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Treat Yourself to an Around the Table Chef's Apron

Contact Susan Nye at susannye@tds.net or 603/526 7319

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Writing and sharing some of the tales told around my table is a lot of fun. I especially like reflecting back and sharing childhood adventures. My friend Thea calls mine an idyllic childhood. She is sure I grew up in the perfect family. Except for the lifelong trauma and drama of being a middle child, she's right.

I admit from time to time I hesitate before sharing. A few tales have been left unwritten, even ones that make me laugh out loud or at least grin from ear to ear. Why the hesitation? I can assure you, mine is not a devious past. Well nothing underhanded enough to call out a SWAT team and bloodhounds. There are no scandalous secrets that would get my dad booted out of the golf club or put my mom on the cover of a supermarket tabloid. I have no startling revelations that would destroy careers or fuel a million dollar law suit. My friends, family and I may think ourselves daring, dashing and absolutely fascinating but (sigh) we are a pretty ordinary (although never dull) bunch.

Still from time to time, my fingers hesitate above the keyboard. I fret and worry that someone will mutter or even shout, "What were they thinking?!?" They of course would be my parents. And by parents, the critics would really mean my mother because when it comes to raising children the buck stops with mom. Or at least it did when I was a kid.



So what did Mom do that could warrant a horrified look or whispered criticism? Did she let us skip school, eat ice cream for breakfast and run around with scissors? Of course not! I was just lucky enough to grow up before back-to-back playdates and practices became the norm for ten year olds.

Compared to an average kid today, my childhood was the epitome of slap dash spontaneity. And thank goodness for that. Admittedly, Mom insisted we learn to swim and made a few intermittent, halfhearted attempts at tennis lessons but she never scheduled us from morning to night. Especially in the summer we had lots of time to dream and explore, to find and create our own fun.

On foot or by bike, my friends and I did a fair amount of rambling and roving. We played kick-the-can and hide-and-seek. When we got bored we wandered into the woods to explore and see what we could find. We never got so lost that we couldn't find our way home. We took a few tumbles and skinned a few elbows and knees. My brother fell in the pond at least once but one of the bigger kids yanked him out. At the end of the day we'd wander home, sometimes a little wet or muddy or covered in poison ivy.

The family dogs Penny and Eeyore usually came along on our escapades. I suppose if anything had gone terribly wrong one of them could have raced home for help. The dogs watched *Lassie* with us on Sunday nights so they knew just what to do.

Times have changed but as I remember it, Mom was the perfect mother. And my memory, while selective, is so good it is frightening. Besides it's my fingers on the keyboard; it's my story and I'm sticking to it. Mom gave my sister, brother and me lots of room to grow and be our best selves. By luck or by design, she managed to raise three very different, never dull kids.

Happy Day Mom and bon appétit!

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or just look like one!*

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Honeyed Apricots with Creamy Yogurt

*A perfect springtime dessert! Whether it's brunch, lunch or dinner, sweet and creamy yogurt
will make a great addition to your Mothers' Day feast! Enjoy!*

Serves 6

32 ounces nonfat yogurt
1/4 cup (or to taste) honey
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 tablespoon Marsala
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
Pinch nutmeg
Juice of 1/2 orange
Grated zest orange of 1/2 orange
1/2 cup tiny chocolate chips (optional)
1/4 cup toasted pine nuts for garnish

Put the yogurt in a colander or sieve lined with a clean dishtowel or coffee filter; let
drain for at least 2-3 hours. While the yogurt is draining, prepare the apricots.

Put the honey, vanilla, Marsala, cinnamon, nutmeg, orange juice and zest in a medium
bowl and whisk to combine. Add the yogurt and whisk until smooth. Stir in 1/4 cup
chocolate chips.

Spoon the yogurt cream into dessert or wine glasses. Top with a generous spoonful of
apricots. Sprinkle with pine nuts and remaining chocolate chips and serve.

Apricots

1 cup dried apricots, cut in slivers
1 tablespoon honey
1 tablespoon Marsala
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
Juice of 1/2 orange
Grated zest orange of 1/2 orange

Combine the apricots, honey, Marsala, cinnamon, orange juice and zest. Cover and
store in the refrigerator for at least an hour to allow the apricots to absorb the liquid
and plump up.

