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MERRY CHRISTMAS

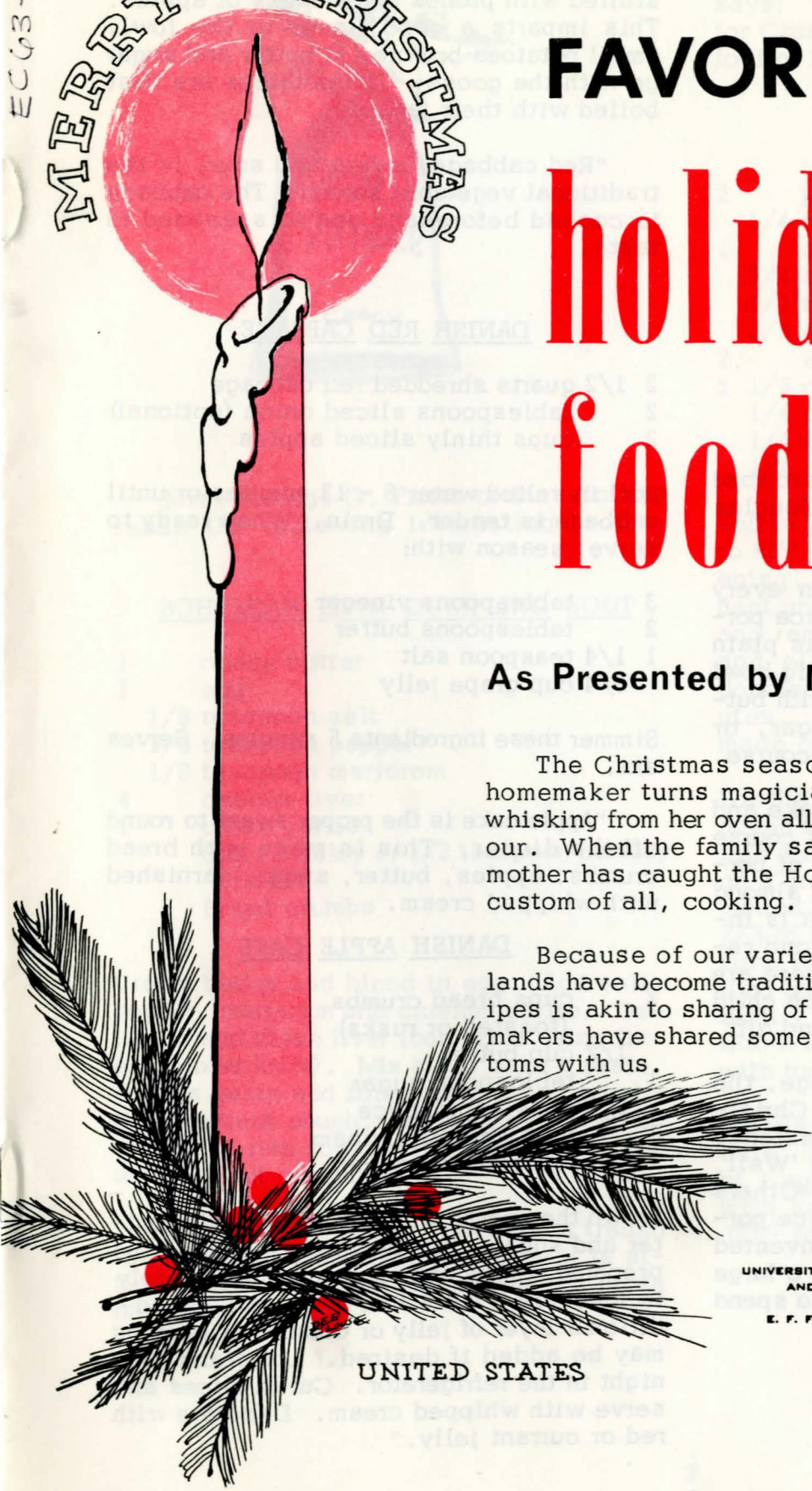
FAVORITE holiday foods

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As Presented by Nebraska Homemakers

The Christmas season is the time when the creative homemaker turns magician and hypnotizes her family by whisking from her oven all kinds of foods with holiday glamour. When the family says, "It smells like Christmas," mother has caught the Holiday spirit in the most womanly custom of all, cooking.

Because of our varied ancestry, many foods of many lands have become traditionally American. Sharing of recipes is akin to sharing of Holiday goodies, so a few homemakers have shared some of their old country cooking customs with us.



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A Danish Christmas dinner as described by Mrs. Charles A. Bloomquist, Douglas County, Nebraska:

"It is an old custom to begin every Christmas dinner in Denmark with rice porridge. This porridge or pudding is plain rice cooked in water and milk. A big bowl full of this rice, which is trimmed with butter, powdered cinnamon and sugar, or served with fruit juice, is the first course.

"Everyone is supposed to partake and eat as much as possible of this first course of rice, for somewhere in this bowl of porridge there is an almond. Until that almond is found by someone the excitement is intense. The one who gets the almond receives a gift. In homes where there are children, it always happens that each child gets an almond and a special almond gift.

"As a child of Danish parentage, the enthusiasm of the Danes for rice at Christmas time seems hard for me to understand. My father jokingly used to tell me 'Well, they won't eat so much afterward.' Others have said that perhaps the whole rice porridge business was thought of or invented by a cunning Danish housewife with a large family to feed and not much money to spend on the goose which follows.

"Be that as it may, the Danes go all out when serving dinners, especially a Christmas dinner. The Christmas goose is stuffed with prunes and wedges of apples. This imparts a good flavor to the fowl. Small potatoes browned in butter and sugar go with the goose. The potatoes are first boiled with their jackets.

"Red cabbage, sweet and sour, is the traditional vegetable served. The cabbage is cooked beforehand and is seasoned to taste.

DANISH RED CABBAGE

- 2 1/2 quarts shredded red cabbage
- 2 tablespoons sliced onion (optional)
- 2 cups thinly sliced apples

Boil in salted water 8 - 12 minutes or until cabbage is tender. Drain. When ready to serve, season with:

- 3 tablespoons vinegar
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup grape jelly

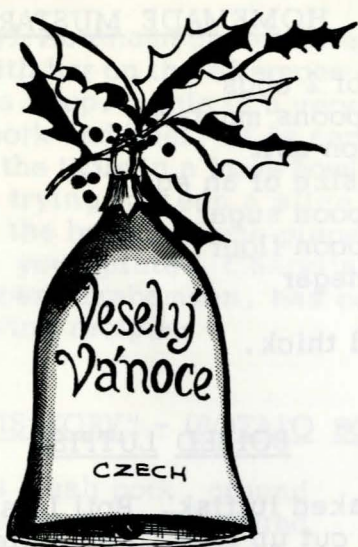
Simmer these ingredients 5 minutes. Serves six.

"Apple cake is the proper sweet to round off the dinner. This is made with bread crumbs, apples, butter, sugar, garnished with whipped cream.

DANISH APPLE CAKE

- 2 cups bread crumbs (toasted or rusks)
- 1/2 cup butter
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 2 1/2 cups applesauce
- 1 pint whipping cream
- 2 tablespoons sugar

Brown the crumbs well in a skillet with butter and sugar. Stir constantly. Place the prepared crumbs and applesauce alternately in layers in a 4 x 8 loaf bread pan. An additional layer of jelly or crushed macaroons may be added if desired. Let stand overnight in the refrigerator. Cut in slices and serve with whipped cream. Decorate with red or currant jelly."



Mrs. George G. Fritts of Burt County sends the following interesting recipe:

BOHEMIAN LIVER DUMPLING SOUP

- 1 ounce butter
- 1 egg
- 1/8 teaspoon salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 1/8 teaspoon marjoram
- 4 ounces liver
- 1 clove garlic
- Sprig parsley or 1/2 teaspoon parsley flakes
- Bread crumbs

Cream butter and blend in egg. Add salt, pepper, marjoram and crushed garlic. Detissue and sieve liver (can grind using finest grinder knife). Mix all to make a paste. To this paste add fine, dried bread crumbs to make thick dough. Add parsley. Drop by teaspoons into soup broth. Simmer 11 minutes without removing lid.

Around the world, women have traded their favorite bread recipes. Now it is almost impossible to tell where many of these have originated.

Miss Irene Ruzicka of Grand Island says: "This is something we always had for Christmas breakfast." It is a braided loaf of bread called:

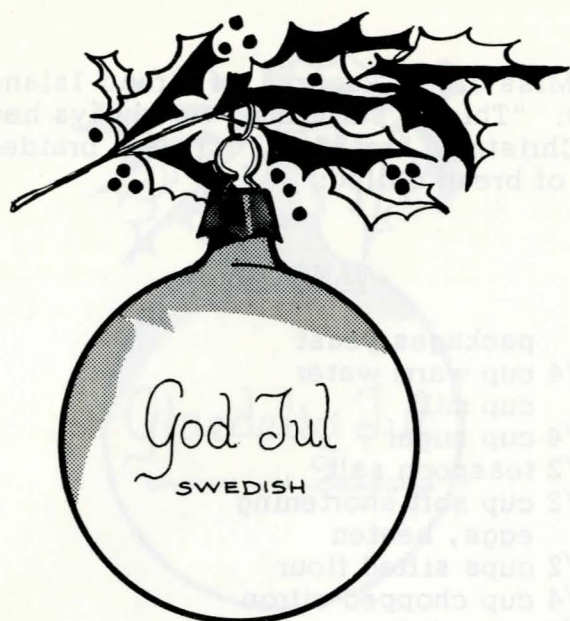
VANOCA

- 2 packages yeast
- 1/4 cup warm water
- 1 cup milk
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup soft shortening
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 5 1/2 cups sifted flour
- 1/4 cup chopped citron
- 1/4 cup raisins
- 1/4 cup chopped almonds

Soften yeast in water. Scald milk and cool to 80° - 85°. Stir in sugar, salt and shortening. Add eggs and one-half the flour. Beat until smooth. Stir in the fruits, nuts and remaining flour. Knead until smooth and elastic. Cover and let rise until doubled in bulk, about 1 hour and 15 minutes. Punch down and shape into a loaf made of 3 different braids.

For the larger braid, divide one-half of the dough into 3 equal pieces. Roll each piece into a strip 18 inches long. Braid and place on a greased baking sheet. Brush top with melted butter. For the second braid, divide 2/3 of remaining dough into 3 equal parts. Form into a second braid about 18 inches long and place on top of first braid. Brush lightly with butter. Form remaining dough into a third braid and place on top. Fasten with toothpicks if necessary.

Let rise in a warm place until doubled in bulk, about 1 hour. Brush with a mixture of 1 egg, 1 tablespoon water and decorate with 1/4 cup blanched almonds. Bake at 375° for 45 minutes.



Mrs. Sue Smith of Lincoln remembers Swedish customs when she was a girl:

"Lutfisk and Christmas are almost synonymous at our house. My mother, Mrs. Oscar Bjorklund of Wakefield, has always fixed it. This was a project to be embarked upon right after Thanksgiving. In those days, the only way you seemed to be able to buy the fish was in the dried form. This meant changing water on the soaking fish every day for weeks. Today you can buy it in some grocery stores already soaked.

"Mustard sauce is a part of the traditional dish. When my Grandfather Anderson was living, this mustard sauce was always very authentic -- unbearably HOT. Now we usually use commercial mustard.

"Rice pudding was always our traditional dessert after the meal of lutfisk and boiled potatoes on Christmas Eve.

"Frukt Soppa, a Swedish fruit soup, was also a favorite. This may be served either hot or cold."

* * *

HOMEMADE MUSTARD

Yolks of 2 eggs
2 tablespoons mustard
1 teaspoon salt
Butter size of an egg
1 tablespoon sugar
1 tablespoon flour
1 cup vinegar

Boil until thick.

BOILED LUTFISK

3 lb. soaked lutfisk. Boil in soft water. Skin and cut up fish. Place pieces close together in cheese cloth. Sprinkle with salt. Place on rack. Bring slowly to boil for 10 - 15 minutes.

When ready, drain and remove to hot platter. Always serve with salt, black and white pepper, mustard and white sauce.

WHITE SAUCE

3 tablespoons butter
3 tablespoons flour
2 1/2 cups milk or half cream
Salt
White pepper

Melt butter, add flour and stir well. Add milk gradually while cooking slowly for 10 minutes. May also be served with green peas in the white sauce.

SWEDISH RICE PUDDING

1/2 cup rice
2 eggs
2 1/2 cups milk
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup raisins
1/2 cup sugar
1/4 teaspoon cinnamon

Cook rice in 2 quarts boiling salted water for 20 minutes. Drain. Beat eggs, add milk and the remaining ingredients. Mix well. Pour into a pan and set in a pan of hot water. Bake in 325° oven until light brown, about 30 minutes.

Cheryl Abrahamson of Axtell says a "must" with her on the afternoon of Christmas Eve is "Dup." This is a very rich broth made of pork and beef. It is served in the middle of the table in a large bowl. The fun comes in trying to keep a slice of bread, dipped in the broth, in one piece until you get it to your plate. Cheryl's mother, Mrs. Reuben Abrahamson, has contributed the following recipes:

"POTATIS KORV" - (POTATO BOLOGNA)

- 6 pounds fresh pork, ground
- 4 pounds fresh beef, ground
- 1 cup minced onion
- 6 tablespoons salt
- 10 pounds raw potatoes, ground
- Pepper and allspice according to taste - mix thoroughly
- Stuff into casings. Stuff lightly so they will not burst during cooking process.

To cook, cover with cold water. After it starts to boil, prick casings with needle to prevent bursting. Boil gently for about 1 hour. Drain and cut in serving size pieces. May be browned in oven after boiled.

SPRITZ COOKIES

- 1 cup butter
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon almond flavoring
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 2 1/2 cups flour

Cream butter and sugar and add egg. Sift flour, baking powder and salt and add to creamed mixture. Add flavoring. Put through cookie press and form into S or O shape. Bake at 400° for 5 to 10 minutes (watch closely).

SWEDISH APPLE CAKE

Stew apples until tender, mash, sweeten, add cinnamon and blend well.

- 2 cups applesauce
- 1 cup cream whipped and sweetened
- 4 slices fresh white bread or sweet bread as buns or parker house rolls, equal to the 4 slices - crumble bread

Place bread and apples in alternate layers in bowl, beginning and ending with whipped cream. Garnish with cinnamon.

OSTAKAKA

- 1 gallon milk
- 1/2 rennet tablet
- 3/4 cup flour with 1/2 cup cold water
- 3 eggs
- 3/4 cup sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/2 cup cream
- 1/2 teaspoon almond extract
- 1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract

Heat milk until lukewarm. Mix flour in cold water and add to warmed milk. Add rennet (mashed). Stir a bit, then let stand about one hour until it thickens, then stir a little and let stand 15 minutes longer. Drain in a colander. Add beaten eggs, cream, sugar, salt and flavoring. Bake 1 1/2 hours - 20 minutes at 360°, then 325° for the rest of the time. Serve ostakaka with lingon berries and whipped cream.

ANISE COOKIES - (SPRINGERLE)

A quaintly carved springerle rolling pin or mold, available in most department stores, gives these cookies an old world charm. You may find a recipe for these cookies in your standard recipe book.



Mrs. Otto Iversen of Washington County says that the Germans call them Faugen and the Danish call them Ebleskivers. Both her husband's folks and her mother's family ate them for Christmas Eve, either with sugar or thickened fruit sauce, such as cherry or gooseberry. These are cooked in a pan called an Ebleskiver Iron.

FAUGEN (FRITTERS)

- 3 cups milk
- 1 yeast cake or dry yeast
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons melted butter
- 6 eggs beaten light
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 cup raisins (wash and drain)
- 6 1/2 cups flour
- cardamon

Scald milk and cool. Soften yeast in a little warm water. Add to the cool milk. Add sugar and melted butter and eggs. Add 3 cups flour and beat 2 minutes. Then add rest of flour and raisins and as much cardamon as you like. (I add a small teaspoon) This dough is very soft. Let rise till light, then stir, and after the second rising, drop by teaspoon in deep fat or fry in faugen pan. Place faugen in a paper sack. Warm in moderate oven. When warm, roll in granulated sugar.

"I think I will put in more sugar next time, and I like more raisins also. We used to always put currants in, I think I like them better. Pour lots of hot water over them as they are always very dry. Drain well."

Many remember their great grandmothers saying that no Christmas celebration was ever complete without Lebkuchen, the famous old-time German Christmas honey cake. Mrs. Arthur Hueftle of Eustis says if you store them tightly covered, they improve in flavor.

LEBKUCHEN

- 1 quart honey
- 1 pound brown sugar
- 1 1/2 cup white sugar
- 1/4 pound citron (4 ounce jar)
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon allspice
- 1/2 teaspoon cloves
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
- salt

Mix the above. Heat through but do not boil. Cool, stirring occasionally. Add:

- 1/2 cup lard, warmed
- 1 quart plus 1 cup rich sour cream
- 1 tablespoon soda dissolved in cream
- 1/2 pound sliced peeled almonds
- flour

Add flour until quite stiff. Let set overnight. Bake. Dough will keep. Can be rolled, shaped, or rolled in balls and pressed down. Leave quite thick.

Mrs. Walter Johann of Seward makes German Christmas Cookies every Christmas. They store well and last for months.

GERMAN CHRISTMAS COOKIES

- 4 cups brown sugar
- 4 cups molasses
- 4 teaspoons soda
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon allspice
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 pound walnut meats, chopped
- 4 cups rich sour cream
- 5 quarts flour
- 2 teaspoons cloves
- 1 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 pound currants
- 1 pound mixed fruit
- 1 pound raisins

Mix sugar and molasses, heat without boiling till sugar is melted. Add other ingredients and enough flour to make a stiff dough. Let stand over night in a cool place. Roll and cut. Bake at 350°. (Makes dozens and dozens and dozens.)

Mrs. Edwin A. Jacobs of Plymouth says that Pfeffernuesse (peppernuts) are fun to make, especially when you see how they go for them when served. They are best if made weeks before the Holidays.

PFEFFERNUESSE (PEPPERNUTS)

Cook - 1 1/2 cups sugar, 3 cups molasses or sorghum, 3 cups shortening. Cook these three ingredients until stringy. When cool add: 1 1/4 teaspoons cloves, 1/4 teaspoon allspice, 1/4 cup sour milk, anise oil or anise seed or vanilla flavoring, 1 teaspoon soda, 1 teaspoon salt and approximately nine cups of flour. (Dough must be stiff enough to work into balls.) Let the dough stand for two days, to ripen, before baking. Roll in finger size rolls or about 1/2 inch in diameter. Cut into 1/3 inch pieces. Place cut side down on greased cookie sheet; bake in 400° oven about 8 minutes. Cookies should be as large and as brown as hazel nuts. They need not be baked all at one time. Store in cans or plastic bag. (They may be stored with a piece of apple.)

* * *

A CHRISTMAS RECIPE

Cloves and cinnamon, holly leaves, reverence, icicles aglitter, mince pies and plum puddings, anise and nutmeg, stars sparkling. Mix ingredients with joy and gratitude, serve with unselfishness and love.



Agnes Arthaud was in Ireland during the Holiday Season in 1962. She says that many of the traditional Christmas foods are similar to ours. Turkey is the Christmas meat and "sweets" are many and varied. There are Christmas fruit breads and yeast is used for these, even though yeast breads are seldom baked at home at other times. Fruit cakes, lavishly decorated; plum pudding; mince pies and many fancy fruit and pastry "trifles" are home-baked or purchased.

The following recipe was given to Miss Arthaud by Mary Duffy, Navin, County Meath. This is a cold meat used in the Cork area for "High Tea," which is supper served late in the evening.

SPICED BEEF

- 1 pound salt
- 1 ounce saltpetre
- 1/4 ounce black pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1/4 pound brown sugar
- 1/4 pound treacle (dark molasses)
- 1/4 ounce allspice
- 1/4 ounce ground cloves
- 1/4 ounce ground mace
- 1/2 teaspoon chopped thyme
- 6 bay leaves
- 3 chopped shallots

The above will spice 7 - 10 pounds beef. Choose good quality, fresh, boned brisket, round or rump of beef.

Method: (1) Prepare meat by trimming carefully. (2) Wipe meat, rub with common salt and let set for 12 hours or more. (3) Mix salt, saltpetre, sugar, spices, shallots, seasoning and flavorings together. Rub this mixture into the meat on all sides. (4) Let meat stand two days, pour the treacle over it, rub the mixture into the meat every day for about a fortnight (two weeks). (5) Tie into shape, simmer until tender, drain, dust with the meat spice, cut thin and serve cold.



Plum pudding has had an interesting history. In early days it was merely a soft, squashy mash extracted from fresh plums and mixed with butter, rice, and barley. The whole grains were included to inspire a good harvest for the coming year.

The next step produced a pudding made from meat broth, spices, and dried raisins. By the early 19th century there were plum puddings similar to the ones made today; however, they were boiled in a cloth instead of being steamed. Even today some families like their plum pudding boiled.

The favorite recipe of Mrs. Vera Goucher for plum pudding was sent in by the Hayes County Sunshine Club.

PLUM PUDDING

- 2 cups suet - chopped
- 1 cup chopped apple
- 2 cups seeded raisins
- 1 cup currants
- 1 cup molasses
- 1/2 cup brandy (apple jack)
- 1/2 cup fruit juice
- 3 cups flour
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon soda
- 2 teaspoons cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon cloves
- 1/2 teaspoon allspice
- 1/4 cup sugar

Combine suet, fruits, molasses, and liquid. Add sifted dry ingredients and mix thoroughly. Fill greased molds, 2/3 full, cover tightly. Steam 3 hours or pressure 20 minutes with petcock open, then 50 minutes at 10 pounds pressure. Serve hot with sauce.

LEMON SAUCE

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1 tablespoon cornstarch
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 cup boiling water
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 1/2 tablespoons lemon juice

Mix sugar, cornstarch, salt and nutmeg. Gradually add water and cook over low heat until thick and clear. Add butter and flavoring. Blend.

Another recipe for pudding was sent in by Mrs. Paul G. Jones of Washington County. She says, "I got this recipe at a Farmer's Institute in Blair, about 1910-12, and I have made it for family Thanksgiving and Christmas gatherings ever since."

BLACK PUDDING

- 1 cup suet - chopped
- 1 cup bread crumbs
- 2 cups flour
- 1 cup sorghum
- 1 cup milk
- 1 cup raisins
- 1 cup dates - chopped
- 2 eggs
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon cloves - scant
- 1 teaspoon soda

Mix spices and soda with flour. Mix well. Place in buttered pan. Steam three hours.

SAUCE

- 2 cups water
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 2 tablespoons flour

Cream butter and flour. Add to boiling syrup. Flavor sauce with dash nutmeg, 1/2 teaspoon each of vanilla and orange extract.