

MONEY
No retirement savings at 50? It's not too late to catch up. **D4**

CLEANING
7 ways to use vinegar to clean your home. **D7**

Home

THE EPOCH TIMES

D1 MARCH 13-19, 2024



ST. PATRICK'S DAY
Celebrate with bangers and mash in a Guinness-onion gravy. **D5**

COURTESY OF STACY LYN HARRIS



Stacy Lyn Harris is a homeschooling mom of seven, cookbook author, public speaker, and television show host.

The True Spirit of Southern Hospitality

For Stacy Lyn Harris, understanding this ‘love language of the South’ began at Granny’s table

By Ryan Cashman

“Southern hospitality” evokes images of front porches and pies resting on open window sills. For some, the concept may appear to be nothing more than a cultural stereotype.

Stacy Lyn Harris disagrees. For the Montgomery, Alabama, native, Southern hospitality is more than a collection of clichés—it’s a dynamic part of life. A homeschooling mom of seven, cookbook author, public speaker, and host of “The Sporting Chef” television show, Ms. Harris is the epitome of the American “can-do” attitude, coupled with charm and grace. In her new

cookbook, “Love Language of the South,” she weaves a comforting tapestry of personal anecdotes and recipes that shows the true spirit of hospitality.

Putting others’ needs above your own is at the heart of hospitality.

Stacy Lyn Harris

“Putting others’ needs above your own is at the heart of hospitality,” Ms. Harris said. “I encourage people to leave their baggage—and phones—at the door, come in, sit down, have fresh tea and a bite to eat, and lay their souls out. Or not. It depends on the need. Someone might have the need to be silent and just be.”

“Nine times out of 10,” she said, “sweet tea, a slice of homemade cake, or a warm meal is hospitality’s accompaniment.”

Continued on D2

How to Create a Lush, Low-Maintenance Front Yard

The ultimate front yard garden is beautiful and welcoming without all the fuss

By Sandy Lindsey

A beautiful front yard does much more than just showcase the homeowner’s wonderful sense of style, attention to detail, and pride of ownership—it also helps foster a sense of community by promoting social interaction. There’s no better icebreaker than talking about plants. It also helps build local pride by enhancing the overall aesthetic of the neighborhood.

When it comes to homeownership, everyone’s heard the term “keeping up with the Joneses.” In this case, why not be the “Joneses” with the most well-designed and well-manicured front yard in the neighborhood? Normally, this would

involve a lot of ongoing maintenance, but by following a few simple design guidelines, ease of care can be built in from the start.

Fighting Mother Nature is one of the reasons most gardeners do a lot of unnecessary work.

Lavish Simplicity

Every detail in a design should be chosen with lower maintenance in mind. For example, a high-maintenance situation such as a steep slope that is difficult to mow can be replaced with a hardy, undemanding ground cover that doesn’t require mowing but will add texture and even color to the yard. Similarly, instead of putting in traditional hedges that need to be trimmed regularly, opt for dwarf conifers, small ornamental shrubs that

Continued on D3

▶ Hanging plants draw the eye upward.



ROMAKOMA/SHUTTERSTOCK

The True Spirit of Southern Hospitality

Continued from D1

INSPIRED BY GRANNY’S KITCHEN

True hospitality is about authenticity, not perfection. Ms. Harris learned this authenticity through the years spent eating food in her grandmother’s kitchen.

“The most comforting food I’ve ever had came from my Granny’s kitchen,” she said. “She always had fresh seasonal vegetables from the farmers market or canned vegetables in her makeshift cabinet on the wall. Her attentiveness to me, the care to put my favorite things on the table, and her over-pouring service made me feel special, and could heal any wrong in my life.”

Ms. Harris recalls that Granny’s kitchen was far from perfect. Plastic tablecloths and mismatched dishes carried the foods that influenced Ms. Harris’s entire life.

Over the years, Ms. Harris attempted to convince her grandmother to write down her recipes. This persistence was met with recipe cards that listed only the ingredients, with no measurements or cooking directions. Ms. Harris got in the habit of using her father as a taste tester, looking to

see if she was getting things exactly right.

“It was a lot of trial and error,” she said.

Ms. Harris was grateful to spend time with her grandmother, who grew ill and died after an extended hospital stay. It was then that the importance of true hospitality hit home.

In the South, whenever a relative dies, homemade food invariably finds its way to your doorstep.

“People are just showering you with care and love,” Ms. Harris said. “When a close member of your family dies, you can’t even think. It’s such a crazy time, and to realize that it was almost like God himself fed you during that time, it’s just a real blessing that Southerners really do show up.”

Granny’s memory now lives on in those interpreted recipe cards and several of Ms. Harris’s favorite recipes from the book. Memory is attached to food, so whenever Ms. Harris prepares Granny’s fried jalapeño cornbread, famous fried chicken, or meat and vegetable soup, there is always a little bit of Granny in the room.

“I feel like she’s there with me when I’m eating that soup. I feel the same comfort that I felt at her table. So, the feeling of her being there is still with me, and it’s a legacy, for me, that I want to leave to my children,” she said.

LEAVING A LEGACY

Ms. Harris thinks occasionally about her own funeral and what her kids will say. She believes that it’s important to do this because it forces her to think about the type of legacy she wants to leave.

“I think the biggest thing I want to leave my kids with is that they saw me serving and meeting the needs of Scott [her husband], and that I took care of



Ms. Harris with her husband, Scott.

them and served them,” she said.

Early in her marriage, Ms. Harris learned to make good use of the wild game that her husband brought in from his countless hunting excursions. Though she was originally opposed to the frequency of those trips, she decided that, instead of fighting about it, she would support her husband’s passion and learn to incorporate game meats into the family menu. Venison, for

instance, became the special ingredient that gives her favorite chili recipe its deep, earthy flavor. Her expertise in cooking wild game has now brought her widespread recognition, and to Ms. Harris, it serves as a testament to the strength of her marriage.

Food continues to be at the center of their cherished family traditions, big and small. The freshness that she remembers flowing from her grandmother’s kitchen thrives

Young Stacy Lyn Harris with her grandmother.



FRIED JALAPENO CORNBREAD (HOT WATER CORNBREAD)

If the oil isn’t hot enough, the batter will absorb the oil, and you won’t get that crunchy exterior and creamy interior. Also, I strongly recommend that you make two batches—they disappear as you make them!

SERVES 10

- 2 cups self-rising cornmeal
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 jalapeño, seeded and chopped
- 2 to 2 1/2 cups boiling water
- 1/4 cup bacon drippings, for frying
- 1/4 cup vegetable oil, for frying

In a medium-sized bowl, mix cornmeal, salt, jalapeño, and water together. You’ll want the consistency of thick cake batter. If it is too dry, add a little more hot water.

In a cast iron skillet, heat bacon drippings and oil until almost smoking. You will know that the oil is hot when a few drops of water sizzle when dropped into the skillet.

Drop 2 tablespoons of cornmeal mixture into the oil and brown until golden crust forms around the edges of the cornbread, about 2 minutes. Then turn and brown until cornbread is golden on the outside. Add more oil and/or bacon drippings if the skillet becomes too dry. Remove to a paper towel to drain and serve hot.

In the South, whenever a relative dies, homemade food invariably finds its way to your doorstep.



Frying in oil gives this cornbread a crispy exterior and a creamy interior.

STACY LYN’S AWARD-WINNING CHILI

Always make sure that your venison is dry and the skillet is super-hot before you brown the meat. Browning enhances the flavor of the dish by giving it more depth of flavor. The “secret ingredient” in this award-winning chili is the yellow corn mix; Jiffy Corn Mix is my favorite. It gives the perfect earthiness to this dish. By the way, to make this dish go further, serve over rice.

SERVES 12

- 116-ounce can of tomatoes, diced
- 3 teaspoons minced canned chipotle peppers in adobo sauce
- 5 slices bacon, finely chopped
- 3 pounds venison stew meat or beef chuck, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- 3 pounds ground beef
- Kosher salt
- Pepper
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 1 jalapeño pepper, seeded and chopped
- 1 can kidney beans
- 3 tablespoons chili powder
- 11/2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 11/2 teaspoons oregano
- 4 garlic cloves, minced

- 4 cups beef broth
- 1 tablespoon packed brown sugar
- 2 tablespoons yellow corn mix

In a food processor, place tomatoes and chipotle peppers and purée until smooth (This should take only about 10 seconds). In a Dutch oven, cook the bacon over medium heat until crisp. Transfer bacon to a paper towel. Leave the fat in the pan.

Pat venison dry and season with salt and pepper. Heat the fat until smoking hot. Brown half of the venison. (Do not crowd the pan or the meat will steam instead of brown). This should take about 6 to 8 minutes. Using a slotted spoon, transfer to a bowl and repeat.

Add the olive oil, onions, and jalapeño to Dutch oven and cook for about 5 minutes or until softened. Stir in kidney beans, chili powder, cumin, oregano, and garlic. Cook for about 30 seconds. Stir in broth, tomato mixture, and brown sugar and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer, covered, for 1 hour. Uncover and simmer for about 30 minutes longer.

Ladle 1 cup chili liquid into a medium-sized bowl and stir in yellow corn mix. Whisk mixture into chili and simmer until chili thickens. Check seasonings. Serve with a dollop of sour cream or cheese and Jalapeño Cornbread.



The secret to this award-winning chili is in the yellow corn mix.

