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Unique Celebrations Around the World

# Valentine's Day

Source: [www.tiyara.org](http://www.tiyara.org) • Editing by GT Magazine

Just as it is in the United States, other countries celebrate Valentine's Day as a day of love and romance, but they have their own specific ways of celebrating.

**ITALY** - Valentine's Day is known as La Festa Degli Innamorati - a romantic holiday and is celebrated similarly to how it is in the United States. But, in Italy, there is also a tradition of giving baci perugina, or Perugina chocolates, which come with romantic phrases printed on the wrappers.

**FRANCE** - Valentine's Day in France is known as La Saint-Valentin and is also a romantic holiday. French couples often exchange gifts, but one unique tradition is the giving of cartes d'amitié, or friendship cards, which are similar to Valentine's Day cards but are given to friends and family members as well as romantic partners.

**FINLAND** - Valentine's Day is called Ystävänpäivä, which translates to "Friend's Day." It is a day for celebrating all forms of love, not just romantic love. Friends, family members, and loved ones exchange gifts and cards to show appreciation for one another.

**BRAZIL** - Valentine's Day is known as Dia dos Namorados (Lover's Day) in Brazil, and couples exchange gifts. However, in Brazil, Saint Anthony is also known as the "Saint of Love" and is celebrated on June 13. It is traditional for couples to exchange gifts and go to church on this day.

**INDIA** - Valentine's Day has grown increasingly popular throughout the years. Many people exchange gifts like in other countries, but the holiday has also faced severe backlash from certain religious groups holding traditional values. However, many Indians continue to celebrate the holiday and express their love to one another.

**JAPAN** - Valentine's Day in Japan is primarily a day for women to give chocolates to the men in their lives. The practice, known as giri-choco, is often directed toward male coworkers or friends rather than romantic partners. On White Day, March 14, men return the favor by giving gifts, typically white chocolate, to the women who gave them chocolates on Valentine's Day.

**SOUTH KOREA** - Similar to Japan, Valentine's Day in South Korea is also a day for women to give gifts to men, but it is also a day for couples to celebrate their love for each other. On April 14, known as Black Day, single people gather together to eat Jajangmyeon (black bean paste noodle) and commiserate about their single status.

Overall, while Valentine's Day is primarily a holiday of romance and love, different countries have their own unique traditions. Some countries focus on romantic love, while others include the celebration of friendship and family.

Happy Valentine's Day!  
 Shea & Bruce Schaefer  
 Publishers of GT Magazine

# Love Letters

an enchanted

human emotion expressed  
in a language between two hearts!

Excerpts: [www.invaluable.com](http://www.invaluable.com)  
Layout and Design by GT Magazine

Love letters or simple small notes may seem like relics of the past, but they are considered a wonderful form of relic that can be cherished for years to come. Before email, text messages, and Instagram memes, couples in love would communicate through heartfelt handwritten messages. Writing special thoughts for another conveys a deep sense of intimacy. Jewelry and diamonds may catch the eye, but words written from the heart convey ones love in a more intimate way.

## THE HISTORY OF LOVE LETTERS

Love letters have been capturing the minds and hearts of civilization for centuries. The form, medium, and content may have changed, but the purpose remains the same — to communicate a special emotion.

The Song of Solomon, found in the Hebrew Bible and the Old Testament, is the voice of two lovers praising each other. It is a unique example of sexuality in historical, religious writings.

As time went on and language evolved, so too did love letters. Old love letters serve as a glimpse into society, highlighting important values, personal expression, and communication styles.

Love letters as we know them today probably began in the early Renaissance, around the start of the 14th century. The Age of Chivalry produced a series of discrete correspondences based on chaste compliments and courtly love. In the early 18th century, love letters become much more personal, full of tenderness and charm.

Human beings from every time and place have sought to explain the depth of their emotion and their regard for their partner. Below we feature famous love letters from around the globe to explore the universality of love.

## EXAMPLES OF GREAT LOVE LETTERS THROUGH TIME

**1790s – General Napoleon Bonaparte To Joséphine Bonaparte**  
General Napoleon Bonaparte is known for his military prowess and the large empire he built following the French Revolution. When he was just a young officer, he met Joséphine, who was six years older. He wrote her love letters while he was at war, though she rarely answered them. This letter reveals another side to this complicated man.

*A few days ago I thought I loved you; but since I last saw you I feel I love you a thousand times more. All the time I have known you, I adore you more each day; that just shows how wrong was La Bruyère's maxim that love comes all at once. Everything in nature has its own life and different stages of growth. I beg you, let me see some of your faults: be less beautiful, less graceful, less kind, less good...*

### 1920s to 1930s – Zelda Fitzgerald to F. Scott Fitzgerald

The Fitzgeralds wrote a great deal of wonderful letters to one another over the course of their tumultuous relationship. Zelda's eccentric personality and her way with words shine in this letter.

*"Darling – I love these velvet nights. I've never been able to decide whether the night was a bitter enemy or a "grand patron" – or whether I love you most in the eternal classic half-lights where it blends with day or in the full religious fan-fare of mid-night or perhaps in the lux of noon. Anyway, I love you most and you 'phoned me just because you phoned me tonight – I walked on those telephone wires for two hours after holding your love like a parasol to balance me. My dear –"*

### 1964 – Richard Burton to Elizabeth Taylor

Richard Burton fell in love with Elizabeth Taylor the moment he saw her on set of the 1963 epic Cleopatra. Their love affair was both celebrated and vilified, but the passion between the two movie stars could not be denied. The pair became Hollywood royalty.

*My blind eyes are desperately waiting for the sight of you. You don't realise of course, E.B., how fascinatingly beautiful you have always been, and how strangely you have acquired an added and special and dangerous loveliness.*

### 1994 – Johnny Cash's letter to June Carter Cash

This sweet birthday letter doesn't use any floral language or metaphors. There is something deeply endearing about the straightforward nature of this note from Johnny Cash to his beloved wife.

*Happy Birthday Princess,*

*We get old and get use to each other. We think alike. We read each other's minds. We know what the other wants without asking. Sometimes we irritate each other a little bit. Maybe sometimes take each other for granted.*

*But once in awhile, like today, I meditate on it and realize how lucky I am to share my life with the greatest woman I ever met. You still fascinate and inspire me. You influence me for the better. You're the object of my desire, the #1 Earthly reason for my existence. I love you very much.*

*Happy Birthday Princess.*

*John*





# The Greer Children's Theatre

The Greer Children's Theatre is among GCAC's most popular programs. Each year, GCT performs three musicals or plays at either the The Cannon Centre or the Edward R. Driggers City of Greer Center for the Arts. Auditions for most GCT shows are open to children in first grade through High School, though some shows do call for adult roles as well. Audition notices are posted on our Facebook page and anyone is welcome to audition.

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March 6-8 & 13-15, 2026

The Cannon Centre  
204 Cannon Street Greer SC 29651

### ACCESSIBILITY

Sensory Friendly Tool Kits: The theatre can be a bright, loud, and overstimulating experience for many people. Borrow one of our Sensory Friendly Tool Kits to use throughout any performance, then return it to us at the end of the show.

### ACCESSIBILITY INFORMATION

Anyone who requires an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication, or a modification of policies or procedures to participate in a program, service, or activity of the City of Greer, should contact the office of Keith Choate, ADA Coordinator, at 864-848-5386 or TTY at 864-968-7014 as soon as possible but no later than 48 hours before the scheduled event.

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### AUDITIONS

Date: Saturday, April 4, 2026  
(Sign Up for an Audition Slot)

The Center for the Arts  
804 Trade Street, Greer SC 29651

### AGE REQUIREMENT:

- This audition is for ages 8 through Seniors in High School.
- If casted, any High School Seniors that are 18 years old will need to pass a background check.

### WHAT TO BRING:

- Wear shoes and clothes that you can move and dance comfortably in.
- A recent, color headshot. (Directors use this photo to remember you when they're casting the show after seeing a hundred other kids in one day, so make sure to give us a photo that looks like you, not one that's overly filtered or from a weird angle.)

PERFORMANCES  
June 5-7 and 12-14, 2026

The Center for the Arts  
804 Trade Street, Greer SC 29651

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

- If you are asked for a callback, those will be later that afternoon, starting at 5 pm.
- Rehearsals are every Monday, Tuesday, Thursday evening (6-9 pm) and Saturdays 9 am-4 pm, starting April 13. The week (Sunday - Thursday) before opening night will be evening rehearsal every day for Tech Week.
- Because of the tight rehearsal schedule for this show, we will not be able to accommodate any conflicts for vacations. Additionally, if you anticipate having to miss more than 3 rehearsals for any reason, we recommend not auditioning for this show.

864-848-5383 • [arts council@cityofgreer.org](mailto:arts council@cityofgreer.org)  
[www.greer cultural arts.com](http://www.greer cultural arts.com)



## GREER FARMERS MARKET

### Food Programs 2026

**Healthy Kids/POP Club**  
FREE \$5 produce vouchers to the first 50 kids at each market (regardless of income level) + Educational activity/craft.

**SNAP/EBT**  
Come to the Greer Farmers Market Booth to buy scrip for use for eligible items.

**BUCKS** **Healthy Bucks**  
With a \$5 or more SNAP purchase, get an additional \$15 worth of tokens for fruits and vegetables.

**Senior Farmers Market Nutrition Program**  
Senior Vouchers are distributed annually in June by Senior Action to eligible seniors. Can be used at approved farmer booths.

**WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program**  
Women Infants Children. Can be used at approved farmer booths.

 [Greerfarmersmarket.com](http://Greerfarmersmarket.com)

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# The Wonderful World of Lemons: Exploring Four Unique Varieties of Lemons

Source: Cold Creek Nurseries [www.coldcreek.net](http://www.coldcreek.net).

Layout and Design by GT Magazine

While the Harvey lemon is likely the one you're most familiar with, there are three other fascinating varieties that offer unique flavors and characteristics.

## Harvey Lemon: The Grocery Store Staple

The Harvey lemon is your standard, run-of-the-mill lemon, commonly found in grocery stores and used in households around the world. It's the lemon you reach for when you need a burst of citrusy goodness in your cooking, baking, or refreshing drink. While it might not be as flashy as its counterparts, it certainly gets the job done!

## Pink Variegated Lemon: A Stunning Twist

Imagine a lemon tree with green and white leaves, bearing fruit with a surprising pink flesh. That's the pink variegated lemon for you! This spontaneous mutation was discovered in 1930 in California and has since become a favorite for making pink lemonade. Its unique appearance adds a touch of whimsy to any garden or orchard.

## Meyer Lemon: The Baker's Best Friend

If you love baking, you'll fall head over heels for the Meyer lemon. This sweet lemon has a hint of tartness in its flavor profile, making it perfect for adding a zing to your baked goods. Meyer lemons are also prized for their thin skin and juiciness, making them a favorite among home cooks and professional chefs alike.

## Ponderosa Lemon: Big, Bold, and Beautiful

The ponderosa lemon is a true heavyweight in the lemon world. It's a cross between a lemon and a citron, bred specifically to produce larger fruit. If you're looking to make a statement with your lemons, the ponderosa is the way to go. Its size makes it a standout in any fruit bowl or garden.



Harvey Lemon



Pink Lemon



Meyer Lemon



Ponderosa Lemon

# Lemon Chicken Piccata

Source: [www.allrecipes.com](http://www.allrecipes.com) • Layout and Design by GT Magazine

## INGREDIENTS

- 3 large skinless, boneless chicken breast halves - cut into 1/2 inch medallions
- salt and pepper to taste
- 1/2 cup all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons vegetable oil, or as needed
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 cup low sodium chicken broth
- 1/2 lemon, thinly sliced (Optional)
- 1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons capers, drained and rinsed
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons minced Italian (flat-leaf) parsley

## DIRECTIONS

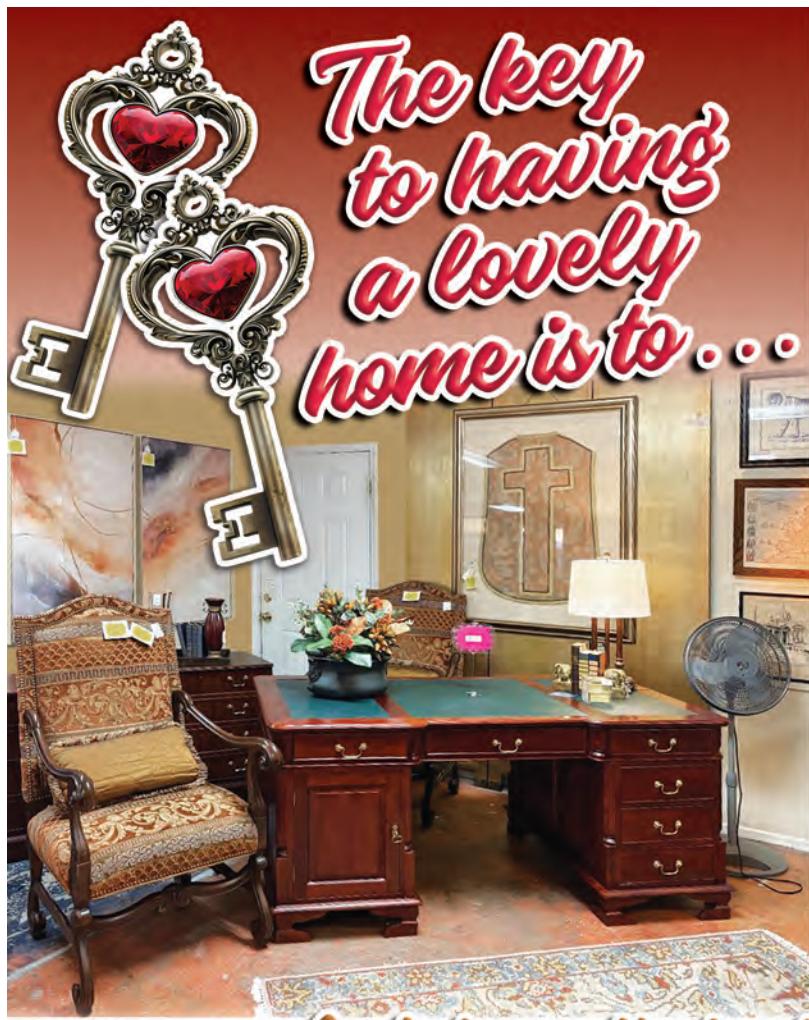
Preheat the oven to 200 degrees F (95 degrees C). Place a serving platter into the oven to warm.

Season chicken breast pieces with salt and pepper and dredge them in flour. Shake off excess flour. Heat vegetable oil in a skillet; pan-fry the chicken pieces until golden brown on both sides, about 3 minutes per side. Work in batches and do not crowd skillet, adding oil as needed. Place chicken pieces onto the warmed platter in the oven. When finished with all of the chicken, drain most of the oil from the skillet, leaving a thin coating on the surface of the pan.

Cook and stir minced garlic in the skillet until fragrant, about 20 seconds. Pour in chicken broth; scrape and stir any brown bits from the bottom of the skillet. Stir in lemon slices and bring the mixture to a boil. Let cook, stirring occasionally, until the sauce reduces to about 2/3 cup, 5 to 8 minutes. Add lemon juice and capers; simmer until sauce is reduced and slightly thickened, about 5 minutes more. Drop butter into the skillet and swirl it into sauce by tilting the skillet until butter is melted and incorporated. Add parsley; remove from heat and set aside.

Arrange chicken medallions on serving plates and spoon sauce over each portion to serve.





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## Greer, South Carolina 150 YEARS Est. 1876

Historic Information by Joada Hiatt and published by Arcadia Publishing  
 Layout and Design by GT Magazine

We're celebrating our sesquicentennial in a way that's uniquely Greer: "A year-long birthday party" that brings together our diverse community, honors our past, and inspires us to create a shared vision for the next 150 years of Greer. We'll have at least one Greer150 event every month in 2026 including a formal ceremony to mark the city's official birthday on March 25 and The Big Bash on March 28.

**BEFORE GREER** – Long before there was a Greer, South Carolina, the Cherokee Indians hunted and early settlers began to farm along the abundant rivers and creeks of the area. When the Indian Boundary Line was drawn in 1761 from the blockhouse in Tryon, North Carolina, south toward Greer, the Spartanburg County side of the line was deeded to the South Carolina Province. The closest blockhouse to Greer was Thompson's Fort, which offered safety and trading. In 1777 the Cherokees made treaties to cede the rest of the land to South Carolina. Today, Line Street commemorates this early history and serves as a county line.

**ESTABLISHMENT** – The site of Greer was called the old Blakely Place, a 200-acre farm owned by James Manning Greer. The Blakely farmhouse was the first known house in the history of Greer and sat behind the Greer Drug Company in the vicinity of Victoria Street. According to tradition, Greer traded a few acres to the railroad in exchange for a wagon and a team of mules. He then sold the rest of his land to W.T. Shumate, who began selling lots when he realized the potential for a town around the train station. A lot in the planned business district sold for anywhere between \$25 and \$75 per acre.

Since the first post office was in the station, the postmark read "Greer's Depot." On March 25, 1876, with 15 votes the town was incorporated as "Greers." William C. Bailey was elected mayor, and the first councilmen were Dr. H.V. Westmoreland, W.A. Hill, David Cannon, and A.J. Morgan. The "s" disappeared some time in the early part of the century. Thus, Greer owed its creation to the Southern Railroad, which was finished in 1873. The first shipment was fertilizer from Greenville.

A second railroad, the Piedmont and Northern, laid tracks through Greer in 1914. With two active train lines, Greer became an attractive site of commerce. Textile mills, such as Victor, Apalache, Franklin, and Greer Mill, were important in the town's development. Agricultural products, especially peaches, were grown and shipped out of state. When the Jones Brothers began to can peaches and tomatoes, the Greer label appeared on grocery shelves across the nation.

**MODERN GROWTH** – In the 1950s, Homelite was one of the early companies to bring a new industry to Greer. A new hospital and high school were built, and Greer began to grow. Just as the railroads brought progress to Greer, the Greenville Spartanburg Airport and I-85 have been important to modern development. BMW brought more jobs for the city and an active program of annexation has doubled its size. Greer prides itself for its friendly, small-town atmosphere and its big-city expectations for growth and progress into the 21st century.

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# How Does Aging Affect Mental Health?



Source: [www.simplepractice.com](http://www.simplepractice.com) • Excerpts taken from article written by Blair Glaser, MA, LCAT • Layout and Design by GT Magazine

After losing her husband, my 71-year-old aunt's world shrunk. Admittedly, she wasn't in stellar physical health, but grief compounded by pre-existing symptoms of depression exacerbated the state of her mental and physical health.

The loss of her husband kicked-off a destructive cycle: each new diagnosis driving her more deeply into despair and isolation. Ultimately, she passed away before her eightieth birthday.

In contrast, a close friend and colleague who I'll call Ann, recently celebrated becoming an octogenarian. A couple of years ago, she lost her husband to a longstanding illness, but she didn't lose her lease on life.

She has a thriving therapy practice, enjoys going to the theater, movies, and art exhibits with her posse of friends. She's also looking for a new partner. Although she uses a hearing aid and is having cataract surgery, she addresses these ailments without dwelling on them—continuing to lead an enriching life.

## Why did aging have such a different effect on each of these women?

We'll review what happens to the mind as we age, what mental health concerns to look out for, and how to get support for issues surrounding aging to make the last chapters of life fulfilling.

## At what age are we considered 'elderly'?

Medically, the terms "geriatric" and "elderly" are used to describe people 65-years-old and above, which I find difficult to accept since my husband and I are at the ages of 52 and 61, respectively, we are late bloomers who, in some ways, feel our lives are just beginning.

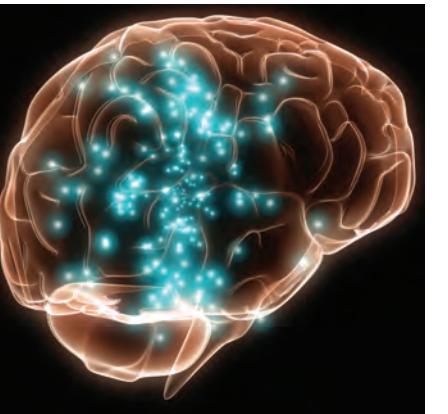
Karl Pillemer, PhD, a professor of human development at Cornell University, told The Atlantic he prefers using the age range "over 75" to describe older adults because, "statistically, that's the age when people become significantly more likely to develop a chronic disease."

The brain begins to shrink in a person's thirties and forties, with the rate of decline accelerating at age 60.

## Getting older affects multiple areas of the brain, including:

- The frontal lobes, which rule our behavior and emotions
- The hippocampus, which governs our memory and learning abilities
- The cortical density (the wrinkled outer layer of our brains) thins, affecting cognition
- The white matter connecting all four lobes of our brains decreases, slowing down our processing
- Chemicals from our aging bodies cause the neurotransmitter systems to break down, causing slower cognitive function

All of this happens in a normal brain, so you can only imagine how quickly it manifests in a brain that is compromised by a disease like Alzheimer's.



## Mental health statistics in elders

Learning about our shrinking brains can bring on feelings of grief and sadness. And, for those experiencing memory loss or dementia effects, these can cause depression.

However, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the percentage of older adults who are clinically depressed is relatively low, ranging from 1-5%, and increasing to 11-13% for adults who require hospitalization or home healthcare.

Psychologist Cecilia Dintino, PsyD, works with middle-aged and older women in her practice. Speaking from her clinical experience with this age group, Dintino corroborates the CDC's report of low depression rates in older people.

"It is a myth that getting old comes with automatic depression or poor mental health," Dintino says. "We have a bias in our culture that says aging brings inevitable decline, diminishment and, of course, depression." However, according to Dintino, older people, like all people in the population, do have depression, anxiety, and grief, and they also have the desire to grow in relationships, self, and in purpose.

## Mental health challenges in elders

The bias Dintino refers to is found in the staggering amount of anti-aging products, supplements, and procedures designed to fend off the inevitable.

Our culture's negative attitudes toward aging are made even more obvious through the abundance of decrepit nursing homes where many elders are left to perish.

Getting older can feel like impending doom rather than growing in wisdom and experience. Bouts of clinically minor depression are normal, as are temporary reactions to a variety of age-related factors, including grief from losing a loved one, depreciating bodily functions and abilities (such as memory and hearing loss), and feelings of purposelessness.

However, when a low-grade depression sets in for two or more years, or erupts into a major depressive episode that impedes normal functioning, it needs professional attention.

Loneliness and isolation in elders can lead to depression, and faster decline. Older adults are also vulnerable to increased anxiety regarding financial stress, fear of one's own or a loved one's impending death, or of their painful deterioration due to limited functionality and sickness. Income levels are also a serious factor in elder vulnerability to anxiety and depression, with stress over affordable medical care being a definitive risk for mental health issues later in life.

## How to age gracefully and increase resilience

When I think of the difference between Ann and my aunt, women of reasonable financial security who had friends and family, it appears the difference in their approaches to aging lies in their resilience.

Resilience is the process and outcome of successfully adapting to difficult or challenging life experiences, especially through mental, emotional, and behavioral flexibility and adjustment to external and internal demands.

My aunt, for a number of reasons, based on her genetics and her life story, did not develop this skill, whereas Ann, through her therapy training and spiritual practice, did. While there's not much we can do

to prevent dementia or the physical ailments of aging, following are ways to increase resilience and stave off mental illness as we age:

## Stay connected

Loneliness is one of the biggest threats to wellbeing for elderly people. If possible, stay connected with family members, reaching out regularly to check in. If you don't have family to keep in contact with, connect with communities that focus on topics that are important to you or activities you love. Through hobbies, religious or spiritual groups, and music or craft making endeavors, you can seek community connection.

## Be aware of the mental health warning signs to look for

- Persistent sad, anxious, or depleted mood
- Loss of interest or pleasure in hobbies and activities
- Feelings of hopelessness and pessimism
- Feelings of guilt, worthlessness, helplessness
- Decreased energy, fatigue, feeling sluggish
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, making decisions
- Difficulty sleeping, early-morning awakening, or oversleeping
- Appetite and/or unintended weight changes
- Thoughts of death or suicide, suicide attempts
- Aches or pains, headaches, cramps, or digestive problems that do not ease, even with treatment
- Restlessness, irritability

Should you recognize these prolonged symptoms in yourself, talk to your doctor and if you can, bring along a spouse, child, or friend. As noted above, elders need community to thrive and face the challenges and losses associated with growing older.

## Get the right help

Depression and anxiety can be treated with therapy and/or medication. However, don't fall for "the biomedicalization of aging," in which people are defined by their declining physique and psychiatric treatment of older people is relegated to a pill.

Sadly, when this happens, there is a missed opportunity. The risk is that the elder individual with ongoing vitality, growth and introspection can get lost. Furthermore, Medicare pays less for psychological treatment than other insurance plans, barring psychologists and psychotherapists from taking on older clients.

## Foster resilience through therapies

Resilience may come to some naturally, however with the right therapeutic intervention, resilience can also be developed. Physical therapy not only reduces joint and muscle pain, but it also does wonders for mental strength, resilience, and self-esteem. Learning a new language, skill, or physical activity can also build strength and resilience.

## "A life well grieved is a life well lived" Richard Nodell

Richard Nodell, a 70-year-old psychotherapist, and leadership consultant, said years ago, "a life well grieved is a life well lived." The more open we can be to experience life's losses, the more available we are to cherish all the beauty life has to offer. If you can allow yourself to face the inevitable losses, both personal and bodily, that come with getting older, this will unburden you to experience the best this stage of your life has to offer.

# Kiwi Lemon Strawberry Tart



A kiwi lemon strawberry tart is a fresh, vibrant dessert that typically features a buttery tart crust, a zesty lemon-infused cream or custard filling, and is topped with an artful arrangement of sliced kiwis and strawberries. The combination of the three flavors; kiwi, strawberry and lemon works well together. Strawberries and kiwis are a classic pairing, as their flavor profiles naturally complement each other.

*A light and refreshing dessert – and the perfect touch for a lovely finish to a Valentine's Day meal.*

## INGREDIENTS

1 pre-made 9-inch pie or tart crust, baked and cooled according to package directions (graham cracker or shortbread crust works well)

8 oz cream cheese, softened to room temperature

1 cup heavy cream

1/2 cup powdered sugar (plus extra for garnish if desired)

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice

1/2 cup granulated sugar

## Fresh fruit:

2-3 kiwis, peeled and thinly sliced

1-2 cups fresh strawberries, hulled and sliced or halved

Optional glaze: 1/4 cup strawberry jam warmed with 1 tablespoon water

## DIRECTIONS

### Prepare the Crust:

Make sure your cooled pre-made crust is ready.

### Make the Cream Filling:

Whip the heavy cream, powdered sugar, and vanilla until soft peaks form. In a separate bowl, mix the softened cream cheese, granulated sugar, and lemon juice until smooth. Gently fold the whipped cream into the cream cheese mixture.

### Assemble the Tart:

Spread the cream filling into the crust and arrange the sliced kiwis and strawberries on top.

### Glaze and Chill:

For a glossy finish, brush the fruit with an optional warm jam glaze. Refrigerate the tart for at least 1 hour before serving to allow the filling to set.

*Happy Valentine's Day!*



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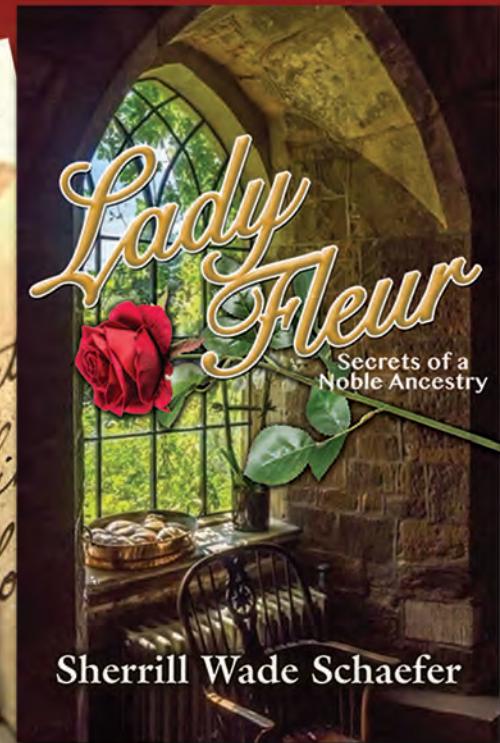
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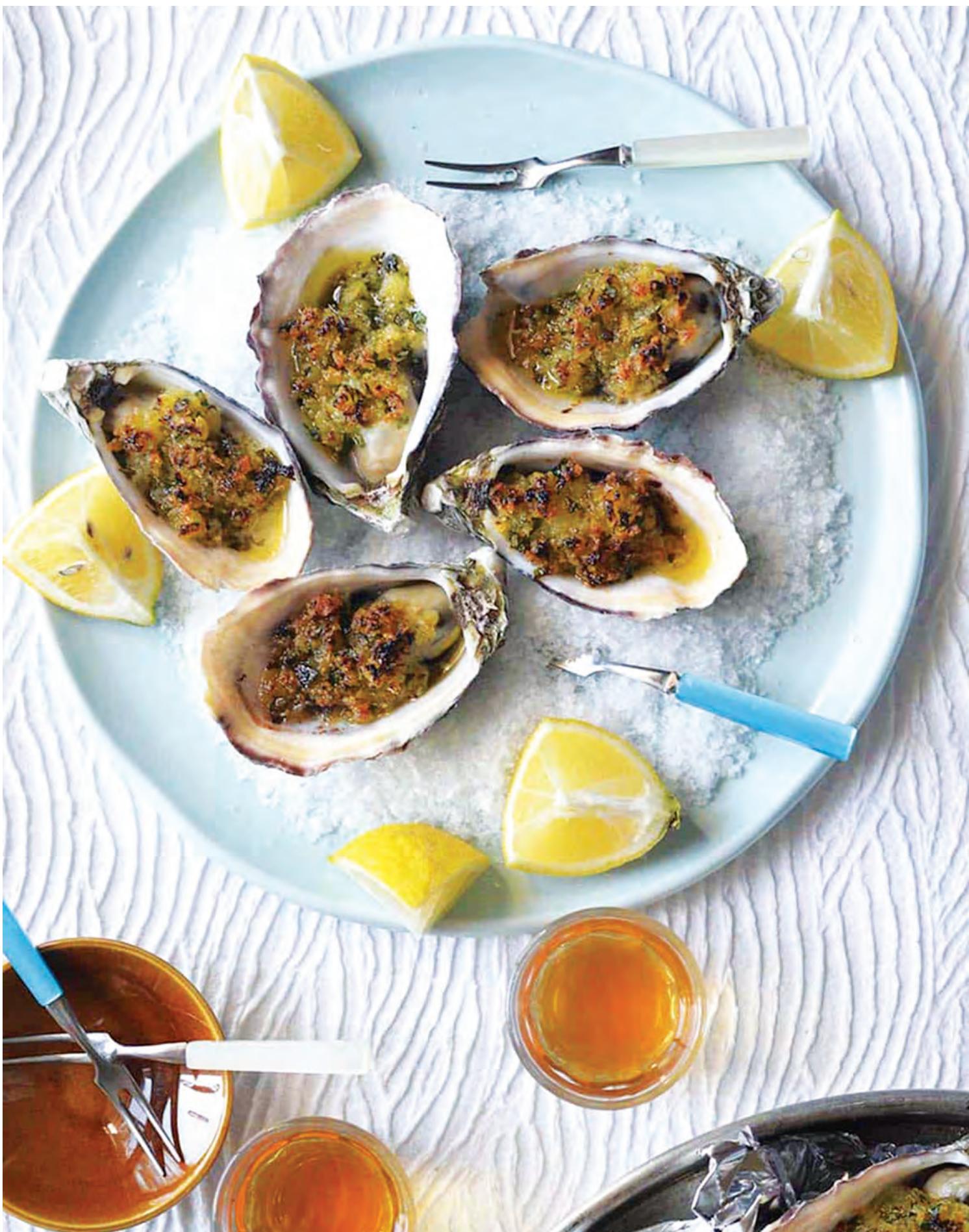
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# Oysters

Excerpts: [www.fishtoyourdoor.com](http://www.fishtoyourdoor.com)  
Photos: [www.oliveandmango.com](http://www.oliveandmango.com)  
Layout and Design by GT Magazine

## Oysters In The Shell With a Buttery Herb Crumb Topping

By Diana Rattray

### Ingredients:

**1 dozen fresh oysters (in the shell)**  
**1 stick butter (8 tablespoons, softened, divided)**

**3/4 cup panko breadcrumbs**  
**2 tablespoons chives (finely chopped)**

**1 tablespoon lemon juice**  
**1 teaspoon lemon zest (finely grated)**

**Optional: sweet paprika**

**Garnish: fresh chopped parsley**  
**2 to 3 wedges lemon (for serving)**

### Directions:

Preheat the oven to 425 F. Add a layer of rock salt to a rimmed baking sheet or substitute dry, uncooked rice. This keeps the oyster shells from wobbling.

Scrub the oyster shells with a stiff brush. Carefully shuck the oysters over a bowl. Run the knife along the bottom of the inside of the shell to loosen the oyster. If some of the oyster liquor does spill out, return it to the bottom shell. Discard the top shells and arrange the oysters with their liquid in the prepared baking pan.

In a skillet over medium heat, melt 4 tablespoons of the butter. Add the panko crumbs and cook, stirring, until the crumbs are lightly browned. Next, in a bowl combine the remaining 4 tablespoons of softened butter with the snipped chives, lemon juice, and the lemon zest. Top each oyster with a scant teaspoon of the butter-and-chives mixture and then sprinkle each one with the buttered panko crumbs. If desired, finish with a light sprinkling of paprika.

Bake the oysters in the preheated oven for about 8 to 10 minutes or until the oysters are cooked through and the topping is golden brown. Sprinkle with fresh chopped parsley and serve with lemon wedges.

Oysters are one of those foods that have become woven into our cultural and culinary lives. Even though its rough earthy appearance is not very desirable to look at, this seafood deserves a higher status for its health benefits and delectable flavor whether eaten raw or cooked.

Oysters are often referred to as '[the food of love](#)', and have a reputation for being able to put the passion back into your love life! How true this is seems to be a matter of debate. What is known for sure is that they contain high levels of zinc, which is an essential nutrient for the healthy production of testosterone in men.

According to research, oysters also contain amino acids and serotonin, which are important to the effective functioning of the pleasure response in the brain. The hormone also helps to stabilise your mood, and produce an overall feeling of wellbeing and happiness.

### WHAT OTHER HEALTH BENEFITS DO OYSTERS HAVE?

Besides zinc, oysters are packed with iron, calcium, copper, selenium, and vitamin A and B12. Copper and zinc are noted for helping to maintain our eyesight and general eye health as we age. Vitamin B12 contributes to healthy cognitive functioning, and may even ward off dementia. It also promotes a strong immune system. They are also rich in protein, low in fat, and contain high levels of iron, which is essential to produce red blood cells.

### HOW ARE OYSTERS EATEN?

Oysters vary in flavor depending on their origin, so if you are after a particular taste and texture, check with your fish market. To check that they are fresh, make sure that your oysters have tightly closed shells with no gaps. Always store them in the fridge, placed on the rounded side.

Oysters can be eaten raw, by opening the shell (a process known as 'shucking') and eating the contents, preferably with a little butter and salt and a squeeze of lemon juice. They can be cooked in a variety of ways, most commonly poaching or grilling. This is a less daunting way if you are slightly suspicious about consuming raw seafood.

There are a wide variety of sauces and dressings that make perfect accompaniments to oysters. Creamy or buttery sauces topped with breadcrumbs are often served, as are spicy oriental toppings, containing ginger, garlic, and herbs.

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Hagood Mill is an operational water-powered gristmill that was built in 1845 by James Hagood. Other mills existed on the site as far back as the 1790's. The Hagood Mill was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1972. The old mill produces stone ground grits, corn meal, flour and specialty items available for purchase.

Beginning July 1, 2019, Hagood Mills, a non-profit 501c3 board (Hagood Mill Foundation) began day-to-day operations. Featuring a historic gristmill, restored log cabins, blacksmith shop, cotton gin,

moonshine still, nature trails, and a gift shop featuring local crafters, musicians and authors. Located on the same grounds is the Hagood Creek Petroglyph.

The Hagood Mill will be in operation and folks can come purchase their grits fresh off the grinding stone. Not only will the grist be operating, you will enjoy the living history demonstrators and artisan craft vendors. The Hagood Creek Petroglyph site will also be open. Want to stay awhile? Check out our website for camping details.

Bring lawn chairs or a blanket for seating in front of the courtyard stage which features a wide range of entertainment throughout the year. Coolers are allowed and food vendors are available for your convenience at each event. Well-behaved pets are welcome but must be on a leash please.



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Hagood Mill Historic Site is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, recognized for its historical significance as one of the oldest surviving gristmills in South Carolina.