

**Who's Who In The Kitchen**

By Audrey C. Lodato  
Post Staff Writer

Seems like most people learned to cook from their mothers when they were growing up. Iris Battle wasn't one of those.

"Probably the first meal I cooked was after George and I came back from our honeymoon," the West Charlotte High School guidance counselor confesses. That first meal included country steak, over which the budding cook "cried because it was so awful. I couldn't get the gravy to brown."

But things have changed. "Now it's a breeze," Battle says. "I fixed country style steak Saturday and I was pleased with myself." Her "practice-makes-perfect" came over the course of 16 years of marriage to minister George Battle.

Her husband "will eat anything," while daughter LaChandra she describes as "a fussy eater. But that may be part of being 10 years old. She likes french fries, pizza, spaghetti, and no gravy on anything."

Nevertheless, Battle likes to experiment when she cooks and tries out new dishes on her two children; the couple also has a son, George, who's 13. "If they like it," she notes, "I'll cook it regularly."

Most of her culinary experimentation occurs during holiday periods when she has more time. She enjoys coming up with something totally different and "being unique."

One such gustatory adventure is a fruit salad she makes. It started out as simply pineapple, mandarin oranges, sour cream and marshmallows. Battle added nuts, peaches, cherries, and coconut. "It's quick and easy to fix," she advises. "No measuring—just open cans, drain, and mix together."

As in her parents' home ("I cannot ever remember Dad cooking."), Mrs. Battle is the chief cook in the family. Occasionally, her husband makes "Cherry Cheese Pie," which recipe follows, but otherwise, all food preparation is left to her. She doesn't seem to mind, but "every chance I get I go home and eat." ("Home" is to her parents' in Rock Hill.)

She also relies on Mom's advise when she's trying something new. Calling her mother "an excellent cook," Battle laughs when asked about childhood memories associated with food. "She always fixed soup when we had colds," she recalls, "and she always baked birthday cakes for us." But, the school counselor says, her biggest memory is of all the food her mother would prepare on Sundays. "She's still doing the same thing, even though we're all gone," Battle remarks.

Battle grew up in Rock Hill and attended Barber-Scotia College in Concord. She met husband George at church in Rock Hill, where she taught history at Clinton Junior College. When Rev. Battle was appointed to Gethsemane AME Zion Church in 1974, they moved to Charlotte. She worked in the church's enrichment program a couple of years before deciding to get a masters degree in guidance counseling at UNCC.

Now chairperson of the guidance department at West Charlotte, Battle professes, "I love my job—the people I work with and the students. I really enjoy what I'm doing. I feel I'm making a difference with students." Adding that she likes not only children but the whole process of childrearing, Battle states, "My husband and I take parenting very, very seriously."



Iris Battle prepares her favorite squash casserole. Ingredients include sour cream, stuffing mix, and pimientos for a rich, hearty flavor. (Photo by Audrey Lodato)

Besides work and home, Iris Battle organized Girl Scouts at Gethsemane and is service unit chairperson for Mecklenburg Unit 2; was appointed by Governor Martin to the State Youth Advisory Council; and is president of the AME Zion Ministers' Wives Fellowship.

She also does "whatever I can at the church. I always say I'm not a typical minister's wife; that's just one role, but I'm that way anyway."

Typical or not, Mrs. Battle has a few recipes to share with you. One of her favorite dishes both to prepare and enjoy is "Polish Sausage Casserole." She usually serves it with steamed broccoli, cauliflower, and squash which have been tossed with Italian salad dressing. "I can get LaChandra to eat that without any coaxing; it's the only way I can get her to eat broccoli," she says, so it must be good!

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**POLISH SAUSAGE CASSEROLE**

2 c. macaroni  
1 lb. Polish sausage  
2 eggs  
1 can evaporated milk  
1/2 c. diced onion  
1/2 c. green bell pepper  
2 c. grated cheese

Cook macaroni as directed on package; drain. Slice sausage very thin, or dice. Blend eggs and milk. Combine macaroni, sausage, milk and egg mixture, onions, green peppers, and 1 cup cheese. Pour into baking dish. Top with remaining cheese. Bake uncovered in oven for 30-35 minutes.

**CHERRY CHEESE PIE**

1 (8 oz.) pkg. cream cheese, softened  
1 (14 oz.) can sweetened condensed milk  
1/3 c. lemon juice  
1 tsp. vanilla extract  
Canned cherry pie filling, chilled  
1 (9") graham cracker crumb crust

In large bowl or blender, beat cheese til fluffy. Beat in condensed milk (not evaporated milk) til smooth. Stir in lemon juice and vanilla. Pour into crust. Chill 3 hours or til set. Top with pie filling before serving. Refrigerate leftovers.

**SQUASH CASSEROLE**

1/2 c. butter, melted  
1 pkg. stuffing mix  
2 lbs. squash  
1 small onion, chopped  
2 carrots, grated  
1 small jar pimientos  
1 can cream of chicken soup  
1 c. sour cream

Mix melted butter with stuffing. Spread half on bottom of casserole dish. Cook squash with onions. Drain; mix in other ingredients. Pour over stuffing mixture in dish. Top with remaining stuffing mix. Bake at 350 degrees til hot throughout, bubbling, and brown on top.

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### Salmon and Zucchini Parmigiana

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### Canned Salmon Entree Is Quick To Fix

Nutrition. Lightness. Flavor and freshness. Ease of preparation. Time. These are the thoughts that run through the consumer's mind when planning meals these days. All merge into the decision of what to serve for dinner.

Simple entrees are an especially attractive answer to the question. And Salmon and Zucchini Parmigiana fulfills all the criteria. It's a quick saute combining fresh mushrooms, onion, tomato and zucchini with a can of salmon and mozzarella and Parmesan cheeses. These are ingredients usually on hand and the preparation of this dish is easy enough to turn over even to a beginning cook.

Accompany the colorful entree with a loaf of crusty French bread and a salad of mixed greens for a light but satisfying menu that brings together the flavors of garden and sea.

With canned salmon from Alaska in the cupboard, you are always

ready to assemble quick yet tasty meals. The delicate flavor of canned salmon make it an ideal choice for use as a sandwich or omelet filling or in salads, soups or sauce for pasta. There's no waste with canned salmon; the liquid, skin and tender bones are all edible and contribute nutrients to the dish being prepared.

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source of protein and is rich in vitamins A and D and important minerals such as iron, phosphorus and zinc. There's a size for every recipe and household. Look for canned salmon from Alaska in 7½ ounce cans to serve 2 or 3, 15½ ounce cans to serve 4 to 6 or individual serving cans that weigh 3½ ounces. All combine great flavor with good nutrition and true convenience.

#### SALMON AND ZUCCHINI PARMIGIANA

Sauté mushrooms, onion and garlic in oil. Add zucchini, oregano and basil. Cook until zucchini is crisp tender; stir occasionally. Drain salmon; chunk. Stir salmon and tomato into zucchini mixture; cook 1 minute longer. Sprinkle cheeses around edge of skillet; sprinkle parsley in center. Cook, covered, 2 minutes or until thoroughly heated and cheese is melted. Makes about 3 servings. Recipe can be doubled or halved.

1 c. sliced mushrooms  
1/4 c. chopped onion  
1 clove garlic, minced  
2 Tbsp. oil  
3 c. diagonally sliced zucchini  
1/4 tsp. each oregano and basil, crushed  
1 can (7½ oz.) salmon  
1 c. diced tomato  
1/2 c. shredded mozzarella cheese (optional)  
3 Tbsp. grated Parmesan  
1 Tbsp. minced parsley

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