

Have fun shaping and eating marzipan holiday trimmings

Among the good, old-fashioned yet still-enjoyed Christmas treats is marzipan, a sweet made of ground almonds, sugar and egg white, which is traditionally formed into decorative shapes, and often colored.

Marzipan has been enjoyed by people with a sweet tooth for centuries. Some scholars trace its origin to the Roman Empire, when it was a special offering to the gods, and went under the name of *panis martius* (bread of Mars).

Question of origin

Others postulate that marzipan, like so much else enjoyed today in the western world, was of Arabic origin.

In Elizabethan England, it was called St. Mark's Pain ("pain" is the French word for bread), a name which was shortened to marchpane and, eventually,

to marzipan.

If you've never made marzipan, it's simple to do. The following recipes reproduced from *Trim a Treat* (Irena Chalmers Cookbooks, Inc.) by Sylvia Schur will start you off:

MARZIPAN DECORATIONS

Makes 1 1/2 cups

- 1 1/2 cups ground blanched almonds
- 1 1/2 cups confectioners' sugar
- 1 egg white
- 1/2 teaspoon almond extract
- Food coloring

Blend the blanched almonds with the confectioners' sugar, egg white and almond extract, until smooth. This is marzipan.

Add 2 to 3 drops of the food coloring to a piece of the marzipan; knead with your fingers until the marzipan is uniform in color.

Form the colored marzipan into Christmas shapes, or fruits; allow to dry for 2 hours.

MARZIPAN PYRAMIDS

Makes about 48 pyramids

- 1 pound almond paste
- 1 1/2 cups confectioners' sugar, sifted
- 3 tablespoons corn syrup
- Liqueur

Mix and knead the almond paste, confectioners' sugar and corn syrup together until a satiny smooth paste is formed. Spoon out 2 tablespoons of the paste, dust fingers with confectioners' sugar, and form the paste into pyramids 1 inch high, with a 3/4-inch base. Make a small hole in the center top of each pyramid. Let the marzipan stand to harden and form a crust. Fill the hole with a favorite liqueur.

CHRISTMAS PUNCH WITH CRANBERRY ICE WREATH

- 3-ounce package cherry-flavored gelatin
- 1 cup boiling water
- 6-ounce can frozen lemonade concentrate
- 3 cups cold water
- 1 quart bottle cranberry juice cocktail, chilled
- Cranberry Ice Wreath (see following recipe)
- 1 pint 12-ounce bottle ginger ale, chilled

Dissolve cherry-flavored gelatin in boiling water. Stir in lemonade concentrate. Add the cold water and the cranberry juice cocktail.

May be refrigerated overnight.

Place cranberry ice wreath in a large punch bowl. Pour punch over ice. Slowly pour in chilled ginger ale.

Makes about 25 4-ounce servings

Cranberry Ice Wreath

- 3 cups cranberry juice
- 2 cups water
- 10 to 12 fresh garden leaves, such as lemon or camellia (optional)

Mix cranberry juice and water. Pour half of it into a 6-cup ring mold. Freeze solid. Remove from freezer; place leaves shiny side up on frozen ring. Carefully pour a small amount of remaining cranberry water over leaves. Return to freezer until frozen. Add more cranberry water to fill mold to the top, if necessary. Freeze overnight or until solid.

Before serving, unmold ice ring by dipping bottom of mold in cold water; turn out on heavy foil. Wrap ring securely in foil. Return to freezer.

May be frozen for 1 month.

Makes 1 ice ring



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Roast goose for Christmas

In times long past, a roast goose was the traditional centerpiece of the holiday table among those people well-to-do enough to enjoy one.

The following recipe for Roast Goose with Potato Stuffing, which is reproduced from *Back-to-Basics American Cooking*, (G.P. Putnam's Sons) by Anita Pritchard, is a modern-day descendant of a Pennsylvania Dutch recipe recorded by 19th century cookbook writer Catherine Beecher. It may start you and your family on a new old tradition!

ROAST GOOSE

- 1 8-to-9-pound goose
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste
- 1 lemon
- Potato Stuffing
- 1 garlic clove
- 1 rib celery with leaves
- Watercress for garnish

Preheated oven temperature: 350°F.

1. Scrub the goose inside and out under hot running water; drain well and pat dry with paper towels.

2. Rub salt lightly into cavity and sprinkle cavity with freshly ground black pepper. Rub cavity and outside skin with cut lemon halves to crisp the skin during roasting.

3. Insert the stuffing. Any extra stuffing can be placed in a small, well-oiled pan and baked with the goose; the baking time will depend upon the amount of leftover stuffing.

4. Close the body cavity with poultry pins and lace together with twine as for Roast Chicken.

5. Place on a rack in a shallow roasting pan, breast side up. Place 1 split garlic clove and 1 rib celery with leaves, chopped into 1-inch pieces, in the bottom of the roasting pan; put a small amount of water in the roasting pan; this will keep the vegetables from burning.

and also will control the splattering of grease from the roasting goose.

6. Prick the skin on the breast and around the legs and wings in a few places with a fork to release the fat. Bake in preheated oven 18 to 20 minutes per pound. Baste occasionally with pan drippings. When the goose is tender and the skin brown and crisp, place on a heated platter garnished with watercress.

Serves 8

POTATO STUFFING

- 3 cups hot mashed potatoes, unseasoned
- 2 1/2 cups coarse dry white bread crumbs
- 3/4 cup finely chopped onion
- 3 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 1/2 teaspoons salt, or to taste

Freshly ground black pepper to taste

- 1 1/2 teaspoons ground sage
- 3/4 cup chopped celery leaves
- 1/2 cup chopped parsley

In a large mixing bowl combine the potatoes, bread crumbs, onion, eggs, salt, pepper, sage, celery leaves and parsley. Stir to blend.

Yield: Stuffing for 8-to-9-pound goose.

*Pritchard recommends the following procedure for closing up the body cavity: "Tuck wings under. Close body cavity with poultry pins at regular intervals. Loop twine around pins, crisscrossing to lace the cavity together; then loop the twine under one leg, up around the other leg, and bring together. Bring twine up under wings; tie over back."

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