

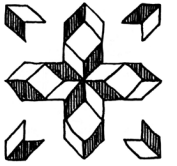
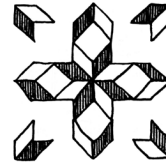


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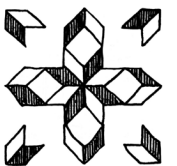
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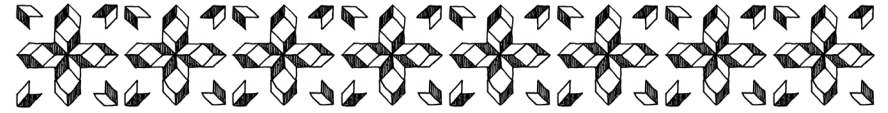
COMMUNITY COOKBOOK



A LITTLE OF THIS,
A LITTLE OF THAT

A WHEELING COMMUNITY
COOKBOOK





A LITTLE OF THIS, A LITTLE OF THAT

A WHEELING COMMUNITY COOKBOOK

Recipes & stories
compiled by
Emma Rose Goldenthal
with Corbin T Lanker

This cookbook was made possible through grant funding from several local and regional agencies. This includes financial assistance from the West Virginia Department of Arts, Culture and History and the National Endowment for the Arts, with approval from the West Virginia Commission on the Arts. This book has also been made possible through a grant from the West Virginia Humanities Council, the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities. Finally, we thank Wheeling Heritage for their financial support of this project via their Partnership Grant program.

Photography by C
Illustrations by E & C

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June-December 2023



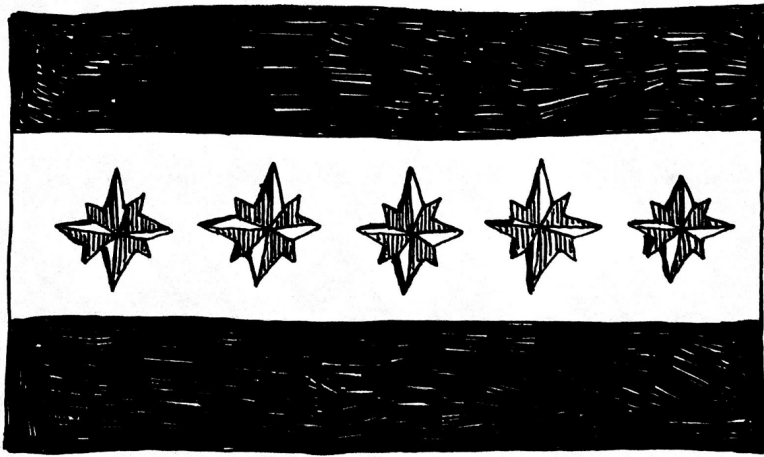
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*The flag of the City of Wheeling, West Virginia,
adopted in 2018.*

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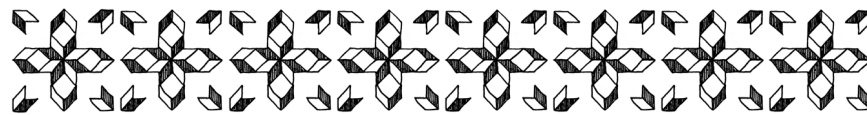
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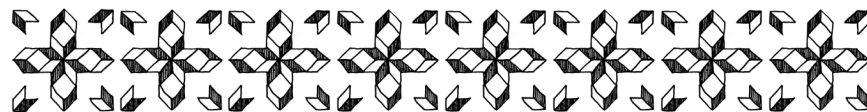
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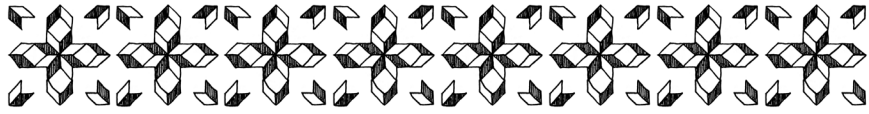
Thank you to our twenty-six recipe and story contributors – Caroline Clay, Jim Coen, Sina Díaz, Terrie Fish, Hannah Hedrick, Renel Hemmerling, Pat Jeffers, Kate Marshall, Maria Miller, Andrew Mull, Sally Mull, Lori Nicholson, Laura Oswalt, Alex Panas, Adam Payne, Lillian “Lil” Payne, Kenneth Powell, Betty Simeth, Darlene “Sis” Stradwick, Brandi Rose, Anthony “Rico” Ruiz, Jenna Thomas-Cline, Maurice “Babe” Walker, Lisa White, Victoria White, and David Widder-Varhegyi – for welcoming us into your homes and kitchens, for sharing your memories and stories, and for inspiring us. It was truly a joy to work with you.

For speaking about your work with us, we further thank those of our contributors connected to community spaces in East Wheeling: Catholic Charities Neighborhood Center, House of Hagar Catholic Worker, Laughlin Memorial Chapel, Neely’s Grocery, and the Greater Wheeling Soup Kitchen.

An enormous thank you to the Mother Jones Center for Resilient Community (our beloved MoJo) for sharing your graphic design tools and block printing supplies, which were used for this book’s layout and cover design. Thank you for making art more accessible for us and our neighbors.

Special thanks to Ella Jennings, Rosemary Ketchum, and Ron Scott for your enthusiastic support of this project, your perspectives, and your advice about community storytelling.





Thank you to our Education Program Manager at Grow Ohio Valley, Hannah Hedrick, and to our West Virginia State Folklorist, Jennie Williams, for your belief in this cookbook these past five months. Hannah and Jennie, we appreciate your astute proofreading, clear feedback, expertise, and creative input. We are so grateful to have had you both as advisors for this project.

To our friends in and around East and South Wheeling: We love you and we love sharing space around a table with you! Thank you for making this city feel like home.

EMMA GOLDENTHAL & CORBIN T LANKER

November 2023



FOREWORD

A Little of This, A Little of That is a collection of local recipes, photography, and food stories gathered from all around Wheeling, West Virginia. It celebrates some of the treasured ingredients, dishes, and food traditions that connect our neighbors to a sense of place, belonging, and community here and throughout the greater Ohio Valley. Not every storyteller lives in Wheeling, but all are anchored to our city in some way.

This cookbook draws inspiration from *The Foxfire Book of Appalachian Cookery* (1984), a project that collects recipes, stories, photos, and wisdom from contributors across Southern Appalachia. Our book is also inspired by the tradition of the “community cookbook,” a do-it-yourself publication commonly associated with churches and social clubs. Largely authored by women, these cookbooks are artifacts of heritage, local history, and regional culinary pride. Dozens of such community cookbooks have been created right here in Wheeling.

The many stories shared in this book are interconnected by common threads. Our contributors often spoke about how special dishes and ingredients help maintain family traditions and cultural ties, especially around the holidays. Others reflected on how a meal or dish can be an opportunity for expressing love and care, or a way to navigate grief and change. Some contributors shared childhood memories that cherished foods evoke. And others yet showed us how cooking can be an intuitive practice, a knowing rather than a mere collection of steps, or an avenue for creativity and experimentation.

As you read, you’ll also notice contributors alluding to how, with practice, measurements can become obsolete. They say you’ll simply “know when it’s done,” “know when it’s ready,” or “know it when you see it.” They add “a little of this” and “a little of that.” They cook with intuition and teach by showing as much as telling. Staying true to this advice, we hope this book celebrates and preserves the various ways that many of us cook: from recipes, from memories, from the hands, and from the heart.

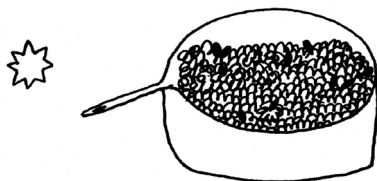
With all its emphasis on storytelling, this cookbook is far from conventional. Accordingly, the recipes contained within take a variety of forms. Some were shared with us in writing – with traditional lists of ingredients, quantities, and steps – and we’ve reproduced them faithfully. Many recipes, on the other hand, were shared with us verbally during our interviews. We’ve presented these as quotations directly from the storyteller in question.

We hope this book inspires your next homemade dish – hopefully one you can share with others. And, like our twenty-six storytellers did, we hope that reading sparks memories and musings for you, too, about meaningful recipes and food traditions in your own life.

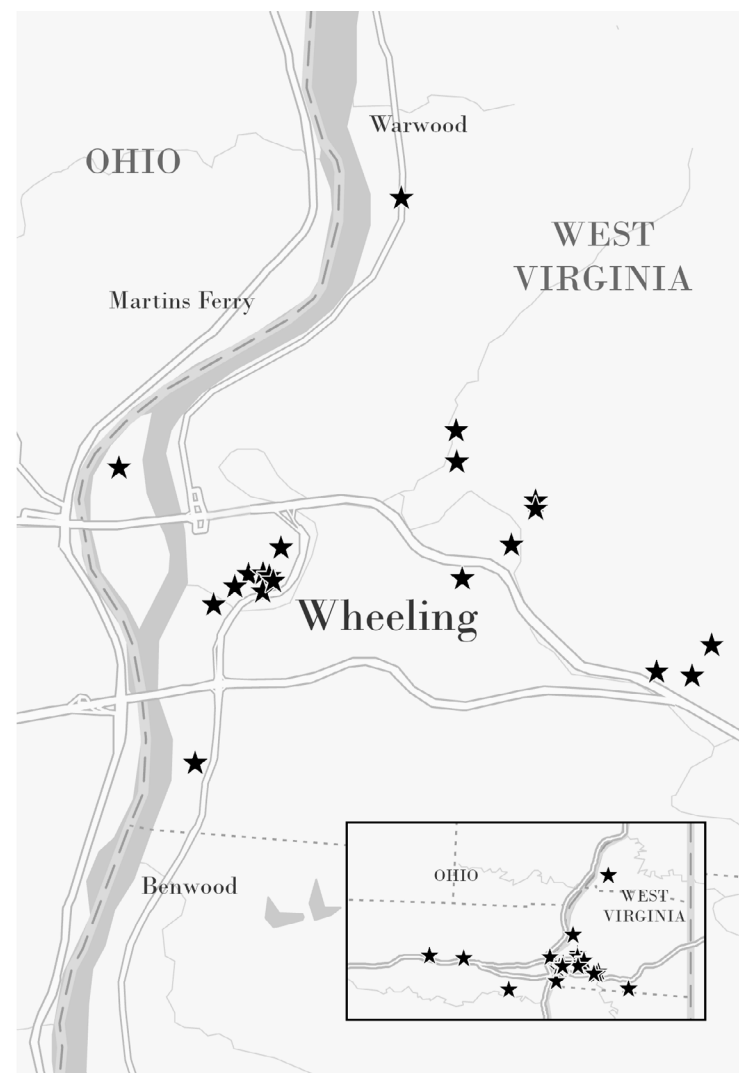
Thank you for reading, for cooking, for sharing the wonderful foods that you make, and for passing on your stories.

EMMA GOLDENTHAL

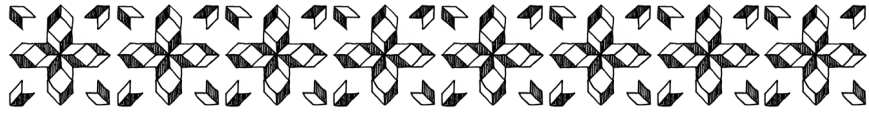
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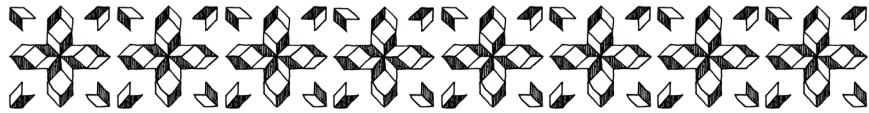
MAPPING OUR FOOD STORIES



This map depicts all twenty-six of our recipe and story contributors. About one in three are connected to Wheeling’s urban core –North, Center, South, East, and Downtown Wheeling – while half hail from Greater Wheeling and the broader Ohio Valley. This book also features food stories from five East Wheeling community institutions, named in our Acknowledgements. *Map by Hannah Hedrick.*



BREAKFASTS



CAROLINE'S FARMER BREAKFAST:

Roasted Potatoes with Pesto & Fried Egg



Caroline Clay

Caroline Clay has farmed in a number of places – Maine, Kentucky, even Italy – but it's been West Virginia where her commitment to farming has become fully realized. Through her work facilitating Grow Ohio Valley's Backyard Gardeners program as an AmeriCorps volunteer, several days a week spent at Eric Free-land's Farm in Wellsburg, and her own research and gardening experiences, Caroline is becoming a knowledgeable and capable farmer. As Caroline's friends and coworkers, we have immense faith in her wherever she goes, but we're glad to have met her here in Wheeling.

A cook with discerning taste, Caroline appreciates the virtue of farm fresh ingredients. "This breakfast is great for days I'm doing farm work because it gives me so much energy. It also makes a great dinner. It's fresh, rich, and filling without weighing you down."

"Plus, I usually have most of the ingredients on hand in the summer, so it's good to make in a pinch or when I'm on a strict budget. This recipe may sound involved for a breakfast, but if you've made the pesto ahead of time, you only need to cut a few potatoes, put them in the oven, walk away, and come back in 20 minutes to cook your egg."

If you haven't made the pesto beforehand, Caroline recommends prepping the potatoes first, making the pesto while they cook, and frying your egg last.

CAROLINE'S BREAKFAST POTATOES

*Some small potatoes
Salt & pepper
Paprika*

*Garlic powder
Other favored spices (optional)
Olive oil*

Cube potatoes and drizzle with olive oil and seasonings. Bake at about 425°F for 20-40 minutes, or until lightly crispy. (Potatoes will cook faster in an air fryer or toaster.)

CAROLINE'S BASIL PESTO

CAROLINE CLAY: "This pesto can be made ahead of time and stores well in the fridge for about a week. It can also be used on pastas or salads. Using sunflower seeds instead of pine nuts (used in a traditional pesto) is great because they're typically easier to find, cheaper, and fewer people are allergic to them."

*1 cup basil
1/3 cup sunflower seeds
Salt and pepper
¼-½ cup olive oil*

*1/3 cup parmesan cheese
1 tbsp lemon juice
1-3 garlic cloves
1 tsp honey*



Combine all pesto ingredients *except* olive oil in food processor or blender and pulse until well ground. Add olive oil until you reach desired consistency. "Everything is an approximate quantity, so you'll want to adjust to taste."



When Caroline showed us how to prepare this dish, she plated her potatoes, pesto, and egg atop a bed of arugula, with thinly sliced radishes and green onions.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

“Fry your egg however you like it. I always go for sunny side up [with butter, salt, and pepper]. Once the potatoes are done, plate them and toss them in the pesto, and top with the egg. Season with more salt and pepper and drizzle more pesto around the plate and enjoy.”

SWEET POTATO WAFFLES FROM SCRATCH

“We’re all pretty spread out, but for the holidays we like to meet around here.”

Andrew Mull is an engineer who grew up in Glen Dale and moved back to Wheeling in 2019. He likes to experiment with different culinary variations, and this is his favorite for breakfasts: a simple recipe you can get creative with. He enjoys making food for his wife, brothers, in-laws, parents, and friends, especially at holiday gatherings.

Andrew has several go-to waffle recipes, depending on the occasion. When we visited with Andrew, he prepared a homemade batter with sweet potatoes he had boiled the night before. “So this recipe is one of the more frequent in the rotation. It’s super easy, real satisfying.”

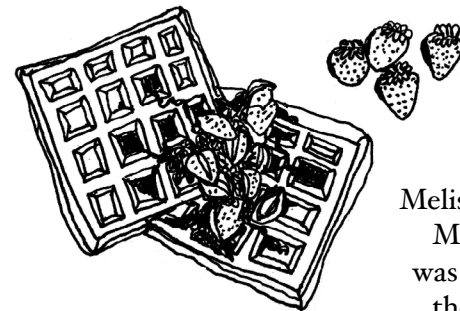


Andrew favors ingredients with fiber, like sweet potato and oats, which complement the natural sugars of the strawberries. “It’s a waffle but you’ve got a lot of unusual things in there – the sweet potato, the rolled oats.” His other two special touches are nutmeg and orange zest. “My secret ingredient for any breakfast is a little nutmeg. And another thing is, save your orange rinds and grate a bit of that in there. A little bit of orange zest can add a lot to a dish.”

We were delighted to talk with Andrew in his kitchen as he prepared these waffles and his strawberry compote for us, and we can say firsthand that they made for a delicious midmorning breakfast.

1 medium sweet potato, cooked and peeled (~¾ cup mashed)	¾ tsp cinnamon
½ cup oats	¼ tsp salt
½ cup all-purpose flour	¼ tsp nutmeg (optional)
½ cup milk	A few tbsp sugar (optional)
2 eggs	Zest of one half orange
1 tsp baking powder	Cooking spray

Add all ingredients into mixing bowl, mash, and combine. Heat and grease waffle iron with cooking spray. Fill center of waffle iron, leaving a little room for expansion.



ANDREW’S STRAWBERRY COMPOTE

The first strawberry compote Andrew ever tried was made by Melissa Rebholz (of Midge’s Kitchen and Midge’s Hot Dog Cart) back when she was cooking at the Public Market. Since then, he’s played around with different recipes and has discovered his

personal favorite, which he shared with us alongside his sweet potato waffles (p.16).

ANDREW MULL: “I like to always make this compote when there’s family or company because it’s so easy. It’s just three ingredients. I like to keep strawberries on hand, but the more ripe they get, the better, actually. Some of these look like they’re gonna turn mushy soon. That’s perfect. They’ll be a little sweeter and will cook down nicely.”

1 carton strawberries
½ orange (for juice)*

2 tbsp sugar

“So step one, you clean the strawberries and quarter them. And you’ll basically cook them down into a nice gooey mixture. Step two is you get some orange juice. And step three, I add two tablespoons of sugar to sweeten it up a bit. Maybe an extra tablespoon if you’re using a lemon. You stir it up, you don’t have to mush or mash anything, it’ll just cook down, 10-15 minutes. It’ll end up as a syrupy mixture with the gooey strawberries. It’ll be a nice dark red liquid. The longer you leave it on here, it’ll thicken up a little bit, but I like it more runny.”

**Andrew prefers to make this compote with oranges, but “you can use basically any kind of citrus.” Remember to save the rind for your waffle batter!*



A from-scratch sweet potato waffle with Andrew’s strawberry compote.

LIÈGE WAFFLES

These waffles are more involved to make than Andrew’s sweet potato waffles, but they are very worth the effort. Almost a dessert, they’re sweeter and have a more chewy, doughy texture than a typical American waffle. “If I’ve got breakfast responsibility one day during our holiday week, I’ll just make, you know, twenty dough balls. And you just put ‘em on the waffle maker, crank ‘em out. Dough keeps overnight so you can make them ahead of time too.”



Andrew Mull

¾ cup warmed milk (less than 100°F;
too hot will harm the yeast)
1 package quick-rise yeast
2 tbsp sugar
3 eggs

2 tsp vanilla
16 tbsp (2 sticks) butter, melted
3 cup all purpose flour
1 tsp sea salt or kosher salt
8 oz pearl sugar*

Warm milk to about 90°F, but no more than 100°F. Sprinkle yeast and sugar into milk, then let sit for 10-15 minutes until foamy. Whisk in eggs, vanilla, and melted butter. Set aside. In a separate large bowl, mix together flour and salt. Create a well in the middle and pour in wet mixture. Stir until soft dough forms. Cover the bowl and place in a warm spot. Let it rise until it doubles, about 30 minutes.

After dough has risen, gently mix in pearl sugar – do not overmix! Divide dough into 10-12 doughballs, roughly the size of tennis balls. Use immediately or seal in plastic bag to be used in the next day or two. Use them just like batter: Heat then grease waffle iron and squish doughball between irons to cook. Top and eat! MAKES ABOUT 10 WAFFLES.

**Pearl sugar can be hard to find. You can make your own by crushing sugar cubes.*

HOMEMADE VANILLA EXTRACT

As Andrew Mull was making his sweet potato waffles, we noticed that he had a large bottle of vanilla extract on his counter. It turns out it was homemade extract he'd been gifted!

“Fun fact, you can make your own vanilla by just getting vanilla beans, put ‘em in a bottle, and then just fill it with vodka. This was an eight ounce bottle and six vanilla beans, but the measurement isn’t too precise, and you can refill it as it gets empty. They say for the first time you do it, let it sit for six months or so. But that’s literally all you need. It’s real easy. I don’t know if it’s cheaper than buying from the store, but I think it’s worth making – it’s basically the same thing. Vodka doesn’t have a flavor profile and cooks off quickly. So after you cook it, you’re left with the vanilla essence.”



SIMPLE DROP BISCUITS

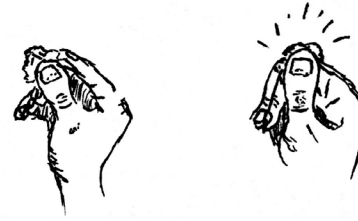
Much like his sweet potato waffle recipe (p.16), Andrew has been tinkering with this “go-to” biscuit recipe for about six months. It calls for two different types of flour, but you can use whatever you have. Andrew’s flours of choice are White Lily (for fine flour) and King Arthur (for cake flour).

“The flour part’s hard because you’ve got to use two different flours that you sift together, that’s the time consuming part. And then ‘snapping’ the butter in it can take awhile, but so far this is what I’ve had the most luck with. I love experimenting with it, finding different ways to do it.”

2 & ½ cups fine flour
2 & ½ cups cake flour
1 tbsp baking powder

¾ tsp kosher salt
12 tbsp butter (1 & ½ sticks), cut into
small cubes and chilled
2 cups whole buttermilk*

*If you don't have buttermilk, substitute with 2 cups whole milk and 1 tbsp white vinegar.



Preheat oven to 375°F, ensuring that one rack is in middle of oven. In mixing bowl, combine both flours, baking powder, and salt by sifting together – “I strongly recommend using a sifter.”

“The butter seems to be the lynchpin, how you do the butter. I just cube it, and once you get the little cubes in there – I make half-inch cubes – you get in there with your hands and, they call it, you “snap it” in until you don’t feel the bits of butter anymore. That way the butter gets coated in flour.”

Gently add the milk and lightly mix until barely combined, “as loosely as you can, once you put the liquid in.” Some dry spots are fine – dough will be fairly sticky. Do not overmix! Use an ice cream scoop or large spoon to place large scoops onto greased baking sheet or cast iron skillet. They can be close or touching. Bake for 20-25 minutes. Andrew suggests pairing these biscuits with a compote, jam, or gravy. MAKES 14-16 BISCUITS.

FARM FRESH FRITTATA

HANNAH HEDRICK: “This one’s funny because I don’t like eggs but it’s convenient for an egg-loving crowd so I make it about ten times a year. Gets good reviews most of the time, but I’ve never tried it so I couldn’t say for sure.”

Chopped vegetables of your choosing	2 tsp garlic powder
(“I like to use peppers, mushrooms, onions, and greens”)	1 tsp salt
1 dozen farm fresh eggs	½ tsp pepper
1 cup milk	Cheese (“Again, you choose - I like mozzarella or feta”)
2 tsp onion powder	

Preheat oven to 425°F. Sauté chopped veg in a cast iron skillet until they soften and start to brown. Remove pan from the heat and set aside while you prepare eggs.

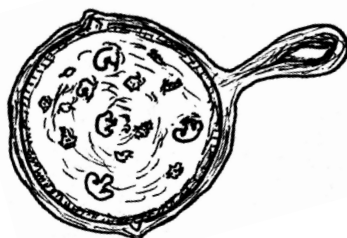
Crack eggs into a large bowl and whisk ‘til all the yolks are broken and mixture looks homogenous. Add milk, onion powder, garlic

powder, salt, and pepper, then whisk vigorously for 2-3 minutes. “You’re trying to get a lot of air into the mixture; it will look foamy when you’re done.”

Pour egg mixture over veg in slightly cooled skillet and mix gently. Sprinkle cheese over eggs. Bake frittata for 35-40 minutes, until eggs are set and top is golden brown. Remove from oven and let stand for 10 minutes before serving. MAKES 10-12 SERVINGS IN A STANDARD CAST IRON SKILLET.



Hannab Hedrick



REMEMBERING THE LEBANON BAKERY



And Other Stories

*“For so many people in my family, their love language is food.
Like, ‘let me cook you something.’”*

Jenna Thomas-Cline lives in Pittsburgh these days, but she grew up in St. Clairsville, Ohio, just across the river from Wheeling. Her strongest connection to her family’s heritage comes through the Lebanese food she’s grown up eating and cooking. Jenna talked with us about two dishes central to her life: *Kibbeh* (a mixed beef and lamb dish) and her mother’s Lebanese rice. We also talked about two local businesses that are close to Jenna’s heart: Ghossain’s Gourmet Mediterranean Foods in Youngstown, Ohio, and the (now-closed) Lebanon Bakery in South Wheeling.

Ever since she was little, Jenna remembers her family ordering all their olive oil, olives, bread, and other ingredients from Ghossain’s, a small business run by a Lebanese family. Her relatives occasionally send surprise packages from Ghossain’s for birthdays and special occasions: “Sometimes I’ll just come home and there’ll be this package, and it’ll say ‘from Joseph Ghossain.’ I have to just call around and be like, ‘Did you send me something?’” None of us really live close to each other anymore, so it’s a nice way to still feel connected.”

Jenna’s memories of kibbeh are similarly linked to family and place. Going to the Lebanon Bakery “was always a family event. My grandmother and grandfather, and myself and my brother, we would go, and we would always get kibbeh. And then they had this cookie called a koulouria, which is a Greek twist cookie. And we would always get that and a Coke every single time. Any time I came home from college, that’s where I wanted to eat.”

Jenna shared some of her kibbeh-making techniques with us and reflected beautifully on the magic of her family’s kitchen whenever everyone gathers to make kibbeh together.



JENNA'S BAKED KIBBEH

كبة بالصينية

“More than just the food came together, it was all these relationships, too.”

This recipe is adopted from *Lebanese Cuisine* by Madelain Farah, Jenna's decades-old Lebanese cookbook that she got from her Nana, Jean. “The kibbeh is the foundation – from here you can fry, bake, have it raw, etcetera. My Nana used to do that. She knew where the meat came from, so she would eat it raw. They purchased their meat from a farm. So it was very different. I just have a Giant Eagle.”

Of her efforts to re-create the kibbeh she loved growing up, Jenna says she's “taken this recipe and essentially made it my own, which is just trying to reach what I think the Lebanese bakery did. Every single time that I make it, I just tinker with something else to try to figure it out.”

Jenna's memories of making kibbeh with her family are as important to share as the recipes themselves:

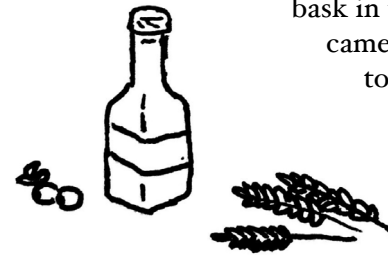
JENNA THOMAS-CLINE: “The magic of these dishes was, making them was such a slow process, but also a process where everyone had a task, and you talked, and you caught up. And the slowness of



Jenna Thomas-Cline

the recipe, the physicality of it, allowed you to do that. It was a full family affair, it really brought people together. Somebody's picking apart mint or parsley, and somebody else is chopping onions so thin that you can see through them, and somebody else is doing the thing with the wheat, and it was kind of like the kitchen just became this lovely little village center where everyone's talking and laughing. And I think that there's something very magical about that, about the slowness of it, and about how you could just

bask in that slowness. More than just the food came together, it was all these relationships too. That was the really beautiful thing.”



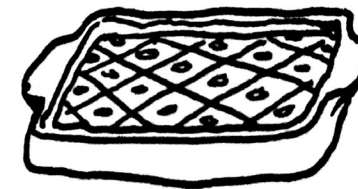
2 & 2/3 cups bulgur wheat
1 large onion, finely minced
2 tbsp salt

2 tsp black pepper
A pinch of pepper
A pinch of cinnamon
Dried mint
2 lbs or 4 cups ground lean beef (98%)
or lamb - “find the leanest meat possible”^{*}
½ cup melted butter

“The most time-consuming part is soaking the wheat – the bulgur – in a big bowl for 30 minutes. And then you have to take handfuls of these little tiny pieces of wheat and squeeze the water out. If you've ever had tabbouleh, the same process goes into making it. The way I make it, you mince your onions really finely, and then you combine everything. And with your hands, you just sort of swish your way around, mixing everything together.”

Once you have your kibbeh mixture, generously butter a 9” x 12” cake pan. Spread an inch-thick layer of kibbeh on bottom of pan. Then go over kibbeh with hands and smooth evenly, dipping hands in cold water so kibbeh will not stick.

Score kibbeh a half-inch deep in a diamond-shaped design, spacing diamonds one inch apart. Pour melted butter across top. Bake at 400°F for 25 minutes, then lower heat to 300°F and bake for 20-30 minutes more or until golden brown. When serving, cut along diamond shaped wedges. SERVES 8-10.



^{*}If using beef, ¼ tsp ground sweet basil may be added.

LEBANESE RICE

Always prepared by Jenna's mom, this was the "only" type of rice Jenna and her family ate when she was young. "It was always a staple side dish that we had constantly. I didn't realize people just ate white rice." Besides associating this dish with the indoor comforts of winter, some of Jenna's fondest memories of her mother's Lebanese rice are connected to family Easter dinners:



Jenna and her Nana, Jean, who gifted her a Lebanese cookbook.

"It was always a very memorable meal. Easter was always, you know, the little glimmer of spring and in the Ohio Valley, [the winter is] so gray. The lamb had rosemary, and lemon, and then the rice was such a wonderful, comforting side, and the whole meal was – it tasted bright. Summer was coming and spring was coming and it felt almost like a rebirth. Like you were just emerging from winter. And I don't even care for lamb! It's the nostalgia behind it. I do not miss lamb at all, but I remember that meal with such fondness."

1 cup white rice
2 cups chicken broth
¼ cup pine nuts
2 tbsp butter

1 tsp cinnamon
½ tsp salt
Generous portion white pepper (black pepper is also fine)

Melt butter in a pot, then brown rice and pine nuts in butter for 2 minutes on medium heat. Once pine nuts become fragrant, add broth to deglaze. Also add pepper, salt, and cinnamon. Bring pot to rolling boil, and as soon as you notice it boiling, cover pot with lid, turn heat down to low, and let cook 20 minutes undisturbed. "Once those 20 minutes are up, the liquid should be gone and you'll have wonderful hearty rice. Enjoy!"



THE BEST KALE SALAD

"In the low light of winter, this salad shines."

This lovely salad from Hannah Hedrick contains roasted squash and a homemade balsamic vinaigrette.

1-2 winter squash ("I prefer delicata because it doesn't need peeled")	Olive oil Honey Salt and pepper
--	---------------------------------------

PREPARE THE SQUASH: Peel if necessary, de-seed, and chop into one-inch pieces. Coat with a small amount of olive oil, salt, pepper, and drizzle of honey. Roast at 400°F for 20-30 minutes, until tender and starting to brown.

½ cup high quality olive oil or any neutral oil	2 tbsp apple cider vinegar
2 tbsp balsamic vinegar	1 tbsp dijon mustard
	1 tsp honey
	Pinch of salt and pepper



MAKE THE VINAIGRETTE: Combine all ingredients in a jar and secure lid tightly. Shake till emulsified. "I always taste and usually add a little more of one thing or the other — adjust how you like."

1 large bunch curly kale
1 goat cheese log (4 oz), crumbled

Handful dried cranberries
Handful pepitas or sunflower seeds

ASSEMBLE THE SALAD: Wash kale and rip into small, bite-sized pieces – “We’re going for a chopped salad consistency here.” In a large bowl, dress kale with just enough vinaigrette to coat. Sprinkle in pepitas and cranberries and toss one more time, then top with squash and goat cheese. Add more vinaigrette to taste if desired.



A finished kale salad, complete with roasted delicata squash, goat cheese, pepitas, & cranberries. This version was made with the addition of chopped apples.

MRS. HUTCHINSON’S CAESAR SALAD

CAROLINE CLAY: “This is a recipe that came originally from a family friend, Mrs. Hutchinson. I first had this salad at a big dinner party she threw when I was probably 9 or 10. I’ve always had pretty discriminating taste (i.e. I’m a little picky), but I remember going back for plate after plate of this salad. Since then, I’ve made it at most family Thanksgivings and Christmases, and it’s always a welcomed source of green on our plates. I’ve eaten a lot of caesar salads in my life, and this one continues to be my favorite.”

1 egg
1 tsp worcestershire sauce
3 tbsp lemon juice
3 cloves crushed garlic
1 pinch salt
½ tsp black pepper
1 & ½ tsp anchovy paste
1 tsp capers
1 tsp dijon mustard
½ cup good olive oil, plus more for croutons
Parmesan cheese



1 baguette, loaf of nice bread, or sourdough
Romaine lettuce (freshly torn and washed)

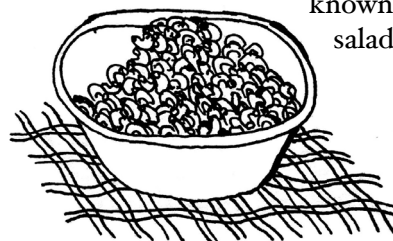
MAKE DRESSING: Coddle egg in boiling water for 45 seconds. Transfer to cool water. Mix worcestershire, lemon, garlic, salt, pepper, anchovy paste, mustard, and capers in a blender. Add the egg. Blend until smooth. Slowly add oil in a steady stream while blending until smooth. Taste and adjust as necessary.

MAKE CROUTONS: Slice or tear bread into large chunks. Heat large skillet over medium heat. Add bread pieces and drizzle with olive oil. Toast until golden brown and slightly crispy. Alternatively, add bread chunks and oil to air fryer and lightly fry.

ASSEMBLE SALAD: Toss freshly torn and washed romaine lettuce with dressing, croutons, and shaved parmesan cheese. “There is no limit to the amount of cheese and croutons you can add.”

MACARONI SALAD FOR A PICNIC

“Every picnic, all these years.”



For decades now, Lori Nicholson has been known amongst her family for this macaroni salad. “We always went on picnics with my husband’s side of the family. For every holiday – Fourth of July, Memorial Day, Labor Day. And I always had to make my macaroni salad. That’s what everyone

wanted me to make. And that’s really not a recipe there. I do a little bit of this and a little bit of that. But for twenty-some years, I made macaroni salad for every, *every* picnic, and I’m like, I just want to – I mean, I’ll make some other stuff too. A dessert or something too. But it was always my macaroni salad that they wanted.”

Although Lori doesn’t use a written recipe, she was able to walk us through the process from memory. Ingredients are measured to taste.

LORI: “Just probably a half of a jar of Miracle Whip. And then a little bit of mustard, and a little bit of pickle juice. Salt, pepper, and sugar. And then I add my elbow macaroni to that dressing, and then I do chopped up pickles, and celery, and green pepper, and onion and then just mix that all together. But you have to have that right taste. You don’t want it too sugary, you don’t want it too vinegary, you know, so you do have to work with it. And hard boiled eggs go in that too.”

TERRIE’S POTATO SALAD

“Everybody likes my potato salad.”

Terrie Fish loves to connect with people over food. She often brings food to her neighbors, and they bring her whatever they have in abundance from their garden. She also likes to host picnics for “anybody who’s available; family, friends, we just put a thing out to say, ‘Hey, we’re having a get together if you want to come – if you’re off, show up.’ I always get requests to make potato salad.”

Small yellow or red potatoes
Some hard boiled eggs
Celery
Onion
Mayonnaise

Miracle Whip
Grainy mustard
White vinegar
St. Elmo Steak House Horseradish
Sauce (optional)

“I use those little potatoes that are yellow or red. I cut them in half. And then I put them in the micro-wave for 6 minutes. You don’t have to boil ‘em, peel ‘em and all that stuff. I leave peels on. The peels



are good for you, too. Then I usually put [hard-boiled] eggs in there. Some celery and onions. And then I just make my salad dressing to put on it. [The salad dressing] usually has some grainy mustard, some Miracle Whip, some mayo, some vinegar – have to have vinegar – and recently I’ve added St. Elmo’s Horseradish Sauce to it sometimes when I make it. It gives it a manly flavor, I call it.”



Terrie Fish in her backyard with her sweet dog, Creed.

SIS’S POTATO SALAD

“I love a lot of potato salad.
That’s a specialty, too, that I like – potato salad.”

DARLENE “SIS” STRADWICK: “Well, I boil my potatoes – got to make sure that those are done all the way through. And then I have to have plenty of [hard-boiled] eggs in mine. Sometimes the more eggs you got in there, it kind of holds everything together. I only use Miracle Whip, I don’t use mayonnaise or anything like that. It’s got a spicy zingy taste to it, a zesty taste. I have the onions – any kind of onion, just not a white onion – chopped up fine. And I only use celery seed. It gives it a good flavor. I don’t like the crunch and all of that, so I use a celery seed. [Then] yellow mustard ... trying to think ... my mind is blank until I’m in the kitchen. You got the main ingredients.”

MOCK CHICKEN SALAD

“I can make this, and it just brings me back, being there with her.”

You’ll find several family recipes from Lisa and Victoria White sprinkled throughout this cookbook, but this one emerged unexpectedly, as this mother and daughter reflected with us on their family and the foods they love to share together.

The two spoke about the way that food and recipes help maintain family ties even after things change or loved ones pass on. “Cherish time with your loved ones, especially your older loved ones, because you don’t know how much time you have,” Victoria commented. “And that’s where recipes carry on,” Lisa added. “Certain foods, like certain smells, generate thoughts and feelings and emotions. To me, food brings back a lot of memories.”

And just like that, we began talking about this recipe – something Lisa calls “mock chicken salad.”



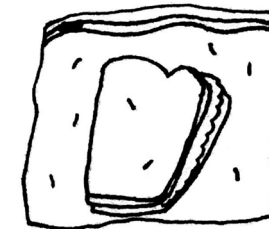
A collection of family photographs and newspaper articles from the Whites, including a photograph of their Memaw, Pauline Hicks.



(Pictured right to left) Lisa & Victoria White, mother and daughter, each holding a photograph of Memaw.

LISA WHITE: “My Memaw used to make chicken salad – it’s not normal chicken salad. Because my dad and my grandpa didn’t like vegetables. They wouldn’t eat most things until they went hunting and were forced to eat whatever they brought, because they were hungry.”

“So she would cook a whole chicken and take it all off the bone, and then grind it through a crank device, because that’s what they had back then. And she would add a little bit of broth, salt, pepper, and mayonnaise, mix it in a bowl and then either put it on sandwiches or crackers, and that was it. We usually had it on sandwiches. And when we would go camping, we’d be guaranteed that there was pre-made, individually bagged chicken sandwiches in the cooler, when Memaw was there.”





“FOOD IS LOVE”:



Tales from a
NuYoRican Kitchen

Sina Díaz learned to cook from her mother: a single parent always busy making delicious homemade food for her household of daughters, plus a large extended family. One day, Sina’s mom taught her to make soup. “I just loved everything about what she was doing. After that I took on dinner [once a week]. And I would make a huge pot of soup. Because that’s what I knew. But it was delicious. And everybody loved it. And it kind of just went from there.”

Much like her mom, Sina is a “Jane of all trades.” She was an EMT in New York, trained to be a welder while pregnant, and helped build bridges and a nuclear plant in Allentown, PA. In Wheeling, she’s worked several long-term jobs in restaurants, and she dreams of opening her own. She’ll name it “Titi Sina’s Cocina” – Aunt Sina’s Kitchen. “Everybody calls my mom Titi Sina. Her real name is Marcelina, but they called her Sina. I’m Sina [too], but I want to pay homage to my mother. She was such an amazing person. Yeah, any time I get into the kitchen, it’s definitely off my mother’s back, you know? Every time I cook, I do it with her in mind.”

Sina is a prolific and inventive cook. She told us that she doesn’t like to cook when she’s angry, because it comes through in her food – and when she’s happy, “I feel like you get more of who I am.”

“Food is love. It’s not the technique, it’s really where it’s coming from, you know, like why are you making this? What is moving you to make it? Like when I make a chicken stew, it’s like, okay, because the day is cloudy, and you need something soothing and comforting. Food is love. Food is love, love is food, and I am all of it [laughs].”

Having tasted Sina’s cooking and sat at her dining room table, chatting with her and her two daughters for hours, it is clear that Sina’s love shines through her food.



ANNATTO OIL

Sina uses *annatto* in many of her dishes. It’s a seasoning that comes from the seeds of achiote trees, which are native to various parts of Central and South America. When Sina has time, she’ll make a homemade annatto oil to cook with. You’ll see it referenced throughout her recipes, so we’ve included her description here.

SINA DIÁZ: “If you were doing it, like at home by yourself, you would use annatto seed. It’s like pebble-ish [seed], it’s red; they even dyed clothes with it back in the day. So you put the seeds in some oil, just a little bit. And that oil becomes like a bright red. So anything you put it in, it’s gonna give it color.”

SOFRITO

“Whatever you’re gonna do for dinner, put this in. It’s gold.”

Sofrito is another foundational preparation that Sina uses in her cooking. She uses it as a base when she makes *arroz con gandules* (rice with pigeon peas, p.37).

Sina uses sofrito in her Puerto Rican dishes as well as more experimental creations. “If I want to keep it Italian when I make spaghetti, right? I’ll keep it Italian. But we have our own Puerto Rican spaghetti, where we do sofrito in the sauce. And we kind of meld it together. And then, you know, we throw it all in together, and it becomes a Puerto Rican spaghetti. You get a little bit of this, a little bit of that, but for the most part, the sofrito is what makes it.”

Sina makes different versions of sofrito depending on what ingredients she can find. She likes to use a kind of Dominican sweet pepper called *ajicito*, which are hard to find here. She’ll also use an herb called *culantro*, which she describes as “more pungent than regular cilantro.”





Sina holds an ajicito (Dominican sweet pepper), which she prefers to use when cooking sofrito. They're hard to find in Wheeling, so a sweet pepper will also do in a pinch.



“This right here is gold, even though it looks sorry right now,” Sina told us, showing us some culantro from her fridge. “It’s actually very exciting,” Sina’s daughter Seci interjected. “It’s like seeing Bigfoot.”

Sweet pepper (or ajicito, if possible)
Cilantro or culantro
Oregano
Red onion

Sazón (Goya seasoning)
Adobo spices
Manzanilla olives

SINA: “You toss it all into a blender or a food processor. I don’t like a fine chop on it, I like it to be coarse. I like for you to feel, you know, what’s going on in the pot. That’s basically like the base of Caribbean cooking, period. Not just Puerto Rican cooking. We all make variations on it. If you can get Dominican oregano, even better.”

ARROZ CON GANDULES (Rice with Pigeon Peas)

“Donde come uno, come dos.”
“Where one can eat, two can eat.”

Sina’s mother cooked not only for their family of five girls, but for her neighbors and extended family too. “The block that we lived on was a lot of family. So okay, picture this. Brooklyn in the eighties. One apartment building was me and my sisters and my mom on the first floor, and two of my aunts on each of the other floors. The next building was an uncle with a girlfriend, and then somebody who was living there. They just became family. ‘Cause you can’t not be family



Sina Díaz

when you’re around this. And then the next building was an uncle and I think an aunt. Again, all family. But my mom was the one who was the best cook. I had an aunt. She had like four kids. That lady never cooked. The only thing I saw on the stove was coffee. That’s it. Because everybody would come to my mother’s house.”

The apartment would fill up around mealtimes, with anywhere between 20 to 25 people some days. Sina’s mother had a saying, “Donde come uno, come dos.” “Where one can eat, two can eat.” “Because,”

Sina told us, “there’s never such a thing as, there’s not enough. You’re not always gonna get full, maybe. But everybody’s gonna get a piece.” Rice and pigeon peas was a staple of these big family meals.

Much like her mother, Titi Sina, Sina cooks “for everyone and everything. But definitely my family. Because I cook with a lot of love. There’s never been a time where I’ve been invited to a family gathering where I’m not the one cooking. Every time. I love to feed people. When I make something and I feed someone, it’s amazing.”

If possible, Sina recommends using banana leaves to impart flavor into the rice: “Right before you put the lid on, you put the banana leaves [in], and then you put the foil, and then the lid. The flavor difference is amazing. It’s like a mild, nutty, sweet flavor.”

- | | |
|-------------|-------------------------|
| Dry beans | Sazón (Goya seasoning) |
| Sofrito | Annatto oil or turmeric |
| Yellow rice | |

SINA DIÁZ: “The beans, they’re not canned beans. It would be in one of these [a big pot]. She’d soak them overnight and then you put ‘em in [the pot], and then you [add] the sofrito, the base, and you just let it simmer all day. When we got out of school, dinner was already done. Because when we left for school, she already started.”



“Everybody would just come in, and – I’mma show you right now. This pot right here is what you make your rice in. [My mother] got the beans out, and she’d do the rice.”

“Everybody would just come to the house and eat. It was just nonstop.”

The rice is “regular shmegular yellow rice” and seasoning. “We use sazón, Goya sazón. They have an annatto seasoning. It gives it a little flavor. You can use annatto oil (p.35) too. But when you don’t have that, turmeric is the next thing. You get more of a yellowish [color] with turmeric. With the annatto you get a little reddish.”

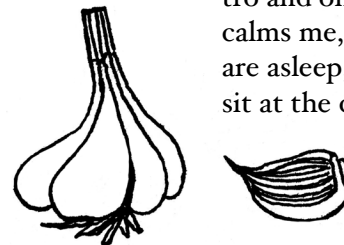
PERUVIAN CEVICHE CON PATACONES (Pickled Shrimp with Fried Plantains)

“Everybody has their own variation, but this is what I grew up with. This is what I know. When I eat it, it’s home to me.”

Made throughout South America, *ceviche* is a seafood dish where the acid of citrus does the cooking. It’s what Sina Díaz calls a *come bebe*, “like a drink it, eat it type of thing.” It’s flexible and versatile, a perfect dish to experiment with until you find your favorite variation. For ceviche, Sina told us, “you can use any type of fish. Everybody’s got their take on it.”

Sina personally prefers to make a Peruvian ceviche, with shrimp, sweet peppers, tomato, and blood orange when she can find it. Her oldest sister got the recipe from her Ecuadorian mother-in-law. “Why Peruvian ‘cause she’s Ecuadorian? I have no idea. But that’s what we learned. And that’s what we liked. And that’s just what stuck.” Sina likes to pair this version with a homemade guacamole and *patacones* (a type of once-fried plantain).

Two final ingredients that Sina emphasized when speaking about this dish were cilantro and garlic, whose smells remind her of home. “Cilantro is – let me tell you, if they made that thing into a perfume, I would wear it. When I smell cilantro, it reminds me of my mother. It reminds me of growing up and [being] around the family. Yeah, cilantro



and onions and garlic – that is home to me. It calms me, it’s relaxing. And garlic – when the kids are asleep, and I’m stressing about something – I’ll sit at the counter, and everything is clean and put away, and they’re put away, and I’ll just peel garlic. It is so therapeutic.”

- Raw shrimp
- Enough lime juice to cover the shrimp
- Coarse kosher salt
- Cilantro
- Sweet pepper (or ajicito, if possible)
- Grape tomatoes
- Red onion
- Blood orange
- Ketchup to taste

MAKE CEVICHE: “Typically you’ll take the raw shrimp, and you’ll [let it sit] in the lime juice with coarse kosher salt [in a shallow dish without heat, to cook].* So that’s cooking the shrimp. While that’s happening, I’m cutting up cilantro. I’m cutting up sweet peppers. I like to do grape tomatoes too. I’ll cut them in half according to how big they are. But you don’t want too much tomato. Red onion for sure, too. And I love a blood orange. If I can’t get my hands on that, [I’ll use] a regular orange, just to give it a little bit of sweetness. I’ll squeeze in just one orange. And it’s freaking delicious.” Sina says she’ll let her ceviche sit an hour or two in the fridge before serving.

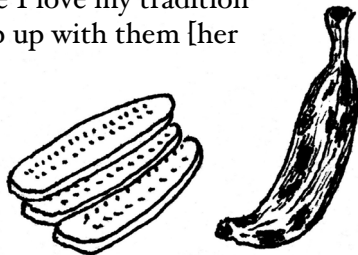
MAKE PATACONES: “You take plantains, the green ones, and you take it to a mandolin and you slice it, almost like a potato chip but the long way along the plantain. So you take it, like that long strip right? And fry it just once. That goes perfect with a ceviche.”

PASTELES & CHICHARRÓN (Stuffed Root Vegetable Patties & Pork Rinds)

“It’s a lotta work, but that’s where you get the joy.”

Pasteles and *chicharrón* are two interconnected Puerto Rican dishes that Sina Díaz and her family make for the holidays. They’ll often pair these meat-filled root vegetable wraps and pork rinds with rice and pigeon peas (37). “It’s always at Christmas, it’s always at Thanksgiving. And I try to keep it up because I love my tradition that I grew up with. And I try to keep up with them [her four children],” Sina told us.

**So long as shrimp are fully covered by the acidic lime juice, the juice will cook them completely.*

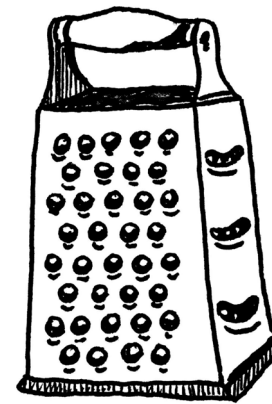


Making this dish requires slow cooking a well-seasoned pork shoulder with the fat cap on (which you later crisp in the oven and chop up to make *chicharrón*). Simultaneously, you prepare *masa* (a root vegetable patty) for *pasteles* using grated root vegetables and spices. You fill small bundles of *masa* with finely sliced pork, fold them in paper (and banana leaves if you have them), then tie them with twine and boil them in what Sina’s daughter Seci describes as a “*super* big pot.”

For all the steps and preparations, this meal needs many hands. “It’s a lotta work, but that’s where you get the joy,” Sina told us. “We spend hours making them,” her daughter Siyan added. “It’s very much a family project,” Sina continued. “If you want to eat, you’re gonna be in it. Some type of way.”

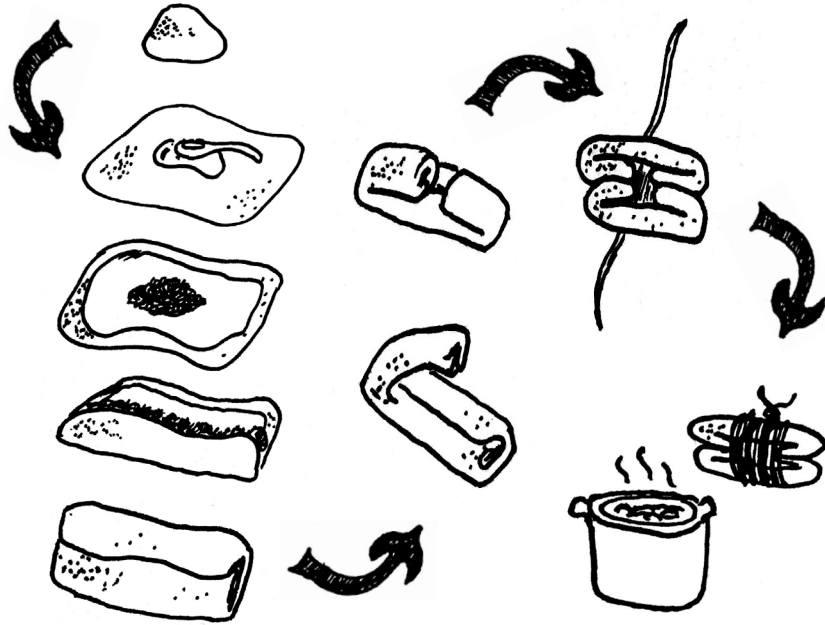
Sina’s memories and descriptions of this dish intermingled as she spoke, conjuring images of her childhood – grating vegetables, smelling cooked pork – that are echoed by her continuation of these same traditions with her children today.

MAKE MASA FOR PASTELES: “A traditional *pastel*, it takes plantains. *Yuca*. *Malanga*. *Yautia*. You have to grate all of this. So when we used to do it, growing up, it would be me, my five sisters, and my mother. When I tell you, there was blood, sweat, and tears in this meal, I mean literally blood, sweat, and tears. Because you’re grating, right, and I’m talking about to the last nub, because you’re not wasting anything – my mother was like, ‘don’t you dare.’ So you make this *masa*, and you mix it up in this big old pot. And then you throw in *sazón* for color, and a little bit of *adobo* for flavor.”

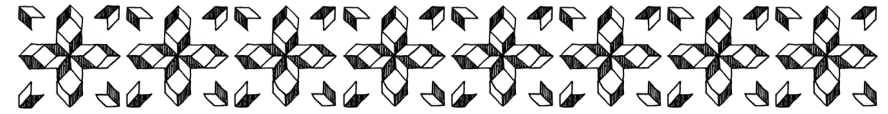


PREPARE PORK FOR FILLING AND CHICHARRÓN: “While that’s going on, somebody else is making pork shoulder. Picture this, big old boney pork shoulder. And you’ve gotta stab it, and twist, cause you want the holes to be big. You see that mortar and pestle right there? So with that, you take garlic, olive oil, salt, cilantro, pepper, you’ll make that into a paste, all of that. And you stuff that into the holes in the pork shoulder.”

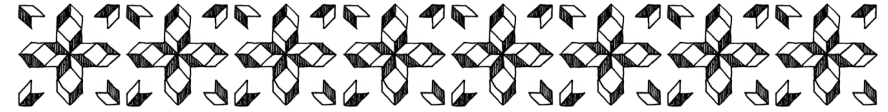
“Season it up. Put it in the oven. You slow cook it, I’m talking about five in the morning. So you slow roast [the pork]. And then towards the end, you take off the foil with that fat cap on, and you let it just roast and sear. And it becomes the crackley-est, fattiest – the frickin’ best. You take the fat cap off, chop it up into chiccharón, and then the meat, you shred it up real fine, and this goes into the middle of your masa.”



ASSEMBLE PASTELES: “The annatto oil I was telling you about gives the pasteles the color. So you’ll take a little bit [of oil], put it [on the masa], and then you spread it out. And then you put some filling there [on top]. And then you take this paper and fold it up like this [she demonstrates with a piece of paper]. If you can get banana leaves – I can get them in Washington, PA – you wrap it in that, then the paper. And we always do it to pack. So you’ll have another one right on top. And then you take that cooking twine yarn and tie it. And then you boil it for an hour. There’s a debate whether you put ketchup on it or not. I put ketchup on mine. A lotta people don’t.”



SOUPS & STEWS



GRANDPA’S BEEF STEW



*“It was always in the freezer...
always on hand whenever you needed it.”*

LAURA OSWALT: “This beef stew makes me think of snow days. You don’t make it in the summertime – it’s definitely more of a fall food. And it was something that was always in the freezer, always on deck, or always on hand whenever you needed it. So that’s why it became a snow day food, because all of a sudden, the kids are home all day, and maybe we don’t have anything, or we don’t want to cook all day to feed them, so we can just defrost the beef stew.”

- | | |
|--|------------------------------------|
| 2 <i>tbsp fat</i> | 1 <i>tsp paprika</i> |
| 2 <i>lbs beef chuck (stew meat)</i> | 1-2 <i>bay leaves</i> |
| 1 <i>large onion (sliced)</i> | <i>Dash allspice or cloves</i> |
| 1 <i>clove garlic or garlic powder</i> | 6 <i>carrots (cut into chunks)</i> |
| $\frac{3}{4}$ <i>tsp salt</i> | <i>Several small onions</i> |
| 1 <i>tbsp lemon juice</i> | 3-5 <i>potatoes</i> |
| 1 <i>tsp black pepper</i> | |

In a large pot, boil 4 cups water. At the same time, heat fat in a large heavy pan. Cube and brown beef. Add large onion and garlic to beef and cook ‘til onion is soft. Then, add mix to water and reduce to a simmer. Stir in salt, lemon juice, and spices. Simmer, covered, for at least 2 hours (more if possible) – but don’t boil. After meat is done, add vegetables. Simmer 30 more minutes until veg are done.



Anthony "Rico" Ruiz

SLOW-COOKED ROPA VIEJA (Shredded Beef Stew)

This recipe comes from Anthony "Rico" Ruiz, Wheeling resident and owner of Ruiz Insurance on Chapline Street. Although Rico has lived in different parts of West Virginia for much of his life, he grew up in Puerto Rico, and this Cuban dish reminds him of home. "Growing up I would go after school to my friend's house – he was half-Cuban, half-Puerto Rican – and they would already have

dinner in the making or about to be prepared. They would invite me in, and that's how it started."

These days, Rico typically makes *ropa vieja* for special occasions, preparing it a few times a year for himself and his wife. "This recipe translates from Spanish to something like 'old clothes' – because when you toss the meat in the crock pot and simmer it for a long period of time, it will loosely just fall apart."

3 lbs beef flank steak*

1 cup beef broth

1 can (6 oz) tomato paste

1 can (14 oz) petite diced tomatoes

1 & ½ tsp salt

¼ tsp pepper

Your spices of choice

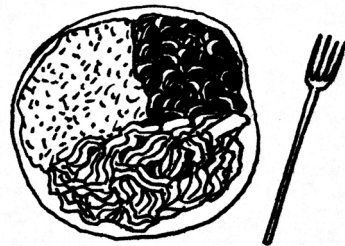
1 tbsp apple cider vinegar

1 small white onion (diced)

2 bell peppers (diced)

3 whole cloves garlic

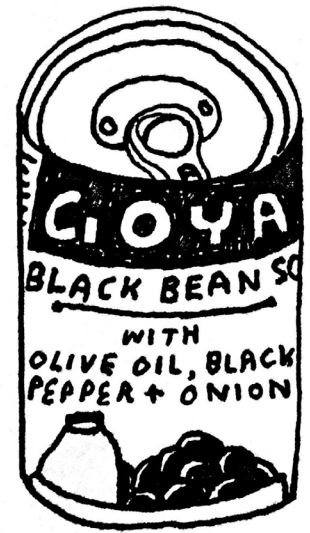
The ensuing recipe is Rico's recommendation for first-timers; he doesn't typically follow a recipe and is accustomed to cooking to taste. It recommends 1 tsp oregano, 1 tsp cumin, and ½ tsp turmeric. Personally, Rico enjoys cooking with traditional Puerto Rican spices you can find at



*Rico suggests leaving the fat on, to help the beef soften up as it cooks, and to add flavor.

the grocery store, like "achiote, coriander, and sazón – maybe a little cilantro too." Always experimenting, Rico says you can "make it taste however you want to. Make it your own!"

Brown beef on its own in a regular oil of your choosing. Place remaining ingredients into a crockpot or slow cooker and mix together. Add flank steak to crockpot and coat thoroughly, placing some mix on top of meat. Cover and cook on low for 9 hours or high for 5 hours; don't open the lid during cooking time. When done, shred the meat with two forks right in the slow cooker.



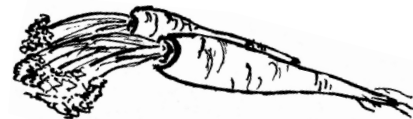
Serve over white rice with a side of black beans – even just a can of black bean soup – and a choice of garnish (avocado, salad, cilantro, Pico de Gallo, etcetera). And then if you feel like it's not as peppery, maybe put a little more pepper, or if you feel like it needs something, you can add it. And that's the traditional way to eat it."

BRUNSWICK STEW

"Way back then they'd put rabbit or squirrel in it – whatever you happened to catch."

PAT JEFFERS: "My mother always made this. It's one of our family favorites. One of those recipes that didn't need to be written down."

"This two-day soup recipe dates from the colonial or pioneer days. This version is from Southern Virginia, where my mother's family came from. Originally this was made with whatever meat was available – chicken, beef, squirrel, rabbit, or venison. My mother often made it with leftover beef roast, as her grandmother had, or chicken (my favorite). Please feel free to use whatever you like, or change the amounts."



2-3 boneless, skinless chicken breast halves
Salt & pepper
A couple of bay leaves

“Several shakes” dried parsley, celery, & onion flakes
1-2 tsp minced garlic

COOK CHICKEN: Place chicken in a large saucepan, season with remaining ingredients. Add water to more-than cover. Cook on low heat till tender. “While the chicken cooks, start the soup.”

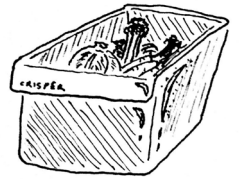
1 onion (chopped)
4-6 carrots (peeled and sliced into rounds)
3-5 stalks celery (destringed and sliced) and their leaves (chopped)
3-4 tsp minced garlic
1 cup uncooked rice
2 cans diced tomatoes, 14 oz. each, or fresh from the garden
6-8 oz. frozen sliced okra, or fresh
2-3 pieces kielbasa, sliced. (“I use Butterball turkey sausage.”)
2 large containers chicken broth, 48 oz. each. (“You will probably need more after the soup cooks down, so I always get an extra carton.”)
Salt & pepper
2-3 bay leaves
“A couple of generous shakes” of dried parsley flakes
Dried celery flakes (if you don’t have leaves from the sliced celery)
Extra veggies of choice (8-12 oz frozen corn, sliced green beans, lima beans, or any combination). Use fresh if available.

ASSEMBLE STEW: Add all remaining ingredients to a large (9-plus quart) pot. Simmer for a few hours, then add the chicken (cut into bite sized pieces), plus extra veg (fresh or frozen). “Simmer for another hour or so. Correct the seasonings. Serve with toasted, buttered French bread, rolls, etcetera. Enjoy!”



“CRISPER” SOUP

TERRIE FISH: “My husband says my specialties are soups. And I make all kinds of soups. I have one called ‘crisper’ soup. I open the refrigerator, whatever’s in the crisper drawer is going in the soup.”



“I do write these things down occasionally because [my husband] says, ‘you got to write that one down, it was really good – what’d you put in it?’ And he’ll know that next time we make it, it’ll be different.”

SHIRLEY’S SOUP

“It’s a very hearty soup.”

KENNETH POWELL: “Well, I’ve little aptitude for the cooking arts, but my mom, Delcie, is a whiz in the kitchen. I asked her if she still had a recipe she came up with when I was a kid, and she did.

“We called it “Shirley’s Soup” because she would make it in large quantities for Shirley, a lady in our church who was going through cancer. Mom kinda made it up as she went, but Shirley loved the soup so much that Mom was thankfully compelled to write it down. It’s not a super old recipe passed on by generations, but in terms of community linkage, you’d be hard-pressed to find a better recipe.”

2-3 skinless chicken breasts	½ cup corn
2 chicken bouillon cubes (or 2 tsp granulated bouillon)	2-3 celery stalks (sliced)
1 large can chicken broth	3 carrots (sliced)
1 can garlic-roasted tomatoes (stewed, chunked)	1 green pepper (sliced)
	½ tsp garlic powder
	1 tsp Italian seasoning
	1 tsp parsley flakes

In large crock pot, place chicken breasts in boiling saltwater with chicken bouillon. As chicken cooks through, add chicken broth and tomatoes. Then, add remaining ingredients and spices. Let boil ‘til cooked through (10-15 minutes). Salt and pepper to taste.

SINA'S BUTTERNUT SQUASH SOUP

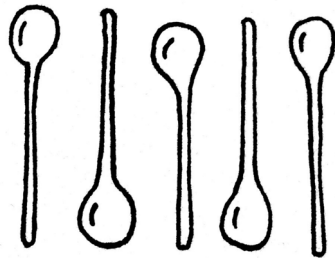
"It's gotta be for a real cozy day, like we're gonna cuddle up and watch a movie after we eat."



Sina Díaz loves sharing her beautiful culinary creations with her four children: Siyan, Seci, Sonia, and Daniel. They, in turn, have nothing but pride for their mom's cooking. As we all sat and chatted, Seci intermittently showed us photo after photo of different dishes her mom makes. Seci's older sister Siyan also spoke highly of her mom's food: "It's goood – you can ask any one of my friends who's ever been to my house when she's cooked. They all love her food. My friend, like, we don't talk that much anymore, but the one time she stayed over she was like, 'when your mom makes that restaurant? Let me know and I'll be over there.'"

"I like her butternut squash soup. I want that right now," Siyan continued.

SINA: "I do the butternut squash, yeah. I like to incorporate coconut milk and cumin. I like to make it real creamy. I like to make a chicken base. What's that brand? Better than Bouillon. That freaking thing. I have not met one I haven't liked. So that just to give it flavor. And then I like to put a little, little bit of nutmeg. To give it that earthy [taste], you know? I'm also a big fan of turmeric for the color."



"THE GOSPEL OF THE PEPPERONI ROLL"



Pepperoni rolls – slices of pepperoni wrapped in bread dough – are a staple of nearly every convenience and grocery store in and around Wheeling, not to mention the official West Virginia state food.

One Wheeling resident, Kenneth Powell, shared some fond memories of this regional staple with us. He also explained the origin of pepperoni rolls, and the context in which they came about.

KENNETH POWELL: "I'm not an expert. But my understanding is that pepperoni rolls, their origins come from Italian immigrants who came to this state. And they were largely coal miners. And during those times, you needed food that was going to last a long time, to get you energy to go through a really difficult job. So bread, pepperoni, maybe some sauce, maybe some cheese."

"I even remember during school lunches, at least once every week or two, there would be Pepperoni Roll day, and everyone knew what that meant. If you were quick on the draw, you could get two pepperoni rolls, and it was worth it because they were delicious. And what made them delicious was that, more often than not, the lunch ladies, they were involved in their actual creation. They were homemade."

"What made pepperoni rolls 'special' to me was that they weren't special in the first place. I've lived in West Virginia all my life, and to me, I just thought they were a normal everyday food. You'd see them in gas stations, pizza shops, school cafeterias, hell, even my mom would make them every now and then. I didn't realize they were a regional thing until I went to college. When I think of food specific to West Virginia, pepperoni rolls immediately come to mind."



Kenneth Powell



Neely's Grocery in East Wheeling.



Maria Miller and her father, Todd, co-owners of Neely's

MARIA'S SECRET PEPPERONI ROLLS

“The pepperoni rolls are legend, nowadays.”

Maria Miller's great-aunt Nancy and great-uncle Vernon Neely founded Neely's Grocery in East Wheeling in 1956. The business began as Nancy's passion project; she ran the business until they earned enough for Vernon to quit his full-time job. Today, Maria co-owns Neely's with her father, marking the third generation in her family to run the store and many of its operations – including cooking.

Before Maria was creating recipes at Neely's, she was a teenager crafting her own recipes, including her famous pepperoni roll recipe. “It's actually my personal recipe [from] back when I was a cheerleader. And we had to make treats for the football players. I said I'd make some pepperoni rolls. Played around with a couple of different ingredients until I liked one, and it stuck.”

Maria brought her homemade pepperoni recipe to Neely's on a slow Saturday in the winter. “I said, we need to do something to warm

us up and keep us busy. And I thought, well, we can slice up some pepperoni, we can slice up some cheese – we had all the ingredients. And so I turned on the oven and decided to roll pepperoni rolls. And we've been selling Maria's Pepperoni Rolls ever since. ”

Understandably, Maria's pepperoni roll recipe is a trade secret, but we highly recommend that you ask around for a different recipe, or try the following one. If you do end up making your own pepperoni rolls, Maria would encourage you to “measure with your heart.”

SIMPLE PEPPERONI ROLLS

Here’s a Northern West Virginia-style pepperoni roll recipe for you to try. Several ingredients are noted as optional, as people throughout the state make pepperoni rolls in many different ways. Sauce and cheese are highly contested ingredients, as is the style of pepperoni.

<i>Your choice of dough – unbaked, frozen dinner rolls are a good start</i>	<i>Your choice of tomato sauce (optional) Salted butter, melted</i>
<i>Pepperoni*</i>	<i>Garlic powder</i>
<i>Mozzarella cheese, sliced (optional)</i>	<i>Dried oregano</i>
	<i>Salt</i>

Preheat oven to 400°F. Working one at a time, roll out a dough ball onto unfloured surface. Place a few pepperoni slices in center of round. Tear a slice of cheese into pieces and arrange atop pepperoni. Roll up, then pinch ends and edges to seal closed. Repeat for as many as you’d like. Arrange finished rolls on a greased baking sheet, seam-side down. Space about an inch apart. Brush a little melted butter atop the rolls. Bake ‘til golden brown, 10-12 minutes.

While baking, combine remaining melted butter with garlic powder, oregano, and salt (to taste) in a small bowl. As soon as rolls come out of oven, brush mixture on top. Serve warm or pack for lunch!

**Your preference of sliced, ground, or pepperoni sticks!*



ITALIAN COOKING IN EAST WHEELING



A recent retiree from the Ohio County Public Library, Lori (Parisi) Nicholson grew up in East Wheeling with many Italian families living nearby. Certain recipes and smells conjure treasured childhood memories connected to this time. Here, Lori reflects on “the times that we spent together, what foods brought us together, and what events brought us together”:

LORI: “I grew up on McColloch Street in East Wheeling. I would not trade growing up there for anything. I loved that neighborhood. Everyone was friendly and we all looked out for one another. My dad was full-blooded Italian. Growing up our meals were homemade and eaten around the table with family. My mom was not Italian, but she would make Italian recipes for my dad, as well as other dishes that were not always Italian. We always had a home-cooked meal.”

“My dad’s parents, Nonni and Pop, lived in the house behind us – literally in our backyard. My pop had a vegetable garden where he grew tomatoes, peppers, swiss chard, eggplant, zucchini, and other vegetables. He also made his own wine and beer. He owned a shoe shop which was connected to our house. Other Italian families lived close by and you could smell the food they were cooking or baking just sitting outside.”

“My most memorable family moments would be having our traditional Italian Christmas Eve dinner, which was the Dinner of the Seven Fishes. We would have Coleman’s fish, my mom would clean and fry smelts, had shrimp, *baccala* (salted cod), spaghetti with anchovies and spaghetti *aglio e olio* (54), and spaghetti with butter for those who did not eat the other spaghetti dishes. The dishes were always the same. I still continue that tradition today.”

“My dad’s side of the family and both sets of grandparents would come to our house. My parents set out cheese trays, snacks, drinks, and cookies that my mom made. My Nonni would make her Italian cookies that only she can make. All the adults would sit around and talk to each other in Italian which I never learned to speak.”



“There were great cooks in my family, which are no longer with us, but I learned a lot from them and a lot of my own along the way. I guess that’s why I love to cook and bake but would rather bake, and I still love to have family get together. I am also Nonni, and my husband Poppy, to our grandson. I hope that my family will remember their favorite recipes that I have made over the years. Here are a few.”

SPAGHETTI AGLIO E OLIO (Spaghetti with Garlic & Olive Oil)

This recipe is an exact formula for the dish Lori’s mom and dad used to make on Christmas Eve or for Sunday family dinners. A traditional Italian dish, it is simple and delicious.

<i>1 lb uncooked spaghetti</i>	<i>Salt (to taste)</i>
<i>½ cup olive oil</i>	<i>Freshly ground black pepper (to taste)</i>
<i>6 cloves garlic, thinly sliced</i>	<i>¼ cup chopped fresh Italian parsley</i>
<i>¼ tsp red pepper flakes (or to taste)</i>	<i>1 cup Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese, finely grated</i>

Bring large pot of lightly salted water to a boil. Cook spaghetti in boiling water, stirring occasionally until cooked through but firm to the bite, about 10-12 minutes. Drain and transfer to pasta bowl.



Lori (Parisi) Nicholson

While pasta is cooking, combine olive oil and garlic in cold skillet. Cook over medium heat to slowly toast garlic, about 10 minutes. Reduce heat to medium-low when olive oil begins to bubble. Cook and stir until garlic is golden brown, another 5 minutes. Remove from heat. Stir red pepper flakes, salt, and black pepper into pasta. Pour pasta into hot olive oil and garlic mix, and sprinkle with Italian parsley and half of cheese; toss until combined. For extra richness, add a tbsp of butter. Serve pasta topped with remaining cheese.

DAD’S SECRET SPAGHETTI SAUCE

“You could always tell when his spaghetti sauce was cooking.”

Lori speaks with pride about having reverse-engineered a (secret) spaghetti sauce recipe that tastes exactly like her dad’s. “He put everything in there, everything. Pepperoni, your spices – oregano, Italian seasonings – sometimes he would make a meatloaf and put that in the sauce while it was cooking for flavor. But I would ask him, ‘what do you put in there? I need the recipe, you know,’ and he’d say, ‘just a little bit of this, a little bit of that.’”

Lori tells us that on her journey to re-create her dad’s tomato sauce, it took one special ingredient for the flavors to finally click. “I don’t know if it was ever actually something that he put in there or just something I added, but it tasted like his. It was so exciting. There’s a little bit of a secret part in there, so I’m not gonna give the whole recipe, but I did figure it out.”



REAL ITALIAN PIZZA

This isn’t quite a recipe either, but another story about a memorable dish in Lori Nicholson’s life.

“My grandma’s pizza was not like [your and my] traditional pizza,” Lori told us, laughing. “She said ours was not “real” pizza. Theirs was thick like bread. And it would just have a little bit of tomato on top and oregano. And that’s all it was. I guess that’s how they had it in Italy. She didn’t like our American-Italian pizza. But we did.”



15TH STREET PIZZA NIGHTS



For some Wheeling friends, weekly Pizza Nights are a summertime tradition. We (the authors) feel lucky to have been a part of the 2023 season. Gathering in the backyard of our friends' 15th Street apartments, we've cherished the feeling of warmth emanating from the cob oven, the sight of a picnic table covered with a vast array of pizza toppings, and the music and liveliness that last well into the night.

In September 2023, we had the chance to photograph our friends and chat with a few about our favorite Pizza Night staples: homemade pizza dough, and "dessert pizza."

DAVE & AIDAN'S 72-HOUR-FERMENT PIZZA DOUGH

In 2021, David Widder-Varhegyi, Aidan Cooper, and a handful of their friends built a Quebec-style cob oven in the couple's East Wheeling backyard. They collected local clay and reclaimed terracotta bricks to make the oven as locally built as possible. This oven has seen dozens of pizza-making events in the years since. We sat around a picnic table beside the oven as David told us about its making, the origin of community pizza nights, and a favored recipe for pizza dough.

DAVID: "The building material is cob. Cob is a combination of clay, sand and straw. What's amazing about this oven design is that it utilizes all three of heat's properties: convection, radiation, and induction. When you cook in it, things get heated from the bottom up, from the top down, and through the motion of the air. And that's simply the design. Not my design. I just followed the book: *Build Your Own Earth Oven*, by Kiko Denzer."

As David, Aidan, and others were learning the oven, the first few pizzas were messy and "turned out to be more like pizza scrambles." But they soon improved, and the group began a tradition of a weekly pizza night, where they invited many people to come and make pizzas



David Widder-Varhegyi, standing beside the cob oven that he built with the help of his friends, using locally harvested and reclaimed materials.

as a community. "Aidan and I would make the dough," David continued, "and then everybody else would bring toppings. Everybody contributed in some way. No one particular person had to carry the financial or physical cost of the whole thing."

"Here's something to celebrate about pizza," David told us. "You can grow your own wheat. And you can literally produce everything else with a little investment. Meat production gets a little more intense, and the dairy product gets a little more involved. But everything else is 'simply' vegetables and grain. So that's easy. Easy in quotation marks. It's very possible. And it's possible to do wherever you are."

David and Aidan always made a 72-hour pizza dough for their community pizza nights. What follows is their recipe, which we have been lucky to enjoy during our summers in Wheeling.

4 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups flour
2 tsp salt

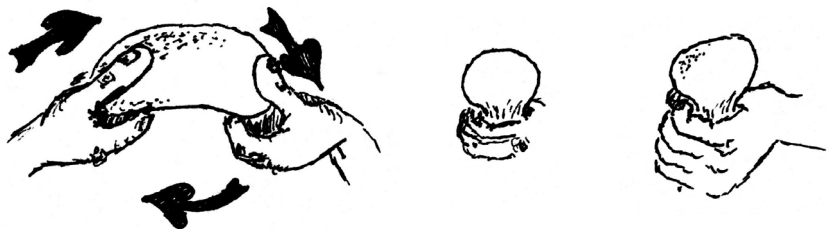
$\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp active dry yeast
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups water

(Recipe begins on the following page.)

MAKE THE DOUGH: “As far as dough prep, it’s simple. Put the dry ingredients in a bowl, and mix them up. Then, slowly add in the water while mixing. I use a metal fork – easy to clean. Now, gently knead the dough for 2-5 minutes to remove clumping. “You can do this in or out of the bowl.”

FOR BULK FERMENT: Next, form dough into a ball, and let sit in bowl. Put a cover overtop “that can breathe, a damp tea-towel for example.” Let it rise – ferment – for 12-24 hours at room temperature while covered. “It should end up bubbly, doubled in size, and quite elastic.” Then, cover bowl with a wet towel and place in the refrigerator for another 48 hours to cold proof. “This gives the dough time to develop flavor complexity.”

SHAPE THE DOUGH FOR INDIVIDUAL PIZZAS: “Take a handful of flour, and put it on the counter. Pull out a chunk of dough, roughly the size of your fist (or use a scale if you’re into accuracy...). Then dab the chunk into the flour – it can be quite sticky. Now shape it into a ball. Cupping your hands, essentially forming a heart shape, work the dough ball in a circular motion while closing the top of the heart. Think of the dough ball as imploding. Finally, cup the “top” of the ball in one hand and pinch together the implosion site. Try it and you’ll see what I mean. Do this with all the dough. Sprinkle flour over the balls and cover with a dry cloth/hand towel. Let sit for 4-5 hours to allow the dough to come to room temp. This also allows the gluten to relax for a malleable dough.” **MAKES 3 to 4 10”-12” PIZZAS, 6 to 8 IF DOUBLED.**



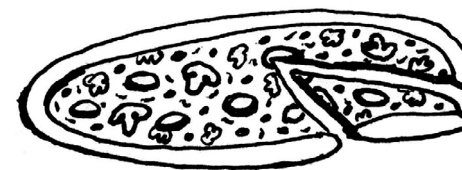
BAKE THE PIZZA: Using semolina flour or cornmeal to prevent sticking, stretch or use a rolling pin to shape dough into a large circle, about an eighth-inch thick. Top as desired.

Dave & Aidan's recipe draws inspiration from BakingSteel.com.



At the Pizza Night picnic table, David Widder-Varbegyi demonstrates how to shape dough following the bulk ferment stage. He draws his fingers inwards (bringing his knuckles together) like two connected gears, creating the so-called “implosion” site where his fingertips meet.

A NOTE ON OVENS AND BAKING TIME: If using a wood-fired or otherwise very hot pizza oven (600°F +), bake for 2-5 minutes, rotating pizza occasionally to ensure even cooking. If using home oven, preheat oven to 500°F (or as hot as it can go) along with empty pizza stone, cast iron, or thick steel pan – the thicker the better. Once at temperature, turn oven to “broil” for five minutes. Remove stone/pan and slide on your pizza dough (with toppings in place). Turn oven back to 500°. Bake for about 5-8 minutes, or until your desired doneness. Let cool for 10 minutes before cutting.



WHEELING'S FAVORITE DESSERT PIZZA

HANNAH HEDRICK: “This is based on the dessert pizza served at a favorite local pizza spot. The lunch buffet was a go-to for post-soccer season celebrations and youth group outings as a kid, and no visit would be complete without dessert. One day, my dad asked a server how they made the topping for the dessert pizza, and – though she didn’t go into great detail – she revealed the secret combination: cake mix and butter. This is the Pizza Night adaptation.”

1-2 prepared pizza crusts
1 box yellow cake mix
1 cup salted butter, melted

Brown sugar, for sprinkling
Canned pineapple chunks
Mini semi-sweet chocolate chips

Pre-bake pizza crust of choice according to directions until almost completely cooked – the topping bakes quickly.

MAKE TOPPING: In a bowl, gradually add melted butter to cake mix, mixing gently until no dry spots remain and mixture is a spreadable consistency (“almost like peanut butter”). Take care not to over-mix, and if the desired consistency is reached before adding all the butter then stop before the mixture turns to liquid.

Spread cake mixture in a thick layer over prepared crust. Sprinkle brown sugar evenly over mixture. Top with choice of canned pineapple chunks or chocolate chips, “or go half and half, and make sure they overlap on a tiny piece in the middle. I like to drizzle the pineapple side with a little pineapple juice and the chocolate chip side with a little extra melted butter.”

BAKE THE PIZZA: If using a wood fired or otherwise very hot pizza oven, bake for 3-5 minutes, checking often to make sure the sugar isn’t burning. If using a home oven, bake at 425°F for about 10 minutes or until desired doneness. Let cool for 10 minutes before cutting.
MAKES ENOUGH TOPPING FOR 2 NINE-INCH PIZZAS.



Assembling pizzas with friends. Everyone brings ingredients to share.



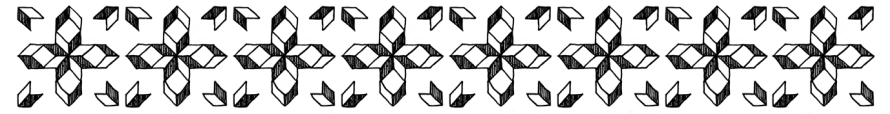
Prior to baking, a ball of homemade pizza dough is stretched out, placed upon a wooden pizza peel with a long handle, and dressed with toppings. Our beloved canine friend Luna asks for scraps (spot her in the lower left corner).



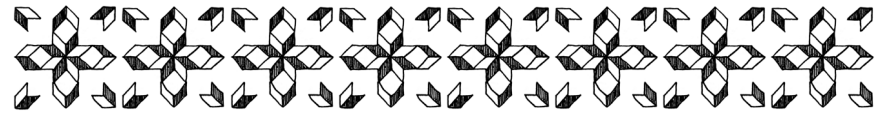
Baking pizza in the cob oven.



Lights on a 15th Street patio illuminate pizza night.



ENTRÉES



RATATOUILLE OVER FRIED POLENTA

“I really just have a passion for creating food. And I just can’t wait ‘til the next thing I make. Because I don’t know what it’s gonna be. But it’s gonna be good.”

Terrie Fish grew up on a farm outside Stewartsville, Ohio and she harkens upon it fondly. She speaks glowingly of the fresh meat and produce she remembers from childhood, and these memories inform her approach to cooking; she likes to use as many ingredients from her garden as she can muster.

Terrie describes her mother coming home from produce auctions with “boxes about the size of the dishwasher,” full of carrots and other produce to preserve. Friends would come over and help with peeling and preservation prep, eager to try a hand at a farming life they’d never before experienced. “We always had to take part.”

Moreover, Terrie’s childhood basement was always a well-stocked den of preserved foods. “We would get fruit, apples, plums, peaches, everything. My favorite was always to sneak downstairs and open a jar of plums and just eat them right out the jar. So I always had a fork hidden down there in the basement. Behind the jars. And I would just open the jars and sit there and eat ‘em. There’s just something about a homemade canned plum. It’s just soft and sweet.”



Terrie Fish picking produce from her backyard garden for ratatouille. She likes to cook with as many homegrown ingredients as possible.

When Terrie made ratatouille with us, she chopped, grilled, and otherwise prepared all the vegetables ahead of time. She also saved the leftovers to share with her husband when he got off work. He's a riverboat captain driving barges on the Ohio River, so the two don't always get to eat together, but they are still able to connect through Terrie's cooking.

We assembled this recipe based on what we saw Terrie cook, as usually she just "invent[s] and create[s] stuff," and doesn't really go by recipes. "I taste as I go, so I can make it how I want it to taste." Terrie likes this ratatouille "because it's everything I can grow in my garden." The proportions and ingredients are subject to change based on what you might have on hand.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <i>1 yellow onion, diced</i> | <i>Salt & pepper</i> |
| <i>2-3 green onions, sliced</i> | <i>Oregano</i> |
| <i>1 summer squash, sliced or cubed</i> | <i>Thyme</i> |
| <i>1 zucchini, sliced or cubed</i> | <i>A few leaves of fresh basil, chopped</i> |
| <i>1 eggplant, sliced or cubed</i> | <i>1 tsp garlic, chopped</i> |
| <i>2-3 bell peppers of varying color, diced</i> | <i>2-3 tomatoes, diced or cubed</i> |

- | | |
|---|---|
| <i>Red wine vinegar</i> | <i>1 can crushed tomatoes (optional)</i> |
| <i>1 jar peppers in oil, diced (optional)</i> | <i>1 jar sundried tomatoes in oil, diced (optional)</i> |
| <i>Tomato juice or V8 (optional)</i> | |

Over medium-high heat, cook onions in olive oil until slightly translucent. Add squash, eggplant, zucchini, and bell peppers. Add dried spices and herbs. Allow vegetables to soften and brown slightly. Add sundried tomatoes and/or jarred peppers if using, adding a bit of the oil too. Add the tomatoes and turn heat to low. Add fresh basil and chopped garlic. Add tomato juice or crushed tomatoes, if using; these "help loosen it up a little bit." Finally, Terrie always adds "a little bit of red wine vinegar in there, just to give it a little acidity." Put lid on partially, and allow to simmer while frying polenta.

MAKE POLENTA: Terrie uses dry or "Heat and Eat" polenta. Prepare using proportions provided on package. Allow to cool and set (letting rest overnight will allow polenta to fry best). Shape prepared polenta into a log and cut into half inch slices. Lightly salt. Heat oil in a pan, making sure to use enough – "If you don't put enough oil in there, it kinda sticks to the pan." Add polenta and cook until it's "a little crispy on the outside." Once cooked, set fried polenta on a paper plate to drain oil, as needed. Place polenta slices on a plate, ladle ratatouille on top, and serve.



Slices of polenta will crisp up nicely in the pan, so long as you use enough oil.

GRANDMA BEV'S "TERRIBLE GOOD" STUFFED GRAPE LEAVES



Alex Panas

Alex Panas calls this recipe a “centerpiece” of her family memories growing up. It’s a re-creation of her grandma Beverly’s beloved dish, made for the holidays and other special family occasions. Bev grew a grape vine in her Warwood backyard, and she would often harvest her homegrown grape leaves for this recipe.

Although Bev used to make these stuffed grape leaves herself, Alex has enjoyed taking on a “new generational role” in her family as the years have passed: “Now, it’s me who makes the grape leaves, and my mom or cousin will do the Greek rice, and my cousin Stefanie will make Greek soup.”

Notably, the folks in Alex’s family who have introduced her to Greek cooking aren’t all Greek themselves: “My grandma Bev wasn’t Greek – her husband was. So she learned how to make these recipes for him and his family. My cousin Stefanie learned to make the soup from her mom, who married into the Greek side of the family.” Alex’s cultural heritage has, in large part, been sustained by the family members who have learned to cook these meals.

Like many home cooks and storytellers we met, Alex’s grandma never wrote anything down, so Alex has been left to re-create the dish based on her own memories, family feedback, and a patchwork of online references. When it comes to her boisterous family’s reception of her grape leaves, the “barometer” is always taste: “Oh it tastes like grandma’s” or “It doesn’t taste like grandma’s.” Alex speaks proudly of her rendition: “One of my grandma’s favorite catchphrases to use in the kitchen was to say that certain foods were “terrible good. While my grandma is no longer around to try my version of her beloved grape leaves, I’m sure she’d say they were *terrible good!*”

1 jar (16 oz) grape leaves in brine	½ cup each chopped parsley, dill, and mint
1 & ½ cup short grain white rice	4 cups chicken broth or water
Extra virgin olive oil	Juice of two lemons
1 large onion, finely chopped	Salt
2 cloves garlic, minced	Pepper
½ lb ground beef	½ tsp cumin
½ lb ground lamb (if you don’t like lamb, substitute with more ground beef)	1 tomato, sliced into half-rounds

PREPARE THE FILLING: Heat drizzle of olive oil in large skillet. Add onions and garlic, and cook for 1-2 minutes until translucent. Add meat and cook until fully browned, tossing occasionally. Drain any excess fat, then season meat with salt, pepper, and spices. Toss to combine. Remove from heat and set aside to cool. In mixing bowl, combine meat, uncooked rice, and fresh herbs. Season with more salt and add a drizzle of olive oil and juice of one lemon. Mix so everything is well-incorporated.

FILL AND ASSEMBLE THE GRAPE LEAVES: Prepare heavy cooking pot and lightly brush bottom with olive oil. Arrange a few grape leaves in the bottom – this will help prevent burning later. For each stuffed roll, place one grape leaf on a cutting board with rough, veiny side facing you. Cut or snip the stem of the leaf off with a knife or kitchen shears. Next, take about one tbsp of filling and place in center of leaf, then fold sides over filling and roll (sort of like a little burrito). Repeat with remaining grape leaves or until you’re out of stuffing. Place each finished roll seam-side down in prepared pot, creating multiple layers if needed. Once done, pour broth or water over the grape leaves so they are just covered, and top with tomato half-rounds. Place small plate (inverted) on top of the grape leaves to keep under liquid.

COOK AND SERVE: Cover pot with lid and cook over medium heat for 30 minutes, or until liquid has been absorbed. Uncover, remove plate, and pour juice of one lemon over top. Cover again with lid and cook on low heat for an additional 30 minutes, or until fully cooked. Let rest off heat, uncovered, for 20-30 minutes before serving. Transfer to serving platter, and add a drizzle of olive oil and a squeeze of lemon juice. You can serve as-is, or accompany the dish with tzatziki or crumbled feta cheese.



1. Be sure to snip the grape leaf stem off each time you begin a new roll.



3. A finished grape leaf should look something like this. Alex suggests using any grape leaves that tear in the process to line your cooking pot.



2. Place one tablespoon of filling in the center of a leaf. Begin rolling by folding the bottom of the leaf up over the filling, then folding in the two sides, and finally rolling the grape leaf closed.



4. A finished pot of stuffed grape leaves, ready to simmer on the stovetop. The pot is lined with extra grape leaves, and tomato half-rounds have been placed atop the finished rolls. Don't forget to cover with an inverted plate and lid before cooking.

POLISH CABBAGE ROLLS

Brandi Rose and her family will make cabbage rolls “every once in a while,” especially for family get-togethers. “[We’ll] just make a big batch and have a nice family dinner, with mashed potatoes and fresh rolls or home-baked bread.” Like many of her family’s recipes, Brandi told us, this recipe “was passed down from my great-grandmother to my grandmother to my mother to me, and it is not written down. But I have been wanting to get it written down.”

BRANDI: “I always double this recipe and use a large head of cabbage. I get the biggest one I can find – the extra cabbage is used to line the pan to keep the cabbage rolls from getting brown and tastes great as a side.”

<i>1 small head cabbage</i>	<i>¼ tsp salt</i>
<i>1 pound ground beef (80/20 for the best flavor)</i>	<i>¼ tsp pepper</i>
<i>1 heaping cup cooked rice</i>	<i>1/3-½ cup beef broth*</i>
<i>½ small onion, diced</i>	<i>1 can condensed tomato soup (26 oz)</i>
<i>1 tablespoon ketchup</i>	<i>1 cup water</i>

Use a sharp knife and remove as much cabbage core as you can. Bring a pot of water to a boil. Add in cabbage. As leaves loosen and wilt, pull them from the water and set aside to cool. If any cabbage leaves have thick stems, trim with a paring knife after they cool.

FOR FILLING: Mix meat, rice, beef broth, ketchup, onion, salt, and pepper together until combined. Divide into eight equal portions and roll each up into a cabbage leaf.

TO COOK: Pour one third of tomato soup can into pan. Line pan with any extra cabbage. “This helps to keep the cabbage rolls from burning, but the extra cooked cabbage is also delicious.” Place cabbage rolls in pan. Pour remaining soup and water over top. Cover. Bake at 350°F for 1 to 1 & ½ hours, until cabbage is tender when poked with a fork.

**“My Babcia (great-grandma) used drippings she saved after making a roast. I put a third into the mix and if the meat mixture isn’t too loose or wet, I add in more.”*

BEEF CHUCK POT ROAST

Emma met Jim while they were both working at Eric Freeland’s Farm in Wellsburg, a town about 15 miles up the river from Wheeling on Route 2. The farm is a beautiful and well-tended place, and its owner, Eric Freeland, takes great pride in the quality of his soil and produce. When Emma met Eric, he told her that he wants his headstone inscription to read, “That man knew how to build soil!”

On a typical workday at Eric Freeland’s Farm, everyone sits down for lunch at the picnic tables overlooking the fields, maybe for hot dogs or homegrown corn on the cob. One afternoon while discussing food (a common lunchtime topic), Jim, who works at the farm several days a week, recited his grandmother’s pot roast recipe from memory. He later told us he’d be glad to share it for this cookbook.

<i>2-3 lb chuck roast</i>	<i>32 oz beef broth</i>
<i>2 bags baby carrots</i>	<i>2 packets beef Lipton soup mix</i>
<i>Small bag red potatoes, sliced in half</i>	

JIM COEN: “Put it all in a crockpot on low for 6 to 8 hours. Or on high for 4 to 5 hours. And enjoy. It’s that simple. It’s very delicious.”



Jim Coen



APPALACHIAN BAKED STEAK

The topic of Appalachian cooking emerged when we asked Andrew about the foods he remembers eating growing up. His mother, Sally, who grew up in southern West Virginia, cooked for her children and family most days, and she often prepared regional staples.

ANDREW MULL: “When we were kids, everything was all done pretty much by my mother. She’s from Logan County, West Virginia, about an hour south of Charleston, very close to the border of West Virginia and Kentucky. That’s where some of the scarier parts of the Mine Wars were happening back in the day, like the Battle of Blair Mountain. So we had a lot of those old-school Appalachian – as I know now – recipes. Back then they were just recipes.”

This last comment was something we heard often from the folks we spoke with for this project – that they didn’t consider certain familiar recipes or dishes to be “regional” or “Appalachian” until they traveled away from the area and noticed the difference.

“We did a lot of chicken noodle soups, we did a lot of stuffed peppers, a lot of baked steak,” Andrew told us, listing some examples. “Baked steak is something I’ve never seen since. From memory, I want to say it’s a package of thin-sliced top round steaks, smothered in cream of onion soup and baked at 350°F for 1-2 hours until done. We had it all the time.”



“COME AS YOU ARE”:



“Good Food and a Respectful Place”

Maurice Walker is better known as “Babe” around town. Ask anyone at the Greater Wheeling Soup Kitchen about Babe, and they’ll have nothing but effusive praise for his cooking. Babe has met many people through his work. “My friends say, ‘man, we can’t take you nowhere, man. I bet if we took you anywhere, New York or somewhere, somebody would know you.’” Indeed, on any given day, Babe and the Soup Kitchen staff are serving at least 200 people – “sometimes you get up to 300.”

Babe has worked at the Soup Kitchen since around 2011. “First, I was going and volunteering. And then one of the ladies that came in noticed and she said, ‘I’m going in there and [I’m gonna] ask Becky to hire you.’ She went in there and asked her, and a couple weeks later, Becky said ‘you got the job if you want to come cook.’ It just took off from there.” Although he could probably be a successful cook anywhere, Babe chooses to stay with the Soup Kitchen: “I’m happy here. I like doing what I’m doing. Feeding people, helping people out.”



Maurice “Babe” Walker, in the kitchen where he’s worked for twelve years.



Located in East Wheeling across the street from the Ohio County Public Library, the Soup Kitchen is a warm and homey space, full of long tables, good smells, and plenty of books that visitors can browse.

BABE’S MEATLOAF

Babe has an immense respect and appreciation for the people he works with. “We got a good cast of people I’m working with, like family.” Laura, Babe’s coworker for ten years and counting, taught Babe her Grandma’s meatloaf recipe, and when Babe makes his version of this meatloaf, it is always a hit: “They love my meatloaf. Anytime I put meatloaf out there, boy, that’s all they take, meatloaf. I don’t care what else is out there, they flock to that.”

“I cook from the heart. I make these people happy,” Babe shared with us. “And it makes me happy. They get a good meal.” Along with cooking from the heart, Babe does his measuring by eye and works through recipes in his head. Thus, the following recipe isn’t too specific, but we encourage you to follow his advice: “Just wing it, you just know when you’re there.”



Ground Beef
Milk
Bread
Eggs
Italian seasoning,

Worcestershire sauce
Seasoning salt
Garlic powder
Ketchup and brown sugar OR
Brown gravy

“Get the meat out. Get it seasoned up, all the seasonings I mentioned. And then I’ll put it in the mixer [with milk, bread, and eggs]. Mix it all up. Then form it, y’know, into loafs. On those big sheet trays. Takes about 30-45 minutes in that oven [at 350°F].” You’ll know when it’s done because “you can pretty much see it setting up.” Once it’s cooked, Babe spreads a sauce over the top. “Sometimes I’ll do a brown gravy, sometimes I’ll do ketchup and brown sugar mixture.”

The Soup Kitchen typically serves Babe’s meatloaf with mashed potatoes, green beans, or mixed vegetables.

CHITLINS

[Laughing] “You can eat just about anything on a pig but the oink.”

Babe has lived in Wheeling his whole life, as have many folks in his large family. He grew up in Vineyard Hills, a community housing complex on the east side of the hill above the Wheeling Tunnel. “Y’know half the place was my family, eighty percent.” Babe speaks glowingly of Vineyard Hills as it was when he was young: “The whole community was like one big family. Outside, we had a wall – we called it The Beachfront. We’d just all hang out on the wall, you know. You didn’t have to worry about all that crazy stuff. You was safe there. I mean, it’s just beautiful. I wouldn’t trade it in for nothing.”

When reflecting on foods that make him think of his childhood, Babe brought up collard greens and chitlins. He shared with us how he likes to make his chitlins. “They are pig intestines, but I mean I grew up on ‘em. I still eat ‘em.”

Pig intestines
Salt
Pepper

Onion powder
Potatoes, cubed
Onions, sliced

“First you gotta clean ‘em all up, man, you gotta make sure you got ‘em cleaned up good. You gotta cut ‘em up [into bite size pieces,] cause they are long.” Season with salt, pepper, and onion powder, then “put ‘em in water with potato and onions. Slow cooker, big pot of water. You gotta let ‘em cook for like a day. Just cook the hell out of ‘em.”

Once they’re cooked, Babe likes to eat his chitlins with hot sauce. “I can’t eat ‘em plain, I have to put a little hot sauce on’ em.” He recommends Frank’s Red Hot – “I live by Frank’s.”

RIBS

“Oh yeah, they like me to make my ribs.”

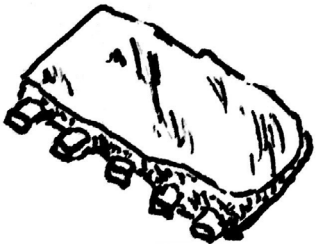
Everybody in Babe’s family has something that they cook well. Babe learned to cook from watching his mom, and food is a big way that his family stays in touch. Since the Vineyard Hills housing complex was demolished in the early 2000s, his family has spread out across Wheeling: “I’m on the island – most [of us are] on the island, down North Wheeling, South Wheeling. Y’know, all split up now. But we still get together.”

Often, Babe’s family gathers to watch football, or to visit at his mom’s house. These gatherings often involve food, even when it’s as simple as asking someone to make a favorite dish. “My cousin Vera, she makes a good lasagna. I just call her and say, ‘why don’t you make some of that good lasagna?’”

Along with chicken soup and chicken wings, Babe often gets asked to make his ribs. He describes his recipe more or less like this:

*Pork ribs
Barbecue sauce and brown sugar OR
Dry rub seasoning*

“First, boil [the ribs] for about a half an hour, just to get ‘em softened up. Then put on the sauce and seasoning. And then bake ‘em about 30-45 minutes [at] 350°F.

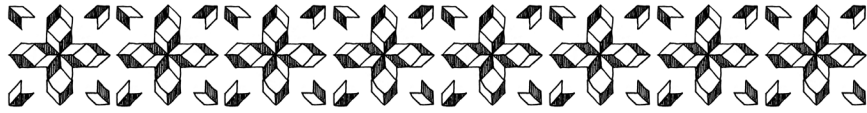


As it’s cooking, it softens them up. So they ain’t tough, you know? Yeah, I make ‘em fall right off the bone. That’s how you gotta have ‘em. That’s when you know it’s ready.”

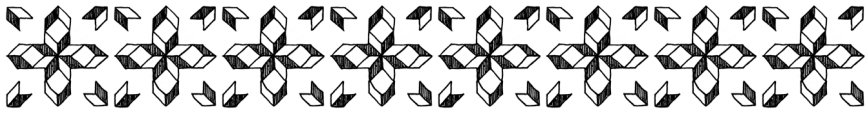
For the sauce, Babe likes to add brown sugar to store-bought barbecue sauce. “I got about five or six different flavors of barbecue I like. And I love adding brown sugar to my barbecue. Give that little sweetness to it.” As an alternative, he suggests a dry rub seasoning.



A sign hanging above the kitchen entrance at the Greater Wheeling Soup Kitchen, where Babe works. “It’s good food and a respectful place,” Babe told us. “We welcome all walks of life. Come as you are.”



ENTRÉES PART II



LAURA'S HAM LOAF

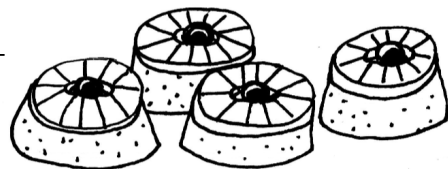
"Have a glass of water ready!"

Laura Oswalt grew up going to the First Presbyterian Church in Moundsville, right down the road from Wheeling. She remembers eating ham loaf often as a child. "When all the church ladies would have luncheon, ham loaf was a staple in the menu. I've always liked it, I think just because I've been used to it for a long time. I'm no longer a part of the church, but if someone was like, 'hey there's ham loaf over there,' I might show up."

"It's just one of those foods that I feel like you don't see too much of anymore. But I grew up eating them a lot. And we would traditionally make them – if it wasn't like at a church thing or something – we'd make them after Christmas or Easter, whenever we were having ham, and my grandma would always grind up all the leftovers. It was adult duty after dinner, when I was a kid in the family."

1 cup brown sugar	2 tbsp lemon juice
1 can crushed pineapple (8 & ½ oz)	1 tbsp mustard
1 tbsp cornstarch	

FOR TOPPING: Mix all ingredients and cook 'til thick. Set aside to cool, then make ham loaves.



2 lb ham
1 lb pork
4 eggs

2 cups breadcrumbs
1 & ½ cup milk
½ tsp pepper

As topping cools, mix ham, pork, eggs, breadcrumbs, milk, and pepper and shape into 14-16 loaves. (Half a recipe makes 10 loaves.) Pour two thirds topping over loaves. Bake at 350°F for 1 to 1 & ½ hours, basting with remaining topping.

MEMAW'S HAM LOAF

"If I'm gonna be here and make something, they're all gonna come."

Lisa and Victoria White are mother and daughter with roots in Wheeling. Much like Laura, many of their shared and fond memories of food are connected to their family, specifically to Lisa's grandmother, Pauline Hicks, who they affectionately call "Memaw."

Pauline lived to be 98 and was married to her husband Phillip for over 70 years. She was a cook for the Marshall County schools system. When we asked Lisa and Victoria to tell us about their favorite memories of Memaw, they laughed as Victoria imitated Pauline's classic exclamations and spoke proudly of her resourcefulness and hardy spirit. "Nothing ever bothered her. That was my Memaw," Lisa told us. "She grew up poor. In that era you fended for yourself. But you took care of everybody. You took care of your neighbors and everybody was your family. She grew up in the Depression and still saved foil, saved Saran wrap, didn't waste a thing." "That was the thing with her ham loaf – it was all about not wasting anything," Victoria added.

Every year for Easter and Thanksgiving, the entire family would gather for potluck meals at Memaw's farmhouse in Cameron. "She would always bring baked apples [p.123] and ham loaf," Victoria recalled, "and her house was always packed. It was a very small, 1940s-style ranch house. When we got together, we filled up every room. Maybe fifty percent of the family would actually get a chair to sit and eat in, and the rest would sit on the couch or on the floor."

Lisa echoed a comment we often heard in the making of this cook-book. “Food brings families together. That was [Memaw’s] philosophy – if I’m gonna be here and make something, they’re all gonna come.”

These days, multiple members of the White family make this ham loaf. “The best advice I have is just do what she did,” Lisa told us. “If you don’t have it, just improvise, because it’s to *your* taste.”

- | | |
|----------------------------|---------------------|
| 1 & ½ lb ground ham | ½ tsp garlic powder |
| 1 & ½ lb ground sausage | ½ cup ketchup |
| 1 egg (beaten) | 1 tsp pepper |
| ¾-1 cup milk | 1 cup ketchup |
| 1-2 cups saltine crackers* | ½-¾ cup brown sugar |

Preheat oven to 350°F. Crumble saltine crackers in a bowl and add beaten egg and milk. Add remaining ingredients and form into 3 equal loaves for baking. Bake for 45-50 minutes. Remove and brush tops with glaze. Return to oven for 10-15 minutes, checking internal temperature until it reaches 160°F.

**If you don't have saltines, you can substitute bread crumbs.*

FRIED FISH

DARLENE “SIS” STRADWICK: “I love cooking, so I don’t think I have a special recipe. ‘Cause I cook a little bit of everything. But I love frying fish. I love fried fish.”



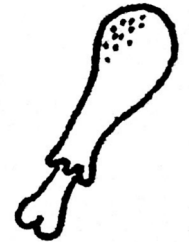
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| White fish of choice | Milk |
| Salt | Fryin’ Magic or other seasoned frying coating |
| Pepper | Vegetable oil |
| Egg | |

Season fish with salt and pepper. Whisk together eggs and milk to create a batter. Season batter with salt and pepper – “I season that too because fish has no taste to it at all. That way it’s nice and tasty.” Coat filets with seasoned frying coating. Heat pan with vegetable oil to cover the entire pan – you can choose to completely immerse the

filets, or to immerse half. Check oil temperature by sprinkling coating – “If it just goes in there and don’t do anything, you’re not ready to put that fish in there yet.” Once oil is hot, immerse fish and fry until golden brown. If frying one half at a time, flip filet once the edges are browned. If deep frying, the filet should float up when it is ready.

SIS’S FRIED CHICKEN

“I just love all of the different smells.”

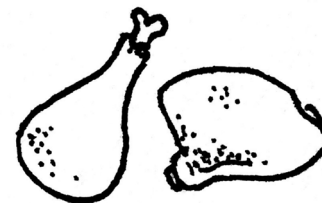


When we talked, Sis’s prowess and passion for cooking shined. You might notice as you read her recipes that they have slightly shorter preambles than most others in this book – this is because she was focused on telling us all the secrets of her favorite foods to make! “I think with cooking you gotta love it. Don’t overthink it. I don’t measure anything. Sometimes when you just throw it together, you’ll be like, ‘Oh, that came out good. What did I put in there this time?’ Don’t overthink it.”

When thinking of her favorite recipes, Sis named a number of dishes, but fried chicken was the first one she mentioned. This dish was an exclusive Sunday specialty growing up; nowadays she loves making it for her family.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---------------|
| Chicken, thawed (Sis prefers wings) | Flour |
| Lawry’s seasoning | Vegetable oil |
| Black pepper | |

Generously coat chicken in Lawry’s seasoning. Sis says she “can’t fry [her] chicken without Lawry’s seasoning. This gives chicken flavor. The only thing that I’ll use.” Lightly sprinkle with black pepper. Lightly flour chicken. Heat a deep pan or pot with oil deep enough to submerge the cuts of chicken. Allow oil to get very hot, then add chicken. Fry until internal temperature reaches 165°F and exterior is nicely browned.



SIS'S BAKED CHICKEN

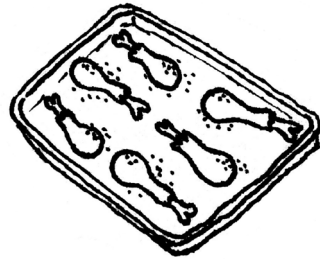
“If you put that [Lawry’s] on there and you bake it, it comes out almost like a fried chicken.”

Sis loves frying chicken (*p.81*), but she doesn’t do it as much anymore, in part because her family doesn’t always ask for it, and in part for her personal health. Rather, she often uses this recipe where she might have previously fried chicken.

<i>Chicken, thawed</i>	<i>Garlic powder</i>
<i>Lawry’s seasoning</i>	<i>Black pepper</i>

Season chicken with Lawry’s seasoning, garlic powder, and a little black pepper. Place on baking sheet skin side up – Sis stresses that this is key. Bake at 350°F for about 30 minutes, then flip and cook for another 30 minutes. Flip once more and cook 10 minutes more, “so that skin side can get crispy again.” Check that internal temperature is over 165°F and that skin is crisp and brown.

CHICKEN BREASTS IN SOUR CREAM



Pat Jeffers has a collection of Wheeling community cookbooks – “They were all fundraisers for something.” One, by the Ohio Valley General Hospital called *The (Revised) Twig Cook Book*, was illustrated by her mother and contains recipes from many of her mother’s friends. As we looked through some of her community cookbooks, Pat told us the story of this recipe:

“I taught at Magnolia High School in New Martinsville for 37 years. We’d have covered dish lunches for the teachers on teachers’ days. And somebody would bring this almost every time.”

Although she never got the recipe from her coworkers, Pat finally found this one in a community cookbook titled *Mountain Measures: A Collection of West Virginia Recipes*, published by the Junior League of Charleston. The recipe was contributed by a “Mrs. Carl Agsten.”

Pat has made Mrs. Agsten’s recipe her own. “Now, I don’t make it exactly this way [the recipe in the book]. I don’t use the bacon, mostly because whoever brought it never did. And I use one small jar of the chipped beef – the little glass jars with the blue lids, they’re still sold at Kroger’s. I always use a can of cream of chicken soup. And it’s easy, no salt, no seasonings – the chipped beef has enough salt that it flavors the chicken.”

“I usually serve it over rice. The chicken is so tender, you don’t need a knife. It’s great for company because it’s very elegant too.”

<i>6 chicken breasts (boneless, skinless)</i>	<i>1 can cream soup (10 & ¾ oz),</i>
<i>10 strips bacon, uncooked (optional)</i>	<i>un-diluted (mushroom, celery, or</i>
<i>½ pint sour cream (8 oz, or 1 cup)</i>	<i>cream of chicken)</i>
<i>1 package chipped beef (thin-dried)</i>	

Halve chicken breasts. Wrap each half in a bacon strip and secure with toothpick. Line greased 9” x 13” casserole dish with chipped beef. Place chicken atop beef. Combine sour cream and cream soup and pour over chicken. Bake covered with foil at 325°F for 2 & 1/2 hours, and uncovered for 1/2 hour longer so it can brown. Use 2 cans soup and 1 pint sour cream, if more sauce is desired. SERVES 6 TO 8.

CHICKEN & STUFFING CASSEROLE

Lori Nicholson got this recipe from her mother-in-law, Mary Nicholson. She says it’s a wonderful comfort food.

<i>2-3 chicken breasts (boneless, skinless)</i>	<i>1 can cream of chicken soup</i>
<i>1 box chicken-flavored stuffing</i>	<i>1 can milk</i>
<i>(“I use stove top.”)</i>	

Preheat oven to 350°F. Coat a 9” x 13” baking dish with nonstick spray. Boil chicken until done, about half an hour, then shred chicken. Prepare stuffing mix with instructions on box. In bowl, mix cream of chicken soup with milk. Place shredded chicken in bottom of baking dish evenly. Then spread stuffing mix ovetop chicken, followed by prepared soup mixture. Bake for 45 minutes or until stuffing is browned and crisp.



A COOK FOR ALL



Darlene Stradwick, better known as “Sis” around town, has been surrounded by cooks for much of her life.

Sis grew up in Morgantown on her family’s farm. She remembers the glory of abundant homegrown ingredients cooked by her mother, grandmother and sister. “They would make pies. It was just an ordinary day for them to get up and make a bunch of pies for the family.” While she doesn’t see herself as as much of a baker, Sis learned the basics of cooking from these family members, and their preparations of fried chicken (p.87), dumplings, pies, beans, and countless other dishes. Today, she remains inspired by her sister Donna, who made “the best lasagna and chicken and dumplings.” It seems that Sis’s cooking prowess has also been passed on to her son, Tray, an executive chef in Columbus, Ohio.

Since moving to Wheeling, Sis has lived many lives here, all of them intertwined with food. She began catering in the midst of running her own cleaning business, thereby establishing some of her commercial cooking roots in town. After that, she ran a restaurant with her cousin Evelina called ‘A Taste of Soul’ downtown. While the business did not last, Sis remarks upon this time with fondness and knows what she would do differently, were she to do it all over again. After her restaurant venture, Sis then worked in the kitchens of Linsly School and Wheeling University (the latter for 16 years), catering all the while. She retired twice but has since been drawn back into the kitchen, currently working at Laughlin Memorial Chapel.

Beyond her work in professional kitchens, Sis is considered a fixture of her East Wheeling community. She’s on the shortlist of people to prepare food for repasses, the dinner following a funeral. “Me, Gigi, Ladonna, just a whole lot of different ladies help do things, but they always want me to organize the kitchen.” She is an enthusiastic chef for her family, friends, and neighbors.



Sis Stradwick in her home kitchen. The sign behind her reads, “Together is our favorite place to be.”

PIZZA SPAGHETTI

“They come up for seconds for the pizza spaghetti.”

Darlene “Sis” Stradwick cooks in the kitchen at Laughlin Memorial Chapel in East Wheeling. When we spoke, Sis reflected fondly on her role in the kitchen. “I love it because we’re showing the kids new things. A lot of them don’t know what different things is. That’s why I’m trying to bring different things to ‘em. There’s nothing like a homemade meal. You know

what I mean?” The kids at Laughlin particularly enjoy this recipe.

SIS: “Now, I like making a thing called ‘Pizza Spaghetti.’ You know how you make spaghetti with [tomato] sauce? You take some of the spaghetti and put it in your [baking] pan, line it in your pan. Then you take some mozzarella cheese, sprinkle some on. Then some pepperoni. And then layer it like a lasagna. Then you layer some more spaghetti on there. You repeat. Have your cheese on the top layer, because the pepperonis [can] dry out. Then you bake it [at 350°F]. Once you’ve taken the spaghetti off the stove, it’s hot and it’s done. So it’s not like it’s gotta stay in the oven for a long long time. You just want that cheese and everything melted. Then you look at it. You’ll be like, ‘Ooh, yeah, that looks nice and ready.’”





Laughlin Memorial Chapel, on 18th Street in East Wheeling, where students much adore Miss Sissy's cooking. The Chapel provides a home-cooked meal as part of their after-school and summer programming for kids in grades K-6.

CABBAGE & TURKEY KIELBASA

Just the other day, Sis made a new dish for the kids using cabbages that were donated to Laughlin Chapel. This recipe is shared below. For recipes with cabbage, Sis often also adds her collard greens (89). "The kids – some of them liked it, some of 'em didn't. You know, because cabbage got that taste."

*Cabbage, finely chopped
Turkey kielbasa, sliced
Salt & pepper*



Cook turkey kielbasa in pot 'til brown and cooked through. Move half of kielbasa to another pan or bowl. Add some cabbage to the original pot, let cook slightly, then layer in remaining kielbasa and cabbage in alternating layers. Add salt and pepper ("Pepper that real good"). Stir occasionally, cooking until cabbage is tender.

TIPS FOR A THANKSGIVING TURKEY

We talked a fair bit with Darlene "Sis" Stradwick about Thanksgiving and learned several tips concerning her holiday cooking. When talking about making her stuffing and preparing a holiday turkey, Sis offered this tidbit of wisdom:

"Now one of the keys with a turkey, I don't stuff my turkey, okay? The only thing I stuff my turkey with is a whole apple and a whole onion. Okay, and it brings a flavor out into the turkey, plus it's moist. Rub it with soft butter too, whole thing, even under the wing. The only thing I put on my turkey is salt, pepper, and poultry seasoning. And don't be scared to put it on there. I use one of those cooking bags to make sure it stay tender."

CORNBREAD STUFFING

"I only eat cornbread stuffing."

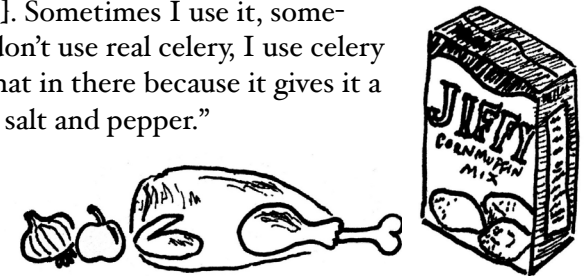
Sis also likes to make cornbread stuffing for her Thanksgiving dinners.

*Jiffy cornbread mix
Onion
Green pepper
Chicken broth*

*Turkey giblets or chicken neck
Celery seeds
Salt & pepper*

SIS: "Y'know, you make your cornbread – I tend to like the Jiffy cornbread mix – and then once that cools off, crumble that up. I cut up a lot of onion and a lot of green pepper because I make a lot of stuffing. I sauté those real good. That goes into the cornbread along with chicken broth because that makes it moist. A lot of people use the giblets or the chicken neck in the turkey, I boil that before [if I'm using it]. Sometimes I use it, sometimes I don't. And I don't use real celery, I use celery seeds. I put a lot of that in there because it gives it a real good flavor, then salt and pepper."

Sis bakes her stuffing at 350°F until it's set and at her desired consistency.



SIS'S MASHED POTATOES



Sis Stradwick's mashed potatoes are a feature at not only her Thanksgiving table, but at Laughlin Memorial Chapel where she works. "Well, you know, the kids love it. I just boil the potatoes and add a little milk, salt, and pepper. Butter. Y'know I use the blender. You don't want them watery-like. I want a nice thick potato." Sis likes to remove potato skins before blending.

CREAMY MAC 'N CHEESE

Mac 'n cheese is one of Sis's favorite dishes to make. The trick to this recipe is canned, evaporated milk, a tip that she learned from her cousin and co-restaurateur, Evelina. "We don't compete against each other, but I noticed that her macaroni and cheese be real creamy, and so I had to break down and say 'how do you get it so creamy? And the key to have that creamy mac and cheese is canned milk. And I've been using canned milk for about five or six years now."

Sis is generous with her recipes and once shared this tip with a 14-year-old, but she heard back poor results. As it turned out, the kid had used sweetened condensed milk! So just be sure to buy the correct canned milk.

Elbow macaroni
Salt & pepper
Butter

Evaporated milk
Large block of cheese, grated

Preheat oven to 350°F. Boil macaroni 'til al dente. Drain and season noodles with salt and pepper. In a separate pot, melt butter, then add evaporated milk. Stir in grated cheese, and stir until cheese sauce is nice and creamy. Butter a high sided baking pan. Pour noodles into a baking pan and cover entirely with cheese sauce (no noodles should be exposed). Bake pan of mac 'n cheese in preheated oven until bubbling and pleasantly brown, close to an hour.



COLLARD GREENS

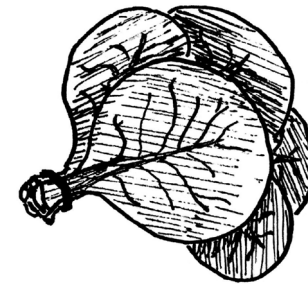
"I go with the turkey. And it's flavorful, too."

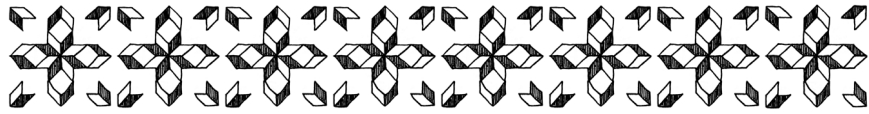
Often at Laughlin Chapel, Sis will incorporate these collards in other dishes, like cabbage and turkey kielbasa (p.86). Her collards are one of the recipes Sis pulls off the top of her head easily. She prefers to use turkey in this dish, noting: "A lot of people do the ham hock, but I don't tend to eat the pork that much. So, I go with the turkey. And it's flavorful, too."

Turkey legs or wings
Garlic powder
Onion powder

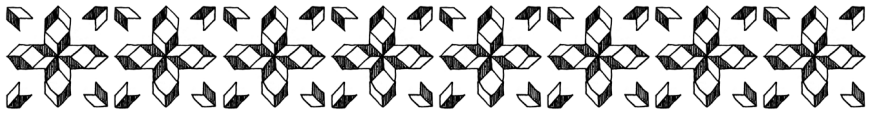
Poultry seasoning
Collard greens, roughly chopped
Onions, sliced

Lightly oil and season turkey with garlic powder, onion powder, and poultry seasoning. Bake at 350°F until internal temperature reaches 165°F and outside of turkey is golden brown. Remove turkey from oven and allow to cool slightly. Pull turkey from bone and shred. Add onions, collards and turkey to a large pot and season with salt and pepper. Cover with water and cook over medium heat for 3-4 hours, until collards are tender. Sis suggests tasting periodically to check.





SIDES & SAUCES



NINA'S STUFFED PEPPERS

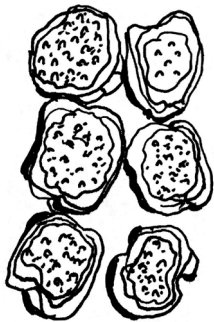
BRANDI ROSE: "This is a super special family recipe from Nina, my maternal grandmother. No one made stuffed peppers like Nina. And people would request these from her. I heard that she was taught this recipe from her mother-in-law, but everyone associated them with Nina." As Brandi told us, Nina used leftover roasts for maximal flavor.

- ½ lb beef (roast or stew beef)
- 4 large bell peppers
- 1 can creamed corn
- 1 small onion, diced
- 1 large potato
- 4 slices of bread
- 2 cans tomato soup
- ½ cup water
- ½ tsp onion powder
- ¼ tsp pepper
- ¼ tsp sea salt

Preheat oven to 350°F. Slice each pepper in half and remove stem and seeds. Peel potato and cube into half-inch pieces. Cube beef into half-inch pieces. Mix beef, cream corn, potato, onions, salt, pepper, onion

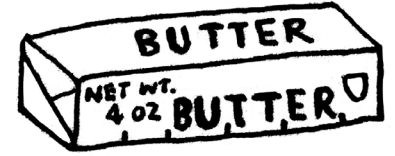
powder, and half of one can tomato soup. Tear bread into half-inch pieces. Fold into vegetable and beef mixture.

Spread the other half a can of tomato soup into bottom of a dutch oven or roaster pan. Add half cup of water. Evenly distribute meat and veggie mixture among bell pepper halves and place in pan, filled side facing up. Spoon remaining tomato soup over peppers. Cover; bake 1 & ½ hours.



HONEYED CORNBREAD

"It's moist enough to where you don't even need a cup of milk, you know?"



Sina Díaz prefers cooking to baking, but this hasn't stopped her from perfecting her cornbread recipe. "I'm very much not a baker. With cooking you get more of a free hand. With baking, it has to be precise. I don't like that. I always say I let my ancestors stop me when I'm, you know, seasoning or whatever. They'll be like 'ya!' which is Spanish for 'that's it!' So that's why I'm much more of a cook than I am a baker. But it comes out really good when I do."

"My main thing is on my cornbread," Sina told us, going on to describe her recipe. "I have perfected this cornbread over the years. There's a lot of butter, and there's a lot of honey. But I make no apologies for it. Butter and honey and – you've got to add [the honey] like, right before it's done baking. You hit it on top. And it kind of just melts into it." "It makes it soft and crusty-ish," Sina's daughter Seci added. "Tastyy tasty."

Although Sina hasn't made this variation yet, she's excited to try baking her cornbread with a local, cinnamon-infused creamed honey from Steve Roth's Beeholding Acres apiary in Wheeling. "It's so rich, it's decadent. And you put this on anything, girl. It is just – it's sexy. Now can you picture that on the cornbread with a glaze? Not anything heavy. Just a nice glaze. I want to try that."

- 2-3 boxes Jiffy mix
- 3 eggs
- Honey
- Real salted butter



SINA: "I follow the recipe on the [Jiffy] box and add my own extras. Make the mix, and drizzle honey into the batter 'til it looks good – however much you want. Grease the pan before you pour the mix in. I like to use cast iron because it gives it a nice crust. Then I'll cube up some extra butter and put it on top of the batter – it'll all bake in. And then hit the honey on top when it's almost done baking but it's still a little wobbly."



BROWN BEANS & CORNBREAD

SALLY MULL: “This meal was a favorite of my parents from Logan County, West Virginia. Logan is a coal mining town. Coal miners ate this meal often for several reasons. It was protein-filled, it fills up your tummy, and beans are inexpensive. You can fix the dinner early in the day, and it’s still tasty later. Although my parents weren’t in the field of coal mining, this meal was a weekly dinner choice of our family. We all loved brown bean days!”

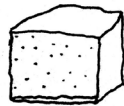


Sally Mull

- 4 cups dry pinto beans
- 4 slices of bacon*
- 2 tbsp butter
- Salt (start with 1 tbsp, may need more depending on your taste)

FOR BEANS: Prepare beans the day before. Rinse and place beans in pan or crockpot. Add water to “well cover” beans. Let stand overnight, at least 6 to 8 hours. The next day, drain beans. Add hot water to beans – enough to cover. Add bacon and salt. Simmer gently with lid tilted on pan or covered in crockpot until desired tenderness is reached, usually about 1 & ½ to 2 hours (longer in crockpot). Adjust salt to taste.

FOR CORNBREAD: “You can use your favorite cornbread recipe. The most important thing is to use a cast iron skillet to bake it. Pre-heat the skillet to 425°F to produce those golden-brown crispy edges! You want it really HOT as you pour the batter into it. Add 2 tbsp of butter first. Swirl it around the bottom and sides of the skillet. Then pour that batter in!”
Bake ‘til done.



*You can use a hambone or chunks of ham instead of bacon.



SALLY’S BAKED CORN

“I guarantee that you will need to double or triple this recipe. Everyone absolutely loves it.”

SALLY MULL: “This side dish is a loved family recipe. Any time we have this, it is gone the first day. We [especially] enjoy it during the holidays. As we are preparing and talking about the menu for the holiday, the conversation is ‘Well, we know we are going to fix baked corn.’ No matter what the rest of the meal includes, this side is requested. I would have many disappointed family members if we didn’t have this on our holiday dinner table!”

“When I double it, I don’t add another stick of butter. I double everything else, but that just seems like a lot of butter. But you can double that too if you like.”

- 1 can whole kernel corn, drained
- 1 can creamed corn
- 1 container sour cream (8 oz)
- 1 stick melted butter
- 1 small box corn muffin mix
- 1 egg

Mix all ingredients together well. Bake uncovered at 350°F for 45 minutes to an hour. “Watch for the nice light brown edges.”

LIL’S BAKED CORN

“Baked corn is what a lot of people like.”

Grandson Adam Payne and grandmother Lillian “Lil” Payne have a weekly dinner with their whole family, and baked corn is also a staple at their family meal. “When the big group is coming for dinner, you can double the recipe and do it in a great big pan and everybody gets their share of it,” Lil told us. “It goes all the way around the table when you have a big group.”



“Baked corn is like cornbread mixed with creamed corn [and] sour cream,” Adam added. “It makes this delightful little casserole.”

1 can whole kernel corn
 1 can creamed corn
 1 box "Jiffy" corn muffin mix
 2 eggs
 16 oz sour cream
 2 tbsp sugar



Combine all ingredients and add to greased 9" x 12" pan. Bake at 350°F for 35-45 minutes. SERVES 10-12.

APPLE BUTTER BAKED BEANS

When we spoke to Terrie Fish, she provided us with a little tidbit of wisdom for the next time you make baked beans: "When I make baked beans, I put a little apple butter in it. Oh, it's got a cinnamony, kind of appley flavor – it makes it sweeter. And it tastes really good. It's kind of like a secret ingredient. One time I ran out of ingredients, and I thought, 'hmm, I'll try this,' and I did, and it turned out well."

ONCE-FRIED SWEET PLANTAINS

Sina Díaz often prepares plantains, an ingredient common to Puerto Rican cooking (and Caribbean cooking in general). Plantains can take many forms – as seen in her recipe for *ceviche con patacones* (pickled shrimp with fried plantains, p.39) and *tostones* (double fried green plantains, p.96; Rico Ruiz's version, p.95) – but one of the simplest is once-fried sweet plantains.

SINA: "So there's two kinds [of plantain]. You got a sweet plantain, and you got the green plantain. The darker plantain is sweeter – it's gonna be like a regular ripe banana, you know? That one, you'll just cut it into quarter inches [lengthwise], maybe a little less, depending on how you like it. And you fry 'em [in a pan]. And it's just – it'll caramelize, it's very sweet." Sina suggests about 4-5 minutes on each side.



RICO'S TOSTONES (Double-Fried Green Plantains)

"There's no way you go visit your grandma a couple times a year and she doesn't have them."

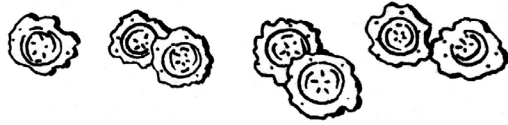
Tostones, or double-fried plantains with a "potato cake, french-fry feel," are another Puerto Rican plantain dish that's simple and delicious. "Obviously Puerto Rico is not just two things, right, but these [tostones and *ropa vieja* (his other contributed recipe, p.44)] hit most home to me," Rico Ruiz told us. "It's like, there's no way you go visit your grandma a couple times a year and she doesn't have them."

The tricky part is finding quality plantains that are right ripeness for frying twice. Rico's advice is this: "It has to be green. Once it goes from green to yellow-ish, you want to use it pretty quickly. Once it's yellow and spotted, that's when it's very sweet and pretty mushy. So fully green is good. But you don't want it to be too hard, because once you try to smash it, it'll break. I usually say, get a green one and let it sit for two days, and use it then. You gotta get it at the right time."

Rico described his process to us, and he encourages experimentation with the recipe. "You [slice it] in inch, inch and a half pieces, and fry it. And then you smash it after you fry it once. And then smashed, it goes back in the oil. It's double-fried, and that's when it comes out crispy. You dip it in mayo-ketchup or in an aioli, whatever you like. I like it just with mayo-ketchup only to be honest. I just sprinkle a little bit of salt. And it's literally the best accompaniment to any Puerto Rican meal. It's perfect."

3-4 green plantains
 1 cup vegetable or canola oil
 4 cups water
 2 tsp salt
 1 lime, juiced





Peel plantains and cut into 1-inch sections. Preheat oil in heavy-bottomed skillet over medium heat. Once oil is hot, fry in batches until golden-brown on all sides, about 8-10 minutes. Remove from oil and let cool on a plate lined with paper towels. Once cool, use a plate to smash slices until they flatten slightly, being careful not to smash them too thin. Gently add tostones to large bowl containing water, lime juice, and salt and soak for 4-5 minutes before patting dry. Fry again on high heat until golden brown and crispy, about 5 minutes.

SINA'S TOSTONES (Double-Fried Green Plantains)

Sina Díaz also makes a version of *tostones*, and, much like Rico Ruiz, she also likes to serve hers with a homemade *mayuketchu* – or mayo-ketchup.

Sina describes her tostones recipe as follows. “The green plantain, you gotta double fry ‘em. So you’ll cut ‘em into [inch-wide pieces] – I usually cut them at a diagonal, because it looks good and they’ll spread out better. So you take ‘em like that, and you fry them. Not too hard, just enough to brown it. When you take [each one] out, you flatten it – not too much though, because you want the crunchy outside, but you want a nice tender inside, too. So you flatten it, and then you refry it. That goes perfect with the mayuketchu.”

MAYUKETCHU

For this dish, Sina gets a lot of help from one of her daughters, Seci. “I’m your sous chef,” Seci told us and her mom, as we sat around their dining room table chatting about cooking and food. There was an occasional intermission each time Seci proudly showed us photographs



of her mom’s culinary creations. When we asked Seci about her sous chef responsibilities, she told us: “Cutting a lot of stuff, and plantains, and when we make plantains, I make my own mayuketchu.”

Seci explained her recipe for mayuketchu: “[It’s] ketchup, mayo, and garlic powder. And then you mix it. And you put it on plantains.” Sina clarified: “She said it, but it should be minced garlic, you know, and a little olive oil. Mayo and ketchup. And a little bit of salt – although I don’t like to oversalt stuff.”

You can find mayuketchu at the grocery store, but Sina prefers to make her own. “Heinz has a thing of mayuketchu now. And I’m like, this is not no mayuketchu. But they’re trying to keep up with the Latin community, so there you go.”



MOTHER'S MAYONNAISE

This recipe comes from Laura Oswald’s mother’s mother’s mother – her great-grandmother. It’s a recipe that’s been passed down through her family, inherited from someone or other’s recipe box: “My mom has one of those fancy cookbook recipe boxes, and she has my grandmother’s and my great grandmother’s. I had my mom copy and print off some of the recipes I was most interested in sharing, and she included this recipe for me.”

Although Laura shared this recipe with us, she’s never knowingly eaten it. “I think my mom included it because it was my great-grandmother’s recipe. There’s a chance I’ve eaten it in the past on a sandwich and just did not know that it was her [Granny’s] mayonnaise.”

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup vinegar

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup water

1 cup sugar

2 tbsp flour

2-3 eggs

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp salt

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp prepared mustard



Combine vinegar and water. Mix in sugar and flour. In a separate bowl, beat eggs with whisk and add to mixture. Add salt and mustard. Cook and stir ‘til mix boils and is thick. Let cool.

SIS'S BARBECUE SAUCE

Darlene “Sis” Stradwick and her cousin Evelina connect over food. They don’t share recipes per se, but they certainly learn from each other. Among other dishes, Sis gets inspiration for her barbecue sauce from Evelina.



SIS: “We both cook almost the same. There’s things she cooks better than me, and me better than her. You know, it’s not a competition. We just learn from each other. I think I got an edge over her with the fried chicken, but she makes up mean barbecue sauce. Oh, she makes her own barbecue sauce. She don’t tell anybody how to do that.”

While Sis doesn’t know how Evelina makes her barbecue sauce, she herself modifies store-bought barbecue sauce by adding lemon juice and brown sugar. “Sometimes the kids want theirs a little spicy, so I throw a little hot sauce up in there.” If adding hot sauce, she prefers Frank’s Red Hot.

MARIA'S HOMEMADE APPLESAUCE

*“You get this smooth maple flavor.
Oh, it’s fantastic.”*

Maria Miller, co-owner of Neely’s Grocery in East Wheeling, grew up in Wheeling and currently lives in her grandma’s former home. Her yard hosts a few peach and apple trees that she remembers climbing as a kid, which she now tends to with her neighbor (who once lived besides Maria’s grandma!).

Maria’s grandmother is the one who taught her to cook. “I come from a long line of Martha Stewart-esque women. My grandmother taught me how to cook in her kitchen, which is now my kitchen. She taught me the aromatics of cooking, how to taste and smell to determine what you need to add or take away from a recipe. And that’s one of the skills that you just have to practice and you have to learn. You’d have to taste after Grandma and she’d say, ‘What do you think that needs?’ Then I’d say, ‘Garlic,’ and she’d say, ‘Good job.’”

This year’s apple harvest gave Maria the chance to make and sell homemade applesauce. She prepared it in the Neely’s kitchen using her neighbor’s Victorio food strainer. Here’s how Maria makes her applesauce:

Apples (chopped)
Sugar
Cinnamon

Maple syrup
Vanilla extract

Chop apples, and cook in large pot with some water. Once cooked, grind through food strainer. If you don’t have a food strainer, use a blender for apples (make sure to peel and core first). Once apples are at desired consistency, add sugar, cinnamon, maple syrup and – as Maria puts it – “a little bit of vanilla measured with the heart.” Adjust flavor to taste. Add to crockpot, set to “keep warm,” and simmer overnight. This extra time helps “keep it warm and get it all mixed. It’s already applesauce, so you don’t really have to cook it. But I want it to have it sort of simmering to get a little bit of the water out, make it sweeter, thicken it up a little bit, and to let all the flavors meld.”





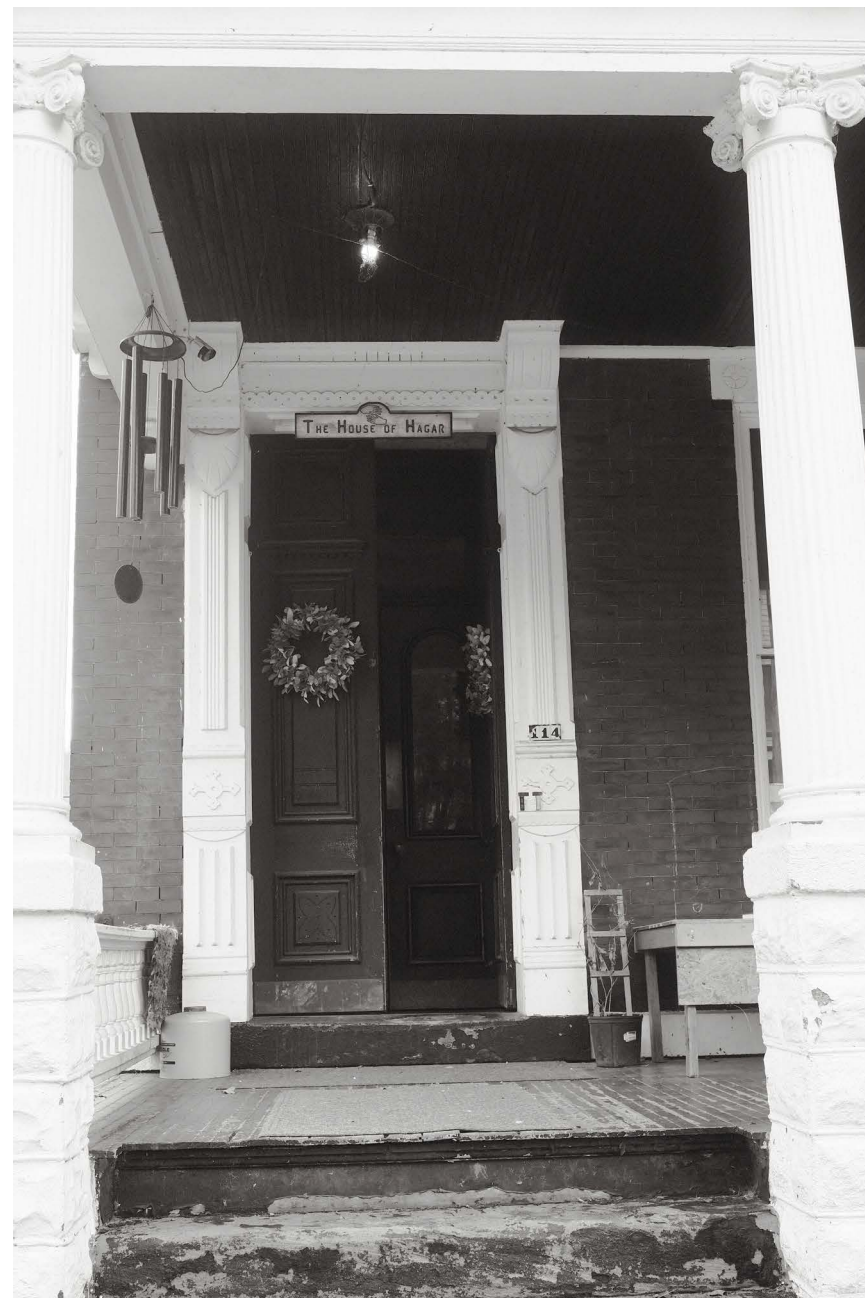
BREAKING BREAD AT HOUSE OF HAGAR



The House of Hagar Catholic Worker in East Wheeling celebrates food and community every week through a family-style meal for their neighbors. Kate Marshall, who runs House of Hagar, spoke to us about these meals and the significance they hold for her:

“In many healthy families, [something] I think is of primary importance is gathering around a meal and breaking bread together. Because it’s in that space that we’re both nourishing our body and nourishing our soul. And there’s something about that nourishment – about encouraging growth and wellbeing – be it from a food source, a conversation, or even knowing that you have a seat at the table. So these family-style meals are really important for us. Especially when we’re inviting our neighbor who is experiencing homelessness, or has been part of a marginalized community, because often they haven’t felt those things.”

“By [creating] a space where we’re saying, ‘we want you at our table, we want you nourished both on a bodily level and a soul level,’ we’re also acknowledging the fact that we can’t grow into the family that we feel that we’re called to be without you being at that table. So the meals and the food are very important to us, as much as the conversation. It makes me feel connected to my neighbor and connected to the world. And I mean, ultimately, they’re my family. We celebrate all our holidays together, and therefore this is my family.”



*The House of Hagar Catholic Worker in East Wheeling,
a welcoming and peaceful destination for all who visit.*



BLENDING PLACE & TRADITION:



One Wheeling Family's *Wigilia* Feast

Brandi Rose's great-great-grandparents immigrated to the United States from Poland, and many generations of her family have made their home in and around Wheeling. "Polish is the one that stuck," Brandi told us about her cultural heritage. "Polish is the one we've kept the traditions for, we've kept the food for."

Wigilia is a traditional supper eaten on Christmas Eve in Poland, and Brandi's family celebrates it here. "The dinner has some wonderful other traditions attached, like having an extra seat in case a 'wandering stranger' comes to your door and starting the festivities when the first star appears in the sky. Traditionally, it's an all-fish and non-meat dinner, but we've incorporated American Christmas into it."

"Christmas Eve is more important than Christmas day in our family," Brandi shared with us. "Ask my two little nephews who are eight and twelve, they'll tell you that Christmas Eve is their favorite day."

While many *Wigilia* dishes remain the same each year, some have changed. "The pierogies are definitely the star of the show. Then my *Babcia*, my great-grandmother, she hosted growing up, and she always made ham and *kielbasa* [a Polish sausage]. We're gonna do prime rib instead [of ham] this year – but *kielbasa* is an easy side."

"There was always white fish baked in a lot of butter. My uncle Frank and my grandfather, they always ate *śledzie*, which is a pickled fish, and nobody touched them except for the two of them. I have not seen *śledzie* since Uncle Frank passed away. And everything else was just traditional American sides. Mashed potatoes, noodles in chicken stock. Homemade rolls. Brussel sprouts for a green vegetable. Everybody loves coleslaw as a side. And then I always bake a Polish pound cake for dessert [p.108]."



One of the most poignant moments of our conversation with Brandi was listening to her reflect on how the smells and tastes of these



foods conjure memories of growing up. "Just the smell of food can bring such a feeling of warmth and nostalgia. Like, we always make fish on Christmas Eve, even though people don't eat it as much as they used to. [It's] just tied to our memories. Like, one year we suggested to my mom – we were like, 'let's just not make fish because some people barely ate it last year.' And she's like 'no, because then it won't smell like *Babcia's* house did when I was little.' So we continue to make that dish. We always do fish, always."



Brandi Rose

PIEROGIES (Polish Boiled Dumplings)

"A pierogi is a memory. Like, you eat that on Christmas Eve, and you can remember eating them when you were little. And the first time your mom taught you how to make them."

BRANDI ROSE: "We make pierogies multiple times a year, but the most important time we do them is for *Wigilia*. It's a tradition that's been passed down, and we currently have three generations – my mom, myself, my sister, and my two young nephews – who get together to make the pierogies as a family. Yeah, it's a family thing."

Laughing, Brandi told us that making pierogi is an all-day event. "We always pick a day, usually Saturday in case it goes long. It has been two days some years, but we've cut back on the amount that we've made. I don't know if you've ever made pierogies, but it's a labor of love. It's four or five people in the kitchen – we still do it at my mom's house. We all have matching pierogi aprons we wear. And the kitchen gets hotter than the gates of hell, because we have two huge pots of boiling water going and we're running around like chickens with our heads cut off."

5 cups flour
5 Tbsp vegetable oil

1 egg pinch of salt
1 & ½ to 2 cups water

MAKE THE DOUGH: “Mix all the ingredients and knead about 70 times. Add 1 & ½ cups water to begin. You may need more or less water – the dough should be pliable but not too sticky. If it’s crumbly or hard to work with, begin to add the additional ½ cup of water into the dough until it’s pliable.”

ROLLING THE DOUGH THIN: “You’re going to roll the dough flat with a rolling pin ‘til it’s as thin as possible. If you’re a novice, I suggest rolling it a little thicker. But the thinner the dough, the more tender the dough, and the better those pierogies are going to be. I am the designated family roller, because I am braver than my mom and my sister. I’d say an eighth of an inch to be safe.”

FOR THE FILLING: “The filling can be whatever you want. My family’s favorites are cheese (a large container of cottage cheese mixed finely diced, sautéed onions) and potato cheese (mashed potatoes mixed with mild cheddar or Velveeta and finely diced sautéed onions.) You can get creative with the fillings too – even fruit!”

FORM PIEROGI: “Cut out a little circle. If I’m hand-pinching, I use a glass or a round cookie cutter, maybe four inches around. Put a dollop of filling in the center, but make sure you leave enough room around the edges to seal the dough. Then I dip my finger in water, and I run it along the inside edges all the way around to help seal it. And then you fold the dough in half and just pinch, pinch, pinch, pinch, pinch all the way around.”

TO COOK: “Gently place the pierogi in boiling water, and when it completely floats on the top of the water, it’s ready – about 5 minutes. Remove from water. Brush with melted butter.*

TO FREEZE FOR LATER: Place drained and buttered pierogi on buttered cookie sheet. “Put them in the freezer all lined up and individual. This way they don’t stick.” Store together in bags or tupperware once frozen. This way “we have some for the following week.”

* “You can place the pierogies in the pan in the oven on a low setting (200°F), covered with foil to keep warm until all pierogies are boiled”



Brandi’s pierogi press. “We roll a long sheet of dough that’s twice this length. And we lay it down the edges, and there’s going to be an overhang of dough. And we fill it with dollops of potato or cheese, each one, and then we fold it back over, and we use a rolling pin to just roll it to the top. And [the rolling pin] seals it perfectly. And then you just flip it over and they pop right out.”

If you’re willing to invest in a pierogi press, Brandi considers it very worth it. “A lot of people hand-pinching the ‘rogies. Making a baker’s dozen it’s no problem to do it that way. But the amount we make for the holidays, it’d be way too much – we probably do over a hundred. Then one year my mom found this pierogi press, and so we started using it. This gets the same results much easier, and it seals them a lot better, because when you’re making them and hand pinching them yourselves, you get ones that bust open. But this thing is foolproof.”



HOMEMADE CHICKEN NOODLES



These noodles are a staple of Brandi Rose's family. To Brandi, the dish is linked to Appalachia: "Noodles, like noodles cooked in chicken stock, are very Appalachian, very from this area. If you go to anybody's grandma's house on Thanksgiving or Christmas, there is a very high probability that there are going to be homemade noodles cooked in chicken stock as a side. It's just a thing that's really popular here."

"I feel like family recipes like this are meant to be shared," Brandi commented to us. "If they aren't, they die, eventually – because there's always going to be somebody in a family down the line that doesn't like to cook. So to me it's so important to share recipes within the family, but also outside of the family. This is how my Uncle Floyd and Aunt Nancy made them for every Wigilia – our traditional Polish Christmas Eve – just frozen egg noodles cooked in chicken broth in butter. It's still a family favorite this way. Chicken can be left out of this recipe all together and it's still delicious."

3 eggs	4-5 cups flour
1 tbsp canola oil	½ tsp salt
¼ cup water	

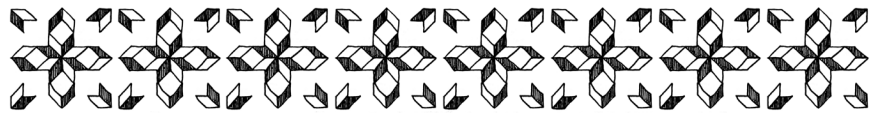
MAKE DOUGH FOR NOODLES: "Add flour to shallow bowl or directly to a large cutting board. Make a well in the middle. In a small bowl, lightly beat eggs, water, oil, and salt. Add to well and start to mix it into flour. Begin to knead dough – add more flour if dough is super sticky. You'll know it's ready when dough is smooth and has a slight shine. Form dough into ball and wrap in plastic wrap. Place in fridge and let rest 20-30 minutes."

ROLL DOUGH: "Cut ball into thirds and roll out until desired thickness (I like an eighth of an inch). Use cookie cutter to cut dough into even noodles. You can place noodles on towels as you go cook them immediately, or you can let them dry and freeze them for later."

2-3 pounds noodles (homemade, or use frozen Reames egg noodles)	48 oz chicken broth or stock
2-3 chicken leg quarters (with skin on)	1 stick butter
	2 tsp chicken bouillon powder or paste

COOK CHICKEN & NOODLES: "Place chicken in a pot with broth and chicken bouillon. Turn on medium heat and cook until chicken is just done. Remove chicken from broth and save broth. Remove all meat from bones and cut into small bite-sized pieces. Bring broth to a boil again. Add butter, then add noodles into the pot until they're about a half inch from the top of the broth. Toss chicken back into broth. Cook until noodles are done (5-10 minutes for homemade, 20-25 minutes for frozen.)"





CAKES

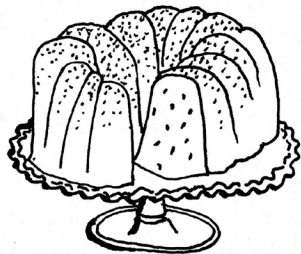


POLISH POUND CAKE

Brandi Rose's family is known for sharing their homemade baked goods. "Cakes, cookies, and like, banana breads, pumpkin breads," Brandi listed. "They're always made in bulk and passed around to the family. Like, every time you go to my sister's or my mom's, they're like, 'Here, I've baked this for you.'"

"And I am also infamous for showing up to my best friend's house, my sister's, my mom's, my husband's best friend's house, with Tupperware containers full of food, or wrapped up loaves of banana bread, or, you know, a container of cookies," Brandi added. "They always tell me that food is my love language, but I think it's actually the cooking and giving of the food that's my love language. I think that food can connect us, and it's wrapped up in so many memories."

Brandi Rose always bakes this cake as a grand finale to her family's Wigilia (Polish Christmas Eve) dinner (p.102). This specific cake is unusual because it takes several hours to bake, and it goes into a cold oven. "It's like a denser yellow cake, and it's a weird recipe," Brandi told us. "It's weird because you do not preheat your oven. I think because it's such a thick batter. It's baked in a Bundt pan. So it has the hole in the middle to try



to bake it throughout. But because of the denseness, and how much batter there is, it needs a low and slow cook and the batter needs to come up slowly."

1 cup butter	½ tsp salt
½ cup shortening	1 cup evaporated milk
3 cups white sugar	3 cups all-purpose flour
3 tbsp cake batter extract or vanilla butter & nut flavor ("I measure this with my heart.")	2 cups pecans or walnuts (roughly chopped)
5 eggs	2 jars maraschino cherries (10 oz each), well-drained*

Grease and flour a Bundt pan. In a large bowl, cream together butter, shortening, sugar and cake batter or vanilla butter & nut flavoring. Beat in eggs, one at a time. Then stir in evaporated milk. Combine salt and flour, then stir into wet mixture. Finally, fold in nuts and cherries. Pour batter into prepared pan.

Place into a cold oven, then heat to 300°F. Bake for 2 & ½ to 3 hours, until golden brown on the outside, or when a toothpick inserted into cake comes out clean. Cool for 15 minutes in pan before gently flipping onto a plate.

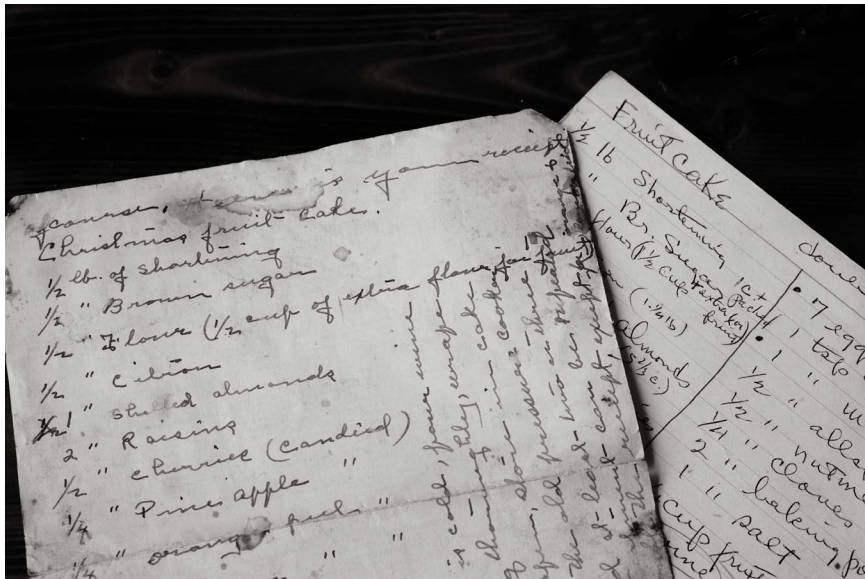
**BRANDI ROSE: "I've used up to 3 jars ... it's a big cake! During Christmas, you can sometimes find green maraschino cherries. For a festive twist, you can add a jar of these in."*

CHRISTMAS FRUITCAKE

"Every Christmas we'd get it in the mail."

This fruitcake has a long history in Pat Jeffers' family. "Every Christmas, my mother's grandmother and her younger sister in Virginia would send us a fruitcake in the mail. I remember both of them, they both lived a long time. And I remember the year that a fruitcake didn't come. And finally my mother got a letter from some relative, and she realized that somebody had died. I can still see her crying."

"So my mother copied it over, and I've made it several times, just because it made me think of my mother and grandmother and great-grandmother, and so on. And my cousin Shirley still likes it too. I like fruitcake, or at least I like this one."



Pat's mother's handwritten fruitcake recipe, itself adapted from Pat's great-grandmother's recipe. Pat's annotations are written on her mother's copy.

This is a simple recipe with a lot of ingredients. Pat has several adjustments and tips for those who make it. If you can't find mace (a sibling spice of nutmeg), it'll still taste okay. "I've used fruit juice or wine depending on what I have," Pat says; wine is circled on her handwritten recipe. Additionally, "the secret to a moist fruitcake is this: Bake it days or weeks ahead of time, so you have it sitting out on the counter aging, and while it's doing whatever it does, you keep pouring wine or fruit juice on it."

For this reason, Pat recommends making this fruitcake well in advance: "You don't bake fruitcake and serve it tonight. I try to make this by the beginning of December."



- ½ lb margarine
- ½ lb brown sugar (1 cup packed) plus extra for fruit
- ½ lb flour (1 & ½ cup)
- ½ lb glazed or candied citron
- 1 lb shelled almonds (5 & 2/3 cup)

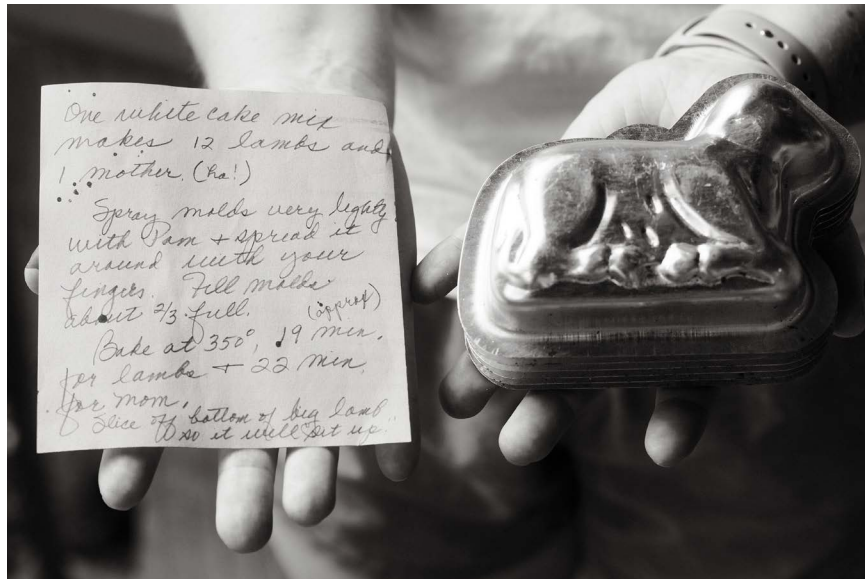
- 2 lb raisins
- ½ lb candied cherries
- ¼ lb candied pineapple
- ¼ lb candied orange peel
- ¼ lb candied lemon peel
- 7 eggs
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 1 tsp mace
- ½ tsp allspice
- ½ tsp nutmeg
- ¼ tsp cloves
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp salt
- ¼ cup fruit juice or wine

Combine all ingredients and place in greased pan. "You can use two loaf pans, individual loaf pans, an angel food cake pan, or muffin tins. Last year, I used muffin tins which was great for gifts." Bake at 350°F for 20-45 minutes, checking often. Fruitcake is done when toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. "I made some in an angel food cake pan one year, because fruit cake always has that hole in the center." Cooking times will vary by method.

GRANNY'S "LAMB" CAKES

LAURA OSWALT: "Granny would make a lamb cake on Easter every year, in these lamb molds that she had. That's one thing that I've specifically taken over is, I make the lamb cakes every year for Easter, and ice them and cover them in coconut to look like their wool. To find these molds, I had to search through the whole house before the estate sale after she passed, because I mean – as a kid that's something that sticks with you, right? Like a cake shaped like an animal. And also because they look a little creepy. I found them down in the fruit cellar in an old cabinet. You can never make a realistic looking lamb cake, but I try."

"I like to make my own white cake mix, though Granny wrote this recipe to just be a boxed mix. And then she would always put the coconut on without toasting it first. So it still looks all white. But I like to toast the coconut because then it gives it a little bit more texture. But then the lambs aren't as white."



Laura Oswalt shows us her Granny's recipe, as well as one of her lamb cake tin.



Relics of her childhood, Laura inherited these metal lamb cake tins from her Granny.

Laura's Granny's recipe reads as follows: "One white cake mix makes 12 lambs and 1 mother (Ha!). Spray molds very lightly with Pam and spread it around with your fingers. Fill molds about two-thirds full. Bake at 350°F for 19 minutes (approx.) for lambs. 22 minutes for mom. Slice off bottom of big lamb so it will sit up."

PIÑA COLADA CAKE (Mandarin Orange Cake)

"It's like the moistest cake I've ever had."



LILLIAN "LIL" PAYNE: "When I worked at AEP, I worked there for 20 years, and a girl came in with a cake pan this high [she brings a hand to about chest height]. And she said 'I didn't buy you a present. I bought you a cake holder and I made a cake.' That's what she gave me."

Lil ended up asking for the recipe, on which the name is labeled 'Mandarin Orange Cake', but she remembers it best by her name for it: Piña Colada Cake. "I call it that 'cause it's got pineapple in it." She likes to make this cake for birthdays. "That's usually a birthday cake. It's three layers. So it looks real pretty. It's real high. And then the topping is whipped cream and pudding. So it's best to make it the night before. It's nice and thick, and it's real good."

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1 pkg yellow cake mix | ¾ cups oil |
| 4 eggs | 1 small can mandarin oranges in juice |

BAKE CAKE: Preheat oven to 350°F. Beat all of the cake ingredients for 2 minutes. Pour batter into three 9" pans. Bake at 350°F for 15 minutes. Let stand to cool.

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| 1 large pkg instant vanilla pudding | 2 cans crushed pineapple, partially drained |
| 13 & ½ oz Cool Whip | |

MAKE TOPPING: Beat all topping ingredients together. Frost each cake layer once cool, and assemble cake. Refrigerate overnight.



SERVING OUR COMMUNITY:



Catholic Charities Neighborhood Center

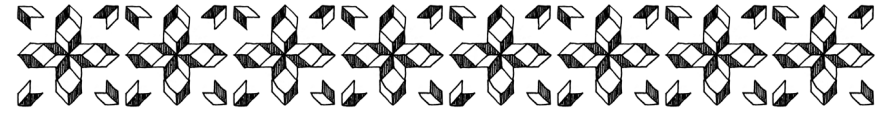
Established in 1969 and located in East Wheeling, Catholic Charities Neighborhood Center is a community resource that has long been serving food to anybody who might need it. We briefly spoke to Betty Simeth, who runs the center’s food programs, about what they do:

“Catholic Charities serves as a food pantry to about 100 families a week who are unable to buy enough food with their monthly budget. The meals we serve at the center are not just for the homeless, they are also for people that can’t afford everyday meals and need something to help them out. We have four to five neighbors I know personally that have housing but come down to get the good, nourishing meal we serve. We serve 50 to 60 people every breakfast and dinner.”

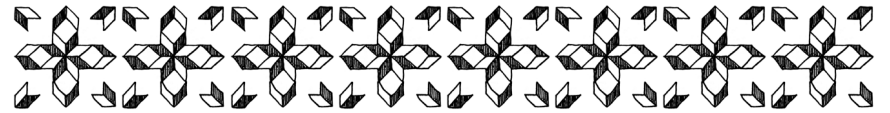
Betty started serving at Catholic Charities about 10 years ago so she could spend more time with her husband, who worked there. What she found incidentally was “an inside love that I didn’t know I actually had.” Betty’s faith and love for her work keep her passion alive, and she will continue working at the center for as long as she can.



Catholic Charities Neighborhood Center on 18th Street



PIES & DESSERTS

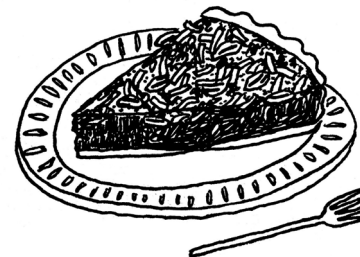


MOTHER’S GERMAN CHOCOLATE PIE

Music teacher Laura Oswalt is known around Wheeling for her mobile coffee cart, Tacet Coffee. She runs the business with her husband, Stephen, who is also a music teacher. Laura grew up in Sherard, while her parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents are all from Glen Dale. Laura herself moved back to Wheeling in 2020.

Much like other folks we talked to, Laura often finds that she doesn’t always need a written recipe to cook or bake – she’s practiced enough to know some of her dishes more or less by heart.

This recipe comes from Laura’s mom, and it’s one of her favorite treats during the holidays. “I like the German chocolate pie, because it’s always a very specific reminder of the holidays. Not even the holidays, but just – my younger self. It’s really hard for me to grasp onto the feeling of being young again, or being a kid again. And it’s like this weird fleeting moment where I feel it for a second, and I don’t get it unless there’s something that I can feel or taste.”



“And my grandma’s house has now been sold – we used to celebrate every holiday there with family – so we don’t have that house as a sense of attachment anymore. The food,

now, is really the main source of attachment to that feeling, or, you know, to our family members that aren't around anymore.”

9" pie shell
 1 tsp vanilla
 2 eggs (room temp)
 13 oz evaporated milk
 4 oz German chocolate (melted)
 1 & ½ cup sugar
 Pinch of salt
 3 tbsp cornstarch
 ½ cup pecans
 1 & ½ cup coconut (or less)



Laura Oswalt

Blend vanilla, eggs, and evaporated milk using a whip attachment. Add melted German chocolate. In a separate container, mix and blend together sugar, salt, and cornstarch. Add to chocolate mixture and pour into 9-inch pie shell. Sprinkle pecans and coconut on top. Bake at 375°F for about 45 minutes. (350°F if using dark pan).

APPLE CRUMB PIE

“It always tasted good, and everybody always knew it tasted good.”

If you already have a recipe for German Chocolate Pie, Laura's family has another pie recipe to offer. “We're a double pie family, so there's always options – apple and pumpkin and German chocolate – whether it's Thanksgiving or Christmas. Everybody gets three pieces.”

Like many of Laura's others throughout this book, this recipe from Laura's Granny. “Granny always made an apple pie. It was like her classic dessert in all seasons. We had it all the time,” Laura recounted. Her granny was known within her family for being self critical, even though her dishes were always delicious:

“Something was always wrong with whatever she made. To her, it was always, ‘Hope you enjoy it, but ... ,’ ‘Hope you enjoy it, but ...’ But it

always tasted good, and everybody always knew it tasted good. And that was also one of the things, after she passed away, that we would always laugh about or talk about, like, ‘oh, well you know what, the pie's probably too dry.’”

1 unbaked pie shell	1 tsp cinnamon
5-7 tart apples, sliced	¾ cup flour
1 cup sugar (to split)	1/3 cup oil (butter or margarine)

Mix and place apples, a half cup sugar, and cinnamon in an unbaked pie shell. Separately, mix remaining sugar, flour, and oil with a pastry cutter. Sprinkle over apples. Bake at 400°F about 40-50 minutes (375°F in Pyrex).

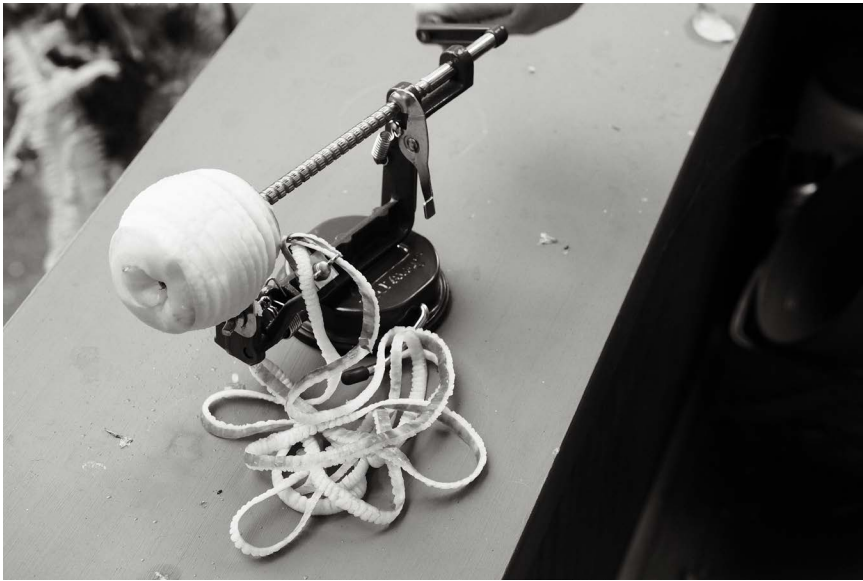
PEELING APPLES FOR PIE

One of Emma's favorite things about our conversation with Laura was witnessing Laura's apple peeler in action, which is the same style of peeler her granny had.

LAURA OSWALT: “She always had this apple peeler, that one of those ones that you put the apple onto, and you turn the crank, and it peels all of the skin off and it slices the apple, so then you can just cut it up really easy.”

“And I love that she had one of those. We went to an apple orchard in North Carolina, back when we were living there, and they had them for sale. So I bought one – not as good as my grandma's. I remember her always using that for her apple pie (p.116) or, if it was broken, you know, I remember she would always complain about having to use the paring knife.”

“This is good for harder apples. I feel like if you put a Red Delicious on here, they're just softer and sometimes the coring process doesn't work as well,” Laura told us. “But you just stab 'er on, and then turn this and that's how you do it. And then you take it off and it's sliced like an accordion. If you like making apple pie this will make your life a whole lot easier. It was worth every penny to me.”



1. *As we sat on her porch, Laura walked us through the process of using the peeler, using a serendipitous apple from the bottom of Emma's bag. "It suction cups down, and then the apple goes on. This is the thing that peels it, and then this cores and slices it [as you crank the handle], so the core is completely out."*



2. *"And it's all sliced and peeled, and then you just take a knife and you slice it down the middle and then it's all ready to go."*

MARGO'S LEMON MERINGUE PIE

*"I write [my recipes] down.
But a lot of them I do so much,
you just get to memorize them.
You just know it."*

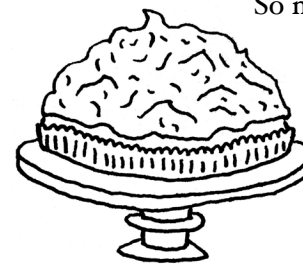
Renel Hemmerling lives in Warwood, and from her modest home kitchen emerges many treats. She bakes at least three to four days a week, and she commits herself to trying a new recipe each week. Apart from her day job, Renel runs a successful baking business called Little Brown Hen Bakery, managing weekly standing orders for bread, selling at various outlets, and always taking special orders.



Renel Hemmerling

Whether it is sweet potato apricot hand pies, pumpkin rolls, or strawberry cinnamon rolls, Renel is constantly baking and sharing her creations with her family, friends, and customers. She's made friends through baking, saying of her neighbor: "I take her jam, and I take her a baked good every week. So whatever I've cooked up, I'll take down to her and just kind of chit chat with her. I talk about recipes with her because she doesn't do so much baking now, but it was something she did enjoy one time. I think it's kind of a lost art."

When we convened with Renel, her kitchen was warm from the oven preheating. After working the night shift, she had stayed up to begin baking this recipe for her family's lemon meringue pie. As Renel explained, "This meringue pie recipe was my mom's grandma's recipe.



So my great-grandmother made it, my grandma made it, my mom made it, I make it and now my son, he makes it as well. This has always been his go-to instead of birthday cake. And so this has been a big family tradition that gets passed on." For those counting, that's five generations in Renel's family who have made this recipe – not including

Renel's granddaughter, who she's already begun to teach about baking.

Renel uses her mother's name, Margo, as the namesake. If the recipe wasn't enough of an heirloom, Renel also uses her mother's KitchenAid stand mixer, an appliance now serving its fourth generation. Margo's culinary example had a critical influence on Renel's early years learning to bake.

RENEL: "My sister and I would, you know, help her roll stuff out, decorate. We'd do a lot of the stirring. Like this [lemon curd] here is like a constant stir. I got my first cookbook when I was nine. My first recipe was a white strawberry cloud. We went and picked strawberries, and then I did just a simple white cake mix with it and baked that up. And that was my first foray into doing it on my own."

As you make this recipe, Renel would encourage you to think of someone to share it with. "I think baking (and cooking) is one of the biggest ways to express your love for people, because you're really feeding them. My family and my kids will tell you the secret ingredient is love in everything that I make for them."

1 & 1/2 cup water	1/4 tsp salt
2 lemons, juiced and zested	4 egg yolks, beaten (save whites for meringue!)
1 cup white sugar	2 tbsp butter
2 tbsp flour	
3 tbsp cornstarch	

TO MAKE FILLING, combine ingredients in a saucepan in order they are listed. Whisk until thickened (about 40 minutes) and remove from heat to let cool.

Shortening	A little water
Flour	2 tbsp granulated sugar
Salt	

PREPARE PIE DOUGH: As you are making filling, prepare your favorite pie dough recipe. Renel uses a simple recipe with the ingredients listed. She notes that for a more pastry-type dough, you can use butter too. Renel stresses flexibility in proportions based on your elevation and using your intuition to get to the right texture for the crust.



PRE-BAKE CRUST: Roll out pie dough and place in 9-inch baking dish. At this point, Renel sprinkles some coarse sugar crystals on the surface of the crust. Bake alone at 325°F for 10-15 minutes (prior to adding filling).

PREPARE MERINGUE: As pie crust is pre-baking and the filling continues to thicken, pour egg whites into bowl of a stand mixer with whisk attachment, and add sugar one tablespoon at a time. Whisk until meringue is foamy and forms stiff peaks (as seen in photo).

4 egg whites (left over from filling)
1/2 cup white sugar

ASSEMBLE PIE(S): Pour slightly cooled filling into cool pie dish. Scoop meringue on top and shape, making sure to create a tight seal between the edge of the meringue and the pie crust. Bake 20-25 minutes until meringue is golden brown.



Renel is the fourth generation in her family to use this very KitchenAid stand mixer, which has held up marvelously over time. When whisking your egg whites for meringue, look for stiff peaks; when you lift the whisk out of the bowl, the meringue should come with it (but not too much).



Four finished lemon meringue pies emerge from the oven, their peaks beautifully golden brown. Renel kindly made several small pies, rather than one large one, when we visited her, so that we could each take one home.

CHOCOLATE PUDDING PIE

LORI NICHOLSON: “This one is always a staple at my house for holidays. Both my kids say ‘Mom you’ve gotta make your Cool Whip chocolate pie.’ Even if I want to make something else, this is what my kids want me to make.” Lori also enjoys making a banana pudding version of this pie, when she has a say!

1 & ½ cups cold milk

2 packages (4 servings) Instant Chocolate Pudding and Pie Filling mix

1 tub (12 oz) Cool Whip, thawed

1 prepared chocolate cookie crumb crust (6 oz)

Add milk to large bowl. Using wire whisk, add and fully incorporate pudding mix until mixture has thickened (about 1 minute). Fold in 3 & ½ cups Cool Whip until filling is uniform color. Spoon and spread filling evenly into cookie crust. Place pie in fridge for 4 hours. When pie has set, garnish with remaining Cool Whip. You can also garnish with grated chocolate or crushed oreo cookies if desired. Store leftovers in the fridge. SERVES 6.



SIS'S SWEET POTATO PIE

“I don’t measure any of this.”

When we talked with Sis Stradwick about foods she makes for Thanksgiving (p.87), she easily rattled off this recipe for sweet potato pie:

“I love sweet potato pie. I just get yams or sweet potatoes, I wash ‘em off, oil ‘em, put ‘em in the oven [at 350°F] and you’ll know when those are done. You have to make sure they’re done, so stick a fork down – otherwise when it’s time to mash ‘em, you’ll have the lumps in ‘em. And I used to, years ago, boil my yams, but that takes out some of the flavors, so now I bake them. Plus when you bake them, you let them cool and the skin just falls off.”

Once you’ve removed the potato skins and mashed them, add to a bowl with butter, eggs, vanilla, brown sugar, and evaporated milk. “And like I said, I don’t measure any of this. You can just taste it once you blend all that. You want it smooth. You don’t want it watery. You put it in a pie crust. You don’t want the filling to be all the way to the rim of the crust. They kind of swell up and you don’t want to be messing up your oven. I’ll usually use six big yams and that’ll make three or four pies.”

MEMAW’S BAKED APPLES

“It depended on how much you were making, how much you had.”

Victoria and Lisa White’s baked apple recipe comes from Lisa’s grandmother, Pauline Hicks, who they call Memaw. We sat with them in downtown Wheeling at the Public Market (where Victoria works as the Vendor Manager), admired the old family photographs they shared with us, and listened to their stories about Memaw and years of family gatherings in her beloved house.

Victoria and Lisa like to use apples from their family farm, Old Fairview Farm, at least when they're in season. "It's a simple thing, and everybody loves it," Lisa told us. "We as the adults hardly ever got any because the kids would fight over it."



"We don't have any written recipes, because that's not really how she rolled," Victoria added. "Everything was always, a handful of this, a pinch of that."

Peel and slice your apples into quarters – firmer apples will take longer and hold up better for cooking, but any apple will work. Place in shallow pan with enough corn syrup to cover the bottom of the pan. Add cinnamon. Simmer apples on low for 10-15 minutes until fork-tender. Remove from heat, cover, and let stand for 5 minutes before serving. Cooking time will vary depending on the apples used.

Apples
Corn syrup
1 tsp-1 tbsp cinnamon

"DIRT" DESSERT



Like Maria Miller's pepperoni rolls (*p.50*), this treat was created one slow winter morning at Neely's Grocery, when Maria decided to make a new recipe with what was around.

MARIA: "This recipe can be adapted and made new over and over again by swapping out pudding and/or cookie flavors. Chocolate pudding instead of vanilla works great with the traditional recipe for chocoholics. Another tasty twist substitutes banana pudding, Nutter Butter cookies, and gummy sharks for a sandy beach effect. Take this recipe and make it your own!"

1 container Cool Whip (8 oz)
1 package Oreos (13 oz)
1 box instant vanilla pudding
2 cups milk
1 package gummy worms

Prepare pudding as directed, combining package contents with milk. Set pudding aside to thicken. Crush Oreos finely with food processor. Alternatively, empty cookies into a large zipper bag and crush with a rolling pin.

To assemble, open Cool Whip and divide evenly into six bowls or containers, spreading in a thick layer across the bottom of each one. Give thickened pudding a good mix, then gently divide evenly into containers, creating a layer above the Cool Whip. Sprinkle crushed Oreos on top of pudding layer. Finish each dish by topping it with a gummy worm or two. Indulge immediately or cover and store in a refrigerator for later.

BUDIN (Puerto Rican Bread Pudding)

As Sina Díaz told us, this isn't your typical American bread pudding. While the texture and concept are similar to a typical American bread pudding, the method – creating a spice tea and a caramel base – is unique to this Puerto Rican dish. "It's something I grew up eating. For whatever reason Puerto Ricans say *budin*. Like you would think pudding, but no. 'Cause we're special. We are a special people." Sina prefers the dish chilled but would also eat it warm with vanilla bean ice cream.

1 cup water
2 cinnamon sticks
15 whole cloves
1 tsp anise seed
2 cups sugar



FOR SPICE TEA: Bring water to boil. Add spices. Let steep 15 minutes. Pour through sieve and set aside.



FOR CARAMEL BASE: Combine 1/2 cup sugar and 2 tbsp water in saucepan over medium-high heat. Stir to dissolve. Heat until boiling, then lower heat. Swirl pan gently to redistribute sugar as caramel darkens. Cook until sugar turns light golden brown, then pour into buttered 9" x 5" loaf pan. Set aside and allow caramel to harden.

1 loaf stale bread, cubed	1/2 tsp kosher salt
1/4 cup butter, melted	1/2 tsp cinnamon
4 large eggs	1/2 tsp ground ginger
2 cans evaporated milk (12 oz)	1/4 tsp ground nutmeg
1 can condensed milk (14 oz)	1/4 cup raisins (dark or golden)
1/3 cup sugar	Butter to grease pan
1 tsp vanilla extract	

FOR PUDDING: Combine all ingredients except bread, and mix well, then add spice tea. Add bread and thoroughly coat.

TO COMBINE: Once caramel hardens, pour pudding mixture into pan overtop. Prepare a "Bain Marie": Line a roasting pan with a damp kitchen towel, nestle loaf pan atop kitchen towel, and place assemblage into preheated oven (350°F). Fill roasting pan with boiling water to reach halfway up sides of loaf pan. Bake uncovered until toothpick comes out clean, about 1 hour 15 minutes. Cool in pan for another hour, then refrigerate until cold (2 hours or more).

"FROG EYE" SALAD

ANDREW MULL: "Me and my brothers have certain recipes that we'll steal from our parents. Here's something I've never seen since I was a kid. It's Cool Whip, with that pasta that's just like those little balls. Pasta balls inside a Cool Whip kind of mixture, with mandarin oranges and some other fruit."

SALLY MULL, Andrew's mom: "This is such a refreshing side dish that goes a long way. I use this recipe every holiday and most every time one of my boys comes home to visit. It is a much loved recipe. When someone comes to one of our gatherings and they have never

tried it, I force – I mean, encourage them to try it! And more often than not, they love it."

1 cup sugar
2 tbsp flour
2 & 1/2 tsp salt (to split)
2 eggs, beaten
1 & 3/4 cup pineapple juice, from cans
2 cans pineapple chunks, drained
20 oz crushed pineapple, drained
A little lemon juice



1 package Acini de Pepe pasta (16 oz)
3 cans mandarin oranges, drained
1 container Cool Whip (16 oz)

Combine sugar, flour, and half tsp salt in saucepan. Gradually stir in pineapple juice and eggs. Cook until thickened. Add lemon juice and cool. At the same time, cook pasta with remaining salt. Drain and rinse with cool water. Combine egg mixture, crushed pineapple, and pasta. Chill overnight (or at least several hours). Add remaining ingredients. Re-chill thoroughly. Enjoy!

PRETZEL SALAD

"Mine never turned out like hers."

While talking to Lil and Adam Payne, we had the joy of watching them connect over a food they'd both experienced: Adam's grandma's pretzel salad. Through our conversation, Lil learned the secret that kept her from ever making it as good as the original.

LIL: "Kathy's mom, Bonnie Rine, she always made that strawberry dessert with the pretzel. That's a good one. She always brought that wherever we were. It was a good recipe. I had it but mine never turned out like hers."

ADAM: "That one is hard to duplicate – it never turned out the same because she would get the strawberries from Dairy Queen. Secretly, apparently she would order eight strawberry sundaes and be like, 'Can you have the strawberries be separate?' And then just put all the ice cream in the freezer and use all the strawberries."

LIL: “I never knew it was from the Dairy Queen.”

ADAM, to us: “It’s called ‘pretzel salad,’ which is funny, because it’s not a salad, it’s one of those ones. It’s like pretzels and melted butter together to make the crust.”

LIL: “Yeah, just to make it solid in there, I guess.”

6 oz strawberry Jell-O	8 oz cream cheese, softened
2 cups boiling water	½ cup granulated sugar
2 & ½ cups salted pretzels (measured before crushing)	8 oz Cool Whip
8 tbsp unsalted butter	1 lb fresh strawberries (hulled and sliced)
¼ cup granulated sugar	

PREPARE JELL-O: Preheat oven to 350°F. Combine strawberry Jell-O with 2 cups boiling water, and stir until completely dissolved. Set aside to cool to room temperature.

FOR FIRST LAYER: Crush pretzels. Melt butter in medium saucepan, then add quarter cup sugar and stir. Mix in crushed pretzels. Transfer to a 9” x 13” glass casserole dish, pressing pretzel mix evenly over the bottom of dish. Bake 10 minutes at 350°F, then let cool to room temperature.

FOR SECOND LAYER: Use electric hand mixer to beat cream cheese and half cup sugar on med/high speed until fluffy and white. Fold in Cool Whip until no streaks of cream cheese remain. Spread mixture over cooled pretzels, spreading to edges of the dish to create a tight seal. Refrigerate 30 minutes.

FOR THIRD LAYER: Stir strawberries (hulled & sliced) into room-temp Jell-O. Pour and spread strawberry Jell-O mixture evenly over cooled cream cheese layer and refrigerate until Jell-O sets (2-4 hours).



This recipe is adopted from Natasha’s Kitchen, a cooking blog shared by Adam for our reference. His relatives said it is nearly identical to their handwritten version.



COOKIE TABLES:



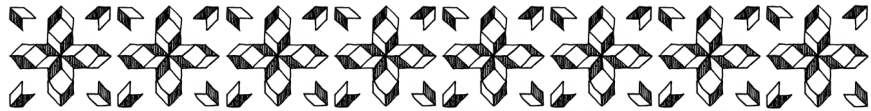
A Regional Wedding Specialty

Where pepperoni rolls (p.52) connect Wheeling to our state’s broader heritage, cookie tables connect Wheeling (and other parts of West Virginia’s northern panhandle) to regions outside the state: Pittsburgh (PA), Youngstown (OH), and the surrounding areas in Western Pennsylvania and Eastern Ohio.

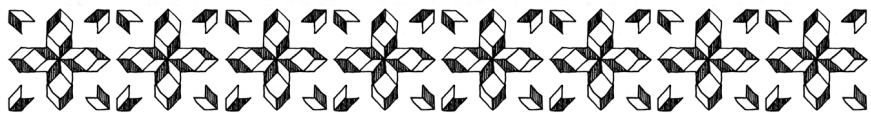
A tradition with roots in Italian immigrant communities, cookie tables are a regional wedding feature in which a large table, covered with an array of cookies, is offered in addition to a cake, with cookies being contributed by family, friends, or community members. Some of the most prolific bakers among our contributors mentioned the tradition in passing or in detail. Renel Hemmerling, who is originally from New York State, learned of this local tradition when coworkers and friends began to request her cookies for weddings: “A lady I worked with, her daughter’s getting married here, and they’re doing a cookie table. And so she asked if I would do up three dozen cookies for this cookie table.” Lori Nicholson also mentioned that occasionally she’ll be asked to bake cookies for weddings by family and friends. And Brandi Rose used several recipes from her grandma Nina’s cookbook for the cookie table at her recent wedding.

Many folks noted cookies that make them feel connected to family, loved ones, and community here in Wheeling. Although we can’t feature every single one, we are glad to present this final smattering of treasured recipes. Keep an eye out – they might very well be featured at a cookie table near you.





COOKIES



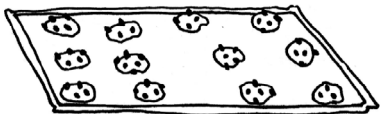
GRANDMA LIL'S CHOCOLATE CHIP COOKIES

When we visited Lillian “Lil” Payne and her grandson, Adam Payne, at Lil’s home in Edgewood, Lil got us straight to work. She was more than happy to take on a jovial advisory role while us kids baked.

Lillian remarked on the many cooks in the kitchen (“Oh my god, I didn’t know it took a village”) as she explained how her chocolate chip cookie recipe was created: “My sister really started with the recipe, and she changed the recipe on the chocolate chip bag to increase the flour a little bit, so it makes ‘em a little bit different than most.”

This chocolate chip recipe has become iconic within the Payne family and beyond. Lil bakes them regularly, averaging once a week, and stores them in the freezer so they’re ready for anyone who may come by. Lil’s family also had the recipe emblazoned on matching plates and gifted through the family.

“They’re kind of a constant with the family,” Adam told us. “They’re also at life events. Positive and negative. They’re always at funerals, always at weddings. I just think they’re an iconic part of my family, but they’ve also since extended into our greater family and friend circle.”



Grandson Adam Payne and grandmother Lillian “Lil” Payne on Lil’s porch

Growing up, Adam attended St. Michael’s Parish School, whose playground was across from Lil’s house. “At St Mike’s, literally at recess sometimes [we] would just scream, ‘Grandmaaaa!’ and she would come across the street and give cookies to me and all of my friends.”

<i>½ cup Crisco</i>	<i>2 tsp vanilla</i>
<i>1 & ½ cup white sugar</i>	<i>2 tsp baking soda</i>
<i>1 & ½ cup brown sugar</i>	<i>4 & ½ cup flour</i>
<i>4 eggs</i>	<i>2 cups Nestle chocolate chips</i>

Preheat oven to 350°F. Mix all ingredients except chocolate chips using a stand or hand-mixer. Fold in chocolate chips using a spatula. Scoop up tablespoon rounds by hand and place on a greased cookie tray. Lil usually tests a small batch first to make sure they rise okay. Bake 8-10 minutes. Set out on counter to cool; press a few extra chocolate chips into each cookie to give it a nice look! SERVES: “ALL.”



Good for 'Cookie Lil'!

Editor, News-Register:

With all that is going on today, I would like to tell you about a special person who makes life better in our area. Her name is Lillian Payne. I call her "Cookie Lil."

She is a widow with married children. She loves to cook and bake. She will call her children and say, "I have a meal today. Would you like to join me?" They come with joy and love to her table. My, what a mom!

Almost every day she bakes cookies to give away. Who to? Her friends, the ill, the elderly, the needy, nursing home friends, except now nursing homes will not accept "Cookie Lil" because of the the "virus." She will be back when the doors open.

Catholic Charities has received bakery goods from her, to their delight. "Cookie Lil" is there for everyone. She brings joy, love and cookies to all.

Watch! One day you may open your door and there will be "Cookie Lil."

A dear friend,

**Molly Blazek
Bellaire**

Lil's cookies were shared so widely that one of her friends, Molly, published a newspaper article about them, believing that they deserved wider recognition. Molly and Lil have played cards together for many years. "We've got a club, the name of our club is C-R-S, Can't Remember Shit, because none of us remember anything. We used to play cards, and we played games with ten cards, then they said they couldn't hold the cards. So they took it down to a game with five cards. But then they said, let's forget the cards and just sit and talk. It's been a great club and we've all been together for many situations. And I was so surprised when she put that in the paper."



1. Once cookie dough is mixed, Lil uses her hands to pull out cookie rounds that are just the right size, placing them about an inch apart on her baking sheet.



2. As soon as warm cookies came out of the oven and were cooling on the countertop, Lil had Emma and Adam artfully add more chocolate chips, an extra touch that is crucial to her recipe.



3. Finished chocolate chip cookies – still warm – at Lil's kitchen table.

BUCKEYES

These treats are named for the state nut of Ohio, a chestnut called a “buckeye.” The buckeye has been widely popularized because of its anthropomorphised role as the mascot of the Ohio State University, Brutus. Lots of people know about Buckeyes, but Emma – who came to Wheeling from the far-off lands of the Northeast – did not.

Lil, Adam, and Corbin (who came to Wheeling from the far-off lands of Ohio) were all astounded to learn of Emma’s ignorance, and Lil did us the honor of explaining what her dessert version of “Buckeyes” is: “It’s just like peanut butter and you roll em and you dip those in chocolate and you call them Buckeyes and you put those in the freezer and they get hard. They’re really good.”

1 cup butter or margarine
2 cups peanut butter

1 to 1 & ½ lbs powdered sugar
Melted chocolate

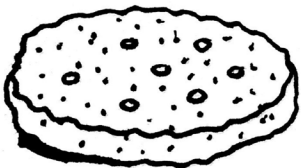
Cream together butter or margarine and peanut butter. Add powdered sugar. Chill until firm. Roll into small balls and place on baking sheet. Dip in melted chocolate. Store in freezer until ready to serve.

RITZ CRACKER COOKIES

*“They’re delicious. And it takes hardly any time to do them.
They’re really good.”*

“Ritz cracker cookies, those are good. You like those?” Lil asked her grandson Adam, as we sat with the two in Lil’s kitchen.

LIL: “They’re very simple. You take a Ritz cracker and put peanut butter on it, put a lid on it [here, Adam clarified that by a ‘lid’, Lil means you put another Ritz cracker on top]. Take chocolate and you melt it. After you have the cracker with the peanut butter lid on it, you dip it in that [chocolate] and put it on wax paper and that hardens.”



Lillian “Lil” Payne shows us her printed recipe for Heath Bar Cookies.

HEATH BAR COOKIES

“They’re one of my favorites, it’s just a different taste and I like a lot of nuts.”

When asked about which of her cookie recipes Lil enjoys most, she replied with this recipe. “I like the graham cracker ones, where’s that one? I call ‘em Heath Bar cookies. Everybody likes those. You can use walnuts or pecans. Usually I do walnuts, ‘cause they’re cheaper. Keebler crackers are the best graham cracker, but you can use Kroger’s, they’re the other ones. And a large [Hershey’s] Symphony bar.”

1 cup butter, melted
½ cup sugar
1 tsp vanilla
1 cup chopped walnuts or pecans

1 pkg graham crackers (Keebler)
1 lg milk chocolate bar (Hershey’s
Symphony)

In a saucepan, melt butter, add sugar, and bring to boil. Boil 2 minutes. Remove from heat and add vanilla and nuts. Line crackers on cookie sheet (40 individual crackers). Pour butter mixture over all crackers. Bake at 350°F for 8 minutes. Let set 1 minute. Remove onto clean surface quickly. Melt chocolate bar in microwave (1 and a half minutes). Top each graham cracker with a strip of chocolate.

ITALIAN COOKIES

Lori Nicholson often bakes cookie platters for weddings and people's events. "I just started baking, and then I was like, 'Oh, I can do this.' My daughter's friends would ask if I could make cookies for their special events. I do it because I like to bake. I've done cookie trays for graduation parties, at Christmas time. One year I did 56 dozen cookies in probably two weeks, just for Christmas."

When we asked Lori about her cookies, she mentioned her grandma, her Nonni Parisi. Every Christmas "my Nonni would make her Italian cookies that only she can make. When I first started making these cookies, they didn't taste anything like hers. I made 'em, but they just didn't taste like I remembered." Lori still isn't sure what she's doing differently, but she's committed to figuring it out.

2 eggs	2 cups all purpose flour
6 tbsp vegetable oil	2 tsp baking powder
½ cup sugar	1 pinch salt
1 tsp almond, anise, or vanilla extract	

FOR COOKIES: Whisk together eggs, oil, sugar, and extract in a mixing bowl. Stir in flour, baking powder, and salt. Roll dough by tablespoonfuls into balls. Chill balls of dough for at least an hour, or freeze for 15-20 minutes. Place cold dough balls on cookie sheets lined with parchment paper. Bake at 350°F for about 9 minutes, or 'til the tops are set. Bottoms will be lightly browned, but tops should still be white. Remove cookies to cooling racks and cool completely.

2 cups powdered sugar	3-4 tbsp cream or milk, warmed
1 tsp almond or vanilla extract	Sprinkles (round)
1 pinch salt	

FOR ICING: Combine all ingredients in a small bowl and whisk 'til smooth, adding enough warm cream to get a thin but creamy consistency. Dip tops of the cookies in glaze, then top with sprinkles if desired. **MAKES ABOUT 30 COOKIES.**

Lori speaks about her Italian family's other Christmastime food traditions back on page 53.

RICH CHOCOLATE TEAS

"They bring the warmth, you know?"

This recipe from Laura Oswalt is a family specialty: a "not-so-traditional Christmas cookie" called "rich chocolate teas." "We call 'em that just because they're so small. They're not a regular cookie. I feel like they're more of a tea time cookie. They're all chocolate with a little frosting."

Different folks in Laura's family all make this recipe, and everyone's cookies are unique. "I feel like my grandma made them a certain way. And then my Aunt Sally makes them a certain way, but they never taste quite the same. And then I make them a certain way, but they don't match my mom's version, which are more like my grandma's – they're more tiny and bite-sized. When I make them, I feel like they spread too much on the pan and are lighter in color. And it's the same recipe! Everybody uses that same recipe, and I am not kidding, they're different, with every person making them."

"They always taste good," Laura continued. "But it's hard because when you try to replicate something, it's just never the same as when that person did it. So when I make them, it's always like, 'Is this like the texture of Granny's? Is this the same size?' Or, 'Oh I need to adjust this so they match better to how she made them.'"

½ cup butter	2 tbsp milk
1 cup sugar	2 cups cake flour
1 egg	½ tsp salt
½ tsp vanilla	2 oz bitter chocolate (melted)

Mix and roll ingredients into small balls (approx. 30), then bake at 350°F for 7 minutes. Ice with melted butter and powdered sugar.





CHRISTMAS COOKIES IN NOVEMBER



“I cooked with my grandmother and helped her. Oh, it was wonderful. She started baking her cookies in November. As a teenager and as a young adult, I’d go and I’d help her. It was a special time to be together to make those cookies.”

Pat Jeffers is a twelfth-generation West Virginian who grew up in Wheeling and moved back to the city after retiring. Of all of Pat’s many Wheeling relatives, the two she spoke most about were her Nanny (on her father’s side), Elizabeth Beans Clark, and her mom, Anne Clark.

“I learned to cook with both of them,” Pat told us. “I come from a bunch of good cooks, all of whom were better than I am, but I inherited their joy in making good meals. What I most want to share with you is my grandmother’s Christmas cookie recipes.”

Pat’s Nanny would bake Christmas cookies starting at Thanksgiving. She would make tins that were this big around,” Pat told us, holding her elbows to form a circle, “and she’d give those to everybody. Family, friends, all the children, children-in-law, cousins, everybody got a tin like that. Each one’d probably have six to eight dozen. Maybe for people who were less close, she’d give a smaller tin. That’s still a lot of cookies. I mean, I make one batch and I’m tired.”

“And then the part that I really am tickled about is, as she got older – and she lived to be 97 – probably in her 80’s, she said, ‘I can’t do this anymore. Everybody tell me what your favorite is, and I’ll just make those.’ Well, everybody had a different favorite. She was still making almost as many as before! But she still did it. She just baked all day.”

Pat’s been collecting recipes for almost her whole life, “since I was a young adult. In fact, somebody had a wedding shower for me, and asked people to please bring a recipe in addition to a gift. About 53 years that’s been. I’ve copied over a lot.” Now, Pat has made the effort to pass on her favorite recipes to her grand-

kids. What follows are some of these recipes.



Four generations of women bakers: Pat’s Nanny – Elizabeth Beans Clark, her father’s mother – Pat, Pat’s mother, Anne Clark, and Pat’s two daughters, Anne and Elizabeth Jeffers, baking cookies at Elizabeth’s house. This photograph was published in the Wheeling News-Register and The Intelligencer in 1986.

NANNY’S MARBLES

“I like these because they’re just sweet and scone-tasting. I just always liked these the best,” Pat told us. “They make me think of my grandmother.”

2 cups butter (“Don’t use margarine!”)	8 tbsp powdered sugar
4 cups flour	2 cups chopped pecans
1 tsp baking powder	½-1 tsp vanilla

“Pat’s favorite.” Mix as pie dough. Roll into small balls. Bake 10-15 minutes at 300°F till slightly golden on bottom. Cool slightly. Roll in powdered sugar while warm. MAKES 11-12 DOZEN.

NANNY'S SCANDINAVIAN COOKIES

PAT JEFFERS: "These cookies have a buttery dough, not too strong a flavor. So you roll the dough into a ball, then roll it in egg whites, and roll it in chopped up nuts. Put it on your cookie sheet, push it down, and put a half a candied cherry in the center. They look very pretty."



Pat Jeffers

Notably, this recipe calls for sifted flour. As Pat reminisced about her grandmother's house, she told us about how the original cabinets had a flour sifter built into the woodwork: "You'd turn the handle, and it'd sift the flour. You put a bowl underneath to catch it."

½ cup butter or margarine
¼ cup brown sugar
1 egg (separated)
1 cup sifted flour

½ cup nuts (finely chopped)
Red & green candied cherries; cut in half

Cream butter, blend in sugar. Add egg yolk (beating until light). Blend in flour. Roll dough into small balls (1" diameter). Dip in egg white, roll in chopped nuts. Place on cookie sheet. Make slight indentation in centers and put a cherry half in each. Bake 5 minutes at 300°F, then remove and press down centers. Bake 15 minutes longer. Cool.

DOUBLE BATCH MAKES 6 DOZEN.



NANNY'S RUM BALLS

PAT JEFFERS: "I have a specific memory of the rum balls [Nanny] would make. They'd have powdered sugar frosting on them. She made the cookies small because they looked fancier. And they had rum in them, and tasted of rum, and every year as a kid I would say, 'Oooh!' And I'd take

one, 'cause I'd forget, and I always hated them. I still hate them! Still don't like the taste of rum. If it were a cocktail I might drink it, but not a cookie."

1 & ½ cup pecans
3 cups vanilla wafers
1 cup confectioner's sugar
3 tbsp white corn syrup

3 tbsp cocoa powder
½ cup rum, or enough to bind mixture

Grind nuts and wafers together in food processor or blender. Blend with remaining ingredients, adding rum a little at a time until mixture just holds. Form into small balls and refrigerate. Dust with more cocoa.



COOKIES WHILE YOU SLEEP

"Put it in the oven, turn off the heat, and go to bed!"

These are lovely meringue cookies that cook in the oven as they cool. The original typed up recipe is decorated with a cute winter scene and reads "Merry Christmas from Pitter Pat!" ("Pitter Pat" is Pat's granddaughter, who was named for her and is a senior at Wheeling Park High School, at the time of writing).

2 egg whites
Pinch of salt
2/3 cup sugar

½ tsp almond extract
1 tsp vanilla extract
1 cup chocolate chips (optional)

Beat egg whites until frothy. Add salt and beat until stiff. Gradually add sugar and beat until very thick. Add extracts. Fold in chips. Line cookie sheet with foil. Drop mixture. Put cookies in oven at 350°F. Close door tightly and turn OFF heat. GO TO BED!





THE STONE & THOMAS TEAROOM



Various contributors reflected on different local institutions that are linked to their memories around food in Wheeling. To our surprise and delight, one that emerged was Stone & Thomas, a department store founded in Wheeling in 1847. Located on Market Plaza across the street from the Capitol Theatre, Stone & Thomas supplied residents with clothing and home goods before the company was sold in 1998. At its face, a department store may seem a strange place to have strong memories of food, until you learn that Stone & Thomas' retail store featured a popular tearoom in the basement.

Lillian "Lil" Payne worked at the soda fountain in the drugstore across from the store, and she recounted how everyday, the Tearoom would be "filled with people" and that her soda fountain seemed to get business from the folks who wanted a change of pace. Pat Jeffers and Lori Nicholson also reminisced on shopping at Stone & Thomas:

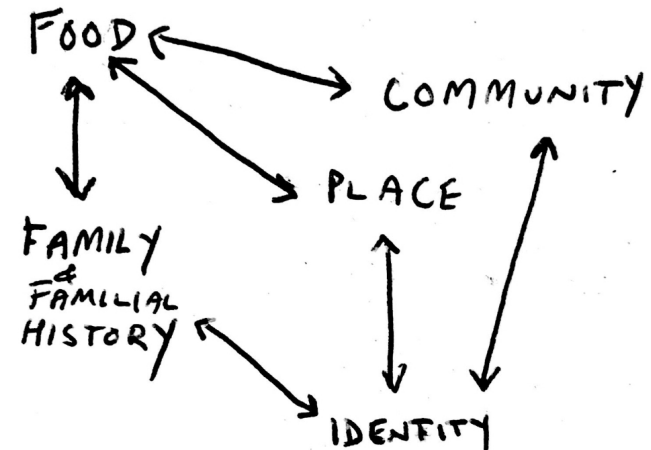
LORI NICHOLSON: "Me and my friends would go shopping in town [at Stone & Thomas]. And then we would always go to the Tearoom and have lunch there"

PAT JEFFERS: "It was wonderful. It was *the* place to go. I still have [their boxes]. I'd tape the corners to save them. They had a Tearoom in the basement – you would walk in from the Market Plaza doors."

Both Lori and Pat remembered one particular Tearoom offering vividly, which Pat described to us in detail. "My favorite thing there was Mickey Mouse Sundae. A scoop of ice cream, two Oreo cookies stuck in for the ears, and then – I forget but – chocolate chips, maybe, for the face. This was a super treat for kids to get. When we'd come to shop, that was a reward for me and my brother Nate for behaving."

While the Stone & Thomas Tearoom is no longer around for us to visit, these authors encourage you to try your own hand at a Mickey

Mouse Sundae or enjoy a cup of tea to treat yourself after a long day, perhaps even a long day of shopping.



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WHO WE ARE

An AmeriCorps volunteer on the Grow Ohio Valley Education team, Emma is passionate about transformative environmental and food systems work that cultivates a sense of place and belonging. She moved to East Wheeling in June of 2023 from Massachusetts, seeking to explore the city where her mom’s father grew up and where many of her relatives still reside. She has quickly fallen in love with Wheeling and has a particular fondness for the hills that embrace the city and the wonderful people she has gotten to know here. As this book’s creator, Emma directed and carried out each phase of the project: articulating a vision for a locally-sourced cookbook, conducting background research, grant-writing, recruiting contributors, interviewing and logistics, transcription, writing, editing, incorporating contributor feedback, and proofreading the final manuscript. She also is responsible for the book’s layout, formatting, illustration, and hand-written section headings, as well as portions of the book’s collaborative cover.



Emma Rose Goldenthal

Many people’s support made this book possible. In addition to those mentioned in the acknowledgements, Emma wishes to thank her amazing cookbook collaborator Corbin for all their work to make this book a reality. She also thanks her parents Lori & Bill, her sister Tess, her partner Luke, her extended family (in Wheeling and elsewhere), and her friends and loved ones for cheering this project on <3

If you have questions about this project, Emma can be reached via email at emma.g4r8@gmail.com.



Corbin T Lanker

An affinity for the farmers Corbin has known – their good work, their comradery – brought Corbin from Ohio to Wheeling, where they currently serve as the Assistant Education Manager at Grow Ohio Valley. Their zeal for engaging with the earth, working with kids, communicating stories, and sharing food form the foundation of the work Corbin pursues. Corbin is enamored with the home they’ve found in Wheeling. They are thankful for all the people they’ve come to

know here – their kindness, their patience, their excitement – all deserve praise. Corbin has relished contributing to this project and attempting to embody the wonderful city they know. On this project, Corbin assisted in planning, marketing, interviewing, writing, editing, and illustrating the cookbook. They also co-designed and block-printed the cover and served as the book’s photographer. Corbin thanks Niagara Falls and the ocean for having such spectacular beauty so as to elude their young hands’ disposable camera. Corbin also thanks their parents, Terry & Tom, and their siblings for teaching them the ways of this world and how to have a patient heart. Finally, Corbin has immense appreciation for Emma’s hard work to birth this cookbook into reality – without her, this cookbook and all the joy of making it would not exist. Thank you all.



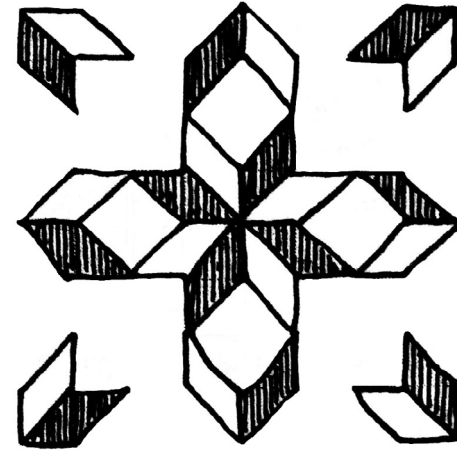
GROW
OHIO
VALLEY

Grow Ohio Valley is a food and farming nonprofit organization based in Wheeling, West Virginia. Grown out of an after-school urban gardening program in our East Wheeling neighborhood, GrowOV now supports dozens of full time jobs in our area in addition to building a network of small farmers and food businesses. The heart of our work is community, and food is the thread that weaves it all together. We envision our community with a strong, locally-owned food system where farmers flourish and local food is a way of life.

Our work is driven by the principle of food sovereignty, which Via Campesina describes as “*the right of people everywhere to produce food locally and sustainably through agro-ecological methods that respect the climatic, cultural and geographical context of each region.*” It places *us* at the heart of food systems, instead of powerful corporations, by building on the principles of solidarity, collectivity and social justice.”

Since its founding in 2014, Grow Ohio Valley has been a model for food systems development through its main initiatives: food production on urban and field-scale plots, aggregation and producer support, and community outreach and education. We work toward our mission of achieving regional food sovereignty through collaboration at all levels – increasing access to the healthy foods our community desires, supporting the local businesses that can provide it, and equipping our community with the tools and support that they need to grow and consume nourishing food right where they live.

To learn more about Grow Ohio Valley, visit our website at growov.org

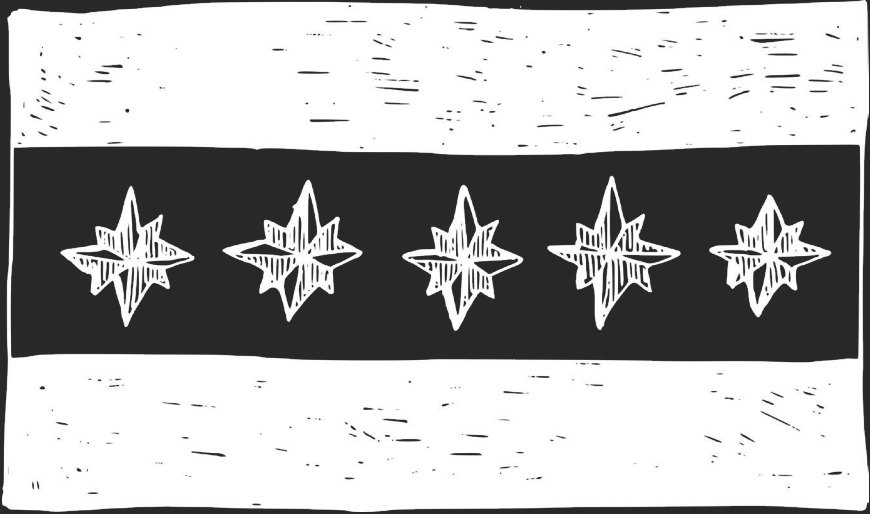
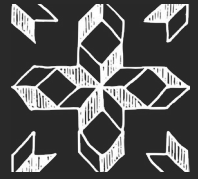


This cookbook features imagery based on the West Virginia State Quilt Block, as designated by the American Quilter's Society.

THANKS FOR READING!



*Recipes & stories compiled by
Emma Rose Goldenthal
with Corbin T Lanker*



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