

# the Ethical Times

## Cooking with Ethics!

People know me for my work as an ethics trainer. But I, like everyone else, have been cooking more, and I think I have become quite the gourmand (or at least that's what my roommate tells me). And in times like these, there's nothing wrong with being a little more sustainable, thrifty, and healthy. So, if you want to up your game like I have, it's not hard. You probably have everything at your disposal already. Just follow these simple rules, and you'll have a plate of "Gavin's Good ole Sunshine Cakes" on the table by dinner. So tie your apron on, throw some flour down on the counter, and let's get ready to cook with ethics!

First, I always make sure my kitchen is stocked with three key ingredients:

- **Clear Ethical Code** – Found in Chapter 68 of the City Charter and the Board Rules (or if you want a quick-rise version, the [FAQs](#))



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- **Effective Disclosure** – This helps the public perception yeast grow and remove any doubt that my kitchen is free and clear of potential conflicts.
- **Effective Administration** – This helps with the consistency of each dish and guarantees it's ready to eat by the time dinner begins.

Fold these three ingredients into a bowl and leave it on the kitchen counter to mature, much like the sourdough starter my grandmother kept in the refrigerator for years. I use this mix in just about everything I cook.

Now, while this recipe is flexible, some ingredients should never be used:

- **Gifts of \$50 or more from people or firms doing (or seeking to do) business with the City** – The thing about valuable gifts is they taste great! But only to me. When I use them in City recipes, they taint the aroma of the dish, which affects how other people taste it. In fact, the valuable gifts might be all anyone tastes! And don't forget, some kitchens don't want any gifts at all in their recipes, so it's always good to check with the head chef of your agency.
- **Unlawful Gratuities** – There are people who swear by them, but I don't. I find that as soon as I use one, I add another and another. Then it becomes all tip and no dish. It's like the way I eat pancakes: with LOTS of maple syrup (Grade B all the way!). Am I eating pancakes with syrup or am I drinking syrup with a few chunks of pancake in it? Skip the gratuities entirely.

### **Confidential City Information** –

There's a reason my grandmother didn't want to share her secrets (even with me, for crying out loud). Not only did she want to ensure the integrity of anything that came out of her kitchen, but who knows what I would have done with that confidential recipe for my own personal purposes. I mean, I still think I could have retired at 19 had I gotten my hands on her recipe for chocolate meringue pie. Check with your executive chef about what can or cannot be included in your recipes.

- **Any Use of City Resources for a political purpose** – Mix any campaign-related activity into that dish, you might as well throw it in the trash.
- **Communications during the first year of post-employment** – Someday I may move on to start my own kitchen in the private sector, but for the first year away from City service, someone else needs to be the point person for any City-kitchen-related business.
- **Particular Matters** – We always want to avoid cross-contamination in food prep, so if you were working on a particular matter like a contract or vendor bid before moving on to that private kitchen, make sure that matter is totally off your cutting board – don't even touch it! – lest it end up mixed up in your new dish.

Not only will using any the above ingredients result in a bad batch of food, they could also lead to Board-imposed fines and agency discipline.

After considering all that, we're ready to go!

### **COIB and COVID-19**

COIB remains operational and is here for you. The Attorney of the Day is still available to answer your ethics questions at (212) 442-1400 or via the [legal advice request form](#).

We encourage New Yorkers to follow [@nycHealthy](#) and/or text COVID to 692-692 to receive updates as news develops.

And [wash your hands](#).

### **Gavin's Good ole Sunshine Cakes**

*Serves 1 to each person at your agency*

Pre-heat your oven to somewhere between "Warm" and "Broil."

#### **Ingredients**

- 1 public servant – Hey, that's you!
- 1 private interest (a business, second job, not-for-profit, political volunteering, close family member, or business associate)
- 1 public duty (the mission of your agency, plus your individual job responsibilities)
- 16 oz. filtered or distilled water

#### **Optional Additional Ingredients**

- 1 part advice from your agency liaison
- 1 part advice from COIB

#### **Instructions**

Take the private interest and separate it from the public duties, similar to separating egg whites from the yolks. Keep those separated at all times. This creates two equally tasteful cakes: one you can enjoy at home, and the other at work. Place these in the oven at separate times and temperatures, let them cool, and then voilà! You've got a great recipe that can be used time and time again. While you wait for the cakes to set, drink the water: it's important to stay hydrated.

Some ethical recipes require a little bit of attention every day, while others can be prepared and set aside in the fridge for when you need them. Whether you need assistance with any ingredients, the steps along the way, or you need to bake some conflicts-free bread right now, our Sous-Chef of the Day is available [online](#) or by calling 212-442-1400 during business hours.



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[nyc.gov/ethics](http://nyc.gov/ethics)

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