

Recipe-as-inquiry: Critical Feminist Food Pedagogies

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Abstract

Recipe as inquiry explores how critical history research, recipe adaptation and food-centered storytelling can be a tool for social change and a form of feminist pedagogy. Employing socially-engaged arts, cooking as inquiry, and critical pedagogy methods in a food education context, this two-pronged inquiry responds to the following questions: *What kind of counternarratives emerge when I use recipes as a starting point of inquiry, both as a route for historical reflection and a way to engage with embodied knowledge transmission through the process of baking and adapting recipes?* and *What happens when hands-on food education is combined with critical discussion around place and home?* This research draws from anti-racist and anti-colonial theory, including Black feminism and Indigenous perspectives on relational knowledge, an expansion of critical geography discourse analyzing contemporary food systems, colonial food history and my own settler family history. This research situates critical food pedagogies within environmental education discourse and practice in the form of two educational outcomes. The first is a memoir and cookbook manuscript that builds both whole grain food literacy and counternarratives around Atlantic Canadian food history. The second outcome reviewed in this paper also focuses on expanding whole grain food literacy through the creation of a virtual whole grain baking workshop. This digital pedagogy event involves both practical skill development and offers critical background information and storytelling about the workshop recipe and its ingredients. *Recipe-as-inquiry* shows how food education can be a tool for social change by increasing the accessibility of food education spaces through digital delivery and through sharing whole grain food knowledge. As expressions of radical pedagogy praxis, this research shows how food is a site of relational knowledge building and how historic relations of food and people shape our contemporary food system and the stories we know and tell about home.

Foreword

Recipe-as-inquiry is the conclusion of my two-year journey through the MES program during these constantly unprecedented times. The world and our expectations of it are so different than when I started at York in September of 2020. While it's been difficult to maintain the productivity expectations of a master's degree, it's also been inspiring to build resilient virtual and later, in-real-life relationships with the incredible faculty and students of EUC. Reflecting my Plan of Study (POS) and my pursuit of the diploma in Environmental and Sustainability Education, my programme has been grounded in learning about food and grain processes and history, feminist and critical food pedagogies, and also decolonization and food sovereignty movements. My MES experience has also been framed by other elements of study discussed in my POS, like art methodologies; queer theory; environmental education discourse and methods; relational accountability as research ethics; and importantly Black and critical geographies. This recipe and food history research project expresses the teachings and connections I've made between these methodological and conceptual schools of thought and my practice as a feminist food education researcher.

Dedication

This work is dedicated in two parts. The first, is to my matrilineal ancestors. My most important life lessons have been either passed directly or manifested indirectly from my mom and my grandmother, the two most important women in my life. My grandmother struggled as a young parent and thrived as a wiser grandparent. My mom has devoted tremendous energy and love to healing intergenerational family wounds that went unchecked for a variety of complicated reasons. My memoir writing and celebration of family joy through food and women's care work is a strategic framing of our family narrative that allows me to memorialize my loving ancestors. This is for Jennifer, Jean and for the expansive joy of our descendants.

I want to make a special dedication to bell hooks and Thich Nhat Hanh. Both of these visionaries honed radically accessible and beautiful theoretical language about practices of life that I wouldn't want to live without. They knew each other, hooks' engaged pedagogy merges Hanh's engaged Buddhism with Freire's critical pedagogy, connecting the significance of pedagogy to our bodies and the well being of both student and teacher. bell hooks and Thich Nhat Hanh left the bodily realm within almost a month of each other last winter. As we move into this brave new world, I dedicate this manuscript and research project to elders lost during the pandemic and my teachers who've passed. I commit to extending the impact of their work as we strive to heal the harm of systems of oppression and fight for the earth and future generations.

Acknowledgements

Thank you thank you thank you to all the family and friends who have held me up as the various stressors during this degree have brought me to the brink of collapse, as the world we knew fell away like flour through a sieve. Sister, our relationship helps me realize the possibility of release from family trauma, a desire I hold for my research. <3

I wouldn't be writing this if the students and my teachers hadn't rocked my world with their brilliance and magic. To my supervisor Lisa Myers, and faculty members who taught me- thank you so much. I'm so grateful you became academics and our paths crossed. I'll carry your influences with me always. To my cohort and special pals within- learning how to build community and friendship through zoom, photo sharing, texting and email, etc. gave me hope for navigating this experience. Later, getting to hug, share food, experience your physical presences, and find joy has given this program more meaning and also kept me going through my sadnesses and the blockages.

Farida, thank you for helping to bring *Tastes of Home* to life. Ben, thank you so much for being my gateway academic mentor. You've always shown up for me in crucial, generous ways that have made moving through academia feel doable and affirmed to me that I belong.

Thank you to the Black feminist thinkers that truly underpin so much radical thought in the academy, whether its acknowledged or not. May all who read this commit to dismantling colonial logics and ending racist oppression.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	ii
Foreword.....	iii
Dedication.....	iv
Acknowledgements.....	v
Research Framing	
Introduction.....	1
Literature Review & Theoretical Framing.....	3
Methods.....	11
Research Process & Reflections	
Component 1: <i>Tastes of Home</i> Recipe and Memoir eBook.....	16
Component 2: <i>Pie Time</i> Zoom Baking Workshop.....	22
Conclusion.....	26
Appendix A: Recipe Archive Documentation.....	28
Appendix B: <i>Tastes of Home</i> eBook (see attachment).....	28
Appendix C: <i>Pie Time</i> visuals (see attachment).....	28
Bibliography	29

Introduction

Place: As food is in part an expression of land, the importance and acknowledgement of place is crucial. I have spent 95% of my life on the east coast of so-called-canada¹. In the 1980's I was born in charlotte county, New Brunswick, 25 km from the United States border in Peskotomuhkati Territory. By this time, most Peskotomuhkati people living on this side of the colonial border had moved south to access Indigenous status from the US government, still fighting to be recognized as a First Nation by the canadian nation state. When I was five, I moved to Mi'kma'ki, where I've been based since. My roots there are deep though I maintain a deep home connection to charlotte county. Since leaving the public school system, I've been in a steady and ongoing awakening to the importance and fraughtness of the relationship between the Mi'kmaq, other First Nations and settler government and institutions. I strive to integrate these new awarenesses (brown and Taylor 2022) into my research practices. I started this grad program in Mi'kma'ki and am finishing it in Tkaronto/ Toronto. This degree has involved a lot of personal reflection of my relationship to home and land through food.

Positionality: To formally address my positionality, I will draw from Indigenous and feminist positionality theories (MacGregor 2021, Zargarian 2021, Tuck and Yang 2012) to highlight identities, roles and perceived power that are relevant to my research. I'm a 5th generation white settler. I was raised and still identify as a woman, born into a family with cyclical, poverty-related intergenerational trauma that has deeply shaped who I am and also this family recipe research. An anti-colonial praxis entails being actively anti-racist and anti-patriarchal (hooks 1994, Verges 2019). As a white researcher working with this methodology, I recognize the potential for abusing radical discourses and perpetuating harm. I'm also a baker, business owner and writer. Growing up in a wealthy community as a poor kid, I consistently practiced passing as

¹ As a nation state in "the global arena", canada delegitimizes itself over and over again through its unwillingness to abide by supreme court recognized land-based treaty rights it is bound to from coast to coast. Because of its failure to act in nation-to-nation relations with people Indigenous to all of the lands within the boundaries of the canadian settler state, I do not capitalize canada. Not capitalizing is intended to serve as a reminder of the false legitimacy of the canadian state. #endthedoctrineofdiscovery

not poor. Over the years I've recognized the mobility this socialization and my whiteness has given me, while also witnessing firsthand the structural harms against single-parent households and those with mental illness. My life experience has politicized me towards anti-oppressive food (Kepkiewicz 2015) and pleasure activism (brown 2019), and I am a striving scholar-activist (Sudbury and Okazawa-Rey 2015) in this rapidly changing world.

My baking craft is another crucial part that I bring to this work. I grew up witnessing my grandmother cook and bake professionally for her family and community. Though our paths are very different, I've followed in my grandmother's proverbial footsteps, being a professional food worker for 20 years. I've worked on farms, been a dishwasher, worked in a grocery store, vended at many farmers' markets, worked as a caterer, founded a micro-catering business, did a baking practicum in Europe, created food zines, started a bakery, project managed the construction of a bakery production space, informally pursued learning the craft of whole grain sourdough breads, developed and taught baking and preserve workshops, managed a food business during a pandemic, and now written a food-centered memoir and recipe book. All these experiences have helped shape my perspective on food systems, and the politics and meaning of food in our lives.

The Food System: Despite the overwhelming grief of this era, I find a lot of hope in food-centered activism happening in almost every community. Food systems are a place where racial, class and climate justice all intersect (Alkon et al. 2011). Given this, skyrocketing food prices "due to inflation", a growing global race-oriented fascist movement, and the IPCC's deadline of 2030 to decarbonize (Begum et al. 2022)-overhauling the food system is imperative and is a place where white supremacy can be challenged (Slocum 2007). My work strives to participate in this revolution by sharing narratives and food pedagogies that counteract the erasure tactics of settler colonialism, centering the interconnectedness and democratic accessibility of food knowledge, and celebrating the joy of eating and sharing food.

Literature Review & Theoretical Framework

This section focuses on sharing the ideas that were most influential to me from my course of study and final research phase. This section is connected to my methodology as it also explains the overarching principles guiding my research process (Drawson, Toombs and Musquash 2017). I've grouped these influences into the following concepts and/ or schools of thought:

- Land and Food Sovereignty
- Feminist Pedagogies
- Anti-colonial Ethics
- Critical Food History
- Socially Engaged Art

Land and Food Sovereignty

This conceptual category comes from *Food, Land and Culture*, the first food studies course I took in the MES programme with Lisa Myers in the fall of 2020. Through this course I learned about food differently, as *miijim*, a relational meaning of food that acknowledges all the relationships involved in the processes of cultivating, harvesting, processing, eating and digesting food. The re-establishment of Indigenous Food Systems in communities from coast to coast are plural expressions (Pictou 2020) of Food Sovereignty (Settee and Shukla 2020), part of a global movement to educate and re-establish regional food systems (Morrison 2011). In 2008, at a Via Campesina assembly, principles centered around the sacredness of food were added. This gets at the heart or metaphysical connections between food, land and our cultures. Even in a globalized food system, food is still inherently relational (Curtin and Helkde 1992, Goffe 2019, Myers 2012, Shin and Bae 2019).

This understanding of food is helpful in thinking about Food Sovereignty, an idea that arose out of a global social movement of farmers in the 1990's as a response to global neoliberalisation, the drive of free-market capitalism and ensuing policies (La Via Campesina 2022). National agricultural policies across the world that have been instituted either voluntarily or through coercion have resulted in industrial agricultural economics and practices that have reshaped the earth as well as commodities like wheat, soy and corn (Friedmann 1990).

This geo-political system radically altered the scale and distance at which food was moving and traded using extreme violence (Collingham 2017, Wilk 2006). The land use logics of commodity agriculture and economics that have evolved from European colonialism are based on new world colonial economic theory that a failure to maximize land productivity is justification to remove or exclude people from it (Li 2014)². This is a theoretical underpinning of genocidal laws like *Terra Nullius* that the British used to clear the prairies to establish the grain commodity system.

The globalized food system has drastically altered the way grain moves around the world. Regional Grain Economies are popping up all over the place, and in some instances, they never left. Consider the Northeast Grainshed Alliance, an initiative that is attempting to build strong, close networks of seed growers, farmers, processors and distributors in the northeastern section of north America. While still unavoidably connected into the global food system, the production and consumption loops of these milled grains bypasses the commodity wheat system and therefore has some shock resistance when global markets collapse or suddenly change. Regional grain systems are built with shorter supply chains and localized relationships (whether to other people or the land). The global movement of goods is more unstable than it has been in my lifetime. Regional grain economies reduce price instability but also advantageously hold the potential to create regional food sovereignty and build community connection. Local grain systems can manifest very differently. For example, re-establishing *manoomin* cultivation for the Anishinaabe people is an expression of *mijiim*, food as relations, as well as land and grain sovereignty.

Feminist Food Pedagogies

As a teaching ideology and framework for learning outcomes and social change, feminist pedagogy arises from a feminist social practice that aims at consciousness raising, social action and social transformation (Zargarian 2021). I apply this lens to my own work and practice as a baking educator throughout both the recipe book and online pie workshop components of my research.

² This line of logic informed *Terra Nullius* (the “this land was empty” argument Europeans made up to “legalize” colonization) and also informs policy that allows for gentrification.

A common assertion among food pedagogy practitioners (I'm one of them), is that food is a diverse site of knowledge (Myers 2020). This is influenced by feminist critiques that challenge patriarchal, positivist assumptions about knowledge production. Non-hierarchical epistemologies are also relevant for the inclusion of story as a primary mode of learning (Davis 2014). By eating, reading about, making and telling stories about food we learn. The way we can learn through interacting with the process of growing, preparing or eating food is infinite. Food is inherently informative, often in ways not recognized within institutional learning. Heldke (1988) interprets this methodologically, as one of the first feminist academics to validate cooking as a method that is able to practice "inquiry as a communal activity" (17).

This Critical Pedagogy is a legacy of Paulo Freire (2004), founder and practitioner of an anti-imperial critical literacy movement whose intent was to raise critical consciousness, motivate cultural autonomy and political action within students. As a praxis it involves critique and action (Zargarian 2021). This aligns with feminist pedagogy principles rooted in liberation through transformative food pedagogies (Jones 2019, Cedillo and Nxumalo 2017). bell hooks (1994), who's engaged pedagogy builds on critical pedagogy's belief that students are the teachers and teachers are the students; she states that thinking is instinctive (hooks 2010). Engaged pedagogy is holistic, values pleasure and can create a consciousness that "challenges the compartmentalization" (Abarca 2016) of body and mind, and the objective and subjective binary- again the work of feminist critique.

Food pedagogies is emergent within education studies showing how "food is a medium through which power, privilege, and identities are (re)produced, negotiated, and/ or resisted through relationships" (Jones 2019, p. 909). Following Jones (2019) and Sumner (2015), a critical pedagogy approach within food education spaces encourages students to explore the meaning of food and to connect the food we eat and recall lived experiences and places beyond. As a non-binary approach, relational and critical food pedagogies work in acknowledgement of "how food [meaning] is embedded in relationships" (Jones 2019, p. 908). This understanding is connected to

feminist epistemology approaches understanding knowledge as relational rather than bestowed.

Food pedagogy practices are also present in arts (Sanchez 2020, Shin and Bae 2019, Henry-Smith and Jackson 2019). Artist scholar Tao Leigh Goffe employs sugar as an artistic material and focal point to explore diaspora identities of the Caribbean. Sugar as material, carries an ability to illuminate and educate in a multi-modal way. Alluding to its transitory and sensory nature, “the residual history of colonialism is sugary with the gooeyness of a suspension of Afro-Asian intimacies and the sticky fingers of time” (54). Similarly, recipes are an educational storytelling device that change with every iteration. Artistic investigation gives us access to this truth. Recipes reveal how “food has symbolic life that is collectively determined” (Myers 2020). This perspective supports food pedagogies and recipes as a teaching device, mode of inquiry and tool for social transformation.

Anti-colonial Ethics

My research connects recipes and food to place in part by examining social and economic influences using an anti-colonial lens that also shapes my ethical framework. Anti-colonial Ethics is the way I am choosing to categorically conceptualize the lineages of thought, activism and scholarship on the topics of anti-colonization, decoloniality, Black geographies and intersectional feminism. This is a realm of theory with a history of resisting white-supremacist racialization logics and processes. The food system has been steeped in these oppressive power relations for centuries now as plantation agriculture begot industrial agriculture and the globalization of food trading (Collingham 2017). My research focus on whole grain baking is connected to regional grain systems that hold more possibility to help shape an anti-oppressive and anti-white supremacist food system.

Being a researcher working with sovereignty issues (whether Indigenous or food sovereignty), means engaging with the pervasiveness of racialized ideologies that inform most social institutions and our relationships with each other (MacGregor 2021). For me, this is an ethical obligation to pay attention to these dynamics and work to interrupt them. The theoretical work of Ermine’s *Ethical Space of Engagement* (2007),

Reo (2019) and Latulippe (2015) on *relational accountability*, Leigh-Styaway (2020) and Betasamosake Simpson (2017) on *radical resurgence*, Whyte's (2017) on *cultural continuance* and Tuck and Yang (2012) and Snelgrove, Cornthassel et al.'s (2014) analyses of settler discourses, are Indigenous paradigms that articulate the political situation between Indigenous First Nations contending with the Canadian settler colonial state. These thinkers have informed the ways I can support or help uphold Indigenous sovereignty against the weight of the state. As a researcher, they inform my sense of responsibility to listen, to attend to a process of relationship building, and to employ non-extractive methods within my research process.

Black Feminists first highlighted the intersection of class, race, disability and gender in societal functioning that now informs public policy and drives social movements and structures analyses pushing movements like abolition further into the public realm (Crenshaw 1991, hooks 2015, Davis 2008). This work is crucial to food justice (Levkoe et al. 2020, Brown et al. 2020) and critical pedagogy frameworks (Ellsworth 1989). Part of Black feminist influence on feminist pedagogy discourse is the recognition of the politics of care (Zargarian 2021), emergent from Black community activism like the Black Panther movement and transformative justice modeling like mutual aid (Spade 2020, Haritaworn 2020). Black geographies (Gilmore 2018, McKittrick 2002) have also transformed spatial analysis work, contributing what Nxumalo and Cedillo (2019) call a "decolonial poetics" that refuses "Black life as ungeographic or placeless" (106). This discourse and its capacity to confront and counteract colonial erasure is especially important to my analysis of recipe history, the impact of white supremacy on the food system, the importance of food and land to Indigenous sovereignty, and the relational entanglements among land, people and empire evident within critical food histories.

Indigenous ethical perspectives and epistemology frameworks and Black feminism and geography are discourses that inform the framing of my own family history and Atlantic Canadian history. Beyond its contemporary connections to colonialism as a region, Atlantic Canada has a unique colonial history involving centuries long relationships with the Mi'kmaq, Wolastoqiyik, Peskotomuhkati and

African arrivants. Using food counter narrative as an access point to reveal this buried history challenges colonial propaganda and is an attempt to practice an anti-colonial research ethic.

Critical Food Histories

A primary concern of my inquiry is to surface important facts and stories hidden in the past of some of our favourite foods. Critical food history is a methodology that brings together food narratives and a critical history framing to revise and refute hegemonic history tellings. Linda Tuhiwai Smith's *Decolonizing Methodologies* (1999) features a critical analysis of capital *H* history, describing it as patriarchal and centered on the “self-actualization of the human subject” (33). Strongly resonating with the motivation of my research, Tuhiwai Smith states “coming to know the past has been part of the critical pedagogy of decolonization... The pedagogical implication of this access to alternative knowledge is that they can form the basis of alternative ways of doing things” (36). Since food is a nexus of environmental, political and social elements, shining light on buried histories that are accessible through recipe investigation is a method for social transformation, and for creating new understandings of the present as well as the past.

My research connects my own family food history, which is connected to the food history of my region, which is also connected to the food histories of the places brought together by trade routes established by British colonialism. Using different recipes as a starting point, Collingham (2017) structures a comprehensive argument showing how the effect of the British empire has shaped our current globalized, industrialized food system. Contemporary staples like wheat, sugar and corn are crops that have altered those either perpetuating or caught in the colonial encounter turned into industrial agriculture. Tye (2011), Mintz (1986), Goffe (2019), Myers (2012), Wilk (2006), and Collingham (2017) all offer analyses that unpack the history and meaning of food and what it reveals about capitalist colonial expansion. This methodology crosses disciplines: history, anthropology, critical geographies, diaspora studies, food studies. These will be considered more closely in the upcoming methods section.

Political economy discourse serves as a lens to analyse food histories and to explore the interplay of technology, economic systems, people, land, and power dynamics. As an example, Mintz's (1986) *Sweetness and Power* illuminates the connections between colonial food systems my ancestors would have been tied to as Mintz' shows how the European industrial revolution was made possible by the commodification of foods and the newly created ability to move calories around the world. This transformation was politically motivated to feed new landless urban populations who would have formerly worked the land for sustenance. During the 1800's it's estimated that 100 million people migrated around the world, 50% of them being Europeans mostly headed to across the Atlantic, including my ancestors (ibid.). During the same century sugar consumption in Britain rose 5-fold and the average person's diet was radically altered (ibid.). The histories of sugar and wheat, when told from a critical historical and political economy lens show the ideologies and motivations that still shape the unsustainable, global industrial agriculture system.

Food justice work of many kinds, like my research, seeks to address or repair these distortions while tending to the complex of relations involved in our hyperconnected food system. Brand (2012) and Goffe (2019), among others, look at sugar production and the corresponding cultural relocations that came with it to understand colonial legacy and imagine radical futures. The Caribbean, Atlantic Canada, Africa and the British Isles have been in a complex social exchange for centuries, some of its history achieved in my own family's recipes.

Socially Engaged Art

In the 12 years between my degrees, engaging with art that explores geography, memory, meanings of home, expressions of land, food, craft and history was a major source of learning. I would argue that art is inherently pedagogical. It's something to be witnessed, heard or experienced and from which to be inspired or taught. There are schools of thought that merge art and pedagogy, including Helguera's (2011) Socially Engaged Arts framework that values art as a "social practice", where the artists' intent is social change or new awarenesses (Brown 2021). Lisa Myers' (2012) curatorial work *Serve It Up* is focused on the practice of making a recipe rather than the ingredients,

assuming that “recipes, cooking, and eating contribute to making connections between people and places” (192). Philosopher Heldke (1988) lauds cooking-as-inquiry as a feminist anti-essentialist method, where “reciprocal responses [inherent to the process of cooking] characterize things that exist in relation to each other, that can affect and be affected by each other” (29). Similarly, from an artistic perspective, O’Grady (2020) describes art as making space for the *Both: And-* a creative space where multiple truths revealed through many simultaneous means can be held in tension.

This kind of meaning making, or attempt at truth telling with food as material or source is the work I do. As a research process guided by feminist pedagogy principles, this project involved workshop development, pedagogical recipe writing, recipe experimentation, ingredient research, archival, photographic and autoethnographic memoir writing about recipes, my career as a baker, and my experience of care through food as a child. Trinidadian artist Wendy Nanan explained that art mimics “the process of life as in making art is to complicate it first to understand the many parts and then simplify it down to its barest essence” (68). My process of inquiry was not linear but followed a kind of expansion and contraction described by Nanan.

In the following section I will be introducing the methods involved in responding to my research questions that were formed to explore the meaning of food in our lives and how we can be changed by it. Following the methods section there will be a discussion component exploring my two outcomes, a recipe and memoir eBook titled *Tastes of Home* and an online hands-on zoom baking workshop titled *Pie Time*, where I will go through my inquiry process and findings that emerged when I explored two food pedagogy research questions. The first having to do with recipe-centered storytelling using cooking-as-inquiry, memoir and food history writing and cookbook form as primary methods. The second line of inquiry resulted in the creation of an interactive zoom group baking class as I practiced implementing different feminist and critical pedagogy methods in my workshop design and delivery.

Methods

The methods of inquiry employed for this research were selected because of their suitability to help me respond to my research questions below. Each question explores food as a pedagogical site and how that might involve critical thinking and social transformation.

1. *What kind of counternarratives emerge when I use recipes as a starting point of inquiry, both as a route for historical reflection and a way to engage with embodied knowledge transmission through the process of baking and adapting recipes?*

Methods: critical historical research, cooking-as-inquiry, food narrative writing and autoethnography

2. *What happens when hands-on food education is combined with critical discussion around place and home?*

Methods: critical history research, feminist pedagogy techniques

Over the course of my MES program, I was exposed to many different methodologies of research practice. Dawson, Toombs and Musquash (2017) describe methods as a tool, technique or process used to address a research question or topic, and methodology as overarching principles that guide and direct research processes. Each pillar of my theoretical framework (*food sovereignty, feminist pedagogies, anti-racist ethics, critical food histories* and *art*) are also categorical methodologies of my research practice. To dig into my research questions through the creation of a cookbook and an online baking workshop, I employed multiple methods, which I've organized into two sections 1) *core methods* (that help frame and/ or help ground my general academic practice) and 2) *project methods* (that are uniquely suitable to each component of my MES final research).

Core Methods:

- Walking Methodologies
- Citational Practices
- Feminist Food Pedagogies

The core methods I employ to guide my understanding of research as a wholistic, multifaceted practice are Springgay and Truman's (2017) *walking methodologies*, varying *citational practices* (Smith et al 2021, Todd 2016) and *Feminist food pedagogies* introduced in the previous section. The core methods are more conceptually abstract than the project methods and can be thought of also as an extension of my ethics framework.

Springgay and Truman's (2017) walking methodology stems from new materialist schools of thought, which highlights interconnectedness. They offer being anchored in place, sensory inquiry, embodiment and rhythm as components of this method. In order to ground myself and be present throughout the near constant stressors of online grad school, I took a lot of walks. For a project in Prof. McGregor's (2021) Indigenous research methodologies class, I developed a walking route that took me through many zones of urban spaces within a 3 km radius of home. I used it often as a time to process the anti-colonial learnings that forced me to revise my understandings of the places I call home. It was also a way to sooth from the traumatic aspects involved in studying colonial history. Following Springgay and Truman (2017), reflective walking as a practice is about being anchored in place, engaging sensory inquiry, embodiment and rhythm (3). Connected to many Indigenous framings of Ontology, walking as a research practice is about activating a relational participation, a way to literally be in the world. I consider actively maintaining a groundedness while thinking and working through research and also connecting this to the land I live on as a practice of ethics.

Citations reflect the relational way knowledge is exchanged. They are also a way of practicing ethics, especially as a white researcher devoting a lot of time to engaging with scholarship written by people who are racialized. White researchers need to be aware of their use, integration and appropriation of brilliant thought from schools like Black feminism (Smith et al. 2021) and Indigenous epistemologies (Todd 2017). This includes having a citation practice that honours racialized thought and includes a deliberate de-emphasis of European scholarship. Part of this method includes a visual

concept mapping practice to citationally document the connections between what I am reading and the crucial thinkers in different schools of thought. Nimble citing is a way of honouring the complex and interconnected lineages of thought that have unfolded within the academy (and outside of it obviously), while counteracting the intellectual theft that is common for white scholars.

Feminist food pedagogies are educational techniques that shape lesson design. Unlike quantitative or many canonical qualitative methods, feminist education design and implementation works to bypass or deconstruct the teacher-student authority structure that is commonplace in most western educational institutions (Zargarian 2021). I use life experience and family cuisines, critical history exercises, hands-on skill development and food stories as tools for food education delivery that is attempting to address social injustices and transformations. This is an approach to non-hierarchical communal inquiry (Heldke 1988). Prioritizing alternative ways of doing, knowing and sharing in learning environments is a powerful tool for the goals of transformative education.

Primary Research Project Methods:

- Recipe-as-inquiry
- Narrative autoethnography and food history counternarratives
- Socially engaged food pedagogies

Part 1- Tastes of Home Recipe Book & Memoir³

Recipe-as-inquiry: The primary method of *Tastes of Home* is an adaptation of Brady (2011) and Heldke's (1988) *cooking-as-inquiry* that I'm calling *recipe-as inquiry*. Over the winter I maintained a baking practice where I worked with 10 recipes selected from my grandmother's collection. I started by making the original recipes and over the months would slowly swap out ingredients or shift the recipe form to incorporate whole grain flours into these dominantly white-flour Atlantic Canadian recipes. Through this recipe practice I was able to bring together recollection for memoir writing and recipe adaptation to express my own values, experiences and influences as a baker that are

³ The author recommends that the attached eBook *Tastes of Home* be read prior to moving forward in the paper.

different from those held and practiced by my grandmother, also a prolific baker. In Brady's methods essay, she states that "cooking as inquiry recognizes bodies and food as sites of knowledge and engages researchers as researcher-participants in reflexive, collaborative study that explores the ways in which the embodied self is performed relationally through food making" (322). This method acknowledges and values the embodied and sensory types of knowledge that challenges sight as the revered sense of the west (Ben-Ze'ev 2012). This method also relies on other inquiry modes, including secondary historical research. This method allowed me to connect with family history and integrate my baking craft into my research practice.

Narrative autoethnography and food history counternarratives: These methods describe my attempt at personal (my baker's story) and family storytelling (my growing up story). This storytelling was anchored by my grandmother Jean's recipes and the different grains I chose to study and incorporate into my baking practice. With this technique, I explored botanical and settler histories of different grains, ingredients and recipes. I also built stories and connections to my own lineage and ancestral homelands, which has become obscure over the generations of my settler family. There are buried histories within cherished recipes. Through Memoir-style writing, short essays about grains, and recipes that examine and reflect the meaning of food within my family, I've gained a new understanding of my homeland and the Atlantic provinces. Counternarratives (Dawson 2020, Haritaworn 2020) challenge dominant food narratives in Canada. Abarca (2016) asserts that food consciousness is often an "oppositional consciousness" (219). Recipes and foods tell stories and I propose that such storytelling has an active pedagogical function as a learning source. Stories combine sensory and intellectual experience and learning (Philips 2013). By using counternarratives, like a citational politic, I aim to identify knowledge that is erased, redacted, and obscured within the settler-colonial apparatus that structures social organizing from government down to neighbourhoods.

Part 2: Pie Time Online Baking Workshop

Socially engaged food pedagogies: Socially engaged art was written about in detail by Helguera (2011) and is a major method of influence on the public arts component to my portfolio. As part of the 2022 EUC Eco-Arts Festival programming, I presented a hands-on pie crust workshop over zoom in response to my research question: *What happens when hands-on food education is combined with critical discussion around place and home?* While arts methods are numerous, socially engaged arts as a method of inquiry and research emphasizes art as an actual “social practice” where rather than a symbolic gesture, an artwork creates a framework for change through social interaction and building relationships. This work raises issues within communities and goes beyond merely pointing to them. Socially engaged art can create movements, is self-organizing and involves self-determined actions (Helguera 2011). Shin and Bae (2016) contextualize this practice within food pedagogies, working from a guiding assumption that “it is not possible to cook together without exchanging ideas and sharing values” (231).

Arts research methods are often open-ended without firm expectations of outcomes, crucial to *community arts* models as well (Gosine 2021). Transformative education facilitates spaces or spheres of exchange where people can “create and deepen human relationships through sensory experience, collective dialogues and spontaneous participation” (Shin and Bae 2019). This reflection comes from an in-person arts project called *Conflict Kitchen* (2010-2017), a socially engaged artwork in the form of a food take-out window in Pittsburgh serving food from nations in conflict with the United States. The ingestion of these foods is not only symbolic but important sensory experiences where US citizens are absorbing the foods along with the histories and stories encouraging conversation and awareness of the complex contestations between nations states. In the context of *Pie Time*, I seek to make space for alternate truths through sensory experience and conversation, through my baking I create an intimate (for zoom) sharing and learning space.

In the following section *Research Reflections*, I will go deeper into my use of these methods and theories, particularly feminist practice, critical historical research

and the creation of food counternarratives. Both of my research questions are trying to get at the connection between the past, embodied learning and translating this emergent knowledge through food storytelling and working with recipes.

Research Process & Reflection

This section goes into greater detail around my inquiry process and discusses my reflections now that I've completed the *Tastes of Home* eBook component and delivered *Pie Time*, the critical pedagogy and zoom baking workshop component.

Component 1: Tastes of Home eBook

Process:

This cookbook is a combination memoir, historical and cultural commentary, and recipe book. Alongside reading research, creative writing and a baking practice, recipes were a starting point for my inquiry. Particularly, my grandmother Jean Stevens' recipes. She passed away in 2019 and one of my inheritances was Jean's cookbook collection. Her recipes offer me a way to maintain active family recollection, and also connect me to my family history and helps build my sense of identity. Talking about how identity is infused in recipes, Heldke (1988) states reflectively: "they are my recipes, filled with the idiosyncrasies of my life" (23). Before Jean died, I already had a handwritten book of her favourite recipes that she copied out for each of her 3 grandchildren. This recipe collection, a notebook she filled mostly with the same recipes from her master collection (a brimming notebook filled with 400 recipes both written on the page and stuffed inside). I wanted to work with Jean's recipes as a way to make space for grief and to connect both with my family history and the land where most of my family has lived for 5 generations.

Before deciding which 10 recipes to work with, I cataloged all of the recipes in these three books, took photo documentation, and created an online space to share this family recipe archive. From the 400 plus recipe list I distilled a longlist of 40 recipes. From here I chose 10 recipes in the following categories of baked goods: bread, cake, cookies and pie.

These were chosen based on the following criteria:

- Significance of recipe author or family connection
- Significance of origin or place reference in recipe
- Significance to my grandmother
- Recipe has interesting story
- Recipe is representative of New Brunswick baking culture
- Suitability for whole grain adaptation
- Contains an ingredient of interest
- Accessibility/ expected appeal to large audience
- Variety

During the recipe review period I also studied the history of grains, recipes and different ingredients, while focusing on their connections to my own place-based settler colonial history on the east coast. Another critical method was the process and act of making the recipes, engaging with their formulas and ingredients, and articulating different meanings along the way. I began the hands-on portion of my research by baking Jean's recipes exactly as they were written, often having to fill in the blanks of the different steps due to her general short-hand recipe documentation style.

This was the most intimate part of the process that allowed me to recollect with the support of knowing I was retracing steps of Jean's recipes. From here I established a sensory connection to some environments and conditions of my grandmother's life. An example of how I could access this indirect knowledge was through engaging with ingredients that are no longer common in contemporary recipes. These ingredients, like shortening or traditional mincemeat, express values (i.e., economic or cultural) and also have a corresponding chemistry that help create flavours and textures that express historical record as they get baked out, either in a grandmother or researcher's kitchen.

Over the course of my baker's path, I've become committed to working with and developing recipes that use whole grain and often locally grown & milled flours. Prior to this project, I've focused on whole grain recipe development for bakery production and baking workshops. For this recipe project, employing a cooking-as-inquiry style method (Myers 2012, Brady 2011, Heldke 1988), I developed 10 whole grain adaptations of my grandmother's recipes. Baking session by baking session, I slowly modified Jean's recipes' ingredients, moving them away from being 100% white flour commodity wheat

recipes, to recipes involving whole grain flours. Intended to help users become comfortable using whole grain flours and support a societal transition back to regional grain economies. Some of the recipes were minimally altered, allowing for expression of what Heldke (1988) distinguished as preference and imperatives in recipe modification. This was either due to their suitability as whole grain recipes or because of an intention to prioritize and therefore preserve the original characteristics of Jean's recipes.

My weekly baking practice involved accumulating a lot of baked goods. I rented a bakery space every Sunday, and every Sunday evening I would come home with many different containers of treats. Diverting food waste is an important part of my life, and so on a weekly basis I would pack up containers of treats and take them with me on my journeys out into the city. Giving baked goods away, helped me articulate and share about my research project as well as get feedback from tasters on my experiments. In an omicron winter, the value of this social exchange and this space for in-person dialogue about the project was significant. As a socially-engaged process, it affirmed my understanding of relational food pedagogies.

After completing the recipe development process, I moved on to a synthesis, creative writing phase that involved bringing together:

- the historical research I had been doing about the 5 grains I was working with
- the critical food history research that contextualized the sensory information involved in recipe development and understand its connection to the food system
- the recollection process involved in archiving my grandmother's recipes and then closely working with them during the recipe adaptation process
- my life experience and learned knowledge as a Maritimer and baker

As a break between the recipe and the writing phases I planned a special trip home, to my settler ancestral homelands where the family memoir pieces take place. During this trip, I took daily walks along the shoreline that allowed me to see and connect with different physical places the different women in my matriarchal lineage have lived their lives. As part of a place-based methodology, I did daily reading research about Peskotomuhkati history and the contestation of land between them and settlers

over the generations my family continued to put roots down in what we know as New Brunswick. Thinking about relations of land and connecting to this home physically, in the only place I know my ancestors to be buried, allowed me to see the geographic connections and imprints of places that have accompanied my food learnings.

By this point I had already decided on certain memories to be included in my creative writing synthesis but did not have a vision of how to organize the parts I knew I wanted to include:

- stories from my adult baker's journey
- brief essays reviewing grain history, botanical traits, and cultural significances
- stories from my growing up that explore the meaning of home from a settler perspective, food production as an expression of care and the complexity of family relations
- explorative recipe descriptions to highlight unique aspects of each recipe and its ingredients

Integrating a trip home a short 'writing-retreat' into my research project was also an expression of Tuck's (2009) desire-based framework. Conceptually connected to bell hook's engaged pedagogy (1994), a desire-centered research approach rejects the academic tendency to center problem solving by identifying deficiencies (a common structure for research questions). For me, this is getting to physically connect with a home I don't get to be at often and be near some of the water I love the most (the Passamaquoddy Bay). By connecting to spatial aspects of my grandmother and her mother's life, it gave me another form of sensory information to infuse into my upcoming writing. In this space I was able to identify stories and memories that inspired the thematic and narrative threads woven throughout the different parts of the book. I left New Brunswick with a cohesive outline for my memoir and cookbook manuscript.

The following months involved daily writing sessions where I slowly completed this memoir project and had the space to share my secondary research findings in what I called "popular history essays" of the grains in the book (corn, rye, oats, kamut and wheat) and in the recipe descriptions. The memoir sections were organized by different eras of my life. I wrote up recollections and reflections of my youth and how food was integrated into our family history, and also the path of my baker's life. This eBook is the

first iteration of a whole grain baking book, *Rise: A Devotion to Whole Grains* (*forthcoming*) that I have a contract to publish in the fall of 2023.

Component 1: Tastes of Home eBook

Reflection:

Original research question: *What kind of counternarratives emerge when I use recipes as a starting point of inquiry, both as a route for historical reflection and a way to engage with embodied knowledge transmission through the process of baking and adapting recipes?*

The keywords of my research question are:

- counternarratives
- inquiry
- historical reflection
- knowledge transmission
- adapting recipes

Inquiry, reflection, counternarratives are conceptually connected through critical food histories and geographies.

Knowledge transmission and adaptation are conceptually connected by feminist food pedagogies.

With *Tastes of Home*, I was able to explore my research question that set out to examine food storytelling as a tool for political change in each of 3 sections of the book (baker's journey, popular grain histories, family recipes). Making spatial or geographic connections between people and land over a food's history (whether a recipe or an ingredient) can inspire new awarenesses and connections to the foods in our lives. As Goffe (2019) states, "within a single grain of sugar the human traffic of the centuries-long history of globalization is encrypted. The Caribbean and its diaspora will forever live with the bittersweet inheritance of sugar" (p. 34). A similar argument can be made for a grain of wheat in the Canadian context, where I assert that white flour holds colonial history and centering and practicing with whole grain flours is an act of subversion.

I pursue whole grain literacy both as a bakery owner and a food researcher, because of the inevitability of white flour becoming no longer viable to produce as a commodity. To make white flour, over 35% of the grain is removed, along with almost all vitamins and minerals. The addition of supplemented nutrients into white flour was the result of massive health problems among populations dependent on this whitened food (Tye 2011). This includes Indigenous peoples from coast to coast who were forced off their land onto reserve and supplied with and/or sold white flour. Determining additive standards for white flour was carried out cruelly in residential schools through “scientific” experimentation over how little of certain minerals and vitamins was necessary to keep a human body alive (Mosby 2017). Other work details the connection between settler colonial genocide and wheat (Friedmann 2005), including the creation of the family farm to grow and sell wheat by rail (Rotz 2017). Local grain systems do not inherently challenge the colonial ideologies of commodity wheat, but they do hold more possibility to confront oppressive systems, if the awareness and will is there.

Devastatingly, a lot of the foods from my grandmother’s recipes have tragic and often forgotten backstories. Through a process of inquiry, reflection and counternarratives I have written work that pulls pieces of these histories into the light while also naming the geographic connections to First Peoples of this land, Caribbean and African people and people from Europe that can be understood through food. Here, I am trying to disrupt the settler colonial status quo and draw attention to realities Canadians are intentionally kept from, all while cushioned in storytelling about food, family and land. Food images, stories and lore are “cherished referents” (78) often idealizing inaccurate versions of collective memory. Giorgio (2016) points out that memory and story are not the same. As an expression of scholarship, *Tastes of Home* is autoethnography that “attends to the cultural and political tensions between lived experiences and their meanings” (p.407). In a way, the pillars of my theoretical framework (*land and food sovereignty, feminist pedagogies, anti-racist ethics, critical food histories and art*) equate to a value system that structures my stories, similar to how anthropology principles shape how we think about autoethnography.

There are many expressions of feminist food pedagogies layered in *Tastes of Home*. When I say food pedagogies, I mean modes of knowledge or learning that can be derived from or accessed with food. Throughout the manuscript, I discuss different spaces and people who have helped me learn to be in the world through sharing food or baking together. All recipes, in a broad sense (not just a written sense), are their own unique pedagogies with information to teach through a variety of channels (Myers 2012). I merge food and feminist pedagogies not because all radical food knowledges are gendered, but because of the lateral and rhizomatic way knowledge moves through food. This is juxtaposed against rational thought and binary epistemologies, the primary discursive tools of patriarchy. I've also hoped to challenge the assumptions of writing *History* (Tuhiwai Smith 1999) that automatically pair the 'evolution of man' with the evolution of the wheat plant. Although my research may not overturn status quo assumptions of progress, I do strive for it to shake the earth below.

To end on a personal note, both my work as a feminist food geography and pedagogy researcher and the work of recollecting and baking carry grief. The grief of white supremacy and settler colonialism feels hard to shift, dislodge and/ or transform. Especially in this era. The grief carried in my family, and lately with my grandmother's passing, is more graspable. By telling my family story and celebrating Jean Anne's legacy and impact, I intend to reframe and dissolve some of the intergenerational trauma that stems from sexual abuse and patriarchal relations. As this project carries on, I will be listening and feeling for closure and transformation of our family psyche. The recipe collaboration between my grandmother and I, is also a way for me to integrate the values and lessons of my childhood context with the very different but dovetailed values of my baking practice.

Research Process & Reflection

Component 2: *Pie Time* Zoom Baking Workshop

Process: The second major component of my portfolio was a zoom baking workshop I hosted as part of the 2022 EUC Eco-Arts Festival *Fracture*. With this hands-on-at-home group baking class, I responded to my research question *What happens when hands-on*

food education is combined with critical discussion around place and home? by applying feminist and critical pedagogy methods. I wanted to methodologically explore how to support critical consciousness raising in the context of a baking workshop. *Pie Time* involved a mix of working through a recipe, exchanging with each other about pie, learning about the food history of pie and getting an introduction to the plant history of the grain we were working with. Meant as a low-commitment, accessible event, the workshop ran from start to finish in 75 minutes, including a reflective Q&A between myself and festival curator Sharifa Riley. Working from secondary food history research I integrated some storytelling about pie and rye – rye being the grain I was using to make the whole grain pie crust recipe. I created a playful presentation, sharing about what and where pie pastry has evolved from and highlighted how local environmental factors are connected to how a food is made and how it evolves. Through narrative storytelling, alongside hands-on recipe practice, I drew together moments in history with light food systems analysis and also contextualized pie in the current North American context. This followed a similar form of storytelling used in the previous component's popular grain histories.

The practical side of the workshop was focused on assisting people in learning how to use whole grain flour to make pie pastry. I created a flexible recipe that can be used with a variety of whole grain flours a participant might have in their pantry. Each participant was emailed a .pdf version of the recipe that offered a lot of detail to help participants feel comfortable trying the recipe again on their own. By the end of the workshop, those who were making pie crust (a portion of attendees were watching and listening only), had created pie dough balls and rolled them out into pans. They could be baked that night or chilled for later use. With my workshop design process, I brought together 2 short reflective presentations connected to the recipe, a group 'get to know you and your relationship to pie' hand poll exercise, and the experience of working through a recipe from home with the support of an instructor going through and narrating the same process.

Component 2: *Pie Time* Zoom Baking Workshop

Reflection:

Original research question: *What happens when hands-on food education is combined with critical discussion around place and home?*

In a way this research event was a culmination of my engagement with environmental education pedagogies during MES, where I experimented with different formats of digital workshop delivery. Given the interdependence and oneness of the environment and food systems (whether local or global), food systems education *is* environmental education (EE). Generally, food workshops cover technical details about the ingredients and don't often contextualize them socially or environmentally. Learning about food systems while working by hand with connected ingredients creates a retention supporting environment (Brown et al 2020, Philips 2013). This benefit is one of the reasons I've been cultivating a pedagogy practice that brings together hands-on skill development and critical thinking (Jones 2019). In the context of environmental education, Judson (2015) calls for the field to employ pedagogies that support memorability through engagement. Within EE discourse, the climate emergency is a motivating factor in rethinking education and shifting the emphasis of environmental systems education in our school and societal systems (Orr 1992). By integrating critical food histories and place-based learning into practical cooking spaces, food educators can support imagination and participation in collectively addressing climate disaster and also the perpetuating impacts of settler colonialism (bound to climate disaster, of course). Feminist and critical food pedagogy methodology, as well as current EE discourse is heavily influenced by Indigenous scholarship (Cedillo and Nxumalo 2017) on critical place-based knowledge and the relational nature of knowledge transmission (Davis 2014). I'm also influenced by this work and have tried to make evident how food as a site of learning is expansive and generative. Recipe-inspired storytelling is a way to explore this, as I did in *Pie Time*. Narrative education challenges how this form of knowledge sharing has been compartmentalized in the education system (ibid).

bell hooks (2010) identified that "the shape of knowledge is constantly changing" (10). The pandemic has made this obvious in many ways, including the rapid adaptation of universities to remote learning. Zoom spaces exist in most realms of my life (i.e.,

education, work, friends, family, hobbies, dance parties, entertainment) and “zoom fatigue” is vernacular, especially among people who are just now completing a 2-year virtual grad school program. Maintaining focus and presence in a zoom space can be a challenge given the cognitive dissonance and/ or dissociative solitude that can come along with virtual space. Academic remote learning is generally passive and “body breaks” are necessary to re-engage. Hands-on food workshops, whether online or in person are inherently active and multisensory.

Cooking and baking are an embodied experiences in which we must use our bodies to transform ingredients into something to eat. This reality is comforting to me in the context of how we’ve normalized being isolated. Many people picked up new food skills during the pandemic, often learning through digital sources like online classes, tik tok videos and IG stories. Pairing critical food stories and the work of cooking is a way to practice an engaged pedagogy (hooks 1994) t hat supports different needs of the self in a learning environment. As stated in the *Tastes of Home* reflection, a lot of critical food systems learning involves oppressive systems and trauma. By resisting what Verges (2019) calls “postcolonial teaching amnesia” through anti-colonial methods, hard, traumatic truths must be acknowledged. An intent of integrating this learning through story into a fun, collaborative baking environment is to provide a caring space to introduce or engage with emotionally difficult topics.

Though *Pie Time* established an ephemeral, one-time community, we left the event with a shared learning experience and some pastry to be reminded of the event later. We centered hands-on skill development and shared an embodied experience on zoom, repeating the same steps while working as a group through a recipe from our remote locations. Here, I am practicing a socially engaged arts method inspired by Shin and Bae (2019) and engaged pedagogy by bell hooks (1994). As a digital learning strategy, educators can develop embodied activities to help people feel connected to each other in a virtual classroom space. These reflections on embodiment and zoom learning may not be relevant to universities soon, considering their rush “back to normal”. Virtual home cooking classes and other remote programming are ways to maximize accessibility in and outside of a pandemic context. For many people learning

at home makes workshop attendance possible in the first place, whether because of being immunocompromised, having mobility issues or not having access to childcare (Hall 2014). Disability perspectives have a lot to offer critical and feminist pedagogies as they do food studies in general (Gerber 2007). We are not post-pandemic, so developing strategies for an engaged pedagogy in virtual education spaces is still relevant to explore and practice.

Conclusion

Over the course of this paper and portfolio components, I show how my food-based pedagogy research practice has been shaped by personal and professional experience in making food, as well as by my teachers and different schools of thought. I consider myself a feminist food educator. The influence of feminism shows up in many different ways throughout this project: 1) recognizing the social impact and feminization of food and care work 2) emphasizing embodied connection through teaching methods 3) creating anti-colonial counternarratives to challenge European assumptions about knowledge production and food history 4) understanding how knowledge can be accessed through the senses and 5) acknowledging and critiquing relations of power for the purposes of social transformation.

Grounded by grains, and the work and history of baking, this research project responded to queries focused on how storytelling around food and ingredients could be told with educational recipes. As a baking educator and promoter of regional grain economies, whole grain literacy is a core motivation. Social transformation is urgently needed. That's part of why we are all here in the Faculty of *Environmental and Urban Change*. Grains make up a significant portion of most peoples' diets- they fuel our adventures, our work, our lives. Alas, keto diets won't save us. The inefficiencies of the food system will not withstand what's coming as we decarbonize and are forced to decentralize the food system, at least to a certain degree. This may or may not result in the decommodification of wheat and the displacement of white flour as a central food in most people's diets globally. Regardless, people and groups maneuvering regional grain economies back into place (from *manoomin* to rye berries) are building the

infrastructure needed to move the food system in this direction while also building climate resilience. In regional grain economies this happens by shortening of supply chain lengths and developing cultivation and processing capacity for drought-resistant, nutritious and productive grains. Further work on this project will bring in a focus on the different actors and processing techniques involved in regional grain systems, from growers to millers. It will also involve the addition of more recipes focusing on each grain to share recipe information about how to bake with them. Through diverse food-centered storytelling and skill-building baking education I strive to support people learning to work with alternative flours and also contribute to a pleasure-centered ideological shift away from white supremacist values in the food system.

#freepalestine

Appendix A: Jean Anne Stevens' Recipe Archive Documentation

1. *Jean Stevens' Recipes (recipe names and sources)*: This is a catalogue of the name and author/ source (if listed) of every recipe in the three recipe collection notebooks I inherited from my grandmother Jean.

[Nan's Recipes- Jan 20 2022](#)

2. *A selection of significant recipes from Jean's collection (recipe images)* These are the 40 recipes from my grandmother's collection that I chose as a longlist for possible adaptation. Also, I hope to share it with family members and community members. The padlet format allows for social media type communication between page visitors.

<https://padlet.com/wordstojess/5xly3bqcsipfgii>

3. *Jean's Recipes selected for Jess' Recipe Adaptations (recipe images)*: These are the recipes I've chosen to focus on for eBook project *Tastes of Home*. This padlet is a working document for my baking practice.

<https://padlet.com/wordstojess/73rz0owloac1ze3p>

Appendix B: *Tastes of Home* eBook

Please see attached .pdf titled *JessicaRossAppendixBComponent1Tastes of Home* to read memoir and baking eBook research outcome.

Appendix C: *Pie Time* visuals

Please see attached .pdf titled *JessicaRossAppendixCcomponent2PieTimeVisuals* to see come examples of my presentation slides that gave visual supports to the critical thinking and food-based storytelling shared during the workshop.

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Tastes of Home

RECIPES AND STORIES
ABOUT GRAINS, BAKING
AND HOME

By Jessica Ross
July 2022

This eBook is a portfolio component for MES research looking at environmental feminist food education. Following the book is a reflective research paper discussing the process of its making.

Photos by Farida Rady, Jennifer Murphy and
Jessica Ross





Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION

SECTION 1: A BAKER'S JOURNEY

OATS

RYE

CORN

KAMUT

WHEAT

SECTION 2: RECIPES AND STORIES FROM HOME

NELLIE AND THE PASSAMAQUODDY BAY

RECIPE 1: WAR CAKE

RECIPE 2: CAPE BRETON OATCAKES

BREAD AND MOLASSES

RECIPE 3: DOUGHBOYS

RECIPE 4: OATMEAL RAISIN COOKIES

NAN AND GRAMPIE'S HEAVEN ON EARTH

RECIPE 5: SOFT MOLASSES COOKIES

RECIPE 6: BROWN BREAD

LIVING UNDER ONE ROOF

RECIPE 7: CHARLOTTE COUNTY STYLE PIE

RECIPE 8: TOOTS' MINCEMEAT CAKE

SHARING RECIPES TO REMEMBER

RECIPE 9: GUM DROP CAKE

RECIPE 10: NUTMEG BLUEBERRY CAKE

COLD PLUNGE CONCLUSION

CREDITS

Introduction

Welcome to Taste of Home a memoir and recipe book. This book contains stories about my life as a baker, my relationship to baking and family and short historical accounts of grains featured in the recipe collection that follows. The second section features 10 of my grandmother's recipes and whole grain adaptations of them that I developed as a way to connect with Jean's recipe archive and as a way to recollect our family and baking.

I've been working in bakeries for over 13 years. It all started when I did a practicum on a farm in Germany that had a bakery on it. In the mornings I would do farm chores, my afternoons were free and then I would go to the bakery in the evenings and help out. I had found one of my callings and things were never the same after that. After 6 months of working in bakeries overseas, I came home and started my own microbakery. Some would say "too soon!", including 36 year old Jess. My business has gone through many phases over the years, culminating in the founding of my own whole-grain sourdough and wood-fired oven bakery, Gold Island Bakery, based in Scotch Village, Nova Scotia, located on Sipekne'katik territory on the unceded land of the Mi'kmaq. In the first section of this book, I reflect on parts of my journey in becoming a whole grain baker and food entrepreneur. Each story is connected to one of the 5 grains featured in the recipes later on in the book. Paired with these stories are short grain histories that will tell you a little bit about where different grains come from and their significance over time.

I've spent much of my life in Mi'kma'ki, both on the NB and NS side. I was born on Peskotomuhkati territory, the southeastern most area of the canadian state, Charlotte County, NB. My ancestors have been living on this land as settlers for many generations at this point. It's the only place where I know my ancestors are buried. The second part of the book takes place here. Over that section of the book, I share stories about women in my family and how I learned about community care through food preparation and sharing. To reflect on this, I also present 10 beloved recipes from my grandmother's recipe collection, which I inherited when she passed away in 2019. Also, as a way to connect with those recipes and also make them more my own, I created adaptations of each of her recipes that bring in whole grain flours. Since the wheat in white flour is not produced in Atlantic Canada, my commitment to sharing whole grain recipes is connected to my commitment to upholding and strengthening our regional grain economies that produce delicious, healthier and more sustainable whole grain flours.

The recipes shared in this book are written so that they can be baked with minimal equipment, no mixers required. However, a good whisk and a rubber spatula are tools I consider essential to a basic baking set up. Beyond that, if you have some baking pans, most recipes can be made in a variety of baking vessels and with little else (medium sized bowls and measuring tools). Whole grain flours can be purchased in a variety of places and at most grocery stores. Bulk food stores carry them too, though have a sniff before purchasing. White flour is stable almost indefinitely since the living and oily parts of the grain are removed (the good stuff!). Whereas with whole grain flour, freshness matters. You can often smell if whole grain flour is old. You can still use it and generally it will be totally transformed by the magic of baking chemistry. All the same, it's something different to pay attention to.

Hope you enjoy, xo Jess Ross the baker





Section 1: A Baker's Journey & Popular Grain Histories



OATS, RYE, CORN,
KAMUT & WHEAT

Before I ever had a bakery, I had an enterprising spirit. Before I loved whole grain flours, I loved oats.

Oats have been an ancestral food of mine for many, many generations. They've factored in my diet in numerous ways, from my morning oatmeal routine (frozen blueberries in the winter, strawberries and brown sugar in the summer), to chewy oatmeal cookies and even sturdier oatcakes. My ancestors are settlers who landed on the East Coast from the British Isles. I've got great-greats and great-great-greats from different parts of England, Ireland and Scotland. I don't know many of my ancestral migration stories. They would have settled this unceded land before Canada was a country, when extractive colonialism was shifting to settler colonialism, forming communities anchored around the sea and fishing industry. I have family connections to Scotland, on all sides, although it is a place I've never been. Learning more about Scotland's long and unique connection to oats has affirmed for me that when I'm eating them, in some way I'm remembering and accessing older homelands, where my ancestors would have been Indigenous.

I didn't have much contact with my dad or his family after the age of 10, but I've held on to a shared entrepreneurial spirit in their absence. We are a family of business people: we are creative, socially engaged lovers of math and specialists in logistics. As a child, I loved playing grocery store clerk—chilling out on my own in my grandparent's unused trailer, operating my play cash register, ringing through imaginary customers and obliging family members. Maybe it was a sign of what was to come. A glimpse of my pending career certainly came that summer, in my early twenties, when I created a "get-rich-quick" scheme for a music festival near Antigonish. Ok, maybe it's a stretch to call this naive business idea a scheme, but it went like this: copious amounts of dense, ready-to-eat, M&M infused, Cape Breton style oatcakes. Arguably a perfect festival food.

I filled a mid-sized rubbermaid container with 200 candy-peppered oatcakes, and hauled them off with me to the festival. It was a weekend of dancing outside and rogue vending, and I was convinced every strung-out cutie would need an oatcake for sustenance, the way the Scots relied on oatcakes for survival. Unfortunately, I had miscalculated.

For my ancestors, oatcakes were bread and oats were flour, a staple food for them. They also acted this way for me, as a modern, chaotic woman of action. But my precious oatcakes didn't seem to have the same appeal for the festival goers. Had I overestimated the popular devotion to oats, or was it that my drive to sell dwindled amid all my dance music options? Either way, my chances of financial surplus were spoiled. Full disclosure, even now, over 12 years into bakery ownership, profits still aren't my strong suit.

All the same, nothing could strip me entirely of the glory in that bin of oatcakes. At least I showed up, with paper bags and a small change float, even if I didn't have the courage to verbally solicit my wares. In the end, a festival teen—filled with youthful bravado—claimed most of the profits in exchange for helping me move the massive amount of oatcakes still left as the festival neared its end.

On the slow journey home, after little sleep and a weekend of dancing outside, my small bounty of leftover oatcakes was a blessing. And it wasn't too many years after my festival bake sale that I took my deep love of mass-producing good foods to the next level. There was a lot more trial and error learned through pop-ups like this as I built confidence in my taste and my slowly growing skillset as a baker and entrepreneur.

Oats

I love the way oats feel when mixed by hand. It's rare to make something with oats that doesn't involve a wet, oily mix. When first wet, oats might release some sticky starch, but the effect of a fat in the mix, be it butter, coconut or olive oil, overcomes this tack and the greasy ease that follows oat mixing by hand feels so good. Once baked together, the crisped and roasted oats become perfectly nutty, those starchy flakes transformed into a toasted whole grain delight.

Like most cereal grains common in the northern hemisphere, oats come from western Asia*, and they primarily moved west into wetter and cooler climates. Some consider oats a secondary crop: a wild, vigorous plant that mimics a cultivated crop (like wheat), and manages to grow and thrive alongside and within plantings of its cultivated lookalike. As a wild food, there is evidence humans were hand grinding and eating oats over 30 000 years ago. Oats are more rain tolerant than rye, corn and wheat. This might be why oats took hold as the primary grain to feed the Scottish people, my ancestors. Oats have been a Scottish staple since at least the 400s. In other parts of Europe, wheat and barley were more common for people to eat, and oats were grown only for animals and judged when used as a human food. Grains, like other foods, often come to be signifiers of class or race, regardless of how delicious or healthy they are.

Oats are considered a low input grain, meaning they thrive in a variety of soils and don't require a lot of fertility for a good yield. Advantageous as a foodstuff, oats have a higher protein, fibre and fat content relative to other common cereal grains. They are also richer in amino acids, which help the body digest and derive nutrients from plant foods.

Despite its virtuosity, oats make you work for it! There are more steps involved in turning oats from a plant into food than there are with other grains in this book. To get oatmeal or oat flour, one must first harvest, thresh, clean, dry, sort, dehull, steam and then finally mill. Oats used to be milled with a tool called a quern, a grain milling technology more than 10 000 years old. Though the stone mills of today work very differently, they are still based on a similar principle to the quern that involves one stationary stone to hold the grain (the bed stone) and one moving stone to pulverize (the runner stone).

In earlier North American colonial history, the Scots grew oats to eat and conjure home. Otherwise they were grown by settlers for horse feed who claimed they weren't fit for humans. Perhaps this stigmatization of oats is surprising to you because, like me, you love oats and they are a part of your daily life. Once the Canadian and American settler states were consolidated after centuries of violence, national food companies were established eventually leading to mass marketing campaigns of foods. Oatmeal was one of the earliest breakfast cereals/ foods to be both packaged rather than sold in bulk and also subject to a major media campaign promoting it as a nutritious breakfast food. New generations of oat recipes and adaptations of oatcakes came about as well, still being made today in kitchens on either side of the Atlantic.

Before I was a whole grain baker, I was a young apprentice in Germany introduced to rye.

A decisive moment on my entrepreneurial and baker's path was when a roommate connected me with her friend who was living on a community farm in Germany that had a bakery. I was 22 and had just finished my undergrad in anthropology. I was feeling done with books and wanted to get my hands into something good and try learning a new language. So I headed off alone into the great unknown, taking a leap of faith into my future.

At first, I struggled to be there. This was a rural area where few people spoke English and my modest traveler's vocabulary didn't get me very far. It was a lonely time, though rich in learning and adventure. Each morning, I had to work up the courage to head down to the large farm breakfast table, knowing I'd be met with the wall of sound that was 12 Germans chatting over gruel, bread and delicious spreads. It was always an incredible offering, though I found it hard to enjoy because of my nerves. Learning to communicate and connect with people in non-verbal ways was part of the process of my informal baking apprenticeship, where I also learned to communicate with grains.

I didn't know how much I would fall in love with rye, with whole grain flours and sourdough cultures. Living and working with people in a community farm setting was revelatory for me offering me insight into an intimate community that modelled a way to live and work collectively that I still dream towards. The farm's ecosystem had many complex parts moving together—people, plants, animals, vehicles, tools, sun, rain and snow, markets, stores and of course foods—all to sustain a quality of living and a thriving organic farm, providing for an even wider community.

This ecosystem also featured an aromatic, warm bakery run by a boisterous, trilingual head baker named Enrique and a sweet, quiet baker named Sina who shared only body language with me. I worked part time in the bakery and part time on the farm, living a unique double life as one of the many young apprentices. Inside the bakery, we were busy making mostly bread. At *Backstube Rosales* we worked with free form and pan breads, with sourdough and yeasted breads, with grains grown in our valley and some imported.

Beyond the bakery, many prepared foods were coming and going from the farm kitchen, all orchestrated by some incredible women who oversaw the *hauswirtschaft* branch of the farm ecosystem. The *hauswirtschaft* (roughly translates to the work of home-making and care systems that keep people energized, both in body and spirits) branch of operations was responsible for sourcing, preparing and serving all meals to those who lived on the farm, maintaining kitchen gardens and chicken coops, preserving lots of farm grown food, curing meats, making butter and cheese, keeping on top of daily desserts, cleaning and maintaining different farm spaces. By default, these responsibilities kept everyone's morale intact, especially through long, wet, cold-handed German farm winters—the only season I happened to live at *Oerkhof*.

The members of the *hauswirtschaft* team had completed a three-year long apprenticeship. Learning about this formal recognition of house work and its corresponding education system changed me. It validated and affirmed my desire to center food production and corresponding care work on my career path. I still regularly wish I had done a formal *hauswirtschaft* apprenticeship in Germany—dedicating years of training to collaboratively learning the arts and crafts of cooking, preserving, growing and cleaning. Yes, I said it, the art of cleaning. This caring breadth of capabilities reminded me of my grandmother and my aunts, who were always generously taking care of house, amid working and rearing the next generation.

Rye

When my hands meet rye, and my other senses tune in, its starchy coarse grit not sticking from abundant gluten, my hand glides through, a gently musty, earthy aroma wafting up, even off of old flour- I am brought to my time in Germany in 2008 and 2009 when my fascination/ curiosity with rye turned into a pretty serious passion of mine.

Rye is the grain that we use most in my bakery. It was one of the reasons I chose to go to Germany, where I got to prepare and taste it in so many new and beautiful breads. Since returning from my practicums and experimenting with it, I've gotten to know its strengths (of which there are many) and its weaknesses (of which there are few).

Rye was growing and being eaten at least 8000 years ago, in 6500 BC. Like other grains central to our diet, it came from the fertile crescent (what is now modern day Turkey, Iran, Iraq, Syria, Israel, Jordan, and the northern-eastern Egypt). Before Rye was intentionally cultivated, it was a tough plant that grew into and among ancient wheat crops. It could survive drought and freezing, and was a hardier plant than wheat. Rye grew vigorously among wheat plants, but when wheat would fail due to drastic climatic change, rye would often survive, leaving farmers with food and seed³. It's a very fertile grain, often volunteering itself year after year in the sun-exposed edges of ancient wheat fields.

Because of how it grew among wheat, most ancient wheat field harvests contained up to 40% rye. Over time, the plant moved north, west and south around the Black Sea, but not so much east, where the climate was hotter and drier. Rye actually grows through winter and thrives in mountainous areas. By around 4000 BC, fully domesticated varieties of rye were being cultivated in their own right, and by 1500 BC it was both a wild and planted crop in Europe. Eventually rye overtook spelt cultivation in much of Europe, having the advantage of not needing to be hulled, and being less prone to spoilage when in storage.

Hardiness was also valued by early European settlers who had to break ground and grow their own sustenance. Rye was an early grain that settler colonizers were more successfully able to grow here, despite already being established as a lower grade grain compared to wheat. Corn, Indigenous to the Americas, was the main grain of this land and its offering by Indigenous peoples is one reason we are still here today. As the Canadian colonial frontier moved west, wheat became more common, and rye lost its place as a central grain. Nonetheless, rye continues to be grown in North America, and is also an important cultural food despite also carrying some stigma like oats used to.

Before I became a whole grain enthusiast, there was a coming-to-know new histories through foods like corn.

After returning from Germany and being unwilling to go back to school, starting a business with my newly established skillset of making rye sourdoughs seemed logical to me. My return from Germany was in the spring. Rather than return to Kijipuktuk/Halifax where I had lived before Germany, I took another risk and moved to a farm that some friends of mine had bought while I was away. We felt like homesteaders (albeit with wifi). We had a depressed cow named Isabel who we hand-milked for gallon after gallon of precious dairy. We made sharp yogurt and pristine butter as our fridge brimmed with aging milk, worked on house renovations, started a farm zine, and carried out a toilet installation. I learned to mix natural wall plasters, and we planted a market garden that yielded enough to sell, surprisingly.

To move our produce, we set up shop on Agricola street once a week. It was a sweet, rogue market stall on the front lawn of a busy street. In preparation for our weekly trips to the city, rather than participate in our generally meager harvest, I would be in the house baking. I turned our standard home oven into a small baker's oven, capable of turning out 20 loaves of rye sourdoughs in a few hours with minimal smoke detector intrusions. It was another micro bakery project that became the foundation of my own bakery business and the beginning of my life as "Jess Ross the Baker".

Not too long into my newly launched career as an informally-taught baker, I was lucky enough to get invited to the Kneading Conference in Skowhegan, Maine, by one of my whole grain baking mentors, Doug Brown. The Kneading Conference (a gathering for passionate local grain farmers, bakers and millers) has always been an incredibly generative stop for my baker's journey. I've met baker friends, and tasted flavours and textures I couldn't have previously imagined. The experiences I've had there have pivoted my course accordingly, expanding my understanding of the place of grain in our society, and what people have made possible within this vast, global craft.

The Kneading Conference takes place at some classic settler exhibition grounds, set up for events like horse racing and livestock showcases. But on this day, the paved grounds and grassy zones were peppered with small wood fired ovens. Some of them were on wheels, some were in the early stages of being built, piles of bricks and buckets of mortar and mud here and there. I had used wood-fired ovens during my time in Germany, but this was something different— a community of people planting the many seeds of regional grain economies that are germinating and very slowly upending the commodity wheat industry and building infrastructure for future needs, when we are forced to change our food system.

Albie Barden is a founder, fixture and father-figure of the kneading conference, a settler elder with a message centered around corn. Albie and his son build wood-fired ovens for a living, and many of the mobile ovens onsite were crafted by them. For some years, Albie had been a part of a seed-saving project, growing out and scattering a special flint corn called Darwin John, which is a variety of corn native to the north east, stewarded and kept alive by its namesake Seneca Corn Keeper, Darwin John

Corns like Darwin John have long been grown on the banks of the Kaniatarowanenneh or St. Lawrence river. Becoming a steward of Darwin John as part of a seed propagation project was the beginning of a very important coming-to-know for me. Learning about the erased history of corn and its role in historic food systems of the Haudenosaunee, the Wabanaki Confederacy and early colonizers taught me about my home, the layers of foodways here and obscured colonial history. It also challenged the racist, evolutionary narratives of the Indigenous hunter-gatherer I had been exposed to in the Canadian school system.

Oftentimes European grain growing systems are thought to be the fruition of civilization, and any society without is stuck in history. The gift of corn and the knowledge of how to grow it here was shared by Indigenous peoples to struggling colonizers. This kept some early settler communities alive as the continent was colonized from east to west. Leaving the kneading conference with 12 kernels of Darwin John corn was the beginning of my relationship to this plant and some of its history. Maintaining relationships with grains at the plant stage makes me really appreciate the countless generations of seed savers that keep special tasting food seeds vital.

Corn

Planting each seed with a quick prayer and a press into the loosened, blood and bone enriched soil gives Darwin John a chance, as the seed waits for water from above, and begins to slowly pull in moisture from the dirt around it. Once tall enough, the leaves of the hand-spanned spaced baby corns gently graze each other when a breeze blows through as sun makes sweetness and starch.

Corn is the only grain used in these recipes that came from North America. Ancient grain researchers have traced the cultivated corn as far back as 10 000 years ago in central Mexico. Over the millennia, corn has evolved expansively and there are over 300 subspecies, each with hundreds of lineages and thousands of cultivars. Corn is special in that it can be grown as far south as 50 degrees southern latitude and 50 degrees into the northern latitude, and it can live off of as little as 10 inches of rain in a season and up to 400. This adaptability helped corn roam south 5000 years ago, and later north into colder climates 2000 years ago. European colonialism was responsible for a major change in how and where corn grew, dispersing it throughout many continents of the world.

Corn has been an important food for many peoples from the Americas over the millennia. It's also a very spiritual plant and food, reflecting the cycles and teachings of being alive. Sacred agricultural relationships have been tragically displaced as European colonialism reshaped local food systems and brought to life the global food system we are currently caught in. My ancestors, Europeans, first experienced corn as newly-arrived colonizers. Over time, it became a staple and a survival food for English speaking settlers, working its way into what would become 'American' and 'Canadian' cuisine.

I didn't learn that corn was originally a crop grown by the Mi'kmaq people until my first kneading conference. Learning more about southern US food culture, taught me that corn was a primary food for enslaved Africans and it's still an essential and celebrated ingredient in African-american cuisine. Over the recent centuries, corn has become a staple grain on the African continent. In some places it has taken the place of older Indigenous essential grains like sorghum and millet.

Plant breeding and seed selection is a fundamental part of growing food. It's only recently that farmers have started buying seed instead of replanting their own, the best and biggest of last year's open-pollinated crops. Commercial varieties of corn have been bred to be large, and also bred so that they can't self-seed anymore.

Hybrid seeds are corn varieties strategically blended for preferred traits. They are not open-pollinators, meaning that if you were to plant a hybrid corn seed, its offspring would be guaranteed to be not the same as its parent. This effect removes the seed sovereignty of farmers and creates a corporate dependence.

The interactions of technology and grains isn't just limited to the history of industrial agriculture. Humans have always been creating natural and constructed tools to unlock the bound energy of dried grains. They don't all look like machinery. Some are processing techniques like corn nixtamalization, a 4500 year old practice of dehusking corn by soaking it with water and wood ash (a source of lime). This process adds vitamins to the corn and eases cooking.

While I didn't grow up eating a lot of dried corn, I have been working with it now for more than 10 years, and I enjoy finding old northeast corn recipes that shed light on earlier settler food systems.

Before I could confidently bake with different whole grains, I had many teachers.

By the time I was all-in on the promise of the whole grain revolution, I had already founded my small company. To start my bakery, I found bakery space for rent inside a restaurant kitchen in Kijipuktuk/ Halifax. The Good Food Emporium was a food-and-dance, community institution kind of a restaurant. I felt lucky to have affordable rent and such good company while I experimented with recipes and business models, including my laborious yet innovative bicycle-delivered bread and pie service.

Through the years that I was running multi-month bread subscriptions and vending regularly at farmers' markets, I was also continuing to learn by visiting other bakeries and their bakers. At my highest commitment to this part of my craftsmanship, a friend and I made a 20 000 km, somewhat harrowing road trip across the US and back to seek out our mentor poets and bakers. I saw many different wood-fired ovens and witnessed the brilliance of bakers and baking on that trip, as I followed up with new friends and colleagues I had made at the kneading conference.

Near the point when we turned around and headed eastward home, we made it to Cohasset, California. I went there to reconnect with Roger Jansen, a legendary (to me) flour mill and oven builder, and to meet his family, who ran a majestic whole-grain, wood-fired oven sourdough bakery hidden in the woods around the foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountains. Roger had worked for Meadows Mills, which was at the time the only remaining stone-ground grist mill building company in North America. I am happy to report that that is no longer the case, and there is now a new generation of mill builders, creating stone flour mills designed with regional grains and whole-grain loaves in mind.

The Jansens taught me a lot about this process. Through this family I learned how special it is to be a baker who buys grain directly from a farmer, getting to know and have dialogue with grain growers, and also how delicious bread can be when made this way. Learning how to create, handle and bake whole grain doughs means leaning into the technologies and techniques of millers and bakers from many generations ago. At the same time it also means understanding the uniqueness of this moment and the newness of the systems we are working to create by building a regional grain shed where seed, flour and bread are all traded within a regional economy.

I learned how to work with the ancient wheat called kamut or khorasan wheat while staying with the Jansens during my winter american road trip adventure. Working in Hearth and Stone Bakery we made bread and pastries with kamut, and I got to witness its texture change depending on the hydration or the richness of the dough—watching it react and become silky as it merged with eggs and butter. By working with this gritty, golden grain, I've learned how whole grain kamut flour can be softened and worked into a gorgeous, sweet, nutty, delicate yet glutinous, springy dough and baked good. It's a cause for celebration and devotion to the whole grain revolution.

Mixing whole grain sourdoughs is such a different experience than mixing the white flour yeasted doughs of my youth (bless them all the same <3). The feeling of mixing an airy, loamy, collapsing tower of a sourdough sponge into ooze wet dough against the soft, dry pillow of flour, about to become a young, unripened bread dough.

Kamut

My own story with kamut or khorasan wheat is tied to America, as is a lot of its recent history as a cereal grain. If you search online for kamut, a lot of the top pages will say its history started in 1949, when it was first publicly known to be growing in North America. In reality, its history reaches many many thousands of years back, and its historic growing terrain is further east in the fertile crescent where many grains we eat today originated. Kamut is a commercial name for the plant *Triticum turgidum ssp. turanicum*, an ancient relative of durum wheat (*triticum durum*), the species that common bread and pasta wheats belong to. Khorasan wheat is another common name of kamut. This name refers to the area in Iran and Afghanistan where the grain is from and where it still grows. Most khorasan wheat is grown in North America and is also a grain crop in parts of the Mediterranean, Turkey, North Africa, Kazakhstan and Iran.

By acre kamut is a lower yielding ancient cousin of common wheats, though its kernel size is almost twice the weight of bread wheats. It's higher in protein (gluten) and contains more amino acids for digestibility. Personally, I love it for its nutty flavour and sweet resemblance to corn. though it behaves like wheat. It can withstand drier growing conditions than many wheat varieties, though it is more disease prone, especially if there is a wet harvest season.

Kamut's North American history is more obscure and recent than rye, oats or wheat. The lineage of Kamut grown in this part of the world can be traced back to 1944 when a US soldier was given 36 khorasan wheat kernels in Portugal. He passed them on to his father, a farmer in Montana. Over the coming decades this grain became a landrace of its own, grown out within a region in the midwest. It was passed around by farmers, at times having peaks of commercial interest before going relatively dormant again.

By the 1960's, this origin story morphed into a myth about this same soldier, a Montana farm boy who stumbled upon 36 kernels inside a tomb in Dashur, Egypt, and later sowed them with his father at home. Around this time, khorasan wheat became locally named 'King Tut's Wheat'. When attempting to brand this special grain seed, a different Montana farmer found the word kamut in the only egyptology book at a small library in Montana. It suggested that kamut was an ancient word meaning wheat. Here is where kamut as a product was born, with two business-minded prairie farmers who believed in kamut as a crop, and saw potential in this underground ancient grain. Subsequently, Kamut became a uniquely controlled grain and in 1989, Kamut was trademarked by these same farmers and a series of organic growing methods became enshrined in the commercial production of this seed.

The company Kamut International LTD heavily marketed this product, and these efforts resulted in any familiarity you likely have with Kamut. Kamut is a variety of khorasan wheat that is privately-owned by North Americans, with its production and processing concentrated in Montana and north in Alberta and Saskatchewan. This seed project and company is innovative because of its organic legislation, but also problematic and appropriative.

Kamut LTD attempted to address shortcomings of the commodity grain industry by requiring that any food called Kamut be both certified organically grown. The company buys back kamut harvests from the farmers they sell seed to, and they also process and distribute specially milled kamut flour. Farmers get a guaranteed price, unlike the commodity wheat market.

Before there were unburnt hearth loaves out of Jess' wood-fired oven, there were (many) burnt loaves.

Leading up to actually having my own wood-fired oven, I got to experiment and work with a few. In Germany, the second farm bakery I worked at had three active wood-fired ovens. As the bakery grew, ovens were added, but the old ones were maintained. By the end of my practicum on Dottenfelderhof, I had been given the responsibility of feeding, cleaning and loading one of these ovens, the one whose only job was to bake one or two big batches of one of my favourite breads, siebenkornbrot⁴. This is a recipe I took home with me, that I would later make in my own wood-fired oven, that is still being made by a new generation of Gold Island Bakery bakers.

Unlike modern gas or electric ovens, wood-fired ovens get heated up very slowly, with fire. Preparing each bake by burning the right amount of wood is a process that must be carefully woven into the different stages of dough making, folding and shaping. The fire infuses the oven with blasts of its radiant heat over a four hour burn-cycle, storing enough energy for six hours of continuous baking. Our free-form wheat doughs are the very first to go in the oven. The way these loaves react, spring and colour to fruition tells us a lot about how the rest of the bake is going to go. How quickly the wheat crusts brown gives me enough information to know how long it's going to take the scones to finish, even though they won't go in the oven for another three hours. Both the sesame whole wheat and the rustic white are special recipes that bake at the hottest temperatures of all the goods. They undergo the fastest transition from dough to loaf.

In my humble opinion, the flavour range that comes from a perfectly roasted sesame whole wheat dough is unparalleled, at least among local bakeries. From top to bottom, end to end, there is variation all the way from "just baked" golden to "almost burnt" garnet. The way these loaves tell the truth of the fire, with no secrets or coverups, has brought me to consider cutting them from our roster. The wheat loaves are consistently inconsistent, but all the flavours are just so good. I'll add that it has way more devotees than complainants. In a way, hearth loaves give eaters access to flavour of the oven itself.

The variability and wild nature of working with whole grains and fire means constant learning for its bakers. This is also true for the customers who get to experience a diversity of what something can taste like, knowing that the loaf is shifted by factors like the conditions in the field, how it is stored once harvested, the milling of the flour, and the spontaneity of a living grain. The magic of whole grain baking shows us what is involved in loving all the parts, being devoted to whole grains and honouring wild methods.

Over the cycle of a firing, my wood-fired oven crackles in a range of snaps, bursts, and spits. Tending to fire to make bread is a nurturing practice. A ritual to remind me of the basics: energy, light, heat, transformation, store and release. The paper catches first, listening from the otherside of the room, I make sure the crackles pick up in pace rather than slow down. A blow of air is all it takes to set it off what dwindles, sucked in away from the oven to protect the baker's lungs. A chain reaction started, paper to boxboard to bark bits and then to oven-dried slab wood, all the way to catch and burn hardwood logs who carry the energy of the loaves inside of them.

Wheat

The early cultivation of wheat, one of the earth's oldest farmed grains, is often considered the birth of agriculture. The creation of systems of storage and processing of grain by humans marked certain transitions as a species that many evolutionary anthropologists attribute to the 'birth of human civilization'. Some would even say it was the beginning of HlStory. Wheat was first farmed around 10 000 years ago in the Jordan Valley and Syria, and its history is certainly a story of transformation. Whether or not this parallels the 'progress' of humanity is questionable. This is not to say the story of wheat is not incredibly important—it is! But a corresponding signpost of progress, industrial agriculture (responsible for producing most of the world's wheat) must now be radically decentralized to mitigate climate disaster.

Wheat is one of the most populous plants on earth and it's the grain most of us have probably consumed the most, no matter where you are reading from. *Triticum aestivum* (bread wheats and spelt) and *triticum durum* (semolina wheats for pasta and bulgur) are the most common wheats grown and consumed today. These varieties are hulless, which means there is one less step in the process of making flour. Other ancient varieties of wheat you may know of are emmer, einkorn and khorasan. Grain breeding over the millennia is responsible for many of wheat's advantageous characteristics, like having no hull. Over millennia, cultivated wheats became domesticated because they lost their ability to self-seed in the wild. Humans would have gathered wheat by hand; the stalks (also called rachis) with loose kernels would have dropped easier; and those that held on would have stayed with the harvester and been more likely to be planted out the following year, propagating that particular trait. Wheat requires cool nights in order to grow, so it moved north and west mostly, growing commonly in northern Africa by 6000 BC where the first oven and bread cultures emerged in Egypt. Wheat continued to move— to other parts of Asia, Spain, Germany and then the British isles. It wasn't until European colonialism that wheat crossed the Atlantic.

Canada's large wheat industry is a lasting consequence of the British empire's focus on wheat within its agricultural colonialism. As Britain forced its frontier west across this land, into the prairies, farms to grow wheat, and railways to move it took over. Perennial grasslands managed since time immemorial by different Indigenous Plains Peoples (like the Blackfoot, and Cree) were converted into massive tracts of slowly depleting farmland. Wheat breeding has been often focused on higher yields and larger seed size, pest resistance and drought tolerance. Over the centuries, wheat yields have increased exponentially. A lot of this productivity comes from industrial fertility inputs. Increased field yields have been necessary to mitigate price instability.

The creation of "white flour" is another tampering of the industrial modern age that has reformed the way we eat wheat over recent centuries. As milling technology advanced in the steam era, white flour emerged as a luxury food in Europe and became a working class food during the industrial revolution. Whole grain or darker flours, including rye, became a class-laden symbol and secondary uses for the nutritious bran and germ (removed to make white flour).

Climate change is destabilizing industrial agriculture. An adaptation required for our planetary survival is a fast divestment from the unsustainable global commercial production of foods. The ancient techniques of breeding plants through strategic seed selection are still with us, as are living seed stewards from corner to corner in our abundant, beautiful home. Whole grains and local grain systems connect us to our ecosystems, our land histories and our homes. The good news is that the revolution is already underway, and moments of it will taste delicious!



Join me in the following section where we will dive into a collection of recipes handed down to me from my grandmother Jean Anne Stevens.

Each of the following 10 recipes features the versions I grew up with and also whole grain adaptations I've created as part of my contribution to the whole grain revolution and as a way to express my love of home.

Section 2: Recipes and Stories from Home



JEAN'S RECIPES, WHOLE
 GRAIN BAKING AND STORIES
 OF CARE AND COMMUNITY
 THROUGH FOOD

Nellie and the Passamaquoddy

Nellie is the only person I'm writing about here who I have never met. She was my mother's mother. Nellie Mabel MacGillivray was born in Green Point, New Brunswick in 1895, and passed away in 1980 in St. Andrews, New Brunswick, five years before I was born. Working with a recipe of Nellie's created a desire to connect with her as best I could. My instincts around this recently took me back to Peskotomuhkati territory (also called Charlotte County) and the Passamaquoddy Bay. So much about myself and this place has changed since I was a kid running around its shores. Many of my favourite memories involve scavenging for smoothed, bright beach glass and searching for crabs in the ankle deep tide pools, revealed by the long tidespan that is characteristic of the Passamaquoddy bay, a branch of the bay of Fundy.

I don't ache for any place as much as I ache for Charlotte County. When I arrived in May of 2022, my body was still tense with the energy of a nearly six-hour non-stop drive. Making bodily contact with the water and shore is one of my main rituals: socks off, dried seaweed on stairs, crunching underfoot as I head to the beach. My feet, fresh out of shoes, hit the bare beach ground for the first time this season. They are a bit sore and raw, getting sanded as I head to the water line. Next up: feet in. The rush of a cold bay of Fundy water body immersion is like a drug for me. An instant grounding and body awareness spurred by the shock to my system of submerging parts.

A solo walk one morning on this trip took me along the shores of the Passamaquoddy bay. I can see across the water different landmarks of my family's history- chamcook, deer island, le tete. All unfolding in this place over the last few generations. I've not lived on these lands since I was a kid. Even though my closest relatives no longer live here, I keep a tradition of returning, at least every year. This year, I'm working on a special recipe project, revisiting my relatives and the foods they made and shared together.

It's hard to say what my grandmother's relationship to her own mother Nellie was. Her recipe collection and my own memories don't offer me much insight. When I helped clean out my grandmother's apartment after her passing, I found and kept a scrapbook of Nellie's, filled with cards, news clippings, material memories giving me glimpses into her world before my time. Nellie and her sister Eva Cleopatra were orphaned young and were raised by family legends Sea Captain Hines and his family. I learned recently that they were the lighthouse keepers at Green Point. Nellie would have spent a lot of her time on these shores then.

With the help of my grandmother's brother, my great uncle Everett, on our trip my mom and I were able to find the spot where the house my grandmother was born in used to be located. I took a little piece of Nellie's recipe back there, sprinkling cake crumbs atop the scrubby land—no longer house or foundation, but not yet forest. A way to reach back, and reflect on family cycles and healing. I never got to care for or share food with Nellie; we never met but I imagine her often.

Being at the site of Nellie and Angus' home brought me closer to the lived paths of my matriarchs, showing me the roads, shores and plants that would have been a part of their lives in Chamcook, NB. Nellie was suddenly widowed with 8 children when she was 37, and my Nan, Jean Anne, was five years old. It's hard to say whether dough boys and molasses would have been such a mainstay had things worked out differently for the McGillivrays, if Angus had lived longer. Regardless, it's here in

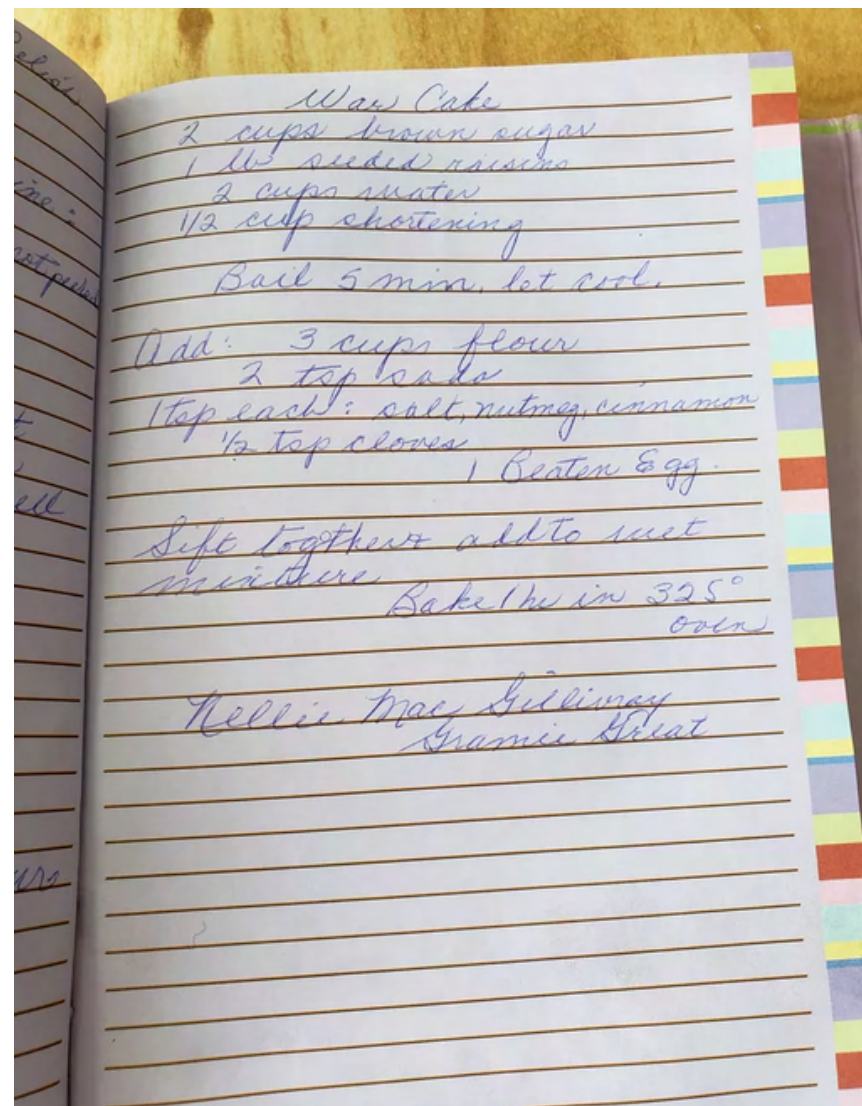
Chamcook where fried dough made its place in our family's menu. I grew up eating bread and molasses together, knowing it was the central dish of Jean's youth. There exists a layer of grief to it, a symbol of hardship, but it was also a way for Jean to connect to home through her years as a grandmother, and also for me as an adult living far from here.

My recent return home was full; full of memory, of trauma echos, of remembering, of moving a little deeper into family recipes as a way to recollect home and the patterns of families.



War Cake (Jean)

Versions of this recipe go back over 160 years. Sometimes War Cakes are named “depression cakes” and “boiled raisin cakes”. One of the things I find interesting about a recipe like this, is it reminds us of times where certain ingredients, like eggs, sugar, butter, were limited because of how the food system was organized by the government to ensure distribution of food resources to soldiers and citizens at home under the pressure of world war. I’ve never encountered anything like this recipe before, involving a strange process signaling past ingredient austerity. I can’t help but feel like the sugar content of this recipe has been bulked up, but all the same, the first step of the recipe involves boiling raisins, sugar and shortening. This process pulls the sugar out of the raisins and helps bulk up the sweetness of the cake. This recipe is the only one authored by Nellie, my grandmother’s mother. When I made her War Cake, I felt uniquely connected to Nellie. In following her ingredients and steps, I was recreating a series of gestures and steps that she would have followed in making the recipe. This p This cake is raisin-forward, resembles a traditional steamed cake and has a long shelf life.



War Cake (Jess)

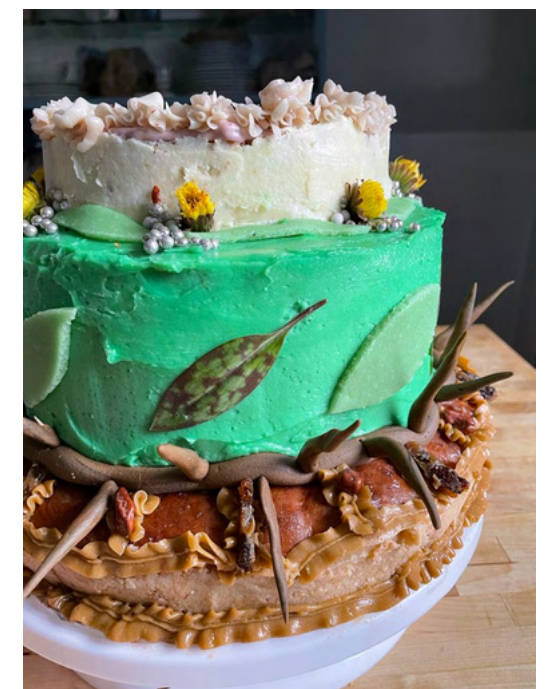
When I first thought about how I could adapt this recipe, I thought about playing around with ingredient restrictions, referencing rations and the radical food system changes that occurred during WWII. Maybe you’ve experienced restrictions on your access to certain foods, due to class, or maybe you haven’t. Few of us, however, can imagine life under a ration system, only so many eggs per week or none, for example. When I think about food systems of the future, I wonder if we will go through a time where the availability and or access to certain foods won’t be like it is now. For example, only beef once a month or no more butter, only plant-based fats. Nellie’s war cake recipe reflects creativity and approximation, while baking within limitations. I want to believe we will have the courage to make hard-feeling choices, restrictions even, that will ensure a livable planet, as the global food system must fundamentally change for the climate. This could mean that recipes simply have to change.

As tempting as creating a futuristic low carbon, idealistic recipe was in my adaptation of Nellie’s War Cake, I ended up taking a different approach. I wanted to respond or communicate with my grandmother directly by reimagining the tastes and symbols I could find in this recipe’s title; its meaning; its ingredients; and its process. I let myself freely create a war cake entirely unlike Nellie’s war cake—playing with flavours, colours and shapes, expressing and exploring war in terms of soil, bodies, flowers, thorns, pain, grief, and the endless cycle of renewal that comes from when things die and the things that inevitably are reincarnated after. It’s a wish for renewal and release of family grief. Trauma made sweet and savoury, blooms bursting, stemmed deep down into the earth, protected by thorns; life, death, war, change, the same, sweet, unpleasant, and sharp. This cake consists of three different cakes and I recommend making it over a 3 day period.

Ingredients:

Food colouring (brown, green, pink)
Fondant (at least 1 ½ cups)
Silver cake decoration balls
Edible flowers
Pebble-rock candy
Butter
Sugar
Raisins

Ingredients included in hyperlinked sub-recipes



War Cake con't. (Jess)

Steps: Day 1

- Make buttercream and orient yourself to the different cake recipes. I made a half batch of this buttercream recipe:

<https://smittenkitchen.com/2008/07/project-wedding-cake-swiss-buttercream/>

- Dye the buttercream before you refrigerate it, divide it up and mix the colours according this ratio:
50% Natural colour 25% Light green 12.5% (1/8) Light brown 12.5% (1/8) Light pink

Day 2:

- Make the cake batters. Use the following three different recipes from the internet to make each layer.

Bottom layer: Baba au Rhum (omit the currants, and use 3/4 cup of sugar instead of 1 cup in the rum syrup; to ensure that the rum syrup soaks into the cake use a toothpick and poke many holes all over the surface of the cake, pour syrup on slowly and use a spatula to force the syrup down the holes)

<https://www.foodnetwork.com/recipes/ina-garten/baba-au-rhum-recipe-2103678>

Middle layer: Ramp Cake (use only the cake recipe itself and use ramp greens instead of nettle)

<https://www.thewondersmith.com/blog/2018/3/13/nettle-cake-an-ode-to-moss-gazing>

Top layer: Rosewater and Raspberry Sponge Cake (since this is going on the top, scale the recipe down by 1/4, using 3/4 of the ingredient amounts but the same process; make the rose cream filling but skip the icing since we have the buttercream; to make self-raising flour, mix 1 1/2 tsp of baking powder per cup of flour) *Wait and make the Rose Cream filling until cake decorating day.

<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/rosewater-raspberry-sponge-cake>

Day 3:

- Make the different decoration components for the final cake decorating stage:

1) Rose Cream Filling: Make rose cream filling according to the Rosewater and Raspberry Sponge Cake from above.

2) Fondant Thorns & Twig rope: Take 1/2 cup of the fondant and work brown food colouring in. If you are using a paste colouring rather than a liquid, don't work the colouring in all the way so that there are darker and lighter streaks to mimic the dynamic colouring of wood. To make rose thorns follow this technique that someone shared in their process of making a crucifixion cake. Take the remaining brown fondant and gently roll it into a twiggy rope that is just as long as the circumference of the ramp cake.
<http://www.gratednutmeg.com/?p=7486>

(tips for this recipe: cut or break toothpicks in half if you don't have wire and carefully insert them into the wider end of the thorn and let the thorns dry out and harden a bit as you prepare the other decoration ingredients)

3) Fondant Leaves: Take 1 cup of the fondant and work green food colouring in to create a shade that compliments your green buttercream and reminds you of a leafy green. Roll out the fondant until it is about 1/4 inch thick. With a sharp paring knife, carve out the shape of a leaf either free hand or draw and cut out one on cardboard to make a form or use a cookie cutter. Put aside. Roll out 4-6 larger leaves for the side of the middle layer and 8 long and slender leaves for the border between the top and middle layers.

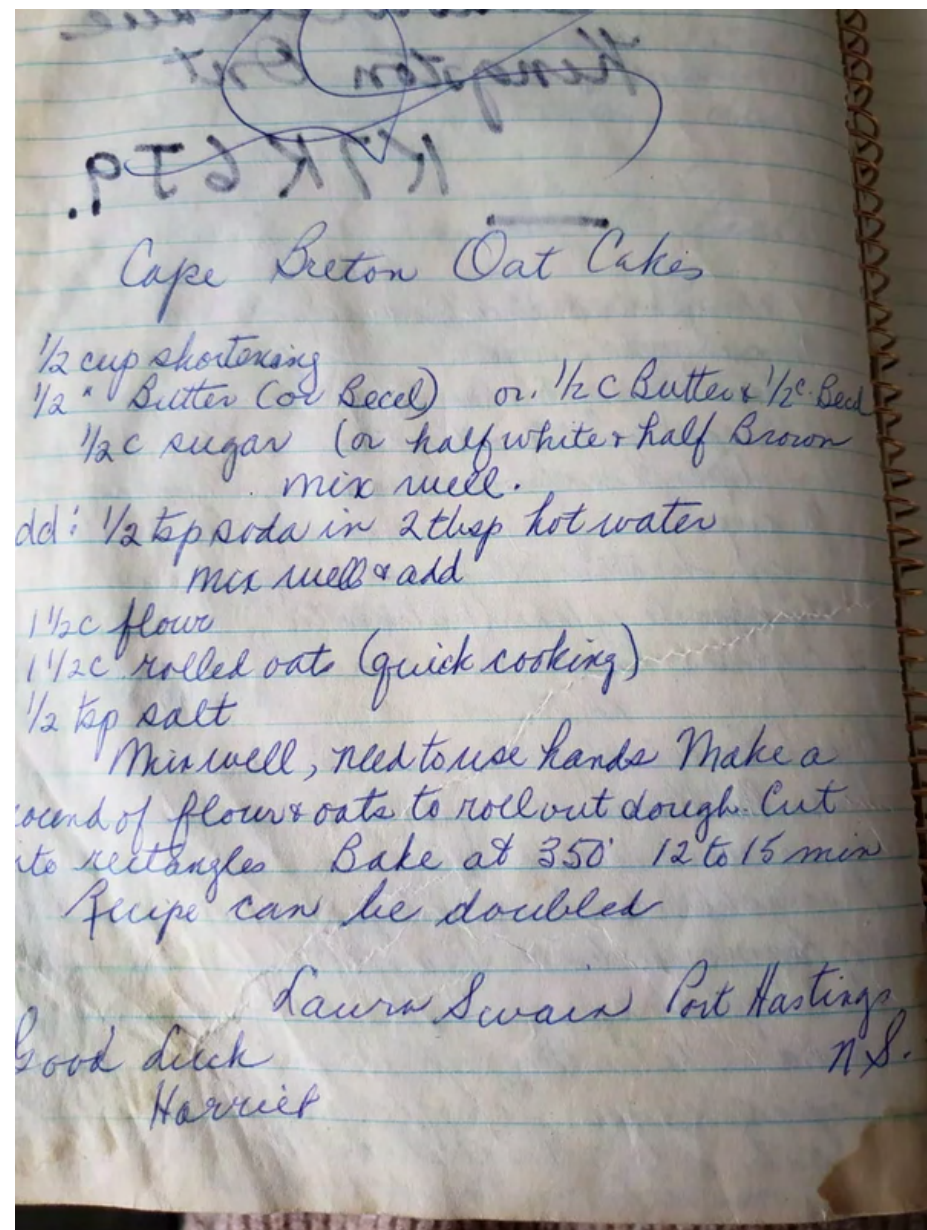
4) Raisin Caramel: Melt 1/2 cup butter in a medium saucepan. Add 1/2 cup of sugar and cook on medium for 4 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add 1/2 cup of raisins and continue to cook, stirring regularly for another 5 minutes on low-medium. Pour into a similarly sized dish lined with parchment or wax paper. Refrigerate. When it hardens, transfer it onto a cutting board and chop it into good-looking slivers.

- Assemble and stack cakes. For this stage you want the buttercreams to be workable and not cold. Remove them from the fridge accordingly. Place the baba au rhum cake on a cake plate or tray. After this process starts it will be difficult to move it. Spread a layer of rose cream just as wide as the base of the ramp cake. Carefully place one of the nettle cakes over the rose cream icing layer. Take the plain lemon buttercream and ice the top of the bottom nettle layer and then place the second layer. Use the natural buttercream to fill in the middle-sides of this second cake layer and make them smooth and straight. Ice the top of the nettle cake with the butter cream. Using the rose cream, apply a circle of icing, centered, the size of the rose cakes. You can use icing to level each of the cake batters, and often you must apply it unevenly to correct height differences in the cake. Center the bottom rose sponge cake layer on top of the top-iced nettle cake, and the just added rosecream. Ice the top of this sponge layer and carefully apply the final top layer- the rose sponge cake.
- With a butter knife, regular or preferably an icing spatula, apply a layer of green icing to the sides and exposed top of the ramp greens cake.
- Apply a layer of natural lemon buttercream onto the sides of the rose sponge cake layer. Be careful to keep it off the green layer below. You can also start with this layer and follow with the green ramp sides and exposed top.
- Spread a thick layer of the rose cream on top, go almost all the way to the edge, but not so far that any falls down the side.
- Put the pink buttercream into a piping bag with a floral-inspired tip. Pipe and ice the top edge of the rose cake, closing the gap between the rose cream top and the buttercream sides.
- Next apply the bigger leaves to the sides of the green cake. Place the slender ones against the border of the ramp cake and the rose sponge cake. Cluster the silver candy bullets and edible flowers in between the slender leaves and repeat around the whole border of the ramp and rose cake.
- Use a second piping bag or clean and dry the pink icing bag and place the brown buttercream inside. Use the same or a different icing tip to complete the border between the bottom of the baba au rhum and the tray or cake plate. The natural sides of this cake are exposed as is the top glossier layer of the original baba au rhum. Apply a similar piped ring of brown icing at the top outside edge of the baba cake. Pipe twenty lines perpendicular to the outer icing ring, connecting the outer edge of the cake to the bottom edge of the ramp cake.
- Carefully place the twig fondant rope around the bottom edge of the ramp cake, in a gentle wave pattern. Take your 24 thorns and stick them into the rope at different angles around the circumference of the cake.
- In alternation, carefully set the rock candies and the chopped raisin caramel, on top of the vertical brown buttercream lines.
- Finally scatter a bit of the slivered raisin caramel on the very top of the cake.
- Serve and enjoy.

This Cake is a nod to Instagram Maximalist Baking Aesthetics, @cakes4sport.

Cape Breton Oatcakes (Jean)

Oatcakes are a baked good of utmost virtue; I love them. This classic maritime recipe is an adaptation that reaches back to an older era of oatcakes when they were less like a cookie and more like a bread, an historic pillar of the Scottish diet. Sugar moves this recipe away from older oatcake recipes, though Cape Breton Oatcakes are not nearly as sweet as a cookie. Although I don't have any Scottish settler ancestors in Cape Breton, its settler culture was shaped by Scottish Gaels during the colonization of the east coast. I've seen lots of oatcake recipes attributed to Cape Breton, though I think it's an ancestral food of settler culture found throughout the maritimes. Enjoy this original version as I do. Optional: adding 1 cup of M&M's to make the perfect festival food.



Oatcakes (Jess)

After making Nan's oatcake recipe and I started to adapt it and try and work the sugar and white flour out of it, experimenting with the ingredients and processes of unsweetened Scottish Oatcakes. Historically oatcakes were actually the 'bread' equivalent of Scottish cuisine, being a vessel for butter, meats and more. This recipe is quite simple though it does involve the use of a food processor, allowing the baker to grind the oats. We are converting coarser oats milled for oatmeal and cookies into a meal, allowing us to create oatcakes perfect for housing your cheeses, spreads, hummus, jam or other toppings. You can use any kind of flaked oat for this, knowing that increased flake size will mean a longer time in the food processor to reach the fine consistency you are looking for. You can experiment with which solid fat you use; consider coconut oil or left-over bacon fat. These are more savoury than you might be used to with an oatcake, can be served with cheese, nut butter and/ or some tasty jam.

Ingredients:

3 cups of oats
1 cup of salted butter
1/2 tsp baking soda/ 2 tbsp water
1/4 tsp salt

Steps: Pulverize half the oats (1 1/2 cups) in a food processor until the oats resemble a coarse flour. This should be at least 30 seconds. If you have oat flour on hand, you can use that alternately.

In a medium or large bowl, mix 1.5 cups of the oat flakes with the newly made 1.5 cups of oat flour and salt.

Cut butter up into small squares by slicing it in different directions with a knife.

Preheat your oven to 375 F (350 if its a hot oven).

Add the butter to the bowl and work it in by hand (or a pastry blender) until it is well mixed but still pebbly. Meanwhile, mix 2 tablespoons of hot water with 1/2 tsp baking soda.

Once the butter is evenly distributed through the oat mix, drizzle the hot water / baking soda mix over top. Take a fork and mix the water in (or keep using your hands).

Next, knead the dough until it sticks together and feels like it can be rolled out.

Scatter some oats over the surface you will roll the batter out onto. Turn the doughball onto the work surface and roll out with a rolling pin or wine bottle. You can keep some flour handy to rub on the pin if the dough is sticking.

Roll out into whatever shape, to about 3/8 inch thickness. Find something in your kitchen that is about 1 1/2- 1 3/4 inch in diameter (I used a coffee scoop) to use as a cookie cutter. Cut out as many rounds as you can from the sheet you've rolled out. Gather the remnants and knead them back into a ball and repeat this step.

Bake for approximately 13 minutes, or until you can see that they have turned golden or browned a bit. Store for weeks in an airtight container.

Bread and Molasses

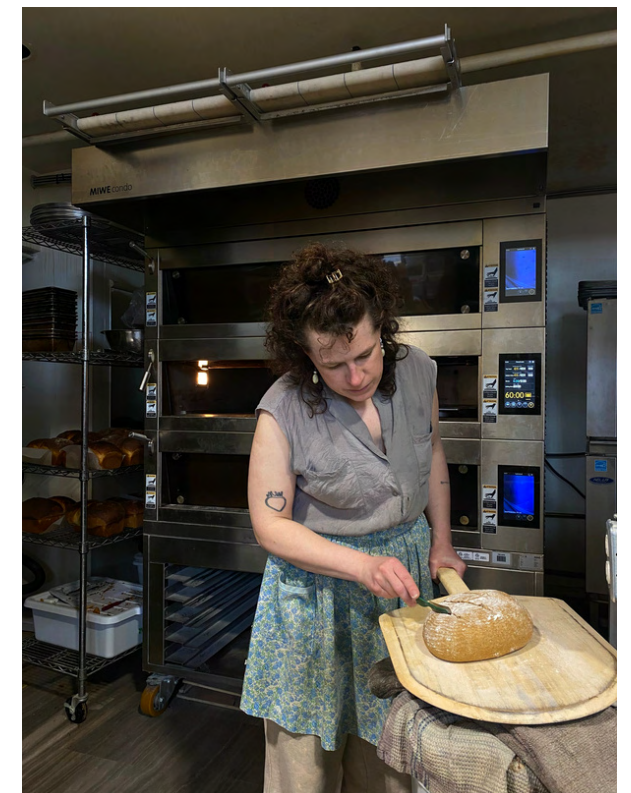
Seeing the expertise and beauty of care delivered by the Hauswirtschaft team at Oerkhof wasn't the first time I'd witnessed community leadership and care through food. This was a dynamic I was raised in. My nan Jean Anne was an outwardly nurturing person, and I can easily picture her standing behind the fryer, alongside a service counter at the hometown labour day fair in Blacks Harbour, NB. I imagine her making doughboys, frying dough, served hot with molasses.

Blacks Harbour is a small fish processing village on the Bay. It's where my mom was born and raised, an influential space in my own upbringing, and where Jean moved to at age 12 with her siblings and mom. They made a break from Chamcook, looking to improve the family conditions. Blacks Harbour is a small town with a sardine packing plant at its heart and built on a bay of fundy harbour that empties out completely at low tide. Winds lick you with sticky, salty, sometimes deliciously putrid ocean air. Rereading that description puts me right there, I breathe deeply, and hold on to that savoury sensation for a moment.

Each year, the Big Company in town—Connors' Brothers—would host a free exhibition for its workers and their kin. It had rides, games with prizes, snacks galore, and of course, a sardine packing contest. I don't remember my grandmother competing, and I never got to pack sardines for work or for competition. Jean was relieved when she moved out of the plant and into work as a chef and baker at the local Fundy Hospital, where eventually her own daughter, my mom Jennifer, would work as a nurse. Stinky fish aside, this labour day celebration was a nice token of appreciation and a good dose of fun. Could a day filled with sunshine, ride bracelets, treats and cousins be any better?

Every kid attending was given a little booklet of tickets. This joyful stapled cluster of paper tabs each had precious offerings on them—ride entrance, game tokens, pop and cotton candy tickets, and of course one for doughboys. Jean was often one of the women behind the counter, working with crowd-sized batches of heaving, airy bread dough, springy, almost jumping itself right into the hot oil. There was also a DIY molasses station. The doughboys would come served in a perfectly sized, rectangular cardboard tray. Sticky fingers were licked, and bellies full, hearts quite plump, taking a weekend to authentically celebrate labour day and enjoy what was then, in the 1990's, the last days of summer heat before the return to class and the return of the cold, fundy bay winds.

Bread and molasses was a survival food during Jean's youth. At the fair it was a special occasion symbol. Now in our family it is a soothing, nostalgic, comfort food signifying home.



Dough Boys (Jean)

When I picture her making them, Nan handles the lightly aerated, detached raw dough carefully. and it gently hits the perfectly tempered oil and drops only for a second. Its density is just so, and the pouch of dough buoys right back up. The cooking process springs into motion. When Nan made doughboys, she would quickly get the oil temperature just right—never measured but always achieved. It's taken me a while to develop that oil expertise Tip: a good way to learn about ideal deep frying oil temperatures is to drop tiny pieces of dough in the oil as it reaches temperature. Observe the reaction and watch for the temperature where the dough bounces right back up. Once you've got the dough ready, feel free to follow these steps and turn it all into doughboys, or if you've had your fill, at a certain point you can roll up the rest of the dough into small buns, or a little loaf, if you please. Please serve doughboys with Molasses.

Ingredients:

2 tsp dry active yeast
3/4 cup water (plus some to finish the dough)
Dash of sugar
2 cups flour
3/4 tsp salt
2-3 tbsp of shortening, oil or butter
750-1000 ml high-heat oil like sunflower or canola

Steps: In a med-large bowl or the bowl of an electric mixer, mix yeast with preliminary water and a dash of sugar. Wait 10 minutes to ensure that the yeast is active. It should bubble to the top and be moving around in the water if it is still active.

Add 2 cups of flour and 3/4 tsp of salt to the bowl. Then add shortening and start mixing- either on medium with a bread mixer or by hand. You will likely need to add water, so once the shortening is blended a bit you can very slowly drizzle water onto your mix. Add approximately a tablespoon at a time. Add water until your dough feels soft and not stiff.

Continue to knead or mix for at least five minutes. It should be satiny and smooth. If working by hand you can keep mixing it in the bowl or turn it out onto a floured surface once it is in a ball.

Cover in a bowl and let rest for an hour. Flour your work surface and turn the dough out, degassing and stretching the dough. Leave for one more hour.

Heat oil at least 3 inches deep in a medium saucepan on medium heat. After a few minutes, drop a tiny piece of dough into the oil to see if it sizzles and how quickly it bounces up. Once the dough is hot enough, tear off a chunk from the main bowl and shape it by tugging at the corners and sides, into a rectangle. Carefully submerge in oil. Add another and fry a few at a time. If they darken too quickly, the inside may not fully cook so adjust the heat as necessary. Conversely, if the oil is too cool, the doughboys will soak up a lot of oil and take too long to float to the top.

Repeat until dough is gone or your crowd is satiated. Leftover dough can be baked into rolls or a small loaf. My grandmother often budgeted for this, making enough dough initially for dough boys and baked bread. Best served hot with butter or margarine and molasses.

****While I do believe doughboys made with 25% whole wheat flour would turn out delicious, this is the only recipe in the collection that I didn't create a whole grain adaptation of. It felt uniquely sanctimonious when I thought about trying to make whole grain doughboys. What can I say, some things are best left untouched. The ideal doughboy texture that conjures home does depend on the magic and power of white flour for me. Even being able to feel the texture of dough that I know my grandmother was making contact with, batch after batch over the years.*



Old Fashioned Oatmeal Raisin Cookies (Jean)

Mixed among my grandmother Jean’s handwritten recipes were various cut outs from different publications. This particular recipe is from the St. Croix Courier- a weekly newspaper local to Charlotte County. Even when Nan moved from New Brunswick to Nova Scotia, she continued to subscribe to the Courier and keep up to date with its local news. This was a tangible and informative way to keep a connection with home, even though our familiarity with the names in the papers has shifted over the years. This is a classic recipe. As you’ll see in my adaptation, I didn’t have to change much to make it a 100% whole grain recipe. I love how the coolness of cinnamon is matched by the sweet pop of the raisins. The textural delight of the oats and dried fruit is superb. Many of Jean’s recipes feature vegetable shortening, a very common household baking fat that mimics lard, made popular in the early 1900’s. Shortening is often prized for its flakiness in baking, and its ability to tenderize and even make things extra crispy. It’s an ingredient designed for textural outcome, consistency and low cost. I encourage you to try working with it and see what you think.



Whole Wheat Oatmeal Cookies (Jess)

In my first attempt at a whole grain adaptation, I eliminated the white flour and tried it with 100% whole wheat flour. There wasn’t a strong difference between the two batches of cookies, other than a slightly stronger grainy flavour in this version of the cookie. This recipe can be made with different fats, though here it is imagined with butter. To me, there just isn’t much that can compare to the way butter fat gently and richly toasts the grain in a cookie context. These oatmeal cookies feature dissolving baking soda in hot water. This technique appears in the Cape Breton Oatcake recipe as well. Baking soda and baking powder are dormant ingredients that don’t do any leavening work until they are activated somehow. For baking soda, heat triggers some of the chemical reaction involved, so mixing it with hot water can be advantageous for goods (like cookies) that bake very quickly and don’t get much time to expand in the oven. These cookies keep well for up to 2 weeks, or can be frozen fresh for a later cool cookie treat.

- Ingredients:**
- 3 cups oats
 - 1 cup org sugar (plus 1 tsp of molasses) or brown sugar
 - 1 cup fat (butter, shortening, coconut oil or a blend)
 - 2 tbsp hot water
 - 2 eggs
 - 1 cup whole wheat
 - 1 tsp soda
 - 1 ½ cups raisins (or chocolate chips, toasted pumpkin seeds or nut chunks)

Steps: If you are making these cookies by hand, ensure that the butter and eggs are at room temperature before starting. Mix butter, eggs, sugar and water in a bowl together with a whisk (if there is no whisk then use a fork or chopsticks). Cream these ingredients together by vigorously mixing the bowl contexts until it’s homogeneous and airy. You can take breaks and even prep the next step, then return to the wet mix to finish it prior to blending the wet and dry.

In a medium bowl, mix all the dry ingredients except the raisins. Again use a whisk or a fork. With a rubber spatula, add the creamed mix to the dry. Folding it all together. Once blended, add in the raisins.

Turn on the oven to 375 F.

Line a cookie sheet with parchment or use a non-stick tray. Make 12 cookies per sheet and drop spoonfuls of dough onto the tray. Once the oven is preheated, bake cookies for approximately 12 minutes or until golden. Transfer to a cooling rack or other surface to cool before storing in an airtight container.

Nan and Grampie's Heaven

Over the course of the pandemic, and even before, I've been regularly visiting my grandparents' old house in my dreams. Lately, the dreams have been on the scarier side, holding a feeling of either gentle or overwhelming threat. This is a stark divergence from the embodied memories of the years I spent there, in a home with many zones for play and rest. Nan and Grampie's place featured a kitchen that was almost always in some form of action or another. My grandmother Jean woke up almost every morning around 4 am, somewhere between 4-6 hours before me. It wasn't unusual to wake up to fresh bread or muffins, perfectly boiled still warm eggs and a steady flow of orange juice to perk up my not-a-morning person kid body. For a lot of my youth, my mom and I were a single-mother/daughter team, cared for and loved extensively by my grandparents, Jean and Bill.

Since my mom was a busy nurse, I spent a lot of days, nights, summer breaks and holidays on the Pennfield Ridge. That home space really helped stabilize us, an ordered home, featuring grandparents who were always on the go. We could visit and be folded into a bigger family network instantly, the care work of being a single mum, eased in community with .

My mom and I weren't the only visitors or guests to regularly stop by Jean and Bill's place. Located on a busy road on the way to Blacks Harbour, it was normal to receive daily drop ins. Nan was always ready for it, the literal and proverbial cookie jar of love always brimming. I think it was easier for Jean to love in this way, as a food provider and host, keeping busy and distracted. In my own workaholic coping habits (either behind the computer or the kitchen counter), I can see the ways I've learned to fruitfully live with grief, existential anxiety and sadness in this same way.

Over the years my bedrooms were always glorious spaces for my independent spirit to thrive in. My grandparents house was another space where I thrived, and got to be around Jean in her element, and watching how she cooked and baked. By the time I was a teenager, I was able to sometimes cook for myself and bake a couple of recipes. I was about 20 when I finally started having my Nan teach me directly: starting with my favourite, Soft Molasses Cookies.

As you read and hopefully cook through these recipes, you are getting a glimpse of the kitchen offerings from Jean's kitchen on the ridge. Something I wasn't expecting but also not surprised at was how many comments about Jean's kitchen came up during the 4 hour wake we held for her when she passed in 2019. It was a difficult week. Love and tenderness flowed at times, but stalled at points. Private family feelings and triggers were worked through among her next of kin. This was all layered atop the deeply transformative experience of being with her during her last days, and being able to embrace her beautiful body just after her spirit parted.

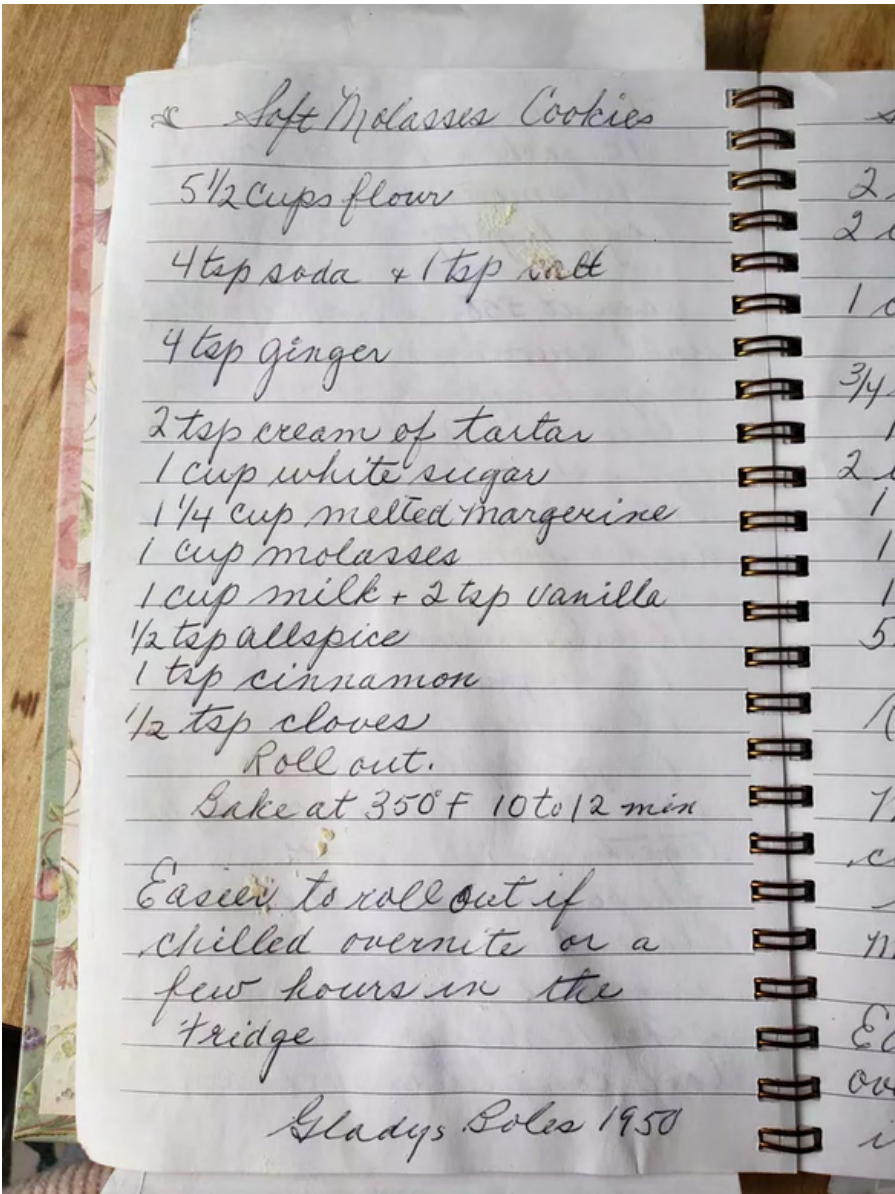
It was like receiving a hug each time a second or third cousin, or a great niece, came up to me and talked about their love for Jean and how they felt the power of her care, within what was a close-knit, small town, and a young, sprawling religious family. We all sweetly and softly remembered her kitchen and her incredible crowd-feeding skills.

Even into her early 90's, she was still baking rolls, bread and cookies for herself and others, albeit more occasionally. Thinking of eating her other special creations in her home through my youth and then in the many homes that would come after their house, draws a line of memory and experience tracing the course of my life path, 36 years long and going strong.



Soft Molasses Cookies (Jean)

This recipe is sacred to me. Modifying it felt nearly hostile! So here it is in all its original glory. Jean worked hard to keep her household regularly stocked with the varying favourites of her family. Soft Molasses Cookies was my favourite. It's the softest, most pillowy cookie I know. These cookies have a beautiful mix of spices and an exciting mouth feel (tingle!) from lots of ginger and acidic cream of tartar (an old baking leavening agent). Thank you so much Gladys Bowles, from whom this recipe came from in 1950, the year my mom, Jennifer was born. It's softness is due to the unique cooking ingredient, milk. If you'd prefer, margarine can be swapped for butter in this recipe. Enjoy! Molasses cookies is an old recipe, stretching back to a time when molasses was cheaper than sugar and was used in recipes as a central sweetener for poorer people. This recipe has the addition of sugar, but much of its sweetness and its body of flavour come from this syrupy, nutritious by-product of cane sugar.



Vegan Soft Molasses Cookies (Jess)

This adaptation of Soft Molasses Cookies is vegan. Nan's original recipe is nearly vegan, so I felt inspired to take it all the way, as I played around with other ingredient substitutions including the addition of corn meal. I brought corn into this recipe because of my love of corn and molasses together. When baked together, corn, molasses and wheat can tell a story of an earlier time when raw ingredients, manufactured goods, and cruelly-enslaved African people moved within a colonial trade triangle (Caribbean, Africa, and both sides of the north Atlantic, including the maritimes. This trade route was a primary profit artery of the British empire from the 1600s to the 1900s. A lot of cod was shipped south from our Atlantic coast to the Caribbean and a lot of molasses came north, much of it for rum production to be traded overseas. Some of these goods were also for recipes using newly available ingredients, like Indigenous corn for European settlers. Corn adds texture to this cakey cookie. If you soak the corn meal in a portion of the milk before you mix up the cookie batter, the grit will fade. This is a dough that can be made ahead of time and chilled in the fridge for up to 2 days before rolling out.

Ingredients:		
1 cup sugar	1/2 cup cornmeal or corn flour	4 tsp ginger
1 1/4 cup margarine	2 tsp cream of tartar	1/2 tsp allspice
1 cup molasses	(an old baking leavener)	1 tsp cinnamon
1 cup non-dairy milk	4 tsp soda	1/2 tsp cloves
2 tsp vanilla	1 tsp salt	
5 cups white flour		

Steps: To start, combine the first set of ingredients: sugar, margarine, molasses, non-dairy milk, and vanilla in a bowl. Combine the second set of ingredients in a separate bowl and whisk.

Stir or whisk together the wet mix until it is homogenous.

Pour wet ingredients into dry and mix until combined, either with a sturdy spatula or knead by hand. Once you've created a consistent dough, place it in a covered bowl or closed container and refrigerate for at least 3 hours and up to 2 days.

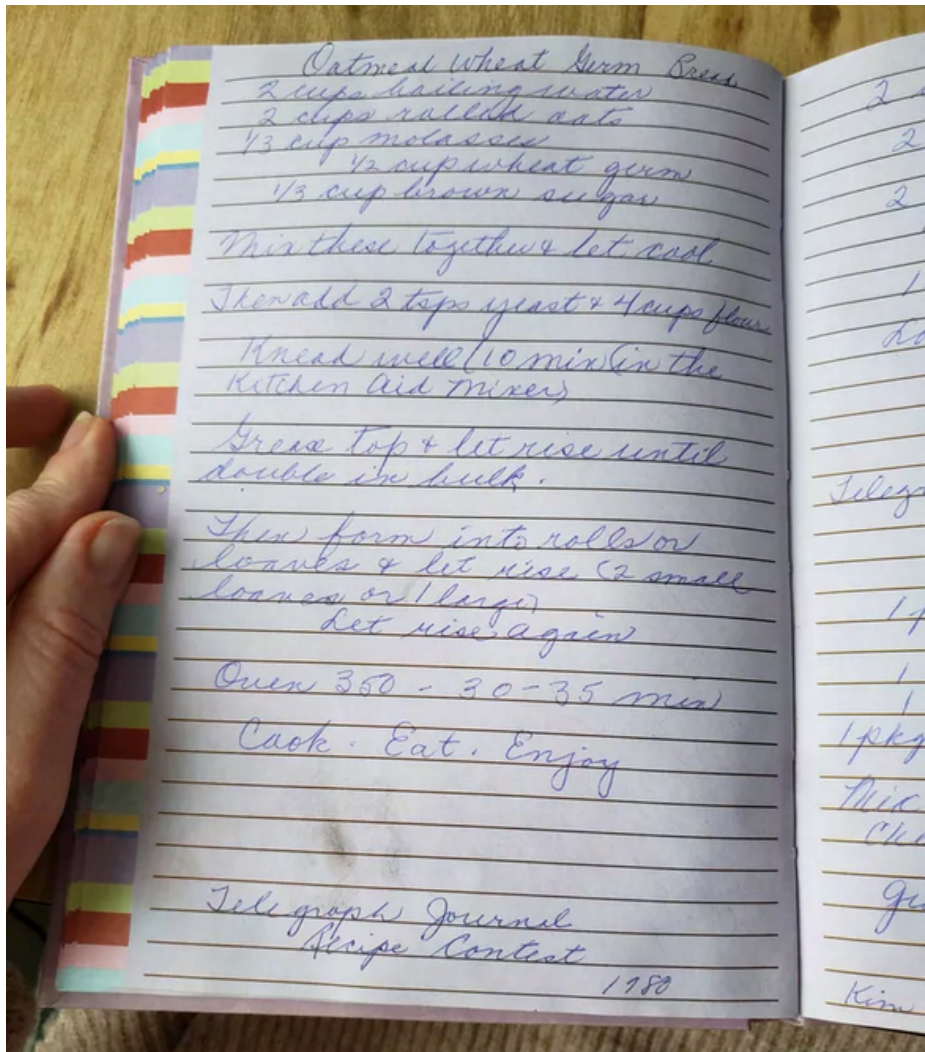
When you are ready to roll out and bake the molasses cookies, take the dough out of the fridge and let it temp, cover off, for 30 minutes or so. Turn on the oven to 350 F and preheat.

Lightly flour a surface and roll half of the dough out to about 1/3 inch up to 1 cm thick. Use a wide-rim mason jar lid or inverted glass if you don't have a large circular cookie cutter to cut out rounds. Other shaped cookie cutters can be used as well if you prefer.

Bake 12 cookies on a sheet for 12-14 minutes until cooked. These cookies don't change colour much (except for when they are overdone), but they do go from shiny to matte finish as one indicator of doneness. Let cool and store in an air-tight container for a week.

Oatmeal Wheat Germ Bread (Jean)

There are not very many bread recipes in Jean’s recipe collection, but this is one of them. I’m not sure I ever tried this recipe of hers. She more regularly made Brown Bread. It was usually just a variation of her daily white bread recipe, modifying it by adding some whole wheat, molasses and water. This Oatmeal Wheat Germ Bread is a curious iteration of brown bread. I consider it a brown bread because it has molasses and a whole wheat component (wheat germ). It tastes like Brown Bread, though the texture is denser because of the oats and the wheat germ. All the same, the tight crumb is quite nice and the people I shared it with enjoyed it, often reminding them of a brown bread type recipe from home. Variations of Brown Bread exist in many places. Most contemporary iterations rely on white flour and are ‘brown’ because of ingredients like molasses or even cocoa, not the bran and germ of wheat or rye flour, which would have once characterized this recipe. Tip: shining your rising ball of dough with shortening or butter is a technique I learned from my grandmother. At the folding stage this richness gets kneaded in, resulting in a nice gloss on the finished loaf. This bread is awesome served with eggs and baked beans.



Sourdough Brown Bread (Jess)

Nan’s recipe for Oatmeal Wheat Germ Bread was a jumping off point for this recipe. It maintains some of the core ingredients- wheat, oats and molasses. I decided to add corn to my Sourdough Brown Recipe, inspired by a Brown Bread recipe from New England called Anadama Bread. I first tasted Anadama Bread at the kneading conference, a unique whole grain sourdough version that has inspired this recipe. The femme-made loaf was a perfect blend: sourdough, molasses, whole wheat, rye and corn. I’ve kept the oatmeal in my version as a nod to starting with Nan’s Oatmeal Wheat Germ recipe and because, as we’ve already established, I love oats.

Containing wheat, rye, oats and corn, this recipe offers insight into the grain landscapes of our ancestors, telling stories about earlier times, before there was even such a thing as ‘canada’ and ‘america’. The roots of Bread Bread are recipes of steamed bread made with rye and corn flours. Wheat became a more common bread ingredient of the north east as the colonial frontier expanded west into the prairies, where the ‘family farm’ as we know it was born. The lineage of Brown Bread recipes tracks the changing way food was grown and accessed, from dense steamed loaves to molasses and white flour imitation loaves.

As a whole grain sourdough devotee, I love intensity, strong flavours and unique textures. This loaf has a really nice texture, and a mellow presence of molasses and a fine crumb, considering its 100% whole grain and features cornmeal and oats. This lightly sweet loaf can be topped with butter and a drizzle of molasses when fresh.

Ingredients:	<i>final dough</i>
sourdough sponge	300 g whole wheat flour
150 g whole wheat flour	100 g whole rye flour
150 g room temperature water	¼ cup molasses
2 tbsp ripe sourdough starter	20 g salt
<i>final dough scald</i>	200 g water
100 g cornmeal	
100 g oats	
300 g hot or boiling water	

Steps: Refresh your sourdough culture prior to mixing the overnight sponge. The day before you want to bake the bread, mix the 150 g of whole wheat flour and water with your sourdough culture. Cover and let rest overnight. In the morning make your scald by pouring hot or boiling water over the corn and oats and stirring well. Let this rest and cool off for at least 30 minutes. Longer if your kitchen is extra warm. Mix the overnight sponge and the final dough ingredients except the salt in a bowl by hand or a mixer. It will feel rough, but keep mixing until it forms a ball. Let rest for 30 minutes. Add the scald and salt. Mix well, until it starts to become homogenous. Let rest for 15 minutes.

Sourdough Brown Bread con't. (Jess)

Return to the dough and knead by mixer or by hand. If mixing by hand you can keep the dough in the bowl or turn it out onto a counter or table top. You can keep water nearby for your hands, or if the dough is seeming wet, keep mixing it in the bowl for a bit before transferring it onto a floured surface to knead. The dough should be starting to transform and becoming smoother. After 6-10 minutes of kneading, place the dough in a bowl or container. Take about a teaspoon of butter or other fat and gently rub it over the top of the dough and drape the bowl with a tea towel or a cover. Leave for 90 minutes, up to 2 hours. This is the bulk fermentation phase where the sourdough yeasts are reproducing in the dough.

Turn the dough onto a floured work surface and knead it to degas and bring tension back to the bread dough. This works the gluten. Return to bowl and cover. Let it rest for 45 minutes- 1 hour.

Once again, fold the dough to tighten it up. You can make one large loaf or two smaller loaves. If using a bread pan, take the kneaded dough ball and flatten it with your fingers. Fold the outside circle edges closest to your left and right hands into the middle, and then, from the top, tightly roll the rectangular dough disc into a log. Place it in a pan with the seam down. If you want to make a round loaf in a dutch oven, then find a soup bowl or smaller mixing bowl and line it with a flour-dusted cloth or tea towel. It will expand so make sure the proofing vessel is large enough for that. Round the ball by hand and place it in the bowl with the pinched dough pointed up, the smoothest side down.

Proof in a warm location for an hour. Halfway through this final proof, turn the oven on to 400 F and put the (empty) dutch oven inside with the lid on if applicable.

After final proof, take your bread pans and score a few lines or a design with your sharpest knife. If you are baking the bread in a dutch oven, remove it from the oven with mitts, remove the lid, and carefully invert the round proofed dough into the dutch oven. Score the top and quickly return the lid (with oven mitts) and place in the oven. Leave the lid on for 15 minutes then remove for the rest of the bake.

Bake 2 smaller loaves for 30 minutes or 1 larger loaf for 40 minutes in the middle of the oven. If you have a thermometer, make sure the internal temperature has reached 200 F.

Let cool for a few hours. If you must sample right out of the oven, tear it, don't try to cut it with a knife. Let it cure overnight at least, before sealing it in plastic to extend freshness.



Living Under One Roof

My grandfather's sisters were known for their pie making skills, among other domestic proficiencies. Summer family gatherings down-home in Seeley's Cove revolved around the sweets and treats. The food table was always an anchor for me at family gatherings where I was surrounded by my many second cousins who I didn't know very well. There were always many different kinds of tender, perfectly baked, fresh fruit pies. Charlotte county is blueberry country, so my favourite pie, Wild Blueberry, was a regular star of the dessert table.

After my grandfather Bill's passing, we didn't spend as much time in Charlotte county. My mom and grandmother and I all moved into a house together about an hour away in Quispamsis. This was a time when my home life felt more typical than it ever had before. Mom and I moved out of apartment life. It was ideal to have my Nan living downstairs, with me and my mom living upstairs. We ate together a lot, Jean always serving something up with dessert and keeping her teenage granddaughter soft and well fed.

When I was 16 and Nan was 74, she was diagnosed with breast cancer. Her healing involved surgery, radiation and some chemotherapy. This process taxed her senior body and my mom worked hard to care for her mother, which came naturally to her, a nurse. As treatment rolled on, the situation became critical and things started to feel like they were falling apart. Our family was strained. A call was made and my mighty Great Aunt Mae Mahar, my grandfather's sister, showed up to help out around home. This was when I learned to make pie.

Mae was often called to care, and when she was, there was pie. Pie for today, tonight and tomorrow, and of course pie for the freezer. Learning how to make pies alongside industrious Aunt Mae in this time of crisis for our family is a deep baking memory that I carry with me to this day. I get to gently recall this time each time I cut cold fat into flour and slowly drizzle water in to mix up pie pastry. I'm grateful to have received her lessons and confidence in pie crust. Despite Jean's community accolades as a baker, Nan never made pie, always declaring that she just couldn't do it and that it was best left to the Stevens women (Grampie's sisters). I miss Aunt Mae, but have developed my own industrious capacity for making pies as part of her legacy.

Providing food for loved ones and bread for my customers is a way I celebrate the care passed down to me through my matriarchal lineage. It's a skillset I've inherited that started with my grandmother and my aunt's recipes like bread, doughboys, buttery cakes, molasses cookies and of course wild blueberry pies.

Charlotte County Pie Crust (the Stevens' women)

One of my favourite foods to make when I want to conjure Charlotte County from wherever I am, is Wild Blueberry Pie. Pennfield, where my grandparents lived during my childhood, was known for its wild blueberry fields misted by the bay of Fundy. One of the main blueberry farms in the area operates a legendary pie stand on the side of the old highway between Saint John and St. Stephen. It was just down the road from Nan and Grampie's and since my grandma "couldn't make pies", we were regular customers. The style of pie crust that my aunt Mae taught me how to make closely resembles the MacKay Wild Blueberry Pies pastry that I still go on an annual pilgrimage for. Its main features include being a shortening-only crust, instead of a butter or blend crust. These crusts are vegan. Shortening is used in pies because it often yields a flakier, more tender crust than a butter crust. Keep the ingredients cold as it's easy to overwork pie dough made with shortening, but so worth it to hone the skill, so you too can make a charlotte county-style pie.

Ingredients:

pastry

2.5 cups of flour (plus extra for dusting work surface)

½ tsp salt

1 cups of cold shortening

up to ¾ cup of ice water

filling

5 cups of blueberries

¾ cup sugar

3 tbsp cornstarch

1 tbsp fresh lemon juice

Steps: The colder your ingredients are, the more forgiving and flaky your final pastry will be. Mix flour and salt in a bowl with a whisk or fork. Slice the shortening into cubes with a large knife. Scatter the cold fat cubes into the dry mix, breaking them up as you stir with a fork.

Take a pastry blender and work it through the bowl until the shortening bits are roughly pea-sized. Drizzle about half of the cold water onto the dough slowly as you integrate it with a fork. After about ½ cup of water has been added, stop pouring and gently toss the dough with a fork and try to distribute the water evenly. Bigger and bigger clusters of dough should be forming while also maintaining bits of shortening. You do not want to make a homogenous dough here. Be careful not to overwork. Add water only until the wet clusters of pastry can be pressed together to make a big ball. If this dough is not feeling cold, chill it for at least 30 minutes before rolling it out. Prior to chilling, split the pastry dough into a one-third portion and a two-thirds portion.

Charlotte County Pie Crust Con't.

Mix the filling ingredients in a bowl and let stand while you roll out the dough. Preheat your oven to 450 F.

Dust your rolling surface and rolling pin (or wine bottle) with flour. Keep a little bowl or amount of flour on the side to help with sticking as you roll. Flatten the larger ball onto the work surface with the rolling pin or your hand. Redust with flour underneath the ball and on top. Then roll it out, continuing to dust very lightly with flour as needed. You can use your pie plate as a guide for how wide to roll the disc. Once large enough to fit in a pie plate, gently lift the dough into the pie plate. If it's fragile, you can gently fold it before lifting it in, then unfold carefully once placed inside the pan.

Pour the filling into the pie plate. Roll out the top and lift onto filled pie plate. Trim the overhanging edges with a knife. Then use a fork or your fingers to pinch the bottom and top pastry crusts along the edge of the pie plate. Poke vent holes in the top crust with a fork. Bake for 10 minutes at 450 F then reduce to 350 F for another 35–45 minutes depending on your oven. If anything is dripping over, you can put the pie plate on a cookie sheet to catch the drips. Remove from oven when you can smell the fruit and the pie has a deep golden hue.



Whole Grain Pastry (Jess)

When I make pies, I often do it differently than how Aunt Mae taught me. I keep a similar process that is detailed in the previous recipe, but I like to mix in whole grain flours and butter into my pastry doughs. I like a shortening and butter mix and a blend of white flour with rye or whole wheat. White flour and shortening are two ingredients that will produce qualities in pies that can be hard to replicate with whole grain or other solid fats. When I'm prioritizing looks and texture, I do like to keep those ingredients involved even in a whole-grain leaning crust. Other than wanting to bring in minerals, good fibers and vitamins, I also mix in whole grain flours because of their exceptional flavour. White wheat flour is a very neutral tasting flour and it doesn't have much character when it comes to taste. Whole grain flours involve the germ and the bran, (components of the grain that get roasted through baking), drawing out nutty, sweet, caramel, malty, woody and sometimes musky tastes. The grain flecks are gently fried as the solid fat pearls throughout your dough snap melt and cause airy flaky pockets, browning up and complimenting the sweet or savoury fillings they contain. Feel free to use this recipe as a way to experiment with a whole grain flour from your cupboard you want to use up. Keeping ingredients cold and chilling your dough before rolling it will help keep tiny, desirable pockets of fat distributed throughout your dough.

Ingredients:

1 cup of white flour
1 ⅔ cup rye, wheat or other whole grain flour
1 cup of butter (or alternative solid fat)
1 tbsp vinegar (cider if you have it)
8–10 tbsp ice cold water

Steps: Chill the butter and pre-measured flour mixed with salt ahead of making the pastry dough. The colder your ingredients the flakier your dough will be. At the minimum, use cold fat and cold water. Using a cheese grater, grate the cold butter and add this to the bowl of flour. With a fork, mix in the cold grated butter with the flour. Here the action is swiftly and gently tossing the ingredients, not pressing. You are trying to achieve a loose dough texture made of damp flour clumped around the butter pieces.

Mix ½ cup of the cold water with 1 tbsp of vinegar. Then, carefully drizzle about ½ the water mix over top. Using a fork, mix until the water is evenly distributed into butter-flour mix. Now slowly pour the rest of the water onto your mix, forking as you pour. Stop adding water when the dough becomes sticky enough to form clumps when you try squeezing it together with your hand quickly.

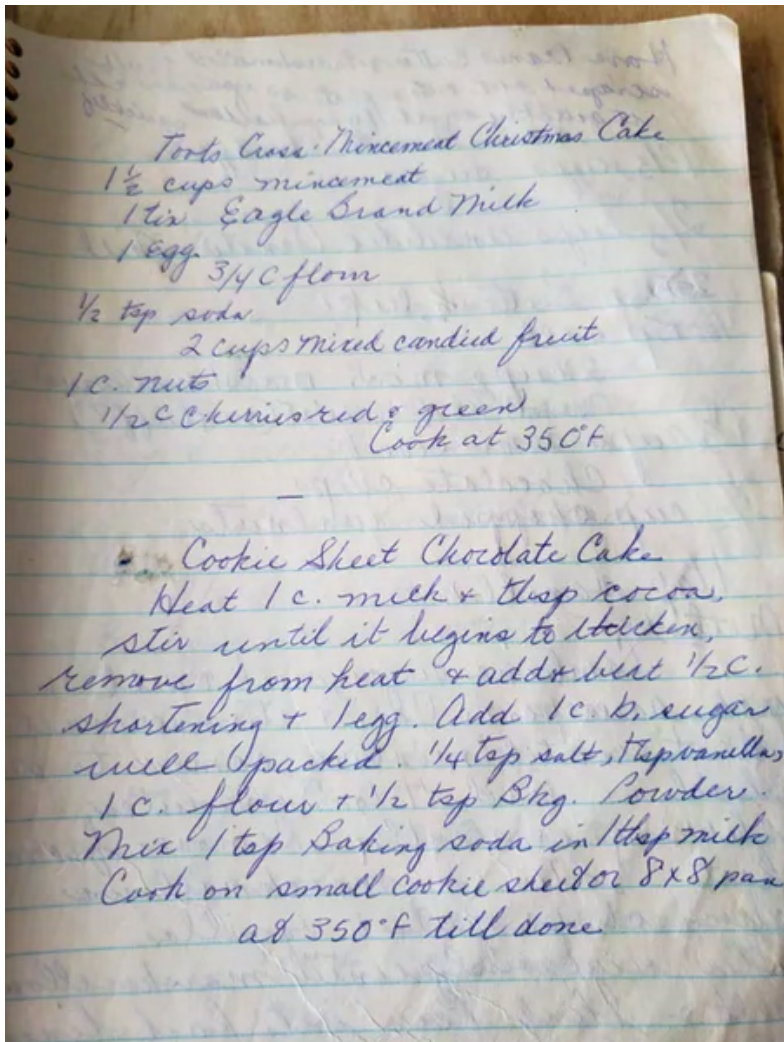
Now press the dough together just until you form a ball. Try not to knead it too much at this stage. It can be tempting. If you can't form a ball, add a touch more water (like a tsp or less at a time). Or just knead it very quickly.

Divide the dough into 2–4 pieces and shape into balls. For example: 2 big and 2 smaller balls for 2 x 8" double pie crust. Press the balls one at a time into the round bottom of your bowl to help shape them like disks. Use your hands to smooth the edges of the disks well. Wrap up disks of dough or place them in tupperware separated by some parchment. Chill them for at least 30 minutes and no more than 3 days. You can also freeze the dough discs for future pie pastry creations.

Toots' Mincemeat Cake (Jean)

Jean's recipe collection notebook is brimming with loose recipe cards, clippings and recipes copied out in her perfected, elegant cursive. Among the pages were many different mincemeat recipes: mincemeat pie, modern mincemeat from scratch, and 3 copies of a Mincemeat Christmas Cake from Jean's sister Dorothy (also known as Dot or Toots). In preparing to make this recipe I needed to decide whether to try out Jean's very involved mincemeat-from-scratch recipe or search for out-of-season canned, vegetarian mincemeat that most people use these days.

Long ago, when pies evolved as a way to prepare food, they were lean, grainy doughs filled with meat often seasoned with spices, alcohol and dried fruit. For many centuries, mincemeat pie has been a part of British Christmas tradition—a pie made of meat, rendered fat, molasses, spices, apples and alcohol like rum and brandy. Toots' recipe is not a pie though. Curiously, it's a cake. This recipe is very citrus forward, containing a few ingredients that really date this recipe to the mid-twentieth century when baking materials were being standardized and mass produced for distribution all across north america—mainly condensed milk, artificial candied peel and questionable green and red preserved cherries. This cake recipe is a throwback. Since most mincemeat already has a strong citrus component, I'd suggest cutting back the added peel if you give this recipe a go. Enjoy your journey to Christmases past.



Sprouted Grain Mincemeat (Jess)

Looking back through my Nan's mincemeat mentions, it's clear to see how it has adapted from a spiced, chunky, meat-centric pie filling, to a spiced dried fruit, booze and citrus concoction that references the flavour and textures of older versions, while being vegetarian. These changes tend toward simplification. Newer iterations involve less labour, less cooking time and avoid now hard-to-find ingredients like suet. In this sprouted grain mincemeat adaptation, I maintain the primary traditional elements of aromatic alcohols, preserved orange and lemon, apple, dried fruits for a meaty mouthfeel, molasses, cinnamon, cloves, nutmeg and pepper.

After making Toots' Mincemeat Christmas Cake, I felt inspired to make a whole kernel mincemeat from scratch. In a note from Nan's mincemeat-from-scratch recipe, she mentions using ground beef. This pebbly texture, I realized after some contemplation, could be mimicked with the chewy bite of sprouted whole kernels of different grains like rye, wheat or spelt. Here, I offer you my spiced, sprouted, booze soaked, grain morsel mincemeat as a different expression of a contemporary, simplified, vegetarian mincemeat-from-scratch recipe.

Ingredients:

1/2 cup oat groats	ground spices
1/2 cup rye kernels	1 tsp nutmeg
1/2 cup wheat berries	1 tsp cloves
1/2 cup chopped dates	1 tsp cinnamon
1/2 cup chopped apricots	1 tsp black pepper
1/2 cup raisins	final mix
zest of 1 lemon	1/2 cup raisins
zest of 1 orange	1 cup applesauce
200 mls spiced rum	2 shots brandy

Steps: Soak the dried grain kernels in a 1 L mason jar for an hour. Strain the water out by pinching cheesecloth to the top of the jar with a mason-jar ring or use a piece of screen or cloth with an elastic. Leave the jar tilted in a bowl, inverted so excess water can drain. That night rinse and drain again, leaving it tilted overnight. Repeat this once the next day. And finally again on the 3rd morning.

Transfer the sprouting grain into a strainer, rinse well and let drain thoroughly. Meanwhile, chop apricots and dates finely. Clean and zest the citrus. Assemble your ground spice mix in a medium mixing bowl. Add the zest and rum. Mix in the grain and dried fruit. Stir this well and pack in an air-tight container. Shake or stir this every few days and leave for a week or two.

When you are ready to finish the grainy mincemeat, bring the applesauce and raisins to a boil and cook for 10 minutes. Turn off and stir in the brandy. Pour this mix into a bowl and add the rum soaking grain and fruit. Mash it up a bit. Pack this mix in containers and freeze it for later use, or store it in jars in the fridge for up to a month.

Sharing Recipes to Remember

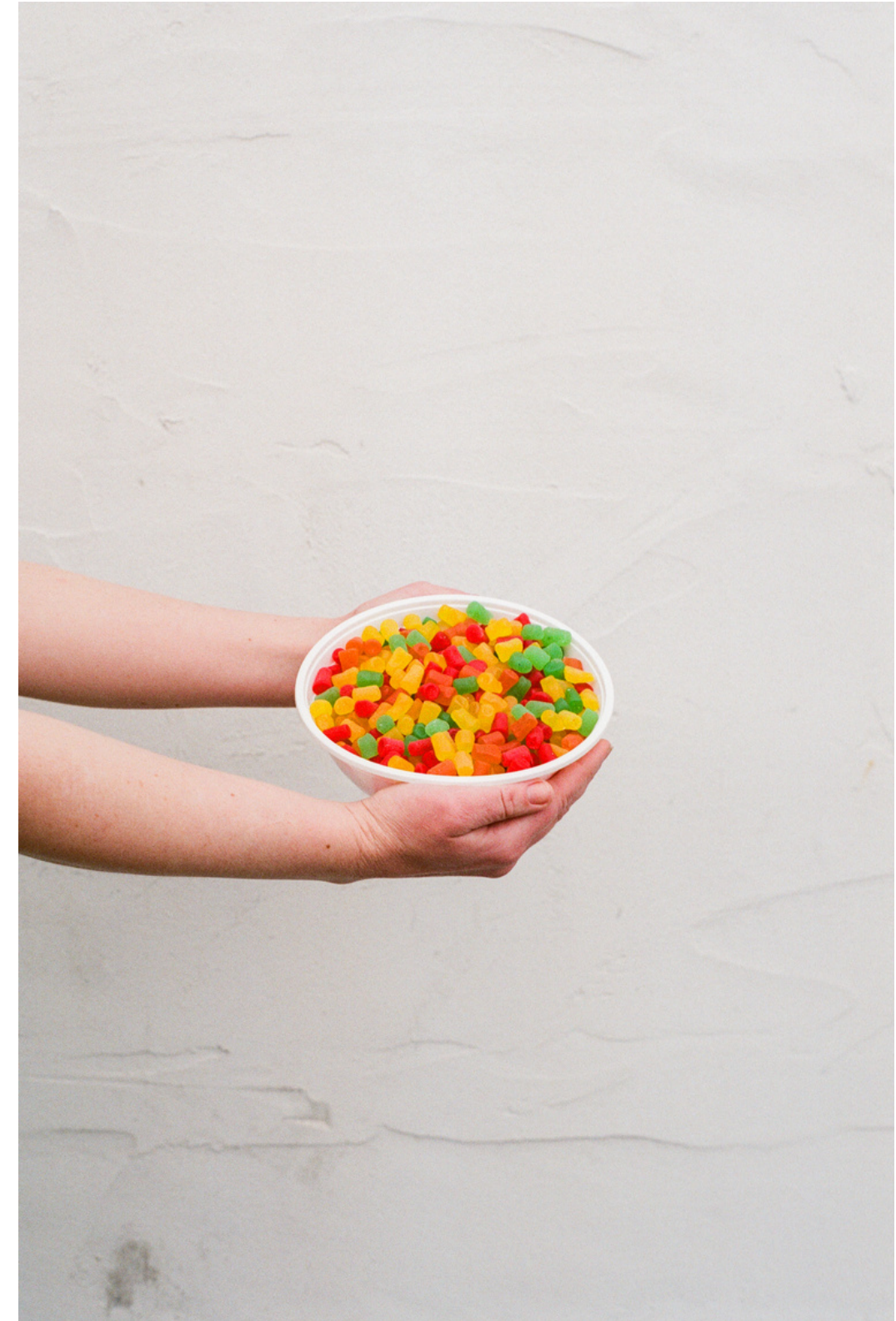
The Fundy Funeral Home in Saint George, NB was a strange, beautiful and somewhat awful place to spend time grieving my grandmother Jean Anne Stevens (nee MacGillivray), just months before the pandemic. It was early December, which nowadays is often an uncomfortably balmy and rainy month. Not this weekend though; the windy air was frigid, the sun was bright through the days despite being near their shortest. We weren't sure that the ground was even workable to dig and the possibility lingered that Nan's body would spend the winter above ground, frozen. Beyond this, the cold didn't interfere though it was a mood. We weren't spending much time outside anyway. We were there to remember and formally say goodbye to Jean. We gathered to have an outwardly celebratory, but inwardly strained, family gathering, bringing together people from all over Charlotte County who loved and who were loved by my grandmother.

For a long time, my memories of the 1970's-feeling funeral home were stuck on a painful exchange between my mom and aunt, Jean's twins playing out intergenerational power dynamics not even their mother's death could quell. But alongside the pain of solidifying family fissures that death had precipitated, there were scores of Jean's nieces and nephews, grand nieces and grand nephews, who showed up to pay their respects and say goodbye to their aunt, a caregiver. Jean hadn't lived in Charlotte County for about 15 years when she passed. Maybe the memories people shared would have been different if she had lived there until the end, maybe not. Most people remembered that vibrant Pennfield Ridge kitchen and all the baked goods she would create in it. Like I said, it was a family hub, an easy place to drop by while heading in or out of town.

As relatives and friends came together to grieve, they got to once again try Nan's recipes. My cousin and I had both shown up with baked goods from my grandmother's collection. I came with soft molasses cookies. My cousin, an experienced elementary teacher, brought special gluten-free adaptations of Nan's sugar cookies and gum drop cake, fan favourites. In good pedagogy practice, she also showed up with printouts of Nan's recipes, typed up from the recipe book Jean had hand-written for all three of her granddaughters.

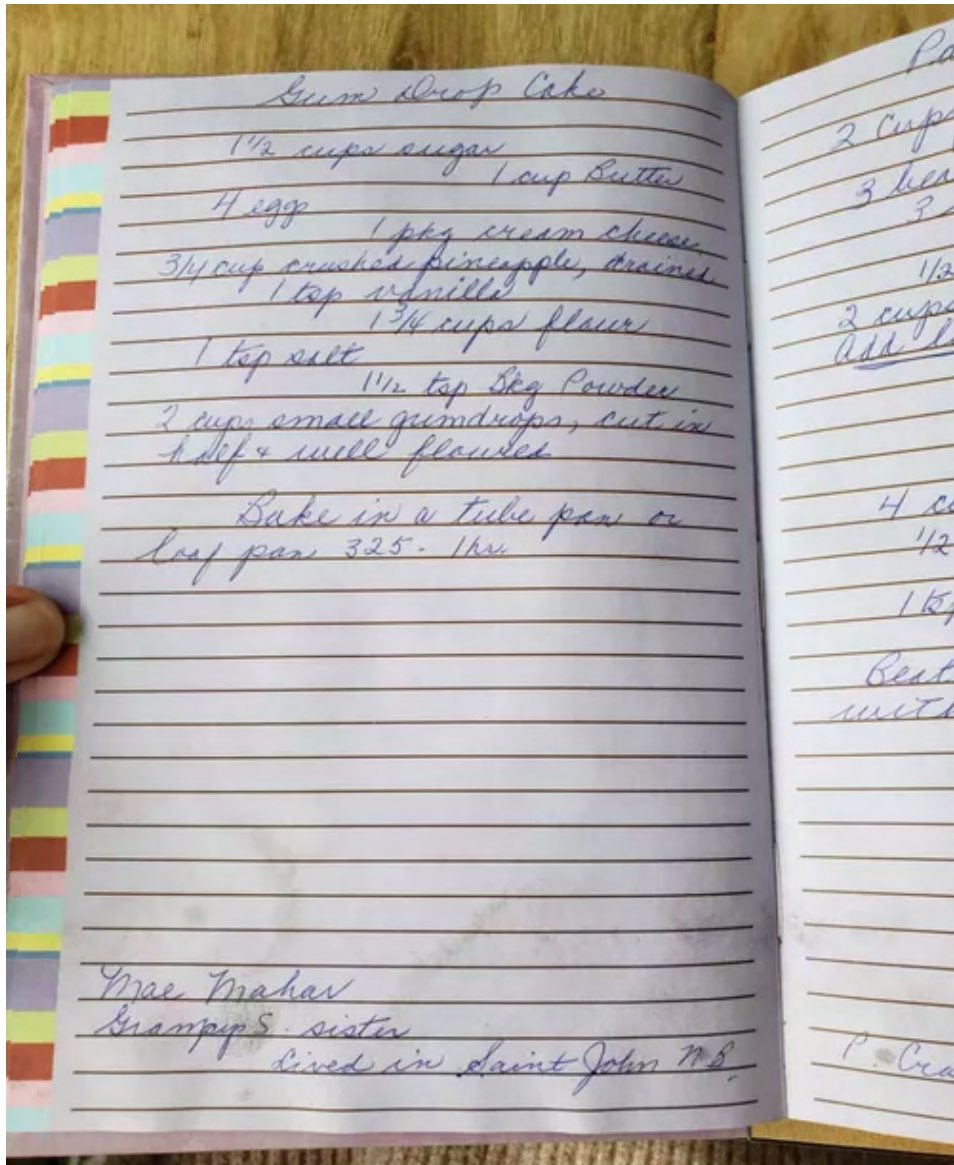
Jean's somewhat austere christian, funeral was less attended than her wake, where many people came to talk to us and to visit closely with Jean's paling, yet held body. I understood why: gathering, stories, sharing foods, and one last call with the dearly departed. I'm grateful to have heard from so many how important a family member Jean was within her extended network, spanning most of Charlotte County and beyond. My own experiences of being at her Pennfield house mirrored those of extended relatives. It was a family-oriented community space of abundance, care and comfort. Of course, it wasn't always like this, and it's not the only narrative of our family or of that place, but it was common experience.

As a process of grief and a celebration of family joy, I've been able to touch her spirit and reach for home by making, adapting and sharing these recipes. They help me hold space for all the joy I experienced within my family, even though a lot of the foundational relationships of it are gone, because of death and uninterrupted ripples of trauma. By making and sharing Jean's recipes, I'm able to bring this food joy into my present and keep Nan's spirit of abundant care through baking alive.



Gum Drop Cake (Jean)

Nan was known for her Gum Drop Cake. This recipe comes from my Aunt Mae. It's a pound cake featuring cream cheese, crushed pineapple, and Gum Drop candies. Gum Drops are an old candy, first made around 1800 in North America. Original Gum Drop candies were actually spice-flavoured: cloves, anise, wintergreen, allspice and spearmint. On their way to being as obscure as suet for a baking ingredient, Gum Drops can thankfully still be found reliably at bulk barns, at least between the east coast and Toronto. They are like a jujube but narrower. Gum Drops come in yellow, red, green and orange, vaguely simulating fruit flavours of the same colours. Where we once might only have had access to baking cherries by drying them or preserved citrus by candying with sugar, Gum Drops mimic fruit and in a way are a modern alternative. It's hard not to appreciate their beauty all the same, much like it's hard not to snack on these jewels through the mixing process. The pineapple in this recipe helps create a thick, fruit moistened batter that supports the weight of the candies. This cake has a great shelf life, staying fresh tasting for many days.



Kamut Candy Cake (Jess)

Candy in cake is an expression of my family's love of sweets. My own sweet tooth has been tempered by adulthood, but it's still a part of who I am. As a nod to my life long love of candy, in my Gum Drop Cake adaptation, I swapped Gum Drop candies for Swedish Berries. Kid Jess is truly delighted that I've honoured her in this way. This recipe will work just as well with Gum Drops, if you fancy. This cake recipe doesn't depend on white flour for loft or texture, so it was an easy one to swap a whole grain flour for white flour, 1 for 1. This recipe works really well with both kamut and corn flours. Using cornmeal or flour makes this cake gluten-free. I don't often have cream cheese handy, but I almost always have yogurt. So for this version, I included a technique to quickly strain yogurt to concentrate its richness and fatness, making it a cream cheese substitute. This cake recipe is a joyful one. It has a rich and citrusy flavour, a bright red pop of colour, and a moist cake crumb that stays ideal for days and days.

Ingredients:

- | | |
|-------------------------|--|
| 1 1/2 cup sugar | 1 cup of Yogurt (strained for 30 minutes max in a sieve) |
| 1 cup butter | 3/4 cup strained crushed pineapple |
| 4 eggs | 2 cups of swedish berries or Gum Drop candies |
| 1 tsp vanilla | |
| 1 3/4 cup Kamut flour | |
| 1 tsp salt | |
| 1 1/2 tsp baking powder | |

Steps: Make sure your butter is at a warm room temperature if you are mixing this batter by hand with a whisk. Set up a fine sieve over a bowl and add 1 cup of plain yogurt. Let it strain for an hour on the counter. Crack the eggs into a separate bowl and let them come to temp as well.

Mix flour, salt and baking powder together well. Set aside. Grease and flour a bundt or tube pan. Optional but suggested: cut out a ring of parchment that will lay just in the flat bottom of the bundt pan. Toss candies and some spoonfuls of flour in a small bowl together to coat.

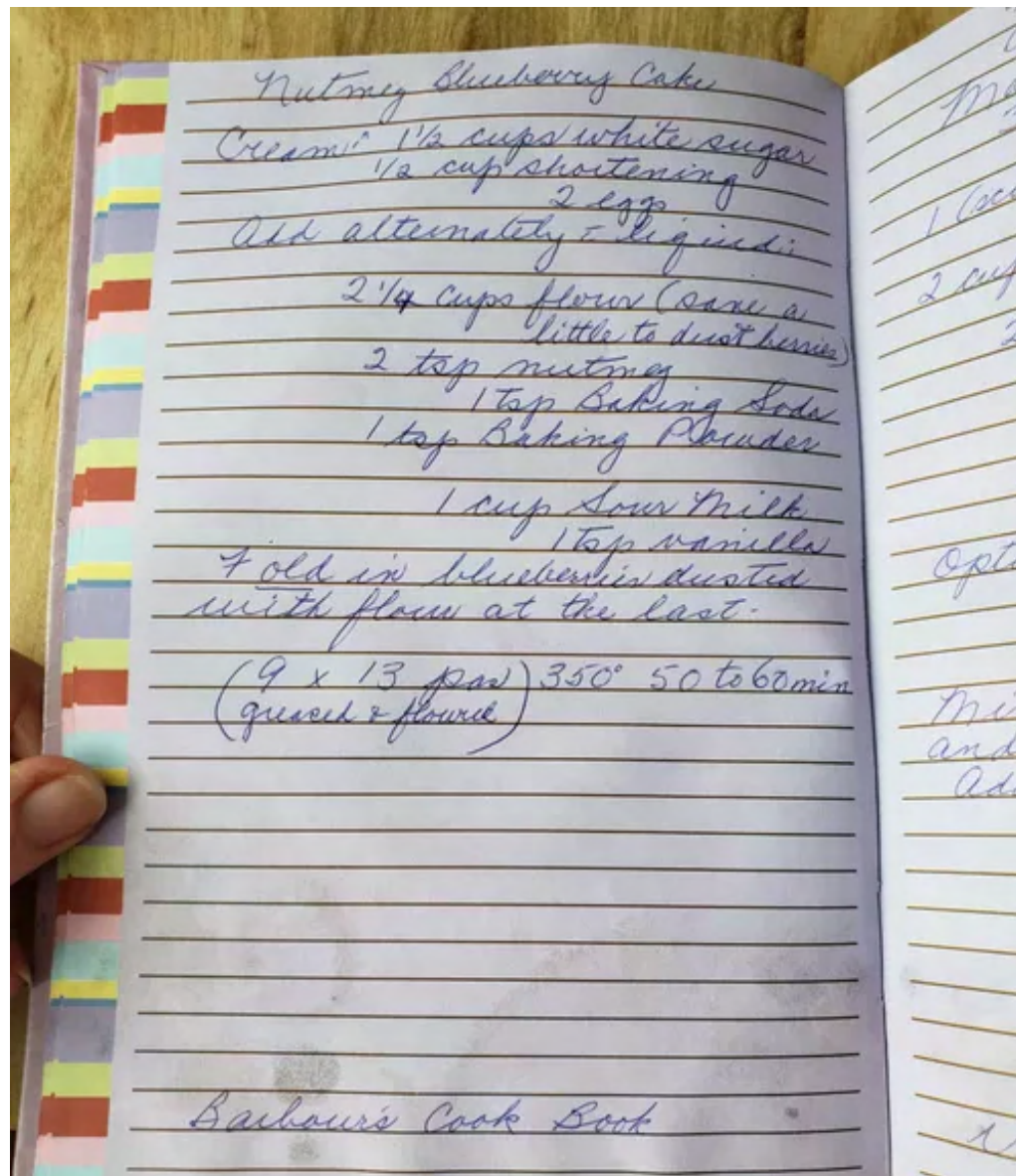
When you are ready to make the cake batter, turn on the oven to 350 F. In a separate bowl, cut the soft butter into the sugar until you've got a chunky mix that can be whisked. If your butter is too hard, you can heat up the bowl for a minute. Whisk this mixture, even though it will be tough at first. If it's too hard to blend, you can add the eggs one at a time and then whisk with vigour.

After the sugar, butter and eggs are creamed, add the vanilla and mix. Then, in alternation, add the strained yogurt, pineapple and dry mix to the creamed sugar mix using a rubber spatula. Use swift, concise hand motions to mix here. Once the batter is almost fully mixed, add in the dusted candies (without excess flour). Using the spatula, pour the batter into the prepped tube pan and level it off once it's all in.

Bake in the oven for 1 hour. The top of the candy cake should be a deep golden hue and a toothpick should come out clean when it is done. Let rest for 15 minutes then invert carefully onto a cake plate or cooling rack. Let cool completely before storing.

Nutmeg Blueberry Cake (Jean)

This cake is a really nice afternoon or casual dessert cake. It's a sweet vessel for berries, including blueberries, a Charlotte County baking staple. This is the only cake recipe I've worked with that uses shortening as the fat. I'm partial to butter in most cases (that flavour!!) but was excited to see how shortening functioned beyond cookies and pastry. Shortening creates a very moist cake, though it doesn't contribute any flavour. I've gained an appreciation for how shortening performs, even though I find it leaves something to be desired. Nutmeg was Jean's favourite spice. When I add nutmeg to my baking or even sometimes savoury dishes (bechamel anyone?), I think of my grandmother. Before we were able to buy most things on demand, foods like spices and even sugar were precious ingredients that became more normal as European colonialism reshaped the way foods moved around the world. I can only imagine that this made each spices' own unique sensory invigoration even more exciting than it still is, when spices hit the nose and palette. Feel free to use an alternative small fruit instead of blueberries. A mix of blueberry and rhubarb is also nice.



Nutmeg Blueberry Rye Coffee Cake (Jess)

For this Coffee Cake recipe, Jean's Nutmeg Blueberry Cake is the creative base for my adaptation, which swaps out white flour for rye and adds a crunchy, cinnamon and brown sugar infused crumble topping. I love nutmeg like my grandmother did. But I couldn't help but want to mellow its brazen taste by adding a cinnamon layer. I am honouring my grandmother's preference by preserving Nutmeg's spotlight in the cake batter, while also bringing in a cool, velvety spice like cinnamon. This buttery berry cake with nutmeg edges is a soft, juicy contrast to the crunchy, sugary streusel layer that bakes on top. Using 100% whole grain flour in this recipe doesn't cause a major change in the texture or lightness of the cake. I've always wanted to have a rye coffee cake recipe. One of rye's special features is its ability to hold moisture, a perfect quality for a cake. I'm happy my rye coffee cake is in the lineage of Nan's recipes. This cake will also work with spelt, corn or whole wheat. I prefer making it in a bundt cake but two smaller loaf pans or a round cake pan will work as well.

Ingredients:

1/2 cup butter	streusel
1 cup sugar	1/4 cup sugar
2 1/4 cup rye flour	1/2 cup oats
2 tsp nutmeg	1/4 cup butter
1/4 tsp cardamom, cloves or allspice	1/4 tsp salt
1 tsp baking soda	1 tbsp flour
1 tsp baking powder	1/2 tsp cinnamon
1 egg	2 tbsp chopped walnut (optional)
1 tsp vanilla or rum	
3/4 cup of milk (dairy or non) + 1 tbsp lemon juice	
2 cups blueberries	

Steps: Make sure the butter comes to room temperature before making the cake. Blend streusel ingredients together in a bowl with a fork or by hand. Set aside. Add lime juice to 3/4 cup of milk and let stand for at least 10 minutes (this becomes sour milk). If using frozen blueberries, toss them in a couple of spoonfuls of flour to coat them and keep the colour from bleeding into the batter.

Turn on the oven to 350 F. Mix flour, spices, baking soda and powder together in a bowl. Cream sugar and butter together in a medium-large mixing bowl. Use very soft to do this by hand with a whisk. Beat the egg in completely and add the vanilla. Give it a final vigorous whisk.

Gently fold the dry mix and the sour milk in alternation with each other, into the creamed sugar bowl, using a rubber spatula. Just before all these ingredients are fully incorporated, start swiftly folding in the dusted blueberries. Transfer the batter into a greased tube pan and smooth the top with the spatula. By hand, evenly sprinkle the streusel mix over top of the cake batter.

Bake in the oven at 350 F for about 50 minutes. The streusel should be golden and crisped, and a toothpick should come out clean when probed into the cake. Let rest for 15 minutes. Remove bundt pan and place either serving plate or cooling rack on top and flip once more to right the orientation of the cake. Let cool completely before storing.

Cold Plunge Conclusion

My last impression of the Kneading Conference is driving away with baker friend miriam in my beloved and badass 1980 Toyota 2-wheel Drive Pick-up Truck, packing a load of market loaves and pastries, and new whole grain flours to experiment with. We had just participated in a few days of learning, involving hands-on workshops and lots of listening. Miriam and I headed north to New Brunswick, with a province and a border standing between us and home. We broke up the drive with a stay in St. Andrews by the sea, where my dad is from. This land is contested, the Peskotomukati First Nation holding sturdy land claim for some of the townland that is a sacred place of ceremony and gathering. Like all settler places, its assumed name is not the only one. St. Andrews, originally called Qonasqamkuk is one of my other charlotte county hometowns. Each year, there are many stops on my annual pilgrimage home to Charlotte County. A pie stop on the side of the highway is a guarantee, and so is a Passamaquoddy swim at the end of the Barr road.

Ok, maybe plunge is a better word. Unlike some descents into the chill waters of the bay of fundy that can take ages, this spot is a cove with a steep drop-off when the tide is high. Despite it being the august long weekend, the water was still brisk. The bay of fundy waters have their own cool range from spring to fall. Because it was summer and the sun was beaming hot and bright, when I say we plunged I mean a full, suspended, rushing immersion into this blue buoyant salty water, the beach ringed by crispy black seaweed. A full baptism, total envelopment by the sea, even if only for a few moments. Going underneath, the cold waters reminded me where and who I was at that moment. My nerves flashing in shock, revealing all of my bodily sides and edges against the cold. The sensors that exist at the very threshold to the body itself, in that cold plunge the sensation is, tell me I'm alive, my body is here and it is from here.

In between our snack sessions on forbidden private property picnic tables and public swims, Miriam and I visited some Ross family and I showed her the landmarks of my family in this place. We tented overnight in the overfull zone of the in-town campground down at the point. Saturated with story and still lasting on still-fresh whole grain goods, we continued on to Mi'kma'ki, another region where I feel grateful to have roots.

In a way my relationship with these recipes is like my relationship with the place. With my annual visits to my settler ancestral homelands, I connect with elements of this place that are integral to my family story, like in the way I have bonded to different qualities and ingredients of recipes from my Nan's collection. I'm carrying forward into this brave new world, making my own meaning, establishing and re-establishing connection in the absence of my grandmother.



Photo Credits

Cover Photos: By Faridy Rady (Jess with recipe book, selection of baked goods from collection)
Page 1: By Faridy Rady (close ups of Jean Stevens’ recipe book)
Page 4: By Farida Rady (portrait of Jess outside with a sample of recipes from Tastes of Home)
Page 5: By Farida Rady (portrait of Jess holding peel in front of baker’s oven in 2022)
Page 6: By Jennifer Murphy (images of whole rye kernels and oats, Jess in front of her bakery)
By Doug Brown (image of Jess holding peel in 2010)
Page 17: By Farida Rady (Jess with Toots’ Mincemeat Cake recipe, both written and baked)
Page 18: By Farida Rady (photos of baked goods and raw ingredients from Tastes of Home)
Page 20: By Jessica Ross (image of the Passamaquoddy bay and Chamcook mountain)
By Farida Rady (image of Jess with Nellie’s War Cake recipe, both written and baked)
Page 21: By Jessica Ross (image of War Cake recipe from the recipe book Jean gifted me)
Page 22: By Jessica Ross (image of Jess’ War Cake iteration, May 5, 2022)
Page 25: By Jessica Ross (image of Cape Breton Oatcakes recipe from the book Jean gifted me)
Page 28: By Jessica Ross (process shots from baking adaptation process)
By Farida Rady (photo of Jess scoring loaf of bread)
Page 30: By Jessica Ross (images taken during process of making Doughboys)
Page 31: By Jessica Ross (image of Oatmeal Raisin Cookie recipe from the St. Croix Courier)
Page 34: By Farida Rady (images of baked recipes from Tastes of Home)
Page 35: By Jessica Ross (image of Soft Molasses Cookie recipe from Jean’s collection)
Page 37: By Jessica Ross (image of Oatmeal Wheat Germ Bread recipe from book gifted by Jean)
Page 40: By Farida Rady (portrait of Jess holding baked Sourdough Brown Bread)
Page 43: By Jessica Ross (image of Passamaquoddy bay looking towards Green Point)
Page 45: By Jessica Ross (image of Toots’ Mincemeat Cake recipe from Jean’s collection)
Page 48: By Farida Rady (image of Jess’ hands and bowl of Gum Drop Candies)
Page 49: By Jessica Ross (image of Gum Drop Cake recipe from book gifted by Jean)
Page 51: By Jessica Ross (image of Nutmeg Blueberry Cake recipe from book gifted by Jean)
Page 54: By Farida Rady (image of each of the baked goods featured in Tastes of Home, artfully displayed on a tray, taken outside)
Page 55: By Jessica Ross (images from the making of Jess' War Cake)



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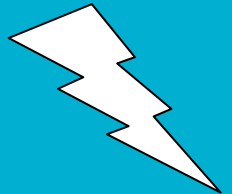
Pie Time Baking Workshop Images and Emergent Queries

MES Portfolio Component Appendix C, by Jessica Ross

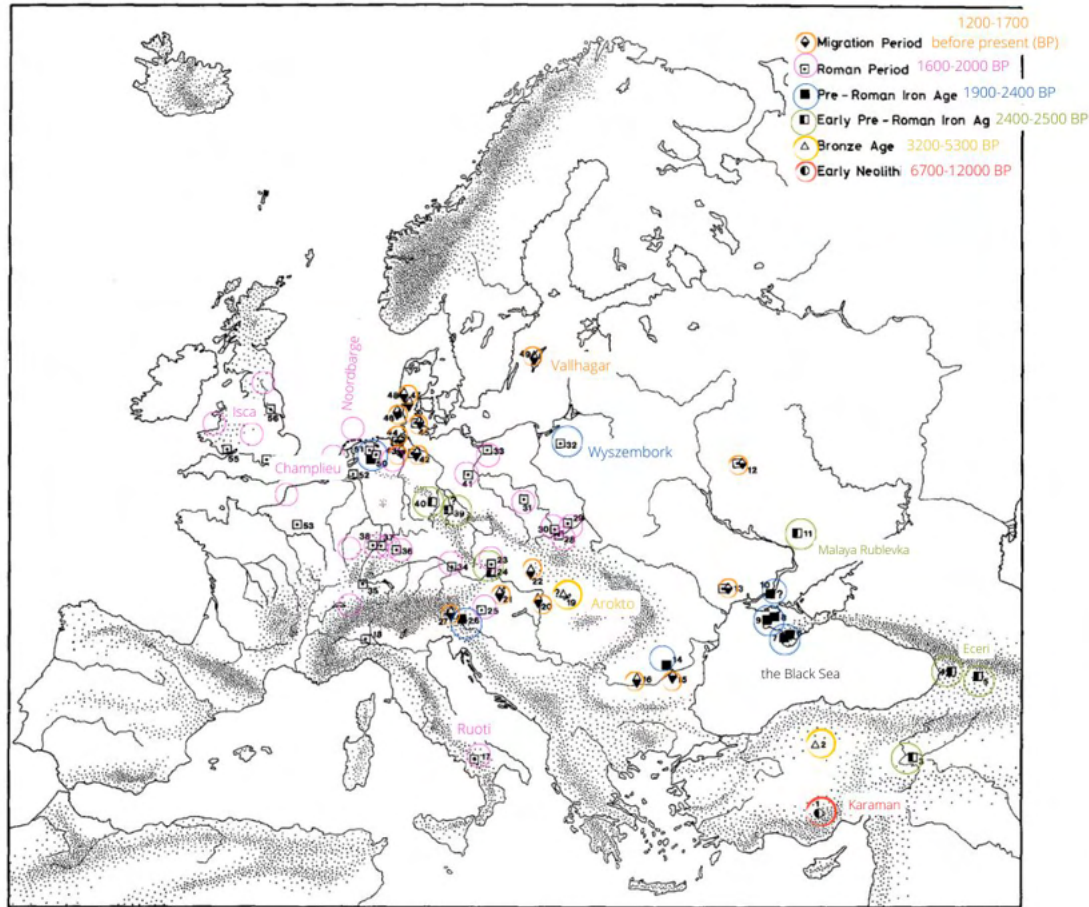
Research Question:

*What happens when hands-on food education
is combined with critical discussion
around place and home?*

but make it
virtual



A sample slide from *Pie Time*:



GENUS SECALE



secale sylvester

Fig. 1. Sites with finds of cultivated rye (*Secale cereale*) from the Neolithic to the Migration period

A sample slide from *Pie Time*:

HISTORY OF PIE PASTRY



AS A FORM, PIE:

- acted as a baking vessel
- made carrying food easier
- allowed for preservation

HOW DID PIE PASTRY AS WE KNOW IT COME TO BE?



A sample slide from *Pie Time*:

WHERE AND WHAT IS PIE NOW?

NORTH AMERICA, SETTLERS & PIE

RITZ / PIE

Mock Apple Pie NO APPLES
NEEDED!

Pastry for two crust 9-inch pie
36 RITZ CRACKERS
2 cups water
2 cups sugar
2 teaspoons cream of tartar
2 tablespoons lemon juice
Grated rind of one lemon
Butter or margarine
Cinnamon

coarsely into pastry-lined plate. Combine water, sugar and cream of tartar in saucepan; boil gently for 15 minutes. Add lemon juice and rind. Cool. Pour syrup over crackers, dot generously with butter or margarine and sprinkle with cinnamon. Cover with top crust. Trim and flute edges together. Cut slits in top crust to let steam escape. Bake in a hot oven (425°F.) 30 to 35 minutes, until crust is crisp and golden. Serve warm. Makes 6 to 8 servings.

Roll out bottom crust of pastry and fit into 9-inch pie plate. Break RITZ CRACKERS

**Try this and other delicious recipes from the Nabisco Kitchens
now on all RITZ packages**

from austerity ingredient
to symbol of america?



pedagogy queries explored further in
Portfolio Research Reflection:

- 1) does zoom as an education space encourage dissociation?
- 2) How is zoom accessible?
- 3) what does it mean to have a physical routine attached to a learning space?

zoom as a shared cooking space

- the safety and comfort of a home space alongside connecting through shared process
- showing people what is possible in their own kitchens with the tools they have on hand (an accessibility of pie).
- as an engaged space that may help support discussing/ learning about disturbing aspects of our foods' histories.
- sharing some understandings and historical musings about pies
- opening with some land history of the grain I will be using during the workshop.
- trying to access the material connectivity that food gives us to others that we have had to minimize during the pandemic; united through doing the same process at the same time, through the same link.

