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Fall 11-12-2018

Grandma Pullan's Orange Rolls

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Recommended Citation

Wright, Glen, "Grandma Pullan's Orange Rolls" (2018). *USU Student Folklore Fieldwork*. Paper 386.
https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/student_folklore_all/386

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Rachel Pullan
Logan, Utah
November 12th, 2018

“Grandma Pullan’s Orange Rolls”

Foodways

Informant:

Rachel Pullan is a 7th Grade English teacher at North Davis Junior High. She grew up in Heber City, surrounded by the Wasatch Mountains and a loving family. Her calling in life is to help her students discover their own stories. She enjoys being outside and involving herself in the community, especially Timpanogos Valley Theatre.

Context:

After posting a message on Facebook regarding my collections project, Rachel contacted me asking if she could share a recipe her grandma passed on to her. Through Facebook messenger, I asked Rachel a series of questions to help her formulate how she would respond. Following two days without hearing from her, I got everything on one long Facebook message.

Text:

My Grandma Pullan has made these rolls for every Thanksgiving dinner as long as I can remember, and long before that. She is nearly 80 now and has been making the rolls her whole life, so over 60 years now. She got the recipe from her mother, my Great Grandma Foster, who probably got it from her mother, my Great great Grandma Yates. I don't know how many generations back it goes, but it will probably keep going for generations to come. Our family loves orange rolls too much to give them up.

The recipe is complicated and finicky. It requires multiple bowls in which you mix different ingredients in different steps--yeast and warm water proofing in one bowl, dry ingredients in another, eggs beaten in another, and shortening and water dissolving in hot water in a fourth. Grandma always serves them piping hot, right out of the oven. Warm, buttery bread... sticky,

sweet orange filling... A little golden and crusty on the top, soft and steamy on the inside... Who would risk going to all that work and not get to enjoy such an amazing finished product?

Only once in all of Grandma's years of making orange rolls did they come out wrong, and that was when she made them with me. As part of my Knowledge project for Personal Progress, I asked Grandma to teach me to make orange rolls. We set a day, and I went to her house in Midvale. She let me wear one of her aprons and showed me all the steps. We followed each to the T. Grandma had done it a hundred times, and I wasn't new to baking myself. We thought we had it all perfect. We set the rolls aside to rise while we made hunter stew for dinner. When we checked the rolls later, they hadn't risen much. They were still small and sad and short, not anything like the tall, poofy clouds of glory they should be. We decided to bake them anyway, but it made no difference--they were as sad and short when they came out as they were when they went in. Grandma just couldn't understand it. Her best guess (and mine too) was that something was wrong with the yeast. It must have been expired or something, because we did everything right. I knew it wasn't my fault, but I was still bummed--the first time in over 50 years!

Still, I know I'm not a bad omen. I've made the rolls since. I did them for Thanksgiving on my mission, for years when we have our feast with my mom's side of the family, and sometimes just for sheer comfort. I enjoy making them because it makes me feel close to my grandma.

Whenever I've made the rolls for my Thanksgivings away, I know that she mixing the dough at the same time, and it feels like we are baking together. That recipe connects us. It was passed down for generations, and now it has been passed to me. It feels like a sacred duty I have to guard the tradition of the orange rolls. One year, Grandma and Grandpa were in a car accident in early November, and cooking Thanksgiving dinner was out of the question for her. Since Grandma was out of commission, the job of making the orange rolls fell to me. It felt as though I had been asked to cook for the president. Me, make the orange rolls? Me, try to live up to the standard set by my Grandma's love and care and 60 years of orange roll making? Me? Yes,

indeed--and they turned out as beautifully as I could have expected, despite my fears. It gives me hope that if I can live up to Grandma's rolls, maybe I can live up to her in all the other ways in which I admire her.

We were with my mom's side of the family just last month for Thanksgiving, and I made the rolls and told the whole story for my Molen relatives' benefit. They loved them. I made them with my best friend Sasha once as well, and she was instantly addicted. She begged me for the recipe this year, saying that she will pass it on to her husband and children and grandchildren as well. I am the guardian of the secrets of the orange rolls--but the best part is passing the secret on.

Grandma Pullan's Orange Rolls

4 1/2 cups flour	3 eggs
3 tsp. salt (2 1/2 tsp.)	1 cup hot water
2 Tbls. yeast	1/2 cup sugar
1/4 cup warm water	1/2 cup shortening

Dissolve yeast in warm water

In separate bowls combine:

Bowl #1	-	Shortening, sugar, hot water
Bowl #2	-	Beat eggs
Bowl #3	-	Stir flour with salt

Make a well in flour and salt and add other ingredients.

Mix with spoon.

Let rise 1-1 1/2 hours.

Stir down.

Cover and place in fridge overnight.

Roll out and cut.

Place on buttered cookie sheet, Brush with melted butter (op.).

Cover with plastic wrap (sprayed with Pam) and a cloth.

Let rise about three hours.

Bake at 350° for 10 – 12 minutes.

Orange Filling:

1/3 c. melted (soft) butter

2 Tbls. orange juice

2/3 c. sugar

Grated rind from 1 orange

Roll out dough into long, narrow rectangle. Spread on filling.

Roll up, seal and cut. Place in buttered muffin tins.

Texture:

She few days later, she sent another message with this comment, "No one knows why we do it this way. When I asked Grandma Pullan, she said, "That's how my mother did it." There are probably more efficient ways of making rolls, but none of us dare try it for fear they won't turn out right. Because when they come out right, they are heaven on earth."

Aside from the main recipe and story, her messages were well thought out and spread out over a full week.

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Fall 2018