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[Food & Diet](#), [Cooking](#)



10/29/2011 Food in my family English: 1841 I come from a very diverse ethnic background, with many variations of what maybe considered cultural foods. I have many fond memories of family reunions and all the interesting dishes my relatives would prepare. Food in my family holds so much meaning; it's the glue that has held us together for many years even before I was born. Food in my family isn't just a substance we consume in order to keep our bodies healthy and energized. When we create a meal, it's as if we are creating art by expressing ourselves in our dish. We take the time to perfect our meals, while also keeping our tradition alive by incorporating the same rituals as our ancestors before us. When it came to certain meals my mother was very traditional in preparing it, and it had to be done a certain way or it was ruined. She wanted to maintain our family's culture in each dish she prepared. She felt as if by doing this it kept our ancestor's memories alive; with each recipe preserved to its natural and formal state with zero alteration kept our tradition alive. She didn't believe in wasting food, so when she prepared dishes she would make sure to cook everything from the head to the feet. My mother's favorite dish to create was Peni which means pig in Spanish. I remember going to the meat market and having to wait on long lines to buy a whole pig so that she can begin prepping it for the family reunion that was scheduled for next week. My mother always said " Una de Las cosas más importantes de recordar es que no es el alimento que usted come que es importante pero cómo usted lo creó que lo hace memorable". In English it means " One of the most important things to remember is that it is not the food you eat that is important, but its how you created it that makes it memorable. " Preparing meals for a family reunion

takes a group effort; especially if it requires large quantities of food needed. I believe it brought us closer together when we were cooking the meals compare to when we actually sat down to eat it. Everyone had there own responsibilities to help contribute to the meals, my family was big on making sure no one was left out. It brought everyone together as a whole, no matter what prier arguments you had with one another or what grudges you may have construed towards each other. It was always put aside when it came to family reunion, because on that day nothing else mattered but family. I believe certain foods can trigger certain memories, depending on what your mind can connect it too. For example every time I smell the sweet sent of buttered pancakes in the morning with a side of bacon. It reminds me of my mom and how I use to wake up and run to the kitchen as fast as I can trying to beat my brothers to the table, because I knew they would eat up all the beacon. It reminds me of happier days; when I use to not have to worry about anything and I could just be myself. When my mother would create Peni it would take hours to just prepare it and then she would have to wrap it up in alumini foil so that it would allow the seasonings to settle in. With big family reunions it bound to have some people bring the similar dishes. Even though they cooked the same type of meat doesn't mean that they are the same dish. Since they were prepared by two different people with different backgrounds, the dish itself represents two completely different styles. For example my mother cooked a lot of her foods traditionally, because that's how she was raised. She grew up with the knowledge of our ancestor recipes, but our relatives from other countries grow up with their own cooking style. They made it the best way they felt expresses themselves and

what they grew accustomed to. I looked forward to having family reunions not just because I enjoyed learning how to create new dishes, but also I wanted to feel closer to my relatives who I hardly ever get to see. By tasting their foods I was able to take a journey to their home town. I was able to taste all the seasoning that they grew up with and to what they felt best expressed the true essence of the meat. From the bitter sweet aroma to the texture of how it was deliciously prepared with each morsel I bit into, you could tell how much attention to detail was put into it. I love trying new things especially created by my family members because their style of cooking was so different compared to what I was used to; it was so unique. It always surprised me how dramatically different their dishes tasted compared to my mother's. They would use ingredients I didn't expect would ever mix so wonderfully together. That's why I believe when you create a meal it is a form of expression of who you are and where you come from. Every time I eat Peni it reminds me of many different fond memories of my mother, because that was what she loved to make. She took pride in her cooking and because of it I also take pride in everything I cook.