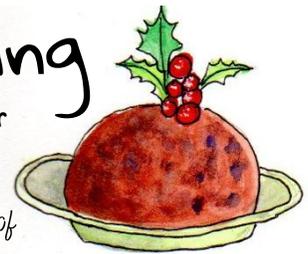


Proper British Plum Pudding

Makes a 2-quart steamed pudding, 10-12 servings or 4 smaller 1/2 quart steamed puddings



This recipe needs plenty of time. Traditionally, the mixing and cooking of the pudding is done on "Stirring Sunday," 5 weeks before Christmas, giving the pudding time to mature in flavor before the big day.

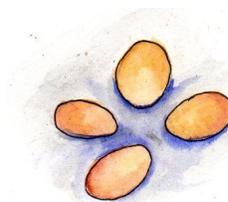


Gather Your Ingredients

Fruit Mixture

(To be made 1-2 days ahead)

- 2 cups seedless raisins
- 2 cups golden raisins
- 2 cups chopped dried fruit
- 1 cup currants
- 1 cup thinly sliced citron (opt.)
- 1 cup chopped candied peel (opt.)
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon mace
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
- 1/4 teaspoon allspice
- 1 1/4 cups sherry*



*This recipe uses sherry... you could substitute brandy, port, or apple cider

Pudding

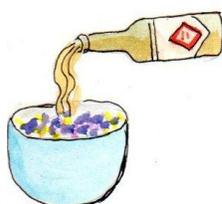
- 1 lb (approximately) bread crumbs
- 1 cup scalded milk
- 1 cup sherry
- 4 eggs
- 1 cup sugar
- 1 cup suet or chilled solid vegetable shortening
- 1 cup flour
- 1 teaspoon salt

Additional sherry to add to cooked pudding before curing and before serving

You will also need molds for the pudding -- either one big one or several smaller ones. You can get creative and use old cans, a fancy flan mold, or a vintage pyrex dish...



STEP 1. Blend the dried fruit, citron, peel, spices and place in a bowl or jar.



Add 1 1/4 cups sherry and cover tightly. Stir and let soak for 1-2 days, stirring daily.

STEP 2. When the fruit is done, soak the bread crumbs in scalded milk and sherry until absorbed... about a half hour...





STEP 3. Cream the sugar, salt and chilled suet or shortening, then add the flour, then the eggs, then the bread crumb, milk and sherry mixture and finally fold in the soaked fruit. Mix well. The dough is now ready to steam.

STEP 4. Cut a piece of parchment paper and place it on the bottom of your buttered mold.

Add in your pudding mix to about 2/3 full. Put another piece of parchment paper on top, then seal with foil and place in your large pot or Dutch oven.



Add enough water to create steam, but not too much...you don't want to drown the pudding...and be sure to add a rack, small plate or pie tin on the bottom of your pot to keep your mold from touching the bottom of the pot and possibly cracking.

STEP 5. Steam for 5-6 hours.



Don't lift lid for first half hour...but after that you can check periodically to make sure there is enough water.

STEP 6. Let cool and add a dash of sherry to each pudding, cover with foil and keep in a cool, dry place for at least a week and up to 6 months.

STEP 7. To serve, steam again for 2-3 hours and remove from the mold.

STEP 8. Sprinkle with sugar; add heated sherry. Ignite and bring to the table.

STEP 9. Serve with hard sauce.

Hard Sauce

1/2 cup butter (1 stick, softened)

1-1/2 cups powdered sugar

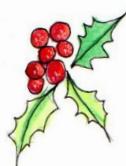
1 tbl sherry or brandy

Whip butter and add powdered sugar, then drizzle in liquor until soft and fluffy. Spoon over each serving and enjoy!

The Hard Sauce is really more like frosting in texture than a "sauce"...but it is delicious...



Be sure to have a lid handy to extinguish the flames before the fruit burns to a crisp...



Illustrated by Natasha Monahan Papousek
Based on a recipe from Elizabeth Monahan Papousek