

Key Lime Cheesecake Popsicles



Well, it's happening. The kid is asking for pink. She wants pink EVERYTHING. She had a fit last week because the pants she wore for the day weren't pink enough. They were of a fabric that were light pink with dark pink hearts and THAT wasn't pink enough!? Good Lord.



The all-in-one-kinda-goodness



After the blend

If you know me, you'll know that I try to fight against gender roles. I fight it so hard that I assigned my bestie, Jackie,

the special task of making sure that if anyone wanted to generously give us a gift for the impending birth of our kid, that said gift should not, pretty please, have the words "princess", "precious", "cutie" or anything like that on it.

It should also not be pink. It's not that I have anything against pink. Heck, I like pink . . . a lot (have you SEEN this website?) it's just that I don't want to shove it down her throat, you know? But then she started daycare at 5 months of age and you can't fight the 8 hours a day that she's called "princessa" or told by her daycare employees that she's cute or given purses and tiaras to play with. You can try to balance that, but you can't necessarily fight it. I'm also tired and I'm not sure it's a fight I'm willing to fight anymore.

Sometimes I feel like Bill Murray's character in Rushmore.

His character, Herman Blume, is this serious intellectual.

He's an educator and prides himself on his intellect.

There's this great scene where he's picking up his teenage twin sons. Bill's in the driver seat and the guys are coming back from wrestling practice, all sweaty and stereotypical 'jock'-like, and they jump into the back of the car. At one point Bill's character kinda gives this roll of the eye like, "How'd my kids end up like this when I'm so that". I picture that scene every time Siona gives a "PINK!" request. It's not to say that if she should grow up to be the girliest of girly girls, I'd be annoyed. I just want to give her every opportunity to like whatever you wants to like, as long as what she likes is healthy (like if she's super into razor blades, I'd have an issue). I want it to be her choice.



In social work school, I had this professor who taught my sex therapy class. She was/is extremely fascinating. She had these friends who gave birth to a baby. Both parents were social scientists and they were determined not to put gender roles onto their newborn. They wanted to give their child and their family the opportunity to love their child and get to know him or her without that added layer of gender-based comments/assumptions. You know, those instant comments folks say as soon as they see a baby boy, "Oh, he looks so strong", or "What a prince!" Or for a baby girl, "She's so beautiful", or "What a little princess". They were so steadfast and determined in their experiment that they wouldn't let anyone change the baby's diaper expect for themselves. Even their own parents didn't know the gender of the baby. But this kind of thing isn't sustainable and by the time the child was 6 months old, they told their family the gender. That story stuck with me on multiple levels but the thing I could never really stop thinking about is, well, how do you know? You have no basis of comparison, right? Like, who knows who that child would have become if folks knew the gender. It all fascinates the hell outta me (#nerdalert). But anyway, long story short,

she'll be 2 in August, my little girl. TWO! She's quickly becoming her own person. She has likes and dislikes (and don't think she's not willing to tell what they are) and it's blowing my mind.



A kiss of lime.

One of her likes is sugar. I mean, she is her father's daughter. I absolutely try to limit this kid's sugar intake but, I'm a firm believer in balance so, she's been known to meal on a cookie or cupcake from time-to-time. One thing I'm gonna start doing this summer is make her healthy, but delicious homemade popsicles. Basically a Kalicious on a stick. But before we get to that uber-healthy thing, I wanted to inaugurate my super cute popsicle holders (they have tails. They're so cute its bordering obnoxious) with a tasty Shavuot-friendly recipe so I made my favorite cheesecake, complete with butter graham cracker crust, into a convenient popsicle. The best part about this recipe is that it's just so stinkin' easy.



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Kahlo's Green Shakshuka



(as seen on my Instagram feed like 3 weeks ago – I finally decided to post).

It was 2007 and I was living in Jerusalem. I had moved there for the year so that I could better my Jewish education as well as kinda reassess where my life was going. I landed in

Jerusalem in May of 2007. As of June that same year, I had met the man I would eventually marry. I won't bore you with the story of our meeting again, but I thought I'd share the story of meeting his parents . . . The Fisches.

I met the Fisches about 7 months after I started dating their youngest son. They only knew the following about me:

1. 6 years older than their son
2. Non-Jewish dad
3. Born and raised in the Reform movement in Atlanta, GA
4. Currently attending yeshiva
5. Name is Whitney (what kind of Jewish name is 'Whitney'?!).

Oy. Vey. For a traditional family from Modern Orthodox Teaneck, New Jersey, my stats weren't super promising. My only saving grace was that I was in Israel and I was currently enrolled in a yeshiva (Jewish educational institution). I'm positive they had mental images of this giant, Southern girl coming to steal their sweet Jersey boy away. I'm positive because that's what my soon-to-be-husband told me after he finally told his parents about me. To be fair, it was really his Jewish mama who had the biggest concerns. And I get it.

As a Jewish mama myself, I get the expectations and envisioning your future for your child. I've already envisioned my daughter as a powerful (yet kind) Executive Director of some sort of human rights NGO so yes, I get it. It's just harder on the other side, knowing that you are not the person your future spouses' parents envisioned for their beloved son.



Some of your players



That being said, the time eventually came for me to meet the parents. I ended up suggesting one of my favorite cafes in the neighborhood of Talpiot where I was living. I didn't have a lot of money to throw around when I was living in Israel so

there wasn't a lot eating out. However, when I did, I always tried to go to Kahlo. Kahlo, named for Frida Kahlo, was small, busy, and delicious. The coffee was strong and the food was traditional Israeli but with a modern twist. Every time I went I ordered the same thing—the green shakshuka. I have enjoyed traditional shakshuka all over Israel but this was the first time (and only time) I saw green shakshuka on the menu. Once I tried it, I was hooked.

But I digress. Let's get back to the story. The day had come for my meeting of the parents. I made sure to leave my apartment early enough so that I could walk there and still have 20 minutes to spare. Parents hate waiting, right? Sadly, they were already there when I arrived (I say 'sadly' because my idea of winning them over with my punctuality was subsequently squelched). This only exacerbated my nervousness about meeting them. I then hugged them. BIG. MISTAKE. I have since learned that you NEVER hug Modern Orthodox Jewish men. NEVER. But I couldn't help it! I'm Southern. I hug! I'm a hugger! Damnit! OK, so there was mistake number 2. I was really doing a great job (insert eye-roll here). After an awkward exchange of names and introductions, we were then led to our tiny table in the corner. I remember making eye-contact with my man on the way to the table and attempting to have a mental conversation. "They hate me, don't they?", I tried to say with my eyes. "No, no, you're doing great!", is what I was hoping to read from his eyes but instead all I got was, well, nothing. We had to work on our mental conversations. So there we were, just four peas in a pod.

Well, three peas and me. And then something awesome happened. My future father-in-law made a joke. I can't remember how the subject came up but we were talking about their last name and how to spell it—Fisch—when my future father-in-law looked at me and said, "It's like I always tell people, you can't have 'Fisch' without the 'C'. Get it? Fish. Sea. Genius. I laughed. Out loud. A real laugh. It wasn't a 'pleaselikemepleaselikemepleaselikeme' laugh but a real

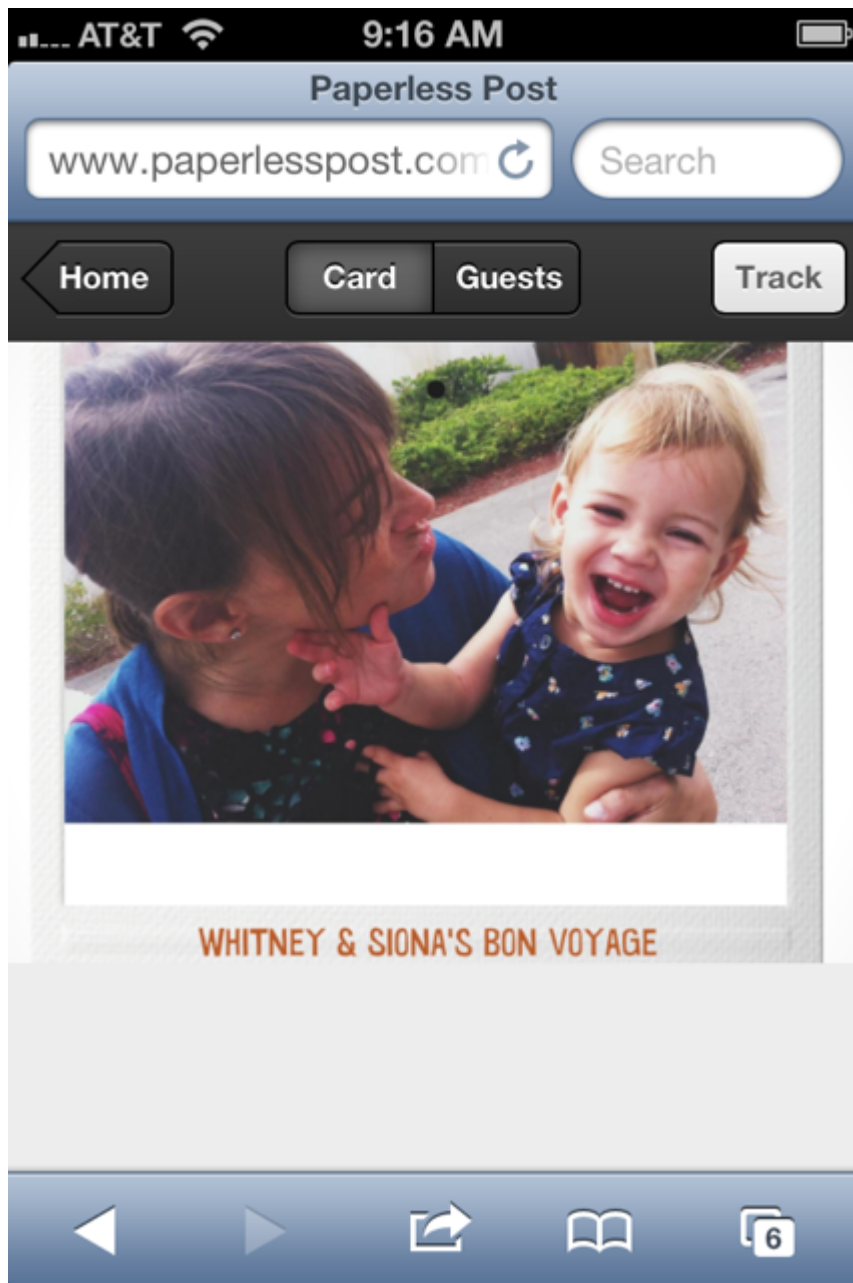
belly laugh. And with that silly joke, deep breaths were had, green shakshuka was ordered and 2 years later, I married their son.



Decisions, decisions. Future-husband and I at the Israeli/Syrian border in 2007.



By the way, this is happening (see below). I signed a lease. I booked the movers. We are officially 6 weeks from moving to LA. Oh. Sh*t.



The recipe below is my interpretation of the Kahlo recipe.

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Chocolate + Tahini

“Earthquake” Cake



Ok, since the last time we spoke, I have crossed a total of, um, nothing, off of “LA” to do list. I have, however, started rewatching all the seasons of Entourage. I figured it’d be a great segue into the big move. You know, because my life will absolutely mirror the life of Vinnie Chase and his buddies

from Queens, right?



Or you could just insert a straw and go to town.

I'm actually gearing up to head to LA this Sunday for four days of work and apartment-hunting. This will be my second solo trip out there and I gotta tell ya, I relish the 'aloneness' of it all for about 24 hours and then I start to really miss my people. It's weird, but I was single for so long in my 20s that I felt proud to be comfortable traveling by myself or just living life for myself. There were definitely times when I felt lonely but I was blessed to have an amazing group of friends who were in the same stage of life as I was. We were all there for each other and very present in each other's lives. Heck, I fancied myself as an openly-Jewish "Carrie Bradshaw"—grabbing life by the horns and really living it (albeit it with A LOT less cash, uglier shoes and a little less promiscuous). I think about my four years in Chicago, specifically, and I feel proud of myself for doing my thing, you know? I was woman, could you hear me roar!?



Tahini, how I love it so.



But now that I've got this amazing kid and husband, I've gotten VERY used to being needed and always having someone around. And so while I sit in my seat on the plane, anticipating 5 or so hours of uninterrupted reading and movie-watching time, while also making a mental list of what I want to order from room service later that night for my eagerly anticipated, "dinner-in-bed-while-watching-uninterrupted-hours-of-Bravo", one of my most FAVORITE things to do while traveling solo (I know, I really live out loud, right?), I know the novelty of this aloneness will wear off very soon.

It's the second day of solo travel when I start to feel the homesickness and the weirdness of a few days by myself.



She got her hands on some lip gloss. That's my big mouth laughing at her in the background. The kid cracks me up.



This is what we do after dinner – hang out and goof off. It's the best. P.S. Pink's really his color, don't you think?

Of course, I try to snap myself out of these pangs of homesickness or weirdness about not having my kiddo by my side by reminding myself that I'm THIS close to entering into my temporary single-parent status and I might just want to cherish this alone time while I got it, you know? Hashtag, get-it-while-you-can-sister.

The other thing I did besides start binge-watching Entrouage is bake a cake in honor of LA. Well, it's not really a cake so much as a 'loaf', but whatever, I baked it nonetheless and it came out very tasty and very pretty. I had the idea after two incidents--the news that there was an earthquake about a month ago, the epicenter of which was something like .5 miles from the school I'm about to work at, and my new-found obsession with tahini and chocolate. Thus, the chocolate and tahini 'Earthquake' cake was born. Do enjoy and don't be afraid to replace your healthy, Whole30 breakfast with a slice of this and some coffee . . . just this one morning. I won't tell anyone, I promise. ☐



“Earthquake” close up

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