

# Stone Soup

*The Magazine by Young Writers & Artists*



*Lightbulb by Ula Pomian*

## CHASING CHICKENS

Angela discovers a new Christmas tradition

## THE JOURNEY OF A MUSHROOM

Life is easy for this mushroom... until she is picked

*Plus:* 10 Delicious Recipes, all tested in the *Stone Soup* Kitchen!



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# Editor's Note

**This is an ambitious and unusual issue** for the magazine—the first half is made up of five stories, all touching on food in some way, though sometimes obliquely—and the second half is our first *Stone Soup* collection of recipes. But the division is not that neat. As I read for the issue, I found stories that seemed to beg for a recipe to go with them. And so two of the recipes (“Christmas Cookies” and “Disaster Raspberry Smoothie”) actually came from the fiction pile. Of the stories that come before the recipes, what unites them, in my mind, is their sense of morality. These are stories with lessons, both stated and unstated. What can you learn from them?

— *Emma Wood*

## A Note from the Stone Soup Test Kitchen

**For the last few weeks** the *Stone Soup* test kitchen has been filled with delicious smells, from melting cheese and savoury tomato sauce, via sweet baking rich with fruit and chocolate, to refreshing smoothies and celebratory spiced punch. Every one of these smells and tastes evokes a memory or a feeling, and each one of the recipes in the Food Issue tells a story—of family, of inventiveness, of literary inspiration, of home, of friends, or what happened the last time our writers tasted or made this or that. We’ve loved reading the recipes’ stories as well as making—and eating—every one of them, and we hope you do, too. Write and let us know the new stories they inspire as they travel from our writers’ kitchens and into yours. Let the culinary adventures begin!

— *Jane Levi*

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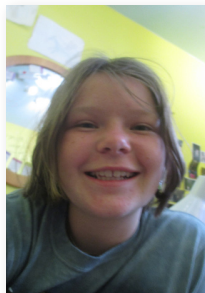
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## Submissions

Read our guidelines at [stonesoup.com](http://stonesoup.com). If you have submission questions, write to [editor@stonesoup.com](mailto:editor@stonesoup.com).

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**ON THE COVER** Ula Pomian is twelve-years-old from Ontario, Canada.



# Stone Soup

*The Magazine by Young Writers & Artists*

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# Chasing Chickens

By Jem Burch

Illustrated by Cole Gibson



Jem Burch, 13  
Van Nuys, California



Cole Gibson, 8  
San Rafael, CA

THE JEEP JOSTLED over the uneven terrain. Though the tough tires absorbed most of the shocks, I still jumped around in the back seat, my stomach lurching with every bump.

It was late afternoon, and the sun blazed in the blue sky. A slight breeze stirred the tall grass and scrub brush and stunted trees that provided sparse shade, but it did little to combat the sweltering heat. Little moved on this vast plain, and I had spotted no animal life so far. The driver of the jeep, my parents' good friend Cecil Dzwowa, explained that many animals escaped the heat of the day by hiding in the shade: the land really only came alive at night.

I sighed, wiping sweat from my forehead. A refrain played over and over again in my mind—*why, why, why*. It was all I could think about. When I had suggested to my geologist parents that we spend winter vacation at home in Connecticut catching up with old friends and playing in the snow, I had not expected an outright refusal. I had not expected to be told that we were spending Christmas thousands of miles from home. And I had certainly not expected to be dragged along on yet another trip to survey rock formations. But that's what happened.

I had rebelled, like any self-respecting teenager would, but Dad got this annoyed look in his eyes and told me that I could either tag along or stay home alone for the full three weeks. And that, in my opinion, was not an option. I wanted a Christmas, and staying home alone was not the way to get

one.

And so that's how I ended up on this stupid trip. The end.

**W**E ARRIVED at the village of Mbamano at sunset. Shadows were lengthening, and the shafts of light that penetrated through the trees above us looked golden. Mom and Dad took several photos, and I leaned against the dusty jeep and took a swig of sun-warmed water from my canteen.

The village itself was small, mostly hidden in shadow. It consisted of about fifteen small huts that were scattered around a wide circle in the dust, like planets orbiting the sun.

Cecil led us to one on the fringe of the circle. It was one of the largest huts, with clean, whitewashed walls and a thatched roof. Small windows punctuated the smooth surface at regular intervals, letting light in.

Three beds, no more than cots, really, lay side by side on the floor. Each one was made up with a soft sheet, a pillow, and a netting of mesh to keep the mosquitoes away at night.

Just past the beds, built into an extended recess in the wall, a small toilet and a washbowl with a water pitcher beside it stood at the ready. It wasn't much, but the homey little hut was a lot less Spartan than what I expected the dwelling to be like.

"Thank you so much!" Mom exclaimed, beaming at Cecil, who flashed one of his rare smiles at her in return.

Dad pushed his glasses up on the bridge of his nose. "Yes, thank you." Suddenly his face clouded. "But there are only three beds. Where will you sleep?"

Cecil had a quick answer for that. "Oh, I figured that the third bed was for me. Angela can sleep out with the lions tonight."

Mom and Dad laughed, and Cecil laughed too. I stretched my lips into a fake grin, trying to act as though it didn't bother me. It did, though. I hated it when adults spoke as though I wasn't there or teased me about something. Sometimes I wished that all grown-ups were like my parents' friend Celia Dwyer. She was a writer blessed with a memory that fell back into the distant past. *She* remembered what it was like to be thirteen—too old to be considered a kid, but too young to be spoken to like an adult. That was why she always talked to me as an equal, not someone to be looked down upon.

When the laughter died down, Cecil spoke again. "I am only kidding, of course. I have arranged to spend the night with a friend who lives here in Mbamano. He has an extra bed, and it is time we caught up anyway. Good night, good friends."

"Good night to you too, Cecil," Mom said. He left with a jaunty wave, and the three of us settled down. By the light of a solar-powered lantern, we brushed our teeth and spit our toothpaste into the dirt, rinsing with the water in the washbowl.

When I finished, I settled down in

bed, staring up at the white ceiling above me. Anger still smoldered in my chest. Now I was here, ready to be bored beyond my wildest dreams. But at least I could expect to return home soon. Mom and Dad always misjudged the time it would take them to get their work done. We'd likely have a full week back at home to spend any way we wanted.

"Good night, Angela," Mom said, rustling sheets as she got into bed.

I didn't say anything. I crossed my arms and pouted. Dad extinguished the light.

"Good night, An," he said.

I turned over, facing away from him.

Outside, a soft wind blew. The moon rose, and myriad stars twinkled. Peace reigned over all, but I still burned with anger.

"You sure you'll be OK?" Mom asked worriedly.

"Of course, Mom!" I replied, rolling my eyes.

"It's just that..." She trailed off, looking at the steadily rising sun.

"Just go!" I flopped down on my cot, making an irritated sound in the back of my throat. I'd rather stay in the hut than let myself be dragged along on another survey.

"OK, but you better have dropped the attitude by the time I get back," Mom said. She sighed. "There's food in the blue bag if you need any. Don't forget to put on some bug spray. We'll be back by four."

"Isabel, come on!" Dad called, and Mom left.

I sighed and turned over on the cot. Rummaging through my bag, I pulled out the bug repellent and sprayed myself liberally. Then I grabbed my book and began to read.

I was in the middle of a chapter when something just outside the window caught my eye. I turned, and in a flash it was gone. I continued reading. A few minutes later it popped up again, but when I turned to look at it, it disappeared. Curious, I stood up to investigate.

Poking my head out the window, I found myself face to face with a girl who appeared to be about my age. Her long dark hair was pulled back from her face, and mischief twinkled in her eyes.

"So Cecil was right! There is an American girl staying here in the haunted hut." She said it quietly, almost to herself, an impish grin plastered on her face.

"Who are you?" I asked rudely.

The girl seemed unperturbed. "Tiwu," she said casually. "And there's a spider on your head."

I whirled around, jumping into the air. Nothing, of course. The girl was laughing. "Got you!" she squealed, climbing through the window. "Come. I'll show you around."

She started to walk to the door. When she noticed I wasn't following her, she turned around. "Well, what are you waiting for?" she asked.

"You to go away," I muttered under my breath, but I walked after her all the same.



### *Chickens*

As we walked, Tiwu told me about herself. Her father was Cecil's friend; that's how she learned I was here. She had a brother named Edward who was a year older than her. She spoke both Twi and English ("Most of the people here do," she had said), and she loved animals.

I didn't say anything. I was annoyed, yes, but also interested. It was hard keeping up the "way-over-it teenager act." I was tired of pretending, and so I listened. Soon, a bond between Tiwu and I began to form.

"We go to school over there," Tiwu

continued, pointing to a squat building several hundred feet down the dirt path. "We're very lucky. Many kids have to walk several miles to get here."

Suddenly, a boy came running out in front of us, chasing a squawking chicken. It swiftly changed direction, heading back the way it had come, and the boy ran after it.

"What. Was. That." I said.

Tiwu laughed. "That," she said, "was Edward. He's practicing."

"Practicing for what?" I asked.

"Christmas!" Tiwu said, as though the



answer was obvious. My confused look must have said it all, because she quickly elaborated.

"It's a tradition," explained Tiwu, "that on Christmas, all the kids in the village get together for a contest. Basically, it's a race to see who can catch a chicken first. The winner gets to roast the chicken and eat it."

"Sounds... interesting," I said.

Tiwu laughed again. "It's fun. You should do it too."

We spent the next five days before Christmas practicing together. Tiwu showed me how to pick up a chicken and follow its movements in order to catch it. I was clumsy at first, and on my second attempt I scooped up the chicken upside-down, whereupon my fingers slipped and it ran away clucking at the top of its lungs. But after a few days, I could successfully corner one of the birds and, on most occasions, pick it up as it tried to maneuver around me.

In the interim between practice, when it got too hot to do much else, Tiwu and I sat in the shade beside the well and talked. We had formed a quick and easy friendship and fit together quite nicely. Tiwu had introduced me to the other children living in Mbamano, but with none of them had I created as tight a bond.

I was enjoying myself, that was clear to see, and I almost felt slightly guilty that I had wanted to stay home in Connecticut for winter break instead of discovering a newfound friendship.

Christmas snuck up on me, which was unusual, as I almost always expect it the moment before it happens upon me. I woke up one morning, and Mom and Dad smiled widely and said, "Merry Christmas!"

"I totally forgot about it!" I exclaimed, grinning.

They handed me a present wrapped in blue paper. I tore it open excitedly, pleased to discover several books by my favorite author.

"Thank you so much," I said, letting myself be enveloped by a hug. "I'm sorry I don't have anything for you."

"You're here, aren't you?" Dad said. "You're the only present we could ever want."

"Even when I'm stubborn and annoying?" I ask.

"Even then," he said.

I leapt into his arms. "I'm sorry about the way I behaved before."

The rest of the morning went well. One of the boys had received the gift of a soccer ball, and several of us improvised a game in the dirt.

Then it was time for the competition. We gathered around Cecil, who was to be the referee. Behind him, about fifteen chickens stood in a nervous circle, pecking at the grain scattered in the dirt.

Cecil raised his arm into the air. I took my position beside Tiwu. She gave me a smile, and I grinned, waiting for the whistle. For a tense moment, everything was silent, and then a piercing blast shattered the stillness.

Kids took off. Chickens took off. For one moment, all was complete chaos, and then things spread out. In the midst of it all, I tried to find a target. Tiwu had explained that a chicken could easily outrun a child, and so it was important to catch one quickly. I glanced around, looking for an unsuspecting hen. There was one, standing still in the dust. I snuck up behind it, hands outstretched. I was so close. My fingertips brushed its white feathers. And then it suddenly squawked away.

I stood up, looking around. Tiwu was off chasing a chicken around a bush; Edward was losing ground as he chased one away from the village. No one else looked anywhere close. I whirled around.

In my peripheral vision, I saw a white blur stepping into one of the huts. Here was my chance! I ran towards it, and then entered the empty house. The chicken was there, looking kind of bewildered. I stepped forward, reached out, and... got it! The hen squirmed and squawked in my arms, but I held tight. Happily, I rushed out of the house, holding the chicken above my head like a trophy.

"I caught a chicken!" My gleeful yell rang out above everything, loud and clear. Cecil blew his whistle. The contest had come to an end.

**I** DECIDED THAT TIWU should get to take my prize. "As my Christmas gift to you," I explained when she opened her mouth to protest. "You get to eat the chicken; not me. I don't think I could eat an entire chicken anyway."


We had laughed and Tiwu said thank you about a million times, and then everything seemed to come to an end. As it turned out, my prophecy that Mom and Dad would finish their work quickly proved correct, and they promised we could leave the next day. We spent much of the afternoon packing but took a break to eat dinner around a fire with the other villagers.

It was a joyful celebration, a hello and goodbye, and many stories were told. Tiwu's father presented me with a gift—a carved wooden statue of a lion—that he said was a token of friendship and gratitude. I promised Tiwu I would write to her, and she promised she would write back to me, and then as we retired to our hut for the night, we said our final farewells. It was a wistful moment, and I felt sad as I lay in my bed, listening to the howling wind.

We left early the next morning, yawning as we drove away from a sleeping village.

"So did you enjoy yourself after all?" Mom asked with a wry smile.

"I did," I replied, thinking of my original resistance. How stubborn I was! How silly! I imagined that I had stayed home in Connecticut. I would've missed so much—Tiwu, the statue in my backpack, the chicken roasting on the fire.

"Can we come back next year?" I asked Mom. 

# The Journey of a Mushroom

By Alicia Xin



Alicia Xin, 12  
Scarsdale, NY

LIFE IS GREAT AS A MUSHROOM. I live in a forest, in mountains of Tibet. Each day starts with the chirping of the early birds, ready to start off our morning on a good note. All across the steep valleys, red pandas, musk deer, and takins are awakening from a night slumber. I live under my own personal blanket of moss, and I listen to the sounds of nature as my body absorbs nutrients from the roots of a thousand year old tree. What a relaxed, laid back life. Nothing could be better.

One day, I heard the sound of voices in the forest. They grew louder and louder, until suddenly, a blinding light came upon me as my moss was lifted from my head. A human peered down at me. I was gently eased out of the ground. A soft hand held me to be examined by shining, brown eyes. Black hair frames them on a face that is much tanned. Her cheeks are such dark red that it looked as if the sun had pinched her on both cheeks. Her eyes crinkle at the edges as she smiles. “Mom, I found one! I found another mushroom!” she exclaimed.

Her mother, standing not too far away, also smiles. “Good work, Tashi, put them in the basket.” Tashi skipped over and put me in gently, as if she were afraid to break me. In the basket were about ten other mushrooms. Tashi walked away.

I don’t know how long I lay in the basket, listening to their talk. Once in a while, another mushroom was put into the basket I was in. After a long time, we eventually came out of the borders of the forest, to a small house. The house



seemed old, built with painted white material that looked like stone. The shingles on the roof were made of wood. The sun was settling down behind a nearby hill, as the girl and her mother entered the small house. Inside, sat an old man, tending to the blazing fire in the middle of the little room. Two other rooms could be seen from there. They each had lumpy beds, a bucket for washing, and some clothes. It was all very clean and tidy, or at least, as much as it will get. A pot and a pan hung from the wall. On a peg were two cloth hats, and a table was under them, against the wall. There was a small cabinet for cooking supplies, and there were some jars for food.

"Hi, grandpa, not so many mushrooms today," Tashi addressed her grandfather with a long face. He handed her two bowls of butter tea, with two lumps of roasted barley flour. She handed one of each to her mother.

"It seems that my goal will never come true," Tashi's mom sighed.

"The motorcycle?" asked the grandfather.

"Yes. It will make us so efficient, getting to the forest and market; it will boost our income considerably, with the added time to pick mushrooms."

Tashi looked up from her food. "Used motorcycles aren't a hopelessly high price. I think if we save up, we'll be able to get one in no time."

"Oh, Tashi," her mother said, "you al-

ways know how to cheer me up."

The next morning, they ate a meal of yesterday's meager leftovers. "We have to go now, grandpa," Tashi reminded him. He smiled, and bade them a swift journey. Tashi and her mother set out to the market. After about an hour of walking, we approached a line of tents. Stopping at a

green one, Tashi's mother unloaded us onto the table. The man behind the desk sorted us into piles and counted each. He handed her something, and piled us into a crate. I was able to see through a hole in the crate, as the same man put

us in a truck and took us to some kind of facility. There, once again, they unloaded us onto a table, but this time, masked people were all around us. One of them lifted me up, examined me and gave me a gentle bath. It felt very nice, as the person's fingers rubbed my grubbiness away, turning me to a flawless model of a mushroom. He dried me off, and wrapped clear plastic all over me. Then, I was whisked into a bin, which was tightly sealed, then hauled onto a plane.

When we were off of the plane, I heard a man say, "New York." Huh. I wonder what that is. I was transported to a refrigerated truck, full of other produce. The icy air was comforting. It reminded me of my forest back on the mountain in Tibet. I was transported to another market that was much bigger, cleaner, and more mod-

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Once in a while,  
another mushroom  
was put into the  
basket I was in.


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ern. It has white tile floors and bright lights. It was so air conditioned that it didn't feel much warmer than the truck. We were put on display, in a bed of ice. Nestled next to me was a bundle of carrots, also clean and shiny, mirroring how grand I looked. I felt proud to be looking so delectable.

Not minutes after I was placed in the ice, a looming face came out of nowhere and looked at me. It reminded me of Tashi, when she picked me up. However, this girl could not be more different. Her skin was a soft peach color, and her golden hair was held back by a silver clip. She seemed a little younger than Tashi, too. Her big eyes stared at me. They were a soft blue, like water. "Oh, dad, could we get this one? It's so beautiful and delicate." Her dad, with brown and silver hair, leaned over her shoulder. "These are a special mushroom called matsutake. They come from Tibet. I've heard they are very good grilled with steak." I was shocked. *Grilled?* The girl shook her head. "Couldn't I just plant it? Somewhere I can see it? Please, dad?" After a moment of hesitation, he agreed. The girl hugged him, and he said, "Now, now, Claire. Don't get too worked up. I still need to do some research on where and how to plant mushrooms."

After he had paid for me, Claire's dad handed me to her. I saw Tashi in her smile, and saw the masked person's careful hands. Claire carried me to her private car, and we soon arrived at Claire's house. Her dwelling was big, with two floors. Going up the stairs and through

a hall, Claire brought me to her room. It was all pink and white. There was a TV on her dresser, facing her bed. On the left side of the dresser was a white desk, and on the right was a book shelf. Dozens of stuffed animals inhabited the room. Claire conjured a violin from the mess of books and clothes on her bed. She played such a beautiful but simple melody that I couldn't help but think of the birds in Tibet. What were they doing now? Her music made me want to go home, back to my moss and my tree.

The next day, Claire and her dad took me to a forest. This forest is not much like Tibet. It does not have takins or red pandas, but it has many new animals, like rabbits and squirrels. Of course, it also has lovely moss and trees. Claire carefully planted me under an old pine tree, covered me up with a thin layer of moss, whispered goodbye to me, and then told me that she will visit me. She walked away, leaving me to anticipate her visits. In my new perfect life, I await my next journey. 



*Fruit Bowl*



Cecilia Yang, 11  
San Jose, CA

# The Man on the Bench

By Ella Glodek



Ella Glodek, 11  
Denville, NJ

"**W**AIT UP MAGGIE!" Helen yelled at her older sister as they raced towards the Rite Aid at the corner of Montgomery Street.

Every day they would meander in with their fifty cents and buy the blueberry Pop Rocks in the candy section. Maybe they would have a small conversation with their friend Rhonda who worked at the register. Rhonda would tell them how cute their new dresses were, and that they have gotten so big, even though Helen didn't feel any bigger than she did the day before. Helen would admire the long, tight, dark braids that hung down from Rhonda's head, and Maggie would talk to Rhonda about "grown up stuff" as Helen felt the popping of the Pop Rocks on her tongue. However, things were different that fall day.

As she skipped across the sidewalk to catch up to Maggie, Helen saw the old, blind man sitting on the dirty, tattered bench outside the Rite Aid. His ripped wool hat was lying upside-down in front of him. His pursed lips slid the side of a harmonica in his hands, a beautiful tune. Helen couldn't help but wonder why he decided to sit on that old, dirty bench, getting the remains of his clothes all muddy. She looked inside the upside down hat and saw one penny lying there, almost lonesome. Helen reached her hand down to the bottom of her back pocket and slowly pulled out the fifty cents that she planned on using for her blueberry Pop Rocks, and dropped it into the almost empty hat.

"Bless your soul," the old man smiled at Helen, as if he could see her.

Something about that moment made Helen's heart feel warm, almost like she put a brand new wool sweater around her soul.

"No Pop Rocks today, Helen?" Rhonda questioned, frowning, "You're too young to go on a diet. Eat while you can because when you get to this age—"

"I'm not going on a diet Rhonda," Helen chuckled, "I just gave my fifty cents to the man with the empty hat in front of him."

"Oh, I see. Well, I suppose a good deed like that deserves a reward. Here you are." Rhonda held out a pack of blueberry Pop Rocks in front of Helen.

"No Rhonda, it's okay. I don't need Pop Rocks." Helen didn't know why she felt a sudden impulse to help the old man, let alone ignore free Pop Rocks.

It felt like it was her duty, her duty to help this man, this stranger, somehow.

Over the next three weeks, Helen gave her fifty cents to the old, blind man sitting on the dirty bench outside the Rite Aid. Every week the man, who through small conversations Helen eventually learned was Salvatore Johnson, would smile and thank her. With time, Helen seemed to forget her childlike ritual of buying Pop Rocks, and she was only concerned now with her new friend Mr. Johnson.

A few days later, Helen was walking to the Rite Aid alone. Her sister, who used to accompany her, was home sick. She skipped down Montgomery Street and


pulled out the fifty cents from her back pocket, but when she looked up she was surprised.

Mr. Johnson wasn't on the bench. There was no one there. Helen frowned when her eye spotted two words encrusted in the bench that she had never noticed before. She traced the letters with her finger: MARY JOHNSON. Helen didn't know who this Mary Johnson was, or why her name was on this bench, or why her last name matched Salvatore's.

**H**ELEN didn't know what happened to Salvatore Johnson. She hoped that his life improved for the better, and that was why he was no longer on the bench every day. She hoped that her good deeds brought him good fortune. Helen's eyes went from the dirty bench to the window of the Rite Aid where she saw Rhonda smiling at her.

"You buying Pop Rocks today, pumpkin?" Rhonda asked Helen as the bell over the door rang when it opened.

"Yeah," Helen said, "I think I'll get some Pop Rocks today."

As Helen ambled out of the store and past the bench with her Pop Rocks, she noticed an unusual feeling that she never had before. She felt aware, selfless, and humbled. She knew that she would be forever changed, all because of some Pop Rocks, some spare change, and Mr. Johnson. 





*Unlike the Others*



Ella Guzman, 11  
Norwood, NJ

# The Year of the Rooster

By Sabrina Guo

**T**HIS SUMMER, I traveled with my family to China's Jiangsu province. One night, we had a soy sauce chicken wrapped in tinfoil for dinner. It looked like a present with a bright red ribbon tied around its center. The plate was china and somehow three times the size of a full sized chicken! Our waitress did the kung-fu hand symbol and then bowed at us, took out a scissor with red blades and handles. Very unique, in my opinion. The waitress said cutting the ribbon would mean good luck and prosperity, and she passed the scissors to me. She looked at me with a look of calm benevolence in her eyes and said: "God bless you, eternal luck and fortune to you."

The meal reminded me of when my mom makes hot pot chicken at home. She makes it at least once a week, always preparing it early in the day and letting it boil for hours, until the meat is perfectly tender and flavorful. When we sit down to eat, each of us has a little dish for sauce, and after we finish eating the chicken, my mom cautiously carries in a pan of fresh raw vegetables to dump into the pot to soak up all the leftover chicken broth. Tall, white mushrooms, sometimes lettuce, but mostly this Chinese green called bok choy, as well as sweet potato leaves, which sometimes leaves a purple mist on the top of the soup, are dropped in. The vegetables make a sizzling sound that make me feel safe and comforted. We always have plenty of leftovers




Sabrina Guo, 11  
Oyster Bay, NY

to last the week.

I never tire of chicken, and sometimes I wonder if it has anything to do with the fact I was born in the year of the rooster. Obviously, a chicken and a rooster are not the same thing, but the rooster is the closest animal a chicken gets to in the Chinese zodiac. Once, I wanted to know more about my animal, so I looked up some of its personality characteristics. I learned that roosters have five main virtues; they are literary, warrior-like, courageous, benevolent, and trustworthy. I think they describe me. In fourth grade, I read 137 books. I usually win 'Mercy' when we play that in school (boys and girls included). I don't know if I'd call myself courageous, but I guess it depends on the situation. This summer, for example, I had to play the violin before thousands of people night after night for several weeks. The first night we played in Chicago, and I was terrified, but eventually I got over it... After that, we traveled all over China, playing in major cities, including Nanjing, which is where I encountered the chicken with the red bow, one night after playing a long concert that left me very hungry.

I've read that roosters were espe-

cially important in ancient times. They didn't just serve as farm animals, or food, as we see in the chicken. Roosters were once treasured for their hunting abilities and hunger for pesky insects. Even weirder, I learned, was that people born the year of the rooster will be unlucky in 2017. Apparently, this zodiac year offended the God of Age, and his curse is a stroke of bad luck this year!

All of this sounds particularly odd when I think about the delicious chicken I had a few months ago in Nanjing—this strange combination of good and bad luck possibly headed my way. I only have a few more months until the new year, so I guess I should count my blessings now, but I've never taken all of the folklore seriously. I guess I realize that every memory I have of eating chicken, or sharing it at a restaurant or around a holiday, reminds me how each place in the world carries its own traditions. Sometimes I wonder if, as humans, we are programmed to enjoy, or even need, traditions to pass down to future generations. I also like to think about how it isn't natural to think something like, *what do chickens think of us?* Instead, we focus on what we know, or want to believe, about chickens! 





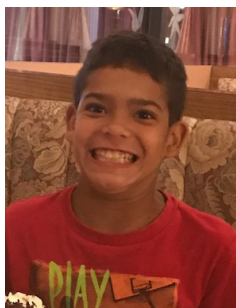
*Apple*



Delaney Slote, 11  
Missoula, MT

# The Secret Agent Baker

By Ralston Frattarola



Ralston Frattarola, 12  
Glenville, NY

**M**Y NAME IS JEFF and I am like every other normal kid in the world going into the seventh grade. Actually, maybe I'm not normal because my family is rich. My family has a mom, dad, older brother, and younger sister. I am totally different from everyone in my family. For instance, I have never liked summer. On the other hand, everybody else in my family does.

I wish my family would let us have more fun. If I ask my parents to get a pool, they say no. If I try to think of something else we could get for fun, like a beach house or something, the answer is always no. My parents just say, "Your brother and sister don't need a pool or beach house. Why do you?"

Well, moving on, I know my family better than anyone else. I don't think my older brother knows I am alive. He is always in the basement. My brother is either on his phone, computer, or x-box. I think basements are gloomy and dark. Don't forget creepy like my sister's dolls. My sister is always upstairs somewhere. I think she's either drawing on her whiteboard or teaching her invisible class. She likes to play school with her dolls and teach them useless stuff! I'm a boy so I don't like to play with creepy dolls. When I ask my brother and sister if they want a pool, my brother just says no, he's happy in the basement, and my sister says, "No, I don't want to drown!"

Besides my parents' favorite word being no, here's more information about them: Every single morning I wake up to the sound of my dad exercising. I hear the jump rope noises.

“Whoooo, whoooo, whoooo,” goes the rope. It makes me giggle a little. I laugh into my pillow because it’s so annoying. So just like my brother and sister, my dad likes his summers. My smart mom is always busy shopping and taking care of everyone in the house. She has no complaints about summer either.

So then there is me, Jeff. As I said, I’m totally different from everyone in my family. I like checkers, chess, drawing, reading, and painting. Wait; I feel like I am forgetting something important. Oh yeah! I love to bake. So every summer I sign up for a baking class. My family thinks baking is messy and not a good way to spend my time.

I am always the best student in the baking class. The baking teacher always says to my parents, “Your son is the #1 baker in my class! I have never seen anyone bake as well as him!”

When the teacher told them this, my parents would say, “We love to hear that good news! We love that he is the best in the class and hope he does such a good job every single time!”

When I heard them say this the first time, I thought to myself, “Really? That isn’t true.” You see, I didn’t think they really cared much that I am so good at baking. I thought what they were really thinking was, “Jeff! Stop wasting your time with this baking nonsense! Be like the other kids!”

When we drove home from baking class no one said a word during the ride. When we got home, I ran to my room full speed. When I got to my room, a mil-

lion thoughts were in my head: “Why are they mad at me? I’m trying to be myself. What’s wrong with that?”

I wanted to stay in my room forever, just like my brother stays in the basement.

But one night I had a sudden thought. I felt like a koala wondering why he was awake! I thought about how baking is a great activity, that I liked it as much as koalas like to sleep, and that I had to prove this to my family. I went downstairs with my flashlight. I didn’t want to wake anybody up. I looked at the table to make sure I had baking class in the morning so I would be able to carry out my plan. I always leave myself reminder notes if I do. I was right! I did have baking class in the morning! I thought about the one time I missed baking class because my parents had thrown out my reminder note, hoping that I would forget that I had class. I went back to bed feeling happy about going to class in the morning. I slept like a baby. Wait—not like a baby, because babies always scream! I slept like a koala because koalas sleep almost all day.

As usual, just like every morning, I woke up to the sounds of my dad doing his exercises. “Whooooo, whooooo, whoooo,” said the rope. I went downstairs for breakfast. I thought about my plan and felt as happy as peanut butter smashed together with jelly. Oh, no! The reminder note about baking class was gone! Well, this time I was not going to forget about my class! I waited until it was time to leave for class. Instead of asking my parents to drive me there, I took

myself there on my bike! I knew that if I asked my parents to take me they would say, “Jeff, you don’t have class today.” I outsmarted them! I rushed to class on my bike.

At baking class the teacher said, “We are going to make brownies today.” I was surprised! I thought the teacher had read my mind for a moment there, because making brownies was my plan late last night when I woke up. But then I remembered that she had told us that last week.

I added a special ingredient to my batter—cocoa powder! When the teacher tried my brownies she said, “This is the best brownie ever! It is super soft and chocolaty!”

It was now time to put my plan to work. After class, I asked the teacher if I could take home the ingredients for making brownies. I wanted her to say yes and she did. It was the best day ever when she said “yes.” I thought to myself, “This is when I will get my freedom!”

I biked home as fast as I could, but I was careful, too. I went home and went straight to the kitchen—my happy place. Then I ran all around the house to see what the rest of my family was doing. My sister was teaching useless stuff to her dolls again, my older brother was playing with the x-box, and my parents were figuring out how to save money. My dad said, “Let’s try to win the lottery!” I giggled a little when I heard that. So the coast was clear! I could be alone in the kitchen! I ran back to the kitchen and made the brownies the same way I had just done in baking class.

My sister came into the kitchen because she smelled me baking. I think she smelled my secret ingredient—the cocoa powder. She asked, “Can I lick the batter off the beater?”

I told her, “Go away and stop annoying me!”

Of course, she said, “Why?”

Then I told her, “More brownies for you if you go away!” That got her to leave. When the brownies were finished (I tested them first) I yelled, “FAMILY MEETING!” That got everyone’s attention. Everyone ran to the kitchen. I said, “Want a brownie?”


My family took one bite and said exactly what my teacher said, “These are the best brownies ever! They are super soft and chocolaty!”

My parents said, and they were not lying, “We should listen to you and your baking teacher more!”

I was as happy as a seagull with a French fry! My parents had snapped out of trying to stop me from baking.

That was the day I got the freedom to be myself. I wanted to remember this day forever. And I did.

### *Epilogue*

Actually, a few days later my summer ended up not going as badly as I thought it would. My parents let me bake a lot! My brother always wanted my brownies for a snack! My parents even wanted me to bake for their job, so I may open my own store one day. The real message of this story is not to go and bake. The real message is to be yourself. 



A watercolor illustration of a large red tomato with a green stem, a sliced lime, and a small red chili pepper. The tomato is the central focus, with its green stem and leaves extending upwards. To its right is a cross-section of a lime, showing its green segments and white pith. In the foreground, a small red chili pepper with a green stem lies on a grey surface. The background is a light, textured grey.

# Savory Recipes

## Pizza

By **Devon Mann**

Illustrated by **Danielle Umbs**

Dough spinning like a helicopter blade  
then toppings

tomato sauce, veggies, cheese.

It bubbles like hot stew in the oven,  
it sizzles on the pan.

Crunchy as an apple

Goey as honey.

Cheese drips like a lava waterfall.

Crackles when I chew it,

Explodes in my mouth like dragon fire.



# Jia's Quick Mini Pizza

By Jia Song Theiss



Jia Song Theiss, 10  
Sammamish, Washington

*One day I wanted some pizza but it was too late to order any. But we did have all the ingredients in this recipe. I decided to experiment and see if I could make several small pizzas using the English muffins. With help from my Dad we cut a couple of muffins in half then toasted them in the toaster. Then I covered two of the muffin halves with ketchup and a layer of cheese. On the other two I put a piece of seaweed on top of the cheese. We put the four muffin halves in the microwave and cooked them for about 30 seconds. That melted the cheese. They were great! My favorite was the seaweed mini pizza! You can add other things, too, like pineapple or sausage.\**



## Ingredients

1. English Muffins
2. Tomato Ketchup (or tomato paste/tomato purée)
3. Mexican Three-Cheese Sprinkles (or other kinds of melting cheese like mozzarella, cheddar)
4. Seaweed or Other Things (optional)

## Method

1. Split English muffins in half and toast in a toaster
2. Place halves on a microwavable tray, face up
3. Spread ketchup on the halves
4. Place a layer of cheese over the ketchup
5. On top of the cheese add seaweed or any other topping
6. Put the tray in the microwave and cook for about 30 seconds or until the cheese is nicely melted

*\*A note from the Stone Soup test kitchen: we tried capers as one alternative topping, and some artichokes in oil from a jar as another. They were really good, too!*

# Mamaw's Mac and Cheese

from *My Family Cookbook*

By Georgia Armstrong



Georgia Armstrong, 11  
Louisville, KY

*I picked this recipe because my grandma always makes it for my cousin and me. Whenever we eat it we think of her. My grandma is the best cook ever! My family and I used to always meet at her house on Sundays and she would always make it. It tastes creamy and chewy at the same time. It is also the best mac and cheese ever!*





## Ingredients

1 cup (125g) macaroni noodles

½ stick (60g) butter

½ cup (125ml) milk

a little half and half or single cream

1 block (approx 4oz (115g)) Velveeta or other processed cheese

## Method

Cook macaroni till partly tender. Drain and put back in pan. Add half and half, butter, and milk. Put over low heat. Microwave a chunk of Velveeta cheese to melt (about ½ minutes in 30 second bursts); add to pan with macaroni and stir in. Watch closely, it is easy to burn, and take off when it looks ready.

# Meatball Subs

By Nena Mundell

*For me, meatball subs are the taste and comfort of home. Ever since I was a kid, I've been helping my grandma cook in the kitchen, and one of my earliest memories is helping her roll out the meatballs and place them on the cookie sheet. My grandmother, of course, was an excellent cook, and mostly eyeballed her ingredients, but I finally got her to write down a family recipe. This is a family legacy that has been passed down in my family, from my grandma, to my mom, and now to me.*



## Ingredients

### *Sauce*

1 tablespoon sugar

Two 14 oz. (400g) cans Italian seasoned stewed tomatoes

One 28 oz. (800g) can peeled plum tomatoes

2 teaspoons sweet onion and herb seasoning\*

2 garlic cloves, peeled

Salt and pepper to taste

## ***Meatballs***

2 lb (500g) ground/minced beef  
1 lb (250g) ground/minced turkey  
½ cup breadcrumbs  
1 tablespoon sweet onion and herb seasoning\*  
2 teaspoons salt  
2 teaspoons pepper

## ***To Serve***

8 submarine rolls (found in the bakery section)  
1 package, pre-shredded mozzarella cheese or other grated cheese to your liking

## **Method**

1. Mix all of the meatball ingredients in a large bowl. Make sure you get it all combined, so your seasonings won't be off.
2. Drizzle about 2 tablespoons olive oil in a large pan, and let warm over medium heat. While that is happening, roll all of the meat into meatballs the size of golf balls. Brown the meatballs in the pan for about 3 minutes, then flip to the opposite side. If it will not turn, it is either burnt or it is not done. After another 3 minutes, turn the meatball to another raw side. When that is done, cook the remaining side, and then put in a large soup pot. It is ok if there is raw meat showing. While the meatballs are cooking in the sauce, they will cook thoroughly.
3. Put all of the sauce ingredients in a large food processor and puree. (Another option is you can put all of your ingredients in your pot BEFORE the meatballs, and purée using a hand-held food processor or stick blender.) Pour all of the sauce into the pot with meatballs, and cook over LOW heat for about two hours. (You could also use a crock pot if you have one.)
4. About 5 minutes before serving put your halved submarine rolls on a baking sheet in the oven for 5 minutes at 350°F / 175°C to toast them lightly. This is so the sauce won't make your bread soggy.
5. To assemble, take out one roll per person, and pour about 3 to 4 meatballs onto the roll. Pour on some extra sauce, top with a little cheese, and then you have your masterpiece!

*\*A note from the Stone Soup test kitchen: you can use some onion salt and a mixture of basil, oregano, rosemary, thyme or other herbs, to your taste if you don't have any seasoning mix.*



# Sweet Recipes

## The Crazy Kid

By Niko Mann

Illustrated by Singyee Liu

Here is a naughty child.  
He acts like a wild tiger.  
He sounds  
like a screeching car.  
He pretends  
he is an exploding rocketship.  
He ate too much sugar  
before bedtime.

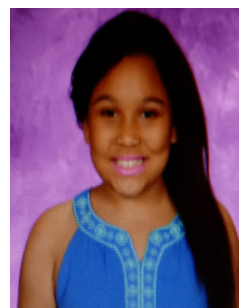




# Very Berry Pie

By Skylar Carroscia

*One Saturday night a long time ago, my grandma and I had nothing to do. I went in the pantry to find some baking recipes. I saw a recipe that said Very Berry Pie. "Grandma," I said "come look at what I found!" My grandma told me this was her great grandma's recipe. "LET'S BAKE IT!" I said excitedly. We got out the pans and got the oven ready. We rolled out the pie crust and put it around the rim of the pie pan. Meanwhile my little brother sneaked into the kitchen and took some pie dough to play with. "WHERE DID THE PIECE OF THE PIE CRUST GO?" I hollered. I saw my little brother run off. He was so fast I could not catch up! DONK! I tripped over the stairs. He dropped the piece of pie crust and I caught it! "I HAVE RETURNED THE PIE CRUST!" I shouted like a brave knight. I looked at my arm and saw that it was bleeding. "That little rascal", I whispered. I grabbed a bandage and wrapped it around my arm. It stop bleeding. When we finished baking the pie, the crust was golden brown. The filling was warm and looked like a mixture of thick berries and sauce. I will always remember the first day I made Very Berry Pie because I still have a scar on my arm, and I bet my little brother will remember, too.*



Skylar Carroscia, 8  
South Euclid, OH

## Ingredients

### *List of ingredients for the crust*

1½ cups (180g) flour  
1 stick (120g) butter  
¼ cup (60ml) ice water  
a pinch of salt  
1 egg yolk



### *List of ingredients for the filling*

8 oz (200g) blueberries  
8 oz (200g) blackberries  
8 oz (200g) raspberries  
3 thinly sliced strawberries  
1 cup (200g) granulated sugar  
½ cup (55g) cornstarch  
1 lemon

### **Method**

#### *How to make the crust*

First, get out a 12 inch (30cm) pie pan.

Next, you need your flour and put it in a bowl. Rub the butter into it with your fingers. After that, take your egg. To separate the yolk, crack the egg in half over a bowl, let the yolk settle in one half of the shell and then keep transferring the yolk back and forth allowing the egg white to fall out into the bowl. Tip the egg yolk in another bowl. Make sure there are no egg shells in it. Whisk it with a whisk until it gets thick. Put it in with the flour and mix it in. Grab your half cup of water and pour it in the flour. Mix until thickened and combined.

Take your hands and pick up the dough and sprinkle some flour on the counter. Take a rolling pin and roll out two pie crusts. Then gently set one crust in the pie pan. Put the

crust around the rim.

### *How to make the filling and bake the pie*

Take out a two quart saucepan and put in the berries and the sugar. The berries should be boiling. You want to reduce the heat, then add the cornstarch, and stir with a wooden spoon. Cook the berries over medium heat until they reduce. They should be thickened after 15 minutes. Let them cool off for 19 minutes.

Take your lemon and stab it with a fork. Cut it in half. Squeeze the lemon juice in with the berries. Mix until thick.

Scoop up the filling and drop into the crust in the pie pan. Wet the edges of the bottom pie crust so the top crust can stick together. Take your 2nd pie crust and put it on the top of the filling, then crimp both crusts together using a fork. Take your fork and put a little hole in the top of the crust so the pie can have some air.

Bake the pie for  $\frac{3}{4}$  - 1 hour at 350°F (175°C).\* Let it cool for about fifteen minutes.



*\*A note from the Stone Soup test kitchen: the pie will turn golden brown. This might take a little longer or a little less time, depending on your oven. You can start to check it after 35-40 minutes.*

# Gluten Dairy Egg-Free Brownies

By Charlotte Weimer



Charlotte Weimer, 12  
McLean, Virginia

*My best Brownies ever. The first bite of my OWN recipe. All in that one bite, I tasted what I had been working on for such a long time. About a year before I made my brownies, I had found a recipe on the internet that I wanted to try. It turned out so well that when people tasted it, with a smile on their face saying it was so good, that they wanted another one, saying they couldn't stop, it made me want to keep going. I bake for many reasons, it makes me happy, I go into my own world in the kitchen, I forget all my troubles and just BAKE. But the main reason I bake is that lots of kids have allergies like me and my family do. I can't have gluten or wheat. I also can't have too many eggs or dairy. The rest of my family is allergic to things like me but they are also allergic to nuts and soy. It sounds pretty impossible to bake without all of those crucial ingredients, but I do it differently. I put my heart, soul, love, joy, sorrow, sadness, my everything into what I bake. I hope that you give this recipe a try and come to adore baking as much as I do, and I hope that you and your family enjoy these brownies as much as we do.*





**Serves:** 16

### **Ingredients**

1 cup (175g) vegan/dairy free butter, melted and cooled in the fridge  
2 tablespoons (30ml) grapeseed oil  
1 cup (200g) brown sugar  
1 cup (200g) white sugar  
4 flax eggs, made from 4 tbsp ground flaxseed and 5 tbsp hot water  
4 teaspoons vanilla extract  
1 cup (200g) gluten free flour blend  
1 cup (85g) good quality, unsweetened cocoa powder (I use a combination of regular and dark)  
1 teaspoon salt  
Dairy-free chocolate chips added to your liking (up to 1 ½ cups (200g))

### **Method**

Preheat the oven to 350°F (175°C) then line a 7x11 inch (18-28 mm) baking tray with parchment paper and set aside. Make your flax eggs: combine your ground flaxseed meal with your warm (not boiling) water and set it aside for at least 5 minutes.

In a large bowl combine the cold melted butter, oil, and both sugars. Add the flax eggs, vanilla and salt then whisk for about one minute until evenly combined.

Over the same bowl, sift in the gluten-free flour blend and cocoa powder. Gently fold the all of the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients until JUST combined (do NOT overmix). Fold in half of the chocolate chips.

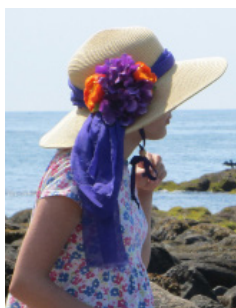
Pour the batter into the prepared pan, then smooth the top. Generously top with the remaining chocolate chips.

Bake for 35-40 minutes\*, or until the center of the brownies is JUST set to the touch. Remove your brownies from the oven and allow to cool to room temperature before removing from the baking tray and cutting into pieces.

*\*A note from the Stone Soup test kitchen: we only needed 30 minutes of baking, as our oven is quite hot, so you might want to check yours a bit sooner. Ours came out of the oven bubbling like lava so if yours do too we'd advise not touching them until they have cooled!*

# Christmas Cookies

By Ella Martinez Nocito



Ella Martinez Nocito, 10  
Sunderland, MA

*My family makes three kinds of cookies every year at Christmas. There's a dark chocolate mint brownie, a sugar cookie, and a chocolate chip peanut butter cookie. Ever since I've been small, I've asked my mom every year if I can help. For as long as I can remember, she's let me get things for her—whisks, bowls, measuring cups. However, this year, even though I'm twelve, I don't expect any more than a "Not this year, Lily. Maybe next year."*

*But when, as she's getting out the ingredients for the chocolate chip peanut butter cookies, I ask, "Can I do them this year, Mom?"*

*I'm surprised when she says, "Sure, Lily. You've helped me for a bunch of years. Do you think you could manage it?"*

*"Sure," I say, thrilled. I've made muffins before, but never one of the Christmas cookies. She hands me the recipe, and under her watchful eye, I gather the ingredients and begin to mix them together. When I'm about halfway through, the phone rings. My mom picks it up, saying, "I'll be on the phone for a little while. Finish mixing them and put them in the oven. I should be off the phone by the time they come out, but if not, let them cool and put them in some Ziploc bags and put them in the box with the rest of the cookies."*

*Then, to the phone, she says, "Hello? Oh, hi, yeah, this isn't a bad time..."*

*She walks up the stairs to talk in peace. I finish mixing most of the ingredients. The last ingredient is butter—I look at it for a moment, then shrug. Dad always substitutes oil for butter. I get out the oil and pour in the correct amount. Mixing them together, I accidentally*

*spill the chocolate chip bag a bit.*

*Oh well, I think. A few extra chocolate chips never hurt anybody. I set them on the cookie sheet in little balls and stick them in the preheated oven. By the time I'm done cleaning up the timer is beeping and I open the oven. The cookies look slightly...flatter...than usual, but I think nothing of it as I let them cool, then lay them in plastic bags and put them with the other Christmas cookies. A few minutes later, Mom comes back in.*

*"Done?" she says. "Good. It's time the Christmas cookies were done, we've never been doing them on the twenty-third before."*

\* \* \*

*Now it is Christmas day, and we're spending it, as always, at Aunt Lavinia's with the rest of our family. Mom and I lay out the cookies on a large tray. She unloads our box and looks at me very, very hard.*

*"What did you do to the cookies?" she asks, rather angrily.*

*"I only traded the butter for oil like Dad always does," I say, brushing my hair out of my face nervously.*

*"Not for cookies!" she said. She never fools around with recipes. I'm expecting more, but she just sighs.*

*"Oh well," she says. "Too late to change them. They'll have to do."*

*About halfway through the night, Aunt Lavinia comes up to me and Mom, one of my cookies in her hand.*

*"These are the best you've ever made!" she says enthusiastically. "What did you do differently?"*

*Mom's face breaks into a smile. "Ask Lily," she says. "She's the one who made them."*

*Aunt Lavinia turns to me. "These are great," she says. "You should make them again next year!"*

*Since then, I've always made the chocolate chip peanut butter cookies at Christmastime. Aunt Lavinia's yet to be disappointed.*



**Note: “Christmas Cookies” is a fictional story! However, it was inspired by the following recipe.**

Recipe makes approximately 36 cookies.

### **Ingredients**

1 cup (200g) all-purpose flour  
½ teaspoon baking soda  
¼ teaspoon salt  
⅓ cup (80ml) vegetable oil  
¼ cup (60ml) milk  
½ cup (55g) granulated sugar or honey  
1 cup (200g) packed light brown sugar  
1 cup (200g) peanut butter  
2 eggs  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 cup (200g) chopped peanuts  
1 cup (200g) semi-sweet chocolate chips

## Method

1. Preheat oven to 350<sup>0</sup>F (175<sup>0</sup>C). Prepare your baking sheets with parchment paper or butter.
2. Whisk flour, baking soda and salt in a small bowl. Set it aside.
3. Cream oil, milk, granulated sugar and brown sugar in a mixer or with a whisk. Slowly add the eggs and vanilla, continuing to mix until they are incorporated. Then add the peanut butter to the wet ingredients and combine thoroughly.
4. Slowly add the dry ingredients into the wet, stirring constantly, to make a soft dough.
5. Stir the peanuts and chocolate chips into the cookie batter.
6. Scoop tablespoons of dough onto sheet pans, leaving 2 inches between each cookie.
7. Bake for about 12 minutes.
8. Cool for about 2 minutes before removing from pan.



# Lembas Cookies

By Ula Pomian



Ula Pomian, 12  
Ontario, Canada

*This cookie was discovered when I was bored. I wrote up a recipe and the Lembas cookie was invented! This cookie is named after the Lembas bread from the Lord of the Rings that the elves make. And, just like the bread, you can eat one cookie and be full for a couple of hours. As my family says: "It tastes like gingerbread, smells like banana bread, and has a texture like a sponge cake." This cookie is truly unique.*



## Ingredients

1 cup (120g) all-purpose flour (or cake flour. I use all-purpose for everything)

1 cup (200g) sugar (less if you like. You can use  $\frac{1}{2}$  -  $\frac{2}{3}$  cup (200g) of honey as a substitute. I found that honey tastes better if you like that sort of thing.)

$\frac{1}{2}$  cup (115g) butter (unsalted, as salted doesn't taste good.

Blech!)

2 eggs

1 pinch salt

1 tsp baking soda (to make it rise. Don't be surprised when something bubbles in the oven, it's just the soda!)

½ cup (120ml) milk (lactose-free works just as well as the real thing)

### Optional ingredients

These optional ingredients are just suggested flavorings. Some people don't like ginger, so if they don't want to, they can take it out with no ill effects, same with the cinnamon, and the molasses.

Ginger (½ - ¾ tsp)

Cinnamon (½ - ¾ tsp)

Molasses (up to 1 tsp, to taste)

### Method

1. Put all the dry ingredients into a big bowl. If using honey instead of sugar, please see next step.
2. Melt the butter (but not completely!) and add to the dry stuff. If using honey, pour it in now, please. If you use honey, it might be runnier, but once it's baked, it'll be fine.
3. Add the eggs and mix in. Pour in the milk and mix everything together. In the meantime, you can preheat the oven (some ovens heat up almost immediately, like mine does, so for me, heating the oven is always the last step. If yours heats up slowly, turn it on while melting the butter).
4. Pour the mixture onto a baking tray tray (approx 9 x 13" / 23 x 33cm) covered in parchment paper, and bake at 400°F (200°C) until golden brown (around 20-30 mins). Don't worry if the mixture is runny at first, because this is what is supposed to happen.
5. Enjoy with jam or butter. Yum!

# Mom's S'mores Bars

from *My Family Cookbook*

By Georgia Armstrong



Georgia Armstrong, 11  
Louisville, Kentucky

*My mom always makes these for my family and me. She also made them for my neighbors when they first moved in, that was our way of making them feel welcomed. They also loved them. My mom is an amazing baker and can make anything that requires baking for any type of occasion.*



## Ingredients

½ cup (115g) butter, softened  
¾ cup (175g) brown sugar  
1 egg  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
1 ⅓ cups (200g) all-purpose flour  
¾ cup (65g) graham cracker crumbs (or crushed wheatmeal  
or Digestive biscuits)

1 teaspoon baking powder  
¼ teaspoon salt  
5 Hershey bars, or 200g other milk chocolate)  
1 small container marshmallow crème, or 200g marshmallows

## Method

Heat oven to 350°F (180°C). Grease one 8-inch (20cm) square pan. Beat butter and brown sugar in a large mixing bowl until light and fluffy. Add egg and vanilla beat well. Stir together flour, graham crackers, baking powder, and salt. Add to butter mixture and beat well until blended. Press half the dough into pan. Arrange chocolate bars over dough. Spread marshmallow crème over it and press rest of dough over it. Bake 30-35 minutes.

# Disaster Raspberry Smoothie

By Evelyn M. Kelly



Evelyn Kelly, 10  
Spokane, WA

*It all began with boredom. It was a sweltering August day, and my younger brother, Ciaran, and I couldn't agree on what to do.*

*"We could play Go Fish," Ciaran suggested.*

*I shook my head. "No."*

*"Okay," Ciaran fidgeted a little, trying to think. "How about—"*

*"I could read to you," I interjected.*

*Ciaran sighed. "C'mon, Evelyn, it's summer. School doesn't start for two weeks. How about—"*

*Once again, I interrupted: "We can pick raspberries and make a raspberry smoothie."*

*On the side of our house, there is a colossal, overgrown raspberry bush that produces many raspberries from about May up until mid-October, when the weather turns cold. One of my favorite summer activities is picking raspberries and then eating them. But it was a small spark of genius that it might be fun to try to make raspberries into a smoothie. After all, we had a blender—though I had never used it before.*

*Ciaran smiled and agreed with me. "Let's do it."*

*And after grabbing a couple of bowls and calling, "Mom, going outside to pick raspberries!", we were on our way.*

*When we pick raspberries, it isn't the most pleasant thing in the world. It just so happens that the bush is west of the house, and that*



*at 3:00 in the afternoon, the scorching sun is in the west, too, and it decides to roast your back. It doesn't help that the bush produces raspberries as well as thorns.*

*The thought of getting a cool smoothie at the end of all of this kept me going, and at least it was only 90°. As soon as we filled three bowls with raspberries, we went inside, dumped the raspberries in a strainer, and washed them.*

*As we did, Mom came into the kitchen. "Hi," she greeted us. "What are you doing with the raspberries?"*

*"Making a smoothie," Ciaran replied as I set down the strainer and searched in the cupboard for the blender.*

*"You've never made one before," she said. "Do you need help?"*  
*I shook my head. "We're good. This was our idea, after all."*

*"Okay," she said and left.*

*As we dumped the raspberries from the strainer to the blender, we couldn't help but be excited. We had never made anything with raspberries, and now we were making a smoothie. "Moment of truth," I told Ciaran as I plugged the blender into an outlet and switched it ON.*

*The blender began to whirr, and the raspberries began to spin. It looked pretty good, actually, in the minute before raspberry smoothie bits began spewing out the top and onto the counter that had just been cleaned.*

*"No, no, no!" I fretted. To Ciaran, who was closer to the blender, I said, "Switch it off!"*

*"I can't do that without—" Ciaran began, reaching for the switch. Before he could, mushed raspberry bits sprayed him in the cheek.*

*"Who cares?" I snapped at him. "You can wash your face after!"*

*A few raspberry bits in the face later, Ciaran flipped the switch and it was off. I reached for a towel so that I could cover the top of the blender. A few minutes later, after we drank our smoothies, Mom came into the kitchen.*

*"How did it go?" she asked. I smiled. "Perfect. Just perfect."*

*Now picking raspberries and making smoothies out of them is one of our favorite summer activities. Of course, we put a rag over the top now so that raspberry bits stay in the blender. But if I were to choose, I wouldn't put a rag over the blender, just for the fun of it.*



Serves 1

### **Ingredients**

1 cup (200g) fresh raspberries  
1 Mandarin orange, peeled  
2 ice cubes

### **Method**

Put all ingredients in a blender and switch it to high. Blend until thick and smooth.

*Note: If your blender is over-reactive, make sure to screw the top on tight and put a towel over the top, just in case!*

# Ponche Navideño (Christmas Punch)

By Catherine Gruen

Walking into my grandmother's house, I gaze at the Christmas tree, sparkling lights winding their way to the peak where a silver star adorns the top branch of the petit pine. Beneath, is a mini lit-up Christmas village, with a fragile train chugging its way through the town and winding through the snow-coated cottages. My grandmother has arranged this small village for nearly fifty years, since she married my grandfather. This year is no different; the same train whistles. I hear my aunt's dog bark a cheerful "hello." Nat King Cole's, silky tone is singing "The Christmas Song" alongside the joyful chorus of voices from my aunts and uncles. I sigh blissfully. I breathe in the sweet, spicy smell of the Ponche. The list of ingredients gallop through my mind: cinnamon, cider, cloves, coconut, pineapple, papaya...

Just this past autumn, my grandmother taught me the recipe, patiently helping me prepare it, and write down what had been locked away in her mind. My grandmother greets me at the door, giving me a hug, and smiling, the words spilling out of her mouth soft, smooth and sweet, "Feliz Navidad!" She proceeds to present me with the Ponche, and I gladly take it, daintily slurping the flavorful drink: spices, apples and raisins fill my mouth. The cup is warm to the touch; heat is radiating off the white ceramic mug and filling my heart with happiness.



Catherine Gruen, 10  
Chino Hills, California



*Serves 7*

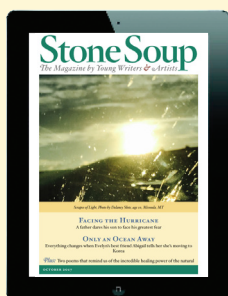
### **Ingredients**

1 medium Granny Smith apple  
1 small Gala apple  
1 ½ cups (350g) papaya (any variety)  
1 ½ cups (350g) pineapple  
1 baby Thai coconut  
9 pitted prunes  
½ cup (115g) raisins  
4 cups (1 litre) water  
4 cups (1 litre) apple cider  
3 medium cinnamon sticks  
3 cloves  
4 allspice berries  
½ cup (115g) raw sugar



## Method

1. Dice the apples, papaya and the pineapple into small cubes. Place them in a large pot.
2. Have an adult open the coconut. Empty the juice into a separate glass. (You will not need it in this recipe.) Scoop away the coconut flesh with a spoon. Place the coconut in the pot.
3. Cut the pitted prunes in half. Place them in the pot, and add the raisins.
4. Pour the apple cider and the water into the pot. Put in the cinnamon, cloves, and allspice. Pour in the sugar.
5. Set on the stove with medium heat until it boils. Lower the flame and simmer for 18-20 minutes.
6. Serve hot.



# Honor Roll

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— *The Editors*

#### Stories

Atara Bayla  
Feldman, 8  
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Mia Widrow, 10  
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#### Artwork

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Andrew Mc-  
Cullough, 8  
Ripley Wong, 10

#### Poems

Anna Calegari, 12  
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11  
Isabella Webb, 11

**Savory Recipes Title Page** - Poem: Devon Mann, 10, San Anselmo, CA; Drawing: Danielle Umbs, 13, Monmouth Beach, NJ



**Sweet Recipes Title Page** - Poem: Niko Mann, 10, San Anselmo, CA; Drawing: Singyee Liu, 9, Long Grove, IL

