

Episode Title: Trisha Yearwood's Food for the Soul

Episode Summary: In this week's episode, Sid Evans, editor-in-chief of *Southern Living Magazine*, talks to country superstar Trisha Yearwood about her latest cookbook, the similarities between making meals and making music, and growing up in Monticello, Georgia.

TRISHA YEARWOOD: In the South, there's such an encouragement to gather. We have a family reunion every time you turn around and that's where the sharing of stories and recipes, that's where that all comes from.

(Biscuits and Jam Theme begins - Fiddler's Barn on Epidemic Sound)

Voice Over from SID EVANS: *Welcome to Biscuits and Jam from Southern Living. I'm Sid Evans, editor-in-chief of Southern Living Magazine. Whether on stage or in the kitchen, my guest this week tells me she's spent her whole life entertaining. And for her, there are plenty of similarities between making music and making a meal.*

TRISHA YEARWOOD: Cooking is therapeutic. Getting your hands into the dish and making a pie crust from scratch or just having people that you love over and making them a meal that makes them feel good. it's kind of like playing to an audience in the same regard. Maybe the applause is a little less.

Voice Over from SID EVANS: *This year marks the 30th anniversary of Trisha Yearwood's hit single "She's In Love With the Boy." And over the last three decades, she's become one of the most influential artists in country music, racking up nearly 60 award nominations for hugely popular songs like "How Do I Live" and "Walkaway Joe." But aside from music, Trisha has carved her own lane in the culinary world as well. Having learned simple recipes from her mom as a kid, Trisha has always loved feeding her family and friends, and she released her first cookbook, Georgia Cooking in an Oklahoma Kitchen, in 2008. Four years later, Trisha's Kitchen debuted on the Food Network and has become one of cable's most popular food programs. On today's show, you'll hear the early cooking advice Trisha got from her mom that she carries with her to this day.*

TRISHA YEARWOOD: You don't have to know everything to be able to make good food. And sometimes my mom's motto was "simple is best." And I love it when somebody who says they can't cook comes to me because I'm like, "Go to the first book, make the meatloaf. It has four ingredients. You can make this." And when you do, you'll be like, I made that. And then you will have the confidence to try the next thing. And maybe that will lead you down the path to trying the more complicated things. But, everybody can cook. I believe that.

Voice Over from SID EVANS: *Plus her husband Garth Brooks' favorite meals, a sneak peek at Trisha's new cookbook, and much more this week on Biscuits and Jam.*

(Theme music ends)

SID EVANS: Well, Trisha Yearwood, welcome to Biscuits and Jam.

TRISHA YEARWOOD: Well, thank you.

SID EVANS: So Tricia, we started this podcast about a year ago to talk about food and music. So I always thought of you as the perfect guest. And I mean you can do food and music better than just about anyone, so I can't tell you how excited I am to finally have you on.

TRISHA YEARWOOD: Well, thank you. I mean, anything that says biscuits and jam, I'm pretty much in. So, it's funny, too, because music and food have so many things in common, you know? It's like we all have to eat, and it's so important and smells and tastes. But music is the same. It's like we have to have music to function. For me, you know, I just can't imagine. So it's kind of like they go hand in hand. It kind of makes sense.

SID EVANS: Yeah. I wanted to ask you about that. I mean, do singing for people and cooking for people kind of come from the same place for you?

TRISHA YEARWOOD: Well, I think both of them, no pun intended, feed my soul. And I think—I can't imagine not singing because it's what I truly believe I was born to do. And I didn't realize until I started cooking more and more how, also, that feeds my soul, as well, as my body. You know, just really—cooking is therapeutic. Getting your hands into the dish and making a pie crust from scratch or just having people that you love over and making them a meal that makes them feel good. It's kind of like playing to an audience in the same regard. Maybe the applause is a little less. Sometimes I get applause from my food, but, um, most of the time it's just the yummy sounds that you want that are satisfying. So there's something that is very gratifying in doing it, and there is that ego boost of having people appreciate what you do, too. So it's kind of the same.

SID EVANS: Yeah, you get something back from the audience in both cases, right?

TRISHA YEARWOOD: Yeah, you do. And, and so it is self-serving, but at the same time I enjoy singing for people to bring them joy or comfort or commiseration, whatever that is. And the same thing with food. I mean it's probably no coincidence that food is present at every occasion and used in every emotion from weddings to funerals, you know, so it's definitely something that evokes emotion on both, both sides.

SID EVANS: Well, so, Trisha, you grew up in a little town called Monticello, Georgia. Um, am I saying that the right way?

TRISHA YEARWOOD: You are. You are. Most people don't. You did it right.

SID EVANS: And this is kind of between Atlanta and Macon. And I saw that you went back there when your last album came out in 2019. Clearly, this is a place that means a lot to you. Can you tell me a little bit about what it was like to grow up there and kind of how it shaped you as a person?

TRISHA YEARWOOD: It was a small town, like maybe two thousand people in the town, maybe 10,000 people in the county. I'm not sure, something like that. It's probably still pretty similar. It's a town that is almost like a time capsule. Growing up there as a little kid was kind of like a Mayberry situation, you know? And when you're a teenager, it's difficult because everybody knows you. Everybody knows your business. We had a town square and that was not the place to hang out. My dad always said, "If I catch you on the square..." You know, so we didn't hang out on the square. But you also know that if you were parked on the square, your parents didn't have to see you there. Just "someone" had to see you there. And your parents would know before you got home that you had been on the square, you know? So, I think that that accountability was something that as a teen I didn't love, but I carried with me as an adult, that small-town feeling of responsibility and accountability, which I think it was a great lesson. It's almost like your parents raised you, but also the whole town raises you. So to go back there, even though my parents are gone and my sister and I both live in Tennessee, it's still home. And I still know almost everybody there, you know? So it really is my hometown forever. I'll always be from Monticello, Georgia. That's always going to feel like home for me no matter where I am.

SID EVANS: What are some of the things that make Monticello kind of different from so many other small towns in Georgia and across the South?

TRISHA YEARWOOD: It was one of those towns that stayed the same. And in some ways, that was a struggle for Monticello. They had to figure out ways to kind of reinvent themselves. So the town square went through phases of having stores that weren't open and there wasn't a big retailer like a Wal-Mart. You know, we had a Dairy Queen, which is still there still—my grandmother worked there. Um, but not a lot of fast food places. I mean, it was a place that kind of stayed in that capsule, which presents its own challenges. I think what makes it different is that when you go there, it does give you a sense of childhood. And probably even if you're not from there, you know, you get that sense of this proud town that has all the old buildings and the things that made it quaint also brought notoriety to it. Um, famously, the movie *My Cousin Vinny* was filmed there. if you ever watch that movie, which every time I watch it—

SID EVANS: Oh, yeah.

TRISHA YEARWOOD: —The Sac-O-Suds! The Sac-O-Suds is a real place. And, you know, the courthouse is a real place. And so it was really fun to get to see your hometown in this movie, you know? And there have been several movies made there, actually. So that's one of the things that kind of people look for, "Oh, let's go to this town that's really kind of stayed the same." It's a historic town and they've kept it up. It's a beautiful place. And I tell people, when you grow up with it, you don't appreciate the dogwood-lined streets, driving down the main street to go to church on Sundays. You see them every day, you know? But when you, when you've been gone and you come back, you're like, "Wow, this is really, really special."

(Country music fades in and out)

SID EVANS: So, Trisha, your first cookbook was called *Georgia Cooking in an Oklahoma Kitchen* and it was a huge bestseller. And your mom and your sister Beth are both listed as co-authors. What was the most important thing that your mom taught you about cooking?

TRISHA YEARWOOD: Well, first of all, the book was supposed to have a more succinct title, and it was the working title for the book, because when I first moved to Oklahoma, my niece Ashley and my sister Beth and my mom put together this, book that was called *Georgia Cooking in Oklahoma Kitchen* to send me to Oklahoma with all these Georgia recipes. So that I wouldn't be too lost out there, you know, on the plains. And so it became the working title. And I always thought we'd change it because it's a mouthful, but then once you've been using it the whole time, the publishers were like, "No, we like it. We're going to keep it."

My mom was a really great cook. She was not a chef, obviously, but she seemed to just know everything. Like if you had a question about the simplest thing from how long to boil eggs for, to how to frost a wedding cake, she had you covered. And she was just fearless. She was not afraid to try stuff in the kitchen. When we were little and she stayed home with us before we could go to school, that's when she started making the wedding cakes and birthday cakes and things for people as a way to bring in income for the family on the side. And I mean, I would put her cakes up against any bakery anywhere in the world. She made beautiful cakes—not using fondant, using icing. She made sugar flowers and all that. So for me, she always made me feel like it was OK to not know everything and to ask questions and also just try it. What's the worst thing that can happen? And you fail a lot, but then you finally get there. And I think that was a great lesson for me, because in this world I am not a chef. I'm a home cook, like my mom. So to not feel intimidated and to feel like I bring something to the table, no pun intended, even though I don't have all that classical training—although that is one of my things I would really like to do, is I'd like to go to culinary school someday. Just to learn all this stuff, because I see these guys talking about, "Oh, I brought the spice that was first originated in the—" I don't know any of those things. So I think it'd be really fun to learn that stuff.

SID EVANS: Well, you know, that's a great lesson, even today. There's so many cooking shows out there and it's so easy to get intimidated and say, "Oh, I'll never be able to cook like that." But you really just have to kind of carry on and try things, right?

TRISHA YEARWOOD: Yeah. And I think that's always, too, nice to have somebody like me, who says "I'm a home cook like you are." So, you don't have to know everything to be able to make good food. And sometimes my mom's motto was: "Simple is best." When we were writing the first book, my editor, who was wonderful and taught me how to write, she would say, "We need exotic spices." And I'm like, "Salt and pepper are our exotic spices. If we're feeling crazy, we might put some garlic powder in something. But pretty much this is what it's going to be." And I think that was just that lesson for my mom of keeping it simple. And I love it when somebody who says they can't cook comes to me because I'm like, "Go to the first book, make the meatloaf. It has four ingredients. You can make this." And when you do, you'll be like, I made that. And then you will have the confidence to try the next thing. And maybe that will lead you down the path to trying the more complicated things. But, everybody can cook. I believe that.

SID EVANS: So I want to ask you a little more about her cakes. I know that you have a tabletop collection with Williams-Sonoma, and I love that you named it the Gwendolen collection after your mom. Tell me a little bit about her cake designs and how they inspired that whole idea.

TRISHA YEARWOOD: My sister and I talked about this a lot because we were the little kids who would be carrying the cake in pieces, the wedding cakes to the wedding. And we're young and we don't want to mess up the cake. And we're in the back seat of the station wagon, you know, holding these cakes. And we just thought she just was magic and we didn't really know how, how it happened. And years later, just a few years ago, we were going through some of her things and we found these catalogs where she would order a lot of her pans from and some of the things that she used, some of the columns she would use, you know, for wedding cakes and found these sketches. And we went, of course she would have drawn what she was going to make before she made it. If she needed to go to a wedding and didn't have a dress, she would draw what she wanted to wear and she would make the dress and wear it that afternoon to the wedding. I mean, she was, she was truly magical. So we took those sketches and, and we're talking to Williams-Sonoma about doing something—what was the next thing because we've done a lot of things together. And their chief designer, Wayne, took these drawings and made this pattern out of her sketches. Nothing's altered. And these are her sketches and made them into this beautiful dinnerware. And I think for me, of all the things that I've been involved in, I'm most proud of this because it's her. it's such a great tribute to her. It's, I believe, a hundred percent—she would have loved it. And it's elegant like her and classy like her and such a true representative. Um, so I'm, I couldn't be more proud.

SID EVANS: That's so great. so, Tricia, I want to know what a typical weeknight would have looked like in your kitchen growing up. did you and your sister cook together back then or was that something that came later?

TRISHA YEARWOOD: My mom was a third grade school teacher. So we would get home every day at 3:15, and sometimes later if we had to stop by the grocery store after school. And she had her Thermos that she would always pour herself a cup of lukewarm coffee and start with that and take a minute for herself. And that was it. Then it was on and it was a home-cooked meal. I don't remember a night that we did not have a home-cooked meal on the table. And that was every night. And my dad would cook on the weekends. He was a good cook. He would either grill steaks or he'd make big breakfasts on Saturday, but she always did the bulk of it.

And for Beth and I—Beth was three years older than me. So Beth would sometimes help her in the kitchen more than I would. My job was usually setting the table and cracking the ice cubes for tea. And also I was the one who was closest to the kitchen, even though we had the '70s passthrough from the kitchen to the dining room. If something was missing from the table, if we didn't have salt and pepper or we didn't have ketchup or whatever we didn't have, Trisha got sent to the kitchen for it because I was closest. And Beth cooked a little bit more than me because she was older.

But it really wasn't until I moved to Nashville at 19 and got an apartment. I was in school and I was homesick. I missed home. I missed my mama's cooking. I'd never had a vegetable out of a can because we had a garden. And I called home just saying, "Tell me how to make something. Like I need a connection to home." And it was potato salad, which was—it's very Southern, but it was just—and there's a lot of different versions. Hers was very simple, four ingredients. I made it and I cried because it tasted like hers. And also I could do it. And I think that was honestly, even though I was a late bloomer, that was the beginning for me of going, this is way beyond just being able to cook for yourself. It is about that. But it's also about what it does for you emotionally, how it connects you when you can't physically be together. And that has really been the whole theme of—especially, since my parents are gone—doing the books, doing the cooking show is a way to keep them alive and with us through their food, through making things that they made. It's been such a wonderful gift for Beth and me to be able to honor them in this way.

SID EVANS: What was the secret to that potato salad?

TRISHA YEARWOOD: Well, I think the secret was more mayonnaise. Everything morphs over time. And now I put a little mustard in it, which I think she would not be about that, but it was, it was just—the secret's really potatoes, you know? It's just potatoes, mayonnaise, salad, pickles, boiled eggs chopped up, and salt and pepper. It doesn't get much more basic than that. And just so good. Oh, I'm gonna have to make it now that we talked about it.

(Biscuits and Jam Theme begins - Fiddler's Barn on Epidemic Sound)

Voice Over from SID EVANS: We'll have more from Trisha Yearwood after the break.

BREAK

(Biscuits and Jam Theme begins - Fiddler's Barn on Epidemic Sound)

Voice Over from SID EVANS: Welcome back to Biscuits and Jam from Southern Living. I'm Sid Evans, and I'm talking with country superstar Trisha Yearwood.

SID EVANS: Well, Tricia, I wanted to turn to music for a second and ask you, who was someone that made a huge impression on you as an artist when you were growing up? Was there someone that inspired you, either because of their voice or their career or the way they carried themselves?

TRISHA YEARWOOD: Hands down Linda Ronstadt. I discovered her when I was probably 9 or 10, and I think it was, "When Will I Be Loved?" came out like '74, somewhere in there, and it was everything. You know, she was this young independent woman. She had this big voice and I, I was a very dramatic young girl because I just was wrapping my arms around these heartbreak songs, having never had any heartbreak at all, you know, in my life. But it was all so dramatic. She made you feel like she was living every word. I play piano and I would get every Linda Ronstadt songbook. And I would sit at the piano

when I would get home from school and play these songs and then I would be really depressed as a teenager will be, because I'm like, I can't hit those notes. I'll never be Linda Ronstadt. I'll never be that good. She was the driving force that I think taught me how to, how to sing, how to belt out a lyric, how to feel the songs. She embodied everything that I wanted to be and still does.

I mean, the first time I got to meet her, I was in my twenties and I had a record deal. and she knew my music, which freaked me out. And when I met her, I just told her all this. I was just telling her how important she was. And she made some compliment to me about my phrasing and how I phrase lyrics. And I'm like, well, I just copy you. I do what I think you would do. I love how even you could, you could feel the crack in her voice if it ever happened. You could hear the breathing in between the phrases. And now with modern technology, a lot of times engineers want to cut those breaths out. And I'm like, no, no, no. You want to hear the artist breathe. So she's just, she's just my hero.

SID EVANS: Do y'all still have a relationship?

TRISHA YEARWOOD: We do, and it's very strange to call your hero your friend. You know, when you meet your heroes, you kind of don't want to sometimes because you're just afraid what if they're not everything I want them to be. But she's so intelligent. She's so kind. I think she knows how important it is to me. I still have to get past the fact that she's Linda Ronstadt, but she is also my friend. And, as hard as that is to say, I'm so grateful because it's so wonderful to get a chance to actually—I mean, she was a mentor to me and didn't know it. So to get to be her friend now and to have that relationship is so, so special to me.

SID EVANS: Hmm. That's wonderful. So, Trisha, this marks the 30th anniversary of your song, "She's in Love With the Boy", which was really like a rocket that took you into the stratosphere. And I'm just wondering if you can take me back to 1991 for a minute and tell me what it was like for you when that song came out, and what does that song mean to you now?

TRISHA YEARWOOD: You know, I, I mentioned that I have been wanting to sing since I was 5. So for me, I just never had a backup plan, and that first single came out when I was 26. So I, I really did spend over 20 years trying to figure out how am I going to do this, and growing up in a small town with not really an outlet for this, I didn't know. I mean, I just thought, I have to be able to do this because I want it so badly. Surely God's not going to give me this desire and I can't find a way to do it. So when, "She's in Love With the Boy" came out at the time, Reba, who was my hero in country music, had had several albums out before a song really took off. So I was not expecting the first single to do anything except maybe introduce me to the country music audience. And we made a video for it. And it went to the video channel, to CMT, two weeks before the single came out. And radio stations started getting calls from people who are seeing the video wanting to hear the song. And I think that was the first indication that I thought, oh, this is going well. People are going to know and it's going to be a nice little introduction. And then the second single has this guy named Garth Brooks on the harmony. And that's going to be the one that's going to really just, you know—I, I just don't think—I was thinking, if we have a top 40 song, I'll be happy.

And now, if anybody says, "We knew that was going to be a hit," they don't. You don't know. You just, you just hope for the best. And then it kept climbing and kept climbing. It became a runaway train that you're just trying to hold onto. And then the fear becomes, "OK, she's going to be a one-hit wonder, have this huge song and never be heard from again." I'm going to be a trivia question. So then the pressure to continue. You're lucky if you get one song like that, I would count, "How Do I Live" as one. I would count "Walkaway Joe" as one. I think you're lucky to have enough of that magic that happens enough that you get to sustain a career. Amazed, that I'm sitting here 30 years later. I'm amazed it's been 30 years. I'm also amazed that I still get to do what I love to do. But yeah, I think that first year when I see it in my head, it's just going by like a train. It's going by so fast. You're just trying to be in the moment. And it's hard because it, it took us all by surprise.

SID EVANS: Well, I want to fast forward a little bit and talk about a song on your most recent album called "Workin' on Whiskey." I just love this song. And the great Kelly Clarkson joins you on it. I just want to know what it was like to work with her. The two of you seem to have a very strong bond. And having your voices, both of your voices on that song is just incredibly powerful.

TRISHA YEARWOOD: She is hands down one of the best singers I've ever heard in my life. She can sing anything. And for someone who is that good to be so down to earth is just a rare combination. She's so real. She's so funny and she's so good. She must not know she's that good or she wouldn't be that nice, you know? It's like, she's so good. Kelly could make a fencepost sound like a really great singer. But to sing with her and to hear our voices kind of get that buzz together is so much fun.

And it's funny that you mentioned "Workin' on Whiskey," because when I heard that song before I recorded it, I heard—man, Linda Ronstadt would have killed this. I was like Linda Ronstadt would have sung this song; I'm going to sing this song. So it has that vibe to me. So it was so much fun to sing. And then Kelly's voice, if a harmony is good and sometimes it just is the right person for the right song, it really just elevates it. And her vocal on that song just took it to another level. I love that song. It was not a single. I love to sing it live. I'll do it in the show even though it wasn't a single just because I want to sing it. I wish Kelly would just come out and, you know, live on the bus and sing it with me every night. But, maybe someday.

SID EVANS: Do you feel like singing and just that little beginning to that song?

TRISHA YEARWOOD: (Singing) "Never love the way that I love you. You left a mark like a old tattoo..." I started it too low. "And I don't know what I'm going to do without... you." I love that song. I'm going to make potato salad and sing that song when we hang up.

("Workin' on Whiskey" begins to play - "The more I think I'm moving on / I start seeing things I shouldn't see / And wanting things I shouldn't be / And wrestlin' with the memory that won't let me go / I've tried and tried to give you up / But once you've had the strong stuff / Nothin' else will be enough / So I'll be workin' on whiskey")

SID EVANS: Well, so, Tricia, you've got a lot going on. You have a new cookbook coming out that's called, *Trisha's Kitchen: Easy Comfort Foods for Friends and Family*. It sounds great. The recipes in it sound great. And, this one was also a partnership with your sister, Beth. How are you and Beth different as cooks? I mean, is one of you a little more scientific or is one of you a little more into spice or sweets? How do you all work together?

TRISHA YEARWOOD: Like, if you could imagine us both in the kitchen, her kitchen's clean and there's flour on the floor in my kitchen. Like she's going to measure everything. She's the older sister, right? She's the responsible one. So she's going to measure everything exactly. She's going to weigh her pans for her three cakes to make sure they all are exactly the same weight before she puts them in the oven. I'm a little looser when it comes to that kind of stuff. And so she's more my mom in that regard. My mom was very precise. My dad, like if he wasn't making a mess, he wasn't cooking. And I'm a little bit more like him. So it's a really good yin and yang for the book because she can be my voice of reason when I need to be reined in a little bit. And I can encourage her to like, "Hey, don't don't worry so much about that, like, let's let it go." So I think she and I are a really good combination. And the thing that we most share that is so wonderful are the memories that we have of our family that nobody else has, you know? So in writing this book, and telling the stories, she has memories of stories just being that few years older than me that I don't remember. So it's also wonderful every time we collaborate to kind of write those stories down and she'll tell me something that I'm like, "Ah, I didn't know that." So it's such a joy. And she's my person. We have that shared experience that siblings have that nobody else has. And so I can't imagine doing a book without her.

SID EVANS: Do you all ever have any sibling battles over what's going to go in the book and what's not?

TRISHA YEARWOOD: No, not really. I mean, she's very easygoing and I'm very controlling. So it's, it's kind of, it's kind of easy. She's just my favorite person because she's so good and she's such a nice person and she has such a great spiritual side. She's my hero without being judged—she's not judgmental, even though Lord knows she should judge me. She's just the best of everything. So, yeah, we don't really. I mean, we collaborate, but I'm usually the one going, "Hey, what about this?" Or "Hey, do you think this is right?" And she's the one that will help me—we're both grammar police, so we help each other make sure we're, you know, getting everything right. And, I just know when the book gets turned in, if her eyes are on it, it's going to be fine.

SID EVANS: So many of the recipes in your cookbooks and on your show are about entertaining and cooking for a crowd. What's something that you like to make when it's just you and Garth?

TRISHA YEARWOOD: He loves anything that's a casserole, that's in one dish so that he doesn't have to come along for a leftover and put it on a plate. He'll just stick the fork in the casserole dish, you know? So anything like—he asked me about, breakfast lasagna, which is in the new book. He's like, a lot of people make these breakfast casseroles, but can you make like a full on lasagna with the noodles and everything, but just all the layers be things that would be that you'd have for breakfast? And so we worked on that together and tweaked it and gave it more flavor every time. And that was just something

he wanted to do that we now has become a staple in our house. So breakfast is big at our house, even for dinner. So if he's really craving something, it's usually something that has to do with breakfast at any time of day. So that's, that's one thing. And then he also really loves, I'll make up from the first book, I make my mom's Sunday roast beef and rice and gravy. And that was Sunday in our house every, every Sunday. And if we're, if we're having people over or if we're, you know, wanting to impress somebody, he'd be like, "Can you make that roast beef?" And I think he just really wants to have it for himself. But he loves that. And those are things that last. You don't—that's not one meal and done, that's a leftover. That's a cold roast beef sandwich waiting to happen, so that's good.

SID EVANS: I've heard that you've been known to call him Gartha Stewart.

TRISHA YEARWOOD: I have. You know, he will—he makes a really amazing pasta salad and—but even if he makes like a sandwich or something, he'll usually take a picture of it because he's impressed with himself, you know? Or he opens a jar of pickles and he'll be like, well, you know, I have my masters and I have my own cooking show. And he's, you know, he's, he's funny in the kitchen, but he's also just fearless. He's willing to tackle anything and help out and do whatever it takes. So he's a great help in the kitchen.

(Country music fades in and out)

SID EVANS: So, Trisha, we've all come through this past year, and I know that you guys were probably planning lots of tours and stadium shows and all that got canceled. Have you been doing a lot more cooking as a result?

TRISHA YEARWOOD: I would say a lot of things that needed attention, like my closet, things that like the cupboards that need to be cleaned out, things that were like, "oh, I'm going to do this project." Those things were things that got tackled during this time. And as hard as it has been, there's been a lot of good life lessons that have come out of this past year-plus. I cooked a lot at home anyway when we were home. But that's the key phrase, is that we just were—you know, Garth was in the middle of a stadium tour. When I'm doing the cooking show, there's not cooking happening at home because I'm cooking on set and I get home and I go to bed, you know, because I get up early the next day.

So to be home this much, has allowed us to have a routine that—and we, neither one of us are people who ever had a routine. You know, doing this for 30 years, the every day is different. And it's been good in a lot of ways. And the other thing about that is things that we were grateful for, I thought I was always grateful to get to sing for a living and to get to go out and perform. But when those things get taken away from you, the thought that you'll never, ever take them for granted for a second again enters the picture. I'll never take for granted getting to hug my sister because now she's vaccinated and I hope we never forget, you know, the things that we can lose and to, to be really appreciative for those things.

SID EVANS: Yeah, amen to that. Well, Trisha, I've just got one more question, and that is what does it mean to you to be Southern?

TRISHA YEARWOOD: Well, when we started this conversation, we talked about Monticello, Georgia, and how I'll always be a Georgia girl. I'll always be for Monticello, Georgia. For me, what I most think about when I think about being Southern is about my family and how I was raised and how as far as being a person, who loves bigly, loves their family so, so much—and I'm not saying that other parts of the country aren't that way. But in the South, there's such an encouragement to gather. We have a family reunion every time you turn around. And that's where to not lose sight of where you came from, you know, seeing folks that those family reunions that have a whole different life experience than I do and have lived through things that I can't imagine. And that's where the sharing of stories and recipes, that's where that all comes from. I just know that's my experience. Sometimes a slower pace, which is also nice, those are the things that, that I that I take with me as a Southerner. My mother she was a Southern woman in that she didn't, uh, wear her heart on her sleeve. You know, she just didn't talk about things out loud that were that were not, you know, ladylike for a Southern lady. But she had this great sense of adventure. She didn't think that her life was just about raising children and putting food on the table. Although it was about that. She also had a job and she had great girlfriends. And she traveled the world with me. Being southern is all of those things. And also how to make a good biscuit, which I think is really important.

SID EVANS: That's the truth. Trisha Yearwood, thank you so much for being on Biscuits and Jam.

TRISHA YEARWOOD: Thank you very much for having me. I so enjoyed talking to you.

(Biscuits and Jam Theme begins - Fiddler's Barn on Epidemic Sound)

Voice Over from SID EVANS: Thanks for listening to my conversation with Trisha Yearwood. Her new cookbook, *Trisha's Kitchen: Easy Comfort Food for Friends & Family*, is available Sept. 28th, and you can pre-order it now from TrishaYearwood.com.

Join me for our next episode with Nashville bluesman Keb' Mo'.

KEB' MO': When I went to church, the music and the food, that's where it's thick, you know? And what's really great about it is like, you know, Aretha Franklin walks into Muscle Shoals expecting to find Black musicians and figuring all those guys were white. So that tells you it was Southern culture. It wasn't white or Black culture. It was Southern culture.

Voice Over from SID EVANS: *Southern Living* is based in Birmingham, Alabama, and this podcast was produced and edited in Nashville, Tennessee. If you like what you hear, please consider leaving us a review on Apple Podcasts or telling your friends about the program. You can find us online at southernliving.com, and subscribe to our print publication by searching for *Southern Living* at www.magazine.store.

Biscuits and Jam is produced by Heather Morgan Shott, Krissy Tiglias and me, Sid Evans, for Southern Living. Thanks also to Ann Kane, Jim Hanke, Danielle Roth, Andy Bosnak, Matt Sav and Rachael King at Pod People.

We'll see you back here next week for more Biscuits & Jam!