

What stories our dining table could tell!

Several months ago, Georgetown Little Theatre presented a show called *The Dining Room*. That play inspired Gerry to realize that although we write about food all the time, it isn't always about the food—sometimes it's about the table, and so she writes today.

The Dining Room is a play portraying many storylines all revolving around a dining room and the table found within. Our current dining table is approximately 12 years old. Twelve years since its construction, that is. But the wood is much older than that. The planks are about 9 inches wide and 6 feet long. We searched in earnest for years to find this custom-made harvest table with a side drawer, turned legs and the option of adding other leaves when needed. Since we often have large groups, the option of extra leaves is a necessity.

Prior to this table, our dark oak table, accompanied by a china cabinet and buffet was given to us by my husband's parents in the 1960's when they became heirs to their parents' dining room set. We think the table was purchased from a well-known department store in the late 40s.

So many meals, so many spills, so many other events: meetings, discussions, homework projects, laundry folding, sewing projects, jigsaw puzzles, numerous games including Scrabble—our personal favourite.

Our dining room table is the focal point in our home. It is in the direct centre of our home and is visible from both the front and back door. Our dining table is open to many guests—some are invited, some just drop in on the spur of the moment. Special occasions like Christmas,

Lori Gysel & Gerry Kentner



New Year, Easter, Thanksgiving, birthdays, July 1, anniversaries and dinner parties have given us the excuse to welcome guests; whether we have a buffet style meal or a plated affair, the table does the job.

Because we appreciate beautiful wood, our current table is almost always uncovered with only a seasonal decoration, maybe a runner or flowers or candles in the centre. Placemats are used all evenings, even with casual company like grandchildren, but for more formal events one of my collection of over 50 tablecloths would serve the purpose.

Our older table had lost its lustre over its 60 years and was made most obvious when we used the extra leaf for company—so shiny and unmarred. There are small markings of blue paint on the surface from a memorable weekend in the 60s with Dave's painting project with the Jaycee organization.

I have a picture of our first daughter, Lori, in a white plastic bathtub on the table, also in the 60s—creating water spots and memories everywhere. Then there was my red burlap curtain project also in the late 60s, which covered the whole dining room table and floor as I

sewed these mutinous yards of fabric.

Literally hundreds and hundreds of people have dined in our home, milling around the table laden with every food imaginable over the years—the hockey years with the pots of chili, the organization meetings with coffee and cookies, the summer barbecue parties with burgers and hot dogs, gourmet dinner parties, making sushi on Christmas Eve or maybe fondue and so many birthday cakes for the kids and grandkids.

If only the table could talk and repeat the conversations! If only I could remember!

Our old table has been at Lori's house for years—starting another new life and another set of memories.

No matter what you serve or how you serve it, use your dining room. Have friends and family over. In many homes the dining room table has become obsolete, most families opting for eating in the more casual kitchen atmosphere or in front of the TV. Now dining rooms have become showpieces or used as offices strewn with paperwork that has found no proper home.

I have considered our dining table to have been one of our most important purchases and one of the most used pieces of furniture in our home. Key family discussions have always taken place here and all of our most important family decisions were born here.

Now I must close, for it is almost time to set the table for dinner again. Have fun and keep cooking!

(Lori and Gerry can be reached at whatscookin@independentfreepress.com)

Frosted Sandwich Loaf

Ingredients for one loaf

- 4 slices bread, sliced lengthwise, whole wheat or white
- 250 g cream cheese
- few drops food colouring
- 2 carrots
- a few chives
- 1 green onion
- 3 eggs
- 5 tbsp mayonnaise
- salt and pepper
- 1/2 (213 g) tin red, sockeye salmon
- dash of lemon juice
- 1 cup chopped ham
- 2 tbsp pistachios, unsalted
- 1/2 tsp Dijon mustard



Method

1. Prepare egg filling: place eggs in a small pot with enough cold water to cover. Bring eggs to a boil and continue to boil for 8 minutes. Remove from heat and cool under running water. Peel immediately. Grate eggs. Mix with 2 tbsp mayonnaise, salt and pepper to taste. Set aside.

2. Prepare salmon filling: drain and remove bones from salmon. Mix with 1 tbsp mayonnaise, dash of lemon juice, salt and pepper to taste. Set aside.

3. Prepare ham filling: put chopped ham in food processor. Process until ham is fine. Roughly chop pistachios. Mix ham with pistachios, 2 tbsp mayonnaise, one half tsp Dijon and salt and pepper to taste. Set aside.

4. Lay one slice bread on serving platter. Spread evenly with salmon. Top with another slice of bread.

5. Spread evenly with egg. Top with another slice of bread.

6. Spread evenly with ham. Top with last slice of bread.

7. Refrigerate (wrapped well with plastic wrap and a damp cloth) for several hours or overnight.

8. Warm cream cheese in microwave until it is smooth and very creamy. Add food colouring, one drop at a time, until desired colour has been achieved.

9. Spread food colouring on all sides and top.

10. Use vegetables to decorate.

11. Refrigerate again for at least one hour before serving.

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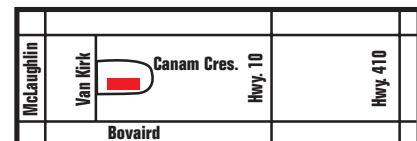
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