



# THE SEASON OF POTLUCKING

20-ish recipes from your favorite  
advertising professionals

**ZLR**  **IGNITION**





At ZLR, we love gathering around our big kitchen table to celebrate holidays, anniversaries and so much more together. That's why creating a cookbook for our 2024 holiday card only made sense.

So, we cooked and baked our favorite recipes, photographed them for our cookbook and then shared them with our coworkers. And now we're sharing with you.

We invite you to read what makes these dishes so meaningful to us — and then make the recipes with loved ones by your side. This holiday season, one thing's for sure — our plates (and hearts) are full.

We thank you for a wonderful 2024 and wish you a very happy 2025.

— Your friends at ZLR





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# Walnut Bread



## Nana's Slovakian Walnut Bread

### INGREDIENTS

#### Dough:

1 pkg instant yeast  
¼ cup warm water  
1 cup milk, scalded  
2 Tbsp sugar  
2 Tbsp butter/  
shortening  
1 tsp salt  
3½ cups flour  
1 egg

#### Filling:

½ cup butter, softened  
½ cup brown sugar  
1 egg  
¼ cup warm milk  
1 tsp cinnamon  
½ tsp vanilla  
2 cups walnuts,  
finely chopped

### DIRECTIONS

Soften active dry yeast in warm water. Combine milk, sugar, butter and salt in another bowl. While lukewarm, add 1 cup of flour and beat well. Stir in softened yeast and egg. Add remaining flour and mix well. Cover and let rise for 1.5-2 hours in a warm place until double in size.

While the dough is rising, make the filling. Finely crush the walnuts and add to a mixing bowl. Add remaining ingredients.

Once the dough has risen, add flour to a clean surface and roll out half of the dough into a 12×10" rectangle. Take half of the nut filling and spread it evenly over the dough, leaving a ½" border. Roll the dough "jelly roll style." Then, pinch the edges of the roll together and tuck the ends underneath, pressing tightly to seal.

Repeat the process for the second half of the dough and nut filling. Place the nut rolls on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper, cover with a towel and let rise in a warm place for one hour.

Preheat oven to 350°. When the rolls have risen, brush them with 2 Tbsp of melted butter. Bake for 35-45 minutes until golden brown. Cool before cutting.



Nana's walnut jar was a treasured part of her kitchen, filled with nut remnants from years of baking her mother's walnut bread recipe. Every holiday, as the warm bread came out of the oven, we eagerly awaited the moment to slather it with butter and savor it together."

**BITTNER**





# Cheddar Scones



## Cheddar Scones

### INGREDIENTS

- 2¾ cups flour
- 2 Tbsp baking powder
- 1 tsp salt
- ¼ tsp baking soda
- 10 Tbsp cold unsalted butter, cubed
- 1 cup shredded sharp cheddar
- ⅓ cup minced fresh chives
- 1+ cup of buttermilk
- 2 Tbsp water
- 1 egg beaten with 1 Tbsp water

### DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 375°. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper.

Whisk together flour, baking powder, salt and baking soda. Cut in butter with a pastry blender or fork (or with hands) until pea sized.

Stir in cheddar and chives; then add buttermilk and 2 Tbsp of water. Knead gently just until blended.

Turn the dough out onto a lightly floured work surface and pat into a 10×5" rectangle. Cut the dough into 2½" square pieces; then cut the squares into triangles. Brush scone tops with egg-water mixture and arrange on prepared baking sheet spaced one inch apart. Bake until golden — about 25 minutes.



“For the holidays, I love making these cheddar scones. You can have them anytime of day and I haven't met anyone who doesn't like them!”

Kathie





# Breakfast Casserole





## Breakfast Casserole

### INGREDIENTS

32 oz frozen hashbrowns

2 cups shredded cheese

1 lb breakfast sausage

1 tsp ground mustard

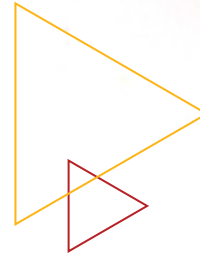
12 eggs

1 cup milk

Minced onions (optional)

Red pepper flakes (optional)

Salt and pepper, to taste



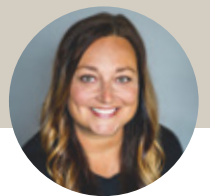
ADJUST THE FLAVOR BY ADDING  
YOUR FAVORITE VEGETABLES!

### DIRECTIONS

Cook and crumble breakfast sausage. In an extra-large bowl, whisk eggs with seasonings and any veggies you're adding (onions, peppers, etc.). Add hashbrowns, sausage and cheese to egg mixture. Spray slow cooker crock and add mixture. Cook on low for 7-8 hours.

“This breakfast casserole is my go-to for special occasions or overnight guests. I'm not a morning person, so I can prep this at night and it's ready when everyone wakes up!”

Jamie





# Relish Tray







## Relish Veggie Tray

### INGREDIENTS

Carrots  
Celery  
Dill pickles  
Sweet pickles  
Green olives  
Black olives  
Hummus  
Anderson Erickson dip  
Herbs for garnish

### DIRECTIONS

Wash and cut vegetables as need.  
Arrange in dishes or on a platter  
and serve with your favorite dips!



MAKE IT YOUR OWN BY  
ADDING RADISHES, SWEET  
PEPPERS, SUGAR SNAP PEAS  
OR CHERRY TOMATOES!

“ We always have  
a relish tray at my  
family’s holidays. The  
only requirement (per  
my dad) is making sure  
it has sweet pickles.  
Other than that, every  
year it’s a little different.”

Tony







# Caprese Skewers





## Caprese Skewers

### INGREDIENTS

Toothpicks

1 pint cherry or grape tomatoes

12 oz fresh mozzarella balls

1 bunch fresh basil leaves

Extra-virgin olive oil, for drizzling

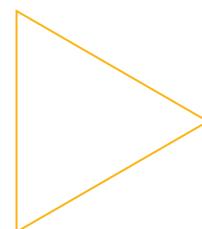
Balsamic glaze, for drizzling

### DIRECTIONS

Slice tomatoes in half. Skewer one tomato, one mozzarella ball and one basil leaf on each toothpick. Drizzle with olive oil and balsamic glaze.

“Caprese skewers are always a hit at any party I bring them to. Everyone loves how flavorful they are and how they are the perfect bite. Plus, they're so easy to put together.”

nicole





# Cheese Dip







## Grandma Ellen's Cheese Dip

### INGREDIENTS

- 1 lb hamburger
- 1 onion, chopped
- 3 Tbsp jalapeno, chopped
- 2 lbs Velveeta cheese, cubed
- 1 Tbsp chili powder
- 1 (10.5 oz) can cream of mushroom soup
- ½ cup butter (1 stick)
- 1 (8 oz) jar of picante salsa

### DIRECTIONS

Brown hamburger and onion. Add hamburger/onion mix to a slow cooker. Add remaining ingredients and stir. Cover and cook on low until melted; stir occasionally. Serve with your favorite tortilla chips!

“For holiday gatherings, we do a mix of appetizers. We change it up every year so we can test new recipes – but the one standard is always the spicy cheese dip. It tastes best if we make it in the slow cooker we’ve had since the ‘80s.”

Jess







# Quinoa Salad





## Jill's Simple Superfood Salad

### INGREDIENTS

3 cups white quinoa

2½ cups uncooked spinach

3 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil

1 small red onion

1 tsp minced garlic

¾ tsp salt

3 oz chopped walnuts

10 servings of sweet poppy seed dressing ..... I USE MARZETTI

SWEET POPPY  
SEED DRESSING

### DIRECTIONS

Bring 5 cups of water to a boil, and cook the quinoa for about 15 minutes.

As quinoa cooks, mince red onion.

Once the quinoa has absorbed all the water, remove from burner. After about 5 minutes, fold in spinach and extra virgin olive oil. Next, stir in garlic, salt and chopped nuts.

Finally, pour in poppy seed dressing (this is almost the full bottle) and give it a final stir.

Eat! Or refrigerate and wait! This salad tastes great hot and cold.

“When I lived in Kansas City, one of my favorite things to eat was quinoa salad from my local grocery counter. After I moved back to Des Moines, I tried to recreate the recipe but never quite got it right. So instead, I invented my own healthy treat that was close enough! Now I bring it to every family holiday to make sure we get our nutrients as we indulge.”

Jill





# Cheesy Potatoes





## Lila's Cheesy Potatoes

### INGREDIENTS

2 lbs diced potatoes  
8 Tbsp salted butter  
1 cup sour cream  
1 (10.5 oz) can cream of chicken soup  
Course ground salt and pepper, to taste  
1 tsp coarse dried parsley  
8 oz sharp cheddar cheese, grated;  
save a little to top

### DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350°. Mix all ingredients in an oven-safe dish and top with the remaining cheddar cheese. Bake uncovered for 1 hour.

“Lila is my wife’s grandmother. She was the last of her generation in our families. While cheesy potatoes were always a great comfort food, now they’re also a way to have Lila present at our family feasts.”

*Steve*







# Baked Beans



## Who Brought the Beans?

### INGREDIENTS

½ lb bacon

1 onion

1 (28 oz) can pork and beans

1 (16 oz) can pinto beans

1 (16 oz) can garbanzo beans

1 (16 oz) can kidney beans

1 (16 oz) can butter beans

1 cup brown sugar

¼ cup prepared mustard

¼ cup ketchup

### DIRECTIONS

Prepare bacon and cut into small pieces. (Bacon shouldn't be too crispy. If you want the dish to be vegetarian, you can skip the bacon.)

Mix all ingredients in a casserole dish or slow cooker. Chop onions and brown, or just add to slow cooker if you use that method.

Bake at 350° for 1½ hours in a casserole dish or slow cooker for 6+ hours. I like to start them the night before and let them cook all night long. (The longer you cook them, the more the liquids are reduced.)

DRAIN THE  
LIQUID FROM  
ALL CANNED  
BEANS!

“My great grandmother originally clipped this recipe from the newspaper. My brother Todd and I used to love these beans when we were kids. We would call them Grandma's hard beans, and she thought we were insulting her beans — but we really liked them that way. Todd and I have continued to make them for holidays ever since.”

*Xan*





# Meatballs







## Grandma Betty's Spaghetti + Meatballs

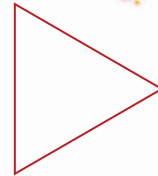
### INGREDIENTS

#### Meatballs:

1 lb ground beef  
1 lb ground pork  
2 cups cracker crumbs  
5 slices stale/dry bread,  
processed into crumbs  
2 eggs  
2 cloves garlic, minced  
3 slices onion, diced  
1 tsp salt  
½ tsp pepper

#### Sauce:

1 (46 oz) can tomato juice  
1 (6 oz) can tomato paste  
¼ tsp sweet basil  
¼ tsp rosemary leaf  
1 tsp parsley  
1 tsp salt



### DIRECTIONS

Mix meatball ingredients in a large bowl. Form into balls (makes about 20 large meatballs). Brown in oiled skillet.

Mix sauce ingredients in a large Dutch oven or wide stockpot. Add meatballs. Bring to boil, then reduce heat and let simmer for 2 hours. Serve over cooked spaghetti.

“My Great Grandma Betty was the matriarch of our family. Every year for the holidays when I was growing up, our extended family of 30+ would gather in her small two-bedroom home to enjoy a meal together and exchange gifts. We sprawled out in the half-finished basement on Grandma's many ‘davenport’ to enjoy her signature homemade sauce and meatballs.”

Chantelle







# Cheese Tortellini





## Italian Sausage + Cheese Tortellini Soup

### INGREDIENTS

22 oz cheese tortellini pasta

1 lb Italian sausage

2 (14.5 oz) cans Italian style diced tomatoes

1 (8 oz) block of cream cheese

32 oz chicken broth

Fresh spinach (optional)

### DIRECTIONS

Brown sausage, and boil cheese tortellini in chicken broth. Add cream cheese to the tortellini and let melt, stirring occasionally until fully melted. Add sausage, diced tomatoes and spinach. Turn to medium-low heat and let simmer for roughly 10 minutes. Sprinkle with parmesan and enjoy!

“This soup is one that I found after moving into my first home with my now husband. At a time when we were navigating how to be adults and find meals we both loved (and could cook without ruining), this one ended up sticking. It’s a soup that feels velvety, warm and cozy to snuggle up on the couch with on a cold day or bring to holiday gatherings to share.”

Kyler





# Shrimp Pasta





## Shrimp Pasta

### INGREDIENTS

24 large shrimp,  
peeled and deveined  
3 cups sliced mushrooms  
1½ Tbsp roasted pine nuts  
6 cups fresh spinach leaves  
6 cups cooked linguine  
4 Tbsp butter  
2 Tbsp fresh garlic, minced

### Lemon Butter Sauce:

1 Tbsp shallot, minced  
1 Tbsp fresh garlic, minced  
½ cup dry white wine  
1 cup heavy cream  
½ cup lemon juice,  
freshly squeezed  
⅛ tsp white pepper  
1 lb lightly salted butter,  
cut into tablespoons

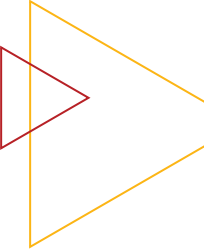
### DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350°. Wash spinach, remove stems and dry. Peel and devein shrimp, then wash and slice fresh mushrooms. Boil pasta according to directions on package.

Prepare lemon butter sauce by melting 1 Tbsp butter in large skillet over medium-high heat. Sauté shallots and garlic until translucent, then add white wine and reduce slightly more than half, whisking occasionally. Add cream and reduce by half, then add lemon juice and reduce by half. Add white pepper and reduce heat to low.

Add remaining butter 2 Tbsp at a time, whisking continuously. Continue to simmer, whisking until sauce just coats the spoon. In large skillet over medium-high heat, melt 4 Tbsp of butter. Add garlic and sauté until it's translucent. Add mushrooms, shrimp and pine nuts and sauté until shrimp are done.

Remove skillet from heat and gently stir in spinach. Place pasta on a plate with shrimp mixture to the side. Pour lemon sauce over pasta and shrimp.



“My mom makes this every year during the holidays. I'm not sure how the tradition started, but my family approves.”

*Prie*







# Baked Cavatelli





## Baked Cavatelli

### INGREDIENTS

- 16 oz campanelle noodles
- 12 oz Italian sausage ..... I LIKE TO MIX  
HALF SAUSAGE  
AND HALF  
GROUND BEEF.
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup onion, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 (26 oz) jar Rao's marinara sauce
- 1 cup mozzarella cheese, shredded
- $\frac{1}{4}$  tsp black pepper

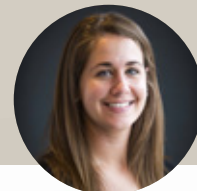
### DIRECTIONS

Cook pasta according to package directions. Drain and set aside. In a large skillet, cook the sausage, onion and garlic until the sausage is brown. Remove from skillet and drain. In a large bowl, stir together pasta sauce with  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup of mozzarella cheese and sprinkle in the pepper. Add the cooked pasta and the drained sausage mixture. Stir gently to combine. Spoon the mixture into a 2-quart casserole dish.

Bake, covered, at 375° for 25-30 minutes or until nearly heated through. Uncover and sprinkle with the remaining  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup of mozzarella cheese. Bake for about 5 more minutes or until the cheese is melted.

“Instead of your traditional ham or turkey for the holidays, our family has Italian food. This started with my grandparents when they hosted family gatherings, and now my immediate family has carried on this tradition.”

Molly







# Strawberry Jell-O



## MaryJo's Strawberry Pretzel Salad

### INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups crushed pretzels
- $\frac{3}{4}$  cup butter, melted
- 3 Tbsp white sugar
- 1 (8 oz) package cream cheese, softened
- 1 cup white sugar
- 1 (8 oz) container frozen whipped topping, thawed
- 2 (3 oz) packages strawberry flavored Jell-O
- 2 cups boiling water
- 2 (10 oz) packages frozen sliced strawberries

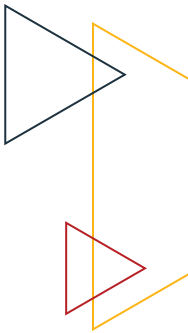
### DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 400°. Stir crushed pretzels, melted butter and 3 Tbsp of sugar together until well-combined; mix well and press mixture into the bottom of a 9×13" baking dish.

Bake in the preheated oven until set, about 8-10 minutes; set aside to cool. Place cream cheese and 1 cup of sugar in a large bowl. Beat with an electric mixer until smooth; fold in whipped topping. Spread mixture onto cooled crust. Dissolve gelatin in boiling water. Stir in still-frozen strawberries and allow to set briefly. Pour and spread over cream cheese layer; refrigerate until set, at least 2 hours.

“My mom loves to make this for us because everyone in our family of picky eaters enjoys it. And because it's light, there's always room for a scoop — even after a big holiday meal.”

Rhonda





# Sugar Cookies





## Granny's Sugar Cookies

### INGREDIENTS

#### Cream together:

½ cup butter

1 cup sugar

1 large egg

#### Sift together and add to mixture:

2-2¼ cup flour

2 tsp baking powder

½ tsp salt

½ tsp vanilla

### DIRECTIONS

Divide dough in two portions.  
Chill for 1-2 hours.

Dust a clean surface with flour and roll dough one portion at a time. Keep the other portion of the dough chilled until ready to roll. Cut into desired shapes and bake at 375° for 6 minutes. Makes two dozen cookies.

“Sugar cookies are a staple dessert for every holiday/event in our household. I remember making them as a kid and continue that tradition today, still using my mom’s recipe. I have a collection of cookie cutters for ALL occasions.”

Kelly







# No Bake COOKIES



## Chocolate No Bake Cookies

### INGREDIENTS

1¾ cups white sugar

1 stick butter

½ cup milk

4 Tbsp unsweetened cocoa powder

½ cup peanut butter

3 cups quick oats ..... NOT OLD-FASHIONED OATS

1 tsp vanilla

### DIRECTIONS

In a large saucepan, mix sugar, butter, milk and cocoa and bring to a boil for 90-120 seconds. Remove from heat and stir in peanut butter. Add vanilla and gradually stir in quick oats. Drop a spoonful on wax paper for each cookie. Let cool for 20-30 minutes and enjoy!

“This is the only thing that my teen son ever asks me to make, so I feel like a nice parent being able to make something he likes.”





# Lemon Squares





## Grandma's Lemon Squares

### INGREDIENTS

#### Shortbread Crust:

1 cup butter

2 cups flour

½ cup sugar

#### Lemon Filling:

⅓ cup lemon juice

4 eggs

¼ cup flour

2 cups sugar

½ tsp baking powder

### DIRECTIONS

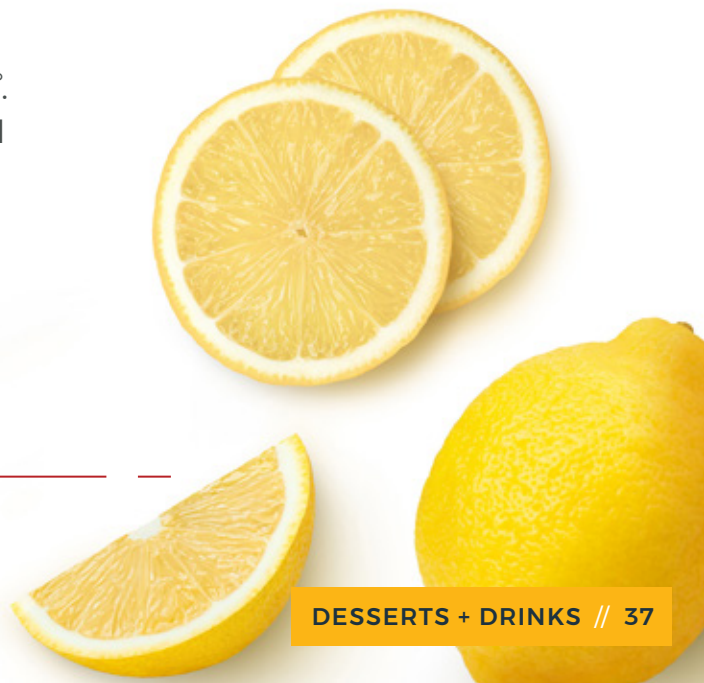
Mix crust ingredients together and spread in pan. Bake for 20 minutes at 350°.

Mix filling ingredients and pour over crust. Bake for an additional 25 minutes at 350°. While hot, sprinkle powdered sugar on top and chill.



“Lemon squares were the one dessert I would always request my grandma to make for me. Later in her life, I borrowed her recipe card and took over for her. She would say mine tasted better, although I don't think I'll ever quite be able to cut them as precisely and perfectly square as she would. Now without her here, that recipe card I “borrowed” is one of my most precious memories of her, even with all the butter stains.”

Riley







# Chocolate Cupcakes



“For as long as I can remember, this is a dessert that my grandma, mom and aunt always make on special occasions or holidays.”

Morgyn



## Black Bottom Cupcakes

### INGREDIENTS

#### Chocolate Batter:

1½ cups flour  
1 cup sugar  
¼ cup cocoa powder  
1 tsp baking soda  
1 tsp vanilla extract  
½ tsp salt  
1 cup water  
⅓ cup vegetable oil

#### Cream Cheese Batter:

8 oz soft cream cheese  
1 egg  
⅓ cup sugar  
⅛ tsp salt  
Chocolate chips  
(as many as you want!)

### DIRECTIONS

Chocolate batter directions: Mix all dry ingredients together, then add water. Add oil and mix. Fill cupcake papers ⅔ full of the batter.

Cream cheese batter directions: Mix all ingredients together. Add to the top of the chocolate batter already placed in the cupcake papers.

Preheat oven to 350° and bake until the chocolate batter springs back when touched with your fingertip — approximately 25 minutes.





# Molasses Cookies





## Molasses Cookies

### INGREDIENTS

4½ cups all-purpose flour  
4 tsp baking soda  
1 Tbsp ground ginger  
2 tsp ground cinnamon  
1 tsp ground cloves  
1 tsp salt  
1½ cups unsalted butter,  
softened to room temperature  
1 cup granulated sugar  
1 cup packed brown sugar  
½ cup molasses  
2 eggs

### DIRECTIONS

In a medium bowl, mix flour, soda, cinnamon, cloves, ginger and salt. In a separate mixing bowl, mix the softened butter, sugar and brown sugar on medium-high speed for about 2 minutes. Add in the eggs one at a time and then add molasses. Beat the ingredients until each is combined. Gradually add in the dry ingredient mixture and beat until the dough is consistent. Refrigerate dough for at least 2 hours.

Preheat oven to 350°. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Roll the dough into 1" balls. Fill a separate small bowl with sugar and roll each ball in the sugar until completely coated. Place dough balls on the prepped baking sheet.

Bake for about 8-10 minutes. Remove from the oven and let cool.



“When I lived abroad, some other expat friends and I would make these cookies for our holiday parties. We had to go to SO many foreign markets to find the ingredients, but it was worth it.”

Megan







# Holiday Punch





“No holiday at Grandma Mary’s was complete without some sort of bright-colored punch to drink. All the kids would gather around the vintage punch bowl, ladling the sweet, sticky substance into our cups trying hard not to spill on Grandma’s floor.”

*Shae*



## Grandma Mary’s Holiday Punch

### INGREDIENTS

- 3 cups pineapple juice, chilled
- 3 cups cranberry juice cocktail, chilled
- 4 cups ginger ale or Sprite, chilled
- ½ cup fresh or frozen cranberries
- ½ orange, sliced

### DIRECTIONS

In a large punch bowl, stir together the pineapple juice, cranberry juice and soda. Add cranberries and sliced orange and stir gently to combine.





# BBQ Take Out





## Jim's Holiday Feast

### INGREDIENTS

Whatever you feel like that day.

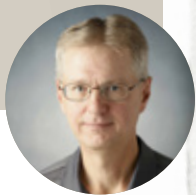
### DIRECTIONS

Pick up the phone and call — or if you're fancy, order online. Enjoy.

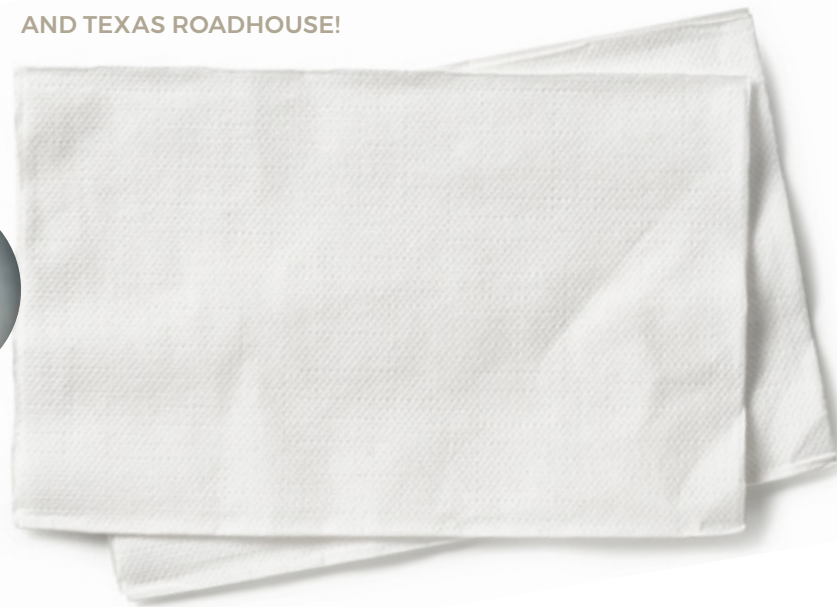
“

I don't cook,  
but barbecue  
is my favorite.”

*Jim*



JIM'S FAVORITES INCLUDE SMOKEY D'S  
AND TEXAS ROADHOUSE!







## The Season of Potlucking

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Special thanks to our ZLR coworkers for  
preparing their special recipes to share.  
Working with you is icing on the cake!

