



Tea Times

In this session we are giving you six Civil War era recipes for our hospitality teas: Mary Todd Lincoln's White Cake, Hardtack (eaten by Civil War soldiers), Buttermilk Cornbread, Blancmange, Jo March's Gingerbread Nuts, and Pickled Limes.

We will also have one storytime tea, a poetry teatime, a fable teatime, a liber-tea, a mythology tea, and a fairy tale tea:

Storytime Tea: *Little Women*, Chapter Five: "Being Neighborly," by Louisa May Alcott

Poetry Teatime: *A Nameless Grave*, by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Fable Teatime: *Aesop's Fables*, "The Four Oxen and the Lion," by Aesop

Liber-Tea: "The Emancipation Proclamation," by Abraham Lincoln

Mythology Tea: *A Wonder Book*, "The Paradise of Children," by Nathaniel Hawthorne

Fairy Tale Tea: *The Blue Fairy Book*, "Rumpelstilzkin," by Andrew Lang

"The nearer the dawn the darker the night."

~ Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

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Mary Todd Lincoln's White Cake

Ingredients

1 c butter, softened
2 c granulated sugar
3 c all-purpose flour
1 T baking powder
½ tsp salt
1 c milk
1 c blanched almonds, pulsed into coarse flour in food processor
1 tsp vanilla extract
6 egg whites, room temperature
Powdered sugar (for dusting)

Note: *This cake recipe is a bit more "involved" than others, but well worth the effort! It is said to be one of Abraham Lincoln's favorite desserts. We have taken this recipe directly from the [Lincoln Home Museum Website](#). We encourage you to click over there and learn more about the Lincolns.*

Directions

Preheat oven to 350°F and lightly grease and flour a 10-in. bundt pan.

In a large bowl, beat sugar and butter with an electric mixer until light and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Set bowl aside.

In a large bowl, sift together the flour and baking powder. Sift two more times. Add dry mixture to butter mixture in 3 additions, alternating with milk. Beat until just blended. Fold in almonds and vanilla. Set aside.

In a separate large bowl, beat the egg whites and salt on high speed until stiff peaks form. Fold one-quarter of the egg whites into the batter until just combined. Fold the remaining whites in, again until just combined. Pour batter into prepared pan.

Bake until cake is golden brown and a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean, about 60 minutes.

Remove to a wire rack to cool for 15 minutes before running a knife around the edges and inverting onto the wire rack.

Let cool for 1 hour. Sift a fine layer of powdered sugar over the top before slicing and serving.



Hardtack

Ingredients

2 ½ c flour
½ c water
1 tsp salt

Directions

Mix flour and salt, and start adding water a little bit at a time, kneading as you go.

Continue adding water until the dough holds together. If it gets sticky add more flour, one tablespoon at a time.

Roll out dough on a floured surface to about ½ an inch thick or less, then cut into squares, roughly 3x3 inches. Poke holes into the squares with a skewer, kabob stick, fork, etc.

Bake at 375° for 25-30 minutes, or until the surface is just starting to brown. Allow to cool completely. Store in an air-tight container.

Buttermilk Cornbread

Ingredients

1¼ c cornmeal
1 c all-purpose flour
¾ c packed brown sugar
⅓ c sugar
1 tsp baking soda
½ tsp salt
1 large egg, room temperature
1 c buttermilk
¾ c canola oil

Directions

1. In a large bowl, combine the cornmeal, flour, sugars, baking soda, and salt. In another bowl, whisk the egg, buttermilk, and oil; stir into dry ingredients just until moistened. Pour into a greased 9-in. round or square baking pan (pan will be full).

2. Bake at 425° until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean, 20-25 minutes. Cool on a wire rack for 5 minutes. Serve warm.





Blancmange

Ingredients

2 c milk
1 c sugar
2 tsp vanilla extract
2 envelopes + 1 tsp Knox gelatin
½ c water
½ tsp almond extract
3 c whipping cream
Berries of choice for decoration

You will also need a mold (metal, plastic, or silicone). If using a metal mold, brush it lightly and evenly with vegetable oil and set aside. This isn't necessary with plastic or silicone.

Note: *In Little Women, Meg March makes this tasty Blancmange to give to Laurie as a get-well present! The chilled pudding would have likely soothed his sore throat; however, this dessert is just as delicious eaten as an everyday treat!*

Directions

Heat milk and sugar to a boil. Cover and let steep for 10 minutes. Add vanilla extract.

In a bowl combine gelatin with water and allow to hydrate for a few minutes. Add and whisk into warm milk mixture.

Add almond extract, then add whipping cream and stir until combined.

Pour into mold. If using a metal mold, place it in refrigerator for at least 5 hours or overnight. It can be placed for a few hours in a freezer to speed up gelling. If using a plastic or silicone mold, for easy removal, it is best to freeze until solid (at least 6 hours).

To unmold, place metal mold briefly in hot water and turn upside down on a serving plate. If using plastic or silicone, pull mold away from frozen Blancmange, place on a serving platter, and place in fridge to defrost.

Decorate with berries of your choice. You may also choose to make a berry sauce by placing the berries in a blender, pressing through a sieve, and adding a touch of sugar to taste.

Gingerbread Nuts

Ingredients

½ pound butter
½ c sugar
3 ¾ c flour
1 c molasses
½ tsp baking soda
½ tsp ginger
½ tsp cinnamon
¼ tsp ground cloves



Directions

Mix all ingredients together and refrigerate 1-2 hours.
Preheat oven to 350° F.
Roll out on floured board to ⅛-¼ in. thickness and cut with round cookie cutter.
Sprinkle with sugar.
Bake for 8-10 minutes on a cookie sheet covered with parchment paper.



Pickled Limes

Ingredients

Limes
Enough salt to coat
Mixture of ½ vinegar and ½ water,
enough to cover limes
Garlic, chopped
Mustard Seed
Cayenne Pepper
Horseradish (optional)

Directions *Note: this recipe is taken from an old recipe book and thus didn't have exact measurements. However, the seasonings should be roughly 1/16 of entire mixture.*

Quarter limes, leaving a bit so the 4 pieces stay connected. Place in a sanitized jar. Sprinkle the limes with the salt, cover, and sit in a sunny spot until the rinds change colors (can be as little as 3 hours or take up to a week depending on sunlight.) Shake every day to coat the limes in juice.

Boil enough vinegar and water mixture to cover the limes. Mix the garlic, mustard seed, cayenne pepper, and horseradish together.

In a sanitized jar, add the limes and seasonings in alternating layers. Carefully pour the vinegar over the limes. Let cool then cover and store in the fridge until the juice thickens.