



QUEENS MEMORY:
A LIFE STORY CLUB
COOKBOOK



Life Story Club
Brooklyn, NY

www.lifestoryclub.org

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Queens Memory: A Life Story Club Cookbook is the culmination of an eight-week series hosted by Queens Memory, facilitated by Life Story Club, in the spring of 2022.

Queens Memory: A Life Story Club Cookbook

LIFE STORY CLUB

**QUEENS
MEMORY**

About Life Story Club

Life Story Club combats loneliness and social isolation by creating small social clubs for older adults to share life stories and easily build friendships. Participants become part of our community committed to meaningful socialization and legacy building.

Visit us at lifestoryclub.org for more information or to join a club.

About Queens Memory

Queens Memory is an ongoing community archiving program supported by Queens Public Library and Queens College, CUNY. We engage with Queens residents in our two-fold mission to (1) push local history collections out to the public through programming and online resources, and (2) pull new materials into our collections from the diverse communities of Queens. The goal is to raise awareness and a sense of ownership in the production of our shared historic record and our dream is that any Queens resident who visits these collections feels his/her experiences and perspective are represented.

TO A TALENTED GROUP OF
CHEFS AND STORYTELLERS.

"Food for us comes from our relatives, whether they have wings or fins or roots. That is how we consider food. Food has a culture. It has a history. It has a story. It has relationships."

- Winona LaDuke

"I realized very early the power of food to evoke memory, to bring people together, to transport you to other places, and I wanted to be a part of that."

- José Andrés

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Queens Memory Cookbook participants gathering for a virtual celebration on April 21, 2022

Queens Memory:
A Life Story Club
Cookbook

INTRODUCTION

The fifteen or so Older Adults that make up our Queens Memory Cookbook Life Story Club arrived that first Thursday afternoon with recipes in hand, hungry to share and to get started. While they didn't necessarily know each other coming in, and seemed to share vastly different backgrounds, it didn't take long for these storytellers to find commonalities and even form friendships, bonding over hard-to-find ingredients, dietary restrictions, and shared family traditions. Lisa Brodeth Carrick explains why she chose to include Varenyky (Ukrainian Pierogies) in this book saying that it's "a dish that binds people together," and that she likes that "the shapes don't have to be perfect... that you can be creative with it." From discussions about Sausage Gravy to Oto, for one hour each week, this group has been able to enjoy a timeless sort of space in which people can come together (over zoom!) and connect simply through a shared love of food, and family and stories. At Life Story Club we firmly believe that social connectivity is not just nice to have, but a public health necessity.

Initially, many in the group were particularly excited to share their own recipes, but that shifted almost immediately, with people becoming increasingly interested in learning

about each other's dishes. One Thursday, someone shared a story about a specific type of Plochman's mustard she remembered from childhood that she had been trying to track down for years. Later that same week, another member from the group had found the exact variety of mustard for her.

Food has the capacity to sustain us and can be a source of joy and comfort. It can also serve as a portal into peoples' lives— a way to share where we come from and who we are. As you'll discover when you read through this book, several people have chosen to include recipes that date back to countries and homes left long ago, while others have selected recipes that remind them of growing up right here in New York City – in Queens, or in the Bronx nearby. JJ Cohen explains, "My parents cooked this [salami and eggs] for my sister and for me and themselves. And they would serve it for either breakfast, lunch, or dinner. And it just reminds me of the old days being with my family." When JJ asked her sister, her cousin, and her husband what they remember eating as kids, they each said, "Salami and eggs."

We are so grateful to have had the opportunity to collaborate with the Queens Memory Project and honored to contribute to the shared historic record that Natalie and her team are amassing. We are also thrilled to be able to help connect and convene older adults in conversation and community, ensuring that their experiences and perspectives can become part of our collective story.

We hope you enjoy this collection of recipes and all the

stories within. Happy cooking, everyone!

- Life Story Club

FACILITATOR'S NOTE

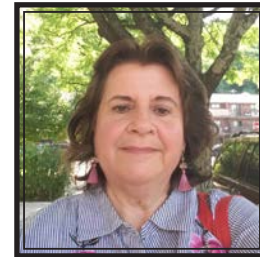
The following conversation was lightly edited from the transcript of the Life Story Club recording held on Zoom on Thursday, March 31, 2022 as part of the Queens Memory Cookbook series. At times words were added or changed for clarity. As a result the transcription may vary slightly from the original recording.

All of the participants gave permission for their stories to be published in this book.

SAVORY DISHES

Salami & Eggs / Broccoli, Asparagus & Eggs

JJ Cohen



JJ Cohen moved from the Bronx to Queens in 1986. She cooks every day. Her favorite foods are pizza and ice cream, and she lives with her husband, son, and cat.

This is basically a really easy recipe. And it's also a fast dish to make. I think the whole thing is done in 30 minutes or less. And there's only two or three ingredients: the salami, the eggs, and the oil. So I thought that would be great for a lot of people. And it's also economical.

And also, there's an alternative: a vegetarian version to the salami and eggs where you could use just egg or egg beaters. And you could use vegetables like asparagus and broccoli or any kind of bell pepper, mushrooms, onions, yum. Sounds good, right?

My parents, when I was growing up in the Bronx, cooked

this for my sister and for me and themselves. And they would serve it for either breakfast, lunch, or dinner. And it just reminds me of the old days being with my family. The funny thing is when I mentioned it to my sister, my cousin, and my husband, I asked the three of them, "What did our parents cook for us in the old days? What do you remember?" And all three of them said, "Salami and eggs." So what do we have in common? We're all from Eastern-European, Jewish families. And it seems to be a common dish for that ethnic group. I'm pretty sure that Ben's Deli in Bay Terrace has salami and eggs on their menu.

I made it when I was a teenager in the Bronx, and then when I first got married, I started to make it. And now I make this for my husband and my son. You know, you could pass it down from generation to generation and anyone can do it. I mean, the ingredients are easy to find, and, like I said, it's like, two-three ingredients. You can also top your eggs with ketchup or salsa.

One other thing: If you want to take the omelet, you could put it in a wrap. Or you could put it in a burrito. You could put it on an English muffin, or on white bread and you can have a sandwich. Be sure to add French fries. I always serve it with French fries. And today, I served it with a side salad. So you get the side salad, the omelet, the French fries, and that's a nice meal.



*Listen to
JJ's story here*

"I asked the three of them, 'What did our parents cook for us in the old days? What do you remember?' And all three of them said, 'Salami and eggs.'"



Salami & Eggs / Broccoli, Asparagus & Eggs

Recipe

Ingredients:

- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- 7 eggs
- Salami

Instructions

1. In your favorite skillet add one teaspoon of vegetable oil
2. Turn heat to low
3. In a bowl mix 7 large eggs with a fork or whisk
4. Slice salami into bite-sized cubes or wedges
5. Place salami into a skillet. Let it cook until it starts getting crispy
6. Drain off any fat from the pan
7. Add your 7 large eggs to cover the salami
8. Let salami and eggs cook for a minute
9. Use a spatula to cut the omelet into 3 portions. Then turn each portion over in the pan so both sides of the omelet cook
10. When cooked the way you like it, remove the omelet from the pan
11. Place the portion on the plate. Add ketchup or salsa or mustard on top of the salami and eggs

Broccoli, Asparagus & Eggs

(Vegetarian Alternative)

Recipe

Ingredients:

- 1 head of broccoli
- 1 package of asparagus
- 7 eggs
- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- Ketchup or salsa

Instructions

1. Use the recipe for Salami and Eggs
2. Instead of using 1/2 pound of salami, use fresh broccoli cut into bite-sized pieces and fresh asparagus cut into bite-sized pieces
3. Fry the vegetables in a skillet and add 1 teaspoon of vegetable oil
4. Turn heat to low. When vegetables are cooked the way you like them, add 7 large beaten eggs on top of the vegetables
5. Cook for 1 minute or until the eggs are done the way you like them cooked

6. Cut the omelet into 3 portions. Then turn each portion over in the pan so both sides of the omelet cook.

7. Serve with ketchup or salsa



Varenyky (Ukrainian Pierogies)

Lisa Brodeth Carrick



Lisa Brodeth Carrick has lived all over Queens: in Jamaica, Kew Gardens, Astoria, Jackson Heights, and Woodside. The library is a very special place for her, and she loves cooking.

The recipe I'm going to share is Varenyky. That's the Ukrainian name for them, but they're also called pierogies or dumplings, and you can buy them in any supermarket. I picked this because growing up in Queens, my best friend's family was Ukrainian. And we went there quite often, and currently with the war going on, it just brought back a lot of different feelings.

I recently found out that my grandmother was from there—from Ukraine. I didn't even know that because it was part of a different country.

It's a very flexible dish to make because you can make it sweet or savory. Kind of like JJ's [Salami and Eggs] – anybody can make it. You can make it gluten-free, or you can make it with flour. You can make it vegan or vegetarian, or you can add meat to it.

You boil the potatoes, or you make whatever your stuffing is and then you roll it out. So you're using a lot of different senses. And it doesn't have to be perfect– the shapes don't have to be perfect. You could be creative and pick a glass to make the shape or a cookie cutter.

But it reminds me of when I was a kid. It reminds me of family. It reminds me of different cultures. You know, when I think about Queens, I think about how on your block could be 20 different kinds of people and you just didn't think twice about it. But that is not something that's everywhere. And so it really reminds me of growing up.

When COVID started, we could not celebrate one of the holidays together. And at the time, my son was living in San Francisco. My daughter was living someplace else. And what I said was, "Let's all make something that reminds you of growing up– a meal that we all ate together– or a meal that matters to you. But don't tell each other what you're making. Just make something and then we'll get on Zoom at a certain time, and we'll eat together, but we'll share what we made."

And everyone made pierogies and broccoli rabe! Some people had different things along with it, but everybody had those two things. You know, it gives me the chills – you don't realize what your kids are remembering, but certain things just really stick with people. And this was one of them.

"This is a dish that brings people together. Not only is the dish diverse and utilitarian, but it is binding."



*Listen to
Lisa's story here*

Varenyky (Ukrainian Pierogies)

Recipe



Ingredients:

Dough

- 2 cups of flour
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 egg
- 2/3 cup of cool water

Potato filling

- 4 large cooked potatoes
- 1 large onion
- Salt and pepper

Sauerkraut filling

- 1 1/2 lbs of sauerkraut
- 1 large onion
- 1/3 cup of oil

Cheese filling

- 2 cups of farmer cheese
- 4 oz of cream cheese
- 1 egg
- Salt
- Sour cream on the side

Fruit filling

- Fresh berries, pitted cherries, plums or stewed prunes
- Flour on the side



Directions

To Form Pierogies

1. Roll dough thin. Cut rounds with inverted water glass
2. Hold round in palm. Place spoonful of filling in center. Fold in half
3. Press edges to seal
4. Lay on dry kitchen towel and cover

To Cook

1. Drop into large pot of boiling water a few at a time. Boil rapidly for about 4 minutes
2. Lift out into colander and rinse with hot water. Drain
3. Coat with melted butter. Keep hot. Serve with sour cream



Sausage Gravy

Sheila Thompson



Sheila Thompson was born and raised in Ohio, the daughter and granddaughter of farmers—which, she explains, is why she grew up eating sausage gravy.

This sausage gravy was made by my mother, my grandmothers on both sides, and my sister. Everybody made it. I think with the family economics, it was a way to stretch a little amount of meat and make it go a little further. It can be eaten over biscuits, mashed potatoes, or buttered toast.

I grew up eating this, but I had never really made it myself.

When I was growing up, my mom was often in the kitchen, cooking and baking for the family. I remember her baking pies, and then using the leftover dough and a little bit of

cinnamon and sugar to make “pie cookies” for us kids.

During the pandemic, I tried to experiment a little bit with food, making pies and various other familiar dishes, because I was so bored at home. Alone.

I'm proud of myself for learning to make it [sausage gravy] myself. I'm just thrilled that it came out okay, and happy to share it with you.



*Listen to
Sheila's story here*

*“It can be eaten over biscuits,
mashed potatoes or buttered
toast.”*



Sheila's dad (baby), uncle, grandmother, and great grandmother on their farm, circa 1909

Sausage Gravy

Recipe

Ingredients:

- 1/2 roll of Jimmy Dean sausage original
- 2 tbsp of flour
- 1 cup of milk

Directions

1. Brown 1/2 roll of Jimmy Dean sausage original in a frying pan. Add 2 tablespoons of flour and 1 cup of milk. Stir

2. Serve over biscuits, mashed potatoes, or toast

Serves 4



Seafood Pasta - OM Style

Olga Gordon-Murray



Olga was born in Kingston, Jamaica. At 15, she, "started to formulate mixing different foods together." Olga "loves anything with the word 'Cooking' in it."

So, growing up, my mother had left after a while when she and my dad couldn't get along. And I was still there as the oldest child. And I had to cook every day for five children, including myself, and my dad. The food better be good.

And you know, every day was a different dish: Monday to Saturday. Saturday, we would have soup. Sunday, we would have rice and peas and chicken and some other protein, whether it's beef or pork. And Wednesday we would have peas and rice with pigtail, or oxtail cooked in it.

And those recipes, I didn't put in the book. These [the ones in this book] are recipes that I recently made. Anyone can make—or eat—my recipes, even the youngest or the oldest are fine. And I'm always trying a new way. My husband always says, "Jesus, thank God the food is good, because with all these mixed up things sometimes I eat, I'm glad that I'm not sick! But it tastes good." But I'm always trying to reinvent, you know? Different styles of cooking whether it be Spanish mixed with Chinese, or Jamaican mixed with something else, you know, anything.

My grandma- I think she was from Syria. She taught my mom Syrian cooking. And I think that's why I love that part of cooking and I love Chinese. My father was on the Chinese side. I love cooking a combination of all of those.

The avocado bread. It is soft and moist, and this recipe reminds me of my husband who loves avocado. He will eat it without any food or rice on the side. Who wants to eat avocado by itself? He'll just get an avocado, wash it off, then slice it up, and just sit and eat it! I was like, wait, wait, wait, we have too much avocado here now; I gotta do something with it.

So one evening I was like, You know what? Let me try something. And I tried that avocado bread. Everybody loves it. I brought it in for the staff too. And you know what? It's packed with healthy ingredients. And it doesn't have a lot of butter or margarine or unhealthy oil because I tend to go to Trader Joe's or Whole Foods and get the cold-pressed

olive oil. It may be expensive, yes, but, you know, in the long run, it's better for us.



*Listen to
Olga's story here*

Seafood Pasta - OM Style

Recipe

Ingredients:

- 1/2 of 1 box spaghetti from TJ's
- Argentinian shrimp from TJ's
- 1/2 package Pederson Farms sweet German smoked uncured rope sausage
- 1/2 of a red bell pepper
- 1/2 of a yellow bell pepper
- 1/2 of a green bell pepper
- 1/2 of an orange bell pepper
- TJ's olive oil
- Organic white button mushrooms from TJ's
- Dash of black pepper
- 1-2 small pieces of Scotch bonnet peppers, if needed
- 4 cloves fresh garlic - cut into pieces
- 1/2 of 1 large onion



Instructions

1. Boil spaghetti in a pinch of salt and 1 tbsp of olive oil until al dente - set aside
2. Sauté sausage - set aside
3. Sauté mushrooms, shrimp, onion, garlic, scotch bonnet pepper, bell peppers in a tbsp of oil. Add everything back to the pan with the cooked spaghetti. Can add Alfredo or pasta sauce. Season to taste

Avocado Bread - OM Style

Recipe

Ingredients:

- 1 Florida avocado cut in 1/2 or 1 Hass avocado
- 1 tsp nutmeg
- 1 cup golden raisin
- 1/2 cup white/spiced rum/brandy
- 2 1/2 cups of all purpose flour
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1/2 tsp baking soda
- 1/4 tsp salt
- 1 tbsp lemon/lime juice
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup half & half
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 eggs

Instructions

1. Mash the avocado in a bowl with lemon/lime juice and set aside
2. Add flour, baking powder, baking soda, nutmeg, and salt into a bowl
3. Add beaten eggs, sugar, half & half, vanilla, raisins, and rum to the avocado bowl and incorporate mixture by whisking it together

4. Use parchment paper to line the baking pan and add mixture

5. Bake at 350° for 1 hour



Avocado Bread - OM Style



Oto (A Ghanaian Ceremonial Dish)

Elizabeth Eshun



Elizabeth is from Ghana, West Africa. She is a US Citizen and a librarian. She has been living in the U.S. since 1991, and has been working with the Queens Public Library for almost 28 years. She lives in Queens, of course. She has been cooking since the age of eight, and continues to cook for her family.

It's called Oto. Ghanaian Oto In English it's spelled: O-T-O. It's simply mashed yam. But it's a very important dish in my tradition. It's a ceremonial dish. Most of our dishes are very complicated. And, I mean, they are very complicated. So I picked this simple one which can be prepared by anybody and everybody as long as you follow this. And this recipe is very short, too.

It's normally prepared during big ceremonies, like when a girl has their first menses... and that is the meal they eat with other people gathering around them. They have the

eggs on top of it, and in one of the ceremonies the girl has little children surrounding her eating from the same pot. Sometimes when they are eating, she closes her eyes, and tries to reach out to the children. The number of children she's able to grab with her eyes closed indicates the number of children she's going to bring forth. That is the belief but I don't know if it actually works. But that is how I knew of it when I was growing up.

And what else? It's also served on people's birthdays. Every birthday, there's an egg for the person having the birthday and the Oto. So when they are serving it for a birthday, or for the outdoor ceremony, the food is prepared, and someone is designated to initiate the food— what they do is they take some and they hit the celebrant's lips three times before it's opened for everyone to partake in it.

And you see that it has eggs on top of it. The eggs are put on. Traditionally, the eggs are not sliced. You put them on it whole. And then you have the peanuts in the center. And then you can also serve it with avocado.

And it's very simple to prepare. And the only thing that might make it a bit complicated is if you don't have the tools because if you saw, I had the earthenware bowl. The earthenware bowl sometimes is black or it's red. So you have the earthenware bowl, and then you have the pestle that you mash it with. But in lieu of that, being here, if I don't have that earthenware bowl, do I have it sent to me from home? It's very delicate to transport. So by the time it got to me, half of it was chipped.

So in that case, I could use a potato masher to mash the yam. But with that, I will not be able to mash the onions and the peppers. So what I'll do is blend the onions and the peppers and then fry them in the palm oil, which most people call red oil. But we call it palm oil. So you fry it away to get the taste out, or the aroma out of it. And then you pour it on the mashed yam. You mix it up. And then you are ready. The food is ready to garnish with your eggs and the avocado and the peanuts.

Ghanaian dishes are not easy to prepare. You need to be standing by somebody who is preparing it. Personally, there are some dishes that I can't really prepare well, that I'd rather let someone prepare. I'll eat it, but don't want to prepare it and mess it up.



*Listen to
Elizabeth's story here*

Oto (A Ghanaian Ceremonial Dish)

Recipe

Ingredients:

- 1 small yam, peeled and cubed
- 1/4 cup red palm oil
- 1 onion, finely diced
- Hot pepper
- Ground peanuts or other nuts
- Avocado
- Salt to taste
- 2-3 hard-boiled eggs (or more if you love eggs)

Equipment

Equipment:

- Large pot
- Cutting board
- Knife
- Asanka and wooden grinder. You may substitute this with a large bowl and a masher.

Instructions

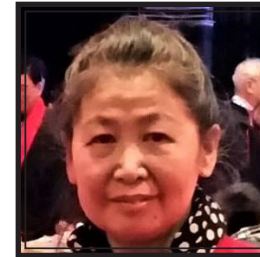
1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add the peeled and cubed yams and boil until fork tender. Strain the water out of the pot. Mash the pepper, onion and some of the groundnut/peanuts in the asanka with the wooden grinder. Then add the yams, and mash
2. In the meantime, heat 1/4 cup red palm oil in a pan over medium heat. Add some chopped onions to the oil and allow the onions to caramelize
3. Pour oil and onion mixture on the mashed yams. Mix to combine until the yam turns a bright yellow color. Season with salt to taste
4. Peel the 2-3 hard-boiled eggs and place the whole eggs on top of the pot of yams. Garnish with the avocado and groundnuts/peanuts
5. Serve and enjoy! Bon Appetit

Note: If you are not using the asanka, then blend or chop the pepper and onion and fry in the palm oil. Use ground peanuts and add to the mashed yam and then pour the oil mixture on top, mix well. Then garnish with egg, rest of groundnut/peanut and avocado.



Assorted Vegetable Delight

Sharlene Chou



Sharlene Chou was raised in China and learned to cook from her father. She moved to New York City 40 years ago and further developed her cooking skills here with her mother. She loves to cook and takes delight in sharing her homemade goodies and unique artistic presentations with friends and family during the holiday season.

My recipe is an assorted vegetarian turkey platter. This is traditional food and it takes a lot of time to cook [the vegetables] individually, then mix them, and let it sit for a few hours. So I only cook it when it's holiday time, when I have time off. It's a good meal to share for the holidays and New Year. It's a must have. And if you have leftovers, somebody will take it home.

I like to make something fun because if it's just mixed vegetables, it's so dark. If people don't know it, then they're not going to grab it to eat it. But, if you make a

presentation that looks colorful, people at least bring their attention to see, "Okay, looks good. Maybe it tastes good, and I have to see."

All the ingredients you require are in a Chinese supermarket. They import them from China. So the ingredients are the same. And the basic stuff you cook.

Half of the ingredients are dried flowers. So it's very easy to store. And half is fresh. Then add some carrots for the colors and the little green beans for the colors. But mainly it's the black fungus. Mainly, its flavor is mushroom. It's the Japanese winter mushroom and/or flower mushroom that will make most of the flavors. It's a little pricey [the mushroom], but it's really big, thick. When you put it in the water, then it really soaks it up. It's meaty. When you put in the flavor it's better than eating meat. Because if there's a lot of vegetarian people, you know, they eat soy products that are very dry and have no taste. But the mushroom...

It's the quality of the mushroom—when you cook it, it'll bring the flavor. It's very strong. And other mixed vegetarian products, there's no taste, so you have to put in just a little soy sauce and fresh ginger and a little sugar, a little salt, you know, oil because the main thing is you cook the mushrooms first. Once you boil the water and put them in there for 30 minutes, it'll cook. But you need to let it simmer for a few hours at low temperatures for them to really get the flavor into each one. You start putting them in the water and make them soft. Then you marinate them. So that's the

key. So, it looks pretty and healthy. I see other people even massage the mushrooms to get it marinated into the flavor. The mushroom will absorb very strong things. So it can clear the air out there, I think. So you have to get good organic mushrooms.

For me this is a memory from— I learned from cooking for my father back in China when I was young and after I moved to—immigrated to— America.

Every year I make it, and everybody will share it, and everybody can eat it. At least, if I bring something to the strange party, I don't know other food from other cultures, at least I have something to eat for myself.



*Listen to
Sharlene's story here*

Assorted Vegetable Delight

Recipe

Prep Time: 2 hours

Serves 12

Ingredients:

- 2 oz dried shiitake winter mushroom (premium quality)
- 2 oz dried black fungus (wood ear)
- 2 oz dried day lily
- 20 oz vegetarian mock abalone (soy product)
- 10 oz baked wheat bran flour (wheat dough)
- 4 oz straw mushrooms
- 10 oz baby bamboo shoots
- 4 oz fresh whole water chestnuts
- 6 oz fresh carrots sliced
- 6 oz fresh snow peas

Cooking Ingredient & Seasoning:

- 10 g of ginger sliced
- 7 tbsp 1/8 tsp of corn cooking oil
- 4 1/2 tbsp light soy sauce
- 2 1/2 tbsp oyster sauce
- 5/8 tsp salt
- 1 1/4 tsp white sugar
- 1 tbsp sesame oil
- 1 pot of water
- 4 1/2 cup of water used for soaking the mushrooms.

Ingredient Preparation

1. Briefly rinse the mushrooms, black fungus, day lily and soak them in the separate bowl of water ideally overnight until softened and expanded in size.
2. Remove stems and transfer the mushrooms to a separate bowl. reserve at least 4 cup of the water used for soaking the mushrooms.
3. Cook the day lily in boiled water for 5 minutes, take out and put on side for use later.
4. Cut baked wheat bran flour into 1 inch cubes for use later.
5. Cut carrots and whole water chestnuts sliced in 1/8" thick.
6. Cut baby bamboo shoots in 2" long.

Instructions

Black Fungus, Day Lily

1. Heat 1 tbsp cooking oil in a large pot over high heat.
2. Add in the black fungus and day lily. Sauté for 3-5 minutes.
3. Stir in 1 tbsp of light soy sauce, 1/2 tbsp oyster sauce, 1/4 tsp sugar and 1/8 tsp salt.
4. Pour in the 1/2 cup reserved water for soaking the mushrooms.

5. Cover with lid and bring to a boil for 5 - 10 minutes.
6. Set aside and save until the end to plate.

Baked Wheat Bran Flour

1. Heat 2 tbsp cooking oil in a large pot over high heat.
2. Add in the baked wheat bran flour. sauté for 3-5 minutes.
3. Stir in 1 tbsp light soy sauces, 1/2 tbsp oyster sauce, 1/4 tbsp sugar.
4. Pour in 1/2 cup the reserved water for soaking the mushrooms.
5. Cover with lid and bring to a boil for 5 - 10 minutes.
6. Set aside and save until the end to plate.

Baby Bamboo Shoots

1. Heat 1 tbsp cooking oil in a large pot over high heat.
2. Add in the baby bamboo shoots. sauté for 3-5 minutes.
3. Stir in 1/2 tbsp oyster sauce, and 1/8 tsp salt.
4. Pour in the 1/2 cup of reserved water for soaking the mushrooms.
5. Cover with lid and bring to a boil for 5 - 10 minutes.
6. Set aside and save until the end to plate.

Carrots Sliced

1. Heat 1 tbsp cooking oil in a large pot over high heat.

2. Add in the sliced carrots. Sauté for 3-5 minutes.
3. Stir in 1/2 tbsp light soy sauces, 1/2 tbsp oyster sauce, and 1/8 tsp sugar.
4. Pour in the 1/2 cup of reserved water for soaking the mushrooms.
5. Cover with lid and bring to a boil for 5 - 10 minutes.
6. Set aside and save until the end to plate.

Snow Peas

1. Bring 1 pot of water to a boil then add the 1/8 tsp cooking oil and 1/8 tsp salt to the water.
2. Put snow peas into water cook for 3 minutes.
3. Put cooked snow peas in the plate and wait to add in the last.

Mushrooms

1. Heat 2 tbsp cooking oil in a large pot over high heat. Add sliced ginger and fry for 1-2 minutes until fragrant and lightly charred.
2. Add in the shiitake winter mushrooms. sauté for 3-5 minutes.
3. Stir in 1 tbsp light soy sauces, 1/2 tbsp oyster sauce, 1/4 tsp sugar and 1/4 tsp salt.
4. Pour in the 1 cup of reserved water for soaking the mushrooms.
5. Bring to a boil then add the 1/2 cup water and turn to

medium-low heat. Cover with lid and let braise for 30 minutes.

6. Add all five groups of cooked Ingredients into cooked mushrooms.

7. Also, add 4 oz fresh whole water chestnuts sliced, 20 oz mock abalone, and 4 oz straw mushrooms.

8. Stir in 1 tbsp light soy sauces, 1/4 tsp sugar and 1/8 tsp salt. Toss to mix everything together.

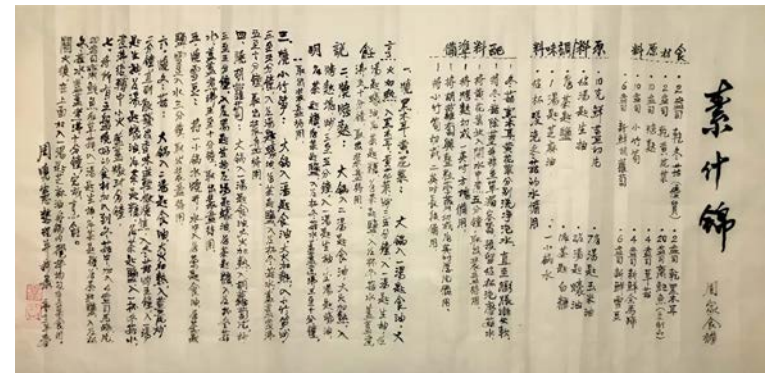
9. Pour in the 1/2 cup of reserved water for soaking the mushrooms. Cover with lid and bring to a boil for 5 - 10 minutes until you are done with cooking.

10. Finally, after turn off the heat, add 1 tbsp sesame oil at top, and stir evenly for all the cooked ingredients in the pot.



Presentation

Using a large oval-shaped plate, follow a turkey-shaped image to assemble an assorted vegetable platter for a family Thanksgiving party.



Recipe for Assorted Vegetable Delight, penned in Chinese calligraphy by Sharlene.

Stuffed Artichokes

Lori Wallach



Lori DiBella Wallach is a third-generation Sicilian-American who grew up enjoying-but unfortunately not learning-the culinary skills of her grandmother and great aunt. She hopes to refine her cooking abilities enough to ensure the continuation of beloved family dishes!

Growing up, we lived in the same house as my paternal grandparents and my great aunt Adeline, who was my grandmother's sister. The two of them—my grandma and aunt—were amazing cooks.

Holiday dinners featured a wonderful array of Sicilian specialties, and I have many happy, nostalgic memories of sitting around the big table for hours, eating, drinking wine, playing board games or cards, and laughing—just very, very happy memories.

The stuffed artichokes were not always present at these

meals, because artichokes are very seasonal and temperamental, and they weren't always available. When they were available, they were my favorite dish. I can still hear the whistle and the screech of the pressure cooker, and that slight anxiety that the pressure valve might go flying off and hit the ceiling, as it occasionally did. I can still smell the wonderful aroma of the tender, savory leaves and the stuffing.

The artichokes were always so much fun to eat. I'd pull off each leaf and scrape it with my teeth, and then at the end, I'd have this big pile of spent leaves on my plate, with the prize in the middle: the soft, delicious heart of the artichoke.

I really wish that I had paid more attention to how the artichokes were made. I wish I had practiced with my grandma and aunt. I miss the artichokes, and I'm glad and grateful to have found a couple of Italian markets that sell them, prepared, around Easter time.

But now, after having a reason to reconstruct this recipe with the help of several of my family members, of course, it was never written down at the time. Grandma and Adeline were cooks who just made it by heart. They never wrote anything down. But now that we've reconstructed it, I feel inspired to try making it myself.



*Listen to
Lori's story here*

Stuffed Artichokes

Recipe

Ingredients:

- 4 medium-large artichokes
- Bread crumbs
- Grated Pecorino Romano cheese
- Oregano
- Grated garlic (optional)
- Extra virgin olive oil

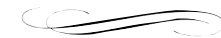
Instructions

1. Wash the artichokes and cut off the stems; these can be cooked separately if desired
2. Trim the top spiky edges of the leaves with kitchen shears or a sharp knife. When done, stand the artichokes upside down to drain out the water
3. In a separate bowl, prepare the stuffing, which is a mixture of bread crumbs, grated Pecorino Romano cheese, oregano, and grated garlic to taste. Add a small amount of olive oil - just enough to moisten the mixture
4. Spread the leaves of the artichokes and stuff leaves and center with the mixture

5. Drizzle olive oil over the tops of the artichokes once fully stuffed
6. Stand the artichokes in a pressure cooker or Instant Pot with a small amount of water
7. Cook for 15 minutes or until the leaves are tender, but not mushy. The stuffing should appear golden with a slight crust. Serves 4



Photograph of stuffed artichokes by Lori Wallach.



My Dad's Linguine with White Clam Sauce

Angela Berardino



Angela is a lifelong resident of Queens. Her ancestors were great cooks and she feels that she is keeping their spirits and traditions alive when she cooks their recipes.

I'm sharing a recipe of Linguine with White Clam Sauce. It was my dad's, and it's the only recipe that I actually have of him. He did collect many recipes from the New York Times, 'The 60-Minute Gourmet.' He used to love that column. But this is the only one that he actually handed down to me.

The story is that because he started to collect recipes, I started to collect recipes. And my mom had her own recipes from her mother, but this was his. It was the only one, as I say, from him. He loved to fish, and mostly he loved going out for blue fish. Sometimes he'd do big fish like marlin or

swordfish or something. But he also went clamming. And when he went clamming, he would bring the clams home, and shuck them himself and make this linguine. And we all loved to have it because it was made with fresh clams.

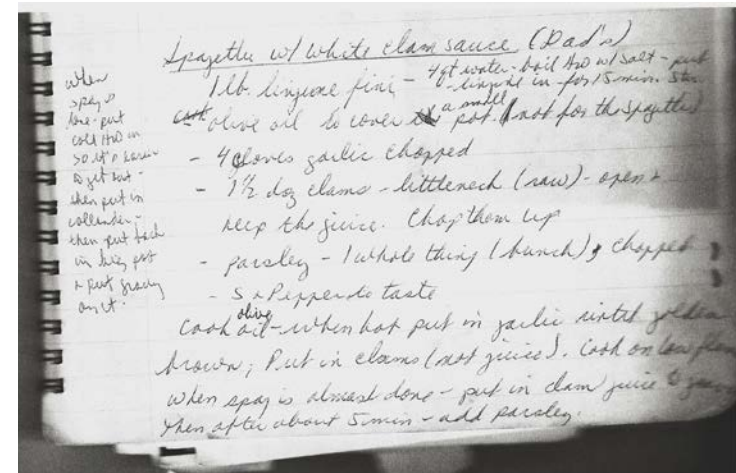
When he passed, I of course, didn't know how to shuck clams, nor did I think I wanted to. I thought I'd cut off my finger or something. But I would go to any one of those fish restaurants in Sheepshead Bay and buy a dozen, or two dozen clams and have them shuck them and save the juice. I have done that several times.

Since then, it's been harder to find somebody that will actually shuck them for me. So what I have done is make it with bottled clam juice and canned clams, which is absolutely not the way to go. The best way is with the fresh clams— he shucked them at home and saved the juice. It makes it a much better dish. It was a very nice meal: just garlic, linguine, parsley, and the clams.



*Listen to
Angela's story here*

“When he passed, I of course, didn't know how to shuck clams, nor did I think I wanted to.”



My Dad's Linguine with White Clam Sauce

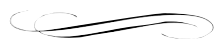
Recipe

Ingredients:

- 1 pound linguine fini
- 4 quarts water
- Olive oil
- 4 cloves of garlic chopped
- 1 and 1/2 dozen fresh clams
- Parsley (fresh)

Directions

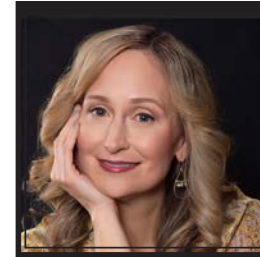
1. After shucking the clams, chop them and save the juice
2. Bring 4 quarts of water with salt to a boil. Put pasta in for 15 minutes and stir
3. Meanwhile, put olive oil in a skillet and saute your garlic
4. When browned, add clams (but not the juice)
5. Cook on low flame
6. When linguine is almost done, put clam juice into a skillet with the browned garlic and the clams and cook for a few minutes, then add parsley
7. When linguine is done, drain by putting pasta in a colander and rinsing with cold water. Put back into linguine pot and add the sauce to the pot and mix



SWEET DISHES

Crescent-Shaped Kipfels with Walnuts

Tracy Zumbahlen



Tracy Zumbahlen enjoys baking and making bread to share with her neighbors in Connecticut. Having lived in both Europe and Asia was a nice way for Tracy to connect to neighborhoods far and wide through food and love.

The recipe that I'm going to share is called Crescent-Shaped Kipfels with Walnuts and it comes from my great grandmother who comes from Austria. When they [she and my great grandfather] came to the United States, they came on a boat that was named "The Rex." And, my grandmother's maiden name is Rex! My mom's maiden name is Rex! So that's really an interesting twist!

And the reason why I chose this particular cookie is because my mom is the oldest of nine kids. Her family and her home were always really busy—lots of cousins, loud, you know?

Dogs and noise and kids and siblings and just pretty noisy. My great grandmother lived down the street so since my mom was the oldest she went to her grandmother's house to get some quiet.

She would study and they would make cookies and meals. And I remember going there when I was little, and just being so happy and we would make these cookies— you'd make the crescent shape with your hands and roll the dough, and then she had one of these little walnut choppers for the nuts, you know, like a jar? And then it had a lid with a handle that you chopped down the walnuts. And you'd sprinkle the walnuts and then a little metal shaker for the powdered sugar.

We weren't really allowed to be in the bathroom or play in the bathroom because it really needed to be safe for my grandmother — she was in a wheelchair. I was always so fascinated by her bathroom because it had double doors that opened to fit the wheelchair. She didn't have a bathtub; she had a standing shower so that she could take the chair into the shower. I just thought that was just so unique and wonderful and magical to me. But I remember if we got the powdered sugar all over us, we would ask to go to the bathroom to wash our hands. And that was just, like, the best thing.

So the funny part is I think the crescent moon shape was what drew me to this. It was a pretty dense cookie, sort of

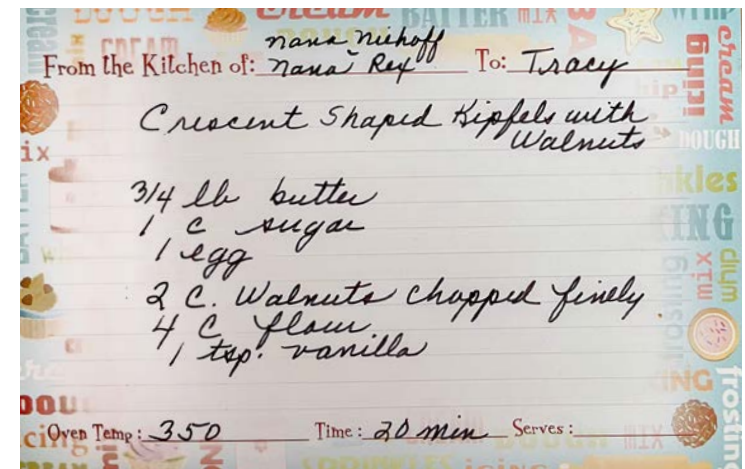
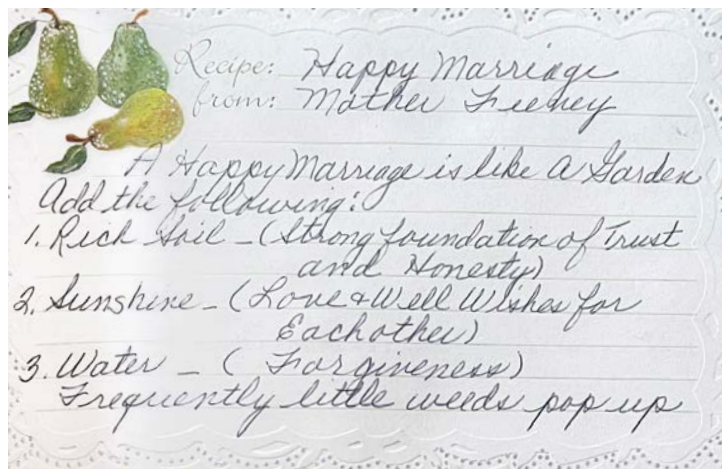
dry, but... My mom's name is Diana, which means "Goddess of the Moon." So I think there's something to that, you know? The crescent moon shape and because she was able to study there, she went to college, and she's just so smart, and a great example. She was a biology teacher. She's retired now, but I always just admired her intelligence and she's just a really strong woman and it reminds me of that.

And then it also trickles into the big family of the nine brothers and sisters too, because my Nana (my mom's mom would eat the cookies and they would all play poker around a big table. They would play what's called penny poker to keep it moving quickly because there were always so many of them. But she would eat these little cookies with powdered sugar and then I can always remember her dusting off her hands before she would pick up her cards so they didn't get all full of powdered sugar.

It's a beautiful way to remember everyone — the more simple hand and body things that connect you to the heart.



*Listen to
Tracy's story here*



Friday Evening Oatmeal Cookies

Laura Anne Walker



Laura Anne Walker learned how to cook by watching her Tex-Mex grandmother and her mother – who learned from their mothers who were Native American and African-American, and German. She is a graduate of Cornell University and taught preschoolers for almost 10 years, as well as at the college level. When she was a high school student, she was a Future Teacher of America and taught other girls Geometry and Algebra. She got them to learn even if they were “initially really bad at it.”

My father actually taught me fractions through cooking, by teaching me how to divide up a cup. I said to him, “Mommy doesn’t use that cup. She uses this cup which has measurements on it.” So he said, “You can use any cup,” and he showed me how to break it up into thirds and so on. After that, I never had trouble with fractions again.

My mom used to make oatmeal-raisin cookies. I remember

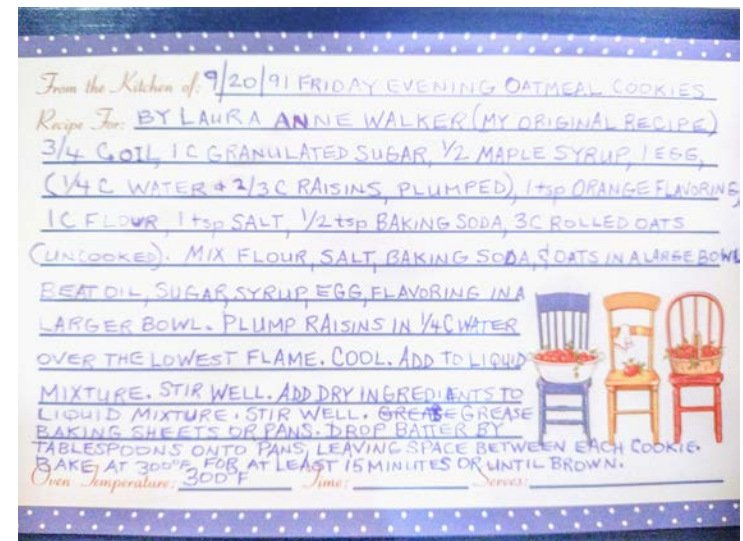
when she would mix up the ingredients with the beater; it would kind of grind against the ceramic bowl, which made such a loud sound. I used to get such a kick out of it. I thought we'd get glass chips in the cookie dough but we never did, because she knew what she was doing. They were the most delicious cookies, and the house used to smell so good whenever she made them.

In the mornings of my childhood, my mom would always make breakfast for me and my siblings— things like cereal, hot oatmeal, a banana, some bacon, or an egg, but whenever she made the cookies, we would plead until she would give us an oatmeal cookie or two with a piece of bacon wrapped around it for breakfast. We would say, "That's good, Ma. That's healthy." And it probably wasn't, but she always gave in anyway.

She's been gone for years now, but this is a very happy memory of her.



*Listen to
Laura Anne's
story here*



Friday Evening Oatmeal Cookies

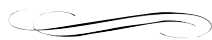
Recipe

Ingredients:

- 3/4 cup of oil
- 1 cup of granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup of maple syrup
- 1 egg
- 1/4 cup of water
- 2/3 cup of raisins
- 1 tsp of orange flavoring
- 1 cup of flour
- 1 tsp of salt
- 1/2 tsp of baking soda
- 3 cups of rolled oats (uncooked)

Directions

1. Mix flour, salt, baking soda, and oats in a large bowl
2. Beat oil, sugar, syrup, egg, flavoring in a larger bowl
3. Plump raisins in 1/4 cup of water over the lowest flame. Cool. Add to liquid mixture, stir well
4. Grease baking sheets or pans. Drop batter by tablespoons onto pans, leaving space between each cookie
5. Bake at 300° F for at least 14 minutes or until brown



One-Egg Cake

Emily Vieryra-Haley



Emily was born and raised with her twin sister in Bayside, Queens, and now lives in Forest Hills, Queens with her husband Alan. Her sister lives only one block away. She is a museum docent and a paralegal, and she has always loved history and cooking. Emily wanted to memorialize this family recipe – which comes from her grandmother Donica, through her mother Catherine, and now Catherine and Emily carry on the tradition.

The recipe I chose is one-egg cake. I chose it actually because it's an old family recipe, but also because it is incredibly easy to make. You probably have the ingredients in your pantry right now. It involves flour, sugar, baking powder, shortening of any kind, the oil, butter, margarine, Crisco (that's an old favorite), vanilla extract, milk, and just one egg, as the name denotes.

I think you can make this vegan if you want to if you make

a flax egg. And I think you can use any kind of milk, like almond milk. And it should work just as well. I've done that with other recipes, changing out those ingredients, and they seem to work well in baking. But this recipe is an old favorite.

My grandmother started it. I don't know where she got it from. But we've used it for birthdays, celebrations, and if you just don't have dessert in the house and want to make something and eat it, you can whip this up. Within two hours, you can have the cake ready and made and iced with whatever icing that you choose.

I never knew my grandmother. She actually passed away the year before I was born. But I do know that she grew up in lower Manhattan. And she was born in 1926. And I think it [the one-egg cake] is something that came out of the Depression. I think it was one of these recipes because it's so scant on ingredients. It was making something out of nothing. And this very much seems to be part of that. And I found other recipes that were kind of similar on other websites. So I think that's where it came from.

So she [my grandmother] made this recipe quite often. I don't know what topping or what frosting she used. But she did use it for birthday parties in the house and, after she moved out of lower Manhattan, she married my grandfather, who was a World War II vet. They moved out to Levittown where there were a lot of housing structures

being built for returning veterans. And they moved into one of its homes. And that's where they started their family. And that's where she made this cake quite often. They later moved to Plainview, Long Island. And I know she continued making this cake there as well. And she gave the recipe to my mom and my aunts. And that's where we started making it. And my mom married my dad and moved to Queens, and we carry on the tradition.

But I have a very short story that goes along with this. And it was just recently told to me by my mom's best friend who told me how once when me and my siblings were very young, my mom was very much yearning for a "girl's night." And so she put us kids to bed early and she invited her friend over. And the deal was they were gonna make this cake and they were gonna have coffee and just talk.

So they started preparing the ingredients. They got the cake into the oven, and then they pulled it out, but it was curiously very flat. They looked at each other and my mom's friend said, "What is this? What happened? Did we forget anything?" My mom said, "We forgot the egg." So even though the title is "one-egg cake," they forgot the main ingredient. So that became famous as well. So don't forget the egg when you make this cake. But with that, happy baking, and I hope you all try it out.

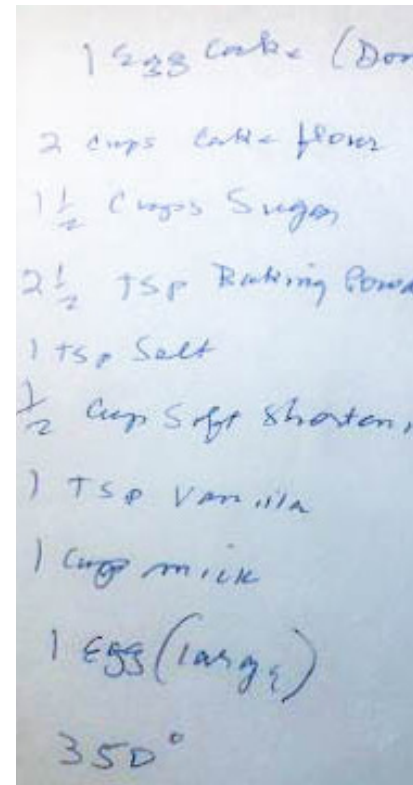
“And I think it [the one-egg cake] is something that came out of the Depression. I think it was one of these recipes because it’s so scant on ingredients. It was making something out of nothing.”



*Listen to
Emily's story here*

One-Egg Cake

Recipe



Ingredients:

Preheat oven to
350° F

- 2 cups cake flour (can use all-purpose flour)
- 1 1/2 cups sugar
- 2 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup shortening (can use Crisco or butter or margarine, softened or melted - can use vegetable oil too in a pinch!)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup of milk
- 1 egg (large)

Directions

This cake is very simple and straightforward. Mix the ingredients in a single bowl, in the order you see them listed. Butter and flour either a bundt pan, a 9-inch round cake pan, or a 9 x 13 rectangular pan. Pour in the batter, and bake for approximately 25 minutes - you will know

your cake is done when you see it brown slightly, and pull away from the edge.

Frost with your favorite frosting.

"A recommended frosting, you ask? My favorite is Hershey's Chocolate Buttercream!"



Hershey's Chocolate Buttercream

Recipe

Ingredients:

- 6 tablespoons butter, softened
- 3/4 cup cocoa powder
- 2 2/3 cups confectioners sugar
- 1/3 cup milk
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Directions

1. Beat together with a wooden spoon, or even better, with a mixer - the frosting turns out lighter and airier with a mixer. Frost cooled cake

Enjoy!



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