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# Between FRIENDS

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The flowers are blooming, the birds are singing, and spring is in the air! It's a great time to put a home on the market—call me today for a free consultation.



Do you know the difference between a home warranty and homeowner's insurance? **Home warranties** are *service contracts* that cover home systems and appliances that fail due to normal wear and use. **Homeowner's insurance** *indemnifies* the homeowner against *damage or liability* arising from some unknown or contingent event. Both offer valuable budget protection, and they can work in conjunction with one another. For example, if a covered water heater leaks under normal use and floods the home, the home warranty will repair or replace the water heater, while homeowner's insurance may cover the water damage.

I recommend an **Old Republic Home Protection Plan** with every transaction for complete budget protection. Call me today to learn more about how a home warranty can benefit you.

Do you have a friend in need? I live and breathe real estate, so let me lend my expertise to guide your family, friends, and colleagues through their next transaction.



## Health & Safety

### Choosing the Right Daycare

You want the very best for your children. Choosing the right daycare is no simple matter, but if you approach it systemically—the way you would any other major decision—you can head to work each morning knowing you've left your kids in safe, caring hands.



The US Department of Health & Human Services strongly recommends shopping around for the right daycare. Get recommendations from trusted friends and local family, visit child-care facilities, and talk to the staff about their approach to child-care. What is their level of experience? Is the ratio of staff members to children high enough to ensure that all kids are adequately supervised? These are all important factors.

Young children's minds are like sponges, curious about the world and ready to soak up all the sights, sounds, colors, words, and new ideas they're exposed to every day. Are there plenty of activities to keep your kids actively engaged? Don't take the staff's word for it. When you make your initial visit in the middle of the day, listen for sounds of happy children—that joyful noise is always a good sign—assuming it isn't nap time!

## Helpful Hints

### Discovering Loose Leaf Teas

Remember years ago when lattes, mochas, and cappuccinos were uncharted territory for coffee lovers? Then came gourmet drip coffee with subtle accents and a whole range of flavors. Today, warm beverage drinkers are discovering (or perhaps *rediscovering*) the joy of loose leaf teas—a forgotten pleasure in today's fast-paced, pre-packaged world.

Loose leaf teas are brewed directly in a tea pot or tea infuser, with hot water poured over the whole leaf and allowed to steep. By preserving the whole leaf, rather than pulverizing it and sealing it in a tea bag, you can experience tea the way it was enjoyed for centuries across Asia and Europe—with deeper aromas and richer flavors than you ever thought possible.

The pre-packaged tea bag manufacturer has mastered consistency, but if you're looking to spice up your tea time, loose leaf teas come in countless varieties. In fact, subtle variations from one tea plant to the next (even among the same varieties of plant) make each cup an entirely new experience.



## Savor the Flavor

### Shrimp Salad with Cucumber & Mint

2 lbs	medium shrimp, cleaned	½	English cucumber, seeded and diced (about 1 ½ cups)
1 cup	fresh mint leaves	1	lemon, zested
2 tbsp	lemon juice		Salt and pepper
3 tbsp	olive oil		

Cook shrimp in boiling water for 3 minutes, drain and drop in an ice bath to avoid over-cooking. Drain again once cooled. Put mint and lemon juice in food processor and pulse to coarsely chop the mint. Drizzle olive oil into processor while pureeing until mint is finely chopped. In a serving bowl, toss shrimp, cucumber, mint mixture, zest, salt, and pepper to combine.

## Household Tips

### Designing a Comfortable Guestroom

**B**enjamin Franklin famously said, "Fish and houseguests smell after three days," but we all enjoy a visit from family and friends... so long as their stay hasn't passed its expiration date. The following tips from *Woman's Day* magazine and *HGTV.com* can add a touch of class and comfort to your guestroom.

**Freshly Cut Flowers:** Help brighten the room and make your guests feel welcome.

**A Good Book:** A good book or magazine—something with short vignettes that can be read in one sitting—make an excellent addition to the nightstand.

**Bedside Lamp:** It isn't uncommon for a night owl to couple off with an early riser. When you include an adjustable desk lamp next to the night stand, the early bird can sleep

while their spouse can stay up all night finishing their mystery novel.

**Extra Pillows:** Simply put... nothing says comfort like a puffy pile of plush pillows on a big bed.

**Universal Charger:** We all forget things when we travel, but one of the very worst things to forget is a charger for a cell phone, e-reader, or laptop. You can buy a universal charger to keep all their devices juiced and connected.



## Brain Teasers



### The Cosmos

- After the sun, the closest star to earth is:
  - Sirius A
  - Proxima Centauri
  - Procyon
  - Vega
- It takes \_\_\_\_ for sunlight to reach the earth's surface.
  - 15 seconds
  - 2 nanoseconds
  - 8 minutes and 20 seconds
  - 3-½ years
- Even light cannot escape the boundary around a black hole known as the:
  - Globular cluster
  - Accretion disk
  - Event horizon
  - Magnetosphere
- NASA estimates the age of the universe to be around \_\_\_\_ years old.
  - 30 million
  - 12-14 billion
  - 50-60 trillion
  - 50,000

ANSWERS: 1-b; 2-c; 3-c; 4-b