



**20th Anniversary**

# Ivey's In My Kitchen™

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## Ivey meets John,....

**It's** time to officially tell the full story. Confession, I have fantasized in my childish mind about having the opportunity to tell this story as an adorable anecdote someday. (& here I am!) It has been over twenty years in the telling, but it's taken that long to build up the love and a friendship so strong that it makes something silly into something meaningful. Let us travel back in time. Here I go,....

I'm a young wife moving to my new home, its almost Thanksgiving. We came up to the Hudson Valley from New York City where I had spent the previous ten years living as a single person; I grew up on Long Island and my Husband grew up in Pittsburgh. The city we had just came up from was self sustaining in maintenance and my Daddy was in charge the last time I lived anywhere that the elements affected more then just my wardrobe. So a few weeks later when it snowed and our driveway was cleared and our walking path shoveled I didn't think very much of it.

December was here and my Husband wasn't, almost as soon as we moved in he flew overseas for a three week business trip. Me, in a home nestled high into a mountain with mountains of boxes and no window coverings, I went about my business of building our nest. It snowed again, it was so beautiful and I felt as if I was having some Rockwelian moment. Little did I know, I laugh now, that moment I felt so much and thought it was only my own, it was the very moment that everything changed. It was dark, I sat on my kitchen floor putting away pots and pans with the gentle new sound of my driveway being plowed outside, followed by an almost methodical sound of shoveling. It was my own bit of heaven with a background symphony and I was really in it. I was entertained by the soft sounds and I loved the isolation of the Hudson Valley. I had everything I needed in my space and I felt incredibly flush for it. The oven was bigger then any I had. My tiny well loved kitchen in the city had an oven, it fit half a chicken, it was small, so small, I had no idea how tiny it was until I opened ours for the first time, I sat down on the floor in front of it and I stared in

wide eyed awe. Size mattered. It was clear, oh the epic fun I was going to have with that oven (tingles). And I did. I cooked that oven till it cried uncle. So if anyone had asked me what I thought, at that time, I would have told you the town must be the ones responsible for plowing and shoveling our driveway and it was a service paid for by our taxes. Yeah, I know how stupid that sounds, but I did begin this whole thing with, I was young, didn't I? I cringe now and understand maybe why this story has been held back a little. So it had been a couple of weeks that I was alone, unpacking boxes, playing with my new oven and setting up our home, I'm standing in the kitchen and I see a truck coming up my driveway. My hearts starts pounding and my feet shuffle just a little. Then I see a man get out of the truck and start walking to the stairs leading to my kitchen door. I immediately spin around and hit the floor. I hit the floor hard. I panicked. Even though I had the good fortune to live in a rent stabilized doorman building while living in NYC, I still had no fewer then six locks on my door. Yep, yeah I was THAT girl. So, here I am, paralyzed literally with fear, lying on the floor underneath the cabinets that hid me from the view of the not shaded, totally glass window of the kitchen and its door. It was the first time I had ever felt that I could not move if I wanted to, even though the frantic fear messages my brain was experiencing were positive that still was just fine with all of my body parts. I stayed there long after the gentle knocking stopped. I waited with myself as I heard the stairs from my kitchen descend and then the sound of the truck's door close and its wheels as it got softer rolling down my driveway. I realized I was able to get up again only after it was that or wet my pants. And that's how I met John Vargo. He was the gentleman who had been maintaining the manicured snow of my property from the old owners and now having seen some activity at the house, he simply wished to get paid.

Husband laughed so hard at me over the phone as I told him of my body drop experience, I swear somebody heard him laughing all the way from across the pond. The idea just did not connect as it was

actually happening. Of course I was going to have to meet people, need their services and pay them, duh. I was going to have to run the house like I ran my old job. But like I said, I was young, had not really seen another person in two weeks at that point and I don't come out looking suave in this story. The next time it snowed I waited for John and I ran outside with my checkbook, a hot tea and a big huge smile. I met his dog, we chatted in the dark of three thirty in the morning, we clicked instantly. He was my new friend for life. He did not know the house had been sold and the old family was no longer there and I was thrilled to already have something not easy to find, a really terrific plow guy. It was the beginning of an incredible friendship. The magazine came up later.

John and his wife became fixtures of my new life, he saw me waddling around big and pregnant, a state he saw and said was "constant" but for the record, I have two children, and I think John was here having tea and cake and conversation a lot during both of my pregnancies so I can see how to him it seemed "constant", I still laugh today thinking about it. Later, John and his wife were additional grandparents to my kids. Those kids, when they were babies each had their turns as a permanent attachment on his wife's knee. They adored her. I know we all miss her.

One day John came by and noticing the pile of recently delivered boxes at my front door, inquired. I told him with much enthusiasm about my Magic Oil, my little home business, Ivey's In My Kitchen, Inc. where I went into people's homes and taught them everything from kitchen user friendliness, to food shopping, to meal planning, to cooking, to maneuvering leftovers. I told him how I wrote and was aspiring to be a published writer, and by the end of the discussion, I had a food column. It was such a natural fit. I walked back into my house happy high on a cloud and wrote about the meatloaf we were cooking for the evenings meal. I have been part of the Boating on the Hudson family ever since. That was in February of 2002, I cannot believe everything we have done in these last 20 years! I am humbled as much as I am grateful. Here are some of my favorite food columns and recipe library with photos from the early years:

#### **Ivey's Old Favorites:**

[www.iveysinmykitchen.com/bothissues.html](http://www.iveysinmykitchen.com/bothissues.html)

#### **Recipe Library:**

[www.iveysinmykitchen.com/recipes.html](http://www.iveysinmykitchen.com/recipes.html)

You readers have been with me, on my shoulder like a friend ever since. When I cook, I am thinking of you, wondering if what I'm making is good enough? Would you like it? Would you ever even make it? When I attend a food convention you are with me. Over these last two decades your letters and

emails have sustained me, healed me, inspired me and nothing makes me happier to know that I made you laugh a little. Look, I'm going to sound old....I remember the magazine when it was printed in three colors on absorbent paper like the Pennysaver! That's how old I am. Watching John build the magazine into a family, a community has never stopped impressing me. John's creative and active mind have made windows and doors blow open. Everything from caring about our Hudson River to our environment to the cornucopia of people, which inhabit it, has left me with an understanding of what true altruism is, and I aspire to be as successful at it as he someday.

Not many of you have heard our radio show. And that is a real shame. For two years John gave me one of the best experiences by allowing me to come on Boating on the Hudson Radio on WFAS with Randy our first mate. We had SO MUCH FUN. Those shows, recording them, driving my kids every Sunday morning to the highest point in Croton on the Hudson so that they could hear Mommy on the radio, it was all a blast. Randy was terrific and I miss those days in the editing room afterwards, making my segments "appropriate" for you. I have put up a link/scan code for you to find them. All the recipes are easy and delicious, the interactions are silly and fun, come listen now as the weather gets warmer and find another angle for what goes on in the galley of your boat. Or even just in your own kitchen. Think of them as podcasts before podcasts:

[www.iveysinmykitchen.com/radio.html](http://www.iveysinmykitchen.com/radio.html)

**H**olding up my Boating on the Hudson press ID, I carry the biggest smile of all. I have stood next to posh magazines in Cannes France handing out our magazine with such pride. At the biggest boating expo's in Miami, Las Vegas, California letting everyone everywhere know who we are. We have been as far in this world as Brasil, Uruguay, France, Italy, Canada. Our magazine started as something local and special and relied upon for things like the tides and its resources. But now, it's that and a guide to New Yorks Hudson Valley, a monthly love letter, if you will, to our magnificent Hudson River. John has taken us throughout its history while creating our own on the Hudson River. His drive and stamina and determination has rewarded us with awareness and of course the published product. It has been my honor to get to know our family, have my family participate... like "hey kid, here's your deli sandwich, ummm, is that boat cooking chick your Mom?"..."Yep, that's her..." to being able to get to know some of you over the years. Bringing you food from incredible restaurants and from my own kitchen to yours. Being a part of Boating on the Hudson Magazine and having John as my family are gifts I never expected and I only hope that I can continue to please you readers for another twenty more. John, thank you, for everything.

## **Ivey & Marjorie's Milos Adventure**

**I** have a cousin, her name is Marjorie, as in the book *Marjorie Morningstar*.

In past articles I may have mentioned Maggie, my Brazilian cousin because our shared love of food bonds us.

We are very close, so much so that in my heart I feel we are soul sisters, not just named after two sisters (our great grandmothers). The story of how I have a Brazilian side of my family without the honor of being Brazilian myself is a story for another time. But for now, simply think of Marjorie as a best friend I would die for. We have shared so much she showed me Broadway and I showed her New York's best restaurants. Back in the 90's when we were young and parenthood was something that happened to other people, we would run around the island of Manhattan like two heavily caffeinated clowns. Very fashionable clowns, but clowns. We saw every new Broadway show together and went to every new restaurant opening during her impromptu spontaneous incredible visits. If you were a friend of mine back then you knew my rule if I made plans with you,...if my Brazilian cousin called from the airport and said she was boarding a flight and arriving in the morning to NY, I'm MIA till she leaves, don't rely on me at all. In short, when Maggie calls, all bets are off. And this is still true today, although after this last wonderful visit I am gripped and delighted by how much has changed and what has stayed the same.

And so it was, with more notice than I have ever gotten since I was 17, a month, Marjorie was coming to New York. It would be the first time in six years since we would be together in her home away from her home in Sao Paulo Brasil. Maggie loves NY so much that it is not simply her screen saver but the entire back wall of her office coverage is a photo of the New York skyline. Maggie, if we were lucky, would be sent to NYC for quick errand like trips to assist her family and or business. So it has always been a half marathon to enjoy whilst being efficient. Our favorites have been chiseled down by time, and a pandemic and life. I am not as young as the espresso drinking girls we once were. I am temporarily limited by my health and in this case when we met up as the whole family I employed the use of a wheelchair. Something I don't intend to keep but that I am grateful to have right now.

I prepared myself for a trip into the city, which is an event. My darling daughter came into the city with me to spend time with Marjorie and we wanted to show her everything, we got almost everything accomplished. All except one meal, one unbelievably unforgettable restaurant with the most pleasurable dining experience



to match their divine food that neither my darling cousin nor me could stop talking about it. We kept telling my daughter we would feed her her favorite food from the greatest restaurant with locations around the world then stiffed her of the experience in lieu of going shopping. What did I expect, she's a teenager?! We did not, of course, deny ourselves. During my three day stay we ate at all our favorite places, especially Milos, after my daughter left. However after the third day, I needed to go home. I had to get off my feet but I wasn't finished playing and like a child I did not want to go home. I needed to spend a little more time with my cousin Marjorie. So we came to an agreement, we would get together at a new location of our favorite restaurant. We had eaten at our classic location in the 50's but this Milos was located in Hudson Yards. A space we could drive up to, park the car, use my wheelchair, have smooth floors and easily spend one more day with my cousin, and not end up a liar to my kid. We made a 12:30 Saturday reservation and not only did I get to impress my 18 year old, I found a favorite to my favorite. I'll explain.

Milos is Greek food, it's symbol on their sign is a fish and they have the most incredible selection display to order from that fish lovers would feel the happiness just walking in. They also serve their own sashimi and sushi but that's not what I go there for. I don't even go there for their fish as much as I did the first few years. I'm being completely honest with you. I will always eat it if it is ordered because Milos dishes are divine and served to share. But,

[www.boatingonthehudson.com](http://www.boatingonthehudson.com)

there is so, so much yummy goodness even just at the beginning of the menu I almost never get to ordering the fish these days. Marjorie and I have a language about this restaurant, it's food, it's menu. We know what we want, we order very quickly and without exception, be it Las Vegas, New York in the 50's or at the Hudson yards location all of our wait staff have voiced concern about our possibly ordering too much food. At Milos, everything is so incredible that there is no such thing as ordering too much food. Even with their generous portions. There is simply so much to taste!

The Milos Special; paper thin zucchini and eggplant, lightly fried, saganaki cheese and tzatziki. That is their description, here's ours; a plate carrying crispy yummy wisps all surrounding a mound of a sauce so delicious we better order two because I am going to fight you over it. The tzatziki is the sauce and saganaki is like a Greek fried cheese stick. The whole dish is stacked like a delectable jenga where if you draw your slim slice of either zucchini or eggplant with just a schmear on the edge and it doesn't collapse everybody's a winner. Then after everyone has been the appropriate amount of polite you get territorial with serving spoons held tightly against firmly pressed forks grabbing until the plate is now a stark white circle with few fried crumb remnants and a streak of ungettable sauce.

Then, there is the thyme grilled mushrooms, outstanding, cooked with such flavor and simple perfection, I order two if I'm expected to share. The platters and portions are large, however, everything is so good that you must taste everything. The fried calamari was so delicate and juicy it seemed as if all other places I had previously ordered the dish just didn't compare. I can't say enough good things about their fried calamari. Just as I thought it was a lost art, I was placing it in my mouth and gently making inappropriate table noises. Or so I'm told. The next dish to send me skywards was their grilled octopus served with capers and the creamiest of hummus. Grilled octopus when done beautifully, like this, is meaty and soft. I just love it. There is something about the Milos green salad is ungettable. I have tried many times to even just identify its secret but I cannot make it at home with any resemblance. This is how it is described and served at the Hudson Yards location hearts of romaine, dill, spring onions, Mizithra cheese and Milos house dressing. I NEED TO KNOW WHAT'S IN THAT HOUSE DRESSING!

Desert for me at Milos has always been baklava, theirs is an almost sinful pleasure how they combine their nuts into the most satisfying delicate delight. I thought I had the best on the menu but I was happily educated by the incredible staff. A desert called Galaktoboureko which is vanilla and lemon zest custard in layered phyllo made it impossible not to make those noises again. It was so unique and satisfying. Milos as a restaurant is set up for your pleasure, it's space is set up in such a way that you are cozy but never crowded. The HY location was well set up for wheelchair accessibility, the restaurants

design on the fifth and sixth floor of Hudson Yards make the view from every table picturesque, the service was nothing short of fine dining, and the experience was unforgettable. The genius blue eyed wizard behind the grill, Saki is a master of what he touches. And Jelena, our incredible, engaging beautiful waitress had the best taste in desserts, she recommended the Galaktoboureko. When you go to the Milos in Hudson Yards try everything and tell them Ivey sent you.

Maybe someday I can get the magic of Chef Saki's tkaziki but until then I am just going to have to give you mine. It's perfect on lamb, or with fried veggies, or pita chips, maybe even on salad, I serve it with everything and it's best served cold. This is my homage to Milos.

### **Ivey's Home Made Tzatziki**

**Greek plain yogurt (1 Qt. container)**  
**Cucumbers (2 long English seedless or 8 small)**  
**Fresh dill chopped very very fine, almost into a paste**  
**One small clove of garlic crushed and chopped so very fine**  
**Lemon salt**

Set out a large glass bowl with a colander inside. Shred the cucumbers with a box grater directly into the colander.

Sprinkle 2 Tbs. Lemon salt onto the shredded cucumber.

Add the dill and garlic to the cucumber mixture then stir gently while it is all in the colander. Press the cucumber mixture against the sides of the colander to drain as much liquid into the large glass bowl. Remove all gathered liquid and set it aside in a tall glass.\*

Place all of the cucumber mixture into the large glass bowl and add half the quart of yogurt in. Stir very well. Once everything is combined add the rest of the yogurt and FOLD it into the cucumber mixture. That means to start your spoon or spatula in the center of the bowl, scoop from underneath and place the bottom of the contents of the bowl onto the top. Use your opposite hand to rotate the bowl to help in the folding action. Fold until the entire mixture is combined. Taste.

If you find yourself slightly satisfied, cover the tzatziki into the refrigerator for at least two hours to let the flavors marry up. It will last a full week in the refrigerator.

\* When I am finished it's my tradition to fill the glass with the juices from the cucumber with soda water, it's my special treat. Not bad with vodka either. Very refreshing.

**Enjoy!**

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\* You are left with a prepared dinner and a set table