



**It began with a simple grassroots effort.** A school district in California realized that their kids had little if any knowledge of women's contributions to the state, to the country and to the world. So, they dedicated a week to women's history. There were special programs and curriculum. The grand finale was a parade and celebration. It was 1978.

**In 1979, educators and activists got together** at The Women's History Institute at Sarah Lawrence College. A teacher from Sonoma shared her district's success and it lit a fire. Spreading to schools and colleges across the country, Women's History Week took off. Unable to contain the enthusiasm to just seven days, there were soon calls for a month of education and celebration. National Women's History Month was declared in 1987.

**This year's theme is Nevertheless, She Persisted.** The goal is to honor women who persist in fighting all forms of discrimination against women. Persistence, it is an amazing word. Could it be the secret to women's success?

**Take for instance, the right to vote.** Today, most of us take that right for granted. Not my grandmother. In her time, the voting age was twenty-one. However, she could not go down to town hall and register to vote on her birthday. Women did not have that right. She was twenty-five when the Nineteenth Amendment was finally ratified into law. The fight for suffrage began as one of twelve resolutions at the Seneca Falls Convention in the summer of 1848. Success took seventy-two years of persistence.

**I remember when one of the credit card companies turned my mother down.** Whether it was a holdover from laws limiting women's property rights or misguided custom, it doesn't matter. Mom was incensed. The person at the other end of the phone told her they would be more than happy to grant a joint card with my dad. She just couldn't have one in her own name. Mrs. Nye was fine; Elizabeth was not. She finally got her card a few years later. I'm guessing it was after the Equal Credit Opportunity Act of 1974.

**At about the same time, I was appalled to learn that wage disparity** of women to men was fifty-nine cents to the dollar. It didn't matter that I was a teenager earning minimum wage at my summer job. Or that the busboys were also earning minimum wage. It was the principle. Since then, the wage gap has narrowed to seventy-nine cents. Persistence continues.

**Throughout the month, let's celebrate the women who came before us.** Let's honor the women in both our personal and collective histories. We'll thank our mothers and grandmothers, Susan B. Anthony, Harriet Tubman and Amelia Earhart. We shouldn't forget our favorite aunts, cousins and neighbors along with Shirley Chisholm, Ella Fitzgerald, Margaret Sanger, Rosa Parks, Sally Ride, Julia Child, Billy Jean King, the 1996 Women's Soccer Team and the 2018 Women's Hockey Team. Because of them, we stand stronger, we are better educated and our lives are freer, richer and safer.

**Armed with persistence and patience,** women have fought and won the right to vote, to education, to work and to own property. The path has rarely been easy and the journey continues. In spite of a rapidly changing world, we still measure the timeline to equal rights for women not in days or even years but in decades.

With a toast of gratitude to brave and persistent women, I wish you bon appétit!

## Pork Stew with Beans & Greens

*Invite friends over for a cozy dinner and celebration of women.*

*Enjoy!*

Serves 8

- 1 tablespoon butter or olive oil
- 2 ounces slab or thick cut bacon, roughly chopped
- 1 1/2 pounds boneless pork shoulder, cut into 2-inch cubes
- Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 carrots, chopped
- 2 stalks celery, chopped
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1/2 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1/4 teaspoon chili flakes
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 cups cooked white beans, drained and rinsed (about 12 ounces dried beans)
- 4-6 cups chicken stock
- 1/2 cup dry vermouth
- 2 tablespoons whole grain mustard
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 pound pre-cooked kielbasa sausage, cut into 2-inch slices
- 16 ounces baby kale or spinach



Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Melt the butter in a heavy casserole over medium heat. Add the bacon and cook until crispy. Remove the bacon and reserve.

Season the pork with salt and pepper. Raise the heat to medium-high, add the pork and cook for a minute or two per side. Remove from the casserole and reserve.

Reduce heat to medium and add the onion, carrot and celery, sprinkle with thyme, allspice and chili flakes, season with salt and pepper and sauté for about 10 minutes. Add the garlic and sauté 2 minutes more.

Return the pork and bacon to the pot and add the beans, 4 cups stock, vermouth, mustard and bay leaf. Gently toss and stir to combine, bring to a simmer and transfer to the oven.

Bake uncovered at 350 degrees for 1 hour. Add the sausage and, if necessary, more stock to the pot, return to the oven and bake for an additional 30 minutes. Add the kale in handfuls and stir or toss until it wilts. Return the pot to the oven for 5 minutes.

Spoon the stew into shallow bowls and serve with a chunk of crusty bread.