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**April Fools Day is a fun, harmless holiday**, filled with silly jokes and foolish pranks. When we were little, my sister Brenda was the master when it came to practical jokes. From time to time, I assisted her, playing Betty to her Veronica or maybe it was closer to Boo Boo and Yogi. More often than not, I was either oblivious to her antics, caught up in some adventure or misadventure of my own, or her clueless victim.

**Brenda is a few years older than I am** and, from about the age of eight or nine, was a clever prankster. She had no trouble thinking ahead and meticulously planned her little scams. I, on the other hand, was the ditzzy sister. An optimist or romantic might say I was living in the moment; a practical parent might call it living in the clouds.

**Not just a planner, Brenda had an uncanny knack for keeping a straight face** as she deftly pulled the wool over her hapless victim's eyes. If I somehow managed to pull off a prank, I was much too excited and pleased with myself to keep it quiet for long. My uncontrolled giggling was a sure sign I had a secret to share. Not my sister, she could think ahead, execute flawlessly and then innocently look her victim in the eye until she decided to unveil her sometimes dastardly, sometimes hilarious deed.

**She had a long running prank with our much younger brother.** When John was about two, she convinced him that she had a twin sister, Eleanor. Eleanor did not spend a lot of time at home but on boring afternoons when John was being a particularly pesky toddler, she would appear out of nowhere. She calmly sent John all over the house and yard to find first one fictitious twin and then the other. The prank went on for a long time but I never saw my sister snicker, giggle or do anything to give herself away.

**Like most children, we had our list of daily chores.** We made our beds, cleaned our rooms and set and cleared the dinner table. When we got a little older, we also did the dishes. Brenda hatched a few of her best pranks while stacking the dishwasher. Switching the salt and sugar were standard April Fools fare but she never played her best pranks on April 1<sup>st</sup>. One spring evening it was much too nice to stay inside so I skipped out of the dish detail. Hours later I discovered Brenda's sweet revenge; a cold, little nest of spaghetti in the bottom of my bed. And yes, I dreamt of worms, both that night and a few more.

**Even under her tutelage, I never developed Brenda's skill for practical jokes.** However, I did develop a bit of talent for tall tales. Tired of being mocked for my little feet, I once I wove an elaborate story of how my parents were missionaries and I grew up in China. I explained that out of respect for local custom my feet were bound as a child. I managed to tell the story with total sincerity and was surprised at how easy it was to dupe my tormentor. Unfortunately, or maybe fortunately, I felt guilty and fessed-up pretty quickly. My childhood, while happy, was far from exotic. I grew up in a Boston suburb and had never been to China. Besides foot binding was outlawed long before I was born.

**With winter dragging on and on it looks like Mother Nature has been pulling a prank on us.** March came in like a lion and went out like a lion. We can only hope that she is feeling a little guilty and packs April with warm days and sunny skies. And if we can't have warm days, can we please, at the very least, have sunny skies.

Bon appétit!



## Grilled Lamb Chops with Lemon-Mint Yogurt Sauce

*Assuming you can dig the grill out of the snowbank, there is nothing foolhardy about these delicious grilled lamb chops and flavorful yogurt sauce. Enjoy!*

Serves 6

Juice of 1 lemon  
 Juice of 1 orange  
 4 cloves garlic  
 1 shallot, roughly chopped  
 About 1/2 cup loosely packed fresh mint leaves  
 1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves  
 2 tablespoons Dijon mustard  
 1 tablespoon honey  
 Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper to taste  
 1-1 1/2 cups dry red wine  
 About 3 1/2 pounds lamb chops (1-2 large or 2-3 small chops per person)  
 1 bay leaf  
 Lemon-Mint Yogurt Sauce (recipe follows)



Put the citrus juices, garlic, shallot, mint, thyme, mustard and honey in a blender, season with salt and pepper and pulse to combine and chop. Add a little wine and process until smooth. Slowly add the remaining wine and process until well combined.

Put the lamb chops and bay leaf in a large, heavy-duty plastic, re-sealable bag, add the marinade and seal the bag, pressing out excess air. Marinate the lamb in the refrigerator for 4 hours or overnight, turning a few times.

Remove the lamb from the refrigerator about 30 minutes before grilling. Prepare a charcoal or gas grill. The fire should be medium hot.

Shaking off the excess marinade, remove the lamb from the plastic bag and place on the grill. Grill until medium rare, 2-3 minutes per side for small chops and 3-5 minutes for larger.

Remove the chops from the grill and let rest for 5-10 minutes before serving. Serve the lamb with Lemon-Mint Yogurt Sauce.

### Lemon-Mint Yogurt Sauce

1 cup plain yogurt  
 2-3 tablespoons finely chopped fresh mint leaves  
 Grated zest of 1 lemon  
 1 clove garlic, minced  
 1 scallion, finely chopped  
 Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

Put all the ingredients in a small bowl and whisk to combine. Cover and chill for an hour or more to combine the flavors.