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Sunday Dinners at My Grandparents'

Cherishing the Memories We Made Over Pasta and Meatballs

When I discovered that March was National Nutrition Month, my mind didn't leap to healthy meal plans and tracking calories. No, I immediately thought about a Sunday tradition that often involved loads of carbs, dozens of guests, and desserts named after my cousins and me.

Every Sunday for as long as I can remember, my family would head over to Nanny and Papa's house for Sunday dinner. It was a tradition my grandparents, my mom's parents, began and one that we continued and grew until they moved into an assisted living facility. To this day, those are some of my greatest memories.

It was always loud. On any given Sunday during my childhood, there were about 19 of us, jammed in around a few tables, enjoying a meal my Nan worked all day to prepare. We feasted on pasta — sometimes homemade pasta that she began making earlier that morning — and meatballs and talked about our weeks and what was happening around us. After we stuffed our faces, Nanny would bring out the dessert, which was often some version of a grandchild's favorite. For example, there were my favorite cookies, which she fondly named "Michael's cookies" or my cousin Joey's favorite cake, named "Joey's cake." Each week was something special.

You never knew who was going to drop by for Sunday dinner at our grandparents' house, because sometimes one of us would bring a guest or someone would stop by unexpectedly. If that happened, they were always corralled into a meal by my grandmother. She worried that she didn't prepare enough food for the unexpected guests, so she always let them dish up first. We used to tease my Nan that if someone rang the doorbell during our meal, we'd have to slip our ravioli back into the dish for the guest!

As we grew up, where we sat changed and the number of people increased, too. My cousin and I were the first and only two cousins allowed to sit at the grown-up table. By the time we graduated to sharing a table with the adults, there wasn't any room for the others! (A big perk of being one of the oldest.) And the more people we added, the more cramped it got.

I'll never forget when I first brought Jill to Sunday dinner. I was the first grandchild to bring a partner to Sunday dinner, and I did my best to prepare her. I warned Jill that she should always accept the food my Nanny is offering, otherwise she won't give up. It was like she feared leftovers or sending us home hungry! I also warned Jill that it might be overwhelming to meet 20 or so people all at once,



but she fit right in. She even bonded with my uncle Ray, who was the only Irish one of the bunch for the longest time. The two of them would joke about being the only two Irish people stuck with a bunch of Italians!

Perhaps, what I'm most thankful for about those Sundays were the years when my kids were able to join. I was the first grandchild to have children, too, and Gabby and Mikey became my grandparents' world after they were born. It was like they had renewed energy! Papa would get on the floor and play with Gabby, while he always loved to talk Red Sox or the Patriots with Mikey and watch him play baseball. My Nan would even push Mikey around in a stroller after spending all day on her feet cooking for more than 20 people.

Today, this whole big group still gets together for the holidays and other celebrations, but we don't gather for Sunday dinners anymore. It felt like the kind of tradition that was best kept during the time we had it, and after my grandparents moved, we moved on, too. But I will always keep those memories close. It was chaotic, you never knew who was going to show up, and my Papa liked to mix his old wine together to create "the house wine."

I can't think of any other way I'd prefer to spend a Sunday.

—Mike Monteforte

An Easy Way to Drink More Water AND AVOID DEHYDRATION

Dehydration is a big problem. Many people don't drink enough water each day — some reports show that 75% of adults in the United States don't drink enough water, and over a quarter are dehydrated. Though those statistics aren't widely agreed upon, it's obvious that most people need more fluids.

Even if it feels like you're drinking a lot of water, remember that water leaves your body every time you sweat, go to the bathroom, and even breathe. Not keeping up with proper water intake can lead to dehydration. Even mild dehydration can cause health problems and impact your brain, heart, skin, and other organs, which can lead to headaches, confusion, fatigue, and gastrointestinal distress.

We all know the solution to dehydration is to drink more water, but exactly how much water do we need each day? The amount will differ depending on the person, but one simple way to approximate your necessary daily intake is by dividing your body weight in half and drinking that much water (in fluid ounces) each day. For example, if you weigh 175 pounds, you'd need to drink 87.5 fluid ounces — over half a gallon — of water per day.



That might seem like a lot of liquid, but you can easily drink it without trying too hard. All you have to do is be proactive: Start keeping water any place you frequent during the day. Keep a bottle in your car, at your desk, by your favorite chair, near your workout equipment, etc. Having water easily available in the places you spend the most time each day helps increase your chances of actually drinking it.

An alternative approach is to purchase a giant jug that can hold all the water you need to drink in a day. Seeing it all in one place might be intimidating at first, but this method makes things very simple. Keep the jug close, and your water intake will likely increase without too much additional effort. And if you're just not motivated to drink plain water, you can always add sugar-free flavoring or lemon to make it more enticing.

3 Ways to Help Your Legal Case Move Faster (And 3 Ways to Mess It Up)

Every legal case proceeds at its own pace. The Myra Clark Gaines litigation — a fight over an inheritance that began in 1834 — famously lasted 55 years. Even simple car accident cases often take more than a year to resolve. Frustration during the legal process is normal, but if you're feeling it, there are a few things you can do to help your lawyers move things along:

- Respond to communication quickly.
- Share all of the details about your case.
- Keep your emotions in check.

This might seem like common sense, but you'd be surprised by how quickly ignoring these three items can send your case off the rails.

Be Quick to Click

When your attorney emails or calls you, it's vital to answer as soon as you can. Some steps of the legal process are time-

sensitive, and if you ignore your attorney or wait hours or days before responding to them, you could miss a crucial window. Your lawyer might even walk away from your case, like the attorney in the 2002 *Garden v. Garden* case who withdrew when his client stopped responding. That said, it's vital not to overcommunicate with your lawyer either. Always respond when they reach out, but don't flood their inbox with emails or load their voicemail with messages. Clogging their information channels will just slow down their work, and it might end up costing you. Your attorney's billable hours may include time taken to respond to emails.

Don't Hide the Details

Some facts of your case could be embarrassing or hard to talk about, but the best way to keep things moving is to share everything with your lawyer upfront. This will save time because your lawyer won't have

to continue prodding you for information, and it could also save your case! Your lawyer won't be able to defend you well unless they have all of the relevant information. Plus, if opposing counsel discovers something you've been hiding, your case may fall apart.

Tamp Down Your Temper

Court cases can get emotional, especially if something like child custody is at stake. Even so, if you have to appear in court it's vital you keep your emotions in check and listen to your attorney's advice about what to say and do. If you lose your temper or disrupt the court process, the judge could hold you in contempt of court — potentially triggering a fine or even jail time. This will certainly derail your case's timeline. For proof, consider a defendant in a burglary case, Manson Bryant, who was sentenced to 22 years in prison. When he heard the verdict, Bryant started shouting at the judge — who added six more years to his sentence on the spot.

TAKE A BREAK



Inspired by EatingWell.com

Ingredients

- 1 lb prepared whole-wheat pizza dough, divided into 6 equal portions
- 12 oz asparagus spears, trimmed and cut into 1-inch pieces
- 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1 cup shredded smoked mozzarella cheese
- 1/3 cup scallions, thinly sliced
- 2 tbsp walnuts, toasted and chopped
- 1 sprig of fresh mint leaves, torn
- Zest of 1 orange

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 500 F and ensure there are two racks in your oven.
2. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper, stretch each piece of dough into a 7-by-3-inch oval and arrange evenly on the pan.
3. On a second baking sheet, toss asparagus with oil and 1/4 tsp salt.
4. Place dough on top rack and asparagus on bottom and bake for 3 minutes.
5. Remove both trays from the oven, sprinkle cheese over the dough, then top with asparagus and scallions.
6. Return pizzettes to oven and bake until the crusts' edges are golden, about 8–10 minutes.
7. Remove from the oven and sprinkle with walnuts, mint, and orange zest before serving.

A LITTLE DISTRACTION

THIS ONE SMALL THING IS KILLING YOUR PRODUCTIVITY

Distractions in your workplace destroy your productivity, regardless of where you actually work. But here's the kicker: Some distractions don't always register as distractions because they're often minor, like a knock at the door or a conversation you can hear from two cubicles over. However, even when a distraction doesn't feel like a distraction, it still kills your productivity.

But one distraction in particular can absolutely ruin productivity. It isn't as obvious as an unexpected phone call or a meeting that could have been an email. It's a small, normal part of our everyday lives: the notification.

We get notifications on our phones, tablets, laptops, desktops, and even our smartwatches. Notifications are everywhere, and we're conditioned to accept them.

Take email, for example. You're likely in the habit of checking email periodically — or whenever you get a notification. It can feel natural to quickly check your email and then get back to what you were doing. Except that never happens.

When an email, text, or other random notification distracts you, it *completely* diverts attention away from what you were doing. If it's spam, you may delete the email. Or, if you need to respond, it might take a few minutes or more. You may spend anywhere between 20 seconds to 20 minutes on any given email.

However, this isn't where time is lost. If you're responding to a customer email, for instance, that *is* part of your productivity. The time is lost when you attempt to get back to what you were doing before checking your notifications.

A University of California, Irvine study found that it takes an average of 23 minutes to get back to your task after every distraction, not just email. Over the course of a day, that adds up to a significant amount of wasted time.



How do you overcome this? Your best bet is to turn off notifications. Most devices let you customize your notifications so you can turn them off during working hours. Here's another quick tip: Set aside specific time during the day to check emails, texts, and other messages. You will significantly reduce the amount of time spent trying to refocus on the important tasks at hand.



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Over Meatball Merch

The Meatball Shop Sued Snooki! (And Another 'Jersey Shore' Star, Too)

Reality TV stars Nicole "Snooki" Polizzi and Deena Cortese are gearing up for a court battle. But this isn't a showdown with another celebrity: It's a fight to the death over merchandise with ... a New York City-based meatball restaurant!

This case sounds laughable, but there's some real "meat" to dig into. The controversy started when the celebrity duo — known as "The Meatballs" since their time together on "Jersey Shore" — launched a clothing brand/online store called The Meatball Shop late last year.

The brand sells meatball-themed T-shirts, sweatshirts, and hats with slogans like "Team Meatball Forever" and "Meatball Squad." Over the holidays, they even offered a sweater with a checklist reading, "Pour wine, wrap gifts, decorate, be a meatball." All of this merchandise plays off the pair's "Jersey Shore" nickname, which Polizzi and Cortese earned because, as Food & Wine puts it, "The party girls are both very tan, curvy, and short."

Even with this claim to the moniker, the legality of the celebrities' clothing line has some competition from, well, places that sell

actual meatballs. According to Page Six, the New York City-based restaurant The Meatball Shop sued Polizzi and Cortese in December of 2020,

claiming their clothing infringes on its trademark. As of writing this, a judge is considering The Meatball Shop's request to shut Polizzi and Cortese's operation down.

To add even more meat to the argument, it was the owners of The Meatball Shop restaurant (Daniel Holzman and Michael Chernow) who first taught Polizzi and Cortese to make edible meatballs in 2017. The lesson was documented in a photoshoot with "In Touch." Does it get more ironic than that?

If you want to keep up with the drama, check PageSix.com, and if this article made you crave meatballs, don't worry — we've got you covered. Visit Epicurious.com and search "classic beef meatballs" for a recipe that will knock your socks off.

