

# The Family Table Cookbook

## by J. D. Moss

### Introduction

*“Close to him were snow-white mountains of mashed potatoes topped with deep yellow butter that was quickly melting down the sides, moving between the flecks of visible pepper and invisible salt. Dangerously close to them was the dark orange chunks of sweet potatoes smothered with a brown sugar sauce and sticky marshmallows perfectly browned on top. In front of his mother was a wicker basket filled with golden fluffy homemade rolls with an aroma that almost overwhelmed the multitude of food dishes in the room. There was a ruby red cranberry salad he had never seen before sitting next to the multicolored fruit salad topped with pecans and slivers of coconut. A long glass casserole dish filled with his mom’s cornbread dressing was releasing a steady stream of steam, carrying its smell around the room and competing heavily with the rolls. This was paired with a large bowl of light brown gravy his mother called giblet gravy. Timmy didn’t know what a giblet was, he did know he liked it. At the far end of the table was the only dish he dreaded the green bean casserole. No amount of cream soup or onion sticks could mask their taste. Fortunately, there was also roasted corn on the cob and English peas with small white onions, both of which he liked, which meant he could choose the vegetables he wanted to eat. Yes, there was also the turkey. This year it was so big his father had it sitting on two seldom-used TV trays. The main dish had been cooking before he had gotten out of bed and its skin looked crispy brown with its legs still wrapped in foil and more of his mom’s dressing was falling out of the turkey onto the large white and red platter she used once a year.*

*He watched as his mother spooned Turkey juice over the turkey’s back, with the liquid bubbling as it washed over the bird. Timmy looked around the table, into the faces of his family and his heart felt as warm as the apple pie his mom had let him taste last night before going to bed. All the days past seemed unimportant as a smile appeared on his face and he and all those gathered, bowed their heads to give thanks for all their blessings and for the joy they all felt sitting at the Christmas table.”*

*From “The Christmas Table” a short story by J.D. Moss*

I love food. The simple enjoyment of seeing and smelling food makes me feel better even before I take a bite. Tasting good food is like flying through the bliss of heaven. Intellectually I know food is energy for the body; however, food for most of us is more than fuel. We are emotionally attached to food, and for me, it is because some of my fondest memories are in sharing meals with my family and friends.

Most of my best memories are in sitting with my loved ones around the family table. When I was very young, we always ate as a family at the table. It was here that we shared our day, our dreams and built a type of closeness that, for me, has lasted a lifetime. Those meals were never perfect, and my siblings and I argued a lot, yet even in our craziest times, we seemed better off than when we ate separately or in front of the TV.

Unfortunately, TV eating became more frequent as we grew up, which made the times we did sit at the table together more special. Thanksgiving became my favorite time of the year, not

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because of the food, but because of the people I spent it with. The food was, well, the gravy of the event. I have never been a big fan of Christmas because I thought there was too much attention paid to gift-giving and I was more interested in connecting to the people I loved. So, what I looked forward to the most was Christmas dinner.

Lifestyles have changed, but the emotional connection to food and people have not. Relationships are still built and strengthened around the sharing of food. Think about all the times you eat out with those you care about. Restaurants have become the new “Family Table.” Super bowl parties bring together chicken wings and people who share the camaraderie and sometimes rivalry that build relationships. Back yard cookouts, picnics, pizzas, and potlucks are still centerpieces in our social lives. Whether we gather-together and share main dishes, snacks, or desserts, food plays an important part in our gatherings. Even romance is built around fine dining; it is the excitement of getting to know a person mixed with the taste and smells of foods that will build lifelong memories.

The Family Table Cookbook is designed to share foods we enjoy, and the memories connected with these recipes. For every food, there is a touch of love. For every ingredient, there is a measure of joy. There is food to feed the body and warmth to feed the soul.

So, join me at the Family Table!

J. D. Moss

To submit a story and recipe send an email to:

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