

Reader Response to *Humanities* Magazine



For this Reader Response, the prompts were twofold; first, we asked how the humanities have enriched our readers' lives in artistic, cultural, or spiritual senses. Our second prompt concerned enrichment of a different nature—we asked readers to share their favorite cultural foods, food musings, and food stories.

Here are some morsels from the feast of responses.

How the Humanities Nourish Us

"MY ENGLISH MAJOR and Spanish minor have so enriched my life. I taught both English and Spanish for a few years before and after raising our six children. My husband and I served a Spanish-speaking mission in Central America twenty years ago. He spoke no Spanish, but together we taught welfare principles and provided humanitarian service to five countries in Central America. My Spanish was invaluable in the experience. With my English major I wrote a newspaper column for nine years in a Bay Area newspaper and self-published the biographies of two grandparents and my father-in-law."

"IN A REQUIRED accounting class I took in the mid-1970s, the professor said he thought accounting was so much more valuable than 'studying some Greek poet.' I still had to take the accounting class but wondered about the viability of my humanities major. When I entered law school, the critical thinking and reading skills I had acquired became the

gateway to learning. Portuguese was akin to much of the Latin we confronted; writing and oral expression were vital. Parenting was enriched by a love of music, art, literature, and the power of sharing expressions. When I worked as a lawyer and judge, my humanities background prepared me for diversity in people and life experiences—to enable understanding and compassion and negotiation. My humanities background gave me the ability to appreciate and learn from one of the great minds of our time. Now, in a home filled with books and my wife's three pianos and constant learning, my humanities education enriches all we do."

"I AM SURROUNDED by tech geeks, including my husband and son. Nevertheless, my heart still belongs to the humanities. Most of my free time now is spent reading."

"IT'S 'THE SPIRIT of the thing,' as my artist grandfather used to say. I love looking at his art because it always makes me feel deeply—usually a little sad. I love his American

Depression-era art. While showing times that were more difficult, they were also simpler. They show a piece of life as it's being lived, as in his painting of a row of old, black cars lined up at a 1920s chapel for a funeral. It's the emotional response to a thing that brings it to life and makes it meaningful to me. I love the humanities!"

Readers' Favorite Dishes, Food Musings, and Food Stories

"FOOD CREATES FAMILY moments that would not exist otherwise—mealtime literally sets apart a time and a space for family bonding that would otherwise dissolve into the day-to-day drudge. Cooking together binds generations together, either through family recipes or just through a family tradition of spending time together in the kitchen. It creates memories, whether it's the big reveal of a birthday cake or the final digging in to a labor-intensive Christmas feast."

"WE OFTEN USE food as a gateway to explore other cultures. As a family, we've learned about Sudan, China, the Philippines, and more, and our kids have loved preparing and trying the traditional dishes of those countries. They are often surprised at how they can find something that connects them to those cultures and peoples, making the foreign feel more familiar."

"FOOD CONNECTS US to our past, present, and future. It is a language we can all understand, and it can bring people together in a world that keeps trying to drive us apart. Good food is so much more than sustenance for our bodies; it feeds our souls."

"RETURNING FROM MY missionary service in Argentina, I brought *empanadas* and *dulce de leche* home with me, and my family often eats those dishes during the year."

"MY HUSBAND AND I both enjoy cooking and trying new recipes. We have our fallbacks but generally don't repeat meals since we love the adventure of trying something new."

"FOOD PLAYS A very big role in our family, especially food from other cultures. Every Christmas we celebrate the culture of different countries that our ancestors are from, and we sample food from those countries."

"WHEN THE SMELL of warm quiche comes wafting through the kitchen, I can close my eyes and be brought back to my years as a little girl when my *maman* used to make it for our family. My heart warms to remember the love she shared in her cooking."

"HOMEMADE PASTA IS a favorite of ours. Making it is a whole-kitchen and whole-family affair. My husband has Italian heritage, and his family makes pasta all the time. We love to make pasta when friends come over, and we get them

involved in rolling, filling, and folding. Homemade always tastes better."

"AT CHRISTMAS WE usually have Christmas pudding based on a recipe that has been in our family for more than one hundred years."

"SOME OF MY favorite dishes from my mission are *poziy/buuzy* (steamed dumplings from the Republic of Buryatia), and a favorite from my husband's mission is *okonomiyaki* (a sort of savory pancake from Japan). Both are unique—and sooo delicious—most people have never heard of them—and sooo delicious."

"FOOD IS ALWAYS important. When my son was in third grade, his teacher asked the kids to write down their cultural background. He put *American*, but his handwriting was so difficult to read that his teacher thought it said *Armenian*, and she asked me if I could bring some Armenian recipes and talk about their cooking for the kids' Christmas party. Since I had visited Armenia with my then-husband and had some Armenian recipes that I liked, I was happy to do so. I don't think his teacher ever realized that we were not Armenian in background!"

"A FORMER BYU friend from Greece gave me a recipe for *baklava* that intimidates me. I've never made it; but unlike other recipes that I discard after never having used them, I still keep this one (it's in her own handwriting). All my BYU memories are treasures." 📖

