

And this week...

A few years ago, when I wrote a different blog called "On The Menu" about the meals that I cooked for my son, someone asked me how I defined my blog. I remember semi-jokingly saying something along the lines that it was an "anti-lifestyle" blog. I said that because though, for me, cooking well for family, friends and oneself is a given, and I love reading recipes, I get very annoyed at what I see as a lot of food blogs' choice to value style over substance and call the website a lifestyle blog.

I find the many paragraphs of stream of consciousness prose before one gets to the meat and potatoes of the recipe annoying, and the photos of perfectly styled casseroles carefully placed on "patinaed" wooden farmhouse tables with cutesy wine stains artfully dotted here and there, of fluffy scones displayed on an artistically crumpled tea towel, or of cakes surrounded by carefully placed ingredients or "randomly" strewn flower petals objectionable. It isn't real and, rather than aspirational, it feels as though it is meant to make others who are trying to do something similar feel bad about their skills and themselves.

I was reminded of this last week when a former colleague dropped by around lunch time and I offered to make us a quick meal. The herb patch sage was already yielding a few leaves, I had eggs in the fridge, some cooked acorn squash, half a red onion and the makings of a salad so I made us an **Acorn Squash, Red Onion and Sage Frittata**. "This

is delicious", my former colleague said, "I don't cook like this. I've seen your blog, it's nice to see firsthand how well you do for yourself!"

While my first reaction was to think that a frittata made of leftovers indicated that I had the skillset to look in a refrigerator and compose a meal from random ingredients rather than brand me a queen of self-care, it did bring me back to my "anti-lifestyle" stance. I like to cook and I like to write so I post recipes. Aesthetics are important to me and I like photography so I do dress my dishes a bit rather than dumping my food on a plate and I do try to take as nice a photo as possible though I do this on my phone with regular kitchen lighting. But am I being as dishonest as lifestyle bloggers?

What my blog doesn't show are the times when a recipe doesn't work so I don't post it, or when I have a bowl of cereal or a cup of cocoa and buttered toast for dinner. It doesn't show when I make a recipe again because it was good, or when I have a plain green salad for dinner because that is what I felt like at that particular moment. It also doesn't show if I have McDonalds for dinner or something completely disgusting and unhealthy because I am in a bad mood.

I did start this blog to keep myself accountable to proper eating rather than allowing myself to integrate some of the "off" meals described above into my routine, and I suppose that I am kept honest and show "how well I do for myself" week to week based on the number of recipes that I post.

This week speaks for itself.

Tik Tok Grapes

Mushrooms on Toast

Green Chicken

Portuguese Kale Stew