

## Food for Thought

*It's a shame that fruitcake gets such a bad rap. With two key ingredients - rum (or brandy) and butter - it ought to be a hit.*

A good fruitcake is not dry, hard, sticky-sweet, or filled with tasteless, artificially colored fruit. Fruitcake at its best should be a mixture of fruits, nuts and just enough rich batter to hold them together. Popular since the Middle Ages, fruitcakes are a symbol of good luck for the New Year as well as for weddings and other celebrations.

Don't try to rush, time is necessary. Some bakers begin soaking fruit in rum months in advance. Allowing the flavors to blend both before and after baking is the key to decadent fruitcakes. Ideally, it takes several days to make your cake or cakes. Chop the nuts and fruits, cover with liquor and/or fruit juice, and let the mixture stand, covered, for two or three days. You can store it longer than a recipe requires, but don't shorten the aging time. Then make the batter and bake your cakes. For most recipes, a full month of ripening is a necessity.

A recipe is only a guide: don't include ingredients you don't like. Feel free to substitute other types of candied or dried fruit and nuts; just be sure that the weight of the fruit and nuts you choose equals that of the original recipe. Dried fruits cooked in juice or wine until they're plump can take the place of candied fruits; home-candied fruits are far more flavorful than the store-bought variety. Fruit juice - apple, orange or a combination of both - works very well in place of rum or brandy, but changes how cakes can be stored.

Always bake fruitcakes slowly, at a low temperature--between 225 to 325 degrees F. The cakes are dense with fruit that will release liquid during baking. Prepare your pans by greasing and flouring them or by lining them with greased parchment paper. When the cake batter is ready, spoon it into the prepared pans, and tap the pans on the work surface to pop any air bubbles. If desired, arrange nut halves, candied cherries or other fruit decoratively on the cake before baking. Place cake pans on center oven rack; pans should not touch each other. You may wish to cover fruitcakes with aluminum foil for the last half hour of baking. With such a long baking time and with so many varieties - light and dark - of fruitcake, color alone won't indicate when the cake is done. Test for doneness by poking a skewer or a toothpick near the center of the cake. It should come out clean.

When wrapped in liquor- or juice-dampened cheesecloth and foil, a fruitcake may be kept for months. Liquor-based cakes may be stored several months in a cool place. Cakes made with fruit juice may be kept in the refrigerator for short-term storage. Fruitcakes freeze well, but don't freeze them until the flavors have ripened and mellowed. Check the cakes once a week and brush with more liquor, if needed, then rewrap in the damp cloth.

When ready to serve, cut the cake into thin slices using a sawing motion. To avoid crumbling, use a serrated knife or other sharp knife.

### FRUITCAKE V

1/8 cup chopped dried cherries	1/8 cup chopped dried mango
1/4 cup dried cranberries	1/4 cup dried currants
2 tbs. chopped candied citron	1/4 cup chopped pecans
1/2 cup light rum, divided	
1/2 cup all-purpose flour	1/8 tsp baking soda
1/4 tsp salt	1/4 tsp ground cinnamon
8 tbs butter	1/4 cup packed brown sugar
1 egg	
2 tbs milk	1/4 cup unsulfured molasses

Soak dried fruit in 1/4 cup rum for at least 24 hours. Cover tightly, and store at room temperature.

Preheat oven to 325 degrees F. Butter a 6 inch round pan and line with parchment paper.

Whisk together the flour, baking soda, salt, and cinnamon.

Cream together butter and sugar until fluffy. Beat in the egg. Add flour in three batches, alternating with the milk and molasses. Stir in the fruit/rum mixture, citron and nuts.

Scrape batter into prepared pan, and bake for 40 to 45 minutes. Let cake cool in the pan for 10 minutes, then sprinkle with 2 tbs. rum.

Place a piece of parchment paper, large enough to wrap entire cake, on a flat surface. Moisten a piece of cheesecloth, large enough to wrap the cake, with 1 tablespoon rum. Place the cheesecloth on top of the parchment paper, and unmold the cake on top of it. Sprinkle the top and sides of the cake with the remaining rum. Wrap cake, pressing the cheesecloth closely to the surface. Place the cake in an airtight tin, and let age for at least 10 weeks. If storing longer, add 1 tbs. rum each week.

### FRUITCAKE I

2 cups packed brown sugar	3 cups all-purpose flour	1 tbs. baking soda
2 tbs. ground cinnamon	2 tbs. ground cloves	2 tbs. ground allspice
2 tbs. ground nutmeg	4 eggs	2 tbs. lemon zest
2 tbs. vanilla extract	1-1/2 cups raisins	1-1/2 cups chopped nuts
1-1/2 cups dried mixed fruit	1-1/2 cups butter, melted	
2-1/4 cups brandy, divided		

Preheat oven to 225 degrees F. Grease and flour a tube pan.

In a large bowl, combine sugar, flour, soda, spices, eggs, lemon rind, vanilla, 1/2 cup brandy, fruit, nuts, and melted butter. Mix thoroughly. Pour into prepared pan.

Bake for 1 hour, or until a tester inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool on a wire rack.

Wrap cooled cake in foil. Sprinkle 2 tablespoons brandy over the cake every day for 2 weeks.

### FRUITCAKE VI

1 lb. candied cherries	1/2 lb. candied mixed citrus peel	
2 cups raisins	1 cup dried currants	1 cup pitted, chopped dates
5-1/2 oz. blanched slivered almonds		
1/2 cup brandy	1/2 cup all-purpose flour	2 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 tsp. baking soda	1 tsp. ground cloves	1 tsp. ground allspice
1 tsp. ground cinnamon	1/2 tsp. salt	
1 cup butter	2 cups packed brown sugar	6 eggs
3/4 cup molasses	3/4 cup apple juice	

In a medium bowl, combine cherries, citrus peel, raisins, currants, dates and almonds. Stir in brandy; let stand 2 hours, or overnight. Dredge soaked fruit with 1/2 cup flour.

Preheat oven to 275 degrees F. Grease an 8 x 8 x 3 inch loaf pan, line with parchment paper, and grease again. In a small bowl, mix together 2 cups flour, baking soda, cloves, allspice, cinnamon, and salt; set aside.

In a large bowl, cream butter until light. Gradually blend in brown sugar and eggs. Mix together molasses and apple juice. Beat into butter mixture alternately with flour mixture, making 4 dry and 3 liquid additions. Fold in floured fruit. Turn batter into prepared pan.

Bake in preheated oven for 3 to 3-1/2 hours, or until a toothpick inserted into the center of cake comes out clean. Remove from pan, and lift off paper. Cool cake completely, then wrap loosely in waxed paper. Store in an airtight container.

## Church Directory

### NEHALEM VALLEY BIBLE CHURCH

Gary Taylor, Pastor  
Grant & North Streets, Vernonia  
503 429-5378  
Sunday School 10:00 a.m.  
Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.  
Nursery available  
Wednesday Service 7:00 p.m.

### VERNONIA FOURSQUARE CHURCH

Carl Pense, Pastor  
850 Madison Avenue, Vernonia  
503 429-1103  
Sunday Worship Service: 10:30 a.m.  
Children's Sunday School

### VERNONIA COMMUNITY CHURCH

Grant Williams, Pastor  
957 State Avenue, Vernonia  
503 429-6790  
Sunday Breakfast 9:00 a.m.  
Morning Worship 9:45 a.m.  
Children and Nursery 10:00 a.m.  
Youth Group 6:00 p.m.  
Preschool Tues. & Thurs. 9:00 a.m.  
Wednesday Prayer 7:00 p.m.  
Friday Adult Volleyball 7:00 p.m.

### ST. MARY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

Rev. Luan Tran, Administrator  
960 Missouri Avenue, Vernonia  
503 429-8841  
Mass Schedule  
Sunday 12:00 Noon  
Religious Education  
Sunday 10:30 a.m.

### SEVENTH DAY ADVENTIST

2nd Ave. and Nehalem St., Vernonia  
503 429-8301  
Morning Worship, 11:00 a.m.  
Bible Study 9:15 a.m.

### FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

359 "A" Street, Vernonia  
503 429-5190  
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.  
Sunday Worship Service 11:00 a.m.  
Wednesday Prayer Meeting 7:00 p.m.

### ST. AUGUSTINE (CANTERBURY) EPISCOPAL CHURCH

375 North St. (Vernonia Grange Hall)  
Vernonia, 503 705-2173  
Please call for service schedule.

### CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS

Marc Farmer, Branch President  
1350 E. Knott Street, Vernonia  
503 429-7151  
Sacrament Meeting, Sunday 10 a.m.  
Sunday School & Primary 11:20 a.m.  
Relief Society, Priesthood and  
Young Women, Sunday 12:10 p.m.

### ASSEMBLY OF GOD

Wayne and Maureen Marr  
662 Jefferson Ave., Vernonia,  
503 429-0373  
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.  
Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.

### VERNONIA CHRISTIAN CHURCH

Sam Hough, Evangelist  
410 North Street, Vernonia  
503 429-6522  
Sunday School 9:45 a.m.  
Morning Worship 11:00 a.m.  
Every Wednesday:  
Ladies' Bible Study 9:30 a.m.  
Ladies' Worship 10:00 a.m.  
Children's Choir 3:00 p.m.  
Family Bible Study 7:00 p.m.