

There is no excuse for a husband not to fix a meal

THE ROLE of the husband as a kitchen helper has progressed from dishwasher to a full-fledged partner in the cooking process. More and more husbands today are finding it both necessary and enjoyable to help with the preparation of family meals.

This is partly a reflection of the changing role of the working woman. Increasing numbers of wives are entering the job market as full-time wage earners. This obviously leaves the job of keeping house one that must be divided between spouses if it is to get done at all.

In my case, I help with meal preparation because of several factors. For the first seven years of our marriage, Kathe worked full-time as a dental hygienist. She often worked late hours, making it necessary for me to at least start the evening meal. This presented no problem because I enjoy cooking almost as much as I enjoy eating.

My enjoyment of cooking duties most likely stems from my early childhood. I can vividly remember sitting on the kitchen countertop watching my mother prepare the family supper. The smells and sounds of my mother's tiny kitchen are forever etched in my senses.

Mom worked "by ear," almost never using a recipe. She would just throw



Bill Ross

the dishes together, and they invariably would have the same great taste time after time. She still amazes me with the zest and enthusiasm she has for cooking a great meal for a large family group. She seems to thrive on it. I guess some of that enthusiasm rubbed off on me because I also get excited about cooking for a group of people.

Many of my male friends are awed that I would ever attempt to make spaghetti for a group of 25 people. "How do you do it?" they ask. "Where did you learn?" These are all men with college educations.

My pat response has always been: "If you can read and follow simple directions, then you can cook a delicious meal easily." There are so many excellent cookbooks on the market today for the working couple that there is no real excuse for a husband not to be able to fix a presentable meal.

My cooking skills were sharpened by many hours of practice during college.

In my last years of schooling, I lived in apartments with as many as four roommates. All of them eagerly took advantage of my interest in cooking, and I always was unanimously voted resident chef. I agreed as long as my "contract" stipulated no dishwashing. I can think of numerous anecdotes resulting from these years of cooking for the guys, many of which I will share in future columns.

I still believe that one of the reasons Kathe married me was because she knew I could cook. One of our first dates was a lasagne dinner I cooked for her birthday. She kept asking where I was hiding the little Italian grandma who did the cooking.

I kid Kathe that she decided to marry me after that lasagne dinner, but I am not kidding when I say that sharing the kitchen chores has probably done much to help our relationship mature and remain a loving, sharing one.

In fact, most men I talk to who help

with the cooking share these same feelings. So, guys, give it a try. Pick one specialty that you may have already cooked at some time and start with that. Then expand your skills slowly. Before you know it, you will look forward to "your-turn-to-cook night."

Italian cooking is my forte, probably because I grew up with pasta being served at least twice weekly — always on Sunday and Thursday and whenever else we could convince mom to cook up a pot of sauce. There is something about mom's spaghetti sauce that I find hard to match in my own kitchen. Maybe it is the pot she used (the same one that she has used for over 30 years) or just the special magic touch that only a mother has.

Because she has never used a specific recipe, my older sister and I have attempted to "put into words" the magic of Mom Ross' spaghetti sauce. While mom's is consistently excellent, I find mine varies from pot to pot — always good, sometimes even coming close to the Mom Ross magic.

I find that one of the most important things in cooking is experimentation. Take a recipe such as this sauce and "do your own thing" to give it your own special touch and flavor. I know you will be amazed at the results you achieve and very satisfied with the help that you receive.

SPAGHETTI SAUCE WITH MEATBALLS

Sauce:

- 1 16 oz. can of tomato sauce
- 1 10 1/2 oz. can tomato puree
- 1 12 oz. can of tomato paste
- 3 cups water
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. oregano
- 1/2 tsp. pepper
- 1/2 tsp. garlic powder
- 1 medium size bay leaf
- 1 tsp. parsley flakes
- 2 tsp. sugar

Meatballs:

- 1 lb. ground chuck
- 1/4 tsp. garlic powder
- 2 eggs, slightly beaten
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1/4 tsp. pepper

Combine all the sauce ingredients in a dutch oven or 4-quart saucepan. Stir thoroughly.

In medium mixing bowl, combine meatball ingredients. Mix together well with hands. Roll into one-inch balls and drop into the sauce.

Bring sauce to a boil. Place lid loosely on pan to allow steam to escape (if the lid is on tightly, the sauce will be watery).

Reduce heat to low and cook for three hours or preferably reduce heat to simmer and cook all night (about 8 hours) as Mom Ross would.

Makes enough sauce to cover two pounds of spaghetti. Serves 6-8 people.

LASAGNE

1 recipe of spaghetti sauce

- 1 lb. package of lasagne noodles
- 1 lb. ricotta cheese
- 1/2 lb. brick cheese (thinly sliced)
- 1/2 lb. mozzarella cheese (thinly sliced)
- 2 cups grated Romano cheese
- 2 eggs

Instead of adding meatballs to the sauce, add one pound of browned ground chuck.

In a medium bowl combine the ricotta cheese, eggs and 1/4 cup of the Romano cheese. Mix well and set aside.

Cook the lasagne noodles as directed on the box. Drain and rinse with cool water.

In a 9x13 casserole dish, place just enough sauce to cover the bottom. Then place a single layer of noodles on the sauce. Spread one-fifth of the ricotta mixture on the noodles. Cover the ricotta with sauce (for easier cutting, be sure to use the sauce sparingly). Next cover with a layer of brick cheese slices. Sprinkle with romano cheese.

Repeat this process four more times, alternating the brick and the mozzarella cheese slices.

Cover with foil and bake at 350 degrees for approximately 45 minutes or until the sauce is bubbling. Cut into squares and serve with plenty of extra sauce and grated Romano cheese on the side.



Turkey Wings Fricassee combines wings with spices, vegetables and noodles.

Turkey wings have plenty of meat for their price

What the world needs now is a high protein, main course meat, low in cholesterol and fats, that is easily digested and modestly priced. No such animal? Have you taken a look at turkey and turkey parts in your supermarket lately?

Depending on your family preference as to dark or light meat, you have a choice of turkey breast, steaks and cutlets, thighs, drumsticks and wings. Fresh or frozen, this wide variety of parts combines well with many other foods and can be used creatively in a number of favorite recipes.

Turkey wings provide a surprising amount of meat for the cost. They respond best to long, slow, moist cooking to bring out flavor and tenderness.

Try serving Turkey Wings Fricassee on a platter over cooked, buttered noodles with glazed carrots and a tossed green salad. That is the kind of whip-inflation goodness we all appreciate when selecting convenient cut-up turkey parts.

- 1/4 tsp. white pepper
- 4 tbsp. butter or shortening
- 2 medium onions, chopped
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- 4 cups chicken broth
- 2 carrots, sliced
- 1/2 cup celery, sliced
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/2 tsp. rosemary
- 1/4 cup cold water
- Wide egg noodles

Rinse wings and pat dry. Combine flour, paprika, salt and pepper. Roll turkey wings in flour mixture to coat. Reserve remaining flour. Melt butter in Dutch oven or large heavy pot. Brown turkey on all sides. Add onions and garlic, saute for 5 minutes. Add broth, carrots, celery, bay leaf, and rosemary. Cover and simmer for 2 to 2 1/2 hours or until turkey is tender. Transfer wings to heated platter.

Remove bay leaf. Mix remaining flour with cold water to form a smooth paste; add slowly to hot liquid, stirring to keep smooth. Cook over medium heat about 5 minutes or until sauce has thickened slightly. Pour over turkey in serving platter. Garnish with parsley. Serve over cooked, buttered noodles. Makes 4 servings.

TURKEY WINGS FRICASSEE
4 turkey wings (about 2 1/2 lbs.)
1/4 cup flour
1/2 tsp. paprika
1/2 tsp. salt

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