

Graduating Advice & Peanut - Sesame Dipping Sauce

Spring 2011/Volume 247

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More information the web at

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Every spring orchestras and bands get out their sheet music and scratch away at Sir Edward Elgar's Pomp and Circumstance. Graduates march. Parents heave a sigh of relief and beam with pride. Teachers do handsprings and high fives, happy the year is over. Then they collect themselves, return to earth and gravely shake hands with graduates and parents alike.

Graduation ceremonies are known for uncomfortable chairs, steamy temperatures and long winded speakers. More often than not, local politicians or minor celebrities offer up advice. They extol the virtues of higher learning. They quote great leaders, heroes, scientists, writers and entrepreneurs. Their carefully chosen words are designed to inspire new graduates as they head off on their next journey.

Be remarkable ... make a difference ... blaze a trail ... shoot for the moon ... be the very best you can be... explore ... dream ... discover. Wow!

Those are some pretty highfalutin words and ideas.

I wonder what advice grandmothers and greatgrandmothers might hand out on commencement day. Would their words be filled with deep thoughts and inspiration? Fun and lighthearted? Practical? Or all of the above?!?

I'm guessing Nana's advice might go something like ...

- . Drink eight glasses of water every day.
- 2. Run, walk, swim, play stay active and exercise.
- 3. Think before you speak and before you act.
- 4. Listen more than you talk.
- 5. Go to bed before midnight and get at least seven hours of sleep.
- 6. Don't forget to say please and thank you.
- 7. Play fair.
- 8. Be kind.
- 9. Be generous. Share your ideas, wealth, goodness and spirit.
- 10. Love your family.
- 11. Love your friends.
- 12. Master the art of compromise.
- 13. Master the art of forgiveness.
- 14. Don't be shy. People aren't mind-readers; let them know what you are thinking.
- 15. Don't complain. If you don't like something, do something about it or let it go.
- 16. Call home every Sunday.
- 17. Eat your vegetables.
- 18. Cook from scratch
- 19. Clean your room.
- 20. Work hard.
- 21. If you make a mistake own up to it. Try not to make too many mistakes you can't fix.
- 22. Smile.
- 23. Have fun.
- 24. Get a job.
- 25. And remember no matter how successful and how important you become ... you will still put your pants on one leg at a time.

Happy graduation, good luck and bon appétit!



Nana Westland - Aunt Bess - Nana Nye



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Peanut-Sesame Dipping Sauce

This versatile dipping sauce will be a great addition at your next party. It makes a wonderful appetizer with fresh vegetables. It's particularly good with blanched and chilled asparagus and snow peas. Or serve it at dinner with grilled chicken or shrimp. Enjoy!

Makes about 1 cup



1/4 cup sesame oil Juice of 1 lime or 2-3 tablespoons rice wine vinegar

1 tablespoon or to taste soy sauce

1 teaspoon fish sauce

To taste Harissa*, Sambal* or your favorite chili pepper sauce (I used a heaping teaspoon of Harissa in my last batch) 2 cloves garlic

1 tablespoon cilantro, chopped

1 cup peanuts

Put the sesame oil, lime juice, soy sauce, fish sauce, garlic, chili sauce, garlic and cilantro in a mini food processor or blender and process until smooth. Add the peanuts and process until smooth. Add hot water a tablespoon at a time and process until you reach the desired consistency.

Refrigerate for at least 2 hours to combine the flavors. Bring to room temperature, give it a stir and serve.

- * Harissa is a North African chili sauce made with hot peppers and spices.
- * Sambal is a South-East Asian chili sauce made with hot peppers, onions and spices.

