

Dessert recipes All-American

Marilyn M. Moore, author of "The Wooden Spoon Bread Book," using her magic spoon to stir up family favorites in "The Wooden Spoon Dessert Book" (Harper & Row, 1990, \$24.95).

This collection of all-American recipes is divided into categories such as High and Handsome Layer Cakes, Deep Dish Pies, Steamed Puddings and Easy Candies.

"Desserts are special," says Moore, who suggests celebrating family gatherings and special occasions by surprising everyone with a home-baked treasure such as French Cream Cake — filled with whipped cream, iced and coated in chocolate — and Peaches and Cream Pie — with a fruit and custard filling, spiced with nutmeg and ginger.

There are also recipes for afternoon snacks and light after-supper sweets. *Hurry-Up Caramel Cake* is a quick-mix Southern recipe that gets its flavor from brown sugar and butter. A warm winter treat, Apple Dumplings in a tender crust are served with Cinnamon Syrup. For children, desserts include Peanut Butter Ice Cream, served with Absolutely Chocolate Chip Cookies.

The cookbook begins with a chapter on ingredients (how to substitute cocoa for baker's chocolate, which apples are best for pies), recommended equipment (what kind of ice cream churn is best), and cooking methods (making smooth stove-top custards, mastering meringue toppings). Moore also spices up the text with helpful hints about each recipe and anecdotes about its origin.

HURRY-UP CARAMEL CAKE

The light texture and flavor of this Southern quick-mix cake makes it a Sunday favorite. The cake is equally at home at a backyard barbecue or with a full-fledged fried-chicken dinner.

Be sure all ingredients are at room temperature (about 70 degrees) before beginning. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Grease and lightly flour two 9-inch round layer pans. Stir together in a large mixer bowl, pressing out any lumps with the back of a spoon.

1 cup granulated sugar
1 cup light brown sugar

Stir into the sugars, again pressing out any lumps

2 1/4 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon baking powder

Add and mix at low speed until the dry ingredients are moistened, then beat at medium speed until smooth.

8 tablespoons soft unsalted butter
1 cup milk

Stop to scrape the bowl and beaters. Add and beat at low speed until the eggs are blended, and then beat at medium speed until smooth.

2 large eggs
1 1/2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract

Stop to scrape the bowl and beaters. Beat again at medium speed until smooth. Spoon and scrape the

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batter into the prepared pans, spreading evenly. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes, or until the cake begins to pull away from the sides of the pan. Cool in the pans 5 minutes. Turn out to cool completely on wire racks. Fill and frost with *Hurry-Up Caramel Frosting*. Makes 10-12 servings.

Hurry-Up Caramel Frosting

In a large, heavy saucepan, stir over medium heat until the butter is melted, the sugar is dissolved and the surface of the mixture is covered with bubbles.

8 tablespoons soft unsalted butter
1 cup light brown sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
5 ounces evaporated milk

Remove from the heat. Stir in.

1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

Beat in, 1/2 cup at a time, to make frosting spreadable

4 cups confectioners' sugar, more or less

Work quickly to fill and frost the cake, as this tends to harden and "sugar up" like pralines.

RAISIN PUDDING

This is an easy and satisfying family dessert.

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. In a heavy nonreactive saucepan combine

1 cup light brown sugar
1 cup water
3 tablespoons unsalted butter
1 1/2 tablespoons cider vinegar

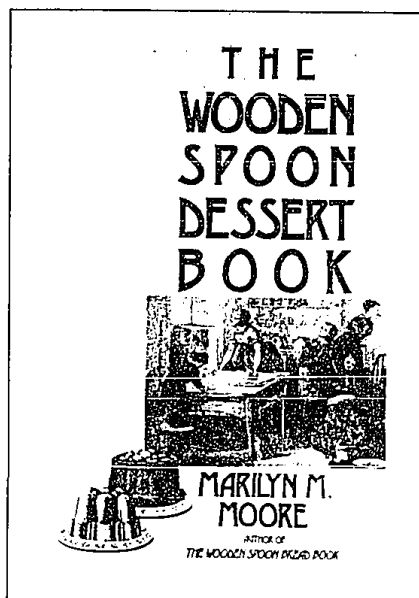
Cook over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until the mixture boils, the sugar dissolves and the butter melts. Pour the hot syrup into an 8-by-8-by-2-inch baking dish. In a mixing bowl, stir together

1/2 cup unbleached all-purpose flour
1/2 cup light brown sugar
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1/2 cup chopped walnuts
1/2 cup raisins

Add and stir in just until well blended

1/2 cup milk
1/2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

Drop the batter by spoonfuls evenly over the syrup in the pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 25 minutes, or until lightly browned on top. Serve warm. Pass a pitcher of cream.



"The Wooden Spoon Dessert Book" is cookbook author Marilyn M. Moore's newest.

Follow these tips to make pasta turn out just right

AP — Pasta is easy to cook, but it's possible to do it wrong. For best results, try these pasta techniques and serving ideas:

HOW MUCH TO COOK

— Plan on 2 ounces of uncooked pasta per person for a main dish, 1 ounce per person for a side dish. Two ounces of dry pasta will yield about 1 to 1 1/4 cups cooked pasta, depending on the shape. For short pasta that you can measure in a cup, 1 cup

uncooked pasta makes about 2 cups cooked (1 1/4 cups for noodles).

COOKING PASTA

— Be sure to use a large pan and plenty of water to allow pasta to "swim."

— Cover the pan while water comes to boiling — it's faster — but cook pasta uncovered. Keep the water boiling.

— Occasionally stir a long pasta,

such as spaghetti, with a long-handled fork to keep strands from sticking together. Stir other pasta with a wide spoon.

— Cooking regular pasta in the microwave is no faster or more convenient than cooking it on the range-top. However, the microwave works well for reheating pasta or pasta dishes, and pasta specially processed for the microwave is available.

— Rinse pasta to be used in a salad in cold water and drain. For other recipes, pasta does not require rinsing.

KEEPING PASTA HOT

— Warm the serving dish by running hot water into it and letting it stand a few minutes. Dry the dish, add the drained pasta, and serve immediately.

— When adding other ingredients to cooked pasta, return the drained

pasta to the pan it was cooked in. Add the ingredients; the heat of the pan will warm them.

— If you must delay serving pasta, drain it and return to the pan it was cooked in. Or transfer to a cooler placed over a pan containing a small amount of boiling water. Coat pasta with a little margarine to prevent sticking and cover the pan.

EXTRA PASTA

— Cooked too much? Add a little

oil to extra pasta and toss to coat. Then cover and refrigerate up to 3 days.

— For longer storage, place cooled, oiled pasta in a plastic freezer bag, seal and freeze for up to 3 weeks. To reheat, remove pasta from bag and add to boiling water; stir gently to separate. Return to boiling and cook until hot, about 2 minutes.



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