

Cooking Through the Decades

By: Madeline H.



In history very few things have stayed constant, one of the largest and most important consistency is food. I have been very affected by my food choices, what I eat and don't eat, and how the food affects my body. Food, eating, and nutrition has been part of my family in a multitude of meaningful ways. Food has always been healthy and available as well as a time when my whole family is together.

To understand the food I eat more and why it is important to me, I went to the one place that I know where to find information on a subject like food, history. The history of food, the science of food, and why it is such a big deal for so many families. To do this I made food that would represent my family's food throughout the last 100 years.

I think the importance of these pieces of work is to show history through a different lens. The food I made was made to the best period accuracy that I could do, I wanted to be accurate so that I could be as if I was the one making it in the decade that it is for. These pieces are important pieces of history that when shown together make a timeline of food in the last decade. We can follow food to know more about the history and how food affects us as people.

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Introduction

For my final project I wanted to explore what my family would eat during different decades of American history. The last century has had many ups and downs for Americans and the purpose of this experiment is to learn more about the foods that people ate during the time period, and why they ate it. Was the food cheap? Was the food extravagant? Was it meant to make a lot out of a little? Who cooked meals and why?

Food preparation is an art. The art of cake decoration and serving food has happened for as long as we have eaten. This form of art was often for parties or celebrations to show off the talents of the cook. Most of the recipes were cooked by women for their families and that was the food I focused on.

The decades that I will be exploring include the roaring 20s, the Great Depression, World War Two, post World War Two, Swinging Sixties, the 70s, the 80s, the 90s, the 2000s, the 2010s.

Disclaimer: the recipes I chose were popular for the type of family I am in, this means, white upper-middle class, parents are together and live in a major city. Not all people who live at the certain decade could afford, or get the food my family might have.

1920-1929



The roaring 20s were about the relief that World War I was over and that men came home, and it was time to live and party. The pineapple upside down cake was a show stopper at all parties where alcohol was illegal. The illegal nature of alcohol made speakeasies and lawbreaking more normal. Parties were frequent in the affluent areas and among rich people.

Exotic fruit was able to be shipped from Hawaii to the mainland US by shipping routes developed for the world war. The Dole pineapple company was the largest pineapple packer in the world by 1923. In 1925, the Hawaiian Pineapple Company sponsored a recipe contest asking American housewives to submit their very best pineapple recipes. There were over 60,000 entries and 2,500 of them were for pineapple upside down cake, it won.

Pineapple Upside-Down Cake

Ingredients

Cake

- 1 ½ cups (200g) King Arthur Unbleached All-Purpose Flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- ¾ teaspoon salt
- 2 large eggs, yolks separated from whites, at room temperature
- ½ cup (113g) unsalted butter, at room temperature, at least 65 °F
- 1 cup (198g) granulated sugar
- ½ cup (113g) milk, at room temperature
- 1 tablespoon (14g) vanilla extract

Topping

- ¼ cup (57g) butter
- ¾ cup (160g) brown sugar
- One 20-ounce (567g) can pineapple rings, drained
- about 2 dozen maraschino cherries

Instructions

1. Preheat the oven to 350 °F.
2. Lightly grease a 9" cast iron skillet (it should measure 9" across the bottom; the top diameter may be greater than 9"). Or lightly grease a 9" x 2"-deep square cake pan.
3. Weigh your flour; or measure it by gently spooning it into a cup, then sweeping off any excess. Whisk together the flour, baking powder, and salt. Set the mixture aside.

4. Whisk the egg yolks to combine; set them aside. Beat the whites, separately, until light and frothy.
5. Beat the butter until soft and smooth. Gradually beat in the sugar.
6. Add the egg yolks, beating to combine. Scrape the bottom and sides of the bowl, and beat again, until smooth.
7. Add the milk alternately with the flour mixture, mixing gently but thoroughly after each addition.
8. Fold in the beaten whites, then the vanilla.
9. To make the topping, melt the butter in the skillet, and sprinkle the sugar evenly on top. Space pineapple rings atop the sugar.
10. Spoon the batter on top.
11. Bake the cake for 35 to 45 minutes, until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean.
12. Remove the cake from the oven. Immediately loosen its edges and CAREFULLY turn the cake upside-down onto a serving plate. Lift the pan off the cake, scraping any pineapple or brown sugar from the pan onto the cake, if it sticks.
13. Place the cherries artfully atop the warm cake, pressing them in gently.
14. Serve the cake warm, or at room temperature. Store it at room temperature, well-wrapped, for several days; freeze for longer storage.

Notes: You have to remove the cake as soon as it comes out of the oven or else it adheres to the sides of the pan. Don't skimp on the butter or brown sugar for the topping, they are what make the caramel sauce. The maraschino cherries are only for decoration, if you don't like them it's ok, they don't add much and can be removed.

The 1930s are most well known for the Great Depression in American history, with widespread poverty and not having enough money for food or housing. Although the Great Depression hung over the US and affected cities around the world, positive change and societal progression persevered. Amelia Earhart became the first female pilot to successfully fly solo across the Atlantic Ocean. Francis Scott Key's "Star Spangled Banner" is named the U.S.'s national anthem. Franklin D. Roosevelt was elected as the President of the United States in 1932 creating the United States Social Security Act, Fair Labor Standards Act and the New Deal.

Meals were often very basic and hard to make an extravagant dish, if you couldn't afford food many soup kitchens were formed and used to feed the hungry. Food was only for feeding people and was made to stretch as far as possible without actually starving. Many kids grew gardens, and raised chickens and food. Food was made with potatoes, flour or a starch, and with small amounts of meat and vegetables.

Poor Man's Meal

Ingredients

- 2 potatoes in $\frac{1}{4}$ inch cubes, peeled
- Half an onion
- 2 hot dogs in pennies
- 3 tablespoons tomato sauce
- Salt to taste
- Pepper to taste
- Oil

Instructions

1. Peel, slice and cube the potatoes in to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch cubes, rough chop the $\frac{1}{2}$ onion and add both to a pan with oil
2. Cook until the potatoes are almost done and then add the tomato sauce and pennied hot dogs.
3. Cook until the potatoes are tender and hot dogs are slightly browned
4. Serve topped with salt and pepper.

Notes: Add a lot of oil and pepper.

1930-1939



The 1940s first half was filled with war and grief as families had to ration food and necessities. In 1944, Roosevelt was elected for a fourth term as US president, winning against Thomas E. Dewey, despite his failing health. FDR died in 1945 before the end of world war two. Women during the time had to start working as their brothers, fathers, and husbands were on the other side of the world fighting the world war. Families needed money and with what came the woman's workforce, they were first seen as foolish but after so many men left and jobs needed to be filled women went to work.

Meatloaf was a simple meal that was able to be made with simple ingredients and ingredients that aren't the best quality and turn it into the best version of the ingredients with adding a lot of flavor and turning it into a meal. Every family had a different recipe that called for slightly different ingredients, including the type of meat, seasonings and glaze.

Meatloaf

Ingredients

The Loaf

- 1 pound ground beef (85% lean)
- 1 cup fresh bread crumbs (2 slices fresh bread; coarse crumbs)
- 1 small onion, minced (1/3 to 1/2 cup)
- 1 tablespoon finely minced celery
- 1/2 of an 8-oz can tomato sauce
- 1 large egg, beaten
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper (or more to taste)
- 1/8 teaspoon poultry seasoning
- 1-1/2 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce
- 1/2 teaspoon yellow prepared mustard

The Sauce

- 1/2 can tomato sauce
- 1/2 can water
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar, packed
- 2 tablespoons yellow prepared mustard
- 2 tablespoons white vinegar

1940-1949



1. Toss beef and bread crumbs together loosely but thoroughly. Blend in remaining ingredients. Form into a loaf.
2. Place in a shallow baking dish and put in a preheated 350-degree F oven while preparing the sauce.
3. In a small saucepan, combine the other half can of tomato sauce, water, brown sugar, mustard, and vinegar. Heat to boiling, stirring or whisking to blend thoroughly.
4. Pour sauce over meatloaf and continue baking 1 hour longer, basting with the sauce after 30 minutes.

Notes: If doubling quantity, form into two separate loaves and bake in two separate 8-inch square baking dishes. I would add carrots to the meatloaf next time but that is my personal preference.

1950-1959



The 50s were defined between the Soviet dominated East and the capitalist West, with the space race, baby boom, and the spark of the civil rights movement. In 1954 the U.S. Supreme Court rules that racial segregation is unconstitutional in public schools in their unanimous decision of Brown v. Board of Education. In the following year Rosa Parks didn't give up her seat and sparked the civil rights movement in the US. women still wanted to work but were also socially obligated to make dinner, have kids and stay home.

As women started to go against these norms they wanted more convenience and freedom, with that came TV dinners, fast food, and boxed cake mix. The best part of these foods were the ability to make it fast or not at all and still feed the family when you work as well. They were part homemade and that attracted women who worked and still need to feel that they made the food.

White Cake

Ingredients

Cake

- 1 Cup Water
- 1/2 Cup Vegetable Oil
- 3 Egg Whites OR 3 Whole Eggs
- Betty Crocker white cake mix

Frosting

- 3 cups powdered sugar
- ½ cup butter softened
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- 3 oz unsweetened baking chocolate, melted and cooled
- 3 to 4 tablespoons milk

Instructions

1. Heat oven to 350 °F for shiny metal or glass pan or 325 °F for dark or nonstick pan. Grease bottom and sides of Two 9” Rounds.
2. Mix Cake Mix, water, oil and egg whites (or whole eggs) in a large bowl with a mixer on medium speed or beat vigorously by hand for 2 minutes. Pour into the pan.
3. Bake until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool 10 minutes before removing from the pan. Cool completely before frosting.

4. In a medium bowl, beat powdered sugar and butter with a spoon or electric mixer on low speed until blended. Stir in vanilla and chocolate.
5. Gradually beat in just enough milk to make frosting smooth and spreadable. If frosting is too thick, beat in more milk, a few drops at a time. If frosting becomes too thin, beat in a small amount of powdered sugar. Frost.

Notes: Place the cakes right side up when you frost it, the top of the cake stick can to the plate. This is two recipes combined.

1960-1969



The 1960s had many challenges and John F Kennedy and Lyndon B. Johnson Had to keep America safe when there was panic. These include the assassinations of US President John F Kennedy and Martin Luther King, and the Cuban Missile Crisis. However awful these events of the 60s are, there was some good, man landed on the moon, the Beatles made their first hit song, and types of discriminations around housing and sales was made illegal. Women were seen more and more in college and finding jobs alongside men, they wanted to be seen more and more as equals.

The food I chose was crêpe Suzette because it was hard to make finger food that's often served at parties. Crêpe Suzette is a folded crêpe, or very flat pancakes, that has orange sauce drizzled over it. It is a French dessert that contains sugar and butter and orange liquor that becomes part of the performance piece of the desert. The orange liquor is flambé, set on fire, and then served at parties. I made a version that has the orange liqueur cooked down to remove the alcohol and just to maintain the flavor of the liquor.

Crêpes Suzette

Ingredients

Crêpes:

- 1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
- Pinch salt
- 3 eggs
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 2 cups milk
- 1 tablespoon orange liqueur (recommended: Grand Marnier)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 tablespoon orange zest
- 1/2 cup clarified butter

Sauce:

- 1 1/2 cups freshly squeezed orange juice
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 2 teaspoons grated orange zest
- 2 tablespoons orange liqueur (recommended: Grand Marnier)
- 3 oranges, peeled and sectioned
- Vanilla ice cream for serving

Instructions

1. Whisk together the flour and salt in a medium bowl. Whisk together the eggs and sugar in a large bowl until pale. Whisk in 1 1/2 cups of the milk, orange liqueur, vanilla, and orange zest and flour until combined. If the mixture is too thick, add the remaining milk until a thin consistency is achieved. Cover and refrigerate batter for 30 minutes.
2. Heat an 8-inch crêpe pan or skillet over medium heat for about 1 minute. Cover the surface of the pan with clarified butter until it gets sizzling hot. Ladle some batter onto the middle of the crêpe pan and immediately start swirling the pan to distribute the batter over the surface. Cook for 45 to 60 seconds or until lightly golden brown. Flip over and cook the other side for 20 seconds. Remove to a plate and repeat with the remaining batter.
3. In a large skillet over high heat, bring the orange juice to a boil. Add the sugar and zest, reduce the heat to a simmer, and cook until the sugar has melted and the mixture is slightly reduced, about 5 minutes. Remove from heat and add the orange liqueur and orange sections. Set aside.
4. Working in batches, gently place a crêpe into the pan holding the orange juice and orange sections. Leave for 1 minute to absorb some juice. Using a narrow spatula, remove the crêpe to a warm serving plate. Repeat with remaining crêpes. Roll the crêpes into a cylinder. Spoon on some of the orange sections. Serve 2 crêpes per person. Top with vanilla ice cream and serve immediately.

Notes: I folded them differently and ate them by hand. The extra sauce was cooked down to a caramel that I added to ice cream the next night.

1970-1979



The 70s were filled with women's rights, gay rights and environmental movements and the Watergate scandal. The voting age was lowered in 1971 and now 18-year-olds can vote. The United States Supreme Court declares that abortion is a constitutional right in the landmark decision in the Roe v. Wade case. TV shows like Saturday Night Live, and cable's first network, HBO airs for the first time. Women wanted to be equally paid, and have equal rights and wanted to pass the ERA, however much they fought and the Senate and House of Representatives passed it the states did not.

Food became a lot more balanced with foods including protein, grain, fat and fruits or vegetables showing up in a single dish. This was due to women working and still needing to cook for families and therefore dinner and meals in general became much simpler and having more essential ingredients. The ideas of a balanced diet and meal was also shown with food pyramids.

Quiche Lorraine

Ingredients

Pie Dough

- 145 grams all-purpose flour (about 1 cup)
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 stick cold unsalted butter (1/4 pound), cut in 1/8-inch pieces
- 3 tablespoons ice water

Filling

- 1 pound bacon, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 1/4 cup green onions, chopped
- 8 ounces Swiss cheese, grated and divided
- 6 large eggs, beaten
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1/2 teaspoon table salt
- Dash of ground red pepper
- Dash of white pepper
- 1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg

Instructions

1. Put flour and salt in the bowl of a stand mixer or food processor. Add butter and quickly cut it into flour until mixture resembles coarse meal.
2. Add ice water and mix briefly, about 30 seconds, to form a soft dough. Remove dough, shape into a thick disk, wrap in plastic and refrigerate

for at least 2 hours or overnight. Bring to cool room temperature before rolling.

3. To roll, lightly flour dough and counter. Roll out gradually, periodically letting dough rest for a moment before continuing. This makes rolling easier and will keep dough from shrinking back during baking.
4. Roll dough to a thin round approximately 13 inches in diameter, then trim to make a 12-inch circle (refrigerate and save trimmings for patching). Lay dough loosely into a 9 1/2-inch fluted tart pan with removable bottom, letting it relax a bit. Fold overlap back inside to make a double thickness, then press firmly against the pan so the finished edge is slightly higher than the pan. Refrigerate or freeze for an hour before pre-baking.
5. Preheat the oven to 425°. Prick bottom and sides of crust with a fork; bake 6 to 8 minutes or until lightly browned.
6. Reduce oven temperature to 350°. Cool pie crust on a wire rack while preparing the filling.
7. Cook bacon in a large skillet over medium heat, stirring often, 7 to 8 minutes or until crispy; drain on paper towels.
8. Sprinkle bacon over the bottom of the pie shell. Sprinkle green onions over bacon; sprinkle half of Swiss cheese over onions.
9. Whisk together beaten eggs and the next 5 ingredients. Carefully pour egg mixture over cheese. Sprinkle remaining cheese over egg mixture.
10. Bake at 350° for 35 to 40 minutes or until lightly browned and set in the middle. Cool 15 minutes before serving.

Notes: This is two recipes combined and you can use store bought pie crust if needing to make this recipe quicker, if you so start at step 4. I personally love this pie crust and think that it is an amazing beginner's pie crust. The nutmeg is important, it gives the egg some depth and complexity.

1980-1989



In the 1980s the president for the majority of it was Ronald Reagan, the first CD player was sold in Japan, and the AIDS epidemic was first discovered. The first woman on the supreme court, Sandra Day O'Connor, was appointed in 1981 by Reagan. In 83 Sally Ride became the first American woman in space. Even though the ERA did not pass in the 70s, women still made great strides in the 80s and were able to make great discoveries and advances for women everywhere.

Deviled eggs were popular in the 80s for the easy protein and great flavor, and were often served at birthday parties or as an appetizer. Food was a lot more available and therefore more foreign recipes and foods were served like the deviled egg from Italy.

Deviled Eggs

Ingredients

- 6 large eggs
- 2 tablespoons mayonnaise
- 1 1/2 tablespoons sweet pickle relish
- 1 teaspoon prepared mustard
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- Dash of pepper
- Garnish: paprika

Instructions

1. Place eggs in a single layer in a saucepan; add water to depth of 3 inches. Bring to a boil; cover, remove from heat, and let stand for 15 minutes.
2. Drain immediately and fill the saucepan with cold water and ice. Tap each egg firmly on the counter until cracks form all over the shell. Peel under cold running water.
3. Slice eggs in half lengthwise, and carefully remove yolks. Mash yolks with mayonnaise. Add relish, mustard, salt, and pepper; stir well. Spoon yolk mixture into egg whites. Garnish, if desired.

1990-1999



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The 90s weren't that long ago however lots of things changed during the 1990s. Google, Amazon and the World Wide Web were invented in the 90s. Bill Clinton and Al Gore were President and Vice President from 1993 to 2001, and he was impeached in 1998. There was the Gulf War and a government shutdown. The 1990s were very turbulent and had many problems but also had the invention of getting information to more people. Women were seen all over being as close to equal as possible and still being discriminated against.

Tiramisu was first invented in the 1960s but was very popular in the 1990s because it seemed to come out of nowhere and explode into popularity. Le Beccherie, a restaurant run by the Campeol family from 1939 until its closure in 2014, has gotten "official" credit for inventing tiramisu. A tiramisu is made of ladyfingers, mascarpone cream, and whipped cream, in a layered cake.

Tiramisu

Ingredients

- 6 egg yolks
- 3/4 cup white sugar
- 2/3 cup milk
- 1-1/4 cups heavy cream
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 pound mascarpone cheese
- 1/4 cup strong brewed coffee, room temperature
- 2 tablespoons rum
- 2 (3 ounce) packages ladyfinger cookies
- 1 tablespoon unsweetened cocoa powder

Instructions

1. In a medium saucepan, whisk together egg yolks and sugar until well blended. Whisk in milk and cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until mixture boils. Boil gently for 1 minute, remove from heat and allow to cool slightly. Cover tightly and chill in the refrigerator for 1 hour.
2. In a medium bowl, beat cream with vanilla until stiff peaks form.
3. Whisk mascarpone into yolk mixture until smooth.
4. In a small bowl, combine coffee and rum.
5. Split ladyfingers in half lengthwise and drizzle with coffee mixture.
6. Arrange half of soaked ladyfingers in the bottom of a 7×11 inch dish.

7. Spread half of mascarpone mixture over ladyfingers, then half of whipped cream over that.
8. Repeat layers and sprinkle with cocoa.
9. Refrigerate 4 to 6 hours, until set.

Notes: I needed a bit more coffee sauce for over the ladyfingers and just used coffee for the little extra. The rum was quite potent and so you could reduce the rum and add more coffee. I would even make this the day before you need it as the flavor develops over time.

2000-2009



The 2000s weren't that long ago but there were some awful things that happened, including 9/11, Iraq war and Afghanistan war. The food movement of the 2000s were farm to table, fresh ingredients, organic, non GMO and other food quality standards. As a child born in 2002 I grew up eating GMO free organic food that was bought at Whole Foods, there weren't Lunchables, Twinkies, or overly processed foods and I liked it. With more women working child care and later pregnancy was becoming more appropriate and often meant that children were more planned.

As a child in California I grew up on avocados and avocado based products. My favorite and the one I am best known for is guacamole. I add lots of garlic and lime as well as keeping it very simple and fresh, perfect for the 2000s.

Guacamole

Ingredients

- Two avocados
- Three cloves of garlic
- Half a lime
- Half a tomato
- Salt to taste
- Pepper to taste

Instructions

1. Cut and remove the avocado from the skin and add them to the bowl
2. Mash till it reaches a smooth consistency and add all the other ingredients
3. Mix together tasting for salt and pepper until it is the flavor you desire.

Note: My family loves garlic in our guacamole, however that means this recipe is quite strong, if you don't like garlic, start with less. If you need to save it then push it all into a pile and cover with cling wrap and store in the fridge.

2010-2019



The 2010s found the rise of gluten free, keto and paleo diets. The trends of the times seemed to come and go a lot quicker because of social media and the spread of rumors and ideas. In 2010, I was eight and therefore I grew up during this period of time. My mother is gluten free because it hurts her stomach, and she can't process gluten. So my family has less gluten than I think the typical family. We all eat with the idea of health on our minds, now for my family that means eating a balanced diet of things that you want to eat, however many people cut out foods or specific ingredients that they don't like or like the effects on their bodies. The #MeToo movement and woman's marches became part of the new woman's movement as more women came out about sexual assault and how common place it was even if it was detrimental to their job.

I did gluten free food to follow the gluten free trend and make something my mom could eat. I also tried to find a food low in sugar because I find processed sugar can harm my mood because I get happy on the sugar and then I crash really hard when it has left my system.

Gluten Free Vanishing Oatmeal Raisin Cookies

Ingredients

- 1/2 Cup(s) (1 stick) plus 6 tablespoons butter, softened
- 3/4 Cup(s) firmly packed brown sugar
- 1/2 Cup(s) granulated sugar
- 2 Large Eggs
- 1 Teaspoon(s) vanilla
- 1 1/2 Cup(s) gluten free multi-purpose flour blend
- 1 Teaspoon(s) gluten free baking soda
- 1 Teaspoon(s) ground cinnamon
- 1/2 Teaspoon(s) salt (optional)
- 3 Cup(s) Quaker® Gluten Free Quick 1-Minute Oats, uncooked
- 1 Cup(s) raisins

Instructions

1. Heat oven to 350 °F. In a large bowl, beat butter and both sugars on medium speed with an electric mixer until creamy.
2. Add eggs and vanilla; beat well.
3. Add flour blend, baking soda, cinnamon and salt; mix well. Stir in oats and raisins; mix well.

4. Drop dough by rounded tablespoonfuls onto ungreased cookie sheets. Bake for 10 to 12 minutes or until light golden brown.
5. Cool for 1 minute on cookie sheets; remove to wire rack. Cool completely. Store tightly covered.

Notes: The cookies were too hard and slightly over cooked for my taste, and so I added the heel of a loaf of bread and that helped the texture and softness a lot.

Conclusion

Food is needed for life and I often forget that food wasn't always a given and can be taken away. As we now know food isn't as easy as going to the store, when things are normal, everyone gets the right foods and supplies in the right amount. However, when we are at times of peril, war, depression, or pandemic, people aren't able to do everything they need to do.

The hardest decade to cook and choose meals for were the 1930s, the 2000 and the 2010. I think this was because the great depression was a time of very little and all the meals were very similar. The 2000s and 2010s were hard because I got into these things, and so I know what was popular during these decades and therefore had a hard time choosing what theme to focus on for each one and then what food itself.

I learned a lot in the last century with food. I learned that food changes a lot when big events happen and that food is often made to feed a lot of people if needed. Even if things seem awful and that you could give up, food is something to brighten your day and make it a little more joyful. The human population at its most basic needs food, water and shelter to live. However, food can come in many forms and depending on the market. Where you live and how much money you make or have is what really determines what you eat. My family through the decades would have been fine and had enough money to eat and make food that was above the basics.