.

## WINTER SQUASH

Have thicker skins and are harvested mature for a more robust flavor and longer storage life.

**Here are some winter squash you should try:**



**Sweet Dumpling Squash** — This small squash has a flavor like a sweet potato and is perfect for scooping out and using as a soup bowl.



**Hubbard Squash** — Despite the slate-toned color, this squash has a sweet flesh that can be used as a substitute for pumpkin. However, it has a grainy texture so it's best mashed or pureed.



**Red Kuri Squash** (orange Hokkaido pumpkin) — Once cooked, the bright orange skin on this squash is edible. It is great when stuffed with rice and roasted vegetables.

# GOURDS

Primarily grown for decoration due to their hard rinds and unique shapes. While some young gourds like Calabash can be eaten, most have bitter flesh and are not considered palatable. **Here are some fun varieties:**



**Bottle Gourd** — These versatile plants are known for their diverse shapes and sizes, ranging from small to three feet long. Young bottle gourds are eaten as a mild vegetable, while matured and dried gourds become durable vessels for containers, musical instruments and crafts.



**Warty Gourd** — These gourds have a bumpy, textured surface that adds a quirky touch to fall decorations. The bumps and warts come in all shapes and sizes, making each gourd unique.

**Sponge Gourd** — This gourd isn't just cool looking, it's also super practical! When mature and dried, the fibrous insides transform into natural loofah sponges, perfect for exfoliating in the shower.





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### INGREDIENTS

- 1½ lb. extra-lean ground beef
- 8 oz. Italian turkey sausage
- 1 c. quick oats
- 4 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 c. green onions, finely chopped
- 4 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 1 tsp. crushed red pepper
- 6 tbsp. molasses
- ¾ c. reduced-sodium soy sauce
- 2 tbsp. lime juice

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. Coat 4-quart slow cooker with cooking spray; set aside. In a large bowl combine ground beef, sausage, oats, eggs, green onions, Worcestershire sauce and crushed red pepper. Shape into 2-inch meatballs.
2. In a skillet, cook meatballs over medium heat until brown, turning once. Transfer to prepared slow cooker.
3. Cover and cook on low-heat setting for 4 to 5 hours.
4. In a small bowl whisk together molasses, soy sauce and lime juice. Pour over meatballs. Toss gently to coat. Serve immediately.



# OVERLOADED S'MORES POPCORN



COOK TIME: 10 MINUTES

PREP TIME: 10 MINUTES

YIELD: 10 CUPS

## TWO CLASSIC TREATS IN ONE!

### INGREDIENTS

- 10 c. caramel popped popcorn, homemade or store-bought
- 2 c. Golden Grahams cereal
- 2 c. mini marshmallows
- 1 c. chocolate chips, melted + ½ cup for add-ins

### INSTRUCTIONS

1. In a large bowl, combine the popcorn and Golden Grahams cereal.
2. On a large piece of parchment paper, drizzle the melted chocolate chips. Immediately spread the popcorn mixture over top, making a single layer. Let harden.
3. Break the mixture into pieces and add in mini marshmallows and chocolate chips.
4. Transfer to a bowl and serve!



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# 3-Ingredient Banana Bread

Prep Time: 8 minutes

Cook Time: 45 minutes

Yield: 8 servings

## INGREDIENTS

- 3-4 very ripe bananas
- 1 box yellow cake mix
- 2 large eggs

## INSTRUCTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350° F.
2. Mash the bananas.
3. Mix bananas, cake mix and eggs in a large bowl until combined.
4. Transfer batter to a greased 9x5" loaf pan and bake for 45 minutes.
5. Cool completely before slicing.



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