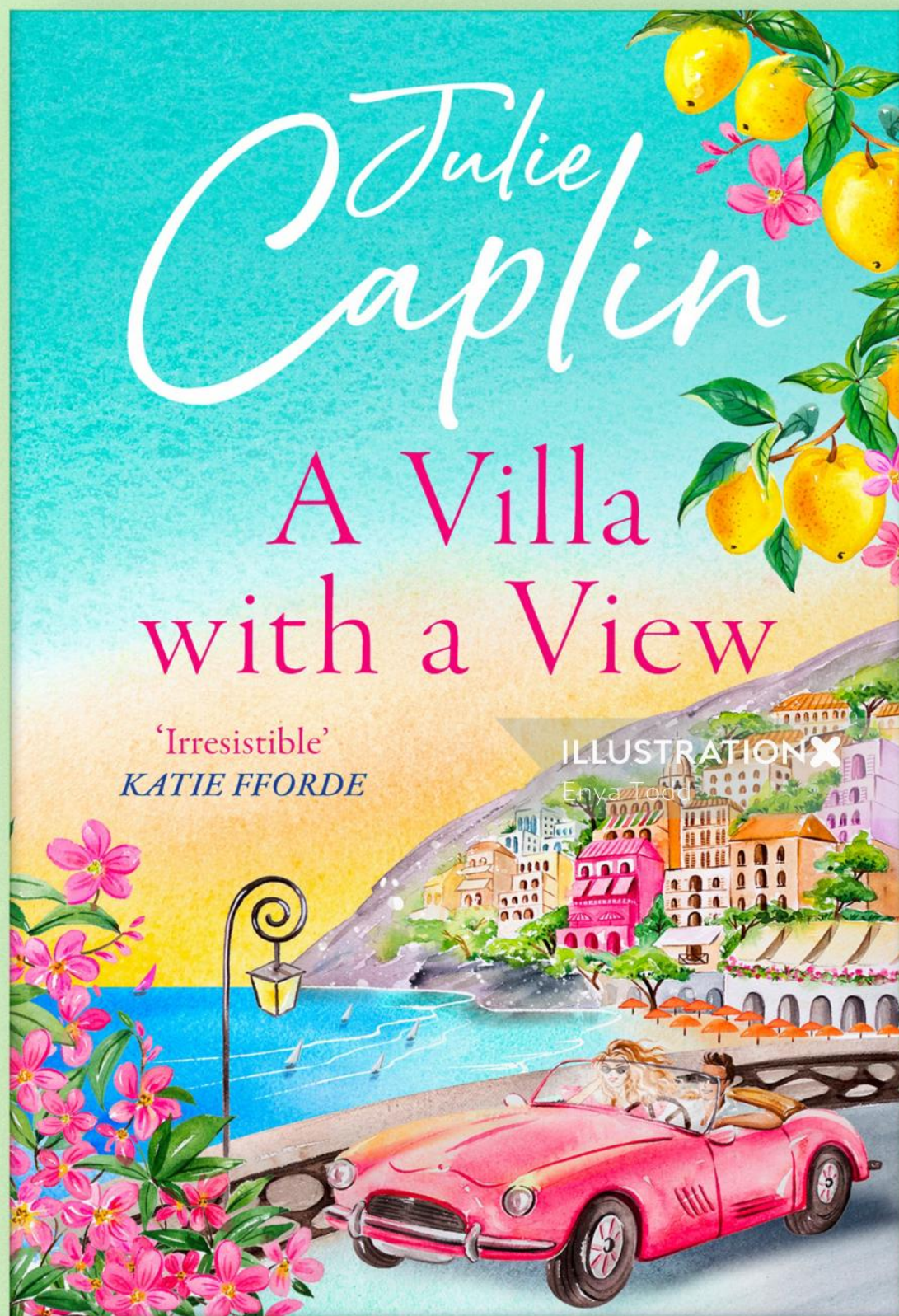


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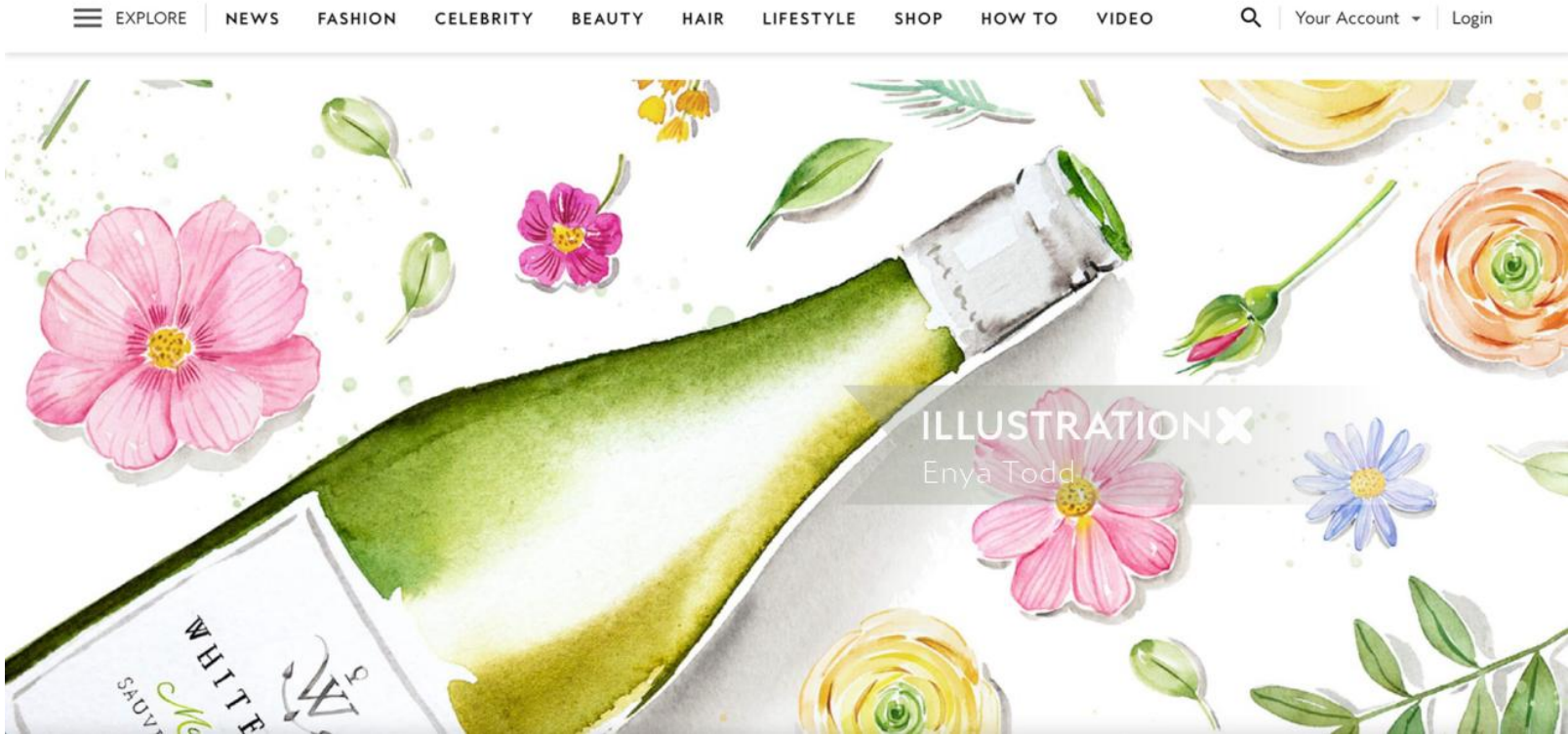
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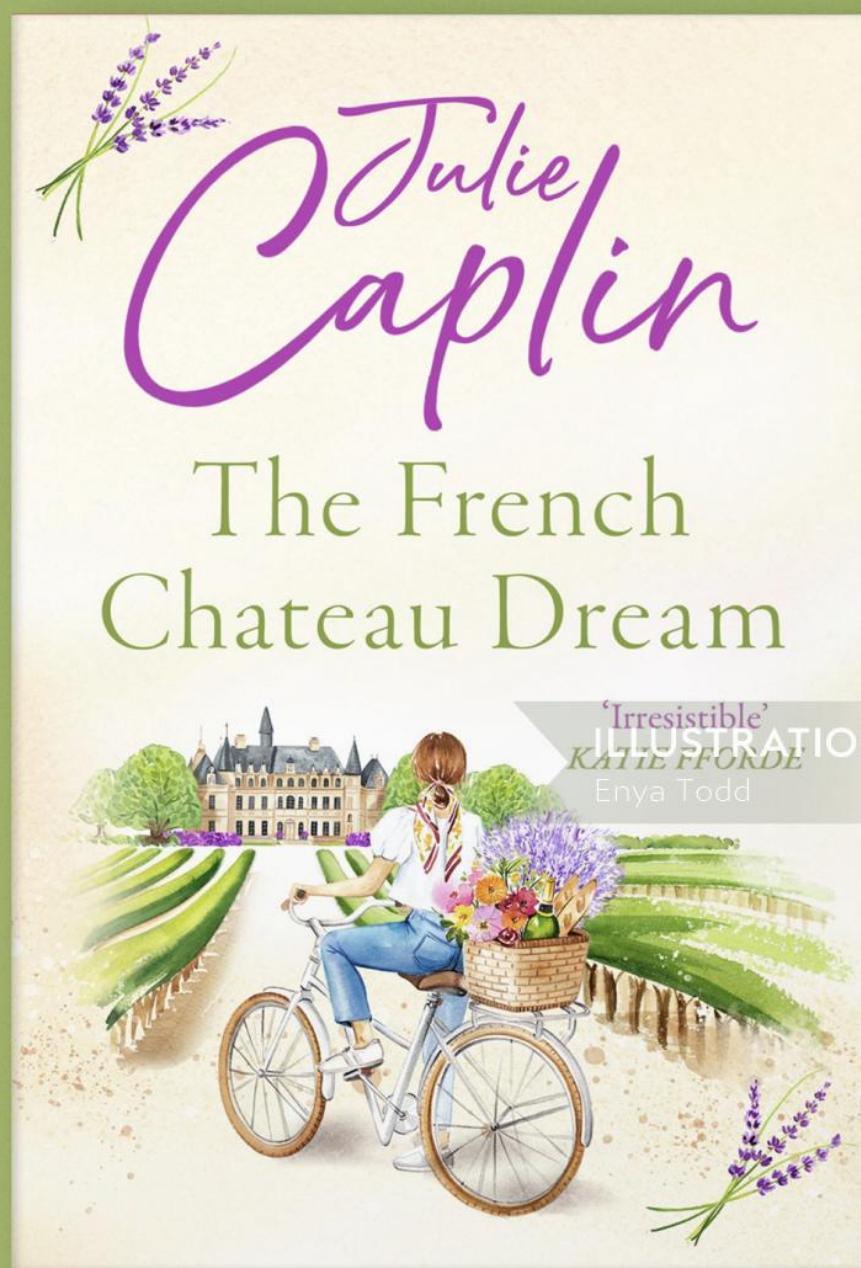
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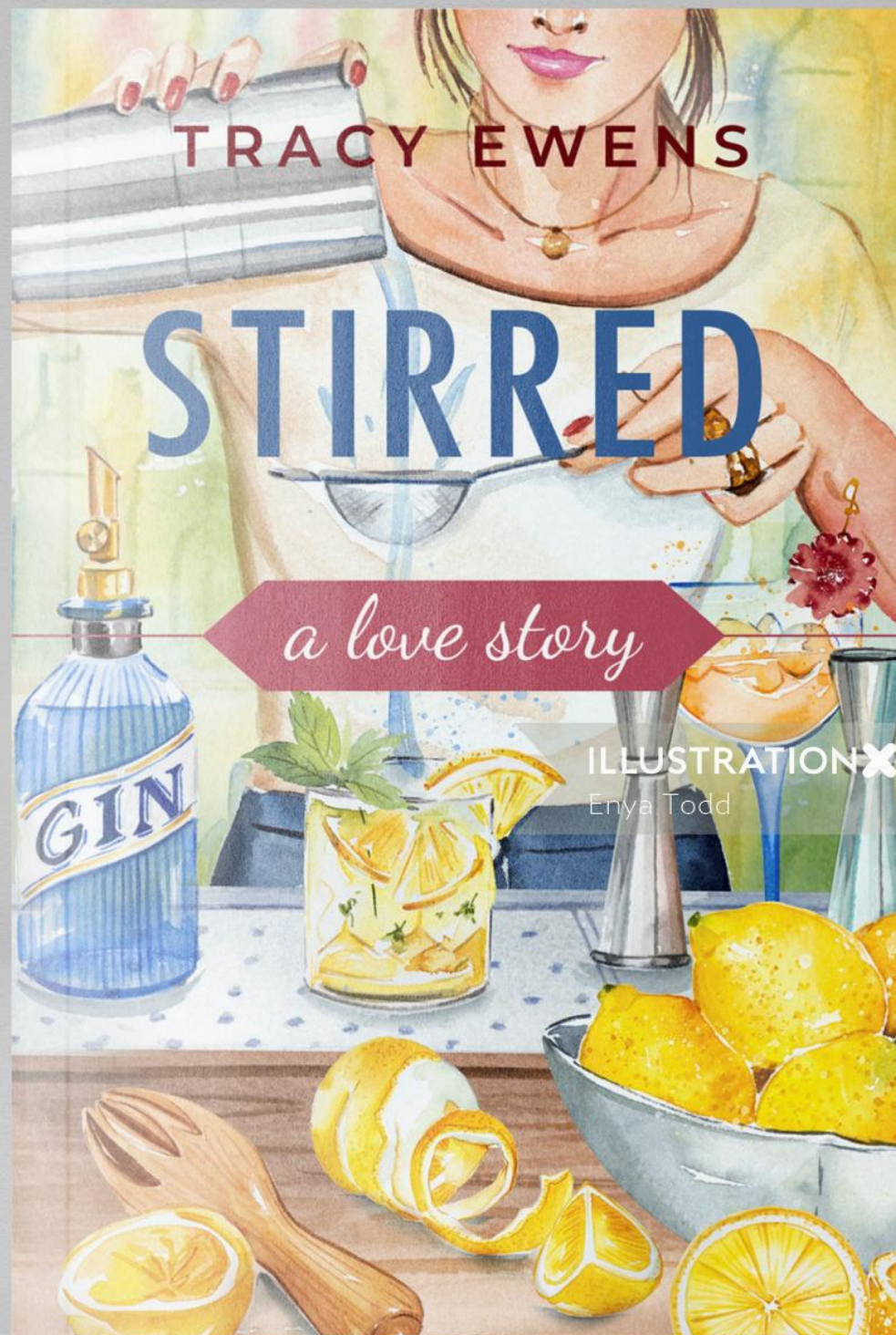
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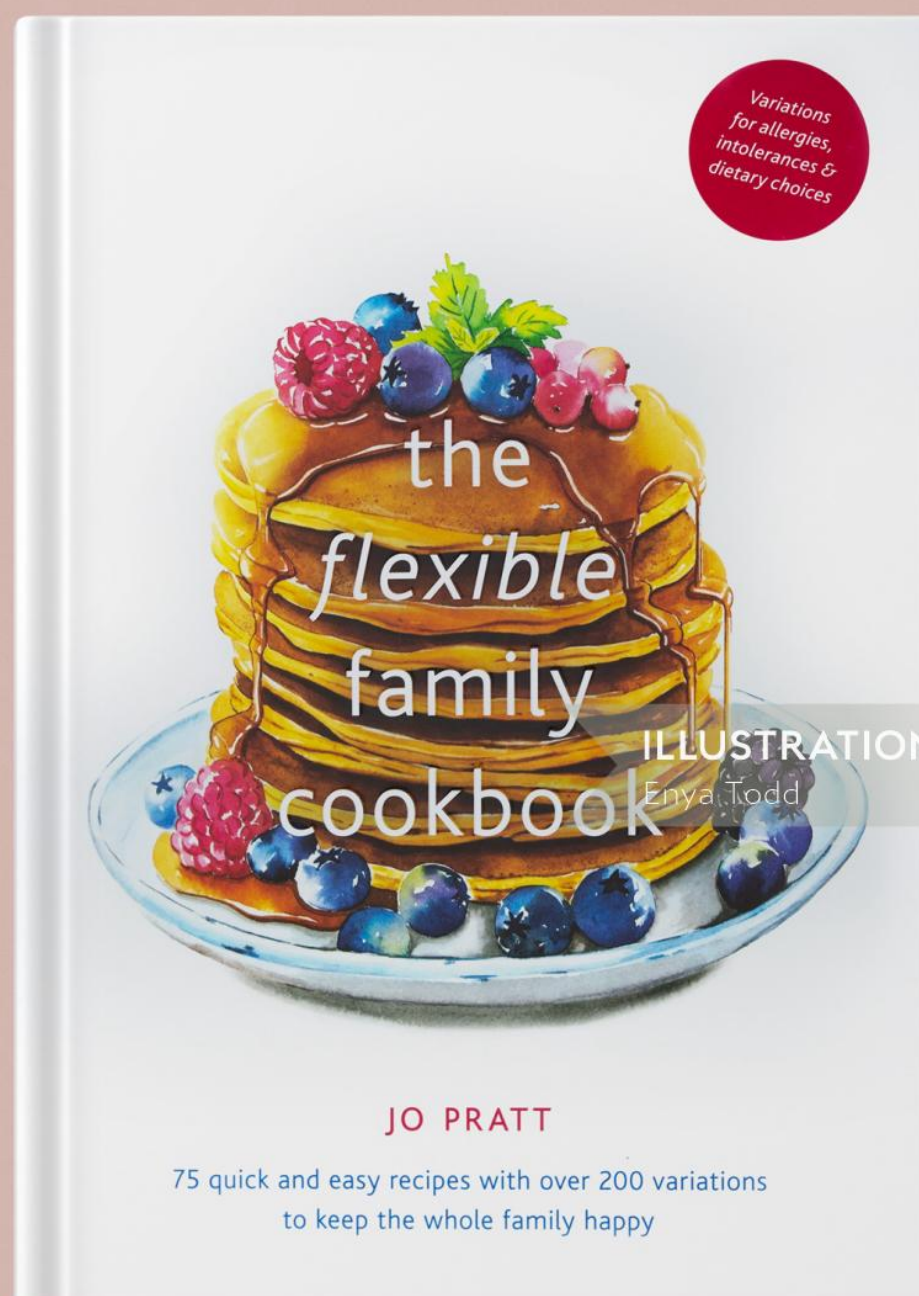
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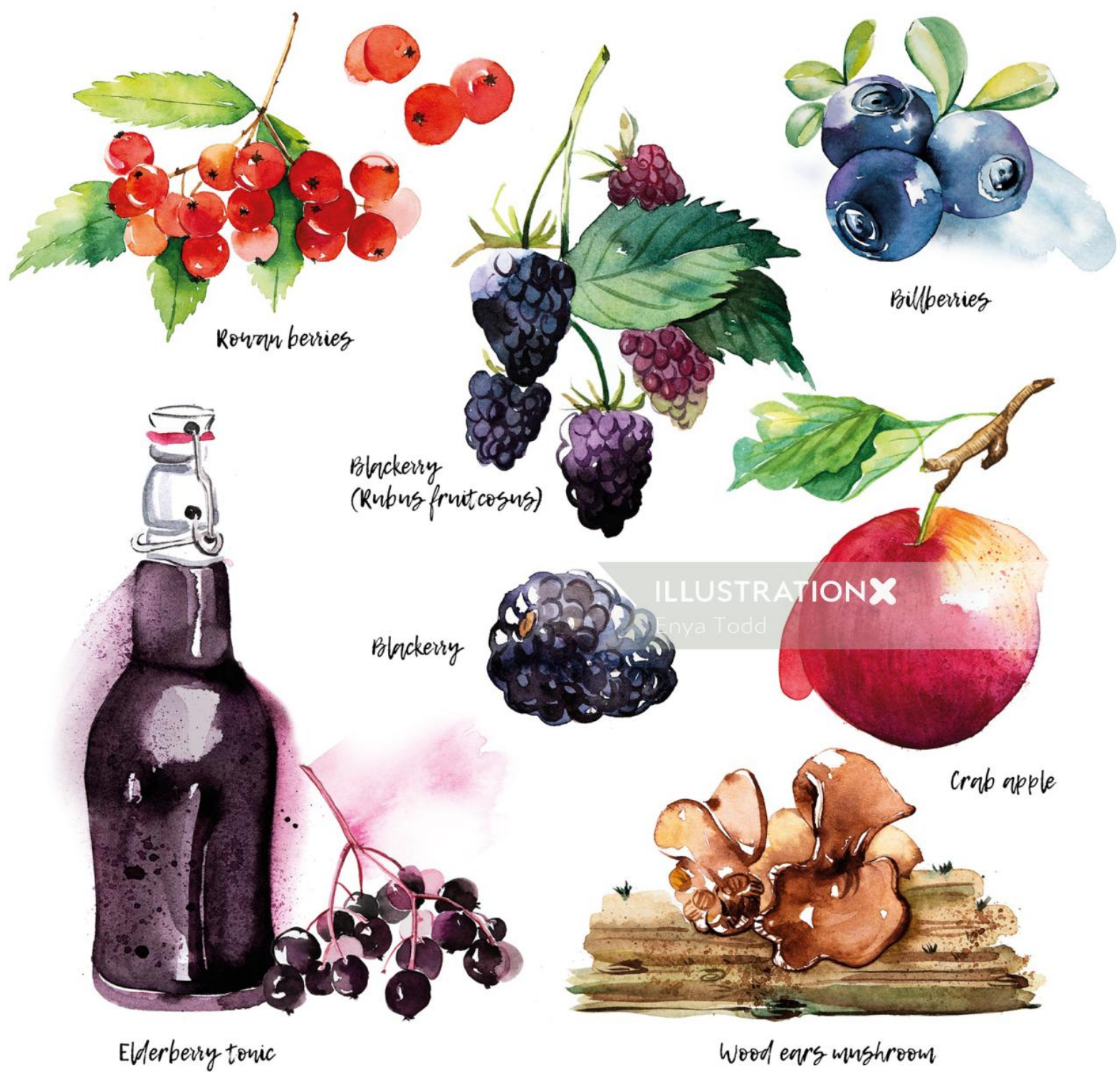
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A rice salad
can result
in obsession

BY OLGA MASOV

The first time I had Lao food, I fell hard for a dish I then obsessed over for years. I'd think about it on the subway, while cooking dinner, folding laundry, during a run. I'd recall its flavors and textures: how its fragrance hit my nostrils; the delightful contrast of crunchy and soft textures. It was a dish I had wanted to learn to make for years but was too intimidated to try. It felt overwhelming in its lack of familiarity, and it looked like it would take all day to make.

Boy, was I wrong.

The dish in question is naem khao: crispy coconut rice with som mu (a type of Lao sausage), herbs and aromatics, served with lettuce leaves for wrapping. I first tried it in 2013, when my friend, chef Soulayphet Schwader, opened his restaurant, Khe-Yo, in Lower Manhattan and invited my husband and me to be his guests. We had never had Lao food, so once we settled in our seats, we selected a few tasty-sounding but unfamiliar dishes.

Our naem khao arrived in a bowl: Fried balls of jasmine rice, fragrant with coconut nestled against aromatic sausage, lettuce leaves, tender sprigs of cilantro, glassine fried makrut lime leaves and bird's eye chile. Next to the salad was a small bowl of honey sambal. Our server recommended we smash the rice balls, sausage, herbs, lime leaves and chile into one another, mixing every-

SEE NAEM KHAO ON E3

RECIPE ON E3
Naem Khao

The where, when and why
of braise, broil or fry

There are a lot of cooking techniques to master.
But you can do all of them.

BY BECKY KRISTAL

It's easy to talk about cooking as a monolithic concept, but there's so much more nuance to it. You may use one method in a recipe, or multiple. You could have one completely mastered and be terrified of another (hello, me not that long ago, afraid of frying).

I like this simple definition of cooking, beyond the broader notion of just any kind of food prep, from "The Science of Good Food," by David Joachim and Andrew Schloss with A. Philip Handel: "Cooking is a process of heat transfer from a heat source to food to transform the food into something different."

It's also a matter of balance. "No matter what you're cooking, or what heat source you're using, the aim is always the same: apply heat at the right level, and at the right rate, so that the surface of the food and its interior are done cooking at the same time," says Samin Nosrat in "Salt Fat Acid Heat: Mastering the Elements of Good Cooking."

So let's take a little deeper dive into your options, starting with two common stove-top methods and continuing with strategies that take advantage of water and the oven. Recipes listed at the end of each section are available in our Recipe Finder at [washingtonpost.com/recipes](https://www.washingtonpost.com/recipes).

SEE TECHNIQUES ON E4

Oil can be
better than
butter in
baking

BY JESSIE SHEEHAN
Special to The Washington Post

I am the queen of the baking shortcut, for despite my deep and powerful love of all things sweet, I'm impatient and awfully fond of instant gratification. I gravitate toward recipes with short ingredient lists and instructions that don't require any heavy equipment (stand mixer, I'm looking at you) and can be assembled using only one or two bowls.

So, although I enjoy the texture achieved by creaming together butter and sugar in a mixer for a fluffy yellow cake or a chewy sugar cookie, what I really dig is a baked good that calls for oil rather than butter.

Baking with oil not only requires less work, and results in fewer dirty dishes, than butter, but it also produces tender, moist baked goods that get better with age and boast an impressively long shelf-life. As such, I not only search out baking recipes calling for oil, but when developing such recipes myself, which I do for a living, I try to create those that are oil-based.

Here is a breakdown of some of the impressive attributes of an oil-based baked good, as well as tips for substituting oil for butter in your favorite baking recipes.

SEE NO BUTTER ON E6

RECIPES ON E6
Hazelnut Chiffon Cake With Nutella Ganache • Cacio e Pepe Olive Oil Popovers

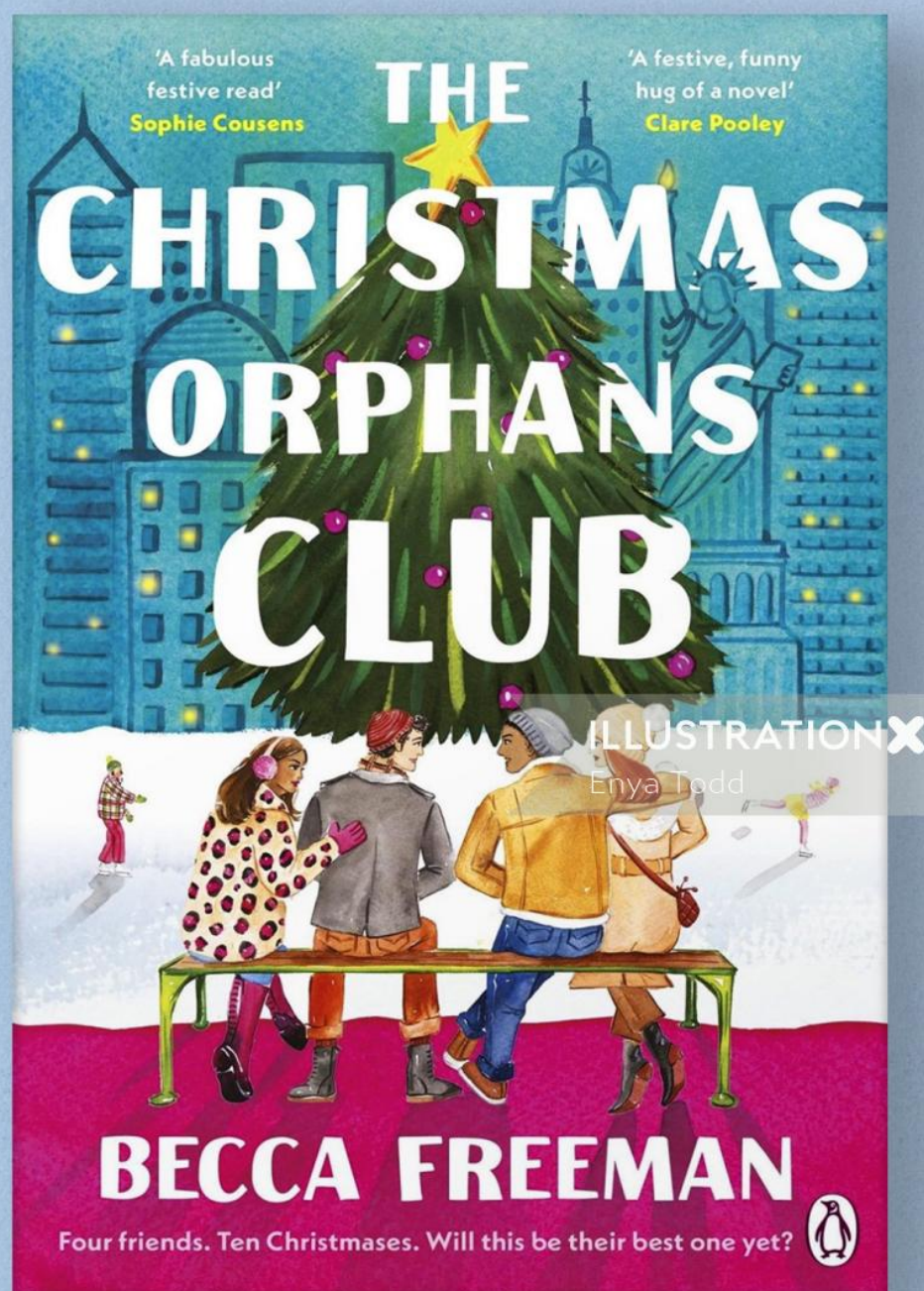
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SOAK IT IN

Spa treatments are getting a beneficial boozy boost.

"Alcoholic substances have nourishing, moisturizing and skin health-boosting properties," says dermatologist Dr. Rachael Burns.

"Grape seeds...contain vitamin C and vitamin E oil, which deeply moisturize the skin and flush out lingering toxins," says Dr. Burns.

Stateside in Reno, Nevada, guests can enjoy a Chardonnay grapeseed oil massage and Cabernet body wrap at Peppermill Reno's Spa Toscana.

Liquor can also be used in spa treatments. Agave, the plant used to produce Tequila, helps heal cuts, burns and rashes, with antioxidant, anti-aging and moisturizing properties. It can act as an astringent to remove excess oil, sebum and dirt from the skin.

"Agave is an antibacterial agent and reduces the presence of harmful bacteria," says Dr. Burns. "It is full of iron and vitamins A, B, B2, C and E that limit irritation and tone the skin."

The Punta Mita Tequila Stone Massage at Apuane Spa at the Four Seasons in Punta Mita, Mexico, infuses Tequila with locally sourced sage oil that is massaged into the body with hot stones to stimulate blood circulation and ease muscle tension.

Beer is used in spa treatments as well. At the Esperanza Resort Luxury Spa in Los Cabos, Mexico, the Brew and Renew Facial combines Mexican craft beer with Baja lime juice and egg whites to refine pores while tightening and lifting the skin for a healthy glow.

"Beer yeast increases skin elasticity for an anti-aging effect and reduces acne flare-ups by suppressing the skin's production of sebum," says Dr. Burns.

—Lola Méndez

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