

Historical Recipes

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James Monroe:

Spoon Bread

[Get recipe]

Cry Babies

Molasses drop-cookies <https://ahundredyearsago.com/2024/03/17/cry-babies-cookies/>

Makes about 50 cookies

1/2 cup hot coffee

1 teaspoon baking soda

1/2 cup sugar

1/2 cup molasses

1/2 cup shortening or butter

1 egg

1 teaspoon cinnamon

1 teaspoon ginger

dash salt

2 1/2 cups flour

1/2 cup raisins

1/2 cup pecans or walnuts, chopped

Preheat oven to 375° F. Dissolve the baking soda in the hot coffee.

Put sugar, molasses, shortening, egg, cinnamon, ginger, salt, and the coffee with baking soda in a large mixing bowl; beat until combined. Add flour, and stir until combined and smooth. Add raisins and walnuts; stir to distribute throughout the dough. Drop heaping teaspoons about 2 inches apart on a lightly greased baking sheet. Bake 10-12 minutes, or until lightly browned.

James Polk

Corn Pone

2 cups (white) cornmeal

1/4 teaspoon baking soda

1 teaspoon salt

4 tablespoons shortening (or lard or butter)

3/4 cup boiling water

1/2 cup buttermilk

Sift 2 cups (white) cornmeal with 1/4 teaspoon baking soda and 1 teaspoon salt. Work 4 tablespoons shortening (or lard) into the dry ingredients. Blend well. Add 3/4 cup boiling water and continue blending. Slowly add 1/2 cup buttermilk until a soft dough is formed. The buttermilk should be added very slowly, making sure the dough retains enough consistency to be molded

into small flat cakes.

Grease a skillet, heat it, then place the cakes in it and bake them in a preheated medium-hot (350 degrees F.) oven for 1/2 hour or 40 minutes, until lightly browned and done. Makes approximately 12.

---*President's Cookbook*, (p. 185-186)

Andrew Johnson:

Red Rice

6 strips bacon, uncooked
2 sliced onions
1 clove minced garlic.
1 large can of tomatoes, with the juice.
1 can tomato paste.
1 cup rice, uncooked

Fry lightly 6 strips bacon until lightly crisped. Set aside. Use the bacon fat to saute 2 sliced onions and 1 clove minced garlic. Slowly add 1 large can of tomatoes, with the juice. Stir well, then add 1 can tomato paste. Simmer 5 to 8 minutes over low heat, then sprinkle 1 cup rice and the 6 slices cooked bacon. Cover skillet and steam until the rice is tender. (If the rice is not fully covered by the tomato liquid when you first begin steaming it, add just enough boiling water to cover.)

In Johnson's day, red rice was a meal in itself for humble folk. Serves 6.

---*Presidents' Cook Book* (p. 267)

Green Beans

"Leather Britches" was one of Andrew Jackson's favorite dishes, which was simply good ole Southern green beans cooked with bacon or ham hock. The original recipe calls for drying the beans and then re-hydrating them, but this recipe is simpler:

<https://www.lanascooking.com/old-fashioned-southern-green-beans/>

Roasted Turkey Legs

<https://thewoksoflife.com/smoked-turkey-legs-disney-copycat-recipe/>

<https://healthyrecipesblogs.com/roasted-turkey-legs/>

Abraham Lincoln:

Mary Todd's Vanilla Almond Cake

There are reports attributable to President Lincoln that this cake of his wife's was the best he ever ate...This delicious cake was the invention of Monsieur Giron, a Lexington [KY] caterer, who created it in honor of the visit to that city in 1825 of his fellow Frenchman, Lafayette. The Todd family acquired the recipe and cherished it ever after. The baking powder must have been added at a later date.

2 cups Sugar
1 cup Butter
3 cups Flour
3 teaspoons baking powder
1 cup milk
1 cup blanched almonds
6 stiffly beaten egg whites
1 teaspoon vanilla (or almond) extract

Cream together 2 cups sugar with 1 cup butter. Sift 3 cups flour and 3 teaspoons baking powder three times and add to the butter-sugar mixture alternately with 1 cup milk. Chop 1 cup blanched almonds until very fine and add them to the mixture. Beat vigorously, then fold in 6 stiffly beaten egg whites carefully. Add 1 teaspoon vanilla, then fold in 6 stiffly beaten egg whites carefully. Add 1 teaspoon vanilla (almond extract if you prefer) and pour the mixture into a greased and floured angel-cake pan. Bake in a preheated moderate (350 degree F.) oven for approximately 1 hour, or until a toothpick comes out clean when inserted into the cake's center. Turn the cake out on a wire rack and allow to cool before frosting it.

Note: This makes a very large cake. If you prefer, you can bake it in two 9-inch layer-cake pans. The cake may be made without the almonds and is a splendid plain white cake, very light and good.

Frost with vanilla frosting or Candied Fruit Frosting (below).

Mary Todd's Candied Fruit Frosting

Egg whites
Sugar
Water
Vanilla (or almond extract)
Salt
Candied pineapple
Crystallized cherries

Beat 2 egg whites until very stiff. Set aside for a moment. Beat together 2 cups sugar and 1 cup water until the syrup spins a thread about five inches long. Then slowly fold into the egg whites, a spoonful at a time, very slowly, beating well with an electric beater as you add. Beat at top

speed (very hard if you use a hand beater) until all the syrup is used and the mixture forms peaks when dropped from a spoon. When stiff, slowly add 1 teaspoon vanilla or 1/2 teaspoon vanilla and 1/2 teaspoon almond extract. Fold into the mixture 1/2 cup diced candied pineapple and 1/2 cup crystallized cherries cut in half. Spread between the layers and over the top and sides of the vanilla almond cake. If desired, the candied fruit may be eliminated. The frosting is delicious without them."

--- *The Presidents' Cookbook*, Poppy Cannon and Patricia Brooks [Funk & Wagnalls: New York] 1968 (p. 256-258)