

THE LEVITICUS COOKBOOK

**TASTY ANIMAL AND VEGETABLE
SACRIFICES FOR YOUR AIR FRYER
AND OTHER KITCHEN SACRIFICIAL
ALTARS**



CONTENTS

Introduction	4
Coffee	7
Instant, single cup drip, French coffee maker, Nespresso	
Sauces	10
Mustard/Mayonnaise Sauce, Mustard/Mayonnaise/Horseradish Sauce, Tartar Sauce	
Tex-Mex	14
Bean, Cheese, Chicken, and/or Beef Tacos, Tacos Using Flour Tortillas, Bean, Cheese, and Jalapeño Tostados, Air Fried Beef Fajitas, Rotel Cheese Dip	
Beef	22
Air Fried New York Strip Steak, Air Fried BBQ Tri-Tip, Homemade Whataburger, Homemade Burger King Whopper, Cowboy Bebop Burger, Tortilla Burger, Guacamole Burger, Bachelor Burger, Chicken Fried Steak Sandwich, Roast Beef, Beef Stew,	
Fish	38
Air Fried Salmon, Air Fried Tilapia, Tuna Sandwich	
Poultry	43
Air Fried Chicken Breast, Ground Turkey Spaghetti, Susan's Homemade Chili, Frito Pie, How To Boil and Peel an Egg, Boiled Egg Sandwich, Turkey BLT	
Indian Food	60
Spicey Mint Chutney, My Naan Bread Hack	
Vegetables and Non-Meat Dishes	63
Microwave Porn on the Car, Microwave Grilled Cheese Sandwich, Peanut Butter Sandwich with Shoestring Potatoes, Microwave Baked Potato, Air Fried French Fries and Onion Rings, Air Fried Breaded Okra,	

Air Fried Roast Asparagus, Peanut Butter, The Bread Machine	
Fruit	74
Cut-Up Fruit	
Fiber	76
Beans Are Your Friend	
Dairy	78
Cottage Cheese, Whole Chocolate Milk, Greek Yogurt	
Desserts.....	80
Blue Bell Moos Bars and KozyShack Chocolate Pudding	
Beverages.....	82
Root Beer, Dr Pepper, and Orange	
Supplements	84
Old Age Pills	
Exercise	86
Take a Hike!	
Balance.....	88
Make Me One With Everything!	

INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

To many, the Book of Leviticus may make one think of rules for keeping kosher that many today might view as an anachronism, or alternatively, Leviticus might conjure up images of Satanic sacrifices from old horror movies. Regarding the former, I do eat a moderately kosher diet for two reasons. First, it makes me think every time I eat about my ancestry, who I am, and the best version of myself that I aspire to be, and second, I no longer consume non-kosher animals like pork or shrimp because over time I have noticed that they seem to contain a richer kind of fat that doesn't sit all that well with me. However, I make no attempt to follow the tradition of separating meat from milk because (1) I have found trying to do so too difficult and burdensome for me personally, and (2) I believe the practice stems from a mistranslation. In Deuteronomy 14:21 it is written, "You shall not boil a kid in its mother's milk," and it has been speculated that the original intent of this commandment was to avoid the cruelty and anguish to the mother goat that could be caused by seeing its offspring boiled in its own milk. However, when the Torah was translated into Greek, the above passage was rendered as a commandment to separate meat and milk. For myself, I prefer the interpretation that focuses on avoiding cruelty to animals over the latter interpretation, but I have no problem with anyone who prefers a different interpretation. I am pro-choice in all things just so long as the exercise of one's individual freedom does not impinge upon the freedom or well-being of others.

When it comes to animal sacrifices, I think the ancient Jewish sacrificial system is greatly misunderstood because the reality is that something, plant or animal, always has to die in order for us to eat, and the difference is that in the sacrificial system this taking of a life so that we may live was elevated through its association with religious awareness and a deeper understanding of the rhythms of life. Also, in the Talmud it is written, "While the Temple still stood the altar used to make atonement for a man, but now that the Temple no longer stands a man's table makes atonement for him." In other words, many people are really reenacting the ancient sacrificial service every day when they combine their meal with prayers of thanks. And that, in my opinion, was the essence of the ancient Jewish sacrificial system. It was a way of giving thanks for the food received.

The ancient Jewish sacrificial system was actually more complex than what I've described above, but the one thing that most of the sacrifices had in common was that they involved not only an attempt to give back to a Deity, but also a giving and sharing with others. Hence, with most of the sacrifices, a portion of the sacrifice was used to provide sustenance for both the priests and the family that had made the sacrifice, and this brought about within Judaism the understanding that giving to God should also involve giving to others. This is reflected in Talmudic dictums like "Charity is equivalent to all other commandments combined," and in Proverbs 19:17, "He who gives kindly to the poor lends to the Lord." This giving is also reflected, in my opinion, in the puzzling Biblical story of Azazel found in Leviticus 16. In this story, two goats are brought for sacrifice, and as determined by drawing lots, one of the goats is let loose in the wilderness. People

have pondered over this story for centuries as to who or what Azazel might be with a fallen angel or a demon of the desert being primary suspicions. However, the literal meaning of the term “Azazel” is simply “goat of departure,” and I suspect that my ancient, nomadic Jewish ancestors understood that giving on a spiritual level through prayers of thanks should always be accompanied by a corresponding act of giving on the physical level. I may be wrong about that, but nonetheless, it certainly seems like a good idea to me.

The bottom line of all this discussion is that whether one believes in some version of a deity or not, one can still be grateful and thankful for good things that happen, and one can and should express one’s thanks on a physical as well as a non-physical level. In my case, I am far from being either a good or accomplished cook with a deep understanding of the entire theory of food preparation, but with my air fryer, a microwave, and a toaster oven, I have learned how to make some truly delicious food with a minimum of effort, and in many respects this book is for people like me who are “cooking Neanderthals.” Additionally, I marvel at the alchemical process by which my air fryer takes something that is initially lifeless and inedible and transforms it into something that gives me life. There is mystery involved, and this process of transformation fills me with both awe and gratitude, and I try to express that gratitude through both my feelings of reverence within and through regular donations without to my local foodbank. The preparation and ingestion of my food now makes me deeply reflect upon how one entity has given completely of itself so that I might live and how I, too, can give to the benefit of others. And that is why I call this collection of recipes “The Leviticus Cookbook.” Simply because my air fryer has resulted in me connecting with universal rhythms in a very profound way that has also taught me how to respond with a corresponding thanks and a reverence for giving. And if we were all thankful for all the good things that come our way and then shared our good fortune with others, just think of how much better the world could be! That is what this cookbook is really all about.

COFFEE

COFFEE

The morning always begins with coffee, at least for me, and there's nothing quite as good as a good cup of coffee in the morning. However, even though I truly appreciate a great cup of coffee, I have no problem accepting a cup of cheap instant coffee when I need that jolt of caffeine. Thus, here are my basic rankings for coffee from worst to best.

Instant Coffee: As I've said, I have no problem with cheap instant coffee as I only require a few things from this morning beverage – hot, bitter, and quite caffeinated. If we're out of town for a while, I'm perfectly fine with just heating some water on the stove and pouring it over those caffeinated crystals. And if I'm in a hurry, I'll just put a spoonful of instant coffee crystals directly in my mouth because the most important thing to me is waking up. Goes well with peanut butter, too. I'm not proud!



Coffee Cone/Funnel: While I'm not that picky about my coffee as long as I taste both bitter and caffeine, I, nonetheless, do appreciate well made coffee, and a better way to make an individual cup is to use a coffee funnel. You usually line this with a #2 coffee filter (or you can buy a reusable filter), add some ground coffee, and place it right on top of your cup. You then just pour your sufficiently hot water on top of it, and in just a minute you will have a nicely brewed cup. However, even though this is pretty good, there are still some better ways to prepare this divine nectar.



French Press: With a French press coffee maker you pour hot water over ground coffee and just let it steep for a minute or so. Next, you press down on a plunger which separates the grinds from the black gold. The end result is a more intense brew that is richer and more satisfying to me than the previous two methods. Not a bad way to start the day!



Nespresso Vertuo: The ultimate coffee experience for me is the Nespresso Vertuo. This machine uses a minimum of water which is forced through a small pod of coffee to produce an intensity of flavor that is like no other. Afterwards, you can return a sackful of spent coffee pods to the Nespresso corporation for recycling for free. But since I got my Nespresso machine, every morning is now a delightful journey into the world of caffeine wrapped in a bouquet of flavor!



SAUCES

MUSTARD/MAYONNAISE SAUCE

This is really simple and really good, and it is probably my preferred dipping sauce for all fish. It is also good for other things like asparagus and chicken, but for the latter I often add some creamy horseradish. But to make it, just combine some mayonnaise with a little mustard, and whip together with a fork. Also, if you get the balance just right, then it won't taste exactly like mayonnaise nor exactly like mustard, but somewhere in between. For my tastes, it should be a pale yellow and taste a little tangy. And that's all there is to it. Very easy!



MUSTARD/MAYONNAISE SAUCE/HORSERADISH SAUCE

To make this sauce, you first combine and mix mayonnaise with mustard as described on the previous page, and then you add some creamy horseradish and use a fork to whip the ingredients together. How much horseradish you use and how hot you make it is up to you. This is a sauce, though, that goes well with steak and roast beef as well as chicken seasoned with salt, pepper, and garlic powder.



TARTAR SAUCE

This tasty sauce is good with fish such as tilapia. Just mix mayonnaise, dried onion flakes, and a little sweet pickle relish together with a fork, and when I use it, I usually take a bite of fish and then dip my fork into the sauce and its tantalizing flavor to the mix.



TEX-MEX

BEAN, CHEESE, CHICKEN, AND/OR BEEF TACOS

This is a good midday meal, in my opinion. The ingredients are as follows:

- Vegetarian refried pinto beans (the creamier the brand, the better!)
- Chicken or beef (if you wish)
- Taco shells (I prefer either Ortega Taco Shells or Old El Paso Stand 'N Stuff)
- Fresh cilantro
- Romaine or Iceberg Lettuce
- Tomatoes
- Onion
- Shredded cheddar cheese (I prefer extra strong)
- Sour cream
- Sliced tame jalapeño peppers
- Pepper
- Garlic

Now I just follow this steps to taco heaven:

1. Put the taco shells upside down on a plate or bowl, and heat on high in the microwave for 35-40 seconds. It's nice if they brown just slightly but watch them so that they don't burn.
2. Dice some tomato and onion to put on the tacos.
3. Shred some lettuce and fresh cilantro. I usually shred the lettuce by hand, but I use some kitchen scissors to cut up the cilantro, both leaves and stalks.
4. Season the pinto beans (with or without meat, as you prefer) to taste with black pepper and garlic powder, and place in the microwave for about 3 to 3 $\frac{1}{4}$ minutes on about 30% power. Also, if you have purchased a plastic cover to keep food in the microwave from splattering over every thing, then this would be a good time to use it.
5. Spoon the heated beans and/or meat into your taco shells followed by diced onions and shredded cheese, and then add sour cream, tomatoes, lettuce, cilantro, or whatever other seasoning you prefer.

If you want meat with your taco, then just add chicken or beef to your beans before heating. For chicken, I prefer to use some chicken breast meat that's been seasoned with lemon-pepper. See my recipe for this in the chicken section. And for beef, I prefer to use flank steak that I've cut up, cooked, and seasoned with fajita seasoning. You can find my recipe for making fajitas and fajita meat elsewhere in this book. And lastly, *nom* *appétit*!



TACOS USING FLOUR TORTILLAS

Just take whatever ingredients you like to use in your corn shell tacos, heat them up as needed, and add them to a flour tortilla. My preferred brand is Guerrero, and I also like to use a smaller sized flour tortilla rather than a larger one.



BEAN, CHEESE, AND JALAPEÑO TOSTADOS

There are several good brands of tostado shells out there, but I usually buy Guerrero and again I prefer a smaller size to a larger size. You can top them with either refried beans from a can that you have seasoned to taste or with some Fritos bean dip. Add some shredded cheese and meat if you want, and then heat in a toaster oven while keeping an eye on it so that it doesn't burn. And lastly, add onions, tomatoes, lettuce, sour cream, or whatever other cold toppings you like. And as always, experiment and make it your own!



AIR FRIED BEEF FAJITAS

There are two cuisines in this world that I think of as both very tasty and intrinsically healthy. They are Indian cuisine and Mexican cuisine. Aside from making mint chutney and my tasty but fake version of naan bread, I don't really know how to make Indian food, but I can cook up some Tex-Mex that satisfies me. Also, as I think is the case with Indian food, many dishes of Tex-Mex can be made from essentially the same ingredients just combined in different ways. Here is my list of ingredients for making really great fajitas using my air fryer.

- Flour tortillas
- Flank steak (the most flavorful meat I've found for this)
- Limes
- Onion
- Bell pepper
- Cilantro
- Sour cream
- Lawry's fajita seasoning

And now here are the instructions.

1. The day before, cut your flank steak into strips, and then cut each strip into bite-sized pieces about an inch and a half in length. Put in a baggie (I prefer quart size with a slider) along with a packet of Lawry's fajita seasoning. Also, cut a lime in half, squeeze the juice from each half into the baggie and then throw what's left of each piece in there too. Let the whole mess marinate overnight in the refrigerator.
2. Cut your bell pepper into strips about a half to three quarters of an inch wide, and cut your onion into squares about an inch or a little less on each side.
3. Put a piece of perforated parchment paper in the bottom of your air fryer, add the onion and bell pepper, spray with a vegetable oil spray like Pam in order to help it brown, and air fry it at 400 °F for 5 minutes.
4. Add the flank steak and lime, and cook for another 7 minutes also at 400 °F.
5. Meanwhile, turn your toaster over up all the way, and use it to heat up and slightly toast a flour tortilla. You don't want to burn it, but you do want it to have just a little crunch to it when you bite in,
6. And when everything is done, add the onion, bell pepper, and flank steak to your flour tortilla, squeeze just a little fresh lime juice onto it, and then add a little sour cream and some cilantro that maybe you have just cut up with scissors like I like to do.
7. Fold up your flour tortilla around your food, and you've got one good fajita! Bon appétit!



ROTEL CHEESE DIP

A mainstay comfort for many a sixties hippie was Rotel Cheese Dip. However, it seems like many younger people these days are unfamiliar with this addictive delicacy, and so if you bring this simple dish to a party, everyone's gonna want to taste it! To make it all you need are two cans of Rotel diced tomatoes and some Velveeta cheese. However, I like to use one can of the original Rotel diced tomatoes and one can of their diced tomatoes with habaneros to spice it up a bit. Here are my instructions.

1. Cut up your Velveeta cheese into cubes that are about a half inch on each side. You don't have to be precise, though, because you're just going to melt it all.
2. Put the Velveeta cheese and both cans of Rotel diced tomatoes into a good sauce pan and heat on low.
3. Keep a good eye on the mixture and stir frequently as it begins to melt.
4. Eat with Tostitos or Fritos and enjoy, and then eat some more!



BEEF

AIR FRIED NEW YORK STRIP STEAK

I have found that the key to many thick cut or tough meats is to first bake them in the air fryer at 200° for a sufficient length of time. In the case of steaks, I usually bake them for 20 minutes. But anyway, here is how to make the perfect New York strip steak!

1. Remove the steak from its package, and rinse it under cold water because who knows where it's been?
2. Dry the steak with paper towels.
3. Spray the steak with a vegetable oil spray like PAM, and season with salt, pepper, and garlic powder.
4. Put a sheet of perforated parchment paper in the bottom of the air fryer for easy cleaning, toss in the steak, and bake at 200° for 20 minutes.
5. Air fry at 400° for 1, 2, or 3 minutes depending on the thickness of the steak and how well done you want it, and then let it sit for 5 minutes so that all the juices are drawn back into the center.
6. Eat and enjoy!

A good steak that is properly cooked will be very flavorful on its own. Nonetheless, I like the flavor of various steak sauces. My favorites are Heinze 57 or a generic equivalent and an easy homemade sauce comprised of mayonnaise, mustard, and creamy horseradish mixed well together.



AIR FRIED BBQ TRI-TIP

Being from Texas, BBQ for me was always brisket (always good!) and occasionally chicken which can vary a lot from good to bad depending on how it's prepared. I had never even heard of tri-tip until I went to California where it is often used in place of brisket. Also, I've never liked the tri-tip I've eaten in restaurants there because it was always cooked in a way that has made it a little too tough and chewy for me. However, I finally figured out a way to make it as tender and as flavorful as good ol' Texas BBQ! [NOTE: I've tried this with brisket, but I now like the tri-tip better!]

1. As usual, first rinse your tri-tip with cold water and pat it dry with paper towels because you don't know where it's been!
2. Spray it with a vegetable oil spray such as PAM, and season it on both sides with McCormick's Grill Mates Texas BBQ seasoning. That stuff has just the right amount of heat and sweetness that I like!
3. Put the tri-tip fat side up in your air fryer and bake it at 200° for 1 hour and 45 minutes. This pre-cooking will help break it down to make the meat much less tough and chewy. Also, I have an Instant Pot and they later came out with a special lid for it to turn it into an air fryer, and it has a "bake" setting that can bake for up to an hour. Thus, when the hour is up, I just start it again for another 40 minutes. My air fryer works great!
4. After baking it, air fry it for just 3 minutes at 400°, let it sit on a plate for about 5 minutes, and then enjoy some good BBQ!

Sauces

Is there ever any reason to use anything other than Sweet Baby Ray's Hickory Brown Sugar BBQ Sauce? Your BBQ will be very flavorful without the sauce, but I like to eat one bite as is and then another bite with my favorite sauce.

Sliced BBQ Sandwich

Here's how I make a sandwich that I can't distinguish from any good Texas sliced brisket BBQ sandwich.

- a. I prefer Aunt Hattie's Big BBQ Buns with sesame seeds on top. I put a couple in my toaster and then use the bagel setting to toast just the inside of each bun. Next, I put a little bit of Sweet Baby Ray's Hickory Brown Sugar BBQ Sauce in the center of each bun.
- b. To build my sandwich, I first slice up the amount of BBQ tri-tip that I want, and I cut it into individual bites. I also cut a big slice of onion to put on top of it, and I then add three or four

slices of crisp hamburger pickles.

c. And then, I enjoy a delicious BBQ sandwich! Yummy, Yummy, Yummy!

Here is a picture of my BBQ with pickles, onion, Ranch Style Beans, and a slice of bread on the side. When I was little, Exxon was called Humble Oil, and every spring in the refinery town I lived in they would host a family picnic called Humble Day at their employee park, and they would serve us a great meal of Chuck Wagon BBQ for lunch. The plate below reminds me of those tasty meals!



Homemade Whataburger

If you live in Texas, then you'll probably think of Whataburger as the "national burger of Texas!" The bottom line is that they are quite tasty, and with the right ingredients you can make your own tasty homemade version. Here's what you'll need:

- Large hamburger buns
- Ball Park pre-cooked frozen hamburger patty
- Mustard
- Diced onion
- Diced tomato
- Diced pickle
- Diced jalapeño
- Diced lettuce
- Salt
- Pepper

And here's how you make it!

1. Put your frozen pre-cooked hamburger patty in the air fryer at 360 °F for 11 minutes.
2. Use the bagel setting on your toaster (if you have one) to toast the insides of your hamburger buns.
3. Add Heinze mustard and coarse ground pepper to both buns.
4. Add your heated hamburger to your buns.
5. Add a dash of salt and a lot of pepper to your burger.
6. Add sliced or dice onion, sliced hamburger pickles or diced unsweetened pickle relish to your hamburger.
7. Add sliced or diced jalapeño (I prefer tamed jalapeños with medium heat).
8. Add shredded or diced lettuce (I prefer crunchy iceberg lettuce, but will use Romaine lettuce, too).
9. Put the other bun on top and enjoy a good burger!



Homemade Burger King Whopper

I've always liked the flame-grilled taste of Burger King hamburgers, and the frozen fully cooked, Ball Park hamburgers have that same flame-grilled taste or, at least, a good approximation of it. To make a hamburger that tastes a lot like Burger King's, here are the ingredients you'll need:

- Large hamburger buns
- Ball Park pre-cooked frozen hamburger patty
- Mayonnaise
- Ketchup
- Sliced onion
- Sliced tomato
- Hamburger dill pickles
- Lettuce

And here are the instructions:

1. Put your frozen pre-cooked hamburger patty in the air fryer at 360 °F for 11 minutes.
2. Use the bagel setting on your toaster (if you have one) to toast the insides of your hamburger buns.
3. Mix a little ketchup with your mayonnaise, whip it well with a fork and spread it on your buns..
4. Add your heated hamburger to your buns.
5. Add a slice of onion, sliced hamburger pickles and a slice of tomato to your hamburger.
6. Add lettuce (I prefer crunchy iceberg lettuce, but will use Romaine lettuce, too).
7. Put the other bun on top and enjoy what you have created!



Cowboy Bebop Burger

Once while travelling I stopped at Burger King, and on their discount menu they had something called a “Cowboy Burger” that consisted of two buns, a hamburger patty, a little barbecue sauce, and two onion rings. It was tasty, and it made me think to myself that I like my hamburgers the same way I like my women, good and cheap! Nonetheless, when I began to think about how I could replicate it at home, I decided to jazz it up a bit with onions and pickle, and so I called the final result my Cowboy Bebop Burger. Here are the ingredients:

- Large hamburger buns
- Ball Park pre-cooked frozen hamburger patty
- Sweet Baby Ray’s Hickory Smoked BBQ Sauce with Brown Sugar
- Slice of onion
- Three sliced hamburger dill pickles
- Two frozen onion rings

To make this delicacy, just follow these instructions:

1. Put your frozen pre-cooked hamburger patty and two frozen onion rings in your air fryer at 360 °F for 11 minutes.
2. Use the bagel setting on your toaster (if you have one) to toast the insides of your hamburger buns.
3. Add a little BBQ sauce to the middle of each bun, but not too much because you don’t want it running over the sides.
4. Add your hamburger patty to the bun.
5. Add a slice of onion, three sliced pickles, and your two onion ring to the mix.
6. Put the second bun on top and enjoy another good hamburger!



TORTILLA BURGER

For several years I worked and taught college level mathematics in a small Texas town called Alvin that is about fifty miles southwest of Houston, and in addition to to having a nice community college there, they also have a unique hamburger stand called Dairyland that sells an equally unique hamburger that they call a tortilla burger. Here are the ingredients you'll need to make my version of it at home.

- Two tostado shells
- Ball Park pre-cooked frozen hamburger patty
- Heinze Mustard
- Sliced or diced onion
- Sliced or diced jalapeño (I prefer tamed jalapeños with medium heat)
- Sliced hamburger pickles or unsweetened pickle relish
- Sliced or diced tomato
- Shredded lettuce
- Fresh cilantro
- Salt
- Coarse Ground Pepper

And now here are the instructions:

1. Put your frozen pre-cooked hamburger patty in the air fryer at 360 °F for 11 minutes.
2. Put two tostado shells in a toaster oven on the highest setting. You want to heat them until the tostado shells begin to brown, but keep an eye on them so that they don't burn. It won't take long for them to be ready.
3. When your hamburger patty is ready, place it on top of one of the tostado shells and add a dash of salt and some coarse ground pepper.
4. Add a little bit of mustard to the center of your hamburger.
5. Add sliced onion, diced jalapeño, and unsweetened dill pickle relish to your hamburger.
6. Add a sliced or diced tomato.
7. Add fresh cilantro and lettuce.
8. Put the other tostado shell on top and enjoy. You'll probably start by holding it in both hands, but end up eating it with a fork. It may break apart as you continue to eat it, but as with tacos, that messiness is just part of the charm!



GUACAMOLE BURGER

This is a tasty version of a basic hamburger. Just heat up your hamburger in the usual way in the air fryer, toast the inside of your buns using the bagel setting on your toaster, and then build your burger using the following ingredients. It's yummy!

- Ball Park frozen hamburger patty
- Tasty hamburger buns
- Ready-made Guacamole (I prefer Herdez brand spicy)
- Onion slice
- Tomato slice (1 or 2)
- Fresh cilantro (optional)
- Chopped, raw jalapeño (optional)



BACHELOR BURGER

What I call my “bachelor burger” is just a very basic, no-frills burger. In other words, meat between two slices of bread. The ingredients are as follows.

- Hamburger patty
- Two slices of bread

To make this, just follow these steps.

1. Put your pre-cooked Ball Park frozen hamburger in the air fryer, and cook for 11 minutes at 360°F.
2. Put your hamburger between two slices of bread, and if you wish, even add a little salt or pepper or Worcestershire sauce.
3. Eat and live.

Like I’ve said, this is a no-frills burger. Nonetheless, it’s quick, doesn’t taste bad, and it satisfies. What more do you need?





P.S. If you can't find these precooked burgers, then try air frying a thin, frozen raw hamburger at 370°F for 14 minutes!

CHICKEN FRIED STEAK SANDWICH

This is really quick and easy if you can find some “Fast Fixin’ Country Fried Steaks.” Like the Ball Park Hamburgers these are pre-cooked and you just have to heat them up in your air fryer pretty much like you do the hamburgers.

And here are the instructions:

1. Put your frozen pre-cooked chicken fried steak in the air fryer at 360 °F for 11 minutes.
2. Use the bagel setting on your toaster (if you have one) to toast the insides of your hamburger buns.
3. Put mayonnaise on your buns, and if you’re like me, add lots of ground pepper.
4. Add your heated chicken fried steak to your buns.
5. Add a slice of tomato, sliced hamburger pickles, lettuce, and more ground pepper if you like.
6. Put the other bun on top and enjoy a tasty chicken fried steak!







ROAST BEEF

Roast beef is a mainstay of a meat-based diet. It is economical in that it can last for awhile, and it can be eaten by itself or incorporated into other dishes like the tacos that I like that I make with a mixture of meat, beans, and onions. Also, as you'll see below, I've figured out how to make an exceptionally good roast using my air fryer. However, that also put a limit on how much I can cook at once, and that limit is usually between $1\frac{1}{2}$ and 2 pounds, and that's fine with me because while I want some leftover, I don't want so much left over that after a while, it doesn't seem so fresh anymore. Thus, if I buy a roast that is larger than what I can fit in my air fryer, then I cut it into sections and freeze some so that I can enjoy freshly cooked roast beef for many days to come. And now, here's how I do it!

1. Take your roast, spray it all around with vegetable oil if you wish, and season it with salt, pepper, and garlic powder.
2. Place it in your air fryer with the fat side up (if it has a fat side), and bake at 200°F for 2 hours. This helps to greatly break down the meat so that when done it will be very tender. Also, if your air fryer's "bake" setting only allows you to bake for 1 hour at a time, then set an alarm so that when the first hour is done, you can immediately start the second hour of baking.
3. And when the baking cycle is complete, air fry the roast at 400°F for 3 minutes.
4. And lastly, stick a kitchen thermometer in it to make sure that the internal temperature is at least 145°F. Also, let it sit for 5 minutes before eating so that the juices contract back to the center.

If your air fryer is like mine, then the end result will probably be the juiciest, tenderest, and tastiest roast you've ever had! Also, it is good with a dipping sauce made of mayonnaise, mustard, and horseradish.



BEEF STEW

The recipe I'm using here is just a very minor modification of one I found at a website called "The Salty Marshmallow" where it goes under the title 'Best Ever Instant Pot Beef Stew.' It's really easy to make, and it's even easier if your store carries veggies for beef stew that are already cut and bundled together. I found such a bundle at Safeway. Anyway, here are the ingredients, and the one or two additions I made is highlighted in red.

- 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ or more pounds of Beef Stew Meat
- 1 tablespoon of Canola Oil (the original calls for Olive Oil)
- 1 teaspoon of Salt
- 1 teaspoon of Pepper
- 1 teaspoon of Italian Seasoning
- 1 teaspoon of Garlic Powder
- 2 tablespoons of Worcestershire Sauce
- 3 cloves of chopped Garlic
- $\frac{1}{2}$ large chopped Onion
- 5 to 10 or more Baby Carrots
- As much thickly chopped celery as you like
- 5 small, whole Red Potatoes
- 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups of beef broth
- 1 15 once can of Tomato Sauce (the original called for 10 ounces, but I couldn't find that size at the store)
- 2 to 3 tablespoons of Corn Starch

And now for the instructions:

1. Put the Canola Oil in your Instant Pot, and set it on Sauté/High. When it is hot enough that a tiny drop of water will sizzle in it, it's ready for you to add the meat. It won't take long at all.
2. Add your stew meat to the pot and stir around with a long, wooden spoon until the meat is browned on both sides.
3. Turn off Sauté, and add everything else to the pot except for the Corn Starch.
4. Put the lid on your Instant Pot, and set it to Pressure Cook on High for 35 minutes. No need to set it to keep warm when done.
5. After 35 minutes is up, then let the pressure cool naturally for 10 minutes.
6. After 10 minutes, hit the button to release any remaining pressure in the Instant Pot.
7. And lastly, add the Corn Starch. Most people like to mix it first with some cold water so that it doesn't clump together in the stew. However, I'm pretty good at just sprinkling it in a little at a time and then whipping it well with a fork.
8. And when done, use a ladle to spoon some of that hearty stew into a bowl. I usually then add a little more pepper to mine because some like it hot!
9. Enjoy this healthy and tasty meal!



FISH

AIR FRIED SALMON

Perfectly good salmon is a delight, and the air fryer can yield many delights. For this recipe, you will need frozen salmon fillets that are individually wrapped with skin on and that are only about a quarter of an inch thick (more or less). Also, I have found fatty, oily salmon to be more flavorful than salmon without much fat, and this may mean farm raised over salmon that is caught wild. Additionally, the good news is that you don't need to let your salmon thaw. Just prepare it frozen according to the directions below, and toss it into the air fryer.

1. Spray your salmon with a vegetable oil spray like PAM.
2. Season it on both sides with lemon pepper seasoning.
3. Put a sheet of perforated parchment paper in your air fryer for easy cleaning, and add your frozen salmon with the skin side down.
4. Air fry at 400° for 12 minutes depending on the thickness of the fillet. If you overcook it, then it will be a little tough. Thus, it's better to undercook it and then microwave it on high for 10-12 seconds (usually) to finish it off.
5. Squeeze some fresh lemon (or lime) juice over your salmon.
6. Serve with mayonnaise-mustard sauce on the side.
7. If done properly, then it will be the best salmon you have ever had!





AIR FRIED TILAPIA

If you buy frozen tilapia fillets that are about a quarter of an inch thick (more or less), then you can prepare this from frozen in the same way that you do the salmon. However, I prefer to eat it with my homemade tartar sauce instead of the mayonnaise-mustard sauce.



TUNA SANDWICH

Here's how you can make a pretty good tuna sandwich. First, let's look at the ingredients:

- Your favorite sandwich bread.
- 1 packet of tuna in water (I buy the individual packets because that's exactly how much I need for a sandwich).
- 1 boiled egg
- Diced celery
- Mayonnaise
- Lemon pepper

Just combine the tuna, sliced boiled egg, diced celery, and mayonnaise in a bowl, and season to taste with lemon pepper. Next, put it between two slices of fresh bread, wrap in a paper towel, and enjoy!



POULTRY

AIR FRIED CHICKEN BREAST

The challenge with chicken is that, as is the case with salmon, if you cook it too much, then it will be tough, while if you don't cook it enough, then you will get sick and die a painful death! Also, many chicken breasts are larger today than they were when I was little, and so it can be a challenge to cook it well all the way through. Thus, I've found a good solution is to first bake it in the air fryer for 50 minutes at 200°. Also, I have at least three different variations of seasoning that I use – BBQ chicken with Sweet Baby Ray's Hickory Brown Sugar BBQ Sauce, chicken seasoned with salt and pepper and garlic powder, and chicken seasoned with lemon pepper seasoning.

1. First, as usual, rinse your chicken breast in cold water, and then pat dry with paper towels.
2. If you are using Sweet Baby Ray's Hickory Brown Sugar BBQ Sauce, then put your chicken in a baggie with generous amounts of the BBQ sauce, and marinate in the refrigerator for a few hours. Otherwise, spray your chicken with vegetable oil spray like PAM, and sprinkle both sides with your seasoning.
3. Place the chicken on some perforated parchment paper in your air fryer, and bake at 200°F for 50 minutes. Also, if you are doing the BBQ sauce method, then squirt a little extra on top of the breast before baking it.
4. If it is a very large chicken breast, then air fry at 400° for four minutes. If it is smaller, then air fry for 3 minutes. If you get the timing right, then your chicken breast will be perfectly cooked, not too tough, and it will be very juicy.

Sauces

- a. If I make BBQ chicken by either method, then I'll often use Sweet Baby Ray's Hickory Brown Sugar BBQ Sauce as my dipping sauce.
- b. If I used salt, pepper, and garlic powder seasoning, then I'll make a dipping sauce by whipping together with a fork some mayonnaise, mustard, and creamy horseradish.
- c. If I used lemon pepper seasoning, then I often add a slice of lemon and some pats of butter to the chicken before putting it in the air fryer.



GROUND TURKEY SPAGHETTI

You can make this with ground beef if you wish, but at this stage in my life I find ground turkey works well without leaving me feeling as heavy afterwards as ground beef does. Additionally, this tasty meal is easy to make, will last for a few days, and can be made from just a few simple ingredients.

- 1 pound of ground turkey
- 1 packet of French's Spaghetti Seasoning
- 1 8 ounce can of tomato paste
- Angel hair spaghetti

And now, here are the instructions:

1. Break up the ground turkey into small pieces in a good pan, and begin to cook on the stovetop on low heat.
2. After about 5 minutes, start heating water on high in another pan for the spaghetti.
3. When your water has come to a rapid boil, carefully feed some angel hair spaghetti into it and mix it around. I prefer angel hair spaghetti because it cooks faster, tastes great, and I wind up afterwards feeling sated without feeling like I'm just too stuffed with pasta.
4. As your ground turkey nears completion, add the packet of spaghetti seasoning and the tomato paste. Also add a little water as needed so that you have some nicely flavored sauce to mix with the pasta.
5. When everything is done, pour the spaghetti through a strainer and put in a bowl or plate, mix some of the flavorful sauce with it, spoon the ground turkey spaghetti sauce on top, and garnish (if you wish) with shredded cheddar cheese or grated Parmesan/Romano cheese.
6. Eat, enjoy, and save the rest for another day!



SUSAN'S HOMEMADE CHILI

Below is my wife's recipe for really good and really easy chili. Basically, just combine all the ingredients below and cook until done. Also, adjust the spices to fit your taste. I usually add a little mor chili powder plus some cayenne pepper to my bowl because I like it hot. We usually make it with ground turkey, but you can also make it with ground beef. However, if you make it with ground beef, then I leave it up to you as to whether to drain th fat or not. In any event, mostly cook/brown the meat first and then add the other stuff. And then enjoy!

Ingredients:

1 pound of ground turkey (or beef)

14 $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce can of whole peeled tomatoes

14 $\frac{1}{2}$ ounce can of diced tomatoes

1 eight ounce can of tomato sauce

1 can of pinto beans

1 teaspoon of salt

$\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of pepper

1-2 tablespoons of chili powder

2 teaspoons of sugar

$\frac{1}{2}$ stick of butter

Brown the meat, add everything else, heat to a boil, reduce heat, simmer for 30 minutes or until it looks done, season to taste, eat well!



FRITO PIE

When I was little, my elementary school cafeteria would often serve a Texas delicacy called frito pie. Here's my easy homemade version. First, the ingredients.

- Homemade chili (see previous recipe)
- Chili powder and cayenne pepper
- Regular Fritos
- Diced onion
- Shredded cheddar cheese (I prefer extra strong)

And now for the instructions:

1. Take your good size serving bowl and add a layer of Fritos to the bottom.
2. Add freshly made or bubbling hot, reheated chili to the bowl after adding additional chili powder or cayenne pepper if you want it hotter.
3. Add another layer of Fritos to the top.
4. Add a generous amount of shredded cheese to the top layer of Fritos, and heat on high in the microwave until the cheese is melted as much as you like. It won't take long, maybe a minute, so keep an eye on it while it is heating.
5. Add diced onion on top of the melted cheese and enjoy!













HOW TO BOIL AND PEEL AND EGG

To tell the truth, I'm much better off buying them this way at the store. Plus, my local store (Basha's) sells a local brand that is quite good and that has them packaged again inside with two eggs to each mini-package, and that helps to keep them fresh.



BOILED EGG SANDWICH

For a half-sandwich, you'll need a slice of bread, a sliced boiled egg, mayonnaise, and some pepper. Mix the egg with a little mayonnaise and pepper, place on one half of your slice of bread, fold it over, and eat it. That's it. That's all there is! Instant satisfying food!





TURKEY BLT

Since I prefer not to eat regular bacon, I make my BLT with turkey bacon, and it couldn't be easier!

1. Place 4-8 strips of turkey bacon on a microwave safe plate, and heat on high for 2 minutes or longer until you reach your desired level of crispiness.
2. Put generous amounts of mustard on two slices of bread.
3. Add your turkey bacon, lettuce, and 1 or 2 slices of tomato to your sandwich.
4. Wrap in a paper towel, take a bite, and enjoy!



INDIAN FOOD

SPICEY MINT CHUTNEY

One of my favorite things if I go to an Indian restaurant is to enjoy some spicy mint chutney with naan bread, and so finally I learned to how to make my own. Here are the ingredients.

- 32 ounces of Chobani Whole Milk Plain Greek Yogurt
- Fresh mint leaves
- Fresh cilantro
- 1 or 2 BIG fresh jalapeño peppers
- Chili powder
- Cayenne pepper

To make this you just mix everything together in a blender.

1. Add the yogurt to your blender.
2. Add mint leaves to your blender, and if you wish, cut up both the mint leaves and the stalks with your kitchen scissors. However, the juice from the stalks will make your chutney thinner, too.
3. Add cilantro leaves to your blender, and if you wish, cut up both the cilantro leaves and the stalks with your kitchen scissors. But as above, I prefer not to include the stalks because the juice therein makes the mixture a little too thin for my preference.
4. Dice your GIANT jalapeño peppers and add to the blender.
5. Add some chili powder for heat and flavor.
6. Add some cayenne for heat, and if the final blend isn't hot enough for you, then just add some more powdered cayenne.
7. Mix everything quite well with your blender, and add green food coloring, if you wish.
8. Spoon some into a bowl and, if you wish, squeeze just a little bit of fresh lime juice on top.

NOTE: These days I find it better to make just a fraction of the recipe above so that it lasts only a few days and is always fresh!



MY NAAN BREAD HACK

Before the pandemic and the disruption of supply chains, I could usually find naan bread at several of my local stores, but those days may now be gone forever and that is a shame because it is the perfect complement to the spicy mint chutney that I like to make. Fortunately, though, I've come up with a hack that produces something which tastes pretty much the same to me and uses an ingredient that is readily available to anyone who would like to try it. Namely, flour tortillas! So what do I do? Well, I put either a flour tortilla or some fraction thereof into my toaster over with the heat turned up all the way, and I wait for it to puff up and char just slightly. That's when I know it's done. Then I take it out and let it cool for a minute, and then I dip it into my spicy mint chutney and enjoy the bouquet of flavors. Though I'm sure some will disagree, to my palette it tastes just like naan bread with the advantage that since it is thinner, it comes with less calories. Otherwise, it's pretty much the same, and it allows me to enjoy my mint chutney in the way that it should be enjoyed. Once again, something to eat that is not only easy to make but tasty and healthy, too!



VEGETABLES AND NON- MEAT DISHES

MICROWAVE PORN ON THE CAR

Not all that long ago I was trying to vocally add “corn on the cob” to my smartphone’s shopping list, but my phone thought I had said “porn on the car,” and so that’s what I now call this delicious side dish! It’s very easy to make, and all you need is a corn on the cob, parchment paper, butter, and whatever spices you want to put on top. And now here’s how you make it.

1. Remove the shuck from the corn on the cob.
2. Spread lots of butter all around it.
3. Wrap in parchment paper.
4. Microwave on high for about 3 minutes.
5. Remove the corn from its wrapping and add your seasonings (coarse ground paper for me!).
6. Eat and enjoy the slightly caramelized corn!



MICROWAVE GRILLED CHEESE SANDWICH

I loved grilled cheese sandwiches when I was little, but I don't eat them too often now because I'm old and at that age where just thinking about food can cause you to put on a pound or two. Nonetheless, when I do make one today, I actually prefer to forgo the messy grill and just let a toaster and microwave do it all for me, and honestly, I can actually make a more consistent product that way. Here's how I like to do it:

1. First, toast two pieces of bread to your desired level of "toastiness."
2. Next, butter the sides that you intend to be the INSIDE of your sandwich. This will basically give your sandwich the same taste as if you cooked it with butter on the grill, but by putting the butter on the inside, it won't be nearly as messy to hold. Get it? Same taste, less mess!
3. For the next step, put the two slices on a plate with the buttered sides up, and add as many slices of Kraft American Cheese as you like. I usually put two slices on each slice of bread.
4. And lastly, heat it up slowly in the microwave on a very low power setting until the cheese starts to melt. For me, that usually means two minutes on power level 2. Also, keep an eye on your sandwich the whole time. If you start to see melted cheese about to run down the sides, then stop it because it's done!
5. Eat it and enjoy the flavor!



PEANUT BUTTER SANDWICH WITH SHOESTRING POTATOES

When I was about 5 years old, my favorite TV show was a cowboy show called “Tumbleweed Time,” and my favorite sandwich was peanut butter with shoestring potatoes! These days I don’t even know how many people have even heard of shoestring potatoes, but as a child I liked them because they added a lot of extra crunch to my already crunch peanut butter sandwich. Fortunately, I was able to find Pik-Nik Original Shoestring Potatoes just the other day at my corner grocery store, and if your store doesn’t carry them, then you can order some through Amazon. Also, this meal is not a big thing. It’s just a little thing. Nonetheless, it’s life’s little pleasures that can add a lot to your sense of well being. Here’s all you have to do:

1. Use either 1 slice of bread for a half-sandwich or 2 slices for a whole sandwich.
2. Apply Jif Crunchy Peanut Butter to one slice for a whole sandwich or half of 1 slice for a half-sandwich.
3. Put shoestring potatoes on top of the peanut butter. Also, if you don’t shoestring potatoes, then just get some crinkly cut potato chips, break them up a bit, and add those to the sandwich. It’s not quite as good as the regular shoestring potatoes, but it’s pretty good and it can give you the nice crunch you are looking for.
4. And finally, close up your sandwich, eat it, enjoy it, and never weigh yourself again!



MICROWAVE BAKED POTATO

Some microwaves have a “baked potato” setting, and some do a very good job. On mine, I usually use the bake potato setting three times, and I let it continue to cook for a couple of minutes between zappings. The end result, though, is very close to an oven baked potato, and when it’s done you can add butter, pepper, cheese, sour cream, chives, or whatever you like. It’s often a meal in itself!



AIR FRIED FRENCH FRIES AND ONION RINGS

You don't want frozen fries that are either too thick or too thin, but right in the middle. Just put them right in the air fryer, spray them with little vegetable oil, and cook at 360° for about 11 minutes. You can also add them to any recipe for frozen hamburgers, frozen fish, or frozen chicken fried steak. When done, season with a little salt or pepper or ketchup as you see fit. Similarly, you can prepare onion rings in the same way, but you probably won't want to spray them with oil unless you like them extra crunchy.



AIR FRIED BREADED OKRA

I don't eat this much any more, but if you like it the you can buy some frozen, breaded okra at the store, and either cook alone at 360°F for 11 minutes in the air fryer, or you can cook it along with your pre-cooked hamburger or chicken fried steak.



AIR FRIED ROAST ASPARAGUS

This is really easy to make and really good. Buy some fresh asparagus at the store, cut off the really thick part at the bottom, spray with a little vegetable oil, put on air fryer parchment paper in the air fryer, and air fry at 400°F for three minutes. Serve with the mayonnaise-mustard dipping sauce. You can also cook this along with fish and beef dishes for a yummy meal!



PEANUT BUTTER

Do I really need to explain this one?



THE BREAD MACHINE

So during Amazon's Prime Day sale, I saw a highly rate Cuisinart Bread Machine available for half-off, and so I had to buy it. And the result? It's amazing! I made a 1-pound loaf of basic white bread, and with unsalted butter spread over it, it tasted just like the good homemade bread I used to enjoy back in the seventies at the now gone Bon Ton Restaurant in Lagrange, Texas. Plus, it has a gluten-free setting. I'm looking forward to making gluten-free bread and challah in the near future!





FRUIT

CUT-UP FRUIT

The reality is that a little fresh fruit each day is good for your health. Thus, I like to buy a medley of fruit that is already cut up and then have two or three pieces every morning with a little cottage cheese.



FIBER

BEANS ARE YOUR FRIEND

The older you get, the more you realize that fiber is your friend for keeping things moving and keeping your arteries clean. Hence, I usually eat a few pinto beans every day either in the form of Ranch Beans or as creamy, vegetarian refried beans.



DAIRY

COTTAGE CHEESE, WHOLE CHOCOLATE MILK, GREEK YOGURT

I eat dairy rather sparingly these days, and when I do, it's usually cottage cheese, whole chocolate milk, or Greek yogurt. Of these three, I consider the yogurt to be most important because it contains bacteria cultures that can be very beneficial for your gut. Also, in spite of their inclusion in some of my recipes, I eat hard cheeses like cheddar only once in a while. They are too high in both fat and calories for me to eat them regularly, but small amounts of cottage cheese, whole chocolate milk, or Greek yogurt each day do seem to be okay for me. Nonetheless, moderation in all things!



DESSERTS

BLUE BELL MOO BARS AND KOZYSHACK CHOCOLATE PUDDING

My favorite dessert these days is the Moo Bar made by Blue Bell Ice Cream. I don't eat a bar all at once. Usually just a couple of bites after a meal. Aside from that, I like a small cup of chocolate or chocolate fudge pudding every now and then. However, I tend to avoid cookies because the calorie content is so high.



BEVERAGES

ROOT BEER, DR PEPPER, AND ORANGE

My favorite drink is cool water that has passed through my Brita filter, and I also enjoy nice cooled chocolate whole milk from time to time. But in addition to that I also drink a little soda each day. I no longer drink an entire bottle at once; I now prefer a swig or two a few times a day. Also, I've learned that if you place your bottle in the coldest part of your refrigerator, then that greatly improves the carbonation. Currently, my favorite sodas are A&W Root Beer, Fanta Orange, and old style Dr. Pepper made with real sugar that I buy at Safeway. I don't like the newer versions of Dr. Pepper with different sweeteners, and I only drink a little in the morning since it contains caffeine. Nonetheless, it has that great refreshing taste that I enjoyed when I was growing up!



SUPPLEMENTS

OLD AGE PILLS

There's always been a debate over whether vitamin supplements are necessary, and recent studies have shown how too much of some vitamins can be harmful. Nonetheless, I know that B vitamins perked up my brain when I was little and that seniors like me have more difficulty absorbing all the nutrients they need from food. Additionally, when I started taking CoQ10 and Quercetin for circulation and heart health, some long haul Covid symptoms I was having began to debate. My current supplement and medicinal regimen is as follows:

Multivitamin with Minerals, Hemp Oil Capsule for Omega-3 and Omega-6, Quercetin, Zinc Chelate, CoQ10, Vitamin C, Zyrtec, Baby Aspirin, and Lisinopril for blood pressure.



EXERCISE

TAKE A HIKE!

The type and amount of exercise you can do will vary throughout your life. When I was young, I was a dancer with scholarships with Houston Ballet, Harkness Ballet, and American Ballet Theatre School, and I danced in musicals with Barbara Eden and Ginger Rogers. Compared to today, I had superpowers. Also, back then, it was easy to loose several pounds a day just working in an extra dance class or two. However, injuries eventually took their toll, and so eventually I had no choice but to give up dance and get a PhD in mathematics instead. Also, as one ages, one has to constantly adjust one's routine so as not to accrue additional injuries. What is safe and good for you to do at one age is not necessarily good at other ages. Furthermore, you may reach a point where you realize that the goal of exercise is not to excessively build your muscles, but to enhance circulation and flexibility. Thus, as I've gotten older and older, walking with good shoes has become more and more important. Still, the amount of walking I can manage in a day has also decreased with age. In my latter fifties I could walk 20,000 steps a day, but now that I'm 70 a basic 5,000 steps a day is my usual. Additionally, I take a hot, 30-minute whirlpool bath a few times a week to also promote good health and blood flow. In the Talmud it is written, "If one eats without walking afterwards, his food rots and that is the beginning of a foul smell." Since I am always eating and always walking, I am fulfilling this rabbinic injunction, and my health is all the better as a result of walking daily.



BALANCE

MAKE ME ONE WITH EVERYTHING!

In all aspects of one's life it is important to maintain balance. In the long run, one should seek balance physically by alternating appropriately between activity and rest, one should seek balance mentally by engaging in both left-brain and right-brain activities, one should seek balance socially by alternating between being alone and being with others, and one should also seek balance spiritually. However, by seeking balance spiritually, I don't mean that one necessarily has to believe in a deity of any sort. That's up to you. Instead, I mean that one should acknowledge that feelings of awe and encounters with deeper mysteries are a part of life itself and should not be suppressed.

Many people, whether deists or not, seek to find a spiritual balance through meditation, and there are many, many different types of meditation. Some simply relax you, some lead you to more ecstatic states of consciousness, and some may even take you altogether beyond the subject-object dichotomy. However, after many years and many experiences, I find that what is most important is to always maintain an awareness of unity even as one goes about one's daily life. One can do this by shifting one's attention away from the usual objects of perception that one tends to focus on and back to awareness itself. As we try to look at that which does the lookin', we soon realize it that while we are aware of our awareness, we can't perceive it in the same way that we do external objects of perception. In particular, we can't see it as composed of parts, and as a result, the closer we move to this awareness, the more unity and love we will tend to feel since love is just another way of experiencing oneness.

In the Zohar, a voluminous 13th century publication of Jewish mysticism, it says, "Herein consisted the sin of the primeval serpent who united below but divided above, and so caused the mischief we still lament. The right way, on the contrary, is to recognize diversity below but unity above. (Zohar I:12b)" The phrase 'united below but divided above' means that you are clinging to external perceptions of some sort while simultaneously separating yourself from an awareness of a greater unity. What you cleave to in the external world could be either bad or not so terribly bad. For instance, it is bad indeed to cling to desires for violence or revenge, but not nearly so bad to adhere to career goals or to help one's family. Nonetheless, if this is not accompanied by an awareness of an underlying unity and the connection of all things, then you have missed the mark. Consequently, the Zohar recommends "recognizing diversity below but unity above," and that means that you are constantly aware of the oneness and interconnectivity of all things even in the midst of being engaged with the world. And I have found that if you do nothing else, this in itself is enough to make the world a better place. Thus, stay centered, stay in balance, and stay aware of your own awareness!

