

# FOOD

## Home is where the heart is

Top Canadian chefs Crawford and Kirk share their love for family-style meals in new cookbook

**PATRICIA KAROUNOS**  
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

For Canadian chefs and spouses Lynn Crawford and Lora Kirk, food has always been a family affair. That's what their beloved farm-to-table restaurant in Toronto, Ruby Watchco (now shuttered), was all about: seasonal, local ingredients, highlighted in cosy dishes, served family-style. "We wanted to cook for you as we would at our home," says Crawford.

Now, the duo are bringing the ethos behind their restaurant to their newest cookbook "Hearth & Home: Cook, Share and Celebrate Family Style," in which they share more than 140 comforting dishes — such as succulent honey-garlic ribs or crumbly sweet onion cornbread — which you can mix and match for feasts with loved ones.

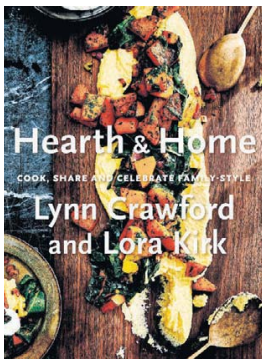
It's an approach to food that has run throughout their lives for as long as they both can remember.

For Peterborough-born Kirk, some of her earliest memories unfolded in the kitchen. She was five when she got her first apron — navy blue with red polka dots — and she and her mom made an apple pie together for her dad.

But it's the weekends, full of quality family time, that really stand out.

"My mom was a stay-at-home mom, and she cooked during the week, when it was more about trying to get food on the table," she says. "But, on Sundays, Dad would do the cooking, and he would always do one of his favourite things — lamb, or roast beef. It was so special to see everyone in there helping out."

Kirk, an award-winning chef who has also worked in the U.K., New York City and at Toronto's Four Seasons (where she met Crawford), remembers the first thing she ever cooked on her own: a beef Stroganoff with homemade noodles, cribbed from a recipe she found in one of her dad's magazines. She was 12 at the time and asked



"Hearth & Home," by Lynn Crawford and Lora Kirk, Penguin Canada, 264 pages, \$40.

her parents for permission to tackle the dish solo.

"It didn't turn out exactly right," Kirk says, laughing. "I don't know if my dad had ever had beef Stroganoff before, but it was the best he ever had."

Crawford's father, "a tremendous cook," is also at the heart of some of her strongest memories.

What stands out most for the Toronto-born celebrity chef, noted for stints at the Four Seasons in Toronto and New York, is the variety of recipes in his vast repertoire. In their house, enjoying a dish like beer-battered fish and chips with homemade tartar sauce was not out of the ordinary.

"It was inspiring," says Crawford, also known for shows such as "Iron Chef Canada" and her bestselling cookbooks. "He really encouraged my brother and I to get into the kitchen and cook with him. It became such a fun part of our day. We all participated, and then we would have that time around the table."

These early experiences laid the foundation for both of their culinary careers and their lives together at home. And, from their new house in Peterborough, it's a love they're also passing on to their daughters, Addie Pepper, 4, and Gemma Jet Aubergine, 2.

## The recipe to win over veggie-skeptical children

Try cookbook author Magwood's candied Brussels sprouts

**WING SIZE TANG**  
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

Trish Magwood describes "My New Table: Everyday Inspiration for Eating + Living" (out Tuesday) as "a cookbook of family recipes, for however you define family." In the new title, a lifestyle guide of sorts, the Toronto-based chef, author, TV personality and mom of three shares more than 100 simple, seasonal recipes for the modern table, with a side of lovely photography that serves as a visual feast, too.

The how-tos are casual, short and sweet, but peppered with personal anecdotes, as well as nods to loved ones. The Caramelized Onion Soup that Magwood calls a Christmas Eve tradition, for example, reflects her Aunt Nancy's "attention to the things that matter" (see: the cheese, which belongs on the bottom, contrary to popular practice).

The Cottage Lasagna ("the best lasagna I have ever had"), adapted over years, takes inspiration from the signature dish belonging to her sister-in-law's

mom. Liv's Chocolate Pudding is a new spin on her grandmother's age-old, feel-good dessert, with a tweak from Magwood's daughter, Olivia.

Taste-testing the book's recipes was a friends-and-family affair, ensuring the dishes will be crowd pleasers at your table, too. See for yourself with Magwood's candied Brussels sprouts, which comes with a sweet touch in more ways than one.

### Magwood's Brussels Sprouts with Pancetta and Dates

"I remember the first time I had Brussels sprouts. I was in grade nine and at a friend's house. Her mom made me eat them, and I hated them. Oh, how I've changed. The Niagara Street Grill, way back when, taught me to love all veggies thanks to their amazing sides. This recipe is a great side mostly because of the maple syrup and balsamic vinegar that candy the sprouts. And now it's one that I feed to the friends of my kids. I tell them, 'If I make you eat your veggies, it means I love you and you are like family.'"



RYAN SZULC

Canadian chefs and cookbook authors Lynn Crawford, left, and Lora Kirk love life in the kitchen.

That starts in their garden, where the girls have a hand in helping grow and pick fresh produce, like Brussels sprouts, spinach, leeks, corn and butter-nut squash.

Both Crawford and Kirk are advocates for sustainable food and think it's important their children know where their food comes from.

Of course, there's plenty for the family to do in the kitchen, as well. A favourite is weekly pizza nights. Crawford and Kirk make the dough, Addie and Gemma roll it out, and everyone picks their homegrown toppings.

"It's wonderful to see food through their eyes and see their amazement of just how wonderful it tastes," says Crawford. "Their sheer joy is mind-blowing. They love cooking; they love seasoning, tasting and creating. It's absolute magic."

### Crawford and Kirk's tips for getting the kids involved

**Start with baking.** Recipes for baked goods typically provide ample opportunity for kids to get involved, whether it's measuring out dry ingredients, pouring everything into a batter or mixing it all together. And they'll be delighted by the prospect of sweet treats, obviously.

"There are a lot of elements they'll love — like smelling ginger, vanilla or cinnamon — that will get them excited and awaken their senses," says Kirk.

**Look for kid-friendly utensils.** Once you and your children are comfortable being more hands-on in the kitchen, get them kitchen tools they can actually use. Look for mini whisks or spatulas, or even try a kid-safe, nylon serrated chef's knife they can use to practise chopping.

**Create a routine.** "It's really important that you don't be rushed about it," says Crawford, adding you have to be intentional with your kids in the kitchen. Dedicate a certain amount of time every week to cooking. Maybe you meal prep every Sunday, and they help wash or chop some veggies, or maybe you pick one day to make a favourite recipe, like baking up a batch of ginger cookies.

**Let them be a part of the process.** Baking likely is not an everyday thing so, if you do want to get your children to be in the kitchen more often than they are, just ask them what it is they want to do. If they don't have enough know-how yet, ask them to grab within-reach tools or ingredients, such as a can of chickpeas. "Let them participate more and more as they get comfortable with the skills," says Crawford. "They'll become these little junior chefs almost instantly."

**"Their sheer joy is mind-blowing. They love cooking."**

**LYNN CRAWFORD**  
CANADIAN CHEF



"My New Table," by Trish Magwood, Appetite by Random House, 288 pages, \$35.

**5 oz (140 g)** pancetta, cut into chunks  
**1 lb (450 g)** Brussels sprouts  
**2 tbsp (30 mL)** olive oil  
Salt and freshly cracked pepper  
**3 tbsp (45 mL)** aged balsamic vinegar  
**2 tbsp (30 mL)** maple syrup  
**1/2 cup (125 mL)** Medjool dates, pitted and halved

Preheat the oven to 425 F (220 C). In a pan over medium heat, fry the pancetta for 2 to 3 minutes per side until it crisps and curls.



KSENIA HOTIC

Trish Magwood describes her new title as "a cookbook of family recipes, for however you define family."

In a shallow baking dish or sheet pan lined with parchment paper, toss the Brussels sprouts with the olive oil. Season with salt and pepper. Roast for 10 minutes. Drizzle with the balsamic and maple syrup and toss to coat.

Top with the dates and pancetta, and roast for 10 more minutes or until just softened. Place under the broiler for about 30 seconds at the end to caramelize. Season with salt

and pepper and serve. Serves 4.

**Cook's note:** For added richness, top while hot with a few dollops of gorgonzola or your favourite blue cheese, just before serving.

Recipe excerpted from "My New Table," by Trish Magwood, by arrangement with Appetite by Random House, a division of Penguin Random House Canada. Copyright © 2021 Trish Magwood. Photography © Ksenia Hotic. All rights reserved.