The St. Luke Lutheran

Christmas Traditions Cookbook

To our families, whose heritage has given us
the traditions that we celebrate and share

Recipes transcribed and edited
by Suzanne Snedeker
December 2020

St. Luke Lutheran Church
109 Oak Avenue
Ithaca, NY 14850-4729

Introduction

As I write this introduction, there is a dusting of snow on the ground in Ithaca, so much like the dusting of confectioners' sugar that adorns many of the recipes in this volume. I have learned so much about the traditions and family heritages through the stories and recipes submitted for this cookbook. They are delightful. Delightful is a marvelous word. It is an internal "light" that brings a smile to our faces and warms our hearts. And isn't that what the Advent and Christmas season is all about? The light of Christ comes to us in so many ways. And we celebrate the season with what comes out of our kitchens.

More than any other time of year, our connections with family run deep during the Christmas season. And this year, as we weather a pandemic, while we may not physically be with some of our family members this Christmas, we can be with them through the traditions we practice to celebrate the season. Christine Lindemann shared how her family made the Advent season special for her, including making Linzer Torte. Many others told of how they remember the smell of pastries and bread made for their Christmas morning breakfasts. Thank you all for sharing your stories. Reading your recollections was a gift to me.

There are an astounding number of heritages represented in this cookbook, including Norwegian, Swedish, Finnish, German, Latvian, Persian, Parisian, British, and from me, even Italian, and good old fashioned American pies and cookies. Before writing this cookbook, I knew nothing about Norwegian lefse and krumkake, or Latvian pīrāgi. I'll attempt making krumkake on my pizzelle waffle maker, and I've mail-ordered my lefse rolling pin and lefse turning stick. I'm indebted to the marvelous stories and detailed descriptions of how to make lefse from Janelle Alvstad-Mattson, and the photographs of a whole family of krumkake waffle makers from the Nelson family. Everett and I both unearthed our mothers' circa 1950s Spritz cookie makers. Here and there we've included the history of the equipment used to make heritage baked goods, fascinating stories in themselves.

I also discovered that Debbie Antal probably made a small mountain of Royal Icing for all of the gingerbread-style graham cracker houses she assembled for over 20-years. Debbie's hand-lettered directions and diagrams are included in the cookbook.

Cookies represent the largest number of contributed recipes in this cookbook. We have not one, but three recipes for Norwegian Christmas bread, Julekage. Many of us will go back and make some delicacies that we haven't made in a long time, or even try out a few recipes for the first time. I've had a set of unused rosette irons in my baking drawer for years! Time to get into our kitchens!

The original lyrics for "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" were:

> Someday soon we all will be together,
> If the fates allow,
> Until then, we'll have to muddle through somehow.

The last line was changed to: "Until then, hang a star on the highest bough."

We'll, we will have to do both. Muddle through, and hang the star.
And celebrate the season with our Christmas traditions.

Suzanne ("Suz") Snedeker, editor

Contributors

We graciously thank the contributors of stories and recipes for the “St. Luke Lutheran Christmas Traditions Cookbook.” And a special thanks to Everett Nelson and Suzanne Snedeker for providing images of traditional cooking equipment.

Janelle Alvstad-Mattson
Debbie Antal
Beth Dewalt
Diane Conneman
Jo Ann Ekdahl
Maija Hinkle
Judy Jensvold
Christine Lindemann
Dorothea Lindemann
Louise McGee
Nader Mehravari
Kayla Mosebrook
Everett Nelson
Nicole Nelson
Sonja Nelson
Elizabeth (Liz) Peck
Dori Rogers
Grace Snedeker
Suzanne (Suz) Snedeker
Monica Vakiner
Janet Wilhelm
Susan Wohlhueter

Beginnings	Page
Front Cover	1-2
Introduction	3
Contributors	4
Index of Recipes	5-7
Cakes and Tortes	8-22
Bûche de Noël - S Snedeker	9-11
Cranberry Christmas Cake - Hinkle	12
Finnish Sour Cream Cake - McGee	13
Fruitcake - G Snedeker	14-15
Linzer Torte - C & D Lindemann	16-17
Moravian Sugar Cake - Dewalt	18-19
“The Snowman” Ice Cream Cake - S Snedeker	20
Three Kings Lemon Bundt Cake for Epiphany - S Snedeker	21-22
Candy	23-26
Butter Toffee - Alvstad-Mattson	24
Fast and Easy Rolo Turtles - Alvstad-Mattson	25
Xmas Fudge - Ekdahl	26
Cookies	27-48
Almond-Pistachio Macaroons - Mehravari	28
Andes Mint Cookies - Alvstad-Mattson	29
Anzac Biscuits - Alvstad Mattson	30
Chai Sugar Cookies - S Nelson	31
Chewy Ginger Cookies - Mehravari	32
Christmas Date Balls - Conneman	33
Crème de Menthe Squares - Conneman	34
Donna Chiara’s Stelline d’Oro (Star Sugar Cookies) - S Snedeker	35
Hermits - Dewalt	36
Holiday Biscotti with Cranberries and Pistachios - Mehravari	37-38
Holiday Fruit Drops - Vakiner	39
Lemon-Lime Basil Shortbread Cookies - Mehravari	40
Ottilie Schmidt’s Pfeffernüsse (Peppernuts) - D Rogers	41
Pignoli Cookies (Pine Nut Cookies) - S Snedeker	42
Pistachio Amaretti - Mehravari	43
Russian Tea Cakes (Butterballs) - S Snedeker	44
Sand Tarts - Conneman	45
Sephardic Almond Cookies - S Snedeker	46
Spritz Christmas Cookies - E Nelson	47-48

	Page
Holiday Specialties	49-54
Gingerbread Houses - Antal	50-52
Holiday Eggnog - Mosebrook	53
Smorgasbord Rice - Alvstad-Mattson	54
Pancakes and Skillet Breads	55-63
Kruspa (Finnish Oven Pancake) - McGee	56
Pannekake (Norwegian Pancakes) - S Snedeker	57
Pfannkuchen (German Pancake) - S Snedeker	58
Potato Lefse I (Thin Norwegian Flat Bread) - Alvstad-Mattson	59-61
Potato Lefse II (History and Merlin's Recipe) - S Snedeker	62-63
Pastries and Fried Specialties	64-82
"Fattigmann" or Poor Man's Cookies - N Nelson	65-66
Italian Prune-Filed Christmas Cookies - S Snedeker	67-68
Krumkake - S Nelson	69
Krumkake (and Its Italian Cousins) - S Snedeker	70
Nelson Family's Krumkake Irons - E Nelson	71
Pīrāgi Latvian Bacon Rolls (Traditional Recipe) - Hinkle	72-73
Pīrāg Latvian Rolls (Maija's Variations) - Hinkle	74-75
Pizzelle - S Snedeker	76
Rosette Cookies - S Snedeker	77
Rugelach - Peck	77-80
Struffoli - S Snedeker	81-82
Pies and Tarts	83-87
Champion Cherry Pie - Wohlhueter	84
Fluffy Peppermint Pie - Ekdahl	85
Janelle's Pumpkin Pie - Alvstad-Mattson	86
Runeberg Tarts - Mc Gee	87
Yeast Breads and Rolls	88-106
Belva's Christmas Rye Bread - Ekdahl	89-90
Christmas Stollen - S Snedeker	91-92
Houska (Jo Ann's Xmas Bread) - Ekdahl	93-94
Julekage I (Christmas Bread from Norway) - S Snedeker	95-96
Julekage II (Christmas or Yule Bread) - Jensvold	97-98
Julekage III (Christmas Cake) with historic and modern versions - E Nelson	99-100
Philadelphia Butter Buns - Wilhelm	101-102
Portuguese Sweet Bread - Snedeker	103-104

Swedish Limpa Rye Bread - Ekdahl	105-106
Recipe Notes	107-108
Back Cover	109-110

Cakes and Tortes

Bûche de Noël (Chocolate Cake Roll with Cherry Filling)

In honor of the family of Drs. Cathy Wilfert and Sam Katz (see story at the end of the recipe)

Submitted by Suz Snedeker

Source: 1950 "Betty Crocker's Picture Cookbook," (Dessert Section pg. 237 plus information I've written on 4 sticky notes. Chocolate frosting recipe (by Helen Evans Brown) adapted from "The James Beard Cookbook," 1959, reprinted in 1976.

Suz's Story: *"In my email correspondence with the many contributors to this collection of Christmas stories and recipes, Jo Ann Ekdahl and I have had number exchanges about our love of being in the kitchen and baking. In one of her emails, Jo Ann asked, 'I have been trying to find a recipe for a chocolate roll-up cake that can be filled to make a Yule Log. I have tried a couple but they always seem to crack even though I can make the white cake ones okay. Do you happen to have a recipe?'*

Yes, I do! I had nearly forgotten about making the Christmas Chocolate Roll, a version of the traditional French Yule log cake called 'Bûche de Noël.' I've probably made it about six times using the recipe from my mother's 1950 'Betty Crocker's Picture Cookbook.' I also had four sticky notes pasted onto the page on how I made the cake, so this is a 'Me and Betty' recipe. I started making the cake after we moved to Ithaca, because I bought the deep jelly roll pan used for this cake at the beloved, but now gone 'Now You're Cooking' kitchenware store that used to be on the Ithaca Commons. But the first time I had this cake was at the home of Drs. Cathy WIlfert and Sam Katz, and a story about them is at the end of this recipe."

Special Equipment:

A rimmed jelly roll pan,10 ½ x 15 ½-inches that is 1-inch deep (shallower pans will not work)
Parchment Paper
Linen kitchen towel
Double boiler

Cake Ingredients:

6 eggs whites
½ teaspoon cream of tartar
½ cup white granulated sugar
6 egg yolks
½ cup white granulated sugar
4 tablespoons cocoa (I use Droste brand)
4 tablespoons SIFTED all-purpose flour or cake flour
(Note: this is one time when Gold Medal Flour is better than King Arthur Flour)
¼ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Confectioners' sugar (for preparing pan)

Filling Ingredients:

1 jar of cherry jam at room temperature (I use “Bonne Maman” cherry preserves)

Method for Cake:

Preheat oven to 325 degrees F.

Prepare your jelly roll pan by greasing the pan with shortening, then cut parchment paper that is 2 inches wider than the pan so it will go up the sides and overhang by an inch or two. This will help if you have problems getting the cake out of the pan since you can pull up on the overhanding paper to get the cake out of the pan. Grease the bottom and sides of parchment paper that line the pan, but don’t grease the parts of the parchment paper that hang over the edges.

Prepare a kitchen towel by sprinkling the entire surface with confectioners’ sugar.

Separate the eggs. Beat the 6 egg whites and cream of tartar together with an electric mixer until the egg whites hold a point (soft peaks) then gradually add the sugar and continue to beat until the egg whites are glossy and stiff, but not dry. Do not overbeat.

In a separate bowl beat the egg yolks together until they are thick and lemon-colored, usually 3 to 4 minutes.

On a sheet of wax paper, sift the flour, cocoa, and salt together. Set aside. Add the flour mixture to the yolk mixture and beat for about 30 seconds until all the flour is incorporated. Carefully fold the flour-egg yolk mixture into the egg whites using a rubber spatula. Be gentle, as you don’t want to deflate the air in the egg whites.

Spread the batter into the prepared jelly roll pan lined with parchment paper. Bake 20 to 25 minutes in preheated oven just until the surface springs back when lightly touched with a finger. The key to this cake is to NOT overbake the cake. This recipe makes a very airy sponge cake.

As soon as the cake is done, <u>immediately</u> invert the cake onto the towel dusted with confectioners’ sugar (and yes, this makes a mini-sugar tornado). Immediately pull the parchment paper off the cake, and as quickly as you can, spread the surface of the cake with the cherry jam, then carefully roll up the cake starting on a long side with the help of the towel.*

Transfer the cake to a long platter seam side down, and allow to cool. Cut off one end at a 2-inch diagonal to get a “stump” that you will attach with frosting to make the roll look like a log.

Ingredients for Frosting:

6-ounces of chocolate chips, semi-sweet (about half a bag)
½ cup sour cream (slightly heaping)
1 to 2 tablespoons heavy cream
1 pinch of salt
Candied cherries for decoration (optional)

Method for Frosting:

After allowing the cake to cool to room temperature, make the frosting. Melt the chocolate chips, in the top of a double boiler. After the chips are melted, add the sour cream, heavy cream, and a pinch of salt.

You want to use the frosting while it is still warm because it will harden as it cools, so now work quickly to frost the cake.

Take a blob of frosting and use it to stick the stump on to the log (on the top of the log about 3 inches from one of the ends). Frost the cake log and stump with chocolate frosting, making long horizontal “lines” in the frosting to resemble the bark of a tree.

Refrigerate the cake. This is when you are lucky if you have a regular “freezer on top” frig so you can have room for this big cake.

Just before serving, you can decorate the cake with candied cherries. Other recipes make “meringue” mushrooms dusted with cocoa. I’ve never done this, but I’ve seen this (see story).

This makes a total mess out of your kitchen, but it will be worth it, because when you bring this cake into the dining room on Christmas day (or post pics on your favorite social media) everyone will say “wow.” Makes 10-12 servings

Note: the original Betty Crocker directions have you roll the cake with the sugar coated towel, cooling the cake, then prior to serving you unroll the cake, fill it with whipped cream, then reroll it. I’ve never been brave enough to use this method, since you risk cracking the cake with rerolling.

The End Story

The very first time I ever saw a Bûche de Noël cake was when we lived in North Carolina where Jeff was doing a fellowship in Infectious Diseases at Duke University. His mentor was Dr. Cathy Wilfert, a pediatrician who pioneered using treatments to prevent AIDS in children of mother’s with AIDS, especially in Africa. She saved tens of thousands of lives, and we mourn her recent passing (September 2020). Her husband, Dr. Sam Katz, who is now 97 years old, was on the team that developed the measles vaccine that came into common use in 1974. It is estimated that this vaccine saves 6 million lives a year, and if you do the math, this means 276 million lives have been saved. It is humbling in this age of COVID19 to know how those that invent vaccines and treatments to infectious diseases can save so many lives.

To backtrack, Cathy Wilfert and her daughters were amazing cooks and bakers. When we went over to the Katz-Wilfert house for a party, they had a Bûche de Noël for dessert complete with the meringue mushrooms. I’d never seen anything like it in my life. My version is somewhat simpler since at most I decorate with a few glazed cherries. Jo Ann, thanks for asking for the chocolate roll recipe. It let me remember the first time I had this cake at Cathy and Sam’s house. A wonderful memory.

Cranberry Christmas Cake

Submitted by Maija Hinkle

Maija's story: "This is a sure favorite for every larger family gathering, especially in the fall and at Christmas, when cranberries become available. They are very easy to make and are scrumptious."

Ingredients:

3 large eggs
2 cups white granulated sugar
¾ cup (1 ½ sticks) butter, softened
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 cups all-purpose flour
12 ounces fresh (or frozen) cranberries

Method:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

With an electric mixer, beat the eggs with the sugar on high speed until slightly thickened and light in color, about 5-7 minutes. The mixture should almost double in size. The eggs work as your leavening agent in this recipe, so do not skip this step. This mixture should form a ribbon when you lift the beaters out of the bowl. Add the butter and vanilla extract; mix for 2 more minutes. Stir in the flour until just combined. Add the cranberries and stir to mix throughout.

Spread batter in a buttered 9 x 13-inch pan. Bake in preheated oven for 40-50 minutes, or until very lightly browned and a toothpick inserted near the center of the cake comes out clean.

Let cool completely before cutting into small slices. Enjoy!

Yield: 16 servings

Finnish Sour Cream Cake

Submitted by Louise Kujala McGee

Louise's story: "Made this cake for Finnish Smörgasbord."

Special equipment: Angel Food cake pan

Ingredients:

3 cups sifted all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon ground cardamom
2 large eggs, beaten
2 cups sour cream
2 cups white granulated sugar
2 to 3 drops almond extract

Additional softened butter and granulated sugar to coat the interior of the cake pan

Method:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

In a medium bowl, sift the flour with the baking soda, salt, cinnamon, and cardamom. In a large bowl, combine the eggs, sour cream, sugar, and almond extract, and blend well. Gradually add the flour mixture to the egg mixture and beat until the batter is smooth.

Pour batter into a buttered Angel Food cake pan that has been dusted with granulated sugar.

Bake in preheated oven for one hour or until a cake tester (toothpick, clean broom straw, or metal cake tester) comes out clean.

Cool cake in the pan for 10 minutes before turning the cake out of the pan. Cool on a wire rack.

Fruitcake

Submitted by Grace Snedeker (Jeff's mother, Suzanne's mother-in-law)

Suz's story: *"I asked my mother-in-law for this fruit cake recipe. She says she got it from the back of a label from a jar of mincemeat. Grace's maiden name is Wayman, so there is British and a bit of Irish heritage from her side of the family. Despite the wealth of jokes about Christmas fruitcakes, this one is a keeper. It's a large recipe suited to making mini-loaves to give away as gifts. One of my favorite Christmas stories is Truman Capote's 'A Christmas Memory' and one of the classic lines is 'Oh my, it's fruitcake weather'. Let the baking begin!*

Notes from Grace on baking pans: This cake can be baked in a 9-inch tube pan, 10-inch fluted tube pan (or Bundt cake pan), 3 loaf pans (8 ½ x 5-inch size), or 12 mini-loaf pans (2 ½ x 4 ½ - inches). All should be greased and floured or greased and lined with parchment paper.

Ingredients:

2 ½ cups unsifted all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
2 large eggs, slightly beaten
1 28-ounce jar of mincemeat (or 2 boxes mincemeat, reconstituted*)
1 14-ounce can sweetened-condensed milk
(or 1 can evaporated milk plus 1 cup white sugar)
2 cups (1-lb) of candied fruit **
½ cup raisins, dried cranberries or other dried fruit of your choice
1 cup coarsely chopped walnuts
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
¼ teaspoon ginger
1 cup of an alcohol (rum, whiskey, apricot cordial, brandy, or peach schnapps)

Method:

Preheat oven to 300 degrees F. Prepare you pans (should be greased and floured).

In a medium bowl, combine flour and baking soda. Put aside. In a very large bowl combine rest of ingredients except alcohol and flour mixture. This is a heavy and large amount of batter so use a strong big spoon to mix the ingredients. Add flour mixture and stir until completely blended. Pour batter into pan of choice (see above for choices).

Bake in preheated oven for the times according to the size of the pan:

- For tube pans, bake 1 hour and 50 minutes or until toothpick comes out clean.
- For large loaf pans, bake approximately 1 hour and 10 minutes
- For mini-loaf pans that are 2/3 full, bake for 35-40 minutes

Always use a cake tester or wooden toothpick to check doneness; when inserted into the center of the cake and withdrawn, it should be dry, and the cake should be a medium brown color.

Cool baked cakes for 15 minutes, then remove from pan(s). Cool cakes completely before putting in storage containers.

Store fruitcake in closed container to age. (Like in a cookie tin or plastic container with a good seal.) The first day drizzle about ¼ cup of alcohol over the large cake. Several days later, repeat. Use your own judgement on amount to pour over smaller sizes. If making smaller loaves or muffins, you can vary the alcohol on some of them to slightly change the flavor if you like.

If storing the cake awhile, you should occasionally check it to see if it still seems slightly moist. If not add a little more alcohol to keep it from drying out. Fruit cake keeps for months and I usually refrigerate what is left after the holidays. Cakes can also be frozen. It is also good without alcohol if you wish to omit it but I don't know how long the cake will keep.

Other directions from Grace:

***To Reconstitute Dried Mincemeat:** Crumble by hand or use spoon to break up pieces in a saucepan pan. Add ½ cup of water or fruit juice and bring to a boil over medium heat and stir while bringing it to a boil. COOL the mincemeat before mixing it into the cake batter. I once reconstituted the mincemeat with a 10-ounce jar of pineapple pie filling and ½ cup apple juice and it was very good.

****Other Candied Fruit Options:** Besides the traditional mix of dried fruit, I like to add candied pineapple and candied cherries. I cut them up into smaller pieces. You can then use the smaller size of the candied fruit (I think it is 8-ounces). I have been rather casual about how much fruit I add and a little more than the recipe calls for is alright.

Linzer Torte

Submitted by Dorothea and Christine Lindemann

Source: Dorothea Lindemann, Christine's mother

Christine's story: *"As a German tradition, my mother and father made Christmas very special for me and my two older brothers while growing up. It began on the first Sunday in Advent. In the morning, we would look for our 'Shoe,' a slipper that each of us put on the windowsill Saturday night and that the Advent Angel filled overnight with goodies such as an orange, chocolates, cookies, and little gifts. All the Advent calendars were opened at this time. We had coffee and cake in the afternoon. My mother would bake something like Linzer Torte or poppyseed cake and lots of Christmas cookies. We also had Lebkuchen (German specialty cookies) from Nuernberg which my Uncle would send from Germany every year.*

As part of tradition, every Sunday in Advent we would light another candle on the Advent wreath and listen to German Christmas Music (especially German children choirs). When the fourth candle was lit, we knew it was Christmastime! On our Christmas tree we had real candles that we lit Christmas Eve. We would go to St. Luke Lutheran Church for the Christmas candle-light service. When we came home, we would have a light meal of the finest food! Then we would light the candles on the Christmas tree and only then open the gifts! We could stay up as late as we wanted. On Christmas Day we would have a nice Christmas dinner."

Ingredients:

1 ½ cups all-purpose flour
1 ½ teaspoons baking powder
2/3 cup white granulated sugar
½ teaspoon ground cloves
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon (or more)
¼ lb. (4-ounces) ground almonds or hazelnuts
1 egg white and ½ of an egg yolk (save the other half of the egg yolk)
½ cup (1 stick) butter, softened
Raspberry jam (with seeds), or apricot jam
1 teaspoon milk
Whipped cream for serving

Method:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

On a clean surface, mix the dry ingredients together (flour, baking powder, sugar, cloves, cinnamon, and ground nuts). Mix the egg white and egg yolk together, and add to and mix with the flour mixture. Top with pieces of the butter, and knead until the dough is smooth. Divide the dough in half. Roll out one piece of the dough, and spread it so it will fit into the greased bottom of a spring-form cake pan. Spread the jam evenly over the dough.

Roll out the remaining piece of dough, cut into ½-inch strips, and layer the strips of dough over the jam layer in a crisscross pattern, trimming the ends so the strips fit the spring-form pan. Mix the remaining ½ egg yolk with 1 teaspoon of milk, and brush the mixture over the strips of dough.

Bake in preheated oven for 30 minutes. Do not over bake.

Serve with whipped cream.

You can make a double recipe and use the extra dough to make round or star-shaped cookies.

Moravian Sugar Cake

Submitted by Beth Dewalt

Beth's story: *"Part of my dad's family (the Kachlines, my dad's maternal grandparents' family) was from Nazareth, Pennsylvania, which is one location where the Moravians settled. When he would visit them growing up, having this cake was always a treat. As I grew up, we enjoyed the cake thanks to family and friends. A few years ago, I got the treasured recipe, and now, we enjoy the cake as part of Christmas breakfast."*

Special Equipment: You will need three 9-inch square cake pans to make this recipe.

Ingredients for Cake:

2 pkgs active dry yeast
1 cup warm water (105-115 degrees F.)
1 cup white granulated sugar
1 teaspoon salt
2 large eggs, well beaten
1 cup (2 sticks) butter, melted
1 cup hot mashed potatoes (unseasoned)
5 ½ to 6 ½ cups sifted all-purpose flour

Ingredients for Topping:

1 ½ cups light brown sugar
1 to 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon (or more, sugar should look "saturated" with cinnamon)
½ cup (1 stick) butter, melted

Method:

In a small bowl, soften yeast in the warm water.

Mix together, in a large bowl, the white sugar, salt, eggs, and butter. Gradually beat in the mashed potatoes. Add one cup of flour and beat mixture until it is smooth. Stir in the yeast mixture and add enough of the remaining flour to form a light, soft dough. (Dough should be slightly sticky but firm enough to handle with floured hands).

Leave the dough in the mixing bowl, cover with a cloth, and let the dough rise until it has doubled in bulk (about 2 hours).

With lightly floured hands, knead the dough and divide it into 3 portions. Press each portion into a 9 x 9-inch square greased cake pan. Cover again and let dough rise until it has doubled in bulk.

With the bowl of a teaspoon, make 1-inch deep indentations in the dough at about 1-inch apart.

Combine the brown sugar and cinnamon for the topping, reserving 6 tablespoons. Press the rest of the topping into the depressions. Drizzle melted butter over the top. Sprinkle the reserved sugar and cinnamon (2 tablespoons per cake) evenly over the top of the dough.

Bake cakes in a pre-heated 350 degree F. oven for about 20 minutes or until lightly brown. Remove cakes from oven. Cool. Remove cakes from pans and enjoy with hot chocolate, tea or coffee.

"The Snowman" Ice Cream Cake

Submitted by Suz Snedeker

Suz's story: *"One of our Christmas traditions is to make an ice cream cake in the shape of a snowman for our Christmas Eve dinner. There is a lovely Christmas picture book by Raymond Briggs, and later an animated film called 'The Snowman' about the escapades and travels of a snowman with a green slouch hat and scarf and a tangerine nose, and a little red-headed boy from Britain. My son Daniel and I made this cake many times together, and I still make it. I set the table on Christmas Eve with a white tablecloth topped with a square 'snowman' tablecloth, and serve the cake with Christmas cookies, especially snowy butterballs.*

Ingredients:

1 half-gallon of Byrnes vanilla ice cream
One box or stick of marzipan (this is firmer than almond paste)
Gel food coloring (Wilton or other brand) in green (a mossy, "leaf" green), orange, and black
(Gel frostings available from baking section of Jo Ann's Fabric stores or craft stores)
Flaked coconut

Method:

Scoop out the ice cream quickly onto a large platter so you have mounds for the head, body, two arms (at the sides of the body), and legs and feet. It may take one or two tries to get all the ice cream on the platter and formed into the snowman. Since the ice cream melts quickly make the rough mounds first, refreeze for 30 minutes, then use a metal off-set spatula to sculp/form the shape of the snowman's head and body. Refreeze for at least another 30 minutes.

To make the decorations, divide your marzipan into three portions. You need a small portion for orange (tangerine nose", a medium portion for black (eyes, mouth, and buttons), and largest portion for green (hat and scarf).

It's best to use disposable gloves and protect your countertop since the coloring gel can stain your hands and work surface. Using a toothpick, transfer small amounts of the coloring gel from the jar to the portions of marzipan. You will need to use your hands to work in each color into the pieces of marzipan. You may have to add addition bits of food coloring to achieve the color you want. Use a clean toothpick each time you transfer color. Always make "black" portion last. After you make the decorations, you can wrap them separately in plastic wrap.

Decorations that you will need to make:
Green: a hat with a floppy brim that fits over the head; and a scarf, including a neck piece, center knot, and two pieces that hang down.
Orange: small nose, slightly oval
Black: two small eyes; a thin roll for the smile/mouth plus 3 black "coal" buttons

After the ice cream is completely frozen solid (a few hours before you plan on serving it), add the decorations. You can scatter flaked coconut around the feet of the snowman.

Three Kings Lemon Bundt Cake for Epiphany

Submitted by Suz Snedeker

Suz's story: *"This lemony Bundt pound cake is infused with brandy-soaked dried cherries, apricots, and golden raisins. The three fruits represent the gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh of the Three Kings of Epiphany. The January 6th Feast of Epiphany, a celebration light, is such a part of the Christmas story for me, and sadly, so neglected. One of my enduring memories of childhood was watching the live broadcast of Gian Carlo Menotti's 'Amahl and the Night Visitors' yearly on TV*. This beautiful choral piece was performed at St. Luke with Robin Booth as the mother and Nola Booth as Amah; Douglas Booth was one of the kings, and Jim Hedlund sang in the chorus. The story tells us that Jesus accepts us as we are and the most precious gift is that of love.*

* The final 1964 broadcast of "Amahl and the Night Visitors" is available on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gPAjNu4WW0I.

Special Equipment: a 10-inch fluted tube pan (Bundt cake pan) and "Baker's Joy" baking spray (has flour and vegetable oil in the spray and works far better to prevent sticking than regular "grease and flouring" methods to prepare Bundt cake pans).

Ingredients for Cake:

½ cup dried cherries (heaping)
½ cup dried apricots, sliced (heaping)
½ cup golden raisins (heaping)
3 tablespoons of brandy
3 tablespoons all-purpose flour

½ cup ricotta (whole or part-skim)
¼ cup Greek yogurt
2 tablespoons lemon juice
2 teaspoons lemon extract

1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened
2 cups white granulated sugar
6 large eggs (at room temperature; you can warm eggs in a bowl of warm water)
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
2 teaspoons freshly grated lemon peel (lemon zest)

3 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
One dried bean

Method:

In a small micro-wave-proof bowl, combine dried cherries, apricots and raisins with the brandy, and heat in a microwave oven for 1 minute, toss, and microwave for an additional minute. Set

aside to allow the fruits to cool and plump. (Note: you will toss the plumped fruits with 3 tablespoons of flour JUST BEFORE folding the fruits into the batter).

In another small bowl, beat the ricotta, yogurt, lemon juice, and lemon extract together until smooth. Set aside.

Over a sheet of wax paper, sift the flour together with the baking powder.

In a large bowl using an electric mixer, cream butter and white granulated sugar together until light and fluffy (about 3-5 minutes). Add eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in the vanilla extract and lemon zest.

Add the flour mixture in three additions to the creamed mixture, alternating with the ricotta-yogurt mixture, and ending with the flour mixture. Beat on low speed until just combined. Fold in the plumped fruits that have been tossed in 3 tablespoons of flour. Insert the dried bean** into the batter.

Preheat oven to 325 degrees F.

Spray the inside of the tube pan / Bundt pan liberally with “Baker’s Joy” baking spray (do not use vegetable cooking sprays). Transfer the batter to the tube pan / Bundt pan, using an off-set spatula to even and level the top of the batter in the pan.

Bake in preheated oven 60 to 70 minutes until a wooden tooth-pick or cake tester inserted in the center of the cake comes out clean.

Cool the cake in the pan for 10-15 minutes. Invert cake pan onto a wire rack and carefully remove the pan. Cool the cake completely before dusting with powdered sugar or glazing with the lemon icing.

Lemon Icing:

1 ½ cups confectioners’ sugar, sifted
2-3 tablespoons lemon juice

Sift sugar into a medium bowl. Add 2 tablespoons of lemon juice and stir to blend. If consistency seems too thick to spread, then add more lemon juice several drops at a tiime, stirring after each addition until the desired consistency is achieved. Transfer cooked cake to serving dish and use a spoon to mound the icing on the top of the cake. With a Bundt cake, you want the icing to be thick enough to be spreadable but thin enough that some of the icing placed on the top of the cake will run down the crevices on the side of the Bundt cake. If it is too thin, all the icing runs down and makes puddles on your serving platter.

**Whoever gets the “bean” in their slice will have good luck in the New Year. The use of charms in cakes has carried over to New Orleans-style Mardi Gras “King Cakes” and is a long standing tradition used in the Parisian “Galette de Rois” (King Cake), an elegant almond paste-puff pastry cake found in every bakery in Paris from mid-December to the end of January.

Candy

Butter Toffee

Submitted by Janelle Alvastad-Matson

Special Equipment: Candy thermometer

Ingredients:

1 cup (2 sticks) butter, cubed
1 cup white granulated sugar
3 tablespoons cold water
Chocolate chips, if desired

Method:

Place parchment paper onto a large sheet pan (with sides is best).

Combine butter, sugar and water in a saucepan. Cook over medium heat until a candy thermometer reads 290 degrees F. (soft-crack stage), stirring occasionally.

Pour the mixture into the middle of the lined sheet pan and allow it to evenly flow out toward the edges. Allow to cool a few minutes. If desired, while the toffee is still warm sprinkle chocolate chips on top and allow them to melt. Spread the chocolate around.

Allow the toffee to fully cool then "crack" it into pieces and store in an airtight container.

Fast and Easy Rolo Turtles

Submitted by Janelle Alvstad-Mattson

Ingredients:

Pretzels squares or twists (use Gluten Free Pretzels and this treat is gluten free)
Rolo candies
Pecan halves

Method:

Preheat oven to 300 degrees F. (150 degrees C.).

Arrange the pretzels in a single layer on a parchment-lined cookie sheet.

Place one chocolate covered caramel candy on each pretzel.

Bake in preheated oven for 4 minutes.

While the candy is warm, press a pecan half onto each candy covered pretzel.

Cool completely before storing in an airtight container.

XMAS Fudge

Submitted by Jo Ann Ekdahl, her mother's recipe.

Jo Ann's story*: "Mom's big thing at Christmas was homemade candy. She tried to teach me but I never could get the hang of it. We weren't poor but she tried to do the best she could on a limited budget. We had our own milk and eggs, a huge hickory nut tree in the pasture, and access to black walnuts. In earlier years we made some maple syrup. She never bought nuts (she always called them nut meats) and I can still see her sitting in the kitchen with an old-fashioned flat iron (the kind you heated on the stove before you ironed). She would turn it flat side up and crack the nuts with a hammer. Sometimes she would pick out the halves that did not break and put them in a pint jar as a gift for our teachers. But more often she made batch after batch of different kinds of candy, packed it in pound boxes, and sent them to our teachers, bus drivers, etc. She made many kinds of candy each year but my favorite was the Xmas Fudge."*

Ingredients:

3 cups sugar
¼ teaspoon cream of tartar (Mom always used 2 to 3 tablespoons light corn syrup instead)
¼ teaspoon salt
1 cup thin cream (or evaporated milk)
1 tablespoon butter
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
½ cup chopped nuts
¼ cup chopped dates
¼ cup candied cherries, chopped

Method:

Combine the first four ingredients in a heavy saucepan (to avoid easy burning). Scrape down the sides of pan. Cook to 238 degrees F. on a candy thermometer without stirring unless absolutely necessary.

Remove pan from heat and add butter and vanilla without stirring. Let cool at least 10 minutes.

Then stir until it begins to thicken. It should not lose its glossiness. Add in the nuts, dates, and cherries, and blend well.

Drop by spoonfuls onto wax paper (or pour into pan) to cool.

Cookies

Almond-Pistachio Macaroons

Submitted by Nader Mehravari

Ingredients:

4 ½ cups confectioners' sugar
2 cups whole almonds, unsalted
½ cup all-purpose flour
1 cup pistachios, unsalted, finely chopped
¾ cup egg whites (about 6 large egg whites)
¼ teaspoon salt

12-ounces semi-sweet chocolate, chopped (for dipping the cookies)

Method:

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.

Line 2 large baking sheets with parchment paper.

Blend sugar and almonds in food processor until the nuts are ground to a powder, scraping down the sides of bowl frequently; the total processing time should be about 4 minutes. Add flour to nut-sugar mixture, and blend for 1 minute. Transfer dough to a large bowl. Stir in the finely chopped pistachios.

In a separate large bowl, using an electric mixer, beat egg whites and ¼ teaspoon salt until the egg whites are stiff but not dry. Fold in nut mixture into beaten egg whites in four additions (batter will be thick).

Spoon batter by generous tablespoonfuls onto prepared baking sheets, spacing mounds about 1 ½-inches apart. Bake cookies in preheated oven one sheet at a time until cookies are dry and cracked on top, about 10 minutes. Slide parchment paper with the cookies onto work surface; cool cookies. Repeat with remaining batter, cooling sheets and lining with clean parchment paper for each batch.

Line three baking sheets with foil. Melt the chocolate in the top of a double boiler over simmering water, stirring until melted. Remove upper pot from the water. Dip baked cookies half-way into melted chocolate, shaking off the excess. Place on foil-lined sheets. Chill for 30 minutes.

Can be made 3 days ahead. Store between sheets of wax paper in an airtight container, and refrigerate. Allow cookies to come to room temperature prior to serving.

Makes about 50 cookies.

Andes Mint Cookies

Submitted by Janelle Alvstad-Mattson

Ingredients:

¾ cup (1 ½ sticks) butter
1 ½ cups brown sugar, packed
2 tablespoons water
2 cups semisweet chocolate chips
2 large eggs
2 ½ cups all-purpose flour
1 ¼ teaspoons baking soda
½ teaspoon salt
36 Andes Mints (we use the pre-broken pieces you can get in the baking aisle)

Method:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. (175 degrees C.).

In a large saucepan over low heat, cook the butter, sugar, and water until butter is melted. Add chocolate chips and stir until partially melted. Remove pan from heat and continue to stir until chocolate is completely melted. Pour into a large bowl and let stand 10 minutes to cool off slightly.

At high speed using an electric mixer, beat in eggs, one at a time, into the chocolate mixture. Reduce speed to low and add dry ingredients (flour, baking soda, and salt), beating until blended. Chill dough about 1 hour.

Roll dough into balls and place on ungreased cookie sheet about 2-inches apart. Bake in preheated oven 8-10 minutes.

While cookies are baking unwrap the mints and divide each in half. When cookies are brought out of the oven, put ½ mint on top of each cookie. Let the mint sit for up to 5 minutes until melted, then spread the mint on top of the cookie.

Let the cookies cool all the way before eating or storing.

Anzac Biscuits

Submitted by Janelle Alvstad-Mattson

Ingredients:

1 cup all-purpose or unbleached white flour
1 cup rolled oats
½ teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon baking soda
¾ cup white granulated sugar
1 cup flaked or shredded sweetened coconut
9 tablespoons (1 stick plus one tablespoon) unsalted butter
2 ½ tablespoons golden syrup (or corn syrup)

Method:

Preheat oven to 325 degrees F. Grease baking sheets.

In a large bowl, stir together flour, oats, baking powder, baking soda, and coconut, and set aside.

Place the butter, sugar, and golden syrup in a small saucepan and heat over medium-low heat, stirring frequently until the butter melts. Pour butter mixture into dry ingredients mixture and stir until well-blended and smooth.

Pull of pieces of dough, roll and compress in hands to form compact 1-inch balls. Place balls on prepared baking sheets about 2-inches apart and pat down slightly. Bake in preheated oven for 14-17 minutes or until cookies are a light golden brown.

Remove baking sheets from the oven and let cookies stand on baking sheets for several minutes. Then using a spatula, transfer cookies to wire rack and let stand until completely cooled.

Can be stored in airtight containers for up to a week. Freeze for longer storage.

Makes about 30 2 ½-inch cookies.

Chai Sugar Cookies

Submitted by Sonja Nelson

Sonja's story, *"While not a traditional Christmas cookie, I found this recipe having accidentally mixed too much sugar into the Krumkake batter one year. We had LOTS of excess sugar cookie batter after enough flour was worked in. I wanted a recipe that used the oh so amazing cardamom, and knew this would be perfect, since I love a good Chai. The Chai Spice Blend (see end of recipe) also goes nicely in pancakes, waffles or French toast with a splash of vanilla."*

Ingredients:

1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened
1 ½ cups white granulated sugar
2 large eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 ¾ cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons cream of tartar
1 teaspoon baking soda
2 teaspoons Chai Spice Blend (see below for ingredients)
¼ teaspoon salt

Method:

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.

Cream butter and sugar together until smooth. Beat in eggs and vanilla extract. Add dry ingredients (flour, cream of tartar, baking soda, Chai spice blend, and salt) and blend well.

Dough can either be rolled into logs, wrapped, chilled, and sliced, or done as drop cookies.

Bake on greased cookie sheet in preheated oven for 10-12 minutes or until lightly browned.

Chai Spice Blend:

- 2 teaspoons ground cardamom
- 2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 2 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1 teaspoon ground white pepper

Chewy Ginger Cookies

Submitted by Nader Mehravari

Ingredients:

2 ¼ cups all-purpose flour
2 ½ teaspoons ground ginger (powdered)
1 ½ teaspoons baking soda
½ teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ teaspoon freshly ground nutmeg
½ teaspoon kosher salt
¼ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
¾ cup packed dark brown sugar
½ cup vegetable shortening
½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, room temperature
1 large egg
½ cup blackstrap molasses
2 teaspoons finely grated fresh ginger (peel ginger first)
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
½ cup finely chopped crystallized candied ginger
1 cup raw or sanding sugar

Method:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. with oven racks in the lower and upper thirds of the oven. Line 2 baking sheets with parchment paper.

In a medium bowl, whisk flour, ground ginger, baking soda, cinnamon, nutmeg, salt, and ground pepper together. In a large bowl using an electric mixer on medium-high speed, beat the brown sugar, shortening, and butter together until light and fluffy (for about 3 minutes), scraping down the sides of the bowl half-way through the beating. Reduce mixer speed to low. Add egg, molasses, fresh grated ginger, and vanilla; beat just to blend. Then add flour mixture; beat on low seed just to blend. Mix in the crystallized ginger. The dough will be very soft and sticky.

Place the raw sugar in a shallow bowl. Using a tablespoon measure, scoop out the cookie dough. And using a second spoon, transfer dough from the tablespoon measure into the bowl with the raw sugar; turn to coat dough well and roll the sugar-coated dough into a ball. Transfer dough ball to prepared baking sheet. Repeat with half of remaining dough and sugar, spacing balls 1 ½ -inches apart.

Bake cookies, rotating sheets halfway through, until edges are firm and centers appear cracked, about 10-12 minutes. Repeat with the remaining dough and sugar, using cooled baking sheets and a new sheet of parchment.

Can be made 3 days ahead. Store cookies in airtight container at room temperature between sheets of parchment or wax paper. Makes 48 cookies.

Christmas Date Balls

Submitted by Diane Conneman

Diane's story: *"I am not sure where I got this recipe but I like to make it to give color to a mixed platter of cookies. And they taste good, also."*

Ingredients:

2 large eggs
¾ cup white granulated sugar
1 pkg (8-ounces) chopped dates
1 cup of shredded, sweetened coconut
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
½ teaspoon almond extract
1 cup chopped nuts

Sugar tinted green and red (for rolling cookies after they are baked)

Method:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

In a medium bowl, beat the eggs. Gradually add sugar and beat well. Blend in remaining ingredients (dates, flavorings, and nuts).

Turn batter into a 2-quart baking dish. Bake in preheated oven for 30 minutes.

While still hot, beat with a wooden spoon to create consistency. Cool.

Form into balls and roll in tinted sugar.

Crème de Menthe Squares

Submitted by Diane Conneman

Diane's story: *" This recipe came from my next door neighbor in Johnson City. That was at least 35 years ago so another old recipe."*

Ingredients:

1 ¼ cup oleo margarine (or butter) [Divided into ½ cup, ½ cup and ¼ cup portions]
½ cup cocoa powder
3 ½ cups sifted confectioners' sugar [Divided into ½ cup and 3 cup portion]
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 cups graham cracker crumbs
1/3 cup Creme de Menthe
1 ½ cups semi-sweet chocolate chips

Method:

Bottom Layer: In a saucepan, combine ½ cup (1 stick) of oleo/butter and the cocoa powder. Heat and stir until well blended. Remove from heat and add ½ cup of confectioners' sugar and vanilla. Stir in graham cracker crumbs and mix well. Press mixture into the bottom of a 9 x 13-inch pan.

Middle Layer: Melt another ½ cup (1 stick) of oleo/butter. In a small mixing bowl, combine the melted oleo and Creme de Menthe. With an electric mixer on low speed beat in remaining 3 cups of confectioners' sugar until smooth. Spread over the bottom chocolate layer. Chill one hour.

Top Layer: In a small saucepan combine the remaining ¼ cup (½ stick) of oleo/butter and chocolate chips. Cook and stir over low heat until melted. Spread over the middle chocolate layer. Chill 1-2 hours.

Cut into small squares and store in the refrigerator.

Donna Chiara's Stelline d'Oro (Star Sugar Cookies)

Submitted by Suz Snedeker

Source: Modified from the recipe in the children's book, "Jingle the Christmas Clown," by Tommie dePaola, a delightful master storyteller who was of Irish and Italian descent.

Suz's story: *"This is the only true 'sugar cookie' in my collection of cookie recipes. I love the orange flavor of these cookies. Over the years I've collected many shapes and sizes of star cookie cutters, including five- and six-pointed stars, and even a Star of Bethlehem."*

Ingredients:

2 cups all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon baking powder
½ cup (1 stick) butter, softened
1 cup granulated white sugar
1 large egg
1 teaspoon orange extract
1 ½ tablespoons orange juice
Sanding sugar (large crystal sugar) for decoration (optional)

Method:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Sift the dry ingredients together on to wax paper (flour, salt, and baking powder) and set aside. Cream the softened butter with the sugar and beat until fluffy (beat about 2-3 minutes). Add the egg, orange extract, and orange juice and mix well. Gradually add the dry ingredients and mix well. The dough should come together to form a ball.

Flatten the dough ball into a disc, wrap in wax paper, and chill for at least 30 minutes. Cut the dough into 4 pieces. Roll out each piece on a floured board, one at a time, until 1/8-inch thick. Cut out dough with star cookie cutters (or any other shape). Combine the bits of dough left over from cutting out the shapes and reroll, and cut out more cookies. Place the cookies evenly spaced on a large greased cookie sheet (or on greased parchment paper-lined cookie sheet).

Bake in preheated oven for about 7-9 minutes. Watch carefully, Cookies should be set and firm to the touch, but remain pale. Carefully remove the hot cookies using a metal spatula to a wire rack to cool. The cookies will firm up as they cool. Ice when cool.

Icing: Combine1 ½ tablespoons of warm water, 4 teaspoons of undiluted orange juice concentrate, and 1 cup of sifted confectioners' sugar. Spread icing on cooled cookies, and allow the icing to set at least an hour before storing the cookies. Can sprinkle cookies white the icing is still wet with sanding sugar if you want sparkling cookies. Makes 4 to 5 dozen cookies, depending on the size of your cookie cutters.

Hermits

Submitted by Beth Dewalt

Beth's story: *"This recipe was handed down from Luke's maternal great-grandmother, Carrie Chamberlin. His mother, Gloria Dewalt, made these cookies every year at Thanksgiving in his house growing up to make sure the kids didn't eat the Christmas cookies. She then gave me the recipe at my bridal shower (in 1996), and I have made sure to make them every year since (although it ends up being more of a Christmas cookie for us)."*

Ingredients for Date Mixture:
½ lb. (8-ounces) dates, cut up
½ lb. (8-ounces) raisins
1 cup brown sugar, lightly packed
1 cup water

Ingredients for Flour Mixture:
4 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking soda
1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
¼ teaspoon ground cloves
¼ teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 cup (2 sticks) butter
½ cup brown sugar, lightly packed
½ cup baking molasses (dark unsulfured molasses)
4 large eggs
1 cup black walnuts, chopped (optional)

Method:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Combine ingredients for date-raisin mixture in a sauce-pan and boil together 15-20 minutes, then let cool. In a large bowl, sift together the flour, baking soda, and spices.

In another large bowl, cream the butter and brown sugar together until light and fluffy. Add the molasses and eggs, and blend well. Stir in the date and raisin mixture, then blend in the flour mixture, followed by stirring in the walnuts.

Drop by spoonfuls on to a greased or lined cookie sheet. Bake in preheated oven for 9 minutes. Remove cookies from baking sheet with a metal spatula and let cool on a wire rack.

Makes about 8 dozen cookies.

Holiday Biscotti with Cranberries and Pistachios

Submitted by Nader Mehravari

Ingredients:

2 ¼ cups all-purpose flour
1 ½ teaspoons baking powder
¾ teaspoon salt
6 tablespoons (¾ stick) unsalted butter, room temperature
¾ cup white granulated sugar
2 large eggs
1 tablespoon grated lemon peel
1 ½ teaspoons vanilla extract
1 teaspoon whole anise seed
1 cup dried sweetened cranberries
¾ cup shelled natural unsalted pistachios

6 ounces white chocolate, chopped

Method:

Preheat oven to 325 degrees F. Line 3 large baking sheets with parchment paper.

Sift the flour, baking powder, and salt into a medium bowl.

Using an electric mixer, beat the butter and sugar in a large bowl to blend well; add in eggs one at a time and beat well after each addition.

Mix in lemon peel, vanilla, and anise seed. Beat in flour mixture just until blended. Stir in cranberries and pistachios (dough will be sticky).

Turn dough out onto lightly floured surface. Gather dough together; divide in half. Roll each half into a 15-inch long log, about 1 ¼-inches wide. Repeat with other half of dough. Carefully transfer the logs to one of the prepared baking sheet, spacing logs 3 inches apart.

Bake logs in preheated oven until almost firm to touch but still pale in color, about 28 minutes. Remove baking sheet for oven and cool logs on baking sheet for 10 minutes. BUT, keep the oven on at 325 degrees F.

Carefully transfer the baked logs (still on the parchment paper) to a cutting board. Using a serrated knife and gentle sawing motion, cut logs crosswise into generous ½-inch thick slices. Place slices, cut side down, on the remaining 2 prepared baking sheets (cookies from one log per baking sheet). Bake until firm and a pale golden color, about 9 minutes per side. Transfer cookies to wire racks to cool.

Line another baking sheet with waxed paper. Stir white chocolate in the top of a double boiler over barely simmering water until smooth. Remove upper pan from double boiler. Dip one end of each cookie in melted white chocolate, tilting the pan if necessary, then shake off excess chocolate.

Place dipped cookies on the sheet lined with waxed paper. Chill until chocolate is firm, about 30 minutes.

Can be made 5 days ahead. Store cookies at room temperature between sheets of wax paper in an airtight container.

Makes 3 ½ dozen.

Holiday Fruit Drops

Submitted by Monica Vakiner

Monica's story: *"My grandmother used to make fruitcake but she said it had a 'bad reputation' so she created these cookies so she could get the flavor in a cookie. Also, as she got older, she said these were much easier to make and just as good. Just like fruitcake, these cookies get better after a day or two, and they freeze well. When I make these cookies, it takes me back to my grandma's kitchen."*

Ingredients:

1 cup butter
2 cups brown sugar, packed
2 large eggs
½ cup soured milk* or buttermilk
3 ½ cups sifted all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon salt
1 ½ cups pecan pieces
2 cups candied cherries, halved
2 cups dates, cut up
About 1 ½ cups pecan halves (for decoration, you'll need about 100 halves)

Method:

In a large bowl, mix butter, sugar, and eggs well. Stir in soured milk. Blend dry ingredients together and stir into butter-sugar-egg mixture. Stir in pecans, cherries, and dates. Cover bowl with plastic wrap and chill cookie dough in the refrigerator for at least one hour.

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. Drop rounded teaspoonfuls of cookie dough, about 2 inches apart, on lightly greased cookie sheet. Place a pecan half on each cookie if desired.

Bake 8-10 minutes in preheated oven until almost no imprint remains when touched lightly. Transfer baked cookies to a wire rack to cool. cookies. After completely cool, can be stored in an airtight container, or cookies can be frozen. Makes about 8 dozen.

***Sour Milk:** To prepare 1 cup of sour milk, put 1 teaspoon of vinegar or lemon juice in a 1-cup measure, and add milk to 1 level cup. Let stand at room temperature for 1-2 hours. Note: You will only need a half-a-cup of the sour milk for this recipe.

Lemon-Lime Basil Shortbread Cookies

Submitted by Nader Mehravari

Ingredients:

1 cup all-purpose flour
½ cup confectioners' sugar
½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, chilled, cut into ½-inch cubes
1 tablespoons fresh, sliced basil leaves
1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest
1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
½ teaspoon finely grated lime zest
¼ teaspoon kosher salt
More confectioners' sugar for pressing the cookies

White sanding sugar - these are large sugar crystals (optional)

Method:

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.

Place flour, ½ cup confectioners' sugar, butter, basil, both lemon and lime zest, lemon juice, and salt in a food processor. Pulse until large, moist clumps form.

Measure level tablespoonfuls of dough; roll between palms of your hands to form balls. Place balls on a baking sheet, spacing 2-inches apart. Lightly dust the bottom of a flat measuring cup or drinking glass with confectioners' sugar and press cookies into 2-inch rounds, dusting the cup/glass bottom with more confectioners' sugar as needed to prevent sticking. Sprinkle tops of cookies with sanding sugar*, if using.

Bake cookies in preheated oven until edges are brown, about 20 minutes. Transfer cookies with a spatula to a wire rack to cool.

Makes about 16 cookies. Goes well with ice cream.

*You can use other colors of sanding sugar, including red and green for Christmas.

Ottilie Schmidt's Pfeffernüsse (Peppernuts)

Submitted by Dori Rogers, Nate Roger's mother

Dori's story: *"I've been working on a family history, and decided to send out a small part of it to family for Christmas this year. It will include a biography of Nathaniel's second great grandmother, Ottilie (Krug) Schmidt (1888-1958), along with a few of her recipes, one of which is for Pfeffernüsse, something she always made for Christmas. Judy (Schmidt) Driscoll wrote to me that Ottilie would make the dough after Thanksgiving, and let it sit in a covered bowl until it was time to bake for Christmas, but I would not recommend that today! I have another copy of this recipe typed by my mother's sister, Sandy. Her recipe reads '2 ½ cups molasses' instead of the '2 ¼ cups' below."*

Note from Suz: Because this is a historic recipe, I've added some modern procedures on the preparation since you don't want to keep the dough at room temperature for a month before baking the cookies! Also, there were some "missing" directions on when to add the sugar, lard, butter, and eggs. I'd advise you to bring the sugar and molasses to a boil in a saucepan over moderate heat, and stir until the sugar is dissolved. Add the lard/shortening and butter to the hot molasses-sugar mixture, stirring to melt the fats. Remove pan from heat. Transfer contents to a large bowl and allow mixture to slightly cool. You can then incorporate the eggs (has to be cool enough so the eggs don't curdle), and then add in the dry ingredients. Also, the amount of baking soda (1 tablespoon+) seems to be more than in other recipes, so I'd suggest reducing the baking soda to 1 ½ to 2 teaspoons. Excess baking soda can result in a bitter, soapy taste.

Ingredients:

2 ¼ cups molasses (other versions of recipe say 2 ½ cups molasses)
1 cup white granulated sugar
½ cup lard (or shortening)
½ cup (1 stick) butter
2 large eggs
7 ½ cups all-purpose flour
1 tablespoon baking soda (heaping) (See "Note from Suz "above; this may be too much)
1/8 ounce ground cloves (about 1 ½ teaspoons)
1/8 ounce ground cardamom (about 1 ¾ teaspoons)

Method:

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.

Bring the molasses to a boil, skim off the foam, and cool. (See "Note from Suz" above on next steps). Add to dry ingredients and work in well.

Wrap the dough in plastic wrap, and refrigerate the dough overnight or up to 2 days.

When ready to bake, make into rolls ½-inch or 1-inch in diameter and slice into ½-inch pieces.

Bake on cookie sheets for 10-12 minutes. Cool completely before storing.

Pignoli Cookies (Pine Nut Cookies)

Submitted by Suz Snedeker

Source: A newspaper clipping written by Marilynn Marter. The recipe was attributed to Marie Marano of Mount Laurel, New Jersey, and was included in her 1981 cookbook of family recipes.

Suz's story, *"Pignoli cookies were usually a 'bakery bought' and not homemade cookie when I was growing up in Rhode Island. You can find them in good Italian bakeries but when my mother moved from Rhode Island to Ithaca, NY, we started to make these cookies ourselves. They have become a favorite of my family and other 'second-generation' Italian friends in Ithaca who look forward to getting these cookies at Christmas time."*

Other notes from Suz: Since pine nuts are expensive, buy them when on sale or at a good price and freeze them. They store well frozen but can go rancid if stored too long at room temp.

Ingredients:

8-ounces almond paste (I use "Solo" brand)
½ cup white granulated sugar
2 egg whites, slightly beaten
½ cup confectioners' sugar, sifted
¼ cup all-purpose flour
Pinch of salt (optional)
1 cup pine nuts

Method:

Preheat oven to 300 degrees F.

In a medium bowl using an electric mixer, break up the almond paste by beating with the granulated sugar. Beat in the egg whites at medium speed until fairly smooth. Add the sifted confectioners' sugar and mix well. Add the flour and salt and mix well.

This is a very sticky dough. Wrap the dough in wax paper, and chill the dough for at least 2 hours before forming the balls. Prepare a greased cookie sheet (or greased parchment paper lined cookie sheet). Pour the pine nuts into a shallow bowl. Wet your hands before forming the dough balls. Pinch off small pieces and form into ¾- to 1-inch balls. Holding the dough ball with your fingers, dip and press the ball into the bowl of pine nuts so one side of the dough has the nuts embedded in the dough, then flip the ball around so it is nut side is "up" when you place it on the cookie sheet. You do not need pine nuts on the bottom of the cookie.

Bake cookies in preheated oven for 20 to 25 minutes. Do not allow the cookies to brown; they cookies should be pale and soft in the center. Carefully remove baked cookies from the cookie sheet using a metal spatula, and place them on a wire rack to cool completely before storing in a cookie tin. Makes about 40-45 cookies.

Pistachio Amaretti

Submitted by Nader Mehravari

Ingredients:

7 ½ ounces (1 ½ cups) shelled unsalted pistachios, preferably skinned
1 cup white granulated sugar
2 large egg whites
1 teaspoon almond extract
Nonstick cooking spray
Confectioners' sugar for dusting.

Method:

If the pistachios have skins on them, place them in a heatproof bowl and pour boiling water over them. Let sit for 4 minutes, then drain. Wrap the nuts in a clean kitchen towel and roll them back and forth to loosen the skins, then finish skinning them by hand.

Place the pistachios and sugar in a food processor. Process until nuts are very finely ground but not pasty, about 30-60 seconds.

With the motor running, pour in the egg whites and almond extract. Process until the mixture balls up around the blade then relaxes into a thick, sticky paste, about 30 seconds. It should be thick enough to scoop with a spoon.

Preheat oven to 300 degrees F. with rack in the center of the oven.

Line two large baking sheets with parchment paper, and coat the parchment with cooking spray.

Using 2 teaspoons, drop heaping spoonfuls of the paste in mounds onto the prepared baking sheets (about 2 teaspoons per mound), leaving 2 inches of space between each mound (about 16 cookies per baking sheet). Smooth and round out the tops with lightly moistened fingers, but don't press down or flatten the mounds. Let sit, uncovered, for 1 hour.

Bake the amaretti, one sheet at a time in preheated oven, until they are just set on top and are beginning to color, about 15-20 minutes. Transfer the baking sheets to cooling racks and let cool completely. Repeat with other sheets of cookies.

Dust cookies lightly with confectioners' sugar. The cookies will keep for 1 week in an airtight container at room temperature.

Makes 32 cookies.

Russian Tea Cakes (Butterballs)

Submitted by Suz Snedeker

Source: Modified from a recipe in the 1950 “Betty Crocker’s Picture Cookbook.”

Suz’s story: *“Christmas would not be Christmas in our house without these cookies! My mother (Edie Contenti Tougas) made them every Christmas as did my Aunt Sally (Santina Contenti Perry). I’ve made them for as long as I can remember. We’ve always called them ‘butterball’ cookies in our family.”*

Ingredients:

1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened, at room temperature
½ cup sifted confectioners’ sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 ¼ cup sifted all-purpose flour
¼ teaspoon salt
¾ cup finely chopped walnuts (or unsalted roasted almonds)
An additional ½ cup (or more) of sifted confectioners’ sugar (for rolling baked cookies)

Method:

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.

Cream butter together with the confectioners’ sugar using an electric or stand mixer for 2-3 minutes until fluffy. Add vanilla and blend well. Gradually add the flour, salt, and nuts to creamed butter-sugar mixture and mix well after each addition. Chill the dough for at least one hour prior to baking. Dough can be made one day in advance of baking.

Suz’s hint: Form the dough in a 4 x 4 x 3-inch rectangle, wrap it in wax paper and then place into a zip-lock bag to chill. After the dough is chilled, you can easily cut the block into 1-inch cubes. Roll each cube in between the palms of your hands to form a ball.

Bake dough balls about 2 ½ -inches apart on a lightly greased cookie sheet or greased parchment paper-lined cookie sheet in preheated oven for 10-12 minutes until firm, but NOT brown. The bottoms of the cookies should be barely brown. After removing from the oven, let the cookies cool on the baking sheet for 1 to 2 minutes before transferring with a metal spatula to a wire rack to cool. After cookies are completely cool, roll in confectioners’ sugar. If you try to roll them while they are still warm, the cookies will fall apart.

Cookies store well in a cookie tin lined with wax paper. Put a sheet of wax paper in between the layers of cookies. Cookies can be kept at room temperature for a week (if they last that long). Roll again in confectioners’ sugar just before serving.

Makes about 4 dozen cookies.

Sand Tarts

Submitted by Diane Conneman

Diane's story: *"This recipe was in my maternal Grandmother's collection and is at least 100 years old. As a family we worked together. Sometimes it was my Mother and her sisters. As my siblings and I got older we helped. When my Dad retired, he was in charge of the oven. One person rolled and cut. Another one or two decorating the cookies. Another was watching the oven and removing the baked cookies to wax paper over a layer of newspaper to cool. All got stored in metal boxes and taken to the back room that was cool. I have acquired small cookie cutters that make 1 to 1 ½-inch tea cookies. Again, nice to mix in with less fancy cookies."*

Ingredients:

2 cups white granulated sugar
3 large eggs
1 cup (2 sticks) butter, at room temperature
2 tablespoons milk
½ teaspoon baking soda
½ teaspoon cream of tartar
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
Approximately 3 cups all-purpose flour (enough to roll out the dough)

Method:

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F. (or 375 degrees F. if using dark baking sheets).

In a large bowl, mix all the ingredients together and refrigerate until stiff. Roll out in small batches on parchment paper to less than ¼-inch. Cut in decorative shapes with cookie cutters. Transfer to cookie sheet and decorate. We used everything from colored sugar to nuts.

Bake cookies 6 minutes on aluminum baking sheets.

Watch closely as the edges should be just slightly brown. Depending on your oven and baking sheets it may be less than 6 minutes.

Cool completely before storing.

Sephardic Almond Cookies (Gluten-Free)

Submitted by Suz Snedeker

Suz's story*: "This recipe was given to me by one of our adopted-students, Noe Ronen. Noe grew up in foster care families, and didn't have family cookie recipes, so when I asked him for a recipe to make for the Adopt-a-Student fall dinner, he chose and sent me this recipe in November of 2012. Since then, they have become a family favorite to bake every Christmas. A really nice airy cookie."*

Ingredients:

3 large egg yolks
1 cup white granulated sugar
1 ½ cups finely ground almonds (NOT almond flour)
3 teaspoons ground cardamom
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 tablespoon rose water (available at Middle Eastern or specialty food stores).

Whole blanched almonds for decoration
Egg wash: 1 egg yolk beaten with 1 tablespoon of water

Method:

Preheat oven to 300 degrees F. Have racks in the middle of the oven.

In a food processor with a metal blade, blend all ingredients, except the last two (the egg yolk wash and the whole blanched almonds).

Line 2 cookie sheets with parchment paper and very lightly grease the paper. Scoop out teaspoon-sized balls of dough and arrange on the parchment paper, leaving 2-inches of space between the cookie balls. Flatten each ball slightly with the palm of your hand.

Press a blanched almond on top of each dough ball, then brush the cookies with the egg yolk-water wash using a pastry brush.

Bake in preheated oven until lightly golden, about 20 minutes.

Remove with a metal spatula to cool on a wire rack.

Makes about 36 cookies (3 dozen).

Spritz Cookies

Submitted by Everett Nelson

Special Equipment: A cookie press. Presses come with discs of different designs.

Everett's story: *"I thought there was a handwritten copy of this recipe in the box that belonged to my mother. I went through everything and couldn't find it. Fortunately, the Mirro recipe booklet was in the cookie press box, folded open to the basic Spritz cookie recipe. That is probably the recipe she always used.*

I remember my mother baking lots of these cookies for the holidays. They are patterned after classic Scandinavian butter cookies. The Mirro Aluminum Company of Manitowoc, Wisconsin designed the cookie press. Their slogan was 'Fancy Cookies and Pastries are easy.' 'You will enjoy many compliments on the clever cookies and pastries you make with the aid of the Mirro press and the recipes in this folder. Follow the simple directions and you are a fancy cookie artist the very first try. The results are as delightful as they are easy to make.'

The Spritz cookie is probably fairly standard for most cookie dough designed to be used with a cookie press. Regarding the name 'Spritz.' I think when we were young, my brothers and I thought 'spritz' referred to the sound the cookies made while being 'spritzed' out by the press. I went back to see if I could find a bit more about the name 'Spritz.' It seems my brothers and were on the right track, given what I found courtesy of a Google search."

> ***From Google:*** **Why Are They Called Spritz Cookies?** Spritz cookies are actually a type of German Christmas cookie made of flour, butter, sugar and eggs called "Spritzgeback." The word spritz originated from the German word, "spritzen," which means "to squirt" in English.

Ingredients:

1 cup (2 sticks) butter or shortening
¾ cup white granulated sugar
1 large egg
2 ¼ cups all-purpose flour, sifted
½ teaspoon baking powder
Dash of salt
1 teaspoon almond extract

Method:

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.

Using an electric mixer, cream the butter, adding sugar gradually. Add the egg. Add the sifted dry ingredients and the almond extract and blend well. Dough should be soft but not crumbly. Fill cookie press with dough. Form cookies on ungreased cookie sheets. Decorate cookies with colored sugar or candy sprinkles if desired. Bake until lightly golden about 10-12 minutes. Cool on cookie sheets before transferring to wire racks. Makes about 5 dozen.

More on the Mirro Cookie Press

Note from Suz: The Mirro Aluminum Company operated from 1909 until 2003 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mirro_Aluminum_Company . Sadly, the aluminum cookie press that they made is no longer manufactured, though some plastic presses made in Switzerland are currently on the market, and even battery-powered and electric presses are available. So, if you have your mother or grandmother's cookie press, hold on to it to keep the tradition of making spritz cookies alive for generations to come!

On the iconic Mirro Cookie Press from Everett: My parents were married in 1952. The cookie press (see picture above) may very well have been a wedding gift or some other 'practical and useful' gift in the mid 1950s.This was my mother's cookie press. They can still be found on-line and are now considered "vintage." There is no date information of any kind on the box or the recipe booklet. Since it is probably as old as I am it roughly dates to the mid 1950s. If the press could talk, I bet it would confess to making hundreds of cookies over the years.

More from Suz: Everett inspired me to find the Mirro cookie press that I knew I had somewhere from my mother. The very back of my baking cupboard I found her press and a recipe booklet in a small mailing box. My mother must have sent for as a part of a promotion. The press came with only 4 discs. A coupon in the recipe booklet indicated that you could receive 8 more discs and 3 pastry tips for only 35 cents, and additional cookie presses for only $1.00 each. The press looks like it has never been used. The address on the mailing box was to where we lived from 1959-1969, but there is no other date on the mailing box or in the recipe booklet.

Holiday Specialties

Gingerbread Houses (Classic "Graham Cracker" Houses, too!)

Submitted by Debbie Antal

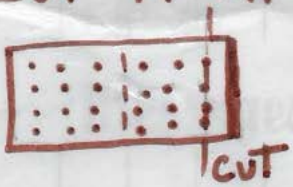
Story by Suz Snedeker*: "For over 20 years, Debbie Antal and her team of St. Luke elves (Debbie and the elves are now retired) assembled dozens of 'graham cracker' gingerbread houses that would be decorated by children and adults alike during Advent at St. Luke, most recently at our annual 'Intergenerational Event.' This is one of the longest St. Luke Lutheran 'Christmas Baking Traditions.' So, to honor this tradition, I've reproduced Debbie's hand-drawn and hand-lettered diagrams and recipes on how to make both the Graham Cracker House, and Gingerbread Houses from scratch."*

A note on the icing: Debbie recommends that you don't use raw egg white for making the royal icing that holds the gingerbread houses together. Instead, use a meringue powder egg white substitute, such as 'Wilton's Meringue Powder'. Royal icing is also used for icing the houses and for "gluing" candy decorations to the gingerbread or graham cracker houses.

Graham Cracker House

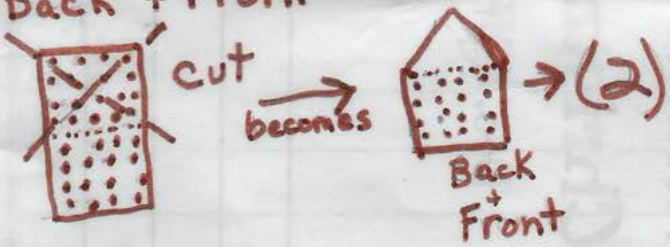
How to begin

Cut 1/4" off for the floor



Center floor between 2 whole Graham Crackers side view

Back + front



Add Icing inside the sidewalls + push your Front + Back into Place.

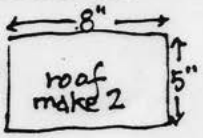
2 Graham Cracker Then lay on Top for roof.

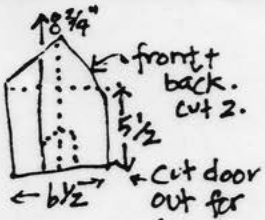
Decorate

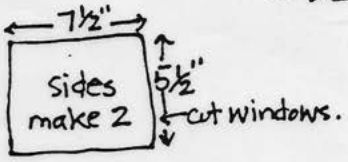
"GINGERBREAD HOUSES."

Gingerbread Dough (enough for large house and decorations)

- 1 cup (2 sticks) margarine
- 1 packed cup brown sugar
- 1 tablespoon cinnamon
- 1 tablespoon ginger
- 1 cup dark corn syrup
- 2 eggs
- 1½ tsp. baking soda
- 5½ cups flour.







Cream margarine, sugar + spices til fluffy. Add corn syrup + ~~egg~~. Beat til blended. Mix the baking soda into the flour + add to creamed mixture. Blend til you have a ball of smooth dough. Remove from bowl + wrap tightly in plastic wrap. Chill dough overnight. When you are ready to roll out the dough, use ALOT of flour on the rolling pin + board. Roll dough ⅛" to ¼" thick. Cut out pieces of Gingerbread House + decorations. Just roll out ¼ of the dough at a time. Transfer to the ungreased back of a heavy duty cookie sheet lightly dusted with flour. Leave space between pieces. Bake at 375° for about 15 minutes – watch carefully. Cool on racks.

Icing ★

- 1 pound confectioners sugar
- 3 egg whites at room temperature
- ¾ tsp cream of tartar

Beat all the ingredients for 7 minutes on hi speed. Store icing in airtight container, it will keep for a few days.

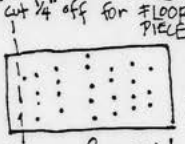
ASSEMBLE ★★

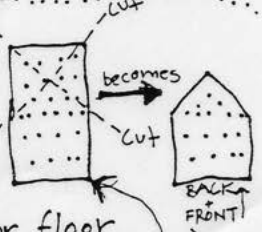
Cover a large piece of cardboard with tin foil. Assemble house on top of foil using LOTS of icing as glue. Use either a pastry tube or knife to apply icing. Add candies, nuts, or raisins for decoration using icing. Also add food coloring to icing if you want. Wait overnight for the icing to get rock hard.

GRAHAM CRACKER HOUSE

Use same icing.

Graham Cracker Pieces: (use exacto knife to cut pieces or sharp knife)
- 2 whole crackers for sides
- 2 whole crackers for roof
- 1 cracker cut off ¼" of length for floor
- 2 crackers cut for front + back (see drawing)





Holiday Eggnog

Submitted by Kayla Mosebrook

Source: Paula Deen (https://www.pauladeen.com/recipe/delicious-eggnog/)

Kayla's story: *"I wanted to pass along the eggnog recipe we use every Christmas season. It's not quite a family recipe (as you can see it's Paula Deen's), but it's one that is special to my family. My mom, Laurie, only makes it for New Year's Eve, our annual party, and she always uses her fancy punch bowl."*

Ingredients:

6 large eggs, separated*
¾ cup white granulated sugar, divided
1 pint (2 cups) heavy cream
4 pints (1 half-gallon) milk
½ pint (1 cup or 8 ounces) bourbon (optional)
1 tablespoon vanilla extract

Note from Suz: The bacteria *Salmonella* can be present in raw eggs. See note below on ways to use pasteurized egg whites and egg yolks instead of raw eggs.

Method:

In a large bowl using an electric mixer, beat egg yolks with ½ cup sugar until thick. In another bowl, beat egg whites with ¼ cup sugar until thick (but not stiff). In third bowl, beat cream until thick.

Add whipped cream to the bowl with the thickened yolks and combine. Fold in egg whites to the yolk-cream mixture. Add milk, bourbon, vanilla, and a pinch of nutmeg.

Transfer the eggnog to a covered container and chill in freezer overnight. Take out the frozen eggnog (Kayla calls it a "giant popsicle") about 4 hours before serving it, and transfer it to the container of your choice (punch bowl).

On Using Pasteurized Eggs: Eggnog you buy at a store has been pasteurized to kill off any *Salmonella* contamination in the eggs (bourbon is not a substitute for pasteurization). Pasteurized egg whites can be purchased in most grocery stores. According to the FDA, you need to pasteurize your yolks so they reach 160 degrees F. You can pasteurize egg yolks by making a "base" of milk (about 1 cup) plus 6 egg yolks. Over simmering water in a double boiler, slowly heat the mixture to 160 degrees F. Monitor the temperature with a food thermometer. As soon as it reaches 160 degrees F., immediately cool the base down over an ice bath to prevent the egg yolks from curdling. Refrigerate the base until you are ready to use it.
https://www.foodsafetynews.com/2018/12/alcohol-content-doesnt-matter-raw-eggs-can-spike-your-nog-with-salmonella/

Smörgåsbord Rice

Submitted by Janelle Alvstad-Mattson

Janelle's story: *"Growing up of Norwegian heritage in Minnesota, Smörgåsbord Rice was served at nearly every large family get together. As a child I didn't appreciate the meringue, but now as an adult, it's my favorite part. This dish is great because the sugar content is easily adjusted to taste and it's naturally gluten free."*

Ingredients:

1 cup rice, uncooked
6 cups water, salted
4 cups (1 quart, 32-ounces) whole milk
5 egg yolks
¾ cup white granulated sugar
1 tablespoon cornstarch
½ teaspoon salt
½ to 1 teaspoon almond extract
Slivered almonds

For meringue:
5 egg whites
10 tablespoons white granulated sugar

Method:

Boil the rice in the salted water for about 20 minutes, until rice is soft. Drain. Add the milk, 5 well beaten eggs yolks, and the cornstarch. Bring to a slow boil (about 5 minutes, stirring often). Add ¾ sugar (can add more for more of a dessert rice), salt, and almond flavoring. May add slivered almonds.

Place rice mixture in a large flat pan and cover with meringue made from 5 well-beaten egg whites and 10 tablespoons of granulated sugar. Brown in oven at 350 degrees F. for about 10 minutes.

Serves 6-8 as a main dish or 8-10 as a dessert.

Pancakes and Skillet Breads

Krupsua (Finnish Oven Pancake)

Submitted by Louise Kujala McGee

Louise's story: *"My grandmother (Mummu) made this often and especially at Christmas. I loved it and asked for it especially when I stayed at the farm for a week in the summer."*

Ingredients:

¼ cup (½ stick) butter (*not margarine*)
2 cups milk (warmed to lukewarm, about 100 to 110 degrees F.)
Pinch of salt
3 large eggs
1 cup all-purpose flour
¼ cup (scant) white granulated sugar
Additional sugar (sprinkled on finished pancake)

Method:

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Melt butter in a broiler pan* in the oven. Remove pan from oven. Keep the oven on.

Meanwhile warm the milk in a saucepan.

In a large bowl, beat the 3 eggs until light in color. While beating the eggs, add the salt and ¼ cup sugar. Blend in warmed milk and flour a little at a time.

Place batter in warm broiler pan (that has the melted butter) and bake for 25 minutes at 350 degrees F. Take out the pan and sprinkle pancake with a little sugar on top. Serve immediately.

*Note from Suz: if you don't have broiler pan, use can use a large cast iron fry pan or other heavy heat-proof frying pan.

Pannekaker (Norwegian Pancakes)

Source: Janet Lawrence's "Norwegian Food and Cooking"

Submitted by Suz Snedeker

Suz's story: *"After returning from our first trip to Norway in the summer of 2008, I bought a Norwegian cookbook. I used to make beignets for breakfast on Christmas morning, but they were too much work. Now I frequently make these wonderful pancakes on Christmas morning which are a thicker version of French crêpes. They can be filled with fresh strawberries, or with lingonberry jam as the filling, and always with a snowy dusting of confectioners' sugar."*

Ingredients:

2 tablespoon butter, melted
3 large eggs, beaten
1 cup all-purpose flour
1 ½ cups milk
Pinch of salt
Pinch of ground cinnamon (or ground cardamon)
Vegetable oil (or peanut oil) or non-stick cooking spray for lightly frying the pancakes
Lingonberry jam (for the filling). See end of recipe for other filling suggestions.

Method:

Melt the butter in a small microwavable bowl. In a medium bowl, beat the eggs together with a whisk. Sift the flour into the beaten eggs. Add the milk, melted butter, salt, and cinnamon, and mix together to form a smooth, thin batter. Let batter rest 30 minutes to an hour so the flour will be absorbed into the mixture.

Lightly grease a small frying pan (7 inches in diameter) or crepe pan, and heat it on the stove top on medium-high heat. When pan is hot, add enough batter to swirl around and cover the base of the pan to form a thin layer (about ¼ cup). Cook until lightly brown on the underside, then slip a spatula underneath the pancake and flip it over. Cook briefly on the other side until a spotted brown color. Using a spatula, move the pancake from the pan to a linen towel, and cover it with another towel to keep the pancake warm. Regrease the pan, and repeat with remaining batter.

To serve pancakes, spoon a line of your filling along the center of the pancake, and fold over the top and bottom of the pancake around the filling. Then place folded pancakes next to each other on a serving platter. Just before serving, dust pancakes with sifted confectioners' sugar.

Other Fillings:
- Fruit jam of any flavor
- Sliced strawberries and whipped cream
- Blueberries and sour cream
- Melted butter with a liberal sprinkling of cinnamon-sugar.

Pfannkuchen (German Pancake)

Submitted by Suz Snedeker (but made in our family by Jeff Snedeker).

Source: Irma S. Rombauer's "Joy of Cooking."

Story by Suz Snedeker: *"Jeff makes this pancake in a big cast iron frying pan. It's wonderfully light and fluffy, and is served right in the skillet. We've often had it during the Christmas season, but Jeff also makes it throughout the year for our 'big breakfast' on Saturday mornings. Jeff is the pancake and waffle maker in our family."*

Ingredients:

4 beaten egg yolks
2 tablespoons cornstarch
¼ cup lukewarm milk
¼ cup lukewarm water
¾ teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon white granulated sugar
Grated rind of 1 lemon
4 to 5 egg whites, beaten stiff
2 tablespoons butter

Method:

Preheat oven to 400 degrees F.

In a medium sized bowl, combine the egg yolks, cornstarch, milk, water, salt, sugar, and lemon rind, and stir until smooth.

In a separate small bowl, beat the 4 to 5 egg whites with an electric beater until stiff and peaks form.

On stove top, melt the butter in a heavy skillet (10-inch cast iron frying pan) and rotate pan so butter covers the bottom of the pan. When skillet is hot, pour in the batter.

Cook pancake over low to medium heat on the stovetop, partly covered with a lid, until it begins to set, and then place the skillet into your preheated oven until it is puffed and firm. Total cooking time is about 7 minutes. It should puff up well, but it may fall, so serve at once.

Can sprinkle pancake with confectioners' sugar and cinnamon, or you can serve with your favorite jam or jelly.

Potato Lefse I (Thin Norwegian Flat Bread)

Submitted by Janelle Alvstad-Mattson.

Janelle's story: *"Growing up of Norwegian heritage in Minnesota, lefse was a staple at every holiday meal and sometimes just at Sunday dinners. For the uninitiated, lefse is a pliable flat bread, similar to a thin tortilla, made with potato, flour, and butter, and cream. Although in America, lefse is often made as a traditional holiday treat, there's nothing particularly "holiday" about it. In communities with many Scandinavians, lefse can be found at fairs, fundraisers, and family dinners any time of the year.*

Below is the recipe I've been using with my tutorial. Some people may balk at the recipe using instant potatoes, but this is what my Norwegian grandmother preferred, so if it's good enough for her, it's good enough for me! This particular recipe nice, too, as it's easy to cut in half or more for a smaller batch, which is really more than enough for anyone just experimenting. You can just use a regular electric griddle or even a pan on the stove at about 400 degrees F.

If you are eating it fresh, you can use as much flour as you need to make it not stick, so you don't need to use the special pastry cloth, rolling pin, or lefse stick. You can use a regular rolling pin and a spatula instead of a stick if you roll it small (about the size of a dessert plate or saucer). If you are going to try to keep the lefse for later, that's when you need to get fancy with the using less flour, covering with cloths, etc. The flour makes it crispy and less pliable if you are not eating it fresh.

Once the dough is rolled and cooked, you can put butter and sugar or sugar and cinnamon on it, roll it up and eat it. If you really want to get into it like the little old ladies of Minnesota, there are good tutorials on YouTube."

Ingredients:

9 cups instant potato buds
2 tablespoons white granulated sugar
2 tablespoons salt
1 cup (2 sticks) butter or margarine
1 cup half & half cream
6 cups water
4 ½ cups all-purpose flour

Method:

Mixing the Dough:
The instructions below work with two-half batches to make batters easier to handle.

For the first half-batch, mix 4 ½ cups of potato buds in a mixing bowl with 1 tablespoon of sugar, and 1 tablespoon of salt. Set aside while heating the water, butter, and half & half.

Combine ½ cup butter (1 stick), ½ cup of half & half, and 3 cups of water in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Once the water, half & half, and butter are boiling, remove from the heat and add

the potato bud-sugar-salt mixture. Stir just until the potato mixture is well blended. (adding the flour comes later)

Repeat this process in the same manner for the second half-batch.

When both half-batches are done, combine them in a rectangular cake pan or roasting pan and pat down evenly. Place a paper towel over the potatoes and then cover with plastic wrap or aluminum foil. The paper towel will protect the potatoes from too much moisture by absorbing condensation that may form when the hot potatoes are refrigerated. Refrigerate for at least 4 hours.

After the potatoes have cooled, remove them from the refrigerator and divide the dough into 3 even batches. Remove one batch and place in a mixing bowl. Place the remaining batches back in the refrigerator until ready to use.

Add 1 ½ cups of flour to the first portion of potato mixture by hand. Continue to work the mixture by hand until it is mixed thoroughly and has a smooth, even texture.
Roll this piece into a log to divide or pull sections into balls of dough - larger than a golf ball but smaller than a baseball (egg sized).

Rolling Out Lefse:
Turn the lefse grill on to begin preheating before starting to roll out your first piece of lefse. Set grill at 400 degrees F.

Prepare the work surface by sprinkling with flour. If eating the lefse immediately, be generous with the flour and no special surface or equipment is fine. If you plan to refrigerate or freeze lefse for later use, it is best to use a cloth-covered lefse board or a pastry cloth and use as little extra flour as possible.

Using approximately ½ cup of flour, sprinkle the working surface with flour so that it covers an area slightly bigger than the size of the lefse pieces you are going to be rolling out.

Use the rolling pin to work this flour into the surface of the pastry cloth and to coat the rolling pin. If using a cloth cover on the rolling pin, be sure that is well seasoned with flour also. Brush excess flour off the rolling pin before beginning to roll out the lefse.

Once the flour is worked into the surface you can begin rolling a piece of lefse out. Take one section of dough and flatten into a small disc.

Place a little more flour in the center of the pastry cloth and place the flattened disc on the flour to coat the under-side and then turn the disk over and begin to roll out the lefse. Start rolling from the center out, rotating around the disc with each stroke. Roll out is similar to rolling out a pie crust. Try to keep the shape in a circle as you roll. If using a grooved rolling pin, make sure dough does not get stuck in the grooves.

If the dough does stick to the rolling pin, remove it immediately to prevent further problems with dough sticking. Dust the rolling pin with a little more flour if dough starts to stick.

Continue to roll out the dough until it is very thin and an even thickness (thinner than a tortilla)

Frying Lefse:
Carefully slide the lefse stick or spatula under the center of the rolled out dough. Insert all the way across the circle until the stick comes out the opposite side and then lift the piece from the work surface.

Gently lift the rolled out lefse and place half on the preheated grill and quickly unfold the remaining half onto the grill to get it to fry evenly.

Allow the lefse to cook on one side, checking often to see if it is beginning to brown. The lefse will begin to bubble slightly and brown spots will form on the bottom side as it is frying.

Turn the lefse once it has browned as desired. Some prefer their lefse browned only until speckled with light spots and others like theirs cooked until the spots are a darker brown. Use the spatula or lefse turning stick again and pick up through the middle. Flip the lefse over and use the spatula/lefse stick to unfold.

Fry the second side in the same manner as the first. If lefse bubbles up while frying, press them down gently so the lefse cooks evenly.

Cook until browned as desired. Check doneness often because it does not take long for it to fry on each side.

When the lefse is done, use your spatula or lefse stick to lift it off the grill and place it flat on a clean smooth towel. Cover the lefse with another towel and then continue to fry the remaining pieces of lefse dough in the same manner.

Eating and Storing Lefse:
Lefse is usually eaten buttered and sprinkled with sugar, then rolled up. Some eat it with cinnamon or jam, or even savory with deli meats and cheese.

If you are storing lefse for later use, allow it to cool thoroughly then fold in half twice and slide into a plastic baggie. It will typically keep well in the refrigerator for a week or can be frozen for longer storage.

Potato Lefse II (History and Merlin's Recipe)

Suz Snedeker's story: *"When cleaning out the St. Luke library a few years ago, a little pamphlet was found, entitled '91 ways to Serve Lefse' by Merlin J. Hoiness. This book was in its seventh printing in 1999. Louise McGee passed on the book to me. I think everyone knows I have quite a cookbook collection. So, it sat amongst my cookbooks for several years until November 15th, 2020, when we had a Zoom coffee-hour after Worship services, and the conversation turned to making lefse. Who would think we had so many lefse makers at St. Luke, and why haven't we had a lefse making party! After the Zoom coffee hour, I searched my bookshelves, found the lefse booklet, and started reading about lefse.*

The booklet's introduction mentions that consuming potatoes was a way of life for Norwegians, but before refrigeration, there was no way to keep leftover cooked potatoes from spoiling. Hence, lefse, a thin, dry flat bread made of potatoes, were made since the lefse could be kept for days or even weeks when stored in a tight container in a dry place. This was especially an important method for food preservation to get through the winter months, and lefse was a mainstay of fisherman in Norway."

The following lefse recipe is from the '91 ways to Serve Lefse' booklet. It was Mr. Hoiness's grandmother's recipe. I've added a few other notes to this recipe, and more information on lefse-making equipment and how to order it is in a section that follows the recipe.

Ingredients:

3 cups peeled and chopped potatoes (russets best)
3 tablespoons vegetable shortening, melted
2 teaspoons salt
1 cup flour

Method:

Boil the potatoes, but do not overcook. Drain well. Rise or mash potatoes and add melted shortening and salt while they are still warm. Cool and refrigerate. Mix in flour and make into paddies about the size of an egg.

Dust the rolling pin with flour (note: this is usually either a regular rolling pin covered with a stockinet or a corrugated rolling pin with the groves packed with flour). Place patty in the center of cloth (Suz's note: lefse is rolled out on round wooden boards with cloth covers) and roll out paper thin. Turn and roll on both sides.

Lift with lefse stick and place on preheated grill (500 degrees F.). When bubbles appear, turn lefse over.
Bake until brown spots appear. Remove from grill and lay between dish towels until cooled. Store in tight container or plastic bag in refrigerator.

Suz's notes: The ways you can serve lefse are endless. Most common is to cut the lefse round in half, spread with butter, sprinkle with cinnamon and white sugar, roll up tight, and cut in 3-inch pieces and serve (Norwegian rugelach?). Lingenberry jam is also a favorite sweet filling.

Lefse Making Equipment:

Equipment used to make lefse includes a lefse griddle (now are electric), a round wooden lefse board and cloth cover, turning stick, grooved rolling pin, and a lefse cozy to keep grilled lefse warm. Sometimes, pictures show that the rolling pin is covered with a stockinet (cloth covering), others use grooved rolling pins packed full of flour. Modern grills are made from aluminum though some have non-stick surfaces. I'd love to know if the original grills before electricity were cast-iron.

"Bethany Housewares" based in Iowa still manufacturers lefse making equipment. Equipment is sold by and can be mail-ordered from: Fleet Farm stores in the Midwest, and websites for "Everything Kitchens" and "lefsetime.com"

As a Christmas present to myself, I bought a lefse board, grooved rolling pin (big and heavy), and turning stick. But I'm going to try using my steel and cast iron griddles instead of the electric griddle pictured below.

Typical Lefse starting kit made by Bethany Housewares, including instant potato-lefse mix, lefse board and pastry cover, electric lefse grill, lefse turning stick, and grooved rolling pin.

Pastries and Fried Specialties

"Fattigmann" or Poor Man's Cookies - a traditional Norwegian treat

Submitted by Nicole Nelson

Nicole's story: *"Of all the family Christmas cookies we would make (lefsa, krumkake, sugar, etc.), these were always my favorite. We would get the wok out and all its various accoutrements and it be one of the rare times we would actually fry in the kitchen. We had a zig-zag pastry wheel that we would use to cut to cookies and that gave them nice frilly edges. Though this recipe fell off the collection of annual treats, it's still one of my favorites and I recently pulled the recipe back out to make and share with friends."*

History of "Fattigmann" Cookies, from: *Thanks for the Food: a Norwegian Food Blog*
Some say these cookies got their name because the ingredients used to make these cookies were expensive when they were invented over 100 years ago, they were said to leave their baker "in the poor house". Others say these cookies got their name because they were the only cookies the less fortunate could afford to make around the holidays. Either way, they are beloved in Norway and for some, Christmas just isn't Christmas without fattigmann.
http://thanksforthefood.com/norwegian-fattigmann-recipe/?fbclid=IwAR2ix3YUWAQBubNeEgrsjKpl4tugt2Q5yx0ZbdiykJfa2Iu4quXMhR3xvKQ

Ingredients:

3 large eggs
½ cup white granulated sugar
½ cup heavy cream
1 teaspoon baking powder
About 3 to 3 ½ cups all-purpose flour - enough to make the dough workable plus extra for rolling
Optional spice(s) for flavor: cardamom, cinnamon, allspice, or any flavor you want
Confectioners' sugar or spice/sugar for coating
Oil for frying

Method:

In a large bowl, mix the eggs, sugar, cream, baking powder, flour, and spice(s) together to form a dough ball. Allow the dough to rest for 20-30 minutes.

Roll out dough on a floured surface to about 1/8-inch thick. Using a knife or rolling cutter, cut the cookies into diamond shapes. Cut a slit in the center of the cookie, long ways. Carefully lift the cookies from the counter and pull the top through the slit; this will give it its unique twisted shape. Repeat with all cookies, setting formed cookies on a tray after twisting.

Heat oil in a deep, heavy pan to 360-375 degrees F. You will need enough oil in the pan so the oil will cover the cookies, or use a home fryer if you have one. Fry the cookies until golden brown, flipping once to fry both sides. Drain on paper towels. Dust with confectioners' sugar or spice/sugar mixture. Serve warm or store in an airtight container for a couple weeks.

Italian Prune-Filled Christmas Cookies

Submitted by Suz Snedeker

Suz's story: *"My Aunt Sally (my mother's older sister) definitely ruled as the baker in the family. She learned how to cook and bake at the elbow of my Italian grandmother (my grandmother did not write down any of her recipes). However, almost no one could reproduce the written recipes my Aunt Sally gave to them. We will never know if this was by accident or design (God forbid someone else in the family would bake as well as she could). I distinctly remember that my mother tried to make my Aunt Sally's recipe for prune cookies and the dough fell apart and the cookies burned to a crisp (since the recipe said to bake at 450 degrees F.). By looking at other similar recipes, I've hopefully filled in the gaps and have captured the cookie of my childhood.*

Filling Ingredients:

2 ¼ cups pitted prunes, chopped (about a 1 lb. package)
½ cup boiling water
¼ cup honey
2 tablespoons fruit jam (strawberry, seedless raspberry, or marmalade)
¼ cup white granulated sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 teaspoon orange extract
¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
½ cup coarsely chopped walnuts (use more if you like nuts)

Method: for Filling

Mix all ingredients together (EXCEPT THE NUTS) in microwave-proof bowl, and microwave on high for 1 minute; stir and microwave for another minute. (My grandmother would have boiled the prunes in the water and honey, but it's a lot easier to do in the microwave.)

Add the nuts to the plumped prunes and mix well. Make the dough.

Dough Ingredients:

2 ¼ cups all-purpose flour
¼ cup white granulated sugar
2 ½ teaspoon baking powder
¼ teaspoon salt
¼ teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1/3 cup butter (~ 5 tablespoons), melted
¼ cup milk
2 large eggs

Egg wash: 1 large egg plus 1 tablespoon of water, whisked together
Optional: Colored sprinkles for decorating

Method for Dough:

For the dough, mix dry ingredients in a large bowl (flour, sugar, baking powder, salt, and spices). Make a well in the center of the flour mixture and add the milk and eggs. Using a fork, bring the dry ingredients to the center to incorporate the dry ingredients into the wet ingredients. Blend well. Helps to get your “hands” into it using a pinching motion to blend the ingredients.

Turn out the dough onto a well-floured board and knead for about two minutes until the dough is smooth. Invert a big bowl over the dough, and let dough rest 20 minutes. Wrap up the dough in wax paper, then in plastic wrap, and chill it in the refrigerator for about an hour (or longer).

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.

Divide the dough into three parts. Roll out each piece of dough on a floured board to about 15 x 10-inches. Put one-third of the filling along the middle on the long access of the dough rectangle. Brush egg wash along all edges of the dough (about a ½-inch). Bring the sides of the long sides of the dough up over the prune filling to meet in the middle and crimp the edges to seal the dough. Press the ends of the dough together to seal the ends. Transfer roll seam side up onto a well-greased cookie sheet or to a greased parchment paper-lined cookie sheet.

Repeat for the other 2 pieces of dough. Place two loaves on one cookie sheet, and the third on the second cookie sheet. Brush loaves with egg wash.

Bake in preheated oven for about 15-20 minutes.

When done, carefully transfer loaves to a wire rack to cool.

Decoration: You can ice the cookies with a mixture of confectioners’ sugar and water. Make sure the icing is fairly stiff but spreadable. It’s traditional to scatter tiny, multi-colored sprinkles over the icing, but I found that if the icing is not really stiff, the sprinkles dissolve in the icing and the colors of the sprinkles ran into the icing.

Alternative dough with pin-wheel style: You can also use prepared pie crust dough. Roll out a Pillsbury pie crust (pre-made) or the dough described above into a rectangle, then spread the filling on the dough, up to 1 inch from the edges. Roll filled dough up on the long side like a jelly roll, and wet and crimp the edges with water or egg wash to seal. Transfer roll to greased parchment paper/cookie sheet, apply egg wash, and bake with the seam side up in preheated oven for 15 minutes. Transfer to a wire rack to cool. Slice into ¾-inch pieces. It will be similar to rugelach.

Alternative filling: You can also use a combination of prunes, dates, and raisins in the filling. I have used 8-ounces of prunes, 2-ounces of chopped dates, and 2-ounces of raisins, plus the jam/honey, extracts, etc. but, with NO added sugar.

Yield: 3 loaves; about 15 bars per loaf, or about 4 dozen cookie pieces if you use pinwheel style.

Krumkake

Submitted by Sonja Nelson on behalf of the Nelson family.

Sonja's story: *"A classic Norwegian Christmas cookie, Krumkake (KROOM-ka-ka) is a super thin sugar cookie made on a hot press and then wrapped over a Krumkake roller. The griddle can either be a traditional single press for the stovetop or an electric double press. When using the stovetop griddle, you want a medium heat and make sure that both sides have been heated. As you bake the cookies, you may have to switch which side is down as the butter coats them. Have a knife handy, so if any excess the splurges out the sides, it can be scraped off. Often confused with the Italian Pizzelle, a Pizzelle is traditionally thicker and flat and may have anise in it; Krumkake is thin, rolled, and may have cardamom in it."*

For your viewing pleasure, a video of Krumkake being rolled by the Nelson family.
https://www.facebook.com/wendi.bussparisi/videos/10218003231215565

Ingredients:

1 cup white granulated sugar
4 large eggs
½ cup (1 stick) butter
1 cup all-purpose flour
vanilla extract (to taste)
ground cardamom (to taste)

Method for Stove-Top Krumkake Griddle:

Pre-heat griddle on medium heat. Make sure to heat both sides.

Mix all the ingredients together. Open the griddle. Using a tablespoon, drop batter onto the hot griddle, and close the griddle. Flip griddle once. When done, using a knife, gently lift the edge of the cookie and roll onto the Krumkake roller. Cool slightly on the roller to maintain form. Gently remove from the roller to finish cooling. Store in an airtight container.

Krumkake can be enjoyed plain or filled with ice cream, whipped topping, or for the really adventurous, shrimp dip (blame a fire department).

With leftovers or crumbs, crush in food processor; roll a scoop of ice cream in the crumbs and re-freeze ice cream.

Griddles (stove-top and electric) and rollers are available at Ingebretsen's Nordic Marketplace, https://www.ingebretsens.com/ See more on the Nelson Family's Krumkake Irons at the end of this section.

Krumkake (and Its Italian Cousins)

Submitted by Suz Snedeker

Source: Recipe for krumkake batter has been adapted from recipes found on “allrecipes.com”

Special Equipment: An electric krumkake or pizzelle waffle maker, or a krumkake iron that is heated on the stove, and a wooden krumkake cone (see note on equipment suppliers below).

Suz’s story: *“I knew nothing about krumkake so it was fascinating to do a little research about this cookie. Norwegian krumkake, meaning ‘curved cake’ is a waffle cookie made from a thin batter of flour, butter, eggs, and sugar that is baked in a patterned two-sided waffle-maker to yield a thin cookie that can be molded into the shape of a cone using a conical krumkake roller. Krumkaker, filled with whipped cream, are traditionally served on Christmas Eve. Krumcake is a close cousin of the Italian pizzelle waffle cookie.”* (see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Krumkake)

Ingredients:

½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter
1 cup white granulated sugar
2 eggs
1 cup milk
1 ½ cup all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon vanilla extract or other flavorings
Spiced variation: add small amounts of ground cinnamon, cloves, and nutmeg

Method:

Preheat your electric waffle maker or stove-top iron according to manufacturer’s instructions.

Using a stand mixer or portable electric mixer, in a large bowl cream the butter and sugar together. Then add the eggs one at a time, mixing well after each addition. Pour in the milk, sift in the flour, and add the vanilla extract. Mix well until you have a smooth batter. (Some recipes call for letting the batter sit for an hour before making the waffles so the flour fully hydrates.)

The amount of batter you place on the hot iron depends on the diameter of your waffle maker, so you may have to experiment. Start with small amounts, in the range of 1 teaspoon to 1 tablespoon. Place the batter on the hot iron, close the lid, and cook until the waffle is light brown. This may be as little as 30 seconds. Open waffle iron, carefully peel/remove the waffle from the iron (remember, the waffle iron is VERY hot), and quickly roll the waffle around a dowel or a krumkake cone before the waffle hardens. It will take about 10 seconds for the waffle to set and harden. Then remove waffle from the dowel/cone and cool completely on a wire rack or a sheet of waxed paper or parchment paper. When cool, cones can be filled with whipped cream.

Krumkake making equipment made by Bethany Housewares can be mail ordered from: **Lefsetime.com** https://www.lefsetime.com/store/Scandinavian-Cookware/ or **Fleet Farm** https://www.fleetfarm.com/detail/bethany-housewares-electric-krumkake-iron/0000000013052

Nelson Family Krumkake Irons

Submitted by Everett Nelson

There are several Krumkake irons in the Nelson family. I have the two that belonged to my parents, Russell and Ruth Nelson. Baking Krumkake was an all afternoon job when Mom set up her production equipment. She and Dad had varying options on the ideal cookie. Mom was of the very lightly golden brown school. Dad felt that the cookie needed just a half minute for a darker result. In his opinion that brought forward the flavor of the cookie.

Early in our married years, my ex-wife Diane was given one which Nicole and her brother Chris have access to. Both Nicole and Chris have their own griddles, from when they were living out on their own. Sonja has one, purchased when she moved to Maryland and wanted to produce her own supply of the delicate crispy Krumkake.

These five are the traditional cast aluminum stove top model. I also have the electric one which Dad got for Mom when her multiple sclerosis reached the point that is was difficult for her to stand at the stove to bake Krumkake. After Mom passed away, Dad continued to bake dozens of Krumkake each December. Many of them were given to friends who enjoyed his tasty treats.

The stovetop iron (left) is labeled Scandinavian Krumkake Iron, Nordic Ware, Minneapolis, MN. The electric one (right) is Krumkake Baker No.350, Vitantonio Mfg. Co., Eastlake Ohio. Vitantonio produced electric pizzelle bakers, waffle irons, and other appliances.

Historical reference for your interest on the history of Krumkake makers:
https://americanhistory.si.edu/collections/search/object/nmah_1321759
https://www.homeworldbusiness.com/italian-kitchenware-specialist-gene-vitantonio-dies/

Pīrāgi, Latvian Bacon Rolls (Traditional Recipe)

Submitted by Maija Hinkle

Maija's story: *"These are an essential food for a Latvian Christmas, although nowadays they are available throughout the year. In our family we prefer to make them with other meat and vegetarian fillings."*

Ingredients:

Yeast dough:
1 quart (4 cups) whole milk
½ cup white granulated sugar
1/3 cup cooking oil
1 tablespoon salt
1 teaspoon ground cardamom
1/3 lb. butter (about 11.5 tablespoons, 1 stick plus 3 tablespoons)
12 cups all-purpose flour (sift after measuring)
½ cup lukewarm water
2 envelopes dry yeast
2 large eggs, beaten

Filling:
2 lbs. bacon (cut off about ¼ lb. from the fat end of each)
½ lb. ham (smoked; **no** water added)
1 medium onion, finely chopped (may be omitted)
salt and pepper to taste

Method:

Prepare the dough:
Heat the milk in a saucepan until bubbles form around the sides of the saucepan. Remove from heat; add sugar, oil, salt, and cardamom; stir, transfer to a large bowl, and let cool.

In a small bowl, dissolve yeast in the lukewarm water (a pinch of sugar may be added).

When the milk mixture has cooled to medium warm, add about half of the flour (6 cups) and beat vigorously with a wooden spoon to make a thin batter. Add the yeast mixture, blend in thoroughly. Add the rest of the flour and knead in the container (bowl) until dough does not stick to hands.

Add the butter and continue kneading until butter is thoroughly blended in. (The dough will be very smooth; it will not stick to the hands or container).

Sprinkle dough with flour, cover loosely with a clean cloth; place in a warm spot to rise until a little more than doubled in bulk (1 ½ to 2 hours, depending on temperature).

Filling:
Chop bacon and ham very fine, add the onion (if desired), add salt and pepper to taste, and blend well.
Note: Bacon is easier to chop when it is **frozen**; but have the filling at room temperature when making the rolls.

Forming the rolls:
Place about ½ of the dough on a pastry sheet; pull out one side, flatten, place about 1 teaspoon of the filling on it, fold over and cut out with a small glass (4-inches in diameter) or large ravioli cutter. Make sure that none of the filling remains between the cut edges. Pinch the edge closed with fingers or the back of a fork.

Baking the rolls:
Place each pastry on a baking sheet; let rise on the pan for 20-30 minutes. Brush with beaten egg twice, when first made and just before placing in the oven.

Bake at 450 degrees F. for about 15 minutes.

Additional hints:
The container for the dough may be an enameled bowl or an earthenware bowl. Kneading in the container, rather than on a pastry board prevents addition of too much flour, which may make the dough too dry.

The dough rises very nicely if placed in a lukewarm oven. Heat the oven to about 100 degrees F., shut it off, open oven door. When the sides of the oven are not too hot to touch with the palm of the hand, place the dough container in to rise, then shut the oven door.

When making the rolls, the dough should be very elastic and smooth and should not need any flouring.

The cutting of each roll goes much faster if a ravioli cutter (round) is used - it seals the edges as it cuts.

Pīrāgi, Latvian Rolls (Maija's Variations)
(with savory, vegetarian or sweet fillings)

Submitted by Maija Hinkle

Maija's story: *"Instead of the traditional Latvian pīrāgi made with smoked bacon and a yeast dough (see recipe on preceding pages), my grandkids' teacher at Latvian camp came up with a much easier version for the dough - Pillsbury Grands! Biscuits. These pīrāgi are easy enough for even five- and six-year old kids to make. To add excitement and accommodate dietary preferences we have substituted other flavorful meat, vegetarian or sweet fillings, for the traditional bacon. Making these pīrāgi has been our family pre-Christmas activity now for years, with each child trying to come up with the next favorite filling."*

Ingredients:

1 container Pillsbury Grands! Flaky Layers Biscuits (in refrigerator section of grocery store)
All-purpose flour for dusting the pastry board
1 large egg, slightly beaten

Filling 1
1 lb. of any of the following sausages: kielbasa, turkey kielbasa, r smoked sausage
1 small onion, chopped
Salt and pepper to taste

Filling 2
1 lb. mushrooms, chopped
1 small onion, chopped
Salt and pepper to taste

Filling 3
1 container Baba Ghanouj (eggplant and tahini)
1 can chickpeas (garbanzo beans), drained

Filling 4
Soft cheese, like Brie or ricotta
Jam or cranberry sauce, or raspberries or pieces of soft fruit

Filling 5
Marshmallows
Chocolate chips
May add a tart jam, like cranberry or lingonberry sauce

(see next page for Filling Preparation Method)

Method:

Preparation of meat or vegetarian filling (Fillings 1 and 2):
Chop the onion and sauté it in an oiled pan until limp. Add the chopped sausage or mushrooms and fry until the meat or mushrooms have lost most of their water and the onion is translucent and the edges are starting to brown. Drain extra fat from the pan. Add salt and pepper to taste. Cool the fillings before use.

Forming the *pīrāgi*:
Separate the layers of each biscuit into two or preferably three circles. For one carton of the Pillsbury Grands!, you should have 24 circles. Place the biscuits on a floured pastry board. Fill the circles one by one with filling, by placing a heaping teaspoon of the filling in the center of the circle. Fold one edge over the filling to completely cover the filling. Using a round ravioli cutter to cut and press together the curved edge of the *pīrāgs*. Make sure that the ravioli cutter has sealed the filling into the *pīrāgs*.

For the other fillings use your judgment as to how much filling will not overstretch the dough. You can form additional circles from the sliver of dough left over from each cut by the ravioli cutter. Alternatively for the sweet fillings, you can add the filling and then pinch together the circles from all sides to form a "pocket", making sure that the top is sealed.

Baking the *pīrāgi*:
Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Place the *pīrāgi* on a cookie sheet and brush with beaten egg. Let rest for 10 minutes or so to let the dough rise a bit. Bake in preheated oven for 13-16 minutes until golden brown.

Serving the *pīrāgi*:
The *pīrāgi* taste best when warm. To keep them warm as long as possible after baking, I usually place them in a bowl lined and covered by tea towels. You can also heat them up in an oven before serving.

Pizzelles

Submitted by Suz Snedeker

Suz's story: *"Pizzelles are a wafer-thin Italian cookie that are made in a special waffle maker with a decorative pattern. Mine pizzelle maker is electric, but old-fashioned pizzelle makers were made of a heavy metal and were placed directly on the gas burner of a stove. This recipe is from Tina Ceprano who was my mother's best friend and her maid of honor. Like my mother, Tina was the daughter of Italian immigrants."*

Ingredients:

1 ¾ cup all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
3 large eggs
¾ cup white granulated sugar
½ cup (1 stick) butter, melted
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Method:

Sift flour and baking powder together over wax paper and then set aside. In a separate bowl, beat the eggs and sugar together until frothy. Add the melted butter and vanilla to the egg mixture. Add flour mixture to the creamed butter-egg mixture. Batter should be stiff enough to drop by a spoon. Batter can be refrigerated, but use within a day.

To make the waffles, follow directions that come with your electric pizzelle maker. Be cautious, as the waffle maker is very hot, and the pizzelles cook very quickly.

Cool pizzelles on a wire rack.

Optional: You can sprinkle the cookies with confectioners' sugar if you wish.

Chocolate variation: Add 1-2 tablespoons of cocoa powder to the flour mixture.

Note from Suz: I've used my pizzelle maker to make cookies used for ice cream sandwiches.

Makes16 large pizzelles.

Rosette Cookies

Submitted by Suz Snedeker.

Suz's Story*: "My Aunt Sally used to make these cookies at Christmas time. I have a set of rosette irons, and will have to be brave and finally try to make these cookies."*

Rosette cookies (called *Struva* in Swedish, *Rosettbakkels* in Norwegian, and *Rosettes* in Italian), are made by dipping a heated flower-shaped iron into batter and then deep-fat frying the cookie. Both Scandinavians and Italians claim these cookies as their own. Many shapes beyond rosettes are available, see: https://www.bakedeco.com/dept.asp?id=664

Ingredients:

1 cup all-purpose flour, sifted (very important to sift the flour; prevents lumps in the batter)
1 large egg (some recipes use 2 eggs for a richer batter)
Pinch of salt
1 cup whole or 2% milk
1 tablespoon white granulated sugar
1 to 2 teaspoon(s) vanilla extract (or other flavored extracts like lemon or orange)
Optional: can add cinnamon (1 teaspoon) or nutmeg (½ teaspoon) to the batter
Vegetable oil for frying
Confectioners' sugar for serving

Method:

Blend flour, egg, salt, milk, granulated sugar, and extracts together until smooth. Cover and refrigerate the batter for at least 2 hours or preferably overnight before using. This allows the flour to hydrate and lets the air bubbles dissipate. Oil should be heated in a heavy Dutch oven / or deep saucepan (oil depth about 2-3 inches) to 365 degrees F. (Note: recipes ranged from using 350 to 375 degrees F.). Use a candy thermometer to monitor the temperature; you may have to adjust the heat to achieve a constant temperature.

The rosette iron should be attached to the rod (they usually screw in). Immerse the rosette in hot oil for 2 minutes to "season" the iron, remove iron from the oil and blot on paper towels, then keeping the rosette iron as level as possible, dip the hot iron into the batter to cover ¾ up the sides of the iron (do not fully immerse), then re-immerse the battered rosette iron in the hot oil for about 18 to 30 seconds or until the rosette is golden brown. Most of the time the fried rosette will pop off the iron easily, though you may need a knife to help pop it off, then flip the rosette and fry the other side. Remove rosette from the oil with tongs, and drain on paper towels. Your first rosette will not be pretty. Be patient, the rest will!

For each cookie, re-immerse the rosette iron (bare, with no batter) for 1 minute in the hot oil, drain briefly on paper towels, dip in batter and proceed as before. Be super careful as the batter may cause the hot oil to spatter and the rosette iron and rod will be very hot as well. Cool the cookies completely before storing in an air-tight container. Just before serving, dust with confectioners' sugar. Makes about 5 dozen cookies.

Rugelach

Submitted by Liz Peck

Source: Adapted from rugelach recipes found in “Baking at Home with the Culinary Institute of America” and “Baking with Julia.”

Liz’s story: *“I first encountered real rugelach (not the fake stuff from the supermarket) at a little Jewish bakery on the lower east side of Manhattan. The cookies I made with this recipe took me right back to that street corner, where we ate all the cookies straight from the wax paper bag. Not even one made it to the subway stop a few blocks away.”*

Time to Prepare: 4 hours (3 hours of preparation/baking; 1 hour of dough rest time)

Yield: 64 cookies

Special Equipment:
Food processor, fitted with a metal blade
Standing mixer, fitted with a paddle attachment
Cookie sheets, preferably heavy half sheet pans (available at the kitchen supply store)

Ingredients:

1 ½ cups pecans*
2 cups all-purpose flour, plus extra for dusting
¼ teaspoon of salt
1 cup (2 sticks) unsalted butter, at room temperature
8-ounce (one package) of cream cheese, at room temperature
1 cup prune butter (sometimes called plum butter)**
Vegetable cooking spray (like Pam) for greasing cookie sheets or parchment paper to line cookie sheets
1/3 cup cinnamon sugar (1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon mixed with 1/3 cup white sugar)
Egg wash (1 large egg whisked with 2 tablespoons cold milk or water)

* The pecans may be replaced with walnuts; both nuts are commonly used in this recipe. If possible, purchase unsalted raw (unroasted) nuts and keep them in the freezer, where they will last for up to a year. The oils in nuts cause them to turn rancid over time, and they have a shorter shelf life if stored at room temperature.

** Prune/plum butter was hard to find, but I finally did locate it in the international section at Tops near the Triphammer Mall. Whenever you find it, stock up. It is a LOT better in this recipe than regular jams. Trust me. If you can’t find the prune/plum butter, consider making apricot/almond filling instead. (***See end of recipe below.)

Method:

To toast the pecans, preheat the oven to 325 degrees F. Spread the nuts in one layer on an ungreased baking sheet and toast them until golden brown, 7-15 minutes. Stir nuts occasionally as they toast; those on the edges of the sheet may brown more quickly. Once they look and smell toasted, take the baking sheet out of the oven and transfer the nuts to a cool container so they will not continue to toast.

Sift the flour and salt into a bowl and set aside.

In a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream together the butter and cream cheese on medium speed for about 2 minutes. On low speed, mix in the sifted dry ingredients until just combined. Scrape down bowl as needed to blend evenly. Gather the dough into a ball, wrap it tightly in plastic wrap and chill until firm, about 15-20 minutes.

To make the filling, place the toasted pecans in a food processor fitted with a metal blade and chop, pulsing the machine on and off, until you form an even, coarse paste. (The key word here is “paste.” Think about making a pecan butter which you could spread on toast.) Transfer pecan paste to a bowl and blend in the prune butter. (Mixture will keep in the refrigerator for two weeks.)

Remove dough from refrigerator. On a lightly floured surface, roll the dough to an even thickness of 1 inch and fold in thirds, like a letter. Wrap the dough tightly in plastic wrap and let it rest for at least 1 hour and up to overnight in the refrigerator. (If you are leaving it overnight, after the first hour of chilling, divide the dough into four equally sized disks and return them, individually wrapped, to the refrigerator.)

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F.

Line cookie sheets with parchment paper or lightly spray them with vegetable cooking spray.

Remove dough from the refrigerator. If it has been in chilling overnight, let the dough warm up some before beginning to work with it. Ideally, it should be neither room temperature nor rock solid.

On a lightly floured surface, roll each of the 4 disks into 10-inch rounds. Transfer each round to its own piece of aluminum foil which has been placed on a cutting board or countertop. Spread one fourth of the filling over each round. Sprinkle each round with 1 tablespoon of the cinnamon sugar. Using a pizza cutter, cut the round into 16 wedges. (When making the last 8 cuts, cut from the outside edge to the inside of the round.) Roll the wedges up, starting with the wide outside edge.

With a spatula, transfer the cookies to the prepared cookie sheet. Brush each cookie with the egg wash and sprinkle with cinnamon sugar.

Cook one sheet (16 cookies) at a time until the cookies are a light golden brown, 25-30 minutes. Half-way through baking, rotate the pan, front to back, for even baking. Transfer to wire racks and cool completely before serving.

They will last at least 4 days at room temperature in an airtight container, separated with layers of wax paper or parchment paper. They should freeze well for a month. To freeze, put them on cookie sheets until solid, then transfer them to zip-lock freezer bags or airtight plastic containers. To defrost, put them in the fridge overnight and then reheat them in a 250 degree F. oven.

*****Alternative Filling for Rugelach: Apricot/Almond**

Ingredients:

2 cups whole dried apricots
¼ cup packed light brown sugar
1 ½ tablespoons amaretto liqueur or fresh lemon juice
¼ cup finely chopped toasted blanched almonds

Method:

Place the apricots in a medium saucepan, cover with water and simmer until the fruit is soft, 10-15 minutes. Drain the apricots, saving about 1 tablespoon of liquid. Using a food processor fitted with a metal blade, puree the fruit with the brown sugar and amaretto (or lemon juice). Add the reserved liquid if the mixture seems too stiff to be spreadable. Transfer the puree to a bowl and stir in the almonds. Mixture can be kept in refrigerator for two weeks.

Struffoli (Neapolitan Honey Balls)

Submitted by Suz Snedeker.

Source: First recipe adapted from Elodia Rigante's "Italian Immigrant Cooking," second recipe is the family recipe from my Aunt Sally Perry and her daughter Mary-Anne Peotrowski.

Suz's story: *Struffoli are also called 'Honey Balls,' though the direct translation is 'cotton balls.' The version made in Naples, Italy is an egg pasta dough that you form into thin ropes, cut into little balls and deep-fat fry. The dough balls are coated with a honey glaze and decorated with a shower of colorful sprinkles and candied cherries. It's traditional to mound the honey-coated balls into the shape of a Christmas wreath. Most families would buy their struffoli from a good Italian bakery, and it was often a 'hostess' present you would bring to a Christmas Eve or Christmas Day dinner. But, when my mother (Edie Contenti Tougas) moved from Rhode Island to Ithaca in 2001, we were on our own. No bakeries sold struffoli in Ithaca, NY. The family joke was every year we would try another recipe, but we could never duplicate the cookie-confection we savored from the Italian bakeries of my childhood.*

The first recipe is somewhat different from my family's recipe, but I really like it. The author of the cookbook is from the 'heel' of Italy (southern-most tip of Italy).This recipe has more eggs and sugar than my family's recipe, and yields a dough ball that is more of a doughnut consistency. The second recipe is the 'family' recipe from my Aunt Sally (Santina Contenti Perry), as transcribed by her daughter, Mary-Anne Perry Peotrowski. But my mother did not have any luck with this recipe (maybe you will). My neighbor, Victoria Pilalo, recently gave me her mother Fiorinta's recipe. It's very similar, but uses 8 eggs instead of 4 eggs.

Version 1: Doughnut-Like Version of Struffoli

Ingredients for Dough:

2 cups all-purpose flour
PLUS some flour for the board for kneading
½ cup white granulated sugar
1 teaspoon baking powder
¼ cup (½ stick), cut into small cubes
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3 large eggs
Vegetable oil for frying (use a large sauce-pan with about three inches of oil)
Honey (about 1 cup)

Method:

Mix the dry ingredients (flour, sugar, and baking powder) in a large bowl. Mix in the butter with a pastry blender, then add the vanilla and eggs and mix well with a fork. Turn out the dough onto a well-floured board and knead for five minutes until the dough is very smooth. The dough is sticky, so make sure you dust flour on your hands. Sprinkle some flour on the dough and cover with a clean dish towel, and let it rest about 30 minutes.

Roll the dough into ropes no more than ½-inch thick, and cut the ropes into little pieces to make the dough balls. Fry about a dozen at a time, as the dough ball will double in size when fried. It's best if one person is making the dough balls and a second person is doing the frying as the dough balls will turn golden brown very quickly and need all of your attention. Be very careful as the oil will splatter when you put the dough into the hot oil. Transfer fried items to paper towels to drain.

While fried balls are still warm, put into a large bowl, and pour the honey over the balls, gently coating them. Then, transfer the coated balls to a large dish or platter and make in the shape of a wreath. Decorate with multi-colored candy sprinkles and candied cherries. Cool completely.

Version 2: Family Recipe (Contenti Family) for Naples-Style Struffoli

Ingredients:

4 large eggs (other recipes I've seen use 8 eggs)
4 tablespoons of oil (I use regular, not EVO, olive oil)
½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 tablespoon fresh squeezed lemon juice
Rind of half a lemon, minced
4 tablespoons white granulated sugar
2 tablespoons orange juice
Rind from ½ and orange, minced
Pinch of salt
¾ teaspoon baking powder
4 cups all-purpose flour, sifted*
Vegetable oil to fry struffoli (about 2-3 inches deep)

(*Aunt Sally's recipe used 4 cups of flour. Other recipes use 3 1/3 to 3 ½ cups of flour.)

Method:

Beat the first 10 ingredients together. Gradually add flour and baking powder until the dough is semi-soft. Knead on a floured board until the dough is smooth and blisters form. Cut dough into small pieces and roll into the shape of a pencil, and cut into small ½-inch pieces. Fry until golden brown in hot oil. Drain on paper towels. Put dough balls in a large bowl and make the honey glaze.

Honey Glaze:
In a small saucepan, Melt ¼ cup of sugar with a tablespoon or two of water. After sugar is melted add half a jar (half a pound) of honey, about 1 cup. Heat the honey mixture until it boils. Add lemon juice and a piece of butter (no amount given), and mix well. Pour the honey mixture over the fried dough balls and mix well to coat the dough balls. Form the coated balls into the shape of a wreath on a platter and sprinkle with chopped nuts (slivered almonds) and candy sprinkles. Allow to cool. Honey will harden somewhat after it cools.

Pies and Tarts

Champion Cherry Pie

Submitted by Susan Wohlhueter

Susan's story: *"This recipe was given to me 25 years ago by our friends, Cindy and Dick Skelton from Lewisburg, Pennsylvania, who came to Ithaca annually to attend a Cornell hockey weekend. Cornell usually won when they were in town, and Coach Mike Shaffer liked to see them! The secret is to buy OREGON TART CHERRIES, found in the fruit department of P&C or Wegmans in a black and red can. There is a possibility finding a cherry pit in the fruit, so be careful."*

Pie Crust: Refrigerated pre-made pie crusts in 2-crust packages are available usually near the butter section in grocery stores. For a 9-inch pie plate, one crust is used for the bottom, and other crust is cut into strips for the top (lattice). If you are using a 10-inch pie plate, you will need to roll out the refrigerated dough rounds a bit bigger so they fit the larger pie plate.

Ingredients for Filling for a 9-inch Pie Plate:

1 1/3 cups plus 1 tablespoon white granulated sugar
½ cup all-purpose flour
2 cans red tart cherries ("Oregon" brand packed in water)
¼ teaspoon almond extract
2 tablespoons margarine or butter (before applying pie crust top)

* Note from Susan Wohlhueter: I have a large pie pan (10 ½-inches) and use 3 or 4 cans cherries, so I use more sugar and flour than this recipe. (see table below)

Pie Plate (in inches)	Sugar	Flour	Cans of Cherries	Cherry Juice	Almond Extract	Butter
6	2/3 cup	¼ cup	1	¼ cup	¼ teaspoon	2 teaspoons
9	1 1/3 cups plus 1 tablespoon	½ cup	2	½ cup	½ teaspoon	2 tablespoons
10	2 cups	¾ cup	3	¾ cup	¾ teaspoon	2 tablespoons
10.5 to 11	2 3/4 cups	1 cup	4	1 cup	1 teaspoon	2 tablespoons

Method for 9-inch pie:

Pre-heat oven to 425 degrees F.

Drain the cherries, but SAVE the reserved juice. In a large bowl, stir together sugar, flour, and about half of reserved juice, and mix lightly with drained cherries. Turn the filling into pastry - lined pie pan. Sprinkle fruit with almond extract and dot with butter. Cover with top crust. (lattice). Seal and flute edges.

Bake 20 minutes at 425 degrees F., then reduce the heat to 375 degrees F. and bake 20-25 minutes longer until the crust is nicely browned and juice begins to bubble.

Fluffy Peppermint Pie

Submitted by Jo Ann Ekdahl

Source: Betty Crocker Holiday Cookbook pamphlet

Jo Ann's story: *"One year when our son Brad was home for Christmas, and my husband Earl's sister had died just before Christmas, and I was way behind with my Christmas baking, Brad made Fluffy Peppermint Pie from a little Betty Crocker Holiday book. The recipe has stuck and I try to make it for Brad whenever he is able to get here for Christmas."*

Ingredients:

1 ½ cups chocolate wafers or chocolate graham cracker crumbs
2 tablespoons white granulated sugar
¼ cup (½ stick) margarine or butter, melted
30 large marshmallows
1 can (14-ounces) sweetened condensed milk
2 cups heavy whipping cream
3 drops red food coloring
2 teaspoons peppermint extract
¼ cup crushed hard peppermint candies
Additional peppermint candy for garnish, if desired

Method:

Mix wafer crumbs, sugar ,and margarine/butter. Press crumb mixture on the bottom and up the sides of ungreased pie plate (a generous sized one at least 9 x 1 ½-inches), and set aside.

Microwave marshmallows and milk uncovered in large microwavable bowl on "high" about 3 minutes, stirring once, until marshmallows are melted. Refrigerate mixture about 25 minutes or until mixture is slightly thickened.

Beat whipping cream, food color, and peppermint extract in chilled medium bowl with electric mixer on high speed until stiff. Fold marshmallow mixture into whipped cream mixture. Fold in ¼ cup crushed peppermint candies.

Mound filling into prepared crust. Cover and freeze about 5 hours or until frozen. Garnish with red and green peppermint candy, if desired.

Makes 8 servings.

Janelle's Pumpkin Pie

Submitted by Janelle Alvstad-Mattson

Janelle's story: "My pumpkin pie secret? About three times the spices than other recipes."

Ingredients:

Pie Crust: Uncooked pie crust of your choosing (only bottom crust). Crimp or flute edges.

Filling:
¾ cup white granulated sugar
1 ½ tablespoons ground cinnamon
1 ½ teaspoons ground ginger
1 teaspoon ground cloves
½ teaspoon salt
2 large eggs
1 can (15-ounces) pumpkin puree
1 can (12 fluid ounces) evaporated milk

Method:

Preheat oven to 425 degrees F.

Mix sugar, cinnamon, ginger, cloves, and salt in small bowl.

Beat eggs in large bowl. Stir in pumpkin and sugar-spice mixture into eggs. Gradually stir in evaporated milk and mix well. Pour filling into pie shell.

Bake in preheated oven at 425 degrees F. for 15 minutes. Reduce temperature to 350 degrees F., then bake for 40-50 minutes or until toothpick inserted into the center of the pie comes out clean.

You may need to cover the pie crust with covers or tin foil pieces if the crust is looking darker than you like. I usually cover mine when I turn the temperature down from 425 to 350 F.

Runeberg Tarts (Runebergintotttu)

Submitted by Louise Kujala McGee

Louise's story: *"OLKAA HYVÄ… (Very good). Recipe from the 'Finnish American Club of Rutland, MA Cookbook.' My Mummu (grandmother) made these only at Christmas."*

More History from Suz: These tarts where named after Johan Ludwig Runeberg, the National Poet of Finland (1804-1877). See images of the traditional cylindrical molds for these tarts at: http://www.dlc.fi/~marian1/gourmet/15_21.htm I have not been able to locate a source of where to buy these cylindrical molds to make authentic Runeberg tarts, so just use small muffin cups.

Ingredients:

½ cup (1 stick) butter
½ cup white granulated sugar
2 large eggs
1 ½ cups sifted all-purpose flour
½ teaspoon baking powder
½ cup almonds, ground
Currant jelly (about 4 tablespoons)
Additional softened butter and white granulated sugar for coating the muffin tin wells

Frosting:
½ cup sifted confectioners' sugar
1 to 2 tablespoons hot water

Method:

Preheat oven 350 degrees F.

Pan Preparation: Butter and sugar small muffin tins or tart pans (the authentic shape for these tarts is a straight-sided metal cylinder about 2-inches in diameter and 2 ½-inches deep); coat sides and bottoms of muffin wells with soft butter, then sprinkle sugar into wells and rotate to coat the buttered surface with sugar, and invert the muffin tin and tap to get rid of excess sugar.

Batter: Cream butter and sugar using an electric mixer until light and fluffy. Add the eggs and beat at a high speed until creamy. Sift flour with the baking powder and add this mixture gradually to the batter. Beat in the ground almonds. Fill muffin tin wells 2/3-rds full with batter.

Bake in preheated oven for 20 minutes or until a pale golden brown. When cool, dot the center of each tart with about ½ teaspoon currant jelly. Make the frosting by mixing the confectioners' sugar and water and blending into a paste. Spoon the frosting into a pastry bag fitted with a tip with a small opening, or make a small hole in the bottom of a Ziplock bag corner, and pipe the frosting in a ring, outlining the jelly. Makes 24 small- or 12 medium-sized tarts.

Yeast Breads and Rolls

Belva's Christmas Rye Bread

Submitted by Jo Ann Ekdahl. Additional directions written by Suz Snedeker.

Jo Ann's story: *"Belva was my father's cousin, a farm wife. My mother used to make the bread, mostly at Christmas, I think. I had rather forgotten about it until my brother in his later years said if he had anything for Christmas, he would like Mom's homemade rye bread. I have oodles of Mom's handwritten recipes so began to look for what I thought he might be talking about and apparently this was it. I made him a couple of loaves and mailed them for a few years before he passed away."*

Suz's story: *"When we were doing the St. Luke Coffee Hour Cookbook, Jo Ann Ekdahl and I shared our mutual love of a good loaf of rye bread. She sent me 'Belva's Rye Bread' recipe, but the recipe was only the list of ingredients with the baking time and temperature, there were no other directions. I recently made the loaf, wrote down the method I used, and when I sent the recipe with directions to Jo Ann, she supplied more of the family history behind the recipe. It's a sweet rye bread, so no wonder it was enjoyed at Christmas time."*

Ingredients:

1 cup boiling water
½ stick oleo (or butter)
½ box brown sugar (Jo Ann uses 1 cup packed; Suz uses a "scant" packed cup)
2 tablespoons orange marmalade
1 ½ tablespoons white granulated sugar in 1 cup lukewarm water with 1 big yeast cake
(Jo Ann uses 1 envelope dry active yeast;
Suz uses 5 teaspoons of Saf Instant yeast plus 1 teaspoon of sugar)
2 teaspoons salt
2 tablespoons anise seed (Suz uses 1 tablespoon each of anise, caraway, and fennel seed)
2 cups rye flour
4 cups white flour (or a combination of bread and all-purpose flour; Suz uses 1:1)

Method:

Place cut-up pieces of oleo/butter in a medium bowl. Pour boiling water over the oleo/butter and stir until the oleo/butter is melted. Stir in brown sugar and marmalade, and blend until sugar is dissolved and marmalade dispersed.

Measure 1 cup of lukewarm water (about 90-100 degrees F.) into a 2-cup measure, and add the yeast and the white sugar; stir to disperse the yeast and sugar. Let yeast mixture sit until it has proofed; about 5 minutes (should be bubbly).

In a small bowl, combine salt and seeds. In the large bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a dough hook, mix the flours together, add the seeds, and blend seeds and salt into the flours. Add the liquid brown sugar-butter-water mixture and the yeast mixture, and stir for 2 minutes. Turn off the mixer, and let the dough sit for 10 minutes to hydrate the rye flour (dough will look wet at this stage). Then, turn mixer on, and knead with a dough hook for 5 more minutes. Dough should

come away from the sides and bottom of the bowl and mound on the dough hook; if the dough is sticking to the sides or bottom of the bowl, add 1-2 tablespoons all-purpose flour.

Turn dough on to a floured board. Knead for 20 strokes by hand. Form a ball of the dough and place in a large, greased bowl.

Cover with plastic wrap and let sit in a warm, draft-free place until double in bulk, about 90 minutes (I put my dough in a cold oven with ONLY the oven light on, and it gets nice and warm). Grease a large cookie sheet and dust with semolina flour or cornmeal.

Scrape out the risen dough onto a floured board and divide in half. From each piece, make a round disc. Fold the top one-third of the disc down, and repeat with the right and left sides, and then fold up the bottom of the disc to the top. Tuck in all the seams so they don't show. Pat into an oval or a round and place seam side down on one side of the prepared baking sheet. Repeat with the other half of the dough, put on the other side of the baking sheet. Make sure you have at least 3 inches in between the loaves. Dust the tops of both loaves with all-purpose flour, cover with a dish towel, and allow to rise for 1 hour.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.

When you are preheating the oven, heat a small cast iron skillet in the oven on the rack below where you will bake the bread. When the oven is up to temperature, quickly slash the top of each loaf along the long axis with a razor blade, throw 3 ice cubes into the hot cast iron skillet to create steam, at the same time put the cookie sheet with the loaves into the oven, and quickly shut the oven door so as little steam escapes the oven as possible. Do not open the oven door for the next 20 minutes. The steam will give the bread a nice crust.

The total baking time should be about 35 minutes or until the loaves sound hollow when knocked on the underside. Cool completely on a wire rack before slicing. Makes a fine-grain, sweet loaf. Freezes well.

Christmas Stollen

Submitted by Suz Snedeker

The story: "*This recipe was sent to Jeff's sister, Carrie, in a letter dated February 13, 1974, from their great-uncle, 'Uncle Bill' Bauerschmidt, who was the brother of Carrie and Jeff's paternal grandmother, Augusta Bauerschmidt Snedeker. Uncle Bill loved stollen bread, and Augusta would make it for him every Christmas, even late in Augusta's life when she was suffering from arthritis.*

This recipe is not Augusta's, but from another family member, Bill and Augusta's cousin Elise Wilk, who had her daughter write down the recipe as Elise made it 'from memory.' After WWII, Uncle Bill helped Elise come to America from Germany, so this is a true German recipe. In corresponding with Jeff's mother, Grace Snedeker, about this recipe I found out that Uncle Bill's daughter, Helen (Sis) Bauerschmidt Rosendale, who is now in her 90s, is a lover of Christmas stollen. Time to revive the tradition of making this bread."

Ingredients:

2 lbs. (about 6 ½ to 7 cups) all-purpose flour
¾ lbs. (3 sticks) butter, melted then cooled
3 envelopes yeast
About 1 ½ cups milk (divided)
1 cup white granulated sugar
1 tablespoon almond extract
1 tablespoon vanilla extract
1 tablespoon lemon extract
1 tablespoon rum (Suz increased rum to 2 tablespoons; can use to plump raisins in microwave)
1 teaspoon salt
Grated rind of one lemon
1 cup dark raisins
6 ½ ounces glazed (candied) cherries
8 ounces glazed (candied) fruit (citron)

Melted butter and confectioners' sugar to glaze the baked loaf

Method:

Sift flour into a big bowl and make an indentation (well) in center.

Dissolve the yeast in ½ cup of lukewarm milk and pour the yeast-milk mixture into the center of the flour. Mix the yeast mixture with some of the flour until you have a mixture like paste. Let this rise for about 15 minutes until blisters (bubbles) form.

Then mix the (bubbly) yeast mixture with the rest of the flour, and add the cooled melted butter, sugar, all extracts, rum, salt, and balance of milk (1 cup). If mixture is too stiff add a little more

milk. If mixture sticks to bowl, sprinkle a little more flour. After everything has been well mixed, put bowl in warm place to rise again (for about 30-40 minutes). Cover bowl with a dish towel to keep the mixture to rise.

Then take bowl and mix the lemon rind, raisins, cherries, and glazed fruit. Mix (knead in) the fruits into risen dough. When well mixed make a long loaf, and put on a well-greased pan (a really big cookie sheet).

Stick (make pricks in the loaf) with a cake tester (long thin wire) a few times to enable air to escape. Put dough in warm place and let rise again (about 30 minutes). Cover again to speed the rising process.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Bake in preheated oven for about 1 hour. Stollen should be a dark brown color if baked thoroughly.

Remove (stollen) from oven and brush with melted butter and sprinkle with confectioners' sugar.

Leave stand until completely cool or it may drop (deflate).

Baking notes from Suz: When I tried making this recipe, I found that the first rise time was not 30 minutes, but more like 1 hour and 30 minutes. For the second rise, I let the dough rest for 60 minutes. The dough will not double, it is a dense dough. The baked loaf crumb consistency is something between a bread, biscuit, and cake.

This recipe make would make a truly huge loaf of stollen. I made it into 4 small round loaves. It would make 3 medium oval loaves. For most sweet breads, you want the internal temperature to be at least 190 degrees F. when done, and 200 to 210 degrees F. if you like a drier texture. So, for the smaller loaves, baking time is between 35 and 50 minutes, depending on your "end" temperature and how wet or dry you like this bread to be. This is a work in progress. I have no frame of reference, because I've never had or baked stollen before, so I don't know what it should taste like.

I've put some more modern terms in parentheses to clarify some of the directions in the original recipe.

Houska (Jo Ann's Xmas Bread)

Submitted by Jo Ann Ekdahl; directions added by Suz Snedeker

Jo Ann's story: "*I don't know that I have a lot of Christmas favorites. Growing up my mother made a bread that was my favorite. I found the recipe this morning though I have never made it. The recipe she copied was apparently named Houska that she relabeled 'Jo Ann's Xmas Bread' only because it was my favorite. As always with her recipes, the directions are sketchy. She knew what she was doing!*"

Ingredients:

1 cup milk
½ cup white granulated sugar
¼ cup (½ stick) butter
2 teaspoons salt
5 ¾ cups all-purpose flour (divided, 1 cup and 4 ¾ cup portions)
¼ cup lukewarm water
2 cakes yeast (or 2 envelopes dry active yeast, or 5 teaspoons of Saf instant yeast)
1 teaspoon grated lemon rind
¼ teaspoon ground mace (if you don't have mace, use nutmeg)
2 large eggs
½ cup raisins
½ cup nuts (walnuts)

Method:

In a small saucepan, scald the milk. Add the sugar, butter, and salt, and stir to dissolve the butter. Cool to lukewarm (90 to 100 degrees F.). Transfer mixture to a large bowl (or to the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with a dough hook). Add 1 cup of the flour, and stir the mixture with a wooden spoon until the flour is incorporated.

In a small bowl, soften the yeast cake in the ¼ cup lukewarm water (for active or instant yeast, sprinkle yeast on top of the water, add and pinch of sugar, and whisk the mixture to blend). Let yeast mixture stand for 5 minutes until yeast is frothy. Add the yeast mixture to the milk-butter-flour mixture.

Stir in the lemon rind, mace, eggs, and raisins, and mix well. Gradually add in the rest of the flour until you have a soft dough. If using a stand mixer, knead with a dough hook for 5 minutes and transfer to a floured board. If kneading by hand, knead on a floured board for 5 minutes. Put a bowl over the dough, and let it rest for 5 minutes. Knead for about 10 to 20 turns by hand until dough is smooth and elastic. You may need to flour the dough to keep them from sticking.

Make a ball out of the dough. Transfer the dough to an oiled bowl, cover with plastic wrap, and let rise in a warm, draft-free place until dough has doubled in volume, about 90 minutes to 2 hours. (Hint from Suz: A cold oven with only the oven light on is a great place for letting the dough rise. The oven light supplies just enough warmth.)

Turn out risen dough to floured surface. Divide into 5 parts and form into ropes. Let ropes sit for 10 minutes. Use three ropes for the bottom braid, then twist the remaining 2 pieces for the top piece. (Note from Suz: recipe does not mention a time for a second rise. Normally a second rise would be 30 minutes to an hour. Sometimes, you don't want a braided dough to fully double in the second rise because the braid starts to come apart. If someone makes this bread, let me know how long your second rise was, or if a second rise is needed.).

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. about 15 minutes prior to the end of the second rise. Grease and flour a cookie sheet (or use corn meal instead of flour).

Bake in preheated oven.

Note from Suz: Jo Ann's mother's recipe did not state how long to bake the loaf, but I am guessing it would be at least 25 minutes, and likely 35 minutes. Bake until the top is golden brown and when you rap the bottom of the loaf, it sounds hollow. Interior temperature should be about 200 degrees F. Similar sweet breads, like Challah, tend to be baked at 375 degrees F. for 25 minutes.

Julekage I (Christmas Bread from Norway)

Submitted by Suz Snedeker

Source: adapted from a recipe found in “Norwegian Food and Cooking” by Janet Laurence.

Suz’s story*: “Jeff and I have been to Norway twice, once in the summer, and once to see the Northern Lights in the winter. While we seldom had many desserts or cookies on the boat cruise up and down the Norwegian coast, their breads were amazing. When I got back home from our first trip, I brought a Norwegian cookbook, and I’ve made this recipe for Christmas bread many times. The bread can be made either in loaf pans or in rounds baked on cookie sheets. This sweet bread is traditionally made at Christmas time and is often given as a present with the package tied with a big red bow.”*

Ingredients: (metric measures in parentheses)

1 cup milk (250 ml)
½ cup lukewarm water (120 ml)
2 packets dry active yeast (or 5 teaspoons Saf Instant yeast)
Pinch of sugar
1 large egg, lightly beaten
½ cup white granulated sugar (90 grams)
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon of cardamom seeds, crushed (or ground cardamom)
5 -5 ¼ cups bread flour (500+ grams)
½ cup candied fruit (115 grams)
1 cup raisins (150 grams)
Beaten egg to glaze before baking

For decoration:
Confectioners’ sugar to glaze after baking
Slivered blanched almonds
Candied (glacé) cherries

Method:

Grease two bread loaf tins or 2 large baking trays.

If you have a stand mixer, fit it with a dough hook.

In a saucepan, bring the milk to just below boiling point. Add the butter and stir until butter is melted. Pour the milk-butter mixture into a large bowl and let cool until lukewarm (below 105 degrees F.). In a small bowl, add ½ cup of lukewarm water (between 85 and 105 degrees F.) and a pinch of sugar. Then sprinkle the yeast over the water, and let sit until the yeast is bubbly and frothy, about 15 minutes.

To the milk and butter mixture, add the egg, yeast mixture, ½ cup of sugar, salt, and cardamon. Add half of the flour and beat the mixture thoroughly with a wooden spoon. Dust / dredge the dried fruit in a little flour, add and knead in the dried and candied fruit by hand. Transfer bowl to a stand mixer fitted with a dough hook, and add additional flour sufficient to make a stiff dough (I used a total of 5 ¼ cups of flour.). After kneading for 3-5 minutes with the dough hook, the dough should mass on the dough hook and leave the sides of the bowl.

Turn the dough on to a lightly floured surface and continue to knead until the dough is firm and elastic. Form the dough into a ball, transfer to an oiled bowl, cover with a damp dish towel (or plastic wrap), and leave in a warm place to rise until the dough is doubled in volume. (I put the covered bowl in a cold oven with only the oven light on to give just enough warmth to get the dough to rise.) Usually takes 90 minutes to 2 hours for dough to double in volume.

Turn the risen dough on to a lightly floured surface, knock down, and knead by hand for 2-3 minutes (about 20 turns). Shape the dough into 2 oval loaves* and place in prepared loaf pans (or round loaves can go on to prepared baking sheets). Let loaves rise again until nearly doubled in size. (*Note that while the original recipe said it makes 2 loaves in loaf pans, the loaves were HUGE, so I tend to do 3 oval or even 4 small round loaves on baking sheets.)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F.

Brush the loaves with beaten egg to glaze. Bake in preheated oven for 30-40 minutes until golden brown and the loaves sound hollow when knocked on the bottom.

While still warm, brush the baked loaves with melted butter or dust with confectioners' sugar and decorate with slivered almonds and glacé (candied) cherries.

Julekage II (Christmas Bread or Yule Bread)

Submitted by Judy Jensvold.

Judy's story: *"This is my mom's recipe (Emelie Eliasson Jensvold) and it honors the Norwegian half (her father's side, my grandfather Bonsak 'Ben' Eliasson) of her Scandinavian heritage. Her mother (Gertie Solomonson Eliasson) was from Sweden. My grandparents met and married in Minneapolis, Minnesota, and homesteaded and raised a family of six children in the Sunlit Basin of Central Montana.*

Our family likes eating Julekage fresh from the oven, as well as on Christmas morning with hot cocoa, and toasted for breakfast in the days between Christmas and the New Year.

On the method: My mom always did a second rise for this bread (let the dough rise twice) before forming the loaves. I think a lot of older recipes had this. I often don't do this (not in the directions below), but her way got a better texture."

Ingredients:

1 package dry active yeast
¼ cup water
1 ½ cups milk
½ cup white granulated sugar
1 teaspoon salt
1 large egg, beaten
5 ½ cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon ground cardamom
1/3 cup red candied cherries (cut in half)
1/3 cup green candied cherries (cut in half)
1/3 cup sultanas (golden raisins)
4 ounces of almond paste, shaped into 2 sticks, ½-inch in diameter and 9-inches long (to fit the length of the loaf pan)

Method:

Dissolve 1 package of yeast in ¼ cup of warm water.

In a small saucepan, scald 1 ½ cups of milk, then add ¼ cup of butter, and stir until the butter is dissolved.

Transfer milk-butter mixture to a large bowl, and cool to lukewarm (110-115 degrees F.). Add softened yeast, and mix well.

Add ½ cup sugar and 1 teaspoon of salt. Then add beaten egg. Mix well.

Stir in 1 ½ cups of flour and 1 teaspoon ground cardamom.

Stir in candied fruit (1/3 cup each red and green cherries, halved), and 1/3 cup sultanas.

Add about 4 cups of flour or enough flour so kneaded dough has a silky surface.

Form the kneaded dough into a ball, place in a large greased bowl, cover with a towel or plastic wrap, and let rise until double in volume.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease two 9 X 5-inch loaf pans.

Punch down risen dough, turn out onto a floured board, and divide the dough in half. Form each piece of dough into an oval loaf to the fit 9 X 5-inch loaf pans.

Turn each loaf over, and make a slit on the bottom the length of each loaf about mid-way into the loaf, and insert the almond paste stick. (The almond paste stick should run the length of the loaf, so when the baked loaves are sliced, all slices will have a piece of almond paste in about the center of the slice.) Close dough securely around the almond paste stick and put each loaf into a greased loaf pan. Let dough rise again in pans until doubled.

Bake in preheated oven for 30-40 minutes. Internal temperature when done will be 190 to 200 degrees F.

Turn out loaves onto a wire rack to cool.

Optional: while loaves are warm, rub top of loaves with butter to give them a shiny finish.

Serve with hot chocolate on Christmas morning.

Julekage III (Christmas Cake) Historic and Modern Versions

Submitted by Everett Nelson

Everett's story: *"Interesting enough both Sonja and Nicole (my daughters) suggested I send along the Julekage bread recipe even though neither one eats much of it. My guess is that Julekage was a regular part of our traditions as they were kids growing up, so in that way it is special to them. Even now they are both fond of cardamom but not very keen on the candied fruit. In thinking about it, the recipe probably reflects life on the farm in eastern North Dakota in the 1920s and 30s. Mom was born in 1920, the youngest of six. Her parents homesteaded in the Dakotas about 1905 after emigrating from Norway in 1902 and first settling with some relatives in Minnesota."*

Notes from Everett: The first recipe in the "box" is the transcription of the handwritten recipe card from my mother's recipe box. I've added a few directions in brackets. As such it assumes basic knowledge of the bread making and baking process. If you follow the quantities as written it should yield 4-5 loaves easily. Serve sliced and spread with fresh butter or cream cheese. Also it is delightful toasted on cold winter mornings. The second recipe is a more modern version of Julekage.

Historic Recipe for Julekage exactly as written from Everett Nelson's mom's recipe file, with a few additions by Everett in square brackets.

1 cup sugar
½ lb. butter
1 cake yeast
1 qt. rich milk
2 eggs
½ teaspoon cinnamon and/or cardamom
Flour [to make a stiff dough, 8 cups]
Citron and Raisins [or candied fruit cake mix]

Put yeast to soak at noon in ½ cup lukewarm water, add a little flour.

In the evening mix the scalded milk with some of the flour and add the yeast.

In the morning add the beaten eggs, sugar, melted butter, salt and the rest of the flour.

Knead. Let raise. Then add raisins, citron, cardamom. [knead well]

Form into loaves, let rise again. Bake in moderate oven.

Modern Version of Julekage

Submitted by Everett Nelson

Ingredients for Dough:

2 packages active dry yeast
½ cup warm water
½ cup white granulated sugar (use 1 teaspoon of this for yeast proofing)
¾ cup warm milk (110 degrees F.)
½ cup (1 stick) butter, softened
1 large egg
½ teaspoon ground cardamom
5-6 cups all-purpose flour
1 cup chopped mixed candied fruit
½ cup golden raisins

Dough Method:

In a large bowl, dissolve yeast in water with 1 teaspoon of sugar and let stand 5 minutes. Yeast mixture should get bubbly.

Add milk, butter, egg, salt, cardamom, 2 cups flour, and remaining sugar. Beat until smooth. Stir in candied fruit, raisins, and enough of the remaining flour to form a soft dough.

Turn dough out onto floured surface; knead until smooth and elastic.

Place dough in greased bowl, cover with a clean kitchen towel or plastic wrap, and let rise in a warm place until doubled in volume.

Punch dough down; shape into two loaves. Place in two greased loaf pans. Cover and let rise until double.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Bake at for 35-40 minutes in preheated oven or until golden brown.

Remove loaves from pans and cool on wire racks.

Ingredients for Frosting:
1 cup confectioners' sugar, sifted
2 tablespoons butter, melted
1 tablespoon milk
Red and green candied cherries to decorate

Frosting Method:
Combine confectioners' sugar, butter, and milk until smooth. Spread frosting over cooled loaves. Decorate as desired with candied cherries.

Philadelphia Butter Buns

Submitted by Jan Wilhelm

Jan's story: *"This recipe is one that has been a part of my Christmas for as long as I remember. I do not know how it came to the family but I know my mother made it for some bachelors my Dad worked with in the 1930s. As a child we had it Christmas Eve and Christmas Day. I have continued to make it to share with friends and families. I usually double the recipe."*

Ingredients:

1 cup scalded milk
1 cake yeast (or 1 envelope active dry yeast)
3 cups all-purpose flour, divided into two 1 ½ cup portions
¼ cup white granulated sugar
¼ cup shortening
½ teaspoon salt
1 large egg
Grated rind of one lemon

For filling:
2-3 tablespoons butter, melted
1 ½ teaspoons ground cinnamon
2 tablespoons white granulated sugar

For caramelization in pan:
¼ cup brown sugar
¼ cup butter, melted

Method:

In a saucepan, scald the milk. Cool scalded milk until lukewarm. Dissolve 1 yeast cake in lukewarm milk. Transfer milk-yeast mixture to a large bowl. Add 1 ½ cups flour to make a soft batter. Let stand (rise) until light.

Add ¼ cup white sugar, shortening, salt, egg, and grated lemon rind. Add the remaining 1 ½ cups of flour to make a workable dough. Knead until smooth and let stand (rise) until light.

Roll out dough

very thin and spread with melted butter, then sprinkle with cinnamon-sugar mixture (filling). Roll up the dough jelly-roll fashion. Cut roll into 1 ½ -inch pieces.

Into a heat-proof skillet (cast iron frying pan), melt ¼ cup brown sugar and ¼ cup butter, and allow to caramelize. Remove the pan from the heat and allow pan to cool. Place the pieces of rolled dough on top of the caramelized sugar and let dough stand (rise) until light.

Preheat oven to 275 degrees F. Bake buns until they are light brown in color, approximately 50 minutes.

Portuguese Sweet Bread

Submitted by Suz Snedeker

Source: Newspaper clipping that belonged to my mother likely from the "Providence Journal Bulletin" newspaper, though the clipping says the recipe was originally published in the "Baltimore Sun."

Suz's story: *"My Aunt Sally (parents were from Italy) married my Uncle Al Perry (parents from Portugal), and my Uncle Al used to buy Portuguese sweet bread from local bakeries in East Providence, Rhode Island, where there was a large Portuguese immigrant population. Fall River, Massachusetts has one of the largest Portuguese immigrant populations (and now, 2nd, 3rd and 4th generation) on the East coast. Portuguese sweet bread is also called 'Hawaiian bread' especially on the West coast because Portuguese immigrants worked in the Hawaiian pineapple fields as harvesters, and brought this bread with them. It has become a part of Hawaiian culture. It is a wonderful sweet bread to make for the holidays."*

Ingredients:

1 cup white granulated sugar
1 ¼ cup scalded milk
½ cup (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened
4 large eggs, room temperature
2 packages of dry active yeast or 5 teaspoons of Saf Instant yeast
1/3 cup lukewarm water
7 ½ cups of all-purpose flour (may have to knead in an additional ½ cup of flour)
1 ¼ teaspoon salt

Optional Additions for the Holidays: ¼ cup chopped apricots and ¼ cup dried cranberries

Egg wash: 1 large egg whisked with ¼ cup milk

Method:

In small bowl, dissolve yeast in 1/3 cup of water and let proof for 5 minutes until yeast is bubbly.

In a large mixing bowl, combine the sugar, milk, and butter, and stir until the butter is melted. COOL to lukewarm (less than 110 degrees F, best if 80-85 degrees F.). If you don't allow it to cool to lukewarm, you will curdle the eggs and kill the yeast.

Add the eggs, one at a time, beating after each addition. Add the proofed yeast mixture to the eggs-milk-sugar mixture. Add the salt and blend in. Beat in the flour a cup at a time using a wooden spoon until the batter is smooth. Add only enough flour to get a smooth dough.

On a floured surface, knead for about 3 minutes until the dough is smooth and elastic. If you want to put in dried fruit, knead in the additions now.

Transfer the kneaded dough to an oiled bowl and cover loosely with plastic wrap. Place bowl in a cold oven with ONLY the oven light ON to give some warmth during the rise. Because of the high sugar content, it may take a long time for the dough to double in volume. Sometimes when I made this recipe, it has not doubled in time to bake the bread the same day, so I let the dough rise covered in the refrigerator overnight, and baked the dough the next day.

Prepare 2 baking sheets. Line baking sheets with parchment paper and lightly grease. Divide the dough (depends on if you want 4 small, 3 medium, or 2 large loaves). Make a ball out of portion, then flatten and stretch into a disc shape. Fold down the top 1/3, then fold over each side toward the middle, then fold the bottom up to the top of the dough ball. Form the folded dough into a round ball if you are baking on cookie sheets, or into an oval if you are baking in bread pans. Place small loaves with two balls per baking sheet; for large or medium loaves, one dough ball per baking sheet. Covered with greased plastic wrap and let dough rise another 2 hours.

About 15 minutes before the second rise is done, preheat your oven to 375 degrees F.

Just before baking, use a pastry brush to gently coated loaves with egg wash, and make a “cross” with a razor blade on each loaf. Bake for 25-30 minutes, switching racks half-way through. You might need to “tent” the loaves at the half-way point with aluminum foil to prevent the surface from burning. Alternatively, only bake one sheet at a time.

It’s lovely warm with butter. I love it for breakfast. A special treat to have during the holidays. The baked bread freezes well in a zip-lock bag.

Makes 2 large, 3 medium, or 4 small loaves.

Swedish Limpa Rye Bread

Submitted by Jo Ann Ekdahl

Source: True North Kitchen (*https://true-north-kitchen.com/swedish-limpa/)*

Jo Ann's story: *"Thinking back, Jamestown, NY was the closest city (to where I grew up) made up of about half Swedes and half Italians. So it wasn't difficult to buy Swedish or Italian foods. Since there was only one car in the family, Mom didn't get much Christmas shopping done until Christmas Eve Day. We would go to town and stop at the Public Market (a triangle shaped building built where two streets came together at an angle) and get some goodies before heading home to a cold house where the fire had gone out by that time. We always had oyster stew on Christmas Eve, but neither Earl nor our two sons liked oysters so we did not continue that tradition. My parents would also buy caraway cheese, lingonberries, Swedish brown beans, and Limpa Rye Bread. I just hunted up a recipe in Google and came up with the attached recipe for Limpa Rye Bread."*

Ingredients:

1 cup buttermilk (Note from Suz: as a substitute for buttermilk, measure 2 tablespoons cider vinegar into a 1 cup measure, then fill up to the 1 cup mark with milk, stir, and let clabber for 10 minutes – it will thicken)
¼ teaspoon baking soda
1 tablespoon butter, softened
2 tablespoons water
2 tablespoons molasses
Zest of 1 orange
1 teaspoon anise seed, toasted briefly in a dry skillet and then ground, or 1 teaspoon ground anise seed (if you like anise seed, increase to 2 teaspoons)
1 teaspoon fine salt
2 teaspoons instant yeast (or Rapid Rise yeast)*
1 cup dark rye flour (Bob's Red Mill brand)
2 cups bread flour

* If you are using envelopes of dry active yeast, you will need to proof the yeast. After making the butter-water-molasses mixture below and cooling to lukewarm, sprinkle the yeast over the mixture, blend in, and let it sit for 10 minutes until the mixture starts to froth and bubble.

Method:

Combine buttermilk and baking soda in a liquid measuring cup. Set aside.

Combine butter, water, molasses, and orange zest in a small saucepan and heat to a simmer. Remove from heat and cool to lukewarm (90 to 105 degrees F).

Add buttermilk mixture and molasses mixture to the mixing bowl of a stand mixer.

Add ground anise seed, salt, yeast mixture, and rye flour to the mixing bowl.

Using the dough hook attachment, mix on medium low until ingredients are combined. Add bread flour and continue to mix on medium low until the dough is fully combined and clearing the sides of the bowl.

Stop the mixer, and allow the dough to rest for 10 minutes to hydrate the rye flour (you can wrap a towel around the top of the bowl so the dough does not dry out.)

Increase speed to medium and knead for approximately 4-5 minutes. If you are mixing and kneading the dough by hand, the process will take longer (hand knead for 8 to 10 minutes).

Remove the bowl from the mixer, and scrape the dough onto a floured surface. Hand knead for about 10 to 20 turns until the dough is smooth. If it is not smooth the dough needs to rest. Place a ball over the dough, and let it rest for 5 minutes. Then knead it for 5 to 10 strokes, and the dough should have become smoother. Form a ball with the dough.

Transfer dough to a clean, oiled bowl. Cover bowl with plastic wrap and let the dough rise at room temperature for approximately 2 hours until doubled in volume.

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F.

Remove the dough from the bowl and pat into an oval shape that is about 1 ½-inches thick. (Note from Suz: to get a shape that will hold an oval and not go flat, form the dough into a large disk. Fold the top third down, then repeat with folding over the right side, then left side, then fold the bottom up to the top. Tuck in ends so no seams show. Roll back and forth to make the oval.

Oil a cookie sheet and dust with flour or cornmeal. Place the dough oval seam side down on the prepared sheet.

Cover formed dough loosely with plastic wrap and allow to rise for another 45 minutes to an hour.

Immediately prior to placing the dough in the oven, remove plastic wrap and using a razor blade score the top of the loaf with 3-4 diagonal slashes

Place dough on a baking sheet and bake until golden brown, 30-35 minutes. The internal temperature of the dough should be at least 198 degrees F. when it is done.

Allow bread to cool completely on a wire rack before slicing.

Recipe Notes:

Recipe Notes:

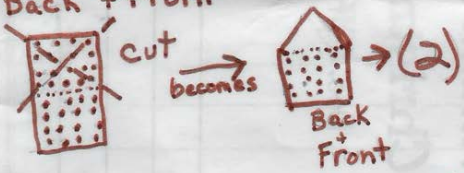
Graham Cracker House

How to begin

Cut 1/4" off for the floor

Center floor between 2 whole Graham Crackers Side view

Back + front



Add Icing inside the sidewalls + push your Front + Back into Place.

2 Graham Cracker Then lay on Top for roof.

Decorate ☺