

RECIPES ASK Aunt Daisy QUESTIONS ANSWERS

USING DRIED FRUITS

VERY useful indeed are the evaporated or dehydrated fruits which are so attractively displayed in grocers' shops. Apart from currants and raisins, we used to think of dried fruits mainly as prunes and apricots; but now we are quite used to seeing dried apples and nectarines, pears and peaches. The up-to-date dehydrating plant is coming more and more into use. I have seen one working in Auckland. It is used mainly for evaporating liver, to make powder and tablets for anæmia; but they also evaporate vegetables there, and even fish! Here are some good ways of using dried fruit:

Dried fruit needs soaking in cold water for 24 hours before using, in order that it may re-absorb moisture; but it should be well washed first in very hot water to which has been added a little bicarbonate of soda. Let it stand in this for 15 or 20 minutes before thoroughly washing it; you will be surprised at the dirtiness of the water! Then soak in cold water as usual, and stew in the same water until tender. Dried peaches and apricots make excellent pies.

Dried Peach Jam

Soak 1 lb. of dried peaches in four pints of water for 24 hours. Remove the skins and cut the peaches into four pieces. Then boil them for 20 minutes in the water in which they were soaked, adding the juice of two lemons. Then add 4½ lbs. sugar, bring slowly to the boil, stirring often; then boil rapidly for half an hour, or until the jam will set when tested.

Apricot and Pineapple Jam

Soak 2 lbs. of apricots all night in 5 pints of water, after washing them in hot water and baking soda. Then boil for about half an hour. Then add 2 tins of crushed pineapple, and 7 lbs. of warmed sugar, and boil till it will set—about half an hour. Half quantities may be used.

Steamed Prune Pudding

Soak 6 oz. of prunes overnight. Next day dry them and remove the stones. Cut into small pieces and dredge lightly with flour to prevent them from sinking in the pudding. Make a pudding mixture with 4 oz. each of flour, breadcrumbs, and sugar, 3 oz. of shredded suet, and the usual pinch of salt. Mix with one beaten egg, and sufficient milk—about a cup—adding the prunes also. Mix well, and steam in a buttered basin for three hours.

Spiced Prune Puff

Soak overnight two cups of prunes. Next day, drain off the water and stew the prunes gently with a cup of sugar, two cups of water, a little cinnamon, four cloves, the rind of half a lemon. When tender—say in half an hour—pour all into a piedish.

Now make the puff top with one cup of flour, one dessertspoon of cinnamon,

half a teaspoon of baking powder, one third of a cup of butter, half a cup of sugar, one egg, and about half a cup of milk. Cream the butter and sugar, and add the beaten egg; sift in lightly the flour, baking powder and cinnamon, and lastly mix in enough milk to make a mixture that will drop from the spoon. Spread this over the prunes, and bake in a moderate oven about half an hour. While still hot, spread with a mixture of half a teaspoon each of sugar, butter and cinnamon and flour. Serve hot or cold. This recipe was sent to me by an Auckland, accompanied by a most delicious sample.

Apricot Whip

One cup of stewed dried apricots, 2/3 cup of sugar, and one egg white. Put these ingredients in a wide bowl and beat the mixture with a wire whisk until stiff enough to hold its shape. Serve with whipped cream, or custard, or in a bowl lined with fingers of sponge cake.

Prune Chutney

Two pounds of prunes, 1 lb. sultanas, 1 lb. sugar, 2 oz. garlic, 1 oz. ground ginger, 1 oz. salt, ½ teaspoon cayenne, 1 quart vinegar. Wash and put the prunes into a dish and just cover with water till soft. Remove the stones. Cut up the prunes, sultanas and garlic. Mix the cayenne, ginger and salt with a little of the vinegar; put all in a preserving pan with the rest of the vinegar, and boil all well for an hour, and bottle. Break the prune stones and add the kernels just before bottling.

Prune Novelty

A most delicious way of serving prunes, is, after soaking them, to stew them in fresh sweetened tea. Make the tea and sweeten it, then put in the prunes and cook them. This makes a thick dark syrup, and is the secret of the delicious flavour with the French way of serving prunes.

Prune Cake

One cup of sugar, 1 cup of butter, 2 eggs, 1 teaspoon spice, 1 teaspoon cinnamon, 2½ cups flour, 2 small teaspoons carbonate of soda, and a pinch of salt. Cream the butter and sugar, add the eggs and beat well. Then add the flour and spices with the soda, sifted well. When mixed, add 1 lb. of prunes previously soaked overnight and stewed the following day. Prunes must be cold and stoned. For the icing, heat the following over a low fire: ¾ lb. of icing sugar, 2 tablespoons of butter, a small egg, and a drop of milk to mix. Do not let it boil. When thick, spread over the cake. It is most delicious, and will keep moist for weeks.

Prune Tart

Cook prunes, take them out of the juice, stone them, and thicken the juice with cornflour or custard powder. Make a short pastry—puff is best. Put a layer

on a plate and cook, then spread the prunes on, and pour the thickened juice over. Let it stand till set, then serve with cream or custard. You can have this either hot or cold.

Apricot and Orange Cake

Soak ½ lb. of dried apricots in hot water for ¼ hour. Dry well, and cut into small pieces. Cream ¼ lb. of butter, 1 breakfastcup sugar, then add 3 eggs one at a time. Beat well. Add the grated rind of 1 orange. Have the mixture nice and creamy, and sift in 2 breakfast cups of flour, 1 teaspoon of baking powder, and a pinch of salt. Then add the apricots, and lastly the juice of ½ orange. Save the other half for the icing. Mix well and put in a greased tin. Bake for 1½ hours—regulo 4. When cold, spread with this walnut paste. Mince ¼ lb. of walnuts, add 2 tablespoons of icing sugar, the beaten yolk of 1 egg, 1 tablespoon of melted butter, and a few drops of vanilla essence. Mix well and spread on the cake. Then make the icing with icing sugar, and the juice of half an orange. Spread on the cake, and cover with chopped walnuts.

Pickled Prunes

One pound of prunes, 6 cloves, 1 pint of vinegar, ½ lb. of sugar, and a little stick of cinnamon. Wash and soak the prunes overnight. Boil the sugar and spice and vinegar, and add the prunes. Boil gently till the skin is just broken. Bottle, and cover when cold.

Oriental Marmalade

Two cups of dried apricots, 1 cup dried figs, 1 cup dates, 2 cups raisins, 4 cups cold water, 1½ cups brown sugar, and 2 lemons. Cut all the fruit into small pieces, cover with cold water, and soak overnight. Add sugar and juice from lemons and cook slowly until thick, about 40 minutes. Place in jars as for ordinary jam.

Quickly-Made Apricot Jam

Wash one pound of dried apricots and soak for fifteen minutes; then drain through colander and put in preserving pan. Add 5 pints of boiling water and the grated rind of one orange. Allow to stand another fifteen minutes, add 4½ lbs. of sugar and boil till the jam will set—about 40 minutes. Put a knob of butter in just before taking it off the fire, as it helps it to set nicely.

This recipe was sent by "Alice Blue Gown" of Castlecliff, Wanganui, who vouches for it: she said it is delicious and of a beautiful golden colour, and that she is quite sure people will not bother with the long slow soaking when once they have tried this.

Dried Apricot and Orange Jam

Nine and a-half to ten pounds of sugar, 8½ pints of water, 3 navel oranges—the weight should come to 1½ pounds—and 1 lb. of dried apricots. Soak the apricots in some of the water, put the skins of the oranges through the mincer, and boil till soft in a little of the water. Cook the apricots separately till soft, then boil everything

together, adding the sugar, till it will set.

If you cannot get navel oranges, any ordinary oranges will do.

Apricot and Lemon Jam

One pound of dried apricots, 1 lb. of lemons, 5 lbs. of sugar, 5 pints of boiling water. Pour the boiling water over the apricots and stand overnight. Boil the lemons whole, until tender. Drain well, and when cold slice very thinly, removing the pips. Boil the apricots until pulpy then add lemons and sugar, and boil until jam will set. This is about one hour.

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