

Recipes For Joy In Life

Robert S. Swiatek

formerly *The Joy Of Life Cookbook*

formerly *The Read My Lips Cookbook*

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First Edition

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to James, Julia, my mom, and all
the others who inspired my cooking

also by Robert S. Swiatek

*The Read My Lips Cookbook:
A Culinary Journey Of Memorable Meals*
out-of-print

Don't Bet On It – a novel

*Tick Tock, Don't Stop:
A Manual For Workaholics*

for seeing eye dogs only

*This Page Intentionally Left Blank
– Just Like The Paychecks Of The Workers*

*I Don't Want To Be A Pirate – Writer, maybe
wake up – it's time for your sleeping pill*

*Take Back The Earth – The Dumb,
Greedy Incompetents Have Trashed It*

Press 1 For Pig Latin

*This War Won't Cost Much –
I'm Already Against The Next One*

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Mirror, Mirror, On My Car

The Joy Of Life Cookbook
unpublished in September 2011

Save The Animals And Children

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Preface to the new edition

The Read My Lips Cookbook was the first book I had published, but not the first one I wrote. That book has yet to be published – maybe, next year. The second one didn't come into print either, although you can find bits and pieces of it in *for seeing eye dogs only* and *wake up – it's time for your sleeping pill*. There's a good chance that my second manuscript will never be published.

Amazingly, my cookbook received lavish praise, including three (out of three) five star reviews from the critics. Others raved about it as well. These fine critics were family, friends and people I have yet to meet, and some whom I met only once. These fine reviews can be found at Amazon.com for *The Read My Lips Cookbook*, even though it's out-of-print.

Going back to my earlier years, I recall parts of meals that others fed me. Each Sunday, our family went to the house of Grandma Stella and Grandpa Thomas Choinski – my mom's parents – and I only recall my Grandma's chicken soup. I loved it because she made it with bay leaves, which my mom wasn't fond of. I recently purchased four ounces of the wonderful spice. That should satisfy the needs of about ten families for twenty years – it's an awful lot of bay leaves. Of course, I cherished my mom's cooking, since she inspired so many of the recipes in this book.

Our family traveled to the homes of her four siblings, which included three sisters, my three aunts Adele, Esther and Florence. My Aunt Esther

also doubled as my Godmother and I fondly recall numerous visits to her and my uncle Ray's house for dinner. Just walking into their abode overwhelmed me with the aroma of pork chops, mashed potatoes and sweet cabbage on so many occasions. This was food at its best.

During the major holidays of Christmas and Easter, our family might go to these same grandparents' home or to that of my uncles and aunts for a fine meal. Sometime in late afternoon, my mom or dad would round us up – they didn't use a lariat – and say that we had another stop to make at the family of my father's relatives. I was disappointed, but got over that rather quickly when we stopped in to my cousin Dorothy and her husband Ray's home for more food. There's no reason why you can't have two dinners in one day. On those occasions, I recall the delicious potato salad as well as the smoked Polish sausage, not to mention the scrumptious desserts. I should mention that Dorothy – she's not from Kansas – is the butter lamb lady in Buffalo. She and her family are the main reason why Western New York has butter in the shape of the Easter lamb each spring.

Another dinner that my uncle Matthew and aunt Dorothy (a different one) hosted – maybe we were only cousins – featured city chicken and a vegetable Jell-O mold. I liked the food so much that you can find both items in this book.

I was a boy scout for a few years and thought about one merit badge, which I never earned: cooking. You might say that this culinary thing hit me when I was very young. The only food

I recall cooking then was a baked potato on a fire outdoors. We just threw the potatoes into flames and after a half hour or so, we had blackened potatoes – but they were good. Blackened grouper came much later. I recall one camping trip in the late winter or early spring when our scout troop did the cabin thing and fortunately none of us caught the fever. We probably only stayed for one night, but I vividly recall one meal of Campbell’s chicken noodle soup and smoked Polish sausage – yummy.

I also recall summer picnics at Crystal Beach – now only a fond memory – and recall the boiled hot dogs, which we couldn’t get enough of. Today, I have one or two grilled each year, but back then, I used my parents’ gas stove to create hot dogs done the same way, right on the burner flames. I never burned the house down and they never complained. Cooking adventures of mine are featured in each of the nine chapters here, so you’ll have to go to those pages.

Thomas Fortenberry is one of the critics who loved my cookbook. I hope to meet him in the near future. He has also reviewed a few other books of mine and truly enjoys all of them – so far. However, he had two criticisms about *The Read My Lips Cookbook*. He thought it should have been longer – translation: he didn’t want it to end since he couldn’t get enough of the anecdotes. He also felt that the title didn’t quite fit the character of the book. In fact, he thought that the subtitle was more appropriate.

It’s been on my mind to republish the cookbook. I had an idea for the cover, which a few

collaborators helped out with, but for some time I couldn't come up with a new title. One Sunday morning in the summer of 2009, while in Hammondsport for the Arts and Crafts Festival, I was inspired. It happened at Mass that day. I pondered what the book is really all about. Sure, it's a cookbook, but it's about the love and our fondness for cooking and enjoying the fruits of our labors – pun intended. It's about getting together and sharing a meal and all the happiness and pleasure to be found in that experience. A very unique part of this book is the laughter and joy invoked by way of what's between the recipes, something that can't be found in many cookbooks.

The title that would almost be perfect to reflect those feelings was *The Joy of Cooking*. However, I thought an even better and appropriate title would be *The Joy Of Life Cookbook*, which was published in May 2010. Unfortunately, *The Joy Of Life Cookbook* was unpublished in September 2011. It's a long story. I like the new title just as well, which is still in keeping with the thrust of my book. If you have a copy of *The Joy Of Life Cookbook*, just cross on the title on the front cover and replace it with *Recipes For Joy In Life*. If not, the may come after you.

May all your meals be memorable!

Introduction

When children leave their parental home to go out into the world, they are faced with quite a few decisions regarding their new life. A choice they don't have is about eating. Just like you and me, they must eat to live! There are quite a few people who live to eat, but that will not concern us here. In feeding oneself, you have one of three choices:

1. You can go to restaurants (anything from fast food to fine dining.)
2. You can have someone cook a meal for you (a relative or friend.)
3. You can cook something for yourself.

Restaurants are a great pleasure, but only if the food is good. Eating fast food on occasion is fine; I have done it more than once in the past. Fine restaurants still don't guarantee healthy dining all the time. Also, if you eat out a lot, you will eventually get tired of it. Unless you live in a large city like Chicago, New York or Los Angeles, the variety of eating establishments will be limited. You will quickly find that your bankroll is limited as well. This is even more so when times are tough, such as the recessions that we experience from time to time.

Another consideration about restaurants is that the food is not always as good as we expected. Oh, the food may have been good, but we may have hoped it would be better, considering the money we

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