



BETWEEN THE ROWS
WENDY SCHMIDT

Prayer plant an indoor favorite

In this time of Lent and approaching Passover, it's a time of introspection and prayer. A plant present in our house growing up had a certain reverence about it, as each night without fail it folded its leaves up as if in prayer.

Maranta leuconeura — the prayer plant. This is a well-loved houseplant of our grandmothers.

This plant is also called "rabbit tracks" because of the symmetrical pairs of dark brown spots on its green leaves. It's a houseplant with leafy stems, usually 12 inches or less in height.

Leaves of the prayer plant fold upward at night; hence the name "prayer plant." Leaves are 7 to 8 inches in length and half as wide. With the variety "kerchoviana," the leaf undersides are grayish and spotted with red. The small flowers are white with purple spots.

Grow your maranta away from direct sunlight. It must have warmth, occasional trimming, lots of water and regular feeding to be at its best. It's excellent for dish gardens, terrariums, and shallow pots.

If you have garden comments or questions, please write to greengardencolumn@yahoo.com. Thanks for reading!

HEALTHY, TASTY RECIPES

Battling against the expanding waistline

Daniel Neman
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

My bathroom scale and I have come to an understanding. I won't stand on it and hurt it anymore if it will stop telling me my weight.

The last couple of months have been brutal on my waistline: Valentine's Day, a birthday. Um, Groundhog Day. Uh, leftovers from New Year's Eve/Christmas/Thanksgiving/Halloween. Last Groundhog Day.

I needed a break. My scale needed a break.

So I decided to devote a week to healthful eating. I wanted to make food that wasn't just deleterious to my health; I wanted to make food that was actively good for me. Or at least food that was not awash in calories.

The trick, though, was to create dishes that had a heap of flavor and were not just bland and blah.

The first part of the equation, the part about the food being low in calories, was relatively easy. I started out with main ingredients that are relatively low-cal to begin with — fish, chicken, shrimp and a vegetarian dish featuring lentils. I am uncommonly fond of lentils, and they do not take long to cook.

I cooked these ingredients with as little fat as I could get away with, and no added sugar. I baked the fish, poached the chicken and boiled the lentils and the shrimp; each method helps keep the weight off.

Though the presentations are simple — no fancy sauces, except on the chicken — they are deceptively full of flavor.

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Abel Uribe/Chicago Tribune-TNS

Shrimp cocktail salad, prepared and styled by Shannon Kinsella.

TASTE SPRING BREAK WITHOUT THE TRAVEL

JeanMarie Brownson
The Daily Meal

Spring break is upon us, but a year into the COVID-19 pandemic, we know that it will not — should not — look like it has in years past. But we need bright spots and sunshine now more than ever. So this spring, we'll travel by way of our imaginations — and taste buds.

Let's picture spring breaks of warm weather, beach and sand that are peppered with memories of delicious meals: The Florida Keys, Laguna Beach, Playa del Carmen, Lima. Let's channel those seafood meals, ceviches on the beach, tropical fruit cocktails and roadside treats.

One of the best parts of vacation, beyond relaxing, sightseeing and swimming, is eating outdoors, on a porch, sea breeze blowing through your hair. While you may not get that salty ocean air in your kitchen, you can still recreate those beachy vibes at home with a seafood shack classic: the spicy fish sandwich.

To cook this at home, start by looking for fish options in the local market's freezer case. The Monterey Bay Aquarium's Seafood Watch app can help you select fish that has been caught (or farmed and harvested) sustainably. Choose from haddock or scrod, U.S. tilapia, Pacific cod or U.S. farmed bass. After thawing in the refrigerator, season the fillets with a spicy rub and then broil to golden and tender before tucking into a toasted bun with a pile of spicy slaw.

Sweet potato fries make the perfect accompaniment to spicy fish sandwiches. For oven fries, simply peel large sweet potatoes, slice them 1/2-inch thick and then cut the slices into 1/4-inch wide sticks. Put on a baking sheet with a nice coating of sunflower or safflower oil and a sprinkle of salt. Bake at 375 degrees on convection, stirring often, until crispy, about 20 minutes. A sprinkle of the seafood seasoning that follows perks them up into a worthy side.

Shrimp cocktail, served with avocado and lime in tall glasses, conjure thoughts of beach snacks in Cabo after a day in the sunshine.

Finally, let a tropical fruit smoothie transport you to a tiki bar, consumed perhaps after a beachside yoga class. Later in the day, the same smoothie deserves a hit of golden rum and a paper umbrella.

Spring break fare to remember. Sand and sun optional, but certainly welcome.

SPICY FISH AND SLAW SANDWICHES

Ready in 30 minutes
20 minutes (prepare time) + 10 minutes (cook time)
4 servings

Add a slice of crispy bacon, or ripe tomato, to these spicy fish sandwiches, if desired. You can cook fish on a medium hot grill if desired.

Instead of burger buns you could also use 8 one-inch thick slices of brioche or challah

- 1 tablespoon sweet paprika
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon garlic powder
- ¼ teaspoon thyme
- ¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne
- 1/8 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1/3 cup mayonnaise, plus more for buns
- 1 tablespoon fresh lime juice
- 2 ½ to 3 cups finely shredded cabbage (half of a 14-ounce bag)
- 1 large carrot, trimmed, peeled, finely shaved or shredded
- 2 green onions, trimmed, thinly sliced
- 4 haddock, tilapia or cod fillets, each at least 1-inch thick (about 1 ½ pounds total)
- 4 brioche or whole grain burger buns, split
- Favorite spicy barbecue sauce
- Olive oil

Step 1: Make Seafood rub: in a small dish, mix 1 tablespoon sweet paprika, 1 teaspoon salt, ½ teaspoon garlic powder, ¼ teaspoon each: thyme, freshly ground black pepper and cayenne, and 1/8 teaspoon ground allspice. The seafood rub can be made ahead and stored in a covered container up to several weeks.

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The Ralston Block's rich history

By Ginny Mammen

The last building in the 1100 block on the south side of Adams Avenue is 1124, known as the Ralston Block on the National Historic Register. It is currently the home of Blue Mountain Outfitters on the first floor and apartments on the second floor.

This two-story brick building was erected in 1892 by Oliver and Eliza Ralston. It was originally designed with a two-bay storefront facing Depot Street to house Ralston and Co. Furniture on one side as one of the earliest, if not the first, furniture store in La Grande. The establishment on the other side was run by Jonas M. Berry, who advertised clothing for the whole family as well as bolt dress goods, including cashmeres, serges, silks, wool and two other fabrics that were popular in the mid 19th century up until the early 20th century, when blended fabrics and synthetics were introduced. These two were henriettas — fine woolen fabrics — and brilliantines — lustrous cloth with silk or cotton warp and wool or mohair weft and known for its dust-shedding properties. J. M. Berry remained in this location until 1908 when he and his wife moved to Portland. Originally the second floor was designed



Larry Fry Collection

The Ralston Block was constructed in 1892 by Oliver and Eliza Ralston.

for offices. Some of the early occupants were Dr. George Biggers, H. J. Jory, a civil engineer, La Grande Chamber of Commerce, Williams Brother — Lawyers and Insurance, La Grande City Attorney and the La

Grande Rod and Gun Club.

In 1923 the building was remodeled to provide multiple storefronts on each facade. The Adams Avenue frontage was occupied by the L & L Drug Co. which had been there for several years prior and remained until about 1935. Later, Lawrence's Jewelry Store occupied this location for more than 40 years.

Oliver Ralston was born in Ohio in August of 1841. When he was 27 he married Eliza Slack, age 21, in Indiana where Oliver worked as a carpenter and where their first child, Alice, was born in 1870. Ten years later they had moved west to Coos County, Oregon, where their second daughter, Daisy, was born. Oliver was still working as a carpenter.

By 1890 the family had moved to La Grande. There is not much information available about this family. Oliver served on the original City Council and it appears that he was Mayor of La Grande in 1898. By 1910 they had moved to San Diego. In 1925 Oliver was living in the National Home for Disabled Soldiers and in July 1926 he died and was buried in the Los Angeles National Cemetery.

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