

Treasures from your Holiday Kitchen

Your Advent Cooking Calendar calls for a bubbling cauldron of Merrie Olde Brandied Mincemeat along with other brandied baubles.

There's an old saying in the little English village of Shropshire that the twelve days of Christmas are a mirror of the year. For each brandied mincemeat treat eaten at a hospitable neighbor's house during that period, you're destined to have one happy month. To insure your good luck, you'd best supply your neighbors well in advance — there's a lot of Christmas baking to be done and much of it begins with a crock of homemade mincemeat.

This old Victorian recipe is bright with the flavor of a whole orange and lemon with an abundance of candied fruits and raisins. The brandy is the catalyst that marries the flavors and preserves them for months to come.

MERRIE OLDE BRANDIED MINCEMEAT

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| 1 small navel orange | 4 cups packed brown sugar |
| 1 small lemon | 1 tablespoon cinnamon |
| 8 cups finely diced unpeeled apples | 1-1/2 teaspoons each ground nutmeg, cloves and allspice |
| 1-1/2 cups golden raisins | 1-1/2 teaspoons salt |
| 1-1/2 cups seedless raisins | 1-1/4 cups Brandy |
| 1 cup mixed diced candied fruits | |
| 1 cup orange juice | |

Quarter and seed orange and lemon. Grind in food grinder or food processor fitted with steel blade. In Dutch oven combine ground orange and lemon, apples, raisins, candied fruits and orange juice. Bring to boil, reduce heat and simmer 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add sugar, spices and salt. Simmer 15 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add 1 cup of the brandy. Simmer, stirring occasionally, until mixture is thick like jam, about 1 hour. Remove from heat. Stir in remaining brandy. Store covered in refrigerator up to 2 months. Makes about 2-1/2 quarts.

BRANDY-GLAZED MINCEMEAT BARS

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| 3/4 cup butter or margarine, softened | 1-1/2 cups rolled oats |
| 3/4 cup packed brown sugar | 1/3 cup chopped walnuts |
| 1/4 cup molasses | 2 cups Merrie Olde Brandied Mincemeat |
| 1 egg | 1 cup powdered sugar |
| 1 teaspoon ginger | 1 tablespoon milk |
| 1 teaspoon baking soda | 1 tablespoon Brandy |
| 1/2 teaspoon salt | |
| 1-1/2 cups flour | |

In large bowl combine butter, sugar and molasses. Beat until fluffy. Beat in egg. Beat in ginger. Add flour, oats and walnuts. Mix to blend thoroughly. Spread half of dough evenly in bottom of greased 9x13-inch baking pan. Spread evenly with mincemeat, and then with remaining dough. Bake in 350 degree oven 35 to 45 minutes until lightly browned and springy to the touch. Cool on wire rack. In small bowl beat together powdered sugar, milk and brandy until smooth. Drizzle over cooled cake. Cut into bars about 1x2-inches. Makes 4 dozen bars.

Note: After cooling and cutting, bars may be securely wrapped and frozen up to 1 month. Drizzle with glaze after bars are thawed.

BRANDIED MINCEMEAT COFFEE CAKE

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| 2 packages active dry yeast | 2 eggs |
| 1/2 cup warm water (110 to 115 degrees) | 6 to 8-1/2 cups flour |
| 1 cup milk | 3 cups Merrie Olde Brandied Mincemeat |
| 1/4 cup butter or margarine | 1 cup powdered sugar, sifted |
| 1/2 cup sugar | 1 teaspoon grated lemon peel |
| 1 teaspoon salt | 2 to 3 tablespoons Brandy |
| 1-1/2 teaspoons mace | |

In small bowl dissolve yeast in warm water; set aside. In small saucepan scald milk. Stir in butter, sugar, salt and mace. Cool to lukewarm. Blend in eggs and yeast mixture. In large bowl beat yeast mixture with 5-1/2 cups of the flour. Turn out onto board and knead in enough of the remaining flour to make a smooth and satiny dough, kneading about 10 minutes. Place in greased bowl. Cover and let rise in warm place until doubled, 1 to 1-1/2 hours. Punch down. Divide dough into two equal portions. On floured board roll one portion into a 10x20-inch rectangle. Cover evenly with 1-1/2 cups of the mincemeat to within 1/2 inch of edges. From long side, roll as for jelly roll. Pinch seam to seal. Fit into greased deep 10-inch tube pan, seam-side up. On floured board roll remaining dough into a 10x12-inch rectangle. Cover evenly with remaining 1-1/2 cups of the mincemeat to within 1/2 inch of edges. From long side, roll as for jelly roll. Pinch seam to seal. With sharp knife, cut into 8 equal slices. Brush ring in pan lightly with water. Arrange slices over ring, cut-sides facing up. Cover and let rise in warm place until cake reaches top of pan, 1 to 1-1/2 hours. Bake on lower rack of 375 degree oven 45 to 55 minutes until browned and springy to the touch. (When top becomes sufficiently brown, cover lightly with foil.) Cool on rack 15 minutes. Remove from pan, cool on rack upright. In small bowl mix powdered sugar, lemon peel and brandy until smooth. Drizzle over cake. Makes 1 cake (12 to 15 servings).



BRANDY SNOWBALLS

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| 3/4 cup butter or margarine, softened | 3/4 cup milk |
| 1/3 cup milk | 3 tablespoons Brandy |
| 3 tablespoons Brandy | 1 cup granulated sugar |
| 1 cup granulated sugar | 2 eggs |
| 3/4 teaspoon baking powder | 3/4 cup flour |
| 3/4 cup flour | Brandy Chocolate Filling (recipe follows) |
| 2 tablespoons light corn syrup | 1 tablespoon Brandy |
| 1 tablespoon Brandy | Powdered sugar |

In large bowl combine butter, milk, 3 tablespoons brandy, the granulated sugar, eggs, baking powder and 2-1/2 cups of the flour. Beat with electric mixer at low speed 2 minutes, scraping sides of bowl as needed. Mix in remaining flour to form a soft dough. With lightly floured hands form dough into 96 smooth 3/4-inch balls. Place 1 inch apart on greased baking sheets. Bake in 325 degree oven 15 to 20 minutes until bottoms of cookies are lightly browned. While cookies are warm, hollow out from flat sides with small pointed knife. Reserve crumbs. Prepare Brandy Chocolate Filling. Fill each cookie with filling mixture. Press two filled cookies together to form a ball. Repeat with remaining cookies. In small bowl combine corn syrup and 1 tablespoon brandy. Brush each ball with brandy mixture and immediately roll in powdered sugar to coat heavily. Sprinkle with colored sugar, if desired. (Cookies may be made in advance and frozen up to the point of brushing with brandy mixture and rolling in sugar.) Makes 4 dozen cookies.

BRANDY CHOCOLATE FILLING

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| Crumbs (from hollowed-out cookies) |
| 1/4 cup Brandy |
| 1/4 cup raspberry preserves |
| 1/4 cup finely chopped nuts |
| 2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa |

In medium bowl mix all ingredients to make a thoroughly blended paste.

BRANDIED APRICOT LOAVES

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| 1-1/2 cups (8 ounces) coarsely chopped dried apricots | 1/2 teaspoon baking soda |
| 2/3 cup Brandy | 1 tablespoon baking powder |
| 1/3 cup water | 1/2 teaspoon salt |
| 1 cup sugar | 2-3/4 cups flour |
| 2 eggs | 1 cup chopped nuts |
| 1/3 cup vegetable oil | Branded Cream Cheese (recipe follows) |

In 1-quart saucepan combine apricots, brandy and water. Bring just to boil. Remove from heat and set aside 10 minutes. In large bowl combine sugar, eggs, oil, baking soda and liquid drained from apricots. Beat 2 minutes. Mix in baking powder, salt, flour and apricots just to blend. Fold in nuts. Turn equally into 2 greased and floured 8-1/2x4-1/2x2-5/8-inch loaf pans. Bake in 350 degree oven 35 to 45 minutes until tops are browned and loaves are springy to the touch. Cool 5 minutes. Turn out on wire racks. Wrap in aluminum foil while still slightly warm. Store 24 hours before slicing. Serve with Branded Cream Cheese. Makes 2 loaves (about 1-1/4 pounds each).

Note: Branded Apricot Loaves may be securely wrapped and frozen up to 1 month.

BRANDIED CREAM CHEESE

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| 2 packages (3 ounces each) cream cheese, softened | 2 tablespoons butter or margarine, softened |
| 3 tablespoons powdered sugar | 3 tablespoons Brandy |
- Combine all ingredients in small bowl. Beat until smooth. Chill. Store in refrigerator 24 hours before serving. Makes about 3/4 cup.

BRANDY HOLIDAY MADELEINES

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| 3/4 cup butter or margarine | 1/2 teaspoon salt |
| 3/4 cup sugar | 1 cup milk |
| 4 eggs | Branded Lime Syrup (recipe follows) |
| 2-2/3 cups flour | Powdered sugar |
| 3-3/4 teaspoons baking powder | |

In mixing bowl cream butter and sugar until fluffy. Add eggs, one at a time, beating to blend well. Combine flour, baking powder and salt. Stir into creamed mixture alternately with milk. Measure tablespoonsful of batter into greased madeleine molds or muffin tin cups (2-3/4-inch). Bake in preheated 350 degree oven 15 to 18 minutes, until edges are browned and cakes are springy to the touch. Loosen and remove from molds; cool on wire racks. Clean and regrease molds as needed to bake remaining batter. Dip cakes, a few at a time, in Branded Lime Syrup; drain. Dust generously with powdered sugar. Makes about 4-1/2 dozen.

BRANDIED LIME SYRUP: Dissolve 1/3 cup sugar in 2/3 cup Brandy. Stir in 1/3 cup strained lime juice.