

Fruit Cake (Old English Pork Cake)—recipe over a hundred years old in 1950 --from our Campina Court neighbor, Mrs. Robert (Bertha) Colvin

A part of our Christmases for many years was the fruitcake baking. Mom had gotten the recipe from a neighbor on Campina Court, Bertha. Colvin, who lived about 2 or 3 houses up in the direction of the Spiroffs. The recipe was 100 years old when Mom got it, so it is now about 160 years old. Mom liked the dark fruitcake and shared it with friends, some of whom suggested that she bake it and sell it. For many years, that is how Mom earned money for Christmas. She saved coffee cans all year long (half pound cans), some were baked in loaf pans, or ring pans and all of us helped with the stirring, measuring, weighing, and decorating. For a number of years, I think she made several hundred pounds of fruitcake to sell. She earned money to spend for Christmas that way. I still make a small batch every Christmas (as of 2011) and send a piece to my siblings--a bit of home from Christmases past. I usually do the baking just after Thanksgiving and I love the way it makes the house smell--like home. Nancy Winter Hatch has now been making it for the past few years.

This is 1/4 of the recipe Mom used to make many times over. The 4 of us kids were involved with the baking process as soon as we were old enough to help stir—it was hard work!!

1/4-pound salt pork
1 C boiling hot strong coffee
1 cup of dark brown sugar
1/4 C molasses
1/4 tsp baking soda
1/2 pound (or more) golden raisins
1/4 pound of pecans (or more)
1/4 pound of walnuts
1/4 pound of dates, (cut up)
1/8 bottle of rum flavoring

2-pounds mixed candied fruit

2-1/4 C flour

Scant 1 tsp each ground cinnamon and ground nutmeg

Grind salt pork. Pour hot coffee over it. Stir. Add sugar. Add 1/4 tsp soda to molasses and add to other mixture. Add other ingredients mixed with flour. Stir to mix.

First grease pans and then put a shallow layer of flour on the bottom.

Line pan completely, bottom and sides, with waxed paper. Decorate tops of loaves with candied cherries and pineapple, if desired.

Bake at 275-300 for 1 to 1-1/2 hours, testing with toothpick to see if it is done. The toothpick should be clean when withdrawn from the cake.

After the cake has cool. Soak cheese cloth in rum and then wrap several layers around the rum. Wrap cake in foil. During the next week or so periodically open it up and add additional rum to the cheese cloth.