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### **Learning Buffet**

The recipe that I want to share has no particular name to it. We just call it “Postre” which in Spanish means dessert. So for the sake of simplicity I will refer to this dish as mother’s dessert. Mother’s dessert is a type of Jell-O made with canned fruit cocktail. I wouldn’t be able to tell you the exact process of how it’s made because I was always off somewhere when my mother would make it, either off somewhere in my video games or probably outside involved in some sort of mischief with my friends. The Jell-O is made with condensed milk, canned fruits and other ingredients which remain a mystery to me. The canned fruits is added to the mixture of creamy white goodness in a Pyrex or some sort of container – my mother always used a Pyrex which is why that – and then it is left to solidify over the course of a few hours, preferably over night that way when you wake up it is ready to eat. When it has solidified it will look just like a white Jell-O with pieces of fruit in it.

I still remember the first night that my mother was making this, it was a few years ago and I had just come back inside from skateboarding with my friends and like I always tend to do I go look for my mother to let her know that I had returned and I greet her with a hug and kiss on the cheek. When I saw her that night I noticed that her Pyrex was filled with an unusual

white substance in it. At first I thought it was milk, but then I dipped my finger in it and felt the thick substance surround my finger. I licked my finger and my taste buds instantly sprang up with delight at tasting the sweet goodness of the condensed milk. I smiled at my mother and asked her what she was making, and she told me that she was trying out a dessert recipe that she found somewhere in a magazine and she thought that my dad and I would like it since we are really into sweet desserts. She told me not to get too excited as it wouldn't be done until the next day, which instantly brought a frown to my face.

The next day rolled by and I happened to wake up around lunch time. I did all my morning to-dos just in time for the food to be served. We ate rice and grilled chicken for lunch day and once we were finished my mother pulled the Pyrex tray out of the refrigerator, I was so anxious to finally try this White Fruit-Filled Jell-O and so was my father. My mother served us each a slice on our plates and waited to see our reactions. My dad and I took a bite into the dessert and we instantly fell in love with it. It was delicious and a great feeling inside my mouth as the sweetness mixed with the taste of fruit. It was delicious and my dad and I thanked my mom and asked her to start making it more often. She did that exact thing, and to this day we still eat mother's dessert.

My mother makes the dessert on holiday occasions and on family gatherings. She makes it for Thanksgiving dinner and Christmas dinner as well as New Year's dinner. She will make it for my birthday because she knows how much I love to eat it, and she likes to share it with my friends who come over to celebrate my birthday and they too love it; whenever they come over still today, they always ask me "When is your mom making that white dessert with all the fruits again, it was really good!" In addition she also makes it for her co-worker's birthday parties and

their family gatherings. Her co-workers have also grown a big liking for my mother's dessert as they are always requesting it whenever they have family gatherings of their own and they invite us and welcome us to attend if we would like to.

This dish has developed a special meaning within my family and has grown to be a traditional dish which my family shares around the holidays and other big family gatherings. This Thanksgiving my mother is hosting dinner at my house for the first year, and we have friends from all over coming over expecting that my mother's dessert will be served. My mom is prepared and is making a huge batch of it because every time we serve her dessert somewhere, people ask for seconds, and sometimes even thirds. Since this is a dessert, it is always served after the main dishes have been finished. Whether it be on Thanksgiving dinner, Christmas dinner, or a birthday party, my mother's dessert is always served after the main dishes have been finished off. Usually the Pyrex with the dessert is placed on a table with people serving squares of it to whoever wants some. When there are a lot of people wanting some, then there will definitely be someone serving dessert to the others to ensure that everyone gets an equal amount. When there aren't much people usually the Pyrex is set on a table and everyone is free to take as much as they would like to eat and even repeat as often as they'd like, still keeping in mind that others want to eat it.

In addition, I served this meal to the class as a learning buffet, and the class had an overall positive response to my mother's dessert. Due to time constraints I wasn't able to get one-on-one feedback from the class, but I did ask for a vote to see if they enjoyed it or not and everyone in the classroom raised their hands, which made me happy to see. I was able to hear a few comments from the class stating things such as that the dessert was really good, or

that it was really sweet, or that it was something that they would be interesting in making to serve to their family. I am almost positive that more than 90 percent of the class enjoyed this dessert that I brought for them to eat.

Finally, this dish carries a very special meaning for me. It has been something that I have eaten since I was small and have continued eating throughout my lifetime growing up. This dish has the power to bring together family and friends no matter the occasion and it is that special attribute that holds this dish in a special place in my heart. I will continue to serve this dish to my kids when I have a family, and hopefully they like it as much as I do.