

Shmanners 333: Thanksgiving Sides

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[theme music plays]

Travis: Hello, internet! I'm your husband host, Travis McElroy.

Teresa: And I'm your wife host, Teresa McElroy.

Travis: And you're listening to *Shmanners*.

Teresa: It's extraordinary etiquette...

Travis: For ordinary occasions. Hello, my dove.

Teresa: Hello, dear. I'm sorry that you are now feeling under the weather.

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: It seems that we traded colds.

Travis: We did. We did. I'm floating around in my head somewhere. But you know what matters?

Teresa: What?

Travis: Content.

Teresa: Content. [laughs]

Travis: Content. You gotta put the con— no. You know, we don't just make this show for fun. It is fun to make. But we know that there are people who are like, "I need *Shmanners* to feel." And so that's why...

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: ... we put this out every week. Happy holidays to everybody. Um, the holiday season in my mind has officially begin. Now, finally.

Teresa: It wasn't the holiday season— it doesn't start with Halloween?

Travis: No, that's its own private— I'm not gonna lump that in.

Teresa: Oh, okay.

Travis: No. The holiday season is more, for me, that feeling from Thanksgiving to, like, January 2nd that you have during the day of, like, increa— at least for me, it's this feeling of everything is simultaneously incredibly hectic and panicky, but also very fun and, ah—

Teresa: Kinda nice.

Travis: Everybody— oh, it's great. We're all thinking about something else.

Teresa: Well, we are a big Thanksgiving house around here. Not because it's the celebration of Thanksgiving, but because Travis loves to cook.

Travis: I do.

Teresa: Loves to host. We love to feed people.

Travis: It's funny, because— I was talking with Alex today and she was like, "There's just so much stuff on top of holi—" and I'm like, "Yeah, absolutely." I don't care about all that. It's that I get to— it's, like, a day where people have to come eat all the food that you make?

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: And that's it for me, man. I would do it any day.

Teresa: Excuse for food.

Travis: This is just the day where it's just like, of course. What else are you gonna do? So I like to make stuff.

Teresa: And Travis, you always over— over-make. You over-buy.

Travis: No, but see, this is where you're wrong. Because on any other day, you would be correct. But this is why I like the idea of eating holidays. Uh, which, you know, it's not a holiday, mind you, but like a Superbowl party, right?

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Or something like that where it's just like, you don't want to get there and be like, "Yeah, this is just enough stuff." Like, that's not how that works. That's just dinner. Right?

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: A regular dinner is, like, just enough food. The idea of an eating holiday is like, a feast. It's a feast day, right?

Teresa: They are having what Bebe is calling— they have, what they're calling at school, a Thanksgiving feast.

Travis: This is the thing, babe. And you know, uh, I rarely will put my foot down about you being wrong about something.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: 'Cause normally it's like, well, I feel very right in this, but my rightness is wrong? Where this is one where I love you, but you are wrong.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Because I don't think you can make too much on Thanksgiving. Because, like, that— it's a feast day. Once again, if someone said "I'm throwing a feast!" And you rolled up and it was like, "And here's your portion, and here's your portion, and that's it."

You're like, "Mmm, I don't think that was a feast." Right?

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: Thank you.

Teresa: Yes, that is true. But—

Travis: I also will say—

Teresa: I get— I get verklempt about all of the extras, and the— the anxiety, the—

Travis: But it also doesn't go to waste. Okay, here's the other thing. I also will then continue to make different things out of those leftovers for—

Teresa: That is true.

Travis: —days afterwards. Also, one more thing, because it is a very privileged position to be talking about being able to make so much food in a land where it is, you know, a very successful country on the surface, and yet there are plenty of people living here in the US with food insecurity, and people experiencing homelessness. So we also do, every year— I dollar-for-dollar donate whatever I spend on ours to the food bank, which I recommend everybody do, and just give to food banks in general during this time, and any shelters that exist during this time. So I also recognize that—

Teresa: Anything that you can give during this time especially, um, because there are so few resources around. If you can't give dollar-for-dollar, a small donation is just fine. But, like, you know, it's important to also include the people who are food insecure in our holiday festivities.

Travis: So, it's the day after Thanksgiving. We're just to the side of Thanksgiving.

Teresa: Ah!

Travis: Ahh, so what are we talking about?

Teresa: We are talking about side dishes.

Travis: Uh-huh.

Teresa: Um, first, what are your favorite sides you want to tell the people?

Travis: Porridge. Gruel.

Teresa: Blah. [wheezes]

Travis: A crust of bread.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: I like a thin broth.

Teresa: No, for real.

Travis: Okay. What are my favorite? [sighs] So, I don't know that I would say favorites, but I will say it would not be Thanksgiving without this thing.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Um, so I make my Mom's version of sweet potato casserole.

Teresa: Mm-hmm. Which I think was included in the Max Fun book at some point.

Travis: I believe so. Um, and rather than being topped with, like, marshmallows and stuff, it's topped, uh, with— well, our version is macadamia nuts and stuff, because Bebe can't do walnuts and such. But, like, crushed macadamia nuts and, you know, like, brown sugar. It straddles—

Teresa: Candied nuts.

Travis: Yeah, but I don't want to make it sound too sweet, 'cause it's not really that sweet. It straddles the line between feeling like a dessert and feeling like a dinner side. But without that, it wouldn't feel like Thanksgiving to me.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Um, of course mashed potatoes.

Teresa: Of course!

Travis: Obv— yeah, obviously. Just picture a Thanksgiving plate without mashed potatoes, or a roll or some kind of bread, and it feels weird. I also have started doing Brussels sprouts every year, and that really feels like one to me.

Teresa: Yeah. That's a very British holiday thing.

Travis: Oh yeah?

Teresa: Yeah, they love the Brussels sprouts. Um, and I think one of my favorite sides— now, this is not actually a family tradition. Do you remember back when our family was just the two of us and we used to do Friendsgiving?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Our friend Molly made this delicious sausage and sage dressing.

Travis: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Teresa: Oh, it was so good. That was my favorite for years and years and years. Maybe I should get that recipe someday.

Travis: But see, the reason I can't answer the question of what's my favorite is, like, one of the reasons I like hosting Thanksgiving is, like, all— the answer is all of them!

Teresa: All of them. [laughs]

Travis: Because I also like— I also have a hard time picturing Thanksgiving without, like, I got one of those, like, frozen shrimp trays, you know, like from Kroger that you can dip and that comes with the sauce right there. And like, oh yeah, I did bacon wrapped smokies and stuff like that. It's like—

Teresa: Yeah, those are all the little extras that you love for the holiday.

Travis: It's all— I mean, green bean casserole's in there.

Teresa: Yeah, and we'll talk about that one.

Travis: It's all great.

Teresa: I would like to select a few. Um—

Travis: Gravy. Stuffing. Dressing.

Teresa: [laughs] Oh. Uh, I do not believe in stuffing.

Travis: Well, so this is a thing. Because there are people for whom the term is interchangeable.

Teresa: Right.

Travis: And there are people for whom— think of it as two very different things, right? Because I know that technically stuffing is what's cooked inside the bird and dressing is cooked on the side.

Teresa: And the recipes are very similar, in fact.

Travis: Right. But I grew up just calling it stuffing no matter what, and it was never cooked inside the bird, and I still don't think of it that way, but I still call it stuffing because when I think of dressing, because of salad dressing, I actually picture stuff like gravy more when I think of dressing.

Teresa: Ohh.

Travis: Because I think of, like, a liquid.

Teresa: That's a you thing.

Travis: I— hey. This is where I know that feeling right is wrong.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: This is a great example of that.

Teresa: Let's take the history of stuffing, which, like we said, stuffing is cooked inside the bird. Um, and then later on we'll do dressing. The quote, "first Thanksgiving," uh, probably took place in 1621, but stuffing as we know it is not, like, a thing that goes that far back. It didn't actually appear in American cookbooks until the late 18th century, so that's way after that, right? The first recipe for any kind of stuffing shows up— I mean, traditional, quote, "American stuffing," shows up in Amelia Simmon's book, *American Cookery* in the late 1700s. Historically—

Travis: By the way, cookery? We need to bring—

Teresa: Yeah, I know. We need to bring them back.

Travis: We need to bring back, like, the -ery. You know, this is the rookery.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: You know? Oh, we do cookery. We don't use that—

Teresa: Crockery.

Travis: We don't use that eu— uh, that suffix? Yes.

Teresa: Yes.

Travis: We don't use that suffix enough.

Teresa: Um, the Puritans—

Travis: Boo!

Teresa: Boo! They didn't even have bread-based stuffing. They probably did not, like, even consider that.

Travis: They— I boo them from every direction.

Teresa: Zero fun.

Travis: I have yet to hear a thing about a Puritan and be like, "Well, we do agree on that point."

Teresa: [laughs] They probably filled the birds that they ate with herbs and nuts. Um, but the other thing that they probably would have put in there were oysters.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Now, there is oyster dressing, or oyster stuffing. Um, but that's a pretty New England-y thing still.

Travis: Well, for a large chunk of US history, when we talk about the US, we're basically talking about New England.

Teresa: That's true. That's where the settlers, the colonizers lived, right? And those are the people who wrote the history books. Um, and so it was a great way to stretch the fowl a little bit, to make sure that everybody got a big portion of, quote, "meat." Right?

Travis: See, I assumed that it was originated from, like, cooking with aromatics. Of just like, well, it will help flavor the bird, and you put the stuff inside of it. Because that is the thing with put—like, you know. I have from time to time, when roasting a chicken or roasting a turkey or whatever, put a lemon on there and, like, you know, sage and thyme and stuff.

Teresa: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

Travis: Because if I put it on the outside, it's gonna burn, right? But I put it in there and it's gonna season it, especially roasting it for a long time. It's gonna season it from the inside out.

Teresa: Right. But that is something that came a lot later.

Travis: Ohh, okay.

Teresa: Uh, the next thing is cranberry sauce is a big deal—

Travis: Not a fan.

Teresa: —around Thanksgivings.

Travis: Too tart for me. Too tart.

Teresa: Well, the indigenous people, especially in the New England area, long raised and ate berries, especially cranberries. Um, and it was, again, Amelia Simmons' book *American Cookery* suggested that they be served with the turkey.

Travis: Now, here's the thing about cranberries that I feel. Many berries, be it the blue, the rasp, the black...

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: ... they feel like berries that desperately want to be eaten so that their seeds may be, you know, distributed and fertilized.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: The cranberry, with its flavor, feels very much like it would rather not be eaten, or at best is ambivalent.

Teresa: It feels kind of more like medicine, doesn't it?

Travis: Yes. A cranberry does not seem like it desires to be eaten. A cranberry's like, "Well, if you're gonna eat me, it's gonna be rough on both of us."

Teresa: Yeah. Uh, Amelia actually suggested that if you don't have cranberries available, you should use pickled mangoes.

Travis: No!

Teresa: Which they don't sound even, like— I mean, I guess pickled is, like, the tart part? Or sour part? But, like... where—

Travis: But Amelia, what about the option of just not, then?

Teresa: Where are you gonna get pickled mangoes in colonial Williamsburg? I don't know.

Travis: Well, I bet it was easier to find pickled mangoes than fresh mangoes at that point.

Teresa: Than fresh mangoes. [laughs] As far as the scale goes. Um, and so it has been a staple. But until, like, about a hundred years ago you couldn't even buy them fresh unless you lived near, like, a cranberry bog.

Travis: Oh, hence that one episode of *Bob's Burgers*.

Teresa: Exactly. And—[wheeze-laughs]

Travis: He gets very excited.

Teresa: Very excited about cranberries.

Travis: That wasn't even a joke, just a reference. You giggled thinking about *Bob's Burgers*.

Teresa: I know, I know. And even then, they were— fresh cranberries were available for a very short period during the year. And that all changed with Marcus L. Urann. He was a lawyer that changed the cranberry, like, industry forever.

Travis: Wait, was he a lawyer for cranberries? He argued to get 'em into every juice on the market?

Teresa: He founded Ocean Spray.

Travis: Ah, so yes.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: And not as direct as I pictured.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: But yes, he forced everybody to drink cranberries, whether they like it or not.

Teresa: That's right, whether they like it or not. And here's the thing. I mean, if you want to sell cranberries, you have to figure out a way to, like, enhance or change the product enough because, like we said—

Travis: [simultaneously] So that people will—

Teresa: So that—

Travis: So that people will eat it!

Teresa: —people can eat it year-round, especially.

Travis: Oh, okay.

Teresa: Right? So a lot of cranberries that come out of the bog, especially when they're harvested by machine, are not perfect beautiful berries, right? A lot of them end up crushed, or mangled, or gashed, or whatever it is. They're not perfectly beautiful berries. And so—

Travis: But how many of us are?

Teresa: —canning— aww.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Canning or jellying these berries made it so much easier to distribute them widely and keep them year-round. Um, and so he was the one who thought of the jellied log, right? And, you know, I mean, obviously this was not at the, quote, "first Thanksgiving." It wasn't even at the Thanksgiving that Abraham Lincoln sanctioned, right? It didn't come along until 1941. But everybody really, really seemed to love it, because 5 million gallons of it are enjoyed each holiday season.

Travis: Not for me.

Teresa: Not for you.

Travis: If it is for you, so be it.

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: But you know what is for us?

Teresa: What?

Travis: Taking a break for a word from some other Max Fun shows.

[theme music plays]

[music plays]

Jo: Maaanolo! Guess what? Manolo, guess what?

Manolo: What, what, what?

Jo: *Dr. Gameshow* has made it to 100 episodes on Maximum Fun!

Manolo: Oh, that's true. I knew that.

Jo: Well, to celebrate, we're releasing our entire Earwolf archives to Max Fun members. That's anyone who gives \$5 or more monthly to support podcasts like *Dr. Gameshow*.

Manolo: That's 63 episodes with in-studio comedian guests like Jason Mantzoukas, Bowen Yang, and Matt Rogers, Joe Pera, Todd Barry, and Janine Garofolo, Conner O'Malley, Chris Gethard, and more.

Jo: Plus three bonus episodes that include two pilot episodes. Wow, two pilots! Must be good!

Manolo: Find the feed at Maximumfun.org/boco, B-O-C-O.

Jo: Stands for bonus content. Mm-hmm!

[music and ad end]

[music plays]

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[music and ad end]

Travis: And next we'll talk about another great Thanksgiving side, potato chips. Teresa, go on.

Teresa: No.

Travis: No.

Teresa: Pumpkin pie.

Travis: Uh— now, listen, babe. I don't know if I count that as a side. That's a dessert.

Teresa: Well, it is now. It didn't start that way.

Travis: Go on?

Teresa: So...

Travis: I am in— you have me hooked, now reel me in!

Teresa: We think of pumpkin pie as kind of like a creamy, custardy, spiced version, right?

Travis: Yes.

Teresa: Of, like, a tart. But it didn't start that way. In the, you know, the mid-17th, late 16th century, it was more like we would think of a meat pie, right? Where, you know, you think about how it's like a thick pastry casing, it's the actual, like, slices of the gourd of the pumpkin, and probably also with, like, you know, apple or pear or some other kind of thing, and cooked inside a pastry case that you probably didn't eat. So it was more like roasted squash than it was the pumpkin pie we think of.

Travis: Interesting. That explains quite a bit to me.

Teresa: Yeah.

Travis: Because if today, right, you were like, "Here's a list of things we had—" assuming pumpkin didn't exist. And you say, "Here's a list of things we don't normally make pie out of. Which one would you pick?"

A pumpkin would not be in my, like, first ten options. Because it's like— it's not inherently sweet. Like, there's not a ton— like, you have to process it first to even be able to work with it, right? So it's not like strawberries or blueberries or raspberries where it's just like, yeah, dump 'em in fresh. It's like, no, in order to be able to do anything with it, first we have to, like, make it into a paste, basically.

Teresa: Yeah, so this was more like roasted squash.

Travis: Hmm.

Teresa: Like you would any other, like, summer squash or zucchini or gourds or things like that, right?

Travis: I think I'd rather make a cucumber pie.

Teresa: Really?

Travis: I think you could do, like, a cucumber and mint pie, uh, that would be delicious.

Teresa: Hm.

Travis: Do some jelly gin in there.

Teresa: Oh boy. Um, okay.

Travis: You know what I'm saying, though. It would be deli— you wouldn't like it 'cause you don't like cucumber. But I'm saying, I've said it out loud now and basically making a, like, uh— what am I thinking of? It's like a— not a mimosa. What's the word? A mojito, like a mojito pie.

Teresa: A mint and cu— mint is— mojitos are mint.

Travis: No, I said, like, cucumber, mint... and gin. But make it into a pie. Anyways, I'm gonna work on it.

Teresa: Anyway. Um, you mentioned sweet potato casserole. Now, your sweet potato casserole does not have the thing that really made sweet potato casserole a side.

Travis: Because I would argue what you're talking about is sweet potato pie.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Where that had the marshmallows on top, right?

Teresa: Yes, and that's really what it was made to do, right? So sweet potatoes have been a savory side dish, kind of just, like, roasted, right? Because you can roast sweet potatoes or bake sweet potatoes the same way you bake regular, like, white potatoes. Right? Um, and you can mash 'em, and people like to add, like, butter and herbs and even the, um, you know, the brown sugar, right? To sweeten it up.

Travis: Basically, I've made mashed sweet potatoes before. I just swap out— instead of salt use sugar, and it's like a sweeter thing.

Teresa: Yeah, kind of. Um, and so that wasn't really what sweet potato casserole was until about the mid-1800's. It was about that time that candied sweet potatoes—

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: So that's the process of boiling in sugar, right? Candying. Became popular. And then it wasn't until the beginning of the 20th century that the marshmallow was introduced to the hot dish kind of accompaniment.

Travis: Now, here's the thing that I will say. They've missed the mark.

Teresa: Oh really?

Travis: Because if you're gonna trick kids into eating something by adding marshmallows, it should've been, like, green beans or broccoli or something like that, right? 'Cause, like, the sweet— I know. Listen, I know the face you're making. But I'm not talking about for us, right? I'm talking about for kids. Because sweet potatoes? Already sweet. Already delicious. Are already— you could do just a big kind of goop on their plate and they'll eat. And then you added marshmallows? Too sweet.

Now, I'll tell you one of my favorite sides. Simple and easy, folks. Basically caramelize some brown sugar and butter and carrots. Just throw baby carrots in a pot.

Teresa: Oh yeah, so good.

Travis: Melt butter on top of it, add some brown sugar in there.

Teresa: You can even do it in a slow cooker.

Travis: Oh yeah. It's your Dad's, like, favorite thing I make.

Teresa: Yeah, he loves that.

Travis: And it's the simplest thing I make, too. It's just brown sugar and butter and carrots.

Teresa: You don't even measure. You just—

Travis: Yeah! Just throw— I just follow my heart!

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Listen! I was raised by a southern woman, and she was raised by a southern woman, and I cook with my heart, by which I mean butter. [laughs quietly]

Teresa: [laughs] Oh boy. Uh, next is green bean casserole, which you mentioned earlier, right? Green beans, again something very typically farmed in the United States from way, way, way back. And what happened was during the 1950's, hot holiday dishes were very popular after World War II. This was considered very celebratory, right?

Travis: Yeah. Well, 'cause it's that idea of, like, having hot food, right? Instead of, like, MRE's, which are meals ready to eat or something, where it's just like a tin that you pull operation and eat. And so now you're home from the war and this— home cookin', right?

Teresa: Right. And it felt very decadent because it was served piping hot, and it was creamy, and basically—

Travis: Rockwellian. That was the— 'cause we talked about Rockwell.

Teresa: Oh, yeah.

Travis: Of that, you know the image of holding a Thanksgiving turkey and, like, the steam and—

Teresa: And the tray, yeah.

Travis: Yeah, that idea. Also it smells better. Stuff smells better when it's warm. Food smells more when it's warm.

Teresa: Uh, so in 1955, a home economics staff member at the Campbell's Soup Company, Dorcas Reilly, um, made this recipe, and it takes just 25 minutes. It is canned onions— well, canned dried onions— canned green beans, and Campbell's condensed cream of mushroom soup. That's it. Um, that is the recipe. And I have come across several, like, quote, "imitation" or "healthy" option or whatever it is. They never taste exactly the same. Um, you don't like it. A lot of people don't like it. I do like a few bite-fulls, but I can't eat more than that, because it is— I don't know what it is about it. Its kind of...

Travis: Dense?

Teresa: Yeah. Yeah, it is dense.

Travis: That's what's off putting to me. Like, most of the stuff— and, you know, I just said I like mashed potatoes and I like sweet potato stuff. But, like, that's not dense to me. If you make that stuff right it's, like, fluffy and light, even though it's rich? Anyways. Uh, the thing about green bean casserole to me, the version you describe, is it is too dominating? Like, to— I don't know. It doesn't— for some reason, looking at it visually it doesn't vibe with me. Also, can I just say, 'cause you brought it up, unless you're talking about, like, allergies or intolerance stuff, anybody who talks about, like, eating on Thanksgiving and holidays and eating in general, about healthy foods and not healthy foods, is such a— like, that's not how it works, right? Bebe will watch videos, and we have to sometimes, like, stop the video and be like, "Hey. That's not true."

Where it's just like, "Oh, let's talk about the healthy foods like apples and lettuce! And let's talk about the not healthy foods like potato chips and cookies."

And it's like, no, no, no. It's just some foods you can eat more of and some foods you have to eat less of, but they're not healthy or unhealthy.

Teresa: Yeah. Food is amoral. It doesn't have good or bad attributes.

Travis: Exactly. Exactly.

Teresa: Food is fuel, and you have to fuel your body in a way that will make it run. That's what you have to do.

Travis: If anyone gives you a hard time about eating too much, especially on a feast day, uh, they can get on outta here, you know what I mean? I don't need them at my Thanksgiving party. Get— hey! The Macy's Day Parade is passing by, why don't you get on one of those floats and get outta here!

Teresa: Alright. Well, people loved the green bean casserole that I just described so much that in 2002, the original recipe, the handwritten recipe card, was donated to the National Inventors Hall of Fame, along with things like... ibuprofen, and the invention of the automobile, [laughs] and all that stuff. [laughs]

Travis: That's a pretty big comparison. Listen, even just those three examples. Like...

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Green bean casserole, even if you love it, there's no way you could argue—

Teresa: I'm just saying it's all included!

Travis: Okay. But hopefully in a different wing, right? It's not like those three things in a line of like, "And here we see thing greatest inventions of all time: ibuprofen, the automobile, green bean casserole." Hopefully they're in different sections, is all I'm saying.

Teresa: Okay, that's all you're saying. Um, so now that I have gone through some of the, you know, the heavy hitters, I'd like to talk a little bit about some submissions to a Twitter thread. Twitter user Maya Kosoff was the one who started a Twitter thread about her family's esoteric Thanksgiving dishes.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Right? Here is one from November 23, 2019. Seafoam salad. It is an original, like, 50's recipe. Uh, so it's got lime jello.

Travis: Oh, okay. See, right off the bat I was like, "This sounds like ambrosia. This sounds like a—"

Teresa: A little bit. A little bit. It's got pears, it's got cream cheese, it's got Cool Whip.

Travis: Mm-hmm.

Teresa: Um, and you put the pears in the blender until it's like applesauce, and you mix in the creamy and the jello and it is... somethin'! It's somethin'.

Travis: I'm not gonna lie, as soon as I heard that my mouth started watering.

Teresa: Really?

Travis: Yeah. Like I said, southern in me was like, "Yeah, all day long." Are you kidding me? That sounds refreshing. It sounds creamy. It sounds delicious. I love that.

Teresa: I don't know if that's something that I would enjoy on my Thanksgiving plate.

Travis: No, I wouldn't have it at Thanksgiving.

Teresa: And it is served as a side, not as a dessert.

Travis: I would have that at a picnic.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: A Fourth of July? All day long. All day long.

Teresa: The next one on this thread is a corn spoon bread.

Travis: Okay. I know what spoon— okay. I know spoon bread, but I often just interchange spoon bread and cornbread.

Teresa: Okay, sure. This one includes a can of corn, a can of creamed corn, a stick of butter, sour cream, cornbread mix, that you bake together for an hour. Um, and I mean, it sounds pretty good.

Travis: Yeah, what's not to like?

Teresa: I mean, I feel like this is the kind of thing that I would see at, like, a Cracker Barrel, right? Like, served in its own little skillet, like cast iron skillet.

Travis: Yeah. Well, they— at the Eagle downtown here in Cincinnati they do spoon bread.

Teresa: Oh, okay.

Travis: But not with— uh, I don't think it has all the extra corn and stuff in it, but.

Teresa: Yeah, but it is like a cornbread.

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: Yeah. I just don't think that it has the kind of, um— it might have too much other stuff in it to actually, like, cut the cornbread squares or whatever, so one eats it with a spoon.

Travis: Yeah, or you spoon it out, I guess. Yeah, 'cause it's in the pan.

Teresa: [simultaneously] Or spoon it out of the dish, yeah.

Travis: Um, just here's a little secret. Another great way of— as long as we're talking about, like, sneaking vegetables in, chop up some steamed broccoli, bake it into your cornbread. It's delicious, kids'll eat it.

Teresa: Our kids eat broccoli without being—

Travis: I mean, I'm sure. I'm saying if you need to sneak it in. Not— not with pure little angels—

Teresa: I also don't believe in sneaking foods in. It doesn't count as exposing them to food if you sneak it in.

Travis: What if I'm talking to the person who needs to sneak it in for themselves?

Teresa: Okay, that's fine.

Travis: What if someone's like, "I can't eat broccoli, but I have to."

Teresa: [laughs] Okay. Alright. Um, here's one. Frog Eye Salad.

Travis: Okay, this one's a complete mystery to me.

Teresa: It's a mystery. It is a—

Travis: Wait, can I guess?

Teresa: Okay, okay.

Travis: I'm gonna say it includes, like, some kind of bean? Like a— like a black-eyed pea or a garbanzo bean or something like that?

Teresa: Interesting. No.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Uh, it is made with very small pasta pieces, acini di pepe pasta. Right?

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Tiny little circles that are usually kind of, like, jaggedy around the outside, maybe like star-ish shaped, right? With mandarin oranges and pineapples, topped with marshmallows or whipped topping, sometimes egg yolks are included in the recipe. It's another one of those, like, jello-y salads.

[pause]

Travis: Okay. That one doesn't hit—

Teresa: [simultaneously] It's not something I'm used to.

Travis: —for me, but okay.

Teresa: Yeah. Interesting. There are a lot of those, like, salads in the Midwest that aren't salad. Like, you know, salad like with—

Travis: See, that feels like more of a southern thing to me.

Teresa: Really?

Travis: Well, when you're talking about adding jello to it, I don't know why, but that strikes me as southern. But, like, Midwest and north seems more like "We added a bunch of mayonnaise to it."

Teresa: [laughs]

Travis: Which I say without judgment. Just fact.

Teresa: Just fact. Here's one. Uh, tomato soup cake.

Travis: Huh!

Teresa: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm. So, here's the recipe from I believe 1955. Butter, sugar, flour, spices of cinnamon, clove, and nutmeg, and then... soup. Tomato soup.

Travis: That sounds up my alley.

Teresa: And then one frosts it with chocolate frosting.

Travis: Oooh! Okay, yeah, that sounds good.

Teresa: So it seems kind of almost like a spice cake, right?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: And I'm not exactly sure—

Travis: Like carrot almost.

Teresa: I'm not exactly sure what tomato brings to the party.

Travis: Well, that's why I think— 'cause I was sitting there— I love fresh tomato. Uh, sometimes I eat 'em like an apple. And I was like, "Well, why not just use fre—" but tomatoes and tomato soup, tomato soup has a lot more, like, flavors and salt and stuff to it. Where, listen, don't get me wrong. You can make a tomato cake and it's great. You can make tomato cornbread and it's great. But I

think that with the tomato soup, it's bringing stuff 'cause it's got the spices right there in it. Or flavors, I wouldn't say spices, flavors.

Teresa: Well, I mean, yeah. Uh, I more like my tomato soup kind of savory, right? I guess that some of those spices are savory? I mean, I guess clove and nutmeg, right?

Travis: But that's what I'm saying, is I think that this is a taking and turning where you're turning it into a, like— you know, if you have a spice cake, right? Where it's just like, yeah, the overriding factor, or the factor that wins out is sweet, but it's like 51%, 49%. You know what I mean?

Teresa: I love— I love to, like, rip up my grilled cheese and dip that into soup it's so—

Travis: [simultaneously] We're not talking about replacing tomato soup forever!

Teresa: I know, I know, I know.

Travis: This isn't a cake or pie question, babe. This is just saying, here's a different way to do it.

Teresa: [laughs] Here is one that I am including because Alex is emphatic.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: About this. She—

Travis: Poison!

Teresa: [laughs] She wanted to tell everyone about White Castle stuffing.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Now, okay. We've talked about the culinary difference between stuffing and dressing. It is actually a dressing that she's talking about. And what it is is—

Travis: My hesitance, by the way, is like White Castle I think is a Cincinnati based fast food place.

Teresa: Yeah. I mean— hmm? Maybe it's Dayton? It's not Cincinnati, I don't think.

Travis: But it's, like, local. I mean, it's Ohio local, or it's...

Teresa: It is, uh... Ohio and I think also Michigan. Now you're gonna have to do a Google. Um, but anyway. So what she says is... if you take a regular dressing, right? It's usually chicken broth, and celery, and salt and pepper and, you know, other add-ins, next to bread, right? Pieces of bread.

So basically what she says she likes to do is take the sliders— about ten, she says— and take out the pickles. She says "obviously," I kind of like pickles so, I mean, if it were me I might keep 'em in. And then rip them up and use that as the bread base, right?

Travis: Apparently, by the way, White Castle was originally founded in Wichita, Kansas.

Teresa: Ohh! So it's a lot further west than we thought.

Travis: And its greatest presence in the Midwest and New York metropolitan area, which I wouldn't have expected.

Teresa: Great.

Travis: Oh, but its headquarters is in Columbus, Ohio.

Teresa: Okay.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: Alright.

Travis: All over the place.

Teresa: And so she says that it makes the best stuffing. And, you know, it makes a lot of sense to me, because the bread is very white and fluffy, right? And I believe White Castle in their, um— the meat part of the slider, isn't it cooked with onions, I think?

Travis: Yeah.

Teresa: It's got onions mixed in. That's great for dressing. Um, and you know, she says it's her favorite and everybody, everybody loves it. I'm excited to try it.

Travis: I mean, not this year. 'Cause I wasn't planning on it.

Teresa: No, you aren't gonna make it, but maybe I'll ask Alex to bring in some.

Travis: Okay. So, that's gonna do it for us. But the last thing I want to say is, if you're— whatever— just like with Friendsgiving, if you regularly eat a side dish on Thanksgiving, guess what? It's a Thanksgiving side dish.

Teresa: It's a Thanksgiving side now!

Travis: That's gonna do it for us, so... let's see. Go check out all the great merch at McElroy Merch. We want to say thank you to Alex, our researcher, without whom we wouldn't be able to make this show. We want to say thank you to Rachel, our editor, without whom we wouldn't be able to make this show. We want to say thank you to you for listening. We could make the show without you, but why?

Teresa: Why?

Travis: Um, let's see. What else? My brain is absolutely swimming.

Teresa: Well, let me do my bit.

Travis: Okay.

Teresa: We always thank Brent "brentalfloss" Black for writing our theme music, which is available as a ringtone where those are found. Thank you to Kayla M. Wasil for our Twitter thumbnail art. Thank you to Bruja Betty Pinup Photography for the cover picture of our fan-run Facebook group, *Shmanners* Fanners. If you love to give and get excellent advice from other fans, go ahead and join that group today. As always, if you have topics that you'd love to see us cover, if you have idioms that you would like to submit, please email us, shmannerstcast@gmail.com, and make sure you say hi to Alex, because she reads every one.

Travis: We are doing Candlenights virtually again this year, so make sure you come check that out. It's going to be December 17th at 9 PM Eastern time. You can get your tickets at bit.ly/candlenights2022, Candlenights 2022. We're gonna have lots of great guests and segments and all that stuff, and all the proceeds go to help Harmony House, which is a shelter in our hometown of Huntington, West Virginia, helping people who are experiencing homelessness. Get those tickets now. Join us again next week!

Teresa: No RSVP required!

Travis: You've been listening to *Shmanners*...

Teresa: Manners, *Shmanners*. Get it.

[theme music plays]

[chord]

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