



*A Room with a View.*

## FEBRUARY 2024



## NOTES & NEWS

### Save Time in the Left Line

Nobody likes to wait in a long line. Try this trick that may save you time—go to the farthest line on the left. Since the majority of people are right-handed, they tend to subconsciously choose things on the right, including lines. Therefore, left lines are often shorter.

### No More Streaks

Do you struggle to get a streak-free mirror? Try using a DIY cleaner with equal parts distilled water and white vinegar. Cleaning your mirror with this solution and a microfiber towel in an up-and-down and side-to-side motion—rather than circular—will leave you with spotless glass. Additionally, the solution may keep bathroom mirrors from fogging up for about a week.

### Kick Out Your Feet for Better Sleep

Your feet may be the key to a better night's sleep. The National Sleep Foundation says keeping one foot outside the covers can help your body maintain a lower temperature, which allows you to fall asleep faster and enjoy a deeper doze.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### Year of the Dragon

Happy Lunar New Year! The Year of the Dragon begins on Feb. 10. Of the 12 animals in the Chinese zodiac, the dragon is the only mythological creature, and it's associated with power, intelligence, confidence and prosperity.

### Inventive Abe

Did you know Abraham Lincoln is the only U.S. president to ever hold a patent? He invented a device to lift boats over obstructions in rivers, such as sandbars, but it was never produced. A scale model of the mechanism is held at the Smithsonian Institution.

### A Quiet Home

Placing furniture against a shared wall can help absorb sounds from neighboring units, making your home quieter.

### Making a Splash

If you watch sports, then you probably know about the famed Gatorade shower, also known as the Gatorade dunk or bath. This tradition of dumping a cooler full of liquid onto the head coach—or star player—began with New York Giants defensive tackle Jim Burt in 1984. After some grueling practices that resulted in a winning game, Burt, linebacker Harry Carson and team dumped the icy drink all over head coach Bill Parcells. This bit of fun has since become a beloved tradition for victorious teams.

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# TRIVIA WHIZ



## Learn About Leap Year

The special and fleeting 29th day of February is known as Leap Day, occurring about once every four years. A year with this extra day is called a leap year—and 2024 is one of them! Take the leap and learn more about this timely phenomenon.

- Though a calendar year is 365 days, the Earth actually takes 365 days, 5 hours, 48 minutes and 45 seconds to completely orbit the sun. Without Leap Day, every year would be missing six hours, and after 100 years, our calendar would be off by a whopping 24 days.
- Leap years help the seasons stay consistent. Without them, eventually August would be a spring month!
- Roman leader Julius Caesar created the first Leap Day around 45 B.C.
- A leap year doesn't occur every four years. A year ending in "00" must be divisible by 400 or it functions as a normal 365-day year. Hence, 2000 was a leap year, but 1900 wasn't, and 2100 won't be, either.
- The tradition of men proposing to women is flipped on Leap Day. In some countries, it's said that if a man says no to the proposal, he must pay up—in Denmark, men gift a dozen pair of gloves, and in Finland, fabric for a skirt.
- There is a one in 1,461 chance of being born on Leap Day; these babies are known as "leapers" or "leaplings."
- Even with leap years, the Earth's rotation doesn't completely match up with our calendar, so scientists occasionally implement a "leap second" to even out the score. The last one happened in December 2016.



## Reach for a Rom-Com

The meet-cute. The love triangle. The star-crossed soul mates. While romantic comedies aren't always realistic, watching them can have some real-life benefits!

*Less stress.* Often following a formula, a romantic comedy tends to be an "easy watch," which is perfect when you need to unwind. Watching a story with a happy ending releases feel-good chemicals in the brain, and research shows that enjoying a rom-com before bedtime can help with insomnia.

*Better relationships.* Of course, life isn't as picture-perfect as a movie, but experts say that watching rom-coms can raise levels of empathy, helping you to be more sensitive to others' needs. Additionally, couples who watch romantic films together and discuss them often have stronger communication skills.

*Releases emotions.* If you've ever craved "a good cry," then you know how cathartic tears—happy or sad—can be. That's because crying relieves the body of stress-inducing cortisol and adrenaline, helping you feel better after you've dried your eyes. Sweet and sentimental storylines can also bring back fond memories, giving you a dose of comforting nostalgia.

*Higher hopes.* Even if you're cynical about love, a rom-com's likeable characters and happy ending can boost your outlook on life, giving you confidence to follow your dreams—romantic or otherwise!

## You Missed a Spot!

A clean, comfortable home requires regular tidying up, but some spots are easy to miss during routine chores. These reminders will help your whole space sparkle and shine:

*Across your home.* Be sure to target areas that get touched daily, but likely aren't cleaned as often: light switches, doorknobs, drawer handles and remote controls. When sweeping or mopping, don't stop where the floor meets the wall. Baseboards and doorframes collect dust easily, but polishing them with a soft cloth will make a big difference. You can also use a vacuum attachment or dustmop to give curtains a quick clean between machine washes.

*Bathroom.* You probably wipe down the counter daily, but what about the toothbrush holder? Soak it in soapy water and scrub away stains with an old toothbrush. When cleaning the floors, make sure you get behind the

toilet. Include bath mats and rugs in your laundry routine; every so often, toss in your shower curtain as well! (Most can be machine-washed, but check the label to be sure.)

*Kitchen.* When was the last time you cleaned your salt and pepper shakers? Next time you need to refill them, first wash them and let them dry completely. For a better-tasting brew, clean your coffeemaker by running a cycle with plain vinegar, then a cycle of water to rinse.





## WIT & WISDOM



### Table for One

Whether you have a sweetie or are happily single, give solo dining a try. While you needn't eat every meal alone—socialization is important to your overall health—dining by yourself can be a fun and enlightening adventure.

Eating alone may sound daunting, but it has actually become very trendy in recent years. After all, solo dining gives you all the power. That's right—you get to pick the menu! It also provides the perfect opportunity for a brain break. Spend some quality alone time sitting with your thoughts, turning the meal into a meditative experience. Eat mindfully, savoring the flavors and presentation of your dish.

Solo dining can also be a social exercise, offering a way to meet new people and connect with your community. This could be from simply people watching and recognizing that you're part of a whole or by reaching out and talking to friendly strangers. These experiences can build your confidence and make you more independent.

Still not sure you can do it? Ease into the experience by bringing along a book to read; unlike scrolling on your phone, which gives off a "leave me alone" vibe, a book can invite discussions. First-timers tend to find breakfast, lunch or an early dinner the easiest meals to enjoy alone, or start out even simpler by relaxing solo at a local coffee shop or bakery.

### Raspberry Streusel Muffins

#### Muffin Ingredients:

- Nonstick cooking spray
- 1 1/2 cups whole-grain sorghum flour
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 3/4 teaspoon baking soda
- 3/4 cup buttermilk
- 1/3 cup firmly packed light brown sugar
- 3 egg whites
- 1/4 cup canola oil
- 2 teaspoons grated lemon zest
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup fresh or frozen raspberries

#### Streusel Ingredients:

- 2 tablespoons whole-grain sorghum flour
- 2 tablespoons light brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons quick-cooking rolled oats
- 2 tablespoons chopped pecans
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

#### Directions:

Heat oven to 400° F. Lightly coat a 12-cup muffin pan with nonstick cooking spray.

In a large bowl, stir sorghum flour, cinnamon and baking soda together. In a separate bowl, whisk buttermilk, brown sugar, egg whites, oil, lemon zest and vanilla. Stir wet ingredients into flour mixture. Spoon the batter into muffin cups and top each cup with raspberries.

In a small bowl, stir streusel ingredients together until crumbly. Sprinkle over muffins.

Bake muffins for 16 minutes. Cool on a wire rack for 20 minutes.

*Find more recipes at*  
Heart.org.



"How sweet the words of truth,  
breathed from the lips of love."

—**James Beattie**

"Once in a young lifetime one  
should be allowed to have as much  
sweetness as one can possibly  
want and hold."

—**Judith Olney**

"What's in a name? That which we  
call a rose by any other name would  
smell as sweet."

—**William Shakespeare**

"Life is short, and it is up to you  
to make it sweet."

—**Sarah Louise Delany**

"The road to greatness is often  
sought, but if journeyed with  
kindness, it is sweetly paved."

—**Tom Althouse**

"Connecting our hearts through  
love yields a nectar so sweet we  
are forever full."

—**Amy Leigh Mercree**

"But friendship is the breathing rose,  
with sweets in every fold."

—**Oliver Wendell Holmes**

"Heard melodies are sweet, but  
those unheard are sweeter."

—**John Keats**

"Oh, how sweet it is to hear one's own  
convictions from another's lips."

—**Johann Wolfgang von Goethe**

"Be sweet, be good, and  
honest always."

—**Emma Bunton**

"Even when the strings are broken  
in our lives, the sweet music plays  
on in our hearts."

—**Bryant McGill**



## February 2024

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8		10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	<b>Presidents Day</b>	19	20	21	22	23
25	26		27	28	29	

## “This Month In History” FEBRUARY

**1942:** Year-round daylight saving time, called “war time,” is signed into U.S. law by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. To save energy, all time zones moved ahead one hour until the end of World War II.

**1950:** Disney’s animated fairy tale feature “Cinderella” delights audiences when it opens in movie theaters.

**1960:** In a civil rights movement milestone, four Black college students begin a sit-in protest at a lunch counter in Greensboro, N.C., where they had been denied service.

**1972:** With over 15 million manufactured, the Volkswagen Beetle becomes the world’s bestselling car.

**1989:** A network of 24 GPS satellites is launched into orbit over Earth, revolutionizing navigation and everyday technology.

**1998:** British singer-songwriter Elton John is knighted by Queen Elizabeth II for his contributions to music and his charity work.

**2006:** A blizzard buries the Northeast. New York City received a record-setting 26.9 inches of snow.

**2020:** At the Oscars, the South Korean thriller “Parasite” is named best picture. It was the first foreign-language film to win the top honor.