

The Day Mom Blew Up Dinner!

My family and friends know that I like to cook. When my children were young and home all the time, it could be a chore. But now that they're grown and on their own, it's a creative outlet and fun! Sometimes I experiment, but most often rely on tried and true favorites.

Several weeks ago, I decided to make a batch of "chicken enchiladas," adapted from several recipes to come up with my version. (That's another thing I like about cooking now – most of the time I only have to cook what I like!) I also made a pot of "Tony Packo's chili" – a mix from my favorite restaurant in Toledo, Ohio, where I grew up. Tony Packo's is a great Hungarian place mentioned many times on the TV show "M*A*S*H" by the character "Klinger", played by Jamie Farr, who is also from Toledo. I fixed all this and put it in the freezer.

Later that week I called my three children and invited them for Sunday dinner. Two out of three still ask, "What did you fix?" Some things never change! I knew the enchiladas were one of their favorites, the chili, mine, so they had no problem accepting. It's not always easy coordinating everyone's schedules to get them all together at the same time.

Come Sunday, everyone arrives for dinner. My house is small, so even three children, one girlfriend and a four year old tornado of a grandson make a full house. Going back and forth, from the kitchen to the living room, to keep up with conversations keeps me hopping. Dinner is close to being finished.

The last thing to do is cook a pot of macaroni to go with the chili. Still going back and forth, kitchen to living room to kitchen, I put the pot on to boil. Too hot, it boils over. Adjust the heat. Enchiladas are done. I pull a beautiful, golden brown casserole out of the oven and set it on top of the stove. Oops! Turned the macaroni down too low and it's not even simmering. Turn the burner back up and back to the living room. A bad move on my part.

I haven't been in the living room long when we all hear a crash! Knowing that we have several curious cats, we imagine that one of them has knocked something off a counter top. We go to survey the damage. Not a cat at all!

In trying to keep up with everything, I accidentally turned up the wrong burner, the one under the enchiladas, and overheated the Pyrex dish they were in. It exploded all over my kitchen. The gooey enchiladas partially held the dish together. Glass was everywhere! And please don't even mention the smell and smoke, because the bottom of the casserole was burnt black.

Luckily no one was in the kitchen when it happened. Windows were opened, the kitchen aired out and the mess was quickly cleaned up. The chili was saved – it did have a lid covering it. However, glass may have been in the macaroni because it was uncovered. It was tossed.

My daughter, not being a great chili fan, decided to order pizza. That night we dined on take- out pizza and chili. This was one dinner, the day mom blew up dinner, that my children (me, too!) will never forget. My best laid plans were literally up in smoke and pieces of glass!

I share this with you because, after all was said and done, it was funny!

Also to let you know that if you want to be creative with your cooking, the Bartholomew County Public Library has many, many cookbooks to give you ideas.

New ones come in every week. We have cookbooks featuring TV chefs like Rachel Ray, Jamie Oliver, Sara Moulton and Emeril Lagasse. Classics like Betty Crocker, Julia Child and Fannie Farmer can take you step-by-step to the perfect meal. Foods from foreign lands, dishes that help you get thin, casseroles to comfort, fix-ups from mixes, vegetarian delights - if you have ingredients, we probably have a cookbook that contains them.

Some of my favorite cookbooks are: [Cheap, Fast, Good](#), [Bread: A Baker's Book of Techniques and Recipes](#), [Death By Chocolate](#) and [Gooseberry Patch Family Favorites!](#) Cooking can be an adventure. Come to the Library and get started on yours. But please, be careful!

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