



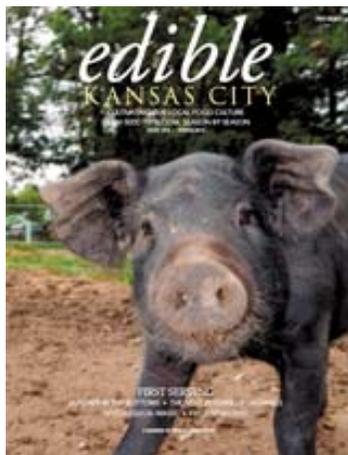
edible KANSAS CITY

Cultivating our local food culture from seed to bloom, season by season

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About AMBER ARNETT-BEQUEAITH

Since 2005, Amber has been on a mission to raise awareness about gluten intolerance and helping those affected realize that “gluten free” doesn’t have to be scary! She has appeared on numerous television shows, served as a gluten-free consultant, and is a contributing writer on the hot topic.

Edible KANSAS CITY explores the foods, stories and communities of Platte, Jackson, Clay, Cass, Johnson, Wyandotte, Miami, Leavenworth and Douglas counties in Missouri and Kansas, season by season. We aspire to be the voice of the local food movement, inspiring readers to support and celebrate the farmers, , chefs, food artisans and local businesses in our community.

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EDIBLE AT HOME: AGAINST THE GRAIN

by AMBER ARNETT-BEQUEAITH

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One Woman's Story





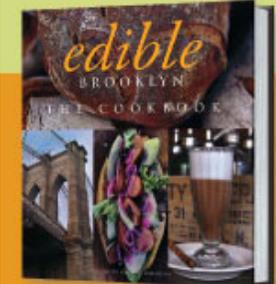
I am always asked in interviews about my primary job as Haunted House Guru or Queen of Scream. “What are you afraid of?” is a common refrain. Well, it’s not zombies or vampires. I have no phobias of snakes or rats. However, with the birth of my twins in 2003, life changed dramatically.

From the recesses of my mind came the repetitive lyrics of a new country jingle: “I want my sleep back, I want my body back, I want my life back.” Not only did we double the number of children with the pregnancy; the natural delivery was no lullaby. Life would be forever changed as the realization that the pregnancy alone and delivering the 7lbs 3 oz. babies (each) was not the only reason for my discomfort. (It didn’t affect my ability to sing, however; I just can’t). I went from doctor to doctor and described a pain in my abdomen that had started during pregnancy. Everyone thought after the birth it would go away, but right after their second birthday I started



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unexpectedly bleeding internally. Now I was scared.

It's hard to describe the alarm of facing a life-threatening illness and the shock that at the age of 35 I was told I could have anything from cancer to Crohn's. I began to lose weight and my hair, and knew then that it was serious. It was when I was leaving the gastroenterologist's office one day after multiple tests (but no additional information) that I realized I had a choice to make. Would I do what the doctors told me or take a chance on finding the true cause? I was told I had 3-6 months to live if I did not start taking the medication that they were prescribing. This medication was uncertain and would probably just mask my symptoms, as they did not know exactly what I had besides that my intestine was severely inflamed and I could no longer absorb nutrients. Therefore, the answer was to just try something and see if it worked. If not, we would move to the next prescription. The side effects list was long and the end of usage was undefined.

As I drove away from the white coat that day, I cried, I prayed, and I listened to my favorite music in search of hope. I began researching. My symptoms partially matched a few different diagnoses but never exactly to any of the five I was given as a possibility.

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