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CHRISTMAS CAKES

PROSPECTS for making Christmas cakes are certainly brighter this year. Butter is the chief problem, but people are experimenting with a mixture of fats, and are kindly sending in their findings for me to pass on to you. One Link in our Daisy Chain uses lard and lemon-juice, allowing 14oz. of lard instead of 16oz. of butter, and the juice of one lemon. She says, "If you cream it well, you cannot tell the difference. I even use lard for making small cakes, but the secret of success is to use a little less lard than butter—and the lemon juice."

Another Link makes a splendid shortening with poultry fat, the yellow fat which is generally thrown away. In cities we can buy this fat at some poultry shops. She puts 1lb. poultry fat and 1lb. cod-fat (outside beef-fat) into a saucepan with a cup of cold water, the juice of a lemon, and a pinch of salt, and "renders" it very slowly over low heat until the solid has become just a shrivelled ball. Then strain the liquid fat into a basin, and leave to set. It does not get hard, but is a very good soft cooking fat. For a good Christmas cake, this Link uses 2oz. butter and ¼lb. of this fat to 2 cups of flour, ½lb. of sugar, 1½ to 2lb. of fruit, 5 eggs and a tablespoon of golden syrup.

Good Christmas Cake

Half a pound of butter, 5 eggs, 1 teaspoon baking-powder, 10oz. flour, ½ teaspoon each of following seven essences: vanilla, lemon, pineapple, brandy, cherry, almond, and any other flavouring at all, ½lb. sugar, 2lb. fruit, ¼ to ½ teaspoon curry powder. Prepare fruit, and sprinkle with flour. Put in a warm place while creaming butter and sugar. Also have flour sifted ready, and in a warm place. When butter and sugar are nicely creamed, add eggs one at a time, and sprinkle in a little flour with each egg, to prevent curdling. Now add curry powder, then fruit and flour alternately, baking-powder last. Quickly turn mixture into well-greased tin, and bake in moderate oven for approximately 3½ hours; oven 300deg. to begin with, and after the first 45 minutes, the heat may be lowered.

Ginger Ale Christmas Cake

One and a-quarter pounds of butter, 1½lb. flour, 1lb. currants, 1lb. sultanas, 4oz. cherries, 2 tablespoons glycerine, 1 grated nutmeg, a pinch of salt, 1lb. sugar, 12 eggs, 1lb. raisins, ½lb. peel, 4oz. of ground almonds, 2 tablespoons brandy (optional), 1 teaspoon cinnamon, 1 bottle ginger ale. Cut up the fruit very fine, and soak all night in ginger ale. Cream the butter and sugar, and eggs well beaten, little by little, not to have the mixture curdle; beat well. Then add flour and spices, fruit, and lastly the glycerine and brandy. This cake requires approximately 4½ hours' cooking. Usual heat for rich fruit cakes (Regulo 2 or 3 or 290deg. to 320deg.) gradually reducing the heat if cake gets too brown. Half

quantities may be used. If using packaged fruit, about 3½lb. This cake will keep for a year.

Cold Oven Christmas Cake

This recipe comes from the Dunedin lady who was runner-up in our Apple Pie Competition at the Centennial Exhibition. Light the oven only a minute before putting in the cake. Put cake on middle shelf and bake approximately 4 to 5 hours, according to depth of cake. Have the regulo at 3 for first 1½ hours, then at 2 for another hour, and at 0 for the rest of the time. Her mixture is ½lb. butter, ½lb. sugar, 5 eggs, 14oz. flour, just a "shake" of baking powder, a pinch of salt, fruit according to richness desired, about 2lb.; flavouring essences as desired.

Christmas Cake (with Golden Syrup) (Keeps Well)

One pound of flour, ¾lb. light brown sugar, 6 eggs, 1lb. currants, ¼lb. almonds, large cup milk, 1 teaspoon baking powder, ¾lb. butter, 4 tablespoons golden syrup, 1lb. raisins, 1lb. sultanas, ¼lb. cherries, ½lb. mixed peel. Sift baking powder with flour. Now beat sugar and butter to a cream, add eggs one by one, and beat well after each egg. When all eggs are in, add fruit little at a time, and still beat well until all the fruit is used. Warm the milk and golden syrup, and add, and lastly add the flour and baking powder. Bake about 4 hours.

Ships' Fruit Cake

Half a pound of butter, 2 large cups flour, 1 tablespoon raspberry jam, or home-made gooseberry, 1 teaspoon baking soda dissolved in 1 cup milk, 1 teaspoon vinegar, ½ cup sugar, 1 tablespoon golden syrup, 1 egg, 1 to 1½lb. mixed fruit. Cream butter and sugar, add egg and beat. Add golden syrup, jam, and vinegar; then flour and fruit, and lastly add the soda and milk. Bake in a moderate oven, slowly, as for a Christmas Cake—approx. 2½ hours. This is a cheap good cake for a standby at Christmas time, and saves the richer cakes.

FROM THE MAILBAG

Transfer Marks

Dear Aunt Daisy,

The other day you were talking about removing transfer marks. Well, I stamped two waggon covers with a transfer in each corner, and afterwards did not like the design, so tried various methods to remove them—methylated spirits included—without any result at all.

Then I filled a saucer with eucalyptus, and put one corner in for about 5 minutes, afterwards rubbing the offending transfer; and to my delight, it all came off. So each corner was done the same. I washed the material in warm soapy water, and there was no further sign of the transfer. Since then I have treated different stamped transfers with equal good luck, and, as we know, eucalyptus does not harm material, so one need have no fears about that.—*Feilding.*