

The TeaCake Project

Elbert Mackey

Copyright Information

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About the Cover

Nothing says “family” more than a tea cake, so it is fitting that the cover of this book features my granddaughter Adrionah and me enjoying freshly-baked tea cakes. By sharing the methods, techniques, and secrets of baking the perfect tea cake with Adrionah, I continued a tradition that has been in my family for over 75 years. The cover photo, therefore, signifies the “passing of the torch” to a new generation of tea cake lovers - a result, I hope, of this book for your family.

Acknowledgements

This book is dedicated to my grandmother Vashti Overall Register, who taught me the fundamentals of cooking at an early age,

my lovely wife Jacquie for her patience and encouragement,

Aunt Maggie's heavenly tea cakes, which created the genesis for this project,

and all the wonderful home cooks across America whose contributions made this project a success.

The Tea Cake Roundup is a distinctive collection of culinary and family traditions that will warm the heart and satisfy the taste buds. The brainchild of Elbert Mackey, this book preserves the endangered legacy of the tea cake and the accompanying family traditions.

The Tea Cake Roundup began with Mackey's personal quest to replicate his Aunt Maggie's tea cake recipe. The tasty treats were a fond link to his past in rural Minden, Louisiana. As an adult living in Austin, Mackey longed for Aunt Maggie's unwritten tea cake recipe. An avid cook, he earnestly set out to recreate the treasured recipe.

As he embarked on his own trial and error, Mackey took his quest to the World Wide Web. He set up a website, teacakeproject.com, where he solicited recipes, poems, and remembrances. The response was overwhelming and Mackey received submissions from around the country, fueling his determination to preserve the recipes and memories for generations to come.

The Tea Cake Roundup is a collection of mouth-watering family recipes and amusing anecdotes from some of the best cooks across America. It is a one of kind journey through the past that will delight all of your senses as you read and savor every heartwarming morsel.

"When we go, the stories go too, unless we've passed them on."

Brian Byrne

Foreword

I first met Elbert Mackey at the National Soul Food Cook Off. The smell of vanilla and nutmeg wafting from Elbert's tasty tea cakes evoked fond memories of my own childhood. We reminisced about tea cakes and their place in African American culture. The tasty little cakes, once the dessert of choice at Sunday dinners, was in danger of being lost to future generations. Elbert, however, was passionate about preserving the recipe and the legacy it represented.

In his debut book, *The Tea Cake Roundup*, Elbert combines his passion for cooking with preserving cultural traditions for future generations. This book rescues old family recipes and the remembrances that accompany them and is the first to connect tea cakes to African American Society. *The Tea Cake Roundup* preserves an important part of African American culinary history. The book will delight all of your senses as you read, cook and remember.

Cassandra Gaines
Founder & Director, National Soul Food Cook-off

Introduction

Like many adults, I have always had vivid memories of the good times of childhood. Playing with my friends, siblings, and cousins epitomized what childhood is really about: carefree living until the responsibility of the real world takes hold. Being a native of the South, a region renown for its delectable cuisines, much of my “good time” memories involve food. Whether accurate or not, my memory was that the cooking done by my mother, my grandmother, and my aunts had no parallel. Perhaps they did use a secret ingredient, or perhaps it was just their love for family that made their food taste so special.

As an adult, I have tried many times to replicate the taste of several of those family dishes with mixed results. But one recipe in particular had confounded me above all others: my Aunt Maggie’s tea cakes. It was my relentless search for that special taste of the tea cake that formed the genesis of this book.

In sharing with others the frustrations of my tea cake recipe quest, I discovered many other people wandering the expanse of cyberspace in search of old family recipes, especially tea cakes. Apparently, though most signature dishes of my North Louisiana upbringing remained part of modern cuisine, the tea cake traditions that were so important in my childhood had been lost. Knowing that I was not alone in that journey, I decided to do what I could to preserve the legacy of the tea cake.

To accomplish that goal, in the fall of 2006, I created a website (www.teacakeproject.com) to solicit information for tea cake recipes, poems,

and remembrances for an eventual cookbook. I expected the site to generate some interest —certainly enough to compile at least a small collection of recipes. What I did not expect was that a reporter for *USA Today* would notice the site and write a story about the project. After that article in December 2006, we received an overwhelming outpouring of feedback. Perhaps most fulfilling was that the responses included not only excellent recipes, but also heart-warming stories and personal remembrances from contributors across the United States. My Aunt Maggie would no doubt chuckle to know that her tea cake recipe had touched such a nerve.

What an irony that an almost-lost food tradition was rescued by a fast-paced technology. Without the website, through which the entire project was handled, the Tea Cake Project would not have been as successful. Thinking about how our ancestors and older relatives used food to create community, I suppose that it is fitting that this project is successful because of community, albeit an online one.

The culmination of the project, *The Tea Cake Roundup*, is more than just a cookbook. For the armchair reader, it offers us a lesson about the role tea cakes have played in our culinary history. Many of the contributors' stories take us back to the days of our childhood, when we went over to our grandmother's or aunt's house and she served us warm, delicious tea cakes. In doing so, the cookbook takes the reader on a journey across the United States into "home kitchens," where they'll be able to try the authentic tea cakes recipes submitted to us.

The recipes, many of which have been in families for generations, have been quality-tested, so I know you and your family will enjoy experiencing the variety that follows. And while I hope that you find the perfect recipe for your taste buds, my utmost desire is that the small treat known as the tea cake takes you back in time, and that you share that experience with your loved ones today.

Part I

Teacakes Through Time

Chapter 1 – Tea Cakes in History

“Sour, sweet, bitter, pungent - all must be tasted.”

Chinese Proverb

The story of the tea cake is a long and intriguing one, beginning in 19th Century England. Often served with Earl Grey tea, British aristocrats originally used the label “tea cakes” (also called “little cakes”) to refer to any cake that was firm enough to pick up with the fingers. This loose definition allowed for a variety in shape and flavor that is still present today.

Tea Cakes in Old Europe

“Dessert is probably the most important stage of the meal, since it will be the last thing your guests remember before they pass out all over the table.”

William Powell

Tea cakes began in England as a tea party treat. Afternoon tea took place between 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. Servants greeted guests with tea cakes in hand.

Although tea parties were everyday events for decades, they began to dwindle in popularity over the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. Tea cakes quickly became special pleasures that were reserved for holidays, weddings, and parties.

Many Britons still eat tea cakes, which they now call “tea biscuits.” These buns typically contain dried fruits like sultanas, currants, or peel. In certain areas of England, tea cakes have started to include various other ingredients as well. For example, in Sussex, tea cakes are flavored with nutmeg, cinnamon, and rose water. Locals call this version of the tea cake a “manchet.” In Kent, tea cakes are called “huffkins” and are flavored with hops after harvest time in September.

Tea Cakes Around the World

Due to their popularity in England, tea cakes quickly spread around Europe and eventually to the Americas. In every country, tea cakes took on new forms and were combined with local delicacies. The Irish version of the tea cake is a chocolate-coated marshmallow on a biscuit. In Sweden, tea cakes are made of wheat soda bread and served with jam and butter. Mexican tea cakes are round cookies, typically with nuts in the center. Tea cakes from around the world are distinct to each culture.

Tea Cakes in North America

Tea cakes quite possibly changed the most drastically in America. Brought to America from English settlers, tea cakes soon took on a significant role in

American cooking. In fact, the first reference to tea cakes in a cook book was from L. M. Child's American Frugal Housewife in 1832. In the south, slaves combined the older and blander tea cakes from England with ingredients and cooking methods brought from West Africa. From then on, basic tea cake recipes were passed down by word-of-mouth for generations.

Tea Cakes During the Slavery Era

"Offerings of food have been breaking down barriers for centuries."

Estee Lauder

Starting in the 17th Century, Africans that were brought to America managed to bring foods and crops that were new to European cuisine. These included watermelons, sweet sorghum, okra, and black-eyed peas. African American slaves were also extremely creative and thrifty with food. Without money or many resources, slaves cooked in open pits or fireplaces and used large pots and skillets. They were especially skilled in roasting, frying, and boiling their foods. They did not have measuring cups, spoons, or formal training, so African American slaves depended entirely on their senses and instincts. Recipes were shared during conversation.

African American slaves could only cook with undesirable leftover food from the house. Using any other foods they could find, slaves created the original "soul food" delicacies that are still enjoyed throughout America today. Numerous dishes, including gumbo, sweet potato pecan pie, and jambalaya, demonstrate the culinary adaptability of African American cooks.

African American slaves used these customs to improve upon the British version of the tea cake as well. However, tea cakes still remained within the culinary domain of white families. Two essential ingredients, refined sugar and bleached flour, were very expensive and difficult for slaves to acquire. Still, Kelly Starling Lyons recalls a story of how some slaves managed to get their hands on delicious tea cakes.

A 35-year-old wife, mother and writer, Lyons grew up in Durham, North Carolina listening to her grandmother's stories. They laughed, baked tea cakes, and shared stores. She writes, "I think about plantation cooks who may have baked tea cakes for their white owners, but could have been whipped for sneaking a taste themselves. I remember my grandma telling me about her Big Mama Chlorey Ann, who kept a couple of the golden cookies in the front pockets of her apron and popped them into her children's mouths just when field work got hardest." Even though tea cakes were not yet a major part of the regular slave diet, many young African American cooks were first introduced to tea cakes during this time.

Tea Cakes During the Post-Emancipation Era

"If people have no bread, let them eat cake."

Marie Antoinette

After emancipation, many slaves were still too poor to afford a wide variety of ingredients. Regardless, new dishes sprang up everywhere. African American

cooks still embraced culinary flexibility and creativity. Even without much money, tea cakes became a main treat of Southern foods. Tilley Johnson of Topeka, Kansas says, "Our older family members were very frugal, as they had to learn to get by with little. For example, my grandmother never seemed to discard anything, and therefore was quite a creative cook. She used empty flour sacks to make the most beautiful tea towels. She used them to cover and store her tea cakes in the cupboard. Of course, those cakes wouldn't last too long in the cupboard anyway. Under financial pressure, the cooks from the Post-Emancipation era invented new cooking styles and recipes.

A practically limitless number of tea cake variations were introduced. Almonds, poppy seeds, lemon, cinnamon, walnuts, and pecans all became ways to spice up the tea cake. Some of the best Southern cooks experimented with tea cakes. Gary Wynn, a 56-year-old from Indiana, has fond memories of his great grandmother's tea cakes. She was raised in Scott County, Kentucky in a poor, white family. Her family lived on a wealthy tobacco farmer's land. Still, Gary says, "The thing I remember was they did not have much money, but she was one of the best cooks I have ever known." Many of the best tea cake recipes were created under these circumstances.

With new access to foods, families that had never tasted tea cakes before quickly added them to their culinary collections. Betty Justice remembers growing up in Georgia without much money: "Even our food was simple. What's funny is that I always thought of tea cakes as a special treat, and yet they are so easy and cheap to make. I guess that's why we ate them so often."

Tea cakes became available to a larger part of the African American community after emancipation. The new tea cake recipes that emerged after emancipation included elements of both European and West African cuisines. Although other soul foods can be considered more truly African, the tea cake unites European and African culinary traditions in a truly African American combination. For this reason, tea cakes are often called “the national cookie of African Americans.”

Tea Cakes During the Depression Era

The financial troubles continued for most families through the Depression Era of the 1930s. Silverrene Roundtree recalls growing up in Chattanooga, Tennessee during this time: “I had four brothers and my father worked on the farm, hunted, and fished to support the family. My mother had her vegetable garden to help. We only bought sugar, salt, flour, and meal at the grocery store. It was a special treat when my mother whipped up a batch of tea cakes.” For many people who grew up in the Depression Era, tea cakes symbolized hope for a happier and more prosperous future.

Even with the most basic ingredients, the simple tea cakes of the past are sometimes the best. Marian Hayes writes, “Mama always said that my grandma made tea cakes because she did not have enough ingredients to make a whole cake. Mama said those little cookie cakes were the best she had ever tasted. Years later, I tried one of Grandma’s tea cakes. They were not sweet and seemed bland. Yet, I long for those cakes now more than any other. Nobody’s tea cakes can taste like Grandma’s.” Sometimes, the humble tea cakes of the past are the most meaningful.

Chapter 2 – Teacake Remembrances

Tea cakes reached their highest point of popularity during the middle of the 20th Century. Families still depended on home-cooked meals from the mothers or grandmothers. Tea cakes were less expensive and became a regular part of the soul food diet. They had a special place in every aspect of life, including Sunday meals, family time on the front porch, and even school. Adults today reminisce about these happy times when they think about tea cakes.

Mariyln Gloer-Hilsabeck has a special childhood memory from this time. She recalls, "I remember eavesdropping on many telephone conversations over our 'party line' back in the early 1950s. A party line was a shared phone line with several subscribers. I'll never forget hearing Mrs. Elnora tell Mrs. Mason her recipe for tea cakes. Mrs. Mason had to promise not to reveal the recipe to anyone. I regret to this day not writing down Mrs. Elnora's tea cake recipe, as it sure was good!" For adults today, tea cakes conjure up memories of the "good times" in the 1950s and 1960s.

Since many families had more money to spend on ingredients, tea cakes played a more regular part in everyday life. People began to eat tea cakes weekly or sometimes even daily. For Reverend Curtis Car of Cedar Park, Texas, tea cakes were Saturday afternoon treats. He writes, "In the late 1950s, every Saturday afternoon, my brother and I waited for Grandmother's afternoon treats: delicious tea cakes. I still remember the aroma of nutmeg and vanilla

baking in the wood stove in our four-room house. After all of our chores were finished, she placed the tea cakes on the table for us. This was the main event of every Saturday afternoon and the highlight of my week." By the 1950s, even less fortunate families could frequently enjoy the scrumptious taste of tea cakes.

Home and Family

"You can't expect a person to dance before he's eaten."

Shalom Aleichem, Tevye Wins a Fortune

Tea cakes remind many people of spending time with their families at home. The comforting smell and the familiar taste invoke feelings of nostalgia for the old days when families gathered together for meals. Tea cakes played a crucial role in this family togetherness, as Doris Bethel recollects: "Family gatherings were big ordeals, especially with regards to the food. Just as I relish in the memories of smothered okra and cornbread, I can smell the tea cakes baking in my grandmother's oven. The smell, more than any other, signifies 'family' to me." As a little girl in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Doris Bethel's childhood experiences were similar to those of many other children at the time.

For children, tea cakes seemed to signify the love from parents and grandparents. Mothers and grandmothers labored over the baking just to bring smiles to their children's faces. Yvonne Bradley recalls what this meant to her and the other children in her family. She says, "I remember standing in the kitchen and waiting patiently for the last cookie batter to be emptied from the bowls and for the spoons to be available. My brother, my cousin, and I would

find a comfortable spot on the back steps or on the ground and finish off all of the leftover batter. Just by looking at us, it was evident what hard work had gone into the tea cake batter. We always returned the bowls and spoons without a spot on them, but with traces of batter on our faces and clothes. The smell of tea cakes baking seemed to give any house a strong feeling of warmth, happiness, and love that defined 'home.'" Perhaps tea cakes tasted so sweet because they were the products of motherly and grandmotherly love.

The Porch

"Ecstasy is a glass of tea and a piece of sugar in the mouth."

Alexander Pushkin

Families in the 1950s relished in the precious time together on the front porch. Mothers, fathers, grandmothers, grandfathers, aunts and uncles joined together to relax, make jokes, and share stories. Tea cakes were a special part of this family time. Irene Mims from Little Rock, Arkansas needed to finish her chores first. Still, the tea cakes made the washing and sweeping worthwhile. She says, "For me, tea cakes go with front porches and screen doors. My grandma Ada, who lived down a dirt path, would bake me these goodies as soon as I finished my chores for her. We'd sit there on her screened-in front porch and eat to our hearts' delight!" Like many others, Irene Mims will forever associate tea cakes with that special time on her grandmother's front porch.

The front porch was a carefree and comfortable place of relaxation after work. Mattie Booker remembers her father eating tea cakes on the front porch at the

end of the day: "Papa liked to 'sit a spell,' as he said, when he arrived home from the lumber mill. When she had the time and Papa hadn't made her mad, Momma made him some buttermilk tea cakes while he sat on the porch. If he was in the right mood, Papa even shared some with our neighbor, Mr. Massie. I can remember some funny conversations on the porch that started all because of tea cakes." Tea cakes on the front porch brought families and neighbors together after a long and grueling day at work. They provided a momentary escape from the ongoing demands of the work day.

Many children of the 1950s and 1960s encountered tea cakes for the first time on the front porch. Extended family members and neighbors shared their tea cake creations with the entire community. Linda Harper, from Portland, Oregon, initially fell in love with tea cakes during an evening on the front porch. She says, "My first tea cake experience came from my neighborhood. Uncle John and Aunt Betty, who were really my neighbors and maybe my cousins, sat on the front porch every afternoon and enjoyed tea cakes. As a child, I thought chocolate was a treat, until I tasted Aunt Betty's tea cakes." Those long, summer afternoons on the front porch with loving family members exposed many children to the mouthwatering aromas and the satisfying taste of tea cakes.

Farm Life

"Work and pray, live on hay, you'll get pie in the sky when you die."

Joe Hill

Life on the farm was made a little sweeter with tea cakes. After milking cows, picking vegetables, and feeding chickens, a bite of homemade tea cakes was a satisfying reward.

According to Curtis Culpepper, his grandmother made the best tea cakes in the whole world, or at least in Jefferson, Texas. He drove fifty miles to her house, which felt like forever to a child. The drive was worth getting to watch his grandmother make her special tea cakes. He remembers, "My granny was perfection in motion with a dash of this, a douse of that, a little of this, and a load of that. It was her secret, and she would even block me out like a center trying to get a rebound in order to conceal her method. One day, we arrived and she had timed the tea cakes wrong and burned the bottoms of the tea cakes. She promptly gathered them up, took them outside, and spread them around on the ground for the eager chickens. She returned to the kitchen and started dashing and dousing once again. This time, they turned out golden. She then went outside and caught a chicken that had been eating her burnt tea cakes. She proceeded to skillfully snap its neck, pluck it, and cook it. We ate the chicken, which seemed fair to me." Tea cakes fit in perfectly with farm life, where food played a major role in day to day life. Families took pride in their food and appreciated the work that went into a meal.

In many rural areas, everyone in the town was somehow related. This was the case in Quitman, Louisiana, where Sharon Leonard visited her in-laws for the first time. Her husband knew everyone in the area. As a new wife, Sharon was tall, thin, and beautiful. However, she still felt nervous about meeting her in-laws and desperately wanted to impress them. She was especially scared to meet her husband's grandmother, whom he called "Mu."

Sharon writes, "When we finally got to Mu's house, she took one look at me and handed me a brown bag full of homemade tea cakes. All of that nervousness I had felt went away and I smiled. Those tea cakes were the best I had ever had. Mu made them full of butter and sugar!" For Sharon Leonard, the tea cakes were a symbol of acceptance into the family and the rural community.

Tea cakes were farm favorites that children enjoyed in the summertime. Valerie Fraser was 10 years old when she biked to her friend Sarah's family farm every Saturday. The farm had cows, ponies, puppies, and many other kinds of animals. They played together and squirted the animals with a hose. When the weather was beautiful, nothing could coax the two girls into the house except for freshly made tea cakes.

Valerie remembers how delectable the tea cakes were: "These heavenly treats would be baked for us by Sarah's grandmother, Miss Lillian. Though I'm well past my prime biking days, I'd gladly pedal 30 miles for just one more of her tea cakes." According to Valerie, "The best tea cakes have the kind of sugared-butter goodness that will make you swear you just heard the whap of a screen door" (SouthernLiving.com). On the farm, children scampered through the trees, teased each other, and raced home for the first bite of Grandmother's

tea cakes. To this day, tea cakes continue to be associated with the romantic view of a peaceful and simple farm life.

Extended Family- The Women of the 1950s

"Tell me what you eat and I will tell you who you are."

Athelme Brillat-Savin

Tea cakes are often a reminder of one special family member. Maybe you remember your grandmother dancing around the kitchen and baking her signature tea cakes. Maybe you remember your aunt carefully mixing ingredients in a bowl. Maybe you remember your cousin trying to imitate the recipes from past generations. Even though these memories are different for everyone, they all share a love between family members that can be rekindled by tea cakes.

The women of the 1950s were strong, self-sufficient, hardworking people. They found a place in the work force and still managed to labor over the stove to cook a fantastic meal. They were the matriarchs of the family. Younger generations now look back with respect and admiration at their grandmothers and aunts. Dera R. Williams fully appreciates her mother's hard work now that she is a mother herself. She writes, "My daughter Rebecca commented recently, 'You know, Mom, Grandma was a really strong Southern woman. She had a career as an elementary school teacher, a husband, and a family and still came home to fix full-course meals and do her own sewing.' Indeed, she did. Thinking back on it now, the majority of my friend's mothers did the same

thing. They too were Southern black women who migrated to California and retained their Southern ways. We children of the 50s and 60s took for granted what we thought were our mother's generation of women's tireless routines of home and hearth. It seemed like nothing for them to leave the classrooms, the hospitals, the offices, or the factories to rush home and cook up fried chicken, mashed potatoes and gravy, a fresh vegetable, cornbread from scratch, and a dessert without missing a beat." These resilient mothers and grandmothers of the 1950s were the foundation for the home. They kept the family together through their devotion, strength, and tea cakes.

Barbara Meshell Carter remembers waking up in Houston, Texas to the smell of her grandmother's tea cakes. Although her grandmother is now deceased, she will always remember the winter mornings with her grandmother: "I can remember as a child, especially during the winter months, waking up to that smell that was so pleasant that I already knew what it was: tea cakes! With my mouth watering, I immediately got up and ran into the kitchen (without brushing my teeth, of course). When I was in the kitchen with Big Mama, I saw the basic ingredients she used: some eggs, flour, and milk from a can. I watched her lovely hands as she took that dough, mended it, and cut it into circles. She placed the dough onto a cooking rack and into the oven. In minutes, like magic, the best tasting caramel cookies came out!" For Barbara Meshell Carter, baking tea cakes are a way to relive the past and to pay tribute to her extraordinary grandmother.

Tea cakes indicate the special role that grandmothers play in every family. As the wise and strong-willed matriarchs, grandmothers are to be respected. Marie Davenport revered her grandmother: "I grew up in Rocky Springs, Mississippi in a

time when my grandmother was the rock for all of the family members. No one can make tea cakes like Mama Bettie. She was the most amazing cook and person I've ever known. We were sharecroppers, so tasty food meant everything to us. Her tea cakes never disappointed."

Grandmothers have strength, passion, and the incredible cooking skills to bake tea cakes. As a child, Tina Faye Lockett also appreciated her grandmother's hard work baking the tea cakes. She says, "I remember Big Momma handing me a shoe box filled with all of my favorite foods- fried chicken, biscuits, baked sweet potatoes, and tea cakes. I cleaned the plate on my bus ride to visit Aunt Lessie in Atlanta. I remember the Trailways bus driver telling me that the aroma of my food made him hungry. I still feel sorry for him to this day, because I did not share Big Momma's food with anyone!" Grandmothers seem to have a special way of cooking. Grandmotherly love can be felt in every bite of warm and sugary tea cakes.

Other people have memories of aunts that baked delicious tea cakes. April D. Morton was raised in Tulsa, Oklahoma by her Great Aunt Carrie. Even though her aunt was already in her seventies, Great Aunt Carrie took on the task of raising April and her two siblings. Tea cakes are April's way of remembering this heroic woman: "We grew up in an old frame house that was so drafty in the winter but constantly filled with delicious smells throughout the season. She could cook or bake almost anything. One of her specialties was her soft and delicious tea cakes. She would make them often and, when she did, they never had time to cool off! I remember how she stored them in large plastic or glass pickle jars. They were so good that I can remember them missing from the kitchen not long after she packaged them. The delectable cookies were a

special treat for the neighborhood kids, my siblings, and me. People always asked her to make tea cakes for them, and she always obliged. She loved doing things for other people. I'll never forget her 'special' touch that she left on every single cookie. She took a fork and simply pressed an imprint into the very center of every one. That was how we distinguished her cookies from anyone else's. I truly miss the smell of her tea cakes baking in that old Anderson oven." Great Aunt Carrie left her signature mark on each tea cake as well as in the hearts and minds of the children that she left behind.

Everyone seems to have a memory of a special family member baking tea cakes. For Lillie Smith of Metairie, Louisiana, the smells of vanilla and a wooden stove evoke memories of her aunt. Lillie's poem, "Sweet Sugary Treats" is an expression of her love and appreciation.

Sweet Sugary Treats

*Hearing her footsteps along the old creaking floors;
Her sculpted hair brushed up in a bun;
Her eyes were as warm as the morning sun
I remember that her fingers would not stretch out flat and long
From years of working the fields, pulling and shucking corn
The essence of vanilla masking the smell of wood burning in the
stove;*

*A voice of hymn filled woes, heartaches, and stories to be told
Still able to straighten my hair with the comb off the stove
Balls of dough that was layered with spices and soul
Sitting and waiting for those sweet sugary treats
Secrets of generations gone by, passed on to little roaming eyes
The love, so many hugs, is easy to remember
with Auntie wanting to give rewards of those sweet and sugary
treats*

Lillie Smith recognized the difficult times and the “heartaches” of the past. For her aunt, as with so many other African American cooks, tea cakes and other sweets were a method of denying or delaying the harsh reality in which they lived. These loving cooks could bring smiles to their children’s faces with something as simple as tea cakes.

Fighting with Siblings

“The Vice-President is sort of like the last cookie on the plate. Everybody insists he won't take it, but somebody always does.”

Bill Vaughan

Battles sometimes broke out between siblings over who could eat the tea cakes first. Even the bowl and spoon became highly valued treasures. Angela Bradley fought with her cousin and brother over every drop of tea cake batter: “I remember standing near the kitchen, waiting, and watching for the last batch of tea cake batter to be poured onto the pan. When that happened, it was ‘every man for himself.’ My cousin, my brother, and I jumped to see who could get the bowl! When the bowl and spoons were separated among us, we sat on the back door steps or the ground and devoured the leftover batter. When we were through, the bowls and spoons didn’t need to be washed. All that we missed of the batter ended up on our face or clothes. Those were the days! The smell of baking tea cakes seemed to fill our house with warmth, happiness, and love.” For children, the batter was sometimes just as sweet as the baked tea cakes.

For families with many children, these disputes became even more intense. However, the arguments are sometimes the fondest memories. For Mary E. Anderson, growing up in Davenport, Iowa would not have been the same without her seven siblings. She remembers these times happily: "My favorite memory is of my mother making tea cakes for her eight children and fighting over how many each of us were allowed to eat. I remember watching my mother making the dough with her fingers and rolling it out with a Pepsi cola bottle, because she didn't have a rolling pin. I could smell the vanilla flavor when they were baking and could hardly wait until they were done." The sweet smell of the tea cakes baking felt like torture to the impatient children.

With siblings and neighbors as competition, the batter and tea cakes were precious prizes. This was a problem for Brenda Maull growing up. However, her mother always kept a secret present for Brenda after school. She says, "My mom, Rosie Maull, made the best tea cakes. I can remember coming home from school and being greeted at the front yard entrance by the sweet aroma of tea cakes baking in the oven. She always left a little bit of the batter in the bowl for me to eat with my fingers. My siblings waited around the oven until the cakes were ready. My mom's tea cakes disappeared fast. Not only was I competing with my siblings, I was also competing with relatives and neighbors. Her tea cakes were always over-sized, moist, and quick to disappear." Tea cakes brought large families together, even if only to bicker over how many each person could have.

Changing Behavior

"There is no sincerer love than the love of food."

George Bernard Shaw

Because children loved tea cakes so much, parents sometimes used tea cakes to teach them a lesson. Whether teaching them not to lie or not to steal, parents used tea cakes as a way to reward and punish behavior. Jacquie Matthews-Mackey grew up in Richmond, California in the early 1950s. She will never forget Mrs. Frasier's tea cakes: "As kids, we all loved Mrs. Frasier. She was instrumental in teaching us how to behave. She would always tell us that if we played nicely together, she would bake tea cakes for us. From that moment on, we were as good as gold. We did not argue, and we took turns in our games. We eagerly awaited those delicious tea cakes. I can remember biting down into my tea cake and looking around at all of the smiling faces. We were as happy as kids could be." For Jacquie, tea cakes were a special reward for behaving well.

Tea cakes also helped take the pain of punishments away. After being spanked or whipped, tea cakes could bring back a smile to any child's face. Liz Crain recalls this painful punishment: "It may sound strange, but I associate tea cakes with being spanked. Growing up in Natchez, Mississippi, I received whippings when I got into trouble. Mother always whipped me first and then promised that Daddy would whip me when he arrived home. I remember being asked to fetch a 'switch' from the sweet gum tree in the front yard for Mother or Father to

use. But the soreness would wear off after eating my mother's tea cakes." Tea cakes provided a sweet moment of bliss for children in painful situations.

Children sometimes could not keep their hands off the wonderful, tempting tea cakes. Hazel Casmere learned about stealing from her mother's tea cakes. These tea cakes had a special 'Seal of Approval' from her mother, who used her long fingers and big knuckles to smack the dough. The tea cakes were so delicious that Hazel could not help herself. She was always able to sneak a bite, even if she was caught. Still, she remembers, "The tea cakes were worth a whipping every time! I always managed to steal a few extra, but she always caught me and whipped me for stealing. I sometimes think that she was pleased to know that I loved them so much, but she had to whip me for the principle of the thing." Whether or not they learned their lesson, tea cakes played an important role in shaping children's behavior.

Holidays and Other Special Events

"When someone is born, wed or buried, there food will be, giving sustenance, making one feel secure. Food is the vehicle of love that is passed on in an Italian family, generation after generation. It is tradition."

Mary Ann Esposito, Ciao Italia

Remember Christmas morning with the smell of vanilla and butter? Or Thanksgiving dinner with homemade pies and tea cakes on the side? These special occasions brought families together to celebrate love, peace, and tea

cakes. Nate Robinson spent his childhood holidays in both Detroit and St. Louis. According to Nate, "On Christmas, Thanksgiving, Easter, or whenever my mother felt like making them, there were tea cakes, tea cakes, and more tea cakes! There were big ones, little ones, round ones, and strangely shaped ones." Nate indulged in his mother's tea cakes with pleasure. Holidays were a time of abundance and overeating.

Eating tea cakes was just a part of the holiday traditions. Gail Barnes-Maxwell grew up in Camden, Texas and spent holidays with her aunt Ola Lee and her cousins. Her aunt made tea cakes twice a year: for Christmas and for Thanksgiving. Gail remembers how her aunt baked with dedication: "Aunt Ola Lee got up before daylight, mixed the batter, and baked the tea cakes. It seems as if she used every bowl, pan, and spoon in the kitchen. Perhaps this is because my cousin and I were responsible for cleaning the kitchen while those delicious smelling tea cakes were baking. After they were finished, Aunt Ola Lee put them in a large serving plate and covered them with a large white cloth to hold the heat in. Once they had cooled down, she said we could eat a few. We always started with one tea cake and a cup of hot chocolate. If we finished that one, we could have more. They tasted better than any cake or pie we had for the holidays. My cousin and I always hid some for after the holidays. The flavor got better with age." Tea cakes were a significant part of Christmas mornings, Thanksgiving feasts, and Easter dinners.

Not all occasions brought families together for happy purposes. In Cheryl Augustine's family, tea cakes were even cooked for funerals. After the death of a loved one, nothing showed sympathy and eased sorrow like a tea cake. She remembers, "It was customary to take a dish or a dessert to a bereaved family

when someone passed away in the neighborhood. Grandmother Alice often made tea cakes for these families. I always volunteered to deliver the 'goods,' because I could always slip a tea cake without anyone knowing." Delicious food showed support and love from neighbors. Nothing brought people together better than tea cakes, even in times of mourning.

Sundays

"A cheerful heart hath a continual feast."

Proverbs 15:15

In the mid 20th Century, large families gathered together for potluck dinners, oftentimes after church on Sundays. Each individual family brought a dish to be shared with the entire community. Parents, grandparents, cousins, aunts, uncles, nieces, and nephews all ate dinner together. Collard and mustard greens, ribs, fried chicken, chitlins, yams, corn bread, kale, and okra are all examples of foods that were shared at Sunday meals. Of course, tea cakes were a favorite dessert as well.

For Barbara Meshell Carter, these meals were the only opportunity for the family to share her grandmother's tea cakes. She recalls, "I remember the days when Big Mama would make tea cakes on Sundays, which was typically the day our family came together and ate Sunday dinner. Everyone knew Big Mama had baked tea cakes, along with other goodies, for this huge dinner." Mothers and grandmothers shared recipes, tasted each other's dishes, and judged whose was best during Sunday meals.

Even though most people had similar experiences at Sunday meals, everyone seems to have different tea cake memories. For Alberta Rushing, tea cakes bring back memories of Sundays and newly slaughtered chickens. He writes, "To me, tea cakes say 'Sunday.' We had our best family meals on Sundays right after church. I remember watching Papa catch and slaughter chickens from the hen house that we would eat for our afternoon dinner. He was so happy to complete his fried chicken dinner with a plate of my grandmother's tea cakes." Alberta remembers tea cakes as a compliment to his father's fried chicken dish. On the other hand, Larry Mayfield from Omaha, Nebraska remembers combining tea cakes with coffee. He went to his grandmother's after church every Sunday. There were tea cakes everywhere! As he grew older, his mother allowed him to try coffee. His Sunday afternoons were wonderful, because of the combination of coffee and tea cakes. Whether with fried chicken or coffee, tea cakes completed any Sunday meal.

Religion was, and continues to be, an essential part of many Southern homes. On Sundays, families went to church and children went to Sunday school together. People praised God, gave thanks, and prayed together. In Bonnie Hemphill-Forrest's home in Jackson, Mississippi, religion and tea cakes literally went together. She says, "I'll never forget how Reverend Jackson came to our house after church to eat Sunday dinner with our family. One Sunday, he must have been really hungry, because he blessed the food in two words: 'Jesus Wept.' He always left our house smiling, because my mother sent him home with his own plate of tea cakes." Reverend Jackson's visits, along with the delicious tea cakes that her mother baked, made Bonnie's Sunday dinners memorable.

Tea cakes were sometimes the best incentive to go to church. The road to church was a dangerous one for Yvonne Jackson of Tyler, Texas. Her mother stayed at home with her new baby brother, so Yvonne went to Sunday school and church with her siblings. She remembers the frightening pathway: "Our route to Mount Corinth Baptist Church included crossing a ditch by walking on a long board. This was torture to me, because I was so afraid. My brother and sister walked across and coaxed me as I got on my knees to crawl across. I was always encouraged by the knowledge that, after church, a little old lady would be at the back door with a tea cake and a hug for each child. I didn't want to miss those tea cakes, so I always found the courage to cross over that bridge. Tea cakes bring back two memories for me: the kindness of that little church lady and crossing that plank bridge." Freshly baked tea cakes made going to church a little easier.

Sunday afternoon tea cakes were popular for most people, but not everyone associates tea cakes with church. Tea cakes remind Frank Sturgis of lazy Sunday afternoons by the river. He writes, "Fishing was a big part of my childhood. Most of the time, I did okay and brought some fish back for supper. But I also remember going to Hobbs Creek on Sunday afternoons and sometimes coming up completely empty. On those days when the fish weren't biting, my grandmother's tea cakes always made the day better." Eating Grandmother's tea cakes on a Sunday afternoon lifted any child's spirits.

While some people spent Sundays with their entire families, Sundays gave other people the opportunity for quality one-on-one time with a family member. Viola Sapphira Robinson remembers spending time with her grandmother in

Kalamazoo, Michigan. The two bonded together over tea cakes. She recalls, "I helped her put the ingredients into a big, floral bowl. We stirred, kneaded, and rounded the dough before plopping it onto a cookie sheet. They smelled so good that my mouth watered. When they were finished, we took our tea cakes and our hot mint tea to the front room and settled down by the radio to listen to a radio program together. That quality time I spent with my grandma will always be in my heart." Sundays were a perfect day for family members to spend time eating tea cakes together.

School

*"We may live without poetry, music and art.
We may live without conscience and live without heart,
We may live without friends,
We may live without books,
But civilized man cannot live without cooks."*

Children of the middle 20th Century also remember tea cakes as a school snack. This daily treat became a regular part of life. Carolyn Burton lived in the country with her great aunt growing up. When she was a little girl attending elementary school, her aunt made tea cakes as a school treat. Carolyn reminisces, "Not a day passed that we did not have freshly baked tea cakes. We took them to school and ate them with our lunch. I'll never forget the smell of freshly baked tea cakes in the morning. It gave me something wonderful to wake up to and made me happy in the mornings." Tea cakes helped make the school day a little easier.

For older generations with less money, tea cakes were a special surprise in any lunch box. Carly Champion Simboro's uncle had a very unique lunch. She says, "My Uncle Garfield used to sit with me by the fireplace and tell me stories about his seven mile walk to school. My favorite story was about his lunch container. It was an empty syrup bucket that contained biscuits, syrup, fatback bacon, and tea cakes (provided some were left over from Sunday's dinner)." The lunch was so simple, but Uncle Garfield was thrilled to tell about his school lunch delights with the younger generations.

Tea cakes were also a popular afterschool snack. They were the best reward after a long day of studying. Beatrice Mason-Hunter of Cherry Point, North Carolina ate tea cakes after school every day. She remembers, "My momma had tea cakes waiting for my brothers and me when we got home from school. We had biscuits for our breakfast, tea cakes for our snacks, and cornbread for supper. That was the life!"

Many children of the time probably would have agreed, including Pamela Winans from Moreno Valley, California. Tea cakes also brought a lot of joy to her throughout the years, especially when she devoured a homemade batch after school. She recalls, "My momma used to surprise us with a batch of tea cakes after we came home from school. It was so exciting, because she rarely had time to make tea cakes. She was so busy raising eight kids while Daddy was at work. Whenever she did manage to find the time, we were always thrilled." After a stressful day at school, nothing brightens a child's day more than biting into a warm tea cake.

Children know that they are in a place of love and comfort when they see a batch of homemade tea cakes. Childhood was sometimes very difficult for Linda Edwards in Humble, Texas. Her mother died when she was four years old. She was ninth in a family of 12 children. For six years, her dad did everything he could to raise his children in a safe and protected environment. Everything changed when Linda was ten years old: "My dad remarried to a woman named Lena. She was, as my dad said, 'not a great beauty and not very smart.' One thing Lena did have was a loving spirit and a heart that loved us unconditionally. That love was evident on extremely cold days when we walked home from the bus stop. I walked worrying and wondering what was for dinner, wondering if I was going to figure out that math problem on my homework, wondering if that ugly boy in class really liked me. Then it happened. We got close enough to home to smell the nutmeg and cinnamon. We looked at each other and yelled, 'Teacakes!' We raced home to see warm tea cakes and hot chocolate waiting for us. For that moment, nothing else mattered. I have not had a tea cake that can compare to Lena's." No matter how traumatic or how stressful life was, after school tea cakes provided momentary joy for children.

Chapter 3 - Tea Cakes Today

"Who would have thought twenty-five years ago that cooking would be a noble career choice and one of America's favorite pastimes?"

Ethan Becker, Foreward, *The Joy of Cooking*, 1997

Tea cakes have changed since their heyday in the 1950s. Today, tea cake recipes are less simple and now include a wider variety of ingredients. Fewer people bake tea cakes at home. In fact, they have become somewhat lost in the fast-paced lifestyle of today. Tea cakes are nostalgic reminders of a simpler past. Cassandra L. Trett from Camden, New Jersey said it best: "We all know that life today is different. What is most different to me is how far we've come from the simple and delicious cooking we used to do in the country." Homemade tea cakes are rare nowadays. Instead, tea cakes are mass produced by companies and restaurants that are looking to keep the memories alive.

The older generations that baked tea cakes for the family are starting to pass away. Garfield Curtis of Mansfield, Louisiana remembers his grandfather's love of tea cakes. He writes, "Granddaddy loved Mellorine ice cream and tea cakes after dinner. I always heard him complain to Grandmother Mattie that it was 'chilly' after finishing off his desserts. I thought of my grandfather recently when I overheard an elderly gentleman at a nursing home say he wanted ice cream and cake. Our choices today just don't measure up." Unfortunately, many

people like Garfield and the elderly gentleman have memories but do not have recipes.

Not all families are allowing the tea cake tradition to die away. Denise Madison's family is exceptional for two reasons. Her father broke the mold. By baking his own version of tea cakes, her father took on a job that was largely female dominated in the past. Also, he continues to bake tea cakes even today. Denise says, "I will always remember my first tea cake. My father baked a batch of tea cakes for my mother and me when I was growing up in California City, California. I am not much of a tea cake baker these days, but when I develop a sweet tooth, I am blessed to have my father around to call upon to bake my family some of his wonderful tea cakes. I enjoy them so much, especially when he tops them with icing." Denise's family is a perfect example of modern day cooking. Men are now more likely to bake alongside their female counterparts. Even if tea cakes are not a regular part of everyday life, they are still very much a part of the traditions that have been passed down to younger generations.

Since less people bake at home, younger generations are finding tea cakes in different ways. Donna N. Gant grew up eating tea cakes that either her mother or grandmother baked. However, now that she is in her 50s and living in Houston, she seldom meets people who have ever heard of tea cakes. One day, while having her hair done at the local beauty parlor, she was quite surprised. She says, "I discovered that one of the many vendors who come through the beauty parlor is a lady who sells tea cakes. We call her 'The Tea Cake Lady.' She makes all flavors of tea cakes and sells them fresh on the weekends. Some of the flavors include lemon pina colada, chocolate chip,

coconut, strawberry, banana, and many other flavors that I never would have associated with tea cakes. Needless to say, The Tea Cake Lady has modernized this traditional dessert. Instead of the imperfect cookie-shaped tea cake our grandmothers used to make, her tea cakes are rectangular with scalloped edges. The strawberry tea cakes are slightly pink. The lemon tea cakes are slightly yellow. She sells them in a pack of five tea cakes for \$5. They are wrapped in colorful cellophane and tied with a ribbon. Despite the fancy flavors and modern packaging, The Tea Cake Lady puts out a tasty product. She is young and not someone I would expect to bake, let alone sell, this historic delicacy. Every time I am sitting under the hair dryer and she walks in with her professional carrier filled with tea cakes, I think of my grandmother, her mother, my mother, and those wonderful tea cakes that my sisters and I have enjoyed all of our lives. I do not know The Tea Cake Lady's real name, but I admire the young woman for her diligence in maintaining the legacy of tea cakes." With the old ways disappearing quickly, there are still some people like The Tea Cake Lady who manage to keep this tasty treat alive.

The Dying Tea Cake

"Life is uncertain. Eat dessert first."

Ernestine Ulmer

The tea cake has struggled to survive in the hectic lifestyle of today. Many of the mothers and grandmothers that used to bake tea cakes in the 1950s have passed away. Because the recipes were not written down, many were lost and forgotten. Society today now depends on fast food and chain restaurants. Still,

many people are attempting to recreate the lost recipes, even replacing unhealthy ingredients with healthier alternatives. With tea cake warriors such as these, the flavor and history of tea cakes are never completely lost.

In Loving Memory of Those Who Have Passed Away

“Older people often leave property or money behind for their descendents, but a package of memories of a person’s life is what usually doesn’t get passed along. The most precious commodities of all-people’s own recollections of their worlds-seldom get preserved.”

Bob Greene, To Our Children’s Children

When grandmothers and aunts pass away, their recipes can unfortunately die with them. Many people have fond memories of their grandmother’s tea cakes, but they struggle to replicate the recipes. This may be partially due to the secrecy of the older generations. Lisa McCurdy experienced this first-hand. She says, “As a child, I could hardly wait for my grandmother to finish baking the tea cakes. The only recipe she had was in her head, and it was passed down from her mother. She made them with and without raisins. She did not share the recipe, and no one has been able to make them the same. She has passed on and the magnificent smell and taste has gone with her.” Lisa’s grandmother was so secretive, posing a challenge for anyone who wanted to recreate her classic recipe.

Even with the loss of some traditional recipes, young cooks are still trying to imitate them. Some have more success than others. Elizabeth Morgan of Newport News, Virginia attempted to cook tea cakes just like her mother's. She says, "Momma passed on a few years ago, and with her went a time-tested tea cake recipe. I have tried to replicate it, but Momma must have done something special with hers. Of course, those tea cakes may have just tasted so good because of the fun we usually had eating them." Perhaps the tea cakes really did have a secret ingredient. Or perhaps they were so delicious because of the love and devotion that went into each tea cake.

One problem for younger generations is that their grandmothers and mothers rarely wrote recipes down. They cooked instinctually and kept the ingredients in their heads. According to Bridget of Tallahassee, Florida, her grandmother was the only family member who could bake tea cakes. She writes, "I don't even think my grandmother Letha had a recipe with measurements. She just knew what ingredients and how much to use. She only made them when her son was visiting from Jacksonville, Florida or wherever else he may have been stationed. He was in the navy, and tea cakes were his favorite sweet from home. My mom tried to make them and they turned out more like sweet crackers. Grandmother Letha passed away on September 17th of this year. I will miss her wisdom, wise cracks, tall tales, sweet potato pies, and those tea cakes." Tragically, very few women documented their recipes and to be passed down to younger generations.

Tea cakes are a way of remembering and cherishing family members who have passed away. Patricia Britton-Hall of Minden, Louisiana baked tea cakes with her aunt Maggie as a child. Tea cakes helped her cope with the loss of her

deceased aunt by evoking loving memories and keeping them alive. Patricia describes Aunt Maggie perfectly: "Aunt Maggie was a petite lady with a measured walk and a quiet air about herself. I don't recall seeing her in a rush or hurried state. Perhaps her pace was attributed to the laid back living that people were accustomed to in the country. I can still picture Aunt Maggie in her gingham apron with her big, grey stoneware mixing bowl with a blue band around it. She grasped the bowl with her left arm and pulled it close to her body between her rib cage and waist. This was the method that home cooks used before the advent of the electric mixer. After about 300 strokes, the butter, sugar, and eggs were creamy and fluffy. Aunt Maggie always gave me the first sample as a reward for helping her in the kitchen. The smell and aroma of tea cakes baking is something that still reminds me of family to this day. Aunt Maggie passed away 25 years ago, but she is probably on the other side making her heavenly tea cakes for all to enjoy." Even though Aunt Maggie passed away, Patricia still keeps her spirit close to her heart.

The Fast Food Culture

The rise in fast food popularity has also led to a decline in baking at home. More families go out to eat. Also, fast food restaurants provide quick and cheap food that benefits anyone on a time schedule. The downside is that fast food is extremely unhealthy, leading to obesity and heart disease. 127 million Americans are overweight, partially resulting from fast food diets. Tea cakes and other homemade foods of the past may not have been extremely healthy either, but everyone knew what ingredients were used. Grandmothers could change the ingredients or even the amount of an ingredient used to make the foods healthier.

Tea Cake in Literature

Young people today who did not grow up eat tea cakes may only know about them through literature. They may recall a character named Tea Cake from Zora Neale Hurston's classic book, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*. Tea Cake is a happy-go-lucky man who courts the main character, Janie. He teaches her to play checkers and to shoot guns. They even picnic together. As the novel is still read in many high schools, younger generations nowadays may be much more familiar with this fictional Tea Cake than with the actual dessert.

Replacing Old Ingredients with Healthy Alternatives

"Tis an ill cook who cannot lick his own fingers."

Shakespeare

With the health-crazed attitudes of today, many traditional soul foods are evolving to incorporate healthier ingredients. Food preparation methods are being refined. Now, healthier options are available. Jennifer Rankins was forced to alter the ingredients in order to share tea cakes with her youngest granddaughter, Mya. Here is Jennifer's story: "One Friday night, my grandchildren asked to come visit me for the weekend. The real question was if I was ready to do all of the things I needed to do for my youngest granddaughter, Mya. She had Juvenile Diabetes and took insulin several times a day. My daughter immediately began to tell me what to do. She wrote out a

shot schedule and how much insulin to give. 'Tonight, when she gets to your house, she should be okay for the night. Be sure to check her before she goes to bed. In the morning, be sure to give her the insulin from this purple vial called Lantus,' she explained. 'Then she can eat breakfast. Right after breakfast, give her another dose of insulin from this blue dial called Novalog.'

It was dark when they pulled into my driveway. We changed into our pajamas and played games. The children were rubbing their eyes sleepily. I took a deep breath and took out the glucose monitor kit to check Mya before bed. 'Which finger do you want me to check?' I asked. 'This one,' she said as she stuck out one finger. I inserted a test strip into the meter and wiped her finger with an alcohol pad. We both blew it dry before I pressed it in gently and pricked her little finger, squeezing the blood up to the tip. I stuck the test strip into the blood and immediately the glucose meter began counting.

The next morning, I got up early to prepare breakfast. I braced myself to give her the first shot, which was my first time ever administering insulin. We got the needle, and I measured the insulin. 'You ready, Mya?' I said, trying to sound brave. She was still sleepy but nodded her head. 'Where do you want your shot?' She pointed to her thigh. 'Okay, here we go,' I said as I quickly inserted the needle and squeezed her thigh. It was over. Suddenly, Mya started clapping to applaud me. 'You did it, Grandma, you did it!' I was thrilled. Mya started doing a victory dance around the house. I was one proud Grandma. I pulled out the mixing bowl, flour, vanilla extract, nutmeg, and butter. 'Grandma, what are you making?' Mya asked. 'I'm making a batch of Sunday morning tea cakes,' I replied. 'But it's not Sunday yet. It's only Saturday!' she protested. 'I know,' I said, 'but it feels like Sunday to me.' I handed her the box

of Splenda that I would exchange as a sugar substitute. We had done it together.”

Due to Mya’s Juvenile Diabetes, Jennifer Rankins needed to find innovative ways to cook tea cakes. By replacing sugar with Splenda, she changed the traditional recipe to one that can be enjoyed by her entire family. With the wide availability of ingredients, such changes are now possible. The tea cake is still an ever-changing dessert that continues to transform over time. The use of healthier substitutes is becoming more common for all soul food recipes. Some cooks substitute plain white flour with whole grain flour. For meat recipes, cooks have started to replace salt port with turkey meat to decrease the fat intake. Other cooks use skim or 1% milk as opposed to whole milk. Regardless, soul foods, including tea cakes, are changing to account for diabetes and the high obesity rates in America.

Rescued Recipes

“Life is a banquet!”

Mame, Aunt Mame

Some recipes were rescued in bizarre and miraculous ways. Lily Hamrick, a writer and lawyer from Berkeley, California, has her own account of rediscovering a long lost tea cake recipe. She bought a grey, metal filing box from a seller on eBay. To her surprise, she discovered a stack of about twenty recipes inside the box. The seller was a Southern woman who had obtained the box from an estate sale. Lily wrote, “Early this morning, I spread the recipes out and, after a few minutes of reading through the cards, a picture of their creator

began to emerge. Some of the recipes are written on pieces of note paper with something called the East Texas Salt Water Disposal Company in Kilgore, Texas." Not sure what a salt water disposal company does, Lily focused more on the possible writer of the recipe: "The woman who once owned this box preserved some of her mother and grandmother's recipes in it – she rewrote them on cards of her own, noting the year they'd first been made. These three women (the owner, her mother, and her grandmother) were clearly Southerners. I know that because a few of these recipes deliver the slow, small town world of that time and place with heartbreaking clarity. This world doesn't exist for this family anymore. Once someone gets rid of their family's history, it's pretty clear their family isn't intact anymore."

With this new discovery, Lily intended to bring the tea cakes back alive for her own children. She examined the tea cake recipe: "The 1-2-3-4 Cake recipe is something that looks like it's been around a long time. The paper's yellow, and the handwriting is a little shaky. You see this cake mentioned often in cookbooks. It's a pound cake. This recipe involves separating the eggs and mixing in the yolks first and then, at the very end, mixing in the whipped egg whites." Even though the tea cake recipe had been lost for the original family, Lily brought the recipe back to life by sharing it with her children.

Attempting to Replicate Tea Cakes From the Past

The tea cake warriors of today are now trying to replicate the forgotten tea cake recipes of the past. This massive effort is a demonstration of the desire to keep these traditional treats alive for future generations. Patricia Carter wanted to make her grandmother's tea cakes but did not have a recipe after her grandmother passed away. After moving to Michigan, Patricia could not find

anyone who made tea cakes. Still, she eventually found the recipe on her own: "The last time I had a tea cake was at our family reunion in Minden, Louisiana about five years ago. I got the recipe out of the family reunion booklet. The recipe did not call for sifting flour, but I do remember my grandmother sifting the flour. She also didn't have a biscuit cutter, so she took a glass, placed it in the rolled out dough, and used a butter knife to cut out the cookies." Patricia located the original recipe and added her own interpretation of her grandmother's methods from memory. She was finally able to remake the long forgotten dessert.

Other cooks have had less success. For Joy Perry of Abbeville, Louisiana, nothing can taste as delicious as her grandmothers' tea cakes. She remembers her wonderful tea cake experiences as a child: "My mother's mom made these thick and crude tea cakes. They were the best with a cold glass of milk. My father's mother was the daughter of a minister. She was petite and so feminine. She made simple but perfect tea cakes. We had them with lemonade. Both grandmothers kept their tea cakes in a cookie jar of some sort and we were at liberty to eat them at any time. I have been trying for many years to make tea cakes, and I have never been able to accomplish this feat. I have collected various recipes and now I will attempt this feat with much passion." Joy's drive and determination are a testament to her desire to keep the tradition going. Even though she has failed in her previous attempts to make tea cakes, she still keeps the dream alive.

Other cooks are trying to replicate these traditional treats for the sake of their elderly family members. Nothing brings back happy memories of childhood like a tea cake can. Lillie Pancotti remembers eating her Aunt Bessie's tea cakes as

a child in Pine Bluff, Arkansas. Now, she wants to bake these tea cakes for her father: "My father is 94 years old now, and he has been craving tea cakes. I've been trying to get the recipe so that I can make them for him before he passes away. Just to see him smile and remember his younger years will make my Christmas." Lillie is not trying to recreate the tea cake recipes in order to pass it down to younger generations. Instead, she wants to give her father a piece of his childhood. For Christmas, she hopes to bring back joyful memories of a simpler time.

Funny Failures

The attempts to replicate the traditional tea cake recipes have had some hilarious results. Some people have failed miserably in their attempts, resulting in some funny stories for the family. As a new mother, Candice Turner from Booneville, Arkansas was determined to make her grandmother's tea cakes for her own children. Here is her story: "My grandmamma was a feisty 4'9" French Cajun mother with five strapping boys. I attempted several times to get her recipe without success. She lived many hours away, so our visits were limited to holidays. Of course, by the time we arrived, the tea cakes were already prepared, denying me the opportunity to observe the creation of a new batch. Eventually, I rallied my father to coax the recipe from her. Unfortunately, the only information he acquired was her response: 'There's no recipe for the cookie, child, you just knows it in yer head.' Back to square one.

I took out a cookbook. There, in black and white, was the coveted recipe. Or so I thought. I set to work, a labor of love. By the time I was finished mixing and kneading by hand, I was exhausted. I relished the time the roll of cookies had to

sit in the refrigerator and took a nap. When I awoke, I set out to the final task of baking my first batch. I put 13 cookies on the baking sheet. The moment they were done, they looked so delicious. I turned off the oven and ran them over to my dad to be the first to sample them. Although he said that they were delicious, I could see the disappointment in his eyes. They weren't his mother's cookies. He later phoned his mom and told her I had made a batch of 13 tea cakes. Her response was, 'Lord have mercy, child, that is way too much work for 13 cookies!'" Candice learned her lesson from the wisdom of her grandmother and from her own tea cake mistakes.

Other people have funny memories of their sisters or daughters trying to make tea cakes for the first time. Dr. Harold Golding of Montgomery, Alabama remembers his sister's failures: "My best memory of tea cakes (and, trust me, I have many 'favorites') is of my sister making them for the first time when she was 12 years old. And unsuccessfully so. She baked them way too long and forgot to use the shortening. I told her, 'Girl, that's hardtack – what those soldiers used to eat!' They weren't the best, but thinking back now, tea cakes remind me of her." Some of the best tea cake memories come from the mistakes of trying to replicate a mother or grandmother's original recipe.

Children and teenagers often try to cook without proper recipes or ingredients. The result is always a hilarious assortment of ingredients that hardly resembles the original goal. Teresa Fredrickson grew up in North Dakota and always babysat for families in the country. Her first attempt at baking tea cakes was during the summer with two children, Bob and Rhonda. She recalls, "The children told me I should try to find a tea cake recipe from their mother's cookbook, which was a thick paperback book. I was young, about 15 years old, so I figured I could try a

recipe. There was one for Russian Tea Cakes which had no baking, so I did not have to turn on the oven. I simply had to sift the flour, measure the ingredients, and mix everything together like the recipe said. The cookies looked and tasted good. When the children's father saw the cookies, he said, 'These aren't really cookies, are they?' I insisted that they were and that he should try one. He did and agreed that they were delicious. When he wanted to know where I got the recipe, I opened the cookbook to the recipe for Russian Tea Cakes that could be served at weddings or showers. He laughed. I said that this was the only cookie recipe that we had all the ingredients to make." Hopefully, these initial mishaps only make children better and more knowledgeable cooks in the future.

Secret Ingredients

Because tea cakes have been passed down through history orally, a variety of different kinds have emerged. Every family seems to have a different method or a secret ingredient. These secret ingredients are still as diverse today. Karen McCauley recalls her aunt's ingredient preference: "My Aunt Bessie would not make tea cakes unless she used brown eggs. She loved those bright yellow yolks. I remember the batter being a rich, vivid, yellow color when she creamed together the butter, sugar, and eggs. She swore brown eggs made a better tea cake than white eggs. I definitely agree!" Karen's family recipe was passed down and morphed over time to include a preference for brown eggs.

Kim Chandler also discovered ingredients that added to the taste of the ordinary tea cake. Growing up in Kansas City, Missouri, Kim always thought that her grandmother's tea cakes were flavorless. She writes, "Big Momma was a

creative cook. I had tasted tea cakes before, but, unlike my kinfolk, I thought they were awfully bland. Big Momma had a solution: lemon poppy seed tea cakes. Now that is a memory I can still taste!" Tea cakes today are now including lemon flavoring and poppy seeds regularly. What was once an innovative addition from cooks like Kim's grandmother is now a popular version of previous recipes.

For David King's family, the secret recipe is rock salt. He remembers growing up on tea cakes with rock salt in Kennedy, Alabama: "As a child, I went to visit my grandmother Chlora and enjoyed some of the best tea cakes I had ever tasted. She had a unique way of making them with coarse or rock salt. In every bite, I tasted the pieces of salt. She knew just how much salt to use to keep them from being too salty." Ingredients like rock salt give the old tea cakes interesting, new flavors.

Many debates between families occur over whether to use icing or frosting on tea cakes. Some families have incorporated icing into their recipes for decades. Allison O'Neal's family in Cordova, Tennessee swears by chocolate icing: "When I was a little girl, my grandmother made tea cakes. We always doubled the batch so that we could put chocolate icing between two cookies. I thought that the way my family ate them was the same way everyone did! I always thought this was the best way to eat tea cakes." Icing really gives tea cakes that extra sweetness that children remember.

Carolyn W. Walker remembers her family's tea cakes, which were served both plain and frosted. Regrettably, she cannot remember much else about the recipe. She says, "I grew up in rural Tallahassee, Florida, and I can still smell the

aroma of Mom's tea cakes baking to this day. Unfortunately, being the youngest family member, I never learned to bake them. I always waited around so that I could get the mixing bowl to finish off the raw contents. The secret of Mom's recipe was never revealed before her death, and none of her children can duplicate the taste or texture. The only ingredient I remember her using was lard." Even if the other ingredients were lost, the use of lard is in itself uncommon. With secret ingredients such as these in every family, the future of tea cakes is an exciting and unpredictable one.

Chapter 4 - The Future of Tea Cakes: New Memories with the Next Generation

“When we prepare dishes handed down to us from our grandmothers, we become grandchildren again, reconnected to the people who have gone before us. When we prepare traditional food for our children, we give them memories they can turn to when they are grown and cut adrift. They will prepare these foods and once again be grounded with their families in time.”

Judith Comfort’s Christmas Cookbook (1988)

Tea cakes are special to many Southern families, so the future of tea cakes is a bright one. Mothers and grandmothers today anticipate passing down the family recipes to their children and grandchildren. Tea cakes give families a reason to go back into the kitchen and cook together. Even those who never learned a family recipe still feel the stories of their ancestors with every bite.

LaVerne Littlejohn never learned a recipe from her grandmother. Like so many before her, she cooks instinctively and intends to pass down her tea cake recipe to those who come after her: “As a little girl, I remember my grandmother coming to visit from Luling, Texas. Every time she came, she brought her famous tea cake cookies for all ten of my siblings and me. We each had our own individual bags. The flavors of all the ingredients lingered on my taste buds. I never got the recipe from my grandmother, because I never knew that I would

be the one to bake them out of my four sisters. I learned to bake them by experimenting until I could recreate that special flavor from my grandmother. Like her, I bag them up for everyone who I think might ask for some. My grandmother would be proud to know that I have stepped up to the plate. Because I never got my grandmother's recipe, I don't have the blue print. I feel the legacy from my grandmother within my soul. Her legacy was already in place for whenever the time was right for me to recognize that I was chosen to carry on her tradition of baking tea cakes. I feel it in my spirit. I plan to pass my recipe down to my daughter or granddaughter, and they will be told to pass the recipe on for generations after generations along with a special story about my grandmother." Like LaVerne, so many cooks are doing what they can to reproduce their family's recipes to pass them on to their children.

New Traditions

Some cooks were never raised on tea cakes, but they are starting a new tea cake tradition with their children. Stellablue did not have a family to teach her how to cook tea cakes, but she did have a love for cooking. Here is her uplifting story: "When I was growing up, I had no mother. I never had any grandparents either. Since my parents moved to California from Oklahoma and Kansas before I was born, I never met any aunts, uncles, or cousins. One thing I did have was a desire to learn to cook. When my kids wake up in the morning and smell tea cakes, they feel so happy. They say, 'Yes! Tea cakes!' and 'Oh, Mom, you're making tea cakes!' When my children are grown and their children are in my kitchen, they will have wonderful stories to tell about waking up in the morning to the wonderful smell of tea cakes baking. I want to share my story with everyone, because even if people who don't have stories from the past

can create stories for their children to tell their grandchildren. Make a home with tea cakes!" Stellablue's story is inspirational to those who did not grow up with tea cakes. She exemplifies how a true cook and tea cake lover can begin a new path for future generations.

One company is using tea cakes to help younger generations without actually baking. TeaCake Kids is a foundation that promotes black awareness and self-esteem. The founder, Jonquil Akhir, noticed a lack of positive images of African American children and other children of color on children's apparel. In 1990, she wanted to make a change. She created a line of clothing and accessories that encourages positive self esteem and ethnic pride in children up to age 10. According to Jonquil, the tea cakes that were baked by women in the past were similar, but no two recipes the same. Like those tea cakes, each child is also unique, so TeaCake Kids embraces these different qualities. This clothing and accessories company shows how the African American community still uses tea cakes to benefit younger generations.

The Rebirth of Tea Cakes

"Members of your family will treasure every word you write. To them you are the connection between the remarkable past and the present; in fact, you are history, and history disappears if you don't record it."

Frank B. Thomas

Many people are rediscovering tea cakes and sharing them with loved ones who never tried tea cakes before. More and more people are being introduced to tea cakes for the first time. Terri Haynes and her husband had never tried tea cakes before, but their love of food united them in a quest to cook delicious tea cakes for their children. She says, "My husband loves flour, especially when it's baked into something. I often joke that he has a genetic flour disorder. He likes bagels, cookies, bread, and anything else with flour. He also eats his food with a cut of hot tea, a staple in his Caribbean upbringing. He is a better cook than a baker, but I am the other way around. Baking is like therapy for me. So, we make a wonderful couple.

We received our first tea cake recipe in a cookbook that was given to us as a Christmas gift. Neither of us had tried tea cakes before. When we read the recipe, we were both intrigued. For me, tea cakes were interesting, because they were neither a cake nor a cookie. He was excited about the flour in the recipe. Baking tea cakes for the first time became a family event. My children and husband gathered in our kitchen as I measured and mixed the ingredients. We watched them bake in our tiny little oven in our tiny little apartment. We put on a kettle of tea and waited. The tea cakes did not disappoint. The combination of the tea cakes and the tea was so perfect, we were speechless. My children ate theirs quickly, picking up the crumbs with their fat little fingers. My husband and I felt like we were getting married again. A Southern girl with a Caribbean boy. Warm tea cakes with hot tea. I now understand his flour disorder." Terri and her family made new memories with tea cakes that the children will cherish forever.

Nowadays, more people have access to recipes from books and the Internet. People who never knew about tea cakes can now find recipes and bake a batch on their own. Some are surprised to bond with loved ones over tea cakes. Evelyn Martin-Anderson had never even heard of tea cakes until she moved from New York City to Austin, Texas. She writes, "A friend, Dr. Marvin Kimbrough, a retired English professor, published a collection of her family's tea cake recipes. I kept the book for several years before I finally tried "Ada's Tea Cakes" recipes that called for two sticks of butter. I even bought a rolling pin and a wooden board to spread out the dough. When I told my mother that I had made tea cakes, she sounded like she had died and gone to heaven. 'Tea cakes,' she sighed, much to my surprise. I didn't even know that she liked tea cakes. So, of course, I sent her a batch for Christmas. When I told my niece Karen that I had baked tea cakes, she asked me, 'What are they?' So, I plan to pass on the knowledge by sending her a package of tea cakes with the recipe." Even though Evelyn discovered tea cakes on her own, she was thrilled to find that baking tea cakes had been a tradition in her family for decades. Tea cakes brought her closer with her mother. She even plans to share her recipe with future generations, ensuring that tea cakes will have a special role in her family for years to come.

Many people are encountering tea cakes for the first time through their loved ones. Wives are baking tea cakes for their husbands. Mothers are showing their cooking methods to their children. Some people are even passing out tea cakes to friends and co-workers. Darlean Grady from Covington, Georgia grew up munching on her grandmother's tea cakes. Now, she is sharing those delightful treats with everyone she can: "Whenever my grandmother came to our house to visit, she had a large brown paper bag full of golden brown tea

cakes. I always jumped up and down when I saw her walking toward our house. She requested 'some sugar' (a kiss) before handing the bag to my mother, who then divided the tea cakes among my four siblings and me. I always took a big bite, filling my mouth with flavors of vanilla and cinnamon. Each tea cake was perfectly round, because my grandmother used a mason jar to cut out the dough. I am now the official tea cake baker in my family. I even run a brisk business around Christmas time. Over the years, I have shared my tea cakes with co-workers and friends, who ordered dozens to share with their families and friends. This African American treat should be lovingly bestowed upon grandchildren by their grandmothers." Darlean took her grandmother's place as the baker in the family. Now that she shares her tea cakes with family and friends, many more people are being exposed to these tasty sweets. Sharing tea cakes is a wonderful expression of love and friendship.

Tasha Garrett was raised on her great aunt's tea cakes and exposed her husband to these delicious little treats. As a result, they grew closer together. She says, "I am a country girl who was born and raised in Athens, Louisiana. I am now living in North Texas. My husband is from Pflugerville, Texas and had never heard of tea cakes until I introduced them to him. Now he loves them as much as I do!" According to Tasha, tea cakes are a big part of her African American heritage. Now, she is sharing a piece of her heritage with her husband through these delectable desserts.

While the future of homemade tea cakes is unknown, some tea cake businesses have been successful catering to the younger generations who cannot bake their own. According to Jennifer C. Anderson, Ham N' Goodies is a popular place to order tea cakes for students at Vanderbilt University. Students across

the campus agree that there is no better place to enjoy tea cakes. Jennifer remembers how the Ham N' Goodies tea cakes momentarily relieved the stresses of college for her: "I had my first tea cake during my first year in college and thought it was the most divine creation I had ever tasted! Almost any girl, and even any boy, who has ever attended Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee knows about Ham N' Goodies' legendary tea cakes. They are the ultimate comfort food for any student who is far away from the comfort of Momma's home cooking. They are also the perfect relief for any student feeling the stresses of college life. Campus organizations order these yummy goodies for gatherings, and it's worth attending meetings just get your hands on one of these fresh delights. Even 10 years after my graduation, I can still remember the warm, vanilla almond flavored cookie with a glaze on top." Unfortunately, Ham N' Goodies is very secretive about their recipe. Jennifer emailed the company and searched the Internet trying to locate their mysterious recipe with no success.

Keeping the Tea Cake Tradition Alive

The tea cake began as a British tea party treat but has continued to evolve since then. After African American slaves combined flavors from West Africa, new types of tea cakes emerged. There are now various different flavors, ingredients, shapes, and colors of tea cakes. Even though many tea cake recipes have been threatened, and some even lost after the death of loved ones, new versions are being produced every day. They are being mass produced by companies in order to combat the fast food industry. Most importantly, families are reconnecting over tea cakes. Even parents who do not have a background with tea cakes are looking to form new traditions for their

children. Cooks are sharing recipes with family members and friends who have never heard of tea cakes. Tea cakes will continue to live on through the stories, memories, and recipes passed on to younger generations, forever ensuring their place in American history as a sweet Southern dessert.

Part II

The Teacake Recipe Collection

Aunt Maggie's Resurrected Tea Cake Recipe

Ingredients

5 to 6 cups flour
4 eggs
2 cups sugar
1/2 cup butter
1/2 cup Crisco butter flavored shortening
1 cup thick buttermilk
1 tablespoon Carnation powdered malted milk
1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 1/2 teaspoons nutmeg
1 tablespoon vanilla

Preparation

Put 5 cups of flour in a large mixing bowl. Make a well in the center. Add remaining ingredients to the well of the flour. Gradually stir in flour as you mix the ingredients in the well of the flour.

Continue until you make stiff dough, adding more flour if needed. On a floured surface, roll out to about 1/2-inch thickness; cut out and bake on lightly greased baking sheets at 350° until brown around the edges. Makes 2 dozen big tea cakes.

Elbert Mackey, Cedar Park, TX

Miss Ernestine's Teacakes

Ingredients

3 sticks of butter

1 1/2 cup sugar

3 eggs

1 tablespoon vanilla

2 3/4 cup sifted flour plus 1 tablespoon flour

1 tablespoon baking powder

1/4 teaspoon salt

1/8 teaspoon nutmeg or more to taste

Preparation

Cream together softened butter and sugar until light. Add eggs one at a time and mix well. Stir in vanilla. Add sifted dry ingredients slowly, mixing well after each addition. Add nutmeg starting with lesser amount and taste to meet your needs. I find that organic nutmeg gives a beautiful delicate flavor.

Interesting note: the lesser quality vanilla works just as well as the pricey organic brands.

Barbara McIntyre, Seattle, WA

Old-Fashioned Teacakes

Ingredients

1 1/2 cups sugar
1 cup butter or margarine
2 eggs (beaten)
4 cups flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon vanilla unsalted butter or margarine (melted)

Preparation

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cream butter and sugar. Add beaten eggs. Beat well. Combine and sift flour, soda, and baking powder. Fold into batter. Add vanilla. Chill dough for 30 minutes. Roll out dough on floured (combine 1/2 teaspoon baking powder and 1/2 cup flour) board to your desired thickness, cut out, and place on cookie sheet. Bake 10 to 12 minutes or until done.

As soon as the cakes are removed from oven, immediately brush with unsalted butter, and cool. If spices are preferred, omit vanilla and add 1 teaspoon cinnamon and 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg to dry ingredients.

Mary Joyce Fontenot, Liberty, TX

Mother's Old-Fashioned Thick Buttermilk Tea Cakes

Ingredients

5 to 6 cups flour
4 eggs
2 cups sugar
1 cup butter
1 cup thick buttermilk
1 1/2 teaspoons baking soda
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon vanilla

Preparation

Put 5 cups of flour in a large mixing bowl. Make a well in the center. Add remaining ingredients to the well of the flour. Gradually stir in flour as you mix the ingredients in the well of the flour.

Continue until you make stiff dough, adding more flour if needed. On a floured surface, roll out to about 1/2-inch thickness; cut out and bake on lightly greased baking sheets at 350° until brown around the edges.

Makes 6 to 7 dozen tea cakes.

Bernice Mackey, Arcadia, LA

Sunday's Tea Cakes

Ingredients

4 cups organic flour
¾ cups Crisco Butter Flavor shortening
¼ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon mace
¼ cup evaporated milk
1 teaspoon almond extract
1 teaspoon butter extract
4 egg yolks, whipped
4 egg whites, beaten
1 1/2 cups sugar, reserve 3 teaspoons

Preparation:

Place flour in large mixing bowl; cut in shortening. Add sugar, baking powder, salt, and mace to mixture. Add extracts to mixture. Beat yolks for about 3-5 minutes. Add to mixture until incorporated. Beat egg whites until stiff, add sugar and beat until incorporated. Add to mixture. Add milk and work mixture together until blended.

Scoop enough dough to fill a regular size ice cream scoop and pat out dough to form rounds. Place on ungreased cookie sheet. Bake 10-12 minutes on the middle rack of oven at 400 degrees until edges appear to brown. Do not overcook.

Makes a bakers dozen, 13 cookies

Nellie Anderson, Weslaco, TX

Syrup Tea Cakes

Ingredients

2 eggs
2/3 cup shortening
½ cup sugar
1 cup ribbon cane syrup
3 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon soda
¼ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 teaspoon baking powder

Preparation

Mix together eggs, shortening, sugar and syrup. Add flour, soda, baking powder, salt and vanilla flavoring. Drop by tablespoons onto a greased cookie sheet and bake at 300 degrees until bottom lightly browns and tops lose their raw look.

Thelma Bell, Mansfield, LA

Small Batch Teacake Recipe

Ingredients

1 cup granulated sugar
2 eggs
1 tablespoons evaporated milk
½ teaspoon almond extract
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
2 ½ cups flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon soda
3 tablespoons melted butter
½ cup Crisco shortening

Preparation

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a large bowl, cream shortening, sugar until combined. Add eggs and beat until light and fluffy. Add almond and vanilla extract. Set aside.

In another bowl, add flour, baking powder and soda. Beat in one cup of dry ingredients until blended. Add evaporated milk and beat until blended. Add another cup of dry ingredients and beat until incorporated. Batter will be somewhat stiff. Add melted butter and beat until incorporated. Oil a medium ice cream scoop and drop by the scoop full onto an ungreased cookie sheet. Bake 10-12 minutes until brown around the edges. Remove from oven and let cool before placing on rack.

Makes 12 tea cakes.

Julia Bennett, Biloxi, MS

Mama Mattie's Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 1/2 cups sugar
2 large eggs
1 cup Crisco shortening stick
2 tablespoons baking powder
3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons melted butter
1 tablespoon vanilla or butter flavor extract
2 tablespoons Rich & Creamy Mayonnaise w/Lemon Juice

Preparation

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place the sugar and shortening in a large mixing bowl. Cream with electric mixer until light and fluffy. Add the eggs one at a time, mixing after each addition. Add mayonnaise, flavor and mix well.

In a medium bowl, mix together flour and baking powder. Add 1 cup of flour to batter and mix well. Continue until all the flour is added. Dough will be a little stiff. Add melted butter, and mix well.

Using well floured hands, take a scoop of batter and toss from hand to hand and shape dough into a 1/4 inch high rectangle. Place on an un-greased cookie sheet and bake for 10 minutes or until lightly browned. Remove from oven and let stand before removing onto rack to cool.

Carolyn Overall, Denver, CO

Molasses Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 cup warm water
1 cup molasses
3/4 cup sugar
1 teaspoon salt
pinch pepper
2 teaspoons ground ginger
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
4 cups cake flour

Preparation

Preheat oven to 350°. In a large bowl, dissolve baking soda into the water, then add remaining ingredients in the order given. Add additional flour if necessary to give the dough the right consistency for rolling.

Divide the dough in half and roll each portion out to a 1/4-inch thickness and cut out with a small glass. Or, you can roll them into small round balls and press with the sugared flat bottom of a glass. Place the cakes on a baking sheet, bake 10 to 15 minutes, until firm and lightly browned on bottoms. Makes about 18 tea cakes.

Lucile Boston, Baton Rouge, LA

Jacque's Tea Cake Crisps

Ingredients

1 cup sugar
1 stick soft butter
1 egg
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 ½ cups flour
1/8 teaspoon nutmeg

Preparation

Mix all ingredients until well combined. Roll, thin, and cut out. Bake at 350 degrees for about 12 to 15 minutes or until brown.

Jacque Matthews-Mackey, Cedar Park, TX

Katheryn's Vegan Tea Cakes

Ingredients

2 cups unbleached white flour
2 teaspoons aluminum-free baking powder
½ teaspoon celtic sea salt
1 tablespoon ground coriander
1 ½ cup organic 100% maple syrup
¾ organic vegetable shortening
¼ cup Earth Balance Garden soy butter
1 ¼ teaspoon pure organic non-alcohol vanilla extract
¼ teaspoon pure organic non-alcohol lemon extract
1 cup whole wheat flour (use whole pastry flour for lighter weight tea cakes)
The equivalent of 2 eggs of dry Egg Replacement product (any brand) mixed according to instructions

Preparation

Preheat oven to 425 degrees. Sift dry ingredients together into a mixing bowl. Cut in shortening and soy butter. Add prepared egg replacer, vanilla and lemon extracts and mix well. Drop batter by rounded teaspoons onto baking sheet sprayed with organic olive oil spray or baking sheet greased with organic vegetable shortening. Bake until edges begin to brown. Sprinkle with 100% pure organic raw cane sugar and ground coriander if desired. Enjoy. Makes about 4 dozen

Note: There are no dairy, eggs, or refined sugars used in this recipe. Most ingredients are found in health food stores.

Katheryn "Sug" McCoy, Altuna, CA

Old-Fashioned English Tea Cakes

Ingredients

2 1/3 cups all-purpose flour
1/3 teaspoon soda
1/3 cup buttermilk
1 cup sugar
1/3 cup shortening
1 egg
1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
1/4 teaspoon salt

Preparation

Sift flour before measuring. Preheat oven to 425 degrees 10 minutes before baking. Grease baking sheet lightly. Stir soda into buttermilk. Measure sugar and shortening into mixing bowl and cream well. Add egg and beat until smooth and fluffy. Stir in nutmeg, vanilla and salt. Add flour and buttermilk alternately in two or three portions, beginning and ending with flour. Remove a third of the dough at a time and place on a floured surface and roll out about 1/4 inch thick. Sprinkle lightly with sugar.

Cut out dough with a large mouth drinking glass or cup and move to pan with spatula. Bake 8 to 10 minutes at 425 degrees.

Mrs J. S. Schrader (recipe belonged to my grandmother)

Swedish Tea Cakes

Ingredients

| | |
|-------------------|--|
| 1 cup soft butter | ½ cup sugar |
| 1 egg | 1 teaspoon vanilla |
| 2 cups flour | Almond Macaroon Filling (recipe below) |

Preparation

Cream butter and sugar thoroughly. Beat in egg and vanilla. Stir in flour. (To measure, dip flour and level off or sift). Drop a round teaspoon of batter into miniature greased muffin cups, pressing batter over bottom and up around the sides about ¼ inch thick (centers should be hollow). Chill. Preheat oven to 325 degrees. Fill hollow with Almond Macaroon Filling. Bake 25 to 30 minutes at 325 degrees. Makes 2 dozen.

Almond Macaroon Filling Ingredients

| | |
|--|-----------------------------|
| 2 eggs | ½ cup sugar |
| 1 1/4 cups finely chopped blanched almonds | ½ teaspoon almond flavoring |

Preparation

Beat eggs until light and foamy. Gradually beat in sugar until well blended. Mix in almonds and almond flavoring.

Sue Terry, Omaha, NE

Mrs. Julia's Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 cup of shortening
1 1/2 cups sugar
2 eggs
2 3/4 cups flour
2 teaspoons baking soda
2 teaspoons cream of tartar
1/2 teaspoon salt

Preparation

Cream shortening and sugar. Add beaten eggs. Beat until light and fluffy. Add combined dry ingredients. Chill at least 1 hour. Roll out thin and cut in small fancy shapes. Bake on ungreased cookie at 350 degrees 10 to 12 minutes. Dust with plain sugar while hot.

Julia Craven, Myrtle Beach, SC

Russian Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 cup (2 sticks) butter, softened
½ cup powdered sugar
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon vanilla
¼ teaspoon salt
1 cup chopped walnuts
Powdered sugar

Preparation

Beat together butter and ½ cup sugar until creamy and fluffy. Gradually mix in flour. Stir in vanilla, salt and walnuts. Using level tablespoonful of dough for each, shape into balls. Place on ungreased cookie sheet. Bake in preheated 400 degree oven 10 to 12 minutes, or until done but not browned. Remove from cookie sheet and cool completely. Roll in powdered sugar.

Makes about 4 dozen

Nellie Jackson, Sedalia, MO

Grandmother's Old-Fashioned Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 cup butter or solid vegetable shortening
1 1/2 cups sugar
1 teaspoon soda
1/2 cup buttermilk
3 eggs
4 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder

Preparation

Cream butter and sugar well. Dissolve soda in butte. Add eggs, flour and baking powder. Add any desired flavoring, such as 1 teaspoon vanilla. Roll dough out on lightly floured board, cut with cookie cutters and bake until lightly browned in 400 degree oven.

Makes about 75 cookies.

Janice Downs, Chicago, IL

Country Tea Cakes

Ingredients

¼ pound butter
1 cup sugar
3 eggs, lightly beaten
1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla
3 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon salt

Preparation

Cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add eggs until blended. Add dry ingredients a cup at a time until blended. Chill for 12 hours. Roll out a third of dough at a time on a floured board 1/4 inch and cut with cookie cutter. Remove to cookie sheet and bake in a preheated oven at 400 degrees for 10 to 12 minutes or until lightly browned . Do not overcook.

Ester Watts, Lancaster, CA

Miss Mattie's Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 1/2 cups sugar
1 cup margarine
2 eggs
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2 teaspoon lemon extract
3 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon soda
1 teaspoon nutmeg

Preparation

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cream sugar and margarine and add eggs, and both flavorings. Beat until blended. Add dry ingredients a cup at a time until blended. Roll dough out on floured surface 1/4 inch thick. Cut out dough with cookie cutter. Move dough to cookie sheet. Bake 10 to 12 minutes or until lightly browned around the edges.

Mattie Underwood, Simsboro, LA

Momma's Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 cup sugar

1 1/2 cups butter

1 egg

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

3 cups flour

3/4 teaspoon nutmeg

Preparation

Cream sugar and butter. Add egg and vanilla. Add dry ingredients a cup at a time until combined. Drop by tablespoon full on cookie sheet. Bake at 400 degrees 10 to 12 minutes or until edges begin to browned.

Kim Rabb, Minden, LA

Tea Cakes

Ingredients

3 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons cream of tartar
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup sugar
1 cup shortening
2 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Preparation

Sift dry ingredients together into a mixing bowl; cut in shortening. Add eggs and vanilla, and mix well.

Drop batter by rounded teaspoonfuls onto greased baking sheets. Bake at 425° until edges begin to brown.

Makes about 4 dozen tea cakes.

Glenda Wilson, Bakersfield, CA

Big Thick Tea Cakes

Ingredients

½ cup margarine, softened
½ cup canola oil
2 cups sugar
2 eggs, beaten
1 tsp pure vanilla
1 teaspoon pure lemon extract
4 cups flour
1 tsp baking powder
½ tsp nutmeg

Preparation

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Combine margarine, oil, sugar and eggs in large mixing bowl. Beat at medium speed until well blended. Add vanilla and lemon flavoring mixing well. Stir together flour, baking powder and nutmeg. Add dry ingredients to the mixing bowl slowly. Blend. Fill a medium ice cream scoop with dough and with clean hands form into a ½ inch round. Place on cookie sheet 1-inch apart. Bake 15-18 minutes or until bottoms begin to brown and tops start to crack. Remove and let cool in pan for 5 minutes before removing to racks.

Store in air tight container for up to 5 days.

Leraldine Carter, Monroe, LA

Old Tea Cake Recipe

Ingredients

4 cups flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
¼ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoons nutmeg
¾ cups Crisco Butter Flavor shortening
1 1/2 cups sugar
3 eggs, lightly beaten
1 teaspoon vanilla

Preparation

Combine flour, baking powder, salt, and nutmeg in large mixing bowl. Cut in shortening. Add sugar and stir until combined.

Add eggs and vanilla to dry ingredients and mix well and form into a ball. With clean and floured hands, pinch off an equal amount of dough and into small balls. Pat out balls from hand-to-hand and form a flat round approximately ¼ to ½ inch and place on cookie sheet.

Bake 10-12 minutes in 375 degree oven until browned around the edges or tops begins to crack. Do not overcook

Mary Chester, Winnsboro, LA

Raisin Tea Cakes

Ingredients

2 cups flour
3 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 cup sugar
3/4 teaspoon salt
1 cup milk
1 egg
2 tablespoons shortening
1/2 cup raisins

Preparation

Sift together flour, baking powder, sugar and salt; add milk, well-beaten egg and melted shortening; add raisins which have been washed, dried and floured and mix well. The batter should be stiff. Half fill greased hot muffin tins and bake about 20 minutes in hot oven.

Ruthie Mae Vernon, Toledo, OH

Tea Cakes Cookies

Ingredients

3/4 cup shortening
2 cups sugar
2 eggs
1/4 teaspoon grated nutmeg
1 teaspoon vanilla extract or grated rind of 1 lemon
4 cups flour
3 teaspoons baking powder

Preparation

Cream shortening and sugar together; add milk to beaten eggs and beat again; add slowly to creamed shortening and sugar; add nutmeg and flavoring; add 2 cups flour sifted with baking powder; add enough more flour to make stiff dough. Roll out very thin on floured board; cut with cookie cutter; sprinkle with sugar; put a raisin or a piece of walnut in the center of each.

Bake about 12 minutes in a 400-degree oven.

Jymmye Dalcoe, Memphis, TN

Texas Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 cup extra fine sugar
1 teaspoon of baking soda
½ cup butter
3 ½ cups flour (sifted)
1 egg
¼ teaspoon nutmeg
1 teaspoon of vanilla
¼ teaspoon mace
¼ cup of buttermilk

Preparation:

Beat sugar and butter until creamy; beat in egg and vanilla. Add soda to buttermilk and stir until combined. Add to mixture and beat until combined. Combine flour, nutmeg and mace in medium bowl. Work dry ingredients into mixture 1 cup at a time until combined. Refrigerate dough for 1 hour. Pinch off equal amounts of dough to make 12 balls. Pat each ball in ¼ inch cookies and place on ungreased cookie sheet and bake for 20-25 minutes in a 375 degree oven until slightly brown. Remove from oven and let stand for 5 minutes and place on rack to finish cooling.

Servings: 12

Ida Davis, Katy, TX

Mexican Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 c. butter
1/2 c. powdered sugar
2 1/4 c. sifted flour
1/4 tsp. salt
1 tsp. vanilla
Powdered sugar for rolling

Preparation

Cream butter and add sugar, flour, salt and vanilla, making a moderately stiff dough. Chill in refrigerator for a few hours and then roll into small balls about an inch in diameter. Bake on a buttered cookie sheet in a moderately hot oven (400 degrees) from 14-17 minutes. As soon as tea cakes are removed from oven, roll them in powdered sugar. Cool on a wire rack and then roll in sugar again. Makes about 5 dozen.

Hector Torres, Round Rock, TX

Scotland Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 c. butter, don't substitute butter
2 eggs, beaten
1 tsp. vanilla
2 c. sugar
4 c. self rising flour
1/2 c. buttermilk

Preparation

Mix sugar and butter. Beat well. Add eggs and buttermilk and vanilla. Beat after each addition. Knead dough. Roll out on wax paper and cut cookies with biscuit cutter. Place on greased cookie sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes or done.

Sgt. Sylvia Dorsey, RAF Alconbury, U.K.

Lemon Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 1/2 tsp. vinegar
1/2 c. milk
1/2 c. butter
3/4 c. sugar
1 egg
1 tsp. shredded lemon peel
1 3/4 c. sifted all purpose flour
1 tsp. baking powder
1/4 tsp. soda
1/4 tsp. salt

Preparation

Stir vinegar into milk. Cream butter and sugar until fluffy. Add egg and lemon peel; beat well. Sift together dry ingredients; add to creamed mixture alternately with the milk, beating smooth after each addition. Drop from teaspoon, 2 inches apart, on un greased baking sheet. Bake in moderate oven (350 degrees) 12 to 14 minutes or until done. Remove at once from pan and immediately brush tops with lemon glaze; cool.

Makes about 4 dozen.

Lovie Abbs, Dallas, TX

Old Fashioned Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 cup butter
2 cups sugar
3 eggs
4 cups flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon vanilla
1/8 teaspoon salt

Preparation

Cream butter and sugar. Add slightly beaten eggs, flour, baking powder, vanilla and salt. Roll on floured board and cut. Sprinkle with sugar and bake at 400 degrees for 12 to 15 minutes.

Makes 9 to 10 dozen depending on size. This will make a fairly thick tea cake. For thinner, roll dough thinner.

Mabel Lewis, Dayton, OH

English Tea Cakes

Ingredients

3 1/3 cups sifted flour
3 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoons salt
2/3 cup shortening
2 cup sugar
4 eggs, well beaten
1 1/3 cups milk
2 teaspoon vanilla

Preparation

Sift flour, baking powder and salt together; set aside. Cream sugar and shortening until fluffy; add eggs. Add flour mixture and milk alternately, in small amounts at a time, add vanilla. Fill greased cupcake pans 2/3 full. Bake at 400 degrees for 15 to 18 minutes. Makes 2 dozen.

Louise Bonner, Las Vegas, NV

Old Fashioned Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 cup butter (room temperature)
2 cups sugar
4 eggs
1 teaspoon nutmeg
1 teaspoon vanilla
4 cups flour - sifted 3 times
3 tablespoons baking powder
1 tablespoon milk

Preparation

Cream butter and sugar together. Add eggs, one at a time, mixing well after each addition. Add milk, nutmeg and vanilla. Sift flour and baking powder together and combine with other mixture. Add enough additional flour to roll out, then cut. Bake on ungreased cookie sheet in oven at 325 degrees for 15 minutes. Makes 4 dozen tea cakes.

Laura Douglas, Richmond, CA

Old Fashioned Tea Cakes

Ingredients

5 cups flour
3 cups sugar
4 eggs
1 pound butter
1 heaping teaspoon soda
2 heaping teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon nutmeg
3/4 cup buttermilk

Preparation

Mix all ingredients together except flour. Put flour in a pan, make hole in flour and add the mixed ingredients and work into the flour. Roll out dough and cut with cookie cutter. Place on cookie sheet and bake at 350 degrees.

Makes 3 to 4 dozen tea cakes.

Evelyn Brent, Hot Springs, AR

Old Fashioned Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 cup butter flavor shortening
1 1/2 cups granulated sugar
1/2 teaspoons nutmeg
1 teaspoons baking powder
2 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon salt

Preparation

Bake at 350 degrees. Cream butter flavor shortening and sugar; add eggs and vanilla, mix well. Mix flour with baking powder and salt; blend into shortening mixture. Stir in 1/2 teaspoon of nutmeg. Add another cup of flour so that mixture is thickened, then put on floured board and roll out. Cut into tea cakes. Put onto greased cookie sheet. Bake 10 minutes or until golden brown.

Carolyn Brandley, Gary, IN

Old Fashioned Teacakes

Ingredients

1 cup butter
2 cups sugar
4 eggs
4 cups flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon vanilla

Preparation

Mix all ingredients together. Chill for 1 hour then roll and cut. Bake at 350 degrees until light brown, do not allow to get over cooked or they will be hard.

Makes 4-5 dozen.

Bettye Beal, Hale, MS

Old Fashioned Teacakes

Ingredients

1 cup shortening
1 3/4 cups sugar
2 eggs
3 cups plain flour, sifted
Nuts (optional)
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup milk
2 teaspoons vanilla (or 1 teaspoon each of vanilla and lemon)

Preparation

Cream shortening and sugar. Add eggs, one at a time. Sift together flour, baking powder, and salt. Add to mixture alternately with milk. Add flavoring and nuts. Turn onto floured board and roll out to 1/4 inch thick. Cut and place on well-greased baking sheet. Bake for 12 to 15 minutes at 350 degrees. Cool on brown paper or cake rack.

Anna Allen, Hall MS

Old Fashioned Teacakes

Ingredients

2 1/2 cups flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/3 cup butter
2 eggs, well beaten
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 cup sugar

Preparation

Sift flour, baking powder and salt. Cream butter and sugar together. Add eggs and vanilla, then add dry ingredients. Roll out on a lightly floured board. Cut with medium cookie cutter. Bake in a moderate oven at 375 degrees until browned. Makes about 2 dozen tea cakes.

Margie Albert, Abbeville, AL

Tea Cakes

Ingredients

2 1/4 cups sifted flour
1/4 teaspoons salt
2 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 cup shortening
1 cup sugar
2 eggs, beaten
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
1 tablespoon milk

Preparation

Sift flour, salt, and baking powder together. Cream shortening and sugar together. Add eggs and vanilla, then add sifted ingredients and milk. Roll and cut. Bake on baking sheet at 375 degrees for 12 minutes.

Makes 2 1/2 dozen tea cakes.

Johnnie Mae Abram, Andalusia, AL

Old Fashioned Tea Cakes

Ingredients

3 cups all purpose flour
2 teaspoons cream of tartar
1 cup sugar
2 eggs
1 teaspoons soda
1/2 teaspoons salt
1 cup shortening
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2 cup finely chopped nuts (opt.)

Preparation

I get good results with 1/2 cup creamed shortening and 1/2 cup butter. Sift dry ingredients together. Cut in shortening. Add eggs and vanilla. Drop by rounded teaspoon onto a greased baking sheet. Flatten a bit with a wet spoon. Bake at 425 degrees until edges are golden. Cookies should be slightly like cake. These are very much like the tea cakes my mom used to make.

Jessie Sneed, Malvern, AR

Tea Cake

Ingredients

1/2 cup light brown sugar

1/2 cup white sugar

1 cup margarine

1 egg, beaten

2 cups flour

1 teaspoon vanilla

Pinch of salt

Preparation

Cream butter and sugars. Add egg and blend in flour and salt. Add vanilla and stir well. Drop by 1/2 teaspoon on greased tin. Bake at 375 degrees until done. Decorate with a cherry or nuts if desired. Note: These are tiny tea cakes that are deliciously light and crisp.

Cleo Johnson, Ardmore, AL

Old Fashioned Tea Cakes

Ingredients

3 sticks butter
2 cups sugar
3 large eggs
5 cups flour
3 tablespoons white vinegar
1 teaspoon soda
1 teaspoon salt
2 teaspoons vanilla

Preparation

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cream butter and sugar. Add eggs and beat well. Add flour alternately with remaining ingredients. Drop by tablespoons. Bake until light brown on ungreased cookie sheet. Take up with spatula and lay on paper towel. When cool, store in tight container.

Makes 7 dozen 2 ½ inch tea cakes.

Cynthia Newby, Ardmore, AL

English Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 cake or package dry yeast (or compressed)
½ cup scalded milk
¼ cup shortening
¼ cup sugar
1 egg or 2 egg yolks, beaten
½ teaspoon salt
1 ½ cups sifted flour

Preparation

Soften yeast in milk (lukewarm). Add shortening, sugar, egg, salt and enough flour to make a rather stiff drop batter. Beat until smooth. Let rise until doubled. Stir down and pour into greased 8 x 8 x 2 pan, filling pan 1/2 full. Mix topping which consists of 1 tablespoon sugar, 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon, 1/4 cup chopped nuts, sprinkle over batter. Let rise until puffy and doubled. Bake in hot 400 degree oven 25 to 30 minutes.

Makes 1 tea cake. Cut in squares and serve with tea.

Thelma Thompson, Jasper, AR

English Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 3/4 cups flour, sifted
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1/4 teaspoons salt
1/2 cup butter
3/4 cup sugar
1 egg
3 tablespoons milk
1/2 cup Citron (or candied peel), finely chopped
1/2 cup currants
1 egg white, slightly beaten
Sugar

Preparation

Combine flour, baking powder and salt. Cream butter; gradually beat in sugar and egg. Add milk, citron, currants and flour mixture. Blend thoroughly. Chill. Roll dough between palms of hands into balls the size of walnuts. Dip tops in egg white, then sugar. Place with sugared side up 2 inches apart on greased baking sheet. Bake in 400 degree preheated oven for 12 to 15 minutes.

Makes about 3 dozen cookies.

Lucille Youngblood, Eureka Springs, AR

Grandma's Tea Cake

Ingredients

1/4 c. butter, softened
1 1/2 c. sugar
2 eggs
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1 tsp. lemon extract
1 tsp. orange extract
4 c. all purpose flour
2 1/2 tsp. baking powder
1/2 c. milk

Preparation

Cream butter and sugar, beating well. Add eggs, beating well. Add flavorings and beat until blended. Combine flour and baking powder, add to creamed mixture alternately with milk. Mix just until blended after each addition. Divide into 4 portions, mash flat and wrap each portion in plastic wrap. Chill at least 2 hours or overnight.

Work 1 portion of dough at a time, store remaining in refrigerator. Roll dough to 1/8" thickness between 2 pieces of wax paper. Remove top layer of wax paper and cut out with desired shaped cookie cutter and place on greased cookie sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for 6 to 8 minutes or until slightly brown edges. Cool.

Makes about 5 dozen cookies.

Cheryl Keating, Phoenix, AZ

Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 c. Crisco or butter
2 c. sugar
2 eggs
1 1/2 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. vanilla
1 tbsp. milk
4 c. flour

Preparation

Mix well. Drop by teaspoon onto cookie sheet. Flatten with fork and bake at 325 degrees for 10 to 12 minutes.

Carol Hutchinson, El Paso, TX

Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 c. shortening
3 tsp. baking powder
3/4 c. sugar
3 c. flour
2 tsp. vanilla
1/2 c. buttermilk
1/4 tsp. soda
2 eggs
1/4 tsp. salt

Preparation

Cream shortening and sugar. Add eggs; mix well. Sift all dry ingredients together. Add milk and soda; beat well. Add vanilla. Add mixtures together. Roll 1/4". Cut out. Bake at 400 degrees until light brown.

Jean Kirkwood, Conroe, TX

Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1/2 c. butter
1 c. sugar
2 eggs, beaten
1 tsp. vanilla
3 1/2 c. sifted flour
1 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. nutmeg
1/2 c. dairy sour cream

Preparation

Cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Blend in eggs and vanilla. Add combined dry ingredients. Alternately with sour cream, mixing well after each addition. Chill several hours. On lightly floured surface, roll out dough to 1/4 inch thickness; cut with 3 inch cookie cutter. Place on well greased cookie sheet; sprinkle with sugar. Bake at 450 degrees 10 to 12 minutes or until lightly browned.

Grace Phillips, Hopewell, MS

Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 3/4 c. sugar
2 eggs
2 sticks butter
3 c. self-rising flour

Preparation

Cream sugar and butter; add eggs, one at a time. Add remaining ingredients. Knead dough on a floured surface. Roll out on a floured surface. Cut and place on a greased cookie sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for about 8 to 10 minutes.

Crosly O'Dell, New Orleans, LA

Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1/2 c. butter
1 c. sugar
2 eggs, beaten
1 tsp. vanilla
3 1/2 c. flour, sifted
1 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. nutmeg
1/2 c. sour cream

Preparation

Cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Blend in eggs and vanilla. Add combined dry ingredients alternately with sour cream, mixing well after each addition. Chill several hours or over night. On lightly floured surface, roll out dough to 1/4 inch thickness; cut with 3 inch cookie cutter. Place on well-greased cookie sheet. Sprinkle with sugar. Bake at 450 degrees 10 to 12 minutes or until lightly browned.

Makes approximately 2 dozen.

Rose Plumber, Bossier City, LA

Tea Cakes

Ingredients

2 c. sugar
1/2 c. butter
1/2 c. shortening
1/2 c. buttermilk
3 eggs
1/2 tsp. soda
2 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. vanilla
Flour sufficient to make a soft dough

Preparation

Cream butter and shortening, add sugar, then beaten eggs. Into 1 cup flour sift soda and baking powder. Add this to the sugar mixture. Add milk and vanilla and enough flour to make a soft dough. Turn onto a floured board. Knead until smooth. Roll out 1/4 inch thick. Cut in any shape. Bake about 10 minutes in a 350 degree oven or until brown.

Makes about 6 dozen.

Lillian Pratt, Lake Charles, LA

Big Mama's Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 c. butter
1 1/4 c. sugar
1 tsp. vanilla
2 eggs
3 c. flour
1 tsp. soda
1/4 tsp. salt
3 tbsp. buttermilk

Preparations

Beat butter in mixer bowl for 30 seconds. Add sugar and vanilla, beat until fluffy. Add eggs, beat well. Stir flour, soda and salt, add to beaten mixture alternately with buttermilk. Drop by rounded teaspoons into a greased baking sheet. Sprinkle with sugar. Bake at 350 degrees for 10 to 12 minutes or until lightly browned on edges. Makes about 45 cookies.

Ruth Reece, Destin, FL

Grandmother Carter's Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1/2 c. butter
1 c. sugar
3 eggs, beaten
1 tsp. vanilla
3 1/2 c. sifted flour
1 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. nutmeg
1/2 c. milk

Preparations

Cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Blend in eggs and vanilla. Add combined dry ingredients alternately with sour cream, mixing well after each addition. Chill several hours or overnight. On lightly floured surface, roll out dough to 1/4 inch thickness; cut with 3 inch round cookie cutter. Place on well greased cookie sheet; sprinkle with sugar. Bake at 450 degrees, 10 to 12 minutes or until lightly browned. Yield: Approximately 2 dozen.

Doris Bailey, Dallas, TX

Mama's Tea Cakes

Ingredients

2 c. sugar
1/2 c. Crisco
1/2 c. butter
1/2 c. buttermilk
3 eggs
1/2 tsp. soda
2 tsp. baking powder
2 tsp. vanilla
Enough flour to make soft dough

Preparations

Cream butter, Crisco and sugar. Add eggs one at a time, mix well. Sift baking powder and soda with 1 cup flour. Add this to sugar mixture. Add milk and vanilla, add to flour to make soft dough. Then turn to a floured board and knead until smooth. Roll out 1/4 inch thick and cut. Bake in moderate oven until brown. About 10 minutes.

Jacqueline Rand, Harriston, MS

Mother's Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 c. butter
1 c. sugar
1 tsp. soda
1 tbsp. milk
3 c. flour
1 egg
1/4 tsp. salt
1 tsp. vanilla
1 tbsp. milk

Preparations

Put flour in bowl, make hole in center. Pour melted butter, sugar, baking soda, salt and milk. Start mixing from center until all flour is worked in. Put in greased baking sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for about 15 minutes. Check to see desired brownness.

Rita Faye Rawls, Lafayette, LA

Old Fashioned Tea Cakes

Ingredients

2 1/4 c. sifted plain flour
1/4 tsp. salt
2 tsp. baking powder
1 c. sugar
2 eggs, beaten
1/2 tsp. vanilla
1 tbsp. milk

Preparations

Sift flour, salt and baking powder. Cream sugar, butter and eggs. Add vanilla, milk and flour. Blend well. Roll to about 1/2 inch thick. Cut with cookie cutter. Bake at 350 degrees for 12-15 minutes.

Alton Perry, Houston, TX

OLD FASHIONED TEA CAKES

Ingredients

1 1/2 c. sugar
3 rounded tbsp. butter
2 whole eggs
1/2 c. sweet milk
2 slightly rounded tsp. baking powder
4 c. sifted flour, mix in baking powder
1 tsp. vanilla
1 tsp. orange extract
1 tsp. lemon extract

Preparations

Mix sugar, butter, eggs and milk; add flour until dough will roll like biscuit, using 1/4 mixture at a time. Roll thin, cut and place on ungreased pan. Then sprinkle over with sugar. Cook in quick 450 degree oven for 10 to 15 minutes.

Pauline Beatty, Ashville, AL

Old Fashioned Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 c. sugar
1/2 c. Crisco
3 c. flour
3 tbsp. baking powder
1 egg
1/2 c. milk
1 tsp. vanilla
1/4 tsp. salt

Preparations

Mix sugar and Crisco; cream. Add beaten egg, milk, vanilla and salt. Add flour a little at a time to form a soft dough. Roll out on well-floured board and knead until dough doesn't stick to board. Cut with a biscuit cutter and place on greased cookie sheet. Bake at 400 degrees for 10-15 minutes. Place on cloth to cool.

Theresa Bonner-Jacjson, Albany, GA

Old Fashioned Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1/2 tsp. soda
1/2 tsp. salt
2 1/2 c. all-purpose flour
1 stick butter
1/2 c. shortening
1 egg
1 tsp. vanilla
1 c. sugar

Preparations

Sift flour, soda and salt. Cream together butter, shortening, egg, vanilla and sugar. Add dry ingredients; mix well. Blend until smooth. Pinch off in bits about the size of a marble and flatten out with palm of hand on greased pan. Bake at 300 degrees for about 10 minutes or until brown.

Valerie Garza, Conyers, GA

OLD FASHIONED TEA CAKES

Ingredients

2 eggs
1 c. shortening
1 1/2 c. sugar
2 tsp. baking powder
Flour for stiff dough (about 3 1/2 c. sifted)
1/2 tsp. lemon flavoring
1/2 tsp. vanilla extract flavoring
1/4 tsp. salt

Preparations

Cream shortening and sugar. Add eggs and beat well. Sift dry ingredients and add to mixture. Roll to about 1/4 inch, and cook at 400 degrees on greased cookie sheet for about 10 minutes. Don't over brown.

Linda Smith, Kenner, LA

Old Fashioned Tea Cake

Ingredients

2 c. sugar
1 c. shortening
1 c. butter
1/2 c. buttermilk
3 eggs, beaten
1/2 tsp. baking soda
2 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. vanilla
1 c. flour
Flour (enough to make a soft dough)

Preparations

Cream butter and shortening; add sugar and eggs. Sift flour, baking soda and baking powder. Add dry ingredients to sugar mixture. Add milk and vanilla. Add enough flour to make a soft dough. Turn onto a floured board; knead until smooth. Roll out to 1/4-inch thick. Cut into any shape. Bake in a 375 degree oven until brown (approximately 10 minutes). Do not put close enough to touch, this will spoil the shape.

Susan Garrison, Bastrop, TX

Russian Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 c. butter
1 tsp. vanilla
1/2 c. powdered sugar
1/4 tsp. salt
2 1/4 c. flour
3/4 to 1 c. pecans, chopped

Preparations

Cream butter. Add sugar gradually and cream well. Sift flour once before measuring. Add salt; mix well with butter and sugar; blend in vanilla and nuts. Form into one inch balls and place on greased cookie sheet. Bake 14 to 17 minutes. While hot, roll in powdered sugar. Coat once, then roll again.

Makes 30 cookies.

Shelly Matthews, Conroe, TX

Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 c. shortening
3 tsp. baking powder
3/4 c. sugar
3 c. flour
2 tsp. vanilla
1/2 c. buttermilk
1/4 tsp. soda
2 eggs
1/4 tsp. salt

Preparations

Cream shortening and sugar. Add eggs; mix well. Sift all dry ingredients together. Add milk and soda; beat well. Add vanilla. Add mixtures together. Roll 1/4". Cut out. Bake at 400 degrees until light brown.

Luella Morgan, Ruston, LA

Big Mama's Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 c. butter
1 1/4 c. sugar
1 tsp. vanilla
2 eggs
3 c. flour
1 tsp. soda
1/4 tsp. salt
3 tbsp. buttermilk
Sugar

Preparations

Beat butter, sugar and vanilla. Add eggs. Add dry ingredients with buttermilk to the first mixture. Drop by teaspoon on greased cookie sheet. Bake in 350 degree oven for 10 to 12 minutes until lightly browned edges.

Makes about 45 soft cookies.

Christina F. Phillips, Breaux Bridge, LA

Grandma's Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 c. shortening
1 1/2 c. sugar
3 eggs
1 c. All purpose flour
2 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 c. buttermilk
1 to 1/4 tsp. vanilla
Sugar optional

Preparations

Cream shortening; gradually add sugar, beating well at medium speed with electric mixer. Add eggs one at a time, beating after each addition. Combine flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Add to creamed mixture alternately with buttermilk. Mix well. Stir in vanilla, cover and chill 1 hour. Roll dough to 1/4 inch thickness on a floured surface. Cut with a 2 3/4 inch round cookie cutter. Place on greased cookie sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes or until edges begin to brown. Sprinkle with sugar, cool.

Makes about 4 dozen cookies.

Eva Rochelle, Haney, MS

Grandmother's Old Fashioned Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 3/4 c. sugar
1 c. shortening
2 eggs
3 c. plain flour
1/2 tsp. soda
1/2 tsp. salt
1 tsp. vanilla

Preparations

Cream sugar and shortening; add eggs one at a time; add remaining ingredients. Knead dough on floured board. Divide dough into long rolls and chill. Slice and place cookies on lightly greased cookie sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes.

Ernestine Shivers, Hinesville, GA

Mama's Tea Cakes

Ingredients

3 c. sifted flour
1 c. sugar
1 1/2 tsp. baking powder
1/4 tsp. salt
1 c. butter
1 tsp. vanilla
1 egg
3 tbsp. Pet milk or cream

Preparations

Sift together flour, sugar, baking powder and salt. Cut butter into dry ingredients. Mix vanilla, eggs, and milk together and add to the dry ingredients, mixing well by hand. It is a very stiff batter. Chill for at least an hour. Roll to pie crust thickness and cut as desired. Bake at 400 degrees for 8 to 10 minutes.

Makes about 6 to 7 dozen cookies.

Barbara Adams, Columbus, GA

Bessie's Tea Cake Cookies

Ingredients

1/2 c. sugar
1/2 c. molasses syrup
1 egg
1 tbsp. vinegar
1/3 c. shortening
1 3/4 c. flour
1 tsp. cinnamon
1 tsp. ginger
1 tsp. salt

Preparations

Mix first 5 ingredients well. Sift flour, cinnamon, ginger, and salt. Add to syrup mixture. Stir well and drop by spoonfuls on cookie sheet. Press down with a cold wet cloth over bottom of glass. Cook 15 minutes at 400 degrees.

Judy Cotton, De Ridder, LA

Old Fashioned Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 3/4 c. sugar
2 eggs
2 sticks butter
3/4 c. oil
4 c. flour
1 tsp. soda
1 tsp. cream of tartar
1 tsp. salt
2 tsp. vanilla

Preparations

Cream together first 4 ingredients. Add the rest of ingredients. Drop from teaspoon on cookie sheet; press with fork dipped in water. Bake until light brown about 10 minutes at 350 degrees.

Ocena Parker, Dallas, TX

Old Fashioned Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 c. sugar
1/2 c. shortening
1 egg
1/2 tsp. vanilla
1/4 tsp. salt
1/3 tsp. soda
1/3 c. buttermilk
2 1/3 c. flour, sifted

Preparations

Grease baking sheet lightly. Set oven 10 minutes before baking. Bake at 425 degrees. Measure sugar and shortening in large mixing bowl and cream well. Add egg, beat until smooth and fluffy. Stir in vanilla and salt. Stir soda into buttermilk. Add flour and buttermilk alternately in 2 or 3 portions. Remove portion of dough on floured surface. Roll out fairly thin. (Not too thin. Cookies will be hard.) Bake 8-10 minutes.

Makes 36 cookies.

Sofie Allen, Springhill, LA

Old Fashioned Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1/4 lb. butter
1 1/2 tsp. vanilla
2 tsp. baking powder
1 c. sugar
3 c. sifted flour
1/2 tsp. salt
3 eggs

Preparations

Cream butter and sugar and mix thoroughly. Add eggs one at a time, beating vigorously. Add vanilla. Mix and sift flour, baking powder and salt. Add to first mixture and knead thoroughly. Chill dough for easier handling; roll thin and cut with cookie cutter. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes in a 375 degree oven or until lightly brown around the edges.

To vary the above, raisins, chopped nuts may be added just before rolling.

To make rolling easier and add taste to the cookie, mix 1/2 cup Imperial sugar with 1 teaspoon nutmeg and sprinkle on dough board before rolling.

Mellisa Adams, Hope, AR

Old Style Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 c. shortening
1 c. sugar
2 eggs, well beaten
3 c. plain flour
1/4 tsp. nutmeg
1 tsp. baking powder

Preparations

Cream shortening and sugar. Add eggs and beat well. Sift flour with nutmeg and baking powder. Combine egg and sugar mixture with flour mixture and chill. Roll out thin. Cut and size or shape desired. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes in a 375 degree oven until lightly browned.

Cool. Store in a covered tin or jar.

Sarah Roberts, Jacksonville, AR

Grandma's Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 c. shortening
1 1/2 c. sugar
3 eggs
4 c. all-purpose flour
2 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 c. buttermilk
1 - 1 1/2 tsp. almond extract

Preparations

Cream shortening; gradually add sugar beating well at medium speed. Add eggs, one at a time, beating after each addition. Combine flour, baking powder, soda and salt. Add to creamed mixture alternately with buttermilk. Mix well. Stir in extract.

Cover and chill 1 hour. Roll dough to 1/4 inch thickness on a floured surface. Cut with a 2 3/4 inch cookie cutter; place on greased cookie sheets. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes or until edges begin to brown. Sprinkle with sugar if desired.

Makes about 4 dozen.

Janice Williams, Macon, GA

Mrs. Mim's Tea Cake

Ingredients

1 c. butter
2 c. sugar
3 eggs, beaten
Flour sufficient to make a soft dough
1/2 tsp. soda
2 tsp. baking powder
1/2 c. buttermilk
1 tsp. vanilla

Preparations

Cream butter, add sugar, then beaten eggs. Into 1 cup flour sift soda and baking powder. Add this to the sugar mixture. Add milk and vanilla and enough flour to make a soft dough. Turn onto floured board, knead until smooth, roll out 1/4 inch thick, cut into any shape. Bake at 350 degrees until brown, about 10 minutes.

Shirley Wright, Marietta, GA

Scotland Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 c. butter, don't substitute butter
2 eggs, beaten
1 tsp. vanilla
2 c. sugar
4 c. self rising flour
1/2 c. buttermilk

Preparations

Mix sugar and butter. Beat well. Add eggs and buttermilk and vanilla. Beat after each addition. Knead dough. Roll out on wax paper and cut cookies with biscuit cutter. Place on greased cookie sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes or done.

Mrs. Becki Dobbs, Norcross, GA

Old Fashioned Tea Cakes

Ingredients

2 c. sugar
2 eggs
2 sticks butter
2 tbsp. sweet milk
1 tsp. vanilla
3 1/2 c. self-rising flour

Preparations

Preheat oven to 375 degrees. Combine sugar, eggs, butter, milk and flavoring; add flour and mix thoroughly. Spoon onto cookie sheet. Cook until golden brown, about 8 minutes.

Mary Ethel Rhone, Sumter, SC

Old Time Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 c. butter, melted
1 1/2 c. sugar
2 eggs
1 tsp. soda
Pinch of salt
4 c. flour

Preparations

Melt butter in pan. Add sugar. Mix well and add eggs. Sift dry ingredients together. Add to mixture. Chill dough. Roll small amounts of dough (after chilling) and cut in desired shapes and sizes. Bake for 8 to 10 minutes in a 400 degree oven until brown around the edges.

Gaye Watson-Harriston, Holly Springs, MS

Old Fashioned Tea Cakes

Ingredients

2 sticks butter

2 eggs

1 tsp. salt

3 1/2 c. flour

2 c. sugar

4 tbsp. milk

4 tsp. baking powder

1 tsp. vanilla

Preparations

Cream butter, sugar, egg, milk and vanilla. Sift flour, salt and baking powder. Add to creamed mixture. Chill. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto ungreased cookie sheet. Bake in 375 degree oven about 8 minutes.

Linda Preston, Birmingham, AL

Orange Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1/2 c. shortening
1/3 c. sugar
1 egg yolk
1/3 tsp. salt
1 tsp. lemon rind
1 tsp. orange rind
1 c. flour
1 unbeaten egg white, more if needed
Chopped nuts

Preparations

Combine all ingredients except flour, egg white and chopped nuts. While combining the ingredients work in the flour a little at a time. When mixed, shape in little balls. Roll in unbeaten egg white and then in the chopped nuts. Bake at 350 degrees for 12 minutes.

Toni Miller, Austin, TX

Grandma's Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 c. shortening
1 1/2 c. sugar
3 eggs
4 c. all-purpose flour
2 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. salt
1/4 c. buttermilk
1 1/4 tsp. almond or vanilla flavoring

Preparations

Cream shortening and sugar, beating well at medium speed of electric mixer. Add eggs, one at a time, beating after each addition. Combine flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt. Add to creamed mixture alternately with buttermilk and flavoring. Mix well. Cover and chill at least 1 hour. Roll dough to 1/4 inch thickness on floured surface. Cut with 2 1/4 inch round cookie cutters. Put on a greased cookie sheet and bake at 350 degrees for 15 minutes or until edges begin to brown. Sprinkle top of cookies with additional sugar, if desired.

Makes 4 dozen.

Marie Dixon, Ashland, AL

Dropped Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 c. butter or shortening
2 eggs
3 c. flour
1/2 tsp. soda
1 1/2 c. sugar
1/2 tsp. salt
3/4 c. sour milk
1 tsp. vanilla

Preparations

Sift flour, salt and soda together. Cream shortening or butter together with the sugar. Add eggs and beat well. Add vanilla to sour milk. Add half of dry ingredients to shortening mixture. Add sour milk and vanilla. Beat until thoroughly combined. Beat in remaining dry ingredients.

Drop by rounded teaspoon on ungreased cookie sheet. Bake in 350-375 degrees for 15-20 minutes, or until edges are golden.

Daisy Israel, Springfield, MO

Mrs. Lula's Tea Cakes

Ingredients

3/4 c. Crisco

2 eggs

1 tsp. vanilla

1 tsp. salt

1 1/4 c. sugar

1 tbsp. milk

3 c. plain flour

2 tsp. baking powder

Preparations

Cream shortening and sugar thoroughly, add eggs. Mix dry ingredients, add to creamed mixture alternately with milk and vanilla. Roll out 1/8 inch thick. Cut and bake at 350 degrees for 10 to 15 minutes.

Mabel Odom, Atlanta, GA

Old Fashioned Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 c. butter, softened
2 c. sugar
3 eggs
2 tbsp. buttermilk
5 c. all-purpose flour
1 tsp. baking soda
1 tsp. vanilla

Preparations

Cream butter, gradually add sugar, beat well. Add eggs, one at a time. Add buttermilk and beat well.

Combine flour and soda. Stir into creamed mixture. Stir in vanilla.

Chill dough several hours.

Roll dough about 1/4 inch thickness. Cut with cookie cutter. Place 1 inch apart on a lightly greased cookie sheet. Bake at 400 degrees for 7 or 8 minutes until edges are lightly browned.

Yield 4 dozen.

Kim Divers, St. Louis, MO

Quick Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 c. sugar
2 eggs
2 c. self-rising flour
1 stick butter
1 1/2 tsp. vanilla

Preparations

Add all ingredients together. Work dough until stiff. You may have to add more flour. Roll out and cut into any shape. Bake on cookie sheet for 15 minutes, or until they are brown at 350 degrees.

Peggy Johnson, Oklahoma City, OK

Southern Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 c. shortening
2 eggs
1 tsp. vanilla extract
1 3/4 c. sugar
1/2 c. milk
3 c. self rising flour

Preparations

In a mixing bowl, cream together shortening and sugar. Beat in eggs. Add milk and vanilla; beat well. Stir in flour; mix well. Drop by tablespoonful 2 1/2" apart onto greased cookie sheets. Bake at 350 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes.

Yields about 3 dozen.

Gerri Dean Gattis, Tulsa, OK

Bienville Tea Cakes

Ingredients

3 eggs
2 c. sugar
4 tbsp. buttermilk
1 c. lard
1 tsp. vanilla
4 c. flour

Preparations

Beat sugar and eggs, add buttermilk, lard and vanilla. Sift the flour and add to sugar mixture. Stir well and refrigerate for 30 minutes for easier handling. Roll on floured board; cut and bake for 8 to 10 minutes at 400 degrees on a greased cookie sheet.

Makes 5 dozen.

Irene Brice, Minden, LA

Lemon Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 1/2 tsp. vinegar
1/2 c. milk
1/2 c. butter
3/4 c. sugar
1 egg
1 tsp. shredded lemon peel
1 3/4 c. sifted all purpose flour
1 tsp. baking powder
1/4 tsp. soda
1/4 tsp. salt

Preparations

Stir vinegar into milk. Cream butter and sugar until fluffy. Add egg and lemon peel; beat well. Sift together dry ingredients; add to creamed mixture alternately with the milk, beating smooth after each addition. Drop from teaspoon, 2 inches apart, on ungreased baking sheet. Bake in moderate oven (350 degrees) 12 to 14 minutes or until done. Remove at once from pan and immediately brush tops with lemon glaze; cool.

Makes about 4 dozen.

Mary Jewel Sneed, Kansas City, MO

Pat's Favorite Tea Cakes

Ingredients

4 1/2 tsp. soda
2 c. firmly packed brown sugar
3 eggs, slightly beaten
1 c. melted shortening
1 tsp. vanilla
1 tsp. nutmeg
5 c. sifted flour

Preparations

Add soda to sugar; stir in eggs. Add slightly cooled shortening and mix well. Add flavoring and nutmeg. Stir in flour. Roll dough to 1/8 inch thickness. Cut with biscuit cutter. Bake at 400 degrees for 10 minutes.

Yields 6 dozen.

Bertha Robinson, Omaha, NE

Aunt Elnora's Tea Cakes

Ingredients

3 tbsp. milk
1 stick butter
2 eggs
2 c. sugar
3 c. flour
1/2 tsp. salt
1 tsp. vanilla flavoring
1/4 tsp. nutmeg
1/2 tsp. cinnamon
1 tsp. soda

Preparations

Cream butter, eggs, sugar and nutmeg. Add dry ingredients and milk. Form a ball and roll out on floured surface. Cut with glass, jar, etc. Bake at preheated 350 degree oven on greased cookie sheet until edges start to brown (about 10 to 15 minutes).

Cynthia Rayburn, Winnfield, LA

Grandma's Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 stick butter
1 egg
1 1/4 c. all-purpose flour
1 tsp. vanilla
1/2 c. sugar
1/2 tsp. baking powder

Preparations

Cream butter, sugar, egg and vanilla. Add flour and baking powder. Drop by teaspoons on greased baking pan. Cook at 350 degrees for about 8 minutes.

Jeanette Underwood, Ringgold, LA

Vanilla Tea Cakes

Ingredients

4 eggs
2 c. sugar
1 1/2 c. butter, softened
2 tbsp. vanilla
4 c. self-rising flour

Preparations

Mix eggs, sugar, butter and vanilla together. Gradually stir in flour. Drop on greased cookie sheet and bake for 15 minutes at 350 degrees. (Can roll out if you want thinner cookies).

Katherine Lewis, Savannah, GA

Grandma Alexander's Tea Cakes

Ingredients

3 eggs
2 c. sugar
3 sticks butter (3/4 lb.)
4 c. plain flour
2 1/2 tsp. baking powder
2 tsp. vanilla flavoring
1/2 c. buttermilk
1/2 tsp. baking soda

Preparations

Sift flour and baking powder together. Set aside 1 cup to work dough. Beat eggs, sugar, butter, baking soda; add flavor together. Add buttermilk. Beat well together. Add the 3 cups of flour slowly, beating or mixing well together. Roll 1/4 inch thick. Cut with cookie cutter. Bake 10 to 12 minutes in a 350 degree oven or until brown around the edges.

Glenda Holmes, Port Arthur, TX

Grandma Mary's Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1/2 c. butter or shortening
2 c. sugar
3 eggs
1/2 c. milk
1 tsp. vanilla
1 tsp. soda
3 3/4 c. flour

Preparations

Cream butter and sugar. Add eggs, vanilla, milk and soda. Add flour. Turn dough onto floured surface. Work by hand 5 minutes. Roll out about 1/2 inch thick and cut out with cutter or desired shape. Bake at 375 degrees about 5 minutes.

Delores Allen, Knoxville, TN

Real Crisp Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 c. butter
2 c. sugar
3 eggs
1 tbsp. vanilla
1 tsp. baking powder
4 c. self-rising flour

Preparations

Cream butter and sugar together. Add eggs, one at a time. Sift flour and baking powder; add slowly to butter, egg and sugar mixture. The dough will be real stiff. Add vanilla and mix with hands.

Divide dough into several balls. Roll out on well floured dough board, cut into circles. Bake at 325 degrees for about 10 minutes.

Rose Gamble-Huff, Knoxville, TN

Miss Sutton's Tea Cakes

Ingredients

2 eggs
1/2 c. sugar
1 tbsp. butter
2 c. flour
2 tsp. baking powder
1 tbsp. Crisco
3 tbsp. milk
2 tbsp. water

Preparations

Combine ingredients and form into soft dough. Roll out and cut into circles. Bake in greased cookie sheet at 350 degrees for 10 to 12 minutes or until brown around the edges.

Janice Sutton, Louisville, KY

Papa's Favorite Tea Cakes

Ingredients

2 eggs, slightly beaten
1 c. sugar
2 c. plain flour
1 c. butter, melted
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. soda
1 tsp. vanilla flavoring

Preparations

Mix all ingredients and roll into 1-inch balls. Place on cookie sheet and press lightly with fork, just to make them pretty. Bake 8-10 minutes at 350 degrees.

Quita Gentry, Toledo, OH

Grandma's Tea Cakes

Ingredients

2 c. sugar
1 c. butter
1 c. buttermilk
3 whole eggs
1/2 tsp. soda
1 tsp. vanilla
1/4 tsp. nutmeg
4 to 5 c. self rising flour, or enough to make soft dough

Preparations

Mix sugar and butter, cream together. Add buttermilk, eggs, soda and vanilla. Add enough flour to make soft dough. roll out on floured cloth and cut. Bake 8 to 10 minutes at 350 degrees or until light brown.

Leslie Mason, Cincinnati, OH

Old Fashioned Molasses Tea Cakes

Ingredients

5 c. flour
2 tsp. soda
1 tsp. baking powder
1 tbsp. ginger
1 1/2 c. sugar
2 sticks softened butter
1 egg
1 c. molasses
3/4 tsp. warm water
1 c. plain flour

Preparations

Sift together flour, soda, baking powder and ginger. Make a well in the middle of the flour mixture and add sugar, butter, egg, molasses and water. Mix well with your hands, then put in 1 more cup of flour and mix well. Pinch off pieces of the dough and pat into very large cookies. Bake at 350 degrees for 10 minutes. Seal in tight container so cookies will stay soft.

Louise Jefferson, Murfreesboro, TN

Adri's Sugar Free Tea Cakes

Ingredients

2 1/4 cups flour
1/2 cup malted powdered milk
1 cup Splenda non-calorie sweetener
1/2 teaspoon soda
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
1/2 cup butter
6 oz lemon yogurt
2 eggs, lightly beaten

Preparations

Preheat oven to 400 degrees.

In a large bowl combine all dry ingredients. Set aside. In a large mixing combine butter, eggs, yogurt and 1/2 cup of dry ingredients and beat until creamy. Mix in remainder of dry ingredients a cup at a time until combined. With clean floured hands, pinch off equal amounts of dough to make 12 balls. Form each ball into 1/4 inch round. Place on ungreased cookie sheet. Bake 8 to 10 minutes, or til tops begin to crack.

Adriannah Keys, Holloman AFB NM

Tea Cakes for Sunday's Company

Ingredients

4 cups organic flour
¾ cups Crisco Butter Flavor shortening
1 1/2 cups sugar, reserve 3 teaspoons
1 teaspoon baking powder
¼ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon mace
1 teaspoon almond extract
1 teaspoon butter extract
4 egg yolks, whipped
4 egg whites, beaten
¼ cup evaporated milk

Preparations

Place flour in large mixing bowl and cut in shortening. Add sugar, baking powder, salt, and mace to mixture. Add extracts to mixture. Beat yolks for about 3-5 minutes. Add to mixture until incorporated. Beat egg whites until stiff, add sugar and beat until incorporated. Add to mixture. Add milk and work mixture together until blended. Scoop enough dough to fill a regular size ice cream scoop and pat out dough to form rounds. Place on ungreased cookie sheet. Bake 10-12 minutes on the middle rack of oven at 400 degrees until edges appear to brown. Do not overcook.

Makes a baker's dozen, 13 cookies

Consuella Johnson, Bryan, TX

My Grandmother's Tea Cake

Ingredients

4 cups organic all-purpose flour
¾ cups Crisco shortening
1 1/2 cups granulated sugar
1 teaspoon cream of tartar
¼ teaspoon nutmeg
4 eggs, beaten
3 tablespoons heavy whipping cream
2 teaspoons vanilla extract

Preparations

Combine ingredients. Bake in 400 degree oven on middle rack for 18-20 minutes.

Yields 13 cakes.

Gladys Jones, Denver, CO

Small Batch Teacake Recipe

Ingredients

½ cup Crisco butter-flavored shortening
1 cup granulated sugar
2 eggs
1 tablespoons evaporated milk
½ teaspoon almond extract
½ teaspoon vanilla extract
2 1/2 cups flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1 teaspoon soda
3 tablespoons melted butter

Preparations

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a large bowl, cream shortening, sugar until combined. Add eggs and beat until light and fluffy. Add almond and vanilla extracts. Set aside.

In another bowl, add flour, baking powder and soda. Beat in one cup of dry ingredients until blended. Add evaporated milk and beat until blended. Add another cup of dry ingredients and beat until incorporated. Batter will be somewhat stiff. Add melted butter and beat until incorporated. Oil a medium ice cream scoop and drop by the scoop full onto an ungreased cookie sheet. Bake 10-12 minutes until brown around the edges. Remove from oven and let cool a few minutes before placing on rack.

Makes a bakers dozen.

Ernestine Johnson, Tyler, TX

Mama Vashti's Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 1/2 cups sugar
1 cup Crisco Butter Flavored shortening stick
2 large eggs
2 tablespoons baking powder
1 tablespoon vanilla or butter flavor extract
2 tablespoons Rich & Creamy Mayonnaise w/Lemon Juice
3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons melted butter

Preparations

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Place the sugar and shortening in a large mixing bowl. Cream with electric mixer until light and fluffy. Add the eggs one at a time, mixing after each addition. Add mayonnaise, flavor, and mix well.

In a medium bowl, mix together flour and baking powder. Add 1 cup of flour to batter and mix well. Continue until all the flour is added. Dough will be a little stiff. Add melted butter, and mix well.

Using well floured hands, take a scoop of batter and toss from hand to hand and shape dough into a 1/4 inch high rectangle. Place on an un-greased cookie sheet and bake for 10 minutes or until lightly browned. Remove from oven and let stand before removing onto rack to cool.

Alfreda and Marion Nabors, Inglewood, CA

Tea Cakes

Ingredients

5 cups flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon soda
2 teaspoons cream of tartar
1 teaspoon cinnamon
¼ teaspoon nutmeg
2 sticks of butter (1 cup)
2 cups sugar
3 large eggs
2 teaspoons vanilla extract
½ cup melted butter
2 teaspoons butter flavor

Preparations

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Sift dry ingredients (except sugar) into large bowl and set aside. Cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add eggs one at a time; mix well. Add vanilla. Combine dry ingredients a cup at a time mixing well after each addition. Batter will become very stiff. Mix melted butter and butter flavoring. Add to batter; mix well.

Flour your hands and scoop out dough with a medium ice cream scoop. Toss between your hands and shape into a round or square, about ¼ inch and place on an un-greased cookie sheet 2 inches apart. Bake 20-25 minutes or until lightly brown around the edges. Let tea cakes cool in pan 2-3 minutes before removing to a cooling rack.
Makes about 21½ dozens.

Elkronzee Slaughter, Somerset, KY

Molasses Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 cup warm water
1 cup molasses
3/4 cup sugar
1 teaspoon salt
pinch pepper
2 teaspoons ground ginger
1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/4 teaspoon ground allspice
1/8 teaspoon ground nutmeg
4 cups cake flour

Preparations

Preheat oven to 350°. In a large bowl, dissolve baking soda into the water, then add remaining ingredients in the order given. Add additional flour if necessary to give the dough the right consistency for rolling.

Divide the dough in half and roll each portion out to a 1/4-inch thickness and cut out with a small glass. Or, you can roll them into small round balls and press with the sugared flat bottom of a glass. Place the cakes on a baking sheet and bake 10 to 15 minutes until firm and lightly browned on bottoms.

Makes about 18

Earline Crawford, New Orleans, LA

Old-Fashioned Teacake Crisps

Ingredients

4 cups all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon soda
½ teaspoon salt
½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 tablespoon grated lemon rind
1 cup butter, unsalted
1 ¼ cups sugar
1 egg
¾ cup sour cream
1 teaspoon pure vanilla flavor

Preparations.

Ensure all ingredients are at room temperature. In a medium bowl combine flour, baking powder, baking soda, salt, nutmeg and lemon rind. In a large bowl cream the butter and sugar. Add egg, sour cream and vanilla and combine well. Add the flour mixture and mix well. Chill at least 1 hour; overnight is preferred.

Roll out dough on a lightly floured surface as thin as possible and cut with a floured cookie cutter. Transfer to a lightly greased cookie sheet and bake in a 375-degree oven 10 to 12 minutes or when the edge of the cookie begins to brown. Be careful not to burn cookies.

Cool for about 5 minutes and remove from cookie sheet using a broad spatula.

Margie Albert, Port Arthur, TX

Old-Fashioned Teacakes

Ingredients

1 1/2 cups sugar
1 cup butter or margarine
2 eggs (beaten)
4 cups flour
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon vanilla unsalted butter or margarine (melted)

Preparations

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Cream butter and sugar. Add beaten eggs. Beat well. Combine and sift flour, soda, and baking powder. Fold into batter. Add vanilla. Chill dough for 30 minutes. Roll out dough on floured (combine 1/2 teaspoon baking powder and 1/2 cup flour) board to your desired thickness, cut out, and place on cookie sheet. Bake 10 to 12 minutes or until done. As soon as cakes are removed from oven, immediately brush with unsalted butter, and cool. If spices are preferred, omit vanilla and add 1 teaspoon cinnamon and 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg to dry ingredients.

Mary Joyce Fontenot, Liberty, TX

Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 cup Crisco butter flavored shortening
2 c. sugar
2 eggs
1/2 c. buttermilk
5 cups flour
1 tsp. soda
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. vanilla

Preparations

Preheat oven to 350 degrees.

In a mixing bowl, cream shortening and sugar until creamy. Beat in eggs. In a separate bowl combine flour, salt, and soda. Mix flour one cup at a time alternately with buttermilk until blended. Add vanilla. Roll out approximately 1/4 inch thickness, and cut out large cookies. Bake for approximately 15 to 20 minutes or until brown on top.

Donna Doyle, Shreveport, TX

Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 cup butter
2 cups sugar
2 tsp vanilla
3 eggs
4 cups flour
1 tsp baking soda
2 tsp cream of tartar

Preparations

Have oven moderately hot (350 degrees). Lightly grease a cookie sheet.

Cream butter and sugar together until light and fluffy. Add vanilla. Beat in eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition.

Sift together flour, baking soda and cream of tartar, then beat into creamed mixture.

Divide the dough into 3 or 4 portions and roll them out, one at a time, on a lightly floured board to a thickness of 1/4-inch. Cut with a cookie cutter and transfer cutouts to a greased cookie sheet. Bake in moderately hot oven (350 F.) until lightly browned -- no longer than 10 minutes.

Betty Gipson, Pine Bluff, AR

Vivian's Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 cup Crisco butter flavor shortening)
2 cups sugar
2 eggs
1 tsp. vanilla extract
3 cups sifted self rising flour
1/2 cup milk

Preparations

Cream together shortening and sugar. Add eggs and vanilla. Add 1 cup of flour at a time then stir, to ensure proper mixing. Then add milk and blend. Spoon dough out with 1 tbsp, roll into hand and then flatten out.

Do not grease your pan. Bake in moderate hot oven. (350 degrees) for 10 - 12 minutes.

Vivian Wilkerson, Chicago, IL

Old Fashioned Tea Cakes

Ingredients

3 1/2 c. self rising flour
2 eggs
1 c. sugar
1 tsp. vanilla
1/2 to 3/4 c. Crisco

Preparations

Mix all ingredients together and knead until sugar does not feel grainy on hands. Work dough well. Roll small pinches in your hand. Lay them on sugar coated surface pat thin. Cook 10 minutes in preheated oven at 375 degrees.

Shelia Parker, Auburn, AL

Old Fashioned Southern Tea Cakes

Ingredients

2 1/2 c. plain flour, sifted

1/4 tsp. salt

2 tsp. baking powder

1/2 c. butter

1 c. sugar

2 eggs, beaten

1/2 tsp. vanilla

1 tbsp. milk

Preparations

Sift flour, salt and baking powder together. Cream butter, sugar, and eggs. Add vanilla, milk, and dry ingredients. Blend well. Place dough on a lightly floured board, sprinkle a little flour over dough and roll 1/2 inch thick. Cut with cookie cutter. Place on cookie sheet and bake at 350 degree oven about 12 to 15 minutes.

Eunice Lott, St. Louis, MO

Tea Cakes

Ingredients

3 3/4 c. flour
1 tsp. baking powder
1/2 tsp. salt
16 Tbsp. unsalted butter, room temp
2 c. sugar
2 lg. eggs
1 Tbsp. vanilla

Preparations

Mix dry ingredients. Beat butter and sugar until fluffy. Beat in eggs one at a time, scraping down bowl each time, then vanilla. Add flour mixture and mix at low speed until comes together. Knead a couple of times just until smooth, the pat into a flat disk, wrap in plastic and chill until firm enough to roll. Roll and cut as desired. Bake at 350 about 8-10 minutes on ungreased cookie sheet.

Francesca Spiller, Detroit, MI

Old-Fashioned Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1/2 c. butter
1 c. sugar
1 tablespoon milk
1/2 tsp. vanilla or other flavoring
2 eggs
2 tsp. baking powder
1/4 tsp. salt
2 c. flour

Preparations

Cream butter with sugar; add beaten egg yolks, flour, baking powder, salt, milk, and stiffly beaten egg whites. Add enough more flour to make of consistency to roll. Cut off small pieces of the dough; roll on floured surface, sprinkle with granulated sugar, cut out with cookie cutter and bake on greased cookie sheets at 350F for about 10 minutes.

Charlean Viser, Galveston, TX

Southern Tea Cakes

Ingredients

4 cups all-purpose flour

1 tsp baking soda

2 tsp. baking powder

2 cups sugar

2 eggs

1/2 cup buttermilk

1/2 lb. (2 sticks) butter, softened

1 tsp. vanilla

Preparations

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a large bowl sift flour, baking soda, and baking powder together. Add remaining ingredients and blend well. Dough should be soft. Roll dough out onto a floured surface until approximately 1/4" thick. Cut dough into desired shapes and bake on a slightly greased sheet pan for 10 - 12 minutes.

Linda Maeshall, Waco, TX

Old Fashioned Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 c. butter
2 c. sugar
3 eggs
4 c. flour
2 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. vanilla
1/8 tsp. salt

Preparations

Cream butter and sugar. Add slightly beaten eggs, flour, baking powder, vanilla and salt. Roll on floured board and cut. Sprinkle with sugar and bake at 400 degrees for 12 to 15 minutes.

Makes 9 to 10 dozen depending on size. This will make a fairly thick tea cake. For thinner cakes, roll dough thinner.

Brenda Luckett, Jasper, TX

Old Fashioned Tea Cakes

Ingredients

2 eggs, beaten
1 1/2 c. sugar
1 stick butter
3 c. flour (plain)
2 tbsp. baking powder
1 tsp. vanilla

Preparations

Cream butter and eggs together until fluffy. Roll out on floured surface. Cut in 3 inch rounds. Bake at 350 F until brown, about 10 minutes. Lightly sprinkle with sugar before baking.

Will give you about 2 dozen tea cakes.

Ruby Neal, Liberty, TX

Old Fashioned Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 3/4 c. sugar
1 c. shortening
3 c. flour
1 tsp. vanilla or lemon flavoring
2 eggs
1/2 tsp. soda
1/2 tsp. salt

Preparations

Cream shortening and sugar. Add eggs, one at a time, and add remaining ingredients. Knead dough on floured board. Chill. Roll out and cut. Bake 8 minutes at 325 F.

Vera Burns, Fairborn, OH

Buttery Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 cup butter
2 cups sugar
2 large eggs
2/3 cup milk
2 teaspoons vanilla
4 cups flour

Preparations

Cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add eggs, milk, and vanilla; mix well. Stir in flour; refrigerate until chilled and easier to handle. Roll out on a floured board to 1/2-inch thick, adding more flour if necessary.

Cut into shapes; place on a greased baking sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for about 10 minutes.

Makes 2 to 3 dozen.

Jeraldine Carter, Atlanta, GA

Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 cup sugar
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 cup margarine
1 teaspoon of Cream of Tartar
1 cup vegetable oil
4 ½ cup flour
2 eggs
1 teaspoon baking powder
2 teaspoons vanilla
1 cup powdered sugar (optional)

Preparations

Cream sugar, margarine, oil, eggs and vanilla. Sift dry ingredients and then add to wet mixture. Use a medium ice cream scoop to drop batter onto cookie sheet. Bake in a 325-degree oven for about 15 minutes. Roll tea cakes in powdered sugar while warm, if desired.

Note: You can also roll out dough, if desired.

Joyce Curry, Fort Bragg, NC

Jacquie's Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 cup sugar
1 stick soft butter
1 egg
1 tsp. Vanilla
1 1/2 cup flour
1/8 teaspoon nutmeg

Preparations

Cream butter, sugar and egg. Add vanilla. Add flour and nutmeg. Roll out thin and cut out. Bake at 350 degrees for approximately 12 to 15 minutes or until lightly brown.

Jacquie Carter, Natchez, MS

Ribbon Cane Syrup Tea Cakes

Ingredients

2 eggs
2/3 cup shortening
½ cup sugar
1 cup ribbon cane syrup
3 cup all-purpose flour
1 teaspoon soda
¼ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 teaspoon baking powder

Preparations

Mix together eggs, shortening, sugar and syrup. Add flour, soda, baking powder, salt and vanilla flavoring. Drop by tablespoons onto a greased cookie sheet and bake at 300 degrees until bottom lightly browns and tops lose their raw look.

J.L. Gamble, Houston, TX

Tennessee Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 1/2 cups sugar
1 cup shortening
3 eggs
1/4 cup buttermilk
1 1/4 tsp. maple extract
4 cups flour
1 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. baking soda
1/2 tsp. salt

Preparations

Stir together sugar and shortening until creamy. Stir in eggs, buttermilk and maple flavoring. Mix together dry ingredients in a medium bowl and add to sugar mixture, stirring well. Cover and chill for at least 1 hour.

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Lightly grease a cookie sheet. Roll dough out 1/4-inch thick on a lightly floured board and cut into desired shapes. Place on prepared cookie sheet. Bake for 10 minutes.

Makes 3 to 4 dozen cookies

Carol Rowe, Memphis, TN

Arkansas Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 cup sugar
2 eggs
3/4 cup butter
2 teaspoons buttermilk
1 1/2 teaspoon vanilla
2 1/2 cups flour
1/2 teaspoons baking soda
1/2 teaspoon soda

Preparations

Mix sugar, eggs, butter, buttermilk and vanilla. Sift together flour, soda and baking powder. Mix eggs and flour mixtures. Stir and knead until smooth. If dough is too soft add more flour, or if too stiff add more milk. Roll dough on floured cloth or wax paper until 1/4 inch thick. Cut with floured cookie cutter. Bake at 375 degrees until golden.

Serves 12.

Nelva Ammons, Jacksonville, AR

Florida Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 cup oleo or butter
3 cups sugar
3 eggs
1/2 cup buttermilk
1 teaspoon soda
1 teaspoon flavoring
2-3 lbs plain all-purpose flour

Preparations

Cream butter and sugar. Add eggs, one at a time until well mixed. Add flavoring. Sift flour and soda and add to mixture, alternating the buttermilk and stir until it is mixed where you can handle either by rolling on a floured board or pat with hands. Place on greased cookie sheets and bake at 450 degrees for 7 minutes or until brown.

Makes 4 dozen.

Maxine Dawkins, Tampa, FL

Mississippi Tea Cakes

Ingredients

2 cups sugar

1/2 cup milk

1 teaspoon vanilla flavoring

Dash of salt

1 cup butter

2 eggs

Flour

Preparations

Cream butter and sugar together; beat in eggs. Add salt and flavoring. Stir in enough sifted flour to make medium stiff dough. Roll out on floured board and cut with cookie cutter. Bake in 350-degree oven until lightly browned.

Makes about 4 dozen tea cakes.

Dorothy Moore, Itta Bena, MS

Georgia Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 cup butter, softened
1 1/2 cups granulated sugar
3 large eggs
3 cups all-purpose flour
3 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 tablespoon pure vanilla extract

Preparations

Cream together the butter and sugar; add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Blend in the sifted dry ingredients and then stir in the vanilla. Drop by tablespoonfuls onto a greased baking sheet. Bake at 375 degrees for 10 to 12 minutes or until golden brown.

Brenda Flakes, Doathan, GA

Texas Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 cup butter, softened
2 cups granulated sugar
2 large eggs
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
Dash of salt
All-purpose flour, sifted

Preparations

Cream butter until light and fluffy; gradually add sugar until well blended. Add eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Add the vanilla and salt; blend well. Stir in enough flour, gradually, to make a medium stiff dough. Roll dough out on a lightly floured surface about 1/4 inch thick. Cut with a cookie cutter. Bake at 350 degrees for around 15 minutes or until lightly browned. Watch carefully!

Lois Fletcher, Temple, TX

Louisiana Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1/2 cup butter, softened
1 cup sugar
2 eggs
2 1/2 cups all-purpose flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
1/2 teaspoons ground powder
1 tablespoon milk

Preparations

Beat butter at medium speed of electric mixture. Gradually add sugar, beating well. Add eggs, beat well. Combine next three ingredients, add to creamed mixture, alternating with milk. Mix well. Cover and chill 1 hour. Work with half of dough at a time and store remaining half in refrigerator. Flour rolling pin lightly; roll dough to 1/4 inch on lightly floured pastry cloth. Cut with 2 1/4 inch round cutter or Mason jar lid and carefully place on greased cookie sheet.

Bake at 350 degrees for 8 minutes (cookies will be pale). Cool on wire rack.

Makes 3 1/2 dozens.

Irene Gallaway, Gilbert, LA

Zaragoza Tea Cakes

Ingredients

3/4 cup butter
2 cups sugar
3 eggs
1 1/2 cups milk
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
3 cups all-purpose flour, sifted
2 teaspoons vanilla flavoring

Preparations

Beat butter, sugar and eggs together for 15 minutes, Add flour, baking powder, nutmeg, mix well, alternating with milk until combined. Roll out on floured board and knead for about 5 minutes. Cut into 1/2-inch biscuit rounds, rolling out thin. Bake at 350 to 375 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes, or until cakes are firm.

Makes 30-40 tea cakes.

Celestine Harris, Zaragoza Air Base, Spain

June's Tea Cakes

Ingredients

2 cups sugar

2 eggs

1 teaspoon soda

1/2 pound butter

4 cups all-purpose flour

Preparations

Cream butter and sugar; add sifted flour with the soda in it. Mix all together. Roll to 1/4 inch thickness, cut with small cookie cutter and bake in a 350 degree oven until light brown.

June Henry, Boston, MA

Back Home Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1/2 cup shortening
1 egg
2 cup all-purpose flour
1/4 cup evaporated milk
1 cup sugar
2 teaspoon vanilla extract
1 tablespoon baking powder

Preparations

Cream shortening; gradually add 1 cup sugar, beating well at medium speed of an electric mixer. Add egg and vanilla; beat well. Combine flour and baking powder; add to creamed mixture alternately with milk, mixing well. Cover and chill 2 hours. Work with half of the dough at a time and store remainder in refrigerator. Roll dough to 1/4 inch thickness on a lightly floured surface. Cut with 2-inch cookie cutter; place on greased cookie sheets. Bake at 350 for 6-8 minutes or until edges begin to brown, Cool.

Yields 3 dozen.

Oletha Johnson, De Lisle, MS

Quick Tea Cakes

Ingredients

1 cup sugar
1 stick butter, melted
2 eggs separated
2 cups all-purpose flour
1-2 teaspoons cinnamon, more or less to taste

Preparations

Preheat oven to 350°F. Mix the butter and sugar until completely mixed. Add egg yolk and mix some more. Add flour and cinnamon and mix thoroughly preferably by hand (though this all can be done in a mixer if you insist).

Pour batter into a cookie pan, spread over the whole pan use the palm of your hand to smooth the batter (this is the hardest part), and brush on leftover egg white. Add whatever toppings you want spread evenly across the batter. Put cookie sheet in oven until cookies are golden brown (about 20 minutes). Remove, and let cool. Before they get too cool, cut them into small squares about 1 in by 1 in.

Rose Marie Spiller, Starkville, MS

Aunt Jewel's Tea Cakes

Ingredients

4 cups flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
¼ teaspoon salt
1 teaspoons nutmeg
¾ cups Crisco Butter Flavor shortening
1 1/2 cups sugar
3 eggs, lightly beaten
1 teaspoon vanilla

Preparations

Combine flour, baking powder, salt, and nutmeg in large mixing bowl. Cut in shortening. Add sugar and stir until combined.

Add eggs and vanilla to dry ingredients and mix well and form into a ball. With clean and floured hands, pinch off an equal amount of dough and into small balls. Pat out balls from hand-to-hand and form a flat round approximately ¼ to ½ inch and place on cookie sheet.

Bake 10-12 minutes in 375 degree oven until browned around the edges or tops begins to crack. Do not overcook.

El Jewel Hall, Houston, TX

Southern Tea Cakes

Ingredients

4 cups flour
1 teaspoon soda
2 teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon nutmeg
2 cups sugar
2 eggs
½ cup buttermilk
1 cup butter, softened
2 teaspoons vanilla

Preparations

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a large mixing bowl mix together flour, baking soda, baking powder and nutmeg. Add remaining ingredients and blend. Lightly flour a surface and shape dough into a ball and place in a covered bowl in the refrigerator for 1 hour. Flour surface again and roll out until approximately ¼ inch thick. Cut dough out in big circle shape and bake on an ungreased cookie sheet for 10 to 12 minutes.

Makes 2-3 dozen cookies

Marilyn Howard, Victorville, CA

Aunt Clara's Old Fashioned Tea Cakes

Ingredients

½ cup butter, softened
1 cup sugar
2 eggs
2 1/2 cups flour
2 teaspoons baking powder
½ teaspoon nutmeg
1 tablespoon milk

Preparations

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Beat butter at medium speed of electric mixer. Gradually add sugar, beating well. Add eggs; beat well. Combine next three ingredients; add to creamed mixture alternately with milk. Mix well. Chill dough in refrigerator for 1 hour. Work with half of the dough at a time and store remaining half in refrigerator. Place a stocking net cover on rolling pin*; flour well. Roll out dough to ¼ or ½ inch on lightly floured surface. Cut with a 2 1/4 inch round cutter, large mouth drinking glass or canning jar etc. and carefully place on ungreased cookie sheet.

Bake at 350 degrees for 8 to 10 minutes (cookies will look pale). Cool in pan for 5 minutes before removing to cooling racks.

Makes 2 to 3 dozens.

Note: I remember watching my Aunt Clara used a Royal Crown cola bottle to roll out her tea cakes whenever she made them for us as a child growing up in Louisiana.

Ida Mae Bell, Homer, LA

Glazes For Tea Cakes

Plain Sugar Glaze: Mix 1/2 cup boiling water gradually to one cup confectioner's sugar.

Vanilla Glaze: Mix 1 cup powdered sugar with 1 1/2 tablespoons milk and 1/2 teaspoon of vanilla.

Chocolate Glaze: Mix 1 cup of powdered sugar with 1 1/2 tablespoons milk and 1 tablespoon chocolate drink mix. If it's not chocolaty enough, add a little cocoa powder.

Lemon Glaze: Mix 1 cup powdered sugar with 1 1/2 tablespoons of reconstituted lemon juice.

Orange Glaze: Mix 1 cup of powdered sugar with 1 1/2 tablespoons of orange juice and 1/2 teaspoon grated orange rind.

Baking Terms

Allumette: Any of various puff pastry items made in thin sticks or strips (French word for "matchstick").

Almond Paste; A mixture of finely ground almonds and sugar.

Angel Food Cake: A type of cake made of meringue (egg whites and sugar) and flour.

Angel Food Method: A cake mixing method involving folding a mixture of flour and sugar into a meringue.

Baba: A type of yeast bread or cake that is soaked in syrup.

Babka: A type of sweet yeast bread or coffee cake.

Baked Alaska: A dessert consisting of ice cream on a sponge-cake base, covered with meringue and browned in the oven.

Baking Ammonia: A leavening ingredient that releases ammonia gas and carbon dioxide.

Baklava: A Greek or Middle Eastern dessert made of nuts and phyllo dough and soaked with syrup.

Batter: A semiliquid mixture containing flour or other starch, used for the production of such products as cakes and breads and for coating products to be deep-fried.

Bavarian Cream: A light, cold dessert made of gelatin, whipped cream, and custard sauce or fruit.

Beignet Soufflé (*ben yay soo flay*): A type of fritter made with éclair paste, which puffs up greatly when fried.

Blanc Mange (*bla mahnge*): (1) An English pudding made of milk, sugar, and cornstarch. (2) A French dessert made of milk, cream, almonds, and gelatin.

Bloom: A whitish coating on chocolate, caused by separated cocoa butter.

Blown Sugar: Pulled sugar that is made into thin-walled, hollow shapes by being blown up like a balloon.

Bombe: A type of frozen dessert made in a dome-shaped mold.

Boston Cream Pie: A sponge cake or other yellow cake filled with pastry cream and topped with chocolate fondant or confectioners' sugar.

Bran; The hard outer covering of kernels of wheat and other grains.

Bran Flour: Flour to which bran flakes have been added.

Bread Flour: Strong flour, such as patent flour, used for breads.

Brioche: Rich yeast dough containing large amounts of eggs and butter; or a product made from this dough.

Brown Sugar: Regular granulated sucrose containing various impurities that give it a distinctive flavor.

Buttercream: An icing made of butter and/or shortening blended with confectioners' sugar or sugar syrup and sometimes other ingredients.

Cake Flour: A fine, white flour made from soft wheat.

Caramelization: The browning of sugars caused by heat.

Cast Sugar: Sugar that is boiled to the hard crack stage and then poured into molds to harden.

Celsius Scale: The metric system of temperature measurement, with 0° C at the freezing point of water and 100° C at the boiling point of water.

Centi-; Prefix in the metric system meaning "one-hundredth."

Challah: A rich egg bread, often made as a braided loaf.

Charlotte: (1) A cold dessert made of Bavarian cream or other cream in a special mold, usually lined with ladyfingers or other sponge products. (2) A hot dessert made of cooked fruit and baked in a special mold lined with strips of bread.

Chemical Leavener: A leavener such as baking soda, baking powder, or baking ammonia, which releases gases produced by chemical reactions

Chiffon Cake: A light cake made by the chiffon method.

Chiffon Method: A cake mixing method involving the folding of whipped egg whites into a batter made of flour, egg yolks, and oil.

Chiffon Pie: A pie with a light, fluffy filling containing egg whites and, usually, gelatin.

Chocolate Liquor: Unsweetened chocolate, consisting of cocoa solids and cocoa butter.

Christmas Pudding: A dark, heavy, steamed pudding made of dried and candied fruits, spices, beef suet, and crumbs.

Clear Flour: A tan-colored wheat flour made from the outer portion of the endosperm.

Coagulation: The process by which proteins become firm, usually when heated.

Cobbler: A fruit dessert similar to a pie but without a bottom crust.

Cocoa: The dry powder that remains after cocoa butter is pressed out of chocolate liquor.

Cocoa Butter: A white or yellowish fat found in natural chocolate.

Compote: Fruit cooked in a sugar syrup.

Confectioners' Sugar: Sucrose that is ground to a fine powder and mixed with a little cornstarch to prevent caking.

Coulis (*koo lee*): A fruit or vegetable puree, used as a sauce.

Couverture: Natural, sweet chocolate containing no added fats other than natural cocoa butter; used for dipping, molding, coating, and similar purposes.

Creaming: The process of beating fat and sugar together to blend them uniformly and to incorporate air.

Creaming Method: A mixing method that begins with the blending of fat and sugar; used for cakes, cookies, and similar items.

Crème Anglaise (*krem awng glezz*): A light vanilla-flavored custard sauce made of milk, sugar, and egg yolks.

Crème Brûlée: A rich custard with a brittle top crust of caramelized sugar. French name means "burnt cream."

Crème Caramel: A custard baked in a mold lined with caramelized sugar, then unmolded.

Crêpe (*krep*): A very thin French pancake, often served rolled around a filling.

Crêpes Suzette: French pancakes served in a sweet sauce flavored with orange.

Croissant (*krwah sawn*): A flaky, buttery yeast roll shaped like a crescent and made from a rolled-in dough.

Custard: A liquid that is thickened or set by the coagulation of egg protein.

Deci": Prefix in the metric system meaning "one-tenth."

Dessert Syrup; A flavored sugar syrup used to flavor and moisten cakes and other desserts.

Devil's-Food Cake: A chocolate cake made with a high percentage of baking soda, which gives the cake a reddish color.

Docking: Piercing or perforating pastry dough before baking in order to allow steam to escape and to avoid blistering.

Drained Weight: The weight of solid canned fruit after draining off the juice.

Dredge: To sprinkle thoroughly with sugar or another dry powder.

Drop Batter; A batter that is too thick to pour but will drop from a spoon in lumps.

Dutch Process Cocoa: Cocoa that has been processed with an alkali to reduce its acidity.

Eclair Paste: A paste or dough made of boiling water or milk, butter, flour, and eggs; used to make eclairs, cream puffs, and similar products.

Emulsion: A uniform mixture of two or more unmixable substances.

Endosperm: The starchy inner portion of grain kernels.

Extraction; The portion of the grain kernel that is separated into a particular grade of flour. Usually expressed as a percentage.

Fermentation: The process by which yeast changes carbohydrates into carbon dioxide gas and alcohol.

Foaming: The process of whipping eggs, with or without sugar, to incorporate air.

Fondant: A type of icing made of boiled sugar syrup that is agitated so that it crystallizes into a mass of extremely small white crystals.

Frangipane: A type of almond-flavored cream.

French Pastry: A variety of small fancy cakes and other pastries, usually in single-portion sizes.

Fritter; A deep-fried item made of or coated with a batter or dough.

Ganache (*gah nahsh*): A rich cream made of sweet chocolate and heavy cream.

Gateau (*gah toe*): French word for "cake."

Gaufre (*go fr'*): French word for "waffle."

Gelatinization: The process by which starch granules absorb water and swell in size.

Gelato: Italian ice cream

Genoise (*zhen wahz*): A sponge cake made with a batter containing melted butter.

Germ The plant embryo portion of a grain kernel.

Glace (*glah say*): (1) Glazed; coated with icing. (2) Frozen.

Glaze: (1) A shiny coating, such as a syrup, applied to a food. (2) To make a food shiny or glossy by coating it with a glaze or by browning it under a broiler or in a hot oven.

Gliadin): A protein in wheat flour that combines with another protein, glutenin, to form gluten.

Gluten: An elastic substance, formed from proteins present in wheat flours, that gives structure and strength to baked goods.

Glutenin: See Gliadin.

Gram: The basic unit of weight in the metric system; equal to about one-thirtieth of an ounce.

Granite (*grab nee tay*): A coarse, crystalline frozen dessert made of water, sugar, and fruit juice or another flavoring.

Gum Paste: A type of sugar paste or pastillage made with vegetable gum.

Hard Sauce: A flavored mixture of confectioners' sugar and butter; often served with steamed puddings.

Hard Wheat: Wheat high in protein.

Hearth Bread: A bread that is baked directly on the bottom of the oven, not in a pan.

Heavy Pack: A type of canned fruit or vegetable with very little added water or juice.

High-Ratio: (1) Term referring to cakes and cake formulas mixed by a special method and containing more sugar than flour. (2) The mixing method used for these cakes. (3) Term referring to certain specially formulated ingredients used in these cakes, such as shortening.

High-Ratio Method: See Two-Stage Method.

Homogenized Milk: Milk that has been processed so that the cream does not separate out.

Hydrogenation: A process that converts liquid oils to solid fats (shortenings) by chemically bonding hydrogen to the fat molecules.

Icing Comb: A plastic triangle with toothed or serrated edges; used for texturing icings.

Inversion: A chemical process in which a double sugar splits into two simple sugars.

Invert Sugar: A mixture of two simple sugars, dextrose and levulose, resulting from the breakdown of sucrose.

Italian Meringue; A meringue made by whipping a boiling syrup into egg whites.

Japonaise (*zhah po net*): A baked meringue flavored with nuts.

Kernel Paste: A nut paste, similar to almond paste, made of apricot kernels and sugar.

Kilo"; Prefix in the metric system meaning "one thousand."

Kirsch: A clear alcoholic beverage distilled from cherries.

Kugelhopf: A type of rich, sweet bread or coffee cake usually made in a tube-type pan.

Ladyfinger: A small, dry, finger-shaped sponge cake or cookie.

Lean Dough: A dough that is low in fat and sugar.

Leavening: The production or incorporation of gases in a baked product to increase volume and to produce shape and texture.

Linzertorte: A tart made of raspberry jam and a short dough containing nuts and spices.

Liter: The basic unit of volume in the metric system; equal to slightly more than a quart.

Macaroon; A cookie made of eggs (usually whites) and almond paste or coconut.

Malt Syrup: A type of syrup containing maltose sugar, extracted from sprouted barley.

Marble: To partly mix two colors of cake batter or icing so that the colors are in decorative swirls.

Marron: French word for "chestnut."

Marshmallow: A light confection, icing, or filling made of meringue and gelatin (or other stabilizers).

Marzipan: A paste or confection made of almonds and sugar and often used for decorative work.

Meal: Coarsely ground grain.

Melba Sauce: A sweet sauce made of pureed raspberries and sometimes red currants.

Meringue: A thick, white foam made of whipped egg whites and sugar.

Meringue Chantilly (*shown tee yee*): Baked meringue filled with whipped cream.

Meringue Glace: Baked meringue filled with ice cream.

Meter: The basic unit of length in the metric system; slightly longer than one yard.

Milli-: Prefix in the metric system meaning "one-thousandth."

Modeling Chocolate: A thick paste made of chocolate and glucose, which can be molded by hand into decorative shapes.

Molasses: A heavy brown syrup made from sugar cane.

Monosaccharide: A simple or single sugar such as glucose and fructose.

Mousse: A soft or creamy dessert that is made light by the addition of whipped cream, egg whites, or both.

Napoleon: A dessert made of layers of puff pastry filled with pastry cream.

Net Weight: The weight of the total contents of a can or package.

No-Time Dough: A bread dough made with a large quantity of yeast and given no fermentation time except for a short rest after mixing.

Nougat: A mixture of caramelized sugar and almonds or other nuts, used in decorative work and as a confection and flavoring.

Old Dough: A dough that is overfermented.

One-Stage Method: A cookie mixing method in which all ingredients are added to the bowl at once.

Othello: A small (single-portion size), spherical sponge cake filled with cream and iced with fondant.

Oven Spring; The rapid rise of yeast goods in the oven due to the production and expansion of trapped gases caused by the oven heat.

Pain d'Épice (*pan day peece*): A type of gingerbread. French name means "spice bread."

Palmier (*palm yay*): A small pastry or petit four sec made of rolled, sugared puff pastry cut into slices and baked.

Parfait; (1) A type of sundae served in a tall, thin glass. (2) A still-frozen dessert made of egg yolks, syrup, and heavy cream.

Paris-Brest: A dessert consisting of a ring of baked éclair paste filled with cream.

Pasteurized: Heat-treated to kill bacteria that might cause disease or spoilage.

Pastillage: A sugar paste used for decorative work, which becomes very hard when dry.

Pastry Cream: A thick custard sauce containing eggs and starch.

Pastry Flour: A weak flour used for pastries and cookies.

Pate a Choux (*pot ah shoo*): Eclair paste.

Pate Feuilleté (*pot foo va fay*): French name for puff pastry.

Patent flour: A fine grade of wheat flour milled from the inner portions of the kernel.

Petit Four: A delicate cake or pastry small enough to be eaten in one or two bites.

Petit Four Glace: An iced or cream-filled petit four.

Petit Four Sec: An uniced or unfilled petit four ("sec" means "dry"), such as a small butter cookie or palmier.

Phyllo (*fee lo*): A paper-thin dough or pastry used to make strudels and various Middle Eastern and Greek desserts.

Piping Jelly: A transparent, sweet jelly used for decorating cakes.

Pithiviers (*fee tee vyay*): A cake made of puff pastry filled with almond cream.

Praline: A confection or flavoring made of nuts and caramelized sugar.

Profiterole: A small puff made of éclair paste. Often filled with ice cream and served with chocolate sauce.

Puff Pastry: A very light, flaky pastry made from a rolled-in dough and leavened by steam.

Pulled Sugar: Sugar that is boiled to the hard-crack stage, allowed to harden slightly, then pulled or stretched until it develops a pearly sheen.

Pullman Loaf: A long, rectangular loaf of bread.

Pumpernickel Flour: A coarse, flaky meal made from whole rye grains.

Punching: A method of expelling gases from fermented dough.

Puree: A food made into a smooth pulp, usually by being ground or forced through a sieve.

Retarding: Refrigerating a yeast dough to slow the fermentation.

Rich Dough: A dough high in fat, sugar, and/or eggs.

Rolled-in Dough: Dough in which a fat has been incorporated in many layers by using a rolling and folding procedure.

Rounding: A method of molding a piece of dough into a round ball with a smooth surface or skin.

Royal Icing: A form of icing made of confectioners' sugar and egg whites; used for decorating.

Rye Blend: A mixture of rye flour and hard wheat flour.

Sabayon: A foamy dessert or sauce made of egg yolks whipped with wine or liqueur.

Sacristain (*sak ree stan*): A small pastry made of twisted strip of puff paste coated with nuts and sugar.

Saint-Honore: (1) A dessert made of a ring of cream puffs set on a short dough base and filled with a type of pastry cream. (2) The cream used to fill this dessert, made of pastry cream and whipped egg whites.

Savarin; A type of yeast bread or cake that is soaked in syrup.

Scaling: Weighing, usually of ingredients or of dough's or batters.

Scone: A type of biscuit or biscuitlike bread.

Scone Flour; A mixture of flour and baking powder that is used when very small quantities of baking powder are needed.

Short; Having a high fat content, which makes the product (such as a cookie or pastry) very crumbly and tender.

Shortbread: A crisp cookie made of butter, sugar, and flour.

Shortening: (1) Any fat used in baking to tenderize the product by shortening gluten strands. (2) A white, tasteless, solid fat that has been formulated for baking or deep-frying.

Simple Syrup: A syrup consisting of sucrose and water in varying proportions.

Soft Wheat: Wheat low in protein.

Sorbet (*sor bay*): French word for "sherbet,"

Sorbetto; Italian word for "sherbet."

Soufflé: (1) A baked dish containing whipped egg whites, which cause the dish to rise during baking. (2) A still-frozen dessert made in a soufflé dish so that it resembles a baked soufflé.

Sourdough: (1) A yeast-type dough made with a sponge or starter that has fermented so long that it has become very sour or acidic. (2) A bread made with such a dough.

Sponge: A batter or dough of yeast, flour, and water that is allowed to ferment and is then mixed with more flour and other ingredients to make a bread dough.

Sponge Cake: A type of cake made by whipping eggs and sugar to a foam, then folding in flour.

Sponge Method: A cake mixing method based on whipped eggs and sugar.

Spun Sugar: Boiled sugar made into long, thin threads by dipping wires into the sugar syrup and waving them so that the sugar falls off in fine streams.

Staling: The change in texture and aroma of baked goods due to the loss of moisture by the starch granules.

Stollen: A type of sweet yeast bread with fruit.

Straight Flour: Flour made from the entire wheat kernel minus the bran and germ.

Streusel (*stray sel*): A crumbly topping for baked goods, consisting of fat, sugar, and flour rubbed together.

Strong Flour: Flour with a high protein content.

Strudel: (1) A type of dough that is stretched until paper-thin. (2) A baked item consisting of a filling rolled up in a sheet of strudel dough or phyllo dough.

Sucrose: The chemical name for regular granulated sugar and confectioners' sugar.

Swiss Roll: A thin sponge cake layer spread with a filling and rolled up.

Syrup Pack: A type of canned fruit containing sugar syrup.

Tempering: The process of melting and cooling chocolate to specific temperatures in order to prepare it for dipping, coating, or molding.

Torte: German word for various types of cakes, usually layer cakes.

Tulipe: A thin, crisp cookie molded into a cup shape.

Tunneling: A condition of muffin products characterized by large, elongated holes; caused by overmixing.

Turntable: A pedestal with a flat, rotating top, used for holding cakes while they are being decorated.

Two-Stage Method; A cake mixing method, beginning with the blending of flour and high-ratio shortening, followed by the addition of liquids. Also called the high-ratio method.

Vacherin (*vah sher ran*): A crisp meringue shell filled with cream, fruits, or other items.

Wash: (1) A liquid brushed onto the surface of a product, usually before baking. (2) To apply such a liquid.

Water Pack: A type of canned fruit or vegetable containing the water used to process the item.

Weak Flour: Flour with a low protein content.

Whole Wheat Flour: Flour made by grinding the entire wheat kernel, including the bran and germ.

Young Dough: dough that is underfermented.

Zabaglione: An Italian dessert or sauce made of whipped eggs yolks and Marsala wine.

Zest: The colored outer portion of the peel of citrus fruits.

Tea Cake Resources

Delivering the Goods

www.225batonrouge.com

Cookies and Bars

www.gritsandmagnolias.com/southern-teacakes.htm

The Tea Cake Project

www.teacakeproject.com

Ham'N Goody's

www.hamngoodys.com

Tea Cake Cookbook Project Submission Announcement

www.blacknews.com/pr/teacakes101.html

This Recipe is Remembrance

www.usatoday.com/news/nation/2006-12-19-tea-cakes_x.htm

How to Write a Cookbook

www.howtowriteacookbook.com/

Worldwide Food Festivals, Food Shows & Events Directory

www.foodreference.com/html/upcomingfoodevents.html

Food to Feed Your Soul

www.tulsaworld.com/news/article.aspx?articleID=20080413_1_A13_hCook65607

Soul Searching

www.tulsaworld.com/lifestyle/article.aspx?articleID=20080326_4_D1_hAcoo50761

We'd Love to Hear From You!

My teacake journey is only beginning. With your help and suggestions, I plan to create a follow-up to *The Teacake Project* in the coming year. As you and your family sample the tasty recipes found in this book and create your own teacake memories, please, share your stories!

Drop us a line by fax or e-mail, and let us know what you liked best about the book, how you would make the book better, and what you'd like to see in a follow up book.

Be sure to include your name, gender, address, and e-mail, so that we can thank you in the next edition of *The Teacake Project*.

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About the Author

Elbert Mackey is an avid cook who has had a passion for food since his grandmother stood him on a kitchen chair to stir cake batter at the tender age of nine. He recalls with warmth the time spent with his grandmother cooking and the tasty reward of licking the bowl after the hard work of preparation. His passion for food and family stirred him to preserve recipes and memories that were in danger of being lost. He has dazzled family, friends and judges with his award winning tasty tea cake creations. Elbert Mackey lives in Austin, Texas with his wife Jacquie and owns a medical equipment repair business.