

Cooking

*Waylon's Way*

*Entertaining at  
Southern Comfort*



Jessi Colter / Maureen Raffety



Cooking Waylon's Way  
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## *Foreword*

*I*n studies of students, researchers are finding a correlation between excelling in school and life and eating meals together as a family. The family meal remains a time of coming together that completes the day.

## *Introduction*

*W*aylon was born in West Texas, I was born in Arizona, and Maureen Raffety, our “chief of staff,” hails from Kentucky. Between the three of us, we have come up with meals that incorporate the taste of the West and the flair of the South.

Our menus were created by Maureen, while Waylon and I helped guide the delicate balance of unforgettable flavors. This is how the three of us spent much of our time.

Waylon had a voracious appetite and enjoyed a bountiful table three times a day. This inspired Maureen, whose culinary skills have thrilled guests that have joined us from all over the world.

We invite you into Southern Comfort, our Nashville, Tennessee home, where we have loved and laughed our way through life’s ups and downs. We want to share these times with you. Our hope is that you will enjoy the humor along with the recipes that we have developed while working our way from rich, creamy butter to light, virgin olive oil.

Maureen, an educator by profession when we began managing Southern Comfort, didn’t cook at all. However, Waylon developed high cholesterol and my taste buds changed when I was pregnant with our son, Shooter. Suddenly, we had to rethink our diets. I was at a loss as to how to plan meals we both could eat, without sacrificing the beauty and richness of the food. Maureen rose to the occasion and designed meals for our new lifestyle.

We will stir up twenty-five years of memories, humor and the joy of celebrating our lives together. May you savor the love of life and food along with us.

Jessi Colter



*Thanksgiving 1975 - Cinnamon Hill, Estate of Johnny Cash in Jamaica*





# The Early Years

**W**aylon's name means "land by the highway," and we've seen most of the highways in the country, while never missing a meal that I can remember. We met in Scottsdale, Arizona in 1966 while he was recording a song called "Norwegian Wood." We were both married to other mates so our meeting was strictly business; he was a progressive new country star—I was a songwriter and recording artist who found him to be a gentleman.

When our marriages were ending, we became traveling companions in 1968. He was 32 and I was a mere 25 when we began our courtship and we married in 1969. Although we settled occasionally, most of our time was spent in busses, planes, cars and hotel rooms. Our culinary habits were "eat when you can, what you can...quickly."

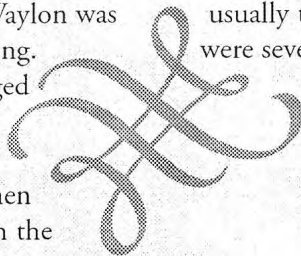
We clashed right off because Waylon was always hungry and I was tired of cooking. I never asked questions first, so I charged my way into this long-legged, West Texan's honky-tonk world and "stirred up the beans." I should have known then that it wasn't going to be easy... but, oh the bliss of self-confidence and youth.

Waylon both fascinated and frightened me. He was a man of mystery from the start. How could I confidently cook for him when one-dish meals, sauces and Arizona-style cooking was my expertise? My husband didn't like casseroles or sauces. Well, who says you need to eat the first year of marriage?

In time I figured it out. Waylon liked everything fried, cooked separately, and well-done. He ate only white sugar and white bread and he wanted lots of food...right then!

I set out to show Waylon that I was as innovative a cook as any other self-respecting bride. When Waylon invited our good friends over to our apartment to eat, I decided to do it up right. What would set him on his heels? I'd roast a rack of lamb and introduce him to artichokes and mint jelly. Big mistake!

Knowing what food a man doesn't like usually tells a story about his upbringing. There were several well-meant directions I received early in our marriage and some of them remained throughout our years together.



*Waylon's Do's and Don'ts*

1. Don't prepare water gravy. It reminds him of days past when there was no milk in his refrigerator and he only had water to prepare gravy.
2. Don't reheat food. It reminds him of his grandmother's ability to kill the taste of food by repeated reheating.
3. NEVER undercook meat. Rare meat reminded him of too many years on the road and away from home.
4. Forget the casseroles. They make him think the cook is using leftovers. And, he doesn't care for their consistency.
5. Never boil okra - it's too slimy.
6. No lamb. It reminds him of sheep in the field - a big no, no.

All these dos and don'ts made us discriminating and friends looked to him for a steer in the right direction when eating out. He had a knack for telling what was the best offer in the house. Perhaps it was that West Texas "luck of the draw."





## Guacamole

|                                   |                         |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| 6 ripe avocados, peeled           | ½ teaspoon coriander    |
| 2 tomatoes, coarsely chopped      | 1 teaspoon cumin        |
| 1 cup grated Monterey Jack cheese | 1 clove garlic, minced  |
| ½ small red onion, chopped        | Juice of 1 lime         |
| ½ teaspoon salt                   | 3 tablespoons olive oil |

Place the avocados, tomatoes, cheese, onion, salt, coriander, cumin, garlic, lime juice and olive oil in a food processor. Use the pulse setting to coarsely blend.

**Makes 2 cups**

## Mama's Hot Sauce

|                                       |                                 |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Two 28-ounce cans tomatoes            | 3 medium onions,<br>chopped     |
| Two 28-ounce cans<br>crushed tomatoes | 1 pod garlic,<br>finely chopped |
| 4 cups sugar                          | 2 cups apple cider<br>vinegar   |
| 5 jalapeño peppers, chopped           |                                 |
| 4 to 5 green peppers, chopped         |                                 |

Combine the tomatoes, jalapeño peppers, green peppers, onions, garlic, sugar and vinegar in a saucepan. Bring to a boil and lower the heat to a slow boil, stirring every 10 to 15 minutes. Simmer for 4 to 5 hours and reduce to half to create thickness. Pour the sauce into hot sterilized jars and seal lightly until cool. Store at room temperature or refrigerate. Excellent with eggs, chicken, beef or fish.

**Makes twelve to fourteen 8-ounce jars**

*Smelling the hot vinegar and seeing the steam rise off Mama's stove sounded the alarm to stay out of the way when I ran in from school. Making hot sauce was an all day, once-a-year event and it's the only canning I saw her do. My sister, Mary D. Korman, continues the tradition today.*



## Mexican Hot Sauce

- |                         |                          |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 16-ounce can tomatoes   | 2 cloves garlic          |
| 1 medium onion, chopped | 1 tablespoon sugar       |
| 1 tablespoon vinegar    | 4-ounce can green chiles |
| ½ teaspoon salt         |                          |

Combine the tomatoes and onion in a blender container and process. Add the vinegar, salt, garlic, sugar and green chiles and process. Try on eggs, baked potatoes, taco salads, etc.

## Kentucky Knockouts

- |                      |                          |
|----------------------|--------------------------|
| 2 tablespoons butter | 8-ounce box Velveeta     |
| 12 eggs, well beaten | cheese, cut into         |
|                      | small pieces             |
|                      | Salt and pepper to taste |

Melt the butter in a skillet. Add the eggs and cheese, stirring occasionally. Season with the salt and pepper.

**Serves 4 to 6**



## Phoenix Scramblers

2 eggs  
1 teaspoon water  
1 tablespoon milk

Pepper to taste  
2 teaspoons butter

Break the eggs into a bowl. Add the water, milk and pepper. Beat the eggs well with a whisk or fork until light and fluffy.

Melt the butter in a skillet over a medium heat. Pour in the egg mixture and allow the eggs to set slightly. Stir gently until the eggs are set but still soft.

*The secret with eggs is in the beating.*

**Serves 1**

## Sausage Gravy

1 pound pork sausage  
4 heaping tablespoons flour

3 to 4 cups milk  
Salt and pepper to taste

Brown the sausage in a skillet. Mash the sausage with the tines of a fork or a potato masher and drain. Return the sausage to the skillet and stir in the flour, cooking for 2 to 3 minutes. Add the milk, a small amount at a time, stirring continually. When the gravy thickens and bubbles it is ready. Season with the salt and pepper. Serve immediately over hot biscuits.

**Serves 6**

*\* If the gravy looks too dry you have used too much flour; add a little butter. If it is too wet, add a little flour. Stir well.*

*If there is one food in the world that Waylon loved more than anything, it is most assuredly sausage gravy with biscuits. In the early days, this was his daily breakfast but in later years it was saved for weekends when he was home. As time passed, it became only for special occasions and always on Christmas morning because of health and dietary restrictions. Sausage gravy was also served at the East meets West breakfast for west coast and New York records executives. Unlike Southerners, the guests didn't care for the gravy. Some called it a cream sauce and most had never seen anything like it.*



Many nights we gathered in the kitchen and watched as Mama mixed up the sugar and cocoa for the fudge. We loved licking the spoon as the fudge hardened.

Our desert cabin was near the Gila (pronounced Heela) River 90 miles southeast of Mesa, Arizona, as the crow flies. Just us, God, the coyotes, rattlers and scorpions reigned over that 1200 acre expanse. My engineering father had built the mills there and mined for copper ore and molybdenum for many years. He was a true mountain man, afraid of nothing. On the other hand Mama was always in the kitchen thanking God and singing hymns. These are warm places in my heart.

## Mama's Fudge

3 cups sugar  
 2/3 cup cocoa  
 1/8 teaspoon salt  
 1 1/2 cups milk

1/4 cup (1/2 stick) butter  
 or margarine  
 1 teaspoon vanilla  
 extract

Combine the sugar, cocoa and salt in a heavy saucepan. Stir in the milk. Cook over a medium heat, stirring constantly, until the mixture comes to a full rolling boil. Boil, without stirring, to 234 degrees Fahrenheit on a candy thermometer or until it resembles syrup. The mixture should form a soft ball when dropped into very cold water. Add the butter and vanilla extract. Do not stir. Cool the fudge at room temperature until lukewarm. Beat the fudge with a wooden spoon until the fudge thickens and loses some of its gloss. Spread the fudge quickly into a buttered 9-inch baking dish; cool. Cut the fudge into squares.

Makes about 36 squares

## Beef Stroganoff à la Jessi

1 1/2 pounds sirloin,  
 cut into narrow strips  
 1/2 onion, chopped  
 1/4 cup butter or margarine  
 10 3/4-ounce can  
 cream of chicken soup

1/4 cup water  
 Sherry cooking wine  
 Fresh mushrooms, sliced  
 1 cup sour cream

## *Epilogue*

*I* deeply regret that Waylon is not here to see the culmination of this project. I said goodbye to him in February of 2002. But his voice of encouragement to Maureen and me to finish this cookbook remained with us.

*He believed in the project's worth and when I would stop working on it he would tell me what I needed to do.*

*Waylon was responsible for so many fine days of entertaining. He was a terrific host and loved nothing better than to gather friends and family around a beautiful table.*

*It is to him that I lovingly dedicate this book as a memory of our festive and sweet life together.*

*Jessi Colter*



