

#LS EDITOR'S NOTE

Silver linings of the year that was

Twenty-twenty was a terrible year. We lost many of our loved ones, respected members of our society; there was a complete lockdown, the economy came to a standstill, many of us lost our jobs. Yet, I would say, looking back, there have been some silver linings. We learnt and re-learnt many good traits and a few forgotten but important civic lessons. In one word, we improvised life as we knew it; amid pessimism and heart breaks, we are still on firm footing.

First and foremost, we have learnt the importance of family; the child in the nuclear family got both his/her parents at home, and in a long time s/he felt the wrap of love and security of having parents around. The spouses bonded and ironed out the differences, togetherness

became top precedence.

The elderly of the family was in the priority list, maintaining cleanliness and proper household hygiene became a regular responsibility. In fact, I know a few families who did not even step out of their homes for the entire year, just so that the elderly would not come in touch with the virus.

The reality of death was so intense and profound that we did press the brakes to appreciate life and living. We realised that the bigger picture of life is not about running after money, fame, lust, or success; these are so trivial in front of death.

Health became the number one concern and eating green and opting for wellness regimes brought us

beneficial results. We wore masks and gave our lungs a break, we maintained social distancing and stayed away from negativity, we did not over-indulge ourselves by spending or showing off to get few virtual validations.

Yes, the person who lost his or her job, life did them injustice, but perhaps, it can be used as an opportunity. Now, you have time to re-think and start anew. For nine to five job holders, taking a risk is almost a sacrilegious sin, we are so dependent on that pay check that we cannot think ourselves out of that conditional box.

There are so many of us taking risk in doing small business. Your necessity will pave the way for you, hone your skills in other ways that make you happy. Earning less but being happy is far better than

being rich and miserable.

The year was especially cruel to businesses, both small and big, like restaurants, fashion boutiques, the wedding industry and so many more were hard hit. But we did not stay put, we continued to roll the wheels of the economy in whatever speed.

It is our resilient human spirit that came out as the winner, it was a different year; nothing like this was ever experienced in our lifetime, but I would say nature forced us to stop. The grating lifestyle that we were so used to, was forcedly stopped. Life pressed a refresh button. Let's begin by taking it easy.

Happy New Year!

— RBR

KITCHEN TALES

NAFISA AHMED SONALI



New Year's delicious delights

For years, it has been a running trend for people in Bangladesh to go out for dinner and dance parties arranged by the hotels, or go on a trip and spend the new year abroad. But with second wave of COVID-19 in full swing, trips were not planned and we settled for spending New Year's at home.

And what better way to have fun at home during a time like this than to have Movie Nights! Just make a list of movies of your family's choice, make your favourite snacks, drinks, cookies, chips and dip, and a big batch of popcorn and spend some quality time with your family.



My grandmother always said, how you spend the first day of New Year will define how the rest of your year will go, and if you eat delicious food it means you will eat well for the rest of the year.

So, she always cooked special items on New Year's Day and we ate amazing dishes throughout the year. But I think it had more to do with her passion and talent for cooking, and for the love and dedication towards her family.

With these recipes, I hope I can share the love and send best wishes for this new year from my family to yours. With 2021 just beginning, let's pray and hope as one united human race that this crisis will soon end and we all can have our normal lives back.

Stay safe and Happy New Year everyone.

CITRUS FRUIT CAKE

This is a moist fruit cake, packed with fruits and bursting with citrus flavour. You can



always change the ingredients you use. This recipe usually requires orange zest. But since I did not have orange zest, I used orange juice. If you are using orange zest, then use 1 cup of water to boil the fruits. When using dried fruits, keep in mind, if you are using candied fruit, you may need to use less sugar, depending on your taste.

Ingredients

- 2 cups flour
- 3 eggs
- 1½ tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp ground nutmeg
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- Pinch of salt
- ½ cup water
- 1 cup butter
- 1 cup brown sugar
- 3 tbsp honey
- 3½ to 4 cups dried fruits
- ½ cup orange juice

- ½ tsp lemon zest
- ½ tsp vanilla essence

Method

In a pot, add water, butter, brown sugar, honey, and dried fruits. Bring to boil and simmer for 2-3 minutes. Take the fruits off the heat and cool completely. In a mixing bowl beat the eggs. Add fruit mixture, orange juice or orange zest, lemon zest and vanilla essence. Sift flour, baking powder, baking soda, ground nutmeg, ground cinnamon and salt into the mixing bowl. Pour batter into a prepared cake tin. Bake for 75-90 minutes at 160° C in a preheated oven.

ITALIAN HOT CHOCOLATE

This hot chocolate is very thick in consistency. It is almost like drinking a cup of melted chocolate. When making hot chocolate, use good quality cocoa powder. The chocolate you use should be one that you enjoy the taste of. I used semi-sweet chocolate here but dark chocolate goes really well in this recipe. When you heat the ingredients, don't make it too thick as it will thicken more as it cools. You can have whipped cream and marshmallows on top or you can dip churros, donuts or cookies in it.

Ingredients

- 4 tbsp sugar
- 2 tbsp cocoa powder
- 1 tbsp cornflour
- Pinch of salt
- ¼ cup semi-sweet chocolate
- 1½ cup milk
- ½ cup heavy cream
- 1 tsp vanilla essence

Method

In a pan, mix sugar, cocoa powder, cornflour, and salt. Add milk, stir and start heating. Add salt, vanilla, and chocolate pieces. When the chocolate has melted, add the cream. Pour into cups and serve with your favourite toppings.

Photo and Food: Nafisa Ahmed Sonali