

And this week...

It must be said that I really do enjoy living alone more than most, which is not to say that, as a devoted mother, I was not looking forward to having my son home (off and on for six weeks) and spoiling him a bit. Now that he has left again until the spring, I remain in my little house with a few (perhaps overly acerbic and certainly tongue in cheek) observations that occurred to me during his first long visit home from college.

Along the lines of "If you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day but if you teach him to fish you feed him for a lifetime", I posit that "you can provide a college kid with the makings of a myriad of snacks that he will need to assemble and he will go hungry, but provide him with already made, just have to grab the bag junk of any kind, and he will eat his weight in the stuff every night after you have gone to bed."

He will be accompanied in this task by some mysterious tribe of refrigerator elves, who have an uncanny and innate knowledge of exactly what it is that you plan to use in a dinner recipe the next day and make one element of it disappear in the wee hours, said disappearance only to be discovered the next day, halfway through the making of the aforementioned recipe. I know that these elves must exist because my son seems to have no knowledge of or interest in the missing ingredients.

These are the same elves who manage to make every glass in the house and a fair few dishes and spoons – always spoons, never forks - disappear on a daily basis, but are kind enough to bring them back in the night so that the kitchen that I left in an immaculately clean and tidied state before bed has a sink full of dirty dishes each morning when I appear to make your coffee.

No matter the years of painfully repetitive training, elvish customs and male DNA do not allow for items to be put in the dishwasher. They can only be put on the counter above the dishwasher or in the sink and, if in the sink, in their unrinsed state. This is the same DNA that does not recognize that it possesses the ability to empty a dishwasher of clean dishes spontaneously though it can do so when someone of the female persuasion (in 99.9% of the cases me) points this out in such high pitched tones that the neighborhood dogs all start to bark at once.

The amount of household trash produced by two people is not equal to double that produced by one. I put out one slightly more than half filled four gallon bag of wet kitchen trash each night and one very loosely filled thirty gallon bag of cans, paper, boxes, and other recyclables each Sunday. During my son's visit the thirty gallon bag became the near daily norm and we went through four gallon kitchen trash bags like nobody's business.

Though between the ages of six and eighteen, my child took out the trash each evening after dinner, it only took four months away for this concept to become a new and fascinating one to him -- purely from an anthropological and theoretical perspective. (Cue more barking dogs.)

The garbage equation laid out above holds true for the grocery bill as well. How quickly one forgets all of the sodas, juices, sparkling waters, candies, crackers, chocolates, chips, cheeses, pork rinds, yogurts, extra loaves of bread, nut butters, large cuts of meat and various other treats and snacks that one needs to purchase if one plans on spoiling one's little darling properly. Not to mention the cost involved in filling a well-garnished fruit bowl with favorites so as to tempt in that healthier direction. I do not begrudge him any of this and am thrilled to provide I am simply pointing out that, much like the pain of childbirth, one simply forgets how much is required of one until it comes time to do it again.

It has also been duly noted (and may reflect on next visit's snack budget) that if the girlfriend and the mother are both in bed with side effects from their booster

shots, the girlfriend will get soup from the freezer on a tray with a bud vase as well as tea at regularly scheduled intervals and the mother will get asked if she feels well enough to get up and make pasta carbonara.

All that being said, my son truly is a lovely human and, boy, am I going to miss having him around.

[Chicken and Yellow Vegetable Curry](#)

[Yogurt Flatbreads](#)

[Easy Mango Sorbet](#)

[Aromatic Green Soup](#)

[Apple Sauce](#)

[Cauliflower Steak with Cumin Roasted Chickpeas, Caramelized Red Onion and Tahini Drizzle](#)