

**THE DALHOUSIE
ENGLISH & CREATIVE
WRITING
PANDEMIC HOLIDAY
COOKBOOK
2020**

Faculty and Graduate Students from the Department of English



Copyright © 2020 Dalhousie Department of English

That's right; we've included a copyright statement, because these recipes are so amazing you will want to reproduce them! And you know what? Go ahead! (Some recipes available online as noted.)

Disclaimer

You might be a bad cook. That's on you.

Printed in the ether of cyberspace

Available from fine email servers near you.

Based on a template downloaded from the interwebs. Image sources are noted or by Jason Haslam.

Contents

Introduction	4
Mains and Sides	5
Desserts	16



[This Photo](#) by is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND](#)



Introduction

Ordinarily, at the end of each Fall term, the members of the Department of English would gather in the Fireside Lounge in the McCain building for some food—and some drinks—to celebrate the conclusion of everyone’s hard work during the term and to begin our holidays. Lately, we’ve been bringing homemade food to these events, and it’s always excellent (though please don’t mention the great butter tart war of 2019).

2020, of course, had other plans. Dalhousie all but shut its doors on Friday, March 13, and moved primarily to online instruction. Wanting to keep faculty, staff, and students safe by following all health guidelines, we had to forego our usual celebration (and most of us were so tired of video conferences that a virtual celebration seemed less than desirable).

Instead, we hit on the idea of this cookbook, in lieu of both the party and our Fall newsletter, as a way to share our favourite holiday treats and stories while maintaining our distance! It’s a little heavy on desserts, perhaps, but hey: it’s the holidays, during a pandemic, when we’re all glued to our screens teaching and learning. “Eat all the cookies!” is what we’re trying to say. We hope you enjoy! (And please feel free to send us some of your recipes, and we’ll update!)



Mains and Sides

Submitted by Heather Jessup

MUSHROOM AND PARSNIP RÖSTI PIE

FROM BRITISH FOOD WRITER AND
COOKBOOK AUTHOR ANNA JONES



Image supplied by Heather Jessup

“One of my favourite Holiday books is a children's book: The Nutcracker in Harlem by T.E. McMorrow and Illustrated by James Ransome. The illustrations are remarkable and even for very small people it is a captivating holiday read.

Ingredients

*1/2 cup leek, finely
chopped*

*1/2 cup sweet potato,
peeled and finely diced*

*1 clove garlic, finely
chopped*

Directions

1. Place a large ovenproof frying pan over a high heat and add a good glug of oil. Add enough mushrooms to cover the base of the pan, season with salt and pepper, and sauté until nicely brown and beginning to crisp at the edges. Transfer to a bowl and fry the remaining mushrooms in batches.
2. Put the pan back on the heat and add another glug of oil. Add the garlic, thyme, onions, carrots and swede,

1/2 cup cremini mushrooms, rinsed and diced

2 tablespoons tomato paste

1 can brown lentils

1 tablespoon soy sauce

1 tsp dried sage

1/2 tsp thyme

1/2 tsp rosemary

1 egg (or flax egg for vegan)

3 tablespoons nutritional yeast

1/2 cup breadcrumbs

3–4 tablespoons vital wheat gluten (or other flour)

salt and pepper, to taste

1 package puff pastry, thawed

season with a good pinch of salt and pepper and cook over a medium heat for 10 minutes, until softened and starting to brown.

3. Preheat the oven to 400F or 200C/180C or Fan/Gas 6.
4. Add the mushrooms and the wine or stock, and simmer until almost all the liquid has evaporated. Add the Worcestershire sauce, mustards, parsley and crème fraîche, if using, and cook gently for a few more minutes, until you have a rich gravy. Taste and add more salt and pepper if needed.
5. Season the parsnips with salt and pepper and pile on top of the mushroom mixture, leaving a little gap around the edge. Drizzle generously with oil and bake for 40 minutes, until golden brown and crisp.
6. Serve with some cheerful greens.

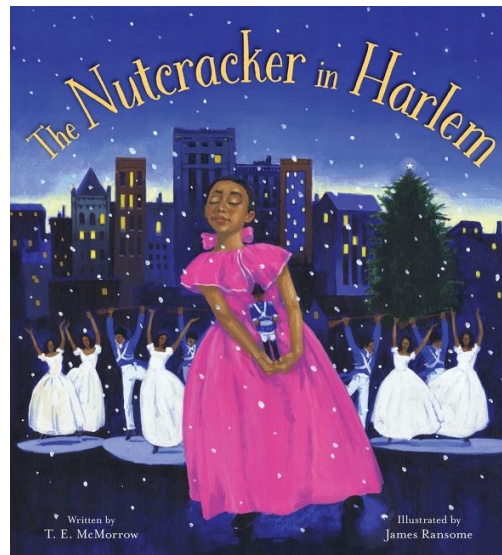
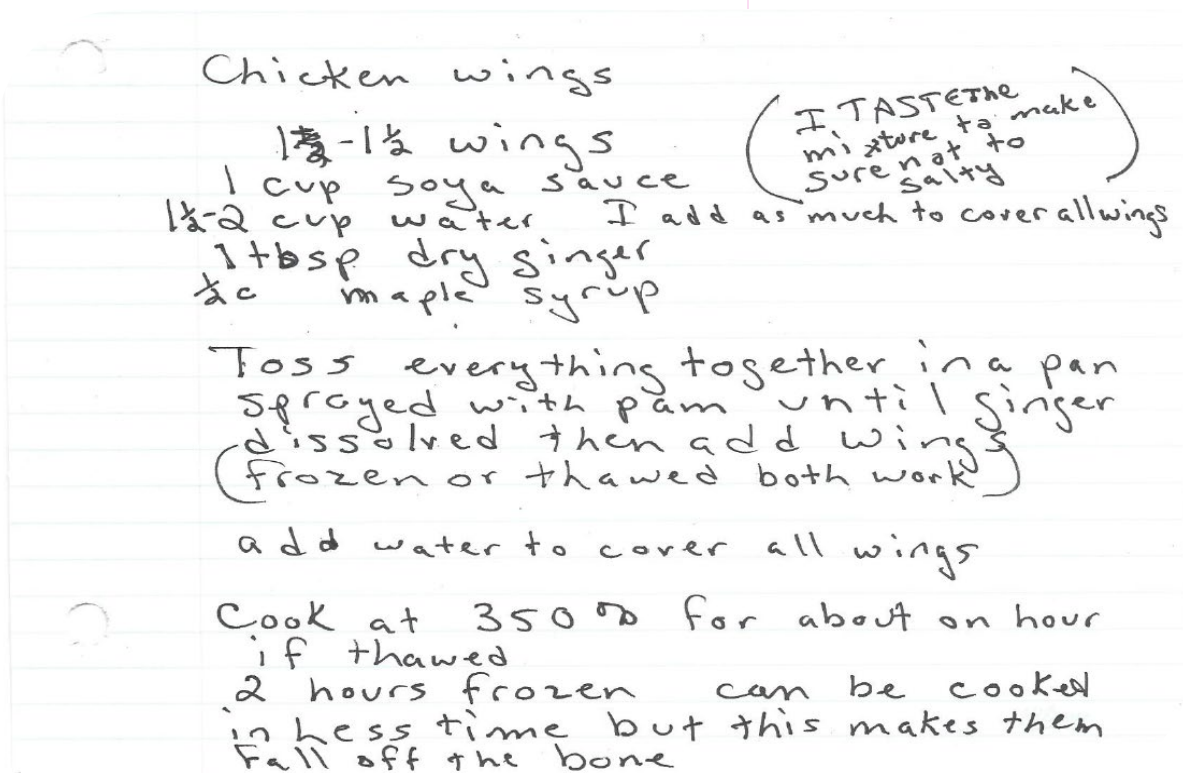


Image supplied by Heather Jessup

Submitted by Brenna Duperron

CHICKEN WINGS



My Mémère is the kind of person who adopts people for the holidays. On Christmas Day, her house would be filled with family, friends, and any old person that she pulled off the street. Everyone was welcome in her home for the holidays, including everyone that they knew! It was a joyful and cacophonous mess. Every year, my Great Aunt Lorna would bring the most delectable chicken wings. I have tried this recipe many times but can never quite match how they tasted on Christmas Day. My siblings, cousins and I would all sneak as many as we could into my Mémère and Grampa's room where we would munch on them while watching their grainy VHS videos of the Claymation Rudolph, Frosty, and Santa Clause is Coming to Town. It has been a long time since my Mémère was able to host one of her free-for-all Christmas celebrations. The COVID pandemic means that this is the first year that my son and I will not be going home for the holidays. It is our turn to make new traditions; however, it also means that I am even more nostalgic for ooey-goey chicken wings.

Submitted by Brian Gillis

BRIAN & THEO'S HOMEMADE GNOCCHI

Brian notes, "A great recipe for leftover mash potatoes! A standing mixer is convenient, but not essential, for this recipe. We use a standing mixer with the dough hook attachment. We usually make a large batch and freeze half of it.

"This recipe is quite forgiving, which is why we give only general proportions without any specific amounts."

Ingredients

Gnocchi

Potatoes

Eggs

Salt, Pepper

Minced Garlic

Minced or dried herbs
(optional)

Shredded cheese
(optional)

All-purpose flour

Suggested Sauce #1

Garlic

Salt, Pepper, Parsley/Dill

Butter and/or Olive Oil

Directions

1. Make mashed potatoes in advance or use leftovers
2. Set a very large pot of water on the stove and start it heating. Depending on your stove, this may take a while. Once it is hot, add salt. (Don't add salt to cold water for boiling pasta, because it can cause pitting in the metal over time.)
3. While the water is heating up, move to the standing mixer or a large bowl:
 - cold or room temperature leftover mashed potatoes.
4. If the potatoes are very cold, break them up a bit to loosen. Add:
 - enough eggs to loosen the potatoes, 1-2 eggs per qt of mashed potatoes.
5. You should have enough eggs to make a slurry. Mix the egg and potato until blended, breaking up the visible lumps of potato. Easiest way to do this is to

Suggested Sauce #2

½ cup cream

*¼ cup crumbled blue
cheese*

reach in, with your impeccably clean hands, and crush any recalcitrant lumps between your fingers.

6. Now is the time to add:
 - salt,
 - pepper,
 - minced garlic,
 - minced or dried herbs (optional),
 - shredded cheese (optional)

How much seasoning you add will depend on how well-seasoned your original potatoes were. You want the dumplings to be well seasoned. Stir to combine


7. Add and knead in:
 - all-purpose flour

You should use at least half as much flour (by volume) as the mashed potatoes that you started with. After kneading, the dough should be tacky but not sticky.

8. Flour a large cutting board or work surface. Working about 1 Cup at a time, roll out the dough into long logs, about 2cm in diameter. Use a pastry blade (aka bench scraper) to chop the logs into little pillows. Use enough flour to keep the gnocchi from sticking.

If you are eating the gnocchi tonight, make sure the water is at a rolling boil, and then drop the gnoccho one-by-one into the boiling water. (If you have a pastry blade, a good technique is to scoop a dozen or so gnocchi onto the blade, and then use a paring knife to flick each gnoccho into the pot.) The gnocchi will sink to the bottom. Give the pot a stir with a slotted spoon. Cook the gnocchi until they float and double in volume, about 5-7 minutes. If you're not sure (and not too hungry to wait), cook another minute: they're robust little dumplings, and it's better to have them fluffy than dense.

Using a large slotted spoon, remove the gnocchi from the water directly to a preheated serving bowl and combine with the sauce. Serve immediately with grated parmesan cheese and freshly ground black pepper. Pair with a full-bodied red wine: chianti is perfect.



If you are freezing the gnocchi, poach the gnocchi until they float plus 1-2 minutes, and then remove with a large slotted spoon. This poaching step is very important! It sets the outsides of the gnocchi and prevents them from turning back into mush when you thaw them. After you have removed the gnocchi, shake off excess water, and spread them on a lightly greased rimmed sheet pan so that they do not touch each other. Set in the freezer overnight. When they are frozen solid, transfer to a gallon zip-lock bag. (The oil will solidify in the freezer, but it will still help prevent the gnocchi from getting frozen to the pan.)

To reheat, bring a pot of water to a rolling boil, salt the boiling water, and add the still-frozen gnocchi, stirring enough that the gnocchi separate. They will sink; cook until they float plus another few minutes until cooked through and doubled in volume.

Sauce suggestions: Gnocchi loves butter- and cream-based sauces. I don't recommend tomato sauce, although I know people who like the tomatoes-and-potatoes combination.

The simplest method is to place

- 1-2 cloves garlic or a small bunch of scallions, chopped,
 - 1 generous pinch of salt,
 - 2-4 Tbsps. butter and/or olive oil,
- in the bottom of the serving bowl, and microwave until the butter has melted.

Then stir in

- freshly ground black pepper,
 - chopped fresh parsley or dill,
- and, of course, the cooked gnocchi.

For an even more decadent meal, warm

- 1/2 Cup cream
- and stir
- 1/4 Cup crumbled blue cheese.
- and the gnocchi. Nothing else is needed, except perhaps some black pepper. Mop up the extra cream sauce with good bread.

Submitted by Jamie Koehn

VEGETARIAN LENTIL WELLINGTON

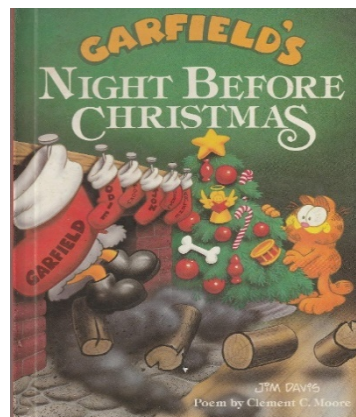


Image from Amazon.ca

This is a vegetarian dish that my partner, Katie Diespecker, made recently. We found that it worked well as an entrée, but I'm sure it could also be transformed into an appetizer.

One of my favourite Christmas stories is Garfield's Night Before Christmas. When I was a small child, I had a great appreciation of Garfield because of our mutual love of good food. Even though my affinity for Jim Davis' cartoon has faded, my father would read this book every Christmas Eve for many years, always pausing to show us the pictures even as we grew into adulthood. It definitely has become an important part of my holiday memories.

Ingredients

1/2 cup leek, finely chopped

1/2 cup sweet potato, peeled and finely diced

1 clove garlic, finely chopped

1/2 cup cremini mushrooms, rinsed and diced

Directions

- 1.** Preheat oven to 425°F. Line a baking sheet or pan with parchment.
- 2.** Sauté leek, sweet potato, garlic and mushrooms in a nonstick skillet with a bit of water or oil until soft. Add tomato paste and continue to sauté until excess liquid has cooked off.
- 3.** Combine vegetable mixture with lentils, soy sauce, seasonings, salt and pepper, and nutritional yeast.

2 tablespoons tomato paste
1 can brown lentils
1 tablespoon soy sauce
1 tsp dried sage
1/2 tsp thyme
1/2 tsp rosemary
1 egg (or flax egg for vegan)
3 tablespoons nutritional yeast
1/2 cup breadcrumbs
3–4 tablespoons vital wheat gluten (or other flour)
salt and pepper, to taste
1 package puff pastry, thawed

Mash lentils with a potato masher for a finer texture, if desired.

4. Stir in the egg.
5. Stir in breadcrumbs and gluten until a firm but not crumbly dough forms. Dough should stick together and hold its shape when pressed in your palm.
6. Lay out puff pastry on the parchment lined sheet. Place lentil filling into the centre of the pastry, pressing it into a log shape. Wrap the pastry around the filling, trim off any excess and tuck the ends underneath.
7. Cut a few slits in the pastry to allow steam to vent. Brush with oil or melted butter.
8. Bake for 35-40 minutes, until golden brown.
9. Allow to cool at room temp for 10 minutes before serving.

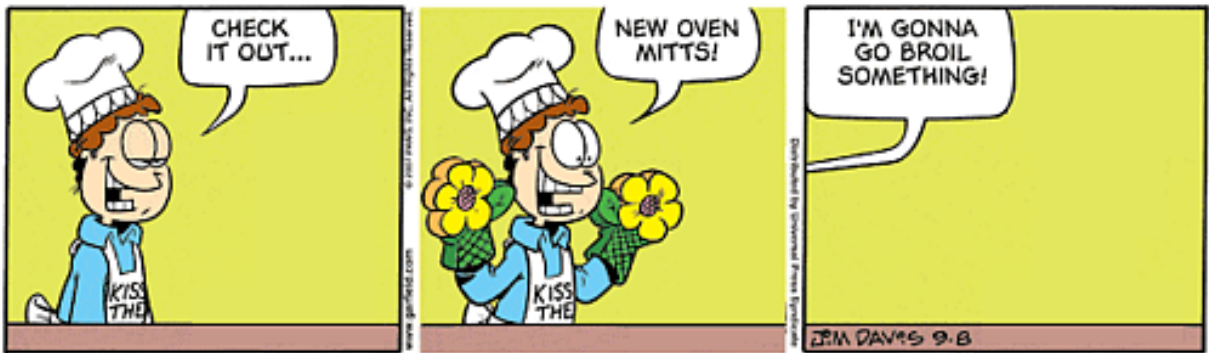


Image from <https://garfieldminusgarfield.net/page/449>

Submitted by Shauntay Grant

CLASSIC CANDIED SWEET POTATOES

FROM ALLRECIPES.COM

Servings: 08

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Cook time: 1 hour 35 minutes

Shauntay adds her favourite movies for the season: How The Grinch Stole Christmas (the cartoon version), Home Alone (part 1 and 2, but mostly part 1), The Preacher's Wife (Whitney Houston's rendition of Joy To The World is just "wow"), and Soul Food ("dumplings, deep fried catfish, macaroni and cheese, sweet cornbread..."; not to be watched on an empty stomach!).

Ingredients

6 yellow-fleshed sweet potatoes

½ cup butter

1 cup packed brown sugar

½ cup water

1 teaspoon salt

Directions

- 1.** Preheat oven to 350 degrees F (175 degrees C).
- 2.** Place whole sweet potatoes in a steamer over a couple of inches of boiling water, and cover. Cook until tender, about 30 minutes. Drain and cool.
- 3.** Peel, and slice sweet potatoes lengthwise into 1/2-inch slices. Place in a 9x13 inch baking dish.
- 4.** In a small saucepan over medium heat, melt butter, brown sugar, water and salt. When the sauce is bubbly and sugar is dissolved, pour over potatoes.
- 5.** Bake in preheated oven for 1 hour, occasionally basting the sweet potatoes with the brown sugar sauce.

Submitted by Mary Beth MacIsaac

RED CABBAGE

Lloyd and I always watch A Christmas Story and the kids have gifted him with a Red Rider BB gun and a mini version of the leg lamp. As an homage to that movie here's a recipe for red cabbage that I really like.

Ingredients

1 large red cabbage, 2 to 2 1/2 pounds, quartered, cored and cut crosswise in thin strips

2 tablespoons canola oil

1 small onion, thinly sliced

2 tart apples, such as Braeburn or granny smith, peeled, cored and sliced

About 1/3 cup balsamic vinegar

1/4 teaspoon ground allspice

Salt

freshly ground pepper to taste

Directions

- 1.** Prepare the cabbage, and cover with cold water while you prepare the remaining ingredients. Heat the oil over medium heat in a large, lidded skillet or casserole, and add the onion. Cook, stirring, until just about tender, about three minutes. Add 2 tablespoons of the balsamic vinegar and cook, stirring, until the mixture is golden, about three minutes, then add the apples and stir for two to three minutes.
- 2.** Drain the cabbage and add to the pot. Toss to coat thoroughly, then stir in the allspice, another 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar, and salt to taste. Toss together. Cover the pot, and cook over low heat for one hour, stirring from time to time. Add freshly ground pepper, taste and adjust salt, and add another tablespoon or two of balsamic vinegar as desired.



[This Photo](#) is licensed under [CC BY-NC-ND](#)

Desserts

Submitted by Melissa Furrow

LA BOUCHÉE DOUCE

Servings: 8-10

I like to make this very adaptable recipe for Christmas dinner. It is festive looking, delicious tasting, and is vegetarian friendly and gluten free unlike traditional mince pies and plum pudding. If you have twenty people for dinner, it's very little more work to double the recipe. You can also reserve some of the ingredients and combine a selection in a separate dish for anyone with allergies to one or another piece of the puzzle, and you will still have something festive and tasty to offer. And you can make a dry bowl of it (with no liqueur) and a hard bowl (with liqueur). The original recipe comes from Chef on the Run by Diane Clement (Vancouver: Sunflower, 1982), p. 127, and Clement's excellent cookbooks are still available. If you don't know them, let this be your appetizer.

Ingredients

*12 small meringues,
about 2 inches in
diameter*

*1 6-ounce package semi-
sweet chocolate chips
(170g)*

*3 tablespoons water (45
mL)*

*2 pints whipping cream
(1 L) [comment here: I
find it hard to use the full
amount of cream Clement
uses. But you can adapt
the proportions to your
own taste.]
(continued next page)*

Directions (from Clement)

- 1.** Leave the assembly until a few hours before serving, so the meringue stays crisp, and serve it in your prettiest glass bowl.
- 2.** Break the meringue into large chunks.
- 3.** Add water to chocolate chips and melt over hot water, stirring until smooth.
- 4.** Whip cream with icing sugar and liqueur until stiff. Spoon a thin (3/4 inch) (2 cm) layer of cream in bottom of serving bowl.
- 5.** Cover with a layer of meringue pieces and drizzle meringue with a thin coating of melted chocolate.
- 6.** Put a layer of sliced [berries] and kiwi fruit on top and spread with another layer of whipped cream.
- 7.** Repeat layers, ending with a topping of whipped cream. Decorate with whole [berries].

2/3 cup icing sugar (150 mL)

3 tablespoons Cointreau or other orange-flavoured liqueur (45mL)

2 or 3 cups fresh [raspberries] [Clement uses strawberries, but Mexican raspberries are available at Christmas-time nowadays, and they are much simpler to prepare]

3 kiwi fruit, peeled and sliced, optional [I think “optional” because it’s hard to be sure you’ve got kiwis of the right degree of ripeness on the day]

a few whole [berries] for garnish



Submitted by Bart Vautour

BART'S PERFECT SUGAR COOKIES

From Bart: Also known as the perfect cookie to eat while watching my perfect Christmas movie: *Auntie Mame* (the Rosalind Russell version, of course).

“Life is a banquet, and most people are starving to death!”

[Auntie Mame trailer](#)

These cookies are subtle but impeccable. They are light enough but also substantial enough. They are a standard that is palatable by most everyone, yet— if made properly—can also become an understated favorite. I've even given you the complete recipe without any secret changes...which rarely happens in my family—I come from a long line of bakers who sometimes give incomplete recipes.

Ingredients

½ cup white sugar
½ cup brown sugar (packed)
½ cup butter
½ cup vegetable shortening
1 egg
1 tsp vanilla ext.
1 tsp almond ext.
2 cups unbleached white flour
½ tsp salt
1 (scant) tsp baking soda
1 tsp cream of tartar
nutmeg if desired...yes.

Directions

1. With beaters, blend sugars, butter, and shortening.
2. Add egg. In separate bowl combine dry ingredients.
3. Add dry ingredients while mixing.
4. Roll in small balls. Place balls on sheet and flatten with a sugared fork.
5. Bake at 350 degrees for 8-10 minutes or until starting to turn golden at the edges.



Image from Wikipedia

Submitted by Asha Jeffers

CARIBBEAN CHRISTMAS POUND CAKE



Image from independent.co.uk

This is the recipe that my father taught me and that we've baked every Christmas, together or separate, for my whole life. It is one of two traditional Caribbean Christmas cakes but the other one, a boozy fruit cake situation, is too labour intensive for me to ever bother to do on my own. As a Caribbean family recipe, it's pretty loopy goopy about measurements apart from the obvious pound aspect. So, consider all the spices as "to taste"! You'll need a kitchen scale or to do some conversion since things are by weight.

I've got a soft spot for A Christmas Carol in its various incarnations. Also, Die Hard.

Ingredients

1 pound butter (softened)

1 pound flour

1 pound sugar

*6-10 eggs depending on
how dense you want it*

*A teaspoon of baking
powder*

Cinnamon

Nutmeg

Allspice

Vanilla essence

Almond essence

Directions

- 1.** Mix together butter and sugar. In a separate bowl, beat eggs.
- 2.** Add eggs, spices, and essences to butter and sugar mixture.
- 3.** Mix in flour and baking powder until smooth.
- 4.** Bake in one of those round tins with a removable bottom at 300. Leave it in until you can stick a knife in the middle and have it come out clean. Usually about an hour? I warned you it was loopy goopy.

Submitted by Andrew Brown

BELGIAN COOKIES

FROM ALLRECIPES.COM

Servings: 12 (makes 24 cookies)

Belgian cookies (aka Empire cookies); unfortunately I don't have a hallowed family recipe but this one I found online recently turned out well.

Ingredients

½ cup butter

½ cup white sugar

1 egg

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

2 cups all-purpose flour

1 teaspoon baking powder

½ cup raspberry jam

1 cup confectioners' sugar

¼ teaspoon almond extract

1 tablespoon hot water

¼ cup candied cherries, chopped

Directions

- 1.** Cream butter. Add sugar, creaming well. Beat in egg and vanilla. Combine flour and baking powder; gradually add to creamed mixture.
- 2.** On a lightly floured surface, roll out dough to 1/8-inch thickness. Cut into 2-inch rounds, and place on ungreased baking sheets.
- 3.** Bake at 350 degrees F (175 degrees C) for 10 minutes, or until very lightly browned at edges. Cool thoroughly.
- 4.** Spread half of the cookies with jam, and top with remaining cookies.
- 5.** Combine confectioners' sugar, almond extract, and enough hot water to make a thin icing. Frost tops of cookies. Top each with a small piece of candied cherry.

Submitted by Pam Decker

THE PERFECT NEWFOUNDLAND SNOWBALL RECIPE



Makes about 4 dozen. These should be stored in the fridge/freezer. They freeze very well (my kiddo eats them frozen all the time, just like my siblings and I did as kids.)

Ingredients

3 cups sugar

3/4 cup melted butter

1 1/4 cups milk

3 cups large rolled oats

*1 cup unsweetened fine
coconut*

12 tsp cocoa

*1 1/2 cups extra coconut
extra coconut to roll the
balls, approximately*

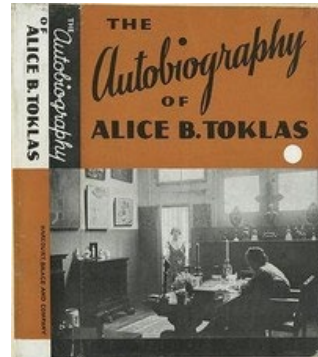
Directions

- 6.** In a large saucepan, combine the sugar, butter and milk. This mixture will foam up while boiling so a larger pot is recommended.
- 7.** Boil together gently over medium heat for 5-6 minutes or until mixture reaches about 230 degrees F on a candy/meat thermometer. (The 5 to 6 minutes cooking time is usually quite accurate for me but don't start timing it until the mixture is fully at a rolling boil and don't stir the mixture while it boils.)
- 8.** Mix together the 3 cups rolled oats, 1 cup coconut and 12 tsp cocoa.
- 9.** Add the boiled mixture to the dry ingredients until well combined and chill well in the fridge (or front step if its chilly) until mixture is able to be shaped into 1 1/2-inch balls. The mixture will be quite soft and sloppy while it is still hot. It will not firm up until it is very well chilled.
- 10.** 5. Roll the balls in additional coconut.

Submitted by Brian Gillis

HASCHICH FUDGE

FROM THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF ALICE B. TOKLAS, BY GERTRUDE STEIN



[Image from Wikipedia](#)

“This is the food of Paradise—of Baudelaire’s Artificial Paradises: it might provide an entertaining refreshment for a Ladies’ Bridge Club or a chapter meeting of the DAR. In Morocco it is thought to be good for warding off the common cold in damp winter weather and is, indeed, more effective if taken with large quantities of hot mint tea. Euphoria and brilliant storms of laughter; ecstatic reveries and extension of one’s personality on several simultaneous planes are to be complacently expected. Almost anything Saint Theresa did, you can do better if you can bear to be ravished by ‘un évanouissement reveillé.’

“Take 1 teaspoon black peppercorns, 1 whole nutmeg, 4 average sticks of cinnamon, 1 teaspoon coriander. These should all be pulverised in a mortar. About a handful each of stoned dates, dried figs, shelled almonds and peanuts: chop these and mix them together. A bunch of cannabis sativa can be pulverised. This along with the spices should be dusted over the mixed fruit and nuts, kneaded together. About a cup of sugar dissolved in a big pat of butter. Rolled into a cake and cut into pieces or made into balls about the size of a walnut, it should be eaten with care. Two pieces are quite sufficient.

“Obtaining the cannabis may present certain difficulties, but the variety known as cannabis sativa grows as a common weed, often unrecognized, everywhere in Europe, Asia and parts of Africa; besides being cultivated as a crop for the manufacture of rope. In the Americas, while often discouraged, its cousin, called cannabis indica, has been observed even in city window boxes. It should be picked and dried as soon as it has gone to seed and while the plant is still green.”
[Note: if this appeals in more than literary ways, please enjoy responsibly. –Ed.]

Submitted by Judith Thompson

GINGERBREAD

Servings: 04

Preparation time: 60 minutes

Cook time: 40 minutes

Judith writes of Dylan Thomas' "A Child's Christmas in Wales" and Alastair Sim in Dickens' A Christmas Carol: "We watched and listened to these every Christmas when I was a kid. Still do. Church wasn't a thing in my atheist family, but my dad believed heartily in Dickens, so this was (and is) my spiritual equivalent to the nativity story. No one has ever scooped better than Alastair Sim!"

Ingredients

½ cup margarine
¼ tsp baking soda
1 cup brown sugar,
loosely packed
1 tsp cinnamon
¼ cup molasses
1 tsp ginger
1 egg
½ tsp nutmeg
2 ¼ cups flour
½ tsp cloves

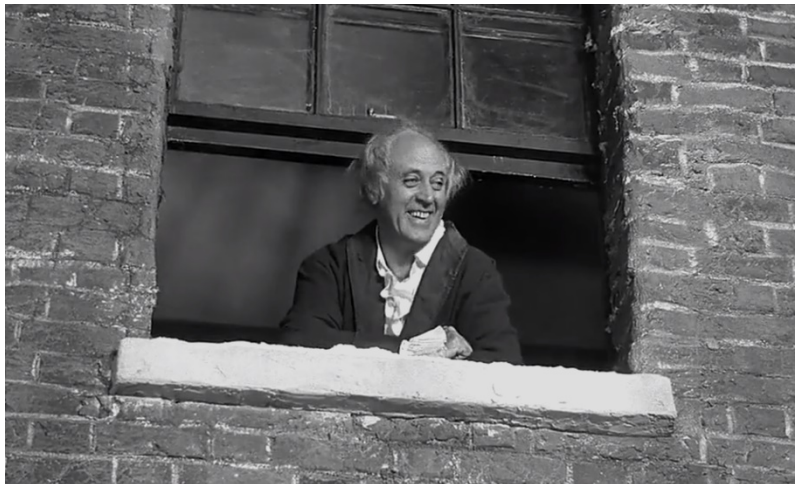
Directions

1. Cream margarine and brown sugar.
2. Add molasses and egg.
3. Mix spices with other dry ingredients and blend well with other ingredients in the bowl.
4. Divide dough in two and wrap in wax paper; refrigerate an hour for easier handling.
5. Roll out on well-floured board or counter, about 1/8 inch thick.
6. Cut cookies in whatever shapes you like and put them on a lightly greased cookie tray, leaving about ½ inch between cookies. (I usually make half of them gingerbread people, and half of them other shapes like holly, trees, bells etc.)
7. Bake at 350o F for 8-10 minutes, until just golden. Cool on racks, then decorate with coloured icing, sprinkles etc. etc.

Tips

- If you measure the molasses in a cup with the egg already in it, it will not stick to the cup. (continued ...)

- If you want to hang them on the tree (I always do), add holes before baking by using a hollow straw to punch holes (the 1/8 inch hole will close up slightly during baking but still leave enough of a hole to put hangers through)
- I used to elaborately decorate the people to look like members of my family, but you could turn them into your favorite authors, literary characters or alien action figures!
- Needless to say, this is fun to do with kids. I've been making them since I was a kid. At my solstice party, I usually have a table in a corner full of baked gingerbread with an array of coloured icings and sprinkles and let the kids go wild.



Alastair Sim in Self Isolation (screenshot from film)

Submitted by Kathy Cawsey

CHOCOLATE TOFFEE CRUNCH



The Best Christmas Pageant Ever. Anyone who has suffered through (as an actor or parent) Christmas pageants will love it. When I was a kid my family read aloud a chapter a week during December; the book is good but this is one of the rare cases where the movie is even better.

My sister and I still regularly quote lines from it, especially "He'd never get through first grade if he had to write all that down!" (in response to the stuck-up girl saying "I know what the angel said. She said his name shall be Wonderful Counsellor of the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.")

Ingredients

40 saltine crackers (1 sleeve)

3/4 c butter

1 c brown sugar

2 c semi-sweet chocolate chips

3/4 c chopped walnuts or other nuts

Directions

1. Heat oven to 450 F.
2. Lay the crackers out flat on a cookie sheet.
3. Melt the butter in a medium-sized pot on medium-high heat; add the sugar. Bring to a full rolling boil for 3 minutes without stirring.
4. Pour the resulting toffee over the crackers. Bake 450 F for 4-6 minutes.
5. Remove from oven; sprinkle with chocolate chips; wait a minute or two and smear when melted.
6. Sprinkle nuts on top (can substitute crushed candy canes or omit entirely); chill; break into pieces when cooled.

Submitted by Rohan Maitzen

CHOCOLATE TOFFEE BARS



Image from
muppet.fandom.com

The best holiday movie without a doubt is The Muppet Christmas Carol, endorsed by Victorianists worldwide.

Ingredients

BASE

1 1/2 cups all-purpose
flour

3/4 cup packed brown
sugar

3/4 cup butter

TOPPING

1 can (30 mL) sweetened
condensed milk

2 Tbsp butter

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 F
2. Grease a 13x9 cake pan
3. BASE: combine flour and sugar; cut in butter until mixture is crumbly; press into prepared pan and bake 15-20 minutes or until light golden brown
4. TOPPING: heat condensed milk and butter in heavy saucepan over medium heat, stirring constantly, for 5-10 minutes; pour / spread over baked base; bake 12-15 minutes or until golden (it will look kind of bubbly and weird but that's right!)
5. Sprinkle chocolate chips evenly over the top; return pan to oven for 2-3 minutes or until chocolate chips are melted enough to spread
6. Remove pan from oven and spread chocolate chips evenly
7. If you wanted, you could top them with sprinkles or candies or nuts at this point (we are a nut-free house so I've never tried this, but I expect it would work well)
8. LET COOL completely before trying to cut into bars.

Submitted by Leonard Diepeveen

OLIEBOLLEN, OR OIL BALLS



This is a traditional New Year's Day dish. When I was thirteen, I ate 32 in one day. This recipe comes from my sister's father-in-law, who was a baker in the Netherlands.

2 tablespoons	sugar	30 ml
2 tablespoons	yeast	30 ml
1 cup	lukewarm water	250 ml
3	eggs	3
5 1/3 cups	lukewarm milk	1 1/3 L
1 1/2 tablespoons	oil	23 ml
7 1/3 cups	flour	1.83 L
4 teaspoons	salt	20 ml
4	apples, peeled and diced	4
2 cups	raisins	500 ml

1. Mix sugar, yeast, and water with a whisk. Let sit for 5 minutes.
2. Add eggs, milk, and oil; mix with the above.
3. Add flour until mixture is like semi-stiff oatmeal (not too runny).
4. Sprinkle with salt and the rest of the flour and let rise in a warm oven for 1 to 1 1/2 hours, or until it more than doubles.
5. Mix in the apples and raisins and let stand for 15-20 minutes.
6. Drop in hot oil in deep pot over medium heat (about #5).

Submitted by Mary Beth MacIsaac

DATE TURNOVERS

When I have time, which can happen over the Christmas break, here's one of my favorite cookies to make (I make half a receipt of the cookie batter and a full recipe of the date filling because I like lots of filling).

Ingredients

1 cup of butter softened to room temperature

½ cup of brown sugar

1 large egg

⅓ cup + 2 tbsp. of whole milk

1 tsp of vanilla

2 ¼ cups flour

2 ¼ cups quick oats

1 tsp baking soda

1 tsp salt

Filling

1⅓ cup of dates

1 ½ tbsp. of honey

½ cup of water

⅓ tsp cinnamon

Dash salt

Squeeze of lemon juice (if you have it)

Directions

- 1.** Make the date filling first by placing dates into a pot with ⅓ cup of water and honey and bring to a boil then turn down heat to a low simmer and stir constantly until the dates begin to break down. After stirring about 8-10 minutes the dates will breakdown into a thick paste. At that point add the cinnamon, salt and lemon juice while continuing to stir until evenly incorporated. Remove from the stove and pick out the seeds then pour the contents into a bowl and allow the filling to cool for 45 min to an hour before using.
- 2.** For the dough combine butter and brown sugar in a bowl and whip with a mixer at med high speed until the butter sugar mixture is fluffy and light, at least 10 minutes.
- 3.** Add the egg, milk and vanilla into the butter sugar mixture and beat at med high speed for an additional 3 minutes until well combined.
- 4.** In a separate bowl add flour, baking soda, salt and sift to combine.
- 5.** Add the flour mixture into the butter mixture in two batches and fold together by hand with a large wooden spoon.

6. Then add the Quick Oats and fold together until evenly incorporated. The dough ball should be a somewhat wet sticky mixture.
7. Using a 18-24-inch-long piece of Cling wrap, wrap up the dough ball and place into the fridge for at least 45 minutes to stiffen up the dough to make it easier to work with.
8. Pre heat the oven to 350° F
9. After removing the dough ball from the fridge open it up and place onto a lightly floured surface and lightly dust the top of the dough ball with flour and roll it out to approx. 1/8" or about 0.5 cm thick.
10. Using a 3-3½ " circular cutter cut out the turnovers and place a heaping teaspoon full of the date filling on half of the circle then fold over the other half and place onto a wax paper lined cookie tray.
11. Reform the remnants into a ball and repeat the rolling, cutting and forming.
12. Place the turnovers in the oven for 25 minutes. If you prefer a softer turnover take it out at 20 minutes.
13. Allow to cool for at least 30 minutes before serving.



Submitted by Jason Haslam

BURT'S BUTTER TARTS



These are my mother's famous butter tarts, which she made every Christmas until I took over the baking. When I was young, she would make these and her other Christmas treats well in advance and freeze them by hiding them at the bottom of a freezer. As the youngest and smallest child, I would therefore be dangled upside down by my brother and sister, who, holding on to my ankles, would dip me into the freezer until I found the goodies. We would then have to eat them quickly, before getting caught. To this day, we all prefer to eat baked goods (and chocolate bunnies) frozen solid.

*It is very important for the butter tart filling to be chewy rather than runny.**

*(*It must be noted that, in her submission to the present volume, Judith Thompson raised a spectre that haunts the department: The Great Butter Tart Conflict of 2019. These comments were withheld on fear of a renewal of hostilities. Of course, one treats those who end up on the wrong side of history, through no fault of their own, with kindness; still, it must be noted that runny butter tarts are an immutable sign of moral weakness. –Ed.)*

Ingredients

Pastry (I just buy frozen tart shells)

2 eggs, beaten

2/3 cup butter

2 cups brown sugar

3 tbsp milk

1 cup raisins

2 tsp vanilla

Directions

- 1.** Press pastry (if using) into tart pans.
- 2.** Mix other ingredients together (leave out raisins if you want people to judge you for your poor decisions)
- 3.** Fill each pastry tart 2/3 full with mixture
- 4.** Bake at 350 F for 20-25 minutes or until pastry is delicately brown.
- 5.** Let cool (or better yet, freeze solid) and eat.
- 6.** Eat while reading [this story](#): I regularly teach it in my science fiction courses, and I think it's hilarious.



HAPPY HOLIDAYS
FROM EVERYONE IN
THE DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH