



She Put *Love* Into Everything She Made

Your testimonials that Mama's cooking is always the best

Rolling in the dough

Martha Holland, my 92-year-old mother, (pictured above) is a wonderful cook. She is rolling out dough for our favorite meal, chicken and dumplings. She has passed her talent down to her five daughters who can make them *almost* as good.

Over time a culture's unique ways of talking or living will evolve and can eventually become watered down, even lost. But it has been said that the last thing to go, the one thing that persists through generations, is food. Our tastes, our favorite dishes, our warm memories of Mama's cooking stick with us.

Talented and experienced cooks across North Carolina can add a pinch and a dash to make a simple dish shine. About half of you gave equal credit to the love with which the dish was made. A word to the wise from many who wrote: Ask your mother or your grandmother how she makes her signature dish today. It will never taste as good when you make it yourself, but maybe that's not the most important thing.

Kim Whorton Tripp, Contributing Editor

Clara Flinehum
Carthage
Central EMC

More black-eye peas, please

I grew up in a single-parent home and times were rough. My father chose to be absent, and my mother struggled to support me and my two older brothers.

It was necessary to make meals stretch, and Mother was a master at stretching meals. The one food we all loved was dried black-eye peas. The first day Mother would have the peas cooked with

fatback, fried Irish potatoes with onions and cornbread. The second day Mother would have fried black-eye pea patties, polk salad with eggs and onions and fried fatback. And if any peas were left, Mother would make black-eye peas mixed with macaroni, mayonnaise and sweet pickle relish.

I think what made Mama's cooking the best was all the love she put into everything she cooked. That's the one ingredient we all crave, but money can't buy.

Geraldine Melvin
Parkton
Lumbee River EMC

Peas
2 pound bag of dried black-eye peas

Fatback for seasoning
Salt to taste

Inspect peas for foreign material and bad peas. Wash peas and place in enough water to cover with about three fingers more water. Add fatback, and bring to a boil. Lower heat to medium. Add salt to taste. Add water as needed. Cook until done.

Black-Eye Pea Patties
1 cup of cold, cooked black-eye peas

1 1/2 cups self-rising flour
1/4 cup chopped onions or more (I love onions, so I use 1/2 cup)

4 tablespoons water or enough to make stiff batter

Mix with spoon and drop into hot oil in old cast iron frying pan. Brown on one side and then on the other.

Black-Eye Pea and Macaroni Salad

1/2 cup cold black-eye peas

1 pound package elbow macaroni cooked and cooled

2 tablespoons sweet pickle relish

1/4 cup mayonnaise

1/4 cup chopped green bell peppers

1/4 cup chopped celery

Mix and serve on lettuce leaves.

Thanks to everyone who submitted stories. More testimonials of Mama's cooking are available online at www.carolinacountry.com. Next month: something you learned about your grandparents. (Deadline was Oct. 15). See more themes and rules of our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series on page 18.



Shoebox lunch

My parents are Bill and Lucille Jones. I was raised in Engelhard. Now, Mama can cook EVERYTHING, but what are most vivid in my memories are the times when we kids would take a class trip and need to take a “box” lunch. Well, there were five of us kids, and Daddy got really sick with his heart when he was around 41, and you just couldn’t get help like people do now. So my Mama sacrificed a lot for us. She didn’t have a fancy lunch box (she used a shoebox and twine), no fancy plastic sandwich bags (she used waxed paper), no “store bought” sandwich ham, chips, cakes or things.

Mama would get up before daylight and boil one egg to make you a deviled egg. Boil one potato to make potato salad, with her famous homemade pickles. Make you a banana sandwich with mayonnaise, yes, mayonnaise. And fry you a couple of chicken legs. Nobody can fry chicken like Mama. Don’t forget the paper towels for napkins. All this was wrapped in wax paper. The egg halves were even held together with a toothpick so as not to stick to the paper, and then she packed all this with a generous helping of love and sacrifice into a shoebox. She tied it with twine and sent us on our way.

Now, kids being kids, we didn’t much appreciate the hard work back then because we wanted to be like the others and have the “fancy stuff.” But having two of my own children and five grandbabies, I understand where Mama was coming from. She did the best that she could by us. Mama is 77 years old now and has had some rough years with her health. But she is still called on to cook for the community bazaars, and we always have tons of family and friends for Thanksgiving and Christmas. (Chicken salad and rice soup, but that’s another story.)

*Sue Harper
Belhaven
Tideland EMC*

Mama worked hard for goodness cakes

The smell of cooking is truly the fragrance of my childhood. My mama was born in Stanly County in 1906—one of 12 children. Being the middle child, her job was to help her mother cook three hearty meals daily for the large farm family. She was only able to finish third grade, but was so wise in the ways of sustenance and survival.

Effie Hathcock and Hauty Eudy married in 1922 and could not have children. They adopted me in 1948 when they were 41 and 48 years old. Daddy worked in Cannon Mills and Mama took in sewing and baked for the public. Everybody in Kannapolis knew Miss Effie’s cakes, pies and home-cooked meals at church. She was one of the founding forces of the Cabarrus County Fair. She won hundreds of ribbons for her baking, canning and sewing. (The picture is a quilt and wall hanging I had made for her from just some of her first-place ribbons.)

At Christmas, Mama took orders for more than 200 cakes during the first three weeks in December—Italian Crème Cake, Fresh Green Coconut Cake, German Chocolate Cake, and Japanese Fruitcakes—as well as any other type of cake anyone wanted. She would have four mixers going at the same time while Daddy broke the fresh coconuts—draining them and grinding the sweet meat. My job was to answer the door when people came to pick up their cakes, take their \$1.50 or \$2 and be certain to say “thank you.”

Serving a meal for 500, 50 or five folks was Miss Effie’s joy. She catered weddings into her mid-80s. Food was her way of showing love. Miss Effie taught all around her that food not only sustains the body but also fills the soul.

*Melinda E. Ratchford
Belmont
Rutherford EMC*

Effie Eudy’s Italian Crème Cake Recipe
available online at www.carolinacountry.com



Mama’s spaghetti boy

Here is my son Ryland at 15 months old enjoying his mama’s homemade spaghetti. It’s one of his favorites, as you can clearly see.

*George, Kristin, Parker
and Ryland Brough
Wake Forest
Wake EMC*



Pie in your eye

Like most Southern women, I think my Mama's cooking is the best. My all-time favorite recipe that Mama (Carolyn Woolard) makes is chocolate pie. Everyone who tastes it also agrees that it is a delicacy beyond compare. She found the recipe about 40 years ago in a cookbook published by "Progressive Farmer." Thanksgivings and Christmases would not have been the same without that pie. Sometimes Granddaddy would not even bother to cut a piece. He'd just dig right in with his fork and wouldn't come up until the whole thing was gone!

Today, she makes them more often because, as you can see, my sons Landon, 6, and Matthew, 2, love them as well. But no matter how often Mama makes them, the family never tires of them. I'm sure generations to come will enjoy this recipe.

Elizabeth Adams
Bath
Tideland EMC

Chocolate Pie

3 tablespoons flour	2 cups milk
3 tablespoons cocoa	2 tablespoons butter
1 cup sugar	1 teaspoon vanilla
Pinch of salt	1 9-inch pastry shell, baked
2 egg yolks	Meringue

Mix flour, cocoa, sugar and salt. Stir in egg yolks; add milk. Cook in a double boiler until mixture is thick. Remove from heat. Add butter and vanilla. Pour into pastry shell and top with meringue. Bake for 12-15 minutes at 350 degrees.

Men and meatballs

I grew up in the suburbs where Mom worked as a bookkeeper. She never kept a garden, canned vegetables or baked much, but I'll match her cooking with anyone's. Gram lived with us, preparing most of the meals during the week, but on weekends the kitchen was Mom's domain. She loved to try different ethnic recipes, so for Italian guests she might serve scaloppini, for the Krauses it was sauerbraten. Therefore, when I invited my new boyfriend Row Carlson to dinner, she served Swedish meatballs. After 45 years of married bliss, these meatballs still have special persuasive properties for Row and me.

So when our oldest daughter called from college proclaiming she was making dinner for the man of her dreams, she wanted Grandma's Swedish Meatballs recipe. "They will bowl over this country boy!" she exclaimed, and I guess they did as they married the following year.

Grandma's Swedish Meatballs have proven to be real man pleasers for us city gals. I think it's the allspice!

Sandy Carlson
Edenton
Albemarle EMC

Grandma's Swedish Meatballs Recipe
available online at www.carolinacountry.com

Send us your best Earn \$50

Here are the themes in our "Nothing Could Be Finer" series. Send us your stories and pictures about these themes. If yours is chosen for publication, we'll send you \$50. You don't have to be the best writer. Just tell it from your heart.

January 2005

The Best Investment I Ever Made

What was it and why.

Deadline: Nov. 15

February 2005

Finally On My Own

Tell us about the first place you lived on your own. Send pictures.

Deadline: Dec. 15

March 2005

Whacky Plants

Pictures of strange-looking or unusual garden plants or produce?

Deadline: Jan. 15

April 2005

Road Trip Horror Stories

Where did you go and what happened? Send pictures.

Deadline: Feb. 15

May 2005

Safety Lessons

Accidents and mishaps that taught you a safety lesson.

Deadline: March 15

June 2005

On the Farm

The best things about growing up or living on a farm.

Deadline: April 15

July 2005

The First Meal I Ever Made

What was it and how did you like it?

Deadline: May 15

August 2005

What I Learned From My Kids

Sometimes children can teach grown-ups a thing or two.

Deadline: June 15

September 2005

Celebrity Look-alikes

Photos of people who are dead-ringers for someone famous. Digital ones must be 300 dpi and at least 4 by 6 inches.

Deadline: July 15

The Rules

1. Approximately 200 words or less.
2. Only one entry per household per month.
3. Photos are welcome. Digital photos must be 300 dpi and actual size.
4. E-mailed or typed, if possible. Otherwise, make it legible.
5. Include your name, electric co-op, mailing address and phone number.
6. If you want your entry returned, please include a self-addressed, stamped envelope. (We will not return others.)
7. We pay \$50 for each submission published. We retain reprint rights.
8. We will post on our Web site more entries than we publish, but can't pay for those submissions. (Let us know if you don't agree to this.)
9. Send to: Nothing Finer, Carolina Country, 3400 Sumner Blvd., Raleigh, NC 27616
Or by e-mail: carolina.country@ncemcs.com.
Or through the Web: www.carolinacountry.com