

Benne Wafers

Benne wafers are native to the "low country" of South Carolina. Sesame, a plant with a long history of cultivation, was probably first grown in Africa; West Africans, brought to this country as slaves in the 17th and 18th centuries, called sesame "benne" and legend had it that eating sesame seeds brought good luck. Interestingly, Middle Easterners also called sesame seeds "benne;" there must have been trade routes that brought together buyers from the Middle East with African sellers. Food, as usual, seems to have been a key component in bringing cultures together.

1/2 cup (1 stick) unsalted butter
1 cup light brown sugar, firmly packed
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon vanilla
1 egg
1 cup unbleached all-purpose flour
1 cup toasted sesame seeds (note: "hulled" work best)

In a large mixing bowl, cream together the butter, sugar, salt, vanilla, baking soda, and egg. Add the flour and mix till smooth. Stir in the sesame seeds.

Drop the dough by tablespoonfuls (tablespoon cookie scoop works well here) onto parchment-lined or lightly greased baking sheets. Bake the wafers in a preheated 350°F oven for 8 to 9 minutes, or until they're golden brown. Remove from the oven, allow to cool for 1 minute on the pan, then transfer to a wire rack to cool completely. *Yield: 3 dozen 3-inch wafers.*

CRANBERRY CREAM SCONES

3 cups all-purpose flour	2 lg. eggs
2/3 cup sugar	1 tsp vanilla extract
1 tsp salt	1/3 to 1/2 cup heavy cream
1 tbs. baking powder	1 cup frozen cranberries
3/4 cup unsalted butter, chunked	

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Position rack in top third of oven.

In food processor, pulse first four dry ingredients briefly. Add butter chunks, and pulse just until mixture is coarse and grainy. Transfer mixture to a large bowl.

Make a well in center and add eggs, vanilla and cream, mixing just until dough starts to come together.

Add cranberries. Turn out onto a floured surface, knead briefly, and pat dough into two one-inch rounds. Cut each round into six or eight pizza-shaped slices. Transfer to baking sheet and brush lightly with cream. Sprinkle with coarse sugar.

Bake for 15 to 20 minutes, until lightly-browned around the edges.

Indian pudding is a baked custard with milk, butter, molasses, eggs, spices, and cornmeal. The name is likely derived from the cornmeal, known as indian meal way back when. Here is a tried-and-true recipe for Indian pudding adapted from [An Olde Concord Christmas](#).

Indian Pudding

- 6 cups of milk
- 1/2 cup (1 stick) butter
- 1/2 cup yellow cornmeal
- 1/4 cup flour
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup molasses
- 3 eggs, beaten
- 1/3 cup of granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon of cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon of nutmeg
- 1 cup golden raisins (optional)
- Whipped cream or vanilla ice cream

1 Scald the milk and butter in a large double boiler. Or heat the milk and butter for 5 or 6 minutes on high heat in the microwave, until it is boiling, then transfer it to a pot on the stove. Keep hot on medium heat.

2 Preheat oven to 250°F.

3 In a separate bowl, mix cornmeal, flour, and salt; stir in molasses. Thin the mixture with about 1/2 cup of scalded milk, a few tablespoons at a time, then gradually add the mixture back to the large pot of scalded milk. Cook, stirring until thickened.

4 Temper the eggs by slowly adding a half cup of the hot milk cornmeal mixture to the beaten eggs, whisking constantly. Add the egg mixture back in with the hot milk cornmeal mixture, stir to combine. Stir in the sugar and spices, until smooth. *At this point, if the mixture is clumpy, you can run it through a blender to smooth it out.* Stir in the raisins (optional). Pour into a 2 1/2 quart shallow casserole dish. Bake for 2 hours at 250°F.

5 Allow the pudding to cool about an hour to be at its best. It should be reheated to warm temperature if it has been chilled. Serve with whipped cream or vanilla ice cream.

Martha Washington Chocolates

- 2 pounds sifted confectioners' sugar
- 1 can sweetened condensed milk
- 2 cups flaked coconut
- 1 stick butter or margarine, melted (4 ounces)
- 3 cups chopped pecans
- Dipping Chocolate (below), melted

Mix all ingredients together, shape into balls, then chill until hard. Dip chilled balls in dipping chocolate and let cool. Store in airtight container in refrigerator.

Dipping Chocolate

Use melted chocolate almond bark or purchased dipping chocolate, or the mixture below:

- 1 cake paraffin wax (I do not include this.)
- 12 ounces semisweet chocolate chips

Melt wax and milk chocolate chips together in double boiler. Dip candy in mixture then cool.

Blueberry Buckle

- 9 ounces cake flour, approximately 2 cups
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon kosher salt
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 2 ounces unsalted butter, room temperature
- 5 1/4 ounces sugar, approximately 3/4 cup
- 1 large egg
- 1/2 cup whole milk
- 15 ounces fresh whole blueberries, approximately 3 cups

For the topping:

- 3 1/2 ounces sugar, approximately 1/2 cup
- 1 1/2 ounces cake flour, approximately 1/3 cup
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground nutmeg
- 2 ounces unsalted butter, chilled and cubed

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F. Spray a 9 by 9-inch glass baking dish with nonstick spray and set aside.

In a medium mixing bowl whisk together the flour, baking powder, salt and ground ginger. Set aside.

In the bowl of a stand mixer, with the paddle attachment, beat together the butter and sugar on medium speed until light and fluffy, approximately 1 minute. Add the egg and beat until well incorporated, approximately 30 seconds. Add 1/3 of the flour mixture and beat on low speed just until incorporated and then add 1/3 of the milk and beat until incorporated. Repeat, alternating flour and milk until everything has combined. Gently stir in the blueberries and pour the mixture into baking dish.

In a small bowl combine the sugar, flour and nutmeg. Add the butter and work into the dry ingredients using a fork to combine. Continue until the mixture has a crumb-like texture. Sprinkle the mixture on top of the cake. Bake on the middle rack of the oven for 35 minutes or until golden in color. Cool for at least 10 minutes before serving.

Bourbon Balls

Makes 36 – 42 cookies

- 2 cups vanilla wafer crumbs
 - 2 tablespoons cocoa
 - 1 ½ cups confectioner's sugar, divided
 - 1 cup pecans, very finely chopped
 - 2 tablespoons white corn syrup
 - ¼ cup bourbon
1. Mix well the vanilla wafer crumbs, cocoa, 1 cup confectioner's sugar, and pecans.
 2. Add corn syrup and bourbon; mix well.
 3. Shape into 1-inch balls, and roll in confectioner's sugar.
 4. Put in tightly-covered box or other metal container for at least 12 hours before serving.

NOTE: These candies keep well for 4 or 5 weeks.

Candied Ginger

Adapted from Martha Washington's recipe

By the eighteenth century, Europeans had been enjoying ginger, usually imported from the East Indies, for about four hundred years. Cooks incorporated the spice into savory and sweet dishes; perhaps candying ginger became a popular method not only of preserving the perishable root but also of taming its fiery flavor.

Ginger can certainly be candied like orange or lemon rinds (by successively boiling it in water and sugar syrup), but Martha Washington wrote a recipe that appears to more closely resemble the dragee method of candying nuts—a process that coats them with hard sugar. Washington instructed the ginger to be soaked in water overnight. She then explained that sugar was to be boiled and cooled, and the ginger added to it, stirring until the lot was "hard to ye pan." The ginger was then removed, dried, and placed again in a hot pan, where, as it cooled, one was to "stir it about roundly, and it will be A rock Candy in A very short space"

The following recipe marries both techniques, resulting in a sweetmeat that is translucent, tender, and coated with sugar.

(George Washington always insisted that crystallized ginger be on the sweets table.)

- 1 pound fresh ginger, peeled
 - 6 cups granulated sugar
 - 4 cups water
 - 4 cups granulated sugar, for coating
1. Place the ginger in a medium-size saucepan, and add enough cold water to cover completely. Place the pan over high heat, and bring the mixture to a boil. Immediately remove from the heat, strain, and rinse the ginger under cool running water. Allow the ginger to cool to room temperature.

2. Using a mandoline, or carefully with a chef's knife, slice the cooled ginger into 1/4 inch thick slices. Place the slices in a pot, and cover with cold water. Bring to a boil. Strain and rinse the sliced ginger under cool running water. Repeat the boiling, straining, and rinsing process four more times to remove the bitterness from the ginger.
3. In a medium-size pot, add the sliced ginger, 6 cups of sugar, and the water; stir to combine. Using cool water and a pastry brush, wash down the sides of the pot, making certain no sugar crystals remain. Bring the mixture to a boil, and cook until the syrup reaches a temperature of 260°F on a candy thermometer, about 10 minutes. Remove the pot from the heat and allow it to cool to room temperature. Cover the pot with plastic wrap, and let the oranges steep overnight at room temperature.
4. Strain the slices from the syrup and arrange them atop a wire rack. Cover generously with 2 cups of the sugar. Turn the ginger slices over, and repeat the process with the remaining 2 cups of sugar.
5. Let the sugar-coated ginger sit out for 8 hours. Store in an airtight container for up to 3 weeks at room temperature.