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Home, Heart, and Harvest

Dear Friend,

As we settle into November, there's a noticeable shift in the rhythm of things. The light softens, the pace slows (at least for a moment), and many of us start seeking out the small comforts that carry us through the season. A favorite recipe. A meaningful tradition. Even a quiet moment before the house wakes up.

If you're thinking about buying or selling, whether it's this season or sometime next year, I'd be honored to help guide you through the process. And even if real estate isn't on your radar, I'm always happy to be a resource, whether that means connecting you with a great local service provider or just staying in touch.

Wishing you a November full of ease, warmth, and a little more space to breathe.

Warmly,
Jim Urban

The Objects We Keep

The things that stay with us aren't usually the expensive ones. Instead, it's the chipped mug we keep reaching for even with nicer ones in the cupboard, the scarf tucked in a drawer for a decade but never donated, the recipe card written in someone's hand, the makeshift bookmark, or the box of old keys whose locks we've long forgotten but still can't throw away.

A certain intimacy exists in the things we keep. They don't always make sense to anyone else and maybe they don't need to. They're not about style or status or practicality; they're about memory, about story, about a feeling we weren't ready to forget.

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Sometimes, we hold on to things because they anchor us to a version of ourselves that we don't want to lose. Other times, it's about someone else — a moment, a season or a chapter we closed gently but not entirely.

As the end of the year inches closer and everything around us leans into the themes of clearing out and starting fresh, maybe this is your permission to keep a few things without explanation. Not everything has to be useful. Some things are just allowed to be loved.

Whether it's a drawer full of mystery items or a sweater that's three sizes too big, if it still makes you feel something, then maybe that's enough.

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The Myth Of The Perfect Table

A lot of pressure exists around Thanksgiving; for instance, the perfect meal, the perfect mood and the perfect table where everyone gets along, the stuffing is crisp but not dry and someone brings a good-tasting gluten-free dish.

But here's the truth: Most of the time, people don't remember how coordinated the centerpiece was. Instead, they remember who spilled something, who told the story they always tell and who sat next to them and really listened.

We can spend hours planning menus and polishing silverware, but the most-meaningful moments tend to happen during the soft spaces, between the burned rolls and the awkward pauses.

If your table isn't perfectly curated this year, then that's OK. If the chairs don't match or someone forgets the cranberry sauce or you end up eating off paper plates, then that's OK, too. What matters is that someone showed up, someone shared a memory and someone laughed with their whole body.

Although a perfect Thanksgiving table doesn't exist, a real one does exist. And real always wins.



The Simple Science Behind Calorie Deficit

A calorie deficit happens when you consume fewer calories than your body burns. Your body needs energy every day to function, including such basic processes as breathing, digesting and maintaining your heartbeat, known as your basal metabolic rate (BMR). In addition, we burn additional calories through daily movement and exercise. Altogether, this is called your total daily energy expenditure (TDEE).

When your calorie intake falls below that number, your body starts using stored energy, mainly from fat, to fill the gap. That's how fat loss occurs.

According to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), "weight loss occurs when energy expenditure exceeds energy intake," and sustained, modest calorie deficits over time are the most-effective and safest path to long-term fat reduction.

Train Your Brain With Simple Thanks

Gratitude is more than a warm, fuzzy feeling; it's a biological boost to your brain and body. Studies using fMRI scans have shown that practicing gratitude activates the brain's medial prefrontal cortex, which is the region associated with emotional regulation and moral cognition.

Remarkably, this activation can persist for weeks after a gratitude practice ends, which suggests lasting effects on the brain's wiring. But the benefits don't stop at the neurological level. According to a 2021 article from *Harvard Health Publishing*, consistent expressions of gratitude are linked to improved sleep, reduced symptoms of depression and anxiety, and stronger social bonds. In other words, regularly reflecting on what you're thankful for isn't just nice; it's self-care backed by neuroscience.

And here's the kicker: you don't have to write a novel or maintain a daily journal. Even simple habits, such as texting a friend "thinking of you today" or jotting down three things that went right this week, can help rewire your brain for greater resilience, joy and connection.

This November, while the world hurries ahead, pause, and allow your brain to marinate in a moment of thanks. It's one of the simplest and most-powerful ways to feel better fast.



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WHAT YOUR FREEZER SAYS ABOUT YOU



The contents in someone's freezer tell a lot about that person. Not the fridge, which is performative. That's where we keep the oat milk and the lettuce. But the freezer? That's where the real story lives.

Open a drawer, sneak a peek and see if you recognize yourself in any of these:

The Soup Archivist

Your freezer is a neatly stacked museum of well-labeled quart containers, chili from last month, lentil stew from 2022 or a lone miso broth you forgot to date but refuse to throw away. You believe in the future you: organized, aspirational and possibly running a small soup-subscription business without realizing it.

The Snack Opportunist

There's a half-eaten pint of ice cream, a tube of frozen cookie dough and a family-size bag of pizza rolls, even though no children live in your home. You are prepared for cravings, unexpected guests and emotional plot twists. You believe joy should always be within arm's reach.

The Frozen Mystery Collector

You have foil-wrapped objects you no longer recognize, three bags of peas that predate the internet and something labeled "open at your own risk." You are sentimental and a little chaotic, and you've definitely said "It's still good" about something that absolutely was not. You live on hope and strong stomach enzymes.

The Minimalist (aka The Ice Tray Only Club)

Only a single ice tray fills your freezer, and maybe a bag of frozen spinach you forgot about. You travel light. You are efficient. You probably get your steps in. You will survive an apocalypse by sheer discipline alone.

The Wild Card

You have frozen banana peels for composting, one Cornish game hen, three boxes of popsicles and an emergency frozen pizza. No one knows what you're up to, and, honestly, we love that about you.

There is no right or wrong way to stock a freezer. But if yours is overdue for a mystery cleanout, then now is a great time. Who knows? You might rediscover that soup from last winter — and the version of you who made it.



WHAT PIE MATCHES YOUR SIGN

Let's be honest: Your personality definitely pairs with dessert.

Aries (March 21–April 19): Spicy Pumpkin Pie

Bold and classic but never boring. You bring the heat and aren't afraid of a little nutmeg with attitude.

Taurus (April 20–May 20): French Silk Pie

Luxurious, rich and unapologetically indulgent. You're here for second helpings and soft blankets.

Gemini (May 21–June 20): Banoffee Pie

Slightly chaotic, somewhat charming and somehow both banana and toffee. People don't always get it, but they always come back for more.

Cancer (June 21–July 22): Apple Crumble Pie

Warm, soft-centered and full of comfort. You bring emotional depth and the best leftovers.

Leo (July 23–Aug. 22): Key Lime Pie

Bright, dramatic and hard to ignore. You're a zesty spotlight-stealer with flair and just the right amount of tart.

Virgo (Aug. 23–Sept. 22): Pecan Pie (with a perfect lattice crust)

Classic with a technical twist. You're detail-oriented, deeply dependable and secretly sweet beneath that organized exterior.

Libra (Sept. 23–Oct. 22): Cherry Pie

Balanced, beautiful and slightly messy but in a charming and poetic way. You bring the aesthetics and the emotional depth.

Scorpio (Oct. 23–Nov. 21): Dark Chocolate Chess Pie

Mysterious, intense and not for the faint of heart. You're unforgettable and maybe even dangerous.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22–Dec. 21): Sweet Potato Pie With Toasted Marshmallows

Adventurous, warm and slightly unexpected. You tell stories, make people laugh and light the top on fire (in a good way).

Capricorn (Dec. 22–Jan. 19): Old-Fashioned Buttermilk Pie

Steady, underrated and surprisingly delightful. You don't need flash to be iconic; you need only a solid crust and a legacy.

Aquarius (Jan. 20–Feb. 18): Matcha Custard Pie

Unexpected, innovative and totally different than whatever everyone else brought. You probably made it yourself, too.

Pisces (Feb. 19–March 20): Lemon Meringue Pie

Soft, soulful and layered. You dream in whipped peaks and golden edges, and you bring feelings to the table, whether or not anyone is ready.



CHARRED CARROT “STEAKS” WITH HERBY YOGURT

A little dramatic, highly photogenic, surprisingly easy and, yes, totally guilt-free.

This recipe is naturally sweet, caramelized and packed with nutrients and turns humble carrots into a showstopper. This feels like a main character instead of a side, contains no refined sugars or heavy cream and is packed with bright flavor and texture.

Ingredients:

- 6 large carrots, peeled and halved lengthwise
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- Salt, pepper and cumin to taste
- Zest of 1 lemon + juice of half
- 1 small garlic clove, grated
- ½ cup chopped pistachios
- 1 cup plain Greek yogurt (or dairy-free alternative)
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh mint or parsley
- Optional: a drizzle of pomegranate molasses or honey

Instructions:

- Preheat oven to 425°F.
- Toss carrots with olive oil, salt, pepper and a pinch of cumin.
- Roast cut-side down on a sheet pan for 25–30 minutes until deeply golden and the edges begin to char.
- While the carrots roast, whisk the yogurt with lemon zest, lemon juice, grated garlic and a pinch of salt.
- Toast the pistachios in a dry pan for a minute or two until fragrant.
- Let them cool and then toss in the herbs.

Spoon the yogurt onto a platter, top with the roasted carrots and scatter the pistachio mixture on top. Finish with a light drizzle of pomegranate molasses or honey if you like a sweet contrast.

Why It Works

This dish feels fancy without trying too hard. It's simultaneously earthy, creamy, crunchy and fresh. And it brings color and personality to a Thanksgiving table that's otherwise a sea of beige.

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