

Happy Memorial Day 2018

Get that potato salad made, put that tea on ice and fire up the grill! Happy Unofficial Start of Summer! (Meteorologically, it's not until June 20th.)

This is what Memorial Day is actually about...

“Memorial Day is a solemn day of remembrance for everyone who has died serving in the American armed forces. The holiday, originally known as Decoration Day, started after the Civil War to honor the Union and Confederate dead.

It's unclear exactly where the holiday originated—Charleston, S.C., Waterloo, N.Y., Columbus, Ga. and other towns all claim to be the birthplace of the holiday. The event in Charleston that may have precipitated the holiday offers poignant evidence of a country struggling to rebuild itself after a bloody war: 257 Union soldiers died in prison in Charleston during the Civil War and were buried in unmarked graves, and the town's black residents organized a May Day ceremony in which they landscaped a burial ground to properly honor the soldiers. It wasn't officially named Memorial Day until 1967. In 1968 Congress passed the Uniform Holiday Act, designating Memorial Day as the last Monday in May rather than May 30, as it had previously been observed.” (Source: <http://time.com/3892630/why-do-we-celebrate-memorial-day/>)

Most of my “Inspired Messages” have been pretty “heavy” lately, so I thought I'd touch on something a little more upbeat. Yes, Memorial Day is for remembering our fallen military men and women. And, we should sing praises to them for the protections they have given their all for. I am in no way trivializing their sacrifice and the sacrifice of their families.

Having said that, how about some fun? What kind of a menu do you have for your picnics and barbeques? Hamburgers, hot dogs, chicken, steak? Macaroni salad, potato salad? Chips, pretzels? Marshmallows for toasting? OK, now think about your menu if you lived in bible times.

Grains and breads, legumes (beans), vegetables, fruits, meat from goats and sheep with the occasional wild game animal thrown in, fish, poultry, eggs, with milk and cheese products from goats. Keep in mind there was no refrigeration, so meats were usually dried. Bread was made, but you had to grind your grain first. There were no sanitation regulations, so good luck with the other stuff. (Learn more here: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ancient_Israelite_cuisine)

Picture this...you are having a celebration for, let's say 20 people. Women, you start on the day before by grinding grain for bread, you get up at 5:00am to bake for the day. The bugs and vermin got into the fruit and vegetables, so you must sort out what is still edible. You are cooking the beans over the open flame and they burn to the bottom while you are sorting out the fruits and vegetables. You go to the local cheese maker only to find you are too late and there is no more. Your hubby had no luck hunting or fishing, so he must go kill one of the sheep. (Can't serve jerky to guests.) It's 100 degrees and no shade, so he has to get it cleaned and, on the spit, before it goes bad. Your guests start arriving and you find that one of the families brought their in-laws from East Gyp who travelled 3 days with their 8 children. (You can't turn them away, it wouldn't be hospitable.) While husband is entertaining the guests, you realize you never hard boiled the eggs so now you have to run to the well for water. Oh, and no aluminum foil, so no coverings to keep flies away.

We've come a long way baby! We think we're in trouble if we forgot to get relish for the hot dogs.

Life two thousand years ago was tough to say the least. The one thing that kept the people going was their faith. Faith that was passed down through stories being told from one generation to the next while enjoying the comradery of family. Of course, depending where you were, Christianity was considered blasphemy and you could be persecuted for it. So, storytelling was often done very secretly.

We have it easier in so many ways. We have the Bible that we can read and read from to others. We have air-conditioned churches where we can go to hear the gospel message. In our country, we can freely share all of this because we are afforded the freedom to worship as we choose. The freedom that was won by the sacrifice of others.

As you chow down this weekend on all of the picnic goodies that have come to be standard fare for us, remember those who have sacrificed their last full measure so that we may do so.

Have a safe and happy Memorial Day weekend!

Cindy Lee

Cindy Lee Nonnemacher
Author



Approx 1915 at Arlington Cemetery at the Civil War Unknowns Monument

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