

CHRISTMAS Dinner

The traditional English Christmas celebrated today started in Victorian times in the 19th century. The main meal is eaten in the middle of the day or early evening. The table is laid with candles and holly and each person is given a cracker to pull.

Christmas dinner consists of roast turkey, goose or chicken served with vegetables such as roast potatoes and Brussel sprouts. The turkey is usually filled with a tasty stuffing made of breadcrumbs, onions and herbs. No Christmas is complete without the traditional Christmas pudding, which might contain coins or lucky charms for the children. It is made with breadcrumbs, sugar, rich dried fruit such as raisins and sultanas, nuts, spices and suet. When the pudding is placed on the table, brandy is poured over it and it is set alight. In the past, the pudding was prepared

many weeks before Christmas and each member of the family made a wish and stirred it. Nowadays, most people buy ready-made puddings from shops and supermarkets.

Recipe for Christmas Pudding

Ingredients

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| 1 1/2 cups chopped raisins | 2/3 cup pitted and chopped dates |
| 1 cup chopped soft dried figs | 1 cup currants |
| 3/4 cup golden raisins | 1/2 cup brandy |
| 8 ounces unsalted butter | 1 cup dark brown sugar |
| grated zest of one lemon | 3/4 cup sifted flour |
| 4 beaten eggs | 1 teaspoon cinnamon |
| 1 cup chopped blanched almonds | 1 teaspoon ground allspice |
| 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg | 1 teaspoon ground ginger |
| 1 1/2 cups fresh white bread crumbs | |

Instructions

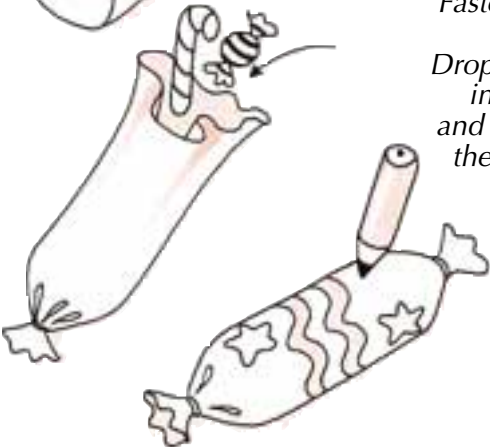
- Grease a 2-quart ceramic mould or casserole.
- Beat the butter and sugar until thick and creamy. Beat in the zests and eggs.
- Fold in the fruit and almonds. Add the flour and spices, then fold in the bread crumbs.
- Spoon the mixture into the prepared mould, press down well and level the surface. Cut a sheet of wax paper 2 inches larger than the top of the mould. Pleat the wax paper twice through the centre to allow for expansion as the pudding rises. Place the paper on top of the pudding and cover it with a twice-pleated double thickness of foil. Tie the foil securely to the edge of the mould with string.
- Place the mould on a rack in a *Bain Marie* or other large covered pot. Pour boiling water into the *Bain Marie* until it is halfway up the side of the mould. Steam for four hours, topping the boiling water to the same level when necessary.
- Remove the mould from the *Bain Marie* and let it cool. Rewrap with fresh wax paper and foil and store in the refrigerator until ready to serve.
- Steam again for two hours before serving.

ACTIVITY

PARTY CRACKERS



Cover the card tube from a toilet roll with crepe paper. Leave enough at each end to make a frill.



Fasten one end with wool. Drop small gifts into the tube and then fasten the other end.

Decorate each cracker.