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## ASK AUNT DAISY

# EASTER TREATS



HERE are a few special recipes for Easter party gatherings. The one for oyster Rockefeller is considered by many Americans to be the very king of oyster dishes. Several people have claimed the honour of originating it, but nobody really knows, except that it was probably in New Orleans. If no frozen spinach, you must use well cleaned fresh spinach—about  $\frac{1}{2}$  lb.

### Oyster Rockefeller

First make the savoury mixture, which is either placed in small portions on each oyster serving, or else the oysters are "bedded down" on it. In a small saucepan heat up 3 tablespoons butter, and add  $\frac{1}{2}$  package of frozen chopped spinach,  $\frac{1}{3}$ rd cup minced onion, a finely-crumbled bay leaf, a tablespoon finely-chopped parsley,  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon each of table salt and celery salt, and a dash of cayenne. Don't add any water at all—the spinach cooks in the butter. Cook, covered, until the spinach is well heated right through. Add  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup fine bread-crumbs (they come in packages) and mix well. Now start heating oven to 425 degrees (Regulo 7). Have ready 18 large or 24 small oysters on the half-shell; place them in a large shallow pan. Place a portion of the spinach mixture over each oyster; dot with chopped bacon; sprinkle with a little grated cheese (optional). Bake 10 minutes.

Quicker method: 18 large or 24 small oysters removed from shells and drained. Dry them between paper towels. Heat oven to 425 degrees (Regulo 7). Spread  $\frac{1}{3}$  of spinach mixture on greased ovenware dish. Arrange oysters upon it, and top each one with a bit of the remaining spinach mixture; dot with chopped bacon, sprinkle with grated cheese. Bake at 425 degrees for 10 minutes. Serve 6 to 8 oysters per person if they are to be a meal in themselves, otherwise just 2 or 3. Slices of cold turkey or chicken, with a salad, could be the next course.

### Chequerboard Cake

This is the popular oblong roll encased in either almond paste, or, as in this recipe, cocoanut paste, with alternate pink and white squares forming the chequerboard. Four tablespoons butter,  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup sugar, 2 egg whites beaten stiffly,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup milk,  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon vanilla, 2 cups flour, 2 teaspoons baking powder,  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon salt. Cream butter, add sugar gradually, beat till light and fluffy. Add sifted flour alternately with milk. Add vanilla, lastly fold in stiffly beaten egg whites. Divide batter, colour one part pink. Bake in two greased square sandwich tins, moderate oven about 20 minutes. Cool. Cut each into 6 even strips. Join layers together like chequerboard, with strawberry filling. Cover outside with cocoanut paste. Leave in cool place 24 hours. Strawberry Filling: One cup sifted icing sugar, 2 tablespoons strawberry jam, 1 teaspoon melted butter. Beat jam into icing sugar, add butter and sufficient hot water to make smooth-spreading paste. Cocoanut Paste: One and a-half cups sifted icing sugar,  $\frac{1}{2}$  cup desiccated cocoanut, 1 tablespoon butter,  $\frac{1}{8}$  teaspoon salt, 2 tablespoons lemon juice,  $\frac{1}{4}$  teaspoon almond essence. Cream

butter and sugar, salt and lemon juice. Add sufficient hot water to make smooth paste. Add almond essence, and green colouring. Add cocoanut and beat well. Should be as thick as possible. Spread evenly on cake.

### Sim-Nel Cake (Traditional)

This is the traditional English Easter cake, Old Simon and Nell could not agree as to whether the cake should be fruit or plain. So Nell compromised by putting a fruit cake mixture at the bottom of the tin, then a layer of almond paste, and then an equal quantity of plain cake mixture on top. Gradually, however, it came to be the custom to make only a good fruit cake mixture, putting half into cake tin first, then the layer of almond paste, and the other half of the mixture. However in Gloucestershire they bake the whole cake first without any almond paste, and then next day split it open through the middle, spread each half with apricot jam, and put it together again with a thick layer of almond paste between in sandwich fashion. A thin spread of apricot jam and another round of almond paste goes on top of the cake. The cake mixture is 6 oz. butter, 8 oz. flour, 4 eggs (added one by one),  $1\frac{1}{2}$  lbs. mixed fruit and  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon mixed spice. Cream the butter and sugar and make as usual. Cover the almond paste on top with a little soft white icing, and set in this tiny fluffy Easter chicks and little marzipan eggs. At Home they sometimes put an empty eggshell filled with spring flowers in the middle of the cake.

### Almond Fingers

One breakfast cup flour, 1 egg,  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. butter, 1 teaspoon baking powder, 2oz. sugar. Beat butter and sugar to a cream, add yolk of egg and beat well. Mix flour and baking powder together and add to mixture. Paste must be very stiff. Roll out thin. Make icing with white of egg and icing sugar and spread on top of paste. Place chopped almonds on, cut into fingers and bake in moderate oven. If no almonds flavour with almond essence. Any nuts chopped should be used.

### Melting Moments

Quarter pound of butter, 1oz. icing sugar, 2oz. flour, 2oz. cornflour,  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon baking powder. Cream butter and sugar and work in other ingredients. Bake in small lots in moderate oven. Stick together with this icing filling:  $\frac{1}{4}$  lb. icing sugar, essence vanilla, butter size of a walnut. Mix well with a little cold water.

### Almond Cheesecakes

For the filling, beat 2oz. butter to a cream, add the same of castor sugar, then the yolk of one egg, 3oz. ground almonds, and 6 drops Ratifa essence. Whip the white of egg stiffly, and stir in the other ingredients. Line small fluted patty-pans (well-greased), with rich pastry, put in each a small teaspoon of raspberry jam, then some of the almond mixture on top. Bake in brisk oven about 20 minutes. If liked, a narrow crossbar of pastry may be placed over the tops of the cheese cakes.

N.Z. LISTENER, APRIL 15, 1954.