

Try This Irish Soda Bread

By FAITH GILLESPIE
Queen of Hearts

It is none too soon to begin to get into the St. Patrick's Day Spirit.

The Mayor of Livonia has already signed the proclamation declaring the week of March 10 to 17 to be Irish Week.

Elsewhere in this newspaper you will find the picture of Mayor Moellie accepting a loaf of authentic Irish soda bread from a charming wee colleen, Maria Ann Menton. Pity the picture isn't in color, for my sources tell me that Maria's dress is a emerald green, and was made especially for her by her aunt in Dublin.

The soda bread was made by Maria's mother, Margaret Menton (Mrs. Joe), lately of Athlone, Ireland, in the county of West Meath.

Mrs. Menton brought the recipe from Ireland when she came; it had been her mother's, and her mother's before her.

Irish soda bread is primarily a breakfast bread in Ireland, and served with bacon and eggs, or sometimes with cheese.

"My husband says it isn't Sunday morning without it," Margaret told me.

The recipe is short and simple, but success depends upon practice, and the hand of the cook. Mrs. Menton chuckled about it. "You have it all your life, and when you marry and leave home after eating your mother's for so long, you have to keep trying. But every time you make it, it gets better."

Here is Margaret Menton's recipe—you know it's the real thing.

IRISH SODA BREAD

Sift together 4 cups flour, 2 teaspoons baking soda, 2 teaspoons salt, and 2 teaspoons sugar. Do this in a fair-sized mixing bowl.

Make a well in the flour, and slowly add 2 cups buttermilk. While doing so, constantly stir the mixture with your hand, mixing with your fingers.

Turn the dough out onto a well-floured board and knead lightly until smooth (approximately 10 minutes).

Sprinkle a 9-inch round cake pan liberally with flour, and place the dough in it, flattening the dough to the size of the pan. Cut a cross on the surface.

Bake at 400 degrees for 45 minutes. When it is done, remove it from the pan and let it cool standing on its side. Serve with lots of butter.

According to Mrs. Menton, the secret is in the kneading.

"Don't lean heavy on it when you knead," she says, with the Irish lilt to her speech.

The Mentons have lived in this country for five years. They began marriage in Dublin, where their two older sons were born.

Their path took them to Montreal, and their first daughter was born during the three years the family was there. They have been blessed with another girl and another boy since they came to the United States.

Joe Menton is a skilled carpenter, and both the Mentons are experts at the Irish Ceili dances, which are something like the American square dances. They teach Ceili dances to the members of the local Irish Club.

The Queen of Hearts salutes this young mother of five who dances and bakes soda bread.

We wish her and her family the luck of the Irish!

St. Agatha Students
Visit Siena Heights

Eleven members of the Genesian Club at St. Agatha High School spent a day recently at Siena Heights College in Adrian. Frank Chubran, Paula Dow, Carol Chubran, Judy Stonik, Nancy Berger, Christine Olizock, Jann Mangold, Colleen Connelley, Susan Griffin, Paula Davis and Maureen Oyer, were participating in Fine Arts Day, put on by the college's speech drama, music and art departments.



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