INFORMAL EVENINGS AT THE WHITE HOUSE

Warm and intimate get-togethers with family and friends are among the entertaining occasions that Nancy and Ronald Reagan cherish most.

Beyond all else, the White House is a home. Quiet little dinner parties for family and friends are among the entertaining occasions that Nancy and Ronald Reagan treasure most—as oases of relaxation in their remarkably busy lives.

The dinner you see photographed on this page took place in the Old Family Dining Room—a favorite gathering place where the President also sometimes presides at official breakfasts and luncheons. The New Family Dining Room, commissioned by Jacqueline Onassis when she was First Lady, is on another floor.) Mrs. Reagan selected most of the table accessories you see above—duck tureens, silver candlesticks, serving plates—from the extensive White House collections. The early-19th-century chandelier is of English cut glass.

On the evening pictured, President Reagan's daughter, Maureen, and her husband, Dennis Revell, were house guests (Maureen visits for a day or two nearly every month); family / turn to page 96.

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friend and interior decorator Ted Graber, who helped Nancy Reagan refurbish the White House, came to call. Henry Haldeman, the Reagans’ chef, prepared a superbly simple dinner under Mrs. Reagan’s supervision. While welcoming Haldeman, Haldeman’s suggestions, whenever company’s coming the First Lady decides what foods to serve.

Nancy Reagan loves to make guests feel at home in the White House and gives a great deal of thought to the foods that they receive. Food, after all, is at the heart of entertaining, even when the dinner takes place at 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue. “I’ve seen Mrs. Reagan go down and spend time sampling desserts in the kitchen,” Elaine Crispin, her press secretary, reports. And, when the Reagans dine alone, they often enjoy “taste-testing” dishes for parties to come.

Elaborate, intricate dishes may be required to impress foreign dignitaries and such, but at informal dinners pomp and circumstance go by the board. The President’s wife has a nostalgic appetite for the earthy, unpretentious meals of his early days in California, and the First Lady makes sure to serve them frequently. Hamburger soup, made with a base of ground beef, lots of onions, potatoes, carrots, and celery, exemplifies his taste for hearty, down-home cooking. Another Ronald Reagan favorite is classic macaroni and cheese, sharpened with dry mustard. Both Nancy and he also relish Baja California chicken, which combines dry sherry and tarragon vinegar in a light, savory sauce.

A typical menu for the sort of friends-and-family get-together on page 95 might begin with onion-wine soup (the beverage of choice: a California white), made with beef broth and—unusually—light cream. For a main course, Nancy Reagan often chooses veal piccata with two-tone rice (wild and white) and, for dessert, one of her favorites, pumpkin pecan pie.

On even evenings in the Old Family Dining Room, a fire glows in the hearth, and always the Reagans’ table boasts a fresh flower centerpiece with the pale yellow and peach-color flowers Mrs. Reagan favors. At dinners large and small, “I try to gather women and men from many different walks of life,” she says, “so that their various experiences and interests lead to good conversation and an enjoyable evening.” She takes special care in putting together a diverse mix of people, because “a well-thought-out guest list is the main ingredient of a successful dinner party.” (Page 64, ten other leading Washington hostesses talk about what makes their most successful parties.) As at the White House, Mrs. Reagan often varies her table with a “smattering of guests from Hollywood,” where the Reagans still have strong, affectionate ties, and she also invites prominent American authors, athletes, scientists to expand the ensemble.

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COLD CUCUMBER SOUP

3 tablespoons butter or margarine
3 cucumbers
2 leeks, chopped
2 bay leaves
2 tablespoons flour
3 cups chicken broth
1 teaspoon salt
1 carton half and half (pin)
Chopped fresh dill
Sour cream

Melt butter, and add cucumbers (slice thin) to the bay leaves. Simmer 2 minutes, then discard bay leaves. Add flour, and well. Add broth and salt, and bring to a boil. Then simmer until cooked—about 30 minutes. Put through a blender, then a rice or large strainer. Chill well. Add half-and-half after soup is cold. Serve with fresh dill sour cream and crackers. Makes 1½ quarts.

ONION-WINE SOUP

1/4 cup butter
5 large onions, chopped
5 cups beef broth
1/4 cup celery leaves
1 large potato, sliced
1 cup dry white wine
1 tablespoon salt
2 teaspoons sugar
1 cup light cream
1 tablespoon minced parsley
Salt and pepper


PUMPKIN PECAN PIE

4 slightly beaten eggs
2 cups canned or mashed cooked pumpkin
1 cup sugar
3/4 cup dark corn syrup
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 unbaked 9-inch pie shell
1 cup chopped pecans

Combine all ingredients except pie shell and pecans. Pour into pie shell; top with pecans. Bake at 350°F for 40 minutes, or until set. Makes one 9-inch pie.

HAMBURGER SOUP

2 lb lean ground beef
2 tablespoons butter
8 cloves garlic, minced
2 cloves garlic, chopped
1 3/4 cups sliced carrots
2 cups chives
1 cup diced green pepper
3 quarts beef broth or 3 quarts water with bouillon cubes
16 oz chopped tomato (canned or fresh)
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper

1. Brown meat in a 6-qt saucepan. Add onions, garlic, carrots, celery, and green peppers; simmer 10 minutes with the pan covered.
2. Add beef broth or water with bouillon cubes. Add chopped tomato; simmer. Simmer soup low on heat for 30 minutes. Add hominy. Boil hamburger soup 10 minutes more.

Note: Hamburger soup freezes very well. It can also be kept in the refrigerator for several days.

Makes 4 quarts.

CANDIED SWEET POTATOES

Cook 5 medium-size sweet potatoes, covered, in boiling water until nearly tender. Preheat oven to 375°F. Pare and cut sweet potatoes lengthwise in 1-inch slices; place shallows glazed baking dish. Season with salt. Mix 1/4 cup maple syrup with 1/4 teaspoon grated lemon rind; 1/4 teaspoon lemon juice and 1/4 teaspoon ginger. Cover potatoes with syrup. Dot with 2 tablespoons butter. Bake on upper shelf of oven for 25 minutes. Makes 4 servings.

PUMPKIN PECAN PIE

1/4 cup each well washed uncooked wild rice and white rice
3 cups consumed
2 tablespoons each soy and minced onion

Cook wild rice in 1 1/4 cups of the consumed for 10 minutes. Meanwhile, place white rice in a 1-quart baking dish in a low oven (300°) to toast until golden-brown. Stir in the remaining 1/4 cup minced, the onion, and partially cooked wild rice. Bake in a moderate oven (350°) 30 minutes. Makes 6 servings.

TWO-TONE RICE

1/4 cup each well washed uncooked wild rice and white rice
3 cups consumed
2 tablespoons each soy and minced onion

Cook wild rice in 1 1/4 cups of the consumed for 10 minutes. Meanwhile, place white rice in a 1-quart baking dish in a low oven (300°) to toast until golden-brown. Stir in the remaining 1/4 cup minced, the onion, and partially cooked wild rice. Bake in a moderate oven (350°) 30 minutes. Makes 6 servings.

CRABMEAT CASSEROLE

1 can (14 oz) crabmeat hearts
1 crabmeat
1/2 lb fresh mushrooms, sautéed
4 tablespoons butter
3 tablespoons flour
1 cup cream
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
1/2 cup medium-dry sherry
Paprika to taste
Ground red pepper to taste
Paprika to taste
1/2 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Place artichokes in bottom of baking dish; sprinkle with the crabmeat; top with sautéed mushrooms. Melt butter in a saucepan; add remaining ingredients except cheese; cook, stirring well after each addition, to form a smooth sauce. Pour sauce over crabmeat; crabs layers, and sprinkle cheese on top. Bake 20 minutes at 375°F. Makes 8 servings.

BAJA CALIFORNIA CHICKEN

8 boned chicken breasts
Seasoned salt and pepper, to taste
2 cloves garlic, crushed
4 tablespoons olive oil
4 tablespoons cornstarch

Sprinkle chicken with seasoned salt and pepper. Crush garlic into oil and vinegar. Add chicken pieces until golden brown, turning frequently. Remove, place in a baking dish. Pour chicken vinegar over. Bake at 350° for 10 minutes. Makes 8 servings.
OLD FASHIONED MACARONI & CHEESE WITH HAM CHUNKS

4 cups milk
1/2 lb. ham (cut in chunks)
crushed crackers

4 cups milk
2 cups milk
1/2 lb. uncooked
1/2 lb. cut up sharp cheddar cheese
1 t. salt
1/4 t. pepper

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place macaroni, cheese, salt, pepper and ham in layers in a buttered casserole. Pour milk over all. Spread crackers over top. Dot with butter. Bake 40 minutes or until golden brown. Serve hot. 6 to 8 servings.

NANCY REAGAN
Monkey Bread

\frac{1}{3} \text{ oz. yeast or 1 pkg. dry yeast}
1 to \frac{1}{4} \text{ c. milk}
3 \text{ eggs}
3 \text{ T. sugar}
1 \text{ T. salt}

3\frac{1}{2} \text{ c. flour}
6 \text{ oz. butter, room temperature}
\frac{1}{2} \text{ lb. melted butter}
two 9'' ring molds

In bowl, mix yeast with part of milk until dissolved. Add 2 eggs, beat. Mix in dry ingredients. Add remaining milk a little at a time, mixing thoroughly. Cut in butter until blended. Knead dough, let rise 1 to 1\frac{1}{2} hours until double in size. Knead again, let rise 40 minutes.

Roll dough onto floured board, shape into a log. Cut log into 28 pieces of equal size. Shape each piece of dough into ball, roll in melted butter. Use half of the pieces in each of buttered, floured molds. Place 7 balls in each mold, leaving space between. Place remaining balls on top, spacing evenly. Let dough rise in mold. Brush tops with remaining egg. Bake in preheated oven at 375° until golden brown. Approximately 15 minutes.

With warmest holiday wishes,

[Signature]

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Persimmon Pudding

\frac{1}{2} \text{ c. melted butter}
\frac{1}{4} \text{ tsp. salt}
1 \text{ c. persimmon pulp (3-4 very ripe)}
3 \text{ T. brandy}
1 \text{ c. seedless raisins}

1 \text{ c. sugar}
1 \text{ tsp. ground cinnamon}
2 \text{ tsp. baking soda}
1 \text{ tsp. vanilla}

1 \text{ c. flour, sifted}
\frac{1}{4} \text{ tsp. nutmeg}
2 \text{ tsp. warm water}
2 \text{ eggs, slightly beaten}
(cheddar nuts optional)

Stir together melted butter and sugar. Beat egg with salt, cinnamon and nutmeg, and add to butter and sugar mixture. Add persimmon pulp, soda dissolved in warm water, brandy and vanilla. Add eggs, mixing thoroughly, but lightly. Add raisins and nuts, stirring until mixed. Put in buttered steam-tight covered mold and steam 2\frac{1}{2} hours. Flame at table with brandy.

Brandy Whipped Cream Sauce

1 \text{ egg}
dash of salt

\frac{1}{3} \text{ c. melted butter}
1 \text{ T. brandy flavoring}
1 \text{ c. sifted powdered sugar}
1 \text{ c. whipping cream}


With warmest holiday wishes,

[Signature]
NANCY REAGAN'S

recipe for

Sweet & Sour Dressing
for Fruit Salad

1/2 cup sugar
2 level T. flour
1 t. paprika
1/2 cup vinegar
1/2 t. grated onion
1 t. salt
3/4 cup oil
1 t. celery seed
   (soak in T. water)

Mix sugar, flour and paprika; stir in vinegar; heat until thick in double boiler. Add onion and salt; cool. Add oil a little at a time, while beating with a rotary beater. Add drained celery seed.
TWO-TONE RICE

3/4 cup each well-washed wild rice and uncooked white rice

3 cups consomme

2 tablespoons each soy and minced onion

Cook wild rice in 1¼ cups of the consomme for 10 minutes. Meanwhile, place white rice in a 1 quart baking dish in a slow oven (300 degrees) to toast until golden brown. Stir in the remaining 1¼ cups consomme, soy, minced onion, and partially cooked wild rice. Bake in a moderate oven (350 degrees) for 30 minutes. Makes 6 servings.

NANCY REAGAN
Dinner: **VEAL STEW WITH RED WINE** (4 servings)

Cut into 12 chunks:

1½ lbs. boneless veal or beef

Roll each piece in: ½ slice bacon - 6 slices in all

Dredge meat lightly with: Flour

Melt in heavy skillet:
2 tablespoons bacon or other fat

Add meat and: 12 small peeled onions

Stir ingredients about and permit to brown on all sides.
Remove from pan. Pour off all but 1 tablespoonful of fat.
Stir in:

1 tablespoon flour

Add and stir until smooth:

1½ cups consomme' or stock
½ cup dry red wine

Add veal and onions. Simmer ingredients closely covered for 1½ to 2 hours until meat is very tender. Season and serve with a baked dish.
Behind the scenes with America's most influential hostess

Simplicity is the essence of Nancy Reagan's style—in food, flowers and in the way she entertains

The day after her husband’s inauguration as President, Nancy Reagan invited some close friends to lunch upstairs in the White House. The meal—celery broth, cheese soufflé, kirsch-sprinkled fruit salad and cookies—was memorable for more reasons than one. “It was so simple and delicious—and so similar to lunch at Pacific Palisades the day after the election—homemade lentil soup, a special cheese sandwich on seven-grain health bread, fruit and cookies,” says her friend Betsy Bloomingdale. “Nancy’s style never changes—at home, in Sacramento or in Washington, she entertains in her own way.” That means small groups, simple foods, beautiful flowers, a warm and welcoming atmosphere that have always made invitations to the Reagan dinners highly coveted.

How to do it the Reagan way? Dinner starts at 7:30 p.m. with drinks and perhaps cheese or guacamole (“everyone’s trying to cut down on their eating”). The first course is often a soup, followed by a pretty veal dish (piccata is a favorite) or breast of chicken; “innovative” vegetables; a good salad such as celery root or mixed greens; and delicious rolls or corn bread. Dessert? The President’s favorite, ice cream, or beautiful fresh fruit with cookies or “Nancy’s famous brownies.”

A favorite number of guests is eight to 10; with more guests, extra round tables come out. (Host and hostess sit at separate tables.) If there’s not enough of one china pattern, Mrs. Reagan will use a different one on each table—but the linen will be the same.

A cherished antique—a silver biscuit container or a lovely tureen—may become the centerpiece, combined with flowers or vegetables. “She likes very casual arrangements, not studied ones,” says florist David Jones. A good example is this low maidenhead fern surrounded by very tall tulips in tiny clay pots, brushed with clear lacquer to glisten like caramel.

“Every table gets tulips of a different color—it’s magical, but very unstudied,” says Mr. Jones. “Nothing is too simple for Nancy.”—L.P.
PUMPKIN PECAN PIE

4 slightly beaten eggs
2 cups canned or mashed cooked pumpkin
1 cup sugar
\frac{1}{2} cup dark corn syrup
1 teaspoon vanilla
\frac{1}{2} teaspoon cinnamon
\frac{1}{4} teaspoon salt
1 unbaked 9-inch pie shell
1 cup chopped pecans

Combine ingredients except pecans. Pour into pie shell -- top with pecans. Bake at 350 degrees for 40 minutes, or until set.

NANCY REAGAN
VIENNA CHOCOLATE BARS

2 sticks butter    2 egg yolks
1-1/2 cups sugar   1-10 oz. jar jelly *raspberry*
2-1/2 cups flour   4 egg whites
1/4 tsp. salt      2 cups finely chopped nuts
1 cup chocolate bits

Cream the butter and 1/2 cup sugar. Add the flour and knead with fingers. Pat batter out on a greased cookie sheet. Bake for 15 to 20 minutes at 350° until lightly browned. Remove from oven, spread with jelly and top with chocolate bits. Beat egg whites until stiff. Fold in remaining sugar and nuts. Gently spread on top of jelly and chocolate. Bake for about 25 minutes at 350°. Cut into squares or bars.

NANCY REAGAN
ONION WINE SOUP

\[ \frac{1}{2} \text{ c. butter} \]
\[ 5 \text{ lg. onions, chopped} \]
\[ 5 \text{ c. beef broth} \]
\[ \frac{1}{2} \text{ c. celery leaves} \]
\[ 1 \text{ lg. potato, sliced} \]
\[ 1 \text{ c. dry white wine} \]

\[ 1 \text{ T. vinegar} \]
\[ 2 \text{ t. sugar} \]
\[ 1 \text{ c. light cream} \]
\[ 1 \text{ T. minced parsley} \]
\[ \text{salt & pepper} \]


6 to 8 servings