



Recipes for
Memorable Gatherings

enjoy

PERLA SERVAN-SCHREIBER

Photography by Nathalie Carnet

Flammarion

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Editorial Director: Florence Lécuyer

Editor: Élise Bigot

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Editorial Director: Kate Mascaro

Editor: Helen Adedotun

Translated from the French by Ansley Evans

Design: Flammarion Design Studio (Audrey Sednaoui)

Adaptation and Typesetting: Florence Cailly

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Preface

ENJOY! It's MY word. It conveys delight and kindness and I've used it as my sign-off to emails and text messages for years. Intrinsically, it encompasses "joy".

Two gifts demonstrate my longtime affection for this word. The first is a sign spelling it out in big wooden letters that my "partner-in-crime" Sophie gave to me. It adorns my kitchen in Provence and welcomes everyone who enters. Before that, my team at *Psychologies* magazine, which I ran with my husband JL until 2008, gave me a T-shirt bearing my favorite sign-off.

So it was inevitable that "Enjoy" would one day rise through the ranks to become a title in its own right, and it's a perfect fit for this celebratory book.

I don't know if joy and enjoyment can be learned in the same way as we learn, say, geography, but I doubt it—if so, there would be more joyful people in the world. I do know that joy is contagious, that it feels good, and can change the lives of ourselves and those we love. So, steer clear of grinces and surround yourself instead with those who approach life with joy.

Preface

Whether it's summer or winter, I love gathering family, friends, and my friends' friends around a table because, when the food is good, joy naturally follows. The body and soul are in harmony and lasting memories are made.

It was through such "great gatherings" and the joy they brought that the idea for this book was born.

When you prepare food with your heart, even if you only cook occasionally, soups become merry, vegetables sing, salads dance, vinaigrettes laugh, and your children, loved ones, and friends will cook up their own memories and ask for more.

I draw inspiration from my Mediterranean roots, from France—my adopted home—and from my travels in Asia. I avoid junk food, but spoil myself with small treats every day—in moderation, if possible! I buy organic, but am not obsessive about it, and I often find myself snapping pictures of homemade bread or brioche fresh from the oven to share with my foodie friends. As soon as I set a big table, the party begins. I can already hear the laughter.



*I draw inspiration from
my Mediterranean roots.*



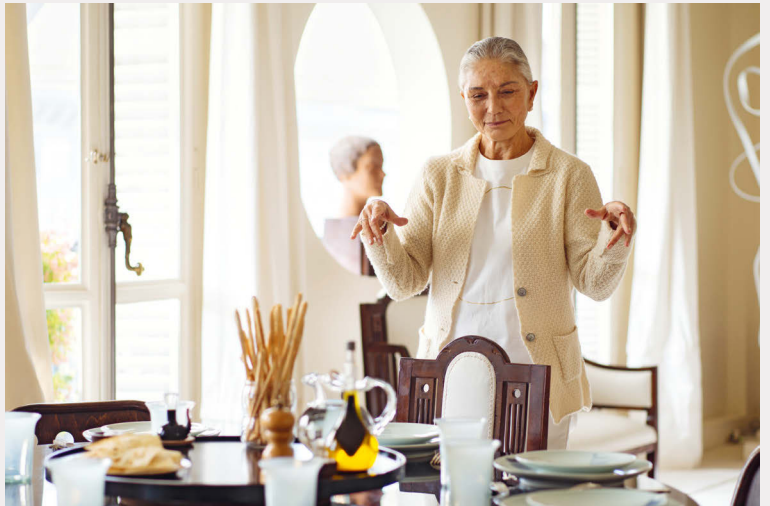
*I spoil myself with small treats
every day—in moderation,
if possible!*





Constraints stimulate creativity.

My mystery ingredient is joy.



We spend at least as much time laughing as we spend working.

*Cooking and serving food
are the cornerstones of my
personal ecology.*

Whatever the season, the aperitif is a ritual beloved by all. In these pages, you'll find many original ideas for cocktail hour, including an addictive ginger and lemongrass infusion that is drunk hot in winter and chilled in summer. A generous selection of zakuska (hors d'oeuvres) has the added advantage that the main meal can be simple, such as a good risotto (my current obsession) and a salad. Dessert, of course, is a given.

Teatime is also sacred in my family (my husband and I forgo lunch for our afternoon tea) and I've included a number of homemade treats to honor this time of day.

Cooking as Meditation

Now that you know me better, I'll let you in on a secret: cooking and serving food are the cornerstones of my personal ecology. They make me happy and are a form of spirituality that fuels me with silence and energy.

To me, preparing food and sharing it with loved ones is a kind of active meditation that refocuses and calms me. Discussing the evening's menu each morning with my husband is a shared ritual that never fails to inspire me.

Cooking is magical—much more than a way to simply nourish ourselves—it can strengthen old bonds or forge new ones, build a family, and provide our grandchildren with memories that someday they too will pass on.

It's impossible not to notice that, despite the foodie craze, we are cooking less and less and, as a result, we are missing out on the pleasures inherent in this ancient craft and the act





Cooking is magical—much more than a way to simply nourish ourselves—it can strengthen old bonds or forge new ones.

of handing it down to future generations. We're also eating increasingly poorly, and, even more troubling, more frequently alone—in many cases at our computers (sometimes even by choice). Eating just anything is an attack on our bodies and eating without pleasure harms our soul. Eating mindlessly prevents us from feeling satiated, which can lead to obesity and threaten our health.

But I'm an optimist, and I can see that the younger generations, both boys and girls, have a greater awareness of the environment and more culinary curiosity than their immediate elders. They are keener to buy organic produce, to set foot in the kitchen, and they are aware that both their health and the planet are in danger. I feel fortunate to be witnessing this change.

In this era of junk food, when restaurants, delivery services, and processed ready-made meals make it possible to eat anywhere and at any hour without having to cook, it's time to give the activity a significance that is both new and ancient at the same time: let's honor the sacred dimension of gathering in joy around a table to celebrate food, the land that produced it, and friendship.

When I go into my kitchen and put on my white linen apron, I begin to breathe more calmly. As all mystics will tell you, joy and spirituality are intertwined.

Tasting joy is like discovering a star as it connects you with something greater than yourself and makes you more luminous, more generous, and more joyful.

ENJOY!





Curried Summer Squash Farfalle

This pasta dish is a variation on one of my most tried-and-trusted recipes: a spiced zucchini and yellow squash gratin that I've been making for years. I'd always promised myself I'd try the same sauce over pasta, and why not toss in the zucchini and yellow squash, too? That's how yellow and green summer squash now find themselves wearing bow ties at my table.

Times

Active: 15 minutes
Cooking: 20 minutes

Serves 10

Ingredients

- 6 small, firm zucchini (preferably light green)
- 6 small, firm yellow summer squash
- Extra-virgin olive oil
- 8 quarts (8 liters) water
- 3 tbsp kosher salt
- Scant 2 lb. (850 g) farfalle
- ¼ tsp saffron threads
- 2 tbsp hot water
- 1 tbsp hot Madras curry powder (if you like spicy food)
- 1½ cups (400 ml) heavy cream
- Salt and freshly ground pepper

To garnish

- Roughly chopped cilantro

To serve

- Freshly grated Parmesan
- Salad of well-flavored greens like purslane

Wash the zucchini and yellow squash and cut into thin slices.

In one large or two medium skillet, heat a little olive oil over low heat. Add both squashes, season with salt and pepper, increase the heat, and cook for 3 minutes until lightly golden, gently turning them over with two spatulas. Set aside.

In a large pot, heat the 8 quarts (8 liters) water with the kosher salt, and bring to a boil. Stir in the pasta and cook according to the package instructions.

While the pasta is cooking, prepare the sauce. Using the back of a teaspoon, crush the saffron to a powder against the sides of a large microwave-safe bowl, and stir in the 2 tablespoons of hot water to dissolve it. Add the curry powder and cream and season with salt and pepper. Microwave for 1 minute on full power, stir, and set aside.

As soon as the pasta is cooked, call your guests to the table because, like a soufflé, pasta will not wait. Drain the pasta, leaving a little water clinging to it, and tip into a large serving dish. Pour over the sauce and stir until the pasta is coated.

Reheat the squash for 1 minute over high heat and spoon over the pasta. Sprinkle with the cilantro and serve immediately with a bowl of grated Parmesan for the cheese lovers among you.

A fresh salad of purslane or other greens will complete the meal and make for a very happy table.





Fusilli with Pancetta and Onions

Of course, everyone knows fusilli! It's short like penne but with a twist and, when paired with the sauces that suit it, is very content—as you will be. Although we don't always follow it (and I'm the same), we all know the Italian pasta law that decrees that every shape has its own sauce—or sometimes several sauces—with which it is meant to be paired. Bearing in mind, however, that all shapes are happy to be dressed with tomato sauce. I have a soft spot for fusilli, especially when served with onions. This recipe was the specialty of my Italian friend Luciano, who came from Puglia and had an unmistakable accent. He was a true foodie who loved making pasta as much as playing soccer or reading the papers. Trust him, it's great!

Times

Active: 30 minutes

Cooking: 35 minutes

Serves 10

—

Ingredients

- 1½ oz. (40 g) dried porcini mushrooms
- 2 lb. (1 kg) onions
- 7 oz. (200 g) pancetta (or bacon)
- 10 quarts (10 liters) water
- Scant ⅓ cup (5¼ oz./150 g) kosher salt
- 2 lb. (1 kg) fusilli
- Scant ⅓ cup (150 ml) extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 1 cup (250 ml) dry white wine
- Salt and freshly ground pepper

To serve

- 2 tbsp toasted sesame seeds
- 1¼ cups (4¼ oz./120 g) freshly grated Parmesan

Soak the porcini mushrooms in a bowl of warm water for 5 minutes and then drain and chop. Peel and thinly slice the onions. Cut the pancetta (or bacon) into thin strips.

In a large pot, bring the water and salt to a full boil, add the fusilli, and cook according to the package instructions.

At the same time, in a sauté pan large enough to hold all the pasta, heat 5 tablespoons of the olive oil over medium heat. Add the onions and fry, stirring frequently, until softened and golden. Add the wine and porcini, season with salt and pepper, and cover. Simmer over low heat for 15 minutes.

While the onions and mushrooms are simmering, sauté the pancetta in a small skillet in 2 tablespoons of the olive oil for 5 minutes, stirring constantly. Remove from the heat.

Drain the pasta, leaving a little water clinging to it, and add to the skillet with the onions together with the remaining 3 tablespoons of olive oil. Add the pancetta and cook for an additional 2 minutes over low heat, stirring often.

And dinner is served! Sprinkle with the sesame seeds and a good dose of grated Parmesan and remembrance.

Sparkling Beets

My big discovery last fall was that beets can be chic! Cutting them into large “fries,” rather than slicing them into rounds, and arranging them in a dome shape in one large or two stylish salad bowls changes everything. The two contrasting shades of red rival a jeweler’s gemstone and the flavor is equally sophisticated. I’ve even converted my husband who, after unhappy childhood memories, used to refuse to eat beets. With red currants or pomegranate seeds and a few sprigs of chervil or chives, the beets come alive and are as stunning to look at as they are to eat.

Times

Active: 25 minutes

Serves 12

Ingredients

- 6 cooked beets, preferably the long Crapaudine variety (or the most flavorful beets you can find)
- Leaves of 12 chervil sprigs (or chive stems)
- 10½ oz. (300 g) red currants (or pomegranate seeds)
- 4 tbsp raspberry vinegar
- 3 tbsp white vinegar
- 4 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- Salt and freshly ground pepper (gray pepper, if available)

Wearing gloves so you don’t stain your hands, peel the beets, cut each one into eight equal slices from top to bottom, and then cut each slice into approximately ½-in. (1-cm) sticks. Arrange them in a dome shape in an attractive salad bowl.

Wash and dry the chervil or chives and chop finely. Wash, dry, and de-stem the red currants.

In a small bowl, whisk together the vinegars and season with salt. Pour over the beets, followed by the olive oil, and add a few grinds of pepper. Scatter the red currants or pomegranate seeds over the beets and sprinkle with the chervil or chives.

Now tell me what you think of my take on children’s building blocks for the chef!

Za'atar-Roasted Butternut Squash

If this recipe reminds you of Yotam Ottolenghi, you're spot on. This Israeli-born chef, who now lives in London, is my idol and I know I'm not alone, particularly since the publication of his cookbook *Jerusalem*, cowritten with his Palestinian friend and head chef, Sami Tamimi. Ottolenghi is a genius at elevating the flavor of even the most ordinary vegetables, through the abundant use of herbs and spices. I love his approach but, to suit my taste, I often cut back on the spice—but not the herbs—and roast vegetables at a lower temperature. Perhaps you'll adapt this recipe to suit your taste, too. This way of cooking squash makes a welcome change from the traditional pumpkin pie or soup made for Halloween or Thanksgiving.

Times

Active: 30 minutes

Cooking: 1 hour

Serves 10

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Ingredients

- 6 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra for greasing
- 2 large or 3 medium butternut squashes
- 4 red onions
- 3½ oz. (100 g) plump dried apricots
- Juice of 2 lemons
- 3 tbsp za'atar herb and spice mix (or dried oregano)
- 1¼ cups (300 ml) water
- Salt and freshly ground pepper

Preheat the oven to 400°F (200°C/Gas mark 6). Brush a rimmed baking sheet with olive oil.

Peel, seed, and cut the butternut squash into ¾-in. (2-cm) slices. Peel and cut the onions into thick slices from top to bottom. Place the squash, onions, and apricots on the baking sheet, drizzle with the olive oil and lemon juice, sprinkle with the za'atar, and season with salt and pepper. Toss everything together with your hands until well coated. Add the water and roast for 30 minutes.

After 30 minutes, give the vegetables a good stir using two large spoons. Add more water, if necessary, and return to the oven for an additional 30 minutes until the onion and squash are tender and caramelized around the edges. A decidedly different take on festive squash!



Garlic and Thyme Carrot Confit

Slowly cooked in olive oil, these carrots are exquisite, especially if you love caramelized notes as much as I do. In this recipe, the sweet caramelized flavor is imbued with hints of garlic and thyme that evoke Provence. Although nothing like a dessert, these carrots are just as much of a treat.

Times

Active: 40 minutes
Cooking: 30 minutes

Serves 12

Ingredients

- 5½ lb. (2.5 kg) sweet, crisp carrots
- 36 pink garlic cloves (5–6 heads)
- 1¼ cups (300 ml) extra-virgin olive oil
- ¾ cup (200 ml) water
- 2 tbsp thyme leaves (from about 6 sprigs)
- Salt and freshly ground pepper

Peel the carrots and cut them diagonally into ¼-in. (0.5 cm) slices. Peel and halve the garlic cloves and remove the germs. **Heat the olive oil** over medium heat in a large Dutch oven or two 9½-in. (24-cm) sauté pans. Add the carrots and garlic and sauté, stirring, until lightly browned. Reduce the heat to low, gradually stir in the water, cover, and cook for 15 minutes. Uncover the pan, stir in the thyme, season with salt and pepper, and increase the heat to high. Cook for 10 minutes, stirring with two spatulas, until the carrots are beautifully tender on the inside and crisp and golden on the outside.

Notes

These carrots are superb with roast chicken.

For rosemary-scented carrots, replace the thyme with the finely chopped leaves from a 4-in. (10-cm) sprig of rosemary. The flavor will be quite different, as will be the health benefits.

Patricia's Crème Caramel

For me, crème caramel is the ultimate comfort food. It's like a cozy blanket and is perfect for all occasions, no matter who is gathered around the table. My friend Patricia's crème caramel is always flawless—including the unmolding—but it's hard to resist a second helping. If you're serving more than eight, it's best to make two rather than double the quantities of ingredients.

Times

Active: 25 minutes
Cooking: 40 minutes

Serves 8

Ingredients

For the caramel

- 3 tbsp water
- 1¼ cups (9 oz./250 g) sugar

For the custard

- 4 cups (1 liter) whole milk
- 1 Madagascar or Tahitian vanilla bean (or ½ tsp ground vanilla bean)
- 6 eggs
- ¼ cup (1¼ oz./50 g) superfine sugar

Preheat the oven to 350°F (180°C/Gas mark 4).

Prepare the caramel by putting the water and sugar in a saucepan set over high heat. Swirl the pan occasionally until the sugar dissolves and then boil until the syrup turns a deep amber color. Pour immediately into a 9-in. (23-cm) porcelain soufflé dish and tilt the dish to coat the bottom and sides. Immediately put the saucepan to soak in hot water—this will make it easier to clean.

To prepare the custard, pour the milk into a saucepan. Split the vanilla bean lengthwise and scrape the seeds into the milk, adding the bean as well, or add the vanilla powder (if using).

Bring to a boil, remove from the heat, cover, and let infuse for several minutes before removing the bean.

Whisk the eggs in a mixing bowl. Slowly pour in the hot milk, stirring slowly but continuously with the whisk to avoid creating froth. If there is any, remove it with a skimmer.

Pour the custard into the dish over the caramel and carefully lift it into a roasting pan. Pour in enough water to come halfway up the sides of the dish. Bake for 30 minutes, watching closely as the water should reach a gentle simmer without either the custard or the water coming to a boil. If this happens, lower the oven temperature to 325°F (170°C/Gas mark 3).

Carefully remove the roasting pan from the oven and lift the soufflé dish out of the pan. Let the crème caramel cool to room temperature, and then either turn it out into a serving dish or serve it directly from the soufflé dish. Dust with superfine sugar.





Arthur's Chocolate Gâteau

I've dedicated a cake (their favorite) to each of my grandchildren. Arthur is my oldest grandchild and he chose my chocolate gâteau to be named after him.

Times

Active: 25 minutes

Cooking: 22–25 minutes

Serves 8

—

Ingredients

- 10½ oz. (300 g) dark chocolate, 70% cacao
- 3 tbsp black coffee (or 1 tsp instant coffee dissolved in 3 tbsp boiling water)
- 1¼ sticks (7 oz./200 g) salted butter, thinly sliced and softened
- 5 eggs
- 1½ cups (6 oz./180 g) confectioners' sugar, divided, plus extra for dredging

To serve

- Crème Anglaise (see recipe p. 193)

Remove a rack from the oven and preheat the oven to 300°F (150°C/Gas mark 2). Stand a 9½-in. (24-cm) nonstick shallow cake pan (preferably silicone) on the rack to make it easier to transfer to the oven when filled with cake batter.

Chop the chocolate into small pieces and place in a microwave-safe bowl with the coffee and butter. Microwave on full power for 1 minute to melt the butter and partially melt the chocolate, making sure the mixture doesn't boil. There will still be some half-melted pieces of chocolate, so work it with a spatula until they melt and the chocolate is perfectly smooth. Alternatively, you can melt the chocolate, coffee, and butter together in a saucepan over low heat, stirring constantly with a spatula until smooth.

Separate the eggs, placing the yolks in one large bowl and the whites in another. Add ¾ cup (3½ oz./100 g) of the confectioners' sugar to the egg yolks and whisk with an electric beater until pale and foamy. Wash and dry the beaters, and then whip the whites with the remaining confectioners' sugar until firm peaks form. Whisk the melted chocolate mixture into the egg yolks until smooth. Using a spatula, gradually fold in the whites until no streaks remain, taking care not to deflate them.

Pour the batter into the pan, slide the rack back into the oven, and bake for 22–25 minutes until the cake is set but still soft in the center.

If you have used a nonstick rather than a silicone pan, let the cake cool for 20 minutes before turning it out onto a serving plate. Let cool to room temperature. If you have used silicone, let the cake cool in the pan, and turn it out when ready to serve. The cake can be left at room temperature for several hours but do not refrigerate it. At the last minute, dust the cake with confectioners' sugar and serve with Crème Anglaise.