Preserving Family Recipes
How to Save and Celebrate Your Food Traditions

VALERIE J. FREY

A Webinar hosted by ALCTS, Association for Library Collections & Technical Services
Who are the memory-keepers in your family?
Where is the value in a recipe?
Nutritional Value
Sensual Value
Emotional Value
Historic Value
Family, Culinary, and Social History
Robert A. Frey to Val! Mulligan:
One fryer, one large i. potato,
One pretty large anise seed.
Bacon (no smoked) cut up fryer, dice potato
& onion, chop up bacon, put all these
on together, at first add salt.

The next step boil till chicken
is real tender, done, the chicken,
the bacon, chips, swirl rice to the
top, skin or take the bacon out
leave it out.

Next step, add 1 lb or 10 oz of funston
8 oz. spaghetti, put chicken back
in pot with all other ingredient
match, stir often, cook till spa-
ghetti is done, add 1 can of cream
style corn starch, continuously about
10 minutes. OK.

Love, Grandpa Frey
Primary and Secondary Sources
The Story of a Recipe...

- Origin (provenance)
- Who used it
- How it was served
- How it changed
- Tales connected to it
- How it fits into family, culinary, and cultural history
A Frey Recipe Story...
Mom's Spaghetti

Cook in iron skillet:

1 pound frozen ground beef, thawed
1 medium onion, chopped
"Lite salt" and pepper, to taste

Add and simmer:

1 (6 ounce) can tomato paste with 1 can water
1 (8 ounce) can tomato sauce
1 (14 1/2 ounce) can peeled whole tomatoes, diced
1 teaspoon dried oregano

Serve with:

1 pound thin spaghetti noodles (vermicelli), cooked
(Spoonful of shortening to prevent pasta from boiling over)
Mom's Spaghetti

**Non-stick**

Cook in iron skillet:

1 pound frozen ground beef, thawed
1 medium onion, chopped
"Lite salt" and pepper, to taste

Add and simmer:

1 (6 ounce) can tomato paste with 1 can water
1 (8 ounce) can tomato sauce
1 (14 ¼ ounce) can peeled whole tomatoes, diced
1 teaspoon dried oregano

Serve with:

1 pound thin spaghetti noodles (vermicelli), cooked
(Spoonful of shortening to prevent pasta from boiling over)
Mom's Spaghetti

Cook in non-stick iron skillet:

1 pound frozen ground beef, thawed in microwave
1 medium onion, chopped
“Lite salt” and pepper, to taste

Add and simmer:

1 (6 ounce) can tomato paste with 1 can water
1 (8 ounce) can tomato sauce
1 (14 ½ ounce) can peeled whole tomatoes, diced
1 teaspoon dried oregano

Serve with:

1 pound thin spaghetti noodles (vermicelli), cooked
(Spoonful of shortening to prevent pasta from boiling over)
Mom’s Spaghetti

Cook in iron skillet:
1 pound frozen ground beef, thawed
1 medium onion, chopped
“Lite salt” and pepper, to taste

Add and simmer:
1 (6 ounce) can tomato paste with 1 can water
1 (8 ounce) can tomato sauce
1 (14 ½ ounce) can peeled whole tomatoes, diced
1 teaspoon dried oregano

Serve with:
1 pound thin spaghetti noodles (vermicelli), cooked
(Spoonful of shortening to prevent pasta from boiling over)
Mom's Spaghetti

Cook in iron skillet:
- non-stick
- fresh
- grass-fed bison or free range turkey

1 pound frozen ground beef, thawed
1 medium onion, chopped
"Lite salt" and pepper, to taste

Add and simmer:

1 (6 ounce) can tomato paste with 1 can water
1 (8 ounce) can tomato sauce
1 (14 ½ ounce) can peeled whole tomatoes, diced
1 teaspoon dried oregano

Serve with:

1 pound thin spaghetti noodles (vermicelli), cooked
(Spoonful of shortening to prevent pasta from boiling over)
Mom's Spaghetti

Cook in iron skillet:

- Non-stick
- Fresh grass-fed bison or free range turkey
- 1 pound frozen ground beef, thawed
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- Sea fresh-cracked pepper
- "Lite salt" and pepper, to taste

Add and simmer:

- 1 (6 ounce) can tomato paste with 1 can water
- 1 (8 ounce) can tomato sauce
- 1 (14 ½ ounce) can peeled whole tomatoes, diced
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano

Serve with:

- 1 pound thin spaghetti noodles (vermicelli), cooked
  (Spoonful of shortening to prevent pasta from boiling over)
Mom’s Spaghetti

Cook in iron skillet:
- non-stick
- fresh
- Vidalia
- sea
- fresh-cracked pepper
- “Lite salt” and pepper, to taste

Add and simmer:
- BPA-free carton
- 1 (6 ounce) can tomato paste with 1 can water
- 1 (8 ounce) can tomato sauce
- 1 (14 1/2 ounce) can peeled whole tomatoes, diced
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano

Serve with:
- 1 pound thin spaghetti noodles (vermicelli), cooked

(Spoonful of shortening to prevent pasta from boiling over)
Mom's Spaghetti

Cook in iron skillet:
- non-stick
- fresh frozen ground beef, thawed
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- Sea Salt and pepper, to taste
- "Lite-salt" and pepper, to taste
- grass-fed bison or free range turkey
- BPA-Free carton
- fresh organic heirloom
- fresh
- dried oregano + fresh basil leaves

Add and simmer:
- 1 (6 ounce) can tomato paste with 1 can water
- 1 (8 ounce) can tomato sauce
- 1 (14 ½ ounce) can peeled whole tomatoes, diced

Serve with:
- 1 pound thin spaghetti noodles (vermicelli), cooked

(Spoonful of shortening to prevent pasta from boiling over)
Mom's Spaghetti

Cook in iron skillet:

- non-stick
- fresh Vidalia onion
- grass-fed bison or free range turkey
- Sea Salt
- fresh-cracked pepper
- "Lite-salt" and pepper, to taste

Add and simmer:

- BPA-free carton
- 1 (6 ounce) can tomato paste with 1 can water
- 1 (8 ounce) can tomato sauce
- fresh organic heirloom
- 1 (14 ½ ounce) can peeled whole tomatoes, diced
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano + fresh basil leaves

Serve with:

- high fiber & protein
- toddler-friendly shapes

1 pound thin spaghetti noodles (vermicelli), cooked

(Spoonful of shortening to prevent pasta from boiling over)
Mom’s Spaghetti

Cook in iron skillet:
- non-stick
- fresh
- Vidalia
- Sea Salt
- grass-fed bison or free range turkey
- fresh-cracked pepper
- “Lite salt” and pepper, to taste

Add and simmer:
- BPA-free carton
- 1 (6 ounce) can tomato paste with 1 can water
- 1 (8 ounce) can tomato sauce
- 1 (14 ½ ounce) can peeled whole tomatoes, diced
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano + fresh basil leaves

Serve with:
- homemade high fiber & protein toddler-friendly shapes
- 1 pound thin spaghetti noodles (vermicelli), cooked

(Spoonful of shortening to prevent pasta from boiling over)
Mom’s Spaghetti

Cook in iron skillet:
- fresh Vidalia onion, chopped
- Sea Salt and fresh-cracked pepper
- "Lite-salt" and pepper, to taste

grass-fed bison or free range turkey
cooked in microwave

Add and simmer:
- BPA-free carton
- 1 (6 ounce) can tomato paste with 1 can water
- 1 (8 ounce) can tomato sauce
- 1 (14 ½ ounce) can peeled whole tomatoes, diced
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano + fresh basil leaves

Serve with:
- homemade high fiber & protein toddler-friendly shapes
- 1 pound thin spaghetti noodles (vermicelli), cooked trans-fat free

(Spoonful of shortening to prevent pasta from boiling over)
Mom's Spaghetti

Cook in iron skillet:

- fresh non-stick
- fresh grass-fed bison or free range turkey
- Vidalia
- Sea
- fresh-cracked pepper
- “Lite salt” and pepper, to taste

Add and simmer:

- BPA-Free Carton
- 1 (6 ounce) can tomato paste with 1 can water
- 1 (8 ounce) can tomato sauce
- fresh organic heirloom
- fresh
- 1 (14 ½ ounce) can peeled whole tomatoes, diced
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano + fresh basil leaves

Serve with:

- homemade high fiber & protein + toddler-friendly shapes
- 1 pound thin spaghetti noodles (vermicelli), cooked + trans-fat free
- (Spoonful of shortening to prevent pasta from boiling over)
Mom's Spaghetti

Cook in iron skillet:
- fresh Vidalia onion
- Sea Salt
- fresh-cracked pepper
- "Lite” salt and pepper, to taste

Grass-fed bison or free range turkey (if non-stick)

1 pound frozen ground beef, thawed
1 medium onion, chopped

Add and simmer:
- 1 (6 ounce) can tomato paste with 1 can water
- 1 (8 ounce) can tomato sauce
- 1 (14 ½ ounce) can peeled whole tomatoes, diced
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano

Serve with:
- Homemade high fiber & protein toddler-friendly shapes
- 1 pound thin spaghetti noodles (vermicelli), cooked trans-fat free
  (Spoonful of shortening to prevent pasta from boiling over)
Why Do Recipes Change?

- Technological Advances
- Ingredient Availability
- Health Knowledge
- Environmental Knowledge
- Cooking Experience
- Available Time
- Needs & Preferences
Glimpsing the Past Through Recipes

Boiled Indian Meal Pudding

Mix one quart of corn meal, with three quarts of milk; take care it be not lumpy—add three eggs and a gill of molasses; it must be put on at sun rise, to eat at three o’clock; the great art in this pudding is tying the bag properly, as the meal swells very much.
Boiled Indian Meal Pudding

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– Mrs. Mary Randolph, *The Virginia Housewife*, 1824/1860
Glimpsing the Past Through Recipes

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– Mrs. Mary Randolph, *The Virginia Housewife*, 1824/1860
Eggless, Milkless, Butterless Cake

1 cup brown sugar
1 ¼ cups water
1 cup seeded raisins
2 ounces citron, cut fine
1/3 cup shortening
½ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon nutmeg
1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 cup corn or wheat flour
1 cup rye or barley flour
5 teaspoons Royal Baking Powder

Boil sugar, water, fruit, shortening, salt and spices together in saucepan 3 minutes. When cool, add flour and baking powder which have been sifted together. Mix well; bake in loaf pan in moderate oven about 45 minutes.
Glimpsing the Past Through Recipes

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Boil sugar, water, fruit, shortening, salt and spices together in saucepan 3 minutes. When cool, add flour and baking powder which have been sifted together. Mix well; bake in loaf pan in moderate oven about 45 minutes.
Sock It to Me Cake

Mix the five ingredients below. Pour into to greased and floured round 8-inch cake pans and bake in a 350 degree oven for about 40 minutes:

- 1 yellow cake mix (15 ounces)
- ¾ cup oil
- 1 cup sour cream
- 2 eggs
- Nuts

Mix and put between halves of cake:
- 3 teaspoons cinnamon
- 3 teaspoons brown sugar
Glimpsing the Past Through Recipes

Sock it To me Cake
1 yellow cake mix
3/4 cup oil
1 cup sour cream
2 eggs
1/2 cup nuts
3 teaspoons cinnamon
3 teaspoons brown sugar
Mix and put.
Recipe Roadblock #1:

The old recipes are out of date. Nobody wants them anymore.
Permission to Play? Granted!

SUNDAE TARTS
Fill cooled Baked Tart Shells (p. 348) with ice cream. Top with chocolate or butterscotch sauce, fresh or frozen fruit. Or sprinkle ice cream with chopped nuts, shaved chocolate, or coconut.
Recipe Roadblock #2:

We don’t have any great cooks or noteworthy recipes in our family.
Recipes Evolve – Yet Still Have Roots
Recipe Roadblock #3:

I don’t cook (anymore), so I don’t have anything to offer.
Recipe Toolkit – Setting a Course (Chapter 1)

- Capture foodways not just recipes
- Write down memories
- Add supplementary materials
- Explore for working solo or with family
Recipe Roadblock #4:

Getting recipes together is too hard. My recipe stash is a mess!
Recipe Toolkit – Organizing & Protecting (Chapter 2)

- Organize your recipes
- Identify heirloom recipes
- Safely handle and store heirloom materials
Recipe Roadblock #5:

Those recipes just don’t work for me the way they did for Grandma.
Recipe Toolkit – Adjusting Recipe (Chapter 3)

- Adjust recipes – clarify or modify
- Research ways to adjust each recipe
Recipe Toolkit – Regional & World Recipes (Chapter 4)

- Translate recipes
- Convert measurements
- Find suitable ingredients
Recipe Roadblock #6:

The cooks in my family don’t use recipes so there’s nothing to share.
Recipe Toolkit – Interviews & Cooking Visits (Chapter 5)

- Create an interview plan
- Find tips for effective interviews
- Explore sample questions
- Create a well-written recipe from a discussion
Recipe Roadblock #7:

I’m too late.
All the good family cooks are gone.
Recipe Toolkit – Orphan Recipes & Research (Chapter 6)

- Research family recipes
- Learn from old recipes and community cookbooks
- Read difficult handwriting and faded documents
- Learn to cook the very old fashioned way
Recipe Roadblock #8:
I don’t have time for a project.
Recipe Toolkit – Sharing Foodways (Chapter 7)

- Find newfangled ways to share old foodways
- Seek unusual ideas for a recipe collection
- Explore binding & publishing options
Sock It to Me Cake

This mild cinnamon coffee cake is good warm or room temperature.

- 3 teaspoons cinnamon
- 3 teaspoons brown sugar
- 1 (18 ounce) yellow cake mix, divided
- 1 cup finely chopped pecans
- ¾ cup vegetable oil
- 1 cup sour cream
- 2 large eggs

1. Preheat oven to 375°. Grease and flour a tube pan.
2. Blend cinnamon, brown sugar, and 2 tablespoons cake mix in a small bowl. Set aside.
3. With an electric mixer, blend cake mix, oil, sour cream, and eggs in a large mixing bowl.
4. Pour in 2/3 of the batter into the tube pan, sprinkle it with the cinnamon mixture, and then cover with the rest of the batter.
5. Bake for 45 to 55 minutes until the top is golden brown and a toothpick inserted into the cake comes out clean. Allow cake to cool in pan for about 15 minutes before removing.

Cooking Notes: I compared this recipe with others of the same name found online to determine the amount for the nuts and to fine-tune the baking details. This recipe appeared on Duncan Hines cake mix boxes for a while, although that version calls for different amounts of cinnamon (2 teaspoons), brown sugar (2 tablespoons), oil (4 cups) and eggs (4 large). That version also calls for 1/4 cup granulated sugar. The uncut cake can be drizzled with a glaze of the following blended well: 1 cup powdered sugar, 1 tablespoon melted butter, 1 teaspoon vanilla, and two tablespoons milk. —Valerie J. Frey

History Notes: This recipe was found in the recipe collection of my paternal grandmother, Arlie Mae Reaves Frey (1917-2000) of Cleveland County, Arkansas (pictured below in 1953). It is assumed that the funny name is a reference to a catchphrase from the 1968-1973 television show, Laugh In. This cake is mentioned on page 229 of Anne Byrn’s American Cake (NY: Rodale, 2016) as one that circulated through Texas and Oklahoma in the late 1960s. —Valerie J. Frey

Recipe Roadblock #9:

Nobody is interested but me.
It may take a little time...
You are now welcome to ask questions!

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