

# Hogtown HomeGrown

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## Two grandmothers - four lives

Each of my grandmothers lived both a country life and a city life. My dad's mom, Sitto (Arabic for grandmother) had family that worked in olive groves, but when she emigrated from Syria at the age of thirteen, she left behind most of her country roots. She and Jiddo (Arabic for grandfather) met, married and raised a family in Manchester, New Hampshire, in the same three-story three-family home where my oldest cousin lives to this day.

Manchester certainly wasn't countryside filled with olive groves. Sitto's long side porch faced an indoor ice rink and a baseball stadium. Other three-story houses lined block after block with a minaret-topped Orthodox church just down the street. But their house had a bit of land and both grandparents brought some of their former life to that little patch of green, with a grape arbor out back and a garden in the side yard. Living in the city didn't mean they went out to eat though, so it always felt like the old country when everyone gathered at home to cook and eat traditional food for both everyday meals and celebrations.

Granny, my Mom's mom, lived her two lives every year. She and my grandfather had a home in small-town Georgia and an apartment on Biscayne Bay in kitschy-urban Miami Beach. Behind the sturdy one-story brick house in Sparta, Country Granny had a garden and a huge fig tree. Unlike Sitto though, I remember Granny growing more tomatoes, roses and daylilies than anything else. From May to October, while they were in Georgia, Granny spent time canning, pickling and freezing the excess bounty her friends shared from their gardens and farms, in addition to cooking the same typical Southern meals she had cooked for years. We seldom ate out because there was no choice beyond Francis Jones's downtown café, unless you drove out to Mr. Dunn's or Mr. Brown's.

It was in Miami Beach that City Granny's culinary skills and taste buds expanded to include new cultures and new foods. From pompano in parchment to chopped chicken liver and Piccolo's to Wolfie's, she experimented, read cookbooks and learned a different way to eat both at home and in restaurants. Except for a few birthday celebrations, dinners were cooked and eaten at home, but lunch was another story.

I had the best of two worlds with my Country Granny and City Granny. After we moved to Florida, Mom and I would spend a week or two in Georgia every year. My fondest memories are sitting on Granny's kitchen step-stool and watching her cook. Two weeks went by too fast. Time with my Country Granny was never long enough.

City Granny was my real Granny. From the day we moved to Florida until I went to college, City Granny was only a bus ride away. When I was in kindergarten, we spent afternoons together; full weekends as I got older. Dinner at six was with Granddaddy, but we often went out to lunch, sometimes Wolfie's for blintzes, sometimes Lum's for chili dogs.

It was dress-up time—yes, Granny wore a hat and gloves—on those special days when we took the bus across the MacArthur Causeway to Miami. We'd shop and have lunch at the expansive Downtown Miami Burdines. I usually had the fruit plate with a date-nut bread and cream cheese sandwich. Granny especially liked their peppermint ice cream.

It felt like a piece of my childhood slipped away when I learned that store, now a Macy's, will close soon. While I know nothing is permanent and it hasn't been a Burdines for years, in my mind it is frozen in time along with the memories of my two grandmothers.

# What's Fresh Right Now?

**Bananas**

**Beans**—green/yellow/purple snap, green/yellow pole, green/purple long

**Beets**

**Broccoli**

**Broccolini**

**Cabbage**—green, napa, flat head

**Carrots**

**Cauliflower**—white/purple/cheddar

**Citrus**—calamondin, kumquat, satsuma, tangerine, temple, meyer lemon, sour orange, hamlin, white/red/pink grapefruit, ambersweet, chinese honey, navel

**Cucumbers**—slicers, pickling

**Greens**—collards, tatsoi, curly/tuscan/white/red russian kale, mizuna, mustards, stir-fry mix, arugula, bok choy, pac choi, spinach

**Herbs**—garlic chives, turmeric, parsley, cilantro, sage, dill

**Lettuce**—bibb, green/red leaf and romaine, mixes

**Moringa**

**Mushrooms**—shiitakes, oyster, dried shiitakes/chanterelles

**Onions**—green

**Papaya**—ripe, green

**Peppers**—red/green/yellow/orange sweet bell, green/red jalapeño, caribbean, assorted hot

**Pineapple**

**Potatoes**—red

**Radishes**—french breakfast, black, purple/white daikon, pink beauty, watermelon

**Roselle**

**Squash**—green zucchini

**Strawberries**

**Sweet Potatoes**

**Tomatoes**—cluster, cherry, sun gold

**Turnips**—tokyo, purple top

# Local and Fresh— Green Cabbage

While I admire the beauty of the savory and the taste of the red, give me a big round head of green cabbage any day. Versatile and nutritious, this member of the brassica family is tasty whether raw or cooked.

Look for heavy heads, tightly packed leaves and even color. Don't worry about a few damaged outer leaves.

A rule of thumb for using cabbage raw—salt and dressing will wilt or soften raw cabbage with time, so if you want a crunchy texture, serve it soon after adding dressing or seasoning.

## Garlic-Roasted Cabbage Slices

### INGREDIENTS

1 large head green cabbage  
1 head garlic  
2-3 Tablespoons olive oil  
Coarse salt and pepper

### DIRECTIONS

Heat oven and sheet pan to 450 degrees.  
Cut four even slices from center of cabbage. Reserve rounded sides for another use.  
Cut top quarter off garlic head and rub over cut surfaces of cabbage.  
Brush cabbage slices and garlic head with oil on all sides. Lightly salt each slice.  
Place cabbage and garlic on hot sheet pan, reduce heat to 400 and bake 20 minutes.  
Turn with a spatula and cook an additional 20-30 minutes, until edges are browned.  
Squeeze a little roasted garlic on top of each slice. Sprinkle with olive oil and pepper.  
Serve hot.  
Cover and refrigerate leftovers.



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# Cabbage Carrot Kugel

## INGREDIENTS

2 cups dry egg noodles  
1 Tablespoon olive oil  
1 onion, quartered and sliced  
1/2 cabbage, chopped  
3 carrots, grated  
1 garlic clove  
1 teaspoon salt, divided  
2 cups chopped parsley  
1 cup sour cream  
2 cups cottage cheese  
8 ounces cheese, grated (try a mixture of sharp white and smoked cheddars)  
1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg

## TOPPING:

3 Tablespoons olive oil  
1 1/2 cups panko crumbs

## DIRECTIONS

Cook egg noodles for the minimum time recommended on the package. Drain noodles, rinse and set aside.

Heat a large covered pot over medium heat and add olive oil. Stir in onions until coated with oil. Cover, lower heat and cook 10 minutes. Stir, cover and cook an additional 10 minutes.

Raise heat to medium and stir in cabbage. Do not cover, but continue to cook, stirring occasionally, until largest pieces of cabbage begin to soften.

Add carrots, garlic and half the salt. Stir well, cover, lower heat and cook five minutes. Remove from heat, stir in parsley and set aside to cool, uncovered.

May be prepared in advance to this point.

When ready to bake, preheat oven to 400 degrees. Oil a large baking pan.

In a large bowl, mix noodles and veggies with sour cream, cottage cheese, grated cheese, black pepper and nutmeg. Taste and add remaining 1/2 teaspoon of salt, if desired.

Pour kugel mixture into oiled baking pan. Use a large fork to evenly distribute mixture in pan, but do not smooth top.

Make topping by stirring 3 Tablespoons olive oil with panko crumbs. Use a slotted spoon to sprinkle oiled crumbs uniformly over top of kugel mixture.

Place pan on cookie sheet and put in hot oven. Reduce heat to 300 degrees and bake for one hour.

Let kugel rest for 5 minutes at room temperature before serving.

Serve hot. Kugel may be cut into squares or spooned from baking pan.

Cover and refrigerate leftovers.

## Tricks and Tips

The noodle kugels I ate when visiting Granny's neighbors in Miami Beach were always sweet.

Held together by eggs, laced with a miserly amount of pot or farmers cheese and dotted with raisins and cinnamon, these kugels were often solid, dry and very eggy.

While noodle kugels are an Eastern European variation on bread puddings, there is a history of savory kugels made with bread, noodles or potatoes. Some kugels are also made from just cabbage, so you don't really need the noodles at all!

Use this recipe as a template to experiment with your favorite flavors and textures.

Try using swiss or gruyere cheese and replace the panko with pumpernickel or rye bread crumbs.

If you want a more solid texture, mix in 4 lightly beaten eggs.

For a creamier texture, add 1/2 cup milk or cream to the cheeses. Bake the kugel covered with parchment and foil.



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## Tricks and Tips

*What's a standard  
candy cane?*

The ones that are  
about six inches long  
with a simple  
peppermint flavor!

*What if I don't have  
any candy canes?*

Use the round red and  
white mints like those  
found at restaurant  
exits. No don't take  
them from there—  
look in the candy aisle!

*Why isn't there any  
sugar in this recipe?*

Oh there is!

The candy canes pro-  
vide all the sweetness  
this ice cream needs.  
This is not an everyday  
food, but a fun treat.

For best results, use  
candy canes with very  
few, very simple ingre-  
dients like sugar, natu-  
ral flavors and colors.

# Peppermint Ice Cream

## INGREDIENTS

8 standard or 12 small red and white candy canes  
3 cups milk  
1 cup cream  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
pinch of salt

## DIRECTIONS

Place unwrapped candy canes in a heavy plastic bag and place the bag between two towels. Use a wooden mallet or saucepan to crush candy canes into small pieces. Pick out 15-20 chunks of similar size and set aside. Pour all remaining crushed candy into milk, cover, shake well and place in refrigerator overnight.

Before churning, mix peppermint milk with remaining ingredients and shake or stir until completely combined.

Process mixture in ice cream maker according to manufacturer's instructions. When ice cream is done, scoop into a covered container and stir in reserved candy pieces. Cover and place container in a paper bag before putting in freezer.

Allow ice cream to "cure" for an hour or two. This allows the ice cream to freeze a bit more, so the texture will firm up and make it easier to scoop.

Serve plain or in a puddle of hot fudge.

## NOTES

If using plant-based milk, use only the unsweetened types.

If you have delicate dental work, do not reserve candy cane chunks—put them all in the milk.