



Hillary Levin/St. Louis Post-Dispatch  
Chocolate-dipped strawberries.

## Keep it Sweet

Easter's gone, but that's no reason to shelve candy recipes

By **DANIEL NEMAN**  
St. Louis Post-Dispatch

It is a fact universally acknowledged that chocolate Easter bunnies taste best when you start by eating their ears.

It's part of the whole chocolate-for-Easter thing, a long-standing tradition that no one seems to know how it began. My own personal guess, based on no specialized knowledge of the subject whatsoever, is that people eat chocolate for Easter because chocolate tastes good.

It's as fine a reason as any, and better than most. Pretty much any reasoning involving chocolate is better than most.

This Easter, I resolved to make four types of chocolate candies to give as Easter gifts to family, friends and loved ones, or just to serve at your own home. And I also made caramels, because some people actually prefer caramels to chocolate.

I know. I don't understand it, either. And I can't figure out how I married one.

I began with chocolate-covered orange peels. Whenever I have chocolate-covered candied orange peels, which isn't nearly often enough, I think of my friend Skip.

Skip is a real-estate agent who showed me around Toledo, Ohio, when I first moved there. Before taking me to available houses, he stopped off at a local confectionary and bought a bag of chocolate-covered orange peels.

I knew then that we were going to be friends.

Chocolate-covered orange peels have always struck me as sophisticated and elegant, the kind of treat that only appeals to a refined palate. That is not what they are like at all in actuality — you should see Skip and me — but it is a pleasant thought when you are cramming them indelicately into your mouth.

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Hillary Levin/St. Louis Post-Dispatch  
Sticky Malaysian Chicken with Pineapple Salad, Wednesday, March 16, 2022.

## Break the fast with class

By **DANIEL NEMAN**  
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I am not Muslim. So when I thought about Iftar, I'm afraid I had some misconceptions.

Iftar is the evening meal that breaks the daily fast during the month of Ramadan. The ninth month of the Muslim calendar, Ramadan is a time of prayer and reflection and restraint from sin and pleasures of the flesh. The holy month begins with the first sighting of the crescent moon, around April 2, and ends around May 2.

Those Muslims who are able are obligated to refrain from eating and drinking between dawn and sundown every day throughout the month. The predawn meal, called suhur, is counted on to provide energy to get through the day. The evening meal, iftar, is meant to satisfy the day's hunger.

I had assumed that a certain group of dishes would be served for iftar, at least for cultural reasons if not specifically religious ones. This is why assuming is generally a bad idea. It turns out that for iftar you can serve basically whatever you feel like eating.

And now that I think about it, that makes sense. Ramadan is 29 or 30 days long, depending on the year. No one wants to eat the same few prescribed meals for that long. You could serve cheeseburgers for iftar, or a bucket of fried chicken.

Still, many families serve food from their cultural backgrounds for at least some meals during Ramadan. It's the food they grew up with. It's comfort food. It tastes like home.

Most of the Muslim families in the United States came from the Middle East and Southeast Asia. For my iftar meals, I focused on recipes from those regions.

I began with the familiar baba ghanoush, a smoky eggplant dip beloved throughout the Middle East — and in more recent years, throughout the world. More complex in flavors than hummus, it is served in much the same ways: with wedges of pita, as a dip for vegetables or, frankly, licked off the finger you just dunked into it.

Don't be embarrassed. Everybody does it. The finger adds flavor.

Eggplant is the primary ingredient in baba ghanoush, of course, but what makes it so silky and addictive are the other ingredients that are blended into it: yogurt, but not too much, garlic, tahini and lemon juice.

I made it two ways, by running the eggplant under a broiler and by cooking it on a grill. If you have one, the grill is definitely the way to go — the actual smoke from the fire is far more pungent than the vaguely smoky taste that comes from charring the eggplant skin in the broiler.

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## On the big screen: A history of La Grande's Erickson Building



**GINNY MAMMEN**  
OUT AND ABOUT

The Erickson Building at 1311-1313 Adams Ave. in downtown La Grande has held tightly to its origin and to the identity of Mr. Erickson, but the following bits and pieces seem to unravel at least some of the mystery.

The name and address of the building appeared in the 1905 City Directory and again in 1915 in The Observer. Further research located a William Erickson, born in Sweden in 1848, who had come to the United States with his family in 1876. He was living in Iowa in 1880 working as a railroad brakeman. Another source told of him coming to La Grande when the railroad was being constructed and then remaining here with his wife, Lydia. After leaving the railroad, William and Lydia became proprietors of the hardware store located on the corner of Elm and Adams mentioned in the Bohnenkamp article, while also farming a large acreage.

(Note: Erickson appeared in some records and Erickson in others, but the information was obviously referring to the same man.)

Not only were the two men competitors in business, they were



Fred Hill Collection

This photo, from around 1906-7, shows the Erickson Building, 1311-13 Adams Ave., which initially housed a department store and, since 1917, has been a movie theater.

related by marriage. Mr. Erickson was a brother-in-law to Mrs. W. H. Bohnenkamp. Like many of the other entrepreneurs in the late 1890s Erickson decided to invest

in Adams Avenue real estate and constructed the one story building at 1311-1313 Adams. The ornate brick front wasn't added until 1902. According to La Grande's

application for the National Register of Historic Places, the "structure was one story, in a Gothic Revival style, with a center gabled pediment flanked by three pinnacles on each side." Although this later remodel was a more ornate building than others on Adams it still featured the street level glass display windows for commercial use.

The Fair was the first business known to have been located in the building. In 1897 Fred Geible was the proprietor of this department store, selling notions and various clothing items. He remained here for 18 years until, in 1915, when Fred moved the business to the Steward Block, in the location previously occupied by the People's Store.

Erickson moved to Spokane and by November of 1915 it was announced that Fredrick D. Haisten, owner of the property at 1311-1313 Adams, was moving into the building. By December of that year, F.D. Haisten Furniture Store appeared at this location.

Haisten was a good businessman, however, and when he saw an opportunity for a better use for his building, the furniture store closed its doors. This was on Dec. 16, 1916, and soon the Colonial Theatre occupied this location. During the 1910s moving pictures were becoming quite popular and most probably he had heard an ear-

lier rumor that Meyers and Leiter, president and vice-president of the La Grande Evening Observer, who had leased the Arcade Theatre, were looking at building a new structure in La Grande especially designed for the moving pictures.

On Saturday, July 28, 1917, The Observer reported that the Colonial was closing for a month for repairs. It seems that Meyers and Leiter were going to "install a new screen and motor generator and make a thorough overhauling of the theatre." By September, Tri-angle Film Distributing Corporation had closed a contract with Myers and Leiter for their pictures to be shown at the newly renovated Star Theatre. The Star's opening night on Saturday, Sept. 14, 1917, featured Bill Hart in the movie "The Square Deal Man."

After the furniture store closed its doors, the ownership of the building and the theater changed numerous times. Whether Haisten sold the building in December of 1916 or months later, by August of 1917 the owners of the Star Theatre were J.B. Sparks and his wife. By 1920 Fred Haisten, no longer owner of either the building or theater, moved with his family to Arizona. In 1921 the proprietors of the Star were Joseph D. Meyers and E.H. Ford and by 1928 Arthur E. Bowen had replaced Ford.

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