

Christmas Morning

The blushing sun throws off rays of gleaming sunshine as I awake on Christmas morning. My grandmother and Aunt Lynn is preparing the finishing touches to Christmas dinner. The crispy bite from the winter air hits me as my weary feet glide into the kitchen. My granny has the window open to let in the fresh breeze from the liquid sunshine that fell the dawn before.

I greet everyone with a drowsy “Merry Christmas” as I go back to my room to get ready for this gigantic annual event. After I take a shower and get dressed, I rush back to “the heart of the family” or the kitchen to start our family’s yearly tradition. Every Christmas morning for the past 20 years or fifteen grandkids, my grandmother has given every grandchild a Christmas chore. This year I was in charge of making Grandma’s Old Fashion Deep Dish Sweet Potato Pie. I couldn’t wait to get started.

My granny doesn’t like to procrastinate, especially on Christmas morning, so she already has the ingredients waiting for me. She has sitting out 7 cups of flour, 2 sticks of butter, a cookie jar that she calls “mamma” filled with 5 cups of sugar and $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of milk for every 5 home grown potatoes. You should end up with at least 1 cup of milk. There is also $\frac{3}{4}$ cup of cinnamon, nutmeg, and vanilla for the entire flavor-filled fantasy. This makes 6 pies.

The first thing we have to prepare is the crust. Mix the 7 cups of flour with 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups of water. Mix with $\frac{1}{2}$ of the measured cinnamon, sugar, nutmeg, and vanilla. You don’t want the crust wet, you just want it too crumble in your hands. Then add 1 stick of the butter cut into quarters. This will make the dough soft. Cook the dough in the 400-degree oven for 10 minutes so that the bottom is semi-cooked.

Granny put on 20 large firm sweet potatoes at eight o’clock this morning so that they could slowly cook and be fairly tender. You do not want to make them too soft because grandma

said then the pie would be mushy and it wouldn't stick to your bones. After the pile of pleasure is drained, it is roughly chopped and left in medium chunks. "You don't want the potatoes to be too thick' cause then you'll be chewin' 'til the dawn of a Louisiana morning!" My grandma used to say that to anyone who attempted to duplicate her pies.

After the sweet potatoes have been chopped, melt the stick of butter and pour in slowly as you stir so that the all of the potatoes are covered with fatty love. Then add the rest of the cinnamon, sugar, nutmeg, and vanilla. Now comes the hard part. Mix all of the ingredients by hand! A blender or any other non-homemade contraption mixes nothing in my grandma's kitchen! Then it wouldn't be homemade and wouldn't be able to call its self a down home meal.

After about 20 minutes of your hands yelling for a break, and it has too be 20 minutes, you can finally stop and let the mixture set for 10 minutes; not more no less. Once the potatoes have stood and all of the ingredients have become friends, introduce them to their newest buddy, the piecrust.

Bake in a 375-degree oven for 33 minutes; that's it! If all directions are followed and GOD is watching over the kitchen, the pies should be firm and as thick as Mississippi fog!! You can either let them cool or serve piping hot. They usually do not last long enough to cool down. So enjoy and "Merry Christmas"!