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"Experienced To Get The Job Done Right With Service Grounded In Trust"

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The sunny days of summer – when days get longer and warmer, birds flutter and bees buzz, evenings are balmy and breezy – life just seems a little bit sweeter! If you are buying or selling a home this summer, give me a call so I can help you make a deal that shines!



Some people don't realize the benefits of a Home Protection Plan. However, as an experienced Real Estate Professional, I would like to explain how a quality Home Protection Plan can benefit you, whether you are selling or buying a home. A good Home Protection Plan ensures the repair or replacement of major covered home systems and appliances that fail due to normal use. For Sellers, this provides added value to your home when it is on the market. For Buyers, this means peace of mind and confidence in the purchase of your home. I advise all my clients to include a Home Protection Plan with their transaction, and the company I trust to provide the best service and coverage is **Old Republic Home Protection**. Call me today for more information about how this valuable service can be put to work for you.

Accessibility and good follow-through – these qualities are instrumental in providing clients with the best in customer care. If you know someone who is selling or buying a home, please refer him or her to me for the best real estate transaction ever.



Health & Safety

Sweet Stuff – The Best and Worst of Sweeteners

Sugar and spice and everything nice – well, almost.

The trouble is that refined sugars don't include anything nice. In fact, they can deplete your body of nutrients, causing damage to your vital organs if your overindulgence goes unabated. Artificial sweeteners can be equally dangerous; some have been shown to cause cancer in laboratory animals, and headaches and depression in people.

Fortunately, you have a virtual cornucopia of better choices. Read on to find out about some of the good sweeteners – raw and lightly processed sugars and syrups – and what's so great about them!

Barley Malt Syrup and Brown Rice Syrup: Composed primarily of maltose and complex carbohydrates, they are digested more slowly than other sweeteners, so they don't make blood sugar levels yo-yo.



Maple Sugar/Maple Syrup: Among the least refined sweeteners available, they are flavorful and contain minerals such as zinc, iron, calcium, and potassium.

Molasses: All molasses contains minerals, but blackstrap, the dark, syrupy "leftovers" from the sugar refining process, contains more minerals and calcium than any other sweetener.

Raw Honey: It's as unrefined as sugar gets—straight from the bees to your table.

Household Tips

Nothing Lasts Forever

NOTHING lasts forever, even if there's no expiration date to guide you. So how long should you let your stuff linger before replacing it? We talked to the experts and nailed down a "best by" date for some common household items.

Cosmetics: *Replace after three months to two years.* Microbe growth in makeup can cause skin irritations and infections. The worst offenders are liquid cosmetics, which build up bacteria more quickly. Keep mascara for a maximum of three months; other liquids and creams (eyeliner, foundation) for no more than a year. Powders (eyeshadow, blush) can be used safely for up to two years.

Mattresses: *Replace after seven years.* A mattress that sags or is uneven won't keep your spine in line as you sleep, which means you may have trouble sleeping, and neck and back pain while awake.

Toothbrushes: *Replace after three months.* Toothbrush bristles frayed from use remove plaque less effectively than those of a new brush. Swapping out your brush will also limit exposure to bacteria that build up on the bristles and could make you sick.

Savor the Flavor

Herbed Goat Cheese Spread with Preserved Garlic

Ingredients:

- One log goat cheese
- Juice of 1/2 lemon
- 1/2 tsp red pepper flakes
- 1/2 tsp dry mustard seed
- 1/2 tsp celery seed
- 1/4-1/2 tsp kosher salt
- One large sprig basil
- Small handful of chives
- 2 cloves preserved garlic (preserved in soy sauce or olive oil)

This spread is tasty, nearly effortless, and readily customizable to whatever herbs and spices you have on hand.

Place goat cheese log in stainless steel bowl; add lemon juice and mash with fork until mixed. Crush dry mustard, celery seed, kosher salt and pepper flakes in a mortar, pestle into a fine powder and add to bowl.

Stack and roll basil leaves; cut into tiny ribbons. Chop chives and put all herbs into bowl. Add preserved garlic (minced) and stir to combine all ingredients. Press goat cheese mixture into a mold or small glass bowl lined with plastic wrap. Place in fridge for a few hours to allow flavors to marry. When ready to serve, invert spread onto a decorative dish and surround with an assortment of crackers and showy fresh herbs.

Helpful Hints

Be Eco-Friendly!

Be GOOD to Mother Earth by resolving to be more ecologically friendly. This simple list of suggestions is a great kick-start!

Change Your Light bulbs – Switch out your incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescents (CPLs) to reduce emissions and save money on your energy bills.

Turn the Lights Off When You Leave a Room – Lighting uses 19 percent of worldwide energy consumption. You can help bring that number down.

Recycle – If you haven't started this yet, it's time. Find out what your city is doing.

Use Paper Bags – Plastic bags are so passé – and harmful to the environment. Or even better, consider buying reusable grocery bags.

Turn Off the Water When You Brush Your Teeth – Does it really need to be on when you aren't using it?

Unplug Unused Appliances – Just because you are not charging your cell phone doesn't mean that the charger plugged in to the wall isn't using energy. Unplug it.

Make Wise Purchasing Decisions – If you are replacing appliances, be sure to buy "Energy Star" appliances, which are more energy efficient.

Don't Run Your Dishwasher Unless it is Full – Enough said.



Real Estate Today

Increase Curb Appeal To Get Buyers Inside

Thinking of selling your home? Here are some easy, inexpensive fixes to help create "Curb Appeal" and get you one GIANT step closer to a sale.

Paint or stain the front door and garage doors, because a potential buyer's first visual focus is on these doors.

Change any outside light fixtures that are dated or worn.

Fix that driveway. The buyer must at least feel they can drive the moving truck in confidently.

Update landscaping beds with plants and flowers for the current season.

Clean windows inside and out – it makes the house feel updated and fresh.

Keep garbage and recycle containers inside the garage, along with all toys and equipment. Make sure the garage is neat and organized.

Remember, most home buyers cannot visualize even these simple changes and clean-ups, and the ones who can will be looking for a reduced price. So to sell the house quickly and at top dollar, make it "appeal" to the many who will be seeing it rather than the few who are looking for a "fixer upper."