

Here's a collection of my favorite holiday recipes

I wish you a joyous, prosperous and love-filled season

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Sugar Cookies

This recipe is from my childhood; it was a treat to come home from school to the aroma of cinnamon and strawberry jam. My grandmother taught my mother, she passed it on to me and now my daughter enjoys baking these charming and light cookies.

½ cup soft butter
½ tsp salt
1 cup sugar
2 eggs unbeaten
1 tsp vanilla
2 cups flour
1 tsp baking powder
½ tsp baking soda
2 Tbs milk
Cinnamon/sugar
Strawberry preserves, nuts, raisins

Combine and blend butter, salt, eggs and sugar until smooth. Add vanilla. Sift flour, baking powder and soda. Add flour mixture and milk ½ at a time to creamed ingredients. If mixture is too wet add more flour.

Drop one teaspoon full of batter onto cookie sheet. (Grease sheets after each batch)

Stamp cookies with a very damp cloth stretched over a glass. Sprinkle cookies with cinnamon sugar mixture and top with preserves, nuts or raisins.

Grease cookie sheets. Bake 10-12 minutes at 375°.

Rugulah

This recipe is from my cousin who is the queen of Rugulah. It's such a favorite in my household I'll only make it once a year, for Hanukah to keep it special.

Dough:

½ lb sweet whipped butter
½ lb cream cheese
2 cups flour twice sifted
½ tsp baking powder
½ tsp salt

Mush these ingredients into 5 balls. Wrap each ball in plastic wrap and chill for 4 hours.

Filling:

½ cup apricot preserves
½ cup walnuts
1 tsp cinnamon
A hand full of raisins

Confectioner's sugar

Take one of the rolled dough balls out of refrigerator and cut it in half. Put half back into refrigerator to keep chilled while working with the other half.

Roll dough out onto marble or board using confectioners sugar (instead of flour), until it's the size of a small dinner plate. Cut the circle into 8 wedges. Place a ½ tsp of filling onto wide end of wedge and roll up forming a crescent shape.

Bake 20 minutes on ungreased cookie sheets at 350°.

Baklava

This recipe came from a woman whose baby I delivered back when I was a midwife. It's greatest success came when my then, 16 year old son made it for his class at holiday time and became a culinary winner amongst his friends.

1 Lb of filo dough (keep dough closed or covered when working with it)
1 lb sweet butter (melted)

Nut Mixture:

1 lb chopped walnuts
1 ½ cup sugar
Cinnamon

Syrup:

1 cup honey
1 ½ cup sugar
1 ½ cup water
1 lemon rind
1 orange rind
Cinnamon stick

Place 4 layers of filo dough in pan brushing each layer with melted butter.

Then alternate layers of nut mixture with layers of dough until the pan is filled.

Brush each layer with butter. End with 4 layers of dough.

Bake at 350° for 1 hour until golden brown.

Boil syrup mixture and pour over baked baklava. When Baklava is cool cut into diamond shapes.

Hermit Logs

My mother LOVES hermit logs, I found this simple recipe years ago and enjoy making them for her when she needs a little nurturing from me.

½ cup soft butter
2 eggs
½ cup plus 2 Tbs sugar
¼ cup molasses

1-¾ cups flour
1 ½ tsp cinnamon
¾ tsp ginger
¾ tsp baking soda
½ tsp salt

½ cup raisins
½ cup walnuts

Cream 1 egg, with the butter and 1 cup of sugar. Add molasses.

Sift together flour, cinnamon, ginger, baking soda and salt. Add to creamed mixture a little at a time.

Fold in raisins and nuts.

Divide dough and shape each half into 12X2 inch rectangles. Leave 3" between each rectangle.

Bake at 375° for 13-15 minutes on a greased cookie sheet. Dough should be soft in the center. Remove and brush with egg and sprinkle with sugar. Cut into diagonal wedges.

Sachertorte Cookies

This recipe comes from an old Pillsbury Bake Off book my mother has. Just try to "eat just one". For some reason they're irresistible.

1-cup butter
1 package instant chocolate pudding mix
1 egg
2 cups flour
3 Tbs sugar
½ cup cherry preserves
½ cup chocolate chip semi sweet
3 Tbs melted butter

In a large bowl cream butter and pudding till fluffy. Beat in egg. Blend flour in at low speed until dough forms into a ball. Shape into 1" cookies and roll in sugar.

Place 2" apart on ungreased cookie sheet. Make depression in center of each cookie.

Bake 15-18 minutes 325°

Fill depression with Preserves.

Melt butter and chocolate chips together and drizzle over each cookie

Sponge Cake

My grandmother came to New York from Russia in the early 1900's. Growing up she had 10 siblings and lived in a small apartment on the lower east side. As she became a wife, mother, and grandmother she gained a reputation for being an excellent cook. This sponge cake recipe was the envy of her sisters. It took an act of congress to get her to document it for me. She claimed to never cook from a recipe.

Ingredients at room temperature

5 eggs (separated)
1- $\frac{1}{4}$ cups cake flour
1- $\frac{1}{2}$ cups sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup less 2 Tbsp hot water
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp vanilla
2 tsp baking powder
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp salt
Sugar and cinnamon
Chopped walnuts

Sift flour on to wax paper once then measure again and sift with salt and baking powder 3 more times.

Separate eggs. Beat egg whites until stiff. Transfer to another bowl.

Without washing bowl, beat yolks until thick and lemon colored add sugar and vanilla. Let it beat a long time until it's very creamy.

Reduce speed then add water slowly.

Fold in flour a tbsp at a time.

Fold in egg whites (40-50 strokes)

Grease 10" tube pan

Sprinkle sugar, cinnamon walnut mixture to coat pan

Pour batter in pan and spiral sugar, cinnamon, walnut mixture in with batter. Put walnuts on top.

Bake in preheated oven 325° for 1 hour

Cool inverted 1 hour

Sweet Rolls

This recipe came from my son's great-grandmother, Martha Klueh. She was a sweet yet tough farmwoman from North Dakota. Too bad she wasn't the one to sell her recipe to Cinnabon...how cool would that have been?

1 package yeast
¼ cup water
1 cup milk
1/3-cup sugar
1/3-cup butter
1 Tbs vanilla
1 tsp salt
3-¼ cup flour
1 egg
Raisins and nuts and cinnamon

Soften yeast in warm water.

Combine and scald milk, sugar, butter and salt. Cool to lukewarm.

Add 1 cup flour to milk mixture and beat well. Beat in yeast and egg and add remaining flour.

Knead. Place dough in an oiled bowl, cover and let rise in a warm place until doubled in bulk. About 1½ hours.

Roll out dough on a board. Spread butter generously on the dough. Sprinkle cinnamon, sugar, nuts and raisins on the dough. Roll up the dough to form a log and pinch the ends together. Slice the log into ½" wheels and place in a greased, round pan.

Cover rolls and let rise 45 minutes.

Bake 350° for 15 minutes.

Sour Cream Pecan Coffee Cake

This delicious and rich coffee cake is from my dear childhood friend. It's been a hit at every event I've brought it to. When I make it the house fills with the luxurious aroma of cinnamon and vanilla and I have to stand guard over it, as it would be gone before it had a chance to cool.

Mix:

1/3 cup brown sugar
1/4 cup sugar
1 1/2 tsp cinnamon
1 cup chopped pecans

In a big bowl cream:

1 cup butter
1 cup sugar
2 beaten eggs
2 tsp vanilla

Sift together:

2 cups flour
1 tsp baking powder
2 tsp baking soda
Pinch salt

1 cup sour cream

Add dry ingredients to wet ingredients. When blended add 1 cup sour cream. Grease and flour a baking pan. Spread 1/2 batter on bottom. Sprinkle cinnamon/nut mixture on top. Then alternate batter and nuts in layers. (Batter is very thick and hard to spread)

Bake at 350° for 35 minutes