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And just like that the swamp maples are sporting their first bright red leaves. At least in my neighborhood, you start to hear Canadian geese honking overhead. (They like to stop and feed at the cornfield down the street.) And the definitive sign that summer has come to an end? A big, yellow school bus rumbles down the hill to pick up the neighborhood kids in front of the post office. To make it doubly tough, the post office just happens to sit right next to the beach.

It's back-to-school and back to reality. The first day of school, especially that first day of kindergarten, is always an exciting day. Or at least it was for me. I was always one of those hopeless nerds who actually liked school. My older sister Brenda blazed the trail ahead of me. Since she seemed to manage okay, I figured I could do the same. Besides,



the first day of school meant new shoes and a special new dress to start the year. Like good luck charms, our shiny, new duds helped bolster our confidence to face new teachers, kids and challenges. Mom took the two of us downtown to Filene's on a quest for Buster Brown shoes and Polly Flinders dresses. If we behaved ourselves and didn't take too long, we could usually talk her into a sundae, or at least an ice cream cone, at Bailey's.

Kindergarten was divided into two sections, morning and afternoon. The mothers in the neighborhood gave a collective sigh of relief when

I was assigned to the afternoon session. I was one of those sleepy headed kids who woke up slowly. I would eventually wander down to the kitchen and dawdle over my breakfast cereal at a leisurely pace. Next I meandered back upstairs. On the way, I might stop and cuddle with one or both dogs, take a detour onto the living room couch to ponder some great philosophical question or check in with Captain Kangaroo and Mr. Greenjeans. Still moving in slow motion, I took forever making my bed and getting dressed. The mothers were convinced that I'd never make it out the door by 8:00. I think that they were probably right. So while my third grade sister waved goodbye and trudged up the hill to Joseph E. Fiske Elementary School, I hung around in my jammies and spent a few more leisurely mornings with the Captain.

I think I did alright in kindergarten. Although I didn't set the world on fire with brains and wit, I didn't weep at the drop of a hat, pick fights on the playground or talk back to the teacher. I was an agreeable little thing, who liked to giggle and was prone to frequent daydreaming. A sweet girl, I was delighted to play with anyone and everyone and just as happy with my own company. Come to think of it, not much has changed over the years.

After all, to paraphrase Robert Fulghum all you really need to know you learn in kindergarten. Nowadays, some schools teach kindergarteners a few reading fundamentals and a little arithmetic. Not my teacher, she focused on the basics and reinforced the good stuff our moms and dads were already trying to teach us. Share. Play nice. Don't hit. Pick up your toys. If you do something wrong, apologize. Don't forget to say please and thank you. Wash your hands. Cover your nose and mouth when you sneeze or cough. Buddy up. Look both ways before you cross the street.

September is a beautiful month to enjoy the change of seasons and celebrate all you learned in kindergarten. Share a favorite bike route, fabulous book or a cup of tea with a friend, practice simple acts of kindness, say thank you like you mean it and do, hold hands and enjoy the Indian summer sunshine.

Bon appétit!

Grilled Shrimp with Pasta & Fresh Tomato Sauce

Fresh local tomatoes combine with grilled shrimp and pasta for a wonderful end of summer meal. Enjoy!

Serves 6-8

About 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar
 1-2 scallions, thinly sliced
 2 cloves garlic, minced
 Dash or two (or to taste) hot pepper sauce
 About 20 ripe plum tomatoes, peeled, seeded and chopped
 Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
 1 pound angel hair pasta or spaghetti
 6 to 8 fresh basil leaves, cut in chiffonade*
 Grilled Shrimp (recipe follows)

Put the olive oil, vinegar, scallions, garlic and hot pepper sauce in a large bowl and whisk to combine. Set aside while you prep the tomatoes to combine the flavors.

Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Set up an ice bath in a large bowl. Cut a small X on the bottom of each tomato. A few at a time, dunk the tomatoes in the boiling water for about 15 seconds. Remove them from the pot and plunge immediately into the ice water. Pull the skin off with a paring knife. Cut the tomatoes in half, scoop out the seeds and chop.

Add the chopped tomatoes to the olive oil mixture, season with salt and pepper and toss to combine. Let the tomatoes sit for 15-20 minutes at room temperature to combine the flavors.

Cook the pasta according to package directions less 1 minute. Drain and return the pasta to the pot. Add the tomatoes to the pasta, toss to combine and cook over medium-high heat for 1 minute. Sprinkle the pasta with half of the basil chiffonade and toss to combine. Transfer the pasta to a serving platter or individual plates, top with the grilled shrimp and remaining basil and serve immediately.

**To chiffonade is to stack the leaves one on top of the other and then cut into thin ribbons.*

Grilled Shrimp

2 cloves garlic
 1/4 small red onion
 1 teaspoon fresh thyme
 1/2 teaspoon (or to taste) hot pepper sauce
 1/4 cup dry white wine
 2 tablespoons olive oil
 2 pounds large shrimp, peeled and deveined
 Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper to taste
 Wooden skewers or a grill basket to cook the shrimp (if using wooden skewers, soak them in water for 30 minutes)



Put the garlic, onion, thyme, hot pepper sauce, wine and olive oil in a small food processor or blender and season with salt and pepper. Process to combine and finely chop the garlic and onion. Let the marinade sit for 10-15 minutes to combine the flavors.

Put the shrimp and marinade in a bowl, toss to combine and marinate in the refrigerator for 15-30 minutes.

Heat the grill to medium-high. Thread the shrimp onto the wooden skewers or toss them in the grill basket. Grill the shrimp, turning once, until just opaque, about 1-2 minutes per side.

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