Introduction to
Feeding the Family
By Jan Meisels Allen, founder and president
The Jewish Genealogical Society of Conejo Valley and Ventura County,
California USA.

This project was inspired by our March 2021 program with Amy Wachs entitled Our Eastern European Roots: We Are What Our Ancestors Ate. Family recipes reveal our ancestors’ places of origin and conjure up tantalizing memories that enrich our family research.

No one recipe is the “correct” recipe. Each of our ancestors had their own personal touch and most did not measure—but did a pinch of this or that using what was locally available at the time. These recipes are passed down to us and part of our heritage.

Many of our childhood memories include meals and food. I recall my father always loved eating salami and eggs, and my aunt treating me to her butterscotch bars, as if they were made just for me.

Enjoy JGSCV’s recipe book so ably coordinated by Andrea Massion. We hope it will inspire you to rediscover your genealogy via your family recipes.

Good appetite!
Jan Meisels Allen, President, JGSCV

The recipes in JGSCV’s first edition of Feeding the Family Tree are not lab-tested nor reproduced in stylish photo layouts. In this collection, many of the recipes are shown as found: a scrap of paper, an envelope, an old recipe card, the notes of someone remembering how. The recipes are from the kitchens of our members and their families. We love them just the way they are: documents valuable enough to accompany one’s genealogical research results and awaken fond memories of childhood, nurturing cooks and a rich culture.

Please note that to better read any original document, zoom in or enlarge the page.

Thank you to our thoughtful and enthusiastic contributors:
Barbara Finsten
Bill Green
Carol Flesher
Christine Goodman Nuttall
Diane Goldin
Fred Land
Helene Rosen
Jan Meisels Allen
Pat Fuller
Shulamit Spain
Wendy Diamond

Enjoy every bite.
B’ shalom,
Andrea Massion
Editor, Recipe Project for JGSCV
Hanukkah 2021
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Enlarging the document on your screen will allow for better viewing, as necessary.
A Genealogist’s To-Do List for Simchas & Holiday Meals

- Take a table photo at each holiday gathering every year.
- Identify the faces. Include out-of-towners, guests and year.
- Document all relationships.
- Note the meal: occasion, menu, location, ritual objects in the photo.
- Use the occasion to ask family members to review or correct their genealogical records for your records.
- Display an ancestor tree with pencils for additions, notes, feedback and newborn stats.
Barbara Finsten

My Israeli Father’s Breakfast Salad

This was a usual breakfast during my childhood and was often eaten with feta cheese, olives and bread. When you go to Israel, you discover that eating salad for breakfast is a national pastime.

Cut up romaine lettuce (you can add other vegetable also) in a big bowl. Add a little diced onion and several large juicy sliced tomatoes on top. Sprinkle salt and pepper on the tomatoes. Let it sit for at least 15 minutes to let the juices of the tomato come out. Drizzle olive oil on the salad and toss. The tomato and oil create the dressing!

Barbara Finsten

My Mother-In-Law’s Mandelbrot Cookies

3 eggs
1 C. sugar
1 C. chopped almonds
3 C. flour
¾ C. oil
2 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. each: almond and vanilla extracts

Combine eggs, sugar, oil, extracts, and almonds. Sift flour and baking powder: combine it with the other ingredients. With floured hands, shape into 2 loaves. Place on greased cookie sheets. Bake on 350 degrees for 20-30 minutes until firm. Remove. Cut into diagonal slices. Return slices to cookie sheets at 250 – 275 degrees for 60 minutes to dry out. They should be golden brown in color.
Christine Goodman Nuttall

Grandmother’s Gumbo

Gumbo has been a favorite meal of my family for as long as I can remember. This recipe was my grandmother’s and probably also my great grandmother’s. My grandmother grew up in Louisiana. Her branch of the family were early Jewish settlers in New Orleans, Lafayette and Lake Charles, Louisiana.

After this photo is my grandmother’s original recipe and my version of the recipe as I make it today. It has always been a big production to make this gumbo. It’s not difficult to make, but it has many steps and makes a terrible mess of the kitchen. I often made gumbo for my dad on his birthday.

Recipe follows on next page.
Elyse Bendel Goodman Viterbo’s Recipe
Gumbo File

8 lb  Chicken (light and dark meat)
3  Sprigs parsley, minced
4  Cans chicken broth (2 quarts total)
2 Tbsp  Wesson oil
2 Tbsp  Flour
1  Onion
2 Tbsp  File
Sprinkle  Cayenne, salt, pepper, Tabasco (few drops)
2 cups  Okra
1 pk  Frozen corn (or fresh)
1 cup  Celery

Brown chicken in oil. Add salt and pepper. Chop onion and celery.
Remove chicken from pan and brown onion and celery with parsley.
Add flour. Cook until really brown. Add 4 cans chicken broth.
Place chicken back in pot. Cook until chicken is tender (1-2 hours).
Take cooked chicken out.
Meanwhile, cook okra (tope) in frying pan until stop is stringy (gooey).
Add to sauce. Continue to simmer. Place more broth in pan used to cook
okra and add this sauce in big pot. Add corn. Let cool. Serve a few
hours later.
When ready to serve:
Remove chicken skin & bones.
Add file
Serve with steamed rice, put file on table and let people add more if desired
Shulamit Spain

Parsnip and Apple Soup

I did not know about parsnips as a child but when I “discovered” this vegetable I fell in love with it because it can be used in so many different ways. There is no limit to one’s imagination in using it. Parsnips can be grated and used instead of potatoes for Kugel or Latkes.

Ingredients

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quantity</th>
<th>Item</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Tablespoons oil of your choice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Medium size onions, finely chopped</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Cloves of garlic, crushed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21 oz</td>
<td>Bramley apples or any other kind of sour, tart, soft apples</td>
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<tr>
<td>21 oz</td>
<td>Parsnips, cut small</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 tsps.</td>
<td>Chicken soup consommé: or pareve chicken soup powder</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 cups</td>
<td>Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 fl. oz</td>
<td>Milk or cream. For pareve, add either more water or soya milk/soya cream</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Salt, pepper — to taste</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Preparation

1. Heat oil, add onions and parsnips, gently fry until onions are soft.
2. Then stir in the garlic and the apples.
3. Add chicken soup powder and water (or 4 cups chicken soup) and bring the mix to boil. Simmer on medium heat for 20 minutes.
4. Liquidize soup in blender or directly in the pot with a handheld blender.
5. Add salt and pepper to taste.
6. If milchig, add 5 fl. oz milk; for pareve, 5 fl. oz water or soya milk/cream.
7. The flavor of this soup can be easily changed by adding herbs of your choice before liquidizing or by adding curry powder.

The butterfly is frozen cream. Any non-dairy milk or cream can also be used.
**Shulamit Spain**

**Parsley Fish known in the Alsace as Yiddefisch**

First I would like to stress that the Parsley Fish is not my own invention but a traditional recipe once widely used in the Alsace and Southern Germany to prepare carp. The fish was usually prepared before Shabbat and kept cool overnight to allow the jelly to form and for the flavor of the sauce to perfuse the fish. The cold fish was served with warm potatoes for Shabbat lunch.

Other fish can be used too, e.g. pike, or salmon cut into steaks or slabs--whole small trout or mackerels are also possible and are used uncut. Rub salt into all the pieces or inside the smaller fish. Leave the fish for at least 1/2 an hour while preparing the sauce.

**Ingredients for sauce**

3 Tbsp Oil  
1 Large onion, finely chopped  
1-2 Cloves of garlic, crushed  
1 bunch Parsley or generous amount  
2-3 Tbsp Flour  
1 cup Water, with more to cover fish  
Salt & pepper — to taste

**Preparation**

Heat oil in a sauté pan, glaze onions and garlic. Add 1/3 of the finely chopped parsley and sprinkle the flour over this mix. Let flour brown, then add water and bring to boil. Add salt and pepper to taste.

Let the mix simmer until the sauce binds and thickens. Then add the rest of the finely chopped parsley and the fish. If necessary add more water so that all the fish is just covered by the sauce.

Depending on the size of the fish, cook with cover for 20 - 30 minutes on a low-medium setting. When the fish is fully cooked, arrange it on a platter dish and spoon the sauce over it. Now you can either serve it hot with boiled potatoes or refrigerate overnight so that it gels, and serve cold with hot potatoes.

Photos by Philip Spain
Carol Flesher

Nanny’s Brisket

I was three years old when we moved to California, so I don’t have years of family dinners with lots of special recipes to pass on. Actually, my grandmother, Gittel Troob was an outstanding cook and baker who cooked traditional Eastern European Jewish delicacies. I must confess that it is really my fault that I didn’t pass on some of her finest work. Kishka (stuffed intestine), liver, and “pupiklach” (chicken stomachs cooked with brisket) were among the items that found their way to Nanny’s table, along with other dishes cooked in the oil of choice—schmaltz (chicken fat). My cousin Emily Cheslow Singh recalls the pre-hatched eggs Nanny put in soup. My father called them “eyelach.” I called them gross. When we visited New York, my thoroughly Californian palette rebelled, I diplomatically (or not) chose not to eat many of Nanny’s traditional recipes, and they have been lost to posterity. As my students would say, “My bad.” Still, a few dishes made the cut. As Nanny would have said, “Es Gezunteheit” (Eat in good health)!

This recipe wasn’t written down. Nanny (Gittel Troob) showed it to Mom (Anne Cheslow) who showed it to me. I don’t know if Nanny ever followed a recipe. One measuring unit was “a glass,” meaning a small Yahrzeit glass. It is my very favorite recipe, one that I can cook with some degree of reliability. It has even become a favorite at my husband Akiva’s family’s holiday dinners. This is my attempt at putting the directions into writing.

**Ingredients:**
- 1-4.5 pound “first cut” or “flat cut” brisket. It should be fairly-well trimmed, but with some fat left for flavor. It should also be the same thickness throughout.
- 4-6 sliced onions. I figure a little more than one onion per pound sliced fairly thin.
- Kosher salt
- Pepper
- Paprika

Spray a heavy, covered pot or Dutch oven and then heat it on the stovetop. If the brisket doesn't have much fat on the outside, you can add a coating of vegetable oil on the bottom of the pan. Season the brisket with Kosher salt, pepper, and paprika on both sides. I don't have a measurement--I just sprinkle until each ingredient is everywhere. You'll have to try it out.

Stick a long fork into the meat and sear the meat on all sides (front, back, and each side). This holds in the juices. It only takes about 30 sec. or so per side if the pot is hot. Remove the meat. Place some of the onion slices on the bottom of the pot just to cover. Put the meat on top of the onion, and put the rest of the onions on top. Lower the heat to simmer, and cover the pot. If the sound is like a "low sizzle" when you lift the pot cover, that's the right temperature. Check in about 10 min and then at about 20 min to be sure that the meat isn't burning but is simmering. After that, check and turn the meat over every 1/2 hour or so. Move the onions around so that some stay on the top and some stay on the bottom.

When the meat is "fork tender" (you can put the big fork easily into the middle of the meat and it comes out easily as well), remove the meat to a cutting board. Cut the meat into thin (+/- 1/8 to 1/4 inch) slices across the grain. If you miss the "across the grain" part, the cut slices will be stringy. Return the meat to the pan and continue to cook at the same simmering temperature, stirring the meat and keeping it moist with the juice. At this point you can taste the juice and add more seasoning if necessary. The juice should be reddish from the paprika. If there is too little juice, add a very small amount of water as needed. If there is too much juice, cook for a while with the pot cover off to reduce the juice. The meat is done when it is tender enough to easily cut it with a fork and all slices taste like the juice and not like boiled beef.
Pat Fuller

**Dorothy’s Knaydlach (Matzo Balls)**

Comments by Nancy Redman Borelli, Pat’s sister.

Matzo ball soup made from Mom Dorothy Nathanson Redman’s special recipe is a universal family favorite. Growing up in a small town in the Midwest with only two other Jewish families, it was hard to find traditional Jewish foods at holiday time. But our mom Dorothy had perfected her matzo ball recipe, and as long as she had a package of matzo meal in the cupboard, she was able to bring it to the table every Passover. Dorothy’s matzo ball soup easily won as “favorite holiday special” in our family from generation to generation. These matzo balls are light, and so flavorful. The extra eggs, and whole onion make them a stand-out treat!

Some hints for making them absolutely perfect:

Chill the batter in the refrigerator for at least an hour before rolling the balls, and if the batter begins to get sticky while you are rolling the balls, stick it back in the fridge again for 20 minutes or so.

Handle the batter as little as possible; make sure the water boils. Gently place the uncooked matzo balls in the pot of water, then lower to a simmer so the matzo balls don’t fall apart.

Enjoy!
Pat Fuller

Dorothy’s Brisket of Beef

Pat Redman Fuller & Beth Redman Doshay

My siblings and I grew up in a small town in Nebraska where we were one of only three Jewish families. Our mother, Dorothy Nathanson Redman, was born and raised on the very Jewish “Near North Side” of Minneapolis in a large extended family and so, felt isolated and alone in Nebraska. She and my dad created Yiddishkeit where they could. We usually celebrated the Jewish holidays with the other two Jewish families in town. This brisket of beef recipe was a traditional favorite at our Passover Seders and we continue that tradition today. It was so popular in our house that my niece requested the recipe to make in her own home. It’s now been passed down literally from generation to generation. It is melt-in-your mouth juicy and tastes just the way brisket should taste. We believe it’s the combination of beer and prunes that gives it its unique blend of tangy, tender and slightly sweet flavor. At such a low temperature, it doesn’t hurt to bake the brisket the full three hours to ensure its juicy tenderness.
Wendy Diamond
Marion Diamond’s “Inside the Cupboard Door” Cakes

Many of us fondly remember Marion as an avid participant in the Jewish Genealogy community. She was a doer, a volunteer in the Los Angeles seminars and a gentle and kind person. Her daughter Wendy, who recently made Aliyah, sent us these cake recipes in Marion’s handwriting. Wish we could see the back side! By the way, the apple sauce cake is delish.
Fred Land

**Jennie’s Raisin Cake**

In the handwriting of Jennie’s daughter. Fred has made it with apples as well. Note the photograph behind the paper bag recipe.

![Recipe Image]

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**Jennie’s Raisin Cake**

1 c. sugar 1/4 lb. Butter
2 c. milk 3 eggs
1 c. raisins 2 cake yeast
1/2 T salt 7 c. sifted flour

Put yeast in 1/2 c. warm milk and a little sugar, let it rise. On store milk, butter, add milk, sugar, let get tepid, mix hot. Then add to this mixture the eggs, sifted flour, raisins, salt and yeast. Beat with spoon 5 to 6 min. Dough is sticky. Cover and let rise to twice its size. Sprinkle with sugar and cinnamon. 300 F, 1 hour.

1/2 c. sugar 1/2 c. milk
1/2 c. raisins 2 eggs
1/4 T salt 1 c. yeast
3 1/2 c. sifted flour

Use grated apples not applesauce instead of raisins.

Make dough thicker by sweeter.
Jan Meisels Allen

Blinzte Soufflé

Jan’s sister, Natalie Perlo Goldberg (1926-2004) is remembered fondly by her three children for making this classic casserole and brunch/breakfast treat. It was the first recipe that Jan thought of when the project began.

12 blintzes, frozen or fresh
½ cup sugar
¼ lb butter
4 eggs
1½ cups sour cream
1 Tbsp vanilla
Cinnamon

- Melt butter in baking dish.
- Coat blintzes on both sides with butter.
- Spread out blintzes in the baking dish and sprinkle with cinnamon.
- Mix sugar, eggs, sour cream and vanilla in blender, then pour over blintzes.
- Bake 350 for 40 minutes. Soufflé is finished when it rises and looks slightly browned.
Diane Goldin

Nana’s Noodle Pudding

My mother made this pudding for Jewish holidays and Thanksgiving. It smells divine when baking and is delicious to eat warm or cold. It was handed down from my great-grandmother, Edith Frank Cristal, who brought it from Russia to St Louis, MO where she raised five children, one of whom was my maternal grandmother, Nana. When I was a child, I didn't like the kugel's raisins and certainly didn't appreciate that their presence offers clues about where my great-grandmother was born. Now I savor it all -- from my grandmother's handwritten recipe that she gave to my sister on her wedding day in 1975 , to the memories of shared family celebrations and the sense that our connection endures.
Nana’s Noodle Pudding (handwritten on prior page)

1lb medium noodles
1 cup sugar
2 eggs
raisins (as much as you want)
¾ stick of butter or margarine
Cinnamon
1 cup milk (or less as added in baking dish)

Cook noodles in salted rapid boiling water until soft. Drain thru colander with cold water running thru noodles.
Melt margarine.
Mix in bowl: noodles, eggs, sugar, raisins, melted margarine, and cinnamon. Add as much or as little cinnamon as desired. Do not add milk in mixing bowl.
Put in baking dish and add milk and bake @ 350° between 45 to 60 min.
After 35 to 45 min. test by sticking silver knife that has been dipped in cold water into pudding. If knife comes out clean, pudding is done. Be sure top of pudding is slightly browned.

P.S. Milk is poured around edges of baking dish and not mixed with the pudding like you mixed all the rest of ingredients. However, milk may flow all thru pudding once you put it around edges. Use as much milk as desired as pudding looks good & moist for the baking.
Helene Rosen

Mary Rosen Loevner’s Passover Cake
Makes one two-layer cake.

Cake:

- 6 eggs
- 2 very heaping tbsp. potato starch
- 2 heaping tbsp. matzo cake meal
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 tbsp lemon juice

Preheat oven. 350 (gas) or 325 (electric)
Grease two round cakes pans with Pam spray.
Separate eggs: Separate each egg individually in a small dish.
When successfully separated, beat whites using mixer until stiff.
In a separate dish, cream yolks, sugar, and lemon juice
Sift flour and potato starch into yolk mixture. Mix.
Fold in 1/3 of whites at a time until all whites are in.
Bake at 25-30 minutes
Let cool upside down
Remove from pan after 10 minutes.

Frosting:

- 2 cubes bittersweet chocolate (2 oz)
- 2 tbsp butter
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 2 tbsp milk
- 2 cups powdered sugar

Melt chocolate and butter over hot water. Sift in sugar.
Add 2 tbsp or more milk when sugar gets thick. Add vanilla. Allow to cool.
Spread over each cake layer and stack. Finish frosting.
Decorate frosted cake with walnuts. One whole walnut in the center. A single circle of half walnuts near the outer edge.
Jan Meisels Allen

**Aunt Anna’s Butterscotch Bars**

I can remember visiting my maternal aunt (mother’s older sister) Anna and uncle Aaron Baker at their chicken farm in Torrington, CT. I loved her “scotch” bars and she always had some in the basement freezer for me when I visited. We would go down the stairs to the basement in her home built in the 1780’s, and get them so she could defrost and serve them to me.

Pre-heat oven to 350 degrees
Recipe fits a 13”x 9”x 2” pan.

**Ingredients**
- ¼ lb. butter
- 1 cup of graham cookie cracker crumbs
- 14-oz can sweetened-condensed milk
- 1 small pkg butterscotch chips
- 1 small pkg chocolate chips (semi sweet or bitter)
- 1 cup chopped nuts (walnuts or pecans)
- 1 cup grated coconut

Line pan with parchment paper (or grease it thoroughly.)
Combine crumbs and butter, then press into the bottom of the pan.
Layer in both chips, then the nuts and finally the coconut flakes.
Pour the can of sweetened condensed milk over everything.
Press down gently so everything sticks to the milk.
Bake 30 min.
When thoroughly cooled, cut into bars.
Learning about the foods your own ancestors ate will not only let you know what they liked, but it will also show you what economic and social conditions were like in their areas during their time periods. It will let you know what foods they had available to them, and what foods were popular.

~W. Moneymaker