

Potlucks

Hi, Fred Nelson for Community Comment,

The following words or phrases mean one thing. Can you tell me what it is? Consider these: "spread", "Jacobs Supper", "faith supper", "covered dish supper", "dish party", "bring and share", "shared lunch", "pitch-in", "carry-in", "bring a plate", "dish to pass" and "fuddle". You have probably guessed by now that they all refer to "pot luck". Pot lucks go back many years and are still popular to this day. Pot luck lunches and dinners can be organized by a small group such as a family or they can consist of large groups such as churches and lodges or most any other organization. Sharing a meal with family and friends is an informal way to enjoy the company of others and bring people closer together. Looking back over the years, there have been a few changes as to preparing the food involved and its presentation. Years ago, food selection was limited to what the housewife might have had on hand, but the food was lovingly prepared as the dish would represent a family and the person who prepared it. A woman could be very popular and demand much respect by her peers if the dish was tasty using the finest ingredients. No better place to exchange recipes so the lady of the house could take home a new recipe and dazzle her family with a tasty meal. Hot dishes and casseroles (for instance baked beans or a tamale pie) were always popular and still are. So are some types of Jello salad. Macaroni and potato salads have also been popular over the years. Then, of course, the dessert: pies, cakes and cookies. Imagine if you will, the early days of the wood and coal fired cook stove. The stove had to be brought up to cooking temperature and the cooked food had to be kept hot until serving time. No doubt the location of the pot luck affair was not just around the corner from the house so there were transportation and insulation problems. In today's potluck world the participant can visit his or her favorite deli, picking out a prepared potato or macaroni salad or maybe some fried chicken or cold cuts. Other options might be a prepared vegetable platter or a fruit salad. Drop by the bakery for cakes and pies or some other sweet goodie that you might consider. Now that does not hold true with all participants. There are still those ladies that will take the time and effort to prepare pot luck dishes the old fashioned way and my hat is off to them. Next time you attend one of these affairs, if you arrive early enough, watch those ladies who bring in their home made dishes and see how they fuss over the presentation on the table. If you find a person who made one of the "special" dishes, why not give her a compliment. She deserves one.

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