

TASTING HISTORY

*Family Stories & Recipes from 30 Countries
by the Immigrant Students of Lowell High School's
U.S. History II Seminar*

Edited by Jessica Lander

INTRODUCTION

In my U.S. History classes, we've been exploring the journeys of immigrants who came to these shores early in the 20th century. We have listened to accounts from Ellis Island and examined Emma Lazarus's inscription on the Statue of Liberty.

In searching for our unit's final project, I found that many curricula began the same way: "Have students imagine they are immigrants coming to a new country."

Here I am in luck. Most of my students do not have to "imagine." I have a classroom full of experts. My students hail from more than 30 countries. Their immigrant stories are diverse and deeply inspiring. With them, my students bring to our classroom a wealth of knowledge, skills, and experiences.

For our final project, I asked my students to share their own coming-to-America stories. And, I encouraged them to learn from their families how to cook their favorite foods. We present this cookbook, brimming not just with delicious family recipes, but also with memories of far away homelands and dreams of American futures.

Like all of our work in school, this cookbook would not be possible without the tremendous support of many families. Thank you to all of my students' Moms, Dads, Aunts, Uncles, Grandmothers, Grandfathers, Sisters, Brothers, and many more who helped teach my students how to cook these beloved family dishes. Thank you for taking the time to help your children write down the recipes and to answer detailed questions as we typed them up.

Thank you to the leadership at Lowell High School for supporting our students on this project. Finally, a special thanks to Lori Lander (my own mom) for putting so much energy and time into supporting me, as this cookbook transformed from idea to reality.

Having studied the journeys and experiences of the 19th century immigrants who helped transform America, my 21st century immigrant students now share their stories. These young people – with their determination, optimism, and caring – are a vital part of America's future.

We hope you enjoy!

~ Jessica Lander

Pão de Queijo

Alicia

Brazil

Pão de queijo is a typical Brazilian dish from the state of Minas Gerais. If you get to Brazil and ask for Minas Gerais, they will talk about “the state of the pão de queijo”. It is known throughout country, but it is most famous in this state. I love pão de queijo so much I could eat it every day on my breakfast.

I don't know for sure when this dish was first created. We think it happened many many years ago when friends found themselves in a kitchen of a country house in the countryside to “talk”, they created pão de queijo which roasted on a wood stove and was prepared with ingredients produced on the farm itself.

My grandmother always cooked pão de queijo when she was going to visit me at my house. When she arrived I already knew that the next day we would have pão de queijo for breakfast. My grandmother also taught me how to make pão de queijo.

I immigrated to America when I was 16 years old. My dad came first and I came with my aunt four months later. I moved from Minas Gerais in Brazil to Lowell, Massachusetts in the U.S.A. It was a bit complicated to leave my mother and my brother and all other people I loved very much. Learning a new language and a different culture was not easy either. But here my aunt still cooks delicious paes de queijo for me! This reminds me of my home.

Makes 30

Ingredients:

1 cup water
1 cup of oil
1 cup of milk
1 tablespoon of salt
3 cups of regular yucca flour
2 cups of sweet yucca flour
2 cups shredded mozzarella
5 eggs

Instructions:

1. Bring water, oil, milk and salt to the boil. When it boils, remove from heat and set aside.
2. Mix the yucca flours and pour the hot liquid gradually, stirring well. When the mixture is warm, add the cheese and eggs, stirring well after each addition of egg.
Work the dough until you let go of your hands and stand flat.
3. Tip: the secret of a good cheese bread is when it is time to knead, the more you knead, the better the flavor!
4. Preheat the medium oven (350°F).
5. Form the dough into marbles, place in a baking dish and put in the oven for 20-30 minutes.



Pastelillos

(Guava/Cheese Turnovers)

Edwin

Puerto Rico

There has been already ten months since I came here from Puerto Rico to establish a new journey of life. My grandma and I came here with the desire of gathering together with our family, since the majority of them were living here. All of us still cook Spanish food everyday, and the most typical and repeated one is white rice with beans. Since here there is not a lot of Spanish places where they cook fried food. I miss them once in awhile. I get to eat pastelillos when I remember them, since I am not really picky nor a fan of food, and therefore I tell my grandma to cook them for me. When I eat them it makes me remember good times in school eating them with my friends.

Pastelillos have been cooked probably for three hundred years ago, and it is mostly cooked in the rural area of the country, not in the cities. A lot of old people, agriculture workers, constructors and outside workers eat this food daily as their breakfast. Also, you'd be able to see a lot of students buying them in the mornings as a breakfast and in the afternoon as a lunch. The majority of the people like to accompany this dish with coffee as the drink.

This dish is majority fried dough, therefore that is the most thing you get when you are eating it. The taste depends a lot in the change of the flavors. I'd say I have a special taste for it because of the reason that since I was a little boy I have been eating it in my school and in my house as a breakfast, lunch, and seldom as a dinner. When I was about 13 I once dared to make this dish by myself, and since then I have been able to cook it. At my house, mainly the one that cooks this dish is my grandmother.

Now that I am living here on the mainland, I'd dare to say that somehow this food loses its essence or its flavor. I'd also dare to say that there is the moment when one realizes that food is not just "it", but the place surrounding you. When coming to America it wasn't really that difficult for me to adapt to the food, since in Puerto Rico we have the majority of the same food. But the lacking in the food here shows you the little but important spots and places that they were part of. Sincerely, I would've enjoyed them more in Puerto Rico if I knew the importance they would have now that I am living here.

Makes 40 pieces

Ingredients:

40 pastelillos wrappers, Goya brand, which are the covering of the pastelillos, they come in a pack of ten.
40 slices of American cheese
1/2 cup of oil
40 slices of guava

Instructions:

1. Prepare the pastelillos with their different flavors inserting inside the chosen flavor, either guava or cheese, and using a fork to close the corners of the wrappers.
2. Put the oil in a pot and let it boil.
3. Carefully throw the pastelillos in the boiling oil.
4. Flip them every 5 minutes till the time reaches to 20 minutes and they will be totally cooked and appetizing to the sight.



Kabab

Yousif
Iraq

Hi, my name Yousif. I'm Iraqi. I lived in Baghdad. It's an awesome city, at least for me. I came here in 2015. I came to America just for the future so I can make something for myself at least to live my life in the right way. In my house, we still cook our Iraqi food, not all of the foods, but many we still do. I miss my grandmother's food and the street restaurants' food that were so delicious. We eat kabab on Fridays and it reminds me of the time my whole family came together back when I lived in Baghdad. We use to sit all together all of us and start eating. It makes me feel better because it's not just a food, it's many Fridays in my life.

We eat Kabab for our dinner and lunch. Usually we cook this dish on Fridays. We cook it because it's a good dish and because we like it. My mom does the cooking and my sister helps her. The only thing I do is eat it. There was a restaurant in front of my house in Baghdad, we lived there for over 17 years, even before I was born. This place was always busy and it cooked amazing Kabab that is why it was busy. But even if it was busy, I didn't need to wait in line, I could always go to the front. Somehow I always tripped or fell down in the Kabab restaurant (I accidently broke a chair once) the workers always laughed at me. But they still gave me kababs! It's a nice memory of this kabab restaurant in Baghdad. These are some of my memories about my favorite food.

Serves 5 people

Ingredients:

1 kilo ground beef meat
2 medium size onions
1 spoon of salt
Bunch of coriander

Instructions:

1. Put the ground beef in a big bowl
2. Then you are going to cut the onions into small pieces and then mix with the beef
3. Then add the salt and then the coriander mix it all together
4. Then ground all of it together as much as you can. And then put them on skewers and cook all of them on the grill for 10 to 15 minutes. This recipe will make about 10 skewers.



Okra Soup and Fufu

Venice

Liberia

Okra and fufu is one of my country's soups. We have about 16 tribes in Liberia that speak about 16 different dialects. The 16 tribes are: Kpelle, Bassa, Dan (Gio), Ma (Mano), Klao (Kru) Grebo, Mandingo, Krahn, Gola, Gbandi, Loma, Kissi, Val, Bella (Kuwaa), and Dei (Dey). Each tribe has its own food. My tribe is Kpelle and we love okra. It is cooked on Thanksgiving days, graduation days, and other special holidays. It is cooked because we like it and it is our tribe's favorite food.

It is my favorite soup and when I eat it, it reminds me of my mom because she is not here. My mom cooks the dish usually but my sister and I give her a helping hand in the process. The okra is served on a round big table where we all gather sit, pray and eat. After eating, we all shared our stories. The soup is very spicy and tastes delicious. The okra has a slippery feel when rubbed with fingers. My first impression was kind of hard to swallow the fufu but when time goes, I got used to it and it became my favorite dish. I missed the dry rice with fried fish my mom usually made because some of the ingredients are scarce here.

I came to America to get advanced education, meet different people, make friends, learn new things and places. I have never stopped watching Christmas movies because I love the winter season and I've always wished to feel a snow. I arrived August 26 2016, at the age of 17. The first food that I tried had so much cheese and it tasted different. We still cook okra soup and fufu here, but only on Sundays.

Serves 3 people

Ingredients:

For the Okra Soup


20 pieces of okra
5 pieces of green pepper
½ yellow onion
2 Teaspoon of tomato paste
2 maggi crayfish
1 teaspoon salt
½-1 lb of beef cut into 1 inch cubes
(optional)
8 pieces of shrimp
5 pieces of fish (any firm fish)
2 pieces of dried and smoked fish
(you can get it at seafood Boston
company)
½ Tsp Goya Adobo (Spice Mix)

For the FUFU

2 cups of cassava fufu flour

Instructions for Okra Soup:

1. Chop/Grater the okra into half-inch rounds.
2. Chop the onion and the pepper into half inch pieces.
3. Season the meat, shrimp, dried and smoke fish together with Goya Adobo season in a pot.
4. Then add ½ cup of water and let it boil for 8 minutes.
5. Season the-fresh fish with Goya Adobo season then fry it till it is cooked, when it is done frying put it aside in a bowl.
6. Fry the okra with the tomato, chopped onions and pepper for about 6-10 minutes.
7. Add the 2 maggi crayfish and 1 teaspoon salt to the okra.
8. Add one cup of water to the okra.
9. Add the fried fish, meat, shrimp, dried and smoked fish to the okra and boil about 15-30 minute



Instructions for Fufu:

1. Put ½ cup of water into the pot and let it get warm/ tepid.
2. Place the cassava fufu flour into the tepid water then stir with a wooden spoon.
3. Add warm water as needed, keep stirring vigorously until cooked through. This would take about 10-15 minutes to be thick enough to scoop up and dip into soup.
4. When cooked, dish it up from the pot in a plate or bowl and let it get cool.
5. Make it into a ball of fufu. It's ready to be served!!

Quipe

Lesly
Dominican Republic

El Quipe is a Dominican dish, it is the favorite snack of many Dominican people and can be obtained anywhere in Dominican Republic. The Quipe is a snack and people eat it all year. It is also often consumed in time like Christmas.

I remember when I was a child and I was seven years old I remember that at Christmas time my mother always cooked Quipe for the best night of the year, December 24. My family all got together to eat the famous dinner of the 24th. I remember that I helped my mother to prepare the pieces and she was in charge of frying. Those are good memories that I share with that meal.

The quipe is one of the most known snacks in Latin America. It was introduced to America in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, thanks to the hundreds of immigrants who traveled to the United States they brought their food and the famous Quipe that many Latin people loved and became popular here.

I do not cook them anymore. The last time I did it was my last Christmas in Santo Domingo in 2015. I think I do not cook them anymore because they remind me of my house there which I miss.


Serves 3 people

Ingredients:

1 cup bulgur
1 qt. of water, divided
1 lb of ground beef
1 bell pepper, chopped small
1 small onion, chopped small
3 teaspoon of salt
1/2 cup tomato
1/4 cup raisins
2 cups oil for frying
1/4 teaspoon of pepper

Instructions:

1. Put the bulgar in a bowl and add enough water to cover and let it sit in for 3 hrs, stir a couple of times while it rests.
2. Pulse onion and basil in the food processor until you obtain a coarse paste.
3. In a bowl, mix meat, bell pepper, basil and onion. Add a pinch of pepper and 2 teaspoons of salt.
4. Using your hands mix the meat with the vegetables until you get a uniform mixture.
5. Separate in thirds and set aside 2/3 of the meat.
6. Now season the meat to your liking.
7. Drain the leftover water from the bulgur and sieve to get rid of all the water. I suggest squeezing the bulgur with a clean cotton tea towel if you are not sure if there's water left after sieving.
8. Add the remaining raw meat to the bulgur (the 2/3 you set aside).
9. With your hands mix the bulgur and raw meat, kneading it until it is mixed uniformly. This is a key step, the better mixed this is, the better chances of it not breaking apart in the hot oil. Knead for your life! If you want, you can also pulse for a couple of minutes in the food processor for a more compact texture.

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10. Put 2 tablespoons of the mixture on the palm of your hands and roll into a ball.
 11. Make a deep indentation in the ball.
 12. Place 1 tablespoon of the filling in the indentation.
 13. Gather around the hole, closing it, and roll the Quipe with the palm of your hands making it as compact as possible. Pinch the ends to give it its traditional shape (They are round and at the ends it is pulled a little to make it slightly pointy).
 14. Refrigerate for at least 3 hours.
 15. When it is time to fry them give them another quick squeeze to make them even more compact.
 16. Heat the remaining oil in a frying pot over medium heat. The oil has to be very hot, cool oil will make your Quipe break down and possibly ruin the oil too.
 17. Being very, very careful with splatters, fry your Quipes, preferably one at a time, dropping them in the oil with a slotted spoon to avoid burning yourself.

Habichuelas con Dulce

Anderson

Dominican Republic

Habichuelas con dulce is one of the most delicious desserts in the Dominican Republic. Habichuelas con dulce has a tradition in the DR, it is cooked during the Holy Week, but if you would like to, you can cook it whenever you want.

When the Holy Week comes, my father buys all the ingredients and my mother makes the Habichuelas con dulce. The Holy Week starts in April and it's a whole week of vacation. When I eat Habichuelas con dulce it reminds me of my family and my country because every Holy Week all my family members used to meet together in my house in Santo Domingo and make Habichuelas con dulce and have a lot of fun.

Habichuelas con dulce is made of beans but it doesn't taste like the normal beans, the flavor changes so much to become a very sweet dish.

I came to America one year ago, I came with my father and my two brothers, my mother was already here. We came to New York through the airport John F. Kennedy, we saw a little bit of NY and then we came to Lowell by bus. My arrival in Lowell was so exciting and happy because my brothers and I saw our mother again, we had three years without seeing her. I have missed my family, friends and food back in the Dominican Republic since I came here, but my mother still cooks a lot of those foods including the Habichuelas con dulce, so when I eat them I remember all the guys of my neighborhood meeting together and having a lot of fun eating Habichuelas con dulce.

Serves 6 people

Ingredients:

1½ lb of red beans
1 lb of sugar
2 cans of Carnation Evaporated Milk
1 lb of sweet potato
1 can of coconut milk
Salt to taste
¼ spoon of sweet clove
Cinnamon to taste
2 small boxes of raisins (optional)
2 Tbsp butter
A little bit of vanilla

Instructions:

1. Soften the beans by putting the beans in a pot with abundant water, approximately 3 liters, and boil, adding more water if is necessary. It takes around 1 hour and 30 minutes for the beans to get soft.
2. Add a little bit of water (½ liter) to the beans after they have softened, put it in the blender and mix it for 8 minutes, then strain it.
3. Peel the sweet potato and cut it in very small pieces (¼ inch each slice).
4. Add to the water and beans, the sweet potato, sugar, cinnamon, clove and salt in a large pot and bring to a boil.
5. When it start to boil, add: Carnation Evaporated Milk, 1 coconut milk, raisins, 2 butter spoons and 1 black vanilla.
6. Let it boil for about 45 minutes to 1 hour.
7. Let it get cool and it's ready to serve.



Bánh Da Lợn

(Steamed Layer Cake)

Thanh

Vietnam

Banh Da Lon is a dish from Vietnam, and is served to visitor in your house. This dish is only served for dessert. This dish has the color and layers like a pig's skin, the green color represent the skin and the yellow represent the fat. My sister cooks this dish for the family when we want to eat it.

My mom helps my sister to cook Banh Da Lon. We only eat layer cake for dessert but people eat this dish all year long. The best part of cooking this steam layer cake with my sister is that while were preparing the flour mix, we always are fighting and yelling at each other about who got to mix the starch, after the fights I always won. This story keeps coming back to me when we cook this cake.

I came to America when I was 11 years old, because my aunt applied for immigrant documents to take our family to America to have a better life. When I came to America I missed my country's food a lot and I thought about going back to my country. Than after a few years in America my sister learned how to cook Vietnamese food and what most impressed me is she cooked steam layer cake. When I eat this cake in America I feel like I am in Vietnam. It brings all of my memories back in my mind and sometimes I almost cry. The thing I miss the most is the food and the place I lived, and of course I can't forget my relatives in my country: grandma, uncle and aunt.

Serves 6 people

Ingredients:

200g of Tapioca starch
50g of Rice Flour
1 tsp of pandan extract or
(five pandan leaves)*
100g of peeled mung bean
250g of sugar
Half of 1/8 tsp of salt
400ml coconut milk
300 ml water

*Pandan extract is made from
pandan leaves.

Instructions:

1. Rinse the beans over a few times and soak the beans in water for 1 hour.
2. Add water to cover the beans and put them in a rice cooker until done, they should steam for 15-20 minutes until soft.
3. In a saucepan over low heat, dissolve sugar and salt in coconut milk and water. Let cool. In a large bowl, combine tapioca starch, rice flour and the coconut mixture. Stir well until dissolved.
4. In a blender, combine 350ml (1 + 1/2 cup) of the above batter with the cooked mung beans and blend until smooth. You will get a yellow batter.
5. Add pandan extract to the remaining batter. You will get a green batter. (To make pandan extract, blend 5 finely chopped pandan leaves with 120ml (1/2 cup) water and extract the juice)

6. Rub the pan (round cake pan with tall sides) with vegetable oil. Fill the pan with the green batter to a depth of $\frac{1}{2}$ inch (1cm). (Measure with a ladle or cup and remember the amount). Cover and put in a double-steamer pot and steam for a few minutes until slightly set. Then add the same amount of the yellow batter. Then add another $\frac{1}{2}$ " layer of green batter. Steam until slightly set. Then add another layer of yellow batter. Continue until you have finished all the batter.
7. After the last layer, steam the whole cake for another 15 minutes. When you poke the center of the cake with a chopstick and see no batter spilling, it is done.
8. Let cool completely and cut into pieces with a greased knife. You can keep the cake in the refrigerator up to 2-3 days. Microwave for 30-45 seconds when you serve it on the next days. Then let it cool and it is good to eat again.



Malasadas

Ricardo

Portugal

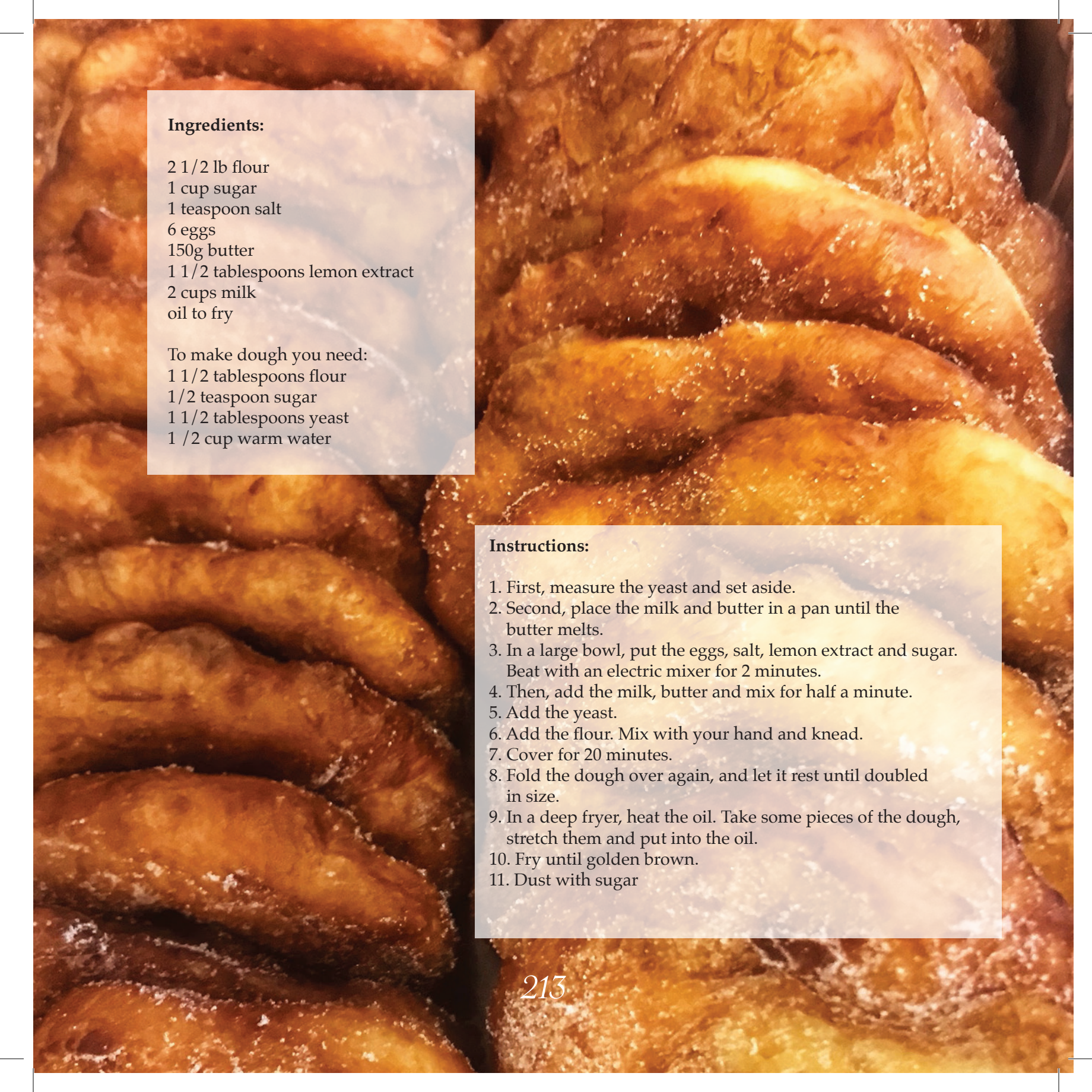
Malasadas is a very common dessert in Portugal. Malasadas are seen mostly at big holidays, for example Carnival, Easter, and finally Christmas. This dessert was originally for Christmas, but then people started making it whenever there was an event or an important holiday. At the time when Jesus was about to be born, a poor family had nothing to offer young Jesus. This poor family had a few things: a lemon, a bit of cornstarch, yeast, and finally sugar. The family started creating foods with those materials, in the end they came up with “Malasadas”.

Malasadas have a very sweet taste, once you put a bit in your mouth you’ll eat it until it’s gone, without stopping. This dessert is special for me because the first time I tried it was at Christmas, which is my favorite holiday. My family and I were having a nice and long family dinner. Almost all the family members were there, those are the days you feel happiness, and joy to be present at that time. I’ve never tried to cook Malasadas because my mom cooks it all the time. By the way, my Mom’s food is the best.

When I first came to United States, I was excited for the first 2 weeks, but after that it got harder for me to say “I love the U.S.”. The first state I lived in, in the United States was Florida, it was beautiful and calm. Every Saturday night, me and my family used to go to the Portuguese Club to meet our friends, eat, have fun, play, and dance. What was new to me was the schools, it was very different from my country. In my country you would have one hour to eat lunch, if you finished eating you could either go to the students community room or outside to play soccer. In the U.S.A. schools you had 20 minutes to eat and then you had to go to class right away. I hated it. Sometimes I could feel it just wasn’t enough time, and the food I was like “wow” and at the same time I didn’t like it. In Portugal, we don’t eat a burger or a slice of pizza in school we eat Portuguese meals for example “spaghetti ah la portuguesa” which means Portuguese Spaghetti, we eat “Empadao de atum” and other good things. Coming to the United States was like being born again, starting everything from zero, it was hard in the beginning but after that I began to feel stabilized.

When I eat Malasadas it makes me remember my grandmother, my aunties, and my mom together talking and laughing while making it and my uncles and my father outside together. It was one of the best days of my life and I promised myself that I would have a day like that again.

Serves 10 people, 2 or more malasadas for each



Ingredients:

2 1/2 lb flour
1 cup sugar
1 teaspoon salt
6 eggs
150g butter
1 1/2 tablespoons lemon extract
2 cups milk
oil to fry

To make dough you need:

1 1/2 tablespoons flour
1/2 teaspoon sugar
1 1/2 tablespoons yeast
1 /2 cup warm water

Instructions:

1. First, measure the yeast and set aside.
2. Second, place the milk and butter in a pan until the butter melts.
3. In a large bowl, put the eggs, salt, lemon extract and sugar. Beat with an electric mixer for 2 minutes.
4. Then, add the milk, butter and mix for half a minute.
5. Add the yeast.
6. Add the flour. Mix with your hand and knead.
7. Cover for 20 minutes.
8. Fold the dough over again, and let it rest until doubled in size.
9. In a deep fryer, heat the oil. Take some pieces of the dough, stretch them and put into the oil.
10. Fry until golden brown.
11. Dust with sugar