

sparklestories
ORIGINAL AUDIO FOR CHILDREN

SUMMER EXPLORER

Printable Project Guide





DIY Explorer Bags



Martin and Sylvia love to explore their backyard. They are expert explorers, in fact – and are always ready for an adventure. Their excitement for exploring inspired this tutorial for making your own explorer bags.

These bags are quick to put together and you might just have most of the items hanging around your house already.

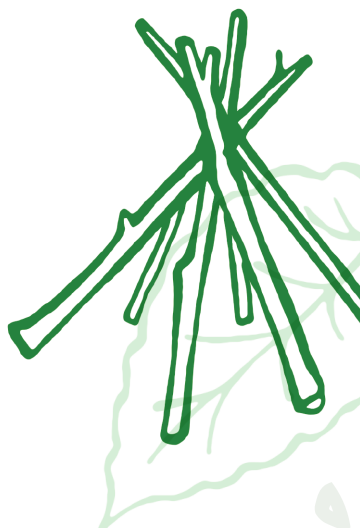

Kids are by nature explorers and young naturalists. Follow their lead and explore your home and the yard around it – even if it's just a tiny strip of grass and trees between the sidewalk and road.

✿ Materials

- 1 canvas or reusable small tote bag
- 1 small notebook with blank pages
- 1 magnifying glass
- 1 pencil, sharpened
- Length of twine
- Several small tins
- Magnifying insect box
- 2 band-aids
- 1 small cloth bag

✿ How to

1. Once you've gathered all of your materials, simply put them in the bag and place the bag by the door so it's always accessible and ready for exploring!
2. The materials I've included are the basic items in our bag, but feel free to add other things, such as a mini flashlight for night walks, a foldable insect, animal, or plant guide, crayons, tweezers, or ductape. As your child gets older you can adjust what items go into the bag and how large the bag is.



How to Explore Your Home and Yard

Same old yard, same old house. Or is it?

Sometimes it simply takes a moment's pause – and an encouragement to find fresh eyes – to see that there's a world of things to explore right around you.

✧ How do you explore your own home and yard?

SPEND TIME IN A SPOT THAT YOU DON'T NORMALLY SPEND TIME IN -- SAY A CORNER OF YOUR YARD, OR TUCK YOURSELF IN A CLOSET. AND THEN OBSERVE -- WHAT IS YOUR HOME LIKE FROM THAT PERSPECTIVE?

IMAGINE THAT YOU WON'T SEE YOUR HOME FOR A LONG TIME. HOW WOULD YOU WALK THROUGH IT TO APPRECIATE IT?

ASK YOURSELVES: WHAT 3 THINGS DO YOU LOVE ABOUT YOUR HOME? WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER MEMBERS OF YOUR FAMILY? THERE'S NOTHING LIKE A LITTLE GRATITUDE-FEST TO MAKE YOUR HOME GLOW IN NICE WAYS.

ANOTHER FUN WAY TO SHIFT YOUR EXPERIENCE OF YOUR HOME: CHANGE SOMETHING. MOVE FURNITURE AROUND IN A BEDROOM OR LIVING ROOM. ADD A BIRDFEEDER AND NOTICE THE BIRDS THAT COME FRESH TO YOUR YARD. HAVE A SLEEPOVER ON THE LIVING ROOM FLOOR. OR CAMP IN YOUR BACKYARD!

1.

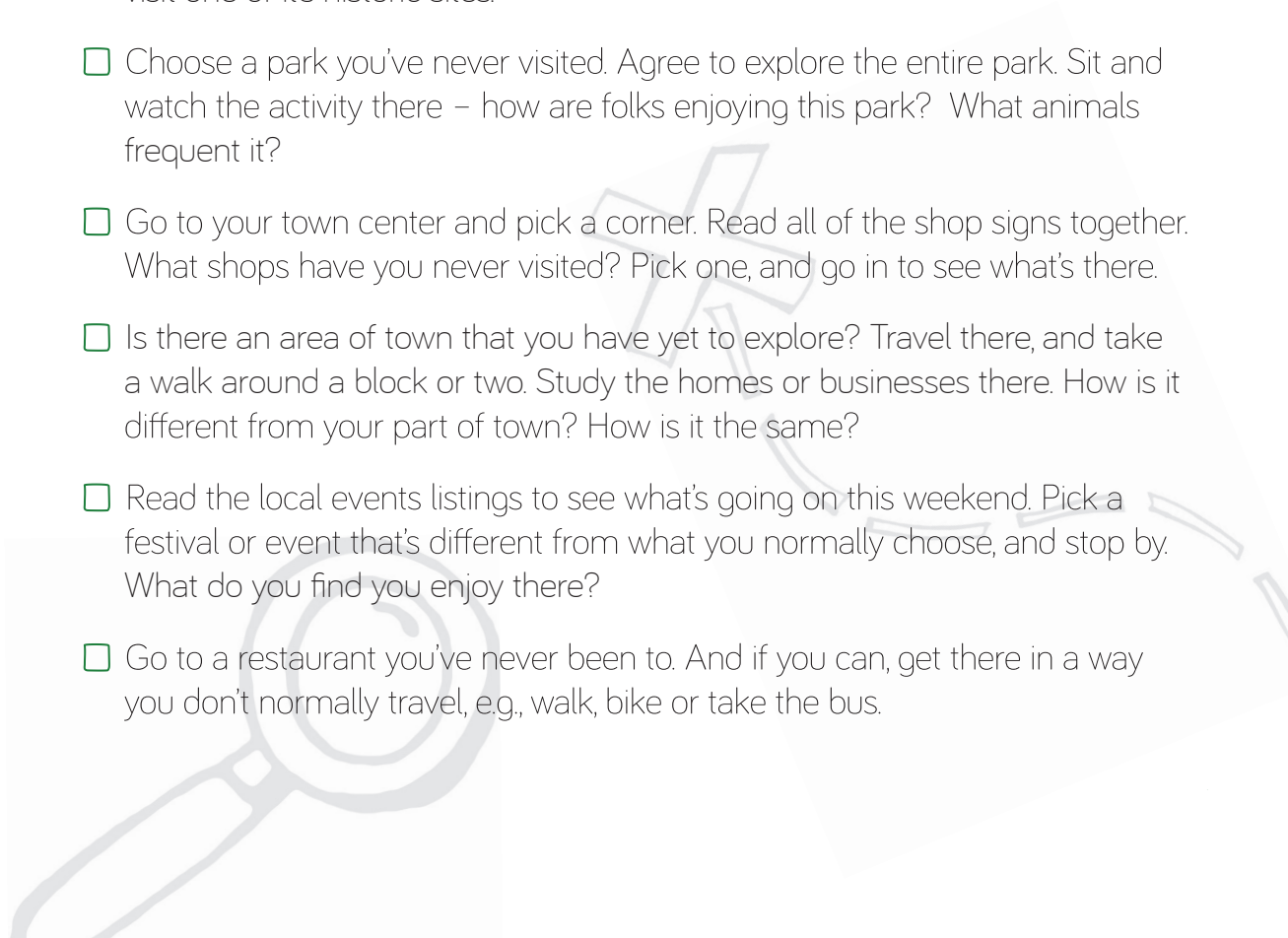
2.


3.





How to Explore Your Neighborhood and Town (parents)


- ☐ Introduce yourself to a neighbor you've never met. Ask them about themselves.
 - ☐ Find out why your city or town is named what it is. Learn a little history, and visit one of its historic sites.
 - ☐ Choose a park you've never visited. Agree to explore the entire park. Sit and watch the activity there – how are folks enjoying this park? What animals frequent it?
 - ☐ Go to your town center and pick a corner. Read all of the shop signs together. What shops have you never visited? Pick one, and go in to see what's there.
 - ☐ Is there an area of town that you have yet to explore? Travel there, and take a walk around a block or two. Study the homes or businesses there. How is it different from your part of town? How is it the same?
 - ☐ Read the local events listings to see what's going on this weekend. Pick a festival or event that's different from what you normally choose, and stop by. What do you find you enjoy there?
 - ☐ Go to a restaurant you've never been to. And if you can, get there in a way you don't normally travel, e.g., walk, bike or take the bus.
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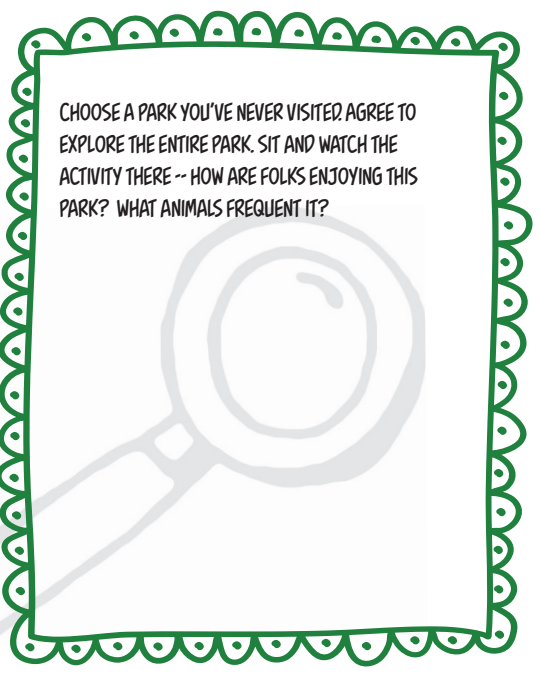
How to Explore Your Neighborhood and Town




INTRODUCE YOURSELF TO A NEIGHBOR YOU'VE NEVER MET. ASK THEM ABOUT THEMSELVES.



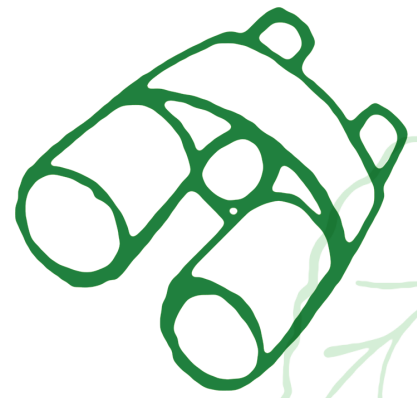
FIND OUT WHY YOUR CITY OR TOWN IS NAMED WHAT IT IS. LEARN A LITTLE HISTORY, AND VISIT ONE OF IT'S HISTORIC SITES.



CHOOSE A PARK YOU'VE NEVER VISITED. AGREE TO EXPLORE THE ENTIRE PARK. SIT AND WATCH THE ACTIVITY THERE -- HOW ARE FOLKS ENJOYING THIS PARK? WHAT ANIMALS FREQUENT IT?



GO TO YOUR TOWN CENTER AND PICK A CORNER. READ ALL OF THE SHOP SIGNS TOGETHER. WHAT SHOPS HAVE YOU NEVER VISITED? PICK ONE, AND GO IN TO SEE WHAT'S THERE.



IS THERE AN AREA OF TOWN THAT YOU HAVE YET TO EXPLORE? TRAVEL THERE, AND TAKE A WALK AROUND A BLOCK OR TWO. STUDY THE HOMES OR BUSINESSES THERE. HOW IS IT DIFFERENT FROM YOUR PART OF TOWN? HOW IS IT THE SAME?

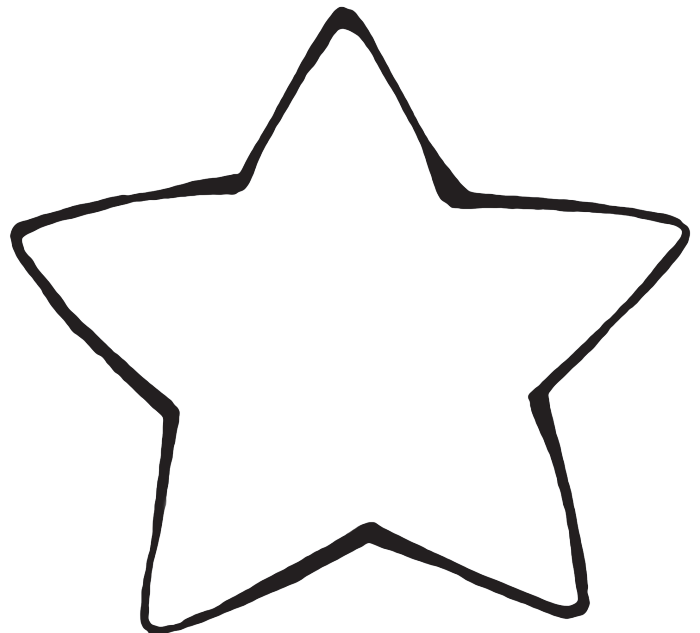
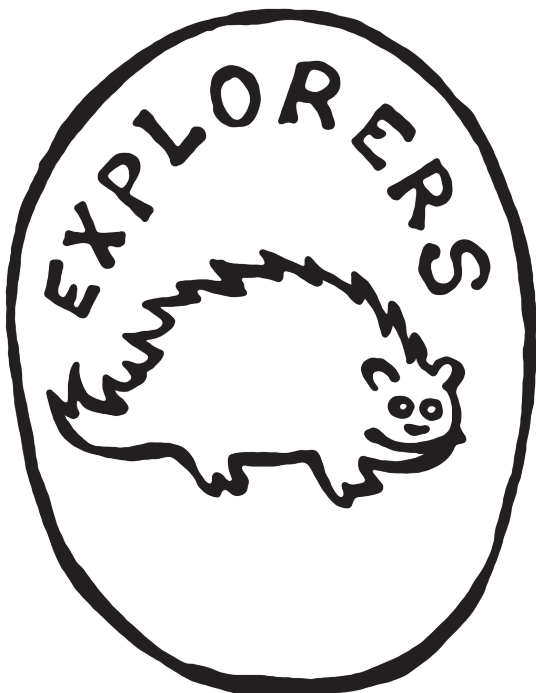
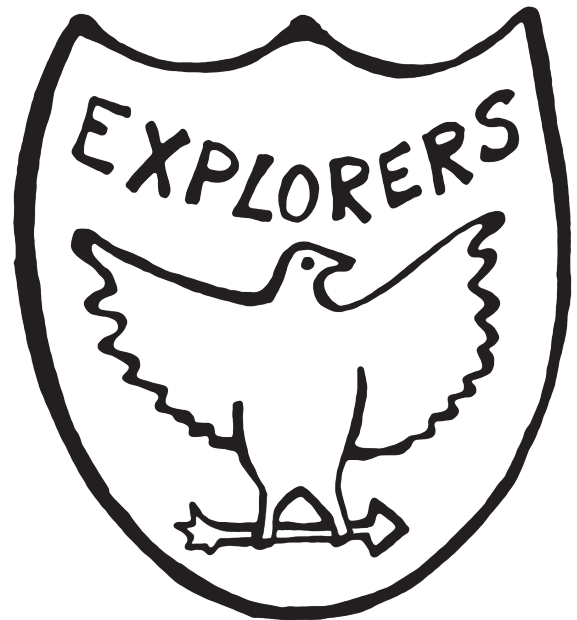
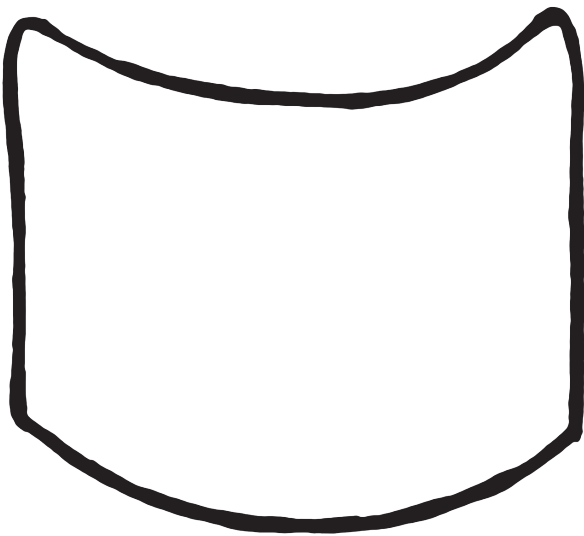
READ THE LOCAL EVENTS LISTINGS TO SEE WHAT'S GOING ON THIS WEEKEND. PICK A FESTIVAL OR EVENT THAT'S DIFFERENT FROM WHAT YOU NORMALLY CHOOSE, AND STOP BY. WHAT DO YOU FIND YOU ENJOY THERE?

GO TO A RESTAURANT YOU'VE NEVER BEEN TO. AND IF YOU CAN, GET THERE IN A WAY YOU DON'T NORMALLY TRAVEL, E.G., WALK, BIKE OR TAKE THE BUS.

Handwriting practice lines with a faint magnifying glass illustration in the background.

Explorer Badges

In the *Martin & Sylvia Saturdays!* story, "A Proper Uniform," Martin and Sylvia are inspired to create their own "Explorers" uniforms, complete with badges. Below are both Sylvia and Martin's badges, so you can join their Explorers team. There are also two plain badges, so you can create your own. What kind of uniform would you like to make?.



RECIPES





Vegetarian Pemmican Bars




Pemmican is a food that was first created up by Native Americans. Traditionally, pemmican was made by mixing dried, pulverized meat with animal fat and dried fruit. While similarly portable and high in protein, Libby's pemmican bars are vegetarian. Feel free to customize the listed nuts and dried fruit to meet your own taste. You can store the finished bars in the fridge, just like Libby does,

Yield: makes 8 large bars or 16 smaller "bites"

Ingredients

- 2 cups mixed, raw nuts and seeds (I used pecans, almonds, and pumpkin seeds)
- ½ tablespoon coconut oil
- 1 ½ cups dried fruit (I used cherries and apricots)
- 1 tablespoon flax seeds
- pinch salt
- ½ cup honey
- ¼ cup water

Directions

1. Preheat your oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit.
 2. In a large skillet, lightly toast the nuts and seeds. When the nuts smell warm, turn off the heat and stir in the coconut oil to coat the nuts.
 3. Transfer the nut mixture to the bowl of a food processor and pulse several times to coarsely chop. Add the dried fruit, flax seed, and a pinch of salt, then pulse a few more times to chop and combine them. With the food processor running on low, drizzle in the honey and water.
 4. Butter or spray a piece of parchment paper and press it into a small baking dish. (The one I used was roughly 9 x 7 inches.) Scrape the mixture out of the food processor and into the dish, using clean hands to press it down into the corners.
 5. Bake the pemmican for 25-30 minutes, or until the edges start to turn deep brown. Allow it to cool completely in the pan, then use the parchment paper to remove it and cut it into bars.
 6. Store your pemmican bars in the fridge — with parchment paper layered between them — for up to two months, or keep them in the freezer almost indefinitely.
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Homemade Beef Jerky



From officers at desolate forts to explorers to cowboys on the trail, beef jerky has long been a staple for people who need protein on the go, or in situations where harder to cook snacks might be impractical for speedy, secret eats.

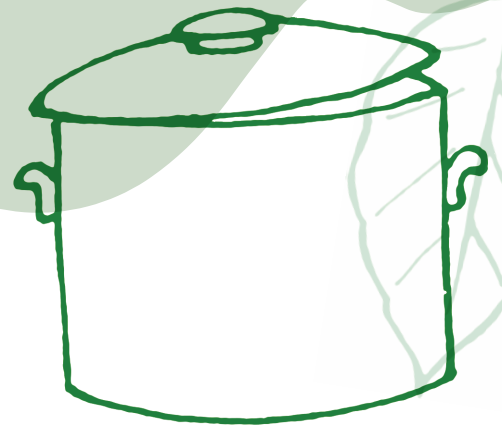
While drying your own jerky has its pitfalls, they're relatively easy to avoid with just a few common sense precautions.

Ingredients

- 2 pounds round steak or similar
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 teaspoon "pink" or curing salt
- 1/4 cup soy sauce
- 3 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 2 tablespoons raw sugar
- 2 teaspoons garlic powder
- 2 teaspoons smoked paprika
- 1 teaspoon adobo sauce
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1/8 cup water

Tips

- While you can play with the spices you use to flavor your meat, try to keep the salt in the recipe you chose at least close to the same. Some recipes don't bother, but I always toss in a bit of curing salt as well, for extra insurance.
- Make sure you're heating your jerky to the right temperature. Get an oven thermometer to check that your oven or dehydrator is really as warm as the dial says.
- Heat treat your jerky to 275 degrees for 10 minutes when it's finished, and then let it sit in an airtight container for 2-4 days to allow any remaining moisture to redistribute. This will help even out any overly dry or moist spots. If condensation forms on the container during that time, you'll also know that your jerky needs to go back in the oven for more drying time.
- Lastly—and this is just a good rule for life, really—don't eat moldy food. If, after storing it for a bit, your jerky smells "off" or is growing critters, toss it out. Here's a simple jerky recipe to get you started. It's a salty/sweet combination, but if you want a bit more of a kick add some red pepper flake or increase the amount of adobo sauce. Slip a baggie in your little boy or girl's pocket the next time they need a secret snack for an adventure.



Homemade Beef Jerky (cont'd)

Directions

1. Put the meat in the freezer for 24 hours before your start; it will make it easier to slice. Once the meat is about half frozen, use a sharp knife to slice it into strips that are about 1/8 inch thick. It's more important that the meat slices are of similar thickness to each other than it is that they're all of perfect thickness.
2. Once the meat is sliced, place it in a plastic baggie and add the remaining ingredients. Remember, you can play with the spices, but keep the salt at least close to the same. Seal the baggie, place it in a large bowl (in case of leakage), and pop the whole thing in the fridge overnight.
3. The next morning, spread the meat out evenly on dehydrator trays or on racks in your 150 degree oven. Dry until the meat will crack, but not break when you bend it. That should take approximately 6 hours in a dehydrator and may take double that time in an oven. Either way, finish the jerky by heating it for 10 minutes in a preheated, 275 degree oven. Allow the jerky to cool, pat off any oil that has collected, and place in an airtight container for 24 days for conditioning. Give the container a shake once a day—this will help distribute any moisture left more evenly—and if you notice condensation forming on the container put the jerky back in the dehydrator or oven to dry more.
4. Store the jerky in a cool, dark, dry place. It will last a few weeks at room temperature, a few months in the fridge, and for up to a year frozen.

Millet Crispy Treats



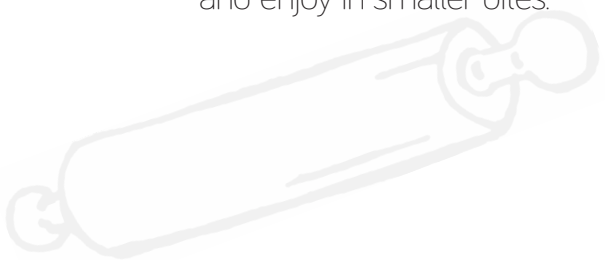
These millet crispy treats look a lot like the marshmallow-y rice crispy treats that you probably grew up eating. But while both treats are based on crispy puffed cereal, these millet treats are not simply a knock-off rice crispy.

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup peanut butter
- 1/2 cup honey
- a pinch of salt
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 3 1/2 cups puffed millet cereal
- 1/3 cup chopped dried fruit (apricots or cranberries would both be good)
- butter or oil (for greasing the pan)

Directions

1. Begin by liberally greasing a baking pan. You'll want to use something close to an 8X8 pan for this recipe, but size isn't absolutely critical. (The pan in these photos, for example, is more like 6X8.)
2. Then, in a small saucepan, mix together the peanut butter, honey, and salt. Put the pan over medium heat, and stir constantly until the peanut butter just starts to bubble. Remove the pan from the heat, and add the vanilla extract.
3. In a large bowl, combine the peanut butter mixture with the cereal and dried fruit. Stir until the mixture is well-incorporated, then press the cereal down into the prepared baking pan.
4. Refrigerate for at least an hour. Then, turn the pan upside down on a cutting board, and give the bottom a good "thwack".
5. The crispy treats should come out as one big square, which you can then cut up and enjoy in smaller bites.





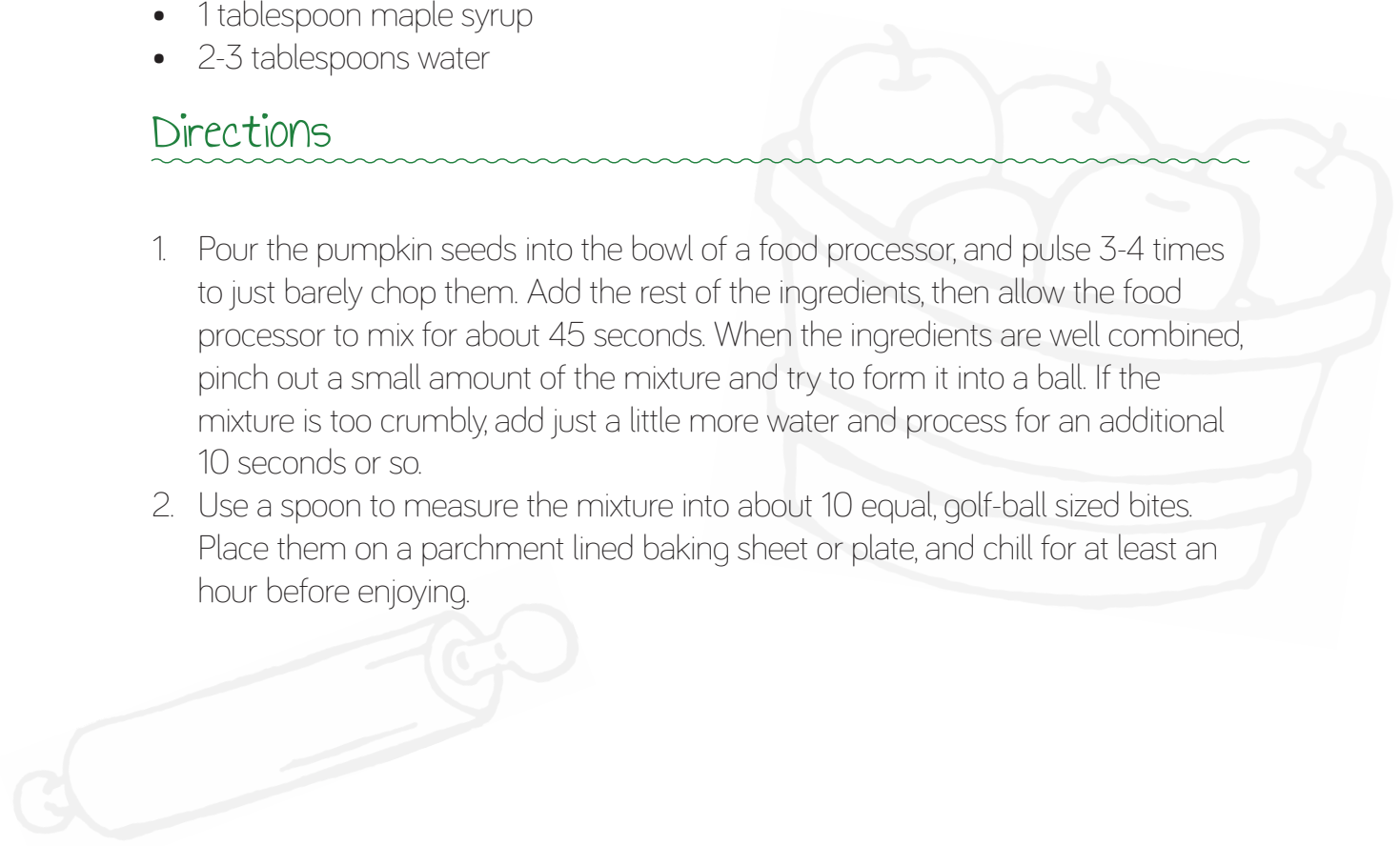
Bird Seed Energy Bites

The combination of peanut butter and nuts provides a one-two punch of protein and satisfying fats that help my little birds keep flying happily. And the honey and maple make them a bit of a treat, too. Feel free to substitute other nuts and seeds—or other nut butters, even—but do keep the ratios about the same. Lastly, these will keep for at least a few weeks in the fridge, so go ahead and double the recipe so that your “bird feeder” is never left empty!

Ingredients

- 5 tablespoons pumpkin seeds
- 2 tablespoons flax seeds
- 2 tablespoons sesame seeds
- 1/3 cup peanut butter
- 1/3 cup old-fashioned oats
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1 tablespoon maple syrup
- 2-3 tablespoons water

Directions

1. Pour the pumpkin seeds into the bowl of a food processor, and pulse 3-4 times to just barely chop them. Add the rest of the ingredients, then allow the food processor to mix for about 45 seconds. When the ingredients are well combined, pinch out a small amount of the mixture and try to form it into a ball. If the mixture is too crumbly, add just a little more water and process for an additional 10 seconds or so.
 2. Use a spoon to measure the mixture into about 10 equal, golf-ball sized bites. Place them on a parchment lined baking sheet or plate, and chill for at least an hour before enjoying.
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Recipe Card Template

Momma caught the organizing bug when she was little, and it looks like Martin has caught it as well. In the Martin & Sylvia: Saturdays! story “The Organizing Bug,” we learn that Momma uses little note cards to organize almost everything – including recipes!

You can use the template here to make recipe cards as well. Decorate them however you wish and then file the cards together into your own recipe folder!

Recipe _____

from

serves

ingredients :

directions: