

# Butter: It's the flavor favored on everything

Cut into the thin brown skin of a hard potato. Steam rises and tiny mounds, valleys and crevices form as the fork turns the pale yellow inside.

Almost ready to eat, the naked vegetable awaits its favored dressing — butter. The first pat melts, gliding in between the fork-made ridges and cracks, enticing passers-by with its unique, buttery aroma.

Butter has a place on the table and in the cooking. It greases the pan for scrambling eggs or making home fries; it's also the perfect toast topper. Warm bread, muffins and rolls quickly absorb

the sunny-lick spread while flaky croissants and brioches contain butter as a prime ingredient. Vegetables, especially corn-on-the-cob, glisten when touched with butter. Fresh fish broils best in butter. Baking cakes and cookies begins with butter.

When did the story of butter begin? In antiquity, butter was used as a salve for burns and other skin injuries. In addition to as a foodstuff, to make butter, nomads used animal skins as sacks for shaking the milk of mammals such as the ewe or goat. Fat globules coagulated into butterfat; whatever did not

come together was drained and rendered into buttermilk. Bedouins' milk-jahs and other similar skins are still used by nomadic tribes in North Africa and the Middle East.

Butter was a scarce commodity during Greek and Roman times. Milk collected from goats and sheep was drunk immediately or made into cheese.

IT WAS not until the Middle Ages that butter was used extensively throughout Europe. Scandinavians first used butter, perhaps because it stayed better there due to the cold climate.

When it was introduced throughout Europe, the dairy product turned rancid quickly and was not widely used until the 18th century. Cooking oils are preferred over butter even today.

Because of the lack of refrigeration, people associated butter with disease. Pariah consumers in the mid-17th century were warned by a physician that butter caused leprosy, a disease mistakenly linked with eating spoiled meat or sea-food. Eventually, butter became valuable. The Pilgrims stored several tubs in the Mayflower and brought it to the new country. An earthen pot with a whirling wooden paddle is still used in Indian villages to churn butter. This device is similar to early European devices for butter-making, but, who were the originators?

The principle involved — to separate butterfat from buttermilk by shaking milk to form a solid substance which can be removed, washed and stored — was responsible for the evolution of the butter churn.

The dasher, a wooden stick with a blunt end, churned butter in a conical wooden vessel. The lump that formed was removed, washed and shaped into a ball or placed in a mold. Salt was often added as a preservative. The butter placed in the family well until needed.

Butter-making industrialized in the mid-18th century. Farmers brought milk to receiving stations and sold it for butter conversion.

ONE POUND of American butter requires nine to 10 quarts of cow's milk. The processing plant weighs and

tests the milk for fat content. The cream is then separated from the milk, pasteurized, cooked, cooled and churned. It is graded AA, A or B according to United States government standards for flavor, body, color, salt and packaging.

There are many different types of packaged butter available, including lightly salted butter, sweet cream butter, with no salt added. And whipped butter, sweet butter incorporating air or inert gas rendering it easier to spread.

The United States and the Soviet Union are the world's leaders in butter production. Minnesota, Wisconsin and Iowa may be considered leading butter states with the United States' butter industry consuming 20 percent of all milk produced.

Butter contains vitamins A and D and provides fat necessary for vitamin absorption. Fat also insulates the body against heat and cold and lubricates the skin.

The following recipes provide intriguing ways to enjoy butter in baking. Butter Sugar Cookies from "Judith Huxley's Table for Eight" (William Morrow & Co.) and Hazelnut Cake from "Mother Earth's Vegetarian Feasts" (William Morrow & Co.) by Joel Rapp offer sweet and buttery taste treats.

**BUTTERY SUGAR COOKIES**  
Makes about 60  
½ lb. (2 sticks) butter  
5 tbs. sugar  
1 tsp. vanilla extract  
2 cups all-purpose flour  
About ¼ cup sugar for rolling the

baked cookies

Cream the butter and sugar with an electric mixer until light and fluffy. Beat in the vanilla. Work in the flour with the fingers. Roll into balls about ¼ inch in diameter and place on a cookie sheet, about 1 inch apart. The cookies will swell by one-third as they bake. Place in a preheated 350-degree oven for about 8 minutes, or until the cookies are pale gold. Roll in additional granulated sugar, coat, and store in a tightly covered container.

## HAZELNUT CAKE

Butter and flour for pan  
3 eggs  
1 cup sugar  
Grated rind of 1 lemon  
8 tablespoons butter (1 stick), cut into small pieces  
1 tsp. baking powder  
1½ cup flour  
1¼ cup hazelnuts, ground fine in blender  
1 tablespoon olive oil  
¼ cup milk

Preheat oven to 350.  
Butter and flour an 8-inch spring-form baking pan. Beat together eggs and sugar until very thick. Beat in lemon rind and butter, piece by piece. Sift together baking powder and flour. Fold gently into batter. Add hazelnuts, olive oil, and ¼ cup of milk mixing well to make a medium-soft batter. If necessary, add another spoonful or two of milk. Turn into springform pan. Bake for 45-50 minutes, or until cake shrinks from sides of pan and tests done. Makes one 8-inch cake.

## Chase the wintry blues with a spicy coffee cake

It's easy to chase the winter blues with a bevy of spiced, home-baked treats fresh from the oven, that create a little nostalgia with a minimum of time, energy and money. And, you needn't sacrifice nutrition for convenience.

The home economists at the Shurline-Central Corp. have developed recipes that combine nutrition and traditional good taste with today's convenience foods. It takes just minutes to turn out a luscious Spicy Coffee Ring that can be served as a hearty, warming breakfast or a delicious dessert.

Desserts containing fruit, nuts and natural grains are not only good tasting but nutritionally sound. Their Colonial

Apple Crunch Cake is a tasty example.

To help you keep an eye on calories, send for a free copy of Shurline's "Nutrition and Diet Guide." Write: Diet Guide Offer, Dept. NCA, P.O. Box 1503, Melrose Park, Ill. 60164.

### SPICY COFFEE RING

Place a ring of perfect walnut halves in a greased 5½ cup ring mold. Separate a package of refrigerated biscuits and dip each in melted butter then in a mixture of ½ cup brown sugar and a teaspoon of cinnamon. Place in mold, overlapping slightly. Sprinkle two tablespoons seedless raisins between biscuits. Bake at 325 degrees 15 to 15 minutes.

### COLONIAL APPLE CRUNCH CAKE

1½ cups flour  
1 cup uncooked oats  
1½ cups brown sugar  
1 tsp. baking powder  
½ cup sugar  
1 cup melted butter  
1 lb. dried apples, cooked until tender  
2 tsp. cinnamon

Mix flour, oats, brown sugar and baking powder with melted butter. Cut together as for pastry. Spread half of crumbs in 9x9x2-inch baking pan. Spread with dried apples and sugar dissolves. Top with remaining crumbs. Bake at 350 degrees for 20 to 25 minutes. Cut into squares.



pilot light  
Greg Melikov

## No crust but real cheese

I don't recognize cream cheese as real cheese. I don't consider cottage cheese real cheese either. That's why I can't understand why everyone calls cheesecake without real cheese cheesecake.

Real cheese is ricotta, Italian in origin, mild and great to cook with, especially in desserts. I had about one-third of a three-pound container left from some Italian dishes so I decided to try a hand at my first cheesecake.

I didn't have a springform pan, with sides that unclasp and peel away, so I improvised and used a tube pan.

"I've never seen a cheesecake with a hole in the middle," my wife said.

"I know," I said, "but the pan can double as a nifty cake holder — you just lift up the tube and

"Good luck," Anita said warily.

I didn't tell her I planned to go crustless. Besides, I didn't have any graham crackers to break into crumbs.

Well, frankly, she was the first to eat her words. "This cheesecake is delicious," she said after sampling a sizable piece.

"I know," I said, "but I'll wait until after dinner."

### HOLE-IN-THE-MIDDLE CRUSTLESS RICOTTA CHEESECAKE

1 container (1 lb.) ricotta cheese, at room temperature  
1 container (1 lb.) sour cream, at room temperature  
2 eggs (8 oz.) cream cheese, at room temperature  
¼ cup sugar  
¼ cup margarine, softened and cut up  
3 eggs  
3 tbs. all-purpose flour  
3 tbs. cornstarch  
1½ tbs. lemon juice  
1½ tbs. vanilla extract

Put ricotta through sieve or strainer into large mixing bowl and beat together with sour cream and cream cheese until well mixed. Beat in sugar, then margarine. Beat in eggs, one at a time. Add rest of ingredients and beat until thoroughly blended. Transfer to tube pan, greased and floured on bottom, sides and top. Bake in middle of preheated 300-degree oven 1 hour; let sit until hot and let stay in closed oven 1 hour. Remove cheesecake from oven and let cool to room temperature. Slip large plastic food storage bag over top of pan, partly ripping if necessary and securing, and refrigerate. Serve slightly chilled. Serves 10.

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