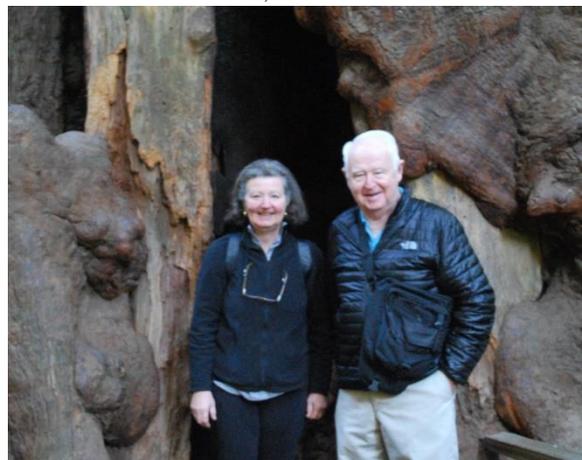


You've got five days to get it together, so, don't blow it.

And by it, I mean Father's Day. If you are suddenly caught unawares, don't worry you are not alone. Father's Day is probably the most overlooked or just plain forgotten holiday in the whole panoply of fêtes, festivals and celebrations. Mom gets brunch, cards and flowers. If we remember, Dad gets another necktie.

In the era of business casual, most men, spend their days in Dockers and button-down shirts. The pants are always navy blue. Although the shirts are always light blue, they generally come in a variety of strips, checks and plaids. If he's retired, your dad has probably traded in his navy blue trousers for khaki and button-downs for golf shirts. Working or retired, most dads have not worn a necktie more than a handful of times since 1998. Of course, there are exceptions. There are always exceptions. While politicians, talk show hosts, bankers and Wall Street wonders are the most obvious tie wearers, there could be others.



That's not to say that a beautiful necktie is not appreciated. In fact, I'm proud to say, I gave my dad his favorite tie, pale yellow with light blue catboats. However, it was ages ago, 1998 or maybe 1997, and it wasn't for Father's Day. It was a Christmas gift. I can't say for certain, but there is a good chance I neglected him that Father's Day. (In my defense, I was living an ocean away.)

Anyway, about that favorite tie, it may be twenty years old but he still likes it enough to find an excuse to wear it once if not twice a year. I suspect that it would be near impossible to find one to replace it. Any new necktie would just join the pile he never wears but refuses to throw away. Most are boring navy blue with equally boring stripes. One has catboats but they sail across a dark, drab background.

All right then, if ties are out, what's in?

How about socks? Think ridiculously bright colors, stars, stripes or polka dots. A beautiful pair of socks will add a little life to dad's wardrobe. If he's the conservative type, you might point to Bush 41. The former president has a spectacular collection of socks. My oldest niece gave Dad a couple of fun pairs for Christmas a few years ago. They are his party socks and he loves them.

Something to eat or drink? Here you have an endless list of possibilities from a bottle of dad's favorite bourbon to a trio of intriguing hot sauces or mustards. If he can't start the day without a great cup of Joe, then a pound of really good coffee sounds like a plan. Then again, you can help him get his grill on by signing him up for the steak of the month club.

Maybe you should give him the gift of time together? Instead of a book he's already read or a shirt that doesn't fit, plan an experience you can share together. Think about what your dad might like to do or see and make it happen. If he loves baseball, take him to Fenway. Fine wines – find a tasting and spend an evening sipping and spitting together. Wannabe chef – sign the two of you up for a cooking class. History buff – walk the Freedom Trail with him. You see, it's not so hard.

Happy Father's Day and bon appétit!



Grilled Vietnamese Beef

Give your favorite steak-and-potatoes man a taste of Asia this Father's Day. Trying new things will keep dad young. Serve the beef with jasmine rice. Enjoy!

Serves 8

8 cloves garlic, finely chopped
5-6 limes
4 tablespoons soy sauce
4 tablespoons fish sauce
3 tablespoons olive oil
2 tablespoons brown sugar
Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
3 pounds tenderloin filets or sirloin steaks, trimmed
1-2 red onions, cut in half and then in 1/4-inch wedges
1-2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
12 ounces arugula
1 cup cilantro leaves
1/2 cup mint leaves, cut in julienne



Make the marinade: put the garlic, juice and zest of 2 limes, soy sauce, fish sauce, olive oil and brown sugar in a bowl, season with salt and pepper and whisk to combine.

Put the beef in a large flat dish and the onion in a bowl. Add about 3/4 of the marinade to the beef and the remainder to the onions. Flip the beef to coat and toss the onions. Flipping and tossing once or twice, cover and refrigerate both for up to 4 hours. Remove from the refrigerator about 30 minutes before grilling.

Prepare a charcoal or gas grill; the fire should be medium hot.

Remove the steaks from the marinade and shake off any excess. Place the steaks on the grill and cook for 2-3 minutes per side for rare and 4-5 minutes per side for medium rare. Transfer to a cutting board, let the beef rest for 5-10 minutes and then cut across the grain in thin slices.

While the beef rests, drain and transfer the onions to a grill basket. Grill, stirring from time to time, until tender-crisp, 4-6 minutes.

Put the juice of 1 lime and the extra virgin olive oil in a large bowl, season with salt and pepper and whisk to combine. Add the arugula, cilantro and mint and toss to combine.

Cut the remaining limes into wedges.

Transfer the greens to a large platter or individual plates, top with beef and onions, garnish with lime wedges and serve.