

# **CHRISTMAS PUDDIN**

It was the Victorians who first called plum pudding Christmas pudding: the recipes are often the same for both. They were liberally doused with alcohol and set alight, although the adding of a sixpence to the pudding was a 20th century invention.

### **Original recipe**

The Author's Xmas Pudding: Eliza Acton, Modern Cookery, 1845

To three ounces of flour, and the same weight of fine, lightly-grated bread-crumbs, add six of beef kidney-suet, chopped small, six of raisins weighed after they are stoned, six of well-cleaned currants, four ounces of minced apples, five of sugar, two of candied orangerind, half a teaspoonful or nutmeg mixed with pounded mace, a very little salt, a small glass of brandy, and three whole eggs. Mix and beat these ingredients well together, tie them tightly in a thickly-floured cloth, and boil them for three hours and a half. We can recommend this as a remarkably light small rich pudding: it may be served with German, wine, or punch sauce.

### Adapting the recipe for modern use

- Flour 3 oz (85g)
- Bread-crumbs 3 oz (85g)
- Suet, stoned raisins, and currants, each 6 oz (170g)
- Minced apples 4 oz (113g)
- Sugar 5 oz (141g)
- · Candied peel 2 oz (56g)

- Mixed spice ½ teaspoonful
- · Salt, few grains
- Brandy, small wine-glassful (c50-75ml)
- 1 large egg

Mix everything together in a large bowl. Ensure the batter is not too wet. Add additional flour if needed.

You can make this pudding in a basin, in a mould or in a cloth. To prepare a cloth, take a length of muslin (doubled up) or a tea towel, and wet it. Squeeze out the water, and flour liberally, shaking the excess off gently.

You can then put your mix in and tie it up firmly before boiling for 3.5 hours.

There's no need to make Victorian recipe puddings in advance as they don't need maturing.

As ever, remember that eggs were smaller  $-\,1\,\rm medium$  or large egg will probably be enough for this, rather than the 3 called for in the original.

## RECIPE CARD WK5

#### **RECIPE NOTES**

Plum puddings like this had been around for about 200 years, eaten throughout the winter, and associated so closely with Britishness that they – and beef – had become the edible symbols of the nation. Served à la Française, the plum pudding would have been on the table at the same time as the beef, and they are excellent eaten together.