Did I hear we can get seconds?

When in South Africa, eating at Aunt Rachel’s is a must! When we first heard that we were going to Rachel’s house for lunch, it was described to us as, “the best meal we’ll eat in South Africa” and “a yummy home-cooked meal comprised of many different types of foods.” When we got to Rachel’s house, she prepared a spread that included rice, pumpkin, sweet and sour chicken, green beans, beets, onion and pepper-based salsa, and beef stew. I have included a picture of the food below. While I am a picky eater, it is important for me to expand my palate. Therefore, I tried everything that Rachel had to offer. The rice was typical but made for a great side. I’m not a big pumpkin fan but enjoyed it today because it was sweet and flavorful. The chicken was super juicy and easy to cut, making it my favorite part of the meal. The green beans tasted so fresh! The beets were a deep purple and rich with flavor. I only had a bit of the salsa because it was spicy, but it was definitely worth it to try. Lastly, the beef stew was hearty and tender, mixed with carrots and potatoes. This was one of our first true South African meals, and it did not disappoint. I truly felt the love that Rachel shared with us through her food and her home. We all left Aunt Rachel’s house full and excited about the rest of our trip!

Today was a special day for my family because we got to go to my Aunt Rachel’s house for lunch. The occasion was my grandmother’s birthday. I usually just have to eat bread and a gross soup every day, but when we go to Aunt Rachel’s, we get a whole feast. The walk to her house felt like three years, but mama told me it was only a 30-minute walk. When we got to her house, we sat down around a big, long table. My grandparents were there, as well as Aunt Rachel, Uncle Martin, and my cousin Claudia. Aunt Rachel already had most of the food prepared and had begun to set it out along the buffet table. Even though I was super hungry, I let Aunt Rachel and the adults get their food first because it is respectful. After everybody had gotten their food and sat down, we said grace and then started to eat. The flavors of the delicious foods exploded in my mouth. I ate slowly because I never wanted this meal to end. We had rice, pumpkin, sweet and sour chicken, green beans, beets, onion and pepper-based salsa, and beef stew. My favorite part was the chicken and rice. Mama always tells me to finish all my food in order for it to not go to waste, so I did. I even ate the beets and pumpkin even though I didn’t like it. Eating traditional South African food is important to me so that I can be in touch with my heritage. It is not often that we get a special treat like my lunch today at Aunt Rachel’s, so I was sure to take in every second. While the food was good, the fact that my whole family was there made the day super special. Love and laughter filled the house, a feeling that I wish I could bottle up to take with me to use whenever I am feeling down. I love going to Aunt Rachel’s and will always cherish my time there.