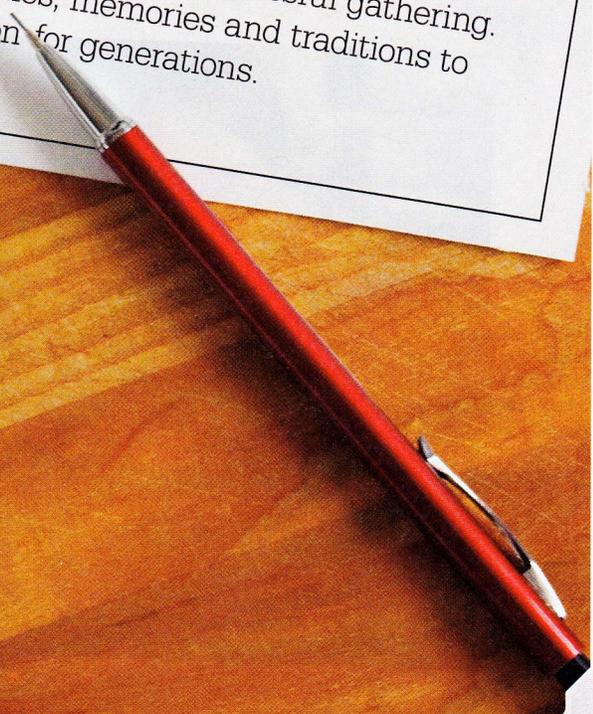


family heirlooms



It's nearly Thanksgiving, so everyone's around and feeling grateful. What better time to round up the relatives and learn Grandma's signature dishes? We've got a foolproof recipe for a successful gathering. Ingredients: loved ones, memories and traditions to pass on for generations.

BY RACHEL BERTSCHE



Chicken legs
drumsticks and thighs), with
or without
salt and pepper
fresh parsley
fresh oregano
fine toasted
bread crumbs (page 215)
flour
eggs
butter

coated
to fit
continue
at 35 minutes
serving with

The Great Gathering

Suzan Colón, author of *Cherries in Winter: My Family's Recipe for Hope in Hard Times*, offers tips for the big day.

Send invitations at least a month in advance.

The great thing about hosting a family-recipe bonanza around Thanksgiving is that your clan will all be in the same place. Still, give fair warning or risk losing some people to football.

Paperlesspost.com and **cocodot.com** have festive online invitations that even a cranky grandpa couldn't resist. Ask your guests to suggest dishes they ate as a child or to send old family recipes and the stories that go along with them. For good measure, encourage each attendee to e-mail or bring an old photo or two.

A week before the cooking class, nail down the lesson plan.

Let Grandma—or whoever's the time-honored family chef—decide which recipes you'll learn to make together. Try for an entrée, side dish and dessert. **Three recipes are manageable without being overwhelming**, and you'll have a full meal at the end of the affair.

Before your guests arrive, do major prep work.

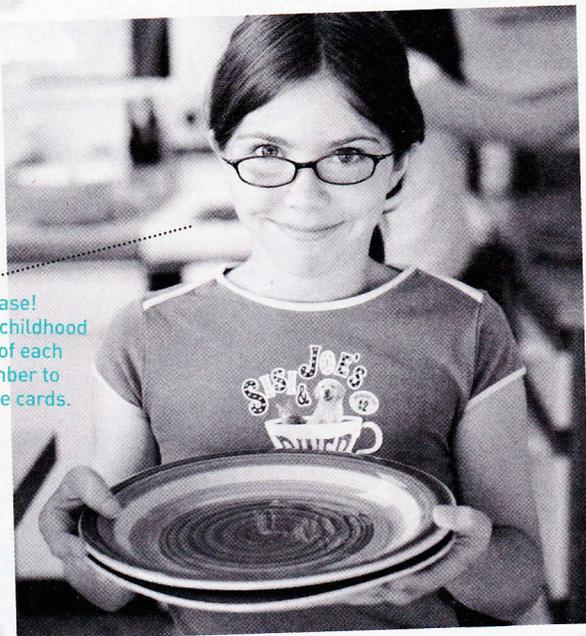
Conquer big-ticket, time-consuming tasks, like coring a pineapple or marinating meats, ahead of time. **Easy peeling and chopping are good group activities** (knives are adults-only, of course) and can help stimulate memories of the good old days.

Assign roles.

You've already designated the master chef. Now choose a photographer and/or videographer to **document the day** and a dishwasher (or two) to keep the workspace clean.



Set the stage: Display old photos to foster a sense of nostalgia, and create a playlist of family favorites to set the mood.



Places, please! Photocopy childhood snapshots of each family member to use as place cards.

Let the stories flow.

Cooking the food your grandmother and great-grandmother made is like creating an edible family tree. Ask questions: Who first made the dish? Why did she use that specific ingredient? Maybe your ancestors lived on a blueberry farm. Maybe they used Crisco because there was a shortage of butter during wartime. Where there's food to eat, there are stories to tell.

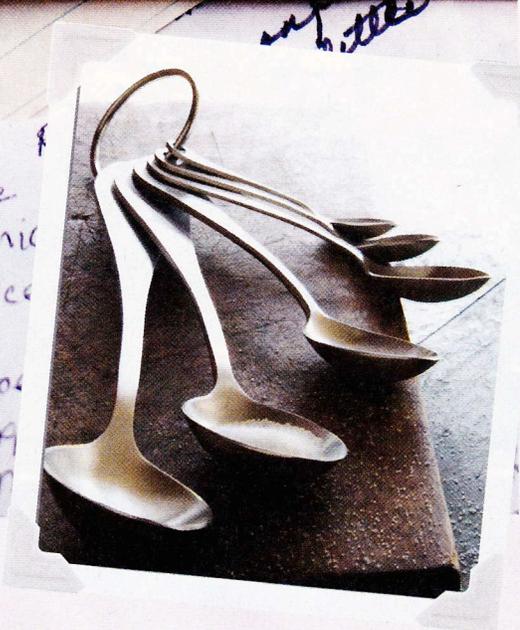
After the fact, collect the recipes in one place.

Gather the pictures, recipes and stories and put them in a photo album. Or a website like heritagecookbook.com can do it for you (\$12 and up per book). Input the recipes and images and, about a month later, you've got yourself some cookbooks. [Just in time for the holidays! Can you say, "perfect Christmas gift"?]

PHOTOGRAPHS: GETTY IMAGES; FOOD PREP AND GIRL, TARA DONNE.

2 sticks margarine (30) 2 egg yolks
 1 t orange juice
 flour (4T) 3T vanilla (20)
 all dry ingredients - add butter
 Bake - 1/2 t - far apart on
 minimum foil - cool thoroughly
 more - cannot use foil more
 on pie - 350° - 8-11 min crust
 egg yolks lightly. Add ^{sweetened} condensed milk, beat
 again. Add lime juice + beat until
 smooth. Pour into pie shell. Bake 350° - 5 min

orange
 dropped into
 cold water
 Preheat oven to 400°
 pat dry. Squeeze
 quarters over chicken
 onion + orange pieces
 Sprinkle salt + pepper
 chicken in roasting
 pan. Roast 20 min



Get It Write

If you're not careful when documenting recipes, you could end up with pages of illegible (and incorrect) chicken scratch. Follow our recipe-writing tutorial.

Assign a single person to secretarial duties. If everyone tries to take notes, you'll end up with five different versions of the same chicken soup.

Measure everything out. Your mother may think "a good pinch" is an official measurement. Shadow Mom while she's cooking, measure the approximate amount she's using, and take note that her good pinch is everyone else's tablespoon.

List the ingredients in the order they'll be used. This is standard recipe practice, so stick with it to make life easier on your family chefs.

Include visual cues. Note that Mom cooked the onions "until golden, about 5 minutes." It might take you longer to achieve the same result.

Make directions short and to the point. An at-home chef, especially when among family, can talk each step to death. For the purposes of your recipe, edit each explanation down to one specific instruction.

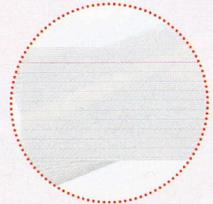
Gear Up

You'll need more (but not much more) than a stove and a spatula to make this a day of record.



FLIP CAM

Use this mini video camera (\$200 and up, theflip.com) to record the dish preparation from start to finish. The easy-to-upload files are perfect for posting to a family blog or e-mailing to anyone who couldn't make it.



INDEX CARDS

They're ideal for jotting down recipes in the moment. A laptop works, too.



SCRAPBOOK

Buy a book to which you can add pages, so your cookbook can grow with the generations. We like Kolo albums (\$18 and up, paper-source.com). Use plastic sleeves to hold any original recipes in Grandma's handwriting (make sure the sleeves are acid-free so they don't damage the recipes over time).



SKYPE

Just because your cousins in Hawaii can't come in for Thanksgiving doesn't mean they shouldn't join this party. On skype.com you can make free video calls, so everyone's invited.