



A LIFE WELL FED

*Recipes to Remember*

# Confessions From a Pantry

Volume 1: October 24, 2023



## Welcome to *Confessions From a Pantry*

*Dear Friend,*

*Thank you for choosing to support this very personal project and my fight to end Alzheimer's. Speaking of confessions, I have one to make. I have never written a newsletter, never had a website, and certainly, never dared to author a cookbook. But what I did have was a dream of being an active participant in the fight to end Alzheimer's; I just wasn't sure what that would look like. I will admit that this whole thing I've started is a little scary, and certain aspects are undeniably outside my comfort zone. But as a wise friend once told me, "Outside of your comfort zone is where the magic happens." If that's true, then this project has all the makings of a magical carpet ride and I'm so very grateful you've decided to come along for the ride. /kg*

## Inside My Pantry

Every pantry is unique. What is considered a "must-have" in my pantry, may not even make it to the deepest corner of your pantry. I also believe that a pantry extends beyond the kitchen closet and includes the refrigerator and freezer. A good pantry is well-stocked so that, on any given day, one can

whip up a simple and delicious meal without having to dash to the store. My goal is to introduce you to new ingredients that push your culinary boundaries and take you outside your comfort zone, guiding you through new flavor adventures.

## Flavored Olive Oils

First up in the pantry is oil. You have the usual suspects like vegetable, corn, canola, grapeseed, avocado, and olive, along with a myriad of blends. Then, there are specialty oils. Another confession to make; in the same way some women impulsively buy shoes and handbags, I buy flavored oils. I often purchase them without a clue how I will use them, but because I find the flavor intriguing. One oil that stands out is Fernleaf dill. It sat on the shelf of my pantry for a few months until I made the commitment to start experimenting. Turns out, salmon, asparagus, chicken salad, white beans, and even egg salad are fabulous with a touch of dill oil. Some of the most popular flavored oils are lemon, Persian lime, chili, and garlic along with two of my favorites, blood orange and basil.

If you're going to dive into flavored oils for the first time, lemon olive oil stands out as one of the most versatile oils, and one I use regularly. Its delicate flavor is delightful in both sweet and savory dishes. There are plenty of recipes to make your own infused oils, but I typically buy mine (a girl has limits). You can find endless flavors online or at your local specialty store. Here are just a few of the ways to play with a pantry full of flavored oils.

**Salads** - Lemon olive oil is my go-to oil for salad dressings. The standard ratio for dressing is 3 parts oil to 1 part vinegar. You can easily substitute lemon oil for plain olive oil in almost any dressing. Add fresh herbs, a pinch of garlic, salt and pepper, and you've got a refreshingly light dressing. It can even stand alone on a salad, without vinegar. Speaking of vinegar, I like to pair lemon oil with seasoned rice vinegar or white citrus balsamic. I rarely combine regular balsamic vinegar with lemon olive oil, as I'm not a fan of its heavy flavor. Once you start experimenting with flavored oils, you'll never have to buy another bottle of salad dressing again. My all-time favorite pairing is lemon or Persian lime olive oil with lemongrass mint white balsamic vinegar. And speaking of vinegar, lemongrass mint and blood orange white balsamic are my two all-time favorite flavored vinegars. They are divine!

**Vegetables** - Get creative and experiment with vegetables you love. My personal favorites include asparagus, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, and green beans. A drizzle of lemon, basil, or garlic olive oil, salt, pepper, and a dash of garlic, creates a bright citrusy flavor that complements the caramelized sugars



## Recipe to Remember

### Crispy Brussels Sprouts With Prosciutto

16 oz. Brussels sprouts, trimmed and cut in half  
3 slices prosciutto, ribbon cut  
2 T. lemon olive oil  
1/4 t. smoked paprika  
1/4 t. garlic powder  
1/4 t. salt  
1/4 t. pepper

- Preheat oven to 425°. In small sauté pan, quick-sear the prosciutto on medium-high heat for 1-2 minutes until it starts to get crispy. Tear prosciutto into small pieces and set aside.
- Combine paprika, garlic powder, salt, and pepper. In a large bowl, gently toss Brussels sprouts in olive oil seasoning mix until well coated.
- Spread Brussels sprouts evenly on a roasting pan and place in the middle rack of the oven. Roast for 25-

of roasted vegetables.

**Seafood** - Lemon or any citrus-flavored olive oil complements grilled or pan-seared fish. When it comes to fish, simplicity is key. Brush the fish with, lemon, lime, or blood orange olive oil, season with salt and pepper, and you're good to go. You can always add your favorite seafood rub if you like a little more zip. Shrimp pairs exceptionally well with lemon olive oil, but my personal favorite is blood orange oil with a touch of orange pepper seasoning from [Badia](#). I'll save the discussion of seasonings for another day, but the orange pepper is one of those things I consider a must-have in the pantry.

**Pasta** - Pasta is a staple in my pantry; so is a block of parmesan cheese, garlic, and fresh or dried herbs. When I'm stumped for dinner ideas, we are always down for a bowl of pasta. Toss whatever pasta you have available in flavored oil, add some herbs, salt, and pepper, and top it off with lots of grated parmesan or Romano cheese. And if your pantry is well stocked, go to the freezer and pull out a couple of Italian sausages, which you previously cut into 1/2" slices before freezing. Throw them in the skillet on medium heat and cook until done. Toss them in with the pasta and you've got yourself a delicious meal in less than 30 minutes.

Whatever flavored oil you choose, I hope you will travel outside your comfort zone and explore new ways to use it. And of course, if you have any questions, or would like to share your story with me, you can email me at [kathy@alifewellfed.org](mailto:kathy@alifewellfed.org). I would love to hear from you.

Next edition, I'll talk about seasonings. If you think I'm a fan of flavored oils, wait till you see what is seasoning my pantry these days.

Want to make your own lemon olive oil? [Click here to visit the website for an easy recipe.](#)

35 minutes or until outer leaves are crispy, tossing after 15 minutes for even roasting. I happen to like mine extra crispy, but roast to your own personal taste.

- Serve as a side to any main course or as an appetizer with your favorite dipping sauce.

### **Peppercorn Dip For Roasted Vegetables**

1/8 c. sour cream  
1/8 c. mayonnaise  
1 T. Boar's Head Gourmaise with peppercorns  
1/2 t. lemon olive oil

Whisk all ingredients until smooth.

### **Sriracha and Hummus Dip**

1/4 c. plain, garlic, or red pepper hummus  
1 t. sriracha  
1 t. lemon-flavored olive oil  
1 pinch of salt and garlic powder  
1/2 t. maple syrup (may substitute agave nectar)  
1/4 t. apple cider vinegar

Whisk all ingredients until smooth.





## Seasonal Changes and Sundowning

As the holiday season approaches and the days get shorter, it's important to consider how this time of year can affect those living with Alzheimer's or other forms of dementia. Reduced daylight, chilly temperatures, and the influx of holiday visitors can trigger anxiety, irritation, and confusion in individuals suffering from Alzheimer's. This can lead to pacing and wandering, a cluster of symptoms known as "sundowning."

I've experienced sundowning firsthand. In the early stages of the disease, I noticed her reluctance to leave home and visit her children and grandchildren who lived just around the corner. We tried a couple of times to get everyone together, but I could see it in her eyes...she was lost, uncomfortable, and confused. In the mid to late stages, she was living in full-time memory care and receiving excellent care. She also had a telephone. When the days shortened, she would call me nearly every day around 5:15 p.m., just as the sun was setting. It was always about the same subject; she wanted to go home and be with her husband. It broke my heart. The best I could do was gently change the conversation and remind her of all the wonderful things she had in her current home. The conversation would eventually shift and we would have a lovely few minutes on the phone. Those conversations were often emotionally draining. She would call back again, and again, and again. I knew she was safe. On occasion, I gave myself permission not to answer the phone, and I was okay with that. It's important to take care of yourself as much as it is to take care of the patient. During those moments, I often relied on the Alzheimer's Association for support on how to handle times like that.

For more information on sundowning, I encourage you to visit this link:

[https://www.alz.org/national/documents/topicsheet\\_sundowning.pdf](https://www.alz.org/national/documents/topicsheet_sundowning.pdf)

[Learn More About Alzheimer's](#)

[Visit our Website](#)

[Support the Project](#)

A Life Well Fed | 1120 Princeton Hills Dr | Nolensville, TN 37135 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)