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Jennifer's Corner

by Jennifer Martin



Cooking for Christmas

I grow to love Christmas every year more and more. Some people think it's the kind of thing you grow out of, but for me, the opposite seems true.

Sure, I don't get as many gifts as I used to, and some things just aren't as exciting or as magical as they used to be. But I love Christmas now for the opportunity to be with family, get things for others, and use my newfound ability / desire – cooking – to the best of my abilities in order to show love to those I care about.

It started when I was watching Food Network at the YMCA (ironic place to watch Food Network, huh?) while I was working out. Good Eats with Alton Brown – an invariably strange, but interesting and intelligent take on just boring, average cooking shows.

The guy's actually got a personality, and he makes things that are somewhat simple, and recipes that any old person could make. He doesn't believe in "uni-taskers" – a.k.a. expensive kitchen appliances that only have one purpose, such as a panini maker. If you want to make a panini, trust me, your George Foreman grill will work just fine.

He's not really a chef, so to speak – he was actually a cinematographer who had a love of cooking, but he found other cooking shows to be so dull and boring that he ended up going to cooking school and starting his own show just because he could. And best of all, he's a Christian who lives just south of us, in Marietta, GA. What's not to like?

So my desire for cooking started there, and spread well into my marriage. Before I moved out of my house, my mom was irate whenever she saw me cooking or baking something, ruining her perfectly, almost never-used kitchen with flour. Just ask her about the time I made homemade cheese from goat's milk.

But one person was blessed: my husband, Daniel. He caught onto the trend, and is also becoming quite the cook himself.

One of our favorite activities together is cooking. We've found that we both enjoy it immensely, and even when we're mad at each other, we both need to eat, right? So we just cook together. And we have learned to compromise for each other.

I never much like spicy food before, but he loved it. For him, I decided to try it. And now I'm eating those red pepper flakes on every single pizza slice I eat, and putting more spices into the foods we cook at home.

For me, he has compromised and agreed to eat whole wheat bread and pasta products because I think they have more taste than just the plain kind. Now he's even started buying 15-grain bread, without me even asking for it.

If you want to show love to your family this Christmas, cook a meal for them. Look up recipes on www.allrecipes.com or www.foodnetwork.com.

And if cooking just isn't your thing, then you should feel blessed by the people who do cook for you, because they do so with so much love, and with you in mind.

The best way to help? Wash the dishes!

I hope you all have a very blessed Christmas season. (none of this "Happy Holidays" nonsense!)