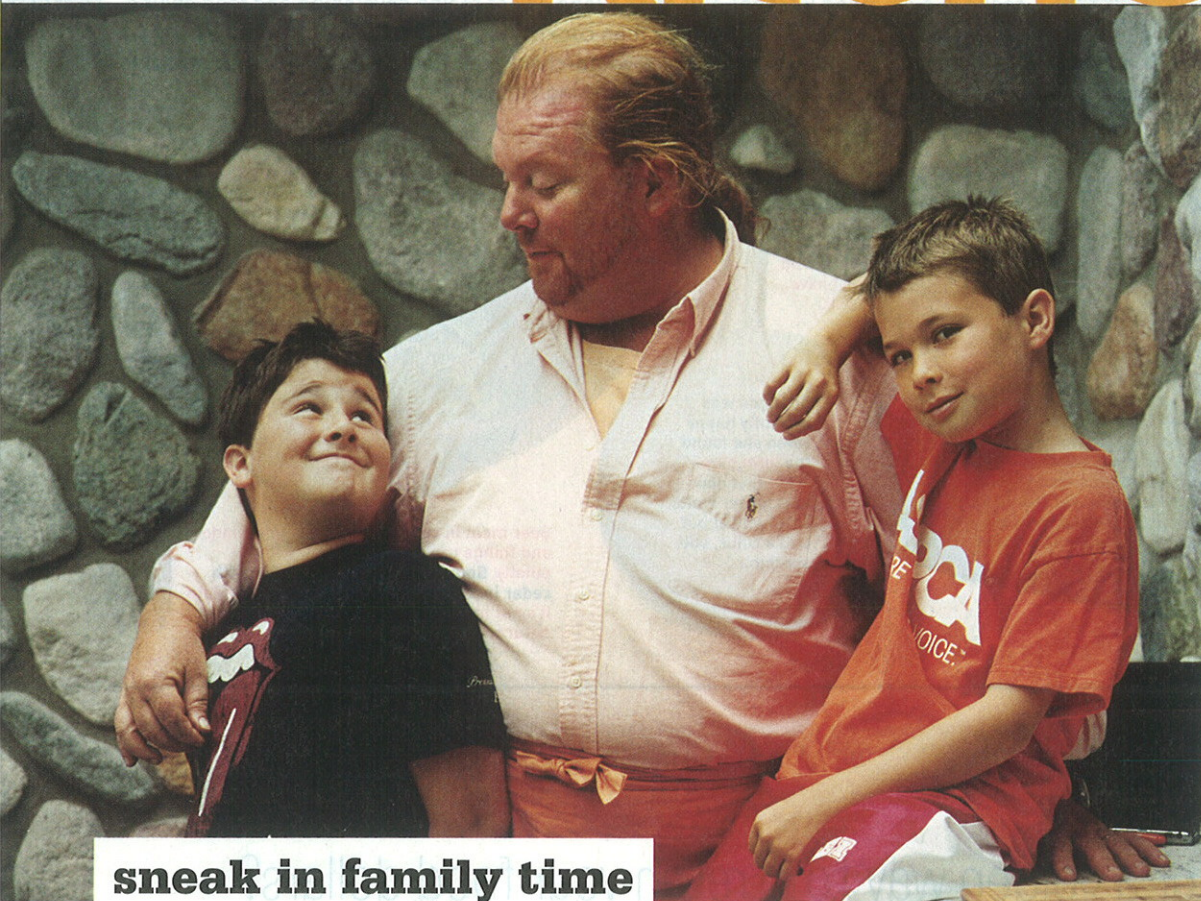


EVERYDAY **kitchen**



sneak in family time

Father of two sons and 15 restaurants, **Mario Batali** knows how to cook up quality moments in the kitchen. BY ASHLEA HALPERN

CREATE THE MENU TOGETHER.

You can't bond over brussels sprouts if your kids won't eat them. "Look at cookbooks with your kids and ask them what sounds good," he says. Get them in on the shopping, too. "They'll get a thrill from being a part of the whole experience."

THEME YOUR MEALS.

"Close your eyes and place your finger on a map. Wherever it lands, that's the theme of the evening," Batali says. "So many times we settle for routine dishes. This forces you to try new cuisines." Venezuelan, anyone?

GIVE EVERYONE A TASK.

"Kids enjoy taking part in a project, no matter how small the job," Batali says. His sons, and like creating the *mise en place*—prepping and measuring out ingredients. Tasks like cleaning produce also make kids feel they played a key role.

MAKE DINNERTIME LEARNING TIME.

"When I serve a particular Italian dish, I'll talk about its origins, the region it's from and so on," Batali says. "Sometimes I'll make a quiz out of it—the winner gets out of helping me wash the dishes!"



knife sharpening 101

When were your knives last sharpened? Yep, just as we suspected. Head to the hardware store, where they'll hone knives for about \$5 each. (Go twice a year.) Steels (those sword-looking tools in the cutlery aisle) are good for maintenance before and after tough jobs like trimming meat, but they aren't a substitute for sharpening.

