

Blame it on the Stars



ARIES (21 Mar-19 April): Change is afoot: a partnership no longer serves its purpose. No fault, no error, no blame. Move on calmly and avoid unpleasant words; your only enemies are rash action and mood swings. Look to the future and fit the present to it. What you'll be, you're becoming. Think matters through and act with purpose, hurting no one and manifesting good will.



TAURUS (20 April-20 May): To all things, an ebb and a flow. A tide is receding, clutching at water is a fool's game. What goes away is no longer yours; strengthen what remains and purge your circuits of illusion. It's no accident that envy and jealousy are called deadly sins. Indulge them at your peril. Take the level of your game up a notch, ignore no cause for laughter and good cheer.



GEMINI (21 May-21 June): Strange places, strange times. A good month to remember understanding is more important than being understood. Security isn't a situation; it's a state of mind. Dealing with variables reveals the constants, being left to your own devices shows you what they are. Nothing succeeds like cooperation and good will; nothing fails like overweening ego.



CANCER (22 June-22 July): Energy focused on work. All systems get back what they give. Give thought to getting up off it and lending a hand. There is not 'my work' or 'their work'; there's only *the* work. Direct all critical analysis to yourself, open your eyes to what is instead of what isn't, consider what works instead of what doesn't. Engage problems, sacrifice for solutions, say yes.



LEO (23 July-22 August): Romance rears its pretty head and no one loves quite like a Leo. Present loves, new loves, old loves in new bottles. Being swept away is great fun; unless, of course, you lose yourself in the process. You and things are who and what they are. This said, engage life with clarity and exuberance. Good news regarding work: act with authority, lead by example, expect success.



VIRGO (23 August-22 Sept): Activity on all levels increases. Expect stress and guard against being a carrier. Know what you want, what you truly need and do nothing that furthers the inappropriate. Adversity isn't a personal affront, thoughtless haste is an insult to your powers of reason. Allow the important to recognize you, entertain with grace and abandon, count three before saying yes.



LIBRA (23 Sept-23 Oct): What should be deep has become shallow. Dredge the channels and let it flow. Say yes to love and treat friendships with the care they deserve. Open your eyes to the world, listen to questions before you answer, neither speak evil nor listen to it. Shine light into the shadows and look for new possibilities. Beliefs unexamined aren't beliefs; they're habits.



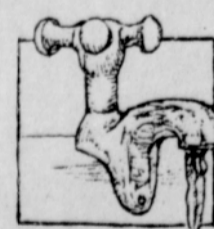
SCORPIO (24 Oct-22 Nov): It seems to be mostly about money. Consider the difference between value and price. Keep the social whirl to a minimum, keep your hands out of your wallet and avoid mixing business with friendship. Any system is the sum of its connections to the world. If you want more, connect more. Action is the antidote to inertia. Measure twice, cut once.



SAGITTARIUS (23 Nov-21 Dec): To get anywhere, first decide where you are. Old habits die hard; help them. New projects involve new perspectives, reinvent your work and insist on progress. Avoid the tendency to go off half-cocked, make decisions with care and force nothing you wouldn't like to see break. Authority belongs to those wise enough not to abuse it.



CAPRICORN (22 Dec-19 Jan): Focus on what's right instead of what's wrong. There are mistakes you need to learn from, problems to unravel, enemies not to be made. Being too sensitive to your own concerns leaves little room to be sensitive to others. Bad juju. Indulge fantasies without confusing them for shared reality. Speak no evil, hear no evil and see what is for what it is.



AQUARIUS (20 Jan-18 Feb): Friends ignored become acquaintances. Keep your energies on a tight leash, race one direction at a time. Income increases follow from clear direction, good communication and not alienating those who want to help you. Neither sulk nor pout. Examine your shortcomings and lengthen them, practice kindness in thought and action and work for the benefit of others.



PISCES (19 Feb-20 Mar): Much chance for gain, many opportunities to blow it. Mind your own business. The affairs of others are the affairs of others, meddling leads to pain and sadness. Cultivate professional contacts and serious people, add new pages to your rolodex. Honor comes to those who weren't thinking about it, popularity is a contest won by those who don't compete.

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Cooking with Turpentine

Okay, folks, you're smack dab in the middle of the holiday season. Having, hopefully, survived another Thanksgiving dinner with an ever-increasing family, you find yourself feeling like something propelled from the south facing end of a north bound turkey, hurtling through space towards Christmas and all the shopping that entails. That's right, it's the season of the family gathering. That nightmare that usually surrounds a large dinner and all the fuss involved. The attempts at small talk over the din of screaming children, football is being preempted for repetitive screenings of "The Little Mermaid", the continuous rains of orders to peel more potatoes, take out the garbage, lance this boil, and don't drink more than five beers before noon. There's more, but you get the point. There is hope.

It must have been about four Thanksgivings ago that we discovered an ideal way to avoid a good deal of nastiness. What, you may ask, was this amazing discovery, or epiphany if you will. Well friends and soon to be converts: offer to take the responsibility of that pesky turkey off the hands of your loved ones. We know. At first this might not sound like such an appealing solution. But wait! Bear with us, there's more. We're talking BBQ.

That's right, BBQ. Picture this: the aforementioned family gathering is in full swing INDOORS. Meanwhile, you and those intelligent enough to trust the wisdom of this plan are OUTDOORS huddled around a warm Weber, a cooler full of beer at your feet, and a jovial laugh gurgling in your throat. The enticing aroma of a roasting turkey and the sounds of football on the radio fill the air.

All right, it's normally right about this time in our argument that people ask: "How in the name of Pete do you BBQ a turkey, and why are you drooling in your pint glass?" A fine question, and one that is easily answered if not easily understood. First, dig a pit. Oh, wait, that's pork...

Actually, it might be better to start with a list of some necessary equipment. In doing so we hope not only to inform you, the reader, but also to remind ourselves exactly what it is we're talking about.

Necessary Equipment

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And there you have it. Believe it or not that is just about all you need to do the trick. But before we move on, let's look at a list of some "unnecessary" items you can have on hand. (These are certainly unnecessary, but the more equipment you have on hand the more impressive it all seems.)

Unnecessary Equipment

- Meat Thermometer - unnecessary due to the pop up thing already in the turkey, but it sure looks professional.
- Cookbook - any oversized tome will do. Don't let anyone actually open the thing.
- Timing device - unnecessary due to the pop up thing already in the turkey. Any kind will do: kitchen timer, hourglass, Mickey Mouse watch, sundial...you get the picture.
- Oven mitts.
- An apron of your liking. We prefer one that says, "I'm with stupid," complete with arrows. Try taking turns wearing the damn thing, it's always good for a couple of laughs. "Hey look everyone. Now I'm with stupid!" Hee Hee. Oh. Pants are optional.
- A five gallon bucket filled with rock salt. This keeps them guessing.
- Lots of ropes and pulleys.
- Safety goggles - these should be given to anyone who comes into the immediate staging area. We find this actually works as a deterrent to having too many people hanging around, thusly safeguarding your beer supply.
- Hard hats are always fun, and attaching a propeller to the top is just plain funny.

Okay, moving right along to the hard part. This is where you will benefit from a little practice. First you need to talk someone into preparing the stuffing, once that has been accomplished put it into the turkey. Seems obvious, but we've forgotten in the past (see item 1 under necessary equipment). Sew the baby up (stapling works as well) and it is ready to go.

Now we get to play with fire. Yeehaw! Remove the upper grill from the BBQ. Place a liberal amount of briquettes, in pyramid form, on the lower grill (liberal = 40). Apply a generous amount of lighter fluid, turpentine, kerosene and/or napalm to briquettes (generous amount = just shy of a gallon). It's time to don your safety goggles, grab your ignition device and kiss your neighbor goodbye. Once the mushroom cloud has dissipated, grab a beer and wait for the coals to turn white hot. This generally takes five beers (two for me, three for my brother). Once the coals are ready, deal half of them to one side and half to the other. The object is to leave sufficient space between the piles for your drip pan. Replace the grill and place the bird directly above the drip pan, with the tail facing south and the neck facing north (fig. 1). Failure to do so will result in a dizzy bird. If the turkey is nestled into the drip pan, you forgot to replace the grill (fig. 2). Remember to look busy. Employ some of your unnecessary items and make lots of anguished sounds. (Since you've come this far, we feel compelled to convey some of the finer points. For instance; plan on cooking a stuffed turkey for approximately twenty minutes per pound. Try adding four or five coals to the BBQ every half hour).

This is the perfect time to use what we call the "WING AND A PRAYER GAMBIT" (imagine dramatic music). More commonly known as a diversion. Here's what you do: storm into the house wearing an expression of frustration or bewilderment, whichever comes natural, and use any combination of these lines.

- The darn coals won't catch.
- Where did I put that damn turkey!?
- It's colder than Aunt G's prosthesis outside!
- I swear this turpentine is never.
- At this rate, the turkey will never get done.
- Has anyone seen the shovel?

Feel free to add more as you see fit. All you're trying to do here is convey the sense that you deserve a beer for all your hard work and selflessness. After all, you are doing this for family. Now go directly to the fridge, grab a beer and storm out in a huff before anyone is the wiser. Remember, this beer did not come out of your personal stash. Chalk one up for you!

About the authors:

Darrin Peters is a renowned line cook whose achievements include: burgers, fries, flatulence and thyme. He currently resides in Cannon Beach with his hair and guilt.

Larry Peters is his brother.