





*Recipe for:* Sauce Recipes from Thérèse Alpetche Laxalt  
Handwritten "Cooking Notebook"

*From the kitchen of:* Meggan Laxalt Mackey

## Story

These are hand-written recipes from my grandmother, Thérèse Alpetche Laxalt.

She was born in 1891 in Baigorri, a small town in the Iparralde (French) Basque Country. Her father was a hotelier who had aspirations for Thérèse to work in Paris, so he sent her to the famed Cordon Bleu cooking school.

Thérèse's life took another turn, however, when she decided to cross the Atlantic on a ship—alone—to see her dying brother who was hospitalized in a Nevada hospital in early 1920. (France had sent a lot of post-World War I soldiers to high-elevation U.S. locations to recuperate from mustard gas poisoning.)

Dominique Laxalt, another Basque who had been working as a sheepherder in the Sierras, was recuperating at St. Mary's Hospital in Reno. He was recuperating from being bucked off a horse in the hills, and occupied the bed next to Thérèse's brother Michel. Michel passed away, but Dominique healed, and my grandmother continued to see him. By 1920 Dominique and Thérèse were married.

Needless to say, Thérèse's Cordon Bleu skills were applied not to cooking for Parsian hotel guests, but rather to the sheepcamps of Nevada!

Later, Thérèse operated her own small boarding house in Carson City where she surely fed her boarders well. Of course, we, her loving family always benefitted from her amazing cooking.

I have attached two pages from Thérèse Alpetche Laxalt's "Cahier de Cuisine," or "Cooking Notebook" that she kept at Cordon Blue. Those recipes are all beautifully hand-written in French. These two pages contain sauce recipes.

As with most Basque immigrants who came to the U.S. in the 1920s, my grandmother ("amatxi" in Basque) did not speak English. The last recipe I have attached is from her Carson City, Nevada, notebook that she kept for years in her kitchen. This carrot pudding recipe shows how she eventually tried to write her recipes in English but most often reverted to French.

She spoke the same way, part French, part Basque (Euskara), and part English: but with the same grace and beauty as her hand-written recipes and incredible cooking. How fortunate we are to have her recipes.