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CELEBRATING WITH FAMILY RECIPES

The holiday season is here and I can already smell the aromas. Fresh cut pines, peppermint candles, and spiced cider. In the background Amy Grant is singing my favorite carols and soon we will come together with family and friends for good food and drink and to make memories. This season of the year makes us stop with the crazy business of our lives and connect with important people we love and care about.

Food is always a part of these celebrations and we all have favorite items that we equate with celebrating the season. Grandma's famous stuffing, your sister's homemade rolls, Uncle Jack's smoked turkey. Each family and culture celebrates with their own special traditions passed down from generation to generation. I urge you this holiday season to take the time and effort to sit down with special loved ones and get those favorite recipes before it's too late. We all imagine family will be with us for years to come, but time proves we don't have forever.

I was reminded of this last summer when I visited with cousins at a family reunion. Their mother's famous strawberry cake was not on the menu as she had become too frail to make it anymore. Fortunately I had the recipe while her daughters did not and had no idea if it was even written down. Years ago I called her to get the recipe which I knew my family would love. It's my sons' favorite cakes and each time I make it I think of her and being with extended family.

As a holiday gift idea consider writing down in long hand your special recipes and passing them on to daughters and sons, nieces and nephews, brothers and sisters. They will become a family treasure for present and future generations. Here are my two very favorite cake recipes from childhood. Both are delicious and worth every calorie. NOTE for upcoming holiday baking, Crisco makes a new shortening that is trans fat free.

AUNT LOUISE'S STRAWBERRY CAKE

1 cake mix (yellow, white, or strawberry flavored)
3/4 cup vegetable oil
4 eggs
10 ounce package frozen strawberries
1 small package strawberry jello
1/2 cup hot water

Mix ingredients and pour into two greased cake pans. Bake at 350°F for 30 to 35 minutes.

Strawberry Icing

1/2 package of 10 ounce frozen strawberries
6 tablespoons butter, melted
3/4 pound powdered sugar

Mix together and spread on cake layers that are COLD. Refrigerate cake until ready to serve.

MOM'S BUTTERNUT CAKE

1 1/2 cups shortening or butter
2 cups sugar
4 eggs
1 cups milk
2 1/2 cups cake flour
1/2 cups self rising flour
1 tablespoon butter nut flavoring

Cream shortening and sugar for 10 minutes on high speed of mixer. Add unbeaten eggs and mix well. Add milk and flour alternately. Add flavoring and mix well. Bake for 1 1/2 hours at 325°F in tube or loaf pan. Frost with icing or eat plain.

Butter Nut Icing

2 cups powdered sugar
1 stick butter or margarine or 1/2 cup shortening
2 tablespoons evaporated milk
1 tablespoon Butter Nut flavoring

Mix ingredients together using mixer. Frost cake.

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