

## Café Offers a Mouthwatering Reason To Stop Near Rosebud

BY SERINA COLE

Sometimes it takes a kind word to lift you up," professes café owner Martha Kutschbach, but a delicious home-cooked meal, friendly smile and sharp-witted waitresses help do the trick, as well. You can find all of these at a little place right outside Rosebud known as the Hiway 77 Café.

While walking into the café, the first thing you may notice is the old-fashioned tin roof and charming homestyle décor. The walls are lined with an assortment of antique knickknacks and dishes. Rows of pictures of men and women who have served in our Armed Forces line the walls. This wall of honor began with only a few pictures of Martha's family and continues to grow. As travelers, truck drivers and locals frequented the café, her collection grew.



More than 200 photos honoring servicemen and women from every branch of the Armed Forces line the walls of the Hiway 77 Café near Rosebud.



The wall of honor includes photos of people in café owner Martha Kutschbach's family as well as those of diners.

Now over 200 soldiers representing every service branch and every war hang proudly as a patriotic tribute to those who served our country.

But a charming décor doesn't answer the call of a starving stomach. The menu offers a variety of home-cooked choices from mouthwatering chicken-fried steak to delicious salads that include everything but the kitchen sink. Daily specials are offered as well, ranging from chicken spaghetti to my personal favorite, red beans and rice.

Hiway 77 Café is known for its great home-cooked meals, but be forewarned: It is not a fast-food restaurant! But, as many would claim, "it is worth the wait."

Customer service is another very important aspect of dining out. It seems that a quick-witted sense of humor and a kindhearted disposition are two qualifications a waitress must possess to be employed with Martha.

"Every customer is special," says Gayla Duyck. Friendly service is a goal of any restaurant or café but is an accomplishment of the Hiway 77 Café.

The café's origin is an uplifting story for those who consider themselves dream chasers. Martha had been employed with the school system for 15 years. Her children, Erin and John, graduated, then moved on.

"I kept my kids busy to keep them out of trouble, and when they left, I had nothing to do. I was bored," Martha said.

After much research and careful con-



The Hiway 77 Café



Martha Kutschbach with one of her regular café customers, Henry Lee Williams.

sideration, Martha decided to follow her dream. She opened the café in October 2001, and success has followed.

"The community has been so supportive of my staff and the café," says Martha when asked about the secret to her success. "But you can't afford to be mediocre either. To be mediocre means you're the best of the worst and the worst of the best."

She attributes her success over the past five years to hard work, determination, a loyal customer base and staff she refers to as her extended family.

To get a taste of what Hiway 77 Café has to offer, visit during business hours, 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday. For dine-in or carryout orders, you can call (254) 583-4444.

# Cooking Tips for an Energy-Wise Holiday Season

Traditionally, the winter holidays are a time for delicious food shared with cherished company. This year, as you count your blessings, you might give a thought to the reliable energy sources that enable you to prepare those culinary delights so enjoyed by family and friends.

Today's new kitchen appliances use nearly 50 percent less energy than those built just a decade ago. Still, when holiday time rolls around, your energy bills can rise considerably, what with your stove, oven and dishwasher running overtime, and the door to your refrigerator standing open frequently as family members search for hidden treats.

Thankfully, it's not difficult to keep added holiday energy costs to a minimum. Your electric co-op has these suggestions:

**OVEN TIPS** The turkey is traditionally stuffed early in the morning and roasted for hours. Since it's a long, slow cook, there's no need to preheat your oven, even when the recipe suggests it. This also holds true for a holiday ham. In fact, unless you're baking breads or pastries, you may not need to preheat the oven at all.

Don't open the oven door to take a peek at what's cooking inside. Instead, turn on the oven light and check the cooking status through the oven win-

**A toaster oven can be a great energy saver for holiday cooking.**



dow. Opening the oven door lowers the temperature inside—by as much as 25 degrees—which increases cooking time and wastes energy.

As long as your oven is on, cook several items at the same time. Just make sure you leave enough room for the heat to circulate around each casserole and pie plate.

In an electric oven, you can turn the heat off several minutes before your food is fully cooked. As long as the oven door remains closed, enough heat will be stored inside to finish cooking your meal. The same principle applies to your electric range-top.

Self-cleaning ovens use less energy for normal cooking because of the higher insulation levels built into them. Consider using the self-cleaning feature immediately after using your oven, to take advantage of the residual heat.

**STOVETOP TIPS** When cooking on top of your range, match the size of the pan to the heating element. A 6-inch pan on an 8-inch burner will waste more than 40 percent of the energy!

Clean burners and reflectors provide better heating, while saving energy.

**OTHER WAYS TO COOK** Don't overlook the other cooking appliances. Fast and efficient microwave ovens use around 50 percent less energy than conventional ovens, and they don't heat up your kitchen. Consider using them to cook yams, steam your favorite fresh vegetables, or heat up leftover turkey and gravy for a midnight snack.

Remember, your small appliances are great energy savers that can save you money all year long. Slow cookers (crock-pots) are perfect for busy families. On average, they will cook a whole meal for about 17 cents worth of electricity. Electric skillets can steam, fry, sauté, stew, bake or roast a variety of food items—and some can double as serving dishes. If you're baking or broiling small food items, a toaster oven is ideal.

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