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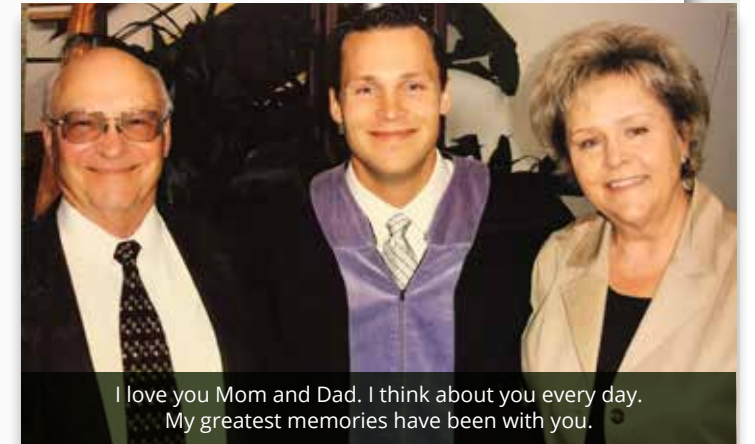
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FUN, FAMILY, AND GRATITUDE

Why Memorial Day Is My Favorite Holiday

When you ask somebody what their favorite holiday is, the more common answers are Christmas, Thanksgiving, or Independence Day. I guess I'm an outlier in this regard, because Memorial Day has been my favorite holiday for as long as I can remember. The reason I look forward to the holiday is partly because of where it falls on the calendar, and partly due to specific family traditions.

I always travel to Eastern Idaho for Memorial Day, and there's no better time to visit. I grew up in farm country, which can be pretty desolate-looking during much of the year. That's not the case in late May, however. The fields of grain are green and popping, the grass is gorgeous, and the weather is almost always perfect. The entire landscape feels like it's exploding with life.



I love you Mom and Dad. I think about you every day. My greatest memories have been with you.

The impact these selfless folks have on all of us isn't limited to a holiday, but it's great that we have a day to celebrate them.

I also use Memorial Day weekend to commemorate my parents. They've both passed away, and our family always visits their gravesites during Memorial Day weekend to honor their memory. It's a very special, intimate experience for all of us and one that brings us closer together as a family unit.

Given that Mother's Day is also in May, I wanted to close by paying tribute to my mother, Bonnie. She passed away four years ago this month, but she continues to be an inspiration to me. She was always my biggest supporter and never failed to have a word of encouragement for me when I needed it most. A mother's love is the closest thing to God's love, and in my experience, that is true. I miss her all the time, but I feel grateful to have been raised by such wonderful parents.

If your mom is still with us, I hope you take the time to express your love to her this month. I also encourage you to take a moment, even in the midst of your cookout, to pay tribute to those who've lost their lives serving our country. We wouldn't be here without our mothers and service people, and now's the perfect time to show our gratitude.

-Dr. Chris Thomason

"The fields of grain are green and popping, the grass is gorgeous, and the weather is almost always perfect. The entire landscape feels like it's exploding with life."

To take advantage of the natural wonders, I always float Henry's Fork (the North Fork of the Snake River) with two of my brothers. We spend the days floating and fishing and the evening cooking and barbecuing at my brother's home. As an added bonus, Memorial Day always happens during the stonefly hatch, which makes for ideal fishing conditions. The experience is always a blast. As we grow older and busier, spending quality time with my brothers gets harder. I cherish these trips for that very reason.

Of course, Memorial Day isn't all about cookouts and fishing trips. It's also a time to take a moment to remember those who are no longer with us, particularly those who have served our country. As a patriotic American, I try to always keep in mind the sacrifices of the brave men and women protecting our nation.

ENRICH YOUR VACATION Buy Local When You're Abroad

The virtues of buying locally sourced food and supporting small businesses have been widely extolled. But we rarely think to apply the same practices when we travel. Many Americans spring for all-inclusive packages when planning their next summer vacation, but doing so means they'll miss out on some of the best aspects of the culture they're visiting.

Part of the joy of traveling is having new experiences you can't have at home. Whether you're in another state or another country, you owe it to yourself to seek out the unique aspects of that location. But to find the character and quirks of your destination, you'll have to explore beyond the hotel lobby.

FOOD

Why have a cheeseburger from a fast-food chain when you can try a local favorite? A great way to start is by asking your taxi driver or hotel concierge about their favorite place to eat. You'll discover new foods and flavor combinations, and the locally owned restaurant is sure to appreciate your business!

ART

Just as your town probably has local artisans who produce unique and interesting work, the same is true for your vacation destination. Anyone can get a gift shop bauble that was mass-produced somewhere else. Take

the time to peruse market stalls and craft fairs while you travel. It can lead you to some truly special souvenirs, and you'll support the arts and traditions of the region!

PEOPLE

While you're out sampling local restaurants and exploring local markets, you'll meet plenty of local people. Don't be afraid to strike up a friendly conversation. You can make new friends around the globe and learn about their unique experiences. One of the most enriching experiences in life is meeting new people and gaining new perspectives.

MEMORIES

Treasured memories are the best souvenir you can bring home from any vacation. So you owe it to yourself to get out and explore!



HAND-WASHING VS. DISHWASHER

We've all walked into our kitchens, looked at the dishes stacked high in the sink, and asked, "Is it better to throw those in the dishwasher or wash them by hand?" The dishwasher would certainly save you some time, but many people believe that washing dishes by hand uses less water and electricity. In reality, however, washing your dishes by hand is one of the worst things you can do for both the planet and your wallet.

Dishwashers use less water than washing by hand. A study conducted in Europe found that individuals who wash dishes by hand tend to use 27 gallons of water to clean just 12 place settings. Meanwhile, modern dishwashers only use 6 gallons of water, and Energy Star appliances use as little as 4 gallons during their wash cycle. The Environmental Protection Agency determined that using a dishwasher instead of washing by hand can save 5,000 gallons of water and \$40 in utility costs a year.

It's not just about water! Unless you have incredibly thick dishwashing gloves, you can't properly clean your dishes by hand. Dishwashers heat water to around 145 degrees Fahrenheit to ensure your dishes are disinfected. Even if the water from your sink could get that hot, you wouldn't want to stick your hand in it.

Which brings us to the science experiment that is your kitchen sponge. Dr. Philip Tierno, a clinical professor in the microbiology and pathology departments at NYU Langone, determined that your kitchen sponge is the single dirtiest item in your house. Soap and water aren't enough to sanitize your sponge, which is left damp next to your sink after each use. Have you ever noticed that stagnant sponge smell? That's bacteria growing. And when you wash your dishes by hand, you rub that bacteria all over your plates and silverware. Yum.

If you have just a single plate or cup, you obviously don't want to run them through the dishwasher alone; that would be incredibly wasteful. But the drawbacks of washing by hand are too great to ignore. The best option is to wait until your dishwasher is full, then start up the washing cycle. All your dishes will be clean and disinfected, and you'll use less water in the process.



DEALING WITH DENTAL ANXIETY

DON'T LET STRESS SCARE YOU AWAY FROM THE DENTIST

No one likes going to the dentist — after all, the thought of someone else snooping around in your mouth isn't pleasant. It's pretty common to feel stressed at the dentist's office, but for some people, that stress can escalate to a phobia.

Dental anxiety can cause a host of dental problems. Many people who struggle with this anxiety will only visit the dentist when they absolutely need to. But rushing to the dentist due to an emergency only makes the patient's anxiety worse. Emergency experiences are never pleasant and can add more stress to a trying situation.

If someone is already nervous about going to the dentist, making an appointment for something far worse than a simple cleaning isn't the solution. Their opinion of dentists is only going to worsen in situations like this, creating an unpleasant case for the patient and dentist.

Managing your dental anxiety isn't easy, but it can be done, and you don't have to rely on sedatives to make it through an appointment, either. An easy way to minimize anxiety is to show up to your appointment on time — never early. Although this strategy may seem too simple to work, it minimizes the time you spend in the waiting room. The longer a patient



sits, the more time they have to mull over any previous bad experiences, imagine things that could go wrong, or anticipate the expected discomfort.

Communicate your anxiety to your dentist. Getting to know your dentist and their process can lower stress levels and uncertainty, and your dentist may have suggestions on how to make you comfortable once they know how nervous you are. Talking through the procedure beforehand and afterward will help you understand what to expect and what's already happened.

Dental anxiety can make the dentist's office seem like the worst place in the world. But with a little confidence and a tactful approach, nobody should have to suffer from poor dental hygiene because of it.

KARA'S CORNER The Importance of Early Detection



While everyone should be screened for oral cancer at least once per year, there are certain groups that are at an elevated risk for developing the disease. The biggest risk factors are smoking and the use of smokeless tobacco. Excessive alcohol consumption, sun exposure, and human papillomavirus (HPV) also increase a patient's likelihood of developing oral cancer. It's more common in males than females, and a higher incidence rate occurs in those above age 50.

An expert may be required for a diagnosis, but you can do a basic screening at home. To start, examine the sides and underside of your tongue for any patches or discoloration. From there, move to your lips and the inside of your cheeks, feeling for any bumps and looking for any red or white patches. Do the same for the floor of your mouth and your soft palate. It's also worth checking for swollen lymph nodes, but remember that those can signify any number of problems, not just oral cancer.

The presence of symptoms is not a surefire sign of oral cancer. Our mouths are complicated, and it's important to make sure that you verify any cause for concern with a professional. At Eagle Dental Care, we are happy to offer oral cancer screenings in between regularly scheduled visits. If you feel you could benefit from a screening, give us a call today.

April was Oral Cancer Awareness Month, which got me thinking about how important oral cancer screenings are as part of your regular dental hygiene routine. We perform screenings during every cleaning and exam. It's particularly important because many oral cancers don't have dramatic symptoms in their early stages. Early detection also significantly increases the survival rate of oral cancer patients.

GRILLED RANCH POTATOES

If you want to be the hit of this year's Memorial Day cookout, don't overlook the star power of a well-made side dish. These smoky, tangy grilled potatoes will be the talk of the party. The best part is how easy they are to prep and make!

INGREDIENTS

- 2 pounds baby potatoes, halved
- Ranch dressing for drizzling
- 1/4 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh chives
- Juice of 1/2 lemon
- Bacon bits (optional)
- 1/2 packet ranch seasoning
- Salt and pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Heat grill to medium. In a large pan, toss potatoes with olive oil, lemon juice, and ranch seasoning. Season generously with salt and pepper.
2. Skewer potatoes. (If using wood skewers, be sure to soak in water an hour before grilling.) Grill until tender and lightly charred, about 15 minutes.
3. Drizzle with ranch and garnish with chives and bacon bits.



LAUGHING GAS

