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Bratzeli Cookies

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Bratzeli Cookies
Aimee Stinson

These cookies are important to me and my family for many generations on my mother’s side. Around Christmas every year, my grandfather comes over to our house and we spend all day making these cookies. After we make them, we neatly arrange them on Christmas style plates and deliver them to our neighbors. When talking with my grandpa recently he said that back when he was young his family would also take them to his neighbors. He said that they made about 75 plates every year and that delivering them took a long time. My family has made a pact that if we take them to our neighbors and they don’t like them, we don’t give them any the next year. If the neighbors love them, they get them every year. The only reason why we have this is because of how long it takes to make the cookies. When my grandpa helped his parents make these as a kid, he never got to eat them. The only bit of cookie that he was allowed to eat was the burnt ones that no one wanted to eat.

The Bratzeli cookies have been a family tradition for a very long time. The recipe originated in Wengen, Switzerland (Bernese Oberland Region) where my great-great-grandmother was from. Since it has been going on from generation to generation, we don’t really know when or who started it. We only know that it’s a special bonding experience with the family in the present and the past. A utensil that is detrimental to making these cookies is a cookie press. My mom has a press that was passed down from her grandma. It looks like a waffle iron, but it is made out of cast iron plates on both sides. Each side has a different design that will be pressed into the cookies. These Bratzeli irons are very hard to find in stock and are very expensive. It is important to get an authentic Bratzeli iron, not a Pizzelle iron because this special iron makes the cookies very thin. When my grandpa was young he remembered an iron that would have to be put on the stove.

This recipe is very important to me because it allows the opportunity for me to spend time with my grandpa. We plan a whole day around Christmas to make these because it’s a whole day ordeal. I get to hear stories and jokes from my grandpa while we listen to oldies Christmas music. As I get older, I appreciate this yearly ritual more. Since it has been very important to me and my past ancestors, I will continue this tradition with my kids. I hope that they will love it as much as I do and will continue the tradition.

This is a recipe from Swiss Days in Midway, Utah. Midway is where my former relatives settled when coming from Switzerland. This recipe is made by the Midway Stake Relief Society organization from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.