

FAMILY MEMORIES OVER FOOD

By Jason Jones

UNITED STATES—I just had a great day recently and it was all spent with family. We haven't had a day like this in a very long time. Why was it important? A family member who moved out of state, came to visit for several days and she cooked up some amazing dishes. When I say epic, I mean just epic. We had chicken and dumplings. Now I know what plenty of you are thinking, when it comes to dumplings you are talking about the kind that are in the canned soup.

Oh, no people, I'm referring to some homemade dumplings with actual homemade broth, real white meat chicken breast, and dumplings made from scratch. Yes, things may have been a bit labor intensive, but they were so much fun to make, watch them be made and see my family laugh in the process. It has been a tough few months with just a bevy of stress to deal with at times.

There is just a lot cooking and at times, it places you on an emotional rollercoaster that you just wish you could have a moment to breathe and I felt like I had the opportunity to laugh and laughter is always great for the heart and brain. It just brings levity to life and the small stuff you just find a way to not sweat it anymore.

Now I will admit when those dumplings were fully complete, I didn't even eat any.



I love cooking food with family. Photo courtesy of Matthieu Joannon.

I wanted to save them for a later time. However, my aunt crafted up some Chicken Curry that literally knocked me out of my seat. It has always been a dish that I haven't been able to master. Why? I never knew how to get things started. However, I am someone who is a visual learner. I have to see something in order to master it. Just writing something down and expecting me to master it; doesn't work, it never has.

So when I witnessed the spices utilized and how my aunt started to craft the dish it clicked in my head. My first thought, "What, it's not as complicated as I thought

it was?!" It is a little bit of this, a little bit of that and it is just all about allowing the flavors to mesh and meld. Yes, some dishes just cannot be rushed and the fact that I have realized that I am going to try to cook this dish on my own in the current week.

Yes, I was doing my happy dance eating that Chicken Curry when it was all done. That broth was literally to die for, and I slurped every single drop of it. Then to add a bit of white rice to help soak up the broth with that chicken. It was just sensational, and I was like, "Sorry mom, aunt's dish is way better than what you've

cooked." Was she offended? No, my mom knows there are some dishes she can craft with ease, that my aunt can't do and vice versa.

That was not the end of it. We had homemade biscuits, when I say homemade, I mean just that. From scratch and I was in literal heaven. It is near impossible to make perfect biscuits, but these were perfection. Perfectly cooked, soft and buttery on the inside and then I had a fried piece of chicken tender on the side, Jeez, this was beyond delicious. That particular recipe I didn't master it because I didn't watch as much as I should have. I wish I did because I do like to bake and I feel like in another life I was a culinary chef/genius.

Yes, cooking is my happy time because I get in the zone and cooking with people who know how to cook is great conversation and lots of fun. When the day was over all we could say is that we have to do this again and cook other dishes, maybe dive down the Italian, Mexican or Asian cuisine. Did I eat a lot? Not really it was more nibbles here and there, but I did feel like tons of nibbles that was good and bad. Long story short, family is so vital to your overall mental health. The more time you spend the better, and having food only sweetens the pot.

RESISTING THE TEMPTATION TO SPEND

By Zoe Mitchell

UNITED STATES—I know I'm not the only one trying to get my finances in order. Money, it is indeed the one thing that many people don't have and those who have it are always aiming to get more of it. Yes, money is the root of all evil as many people like to say. I truly do believe that, and I don't care what others say. People who have money can easily say money is no big deal. You know why you can say that "You have it!"

With that said, I am realizing that sometimes as Americans we simply buy just to buy something. I have been trying to tell myself it is okay to enter an establishment and browse around. You do not have to buy something because you enter a store. However, on a mental level we're constantly telling ourselves we have to and the question is why?

I think we just like to say we purchased something. The problem with doing such is that it is wasteful spending. You just purchased an item that you do not want and that you do not need. I just had that experience unfold and now it's a problem. Why? I took



It is not easy to resist that temptation to spend at times. Photo by Lukasz Radziejewski.

money from my budget that should have been spent elsewhere. Not to mention I am going to have to now return that item to the store, which means I have to make a trip that I did not plan or want to take at all.

So you're now spending more money on gas and time to make a trip back to an establishment because you are suffering from buyer's remorse. Yes, you might think it's a great feeling to purchase something and yes, your endorphins do peak when your purchase something, but it is very short-lived.

Yes, you are happy for a few min-

utes after you purchase something, but by the time you get home that feeling has not only dissipated, but you are feeling regret. I don't want to live with regret in life, but when it comes to money you really have to think and resist if at all possible. What does that mean? If your goal is to save money, you have to not be tempted to spend. How do you do that? If the mall is a weakness for you, than you have to stay away from the mall. If you can get to a place where you go to the mall and window shop without purchasing that is a good thing. However, not every individual has that ability to resist.

If you are a spender you have to set a budget and stick to it no matter how much you might be tempted to do so. I think that is all about bargains and deals. At times when we see deals and bargains that feel so good we feel like a dummy if we pass it up. Guess what, you can pass up the deal especially if it is something that you do not need. Save that money for something else because you might need to spruce up the house, fix your car, pay a bill, encounter an experience that you've been thinking about for years, saving for a house.

Delayed gratification is something we don't like, but if we can force ourselves to try more it makes things a lot better. Knowing where you have an issue when it comes to money, helps you understand and respect it more. Sometimes just go a week without spending and see how you feel. It is a good feeling looking at your bank account and seeing a lot more money than you expected. Resisting the temptation to spend is possible, it is all about whether you want to do it or not.