

Comfort Food, Conroy-Style

Written by Debbi Covington

Tuesday, 22 March 2016 12:03 - Last Updated Tuesday, 22 March 2016 13:46



By Debbi Covington, Everyday Gourmet

I had been reading Pat Conroy's cookbook,



The Pat Conroy Cookbook: Recipes and Stories of My Life, when our telephone rang. Pat's sister-in-law, Terrye, was on the line with a request (actually, bestowing an honor) from the Conroy family for me to cater Pat's funeral reception at the Yacht Club on Tuesday afternoon.

It seemed like fate, or even serendipity, that I had Pat's cookbook on my desk with a folded down corner marking Chapter 15, "Why Dying Down South Is More Fun." Pat had already planned the menu for me. The way I show people that I care about them is through food. So, four of Pat's quotes from Chapter 15 really hit home. "Cooking food for a grieving family and their friends is still one of the classiest ways to send a love note that I can think of." "Pickled Shrimp is my answer to death in Georgia. In South Carolina, I generally respond with a shy and unexpected gift of Dunbar Macaroni." "I cannot think of ham without thinking of Southern funerals." And most importantly, "When I die, I fully expect all the shrimp in Beaufort to be pickled that day." Following Pat's lead, I attempted to create a menu that represented both Pat Conroy and South Carolina. I'm sharing a few of my offerings in this week's column. The recipes for Pickled Shrimp and Dunbar Macaroni are straight from Pat's cookbook. For the reception, because of time constraints, I used my own recipe for Pickled Shrimp, which is actually very close to Pat's version. The Dunbar Macaroni is a classic recipe from the upstate town of Newberry. Ham and Swiss Poppy Seed Rolls have been served at so many Beaufort funerals that they're sometimes called Funeral Sandwiches. Maybe all of the shrimp in Beaufort weren't pickled that day, but I can promise that close to 50 pounds were. The truly sad thing was that

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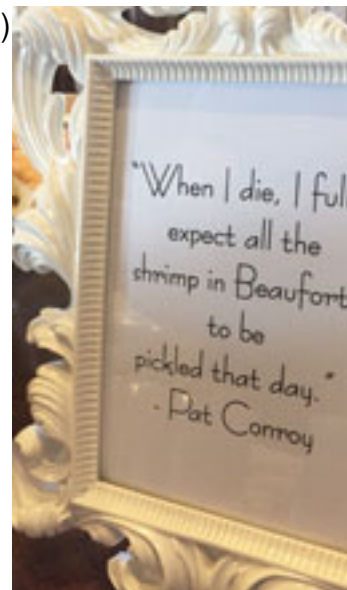
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Pat wasn't there to enjoy them. Goodbye, our dear Mr. Conroy, you will be missed.

Pickled Shrimp

(from *The Pat Conroy Cookbook: Recipes and Stories of my Life* by Pat Conroy)



1 cup thinly sliced yellow onion

4 bay leaves, crushed

1 (2-ounce) bottle capers, drained and coarsely chopped

¼ cup fresh lemon juice

1 cup cider vinegar

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½ cup olive oil

1 teaspoon minced fresh garlic

1 teaspoon coarse or kosher salt

1 teaspoon celery seeds

1 teaspoon red pepper flakes

2 pounds large (21-25 count) shrimp, peeled and deveined

Mix all ingredients except shrimp in a large heatproof glass or ceramic bowl. In a medium stockpot over high heat, bring 4 quarts abundantly salted water to a rolling boil. Add the shrimp and cook until just pink, about 2 minutes. (The shrimp will continue to “cook” in the marinade.) Drain and immediately transfer to the marinade. Bring to room temperature, cover tightly, and marinate overnight in refrigerator. Transfer shrimp and marinade to a glass serving compote or bowl. Serve chilled.

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Don't Miss Conroy's Conchitos, Resistant Starches of my Life by Pat Conroy in his new book.



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