



Happy New Year! We hope everyone's year is off to a fabulous start. We had a great 2015. Here are a few family highlights from this past year.

We spent a week on a family vacation in Yosemite National Park. A stunning National Park, amongst many, that we dreamed of visiting and have been finally able to mark off of our bucket list. We found out that we are expecting a much welcomed addition to our family in early February 2016. We are counting down the days and are beyond excited to meet our baby boy. We started our blog. Something we had been thinking of doing for quite sometime but honestly it's quite intimidating on many levels. But I am so glad we did it.

We've found that we have many supporters and are so thankful to everyone who comes here everyday to read what we've written or look at the pictures that we've taken and for all the supportive feedback we've received. It's been hard work, but worth every moment.

Madelyn has once again excelled academically by making it on the honor roll and being awarded for meeting the High Honors criteria. She also was asked to be part of Math Olympiads, an after-school program for advanced math students to compete in math competitions. In October she participated in the PTA Art Reflections contest and won first place in her category of Intermediate Film Production where she then went on to the next level. She's such a bright ray of sunshine in our lives, academically, but more importantly with her endless joy for life.

Maddox is following right in his big sister's footsteps. His teacher commended him at his conference for being among the top in his class. He is a determined kid and an extremely hard worker. This year he taught himself how to juggle. He's tried to teach us, but we've determined that we clearly do not have the patience nor the hand-eye coordination that it requires to be successful at this skill.

Clara is potty trained and sleeping in a big girl bed (half of the night) which she is so proud of. She has a tremendous vocabulary which always has us scratching our heads wondering where she comes up with the things she does. But overall, she's slowly becoming the sweet-tempered toddler that we knew existed inside her somewhere.

Thank you to everyone who joined us in baking during the holidays. I know it's a busy time of year to find additional time for anything extra. So we thank you for your continued support.

For our 10th and final day of baking we've made something that the kids and I have been dreaming of making for a long time. We've heard that making your own marshmallows is so much better than store-bought. Let me tell, it's true! We made homemade marshmallows and cranberry white hot chocolate. A few marshmallows dipped into the cranberry white hot chocolate and you have the most delicious treat that can be enjoyed all winter long after a cold day playing in the snow. The marshmallows were so much easier to make than I expected and came out warm and gooey. The cranberry mixed with the white chocolate gave a nice twist to the traditional hot chocolate. And what's better, the hot chocolate is so easy to make in the slow cooker it practically makes itself and is hot and ready to be enjoyed the moment you walk in the house.

There is nothing more soothing than sitting by the fire all cozied up with a good book and a treat to warm your soul. We are currently reading the illustrated version of Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone, gearing up for the grand opening of Harry Potter at Universal Studios Hollywood on April 7th, 2016. We've never read the book and so far it's fantastic. I would highly recommend reading it if you never have.



Homemade Marshmallows

Ingredients:

- 3 packages (1/4-ounce each) unflavored gelatin
- 1 cup cool water, divided
- 1 1/2 cups granulated sugar

1 cup light corn syrup

1/8 teaspoon salt

1 tablespoon vanilla extract

confectioners' sugar, to sprinkle on top

If you'd like to try these delicious homemade marshmallows head to [King Arthur Flour](#) for the instructions.









Slow Cooker Cranberry White Hot Chocolate

Ingredients:

- 1 cup 35% cream
- 1 cup whole (3%) milk
- 1 cup high quality chopped white chocolate
- 1 cup reduced sugar or low-calorie cranberry juice
- Optional: red food coloring

For the instructions on making this creamy delicious hot chocolate go to [The Recipe Rebel](#).









Here's to 2016! We hope yours is filled with family, friends and love (and homemade

marshmallows with cranberry white hot chocolate). Cheers!!





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