

Hogtown HomeGrown

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The Passing of an Era

From the age of ten, when her mother died, Granny was in charge of the “house” part of her family’s household. From 1918 until 2002 she cooked three meals a day for whoever happened to be part of the household that day. It was simple food—local, seasonal vegetables and meats cooked Southern style—filling and inexpensive! In the 1950’s, when she and Granddaddy began to live in Miami Beach for the winter months, her repertoire expanded. I would sit on her kitchen counter and watch as she wrapped pompano in parchment to cook, never imagining how much she had to learn and change through the years. This was a woman with an incredible work ethic—from restaurants to dairy farms, rose growing to baby rocking, she just got up every morning, put on her pantyhose (once they were invented in the 60’s) and did her job of running her home. Granny died peacefully June 25th, at the age of 99 years, 3 months. After her funeral the topic inevitably turned to food and everyone reminisced about the list of desserts there would be to choose from at the end of a meal. “Now what do you want for dessert? We have Aunt Mae’s Pound Cake, cobbler, Chess Pie, sliced peaches, Jello, Lemon Custard Ice Cream, vanilla ice cream, sugar wafers and Oreos.” We will not see a woman like her again, but I will always be prepared to list the desserts when I become a Granny!

Mae Gillespie’s Pound Cake

INGREDIENTS

2 sticks butter (1/2 pound), softened
3 cups white granulated sugar
5 large eggs, room temperature
3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon cream of tartar
1 cup milk or evaporated milk
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1/2 teaspoon almond OR lemon extract

DIRECTIONS

Butter and flour cake pan. Set aside.
Cream butter and sugar until very light and creamy.
Add eggs one at a time beating vigorously after each addition. The air you beat in now will cause the cake to rise, so if you are making it by hand, be prepared!

Mix cream of tartar into flour with a fork.
Beat flour and milk alternately into butter/egg mixture, ending with milk.
Stir in vanilla and other extract.
Pour into prepared pan, smoothing top lightly with a spatula.
Place pan in cold oven and set temperature to 325 degrees.
Bake 90 minutes without peeking.
Cake is done when a toothpick tests clean.
Remove from pan immediately.
Let cool before slicing.
Wrap in two layers, such as foil and a zip-loc or plastic wrap and foil, so it will stay as moist as possible.
Slice thinly, so you can eat two slices without feeling guilty.

Tricks and Tips

Want to use honey instead of sugar? Honey is sweeter, so use about 1/2 the amount called for when substituting for sugar. You'll have to work with your favorite recipes to determine the correct proportions, but when I use honey in baked goods, I add extra flour to achieve the right texture.

It's Local, It's Fresh, It's Honey

What's sweeter than sugar and produced locally year round? Golden, delicious Florida honey! Bees are out there working every day to make honey for you to drip on a biscuit, drizzle over fruit salad or spoon into your tea.

In this area there are several varieties of honey available—Tupelo, Orange Blossom, Gallberry and Wildflower. I tend to use Tupelo when I want the taste of the honey to stand out, like in Honey Vanilla Ice Cream or Christmas Eggnog (December 2006). Orange Blossom is what I prefer dripping off my biscuit or swirled into my oatmeal; its distinct flavor is meant to be savored. Gallberry and Wildflower find their way into my baked goods and winter squash recipes, since they are stronger and can handle the competition of other flavors.

Enjoy local honey and do what you can to make sure our children get to enjoy it too by providing habitats and environments for bees to thrive. Not only are bees important for honey production, but they provide pollination services for crops all over the world—if they are endangered, so are our food sources.

Heirloom Tomatoes

Remember those tomatoes your granny or grandpa grew—sweet and flavorful, ready to eat straight from the garden, still warm from the sun? I found several varieties of heirloom tomatoes at a recent market, including Martino's Roma, Druzba, Wapsinicon Fuzzy Peach and Bean's Yellow Pear. Look for heirlooms so you can relive those tasty tomato memories. If you garden, check seed catalogs for tomatoes and other heirloom vegetables.

What's Fresh Right Now?

Beans—green
Corn—Silver Queen, bi-color
Cucumbers—hydroponic, Kirby
Eggplant—Italian, Oriental, white
Elderberries
Figs—LSU purple, Celeste, trees
Honey—Tupelo, Gallberry, Orange Blossom
Leeks
Melons—watermelon, cantaloupe
Okra
Onions—dry yellow
Pears—Florida Sand
Peas—white acre, black-eye, black crowder, zipper cream, pink eye
Peppers—jalapeno, banana, poblanos, sweet green and red
Potatoes—sweet
Squash—yellow, spaghetti, Delicata, acorn, butternut, Pink Banana, calabaza, pumpkin
Tomatoes—beefsteak, sun-gold, cherry, sweet grape juliet, black cherry, lemon boy, heirloom

Honey Vanilla Ice Cream

INGREDIENTS

1 cup honey (try local honey)
2 cups (16 ounces) whipping cream
10 cups low fat milk
2 Tablespoons vanilla
2 bags ice (don't try to use ice from home)
1-2 cups ice cream salt (rock salt)

DIRECTIONS

Whisk honey and cream together until completely mixed. Stir in milk and vanilla. Refrigerate overnight or until chilled. Stir again and freeze in an electric or hand crank ice cream churn, according to directions. After ice cream is ready, if you have time, pack it down with more ice and salt, wrap churn in towels and let it cure for an hour. Serve and expect compliments and rave reviews. Leftovers can be frozen in plastic containers, but place each container in a paper bag before freezing to keep the ice cream from turning into a chunk of ice.

Sweet and Sour Cucumber Salad

INGREDIENTS

2 cups cucumber, thinly sliced
1/2 small sweet onion, thinly sliced (optional)
1/2 cup rice wine vinegar
2 tablespoons honey or raw sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt

DIRECTIONS

Mix vinegar, sugar and salt, stirring until dissolved. Add cucumber (and onion) and mix well. Marinate refrigerated for at least 1 hour or up to 24 hours prior to serving.

Sautéed Bay Scallops

INGREDIENTS

2 pounds fresh or frozen bay scallops
2 tablespoons olive oil
3 cloves garlic, minced
1/8 teaspoon each ground chipotle pepper and ground black pepper
1/4 teaspoon ground cumin
2 limes, juiced

DIRECTIONS

Heat pan, add oil and garlic. Stir garlic over medium heat until it turns light golden brown. Add peppers and cumin, stir and let sizzle for 1 minute. Add scallops and stir until they are firm, opaque and coated with spices, about 3-5 minutes. Stir in lime juice. Serve over wild rice blend.

Tricks and Tips

Catch your own bay scallops in waters off the Florida coast! This year the season runs July 1st to September 10th. Check the FWC site myfwc.com/marine/bayscallops for more info.

Emily's Ginger Peach Pie

INGREDIENTS

Your favorite pie crust dough for top and bottom crusts
8 peaches, peeled and sliced
1 tablespoon fresh ginger root, peeled and grated
3/4—1 cup turbinado sugar or Sugar in the Raw
1 egg, well beaten

DIRECTIONS

Mix peaches, ginger and sugar. Roll out bottom crust and place into deep dish pie pan. Fill with peach mixture. Roll out top crust, place on pie and crimp edges. Cut vents. Brush top with egg wash made from one beaten egg. Sprinkle with 1 tablespoon of turbinado or raw sugar. Bake at least one hour at 375 degrees. Both top and bottom crust should be fully cooked, tan on bottom, and flaky, shiny and golden on top. Cuts best at room temperature.

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Local and Seasonal Recipes, Menus and More
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E-mail for a free recipe:
HogtownHomeGrown@gmail.com.

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Hogtown HomeGrown

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Tricks and Tips

Chris's Apple Crisp is the favorite dessert wherever it appears. You know you're special when she makes one just for you, since it is a lot of work to peel all those apples. When her children were younger, they would wait by the table as she peeled each apple, so they could munch on the tasty, curly peels.

Chris's Apple Crisp with Almonds

INGREDIENTS

- 3 pounds MacIntosh or Granny Smith apples, peeled, cored and sliced
- 1 lemon, juiced
- 1/4 cup apple juice
- 3/4 cup all purpose flour
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup softened butter
- 1/2 cup sliced almonds

DIRECTIONS

Toss apples with lemon juice and place in a 9-inch square baking dish. Add apple juice. In a separate bowl, combine flour, sugar, cinnamon and salt. Cut in butter until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Stir in almonds and sprinkle crumb mixture over the apples. Bake at 350 degrees for 35-45 minutes, until the apples are tender.