

Introduction

One and a half cups of flour. One egg. Three quarters cup of sugar. One teaspoon of baking powder. One teaspoon of baking soda. These are the basics that make the average cake-like bread. From here, the ingredients diverge. Half a cup of butter. Some use oil, others use shortening. Some choose to put in bananas, cinnamon, blueberries, or almonds. Many opt for a smooth top with the signature center crack while others mix flour, butter, and sugar together for a streusel. No two breads will ever be the same. Despite all originating from the same barebones recipe, as the bread popularized, people began making it their own. Adding ingredients, testing different measurements, taking the foundations and adding to them. Over time, these improvised recipes become staples and these recipes are passed down like hand-me-downs. Pieces of history traded and altered.

Some of my earliest memories are in a kitchen. My grandmother cooked these elaborate spreads every Christmas complete with five distinct cakes she never gave the recipes of. Abuela would have my brother and I slice zucchini for the calabacitas we would later eat in front of the large box tv set as the beginning credits for the 1993 Secret Garden would play. Bags filled with tamales from the aunts in Mexico that we would place in the steamer when Abuela returned. The two foot wide tub used to make jam out of the pounds of berries we had picked earlier that day. No matter what, what you could always count on was that the kitchen would be crowded.

My brother and I were taught to properly set the table as soon as we could walk. We have become accustomed to the food staples that adorn the table annually. At abuela's house, expect room temperature butter, so soft it almost melts at the touch atop a slice of white bread— a food item we never would get at home— and sometimes an omelet. At grandma's house, meals circulated based on the favorite meals of those visiting. So every time my family visits, we almost always have braised short ribs, chicken and sausage, grits and bacon for breakfast, and there was always a chocolate pound cake.

Food and food culture are ingrained within us and has defined much of my relationship to my dual ethnicities. I would learn about my grandparents' life while in the kitchen with them. Learned that real butter, not the fake butter you can buy from the grocery store, makes the best cakes and that when the butter is made you can smell it from up the street. Abuela would explain how her family would eat food in vats as her family was so large they often ate meatless soups or stews made in gigantic pots. Despite isolation from both cultures due to underexposure, food always found a way to connect me to both the Mexican and African American cultural identities. One of the few phrases I actually knew in Spanish was how to order three tacos with carne asada, carnitas, and lengua (tongue). Cooking with my family has given me a window into their individual lives but also paves a path for my own cultural discovery.

The recipes I am using are family recipes that have been passed down by word of mouth or sight and if they had been transcribed, the original recipes were altered as they have been memorized. Therefore there are no real precise recipes, and if they are, many of them are altered even while being followed. Each is riddled with stories and emotions and memories that cannot be captured in accuracy. This compilation of recipes is organized in meals that my family shares

together on an annual, weekly, or monthly level. Meals that have particular meaning, made in a particular way. Some, based on small trips I've taken with my family and the foods that we tried together and attempted to make later on. Most of them, a simple list of ingredients that endlessly grows and shrinks, the preparation that changes from time to time, there is no uniformity. Almost all of these recipes have been given to me by my grandmothers and my parents who learned to cook from them. Cooking is about feeling and for that reason, if you choose to make one of the recipes from my book, many of them have very loose and imprecise ingredients lists. Much like cultural identity as there is no singular way to be Black or Mexican, there is no singular way to cook. Do what feels right or what tastes good to you.

Abuelas Techniques

Cleaning Chiles

To begin, twist off the tops of your dried chiles and cut a tear into the side. Open the chile and you can use water or simply your hands and rub all of the seeds and veins out. In Mexico, my aunts use knives to deseed the chiles and bring a lot of the red chile flavor out.

Tamales Folding

Take your soaked corn husks and open them wide so that they look like a fan. Scoop up around two tablespoons of the masa and spread it along the upper 3/4s of the wide area on the husk. Make a little well with the back end of your spoon in the masa and fill with around one fork full of meat/one spoonful of sweet filling. Now, fold the filled husk as if you are swaddling a baby, starting with one side and then the other. Lastly, fold the ends upward, some like to tie the ends, but folding them works fine. Place your tamales in a steamer prepared with extra husks aligning the exterior like a fortress. When the steamer is full, fold the exterior husks into the middle, and put a top on it.

The Basics

Cornbread

Grits

Masa for Sweet Tamales

Masa for Savory Tamales

Red Chile Pork

Cornbread

It is within traditional Alabama southern tradition to have fine ground white cornmeal. Cook it in a cast iron skillet. It is tradition.

Ingredients

White cornmeal

A couple of tablespoons of sugar (for texture purposes)

2 eggs

Shortening, crisco
Buttermilk
1 tsp Baking powder

Process

Throw all of the ingredients into a mixing bowl and stir until the batter is the consistency of ketchup. You may need to add more liquid in order to achieve the desired consistency.

Heat the skillet with some shortening before putting in cornbread batter. Make sure you can hear the crackle. Cook for around 45 minutes or until the sides begin to pull away from the skillet.

Serve with every meal.

Grits

Ingredients

1 part grits
2 parts hot water

Process

Pour grits into hot water, stir the whole time or they will clump together. Put the top on and stir occasionally. Cook for 15-20 minutes or until thick. Salt and pepper it to taste.

Serve with bacon, cheese, eggs, butter, and Parks brand sausage.

Masa for Sweet Tamales

Cook with your tastebuds

Ingredients

2 cups of shortening (or lard)
4 cups of Maseca
2 cups chicken broth
1 tsp of salt
2 cups sugar

Process

To begin, place two cups of shortening (we used butter flavored) into a standing mixer and beat until light and fluffy using the flat beater. This should only take around 3-5 minutes. Traditionally, this is done by hand. Next add in the maseca in batches. Be careful not to put all of it in at once. Once combined, pour in one cup of the chicken broth and turn the mixer on medium. Add the salt and beat until combined. Then add a second cup of the broth. Finally, pour in the two cups of sugar and use your hands to combine. You can make it as sweet as you want, just add sugar to your liking. The masa should be sticky but should not stick to your fingers. Fill an already used measuring cup or a glass with water, and place a small chunk from the mixing bowl, in order to test the masa. If it was made correctly, the chunk should float. Cover and set aside.

Once ready, fill the tamales with any sweet mixture you like using Abuela's technique (we used a homemade pineapple filling for a couple and dried coconut, raisins, and walnuts for others) and steam in a tall steamer for approximately 45 minutes.

Masa for Savory Tamales

Ingredients

- 2 cups of shortening (or lard)
- 4 cups of Maseca
- 2 cups chicken broth
- A lot of salt

Process

Start by adding two cups of shortening (we used butter flavored) to a standing mixer and beat until peaks form. This should only take around 3-5 minutes. Next, to the standing mixer add in maseca one up at a time until it is completely incorporated. The resulting mixture will be grainy. Once combined, pour in one cup of the chicken broth and turn the mixer on medium until incorporated. Then, add a second cup of the broth and blend for around 5 minutes. The mixture should look like thick cornbread batter. The masa should be sticky but should not stick to your fingers. Fill an already used measuring cup or a glass with water, and place a small chunk from the mixing bowl, in order to test the masa. If it was made correctly, the chunk should float. Finally, add in around 2 tablespoons of kosher salt and use your hands to combine. Frequently taste the masa and add salt to your liking. A lot of the salt will come out while steaming the tamales so do not be worried if you think you added too much. Cover and set aside until ready to use.

Once ready, taking your corn husk, fill the masa with any chile rojo/chile verde mixture you like using Abuela's technique (p2) and steam for approximately 45 minutes.

Red Chile Pork

Ingredients

- 1 package chile pasilla
- 1 package chile ancho
- 1 package chile guajillo
- 2-3lb pork roast
- Garlic
- Red Chile powder (if you like spice)
- Salt and pepper (to taste)

Process

To begin, clean the chiles using Abuela's technique and place the deseeded chiles in a bowl. Once all of the chiles have been cleaned, throw them into a blender with around $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of water and blend until smooth. Pour out the contents into a chicken cloth strainer over a large

plastic bowl and using a large metal spoon, press the contents through until all that is left is chile skin and left over seeds. Repeat this process until all of the chiles have been pureed and pressed. Pour the chile rojo in jars and set aside.

Lunch on a Busy Afternoon

Chicken Salad
Pears with Cream Cheese
Hard Boiled Eggs

Chicken Salad

Ingredients

3 cups chopped leftover Chicken
Mayonnaise
Relish
Two stalks of celery chopped
¼ cup red pepper
¼ cup red onion
One tablespoon mustard
Salt and pepper to taste

Take the leftover chicken from the night before and chop it into smaller pieces. Add the chunks of chicken to a bowl. Chop up vegetables and throw them into the bowl with the chicken.

Add two tablespoons of relish, mustard, and four tablespoons of mayonnaise to the bowl as well.

Pears with Strawberry Cream Cheese

Ingredients

3 Bosc Pears
Strawberry Cream Cheese
Walnuts (optional)

Cut the bosc pears in quarters and deseed. In a small bowl combine the strawberry cream cheese and walnuts until creamy. Scoop one tablespoon of the mixture and place it in the divet of the pear. Chill for 5-10 minutes, then serve.

Hard Boiled Eggs

Ingredients

Salt
5 cups of Water
5 eggs

Bring five cups of water to a boil over medium heat. Salt the water so that it is just barely cloudy. Turn off the heat and cover for 10-12 minutes, 15 if you like a well done yolk. Serve hot or chilled.

After a Day at the Blueberry Patch

Blueberry Jelly

Blueberry Pie

Blueberry Jelly

Ingredients

9 c Blueberries
15c Sugar
4 packages pectin
1 Lemon
1 tbsp of butter

Process

Wash your berries in sink, be careful not to burst them or make them soggy

Measure 9 cups of berries and pulse them in a blender until they are just broken up, but not pureed. If you don't have a blender, you can always use a masher.

Place pulsed berries in a large metal bowl and measure 15 cups of sugar. Add the juice of one lemon. Put in a metal bowl with the berries and stir. Heat mixture over medium. Once it is warm to the touch, increase the heat. Stir occasionally. Add in butter to reduce foaming.

While cooking, prepare the jars. Start by washing 8 jars with soap and water thoroughly. Bring water filling half of a large metal to a boil. Fill the jars half full with hot water and place them in the boiling water along with the rings.

Meanwhile, open four packages of pectin. Once mixture is brought to a boil, stir for one minute. Add in the pectin packets, bring to a boil again and stir for one minute. Then turn off the heat.

Fill prepared jars and seal. Let rest for 8 hours or until jelled before opening.

Blueberry Pie

Ingredients

5 cups of blueberries (preferably fresh)
 $\frac{3}{4}$ cup granulated sugar
1 tsp vanilla
1 tsp ground allspice
1 tsp ground nutmeg
1 tsp ground cinnamon
 $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon of salt

¼ cup water

1 tablespoon cornstarch

Process

Preheat the oven to 375.

In a large saucepan, combine cornstarch, water, sugar, and salt. Add half of the blueberries. Cook berries down until just they burst. Add in spices and the remaining blueberries. Bring to a boil, stir for a minute, then turn off the heat. Let sit to thicken.

Take the crust, prepared and cooled, and fill it with the blueberry mixture until it just barely fills the crust.

If you have extra crust you can take this time to decorate the top of the pie in any way you like. Bake at 375 for 30 minutes, then lower the heat to 350 for 20.

Let cool for 30 minutes before serving.

TV Dinners With Abuela

Calabacitas

Boxed Cupcakes

Kool-Aid

When I was a kid, my brother and I would get dropped off at Abuela's house in the afternoon to have a sleepover. We would show up, duffel bags in tow, excited for the night to come. Abuela always had candy and ice cream and cakes, things that were rarities at home. But the real draw was the movies. Movies on VHS from way before I was born stacked in messy boxes under the TV in the guest bedroom. From Disney's hidden treasures such as *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* to bootlegged musicals like *Cats* to the classics, *Sound of Music* and *Chitty Chitty Bang Bang*. If there's one thing my abuela loves, it's movies. Especially movies that break into song. She loves to sing, and this love for singing passed down to my brother and I.

Around 6pm, while my brother would set the side tables up in front of the tv with plastic cups, forks, and spoons for the ice cream that would be sure to come, I would help abuela cook dinner. Sometimes we had spaghetti and meatballs, other times we had breakfast for dinner, but usually we made my favorite, Calabacitas.

We only get to make this at abuelas house, so the memories immediately entangle with her. Zucchini, frozen corn, canned tomatoes, and cheese. That's it. That's all it was. Easiest and quickest meal ever. I can make it by myself now, but in the early days, my job was to pour in the corn and to top with cheese. The most *Important* job, Abuela would say.

And when dinner was done and placed into bowls, we would start the movie. Tonight was *The Secret Garden*.

Calabacitas

Introduction by Abuela

“My family was very large and very poor. We couldn’t afford to eat luxuries like meat every day and a lot of our meals were served from these huge pots. My mother used to make it a lot because it was so easy and the ingredients were so cheap at the local market. However, the corn we would get from the field and cut the kernels off. Cheese was always super expensive so many times we went without but when we did have cheese, it was a treat. This was a whole meal. I used to eat three or four bowls at a time.”

Ingredients

- Zucchini (chopped)
- Can of tomatoes
- Two cloves of minced garlic
- Corn kernels (preferably frozen)
- Milk (quarter cup)
- Chicken bullion

Optional: cheese

Process

Start by frying a clove or two of minced garlic at the bottom of a saucepan.

Next, put about a quarter cup of milk at the bottom of a saucepan, or at least enough that it covers the bottom of the pan. Warm the milk at medium heat.

Chop up your zucchini and throw it in the pot with the heated milk. Cook the zucchini down until soft. This should be about 8 to 10 minutes. Open one can of tomatoes, drain them, and pour the can into the saucepan with the softened zucchini. Next, place about a cup of frozen corn in the saucepan. Lastly, throw a cube of chicken bullion in as well.

Cover the pan and cook for about 5 to 7 minutes or until fragrant.

Uncover the pan and top with Mexican cheese blend.

Funfetti Cupcakes

Ingredients

- Boxed Funfetti cupcakes
- Jelly or Pudding of your choice
- 1 can Pillsbury frosting

Follow the recipe on the box and bake for 24-30 minutes or until a toothpick inserted comes out clean. Cool the cupcakes for 30 minutes. Next, with a melon baller, scoop out the middle of the cupcakes and fill with your favorite jelly/pudding. Usually, Abuela used cherry pie filling or strawberry jelly. Top with Pillsbury frosting.

(12 people, one house)

Fried Fish
Sweet Potato Souffle
Turnip Greens
Pear Topping

Fried Fish

Ingredients

Catfish, tilapia, or cod fillets
Around a 1 ½ cup ground meal (if not super fine, add flour)
Salt
pepper

Process

Begin by filling a frying pan with canola oil so it reaches just about one to two inches. Heat the oil on high.

Wash your fish thoroughly and take out any left over bones. Place in a large plastic bowl and heavily sprinkle salt and pepper over the fish, making sure each piece is thoroughly coated. Next, press the fish down into flour, coating the entire piece, and pan fry in the preheated oil. At this point, the oil should be hot enough so that the breading on the chicken fries right away. Put as many fillets that fit in the pan, turn the heat from high to medium, and put a top on the pan. To tell if it is done, you have to see it and hear it. If it's brown around the sides, turn the fish. Once crispy, take the pieces out of the oil and set on a paper towel.

Turnip Greens

The water that is left behind after you take the turnip greens out of the pot is called pot likker. It is traditionally used as a soup base or simply a soup itself. My grandma even said she drinks the pot likker with a side of cornbread.

Ingredients

A bunch turnip greens, including the roots
A smoke meat (traditionally a hamhock, but you can also use neckbone)
3 tablespoons of sugar
A dollop of crisco

Process

Get a large pot and place smoke meat inside, covering it with water. Cook it until tender, or until you can pull off the meat with a fork. Place your greens into the pot along with an oil (preferably crisco), sugar, and chopped turnip roots. Cook it until the greens are tender.

Sweet Potato Souffle

Candied yams, a staple in Southern households, is often the side dish of choice for major holidays like Thanksgiving and Christmas. Our family however has taken to making sweet potato souffle for the past 20 years, reflecting my take on our family tradition. This all came to pass during my first attempt to make Thanksgiving dinner. Sweet potato souffle has now become a tradition that Pop Pop and Alex, in particular, have come to love. We have traded this recipe around the family and it is made in multiple Mitchell households from Chicago to East Hartford to Kentucky throughout the year.

Ingredients

- 3 ½ pounds sweet potatoes, peeled and sliced (about 3 large potatoes)
- 1 c sugar
- 1 large egg
- ¼ c butter
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- ½ tsp nutmeg
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ c raisins (optional)
- 2 c miniature marshmallows (as topping)

Process

Bring sweet potatoes and water to cover to a boil, and cook 20 minutes or until tender with a fork; drain. Beat sweet potatoes, sugar, and next 6 ingredients at medium speed with an electric hand mixer until smooth. Stir in raisins, if desired. Pour mixture into a lightly greased 13 x 9 baking dish. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes or until bubbly. Top evenly with marshmallows. Bake uncovered for 15 minutes or until lightly browned.

Pear Topping

Ingredients

- Bosc pears (slice)
- Bourbon
- Sugar
- Vanilla
- Butter

Process

Place two tablespoons of butter in a saucepan. While melting, slice three medium sized bosc pears. Throw the slices into the pot along with about ¾ cup of sugar, a teaspoon of vanilla,

and a fourth of a cup of bourbon. Bring mixture to a boil and stir occasionally. Once boiling, turn off the heat and rest. Once thickened, serve warm either alone or on top of vanilla ice cream.

Uncle Horace's Favorite Meal

Intro from Uncle Horace

Fried Chicken

Fried Okra

Cornbread

Sweet Tea

The family [folklore] states that in all twelve years of schooling, great grandma Julie only missed two days despite having to walk for miles every day, and that was only because the bridge she had to cross in order to get to school had been wiped out in a flood. For us it was no different. Every morning and every afternoon, my brothers and I walked three miles to school. We didn't ride the bus, that was for the white kids.

My mother didn't live with us during the week. She taught English at the boarding school in the town over and would sleep there on weeknights. Grandma was in charge of us kids when my mother wasn't around.

I was woken up before the sun even had a chance to color the sky. You couldn't let the sun catch you in bed and my grandma certainly didn't. She'd been up for a while, cooking breakfast and getting ready for the day ahead. Men didn't cook. The women, they didn't need any help. Every morning before school, the door would open with the sharp sound of the hinges and she would poke her head in to make sure we were awake.

We always ate breakfast together. My grandmother, grandfather, my two brothers, and I would sit around the table, the sun barely peeking behind the trees. Holding hands and bowing our heads, I, or one of my brothers would recite the daily prayer. You couldn't eat without saying grace. Breakfast was the biggest meal of the day. The table, adorned with steaming hot smothered pork chops, on occasion fried chicken from the night before, biscuits, grits, syrup, sausage, and sometimes fruit. We couldn't dwell on the food no matter how early we woke up. we had a long walk ahead of us.

Grandma pushed a greasy sack lunch in our hands as we bundled out the door. This was always a sandwich, but after walking in the Alabama heat for an hour, the expectation of freshness disappears. We didn't have room or the money to complain or dislike foods. You ate what was put in front of you, no questions.

At this point the sun was up. Not glaring heat yet, but it was hot. Our next door neighbors were a white family. They had kids around our ages but we weren't really close with them. You weren't friends with white folk back then, we smiled and said hello and moved on. They were nice enough though. We didn't have the same life. They rode to their white school in a bus that would come after we left. We didn't walk to school alone though.

Looking across the street was Connor and his sister and brother, waiting for us, my brothers, your pop pop and uncle Pete. The six of us waited for the next trio to join. Earl Newman and his sister and brother appeared walking down the street. They were our best friends, we walked to school together every day for years. Three miles, the nine of us ranging in ages, pack lunches in hand, began walking down the backroads to school. After school, when it was time to come home, the nine of us would find each other again and head back. Three miles. Every day. It was either that or don't go to school, and that was not an option. If grandma Julie could walk every day for twelve years, we couldn't complain. It was what we had to do.

Fried Chicken

There's a big difference between pan fry and deep fry, the south we pan fried.

Ingredients

- 1 Whole Chicken
- Kosher salt (to taste)
- Black pepper (to taste)
- Flour
- Canola Oil

Process

Begin by filling a frying pan with canola oil so it reaches just about one to two inches. Heat the oil on high.

Cut chicken into parts and wash thoroughly. Place in a large plastic bowl and heavily sprinkle salt and pepper over the chicken, making sure each piece is thoroughly coated. Next, place chicken pieces into buttermilk and then press the pieces down into flour, coating the entire piece. and pan fry in the preheated oil. At this point, the oil should be hot enough so that the breading on the chicken fries right away. Put as many chicken pieces that fit in the pan, turn the heat from high to medium, and put a top on the pan. To tell if it is done, you have to see it and hear it. If it's brown around the sides, turn the chicken, but only once. If you turn the chicken multiple times, it loses the moisture. Once crispy, take the pieces out of the oil and set on a paper towel.

Fried Okra

It is important to use a black cast iron skillet to fry okra. However, you can use an air fryer and cook okra in batches. Rather than using the canola oil, simply spray PAM in the basket and add the cornmeal covered okra to air fry on 400 degrees for 10 mins for a less greasy product. So, we typically eat fried okra with southern cooked meals that include collard greens, candied yams, field peas, and cornbread. This combination goes well with baked chicken, glazed ham, or beef roast. Fried okra is quintessentially Southern!

Ingredients

- 3 cups washed and sliced fresh okra

1 egg (beaten)
1 cup buttermilk
¼ flour
1 cup yellow cornmeal
1 Tbsp salt
½ tsp black pepper
Canola oil for frying or Crisco (¼ cup) Need enough to cover the bottom by a ½ in

Process

Start by mixing buttermilk and egg in a small bowl and set aside. Then, mix flour, cornmeal, salt and pepper in a bowl. Pour buttermilk mixture over sliced okra. Heat the canola oil in the cast iron skillet. While the oil heats, gently add dry mixture to okra with buttermilk, turning to coat. When oil is hot, you can test this by dropping a small amount of cornmeal into grease and if it starts to sizzle it is ready. Shake off excess cornmeal from the and add to skillet

Cook for approximately 12-15 minutes on medium heat until brown and crispy. Don't over stir.

Place on paper towels to drain.

Sweet Tea

Ingredients

3c Water (boiling)
8 Lipton Tea bags
1 1/3c Sugar
7 cups water cold
Ice
Lemon Slices (to garnish)

Process

Begin by boiling 3 cups of water. Once at a steady boil, add 8 lipton tea bags without the tags. Steep for around 20 minutes.

Once steeped, pour tea into a pitcher and stir in sugar until dissolved. Next, add in cold water and ice until liquid has reached the top of the pitcher.

Serve with a lemon slice.

Day Trip To LA

Horchata

Jugo De Jamaica

Agua Fresca

Horchata

Ingredients

- 1 Cup long white grain rice
- 3 Cinnamon sticks
- 2 Cups Sugar
- 5 cups water
- 4 cups Milk
- 2 tablespoons Vanilla Extract

Process

To a large glass bowl add one cup of rice to two cups of water and let it sit overnight. The next day, place the contents of the glass bowl into a blender with three cinnamon sticks and blend for 10 minutes. Drain out the mixture using a cheesecloth or a strainer because we do not want any cinnamon stick or rice chunks in our horchata. Place the rice mixture into a large juice dispenser. Fill the blender with water and add to the dispenser. Next, pour in around four cups of milk to the mix. Add two cups of sugar, but you can add more to taste. You could also use lechera. Lastly add 2 tablespoons of vanilla extract. Add ice and stir.

Jugo De Jamaica

Ingredients

- Sugar
- Water
- Cinnamon
- Dried hibiscus flowers
- Lime juice (optional)

Process

In a large pot, boil dried hibiscus flowers and two cinnamon sticks in enough water so that it more than covers the flowers. Once it comes to a steady boil, turn off the heat. Next, add in two cups of sugar but you can add more depending on whether you like a sweeter juice or a tart one. Adding lime gives it a different flavor, but it never hurts. Serve juice hot like tea or over ice.

Agua Fresca

Ingredients

1 whole Watermelon
Sugar
Water
Lime Juice
Tajin to rim the glass

Process

Place watermelon, water, and lime juice in a blender. Blend the contents until pureed and then strain the mixture using cheesecloth. Serve chilled, either plain or over ice. My brother and I rim our glasses with tajin.

Late Night Thursday Dinner

Picadillo
Mexican Rice
Pico De Gallo

Picadillo

Ingredients

4 tbsp Canola Oil
2 Cloves Garlic
Ground Beef or turkey
1 Can of Tomatoes, mostly drained
1 Onion chopped
1 or 2 red potatoes
2 bay leaves
Coriander and cumin to taste

Process:

In a nonstick pan, heat around 4 tablespoons of canola oil, onion, and two cloves of minced garlic. Once fragrant, add around 2 pounds of ground beef to the pan, crushing it up as the bottom gets brown. Next, add 1 teaspoon of kosher salt and ground pepper and let the meat brown. While meat cooks, chop your potatoes into small cubes and throw them in the pan with the meat. Add in a heaping tablespoon of both coriander and cumin and mix. Let the meat and the potatoes cook for about 5-8 minutes longer. Now, add in one can of tomatoes and your bay leaves and let the tomatoes cook down, this should take about 8-10 minutes.

Serve with either corn or flour tortillas, pico de gallo, guacamole, lettuce, shredded cheddar cheese, and fresh or canned salsa.

Mexican Rice

Ingredients

Canola Oil
White rice
Garlic
Onion
Can of tomatoes
Chicken bullion
Coriander and Cumin to taste

Process:

In a frying pan, place about three tablespoons of oil in a pan with one cup of rice. Toast the rice until it becomes golden brown.

Chop up half an onion and one to two garlic cloves and fry it with the rice until fragrant. Now, add in a few pinches of ground cumin and ground coriander. Wait until these spices “perfume the air” before adding in a can of diced tomatoes.

Next, fill the pan with enough water that it almost reaches the brim of the pan and cover to let it cook down. When the water lowers to around the halfway point of the pan, sprinkle in one crushed up cube of chicken bullion. Cover the pan again. If the rice begins to brown along the sides, add more water.

Once all of the water has been absorbed, let the rice sit. This can be served with frozen peas or topped with a sliced banana.

Pico De Gallo

Ingredients

2 beef tomatoes cubed
1 white onion cubed
Cilantro
Jalepeño chopped
Salt
Pepper
Lime Juice

Process

Throw all of the ingredients into a bowl and mix. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Thanksgiving Dessert Party

Pumpkin Pie
Kentucky Derby Pie
Chocolate Pound Cake
Ponche
Cinnamon tea
Chocolate Fudge

Pumpkin Pie

Intro by Kristi Mitchell

In our family, pumpkin pie became a part of our Thanksgiving tradition 20 years ago. Despite the fact that I grew up in New England the home of pumpkin pie, my Thanksgiving traditions revolved around all things Southern. For instance, our Turkey Day was capped off with chocolate chocolate pound cake, carrot cake, German Chocolate cake, and sweet potato pie. These were mainstays. It wasn't until I met your dad, that I ever thought about actually making pumpkin pie. For him, Thanksgiving was not Thanksgiving without it. So, I sought to find out the quintessential recipe and landed on the back of a can of Libby's pumpkin puree. The label promised to produce a foolproof pie. Little did I know that one 15oz can of pumpkin puree would produce more than one deep dish pie. In fact, there is enough filling to make another regular sized pie. Over the years, I have used the leftover pie filling to make ramekins for individual sized pumpkin pies to spread the love. For your dad, the more pumpkin pies the merrier.

Ingredients

- 1 (9 inch) unbaked deep dish pie crust
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup white sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon ground ginger
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon ground cloves
- 2 large eggs
- 1 (15 ounce) can LIBBY® 100% Pure Pumpkin
- 1 (12 fluid ounce) can NESTLE® CARNATION® Evaporated Milk

Process

Start by preheating your oven to 425 degrees F.

Then, Combine sugar, salt, cinnamon, ginger and cloves in small bowl. Beat eggs lightly in large bowl. Stir in pumpkin and sugar-spice mixture. Gradually stir in evaporated milk. Pour into pie shell. Bake for 15 minutes. Reduce temperature to 350 degrees F.; bake for 40 to 50 minutes or until knife inserted near center comes out clean. Cool on wire rack for 2 hours. Serve immediately or refrigerate. (Do not freeze as this will cause the crust to separate from the filling.)

Kentucky Derby Pie

For 30 years, our family has served this pie on Holidays, special occasions, and just because. It has become a foolproof dessert that is a crowd pleaser. For one of my mother's engagement parties, Kentucky Derby pie was served to the guests, reflecting on how significant this dessert has been to our family. From a historical perspective my Aunt Deloris introduced this

pie to us. She and her family have lived in Crestwood Kentucky since 1985, and as such have adopted Kentucky culinary customs- from mint juleps to burgoo to Kentucky Derby pie. We serve this pie throughout the fall month at dessert parties, birthday parties, and holidays.

Ingredients

- 1 cup sugar
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 1 stick butter, softened
- ½ cup flour
- 1 cup chocolate chips, semisweet
- 1 cup chopped English walnuts
- ¼ cup Kentucky Straight Bourbon
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1 unbaked deep dish pie shell

Process

Preheat oven to 350 degrees
Mix eggs and sugar. Add butter and mix again well. Add flour, chips, nuts, bourbon, and vanilla- Mix Well!
Pour into the pie shell and bake at 350 degrees for 30-40 minutes. Pie will be light brown in color. Serve warm with ice cream or whipped cream.

Chocolate Pound Cake

There is no recipe for this one. This one I hold the closest to myself and it is a family secret.

Chocolate Fudge

Introduction by Kristi Mitchell

When I was growing up, my mom used to make candy during the Christmas Holidays. Most often, these candies were pecan turtles which by the way are exceptionally good. In the South, pecans are a very common nut and something that is used in cooking whether it is in a side dish or in a dessert. When I moved to DC, I needed to bring a dessert for a potluck during the Holidays and stumbled upon this recipe. Over time, I have perfected this foolproof dessert by adding a splash of bourbon, my secret ingredient! The melt-in-your-mouth delicacies are always a crowd hit. Now, having shifted toward hosting Thanksgiving Dessert parties following the Big Day, we always include these candies as a part of our buffet.

Ingredients

3 cups semi sweet chocolate chips
1 (14 ounce can) Eagle Brand Sweetened Condensed Milk (not
evaporated milk)
Dash salt
1 chopped nuts (optional)
1 1/2 tsp vanilla extract

Process

In heavy saucepan, over low heat, melt chocolate chips with sweetened condensed milk and salt. Remove from heat; stir in nuts (optional) and vanilla. Spread evenly into a wax-paper-lined 8- or 9-inch square pan. Chill 2 hours or until Firm.

Lift fudge out of pan and place onto cutting board; peel off paper and cut into squares. Store covered in refrigerator.

Ponche

Ingredients

2 gallons of water
1 Sugar cane (cut up)
Cinnamon sticks
Guava
Apples
Orange Studded with cloves
Piloncillo
Tejocotes
Sweeten it to taste

Process

To begin, pour two gallons of water into a large pot with the cinnamon sticks, sugar cane, orange, and piloncillo. Bring to a boil. Next add in all of your fruits, you can use the ones in this list, but some people like to add raisins, apricots, or pears to their ponche. Once fruit is softened and the liquid becomes a deep reddish purple, the ponche is ready.

Serve hot or over ice. Sweeten it with sugar if it is too tart.

Cinnamon Tea

Ingredients

4 Cinnamon Sticks
Around a quart of water

Process

Boil a quart of water with the four cinnamon sticks halved until the water becomes fragrant and the color changes to a deep brown. Once boiling and the cinnamon flavor is potent, lower the heat.

Serve hot or over ice. In my family, we add a splash of evaporated milk or maybe add some brown sugar to sweeten it.