

And this week...

To put the following prose in context, I have been thinking about this after discussing the possibility of group gatherings this holiday season with a couple of friends and reminiscing over fraught dinners past...

I have written a fair amount in the past about how I equate cooking with caring; stating that I use it as an additional expression of love for family and friends. I have certainly spent more than my fair share of time standing on the sister soapboxes of seasonal and sustainable eating and sharing my views. My biggest bugbear, to which I have also devoted a lot of ink, is food waste and all of the horrifying statistics that surround that. It does not sit well with me that I eat well and that a third of the world's population does not, even though we have ample means to feed everyone. [The World Hunger Clock](#) causes me a certain amount of anxiety.

But, though I am comfortable writing about that particular political issue, I am less at ease with certain topics that are open to verbal discussion when food is politicized, which seems to happen more and more often these days. It isn't that I don't know where I stand -- goodness me, I usually do -- it is simply that I often feel that -- especially when dining

with others -- we should perhaps take what we put in our mouths with fewer chips on our shoulders .

Talk of food, whether I like it or not though, engenders powerful political dialogues in the current climate and there are specific topics which seem to come up regularly. Actual politics -- American blue vs red -- is a real button pusher at any dinner and certainly not conducive to either good manners or happy digestions. There is often a conversation around diet (organic, vegetarian, no GMOs, etc.), the socio-economic ramifications of what eating in that particular manner entails, and often a whole lot of unnecessary (and unfortunately shared) judgement about, and proselytizing to, those who are not on the same diet as the person who is speaking. And, more recently, a debate has arisen on several occasions as to cultural appropriation and if people like me, who are white, even if they are multi-cultural in education and upbringing, should be cooking dishes from other cultures and, if they do, is this a form of insidious racism.

I guess that the long and the short of it is that I believe that everyone is entitled to their own opinion and dietary preferences, but that I don't necessarily wish to explore these particular topics while eating. The dinner table is not the place where I want to unravel the politics of every forkful that I ingest, but rather the place where I want to feel that I am home. I am not sure what that says about me as a world citizen, but I do think it brings

me full circle to the original point expressed in my first sentence, something to keep in mind as the festive season approaches, especially these days when, with Covid slightly on the wane, the possibility actually exists that we might sit around a proper holiday table with family and friends.

As for the weekly recipe recap:

Sumac and Cinnamon Chicken with Date-Herb Couscous "Gruel"

EPIC Multi-Bean Chili

Comfort Eggs on Toast

Sunday Sauce

Warm Spinach Salad

Baked Apple with Bourbon Cream