Cookie Day

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Recommended Citation
Cookie Day
Foodways: Calendar Custom

Informant
Wendy Price is 46 years old. She is a sonographer and works in high-risk obstetric care in fetal-maternal medicine. Her bachelor’s degree and certification are from Weber State University. She was born and raised in Clinton, Utah but currently lives in Layton, Utah. She is a married and has 4 children, aged from 14 to 22. She is my mother.

Context
Wendy told me about this custom while we were lounging around in her bedroom in her house in Layton on a cold Sunday afternoon. She was laying in her bed and had just finished watching a movie and I was sitting on the floor on the side of her bed and we were planning for Christmas. The rest of our family was home, but everybody had scattered into different rooms in the house, so my mom and I were the only people in the room. The house was really quiet and there were no interruptions. This tradition takes place in the kitchen of Wendy’s home in Layton. It happens on a Saturday before Christmas in December (the actual date varies a little every year depending on what Saturday works best for everyone). On Friday night, Wendy and her husband go to the grocery store and buy “a ridiculous amount” of baking supplies- frosting, sugar, powdered sugar, sprinkles, cupcake holders, candy, flour, chocolate chips, butter, etc. Friday night they clean they kitchen and make sugar cookie dough in preparation for the next day. On the chosen Saturday, Wendy wakes up at 7 AM, wakes up the rest of the family, and begins to bake. The baking goes from the early morning until about 6 o’clock at night. The baked goods are then delivered for the next few hours, and finally the kitchen is cleaned. Cookie Day officially ends close to 10 PM every year. Wendy, her husband, and her children participate every year, but so does most members of her husband’s extended family. Her mom, dad, and sister, often attend as well. Occasionally, a few of her kids’ friends will show up to help for a few hours also. The number of participants ranges from 10 to 25 people, depending on the year. Wendy mentioned multiple times that it is a really long day.

Text
Cookie Day is a day that we- my current family- we spend a Saturday, one of the Saturdays in December, and um we get up early in the morning and we make cookies. We make all different kinds of cookies. We make chocolate chip cookies, we make sugar cookies, sometimes we make shortbread, cookies that are shaped like candy canes, we make fudge, we make sometimes, some years we make different things, we made cream puffs one year, we make star-shaped Rice Krispy treats, we make muffins, one of the things we’ve added recently is we do chocolate-
dipped pretzels, and this is an all-day activity. In fact we usually start the night before. Mostly what takes the most time is frosting the sugar cookies. When we get all of them done, we put them on plates—we divide them up so each plate has at least one kind of each cookie we made—and we take the plates around to neighbors and friends. It’s grown from maybe 20 plates of cookies to 100 plates of cookies and I sometimes wonder if our neighbors are frightened to eat them because we sometimes have little kids frosting cookies.

**Texture**

My mom’s tone was a little bitter and whiny as she told me about this tradition; she even started off by telling me this is a tradition that she “absolutely hates!” Her tone was very animated and loud and she did not hold back any complaints she had about this custom. She rolled her eyes a few times and laughed at me as I looked shocked. The atmosphere of the custom is loud, boisterous, energetic, hectic, and overwhelming. My mom mentioned that there is a huge age range of participants so there is always a lot of conversation and bonding that happens, as well as a lot of noise as people bake and frost and deliver. This custom is meaningful to my mom because it brings a lot of family members together. She hates the actual baking and the money she spends on it and how tiresome it is, but she continues to do it because it is important to her children. Her role is usually to make frosting, and she says she is always running around and failing to keep up with the demands of the cookie decorators. She complained about this custom, but it is something she has done every year since she married my dad almost 30 years ago, so it obviously has meaning for her.