

Summer Ruedy

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### Original Story

Being a family-oriented person all my life, I have always loved listening to stories told by my relatives and reliving those moments with them – especially those surrounded by food. We have many cooks in our family, and every gathering is filled with delicious dishes and shared stories. I cherish every new memory I learn about my family, and our heritage. Growing up, I've realized that I am who I am today, because of them and the memories we share.

Since being in France while studying Food Journalism, I have noticed how relevant it is to feel homesick, and long for your comfort people. I found solace in listening to my classmates' family memories surrounding food. I became curious about their fondest family memories, how these memories reflected on their personalities, and how they influenced their daily lives. It was fascinating to hear their stories and see the parallels between their experiences and my own. These conversations helped me feel connected and reminded me how universal family bonds can be.

With my classmates' permission, I wanted to share their cherished food memories, and how they feel it reflects themselves and their daily lives. However, I first wanted to share a story of my own.

#### **Why I never turn down a Donut**

My grandma was known to her friends and family as the “Donut Queen.” Whenever she picked me up from school, a pack of powdered sugar Hostess donuts

would always be waiting for me on my seat. If I spent the night at her house, we would make a donut run as soon as I woke up. Despite the wide variety of donuts available, she preferred simplicity: a chocolate frosted white cake donut for her and a glazed twist for me. She loved her donuts, but she loved sharing them with her loved ones even more. Since her passing, I always make my way to the donut shop on her birthday to celebrate her unforgettable life with a glazed donut.

### **Wyatt and His Memories Imbedded in a Dining Table**

Being part of a large family usually makes it hard for everyone to be together, but not for Wyatt's family. At the center of his grandparent's "Old House" sat a large dining table. Whether it was a group of 5 or 20, it didn't matter; they were dedicated to fitting everyone at that table. They would gather, with copious amounts of food in front of them, and enjoy the cherished family time. Wyatt talked about the time he spent with his family, surrounding that table, filling the space with endless stories. Hours felt like minutes for them. To this day, Wyatt and his cousins still talk about that house with that infamous table. They one day want to buy that house, to relive those memories and create new ones. Sitting and eating dinner with his loved ones will always be special because it will always remind him of the time spent at that dining table.

### **Anna Liv's Long Drive Reward**

Visiting her grandparents was always a challenge for Anna Liv, enduring the long eight-hour drive from Los Gatos to San Diego two or three times a year. Despite the boredom that inevitably set in during the journey, the anticipation of

what awaited her at the end made it all worthwhile. Each arrival was greeted with a warm welcome and the comforting aroma of a freshly prepared homemade meal. Anna Liv's excitement peaked as she stepped into her grandparents' home to find a feast laid out before her, including her cherished favorites like Pancit, Chicken Adobo, and Fried Rice. Despite the lengthy drive, the opportunity to reconnect with family and savor her beloved dishes made the journey truly meaningful for her.

### **Brooke and her “Pink Steak”**

Growing up, Brooke's mom would make her and her siblings “Pink Steak” as a common meal. Since having a picky brother, this was an easy meal that they could all eat and like. Her whole life, Brooke believed that Pink Steak was a special type of steak, never being able to find it at any stores. When Brooke started college, she went grocery shopping for the first time, and stumbled upon the infamous “Pink Steak.” Amazed, she pulled out her phone and called her sister to tell her about her discoveries. Brooke's sister then broke the news to her that “Pink Steak” was just Ham all along. It was just a nickname that her mom gave it due to her brother's pickiness.

### **April's Holiday Traditions**

Every year, when Lunar New Year rolls around, April and her family would gather to make their favorite meal – Bánh tét. They make enough of this Vietnamese delicacy to last them the rest of the year, until it's time to make it again. During the creating, April's job was to scrub the banana leaves. Every year she would sit, scrubbing banana leaves for hours. The year before her dad got sick, he decided to join her in the process. While it was a small and simple gesture, it

was a special moment for the both of them. They enjoyed the time together, sitting and helping each other out. Since his passing, April has loved being able to relive that memory each time she sits and continues her job of scrubbing the banana leaves.

After listening to my classmates, I have gained a new perspective on their lives and backgrounds. Each story they shared was interesting and wholesome in its own way. It also shows you how some of the best memories you have, are surrounded by food. These stories not only allowed me to understand my classmates better but also highlighted the diversity and richness of their experiences. It's amazing how much we can learn about each other through these personal narratives, and it has deepened my appreciation for the unique journeys each person has taken.