

The background of the entire cover is a photograph. It shows a person's hand holding a bouquet of flowers. The hand is wearing a ring with a large orange stone. The bouquet includes several orange daisy-like flowers and one white daisy with a red center. The background of the photo is a pair of dark denim jeans with a metal button visible. The title 'The Kindred Life' is overlaid in a large, white, serif font.

The Kindred Life

Stories & Recipes
to Cultivate a
Life of Organic
Connection

cofounder of
*The
Kindred
Farm*

CHRISTINE MARIE BAILEY

A PDF COMPANION TO THE AUDIOBOOK

The Kindred Life

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This is a work of nonfiction. The events and experiences detailed herein are all true and have been faithfully rendered as remembered by the author, to the best of her ability. Some names have been changed to protect the privacy of the individuals involved.

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CHAPTER 1 IS ABOUT

Voice

We all have a song inside that's waiting to be sung. Our voices may be gritty and imperfect at first, but it's time to start singing.

- What does bravery mean to you?
- Name a time when you felt the most “you” you’ve ever been. Write a few thoughts about when and where you were and how it felt.
- While reading this chapter, what inner “song” began to come to the surface? *Pay attention* to that now and make note of what you’re sensing.
- What does your unique “voice” sound and look like?
- What are you proud of in yourself? What do you like about the life you’re living?
- What are some things you’d like to change?

CHAPTER 2 IS ABOUT

risk

“Kindred” can enter your life in all sorts of ways, but sometimes it will take risk, vulnerability, and a leap of faith.

- Who has lit a spark in you, lighting up the world for you in a way that feels true, in a way that you’ve never seen before? Who has helped you see the truest parts of your personality and celebrated your uniqueness?
- Whom will you light a spark for?
- What are some risks you’ve taken that were absolutely worth it?
- In what relationships do you feel most fully yourself? What is it about those relationships that makes you feel that way?
- Which people in your life feel “kindred” to you? Why?

CHAPTER 3 IS ABOUT



Even at the ends of the earth, I found the key elements of human connection: vulnerability, struggle, joy, nourishment. We are more alike than we think we are.

- Who are some women—where you live or abroad—who have inspired you?
- How did they inspire you? How do they affect your life today?
- In your opinion, what qualities make a strong woman?
- Do you feel strong?
- I've been called to stay and sow seeds here for now. "It's a vow to stay here and welcome people in. . . . To be faithful with the land beneath my feet. . . . That's just as valuable of a dream and calling." Do you believe you can serve more effectively by being rooted to where you're called to be? How can you be faithful with the land beneath your feet today?

CHAPTER 4 IS ABOUT

Origin

We all have to start somewhere, and we're all amateurs at the beginning. We can't let that stop us. Until we try, we never know what goodness might unfold. Start small. Just begin.

- What is something that is definitely not working for you anymore?
- What is your “new piece of paper”?
- What dream, goal, or idea do you have in mind right now?
- What's holding you back from trying for the first time or trying all over again?

Here are some steps to take:

- **Clear the land.** What in your life needs to be eliminated so you can pursue this dream?
- **Amend the soil.** Add in nourishment by surrounding yourself with voices and knowledge that move you closer to your purpose.
- **Start small; just begin.** You're not building an entire farm yet, just a tiny garden. How can you take the first small step forward?

CHAPTER 5 IS ABOUT



exploration

When we pay attention to the passions bubbling up inside us, then explore them regardless of the destination, we can create something special and unique.

- Think about how the farmers invited us into their way of life and made time for us to learn. “They were just doing their jobs diligently with passion—they didn’t know the time they spent with us was stoking the fire of a dream that would continue to grow for years to come.” Has someone done that for you?
- How can you live in such a way that it might stoke the fire of another person’s dreams?
- What is something you’ve been wanting to explore? Whom can you take with you?
- What “back roads”—places you can visit or research, or people you can talk with—would help you learn more about the dream or idea you’re wanting to pursue?

CHAPTER 6 IS ABOUT

diversity

Food is more than just physical sustenance; it stirs vulnerability, it connects us, it makes us human. Sharing food brings us together in our diversity because it's something we all need and crave. Food is a gift we can hold in our hands and pass along to others to nourish them in all kinds of ways.

- In what ways have you seen that food is more than physical sustenance?
- Have you ever experienced food as a gift—as the giver or the recipient? What was that experience like?
- What's a diverse group of people you've been a part of, and how did a shared food experience play a role in that?

CHAPTER 7 IS ABOUT

Change

Sometimes you have to cut down something that's still growing in order to make room for something new. A new, fresh crop that goes with the season.

- Let's think about change—the good kind, the kind that moves you forward. Are you being “uprooted” right now in any way?
- Is there something in your life that looks like loss but could instead be making way for a new, better “crop” to grow in this season?
- What are you afraid of losing if you change?
- How is fear stopping you from doing the actions that bring you closer to the life you want to live?
- What are some things you're stirred to do now—big or small—to move in the direction of good, healthy change?

CHAPTER 8 IS ABOUT



Perfection idealizes what we hope the end result will be rather than seeing the beauty along the way. Progress, on the other hand, says that abundant life isn't found in the end result but in the journey itself.

- In what areas of your life have you felt driven to achieve perfection? How has that turned out for you?
- What are some ways you could aim for progress instead?
- What “messy middle” are you in the midst of right now?
- In what ways are you idealizing the end result of the dream home, family, career, marriage, or friendship, rather than seeing the beauty that's trying to speak to you along the way?

CHAPTER 9 IS ABOUT

Vulnerability

We experience kindred in the stripped-down moments of our humanity, sometimes giving and sometimes receiving.

- What feelings or personal experiences did your mind conjure as you read this chapter?
- “We say we want a life that goes smoothly with no problems in it. But what we really want is to know that we have people who will walk through the hard with us.” Write some thoughts on this quote. Do you believe this?
- If you had to choose an easy life alone, or a harder life as part of a tightly knit, authentic community, which would you choose?

CHAPTER 10 IS ABOUT

Strength

We are often stronger than we think we are and more capable than we realize.

- When is a time you felt you were going to break? Who was with you? How did you pull through it?
- Have you ever felt God was giving you supernatural strength, either directly or through the encouragement of another person?
- Name a time when you felt really strong or brave, even if you still felt scared out of your mind. When and where was it, and what were you doing?
- Write down three of the hardest things you've ever done. How were they worth it? How did you grow?

CHAPTER 11 IS ABOUT

Community

Something beautiful can be built that the community can enjoy, but it will take consistency and responsibility, even when it's hard.

- Have you ever been a part of a community experience like I describe in this chapter?
- Which part of the story resonated most with you?
- Do you believe that “together” is the best place to do hard things? How have you experienced it?
- What is a way you can take on something hard with your own people to work toward a good and worthy goal? What abundance are you hoping it will create?
- Instead of aiming for perfect, fancy, or curated, how can you give people “real”? How can you give them “kindred”?

CHAPTER 12 IS ABOUT

adventure

However big or small, adventures, especially in our ordinary lives with our people, lead to the best stories and memories, the ones we tell over and over. Let's fill our lives with more of those moments.

- Name a time you felt free and wild, uninhibited, fully yourself.
- Is there something you've always wanted to do or try but haven't ever done? Why?
- Write down four specific time slots in a month when you could add in some kind of adventure. If you think there's no empty time slot, what can you eliminate or move around to carve out time?
- Think of things you do on an ordinary basis—the way you eat your meals or spend your weekends or even your weeknights. How can you add an element of adventure to make these things a little more special and unexpected?

CHAPTER 13 IS ABOUT

savoring

We all want time to “slow down,” but we rarely do anything about it. There are ways we can live so time feels slower, longer, and fuller of the things we truly value.

- Think of the moments that make you say out loud or to yourself, “Time, slow down!” What are those moments usually related to? What sparks that in you?
- Describe a day you can remember where time felt “endless” in a good way? Where were you? Who were you with? What did you do that day?
- What practices from that day can you build in your regular life, on a weekly basis, to stretch out time more and more?
- List some things you wish you had time for.
- What can you say no to that is stealing time away from you?
- What can you say yes to so you can log more moments in the present?
- Record your “day in the life” on an ordinary day. What do you notice about how you spend your time?
- Are you spending your time the way you want to?

CHAPTER 14 IS ABOUT

belonging

The table is more than a piece of furniture; it's a place where our bodies and souls are nourished. I've described many (but not all!) of the significant tables of my life where love and nourishment and connection have drawn me back time and again.

- What are the significant tables of your life, and what are some memorable moments that have happened there?
- Have you ever had an experience where you felt too insecure to welcome someone into your home and around your table? What do you think you might have missed out on?
- How can you invite people in around your table now, as is, however messy or imperfect? Name three possible ways and choose the one you'll pursue first.

CHAPTER 15 IS ABOUT

action

It's never too late to change. You can't miss the window. Your Kindred Life is worth fighting for, and it's time to take a step forward, trusting the goodness of the journey you're on, using the gifts you've been given.

- Write a letter to your past self. What do you wish you could say? What wisdom do you have now, from where you stand today? What can you see from the journey that has unfolded?
- What is something deeply rooted inside you that wants to be expressed?
- What about your life do you wish to change? What are you going to do about it?
- What are things you've always been?
- What are things you've always loved?
- How can you reconnect with them now?
- Spend some time thinking about the gifts you have to offer the world. How will you make the choice to offer them up, to sing your song?
- What have you learned about living a life of deeper purpose and connection?
- Who is a trusted person (or who are trusted people) on this journey with you?
- What is *your* Kindred Life?

Recipes



Curry Chicken Salad

When I first met Steven, I basically lived on grilled chicken, apples, peanut butter, broccoli, and frozen chicken tenders. Thank God he swept in and showed me the whole big, beautiful world of food that was out there and helped me venture beyond bland snack food. A basic yet perfectly balanced chicken salad is one of the first recipes I learned from him, and whenever I think about it, it reminds me of our early married days, when we made this often as an easy lunch or to take on a picnic.

This recipe has both Asian and Southern flair, just like my Korean-Southern-chef husband. Duke's mayonnaise, a North Carolina staple, is a shout-out to his Southern side of the family who lives in the Raleigh area.

Makes 6 to 8 servings

- 1 1/2 pounds boneless, skinless chicken breast
- 2 cups Duke's mayonnaise or your preferred brand
- 1/2 cup mango chutney or peach jam
- 3 tablespoons curry powder
- 2 large celery stalks, diced small
- 1 1/2 cups roasted cashew halves
- 1/4 cup golden raisins or regular raisins
- 2 green onions, chopped (both the white and green parts)
- 2 teaspoons sea salt
- 1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

Fill a large pot with water. Put the chicken in the pot, and bring the water to a boil. Once bubbles form, reduce to a simmer, put a lid on the pot, and leave the chicken alone for 1 hour while it poaches.

While the chicken poaches, use a medium-size bowl to combine the mayonnaise, mango chutney, curry powder, celery, cashews, raisins, green onions, salt, and pepper. Stir until well combined.

Take the chicken out of the pot, and it will be fall-apart tender. Dice it into cubes, and add it to the mixture in the bowl.

SERVING SUGGESTIONS

- Garnish the chicken salad with fresh cilantro and serve it on a bed of butter lettuce or spinach.
- Stuff the chicken salad inside lettuce wraps.
- Serve the chicken salad in a bowl and use crackers or dried roasted seaweed to scoop it up.
- Spread the chicken salad on bread as an open-face sandwich.

Signature Tea and Coffee Lattes

This is exactly how I've been making my tea and coffee drinks for years, and it always transports me back to my Dallas backyard garden, where I loved to drink a morning tea or coffee latte and walk around, dew collecting on my shoes, to see what had sprouted overnight.

Now I like drinking a morning latte while visiting the wildflower fields and saying good morning to my lettuce plants and cosmos reaching to the sun.

If you come to my house, you'll be offered one of these, and you'll get to choose your favorite mug too.

When I make a tea latte, I use yerba maté, which is a loose-leaf tea made with leaves grown in the South American rainforest and hand harvested. It's loaded with vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, and polyphenols. Yerba maté is brewed into a tea and savored every day in many South American countries, preferably with friends. It gives you natural energy from "mateine," which doesn't cause the same jittery effect of caffeinated coffee.

Still, I'm not completely giving up coffee! When I make a coffee latte, I make it in a French press. I like a medium or dark roast because it makes richer coffee drinks.

Makes 1 serving

- 1 (13.5-ounce) can coconut milk
- 1/4 cup filtered water
- 12 ounces brewed yerba maté or brewed coffee
- 1 packet or 8 drops natural sweetener
- Sprinkle of cinnamon

In a mason jar, add the coconut milk and filtered water, then shake vigorously. (I find that undiluted coconut milk is great for cooking but too rich to drink in a latte.) You could also warm the coconut milk in a pan with 1/4 cup filtered water until it's combined. Put the thinned coconut milk in a jar and store in the fridge for later use.

Brew the tea or coffee according to your preferred method and strength.

Froth about $\frac{1}{4}$ cup of the thinned coconut milk. I have an electric frother that both heats and froths the milk. If you don't have one of these, then froth it with a handheld frother.

Choose your mug, add sweetener to the bottom of the mug, and pour in the hot tea or coffee.

Layer the frothed milk on top and sprinkle with cinnamon.

NOTES

- You can substitute another nut milk, but coconut milk is my favorite. If you use a different milk, there's no need to thin it with water.
- Stevia is my preferred natural sweetener. I use either 1 packet of powdered or 8 drops of SweetLeaf Sweet Drops Vanilla Crème liquid stevia. However, if you don't like the taste of stevia, you can substitute 1 tablespoon of honey, maple syrup, or coconut palm sugar.

Heirloom Tomato Bruschetta

I can taste them now as I type this: sweet, tangy heirloom tomatoes carried home in a little paper basket from a Texas farm trip that morning, which means those tomatoes were probably pulsing on the vine the day before. Fresh basil from our backyard garden, pungent Parmesan cheese, and the juices dripping as my teeth sink into the thick, buttery toasted bread.

Making this recipe with our own farm-grown tomatoes now is even more fulfilling. It's as simple and rustic as it gets, yet it is a stunner on a plate.

Makes 4 servings

- 2 large heirloom tomatoes, diced
- 2 teaspoons sea salt
- 4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, divided
- 4 large, thick slices sourdough bread
- 1 large garlic clove, minced
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese, divided, plus more for garnish
- 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
- 6 large basil leaves, cut into thin ribbons, plus more for garnish

Place a colander over a large bowl. Put the diced tomatoes in the colander and sprinkle with the sea salt. Mix and let the tomatoes sit in the colander for 30 minutes so all the juices run out. This removes the moisture and concentrates the flavor.

Add 2 tablespoons of the olive oil to a large skillet and panfry each slice of bread until it's golden on both sides, approximately 2 to 3 minutes on each side. Once you remove them from the skillet, sprinkle $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of the Parmesan cheese evenly over each slice.

Transfer the tomatoes to a large bowl; then add the remaining 2 tablespoons of olive oil, garlic, the remaining $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of Parmesan cheese, red wine vinegar, and basil. Stir gently until well combined.

Evenly spoon the mixture on top of each slice of toast, garnish with a few more leaves of chopped fresh basil and another sprinkle of grated Parmesan cheese, and serve immediately. This recipe is best served fresh. If you make it ahead of time, the tomato mixture or bread can turn mushy. No one wants mushy bruschetta!

Herb-Roasted Veggies

One benefit of owning an organic produce co-op was that we always had abundant veggies to cook and experiment with at home. Now on the farm, one of our favorite simple dinners is a pan of roasted veggies with creamy dipping sauces, a salad, and some kind of meat: roasted chicken thighs, a whole chicken, sausage, or ground beef. A pan of roasted veggies is quick to prepare, and you can let the veggies roast while you make the rest of your meal.

You want roasted veggies that are perfectly crisp and brown on the outside but soft on the inside. It's an easy set formula you can use with whatever veggies you have on hand.

Here are some of my favorite veggies to roast—any or all of them together: radishes, broccoli, cauliflower, zucchini, yellow squash, potatoes, sweet potatoes, butternut squash, beets, and carrots.

Makes 6 to 8 servings

Approximately 6 cups cubed veggies of choice
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, avocado oil, or coconut oil
1 tablespoon Kindred Farm "The Everyday" Spice Mix

Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.

Peel your veggies as desired, although I recommend leaving the skin on for maximum vitamins! Then cut them into 1-inch pieces.

Fill a roasting pan with the veggies and toss them with the oil and herb blend so all the veggies are coated.

Arrange the veggies in a single layer, leaving space between them. If you crowd the veggies on the pan, they'll steam instead of roast, and you won't get that incredible browning on all sides.

Roast the veggies for 20 minutes. Toss and check them to see if they're becoming golden brown. If not, roast for a few minutes longer.

NOTE

- You can substitute 1 teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon black pepper, and 1 teaspoon garlic powder for the spice mix.

Herbed Mayo

And because the only thing better than a plate of seasonal roasted veggies is roasted veggies in creamy dipping sauces . . .

Makes 1/2 cup

1/2 cup mayonnaise

1 teaspoon Kindred Farm “The Everyday” Spice Mix, or 1 teaspoon from a mixture of equal parts sea salt, black pepper, and garlic powder

In a small mixing bowl, stir the mayo and herb blend together with a spoon until creamy.

I love dipping the roasted veggies into the herb blend—a little creaminess with each bite!

Beet Hummus

Adding a splash of magenta to your plate is unique and fun, and even my girls like this dish because it’s bright pink! This hummus would also make for an amazing pop of color on a charcuterie board.

Makes 1 quart

3 to 4 medium beets

1/4 cup tahini

Juice from 1 lemon

1 to 2 cloves garlic

1 to 2 teaspoons cumin

4 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

Sea salt and cracked black pepper to taste

Optional toppings: drizzle of local raw honey, powdered turmeric, smoked paprika, toasted nuts, chopped parsley, or chopped cilantro

Fill a medium-large pot with water. Cut the ends off the beets and place them in the pot. Bring the water to a boil, and boil the beets until fork tender—that is, cooked just enough that a fork passes into the middle of the beet easily.

Drain the beets and let them cool a bit. (If you decide to peel the beets, the skins will slide right off.)

Put the beets in a food processor with the tahini, lemon juice, garlic, and cumin. Pulse until the ingredients start to form a paste.

Using a rubber spatula, scrape the sides of the food processor bowl to make sure all the little bits are in the mixture, and pulse again.

Drizzle in the olive oil a tablespoon at a time, and keep pulsing until the mixture has a creamy consistency.

Add salt and pepper to taste, pulse the mixture again, and sample until you're happy with the level of seasoning.

Scoop the hummus into a small serving bowl and add any optional toppings desired.

NOTES

- You can peel the beets if you like, but you can leave the skins on as well.
- Beet hummus can be stored in a covered container in the fridge for up to one week.

SERVING SUGGESTIONS

- Use the hummus as a dip for raw veggies (carrots, cucumbers, celery).
- Use it as a dip for crackers or chips.
- Spread it on toast and add other toppings, like goat cheese or nuts.
- Use it as a sauce on top of a rice bowl.

Easiest Bread Recipe Ever

During our time at the rental house after we moved to Tennessee, I started making this bread. It was the perfect recipe to work on during our “abiding” year, and now I’ve made it at least a hundred times since we moved to the farm. If you come to my house for dinner, I’ll likely make you this bread.

There’s something about handing someone a warm loaf of bread that makes them feel special and cared for. It’s my favorite thing to deliver to foster care families at our church or any friend who’s just had a baby. I wrap the bread, still warm, in parchment paper and deliver it with a chicken or pasta dish with tomato sauce, a big Kindred Farm salad, and brownies.

This crusty bread with a lush, soft inside goes perfectly with pretty much anything, from a steaming hot bowl of soup on a chill-you-to-your-bones winter day to a tangy, crunchy salad in early spring (so you can sop up all the extra dressing on your plate with the bread, of course).

Making homemade bread always seemed so complicated and unattainable, but once I finally mustered up the courage to try it, I realized how easy it is. With only a few ingredients, you can whip up the dough in three minutes, then go enjoy the most heavenly scent ever wafting through your house. In the words of my oldest daughter, “I wish they made an essential oil of the baking bread smell!” Me too, sister, me too.

Yes, it’s a little more work than buying bread at the grocery store, but do you want to be a part of actual, real magic? Because that’s what happens when you make your own bread. With the added ingredient of time, you completely transform a pile of the simplest of ingredients—flour, water, yeast, and salt—into the ultimate hearty comfort food. Baking bread is a slow, intentional practice as ancient as humanity itself, and you get to take part in that when you sink your fingers into that dough.

You can do this—I promise! All you need is a Dutch oven or other tightly lidded pot. I use an inexpensive 5-quart Lodge cast-iron Dutch oven for mine, and I love it.

Makes 1 loaf (6 to 8 servings)

- 3 cups organic all-purpose flour, plus more for dusting
- 1 teaspoon active dry yeast from a packet
- 2 teaspoons sea salt or kosher salt
- 1 1/2 cups warm water (not hot, which can kill the yeast)
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh herbs, like rosemary and thyme, optional

Measure each cup of flour by filling the cup to overflowing, then tap the flour mound with the blade of a butter knife to eliminate any air bubbles and make sure the flour settles into the cup. Use the butter knife to scrape the excess flour off the top of the cup in a straight line. Add each cup of flour to a large bowl, then add the yeast and sea salt.

Add the warm water to the dry mixture and stir it together with a wooden spoon, scraping the sides of the bowl. (The mixture will be sticky and shaggy—that's how it's supposed to look!)

Cover the bowl tightly with plastic wrap and let the dough rise for 6 to 8 hours. Letting it rise on your kitchen countertop is fine, or you can put the bowl in the middle rack of your turned-off oven, with just the oven light on. The warmth from the oven light will help it rise. After the first rise, your dough should have doubled in size and have lots of bubbles.

Preheat the oven to 450 degrees. Place your Dutch oven or lidded oven-safe pot in the oven to get it nice and hot.

While the pot heats, complete the second dough rise. Take a handful of flour and sprinkle it on a cutting board so your dough doesn't stick. Scrape all the dough from the bowl onto the board. (Keep the bowl—you'll need it again!) The dough will be sticky. Sprinkle flour on top, take a flap of dough, and fold it over itself, almost like you're closing an envelope. Keep rotating it and folding it over itself, sprinkling more flour as needed. Your dough should feel soft and puffy and no longer sticky. Turn the dough over, and you'll have a lovely ball with all folds hidden underneath.

Place a piece of parchment paper inside the bowl that previously held the dough. Set your dough ball on the parchment paper in the bowl. Cover the bowl lightly with a clean dish towel, not touching the dough.

Wait about 30 minutes, and you're ready to bake! Open the oven and carefully remove the superhot lid of your Dutch oven. Pick up the parchment paper with the dough ball in it and place the entire thing in the Dutch oven. This way, you won't mess up that perfectly round ball!

Place the lid back on the pot. It's okay if some of the parchment paper sticks out. Bake for 30 minutes. Remove the lid and bake for 15 more minutes, until there's a gorgeous, dark-brown crust. Take the Dutch oven out of the oven. Remove the bread from the Dutch oven and let it cool for a few minutes on a cutting board before slicing.

Give yourself a high five for making homemade bread!

NOTES

- For really crispy crust, use bread flour. My favorite brand is King Arthur.
- I prefer using active dry yeast from packets—not from a jar, which has an extra additive.
- I'll often make this dough right before bed and let it rise overnight, then bake it first thing in the morning. Or I'll make the dough in the morning and let it rise all day so I can bake it before dinner.



Whipped Honey Butter

Out of all the things we serve at our Kindred Dinners, it's the Whipped Honey Butter that people always beg to take home with them. People have even asked for a spoon to eat it straight out of the jar. For our dinners, we partner with a local baker to make the bread since we need such a large quantity, and we serve it with this butter.

Put this butter in a cute jar and take it as a gift to someone, along with the above bread, or have this at the table for everyone to share with their bread at dinner.

It's super simple, but the quality of the butter, the local raw honey, and the amount of time you whip it are all keys to making this the most velvety, ridiculously amazing thing you can slather on your bread.

Makes approximately 1 pint

2 sticks grass-fed butter, softened

1/2 cup local raw honey, plus more to taste

1/4 teaspoon sea salt

In a food processor or stand-up mixer, combine the butter, honey, and salt. You could also use a large bowl and an electric handheld mixer.

Whip/process the butter for several minutes, until it looks light and fluffy like buttercream icing.

Stop and taste. Keep drizzling in more honey and tasting it until you no longer say, "It still tastes like butter," and you can finally say, "Ahh, it tastes like honey butter."

Favorite Nourishing Smoothies

Smoothies are my girls' favorite breakfast and afternoon treat. My oldest daughter said recently, "If I don't have one of your homemade smoothies every day, I feel like I'm going crazy!"

A cold smoothie is also the thing that sounds most appetizing to me after working outside in the field for several hours. The first sip feels like straight liquid gold on those hot, humid summer days. If someone is here helping us on the farm or visiting, they're going to be handed a mason jar with a smoothie inside it too. I've never once had someone turn it down—or refrain from making a slurping noise when their fat straw hits the bottom of the glass.

Smoothies aren't rocket science; making a delicious smoothie is all about proportions. I've finally found the perfect proportions to make a cold, thick but also drinkable-through-a-straw nourishing smoothie. I use a ten-year-old Vitamix blender that's still going strong. Mine was a gift from my mother-in-law when I became a mother. I highly recommend the investment in a good-quality blender, or it will be nearly impossible to get that thick, smooth consistency without burning out the motor. Not that I've ever done that or anything.

GO-TO GREEN SMOOTHIE

Makes 2 servings

- 2 cups almond or coconut milk
- 2 frozen whole bananas (if you have a weaker blender, slice them first)
- Large handful of kale, spinach, or Swiss chard
- 2 tablespoons almond or peanut butter
- 2 tablespoons real-food protein powder
- 4 to 5 drops natural sweetener, optional
- 4 to 5 ice cubes

Place all the ingredients in a blender. Before you turn on the blender, make sure the frozen fruit and ice are sticking out above the liquid.

Turn on the blender and slowly increase the speed from low to high, then blend for about 30 seconds or until all the ice and frozen bananas are thoroughly mixed. The smoothie should look like the consistency of soft-serve ice cream.

Pour the smoothie into a large glass with a straw and add any additional toppings desired.

Variation: Minty Green Smoothie

Add 2 to 4 drops of peppermint essential oil to the Go-To Green Smoothie ingredients. I recommend using therapeutic-grade essential oils that are approved for taking internally. I love doTERRA and have used this brand for more than ten years. Alternately, you can use 2 to 4 drops of peppermint extract or a handful of fresh mint from your garden. The mint version of this green smoothie is the only thing my body craves while farming on a really humid Tennessee summer day, and on those days, it's the most refreshing, nourishing thing I can imagine.

CHOCOLATE-PEANUT BUTTER SMOOTHIE

This closely resembles a Wendy's Frosty. I'm just sayin'.

Makes 2 servings

- 2 cups almond or coconut milk
- 2 frozen whole bananas (if you have a weaker blender, slice them first)
- 1 to 2 tablespoons raw cacao
- 2 tablespoons almond or peanut butter
- 2 tablespoons real-food protein powder
- 4 to 5 drops natural sweetener, optional
- 4 to 5 ice cubes

Place all of the ingredients in a blender. Before you turn on the blender, make sure the frozen fruit and ice are sticking out above the liquid.

Turn on the blender and slowly increase the speed from low to high, then blend for about 30 seconds or until all the ice and frozen bananas are thoroughly mixed. The smoothie should look like the consistency of soft-serve ice cream.

Pour the smoothie into a large glass with a straw and add any additional toppings desired.

CHERRY SMOOTHIE

Makes 2 servings

- 2 cups almond or coconut milk
- 1 cup frozen cherries
- 2 tablespoons almond or peanut butter
- 2 tablespoons real-food protein powder
- 4 to 5 drops natural sweetener, optional
- 4 to 5 ice cubes

Place all of the ingredients in a blender. Before you turn on the blender, make sure the frozen fruit and ice are sticking out above the liquid.

Turn on the blender and slowly increase the speed from low to high, then blend for about 30 seconds or until all the ice and frozen fruit are thoroughly mixed. The smoothie should look like the consistency of soft-serve ice cream.

Pour the smoothie into a large glass with a straw and add any additional toppings desired.

NOTES

- You can use any milk you prefer.
- I use a collagen protein powder made with grass-fed beef collagen, vanilla powder, and monk fruit sweetener. If you don't want to include protein powder, you can add a few tablespoons of hemp seeds.
- Use a sweetener if you prefer a touch of natural sweetness or if you choose to omit the protein powder. I prefer SweetLeaf brand stevia natural sweetener. You can also use a big spoonful of honey or maple syrup.
- Sometimes I put dark chocolate chips at the bottom of my girls' smoothie glasses. The only rule is they have to drink the entire smoothie to the bottom before they get to eat the chocolate chips with a spoon. Win-win!

SMOOTHIE TOPPING OPTIONS

- Ground flaxseed
- Enjoy Life mini chocolate chips
- Cacao nibs
- Ground coconut
- Hemp seeds
- Chia seeds

Strawberry Rosé Jam

Yeah, I know . . . I thought canning and preserving was intimidating, too, remember? So to take away some obstacles here, we're going to make this as a refrigerator jam so you don't actually have to can anything.

Block out a few hours to try this recipe yourself, sipping the remainder of the wine from the bottle, of course. Or grab a few friends and figure this out together. When you're done, you will look at the gemlike jars with awe and wonder, seeing them for the treasures that they are.

Makes approximately 6 half-pint jars

- 2 cups spring-ripe strawberries, sliced in half, tops removed
- 2 cups sugar
- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
- 2 cups rosé wine
- 1/4 teaspoon cracked black pepper
- 1 package fruit pectin, optional

In a large saucepan, combine the strawberries, sugar, lemon juice, rosé, and pepper. Cook over medium-high heat and bring to a boil.

Reduce the heat until the mixture reaches a simmer, and cook until the mixture thickens to a jam-like consistency. While you're cooking, a great way to test the thickness of your jam is to put a plate in the freezer for a few minutes, then remove the plate and put a spoonful of jam on it. Run your finger through the jam. Does your finger make a clear line straight through the jam? If so, your jam is thick enough. If it doesn't make a clear line and looks runny, you can add some pectin.

If using pectin, bring your jam back to a boil and add the pectin. Stir well to incorporate the pectin and cook for 1 minute. Then remove from the heat and let it cool a bit.

You made jam! Put your jam in mason jars, let it cool, and store in the fridge for up to 3 months.

SERVING SUGGESTIONS

- Spread the jam on biscuits or sourdough bread.
- Add a scoop of jam on top of ice cream.
- Spread some of the jam on homemade pizza, mixing it with the tomato sauce.
- Add the jam to a sandwich with mayo.
- Spread the jam over goat cheese or brie on a charcuterie board.

Charcuterie Board with a Story

“This is an artistic expression of my love for you,” Steven said. “You can open your eyes now.”

On this July night of our fifteenth wedding anniversary, our girls were having a slumber party at a friend’s house. This was the first night we’d ever spent in our home without them, and Steven and I were on the first date we’d had in months.

Laid out on the table before me was the most beautiful charcuterie board I’d ever seen, and with all the beautiful food I’ve seen him craft for his clients, that’s really saying something.

This was food-turned-art that told a story: rainbows of color, uniqueness, different textures, flavors that complemented rather than competed . . . just like us.

Last summer’s peach bourbon vanilla jam. Preserved figs, which always remind us of Texas. Pickled cauliflower we’d made earlier in the season. My favorite Cowgirl Creamery triple-cream brie. His favorite cheddar. Fresh tomatoes, cucumbers, hot peppers, and a few leaves of lemon basil—all straight from our farm, all grown from seed in midwinter. A wooden jam spoon our neighbor Jessica had hand-carved from one of our fallen trees after an epic spring storm. Rainbow carrots, which are on our farm logo even though we can’t grow them well yet because it takes years to nourish the soil and build up the layers.

All of this was carefully arranged by a self-trained chef who loves experimenting with flavor and whose creativity and love are expressed through food. Enjoyed by me, a woman who probably wouldn’t have eaten most of this stuff fifteen years ago but has now found a lot more food freedom.

One shared meal savored over hours on the land we’ve worked together with our family, celebrating a marriage we’ve fought hard for.

In the artisan food world, things that take more time are more valuable in general. The older bourbon. The long-aged cheese. The heirloom tomato sauce recipe that takes days to simmer and has been passed down for generations.

A charcuterie board is one of the best shared food experiences that encourages the slow unraveling of time.

It has a feeling of a special feast, without anyone having to cook a thing. You don’t even need plates. From a common plate or board in the middle of the table, you’re anchored in your time together, in your nourishment.

Here's how to build your own. Have at least two varieties in each of these categories:

- meat
- cheese
- pickled items
- jam
- hummus
- fruit
- nuts
- something sweet,
like chocolate

Within each category, make the varieties different. For example:

- hard cheese and a soft cheese
- plain salami and a spicy salami
- pickled spicy okra and olives stuffed with cheese
- marcona almonds and candied pecans

Add unusual, fun things, such as unique potato chips, queso or cashew cheese, corn nuts.

As you select your elements, can you add any items that symbolize a memory or tell a story about the people who will be sharing the charcuterie board?

Use a wooden cutting board to display everything. To assemble, start with your cheese and make small groupings in different spots on the board. Then take your next item, like meat, and make small groupings next to the cheese. The goal is to not have all of one item in the same spot.

Assembling a board takes a while, and it takes care. This is a great thing to do with someone who will be at the table with you.

Put dips and nuts in small bowls and put those on the board. Then display cheeses and fruits around the bowls.

Cover the entire board space—"Always crowd the board." (I learned this from Steven.)

Set your board in the middle of the table where you'll be sitting or in a living room on a coffee table, where you can be comfortable for a while. The point isn't walking up to a table, grabbing a cracker and some cheese, and walking away, but setting up space for people to linger, to see one another across the table, to connect.

Kindred Farm Salad

One of my absolute favorite things? Picking dinner. Are you even a farmer if, at some point, you haven't harvested something, strapped it in, and let it ride shotgun in the truck back to the house?

The primary crop we grow on Kindred Farm year-round is a type of lettuce called "salanova," which comes in eight different leaf shapes and two colors: green and red. When it's growing down a one-hundred-foot row, densely planted, it looks like a one-hundred-foot purple-and-green carpet. When we harvest it, we remove the leaves from the core and mix it all together to create our Buttery Sweet Salad Mix.

For this recipe, any fresh, fluffy lettuce will do. A spring mix would be perfect, or romaine mixed with butter lettuce. Anything but iceberg! Of course, you can purchase the lettuce at the grocery store, but I encourage getting some from your local farmer, if possible. Also, lettuce is super easy to grow in early spring, if you want to give it a try, and few things are more delicious than a crunchy salad made with lettuce that was in the ground, pulsing with life, thirty minutes ago.

I always, always, always have a big bowl of salad as the centerpiece of any dinner, especially when we have other people over. And it's a great thing to build together with a friend in the kitchen.

"How do you know what to put in it to make it taste like this?" they say. Well, here ya go! I never follow a "recipe" for salad. It's more a formula for elements that, when put together, make for an interesting salad with a balance of textures and flavors.

Makes as many servings as you need

Foundation

1/2 cup lettuce per person

Veggies (choose any or all)

Thinly sliced cucumbers
Carrots peeled into long ribbons
Halved cherry tomatoes
Thinly sliced celery
Sliced bell peppers or sweet peppers

Halved garlic-stuffed green olives
Grated raw beets
Sliced radishes
Broccoli or cauliflower florets, finely chopped

Creamy (choose 1)

Crumbled goat cheese
Crumbled feta cheese
Raw Parmesan cheese peeled into shavings

Crunchy (choose 1 or 2)

Sunflower seeds
Honey-toasted cashews
Toasted almonds
Toasted pecans
Toasted walnuts

Sweet (choose 1)

Pitted dates, chopped (my favorite!)
Raisins
Dried figs
Dried apricots

Finishing touches (choose 1 or 2)

Sprinkle of nutritional yeast (which our family calls “cheesy flakes”—great for a nondairy option!)
Sprinkle of hemp seeds
Sprinkle of garlic powder (Aunt Lucille’s secret ingredient)
Edible flowers: purple pea flowers are our favorite, but you can also use calendula flower petals, marigolds, pansies, dandelions, and nasturtiums (just be 100 percent sure you’re selecting edible flowers that haven’t been sprayed with chemicals)

Start with the foundation, and then add all the extras. I can’t give you exact measurements for these, but I can tell you that as you add them, you’ll want to either put each element in a tight pile and then pile the next thing next to it, or evenly place each item over the surface of your bed of lettuce. When you’re done adding toppings, the entire top of your bowl should be covered, without any lettuce showing. When you toss it with the dressing, it’ll come together like magic.

NOTES

- To make honey-toasted cashews, preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Spread raw cashews on a large rimmed baking sheet, place it in the oven, and toast the cashews for 5 to 10 minutes, until they’re golden brown. Stay nearby though—they toast quickly! After you remove them from the oven, immediately drizzle raw honey on top and toss; then sprinkle with sea salt.
- Alternatively, you can toast the cashews in a dry pan over medium heat for a few minutes until golden brown. Drizzle raw honey on top and toss, sprinkle with sea salt, and remove from the pan.

Go-To Vinaigrette

This is my standard vinaigrette. I always have a big glass jar of it ready to go, stored with a tight lid in my spice pantry. Because when you're making a salad for dinner, you don't want to have to whip up a new batch of dressing every single time.

Makes approximately 4 servings

- 1 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1/3 to 1/2 cup acid (see suggestions below)
- 3 to 4 tablespoons Dijon mustard
- Big pinch of sea salt to taste
- Cracked black pepper to taste

In a large jar with a lid, combine the olive oil, acid, mustard, sea salt, and pepper.

Close the lid tightly and shake hard! Shake until the Dijon blends in well, there are no lumps, and the dressing looks blended and creamy.

Alternatively, you could put all of it in a blender and whizz it up, then pour any extra into a jar to store.

NOTES

- My go-to acid is apple cider vinegar, but other great choices are balsamic vinegar, fresh lemon juice, champagne vinegar, and red wine vinegar. The amount you add to the dressing determines whether it's milder or tangier.
- It's hard to overdo the Dijon mustard, which gives the dressing extra tang and the perfect creaminess.

Kindred Farm Honey-Basil Balsamic Vinaigrette

Perfect for summer, when you have lots of extra basil! This is best made fresh for each salad or made in a bigger batch and refrigerated so you can use it in a few days.

Makes 2 servings

6 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
2 tablespoon Dijon mustard
2 tablespoons raw honey
8 to 10 fresh basil leaves
Sea salt to taste
Cracked black pepper to taste

In a blender, place the olive oil, vinegar, mustard, honey, basil, salt, and pepper.

Blend on high for about 10 seconds, until creamy.

Taste and adjust salt and pepper to your preference.

Pour over salad and toss lightly.

Aunt Lucille's Ricotta Cookies

The sound of laughter and the smell of marinara sauce and meatballs filled the entryway of the house on Kinney Street. The December air outside was chilly in New Jersey. Bundled in a wool coat and boots, a four-year-old little girl climbed the tunnel-like steps to the second-floor apartment of her aunt Lucille and uncle Tony. Her feet could barely reach above each stair, but the comforting aroma led her quickly into the warm home.

It was Christmas afternoon, and about twenty people were already crammed into the tiny kitchen and around the dining room table, which was the centerpiece of the family. It was the site of classic Italian American meals of baked ziti, homemade meatballs, braciola, and garlicky salad with black olives (and that was just the first course), along with every dessert you could possibly imagine.

Before dinner, the little girl's favorite thing to do was put a black olive on each finger and call them "meatballs." Her favorite dessert was the ricotta cookies with tiny rainbow sprinkles. After dessert, the dining room erupted into a game of Pokeno or long conversation over unmarked bottles of red wine.

These are some of my most vivid childhood memories with my Italian family. The kids were always included in the fold, crammed into the tiny dining room with everyone else, allowed to help in the kitchen and be involved in the family recipes. Aunt Lucille's table was one of the places I felt the most welcomed in the world. When she passed away from lung cancer at only sixty-nine years old, just a month before I got pregnant with my first daughter, it was one of the saddest things I've ever experienced. But I take her heritage with me to this day, in the life I live with my family around the table. I wish she were still here, but I know she'd be proud to share this recipe, one of her best, with you.

Makes approximately 2 dozen cookies

For the cookies

- 1/2 cup butter, softened
- 1/4 cup whole milk ricotta cheese
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 2 cups flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon salt

For the frosting

- 1 1/2 cups powdered sugar
- 1 teaspoon vanilla
- A few teaspoons whole milk
- Tiny, round white or rainbow sprinkles

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

In a stand mixer, blend the softened butter with the ricotta cheese.

Add the vanilla, sugar, and egg to the butter and cheese mixture, and blend until smooth.

In a medium bowl, combine the flour, baking soda, and salt.

Add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients in the stand mixer bowl and blend until smooth.

Roll the dough into balls about 1.5 inches wide, and space them evenly on a large cookie sheet lined with parchment paper (or a greased cookie sheet if you don't have parchment paper).

Bake the cookies for 10 to 12 minutes.

While the cookies bake, make the frosting by mixing the powdered sugar, vanilla, and milk together in a medium bowl and whisking until smooth. Add enough milk so the mixture isn't too runny but is able to be easily drizzled over the cookies.

Remove the cookies from the oven and let them cool on a cookie sheet. After they cool, drizzle frosting over each one and then cover with round white or rainbow sprinkles.