

# CHRISTMAS FAMILY RECIPES SAVED & SHARED



By Lisa Crandall



**D**o you have a favorite recipe that you learned from your mom or your grandmother? Recipes are the bedrock of family culture and as young people discover the joys and benefits of cooking from scratch they'll be tweaking and enjoying those family recipes and hopefully passing them on to the next generation.

In our household those recipes include my great grandmother's recipe for date squares made with a blend of large and small oatmeal with no vanilla or orange zest. From my husband's family there is a treasured recipe for ginger snaps that are soft enough to bite into without cracking. When asked, one friend remembers learning how to make grasshopper pie because it was a favorite of her father's. Nowadays she makes it to share as a gift during the holidays. Another friend makes corn pudding and brings it to every potluck because it was a family favorite when he was growing up. As a single man the recipe is too large for one so he takes advantage of every opportunity to enjoy it and share it at the same time. The range of recipes passed along is infinite. Husbands bring them from their mother's kitchens and daughters learn them from their mothers.

Ultimately there is one primary reason recipes get handed down through the generations. They taste good! And for the most part they are easy. And those details are important when the holiday baking season rolls around and families gather, clamouring for familiar tastes. The following recipes are some of my favorites.



## Date Squares

### What you'll need...

1 lb cooking dates • 2 cups brown sugar (plus 1 handful) • 2 cups flour • 2 ¼ cups of oatmeal (see note) • 1 teaspoon baking soda • 1 cup hard margarine

**Note:** use a blend of large and small flake oatmeal aka old fashioned and quick cooking. Slightly larger flake.

### To Create:

- Put the dates into a pot and almost cover with water and a handful of brown sugar. Cook on low-medium heat until soft enough to mash thoroughly. While they are cooling mix up the dry ingredients using a pastry blender to make a crumbly mixture.
- Place approximately ½ of the crumble mixture into a greased 9" x 13" pan and pat down gently to form the bottom layer. When the dates are cool enough to work with spread evenly across the pan. Spread the remaining crumble mixture loosely across the top. Do not pat this down
- Bake in a 350 oven until the edges are just starting to brown. Cool before serving. These freeze well.



## Baked Beans

### What you'll need...

1lb (approximately 2 ¼ cups) dried navy beans, or any kind of dried bean • 1 cup (generous) chopped onion • 5 cups water • ½ cup ketchup • 1/3 cup molasses (not blackstrap) • ¼ cup brown sugar, packed • 1 teaspoon dry mustard • 1 teaspoon salt • 1/4 teaspoon pepper • 1 slice of peameal bacon • 1 teaspoon baking soda • 1 cup hard margarine

### To Create:

- Combine all ingredients in 3 ½ quart slow cooker. Stir. Add the pea meal bacon last and bury it slightly in the middle of the beans. Cover. Cook on low for 8-10 hours or on High for 4 to 5 hours.
- This makes about 6 cups of deliciously flavoured baked beans.



## Buttery Corn Pudding

### What you'll need...

1 can creamed corn (14 oz or 19 oz cans will both work) • 1/4 cup all-purpose flour • 1/4 cup sugar (I often use a tsp ± less) • 3/4 cup milk • 3 eggs • 1/4 cup melted butter • a pinch of salt • 2 tsp melted butter (for baking disk - I just rub it on cold)

### To Create:

- Combine corn, flour, sugar, milk, eggs & 1/4 cup of butter in bowl.
- Mix thoroughly. (Mix everything else before adding the corn)
- Pour into 1 1/2 quart casserole, greased with remaining 2 teaspoons of butter.
- Bake at 350 degrees for 45 – 60 minutes, until set. Serves 8. Reheats nicely.

I think it is this tendency to want tried and true recipes that makes community cookbooks so popular as projects and as fundraisers. I bet you've got several in your cookbook collection. Maybe today would be a good day to pull one out and browse through to see if there is something interesting to experiment with. Or maybe this year would be the right time to create a family cookbook as a truly unique holiday gift. LH