



Historical Society of Pennsylvania

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"Plumb Pudding," in Eliza Anthony, *Eliza Smith Huntington Memorandum Book*, AM0076.

Original Recipe:

Plumb Pudding

Take 1 lb of beef suet 9 eggs 1 lb of currants 1 lb of raisins 1/2 lb of sugar 1 quart of milk 2 gills of brandy cloves nutmeg + mace to your taste to be struck over with citron and the whole to be boiled in 3 hours.

Modern Translation

While several manuscripts omit the flour or breadcrumbs, a boiled pudding needs some binder and will likely not hold together as a custard. Therefore, Eliza Anthony's recipe required a lot of investigation and guesswork. Comparing the proportions of ingredients in Eliza's recipe with others, I came up with a batter that worked well enough by adding flour. I further decided to omit the eggs and milk, because I worried the batter would be too loose. As a novice pudding-boiler, I wanted a stiffer batter in my cloth. I also halved Eliza's recipe.

8 oz or 1 cup shortening, measured, wrapped in wax paper and put in the freezer overnight.

1 1/2 to 2 cups flour

1/2 cup raisins

1/2 cup currants

1/2 cup molasses

1/2 cup brandy

1/2 teaspoon ground cloves

1/2 teaspoon nutmeg

Fill a large stockpot 2/3 full with water and bring to a boil.

Remove the shortening from the freezer and grate on a box grater. Combine in a large mixing bowl with 1 1/2 cups flour. Cut the flour into the shortening with a pastry cutter. Add molasses and combine. Add the remaining ingredients and mix completely. The batter should be stiffer than cake batter. Add a bit more flour as necessary.

Once the water is boiling, add your clean pudding cloth to the water to dampen and heat it. Carefully, with rubber gloves, remove cloth with tongs and wring it to just damp. Lay it flat and coat it generously with flour, rubbing the flour into the cloth to help form a barrier between the

boiling water and the pudding batter. Scrape all the pudding batter into the center of the cloth, bring the corners of the cloth together and close the cloth around the batter by twisting the gather a few times. Using 24"-36" of kitchen string, tie the pudding cloth tightly closed.

Place the pudding into the boiling water and tie either end to the handles of the stockpot, or suspend it from a long spoon that rests on the edge of the pot. The goal is to suspend the pudding in the water and not have it touch the bottom of the pot. Keep the water boiling for 3-4 hours, adding more hot water as needed throughout the time period. It is better to lean towards the longer time, as it is difficult to re-wrap the pudding cloth if you find the pudding is undercooked.

Remove the pudding from the boiling water and cut the string to unwrap the pudding. It should be solid and held together. Historically the pudding would be made weeks in advance of Christmas with occasional gills (4oz) of brandy added to its container to keep it moist.