

Living with Ed: The Perfect Birthday

TV and movie actor Ed Begley, perhaps the “greenest” man in Hollywood, rides his electric car to the Academy Awards and powers his home with the sun and his stationary bike. But Living with Ed and his environmentalist passion isn't always a walk in the park for wife, Rachelle. This first-of-its-kind reality green show chronicles life with an earth-friendly fanatic with humor and heart.

About this Episode

It's Ed's birthday! And just like everything else in the Begley house, it's far from conventional. For starters, Ed wants to forgo eating out at a fancy restaurant to cook his own birthday dinner. He plans a vegetarian feast, which he cooks in solar ovens. While the birthday boy is busy in the kitchen, Rachelle gets new air purifiers installed and plans her surprise gift for Ed — a tech-y and green gift she normally would never think of. But she's also in for a surprise when Ed decides to switch the typical birthday cake to something a little bit strange.

Vocabulary

- Purifier
- Advocate
- Recreate
- Hybrid
- Vegan
- Hyperbole
- Counterintuitive
- Decaffeinated
- Organic
- Solar
- Threaten
- Antisocial

Discussion Questions

1. This episode is all about Ed's birthday and the unique ways in which he chooses to celebrate. Based on what they know about Ed, what would make his birthday perfect? What foods might he eat? What activities might he do? How might his idea of a perfect birthday be different from Rochelle's?
2. Have students share what would make a birthday perfect for them. How is their perfect birthday similar and different from Ed's?
3. Ed never stops thinking of ways that he can help the environment. Have students list all of the things in this episode that Ed does to help the environment. How many things on their list do students already do? How many could students do if they don't already? Finally, how many would they actually do? Challenge students to implementing one new idea that could help the environment.

Suggested Activities

Vegan Birthday Brownies (Consumer Science, Health, Science, Language Arts)

Ask students if they have ever made brownies. If so, what ingredients did they use? In this episode, Ed makes vegan brownies. Ask students to define the word “vegan.” Then have them identify the similarities and differences between veganism and vegetarianism. *Vegans eliminate all animal products from their diet, including dairy. Those following a vegan lifestyle generally do not wear leather and avoid products made from animals such as wool, silk and down. Vegetarians do not eat meat, fish or poultry, but might eat dairy products such as cheese, eggs, yogurt or milk.* Why might someone become a vegan or vegetarian? What are the advantages of this type of lifestyle? What are the challenges? Have students review Ed's vegan brownie recipe below. Based on what they learned, what makes the brownies vegan? How might the ingredients be different if it were vegetarian rather than vegan? Have students ever tried tofu? If so, how

would they describe the taste? Do students think they would like the taste of these brownies? Why or why not? If a heat source is available at the school, have students make and taste the recipe. Discuss whether it was better, worse or similar to how they thought it would taste. Finally, have students look for other vegan or vegetarian recipes to try at home.

Ed's Vegan Birthday Brownies

Ingredients: 1 cup soft to medium tofu, 1 cup dry sweetener, 2 tsp vanilla extract, 4 tbsp oil, 4 tbsp coca or carob powder, 1 1/3 cup whole wheat pastry flour, 2 tsp baking powder, 3/4 cup chopped pecans. Also need: 8 x 8 cake pan, sifter, food processor and heat source.

Recipe: Preheat oven at 350° F. In a blender or food processor, blend tofu, sweetener, vanilla, oil and coca powder until smooth and creamy. In a large bowl, sift together the flour and baking powder, Add pecans and tofu mixture, and mix together gently until "just mixed", If batter is too dry, add a splash of water, Spoon the batter into a lightly oiled 8x8 cake pan. Bake for 20-25 minutes. Test with a knife to see if done. Let cool in pan for 5 minutes before cutting into squares. Makes 6 large brownies.

Get Walking! (Language Arts, Science, Social Studies)

In the episode, Ed ranks his favorite modes of transportation to use when traveling in and around his community. He ranks walking as his favorite and driving Rochelle's hybrid as his least favorite. Have students share reasons why Ed prefers walking or biking to driving. How is it better for his health? How is it better for the health of the community? How would students rank their own transportation preferences? How often do they walk in their community? How often do they ride a bike? How often do they get driven around? Ed describes his neighborhood is easily "walkable." What would make an area easily walkable? If possible, have students take a walk around the school's "neighborhood." Is it an easy area to walk in? Why or why not? Have student groups imagine that they have been asked by the local environmental association to design a strategy to encourage people to walk or bike rather than drive in the community. Their idea could include physical changes to the community or signs/posters to encourage more walking and less driving. Have students share their strategies with the class, challenging the class to select the one or two most doable ideas. Finally, if appropriate, have students share the ideas they've selected at a PTA meeting, local town board meeting or in the local newspaper.

Sol Food (Science, Design, Consumer Science)

Ed makes his birthday soup using a solar cooker. Have students research the origins of solar cookers as well as why and how people use the sun as an energy source. What are the advantages to using the sun's energy to cook? Students should identify that cooking with the sun is free, renewable and non-polluting! What might be the challenges? Students should identify that it may take longer, you can't cook at night or on a day with no sun and you can't broil. What principles or elements do students think would be important when designing a solar oven? Have student groups design their own solar cookers using the following materials: one pizza box, black construction paper, aluminum foil, scissors or X-acto knife, plastic wrap, double sided tape, an oven thermometer and a hot dog. Then have student groups follow these steps:

1. Line the bottom of the pizza box with black construction paper and tape it down.
2. On the top cover of the pizza box, draw a square 1" from all sides.
3. Cut along three of the lines but leave the fourth line uncut. Fold open the flap.
4. Wrap a piece of aluminum foil around the flap and secure the foil to the flap with double sided tape.
5. Tightly stretch or lay the plastic wrap over the hole on the inside top of the box. Smooth the plastic and secure it around the sides with tape so no air can escape.
6. Use tape to prop open the flap and allow aluminum lining to reflect the maximum amount of sunlight into the oven.
7. Place the hot dog into the solar cooker and make sure that the opening is facing the sun.
8. Cook the hot dog. Record how long it takes for the hot dog to reach 165 degrees.

9. Enjoy!