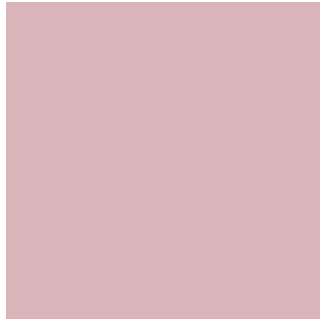


***Introduction***  
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# Introduction

## Friends & Family

It is obvious food nourishes, but if the cook cares about the people at the table, it nurtures as well. Our Mom and Dad both saw to it that us kids, our extended family, and friends were always welcome and well-fed. It wasn't unusual for their friends to stop by on a random afternoon for a cup of coffee and a visit. But for Christmas Eve, New Year's Eve, and every milestone celebration—first communions, graduations, confirmations—our house was truly open: friends and family would find not only a heartfelt welcome, but also food and drink and fellowship.

The various occasions were marked by what was served: Christmas, Easter, and New Years meant ham, sausage, and salads along with cookies and pies mostly made by my sister Alexia. Milestone celebrations always featured the fresh strawberry whipped cream cake from the Gary Bakery, along with lots of fried chicken. For weeks before such gatherings, on our way home from school with a car full of kids, Mom would stop at the Buy Low on Ridge Road in Glen Park so we could each buy the limit of 2 fryers when they were on sale. They would go into the chest freezer and be fried up the day before whatever occasion was being celebrated.

Guests for holidays and special celebrations rarely arrived empty-handed. My Aunt Mary's cherry slices or nut and poppyseed rolls (depending on the season), along with sweets like my cousin Sharon's Fannie Mae Fudge or cousin Phyllis' Cherry Slice Cookies, and side dishes of all kinds would be added to the table. That kind of welcome, one that always included an offer of something to eat and drink, was common at our house, as my college friend Bruce Anderson (left) found when he came to visit for a couple days in 1980.



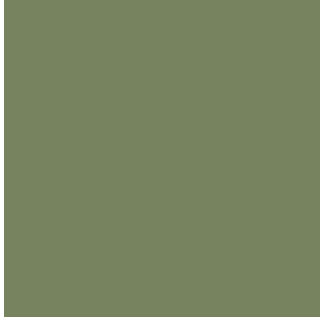
Here's how he tells it:

*During a school year break, Nick invited me to visit his family home in Lake Station, Indiana. I call Indianapolis home, and recall telling Nick I would arrive mid-afternoon. Back then, with a maximum speed limit of 55 MPH, it was a 4-hour drive. I arrived to find Nick home alone, and he proceeded to give me the obligatory homestead tour, ending in the basement. He mentioned there was chicken and rice on the stove that his mom had made for me, giving the two of us a mid-afternoon snack, which explained the delicious aroma I had noticed when I entered the kitchen earlier. "I'll be right up," Nick said, sending me ahead.*

*Sitting on the stove I found a huge stainless steel roasting pan filled to the brim with hot rice, tomato sauce, and chicken. Snack? For me? Who else was coming? What should I do? Nick came in, filled two plates and sat down. "This is good," Nick reassured me, and indeed it was. We enjoyed the chicken and rice in the mid-afternoon, and when Mom got home, she thought I needed dinner. A whole new meal was prepared, equal in quantity and quality. The food festival was underway.*

*I was a guest for two days, and those welcomed into the Dorochoff home know the family to be generous and gracious hosts. Each meal was equally gregarious and delicious. The memories of just the food include a pan of 20 plus fish fillets with the obligatory salad and Kraft macaroni and cheese, as well as breakfasts including skillet of eggs, sausage, and a loaf of toast. But more important, perhaps, were the stories and laughter, which along with the joy of making and sharing meals became my definition of the Dorochoff family. Clearly, food and the dinner table were essential to the Dorochoff way of life. 45 years later, I can close my eyes and return to that little kitchen with its refrigerator out on the back porch, the space in the kitchen given over to as many chairs as could fit around the table and remember the smells, the sounds, and the amazing meals full of nourishment, flavor, and love.*

My parents were not unique in our family. We met the same plenty of both food and fellowship when visiting our aunts, uncles and cousins. And our generation developed its own traditions. Family favorite dishes, both sweet and savory, and seasonal dishes joined the favorites of our parent's generation. And as my parents' generation passed on, those old favorites often became less common than they once were.



friends and family, like Aunt Jennie Sposito's spaghetti and meatballs, which Alexia made regularly for us before she went off to college. As the years passed by, a sloppy joe recipe from our friend Cindy Oman's Grandpa Goggins became a favorite and my husband Joe's Turkey Tetrazzini, a curry-laced pasta, became a traditional post-Thanksgiving treat. And, speaking of turkey, our grandma, Antonina Purevich (left), taught Mom to baste the turkey with Mogen David and 7-Up after stuffing it with her unusual cracker dressing. Like that turkey, we don't often make some of the dishes we had growing up, often selected because they fed seven on a shoestring: Dad's cabbage soup or Mom & Dad's chicken and rice that Bruce enjoyed during his visit, or Mom's cabbage and dumplings, which could feed our army on pennies.

## Traditions

In 2023, my sister Alexia (right top) called to tell me that her daughter Cheryl (right middle) wanted to learn how to make Mom's stuffed cabbage. Alexia had a copy of a recipe and wanted to check to see if it was the same as I had. By the time we were done talking, we decided that I would come out to Cheryl's and the three of us together would tackle the ingredients for an electric roaster full of cabbage rolls. I typed up a final copy of the recipe we used and emailed it to Alexia and Cheryl with a couple "how to" pictures, which are now in Chapter 4.

It was a great experience and made me think about all the dishes we had growing up, and what traditions around food our own families have developed, like my nephew Louie's deviled eggs, my brother-in-law Greg's chicken wings or baked beans, and my nachos and biscuits and gravy, which Joe really likes. On top of these contemporary dishes, Mom spent years collecting recipes from her friends, which found their way to Alexia after Mom passed. These include dishes from Mom's friends from church or from Wednesday night bingo, like Amelia Yaros' chicken rice. Then there are the recipes shared with us kids from both



Once I started gathering recipes, I began reaching out to cousins and friends for both recipes and photos. They were happy to share recipes that were important to their families as well, and in the process I managed to locate, with their help, some recipes I thought were lost forever. "And why stop there?" I thought. George (below) had tried to recreate the garlic sausage Dad would buy from his friend each fall, which we had each Christmas and Easter. With his efforts and a couple versions I found on the web, I landed on something that is as close to what I remember as anyone could expect. Our friend Eric joined me

one day to make his own Italian sausage while I made the garlic sausage, and both were fantastic. Another example was my search for pierogi like those we would have on some Fridays during Lent. I remember riding with Dad (below) to the Knights of Columbus building on 5th Avenue in Gary where the Slovak Club had their weekly fish fry. That search resulted in three recipes from friends and family.



“Cooking with Friends and Family” means that if you want to get to know a recipe, you should have an idea of where it came from. Each chapter has a brief intro and some notes about ingredients, followed by the folks who brought those recipes to the table. There are generally two recipes on each page, which have a head note that provides a bit of history, often from the person who provided the recipe. Below the head note, a shaded box titled “Before Getting Started” includes number of servings and information on equipment and prep work to be done prior to actually making the dish.



## Contributions

Each chapter mentions the folks who contributed specific recipes, many of whom also provided photos of the folks associated with those dishes or photos of the dishes themselves. There are so many folks who contributed in other ways, as well. Alexia served as the guardian of Mom’s recipe collection and was supportive throughout the entire process, and her daughter Cheryl got the ball rolling when she asked about Mom’s stuffed cabbage. Our friends, John and Jean Dravet (below) also provided a lot of help. John read and provided edits on early drafts, and Jean rescued two recipes from oblivion for me: the walnut cake in Chapter 8 and the cinnamon rolls in Chapter 9. In addition to recipes, both provided advice and help with recipe testing and photos.

Special mention goes to Bruce and Lynda Anderson, who both provided help early on. I so appreciate Bruce’s willingness to let me include his story about visiting me at my folks in the early 1980s. And Lynda (below) helped me with the design of the book. I had the basic layout, but had no idea how to use color in the design. Lynda is an accomplished designer, and agreed to help, I figured we would spend an hour or two talking about whatever it is designers talk about, and I was really looking forward to having her tell me what to do. Imagine my surprise when in two minutes she took care of my problem, saying something along the lines of, “find something you like, maybe a wallpaper or a painting, and use the colors from it.” I immediately knew where to look, and selected colors for this book from a Phillip Morris wallpaper named “Strawberry Thief.” Once I picked the wallpaper, I took advantage of Christian Hoggard’s web site, which translates the colors from that wallpaper (left, image credit V&A Museum) to a palette with corresponding computer codes (<https://c-shoggard.netlify.app/post/morris/>).

More recently, my cousins Carol Baisden and Jody Buchanan have contributed a lot to this book. I reached out to Jody (facing page, top left) for family photos and some help with my Aunt Helen’s stuffed rigatoni recipe, and

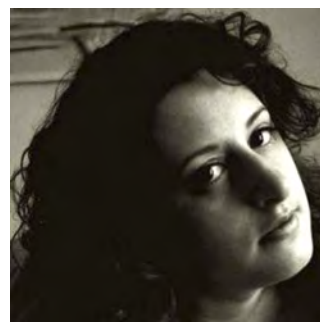
she ended up providing some of the best photos of my Mom and Dad that I have seen, including a couple taken during the holidays. (One of my favorites is to the right.)

I reached out to Carol (below right) for comments on a draft of the book I posted online, and she ended up providing about twenty recipes that were favorites from her family. Talking with her about her family's



traditions reminded me of their importance. You'll find many of these stories in the head notes to recipes from her mom (my Aunt Jo), her grandmother, and others she and her and her siblings consider family favorites.

Even before I started compiling this book, our friends Megan and Eric (right), who live downstairs, shared food with us. An endless parade of food was shuttled between the two households by leaving them on the "magic table" in the main hall. Eric's support in testing the sausage recipes was previously noted, and a jar of Megan's



Habanero jelly was so good it ended up in the book as well.

Our good friend Jeff Zurlinden (right) provided assistance with testing, but more importantly, support while I tested recipe after



recipe over the past couple years. Being a few years older than me, he was able to weigh in on how well some of the recipes for dishes from the 1950s and '60s performed, and his opinion was always welcome.

The support and sharing of the folks mentioned above and of every person mentioned in these pages is a mere echo of that I experienced from my husband, Joe (below). Our mutual love of cooking and baking was one of the things that drew us together.

Joe has always been patient with me (thank God!) and even more so during the past three years as I worked on this book. He had a front-row seat, whether he liked it or not, to each success and failure as the book took shape.



Over the last year he has been even more supportive (perhaps looking forward to when this particular type of torture would end?), testing recipes and providing advice on fine-tuning them. But most of all, his love and support have made this book possible.

