



TOP: Mathis penned a cookbook in 1982, *Cooking For You Alone*. BOTTOM: An old family photo. Mathis's mother and father are in the first row, and Johnny is standing in the back row with his brother and sisters (Johnny is top right). He had 6 siblings. "When I was growing up we didn't have a lot of extra money for gifts," Mathis remembers, "but there was always the smell of holiday foods cooking and music all around the house."

Q + A

Johnny Mathis Cookbook author/Gourmet

KITCHEN INSPIRATION?

I learned growing up; both of my parents were great cooks. I've always cooked all of my own food. I enjoy it and it's relaxing and it's never made sense to me to have someone cook for me.

ENTERTAINING?

I don't entertain so often now because of travel and golfing. But I used to love having groups over. The best thing was that I had a golfing buddy who would come over early and do all the chopping; he loved to chop and he was good at it. That made it easier and more fun.

FAVORITE HOLIDAY?

I love Christmas; it has great memories for me. When I was a child there wasn't a lot of money for gifts, but there were always wonderful foods, the smells coming from the kitchen, and we had lots of music.

IS THIS A FAMILY RECIPE?

No, it actually came from my golfing buddy, Howard Keel (MGM musical star). He's gone now, but he had great stories about his movie career. \$

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STICKY TOFFEE PUDDING by Johnny Mathis

- 3/4 pound (or 8 ounce package) of chopped Pitted Dates
- 1 cup water
- 1 tsp. Baking Soda
- 1/4 cup butter
- 3/4 cups sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup + 2 Tbl. of all purpose flour
- 1/2 tsp. vanilla

Combine dates and water in a saucepan and bring to a boil
 Remove from heat
 Stir in Baking Soda
 Then set aside
 Cream butter and sugar together until smooth
 Add eggs – one at a time, beating after each addition
 Fold the flour into cream mixture
 Add dates with liquid and vanilla

Pour the batter into a greased 7 X 7 X 2 baking pan
 Bake @ 350 for 30-40 minutes

While pudding is baking, prepare the sauce:

Sauce
 1 cup firmly packed brown sugar
 1/4 cup + 2 Tbl. whipping cream
 1/2 cup butter
 1/2 tsp. vanilla
 Combine sugar, cream, butter, vanilla into saucepan
 Bring to boil
 Reduce heat and simmer for 3 minutes
 Pour some of the sauce over the baked pudding
 Return to oven for 7 more minutes
 Pudding should absorb the sauce and turn golden brown
 Cut into squares and serve with extra sauce

P.S. "If You Want To Gild The Lily, Throw Some Pecans Into The Sauce."