

---

## Living Homegrown Podcast – Episode 132

### Inside the Elliott Homestead

**Show Notes are at: [www.LivingHomegrown.com/132](http://www.LivingHomegrown.com/132)**

**Shaye:** I fully believe that the greatest moments of life happened not when you're on this grand vacation or when you've climbed to this mountain. It's the everyday ordinary that makes life so magical. If you're eating three meals a day, there might be a time in your life when you go to this incredible restaurant and have this amazing meal and it's a wonderful experience. But the reality is, you're going to eat breakfast on a Monday morning at home for the rest of your life.

**Theresa:** Right.

**Shaye:** If you can make those small moments, something delicious and something wonderful, all of the sudden, you've added this whole new layer of enjoyment and celebration to your life that wasn't there before.

**Theresa:** This is the Living Homegrown Podcast, Episode 132.

**Announcer:** Welcome to the Living Homegrown Podcast where it's all about how to live farm fresh without the farm. To help guide the way to a more flavorful and sustainable lifestyle is your host, national PBS TV producer and canning expert, Theresa Loe.

**Theresa:** Hey there, everybody. Welcome to the podcast. I'm your host, Theresa Loe, and this podcast is where we talk about living farm fresh without the farm. And that can mean preserving the harvest, small space food growing, taking care of backyard critters or just taking small steps towards living a more sustainable lifestyle, all the different ways that we can live closer to our food even if we have little or no garden space at all. If you'd like to learn about any of these topics or my online courses or my Living Homegrown membership, just visit my website, [livinghomegrown.com](http://livinghomegrown.com).

In today's episode, I wanted to bring on Shaye Elliott of Elliott Homestead and I wanted to have her come on and really talk to everybody about what life is like when you live on a super active homestead with a lot of animals, growing a lot of food and four active children running around your feet while you're trying to do this at the same time.

Shaye Elliott, if you don't know her, has a very popular blog and she writes a lot of cookbooks and specifically one of the books that she has written that I really love is called *Welcome to the Farm: How-to Wisdom from the Elliott Homestead*. Grow your own food, raise backyard chickens, preserve the harvests. She has a fantastic way of drawing you into her writing to where you really feel that you are right there with her in every aspect, the ups, the downs, the exciting times and the sad times, all of it together on her homestead.

I really love her writing and so I wanted to bring her on because I couldn't think of a better person to really give us a taste of what it's like when you have so many animals and so much going on and you're trying to have your family life mesh with that at the same time.

Also, Shaye has a lot going on this coming year in 2018. She has already a few books out and she has two new books coming out this year, and she currently has a pilot being run on the Food Network which is right up our alley. It is all about eating real wholesome homestead food and I was kind of excited when I heard that this was a possibility for her. At the time that we are recording this, she's still waiting to hear if it's going to be picked up by the Food Network. And so we talked about what the show is and what kind of recipe she'll be doing.

But I, for one, am really hoping that this show makes it to be a regular feature on the Food Network. Now, let me tell you a little bit about Shaye and then we'll dive into the interview. Shaye Elliott is a farmer, wife, mother, blogger and home cook. Seven years ago, she started a blog that encompasses so many of the things that she desperately loves. Her bearded husband Stuart, their quiver of children and life on the farm.

Shaye and her family lived on a small handful of acres in North Central Washington and on that land, they raised dairy cows, a giant flock of laying hens, meat chickens, hogs, sheep, turkeys and a variety of produce in their large organic gardens. Shaye and her husband farm to provide for their family with as much homegrown food as possible, learning the ways of the land and the ways of the past. They preserve food, stock up the larder for winter and are ever-working towards growing more.

Laundry hanging on the line may cause some to think they're old-fashioned and maybe that's true but they don't seem to mind a bit. Now, as you listened to this episode, there's a lot of different things that we talked about. We talked about what life is really like with all the different animals and with her family and homeschooling and all those different things, but we also talked a lot about having a dairy cow, some of the things that she does with the milk. We walked about raw milk and what that means. We dived into a lot of really interesting topics.

One of the things that Shaye shares with us is a recipe for something called junket. Now, this was new to me. I was really excited to share it with all of you and I wanted to tell you that in the show notes for today's episode, I have the full recipe so that you can print it out and make it on your own. You don't have to try and write anything down while you're listening to the episode.

Also in the show notes, I will have links to Shaye's blog, to all of her books, to some of the blog posts that we talked about in today's discussion and I'll also have some information for resources on where you can get ingredients for making cheese and links to more information from some of the things that we talked about today. To get to the show notes, you just go to [livinghomegrown.com/132](http://livinghomegrown.com/132) and I'll have everything there for you all the resources, all the links in one place.

Now, before we dive into the interview, I just want to tell you that today's podcast episode is brought to you by my Living Homegrown Institute. Now, I truly believe that living an organic farm fresh lifestyle is really a journey in learning and as we learn these different skills such as food fermentation and food growing and even critter keeping, there are three distinct stages of growth. We all start out with curiosity. We want to learn about these new skills, but then we move into experimentation and eventually, we grow into mastery of these skills.

Now, if you're working at creating a farm fresh lifestyle yourself and you're curious where you fall on that scale, I've got a free resource for you. It's my farm fresh success path and it's really what I use inside my learning institute with my students and it will help you decide where you are on your own journey, it will tell you the characteristics of that particular stage and it will give you some action steps that you can take to reach the next level.

To get to the success path PDF, you just go to [livinghomegrown.com/path](http://livinghomegrown.com/path) and you can download it there for free. So, I'm really anxious to share this conversation with you. I think you're going to love Shaye. She is definitely one of us and just has a really fun, fun way about her. With that, let me share my conversation with Shaye Elliott of Elliott Homestead.

Hey, Shaye, thanks so much for coming on the show today.

Shaye: Yeah, thanks for having me. I've been looking forward to it. This is exciting.

Theresa: Me too. I really have been looking forward to this. I've been following your blog. I have your Welcome to the Farm book and I have to tell you that one of the things you do so well on your blog is that you're very present to your everyday and I love the way you write because you really make us as readers kind of stop and pay attention because you're always talking about the sights and the sounds and the smells and the tastes and the good and the bad, and all of that together.

I feel as if when you write, you let us experience everything with you, the whole thing. You have a very honest account. That's why I'm really excited to share you with my listeners because I really want them to check out everything that you do. I guess my first-

Shaye: Oh, thank you.

Theresa: Oh, sure.

Shaye: That's very sweet.

Theresa: I guess my first question is, you started blogging and you are doing this whole homesteading thing, which came first the chicken or the egg? Were you blogging first and then started homesteading? How did that start?

Shaye: It's actually kind of funny because I started blogging when my first born was just a few weeks old and I was working in this office space where I just sat at a desk all day and basically, a receptionist except no one ever came in. I was bored out of my mind and I had my new little baby there so I was feeling all these emotions and all these wonderful things. I started blogging and I called the blog The Elliott Homestead and we had no homestead. There was-

Theresa: That's so funny.

Shaye: There's no element of a homestead at all. Definitely, I guess the chicken came first. The first of that came later. The blog follows us through our very first garden that we had at our rental house when we were just newlyweds. Then we moved to Alabama for a little while and didn't even have a garden there. We did have some rabbits but it's really been this progression that's gone on for quite a while now.

Theresa: Yeah. Now, you're in the Pacific Northwest. You have two and a half acres. You write about all the animals that you have and everything that you do, the ups, the downs, the recipes, a lot of recipes, really fantastic recipes. You even have books coming out with more recipes which we'll talk about. But one of the things that I think is really exciting that I just want to mention here so everybody has it on their radar is that you have a pilot right now for the Food Network. How did that happen?

Shaye: We do, yeah. We are working with an amazing production company that just found our blog randomly. I guess they do this sort of thing. They go around, they try and find people that they'd like to work with. They approached us years ago, came out with a crew and did some short films in our little rental kitchen of just ... I think we did a steak one and we maybe did a pasta one, a little short two or three-minute videos.

They took those to various stations, Food Network being one of them and Food Network, it wasn't the right time. They just said, "We're not interested." We were never out to look for that sort of a thing. It really just sort of happened and we felt, "Okay. Well, we can go along for this ride and we'll just ride it until there's nothing else to do."

Literally out of the blue, last year, a production company called us and they said, "Hey, do you want to do a pilot for Food Network? They gave us the green light." I mean, I was just speechless, just speechless because as a food blogger, especially as a real food blogger, this is as big as it gets.

Theresa: Right.

Shaye: I was shaking in my boots for a little while. It was a pretty intense experience, the only thing I can really liken it to is childbirth where you put so much time and effort into building this and growing this and then, there's this birth happens and this amazing thing comes out and it's just incredible.

Theresa: Yes, and then now, you're now in the waiting period because they do-

Shaye: [inaudible 00:11:24]

Theresa: Yeah, so the way I think it works is that you created this pilot and now, it is actually airing on Food Network and people can find it and watch it. Then now, it's a wait to see if we're going to have a whole series from that going forward?

Shaye: Exactly, yeah. We're really in the waiting. Again, it was one of those things that's like if this goes somewhere, that's great. If it doesn't, we're okay with that too, which is great to fill that piece either way. But the idea of taking real food, actually home-cooked food to the masses, that just gets me so excited.

Secretly, I'm crossing all my fingers and toes that this totally goes through. But they have their ways. It's all numbers. For a station like that, it all comes down to that. They have their marks and they have their numbers that they need to hit. It's just a waiting game at this point.

Theresa: Yeah, absolutely. I have everything crossed too because this is just something that isn't being done and I interview people all the time that are doing the whole farm-to-table lifestyle really but there isn't that much on TV for that.

Shaye: No, not at all, and what's so interesting is we did multiple interviews with Food Network executives before we filmed the pilot. Their concern was, "Hey, our customers, they're not interested in farm to table. They're not going to go to the farmer's market to buy their food. They're just buying it from the grocery store," and I love the challenge of that. Let's say you go into any grocery store across the country, what kind of foods do you buy so that you can still be cooking real food, whole foods from scratch?

Theresa: Exactly.

Shaye: Because it's totally possible. You don't have to rub shoulders with your farmer although I think there's a lot of benefit to that but you don't have to do that to cook wholesome food.

Theresa: Exactly, exactly. Teaching people to shop the perimeter of the store so that they're not-

Shaye: Absolutely.

Theresa: ... getting all the preservatives. I love that that's really how you're going to be taking this if it takes off. Whether it ends up being at Food Network or even someplace else because that's always a possibility too.

Shaye: Sure.

Theresa: But, yes, this is just so needed. I'm super excited about this and hopefully, getting the word out on my podcast, maybe more people will watch will get your numbers up.

Shaye: Yeah, the email Food Network.

Theresa: Yeah, exactly. We should. I think that, in fact, it's exactly what I will tell everybody to do in the show notes. We have to get this on TV as a regular thing not only because we want to see it and we want to experience your food and your lifestyle and everything that you're doing, but it really is needed. And I feel this is something, when they say, well, they aren't interested in that, this is your opportunity to educate them on how they can do it.

Shaye: Absolutely, which is so interesting because even at the beginning of this, you said the blog, it's the sounds and the smells and the tastes and I fully believed that the greatest moments of life happened not when you're on this grand vacation or when you've climbed to this mountain. It's the everyday ordinary that makes life so magical and if you're eating three meals a day, there might be a time in your life when you go to this incredible restaurant and have this amazing meal and it's a wonderful experience.

But the reality is you're going to eat breakfast on a Monday morning at home for the rest of your life. You can make those small moments something delicious and something wonderful. All of the sudden you've added this whole new layer of enjoyment and celebration to your life that wasn't there before. I'm on a mission, man.

Theresa: Yeah, I'm with you. I'm with you. I'm your cheering section over here. I love it. I love it. You just really pointed out, you just perfectly demonstrated what I'm talking about. You really teach your readers to stop and close your eyes and appreciate the moment and that is, I think, so important in today's really busy lifestyle and it's one of the reasons why so many of us, my listeners included that we go for this type of lifestyle is when you're out there, I find weeding very meditative.

When you're out there in the garden and there's the sounds. I garden in the city. I'm in the heart of Los Angeles. I only have one-tenth of an acre but we try to homestead with just our chickens and our food that we grow but there's the sights and the sounds of the garden and the bumblebee and all of that. It's soaking that all in is so important and it helps us not be so stressful from the regular hustle bustle.

Shaye: Yeah, all of those things are best done without a phone in hand too I might add.

Theresa: Yes, totally. I'm with you.

Shaye: Disconnect, stare at the bees for a while. My husband actually said to me the other day, I was just in the mood, that happens.

Theresa: Sure.

Shaye: He just looks to me and he's like, "I think you need to go and spend some time with the pigs." I would sit out in the hay and just watch them move around for a while and came back in totally better.

Theresa: Yeah, it totally works. Yeah, we call that farm TV. We watch our chickens in the evening at the end of the long day. Yeah, exactly. Well, so I'd love for you to describe to everybody what your homestead is like because on your blog, you talked about some of the different locations that you've been on because you've been taking people on this journey for several years now and where you are now, you have several different animals that you raise in your garden. Describe what your homestead is like right now.

Shaye: Yeah. It took us a few years to blend ... You try everything when you start homesteading. I think homesteaders in general tend to be very ambitious-driven daydreamers. There was a time when we had guineas and like all these creatures that we tried but didn't really work for us. Now, we've kind of settled into this really wonderful groove and we found what fits for us. We have a massive laying flock because we have four kids and so we eat two dozen eggs a day. We have to keep a lot.

We keep those. We keep ducks for meat and we keep geese and turkeys just for the novelty of them because we love them. We love the way that they sound and the way that they move. I think the queen of the farm is our dairy cow, Cecilia. We have a little heifer that she had last year. We have two cows now and then we keep a herd of Katahdin sheep. Katahdins are a hair sheep. They don't produce wool, but we raised them for meat. And then we also raised old spot pigs for meat as well.

We have been able on our little two and a half acres to produce all of our dairy products and all of our meat. Of course, we have our big organic gardens as well. So, quite a lot going on.

Theresa: Yes, it's quite a lot, so it's a lot to manage. You have the two of you and you have your four children and I know you also homeschool, isn't that right?

Shaye: Yes, yes.

Theresa: How [crosstalk 00:18:21]. Yeah, but you're building this fantastic life and what a fantastic education you're giving your children not just with that homeschooling education but the education in where their food comes from and all of that. How do you manage taking care of all those animals and homeschooling at the same time?

Shaye: Well, it's definitely a team effort. Originally, when we started, it was a lot harder because my husband was teaching full time, so he was away from the home. We've since moved with the blogs and the books and just the way we structured our business, he's now able to be home and we do all of our work from here.

There's definitely a tag team element because he is a trained teacher, a classical education so he takes over certain subjects that he's really well-trained on. I take over mostly Home Ec like, "Here's how you fold laundry, kids."

Theresa: No, it's important stuff.

Shaye: It is important, but we call it the farm school because that's really what it is. They're reading these incredible novels and they're learning Latin and Math and yet, they're also out milking with us every day and they're learning how to scramble eggs and they're learning how to breed animals and all these sorts of practical things that kids just don't really need to learn anymore unless they're living on the farm. But for us, it's just a normal pace of life.

Everyone goes out in the morning to do farm chores together. Everyone comes in and cleans up and does indoor chores and then literally, the whole family even the baby, we all go down to do school together but my husband, even being classically trained, he recognizes life is education. It doesn't just happen in a classroom and our hope isn't to recreate a classroom here. This is a lifestyle that we're wanting to share with them and there are moments of education through and throughout the entire day.

We really don't sit down to school for that many hours a day. It's pretty short, which makes it possible.

Theresa: Exactly, yes, I also love when you talk about this on your blog, you're very honest about where you can even start doubting yourself and it reminded me so much of being an entrepreneur. We go through the same things. We have the same questions like, "Am I doing this right? Who am I to be teaching?" I definitely will link in the show notes to some of those posts on homeschooling because I love your philosophy about how every moment is a learning moment, so they're really learning all the time and you don't have to beat yourself up that they have to ... You're trying not to teach them something the way you were taught, and so it's a new frontier.

Shaye: Exactly, yeah. One of our really great friends who's also a classically trained teacher, even in the school environment, he said, "You know, I have one mission with my students and that's to teach them to be creative problem solvers and to love learning." I love that because you can be trained for any job. The way technology is moving so fast, they're going to have to be trained fresh anyway.

Now, if you can teach a kid to work hard and to work through problems, to creatively solve those problems, you've created a lifelong learner who's capable of almost anything. That's kind of our mission. Our family motto is Elliotts can do hard things. It's like, "Well, I don't want to trudge up to the barn in two-feet of snow and carry a five-gallon bucket of feeds." It's like, "Well, Elliotts can do hard things. You can do this, so get to it."

Theresa: That is so good. Yes, I love that. Well, I loved your book, Welcome to the Farm, because it really is kind of a manual for homesteaders and I refer a lot of people who write to me and say, "I'm interested in getting into this. What book do you recommend?" I recommend your book because-

Shaye: Oh, thank you. Love it.

Theresa: Yeah. Well, it covers a little bit of everything and really you show the beginner steps and then, following your blog, they can take it so much further.

Shaye: Right.

Theresa: One of the things though that I have to tell you is that even though I only have one-tenth of an acre here, I actually have always secretly wanted to have a cow or a goat, but I know I just can't do that here in the heart of Los Angeles. I'm really excited to talk to you about your dairy animals because you have a whole section in the book on that.

What exactly made you want to have a cow? Because you kind of have a funny story about how you got ... You kind of put the cart before the horse.

Shaye: I totally put the cart before the horse into our little homesteader fashion. When we lived in Alabama, we moved back to the Pacific Northwest which is where I'm originally from and we were able to rent a farm on five acres and so knowing we were coming back to that, I got on Craigslist, I'm like, "Well, every homestead needs a cow." I literally bought the cow three months before we moved back.

It was poor planning and my poor husband, honestly, just ridiculous but I knew like I knew we needed a cow. I'd raised steers through FFA in high school and then I actually went to [WSTU 00:23:40] in Washington for beef production. Cows were part of my ... They're part of my soul like there's something about them that just speaks to me.

I knew we would have a dairy cow. At that time, I think we only had two kids. Now, we have four so they go through a lot of milk so it makes sense for us. She's our queen of our farm. We love her.

Theresa: Yeah, I just loved reading that section and everything that you do with the milk. Let's first talk about this because we're talking about raw milk and-

Shaye: Raw milk.

Theresa: Yeah. I think most of my listeners are familiar with what we mean by that but could you just explain to everybody what is meant by raw milk in case I have a new listener.

Shaye: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, all of our milk is raw, which means it's completely unpasteurized and unhomogenized. This is how all milk has existed for the history of mankind until about, what is it, the 40's I think or 50's, when all of the sudden, they wanted milk to transport further. In order to make it last longer so that it could withstand that transportation from the farm to the city, they pasteurized it which is just heating it up and what that does is it kills all of the bacteria within the milk so that it spoils slower.

The unintended consequence of that is when you've killed off the bacteria, you've also killed off all the digestive enzymes and all the really beneficial bacterias that exist in milk and thus, you turn it from a really nutrient dense food into kind of a dead food that's no longer living. We wanted desperately to be able to raise our children on raw milk so that they could grow with healthy guts and build up strong immune systems. And this was one of our best ways of securing that.

---

Raw milk is legal in Washington state but the Department of Agriculture makes it pretty difficult in order to be licensed, in order to purchase. For us, the ease of having a dairy cow made all of the sudden ... It just made more sense.

Theresa: Yes, and if you live in an area, there are areas where it's illegal. There's areas where there are some weird rules around it. Every-

Shaye: [inaudible 00:25:59] milk.

Theresa: Yes, exactly.

Shaye: We did that in Alabama, yeah.

Theresa: Yeah. There are loopholes and ways around it, and people crossing over the borders and then, it's like they're bringing in drugs.

Shaye: I get it. Well, it's funny, when you believe in raw milk, when you've researched it and you've landed on the side of this is really important, this is the foundational food, you're willing to go the distance to secure it.

Theresa: Absolutely, yeah. I totally get that, which is probably why I've always wanted a cow, but now that you have your cow, you have a definite routine with it. Being someone who doesn't have a cow, I know that there's periods of time. First of all, yes of course, you have to have a baby for her to have milk. And then there's a period of time that you don't have her in milk because she'll be having another baby. Could you tell me like over a span of a year, how long is she milking and how long is she not?

Shaye: Sure. Cows have the same gestation as a human which is nine months. And so, every year, you're basically milking her for about nine months and then she's dry for three. How it works is you breed her. Nine months later, she has a calf and that you immediately start milking her. The first few days will be colostrum, but then you were able to just milk her from there on out. The trick comes in about two or three months into milking her, you actually have to breed her again. You breed her when she's in milk, when she has a nursing calf, which is like ... I've been a nursing mother. I've been pregnant and I'm like, "That's so terrible. Give the girl a break."

But cows are much more resilient than we are. You breed her two or three months after she calves, and then she continues to carry that calf. You stay pretty consistent. If you calve in June, you calve in June every year, so as long as you stay to that schedule. Every dairy person does it differently. I give my cows a solid three months of dry time, a time when they're not in milk before they calve so that their bodies can really build up the nutrients and the energy that they need, they can put it into the baby.

Like our cow, she calves in June, so we'll dry her up in March. We won't milk her at all April, May through June until she calves. She gets some kind of a break, which is interesting because people do not think of milk as a seasonal food, but it really is.

Theresa: Yes, absolutely it is. I'm glad we explained that, so if anyone didn't know. Then you have this cow, and you have to milk her every morning and every night no matter what?

Shaye: Again, people do it every way. We have decided to keep the calf on the cow, so we got this beautiful little heifer calf and we thought, "You know what? We'll just see what happens if we keep her." It's really great because we've milked before morning and night for nine months straight with zero breaks, and that can get tedious. We're home people. We like to be here, but even that's a little bit much.

What's so great about having the calf is that if don't want to milk, you just leave the calf on, and she's like your little built-in milker for you. You don't have to worry about the cow getting engorged or getting mastitis.

We found a good rhythm with our kids being really young with the amount of energy it takes just to get them out to do chores. Right now, we only milk once a day. We go out in the morning. Stu milks from one side. I milk from one side. Each of us have two tits and we can milk her in 10 minutes, and it's totally done. Then she's with the calf for the rest of the day. We separate them at night and then we milk her again the next morning, so it's really easy. And if we ever want to leave on vacation, we just leave them together. We don't separate.

Theresa: That was my next question.

Shaye: It's so simple, yeah.

Theresa: Yeah, okay.

- Shaye: It's really great when you have that freedom.
- Theresa: Yeah. That makes a big difference. I was thinking, "And then you can never go on vacation."
- Shaye: I know, yeah. We've done that. We're not huge vacation people, but to have the ability to say ... We take Sundays off. We don't milk on Sundays, which is just great. It's like Pepper gets to eat. We get to take the day off, super easy. I think it makes it doable for people.
- Theresa: Yes. What do you do with all the extra milk? Because I imagine that there's times when it starts getting out of hand.
- Shaye: Yes, sometimes. Definitely much more when we are milking two times a day. There was a time with our other cow, Sally, she was giving us five gallons a day. We drink a lot of milk, but that's a lot of milk. We found a few creative ways to use that. One of the ways we use it was we fed it to our pigs, which was wonderful because they grew so fast just because it's so dense. It's so wonderful for them. That's one way.
- I also took up cheesemaking, which I have learned there is a reason there like artisans who do this because there were some pretty bad cheeses in there.
- Theresa: That's so funny.
- Shaye: Yeah. I'm going to have to work on that. Also, not a great hobby if you have young children because a few degrees of temperature difference can make the difference between making a really good cheese and making a really bad cheese.
- Theresa: That's a really good-
- Shaye: [inaudible 00:31:32].
- Theresa: Yeah. That's a really good point. I hadn't thought about that, but you just take your eyes off of it for a split second and you missed that temperature margin. And that's so easy when you have to go chase after someone.

Shaye: Oh, yeah. I think I will take it up again when the kids are a little bit older. But now, I just keep it to really soft, simple cheeses that are really hard to screw up. No more Parmesans, just not going to happen. I will gladly support a farmer who does that well.

Theresa: Yes. Well, and you can always do that later when the kids get a little larger, a little bigger and they can help you do it.

Shaye: Exactly.

Theresa: One of the things you had in your book which just like ... It was one of those moments where I was reading through and I did a double take. You had a recipe for something called junket, which I'd never heard of before and I had to quick google it and learn that it was a very old-fashioned thing to do with milk. You have a recipe for junket in your book, and so I would love for you to kind of walk everybody through what it is and how you make it.

Shaye: Yeah. I first stumbled upon the concept of junket in the cheese-making book I got called *The Art of Natural Cheesemaking*, which I loved the concept of. And there was this recipe or I can't remember if it was a recipe or if it was just the introduction to it. Somehow, junket came into my life and having young babies, it was really the perfect first food to like introduce to them. Junket is made simply by warming up milk very, very slightly, adding an incredibly small amount of rennet just enough to make the milk set. And then you let it chill, let it settle and serve it. I love to serve mine dusted with cinnamon.

What's so fascinating to me about junket is like originally, it was made to help nurse people who were sick back to health because you heat the milk so low that it still has all its wonderful enzymes and bacterias, you're kind of setting it into a slightly solid form almost like a milk jello, those slightly different texture. It's really a milk curd. They would feed this junket to people on the hospitals to nurse them back to health and I thought, "What a novel concept. The food that you eat affects your health? How crazy is that?" And people used to understand this concept.

And I think, now, we kind of see this upswing of some hospitals taking note of that. I love the idea of introducing that to my little kids, introducing them to something that's completely old fashioned and yet totally relevant to today, something that we could still be benefiting from if people know about it.

Theresa: I imagined you can change it up a little bit like in the book, you use cinnamon, nutmeg, cardamom, but you could just play around with that, right?

Shaye: Totally.

Theresa: Yeah.

Shaye: Absolutely. Sometimes I'll even just like put in a scoop of like apricot jelly or something. It can really be anything.

Theresa: Yeah. Well, I loved the way you described it in the book because you said junket is cheese, in a way, but it's totally not cheese. Junket is flan, in a way, but totally not flan. And junket is custardesque, but totally not at all. And then you just said it's in a category all of its own.

Shaye: Yeah. It really is. It could be like I consume maybe a slightly wetter panna cotta of sorts. You'll just have to make it. It's super, super simple just keeping rennet on hand even for your cottas is great. Yeah, definitely give it a go especially if you have little ones. It's such a wonderful treat.

Theresa: Now, in the recipe that you had in your book, you called for one tablespoon of active kefir or whey, and is that something ... Kefir is fermented milk if someone doesn't know, and whey is like a by-product if you're making cheese. It's the liquidy part that drains out. Is that something that we would have to have to make this?

Shaye: That is totally optional. One of the great ... Both of those foods have in common is that they're both alive and super charged with beneficial bacteria. Adding that into the process of making junket, all of a sudden, it becomes this super charged food. I like to think of kefir is like yogurt on steroids. No one is unfamiliar with the benefits of eating yogurts. Not a lot of people are familiar with kefir, so it's taking the superpowers of yogurt, all those yummy probiotics and digestive enzymes. And it's completely super charging that. That's exactly what it does to junket. All of a sudden, you get this powerful punch of ... These wonderful little things that just live on this invisible plane that we never get to see but that can greatly benefit our health.

---

Theresa: Perfect. Yeah, and this is something if you're doing this sort of thing and you have it on hand, we're always looking for things to do with our whey. This is a perfect thing, but that's why I wanted to ask because I thought if that was critical component, then they might not feel like they could make it but that's really good to know. Really, it's the rennet that kind of turns it over.

Shaye: Exactly. It just sets it slightly.

Theresa: Fantastic. Well, one of the things I didn't really have planned to ask you but as we were talking, I remembered you talking about this somewhere on your blog and that's coffee. You could just hear the tone of your voice changed. I'd love for you just really briefly to tell everybody, because you guys really are into coffee and you do a home roasting thing.

Shaye: We do. Obviously being from the Pacific Northwest, the town I grew up in. Even back then, there was a coffee stand on every corner. It's just part of our culture here. If you meet up with a friend, you meet at the coffee shop. That's just the way it works. When we moved down south and there was, I think, one Starbucks in like a 20-mile radius, I was like, "What is this fallacious place where people don't drink coffee?" I didn't understand.

When we moved back, I was super happy to have my little coffee stands back. But since then, we've upped our obsession a little bit more. We were able to purchase a Faema espresso machine from a little coffee stand here that was going out of business. Now, we live about 20 minutes out of town, so we don't drive in to just get coffee. We make coffee here, so we have this two-head espresso machine that weighs about 300 pounds in our kitchen.

But coffee is kind of my husband's deal, so he learned how to roast coffee in a Poppery popcorn machine from the 80's. There's a specific model of popcorn maker that gets hot enough to roast coffee beans. You can find them on eBay. We found ours at Goodwill, I think, for about \$3 and we've been roasting it for over five years. It's really remarkable. You buy green beans. You roast them at home. You just can't beat the freshness. You cannot beat it.

Theresa: No, and you do it outside because it gets kind of smoky?

Shaye: Yes, it does. It gets really hot and really smoky. But it's just good as it gets. That's the only reason I get out of bed in the morning. He'll wake me up and he'll say, "Honey, there's coffee on the table." He knows I won't get out of bed for any other reason, other than I don't want my coffee to go cold.

- Theresa: That's so good. I've read a lot about it. In fact, I actually got myself one of those Poppers. If I get stuck, I'll be emailing you with questions.
- Shaye: Absolutely, yeah.
- Theresa: Yeah. I've been wanting to do that, so I was excited when I saw that you do that because I was like, "Oh, this is something I've been wanting to do." I live in Los Angeles. There's a Starbucks everywhere, but I wanted to do it to have ... I mean, there's nothing fresher than two seconds from your door that you're doing that.
- Shaye: Right, exactly. It's funny because sometimes when you talk about these things, people interpret that as snobbery but I really look at it ... It's like when you garden and you eat a fresh tomato from the garden, it's because it tastes better that you like it more. It's really the same thing with wine or even with homegrown meat or coffee. When you get acclimated to that wonderful taste, all of a sudden, this little part of your tongue comes alive that didn't before. That's not snobbery. That's just refinement. That's like loving the flavors.
- Theresa: Yeah. That's really why I got into homesteading was to grow the flavors that I couldn't find anywhere else. I think a lot of people do that, yeah.
- Shaye: Yeah.
- Theresa: Well, speaking of food and transitioning to recipes, I know you have another book that's coming out April first of this year. Tell everyone a little bit about that.
- Shaye: This book is called Family Table, and you know what's so interesting about this cookbook is that I do my photography here at the home. I don't have any sort of office space or studio space. Everything that you see in this cookbook was literally shot right before my family ate it. They're all like, "Mom, we're hungry. We're hungry. We're hungry." I'm like, "Hang on. I got to change the lighting," or, "I don't like ... Switch out the napkins." Because this really is a reflection of what is on our family table.

I have four young children. We cook three meals a day from scratch here, which sounds really intimidating to a lot of people but this type of cooking makes it possible and that's when I really want to turn people on to that cooking from scratch doesn't have to be this overwhelming, insurmountable, horrible, dreadful task. It can be extremely basic, just well-intentioned, directed in the right way. It can be really delicious. Family Table is exactly that. It's a reflection of what is on our table every day.

Theresa: Yeah, real food, delicious real food.

Shaye: Yeah.

Theresa: And then you have another book coming out at the end of this year. Man, you have been busy.

Shaye: Oh, man. Yes. We have a book called Seasons at the Farm. And this is a book I'm really excited about. I love doing the recipes. This is pretty personal, so this is me inviting people into my home and saying, "Okay, fall on the homestead. What does that look like? Here's what's going on in the barnyard. Here's what's going on in the garden. Here's what's going on in the kitchen. And also, here's what's going on in my home. So, here is how it's decorated. Here's what my table looks like." Literally our whole house other than our bathroom that's yet to be remodeled. That is off limits. Even I don't want to go in there. But it's all elements of how we decorate our farmhouse.

I think it's interesting because since we moved into this house two years ago, we begun this renovation process. Our readers have really wanted to know like, "How do you cultivate a space like that, that has that feel, that farmy feel to it that appeals to a lot of people, a house that feels worn in and comfortable that yet still like has a family?" Seasons at the Farm is a reflection of exactly what's going on every season. I think it's going to give people an insight to stuff they've not quite seen before.

Theresa: That's really exciting, and I think it will really help people with seasonal living and seasonal eating when they can see how you interpret that because you definitely have the seasons where you are. You're in Southern California. It's either 70 degrees or 75. But you guys really have the seasons. The seasonality is the way it is in most parts of the country, and you're able to help people bring that into their own lives which will be really exciting.

Shaye: Exactly. It can be really intimidating in our Pinterest-loving culture. You think Christmas, for example, and you think you have to deck the halls and it has to be this huge, extravagant picture-worthy thing. Surprisingly, our home isn't like that. We put up a tree, and we put out a few things of greens in it, but it's really subdued because it really is again like that everyday celebration of things. It's not these huge moments, it's just kind of living in the space and loving it and appreciating it. Yeah, it's going to be great. I can't wait for people to see it.

Theresa: I can't wait to see it either. I agree with you 100%. I think you're the perfect person to share that, and it brings us right back to what I said at the beginning, which is you really help people stop and pause and appreciate the smells and the flavors and the sights of everything in every season from the garden in the home. I'm very, very excited about that book. I can't wait.

Shaye: Yeah, it will be fun. It will be good.

Theresa: Well, Shaye, I can thank you enough for coming on. I really thank you for sharing your life with us on the blog and in your books. And thanks for coming on the show today and sharing it with all of my listeners.

Shaye: Yeah. Thanks for having me. I love it. I love meeting new people, and I can't wait to hear from them.

Theresa: Well, I hope you enjoyed that conversation with Shaye Elliott from the Elliott Homestead. Now, as I said before in the show notes for today's episode, I will have everything that we talked about, links to Shaye's website, her books, a PDF download of the recipe for junket, and I will include some links to resources for making cheese. And to get to the show notes, you just go to [livinghomegrown.com/132](http://livinghomegrown.com/132), and everything will be right there for you.

Thank you so much for joining me here today. I hope you enjoyed this episode as much as I did. Until next time, just try to live a little more local, seasonal and homegrown. Take care.

Announcer: That's all for this episode of the Living Homegrown Podcast. Visit [livinghomegrown.com](http://livinghomegrown.com) to download Theresa's free canning resource guide and find more tips on how to live farm fresh without the farm. Be sure to join Theresa Loe next time on the Living Homegrown Podcast.