PERFECTION IS OVER-RATED

By

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Do you secretly try to re-enact a *Better Homes & Gardens* holiday? You know, one with all the beautiful decorations, delicious food, elegant parties, and smiling families gathered around an elegantly set table.

It's easy to succumb to the pressure of making the holidays perfect, when often they're anything but.

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Pictured here is the Dutch pastry, Banket (bahn-ket). It consists of a delicious buttery crust wrapped around an almond-paste filling. I salivate just thinking about it. Next to my husband, it's my favorite thing about the Dutch.

I finally learned how to make Banket. It is labor-intensive--two days of work, resulting in a kitchen dusted in flour and a sink full of baking dishes. Worth all the effort.

My family loves it, so I make it every year to take to our Thanksgiving celebration. This year I baked early and gently wrapped nine pastry rolls in aluminum foil and put them in the freezer with ominous "keep out" signs on them.

Travel day came. I placed the Banket rolls in a cushioned carrying bag and admonished my husband to carefully place it on top of the suitcases. We handled them like newborn babes.

Wednesday evening before Thanksgiving was the big reveal. Children and grandchildren gathered around the table as I proudly pulled out three of the rolls. The family oohed and aahed, much to my prideful delight. I cut pieces for everyone and glowed, watching them enjoy this time-honored treat from their Dutch ancestry.

Suddenly, I jumped up from my chair and shouted, "I just sat on the Banket!" I had placed the carrying case on my chair and inadvertently sat on them. Had been sitting on them for about five minutes!

Oh, the hoots and hollers and laughter. The kids went crazy and the grandkids thought it was the funniest thing they'd ever seen from Grandma. One videotaped the whole disaster of me alternately crying and laughing.

The Banket? Flat as a pancake. So pitifully thin. All that hard work to make them light and fluffy. All that effort to transport them from Arizona to California. All wasted.

So much for *Better Homes & Gardens*. I'm guessing most everyone has similar instances of disastrous attempts at perfection.

For me, my Banket fiasco was a reminder to tone down the pride and the desire for perfection.

By the way, the kids said from now on, it will be called, "Butt-ket." Our Dutch ancestors are rolling over in their graves. Sigh.