Bowls Of Nuts Adorn Tables At Christmas

Favorite Item Of Colonial Days Holds Place On Menus

At this time of the year nut bowls, filled with nuts, fresh and salted, shelled and unshelled, are as much an adornment of the dining table as bowls of fruit.

"Nuts have been on the American menu since colonial times," says a bulletin from the Washington, D. C., headquarters of the National Geographic Society. "The earliest Americans invited Indians to their feasts. Their contribution to the festive board was nuts, corn and wild game.

"From prehistoric times, Indians of North America have appreciated the value of nuts and have used them to supplement their diet. The Indian in the role of orchardist seems strange, yet he found so many uses for hickory nuts alone that he cultivated hickory groves. He not only ate the nuts, but drank hickory 'milk,' made by pouring water over pulverzied nuts on the ground press cake, and used it in cooking hominy and corn cakes, and as gravy on sweet potatoes.

"Pecans, which have been growing wild for centuries in moist lowlands of the southern United States and Mexico, were also favorites with American Indians. Later pecans furnished nourishment for early Mississippi settlers and were one of their first articles of commerce. In the 1760's fur traders carried pecans along with their beaverskins to New York, where some were shipped to England and France.

"Murmuring pines in the Southwest and in Mexico still provide Indians and Mexicans with edible nuts. Long before cowled Spanish monks marched up the western coast, establishing their missions, Indians depended for food partly on nuts of the scrubby pinon tree of Arizona and New Mexico. Paiute and Washo tribes of western Nevada once fought long, bloody battles over pinon nuts. Hatchets were not buried until the territory was definitely divided to give each a share of pinon woods.

"The expression "from soup to nuts" implies that nuts are merely dainties to top a feast, whereas to many people they are the feast itself. Nuts are one of the richest foods grown. Their protein is of good quality, but because of their high fat content they are used interchangeably with other fatty foods such as cream, butter or bacon. Many inhabitants of India and Japan substitute nuts and legumes entirely for meats.

"The chestnut-bark disease, which has destroyed most of the native chestnut trees in the eastern United States, has greatly limited American acquaintance with these nuts. Few of recent generations in the United States have seen the large spiny burrs with their velvety linings, and recognize the glossy, bright brown nuts only as stuffing in Thanksgiving turkeys or as tasty morsels bought from street vendors on frosty mornings.

HOLIDAY EGG NOG

If you are keeping open house over the holidays, here is an old fashioned egg nog recipe.

Take a dozen eggs and put the yolks into one dish and then divide the whites evenly in two dishes. Beat yolks light, add two cups sugar, beat well and then add one quart of good brandy and one pint of jamaica rum, adding a little at a time, turn about. Then add three quarts of rich cream and one of the dishes of whites of eggs, beaten up light.

Take the rest of the whites and beat up stiff and add a cup of powdered sugar, add to this a quart of cream and stir into the above.

Make early in the morning the day it is to be used, so that the brandy and the rum have time to blend.

A simpler Version

12 eggs, whites and yolks separated
12 tablespoons sugar
12 tablespoons brandy
12 tablespoons jamaica rum
1 quart cream.

Beat yolks light and mix sugar in thoroughly. Then add brandy and rum.

Whip cream firm and stiff and add to above mixture. Beat whites of eggs stiff and add last of all to the above.

Contrast In Salad Dressing Is Smart

The new vogue for salad dressings is "contrast," and you'll find it in both taste and texture with this banana peanut butter mayonnaise.

Combine 1 ripe banana, mashed with ¾ cup mayonnaise and 3 tablespoons peanut butter. If too thick, thin with a little thin cream. Makes about 1¼ cups.

MOLDED FRUIT JUICE

It's perfectly "correct" to eat your fruit juice in the new manner—with a spoon—when you mold it this way:

Dissolve one package lemon flavored gelatin in 1¼ cups warm water. Add ¾ cup canned grapefruit juice, 2 tablespoons sugar and dash of salt. Turn into individual molds and chill until firm. Unmold and serve.

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CHRISTMAS PLUM PUDDING

Playing almost as important a part in the traditional celebration of Christmas as the yule log, the holly wreath, the mistletoe and St. Nicholas himself is the famous plum pudding, which has come to us with the passing of the centuries.

The original plum pudding or plum pottage as it was first termed, was served as an accompaniment to the first course of the Christmas dinner back in the days of the Normans. The method of preparation was to boil beef or mutton in its own broth which was thickened with brown bread. Half boiled raisins, currants, prunes, cloves, mace and ginger were then added. The mixture when done, was sent to the table with the best meats.

Plum puddings are best when served very hot. They should be steamed for one hour before serving. A flaming plum pudding which will add interest to your Christmas dinner may be had by pouring brandy over the pudding and lighting it just before it is brought to the table. Domestic Port or Sherry Wine are excellent to serve with the plum pudding.

Many housewives make their plum pudding right after Thanksgiving but those who have not, will find there is still ample time in which to prepare one.

3 cups stale bread crumbs
2 cups hot milk
8 eggs
½ cup domestic sherry wine
¼ cup brandy
1 lb. seeded rasins
1 lb. currants
¼ lb. citron, cut in strips
1 tablespoon mixed mace, cinnamon and cloves
1 lb. salted beef suet, chopped fine
Sufficient flour to dredge fruit

Soak bread in hot milk and let it stand until cool, then add sugar and yolks of eggs beaten to a cream, next the fruits dredged with flour, the suet, wine, brandy and spices. Beat the whole together and add last the egg whites, beaten stiff.

Turn into a well buttered mold, cover and steam for six hours. When ready for serving, steam in mold for one hour. Serve with a wine or brandy sauce.

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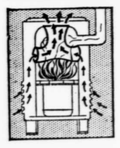
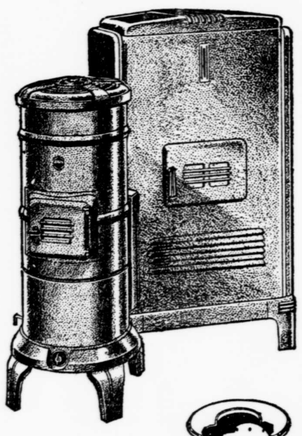
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Candy Boosts Spirit Of Christmas In Home

Home made candy does so much toward increasing the Christmas spirit that every housewife should make it. Not only for her own home, but as gifts for friends as well.

This candy making can be made into a party if so desired, with great results, especially for the children that are home for vacation, they simply love to make candy. The following recipes are economical and very simple to make.

Stuffed Dates

Dates
Walnuts
Granulated sugar

Remove stones from dates and fill the cavities with walnuts or Canton ginger. Shape in the original form and roll in granulated sugar.

Butterscotch

1 cup molasses
8 cups powdered sugar
1 cup butter
Pinch of soda

Boil all the ingredients until it forms a hard ball when tried in cold water (250-264 F.). Or if you desire a chewy candy, stop just short of this stage.

Molasses Taffy

1 cup white sugar
2 cups brown sugar
¼ cup molasses
2 tablespoons vinegar
2 tablespoons butter
1 cup cold water

Cook all the ingredients until the mixture forms a hard ball when tried in cold water. Pour onto a buttered platter and when cool enough to handle, pull and then cut in small pieces.

Christmas Salads May Be Gay And Colorful

A salad is, fortunately, something that can be dressed up to be one of the outstanding features on the table. And for Christmas dinner, everything, including the salad, should be gay and colorful.

With the turkey, a fruit salad is chosen by nine out of ten people. Whether if be a Waldorf salad, or pear and cheese, or pineapple and cheese or mixed fruits, all can be made cheerful by simply using a pastry tube and a little vegetable coloring. For instance, if serving a pear and cream cheese salad, the cream cheese can be colored red and piped around the edges or over the tops of the pears. Or a Waldorf salad can be trimmed with bits of holly. An interesting variety of this salad, by the way, is to mix in chopped raw cranberries that have been standing for awhile in sugar.

If green salads are preferred, bits of pimento add so much color. Or red and green peppers, sliced and crossed over the top of the salad. One can go much farther though, and make a beautiful jellied salad of strawberry flavored gelatine or plain gelatine with red vegetable coloring. Fancy shaped molds are still being used with great success and are ideal for increasing that holiday spirit.

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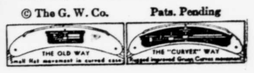

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