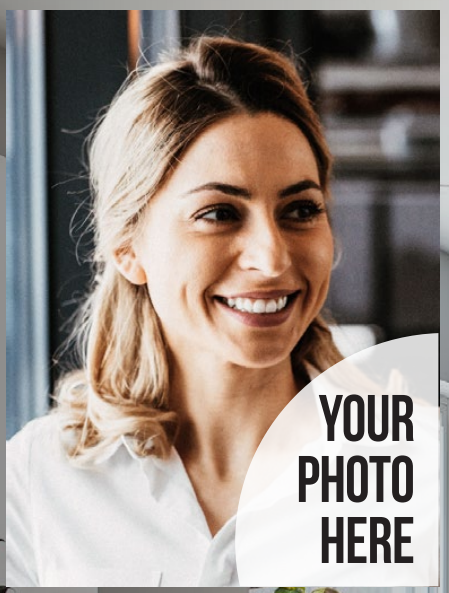
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AMERICAN LIFESTYLE

THE MAGAZINE CELEBRATING LIFE IN AMERICA

ISSUE 146



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ABOVE *AND* BEYOND

Making a main floor more dynamic / **PAGE 41**

For the Love of Hobbies / **04**

Davon Moseley Gets Into It / **33**

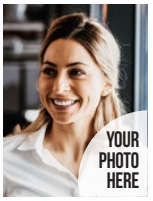
ISSUE 146
COVER PRICE $12.99

Front of Tear Out Card 1

hibachi ***STEAK***



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Back of Tear Out Card 1

hibachi *STEAK*

make

- 2 pounds sirloin steak
- ¼ c. low-sodium soy sauce
- ¼ c. hoisin sauce
- 1 tsp. toasted sesame oil
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp. ground ginger
- Neutral oil, to cook

SERVES 4

Recipe from ***Let's Get Into It: 130+ Comfort Food Recipes for Novice Cooks*** by Davon Moseley. DK Publishing, 2025. Photography by Stephen Buchanan.

measure

1. Pat dry the steak. Cut the steak into 1 in. pieces. Set aside.
2. In a large bowl, whisk together the soy sauce, hoisin sauce, sesame oil, minced garlic, and ginger until combined.
3. Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat and add 1 tbsp. neutral oil. Once the oil is hot, it will easily move around the skillet and shimmer. Add the steak pieces in small batches to cook. You do not want to overcrowd the skillet as too many pieces in the skillet can cause them to steam and reduce the chances of getting a good sear on each piece. Add just enough so each has room to cook. (You'll need to sear in 3 or 4 batches.) Cooking time will depend on your preference of steak doneness. I like medium and cook the steak for 1 to 2 minutes, flip, then cook 1 to 2 minutes on the other side. For well done, I recommend cooking for 2 to 3 minutes each side. For a medium-rare cook, increase the heat to high and cook for 30 seconds to 1 minute on each side. Once the steak is cooked to your preference, remove from the skillet and set aside on a plate. Repeat with all the steak cubes.
4. Once all the steak is cooked to your preference, reduce the heat to medium and add all the steak back into the skillet. Toss in the sauce and cook for about 2 minutes, until the steak is coated in the sauce. Serve and enjoy.



Dear Bill and Judy,

This time of year offers the perfect opportunity to slow down, which is exactly the spirit behind this issue. Inside, you'll find advice and inspiration for savoring life, both during winter and in the season ahead.

To begin, delve into why the days seem to blur together faster than ever in 2027. Learn what small, deliberate habits can restore a sense of presence to your daily routine. To that end, also check out the articles on the enduring appeal of hobbies, alongside what book clubs offer their participants well beyond the final page.

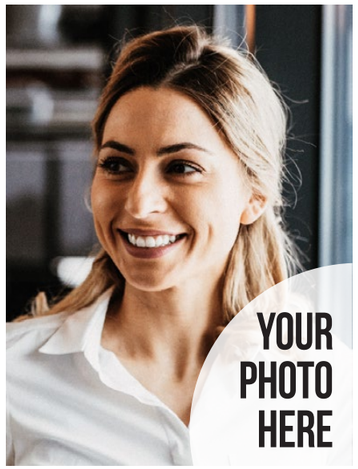
As winter edges toward spring, people are eager for signs of renewal. One popular event that exemplifies this is Washington, DC's National Cherry Blossom Festival. Discover the best ways to get there, enjoy the blooms, and make the most of the celebration that turns the nation's capital pink every March.

There's perhaps no easier way to savor life than through a home-cooked meal, and the kitchen is chef and content creator Davon Moseley's realm. Inside, he discusses how his food focuses on comfort and community and shares recipes for the ultimate comfort combo: steak and potatoes.

Pause and enjoy life's more leisurely moments. As always, it's a pleasure to send you this magazine.

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WHY TIME HITS HYPERSPEED

Written by **Andre Rios**

It's not just you. For many of us, time feels like it's moving too fast. The weeks collapse into each other, the seasons arrive too soon, and suddenly another year is over. It isn't only age or nostalgia at work. In reality, how our daily lives operate is responsible for this collective phenomenon.

Dissecting the cause

In the past, our routines carried built-in idle moments like waiting in line without a phone and enduring a long car ride with little entertainment. These intervals may have felt dull, but they let the mind wander, reflect, and register time passing.

Now, nearly every idle moment is filled. You pull out your phone at the first hint of boredom, digesting news, social media messages, or an endless stream of short videos designed to capture your attention immediately and keep it.

Short-form media plays its own role here. Its structure—brief, varied, and consumed near-constantly—satisfies just enough to keep you going but too little to anchor memory. Of course, time isn't moving faster in any objective sense. But a day spent in partial focus leaves behind fewer vivid impressions. Looking back, these hours feel shorter because there is simply less to recall.

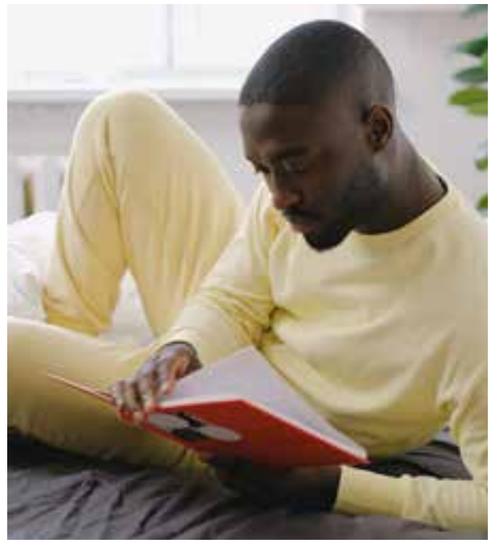
Contrast this with a day spent in varied in-person activities, such as cooking a complicated meal, visiting a new place, and hosting friends. These experiences demand your full presence, leaving distinct markers in the mind, expanding your sense of time both in the moment and in reflection afterward.

Restore a sense of pace

Thankfully, you're not at the mercy of these effects. To slow down, reintroduce deliberate structure into your routine—no need to withdraw from modern life entirely. First, place boundaries around passive media consumption. For example, avoid having "background TV" run as you do chores. Similarly, define limited periods for checking email, news, or social media to keep them from occupying every gap throughout your day.



Opt for activities that resist interruption, like reading a physical book, gardening, or taking a long walk without a device.



GUSTAVO FRING/PEXELS, SHVETS PRODUCTION/PEXELS

Equally important is what you choose to do instead of scrolling through digital media. Opt for activities that resist interruption, like reading a physical book, gardening, or taking a long walk without a device. Even a minor ritual, such as having a proper breakfast each morning, can help each day feel more distinct.

Don't fear boredom

This feeling is often avoided, but it deserves reconsideration. In reality, it's space for your mind to wander and time to simply rest. Allowing a few unfilled moments of stillness can restore some contrast to each day.

Try making these subtle changes, and you may find the days feel less like a blur—and more like something worth remembering.

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ISSUE 146

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Designed and printed in the USA.

All photos and/or artwork inside are provided by Getty Images, unless noted.

for the love of HOBBIES

Written by **Matthew Brady**

As American side hustles became a cultural norm in recent years, hobbies were increasingly viewed as potential income streams. Knitting shops filled with entrepreneurs testing product lines. Home kitchens doubled as micro-bakeries. Even someone with a weekend watercolor habit wondered: "Could this be worth something more?"

Such a question is now losing some of its shine. Many people are returning to activities that exist for one reason only—the pleasure of doing them. Pottery studios report full classes with no talk of selling pieces. Birding groups are expanding, filled with people content to stand still and watch nature take flight. Gardeners enjoy the time spent cultivating as much as what it can yield. These choices share a common theme: They are for pure enjoyment, not auditions for a second career.

Part of the appeal is control. A hobby that remains personal, not monetized, has clear boundaries. It begins and ends on one's own terms, freed from customer expectations, algorithmic pressure, and any sense of obligation. There is freedom in being an amateur again—free to be inconsistent, to improve slowly, and to lose interest and return without consequence.

When you have this mindset, you also tend to reflect on what matters to you. As you've probably experienced, time spent on something "unproductive" usually requires justification. (Time is money, after all.)

However, this notably changed for many people because of COVID, when they were forced to rediscover the simple pleasure of just *doing*. Today, you can gleefully spend an hour shaping clay or walking a wooded path with binoculars, knowing that you'll get a distinct kind of return on investment: one where your mood is steadied and your mind occupied in a way that exhilarates rather than exhausts. Research has long suggested that restorative leisure improves well-being, and more and more, our lived experiences are validating that it is.





You can gleefully spend an hour shaping clay or walking a wooded path with binoculars, knowing that you'll get a distinct kind of return on investment: one where your mood is steadied and your mind occupied in a way that exhilarates rather than exhausts.



Perhaps the most telling changes are conversational. Whereas people once wondered what a hobby might become or be worth someday, they now prioritize how it feels to participate. The experience is often simple: absorbing and calming (and occasionally frustrating) but well worth the time.



BOOK CLUBS AND BELONGING

Written by **Andre Rios**

You turn the page, pour another cup of coffee, and settle into the couch. The book in your hands might be a gripping thriller or a dense historical biography. But you did not join this group just to analyze plot points. You joined because you craved a space where people actually look at each other, listen, and share. The deeper draw of book clubs, these long-running social groups, is the connection waiting for you on the other side of the table.

A REASON FOR MEETING

Book clubs have endured as one of the most consistent forms of regular social gathering. In fact, some niche clubs have seen dramatic growth. CNN Business reports that #BookTok has become one of TikTok's most prominent communities for readers.

So what has sustained these storied groups and even helped them flourish? In a world where digital interactions dominate, these circles offer something increasingly rare: a physical space to slow down and practice the art of deep conversation with others.

And while the scheduled topic might be a bestselling novel or a historical biography, the discussion doesn't have to stay bound within the pages. In fact, gathering to discuss a book can act as a natural catalyst for casual chats—and even deeper ones, should you wish to bond more closely with members. As you analyze a character's choices, you may begin to share your own stories: relationships, career pivots, grief, and joys.

WHY PEOPLE KEEP SHOWING UP

It is no coincidence that book clubs continue to meet in 2027. Psychologists frequently warn of a modern loneliness epidemic, noting that traditional



CUP OF COUPLE/PEXELS

community spaces are rapidly disappearing in favor of digital-only ones. Yet book clubs help create a more comfortable and enriching rhythm in life, elevating face-to-face gatherings to a standing appointment every week or so.

Just as important, they foster accountability. If you feel tempted to settle into a homebody after-work lifestyle, a book club legitimizes your need for a social life outside of professional and familial obligations.

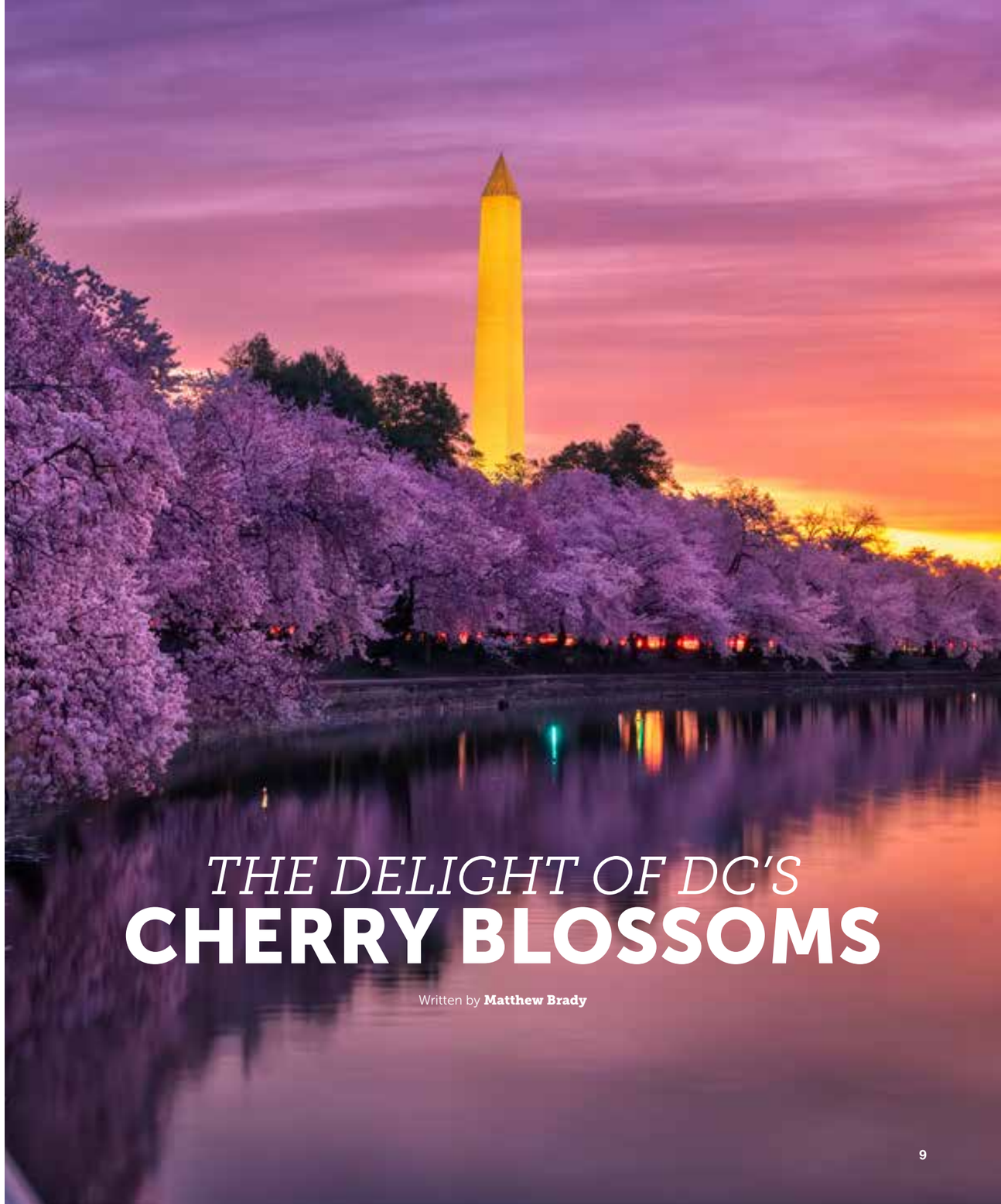




JOINING THE FOLD

The next time you feel isolated, in need of a bright spot scheduled into your routine, or eager to discuss the latest trending bestseller, research local book clubs on social media sites like TikTok and Instagram. Alternatively, you can reach out to your local public library for details on book clubs based on certain subjects or demographics. You could even plan your own with like-minded friends and coworkers, many of whom may be awaiting an invitation to join such a community.

The only real question is: What's on the docket for your next meeting? Dive into your next fiction or nonfiction selection, and let the conversation take you somewhere even the book never could.



THE DELIGHT OF DC'S CHERRY BLOSSOMS

Written by **Matthew Brady**



In early March, you can walk the Basin a bit more freely and admire the shift in color from bud to blossom.

For a few weeks each spring, Washington, DC, becomes as much a celebration as it is a capital. And at the heart of it all is the annual rebirth of the city's world-renowned cherry blossom trees.

The National Cherry Blossom Festival fills both visitors and Washingtonians with a sense of occasion—families arriving with excitement, longtime residents returning out of habit, and a steady stream of visitors moving between events that stretch well beyond the water's edge. The pink flowers remain the draw, of course—the festival simply amps up the experience.

History in bloom

The cherry blossoms' roots trace back for over a century. In 1912, Tokyo's mayor, Yukio Ozaki, sent thousands of cherry trees to Washington as a gesture of goodwill. First Lady Helen Taft and the Viscountess Chinda, wife of the Japanese ambassador, planted the initial pair along the Tidal Basin, an area that, like the trees, has grown in prominence. This origin makes the blossoms more than merely ornamental; they mark the enduring relationship between two nations.

The National Cherry Blossom Festival continues the tradition. In 2027, it is scheduled from





March 20 through April 11. Peak bloom typically falls within that general window, though exact timing depends on the weather. You can follow the festival's official Bloom Watch page for the most up-to-date information.

When, where, and what

Washington's weather can be fickle in spring, so time your trip intentionally. In early March, you can walk the Basin a bit more freely and admire the shift in color from bud to blossom. Come April, the petals begin to fall like snow and the ground softens with drifts of pale pink, creating a different yet also appealing experience. Also, early mornings are generally the least crowded time of day.

Be particularly strategic about where you settle on the grounds. Once you arrive at the festival, entering from less crowded access points to the south may be helpful.

The Blossom Kite Festival, held on the National Mall, includes demonstrations and competitions as the sky fills with colors.

There are three primary places to see the blooms, all National Park Service locations: around the aforementioned Tidal Basin in West Potomac Park, in East Potomac Park, and near the Washington Monument. The Basin remains the center point, offering scenic views near the Jefferson and MLK Jr. memorials; meanwhile, East Potomac Park offers longer stretches of trees. Want to get away from the bustling crowd? Even a short walk away from the main blossom loop will allow you to enjoy the trees at a more peaceful pace.

The festival calendar is centered on several established events. The Opening Ceremony, presented in partnership with Japan, features traditional and contemporary performances. The Blossom Kite Festival, held on the National Mall, includes demonstrations and competitions as the sky fills with colors. Petalpalooza at The Wharf offers an evening program with live music, interactive art installations, and a fireworks display over the water. But the true hub of the festival is the National Cherry Blossom Festival Parade, in which blossom-themed participants celebrate along Constitution Avenue.

If you come for the blossoms, you need to stay to see the city. Washington is replete with must-see museums, monuments, and memorials (many of which are free) as well as a plethora of performing arts and retail stores to take in. And the offerings don't stop at the city, either; the metropolitan area extends into Virginia for even more adventure.



JASON DIXON PHOTOGRAPHY/NATIONALCHERRYBLOSSOMFESTIVAL.ORG





NATIONALCHERRYBLOSSOMFESTIVAL.ORG

How to get there

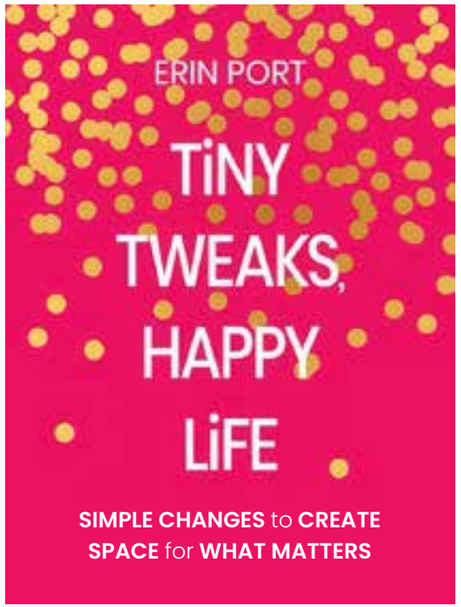
DC is notorious for its heavy traffic, and that amps up even more during the festival, making street parking nearly impossible. Your best bet is to plan your road trip or try an alternate form of transportation. If driving, you can reserve parking at one of several city parking garages through the festival's website. For a more leisurely commute, consider traveling here via train or bus. Options even include e-scooters, e-bikes, and the Cherry Blossom Water Taxi!

Both the National Cherry Blossom Festival and the blossoms themselves offer visitors a sense of wonder and continuity. The trees come to life like clockwork in early spring, enticing pilgrimages from all over the country and the world to witness their splendor. Washington, DC, enhances the celebration with kites, music, gatherings, and more. When you attend, you might just find that beauty, renewal, and history have rarely been so perfectly arranged, with a pink bow courtesy of Mother Nature herself.

For more info, visit
nationalcherryblossomfestival.org



COURTESY OF ERIN PORT



FOCUSING SMALL, LIVING WITH PURPOSE

Interview with **Erin Port**
Written by **Andre Rios**

Popular author and speaker **Erin Port**, founder of the self-help brand Simple Purposeful Living, shares her tips for living a healthier, happier life.

WOULD YOU INTRODUCE YOURSELF AND YOUR BACKGROUND?

I call myself an accidental entrepreneur. I was a first-grade teacher and got my master's in educational leadership. I thought I wanted to be a principal but realized I was spending more time away from home helping other families than my own, so I decided to stay home.

I started blogging in 2009. I was passionate about helping people simplify their lives because there are parts they can make less complicated, freeing them up to do more of what matters. I founded my Simple Purposeful Living brand in 2018, which now includes blogs, a book, and a podcast.

WHAT IS YOUR CORE APPROACH TO SIMPLE, PURPOSEFUL LIVING?

You don't have to overhaul your life to love it. We think events must be big and grand, but I share quick, practical ways to create meaningful traditions in life. These actions result in fewer expectations, less stress, and feeling more present in the moment.

When something interrupts a big overhaul, people think, *I failed*. Instead, making small changes, like fixing one drawer, can make a big impact. That builds belief—I can make a change—which snowballs into other areas of life.

WOULD YOU SHARE A REAL-LIFE EXAMPLE?

A reader had a husband with a concussion and a sick child. She said, "I'm going to buy paper plates so I don't have to wash dishes." That's a tiny tweak. Then, "I need help driving my son" turned into asking for carpool help. Her circumstances were heavy, but she became nimbler in the middle of it.



You don't have to overhaul your life to love it. We think events must be big and grand, but I share quick, practical ways to create meaningful traditions in life.

WHAT INSPIRED YOUR BOOK, *TINY TWEAKS, HAPPY LIFE?*

It came from a difficult season. We adopted our son, who was severely malnourished and nonverbal. Feeding him could take up to an hour and often ended in vomiting.

One day, I collapsed in the hallway crying, saying to myself, *This is everything I wanted, but it's really hard.* I followed it up with *What do I need right now?* My answer: step outside for some coffee.

That was a tiny tweak. It didn't fix everything, but it was an action of regaining control and showing myself that I wasn't stuck. *Tiny Tweaks* was born there. It wasn't a productivity hack; it was my lifeline.

WHAT'S AN EXAMPLE OF A STARTING POINT ANYONE COULD TAKE?

Try going on a five-to-ten-minute silent walk. No earbuds, no phone. It gives your brain a break. We input so much information but don't process it. However, silence helps organize or discard it, so you return from these sessions feeling lighter.

Some other recommendations: Tuck your phone away at night to avoid blue light, and wake up on your terms. And plan your next week on Friday so you can go into the weekend knowing it's covered.

For more info, visit
simplepurposefulliving.com
or follow Erin
@simplepurposefulliving

COURTESY OF ERIN PORT









PHOTOS COURTESY OF FACEBOOK.COM/GARY.BUCHSEN

THE MINE THAT FREEZES IN SUMMER

THREE MILES EAST OF Coudersport, Pennsylvania, off Route 6, sits one of the genuinely strange natural phenomena in the eastern United States. The Coudersport Ice Mine is a shaft in the earth—roughly ten by eight feet and more than thirty feet deep—that behaves exactly opposite to what logic suggests.

From roughly April through October, ice builds inside: on the walls, along ledges, and in icicles that can reach fifteen to twenty-five feet in length, sometimes so clear as to be nearly transparent. By November, it has melted entirely. The pattern has held since a silver prospector named Billy O'Neil broke through the hillside in 1894 and found ice on a summer afternoon.

The explanation lies in the geology, though the full mechanics remain only partially understood. Dense, cold air settles deep into fractured Paleozoic-era rock during winter. When outside temperatures rise in spring, that stored cold moves outward through the fissures, chilling moisture as it passes and forming ice at the precise moment the calendar says it shouldn't exist. According to Atlas Obscura, it is the largest such formation east of the Mississippi.

The mine closed in 1990 and sat untouched for more than two decades before reopening in 2014 under new ownership. Visitors don't descend into the shaft; guides lead small groups into a viewing room directly above it, where the cold is immediate and the ice is visible below. It operates seasonally, Wednesday through Sunday from Memorial Day through Labor Day—fittingly, only when the ice is there to see. It pairs naturally with Cherry Springs State Park about fifteen miles south on Route 44—the East Coast's only Gold-level International Dark Sky Park. So you could spend a summer excursion viewing ice in the afternoon and stars at night.

Learn more at
coudersporticemine.com

SCANDINAVIAN SECRETS *FOR TACKLING DARK DAYS*

Written by **Michael Russell**



Norway, Sweden, and Denmark average fewer than seven hours of daylight in December. Yet these countries consistently rank among the happiest in the world. Researchers point to many contributing factors: strong social systems, trust in institutions, and work-life balance. Cultural practices refined over generations to make winter genuinely livable may play a role as well.

The most well-known is hygge, a Danish concept (Norwegian in origin, but most culturally embedded in Denmark) that

In Sweden, *fika*—the scheduled coffee break—is a real pause, taken away from work, with something warm and something sweet.

resists clean translation but lands somewhere between coziness and contentment. It's a deliberate practice rather than a mood, creating conditions that make the present moment feel worthwhile. This could be a lit candle or an unhurried afternoon with someone you love. Hygge is grounded, not aspirational. Showing up to your own life, slowly, is the whole point.

Ritual, not remedy

Most approaches to winter burnout are corrective—sleep more or exercise harder. The Scandinavian model proposes something different: that the season has its own value and that learning to inhabit it can change your relationship to the season entirely.

The mechanism is ritual. In Sweden, *fika*—the scheduled coffee break—is a real pause, taken away from work, with something warm and something sweet. In Norway, the *koselig* practice of embracing coziness encourages unhurried togetherness, with food made from scratch and phones put away. These are practices, not indulgences, and a blueprint for a sustainable winter. Creating your own version means identifying the small rituals that return you to yourself and defending them against the week's friction.



ESRA AFSAR/PEXELS

Thirty minutes in gray winter daylight, say on a walk before noon, can do measurable work on mood and sleep.

Light as a tool

Scandinavians layer light deliberately—like table lamps, floor lamps, candles on every surface, and lanterns outdoors—rather than relying on a single overhead fixture. Warm, low light may reduce cortisol and signal the brain toward rest. A room lit by one overhead bulb on a January evening works against you in ways that are physiological.

Outdoor light matters equally. Thirty minutes in gray winter daylight, say on a walk before noon, can do measurable work on mood and sleep. The Scandinavian principle: You don't wait for good conditions; you go out anyway.

By February, the distinction between people who have made peace with winter and those still fighting it is often visible. One group is tired, while the other has learned to rest.

AN ARTIST'S **HEALING HANDS**

Interview with **Scott Shaffer /** Written by **Andre Rios /** Photography **as noted**



Delve into the inspiration behind ceramic artist **Scott Shaffer**'s thought-provoking work.

What was your journey to becoming an artist?

When I was young, my mom was a watercolor artist. I keep her still-life fruit paintings hanging up. I also admired my older brother's high-school ceramics work. Once I touched clay again in high school, I was hooked. I even took second place in a student contest!

I continued crafting through college, but once I moved back to the Bay Area from San Diego, I took a class for fifteen years, working with clay. Later influences include ceramic artist David Shaner and glassblower Dale Chihuly, the former because of his more earth-toned glazes and the latter because of his out-of-the-box thinking.

My recent works have been published in the *Santa Clara Review* (by Santa Clara University) and *Ceramics Monthly*.

Would you give us a glimpse into your process?

I typically use a stoneware clay body, not porcelain, which is finer, and usually work on a potter's wheel. Sometimes I will sketch out a piece before I throw it, but most of the time I just ask myself questions like *What haven't I made in a while? How big will I make it? Does it need a lid? How will I fire it?* and *What glaze will I use?* Alternatively, I use what's called barrel firing, where smoke and the chemicals flow over pots. You never know what you're going to get from this process!

I'm also a marriage and family therapist who has worked with broken and hurt people, which has also inspired my work. For example, when one of my concept pieces was broken by gallery guests, I was initially going to discard it. But then I had the idea to use the broken work to illustrate the human ability to heal despite difficult circumstances. So I made ongoing repairs using a Japanese technique called *kintsugi* and added the Chinese character for "faith." And thus, I named the piece *Faith Restored*.

How do you hope your art makes a difference to people who view it?

The effect I hope for is twofold. For the display work I make, I hope they get to enjoy and show a handmade piece of pottery that is not mass-produced. Each piece I make is not made to be the same shape or size. I often embellish my work using wood, shells, and/or beads.

For the "concept" pieces, they come from my inner therapist. How can I create work that speaks of the human condition? Where my work is shown, I have a placard that tells not only the name of the work but also some thoughts I'd like the viewer to leave with.

For more info, visit **saspottery.com** or email Shaffer at **saspottery@gmail.com**



HEADSHOT: SCOTT SHAFFER

CLOCKWISE: CHRIS GONZALEZ, SCOTT SHAFFER, CHRIS GONZALEZ

"I typically use a stoneware clay body, not porcelain, which is finer, and usually work on a potter's wheel.





Faith Restored



answers about ANXIETY

Interview with **Dr. Emily Ferrara**
Written by **Matthew Brady**

DR. EMILY FERRARA, founder of Simplify Life Counseling + Coaching in Atlanta, discusses anxiety's impact and the best treatment options.

What are anxiety's primary causes and effects? How do you diagnose it?
The causes depend on the type because there's a wide array, from general anxiety disorder to OCD and PTSD. Heredity accounts for about 30 percent of general anxiety cases, whereas with OCD it can be up to 50 percent. Regardless, science shows that when we live on edge for a long time, it's harmful to our health, especially our brains.

I always use clinical criteria to initially assess a patient's anxiety rating because the data drives the diagnosis—otherwise, it's easy to misdiagnose. As an example, people will often think they have ADHD when it's anxiety or report that they're having a heart attack when it's a panic attack.

Is our society more anxious than ever? If so, why?
Yes, but it's nuanced. For one, we see a lot of young folks with social anxiety, which COVID amplified by necessitating being behind screens even more instead of being around others. But the bigger problem is not having the tools to manage it. That's particularly challenging because it's so easy today to get distracted rather than process your feelings.

In addition, people overly identify with anxiety; a lot of them will say "I *am* an anxious person" instead of "I *have* anxiety." It becomes their name tag, a situation that's only made worse if they self-diagnose through googling or using AI. As therapists, we work to emphasize instead that they are so much more than that. But I think that they get comfortable with such labels, which creates learned helplessness and can even lead to weaponizing mental health.

How can labels weaponize mental health?
Here's one example. Many individuals, especially young ones, say "You triggered me" or "I was so triggered in class." *Trigger* is a term that we use for extreme trauma, such as when a soldier comes home and goes into fight-or-flight mode because of fireworks. It's not merely when you get frustrated.

What are the best ways to handle anxiety?
We normally only consider medication for more serious forms. Otherwise, we'll work on helping them face it. For instance, if someone has a contamination phobia, we may have them touch doorknobs.





With general anxiety, cognitive behavioral therapy, or CBT, is the most proven effective method. Through it, we try to change patients' thoughts, which changes their beliefs, which changes their actions.

Plus, CBT goes beyond our sessions: Self-dependence is the goal, not to see a therapist forever. We'll teach them strategies, such as logging their anxiety prompts, thoughts, and responses, that they can use in everyday life and, if need be, to lean on advocates like their parents or partner.

You believe that anxiety can be good. Would you elaborate?

It's not cancer—it's something that naturally helps us by keeping us fully attuned, such as by making students feel nervous when taking a test, preventing them from getting distracted or being unable to recall as much.

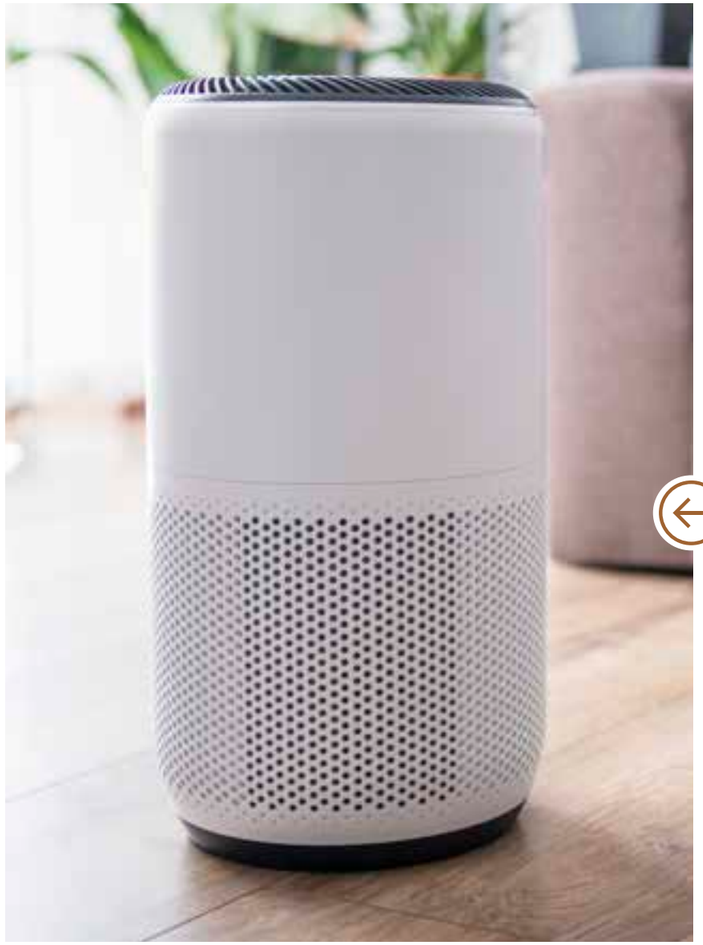
People's responses to anxiety are vital. If they can control it, they can use it to improve their performance. However, when it gets to be too much, they can freeze up and assume something bad is going to happen. Ultimately, that's what the condition does: it causes us to overestimate negative outcomes and underestimate our ability to prevent or solve problems.

Overall, is there hope?

There's more hope now than ever before. I was the three-year-old who was washing my hands obsessively and making family members wonder, "What is this?" In prior generations, people who had any kind of overt mental health problems were often put in institutions. Today, we're able to explain anxiety and provide practical solutions for managing it.

MAKING WELLNESS MORE CONVENIENT

Written by **Thomas Maye**



Healthy habits work better when your environment supports them. For example, a foam roller in your closet gets used twice, yet if you keep it beside your favorite chair it's more likely to become part of your routine. The difference is placement. A small, well-positioned collection of tools can make a huge difference.

Recovery: maintenance first, repair second
These are different needs. Daily muscle recovery maintenance can be handled well by a firm foam roller since some studies suggest foam rolling may help reduce muscle soreness and improve short-term recovery. For targeted repair after strength training, a massage gun can address specific areas with more precision than a roller can. For travel days or long periods on your feet, graduated compression socks can reduce leg fatigue.

Sleep and air quality
Bedroom air quality has a direct effect on sleep quality. Research has found that poor ventilation and elevated particulate levels are consistently associated with more disrupted sleep and lower next-day performance. An appropriately sized purifier can handle your larger rooms reliably, making a consistent difference for anyone sensitive to dust or allergens. If you reside in a drier climate or a heated home, consider a model that automatically maintains comfortable overnight humidity.

Kitchen and travel
Time (or the lack of it) usually trumps skill when it comes to cooking well. Keeping a blender on the counter allows you to make a good breakfast in minutes. An air fryer, left accessible rather than stored, produces satisfying meals with minimal oil and less cleanup. For cookware, opt for ceramic surfaces that wash easily. On the road, using an insulated water bottle can keep your hydration consistent, while resistance bands can allow you to work out in your hotel room. A handy pill organizer prevents the lapse in supplements that happens when bags are packed in a hurry.

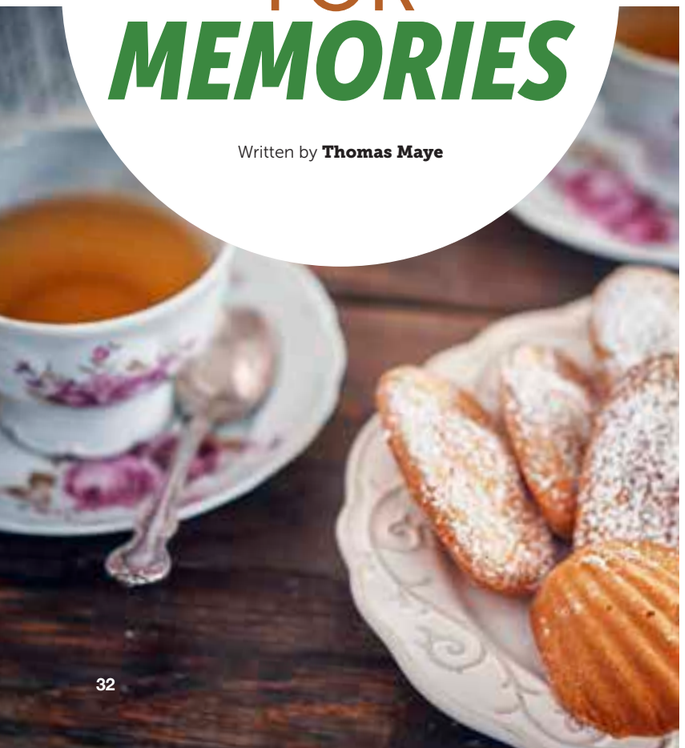


One upgrade at a time
Identify the gap that costs you most, and address it with a single well-chosen tool. Add only as the next need becomes clear. A small collection maintained over time might just outperform a larger one that requires management.



THE BEST SENSE FOR *MEMORIES*

Written by **Thomas Maye**



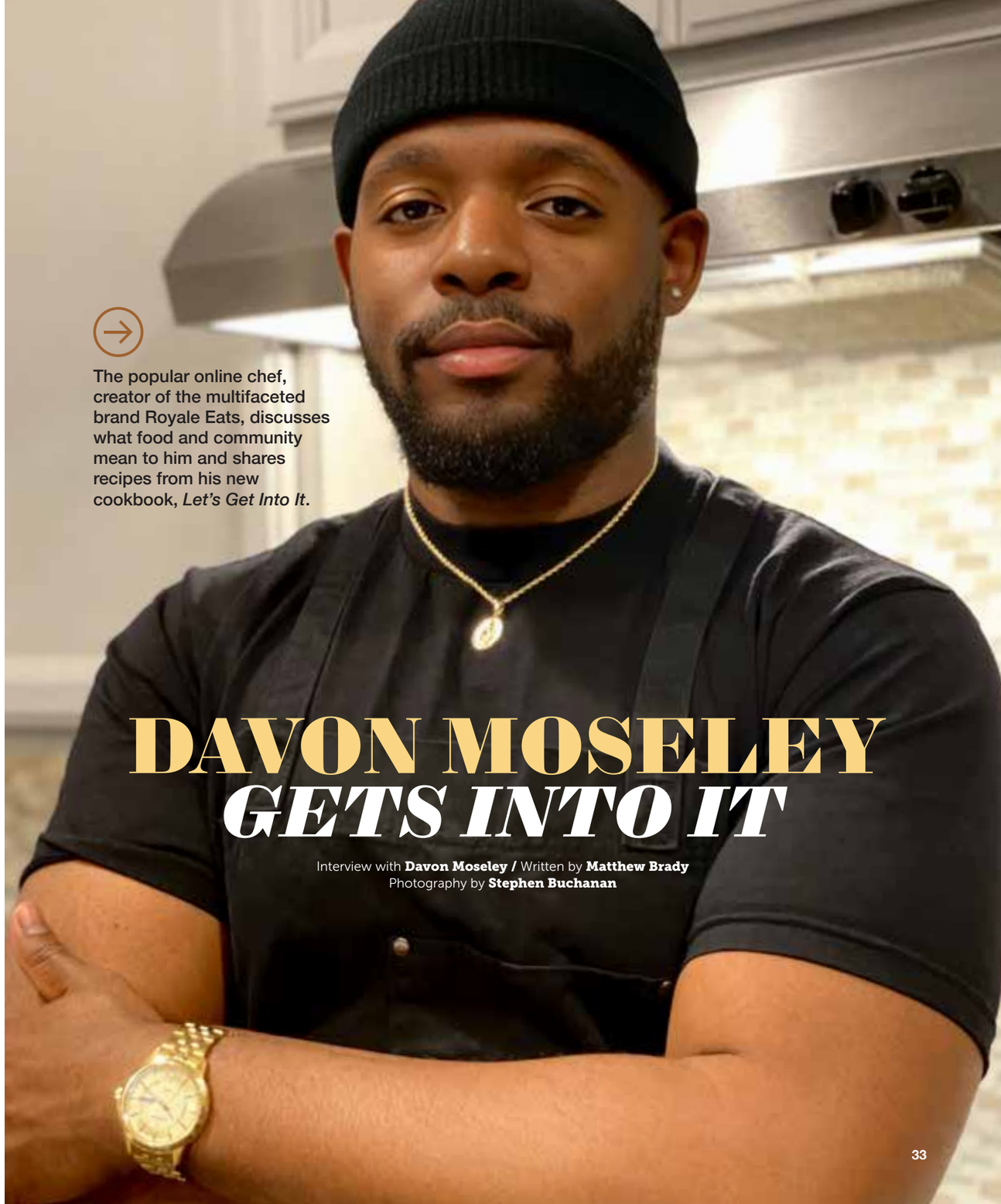
Sunscreen. Pipe tobacco. A particular hand lotion your mother wore. The smell arrives before the memory does, and suddenly you're not in your kitchen anymore.

No other sense does this as reliably. Sight and sound travel through the thalamus, the brain's relay station, before reaching areas tied to memory and emotion.

Smell takes a shortcut. Odor molecules connect directly to the olfactory bulb, which in turn links to the amygdala and hippocampus. These are the structures that handle emotion and store autobiographical memory. The result is a link between scent and personal history that research describes as more visceral and emotionally charged than memories triggered by photographs or songs—and, notably, one that tends to pull from much earlier in life. Studies consistently find that scent-evoked memories cluster in the first decade, whereas visual and verbal cues tend to surface memories from adolescence and early adulthood. This is why scent memories tend to arrive whole.

Researchers call it the Proust phenomenon, after the novelist's famous passage about a madeleine soaked in tea and the flood of childhood memory that followed. What Proust described, neuroscientists have since confirmed as a measurable feature of brain architecture, not literary license.

Most people experience this passively through a smell they weren't expecting. But the mechanism runs in both directions. A fragrance worn consistently through a significant period becomes retrievable later; a candle burned only on certain evenings begins to mark time as reliably as a calendar. Retailers and hoteliers have understood this for years. The same logic applies at home: A scent, applied with consistency, shapes not only how a space feels in the moment but also how it will be remembered.



The popular online chef, creator of the multifaceted brand Royale Eats, discusses what food and community mean to him and shares recipes from his new cookbook, *Let's Get Into It*.

DAVON MOSELEY *GETS INTO IT*

Interview with **Davon Moseley /** Written by **Matthew Brady**
Photography by **Stephen Buchanan**



Where did you grow up? How did your upbringing shape your relationship with food?
I was born in DC and raised in Maryland, but both sides of my family are from a small town in North Carolina. We went back and forth a lot, so I feel connected to both areas. The traditions I grew up with, especially around food, really come from my family in North Carolina, though. Food was always present. No matter what the occasion was, we were cooking.

When did cooking shift from something you enjoyed to something you wanted to understand?
I was always curious. While everyone else was in the living room or outside, I was in the kitchen watching. My grandmothers and aunts didn't necessarily explain what they were doing, but I paid attention. Over time, I started to understand that food wasn't just about eating; it was how people came together. That made me want to learn the process, not just the result.

My father was the first person who taught me cooking step by step. Of all things, he walked me through how to make spaghetti—something simple, but it mattered.

You didn't go to culinary school. Instead, you studied kinesiology and later health and wellness coaching. How did that influence your work?
It helped me understand the body and how food affects it. In my master's program, I also learned how to communicate: how to guide people and explain things clearly. That's a big part of what I do now. It's not just cooking; it's helping people feel like they can do it too.

When did you kick off your brand, Royale Eats? What pushed you to share your cooking publicly?
I was at home a lot during COVID, just cooking and posting on my personal page. Friends kept asking where I got the food, and I'd say, "I made it." They encouraged me to start a food page. I hesitated at first. I wasn't someone who loved posting, but I gave it a try and

named it using my middle name and my passion for food. People responded to it pretty quickly, with many requesting my recipes, and it just kept growing.

Your brand feels approachable by design. Was that intentional?
Completely. The foundation is comfort. I want folks to feel comfortable in the kitchen. Not everyone has confidence there, but they still want home-cooked meals. My goal is to make recipes that meet them where they are—especially beginners—and help them build from there.

Your work often emphasizes community. What role does food play in that?
Food is a tool: It brings people together in a positive way. For example, it's hard to stay upset with someone when you're sharing a good meal. For me, the most rewarding part is hearing from people who tried a recipe and felt proud of it or even served it to their family and got a positive reaction. That means more than anything.

With all you do, you seemingly need to think about food 24/7. Do you ever need distance from it?
Absolutely. I love food, but constantly working with it can be exhausting. Sometimes I have to step away: go out, focus on something else, and reset. If I don't take that time, I can't give everything my best effort.

What has kept you levelheaded during this venture?
My mindset. I was raised to stay grounded—to never think I'm better than anyone but not to think I'm less, either. That keeps me centered. No matter where this goes, I want to remain someone people can relate to as they enjoy my cooking.

For more info, visit **royaleeats.com**

SCAN THE QR CODE
to get the full cookbook.



Recipes from ***Let's Get Into It: 130+ Comfort Food Recipes for Novice Cooks*** by Davon Moseley. DK Publishing, 2025. Photography by Stephen Buchanan.



hibachi STEAK

If I'm not in a chicken mood, then I am definitely ordering the steak. Tender steak bites tossed in a flavorful sweet and savory sauce are a home run. With a few different recipes, my goal is for you to have hibachi nights at home to treat yourself and your loved ones. Maybe you can even have your family sit at the counter while you cook!

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

- 2 pounds sirloin steak
- ¼ cup low-sodium soy sauce
- ¼ cup hoisin sauce
- 1 tsp. toasted sesame oil
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp. ground ginger
- Neutral oil, to cook

INSTRUCTIONS

1/ Pat dry the steak. Cut the steak into 1-inch pieces. Set aside.

2/ In a large bowl, whisk together the soy sauce, hoisin sauce, sesame oil, minced garlic, and ginger until combined.

3/ Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat and add 1 tbsp. neutral oil. Once the oil is hot, it will easily move around the skillet and shimmer. Add the steak pieces in small batches to cook. You do not want to overcrowd the skillet as too many pieces in the skillet can cause them to steam and reduce the chances of getting a good sear on each piece. Add just enough so each has room to cook. (You'll need to sear in 3 or 4 batches.) Cooking time will depend on your preference of steak doneness. I like medium and cook the steak for 1 to 2 minutes. Flip, then 1 to 2 minutes on the other side. For well done, I recommend cooking for 2 to 3 minutes each side. For a medium-rare cook, increase the heat to high and cook for 30 seconds to 1 minute on each side. Once the steak is cooked to your preference, remove from the skillet and set aside on a plate. Repeat with all the steak cubes.

4/ Once all the steak is cooked to your preference, reduce the heat to medium and add all the steak back into the skillet. Toss in the sauce and cook for about 2 minutes, until the steak is coated in the sauce. Serve and enjoy.

Recipe by **DAVON MOSELEY**
Photography by **STEPHEN BUCHANAN**



GARLIC & HERB *mashed potatoes*

There are a lot of dishes that people can debate over whether they're good or not. However, I've never heard anyone say they didn't like mashed potatoes. This is my favorite way to make mashed potatoes because they're buttery, rich, and sure do satiate. I like to serve these with almost every entrée in this book—they all work!

Serves 6

INGREDIENTS

2 pounds Yukon Gold potatoes
4 tbsp. (½ stick) unsalted butter
2 cloves garlic, crushed
2 cups heavy cream
2 sprigs fresh thyme
1 sprig fresh rosemary
Kosher salt, to taste
Black pepper, to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1/ Rinse, peel, and chop the potatoes into 1-inch pieces.

2/ Add the potatoes and about 1 tablespoon of kosher salt to a large pot and cover with water. Bring to a boil, and cook for 10 to 12 minutes, until the potatoes are fork-tender. Remove from the heat and drain the water from the pot, keeping the potatoes in the pot and allowing the steam to release.

3/ Meanwhile, make the butter mixture: In a small pot over medium-low heat, melt the butter. Once melted, add the garlic and cook for about 1 minute, stirring frequently, until the garlic is fragrant. Next, pour in the heavy cream and add the fresh thyme and rosemary. Stir frequently for 2 to 3 minutes and bring to a low simmer. Simmer for about 5-10 minutes to allow the cream to infuse. Once done, remove the thyme, rosemary, and garlic from the pot. Remove the pot from the heat.

4/ Using a potato masher, mash the potatoes in the pot to your desired consistency. (You can also use a potato ricer.) Pour in ¼ of the butter and cream mixture at a time and fold it into the potatoes. Repeat the pouring and folding until the mashed potatoes reach your desired consistency, folding until just combined to avoid overmixing. You may not end up using all of the butter mixture.

5/ Season with salt and black pepper. Optionally, top with chives. Enjoy hot.

Recipe by **DAVON MOSELEY**
Photography by **STEPHEN BUCHANAN**

ABOVE AND BEYOND

Interview with **Christie Leu**
Written by **Matthew Brady**
Photography by **Stacy Zarin Goldberg**

Interior designer **Christie Leu**, principal designer at Christie Leu Interiors, discusses a Maryland project that quickly expanded, resulting in a dramatic main-floor upgrade.

Tell us about yourself. Was your path always to design?
I started my career as an artist, traveling and selling functional pieces. After I had my children, especially the triplets, that lifestyle wasn't practical anymore. At the same time, I was renovating my own home and working with contractors. That's when I realized I could turn that experience into a profession.

How did having triplets shape how you worked?
It changed everything. When you have triplets, you rely on systems, such as schedules, organization, and making sure everything has a place. You're constantly thinking about efficiency.

That mindset carries directly into my work because it taught me to see problems at scale. When you're managing five young children, you're always asking how to make things work better—how to get out the door and where things should go. That's exactly what I do in design.

Your website states that you often begin your process in the construction phase rather than in design. Why?
That's where you have control. If I'm involved early, I can make sure outlets are where they need to be, lighting is planned properly, and the layout supports how the homeowners actually live. It's much harder to fix those things later.

This Kensington, Maryland, project began as a kitchen update but expanded significantly. What changed?
The kitchen itself wasn't working, but the bigger issue was the surrounding rooms. The family room and a small library weren't being used well, and the light was trapped in one area. By opening those connections, we not only improved the kitchen but also changed how the entire main level functioned.

Did the clients have a clear vision of what they wanted?
The homeowners have strong tastes, which definitely helped the collaboration. They knew





they liked a mid-century modern feel and weren't afraid of color. That gave us a clear direction. They also understood that function mattered just as much as form, which made decisions easier.

You didn't fully combine the rooms but adjusted their flow. Why take that approach?
You don't always need one large, open space. It's more effective to create strong connections—such as wider openings and better sightlines—so the rooms relate to each other. That way, you keep definition but gain flow, light, and usability.

Light seems central to the outcome. How intentional was that?
Very. The family room had beautiful natural light, but it stayed contained. Once we opened the walls, that light became part of the kitchen experience. It changes how a space feels throughout the day.









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Storage plays a major role in this kitchen. How did you approach it?
I always try to maximize storage without compromising the design. In this case, we had the space to do it well, including deep drawers, integrated storage in the island, and hidden areas for appliances. When storage is handled properly, it frees up the rest of the room to feel calm and intentional.

Were the hidden areas planned or added along the way?
Both. Some ideas come from experience, and some come directly from the homeowners. In this project, they suggested a hidden charging shelf under the counter. We worked it out with the cabinetmaker and made it part of the design. Those details make a house easier to live in.

The kitchen includes a lower work surface. What problem were you solving there?
They wanted a baking area that was more comfortable to use. Lowering that section by about six inches made it more usable, especially for their daughter. It's a small adjustment, but it changes how the space functions day to day.

The powder room also stands out. Was that driven by creativity or constraint?
Constraint at first. It's a very tight space, so I had to design a curved vanity just to allow the door to open properly. Once that was solved, we added the wallpaper and color. Often the most interesting rooms start with a limitation.

How did that play out here overall?
Every project has limitations, whether in space, structure, or budget. In this house, the existing footprint and layout forced us to think carefully about flow and function. That focus led to better decisions than if we had just expanded outward.

For more info, visit
christieleuinteriors.com



GROWING UP WITHOUT A **ROAD MAP**

Written by **Andre Rios**

Some people look to their peers and wonder if other adults received a manual for life that they somehow missed. While others followed a clearly marked path—paved with stable resources, predictable milestones, and reliable guidance—they feel like they navigated a wilderness alone.

They may have grown up with less guidance, forced to scout the terrain as they went. Although you may have spent years viewing such a lack of direction as a deficit, research and real-world success stories suggest that your difficult start likely gifted you with a unique set of strengths that others rarely develop.

The hidden gifts of a difficult start
Adversity in childhood often acts as a high-pressure forge. When you cannot rely on a stable environment, your brain may adapt by developing heightened skills in areas like pattern recognition, social intelligence, and creative problem-solving. You may have learned to read a room before you could read a book or mastered the art of making do, which, in adulthood, translates into an impressive ability to innovate under pressure.

These traits are not just survival mechanisms; they are the foundations of resilience. According to Dr. Ann Masten, a leading researcher in the field of developmental resilience, this "ordinary magic" (to use her term) does not come from an extraordinary quality within the individual but rather from the fundamental human adaptive systems that difficulty activates. When you face early challenges, you exercise your resilience muscles long before your peers even know they have them.

Lessons from those who led the way
History is full of individuals who turned an absent road map into a blueprint for unprecedented success. Consider Howard Schultz, the former CEO of Starbucks. Growing up in public housing projects in Brooklyn, he witnessed the crushing weight of poverty and a lack of health insurance. Schultz did not just survive that environment; he used the empathy and drive he gained there to build a company culture that prioritized employee benefits, fundamentally changing the service industry.

Similarly, Viola Davis has often spoken about the difficulties of poverty and trauma that surrounded her as a child, including food scarcity. She used her early hardships to fuel a relentless work ethic and a deep, empathetic well from which to draw her performances. For Davis, that meant she had to invent her own destination, eventually becoming one of the most decorated actors of her generation.

These individuals prove that a difficult beginning does not define your ending; rather, it provides the raw material for a more complex and durable character.

The strength of an unwritten path
Your history of navigating without a guide has likely made you more comfortable with ambiguity than the average person. While others panic when a plan falls through, these people often pivot, possessing tremendous "stress-related growth"—the phenomenon in which individuals emerge from struggle with a greater appreciation for life, increased personal strength, and new possibilities.

You may not have chosen your youth or upbringing, but any rocky terrain you crossed made you a master navigator. Today, you don't need a road map because you have something better: a compass built from experience, resilience, and an intimate knowledge of exactly how far you can go.

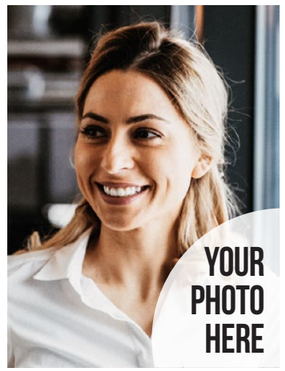




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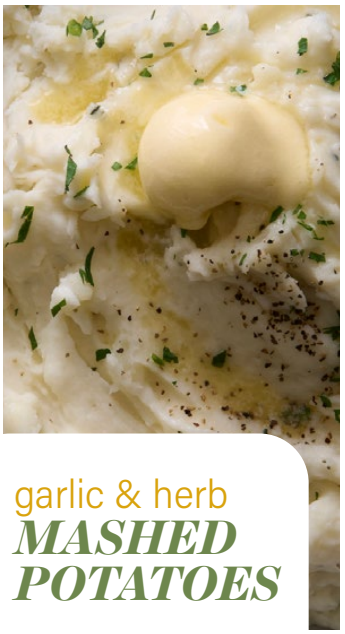
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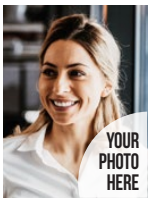
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Front of Tear Out Card 2



garlic & herb
MASHED POTATOES

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Back of Tear Out Card 2

garlic & herb
MASHED POTATOES

SERVES 6

make

- 2 lb. Yukon Gold potatoes
- 4 tbsp. (½ stick) unsalted butter
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 2 c. heavy cream
- 2 sprigs fresh thyme
- 1 sprig fresh rosemary
- Kosher salt, to taste
- Black pepper, to taste
- Chives (optional)

measure

1. Rinse, peel, and chop the potatoes into 1 in. pieces.
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Recipe from ***Let's Get Into It: 130+ Comfort Food Recipes for Novice Cooks*** by Davon Moseley. DK Publishing, 2025. Photography by Stephen Buchanan.

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The Smith Family
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Stacey is the best of the best! Our family was very pleased with her services, especially Snowball, our little pup! She listened to all of our concerns, wants, needs, and dreams. Stacey is totally awesome! I will be sharing her information with everyone that I know.



★★★★★

The Miller Family
Manayunk

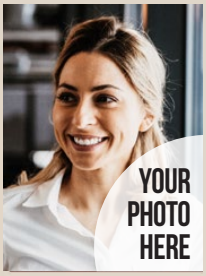
Stacey was very patient with us, even though we were very picky. She knew how important it was for us to have a great experience and great service. We would definitely refer Stacey to all of our friends and family.



★★★★★

The Austin Family
Manayunk

Stacey is truly a very impressive person. She works fast, efficiently, and effectively. Her services are top of the line and we were very satisfied with her work. We love Stacey!



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