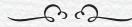




*Bless my kitchen, Lord, and light it with love. As I plan and cook
my meals, keep me ever mindful of the wonderful benefits that come
from serving my family. I pray, Lord, that my loved ones will feel
Your presence and rest content in Your grace and provision. Amen.*



*She brings her food from afar.
She also rises while it is yet night,
And provides food for her household...
A woman who fears the LORD, she shall be praised.
Give her the fruit of her hands,
And let her own works praise her in the gates.*

PROVERBS 31:14-15,30-31



INTRODUCTION

I come from a long line of good cooks, Plain and otherwise, and many of the recipes in this cookbook have been handed down in my family for generations. Other recipes were gleaned from friends at the Conservative Amish Mennonite Church that I attended.

For as long as I can remember, the women in my family (and even some of the men) have enjoyed time spent in the kitchen preparing meals for those we love. Some of these recipes weren't written down, but instead passed down as the daughters worked alongside mothers, learning by doing. Certainly, that's how my sisters and I learned, and by the time we were teens, we were knowledgeable and efficient in the kitchen, and we loved turning out goodies on a weekly basis. Our cookie jar was never empty. Mama also felt strongly that her daughters would learn, among other things, how to turn out a perfect crust, and I still love to bake pies as a result of her careful instruction.

My mother raised four girls and one boy (who is an excellent cook also), and Christmastime was especially enjoyable for us. For weeks beforehand we'd gather daily in the kitchen and turn out all sorts of special baking that would find its way into gifts for neighbors and anyone who showed

up unexpectedly at our door, with plenty left over for us. Oftentimes, on long winter evenings, my mother and father would crack sacks of walnuts harvested from my grandfather's trees, while my sisters and I sat at the kitchen table and copied and recopied family recipes or played board games. Dad would more than likely pop a big pan of popcorn and top it with melted butter and salt—what a treat that was! We'd talk and work and eat, and those memories of the family gathered around the kitchen table are precious to me even after many years.

Family lore has it that during the Depression our grandmother issued a standing invitation to the extended family. Every week after church, the whole clan would gather at her table for a big meal. Sometimes this was the only good meal some of the relatives could look forward to all week, and Grandmother always made sure there were plenty of leftovers to send home with the aunts and uncles and cousins. Because they lived on a farm, my grandparents were able to be generous in spite of the lean times. Mama said they were as poor as church mice right along with everyone else, but food was plentiful and they were openhanded.

When I raised my own family—I have three

grown boys—I was so thankful that my mother had taught me the joys of cooking up love in the form of good food, because sometimes it seemed as if I spent all my time in the kitchen. I always kept a large garden, and we had a small fruit orchard and 53 blueberry bushes that I tended. We raised chickens for eggs and meat, turkeys, hogs, sheep, rabbits, and angora and milk goats. I canned anywhere from 400 to 600 jars of food each season to help see us through the winter, and I froze and dehydrated many pounds of produce as well. We didn't have store-bought bread, and while raising my children, I ground wheat and rolled oats to use in my bread baking. I usually made four loaves at a time, and one loaf was always made into cinnamon sugar bread, which we would take from the oven and devour on the spot. I took such joy in being able to take care of my family with the fruits of my labor.

The recipes you will find in this book are the recipes my children were raised on. Good, solid food that “fills in the cracks,” as we like to say. My

sons are grown now, with wives and families of their own, and every one of them cooks. I love it when one of my boys calls me up to ask me a cooking question—they may not realize it, but they have begun making memories of their own.

In this fast-paced world, there are few things better than taking the time to prepare the ingredients for a great meal and gathering the family around the table to enjoy the results. For a short while, our cares and responsibilities fade into the background, and we can focus on our families, delighting in the small news of the day and savoring the pleasure that comes from a lovingly prepared home-cooked meal. I hope that some of the recipes in this book will find a place in your kitchen, and that as you prepare your family meals you, too, will take pleasure in the simple art of cooking for loved ones.

Blessings!
Georgia

BREAKFAST TREATS

Morning comes early for the Amish. Often rising as early as 4:30 a.m., the males in the family head to the barn to care for the many animals usually found on an Amish farm. There are cows to milk, horses and pigs to feed, and eggs to gather from a flock of chickens. So much to do! Morning chores can easily take an hour or more. It's easy to work up quite an appetite.

Meanwhile Mother and the girls fire up the cookstove and begin breakfast preparations. The morning meal is important for Amish families. It must feed them and keep them going for many hours of steady work—the noonday meal is a long way off.

The breakfast table is also the place where the adults discuss their plans and schedules for the day, where scholars fuel themselves for the hours of learning ahead, and where the first silent prayer of the day is shared by all.



Without a word, Father bows his head, and the family follows. Again without a word, Father begins to serve himself from the many plates and bowls on the table. Prayer time is over. Now it's time to dig in and eat up.

Breakfast is served!

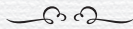




Joy comes in the morning.

PSALM 30:5



*Lord, I thank You that Your mercies are new every morning.
What an encouragement that is! As I begin this new day,
may I be mindful of Your love for me. Help me to pass
that love on to everyone I interact with today—to my
family, friends, and strangers. Open the eyes of my heart
that I might see the needs of others. I pray, Lord, that You
will use me today to lighten someone's load and to remind
them that You are faithful—great is Your faithfulness!*



Notes:

Amish Breakfast Casserole

- 1 lb. bacon, cut up
- 1 onion, chopped
- 6 eggs, beaten
- 4 cups hash browns, thawed and shredded
- 2 cups Cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1½ cups cottage cheese
- 1¼ cups Swiss cheese, shredded

In a large skillet, brown the bacon and onion, stirring, until bacon is crisp; drain.

In a large mixing bowl, mix together the remaining ingredients and then stir in bacon mixture. Transfer to a greased rectangular baking dish and bake, uncovered, at 350° for 35-40 minutes or until eggs are set. Let stand 5 minutes before cutting.

Any housewife, no matter how large her family, can always get some time to be alone—by doing the dishes.

Amish Breakfast Pizza

- 1 lb. sausage
- 1 batch biscuits, unbaked
- 1 cup potatoes (use shredded fresh or frozen)
- 1 cup Cheddar cheese, shredded
- 5 eggs
- ½ cup milk
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. pepper

Cook the sausage until browned; drain.

Grease a jelly roll pan and pat the biscuit dough in the bottom of pan. Spoon the sausage over the dough and then spread the potatoes and cheese on top.

Mix together the eggs, milk, salt, and pepper. Pour over the pizza and bake at 375° for 25-30 minutes or until done.

Notes:

Amish Coffee Cake

2 cups brown sugar

2 cups flour

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup shortening

1 tsp. baking soda

1 cup hot coffee

1 egg

2 tsp. vanilla

Mix together the brown sugar, flour, and shortening just until mixed; there will be lumps. Take out 1 cup of sugar and flour mixture and set aside to be used later for a crumb topping.

Dissolve the baking soda in the hot coffee and add to the remaining flour mixture. Add the egg and vanilla and mix quickly; do not overmix.

Pour batter into a rectangular baking dish and sprinkle on crumb topping.

Bake at 350° for 30 minutes; turn to 325° if top starts to get too brown.

Remove from oven and sprinkle with powdered sugar or leave plain.

Apple Cinnamon Granola

4 cups rolled oats

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup coconut

1 cup nuts, finely chopped

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup sesame seeds

$\frac{3}{4}$ tsp. salt

1 tsp. cinnamon

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup honey

$\frac{1}{3}$ cup oil

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp. vanilla

1 cup dried apples, finely cut

Combine the oats, coconut, nuts, sesame seeds, salt, and

Notes:

cinnamon in a large bowl. Combine the honey, oil, and vanilla separately and then add to the first ingredients.

Mix thoroughly. Spread out on 2 greased cookie sheets and bake at 350° for 20-25 minutes, stirring occasionally.

Cool, and then add 1 cup finely cut dried apples.

Store in tightly covered container.

Apple Fritters

1 cup sifted flour

1½ tsp. baking powder

¼ tsp. salt

1 T. sugar

½ cup milk

1 T. oil

1 well-beaten egg

2 apples, peeled, cored, and sliced

Sift together flour, baking powder, salt, and sugar. Blend together milk, oil, and egg. Gradually add to the dry ingredients. Stir in apples.

Fry in butter or oil, just like you would pancakes.

Serve plain or with powdered sugar.

Apple Oatmeal

1 cup rolled oats

2 cups cold water

½ tsp. salt

1 finely chopped apple

dash each of cinnamon and nutmeg

Combine the oats, water, and salt in a saucepan and cook 10 minutes on low heat. Then add the apple and spices and cook 5 minutes more or until apples are done to desired softness.

Serve with brown sugar, honey, or cinnamon sugar, and milk.

Bacon, Egg, and Cheese Casserole

- ½ lb. bacon
- 6 slices bread
- ½ lb. Velveeta cheese
- 6 eggs
- 2 cups milk
- ½ tsp. salt
- ¼ tsp. pepper

Fry bacon until crisp and then crumble into pieces.

Cut bread into cubes and place in a well-buttered 2-quart casserole dish. Cube cheese and layer on top of bread cubes. In a mixing bowl, beat eggs, milk, salt, and pepper. Pour over the bread and cheese. Sprinkle bacon pieces on top. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

Bake covered at 350° for 50-60 minutes or until puffed up and golden.

Basic Granola

- 6 cups rolled oats
- 2 cups (any combination) raw walnuts and sunflower seeds
- ¾ cup honey
- 1 T. salt
- ¾ cup vegetable oil
- ½ cup water
- 3 tsp. vanilla
- 2 cups raisins
- 2 cups toasted wheat germ

Mix all ingredients together except for raisins and wheat germ. Spread in thin layer on cookie sheets or large baking pans. Bake for 1 hour at 300°.

When cool, add the raisins and wheat germ.

You can also add coconut, dried apricots, or dried apples.

Store in airtight container. The granola will last longer if stored in the refrigerator.

Notes:

Berry Muffins

- 1¾ cups flour
- 1 cup + 1 T. sugar, divided
- 2½ tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. cinnamon
- ¼ tsp. salt
- 1 cup milk
- ¼ cup butter, melted
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1 tsp. vanilla
- 1 cup berries (blueberries, cranberries, blackberries, etc.)

Grease muffin pans. Preheat oven to 375°.

Stir together in a large bowl the flour, 1 cup sugar, baking powder, cinnamon, and salt.

In another bowl stir together milk, butter, egg, and vanilla. Add to the dry ingredients in the large bowl and stir just until blended. Batter will be lumpy. Fold in berries.

Fill muffin cups ¾ full. Sprinkle with remaining sugar. Bake for 20 minutes or until done.

Blackberry Syrup

- 1 cup blackberry juice
- 1½ cups sugar
- 1 T. lemon juice
- ¼ cup light Karo syrup

Put all ingredients in a saucepan and bring to rolling boil. Boil one minute. Remove from heat and skim off foam. Store leftover syrup in refrigerator.

Plans for marriage are kept secret in Amish communities. But one can get an idea of who might be marrying come the autumn wedding season by looking at the family garden to see how much celery is planted—celery is an important element of Amish weddings and is used much the same as bouquets of flowers are used in English weddings.

Notes:

Kids especially love this treat. You can also crumble the crunch bars into a bowl, add milk, and eat like cereal.

Blueberry Oatmeal Muffins

- 1 cup flour
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. salt
- ½ tsp. cinnamon
- ½ cup brown sugar
- ¾ cup rolled oats
- 1 egg
- 1 cup milk
- ¼ cup melted butter
- ¾ cup blueberries, fresh or frozen
- sugar for sprinkling

Stir the flour, baking powder, salt, and cinnamon together. Add the sugar and rolled oats and mix well.

In a large bowl, beat together the egg, milk, and butter. Add dry ingredients and stir until just moistened. Fold in blueberries.

Fill muffin tins about ¾ full and sprinkle a bit of sugar on top of each muffin. Bake at 375° for 20 minutes or until brown.

Breakfast Crunch Bars

- 1 cup oatmeal
- 1 cup cornmeal
- 3 cups whole wheat flour
- ½ cup sugar
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. soda
- 2 tsp. salt
- 1½ cups milk
- ¾ cup molasses

Mix together the dry ingredients. Then heat the milk, add the molasses, and mix the milk mixture with the dry ingredients.

Pour into a lightly greased baking dish and bake at 350° for 25-30 minutes. Cool completely before slicing into bars or, while still hot from the oven, eat with milk as you would cereal.