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COSTCO Connection®

THE MAGAZINE FOR COSTCO MEMBERS

Backyard parties

Costco's got your summertime get-togethers covered 28

JULY 2023



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Relax in recliners
Mud room makeovers

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space will help keep your
home neat and tidy.

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SKIP

ASSISTANT
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NOTE

The not-so-lazy days of summer

Happy Canada Day, everyone! The holiday reminds us to take pride in who we are. From coast to coast, we celebrate all of the things that make Canada and Canadians extraordinary. I am proud to live in this progressive, diverse and multicultural country.

A great way to celebrate everything that makes us Canadian is to throw—or attend—the ultimate backyard party, as our cover story suggests. Warm and sunny days make me think of my family's summer outdoor pleasures: jumping off the dock, hosting cookouts and toasting marshmallows on an open fire. This issue offers great recipes using fresh summer ingredients, such as garlic, tomatoes or calamari. Alternatively, maybe a salad for your favourite meat lover will grace your picnic table.

Is a summertime reno on your to-do list? If so, have a look at For Your Home, this issue's Special Section. For starters, check out the article on setting up a mud room. Now is the perfect time to pack away your cold-weather gear and reorganize this much-used space. Do you need to create a workspace for two? This issue can help you tackle that too. And my husband's favourite piece of furniture—the recliner—is also featured this month. The best reclining furniture relaxes both your mind and body with features offering comfort and ease. Who among us doesn't need to relax just a little bit more?

As we raise the flag and enjoy a warm evening of fireworks, let's all be grateful that we share this beautiful and welcoming country with each other. ■

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Sue Pudrycki is Assistant Vice President of Marketing.

Coming next issue
Costco members show off their unique collections.

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TREAT YOURSELF

International Self-Care Day

While for some, self-care may mean taking a luxurious bath or getting a facial, it goes far beyond that. Self-care is quite literally taking care of your whole self—physically, mentally and emotionally. Use International Self-Care Day (July 24) as a healthy reminder that you are worth it.

Spending time doing things you enjoy or that make you feel uplifted, especially when you feel stressed, is important for your health, according to the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH). Self-care can add meaning to your life by supporting things like your energy and sleep quality, while also helping you avoid depression, burnout or even disease.

And as an article on Canada.ca states, you need to care for yourself to be able to care for others. Use these tips from CAMH as a starting point:

- Eat well.
- Move your body.
- Meditate.
- Pay attention to yourself.
- Slow down.
- Talk to people.

FEEL IT FIRST

Sample swatches available

Before buying furniture or flooring at Costco.ca, get a feel for the fabric or material and see how it looks in your home. Contact information for sample swatches can be found in the “Product Details” section of many online items.



LEFT: © AOPSAN; RIGHT: KVLADIMIRY / STOCK.ADOBE.COM



KITCHEN CREATIVITY

Harvest your own colours

If you've ever stained a shirt, you know that fruits and vegetables can dye clothing. To intentionally create natural dyes from the season's offerings, you'll need water, fruits or vegetables, and a fixative. Often called a mordant, fixative options include salt, vinegar, baking soda or alum. Do an internet search to find the best match, and ratio, for the plants you are working with. From there on, be sure to wash your newly dyed items separately. Get creative!

If you see these two numbers at the end of a price in a Costco warehouse, it signifies that the item has been marked down. You'll know it's a deal.



KEN BROMAN



Laurent Bui in Hawaii.

TRAVELLING FAN

Love Costco, will travel

Costco member Laurent Bui has a history with Costco. The Montreal resident's first date with his future wife was at a warehouse in Montreal. He's visited Costco locations in Hawaii, Florida, Texas, California and outside of Paris, along with many in Canada. "Wherever I go in the world, I know I can find a good hot dog and soda for \$1.50," he says.

FAR LEFT: © KAPINON / STOCKADOBECOM; LEFT: MARIANNE CHÉHADE

SENSIBLE CELEBRATIONS

New alcohol guidelines

Planning to quench your thirst with a beer or cocktail? Pace yourself. According to new guidelines from the Canadian Centre on Substance Use and Addiction (ccsa.ca), more than six drinks a week leads to high health risks, including cancer—especially for women.



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MANGO MADNESS

Chutney Chicken Breasts

- | | |
|---|---|
| 4 (230 g/8 oz each) chicken breasts | ½ small shallot (15 mL/1 Tbsp), finely minced |
| Salt and pepper, to taste | 2 dates, finely chopped |
| 125 mL (½ cup) maple syrup | 1 mL (¼ tsp) fresh ginger root, grated |
| 30 mL (2 Tbsp) apple cider vinegar | 1 small garlic clove, finely minced |
| 500 mL (2 cups) fresh mango, finely chopped | 0.5 mL (⅛ tsp) crushed red pepper flakes |

Preheat oven to 180 C (350 F). Spray-coat a baking pan with cooking spray. Season the chicken breasts with salt and pepper; place on the prepared baking pan. Bake for approximately 30 minutes, or until the internal temperature registers 74 C (165 F).

Pour the maple syrup and cider vinegar into a medium-size pot; bring to a boil over high heat, then reduce the heat to simmer. Add all remaining ingredients. Simmer 20 to 30 minutes, until slightly thickened, allowing the mixture to soften and the flavours to blend. Remove from heat; cool for a few minutes.

Plate the chicken. Serve the mango chutney on top of the chicken. Makes 4 servings.

Note: Try the chutney on top of baked fish or lean red meat, or dollop into plain yogurt. Store unused chutney, refrigerated, in a sealed container; use within 2 to 3 weeks.

Recipe courtesy of Vicki Shanta Retelny (victoriashantaretelny.com)



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PERFECTION *in a pinch!*

GRILLED PEACH FLATBREAD

SERVES
2

2 Peaches, pitted and sliced
8–10 slices thinly sliced prosciutto,
cut into strips
30 mL (2 Tbsp) balsamic glaze
60 mL (4 Tbsp) spreadable goat cheese
2 handfuls of fresh basil
30 mL (2 Tbsp) olive oil
2 flatbreads
Salt to taste

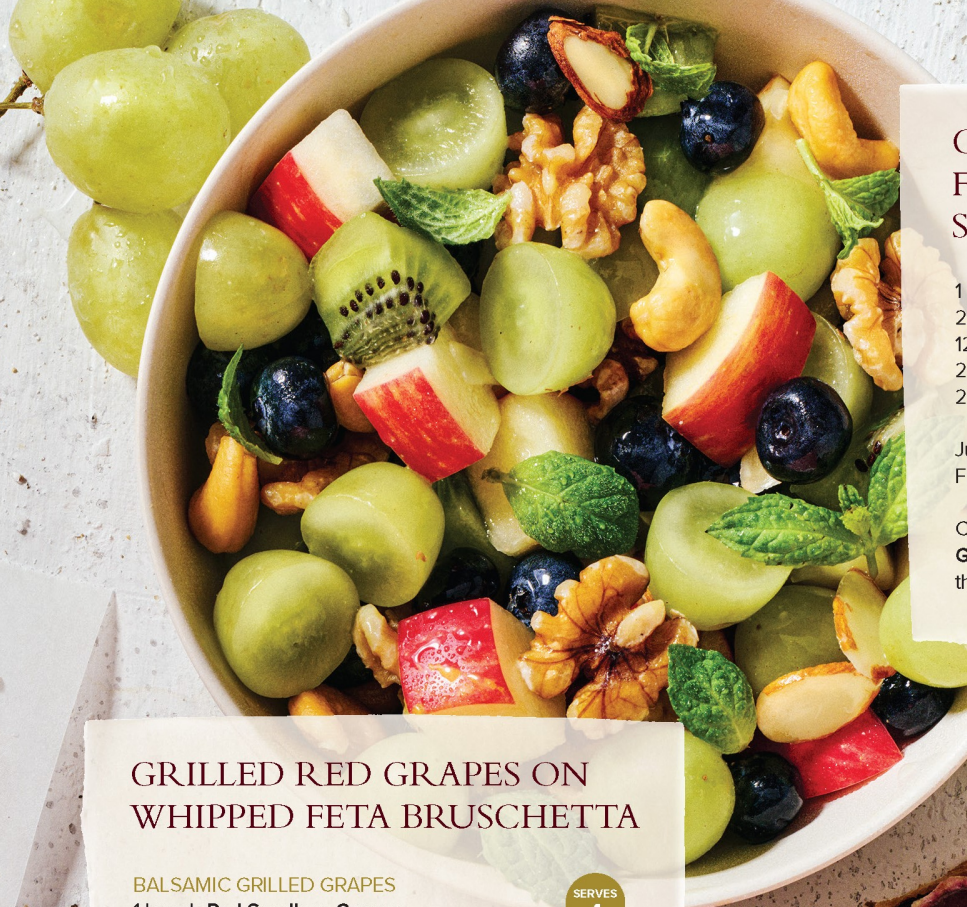
Preheat the grill to medium heat and oil the grate.

Place **Peach** slices on the grate and flip after about 3 minutes when grill marks are forming. Cook for another 3 minutes and transfer to a plate.

Lightly brush flatbread with oil and place on grates for 2 minutes. Spread goat cheese onto one side of the flatbread. Layer basil, prosciutto, and **Peach** slices on the flatbread, adding salt to taste.

Drizzle with balsamic glaze.





GREEN GRAPES FRUIT & NUT SALAD

SERVES
2

1 apple, diced
250 mL (1 cup) **Green Grapes**, halved
125 mL (½ cup) blueberries
2 kiwis, peeled and diced
250 mL (1 cup) mixed nuts (walnuts,
cashews, almonds etc.)
Juice of 1 lime
Fresh mint leaves

Combine all the fruits, including the **Green Grapes** and nuts in a large bowl. Squeeze in the lime juice, add fresh mint and serve cold.



GRILLED RED GRAPES ON WHIPPED FETA BRUSCHETTA

BALSAMIC GRILLED GRAPES

1 bunch **Red Seedless Grapes**
30 mL (2 Tbsp) olive oil
30 mL (2 Tbsp) balsamic vinaigrette

SERVES
4

WHIPPED FETA SPREAD

250 mL (1 cup) feta cheese
90 mL (6 Tbsp) extra virgin olive oil
2 mL (½ tsp) black pepper
Zest of 1 small orange

1 Kirkland Signature baguette,
sliced into thin slices and toasted
Additional orange zest

Rinse and pat dry one bunch of **Red Seedless Grapes**.
Toss grapes in a bowl with olive oil and balsamic
vinaigrette. Marinate for an hour, turning every so
often to coat every grape.

Preheat grill to medium heat. Place marinated grapes
on grill for about 3 minutes or until bursting open.
Remove from grill and let cool.

Prepare the Whipped Feta Spread: In a food
processor, process feta cheese, olive oil, pepper and
orange zest until smooth. Set aside.

Toast the slices of baguettes. Using a knife, spread the
whipped feta onto the bread and top with a few grilled
grapes (removed from the stem). Add a little bit of
orange zest and serve.

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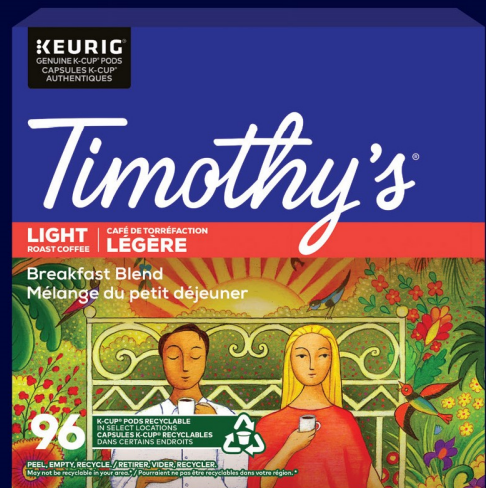


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"The function of leadership is to produce more leaders, not more followers."

—Ralph Nader, U.S. activist and consumer advocate

FOR YOUR BUSINESS

by BRUCE DEJONG

Management by wandering around—or MBWA—is beneficial to businesses and to the workforce, as impromptu conversations can lead to problem-solving and improved relationships with employees. But if you're ready to take your leadership to the next level, where you can elevate your workers' productivity and their workplace satisfaction, consider the power of regularly scheduled one-on-one professional development meetings.

Whether you're a new or experienced manager, the following guidelines can help you conduct robust one-on-one sessions that will make a difference in your work environment.

Be positive, be present

Your energy waxes and wanes throughout the day, so give your employee the best you have to offer. Schedule your one-on-ones when you're most likely to have plenty of energy, and bring your enthusiasm and positivity. More importantly, bring yourself. Turn off your cellphone, close your laptop and let others know you're unavailable. Start by connecting on a personal level before asking what's on the employee's mind as a transition to business issues.

Guide more than instruct

This is a tough one. You're a manager—it's your job to manage. But unless a situation is urgent or too consequential, encourage your employee to do their own problem-solving. Ask questions like: What else could you do? Have you faced a similar situation? What did you do?

Be a better listener

For those who would rather talk than listen (which, let's be honest, is most of us), listening is a skill and therefore requires effort and

practice. Here are some helpful tips to get you started:

- Intend to be amazed, as intention is everything.
- Ask clarifying questions rather than make assumptions of the other person.

• Pause before responding to give yourself time to digest what you heard.

• Offer only solicited advice, as unsolicited advice is seldom welcome or followed.—BD



Raise the bar

How managers can elevate their workers to new heights

What worked, and what didn't? Try to lead them to answers. If you need more ideas, ask: What would you do if you knew you wouldn't fail?

Develop a continuum

One-on-ones are a great way for you and your employee to step outside everyday demands and gain perspective. Carry that perspective forward by asking for a summation of the challenges, victories and lessons learned since you last met. Create an emotionally safe space where your employee can authentically share their work experiences and grow.

Over time, you can build their confidence by highlighting their sound decisions and their expanding skills, knowledge and abilities. As you do so, be sure to manage your own impulse to interrupt, explain or defend against any negative comments.

Regularly scheduled one-on-ones will boost productivity and positivity in the workplace. Give it a try! ■

HERESA GONCE



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by LANA SANICHAR

A topic that keeps coming across my desk is the changing face of retirement income in Canada.

What types of income should the average Canadian plan to receive in 2023 and beyond? I reached out to Julie Petrera, a senior strategist at Edward Jones Canada. This is what she told me.

The sources of retirement income are shifting. They used to rely on the “three-legged stool” to fund retirement: a government-sponsored pension plan, an employer-sponsored plan and the person’s own savings. However, retirement funding is becoming more of a responsibility for the individual as the number of employer-sponsored plans is on the decline.

A study by Age Wave, a thought leader on aging, and Edward Jones found that 55% of Canadians plan to work in retirement, some for their entire life. This means some people will continue to earn employment income. This could affect eligibility for income-tested government plans like Old Age Security (OAS), which will start to be recaptured when total income reaches \$86,912. A Canada Pension Plan, on the other hand, won’t be clawed back but will go into the income test for OAS. As Canadians keep working in retirement, they may begin collecting this later, increasing the monthly benefit, thereby reducing OAS.

After age 71, one’s Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP) matures, and you must either withdraw the funds, roll them into a Registered Retirement Income Fund (RRIF), purchase an annuity or use some combination of the three. Withdrawals from RRSPs and RRIFs and annuity payments are



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taxable and are included in the income test. High interest rates, ongoing market volatility and longevity have made annuities more attractive than RRIFs. Annuities can offer income for a guaranteed period or for life, inflation protection and liquidity.

Canadians could also receive passive income, including rental income, or withdrawals from non-registered plans or tax-free savings accounts. While neither of the latter two is included in the income test, both can be important sources of retirement funding, especially in the absence of an employer-sponsored plan.

Petrera notes that every retiree is unique and will need personal advice on how to determine what types of income to expect and how to optimize that income from a tax perspective. Speak to a financial professional to help you optimize your retirement income strategy. ■

Please do your own due diligence when making any financial decisions. This column is for general informational purposes only and may not apply to all provinces. It is meant to get the reader thinking about their finances; it is not meant to be used in lieu of advice from a professional.

Future proofing

How to stay financially solvent after retirement

COURTESY OF LANA SANICHAR



Lana Sanichar is president and editor-in-chief of *Canadian Money-Saver* magazine.

Through an exclusive arrangement, *Canadian Money-Saver's* experts partner with the *Costco Connection* to share advice about relevant financial topics.

Email topic suggestions to moneyinfo@canadianmoneysaver.ca.

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A look at annuities

According to [Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca), the Government of Canada’s website, the overall price of an annuity can vary among providers.

The website advises, “Before buying an annuity, ask for the list of fees and commissions. Make sure you understand the contract restrictions, including penalties and administrative

fees. Once you know what kind of annuity you are interested in buying, compare similar products from several providers.”—LS

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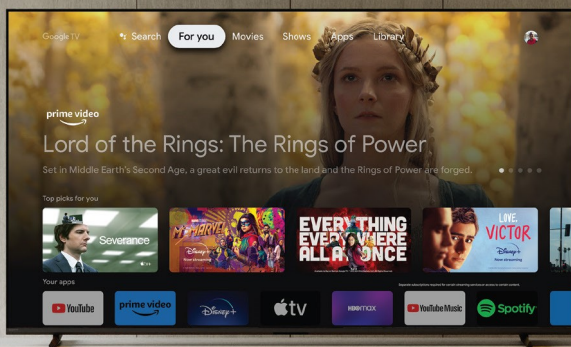
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According to tech firm Percepto, the first attempt at a self-propelled drone as an aerial target was completed in 1916.

TECH CONNECTION



by MARC SALTZMAN

Need some adrenaline in your life? Drones are surprisingly fast and responsive, and most have advanced cameras that allow you to capture stunning aerial footage you can watch later on a TV or computer. Some drones work with special glasses that let you see what the camera sees, in real time. You control the drone's flight via a dedicated radio controller on the ground, or, depending on the model, you can also use a smartphone app.

Drones are not only fun, but they're being embraced by several industries for commercial applications, such as real estate (to see the entire property), movies (for bird's-eye footage), search and rescue (to find lost people) and even delivering items to shoppers (though this service is still in the early stages).

Here are a few things to consider if you're thinking of buying a drone.

For visuals

If you'll use a drone primarily to shoot video or snap pics, make sure it has a good on-board camera (or at least allows you to mount one, such as a GoPro). Look for a wide-angle 4K camera. Some drones house a three-axis mechanical gimbal for more stable video recording, and an auto-tracking feature that can lock onto a still or moving target. The larger the camera sensor, the better (at least 2.5 centimetres; 1 inch), and an RYYB (red, yellow, yellow, blue) filter array is also key. Both can help capture clear images in low light.

Eye in the sky

Points to ponder before buying your first drone

Practical considerations

Battery life (flight time) is important, as you don't want the thrill to be over too soon. Some drones can last 40 minutes between charges, but be sure to keep a spare battery with you, to keep the fun going. Other features to look for include advanced obstacle avoidance, far video transmission and the ability to land automatically or return to its flier if it senses it's going out of range, if the battery is about to die or if it's about to enter a no-fly zone (such as near an airport).

If you're thinking of buying a drone for someone special, note that flyers need to be at least 14 years of age and must register first with Transport Canada Civil Aviation. Additional certifications may be required for commercial use. Have fun flying the friendly skies. ■

SEVAG SAGHERIAN



Marc Saltzman

is a tech journalist and host of the *Tech It Out* podcast. He answers selected questions in this column and regrets that all questions can't be answered individually.

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COSTCO CONNECTION

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Remote control

How you want to control your drone boils down to personal preference. Each option has its advantages, and some models offer support for

both controllers and apps.

A dedicated remote controller (which may be sold separately) offers more precision for flying and lets you keep your eyes locked on your drone.

A smartphone or tablet is ideal for tapping waypoints, drawing a flight pattern with your fingertip and seeing what the drone camera sees. Some apps let you perform tricks with onscreen (virtual) buttons.—MS

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Beach bingo

Picking any of these sandy surf and snorkel spots is a win-win

by PETER GREENBERG



HANDE BAYAR

Peter Greenberg is the multiple–Emmy Award–winning travel editor for CBS News and host of *The Travel Detective* on public television (petergreenberg.com).

Like many of you, I’ve always been drawn to the beach. There are so many great spots all over the world. Here are a few of my favourites.

Hawaii

Hapuna Beach. This beautiful 800-metre stretch of white sand on the Big Island is ideal for swimming and boogie boarding and a popular jumping-off spot for diving or snorkelling, especially with a squadron of manta rays that live off the coast here. If you visit in the early months of the year, you may catch sight of migrating humpback whales.

In search of the ultimate sugar rush? Check out the Manuela Malasada food truck for *malasadas* (filled Portuguese-style doughnuts).

The Islands of Tahiti

Matira Beach. Bora Bora’s largest public beach offers crystal-clear water, plentiful soft sand, palm trees for shade, safe swimming and good snorkelling. Thanks to its unspoiled views and the

colours of the sky shimmering on the water, catching a sunset on Matira Beach is a must. There are several small cafés nearby, including The Lucky House Fare Manuia. Grab a chair on the terrace and order a Tahitienne, a wood-fired pizza with ham, pineapple, olives and oregano.

Turks and Caicos Islands

Grace Bay Beach. At just under 5 kilometres in length, with soft white sand and calm turquoise water, Grace Bay Beach in Providenciales is big enough to avoid ever feeling crowded. A barrier reef 1.6 kilometres offshore protects the bay from Atlantic Ocean swells, making it a great spot for swimming. The beach is also a departure point for scuba diving and snorkelling trips. The Bight Reef, also known as Coral Gardens, is easily accessible at the western end of Grace Bay and starts right off the beach, extending out about 120 metres. A real bonus: You’re likely to encounter pods of bottlenose dolphins playing in the bay.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: © KYO46/BLUEORANGE STUDIO; SPIRITOFAMERICA / STOCK.ADOBE.COM



Clockwise from left: Hapuna Beach, Hawaii; snorkeling in Bora Bora, Tahiti; Mexico's Playa Ruinas.



Costa Rica

Playa Grande. Not far from the more famous Playa Tamarindo, this beach is less crowded and a good spot for surfers (of any skill level) in Guanacaste province. The beach faces due west, making for glorious sunsets over the water. There are nearby surf shops where you can sign up for a lesson or if you just need a board. If you're a beginner, stick to the white water, which is most prominent during high tide.

Whether you've been surfing or just relaxing on the sand, refuel at Taco Star, located only a few steps away from the beach, which serves both ground beef and vegetarian tacos (or a mix of both), as well as quick bites like PB&J sandwiches, banana bread, fruit juices, kombucha and, of course, cerveza.

Mexico

Playa Ruinas. For a unique setting, head to Playa Ruinas in the town of Tulum on the Riviera Maya. Perched on a cliff overlooking the beach, the backdrop for this wide white-sand beach with vivid blue water is dramatic ruins of the last great city constructed and inhabited by the Mayan people. El Castillo, the castle, built in the glory days of the Mayan civilization, attracts thousands of visitors. My advice: Hit the beach in the early morning. The waters are still as glass, great for swimming and seldom crowded. ■

COSTCO CONNECTION

Costco Travel offers vacation packages, as well as cruises, car rentals and hotel-only options, for destinations in Canada, the United States and around the world. To learn more, visit CostcoTravel.ca or call 1-855-863-0357.

Maui beachside

If you are travelling with children, Napili Beach, shaped like a crescent on Maui's northwest coast, offers waters calmer than many of the other beaches on

the island, coral reefs accessible from the beach and a sizable sea turtle population. If you go by car, get there early: Parking is limited. And if you plan to spend the day, pack snacks, as dining options are few.

Even if just lounging on the beach is your thing, be sure to keep an eye out in the early months of the year for migrating humpback whales.—PG



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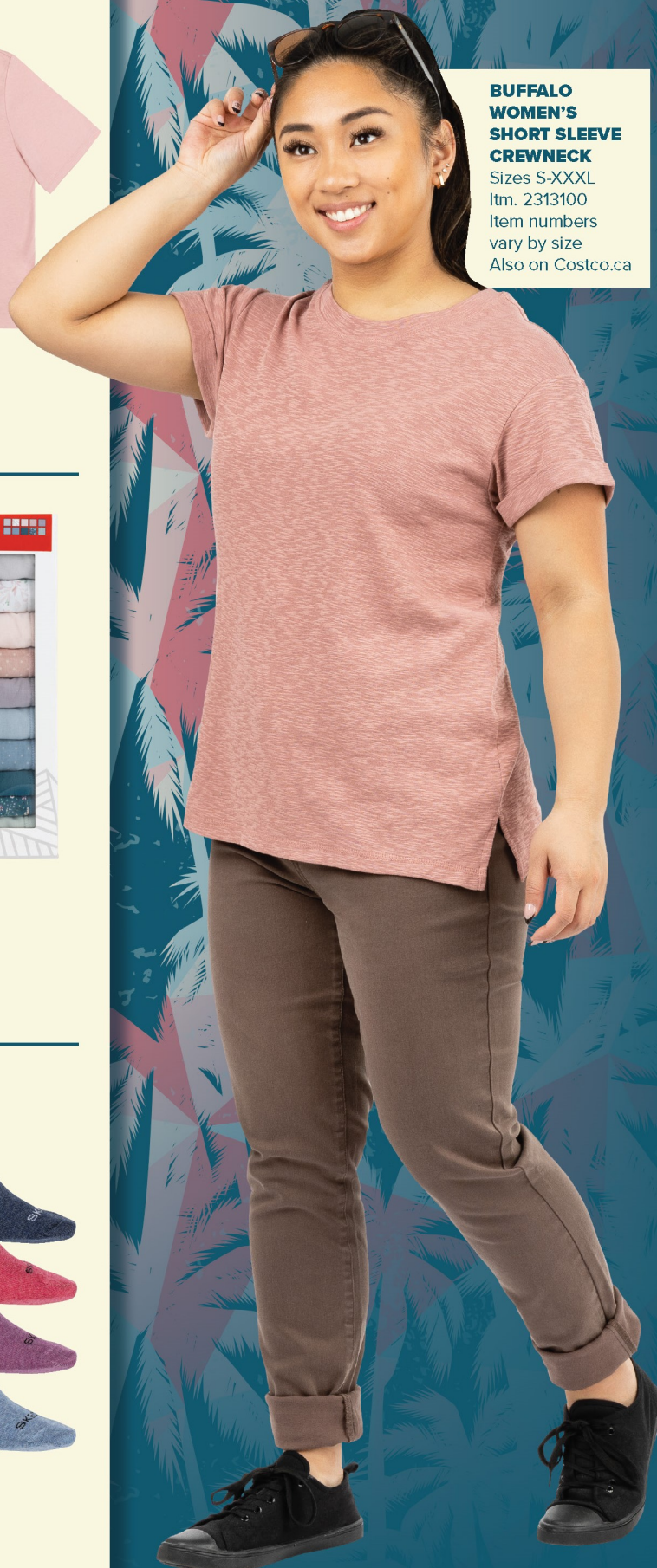
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Also on Costco.ca



Summer soirée

Get ready to celebrate! Whether it's at a backyard barbecue, graduation celebration or swishy cocktail party under the stars, people are so ready to mingle. Feeling a little rusty as a host? Relax. These tips will help you turn out your best summertime party ever.

Stories by **LAURA LANGSTON, SARAH MADEWELL,
CHRISTINE PERSAUD and KIRA VERMOND**

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30





here's just something about an outdoor party. From the food to the activities and more, there's nothing like enjoying beautiful summer weather with family and friends. No matter how big or small the gathering, here are some pointers for a successful event.

Start planning

"Backyard parties are such a lovely way to bring everybody together, reestablish our friendships and communities—and celebrate togetherness," says Costco member Amanda Douglas, an event planner in Winnipeg.

But don't think that easy-breezy get-together will be a cinch to pull off at the last moment. At the heart of any fabulous party is a well-constructed plan.

"Give yourself a month to chip away at all the major things on your list: décor, backyard prep, and food and drink prep," says Douglas, who recommends filling the pantry well in advance.

Pick a theme. Themes take a party from so-so to sensational. They don't have to be complicated, either; in fact, simple is better. Try a Hawaiian luau and crack out the tiki lanterns. Host a beer-tasting party and sample some local brews. Dreaming of an Italian garden party theme? Grab a gingham tablecloth and twinkling bistro lights, and you're good to go.

Have ample seating. Ever been to a backyard party without enough seating? Not fun. Give your guests comfortable places where they can sit and eat, rather than perching at the edge of a tippy lawn chair. Outdoor plastic or folding chairs are

COSTCO CONNECTION

Nearly everything you need to host an outdoor party—including food, lighting, patio furniture, electronics and more—is available in Costco warehouses and at [Costco.ca](https://www.costco.ca).



easy to stack and store when not in use. The same goes for folding tables. Or you can rent them.

"We have a couple of [large] tables we use all the time. I even invested in [tall tables] this year because of the cocktail parties we've thrown at home," says Costco member Renee Patrone Rhinehart, founder and CEO of Party Host Helpers, a party staffing company in Philadelphia.

Make it comfortable. For afternoon parties, have buckets of sunscreen and cold water on hand. Kids can even make folded paper fans for guests at a craft table. If the yard is in full sun, install umbrellas or shade sails.

Evening get-togethers require plenty of bug spray or a handful of cordless mosquito repellents dotting the property. They last for hours. And don't forget baskets of blankets for chilly nights.

Set the mood. Lighting can be as simple or as extravagant as you want. Bistro and twinkle lights are easy to find and



Clockwise from top:
Bring people together at your outdoor party with a well-planned menu, music and dancing and barbecue.



hang—perfect for a late-night dinner party—while tea lights are inexpensive and pretty.

Have backup supplies. If there's one mistake hosts make, it's not being prepared for surprises, says Douglas. Buy extra napkins and compostable plates and cutlery just in case you run out. Have backups for your backups.

And ice. Plenty of ice. "Three bags minimum," Douglas says with conviction. "You don't want anyone to have to go out on an ice run. As a host, you want to be engaged and having fun too."—*Kira Vermond*

Let's eat

When it comes to menu planning, the occasion or theme may suggest a menu: pizza and cake for a young person's birthday party or sparkling wine and fancy finger food at a bridal shower.

Or consider destination-specific foods: hummus and pita paired with souvlaki and salad for a Greek meal; queso, chips

and salsa with prawn tacos for a fiesta; or kalua pork, macaroni salad and grilled pineapple for a luau.

Jordan Hansen, owner and creator of the blog *Jordan's Easy Entertaining* (jordanseasyentertaining.com), suggests planning a menu around a signature dish or what's popular with guests, especially if there are dietary restrictions. Still stumped? "In that case, choose a main dish first," Hansen says, "and pick side dishes to complement it."

Barbecuing is a natural choice for a summer party. If you go that route, Hansen says, the more you can prepare ahead, the better. "It saves time, and not everything needs to be homemade," she says, adding that she often buys Costco side dishes and desserts to serve at a barbecue. Her tip: Shop with a checklist for mains, sides, drinks and desserts, so nothing is missed.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 32

Food safety

Warmer temperatures can cause food-borne germs to flourish. Guidelines from Health Canada include:

- Keep meat, poultry and seafood refrigerated until you're ready to grill.
- Keep raw meat, seafood and poultry away from ready-to-eat foods.
- Throw out marinades and sauces that have touched raw meat juices.
- Use clean utensils and a clean plate to remove cooked meat from the grill.
- Keep hot foods at 60 C (140 F) or warmer (use slow cookers or chafing dishes) and cold foods at 4 C (40 F) or below (place dishes in bowls of ice so they stay chilled).

- Refrigerate leftovers within two hours to minimize the chance of bacteria growing.

And to keep pesky bugs away from food, Jordan Hansen relies on pop-up food tents with mesh sides. Or try a pot or two of lavender or mint on your dinner table; they're natural mosquito repellents.—LL

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: © MB, GORODENKOFF; RAWPIXEL.COM / STOCK.ADOBE.COM



With barbecues, you'll be cooking while your guests are there, so timing is important. First, barbecue things that require more time, like ribs or potatoes in foil, and set them aside. Next, grill steaks or burgers and let them rest a few minutes while you quickly grill fish or veggies last.

Don't rule out the ever-popular potluck. In that case, give guests guidelines or assign dishes. Hansen says most people are relieved to have the guesswork removed. "You can ask someone to bring a side salad or fruit tray," she says. "It gives them room to be creative, but it takes away their stress and yours too because you won't end up serving repeat dishes."

Keep beverages simple. Ask guests to bring their own and provide mixers and bottled water, or mix up a single-batch drink like sangria or pink lemonade and serve it in a big pitcher with lots of ice.

Regardless of what you serve, remember to relax and have fun. —*Laura Langston*

Sound and vision

Summer and backyard parties go together like PB&J. Make yours memorable with delicious food, flowing drinks and, of course, exciting entertainment.

Outdoor speakers set the mood, from loud and lively party tunes to quiet back-

ground jazz. Bluetooth speakers are a simple solution, particularly rugged, waterproof ones, especially if you have a pool. Ideally, use multiple portable Bluetooth speakers that wirelessly link to one another (called daisy chaining). More speakers, after all, equal more enveloping sound. Because you'll be outdoors and might not want to disturb the neighbours with loud, bass-heavy tunes, a pair of 60-watt speakers should be sufficient for background music. (Don't forget to charge them!) An indoor speaker on a shaded, covered deck that's promptly brought inside after the event will suffice in a pinch.

If you prefer wired gear, a pair of large party speakers positioned left and right can pump tunes; one might do for a small backyard. Make sure to use a long, outdoor-rated extension cord and safely secure it.

Music playlist pro tip: When you send invitations, ask guests to contribute five to 10 songs and add them to a streaming playlist. Leading up to the party, whenever you think of a good tune or hear a great song on the radio, add it, too.

Liven up the event further with karaoke. YouTube is a good source of free content with scrolling lyrics (search the



Clockwise from left: Entertain guests with a variety of activities, such as ladder ball, axe throw or an outdoor movie.



song title “+ karaoke”) so guests can let loose, channelling their inner Mariah and Elvis. Add a wireless mic and a tablet (or outdoor TV) and, with reliable Wi-Fi, everyone can belt out hits. Some party speakers even have a mic input and built-in karaoke features, complete with strobe lighting.

To top off the evening, mount a white sheet to the side of the house, deck or fence and, when the sun sets, use a portable projector and speaker for a movie night under the stars. Some smart portable projectors have streaming service access built in, or plug in a streaming stick or a USB flash drive with a movie. Add chairs and popcorn and enjoy.—*Christine Persaud*

Backyard games

Outdoor activities are in full swing when families throw backyard barbecues, parties and other fun gatherings under the sun—or starry skies. Playing games in the backyard can be a blast, but with thousands of outdoor games out there, planning these activities can be challenging.

Think about the ages of your guests to help narrow your choices. Create your game plan with these ideas:

Families with kids. Young children have tons of energy to spend. These classics will keep everyone moving:

- Playing catch with a sticky mitt set or baseball mitts
- Kickball, soccer, dodge ball
- Red light, green light
- Capture the flag, freeze tag
- Water balloon toss
- Super-sized classics like tic-tac-toe

Teens and adults. Games like these can engage active, competitive, critical-thinking teenagers and adults:

- Egg toss
- Ladder ball
- Dizzy bat race
- Egg-spoon race
- Pass the bucket
- Friendly water fight
- Sports games like flag football
- Badminton
- Cornhole toss
- Board or card games

Come one, come all

Backyard get-togethers with all ages can be a smorgasbord of fun activities. Pick a few games for each age group. For additional ideas, do a quick internet search for backyard games for children, teens or adults.—*Sarah Madewell*

Tips for success

Know who is coming. Are your guests small children or co-workers? The answer will direct what kind of games to play and what games may not be appropriate.

Plan ahead. Stick to a budget and have game supplies on hand.

Delegate. Avoid getting overwhelmed. Reach out to others and ask for help.

Listen to your guests. If they don't seem to be interested in an activity, move on to the next game.

Be prepared for bad weather. Consider a backup plan if the party needs to move inside.

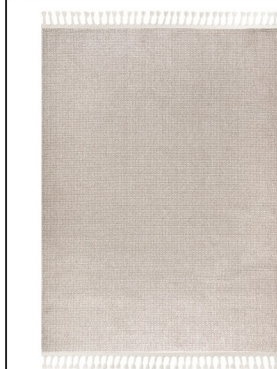
Have fun. The planning is done, the party is underway and you have helpers. Relax and let the games begin.—*SM*

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: COURTESY OF EAST POINT SPORTS; SHAIITH / STOCK.ADOBE.COM



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Mud rooms

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Transformer Table

COURTESY OF TRANSFORMER TABLE

A place for everything

When it comes to your home, space can make a world of difference. With proper planning, you can maximize what you have to work with. The right products can help, too.

In this month's For Your Home Special Section, learn about Transformer Table, a company that defies spatial limitations with its modular furniture. If you've got room to relax, read up on recliner options, ways to get the most out of your shared home office and how to set up an organized mud room. Finally, our buyers' picks feature items that are sure to enhance your space.

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46 Recliners

49 Buyers' picks



Recliners



Stretch the limits

Transformer Table takes efficiency to another level

by DAN JONES



Costco members Zaur and Dzera Pkhalagov ran into a big small problem: The married couple loved hosting friends and family, but were limited by the space in their condominium for large furniture.

With a background in mining and engineering, Dzera's brother—Soslan Tsoutsiev—went to work to find a solution.

Without any experience making tables or marketing products, Zaur, Tsoutsiev and five other friends combined their various backgrounds in defence, video production and graphic design—along with plenty of research and trial and error—to form Transformer Table in 2016.

The result is a concept that developed into one of Canada's most successful start-ups after taking off on social media.

"We never let go of the dream," says Artëm Kuzmichev, one of the friends and now Transformer Table's chief technology officer and director of marketing.

Driven by innovation

Based in Montreal, Transformer Table makes modular tables and benches for small spaces. Their dining table can stretch from 46 centimetres (18 inches) to as long as almost 3 metres (10 feet), turning a compact console into a banquet table.

"The furniture industry needs more innovation," says Richard Mabley, Transformer Table vice president of business development and another one of the friends, along with Alexandre Doré, Cedric Deltandre and Holland Wabie. "There are more and more condos and smaller homes now. People are wanting to really maximize their space and they want high-quality furniture that will accommodate them for a long time."

Space saver

Expandable tables with drop-in leaves have been around for decades, but Transformer Table crafted a heavy-duty telescopic mechanism that allows anyone



Left: Dining tables can stretch to almost 3 metres (10 feet). **Below:** Transformer Table furniture can contract when space is tight.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF TRANSFORMER TABLE

Tables with all five panels can seat 12 people, with four additional size options in between, and can hold up to 340 kilograms (750 pounds). Each bench stretches to 3.3 metres (11 feet), with enough space for six adults to sit down.

“We wanted a table that was perfect for any moment, no matter how big or small your space or family is,” Mabley says.

Quick growth

Transformer Table ballooned from 400 customers in its first year to 70,000 currently, with business around the globe, its own manufacturing facility in Vietnam and 500 employees worldwide. The company’s annual revenues increased from \$360,000 in 2017 to \$75 million in 2022.

The company has also prioritized sustainability as it has grown: Each piece is constructed with responsibly sourced, high-quality solid wood and MDF. It also plants 10 trees for every item sold.

“We’ve challenged the boundaries of furniture,” says Saskia Rose, Transformer Table head of communications. “We’re really trying to revolutionize the status quo.” ■

to smoothly change their table or bench, depending on how small or big they’d like it to be, with no assembly required. Expansion panels stack easily and neatly inside an internal storage box when not in use.

“The mechanism is based on a wooden version from Japan made about 100 years ago,” Mabley explains. “We expanded on it. Ours has tiny ball bearings inside. It makes our tables super user-friendly and super resistant. Anybody can expand them. And it’ll be the only table you’ll ever need.”

COMPANY INFO

Name

Transformer Table

CEO and president

Soslan Tsoutsiev

Employees

Over 500 worldwide

Headquarters

Montreal

Items carried at Costco

Dining table set with one table and one bench. Item 1572246. Warehouses/Costco.ca. Same set in black, light acacia, walnut coloured or white. Various item numbers. Costco.ca only.

Quote about Costco

“Our shared commitment to excellence in regard to quality and consumer experience has made our [business] partnership a resounding success.”

—Saskia Rose, head of communications

Building a buzz

Transformer Table was an instant sensation on social media, with an early Facebook video showing the product quickly reaching

4.5 million views. On Instagram, one post recorded 131 million views, and the company has generated 300 million views combined across social media platforms. Television publicity,

including an appearance on *Dragons’ Den* in 2018, also helped it take off, and its Kickstarter campaign in 2019 raised more than \$4 million on a goal of \$50,000.—DJ

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Lounge Sectional



Item. 1646072

Transform your living room into a cozy retreat with this lounge sectional. This modular sectional comes with two throw pillows, feather and fibre filling in cushions and loose seat and back cushions upholstered in a chic light grey fabric. Create the perfect space for relaxation and rejuvenation.

True Innovation Fabric Accent Chair

This fabric accent chair from True Innovation will add style to your space — crafted with premium materials and attention to detail. The beige fabric and nail-head trim on the front arms add sophistication, while the pocket coils and sinuous springs ensure optimal comfort. Perfect for any living space or office.



Itm. 1570096



Itm. 1646069

Palliser Power Leather Recliner

Indulge in luxury with this recliner featuring top-grain leather on all touch surfaces and footrest. The protected leather repels liquid and is stain-resistant. The wall-hugger mechanism allows for recline within 4 inches of the wall, and the discreet inside touch button control provides easy operation.



Itm. 1646066

Loxley Rowe – Ari Accent Console

Add a touch of elegance to your living space with this Ari accent console. Featuring a stormy grey finish and two sets of handles — brushed gold and brushed nickel. With two soft-close door cabinets and tempered glass panels, it also comes with adjustable interior shelves for maximum storage versatility.

Elmwood 7-pc. Dining Set



Itm. 1653307

Elevate your dining experience with this Elmwood 7-piece dining set. Crafted from solid wood with Mindi wood veneer and a multi-step hand applied finish. The table comes with a self-storing butterfly leaf extension for easy expansion. Perfect for hosting family and friends.

Transformer Table 3.0 with bench



Itm. 1572246

This birch grey dining set is a space-saving solution. This innovative table can comfortably seat up to 12 people when fully extended and then collapse to a console size for storage. Crafted from solid wood and MDF, this table and bench showcase unique wood grains, resulting in one-of-a-kind pieces with natural colour variations.



Neat and tidy

Adding a mud room can help keep your family organized

by MERLISA LAWRENCE CORBETT



ILLUSTRATION: © DARIUSTIGUOVA; NANYASEW; LEFT: SAMIAM2007 / STOCK.ADOBE.COM



COSTCO CONNECTION

Costco warehouses and Costco.ca carry benches and other organizational items and decorative items throughout the year.

Rain, snow, fall leaves and everyday debris can get dragged into your home. If you've dreamed of having a dedicated place to store muddy or wet footwear, outerwear and sports gear, the good news is that if you have an entrance, you can have a mud room.

First, consider the needs of those in the household, says Tamara Liebmann, a Montreal-based member of Professional Organizers in Canada. Count everybody, including pets.

Then, ask yourself: What things do you all need when you walk out of your home? What items, such as mail, work boots, keys, purse, backpack, caps, etc., do you bring home daily? Also, what gets tracked in, like mud, gravel, leaves or dirt?

Liebmann recommends setting up an "insta mud room" near the entrance you use most, which may not be the front door. Sometimes a side door or garage entrance makes a better spot for a mud room.

Go vertical

Once you've designated an area, install hooks, shelves or knobs on a wall. "Vertical is your best option if you have limited space," Liebmann says.

Her favourite "insta mud room" hack is a shelf with coat hooks attached, which is ideal for keys, sunglasses, ID badges, purses and knapsacks. "These are super helpful," she notes, "because then you're increasing the amount of space you have without using valuable floor space."

Chairs, benches and bins

"A bench will always be a bonus if you have the space, as it will be easier to put on and take off your shoes," says Isabelle Lamy, a professional organizer and declutterer based in London, England.

Select a bench with storage underneath—open, or with drawers or shelves—or an upholstered flip-top bench or cube storage. If you live in a location that gets plenty of rain, sleet and snow, Liebmann recommends a boot tray as well; get one that can fit by the door, beneath a bench or in a small closet.

Bins can be used individually or with cube storage shelves and are a great way to conceal clutter. Use them to organize winter gloves, hats and scarves. In spring and summer, use them for outdoor toys, flip-flops, bug spray and sunblock.

Finishing touches

Add a mirror to the wall over the bench or shelves to make the space look larger and as a place to check your face on the way out. A tall vase makes a great place to park umbrellas.

Lamy adds, "We are usually more inclined [to keep] everything neat and tidy if the space is beautifully designed and the décor stylish." ■

Merlisa Lawrence Corbett is a freelance writer based in central Florida.



Workspace for two

Tips to successfully share home office space with a partner

by ROSIE WOLF WILLIAMS



COSTCO CONNECTION

You'll find a selection of office furniture, laptop and desktop computers, wireless printers and scanners, noise-cancelling earbuds and a host of other supplies for your home office in Costco warehouses and at Costco.ca.

The last few years have changed the way we do business, and many brick-and-mortar businesses are making the change to fully remote or hybrid working. In fact, in a recent study by tech communications company Owl Labs, 83% of survey participants who work from home said their productivity is the same as or higher than when they were working in the office.

If you are in this situation (or headed there), one partner in your home may already have an established office space, while the other does not, or both partners may find themselves working from home for all or part of their employment. In both scenarios, couples will have to make adjustments.

Make a game plan

"Sharing a home office with a loved one can be challenging and rewarding," says Ellie Borden, a registered psychotherapist, clinical director and clinical supervisor of Mind by Design in Oakville, Ontario. "To create a game plan, it is necessary first to identify each

person's needs and work style. One person might need a quieter workplace, while another might need more natural light. Once you know what these needs are, you can plan how to set up the space and equipment to make it a comfortable place to work for both parties. Establishing guidelines and goals with your partner is imperative to ensure a smooth workflow. These guidelines include setting noise levels, scheduling meetings and calls, and respecting each other's work hours."

Professional organizer Phaedra Studt, owner of Practical Possibilities in Chicago, agrees. "I work from home when I'm not working with my clients in their homes," she says. "Pre-pandemic, my husband worked primarily in the office." She says that when he began working from home, she was initially frustrated because she went from having a quiet place to work, to having her work situation disrupted by countless phone calls that her husband would take. "I could sometimes relocate to another place [in] the home, but my desk had my second monitor and my scanner," she adds.



FROM LEFT: NADYA USTUZHANTSEVA, DRUMCHEG; EMBASY / STOCK.ADOBE.COM

The couple came up with solutions. Studt began using noise-cancelling headphones with some music to help her focus. She also let her husband know the days that she would need the office and asked him to relocate for the day. She notes, “I started putting these days on the calendar so he [knew about them] before they came up.”

Practical matters

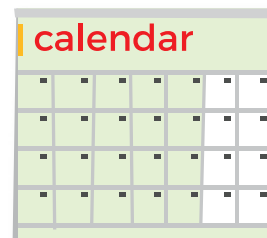
Studt suggests that a shared home office should have designated individual spaces. “Each person needs to maintain the organization of their own space when it comes to paper management,” she says. “Everyone has different styles for [organizing] their space and accessing their supplies. You will be able to

keep the peace if you allow your partner to maintain their space however they deem fit—even if it’s less tidy than you would care for.”

Each partner needs an inbox for incoming household paperwork, according to Studt. She feels that, ideally, each person should have their own desk. If separate workspaces aren’t an option, she says, a surface that can hold a computer with some space to take handwritten notes will suffice. If this is the case, using laptops instead of desktop computers makes it easy for one person to relocate temporarily. Set up communal equipment, such as wireless printers and scanners, outside the office area, where either person can access them without disturbing the other.

Borden says that communication is critical when sharing a home office with a loved one. “Effective communication lets both sides say what they need, what worries them and what they like. This can make the workplace happier and more productive,” she explains. “When discussing office layouts and noise levels, it’s essential to do so with empathy and respect. Begin by expressing your concerns and preferences and acknowledging each other’s needs. You could say, ‘I understand that you need a quiet environment to concentrate, but I also need natural light to work comfortably.’ This demonstrates your willingness to compromise and find a solution for both of you.” ■

Rosie Wolf Williams is a freelance writer based in Bennington, Vermont.



Keeping the peace

Maintaining a peaceful and productive work environment can be difficult when two people share a home office but work different shifts. Registered psychotherapist Ellie Borden offers some tips to consider:

Use a shared calendar.

A shared calendar can assist you in staying on top of each other’s schedules and avoiding conflicts.

Create a communication system. Determine how you will communicate with one another, especially if one of you is sleeping or working.

Make a separate workspace for each person. This can aid in reducing distractions and interruptions.

Schedule breaks together. Even if you work different shifts, you should take breaks together. This can assist you in remaining connected and reducing feelings of isolation.—RWW

Set boundaries

Don’t rely on assumptions or social norms to dictate your home office culture. Spell it out ahead of time: Are your

papers off-limits to your partner—no matter how messy your desk may get?

How do you manage interruptions, or interrupt in a courteous manner? One

home worker puts on a headband with ears to warn her partner not to interrupt. Another hangs a “Do Not Disturb” sign on the door. Mutual respect is key.—RWW

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Sit back and relax

How to pick the perfect recliner for your needs

by MALI ANDERSON

COSTCO CONNECTION

A variety of reclining chairs can be found in Costco warehouses and at Costco.ca.

They call it kicking back for a reason. Stretching out and putting your feet up in a recliner is ideal for unwinding after work, cuddling with little kids or relaxing while you stream your favourite shows. If you want a piece of furniture that can make your home or apartment even cozier, there is likely a recliner out there that can match the type of comfort and functionality you crave.

“There are so many styles now,” says Costco member Sarah Boardman-Miller, principal interior designer and owner of SB Design and Showroom LLC. Whether you live in an urban condo, where space is at a premium, or in a sprawling home, here are tips to find the right recliner for your needs.

Measure your space

While it is fun to begin searching for recliners in stores or online, be sure to get out the measuring tape before making a purchase. After all, recliners recline, meaning you will need enough space for the chair

to be an asset to your living room whether it is upright or not.

“Depending on the angle and size, you will need more space behind and in front of the closed chair. Most recliners that really recline need anywhere from 30.5 to 61 centimetres [12 to 24 inches] [of space] in front and back,” Boardman-Miller explains. But because recliners cancel the need for an ottoman, they can take up less space than a traditional chair with a footrest, depending on the rest of the furniture in the room.

Explore features

Because recliners come in such a wide range, focus on what features are important to you. For instance, parents of young children often gravitate toward gliders to lull their children to sleep, while individuals with a physical occupation may opt for heat and massage features to ease muscle aches and reduce stress.

According to Costco member Hope Nichols, owner and principal designer of



Left: Top Grain Leather Power Recliner (Item 1695399), available only on Costco.ca.

Above: Top Grain Leather Power Home Theatre Recliner (Item 1717554), available at select warehouses and on Costco.ca.

Hope Nichols Interiors, because there are “a ton of options for recliners on the market today, I really like to narrow down what the purpose of the piece will be. For example, will it go in the home theatre, become a cozy alternative to the desktop for someone working from home, is it meant for a reading nook or does the client need it as a health support? In any of these cases, I like to look for options that meet my client’s needs, like a built-in USB port or cupholder.”

If you are interested in a pair of recliners for an entertainment area, you may want to look into swivel recliners that will allow you to engage in a conversation happening on the couch and then swivel back to watch TV.

Chairs aren’t the only things that recline. Reclining sectionals and sofas are a great way to keep larger groups comfortable.

Consider materials

Once you have an idea of how much space you will allot for your recliner and which features you are prioritizing, think about colours and fabrics. The materials you prefer will depend on the style of the rest of your home. Leather looks luxurious, while fabric recliners provide a soft look. And don’t forget stain-resistant choices (see “Do you have pets?”), which, paired with proper care, can help a chair look like new.

“Whether in a neutral tone or a coordinating colour ... the right fabric will always make a space feel pulled together,” says Nichols. “To me, a recliner is like a favourite pair of jeans, and I want my clients to love what they choose.” ■

Costco member Mali Anderson is a freelance writer based in Chicago.

Try it on for size

Just like standard sofas and armchairs, recliners are available in different sizes. Here are a few sizing tips to keep in mind when you try different models:

- Before reclining, your knees should be at a 90-degree angle, with your feet touching the floor.
- While you are seated, your arms should rest comfortably, from elbow to hand, on the armrest.
- When you lean back, the middle area of the chair should support your lower back and your heels should be supported by the footrest.
- Your head should rest comfortably as well. If you feel any strain in your neck, try another model.—MA

Do you have pets?

Many animal lovers share furniture with their furry companions. If this is true for you, remember the possibility of pet wear and

tear when choosing a recliner.

For some, patterned fabrics make shedding and small marks less noticeable. Tightly woven fabrics can be a good choice, as they may withstand some pet damage.

And while “leather is always a great choice for harder wearing, know that if you have pets, leather will show the wear from claws,” notes designer Sarah Boardman-Miller.—MA



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Buyers' picks

Product selections from
Costco's Furniture buying team



Hanh Nguyen

Anthony Singh

Manuela Gravel



Leather Power Recliner

This casual contemporary recliner is a great fit for modern homes. The top-grain leather is soft, luxurious and easy to clean and maintain. The power-motion seat has a power headrest that allows you to select the optimal position for your comfort. It also features a metal switch with USB and USB-C ports to charge your electronic devices. Item 1645997. Warehouses/Costco.ca.

—Hanh Nguyen



Marina Del Rey Mid-Century Queen Bed

Constructed with a sturdy wood frame and walnut veneers, this bed features a split veneer pattern on the panel headboard and tapered cylindrical legs that are a signature look of mid-century design. Heavy-duty deck boards support a mattress without the need for a box spring, showing off even more of the striking headboard. Mattress not included. Item 1635560. Select warehouses/Costco.ca.—Anthony Singh



Thomasville 3-Piece Sectional

This cream-coloured collection includes a two-piece sectional covered in soft fabric composed of durable fibres and paired with two accent pillows. A no-sag spring system offers excellent support. Designed with function in mind, the cushioned top of the accompanying ottoman lifts with ease to reveal a generous storage compartment. Solid wood legs and an exposed walnut wood base complete the frame. Item 1646047. Warehouses/Costco.ca.

—Manuela Gravel



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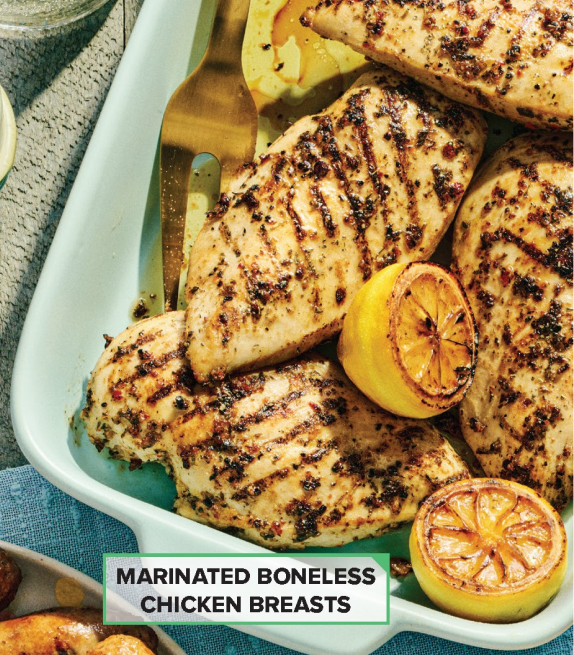


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Squid sensation

Learn how to make calamari both a menu appetizer and an entree

by SCOTT JONES



LIESA COLE

Scott Jones
(@JonesIsThirsty)
is a Culinary
Institute of America
graduate and wine
education specialist
living in Alabama.

Move over, turkey and tuna—there's a new lean protein on the block: calamari steaks.

Traditionally enjoyed as an appetizer course of succulent, deep-fried rings, calamari (Italian for “squid”) now stars in main dishes as steaks and burgers. Thanks to its growing availability, you can now serve these hearty and versatile fillets at home.

One 170-gram (6-ounce) calamari steak contains 27 grams of protein, 150 calories, 2.3 grams of fat and 4.5 grams of carbohydrates. Squid are related to octopuses, and feature edible tentacles and a cylinder-shaped main body called the mantle. While all calamari is squid, different culinary uses call for different species. The Gould's squid is relatively small, less than 61 centimetres (2 feet) long, with a mantle that's best stuffed or cut into rings for use in appetizers, salads and stews. The much larger Humboldt

squid can grow to 183 centimetres (6 feet) long. Its mantle produces thick, 113- to 170-gram (4- to 6-ounce) steaks.

Tenderizing calamari steaks is a must. Most are sold frozen and pre-tenderized, so they're ready to be seasoned and cooked once thawed. However, if you buy them fresh, marinate the steaks in milk, buttermilk or lemon (the acidity breaks down the texture) in the refrigerator for 30 minutes or gently pound them with the smooth side of a meat mallet.

One of calamari's primary attributes is its ability to pair well with various seasonings and sauces. Prepare and serve it in the same ways you would with shrimp. Basic seasonings like citrus zest and juice, garlic and fresh herbs complement calamari's natural sweetness. You can also spice it up, from mild to hot, with influences from Asian, Caribbean, Mediterranean, Latin and other global cuisines. A coating of bread crumbs (particularly panko) adds flavour and texture.



Pan-Fried Calamari Steaks with Lemon Beurre Blanc

© JENNY ROSS (PRIMALWELLNESS.COACH)

Whichever flavouring combo you choose, cook calamari steaks quickly over high heat to preserve tenderness. Think grilling, sautéing, pan-frying or broiling. A good rule of thumb is one to two minutes per side or until the meat is opaque. Here's a chef's secret: Score both sides of the steak in a diamond pattern with shallow, 0.32-centimetre (1/8-inch) diagonal cuts to prevent them from curling while cooking.

To serve, top with herb butters and fresh salsas or drizzle with tomato-based sauces like marinara and puttanesca. You can also keep it super simple with capers and a squeeze of fresh lemon juice. Burgers and po'boys are options too. Buns or sub rolls dressed with aioli or remoulade sauce, sliced tomatoes, shredded lettuce and pickles can elevate a hand-held sandwich to something truly special. ■

Pan-Fried Calamari Steaks with Lemon Beurre Blanc

BEURRE BLANC

60 mL (1/4 cup) dry white wine
7 mL (1/2 Tbsp) white wine vinegar
22 mL (1 1/2 Tbsp) lemon juice
7 mL (1/2 Tbsp) shallot, finely chopped
1 garlic clove, minced
Salt, to taste
114 g (4 oz) cold unsalted butter, cut into 1.3-cm (1/2-inch) cubes

7 mL (1/2 Tbsp) butter, softened
1 lemon, halved
125 mL (1/2 cup) panko, plus more as needed
2 calamari steaks, pounded to 0.3 cm (1/8 inch) thick
Salt and pepper, to taste
Avocado oil, as needed
125 mL (1/2 cup) arugula

Prepare the beurre blanc: In a small saucepan over medium heat, combine all beurre blanc ingredients except salt and butter; bring to a boil. Adjust heat to medium-high and reduce mixture to about 15 mL (1 Tbsp), about 10 minutes. Strain the mixture through a fine sieve into a container, then add 2 pieces of cold butter. Using an immersion blender, purée until smooth. With the blender running, continue adding butter, a piece at a time, until it is all incorporated. Season to taste. Keep warm until serving.

Spread the softened butter on the cut surfaces of the lemon. Place lemon halves cut/butter side down into a very hot non-stick or cast-iron pan. Sear over high heat until lightly charred, then remove and set aside. Wipe the pan clean.

Spread the panko on a plate. Place the calamari in a large zip-close bag and use a rolling pin to flatten. Bread the calamari steaks, pressing lightly to ensure the panko adheres. Repeat for both steaks, adding more panko, if needed. Season with salt and pepper.

Heat a thin layer of avocado oil in the pan over high heat until almost smoking. Add the calamari steaks and cook on high heat until golden on one side, about 1 to 2 minutes. Flip and cook the second side until golden. Remove and serve with beurre blanc underneath, a bit of arugula on top and a charred lemon on the side. Makes 2 servings.

Recipe courtesy of Jenny Ross (primalwellness.coach)

COSTCO CONNECTION

Fresh calamari steaks can be found in Costco meat departments. Frozen calamari rings are available in Costco warehouses and through Costco Grocery at Costco.ca.

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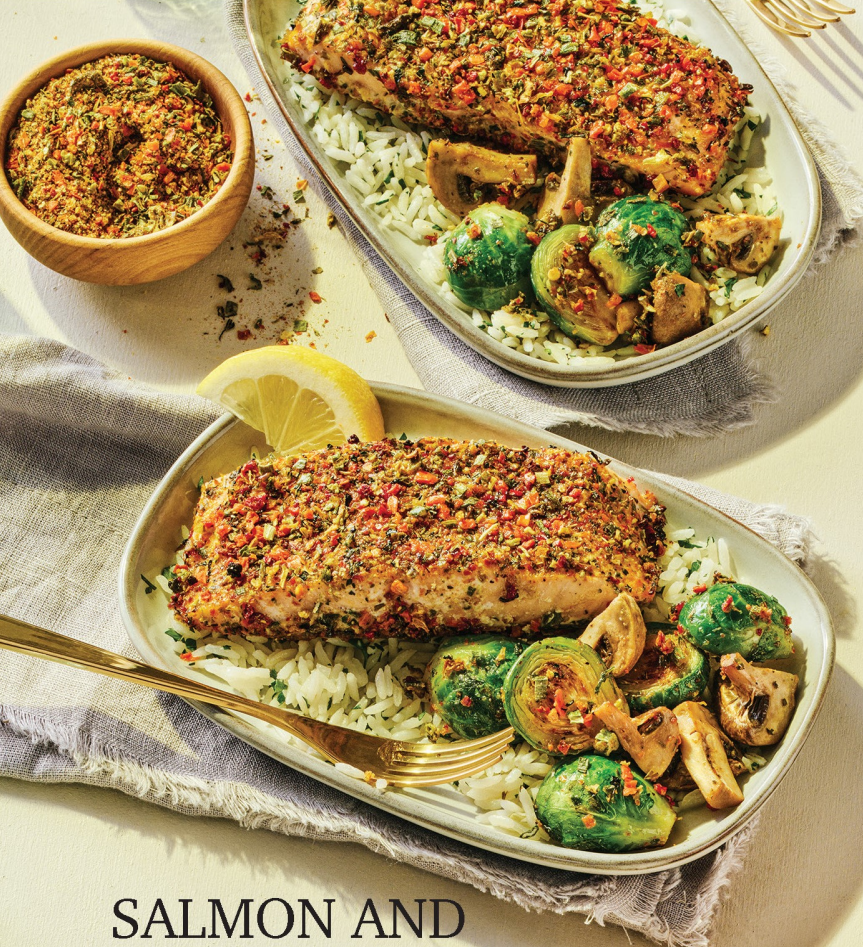
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SERVES
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- 1 **Molinaro's Cauliflower Pizza Kit**,
crust and sauce
- 280 g (10 oz) chicken breast, cooked and diced
- 60 mL (¼ cup) barbecue sauce
- 310 mL (1¼ cup) smoked mozzarella, shredded
- 60 mL (¼ cup) red onion, sliced
- 80 mL (⅓ cup) mozzarella, shredded
- 1-2 jalapeños, sliced
- 30 mL (2 Tbsp) cilantro, chopped

Combine the diced chicken and barbecue sauce in a small bowl along with ½ the **Molinaro's Cauliflower Pizza Kit** sauce, set aside.

Spread the rest of the Molinaro's sauce on the pizza crust and spread the smoked mozzarella on top. Top with chicken, red onions, jalapeños and mozzarella.

Bake pizza as per the cooking instruction on the packaging.

SALMON AND VEGETABLE EN PAPILLOTE

SERVES
4

- 4 (150 g/½ lb) each skinless salmon fillets
- 180 mL (¾ cup) olive oil
- 250 mL (1 cup) **Moulin Rouge Vegetable Seasoning**
- 12 white mushrooms, sliced
- 20 Brussels sprouts, halved

Preheat the BBQ to medium-high heat.

In a large bowl, add the oil and the **Moulin Rouge Vegetable Seasoning**. Mix well until a paste forms. Rub salmon and vegetables with oil and seasoning mixture.

Place salmon and vegetables on a large piece of foil. Arrange the vegetables around the salmon. Add oil or seasoning as needed. Then wrap the foil around to form 4 papillotes.

Bake on grill for 15 minutes or until desired doneness.

Serve with the accompaniment of your choice (rice, potato or salad) with a touch of vegetable seasoning.



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LEFT: ALISON RANDALL (HOMEANDPLATE.COM); ILLUSTRATION: © DARIAUSTIUGOVA / STOCKADOBECOM

Caprese Chicken

MARINADE

125 mL (½ cup) olive oil
60 mL (¼ cup) balsamic vinegar

1 garlic clove, minced
22 mL (1½ Tbsp) honey
15 mL (1 Tbsp) Dijon mustard

4 skinless, boneless chicken breasts
1 (228-g/8-oz) ball of fresh mozzarella cheese, sliced into 8 slices
2 medium tomatoes, sliced
4 to 6 fresh basil leaves, chopped

Balsamic glaze
Salt and pepper, to taste

Prepare the marinade: Blend the marinade ingredients; pour over the chicken breasts in a zip-close bag and seal. Allow the chicken to marinate in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours.

Preheat a grill to 190 C (375 F). Grill the chicken breasts for 4 minutes on one side; flip over. Top each breast with 2 slices of mozzarella cheese and then 2 tomato slices. Grill 4 to 7 minutes longer, depending on chicken thickness, to an internal temperature of 74 C (165 F). Remove the chicken to a serving platter. Add a pinch of chopped basil, drizzle each chicken breast with balsamic glaze and season with salt and pepper to taste. Makes 4 servings.

Recipe and photo courtesy of Alison Randall (homeandplate.com)

From the vine

Sweet and savoury tomatoes

by VICKI SHANTA RETELNY

Tomatoes come in many shapes and sizes, and in colours ranging from yellow to orange to red to green to brownish purple. While thought of as a vegetable, tomatoes are fruits grown on vines. Originally from South America, tomatoes are a kitchen staple across the globe.

Whether fresh or in salsa, concentrate, juice or ketchup, the mighty tomato packs a nourishing punch. With only 32 calories in 250 millilitres (1 cup) of chopped tomatoes, they are loaded with vitamin C, potassium, vitamin K and folate, as well as the red carotenoid pigment called lycopene, which might have a role in reducing the risk of prostate cancer and heart disease. In addition, tomatoes give dishes a rich, savoury flavour called umami, which comes from the amino acid glutamate.

Tomatoes' flavours are based on their ratio of sugar to acid, as well as their aroma. Sweet-tasting tomatoes, such as cherry tomatoes, contain more sugar and less acid, and when you bite into one it exudes a bevy of sweet aromatic compounds.

Out of the hundreds of hybrid varieties of tomatoes, each of the versatile tomato types has unique culinary applications. Enjoy juicy and sweet bite-size cherry tomatoes in salads, on skewers and in kebabs; use tiny grape tomatoes for snacking. Tomatoes on the vine, which are sold with the stem intact, are perfect sliced and piled on burgers and sandwiches; the attached vine prolongs their shelf life and continues to give the tomato nutrients. Whipping up a marinara sauce? They also make a tasty purée that can be used to top pasta or pizza, nestled into lasagna or spread over baked chicken or eggplant. ■



ANGELA GARBOT PHOTOGRAPHY

Vicki Shanta Retelny (victoriashantaretelny.com) is a Chicago-based nutritionist and lifestyle writer.

COSTCO CONNECTION

You'll find tomatoes on the vine, grape tomatoes and medley tomatoes in Costco warehouses. Groceries are available for delivery through Costco Grocery at Costco.ca.



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Chicken and Tortellini Salad

DRESSING

180 mL (¾ cup) extra-virgin olive oil
60 mL (¼ cup) red wine vinegar
10 mL (2 tsp) fresh garlic, minced
2 mL (½ tsp) salt
0.6 mL (⅛ tsp) pepper

500 mL (2 cups) rotisserie chicken breast, cut into bite-size pieces
Salt and pepper, to taste
284 g (10 oz) fresh three-cheese tortellini
500 mL (2 cups) loosely packed baby spinach
250 mL (1 cup) red onion, diced
250 mL (1 cup) grape tomatoes, halved
250 mL (1 cup) seedless cucumber, diced
1 (64-g/2.25-oz) can sliced black olives, drained
60 mL (¼ cup) feta cheese
60 mL (¼ cup) loosely packed fresh basil leaves, chopped

Prepare the dressing: Combine all of the dressing ingredients in a large jar (or measuring cup). Cover and shake (or whisk) until completely combined. Set aside.

Season chicken with salt and pepper.

Cook the tortellini in a large saucepot according to package instructions, then drain.

In a large bowl, gently combine chicken, tortellini, spinach, onion, tomatoes, cucumber, olives and feta cheese. Pour about 60 mL (¼ cup) dressing (or more, to taste) over the salad. Reserve remaining dressing.

Cover and refrigerate salad until ready to serve. Stir in basil just before serving. Makes 8 (250-mL/1-cup) servings.

Note: Use remaining dressing to refresh any leftover salad.

Recipe courtesy of Blair Lonergran (theseasonedmom.com)

Protein greens

Make meaty mixed salads for your next meal

by MARCY GOLDMAN

Everyone wants healthy salads, and social media has no shortage of food influencers literally tossing up chickpeas, tofu, grains and fibre-friendly pulses with the usual salad staples. But what about meat? Many people still want some heftier protein—such as seafood, chicken or beef—to bolster all that light fare.

Of course you can always add a chicken breast to your greens, but here are some fresh ideas for creating a satisfying salad:

- Try Korean ribs over shredded cabbage and Sriracha-spiked

cellophane noodles, all topped with kimchee.

- Make a *shish taouk* salad with Middle Eastern marinated grilled chicken kebabs, couscous, hummus and greens.

- For seafood lovers, grilled salmon, shrimp or crab meat is a natural addition to Caesar salad.

The ways to add muscle-building protein to your salads are limited only by your imagination. For a little more inspiration, try one of the recipes on these two pages. ■

Marcy Goldman is a Montreal-based chef-host of Betterbaking.com.

Citrusy Shrimp and Avocado Salad

454 g (1 lb) medium shrimp (31/40 per lb), peeled and deveined, cooked (warm or cooled)

1.9 L (8 cups) salad greens, such as arugula, spinach or spring mix

Fruity (or lemon-flavoured) extra-virgin olive oil

½ lemon or ½ orange

1 avocado, pitted, peeled and sliced or diced

1 shallot, minced

113 g (4 oz) sliced almonds, toasted

Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Toss the shrimp with the salad greens in a large bowl. Lightly drizzle with olive oil and a generous squeeze of the citrus, then toss lightly to coat. Add the avocado, shallot and almonds. Season with salt and black pepper; serve. Makes 4 servings.

Recipe and photo courtesy of Heidi Larsen (foodiecrush.com)



Black and Blue Steak Salad

454 g (1 lb) boneless top sirloin steak, cut 2 cm (¾ inch) thick

60 mL (¼ cup) Worcestershire sauce

5 mL (1 tsp) salt

5 mL (1 tsp) pepper

125 mL (½ cup) grape tomatoes

1.5 L (6 cups) spring mix greens

1 avocado, pitted, peeled and thinly sliced

¼ red onion, thinly sliced

60 mL (¼ cup) blue cheese crumbles

60 mL (¼ cup) dressing of choice

Place steak in a zip-close bag with Worcestershire sauce, salt and pepper. Seal; turn steak to coat evenly. Refrigerate at least 1 hour, then remove steak from marinade. Place steak on grill over medium heat. Grill, covered, for 7 to 11 minutes for medium-rare (an internal temperature of 63 C/145 F) to medium (an internal temperature of 71 C/160 F) doneness, turning occasionally.

Remove steak from grill and let it rest. While it is resting, grill the tomatoes for 2 to 3 minutes or until they burst. Remove tomatoes from the grill, and slice the steak across the grain.

Fill a platter or large salad bowl with greens. Top with burst tomatoes, avocado slices, red onion and blue cheese. Top with steak slices, then serve with dressing of your choice. Makes 4 servings.

Recipe and photo courtesy of Courtney Whitmore (pizzazzerie.com)



COSTCO CONNECTION

Ingredients for salads can be found in Costco warehouses. Groceries are available for delivery through Costco Grocery at Costco.ca.

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Power punch

Stop and smell the stinking rose

by VICKI SHANTA RETELNY



© CAROL BORCHARDT (FROMACHEFSKITCHEN.COM)



ANGELA GARBOT PHOTOGRAPHY

Vicki Shanta Retelny (victoriashantaretelny.com) is a Chicago-based nutritionist and lifestyle writer.

COSTCO CONNECTION

You'll find fresh, minced and granulated garlic in Costco warehouses. Groceries are available for delivery through Costco Grocery at Costco.ca.

Aromatic and versatile, garlic, aka “the stinking rose,” has been used for thousands of years by many cultures to add flavour to a variety of dishes.

The potent bulb is just as well regarded for its potential health benefits. Garlic has anti-inflammatory and antioxidant properties, and whether raw or in aged extracts, powder, oil or supplements, garlic may help reduce total blood cholesterol and low-density lipoprotein cholesterol levels. In addition, allicin, a compound in garlic, has been isolated as helping to lower blood pressure in hypertensive people.

Garlic can be used raw, cooked or dried and granulated. Peeled, crushed, chopped, diced or minced, fresh garlic is tasty sautéed in sauces, chili and soups, as well as puréed in pesto and hummus or whisked into salad dressings and marinades.

Garlic is often combined with herbs and spices as a rub for meat, poultry and seafood. Garlic can also be baked into breads, casseroles, quiches and savoury pies.

Garlic is ideal on its own as well. A whole garlic bulb can be drizzled with olive oil and oven-roasted; the softened cooked cloves can be spread on crusty bread.

To store whole unpeeled garlic bulbs, place them in a wire basket or ceramic bowl in a cool, dark, well-ventilated spot with dry airflow for up to six months. Separate cloves only when you're ready to use them. Once the cloves are removed and peeled, their shelf life is about two weeks refrigerated. As garlic ages it grows green shoots that can cause a bitter taste.

In any form, garlic is an ancient food with modern medicinal and culinary uses. ■

40 Clove Garlic Chicken

60 mL (¼ cup) all-purpose flour
Salt and pepper, to taste
4 chicken thighs, bone in and skin on
30 mL (2 Tbsp) olive oil
250 mL (1 cup) dry white wine
250 mL (1 cup) chicken broth
40 large garlic cloves, unpeeled
10 mL (2 tsp) fresh thyme, chopped
2 sprigs of fresh rosemary, leaves only, finely chopped
2 bay leaves
30 mL (2 Tbsp) butter
Pinch of crushed red pepper flakes
Chopped fresh parsley, for garnish
Baguette, sliced

Generously season the flour with salt and black pepper. Dredge both sides of the chicken thighs in the flour.

Heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add the chicken, skin side down; brown well. Turn the chicken over and brown the other side. Remove the pan from heat. Add the wine carefully, then return to the heat.

Bring to a boil, reduce the heat to a simmer, then cook until the wine is reduced by half. Add the chicken broth and garlic, then bring the liquid back to a boil. Add the thyme, rosemary and bay leaves. Reduce the heat to a simmer; cover the skillet. Cook 25 to 30 minutes or until the chicken is thoroughly cooked through to 74 C (165 F) in the centre and the garlic is tender.

Stir in the butter and crushed red pepper flakes. Remove the bay leaves and sprinkle the chicken with parsley. Squeeze the garlic out of the cloves to spread onto baguette. Makes 2 to 4 servings.

Recipe courtesy of Carol Borchardt (fromachefskitchen.com)

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Wade a while

Moving in the water can provide pain relief and offer a safe alternative to exercising on land

by JACKIE DUDA



Water workouts offer the ability to increase muscle in a low-impact environment.

COSTCO CONNECTION

Swimsuits and other water-related items can be found seasonally in Costco warehouses and at Costco.ca.

Humans are roughly 60% water, so it makes sense that exercising in water, in the form of aquatic therapy, could play a part in our health.

“Everyone can benefit from aquatic therapy,” says Alison Bonnyman, physiotherapist and founder of Canadian Aquatic Rehab Instructors (CARI), which provides training for aquatic therapists across Canada. “Patients with total joint replacements, arthritis, Parkinson’s, multiple sclerosis and stroke, dementia and sports injuries can benefit,” she says, as can patients with complex conditions like tracheostomies or Guillain-Barré syndrome. Aquatic therapy has even been used to facilitate bonding between neonatal intensive care unit infants and parents.

Gaining strength, reducing pain

“[Aquatic therapy is] a good option for gaining strength, because buoyancy makes it easier to exercise in the water,”

says Costco member Dr. Albert Recio, a physician in the paralysis restoration program at the International Center for Spinal Cord Injury at the Kennedy Krieger Institute. Buoyancy supports patients, and hydrostatic pressure, the force of water against the body, helps circulation. “Hydrostatic pressure promotes muscle relaxation and helps decrease swelling,” explains Recio.

Aquatic therapy increases blood flow, strengthens muscles, improves balance, boosts memory and reduces stress, explains Bonnyman. “People feel more relaxed.” The relaxation and pain reduction can last for hours, says Costco member Audrey Collins, a certified CARI instructor based in Ontario. “Water supports the body and makes it easier to move and exercise,” she adds. Patients get stronger over time while experiencing less pain.



LEFT TO RIGHT: © NEW AFRICA; KZENON / STOCK.ADOBE.COM

Recovering from injury

Costco member Michael Murray, president of the American Physical Therapy Association Academy of Aquatic Physical Therapy, sees a wide spectrum of patients, from injured athletes to people for whom aquatic therapy is a last resort.

Murray and his colleagues at Duke Health, in North Carolina, studied healthy people walking in shallow water, demonstrating how buoyancy lessened impact on lower extremities and resistance increased strength and some joint mobility. “If you have a condition that’s degenerative, aquatic therapy helps strengthen you to live more

independently on land,” says Murray. He notes that high-intensity aquatic exercises can help maintain bone density, but osteoporosis patients also need weight-bearing exercise on land, adding that many patients do a combination of aquatic and land therapy to get stronger and functionally independent.

Meeting special lifestyle needs

Recio works with patients of all ages with mild to severe neurological, rehabilitative or developmental needs, and has published groundbreaking research on aquatic therapy for patients with tracheostomies, colostomies and pressure injuries, where activities of daily living, such as personal care and hygiene, improved. “We’re trying to demonstrate we can eliminate barriers for patients with complex medical conditions. We have developed policies and procedures allowing patients with ventilators and diaphragmatic pacers in the pool for skilled therapies,” Recio explains, adding that these patients hadn’t previously been considered for aquatic exercise. Aquatic therapy gives them more independence.

Aquatic therapy participants should continue water exercises after discharge from therapy by joining an aquatic exercise program at their local fitness centre or YMCA. “Remember,” says Collins, “if you don’t move it, you lose it.” ■

Jackie Duda swims three times a week and engaged in aquatic therapy to recover from a life-threatening medical crisis.



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Wading in

Knowing how to swim isn’t necessary for aquatic therapy; therapists accompany patients in the water. Some insurance companies require a doctor’s prescription. All patients should discuss any new exercise program with their doctors first.

At some YMCA locations, for example, people can sign up for classes like Aqua Yoga, or Splashin’ to the Oldies. Another option is to reserve time to swim or walk in the lanes. Many pools set aside a lane just for water walking exercise.

You can find aquatic therapy programs by asking your physician, checking the website for Canadian Aquatic Rehab Instructors (aquaticrehab.ca) or through an online search (search “aquatic therapy near me”).—JD

Aquatic exercises

Exercises vary, depending on whether one is pre- or post-operative, trying to lose weight, recovering from injury, strengthening

weak muscles or trying to live better with chronic pain. Many patients start with walking, marching and squats in waist-deep water.

Exercises in chest-deep water might include aqua

dumbbells, noodles and kickboards for resistance, or adding ankle weights to augment the strengthening effects of water walking and leg lifts. For safety, wear an aqua belt or life vest.—JD



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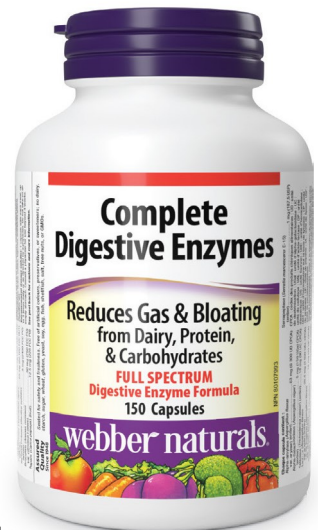
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Varicose veins

Learn the risks and how to keep your legs healthy

by LAWRENCE VARGA
and JOSEPH HANNA



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Lawrence Varga, B.Sc.Pharm., is assistant vice president of Costco Pharmacy.

Joseph Hanna, B.Sc.Pharm., CDE, CGP, director of Costco Pharmacy, contributed to this column.

Yes, they can be unsightly, and for the one in five Canadians who suffer from varicose veins, these dark blue, twisted, swollen vascular strands that occur in legs are responsible for considerable aching, heaviness, itchiness, fatigue, burning and pain. Varicose veins are often greater than 4 millimetres (one-eighth inch) in diameter, and may, in rare occasions, lead to dangerous blood clots.

Veins have one-way valves that direct blood that has all its oxygen used up back to the heart to be reoxygenated—hence the blue colour. When these valves become weak, blood pools and collects in the lower extremities, building up pressure and deforming the veins. Women are more susceptible to this, and the issue can run in families. Being overweight, being older or simply sitting or standing for long periods of time increases the risk of developing them, as do liver and heart diseases.

Compression stockings are recommended to help battle varicose veins. Knee-length socks are preferred over

thigh-high options, because they target the most common areas affected. These stockings work by gradually tightening as they reach the feet, improving circulation and preventing blood from collecting in one place. Having compression stockings fitted by a certified individual may help achieve better results.

When varicose veins bleed or are red and warm to the touch, this may be a signal to see a doctor who can examine you for more invasive procedures. Most measures involve physically manipulating the affected area in some way. Burning and closing up the veins can be accomplished by lasers, radiofrequency ablation or injections of chemicals. The veins can also be cut or removed surgically.

Armed with this newfound knowledge, you can now better navigate the sometimes misunderstood world of these strange blue webs that cause more than cosmetic trouble. ■

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Prevention tips

Varicose veins can be prevented and treated simply by maintaining a healthy and active life-

style. Exercises that keep your legs moving and your blood flowing are crucial to preventing these veins.

Cycling, swimming, running, stair climbing and

using elliptical machines are key activities that are highly recommended to prevent these often painful veins.—LV

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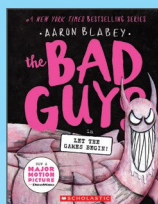
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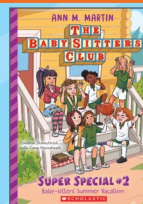
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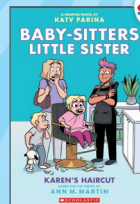
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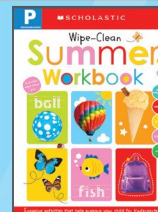


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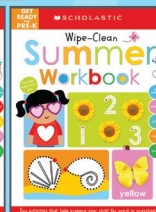
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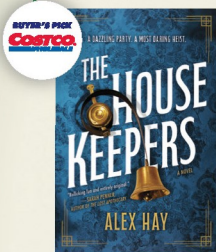
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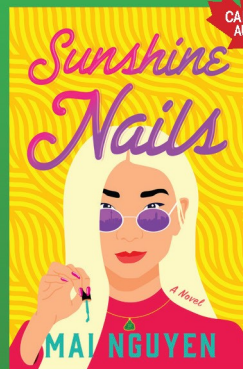
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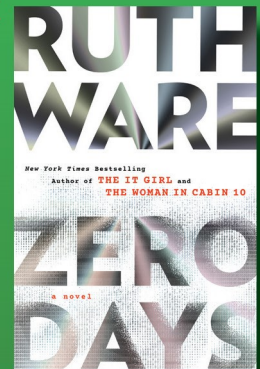
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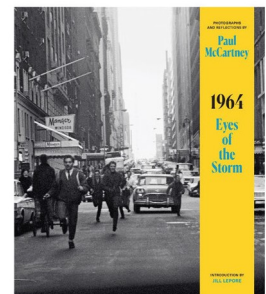
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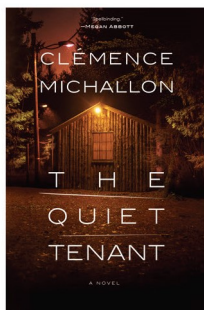
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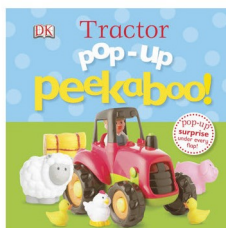


Taken by Paul McCartney—unseen photographs of when The Beatles changed music history.

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The chilling psychological thriller narrated by those closest to a serial killer.
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Find all the tractors and farm animals in this lift-the-flap and pop-up book for little ones.

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Two best friends, lots of toppings, these hilarious chapter book graphic novels will tickle the funny bones of kids ages 5-8 and bolster their reading confidence.

ITM. 1736262

Product selection may vary by location.



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Cindy Redmond
Buyer, Books

Alex Hay's debut novel, *The Housekeepers*, is a joy to read. It's an Edwardian heist that has it all: revenge, mystery, power and hints of anger and sadness.

Mrs. King comes from a family of con artists and thieves, but she's made herself respectable and now works as the housekeeper at the grandest home in Mayfair. When she's let go, she gathers a group of women to help her exact her revenge on the night of a much-anticipated costume ball.

The Housekeepers (Item 1733662) will be available in July in most Costco warehouses.



Historic heist

Alex Hay's *The Housekeepers* is a fast-paced story of revenge

by HOWARD CALVERT



Alex Hay

COURTESY OF ALEX HAY

Plotting an intricate heist novel set in London in 1905 can befuddle your brain in more ways than one, as Alex Hay discovered when writing his debut novel, *The Housekeepers*, about an intricately planned robbery.

"Keeping track of the characters was both wonderful and absolutely agonizing," he tells the *Connection* from his house in South London. "To solve the problem, I set up a huge spreadsheet that detailed every scene, who was where, what were they doing and what should they be doing. It was exciting but gruelling at the same time. I learned that planning can only take you so far; sometimes you have to tune into where the story's going and run with it."

Two factors make *The Housekeepers* stand out in the heist genre. The first is the fact that the gang of robbers, led by Mrs. Dinah King, is all-female. "It was an instinctive decision, and, once made, I couldn't see the story any other way," Hay says. "I was mindful of the fact that I was writing from the male perspective and wanted to do so in a way that felt right to the story."

The second standout feature is its setting in Edwardian London in the early 1900s, with all the glamour and extravagance that come with the city's most coveted address: Park Lane.

"It got me thinking, 'Who was there at that time? Who are the people in those huge houses?'" says Hay. This led him to focus on those who work "behind the green baize door"—the cooks, maids, cleaners and seamstresses running the wealthy owners' luxurious abodes—and their plan to unite for the ultimate grand robbery.

Hay has always been drawn to historical fiction—he studied history at university and had written three unpublished historical novels before *The Housekeepers*—and says that he’s fascinated with this particular era.

“As it was the turn of the century, there was a febrile atmosphere where new technologies, powers and fortunes were rising and falling,” he says. “There were all these enterprising characters who were burning with ambition. And from an aesthetic perspective, it’s fun to write about, as there’s all the opulence and glamour you could hope for.”

To make sure the minute details were correct, Hay spent hours poring over old copies of *The Illustrated London News*, which contain “deliciously” detailed information about Park Lane mansions.

Hay calls the magazines “gold dust, as there were in-depth descriptions of everything inside these houses: paintings, furniture, mirrors, carpets. It meant that I could begin to create what was in that house and what could be stolen.”

He completed the first draft in four months in winter 2020, while the UK was in lockdown: “I wrote during the early mornings and evenings around my full-time job in the charity sector. I perfected the art of turning on my trusty white-noise playlist and quickly diving in.”

The result is a gripping page-turner that’s won praise for its originality, unpredictability and cleverness. “I’m hoping the book finds readers who enjoy a racketsy, high-stakes heist and love the same glitz, glamour and dark central mystery that I loved while writing it,” he says. “I’m keeping my fingers crossed that Mrs. King and the gang do their thing and that people enjoy the story along the way.” ■

Howard Calvert is a freelance journalist and author based in Hampshire, England.

ADDITIONAL BOOK PICK

BOOK *The Marriage Portrait*

AUTHOR Maggie O’Farrell

The Marriage Portrait (Item 1736280) will be available in July in most Costco warehouses.



In Maggie O’Farrell’s *The Marriage Portrait*, which is set in Renaissance Italy, 15-year-old Lucrezia de’ Medici marries Alfonso, Duke of Ferrara, with the expectation that she will produce an heir. However, as her husband’s behaviour becomes increasingly erratic, Lucrezia realizes she is in mortal danger.

Costco Connection What inspired this particular story?

Maggie O’Farrell I studied Robert Browning’s poem “My Last Duchess” at university. It features a 16th-century duke, showing a visitor a portrait and saying, “This is my previous wife. And by the way I murdered her.” It’s an astonishing moment. I was thinking about that poem one day, wondering whether it was based on real people. I looked it up and within a minute I had her name: Lucrezia de’ Medici. Then I saw her portrait, and as soon as I saw it, I just knew I had my next book. She looks really worried ... and I wanted to tell her side of the story.

CC What do you hope that readers will take from the book?

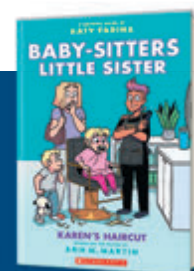
MO A sense of Lucrezia’s resilience and resourcefulness. It was too dangerous for her and her siblings to leave the palazzo in Florence. Her parents were so worried about assassination and kidnap that they lived on one floor of that big palazzo. And even when she married, she was essentially locked in a gilded cage. So what the book meant for me was the potential for escape and resourcefulness, even in the context of very little choice.

Also in the warehouse

In the graphic novel *Karen’s Haircut (Baby-Sitters Little Sister No. 7)* Kristy’s little stepsister, Karen, feels like an ugly duckling. She’s losing her

baby teeth and has to wear glasses. Certainly a new ‘do is the fix she needs. Unfortunately, the haircut turns out all wrong! What will the kids at school say? And what will it take for Karen to regain her confidence?

Karen’s Haircut by Ann M. Martin with illustrations by Katy Farina (Item 1733813) will be available in July in most Costco warehouses.—CR



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Health and dental

In the last few years, many Canadians held off on using extended health care services like massage therapy, physiotherapy, dental and more. As things get back to normal, it's important to check that your insurance covers the services you need. Additionally, provincial or employer health plans don't always cover all health and dental expenses. If you were among the many people changing careers or starting self-employment ventures during the pandemic years, it's essential to have insurance there for when you need it.

Term life

Term life insurance provides a tax-free lump-sum payment to your loved ones in the event of a death. In short, it helps to protect



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the future of your family so they can continue covering everyday costs—like a mortgage, for example. Manulife term life policies offer flexibility, and even lower premiums for Costco members. Manulife has both five- and 10-year term life plans, so you can choose a plan that's best for you.

Travel

Many people are now booking holidays or travelling to visit family after several years of staying close to home. However, if you require hospitalization or medical care while outside Canada, it's important to remember that these expenses are typically not covered by government or employer plans. The increased surge in travel often comes with delays, cancellations and lost luggage, which can lead to unexpected costs. Manulife offers a variety of travel insurance options, including emergency medical coverage, trip cancellation and everything in between. ■

COSTCO CONNECTION

For more information on how Manulife's insurance plans can help you plan ahead, visit Manulife.ca/Costco or call 1-866-707-4922.

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Cancun: Hyatt Ziva Cancun

Located within the lively Cancun hotel zone, this all-inclusive resort welcomes guests of all ages. The resort features a variety of dining options, including a microbrewery and a sweet shop, a kids club with a water park, a teen lounge and the relaxing Zen Spa. For an elevated experience, stay in the Club section or the adults-only Turquoise section and receive additional amenities. Costco Travel's package includes a Digital Costco Shop Card. To learn more, visit CostcoTravel.ca.



Birthday Cake Yogurt Pretzels

These pretzels are the perfect combination of sweet and salty. 737 g. Item 1718034. **Warehouses only.**

The latest Costco finds



Dyson V15 Detect Slim Vacuum

This cordless vacuum features a precisely angled laser that reveals microscopic dust on hard floors, intelligently optimizes suction and run time, and features the latest hair detangling technology. Item 1711427. **Warehouses/ Costco.ca.**



First Day or Last Day of School Chalkboard

This double-sided chalkboard measures 30 cm x 40 cm (12" x 16") and is easy to write on and wipe off with a cloth or wet tissue. Includes four assorted chalks so you or your child can write down likes, wishes, gains, accomplishments and milestones throughout the school year. Item 4304984. **Warehouses/ Costco.ca.**

Step2 Rushing Rapids Water Table

Make a splash with this water table, which lets kids play with interactive spinners, ramps and a 21-piece accessory kit that includes play balls, sea critter toys and more. Item 1586356. **Costco.ca only.**



Gilman Creek Fabric Reclining Modular Grey Sofa

This sectional has soft lines and oversized seating for added comfort. The performance fabric is soft to the touch and stain resistant. The two motion seats allow you to select your optimal position while the armless seat features a storage drawer below. Item 1653280. **Costco.ca only.**



Kirkland Signature Women's Travel Pants

Stylish and comfortable, these travel pants offer some stretch for comfort, plus a zippered side pocket. Colours: black, green, navy. Sizes: 4–16. Selection varies by location. Item numbers vary by size. **Warehouses/ Costco.ca.**



Smucker's Uncrustables Peanut Butter & Strawberry Spread Sandwich Enjoy the delicious combination of PB&J in the form of a sealed crustless sandwich. Just thaw and eat. 18 x 58 g sandwiches. Item 2121272. **Warehouses only.**



Eddie Bauer Youth Reversible Plush Jacket

This full-zip hooded jacket reverses to a plush jacket. The non-plush side features functional zipper pockets and the plush side has two functional non-zipper pockets. Item 2514851. **Warehouses/ Costco.ca.**



The Ritz-Carlton, Montreal

Downtown, The Ritz-Carlton, Montreal is an extension of the city itself: a modern tech hub with European-inspired charm. The five-star hotel invites guests to experience the indulgences of a past era, set within a landmark building. Canadian influence is seen throughout, with spa treatments featuring maple sugar, works by local artists displayed at the hotel's Cosner Art Gallery and regional products showcased in dishes at Maison Boulud. To learn more, visit **CostcoTravel.ca.**



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CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: BRIAN ATKINSON; SCOTT DANIEL; BRIAN ATKINSON

KIDS TO SEA

There are many activities at Roads to Sea for youngsters 6 to 12 years old. Children receive a prize for completing 10 activities—such as building an *inuksuk*, a figure that resembles a person, out of rocks, or identifying the different kinds of seaweed found on the tour—as part of the Bay of Fundy Nature Club. (Due to safety regulations, children 5 and younger are not permitted on the tours.) —WK



A life of exploration

Few people know where they'll be every day. But from May to October, adventure guide Anna-Marie Weir does. Through Roads to Sea (roadstosea.com), she has been hosting tours seven days a week, six months a year, to the four corners of New Brunswick.

Weir started her company in 2003 after leaving a corporate job. She says,

"I enjoy sharing our amazing part of the world through culture, cuisine, storytelling and meaningful experiences with the people and artisans of New Brunswick."

Whether walking the ocean floor at the location of the world's highest tides, sampling local wines and fresh seafood, exploring a 3,000-year-old First Nations community or experiencing an Acadian kitchen party, this high-vibe tour guide offers unique excursions that she promises will include "Maritimes hospitality and good old-fashioned fun." —Wendy Kitts

Clockwise from top: Anna-Marie Weir with visitors at Hopewell Rocks Provincial Park; Weir discusses balsam fir, New Brunswick's official tree; exploring the province's diverse cultures.

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