

# SHOP TALK 2024

HAPPY NEW YEAR TO OUR SONOCO FAMILY!! JANUARY 1, 2024

In this new year, be grateful that God has given you victory over many things over the past year.

*Steven M. Hitchcock*

Write it on your heart that every day is the best day in the year.

*Ralph Waldo Emerson*

Approach the New Year with resolve to find the opportunities hidden in each new day.

*Michael Josephson*

New Year = A New Life!

Decide today who you will become, what you will give and how you will live.

*Anthony Robbins*

You know I always dread the whole year? Well this time I'm only going to dread one day at a time.

*Charlie Brown*

## NEW YEAR'S DAY FACTS & TRIVIA

The year is coming to an end, but wow, 2023 has been another tough one. Most of us are probably looking forward to starting a whole new year. Many places around the world begin New Year's celebrations on December 31st. The celebrations continue into the early hours of January 1st. Before we ring in the new year, let's get some facts about New Year's Day.

### The first New Year was in March

New Year's wasn't always celebrated on January 1st. The earliest New Year festivities date back about 4,000 years. At that time, the people of ancient Babylon began their new year in what we now call March.

### Who changed it to January 1st?

The calendar that we use today is known as the Gregorian calendar. It was introduced 400 years ago by Pope Gregory XIII in 1582. He declared once and for all that January 1st should be New Year's Day.

Since then most of the Western world celebrates the start of the year just like you do — on the first day of January.

### How does everyone celebrate?

Here in North America, we usually ring in the new year by gathering with family and friends for parties. Or even special meals and spectacular firework displays.

In Greece, a gold or silver coin is baked into a cake, called a **vasilopita**. The person who receives the piece of cake with the coin inside is said to have luck the rest of the year.

In Spain they eat 12 grapes at midnight on New Year's Eve to bring 12 months of happiness.

While in Bolivia, families often hang small homemade dolls outside their homes for good luck.

Over in Japan, at midnight on New Year's Eve, bells and gongs sound to banish bad spirits. To leave the old year behind and welcome in the new one, the Dutch make bonfires in the street using Christmas trees. Portuguese children go from home to home and sing for neighbours. They may receive sweets and coins in return.

### **What's with the fireworks?**

Fireworks originated centuries ago and are believed to have been invented by the Chinese. They are said to chase away evil spirits and bring good luck, making them a perfect way to begin a new year!

### **What's that song they always sing?**

The song that's traditionally sung at midnight on New Year's Eve is called *Auld Lang Syne*. Its title means "times gone by." The song is an old Scottish tune. But, a Canadian bandleader named Guy Lombardo is responsible for making it a New Year's tradition. He performed the song at midnight at a New Year's Eve party in New York City in 1929.

Want to be one of the first people to welcome the new year? Then you'll want to visit the tiny Pacific island nation of Kiribati.

As for the last place to ring in the coming year? That title belongs to American Samoa in the South Pacific Ocean.



### **What to Eat on New Year's Day**

According to popular folklore, if these foods are eaten on New Year's Day, they guarantee good luck throughout the year.

- Peas or beans are said to symbolize coins or wealth. Choose traditional black-eyed peas.
- Greens resemble money, specifically folding money. Make dishes using smothered cabbage or collard greens, or other green, leafy vegetables to ensure good fortune for the coming year.
- Pork is considered a sign of prosperity in some cultures because pigs root forward. Many Southern New Year's Day dishes contain pork or ham, but feel free to serve a pork roast or baked ham as an entrée.
- Cornbread might symbolize gold, and besides, it is essential with black-eyed peas and greens.

In other cultures, fish, grapes, and ring-shaped cakes or doughnuts, or cakes with special treats inside symbolize luck.

### **What Not to Eat on New Year's Day**

- Some believe that lobster could cause bad luck in the coming year because it moves in a backward direction and could mean setbacks in the year ahead.
- For the same reason, some believe chicken dishes should be avoided New Years Day. Chickens scratch backward, plus they are winged so your luck could fly away.



## CRISPY CRUST CORNBREAD

To start with, you gotta – gotta – have a hot pan with hot oil in it first. So put some oil in a black skillet and stick it in a 425 F oven while you mix up the bagger. 😊 Makes 1 skillet (12" diameter)

- 2 ½ cups yellow cornmeal
- 1 ½ cups flour
- 1 Tbsp baking soda
- 1 ½ Tbsp baking powder
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 cups buttermilk (make your own, yum)
- 2 each eggs
- ½ cup veg oil

- Got that pan in the oven? Good.
- Sift together all dry ingredients.
- Combine milk, oil and eggs
- Combine the wet and dry ingredients and gently stir together.
- Pour into that hot skillet from the center, letting the batter spread to the edges.
- Stick it in the oven and bake about half an hour or so. It'll have a hollow thumping sound if you tap on the center.
- Remove and let cool before cutting into either squares or wedges for serving.



## SPICY BLACK-EYED PEAS & HAM

- 1 lb dry black-eyed peas
  - 2 quart chicken or pork stock
  - ¼ lb salt meat, diced small (about ¼")
  - 1 each onion, large, diced
  - 1 Tbsp garlic, minced
  - ½ lb ham, diced (preferably bone-in ham)
  - 2 ribs celery, diced
  - 1 each bell pepper, diced
  - 1 each jalapeno, minced (or 2 Tbsp pickled)
  - 2 tsp Tony's or Slap Ya Mama
  - ½ tsp black pepper
- Salt, adjusted as needed (if needed)

- Rinse the peas and pick them over. Set aside.
- In a large saucepan, render the salt meat and add the onion, celery, peppers and garlic.
- Cook until the vegetables are tender.
- Add the diced ham and brown lightly.
- Add the stock, black-eyed peas and seasoning.
- Bring to a boil and reduce to a simmer; cook low and slow, stirring occasionally until the beans are done. Add water as needed during cooking.
- Adjust for salt and seasoning and add to taste.
- Remove and place on serving line in 1/3 pan.





## SMOTHERED CABBAGE & SAUSAGE



- 2 Tbsp Veg Oil
- 4 each bacon strips, diced or chopped
- 1 lb Smoked Sausage, Cut Into 1" Slices
- 1 each Large Onion, Diced
- 1 each Green Bell Pepper, Diced
- 1 Head Cabbage, Cored, Coarsely Chopped
- Salt To Taste
- Cayenne Pepper To Taste
- Black Pepper To Taste

- Heat oil in a large 8 quart Dutch oven or stockpot at medium heat.
- Cook bacon until it begins to crisp.
- Add sausage, cook, stirring occasionally, until sausage pieces brown, 7-10 minutes.
- Add onions and bell peppers and cook for 5 minutes.
- Reduce heat to medium.
- Add cabbage, salt, red cayenne pepper, and black pepper.
- Cook, covered and stirring occasionally, until cabbage is tender, about 45 minutes.

## CHOCOLATE CHIP PIE



Sort of a custard but much richer, this will be a welcome addition to your baking repertoire.  
Makes 1 9" pie.

- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup flour
- 1/2 cup margarine, melted
- 1 cup pecans or walnuts, chopped
- 1 cup chocolate chips
- 2 each eggs
- 1 each 9" pie crust, unbaked

- Beat eggs in a medium bowl.
- Add the margarine and blend well.
- Add in the flour and sugar and mix well to a uniform consistency.
- Fold in the nuts and chocolate chips.
- Pour into the pie shell.
- Bake at 350 F for about 50 minutes to an hour.





## PESTO BEAN SOUP

An interesting and delicious spin on the same old bean soup. Makes about 2 gallons.

- |     |        |                               |
|-----|--------|-------------------------------|
| 4   | Tbsp   | minced garlic                 |
| 1/4 | cup    | olive oil                     |
| 1/4 | tsp    | red pepper flakes             |
| 10  | cups   | great northern beans, cooked, |
|     |        | drained                       |
| 3/4 | cup    | pesto                         |
| 1/2 | cup    | grated Parmesan cheese        |
| 3   | quarts | chicken stock (broth)         |
| 4   | cups   | celery, diced                 |
| 2   | cups   | red bell pepper, diced        |
| 2   | cups   | onions, diced                 |

- Put the red peppers in a skillet – no oil – and cook on high heat until the peppers are lightly roasted but not blackened. Set aside.
- In a stockpot, heat the oil and add garlic and onions. Cook until wilted and fragrant.
- Add red pepper flakes
- Add the beans and a couple of cups of chicken stock. Cook, stirring, until the mixture thickens a little bit.
- Add the remaining ingredients – except the peppers – and cook about 15 minutes or until the celery is tender.
- Add the peppers and remove from heat.
- Place in a soup kettle or a deep 1/3 pan for serving on the line.

## PESTO ROTINI SALAD

- |     |         |   |
|-----|---------|---|
| 1 ½ | cups    | mayonnaise  |
| 1/4 | cup     | pesto   |
| 2   | Tbsp    | lemon juice                                       |
| 1/2 | tsp     | black pepper                                      |
| 1/2 | tsp     | salt (or to taste)                                |
| 1   | package | rotini pasta                                      |
| 1   | each    | cucumber, peeled and diced                        |
| 1   | cup     | grape or cherry tomatoes, halved (grape are best) |
| 1   | cup     | black olives, sliced                              |
| 1   | each    | red bell pepper, diced                            |
| 1/2 | cup     | diced celery                                      |
| 1/4 | cup     | fresh parsley, finely chopped                     |

- Cook the pasta al dente', drain well and allow to cool. Set aside.
- In a large bowl, combine the mayonnaise, pesto, lemon juice, salt, and pepper. Mix well.
- Add the remaining ingredients and fold together until lightly blended. Be careful not to damage the tomatoes as you blend the salad.
- Add the parsley to the top for garnish.
- Serve in a salad bowl, or in a pan on the salad bar.

# Keep your workplace safe by making these New Year's resolutions

## Keep a cleaner, more organized workspace.

What can't be kept clean, can't be kept safe. Hazards can be found in any type of commercial establishment, from offices and machine shops to retail stores and restaurants. Injuries from slips and falls on wet floors or from tripping over clutter can easily occur when conditions are not kept clean and organized. Clutter can also increase the risk for fires, especially stockpiles of paper or boxes located near sources of ignition.

## Pay strict attention to driving safety.

Every business has a level of driving exposure. In some companies, transportation and driving are central to the operation of their business. In others, it is only an incidental aspect, such as running errands from time to time. No matter how often employees get behind the wheel for company purposes, in almost all cases, it's by far your most dangerous activity — and the greatest source of fatalities in American workplaces.

Driving safety is critical to the welfare of all of us.

## Eliminate taking shortcuts in processes or procedures.

Not only is safety enhanced, but so is the quality of your product or service.

Understand workplace safety procedures such as proper lifting techniques, how to use new equipment, wearing protective clothing and reporting any unsafe working conditions. Additionally, keep accurate and detailed records of any incidents, including near-miss accidents, so you can continue to learn and improve those processes and procedures.

**Be a role model.** As the business owner and leader, resolve that you will be the strongest role model for safety you can be. You set the tone, and if your behavior reflects the importance of doing things right, your organization will follow you. Unfortunately, the opposite will also be true. Make preventing accidents and injuries one of your top priorities in 2024.

## Turn near misses into opportunities.

Near miss incidents are indications that something is wrong. Don't sweep them under the rug. Learn from them so you can fix whatever caused them. If you don't, the next incident might be a serious accident, injury, or even fatality.

## Take advantage of free resources.

You don't have to go it alone when it comes to implementing effective safety measures. There are many helpful resources available such as OSHA's [Recommended Practices for Safety and Health Programs](#). Your insurance advisor is also a great resource for risk management advice.

## Take time to reflect.

Making New Year's resolutions without taking stock of last year's events is akin to setting half-baked goals. Look back at 2022 and identify any mistakes and successes that you can learn from, then use what happened to create specific and informed safety resolutions.





## Getting Started with Mindfulness

### What is mindfulness?

Mindfulness is the basic human ability to be fully present, aware of where we are and what we're doing, and not overly reactive or overwhelmed by what's going on around us.

While mindfulness is something we all naturally possess, it's more readily available to us when we practice on a daily basis.

Whenever you bring awareness to what you're directly experiencing via your senses, or to your state of mind via your thoughts and emotions, you're being mindful. And there's growing research showing that when you train your brain to be mindful, you're actually remodeling the physical structure of your brain.

The goal of mindfulness is to wake up to the inner workings of our mental, emotional, and physical processes.

### What is meditation?

Meditation is exploring. It's not a fixed destination. Your head doesn't become vacuumed free of thought, utterly undistracted. It's a special place where each and every moment is momentous. When we meditate, we venture

into the workings of our minds: our sensations (air blowing on our skin or a harsh smell wafting into the room), our emotions (love this, hate that, crave this, loathe that) and thoughts (wouldn't it be weird to see an elephant playing a trumpet).

Mindfulness meditation asks us to suspend judgment and unleash our natural curiosity about the workings of the mind, approaching our experience with warmth and kindness, to ourselves and others.

### How do I practice mindfulness and meditation?

Mindfulness is available to us in every moment, whether through meditations and body scans, or mindful moment practices like taking time to pause and breathe when the phone rings instead of rushing to answer it.

#### The Basics of Mindfulness Practice

Mindfulness helps us put some space between ourselves and our reactions, breaking down our conditioned responses. Here's how to tune into mindfulness throughout the day:

#### The basics of a mindfulness practice

Set aside some time. You don't need a meditation cushion or bench, or any sort of special equipment to access your mindfulness skills—but you do need to set aside some time and space.

Observe the present moment as it is. The aim of mindfulness is not quieting the mind, or attempting to achieve a state of eternal calm. The goal is simple: we're aiming to pay attention to the present moment, without judgment. Easier said than done, we know.

Let your judgments roll by. When we notice judgments arise during our practice, we can make a mental note of them, and let them pass.

Return to observing the present moment as it is. Our minds often get carried away in thought.

That's why mindfulness is the practice of returning, again and again, to the present moment.

Be kind to your wandering mind. Don't judge yourself for whatever thoughts crop up, just practice recognizing when your mind has wandered off, and gently bring it back.

That's the practice. It's often been said that it's very simple, but it's not necessarily easy. The work is to just keep doing it. Results will accrue.

### **How to Meditate**

This meditation focuses on the breath, not because there is anything special about it, but because the physical sensation of breathing is always there, and you can use it as an anchor to the present moment. Throughout the practice you may find yourself caught up in thoughts, emotions, sounds—wherever your mind goes, simply come back again to the next breath. Even if you only come back once, that's okay.

### **A Simple Meditation Practice**

Sit comfortably. Find a spot that gives you a stable, solid, comfortable seat.

Notice what your legs are doing. If on a cushion, cross your legs comfortably in front of you. If on a chair, rest the bottoms of your feet on the floor.

Straighten your upper body—but don't stiffen. Your spine has natural curvature. Let it be there.

Notice what your arms are doing. Situate your upper arms parallel to your upper body. Rest the palms of your hands on your legs wherever it feels most natural.

Soften your gaze. Drop your chin a little and let your gaze fall gently downward. It's not necessary to close your eyes. You can simply let what appears before your eyes be there without focusing on it.

Feel your breath. Bring your attention to the physical sensation of breathing: the air moving through your nose or mouth, the rising and falling of your belly, or your chest.

Notice when your mind wanders from your breath. Inevitably, your attention will leave the breath and wander to other places. Don't worry. There's no need to block or eliminate thinking. When you notice your mind wandering gently return your attention to the breath.

Be kind about your wandering mind. You may find your mind wandering constantly—that's normal, too. Instead of wrestling with your thoughts, practice observing them without reacting. Just sit and pay attention. As hard as it is to maintain, that's all there is. Come back to your breath over and over again, without judgment or expectation.

When you're ready, gently lift your gaze (if your eyes are closed, open them). Take a moment and notice any sounds in the environment. Notice how your body feels right now. Notice your thoughts and emotions.

### **Mindful Practices for Every Day**

As you spend time practicing mindfulness, you'll probably find yourself feeling kinder, calmer, and more patient. These shifts in your experience are likely to generate changes in other parts of your life as well.

Mindfulness can help you become more playful, maximize your enjoyment of a long conversation with a friend over a cup of tea, then wind down for a relaxing night's sleep. Try these 4 practices this week:

