

**Meredith O'Brien's Dysfunctional Family Bingo Card, 2008**

	<b>B</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>G</b>	<b>O</b>
<b>1</b>	At least one relative drinks too much and goads another relative into a political argument.	Your sister brings her family's large dog to Thanksgiving. Someone at the gathering is allergic to dogs and insists she needs to spend the day on the back porch, while your 4-year-old pulls the dog's tail and gets bitten on the hand.	You forgot to bring an extra outfit for your toddler whose diaper has just exploded. You listen to a half-hour of tongue-clucking from better prepared parents who had to loan you a too-big jumper for your toddler.	Your kid accidentally breaks the heirloom Waterford crystal candy dish that was left out on the coffee table next to the lit tapered candles, even though you had earlier tried to convince the hostess that, with small children around, these things would be better off out of the kids' reach.	It's Thanksgiving morning. And you just realized you forgot to defrost the turkey. You get to spend the whole day listening to everyone tell you what Rachael Ray would do and wishing you had more wine in the house.
<b>2</b>	Your spouse camps out all day in front of the TV watching football while you're stuck in the 1950s, doing dishes and scheming of ways to make his life a living hell when you get home.	Some older children at the gathering taught your impressionable young child how to spit, the glory of purple nurples and new vocabulary words, like the "F" word.	At least two people at your Thanksgiving dinner have hacking coughs and obviously runny noses, yet they still ask you -- repeatedly -- if they can hold your baby. When you say, "No," you're criticized for being overprotective.	You loathe green bean casserole. Yet, for some reason, one of your aunts has decided it's your favorite holiday dish. She announced to the gathering that she made it just for you and anxiously watches to gauge your reaction as you taste it and try not to gag.	Maxi pads, whose box you had had tucked away in a bathroom cabinet, were taken out by a young nephew who decided to remove the paper strips on the back and stick them all over the bathroom wall in a random pattern.
<b>3</b>	While watching the turkey as it's lowered into a turkey fryer in the back yard, a male relative becomes obsessed with deep-frying something else, like a whole potato, and, in his haste to plop potatoes into the pot of boiling oil, some of it splashes out and starts a small fire.	A relative hovers over you in the kitchen while you're cooking, asking you why you're doing "that" every 30 seconds and telling you how she used to cook, "Back when women cooked and actually knew what they were doing."	<b>FREE SPOT</b>	Your children want nothing to do with Thanksgiving dinner. They gorge on crackers, Chex Mix and ice cream while repeatedly sidling up to you and whining that the food here "is yucky."	It gets heated when several members of the family cannot agree on the best, fastest route to take from this location to the mall.
<b>4</b>	A relative gets food poisoning from the tuna casserole your great aunt made. People jockey for the chance to flee the premises and spend time in the Emergency Room so they don't have to have her tapioca pudding.	Parents allow their young their kids to run all over your house with food in their hands -- dropping crumbs everywhere and stomping them into the rugs -- while leaving sticky fingerprints on the walls.	Your mother suggests that you join her in starting a diet in the new year, noting that your pants are getting "a bit snug" and asking you if you've ever heard the term "muffin top."	Your uncle has changed the channel on the TV in the family room to HBO which is showing the "Godfather" trilogy. In full view of the grade schoolers in attendance.	During what was supposed to be a "fun" game of touch football, one adult slams his 10-year-old nephew to the ground in order to score a touchdown. When the kid objects, he tells him that today's kids are "soft."
<b>5</b>	A male relative drags you outside and points out everything that's wrong with your house, from the roof and gutters, to the window screens and chimney.	Your spouse spends approximately 3/4 of the time checking the BlackBerry and making calls while you're stuck listening to stories about your uncle's latest medical exam and the antics of your aunt's cats.	You didn't realize that, despite the long sweater you're wearing, when you lean over in those pants everyone can see your underwear. This is pointed out to you by your mother-in-law who shouts, "We can all see your thong underwear ya know!"	Utterly defeated, you wind up ordering take-out for your guests after your oven stopped working. You and your spouse then got into a colorful argument in front everyone over why you didn't just buy a new stove last week when it was first acting up.	At least one person demands to know where the canned cranberry sauce is, even though you've made homemade cranberry sauce. He also wants to know where the plate of pickles is.

Image credit: Meredith O'Brien/Picket Fence Post, 11/24/08.