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BACK IN THE KITCHEN WITH MAMA DIP

“Mama Dip [has the] ability to render great flavors from simple and good ingredients.”

—*Southern Living*

(Chapel Hill, N.C.) On a recent early September afternoon, Mildred “Mama Dip” Council sat in her restaurant’s kitchen, dipping this year’s batch of damson plum jelly into rows of waiting canning jars, switching to a cool utensil when the hot amber liquid made the one she was using too hot to handle.

Behind her sat dozens of glistening jars of pickled red and green chili peppers—the product of her morning’s work.

Most days, Council—now 76 years old—can still be found at Mama Dip’s Kitchen, supervising and training staff, making jellies and chow-chow, and greeting the busloads of fans who come for breakfast, lunch, and dinner at the acclaimed Chapel Hill, North Carolina restaurant she founded in 1976 with a \$64 investment.

They also come to pose for photos with Council, or to pick up an autographed copy of her now classic cookbook, **MAMA DIP’S KITCHEN** (1999).

Council, in the just released and eagerly awaited **MAMA DIP’S FAMILY COOKBOOK** (October 2005 University of North Carolina Press) writes, “Many people tell me how my biscuits are just like their mama’s or grandma’s or that when they come to the restaurant

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they find a lot of things that they have not eaten in a long time. They never learned to cook the way their grandma or mama cooked.”

MAMA DIP’S FAMILY COOKBOOK brings Mildred Council’s story up to date since the huge success of her first book. It features 306 easy new recipes for home-style Southern dishes that are “gone but not forgotten”—Council’s way of describing fondly remembered family favorites that are hard to find today. Most of them are based on supermarket staples that Council keeps in her pantry and lists in her book.

Mama Dip’s Kitchen is a family business—many of Council’s eight children play key roles in the restaurant—and **MAMA DIP’S FAMILY COOKBOOK** reflects her belief that “Food has always been at the heart of our family.”

Mama Dip includes her family’s *Breakfast Casserole*, a French toast-like dish served with a strawberry topping that’s easy to assemble the night before it’s baked. It’s particularly welcome on holiday mornings when families would rather spend time together than cook. Hearty *Breakfast Pizza* will appeal to those who like their eggs served up with sausage, cheese, green pepper, and potatoes. And *Southern Brunch Shrimp and Grits* is Mama Dip’s take on the classic fisherman’s breakfast.

After *Mama Dip’s Catfish Gumbo*—brimming with okra and green pepper and spiced with Cajun seasoning, hot sauce, and crushed red pepper—was featured on the Food Network’s *Rachael Ray’s \$40 a Day*, it became one of her most requested recipes and is included in the new book by popular demand.

For people who love the taste of homemade dumplings but have a hard time making them, Mama Dip developed *Chicken Tortilla Stew*—which substitutes flour tortillas cut into squares for the key ingredient in the favorite comfort food.

Meat Loaf in a Blanket—ground beef pressed into a loaf pan and topped with refrigerated biscuits—is the savory country cousin of its inspiration—Beef Wellington. It’s especially good when drizzled with Council’s *Brown Beef Gravy*.

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Vegetables are never an afterthought at Mama Dip's Kitchen. Council prefers firm red tomatoes to the green variety, and suggests serving her *Fried Red Tomatoes*, garnished with a generous sprinkling of crumbled bacon, as a breakfast treat with hash browns and spring onions. She observes that country cooks often mixed vegetables together with delicious results, and suggests pairing *Fresh Peas and Corn*, *Rutabagas and White Potatoes*, and *Collards and Cabbage*.

Mama Dip's legendary reputation as a southern cook was built, in part, on her pecan pie. Mildred Council gives her signature recipe a sublime new twist with the equally easy to prepare *Chocolate Pecan Pie*—a longtime customer favorite at Mama Dip's Kitchen.

There are 85 dessert recipes in **MAMA DIP'S FAMILY COOKBOOK**, including Council's old-fashioned *Dark Chocolate Stack Cake*, *Cherry Rhubarb Cobbler*, *French Apple Pie*, and *Coconut Bread Pudding*.

For over 30 years, Mildred Council has served large, hungry groups at church suppers and community dinners. **MAMA DIP'S FAMILY COOKBOOK** includes Council's tried and true diagram for the best way to set up a buffet table. She also offers 29 recipes perfect for tailgating, potluck dinners, and family celebrations.

So the next time you're asked to bring a dish to pass, serve up Council's *Oven Chopped Barbecue* on buns with her famous *Sweet and Sour Slaw*. Mama Dip guarantees that "It will be the first thing to go."

And remember, according to Mama Dip, "A country cook doesn't put a dish on the table without testing it first for taste."

Mildred Council is founder and cook of Mama Dip's Kitchen in Chapel Hill, North Carolina. She is well known and widely respected for her cooking, her charisma, and her longtime community service. In 2004, she was given the North Carolina Restaurant Association Neighbor Award for her involvement with Chapel Hill's annual Community Dinner. Her first book, **MAMA DIP'S KITCHEN**, earned her thousands of new fans all over the country.

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4-4-4 Back in the Kitchen with Mama Dip

Advance Praise:

A Library Journal Editors' Pick for Fall 2005

MAMA DIP'S FAMILY COOKBOOK

by Mildred Council

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