Denise Mazal

Love Kolaches

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Evan Stern: I'm Evan Stern, and I'm speaking today with Denise Mazal.

Denise Mazal: Ma*zal*.

Evan Stern: With Denise Maz…

Denise Mazal: Ma*zal*.

Evan Stern: Ma*zal*.

Denise Mazal: Ma*zal*.

Evan Stern: —with Denise Mazal, in Boerne, Texas. Ms. Mazal, for the record, can you state your name and occupation?

Denise Mazal: My name is Denise Mazal, and I am a former owner of Little Gretel, head chef and basically executive chef.

Evan Stern: Great. I forgot, I have to—for backup, I also have to—

Denise Mazal: Should I just kind of say—what am I, then? I don't really know. A chef? But I am not really chef [laughs] anymore. But—am I chef? I suppose I'm still chef.

Evan Stern: I think once a chef, always a chef, correct?

Denise Mazal: Sure. So, yeah. I'm chef.

Evan Stern: Wonderful. To begin, I know you've described Prague as your mother and your mentor. Can you maybe describe for us your childhood home, and tell me a little bit about where you grew up and how it shaped you?

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Denise Mazal: Prague, as everybody knows in these days, has lots to offer. When I grew up, I was exposed to beautiful architecture, arts, phenomenal music, sports, and geography of Europe. That kind of really installed the interest in all these venues.

Evan Stern: I know most American kids today grow up eating macaroni and cheese and nuggets. What did you grow up eating?

Denise Mazal: I end up eating really fabulous food. My mother was a chef. Unfortunately, she didn't have too much of a time to cook at home, only on Sundays. But she was always able to bring food home, so I really ate the top delicious food, Czech food.

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There were no hamburgers. They were not hot dogs. They just really made food from scratch. And that's what I grew up with.

Evan Stern: What would you say are the hallmarks of Czech cuisine?

Denise Mazal: Czech cuisine is really based on—like a French cuisine, cooking from scratch, using all ingredients, even leftovers or scraps, from vegetables and meats. Making stocks—from stocks—and we make soups and sauces. So it's very similar to French cuisine. Unfortunately, in Communist times, that was the time when I grew up, food was rather bland.

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The color was not there. Because it was just kind of—food was food, and you ate it. They put it on a plate, and that's how it was. It was not luxury. Like in these days, you go to restaurants, and

it's really to go out to restaurant is a luxury. Normal life back in my days, people had to cook at home to save the money, to feed everybody the best way they could.

Evan Stern: I know a lot of times, people get confused with Czech food and German food. How would you distinguish Czech food from German food?

Denise Mazal: Well, Czech food is definitely much better [laughs], I have to say. If I can compare German and Czech food, it would be Bavarian—food from Bavaria, Austria, and Hungary. That's very similar food.

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We all borrowed recipes from each other, and eventually called them our own recipes. Czechs are definitely better in sweets-making. Even Germans accepted the Czech names for the name of desserts. On the other side, the Germans would know better food like, let's say, sauerbraten, sausage plates. And the Czechs actually accept *their* name, of savory food. So Czechs would be definite leader in sweets, and Germans would be a leader in entrées.

Evan Stern: Speaking of sweets, for the uninitiated, what is a kolache?

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Denise Mazal: Kolaches, okay. Kolaches actually come from a word, kulatý, which means rounds. So that's a kolache—kol, kulatý, kolo. It's a kolach. So anything really basically made in the rounds, it calls kolach. It doesn't have to be per se this traditional or authentic kolache; it's just called kolach. Kolach should be definitely round, not square but round; dense, not soft like a pillow; and golden brown, not a blonde color like Danish pastry.

Evan Stern: Every food has a story behind it, and do you have any idea how kolaches came to be a staple of the Czech nation? And when and where were they typically enjoyed back home?

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Denise Mazal: You do not find kolaches in the stores in my times. It would be always baked at home, and it was basically baked always by grandmas, who were not working anymore, so they had more time. Kolaches need a lot of time, and busy women, going to work, getting—taking care of kids, didn't really have time to make kolaches. Maybe on Saturdays and Sundays. But it's been mainly grandmas who kept the tradition on.

Evan Stern: Do you have any idea, looking back into history, why they started? And if you don't know, that's perfectly fine.

Denise Mazal: Why they start to make kolaches—well, it was definitely because we don't—we have a country, very humble, and we really use up everything we grow.

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Everything is sustainable. So we had a lot of fruits, especially apples, pears, plums, cherries. And so all that was used in baking. I'm sure kolach came by because of a dough. It's a yeast-based dough. And it was a filler. There are different kinds of kolaches. They can be filled with farmer cheese; absolutely it's a quark. It's quark. It's really—the cheese that goes on inside. And on the top you will put the fruit. That's basically how I think kolaches came about. It was just for use of fresh fruit, which was changed into jams for wintertime, so it would be recycled, and in a really good, tasty way, the kolach was introduced.

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Evan Stern: Can you tell me about wedding kolaches?

Denise Mazal: Oh, wedding kolaches are really a lot of fun. I made thousands of wedding kolaches. As the story goes, one of the stories I like, that the bride has to prove herself, and she has to bake a thousand kolaches for the wedding. It's really about the gathering, or the family, of women, and baking together. And then the kolaches are offered to all of guests.

Evan Stern: Before we started recording, we were talking about the frgáls.

Denise Mazal: Frgál?

Evan Stern: Can you tell us about the frgál?

Denise Mazal: Well, frgál been basically an ancestor of a pizza, probably even the first pizza in the world.

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It was created in 1700s. And again it was basically—the reason for it was because of so much of fabulous fruit jams. And so, as they made the bread, they just rolled out a large, large kolach, about 30 centimeters, what is 15 inches. Then they'd fill it up. In those days I heard they been actually probably filling that up with sauerkraut and sardines. *But*, yeah—it's kind of unappetizing if you think of sardine and sauerkraut, but it's what they had on hand, again. And later on, with ample of fruits and jams, they start to make frgáls filled with pears.

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Then later on, it just kind of started to fill up with the poppy seed, plum jam. Czechs are actually the largest growers of poppy seed, still. We are still ahead of every nation. So, obviously poppy seed has to end up somewhere, and so end up mainly in the pastries, and mainly in kolaches.

Evan Stern: And you would consider the frgál a member of the kolache family, yes?

Denise Mazal: Definitely, yes. Yeah.

Evan Stern: I'm just going to switch positions here, because of this vacuum here.

[inaudible side conversation]

Evan Stern: That's quite all right. Oh, it's quite all right. You can never plan on—you can never plan on matters of this nature. But we were saying—so, but you would consider the frgál a member of the kolache family, yes?

Denise Mazal: Definitely, yeah. Frgál is a large kolach.

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Also, in these days, are making frgál kolaches with beautiful designs, using all three fillings. In the United States, the quark is just extremely expensive, and it's hard to make, so I created the recipe for farmer cheese, which would be very similar to quark. Then I use the plum jam and poppy seed. And in these three fillings, I created the different designs. A couple of them actually I have even copyrighted. It's kind of unheard of, but somehow it happened. [laughs]

Evan Stern: So you've copyrighted jams yourself, huh?

Denise Mazal: I copyrighted the three kolaches, or maybe four, as a three-dimensional food.

Evan Stern: Before I forget to come back to this, what are these kolaches that you copyrighted?

Denise Mazal: Those are frgál.

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Because of designs on them. So people can still make their own frgáls with own designs. And it's a fact—and I don't have only three frgáls. I've made in my history of the Little Gretel Restaurant, I must make maybe 50 to 100 different designs. Let's say for Valentine's Day I will make a heart on it. For Father's Day I would make a beer mug on it, nicely decorated with the peaches, and raisins, is another thing. Raisins and almonds are really important for frgál kolache make.

Evan Stern: Who taught you how to make kolaches and frgál?

Denise Mazal: Well, it's something you grew up around. You know, you're eating it. You smell it in the air. And it just—the memories of those smells and tastes just evokes the eager to make it.

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And so I start to make them using my mother's cookbook. She brought me, in my immigration, a cookbook—her own cookbook, from 19-I think-41. So by knowing how the kolache is supposed to look, how it's supposed to taste, it's just very easy to follow the recipe. Actually I would like to underline that really the recipes, there are so many recipes as many grandmothers exist. Every one of them is going to have different recipe. I created the recipe for Little Gretel with my friends, Czech chefs. They actually helped me. I have to give credit to Lukáš Skála.

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He is a recognized pastry chef in Czech Republic, winning Olympics—Gastronomy Olympics in Erfurt, or placing really high. He actually came to my restaurant and taught me how to make pressed kolaches. So then I had made even the pressing little tool, and that's how we make our kolaches. We press them, and then stretch them a little bit, and then we fill them up with filling.

Evan Stern: I know you mentioned your mother earlier. I know you said that she was a chef. What would you say is the most important lesson she taught you?

Denise Mazal: Definitely don't throw anything. Just use up everything you can do. Because this is basically how the Czech cuisine is created. By layers.

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You start, let's say, with cleaning up pork for schnitzel, and you have all scraps. So you roast those scraps, you put them in a pot, fill it up with water, put the seasoning in it, and that basically becomes foundation for your next step. And so, that's definitely what I've been doing. I've seen my mother doing it. I've seen it in her restaurant. So, by really being next to my mother, being next to other chefs she worked with, and then just seeing as a little girl, that was how I kind of absorb the cooking.

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Evan Stern: I knew you grew up around this since birth, but is there a moment you remember saying to yourself, "I want to be a chef, too"?

Denise Mazal: Hmm. Moment. Well, I'll tell you something. My mother was working really hard. And she really didn't want me to be in the kitchens. She wanted me to go to school, have a degree, so I end up being a civil engineer, bachelor degree in transportation. And when I left my country in the Communist times, really the easiest way for me to start was in the kitchens. Because I defected to Paris, in France, and for me to start there as a civil engineer was extremely difficult, because my papers were not good.

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I would have to go back to school. And what do you do when you are in a different country, you have to pay your bills? You just have to go to work. I didn't have that leisure to go back to school and study. So I start to work in Hotel Concorde Lafayette in Paris. Then with everything that happened, I had to move to Munich, and I worked for Hilton Corporation, in Munich, Germany. So, it was just kind of always, always there for me. When I arrived to United States, it was basically—that's probably when I arrived, I would just kind of dream about—because this country is really a country for all of opportunities, and with hard work and dreams, I knew I can reach my dream, in a culinary, because I had been basically living in it all my life.

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Evan Stern: What caused you to defect?

Denise Mazal: Well, really, I suppose I've been blessed, because with my education, I got the job, which was phenomenal. I worked for Charles University as a building—construction, as a contractor. I was just making so much of money [laughs], and there was no really—for that era, there was not really for me of getting better.

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And then one day, my employer decided, and they have to choose a person to join the Communist Party, and it was right before the new elections. I really didn't want to become the communist, because they took all what my father worked for all his life, and they basically took everything from my mother. She worked all her life. So it was just kind of black day in my eyes, in my heart, and I decided to leave.

Evan Stern: I know you said that you worked for Hilton in Munich. What ultimately brought you to the United States? And then, how did you end up here, in Boerne, Texas?

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Denise Mazal: Well, that's actually—I always say, this is a very long story. But in order to come to United States, you had to be invited. You basically had to have a job. You couldn't just kind of come and then apply for asylum. So, I had been invited by, believe it or not, Steve Martin, the actor. Best friend. Steve Martin love Czechs. As you know, in '76, '78—it was the time when I came to U.S.—he had his own show, the crazy—*Saturday Night Live*—and he always played the crazy Czechs. So he was actually supporting and probably sending even money for people like me, myself. And I end up getting contract to work as a chef, and housekeeper, for Belgium ambassador in Aspen, Colorado.

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And so basically, that was secured, I got social security number, and based on that, I was free to get to Aspen and start to work.

Evan Stern: That's incredible! But how did you get from Aspen to Texas?

Denise Mazal: Okay, actually I never end up in Aspen, because I found out—then things changed. The job was not really that—actually, job was good, but it just didn't work. Some other better opportunities happened for me, in Boulder, Colorado. So I end up living and working in restaurants in Boulder, Colorado, where I met my husband, Jimmy Mazal, who was also a restaurateur. So you can see my whole life was all around restaurants.

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Just when we got married and had our first daughter, we decided it will make better sense to move to southern part of United States, because of weather. We really didn't like that cold

afternoons. We kind of been outdoor people. He likes to play golf; I like to play tennis. So his job basically eventually brought us to San Antonio, Texas, where his family lived.

Evan Stern: Then you moved to Boerne. I know people think, "Oh my goodness, Texas, Czechoslovakia; completely different." Was there anything that you found here that maybe reminded you a little bit of home?

Denise Mazal: Definitely. Even though Boerne really didn't have any kind of restaurants—per se German restaurants—it still had that German install [sp] heritage.

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I just really loved San Antonio because of its Latin feel, which kind of reminded me of Europe. You don't see too many places like that in the United States, that kind of little piece of Europe. When I first came to Boerne, because I kind of wanted to check out—there was a school district from where I lived, my kids would have to come out, to Boerne—I drove up here, and it was early in the morning, and the water was evaporating from the river, and I turned to the right, and just drive really slowly, enjoying the moment of a river. And there I saw a sign for sale on a corner, for sale. And I just totally fall in love, instantly, with that land.

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We end up buying it. It was one small piece of property which end up later on, five pieces of property, building up my toy shop, where we are sitting right now, which is now DOBBS Bar, and building up next door Little Gretel Restaurant.

Evan Stern: What were your first impressions of Texas kolaches?

Denise Mazal: Oh, no. [laughs] it was a big, big disappointment. *But*, they taste good, and every time when I drive on that Highway 35 to Dallas, I would always stop in West, I would always buy poppy seed kolache. Even though they are not poppy seed kolache; they are kind of poppy seed buchtas. But I still loved them. I would still support them. But I didn't find really kolaches as I make, anywhere.

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Even though it's starting to be better, it has been already 15 years ago when I entered the competition in kolache making in Caldwell, in a festival there, and my kolache has been basically the worst, in their eyes. Anything they could say about it bad—it was bad. Interestingly enough, though, I end up being on Austin television, maybe two television stations approached me and then asked me what I am selling. And I said, "Well, these are real, authentic kolaches." So that happened 15 years ago. And from then on, I can see the kolaches kind of really got better acknowledgement. There is even a Kolache Trail in these days.

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So I'm really proud of the fact that me being just different, and not being accepted immediately, I hope I will change look—

Evan Stern: You entered the kolache competition in Caldwell—

Denise Mazal: Yes.

Evan Stern: —and they judged you terribly.

Denise Mazal: Yes. Yeah. They said—they didn't say; they wrote it on a paper—just everything was wrong with them. Yeah.

Evan Stern: And how did that make you feel at the time?

Denise Mazal: I just kind of said, "You just don't know." Yeah. I just—I didn't took it bad. I said, "Well, I'm going to just keep on doing what I'm doing, because I know I'm doing it right."

Evan Stern: You do eventually open up Little Gretel. You have a very successful business. And then you open up an entire kolache shop, where you are selling the traditional kolaches as you know how to make them.

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Can you tell us about what inspired you to start doing that?

Denise Mazal: Okay, this is actually still in the process. As you know, I just retired from having a restaurant. But I want to keep the kolache growing, because it's necessary. It's really the heritage. It's really something. It's a symbol of Texas. It's not going to be that much of a symbol in the Czech Republic, but the Texans are really proud of their kolache, and I want to be part of that, to keep the traditions and authenticity. At this moment, I have a website store—it's called Love Kolaches—where people can order kolaches, and I will bake them. Then we freeze them, and on Monday we ship them out, so they will come fresh to your home.

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They can be frozen in a freezer for up to three months. They will be still really good. And that's basically what I will do. Because to make kolaches, it's really—it's time consuming. It takes from the beginning to the end probably three to four hours. So be doing that every day, really only grandmas have probably that time. But on daily basis, you can do it. So I would always suggest make them let's say on Sunday, as a family fun, freeze them, and then pull them out of

the freezer as you go, and heat them up in the oven, and they are going to be as fresh as if you would take them out of the oven at that moment.

Evan Stern: I'll have to order some, sometime. That sounds fantastic. But just talking though again about kolaches in Texas, how do you feel about the fact that when people think of kolaches in this country, they're most likely to think about the kind of kolaches that we have here in Texas?

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Denise Mazal: Yeah. Well, I do have my own version about that. I think it's nothing wrong with that, and I think it's kind of neat. At the beginning I was trying to also fight—"Those are not kolaches. Those are not the sausage kolaches. Those are pigs in a blankets, klobasneks." But you know, I am one person against the millions. So I just kind of gave up, and I'm calling them kolaches, also. They are savory kolaches. And I think the way how they've been born is because of Czech immigrants in 1800s, when they came, it's the same like for me right now. I cannot find quark, and I had to substitute all ingredients to make the farmer cheese to resemble, in the taste and looks, to quark.

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And that's what exactly they've been doing in 1800s. They did not have per se the right flour. They did not have—maybe eggs been small. Maybe milk was not—was much more fatty, so then you didn't have to use that much of butter. So you see, those are all things you have to kind of think about when you are creating a recipe, to be authentic to the Czech kolache. So I think, as families have been making their regular, round, authentic kolaches, they had leftover dough. Men had to go on a field to work. And really easiest way to give them a little food in their box, to

field, was since we are also really good sausage makers, just take the sausage, wrap them in the dough, bake it. It's clean; you can eat it. That's kind of my approach to seeing how sausage kolache was created—by necessity. And on the other side it was very clever.

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Evan Stern: So you have made peace with the fact that people here call sausage in dough a kolache. You've made peace with that?

Denise Mazal: Of course. Yeah. It's nothing wrong with that. I think we should be actually proud of it, and [0:31:28] we can kind of brag about, well, it's not right. But—so it's at least a good conversational piece.

Evan Stern: That's kind of nice to hear. That's a progressive attitude I think. But can you share with me any meaningful exchanges? When you have this shop, you open this shop, you're selling these kolaches here, can you share with me any meaningful exchanged you shared or witnessed with customers over your kolaches?

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Denise Mazal: Well, my kolache has been always very well accepted. I know people would like to see more of different kinds, which I'll be willing to create. Tell me that question again?

Evan Stern: Meaningful exchanges you had with customers. Like, reactions that your customers had to your kolaches?

Denise Mazal: Oh, yeah, definitely. It's always the memories, yeah. It is just—really food is all about memory. Something—what you ate, you had before, and it just sticks in your head, and it just kind of brings you back to past, to the moment where you enjoyed it when your grandma

made it for you, or you bought it in a store, or somebody gave it to you. And you just sit down, you get your cup of coffee, and you had a kolache. It's just really about bringing the memories, which people will actually drive all over from Houston, Austin, and Dallas, to my restaurant, to get those memories back.

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Evan Stern: Are there any specific customers, stories that you can remember they shared with you? Are there any that come to mind?

Denise Mazal: Yeah, not really. [laughs]

Evan Stern: That's perfectly fine. Looking back on your life, if you can name it, what is the most meaningful batch of kolaches you ever made?

Denise Mazal: Hmm. [laughs] Meaningful batch of kolache. Well, most meaningful—batch of kolache—well, I've been always proud of every single kolache I ever made, and I must have—I was already calculating how many I probably made.

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It's close to half of a million of them. You have to understand it takes the time. You basically have to become that kolach. And it's again—kolach is a single kolach, and the plural is kolaches. It's kolache. So it's kind of different in the Czech language. But if I talk about one kolach, you have to just really definitely put your heart in it. I've been working with my employees or students, and when they just are making it because they have to be making it, their kolache always took totally different than mine.

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You just have to *indulge*. You have to bring that soul into them. What is probably the most rememberable making kolaches would be the wedding kolaches, because it's almost like making—knitting a blanket for somebody who goes through some illness, and in every stitch, you put that wish that person will get better. It was same with for me making wedding kolaches. When I was pressing those rounds and filling them up, just wishing—sending the wishes to the new-weds, the best wishes. So maybe the wedding kolaches would be my best memories of making for people.

Evan Stern: But I know that after—I think it was 16 years—I think after 16 years of serving this community, you just closed Little Gretel a few weeks ago. What led you to step back after all of this time?

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Denise Mazal: Well, it's about time. I do have three beautiful grandchildren, which I don't even know; it's just hi and bye. They do love my kolaches; they grew up on them. But it is just the time for me to—let it go. I was hoping that somebody will take it over. I just didn't found anybody who will per se take the Czech cuisine. It's not easy affair. It's time-consuming. And I proved and it was appreciated, what I've done. So I still hoping somebody is going to like to open a similar restaurant to mine.

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I just would like to relax right now. I'd like to rest. I didn't have really vacation in five years. Working 50 to 70 hours a week, it is just—and it doesn't go away. You just have to—you go and you go and you go. I'm exhausted. And I'd like to rest for months, then probably go to Czech

Republic to visit my family. And afterwards, I would like to build another kitchen, out of which I'll be focusing only on kolaches, to keep the traditions up.

Evan Stern: Can you tell me about what the last few weeks have been like, for you?

Denise Mazal: Oh. It was—torture. It was so hard. It was just the physically and mentally.

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Sometimes I cried, but it was mainly at home. In the restaurant, it's just the pace, and the physical—didn't allow me to just kind of lose tears. I just had to go, and stayed focused on what needs to be done. Serve people to the last moment, the way we serve them all these years. So, I'm still kind of—I still didn't stop. I'm still kind of—I've been still doing every day something, regarding to closing and finishing up. So I hope very soon I'm going to be able to go on vacation, and start from—not necessarily from a beginning, but start again where I finished, and keep on going.

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Evan Stern: I know that traditionally, when places open, they have ribbon-cutting ceremonies. But I know the Chamber of Commerce here surprised you with a ribbon-tying ceremony. Can you tell me about what that was like for you?

Denise Mazal: Wow, that was just—it just really got my heart. I mean, that was really tears, they came out. It was beautiful. I didn't expect that. [laughs] I even said—when my daughter said, "Come on mom, you have to come out," I said, "Come on, and who's going to be cooking? I have to stay here. I cannot go out." She says, "No, you're gonna come out." So I went out, and it

was just—everybody was just so nice. It was definitely one thing it never happened in the history of the United States. There's always a ribbon-cutting, the red ribbon.

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But ribbon *tying*, it's the first one, so I'm glad I was part of it. And I was the first one. It really means a lot to me. And this is why I don't want to totally disappear from this community. Because really Boerne without my restaurant, it kind of doesn't have its—that image, which I was trying to create, which I know people have been asking for, long time. Because when I used to have my toy shop and knitting shop, and I taught people, and I brought a lot of people from all over Texas, they've been always asking, "And so where is a nice German restaurant?" I would have to always answer, "There is none."

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So I hope with my kolaches I'm going to still be able to create the feel of Europe in Boerne.

Evan Stern: What are your hopes for the future of kolaches in this country?

Denise Mazal: I would like everybody to try to make kolaches for fun. There are not only one kind of a kolache, or two, let's say kolache. The authentic ones, the round ones, or sausage ones, or nor frgál. Actually at this moment I am working on finishing up the manuscript for publishers about the Czech cuisine, and I am publishing there about probably ten different recipes of kolaches. So I would like people to definitely seek eventually for my cookbook, and try those kolaches.

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Because they are just—they are fun to make. They are definitely delicious. And they are easy to store. So it's not like they will spoil—you will put your time into something, and in two minutes, it will be gone. Even though they *would* be gone. But you can still save some for future, and then do it again. So I think for family gathering, it's a really fantastic way to fill your time. And I hope there is going to be more young people interested. And there is a lot of bakers. I do work with students of culinary schools, and mainly all I hear, it's always the girls like to open up the bakery. So I think they should be, again, exposed. That's kind of the word.

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As I was exposed to food in my young age, they have to be exposed to kolaches. So, I'll be still working with culinary school of arts in Boerne, in the high school. I'm on a board of advisors with Saint Philip's [sp] school. I know they have a really wonderful professor who, on my telling him, "Please, teach them how to make kolaches," and he did. I don't know if he still works there but maybe I could be like just the guest chef to expose, really—you have to expose the young people to making kolaches.

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Evan Stern: I know you say you're going to continue selling the kolaches. If people want to order your kolaches, where should they go? How should they try to get in touch with you to get some?

Denise Mazal: The best and easiest way is to get online, and Google www.lovekolaches.com. There are the forms, and you can choose any kind of kolache you like, and place an order, and then I will bake them, and I will freeze them, and I will ship them. Anywhere in the United States.

Evan Stern: Wonderful. I know I'll be ordering some.

Denise Mazal: [laughs] Super.

Evan Stern: Just a few more. Decades in the future, after you've left this Earth, say someone wants to commune with your spirit and go someplace to get to know Denise Mazal a little bit better. Where should they go? Where would you send them to go look for you?

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Denise Mazal: Well, I think my spirit is going to stay here in Boerne, still with the people, young people, in their hearts, because they remember my cooking. So it would be Boerne. I hope my new kitchen of Love Kolaches here in Boerne, on this property, will be established well, and I would find a person—which I already kind of have a sous-chef, who even promised me, "As you taught me, I will then find someone who will be standing next to me, like I stood next to you, and I will teaching them, to keep the tradition up."

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Evan Stern: Beautiful. And do you just have any final thoughts that you care to share?

Denise Mazal: Well, I really love my country. I love Czech nation. I love Czech people. I love their history. I'm really proud of all of us Czechs, what we've done, for the world, in music, in science, in theatre, in arts, in culinary, in inventions. We've been always the pioneers of any kind of industry. We accomplished a lot in our lives, one way or the other.

0:47:00

And I would like the new generation, even in Czech Republic, to realize that—that it's really important, to be proud of who you are and keep the traditions up.

Evan Stern: Thank you so much for finding time to speak with us today. It has been a great honor.

Denise Mazal: Thank you so much. Thank you.

Evan Stern: Thank you.

[End]