

Mayor Days Be Merry!

By Susie Iventosch



Karen Mendonca and Victoria Smith

Photo Doug Kohen

It's that cheery time of year when kitchens are bursting with the wonderful aroma of holiday baking! Cookies and candies, jams and breads, roasts and rubs and all the trimmings are being prepared for family gatherings, holiday teas, cocktail parties and Santa's trek back up the chimney! We thought it would be fun to take a peek at what our 2011 mayors have in store for the Christmastime food and festivities.

Orinda's Mayor Victoria Smith shared a few of her family's fun holiday traditions as well as her recipes for scrumptious zucchini nut bread and her sons' fabulous fudge. Mayor Karen Mendonca of Moraga offered two delicious recipes, and a little insight into her Christmas festivities. Unfortunately, we could not collect any recipes from Lafayette Mayor Carl Anduri due to his heavy travel schedule, however his traditional Swedish Christmas Eve fare sounded very intriguing indeed!

For Mendonca, Christmas has always been the time of the year when her family reunites with loved ones they don't get to see every day.

"Traditionally, we attend vigil services early in the evening on Christmas Eve, and then return to open presents and enjoy a nice dinner with the immediate family," the mayor said. "Then, on Christmas Day, we enjoy a large breakfast of omelets, fresh fruit and 'potica,' an Austrian yeast bread."

Then the formalities begin of setting the Christmas table, preparing the meal and welcoming family and friends for the holiday feast.

Smith and her family always make time to attend a concert, play or other holiday event together, so as to enjoy the festive spirit of the month.

"And, we always read 'The Night Before Christmas' every Christmas Eve!" she said.

It has always been important to her family to give back during the holidays. When the mayor's own sons, Will and Daniel, were young Scouts they worked at the Food Bank or the Books for Barrios program. More recently, Smith and her husband, Wick, have donated gifts for the Juvenile Hall Auxiliary.

"This helps to provide some small gifts (and good cheer) to young people in juvenile hall, many of whom don't receive any other gifts," she pointed out.

"Enjoy your families and your time together this year," said Smith. "And, during these tough economic times, if you can, please contribute with your time, or financially, to those who may not be as fortunate this holiday season. Happy holidays, Lamorinda!"

Mayor Mendonca's Steamed Persimmon Pudding with Lemon Sauce

Persimmon Pudding

INGREDIENTS

2 eggs
 1¼ cups granulated sugar
 1¼ cups sieved persimmon pulp
 (about 3-4 large, ripe persimmons)
 ¼ cup melted butter
 1½ cups sifted all-purpose flour
 1½ teaspoons baking powder
 ½ teaspoon salt
 ½ teaspoon cinnamon
 ¾ cup milk
 1 cup seedless raisins
 ½ cup chopped pecans
 ¼ cup brandy

For Garnish: 1 cup heavy cream, whipped and flavored with powdered sugar and pure vanilla extract



Photo Susie Iventosch

DIRECTIONS

In a large bowl beat eggs until light and foamy, then beat in sugar until smooth and lemon-colored. Combine persimmon pulp and melted butter and stir into egg mixture. Sift dry ingredients and stir into egg mixture alternately with milk, beating well after each addition.

Add raisins, pecans and brandy. Transfer to a well-buttered mold (I used a soufflé dish) and cover tightly with foil.

To cook the pudding, place the mold (soufflé dish) on a rack in a large deep kettle and add water to come halfway up the sides of the mold. Bring water to a gentle boil, cover pan, lower heat, and continue to cook (steam) for about 2½ hours.

Remove pudding from water and let cool for 15 minutes. Unmold onto a serving plate. Serve warm with lemon sauce and a very generous dollop of whipped cream.

Lemon Sauce

1 cup sugar
 2 cups water
 2½ tablespoons corn starch
 ½ cup fresh squeezed lemon juice
 1 tablespoon grated lemon zest
 2 tablespoons butter

Combine sugar and cornstarch in a saucepan and gradually add water, blending with a whisk until smooth. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until mixture becomes thick and clear. Remove from heat and stir in lemon juice, zest and butter. Stir until well-blended. Serve warm or chilled over persimmon pudding.

Susie Iventosch is the author of Tax Bites and Tasty Morsels, which can be found at Across the Way in Moraga, www.amazon.com, and www.taxbites.net. Susie can be reached at suziventosch@gmail.com.

These recipe is available on our web site

www.lamorindaweekly.com

If you would like to share your favorite recipe with Susie please contact her by email or call our office at 925-377-0977.

