

Who's Who In The Kitchen

Chicken And Dumplings Fans Have Probably Tasted Cora Black's Recipe

By Audrey C. Lodato
Post Staff Writer

If you're a chicken and dumplings fan, and you've been in Mecklenburg a while, chances are you know Cora Black or have eaten her speciality. "I've made chicken and dumplings all over Mecklenburg County," Mrs. Black reveals. She's cooked for church dinners and other groups in the area for years. "Some people say, 'If Cora Belle Black isn't going to make it, I'm not coming,'" she mentions.

Despite her reputation, Mrs. Black claims she can't explain what makes her chicken and dumplings so special. It's not so much the ingredients and measurements as it is something she seems to have a "feel" for. Noting that she judges what a dish needs by smell rather than by taste, this retired school dietitian recalls, "I started cooking when I was 13. I loved the kitchen. I hung around my mama all the time." Her mother was "a really good cook" who at one time cooked for a boarding house.

With over 30 years experience in school cafeterias as both dietitian and manager, Mrs. Black believes

children need to be trained at home to eat different foods. "They'll say they don't like something when they've never tasted it," she remarks. Providing a balanced, nutritional meal is a big reason for having school cafeterias. "So many children are little and skinny. You know they're not eating their vitamins," she points out. Too many children, she feels, only get something to eat, not balanced meals, at home.

Mrs. Black points to her great granddaughter, Yaschia Quina Baker, as an example. Yaschia loves beans and greens, but, says Mrs. Black, "she didn't like them til I taught her to eat them."

Cora Black and her husband, Sidney, have been life-long members of Rock Hill AME Zion Church, which was founded 125 years ago by Mr. Black's grandfather. "In all those years, we can count the Sundays we've missed on our fingers," Mrs. Black comments. At one time or another, she and her husband have served as president of most of the church's organizations, and Mr. Black has been the church's superintendent for 56 years. They are now active on the

AME Zion district level.

Church obviously is important to the couple. "It means all; all in all," Mrs. Black remarks. "When my husband was in the hospital, he asked for a Bible. One of the nurses said to him, 'Every time I see you, you're reading that book.' He said, 'This is the best book ever written.'"

Retired since 1976, Cora Black loves working in her garden. "If I don't make my beds first thing when I get up, I don't come back in to make them," she laughs. The Blacks used to have a big truck farm but have had to cut the size of the garden. Neither does Mrs. Black raise as many flowers as she used to. Still, they grow all their own vegetables and are able to preserve a lot.

Says Mrs. Black of the couple's 54-year marriage, "I've enjoyed every bit of it." They have one daughter, Alfretha Baker, who lives in Greensboro; two grandchildren, and four "greats."



Vegetables from the garden are a mainstay of menu.

MENU

- Country Steak With Gravy
- Garden Beans
- Mashed New Potatoes
- Wilted Lettuce With Onions
- Sliced Fresh Tomatoes & Cucumbers
- Coconut Cake

MASHED NEW POTATOES

Peel new potatoes and soak in warm water several hours. Cook whole, then mash with butter or margarine and other seasoning as desired.

GARDEN BEANS

Cook washed and freshly picked beans with ham hock or fatback grease, a peeled onion, salt to taste, and a pinch of sugar "to bring out the taste of the beans." Simmer no more than one hour after the pot starts boiling.

COCONUT CAKE

- 1 lb. butter or shortening
- 3 c. sugar
- 6 eggs
- 1 c. milk
- 4 c. flour
- 1 Tbsp. vanilla (or part vanilla, part lemon or almond)

Cream butter, sugar, and eggs. Add flavoring to milk and add to butter mixture. Beat in flour gradually. Bake in 3 greased, 9-inch layer pans at 350 for 25-30 minutes. Turn out of pans and cool before frosting. 7-Minute Frosting: In top of double boiler beat over boiling water for 7 minutes 3 egg whites, 2-2 1/2 c. granulated sugar, 6 Tbsp. water, and 2 tsp. flavoring. Frosting should be stiff. Spread over layers and sprinkle with coconut.

COUNTRY STEAK

Salt and pepper cube steak. Roll in flour and cook fast in 1/2 cup hot grease. Brown on both sides. To drippings in pan, add approximately 1 Tbsp. flour and enough water to make gravy of desired thickness. Keep stirring til flour is blended in. Simmer on stove (keep stirring) or heat through in oven. You may sprinkle the gravy with Accent or a bit of sugar if desired.

WILTED LETTUCE WITH ONIONS

- Leaf lettuce
- 1 large onion, chopped
- Fatback drippings or vegetable oil
- 1/2 c. vinegar
- 1 tsp. sugar
- Dash salt
- 2 Tbsp. drippings

Chop lettuce and onion into pan with drippings; cook just until wilted. Meanwhile, boil remaining ingredients in saucepan. (If vinegar is especially strong, dilute with 2 Tbsp. water.) Pour sauce over lettuce and onions and mix. "That's real good with potatoes."



Some of the best sauces to grace a barbecue are made at home.

Sauces Are Traditional

Sauces have long added to the American tradition of barbecued foods. But some of the best sauces are those special recipes prepared at home.

Donna Higgins, director of Del Monte Kitchens, says homemade barbecue sauce can be made in

small or large quantities, and applied to various meats to enhance their flavors.

In the recipes that follow, Higgins suggests adding interest to barbecue sauces with Wright's Natural Hickory Seasoning.

WRIGHT'S

SAVORY BARBECUE SAUCE

- 3 medium onions, finely chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 3 Tbsp. oil
- 3 c. Del Monte tomato catsup
- 3 Tbsp. Wright's natural hickory seasoning (liquid smoke)
- 1/2 c. brown sugar, packed
- 1/3 c. cider vinegar
- 1 tsp. dry mustard
- 1 tsp. hot pepper sauce

Saute onion and garlic in oil until tender. Stir in remaining ingredients; bring to boil. Reduce heat; simmer 10 minutes. Use with chicken, ribs and hamburgers. Yield: 1 quart

OLD SOUTHERN

MARINADE

- 1 c. cider vinegar
- 1/2 c. chopped onion
- 1/3 c. oil
- 1/4 c. Del Monte tomato catsup
- 2 Tbsp. Wright's natural hickory seasoning (liquid smoke)
- 1 Tbsp. hot pepper sauce
- 1 Tbsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 1 Tbsp. salt
- 1/2 tsp. oregano
- 1/2 tsp. basil
- 1/4 tsp. garlic powder

Combine all ingredients in saucepan; simmer 10 minutes. Use as marinade for chicken or ribs, marinating 1 1/2 hours, and basting frequently during cooking. Yields approximately 2 cups.



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By the way...

By Joe Black

A group of famous people in the entertainment world came together and blended their voices in song and said:

"We are the world
We are the children
We are the ones to make a brighter day."

This unselfish act was motivated by the famine and starvation in Ethiopia. It is a classic example of: "Black and White together, we shall overcome."

Today, I want to remind you of a challenge to Black Americans. It is finding a cure for Sickle Cell Trait and Sickle Cell Anemia. Why? Because one of 12 Black Americans has Sickle Cell Trait; one of 500 Black Americans has Sickle Cell Anemia. Sickle Cell Anemia does not affect one's intelligence, but it can cause growth retardation, leg ulcers, pneumonia, strokes, decreased exercise tolerance and sometimes causes pain.

If you are born with this tendency from one parent, you have Sickle Cell Trait. If you are born with this tendency from both parents, you have Sickle Cell Anemia. You will not know whether you have Sickle Cell Trait unless you take a simple blood test. So help combat and support the fight against Sickle Cell Disease by:

1. Having a blood test to learn if you have the Trait.
2. Riding Greyhound, because in 1985 a percentage of each ticket will be donated to the National Association for Sickle Cell Disease.
3. Mailing a contribution to your local Sickle Cell Chapter, or to:
The National Association for Sickle Cell Disease
3460 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, California 90010-2273

Joe Black
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