

Topic: Food and Food Practices

Abstract: My family practices different food cultures. We have a mix of foods that we eat. My parents decided that we should eat the leftovers in the fridge. We pray before eating to bless the food. We eat Italian, Irish, Mexican, Southern, and Japanese food. I explain where the food we are eating comes from and why the family eats it. I also talk about the interaction my family has when they eat together.

Keywords: Family food practices, meal, family, adopted, stepsiblings, ethnically, culturally, culture, inherited, leftovers, cooking, eating dinner, spaghetti, corned beef, potatoes, beans, rice, garlic bread, cornbread, cabbage, vegetable stir-fry, Teriyaki chicken, prayers, fruit salad, Roman Catholic, Baptist, Spanish, Japanese, Mexican, Southern, Italian, Irish.

Ethnic Designation: White

Cultural Category: Food and Food Practices and Family Interaction

A Blended Dinner Of Skips

I am going to write my Cultural Narrative Essay on my family's food practices. My family, being a family in which most of the kids are either adopted or stepsiblings, is a very ethnically and culturally diverse family. All of us practice a mixture of cultural practices, some of which are outside the already inherited family mix. The best story that I think relates to this concept is one that involves the diversity of the foods my family eats. One incident that I think best describes this is the dinner that my family about a year ago in which when we were all eating and finishing off our 'skips' or leftovers.

Our parents had decided that our fridge was getting too full of leftovers that needed to be finished off. So instead of cooking in dinner they had all us kids retrieve the leftovers from the fridge and set the table in preparation for eating dinner. We got out

leftover Spaghetti, corned beef from St. Patrick's Day dinner (all the cabbage had already been eaten, beans, rice, mashed potatoes, cornbread, Vegetable Stir-fry, boiled potatoes, and Teriyaki Chicken. Once every necessary condiment and piece of silverware was on the table, and everyone was seated in their proper places, we said prayers.

My mother is Roman Catholic and my father is Baptist, but mom made herself responsible for our religious upbringing. So all we kids were raised Catholic. In accordance with our upbringing, we attended Mass every Sunday, pray to Jesus, God, and the Saints, and make the sign of the Cross when we pray for dinner. When we were finished with our prayer, we began to eat our dinner.

The twins, who are thought to be half-Mexican-American picked beans, rice, lettuce and cheese and made a burrito and a taco respectively, along with eating some leftover spaghetti and Teriyaki Chicken. They debated as to whether burritos or tacos tasted better and who's favorite Screamo band played better music. Having learned Spanish in school at a young age, they switched back and forth between Spanish and English in their conversation.

My younger sister, who is black and has a strong fascination with Japanese culture, ate rice with milk and sugar, Teriyaki chicken, corned beef, and mashed potatoes. She and I talked about the Manga and Anime that she was into right now. She practiced her very limited knowledge of Japanese by asking for her food in Japanese. Which annoyed the twins who don't know any Japanese. So they annoyed her back by asking for their food in Spanish, which annoyed my sister because she doesn't know any Spanish.

My mom, who is Irish, but raised by Italians, was eating boiled potatoes, corned beef, vegetable stir-fry, and rice. She joked that her Irish blood must be showing because

of her food preferences. She also told my younger siblings that they should learn from each other's languages, rather use them to annoy each other. My siblings listened to her because everyone else at the table understood very little Japanese or Spanish, which hindered us in the passing of the required food. She then turned her attention to me, who was eating mashed potatoes, vegetable stir-fry, beans, and rice, and is who is thought to be French. She asked me how school was going So I told her about the research paper that I was doing on the Vikings for History class. The topic of my research paper immediately piqued my dad's interest, who is very interested in history and genealogy. He was eating mashed potatoes, vegetable stir-fry, beans, and rice. My dad id of Swedish decent but is from Mississippi. He discussed Viking history with me and even hypothesized that he was probably descended from the Vikings because of his Swedish bloodline. He then commented , off topic, that he wished that he had thought to use the leftover beans to make some bean soup to complement the cornbread, as this food combination is apparently very popular in the south.

When he expressed an interest in making said food tomorrow, my mom told him "No" because "Southern Bean soup and cornbread would not go very well with Italian Spaghetti and Garlic bread." "Why not?" My teenage sister commented, "We are already eating Irish, Italian, Mexican, Southern, and Japanese food." My mom pointed out that we were eating very small portions of skips right now. Then explained that the spaghetti, bean soup, garlic bread, and corn bread would be too much food.

My older brother, who is not adopted and loved history as much as my dad does, commented that I should do my next Research paper on the Celts, as they have had an interesting history as well. He explained some of that history and the traditions that have

been passed down. Such as us celebrating St. Patrick's day, by eating corned beef and cabbage, our Roman Catholic religion, that many of the older siblings have Irish names, and the story of how the tale of 'Jack of the Lantern' got its place in Halloween tradition (Jack's original lantern was a carved potato, not a pumpkin. That was changed when the Irish tradition moved to areas where potatoes were uncommon and pumpkins were plentiful.)

After several minutes of this conversation, my siblings, none of them lovers of history, asked if they could get dessert. Seeing that everyone was finished, my mom said that they could. Me, my brother, and my dad continued to discuss Celtic history during dessert. I understand that this leisurely, social, relaxed way of having a family meal is from Italian culture. For dessert itself, we had ambrosia fruit salad, that my dad had made, saying that he'd learned how to make it from his mother. I not sure what ethnicity this dish is from, but my family enjoys it, nonetheless.