

FOOD

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Never too busy for Dad

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FOR THE MESSENGER

Busy week? Did it just dawn on you that today is Father's Day? Not to worry, with these stress-free tips you still have plenty of time to show Dad how special he is.

Years ago, I learned two simple rules for success in the kitchen, especially when it comes to celebrations with family: 1.) Any meal is secondary to spending time with loved ones. 2.) Never plan a menu so complicated that, when the cooking is finished, the kitchen resembles a movie set for an environmental disaster.

With her huge brood to care for, my mother was usually on the losing end of both of these rules, but it wasn't always because of the children racing around her feet as she stirred, mashed and blended her way through the day.

You see, my father retired while I was still in school. He enjoyed having more time for his music and poetry, and for the ministry of a little church that started out in our home and grew from there. But he still had creative energy to spare, and often devised down-home style endeavors that we kids thought were terrific fun. Our mother, however, didn't always see it that way.

One of Dad's special pursuits occurred in early spring, when the days give a glimpse of sun and warmth but the nights are still long and cold.

On this particular day I jumped off of the school bus, and nearing the house I noticed a pleasant sweet smell that I couldn't quite place. This was not unusual; at various times of the year our house emanated different scents. In summer it was jelly and jam, in fall it smelled of pickles, tomatoes and Mom's dreaded chili sauce (that I now long for), and winter brought the scent of Dad's fresh baked bread.

Spring was always a sort of in between, when both the earth and my father were at loose ends. Still too cold for farming or fishing, but the urge was there to shake off winter's dark days.

As I plunked down my books and coat I could hear my parents in the back of the house. Well, mostly it was my mother, and she did not sound thrilled. I clicked on the big console television in the front room and made my way to the fridge.

Rounding the hall I saw both of my parents standing in our steam-filled kitchen, staring up at the ceiling.

My mother held a bundle of clean sheets in her arms. Her brows were furrowed and her dark eyes flashed. My father stood near a boiling kettle on the stove with a long spoon in his hand. His expression was bemused and his gray eyes looked up in wonder.

I looked up at the ceiling, too. It was speckled with little brown dots.

My mother was saying, "Why didn't you do that outside?" My father was quiet. He knew better than to say much; it would have been like toying with a diminutive tiger.

"What is that?" I asked.

Turning to me, my mother said, "Your Daddy is making maple syrup!"

I then noticed that the little brown dots were slowly dripping from the ceiling and down onto everything — floors, dishes, and the freshly washed sheets my mother was holding.

It was raining in the kitchen. Raining sweet, sticky maple syrup.

After my mother left the room, I walked over to the counter, wiped my finger across a splotch and raised it to my lips.

"Hey, Dad, this is really good!"

My father quietly turned



Photo by Chuck Angel

Marinated London Broil with Maitre d' Butter.



Photo credit Chuck Angel

Ovatus Glaysbrook

back to the boiling kettle and whispered that he'd fry us up some cornbread later to go with it.

Times like that are what keep us going later in life.

Dads and fatherly folks usually don't want to be fussed over too much. A card or small gift, a simple good meal and a little time with you is about all it takes to make them happy.

And that is what Father's Day is all about. Expressing our thanks and appreciation to those very influential men in our lives. Here are some sure-fire ways to dress up Dad's meal and still have time to spend with him, all without having to call a Hazmat team to come clean up the kitchen.

Basic Marinade

This quick fix will render flavor and tenderness to Dad's steak, chicken or pork with ingredients that you may already have on hand.

Blend together equal parts:

- Orange juice
- Soy sauce
- Bottled Italian dressing. (I like to use a bold-flavored type.)

Put the meat in a freezer bag, add the marinade and squish it around. Chill for at least 3 hours, overnight is even better. For the 2 pound London broil featured here, I used 1/3 cup of each ingredient.

Maitre d' Butter

Once Dad's steak is grilled, top it off with this classic and everyone will be wondering where you went to cooking school. It will work equally well on Dad's freshly grilled or broiled Catch of the Day.

- 1 tablespoon dried parsley
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 1 stick (1/2 cup) butter, softened
- Plastic wrap or waxed paper



Photo by Chuck Angel

Ovatus Glaysbrook's Coconut Pie with Super Simple Meringue.

First put the parsley in a small mixing bowl and drizzle the lemon juice over it. Let it set for a couple of minutes so that the parsley soaks up the juice. Next, mash the softened butter into the parsley and lemon; it's okay if a little of the lemon juice doesn't blend into the butter.

Scoop the mixture out onto a sheet of plastic wrap or waxed paper. Roll it into a tube shape and tighten the ends like a candy wrapper. Refrigerate for at least an hour.

Top hot steak, chicken, pork or fish with a slice of the butter; it will melt and blend with the meat juices to create a delicious sauce.

Finish With A Flourish

The story behind this pie is almost as good as the pie itself, and definitely worthy of your Father's Day celebration. Ovatus Cooper of Mortons Gap was just 16 years old when she married the love of her life, John Evan Glaysbrook. That was back in 1935. On that day, her aunt gave her a recipe for coconut pie as a wedding gift.

Young Mrs. Glaysbrook first made the pie for her new husband, and she says that even though she was an inexperienced cook it turned out pretty good, and improved each time she made it. As her family grew she began to double, triple and even quadruple the recipe.

Folks began expecting her to bring those coconut pies to family reunions, church suppers and holiday gatherings.

In time, this coconut pie became her special way of saying "thank you" to preachers, teachers, bankers and others who had lent her a hand in one way or another.

Chuck and I encountered this marvelous pie in 2004,

when I stopped in to check on Mrs. Glaysbrook, who was by then getting up in years. Something didn't seem quite right. I told her that I thought she had a gas leak in the house, and wouldn't she come home with me and call one of her children to come check on it?

Naturally she refused to leave her house, but she immediately called her son. He in turned called the gas company and the problem was quickly resolved.

The next day, our bell rang and I answered the door to find a tiny lady standing there, holding a big coconut custard pie.

"You're my hero!" Mrs. Glaysbrook said.

Of course, Chuck and I realized that checking on a neighbor is not particularly heroic, but who says no to pie?

Ovatus Cooper Glaysbrook is now well into her nineties and lives with her daughter, Joyce Hogan of Earlington. Although she no longer remembers the name of the aunt who gave her the recipe, she has never forgotten baking all of those coconut pies.

Ovatus Glaysbrook's Coconut Pie

This recipe calls for brand named ingredients from Pet Milk, Argo and Goldenrod. The Pet Milk trademark was registered in 1895, Argo Manufacturing incorporated in 1891 and Goldenrod was founded right here in Madisonville in 1927.

If your Dad is on a low-sugar diet, simply replace the sugar for your favorite granulated sugar

substitute. It will work for the meringue, too.

- 1 cup white sugar
- 1 level tablespoon Argo cornstarch
- 2 heaping tablespoons flour
- 1 cup Pet milk
- 2 cups Goldenrod milk
- 3 egg yolks, beaten
- 1/2 cup coconut
- Dash salt
- 1 teaspoon margarine
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- A few drops yellow food coloring (optional)
- 1 baked 9-inch pie crust
- 3 egg whites
- Extra coconut

In a 2-quart saucepan, combine the sugar, cornstarch and flour. Add both kinds of milk, the egg yolks, coconut and salt. Cook, stirring constantly, until thickened; add margarine, vanilla and food coloring if desired. Pour into the baked crust. Beat the egg whites until stiff, spread on the pie, and top with extra coconut. Place the pie in the oven and broil, watching closely until topping is browned. Makes one 9-inch pie. If you'd like more meringue, try topping your pie with the following quick and dramatic "up-do."

Super Simple Meringue

I recently learned that meringue is an invention of the Swiss. Who knew? It's easy to treat Dad to a scrumptious "mile high" style meringue topping by using store-bought egg whites in a carton. Remember that you can use sugar substitute if you wish.

- 1 1/3 cups egg whites from a carton
- 3/4 cup white sugar
- 1 teaspoon cream of tartar

If you do not have cream of tartar you can still make the meringue but it may "deflate" a little. If you want to use the egg whites left over from the pie recipe, add them to only 1 cup of the carton egg whites.

Measure the carton egg whites into a large mixing bowl and let them come to room temperature while you make your pie. When ready, add the cream of tartar to the sugar in a cup or small bowl and stir it around a little to blend.

With a mixer set on high, whip the egg whites until they just begin to foam up, then add the sugar, a little at a time, whipping as you go. After all the sugar is added, continue whipping the mixture until very stiff and glossy.

Spread the meringue onto the pie, making sure to cover the edges as this will keep the meringue from sliding.

Broil until nicely browned, watching very carefully to prevent the meringue from burning. This should take 2 minutes or less.

Chill the pie thoroughly before serving.