



BETWEEN THE ROWS
WENDY SCHMIDT

Keeping your kitty in greens when it's white outside

When the grass is covered with snow, your outside kitty has no access to the usual fresh vegetables/salad. You can buy kits to grow your own kitty grass, or you can buy wheat grass already growing in various stores. Another alternative is to grow your own kitty grass. This may save money, but it will also be very satisfying to be able to do something to feed your pet and know where the food comes from — especially when you're careful to buy organic non-GMO grain.

Numerous grains can be used, but sprouting wheat grass is always a hit. The seed is fairly easy to get in any store selling bulk grains. Buy whole wheat berries. It probably doesn't matter to a kitty whether it is seed from soft wheat (for pastry flour) or hard wheat (for bread flour), but all I have is Montana Red, which is a hard wheat, and it works well.

Take 1 tablespoonful of wheat berries and place in a glass. Cover with tepid water and let sit at least overnight but not more than 24 hours.

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DORY'S DIARY
DOROTHY SWART FLESHMAN

Gift catalog prompts memories

When I went to pack up my Christmas decorations after New Years, I included my Montgomery Ward Christmas Gift Catalog of 1985, their last catalog before closing out their 113-year catalog business.

It is always fun to look in old catalogs which we now consider treasures from those years and we compare the prices as well.

It always brings back memories of what was given as well as received and what things outlasted the following years either in fact or memory.

The catalog itself was the initial item to enter our house and its pages be almost worn out from being turned and the treasures numbered in your favor with the corners of the pages earmarked by turning them down.

Not that you expected to get everything you marked as a favorite. In fact, not that you expected to get any of these things from a catalog because of the prices attached, but just in looking at such wonderful things they became part of you. And, when Christmas actually came and you found a present or two marked with your name, the gift inside had been chosen with you in mind, a wonderful gift in itself.

Christmas had always meant more than just a gift, for it was always wrapped in the expectation of time — time to see the snow fall for playing in it or building snowmen or going sledding, or looking out the window for expected guests arriving for a meal together.

Aunts and uncles brought laughter and chatter into one's home along with cousins with whom to play and chase away the solitude of waiting.

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Super Choice For Football-Watching Parties



Miniature crab cakes with avocado dip.

Jessica J. Trevino/Detroit Free Press-TNS

AVOCADO APPETIZER

By **Susan Selasky**
Detroit Free Press

The recent avocado warning from the Food and Drug Administration couldn't have come at a worse time. While avocados are available year-round, we are heading into a popular time for them: February's Super Bowl, when more are consumed than at any other time.

And in the weeks ahead, you will start seeing them on sale a lot.

The report released by the FDA in early December found that about one in five avocados tested positive on the outer skin (or peel) for *Listeria monocytogenes*, whose infection listeriosis can cause a variety of health issues, including nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. The bacteria was also found in less than one percent of avocado flesh. During the reporting period (2014-2016), they also found salmonella, but in less than 1 percent of avocados sample tested.

Why does this matter if you don't consume the skin?

The potential issue is that when you cut through the avocado's pebbly skin, bacteria could be transferred to the knife. And then the knife could contaminate the avocado flesh.

"Even if you plan to cut the rind or peel off the produce before eating, it is still important to wash it first so dirt and bacteria aren't transferred from the knife onto the fruit," warned the FDA.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention estimates 1,600 people are sickened from listeriosis each year. Of those sickened, the CDC says about 260 people die.

HOW TO BUY AVOCADOS

Avocados ripen after they are picked, not on the tree. A ripe avocado will yield to gentle pressure when you push into it. The skin will be pebbly and purplish-black. Once ripe, you can store uncut avocados in the refrigerator for about three days. The skin of an unripe avocado will be hard and green. Buy these if you don't plan on using them right away.

HOW TO WASH AVOCADOS

Treat avocados the same way you do melons: washing them under cool water before slicing into them. Because avocado skins are pebbly — as are some melons — use a vegetable brush to scrub them. Once scrubbed, pat them dry with paper towels. And always make sure you are preparing them on a clean work surface.

HOW TO SLICE AVOCADOS

Once washed, hold the avocado in a clean dish towel. Insert the tip of a knife through the skin, flesh and to the pit/seed. Cut around the seed, rotating the avocado with one hand and holding the knife with the other. Once you've cut around the whole avocado, twist to separate it in half. At this point you can scoop out the flesh, slice or dice it.

HEALTH BENEFITS OF AVOCADOS

Avocados are a darling fruit noted for their high good fat content — monounsaturated. This is the fat noted for helping to increase HDL (good) cholesterol and lower LDL (bad) cholesterol. Avocados are also a good fat source for those following a ketogenic diet.

MINI CRAB CAKES WITH AVOCADO DIP

Today's recipe for crab cakes with an avocado dip is one of my favorite appetizers. They are easy to put together, and you can make them in advance. Guests love the crab and avocado pairing. They are also light, so you don't feel like you've overindulged.

Makes: 30 mini crab cakes/ Preparation time: 15 minutes /Total time: 45 minutes

FORTHE DIP

- 1 ripe avocado, halved, peeled and pitted
- 1/4 cup packed freshly chopped cilantro
- 2 tablespoons plain nonfat Greek-style yogurt or nonfat sour cream
- 1/2 teaspoon minced garlic

- 1 teaspoon fresh lemon or lime juice
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon black pepper to taste

FORTHE CRAB CAKES

- 2 egg whites, lightly beaten
- 1 pound special lump crabmeat, picked over for cartilage
- 1/2 cup fresh bread crumbs
- 1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- Cayenne pepper to taste
- 1 teaspoon Old Bay seasoning to taste, optional
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil

Place all the dip ingredients in a food processor or blender and blend until smooth. Adjust the seasoning as necessary. Cover and refrigerate up to two hours.

In a medium bowl, combine the egg whites, crabmeat, bread crumbs, Dijon, salt, cayenne and, if using, Old Bay seasoning. If the mixture seems too loose, add more bread crumbs to bind it. Shape the mixture into 30 mini crab cakes, about 1 1/2 inches in diameter.

In a large nonstick skillet, heat the oil over medium heat. When the oil is hot, add the crab cakes and cook until they are golden, about 2-3 minutes on each side. Remove them to a paper towel to drain. You also may place them on a baking sheet and broil 6 inches from the broiler about 8 minutes. Arrange them on a serving platter, and top each cake with a dollop of the avocado dip.

— Adapted from "Gourmet's Fresh Menus" by Gourmet Magazine (Random House, \$2750) for Heart Smart and tested by Susan Selasky for the Free Press Test Kitchen.

Analysis per 2 crab cakes.
77 calories (35 percent from fat), 3 g fat (0 g saturated fat, 0 g trans fat), 4 g carbohydrates, 8 g protein, 244 mg sodium, 21 mg cholesterol, 30 mg calcium, 1 g fiber. Food exchanges: 1 lean meat.

Garlic, lemon help to dress up cauliflower

By **Leah Eskin**
Chicago Tribune

Diner en Blanc — dinner in white — is an enchanting idea. Guests, dressed in their finest whites, learn last-minute the unlikely location of their meal — say, outside Lincoln Center. Exhibiting, in the words of the international organization, "decorum, elegance, and etiquette," they stage a posh picnic.

I'm all for unlikely, for elegance, for picnic, though in the 30 years since a guy named Francois Pasquier suggested his friends get together in a park,

in white, I've never attended the event. The secret society meets in Santo Domingo, the Dominican Republic, and Abidjan, Ivory Coast, and other spots I frequent infrequently. Like, never.

In fact, the whole project, while very public, is by invitation only.

Instead, I pull together my own white night. I prepare an all-white meal — steamed haddock, stewed cannellini beans, slivered endive, roasted cauliflower warmed with garlic and anchovy.



E. Jason Wambegans/ChicagoTribune-TNS

Garlic, anchovies, lemon and parsley flavor roasted cauliflower.

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