Stirring Up MMMemories

Readers recall the flavors they savored in the good old days.

French Toast to Most Folks

I GREW UP in New Orleans, in the 1100 block of Milan Street. There were 45 school-aged children who lived in our area, and since it was cheaper to eat lunch at home rather than in school, all 45 went home at noon.

But on rainy days, the mothers took turns, three at a time, making lunches and bringing them to us. There was a great variety, but the favorite of all 45 was when the mothers brought "loss bread"…French toast to other folks.

—Dora Watson, Glasgow, Virginia

Easter Treats, Italian Style

AT EASTER TIME, my Italian grandma made ricotta cookies with pastel frosting, colored baby blue, pistachio green, light pink and yellow. Piled high on a plate, they resembled Easter eggs, full of ricotta cheese, fluffy and light. They provide a special memory for me and are still made today.

—Paula Timpson, East Hampton, New York

Land of Plenty

IN MARCH 1963, I arrived in the United States from Germany with my G.I. husband, two babies and very limited knowledge of the English language.

At my first Easter dinner, with my husband's whole family at my mother-in-law's house, there were so many strange and new foods to eat. My mother-in-law kept saying to me, "Eat, eat…I have plenty!"

After the meal, everyone got up and began clearing the table. I remained seated, waiting for the wonderful dish called plenty!

—Christel Koertgen, Paradise, California

Biscuit-Snacking Soldiers

DURING WWII, many troops trained for war close by our home in Tennessee. We were poor but always had plenty to eat.

One day, when I came home from school, I fixed myself a treat of my mother's biscuits, buttered and sugared, and headed across the field to visit with the soldiers. When they saw me eating the biscuits, they asked if there were any more at home. I nodded "yes," went back home to butter and sugar the leftovers and then took them to the soldiers.

After that, they kept me busy giving them snacks and buckets of water, which they were not supposed to have. But often, on the way home, I discovered some coins in the otherwise empty buckets!

—Billy Jones, Shelbyville, Tennessee

Best Potato Chips Ever

IN THE EARLY '50s, when we visited our grandparents, Grandpa Dennis' ritual began with a trip to the root cellar to fetch a large potato. With his pocketknife, he sliced the potato paper-thin, so thin you could almost see through each slice.

The five of us children would line up as he cooked the slices on top of the hot cookstove, one at a time, sprinkling each with a little salt and turning them with a big metal spatula.

Each of us would get one of the potato chips and then go to the back of the line and wait for the next one. They were the best potato chips in the world, and I have never tasted anything like them since.

—Karen Dennis, Lemon Grove, California