Making Ends Meet

Casandra Wilson

BEFORE YOU READ: Think about the idiom, “making ends meet.” What does it mean? Try using it in a sentence or two. What is a dish that you cook when you are trying to make ends meet?

My mother had seven children, and she worked very hard to feed and educate us without any of our fathers by her side. Many times, we went to school with our shoes torn and without lunch. In Jamaica, they don’t give free lunch at school like they do here, so my mother used to get up early and make us cornmeal porridge to fill our stomachs. She hoped that would hold us for the whole day. When we came home from school, our dinner would be waiting for us.

To earn money, my mother washed people’s clothes. She scrubbed the clothes with her hands and a scrub brush and then hung the clothes in the sun to dry. The next day, she went back to iron and fold them. After all that hard labor using up her strength, she went to do the grocery shopping. But she never could buy enough. She did not buy expensive foods, just foods to fill our stomachs. We used to be well satisfied, because we all knew what our mom was going through.

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One Sunday she wanted to cook rice, peas, and fried chicken for our dinner, but she didn’t have any cooking oil to fry the chicken. She seasoned the chicken hoping some friends or family members would pass by and give her the money she needed to buy the cooking oil. She was there waiting and waiting with no luck.

Finally, she came up with an idea to start boiling the chicken. You could smell the aroma coming from the well-seasoned chicken. After she cooked the chicken, she added carrot, thyme, sweet pepper, and tomatoes. Then she decided to throw the rice in the pot with the chicken and let it all cook together in one pot. And that was our Sunday dinner. Even though that’s not what my mother had planned to cook for our dinner, it turned out to be very tasty and we all enjoyed our Sunday dinner.

That is a dinner I will never forget. Even now that I am an adult, I cook that same dinner for my kids and called it my mom’s signature dish. I will cherish that memory for the rest of my life. I love you, Mom.

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What about You?

The writers on this page and p. 1 write about a meal they will never forget. Write about a meal that you will never forget.


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