

Old English Custom

Tradition Tells Us to Serve Hot Cross Buns

By Maxine Buren
Statesman Woman's Editor

There's something about cold weather, and especially when it gives one that snowbound feeling, that brings many women a desire to bake yeast bread.

We had our experience with a recently published rule for making brown and serve rolls, which are only half baked. We were in the midst of a batch when neices brought a crowd of boys and girls to slide on neighboring hills. We would far rather entertain 14 youngsters with waffles and hot chocolate and lots of snow for sliding, than finish up a batch of bread. So we theoretically threw out bread to the four winds and enjoyed our relatives and their friends.

The weather notwithstanding, hot cross buns will be on the March schedule of bread-baking women.

Mythology tells us that the Greeks offered to their moon goddess, Astarte, and other of their divinities, a sacred cake called a "bun," from which the word "bun" finally evolved. These cakes appear in many of the early Grecian works of art and sculpture. It is possible that the stylized cross was used as either an allusion to the four phases of the moon, or as a matter of convenience in breaking the cakes into four parts when offered as a sacrifice.

The Egyptians similarly honored their moon goddess by a cake offering on special days. Their cakes were called "bon," meaning ox, and were printed with a pair of horns, symbolic of the oxen or horned moon of Isis.

In the Christian era, the custom of the hot cross buns was continued, but with a new significance attached to the symbol of the cross.

Medieval churches distributed buns to communicants after Mass on Easter Sunday. In England, as far back as 1252, bakeries engaged in the forbidden practice of competing with the church, by selling buns and cakes stamped with a cross.

It was believed that the buns would never mold if properly made and the entire procedure has to be completed before a certain time — whether sunrise or church time is now uncertain. Undoubtedly the lavish use of spices in the cakes helped to preserve them, enabling families to keep a bun for good luck until the same season the following year.

Later, the bun lost its religious significance and became a mere cake. Yet it continued to be associated with Good Friday. Here is one of the many recipes for Hot Cross Buns:

HOT CROSS BUNS

- 3/4 cup seedless raisins
- 3/4 cup milk
- 1/2 cup butter or margarine
- 1/2 cup granulated sugar
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt
- 1 cake compressed yeast
- 2 eggs
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- Rinse and drain raisins. Scald milk and stir in butter, sugar and salt. Cool to lukewarm. Crumble in yeast and mix well. Beat 1 egg with 1 yolk, reserving 1 egg white for glaze. Mix egg and about half the flour into yeast mixture, beating until smooth. Add spices, raisins, citron and cherries and mix well. Add remaining flour to make soft dough. Knead on floured board until smooth. Place in bowl, cover closely and let stand until dough is doubled in bulk (about 1 1/2 to 2 hours). Punch down. Turn out on floured board and roll dough to about 3/4-inch in thickness. Cut with 2 1/2-inch round cutter. Dip in melted butter and place about 1-inch apart on greased baking sheet. Let rise until light (about 45 minutes). Make a shallow cut in shape of cross on top of each roll, using a sharp knife. Beat egg white with 1 tablespoon cold water until foamy. Brush onto tops of rolls. Bake in moderately hot oven (375 degrees) 20 minutes. Brush again with egg white and bake 5 minutes longer. Remove from oven and fill cross with stiff confectioners' icing. Serve warm. Makes 15 large buns.

In Traditional Style



Hot Cross Buns are, of course, traditional breakfast fare for Good Friday. They have become a popular choice for serving during the entire Lenten season. They'll be found at the baker's shops from now until Easter and many women will like to make their own.

Franks Combine For Main Dish

Frankfurters are a good meat to fall back upon when ideas are at a premium. Here is one such dish using the franks along with tomato soup.

FESTIVE FRANKS

- 1/2 cup finely chopped onion
- 1/2 cup finely chopped celery
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 3 tablespoons shortening
- 2 tablespoons brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons prepared mustard
- 1 can (1 1/4 cups) condensed tomato soup
- 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce
- 2 teaspoons lemon juice or vinegar
- 4 drops Tabasco sauce, if desired
- 1 pound frankfurters (10-12)
- Brown onion, celery and garlic in the hot melted shortening in a skillet. Stir in remaining sauce ingredients and add frankfurters to the sauce. Cover; simmer 20 minutes. Eat these hot with sauce as is, or put franks, in buns. Serves 4 or 5.

CABBAGE AGAIN

Wedges of cooked cabbage can easily become company fare. Top each serving with a creamy cheese sauce which has pieces of red pimiento and chopped black olives for extra flavor and color.

Apples, Buttermilk In Quick Bread

We've had orange breads, banana and prune and date breads. We have also featured applesauce cake as one of the best. Here is an apple bread, new to use but it should be just as good as applesauce cake.

APPLE BUTTERMILK BREAD

- 1 cup grated unpeeled apple
- 1 1/2 tablespoons buttermilk
- 2 cups sifted flour
- 1 teaspoon soda
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup chopped nuts
- 1/2 cup shortening
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- Cream shortening and sugar together until fluffy. Add eggs and beat well. Stir in grated apple and buttermilk (or sour milk). Sift flour with soda, baking powder and salt. Add chopped nuts to dry ingredients and stir into apple mixture. Pour into two 6x3 inch greased loaf pans and bake in moderate oven (350 degrees) 45 mins.

Tomatoes Baked In Casserole

The hot house tomatoes are in market all winter these days. Here is a recipe that uses fresh tomatoes and can be made now with the market's offering, or later when the garden yields sun-ripened ones.

TOMATOES BRISTOL

- 6 ripe unpeeled tomatoes
- 1 cup cooked lima beans
- 1/2 cup fresh bread cubes
- 2 tablespoons onion, chopped
- 2 tablespoons parsley
- 1/2 cup cheese, grated
- 2 tablespoons butter, melted
- 3 tablespoons cream or milk
- 1 egg, beaten
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- Scoop out centers of tomatoes. Combine remaining ingredients and stuff tomatoes. Fit into shallow pan and add 1/2 inch boiling water. Bake in a moderate oven (350 degrees) 30 minutes. Serves 6.

PEARS HANDY

Fresh winter pears are the basis for many wonderful salads this time of year. Peel, halve and core a juicy ripe pear, then dip in pineapple juice to preserve its pearly white color. Arrange on crisp greens. Top with a sprinkling of red sugar to give it a delicate blush. A cheese dressing is superb with this.

Pepper Prospects Looking Up, Now That Industry Eyes This Hemisphere

The high price of pepper has stepped up interest in the production of that leading spice here in the Western Hemisphere, according to the office of foreign agricultural relations, U. S. department of agriculture. Most of the pepper used in the United States in normal times comes from the Far East. Short production there has caused the price to growers to rise from 10 cents a pound in 1946 to more than \$2.60 a pound in 1950.

Some experimental work in pepper growing has been done in Ecuador and Nicaragua, through cooperation of department of agriculture scientists.

Pepper is the world's most important spice. It accounts for more than a quarter of the total tonnage of all spices imported by the United States. Yet the U. S. is getting less than half its normal supply. The shortage is the result of destruction of the plantations in Indonesia in World War II. Before the war Indonesia was the greatest pepper-growing country in the world. India ranked second with French Indo-China, Sarawak, Siam, Madagascar and Ceylon next in order.

Familiar as pepper is on the kitchen shelf and dinner table, many people know little about where and how it grows or even the difference between black and white pepper. Black pepper is the dried fruit of the tropical pepper vine. The berries are picked while still green and dried in the sun. White pepper is the seed of the berries left to ripen on the vine. To produce it, the ripe berries are fermented, then washed to remove skin and pulp, and finally spread on mats to sun-dry. Pepper vines are often trained to grow on such tropical trees as kapok which give them support as well as shade.

CARE WITH MUSHROOMS
Don't keep fresh mushrooms too long before using them — three days in the refrigerator at the most. Use low heat when you're cooking them and don't overcook.

ADD SALT
Next time you cook prunes or apricots or one of the other dried fruits, add a few grains of salt or lemon to enhance the flavor. Applesauce also benefits from a dash of salt.

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Fluffy Dessert Uses Gelatine

Whipped up gelatine makes this fruitily dessert a nice texture.

GRAPEFRUIT FLUFF

- 1 tablespoon gelatine
- 1/4 cup cold water
- 1 No. 2 can grapefruit sections
- 2 eggs, separated
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon corn starch
- Pinch salt
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 cup milk

Soften gelatine in water for 5 minutes; then dissolve in a little boiling water drained from grapefruit. Add to rest of juice and the grapefruit which may be sliced or left whole, as desired. Chill until liquid starts to congeal. Beat egg whites stiff; then gradually beat in 1/4 cup sugar. Whip this into gelatine mixture. Chill till firm. Serves 5 to 6.

SAUCE

Beat egg yolks, add milk, and stir in 2 tablespoons sugar combined with the corn starch. Cook over boiling water, stirring constantly until sauce thickens and coats spoon. Stir in salt and butter and cool. Serve over Grapefruit Fluff.

EASY, POPULAR

Tapioca pudding becomes a very special dessert when you sweeten it with brown sugar and add a handful of raisins to the mixture as it cooks. After it cools fold in a half cup of whipped cream.

One-Egg Cake Has Fruit Filling

An inexpensive one-egg cake takes well to a rather sweet filling. You can make this for family dinner desserts. Good between layers of gingerbread too.

RAISIN NUT FILLING

- 3/4 cup brown sugar, firmly packed
- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1/4 cup water
- 3/4 cup broken walnut meats
- 3/4 cup cut seeded raisins
- 2 tablespoons cream or rich milk (about)

Heat sugar, butter, and water in skillet, and cook until a small amount of mixture forms a small ball in cold water (236 degrees). Remove from fire add nuts and raisins. Add cream until of right consistency to spread. Makes enough filling to spread between two 9-inch layers, or on top of 8x8-inch cake.

FRUITS COMBINE

Partially thawed frozen strawberries with golden canned peach halves and a few fresh grapefruit sections make a beautiful fruit bowl. You'll like it for dessert after a heavy meal or to finish off a brunch menu.

Pear Provides Fruity Dessert

Try Pear Helene for an unusual sundae. Serve it as an after-meal dessert or for afternoon or evening refreshment.

PEAR HELENE

In an ice cream dish place a scoop of ice cream. Top with a canned Bartlett pear half cut side down. Pour over this a rich chocolate sundae sauce. Form a circle of whipped cream around the inner side of the dish using a pastry bag, leaving a portion of the chocolate covered pear exposed. Top with chopped nuts.

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