

20th Storyworth: What Are Your Favorite Recipes Either To Cook Or To Eat?

I will interpret this request to look for less the specific recipe per se, but rather the foods that I like, and to explain what about each might make them special. They can be grouped among “Au Natural”, “Convenient”, “Taste and Texture” and “Fine Dining”. It should be noted here that I am cut from pretty common Type 2 Diabetic cloth in terms of ingredients; sweet and salty are like magnets ;-)

As I am writing this, it is now 4 AM on a Thursday night when we were well fed by Susan Hernandez and Connie Rule at Mickie Tranter’s house, and I simply cannot sleep. Too much on my plate, so to speak, and none of THAT I can nibble on ;-). As an aside, many recipients of this will be aware that I responded to Mickie’s request that I help fix a few problems with her downstairs toilet while she is recovering at hospice from her second knee replacement, and that I earned my and Dawn’s dinner by going above and beyond on the toilet as Mickie knew I would ;-). So she has the riser seat with lift handles she had from her first knee replacement, but I adapted it so the original toilet seat is not there, but the add-on bidet she had recently added between it and the ceramic bowl is now atop the riser seat and works perfectly like that, with 5-1/4” spacers and 7” long hex bolts to hold the bidet with the original seat mount holes in the bowl. And the flap valve now works correctly as well, which was her reason for calling in the first place. Engineering uber alles ;-)

Anyway, the “Au Natural” foods are the kinds of things which really require little preparation. They come from nature just the way I consume them. That would include things like fresh fruits and vegetables, which I generally love. The specific exceptions include squash, and now, because of my dentures, hard veggies like broccoli and cauliflower unless well cooked to soften them. But I do love their taste ;-). I also love to eat cukes and celery, although I’ll often slice up a cucumber and add Zesty Italian or Ranch dressing to the bowl.

In the fruits; I love oranges, and have a knack for peeling them with a spiral slit using a pocket knife so I can take off their peel in a continuous piece, especially for navel oranges. I am more particular about my apples, preferring the sweeter Delicious and Granny Smith or Cortland varieties, and I hate bitter ones. I love fresh Pineapple, but I have had some bad experiences if the cores have not been properly removed, as they have an acid which can literally burn my lips if I am not careful. So I’ll usually prefer pineapple from the can, merely for safety. I also like seedless grapes, either color, although I more often buy the green type, oddly.

Speaking of canned fruits, I love fruit cocktail and peaches which I see as in the “Convenience” group, I USED to never go near canned veggies, preferring the frozen variety. But with dentures, and especially before I finally got them, I used to eat canned foods a lot. Their prime advantage being convenience, plus the fact that most are well salted, and I refer you to what’s written above to explain THAT again. That plus the addition of tons of butter (NOT margarine! ;-). because I am not here for a LONG time, just a GOOD one ;-)

I am definitely a meat and potatoes guy, but basically lazy as well. So if it involves more than a single pot to prepare, it’s almost certainly not going to make my short list. So I love my Dinty Moore Stew, but have never been able to explain why they omit green veggies from it, so ALWAYS add peas or green beans to the carrots and potatoes already in the pot. I also love the “Country Style” Bush’s Baked Beans because they use extra brown sugar. And my fave BBQ sauce is sweetened with honey. A true diabetic ;-)

I also love simple foods, like canned soups and PBJ sandwiches. Again, before the dentures I used to prefer the Crunchy Peanut Butter, but am now resigned to creamy. But don’t try to foist off on me ANYTHING which says “low calorie”, “reduced fat” or “light”, which I see as buzzwords for higher priced and tastes like cardboard. I refer you back to the Long vs Good times ;-). But not all the foods I love are unhealthy – I love to munch on celery stalks with Peanut Butter in their channels. But I am not a fan of raw carrots, mostly because they are hard to bite into, and you can forget tofu, kale and the like completely.

I also love Ramen noodles, which I prefer to eat with sandwiches. But I now miss them because Dawn hates them. Oh well – some things in life require sacrifices ;-) And like Ramen, I like my rice dishes flavored, typically chicken or beef, and prefer when I go for Chinese Buffet to get the rice with veggies instead of white rice, which is too bland for me. But I would eat the same things almost every day at such a place and never be unhappy, because they have so much variety in choices otherwise. And plenty of soy and sweet & sour sauce to embellish whatever, and a huge variety of desserts ;-)

For “Taste and Texture” I like to vary. So I’ll eat Cheerios, Wheaties, Corn Flakes, Raisin Bran and Shredded Wheat for cereals, so long as I have plenty of sugar to sweeten the bowl ;-) And topped with sliced bananas. Takes one to know one ;-) For hot cereals I like Oatmeal or Cream of Wheat, each with lots of brown sugar. And raisins ;-) Not a fan of salsa, in fact almost NOTHING Mexican appeals, although I love potato chips, especially with onion dip. I also love to munch Ritz-like crackers with sharp cheddar or swiss cheese and summer sausage. But if it takes more effort than dumping into a bowl, I’ll likely demur and revert to my one-bowl prep meals. Laziness has ALWAYS been my strong suit, as I HATE to clean up.

For desserts I am pretty easy to satisfy – I like most ice creams, but my fave is a soft swirl twist of vanilla and chocolate on a sugar cone, inverted into a cup to minimize the mess, and my hard dessert preference is Maple Walnut, Butter Pecan, Cookies and Cream, and Death by Chocolate. And unlike my Mom, sprinkles, whipped cream and cherries ARE desired ;-) But I LOVE a Creamsicle pop on a hot day.

My breakfasts are Danish or pastries, with OJ and coffee (which I take like I prefer my women; cold, dark and bitter, which means iced but black ;-) But I prefer Hazelnut over Dark or French Roast. And I like Cream Soda or Root Beer over Cola or Orange. Don’t EVER try to get me to drink a Dr Pepper. There is not enough sugar in the Caribbean to fix that stuff ;-)

For “Fine Dining” I mean somebody else fixed it, although I love to grill. I usually won’t have more than a quarter of the list at a single meal, but shrimp cocktail and mozzarella sticks, and clams on the half shell, all with cocktail sauce, would be starters, followed by thick juicy steak or prime rib, medium rare, or medium if an end cut which I’d prefer, with French Onion soup or New England Clam Chowder, a blooming onion, a Rum Sunrise or Pina Colada, and finished with a Crème Brulee or REALLY moist Cheese Cake or Chocolate Brownie, both ala mode. Then they can wheel me out and dump me on the lawn before they shoehorn me back in the car ;-)

Speaking of which; I refer you back to simple. For snacking I like cinnamon donuts and Milky Way bars. If I am driving, that’s what I do, although I am a fast-food junkie. But you won’t find MY dashboard covered with coffee stains and McNugget boxes, although you likely WILL find a wad of napkins because I use them to dry my nose. Dawn hands me one about every ten seconds it seems. Then asks me for another Wintergreen Mint Life Saver, which I buy by the truckload ;-)

Joe Holzer 5/14/2021