

On Valentine's Day ...

SURPRISE YOUR LOVED ONES WITH AN ASSORTMENT OF 18TH-CENTURY SWEETS. NIEL DE MARINO, PROPRIETOR OF THE GEORGIAN KITCHEN, CREATED THIS SPECTACULAR DESSERT TABLE LADEN WITH MERINGUES, PUDDINGS, SMALL CAKES, AND SYLLABUBS. HE HOSTED DESSERT WITH THE EDMONSTONS LAST NOVEMBER IN THE PATRIOT FAMILY'S 1755 GEORGIAN STONE HOUSE IN NEW YORK'S HUDSON VALLEY. THE CHEF'S COLLATION OF DESSERTS MIGHT HAVE BEEN FOUND IN AN UPPER-CLASS HOME DURING THE HOLIDAYS OR AFTER A BALL. DESSERTS MADE WITH PRECIOUS SUGAR, EXOTIC SPICES, AND CANDIED FRUITS SERVED AS A STATUS SYMBOL THAT THOSE OF LESSER MEANS, LIKE THE EDMONSTONS, WOULD HAVE ASPIRED TO ACHIEVE.



RECIPES

KISSES FOR A SLACK OVEN

These meringues have been modified from the period receipt for those with gluten intolerance.

3 egg whites
1 teaspoon rose water
¼ teaspoon cream of tartar
Dash of salt
1 cup sugar

In a mixing bowl, combine the egg whites, rose water, cream of tartar, and salt. Beat until soft peaks form. Very gradually add the sugar, beating until very stiff peaks form. The meringue should be glossy. You can color it with a few drops of spinach juice or beet juice to obtain the tint you prefer.

Drop kisses from a tablespoon, or pipe them from a pastry bag onto a parchment-lined baking sheet, spacing them about 1½ inches apart.

Bake them in a slack (slow) oven—at 275 degrees F.—until they are dry, approximately 20 to

30 minutes. Watch them closely—they should not change color from creamy white (or color tinted).

Based on a recipe from *The Thirteen Colonies Cookbook*, by Mary Donovan, Amy Hatrak, Frances Mills, and Elizabeth Shull, 1975.

TO MAKE WHIPT-SYLLABUBS

Take a quart of thick cream, and half a pint of sack, the juice of two Seville oranges or lemons, grate in the peel of two lemons, half a pound of double-refined sugar, pour it into a broad earthen pan, and whisk it well, but first sweeten some red-wine or sack, and fill your glasses as full as you chuse, then as the froth rises take it off with a spoon, and lay it on a sieve to drain, then lay it carefully into your glasses till they are as full as they will hold. Do not make these long before you use them. Many use cyder sweetened, or any white wine you please, or lemon, or orange whey made thus: squeeze the juice of a lemon, or orange, into a quarter of a pint of milk, when the curd is hard, pour the whey clear off, and sweeten it to your palate. You may colour some with the juice of spinach, some with saffron, and some with cochineal, just as you fancy.

TO MAKE EVERLASTING SYLLABUBS

Take five half pints of thick cream, half a pint of Rhenish, half a pint of sack, and the juice of two large Seville oranges; grate in just the yellow rind of three lemons, and a pound of double-refined sugar well beat and sifted; mix all together with a spoonful of orange-flower water; beat it well together with a whisk half an hour, then with a spoon take it off, and lay it on a sieve to drain, then fill your glasses. These will keep above a week, and it is better made the day before. The best way to whip syllabub is, have a fine large chocolate mill, which you must keep on purpose,

and a large deep bowl to mill them in. It is both quicker done, and the froth stronger. For the thin that is left at the bottom, have ready some calf's-foot jelly boiled and clarified, there must be nothing but the calf's-foot boiled to a hard jelly: when cold, take off the fat, clear it with the whites of eggs, run it through a flannel bag, and mix it with the clear, which you saved of the syllabubs. Sweeten it to your palate, and give it a boil; then pour it into basons, or what you please. When cold, turn it out, and it is a fine flummery.

TO MAKE AN ALMOND-PUDDING

Blanch half a pound of sweet almonds, and four bitter ones, in warm water, take them and pound them in a marble mortar, with two spoonfuls of orange-flower-water and two of rose-water, a gill of sack; mix in four grated Naples biscuits, three quarters of a pound of melted butter; beat eight eggs, and mix them with a quart of cream boiled, grate in half a nutmeg and a quarter of a pound of sugar; mix all well together, make a thin puff paste, and lay all over the dish. Pour in the ingredients, and bake it.

TO MAKE GINGER-BREAD CAKES

Take three pounds of flour, one pound of sugar, one pound of butter rubbed in very fine, two ounces of ginger beat fine, a large nutmeg grated; then take a pound of treacle a quarter of a pint of cream, make them warm together, and make up the bread stiff; roll it out, and make it up into thin cakes, cut them out with a tea-cup, or small glass; or roll them round like nuts, and bake them on tin-plates in a slack oven.

Unless otherwise noted, these dessert recipes are taken from *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy*, by Hannah Glasse, 1747.

TO MAKE PORTUGAL-CAKES

Mix into a pound of fine flour, a pound of loaf-sugar beat and sifted, then rub it into a pound of pure sweet butter till it is thick like grated white-bread, then put to it two spoonfuls of rose-water, two of sack, ten eggs, whip them very well with a whisk, then mix into it eight ounces of currants, mixed all well together; butter the tin-pans, fill them but half full, and bake them; if made without currants they will keep half a year; add a pound of almonds blanched, and beat with rose-water, as above, and leave out the flour. These are another sort, and better.

TO MAKE LITTLE PLUM-CAKES

Take two pounds of flour dried in the oven, or at a great fire, and half a pound of sugar finely powdered, four yolks of eggs, two whites, half a pound of butter washed with rose-water, six spoonfuls of cream warmed, a pound and a half of currants unwashed, but pickled and rubbed very clean in a cloth; mix all well together, then make them up into cakes, bake them in an oven almost as hot as for a manchet, and let them stand half an hour till they are coloured on both sides, then take down the oven-lid, and let them stand to soak. You must rub the butter into the flour very well, then the egg and cream, and then the currants.

TO MAKE SHREWSBURY CAKES

Take two pounds of flour, a pound of sugar finely searced, mix them together (take out a quarter of a pound to roll them in); take four eggs beat, four spoonfuls of cream, and two spoonfuls of rose-water; beat them well together, and mix them with the flour into a paste, roll them into thin cakes, and bake them in a quick oven. *