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A New Cookbook by Immigrants Helps Support Other Newcomers to Colorado

CLAIRE DUNCOMBE | MAY 3, 2021 | 8:55AM



Together at the Table: Recipes From Our Cultural Heritage is a cookbook meant to celebrate the stories behind passed-down recipes.

“Many years ago when I was a newly-wed, my sister-in-law Elli showed me how to make this Greek dish,” Susan Polycarpou writes in a new cookbook, *Together at the Table: Recipes From Our Cultural Heritage*. Dolmathes, or stuffed grape leaves, is one of many passed-down and loved recipes reflecting the stories and heritage of the book’s contributors.

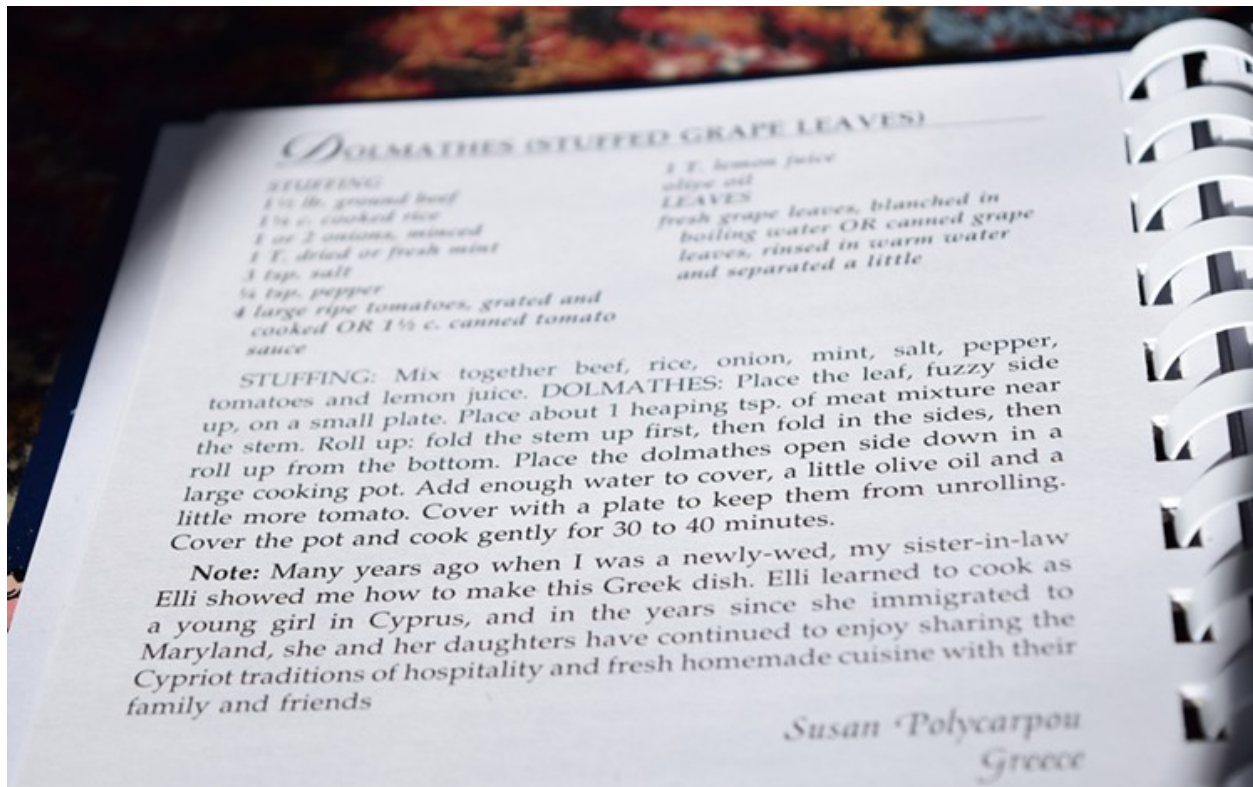
Published by [Immigrant Pathways Colorado \(IPC\)](#), the cookbook compiles 125 recipes from 45 countries. In addition to recipes, the book includes notes from contributors telling their stories about each dish. IPC plans to use donations from the cookbooks to continue its mission to support personalized immigrant, refugee and asylee self-development activities in the Denver metro area.

“Sharing recipes is powerful,” says Susan Thornton, chair of Immigrant Pathways Colorado. “These come from the heart.”

One of the organization's board members, Connie Shoemaker, came up with the idea for the cookbook about a year and a half ago, and the organization reached out to community members to submit family or beloved recipes. “A lot of [contributors] are immigrants themselves, or their families immigrated one or two generations ago,” Thornton adds.

The cookbook includes recipes such as aebleskage, a Danish apple cake; berbere, a spice blend from Ethiopia; and sopa de calabazas, a Mexican zucchini soup. There are directions for appetizers, soups and salads, vegetables and side dishes, main dishes, sauces, breads and rolls, and desserts, cookies and candies.

The stories impart some of the significance of each of the dishes. “Our heritage is often passed down and intimately bound up in the food we eat,” the cookbook’s preface reads.



Recipes include ingredient list, directions and stories associated with each dish.

Claire Duncombe

Alongside a detailed description of how to make chorizo, Benita Salas writes:

“My grandfather, Benito de la Torre, who emigrated from Spain to Mexico, created this recipe. Every Sunday I went to my grandparents’ for a breakfast of chorizo, eggs, beans and homemade tortillas. I was named after my grandfather; the feminine of Benito is Benita. This recipe has been passed down to two generations and always enjoyed it during our breakfast meal!”

Shirlaine Castellino introduces her chicken adobo recipe like this:

“I am originally from the Philippines. I came to the United States as a student many years ago. This main dish is one of my favorite Filipino dishes. For some unknown reason, I can’t cook Filipino dishes well, but I do know how to make this one — my mother, bless her soul, would be proud! I’ve never met anyone who doesn’t like chicken adobo. Try it for yourself!”

Thornton says Castellino's chicken adobo was the first meal her husband made from the cookbook. "It was delicious," she adds.

She started Immigrant Pathways Colorado in 2009 as an outgrowth of other grant-funded initiatives designed to help immigrant communities in Littleton. IPC specifically aims to support documented immigrants overcome some of the financial difficulties that can arise while navigating their new home. Through its program, One-Immigrant-at-a-Time, the 501(c)3 seeks to financially assist one individual at a time as they engage in activities such as pursuing higher [education](#), applying for citizenship, learning English or seeking professional training.

"We make grants for immigrants, refugees and asylees living here legally and at the federal poverty level. They have dreams, and they want to make their lives better," Thornton explains.

Since 2009, IPC has made approximately 122 grants for individuals from 27 countries; each grant is roughly \$1,000. Thornton hopes donations from this cookbook will strengthen the organization's ability to support its community.

Together at the Table: Recipes From Our Cultural Heritage is available at the [Tattered Cover](#) and on [IPC's website](#).