

Go countrywide for Christmas breakfast

BY DEBBIE KOONTZ

LANCASTER — When Christmas comes, it is celebrated all over the world and each country has their own traditions to uphold when it comes to serving the favored Christmas foods.

Here in the United States the traditions, run from ham on the dinner table to cookies neatly set out for Santa to eggnog on Christmas eve.

But since the United States is made up of a conglomeration of several ancestries and several religions, almost anything goes (as goes the old saying) and almost every dish is tradition somewhere in the far corners of the country.

So this Christmas serve an extra special breakfast derived from

dishes from all over the U.S.

Start off Christmas day with freshly-baked bagels. The bagel is a Yiddish term for an old-time Jewish yeast-dough roll shaped like a doughnut with a hole in the center. It is cooked in simmering water before being baked. It isn't sticky or greasy and its hard crust is notorious. Possessing the same nutritive value as bread, the bagel is no more fattening. Favorite things to spread on bagels are cream cheese and lox (smoked salmon) and melted butter.

BAGELS

- 1/4 c. butter
- 1 1/2 T. sugar
- 1/2 t. salt
- 1 c. scalded milk
- 1 oz. compressed yeast

1 egg white
3 3/4 c. sifted enriched flour

Add butter, sugar, and salt to scalded milk. When lukewarm, add yeast, well beaten egg white and the flour. Combine well knead and let rise until doubled in bulk. Cut off the small pieces and roll the width of a finger and twice the length, tapering at the ends.

Shape into rings, pinching the ends together well. Let stand on a floured board only until they begin to rise. Fill a large pan half full of water. Place over heat and when very hot, but not boiling, drop the dough rings in carefully one at a time.

Cook under the boiling point till they hold their shape, then turn with a skimmer and continue to

cook. They must be light and keep their shape when handled.

Place on a thin ungreased baking sheet and bake in oven at about 400 degrees until the bagels appear golden brown, first on one side and then the other.

From our south-western border come the famous tortillas. Tortillas are thin, flat cakes made of pounded corn baked on a hot iron stone. They are used in Mexico and sometimes in southern Texas in place of bread.

TORTILLAS

- 3 c. yellow corn meal
- 2 c. sifted enriched flour
- 3 t. salt
- 4 T. shortening
- 1 to 1 1/4 c. lukewarm water

Mix corn meal, flour and salt together. Add shortening, mix well, and then add 1 cup of the water until all ingredients form a ball and bowl is clean.

Put on the counter and knead well, then divide into balls about 1 1/2 inches in diameter. Let the balls stand about 20 minutes and

then flatten

Place on an ungreased skillet and cook about 1 1/2 to 2 minutes. Turn and cook another minute. Serve

From the south comes a famous breakfast cereal — grits. Grits are grain, especially hominy, coarsely ground.

GRITS AU GRATIN

- 3/4 c. grits
- 3 c. boiling water
- 1 t. salt
- 1/2 lb. sharp cheese, grated
- 1 c. milk
- 1/2 c. buttered breadcrumbs
- 1/4 t. paprika

Slowly stir grits into boiling, salted water in top of double boiler over direct heat. Cover. Place over boiling water and continue cooking 45 minutes, stirring.

Alternate layers of cooked grits and grated cheese in greased baking dish. Add milk and breadcrumbs and paprika. Bake in 325-degree oven for 30 minutes

Care for poinsettias

LANCASTER — To keep your Christmas Poinsettia in good condition throughout the holidays and afterwards special care is needed.

Place the poinsettia where it will receive the greatest amount of sunlight — in south east, or west exposures — and where the plant is not exposed to cold-air drafts, such as near an outside doorway or on a window sill. Do not place the plant near a radiator, furnace register or fireplace.

Poinsettias grow best in tem-

peratures which average 60°F (15°C) at night and 70° F during the day, also the temperatures recommended for conserving energy

Avoid over-watering, too much water damages roots and causes the plant to wilt.

When the colored bracts begin to fade, reduce the amount of water and place the plant in a cool place 40°F to 45°F. Allow the plant to receive some light. Keep it slightly damp until May when it should be reotted.

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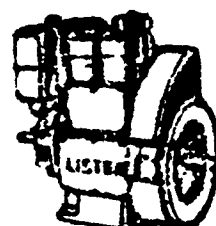
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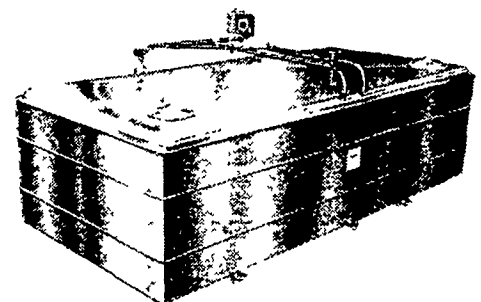
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