

Household Hints.

CHRISTMAS CAKES.

From Harper's Bazar.

MANY rich cakes improve with time, and it has always been the custom with the best Southern housekeepers to make their Christmas cakes several weeks in advance of the holidays. The following recipes are among the best used:

CHRISTMAS PLUM CAKE.—Cream one pound of butter and one pound of sugar together; add the beaten yolks of eighteen eggs, one gill of molasses, one pound of sifted flour, one table-spoonful of coarse flour, beat altogether for five minutes. Add three pounds of seeded raisins, one pound of dried currants, half a pound each of almonds and sliced citron, well floured, two ounces of grated cocoanut, one table-spoonful each of ground allspices, mace, and cloves, and two grated nutmegs; lastly, add the beaten whites of the eggs. Mix well, pour in one large tin, two smaller cake moulds, and bake in a moderate oven for six hours; ornament when cold with fancy sugar-plums and a wreath of holly.

CHRISTMAS BLACK CAKE.—Cream three pounds of brown sugar and three pounds of butter together; beat in three pounds of flour; beat twenty-eight eggs separately, and add, with five pounds of seeded raisins, four pounds of dried currants, one pound of sliced citron, one ounce each of cinnamon and nutmeg, half an ounce of mace, cloves, and all-spice. Mix and beat well. Turn into a very large cake mould and bake for six hours. This cake will keep for years.

CHRISTMAS FRUIT CAKE (a creole recipe).—Take a pound of butter, a pound of powdered sugar, fifteen eggs, a pound of sifted flour, a pound and a-half of raisins, half a pound of currants, half a pound of citron, half a pound each of candied cherries, orange and lemon peel, one grated nutmeg, half a table-spoonful each of cinnamon and mace, a tea-spoonful each of ground cloves and ginger, and the juice of two lemons. Seed the raisins; wash and dry the currants; slice the citron, orange, and lemon peel thin; beat the butter to a cream; add the sugar; beat the eggs until very light, and add them to the butter and sugar, then gradually sift in the flour. Mix all the fruit together and pour over it. Mix the spices in the batter; add the fruit; mix thoroughly; add the lemon juice, and beat again. Line a large cake pan with greased paper, turn in the batter, and bake in a very slow oven for four hours. When done remove carefully from the pan; let cool. Ice and ornament the top with candied cherries, strawberries, or other small candied fruit.

HOLIDAY CAKE.—Blanch three-quarters of a pound of shelled almonds, and slice in halves; chop half a pound of citron; mix them together and roll in sifted flour; add to six well-beaten eggs and three-quarters of a pound of sugar; mix well, and sift in a pound of flour. Butter long shallow cake pans, put the batter in them, and bake in a quick oven. When done, take out, roll in sugar and finely pounded almonds. Put away in a tight tin box, and these cakes will keep for a year.

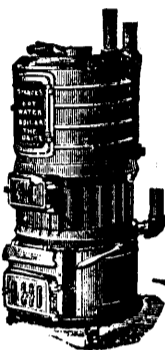
WHITE FRUIT CAKE.—Cream one pound of butter and one pound of powdered sugar together; add the beaten yolks of sixteen eggs, and a pound of sifted flour with two table-spoonfuls of baking-powder. Slice three pounds of citron, blanch a pound of almonds, and grate one cocoanut; add to the batter, with the stiffly beaten whites of the eggs. Line a cake pan with greased paper, turn in the mixture, and set in a moderate oven. Bake slowly for two hours; when cold, ice with cocoanut frosting. If kept in a close tin box, this cake will keep two or three weeks.

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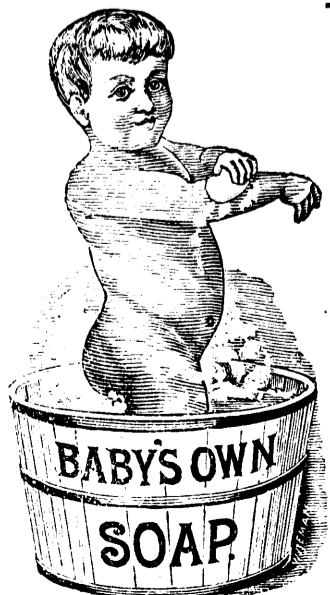
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Household Hints.

FROM the early days of good cookery apple sauce has been an honoured accompaniment of a dish of roast pork or of pork chops. An equally desirable accompaniment of pork chops or of sausages is fried apples. These should be cut in slices about a quarter of an inch thick, across the core of the apple, which may be removed with an ordinary apple corer. Select tart, well-flavoured apples for this purpose, dip them in batter and fry them to six minutes in boiling fat. Or, if you prefer, fry two or three pieces of salt pork until they are crisp and brown, and fry the rings of apple in the hot fat thus obtained. Do not crowd the apples in the pan, but put only as many as will lie flat in the bottom. When they are fried on one side turn them on the other. If the apples are fried in this way without the batter the peel should be left on. Otherwise they become too soft to handle conveniently. While upon the subject of pork it is well to remind readers that thin slices of pork, dipped in egg and then in bread crumbs and fried in fat for a moment till a delicate brown, make a good accompaniment for a dish of fried mush on the autumn breakfast table. Sausages of fresh pork may now be found in perfection and are never more delicious than on these crisp, cool mornings, when they are accompanied by the lightest and sweetest buckwheat cakes. Unless you are positively certain of the trustworthiness of your sausage-maker it is always better to buy the pork and make sausages at home. If you are provided with a good meat-chopper, such as is useful in the family for preparing hashes, croquettes and other minces, this is not a difficult thing to accomplish. One of the simplest and best rules for country sausage calls for about two pounds and a-half of pork, three quarters lean and one-quarter fat. Mince this meat as fine as possible with a machine. It must be ground to a paste. Add a heaping table-spoonful of salt, a table-spoonful of black pepper, a table-spoonful of powdered sage, and a scant teaspoonful of summer savory. English housekeepers would add a salt-spoonful of allspice and half the amount of cloves. Use your taste in this matter. Mix all the ingredients through the sausage meats with the hands, turning it again and again, so that every part shall be evenly seasoned. Roll the sausage meat into balls, and fry it for breakfast in its own fat. It will keep all winter, when made by the quantity, if it is packed down in earthen jars, covered with melted lard to keep out the air, and set in a cold cellar. A nice way of cooking country sausage balls is to dip them in egg, then in bread crumbs, and fry them in boiling hot fat like croquettes. Correctly speaking, no fat ever boils, but this is a term used by cooks to indicate that degree of heat which browns a piece of bread almost the instant it is thrown in it. Another good way of cooking sausages is to bake them. Make them into balls, separate them in a baking pan by oblong slices of bread, turn them from one side to the other as they brown and baste them thoroughly. Sausages may be properly served with a ring of fried apples around, or they may be served around a mound of mashed potatoes, or of apple-sauce in which there is very little liquid. Some cooks go so far as to serve sausages as a garnish to roast turkey, but this does not seem to be in the best taste.

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