

Dinner at the Robbo's: Kathy Robinson

With six young kids, Mum had eight mouths to feed on a daily basis, the menu was often not that varied and many dishes morphed into each other.

Mum did not feel at home in the kitchen. Had it been in another era I am sure she would have pursued a career in the finance sector, but this was Australia in the 1960's and women were mostly stay at home Mum's.

Our Mum was the self-appointed 'food police' and growing up we had an abundance of healthy and wholesome foods. We were never entertained with any 'gut rot' and the likes of fizzy or brightly coloured soft drinks never made it to our pantry. Raw sugar, brown rice, wholemeal bread were our staples.

We are unsure where her nutritional education came from and believe it was her desire that we had the healthiest choices – as bland as they were! Meat and three veg was the ongoing menu, the veggies broiled to a soggy, tasteless moosh! We often had to hold our noses to swallow down the bitter lumps of watery zucchini, but eat our veggies we did with great obedience, after all, they were good for us and with so many starving children around the world we were advised to be grateful.

Dinner tonight might be mince stew, the following night with sultanas and a vibrant orange curry powder added, it was transformed into another dish, or at least the only version of curry that we knew!

We did not grow up in a multi-cultural suburb and our gastronomic experiences were limited. Take away choices were fish and chips or KFC. Then to our delight a Chinese Restaurant opened nearby with our favourite dishes a bright yellow lemon chicken and the luminous pink sweet and sour deep fried pork, all washed down with a mountain of special fried rice! So tasty, so exotic! But ohhh, so thirsty – MSG was all the rage!

Our treats consisted of a bag of peanuts in their shell and a stash of licorice. On the rare occasion we were fortunate enough to have chocolate biscuits, it was every man for himself and once opened it only took seconds until the packet had been emptied and its contents consumed.

Over the decades our food choices and our children's food choices remain the same, plenty of fresh nutritious, fruit and veggies!

Thank you, Mum.