

Heritage Recipes

You can share old family recipes and traditions

Mama's Strawberry Jelly In Loving Memory of Patsy Marie Paul Submitted by Melissa



Many times the heart of a recipe is one of the most important ingredients included. The memories and the love are just as important as the sugar, flour and butter, etc. This is how I feel about Mama's Strawberry Jelly.

Mama passed away in 1995, leaving behind a husband, 6 children and their families to cherish her memory. She also had her first great-grandchild on the way. That little one is now 14 years old. Her name is Hannah Marie (the Marie is after my Mother) and I am her godmother. My goal has been to make my Mother as real to Hannah and the other grandchildren as possible by sharing recipes and memories.

Please accept this special gift of Mama's strawberry jelly recipe as a token of our love. For you see, it's the result of group effort. First, God grew the ripe, fragrant berries and Mama loved them so much that she wanted to have enough to last through the winter months. So, she sent Daddy to the store to buy an ample supply. Next, we washed and sliced them and put them in the freezer. Mama enjoyed them until she was called away to Heaven. After she was gone, the berries waited patiently to be used, but I left them alone. I made the excuse that I was too busy to do anything with them. But, now I realize that I just wanted to keep something that Mama had touched and enjoyed. Preparing those berries was one of the last projects we did together.

Years earlier, when I was a young bride, Mama had bought me my first canning equipment. She was always interested in what kind of jam, jelly or pickle I was trying out at the time. What could be more fitting than to make jelly out of Mama's strawberries? While I made the jelly, my heart was happy and sad all at the same time. My heart ached because I missed her so much (it still does). My heart also sang because nothing would make Mama more happy than to share another gift with the ones she loved. She would be grateful to touch our everyday life in a way that we could see, smell and taste.

I shared the jelly with my family and I hoped that as they enjoyed it they would remember the light in Mama's eyes and see her beautiful smile. I hoped they would feel the warmth of her hand close to their heart. Those little jars of jelly were packed with Mama's love! She wanted to be remembered. She loved everyone so much and she would never want to be forgotten. She would want her memory to live on even as she is alive in her new life in Heaven. I couldn't bring myself to open my jar of jelly. It was too precious. What could I do with it? It had to be something special. I decided to enter it in the fair we used to have here in town very fourth of July. For years I had entered lots of cakes, pies, jellies and preserves and Mama always insisted that I call as soon as I had found out where I had placed in each category. To my surprise, mine and Mama's jelly won a third place ribbon! I know she was proud of us.

The strawberries are gone and the jelly is gone but Mama's love is still shining brightly in my heart. The best way that I can honor her is by doing my best every day and by trying to uphold the values her and my Dad taught me. As long as I'm alive, her memory will live on and I'll never look at a jar of strawberry jelly the same way again!

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MAMA'S STRAWBERRY JELLY

3 quarts strawberries
3½ cups prepared juice
4½ cups sugar
1 box powdered pectin

Wash and remove caps from berries. Crush berries and simmer for 10 minutes or so, covered, stirring occasionally. Strain juice through several layers of cheesecloth. Measure sugar; set aside. Stir pectin into prepared juice in a medium size pan. Bring to a full boil over high heat. Add sugar, return to a full, rolling boil. Boil hard 1 minute., stirring constantly. Remove from heat. Carefully ladle into hot, sterilized jars and seal (process if desired). Store in a cool, dry place.
Yield: 6 to 8 small jars.

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