



KITCHEN Circles



RECIPES FOR REAL CONNECTION
BY IMOGEN BAILEY

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Recipes for Real Connection

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“Together”



Introduction

The Heart of the Kitchen – Rediscovering Connection Through Cooking

When I think about the kitchen, I don't think about appliances or shopping lists. I think about women.

I think about the women I have stood beside at stoves over the last twenty years — at gatherings, at long Sunday lunches, at celebrations, in the small Circles I have run from my own home. I think about the kind of conversation that only happens when both your hands are busy and the food is taking its time.

There is a particular magic that lives in a kitchen full of women. It is not loud. It is not curated. It is the magic of three or four pairs of hands moving around a single pot. Children threading between knees. A grandmother passing a tasting spoon. An aunt stirring while a teenager peels. A stranger arriving with a bottle and leaving as a friend.

This is one of the oldest forms of connection we have, and most of us have very quietly let it slip away.

This book is my attempt to put a little of it back where it belongs.

It is a cookbook, first and foremost. The recipes are real, the meals are good, the food is the point. But it is also an invitation — to slow down, to share the chopping, to look up from the cutting board and notice who is standing beside you. The kitchen has always been a Circle. Most of us simply stopped treating it like one.

These pages are a quiet remembering. And I am so glad you are here for it.





Purpose of This Book

My purpose with this book is simple.

I want to make it easier — and a little more beautiful — for women to feed each other again. Not in a perfect-hostess way. In a real way. The way our mothers' mothers and grandmothers' grandmothers did it, before we got so busy.

Every recipe inside is designed for more than one set of hands. Each one assigns gentle roles — a Story Holder, a Flavor Alchemist, a Fire Keeper, a Root Weaver — so the work of the meal is shared and nobody is left alone in the kitchen while the others sit. Each recipe carries small Connection Invitations: a question to ask while you chop, a moment to pause while the pot simmers, a way to bring the conversation a little deeper than the weather.

You don't have to do all of it. Use what feels right. Leave what doesn't.

What I am asking is that you gather — even just two of you — and let the cooking be the reason.

That is the whole purpose of this book.



Why Connection Matters More Now Than Ever

I have spent twenty years in front of cameras, and in that time I learned something about being seen.

Being watched is not the same as being known.

Most of us are surrounded by people and screens and noise, and most of us still long for something deeper than what the calendar gives us. The research is consistent with what we already feel — one in three of us, in Australia, the US, and the UK alike, quietly carries that ache. You don't really need the research, though. You can feel it underneath most of your days.

We have not lost our capacity for connection. We have lost the containers that used to hold it. The front porch. The long Sunday lunch. The walk to the well. The fire that needed tending. The dough that needed kneading by more than one pair of hands.

A kitchen full of women cooking together is one of those containers. It always was. This book is a small effort to put one of those containers back where it belongs — in your house, on your stove, in the next gathering you host.

A Brief History:

SHARED MEALS AND CIRCLES ACROSS CULTURES

The cookbook in your hands did not invent the idea of women cooking together. It is one of the oldest ideas there is.

For as long as humans have made meals, we have made them in company. The earliest hearths were communal — one fire, many hands, food coming from a shared pot because that was the only kind of pot. In hunter-gatherer life, women gathered to grind, to peel, to pound, to ferment. The kitchen was not yet a room. It was a clearing, a courtyard, a corner of the home where the work of feeding people happened with other people.

Across cultures the pattern repeats. In Indigenous Australian communities, in the longhouses of the Haudenosaunee, in West African compounds, in the Mediterranean traditions of meze and the symposium, in the family-style tables of East Asia where every dish is shared from the centre — eating together has always been more than nourishment. It has been alliance, ceremony, welcome, celebration. It has been the way a community knew itself.

In every kitchen I have ever been welcomed into, the same quiet pattern shows up. The grandmother leads. The daughters listen. The children carry things. No one performs. No one apologises for the kitchen. It is ordinary and it is sacred — and it is completely unremarkable to everyone except the visitor who notices.

What is unusual is what we have now — eating alone at desks, eating in cars, microwaving in silence, ordering through a screen.

The history of shared meals is long.

The era of solitary eating is recent.

And it does not have to keep being the era we live in.

An Invitation to Gather

So this is my gentle call to you.

Choose a recipe — any one. Send a message to two or three women you would like to know better, or know more deeply. Invite them to cook with you, not for you. When they arrive, give each of them something to do straight away. Hand them a knife and a chopping board. Pour them tea. Tell them which role you have saved for them. Begin.

Let the meal take its time. Let the conversation find its own depth. Let the kitchen become a Circle without ever announcing itself as one.

You will need no special training. No spiritual costume. No perfect plate.

Just your imperfect, full, real self. That is the only thing the women in your life have ever truly needed from you.

May your table be a place of belonging.

With love,
Imogen

What Is a Circle?

Embracing the Power of Shared Spaces

A circle is more than a shape—it's a way of being together.

At its essence, a circle is an intentional gathering where people come as equals, with no hierarchy or podium. Everyone sits (or stands) facing one another, creating a container of safety, respect, and presence. There is space for each voice to be heard without interruption or advice-giving. A simple talking piece may pass from hand to hand, ensuring everyone has the opportunity to share from the heart—if they choose—while others listen deeply.

Circles have existed across cultures for thousands of years: Indigenous talking circles, ancient women's gatherings around fires, Quaker meetings, men's groups in modern retreats. They are places where vulnerability is welcomed, judgment set aside, and collective wisdom emerges naturally. In a circle, we remember we are not alone. We witness one another. We belong. What makes circles powerful is their simplicity and their depth. They combat isolation by fostering authentic connection—the kind that heals, uplifts, and reminds us of our shared humanity. As Imogen Bailey beautifully says, "Our connection to one another is the greatest gift we have."

In our disconnected modern world, circles offer a gentle antidote: a space to pause, to listen, to be truly seen.



The Approach:

THE HONOURING HEART APPROACH TO CIRCLES

Honouring Heart, founded by Imogen Bailey, brings a modern, heart-centered approach to this ancient practice—primarily through women's circles, but with principles that extend to all who seek deeper belonging.

Imogen describes a women's circle as "a programmed gathering where women can learn, grow, share, and create in a safe and nurturing space led by a circle facilitator." It is "a truly rewarding and rejuvenating exercise for all ages and backgrounds."

Rooted in her own journey as a birth and end-of-life doula, meditation teacher, Reiki practitioner, and women's circle educator, Imogen's work centers on life's transitions and the profound healing that happens when humans connect authentically. She created Honouring Heart to empower facilitators to hold inclusive, supportive spaces that nurture mental health, combat loneliness, and build meaningful tribes.

Core elements of the Honouring Heart approach include:

- Creating safety and inclusivity so everyone feels held.
- Emphasizing presence, deep listening, and non-judgment.
- Honoring each person's unique contribution and story.
- Using gentle structure (like programming, rituals, and activities) to guide the flow while allowing organic magic to unfold.
- Recognizing connection as essential for confidence, growth, and well-being.

Through her Women's Circle Facilitator Program and teachings, Imogen has inspired thousands to lead circles that make belonging accessible and transformative.

This cookbook draws directly from that spirit: adapting the nurturing, heart-based essence of Honouring Heart circles to the shared joy of cooking and eating together.

Adapting Circles to the Kitchen

The kitchen is a natural circle.

It already brings people into close, embodied proximity—around a counter, island, or stove—where movement, touch, scent, and sound create immediate intimacy. Tasks are shared, contributions visible, and the outcome (a meal) is collective.

We adapt circle principles here in simple, flowing ways:

- **Equality in roles** — Rotating tasks (chopping, stirring, seasoning, storytelling) ensure no one dominates or sits out; everyone contributes and is witnessed.
- **Presence over perfection** — We pause to notice: the color of vegetables, the aroma rising, a memory the taste evokes. No rushing.
- **Safe sharing** — Gentle invitations during prep or at the table encourage heart-sharing without pressure—stories, gratitudes, reflections.
- **Facilitation as holding space** — One person (rotating or gentle host) guides lightly: suggesting pauses, reminding of kindness, ensuring everyone feels included.
- **Closing with gratitude** — The meal becomes the ritual endpoint, where we reflect on what nourished us beyond the food.

The result? A kitchen circle feels dynamic yet grounded—less formal than seated sharing, more alive with the rhythm of cooking. It turns ordinary meals into ceremonies of connection, where food becomes the medium for deeper relating.



Guidelines

CREATING A SAFE AND WELCOMING KITCHEN CIRCLE

To make your gatherings feel nurturing and inclusive, hold these gentle guidelines:

1. **Set a clear intention** — At the start, share why you're gathering (e.g., "to connect, listen, and enjoy each other's company").
2. **Agree on consent and boundaries** — Everyone can pass on sharing; respect privacy; no fixing or advice unless asked.
3. **Practice deep listening** — When someone speaks (while chopping, stirring, or at the table), give full attention—no phones, no interrupting.
4. **Embrace imperfection** — Spills, uneven cuts, burnt edges—laugh together. The heart matters more than the recipe.
5. **Include everyone** — Rotate roles so no one is sidelined; check in if someone seems quiet.
6. **Honor timing and energy** — Keep it relaxed; end when it feels complete, not rushed.
7. **End with gratitude** — A shared moment of thanks—for the food, the company, the connection.

These aren't strict rules but loving reminders to keep the space safe and welcoming.





Sample Circle Open & Closes

Opening Ritual (5–10 minutes, before starting prep)

Gather everyone around the kitchen space. Take a collective breath. The host might say:

"Welcome. We're here to cook, eat, and connect with open hearts. Let's take a moment to arrive—feel your feet on the floor, notice your breath. If you'd like, share your name and one word for how you're arriving today." (Go around quickly.)

Then: "May this kitchen be a circle of kindness, presence, and belonging. Let's begin."

Closing Ritual (at the table, after eating)

Light a candle (or simply hold hands/raise glasses). Go around:

"Share one thing you're grateful for from this gathering—the food, a moment, a feeling, a story."

End with a collective breath and words like:

"Thank you for showing up. Thank you for this connection. May we carry this warmth with us."

These rituals bookend the experience, creating a gentle container

About the Author

IMOGEN BAILEY AND THE JOURNEY OF HONOURING HEART

My name is Imogen Bailey, and the cookbook in your hands is one of the most personal things I have made.

I am a women's Circle facilitator and the founder of Honouring Heart. I am a birth and end-of-life doula, a meditation teacher, and a Reiki practitioner. Most of all I am a student of gathering — of what makes a room feel safe enough that the real conversation begins.

I came to this work through twenty years in television. What I noticed, slowly, was that the spaces I felt most alive in were the quiet ones — evenings around a friend's table, weekends stirring on a stove while women I loved talked openly beside me, late afternoons in the small Circles I run from my own home. The way we live now is not how humans were meant to live, and the antidote is closer than we think. Usually within reach of a stove.

I run the Women's Circle Facilitator Program at Honouring Heart. I am the author of *The Power of Circle*. I made this cookbook because the kitchen, in the end, is where most of it begins.

With love,
Imogen





Recipes for Connection

HOW TO USE THESE RECIPES

Role Assignments and Connection Invitations Explained

The recipes in this book are designed for collaboration, not solo cooking. Each includes:

- **Serves** — Typically 4–8, scalable for small or larger groups.
- **Roles** (4–6 rotating jobs) — e.g., Chopper, Stirrer, Taster/Seasoner, Storyteller, Table Guardian, Flame Keeper. Assign playfully at the start; rotate for future gatherings.
- **Connection Invitations** — Gentle prompts woven into prep, cooking, and eating phases. Examples: "While chopping, share a childhood memory tied to this ingredient" or "At the table, offer one word of appreciation for the person next to you."
- **Flow** — Step-by-step with timing for sharing to keep energy flowing naturally.

Approach these as frameworks—adapt roles or prompts to your group. The goal isn't culinary perfection but presence and connection.

Let the kitchen become your gathering place. Let the meal nourish more than bodies.

You're invited to begin.



Quick Weeknight Circles

SIMPLE, 30-45 MINUTE MEALS TO RECONNECT ON
ORDINARY EVENINGS WITH FAMILY OR CLOSE FRIENDS



Heartfire Stew

A SLOW-SIMMERED SHARED CONNECTION MEAL



Serves: 6-8

(perfect for a small group circle of 4–10 people)



Total time: 2–2.5 hours

(mostly hands-off simmering, ideal for conversation)

VIBE:

Warm, grounding, nourishing — like a gentle hug in bowl form. A hearty vegetable & bean stew with rich, layered flavors that improve as it simmers, symbolizing how relationships deepen with time and shared attention.

INGREDIENTS

(collective shopping / foraging list – assign someone to coordinate)

- 2 large onions, diced
- 4–6 garlic cloves, minced
- 3 carrots, chopped
- 3 celery stalks, chopped
- 2 red capsicums (bell peppers), chopped
- 500g (about 1 lb) potatoes or sweet potatoes, cubed
- 2 cans (400g each) chopped tomatoes
- 2 cans (400g each) mixed beans (kidney, cannellini, chick peas — or cooked dried beans)
- 1 litre vegetable or chicken stock
- 2–3 bay leaves
- 2 tsp smoked paprika
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp dried oregano or thyme
- Salt & black pepper to taste
- Olive oil for sautéing
- Fresh herbs (parsley, coriander/cilantro, or basil) to finish
- Optional richness: splash of red wine, balsamic vinegar, or a spoonful of miso
- To serve: crusty bread, yoghurt/sour cream, grated cheese, lemon wedges

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign these collaboratively at the start (like passing a talking piece in a circle). Everyone gets one primary role, but people float to help others — no one is "stuck." This creates flow, contribution, and appreciation.

Fire Keeper / Heat Guardian — Manages the stove heat, stirs the pot periodically, watches simmer levels. Symbolic: tends the "heart" of the meal (and group energy).

Chop Circle Leader — Prepares and leads the chopping station; invites others to join and share knife skills or stories.

Story Weaver — Brings a small talking piece (stone, spoon, feather) to hold during chopping/eating rounds; gently invites shares.

Flavor Alchemist — Tastes, seasons, and suggests adjustments; adds final herbs/wine/etc

Table Weaver — Sets the table mindfully (candles, simple flowers, no phones), creates beauty and intention.

Gatherer — Collects any last-minute ingredients, bread, drinks; welcomes people as they arrive.

Floating Heart — No fixed job; offers help wherever needed, checks in on people's energy, brings extra warmth.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (10–15 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together. Stand or sit in a loose circle around the kitchen/table.

Connection Invitation: The Story Weaver holds the talking piece and says: "We're here to cook and eat together as an act of connection — something humans have done across cultures for thousands of years. Let's set an intention for our time. When the piece comes to you, share one word or short sentence about what you'd like to give or receive today (e.g., 'laughter', 'to feel seen', 'rest')." Pass the piece around once. No crosstalk — just witness.

2 / The Chop & Share Round (20–30 min) Everyone takes a chopping board/task based on roles. Play soft music or silence.

Connection Invitation: While chopping, use the talking piece every 5–10 minutes for a quick round: “Share one small thing from your week — something ordinary or tender — that you’re carrying into this space.” (Keep shares brief, 1–2 min max. Others listen fully, no advice unless asked.) This mirrors circle vulnerability while hands stay busy — chopping becomes meditative.

3 / Building the Stew (layering flavors – 15 min active)

- Fire Keeper heats oil; Chop Circle Leader starts onions/garlic.
- Everyone adds their chopped veg when ready, saying aloud: “I add this carrot for grounding” or “This pepper for warmth.”
- Flavor Alchemist adds spices, stock, tomatoes, beans.
- Bring to simmer, then low heat.

4 / Simmer & Deep Share (45–60 min hands-off) Pot simmers > group moves to lounge/table or stays nearby.

Connection Invitation – Full Heart Round: Story Weaver begins: “As this stew slowly becomes more than the sum of its parts, let’s do the same. Share something you’ve been holding in your heart lately — a joy, a struggle, a question. We listen with our hearts, not to fix.” Pass the talking piece fully around once or twice. End with appreciation: each person names one thing they appreciated witnessing in another.

5 / Finishing & Serving (10 min) Flavor Alchemist tastes/adjusts. Fresh herbs scattered. Table Weaver calls everyone to the beautifully set table. Light a candle if desired. Hold hands or moment of silence. Someone says: “May this food nourish our bodies and our connections.”

6 / Eating Together – The Closing Circle Eat slowly. Midway, do one final light round: “One thing this meal/time is giving me right now...” End with gratitude — go around: “Thank you for...” (specific to someone or the group).

This recipe is endlessly adaptable — swap ingredients seasonally, make it gluten-free, add meat if desired — but the **roles + invitations** are the heart. It turns cooking into ceremony, eating into communion.



Vibrant Stir-Fry Veggie Bowls

A QUICK, COLORFUL CONNECTION STIR



Serves: 4-6

(ideal for a circle of 4–8 people)



30–40 minutes

(fast, active prep and cooking keeps energy flowing)

VIBE:

Bright, fresh, energizing—like a burst of life on the plate. Crisp-tender veggies in a glossy, savory-sweet sauce over rice or noodles, topped with crunch and freshness. Symbolizes quick, radiant connection: coming together fast, yet creating something beautiful and nourishing.

INGREDIENTS

(group shopping/prep list – assign a Gatherer)

- Base: 2–3 cups cooked rice, quinoa, or noodles (brown rice for grounding, jasmine for lightness)
- Veggies (aim for rainbow colors – chop into bite-sized pieces):
 - 1 large broccoli head, cut into florets
 - 2 carrots, thinly sliced or julienned
 - 1 red bell pepper, sliced
 - 1 yellow/orange bell pepper, sliced
 - 1 cup sugar snap peas or snow peas
 - 1 zucchini or 200g mushrooms, sliced
- Optional extras: edamame, baby corn, bok choy, or whatever's fresh
- Protein boost (optional): tofu cubes, tempeh, eggs, or shrimp – pan-fried separately
- Sauce (whisk together):
 - ¼ cup soy sauce or tamari
 - 2 tbsp sesame oil
 - 2 tbsp honey or maple syrup
 - 1–2 tbsp rice vinegar
 - 1 tbsp cornstarch mixed with 2 tbsp water (for thickening)
 - 3 garlic cloves, minced
 - 1–2 tsp grated fresh ginger
- Optional heat: sriracha, chili flakes
- Finishers: sesame seeds, sliced green onions, fresh coriander/cilantro, lime wedges, crushed peanuts/cashews

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign at the start in a quick standing circle (like setting intention). Roles flow and overlap—encourage helping and appreciation.

Wok Guardian / Flame Tender — Controls the wok or large pan heat, adds oil, stirs constantly for even cooking.

Chop Rainbow Leader — Preps and organizes veggies by color; invites others to chop and name what each color brings (energy, joy, etc.).

Story Spark — Holds a simple talking piece (wooden spoon, colorful stone); gently guides quick shares during prep.

Sauce Alchemist — Mixes and tastes the sauce; adjusts flavors collaboratively.

Base Builder — Cooks the rice/noodles; sets the bowls mindfully.

Topping Weaver — Prepares garnishes, arranges them beautifully.

Floating Connector — Helps anywhere, checks in on moods, brings extra presence.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Quick Intention (5–10 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together. Form a loose circle in the kitchen.

Connection Invitation: Story Spark holds the talking piece: “Tonight we stir-fry vibrant colors and flavors to remind us how quickly beauty and nourishment can come when we come together. Share one word: What color or energy do you bring to this space today?” Pass once around—no deep dives, just quick sparks to set a playful, present tone.

2 / Chop & Color Round (10–15 min) Everyone at stations chopping veggies. Play upbeat, gentle music.

Connection Invitation: Every few minutes, Story Spark pauses for a micro-round (30–60 sec each): “As we cut this [vegetable], share one small ‘bright spot’ from your day or week—something that brought a smile or lightness.” Listen fully, no fixing—just witnessing. Chopping becomes rhythmic and grounding.

3 / The Stir-Fry Dance (8–12 min active)

- Wok Guardian heats oil high.
- Add garlic/ginger first (aroma fills the space).
- Chop Rainbow adds veggies in stages (hardest first: carrots/broccoli, then peppers/peas). Everyone calls out: “I add this red pepper for passion” or “These greens for calm.”
- Sauce Alchemist pours in sauce; stir until glossy and thickened.
- Keep moving—high heat, constant motion, like stirring energy together.

4 / Bowl Assembly & Deepen Share (5–10 min) Base Builder portions rice/noodles into bowls. Everyone adds stir-fry, then Topping Weaver scatters garnishes.

Connection Invitation – Heart Round: Sit or stand around the table. Story Spark: “These bowls are vibrant because of every hand here. Let’s share from the heart: What’s one thing you’re grateful for in this moment, or one feeling this colorful meal stirs in you?” Pass the piece fully once. Hold space with warmth—no advice, just presence.

5 / Eating Together – The Closing Spark Eat mindfully (chopsticks slow it down beautifully). Midway or at end: Quick final round: “One word for how this shared meal lands in your body/heart right now.” End with group gratitude: Go around naming one specific appreciation (“Thank you for your laugh while chopping” or “Thank you for tending the wok so perfectly”).

This dish is endlessly customizable—swap veggies seasonally, adjust spice, make it gluten-free. The fast pace keeps things lively, while the roles and invitations turn a simple stir-fry into a mini-ceremony of connection.



Creamy Garlic Herb Pasta Primavera

A VELVETY SHARED COMFORT BOWL



Serves: 4-6

(ideal for a circle of 4–8 people)



35–45 minutes

(active and flowing, with moments to pause and connect)

VIBE:

Warm, enveloping, herbaceous — like a soft embrace in a bowl. Spring/summer veggies in a light creamy garlic-herb sauce over pasta, brightened with lemon and fresh greens. Symbolizes how simple ingredients, when tended together, create deep nourishment and closeness.

INGREDIENTS

(group shopping/prep list – assign a Gatherer)

- 400–500g pasta (penne, fusilli, farfalle, or orecchiette for catching sauce)
- 2–3 tbsp olive oil or butter
- 4–6 garlic cloves, thinly sliced or minced
- 1 small onion or leek, finely chopped
- Veggies (mix of seasonal primavera classics):
- 1 zucchini, sliced into half-moons
- 1 yellow squash or extra zucchini
- 1 cup asparagus, cut into 2-inch pieces
- 1 cup broccoli florets or broccolini
- 1 cup peas (fresh or frozen)
- Optional: cherry tomatoes halved, spinach/arugula to wilt in at end
- 1½ cups heavy cream (or half-and-half / plant-based cream for lighter)
- ½–¾ cup grated Parmesan or pecorino (plus more for serving)
- Zest and juice of 1 lemon
- Fresh herbs: ½ cup chopped (mix of basil, parsley, chives, dill — whatever's abundant)
- Salt, black pepper, red pepper flakes to taste
- Optional richness: splash of white wine or veggie stock for deglazing

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign collaboratively in a quick opening circle. Roles encourage flow, help, and gratitude — everyone contributes meaningfully.

Pot Tender / Pasta Guardian — Boils water, cooks pasta al dente, reserves starchy water.

Garlic & Herb Weaver — Preps garlic, onion, and fresh herbs; infuses the sauce base.

Veggie Circle Leader — Washes/chops primavera veggies; invites color/energy naming.

Story Holder — Holds a talking piece (wooden spoon, herb sprig); gently guides shares.

Sauce Alchemist — Builds and tastes the creamy sauce; adjusts seasoning/lemon.

Table Nurturer — Sets the table with care (candles, cloth napkins, no distractions).

Floating Heart — Supports wherever needed, checks energy, adds warmth.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (5–10 min) Everyone arrives, hands washed together. Form a loose circle in the kitchen.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder offers the talking piece: “We gather to create this creamy, comforting dish as an act of connection — something our ancestors knew well. Share one word or short phrase: What do you hope to feel or offer in this shared space today?” Pass once around. Listen deeply, no interruption — just witnessing.

2 / Prep & Share Round (10–15 min) Stations for chopping veggies, mincing garlic/herbs. Soft music or quiet chatter.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses every few minutes for a brief round: “As we prepare these vibrant vegetables, share one small thing you’re noticing in yourself right now — a feeling, a memory, a sensation.” Keep shares short (1 min max). Hands busy, hearts open — chopping becomes a meditative rhythm.

3 / Building the Primavera (15–20 min active)

- Pot Tender starts boiling salted water for pasta.
- Garlic & Herb Weaver sautés garlic/onion in oil until fragrant (everyone inhales and appreciates the aroma).
- Veggie Circle Leader adds veggies in stages (firmer first: broccoli/asparagus, then zucchini/peas). Sauté until bright and crisp-tender.
- Sauce Alchemist pours in cream, simmers gently, adds cheese, lemon zest/juice, herbs. Taste together — “More garlic? More lemon?”
- Pasta Guardian drains pasta, reserves a cup of starchy water; toss everything together, loosening with pasta water for silky texture.

4 / Plating & Deeper Heart Round (5–10 min) Table

Nurturer calls everyone to the set table. Portion into bowls, top with extra herbs/cheese/lemon.

Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share: Story Holder: “This creamy dish holds the care of every hand here. Let’s share from the heart: What’s one thing weighing on you or lighting you up lately? We listen with presence, no need to fix.” Pass the piece around once (or twice if energy allows). Hold space warmly.

5 / Eating Together – The Closing Circle Eat slowly, savoring flavors and company. Midway or toward end: Quick final round: “One thing this meal or our time together is stirring in me right now...” Close with gratitude: Go around naming appreciations (“Thank you for the perfect lemon balance” or “Thank you for holding space so gently”).

This recipe adapts easily — vegan with plant cream and nutritional yeast, gluten-free pasta, extra veggies. The creaminess encourages slow eating and lingering conversation



"Sharing food with another human being is an intimate act that should not be indulged in lightly."

M. F. K. FISHER

A Story of Belonging:

ZOE'S PATH BACK TO HOLDING SPACE AND BEING HELD

My journey into hosting women's circles did not begin as a business decision. It began as an urge. A quiet ache beneath the surface of work I already loved. I was supporting women and children one-to-one, and while it was deeply aligned, I felt called toward something slower, more communal, more ceremonial.

I longed for a space where women could gather not just to receive from me, but to witness and hold one another. The moment of initiation came unexpectedly when a long-term client, at her final session, told me, "You are like a sister in the kitchen and a healer on the mountain. You need to share this with more people." She offered me her small meditation room, and despite the nerves that rose in my body, I said yes.

I didn't feel ready. Stepping beyond the safety of one-to-one work stirred fears of visibility, inadequacy, and being truly seen. Yet alongside the fear was a spark of something creative and instinctive awakening deep within me. It felt like a seed had been planted. The whisper grew louder: Women need this... and so do you. The first circle was intimate and tender. I clung to detailed notes and carefully prepared words, but what I remember most is the quality of the silence....full, alive, and then the moment a woman shared her heartbreak and every woman in the room felt it. Something ancient stirred in me that night. It was less about facilitating and more about remembering. It was time to step into my light instead of playing small and avoiding it.

As the months unfolded, circle became as much my teacher as my offering. I began trusting my voice instead of rehearsing it. I confronted old patterns of not feeling good enough and softened parts of myself that had long been guarded. There were evenings when only a few women came and doubt crept in, yet each time I considered pulling back, something deeper anchored me. It was within the women; their tears, the laughter, the courage in the room, the creativity of self-expression, the sacred simplicity of women choosing to sit together. Gradually, my notes fell away. I began listening more than planning, feeling into the energy of what wanted to move through the space. The circles developed their own rhythm of reverence, ritual, and shared breath.



What surprised me most was realizing I was not only holding space, but I was also being held. The Circles had become a dance between yin and yang. In witnessing other women reclaim their voices, I reclaimed my own. In watching them soften, I softened. Circle became a remembering of who I was before I learned to shrink. It taught me that leadership could be gentle, that visibility could be aligned, and that I did not have to perform to belong. Hosting women's circles did not simply expand my work; it reshaped me from the inside out. And perhaps that quiet inner reshaping was the true beginning all along.

Spiced Chickpea & Spinach Stew

A WARMING POT OF SHARED NOURISHMENT



Serves: 6-8

(ideal for a cozy circle of
5–10 people)



45–60 minutes

(mostly simmering time
for easy conversation)

VIBE:

Earthy, aromatic, comforting — like a spiced hug from the inside out. Tender chickpeas and wilted spinach in a rich tomato-based broth infused with cumin, coriander, paprika, and warmth. Symbolizes how diverse elements (like people) come together over gentle heat to create something sustaining and whole.

INGREDIENTS

(collective gathering list – assign a Gatherer)

- 2–3 tbsp olive oil
- 1 large onion, diced
- 4–6 garlic cloves, minced
- 1–2 inch piece fresh ginger, grated
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 2 tsp ground coriander
- 1–1½ tsp smoked paprika
- ½–1 tsp ground turmeric
- ½ tsp cinnamon (optional, for depth)
- ¼–½ tsp chili flakes or cayenne (adjust for heat)
- 2 cans (400g each) chickpeas, drained and rinsed
- 1 can (400g) chopped tomatoes
- 400–500ml vegetable stock (or water + bouillon)
- 200–300g fresh spinach (or a big handful per person), roughly chopped
- Juice of 1 lemon (or to taste)
- Salt & black pepper to taste
- To finish: fresh coriander/cilantro, parsley, or mint; yoghurt or coconut yoghurt; optional extras like toasted pine nuts or pomegranate seeds

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign at the start in a gentle standing circle. Roles overlap and support each other — emphasize appreciation and flow.

Flame & Pot Keeper — Manages heat, stirs the stew, watches the simmer.

Spice Alchemist — Measures and adds spices; invites group input on balance.

Chop & Green Weaver — Preps onion, garlic, ginger, spinach; leads veggie additions.

Story Circle Holder — Holds a simple talking piece (spoon, stone, spice jar); guides gentle shares.

Flavor Guardian — Tastes, adjusts salt/lemon/spice; suggests final tweaks.

Table & Beauty Setter — Creates an inviting table (candles, simple greenery, warm lighting).

Floating Nurturer — Offers help anywhere, senses energy, brings extra care.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention (8–12 min) Everyone arrives, hands washed together. Form a loose circle near the stove/table.

Connection Invitation: Story Circle Holder offers the talking piece: “We come to this pot as people have for centuries — to nourish body and heart through shared effort. Share one word or brief phrase: What warmth or quality do you bring to our circle today?” Pass once around. Hold space with full attention — no crosstalk.

2 / Prep & Spice Round (10–15 min) Stations for chopping and measuring. Gentle background sounds or quiet.

Connection Invitation: Story Circle Holder pauses periodically for quick rounds: “As we add these spices, share one small thing that’s been ‘warming’ your heart or mind lately — a moment, a person, a feeling.” Keep shares light and brief (1 min). Chopping and stirring become anchors for presence.

3 / Building the Stew (15–20 min active)

- Flame & Pot Keeper heats oil; Chop & Green Weaver starts onion, garlic, ginger.
- Spice Alchemist adds spices — everyone can say aloud: “I add cumin for grounding” or “Paprika for a spark of joy.” Sauté until fragrant.
- Add chickpeas, tomatoes, stock; bring to simmer.
- Simmer 20–30 min, stirring occasionally. Add spinach toward end to wilt gently.
- Flavor Guardian tastes with group: “More lemon for brightness? More heat?” Adjust together.

4 / Final Touches & Deeper Share (10 min) Finish with lemon juice, fresh herbs. Ladle into bowls.

Connection Invitation – Heart Round: Move to the table. Story Circle Holder: “This stew has deepened with time and every hand. Let’s open our hearts: What’s one thing you’re carrying right now — a gratitude, a tender spot, a hope? We listen fully, without fixing.” Pass the talking piece once (or twice if the group flows). Hold warm, non-judgmental space.

5 / Eating Together – The Closing Circle Eat slowly, savoring layers of flavor. Midway or at end: Quick round: “One word for how this shared pot feels in your body or heart right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for the perfect spice balance” or “Thank you for listening so deeply”).

This stew is forgiving and adaptable — add sweet potato or carrot for extra heartiness, make it spicier or milder, serve with flatbread, rice, or couscous. The slow build of flavors mirrors how connection unfolds with patience and attention.



"The people who give you their food
give you their heart."

CESAR CHAVEZ



Quick Moroccan Tagine with Couscous

AN AROMATIC POT OF SHARED WARMTH



Serves: 4-6

(perfect for a lively circle of 4-8 people)



35-45 minutes

(quick stovetop version, no traditional clay pot needed)

VIBE:

Exotic yet comforting, layered with spice, sweetness, and earthiness — like a journey tasted together. Tender veggies, chickpeas, and dried fruit in a fragrant broth, served over fluffy couscous. Symbolizes how fast magic can happen when diverse elements (and people) blend with intention and gentle heat.

INGREDIENTS

(group gathering list – assign a Gatherer)

- 2-3 tbsp olive oil
- 1 large onion, sliced
- 3-4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1-2 tsp fresh grated ginger (or 1 tsp ground)
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 2 tsp ground coriander
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- ½ tsp turmeric
- ¼-½ tsp cayenne or harissa paste (for heat)
- 2 carrots, sliced into rounds
- 1 zucchini, chopped
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 can (400g) chickpeas, drained/rinsed
- ½ cup dried apricots or raisins, halved
- 1 can (400g) chopped tomatoes
- 300-400ml vegetable stock
- Optional: handful green olives, preserved lemon rind (chopped)
- Juice of ½-1 lemon (to finish)
- Salt & black pepper to taste
- For couscous: 250-300g couscous, 300-400ml boiling water/stock, 1 tbsp olive oil or butter, pinch salt
- To finish: fresh coriander/cilantro, parsley, sliced almonds or pistachios (toasted)

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign collaboratively at the start in a standing circle. Roles encourage flow, mutual help, and appreciation — everyone belongs.

Flame & Pot Guardian — Controls stove heat, stirs the tagine, monitors simmer.

Spice & Aroma Weaver — Measures and adds spices; invites group naming of what each spice brings.

Veggie & Fruit Circle Leader — Preps veggies, apricots; leads colorful additions.

Story & Presence Holder — Holds a talking piece (spoon, spice jar, stone); gently guides shares.

Couscous Tender — Prepares fluffy couscous; fluffs and seasons it mindfully.

Flavor Balancer — Tastes, adjusts lemon/spice/salt; invites group input.

Table & Heart Setter — Creates welcoming table (candles, warm colors, no phones).

Floating Connector — Helps anywhere, senses energy, offers extra care.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (5-10 min) Everyone arrives, hands washed together. Form a loose circle.

Connection Invitation: Story & Presence Holder offers the talking piece: “In Morocco and beyond, the tagine pot has long been a place where people gather, share, and connect. Tonight we do the same. Share one word or short phrase: What spice or quality do you bring to our circle today?” Pass once around. Listen with full presence — no fixing or interruption.

2 / Prep & Spice Round (10–12 min) Stations for chopping and measuring. Gentle music or ambient sounds.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses every few minutes for quick rounds: “As we add these warming spices, share one small thing that’s been ‘warming’ or stirring in you lately — a joy, a challenge, a memory.” Keep shares brief (1 min). Prep becomes rhythmic and grounding.

3 / Building the Tagine (15–20 min active)

- Flame & Pot Guardian heats oil; Veggie Leader starts onion/garlic/ginger.
- Spice Weaver adds spices — everyone calls out: “I add cinnamon for sweetness and depth” or “Cumin for earth and togetherness.” Sauté until fragrant.
- Add veggies, chickpeas, apricots, tomatoes, stock. Bring to simmer.
- Cover and cook 15–20 min until veggies are tender.
- Flavor Balancer tastes with group: “More lemon for brightness? More heat?” Adjust together.

4 / Couscous & Deeper Heart Round (5–8 min) Couscous Tender pours boiling water over couscous, covers, fluffs after 5 min.

Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share: Move to the table. Story Holder: “This tagine has come alive through every hand and heart. Let’s open: What’s one thing you’re holding in your heart right now — gratitude, tenderness, hope? We listen with warmth, no need to solve.” Pass the piece once (or twice if flowing). Hold sacred, non-judgmental space.

5 / Eating Together – The Closing Circle Plate tagine over couscous, top with herbs/nuts. Eat slowly, savoring layers. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how this shared meal lands in you right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for the perfect spice harmony” or “Thank you for holding such gentle space”).

This quick tagine is versatile — add chicken/lamb for non-veg, swap veggies seasonally, serve with flatbread instead of couscous. The fast timeline keeps the energy alive while allowing deep connection.



Family-Style Quesadillas

BUILD-YOUR-OWN SHARED MELTY CONNECTION



Serves: 4–8

(great for family, friends, or mixed-age circles of 4–10 people)



30–40 minutes

(quick assembly and grilling keeps energy high and fun)

VIBE:

Fun, hands-on, gooey, customizable — like a warm, cheesy hug everyone helps create. Crispy tortillas filled with melted cheese and colorful fillings, cut into wedges and served family-style for reaching, sharing, and savoring together. Symbolizes how individual choices blend into collective joy when we show up and contribute.

INGREDIENTS

(group gathering / prep list – assign a Gatherer)

- 8–12 large flour or corn tortillas (soft, burrito-size for sharing)
- 3–4 cups shredded cheese (cheddar, Monterey Jack, mozzarella, or mix; Oaxaca for authentic stretch)
- Fillings (set out in bowls for build-your-own):
- Cooked shredded chicken, ground beef, or chorizo (optional protein)
- Black beans or refried beans
- Sautéed onions & bell peppers (multi-color for vibrancy)
- Sliced mushrooms, zucchini, or spinach
- Corn kernels, diced tomatoes, jalapeños
- Avocado slices or guacamole
- Fresh cilantro, green onions
- For grilling: butter or oil
- Sides for sharing: salsa (mild & spicy), sour cream or Greek yogurt, guacamole, lime wedges, pico de gallo

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign at the start in a fun, quick circle (perfect for families/kids too). Roles overlap — encourage helping, swapping, and cheers for each other.

Griddle / Pan Guardian — Manages the stove or griddle heat, flips quesadillas, ensures golden crispiness.

Fill & Fold Artist — Leads assembly station; invites creative combos and naming.

Cheese & Topping Weaver — Preps/shreds cheese, organizes filling bowls.

Story Spark Holder — Holds a talking piece (spatula, tortilla, fun stone); guides light shares.

Platter & Table Setter — Cuts finished quesadillas into wedges, arranges big family-style platter, sets table invitingly (no phones, colorful napkins).

Flavor & Dip Alchemist — Prepares/tastes sides (salsa, guac), adjusts spice.

Floating Joy Bringer — Helps anywhere, keeps energy up, checks in on everyone.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (5–8 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together. Form a loose circle around the kitchen counter.

Connection Invitation: Story Spark Holder offers the talking piece: “Quesadillas are simple but magical when we build them together — just like connection. Share one word: What ‘flavor’ or energy do you bring to our circle today? (e.g., ‘silly’, ‘calm’, ‘curious’).” Pass once around quickly. Listen with smiles — set a playful, welcoming tone.

2 / Build & Share Round (10–15 min) Set up assembly line: tortillas, cheese, fillings in bowls. Everyone grabs one and builds 1–2 quesadillas. Play upbeat music.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses every few minutes for micro-rounds: “As you add your fillings, share one small fun thing from your day or week — a laugh, a win, a quirky moment.” Keep shares short and light (30–60 sec). Building becomes creative and bonding.

3 / Grilling Dance (8–12 min active)

- Griddle Guardian heats pan/griddle with butter/oil.
- Fill & Fold places quesadillas on; everyone can help flip or press gently.
- Call out: “I’m adding extra cheese for gooey love!” or “This one’s spicy for boldness.” Grill until golden and melty (2–3 min per side).
- Transfer to cutting board for Platter Setter to cut into wedges.

4 / Platter Assembly & Deeper Heart Round (5–8 min) Pile wedges on a big central platter with sides around it. Gather at table.

Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share: Story Holder: “These quesadillas came from every hand here. Let’s open our hearts: What’s one thing you’re grateful for right now, or one feeling this shared moment brings up?” Pass the piece once around. Hold space warmly — no fixing, just presence.

5 / Eating Together – The Closing Circle Dig in family-style: reach, share, dip, laugh. Eat with hands for extra playfulness. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how this melty, shared meal feels in you right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for the perfect flip” or “Thank you for your smile while building”).



Mediterranean One-Tray Bake

A HANDS-OFF SHARED ROAST OF SUNSHINE FLAVORS



Serves: 4–6

(ideal for a warm, intimate circle of 4–8 people)



45–55 minutes

(mostly oven time for easy lingering and connecting)

VIBE:

Bright, herbaceous, sun-drenched — like a Mediterranean holiday on a plate. Colorful veggies, olives, feta, and herbs roasted to caramelised perfection, with olive oil and lemon tying it all together. Symbolizes how simple, diverse ingredients (and people) come together effortlessly in one space to create something vibrant and nourishing.

INGREDIENTS

(group gathering list – assign a Gatherer)

- 500–600g baby potatoes or chopped potatoes, halved
- 2 red onions, cut into wedges
- 2–3 bell peppers (mix of red, yellow, orange), chunked
- 1 large zucchini, thick slices
- 200–300g cherry tomatoes, whole
- 1 can (400g) chickpeas, drained/rinsed (or add extra veggies)
- 3–4 tbsp olive oil
- 4–6 garlic cloves, smashed or whole
- 2 tsp dried oregano
- 1–2 tsp dried thyme or rosemary
- 1 tsp smoked paprika (optional for depth)
- Salt, black pepper, red pepper flakes to taste
- 100–150g feta cheese, cubed or crumbled (or plant-based alternative)
- Handful pitted olives (Kalamata or green)
- Zest and juice of 1–2 lemons
- Fresh herbs to finish: parsley, basil, dill, or mint (chopped)
- Optional extras: artichoke hearts, eggplant chunks, halloumi slices

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign collaboratively at the start in a relaxed standing circle. Roles flow and overlap — encourage helping, appreciation, and joy in the process.

Oven & Tray Guardian — Preheats oven, lines tray if needed, places tray in/out, monitors roast.

Chop & Color Weaver — Leads chopping veggies; invites everyone to name what each color brings (e.g., “red pepper for passion”).

Herb & Seasoning Alchemist — Measures oil, herbs, spices; tosses everything together.

Story & Heart Holder — Holds a simple talking piece (lemon, wooden spoon, olive); gently guides shares.

Finishing Touch Artist — Adds feta, olives, fresh herbs, lemon at the end.

Table & Atmosphere Setter — Creates inviting table (sunny linens, candles, no distractions).

Floating Nurturer — Helps anywhere, senses group energy, brings extra warmth.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (5–10 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together. Form a loose circle near the counter.

Connection Invitation: Story & Heart Holder offers the talking piece: “Across the Mediterranean and beyond, people have long gathered around shared trays of roasted food to connect deeply. Tonight we do the same. Share one word or short phrase: What ‘flavor’ or sunlight do you bring to our circle today?” Pass once around. Listen fully — no interruption, just presence.

2 / Chop & Toss Round (12–15 min) Everyone chops veggies at stations. Play soft Mediterranean music or gentle chatter.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses periodically for quick rounds: “As we chop these bright vegetables, share one small thing that’s brought ‘light’ or warmth into your week — a moment, a kindness, a feeling.” Keep shares brief (1 min max). Chopping becomes meditative and collaborative.

3 / Assembly & Roasting (5 min active + 30–40 min oven)

- Chop & Color Weaver piles veggies/chickpeas on large sheet pan(s).
- Herb & Seasoning Alchemist drizzles oil, sprinkles herbs/spices/salt — everyone tosses together (hands in if desired).
- Oven Guardian slides tray(s) into preheated 200–220°C (400–425°F) oven.
- Roast 30–40 min, stirring once halfway for even caramelisation.
- While it roasts, group can move to lounge or stay nearby for deeper conversation.

4 / Finishing & Deeper Heart Round (5–8 min) Tray out of oven. Finishing Touch Artist adds feta, olives, fresh herbs, lemon zest/juice.

Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share: Gather at table. Story Holder: “This tray has transformed through every hand and the gentle heat of time. Let’s open our hearts: What’s one thing you’re carrying right now — a gratitude, a tender spot, a hope? We listen with warmth, without fixing.” Pass the talking piece once (or twice if energy flows). Hold sacred, supportive space.

5 / Eating Together – The Closing Circle Serve family-style straight from the tray or platter. Eat slowly, savoring roasted flavors. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how this shared sunshine meal feels in your body or heart right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for the perfect herb balance” or “Thank you for your gentle listening”).

This one-tray bake is endlessly flexible — vegan without feta, add protein like chicken thighs or sausages on separate sections, swap veggies seasonally. The hands-off roasting frees time for real connection.



A Story of Silent Support:

ANNIE'S BLOOM IN THE CIRCLE

I came to circle at a time in my life when I was surrounded by people, yet still felt alone. I was the one others leaned on. The counsellor. The space holder. The capable woman. But I realised I did not often allow myself to be held. Sitting in circle without a role to play felt unfamiliar at first. I had to overcome my own guardedness. Trusting women did not come naturally to me. Softening in a room full of women felt vulnerable and I hated it, yet wanted to love it.

Through the years, of not just my facilitator training, but the repeated practice of sitting together, something changed. I began to notice how my body would brace and how slowly, over time, it would soften. I learned to regulate myself in the presence of other women rather than perform or over give. Circle helped me rebuild trust. Not just in others, but in myself within relationship. The loneliness I did not even know I was carrying began to dissolve. I felt connected in a way that did not require me to lead or hold everything together.

Circle has changed how I show up as a woman, a mother and a facilitator. I no longer feel I have to be the strongest one in the room. I can receive. I can rest in silence. I can allow myself to be seen without fixing or guiding. That shift has been deeply healing. Circle did not just teach me how to facilitate. It taught me how to belong.



Healing Ginger Turmeric Broth Bowls

A SOOTHING GOLDEN ELIXIR FOR BODY & HEART



Serves: 4-6

(perfect for a tender circle of 4-8 people)



45-60 minutes

(mostly gentle simmering for unhurried connection)

VIBE:

Warm, glowing, restorative — like liquid sunshine and a soft blanket in bowl form. A clear, flavorful broth infused with fresh ginger, turmeric, garlic, and aromatics, served with nourishing add-ins for personalization. Symbolizes how gentle heat and time transform simple elements (and people) into deep healing and closeness.

INGREDIENTS

(group gathering list – assign a Gatherer)

Broth base:

- 2-3 tbsp olive oil or coconut oil
- 1 large onion or leek, thinly sliced
- 6-8 garlic cloves, sliced
- 4-6 inch piece fresh ginger, peeled and thinly sliced or grated
- 2-3 inch piece fresh turmeric (or 2-3 tsp ground turmeric)
- 1-2 stalks lemongrass, bruised (optional but lovely)
- 1-2 carrots, sliced
- 2 celery stalks, sliced
- 1-2 star anise or a few peppercorns (optional)
- 1.5-2 litres vegetable stock or bone broth (for deeper healing)
- Juice of 1-2 limes or lemons (to finish)
- Salt & black pepper to taste
- Optional boost: splash of coconut milk for creaminess, miso paste for umami

Add-ins (set out buffet-style for personalization):

- Cooked rice, quinoa, or noodles
- Leafy greens (spinach, kale, bok choy)
- Sliced mushrooms, broccoli florets, or zucchini
- Protein: tofu cubes, shredded chicken, poached eggs, or edamame
- Fresh herbs: cilantro, basil, mint, green onions
- Toppings: sliced chili, sesame seeds, lime wedges, chili oil

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign gently at the start in a soft circle. Roles emphasize care, support, and appreciation — perfect for a healing-focused gathering.

Simmer & Broth Keeper — Tends the pot, adjusts heat, stirs mindfully.

Root & Aroma Weaver — Preps ginger, turmeric, garlic, onion; infuses the base.

Add-In Circle Leader — Preps and organizes customizable toppings/add-ins.

Story & Healing Holder — Holds a simple talking piece (ginger slice, spoon, stone); guides gentle shares.

Flavor & Balance Guardian — Tastes broth, adds lime/salt; invites group adjustments.

Table & Sanctuary Setter — Creates a calm, welcoming table (candles, soft lighting, warm bowls).

Floating Care Bringer — Offers help anywhere, checks in on energy, brings extra gentleness.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (8-12 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together slowly. Form a loose circle.

Connection Invitation: Story & Healing Holder offers the talking piece: “Tonight we create this healing broth as an act of care — for our bodies and for each other, echoing ancient ways of gathering around pots for restoration. Share one word or short phrase: What healing or softness do you wish to receive or offer here?” Pass once around. Listen with full, tender presence — no crosstalk.

2 / Prep & Infusion Round (10–15 min) Stations for slicing roots and veggies. Soft, calming music or quiet.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses every few minutes for brief rounds: “As we prepare these healing roots, share one small thing your body, heart, or mind has been asking for lately — rest, kindness, release.” Keep shares gentle and short (1 min max). Prep becomes a soothing ritual.

3 / Building the Broth (10 min active + 25–35 min simmer)

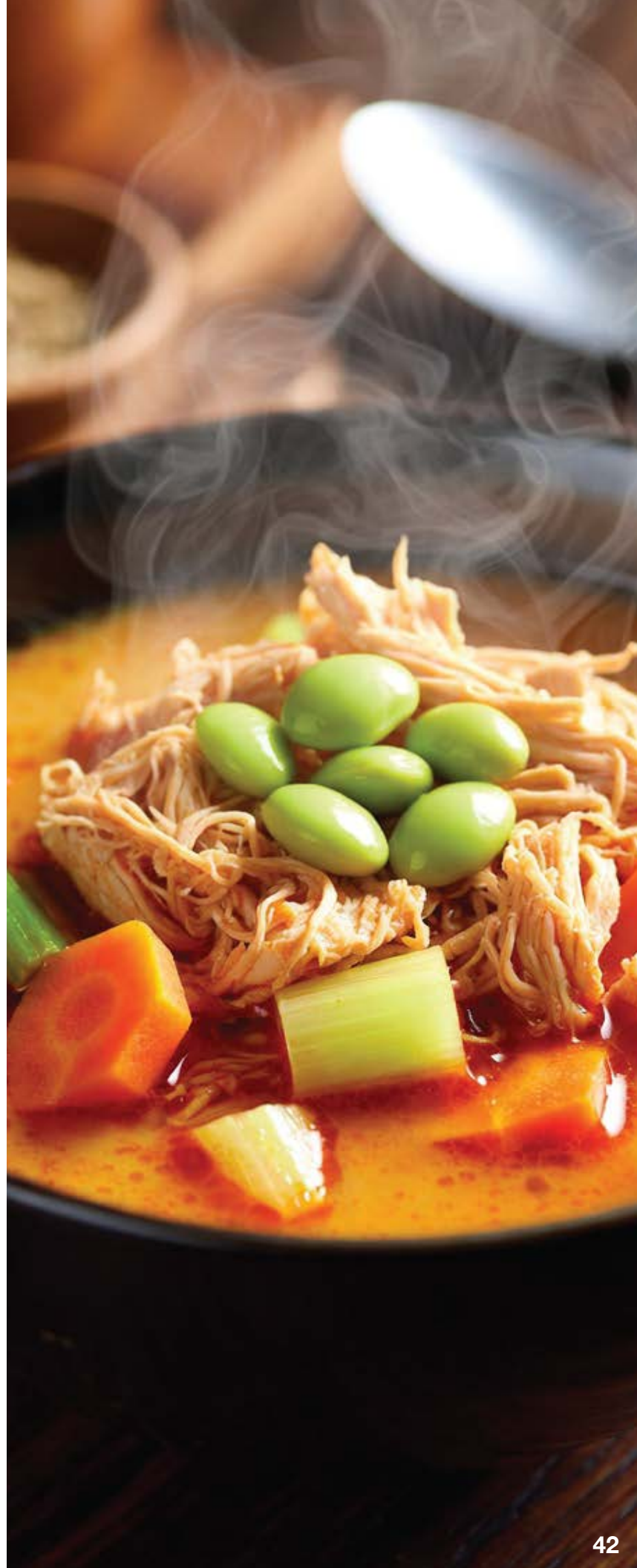
- Simmer & Broth Keeper heats oil; Root Weaver adds onion/garlic/ginger/turmeric. Sauté until fragrant.
- Add carrots, celery, aromatics; pour in stock. Bring to gentle simmer.
- Simmer low and slow — everyone can gather near the pot, inhaling the steam.
- Flavor Guardian tastes with group: “More lime for brightness? More ginger for warmth?” Adjust together.

4 / Assembly & Deeper Heart Round (5–10 min) Strain broth if desired (or leave chunky); ladle into bowls over chosen bases/add-ins.

Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share: Gather at the table. Story Holder: “This golden broth holds the quiet care of every hand here. Let’s open our hearts: What’s one tender thing you’re holding right now — a gratitude, an ache, a hope? We listen with softness, no need to heal or fix.” Pass the piece once (or twice if flowing). Hold warm, sacred space.

5 / Eating Together – The Closing Circle Sip slowly, savoring warmth and layers. Encourage adding toppings as needed. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how this healing broth feels moving through you right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for the perfect ginger balance” or “Thank you for your gentle presence”).

This broth is highly adaptable — vegan, gluten-free, add heat or creaminess as desired. The slow simmer and customizable bowls encourage lingering, making it ideal for emotional or restorative gatherings.



Easy Chicken (or Tofu) Fried Rice

A QUICK, CUSTOMIZABLE WOK OF TOGETHERNESS



Serves: 4–6

(ideal for a lively circle of
4–8 people)



20–30 minutes

(fast, high-energy cooking
keeps everyone engaged)

VIBE:

Savory, comforting, stir-fried joy — like a warm, flavorful hug in a bowl. Day-old rice tossed with protein, veggies, eggs, and soy for that classic takeout feel, but made with love and shared hands. Symbolizes how “leftovers” (experiences, feelings, ingredients) can transform into something nourishing when stirred together with intention.

INGREDIENTS

(group gathering list – assign a Gatherer)

- 4–5 cups day-old cooked rice (cold is best for texture; jasmine or long-grain)
- 2–3 tbsp neutral oil (vegetable, canola, or sesame)
- 2–3 eggs, beaten
- Protein: 300–400g cooked chicken (shredded/ diced) or firm tofu (cubed and pan-fried)
- Veggies (mix and match what’s on hand):
- 1 cup frozen peas & carrots (or fresh diced)
- 1 small onion, diced
- 2–3 garlic cloves, minced
- Optional extras: bell pepper, zucchini, corn, broccoli, green beans
- 3–4 tbsp soy sauce or tamari (adjust to taste)
- 1–2 tsp sesame oil (for finishing aroma)
- 2–3 green onions, sliced (for garnish)
- Optional: ginger (minced), oyster sauce, chili flakes for heat
- Salt & white pepper to taste

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign at the start in a quick, upbeat circle around the wok/counter. Roles flow and overlap — encourage cheers, swaps, and appreciation.

Wok / Heat Guardian — Controls pan heat, stirs constantly, keeps everything moving.

Rice & Protein Prepper — Breaks up cold rice, preps chicken/tofu.

Veggie & Egg Circle Leader — Chops veggies, scrambles eggs; invites naming what each adds.

Story Spark Holder — Holds a talking piece (spatula, green onion, fun stone); guides light shares.

Sauce & Season Alchemist — Mixes soy/sesame, tastes, adjusts flavors.

Platter & Table Weaver — Portions into bowls or serves family-style, sets inviting table.

Floating Energy Keeper — Helps anywhere, keeps vibes high, checks in on everyone.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (5 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together. Form a loose circle near the stove.

Connection Invitation: Story Spark Holder offers the talking piece: “Fried rice is humble magic — turning yesterday’s rice into today’s feast when we come together. Share one word: What ‘flavor’ or energy do you bring to our wok today? (e.g., ‘playful’, ‘grounded’, ‘spicy’).” Pass once around quickly. Listen with smiles — set a fun, welcoming tone.



2 / Prep & Quick Share Round (8–10 min) Stations for chopping, beating eggs, breaking up rice. Upbeat music or chatter.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses for micro-rounds: “As we prep these bits and pieces, share one small ‘leftover’ from your day or week — something ordinary, funny, or tender you’re carrying.” Keep shares light and brief (30–60 sec). Prep becomes rhythmic and bonding.

3 / The Stir-Fry Flow (10–12 min active)

- Wok Guardian heats oil high; scramble eggs first, remove.
- Add onion/garlic/veggies; stir-fry until bright.
- Rice & Protein Prepper adds rice and chicken/tofu; everyone pushes and flips.
- Sauce Alchemist pours soy/sesame — call out: “I add this soy for savoriness” or “Sesame for warmth.”
- Return eggs, toss everything together until hot and fragrant.

4 / Plating & Deeper Heart Round (5 min) Wok Guardian scoops into bowls or big platter.

Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share: Gather at table. Story Holder: “This fried rice came alive through every stir and hand. Let’s open: What’s one thing this quick, shared moment is stirring in you — gratitude, a laugh, a soft spot? We listen fully, no fixing needed.” Pass the piece once around. Hold space with warmth.

5 / Eating Together – The Closing Circle Eat family-style or from bowls, with chopsticks for slowness. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how this fried rice lands in your body or heart right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for the perfect stir” or “Thank you for your laugh during prep”).

This dish is super flexible — fully vegetarian/vegan with tofu, gluten-free soy, add whatever veggies/protein you have. The fast pace keeps energy alive while roles and shares turn it into real connection.

Sheet Pan Fajita Veggies & Wraps

A COLOURFUL, BUILD-YOUR-OWN CONNECTION FEAST



Serves: 4-8

(perfect for a colourful, energetic circle of 4-10 people)



35-45 minutes

(mostly hands-off oven time for easy conversation)

VIBE:

Bright, smoky, zesty — like a fiesta on a tray. Tender-crisp peppers, onions, and mushrooms roasted with classic fajita spices, served with warm wraps and toppings so everyone assembles their own. Symbolizes how different “pieces” (people, flavours, stories) come together beautifully when given space and a little heat.

INGREDIENTS

(group gathering list – assign a Gatherer)

Veggies for the tray:

- 3 large bell peppers (red, yellow, orange – mix for colour)
- 2 large onions, sliced into wedges
- 200-300g mushrooms, thickly sliced
- 1-2 zucchini, sliced into strips
- Optional extras: 1-2 corn cobs (cut into rounds), broccoli florets, or cherry tomatoes
- 3-4 tbsp olive oil

Fajita spice mix (or use store-bought):

- 2 tsp chili powder
- 2 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 1 tsp garlic powder
- 1 tsp onion powder
- ½-1 tsp oregano
- ½ tsp salt + black pepper
- Optional heat: ¼-½ tsp cayenne or chipotle powder

To serve / build-your-own:

- 8-12 soft flour or corn tortillas (warmed)
- Protein option: grilled chicken strips, steak strips, black beans, or crispy tofu
- Toppings bar: guacamole, salsa, pico de gallo, sour cream / yoghurt, lime wedges, fresh coriander/cilantro, sliced jalapeños, shredded lettuce, grated cheese
- Optional: hot sauce selection

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign at the start in a quick, fun standing circle. Roles encourage creativity, help, and appreciation — everyone contributes.

Tray & Oven Guardian — Preheats oven, lines tray(s), places in/out, tosses veggies halfway.

Chop & Colour Weaver — Leads slicing peppers/onions/zucchini; invites everyone to name what each colour brings (joy, energy, calm...).

Spice Alchemist — Mixes and sprinkles fajita seasoning; invites group input on balance.

Story & Spark Holder — Holds a talking piece (lime, wooden spoon, colourful pepper); guides light shares.

Toppings & Wrap Weaver — Prepares and arranges the toppings bar, warms tortillas.

Table & Fiesta Setter — Creates a vibrant, inviting table (bright napkins, candles, no phones).

Floating Connector — Helps anywhere, keeps energy playful, checks in on everyone.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (5-8 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together. Form a loose circle near the counter.

Connection Invitation: Story & Spark Holder offers the talking piece: “Fajitas are all about colour, flavour, and bringing different pieces together — just like we do tonight. Share one word: What ‘colour’ or energy do you bring to our circle today? (e.g., ‘fiery’, ‘calm’, ‘playful’).” Pass once around quickly. Listen with smiles — set a warm, festive tone.

2 / Chop & Season Round (10–12 min) Everyone chops at stations. Play lively Latin-inspired music or gentle chatter.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses for quick rounds: “As we slice these bright peppers, share one small thing from your week that brought a burst of colour or energy — a laugh, a win, a moment that lit you up.” Keep shares light and brief (45–60 sec). Chopping becomes rhythmic and joyful.

3 / Roasting the Tray (5 min active + 25–30 min oven)

- Chop & Colour Weaver piles veggies on large sheet pan(s).
- Spice Alchemist drizzles oil and sprinkles seasoning — everyone tosses together (hands in if desired).
- Tray Guardian slides tray(s) into preheated 220°C (425°F) oven.
- Roast 25–30 min, tossing once halfway for even charring and colour.

4 / Build & Deeper Heart Round (5–8 min) Tray out >

Toppings Weaver arranges everything on table: veggies, warm wraps, protein, toppings bar.

Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share: Gather at the table. Story Holder: “This tray of colour and flavour came from every hand here. Let’s open our hearts: What’s one thing you’re grateful for right now, or one feeling this shared moment brings up?” Pass the talking piece once around. Hold space with warmth — no fixing, just presence.

5 / Eating Together – The Closing Circle Everyone builds their own wraps — pass the tray, reach, share toppings, laugh. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how this fajita feast feels in your body or heart right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for the perfect spice mix” or “Thank you for your smile while chopping”).

This recipe is very flexible — fully plant-based with beans/tofu, gluten-free wraps, adjust spice level for kids or sensitive palates. The build-your-own style makes it inclusive, fun, and perfect for mixed groups.



Thai-Inspired Coconut Curry Noodles

A FRAGRANT WOK OF SHARED WARMTH & BALANCE



Serves: 6–8

(perfect for a vibrant circle of 6–10 people — friends, family, gatherings)



35–45 minutes

(active wok time keeps energy flowing and connected)

VIBE:

Creamy, aromatic, harmonious — like a warm tropical hug in a bowl. Rice noodles in a rich coconut curry broth with vegetables, protein, and fresh herbs, balanced to perfection through group tasting. Symbolizes how contrasting elements (spicy/sweet, creamy/crisp) blend beautifully when tended together with care and presence.

INGREDIENTS

(group market list – assign a Gatherer)

- 400–500g rice noodles (wide or vermicelli, soaked or cooked per packet)
- 2–3 cans (400ml each) coconut milk
- 2–3 tbsp red or green curry paste (adjust for heat; Thai brands best)
- 1 large onion or 3 shallots, thinly sliced
- 4–6 garlic cloves, minced
- 1–2 inch fresh ginger or galangal, grated
- 1–2 lemongrass stalks, bruised and chopped (optional but authentic)
- Vegetables (mix for color and texture):
 - 2–3 bell peppers, sliced
 - 2 cups broccoli florets or green beans
 - 1–2 carrots, thinly sliced
 - 200g mushrooms or baby corn
 - Handful snow peas or bok choy
- Protein (choose 1–2):
 - 400–500g chicken, tofu, shrimp, or tempeh, sliced
 - 2–3 tbsp fish sauce or soy sauce/tamari
 - 2–3 tbsp palm sugar or brown sugar
- Juice of 2–3 limes
- To finish & serve:
 - Large handful fresh Thai basil, cilantro, and/or mint
 - Lime wedges
 - Bean sprouts, sliced chili, crushed peanuts

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign at the start in a lively standing circle around the wok or large pot. Roles overlap and encourage helping, tasting together, and appreciation — everyone tends the balance.

Wok / Flame Guardian — Controls heat, stir-fries base, monitors simmer.

Aroma & Curry Weaver — Starts onion/garlic/ginger/curry paste; builds fragrance.

Veggie & Protein Circle Leader — Preps and adds vegetables/protein in stages.

Story & Balance Holder — Holds a talking piece (wooden spoon, lime wedge, chili); guides gentle shares.

Flavor Harmony Alchemist — Tastes and adjusts fish sauce/sugar/lime; invites group input.

Noodle & Garnish Tender — Cooks/soaks noodles, prepares herbs/sprouts/peanuts.

Table & Warmth Setter — Creates inviting table (bright cloths, candles, no phones).

Floating Heart Connector — Helps anywhere, keeps energy warm and present.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (5–10 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together. Form a loose circle near the wok.

Connection Invitation: Story & Balance Holder offers the talking piece: “In Thai kitchens and tables, curry is shared to bring people into harmony — flavors balanced, hearts open. Tonight we do the same. Share one word: What ‘flavor’ or quality do you bring to our circle today (balance, warmth, spice...)?” Pass once around quickly. Listen with smiles — set a welcoming, harmonious tone.

2 / Aroma & Stir Round (10–15 min) Stations for chopping and measuring. Upbeat Thai or gentle music.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses every few minutes for quick rounds: “As we build this fragrant base, share one small thing from your day/week that felt ‘balanced’ or brought you harmony — a moment, a connection, a breath.” Keep shares light and brief (30–60 sec). Stirring becomes rhythmic and grounding.

3 / Building the Curry (15–20 min active)

- Wok Guardian heats oil; Aroma Weaver adds onion/garlic/ginger/curry paste. Stir until fragrant.
- Veggie Leader adds protein first (if using), brown lightly, then harder veggies (carrots/broccoli).
- Pour in coconut milk and a splash of water/stock; simmer gently.
- Flavor Alchemist tastes with group: “More lime for brightness? More sugar for sweetness? More fish sauce for depth?” Adjust collaboratively.
- Add softer veggies (peppers, snow peas) toward end to keep crisp.

4 / Noodles & Deeper Heart Round (5–10 min) Noodle Tender adds cooked noodles to wok or serves separately.

Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share: Gather at table. Story Holder: “This curry has come into balance through every hand and taste here. Let’s open our hearts: What’s one thing you’re grateful for right now, or one feeling this shared warmth is stirring in you? We listen fully, no fixing needed.” Pass the piece once around. Hold space warmly.

5 / Eating Together – The Closing Circle Serve family-style in large bowls or plates; top with herbs, sprouts, peanuts, lime. Eat slowly, savoring layers. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how this harmonious curry feels in your body or heart right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for the perfect lime lift” or “Thank you for your gentle presence”).

This dish adapts easily — fully vegan (use soy sauce, extra tofu/veggies), milder or spicier curry paste, rice instead of noodles. The shared wok and tasting keep everyone engaged and connected.



Hungry For Connection

ELIZABETH'S RETURN TO BALANCE

I was hungry for connection.
To find my people.
A place where my beliefs and my boundaries were respected.

A well-held circle gives structure.
And structure, for me, creates trust.
It becomes a place I can land.
A place where I can speak what is truly happening without fear
of judgement.

Why?

Because everyone is there for the same reason.
I am shy by nature. Large crowds unsettle me, especially when
vulnerability is involved. Circle gently asks me to step beyond
that edge.

It helps me release what has been sitting in my system, creating
quiet dis-ease beneath the surface.

This is not about off-loading onto my circle sisters.
It is a felt moment.

My moment to meet my body and say, "I hear you. I feel what is
moving through you. Let us recognise it and let it move on."

That simple act restores balance.

And the feeling of being included, of standing among peers,
reaches even deeper - steady, affirming, and quietly healing.

Needless to say, with this passion, I took my journey to the next
level.

To be able to provide others with the same feeling,
the same release, that feeling of being held, led me to become a
circle facilitator myself and to teach others to do the same.

You see, holding space for others is a sacred gift, and one that
if you can, you must.





Weekend Feasts & Celebrations

ABUNDANT SPREADS FOR FRIENDS, EXTENDED FAMILY,
OR JOYFUL GATHERINGS



Build-Your-Own Taco Feast

A JOYFUL, CUSTOMIZABLE SHARED CELEBRATION



Serves: 6–10

(perfect for lively circles of 6–12 people, families, or friends)



45–60 minutes

(prep and assembly flow into eating for maximum connection)

VIBE:

Festive, colorful, hands-on — like a fiesta on the table. Warm tortillas filled with seasoned proteins, fresh salsas, crunchy veggies, and creamy toppings, built to each person's taste. Symbolizes how individual choices (and stories) blend into collective delight when we gather with intention.

INGREDIENTS

(group shopping / prep list – assign a Gatherer)

- Tortillas: 20–30 soft corn or flour (warm in a stack)

Proteins (choose 2–3 for variety):

- 500–700g ground beef or turkey seasoned with taco spice
- Shredded chicken (rotisserie or poached, tossed in salsa)
- Carnitas-style pork or slow-cooked beef
- Plant-based: seasoned black beans, lentils, or grilled tofu/veggie crumbles

Toppings & Fillings (set out in bowls buffet-style):

- Shredded lettuce or cabbage
- Diced tomatoes, onions, radishes
- Pickled red onions or jalapeños
- Guacamole or sliced avocado
- Salsa roja, salsa verde, pico de gallo
- Sour cream or Mexican crema
- Shredded cheese (cheddar, cotija, queso fresco)
- Fresh cilantro, lime wedges
- Optional extras: black olives, corn, refried beans, hot sauces
- Sides: Mexican rice, chips & salsa, elote (street corn) if desired

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign at the start in an upbeat standing circle. Roles encourage creativity, help, and appreciation — everyone contributes to the feast.

Tortilla Warmer / Guardian — Heats tortillas (stovetop, microwave, or oven); keeps them soft and stacked.

Protein Sizzle Leader — Cooks/seasons proteins; invites naming what each brings (e.g., “spice for fire”).

Chop & Fresh Weaver — Preps veggies, herbs, salsas; leads colorful additions.

Story Fiesta Holder — Holds a talking piece (lime wedge, spoon, colorful stone); guides joyful shares.

Topping & Salsa Alchemist — Assembles/arranges bowls, tastes for balance.

Table Fiesta Setter — Creates vibrant table (bright cloths, candles, no phones, perhaps papel picado or flowers).

Floating Joy Connector — Helps anywhere, keeps energy playful, checks in on moods.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (5–10 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together. Form a loose circle around the counter.

Connection Invitation: Story Fiesta Holder offers the talking piece: “In Mexican culture, tacos bring people together in laughter and sharing — a simple meal that becomes a celebration. Tonight we build our feast the same way. Share one word or short phrase: What ‘flavor’ or joy do you bring to this table today?” Pass once around quickly. Listen with smiles — set a festive, welcoming tone.

2 / Prep & Share Round (10–21 min) Stations for cooking proteins, chopping veggies, making guac/salsa. Upbeat Latin music or lively chatter.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses every few minutes for quick rounds: “As we chop these fresh colors or stir the sizzle, share one small fun or bright moment from your week — something that made you smile.” Keep shares light and brief (30–60 sec). Prep becomes creative and bonding.

3 / Assembly & Build Round (10–15 min)

Tortilla Warmer stacks warm tortillas.

Protein Leader spoons fillings into serving dishes.

Everyone gathers around the spread: Build your first taco together.

Call out playfully: “I add this avocado for creaminess” or “Cilantro for freshness.” Pass bowls, reach, share.

4 / Seated Feast & Deeper Heart Round (5–10 min) Move to the table with the big colorful spread in the center.

Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share: Story Holder: “This taco feast came from every hand and heart here. Let’s open: What’s one thing you’re grateful for in this moment, or one feeling bubbling up as we share this food?” Pass the piece once around. Hold space warmly — laughter and tenderness both welcome, no fixing needed.

5 / Eating Together – The Closing Circle Build more tacos, eat family-style, pass toppings. Savor slowly. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how this fiesta feels in your body or heart right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for the perfect salsa kick” or “Thank you for your contagious laugh”).

This feast is endlessly adaptable — vegetarian/vegan options, gluten-free tortillas, kid-friendly mild versions, or spicier for bold palates. The build-your-own style makes it inclusive, fun, and deeply connective.



Roasted Vegetable Platter with Hummus & Baba Ganoush

A GENEROUS SHARED MEZZE OF WARMTH & EARTH



Serves: 6–8

(perfect for a welcoming circle of 5–10 people)



50–60 minutes

(mostly oven roasting for easy conversation time)

VIBE:

Earthy, smoky, creamy, colorful — like a sun-baked garden on a platter. Tender roasted veggies paired with silky hummus and smoky baba ganoush, served with warm pita or flatbread for dipping and sharing. Symbolizes how diverse elements (people, flavors) come together in one generous space to nourish body and bonds.

INGREDIENTS

Roasted veggies:

- 2–3 eggplants (for baba ganoush base, or roast extra slices)
- 4–5 carrots, halved lengthwise
- 2–3 zucchini, thick slices
- 2 red bell peppers, chunked
- 1–2 red onions, wedged
- 200–300g cherry tomatoes or grape tomatoes
- 3–4 tbsp olive oil
- 2 tsp za'atar or sumac
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- Salt, black pepper, chili flakes to taste

Hummus (quick homemade or quality store-bought):

- 2 cans (400g each) chickpeas, drained (reserve liquid)
- 3–4 tbsp tahini
- 2–3 garlic cloves
- Juice of 1–2 lemons
- 2–3 tbsp olive oil
- Salt, cumin to taste

Baba ganoush:

- 2–3 roasted eggplants (from above)
- 2–3 tbsp tahini
- 2 garlic cloves
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 1–2 tbsp olive oil
- Salt, smoked paprika or cumin to taste

To serve:

- Warm pita bread, flatbread, or lavash
- Fresh herbs: parsley, mint, dill
- Olives, radishes, cucumber slices, pickled turnips
- Optional: feta crumbles, pomegranate seeds

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign collaboratively at the start in a gentle standing circle.

Roles flow with mutual support — emphasize appreciation and shared effort.

Oven & Roast Guardian — Preheats oven, arranges veggies on trays, monitors roasting.

Chop & Earth Weaver — Preps vegetables; invites naming what each brings (e.g., “eggplant for depth”).

Dip Alchemist — Blends hummus and baba ganoush; tastes and adjusts with group input.

Story & Heart Holder — Holds a simple talking piece (olive branch, spoon, stone); guides shares.

Platter & Beauty Artist — Arranges finished platter beautifully, adds herbs/olives.

Bread & Table Nurturer — Warms breads, sets inviting table (candles, warm tones, no distractions).

Floating Care Connector — Helps anywhere, senses energy, brings extra warmth.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (5–10 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together. Form a loose circle near the counter.

Connection Invitation: Story & Heart Holder offers the talking piece: “In Middle Eastern traditions, shared platters like this invite hospitality and deep connection — food as a bridge between hearts. Tonight we gather the same way. Share one word or short phrase: What warmth or gift do you bring to our circle today?” Pass once around. Listen with full presence — no interruption.

2 / Chop & Prep Round (10–15 min) Stations for chopping veggies, blending dips. Soft Middle Eastern music or quiet.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses periodically for quick rounds: “As we prepare these earth-grown vegetables, share one small thing that’s been grounding or nourishing you lately — a moment, a person, a feeling.” Keep shares brief (1 min max). Chopping becomes rhythmic and connective.

3 / Roasting & Dip Making (10 min active + 30–40 min oven)

- Oven Guardian tosses veggies with oil/spices on sheet pans; roasts at 200–220°C (400–425°F) for 30–40 min, stirring once.
- For baba ganoush: Roast eggplants whole or halved until collapsed/charred; scoop flesh.
- Dip Alchemist blends hummus (chickpeas, tahini, garlic, lemon, oil) and baba ganoush (eggplant flesh, tahini, garlic, lemon, oil) — taste together: “More lemon? More smoke?”
- While roasting, group can sit nearby or move to lounge for unhurried talk.

4 / Platter Assembly & Deeper Heart Round (5–10 min)

Roast veggies out; Platter Artist arranges artistically with dips in center, herbs scattered.

Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share: Gather at table. Story Holder: “This platter holds the care and colors of every hand here. Let’s open our hearts: What’s one thing you’re carrying right now — gratitude, tenderness, hope? We listen with warmth, no need to fix.” Pass the piece once (or twice if flowing). Hold sacred, supportive space.

5 / Eating Together – The Closing Circle Serve family-style: tear bread, dip, share veggies. Eat slowly, savoring layers. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how this shared mezze feels in your body or heart right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for the perfect smoky baba” or “Thank you for your gentle listening”).

This platter is versatile — vegan by default, add halloumi or lamb for variety, swap veggies seasonally. The shared dipping encourages closeness and lingering.



Slow-Cooked Lamb or Plant-Based Tagine

A PATIENT POT OF LAYERED WARMTH & BELONGING



Serves: 6–8

(ideal for a cozy, extended circle of 5–10 people)



2.5–3 hours

(mostly low simmer for unhurried connection; can use slow cooker)

VIBE:

Fragrant, tender, sweet-savory — like a spiced embrace that deepens with time. Tender lamb (or hearty chickpeas/veggies) with apricots, olives, and warm spices, served over couscous. Symbolizes how patience and shared tending transform simple ingredients (and relationships) into profound nourishment.

INGREDIENTS

(group gathering list – assign a Gatherer)

Protein base (choose one):

- Lamb: 1–1.5 kg lamb shoulder, cubed
- Plant-based: 3–4 cans (400g each) chickpeas, drained + extra veggies (e.g., 500g sweet potato or pumpkin cubes)
- 2–3 tbsp olive oil
- 2 large onions, sliced
- 4–6 garlic cloves, minced
- 1–2 inch fresh ginger, grated
- Spices: 2 tsp ground cumin, 2 tsp ground coriander, 1 tsp ground cinnamon, 1 tsp turmeric, 1 tsp smoked paprika, ½ tsp cayenne (adjust heat)
- 1 can (400g) chopped tomatoes
- 500–700ml vegetable or chicken stock
- 150–200g dried apricots, halved
- 100g pitted green olives
- Optional: preserved lemon (rind only, chopped), 1 cinnamon stick
- Salt & black pepper to taste
- To serve: couscous (300–400g), fresh coriander/parsley, sliced almonds (toasted), lemon wedges

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign gently at the start in a standing circle. Roles emphasize patience, support, and gratitude — mirroring the slow build of the dish and connection.

Pot & Flame Tender — Manages heat (stovetop or slow cooker), stirs occasionally, watches simmer.

Spice & Aroma Weaver — Measures and adds spices; invites group naming of their qualities.

Chop & Root Leader — Preps onions, garlic, ginger, apricots; leads additions.

Story & Patience Holder — Holds a talking piece (cinnamon stick, spoon, stone); guides unhurried shares.

Flavor Depth Guardian — Tastes midway/end, suggests adjustments (more lemon? more spice?).

Couscous & Table Nurturer — Prepares fluffy couscous, sets warm, inviting table (candles, low lighting).

Floating Heart Keeper — Helps anywhere, senses energy, offers gentle check-ins.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (8–12 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together slowly. Form a loose circle.

Connection Invitation: Story & Patience Holder offers the talking piece: “In Moroccan homes, the tagine simmers slowly while people gather, share, and connect over time. Tonight we honor that. Share one word or short phrase: What patience or warmth do you wish to bring or receive in our circle today?” Pass once around. Listen deeply — no rush, just presence.

2 / Prep & Spice Round (15–20 min) Stations for chopping and measuring. Soft music or quiet conversation. Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses every 5–10 minutes for gentle rounds: “As we layer these spices and roots, share one small thing you’ve been ‘simmering’ in your heart lately — a hope, a memory, a quiet feeling.” Keep shares tender and brief (1–2 min). Prep becomes meditative.

3 / Building the Tagine (15 min active + 2–2.5 hours slow cook)

- Pot Tender heats oil; Chop Leader adds onions/garlic/ginger.
- Spice Weaver layers spices — everyone calls out: “Cinnamon for sweetness and depth” or “Cumin for grounding.” Sauté until fragrant.
- Add lamb (brown first) or chickpeas/veggies, tomatoes, stock, apricots, olives. Bring to simmer.
- Cover low heat (or slow cooker on low). Stir occasionally; group can relax nearby for deeper talk.

4 / Midway Check & Deeper Heart Round (10 min) Flavor Guardian tastes with group; adjust. Add preserved lemon if using. Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share: Gather near pot or at table. Story Holder: “This tagine grows richer with time and every contribution. Let’s open our hearts: What’s one thing you’re holding gently right now — gratitude, tenderness, a question? We listen with patience, no need to resolve.” Pass the piece once (or twice). Hold warm, spacious space.

5 / Finishing & Eating Together – The Closing Circle

Prepare couscous; ladle tagine over it. Scatter herbs/almonds. Eat slowly from shared platter or bowls. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how this slow-cooked warmth feels in you right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for tending the pot so lovingly” or “Thank you for your open heart”).

This tagine adapts beautifully — fully vegan with plant base, milder for kids, spicier for bold palates. The long cook time is the gift: it carves out real space for connection.



A Story of Purpose & New Chapters:

MICHELLE'S JOURNEY OF REMEMBERING

I found myself swirling around in a season of my life where the universe whispered softly,

“You’re here for more”.

Logically having no clue what the “more” was.

I began my search of finding my purpose when within a very short time I stumbled across women’s circle.

I was instantly curious and sat out to learn all I could and very quickly realised becoming a circle facilitator was the next step I felt called to follow. It all felt like a quiet remembering in my soul. What I discovered inside circle was something I had been looking for my whole life, that it was incredibly supportive and nourishing. The connection the depth and truly being seen and held without needing to be anything other than myself.

The community and support I found was unlike anything else i had experienced, it truly felt like home to me like I had fully landed. I fell deeply in love with the work and community that I was building around me, it wasn’t something I just did, but something I fully embodied.

Women’s circle help me through some of the most challenging and hardest seasons of my life, especially the time my mum passed away, grief has a way of creating so much heaviness and loneliness that words cannot fully explain. I was held in circle with so much love, reverence, compassion and grace, without anyone trying to fix “me” or the situation. That experience is something that i will carry with me throughout my life.



Women’s circle was the missing piece I never realised I needed. It didn’t just change what I did , but changed the woman that I became.

Most of all it gave me a deep knowing that when women gather exactly as they are something magical truly does shift where women can remember their own strengths and witness their true self.

Thank you for this amazing opportunity to share this

Much love Michelle

Italian Sunday Sauce with Homemade Pasta

A SLOW-SIMMERED DAY OF FAMILY & HEART



Serves: 6–10

(ideal for an extended circle of 6–12 people — family, chosen family, friends)



4–6 hours

(mostly low simmer + pasta rolling; can start early for relaxed pacing)

VIBE:

Rich, comforting, deeply nourishing — like a warm hug from Nonna that lingers. A hearty tomato-meat ragù simmered low and slow, served with fresh, tender handmade pasta.

Symbolizes how time, care, and shared effort transform everyday ingredients (and people) into something profound and lasting.

INGREDIENTS

(group shopping / prep list – assign a Gatherer)

For the Sunday Sauce (Ragù):

- 3–4 tbsp olive oil
- 500–700g mixed meats (e.g., pork ribs, beef brisket chunks, Italian sausage, or meatballs)
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 2–3 carrots, finely chopped
- 2–3 celery stalks, finely chopped
- 4–6 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 cans (800g total) whole peeled San Marzano tomatoes, crushed by hand
- 1 small can tomato paste
- 200–300ml red wine (optional but traditional)
- 500–700ml beef or vegetable stock
- 2–3 bay leaves
- Fresh herbs: handful basil, oregano, parsley
- Salt, black pepper, pinch red chili flakes to taste

For Homemade Pasta (per 4 people; scale up):

- 400g "00" flour (or all-purpose)
- 4 large eggs
- Pinch salt
- Optional: splash olive oil or extra egg yolk for richness
- To serve: grated Parmigiano-Reggiano, fresh basil, crusty bread

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign collaboratively at the start in a joyful standing circle. Roles emphasize patience, contribution, and appreciation — perfect for a long, unfolding day.

Pot & Simmer Guardian — Tends the sauce pot, stirs periodically, watches low heat.

Sofritto & Meat Weaver — Browns meats, starts the holy trinity (onion/carrot/celery).

Pasta Dough & Rolling Leader — Mixes dough, rolls/cuts pasta; invites group to join stations.

Story & Legacy Holder — Holds a talking piece (wooden spoon, bay leaf, stone); guides shares.

Flavor & Heritage Alchemist — Tastes sauce throughout, adjusts seasoning with group input.

Table & Hearth Setter — Creates warm table (candles, family photos?, red wine glasses, no distractions).

Floating Heart Connector — Helps anywhere, senses energy, brings extra care and reminders to slow down.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (10–15 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together. Form a loose circle in the kitchen.

Connection Invitation: Story & Legacy Holder offers the talking piece: "Italian Sundays are for sauce that simmers while hearts open — stories passed down, love stirred in. Tonight we revive that. Share one word or short phrase: What family memory, tradition, or warmth do you bring (or long for) in this space?" Pass once around. Listen deeply — no rush, just witnessing.

2 / Sofritto & Sauce Building Round (20–30 min active)

Stations for chopping, browning. Soft Italian music or family playlists.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses every 10 min for brief rounds: “As we build this base layer by layer, share one small ‘foundation’ from your life — a person, lesson, or value that grounds you.” Keep shares warm and brief (1–2 min). Chopping and stirring become grounding rituals.

3 / The Long Simmer (3–5 hours mostly hands-off)

Simmer Guardian brings sauce to gentle bubble, then low heat. Everyone can drift in/out to stir, taste, add herbs. Flavor Alchemist leads periodic tastings: “More basil for freshness? More time for depth?” Adjust together. While sauce simmers, group moves to lounge, table, or garden for deeper conversation.

4 / Homemade Pasta Making & Deeper Heart Round

(30–45 min) Pasta Dough Leader mixes eggs/flour on counter; everyone kneads, rolls (with machine or pin), cuts tagliatelle/-pappardelle.

Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share: Gather around pasta station or table. Story Holder: “This sauce has deepened with time, just as our connections do. Let’s open our hearts: What’s one story, feeling, or piece of your heritage you’d like to share while we shape this pasta? We listen with love, no need to fix.” Pass the piece once (or twice). Hold sacred, patient space — tears, laughter, silence all welcome.

5 / Eating Together – The Closing Circle Boil fresh pasta al dente; toss with sauce. Serve family-style with cheese, bread. Eat slowly, savoring every layer. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how this Sunday sauce feels in your body or heart right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for tending the pot all day” or “Thank you for sharing that story”).

This recipe is adaptable — fully plant-based with mushrooms/lentils instead of meat, quicker simmer if needed, or dried pasta shortcut. The long timeline is intentional: it carves out real hours for connection.



Korean BBQ-Inspired Lettuce Wraps

A HANDS-ON TABLE OF SHARED BITES & JOY



Serves: 4-8

(perfect for an interactive circle of 4-10 people)



35-45 minutes

(quick marinate/grill + assembly for lively energy)

VIBE:

Fresh, bold, interactive — like a mini Korean BBQ party at home. Thinly sliced marinated protein grilled with smoky char, wrapped in crisp lettuce with colorful banchan, sauces, and herbs. Symbolizes how individual choices (wraps, fillings) come together in shared moments of delight and connection.

INGREDIENTS

(group gathering / prep list – assign a Gatherer)

Protein (choose 1-2 for variety):

- 500-700g thinly sliced beef (ribeye, sirloin) or pork (belly, shoulder) or plant-based: firm tofu slices or mushrooms

Marinade:

- 4 tbsp soy sauce or tamari
- 2 tbsp sesame oil
- 2 tbsp brown sugar or honey
- 3-4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tbsp grated ginger
- 1 tbsp gochujang (Korean chili paste) or mild alternative
- 1 tbsp rice vinegar
- Optional: 1 Asian pear or apple, grated (for tenderness)

Wraps & Fresh Elements:

- 2-3 heads crisp lettuce (butter, romaine, or perilla leaves if available)
- 1 cucumber, julienned
- 2-3 carrots, julienned
- Bunch green onions, sliced
- Fresh herbs: perilla, mint, cilantro

Banchan-Style Sides (small bowls):

- Kimchi (store-bought or quick homemade)
- Bean sprouts or spinach namul (lightly seasoned)
- Pickled radish or daikon

Sauces:

- Ssamjang (mix gochujang, doenjang/miso, sesame oil, garlic)
- Sesame dipping sauce
- To grill: neutral oil, sesame seeds for garnish

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign at the start in a fun, quick circle around the grill/table. Roles encourage interaction, help, and appreciation — everyone gets hands-on.

Grill Master / Flame Keeper — Manages grill or pan heat, cooks protein slices.

Marinade & Slice Weaver — Preps and marinates protein; invites naming flavors.

Fresh & Crunch Circle Leader — Preps lettuce, veggies, herbs; sets up assembly station.

Story Ssam Holder — Holds a talking piece (lettuce leaf, tongs, stone); guides light shares.

Sauce & Banchan Alchemist — Mixes ssamjang/sauces, arranges side bowls.

Table & Gathering Setter — Sets central grill/table (low seating if possible, no phones, vibrant plates).

Floating Joy Connector — Helps anywhere, keeps energy playful, checks in on everyone.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (5-10 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together. Form a loose circle near the grill/table.

Connection Invitation: Story Ssam Holder offers the talking piece: “In Korean gatherings, ssam wraps bring people close — each bite shared, each story wrapped in. Tonight we do the same. Share one word: What ‘flavor’ or energy do you bring to our table today? (e.g., ‘bold’, ‘fresh’, ‘warm’).” Pass once around quickly. Listen with smiles — set a festive, open tone.

2 / Marinate & Prep Round (10–15 min) Stations for slicing, marinating, chopping veggies. Upbeat K-pop or gentle music.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses every few minutes for quick rounds: “As we slice and season these fresh elements, share one small thing that’s brought ‘crunch’ or zest to your day/week — a laugh, a surprise, a bright spot.” Keep shares light and brief (30–60 sec). Prep becomes energetic and bonding.

3 / Grilling & Assembly Dance (10–15 min active)

Grill Master heats grill/pan high; Marinade Weaver adds protein slices in batches.

Everyone can flip or watch: Call out playfully — “This piece gets extra char for boldness!”

Fresh Leader sets lettuce leaves around table; sides and sauces in center.

Group gathers: Wrap your first ssam together — layer protein, veggies, sauce, herbs, wrap, eat in one bite.

4 / Eating & Deeper Heart Round (5–10 min) Everyone sits/stands around the table, building and sharing wraps continuously.

Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share: Story Holder:

“These wraps are made and shared by every hand here. Let’s open our hearts: What’s one thing this lively moment is stirring in you — gratitude, a memory, a feeling? We listen fully, no fixing needed.” Pass the piece once around. Hold space with warmth and laughter.

5 / Eating Together – The Closing Circle Keep wrapping and eating — it’s ongoing and social. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how this shared ssam feels in your body or heart right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for the perfect grill timing” or “Thank you for your infectious energy”).

This recipe is flexible — fully vegan with tofu/mushrooms, adjust spice for all palates, add seafood if desired. The interactive grilling and wrapping naturally encourages closeness and fun.



Harvest Feast Salad Bar

A BOUNTIFUL, BUILD-YOUR-OWN TABLE OF GRATITUDE



Serves: 6–10

(ideal for a grateful circle of 6–12 people — families, friends, community)



45–60 minutes

(mostly roasting and assembly for relaxed flow)

VIBE:

Vibrant, earthy, generous — like a table overflowing with the season's best, inviting everyone to take what nourishes them. Roasted roots, fresh greens, grains, nuts, seeds, and a simple vinaigrette, all arranged buffet-style for personal bowls. Symbolizes how diverse gifts from the earth (and from each person) come together to create wholeness and belonging.

INGREDIENTS

(group gathering / foraging list — assign a Gatherer)

Roasted harvest veggies (choose seasonal mix):

- 500–700g root veggies (sweet potato, carrots, beets, parsnips), cubed
- 300–400g Brussels sprouts or cauliflower florets
- 2 red onions, wedged
- 200–300g cherry tomatoes or halved grapes (if in season)
- 3–4 tbsp olive oil, salt, pepper, fresh thyme/rosemary

Fresh & crisp base:

- 2–3 heads mixed greens (kale, rocket/arugula, spinach, romaine)
- 1–2 heads radicchio or endive for bitterness
- 1–2 apples or pears, thinly sliced

Grains & protein:

- 2–3 cups cooked farro, quinoa, barley, or wild rice (cooled)
- Optional: chickpeas, lentils, grilled halloumi, feta, or roasted nuts/seeds

Toppings & crunch (set out in bowls):

- Toasted pumpkin seeds, sunflower seeds, walnuts, pecans
- Dried cranberries, pomegranate seeds, or chopped dates
- Pickled red onions, radishes, or quick-pickled beets
- Fresh herbs: parsley, dill, mint, chives

Dressing (whisk together or make 2 versions):

- ½ cup olive oil
- ¼ cup apple cider vinegar or balsamic
- 2 tbsp maple syrup or honey
- 1–2 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- Salt, pepper, squeeze of lemon/orange

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign collaboratively at the start in a joyful standing circle. Roles emphasize abundance, contribution, and gratitude — everyone tends the “harvest.”

Roast & Earth Guardian — Preheats oven, roasts veggies, tosses with herbs.

Green & Fresh Weaver — Washes/chops greens, slices fruit, arranges base.

Grain & Protein Alchemist — Cooks/preps grains, adds protein elements.

Story & Gratitude Holder — Holds a talking piece (apple, wooden spoon, leaf); guides shares.

Topping & Crunch Artist — Toasts seeds/nuts, arranges pickled items and toppings.

Dressing & Balance Maker — Whisks dressing, tastes with group, adjusts sweetness/acidity.

Table Harvest Setter — Creates abundant, beautiful spread (seasonal leaves/flowers, candles, no phones).

Floating Abundance Connector — Helps anywhere, senses energy, reminds everyone to savor.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (8–12 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together. Form a loose circle near the counter.

Connection Invitation: Story & Gratitude Holder offers the talking piece: “Harvest feasts have always been about giving thanks for what the earth and each other provide. Tonight we recreate that. Share one word or short phrase: What ‘gift’ or abundance are you bringing to this table today (or grateful for)?” Pass once around. Listen with full hearts — no rush, just appreciation..

2 / Prep & Spice Round (15–20 min) Stations for roasting, chopping, toasting. Gentle autumnal music or quiet chatter.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses every 5–10 min for brief rounds: “As we prepare these gifts from the season, share one small thing you’ve received or harvested lately — a kindness, a lesson, a moment of beauty.” Keep shares warm and brief (1 min max). Prep becomes a ritual of thankfulness.

3 / Roasting & Assembly (20–30 min active + roast time)

Roast Guardian tosses veggies with oil/herbs; roasts at 200–220°C (400–425°F) for 25–35 min.

Green Weaver arranges fresh bases; Grain Alchemist readies cooled grains.

Topping Artist toasts seeds/nuts; Dressing Maker whisks and tastes with group: “More maple for sweetness? More vinegar for brightness?”

While roasting, group can gather near oven or table for lighter talk.

4 / Buffet Spread & Deeper Heart Round (5–10 min)

Everything arranged beautifully on table or counter.

Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share: Gather around the spread. Story Holder: “This harvest bar holds the care and gifts of every hand here. Let’s open our hearts: What’s one thing you’re truly grateful for in this season of your life — big or small? We listen with gratitude, no need to respond or fix.” Pass the piece once (or twice if flowing). Hold sacred, appreciative space.

5 / Eating Together – The Closing Circle Everyone builds their own bowl: greens, grains, roasted veggies, toppings, drizzle dressing. Eat slowly, savoring colors and flavors. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how this shared harvest feels in your body or heart right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for the perfect roast crisp” or “Thank you for your open gratitude”).

This salad bar is endlessly seasonal — swap in squash, kale, apples in fall; tomatoes, zucchini, berries in summer; root veggies and citrus in winter. Fully vegan/gluten-free adaptable.



A Story of Presence & Purpose

NIKKI'S CALL TO SERVICE

My journey to Circle began with Imogen Bailey and her online portal, Circle Certification. What I thought would simply be a training became something far deeper. It was an initiation. A gentle yet powerful remembering of the sacred art of gathering. Through Honouring Heart, I was introduced not just to structure and facilitation, but to presence. To the responsibility and privilege of holding space with integrity, softness, and strength. Inside that portal, I felt something awaken. The call to gather women in a way that felt ancient and reverent, yet deeply needed in our modern world. It was there that I realised Circle is medicine and that I was being invited to become a keeper of that medicine.

When I created my first Bridal Circle, I felt the alchemy of magic and presence move through the space. It was a beautiful unfolding, not just of the bride, but of the love story held between the couple and the women who had gathered to honour it. Something shifted in that room. The air felt softer, sacred and almost luminous. The circle was born from a desire to honour the couple as a sacred threshold and invited to share a blessing, a story or a piece of wisdom for their next chapter, before their wedding day.

Within the safety of the circle, voices that once trembled grow steady. Stories once hidden find air. Strength that was buried begins to bloom. There is no hierarchy there, only shared humanity, shared courage, shared becoming. Within circle women heal through presence. Through listening. Through being seen without needing to be anything other than what you are. And when one woman rises, she quietly shows another that she can too.

Nikki Rae

Soulflower Ceremonies



Ethiopian-Inspired Injera & Wat Spread

A COMMUNAL PLATTER OF SHARED NOURISHMENT



Serves: 6–10

(perfect for a heartfelt circle of 6–12 people — family, friends, community)



1.5–2 hours

(quick injera version + simmering wats; traditional injera ferments longer, but this accessible take keeps the spirit)

VIBE:

Warm, spicy, tangy, comforting — like a living table where flavors and hearts mingle. Spongy injera topped with rich, berbere-spiced wats (stews), eaten by hand from a shared platter. Symbolizes how tearing and sharing one bread unites diverse elements (and people) in belonging and care.

INGREDIENTS

(group shopping / prep list – assign a Gatherer)

For quick injera (makes 8–10 large rounds; traditional uses teff only + fermentation, this hybrid is easier):

- 2 cups teff flour (or 1 cup teff + 1 cup all-purpose/rice flour for accessibility)
- 1 tsp instant yeast
- ½ tsp salt
- ¼ tsp baking soda
- 3–4 cups warm water
- 1–2 tbsp apple cider vinegar (for tang)

For wats (make 2–3 for variety; scale as needed):

Misir Wat (spicy red lentil stew – vegetarian staple):

- 2 cups red lentils
- 2–3 onions, finely chopped
- 4–6 garlic cloves + 2 tbsp ginger, minced
- 3–4 tbsp berbere spice (adjust for heat)
- ¼ cup niter kibbeh (spiced clarified butter) or olive oil/vegan butter
- 2–3 tbsp tomato paste
- Salt to taste

Doro Wat (spicy chicken stew – meat version; or sub chickpeas/tofu):

- 1 kg chicken thighs (or plant-based protein)
- Same base as misir (onions, garlic, ginger, berbere, kibbeh/oil)
- 4–6 hard-boiled eggs (optional, peeled)

Gomen Wat (collard greens – vegetarian):

- 1 kg collard greens or kale, chopped
- Onions, garlic, berbere, kibbeh/oil
- To serve: extra berbere, lemon wedges, optional hard-boiled eggs, cottage cheese (ayib) or feta

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign at the start in a warm standing circle. Roles emphasize shared effort, hospitality, and gratitude — everyone contributes to the communal platter.

Injera Baker / Flame Tender — Cooks injera rounds on skillet or non-stick pan.

Wat Simmer Guardian — Tends pots, stirs wats, monitors low heat.

Spice & Base Weaver — Preps onions/garlic/ginger, adds berbere and layers flavors.

Story & Gursha Holder — Holds a talking piece (spoon, injera scrap, stone); guides gentle shares.

Platter & Beauty Artist — Arranges final communal platter with wats on injera base.

Table & Hospitality Setter — Creates inviting setup (large platter center, no utensils, warm lighting).

Floating Heart Connector — Helps anywhere, senses energy, encourages feeding gestures.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (8–12 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together (a traditional Ethiopian start). Form a loose circle.

Connection Invitation: Story & Gursha Holder offers the talking piece: “In Ethiopia, the injera platter brings people together as one — sharing food, stories, and care. Tonight we honor that. Share one word or short phrase: What warmth, gift, or connection do you bring to this table?” Pass once around. Listen with full presence — no interruption.

2 / Prep & Spice Round (15–20 min) Stations for chopping onions, measuring spices, mixing injera batter. Soft music or quiet.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses periodically: “As we layer these spices and stir the pots, share one small thing that’s been ‘simmering’ in your heart — a gratitude, a memory, a tender feeling.” Keep shares brief and gentle (1 min). Prep becomes meditative.

3 / Cooking the Spread (45–60 min active + simmer)

- Injera Baker pours batter thinly on hot non-stick pan (no oil), cooks until bubbles form and edges lift (2–3 min per side). Stack and cover to stay soft.
- Wat Guardian starts wats: sauté onions slowly in kibbeh/oil until caramelized, add spices/garlic/ginger, then lentils/chicken/greens + water/stock. Simmer low 30–45 min. Taste together: “More berbere for fire? More salt for balance?”
- Group drifts in/out to help stir or flip.

4 / Platter Assembly & Deeper Heart Round (10 min)

Platter Artist lays large injera as base, spoons wats in colorful mounds.

Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share: Gather around platter. Story Holder: “This spread holds every hand and heart here. Let’s open: What’s one thing you’re carrying right now — joy, tenderness, hope? We listen with care, no need to fix.” Pass once (or twice). Hold warm space — invite optional gursha (feeding a bite) as a gesture.

5 / Eating Together – The Closing Circle Sit around the platter. Tear injera, scoop wats, offer gursha if desired. Eat slowly with hands. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how this shared platter feels in you right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for the perfect spice” or “Thank you for your open heart”).

This spread adapts easily — fully vegetarian/vegan, milder berbere for kids, extra wats like shiro (chickpea) or atakilt (cabbage). The communal platter and hand-eating naturally deepen bonds.



Paella Circle

A COMMUNAL PAN OF SHARED STORIES & SAFFRON



Serves: 8–12

(perfect for a generous circle of 8–15 people — family, friends, community)



1.5–2 hours

(active prep + cooking; the simmer builds natural conversation time)

VIBE:

Golden, aromatic, festive — like sunshine captured in rice. Bomba rice infused with saffron, layered with proteins, veggies, and socarrat (crispy bottom crust). Symbolizes how diverse elements (people, ingredients) unite in one pan over gentle heat to create something greater than the sum.

INGREDIENTS

(group gathering / prep list – assign a Gatherer)

- 600–800g short-grain paella rice (Bomba or Calasparra ideal; arborio as substitute)
- 2–3 generous pinches saffron threads (or 1 tsp powder)
- 3–4 litres chicken/fish/vegetable stock (warm)

Proteins (mix for variety; traditional Valencian omits seafood):

- 800g–1kg chicken thighs (or rabbit), cut into pieces
- 400g chorizo or Spanish sausage, sliced
- Seafood: 500g prawns/shrimp, 500g mussels/clams, 300g squid/calamari (optional for mariscos version)

Veggies:

- 2 large onions, finely chopped
- 4–6 garlic cloves, minced
- 2 red bell peppers, sliced
- 200g green beans or runner beans, cut
- 200g peas (fresh or frozen)
- 2–3 ripe tomatoes, grated (or 1 can chopped)
- ½ cup olive oil
- Spices: 2 tsp smoked paprika, salt, black pepper
- To finish: fresh parsley, lemon wedges

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign collaboratively at the start in a standing circle around the paellera (pan) or stove. Roles flow like a team tending a fire — everyone contributes, helps, and appreciates.

Fire & Pan Guardian — Manages heat (outdoor wood/gas burner or stovetop/oven), stirs early stages, watches for socarrat.

Sofrito & Base Weaver — Starts the onion/garlic/tomato/-pepper base, builds flavor layers.

Protein Sizzle Leader — Browns chicken/sausage/seafood in batches.

Story & Saffron Holder — Holds a talking piece (wooden spoon, saffron jar, lemon); guides gentle shares.

Rice & Season Alchemist — Adds rice, saffron/stock, tastes/adjusts with group.

Veggie & Garnish Artist — Adds beans/peas, scatters parsley/lemon at end.

Table & Circle Setter — Prepares eating area (large table, no plates — eat from pan if traditional; candles, no phones).

Floating Heart Connector — Helps anywhere, senses energy, encourages presence.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (10 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together. Circle around the pan.

Connection Invitation: Story & Saffron Holder offers the talking piece: “In Spain, paella is more than food — it’s a ritual of gathering, where the pan becomes the heart of the circle. Tonight we revive that. Share one word or short phrase: What ‘warmth’ or gift do you bring to this shared pan today?” Pass once around. Listen fully — no crosstalk, just witnessing.

2 / Prep & Flavor Building Round (15–20 min) Stations for chopping, browning. Gentle Spanish music or quiet chatter.

Connection Invitation: *Story Holder* pauses periodically: “As we build this base together, share one small thing from your week that felt ‘golden’ or nourishing — a moment, a kindness, a spark.” Keep shares brief (1 min). Prep becomes rhythmic and connective.

3 / The Paella Cooking (45–60 min active)

- Fire Guardian heats oil in large paellera (or wide pan).
- Protein Leader browns chicken/sausage; set aside.
- Sofrito Weaver adds onion/garlic/pepper/tomato; cook to sofrito.
- Rice Alchemist stirs in rice to coat, adds paprika/saffron (steeped in warm stock), then stock. Bring to boil, then low simmer (no more stirring after rice settles).
- Add proteins back, nestle in seafood/mussels (they open as they cook).
- Veggie Artist adds beans/peas toward end. Let simmer until rice tender and socarrat forms (listen for light crackle).
- Group gathers near pan, inhaling aromas, chatting.

4 / Rest & Deeper Heart Round (5–10 min) Remove from heat; cover with clean tea towels to rest 5–10 min.

Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share: Gather around the pan. *Story Holder*: “This paella has absorbed every hand and the slow fire of time. Let’s open our hearts: What’s one thing you’re carrying right now — gratitude, tenderness, a story? We listen with warmth, no need to fix.” Pass the piece once (or twice if flowing). Hold sacred space.

5 / Eating Together – The Closing Circle Place pan center-table. Eat directly from it (spoons or hands), passing lemons/parsley. Savor slowly. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how this shared paella feels in you right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for tending the fire” or “Thank you for your open presence”).

This paella adapts — vegetarian (extra veggies/beans/artichokes), milder for kids, or fully seafood. The large pan and no-stir rule create natural pauses for connection.



Pulled Pork (or Jackfruit) Sandwiches with Slaw

A SLOW-COOKED, HANDS-ON FEAST OF COMFORT & CONNECTION



Serves: 8–10

(ideal for a generous circle of 8–12 people — family, friends, neighbors)



5–7 hours

(mostly low-and-slow cooking; can use slow cooker for ease)

VIBE:

Smoky, tender, tangy-sweet — like a warm hug between soft buns. Juicy pulled pork (or shredded jackfruit for plant-based) topped with crunchy, creamy slaw on toasted buns. Symbolizes how patience and shared effort transform tough cuts (or humble ingredients) into something deeply satisfying and unifying.

INGREDIENTS

(group gathering / prep list — assign a Gatherer)

Protein base (choose one):

- Pulled pork: 2–2.5 kg pork shoulder (bone-in or boneless)
- Plant-based: 4–5 cans (or 3–4 kg) young green jackfruit in brine/water (drained, cores removed)

Dry rub:

- ¼ cup brown sugar
- 2 tbsp smoked paprika
- 1 tbsp garlic powder, onion powder, black pepper, salt
- 1 tsp cayenne or chili powder (adjust heat)

Braising liquid:

- 1 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1 cup BBQ sauce (or homemade: ketchup + molasses + spices)
- 1 cup apple juice or broth
- 1 onion, quartered

For serving:

- 12–16 soft burger buns or brioche rolls, toasted
- Extra BBQ sauce

Classic creamy slaw:

- 1 small green cabbage + ½ red cabbage, finely shredded
- 3–4 carrots, grated
- 1 cup mayonnaise (or vegan mayo)
- ¼ cup apple cider vinegar
- 2 tbsp sugar or honey
- Salt, pepper, celery seed to taste

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign at the start in a relaxed standing circle near the slow cooker/oven. Roles emphasize patience, care, and appreciation — everyone tends the “long fire.”

Slow Cooker / Oven Guardian — Monitors temperature, bastes occasionally, pulls/shreds at end.

Rub & Season Weaver — Mixes dry rub, coats protein (pork or jackfruit), preps onion.

Slaw Crunch Leader — Shreds cabbage/carrots, mixes dressing, tastes for balance.

Story & Tenderness Holder — Holds a talking piece (wooden spoon, apple, stone); guides gentle shares.

Sauce & Finish Alchemist — Prepares/tastes BBQ sauce, adjusts slaw or final seasoning.

Bun & Table Nurturer — Toasts buns, sets inviting table (paper plates ok for casual, candles, no phones).

Floating Heart Connector — Helps anywhere, checks energy, brings extra warmth.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (8–12 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together. Form a loose circle.

Connection Invitation: Story & Tenderness Holder offers the talking piece: “Slow-cooked meals like this have always gathered people — time to talk, laugh, and just be. Tonight we make space for that. Share one word or short phrase: What comfort or tenderness do you bring or hope to receive here today?” Pass once around. Listen with full presence — no rush.

2 / Prep & Rub Round (10–15 min) Stations for rubbing meat/jackfruit, shredding slaw veggies. Gentle music or quiet.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses every few minutes: “As we rub in these spices or shred these crisp vegetables, share one small thing that’s felt ‘tender’ or comforting in your week — a moment, a person, a feeling.” Keep shares brief and soft (1 min max). Prep becomes grounding.

3 / The Long Cook (mostly hands-off 5–7 hours)

- Rub Weaver coats pork/jackfruit; place in slow cooker/oven-safe pot with onion, liquids.
- Slow Cooker Guardian sets low (slow cooker 6–8 hrs or oven 150°C/300°F covered 5–7 hrs).
- Midway (after 3–4 hrs), group can check in, baste, or shred early samples.
- While it cooks, relax nearby — perfect for deeper conversation or games.

4 / Pulling & Slaw Final Round (10–15 min) Slow Cooker Guardian pulls pork (or shreds jackfruit) with forks; mix in some sauce. Slaw Leader finishes dressing and tosses.

Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share: Gather near the pulled protein. Story Holder: “This dish has softened with time and care — just like hearts do when tended. Let’s open: What’s one tender thing you’re holding right now — gratitude, ache, hope? We listen with gentleness, no need to fix.” Pass the piece once (or twice). Hold warm, supportive space.

5 / Eating Together – The Closing Circle Set up buffet or family-style: buns, pulled pork/jackfruit, extra sauce, slaw. Build sandwiches. Eat slowly, savoring textures. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how this shared comfort feels in you right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for shredding so patiently” or “Thank you for your open heart”).

This recipe is adaptable — fully vegan with jackfruit, spicier or milder BBQ sauce, gluten-free buns. The long cook time is the gift: it carves out real space for connection.



Greek-Style Meze Platter Feast

A SHARED TABLE OF SMALL PLATES & BIG CONNECTION



Serves: 8–12

(perfect for a generous circle of 8–14 people — family, friends, gatherings)



60–90 minutes

(mostly assembly and light cooking for relaxed flow)

VIBE:

Bright, Mediterranean, generous — like sunshine on a long table. A feast of creamy dips, grilled vegetables, fresh salads, olives, cheese, and warm pita, all served family-style for reaching, sharing, and savoring slowly. Symbolizes how small, simple offerings multiply into abundance when passed with care and intention.

INGREDIENTS

(group market / gathering list — assign a Gatherer)

Dips & spreads:

- Tzatziki: Greek yoghurt, cucumber, garlic, dill, lemon, olive oil
- Melitzanosalata (eggplant dip): roasted eggplant, garlic, tahini or olive oil, lemon
- Taramasalata or hummus (store-bought or quick-made)
- Fava (yellow split pea purée) or skordalia (garlic-potato dip)

Grilled & fresh:

- 3–4 zucchinis, eggplant, bell peppers, sliced for grilling
- Halloumi or saganaki cheese for grilling
- Octopus, prawns, or lamb souvlaki skewers (optional protein)
- Dolmades (stuffed grape leaves — store-bought or homemade)

Salads & sides:

- Greek salad: tomatoes, cucumber, red onion, olives, feta, oregano, olive oil
- Marinated gigante beans or chickpeas
- Roasted potatoes with lemon and oregano

Essentials:

- Plenty of warm pita bread or flatbreads
- Kalamata olives, feta blocks, stuffed peppers
- Fresh herbs: oregano, dill, mint, parsley
- Extra-virgin olive oil, lemon wedges, red wine vinegar
- Optional: ouzo or white wine for toasting

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign collaboratively at the start in a relaxed standing circle near the counter/grill. Roles encourage flow, help, and appreciation — everyone contributes to the feast.

Grill & Char Guardian — Manages grill or grill pan, cooks vegetables/cheese/protein, ensures golden char.

Dip & Spread Weaver — Prepares tzatziki, eggplant dip, and other spreads; tastes for balance.

Salad & Fresh Leader — Chops tomatoes/cucumbers/onions, assembles Greek salad and sides.

Story & Meze Holder — Holds a talking piece (olive branch, lemon, small spoon); guides gentle shares.

Platter & Beauty Artist — Arranges all elements on large platters/boards; creates inviting abundance.

Bread & Table Nurturer — Warms pita on grill, sets welcoming table (olive branches, candles, no phones).

Floating Heart Connector — Helps anywhere, senses energy, encourages reaching/sharing.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (8–12 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together. Form a loose circle near the table/grill.

Connection Invitation: Story & Meze Holder offers the talking piece: “In Greece, meze is about more than food — it’s hospitality, lingering, and saying ‘you belong here.’ Tonight we gather in that spirit. Share one word or short phrase: What gift or warmth do you bring to this shared table today?” Pass once around. Listen fully — no interruption, just presence.

2 / Prep & Share Round (15–25 min) Stations for chopping, grilling, mixing dips. Soft Greek music or gentle chatter.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses every few minutes for brief rounds: “As we prepare these fresh ingredients and dips, share one small thing you’re grateful for right now — a person, a moment, a simple joy.” Keep shares brief (1 min max). Prep becomes rhythmic and connective.

3 / Grilling & Assembly (15–20 min active)

- Grill Guardian heats grill/pan; brush veggies/cheese with oil/oregano; cook until charred and tender.
- Dip Weaver mixes tzatziki/eggplant dip; taste together: “More garlic? More lemon?”
- Salad Leader assembles Greek salad; everyone can add olives/feta.
- Platter Artist arranges everything: dips in center, grilled items around, salads and breads on sides.

4 / Table Gathering & Deeper Heart Round (5–10 min)

Move to table with platters in center.

Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share: Story Holder: “This meze spread holds the care of every hand here. Let’s open our hearts: What’s one thing you’re truly grateful for in this moment, or one feeling this shared table is bringing up for you? We listen with warmth, no fixing needed.” Pass the piece once around. Hold sacred, joyful space.

5 / Eating Together – The Closing Circle Eat family-style:

tear pita, scoop dips, pass plates, savor slowly. Toast with ouzo/wine/water if desired. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how this meze feast feels in you right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for the perfect char on the halloumi” or “Thank you for your open heart”).

This meze is endlessly adaptable — fully vegetarian/vegan (skip cheese, use plant yoghurt), add seafood or meat skewers, swap seasonal veggies. The shared plates and slow pace naturally deepen bonds.



Big-Batch Chili with Cornbread

A WARMING POT & GOLDEN SIDES FOR DEEP CONNECTION



Serves: 10–14

(ideal for a large, welcoming circle of 10–15 people — family, friends, community)



2–3 hours

(mostly low simmer + cornbread baking for unhurried conversation)

VIBE:

Bold, smoky, comforting — like a big hug in a bowl. Rich, spiced chili loaded with beans, tomatoes, and optional meat, served with sweet-savory cornbread wedges. Symbolizes how a single pot can hold and nourish many when tended together with patience and care.

INGREDIENTS

(group gathering list – assign a Gatherer)

For the chili:

- 3–4 tbsp olive oil or vegetable oil
- 2–3 large onions, diced
- 6–8 garlic cloves, minced
- 1.5–2 kg ground beef/turkey (or plant-based: lentils, extra beans, or meat substitute)
- 4–5 cans (400g each) kidney beans, black beans, or pinto beans (drained/rinsed)
- 3–4 cans (400g each) chopped tomatoes
- 1–2 cans tomato paste (for thickness)
- 2–3 cups vegetable or beef stock
- Spices: 4–6 tbsp chili powder, 2 tbsp ground cumin, 2 tbsp smoked paprika, 1–2 tsp oregano, ½–1 tsp cayenne (adjust heat), salt & black pepper
- Optional richness: 2–3 tbsp cocoa powder or dark chocolate, 1–2 tbsp brown sugar
- Toppings: grated cheddar, sour cream/Greek yoghurt, sliced green onions, cilantro, avocado, jalapeños, lime wedges

For cornbread (makes 2 large pans or 1 very large):

- 3 cups cornmeal
- 3 cups all-purpose flour (or half wholemeal)
- ⅓ cup sugar
- 3 tbsp baking powder
- 2 tsp salt
- 4 eggs (or flax eggs for vegan)
- 3 cups milk (or plant milk)
- ¾ cup melted butter or oil
- Optional: 2 cups corn kernels, grated cheese, jalapeños

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign at the start in a warm standing circle near the pot. Roles emphasize collective care, patience, and appreciation — everyone helps tend the “big pot.”

Pot & Simmer Guardian — Manages heat, stirs periodically, watches the chili bubble.

Base & Spice Weaver — Starts onions/garlic, layers spices, builds flavor foundation.

Bean & Protein Leader — Browns meat (if using), adds beans/tomatoes/stock.

Story & Warmth Holder — Holds a talking piece (wooden spoon, chili pod, stone); guides gentle shares.

Cornbread Baker — Mixes and bakes cornbread; invites group additions (corn, cheese).

Topping & Table Nurturer — Prepares toppings, sets inviting table (big ladle, bowls, candles, no phones).

Floating Heart Connector — Helps anywhere, senses energy, brings extra gentleness.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (8–12 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together. Form a loose circle around the pot.

Connection Invitation: Story & Warmth Holder offers the talking piece: “Big pots of chili have gathered people for generations — warming bodies and hearts while stories flow. Tonight we do the same. Share one word or short phrase: What warmth, comfort, or gift do you bring to this circle today?” Pass once around. Listen deeply — no interruption, just presence.

2 / Prep & Spice Round (15–20 min) Stations for chopping, measuring spices, browning. Soft music or quiet chatter.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses every 5–10 min for brief rounds: “As we layer these spices and stir the base, share one small thing that’s been ‘warming’ your heart or mind lately — a kindness, a memory, a feeling.” Keep shares brief (1 min max). Prep becomes rhythmic and connective.

3 / The Long Simmer (1.5–2.5 hours mostly hands-off)

Pot Guardian heats oil; Base Weaver starts onions/garlic. Bean & Protein Leader adds meat (brown) or beans directly, then tomatoes/stock/spices. Bring to simmer, then low heat. Stir occasionally; taste together: “More chili powder for fire? More sweetness for balance?” While simmering, group can relax nearby or help with cornbread.

4 / Cornbread & Deeper Heart Round (20–30 min)

Cornbread Baker mixes batter (add corn/cheese if desired); bake at 200°C (400°F) 20–25 min until golden.

Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share: Gather near pot and oven. Story Holder: “This chili has deepened with time and every hand here. Let’s open our hearts: What’s one thing you’re carrying right now — gratitude, tenderness, hope? We listen with warmth, no need to fix.” Pass the piece once (or twice if flowing). Hold sacred, supportive space.

5 / Eating Together – The Closing Circle Ladle chili into bowls; serve cornbread wedges on side or crumbled on top. Add toppings family-style. Eat slowly, savoring layers. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how this shared warmth feels in your body or heart right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for tending the pot so patiently” or “Thank you for your open presence”).

This chili is endlessly adaptable — fully vegan (extra beans/mushrooms), milder for kids, spicier for bold palates. The big batch encourages seconds and lingering.



A Story of Sisterhood:

KELLEY'S RETURN TO THE FEMININE

A Journey full circle

My childhood was somewhat lonely. I grew up with a brother 4 years younger but we never really got along.

At school I was a bit of a black sheep, having small groups of selected friends. Sometimes my friendships worked and other times they certainly did not.

I rarely felt connected to girls back then or women later in life, most of my school friends were boys, but deep down, I desperately wanted to be a part of the sisterhood.

Once I had children I craved to be surrounded by like-minded women but I never really found them.

I did find an alternative school for my daughters and hoped I'd find my kind there. On some level I absolutely did but I was told I needed to be "invited" to their circle. I couldn't relate to that.

20+ years on, due to our love of Clarissa Pinkola Estes, I met Imogen and participated in her amazing circle training and now, although not often or regularly, I run women's and couples circles, especially at my retreats.

Everything begins and ends in circle.

And in every circle, I find my tribe.

I am so very grateful xxx





Weekend Feasts & Celebrations

ABUNDANT SPREADS FOR FRIENDS, EXTENDED FAMILY,
OR JOYFUL GATHERINGS



Autumn Harvest Root Vegetable Soup

A GROUNDING CAULDRON OF SEASONAL WARMTH



Serves: 8–10

(perfect for a cozy circle of 8–12 people — family, friends, neighbors)



1–1.5 hours

(mostly hands-off simmering for unhurried connection)

VIBE:

Earthy, velvety, gently sweet — like wrapping yourself in an autumn blanket. A creamy blend of roasted and simmered root vegetables, brightened with herbs and a touch of warmth.

Symbolizes how humble, hidden roots (like people's quieter gifts) come together over time to create deep nourishment and belonging.

INGREDIENTS

(group gathering list — assign a Gatherer)

Root vegetables (mix for color and flavor — about 2.5–3 kg total):

- 4–5 medium carrots
- 3–4 parsnips
- 2–3 sweet potatoes or yams
- 1 large celery root (celeriac) or 4–5 potatoes
- 2 medium beets (optional for ruby color)
- 1 large onion or 2 leeks
- Aromatics: 6–8 garlic cloves, whole or smashed
- 3–4 tbsp olive oil
- Fresh herbs: 4–5 sprigs thyme, rosemary, or sage (or 2 tsp dried)
- 2 bay leaves
- 2–3 litres vegetable or chicken stock
- 1 cup cream, coconut milk, or cashew cream (for velvety finish; optional)
- Salt, black pepper to taste
- To finish: fresh parsley, chives, or dill; pumpkin seeds or croutons; swirl of yoghurt or olive oil; squeeze of lemon (optional brightness)

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign collaboratively at the start in a gentle standing circle near the pot. Roles emphasize seasonal care, contribution, and appreciation — everyone tends the harvest.

Pot & Simmer Guardian — Manages heat, stirs occasionally, watches the slow bubble.

Root & Earth Weaver — Washes/peels/chops root vegetables; invites naming what each root brings (grounding, sweetness, depth).

Aroma & Herb Leader — Preps garlic/onion/herbs; adds layers of fragrance.

Story & Harvest Holder — Holds a talking piece (carrot slice, wooden spoon, leaf); guides gentle shares.

Flavor & Cream Alchemist — Tastes midway/end, adds cream/stock adjustments, brightens with lemon.

Table & Hearth Setter — Creates cozy table (candles, warm bowls, autumn leaves or simple centerpiece, no distractions).

Floating Heart Connector — Helps anywhere, senses group energy, brings extra gentleness.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (8–12 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together. Form a loose circle in the kitchen.

Connection Invitation: Story & Harvest Holder offers the talking piece: “Autumn soups have long gathered people around the hearth as the season turns — roots dug up, simmered slowly, shared gratefully. Tonight we honor that. Share one word or short phrase: What ‘root’ or grounding quality do you bring to our circle today?” Pass once around. Listen with full, tender presence — no crosstalk.

2 / Chop & Roast Round (15–20 min) Stations for chopping roots (uniform size for even cooking). Soft autumnal music or quiet.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses every few minutes for brief rounds: “As we prepare these roots from the earth, share one small thing that’s been grounding or steadying you lately — a person, a routine, a quiet moment.” Keep shares brief (1 min max). Chopping becomes meditative and collaborative.

3 / Building the Soup (15 min active + 45–60 min simmer)

- Roast Guardian tosses chopped roots/garlic with oil/herbs on sheet pans; roast at 200°C (400°F) 25–35 min until caramelized (optional for deeper flavor; can skip and sauté directly).
- Pot Guardian heats oil in large pot; Aroma Leader starts onion/garlic.
- Root Weaver adds roasted or raw veggies; cover with stock, add bay/herbs.
- Simmer low 45–60 min until very tender.
- Flavor Alchemist blends (immersion blender or batches) for velvety texture; add cream, taste: “More salt? A touch of lemon for lift?” Adjust together.

4 / Finishing & Deeper Heart Round (5–10 min) Ladle into bowls or serve from pot. Scatter herbs/seeds.

Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share: Gather at table. Story Holder: “This soup has been nourished by time, earth, and every hand here. Let’s open our hearts: What’s one thing you’re carrying into this season — gratitude, tenderness, a hope? We listen with warmth, without fixing.” Pass the piece once (or twice if energy flows). Hold sacred, supportive space.

5 / Eating Together – The Closing Circle Eat slowly, savoring earthiness and warmth. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how this shared harvest soup feels in your body or heart right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for the perfect roast” or “Thank you for your gentle listening”).

This soup is endlessly adaptable — fully vegan with plant cream/stock, add grains (barley/quinoa) for heartiness, spice it up with ginger or chili. The slow simmer and blending create natural pauses for real connection.



Summer Stone Fruit & Burrata Sharing Platter

A JUICY, SUN-DRENCHED CIRCLE OF ABUNDANCE



Serves: 6–10

(ideal for a relaxed circle of 6–12 people — friends, family, summer gatherings)



20–30 minutes

(mostly slicing and arranging for easy, joyful flow)

VIBE:

Bright, juicy, creamy, effortless — like sunshine on a plate. Ripe stone fruits paired with torn burrata, fresh herbs, honey drizzle, and optional prosciutto or nuts for contrast. Symbolizes how peak-season abundance (and people's unique "flavors") shine brightest when shared simply and generously.

INGREDIENTS

(group gathering list – assign a Gatherer)

Stone fruits (peak-ripe, mix for color and variety – 1.5–2 kg total):

- 4–6 peaches or nectarines, sliced into wedges
- 4–6 plums or apricots, halved or wedged
- Handful cherries or small plums, whole or halved
- 3–4 balls fresh burrata (or buffalo mozzarella)
- 100–150g prosciutto or speck (optional; omit for vegetarian)
- Fresh herbs: large handful basil, mint, or thyme leaves
- 3–4 tbsp good extra-virgin olive oil
- 2–3 tbsp runny honey or balsamic glaze
- Optional add-ins: toasted pine nuts or pistachios, flaky sea salt, cracked black pepper, arugula or baby greens base, grilled sourdough slices or crostini
- To serve: crusty bread or crackers on the side

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign at the start in a light, standing circle around the platter/board. Roles encourage creativity, help, and appreciation — everyone adds their touch to the beauty.

Fruit & Color Weaver — Slices stone fruits into attractive wedges/halves; arranges by color for vibrancy.

Burrata & Creamy Heart Tender — Tears burrata balls open gently, places centrally or scattered.

Herb & Drizzle Alchemist — Picks fresh herbs, drizzles oil/honey, seasons with salt/pepper.

Story & Sunshine Holder — Holds a talking piece (peach pit, spoon, basil sprig); guides joyful shares.

Platter & Beauty Artist — Arranges everything on large board/platter; adds prosciutto/nuts if using.

Table & Summer Setter — Creates inviting outdoor/indoor setup (blanket, low table, candles, no phones).

Floating Joy Connector — Helps anywhere, keeps energy light, encourages reaching/sharing.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (5–8 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together. Form a loose circle near the platter.

Connection Invitation: Story & Sunshine Holder offers the talking piece: "Summer fruits at their peak remind us to savor the moment and each other — simple, shared, abundant. Tonight we gather in that spirit. Share one word: What 'sunshine' or joy do you bring to this circle today?" Pass once around quickly. Listen with smiles — set a warm, open tone.

2 / Slice & Arrange Round (10–15 min) Stations for slicing fruit, tearing burrata, picking herbs. Play soft summer music or gentle chatter.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses every few minutes for quick rounds: “As we slice these ripe fruits and arrange the colors, share one small thing from your summer (or recent days) that felt juicy, bright, or alive.” Keep shares light and brief (30–60 sec). Arranging becomes playful and bonding.

3 / Final Touches & Platter Assembly (5 min)

- Fruit Weaver lays out slices in patterns (radiating from center or rainbow style).
- Burrata Tender places and tears open cheeses for creamy pools.
- Herb & Drizzle Alchemist scatters leaves, drizzles oil/honey generously, adds salt/pepper.
- Platter Artist adds prosciutto ribbons, nuts, herbs for final beauty. Everyone steps back to admire.

4 / Sharing & Deeper Heart Round (5–10 min) Move to seated circle around the platter.

Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share: Story Holder: “This platter is alive with the season’s gifts and every hand here. Let’s open our hearts: What’s one thing you’re grateful for in this moment of summer (or life) — a joy, a connection, a simple pleasure? We listen fully, no fixing needed.” Pass the piece once around. Hold space warmly — laughter, quiet, tears all welcome.

5 / Eating Together – The Closing Circle Reach across, tear bread, scoop burrata with fruit, drizzle more honey. Eat slowly, savoring contrasts. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how this shared summer platter feels in you right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for the perfect honey drizzle” or “Thank you for your bright energy”).

This platter is endlessly flexible — fully vegetarian/vegan (omit prosciutto, use plant-based cheese), add grilled fruit for char, or swap in figs/berries seasonally. The no-cook ease keeps focus on connection.



A Story of Gentle Healing:

ADRIANA'S RETURN TO HERSELF

Nearly a decade ago in the tender aftermath of my divorce, I found myself standing at a crossroads-raw, searching and deeply aware of how alone I felt and how much I needed to stop isolating myself and find my community.

It was from that place of personal healing and unraveling that I came across the concept of a circle.

I had never even attended a circle and yet something deep inside of me told me to learn about it and create my own, and so I found Imogen, jumped on a plane and studied the art of leading circles with her, which I will be forever grateful for.

I was so nervous holding my first circle and yet started to gather women, not with some grand plan but with a simple desire to create a space where women could be truly seen, genuinely heard and unconditionally supported.

What began as my own healing journey became the seed of something far greater than I could have imagined.

Over the years of consistently holding circles, that seed grew into a beautiful community of women who shared stories, showed up for one another through heartbreak, transformation, grief and joy, through the ordinary and the sacred.

What I noticed was that when women gather together in this way with intention and vulnerability, something ancient stirs in them and the room.

Stories that had been carried in silence for years found their voice, tears fell without apology and no fixing was needed just witnessing, and in that shared vulnerability, healing happened for all of us. My calling started to deepen as the years passed, I began to feel the pull not only to lead my own circles, but to teach others how to hold them too in their own communities.

Mentoring and educating emerging facilitators has now become one of the most meaningful chapters of this work for me.

Watching a woman step into her power as a circle keeper, learning to hold space with confidence and care, inviting connection and honouring the stories shared, there is nothing quite like it.



Womens circles are one of humanity's oldest traditions, women gathering around campfires, in sewing groups, in kitchens with a cuppa, weaving their lives together through story and presence. This practice is now being brought forth in modern ways, women are hungry for it, for real connection, for a place they don't have to pretend or perform.

So I am convinced now more than ever that a circle is not just a beautiful tradition, it is a necessity.

Winter Solstice Spiced Mulled Cider & Comfort Stew

A HEARTH-SIDE PAIRING FOR RENEWAL & BELONGING



Serves: 8–12

(perfect for a solstice circle of 8–14 people — family, chosen family, friends)



1.5–2 hours

(mostly hands-off simmering for deep conversation)

VIBE:

Spicy, fragrant, deeply comforting — like candlelight and firelight wrapped around you. A rich vegetable & bean stew with winter roots, paired with steaming mulled cider infused with citrus and spices. Symbolizes how the darkest night holds the promise of returning light when we gather, share, and tend together.

INGREDIENTS

(group gathering list – assign a Gatherer)

Comfort Stew:

- 3–4 tbsp olive oil or butter
- 2 large onions, diced
- 6–8 garlic cloves, minced
- 4–5 carrots, chopped
- 3–4 parsnips or turnips, chopped
- 2–3 potatoes or sweet potatoes, cubed
- 3 celery stalks, chopped
- 2 cans (400g each) chopped tomatoes
- 2–3 cans mixed beans (kidney, cannellini, black – drained/rinsed)
- 1–1.5 litres vegetable or beef stock
- 2–3 bay leaves
- 2 tsp dried thyme or rosemary
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- Salt, black pepper to taste
- Optional: splash red wine, handful barley or lentils for thickness
- To finish: fresh parsley, grated Parmesan or nutritional yeast

Spiced Mulled Cider (non-alcoholic base; add rum/wine optionally):

- 3–4 litres apple cider (or cloudy apple juice)
- 2 oranges, sliced (plus zest of 1)
- 2 lemons, sliced
- 4–6 cinnamon sticks
- 8–10 whole cloves
- 6–8 star anise
- 1–2 tbsp whole allspice berries
- ¼–½ cup brown sugar or honey (to taste)
- Optional: fresh ginger slices, cardamom pods, a splash of dark rum/brandy per mug

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign at the start in a gentle standing circle near the stove/pot. Roles emphasize light-bringing, nurturing, and shared tending — everyone contributes to the solstice warmth.

Hearth & Simmer Guardian — Tends stove heat for both stew and cider, stirs periodically.

Root & Earth Weaver — Preps and chops root vegetables for the stew; invites naming what each brings (grounding, sweetness).

Spice & Aroma Alchemist — Measures and adds spices to stew and cider; layers fragrance.

Story & Solstice Holder — Holds a talking piece (cinnamon stick, orange slice, stone); guides reflective shares.

Flavor & Light Balancer — Tastes both dishes, adjusts sweetness/spice/acidity with group input.

Table & Candle Setter — Creates a solstice-inspired table (candles for returning light, evergreen sprigs, warm bowls/mugs, no distractions).

Floating Light Connector — Helps anywhere, senses energy, brings extra care.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (10–15 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together. Form a loose circle near the hearth/stove. Light a central candle if desired.

Connection Invitation: Story & Solstice Holder offers the talking piece: “On the winter solstice, we gather in the dark to welcome the returning light — through shared warmth, stories, and care. Tonight we do the same. Share one word or short phrase: What ‘light’ or hope do you carry into this darkest night?” Pass once around. Listen deeply — no rush, just witnessing.

2 / Prep & Spice Round (15–20 min) Stations for chopping roots, measuring spices, slicing citrus. Soft winter music or quiet.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses every few minutes for brief rounds: “As we prepare these roots and spices for warmth, share one small thing from the past year that brought you ‘light’ or strength — a moment, a person, a quiet victory.” Keep shares tender and brief (1 min). Prep becomes grounding and connective.

3 / Building the Pairing (15 min active + 1–1.5 hours simmer)

- Hearth Guardian heats oil in large pot; Root Weaver starts onions/garlic.
- Spice Alchemist adds stew spices, then veggies, beans, tomatoes, stock, bay. Bring to simmer.
- In separate pot, Spice Alchemist combines cider ingredients; simmer gently (do not boil).
- Simmer both low — stew 45–90 min until tender and deepened; cider 30–60 min for flavor infusion.
- Flavor Balancer tastes with group: “More cinnamon for comfort? More honey for sweetness?” Adjust together.

4 / Finishing & Deeper Heart Round (5–10 min) Ladle stew into bowls; strain or ladle mulled cider into mugs (add optional spirits). Garnish stew with herbs.

Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share: Gather at candlelit table. Story Holder: “These dishes have simmered with time and every hand here, just as light returns after darkness. Let’s open our hearts: What’s one thing you’re releasing from the old year, or welcoming into the new? We listen with warmth, no need to fix.” Pass the piece once (or twice if flowing). Hold sacred, hopeful space.

5 / Eating & Drinking Together – The Closing Circle Sip cider slowly; eat stew with bread or alone. Savor warmth and flavors. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how this solstice warmth feels in you right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for tending the simmer” or “Thank you for your brave sharing”).

This pairing is adaptable — fully vegan, spicier or milder, add meat to stew if desired. The dual simmer creates natural, extended time for real connection.



Spring Renewal Green Goddess Bowl

A FRESH, VIBRANT BOWL FOR REBIRTH & CONNECTION



Serves: 6-8

(ideal for a light, uplifting circle of 6-10 people — friends, family, spring gatherings)



35-45 minutes

(quick assembly and cooking for gentle, flowing energy)

VIBE:

Crisp, herbaceous, cleansing — like the first warm breeze after winter. Layered bowls of tender greens, spring veggies, grains, protein, and a luscious green goddess dressing bursting with fresh herbs. Symbolizes how spring's new growth (and our own renewal) emerges when we gather, nourish, and open to one another.

INGREDIENTS

(group market / garden list — assign a Gatherer)

Base & greens:

- 6-8 cups mixed spring greens (baby spinach, arugula, watercress, pea shoots, lettuce)
- 2 cups cooked quinoa, farro, or brown rice (cooled or warm)

Spring vegetables:

- 2-3 cups asparagus, trimmed and lightly steamed or blanched
- 2 cups snap peas or snow peas, halved
- 1-2 cucumbers, thinly sliced
- 1-2 avocados, sliced
- Radishes or spring onions, thinly sliced

Protein (choose 1-2 for variety):

- Grilled or poached chicken breast, sliced
- Baked or pan-fried tofu/tempeh
- Hard-boiled eggs, halved
- Edamame or chickpeas

Green Goddess Dressing (blend together):

- 1 cup fresh herbs (mix parsley, dill, basil, chives, tarragon)
- 1 ripe avocado or ½ cup Greek yoghurt/plain yoghurt
- 2-3 tbsp lemon juice (or lime)
- 1-2 garlic cloves
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 1-2 tbsp tahini or mayo (for creaminess)
- Salt, pepper, pinch sugar to taste
- Water to thin as needed

Toppings:

- Toasted seeds (pumpkin, sunflower, sesame)
- Microgreens or edible flowers (optional beauty)
- Lemon wedges, flaky sea salt

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign at the start in a light, standing circle near the counter. Roles encourage freshness, contribution, and renewal — everyone helps bring in the new season.

Green & Fresh Weaver — Washes and arranges salad greens, slices cucumbers/radishes.

Spring Veggie Tender — Preps and lightly cooks asparagus/snap peas (blanch or steam briefly).

Grain & Protein Balancer — Cooks/preps grains and protein; slices avocado/eggs.

Story & Renewal Holder — Holds a talking piece (lemon wedge, fresh herb sprig, stone); guides gentle shares.

Dressing & Herb Alchemist — Blends green goddess dressing; tastes and adjusts with group.

Bowl & Beauty Setter — Arranges bowls or serves family-style platter; adds microgreens/flowers.

Floating Light Connector — Helps anywhere, senses energy, encourages lightness and presence.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (5-10 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together. Form a loose circle in the kitchen.

Connection Invitation: Story & Renewal Holder offers the talking piece: "Spring is the season of renewal — fresh greens pushing through soil, light returning, hearts opening. Tonight we gather to release the old and welcome the new. Share one word or short phrase: What are you ready to release or invite in this spring?" Pass once around. Listen with full, gentle presence — no interruption.

2 / Prep & Fresh Round (10–15 min) Stations for washing greens, slicing veggies, cooking grains/protein. Play soft spring music or quiet.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses every few minutes for quick rounds: “As we prepare these fresh, tender greens and shoots, share one small thing you’d like to ‘grow’ or bring more of into your life right now — hope, rest, courage, joy.” Keep shares light and brief (30–60 sec). Prep becomes vibrant and uplifting.

3 / Dressing & Assembly (10 min)

- Dressing Alchemist blends herbs, avocado/yoghurt, lemon, garlic, oil — thin with water until pourable. Taste together: “More lemon for brightness? More herbs for green?”
- Green Weaver layers bases in bowls (or on large platter).
- Spring Veggie Tender adds blanched asparagus/peas; Grain & Protein Balancer adds grains/protein/avocado.
- Bowl & Beauty Setter drizzles dressing generously, scatters seeds/microgreens/flowers.

4 / Seated Renewal Round (5–10 min) Gather at table with bowls or family-style platter in center.

Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share: Story Holder: “These bowls are alive with spring’s new growth and every hand here. Let’s open our hearts: What’s one thing you’re grateful for as we move into this lighter season, or one tender hope you’re holding? We listen with warmth, no need to fix.” Pass the piece once around. Hold sacred, hopeful space.

5 / Eating Together – The Closing Circle Eat slowly, savoring crisp textures and bright flavors. Reach across, share bites. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how this spring renewal bowl feels in your body or heart right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for the perfect herby dressing” or “Thank you for your open sharing”).

This bowl is endlessly adaptable — fully vegan (use tahini/avocado dressing), gluten-free grains, add grilled fish or halloumi for variety. The fresh, light nature keeps energy uplifted and connective.



Birthday Blessing Cake Assembly

A SWEET CIRCLE OF WISHES, GRATITUDE & LOVE



Serves: 8–12

(perfect for an intimate birthday circle of 8–14 people — family, chosen family, close friends)



45–60 minutes

(cake baked ahead; focus is on decorating & blessing)

VIBE:

Warm, playful, deeply touching — like wrapping the birthday person in layers of love. A tall, simple layer cake transformed into a living blessing through fresh fruits, edible flowers, candles, and handwritten notes of well-wishes. Symbolizes how individual gifts of sweetness (words, gestures, toppings) come together to celebrate one life and strengthen the whole circle.

INGREDIENTS

(group gathering list — assign a Gatherer)

Cake base (bake ahead or use quality store-bought):

- 2–3 layers vanilla, chocolate, or lemon cake (8–9 inch rounds)
- Frosting: 800g–1kg buttercream, whipped cream, or cream cheese frosting (white or pale color for writing/decorating)

Toppings & blessings (set out in bowls for collaborative assembly):

- Fresh berries (strawberries, raspberries, blueberries, blackberries)
- Sliced stone fruits (peaches, nectarines, plums)
- Edible flowers (nasturtium, pansies, violets, rose petals)
- Chocolate shavings, sprinkles, or crushed nuts
- Candles (number for age + 1 for good luck)
- Small slips of paper & food-safe pens/markers (for writing blessings/wishes)
- Optional extras: macarons, meringue kisses, gold leaf, honey drizzle, fresh mint/herbs

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign at the start in a joyful standing circle around the cake table. Roles are light, creative, and appreciative — everyone contributes to the blessing.

Cake & Frosting Guardian — Smooths frosting between layers and on outside; creates even canvas.

Fruit & Flower Weaver — Preps and arranges fresh fruits and edible flowers for beauty.

Blessing & Wish Scribe — Prepares small paper slips and pens; collects written blessings.

Story & Heart Holder — Holds a talking piece (candle, flower, small spoon); guides gentle shares.

Candle & Light Tender — Places candles thoughtfully; lights them at the right moment.

Platter & Beauty Artist — Final arrangement of all elements; adds final touches (sprinkles, drizzles).

Floating Love Connector — Helps anywhere, keeps energy warm and inclusive, checks in on birthday person.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (8–12 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together. Form a loose circle around the cake table. Light a single central candle if desired.

Connection Invitation: Story & Heart Holder offers the talking piece: “Birthdays are a chance to pause and bless someone’s life — to say ‘you matter’ through sweetness and words. Tonight we make this cake a living blessing. Share one word or short phrase: What quality or gift do you see in [birthday person’s name] that you’d like to honor today?” Pass once around. Listen with full hearts — smiles, tears, laughter all welcome.

2 / Layering & Frosting Round (10–15 min) Cake Guardian spreads frosting between layers and coats outside smoothly.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses for quick rounds: “As we build these layers together, share one small memory or moment with [birthday person] that still warms your heart.” Keep shares brief and joyful (1 min max). Frosting becomes rhythmic and bonding.

3 / Blessing Writing Round (5–10 min) Blessing Scribe distributes paper slips. Everyone writes 1–3 short blessings/wishes (e.g., “May your courage grow,” “Thank you for your laughter,” “Wishing you gentle days”). Fold or roll slips; place in small bowl.

Connection Invitation (optional light round): “While writing, silently hold the intention of love for [birthday person].” No need to share aloud yet — keep private for surprise.

4 / Decorating & Deeper Heart Round (10–15 min) Fruit & Flower Weaver adds fruits and flowers; Platter Artist arranges beautifully. Candle Tender places candles.

Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share: Gather closer. Story Holder: “This cake holds the love and intentions of every hand here. Before we light the candles, let’s open our hearts: What’s one blessing or piece of gratitude you’d like to speak aloud for [birthday person] right now? We listen with love, no need to respond or fix.” Pass the piece once (or twice). Hold sacred, warm space — birthday person simply receives.

5 / Candle Lighting, Blessing Sharing & Eating – The Closing Circle Candle Tender lights candles (everyone sings “Happy Birthday” or a favorite blessing song). Birthday person blows out candles (make a wish silently). Blessing Scribe reads aloud the written slips (or passes them privately). Everyone takes a slice; eat slowly, savoring sweetness and connection. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how this birthday blessing feels in you right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for your beautiful fruit arrangement” or “Thank you for the heartfelt words”).

This assembly is endlessly adaptable — gluten-free/vegan cake base, different flavors (lemon, carrot), or themed toppings. The focus is the ritual: slow decoration, spoken



A Story of Searching & Finding

LYN & CLAIRE'S WISE WOMEN RETREATS

How We Found Women's Circles

Neither of us came to women's circles easily. Claire arrived carrying decades of conditioning from high-performance, masculine-dominated spaces of professional kitchens, international events, corporate grind. She was a doer, a fixer, a people-pleaser who had quietly lost herself along the way. Lyn had spent 20+ years in the corporate world and then in the fitness industry, helping others transform while quietly navigating her own spiritual awakening, one she hadn't yet felt safe enough to share with the world.

When we each completed Imogen's women's circle facilitation training via another beautiful soul sister in Adriana Basile Teichert, something profoundly shifted in both of us. The circle was the first space in a long time where we didn't have to perform, produce, or have the answers. We just had to show up, honestly and wholly, as women. For Claire, it was a lightning bolt moment: after years of healing from burnout and childhood trauma, she finally found the purpose she had been unknowingly searching for. For Lyn, it was a homecoming: a place where her spiritual gifts, her intuitive wisdom and her lived experience of midlife were not just welcome...but essential.

What Grew from That Seed

About six months after we completed the women's circle training, something beautiful and completely unplanned happened. A casual conversation at a local park between two women who barely knew each other turned into a two-hour download of shared vision, purpose and passion. We had both been sitting with the same quiet knowing: that women in midlife were being underserved, under-supported and quite frankly, under-celebrated.

From that park bench conversation, Wise Women Retreats was born.

Today, we create and run all-inclusive luxury retreats, women's circles, workshops and corporate wellbeing experiences for women 40+ navigating the transitions of midlife - menopause, identity reinvention, burnout and the quiet grief of losing who they once were and becoming someone new. Our work blends five-star hospitality with sacred circle practice, science-backed menopause education with soulful ritual. We bring both the 'woo and the woo-hoo' to every experience we create.



What the Circle Made Possible

The circle didn't just teach us how to hold space - it reminded us why it so very much matters. It modelled for us what it looks like when women stop competing and start witnessing each other. It gave us the tools, yes, but more than that, it gave us the permission: to lead, to trust our own wisdom and to believe that our stories - messy, complicated, and beautiful as they are - these are exactly what other women need to hear to feel safe and understood in their own messy, complicated and beautiful journey's.

Imogen's training was the seed. The park bench conversation was the soil. And Wise Women Retreats is what bloomed.

We are endlessly grateful...and we are just getting started!

New Moon Intention Soup

A CLEANSING BROTH FOR SETTING SEEDS & RENEWAL



Serves: 6–8

(ideal for an intimate new moon circle of 6–10 people — friends, family, or solo with leftovers)



45–60 minutes

(mostly gentle simmering for reflective pauses)

VIBE:

Clear, aromatic, subtly healing — like moonlight in a bowl. A light vegetable broth infused with ginger, garlic, turmeric, and fresh herbs, with optional add-ins for personalization. Symbolizes how the dark moon holds space for new beginnings: clear the old, set intentions, and nourish what's emerging.

INGREDIENTS

(group market / garden list – assign a Gatherer)

Broth base:

- 2–3 tbsp olive oil or ghee
- 1 large onion or leek, thinly sliced
- 6–8 garlic cloves, sliced
- 2–3 inch fresh ginger, sliced or grated
- 1–2 tsp ground turmeric (or fresh root)
- 2–3 carrots, thinly sliced
- 2–3 celery stalks, sliced
- Optional cleansing boosts: handful fresh parsley stems, bay leaves, lemongrass stalk, fennel seeds
- 2–2.5 litres vegetable stock or water
- Juice of 1–2 lemons (added at end for brightness)
- Salt & white/black pepper to taste

Add-ins (set out buffet-style for intention personalization):

- Cooked grains: rice, quinoa, or noodles
- Leafy greens: spinach, kale, or chard (wilt in at end)
- Protein: tofu cubes, shredded chicken, poached eggs, or edamame
- Fresh herbs: cilantro, basil, mint, chives
- Toppings: sliced chili, sesame seeds, lime wedges, miso paste dollop
- Optional ritual touch: small slips of paper & pens (for writing intentions to “plant” silently or burn safely after)

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign gently at the start in a quiet standing circle near the pot. Roles emphasize clarity, intention, and care — everyone helps seed the new cycle.

Pot & Simmer Guardian — Tends heat, stirs mindfully, watches the gentle bubble.

Root & Aroma Weaver — Preps onion/garlic/ginger/carrots/celery; infuses the base.

Add-In Circle Leader — Preps customizable add-ins (grains, greens, proteins).

Story & Intention Holder — Holds a talking piece (ginger slice, spoon, moonstone if available); guides reflective shares.

Flavor & Clarity Alchemist — Tastes broth, adds lemon/salt; invites group adjustments.

Table & Moon Setter — Creates a serene table (candles for new light, dark cloth, simple moon imagery, no distractions).

Floating Renewal Connector — Helps anywhere, senses energy, brings extra softness.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (8–12 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together slowly. Form a loose circle. Dim lights if possible; light one candle for the new moon's emerging light.

Connection Invitation: Story & Intention Holder offers the talking piece: “The new moon is a time of fresh beginnings — a dark sky holding infinite potential. Tonight we create this soup as a vessel for our intentions. Share one word or short phrase: What are you ready to release from the old cycle, or what new seed do you wish to plant?” Pass once around. Listen with full, quiet presence — no crosstalk or advice.

2 / Prep & Seed Round (10–15 min) Stations for slicing aromatics and roots. Soft, ambient music or silence.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses every few minutes for brief rounds: “As we prepare these cleansing roots and herbs, share one small thing you’re releasing or clearing space for right now — a habit, a thought, a heaviness.” Keep shares gentle and short (1 min max). Prep becomes meditative and purifying.

3 / Building the Broth (10 min active + 30–45 min simmer)

Simmer Guardian heats oil; Root Weaver adds onion/garlic/ginger. Sauté until fragrant.

Add carrots/celery, turmeric, herbs; pour in stock. Bring to gentle simmer.

Simmer low — everyone can gather near, inhaling steam as intentions “cook.”

Flavor Alchemist tastes with group: “More ginger for clarity? More lemon for release?” Adjust together.

4 / Add-Ins & Deeper Intention Round (5–10 min) Strain broth if desired (clear for renewal); ladle into bowls over chosen add-ins.

Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share: Gather at table. Story Holder: “This broth has cleared and warmed through time and every hand here. Let’s plant our seeds: What’s one clear intention or wish you’re setting for this new cycle? Speak it aloud or hold it silently as we sip. We listen with openness, no need to solve or comment.” Pass the piece once (or twice if flowing). Hold sacred, spacious space — optional: write intentions on slips, fold, and “plant” by placing under bowls or burning safely later.

5 / Eating Together – The Closing Circle Sip slowly, savoring clarity and warmth. Add toppings as desired. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how this new moon soup feels moving through you right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for the gentle simmer” or “Thank you for your brave intention”).

This soup is highly adaptable — vegan by default, add bone broth for deeper nourishment, lighter or heartier add-ins. The clear broth and slow simmer mirror the new moon’s invitation to emptiness and potential.



Full Moon Gratitude Tart

A LUMINOUS DESSERT OF THANKS & SHARED RADIANCE



Serves: 8–12

(ideal for a full moon circle of 8–14 people — friends, family, community)



45–60 minutes

assembly & decorating
(tart baked ahead; focus is on gratitude ritual)

VIBE:

Bright, creamy, joyful — like moonlight on a plate. A crisp crust filled with tangy lemon curd or pastry cream, crowned with fresh fruits, flowers, and symbols of gratitude. Symbolizes how the full moon reflects light back to us, illuminating what we're thankful for when we gather and offer it together.

INGREDIENTS

(group gathering list – assign a Gatherer)

Tart base (bake ahead or use quality store-bought):

- 1 large (9–10 inch) pre-baked sweet shortcrust or graham cracker crust
- Filling: 600–800g lemon curd, passionfruit curd, or vanilla pastry cream (smooth and bright)

Toppings & gratitude elements (set out in bowls for collaborative assembly):

- Fresh berries (strawberries halved, raspberries, blueberries)
- Sliced stone fruits (peaches, nectarines, figs)
- Kiwi, mango, or pineapple slices for brightness
- Edible flowers (pansies, violets, rose petals, borage)
- Whipped cream or coconut cream dollops
- Silver or gold edible dust/glitter (for “moonlight” shimmer)
- Small mint leaves or herb sprigs
- Optional: meringue kisses or mini macarons for texture
- Ritual touch: small slips of paper & food-safe pens (for writing gratitudes to place on or around tart)

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign at the start in a joyful standing circle around the tart table. Roles are creative, appreciative, and light — everyone adds their “light” to the gratitude.

- Tart & Filling Guardian — Spreads or pipes filling evenly into crust; creates smooth base.
- Fruit & Radiance Weaver — Slices and arranges fresh fruits in moon-inspired patterns (radiating circles, full moon center).
- Flower & Beauty Alchemist — Places edible flowers and herbs for luminous touch.
- Story & Gratitude Holder — Holds a talking piece (candle, flower, small spoon); guides reflective shares.
- Shimmer & Finish Artist — Dusts with edible shimmer, adds whipped cream dollops, final touches.
- Table & Moon Setter — Creates a full moon-inspired table (silver/white cloth, candles in circle, moon imagery, no distractions).
- Floating Light Connector — Helps anywhere, keeps energy warm and inclusive, checks in on group.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (8–12 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together. Form a loose circle around the tart. Light candles in a circle if desired.

Connection Invitation: Story & Gratitude Holder offers the talking piece: “The full moon shines fully, reflecting back all we’ve grown and received. Tonight we make this tart a shared expression of gratitude. Share one word or short phrase: What are you most thankful for in this cycle, or what light has come into your life lately?” Pass once around. Listen with full hearts — smiles, quiet nods, emotion all welcome.

2 / Layering & Decorating Round (15–20 min) Tart Guardian spreads filling smoothly.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses for quick rounds: “As we place these bright fruits and flowers, share one specific thing you’re grateful for about someone in this circle (including yourself).” Keep shares warm and brief (1 min max). Decorating becomes playful and connective.

3 / Gratitude Writing Round (5–10 min) Everyone writes 1–3 short gratitudes on slips (e.g., “Thank you for your steady presence,” “Grateful for laughter shared,” “Thankful for my own growth”). Fold or roll slips; place gently on tart (around edges or in center) or in small bowl beside.

Connection Invitation (optional light): “Write with intention — let these words be a quiet offering to the circle and the moon.”

4 / Final Shimmer & Deeper Heart Round (5–10 min) Shimmer Artist adds edible dust, whipped cream, final flowers. Step back to admire.

Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share: Gather closer. Story Holder: “This tart glows with the gratitude of every hand here — a reflection of our shared light. Let’s speak aloud: What’s one big or small gratitude you’d like to voice for this full moon moment? We listen with love, no need to respond or fix.” Pass the piece once (or twice). Hold sacred, radiant space — birthday-style song optional if honoring the moon/group.

5 / Eating Together – The Closing Circle Slice and serve (or pass forks for shared bites). Savor sweetness slowly. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how this full moon gratitude feels in you right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for the beautiful fruit moon” or “Thank you for your heartfelt words”).

This tart is adaptable — vegan curd/cream, gluten-free crust, different fruits seasonally. The focus is the ritual: collaborative beauty-making, spoken thanks, shared sweetness under the full moon’s light.



Summer Solstice Grilled Vegetable Feast

A SUN-FILLED, SMOKY CIRCLE OF ABUNDANCE



Serves: 8–12

(ideal for an outdoor or lively indoor circle of 8–14 people — friends, family, summer gatherings)



45–60 minutes

(active grilling + assembly for high-energy connection)

VIBE:

Bright, smoky, sun-drenched — like capturing the longest day's light on a platter. Charred, tender vegetables with Mediterranean-inspired marinades, served with dips, flatbreads, and fresh herbs. Symbolizes how the peak of light and heat brings out the best in simple ingredients (and people)

INGREDIENTS

(group market / garden list – assign a Gatherer)

Vegetables for grilling (seasonal summer bounty – about 3–4 kg total):

- 4–5 zucchini or courgettes, thick slices
- 3–4 eggplants/aubergines, sliced into rounds
- 4–5 bell peppers (mix red, yellow, orange), quartered
- 2 bunches asparagus, trimmed
- 500g mushrooms (portobello or large field), halved
- 2–3 red onions, cut into thick wedges
- Corn on the cob (optional, husked)

Marinade/Dressing:

- ¾ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- Juice and zest of 2–3 lemons
- 4–6 garlic cloves, minced
- 2–3 tbsp fresh oregano, thyme, or rosemary (or 2 tsp dried)
- Salt, black pepper, chili flakes to taste

To serve:

- Tzatziki, hummus, or yoghurt-tahini dip
- Flatbreads, pita, or crusty bread (warmed on grill)
- Fresh herbs: parsley, mint, dill, basil
- Feta or goat cheese crumbles (optional)
- Lemon wedges, olive oil drizzle
- Optional proteins: grilled halloumi, chicken skewers, or tofu slices

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign at the start in a lively standing circle around the grill (or grill pan). Roles flow like tending a solstice fire — everyone contributes, helps, and celebrates.

Fire & Grill Guardian — Manages grill heat, oils grates, flips vegetables, ensures even char.

Veggie & Marinade Weaver — Preps and marinates vegetables; invites naming what each brings (vitality, color, sweetness).

Dip & Herb Alchemist — Prepares dips, chops fresh herbs, tastes for brightness.

Story & Solstice Holder — Holds a talking piece (lemon wedge, grill tongs, stone); guides celebratory shares.

Platter & Sun Artist — Arranges finished grilled veggies beautifully on large platters; adds herbs/cheese.

Bread & Table Weaver — Warms breads on grill, sets inviting outdoor/indoor table (sunny cloths, candles or lanterns, no phones).

Floating Light Connector — Helps anywhere, keeps energy joyful and inclusive, checks in on moods.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (8–12 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together. Form a loose circle around the grill. Light the grill (or stovetop) as a shared “solstice fire.”

Connection Invitation: Story & Solstice Holder offers the talking piece: “On the summer solstice, we celebrate the peak of light and life — gathering around fire to share abundance and gratitude. Tonight we honor that. Share one word or short phrase: What ‘light’ or fullness are you celebrating in your life right now?” Pass once around. Listen with full presence — smiles, cheers, emotion all welcome.

2 / Prep & Marinade Round (10–15 min) Stations for slicing veggies, mixing marinade. Upbeat summer music or lively chatter.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses every few minutes for quick rounds: “As we slice these sun-ripened vegetables and coat them in oil and herbs, share one small thing this season (or lately) that has felt vibrant, alive, or full of light.” Keep shares bright and brief (30–60 sec). Prep becomes energetic and bonding.

3 / Grilling Dance (15–25 min active)

- Grill Guardian heats grill high; brush veggies with marinade.
- Veggie Weaver places batches on grill; everyone can help flip or move.
- Call out playfully: “These peppers are for passion!” or “Zucchini for growth!” Grill until charred and tender (3–6 min per side).
- Transfer to platters; keep warm. Bread Weaver toasts flatbreads on grill edges.

4 / Platter Assembly & Deeper Heart Round (5–10 min)

Platter Artist arranges grilled veggies in colorful abundance, scatters herbs/cheese, adds dips and breads.

Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share: Gather around the table/platters. Story Holder: “This feast carries the sun’s fire and every hand here. Let’s open our hearts: What’s one big or small thing you’re truly grateful for in this season of light? We listen with joy, no need to fix.” Pass the piece once (or twice if flowing). Hold warm, celebratory space.

5 / Eating Together – The Closing Circle Serve

family-style: reach, share, dip, savor smoky flavors. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how this solstice feast feels in you right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for perfect grill timing” or “Thank you for your radiant sharing”).

This feast is endlessly adaptable — fully vegan (skip cheese), add grilled proteins, spice up marinade. The outdoor grill (or indoor pan) and high-heat energy keep things lively while roles and shares deepen connection.



Equinox Apple & Root Vegetable Bake

A DISH OF PERFECT BALANCE & SEASONAL GRATITUDE



Serves: 6–8

(ideal for an equinox circle of 6–10 people — family, friends, seasonal gathering)



60–75 minutes

(mostly hands-off roasting for reflective time)

VIBE:

Warm, harmonious, subtly sweet — like standing at the exact center between light and shadow. Roasted roots and caramelized apples with herbs and a touch of honey or maple, served family-style straight from the tray. Symbolizes equilibrium: the grounding depth of roots meets the lifting sweetness of fruit, reminding us that wholeness comes from holding both. when we gather around the fire together.

INGREDIENTS

(group gathering list – assign a Gatherer)

Root vegetables (mix for balance and color – about 2–2.5 kg total):

- 4–5 medium carrots, peeled and cut into chunky batons
- 3–4 parsnips, peeled and cut into chunky batons
- 2–3 sweet potatoes or yams, peeled and cubed
- 2 medium beets (optional for rich color; peeled and cubed)
- 1 large red onion, cut into thick wedges

Apples (firm, tart-sweet varieties for brightness):

- 4–5 apples (Granny Smith, Honeycrisp, or Pink Lady), cored and cut into thick wedges
- 4–5 tbsp olive oil or melted butter/ghee
- 2–3 tbsp honey or maple syrup
- 2 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1 tsp ground nutmeg or allspice
- 3–4 sprigs fresh thyme or rosemary (or 1 tsp dried)
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- Optional richness: handful toasted walnuts or pecans, crumbled feta or goat cheese (for savory contrast)
- To serve: crusty bread or warm flatbread, dollops of yoghurt or sour cream

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign collaboratively at the start in a gentle standing circle near the roasting trays. Roles reflect balance — everyone contributes to the harmony of the dish and the gathering.

Roast & Balance Guardian — Preheats oven, tosses everything with oil and spices, monitors even roasting.

Root Weaver — Prepares and chops root vegetables; invites naming what each root brings (grounding, stability, depth).

Apple Weaver — Slices apples, adds sweetness; invites naming what each apple brings (brightness, joy, lift).

Story & Equinox Holder — Holds a talking piece (apple wedge, thyme sprig, small stone); guides reflective shares.

Flavor & Harmony Alchemist — Tastes midway/end, adjusts seasoning/honey; invites group input on balance.

Table & Threshold Setter — Creates a balanced table (equal candles for light and dark, seasonal leaves or simple centerpiece, warm serving dishes, no phones).

Floating Harmony Connector — Helps anywhere, senses group energy, brings extra care and reminders of balance.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (8–12 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together. Form a loose circle near the trays. Light two candles if desired — one for light, one for dark — to symbolize the equinox balance.

Connection Invitation: Story & Equinox Holder offers the talking piece: “At the equinox, day and night stand equal — a moment to honor balance, give thanks for what has been harvested, and prepare for what’s next. Tonight we create this dish as a reflection of that harmony. Share one word or short phrase: What in your life feels in balance right now, or what are you seeking to bring into greater equilibrium?” Pass once around. Listen deeply — no rush, just witnessing.

2 / Prep & Balance Round (10–15 min) Stations for chopping roots and apples. Soft, balanced music or quiet conversation.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses every few minutes for brief rounds: “As we prepare these grounding roots and bright apples, share one small thing you’re grateful for that brings balance to your days — a person, a practice, a feeling.” Keep shares brief and gentle (1 min max). Chopping becomes mindful and connective.

3 / Roasting & Harmony Building (10 min active + 40–50 min oven)

- Roast Guardian tosses root vegetables and onion with half the oil, herbs, salt/pepper on one tray.
- Apple Weaver tosses apple wedges with remaining oil, honey/maple, cinnamon/nutmeg on another tray (or together if space allows).
- Roast at 200°C (400°F) for 40–50 minutes, stirring once or twice for even caramelization.
- Combine everything on one large platter or tray midway if separate; Flavor Alchemist tastes with group: “More honey for sweetness? More salt for grounding?” Adjust together.
- While roasting, group can sit nearby for unhurried conversation or reflection.

4 / Plating & Deeper Heart Round (5–10 min) Arrange the roasted roots and apples together on a large platter; scatter nuts/cheese/herbs if using.

Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share: Gather at the table. Story Holder: “This dish holds the balance of earth and light, roots and fruit, every hand here. Let’s open our hearts: What’s one thing you’re thankful for in this season of change, or one area where you’re inviting more harmony? We listen with warmth, without fixing.” Pass the piece once (or twice if energy flows). Hold sacred, balanced space.

5 / Eating Together – The Closing Circle Serve family-style with bread and yoghurt. Eat slowly, savoring the contrast of earthy depth and sweet brightness. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how this equinox balance feels in you right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for the perfect apple sweetness” or “Thank you for your steady presence”).

This bake is endlessly adaptable — fully vegan with maple and olive oil, add sausage or halloumi for heartiness, spice it up or keep gentle. The roasting time creates natural pauses for real reflection and connection.



Samhain Pumpkin & Squash Ritual Stew

A GROUNDING CAULDRON FOR TRANSITION & PROTECTION



Serves: 8–10

(perfect for a Samhain circle of 8–12 people — family, chosen family, friends)



1.5–2 hours

(mostly low simmer for reflective, unhurried space)

VIBE:

Deeply earthy, smoky, comforting — like firelight on a cold night. Velvety pumpkin and squash with beans, roots, and autumn spices, served with crusty bread. Symbolizes the turning: abundance stored for the dark months, release of the old, and protective warmth shared together.

INGREDIENTS

(group gathering list – assign a Gatherer)

- 1 large pumpkin or 2–3 medium squash (butternut, kabocha, or sugar pumpkin – about 2–2.5 kg total), peeled, seeded, and cubed
- 3–4 tbsp olive oil or butter/ghee
- 2 large onions, diced
- 6–8 garlic cloves, minced
- 3–4 carrots, chopped
- 2–3 parsnips or turnips, chopped
- 2 cans (400g each) chopped tomatoes
- 2 cans (400g each) beans (kidney, black, or cannellini – drained/rinsed)
- 1–1.5 litres vegetable or chicken stock
- 2–3 bay leaves
- Spices: 2 tsp smoked paprika, 1–2 tsp ground cumin, 1 tsp ground coriander, ½–1 tsp cinnamon, pinch cayenne (adjust heat)
- Salt & black pepper to taste
- To finish: fresh parsley or sage, a swirl of cream/coconut cream (optional), pumpkin seeds (toasted)
- To serve: crusty bread or soda bread, optional apple cider or mulled wine

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign at the start in a quiet standing circle near the pot. Roles reflect the season's themes — honoring the harvest, tending the fire, protecting the circle.

Cauldron & Fire Tender — Manages heat, stirs mindfully, watches the slow simmer.

Harvest Weaver — Preps pumpkin/squash and root vegetables; invites naming what each brings from the earth.

Spice & Protection Alchemist — Measures and adds spices; layers protective, warming energy.

Story & Veil Holder — Holds a talking piece (bay leaf, pumpkin seed, small stone); guides reflective shares.

Flavor & Ancestor Guardian — Tastes midway/end, adjusts seasoning; invites group input on depth.

Table & Hearth Setter — Creates a Samhain-inspired table (candles in circle, autumn leaves/pumpkin pieces, warm bowls, no distractions).

Floating Guardian Connector — Helps anywhere, senses energy, brings extra protection and care.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (10–15 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together. Form a loose circle around the pot. Light a central candle or small fire (real or symbolic) to represent the thinning veil and returning inner light.

Connection Invitation: Story & Veil Holder offers the talking piece: “Samhain is the time when the veil is thin — a moment to honor what has passed, give thanks for the harvest, and set protective intentions for the dark half of the year. Tonight we create this stew as a shared cauldron of warmth and remembrance. Share one word or short phrase: What are you ready to release from this cycle, or what protection do you seek for the months ahead?” Pass once around. Listen deeply — silence, tears, stories all welcome.

2 / Harvest & Prep Round (15–20 min) Stations for chopping pumpkin/squash and roots. Soft, grounding music or quiet.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses every few minutes for brief rounds: “As we prepare these roots and fruits from the earth’s final harvest, share one small thing you’re grateful for from this past season — a gift, a lesson, a moment of beauty.” Keep shares tender and brief (1 min max). Chopping becomes meditative and honoring.

3 / Building the Cauldron (15 min active + 1–1.5 hours simmer)

- Fire Tender heats oil; Harvest Weaver starts onions/garlic.
- Spice Alchemist adds spices — everyone can call out: “Paprika for protection,” “Cinnamon for warmth in the dark.”
- Sauté until fragrant.
- Add pumpkin/squash, roots, tomatoes, beans, stock, bay.
 - Bring to gentle simmer.
- Simmer low — group gathers near, inhaling steam as intentions “cook.”
- Flavor Guardian tastes with group: “More cumin for depth?”
- More salt for grounding?” Adjust together.

4 / Finishing & Deeper Veil Round (5–10 min) Remove bay leaves; swirl in cream if using. Ladle into bowls; scatter parsley/seeds.

Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share: Gather at candlelit table. Story Holder: “This stew has been nourished by the harvest, time, and every hand here — a protective vessel for the dark months. Let’s open the veil: What’s one thing you wish to honor or remember from someone or something that has passed (person, pet, season, dream)? Or one protective wish for yourself or the circle? We listen with reverence, no need to fix.” Pass the piece once (or twice if flowing). Hold sacred, gentle space.

5 / Eating Together – The Closing Circle Eat slowly, savoring earthiness and warmth. Bread to dip, cider to sip. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how this Samhain stew feels in you right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for tending the cauldron” or “Thank you for your brave sharing”).

This stew is adaptable — fully vegan, spicier or milder, add sausage or bacon for traditional depth. The long simmer creates natural time for remembrance and protection-setting.



A Story of Sisterhood

JACINDA'S RETURN TO THE FAMILIAR

I circle because I love sitting in Circle myself, and because there is something profoundly powerful about bringing women together in this way. Circle offers a sacred space where each woman is gently held, deeply heard, and fully seen—without fixing, performing, or needing to be anything other than who she is in that moment. Circle gives us permission to simply just be.

While every Circle is unique, they all carry a shared essence of awakening and self-discovery. Circle invites us home to ourselves, allowing us to soften, to remember, and to be unapologetically authentic in the presence of others. It is a space where reflection, connection, and truth naturally unfold.

Circle is medicine and a nourishment that restores balance, brings steadies to the heart and nervous system, and reminds us that we do not walk this path alone.

By the time our Circle closes, it is always beautiful to witness the subtle and sometimes deep energy shifts in each woman who has attended—the lightness, the clarity, the quiet strength that emerges. Holding women in Circle and witnessing the energy of this shared space is a true honour, and one I never take lightly.



Midsummer Berry & Herb Sharing Salad

A RADIANT PLATTER OF LIGHT, ABUNDANCE & TOGETHERNESS



Serves: 8–12

(perfect for a joyful midsummer circle of 8–14 people — friends, family, outdoor gatherings)



25–35 minutes

(mostly assembly for light, summery flow)

VIBE:

Fresh, jewel-toned, herbaceous — like sunlight captured on a platter. A generous mix of ripe berries, tender greens, fragrant herbs, and a light honey-lemon dressing, served family-style for reaching and sharing. Symbolizes how the peak of summer's light and sweetness shine brightest when offered and received together.

INGREDIENTS

(group market / garden / foraging list — assign a Gatherer)

Greens base:

- 8–10 cups mixed tender greens (arugula, baby spinach, watercress, mâche, or foraged wild greens like dandelion or chickweed)
- Handful edible flowers (nasturtium, borage, viola, rose petals — optional but traditional for midsummer magic)

Berries & fruit (peak-ripe, mix for color — 1.5–2 kg total):

- 500g strawberries, halved
- 400g raspberries
- 300g blueberries or blackberries
- 200g redcurrants or cherries (pitted)
- Optional: sliced nectarines or peaches for extra juiciness

Fresh herbs (abundant handfuls):

- Mint, basil, dill, lemon balm, chives

Nuts & crunch:

- 1 cup toasted almonds, hazelnuts, or sunflower seeds

Dressing (whisk together):

- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- ¼ cup fresh lemon juice (or lime)
- 2–3 tbsp honey or maple syrup
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- Salt, black pepper to taste

Optional add-ins for heartiness:

- Crumbled feta, goat cheese, or plant-based cheese
- Cooked quinoa or farro (cooled)
- Grilled halloumi slices

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign at the start in a bright, standing circle around the platter table (ideal outdoors). Roles are playful, creative, and appreciative — everyone adds their “light” to the feast.

Green & Base Weaver — Washes and arranges tender greens as the foundation.

Berry & Jewel Artist — Preps and scatters berries/fruit for vibrant color.

Herb & Fragrance Gatherer — Picks, chops, and scatters fresh herbs generously.

Story & Midsummer Holder — Holds a talking piece (berry, flower, spoon); guides celebratory shares.

Dressing & Harmony Alchemist — Whisks dressing; tastes and adjusts with group input.

Platter & Sun Beauty Setter — Arranges final platter (layers, flowers, nuts); creates abundance.

Table & Light Weaver — Sets inviting outdoor/indoor table (sunny cloths, flowers, candles or lanterns, no phones).

Floating Joy Connector — Helps anywhere, keeps energy light and inclusive.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (5-10 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together. Form a loose circle near the platter.

Connection Invitation: Story & Midsummer Holder offers the talking piece: “Midsummer celebrates the longest light of the year — a time to gather, feast, and honor what is full and alive in us. Tonight we build this salad in that spirit. Share one word: What ‘light’ or fullness are you celebrating today?” Pass once around quickly. Listen with smiles — set a radiant, open tone.

2 / Prep & Abundance Round (10–15 min) Stations for washing greens, slicing berries, picking herbs. Play gentle midsummer music or lively chatter.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses every few minutes for quick rounds: “As we scatter these ripe berries and fragrant herbs, share one small thing this season (or lately) that has felt bright, alive, or abundant.” Keep shares joyful and brief (30–60 sec). Assembly becomes playful and bonding.

3 / Dressing & Final Assembly (5–10 min)

- Dressing Alchemist whisks oil/lemon/honey/mustard; taste together: “More honey for sweetness? More lemon for brightness?”
- Green Weaver lays greens as base; Berry Artist adds jewel-like fruits; Herb Gatherer scatters leaves.
- Platter Setter drizzles dressing lightly, adds nuts/flowers/cheese for final beauty.

4 / Seated Gratitude Round (5–10 min) Gather at table with platter(s) in center.

Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share: Story Holder: “This salad glows with the season’s abundance and every hand here. Let’s open our hearts: What’s one thing you’re deeply grateful for right now — in your life, in this circle, in this moment of light? We listen with joy, no need to fix.” Pass the piece once around. Hold warm, celebratory space.

5 / Eating Together – The Closing Circle Serve family-style: reach across, scoop portions, savor fresh flavors. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how this midsummer salad feels in you right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for the perfect berry scatter” or “Thank you for your radiant sharing”).

This salad is endlessly flexible — fully vegan (skip cheese), add grilled proteins, swap berries seasonally. The no-cook ease and shared platter encourage lingering and true connection.



Sweet Endings & Sharing Desserts

THE PERFECT CLOSING CIRCLE FOR LINGERING
CONVERSATIONS AND SWEET GRATITUDE



No-Bake Energy Balls with Global Spices & Nuts

PORTABLE BITES OF SHARED VITALITY



Makes: 30–40 balls

(perfect for a circle of 6–12 people to roll, share, and take home)



20–30 minutes

(quick, hands-on, no cooking required)

VIBE:

Chewy, aromatic, energizing — like tiny globes of connection. Nutty-oat bases flavored with different global spice blends, rolled together and shared. Symbolizes how small, portable acts of nourishment (and care) travel with us and bind us across distance and time.

INGREDIENTS

(group gathering / pantry list – assign a Gatherer)

Base (for all variations – scale up as needed):

- 2–3 cups rolled oats (gluten-free if preferred)
- 1–1½ cups nut butter (almond, peanut, cashew, or tahini for sesame vibe)
- ½–¾ cup honey, maple syrup, or date paste (for binding and sweetness)
- ½ cup ground flaxseed, chia seeds, or hemp seeds (for nutrition and texture)
- Pinch sea salt

Global spice & flavor variations (choose 2–4 for variety; divide base dough and mix in):

- Moroccan-inspired: 2 tsp ras el hanout + ½ cup chopped dried apricots + ¼ cup chopped pistachios
- Indian chai-inspired: 2 tsp chai spice (or mix cinnamon, cardamom, ginger, cloves) + ¼ cup chopped dates + 2 tbsp coconut flakes
- Mexican cacao-chili: 2 tbsp cacao powder + 1–2 tsp chili powder or cayenne + ¼ cup chopped dark chocolate or cacao nibs
- Middle Eastern sesame-tahini: Use tahini as nut butter + 1–2 tsp za’atar or sumac + ¼ cup toasted sesame seeds
- Classic autumn: 2 tsp pumpkin pie spice + ¼ cup pumpkin seeds + ¼ cup dried cranberries

Coating options (for rolling):

- Unsweetened coconut flakes, crushed nuts, cocoa powder, sesame seeds, finely chopped dried fruit

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign at the start in a fun, standing circle around the counter. Roles are light, tactile, and creative — everyone gets their hands in the mix.

Base Mixer — Combines oats, nut butter, sweetener, seeds, and salt into a sticky dough.

Spice Weaver — Divides dough, mixes in global spice blends and add-ins for different flavors.

Rolling Circle Leader — Shapes dough into balls; invites everyone to join and name their ball’s “intention.”

Story & Vitality Holder — Holds a talking piece (spoon, spice jar, nut); guides playful shares.

Coating & Finish Artist — Prepares coating bowls, rolls balls in toppings for beauty and crunch.

Table & Sharing Setter — Arranges finished balls on a platter or in small takeaway bags; sets inviting space.

Floating Energy Connector — Helps anywhere, keeps vibes light and inclusive, checks in on moods.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (5-8 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together. Form a loose circle around the counter.

Connection Invitation: Story & Vitality Holder offers the talking piece: “These little energy balls carry nourishment we can take anywhere — just like the care and connection we share here. Tonight we make them together as a small act of vitality and support. Share one word: What ‘energy’ or quality do you want to carry with you this week (strength, calm, joy, courage)?” Pass once around quickly. Listen with smiles — set a warm, playful tone.

2 / Mixing & Flavor Round (8–12 min) Base Mixer combines core ingredients into a big bowl. Spice Weaver divides into portions and mixes in global flavors.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses for quick rounds: “As we blend these spices and nuts from different cultures, share one small thing that gives you energy or grounds you right now — a person, a habit, a memory.” Keep shares light and brief (30–60 sec). Mixing becomes tactile and bonding.

3 / Rolling & Coating Round (10–15 min) Rolling Circle Leader starts shaping tablespoon-sized balls; everyone joins. Coating Artist sets out toppings.

Connection Invitation: While rolling, do a micro-round: “As you shape your ball, give it a quiet intention or name — something you want to carry forward or share with others.” Roll in coatings; call out playfully: “This one’s Moroccan adventure!” or “Chai calm for the week!”

4 / Platter Assembly & Deeper Heart Round (5–10 min) Arrange finished balls on a large platter or in small bags for taking home.

Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share: Gather around the platter. Story Holder: “These balls hold the energy, flavors, and intentions of every hand here. Let’s open our hearts: What’s one thing you’re grateful for in this moment or in this circle? We listen fully, no fixing needed.” Pass the piece once around. Hold space warmly — laughter and tenderness both welcome.

5 / Eating & Sharing Together – The Closing Circle Pass the platter; eat one or two balls slowly, savoring flavors and textures. Share extras to take home. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how these shared energy balls land in you right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for the perfect chai blend” or “Thank you for your bright energy”).

This recipe is endlessly adaptable — nut-free with seed butters, vegan by default, different spice profiles for cultural nights. The no-bake nature makes it accessible for any gathering, while rolling together keeps hands busy and hearts open.



Rustic Fruit Tart for Passing & Praising

A SHARED, IMPERFECT BEAUTY OF GRATITUDE



Serves: 8–12

(ideal for a warm circle of 8–14 people — family, friends, celebration or healing gathering)



60–75 minutes

(mostly hands-off baking; the real time is in the passing & praising)

VIBE:

Golden, juicy, generous, deeply comforting — like a big edible hug that says “you belong here.” A free-form galette-style tart overflowing with seasonal fruit, tender flaky pastry, and the sweetness of spoken praise. Symbolizes how something beautiful is created when everyone adds their small part and then passes it around with love.

INGREDIENTS

(group gathering list – assign a Gatherer)

Pastry base (can be made ahead or use good store-bought puff/shortcrust):

- 300 g plain flour
- 180 g cold butter, cubed
- ½ tsp salt
- 1–2 tbsp sugar (optional for sweeter crust)
- 5–7 tbsp ice water

Fruit filling (use what's in season & beautiful – about 1.2–1.5 kg total):

- Summer: stone fruit (peaches, nectarines, plums, apricots), berries
- Autumn: apples, pears, blackberries, figs
- Winter: apples, pears, cranberries, quince
- Spring: rhubarb, strawberries, early cherries

Inside the tart:

- 3–5 tbsp sugar (adjust depending on fruit sweetness)
- 1–2 tbsp cornstarch or arrowroot (to thicken juices)
- 1 tsp vanilla extract or paste
- Zest of 1 lemon or orange (bright lift)
- Pinch salt
- 1–2 tbsp butter, dotted on top

Finishing touches:

- 1 egg beaten with splash of milk (egg wash)
- Raw/demerara sugar for sprinkling
- Optional: honey drizzle, fresh herbs (thyme/mint), cream/ice cream to serve

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign at the start in a joyful standing circle. Roles are deliberately light and creative — the whole point is that everyone touches the tart.

Pastry Guardian — Rolls out the large rough circle (doesn't have to be perfect!)

Fruit Weaver — Prepares and arranges the fruit in the center

Sweetness & Spice Alchemist — Mixes sugar/cornstarch/vanilla/zest; sprinkles it over

Story & Praise Holder — Holds a talking piece (wooden spoon, apple, small stone); guides the praising rounds

Crimper & Egg Wash Artist — Folds the edges over (rustic folds are encouraged!), brushes egg wash

Finishing Beauty Maker — Dots butter, sprinkles sugar, adds any final herbs/flowers

Table & Passing Weaver — Sets a beautiful, central place for the tart + plates/forks; organises the passing flow

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (5-10 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together. Form a loose circle around the table.

Connection Invitation: Story & Praise Holder offers the talking piece: “This tart is going to be wonderfully imperfect and completely beautiful — just like us. We’re going to build it together and then pass it around praising what each person added. Share one word: What quality do you see in someone else here that you’d like to praise today?” Pass once around (quick, light, warm).

2 / Building the Tart Together (15–25 min)

- Pastry Guardian rolls out a large rough circle on baking paper.
- Fruit Weaver piles fruit in the middle.
- Sweetness Alchemist sprinkles the sugar mix.
- Crimper folds edges in (everyone can come up and make one fold).
- Finishing Beauty Maker adds butter, sugar, herbs.

Connection Invitation while working: Every time someone adds their part (one fold, one sprinkle, one fruit placement), they say aloud in one quick sentence: “I add this ___ because I appreciate ___ in you / us.” (Examples: “I add this peach because I appreciate your gentleness” / “I fold this edge because I’m grateful for your laughter”)

3 / Baking & Softening Round (35–45 min baking) Bake at 200°C / 390°F for 35–45 minutes until deep golden and bubbling. While it bakes > group moves to lounge/seating area for softer conversation or music.

4 / Passing & Praising Ceremony – The Heart of the Ritual

Hot tart comes to center of table.

Full Circle Praise Round: Story & Praise Holder begins: “We made something beautiful together. Now we pass it and speak what we see.”

- Person 1 cuts a small piece, passes it to person 2, and says one specific praise for that person (or the group).
- Person 2 receives it, says “thank you,” then cuts & passes to person 3 with a praise.
- Continues around the circle until everyone has received and given. (Can go twice around if the group is flowing)

5 / Eating Together – The Closing Circle Everyone eats their piece slowly, savoring the contrast of crisp pastry, jammy fruit, and warm praise. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how receiving & giving this praise feels in your body/heart right now.” Close with a final group appreciation (everyone says one word of thanks).

This tart is endlessly forgiving — use whatever fruit is beautiful that day, make it vegan, gluten-free, or rustic-messy on purpose. The real magic is in the passing & praising ceremony — it turns a simple dessert into a deep, memorable ritual of being seen and seeing others.



Warm Chocolate Lava Cakes with Storytelling

MOLTEN CENTERS & SHARED STORIES



Serves: 6–8

(perfect for an intimate circle of 6–10 people — family, close friends, evening gathering)



35–45 minutes

(quick prep + short bake for immediate connection)

VIBE:

Rich, intimate, transformative — like cracking open your heart and letting warmth spill out. Individual chocolate cakes with gooey, flowing centers, served warm so everyone can break theirs open together and share a story as the chocolate pours. Symbolizes how vulnerability (the molten center) and sweetness (the chocolate) become gifts when shared in safe space.

INGREDIENTS

(group gathering list – assign a Gatherer)

- 180 g dark chocolate (70% cocoa or higher), chopped
- 120 g unsalted butter, cubed (plus extra for greasing ramekins)
- 2 large eggs + 2 large egg yolks
- 100 g caster sugar (or brown sugar for deeper flavor)
- 40 g plain flour (or gluten-free blend)
- Pinch sea salt
- 1 tsp vanilla extract (optional)
- Optional richness: 1–2 tbsp espresso or strong coffee (enhances chocolate), splash of liqueur (Cointreau, Baileys, or rum)
- To serve: icing sugar dusting, fresh berries, whipped cream or vanilla ice cream, small spoons

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign at the start in a warm standing circle around the counter. Roles are cozy, hands-on, and story-focused — everyone contributes to the melting and the revealing.

Melter & Heart Tender — Gently melts chocolate and butter together (double boiler or microwave in bursts).

Whisk & Sweet Weaver — Whisks eggs, yolks, sugar, and vanilla until pale and thick.

Story & Reveal Holder — Holds a talking piece (small spoon, chocolate square, candle); guides the storytelling moments.

Filling & Flow Artist — Folds flour/salt into batter, pours into greased ramekins.

Oven & Timing Guardian — Places ramekins in oven, times precisely so centers stay molten.

Table & Hearth Setter — Creates intimate table (dim lights, candles, small plates/spoons, no phones).

Floating Warmth Connector — Helps anywhere, keeps energy soft and supportive, checks in on feelings.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (5-8 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together. Form a loose circle near the stove/counter. Light a few candles for warmth.

Connection Invitation: Story & Reveal Holder offers the talking piece: “These lava cakes are about what happens when we let the center melt and flow — just like stories and feelings when we feel safe to share them. Tonight we’ll bake them together, then crack them open and let something warm spill out. Share one word: What feeling or story are you willing to let flow tonight if it feels right?” Pass once around gently. Listen with full presence — no pressure, just invitation.

2 / Melting & Mixing Round (10–12 min) Melter gently melts chocolate and butter. Whisk Weaver beats eggs/sugar until ribbon stage.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses for quick rounds: “As the chocolate melts and the eggs lighten, share one small thing that has felt ‘warm’ or comforting to you lately — a moment, a person, a memory.” Keep shares soft and brief (30–60 sec). Hands busy, hearts thawing.

3 / Filling & Baking Round (5 min active + 10–12 min bake) Filling Artist folds everything together gently. Pour into 6–8 greased ramekins (fill $\frac{3}{4}$ full). Oven Guardian bakes at 200°C (400°F) for 10–12 minutes exactly — edges set, centers still soft/jiggly.

Connection Invitation (while baking): Gather near oven or sit in circle: “While these cakes bake and their centers stay molten, share one thing you’ve been holding inside that you’re ready to release or let flow — no need to go deep unless you want to.” Pass the piece once. Hold warm, non-judgmental space.

4 / Plating & Storytelling Reveal (5 min) Remove cakes carefully (they should be puffed and slightly cracked). Dust with icing sugar if desired.

Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share: Place cakes in center of table. Story Holder: “Now we come to the moment of reveal. Each of us will crack open our cake, watch the chocolate flow, and share one story, feeling, praise, or gratitude that wants to come out with it. There’s no right or wrong — just what’s true for you right now. We listen with our hearts.” Go around the circle: each person taps or cuts their cake, watches the lava pour, and shares. Others witness fully — no interruption or advice.

5 / Eating Together – The Closing Circle Eat slowly with spoons, savoring the contrast of crisp edges and molten center. Share bites if desired. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how this warm flow feels in you right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for melting the chocolate so gently” or “Thank you for the courage in your story”).

This recipe is adaptable — gluten-free flour, dairy-free chocolate/butter, different flavors (orange zest, chili, espresso). The short bake time keeps energy focused on the ritual of revealing and sharing.



Cardamom & Rose Rice Pudding

A SLOW-SIMMERED BOWL OF COMFORT & CONNECTION



Serves: 6–8

(ideal for a cozy circle of 6–10 people — family, close friends, evening gathering)



50–70 minutes

(mostly low simmer for unhurried sharing)

VIBE:

Creamy, floral, enveloping — like being wrapped in soft warmth and quiet affection. Arborio rice gently cooked in milk with cardamom and rose, served warm or chilled in small bowls. Symbolizes how slow, steady care (like simmering rice) transforms simple ingredients (and relationships) into something rich, fragrant, and deeply nourishing.

INGREDIENTS

(group gathering list – assign a Gatherer)

- 200 g Arborio or short-grain rice (for creaminess)
- 1.2–1.5 litres whole milk (or plant milk: almond, oat, coconut for dairy-free)
- 100–150 g sugar or honey (adjust to taste)
- 6–8 green cardamom pods, lightly crushed (or 1 tsp ground cardamom)
- 1–2 tsp rose water (pure, food-grade; start small and taste)
- Pinch sea salt
- Optional richness: ½ cup cream or coconut cream at end

To finish & serve:

- Chopped pistachios or almonds (toasted)
- Dried rose petals (edible)
- Drizzle of honey or pomegranate molasses
- Fresh berries or pomegranate seeds (optional brightness)
- Warm flatbread or shortbread on the side

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign at the start in a soft standing circle near the stove. Roles emphasize patience, care, and shared sweetness — everyone tends the slow unfolding.

Simmer & Milk Guardian — Watches the pot, stirs regularly, adjusts heat to keep gentle bubble.

Spice & Aroma Weaver — Crushes cardamom pods, adds rose water and salt at right moments.

Sweetness Alchemist — Tastes and adds sugar/honey gradually; invites group input on balance.

Story & Softness Holder — Holds a talking piece (cardamom pod, spoon, rose petal); guides gentle shares.

Finish & Beauty Artist — Toasts nuts, scatters rose petals, arranges serving bowls.

Table & Hearth Setter — Creates cozy table (candles, soft lighting, small bowls/spoons, no distractions).

Floating Comfort Connector — Helps anywhere, senses energy, brings extra tenderness.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (8–12 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together. Form a loose circle near the stove. Light a candle or two for gentle warmth.

Connection Invitation: Story & Softness Holder offers the talking piece: “Rice pudding has long been a dish of slow comfort — something simple that becomes rich and sweet with time and care. Tonight we make it together as an act of softness and presence. Share one word or short phrase: What softness, comfort, or sweetness are you bringing or hoping to receive here tonight?” Pass once around. Listen with full, tender presence — no rush.

2 / Simmer & Stir Round (10–15 min active start) Simmer Guardian heats milk in large pot; add rice and crushed cardamom pods. Bring to gentle simmer.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses every 5–10 minutes for brief rounds: “As we stir this pot and watch it slowly thicken, share one small thing that has felt comforting or sweet to you lately — a moment, a kindness, a feeling.” Keep shares gentle and short (1 min max). Stirring becomes rhythmic and grounding.

3 / Slow Cooking & Tending (30–50 min mostly hands-off)

Simmer Guardian keeps low heat, stirring occasionally to prevent sticking. Spice Weaver adds rose water toward end (taste first — it’s potent). Sweetness Alchemist tastes with group: “More honey for sweetness? More rose for fragrance?” Adjust together. Cook until rice is tender and pudding creamy (add milk if it thickens too much). While simmering, group can sit nearby for deeper conversation or quiet.

4 / Finishing & Deeper Heart Round (5–10 min)

Remove cardamom pods if whole; stir in cream if using. Finish Artist toasts nuts, scatters rose petals. Connection Invitation —

Full Circle Share: Gather at table. Story Holder: “This pudding has softened and sweetened through time and every hand here. Let’s open our hearts: What’s one thing you’re grateful for in this moment, or one tender feeling rising in you right now? We listen with softness, no need to fix.” Pass the piece once (or twice if flowing). Hold warm, enveloping space.

5 / Eating Together – The Closing Circle

Ladle into small bowls; top with nuts, petals, extra honey. Eat slowly, savoring creaminess and fragrance. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how this warm sweetness feels in you right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for the perfect rose balance” or “Thank you for your gentle presence”).

This pudding is endlessly adaptable — fully vegan with plant milk/cream, spiced differently (saffron, orange blossom), served warm or chilled. The long simmer creates natural time for real softness and connection.



A Story of Love and Strength

CARLY'S JOURNEY OF SELF LOVE

I love hosting women's circles because it's great to connect with other women as equals. No one gives advice and everyone just listens and supports the women in this way. It is wonderful just to feel supported and heard. There is such magic when women gather together and share their stories without feeling judged and simply being heard and supported. This is the true beauty of a woman's circle. I remember one circle we did an exercise of writing a love letter to ourselves. When the women shared theirs, I felt so much love and compassion for each of them. The letters were each so unique and beautiful and touching.

Here is a paragraph from my self love letter.

I'm so proud of the woman you have grown into. You go after your dreams and if challenges arise you find a way to overcome them. You have so much love in your heart that you share with others. Always willing to lend a helping hand to those in need and kind words to comfort those who need it. If things push you down. You just keep getting back up and try again. Never give up going after your dreams. Know that you are loved and supported by your ancestors and angels.



Lemon & Herb Infused Shortbread Rounds

BUTTERY BITES OF PRESENCE & PRAISE



24–30 small rounds

(ideal for a circle of 6–12 people to roll, bake, and share)



45–55 minutes

(plus 30 min chill; can be made ahead)

VIBE:

Crisp-edged, tender-centered, softly fragrant — like a warm hand on the shoulder. Classic shortbread infused with lemon zest and fresh herbs, cut into small rounds for easy passing.

Symbolizes how simple ingredients (and simple presence) become something deeply comforting when tended and shared together.

INGREDIENTS

(group gathering list – assign a Gatherer)

- 250 g unsalted butter, softened (room temperature)
- 100 g caster sugar (or golden caster for deeper flavor)
- Zest of 2 large lemons (plus 1–2 tsp lemon juice if desired for brightness)
- 2–3 tbsp finely chopped fresh herbs (choose one or mix: rosemary, thyme, lavender buds, lemon thyme, or a little mint)
- 325 g plain flour
- ½ tsp fine sea salt
- Optional: 1 tsp vanilla extract

To finish:

- Extra caster sugar for sprinkling
- Optional: edible flowers (pressed into tops before baking), thin lemon slices (dried or fresh)

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign at the start in a relaxed standing circle around the counter. Roles are tactile, gentle, and creative — everyone gets their hands in the dough.

Butter & Zest Weaver — Creams butter and sugar, adds lemon zest and herbs.

Dough Tender — Works in flour and salt, brings dough together without overworking.

Rolling Circle Leader — Rolls dough to even thickness; invites everyone to help cut rounds.

Story & Softness Holder — Holds a talking piece (lemon half, wooden spoon, small herb sprig); guides gentle shares.

Cutting & Shaping Artist — Cuts rounds with cookie cutter or glass; arranges on trays.

Oven & Warmth Guardian — Preheats oven, bakes trays, watches for golden edges.

Table & Passing Setter — Prepares serving platter or basket (linen cloth, simple flowers, no phones).

Floating Comfort Connector — Helps anywhere, keeps energy soft and inclusive.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (5-8 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together. Form a loose circle near the counter.

Connection Invitation: Story & Softness Holder offers the talking piece: “Shortbread is simple, but it asks for time and care — a quiet way to say ‘stay, rest, be here with me.’ Tonight we make these rounds together as an act of gentle presence. Share one word: What softness, comfort, or small joy are you bringing into this space today?” Pass once around. Listen with full, tender attention — smiles, quiet nods, emotion all welcome.

2 / Creaming & Mixing Round (8–12 min) Butter & Zest

Weaver beats butter and sugar until pale and fluffy. Adds lemon zest and herbs. Dough Tender works in flour/salt gently until it just comes together.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses for quick rounds: “As we work the butter and herbs into the dough, share one small thing that has felt comforting or nourishing to you lately — a moment, a person, a scent, a sound.” Keep shares light and brief (30–60 sec). Mixing becomes rhythmic and soothing.

3 / Chilling & Rolling Round (10–15 min + 30 min chill)

Dough Tender wraps dough in cling film; chill 30 minutes (group can sit, sip tea, talk). Rolling Circle Leader divides dough, rolls to ~0.8 cm thick.

Connection Invitation: While rolling: “As we roll this dough smooth, share one small thing you appreciate about someone else in the circle — something you’ve noticed or received from them.” Pass the piece lightly — keep it warm and easy.

4 / Cutting, Baking & Deeper Heart Round (15–20 min)

Cutting & Shaping Artist cuts small rounds (5–6 cm diameter); place on lined trays. Finishing Touch Alchemist presses edible flowers or sprinkles sugar if desired. Oven Guardian bakes at 160°C (325°F) for 15–20 minutes until pale golden (edges only lightly colored).

Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share (while baking):

Gather near oven or sit together. Story Holder: “These rounds are baking gently, taking their time to become something sweet and whole. Let’s open our hearts: What’s one thing you’re grateful for right now — in this moment, in this circle, in your life? We listen with warmth, no need to fix.” Pass the piece once (or twice if flowing). Hold soft, appreciative space.

5 / Passing & Eating Together – The Closing Circle

Cool slightly on trays, then arrange on platter or basket. Pass the rounds around the circle — each person takes one (or two) and passes to the next. Eat slowly, savoring buttery texture and lemon-herb fragrance. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how these shared rounds feel in you right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for the perfect lemon zest” or “Thank you for your gentle listening”).

This shortbread is endlessly adaptable — swap herbs (lavender for calm, rosemary for grounding), add citrus zest (orange, lime), make gluten-free, or shape into hearts/stars for special occasions. The small rounds encourage passing and sharing — literally and figuratively.



Shared Baklava Bites (Mediterranean Touch)

LAYERED SWEETNESS PASSED WITH INTENTION



36–48 small bites

(perfect for a circle of 8–14 people to layer, bake, and share)



60–75 minutes active

+ 45 minutes bake +
cooling/syrup time

VIBE:

Crisp, sticky, nutty, floral — like a warm embrace of honey and spice. Mini baklava pieces made with buttered filo, spiced nuts, and rose-honey syrup, designed to be passed hand-to-hand. Symbolizes how small acts of layering and offering create deep sweetness when done together.

INGREDIENTS

(group gathering list – assign a Gatherer)

- 1 packet (375–500 g) filo pastry sheets (thawed if frozen)
- 200–250 g unsalted butter, melted (for brushing)

Nut filling:

- 300–400 g mixed nuts (walnuts, pistachios, almonds – toasted and finely chopped)
- 2–3 tsp ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp ground cardamom (optional but lovely)
- 2–3 tbsp sugar
- Pinch salt

Syrup:

- 300 g sugar
- 250 ml water
- 150 ml honey
- Juice of ½ lemon
- 1 cinnamon stick
- 2–3 whole cloves
- 1–2 tsp rose water or orange blossom water (add at end)
- Optional garnish: extra chopped pistachios, edible rose petals

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign at the start in a gentle standing circle near the trays. Roles reflect layering, offering, and sweetness — everyone contributes to the build and the passing.

Butter & Layer Guardian — Brushes filo sheets with melted butter; keeps stack covered to prevent drying.

Nut & Spice Weaver — Mixes chopped nuts with cinnamon/cardamom/sugar; scatters evenly.

Story & Offering Holder — Holds a talking piece (nut, cinnamon stick, small spoon); guides praise and intention shares.

Cutting & Shaping Artist — Cuts assembled trays into small diamond or square bites before or after baking.

Syrup & Sweetness Alchemist — Prepares and pours syrup; tastes for balance.

Tray & Passing Setter — Arranges baked bites on large platter(s); sets inviting table (low bowls, candles, no phones).

Floating Sweet Connector — Helps anywhere, keeps energy warm and inclusive, reminds everyone to breathe and enjoy.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (5-12 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together. Form a loose circle near the trays.

Connection Invitation: Story & Offering Holder offers the talking piece: “Baklava is made layer by layer, just as connection is built — one small act at a time. Tonight we create these bites to pass to one another as a gesture of sweetness and care. Share one word or short phrase: What sweetness or kindness would you like to offer or receive in this circle today?” Pass once around. Listen with full, warm presence — no rush.

2 / Layering & Nut Round (15–25 min) Butter & Layer Guardian brushes a sheet of filo with butter; place on tray. Nut & Spice Weaver scatters a thin layer of nut mix. Repeat 8–10 layers (butter, filo, nuts), ending with 2–3 buttered filo sheets on top.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses every few layers: “As we build these layers together, share one small thing you appreciate or are grateful for about someone else in the circle — or about yourself.” Keep shares brief and gentle (30–60 sec). Layering becomes rhythmic and connective.

3 / Cutting & Baking (10 min active + 40–45 min bake) Cutting & Shaping Artist scores top layers into small diamonds or squares (before baking for clean cuts). Oven Guardian bakes at 160°C (325°F) for 40–45 minutes until golden and crisp.

Connection Invitation (while baking): Gather near oven or sit together: “While these bites turn golden, share one small sweetness from your week — something that brought you joy, comfort, or lightness.” Pass the piece once. Hold soft, appreciative space.

4 / Syrup & Deeper Heart Round (5–10 min) Syrup Alchemist simmers sugar, water, honey, lemon, cinnamon, cloves; cool slightly, add rose water. Pour warm syrup slowly over hot baklava so it soaks in.

Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share: Gather around trays. Story Holder: “These bites have soaked up sweetness just as we soak up care from one another. Let’s open our hearts: What’s one thing you’re truly grateful for right now — in this moment, in this circle, in your life? We listen with warmth, no need to fix.” Pass the piece once (or twice if flowing). Hold sacred, sweet space.

5 / Passing & Eating Together – The Closing Circle Let cool slightly so syrup sets; cut fully if not pre-scored. Arrange on platter(s). Pass the tray around the circle — each person takes one or two bites and passes to the next, perhaps offering one directly to someone with a quiet word of praise. Eat slowly, savoring crisp layers and fragrant syrup. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how these shared bites feel in you right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for the perfect nut layer” or “Thank you for your open gratitude”).

This recipe is adaptable — vegan with plant butter, nut-free with seeds, different spices (orange blossom, saffron), smaller or larger trays. The small bites and passing ritual make it deeply connective and easy to share.



No-Bake Peanut Butter Chocolate Bars

STICKY HANDS, SWEET CONNECTION



16–24 bars

(perfect for a circle of 6–12 people to make, share, and take home)



20–25 minutes active

+ 1–2 hours chill

VIBE:

Rich, nostalgic, instantly comforting — like a hug in bar form. A crunchy peanut butter–oat base, creamy peanut butter filling, and glossy chocolate top that sets into shareable pieces.

INGREDIENTS

(group gathering / pantry list – assign a Gatherer)

Base:

- 200 g digestive biscuits or graham crackers, finely crushed (or gluten-free alternative)
- 150 g smooth peanut butter (natural or regular)
- 100 g unsalted butter, melted
- 80 g icing sugar (powdered sugar)
- 1 tsp vanilla extract (optional)

Filling:

- 250 g smooth peanut butter
- 80 g unsalted butter, softened
- 150 g icing sugar
- Pinch sea salt (to balance sweetness)

Chocolate Top:

- 300 g dark or milk chocolate (chips or chopped bars)
- 30–50 g unsalted butter (for shine and easier cutting)
- Optional extras: chopped peanuts, flaky sea salt, or a drizzle of melted white chocolate for decoration

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign at the start in a fun, standing circle around the counter. Roles are sticky, playful, and collaborative — everyone gets their hands (or spoons) in.

Base Builder — Crushes biscuits, mixes with peanut butter, butter, and sugar; presses into lined tray.

Filling Mixer — Beats peanut butter filling until smooth and creamy; spreads over base.

Chocolate Melter — Gently melts chocolate and butter (double boiler or microwave); pours and smooths top layer.

Story & Sweetness Holder — Holds a talking piece (spoon, peanut, small chocolate square); guides light shares.

Decoration & Finish Artist — Sprinkles chopped nuts, flaky salt, or drizzles extra chocolate.

Tray & Sharing Setter — Lines tray with parchment, cuts cooled bars, arranges on platter or in bags.

Floating Joy Connector — Helps anywhere, keeps energy light and playful, checks in on everyone.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (5-8 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together (sticky hands ahead!). Form a loose circle near the counter.

Connection Invitation: Story & Sweetness Holder offers the talking piece: “These bars are quick to make but full of sweetness — just like the small moments of connection we can create together. Tonight we’ll layer, spread, and share them as a little act of care. Share one word: What sweetness or comfort are you bringing or hoping to carry away from this circle today?” Pass once around quickly. Listen with smiles — set a warm, easy tone.

2 / Base & Filling Round (8–12 min) Base Builder crushes biscuits (rolling pin or food processor) and mixes with peanut butter, melted butter, sugar. Press firmly into lined 20x30 cm tray. Filling Mixer beats peanut butter filling until fluffy; spread evenly over base.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses for quick rounds: “As we press this base and spread this creamy layer, share one small thing that has felt comforting or sweet to you lately — a person, a moment, a taste.” Keep shares light and short (30–60 sec). Hands sticky, hearts opening.

3 / Chocolate & Decoration Round (5–8 min) Chocolate Melter melts chocolate and butter gently (stir until glossy). Pour over filling; smooth with spatula. Decoration Artist sprinkles nuts, salt, or drizzles extra chocolate.

Connection Invitation: While topping: “As we finish these bars with sweetness on top, share one small thing you appreciate about someone else in the circle — something you’ve noticed or enjoyed.” Pass the piece lightly — keep it warm and playful.

4 / Chilling & Deeper Heart Round (5–10 min while chilling) Place tray in fridge or freezer to set (1–2 hours fridge, 20–30 min freezer).

Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share: Gather near the tray or sit together. Story Holder: “These bars have chilled and set with the care of every hand here. Let’s open our hearts: What’s one thing you’re grateful for right now — in this moment, in this circle, in your day? We listen fully, no fixing needed.” Pass the piece once around. Hold space warmly — laughter and tenderness both welcome.

5 / Cutting, Passing & Eating Together – The Closing Circle Tray & Sharing Setter cuts into small squares or rectangles. Arrange on platter or in small bags. Pass the platter around the circle — each person takes one (or two) and passes to the next, perhaps offering one directly to someone with a quiet word (“This one’s for your sweetness today”). Eat slowly, savoring the layers of crunch, cream, and chocolate. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how these shared bars feel in you right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for the perfect chocolate melt” or “Thank you for your open gratitude”).

This recipe is endlessly adaptable — vegan with plant butter and maple syrup, nut-free with seed butter, different flavors (add cocoa to base, swirl raspberry jam). The no-bake nature keeps energy focused on connection, and the small bites encourage passing and sharing — literally and figuratively.



A Story of Community:

PETA'S ROAD OF INTENTION AND TRADITION

I felt the call to circle long before I ever created one. For years, I was searching for a space where women could come together without masks, without pressure, without needing to have it all figured out. A place where we could just be...messy, real, tired, hopeful...all of it. When I went looking for a women's circle in my local community and couldn't find one, something shifted. In a quiet but undeniable moment during meditation, the message came through clearly: if you can't find it, you're here to create it.

I didn't feel fully ready. I was navigating life, motherhood, work, and my own inner world. But I realised that readiness wasn't the requirement... willingness was. So I started. What I've come to understand is that circle isn't about being the most experienced or the most "healed" person in the room. It's about being willing to hold space, to listen deeply, and to trust that when women gather with intention, something ancient and powerful begins to unfold.

When circle is "magic," it doesn't look like perfection. It looks like women softening. It looks like someone feeling seen for the first time in a long time. It's the exhale, the tears, the laughter, the quiet nods of understanding. It's the moment a woman realises she doesn't have to carry everything alone. To me, circle is a remembering... that we were never meant to do life this way on our own. And as a facilitator, there is nothing more humbling than witnessing that unfold, again and again.

This is the thread I now follow...and the one I gently hold for other women to find their way back to themselves.



Berry & Yogurt Parfait Layers

LIGHT, LAYERED BOWLS OF SHARED FRESHNESS



Serves: 6–8

(perfect for a bright circle of 6–10 people — friends, family, morning or afternoon gathering)



20–30 minutes

(quick assembly, no cooking required)

VIBE:

Fresh, colorful, uplifting — like stacking little rainbows of gratitude. Creamy yogurt layered with juicy berries, crunchy granola, and a touch of honey or maple, built together and passed around. Symbolizes how individual layers (and individual gifts) come together into something beautiful and nourishing when we take turns contributing.

INGREDIENTS

(group market / garden list – assign a Gatherer)

- 1 kg Greek yogurt or thick natural yogurt (plain or lightly sweetened; dairy-free coconut/almond yogurt works beautifully)
- 800 g–1 kg mixed fresh berries (strawberries sliced, blueberries, raspberries, blackberries — or seasonal fruit: cherries, peaches, mango)
- 300–400 g granola (homemade or store-bought; choose one with nuts/seeds for crunch)
- 4–6 tbsp honey or maple syrup (for drizzling)

Optional extras:

- Fresh mint leaves, chopped
- Lemon zest for brightness
- Chia seeds or hemp seeds (sprinkled between layers)
- A few tablespoons of berry compote or jam for deeper color
- Clear glasses, jars, or small bowls (one per person, plus extras for sharing)

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign at the start in a light, standing circle around the counter or table. Roles are simple, colorful, and encouraging — everyone adds their layer to the collective creation.

Yogurt & Base Weaver — Scoops and smooths yogurt into the bottom of each glass.

Berry Brightness Leader — Washes, slices, and arranges berries; invites naming the color/energy each berry brings.

Crunch & Texture Artist — Sprinkles granola and seeds between layers.

Story & Layer Holder — Holds a talking piece (berry, spoon, small flower); guides gentle shares.

Drizzle & Finish Alchemist — Adds honey/maple drizzles, mint, zest; tastes for balance.

Glass & Passing Setter — Arranges finished parfaits on a central tray or board; sets inviting space.

Floating Fresh Connector — Helps anywhere, keeps energy light and joyful, checks in on everyone.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (5-8 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together. Form a loose circle near the ingredients.

Connection Invitation: Story & Layer Holder offers the talking piece: “Parfaits are built layer by layer — each one adding color, texture, sweetness — just like the small moments and people that make life richer. Tonight we create these together and pass them around as a shared gift. Share one word: What ‘layer’ of lightness, joy, or freshness are you bringing into this circle today?” Pass once around quickly. Listen with smiles — set a bright, open tone.

2 / Layering & Building Round (10–15 min) Start with Yogurt & Base Weaver adding a generous spoonful of yogurt to each glass. Berry Brightness Leader adds a handful of berries. Crunch & Texture Artist sprinkles granola. Repeat layers 2–3 times until glasses are full.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses every layer or two: “As we add this layer of berries or crunch, share one small thing that has felt fresh or bright in your life lately — a moment, a kindness, a color.” Keep shares light and short (30–60 sec). Hands moving, hearts lifting.

3 / Drizzling & Finishing Round (5 min) Drizzle & Finish Alchemist adds honey/maple in gentle swirls, scatters mint or zest.

Connection Invitation: While drizzling: “As we finish these parfaits with sweetness on top, share one small thing you appreciate about someone else in the circle — something you’ve noticed or enjoyed.” Pass the piece lightly — keep it warm and easy.

4 / Passing & Deeper Heart Round (5–10 min) Glass & Passing Setter arranges parfaits on a central tray.

Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share: Gather around the tray. Story Holder: “These parfaits hold the layers and care of every hand here. Let’s open our hearts: What’s one thing you’re grateful for right now — in this moment, in this circle, in your day? We listen fully, no fixing needed.” Pass the piece once around. Hold space warmly — laughter and tenderness both welcome.

5 / Eating Together – The Closing Circle Pass the tray around the circle — each person takes one parfait and passes the rest to the next. Eat slowly with spoons, savoring the layers of creaminess, crunch, and fruit. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how these shared parfaits feel in you right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for the perfect berry layer” or “Thank you for your bright presence”).

This parfait is endlessly adaptable — vegan with plant yogurt, gluten-free granola, different fruits seasonally, add chia pudding or overnight oats for extra depth. The layering and passing make it naturally connective and joyful.



Cinnamon Apple Crumble (Group Topping Assembly)

LIGHT, LAYERED BOWLS OF SHARED FRESHNESS



Serves: 8–10

(perfect for a cozy circle of 8–12 people — family, friends, autumn gathering)



50–60 minutes

(20 min prep + 30–40 min bake)

VIBE:

Golden, fragrant, enveloping — like a hug from the season itself. Soft cinnamon-spiced apples topped with a crisp, buttery oat crumble, baked until bubbling and golden. Symbolizes how individual hands scattering topping over shared fruit create something greater — comfort, abundance, and connection.

INGREDIENTS

(group gathering list – assign a Gatherer)

Apple Filling:

- 1.5–2 kg apples (mix tart and sweet: Granny Smith, Braeburn, Pink Lady), peeled, cored, and sliced
- 80–100 g brown sugar or coconut sugar
- 2–3 tsp ground cinnamon
- ½ tsp ground nutmeg or allspice (optional)
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 2 tbsp plain flour or cornstarch (to thicken juices)
- Optional: 1 tsp vanilla extract, handful raisins or dried cranberries

Crumble Topping (group assembly):

- 250 g plain flour (or half wholemeal)
- 200 g cold unsalted butter, cubed (or vegan butter)
- 150 g brown sugar or demerara
- 100 g rolled oats
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- Pinch sea salt
- Optional add-ins (for variety): chopped nuts (almonds, pecans), seeds, desiccated coconut
- To serve: vanilla custard, whipped cream, Greek yoghurt, or ice cream

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign at the start in a warm standing circle near the counter or table. Roles emphasize shared creation — everyone contributes to the topping's texture and the dish's warmth.

Apple & Spice Weaver — Slices apples, mixes with sugar, cinnamon, lemon, and thickener; spreads into baking dish.

Butter & Rub Leader — Cuts cold butter into cubes; starts rubbing into flour/sugar for crumble base.

Oats & Texture Circle — Adds oats, cinnamon, salt; invites group to join rubbing and adding extras.

Story & Harvest Holder — Holds a talking piece (apple slice, cinnamon stick, wooden spoon); guides gentle shares.

Topping Scatter Artist — Oversees final scattering of crumble over apples; ensures even coverage.

Oven & Warmth Guardian — Preheats oven, bakes dish, checks for golden bubbling.

Table & Hearth Setter — Creates inviting table (candles, autumn leaves, warm bowls/spoons, no phones).

Floating Comfort Connector — Helps anywhere, senses energy, brings extra tenderness.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (8-12 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together. Form a loose circle near the counter.

Connection Invitation: Story & Harvest Holder offers the talking piece: "Crumble is a dish of simple abundance — fruit from the earth, butter and oats from our hands, baked into comfort we share. Tonight we make it together as gratitude for the harvest and for each other. Share one word or short phrase: What sweetness or warmth are you thankful for in this season of your life?" Pass once around. Listen with full presence — no rush, just witnessing.

2 / Apple & Base Round (10–15 min) Apple & Spice Weaver slices and mixes apples; spreads evenly into large baking dish (25x30 cm or similar).

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses for quick rounds: “As we prepare these apples and season them with cinnamon, share one small thing from this past season (or year) that you’re grateful for — a gift, a lesson, a person.” Keep shares warm and brief (1 min max). Slicing becomes grounding and appreciative.

3 / Group Topping Assembly Round (10–15 min) Butter & Rub Leader starts rubbing cold butter into flour/sugar until crumbly (like coarse breadcrumbs). Oats & Texture Circle adds oats, cinnamon, salt; everyone joins in rubbing with fingertips — passing the bowl around so each person adds their touch (and can toss in optional nuts/seeds).

Connection Invitation: While rubbing and passing the bowl: “As we rub this topping together, share one small thing you appreciate about someone else in the circle — something you’ve noticed or received from them.” Pass the bowl and the talking piece — keep it light and joyful.

4 / Scattering & Baking Round (5 min active + 30–40 min bake) Topping Scatter Artist evenly scatters crumble over apples (no need for perfection — rustic is beautiful). Oven Guardian bakes at 180°C (350°F) for 30–40 minutes until golden, bubbling, and fragrant.

Connection Invitation (while baking): Gather near oven or sit together: “While this crumble bakes and the kitchen fills with warmth, share one small hope or wish you’re carrying into the next season — something you’d like to grow or invite more of.” Pass the piece once. Hold gentle, hopeful space.

5 / Serving & Eating Together – The Closing Circle
Remove from oven; let rest 5–10 min. Serve warm with custard, cream, or yoghurt. Pass bowls or plates around the circle — each person serves themselves or someone else with a spoon of crumble. Eat slowly, savoring the contrast of soft fruit and crisp topping. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how this shared crumble feels in you right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for the perfect cinnamon balance” or “Thank you for your gentle sharing”).

This crumble is endlessly adaptable — vegan with plant butter, gluten-free flour/oats, different fruits (pears, berries, stone fruit), spiced up or down. The group topping assembly makes it a true shared creation, and the passing ritual deepens the sense of care.



Simple No-Bake Cheesecake Bites

CREAMY MORSELS OF SHARED SWEETNESS



24–36 small bites

(perfect for a circle of 6–12 people to assemble, share, and take home)



25–35 minutes active

+ 1–2 hours chill (can be made ahead)

VIBE:

Cool, creamy, bright — like a little burst of comfort and lightness passed from hand to hand. Smooth cheesecake filling on a crunchy base, topped with fresh fruit or a drizzle, made in mini muffin tins or small cups for easy sharing.

INGREDIENTS

(group gathering list – assign a Gatherer)

Base:

- 250 g digestive biscuits or graham crackers, finely crushed (or gluten-free alternative)
- 100 g unsalted butter, melted (or vegan butter)
- Pinch sea salt

Cheesecake Filling:

- 500 g cream cheese, softened (full-fat for richness; or dairy-free alternative)
- 150 g icing sugar (powdered sugar)
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- Zest of 1 lemon (plus 1–2 tbsp lemon juice for brightness)
- 250 ml heavy cream, whipped to soft peaks (or coconut cream for vegan)

Toppings (set out buffet-style for personalization):

- Fresh berries (strawberries sliced, blueberries, raspberries)
- Lemon curd or berry compote
- Drizzle of honey or caramel
- Crushed nuts, chocolate shavings, edible flowers, or mint leaves

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign at the start in a relaxed standing circle around the counter or table. Roles are light, hands-on, and creative — everyone contributes to the little bites of sweetness.

Base Presser — Mixes crushed biscuits with melted butter and salt; presses firmly into mini muffin tins or small cups lined with paper liners.

Filling Whipper — Beats cream cheese, icing sugar, vanilla, and lemon until smooth; folds in whipped cream gently.

Story & Sweetness Holder — Holds a talking piece (lemon wedge, spoon, small berry); guides gentle shares.

Piping & Filling Artist — Spoons or pipes cheesecake filling into each base (use a zip-top bag with corner snipped if no piping bag).

Topping Circle Leader — Arranges toppings in bowls; invites everyone to decorate their own bites or a few for others.

Chill & Passing Setter — Places tray in fridge to set; prepares serving platter or small takeaway boxes.

Floating Joy Connector — Helps anywhere, keeps energy light and playful, checks in on everyone.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (5-8 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together. Form a loose circle near the counter.

Connection Invitation: Story & Sweetness Holder offers the talking piece: “These little cheesecake bites are simple and sweet — made quickly, shared easily, just like small moments of care we can give each other. Tonight we build them together as a way to offer and receive sweetness. Share one word: What ‘sweetness’ or kindness would you like to give or receive in this circle today?” Pass once around quickly. Listen with smiles — set a warm, gentle tone.

2 / Base & Filling Round (8–12 min) Base Presser mixes and presses crumb mixture into mini tins or cups. Filling Whipper beats cream cheese mixture smooth, folds in whipped cream.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses for quick rounds: “As we press these bases and whip this creamy filling, share one small thing that has felt sweet or comforting to you lately — a moment, a person, a taste.” Keep shares light and brief (30–60 sec). Hands moving, hearts lifting.

3 / Filling & Topping Round (10–15 min) Piping & Filling Artist fills each base with cheesecake mixture (smooth tops if desired). Topping Circle Leader sets out bowls; everyone adds berries, drizzles, nuts, or flowers to their own bites — or to a few for others.

Connection Invitation: While topping: “As we decorate these bites, share one small thing you appreciate about someone else in the circle — something you’ve noticed or received from them.” Pass the piece lightly — keep it warm and easy.

4 / Chilling & Deeper Heart Round (5–10 min while chilling) Chill & Passing Setter places tray in fridge to set (1–2 hours).

Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share: Gather near the tray or sit together. Story Holder: “These bites have chilled and set with the care of every hand here. Let’s open our hearts: What’s one thing you’re grateful for right now — in this moment, in this circle, in your day? We listen fully, no fixing needed.” Pass the piece once around. Hold space warmly — laughter and tenderness both welcome.

5 / Passing & Eating Together – The Closing Circle
Remove from fridge; arrange bites on platter or in small boxes. Pass the platter around the circle — each person takes one or two bites and passes to the next, perhaps offering one directly to someone with a quiet word (“This one’s for your sweetness today”). Eat slowly, savoring the contrast of crunchy base, creamy filling, and fresh toppings. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how these shared bites feel in you right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for the perfect lemon zest” or “Thank you for your gentle sharing”).

This recipe is endlessly adaptable — vegan with plant cream cheese and coconut cream, gluten-free base, different flavors (chocolate swirl, matcha, berry compote). The small bites and passing ritual make it naturally connective and joyful.



Matcha & Coconut Bliss Balls

A MINDFUL, SHARED RITUAL OF GREEN HARMONY



20–24 balls

(ideal for a small, intimate circle of 6–10 people — friends, family, wellness gatherings)



25–35 minutes

(no baking; focus on rolling and sharing)

VIBE:

Earthy, creamy, subtly sweet — like a moment of calm and clarity in your hands. Soft, fudgy balls of coconut, nuts, dates, and ceremonial-grade matcha, rolled in coconut or matcha-dusted coatings. Symbolizes how simple, green ingredients (and quiet presence) can create deep nourishment when shaped together with care.

INGREDIENTS

(group gathering list – assign a Gatherer)

- 2 cups desiccated coconut (plus extra for rolling)
- 1 cup raw almonds, cashews, or macadamias (or a mix)
- 1 cup pitted Medjool dates (about 12–14, soaked 10 min in warm water if dry)
- 3–4 tsp ceremonial-grade matcha powder (adjust for intensity)
- ¼ cup coconut oil, melted (or coconut butter for richer texture)
- 2–3 tbsp maple syrup, honey, or date syrup (adjust sweetness)
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- Pinch sea salt
- Optional boosts: 1–2 tbsp chia seeds or hemp seeds for extra nutrition
- Coatings: extra desiccated coconut, matcha powder mixed with a little powdered sugar, crushed pistachios, or cacao nibs

ROLES / JOBS - CIRCLE-STYLE ASSIGNMENTS

Assign at the start in a calm, standing circle around the counter. Roles are gentle and mindful — everyone contributes to the “bliss” with care and presence.

Matcha & Flavor Weaver — Measures matcha, tastes/tests sweetness, adjusts balance.

Nut & Date Prepper — Processes nuts and dates in food processor (or chops finely by hand).

Coconut & Texture Guardian — Adds coconut and oil, blends to sticky dough consistency.

Story & Presence Holder — Holds a talking piece (matcha whisk/chasen if available, spoon, small stone); guides quiet shares.

Rolling & Coating Artist — Shapes balls, rolls in coatings; invites creative variations.

Platter & Serenity Setter — Arranges finished balls on a beautiful platter (green leaves, simple ceramics, candles).

Floating Calm Connector — Helps anywhere, senses energy, reminds everyone to breathe and slow down.

STEP-BY-STEP COOKING PROCESS - (WITH BUILT-IN CONNECTION MOMENTS)

1 / Gathering & Intention Setting (5-8 min) Everyone arrives, washes hands together slowly. Form a loose circle. Light a candle or place a small green plant in the center if desired.

Connection Invitation: Story & Presence Holder offers the talking piece: “Matcha invites us to be fully here — in this breath, this moment, this circle. Tonight we create these bliss balls as a shared act of calm and care. Share one word or short phrase: What quality of presence or peace do you wish to bring or receive today?” Pass once around slowly. Listen with full, gentle attention — no rush, no crosstalk.

2 / Blending & Shaping Round (10–15 min) Stations for processing, mixing, tasting. Soft ambient music or silence.

Connection Invitation: Story Holder pauses every few minutes for quiet rounds: “As we blend these simple ingredients into something nourishing, share one small thing you’re grateful for in this exact moment — a sensation, a person here, the green of the matcha.” Keep shares soft and brief (30–60 sec). Mixing and rolling become meditative and grounding.

3 / Rolling & Coating Round (10 min)

- Rolling Artist forms small balls (about 1 tbsp each).
- Everyone rolls in chosen coatings (coconut, matcha-dust, nuts).
- Encourage gentle experimentation: “This one is rolled extra slowly for extra calm.”
- Place finished balls on platter.

4 / Platter Assembly & Deeper Heart Round (5–10 min)

Platter & Serenity Setter arranges balls in a beautiful pattern; add a few fresh herbs or flowers for beauty.

Connection Invitation – Full Circle Share: Gather around the platter. Story Holder: “These bliss balls hold the care and presence of every hand here. Let’s open our hearts: What’s one quiet gift or moment of beauty you’ve noticed in yourself or in this circle today? We listen with stillness, no need to fix or respond.” Pass the piece once (or twice if flowing). Hold sacred, peaceful space.

5 / Eating Together – The Closing Circle Serve with matcha tea or herbal infusion if desired. Take one ball each, savor slowly — notice texture, flavor, the green energy. Midway or end: Quick round — “One word for how this shared bliss feels in your body or heart right now.” Close with appreciations: Go around naming specifics (“Thank you for the perfect matcha balance” or “Thank you for your calm presence”).

These bliss balls are endlessly adaptable — add cacao for chocolate version, use different nuts, make gluten-free/vegan by default. The slow, mindful rolling and tasting make them ideal for quiet gatherings or as a gentle closer to deeper circles.



The Art of Tea & Circle

In the rhythm of our busy modern lives, we've often lost the simple rituals that once wove communities together—gathering around a hearth, sharing stories over steaming cups, and honoring the cycles of nature and self. Drawing inspiration from ancient traditions across cultures, from Japanese tea ceremonies to Indigenous sharing circles, this chapter invites you back to the art of tea as a gentle bridge to connection. Here, tea becomes more than a beverage; it's a mindful pause, a shared creation that fosters vulnerability, laughter, and planning. Whether as a soothing wind-down after a communal meal from our Kitchen Circle recipes, a standalone ritual when time is short, or a dedicated session to map out a year of gatherings, tea time honors the heart's need for presence.

We'll explore six herbal tea blends, each crafted from loose-leaf ingredients you can mix in your kitchen. These are designed for group preparation, assigning simple roles to participants—like the "Herb Keeper" who measures and blends the leaves, the "Water Tender" who heats the kettle, or the "Cup Bearer" who pours and serves. This division of tasks mirrors the collaborative spirit of our cookbook, turning even a quick tea session into a platform for bonding. As the tea steeps, engage in the provided prompts—spoken sharing circles or letter-writing exercises—to deepen connections. Feel free to adapt these for your group's size, from intimate duos to larger circles.

If you're using tea time to plan ahead, we've included a 12-month calendar template at the end. Gather your group, brew a pot, and fill it with recipes from this book, scheduling themes around seasons, holidays, or personal milestones. This forward-looking ritual not only sustains your kitchen circles but revives the timeless wisdom of communal sustenance.



Calming Tea Blend

Theme: Easing the day's tensions, inviting rest and reflection.

Ingredients (for 4-6 servings):

- 2 tablespoons chamomile flowers (dried)
- 1 tablespoon lavender buds
- 1 tablespoon lemon balm leaves
- Optional: A pinch of valerian root for deeper relaxation

Preparation Roles and Instructions:

Herb Keeper: Measure and gently mix the herbs in a bowl, inhaling their soothing aromas as you blend.

Water Tender: Bring 4-6 cups of fresh water to a gentle boil (not rolling, to preserve delicate flavors).

Cup Bearer: Place 1-2 teaspoons of the blend into a teapot or infuser for each cup. Pour the hot water over, cover, and steep for 5-7 minutes. Strain and serve in warmed cups.

As the tea steeps, share in a circle: "What burden from today can I release, like steam rising from this cup?" For a letter-writing alternative, have each person jot a note to their future self about finding calm in chaos, then seal and exchange to open in a month.



Soothing Tea Blend

Theme: Comforting the body and spirit, like a warm embrace after a long journey.

Ingredients (for 4-6 servings):

- 2 tablespoons peppermint leaves
- 1 tablespoon fennel seeds
- 1 tablespoon ginger root (dried or fresh, grated)
- Optional: A few rose hips for a tangy uplift

Preparation Roles and Instructions:

Herb Keeper: Crush the fennel seeds lightly and combine with peppermint and ginger in a shared mixing ritual.

Water Tender: Heat 4-6 cups of water to just below boiling.

Cup Bearer: Add 1-2 teaspoons per cup to the pot, steep covered for 6-8 minutes, then pour mindfully, noting the steam's dance.

Prompt for sharing: "What small act of kindness soothed me recently, and how can I offer that to someone here?" Or, write letters to a loved one (present or not) expressing gratitude for their comforting presence, and read aloud if comfortable.



Romantic Tea Blend

Theme: Igniting sparks of affection, celebrating love in all its forms—romantic, familial, or self-love.

Ingredients (for 4-6 servings):

2 tablespoons hibiscus flowers

1 tablespoon rose petals

1 tablespoon cinnamon bark (broken)

Optional: A dash of cardamom pods for warmth

Preparation Roles and Instructions:

Herb Keeper: Blend the vibrant petals and spices, perhaps whispering intentions of love into the mix.

Water Tender: Boil 4-6 cups of water softly, envisioning it as a heart's gentle pulse.

Cup Bearer: Infuse 1-2 teaspoons per cup, steep for 5-7 minutes, and serve with a flourish, maybe garnished with a fresh rose petal.

Circle prompt: "What memory of love makes my heart bloom, like these petals?" For letters, pen notes to your inner romantic self, sharing dreams of connection, then swap and discuss.



Cycle/Moon Tea Blend

Theme: Honoring natural rhythms, from menstrual cycles to lunar phases, fostering attunement to body's wisdom.

Ingredients (for 4-6 servings):

- 2 tablespoons raspberry leaf
- 1 tablespoon nettle leaf
- 1 tablespoon red clover blossoms
- Optional: A few calendula petals for lunar glow

Preparation Roles and Instructions:

Herb Keeper: Layer the leaves and blossoms thoughtfully, aligning with the moon's current phase if known.

Water Tender: Warm 4-6 cups of water to a nurturing simmer.

Cup Bearer: Use 1-2 teaspoons per cup, steep for 7-10 minutes to draw out the herbs' supportive essence, then distribute with care.

Sharing invitation: "How do the cycles in my life—moon, seasons, or personal—call for nurturing?" Alternatively, write letters to your body, thanking it for its rhythms, and share excerpts in the circle.



Inspiring Tea Blend

Theme: Awakening creativity and motivation, like a dawn breaking through routine.

Ingredients (for 4-6 servings):

- 2 tablespoons green tea leaves (or yerba mate for caffeine-free)
- 1 tablespoon lemongrass
- 1 tablespoon ginseng root (dried)
- Optional: A pinch of holy basil for focus

Preparation Roles and Instructions:

Herb Keeper: Energize the blend by mixing with intention, perhaps clapping hands to "wake" the herbs.

Water Tender: Heat 4-6 cups to 80-85°C (just off boil) to avoid bitterness.

Cup Bearer: Infuse 1 teaspoon per cup for 3-5 minutes, serve promptly to capture the vibrant energy.

Prompt: "What spark of inspiration am I nurturing right now, and how can this circle fuel it?" For letter writing, draft messages to a future creative project, outlining visions, then exchange for group insights.



Peaceful Tea Blend

Theme: Cultivating inner harmony and group unity, echoing ancient peace rituals.

Ingredients (for 4-6 servings):

- 2 tablespoons passionflower
- 1 tablespoon skullcap herb
- 1 tablespoon oat straw
- Optional: A few linden flowers for heart-centered calm

Preparation Roles and Instructions:

Herb Keeper: Blend serenely, perhaps in silence to invite peace from the start.

Water Tender: Bring 4-6 cups to a tranquil boil.

Cup Bearer: Steep 1-2 teaspoons per cup for 6-8 minutes, pour slowly, observing the infusion's gentle color.

Circle sharing: "What brings me peace in this moment, and how can I share it with others?" Or, write letters of reconciliation—to self or another—and discuss ways to embody that peace in daily life.





Integrating Tea into Your Circles

Tea time seamlessly extends the connection sparked in the kitchen. After a Kitchen Circle meal, let it serve as a digestive wind-down, where the group's energy shifts from active cooking to reflective sharing. If time is limited, skip the meal altogether and center on tea-making as the ritual—still assigning roles to make everyone feel involved. For deeper planning, dedicate a session to brewing one of these blends while mapping your year ahead. This not only revives forgotten cultural practices but builds anticipation for future gatherings, strengthening bonds over time.

12-Month Kitchen Circle Planning Calendar

Use this template to plan your group's gatherings. Choose recipes from this book that align with themes, seasons, or celebrations. Assign a host, roles, and any adaptations. Print or copy it into a shared journal for your circle.

Month	Theme/Recipe from Kitchen Circles	Date & Time	Host/Location	Assigned Roles (e.g., Prep Leader, Story Sharer)	Sharing Prompt Idea
January					
February					
March					
April					
May					
June					
July					
August					
September					
October					
November					
December					

As you fill this calendar over tea, remember: these moments are threads in the tapestry of connection, honoring the heart's ancient call to gather, create, and share. May your circles brew endless warmth.



Closing

SUSTAINING THE FLAME -
TAKING CONNECTION BEYOND THE KITCHEN

The flame we kindle in the kitchen doesn't have to go out when the dishes are done.

Each gathering—each shared chop, stir, taste, and story—lights something enduring. It reminds us that connection isn't a one-time event; it's a practice, a way of being. The laughter that lingers, the vulnerability that was met with kindness, the quiet knowing that "I am not alone"—these are embers we can carry into daily life.

In a world that often pulls us apart, sustaining connection means choosing small, intentional acts: texting a friend from last week's meal to say, "I was thinking of you," inviting a neighbor for tea, turning a weekday dinner into a mini-circle with family. It's about remembering that the table is always available as a hearth for the heart.

As Imogen Bailey so beautifully expresses, "Our connection to one another is the greatest gift we have." This cookbook has been an invitation to unwrap that gift in the kitchen. Now, the real magic happens when we take it with us—into conversations, check-ins, shared walks, quiet moments of support. The flame grows brighter the more we tend it. May your kitchen circles ripple outward, creating tribes of belonging wherever you go. May the warmth you felt around the table become the warmth you offer the world.

The circle never truly ends; it simply widens.



Ideas for Ongoing Kitchen Circles

To keep the spirit alive, here are gentle ways to make shared cooking and eating a regular rhythm:

- **Monthly Theme Nights** — Choose a loose theme (e.g., "Gratitude," "Memories," "New Beginnings") and select a recipe that fits. Rotate who hosts and who chooses the theme.
- **Weekly Family or Flatmate Circles** — Turn one dinner a week into intentional connection time with quick role assignments and one sharing prompt.
- **Seasonal Gatherings** — Align with solstices, equinoxes, or personal milestones—spring renewal potlucks, autumn harvest feasts—to mark time together.
- **Pop-Up Neighbor Circles** — Invite 2–4 neighbors over for a simple soup night; keep it low-pressure and rotating.
- **Virtual-Hybrid Options** — For distant friends, cook the same recipe simultaneously via video call, sharing screens and stories in real time.
- **Circle Keeper Rotation** — Assign a different person each time to gently facilitate—setting intention, guiding prompts, closing with gratitude.
- **Journaling the Magic** — After each gathering, jot down one moment of connection; over time, it becomes a beautiful record of belonging.

Start small. Consistency matters more than scale. Each time you gather, the circle strengthens.



Resources & Further Inspiration

To deepen your journey with circles and connection:

- **Honouring Heart (honouringheart.com)** — Imogen Bailey's platform for women's circle education, facilitator training, workshops, and community. Explore Imogen's book, *The Power of Circle*, for stories, guidance, and tools to create safe, supportive spaces.
- **Imogen Bailey's Work** — Follow her on social media (@ImogenBaileyHonouringHeart) for inspiration, circle glimpses, and teachings on belonging, healing, and authentic relating.
- **Books on Circle & Community** — *The Circle Way* by Christina Baldwin and Ann Linnea; *Calling the Circle* by Laura Bruno; *The Art of Gathering* by Priya Parker—for blending ritual, intention, and everyday connection.
- **Podcasts & Communities** — Look for episodes on women's circles, communal eating, or belonging (e.g., "The goop Podcast" or "On Being" episodes on community).
- **Local Circles** — Search for women's circles, men's groups, or mixed community gatherings in your area—many draw from similar heart-centered principles.
- **Simple Daily Practices** — Free guided meditations on connection (often available via Honouring Heart or apps like Insight Timer) to keep the flame alive between gatherings.

These are doorways. Walk through the ones that call to you.

A Final Gratitude Circle Exercise

As you close this book, gather whoever is near—or do this solo, with the intention of sending love outward.

Sit or stand in a loose circle (even if it's just you and a candle or photo of loved ones). Take three slow breaths together.

Go around (or speak aloud to yourself):

- Name one specific moment from a recent kitchen gathering (or from reading this book) that touched your heart.
- Say one thing you're grateful for about the people who shared it (or about the possibility of future connections).
- End with: "Thank you for this gift of connection."

If alone, place a hand on your heart and whisper: "Thank you for the flame within me, and for the circles yet to come."

Blow out the candle (or imagine it glowing on). Carry that warmth with you.

This simple ritual seals the experience—and opens the next one.



With Love and Thanks

To every reader who has turned these pages: thank you for saying yes to connection.

To my support network and the Honouring Heart community: thank you for modeling what heart-centered gathering can be, and for reminding us that belonging is our birthright.

To everyone who has ever chopped, stirred, tasted, listened, or simply shown up at the table: you are the living circle. Your presence matters. Your stories matter. Your willingness to connect in this simple, profound way is a quiet revolution.

May your kitchens stay warm.

May your tables stay open.

May your hearts stay soft and seen.

With deepest gratitude and love, Imogen

If you would like to learn more about circle and human connection please visiting www.honouringheart.com



The Power of Circle

In *The Power of Circle*, Imogen Bailey shares her transformative journey from loneliness and self-doubt to empowerment through the ancient ritual of women's Circles. Drawing from 10+ years of facilitating Circles and 20+ years in presenting and storytelling, Imogen guides you to rediscover connection, build confidence, and foster belonging in a world that often feels isolating.

Personal Stories & Insights

Heartfelt anecdotes from Imogen's life, including her Hollywood pursuits, fertility challenges, and Circle discoveries, plus inspiring tales from women who've overcome isolation, divorce, and anxiety.

Practical Tools & Activities

Step-by-step guides to starting your own Circle, with activities like heart-opening dances, peaceful flag creations, and storytelling prompts—perfect for beginners or seasoned facilitators.

Inclusive & Empowering

Welcoming to all genders, ages, and backgrounds, emphasizing authenticity, support, and turning your passion into a purposeful business.

Ancient Wisdom Meets Modern Life

Explore Circle's history from indigenous traditions to today's wellness spaces, with tips on boundaries, self-worth workouts, and combating the loneliness epidemic.

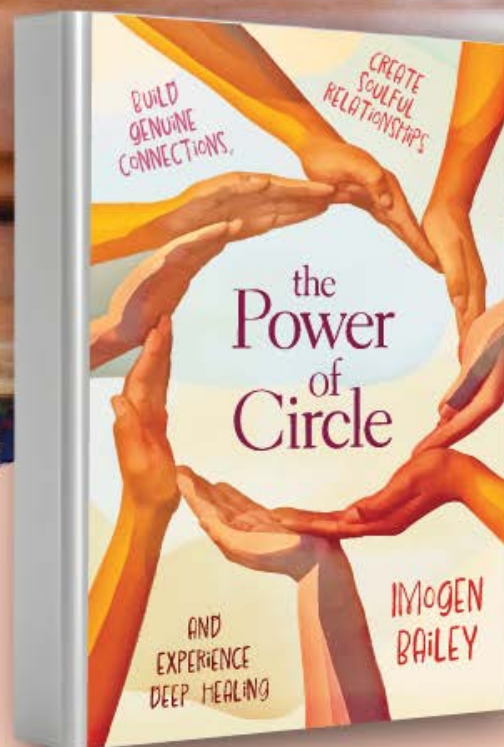
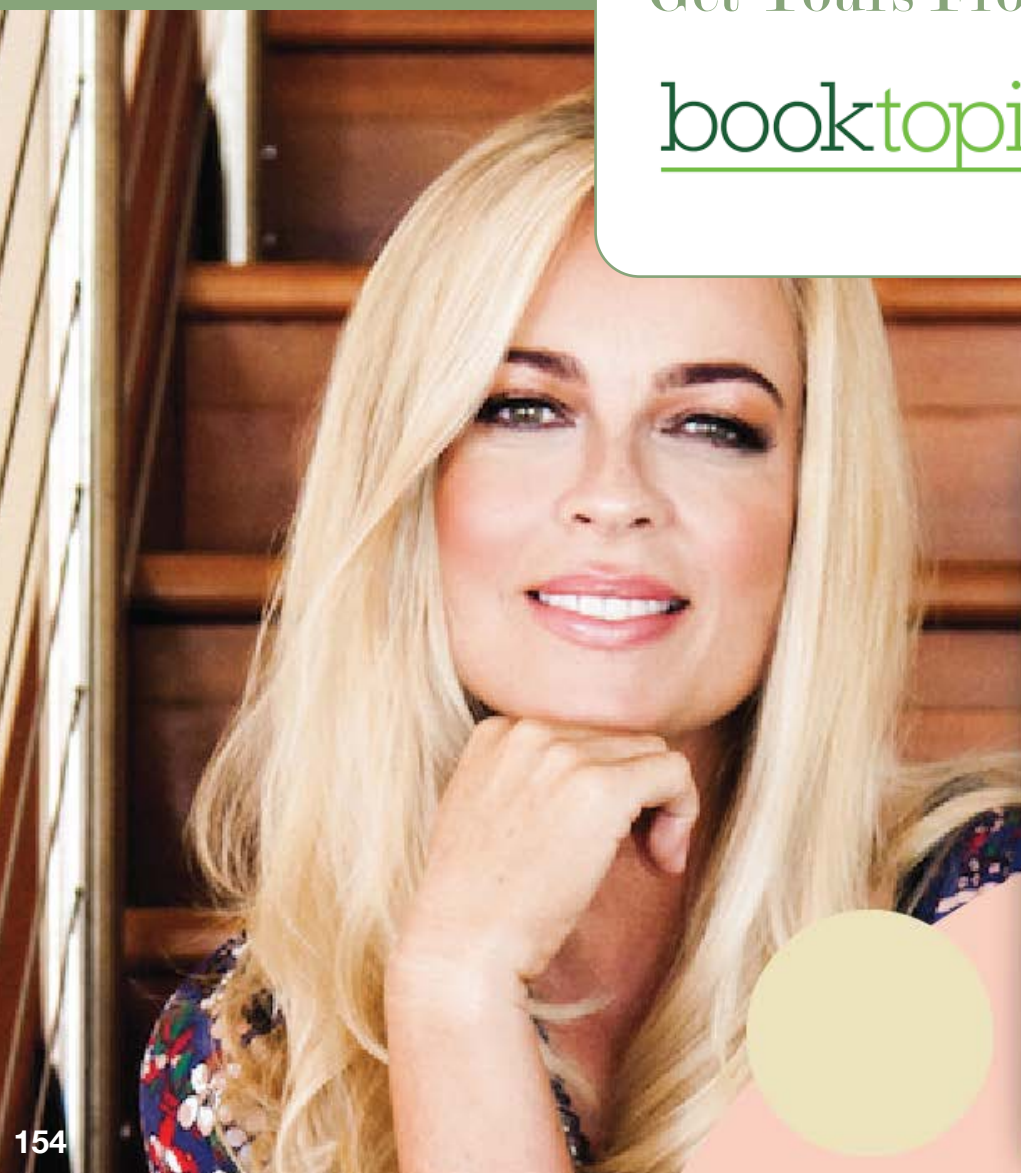
Business Blueprint for Facilitators

Actionable strategies to launch and scale your own Circle venture, blending purpose with profit for sustainable impact.

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Are You Inspired?

As you turn the final pages of this cookbook, may the warmth of shared meals linger—the laughter, stories, and quiet moments of true connection that happen when we gather around food. Across cultures and centuries, the kitchen and table have been sacred spaces for belonging, healing, and remembering we're not alone. By dividing roles in preparation, inviting simple sharing exercises, and savoring both the meal and one another, you've already revived this ancient magic in your own way.

If this has awakened a deeper calling—to hold even more intentional space for connection, perhaps beyond the kitchen—know there's a beautiful path forward. The Women's Circle Facilitator Program from Honouring Heart

(honouringheart.com), created by Imogen Bailey, invites you to lead heart-centered women's circles: safe, sacred gatherings for support, relaxation, inspiration, and deep belonging.

This self-paced online training requires no prior experience and offers lifetime access to rich resources—circle scripts, 50+ activities, templates, ritual designs, demo videos, and business foundations (marketing, pricing, client attraction). You'll earn certifications in Women's Circles, Teen Circles, Wise Circles (over 60s), Baby Blessingways, Bridal & Wedding Circles, and join an ongoing community of like-hearted facilitators.

Many graduates recoup their investment quickly by leading just a few circles,

turning their passion into meaningful service. With flexible payment plans, a money-back guarantee, and space for your unique voice, it's designed to help you step confidently into facilitation—extending the spirit of your cookbook gatherings into regular circles where women feel truly seen, held, and nourished.

If the idea of creating these transformative spaces resonates, explore the Ultimate Circle Facilitator Bundle at <https://www.honouringheart.com/womens-circle-facilitator-program>. Your community is waiting, hearts ready to meet—just as we've done here over simmering pots and unfolding stories. May your tables stay full, your circles keep widening, and your connections grow ever deeper.



Imogen Bailey
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