

## Favorite Comfort Food

*04-13-2015 by Harry Zirkelbach*

Geoff, what is your favorite comfort food?

Grandpa I can and do eat everything. If I had to choose now, it would be a pizza pie. Yeah, I like most cheese and meat toppings. Let's order some. O.K.?

We make that phone call and in no time, we are trashing the thin crust and gooey toppings to ribbons. I have to remind my grandchild, his mom will not be happy at the mess one twelve inch pizza can make to a meticulously clean house. He reminds me, "She likes you Grandpa, and is quick to forgive. I'll hide behind you."

Attacking the last crumbs and cola, Geoff mentions Pizza has always been his favorite, remembers our family never had pizza as a meal at home. How come?

He's not going anywhere but to bed later in the evening, so I'm free to embellish the details of the days before this pizza.

Geoff, I had my first pizza in 1948 here in Denver. I had just arrived, joining buddies from New York City. They raved about New York style pizza. Took a group of us to this new outlet in the 1500 block Colorado Blvd, the pizza proprietor, an Irishman. I thought that odd, the Italian dish sold by an Irishman. That treat didn't match their heavenly claims, but was tasty. Later, I found the same disappointment with their claims for the great Denver's plentiful spaghetti providers, all really Italian, some with mafia accent.

Why this disappointment to my taste buds?

You may recall Geoff, my mom was Irish for generations galore; dad's father, German (back to Adam probably) and his mother English (likely the same lineage). But our table was set by Mom, period. If there was anything Dad didn't enjoy eating from mom's table it escaped my attention.

Mom's weekly outline began with Monday's washing. Tuesday, Ironing and darning. Wednesday bread baking.

That morning, meals of the next seven days were prepared in mom's head. She baked 15 loaves of bread, and depending on the season, pies or cakes. Afterward, on the kitchen table she rolled out egg-enhanced dough, thin, each side dusted with a veil of flour so dough would not stick to itself when rolled up. She'd make a dozen of these three inch thick, foot long rolls. Let dry, sliced in thin strips to be noodles. The completed strips were aerated by tossing gently in the air, then rinsed removing excess flour, dried some more, bagged, for that weeks' various soup base.

Today's store-bought noodles never meet those expectations. I always asked Mom for seconds of that ambrosia.

With this exception, never found another soup provider who met her standards. That was an Army Sgt. in Japan, winter 1945-6, Kyoto Hotel, who finding any fresh vegetable that miserable winter, added powdered milk, providing a cream soup fit for the hungry Army.

Of course you recall the tale of my Commanding Officer then. Didn't like broccoli. He would not touch that soup. The Japanese waitresses felt obligated to insist, all kinds of enticements; only removed the offering when with gestures, he pretends to pour the soup on the rug.

Geoff, this was like burlesque, for at every broccoli offering, the routine could be repeated to enjoyment of the dining hall.

Truly Geoff, my favorite comfort food probably changed every decade. Let's check our preference in a few years.