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FOOD PLAY

CREATIVITY AND IMAGINATION CAN TURN FOOD INTO ART.



BY MINDY INMAN

For most, food is a means of nourishment. There are good tasting foods, and bad tasting foods, depending on your personal preference. Yet for others, food contains possibilities that many miss. Children for example, often seem to refuse to see the meals placed before them as anything other than a medium that begs to be created into art. For them, clouds are fluffy bunnies and mashed potatoes are volcanoes.

The book *Play With Your Food* encourages not only children but people of all ages to reconnect with their childlike innocence and artistic visions. After reading this book, food is no longer one-dimensional, and your eyes will be opened to the fact that vegetables, fruits, and foods of all types hold the possibility within them to be enjoyed in more ways than one. A green pepper becomes a camel with peppercorns for eyes, a lemon becomes the face of a baby bear with folded flaps of rind for ears, and an upside down banana peel becomes an octopus. *Play With Your Food* shows us how, with small manipulations, food's other dimensions can be uncovered, just for the fun and creativity of it.

Produce shopping will never be the same again. I know that after reading this book my weekly produce runs are now filled with aisles of artistic vegetable possibilities staring back at me. I can't walk past the watermelons without thinking of how it makes a great turtle shell, or how apple stems make great legs for a string bean grasshopper. This book inspires us to open our imaginations to the individual characteristics of each

piece of produce — an oddity, a growth or any distinct feature — and allow our youthful creativity to take over. The techniques discussed in the book are easy and imaginative. Using only simple household items, one can create an entire zoo of food animals. In addition to colorful pictures of example creations, the book guides you through the steps in fashioning such creatures. There is a section for suggestions on how to create effective ears, eyes, mouths and legs that, added to a simple item of produce, can create an expressive individual.

Every year in October millions of Americans can be found perusing supermarkets and crop fields, searching for that one special pumpkin. We take them home with us and, armed with our playful imaginations, we unleash the hidden personalities within the squash. Some become witches with a crooked stem as a nose, some have cutout smiles or grimaces with triangle eyes — we are inspired every year to see food through different eyes, and it is this point of view that the book *Play With Your Food* encourages us to adopt, not just once a year, but any and all days of the week.

Beauty, they say, is in the eye of the beholder, and with a newly enhanced perception and creativity from this book, our everyday food no longer has to be monotonous; adults and children alike can share the beauty of nature's creations. May we lay on our backs and stare at the clouds until we see the fluffy bunnies, and may we play with our food like children at the dinner table.

EW

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