



TEXAS FOLKLIFE

# Handed Down *at Home*

A monthly series that celebrates everyday traditions through simple, *low-to-no-cost* activities families can do together. Each lesson invites families to explore what folklife means— learning, creating, and reflecting on the stories, foods, and crafts that make up our shared culture.





## THE STORIES WE EAT

*Food is one of the most powerful ways traditions are shared and remembered.*

The recipes we cook, the smells that fill our kitchens, and the rituals of gathering at the table connect us to our families, cultures, and histories.

Across cultures, food carries memory, comfort, and identity. A single dish can hold generations of wisdom: ingredients passed down from elders, techniques taught by hand, or flavors that reflect migration and place.

**This activity teaches families that food is more than nourishment;** it's a living record of tradition, connecting the past and present through shared experience.



## *You don't need a big meal to share this lesson.*

A small dish, snack, or just a simple story will do. What matters most is talking about what food means to your family: where recipes come from, who taught them, and why they matter.

Across generations, families have made do with what they had, stretching ingredients, and turning little into plenty. Those resourceful meals, made with love and imagination, are often the ones we remember most.



1

### **Pick a meal or recipe:**

Choose a food that means something to your family. Maybe a holiday dish, a snack from childhood, a comfort food, or something small that brings joy.

2

### **Tell its story:**

Talk about where it came from. Who first made it? Is it tied to a memory, celebration, or season?

3

### **Cook or prepare it together:**

Involve everyone- mixing, chopping, tasting, or setting the table.

4

### **Share while you eat:**

As you enjoy the meal, share stories or feelings it brings up. Encourage younger members to imagine how they'll keep the tradition alive.

5

### **Reflect:**

Ask what foods make them feel "at home" and why.





The background of the entire slide is a close-up photograph of a person's face, focusing on their eyes and nose, which are partially obscured by a dark, textured overlay. In the bottom right corner, a portion of an open recipe book is visible, showing various recipes with ingredients and instructions. The text is presented in two main sections, each enclosed in a decorative frame with gold-colored borders and corner ornaments. The top section has a dark blue background, while the bottom section has a dark red background.

## Ways to Expand the Lesson:

- **Write** down the recipe and its story in a small “Family Recipe Journal.”
- **Create** an illustrated menu of your family’s favorite meals and who taught them.
- **Record** a short video of a family member explaining how they make a dish.
- **Cook** a meal from a friend’s or neighbor’s tradition! Talk about what’s similar or different between the dishes.

***Foodways is both a practice and an art form.***

The ways people cook, share, and celebrate food are expressions of identity and community. Our foodways are living reminders that tradition is made fresh every day.



What Stories Live in Your Home?



Share your favorite photo or family story with us using  
**#HandedDownAtHome**  
Tag @TexasFolklife to be featured in  
next month's newsletter!