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The following is an excerpt from my food blog, “The Alchemist” (<http://thealchemistblog.wordpress.com>), a site which combines helpful how-to’s and technical instruction with humor and storytelling. The tone is friendly, funny, and casual. This post was taken from a post entitled “Crab Rangoon,” published December 8, 2008, on Wordpress.com:

*...Christmastime always makes me think of Chinese food. I know what you’re thinking—wow, her family probably never cooked; they probably ordered in Chinese for the holiday—poor Gen! Au contraire, my sweet poppets, au contraire...you see, I came from a family that dedicated itself to crafting the perfect holiday. Thanksgiving with 15 sides (3 different kinds of jello, but of course), Christmas with a family-style spread that required an extra 8-foot folding table to accommodate the selection, and a traditional Polish Christmas Eve Wigilia meal the night before—all for our humble family of five. So where does the Chinese food fit in? Well, somewhere between my mother’s 3 AM panic attack over getting the house clean enough, my brother’s emotional breakdown (“so many dishes...:::sob::: they just keep coming! Where do they come from?”), and my impromptu nap at the kitchen table (vegetable peeler still in hand, five pounds of potatoes down, only three more to go!), we all got hungry. My aunt would pull out the Chinese takeout menu, and forty bucks later, we were a united front once again, happily chowing down on Moo Goo something-or-other and wondering how the hell we had ended up in this gelatinous, technicolored, gumdrop-studded, whirling, twirling gingerbread house of horrors. That, my friends, is why, as I was decking my halls and ho-ho-ho-ing my way through my cookie list, I was hit by an overwhelming—nay—insatiable desire for Crab Rangoon. Enter today’s recipe...*

*...What you must remember is that no holiday is perfect-not even Martha’s, I’m sure. Perfect holidays may make the cover of “Better Homes...” but they rarely make memories, and I’m pretty damned sure they don’t conjure up cravings for Crab Rangoon. So indulge your mother’s compulsive need to include the three primary jello colors. Peel potatoes ’til you pass out. Embrace the dog when he eats the blinking angel tree-topper (he looks kinda cute with his tummy periodically lighting up like that). The love will get you through. If not, there’s always the nog\*.*

*\*Recipe for life-saving nog most likely forthcoming.*

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