

# Food is our fuel – making sure we kiss the cook is important

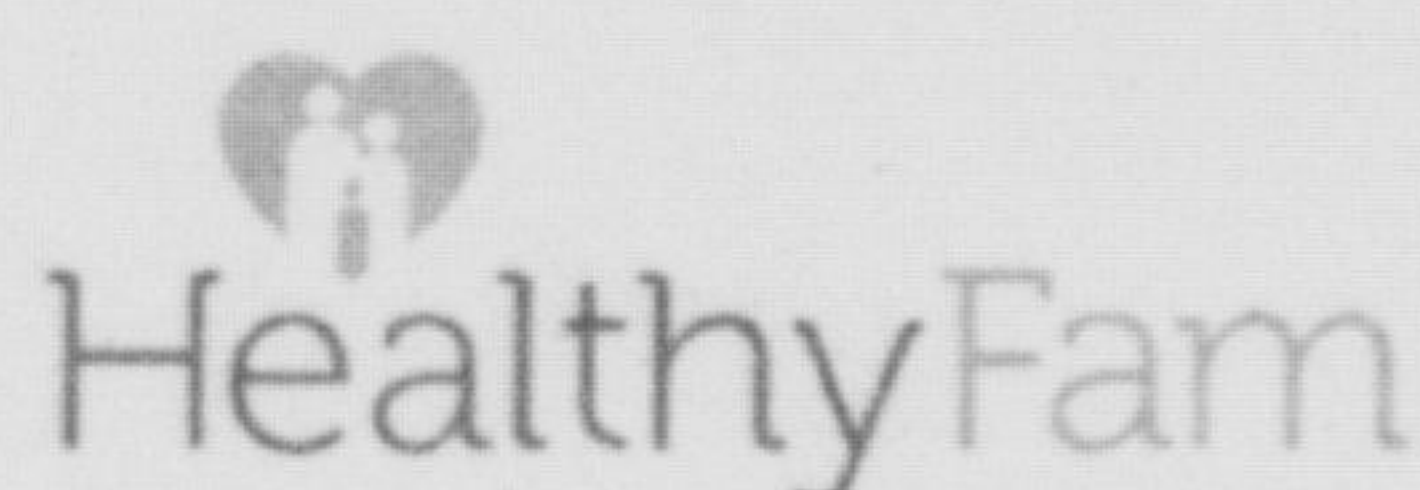
By Julia Hanna

The other day I caught myself thinking about family and in particular my Nonna. I was thinking about her and all of the great contributions she made toward the family.

One of the strongest memories I have of her is in the kitchen lovingly preparing a delicious meal for her family to enjoy. I started to think about all the meals she had made over her "cooking career." I came to realize that she must have made an astronomical amount of meals. I decided to pull out my calculator and do the math.

If my grandmother had made an average of two meals a day over the 25 years she spent in the kitchen cooking for the family, it would come to a grand total of 18,250 meals. Think about that — more than 18,000 meals prepared by one woman in the course of her lifetime. This came to me as a very surprising number, but I realized that this feat has been accomplished by many other women. Many of these women cooked for us so they could feed and nurture us without any thought of being compensated. I'm quite certain that we didn't thank my Nonna 18,250 times.

Understanding what I know now about the challenges of preparing a meal for your fam-



ily day after day, I wish that we had thanked her every time.

Today the act of preparing a meal can be done in a fraction of the time with convenient foods and pre-packaged products. Other factors like drive-thru restaurants and microwaveable meals have made many of us used to getting a meal very quickly.

I realize that we can't turn back the hands of time, nor would we want to, but we should never forget the importance and pleasure of a home-cooked meal. When someone takes the time to prepare something for you to eat, whether it's a simple sandwich or the most exquisite holiday dinner, don't forget to thank them. The best thing one can do for the cook in our lives is acknowledge them. After all, food is our fuel. Never forget to kiss the cook! This is one of my favourite fall recipes. It's always a hit, especially with children. You can use the roasted vegetables as a side dish, and use what's left over for the hummus. To simplify this recipe you can use store-bought hummus that doesn't contain additional ad-



ditives. This is proof positive that healthy and delicious can go hand in hand.

## Roasted Root Vegetable Hummus

- 1 small sweet potato, peeled and coarsely chopped
- 1 medium parsnip, peeled and coarsely chopped
- 1 medium carrot, peeled and coarsely chopped
- 1 small onion, cut into small wedges
- 3 cloves of garlic, peeled
- 1 tablespoon of olive oil
- salt and black pepper
- 1-16oz can of garbanzo beans (chick peas), rinsed and drained
- 1/4 cup tahini (sesame seed paste) or 1/4 cup peanut butter
- 1/4 cup lemon juice

• 1/4 cup olive oil

• 1 teaspoon ground cumin

Preheat the oven to 425° F. Place sweet potato, parsnip, carrot, onion, and garlic in a baking pan. Drizzle with 1 tablespoon of olive oil and sprinkle with salt and black pepper. Roast for 25 minutes or until tender and lightly brown. Let cool.

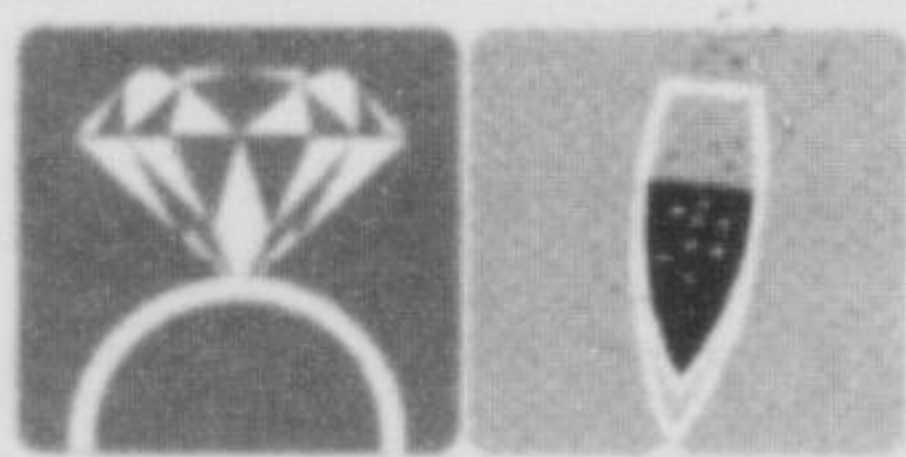
In a food processor, combine roasted vegetables, chick peas, tahini, lemon juice, cumin and 1/3 cup olive oil. Cover and process until smooth, scrapping the sides of the bowl as necessary. Add additional olive oil if needed to make a smooth paste and up to 6 tablespoons of water to thin to desired consistency.

Spoon the hummus into a serving dish. Cover with plastic wrap and let chill for at least two hours and up to three days.

Let it stand at room temperature for 30 minutes prior to serving. Serve with toasted pita, tortillas, bread sticks or crudites (carrots, broccoli, or cauliflower).

Halton chef and restaurateur Julia Hanna is the founder of the Healthyfam, a non-profit organization that teaches people the value of eating right, staying fit and connecting with each other on a regular basis to build a strong family foundation. Her column runs monthly.

may we propose



a toast to

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## The Winning Engagement Story: David & Lindsay Barker

Our story is one of passion, determination and teamwork. We've endured a rollercoaster ride of ups and downs to arrive at this point, as many couples do. We've been together for many years and life has thrown us our fair share of stormy weather, but together we have braved through it all.

We were engaged in a fairy tale setting, a snowy forest path, while out on a one-horse sleigh ride March 2010. My then fiancée, Lindsay, had no idea it was coming though I had been dropping slight hints for nearly 6 months. I had tried some sneaky tactics to discover her ring size and what type of a ring she would fancy. It was a difficult task, being that she isn't overly materialistic, and had no prior notion of what she wanted in a ring. I had asked her back in September if she'd like a sleigh ride in the wintertime. We both are avid horseback riders and it seemed like an obvious activity to try (but little did she know I was already planning to pop the question then).

Come the fateful weekend in March, she had completely forgotten any of my questions from earlier. I booked the sleigh ride up north in Grey County at Whinny Acres and also booked a B&B in Fergus for afterwards. It was a warm day and I was worried there wouldn't be any snow to sleigh on. As luck would have it, we had enough for a shorter run. When we arrived, Lindsay went off to learn how to use the radio that would be on board in case we were separated from our outrider (one of the owner's rides ahead of the sleigh to guide us). Meanwhile, she believed

I was just chatting with the outrider to learn how to drive the sleigh (which was only partly true). I would be driving it myself, but I also took the time to explain my plan of attack and he told me he would signal for us to stop, then pretend he had to go "water a tree." While he vanished, I would take the chance to bend a knee and ask her "the question." So, all was well for the first bit, though it was drizzling and a bit cool. When he signaled to stop, the clouds broke and the sun appeared. He went off and I started to spout a bunch of mushy stuff but she still had no idea what was happening until I removed my glove, reached into my pocket and drew out a small box. Inside contained a ring and I asked her to marry me. Between the tears and looks of surprise, she said yes. The moment couldn't have been more perfect. The outrider came back, snapped a few photos and we carried on our journey. It couldn't have been more perfect with the horse at a good pace, the owner's dogs joyfully loping alongside the sleigh and my future wife clinging to my arm as I learned how to make the retired racehorse, buddy, go even faster through the trails. We ended back at the parking lot and were offered heartfelt congratulations and hot chocolates. After our one horse open sleigh adventure, we returned to the Guelph area for supper and carried onto a beautiful B&B in Fergus. It was a fantastic weekend.

We were married Oct. 6 2012 just north of Newmarket, surrounded by forest, family and friends. We are still looking for new adventures and with each day, our love for each other grows stronger.