

## We Gobbled Them Up

Holidays are special occasions for many people. Perhaps they mean you get a day off of school or work. Perhaps they mean you get a chance to decorate. Perhaps they mean you get presents. But as many books and movies say, holidays are not just about presents or other trivial yet exciting things. For me, holidays mean family. My large extended family has always been present at festivities, whether it be a Christmas gift exchange or an Easter dinner. My grandfather often makes delectable dinners, from a holiday feast to an afternoon Mexican meal. These two things, family and food mean the most to me at celebrations.

One holiday combines these ideas. Since 1621, Thanksgiving has been celebrating thanks. One Thanksgiving, this past one, had me wondering how I could thank and repay my relatives for the joyful times we have and how to combine all the things Thanksgiving is about: family, fun, and food.

It was a few days before Thanksgiving, a dark and chilly November evening. My mother was out running errands for her business and my dad was answering messages on his computer. I, however, was not doing anything productive. I was sitting on the floor of my room, trying to decide what to do with the last few hours of the day. Then an idea sprung up on me like dusk in winter. I barreled out of my room, energized by inspiration, and asked my dad if I could make sugar cookies. These weren't going to be regular ones but turkey shaped ones, perfect for the upcoming holiday. According to the Real Simple magazine, 88% of Americans eat turkey on Thanksgiving. That Thanksgiving, we would be adding to that number. Not just with turkey, but also with turkey sugar cookies. I gathered up the ingredients, complete with a turkey shaped cookie cutter. Just as I was getting out the vanilla extract, my dad came into the kitchen.

"Can I help?" he asked.

I replied eagerly, "Yes!"

Equipped with a mixer and '80s music, we set to work. The mixer rumbled as it folded and combined the butter and sugar.

"The next step is to add the vanilla extract," my dad read out the recipe I had found in my mother's recipe book.

"Okay, I'll add it in."

I poured a careful tablespoon of liquid into the mixture. I put my head close to the machine and breathed in the sweet scent of vanilla. It was one of my favorite smells; it reminded me of baking with my mom. Then I looked into the metal bowl of the mixer. It was a smooth brown color. The cookies were ready to be put in the oven! My dad and I emptied the contents of the bowl onto the counter, rolling it out and cutting out uniform turkey shapes. Then we put them on two clean pans and my dad popped them in the oven.

"Well, we've got 25 minutes to wait. How about we play some Blazing Beaks?" he said. Blazing Beaks was a Nintendo Switch video game that my dad and I had been playing often.

"Sure!" I said.

We then started to play, and before we knew it the cookie timer had gone off.

"Cookies are ready!" I said gleefully and we went to the kitchen.

The turkeys were perfectly golden brown, ready to be decorated. We made buttercream while the cookies cooled. My dad put the frosting in clean white bowls and we dyed it a rainbow of colors that were beautiful, though some were not exactly accurate turkey colors. We frosted

the cookies, a swirl of sugary paints, and they looked delightful. Some had multicolored feathers, while others were solid colored. There was even a pair with yellow and pink reversed colors. They all had gleaming halloween sprinkles as eyes. My dad turned on a basketball game and then we both sat down to taste test.

I picked out a large brown bird and bit into it with a soft crunch. Buttery, warm, and golden, the cookies were amazing. The buttercream was flaky and velvety. The sprinkle eyes were crunchy and possibly stale. These cookies were perfect for Thanksgiving.

And they were. The cookies were a success several days later, at Thanksgiving. My whole family loved them. The cookies remind me of the family I made them with and the family I enjoyed them with. For me, the very essence of the holidays.