



If you are looking for a recipe but can't find it, send your recipe request to Lou Ann Good, Cook's Question Corner, in care of Lancaster Farming, P.O. Box 609, Ephrata, PA 17522. There's no need to send a self-addressed stamped envelope. If we receive an answer to your question, we will publish it as soon as possible. Check your recipe to make sure you copy the right amounts and complete instructions for making the recipe. Sometimes we receive numerous answers to the same request, but cannot print each one.

Answers to recipe requests should be sent to the same address. You may also e-mail questions and answers to LGOOD.EPH@LNPNEWS.COM

**QUESTION** — Ralph Kieffer, Halifax, wants a recipe for Aunt Flossie's tomato soup, which he heard is printed in a Lancaster County cookbook.

**QUESTION** — Sandra Smith is looking for a recipe for potato skin soup.

**QUESTION** — A steady reader wants to know how to make natural vinegar, which is a vinegar that gets a "mother" in it. Is there a place to buy such vinegar?

**QUESTION** — Jane Freed, Mertztown, wants a recipe for making homemade sauerkraut to can. She wants two methods: the one that ferments in a crock and the one packed in quart jars.

**QUESTION** — A reader wants low-fat recipes and diabetic recipes that other readers have tried and liked.

**QUESTION** — A Narvon reader writes that she accidentally discarded two recipes, which she had clipped from this column, that her family really liked. One recipe was for waffles, and the lady who had submitted it wrote that she sold them at a stand when she was young. The other recipe was for biscuits that used cold butter cut into the flour. Anyone know to which recipes she is referring? Please send in to be reprinted.

**QUESTION** — June Martin, Oxford, N.J., wants a recipe to make venison hot dogs.

**QUESTION** — Nina Biddle, Tyrone, has identical recipes for sugar cookies, one using Pillsbury flour and the other Gold Medal. Why do they taste differently if the identical ingredients are used? If we do not receive an answer to this request within two weeks, we will drop it.

**ANSWER** — Frank Bonk, Perth Amboy, N.J., wanted to know where to find fresh killed geese and goose livers. Thanks to Richard Langhman, Chambersburg, for writing that fresh-dressed geese can be purchased at Peachy's Butcher Shop and Market, Belleville (Mifflin Co.) Phone (800) 222-3341.

**ANSWER** — Pat Elligson, Millers, Md., wanted a recipe for good, moist old-fashioned fruit cake that is thick with fruit and nuts. Unfortunately we did not receive any recipes in time for holiday baking. But this week, three were submitted. I guess people have time since the holiday season is over. So please clip these recipes to use for next year's Christmas season. Thanks to Shirley Orfanella, Quarryville, for sending a recipe for a fruit cake "that they will really eat."

#### Dark Fruitcake

3½ cups mixed diced fruits and peels  
1¼ cups dark seedless raisins  
1¼ cups light seedless raisins  
1 cup chopped walnuts  
1 cup chopped pecans  
3 cups enriched flour  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
1 teaspoon allspice  
½ teaspoon nutmeg  
½ teaspoon ground cloves  
1 cup shortening  
2 cups brown sugar  
4 large eggs  
¾ cup grape juice

Mix fruits, peels, raisins, and nuts. Sift together flour, baking powder, salt, and spices. Sprinkle ¼ cup over fruit mix and blend well. Cream shortening and sugar. Add eggs, mix well. Add dry ingredients to creamed mixture adding grape juice. Pour batter over fruits and mix well.

Line two 8½x4½-inch loaf pans with waxed

paper, allowing ½ inch to extend above all sides. Fill ¾ full. Do not flatten. Bake in very slow oven (275 degrees) for 3-3½ hours or until done. Put pan of water on bottom oven rack. Makes about 6 pounds.

Thanks to Stephanie Luckenbaugh, Abbotstown, for sending a recipe she's had since the 1950s. She writes that although it is not the traditional fruitcake recipe, it is very delicious and simple to prepare.

#### Brazil Nut Cake

3 cups Brazil nuts OR 3 cups walnuts, halved, OR combination of both  
16 ounces dates OR raisins, chopped, pitted or combination of both  
1 cup red maraschino cherries, drained  
1 cup green maraschino cherries, drained  
¾ cup sugar  
¾ cup flour  
½ teaspoon baking powder  
½ teaspoon salt  
3 eggs, beaten  
1 teaspoon vanilla

Mix together nuts, fruits, and cherries in a bowl. Sift together flour, sugar, baking powder, and salt. Add to the fruit and nut mixture and stir well. Next, combine the 3 beaten eggs and vanilla and add to the fruit, nut, and flour mixture. Mix well until everything is moist. Pour into a loaf pan and press down hard all over the top. Bake at 300 degrees for 105 minutes. Cool completely. Do not try to remove cake from loaf pan until cake is completely cool.

Thanks to a steady reader from Manheim for sending this recipe, which she writes should be made at least three weeks in advance of eating. This recipe was handed down through the family from the reader's great grandmother. However the reader writes that she hasn't made it for about five years because she is the only one in her family who likes fruit cake.

#### Old-Fashioned Fruit Cake

Sift together and set aside:

3 cups cake flour  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
1½ teaspoons cinnamon  
1 teaspoon cloves  
¼ teaspoon nutmeg  
¼ teaspoon mace  
½ teaspoon salt

Cream together:

1 cup shortening (half Crisco, half margarine)  
1½ cups light brown sugar  
3 large eggs, add one at a time

Fruit and nuts in separate bowl:

1 cup light raisins  
1 cup dark raisins  
1 cup chopped figs  
2 cups chopped nuts (pecans and English walnuts)  
1 cup candied cherries  
¼ cup candied orange peel  
¼ cup candied lemon peel  
¼ cup candied citron  
¼ cup candied pineapple

Take about ½ cup of the dry ingredients and mix into fruit and nuts to give a dusted coating, set aside.

To dry ingredients, mix alternately with creamed mixture, adding ½ cup peach or grape juice and 1 cup grape jelly. Mix well. Add the fruit and nuts and stir well.

Line two tube pans or three loaf pans with waxed paper, greased and floured pan and paper. Place walnut halves and candied cherries on top.

Bake at 275 degrees for 1 hour, increase temperature to 300 degrees and bake an additional 1½-2 hours.

If cake browns too soon, cover with brown paper.

When cakes are cooled, soak a white cloth in grape wine or grape juice and wrap cake in it. Place in tight container. Check every week to be sure cloth is damp. If not, unwrap, dampen cloth again and replace in container.

**ANSWER** — A reader wanted a recipe to make raisin bran muffins in which the mix can be refrigerated up to 30 days and used when needed. Thanks to Jean Sarver, Millerstown, and others for sending recipes. Elaine Brown, Tunkhannock, sent a similar recipe. She writes if all the batter is baked at once, it makes 4 dozen regular-sized muffins, which freeze well after baking. For Elaine and others who inquire: We do not have a test kitchen. We rely upon our readers to send correct recipes that they have tried. Yes, we have had many requests for publishing an annual cookbook but are not pursuing it at this time. Thanks for your idea for type-style changes, which we may incorporate in the future.

#### Six-Week Bran Muffins

5 cups flour  
5 teaspoons baking soda  
2 teaspoons salt  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
1 teaspoon nutmeg  
15-ounces bran flakes with raisins  
3 cups sugar  
4 eggs  
1 cup oil  
1 quart buttermilk  
2 teaspoons vanilla

In large bowl, mix first five ingredients. Add bran flakes and sugar. Mix well. In mixing bowl, beat eggs, add oil, buttermilk, and vanilla. Pour over flour mixture and stir well. Transfer to plastic container with tight fitting lid and store in refrigerator until ready to use. Keeps up to six weeks. When ready to bake, don't stir when dipping out to fill muffin pans. Drop ½ cup into paper-lined tins. Bake 20 minutes at 375 degrees.

**ANSWER** — For the reader who requested recipes for a steak sauce to use as a marinade and to make steaks like those served at steak houses, Carroll Boyer, Stewartstown, sent in the following comprehensive instructions on how to cook a steak:

• **Steak** — you must find a local butcher who will hand cut your steak to 1¼-2-inches thick, and tell him not to trim it. Steak houses do not buy steaks from the supermarket. You must purchase your steak at least the day before you plan to use it.

• **Marinade** — you must marinate at least 12 hours. You can use either a dry or liquid rub. Carroll uses a dry rub from McCormick. Rub each steak on both sides using a liberal amount on each side until it disappears. Place steaks in a plastic bag in refrigerator.

• **To cook the steak** — you must have a very hot cooking surface. The steak must sizzle when you start them. Use tongs — not forks. Lay your steaks on the grill. Brush the top of steak with oil (any cooking oil will do), turn the steaks, using the tongs lift each steak for 10 seconds to let it breathe. Walk away for 5 minutes. Now coat the top side with oil, turn, lift each steak again for 10 seconds and walk away for 5 more minutes. Now your steaks are done.

"If your crowd wants well-done steak, send them to a leather shop," Carroll writes.

## Plastics And The Microwave

LEBANON (Lebanon Co.) — Stories about the dangers of chemicals leaching from plastic into microwaved food have circulated for years. As a result, the Food and Drug Administration continues to receive inquiries from concerning consumers.

Consumers can be confident as they heat meals or leftovers in the microwave that the FDA carefully reviews the substances used to make plastics designed for food use. These include microwave-safe plastic coverings that keep food from splattering and microwave-safe containers that hold frozen dinners. Even microwavable popcorn bags, which look like paper, actually contain a metalized plastic film that allows them to reach high temperatures so the corn can fully pop.

Under the food additive provisions of the Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act, new substances used to make plastics for food use are classified as "food contact substances." They must be found safe for their intended use before they can be marketed.

Consumers should be sure to use any plastics for their intended purpose and in accordance with directions. If you don't find instructions for microwave use, you should use a different plate or container that you know is microwave-safe. Such containers are made to withstand high temperatures.

For example, carryout containers from restaurants and margarine tubs should not be used in the microwave, according to the American Plastics Council. Inappropriate containers may melt or warp, which can increase the likelihood of spills and burns. Also, discard containers that hold prepared microwavable meals after you use them because they are meant for one-time use.

Microwave-safe plastic wrap should be placed loosely over food so that steam can escape, and should not directly touch your food. Some plastic wraps have labels indicating that there should be a one-inch or greater space between the plastic and the food during microwave heating.

Always read directions, but generally, microwave-safe plastic wraps, wax paper, cooking bags, parchment paper, and white microwave-safe paper towels are safe to use. Covering food helps protect against contamination, keeps moisture in, and allows food to cook evenly. Never use plastic storage bags, grocery bags, newspapers, or aluminum foil in the microwave.