

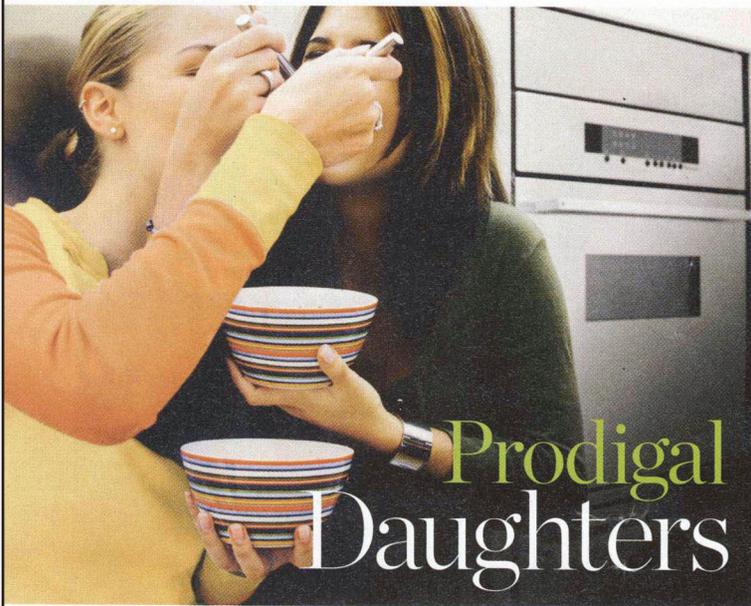
HAPPY THANKSGIVING

from Henry Holt

When Rhoda Janzen observed Thanksgiving far from home, the holiday took on an entirely different level of celebration—and of depth. We hope you'll enjoy her Mennonite take on the holiday, and we wish you and your loved ones a day of blessings, good food, and good cheer.

(P.S. Searching for a recipe for apple pie or split-pea soup? Just scroll through the PDF—we've got you covered.)





Prodigal Daughters

Young, rebellious—and missing home, just a little By Rhoda Janzen

from
GOOD HOUSEKEEPING,
NOVEMBER 2009

Having been raised Mennonite, in plain, modest clothing, with no radio, no dancing, and no knowledge of the workings between men and women, my sister and I chose “hot pants” to break away. (Our version of hot pants: long, homemade prairie skirts with a ruffle.) The moment we hit college, we went wild. Not wet-T-shirt wild, but Mennonite wild: We kept up our grades, but drank piña colodas; we made our beds, but said words like “crapola”; we canned beets, but also dated. We were so starved for social attention we’d have gone out with the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse.

Fortunately, we didn’t have to. Who knew that lipstick and “slutty” jeans made all women kin? *Basta*, aprons! Begone, sensible shoes! For the first time in our lives, our phones were ringing. This went straight to our heads, and we discovered our inner vamps. They wore shoulder pads—this was in the eighties—and even flirted with other women’s boyfriends.

One Thanksgiving, we quietly declined to return to our Mennonite community in Fresno, CA. It’s not that our family was dysfunctional

in the cinematic sense. It was more that we’d have to make small talk with lonely exchange students from even more conservative Mennonite colonies in Paraguay. There’d be the bustle of making bread, cranberry *pluma moos* (prune soup), and pie, pie, pie. Mom referred to the turkey as The Bird. “Girls, will you make the gravy? The Bird smells done.” And right before we ate, my father, a preacher, would intone an ultralong prayer. Family and guests would sing, as Mennonites always do, a cappella and in four-part harmony, “*Nun Danket Alle Gott*,” “Now Thank We All Our God.”

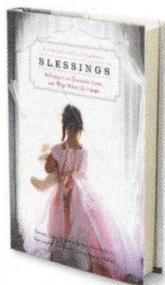
I flew up from the University of Florida to Hannah’s small Mennonite college in Indiana. Did having boyfriends stop us from going out with two dweeby guys the night before Thanksgiving? Nossir! Fresh from a day of shopping, I in my new black Spandex sheath, she in a gold satin number, we were rarin’ to go. Hannah could really shake a tail feather, an unusual talent for a Mennonite. Though her date introduced himself as The Schmitter and mine boogied with a sidebar finger snap, we had a fine time there on the dance floor at Crackers.

The next morning, Hannah and I reconnoitered in her kitchen to discuss Thanksgiving dinner. Slightly hungover, I said, “You know what I’m in the mood for? Split-pea soup.” By mid-afternoon we were sitting across from each other, having set the table formally, like my mother. The soup steamed in its tureen, and the fragrance of homemade bread rose like prayer. We hesitated—would we do it? Say grace, sing the song? How far would we go in our defiance? We looked at each other sheepishly before clasping hands and clearing our throats. Our voices lifted in the familiar tune:

*Now thank we all our God
With hearts and hands and voices.*

Her clear soprano above my alto, we sang every verse, blinking back tears. In that warm little kitchen 3,000 miles away from family, we had our first glimpse of home. ■

Rhoda Janzen’s memoir, Mennonite in a Little Black Dress, is just out.



IN STORES THIS MONTH
Blessings: Reflections on Gratitude, Love, and What Makes Us Happy (\$12.95, Sterling) features 35 essays by beloved GH writers

“There’d be the bustle of making bread, cranberry *pluma moos* (prune soup), and pie, pie, pie.”

Old-Fashioned Apple Pie-by-the-Yard

Say goodbye to soggy crust with this freestanding pastry. Each “yard” of pie serves a dinner party of six. This recipe makes six compact, stackable pies for the freezer.

Ingredients:

- 6 cups flour, plus 1 heaping tablespoon
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 12 small tart Granny Smiths—peeled, cored, and sliced
- juice from ½ a lemon
- dots of butter, almost 8 tablespoons
- 1 16-oz package of lard (lard makes the best pie crust—don’t use Crisco or butter)
- 1 ¼ cup ice water
- ½ cup tap water
- 1 big teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 ¾ cup sugar, plus enough to sprinkle on top of pie

A food processor makes quick work of slicing the peeled, cored apples. Toss in a big bowl with juice of ½ a lemon.

In small bowl, mix sugar, cinnamon, heaping tablespoon of flour, and dash of salt. Set aside.

Place 3 cups flour and 1 teaspoon salt into food processor. Cut the lard (8 oz) in ½. Pulse until pea-sized chunks form. Remove to big bowl; then do the second batch.

Start with 1 cup of ice water; add in dribbles in the dough with your hands. Add ¼ cup more ice water and work with hands until just absorbed. Flour the counter or a pastry board. Shape 1/3 of the dough into a square patty. Sprinkle with flour and roll into a tray-sized rectangle about 24” by 14”—this will make two pie-by-the-yards. Patch any places where it is cracked or uneven. Square off uneven edges with a sharp paring knife. Cut into 2 pieces, each 12” by 7”.

Distribute 1 ½ cups of apples per piece in a long thin line down center of pastry. Liberally dot with butter. Sprinkle each piece with ½ cup of the cinnamon-sugar mixture. Loosen pastry all around edges with knife. Moisten edges with paper towel dipped in water. Seal with long seam down center of tart, lifting dough edges together, beginning about ¾ way up. Pinch seam tightly. Repeat for remaining four pie-by-the-yards.

If there are cracks in the pastry, you don’t need to vent it. But if the dough is whole, prick wee knife slits in tart. Sprinkle with white sugar. Bake for 40-45 minutes at 400. If transferring directly to freezer, do not vent or sugar. Wrap in snug plastic wrap and lay flat on freezer shelf. Baking instructions are the same whether pie is fresh or frozen, and the pie will be equally delicious straight from the freezer.



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—rhoda janzen,
from *Good Housekeeping* (Nov. 09)

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Split-pea Soup

Ingredients:

- 2 Tbsp butter
- 1 big onion, chopped
- 3 stalks celery, chopped
- 1 ½ cups peeled carrots, diced small
- 4 large garlic gloves, pressed
- Leftover ham bone or 2 meaty ham hocks
- 2 teasp dried leaf marjoram
- ¼ teasp dried leaf thyme, crumbled
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 ½ cups green split peas
- 1 cup cream

Fill a big pot almost full with water and ham bone or ham hocks. Add bay leaves. Bring to a boil on medium heat, turn heat down, and simmer until liquid reduces—pot should be about 2/3 full when the bone is removed. Discard bones and bay leaves. Cover and chill; skim and discard fat.

Melt butter in Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add onion, celery, and carrots. Sauté until soft, 8-9 minutes. Add pressed garlic and stir until fragrant, another minute. Add marjoram and thyme and stir, about a minute. Add ham liquid and rinsed split peas; bring to a boil. Reduce heat to medium-low and simmer at half-lid until peas are tender and falling apart, 1 ½-2 hours. Check for salt and pepper and stir in the cup of cream until just heated through. Serve with warm crusty bread.

“The most delightful memoir I’ve read in ages.”

—Elizabeth Gilbert, author of *Eat, Pray, Love*

“Wonderfully intelligent and frank . . . I loved this book, and Rhoda Janzen. She is a terrific, pithy, beautiful writer, a reliable, sympathetic narrator and a fantastically good sport.”

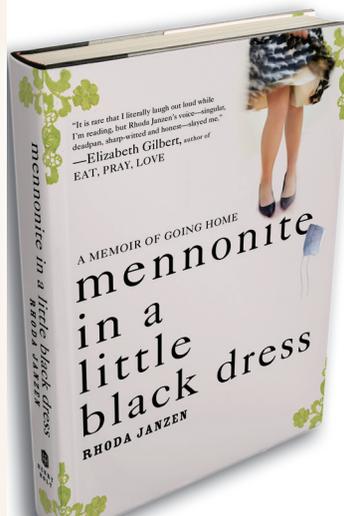
—Kate Christensen, *New York Times Book Review*

“Hilarious and touching.”

—*People* ★★★★★

“A hilarious collection of musings on Janzen’s childhood, marriage, and eccentric family . . . Janzen mines Mennonite culture for comic effect, but she does so with love.”

—*Entertainment Weekly*



the perfect holiday read

RHODA JANZEN'S
new memoir

**Mennonite
in a
Little
Black Dress**

HENRY HOLT & COMPANY