

Holiday Tips & Recipes



"The art of giving presents is to give something which others cannot buy for themselves"

-A.A. Milne

Great Gifts From Your Kitchen

Looking for some inexpensive, yet creative homemade gifts that will draw some *oohs and ahs* from those on your Christmas list on that big day? Look no further than your kitchen when it comes to practical, *easy-to-put-together* items that will delight almost anyone.

Everyone appreciates a gift that is homemade because of the extra time, attention and love put into it. Besides being as creative as you want, the giver can take the person's individual needs into consideration. For that diabetic friend, for instance, give a choice of sugar-free jams in a small wicker basket; or for the pickle lover, send some pickled okra, pickled watermelon rind, or dilly beans, to name just a few different choices.

Do you have a favorite mixed bean soup recipe you would be willing to share? A unique way to do it is by layering the different dried beans called for in the recipe in a clear glass jar, put on a decorative jar cover and label and attach the recipe. Put the jar in a basket along with a loaf of homemade bread and perhaps a beverage or some holiday cookies and you have a delightful gift for someone to enjoy on one of those cold winter nights.

Nuts in the shell are always a welcome gift; add them to a basket along with a fancy nutcracker. If you are really ambitious, try shelling the nuts and roasting them with different flavorings, such as garlic powder or liquid smoke (this works best with almonds). Pack them in fancy jelly jars and you have a great gift for the home entertainer on your list.

Dried fruits are so expensive if purchased in the fancy commercial packs on the market but if you venture into the Suisun Valley you can obtain them locally from Solano local farmers. Or you can spend the time and dry them yourself. Put some different varieties in a flat basket, add some shelled nuts and cover with colored cellophane and a pretty ribbon for a gift which will surely rival anything you can buy commercially.

Dried soup mixes, flavored vinegars, dried fruits and nuts -all are super gifts right from your kitchen made with a minimum of effort, yet with the touch of quality and love that will make your gift the most treasured of all. Happy gift giving!

Sending Your Far Away Special People Baked Goodies

Low on cash, but want to remember a loved one with something special this Holiday Season? Sending a homemade goodie says it with love. But if your gift is not properly packed, your love and effort may be in vain.

Start by choosing foods that travel well. Forget delicate or crisp cookies and cakes, or foods that need refrigeration, or heavily frosted items. Good packers include; fruit cakes, nut breads; bar cookies such as brownies, fruit bars of all kinds, baked and shipped in foil pans (wrapped with foil or plastic wrap). Salt and candy-coated nuts or soft candies shipped in one large bar usually travel well. Chocolate-dipped fruits and candy may be a sticky situation if sent to warm or hot climates.

Use a sturdy container that is the right size for the amount of food being sent. This helps eliminate extra shifting and crumbling. Good containers include: fresh vegetable trays, coffee and shortening cans, oatmeal and cornmeal tubes, light plastic containers, and foil pans. Decorate the container with colored foil, wrapping paper, felt ribbon or yarn. Use puffed cereal, popcorn, marshmallows, or crushed paper to fill any extra spaces.

Place the gift container in a sturdy shipping box, corrugated, if possible. A layer of filler at the bottom of the shipping box serves as a cushion. Use additional filler for other empty spaces and to cushion the top as well.

Packing Pointers:

1. Wrap foods in foil or plastic wrap.
2. Pack foods in a sturdy container.
3. Use filler such as popcorn, crumpled paper, Styrofoam chips or puffed cereal as a cushion on the bottom of a shipping box, corrugated, if possible.
4. In the shipping box place the heaviest wrapped foods on the bottom, lightest ones on top.
5. Stuff filler between any individual packages to minimize shifting and crumbling in route
6. Top the shipping box with another cushion of filler and enclose a shipping label.
7. Secure the shipping box with pressure sensitive tape. Scotch or masking tape is not acceptable.
8. Label the shipping box clearly with the name and address of the sender and the receiver.
9. For gentler handling, label the package, "FRAGILE, HANDLE WITH CARE."
10. Use "air express" or "parcel post" for overseas mailing. Ask about how long the package will take to arrive.

Appetizers and Starters

Grapefruit, Persimmon, and Avocado Salad

4 large or 6 small grapefruit, white or pink variety
2 very ripe and soft persimmons
1 large or 2 small ripe avocados (Hass is best variety)
1 head of Bibb lettuce

Peel and section the grapefruit making sure to remove all the membrane. Place in a bowl. Peel and slightly mash the persimmons. Add to the grapefruit sections. This may be prepared and refrigerated at this point 1 to 2 days ahead.

When ready to serve, wash and separate the lettuce leaves and drain well. Line a serving tray or individual salad bowls with the leaves. Spoon on the grapefruit and persimmon mixture and top with peeled and sliced avocado. Serves 8-12 people.

Pearl's Smoked Almonds

1/2 teaspoon liquid smoke
2 teaspoons water
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup whole unblanched almonds
1 teaspoon salad oil

Mix liquid smoke, salt, and water in a bowl. Add almonds and stir to coat. Let stand overnight. Add oil to almonds and stir until well coated. Spread in shallow pan and roast in 250° F. oven, stirring often, until nuts are crunchy. Cook and store in airtight container.

Sichuan Spiced Nuts

1 teaspoon Sichuan peppercorns or black peppercorns
2 cups almonds (unblanched) or salted, roasted peanuts
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper

Toast peppercorns in a large frying pan over medium-low heat, shaking often, for 4 to 5 minutes; do not scorch. Remove from pan. Crush with a mortar and pestle, or place peppercorns in a plastic bag and crush with a heavy mallet until very finely ground. Pour through a fine strainer back into the pan. Discard coarse pieces.

Add nuts, sugar, and cayenne to pan; mix well. Stir over medium heat until sugar melts completely, then reduce heat to low and continue stirring until sugar coats nuts with a shiny glaze, about 10 minutes. Pour onto a piece of oiled foil. Cool. Break nuts apart. Serve, or store at once in an airtight container. (Nuts absorb moisture quickly.) Store for up to two weeks. Makes two cups. (Do not try to double the batch--make two batches instead.)

SUGARED WALNUTS

1 c. firmly packed brown sugar
 1/2 c. sugar
 1/2 c. commercial sour cream
 1 tsp. vanilla extract
 2 (3-oz.) pkg. walnut halves

Combine sugar and sour cream in a Dutch oven; stir well. Bring to a boil. Boil, without stirring, until mixture reaches soft ball stage (238 degrees). Stir in vanilla and walnuts.

Quickly turn walnuts out onto a buttered baking sheet. Separate with a fork. Let cool; store in a tightly covered container. Yield: about 2-1/2 cups

CINNAMON WALNUTS

1 c. sugar
 1/2 tsp. ground cinnamon
 1/8 tsp. cream of tartar
 1/4 c. boiling water
 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract
 1-1/2 c. walnut halves

Combine sugar, cinnamon, cream of tartar, and water in a medium-size heavy saucepan. Stir until well blended. Cook over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until mixture reaches soft ball stage (240 degrees).

Remove from heat; stir in vanilla and walnuts. Beat with a wooden spoon until thickened. Quickly spread walnuts on waxed paper; separate with fork. Let cool. Store in an airtight container. Yield about 3 cups.

Beverages and Beverage Mixes

Russian Tea

1 cup instant tea
 1 cup Tang orange drink powder
 1 cup sugar
 4 oz. powdered lemonade mix
 1 tsp. ground cinnamon
 1 tsp. ground cloves

Mix all ingredients together and store in an airtight jar. I omit the sugar because the Tang and lemonade mix are already sweetened. Orange and lemon flavored drink powder can be purchased made with artificial sweeteners, if you prefer

Hot Buttered Rum Mix

1 qt. vanilla ice cream
 1 lb. butter, melted (do not use margarine)
 1 lb. brown sugar
 1 lb. powdered sugar
 1 ½ tsp. ground cinnamon
 1 ½ tsp. ground nutmeg
 Dash allspice

Mix butter with sugar and spices and beat in ice cream. For drinks, use about 2 Tbsp. mix, 1 oz. rum and 6 oz. boiling water. This mix is also good on pound cake, ice cream and baked apples. Store leftover mix in the freezer.

Hot Cocoa Mix

¼ cup Dutch processed cocoa
 ½ cup sugar
 ¼ tsp. ground cinnamon
 ¼ tsp. vanilla powder

Mix ingredients together. When ready for a cup of hot chocolate, mix 2 tablespoons of the mix into 1 cup hot milk. Stir and serve.

Hot Cocoa Milk Mix

5-6 cups non-fat dry milk powder
 1 ½ cups sugar
 1 cup cocoa powder
 1 vanilla bean, optional

Mix all ingredients together, except vanilla bean. Store the mixture in a canister or plastic bag. Add vanilla bean to storage container. The recipe makes 7 1/2 cups cocoa mix which will make about 60 cups of hot cocoa. TO MAKE ONE CUP OF HOT COCOA: Put 3 heaping tablespoons of the mix into

a cup. Next add a small amount of hot water to the cup and stir the mixture until a paste forms. Finally, fill cup with additional hot water and stir thoroughly. Serve and enjoy.

Mulled Cranberry Juice

4 4-inch cinnamon sticks, broken in pieces
 3 teaspoons whole allspice
 2 whole nutmegs, crushed
 3 teaspoons grated lemon peel
 1/3 cup brown sugar, firmly packed
 4 large lemons

Combine all above ingredients, with the exception of the lemons, in a small bowl.

For mulls, divide mixture into four equal parts and put onto four two-inch squares of cheesecloth. Wrap cheesecloth around mixture and tie with string. Wrap all with plastic wrap and tie with ribbons. Store the bundles of spices in the refrigerator.

To make mulled cranberry juice, untie ribbon and remove plastic wrap. Place one mull in 1 1/2 quarts cranberry juice in a large pan, add sliced lemons and bring the mixture to a boil. Simmer for 15 minutes.

HOLIDAY CIDER

1 gallon apple cider
 6 ounces frozen orange juice concentrate
 2 ounces frozen lemonade concentrate
 1/2 cup brown sugar—(use 3/4 cup if you like it sweeter)
 1 Tablespoon whole cloves
 1 Tablespoon whole allspice
 3-4 whole cinnamon sticks
 1 whole nutmeg, crushed

Tie all the spices into a fabric square. In a large pot, combine the juices and brown sugar. Mix and stir until well mixed. Add the spice bag and bring to a simmer and simmer at least 30 minutes. Serve hot with a cinnamon stick as a stirrer.

Breads and Coffee Cakes

DATE TREASURE CAKE

- 1 cup flour
- 1 cup sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon baking powder

Mix the dry ingredients together in a large bowl.

Add:

- 3 cups whole, pitted dates
- 3 cups walnuts, as whole as possible
- 1 cup whole maraschino cherries, drained

Mix well until fruit and nuts are well coated and distributed.

In another small bowl beat four eggs well. (Or use egg substitute to equal four eggs). Add 1 teaspoon vanilla flavoring extract. Mix well.

Pour the egg mixture over the fruit, nut and dry ingredient mixture and stir until the dry ingredients are well blended.

Turn out the mixture into prepared loaf pans—lined with brown paper and greased well. Bake at 325 degrees Fahrenheit. Small loaf pans take about 1 hour and large pans take about 1 ¾ to 2 hours.

Recipe makes 2 small loaves or 1 bread pan size loaf. Test for doneness by pressing the dough and see if it springs back.

Let cool for about 10 minutes and then carefully loosen sides and turn out on a rack to cool. Remove the brown paper and continue to cool.

Let the fruit cakes age for at least one day before slicing. This cake freezes well but wrap well.

Soft German Pretzels... chewy & big

Traditionally served at Oktoberfest, these pretzels are good anytime for snacks or with meals. They are best eaten the same day but do freeze and reheat well. Try them warm, with butter or any of the mustard recipes in this booklet.

1 package active dry yeast
1 cup warm water (about 110° F)
2 Tbsp. vegetable oil
1 Tbsp. sugar
2 ½ cups all-purpose flour (about)

Dissolve the yeast in the warm water, add 1 ½ cups of the flour, the oil and the sugar. Beat well to make a smooth batter. Gradually stir in enough of the remaining cup of flour to form a soft dough. Turn out on a floured board and knead until smooth and no longer sticky; add flour as needed. Turn dough over in a greased bowl; cover and let rise in a warm place until doubled, about an hour.

Punch down dough and turn out on a floured board; divide into 12 pieces. Shape into smooth balls, then roll each into a smooth 18-inch rope and twist into a pretzel shape. Place slightly apart, with ends underneath, on greased baking sheets. Let rise, uncovered, in a warm place, until puffy, about 25 minutes.

After all have been shaped, the first pretzels should be ready to cook.

In a 3-quart stainless steel or enameled saucepan (do not use aluminum), bring 6 cups water and 6 Tbsp. baking soda to simmering, adjust heat to keep water simmering gently. With a slotted spatula, lower one pretzel at a time into the pan. Let simmer 10 seconds on each side, then lift out, drain briefly, turn over, and place about 1 inch apart on well-greased baking sheets. Let dry briefly, then sprinkle lightly with coarse salt. Let stand, uncovered, until all have simmered.

Bake in a 425° oven until golden, about 12 minutes. Remove from baking sheets and transfer to wire racks.

Serve warm; or cool completely, wrap airtight, and freeze. To reheat, place uncovered pretzels in a 350° oven for 10 minutes or until warm.

Makes 12 large pretzels.

Cherry-Almond Coffee Cake

1 cup sour cream (any type)
1/4 cup water
3 eggs (or substitute)

Mix these three ingredients together thoroughly. Add one white cake mix (dry). Mix well; press

into jelly-roll pan. Drop spoonfuls of one 20 oz can cherry (or blueberry) pie filling on the top. Bake at 350°F. for 25-30 minutes. Sprinkle with sliced almonds. Drizzle with a mix of 2 cups powdered sugar, 1 Tablespoon milk, and 1 teaspoon vanilla. Cut into squares to serve.

Candy Cane Coffee Cakes

Makes 3 coffee cakes

2 cups dairy sour cream
 2 package active dry yeast
 1/2 cup warm water (105° - 115° F)
 1/4 cup softened butter or margarine
 1/3 cup sugar
 2 teaspoon salt
 2 eggs
 About 6 cups all-purpose flour
 1 1/2 cups drained finely chopped maraschino cherries
 1 1/2 cups finely chopped dried apricots
 Soft butter or margarine
 Thin Icing - Recipe to follow

Several hours before starting project, chop fruit and mix together. Let stand 2 to 3 hours .

Heat sour cream over low heat until luke warm. Dissolve yeast in warm water. Stir in sour cream, 1/4 cup butter, the sugar, salt, eggs and 2 cups of the flour. Beat until smooth. Mix in enough remaining flour to make dough easy to handle.

Turn dough onto well-floured board; knead until smooth, about 10 minutes. Place in a greased bowl; turn greased side up, cover and let rise in warm place until double, about 1 hour.

Heat oven to 375°F. Punch down dough, divide into 3 equal parts. Roll each part into a rectangle, 15 x 6 inches, place on greased baking sheet. With scissors, make 2-inch cuts at 1/2 inch intervals on the long sides of the rectangles.

Spread 1/3 of cherries and apricots mixture down the center of each rectangle. Crisscross strips over filling. Pinch tightly. Stretch dough to 22 inches. Curve to form a cane.

Bake 15-20 minutes or until golden brown. While warm, brush with butter and drizzle canes with thin icing. If desired, decorate with candied red and green cherries.

Thin Icing

Blend 2 cups confectioners sugar with about 2 Tbls water. If too stiff add more water a drop at a time.

These cakes, if unfrosted and wrapped tightly, will freeze well for a month or two.

Candy Recipes:

Cotlets

2 cups dried apricots	2 tablespoons unflavored gelatin
1 Tbls lemon juice	1 cup cold water
1 cup chopped walnuts	2 cups white sugar
Powdered sugar.	

Cook apricots in saucepan with 1/2 cup water until tender. Force through a sieve; add white sugar and 1/4 cup water. Cook until thick, about 30 minutes (a little more water may be necessary), stirring often to keep from burning. Soak gelatin in 1/4 cup cold water, add to apricot mix, and stir. Cool slightly, add nuts and lemon juice and mix well. Pour into an 8x8x2 inch pan. Refrigerate overnight. Cut into pieces of desired size and roll in powdered sugar (One tablespoon cornstarch added to sugar helps prevent stickiness).

Microwave Toffee

1 cup butter (do not use margarine)
 1 pkg. brown sugar
 1 pkg. (12 oz.) semisweet chocolate chips
 1/2 cup ground almonds

Butter cookie sheet and set aside. In 2-quart measuring cup, microwave the butter until melted. Stir in brown sugar. Microwave on High 9 minutes, stirring every 3 minutes until mixture reaches hard-crack stage, 300° on microwave candy thermometer. Pour mixture onto buttered cookie sheet and spread out.

Sprinkle with chocolate chips. When chips have softened, spread them with back of spoon. Sprinkle with ground almonds; refrigerate until candy is rock hard.

Microwave Rocky Road

1 pkg. (12 oz.) semisweet chocolate chips
 1 pkg. (12 oz.) butterscotch chips
 1 cup crunchy peanut butter
 1 pkg. (10 1/2 oz.) miniature marshmallows
 1 cup salted Spanish peanuts

Combine chocolate and butterscotch chips in a large bowl. Microwave on 80% power 5 minutes; stir once or twice until melted. Stir in peanut butter and blend well. Stir in marshmallows and peanuts and blend. Spread mixture on a large buttered cookie sheet; refrigerate until set. Cut into squares.

Microwave Almond Brittle

- 1 cup almonds
- ½ cup white corn syrup
- 1 cup sugar
- ⅛ tsp. salt

Mix all ingredients. Cook on HIGH for 7-8 minutes, stirring after 4 minutes.

Then quickly mix in the following pre-measured ingredients: 1 Tbsp. margarine and 1 tsp. vanilla.

Continue to microwave cook for an additional 1-2 minutes. Add: 1 tsp. baking soda. Then mix well.

Pour immediately onto buttered cookie sheet or wax paper and spread. When cool, break into pieces.

Napoleon Creams

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|------------------------------|--|
| ½ cup butter | 3 Tablespoons milk. |
| ¼ cup sugar | 1 (3 ¾ oz) vanilla instant pudding mix |
| ¼ cup cocoa | 2 cups sifted confectioners sugar |
| 1 teaspoon vanilla | 1 (6 oz) package chocolate chips |
| 2 cups graham cracker crumbs | 2 Tablespoon butter |
| 1 cup flake coconut | 1 Tablespoon paraffin (optional) |
| ½ cup butter | 1 egg, slightly beaten |

Combine ½ cup butter, sugar, cocoa and vanilla in top of double boiler. Cook over simmering water until butter melts. Stir in egg. Continue cooking, stirring, until mixture is thick, about 3 minutes. Blend in crumbs and coconut. Press into buttered 9 inch square pan.

Cream ½ cup butter thoroughly. Stir in milk, pudding mix and confectioners sugar. Beat until light and fluffy. Spread evenly over crust. Chill until firm.

Melt chocolate, 2 Tablespoons butter and paraffin over simmering water. Cool. Spread over pudding layer. Chill. Cut into 2 x ¾ inch bars. Makes about 44 pieces.



Microwave Candy Coating & Chocolate Melting Chart		
Amount	Container	Microwave at 50% (Medium)
1/8 lb.*	Small mixing bowl	2 - 3 minutes
1/4 lb.	Small mixing bowl	2 - 4 minutes
1/2 lb.	Small mixing bowl	2 1/2 - 5 minutes
3/4 lb.	Medium mixing bowl	2 1/2 - 5 1/2 minutes
1 lb.	Medium mixing bowl	4 - 8 minutes

* 1/8 pound of candy coating equals 1 square or 2 ounces.

Cookies---

Holiday Jewel Cookies

Preheat oven to 325 °F

Cream the following ingredients together:

- ¼ margarine or butter
- ½ cup brown sugar
- 2 Eggs

Mix the following ingredients together in another bowl:

- 1 ½ cups all purpose flour
- 1 ½ teaspoons baking soda
- 1 ½ teaspoons ground cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon ground nutmeg
- ½ teaspoon ground cloves

Add dry ingredients to the creamed ingredients and mix well. Then add 1 ½ pounds of candied fruit, 1 pound of raisins (soaked overnight in ½ cup bourbon, brandy, sherry or fruit juice) and 1 ½ pounds chopped walnuts. Mix well.

Drop by teaspoons full onto greased baking sheets. Bake 15 minutes at 325 °F. Cool on racks and store in airtight containers. These cookies freeze well. Makes about 10 dozen (120) cookies.

NOTE: You can also use dried fruit rather than candied fruit, if desired. Just dice the fruit into very small pieces and stir into the mixture as directed above.

Chocolate Peppermint Creams

Preheat oven to 350 °F.

Sift together 3 cups flour, 1 ¼ teaspoon baking soda and 1 teaspoon salt and set aside.

Heat 1 ½ cups brown sugar, packed, ¾ cups butter, 2 Tablespoon water, until butter is melted.

Add 12 oz. (2 cups). chocolate chips (NOT IMITATION), stir to melt. Beat in two eggs.

Stir in flour mixture. Drop by heaping teaspoon onto grease cookie sheet. Bake 8-10 minutes.

Cool and then sandwich together two cookies with peppermint cream as follows: Blend together 1 cup sifted powdered sugar, ⅓ cup soft butter, ⅛ teaspoon peppermint extract (I use more), and dash salt. Beat in two cups sifted powdered sugar with ¼ cup milk.

Orange Sugar Cookies

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup oil
 2 eggs, beaten
 3 Tbsp. dried, grated orange peel
 2 cups flour
 2 tsp. Baking powder
 Dash salt
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp ground cloves
 $\frac{1}{4}$ tsp cinnamon
 Sugar for sprinkling on tops

Preheat oven to 350 °F Blend oil and sugar. Stir eggs and orange peel. Combine dry ingredients. Add gradually to orange-sugar mixture, mixing well after each addition. Chill overnight. On a lightly floured surface, roll thinly and cut with cookie cutters. Sprinkle with sugar. Bake cookies on a greased cookie sheet at 350 °F for 10-12 minutes, or until edges are golden. Yield: 2 dozen cookies.

Bourbon Balls

2 cups crushed vanilla wafers (about 8 ounces)
 1 cup sifted confectioners sugar
 1 cup chopped walnuts and pecans
 2 Tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder
 3 Tablespoons light corn syrup or honey
 $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{3}$ cup bourbon.
 Confectioners sugar for rolling

1. Combine crushed vanilla wafers, 1 cup confectioners sugar, nuts, cocoa powder, corn syrup and bourbon in medium size bowl; mix until well blended. Mixture should be moist but not soggy.
2. Pinch a walnut-sized piece from mixture and roll firmly between moistened palms of hands to form a ball. Repeat with remaining mixture. Roll ball in confectioners sugar. Store in an airtight container in cool dark place. Flavor improves with age.

Tiny Chocolate-Walnut Cookies

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup margarine or butter, softened
 3-oz. pkg. cream cheese, softened
 1 cup All Purpose or Unbleached Flour

FILLING

½ cup firmly packed brown sugar
 1 egg, slightly beaten
 1 teaspoon vanilla
 ¼ cup miniature chocolate chips
 ½ cup chopped walnuts

Heat oven to 350°F. Lightly spoon flour into measuring cup; level off. In small bowl, combine margarine, cream cheese and flour; blend well. Divide dough into 24 pieces. Press dough into bottom and up sides of 24 ungreased miniature muffin cups. In medium bowl, blend brown sugar, egg and vanilla; stir in chocolate chips and walnuts. Spoon about 1 tablespoon filling into each muffin cup. Bake at 350°F. for 15 to 20 minutes or until filling is set and crusts are light golden brown. Let stand 10 minutes before removing from pans. At serving time, garnish each with a dollop of whipped cream and walnut half, if desired. Makes about 24 cookies.

Walnut Squares

1 cup brown sugar
 1 egg
 5 Tbsp. flour
 ¼ tsp. baking soda
 1 cup chopped English walnuts (approx. 20)

Combine sugar, egg, flour, soda, and then add nuts. Spread in bottom of greased 7" x 11" baking pan. Bake in 350° F oven for approx. 15 minutes. Remove from oven; slice into squares with sharp knife while still quite warm. Makes approx. 15 squares, depending upon how it is sliced. Cover immediately with plastic wrap.

Triple this recipe and spread on a greased jelly roll pan, 11 ½" x 17 ½ ", and bake as above. For thicker cookies, spread batter a little thicker in a pan and bake a little longer.

Almond Biscotti Yield: 5 dozen

2 ½ cups sugar
 4 cups flour
 ¼ tsp. *each* salt and baking soda
 4 eggs
 2 Tbsp. sweet butter at room temperature
 1 tsp. *each* vanilla extract and anise seed
 ¼ tsp. almond extract
 1 ½ cups almonds, chopped coarsely
 1 cup chocolate chips

Combine dry ingredients. Add eggs, butter, extracts and anise seed. Mix until just combined. Stir in almonds. Knead dough with well floured hand to form 4 logs, 1" x 6". Place two logs on greased

cookie sheet (logs spread). Bake until just beginning to brown (approx. 1 hour) at 300°. Cool slightly.

Cut into ½" slices on the diagonal. Eat end pieces! Place slices cut-side down on cookie sheet and bake until golden (approx. 30 minutes). Cool completely. Melt ½ cup chocolate chips on a plate in a microwave. Stir chocolate, then dip one side of cookie into the chocolate. Place chocolate-side up to air dry. Melt more chocolate as needed. Wrap in gift bags or store in airtight container.

Italian Honey and Almond Nests

2 cans (4 oz. each) slivered almonds

¼ cup honey

Colored sugar crystals

Spread nuts in a single layer on a cookie sheet. Toast in a slow oven (300°) for 30 minutes or until almonds are a golden brown.

Heat honey to bubbling in a medium-size skillet. Add hot almonds to pan. Toss with a wooden spoon until almonds begin to stick together.

Dampen a wooden board with water. Drop almonds by spoonfuls onto board to make 20 mounds. Moisten hands with water. Quickly shape each mound into a nest with fingers. Sprinkle with colored sugar crystals. Allow nests to cool on board, then transfer to an air-tight container.

Rugelach

(Cream Cheese Cookies)

Dough:

½ lb. cream cheese
 ½ lb. unsalted butter
 2 cups flour

Cream butter and cheese until light and fluffy. Beat in flour ½ cup at a time until all is incorporated. Refrigerate 1 hour.

Fillings:

Raisin-Nut

½ cup sugar
 ½ cup raisins
 ½ cup chopped walnuts
 1 Tbsp. cinnamon

Combine filling ingredients.

Strawberry Jam

1 cup ground almonds
 1 cup strawberry jam
 Combine filling ingredients.

Prepare one of the fillings. Divide chilled dough into thirds. Roll each third into a 9" circle. Use flour sparingly. Spread 1/3 of filling onto circle, leaving the very center bare. With a sharp knife, cut each circle into 16 pie-shaped triangles. Starting at the wide end, roll triangle into a crescent shape. Bake at 350° F on ungreased cookie sheet 20-25 minutes until golden.

Yield: 4 dozen

Candy Bar Cookies

1 14 oz pkg. light caramels - Kraft caramels work well
 ½ cup evaporated milk
 Combine and stir over medium heat until caramels are melted. Set aside.

1 pkg. German chocolate cake mix (18.5 oz size)
 ¾ cup melted butter
 ⅓ cup evaporated milk
 1 teaspoon vanilla
 1 cup chopped nuts

Combine last five ingredients listed above together and divide in 1/2, reserving 1/2 for later. Pat 1/2 of mix into a 13 x 9 greased and floured pan. Bake at 350° for 8 minutes. Remove from oven and while still hot, sprinkle on 6 oz semi-sweet chocolate chips. Then spread reserved caramel mix over the chocolate chip layer. Spread on reserved cake mix and along with 1/2 cup chopped nuts. Bake at 350° for 18-20 minutes. Yield: About 48 bars.

Desserts and other sweets. . .

Cranberry Raspberry Trifle

1 angel food cake, large size
 10-12 oz. package frozen raspberries, thawed
 10 Tbsp. cranberry-raspberry juice concentrate, thawed
 1 pkg. vanilla instant pudding (3 oz.)
 2 cups milk
 ½ cup eggnog
 1 container whipped topping or heavy cream, whipped & sweetened
 Several berries for garnish

Tear angel food cake into bite-sized pieces. Layer half of the pieces on the bottom of a clear glass bowl. Spoon 5 Tbsp. of juice concentrate over the cake pieces. Top with the berries, except for the berries saved for garnish. Combine pudding mix, milk, and eggnog. Mix, beating at low speed about 2 minutes. Pour over raspberries, top with remaining half of the cake pieces and spoon remaining juice concentrate over the cake. Cover this layer with the whipped topping and decorate with the berries. Refrigerate for several hours before serving.

Neatest trick of the season: Bake fruit cake in orange shells for gift giving and party serving. Sliced crosswise, each attractive round will have a portion of sweet cake and tangy candied peel. These fruit cakes take a little doing but the making is spread over a couple of days and worth the spectacular results!.

Fruit Cake in Candied Orange Shells

Fruit Cake

1 cup sifted flour
 1/4 tsp salt
 1/2 tsp nutmeg
 Dash of cardamom
 1/2 cup butter or margarine (we all know which tastes best)
 1/4 cup firmly packed brown sugar
 4 eggs
 1 1/2 cup raisins
 1 cup (8 oz) mixed candied fruit
 1/2 cup chopped walnuts
 Candied orange shells and orange syrup - Recipe to follow
 2 Tablespoons sherry or port (I prefer brandy or rum)

Sugar

Sift together the flour, salt, cloves, nutmeg, and cardamom. Cream butter and brown sugar. Beat in the eggs thoroughly, one at a time. Stir in the sifted dry ingredients, then raisins, candied fruit, and chopped walnuts. Spoon into candied orange shells.

Place in baking pan and brush with orange syrup.

Bake at 300°F. for 50-70 minutes. Cool. Prick top of cake with fork, dribble sherry or port over cake. Cover with candied orange tops. Store in a container with a tight fitting cover in a cool, dry place for several days.

Roll in sugar. Wrap tightly in transparent plastic wrap and decorate packages with festive ribbon. Slice horizontally to serve. Makes 6 large or 9 small cakes.

Christmas Persimmon Cake

Makes two large or four small loaf cakes

3 Tbls butter	2 cups sugar
2 cups persimmon pulp	2 cups walnuts, chopped
1 cup seedless raisins	1 cup dates, chopped
1 Tablespoon orange peel, grated	4 cups sifted cake flour
4 teaspoon baking soda	3 teaspoon baking powder
3 teaspoon ground cinnamon	1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
1/2 teaspoon ground allspice	1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 cup milk	2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

Cream butter and sugar in large mixing bowl. Add persimmon pulp, nuts, raisins, dates, and orange peel; mix well. Sift flour with baking soda, baking powder and spices. Add flour mixture to persimmon mixture alternately with milk, beginning and ending with flour. Stir in vanilla extract. Turn batter into two well greased 8x5x3 loaf pans. Bake in preheated 300° F. oven 1 1/2 hours or until a cake tester inserted into center comes out clean. Turn out onto wire rack to cool. Garnish cake, if desired, with glazed fruits and nuts arranged in row down center.

Note: Be sure you select only ripe persimmons. This is like a fruitcake but not the moist variety. It stores well if wrapped tightly in aluminum foil. Flavor improves with time. Lovely to serve with hot tea on a blustery winter day.

Mustards---

MAKING YOUR OWN MUSTARDS

Have you noticed that *gourmet mustards* are appearing with increasing variety. But for those of you who enjoy the kitchen, making your epicurean mustards is easy and fun.

SHOPPING

When it comes to raw materials, it's useful to know that dark mustard seed is more pungent than the more readily available light (white or yellow seed). The difference, however, is not enough to justify long searches to find the dark kind. Either light or dark mustard seed can be used in the recipes that follow. Mustard seed can also be special ordered from a spice dealer .

POWDER POWER

Dry mustard are not all alike. Some domestic brands have little flavor, having only hotness to offer. Imported mustard powder is recommended. All of their varieties are HOT --so use accordingly.

TAMING THE FIRE

You may like to experiment with your own special methods but one way to full-flavored and sufficiently "hot" mustard without bitterness may be achieved by combining powdered mustard and cracked or ground mustard seeds. Mix the seeds and powder with water and let the mixture stand and "breathe" for an hour or more to allow the bitter volatile components to depart in peace. Leave it for at least 3 hours but you may leave it overnight, if this is more convenient.

RECIPES MEANT FOR ADJUSTMENT

The recipes that follow are guides, not blueprints. Follow the basic proportions of mustard and moisture, the rest is negotiable. Increase the herbs, spices, salt, acid, or sweetening, but taste carefully as you make changes. Be sure to make notes as you adjust the recipe, so you'll be able to easily reproduce your specialty!

THICKENING THE POT

Prepared mustards thicken somewhat upon standing. So your final product may thicken up following standing; but if your mixture is too thin, add another tablespoonful of mustard seeds and process in the blender. Then let it stand again.

STORAGE

Room-temperature storage is fine for homemade mustards but they do lose pungency over time. To maintain the original hotness, refrigerate.

Starting with Store-Bought Mustard:

Green Peppercorn Mustard

To one cup of smooth Dijon-style mustard, add 1 tablespoon (or more) green peppercorns, crushed. Drain seeds well before crushing, if they were packed in brine. Stir in a pinch of allspice, a pinch of cinnamon, and about ¼ teaspoon of well-crumbled dried tarragon. Mix, taste, and add more spice or herbs plus salt to your taste.

Horseradish Mustard

Add 1 tablespoon or more of drained bottled horseradish to one cup of smooth Dijon-style mustard. Stir in small clove of garlic, peeled and minced to a paste, pinch of allspice, a pinch of sugar, and a dash of salt. Mix well and taste. Adjust if desired.

Mixed Herb Mustard

To 1 cup of smooth Dijon-style mustard, add 1½ teaspoons of the combined herbs--tarragon, thyme, sweet marjoram or basil and a little oregano; add a small clove of garlic peeled and minced into a paste. Stir well and add 1 teaspoon finely chopped parsley, a little lemon juice, salt to taste, and a twist or two of freshly ground pepper. Stir well and refrigerate to preserve the herbal flavor.

Shallot Mustard

Peel shallots and mince enough to make one tablespoonful. Place shallots in a cup and cover with boiling water; blanch the shallots for one minute, draining them thoroughly and fold them into one cup of smooth Dijon-style mustard. Add freshly ground pepper and a bit of salt, if desired. Store this mustard in the refrigerator.

Quick Green Peppercorn Mustard

1 -8 oz jar Dijon mustard
1 tsp mustard powder
1-2 Tbsp green peppercorns

Mix 1 Tbsp of Dijon mustard with the mustard powder. When it is smooth, stir in the remaining Dijon mustard. If using green peppercorns packed in brine, drain then, discarding the liquid, then add then to the mustard. If using dried green peppercorns, soak then for 1/2 hour in water before adding to the mustard.

Put the peppercorn mustard mixture into a blender and blend until smooth. For a coarse mixture, simply mash the peppercorns into the mustard.

Good with spread as a sandwich spread

Making Your Own Mustard. . .

Until a few years ago, there were few types of mustards available, unless you wanted to pay a premium price. Now you can purchase every conceivable kind--some are smooth, some are chunky.

They are still at a premium price, which positively invites you to experiment with making your own. They are as good as or better than store bought. Since the basic ingredients--mustard seeds and powder--are inexpensive, they are cheap to make at home.

The recipes below make small quantities, usually enough to fill a container about the size of a small baby food jar. But you can multiply the quantities so you have enough to give to friends.

You can keep mustard 3 to 4 weeks in the refrigerator, though remember, it loses its potency the longer you keep it.

Experiment and have fun!

Ballpark Mustard

2 Tbsp powdered mustard 1 Tbsp turmeric 1/4 tsp salt 1 tsp sugar
Water or mixture of water and white vinegar to mix

Put the mustard, turmeric, salt, and sugar into a small bowl. Gradually add water or water and vinegar, stirring to make a smooth paste of the consistency you want.

This is the mustard for hot dogs and other sausages. It can be used in potato salads.

Honey Mustard

4 Tbsp mustard powder
1/2 Tbsp water
1 tsp vinegar
1 Tbsp vegetable oil
2 Tbsp honey

Mix the mustard to a stiff paste with the water and vinegar. Stir in the oil until the mixture is smooth, then stir in the honey. Pour into a sterilized jar.

This mustard is a good spread for sandwiches made with boiled ham or other cold cuts. Also serve with baked ham, pork, and barbecued meats.

Spice Mustard

1 Tbsp curry powder
 1 tsp cinnamon
 ¼ tsp powdered cloves
 1 Tbsp vegetable oil
 3 Tbsp mustard powder 1 tsp sugar
 ¼ cup water

Put the curry powder, cinnamon, and cloves in a small frying pan over medium heat. Let them heat through for about 4 minutes, stirring to prevent from burning. Stir in the oil.

In a small bowl, combine the oil and spice mixture with the mustard and sugar. Add the water and stir to a smooth paste, adding a bit more water if necessary.

Good with barbecues and Indian or Middle Eastern food.

Horseradish Mustard

½ cup powdered mustard
 ⅛ tsp white pepper
 ¼ cup water
 1 tsp salt
 1 tsp brown sugar
 1 clove garlic, peeled
 ½ cup white wine or cider vinegar
 1 to 2 Tbsp grated or prepared horseradish

Combine the powdered mustard, pepper, and water in a bowl. Put the salt, sugar, garlic, and 1 Tbsp of horseradish in a blender, and blend them together. Then strain into the mustard mixture. Transfer to a small pan and simmer over low heat, stirring continuously until slightly thickened. When the mustard has cooled, stir in half the additional horseradish to add texture. Add the remainder if you like. If the mixture is too thick, thin with additional water or vinegar.

This startlingly hot mustard is definitely only for those who like strong condiments. It is good with beef, ham, and hearty sausages.

Lemon Mustard

¼ cup yellow mustard seed
 4 tsp mustard powder

Grated zest and juice of 1 medium lemon
1 Tbsp white sugar
¼ tsp salt
Pinch cayenne or red pepper (optional) ¾ cup water

Grind the mustard seeds in a spice blender or a blender until they look like coarse corn meal. In a small saucepan, mix them with the mustard powder, lemon zest and juice, sugar, salt, and cayenne (if using). Stir in the water and then place over medium heat and bring to simmer. Cook for 5 minutes, stirring continuously. Let cool. To store, pack into a small sterilized jar and keep in the refrigerator .

This is a good mustard to serve with chicken, fish, and steak.

NOTE: At first, this mustard tastes pungent, but cools down and tastes very lemony after a day or so. For a hotter mustard, add more cayenne or red pepper.

HOT SWEET MUSTARD

¼ cup dry mustard
⅔ cup water
1 ½ tablespoon cornstarch
¼ cup sugar
½ teaspoon salt
⅓ cup vinegar

In a small bowl mix mustard with ¼ cup of the water. Allow to stand. In a small saucepan mix cornstarch, sugar, and salt with remaining water. Add vinegar. Cook over low heat. With a wire whisk, stir constantly until thickened. Remove from heat. Cool. Stir in mustard mixture. (The amount of mustard used will determine the hotness of the product. For a milder mustard, add less of the mustard mixture.) Yields 1 cup.

Preserved Products---

Basil Pesto

(Lower Fat Version that freezes well)

- ¼ cup pinenuts (or other chopped nuts or seeds)
- 2 cloves crushed garlic
- 2 green onions, optional

Process in food processor until smooth and well blended. Then add:

- ½ cup basil leaves, firmly packed
- ½ cup chopped parsley or additional basil
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice (freshly squeezed is best)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- ¼ grated or shredded parmesan cheese
- Salt to taste

Continue to process until smooth and well-blended. Freeze in ice cube trays and then transfer the frozen cubes into freezer containers for long term storage.

Toss with cooked pasta or as an appetizer. Use anywhere basil pesto is called for. Be creative--put a dollop in a bowl of chili and have a new gourmet treat.

Lemon Curd

- 4 teaspoons grated lemon peel
- ⅔ cup lemon juice
- 5 eggs
- 1 cup sugar
- ½ cup butter

In the container of a blender, combine first four ingredients; whirl until smooth. With the motor at lowest setting, gradually add the melted butter, pouring in a steady stream; whirl just until blended.

Transfer mixture to a small heavy pan and cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, about 5 minutes or until it begins to bubble and thickens. Remove from heat. Ladle hot mixture into jars to within ¼ inch of rim. Seal, or cool slightly, cover and refrigerate or freeze. It keeps in the

refrigerator 1 week or in the freezer for several months.

Freezing is the recommended method of preservation. In canning the mixture tends to become spongy.

NOTE: For less fat and cholesterol, use egg substitute and 50% less fat butter.

Apple Dessert Topping

1 lb. cooking apples, pared, cored and cut into 1/4 inch thick slices
2 cups apple juice or cider
1/2 cup firmly packed brown sugar
1/4 cup light corn syrup
1/8 to 1/4 teaspoon nutmeg
1/4 cup toasted pecans, walnuts or almonds (optional)

Place all the ingredients, except nuts, in saucepan and simmer until apples are very tender and sauce is slightly thickened, 20 to 30 minutes. Add nuts. Store the mixture in the refrigerator. For canning: Pour hot topping into clean hot jars, leaving 1/4 inch head space. Process pints for 15 minutes in boiling water bath canner.

Apricot Pepper Jelly

1 cup red or green bell pepper strips
2 cups cider vinegar
1/3 cup canned whole jalapeno peppers, drained, rinsed, stems and seeds removed
1 to 1 1/4 cups dried California apricot halves, finely slivered (6 oz bag)
6 cups sugar
1 pouch (3 oz) liquid pectin
Food coloring if desired

Combine pepper strips, vinegar and jalapeno peppers in an electric blender. Process stop and go fashion until somewhat ground but small chunks remain. Combine with apricot strips and sugar in saucepan; bring to a boil; Boil 5 minutes. Remove from heat; skim off any foam. Cool 2 minutes, then mix pectin and food coloring. Pour into sterilized jars and fasten lids. Process in boiling water bath for 15 minutes. Cool.

*If available, use 1/3 cup fresh jalapeno peppers instead of canned ones.

Cranberry Pepper Jelly

1 1/2 cups cranberry juice cocktail

1 cup vinegar
 2-4 Jalapeno peppers, halved and seeded (canned jalapeno peppers work fine)
 5 cups sugar
 1 pouch liquid fruit pectin (3 oz.)

In a saucepan, combine cocktail, vinegar and jalapeno peppers. Bring to boiling, reduce heat. Cover and simmer 10 minutes. Strain to gather about 2 cups liquid. Discard peppers.

In a large pan (at least 4 quart size), combine the 2 cups liquid and sugar and bring to a full rolling boil over high heat, stirring often to dissolve sugar. (The mixture should boil so rapidly on the surface that you can't stir it down.) Stir in pectin and return to a full rolling boil, boil for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Remove from heat; use a metal spoon to quickly skim off foam. Pour jelly into clean, hot jars, leaving a ¼ inch headspace. Wipe rims, top with flat lids and screw on metal lids. Process in boiling water bath or steam canner for 5 minutes.

Makes about 5 half pints.

Sweet and Hot Red Pepper Jelly

You can use green or yellow peppers for slightly different tastes and different colors.

For the juice extraction:

8 medium red bell peppers, washed, stemmed but not seeded, and cut into 2
 inch pieces
 2 3-inch fresh red hot chili peppers, washed, stemmed but not seeded, and cut
 into
 1 inch pieces (wear rubber gloves to cut up the peppers)
 1 onion, peeled and cut into 1 inch pieces

For the Jelly:

2 cups white distilled vinegar
 ¼ cup strained fresh lemon juice
 8 cups sugar
 3--3-ounce pouches liquid pectin

Extract the juice: With a food grinder coarsely grind the bell peppers, the chili peppers, and the onion or in a food processor mince the vegetables, pulsing the motor several times and scraping down the sides. In a heavy saucepan combine the vegetables and 1 cup cold water. Bring the vegetables to a simmer stirring occasionally. Simmer the mixture, covered for 10 minutes. Ladle the mixture into a jelly bag set over a large heatproof bowl and let it drip, undisturbed for 1 hour. If there is less than 2 ¼ cups of the extracted juice, pour a small amount of hot water into the jelly bag and let the mixture drip until there is 2 ¼ cups juice.

Make the jelly: In a heavy 10-quart kettle combine the extracted juice, the vinegar, the lemon juice, and the sugar and cook the mixture over high heat, stirring constantly, until it comes to a full rolling boil, that froths up toward the top of the kettle and cannot be stirred down. Stir in the pectin, bring the mixture to a full rolling boil, stirring constantly, and boil it, stirring constantly for 1 minute. Remove the kettle from the heat, skim off the foam, and ladle the jelly through widemouthed canning funnel into sterilized half-pint jars, filling the jars to within 1/8 inch of the top. Wipe the rims of the jars with a dampened cloth and seal the jars with hot lids. Store the jelly in a cool, dark, dry place for at least 24 hours to let it set. Makes 9 cups.

Pomegranate Jelly

4 cups prepared juice (the juice from 6-8 large fully ripe pomegranates)
 7 ½ cups sugar
 2 pouches Fruit Pectin.

Thoroughly mix sugar into juice in saucepan. Place over high heat and bring to a boil, stirring constantly. At once stir in fruit pectin. Then bring to a full rolling boil and boil hard for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Remove from heat and skim off foam with metal spoon. Ladle quickly into hot sterilized jars, filling to within 1/8 inch of tops. Wipe jar rims and threads. Cover with two piece lids and process in hot water bath for 15 minutes.

Lower Sugar Pomegranate Jelly

6 cups pomegranate juice
 4½ cups sugar
 1 box Sure-Jell for Lower Sugar Recipes

1. Prepare juice by mashing the pomegranate berries and straining the juice until you have six cups. Pour juice into an 8 quart saucepot.
2. Measure sugar into a bowl and set aside.
3. Take ¼ cup of the sugar and mix with the contents of the fruit pectin box. Stir the mixture into the fruit juice, mixing thoroughly.
4. Place juice mixture over medium high heat. Bring to a **full rolling boil** (or a boil that does not stop when stirred.). Stir constantly so mixture does not scorch.
5. When mixture comes to a **full rolling boil**, add the sugar all at once and stir, mixing well. Bring the mixture back to a full rolling boil and boil for **exactly 1 minute**. You may add ¼ teaspoon margarine to keep mixture from foaming excessively.

6. Remove from the heat and fill sterilized jars to $\frac{1}{4}$ inch from the top. Cover with flat canning lids that have been prepared according to directions (in boiling water). Secure ring bands. You may process in a water bath canner for 15 minutes to assure sealing.

Store in a dark, draft free space. Label and date. Makes about 8 (8 ounce jars).

Pomegranate Syrup (Grenadine)

Measure equal parts of juice and sugar, and let stand together for three days. Bring to a boil, simmer 5 minutes, strain, and pour into sterilized jars and seal.

Pomegranate juice is a splendid coloring for lighter colored fruits and salads. For example apples and pears marinated in pomegranate juice makes a most luscious appearing and tasting fruit cocktail or salad.

Refreshing “pink lemonade” can be made from pomegranate juice, using sugar, water and plenty of ice.

Sugar Free Triple Berry Jam

- 4 cups strawberries
- 2 cups raspberries
- 1 cup blueberries
- 1 $1\frac{3}{4}$ oz. package pectin for low-sugar preserves (low-methoxyl pectin)
Use "Slim-Set" brand or no-sugar pectin made by the Ball Company
- 20 packets Equal[®] or 2 Tbsp. Equal[®] Measure

Mash strawberries, raspberries and blueberries to make **4 cups of pulp**. Stir in the pectin; let the mixture stand 10 minutes, stirring frequently. Transfer the mixture to a large saucepan. Cook and stir over medium heat till mixture comes to a rolling boil. Cook and stir 2 minutes more. Remove from heat; stir in Equal[®]. Skim off foam, if necessary.

Ladle at once into freezer containers or jars, leaving 1/2-inch headspace. Seal and label. Let stand at room temperature 4 to 6 hours or till set. This jam may be stored up to 3 weeks in the refrigerator or 6 months in the freezer.

Makes about 4 cups

(64 one-tablespoon servings)

Nutrition information per serving: 9 cal, 0 g pro., 2 g carbo., 0 g fat, 0 mg chol, 3 mg sodium
Diabetic Food Exchanges: Free food. Adapted from the “Simply Sweet” recipe book published by the NutraSweet Company ©1993.

Brandy Peach Conserve

3 1/2 cups fresh or frozen peaches, peeled and ground or crushed
 1 cup almonds, blanched and slivered or chopped
 1/2 cup seedless raising, golden or black
 1/4 teaspoon grated lemon rind
 2 tablespoons lemon juice (about one lemon)
 1/4 teaspoon powdered cinnamon
 1 box Sure-Jell fruit pectin
 5 cups (2 1/4 pounds) sugar (measured and set aside)
 1/2 cup brandy

In a very large saucepan, place the first six ingredients. Mix in the pectin. Place pan over high heat and stir until mixture comes to a hard boil. Immediately add all the sugar and stir. Bring to a full rolling boil and boil hard one minute, stirring constantly. Remove from heat; immediately add the brandy.

Ladle immediately into clean, hot jars, filling to 1/4 inch from the top. Wipe jar rims clean and seal with clean, hot metal lids and bands. Screw bands on firmly and process jars for 5 minutes, using the boiling water bath method. Remove jars from water, cool, and store in cool, dry place. (Small amounts of jam can be covered and stored in the refrigerator for up to 2 months.)

Chutneys

Almost any fruit or vegetable can be turned into the delightful sweet and sour condiment known as chutney. Although most often associated with food from India, chutneys are actually quite British, an invention of the colonials who governed India and named their concoction after the Hindustani word for strong spices, *chatni*. The pieces of fruit or vegetable can be cut large or small, or even pureed, but they are always cooked with vinegar, sugar, and selection of herbs and spices until the liquid becomes syrupy and the chutney resembles jam. Mostly fruit, (vegetables also work) chutneys are a good way to use ripe produce. Other fruit-vegetable combinations (the number is almost countless) include tomato-onion and corn-raisin. The constant elements are sweet and sour--how much of each depends on taste and the fruits used.

Chutneys add pizzazz to roasted and grilled meats and poultry. These cooked and colorful combinations vary, depending on the fruits in season and how sweet or pungent to make the dish.

A cooked chutney can be made ahead and stored in the refrigerator for at least a week. Or it can be processed in a water bath canner for 15 minutes. The processed product will keep for up to one year.

Basic Chutney

1 ½ pounds fruit, such as pears, apples, raisins,
 or a combination; peeled, cored and chopped, or use vegetables
 ¾ cup brown sugar
 ¼ - 1 cup white vinegar
 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
 1 Tbsp. ginger, finely chopped
 1 tsp. salt
 1 tsp. cumin seeds, or use ground
 1 tsp. mustard seed, optional
 Dash chili flakes, optional

Mix all ingredients in a pan. Simmer for 30 to 40 minutes. Cool and refrigerate. This can also be processed in a water bath canner. Makes 6 to 8 servings as a side dish.

Nancy's Banana Chutney

2 cups onion, coarsely chopped
 1 pound dates, chopped
 6 ripe bananas
 3 cups sugar
 2 cups cider vinegar
 1 cup golden raisins
 ½ - ¾ cup crystallized ginger
 1 tsp. curry powder
 1 tsp. salt

Combine all ingredients in a heavy non-aluminum saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium heat, simmer until thick (about 30 minutes), stirring occasionally. Spoon into half-pint jars, seal, and store in the refrigerator. Makes 6 half pints.

Peach-Jalapeno Chutney

2 pounds peaches, slightly soft
 1 cup apple cider vinegar
 2 cups dark brown sugar
 1 medium garlic clove, minced
 1 small onion, finely chopped
 2 small jalapeno peppers, seeded and finely chopped
 1 tsp. mustard seed
 1 Tbsp. fresh minced ginger
 ½ cup golden raisins
 1 tsp. cinnamon
 1 tsp. ground allspice
 ¼ tsp. salt

Immerse peaches in a large saucepan of boiling water for about 30 seconds and then remove. Peel, pit, and cut into a coarse dice. Place remaining ingredients in a medium non-aluminum Dutch oven or heavy pot. Bring ingredients to a boil over medium-high heat. Lower heat and let simmer, partially covered, about 45 minutes. Stir chutney frequently, making sure that it does not burn or stick to bottom of pan. Remove from heat and cool. Taste for seasoning. When cool, pour chutney into glass containers. Store in refrigerator. Makes about 1 quart.

Pear and Orange Chutney

2 pears, cored and chopped
 1 small onion, finely chopped
 Zest, juice, and flesh of 1 orange
 1 small piece fresh ginger, finely chopped
 ½ cup raisins
 1 - 2 Tbsp. sugar, or to taste
 ⅛ cup water or orange juice
 ½ tsp. ground cinnamon
 ½ tsp. mustard seed, optional
 Pinch red chili flakes, optional to taste

Put ingredients in a saucepan. Bring to a boil, cover, and simmer on medium low heat for 15-20 minutes or until fruit is soft. Taste for correct seasoning. Cool and serve room temperature. Serves 4-5 as a side dish.

(Other fruits which work well include plums, raisins, peaches, pineapple, mangoes, and apples. The cinnamon gives a sweet undertone, while an equal amount of mustard seed would add a touch of spice and heat. Cider vinegar makes for a more mellow flavor. The idea is to balance the flavors so that no ingredient overpowers another.)

Cilantro Chutney

2 cups cilantro leaves
 3 Tbsp. sweetened coconut
 2 Tbsp. almonds
 1 Tbsp. rice wine vinegar
 1 Serrano chili, stem removed
 1 Tbsp. sugar
 2 Tbsp. lime juice
 1 tsp. ground cumin

Combine ingredients in a blender and process until smooth. Refrigerate until ready to use. Makes 1 cup. This will keep three days in the refrigerator and is also great served with chicken or fish.

Hot Tomato Chutney

A delicious accompaniment to cold meats and chicken.

3 pounds (about 4-5) ripe tomatoes, seeded and coarsely chopped
 1 cup brown sugar
 1 cup cider vinegar
 1 large red pepper, chopped
 1 large onion, coarsely chopped
 2 garlic cloves, minced
 3 Tbsp. peeled and minced fresh ginger
 ½ cup raisins
 2 jalapeno peppers, seeded and chopped
 1 tsp. cumin seeds
 1 tsp. mustard seed
 2 tsp. salt
 ¼ cup chopped cilantro

Place all ingredients except the cilantro in a large non-aluminum saucepan and cook over medium heat, stirring, until the sugar is dissolved. Continue to cook stirring occasionally, until the mixture thickens, about 30 minutes. Stir in the cilantro for the last few minutes of cooking. Pack in sterilized jars and seal. Freeze or process in a hot water bath for 15 minutes. Makes 3-4 pints.

Mint Chutney

This is interesting served with lamb as an alternative to the usual mint jelly, and is also good with pears or apples and cheese as a savory.

1 ½ cups brown sugar
 1 Tbsp. mustard seed
 1 ½ cups cider vinegar
 3 cups finely chopped apple mint or other mint
 1 cup finely chopped cilantro or parsley
 3 cups peeled and finely chopped apples
 2 medium yellow onions, finely chopped
 ½ cup seedless raisins
 ½ cup chopped walnuts
 1 tsp. salt

Place the sugar, mustard seed, and vinegar in a non-aluminum pan over low heat and cook stirring, until the sugar has dissolved. Add the remaining ingredients and bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer for 5 to 10 minutes or until the chutney has thickened. Pour into sterilized jars and seal. Store in the refrigerator for up to 2 months, or process in a hot water bath for 15 minutes for longer storage. Makes 3 pints.

Cranberry and Pear Chutney

12 oz. bag of cranberries, picked over
 ½ cup firmly packed dark brown sugar
 ½ cup raisins
 2 pears, peeled and chopped
 2 tsp. freshly grated lemon zest
 ¼ cup minced, peeled fresh ginger root
 ½ tsp. dried hot red pepper flakes
 1 cup chopped onion
 ¼ cup cider vinegar
 1 tsp. mustard seed
 ⅛ tsp. salt

In a heavy saucepan, combine cranberries, brown sugar, raisins, pears, zest, ginger root, red pepper flakes, onion, vinegar, mustard seed, and salt and simmer the mixture, stirring occasionally, for 20-25 minutes, or until the berries have burst. The chutney keeps, covered and chilled, for 2 weeks. Serve the chutney at room temperature. Makes about 4 cups.

Cranberry Sage Chutney

This chutney is wonderful with a holiday turkey and the turkey sandwiches that follow. It would also make a great Christmas present for friends.

6 cups cranberries
 1 ½ cups sugar
 1 orange, unpeeled, chopped, and seeded
 1 cup orange juice
 1 small onion, finely chopped
 ¼ cup raisins
 ¼ cup slivered almonds
 12 dried dates, chopped
 ¼ cup chopped crystallized ginger
 ½ cup cider vinegar
 1 tsp. dry mustard
 1 tsp. salt
 3 Tbsp. chopped fresh sage or 1 Tbsp. dried sage

Place all the ingredients except 2 Tbsp. of the sage in a non-aluminum pan and cook over medium low heat, stirring, until the sugar dissolves. Increase the heat and boil until the berries pop and the mixture thickens slightly, about 5-10 minutes. Ladle into sterilized jars, wipe the rims clean, and seal tightly. This chutney can be refrigerated for up to 6 months. To store for up to one year, process in a hot water bath for 15 minutes. Store in a cool, dark place. Makes 8 half pints.

Cranberry Chutney

This colorful chutney is delicious all on its own. It can be stored for two to three weeks in the refrigerator OR frozen. Thaw and store in the refrigerator.

Preparation time: approximately 10 minutes

Cooking time: approximately 10 minutes

1 cup water
 ¾ cup granulated sugar
 1 12-oz. package fresh or frozen cranberries
 1 cup peeled chopped apple
 ½ cup cider vinegar
 ½ cup raisins
 ½ tsp. ground cinnamon
 ¼ tsp. ground ginger
 ¼ tsp. ground allspice
 ¼ tsp. ground cloves

In medium saucepan combine water and sugar; bring to boil over medium heat. Add cranberries, apple, vinegar, raisins and spices. Bring to boil, then simmer gently 10 minutes, stirring often.

Pour into mixing bowl. Place plastic wrap directly on surface of sauce. Cool to room temperature and serve, or cover and refrigerate then bring to room temperature before serving.

Makes about 2 cups.

Green Tomato and Apple Chutney

3 pounds green (unripe) tomatoes
 2 pounds firm, tart apples (such as Granny Smith)
 2 cups raisins, golden or dark
 ¾ pound diced onions
 2 teaspoons minced garlic
 2 cups packed light brown sugar
 1 cup granulated sugar
 2 teaspoons salt (optional)
 1 ½ cups cider vinegar
 3 or 4 tablespoons finely minced fresh ginger root
 1 ½ tablespoons mustard seed
 2 teaspoons ground coriander
 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
 ¼ teaspoon ground hot red (Cayenne) pepper (or ½ teaspoon dried red pepper flakes; or 1 teaspoon finely minced fresh hot red pepper)

Cut out the stem scars on tomatoes and cut them into 1/2 inch chunks (approximately 8 cups). Place into very large pan. Peel, core, and cut the apples into 1/2 inch chunks (approximately 5 1/2 cups) and add to the pan. Add diced onions (approximately 1 1/2 cups to pan. Also add the raisins, garlic, sugar, salt, and vinegar. Mix ingredients well and bring to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce heat and boil slowly, uncovered, stirring often, for 30 minutes.

Add the ginger, mustard seed, coriander, cinnamon, and hot pepper. Return to slow boil, stirring often, until mixture thickens. Ladle into clean, hot, half-pint jars, leaving 1/4 inch head space. Seal and process for 10 minutes using the simmering hot water bath method. Makes about 9 half-pint jars.

Let chutney mellow for a few weeks before serving it.

Feijoa Chutney

1 1/2 cups granulated sugar
 1 cup white distilled vinegar
 1 teaspoon chili powder
 1 clove garlic, minced
 1 tablespoon grated fresh ginger root
 4 cups sliced feijoas (pineapple guava)
 1/2 cup golden raisins
 1/4 cup almonds, blanched and sliced or chopped
 1/2 teaspoon salt (optional)

In a large pan, heat sugar and vinegar; add spices and cook for 5 minutes. Slice feijoas, discarding blossom and stem ends (make slices thin and even). Add fruit to pan and cook until somewhat transparent (this takes a while!). Add remaining ingredients and cook until it thickens. Ladle into clean, hot, half-pint jars. Seal and process for 10 minutes using the simmering hot water bath method. Makes about 4 half-pint jars.

Red and Green Tomato Chutney (Hot and Spicy)

4 cups peeled, cored, chopped red tomatoes
 4 cups cored and chopped green tomatoes
 4 cups peeled, cored, and chopped Granny Smith apples
 2 cups chopped onions, red or yellow
 1/4 cup seeded and chopped green bell peppers
 1/4 cup seeded and chopped red bell peppers
 3 jalapeno peppers, seeded and chopped
 2 tablespoons grated fresh ginger
 3 large cloves garlic, minced

1 cup seedless raisins, golden or black
 3 cups light brown sugar
 3 cups apple cider vinegar
 1 teaspoon (or less) cayenne pepper
 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
 1 teaspoon salt (or less) (optional)

Combine all ingredients in a large, heavy pan. Cook over medium heat, stirring often, for about 2 hours, or until mixture thickens. Immediately ladle into clean, hot jars, leaving 1/4 inch head space. Seal and process for 10 minutes using the simmering hot water bath method. Makes about 8 half-pint jars. Allow to mellow a few weeks before serving.

Ornaments and Extra Touches- - -

Spice Ornaments

Combine:

3/4 cup ground cinnamon
 1 tsp. ground allspice
 2 tsp. ground cloves
 1 tsp. ground nutmeg

Blend well. Stir in 1 cup applesauce.

Mixture will be stiff. Roll dough out to 1/4" thickness. Cut into shapes. You can also mold the dough into shapes with your hands or roll it into balls to use with a cookie stamp.

Snip wire and bend into horseshoe shapes and insert them into the tops of the ornaments, leaving half circles exposed. Let ornaments dry uncovered for 2 to 5 days (or in a gas oven with only the pilot light on for overnight). When they are completely dry, store them in sealed plastic bags until you are ready to use them.

You can add small dried flowers, ribbon, beads, lace etc. If a stronger scent is desired, brush or dab on spicy fragrance oil.

Puffy Granny Jar Caps

1/2 yd. colorful cotton-blend fabric
 7 yds. lace, rick-rack or
 1/4 inch bias binding, if desired
 Elastic thread

Cotton-polyester thread
1 lb. fiber fill

Cut fabric in eight 9-inch circles for wide-mouth jars or twelve 7-inch circles for regular-mouth jars. If using trim, sew trim around edges of circles. If not using trim, turn edges of circles under and stitch by hand or machine. Wrap elastic thread around a bobbin by hand, stretching the thread slightly. Place bobbin in sewing machine. Thread top of sewing machine with cotton-polyester thread. Set machine for basting, 4 to 6 stitches per inch. Sew completely around circle 1-1/2 inches from edge with right side of fabric up. Do not backstitch. Gently pull both ends of elastic thread until cap fits snugly around jar top. Tie ends of elastic thread to secure. Stuff cap with fiber fill. Makes 8 caps for wide-mouth jars or 12 caps for regular jars.

Aromatic Dough Ornaments

2 3/4 cups all-purpose flour	1 Tablespoon ground allspice
3/4 cup salt	1 Tablespoon ground cloves
1/4 cup ground cinnamon	3/4 teaspoon powdered alum
1 1/4 cups water	

Combine flour, salt, cinnamon, allspice, cloves and alum in a medium mixing bowl. Add water. Mix well to form dough. Shape the dough into ball. Knead on lightly floured board for about 5 minutes, or until dough is smooth. (If too stiff, sprinkle with additional water; if too moist, add flour.) Spray pie plate or baking sheet with nonstick vegetable cooking spray; set aside. For conventional oven method, heat oven to 250° F.

Prepare aromatic dough. Roll dough to 1/4 inch thick on lightly floured board, work with small portions of dough at a time. Cut out shapes with cookie cutters.

Embellish cutouts with cinnamon candies, cloves, allspice or bits of textured dough; make the textured dough by pushing small amounts of dough through a garlic press. Secure the dough to cutouts by moistening with water. Cut hole for hangar near top of cutout using a drinking straw.

Spray pie plate or baking sheet with vegetable cooking spray. Place cutouts on prepared surface. Microwave at 30 percent (medium low) for 5 - 8 minutes or until the tops of the cutouts feel dry, rotating the plate and checking the ornaments every 2 minutes. You can also bake them for about 2 hours, or until tops are dry and feel firm to the touch.

Remove ornaments to a rack and set aside for 24 hours or longer to complete drying. If desired, spray the ornaments lightly with vegetable cooking spray for shiny appearance. Insert ribbon or raffia for hangers through the holes of the ornaments; knot ends together.

Use pen to draw eyes and mouth on circle. Use red pencil to color cheeks.

Sugar and Spice and Other Nice Things . . .

Pumpkin Pie Spice Mix

8 parts ground cinnamon
2 parts ground ginger
1 part ground cloves

This is also great to add to a pot of simmering water on the stove or wood stove.

Scandinavian Sugar

4 inches stick cinnamon	3 whole cloves
1 cardamon pod, shelled	½ cup sugar

Blend spices 30 seconds. Add sugar, blending just until well blended. Sprinkle on toast, fruit salad or hot cereal.

Candied Orange Shells and Orange Syrup

6 large or 9 small oranges
Water
Salt
3 cups sugar
¾ cup light corn syrup

Cut a slice from the top of each orange, scoop out pulp.

Place orange shells and tops in a large pan. Add 3 quarts water and 1 Tbls salt. Bring to a boil, simmer five minutes. Drain and repeat using fresh water and salt. Drain.

Mix together sugar, corn syrup and 1 cup water in saucepan, bring to boil while stirring constantly. After it comes to a boil, cook without stirring until the syrup reaches 240°F on a candy thermometer.

Add orange shells and tops. Cook for ten minutes. Remove from heat and cool slightly. Put shells and tops into a shallow dish.

Cover with syrup and let stand about four hours, turning occasionally. Remove shells and invert on small juice glasses to drain overnight. Reserve syrup.

Use shells, tops and syrup as directed in recipe for fruit cakes in candied orange shells.

P.S. There will be left over orange syrup.

Cranberry Relish

4 cups frozen cranberries, coarsely chopped
 4 tsp. fresh ginger, grated
 2 large jalapeno peppers, seeded and chopped very finely
 ½ cup red onion, coarsely chopped
 4 Tbsp. fresh lime juice
 4 orange sections, pulp and juice
 4 stalks celery, finely chopped
 1 cup sugar
 10 mint leaves, chopped

Combine all ingredients except mint leaves. Store in refrigerator for two days. On the third day, add mint leaves and serve.

Drying Lemon and Orange Peel

Wash citrus in hot water. Quarter lengthwise and remove fruit. Scrape and discard white membrane from inside of peel. Cut into small strips. No pretreatment is necessary.

DEHYDRATOR: Spread pieces of peeling on trays and dry at 115°F, 6-8 hours, until crisp. Stir occasionally.

SUN: Spread pieces of peeling on trays in full sun in a well-ventilated place, stirring occasionally. Dry until crisp (approximately 1 day if weather is good).

OVEN: Spread pieces of peeling on trays. Dry at 115°F, stirring occasionally, until peel is crisp (8-12 hours).

USES:

- * ½ teaspoon dried peel = 1 tablespoon fresh
- * Use in cakes, cookies, pies, breads, frosting, poultry seasoning and salad dressing.
- * Grate by running through a blender or food mill. Store in small bottles in a cool, dark, dry place.

Fill The House with the Fragrance of the Holidays!

Simmering Potpourri (Fresh)

3 4-inch sticks of cinnamon
 3 Bay leaves
 1/4 cup of whole cloves
 1/4 cup allspice
 1/2 a lemon, halved
 1/2 an orange, halved

4 cups of water

Combine together in saucepan and bring to boil. Reduce heat and simmer as long as desired, remembering to add additional water to prevent drying out. You can store this solution in a tightly covered container in the refrigerator for several days and reuse as desired.

Simmering Potpourri (Dried)

This is the same as above, substituting several slices of dried orange and lemon for the fresh. This dried version can be creatively packaged and given as gifts.

Flavored Vinegars---

Making Flavored Vinegars at Home---

Fresh garden herbs and whole spices are ideal ingredients for flavoring vinegar. Whether you grow your own herbs or buy them in a market, you will discover that flavored vinegars are very easy to prepare and they make unique gifts.

Be sure to begin the process well in advance--you'll need to let the vinegar stand for several weeks to absorb the flavors of the herbs and spices. In that time, the vinegar's sharp flavor will soften and mellow, resulting in a delightful blend.

To prepare flavored vinegar: Simply put herbs and spices into a decorative bottle or clean jar, fill it with cider or wine vinegar, put on the lid, and let the bottle stand in a cool dark place. It takes 3 to 4 weeks for flavor to develop.

To speed up the process by a week or two, heat the vinegar to lukewarm (or even boiling), then pour it into a bottle over herb leaves that have been crushed or coarsely chopped. Let the bottle stand in a warm, dark place and shake gently each day. When the flavor suits you, strain out the seasonings and discard them. Select the bottle you want to use for the gift, put in fresh herbs, spices, flowers, or fruits and fill with vinegar and seal.

You won't be able to use this faster method to make clear vinegar with whole herbs intact--for this you must allow more time.

Don't forget to identify the vinegar's flavors by writing it on a tag or decorative label. You may want to indicate the bottling date, too. Once you've opened your vinegar, store it in a cool, dark place and use it within 3 to 4 months.

Enjoy--Have Fun!!

Uses for Flavored Vinegars Use as a base for salad dressings, such as:

Chinese Salads
 Wilted Greens
 Fresh Green Salads
 Spinach Salads
 Fruit Salads

Use as a substitute for other vinegars in recipes A splash of special vinegar can improve a soup or stew Use as a marinade for meat or poultry
 (It tenderizes the meat and gives it a wonderful flavor!)

WHAT VINEGARS TO USE

Red wine vinegar-Attractive appearance; mildly “gusty” flavor
 White wine vinegar-Light colored; delicate flavor
 Champagne vinegar-Similar to white wine vinegar
 Rice vinegar (red or white)-Delicate flavor (“Seasoned” varieties contain sugar.)
 Distilled white vinegar-Colorless; very acidic flavor
 Apple cider vinegar-Light brown; strong flavor of apples
 Apple cider flavored distilled vinegar-Distilled white vinegar with added color and flavor

PREPARE HERBS-THEN ADD VINEGAR

Crush dried herbs; “bruise” fresh herbs. Fill a wide-mouth jar with desired amount of herbs or other desired ingredients. Add vinegar, cover jar and leave at room temperature for the desired amount of time to infuse the flavor. To speed up the process, the vinegar may be heated to the boiling point before pouring over the herbs. Be sure that any fresh herbs have been rinsed and air-dried to be free of all drops of water. (Water may cause cloudiness.)

When the vinegar tastes just right, strain out the flavoring ingredients. If it is cloudy, or has small particles, strain it through a coffee filter. For a pretty appearance, put some fresh flavoring into bottles and pour in the completed vinegar. Vinegars will keep indefinitely.

COMBINATIONS AND QUANTITIES-USE YOUR IMAGINATION

2 cups white wine or champagne vinegar and 4 large sprigs fresh basil. For a beautiful lavender color try purple basil.

2 cups white wine or champagne vinegar and 2 large sprigs rosemary and 2 large sprigs tarragon.

2 cups apple cider or white distilled vinegar and 1/3 cup chopped garlic.

Fill a jar with peppers, hot jalapeños or Serrano (or milder); fill up the jar with strong-flavored vinegar. Store for a week or two. Leave the peppers in the vinegar and remove pieces to use for cooking when desired.

Basic Herb Vinegar

Heat distilled white vinegar to just below a simmer. Add sprigs of fresh herbs to an 8 or 12 ounce bottle. Fill with the warm vinegar. Seal bottle or cork the bottle. Allow to age for about two weeks in a dark place. Strain the vinegar and add back to bottle with a fresh sprig of herbs.

Tarragon or Dill Vinegar

1 quart vinegar
1 cup long sprigs of tarragon or dill or ½ cup dried herbs

Place herbs in container, add simmered vinegar, cap or seal and let stand for two weeks.

Fresh Basil Vinegar

1 quart vinegar
1 cup fresh basil or ½ cup dried basil

Put basil in container and add simmered vinegar. Cap or seal and let stand for two weeks.

Rosemary or Thyme Vinegar

4 or 5 whole peppercorns 1 quart red wine vinegar
1 cup fresh rosemary or thyme branches (or both)

Place peppercorns and herbs in container, add simmered vinegar. Cap or seal and let stand for two weeks.

Garlic Vinegar

1 quart vinegar
8 to 12 garlic cloves, peeled

Thread garlic onto bamboo skewers and insert into container. Add simmered vinegar. Cap or seal and let stand in cool, dark area for two weeks. Strain vinegar and add fresh garlic.

Fruit or Berry Vinegar

In the top of a non-aluminum double boiler, place 2 cups fresh or frozen red raspberries (mashed) or any other kind of mashed fruit, 2 tablespoons sugar or honey, and 2 cups red wine vinegar. Place over boiling water, turn down the heat, and cook over barely simmering water, uncovered, for 10 minutes. Place in a covered jar, store for 2 weeks, then strain. Pour into bottles and add a few fresh berries or a piece of fresh fruit, if desired.

Fresh Lemon, Lime, or Orange Vinegar

1 lemon or orange or 2 limes, well scrubbed
1 quart vinegar

Slice lemon or orange into sixths or cut limes into quarters. Thread onto bamboo skewers and place in container. Add simmered vinegar. Add food coloring if desired. Cap or seal and let stand in cool, dark area for two weeks. Strain and add fresh fruit slices.

Onion Vinegar

1 cup finely chopped Spanish or white onions or 4 sliced shallots
1 quart distilled white vinegar

Combine ingredients, cover, and let steep 2 weeks. Strain and rebottle.

Special Vinegar (Mild)

2 1-inch sticks cinnamon
4 blades whole mace
8 whole peppercorns
12 whole cloves
15 whole allspice
1 quart distilled white vinegar

Put vinegar in the top half of a double boiler or a similar arrangement. Bring the water to a boil, then remove from the heat and allow the spices to steep in the warm vinegar for two hours. You may use a spice bag or allow the spices to float free. Then follow the normal procedure of straining, rebottling, and capping tightly.

Berry Vinegar

1 lb berries
(blackberries, black currants, elderberries, mulberries, and raspberries are best) 1 pint distilled white vinegar
Sugar

Place only prime condition fruit in a large glass bowl. Add the vinegar and cover with a towel. Steep the mixture for 3 to 5 days, stirring occasionally. Strain the fruit, and in a saucepan, add up to two cups sugar for each pint of liquid (taste along the way for the desired ratio). Boil the mixture, stirring until the sugar is dissolved and continue boiling for another 10 minutes. Rebottle in hot jars and seal tightly.

Fruited Wine Vinegar

- 1 ½ cups white wine vinegar
- ½ cup white table grapes
- 2 pieces fresh pineapple, cut in strips
- Twist of orange rind
- 1 strip red pepper

Warm the vinegar in a saucepan. Place the grapes, pineapple, orange rind, and pepper in sterilized jar or bottle and pour in the warmed vinegar. Cap and allow to stand for a few days before giving. Makes 1 pint.

Other Combinations for Vinegars

- Oregano, bay leaf, garlic in amounts to your taste in red wine vinegar .
- Four cloves of garlic, one lemon peel cut in a continuous spiral, four sprigs of spearmint in 1 quart of wine vinegar.
- Five grapes, one sprig of lemon thyme, one sprig of rosemary, four whole black peppercorns in one pint of white wine vinegar.
- Shallots in the amount to your taste added to white wine vinegar.
- Four bay leaves, small dried hot chili peppers, four garlic cloves in red or white vinegar.
- Two cinnamon sticks, six whole cloves, six golden raisins, one orange peel cut in a continuous spiral in one pint cider vinegar .
- Two sprigs mint, one lemon rind cut in a continuous spiral, and six currants in one \ pint of white wine vinegar.
- Sweet basil, oregano, and black pepper in amount to your taste in red wine vinegar .
- Lemon thyme and rosemary in amounts to your taste in the vinegar of your choice.
- One part tarragon and two parts each of lemon thyme, basil, chives in the vinegar of your choice.

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