

THE MICRO WAY LANI BLOOMER



done, even with shielding. The nuts sank to the bottom. The edges didn't brown, so most of the recipes I tried looked "sick." And cinnamon or graham cracker crumbs on the edges didn't help much.

Well, I tried again, with success at last! Here, barely in time for Christmas, is a nut bread, with several variations, that looks good enough to serve company. It tastes delicious and doesn't take hours to bake because it's designed for your microwave.

These nut rings are pretty when served whole; sprinkle with powdered sugar, if desired. Or slice and serve spread with cream cheese or butter for a buffet.

They are also delicious toasted for breakfast. They keep well refrigerated, and freeze well too, so make one now to have on hand

Microwaving Nut Breads
Every fall, for the last three years I have planned a column on microwaving nut breads. But every fall, I have replaced that column with something else, since the recipes I'd tested weren't very good. I was beginning to think that

nut breads just weren't worth cooking in a microwave.

Here are some of the problems I ran into: The cooking is uneven because of the very dense batter, so the bottom is frequently underdone. In the loaf shape, the ends get too hard before the middle gets

for unexpected company during the next few weeks.

Cranberry Nut Ring

- 3 tablespoons shortening or margarine
- 2 cups finely chopped walnuts, divided (½ cup to coat pan, 1½ cups for batter)
- ¾ cup margarine or butter
- 1½ cups sugar
- 3 eggs
- 2 teaspoons orange rind
- ¼ cup orange juice
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1½ cups flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1 cup coarsely chopped cranberries

1. Heavily grease a 10 to 12-cup plastic bundt pan, using all 3 tablespoons shortening or margarine. Sprinkle ½ cup nuts evenly in pan to coat sides and bottom.

2. In large mixing bowl, cream butter and sugar until very light and fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating very well after each. Then stir in orange rind, juice, and sour cream, mixing until smooth. Sift flour with baking powder and soda and stir into batter. Fold in remaining 1½ cups nuts and cranberries.

3. Spread batter evenly in prepared pan. If your oven does not have a turntable, raise the pan off the bottom of the microwave by placing the bundt pan on top of an upside down pie plate, dinner plate or flat casserole lid. (This lets more microwaves get under the pan, so the bottom cooks more evenly.) With a turntable, this is not necessary.

4. Leave uncovered and microwave on medium (50,5) for 15 minutes, until batter rises evenly all over pan. If the batter rises

unevenly, rotate pan every 4 to 5 minutes during baking. Microwave on high for 5 to 7 minutes, until a long toothpick or cake straw comes out clean.

5. Let stand on a flat surface (counter, breadboard, hot pad) for 15 minutes. Move pan to a wire rack and cool until bottom is only warm to touch (15 to 20 minutes). Turn out onto a serving plate. Serve warm or cool completely. Nut breads slice better when cold. Makes 1 12-inch ring; serves 18-24.

Variations:

Date Nut Bread: Replace cranberries with chopped dates.

Bishop's Bread: This is a sweet treat for a dessert buffet! Omit cranberries, orange rind and juice. Use ¼ cup milk and 1 teaspoon vanilla. Then stir in only 1 cup chopped nuts (instead of 1½) and ½ cup chopped dates, ½ cup chopped candied cherries, and ½ cup miniature chocolate chips.

Tips: Make sure you finely chop the pieces of nuts, dates, etc. that you add. Large chunks or regular size chocolate chips sink during microwaving. If a lot of big chunks sink, the batter on the bottom around them will be undercooked.

— Dense batters like this need to be raised up in the microwave, as in step 3, or they may not be done in the cooking times given.

— When testing for doneness, use a cake straw or long toothpick that will reach to the bottom of the bundt pan. It is the very bottom that may be underdone.

Note: The cooking times above are for microwaves with 600-700 Watts. For 500 W, add 10-15 seconds for each minute.

I hope you have a joyous holiday and that you'll be celebrating with your family as we will.

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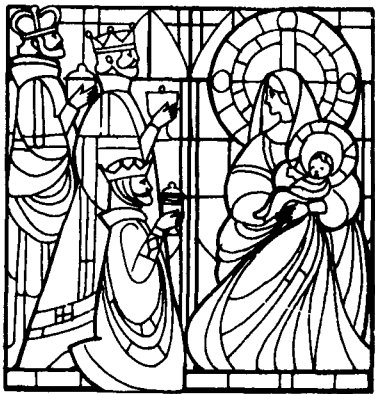
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As We Celebrate The Birth of
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Good Year In 1986 And We Wish Them A Prosperous
Year In 1987!

Kerr Attends AVA Convention

ALEXANDRIA, Va. — Jim Kerr, vocational agriculture teacher in the Willow Street AVTS school joined approximately 500 other vocational agriculture educators attending the American Vocational Association National Convention in Dallas, Texas, December 5 to 9. An estimated 6,500 vocational educators representing the 12 AVA divisions attended the 600 plus sessions keyed to the theme, "AVA at 60... A Tradition to Build On."

The 38th National Vocational Agricultural Teachers' Association Conference ran concurrently with the AVA Convention. The NVATA, an affiliate of the AVA Ag Education Division,

conducted a series of programs designed to meet the specialized needs of the secondary, post-secondary and adult agriculture instructors. The total program included general sessions, departmental/ sectional/ regional/ divisional/ affiliate meetings, business sessions, special award and recognition programs, socials, receptions, and sponsored meal functions.

Jim Kerr, currently serving as the past president of the Pennsylvania Vocational Agricultural Teachers Association, also served as delegate at the convention.

The NVATA is a national professional organization for vocational agriculture educators.

**Jolly good wishes
for a New Year
packed with fun
and lots of
happiness all
rolled into one!**

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...and love to you and
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