

The Kitchen Hot Spot

If you belong to those lucky people who have had the privilege of enjoying a warm breakfast or the happy voices of the family crowd gathered around the kitchen table, it is most likely that this cooking spot in your family's house brings back a lot of happy memories every time you enter its premises. Like many of you, my family kitchen has been the focal point of my life from childhood to adulthood. Although I cannot always recall with confidence, whether or not a conversation took place in any other room inside my family's house, I am usually able to remember the one that took place inside the kitchen.

My cultural background evolves around food. When people in my home country decide to spend some quality time together, they usually do it around food. Asking a visitor if he is hungry the moment he enters our house is not considered rude or inconsiderate. On the contrary, this is a question one asks in order to make sure that the other feels welcomed. It is actually impolite not to ask if your guest needs to drink or to eat anything even before they are seated in the living-room couch. Although this practice made me wonder while I was a kid why people popped the "million-dollar" question after the guest has been comfortably seated, I realized as the years went by that there is a big difference between asking someone if he or she wants to eat or drink anything from inviting that person to enter the sanctuary of the kitchen. The process of opening the door of the kitchen and letting the other person explore its content is saved to be offered to those who have successfully passed the line between "I like you" and "I love you." Even though my father, in particular, was the one that usually left the fridge door open to everyone's sight, the understanding that this was an act of goodwill was more than obvious. Those who managed to stay in the kitchen room more often became clearer to me as I grew up that were the people my parents really cared for and wanted to share their lives with.

Two of those welcomed individuals were me and my brother. Since my mother was the master-cook of the family, our bright and lively kitchen became over the years that unique place where we would look for to find the needed comfort and support. In addition, my father, who was always capable of creating the kitchen mess my mother later had to clean, preferred the warmth of the kitchen to sit us down and discuss our problems or thoughts. In that room I heard for the first time how my parents met and fell-in-love, what my mother asked after she gave birth to me, who teacher gave my brother his first excellent grade, what I should do in case of a family crisis, and so much more. Our kitchen was the room that I stayed in late to study for my exams, while it was the only room one would enter without having anything particular to do apart from catching up with the rest of the family members.

Creating with the help and advice of my mother our birthday cakes was a one-year event my brother and me never wanted to end. Warm chocolate cookies, sugary syrup and lots of other "healthier" food ingredients were the toys with which we adored playing for hours. If I had to advise one thing every couple I meet, it would be to create the kitchen of their dreams by keeping it always accessible to fun and games, while enjoying the process of preparing the family breakfast, lunch or dinner. Parental guidance and support can uniquely be combined with the hottest place in a house; its kitchen.

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About the Author

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