

Christmas 2020 Virtual Tour Recipes

An English Plum Pudding

Beat eight eggs very light, add to them a pound of flour sifted, and a pound of powdered sugar; when it looks quite light, put in a pound of suet finely shredded, a pint of milk, a nutmeg grated and a gill of brandy; mix with a pound of currants, washed, picked, and dried, and a pound of raisins stoned and floured, tie in a thick cloth, and boil it steadily eight hours.

The Virginia House-Wife, Mary Randolph, University of S. Carolina Press, 1824 1st edition, pg. 164.

Sugar : granulated sugar – do not use confectioner’s sugar

Suet : fine kidney fat can be replaced with butter or vegetable shortening

Nutmeg : medium nutmeg grates to 2 ½ - 2 ¾ tsp Fresh grated is much better than pre-ground

Currants: Zante currants – just check over for tiny branches or stems: very similar taste to dark raisins

Raisins : stoned refers to removing the large pit, no longer required with seedless grapes/raisins

Gill : ½ cup measure

Eggs : Eggs varied in size, use large eggs and reduce the number

Modern Recipe: This is very large. A half recipe makes a 2-quart pudding with 6 hours steaming

6 Eggs	2 ½ - 2 ¾ tsp fresh grated nutmeg or ground
3 ½ cups White flour, unsifted	½ cup Brandy or dark Rum
2 ¼ + 2 Tbsp granulated sugar	1 lb. Zante currants
1 lb. suet or butter finely shred	1 lb. raisins and golden raisin mixed
2 cups Milk	

Prepare a tin mold or a rimmed pudding bowl by brushing very well with softened butter or vegetable shortening. If using a flat-bottomed pudding bowl, cut a parchment circle the size of the flat area, lay it on the buttered surface, then butter the parchment circle. Brush everything a second time.

Set up a large pot deep enough to hold the mold or bowl. Set a small grate or canning lid bands on the bottom to raise the pudding off the bottom. Bring a separate, large pot of water to a boil.

Measure flour and set aside. Measure both raisins and currants into a bowl and toss with 2 Tbsp of the flour. Set aside. Mix grated nutmeg and granulated sugar into the remaining flour and set aside.

Beat the eggs until very light and thick. Slowly whisk in the sugar/flour mixture until it looks very light. Stir in the cold, shredded suet or butter and milk, then the Rum or Brandy. Add the dusted raisins and currants. Pour into well buttered or greased mold or pudding bowl, leaving room at the top for expansion. Seal as directed below and set onto the large pot. Add boiling water to just below the top of the pudding. Cover the pot and boil lightly for 8 hours, adding boiling water as needed. Lift pudding from water to a cooling rack. Unmold after 30 mins. Serve with Rum/Brandy sauce.

To seal:

Tin molds have a tight-fitting lid, but it is still necessary to tie it with kitchen cord, in 4 directions and secured tightly at the center, and with a cord loop for lifting later.

Pudding bowl: butter the center of a double layer of parchment. Lay it, buttered side down, over the bowl. Cover with foil and shape it tightly to the bowl. Tie kitchen cord tightly around the bowl below the rim, creating cord loops on opposite sides for lifting.

18th C mincemeat receipts contained meat. This is a more modern meatless English recipe.

Mincemeat

1 pound firm apples, peeled, cored	1 pound dark brown sugar, packed
1 pound dried Zante currants	8 ounces shredded suet or cold veg. shortening
1 pound golden raisins	1 tsp. fresh grated nutmeg
1 pound dark raisins	1 tsp. ground cinnamon
12 ounces dried orange peel	2 lemons – grated zest and juice
4 ounces dried lemon peel	2-3 cups Dark Rum or Brandy to taste, optional
1 cup blanched almonds, chopped coarse	(Brandy has a stronger taste than Rum)

Peel, core and finely chop the apples. Carefully check raisins and currants for stems and twigs. Add lemon zest, lemon juice, dried orange and lemon peels and chopped almonds to the raisin mixture. Blend cinnamon and nutmeg into brown sugar and add to dried fruit. Toss well. Add 2 cups of Dark Rum or Brandy and stir well. Put into glass jars or bowl. Cover tightly and refrigerate for at least 2 weeks before using. Stir occasionally so all the dried fruits get mixed with the liquid. Add more alcohol if mixture is too dry. (2 $\frac{1}{4}$ - 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ cups were used in total.)

This makes enough for 3-4 pies and a few tarts. Consider $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{3}{4}$ of the recipe if only making tarts.

Pastry Crust: makes about 3 dozen 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ " tarts

4 cups flour, all-purpose	1 Egg, beaten
1 $\frac{1}{4}$ c (2 $\frac{1}{2}$ sticks) softened butter	water as needed
2/3 cup granulated sugar	

Blend flour and sugar. Cut in butter. Add beaten egg and mix until it forms a dough. Add a few drops of water if necessary. Gather dough into a ball and divide into 2 or 3 pieces. Cover pieces with a damp cloth while rolling out one portion on a floured surface to 1/8th inch thick. Cut 4" circles to fit into 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ " muffin tins. Fill close to the top with mincemeat and top with a 3" pastry circle that was dampened with water around the outer edge. Lay dampened side over the mincemeat and gently press towards the outer edge so pastry lid slips down into the tin to meet the bottom pastry. Crimp edges together with the tines of a fork to seal.

Bake @ 375 degrees for 20-25 minutes. Cool in tins on a wire rack for 5-10 mins. before removing tarts to fully cool on rack.

Smaller tart pans require less baking time, and adjust the size of the pastry circles to fit the tins.