

MARCHING TOWARD SPRING: TIPS FOR CONQUERING CABIN FEVER



Food

Celebrate Spring
and St. Patty's Day.



Fun

List your favorite
things this March.



Conversation

The fine art of
patience.



It's coming! Spring is only a few weeks away. Even if you don't live in a part of the U.S. that experienced historic and seemingly endless amounts of snowfall this winter, you can't help but get excited for the warmer season to come.

March is the month in which cabin fever often culminates. Perhaps both the adults and the children in your house are feeling a wee bit restless and impatient? Here we offer some ideas for managing all that anticipation while surviving these last few weeks of winter. (Bonus: all these ideas work well in any season, really!)

1 Practice Patience.

Patience may be in short supply right now after being cooped up all winter, but try not to snap when you're busy and a child wants your attention. We're all guilty of it, but a better response is to look at your child while listening carefully for a moment to what he is saying. After listening, offer your child an explanation of why you are not available right now, as well as something else he can do until you can give him your full attention. When you are finally able to give your child your full attention, this will feel like a reward for being patient—one likely to reinforce patient behavior in the future (fingers crossed!)

3 Nurture your Young Scientists.

Related to the above bowl of dirt, Dr. Anne Fishel has a whole chapter in her *Home for Dinner* book devoted to how to play with one's food. She writes, "young children love to make concoctions from leftover food, soap bubbles, seltzer water, spoonfuls of sugar, salt and other baking items." When you're stuck inside, making play dough together is a fun and simple activity that can keep kids happy for a while. Check out a few more fun ideas here.

5 Ok, Give up and just go crazy.

There are lots of fun things to do when stuck indoors. Put on the music and have a dance party. Or have an indoor scavenger hunt by hiding some items and creating a checklist for the kids to use. If your kids like to perform, encourage a puppet or a talent show. Or blow up some balloons and have a volley-balloon tournament! Board games and even a simple old-fashioned game of hide and seek can also work wonders. The ideas are endless—and you can check out our Fun section for further inspiration. Feel free to share your own ideas either on our Facebook page or here in the comments!

2 The Kitchen Cure.

We're firm believers that getting kids in the kitchen is a surefire way to channel their energy into something meaningful, fun and delicious. Let them choose from one of our simple recipes that are all eight ingredients or less. Older kids can take the lead, and even the youngest ones can pitch in by measuring, pouring, and stirring ingredients. Or watch one of our Kids who Cook videos for some inspiration, like this one on making a big bowl of dirt, an appropriate tribute to the Spring thaw!

4 Everyone: Remember to Breathe.

Always a good idea to do this, yes? Being mindful of mindfulness can be very useful for all family members after too much time together. A simple way to introduce this concept of calming down and staying in the present moment is to have everyone close their eyes and remain silent for about a minute. Ask them to focus on what they hear and smell (for added fun, you can have everyone imitate the sounds they hear or attempt to describe the smells). Don't be surprised if your kids can hear and smell things you can't, as both of these senses decline with age. Try this tonight at dinner! More ideas for fostering mindfulness can be found here.



Roasted Asparagus with Shaved Parmesan



This recipe comes to us from our Executive Director Lynn Barendsen and her son Luca. Lynn writes, “Roasted asparagus with shaved parmesan is a recipe we came up with years ago, and it’s an easy one for cooking with kids. We used to have to top our greens (asparagus, spinach, escarole) with all kinds of things to entice our boys. We’d try toasted almonds or Parmesan or garlic or sometimes all three—anything to get them to eat green veggies. Somewhere along the line, they stopped caring about the toppings as much and now they’ll eat the greens with or without. During the summer months, we’ll often grill the asparagus, which is equally delicious.”



Roasted Asparagus with Shaved Parmesan

Instructions:

1. Preheat oven to 450°.
2. Wash and dry asparagus. Trim ends off of asparagus.
3. Spread asparagus in roasting pan, sprinkle olive oil over the top and coat evenly by hand.
4. Sprinkle with kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper.
5. Roast for 10 minutes.
6. Remove from oven, squeeze lemon juice over asparagus and stir gently to mix.
7. Sprinkle with freshly shaved parmesan.

Ingredients

Serves 4

- 1 bunch asparagus
- Parmigiano reggiano cheese
- Kosher salt
- Pepper
- Olive oil
- Lemon

More at:
thefamilydinnerproject.org/food/roasted-asparagus-shaved-parmesan/





20 Things I Love about _____

Come up with a topic together - or put some ideas in jar and pull out one randomly. Examples could be a season or a person or place. Then go around the table and have everyone name something silly or serious they love about that season until you have twenty items. Make sure to write everything down so you can have fun looking at it a month, a year, or 20 years from now!



20 Things I Love about _____



- | | |
|-----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 11. _____ |
| 2. _____ | 12. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 13. _____ |
| 4. _____ | 14. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 15. _____ |
| 6. _____ | 16. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 17. _____ |
| 8. _____ | 18. _____ |
| 9. _____ | 19. _____ |
| 10. _____ | 20. _____ |





CONVERSATION

Our conversation starters this month are all about the fine art of patience.

AGES 2-7



What does it mean to be 'patient'?

In the Elephant and Piggie Book *Waiting is Not Easy*, Elephant has a very hard time waiting for something. Do you have a hard time waiting for things? Like what?

What is something you are waiting for, or looking forward to, right now?

AGES 8-13

Think of someone you know who is very patient. Who is it? How can you tell they are patient?

All of us lose our patience sometimes. Think of a recent time you lost yours. What happened?

In the famous "Marshmallow Study" by Stanford University, children were presented with one marshmallow or other treat, which they could either eat immediately or not eat for 15 minutes in order to get more. What do you think you would do in this situation? (you can watch videos of this experiment online!)

AGES 14-100

Saadi, a famous poet, is quoted as saying "Have patience. All things are difficult before they become easy." Have you found this to be true?

What's the best thing you ever waited for? How long did you wait—and what did it feel like to wait?