

**My grandmother was happy for any excuse to see her family.** Thanksgiving, Independence Day, you name it. At her house or ours, in the dining room or backyard, she loved seeing her clan all together. So, after Mom and Dad built the little brown house in the New Hampshire woods, an early Easter became the bane of Nana's existence. A March Easter increased the likelihood that we would be skiing instead of headed to Nana's for baked ham, scalloped potatoes and green beans.

**As much as we loved her and we truly did,** Nana and her Easter ham could not entice us off the slopes. We'd be more than delighted to indulge in her scalloped potatoes and green beans once the snow was gone. For her part, although she liked to have her family around her table, Nana wasn't fussy. She'd have come up to our house in the suburbs without hesitation. Why, she would have been more than pleased to bring the scalloped potatoes or a lemon cake or both. (New Hampshire was another matter. She preferred to visit the little house in the woods during the summer.)



**When it came to cooking,** Nana was old school and a true New Englander. She baked at least once a week or at least she did when her grandchildren were around. I can't remember ever being at her house when there were not homemade cookies in the jar. My grandfather's favorites were Hermit Bars and Molasses Cookies. She baked lots of pies, especially blueberry, as well as the occasional cake and pan of brownies.

**Her kitchen was tiny,** just large enough to hold the stove, refrigerator and the sink with flanking counters. Cheery, calico curtains hid the treasures inside the lower cabinets. The uppers were open and held mysteries not found in my mother's kitchen. No, these shelves were not filled with exotic spices. After all, Nana was a classic New England cook. However, she had a glass jar of cream of tartar. It was not creamy and was nothing like the tartar sauce that came with our fried clams at the local fish shack. There was also a canister of cornmeal and jars of nuts and raisins, ground ginger, baking powder and a bottle of molasses. Not a single one of these obscurities could be found in my mother's kitchen.

**Apart from the countertops on either side of the sink,** her only work space was a small table. My sister Brenda and I would sit at that table and ask her countless questions while she bustled about. My grandmother was a bustle-er. We were more than curious as to why she didn't bake her cakes from a mix or buy her cookies ready-to-eat and lined up in a plastic tray. After all, that's what our mother did.

**Now, this was not the kitchen my dad grew up with,** that one might have been larger but maybe not. The kitchen I connect with my grandmother was in their cozy retirement house on Buzzards Bay. Infrequent or not, it continues to amaze me that Nana prepared family dinners for eight, twelve or more in that tiny kitchen.

**Although it might have happened at least once,** maybe twice, I never saw even a hint of chaos when Nana cooked. When we arrived for dinner, Easter or otherwise, everything was under control and close to ready. The ham was roasting and the potatoes were bubbling in the oven. The beans were trimmed, snapped and ready for steaming. A lemony cake was sitting on the kitchen table and strawberries were ready in the refrigerator.

... and if Easter was early, well, there was always Mother's Day. Bon appétit!

*Susan*

## Lemon Pound Cake

*Lemony cake with fresh berries is a bright and sunny dessert for Easter or any spring feast. Enjoy!*

Serves 12

1 cup (2 sticks) butter, at room temperature, plus more for the pans  
 3 cups all-purpose flour plus more for the pans  
 1 1/2 teaspoons salt  
 1/2 teaspoon baking powder  
 1/2 teaspoon baking soda  
 Grated zest of 2 lemons  
 2 1/4 cups sugar  
 Juice of 3 lemons  
 6 large eggs  
 3/4 cup sour cream  
 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract  
 Strawberries, hulled and halved or quartered  
 Whipped Mascarpone & Cream (recipe follows)



Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Butter and flour two 8x4 1/2-inch (6-cup) loaf pans.

Put the dry ingredients in a bowl and whisk to combine. Add the lemon zest and whisk again.

Put the butter and sugar in a bowl and beat with an electric mixer on high until fluffy. With the mixer running on medium-low, add the eggs one at a time and beat until combined. Add the lemon juice and beat until smooth. Add the sour cream and vanilla and beat again.

With the mixer on low, slowly add the dry ingredients to the wet ingredients. Increase the mixer speed and beat until just smooth.

Pour the batter into the prepared pans, smooth the top and bake for 45-60 minutes or until a cake tester inserted into the center comes out clean or with just a few crumbs attached. Cool to room temperature and serve with a spoonful of fresh strawberries and a dollop of Whipped Mascarpone & Cream

## Whipped Mascarpone & Cream

4 ounces mascarpone cheese  
 Grated zest of 1 lemon  
 3 tablespoons sugar  
 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract  
 1 cup heavy cream

Put the mascarpone, zest, sugar and vanilla in a bowl and beat until fluffy. With the mixer running, slowly add the cream and beat until well combined. Increase the mixer speed and continue beating until soft peaks form.