



THE CHRISTMAS DINNER

IN olden times, the Christmas Dinner (with a capital D) was the most important event of the day; and even though we in New Zealand are frequently camping or picnicking during Christmas time, yet the menfolk certainly do expect a turkey, or at any rate, a pair of ducks or fowls to mark the occasion. A good deal of preparation can be done beforehand—the breadcrumbs got ready, and so on; and once the bird is stuffed and popped into the oven, it really isn't much trouble.

The Stuffing

The quantity of breadcrumbs depends upon the size of the bird. Use bread two or three days old. To each one pound of breadcrumbs, allow approximately a teaspoon of thyme, half a teaspoon of nutmeg, a grating of lemon rind, salt and pepper, three tablespoons of finely chopped parsley, two heaped tablespoons of butter, a cupful of cold pickled pork, the fat and the lean cut into neat square pieces; and bind the whole when well mixed with a beaten egg. Make it firm enough to cut into neat slices when being carved. Taste it to see if the seasoning is just right. Stuff the crop

of the turkey with this, plumping it out well, and sew up with linen thread. Put it into the baking dish, breast upwards. Cover with caul fat, or pieces of bacon, and bake in a moderate oven for first hour; then reduce heat. Better to cook too slowly than too quickly. Remove the fat from the breast about twenty minutes before serving, to allow it to brown. Cook for 3 or 4 hours, according to the size of the bird. Serve with thick brown gravy, bread sauce, and boiled ham. Some people like to stuff the body of the turkey also, using pork sausage meat.

Bread Sauce

Peel a medium sized onion, stick it with 4 or 5 cloves, and simmer it in a pint of milk, seasoned with pepper and salt, for fifteen or twenty minutes. Strain the milk over four or five ounces of fine white breadcrumbs, and as it is a special occasion, add one or two tablespoons of cream. Beat up a little and reheat before serving.

Roast Duck with Raisin Stuffing

One onion chopped finely; one cup of raisins, three cups of white breadcrumbs;

two tart apples grated and chopped finely; half a teaspoon of mixed herbs; one tablespoon of butter; salt, pepper, and cayenne.

Cover the onion with cold water, bring to the boil and boil for five minutes. Drain away all the liquid. Mix onion with all the other ingredients. If too soft add a few more breadcrumbs. Stuff body of duck, sew or skewer up tightly. Place legs and wings into position and tie securely. Take a double piece of greaseproof paper, grease it well with dripping, and wrap the duck in the paper, with the greased side in. Place on a low rack in the roasting tin. Bake in a moderate oven, for two to three hours, depending on the age. Serve with apple sauce and brown gravy, also baked or chipped potatoes and green peas. If duck is old, steam first and then brown in the oven. To brown, brush duck well with butter, dust with flour and roast, basting occasionally till nicely browned. Watercress or orange salad may be served with duck, also.

If you prefer the old-fashioned and very savoury and satisfactory sage and onion stuffing, just leave out the raisins and apples, and mixed herbs, and substitute an extra onion and a tablespoon or two of finely chopped sage. Stuffing is always much more easily digested if the chopped onion is boiled for a few minutes and then drained, before being added to the breadcrumbs.

Apple Sauce

Peel and cut up a pound of cooking apples, and cook them with an ounce of butter, and two or three tablespoons of sugar. Beat up with a fork, and serve very hot.

Savoury Baked Cauliflower

One large cold cooked cauliflower; three level tablespoons of flour; one rounded tablespoon butter or bacon dripping; two cups of milk; two egg yolks; one tablespoon chopped parsley; one tablespoon capers; two cups cornflakes; seasoning, salt and cayenne.

Melt the butter, add the flour and the seasoning, and stir till smooth.

Add milk gradually, stirring briskly over medium flame. Take from gas.

Add egg yolks and stir briskly, add parsley and capers. Place half the cauliflower into china oven dish, pour half the sauce over, add balance of cauliflower, then sauce. Cover with cornflakes and dot liberally with butter. Bake in a moderate oven for twenty or thirty minutes. This dish may be prepared the day before required, and just placed into the oven half an hour before dinner. It is very nice with roast poultry.

The Christmas Ham

Here is a Los Angeles recipe for baked ham. Scrub and soak the ham first in water from twenty-four to forty-eight hours, changing the water two or three times. Then boil it, allowing twenty minutes to the pound. When the ham is cooked, skin and sprinkle it with brown sugar and a dash of black pepper and stick generously with cloves. Bake in cooking sherry and keep basting until the ham is a juicy, golden brown.

Another Method

Make a paste of flour and water. Roll out about quarter of an inch thick, and wrap it round the ham. Save a piece of dough to patch with, as the steam will force holes through. It is still easier to use two thicknesses of greaseproof paper. This is the modern way, and does away with the possibility of the paste cracking and letting out the steam. Put the ham in a "roaster" and add a little boiling water to keep from burning. Roast till done, then break off all the dough, and put it back in the oven to brown, with a sweet pickle juice poured over it.

Flavouring Baked Ham

After removing the flour and water paste in which the ham was wrapped, skin the ham and stick it all over with cloves; pour over it a thick syrup of spiced vinegar and brown sugar; and put back in the oven to brown. Maple syrup may be used instead, giving a rather unusual flavour; then stick whole cloves over the fat before baking again. Afterwards, sprinkle with crisp browned breadcrumbs.

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Summary of principal events in North
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PASTRY FOR THE MINCE PIES

FLAKY pastry is the best for these most delightful dainties, and don't be economical with the quality of the mince-meat you put in. An old Cockney chef told me the other day that it is not necessary to have patty pans either. He used often to cut the rounds of pastry with a tin, place them in rows on the oven shelf, put a generous helping of mince-meat on them, then cover with larger rounds, having brushed round the edges with water. Many people, however, prefer short pastry for mince pies—I do myself. Here are some recipes of both kinds:

Flakey Pastry

Half a pound of flour, a saltspoon of salt, six ounces of butter, half a tea-

spoon of cream of tartar; half a teacup of water; quarter teaspoon lemon essence. Sift flour, cream of tartar and salt. Rub in half the butter, mix into a smooth paste with water and roll out into a long narrow strip. Divide remaining butter into six pieces and place on one half. Fold pastry. Seal edges by pressing together. Turn pastry so that the folded edge will be to the right. Roll out again. Repeat process four times. Roll to size and shape required. Use hot oven. Bake on Regulo No. 8 or 7; or four hundred and twenty degrees.

Short Pastry

One-quarter of a pound of butter; two tablespoons of fine sugar; one yolk of