



Tea Times

In this session we have six recipes for each week of Advent:
Christmas Pudding, St. Nicholas Honey Cakes, St. Lucia Saffron
Buns, Sugarplums, Wassail, Twelfth Night Cake

We have a link for you to download Christmas teatime packet with
four Christmas stories:

Storytime Tea 1: *A Christmas Carol*, by Charles Dickens

Storytime Tea 2: *Little Women*, Chapter II: "A Merry Christmas" by
Louisa May Alcott

Storytime Tea 3: *The Tailor of Gloucester*, by Beatrix Potter

Storytime Tea 4: *The Noel Candle*, by Clement C. Moore

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Christmas Pudding

Christmas pudding is a traditional dessert that has been enjoyed for centuries as part of the Christmas holiday. Originating in the Middle Ages as a special kind of porridge, it was later adapted during the Victorian era to be a pudding.

Per tradition, the Sunday after Thanksgiving and before Advent was referred to as "Stir Up Sunday," as churchgoers were encouraged to "stir up and bring forth the fruit of good works." On this day, the entire family would gather and make the pudding together, with each family member taking a turn to stir the pudding.



Ingredients

- ⅓ cup citrus or lemon peel
- 1 cup raisins
- 1 cup dried cranberries
- ½ cup ground almonds
- ½ cup flour
- 1 ½ cup breadcrumbs
- ½ cup brown sugar
- 1 cup vegetable shortening
- ½ cup apple cider vinegar
- 4 beaten eggs
- ½ tsp salt
- ½ tsp nutmeg
- ½ tsp cinnamon
- ½ tsp allspice
- ¼ cup milk (or enough to soften mixture)

Directions

Chop the almonds, dried fruits, candied peels, and mix together with the spices. In a large bowl, blend together the fruit mixture with the flour and salt, and then with your hands work in the shortening, breadcrumbs, and sugar until everything is thoroughly mixed together. Add the eggs, vinegar, and milk until it makes a soft paste. Let the mixture sit overnight in the refrigerator.

Traditionally, the pudding is cooked in a steaming basin for 2 hours. Alternatively, it can be cooked in an egg poacher by filling the cups and covering them with aluminum foil. If no steaming basin is available, the pudding can be baked for 1 ½ - 2 hours at 350F, although it will be more dense and less spongy than when steamed.

St. Nicholas Honey Cakes

St. Nicholas honey cakes are a popular Christmas treat in many parts of the world. These sweet, fragrant cakes are made from a simple dough that is filled with honey and topped with dried fruits or nuts. They are typically enjoyed as a dessert or snack during the Christmas season, and are often associated with St. Nicholas, the famous Christmas figure who was known for his generosity and kindness. Honey cakes are symbolic of abundance, fertility, and happiness, making them a popular holiday treat for Christmas celebrations.

Ingredients

½ cup honey
½ cup sugar
1 egg
2 egg yolks
2 ½ - 3 cups flour
1 tsp baking soda
½ tsp cinnamon
½ tsp nutmeg
¼ tsp ground cloves
¼ tsp ginger



Directions:

Warm the honey slightly and combine with the sugar. Add eggs and beat well. Sift the flour with the soda and spices and stir into the honey batter thoroughly.

Let the dough rest overnight. Roll dough to ¼-inch thickness; cut out with a round cookie cutter. Brush with the slightly beaten white of an egg, and place on cookie sheet.

Bake for 10-15 minutes at 375F or until cakes are golden brown.

St. Lucia Saffron Buns

Saint Lucia Day is a holiday celebrated on December 13th in countries all over the world, but especially in Scandinavia. This festival commemorates Saint Lucia, an early Christian martyr who died for her faith and was known for her charity and generosity.

As tradition has it, St. Lucia visited Christians who were hiding from persecution, carrying a platter of food and wearing a crown of leaves and candles to light the way. As such, St. Lucia Day is celebrated as a festival of light. On this day, young women (often the eldest daughter in the family) dress up as Saint Lucia, which typically includes a crown of candles and a white robe, and she serves breakfast of coffee and saffron buns.



Ingredients

- ½ tsp finely crumbled saffron threads OR 1 tsp turmeric
- 1 cup unsalted butter, melted
- 1 cup milk
- ¾ cup sugar
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 packages (4 ½ teaspoons) active dry yeast
- 5-6 cups all-purpose flour, divided
- 2 large eggs, beaten
- Raisins (optional)
- 1 large egg white

Mix saffron threads (or turmeric) into the melted butter and let stand for 30 minutes to 1 hour to infuse the butter with the spice.

In a saucepan over medium heat, warm the milk until small bubbles form all over the surface. Stir in the melted butter, sugar, and salt. Pour the mixture into a large mixing bowl and cool until it's just a little warm. Stir in the yeast and let stand for 10 minutes.

Mix 3 ½ cups flour into the liquid to blend and then stir in the 2 beaten eggs. Add enough of the remaining flour to form a soft dough (the dough should pull away from the sides of the bowl), without adding too much flour and drying out the dough.

Transfer the dough to a large greased bowl and turn to evenly coat the surface of the dough. Cover with a clean towel and let rise in a warm, draft-free place until doubled in volume, about 1 hour.

Punch down the risen dough and lightly knead 2 or 3 times on a floured surface. Pinch off small handfuls of dough, about 2 ¼ inches in diameter, and roll into ropes about ¾ inch in diameter. Shape the ropes into "S"-shaped buns or other desired shapes. Place on a lightly greased baking sheet, cover with the towel and let rise again until doubled in volume, about 1 hour.

Preheat the oven to 375 F. Brush the buns with the remaining egg white and then decorate the buns with the raisins if so desired. Bake in oven for 15 minutes or until golden brown.

Sugarplums

Sugarplums are a Christmas tradition that has been an important part of holiday celebrations for generations. These sweet, chewy candies are typically made from sugar, dried fruit, and nuts, and they come in a variety of shapes and flavors. They were considered a delicacy during the Victorian era.

Ingredients

- 8 oz chopped dried figs
- 8 oz chopped dates
- 8 oz chopped raisins
- 8 oz chopped dried cranberries
- 8 oz chopped almonds
- 8 oz chopped walnuts
- 8 oz chopped pecans
- 4 oz shredded coconut
- 4 oz crystalized ginger candy
- 1 orange (grated rind and juice)
- 1 lemon (grated rind and juice)
- Granulated sugar



Chop everything in a food processor. Combine it all in a large bowl and use your hand to mix until it makes a paste. Form into small balls and roll in granulated sugar. Store in a tin lined with wax paper and keep refrigerated. (They will keep a long time and the flavors blend together as the days go by.)

Wassail

Wassail originated in medieval England and is a traditional Christmas beverage that has been enjoyed for centuries. Made from a mixture of cider, spices, and other ingredients, wassail is thought to symbolize good health and prosperity for the coming year.

The tradition of "wassailing" was brought over to America by English settlers. It was the practice of going door to door and sharing wassail with others, making toasts and dancing and singing. Over time it became popular to make wassail during the Christmas season.



Ingredients

8 cups apple cider
2 cups orange juice
½ cup lemon juice
4 whole cinnamon sticks
12 whole cloves or 1 teaspoon ground cloves
¼ tsp ground ginger
¼ tsp ground nutmeg

Directions

Combine all ingredients in a large pan. Bring to simmer over medium-low heat. Reduce heat and continue simmering for 45 minutes. Alternatively, mix all into a crockpot and let cook overnight.

Twelfth Night Cake

Twelfth Night, or Epiphany Eve, is a festival on the last night of the Twelve Days of Christmas, marking the beginning of Epiphany, which celebrates when the three wise men visited Jesus and gave gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. It is custom on this day to eat cake, chalk the front door, bless your house, and sing carols.

Ingredients

1 cup finely ground almonds
2 ½ cups sifted flour
½ tsp salt
½ cup sugar
4 egg yolks
8 tbsp (½ cup) of melted butter
6 tbsp ice-cold water
1 egg yolk, lightly beaten with a little water



Directions

Mix the almonds, flour, salt, and sugar. Add egg yolks, butter, and water, and work together with fingers to make a firm dough. Form into a ball and let sit in the refrigerator for 1 hour.

Preheat the oven to 425F. Grease a baking sheet.

On a lightly floured surface, roll the dough until it's about ¾ inch thick, then use a plate to cut the dough in a circle shape. Put a dried bean underneath the dough.

With a sharp knife, cut small decorative shapes into the dough. Brush with egg yolk and bake for 20-30 minutes or until golden brown. Whoever gets the slice with the dried bean gets to be king or queen for the day!