

FOOD

In words and food, Maya Angelou reflects on holidays

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says. "I'm always glad and really so grateful to anyone who cooks for me. And I love to cook for others."

Angelou cooks for her friends, Hall of Fame songwriters Ashford and Simpson, every Christmas, when she is their guest. As per tradition, she creates the dessert, sometimes a trifle, sometimes a chocolate cake, but always something festive. Her other tradition involves people she has never met, and likely will never meet again.

"I like to spend one day during the holidays either serving food at a shelter or preparing food to be given to one," she says. "We're told in the Judeo-Christian bible that it's more blessed to give than to receive. And sometimes we just receive."

Now "82 plus," as she says, the Pulitzer winner has seen Christmas changes over the decades. And though like many people she is concerned about the commercialism of the holiday, she says she still loves the other sentiments it inspires.

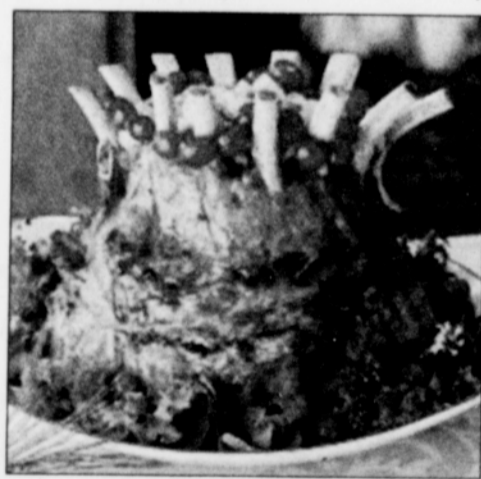
"I like that families still try to come together," she says. "Quite often when we go to homes, to give, we find a lot of young people, black and white, washing dishes, trying to seriously be part of the community and to justify the space they occupy."

Crown Roast of Pork

Start to finish: 4 hours (1 hour active) Servings: 8

- 1 tablespoon butter
- 3 apples, peeled, cored and cut into large dice
- 8 pitted prunes
- 1 teaspoon granulated garlic
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
- 1 1/2 tablespoons olive oil
- 8 pounds pork ribs (have butcher fashion into crown roast)

1. Heat the oven to 375 F.
2. In a large skillet over low, heat the butter. Add the apples and prunes and saute for 3 minutes. Remove the skillet from the heat and set the prunes aside in a separate dish. Let cool.



3. In a small bowl, mix together the garlic, thyme, oregano, salt, pepper and olive oil to form a paste. Rub the paste into the meat. Place the meat in a shallow roasting pan and roast for 30 minutes. Reduce the oven temperature to 325 F and roast for another 2 to 3 hours.
4. Remove the roast from the oven once the internal temperature reads 145 F on an instant thermometer.

5. Place a prune on the end of each rib and return the meat to the oven for 20 minutes.

6. Remove the meat from the oven. To serve, transfer the cooled apples into the center of the crown roast.

7. Nutrition information per serving (values are rounded to the nearest whole number): 894 calories; 639 calories from fat (71 percent of total calories); 71 g fat (26 g saturated; 0 g trans fats); 233 mg cholesterol; 15 g carbohydrate; 46 g protein; 2 g fiber; 334 mg sodium.

(Recipe adapted from Maya Angelou's "Great Food, All Day Long," Random House, 2010)

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