



One of my favorite things to come out of the pandemic experience, was making new foods at home. Like many other people, I put new energy into cooking this past year and learned how to make some of my family's favorite dishes. I became comfortable making dishes like pollo a la plancha with fried plantains, tiramisu, Dijon chicken, lentils, roast turkey, mashed potatoes, and delicious flat bread pizzas. My children flexed their culinary skills as well and experimented with baking lemon bars, pan dulces, cinnamon rolls, coffee cake, and French toast bread pudding.



I am fortunate to have a full-time job that allowed for me to work remotely prior to the plague year and the subsequent health orders to do just that. One of my favorite things to come from the pandemic, is the wider acceptance of remote working. It has allowed me to better balance my work/family responsibilities. I have been able to better assist my children with their changed learning environment in the past year, trouble-shooting wifi and distance learning for three children. The office my job is based out of closed completely for most of 2020, and company management witnessed benefits of being able to work from home. Many other employees are opting to continue to work from home in order to support the many responsibilities of their lives as they see fit.

The transition to full time and permanent work-from home has also allowed me to improve the quality of my rest and sleep. Prior to working-from-home even half time, I was spending a significant amount of time traveling, and preparing for travel: to two different schools across town, the office, home, and sometimes back and forth a couple of times, and then across the state every other week. Now that school and work are in the same location, rolling out of bed to make coffee and get the day going is much more relaxed. And if need be, I can take a yoga break at (almost) any time of day.

Prior to the widespread knowledge of the pandemic, I was admitted to an online master's program in history and although adding a full course load during a pandemic was daunting, I have successfully managed to complete 60% of the program in one year. Being "stuck" in the house only served to support my needs and desires to focus on my studies.

Most importantly, I have had the good fortune and opportunity to just be around my family. The time spent together, even if in separate rooms at times, has deepened our connections and given us many happy memories during this very difficult time.

#pandemicprompt, #HST580, #ArizonaStateUniversity, #MyFavoriteThings, #food, #sleep, #WFH, #gradschool, #family