



## HAPPY NEW YEAR

*From Everyone At Domnitz & Skemp!*

### The D&S 2015 New Year's Resolution List Is Here!

When the calendar turns to January, most of us take the opportunity to consider making changes in our physical and mental health, our lifestyle or perhaps our employment situation. We use this time of the year to ponder our circumstances and make resolutions in order to try to better ourselves personally, professionally, spiritually, physically and/or financially. Experts say that choosing a goal, writing it down and putting it in a place where you can see it every day (e.g. a sticky on the bathroom mirror) increases your chances of accomplishing that goal. Whatever changes you are motivated to make in 2015, here are some that we at Domnitz & Skemp are making to try and improve our health and/or general overall well-being.



1. Cut back on or eliminate intake of Sugar and High Fructose Corn Syrup.
2. Learn about genetically modified foods (GMO's) and avoid them.
3. Read food labels and decrease processed food intake.
4. Cook more at home.
5. Learn to meditate and do it every day.
6. Don't sweat the small stuff—it's all small stuff!
7. End the negative self-talk!
8. Eliminate toxic relationships.
9. Hang out more with friends.
10. Eat more organic fruits and vegetables, especially more leafy greens.
11. Be More Eco-friendly (e.g. recycle, ride the bike and/or walk instead of drive).
12. Take a Yoga class.
13. Positive Mental Attitude!
14. Find an activity/exercise you enjoy and do it at least 3-4 times a week.
15. Turn off the TV and read more books.
16. Shop on the perimeter of the supermarket (see Nos. 1, 2 & 10 above).
17. Be more compassionate.
18. Be grateful.
19. Be more considerate.
20. Be more respectful.
21. Do Not Overreact.
22. Think before speaking.
23. Listen.

Whatever you decide, we encourage you to stick with it and to NOT throw in the proverbial towel by January 17th—National Ditch New Year's Resolutions Day! Good luck! •



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# The McDonald's Coffee Case was Over 20 Years Ago—Get Over It!

Tony and Noah recently tried a case to verdict in Green Bay. At the beginning of the trial—as in all jury trials—about 30 members of the community were brought into the courtroom in order to be questioned by the litigants so a jury could be empanelled to hear the evidence and render a verdict. This process is called “voir dire.” The purpose of voir dire is to investigate whether anyone on the panel would be biased and, therefore, unable to sit as a fair and impartial juror. After questioning from both sides, the 30 individuals are culled down to a jury of 12 by each side utilizing what are called preemptory strikes. As in all jury selection—or what some call juror de-selection—someone on the panel will comment about the McDonald's coffee case and how it is representative of a broken civil justice system. Because this case has become the hook on which people who dislike the civil justice system like to hang their hat, we think you deserve to hear the truth about the notorious McDonalds coffee case; a case that occurred over 20 years ago!



In 1992, Stella Liebeck, a 79 year old woman at the time, bought a cup of coffee at a McDonald's drive-thru window. She was a passenger in her grandson's car; a car that did not have the cup-holders that are now standard in almost every vehicle. After picking up the coffee, her grandson pulled to a complete stop in the parking lot so that Mrs. Liebeck could remove the lid and add the cream and sugar. She had the cup between her knees when it tipped and spilled the entire contents into her lap. Contrary to popular accounts of the story, Mrs. Liebeck was NOT driving at the time of her spill and the vehicle was NOT moving at the time of her spill.

The temperature of the coffee was not only hot, but DANGEROUSLY hot. In fact, McDonalds' corporate policy was to keep their coffee at a temperature that they knew would cause instantaneous destruction of flesh and muscle. To make matters worse for her, at the time of the incident Mrs. Liebeck was wearing sweatpants which absorbed the hot coffee and kept it against her skin for an extended period of time. She ended up sustaining full thickness third degree burns (the most serious kind) to 6% of her body. She was hospitalized for 8 days during which she underwent skin grafts to her inner thighs, genital and groin areas. Mrs. Liebeck subsequently offered to settle the case pre-suit for \$20,000.00 to cover her medical bills. McDonalds offered only \$800.00.

During the litigation, McDonalds admitted that it held its coffee at temperatures between 180 and 190 degrees in order to maintain optimum taste, even though other similar establishments sold coffee at substantially lower temperatures, between 135 to 140 degrees. McDonalds' quality assurance manager also testified that he was aware that a burn hazard existed with any food substance served at 140 degrees or above and that McDonalds coffee, at the temperature at which it was poured into the Styrofoam cups, was not fit for consumption because it would burn the mouth and the throat. In addition to McDonalds own knowledge, a scholar in thermodynamics testified that liquids at 180 degrees will cause a full thickness burn to human skin in 2 to 7 seconds. As the temperature decreases to 155 degrees, however, the extent of the burn decreases exponentially. Finally, McDonalds produced documents during the litigation showing that its coffee had burned more than 700 people between 1982 and 1992, with some of these claims involving children and others involving third-degree burns similar to Mrs. Liebeck's. Consequently, while McDonalds had notice of the hazard, they failed to do anything about it.

After hearing all of the evidence, a jury awarded Mrs. Liebeck \$200,000.00 in compensatory damages, which was reduced by 20% for her contributory negligence. The jury also awarded \$2.7 million in punitive damages, which equaled two days of McDonalds' coffee sales. The trial judge subsequently reduced the punitive damages award to \$480,000.00, even though the judge called McDonalds conduct reckless, callous and willful. The parties eventually entered into a confidential settlement. To combat the misinformation about this lawsuit, Susan Saladoff recently made a documentary film entitled “Hot Coffee”. You can watch the trailer and order a copy at [www.hotcoffeethemovie.com](http://www.hotcoffeethemovie.com).

The next time you hear someone moan about how the McDonalds Coffee Case is the prime example of a civil justice system run amok, remind them not only of McDonalds abhorrent conduct in the case but also of the fact that this unfortunate event occurred over 20 years ago so GET OVER IT! ●

# Momma 'Nita Domnitz's Top 10 Dishes!

*By: Noah And Ari Domnitz*



**Momma 'Nita**



**Ari (yellow) and Noah (green) Domnitz**

No matter which holidays you and your family celebrate at the end of each year, there's no denying that family feasts play an important role in any holiday tradition. The Domnitz family not only celebrates Thanksgiving, Hanukkah and New Year's, but is also blessed to have two family birthdays in December. Son/Brother Ari recently turned 37 (December 13), and on December 26, Momma Nita turned... well, you know, she also celebrated a birthday. So for some New Year's fun, the Brothers Domnitz decided to rank their All-Time Top 10 Momma Nita Menu Items. A few quick provisos: (1) this is not in any specific order as they are probably all tied for first – very diplomatic; (2) since there was simply no way to keep this fabulous list to exactly 10 items, we listed a few delicacies that are often served to the family together, as one item. Without further ado let the countdown begin:

**10. Cranberry Chicken over Rice Pilaf.** A rib sticking sweet/savory medley that makes you beg for more and pray for leftovers. Nailing the proper sauce-to-rice ratio is a learned skill!

**9. Chicken/Shrimp Stir Fry.** A weekly special for us growing up that added some great Asian flare to a regular old school night. Lots of veggies, chicken/shrimp in a spicy sauce. Mmmm.

**8. Bran Muffins.** These muffins are little bits of heaven that can be plain, blueberry or chocolate chip. In recent years, there's been a celebrated move to utilize some shallow but wide muffin tins that yield a huge muffin top with a limited trunk. Top of the muffin to you! (Seinfeld reference.)

**7. Soups.** Classics in this category include homemade chicken soup with all organic ingredients and vegetable soup with/without beef.

**6. Salmon Patties.** We know what you may be thinking, but don't knock'em til you try'em! These delectable discs are mixed like meatballs, pressed flat, and griddled to perfection. We prefer to slice them horizontally and eat them on a bagel with sliced tomato. A multigenerational gift made by both of our grandmothers, Momma Nita sticks to her mom's recipe. Delicious. Traditional. Unique.

**5. Banana Bread.** A recipe secured from one of Momma's oldest and closest friends, there's just never enough of this thing to go around. Chocolatey, banana-y, dessert-ish creation can be enjoyed literally at all hours of the day. Put in on the counter and watch it disappear one (or two) slices at a time. Inside Tip: this batter can also be put in muffin tins for a special treat.

**4. Thanksgiving Stuffing and Candied Sweet Potatoes.** Our second double-dip. The stuffing may be the single most flavorful item on this list. There's so much to go around that only about 40% of it actually makes it in the bird. The sweet potatoes are the perfect combination of gooey, sticky, and rich. These are staples on most Thanksgiving tables but, of course, we're quite partial to our mom's versions. Sorry – sort of.

**3. Cakes.** Carrot Cake with cream cheese frosting is outstanding; the traditional chocolate cake is to die for; honey cake is a dense sweet and spicy delicacy that some (Noah) believe is best when dunked in a glass of milk; and the one that people come from all around the area to taste—the Cheesecake, with its graham cracker crust and perfect combination of creamy and sweet. Good luck stopping at one slice of any of these bad-boys!

**2. Spinach Pie.** Mom's take on the greek classic Spanakopita. It's her self-proclaimed "most professional" item. Hours of prep and assembly are required as each of the dozens of layers of filo dough are buttered and filled with a savory mixture of spinach, feta cheese, and onions. A++.

**1. Brisket and Potato Pancakes.** With apologies to each Jewish boy who will likely proclaim that his mother's brisket is the best, you're all fighting for second place! The heaping pan of tender brisket, carrots, onions, and mushrooms emerges from the oven and fills the house with glory. Although it is a staple at most Domnitz family holiday dinners, we've chose the version that pairs with Mom's homemade Latkes (potato pancakes). This meal is a merging of family recipes with Momma Nita following our Grandma "Babe" Domnitz' brisket recipe and her own mother, our Grandma Shirley Kane's latke recipe – there's just no way to explain the flavor of these paper thin, crispy, circles of joy. Add either apple sauce or sour cream to the latkes or just apply some brisket juice (or any three of these toppings in combination), you simply can't go wrong. Each of these items by on their own are standouts, however, if you're ever presented with them in combination, simply sit back, look to the sky and smile: you've hit the flavor lottery.

So there you have it folks. The Brothers Domnitz All-Time Top 10 Momma Nita Menu Items. It was a labor of love and hunger. Bon Appetite and Happy New Year! ●

January Holidays and Quirky Dates

**January 10**  
Peculiar People Day

**January 17**  
National Ditch New Year's Resolutions Day

**January 18**  
NFC/AFC Championship Games

**January 18**  
Winnie the Pooh Day

**January 19**  
Martin Luther King Day

**January 25**  
National Opposite Day



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# 7 Layer Bean Dip Recipe – Perfect for Football Gatherings

The NFL Playoffs and Super Bowl are upon us. If you choose to entertain, this is a fantastic appetizer to serve at your football party. As with any recipe we recommend, we encourage you to use only organic ingredients; or, at least purchase ingredients whose label does NOT read like a chemistry experiment. We assure you that it will not only taste better but be healthier, too. Enjoy!

Serves: 8-10

### Ingredients:

- 3 medium ripe avocados, peeled, cored, mashed
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1/2 cup mayonnaise
- 1 cup sour cream
- Taco seasoning mix
- 2 (8 ounce) cans bean dip
- 2 medium tomatoes, chopped
- 1 bunch green onion, chopped
- 1 (3 ounce) can black olives (sliced or chopped)
- 1 (8 ounce) package shredded cheddar cheese

### Directions:

1. Mix avocados, lemon juice, salt, and pepper.
2. Mix mayonnaise, sour cream, and taco seasoning mix.
3. Layer ingredients as follows.
4. Bottom layer: Bean dip.
5. Second layer: Avocado mixture.
6. Third layer: Sour cream mixture.
7. Fourth layer: Tomatoes.
8. Fifth layer: Onions.
9. Sixth layer: Olives.
10. Seventh layer: Cheese (Colby Jack cheese is good).
11. Top with extra sour cream/olives/salsa, etc. if desired.
12. Serve with tortilla chips.

For best results, chill for a few hours or overnight to let the flavors intensify. •

