



FYI Newsletter



Dear Associate,

During these strange days after our world has been turned upside down and shaken out and we are trying to reestablish our footing but we are not quite sure what surprises the future may bring, it is a good time to escape into the equally unusual but less threatening world of the imagination. It's a good time to look at things that haven't changed and won't change, and to look at them with new eyes.

After working in and designing commercial kitchens for decades, we want to share more than our architectural plans with you. This summer, I send you my painting of a kitchen, in words.

I hope you are enjoying this second summer of the pandemic, whether it is actually almost ended or just beginning again, who knows for sure. Many of us will soon be leaving our home offices with their conveniences and distractions to return to the big, busy building. Will we find the familiar world waiting for us there, or something else? What else? Time will tell.

We have been resilient as we paired the relaxation of our formerly frenetic schedules and increased family time against health fears and the lack of public entertainment and overseas travel. May those for whom the worst has touched their friends and family, accept my deepest sympathy. How I wish for your sake and for our planet that it never happened.

May the end of summer find you happier and healthier, and may our feature story make you smile.

Your consultant with food for thought,

Lynn

Lynn Hopkins

Praises to the Humble Kitchen

It's not just because we have been designing major kitchens for decades that I have stopped to consider how amazing the kitchen is among indoor spaces. When I think about the innumerable details that are involved in kitchen design, I feel compelled to give the kitchen a well-deserved standing ovation. What else around us is such an unsung hero as the professional kitchen?

Let's begin in the dark kitchen at 3:00 am, a time when its operators are fast asleep (unless it's a bakery). Except for the refrigeration rooms, which never sleep, the machines are at rest, too, waiting patiently for the sun to rise, the lights to be flipped on, and the whirring of another day to begin.

How does it smell? Do the humans keep it clean, even by moving the heavy equipment out of the way to yank the grime out of hiding? I pray that the ducts are clear. Kitchens hate uncontrolled fire. Does it have an air filtration system? Are there sick or even dead machines sadly standing useless among the hard-working machines, taking up space, and daily reminding the humans of their sacred duty? The midnight kitchen can be a real gossip!

Soon after dawn, the silence is broken as the key turns the lock, the heavy door creaks open, the lights are flipped up, and the delivery trucks begin to arrive.

In come ingredients from all over the world and from the nation's farms and factories. Our kitchen is the recipient of farmland crops and animals. Chickens and cows send their milk, cream and eggs, and fields of waving grain are turned into flour and bread, all adding to the plethora of ingredients. Fish, pigs, chickens and cows arrive to do their parts too in the epicurean creations. The kitchen welcomes

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Humble kitchen continued...
the world that becomes the chef's palette.

When the chefs and cooks arrive, the kitchen becomes both an art studio and a factory. Men and women in white coats and tall hats create magnificent edible sculptures. Whether sweet or savory, gastronomic delicacies are made to nourish and entertain hungry patrons. Deep down the most talented chefs yearn for the kind of timeless recognition that painters and sculptors enjoy and they never get it. Sad. Humbly, day after day they make more rapidly disappearing art.

But the kitchen is no typical art studio for its product is medicinal, filled with vitamins, minerals, antioxidants, fiber, and a myriad of necessary daily nutrients that each patron's body needs to stay healthy. In that sense, this art studio/factory doubles as a pharmacy. Rarely does an art collector need his or her purchase in order to survive another day, as a cafe patron does. Three cheers for the pharmacy/art studio/factory.

Cooks don't work alone. The kitchen houses a community of people who create together, serve together, and in a sense, dance together, moving around and through the space. The layout of the circulation aisles choreographs their movements--hopefully, not with too many bumps or do-si-dos.

Some kitchens have a theater component, a big glass wall where the chef's work is onstage for all to see and admire.

Kitchens receive from the agricultural world, the mechanical world, and the human world--and they do it all in a dynamic fashion to deliver relief from hunger, to give pleasure, nourishment and entertainment, and to enhance socialization.

I challenge you, my reader, to come up with a space that equals the awesome professional kitchen in modesty and value. Hip hip hooray! I am sure there will be kitchens in heaven. Don't you agree?

Ω

Karpouzopita (Watermelon Pie)

This is a traditional dessert in the Cyclades Islands in the Aegean in Greece, where they serve Karpouzopita throughout the day. It is a vegan delight!

Honey is the main sweetener and key ingredient in this dish and it's imperative that you use the very best quality honey in the world. I brought a few jars of honey back from Tuscany one year and when I opened a jar months later and tasted it, I thought I heard a symphony in my head! Never before or since had that happened, but I am convinced that great honey is symphonic!

Ingredients

- 4 cups diced watermelon
- 1 cup flour
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1/3 cup honey
- 2 Tbsp sugar
- 1 Tbsp semolina flour or farina
- Cinnamon
- Sesame seeds

Instructions

1. Shell and clean a watermelon. Remove all seeds. With your hands, break up (do not mash into a puree!) the watermelon into small chunks, about an inch in diameter.

2. Set aside in a strainer to remove the liquids. Do NOT press or mash the watermelon. Let it strain naturally, while retaining some of its essential liquids. Save the watermelon juice for a refreshing drink later! You should strain your watermelon for about an hour.
3. Once strained and you're ready to start your preparation process, pre-heat your oven to 350°F.
4. In a large mixing bowl, add your watermelon and flour and mix well. The watermelon will start breaking up even more and will help create a liquid dough.
5. Add the olive oil and honey and keep mixing. When the dough is mixed, add the sugar and sprinkle with cinnamon. Keep mixing until the ingredients have blended.
6. Drizzle the bottom of a round cake pan with olive oil and sprinkle some farina to lightly cover the bottom and sides of the pan.
7. Pour in your dough. The height of the pie shouldn't exceed about an inch.
8. Sprinkle the top with sesame seeds.
9. Bake at 350°F for 50-60 minutes.

Serve hot or warm with drizzled honey. You can also place the pita in the fridge for later and serve cold, although it has a different flavor when it's cold (still tasty, though!)



Credits Lynn and staff at NMAAHC, 2017 by Bill Petros.
Chagall The Birthday 1915. Swinging on a Star Anonymous.
Andrew Wyeth Distant Thunder, 1961