

Poison apple or man-catching beignets?

Are these Disney foods worth recreating?



Sara Popken
Opinion Writer

I still remember my first paper cut. I was skimming the pages of the my favorite book. It was a hand-me-down from my siblings, but through the worn red lettering it read, "Walt Disney Mickey Mouse Cookbook". I spent years rereading the pages and returning to recipes, except for Dewey's cheese waffles.

There are so many children's movies with different types of foods animated to perfection that I was unable to recreate then, that I've been able to now.

Ratatouille

I didn't make a traditional ratatouille but instead a Confit Byaldi. They're basically the same thing but the Pixar-like plating from the actual movie resembles a Confit Byaldi, which is basically just a fancier version of ratatouille that only really

changes presentation wise.

I was super excited to work on this recipe. It didn't seem too hard and although ratatouille was never my favorite movie, it's definitely the first one related to food that I think of.

However, when I recreated it, I was so let down.

The bottom of the baking dish is lined with a piperade which is similar to a tomato sauce but with the addition of roasted peppers. Along the top of this thinly sliced eggplant, Roma tomatoes, yellow squash and zucchini are layered.

I would like to thank my mandolin slicer for being the only way I could get through this recipe.

After it took a total of three hours in the oven, I was excited to try it and then I regretted making it. It isn't horrible but it isn't worth the time nor the effort and unfortunately, mine didn't look as pretty as the one in ratatouille despite the effort I put into



Ratatouille

plating.

After I didn't like it by itself, I attempted to salvage it. I tried it with pasta and another time with fish, as suggested. I will admit it was better with the fish but, overall I'm just let down. I used to dream of being in a restaurant with Remy, but I don't think I trust him anymore.

This dish may have saved the restaurant, but if I had been the critic it would have shut it down.

Alice in Wonderland

I loved Alice in Wonderland growing up. From the books to my bedding, it spread through my

childhood. For years I daydreamed of her tea party with the Mad Hatter and having cookies that caused people to shrink or grow with each bite.

Unfortunately, I couldn't find a recipe that had mastered the magic seen in the film, but I still made the cookies.

I followed a basic sugar cookie recipe. Flour, sugar, eggs, butter, vanilla, baking powder, combined and baked, pretty simple. The hardest part of these was frosting them, but compared to the movie I think I got pretty close.



Alice in Wonderland

As the soundtrack of the movie played and I rolled out the dough into malleable pieces, I felt as though there was a version of my child-self watching. She watched as I worked and slowly I could see her begin to express

not only admiration but excitement.

It reminded of the times I frosted cookies with my sisters, and as they laughed I copied them, despite the fact that I didn't understand their jokes.

I would do so much to go back and give my younger self a simple cookie and hug because she really deserves it, and something about putting a recipe from a movie into my own world helped me grasp that. For the first time in a long time, I reflected upon where I was in life and how I got here, and I realized how proud I was of myself.

Princess and the Frog

I loved Tiana for a number of reasons, but the movie following her dream of owning a restaurant and taking after her father wasn't far from my own when I originally watched it. My Disney cookbook wasn't the only thing aiding my involvement in the kitchen, my father is a former restaurant owner and there's no denying that I took after him.

I made beignets because seriously, what is better than seeing Tiana so happy at the end of the movie, layering honey upon her pastries? I can't help but feel proud of her as her world seems to be coming together.

The dough was easier than I expected it to be but when it came to actually frying it they puffed up and turned golden, just not quite as pretty as Tiana's. This process was



Beignets

actually a little nerve wracking for me because a gallon of hot oil can manage a lot of damage but luckily everything went well.

Between my anxiety fueled pacing throughout my kitchen in an attempt to convince myself I wouldn't start a grease fire and convincing myself to check on the confections, I was finally able to reflect upon another my childhood dreams, the restaurant.

I had convinced myself I'd be cooking side by side with

my father. He'd slice things become I hate it and I'd get to measure everything perfectly, as I've always loved to do. Customers would come by and we'd be known as the owners—a dream come true.

In the last few years I had to watch my father age and grow ill. It was bitter and stung, shutting down my restaurant and leaving me with a ticket right back to reality from my daydreaming.

Of course, I had to top them with tons of powdered sugar and honey that I extracted from some leftover honeycomb. I can see why Tiana

said the way to a man's heart was through is stomach.

Coco

Aside from my father's cooking leading to my connections with food, I have shared hundreds of dinners with my siblings. Being the youngest this was often my only time to connect with them. The table in Coco itself reminds me of my own when I was younger, with family gathered all around.

The scene of the Rivera family sharing time with each other

surrounded by tamales brought me back to my childhood, and although my dad never made tamales before, he helped me this time.

My dad no longer cooks as much as he used to, but we sat for almost an hour and spread the masa along the dried corn husks. He laughed and smiled while cooking again.

The meat was similar to meat I've made for Birria tacos and honestly there's not much unique about this recipe to Disney other than my association of tamales with family and togetherness shared with the film.

I didn't have a steamer basket so I had to use a colander, a big pot, some aluminum foil and a lot of effort to make it work but they still turned out. It was just like my family and the ways life had taken all of us. Bits and pieces of separate devices functioning as one.

Ponyo

So, I know, I know Ponyo is technically a Studio Ghibli production but because Disney and the studio have had a back and forth history with film rights and because it is such a cute movie there was no way I could leave it out.

Making the broth for this recipe was

easily the most challenging part of everything I worked on for this piece. I was losing my mind trying to get it the right color and I added too much ginger nearly every time.

Eventually my dad stepped in and helped me. My bank truly couldn't be more thankful considering it was hard to find all the bones I needed for a decent price.

Aside from that it was self explanatory and because I brought along my friend who introduced me to Ponyo, it was an amazing process to be able to talk about her experiences with the movie.

Liliana McKee-Hernandez is a sophomore at Northwest and grew up with Ponyo being her childhood favorite movie.

"It was the only time all three of my siblings and I would sit down and spend time on the same thing together." She explained.

Later on she went on to talk about how the movie always was so adorable and precious to her as a whole. The theme song went on to be repeated by us over and over again.

When it was finally done and Liliana managed to sit through the process of me taking pictures, I got to watch her face light up as she looked down at it. "It's like one of my childhood dreams coming true." She managed between laughs.

I've never been so glad to have made a dish for someone.



Ponyo