

variations of simnel cake as there are imaginative cooks who add a special "something" from their cupboard. The following recipe is delicious and very easy to make. Try making it to enjoy with your family and friends or to take to church and share at the coffee hour.

1½ Cups flour; ½ teaspoon baking powder; ¼ teaspoon allspice; ¼ teaspoon cinnamon; ¼ teaspoon nutmeg; ¼ teaspoon ground cloves; ¼ Cup softened butter; ¾ Cup sugar; 1½ Cup golden raisins; ¾ teaspoon currants; 1 Cup chopped candied fruits such as cherries, pineapple slices; 2 Tablespoons mixed candied fruit peel; 3 eggs beaten lightly; ½ teaspoon vanilla; 2 Tablespoons brandy

### **Mixing & Baking Directions**

Set the oven 300 degrees. Mix raisins, currants, candied fruits, and candied peel with 1 tablespoon and set aside. Sift remaining flour, baking powder, allspice, cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves and set aside. In a large bowl, cream butter and sugar together until light. Beat in eggs, brandy, and vanilla. A food processor or electric mixer may be used.

Beat in flour mix gradually until just combined. Add the fruit and peel mix to the batter and combine well. Turn the batter into a greased layer-cake pan and press down the surface with the back of a spoon to smooth. Bake 1 ¼ until a cake tester inserted in the Centre comes out clean. Let cool before removing from pan and cool completely before frosting.

### **Frosting**

Beat 1/3 Cup softened butter until light. Gradually beat in 3 ½ Cups confectioner sugar until fluffy.

Beat 2 teaspoons vanilla and about 3 Tablespoons milk until smooth. If it seems too thick, add a little more milk.

# **Simnel Cake**

Simnel cakes are called such because of the fine flour (Latin "simila") they were made of. These cakes were baked and sold on Lenten Sundays in both England and France. The French always baked their cakes muffin-size and drew sugar crosses on the top. These were their equivalent of the English Hot Cross Bun.

In Canada, the simnel cake is especially associated with the 4th Sunday on Lent called *Refreshment*, *Rose*, or *Mothering Sunday*. That day was the older version of our own Mother's Day. Children of all ages were expected to pay a formal visit to their mothers and to bring a simnel cake as a gift. In return, the mothers gave their children a special blessing. This custom was so well-established that employers were required to give servants enough time off to visit out-of-town mothers - provided the trip did not exceed 5 days!

### **First Recipe**

1 ½ Cups butter; 4 Cups flour; 8 eggs; 1 teaspoon salt; 4 Cups sugar  
2/3 Cup grated lemon & orange peel; 2 Cups currants; 8 oz. (or more) almond paste

### **Mixing & Baking Directions**

Cream butter and sugar until smooth. Add eggs singly, beating after each one. Sift and add flour and salt. Dust peel and currants with flour and add half batter, place almond paste on first layer then add the rest of the batter. Line 12" x 15" greased pan with waxpaper. Pour in ½ batter. Bake at 300 degrees for one hour. May be iced if desired. Cut cake into small 1" squares as it is very rich. (Freezes well.) Place twelve almond halves on the top for the Twelve Disciples.

### **Second Recipe**

The following recipe for Simnel Cake varies from the one above in that it has more fruit and spices. Some describe this as a rich plum cake enclosed in a hard dough crust, some say it is a currant cake, and some insist it has a marzipan frosting. There are probably as many

## Mothering Sunday

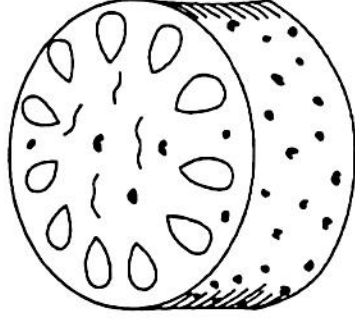
The fourth Sunday in Lent (this year, March 9th) is traditionally called Mothering Sunday, Refreshment Sunday, Laetare Sunday, or mid-Lent Sunday. It is a little "break" during Lent, when the fast need not be so strictly obeyed. It is meant to relieve the penitent, to strengthen them for the rigors of the rest of the season.

In England the custom arose for children who were away at school or in domestic service to make special visits home for this particular Sunday - to return to their mothers and their mother church, or home parish. As becomes a family gathering, special treats were served, in particular, Simnel Cake. Originally a sweet biscuit, it came to be a rich fruit cake with a pastry coloured yellow with saffron, a typical Easter and Spring flavouring. The pastry now is often replaced by marzipan.

We would like to celebrate Mothering Sunday with this traditional treat, so we need your help! If you enjoy baking and would like to bring a cake to the Coffee Times on March 9th, please call the office (942-7465) or speak to Pat, to let us know. We will need 1-2 cakes for the 10:00 service, and at least 2 for the 11:00. A recipe is provided below, or please feel free to use your own if you have one. Thank you very much for your help!

### Simnel Cake

- 2 1/2 cups of cake flour
- pinch of salt
- 1/2 tsp. baking soda
- 1 1/2 cups raisins
- 3/4 cup currants
- 3/4 cup candied cherries, halved
- 1/4 cup candied peel
- 1 cup butter
- 1 cup sugar
- rind of 2 lemons, grated
- 4 eggs, separated
- 3/4 lb. marzipan
- 1/4 cup milk - may be added to make the batter a spreading consistency



Grease and line an 8" spring-form pan with wax paper. Sift flour with salt and baking soda. Mix all fruits together and toss in some of the flour. Cream butter with sugar and lemon rind until light. Beat in egg yolks, one at a time. Beat egg whites until stiff. Stir one half of the flour into butter and sugar. Then add fruit and rest of flour. Fold in beaten egg whites at the very end of the procedure. Place one half of the batter in the prepared tin. Roll a disc of marzipan and place on top (this should be smaller than the time to prevent it from running out during cooking). Cover with remaining batter. Bake at 350 F. for 1 1/2 hours, then at 300 F for 1 1/2 hours. Cover with foil if it begins to brown too much. Ice with a rich butter icing if desired. Top with 11 balls of marzipan, representing the faithful apostles, one in the center, and ten in a circle.

## Mothering Sunday

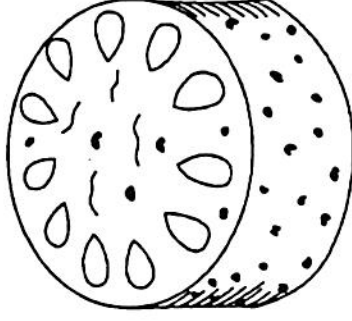
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