

In January 2015 a set of unpleasant circumstances lead to my return to Canada after more than a decade abroad. It also happened to be the worst winter in Halifax's recorded history iirc. I ended up stranded in Halifax for 2+ months.

By April the snows had let up enough to wander back to south shore where I am from ... however it would be mid May before the ice let go enough to go fishing in the creeks.

Grandpa was 93 that year, a WWII vet, retired pulp mill manager and fisherman. His health had him on a very strict diet - his catch phrase was "Taste it ... if it is any good ... I can't have it."

So I set about teaching myself to cook all the things he liked, all the ways he liked them, without the ingredients he wasn't allowed to have ... namely salt.

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Coconut Cream Pie started it all

... and other desserts ...

It was a standing practice in the family, whenever the children "from away" came by, there would be a list of chores for us to do in exchange for our favorite foods.

As the cooks aged and arthritis set in, that shifted to us coming to do chores and bringing our favorite foods.

But when Grandpa's diet kicked in full strength even the favorite foods got banished.

Grandma had been making me mincemeat pies for 4 decades ... I had been bringing Grandpa coconut cream pies, his absolute favorite, for well over two decades when, in 2015, word on high came down ... no more pie ... too much salt ... blah blah blah ...

That is what started my cooking for Grandpa that summer - I needed to learn to make coconut cream pie filling, from scratch, with no salt.

It turned out to be easy so I set about teaching myself as much as I could ... with Grandpa making suggestions all the way along ... and that all ended in us writing a cookbook ... this cookbook.