

# Heirloom of Style

IN BEAUTY & LIFESTYLE, LIFESTYLE FEATURES

## Crème de la Crème: Natural Culinary Nutritionist Jackie Newgent on Reclaiming Your Recipes

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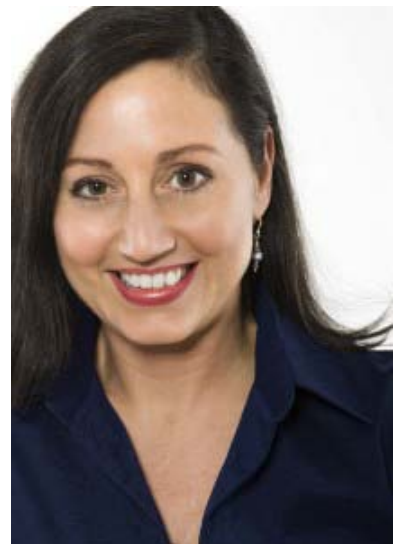
I'm a self-certified foodie. From truffle fries to a chocolate mousse, I have no qualms about rolling up my sleeves to attempt a great dish. As it stands, confections of butter and heavy cream are my best friends, and garlic and shallots are becoming staples on my kitchen counter.

But then, something crazy happened to me. You know the cliché about your favorite jeans no longer fitting? Yes, that happened to me.

The foods I became connected to, rich in flavor and fat were making *me* fat! My waistline is in need of a reduction just as much as my sodium intake but the idea of depriving myself of savory dishes is as unappealing as you could imagine.

[Jackie Newgent](#), a fellow foodie and natural culinary nutritionist, was so reassuring in her health food advice that I know it's possible to create a culinary explosion without expanding your belt at the dinner table.

Her recipes are yummy and have appeared everywhere from ABC's "Good Morning America" to *Health* and *Woman's Day* and recently *Self* magazines. Her second book, "1000 Low-Calorie Recipes", is set to hit bookstores this [October](#) and in the midst of her busy schedule, she gave *Heirloom of Style* a few pointers for the Crème Brulee-ers in us all.



**NICOLE:** When did you begin whipping up healthy recipes. Were you always fascinated by healthy, delicious foods?

**JACKIE:** I began cooking at the age of three. My mother was a caterer so I was destined to have a food career. I was always fascinated by delicious food, but not healthy food. My first creation (at the age of

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three!) was a potato chip-bologna canapé. But I then did become enamored with healthful cuisine once I completed schooling to become a dietitian.

**NICOLE: One of the biggest misconceptions about eating healthier is that the food is bland and boring. How can we eat healthy without compromising the tastes that we've come to love?**

JACKIE: I think the “bland” or “boring” labels for healthier food exist only if we continue to let them exist. Those thoughts actually never cross my mind when I make or recommend nutritious fare. I find the best approach to eating your favorite decadent foods in a better-for-you way is to focus on what you can add to those foods, such as herbs, spices, seasonal veggies, beans, nuts, and more. When you do this, you'll potentially be able to reduce the sodium or saturated fat, for instance, without compromising taste. In fact, your made-over dish may be more delicious. I find that's usually the case ..., which you can actually see for yourself on my recipe [blog](#), “tasteovers by jackie”! While you're there, consider sending me one of your rich recipes for a free makeover!



Jackie Newgent's Avocado Whip

**NICOLE: Why does it seem like eating healthier adds more to the bottom line of the grocery bill?**

JACKIE: I believe the “eating healthier costs more” myth really began since people often added healthier foods to their grocery carts without removing something else. There are absolutely some inexpensive “junk” foods. Plus, the focus used to be on meats ... and lean meats can be costlier. But if you plan wisely, you can enjoy inexpensive healthful foods. You may even shrink your grocery bill by going for better-for-you bets. Basically, that may mean choosing produce that's in season; buying whole grains, nuts, and seeds from bulk bins; and still looking for sales. Yes, bargains and coupons are available for healthful foods, too.

**NICOLE: How often do you grocery shop?**

JACKIE: I'm a New Yorker; so I shop nearly every day since I can only carry about a day's worth of groceries at a time. But even if I weren't a New Yorker, I'd still probably shop nearly as often. One of the main reasons for this is I absolutely want the freshest food possible. And since I follow a plant-based eating plan, I want my produce to be as fresh and nutritious as possible. I encourage others to

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do the same. Basically, stock on up items that have longer shelf lives, like canned beans or frozen veggies; and then make really short trips often for fresh, perishable foods.

**NICOLE: What natural ingredients are the best for adding flavor to dishes?**

JACKIE: Fresh herbs—all of them. Grow some if you can—even in your windowsill.

**NICOLE: What do you consider a well-stocked fridge and pantry?**

JACKIE: That's a tough question since it can depend on your likes and dislikes, cultural influences, style of cooking, and more. But just looking at my fridge, as a reference ... the fridge contains fresh seasonal produce (though not an overabundance), fresh herbs, gingerroot, organic eggs, Greek yogurt, organic milk, almond milk, various cheeses, and a vast array of condiments. In my freezer, plenty of leftovers (intentional or unintentional) for a quick meal anytime, along with whole grain bread and various frozen veggies that would otherwise be out of season. The pantry (or dry storage) ... a variety of oils and vinegars, numerous dry spices and herbs (that are current!), garlic, onions, potatoes, nuts and seeds, dried fruits, honey, cartons of low-sodium broths, whole grain pastas, brown rices and other whole grains like quinoa, and lots and lots of canned organic beans and tomato products.



Jackie Newgent's Rustic Sweet Potato Flan

**NICOLE: How can you get your family and friends on board with eating healthy?**

JACKIE: There's no one way to approach this. But I find what works best is to make a healthful dish that's delicious. And don't intentionally say it's healthy. My family and friends usually figure out for themselves that the dish is healthful and become curious about how to make it or similar dishes. When they are the ones being inquisitive of nutritious foods, they usually are more apt to incorporate healthful cooking into their repertoire.



Jackie Newgent's Spinach and Chicken Lasagna

**NICOLE: What's the most versatile ingredient in the kitchen?**

JACKIE: There are so many ingredients that I consider versatile. But one that I suggest—and one that's perhaps most versatile in my cooking—is Greek yogurt. It can be used well in both savory and sweet dishes—in cooked and raw dish. Personally, I use it often since I do quite a bit of Mediterranean and Middle Eastern cooking.

**NICOLE: For those of us who want to revamp our recipe books, how do we start?**

JACKIE: The easiest way is to simply make one change at a time based on what your health priority is. If you're trying to get more fiber, switch to whole grain products. If you're aiming to eat less sodium; be go a little heavier on spices or herbs. If you're focused on losing weight, consider how you can add more volume with nutrient-rich veggies.

**NICOLE: What is your favorite dessert?**

JACKIE: I'll take a good old-fashioned chocolate milkshake anyday ... though these days I do prefer that it's organic, too.

**NICOLE: What tips do you have for making a natural culinary change, permanent?**

JACKIE: I know you've heard it before ... small changes. Small changes add up to big differences.

Be sure to visit Jackie's [website](#) for more recipes and recommendations.

(Photo Credits: Jackie Newgent)

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