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from April 2021  
Key Peninsula News

Food is love. Food is history. Food is a story.

Most families have recipes passed down from preceding generations. It's not because they are gourmet or have exotic ingredients; they can be simple or laborious. What they have in common is a timeline filled with memories, like families that relish the joyful task of making Christmas tamales with, of course, plenty of extra for everyone to take some home.

I have a dear friend who loves dim sum as much as I do. Years ago, she gave me her mother's recipe for dim sum dough. It's very simple and a lot of work, but that's not the point. Decades later, after eating all over Seattle's Chinatown, chasing down new dim sum places, as well as making our own dim sum feasts together, we still glorify in these little packages of Chinese delight.

In Shanghai, we toured with abandon the miles of old alleyways filled with food stalls and were saddened to see them disappearing, as a whole community was displaced through gentrification. There was such a food history, gone to the next generation, stinky tofu and all.

Our family has two recipes that are stars at many of our celebrations. They are both unique cultural treasures that are easy to prepare.

The ceviche comes from my husband Herald's Latin American family. Ceviche in Ecuador is like stew — every family has its own version. This recipe calls for cooked shrimp, making it more palatable for those who shy away from the “raw” seafood ordinarily cooked by the citric acid of lime juice. The other ingredient, a staple in his stepmother's country of Peru, is popcorn. It sounds crazy, but a few kernels of popcorn dropped into the lemony juices and spooned up with a succulent shrimp are a wild explosion of flavor that is unique.

The second recipe, Kraut Kuchens, comes from my childhood. My neighbors in Walla Walla were a large German family, and as I was treated like another sibling, often lost in the mix, this recipe by Mary Jo Hartzheim was handed down to me.

### Ecuadorian Shrimp Ceviche

3 pounds medium shrimp, peeled and deveined  
1 large white onion, slivered  
10 lemons, juiced and 1 tablespoon zest  
1 large tomato, diced  
1 cup parsley, finely chopped  
1/3 cup ketchup  
3 tablespoons olive oil  
salt, pepper and hot sauce to taste  
unbuttered, unseasoned popped corn

Bring 1½ cups of water to a boil. Add shrimp and cook for 5 minutes. Do not overcook. When done, strain to reserve shrimp water. Chill shrimp. In a glass bowl stir in shrimp water, lemon juice, zest, ketchup, oil, hot sauce, and salt and pepper. Add the rest of the ingredients and stir to combine. Cover with plastic wrap and chill until ready to serve.

Meanwhile, pop a large bowl of air-popped or old-fashioned popped popcorn. Don't add butter or seasonings.

Dish up ceviche in a bowl with a fair amount of juice. Serve with a small bowl of popcorn on the side. To eat, drop in a few kernels of popcorn into the ceviche, so the popcorn absorbs a little of the juices. Adding too much popcorn at a time will have a disappointing, soggy effect.

### Kraut Kuchens

1 pound ground pork and ½ pound ground beef  
1 cup onion, diced  
1 cup celery, diced  
2 to 3 cups of good sauerkraut like Steinfelds, drained and squeezed dry  
16 Rhodes Frozen Dinner Rolls, or your favorite dinner roll recipe  
1 egg and 2 tablespoons water for egg wash

Preheat oven to 350. While yeast dough rises, make the filling. Brown ground meat and reserve to paper towel. Remove excess fat, leaving 1 tablespoon to sauté veggies, cooking halfway through, leaving them still crisp. Add back the meat and season to taste. Add sauerkraut, stir to combine and heat through.

Next, roll golf-ball sized dough balls on a floured board into oblongs. Put 1 large spoonful of filling into center of dough. Bring four corners together like an envelope, using a finger of egg wash to help seal. Place kuchens seam side down on a greased cookie sheet and brush with egg wash. Bake 25 minutes. Serve with sour cream and mustard. Makes 16.

*We'd love to feature a dish from your KP kitchen that friends and family ask for. Email the details to [editor@keypennews.org](mailto:editor@keypennews.org) with your phone number; we'll be in touch. (Don't worry, we do most of the writing.)*