



Gathering At Table

Recipes & Stories Across Cultures

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FOREWORD

By Royal Orr..

At St James - MCM, we believe in the power of gathering people together. When we meet and listen to one another, an almost magical thing happens - the seeds of friendship are planted.

That's especially the case when we gather in a spirit of service.

Gathering and listening like this can lead us to go out to the world and witness to what we have learned and to the friendships that have resulted. That's the spirit that inspired "Gathering at Table" and this collection of recipes - to meet strangers from different backgrounds, to share memories and stories of food and the people who prepared it, to talk about the love and care that making and eating food can represent in our lives, confident that this gathering would enrich our lives.

And so it is; with great pleasure, we present to you just a few of the recipes and the stories that we heard from new friends as we gathered at table...





Robert Verrall - scalloped potatoes

I first came to St. James to organize the funeral of my beloved Marion. As I sat in the empty church, waiting for Rev. Bonnar to arrive for our appointment, a young woman was softly playing the organ. I was moved to tears by the gentle notes, remembering Marion's father who was an organist. It was fate that brought me to the church that day and I have never left. I became a member of the congregation and soon joined Montreal City Mission as a volunteer and MCM Elder-in-Residence, as well as an enthusiastic participant in the *Gathering At Table* project. What could be better than meeting other seniors from near and far and sampling wonderful food?!

As children we all had at dinner favorite items we liked and others not so much. Some of us did not like Peas. Turnip, Parsnip, carrots, but all of us loved our mother's Scallop Potatoes. It was certainly my favorite. There was always a beautiful crust on top, perfectly done in the oven. And there was enough of this for all of us to share.

I usually make this in the morning then reheat when the ham (or whatever) is done.

Robert's scalloped potatoes

INGREDIENTS

- 2 ½ lbs potatoes, peeled and sliced
- 2 cups milk
- 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- garlic, smashed (at least 4 to 6 cloves)
- Salt and pepper
- Tons of any sharp cheese, grated (I use white cheddar)



DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit
2. Make the milk mixture first: bring to a boil and let sit for as long as you want
3. Peel, slice and rinse potatoes, place in 9" x 13" casserole dish (oven ware)
4. Strain mixture over potatoes, discard garlic
5. Throw cheese on top – go crazy!
6. Bake at 375 degrees for 1 hour





Hassan Younis - Molokhia

As a refugee senior finding myself alone here in Montreal, suddenly, small things mean a lot. I do not remember that I ever ate Molokhia alone or had dinner by myself without being surrounded by my kids and grandkids.

The other day, I invited my friend to have lunch with me and our dish was the famous Molokhia. I had flashbacks from my previous life when I remembered all the women gathering together to prepare the Molokhia dish. As a child I remember how so many women came to meet up in our home ... together preparing the food ... sharing their lives with one another ... telling us beautiful stories. We could smell the Molokhia's " " and hear the sizzling – what we call “Tasha” - from the street where we used to play - waiting for the delicious lunch to be served!

Molokhia is more than food for me. It reminds me of my friends, family and brings me joy.

Hassan's Molokhia

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pkg frozen or dry Molokhia (400g)
- 1 whole chicken
- 6 cups of chicken broth (for each molokhia package)
- 4 garlic cloves
- 1 medium onion
- 1 chopped tomato
- coriander
- 1 tablespoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black peppers
- 4 tablespoons oil
- Pita bread



DIRECTIONS



1. Put the chicken in a pot filled with water and cook until the water starts boiling then put the diced onion, salt, pepper on the chicken then let it boil for an hour.
2. Add the chopped 4 cloves of garlic with coriander and fry it with two tablespoons of corn oil, until the garlic's color becomes golden brown.
3. Add the chicken broth, chopped Molokhia, and the fried garlic to the pot.
4. Season the soup with the black pepper and bring it to a simmer. Let it boil for about 10 minutes
5. Add the tomato to make the soup's texture less gooey, if desired
6. Make white rice or pita bread to serve along with the chicken and Molokhia soup.



VALERIE SHANNON - LEMON PUDDING

I grew up with my Irish grandmother living in our home. Sarah Jane Rea was born on a farm on the outskirts of Belfast, Northern Ireland in 1898. She was one of five children. She married James Robert Wylie and moved into the city of Belfast and then to Comber. They had two daughters, one of whom was my mother. My grandmother worked "in service" which was very common for Irish women of the day. Because of sectarian violence and the Irish Civil War, they immigrated to Montreal in 1925 to establish a safer, better life for themselves and their children. They were not the first family members to come to Canada...all their siblings did as well as their mother who was widowed by then and having to support two younger children both of whom died of infectious diseases shortly after their arrival. My grandfather worked as a van driver for Eaton's Department store as it was well known in Montreal that Timothy Eaton, a wealthy Irishman, would hire all new Irish immigrants. My grandmother worked most of her life at Miss Edgar's and Cramp's private school for girls which had several borders in addition to day students. She cleaned and cooked for the students and staff and looked after the headmistress on Saturdays. She was no stranger to hard work. In our home, she loved to make soup, potato bread, wheaten bread and my favourite, lemon pudding. I imagine that while in Ireland, she learned how to make the lemon pudding for the wealthy families to whom she was in service as lemons were scarce and costly. When I was about to be married, I asked my grandmother to give me the recipe. She dictated it to me as it is written below. I cherish it and the many happy occasions at which we enjoyed it. How I wish I had asked more questions about her early life when I was growing up. In the meantime, I have many wonderful memories of my grandmother, Sarah Jane Wylie, who lived to be 99 years of age.

VALERIE'S LEMON PUDDING

INGREDIENTS

- 1 Lemon
- 2 tbsp flour
- 1 cup white sugar
- Melted butter (the size of a walnut)
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup milk



DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees Fahrenheit
2. Grate rind and juice of one lemon
3. Beat 2 eggs, whites and yolks separately
4. Mix flour and sugar thoroughly
5. Add lemon juice and rind, yolk of eggs, milk and butter to the bowl.
6. Then add stiffly beaten egg whites.
7. Place the dish in a pan of water and bake for 3/4 of an hour.



This is exactly how Nanny dictated the recipe to me.



Dina Basiony - Kushari

I find strength in remembering the positive things in my life. Through preparing and enjoying Kushari, I connect with a lot of happy, memorable moments that bring me back to family gatherings and conversations during mealtime. Kushari still represents a traditional, well known meal in Egypt. During the Arab spring of 2011, I, along with other demonstrators, kept up energy with Kushari. Why do I especially like this meal? Because in the past I used to hear that the kushari is a dish for poor people. It gives them energy and power to continue their journey. When the Arab Spring volunteers distributed Kuhsari to us in the square, I had a wonderful feeling, knowing that the “ poor people’s meal” was bringing all people together.

When I heard about the GAT project and the different participants from so many backgrounds, I got the same feeling and I was excited that again food will bring people together and create a better life for all.

Dina's Kushari

INGREDIENTS

oil
1/3 cup vermicelles
2 cups of rice
2 cups of water
salt
1 cup brown lentils
1 onion
1 and 1/2 teaspoon cumin
1 cup soaked chickpeas
1/2 cup of pasta - small size

Sause:

6 garlic cloves
3 cups tomato sauce
1/2 spoon cumin
1/2 spoon of sugar
1 piece grated onion
1/4 cup vinegar
1/2 teaspoon hot sauce
1/8 cup lemon juice
2 tablespoons tomato paste
1/2 teaspoon black pepper



DIRECTIONS

Put oil in an empty pot, then add the noodles and stir it until golden then add the rice to it, add the water and salt (water should cover the ingredients and increase by 2 centimeters above); leave it with the lid on a low heat until it is cooked.

Bring another pot of water and lentils, add onions, cumin and salt to it, and leave it on a low heat until it becomes soft.

Boil chickpeas and the pasta

To make tomato sauce:

In another bowl, put oil and garlic, stir until light yellow, add tomato juice, two tablespoons of sauce and spices.

Fry the onions in the oil, stirring constantly, until they become light brown in color. Put the onions on a kitchen paper to get rid of the excess oil, and set them aside. Add the lentils to the rice and stir them.

Then we prepare **the Kushari special sauce**: (vinegar and chili, a small amount of lemon juice and a finely crushed clove of garlic), mix all the ingredients well, and put them in a bowl.

You can serve kushari by putting the cooked ingredients on the plates, and decorate it by distributing tomato sauce adding caramelized onions.



Ann Martin - Shortbread

Bread-in Name Only

Shortbread dates back to medieval Scotland and was originally a sweet yeast-based biscuit. To avoid paying the taxes that were levied on biscuits at the time, Scottish bakers classified their yeasted biscuits as "bread." Eventually, the yeast was replaced by butter, and today's version of shortbread was born. The "short" in shortbread is a reference to its texture. These cookies have a high ratio of butter to flour and a low moisture content, which inhibits the development of gluten in the dough and keeps the cookies tender and crumbly - a texture known as "short."

What fond memories I have as a child watching my grandfather, Jim Wright from Dundee, prepare his shortbreads in the kitchen while belting out 'I Love a Lassie' from one of Scotland's most famous singers Harry Lauder His song lives on in my heart!

Ann's Shortbread

INGREDIENTS

- 8oz butter
- 1/2 cup white sugar
- 2 cups flour



DIRECTIONS

1. Mix well-placed into 9'x13' pan
2. crimp edges , prick shortbread with fork every 2 mins
3. Preheat oven to 350° for 20 mins
4. Reduce temp to 300° and bake for 5 mins then turn off heat, open oven door slightly and keep shortbread in oven for at least 30 minutes

'This process make the shortbread short'





Mahmoud Nasser - Snunniya

Social life and gathering need a reason. A newborn is always a good reason for people to gather, eat, and chat.

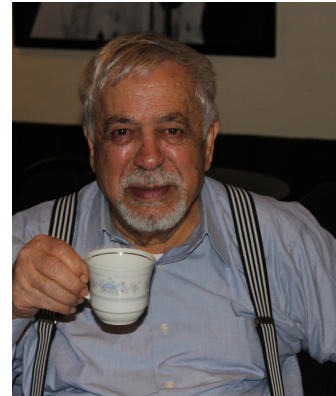
Years ago, I lived with my family in a small village in Palestine, called Kafr Laqif. We were farmers and my parents worked mainly in agriculture. I remember when someone had a new baby, all the village celebrated and participated in the snunniya preparing process. They used to go outside and cook the snunniya in a big pot. It was always a wonderful experience for me.

A year ago I was delighted with the birth of my grandson and wanted to prepare the snunniya for him. But what a big different way of doing it. I did it alone with my wife in a small kitchen. I missed the noise and action that always accompanied the cooking.

Mahmoud's Snunniya

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup of wheat berries
- 5 cups of water
- 1 cup of sugar (or more if needed)
- 1 cup of rose water
- 1 tablespoon of blossom water
- 2/1 cup of pine nuts
- 2/1 cup of peeled walnuts
- 2/1 cup of peeled almonds
- 1 cup of sweet pomegranate



DIRECTIONS

1. Wash and soak the wheat berries and the nuts in water for a whole night;
2. On the next day drain the wheat and place it in the pressure cooker and add the necessary water. boil for half an hour (after draining the pot)
3. Add sugar to wheat and stir on fire for 5 minutes
4. Remove the pot from oven and add rose water, flower water, soaked grains and sweet pomegranate beans
5. Stir the mixture and serve hot or cold, to taste (with nuts sprinkled on top)



RENATE SUTHERLAND - MIXED FRUIT FLAN

I was born and grew up in Berlin, Germany during the war, when there was extensive food rationing. We were lucky to have family living in the countryside and who had various types of berry bushes and fruit trees in their gardens. We visited them often

I remember with fondness my mother making and serving the refreshing and colourful "Obsttorte" when we celebrated family birthdays and holidays. It was always a family tradition to serve it in the afternoon at "Kaffee und Kuchen" (cake and coffee time). After immigrating to Canada in the early 50's, the "Obsttorte" tradition has continued in my family. To this day it is a favourite family dessert. I make it often and enjoy introducing it as my dessert contribution to event gatherings.

Renate's "Obsttorte"- Mixed Fruit Flan

INGREDIENTS

Base:

Pastry ingredients for a 12" fluted tart pastry spring form:

- 6 oz. or 150 grams flour
- 2 ½ oz. or 65 grams sugar
- 1 tsp. baking powder
- 1 egg
- 2/3 oz. or 65 grams margarine or butter



Topping:

- Two packages of Dr. Oetker Clear Glaze (unflavoured)
- Fresh fruit or well drained canned fruits
- Whipped cream or Reddi Whip

DIRECTIONS

Base:

1. Sift flour, sugar and baking powder into a mixing bowl
2. Add margarine/butter, cut into, dice and blend lightly with fingertips until mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs
3. Beat egg and work in lightly. Press or roll out dough unto slightly greased and floured base of pastry form
4. Bake at 300 F for 20 – 30 mins. until baked but not brown. **Cool pastry**

Topping

- Prepare TWO packages of Dr. Oetker Clear Glaze as per instructions and let cool
- Arrange any combination of fresh fruit (washed and dried) on baked pastry base.
- Pour cooked glaze, slightly cooled and thickened, over prepared fruit and refrigerate
- Serve chilled with whipped cream or Reddi Whip/per serving, as desired



Salwa Sadek - Soup

"Sweet memories"

This is what my granny's soup meant to me and reminds of when I think of her and the family gathering in her house along with her beautiful cats. It 's associated with the sweet old days when my siblings and I were young, happy and sometimes naughty as most children are.

One of the things I 'll never forget from that period is when I slipped my share of meat to the cat waiting under the table because I did not like meat that much. I had done it many times when my elder brother finally noticed though he did not make an issue out of it on the spot. However, he talked to me afterwards and asked me to tell everybody that I did not like the meat in the delicious soup.

It was a good experience for me to express myself without worrying about pleasing others. I miss my late grandmother, my parents and the playful cats.

Really, they were sweet days..

Salwa's Soup

INGREDIENTS

- 2 peeled and grated carrots
- 2 grated zucchini
- 1 grated onion
- Fresh tomato juice (do it in the blender)
- Some burghul
- Cooked veal or beef cubes
- Some salt, pepper, cumin
- Fresh chopped coriander



DIRECTIONS

1. In a pot put the meat broth (maraka) or the liquid in which you cooked the meat, bring to boil then add onion, zucchini, tomatoes, spices after 5 minutes add the cooked meat cubes and burghul. Stir regularly
2. Cook everything together for like 15 minutes on medium heat
3. When done add chopped coriander
4. Serve with bread





Sandra Woods- Chewy Coconut Macaroons

My recipe is a very 20th century story. I grew up in a one-parent family and my mother's parents lived with us. My mother worked and neither my mother nor grandmother had the time or inclination to cook. We generally ate supper in front of the television although I do remember being around the dining room table for special meals like Christmas or Easter and even for Sunday dinner when I was little.

Consequently, I did not learn to cook from my family nor do I have any old family recipes or stories. What I do have is friends that I like to entertain and I spend much enjoyable time searching the internet and/or my cookbooks for recipes that I think will come together in interesting menus and that people will like. Although I will sometimes make substitutions, I generally follow the recipe the first time I make something and after that will make changes if I think something will work. The recipe I have submitted here is one that has been quite well-received!

Sandra's Macaroons

INGREDIENTS

- 14 ounces Sweetened flaked coconut
- $\frac{3}{4}$ Cup Sweetened condensed milk
- 1 TB Vanilla
- 2 Large egg whites
- $\frac{1}{8}$ Tsp salt



DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 325 with rack in lower middle position.
2. Line baking sheets with parchment paper
3. In large bowl stir together coconut, sweetened condensed milk and vanilla. Combine well
4. In medium bowl beat egg whites until they form stiff peaks
5. Transfer egg whites to large bowl and fold into coconut mixture. Do not overmix
6. Drop tablespoon size mounds of mixture onto lined baking sheets approximately 2 inches apart
7. Bake 15-18 minutes until tops are golden. (Time depends on the oven and size of the mound).
8. Let cookies cool fully on baking sheets before transferring to serving plate
9. If desired, drizzle with dark chocolate once cookies are fully cooled



Stephen Forde - Jerk Chicken Wings

Visits with my aunt and uncle in Brooklyn, New York always included family suppers featuring great Trinidadian dishes like pelau (pigeon peas and rice with chicken) or callaloo (a thick soup made with okra and spinach with crab). But on one of those visits, a family friend, who came to the U.S. from Jamaica, brought over a pan of oven-roasted jerked chicken pieces to add to the collective meal. It was an instant hit – hot and spicy and savory, as all good Caribbean dishes are. Wade and I both insisted that she give us the recipe.

Turns out, jerk chicken is more of a method than it is a recipe and it's ridiculously easy to make. But there are a couple of secrets from the Caribbean culinary tradition that will make a jerk dish truly great. First, you must rinse the chicken pieces in a bowl with water with a splash of vinegar added. This helps to wash away and kill any bacteria that may be on the skin and the surface of the meat and it helps to ensure that the meat absorbs the flavor of the seasoning.

Secret number two: As anybody from the Caribbean will tell you, you must season the meat before you cook it – not after! After rinsing and draining, rub the seasoning into the meat with olive oil. The oil helps the meat absorb the seasoning. Then put it in the fridge for at least a couple of hours to let the flavors really penetrate the meat.

The jerked chicken wings seem to always be a hit at our Saint James pot-lucks, but they're also great at picnics (with potato salad of course!) and can be served as appetizers. Any part of the chicken (or just about any other meat – even fish) can be jerked this way and enjoyed with a rice dish such as pelau.

Stephen's Jerk Chicken Wings

INGREDIENTS

- 2 lbs. Chicken wings
- 4 tablespoons Jerk seasoning (We use the wet style that comes in a jar. Walkerswood is our favourite, other brands are good as well - Aunt May's, Grace, etc. This will make it fairly hot. Use less for a milder dish.)
- 1 teaspoon Onion powder
- 1 teaspoon Garlic powder
- 2 tablespoons Olive oil



DIRECTIONS

1. Rinse the wings thoroughly in a bowl with water and about half a cup of vinegar
2. Drain
3. In the same bowl, add the jerk and the other seasoning, along with the olive oil
Thoroughly work the oil and seasoning into the chicken. Don't be afraid to get your hands in there!
4. Cover and put in the fridge and let marinate for at least two hours. Overnight is even better!
5. When ready to cook, lay the wings out on a baking tray lined with parchment paper
6. In a pre-heated oven, bake at 350° F for 30 to 45 minutes. It can also be done on the barbecue.



Arlen Bonnar - Nan's Corn Chowder

This is my grandmother's recipe. I was born in Cape Breton Island on the Canadian east coast in the early 1950s. Sydney, my home town was surrounded by three major industries, steel making, coal mining and fishing. We, like many others, lived on the lower economic side of the community. Hard working men and women struggled to make ends meet, often from paycheque to paycheque.

While we never went hungry, feeding a large extended family was always a challenge.

This recipe was one of those able to feed a maximum of people at a minimum cost. It was filling, nourishing and good!

Here's to my Nan!

Nan's Corn Chowder

INGREDIENTS

- 4 medium size potatoes, peeled and cut into small quarter inch cubes
- 1 medium onion peeled and finely chopped
- 2 medium carrots finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 2 cans of creamed corn (398 ml each)
- 1 can evaporated whole milk (could use 2%)
- 1 tin of whole corn (optional)
- 2-3 tablespoons butter



DIRECTIONS

In a large pot:

1. Sauté onions in tablespoon of butter over medium heat for 2-3 minutes
2. Add carrots and potatoes, stir for 2 minutes
3. Cover vegetable with cold water, just covering them. Add salt
4. Bring to a gentle boil for 10-15 minutes, until the potatoes are just soft
5. DO NOT drain vegetables. Add creamed corn, evaporated milk, optional kernel corn and butter. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
6. Stir, leave on medium heat until close to boiling.
7. Remove from heat.
8. Often served with saltine crackers or just good bread.
9. Refrigerate if not served within half hour. It is better the next day when re-heated. Can be kept in the fridge for 2-3 days.
10. This is a user friendly recipe and quantities can be easily modified to suit your tastes. Enjoy!

Afterword

By VALERIE SHANNON..

We came together....because who can resist an invitation from Paula

We came together....because of curiosity

We came together....knowing that a middle eastern lunch would be delicious

We came together....trusting that the combination of food and stories would uncover common ground

We are together....new faces, different languages, introductions, some unease

We are together....what a feast! A green bean with so much promise, an Egyptian pudding prepared for a family rite of passage, an Irish immigrant story flavoured with lemon pudding, a Scottish grandfather with sleeves rolled up making short bread, Cape Breton corn chowder that stretches to feed many mouths, Portuguese custard tarts, falafel, lentil soup that warms the cockles of your heart

We are together....new faces, new stories, familiar faces, confessions, more openness, greater comfort not just in the food offered but in being together

We are together....questions, questions....can food bridge differences, can food be the beginnings of friendship, can food demonstrate cultural evolution, can food be the catalyst for connecting in a meaningful way, how do we capture our collective experience

Together....

.... we learn about each other

.... we remember our family traditions

.... we bring the past into the present and think about the future

.... we create something new.

A taste of home: Montreal seniors share food, culture, personal stories in new cookbook



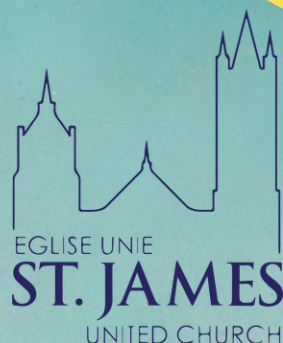
Make
the
season
kind



Recipe notes....



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