Stirring Up Mmm-Memories

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

Tough Bird

IN the early ’60s, we lived on an inactive mining claim in Oregon. One year, there were no funds for a Thanksgiving turkey. One of our neighbors offered us a goose, which we gladly accepted.

As the bird was roasting, the aroma filled the house, but after 8 hours, the bird was impenetrable. I finally immersed it and boiled it…still no change.

We later discovered that the goose had been a barnyard guard for more than 11 years.

—Irmgard Wood, Westlake Village, California

Necessity, the Mother of Invention

AS November approaches, I always remember our first Thanksgiving in Ohio, in 1950.

These were hard times for our family, so we all lived together, six adults and six children. We were very happy and all felt loved and protected.

This was to be a special Thanksgiving. As poor as we were, we still had turkey with all the trimmings. A special treat was Jell-O for dessert. Aunt Dorothy didn’t have a big enough bowl for the quantity she had to make, so she sent Uncle Henry to buy one. He came back with a half-bushel tub! They agreed it was clean and new, so why not use it? To solve the dilemma of fitting it into the refrigerator, Aunt Dorothy covered it and snuggled it deeply into a snowdrift out to set. It worked!

—Betty Dunbar, Barberton, Ohio

The Comfort of Pumpkin Pie

PUMPKIN PIE has been a comfort to me throughout my life. When I dined at Grandma's and Grandpa's, all I needed to do was to clear my dessert plate and another piece of pumpkin pie would appear. Mom carried the practice into our family as our favorite dessert, and there was always pumpkin pie at our traditional Sunday dinners.

—Arlene Buss, Midvale, Utah

Oops! Pay Attention

AS a class project when I was in fifth grade, in the '20s, we made apple jelly. To determine when the jelly was ready to come off the stove, our teacher instructed us to take out a small amount and add a pinch of Epsom salts to check if it jelled.

I missed part of the directions and added the Epsom salts to the whole pot. It jelled beautifully and turned a bright green. I was so proud of my achievement, I delivered jars to my neighbors.

When my mother tasted my prize jewel, it was an awful discovery. Back I went to all of our neighbors to retrieve my bitter jelly.

—Frances Bush, Columbia, Mississippi

Culinary Creations

During the early 1950s, my mother, Julia Kemp, was a well-known caterer for weddings and parties of all sizes in the Iron Range area of northern Minnesota. She prepared all week for one to three weddings a Saturday. She used cloth doilies on her serving dishes and always wore one of her pretty party aprons for those special occasions.

—Susan Filbrandt, Lake Mills, Iowa