

Oven Tales

Jeanne Lee

Mother was a cook who rarely measured her ingredients and food always tasted great. Uncle Shorty had a penchant for walking up behind a person – usually a female – and poking his fingers in her ribs while shouting “Gotcha.” One day mother was bent over the oven testing the roast with a large meat fork when Uncle Shorty poked her. She instinctively swung around with the fork and he found it implanted into his hand. I don’t remember him ever doing that to anyone again!

The maid of honor had prepared a turkey for a small wedding rehearsal dinner. As the groom-to-be began to carve the turnkey, he found the bag of giblets still inside the cavity of the turkey. After a great laugh for the fact the maid of honor had never before prepared a turkey, let alone known there was “something” inside, we enjoyed a great meal and the memory of what a dear friend will do for her friend and the bride-to-be.

The boys were having a sleepover for some high school buddies. Mom had gone to bed but was soon awakened by intermittent chirping. The chirping became more consistent, and she finally climbed out of bed and headed for the kitchen and family room. The smoke and odor soon made her realize the chirping was the smoke alarm and the odor from the kitchen indicated that the cheese on the pizza the boys had prepared had melted onto the oven heating element. The boys, now lounging innocently in the family room, had been trying to fan away the smoke resulting in the chirping. Good thing for the boys mom was willing to go back to bed with only the warning not to do any more “cooking” and the oven was self-cleaning.

The desire to bake a beautiful pound cake was the goal. All those eggs, sour cream and butter added not only to a tasty cake but to the amount of the grocery bill. The cake came out of the oven and within 10 minutes had fallen so there was a deep cake hollow between two ridges of cake around the Bundt pan edges. The pan got scraped into the trash and the baker moved on to other items. After a year’s hiatus, another attempt was made with extreme care and baking. This time not only the contents but the actual Bundt pan were placed (pitched actually!) unceremoniously into the trash. It is rumored by some that the baker bought a new Bundt pan but a pound cake recipes was never tried again.

As one who still enjoys baking, I was privileged to win Best of Show for the Most Blue Ribbons in Baking for 10 consecutive years in the Douglas County Fair. I use both my regular oven and my new microwave convection oven and continue to try new recipes. Using both ovens simultaneously, I can bake as many as four dozen cupcakes or muffins at the same time. Though I have no idea where my cookbooks and numerous notebooks full of printed recipes will go after I’m gone, my oven and I have baked and shared many great items with friends and neighbors, and I have fond memories of others’ Oven Tales too.