



Memories from

Alma's
Kitchen

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A Culinary Journey in Time

Edited by Peter Prevos

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Contributions from Thellie and Peter Woods, Karen Woods, Ann Mullan, Jo Mullan, Noreen Wackrow, Noel Gribble, Sue Prevos and many others.

Edited by Peter Prevos and Marissa van Uden.

Design by Luke Brewer.

Front page: Alma cutting a cake made for her grand daughter Helen's
twenty-first birthday.

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Preface

The idea to write this book came to me when I realised that in conversations about my mother-in-law Alma Brewer, the favourite topic was food. Stories about her legendary cakes and the many hours she spent slaving at the stove are common topics at family gatherings.

Handwritten copies of Alma's recipes are scattered widely within the extended family, but nobody seems to hold a complete collection. This book was created to capture these recipes and the associated memories in one place for future generations.

Alma was a professional chef, cooking daily for her family and for others in the community. We are not used to referring to the women of her generation as professionals, but cooking was their job, even though they were rarely paid for their work. Until not all that long ago, 'cooking' and 'woman' were two words that naturally bonded together, and so we easily overlook the significance of their work.

This book is a culinary journey in time through Alma's recipes and family stories. It is an ode to Alma's years of hard work and to the cooking traditions of a vanished Australia.

Peter Prevos, Kangaroo Flat, May 2014

One

Introduction

Alma Gribble, the second child of George and Elizabeth Gribble, was born in 1924 in the alpine town of Bright. Growing up, she had ambitions to become a nurse but she wasn't allowed to attend high school and so this dream was never fulfilled. Just like many other girls of her generation, Alma left school just before her fifteenth birthday and was sent off to work as a housemaid for her aunt.

She started her career as a cook at Cunningham's Bakery in Eldorado. After her first son Noel was born, Alma got a job as a cook at the Star Hotel in Eldorado. It was in this hotel in 1947 that Alma met Vince Brewer, and after a whirlwind romance of only three weeks they were engaged and married only a few months later. The Brewer family grew to a respectable size of nine. First their three daughters Thelma, Noreen and Ann were born, followed by the three boys David, Norman, Bobby, with Sue closing the ranks.

Alma was a great cook, and was pretty much self-taught. She followed established recipes but also experimented to develop her own approaches to known dishes. Her mother, on the other hand, was not so great in the kitchen, so she couldn't pass on any wonderful recipes or techniques. In fact, Alma's mother was known for once taking credit for a sponge cake that was actually made by her husband when they hosted a euchre party. Her own version of the sponge cake had not worked out quite so well and had been relegated to feed the chooks.

Back then, cooking was a much more laborious task than it is now. In the time before supermarkets, even getting some milk required a lot of

work. Alma and Vince had two cows that wandered the common during the day, and had to be rounded up by the kids every night. Every morning and night, Alma milked them by hand to provide the necessary milk, cream and butter for her family.

Alma gave her children free rein in the kitchen and also encouraged them to cook. The children liked it best when Alma wasn't home to watch them practicing, because then they could make the things they liked most, such as honeycomb and toffee. Being alone in the house also meant they could feed any failures to the chooks without getting in trouble.

Takeaway meals were unheard of, and so every day Alma cooked massive amounts of food on a wood stove to feed her family. The old stove at the Eldorado house was an IXL with the fire box on one side and the oven on the other. Alma and Vince took turns getting up first and lighting the fire in the mornings, usually with a liberal splash of kerosene. The sons had to collect chips from the wood heap to help start the fire. Boys being boys, they enjoyed playing with fire so much that David once lost his eyebrows trying to light the fire because he was a bit too liberal with the kerosene.

Hot water was provided through a copper fountain with a brass tap that sat on the top of the stove. Two big black kettles always sat on the side over the firebox, ready to boil some water for a cuppa or for doing the dishes.

When Alma was making cakes, she would test the oven temperature by putting her hand in it to see how hot it was—and she was amazingly accurate with this method. Many of the original recipes do not provide any temperature, they merely say “moderate oven”, which was enough for experienced cooks.

Alma was always welcoming, warm and generous and didn't bat an eyelid about providing food for whoever happened to turn up around meal-times. Jacky, a friend of Thelma's, remembers being taken to the Brewer home from school for lunch and being provided with a great meal, no questions asked. Alma always managed to rustle up plenty for everyone and apparently without much effort—possibly she simply put less on her own plate to allow for the guests.

After the family moved to Wangaratta, Alma continued to work as a cook, but now on a modern gas stove. She prepared meals for the nuns at the local convent and for the priests at the presbytery. Alma also baked cakes and slices for afternoon teas and helped out with the catering at horse race meetings in the district.

Alma was especially famous for her fruit cakes, and every Christmas she would make cakes for the whole family. If you were really good, you got two cakes. Her fruit cakes were used by many locals over the years as wedding cakes, engagement cakes and for twenty-first birthday parties. Her plum puddings were pretty well liked too, although the kids were mostly just interested in finding the silver coins. After decimal currency was introduced, Alma kept a special horde of the old imperial currency to reuse in her plum puddings each year.

Alma also made lots of jams, jellies and relishes, and her tomato sauce was legendary. Even though the recipe was from the standard Ezy-Sauce bottle, it required the finesses of a great cook to make it stand out from the average. Even friends of the family would often ask if there was a spare bottle. Alma always bottled her famous tomato sauce in brown 'long neck' beer bottles, and so the male members of the family made valiant attempts to provide her with an endless supply of these. Once, Alma and her sister Betty got a cheap deal on one hundred pounds of tomatoes. They made so much sauce that the house reeked of tomatoes and onions for days—but no one minded because at least there was plenty of sauce to go around.

Later, when Thellie was attending Teacher's College in Melbourne, she would come home to visit on weekends and always returned to the big city with a large tin full of home made biscuits. Alma's biscuits always made her very popular with her friends, until such time as the tin was empty.

Alma did the same for her youngest daughter Sue when she was in college, often including a supply of boiled pineapple fruit cakes. And Noreen remembers going back with flasks of soup when she was doing her nurses training.

Alma once travelled to Fish Creek to look after Thellie when she had a bad case of the flu. The only problem was she got on the wrong train, and

so she had to be fetched from Morwell—over an hour's drive away from Fish Creek. Thellie's husband Peter didn't really mind driving to pick her up though, because of course she would fill the cake tins during her visit and made him his favourite Swiss rolls. In fact, it is sometimes said that Peter only married Thellie to ensure a steady supply of Alma's Swiss rolls.

In the following chapters, a large collection of Alma's recipes are presented. The preference for sweets within the family becomes clear from the great number of recipes for biscuits, slices, cakes and desserts when compared to the savoury dishes.

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Savoury Dishes

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Savoury Dishes

Sunday lunch in the Brewer household always consisted of a roast followed by sweets. The Brewer children have fond memories of walking home from Sunday school and being able to smell the roast cooking as they came down the lane.

As was common in the days before obesity warnings and magazines filled with articles on what one should not eat, Alma cooked her roasts in lots of fat and seasoned them with large amounts of salt.

When roast lamb was on the menu, Alma enjoyed eating some while the rest of the meal was cooking, since the lamb was ready before the rest of the roast. This was her favourite part of the meal.

Chooks did not come from the supermarket but were grown in the back yard. They were well fed from the mislaid cakes and biscuits the children fed them when hiding their mistakes. Compared to today's supermarket variety, the home-grown chooks were pretty big and fed a whole family. Preparing roast chicken was a long process. Before any cooking could start, the kids had to catch the chook so that Alma could chop its head off. One time, Alma didn't quite manage to remove the head in the first blow. Needless to say, the poor creature ended up running around in circles (a perfect demonstration of the saying "ran around like a headless chook"). It had to be caught again before she could perform the final blow. After a chook had been slayed, it was dunked into hot water in the copper trough to soften its feathers. Rubbing resin into the feathers made plucking the chook a lot easier, but it was surely not the best part of preparing a meal as the smell of wet feathers was disgusting. After gutting, the chook it was

finally ready to cook.

Throwing away food was not a normal thing in those days. Leftover roast meat was sliced up and kept for Sunday tea or for sandwiches, or it was minced to make rissoles or shepherd's pie. After the family had finished eating their roast chook, Alma would always keep the carcass for making soup.

Roast tomatoes

These were always a favourite with a roast lunch.

Ingredients

- tomatoes
- salt
- sugar
- grated onion
- breadcrumbs

Instructions

Cut the tomatoes in half and sprinkle them with a little salt and a little sugar.

Add some grated onion, and then top the tomatoes with breadcrumbs.

Cook the tomatoes in a hot oven for about 35 minutes till the breadcrumbs are browned and the tomatoes are soft but still maintain their shape.

Potato cakes

Ingredients

- 2 large grated potatoes
- 1 egg
- 1 onion grated
- flour

Instructions

Squeeze the grated potatoes to drain some of the moisture.

Mix everything together with enough flour to bind the mixture.

Heat a pan with a little oil and butter, although Alma probably used fat saved from the roasts.

Put spoonfuls of the mixture into the pan, and then flatten them to form the cakes.

Flip the potato cakes over and cook till golden on both sides.

Shepherd's Pie

Ingredients

- 4 large potatoes
- 500 g minced beef or lamb
- grated onion
- grated carrot
- dried herbs
- liberal dash of tomato sauce
- tablespoon of Worcestershire sauce
- ½ cup water or stock

Instructions

Boil the potatoes and mash them.

Combine the ingredients and place them in a pie dish.

Top the pie with the mashed potato.

To serve, decorate the mashed potato with a fork and then brush with butter.

Bake the pie at 180°C for about half an hour until browned.

Egg and Bacon Pie

Ingredients

- 3 eggs
- 1 cup milk
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup packet-pastry mix
- 1 cup grated cheese
- 1 cup chopped onion
- 1 cup chopped bacon

Instructions

Combine all ingredients.

Place the mixture into a large greased pie dish or several single-serve pie dishes.

Cook in the oven on medium until brown, and then let set 1 hour (for a large pie) or half an hour (for small pies).

Pastry for Meat & Veggies

Ingredients

- 1 cup sifted plain flour
- 1 cup sifted self-raising flour
- 120 g butter
- $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon salt
- water

Instructions

Rub the butter and flour.

Mix with water to produce a soft dough.

Tomato Sauce

Ingredients

- 9–12 kg tomatoes
- 1½ kg onions
- 100 g garlic
- 1 tablespoon ground ginger
- 1½ kg sugar
- ½ cup salt
- 1¼ kg apple purée
- 375 ml Ezy-Sauce

Instructions

Mix the ginger to a paste with some water.

Put the tomatoes, onions, garlic and ginger through the food processor and then place them in a stock pot and boil gently for 5 hours.

Sieve the mixture with a Mouli-grater and put it back into the stock pot.

Add the sugar, salt, apple purée and Ezy-Sauce.

Simmer uncovered for approximately 1 hour or till the mixture pours with a thick consistency.

Carefully pour into hot sterilised bottles and seal.

Tomato Relish

Ingredients

- 3 kg ripe tomatoes
- 1 kg onions
- small handful of salt
- vinegar to cover
- 1 kg sugar
- 3 tablespoons mustard
- 2 tablespoons curry powder
- 1 tablespoon plain flour

Instructions

Scald and peel the tomatoes.

Cut the tomatoes and onions into small pieces.

Sprinkle with salt and let stand overnight. Drain in the morning.

Cover with vinegar, add sugar, and then boil for 1 hour or until the onion is soft.

Mix the mustard, curry powder and flour with vinegar to form a paste.

Add to the tomatoes and onions and boil up again.

Mock Turkey (or Duck)

Ingredients

- 2 tomatoes
- 2 slices of bread
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 30 g butter
- 1 egg
- 1 small grated onion
- 2 tablespoons grated cheese (optional)
- pepper and salt
- a pinch of mixed herbs

Instructions

Peel and chop tomatoes.

Melt butter in saucepan and fry onion till light brown.

Add tomatoes, salt, pepper, herbs and sugar, and then cook until tender.

Beat egg and add to the mix along with the cheese.

Stir over gentle heat until thickened.

Spread on toast or sandwiches.

Chicken Noodle Soup

In winter, Alma always had a huge pot of soup simmering on the side of the stove. Everybody loved coming home for lunch in winter, so they could enjoy a bowl of hot soup before scampering back to go on with a game at school. This recipe has no defined ingredients or quantities. Just throw in whatever you have.

Instructions

Place the chicken carcass, saved from a roast chook dinner, in a stock pot and cover with water by at least five centimetres.

Bring the water up to a boil, and then simmer for a fair while to maximise the flavour.

Remove the chicken bones from the broth and discard.

Pour the broth through a strainer into a bowl to collect any small bones or bits of chicken, and then put the stock back into the pot.

Add grated carrots, chopped onions and finely diced celery. Alma sometimes added other veggies such as turnips or swedes, but mainly she just used carrots, onions and celery.

Bring everything up to a simmer again, and cook until the veggies soften.

Add vermicelli and cook until tender.

Season the soup if needed with salt and pepper.

Devilled Lamb Chops

Alma once cooked devilled lamb chops for her great-grandchild Jas. At only two years old, Jas wasn't a big eater as allergies prevented her from eating many types of meals. The food cooked by her great-grandmother tasted so good, however, that she finished a massive serve of chops.

Ingredients

- 4 lamb chops
- 2 tablespoons fruit chutney
- 1 teaspoon curry powder
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 2 teaspoons soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon vinegar

Instructions

Place the chops in a shallow dish and top them with the remainder of the ingredients.

Alma sometimes substituted steak for the chops.

Place the chops in the oven for 1½ hours at 160–180°C , or until tender.

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Desserts

Alma was best known for her desserts and cakes, as can be seen by the large number of recipes in these chapters. Alma made sure that almost every night there were sweets to enjoy after tea. But regardless of their high-calorie diet, none of the children became overweight, thanks to the active lifestyle of everyone in Eldorado.

An easy standby dessert was junket, often served with stewed fruit. Alma used to get junket tablets from the Rawleigh man—a travelling salesman. The junket would be made with warm milk straight from the cow, which was just the right temperature to make the dessert. It set quickly, so it could be made soon before eating. To top it off, the junket was usually sprinkled with nutmeg.

Alma's praises in cooking are sung widely in this book, but not everything she made was perfect. Alma used to make banana custard, which was basically just custard with sliced bananas stirred through it. The custard was always lumpy though, so this was not thought of as one of her best desserts.

It was also possible to end up with too much of a good thing. When Alma's grandson Shane lived with her, she loved to cook lots of food for him and kept him well fed. One night, she served him rhubarb, which he told her he especially enjoyed. Alma, happy with this appraisal, decided to stew some more for him. The next night, Shane was surprised to find a huge pot of rhubarb in the fridge. She'd made it especially to please him, and so he was obliged to eat the same dessert for many nights in a row.

Chocolate Self-Saucing Pudding

Ingredients

- 60 g butter
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 cup self-raising flour
- 1 tablespoon cocoa
- ½ cup milk
- For the topping:
 - ½ cup sugar
 - 1 tablespoon cocoa
 - 1½ cup hot water

Instructions

Cream the butter and sugar, add the egg and beat well.

Add the self-raising flour, cocoa and milk, and place the mixture into a greased basin.

To make the topping, sprinkle the sugar and cocoa onto the mixture.

Spoon the hot water gently on top.

Bake in a moderate oven (180°C) for 35–40 minutes.

Dessert Pastry

Recipe makes enough for 2 pies with tops.

Ingredients

- ¼ cup sugar
- 120 g butter
- 1 cup plain flour
- 1 cup self-raising flour
- 1 egg
- enough milk to make it rollable

Instructions

Cream the butter and sugar.

Add the egg and the flour, and combine.

Add enough milk to make the dough rollable.

Pineapple Fluff or Delight

Ingredients

- 1 packet lemon jelly crystals
- 1 small tin crushed pineapple
- 1 tin evaporated milk

Instructions

Make lemon jelly using two cups of boiling water, or make two cups using the juice from the pineapple tin.

Refrigerate till just starting to set.

Whip the cooled evaporated milk until quite thick, add it to the almost set jelly, and then whip it again.

Fold in crushed pineapple and set in the fridge.

Passion Fruit Flummery

Ingredients

- ½ cup castor sugar
- 2 tablespoon plain flour
- 1 tablespoon gelatine
- 1 cup water
- juice of 2 oranges
- juice of 1 lemon
- ½ cup passion fruit pulp

Instructions

Place sugar, flour, gelatine, water and juices in a medium saucepan.

Whisk until well combined.

Bring to the boil over a medium heat, stirring constantly, and then simmer two minutes.

Pour into a heat-proof bowl and refrigerate for one hour or until the mixture starts to set around the edges.

Stir in the passion fruit and beat for 15 minutes until the mixture is thick and pale.

Refrigerate for 2 hours till set.

Serve with extra passion fruit and whipped cream.

Golden Syrup Dumplings

Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon butter
- 1 cup self-raising flour
- 1 beaten egg
- 2–3 tablespoons milk
- For the syrup:
 - 1½ cup water
 - ½ cup sugar
 - 1½ tablespoons butter
 - 1 tablespoon golden syrup
 - 1 teaspoon lemon juice

Instructions

Rub the butter into the flour. Add the egg and enough milk to form a soft dough.

Place the dough into a greased pie dish in separated spoonfuls.

Place the syrup ingredients into a saucepan and stir until the sugar has dissolved. Bring to the boil.

Pour the syrup over the dumplings, and then bake at 190°C for 20–30 minutes.

Alternatively, the dumplings may be boiled in the syrup instead of baked in oven

Boil for approximately 30 minutes.

Serve with custard sauce, cream or ice-cream.

College Steamed Pudding

Ingredients

- 125 g butter
- 125 g sugar
- 1 beaten egg
- ½ teaspoon vanilla essence
- 225 g self-raising flour
- 125 ml milk
- 75 g jam

Instructions

Place water in large pot and heat to boiling.

Grease a pudding bowl.

Cream butter and sugar, and add egg and vanilla.

Stir in flour and milk alternately and mix thoroughly.

Place the jam in the base of the pudding bowl, and put mixture on top.

Cover the bowl with greaseproof paper and cover with the lid.

Place into a pot of boiling water, and steam for 1½ hours.

Do not totally immerse basin, and keep the water boiling, add more if the level goes down.

Turn onto plate, and serve with custard.

Queen of Puddings

Ingredients

- 2 cups milk
- 1 cup fresh white breadcrumbs
- 2 eggs, separated
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup sugar
- 2 tablespoons strawberry jam

Instructions

Preheat the oven at 180°C and brush a shallow dish with melted butter.

Place breadcrumbs into a bowl.

Heat the milk until almost boiling, and remove from the heat.

Pour the hot milk into the bowl of breadcrumbs, and then leave for 10 minutes.

Beat egg yolks with half of the sugar, and then stir into the breadcrumb mixture.

Put into the dish and bake for 45 minutes or until firm.

Spread the jam over the cooked custard.

Beat the egg whites until stiff and add the remaining sugar.

Swirl over the top of the jam and bake for 3–4 minutes, until lightly browned.

Bread and Butter Custard

Ingredients

- 2 eggs
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1½ cups milk
- ½ teaspoon vanilla essence
- ¼ teaspoon grated nutmeg
- 2 slices buttered bread cut into squares
- 2 tablespoons sultanas.

Instructions

Arrange the bread slices in a dish and sprinkle with sultanas.

Beat eggs and sugar lightly.

Warm milk and vanilla, and stir into the egg-and-sugar mixture.

Pour over the bread and sprinkle with nutmeg.

Bake at 180°C for 40 minutes or until set.

Pineapple Pie

Ingredients

- 4 tablespoons cornflour
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup water
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon rind
- 450 g can crushed pineapple
- 60 g butter
- 2 egg yolks
- 2 egg whites
- $\frac{1}{3}$ cup castor sugar

Instructions

Combine the cornflour and sugar in a saucepan.

Gradually stir in water, and mix till smooth.

Add lemon rind and can of pineapple, including the juice.

Stir constantly till mixture starts to boil.

Reduce heat and continue stirring for two minutes.

Remove from the heat and quickly stir in the butter and egg yolks, mixing well.

Mix the egg whites with the castor sugar to make meringue.

Cool and put into pastry case and top with meringue.

Beat egg whites until soft peaks form.

Add sugar and beat until dissolved.

Bake at 180°C for 5–10 minutes till meringue is slightly brown.

Christmas Pudding

Ingredients

- 240 g butter
- 240 g sugar
- 1½ cups plain flour
- 5 eggs
- 800 g fruit
- 3 tablespoons brandy
- ½ teaspoon bicarb soda
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon mixed spice
- 1700 g breadcrumbs

Instructions

Cream butter and sugar. Add eggs, breadcrumbs, flour and spices.

Add the fruit and the brandy and mix well.

Turn onto a floured cloth or basin and boil for 4 hours.

Keep adding more boiling water as needed.

To reheat the pudding just before serving, boil it for another hour.

Banana Plum Pudding

Ingredients

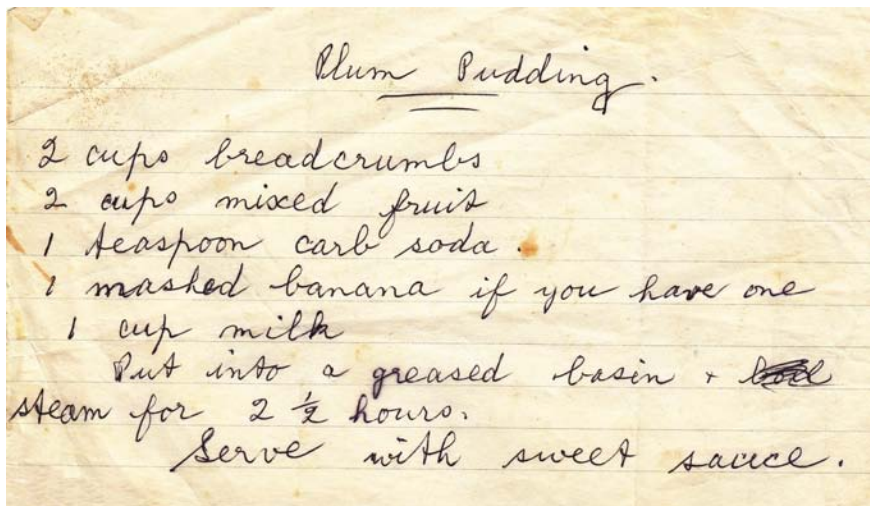
- 2 cups of breadcrumbs
- 2 cups of mixed fruit
- 1 teaspoon bicarb soda
- 1 mashed banana
- 1 cup of milk

Instructions

Mix all the ingredients and place them into a greased basin.

Steam for 2½ hours.

Serve with sweet sauce.



The original recipe

Baked Rice

Rice dishes were not common in Alma's cooking. After Vince's experience in the war and having spent almost four years in a Japanese prisoners' camp, he was understandably not keen on rice, but occasionally he would eat some of the baked rice dessert.

Ingredients

- ½ cup rice
- 2 eggs
- ½ cup sugar
- 3 cups milk
- vanilla
- sultanas (optional)

Instructions

Cook the rice.

Mix all other ingredients together, and add the rice.

Bake in an oven on moderate heat for 30–35 minutes.

Jam Roly Poly

Ingredients

- 125 g self-raising flour
- 125 g plain flour
- 125 g butter
- 100 ml water
- A jar of your favourite jam (see page 93 for jam recipes)
- To make the syrup
- 2 cups boiling water
- 1 tablespoon butter
- ½ cup sugar

Instructions

Sift the flour, and then rub the butter into the flour.

Add enough water to make a stiff dough, and roll out into a rectangle.

Cover the dough with half of the jam, and then roll it up into a spiral.

Press the sides and ends together, and place into a greased casserole dish.

To make the syrup, mix the boiling water, butter and sugar together until the sugar is completely melted.

Pour the syrup over the pastry.

Bake at 200°C for 40 minutes.

Lemon Sago

Ingredients

- 2 cups water
- ½ cup sago or seed tapioca
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 tablespoon golden syrup
- grated rind and juice of 1 lemon

Instructions

Bring water to the boil. Add sago and stir well.

Cook until clear, stirring frequently.

Add sugar, syrup, lemon rind and juice, and cook for 1 minute.

Cool and pour into serving dish.

Plum Pudding

Ingredients

- 600 g mixed fruit
- 240 g butter (or a substitute)
- 250 g brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon grated orange rind and lemon rind
- 4 eggs
- 1 medium-sized grated carrot
- 1 small grated apple
- 125 g shredded peel
- 1 teaspoon nutmeg
- 120 g breadcrumbs
- 120 g plain flour
- a pinch of salt
- 1 teaspoon mixed spice
- ½ teaspoon bicarb soda
- 60 g chopped balanced almonds
- brandy (optional)

Instructions

Cream the butter and sugar with the grated rinds.

Add unbeaten eggs one at a time and mix well.

Mix in the fruit, carrot, apple and peel.

Fold in breadcrumbs, almonds, sifted dry ingredients and some brandy.

Mix well together.

Allow to stand for 45 minutes.

Put into greased basin and steam for 5 hours.

Lemon Delicious Pudding

Ingredients

- 60 g butter
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup caster sugar
- grated rind of one lemon
- 3 eggs
- 3 tablespoons plain flour
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup milk
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup orange juice
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup lemon juice

Instructions

Cream the butter, sugar and lemon rind.

Separate the eggs, and add the yolks to the mixture one at a time.

Sift the flour over the top and mix through.

Mix the milk and juice together, and then stir into the mixture.

Put the mixture into a baking dish and pour in the boiling water to fill up half the dish.

Bake in a moderate to slow oven at 160°C for about 45 minutes.

To serve, sift some icing sugar on the top.

flour, 4 eggs
bananas, about
mixed fruit

Cakes

butter + sugar
yup + essence
flour + fruit
consistency with
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a few days b

Four

Cakes

Alma was especially famous for her cakes and slices, which would have been hard work to make without the help of an electric beater. She used a manual egg-beater for all her sponges, Swiss rolls, Pavlovas and anything else that had to be whipped.

Her cakes were so popular with the community, locals often paid her to make cakes for weddings, engagements and twenty-first birthday parties. Alma also made the wedding cakes for numerous family members, including her grandchildren.

Ann, Alma's daughter, not only learned from her mother but also attended cooking classes at her high school. The school didn't have a big enough cookery centre for all the students, so some classes had to go to the old high school building in town. Everyone loved going there for cookery, because you could nick off up the street to the tech school to catch the bus home if you had an afternoon class. Ann loved all four years of cooking class, except for one particular instance . . .

One day in cooking class, the students were learning how to make a Swiss roll. In demonstrating to the students what they should do, the teacher rolled up the cake first to cook it, then let it cool down and unrolled it to add the jam, before rolling it up again. Alma used to take the cake out of the oven, put the jam on it, and then roll it up all performed very quickly and carefully. So of course, Ann told the teacher she was doing it wrong: "That's not how Mum does it", she said. Needless to say, the teacher was not impressed.

Not everybody appreciated the recipes as they were written down. Noel

loved her chocolate cakes, but preferred them a bit soggy. To change the cake to his particular taste, he would occasionally sneak into the kitchen to open and shut the oven several times. This would cause the chocolate cake to sink in the middle, leaving a nice soggy chocolate centre. He was always scolded for doing this, but for him the enhanced taste and texture was worth all the trouble.

Lemon Yoghurt Cake

Ingredients

- 125 g butter
- 1 cup castor sugar
- 2 eggs
- 2 cups plain flour
- ½ teaspoon bicarb soda
- ¾ cup natural yoghurt
- ⅔ cup lemon juice
- 2 teaspoons grated lemon rind
- ¼ cup sugar

Instructions

Sift the flour and bicarb soda.

Cream the butter and sugar, and beat in the eggs, one at a time.

Add half the lemon juice and yoghurt, and then fold in the flour and lemon rind.

Put into a greased, lined tin of 20 cm diameter.

Bake in a moderate oven (180°C) for an hour.

To make the syrup, heat half the lemon juice, lemon rind and sugar until the sugar is melted.

When the cake is cooked, turn it onto a wire rack.

Spoon the syrup over the cake.

When the cake is cold, sift icing sugar liberally over the top of the cake.

Mock Cream

This is a good firm cream for refrigeration.

Ingredients

- ½ cup water
- ½ cup sugar
- ½ cup butter
- ½ teaspoon vanilla

Instructions

Combine the water and sugar in a saucepan, and stir till the sugar is dissolved.

Bring the mixture to the boil, and remove it from the heat to allow it to cool down.

Beat the butter and vanilla till white and fluffy.

Gradually pour in cold syrup.

Swiss Roll

Alma was famous for her rendition of the Swiss roll. Whenever she made half a dozen rolls for cake stalls, they were sold beforehand or snapped up on the way. She used to beat the egg whites by hand, which required incredible strength. Modern cooks would have aching arms if they had to beat so much mixture by hand. Once they emerged from the old wood stove, she would lay them out on a tea towel and cover them in beautiful home-made raspberry jam, before gently rolling them up and sprinkling them with castor sugar.

When Thellie and Peter first started going out together, they would travel back to Eldorado to play tennis. Thellie was still studying teaching in Melbourne while Peter was running the Kangaroo Ground School just past Eltham. They had a lot fun that year playing tennis and spending Saturday nights at the Pinsent Hotel. Staying at the Brewer's gave Peter the chance to truly appreciate Alma's cooking. She worked out pretty quickly that he particularly loved her Swiss Rolls.

Peter fondly remembers leaving Eldorado on Sunday nights with a special tin tucked in his bag. Inside would be one of Alma's famous Swiss Rolls to get him through the week in Melbourne. Alma had great cooking skills, but nothing else she produced lives in Peter's memory like her Swiss Rolls.

Ingredients

- 1 cup self-raising flour
- 2 tablespoons hot water
- $\frac{2}{3}$ cup castor sugar
- 3 eggs
- vanilla
- pinch salt
- 4 tablespoons warm jam

Instructions

Sift the flour and separate the eggs.

Beat the egg whites in a warm dry bowl until stiff but shiny.

Slowly add the sugar and beat until the mixture is stiff.

Add the yolks and beat till the mixture forms a figure-eight shape.

Add the water and vanilla down the side of the basin.

Using a tablespoon, lightly fold in flour.

Add half at a time, don't over mix.

Pour into a lined or greased Swiss roll tin.

Cook at 190°C for 12–15 minutes.

Prepare a sheet of baking paper or a clean tea towel sprinkled with castor sugar.

Carefully turn the cake over onto the paper, spread with jam, and then roll them up as quickly as possible.

Lemon Filling

Ingredients

- 2 rounded dessert spoons of cornflour
- 1¼ cup sugar
- 1 cup cold water
- juice and rind of 1 large or 2 small lemons

Instructions

Boil all ingredients together until thick.

Ginger Fluff

Ingredients

- 4 separated eggs
- ½ cup sugar
- 2 dessert spoons plain flour
- 1 level teaspoon cinnamon
- 1½ dessert spoons cocoa
- 1 dessert spoon golden syrup
- ½ cup cornflour
- 1 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1 level teaspoon cream of tartar
- ½ teaspoon bicarb soda

Instructions

Beat the egg whites until stiff.

Gradually add sugar while beating the mixture well, and then add the egg yolks.

Sift the dry ingredients three times and then fold them lightly into the egg mixture.

Add the pre-warmed golden syrup.

Place in two well-greased sandwich tins, and cook in a moderate oven (180°C) for 20 to 25 minutes.

Eggless Cake

A dark and moist cake made without eggs.

Ingredients

- 1 small cup sugar
- 125 g butter
- 1 cup sultanas (more fruit can be added if you like)
- 240 g flour
- ½ teaspoon bicarb soda
- 1 teaspoon cream of tartar
- 1½ cups warm stewed apples
- 2 teaspoons cocoa
- ½ teaspoon nutmeg, cinnamon or spice
- ½ teaspoon vanilla

Instructions

Cream the butter and sugar and add the apples in which the bicarb soda has been dissolved.

Add the spices and vanilla and lastly the flour and the fruit.

Bake the mixture for 1 hour in a moderate oven (180°C) .

Eggless Fruit Cake

Ingredients

- 120 g butter
- 240 g sugar
- 1 tablespoon golden syrup
- 500 g self-raising flour
- 120 g currants
- 120 g sultanas
- 1 cup milk
- vanilla essence and mixed fruit can be used

Instructions

Cream the butter and sugar, and add the golden syrup and vanilla essence. Stir in the sifted flour to a good consistency with milk, and add the mixed fruit.

Bake in a moderate oven (180°C) for 1½ to 2 hours.

Keep a few days before cutting.

Dolly Varden Cake

Ingredients

- 2 cups self-raising flour
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup butter
- 1 cup castor sugar
- 3 eggs
- 30 ml milk
- pinch of salt
- Extra ingredients
- 1 tablespoon mixed peel
- 2 tablespoon sultanas
- 1 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon mixed spice
- 3 drops vanilla essence

Instructions

Sift flour and salt.

Cream butter and sugar.

Beat eggs and add them gradually and mix well.

Add flour and milk alternately and mix well.

Divide mix in half and add extra ingredients to one half.

Cook in two 20 cm greased and lined sandwich tins.

Cook at 180°C for 30 minutes.

When cooked, join with Vienna icing.

Decorate top with frosting.

Guinness Cake

Ingredients

- ½ litre of Guinness
- 80 g butter or margarine
- 125 g sugar
- 375 g raisins or sultanas
- 330 g self-raising flour or plain flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 2 eggs

Instructions

Put butter, sugar and fruit into a saucepan with the Guinness.

Bring to the boil, and then leave to cool overnight.

The next day, add 2 eggs and the flour with the baking powder.

Put into a tin and cook for 2 hours in a preheated oven at 130°C.

Cream Cake

The cream cake was one Alma made to use up extra cream. As the family had their own cows, milked by Alma, there was always a lot of cream. Alma usually separated some of the milk to make cream, but other times she scalded the milk and skimmed the clotted cream off the top. Often she would also make butter with the cream in a butter churn.

Ingredients

- 4 eggs
- 1 cup cream
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 cups self-raising flour
- vanilla essence

Instructions

Beat all ingredients together for 5 minutes.

Bake in a moderate oven (180°C) for about half an hour.

Delicate Lemon Cake

Ingredients

- 1 cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- ½ cup milk
- 60 g butter
- 60 g margarine
- 1½ cup self-raising flour
- grated lemon rind

Instructions

Beat the ingredients for 5 minutes.

Bake for 30 minutes in a moderate oven (180°C).

Date & Walnut Loaf

Ingredients

- ½ cup of dates
- ½ cup of brown sugar
- ½ teaspoon bicarb soda
- 30 g butter
- grated rind of one lemon
- ⅓ cup boiling water
- one egg
- 1 cup self-raising flour
- ½ tablespoon mixed spice
- ½ cup walnuts

Instructions

Combine the dates, brown sugar, bicarb soda, butter, lemon rind and boiling water in a mixing bowl, and then stir until the butter and sugar are melted.

Cool the mixture and mix in the egg, self-raising flour, mixed spice and walnuts.

Place the mixture in a roll tin and cook in a moderately heated oven for about 45 minutes.

Leave the loaf in the tin for about 5 minutes before serving.

Family Chocolate Cake

Ingredients

- 2 cups water
- ½ cup cocoa
- 3 cups castor sugar
- 3 cups of self-raising flour
- 250 g chopped butter
- 1 tablespoon bicarb soda
- 4 lightly beaten eggs

Instructions

Grease a deep 3½-litre baking dish and line the base of the tin with baking paper.

Combine the water, sugar, butter, sifted cocoa and bicarb soda in a large pan.

Bring the mixture to the boil, and stir while boiling, until the sugar dissolves.

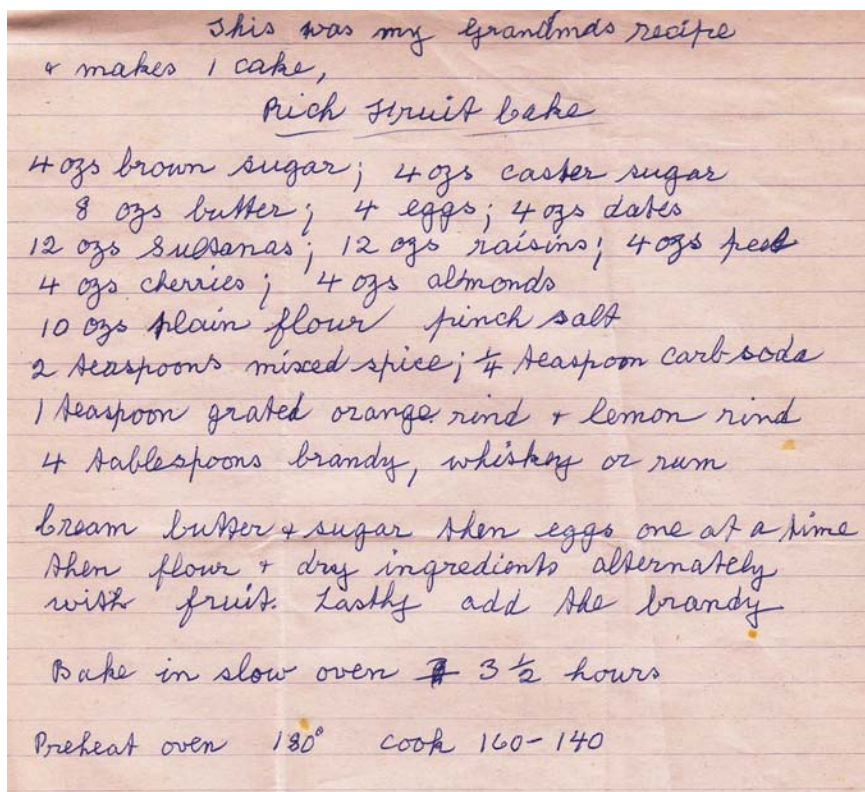
Let it simmer uncovered for 5 minutes, followed by 10 minutes of cooling. Add the flour and eggs and beat until smooth.

Pour the mixture into the tin and bake in a moderate oven at 180°C for 50 minutes.

Let the cake stand for 10 minutes and then turn it onto a rack for cooling.

Rich Fruit Cake

Alma's fruit cake was delicious. Thellie always asked for a fruit cake as her birthday cake, which is pretty unusual for a kid. At Christmas, Alma used to make several fruit cakes loaded with a brandy. Once the kids became adults, they each got a cake at Christmas, or maybe two if they were lucky. She always seemed to have a couple of extras in the cake tins, and they lasted well because of the brandy. This recipe has a long history as it was given to Alma by her grandmother, which means it could be at least 150 years old.



The original recipe

Ingredients

- 115 g brown sugar
- 115 g castor sugar
- 230 g butter
- 280 g plain flour
- 340 g raisins
- 340 g sultanas
- 115 g cherries
- 115 g peel
- 115 g dates
- 115 g blanched almonds
- 4 eggs
- pinch of salt
- ¼ teaspoon bicarb soda
- 4 tablespoons brandy, whiskey or rum
- 1 teaspoon grated lemon rind
- 1 teaspoon grated orange rind

Instructions

Cream the butter and the sugar and add the eggs, then add the fruit and the sifted dry ingredients alternately.

Lastly, add the brandy.

Pre-heat the oven at 180°C and bake in a slow oven (140–160°C) for 3½ hours.

Frangipani Cake

Ingredients

- 115 g butter
- 115 g sugar
- 2 separated eggs
- 1 large cup self-raising flour
- ½ cup milk
- grated rind of one orange
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- ½ cup coconut

Instructions

Cream the butter and the sugar well.

Add the egg yolks, and beat the mixture well.

Add the orange rind, followed by the flour and milk alternately.

To prepare the topping, beat the egg whites until stiff and add the sugar and the coconut.

Spread the topping on the uncooked cake.

Bake in a moderate oven for 35 minutes.

When the cake is half cooked, place baking paper on the top.

Orange Cake

Ingredients

- 55 g butter
- 1 cup flour
- ½ teaspoon cream of tartar
- ½ cup castor sugar
- ¼ teaspoon bicarb soda dissolved in milk
- orange rind and juice

Instructions

Cream the butter and sugar and add the dry ingredients, plus a little grated orange rind and a small quantity of orange juice.

Lastly, add the milk.

Bake for half an hour in a sponge tin.

Patty Cakes

Most recipes in this book are not originally devices by Alma but follow a great tradition of country women's cooking. Alma's patty cake recipe was one she created herself. She chose the basic ingredients and then experimented until she was happy with the result. The patty cakes were something she would whip up quickly so we always had cakes in the tin. One of the children's favourite toppings was icing sprinkled with jelly crystals.

Ingredients

- 115 g butter
- ½ cup sugar
- 3 eggs
- 2 cups self-raising flour
- milk

Instructions

Set the oven at 200°C and brush or spray the patty pan tray with oil.

Cream the butter and sugar until light and fluffy.

Add the egg and vanilla essence and mix well.

Add the flour and milk alternately, about ⅓ at a time.

Stir gently and thoroughly.

Place the mixture into pans, half filling each one. Bake at 200°C for 12–15 minutes until golden brown and shrinking slightly from the sides of the pans.

Cool the cakes in the patty ans for 2 minutes and then place them onto a cake cooler.

Butterfly Cakes

Patty cakes can also be turned into butterfly cakes.

Cut the top in half and place them sideways on the remainder of the patty cake to create wings.

Add whipped cream between the wings and top it off with a bit of jelly between the wings.

Cheese Cakes

Ingredients (Pastry)

- 120 g plain flour
- 30 g margarine
- 30 g lard
- cold water to mix
- a little raspberry jam
- a pinch of salt

Ingredients (Filling)

- 1 egg
- 60 g butter
- 60 g sugar
- 60 g plain flour
- 1 dessert spoon milk
- 1 level teaspoon baking powder
- vanilla
- rind of $\frac{1}{4}$ lemon

Instructions

Roll out pastry to about half a centimetre thick and cut out circles to fit into patty tins.

Put a dab of jam in each.

To make the filling, cream the butter and sugar, add the egg, lemon and vanilla.

Sift dry ingredients and add flour and milk.

Put one cake into each patty pan.

Decorate with a strip of pastry.

Cook at 180°C for 15–20 minutes.

Tea Cake

Ingredients

- 60 g butter
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 egg
- 180 g self-raising flour
- ½ cup milk
- a pinch of salt

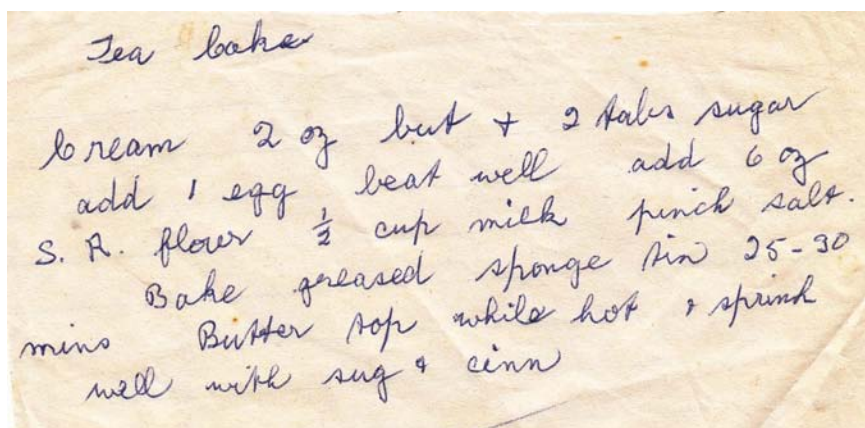
Instructions

Cream the butter, sugar and the egg, and beat well.

Add the self-raising flour, milk and a pinch of salt.

Bake in a greased sponge tin for 25 to 30 minutes.

Butter the top of the cake while hot, and sprinkle well with sugar and cinnamon.



The original recipe

Simplicity Chocolate Cake

Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons butter or margarine
- 2 level tablespoons cocoa
- 1 cup self-raising flour
- 1 cup sugar
- ½ cup milk
- 2 eggs
- ½ teaspoon vanilla

Instructions

Place all the ingredients except the butter into a bowl.

Melt butter and pour over the other ingredients.

Beat hard for 3 minutes.

Pour into a greased tin.

Bake in a moderate oven 30–35 minutes.

Ice the cake.

Boiled Pineapple Fruit Cake

Ingredients

- 500 g mixed fruit
- 1 cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- small tin crushed pineapple
- 140 g butter
- 1 cup plain flour
- 1¼ cups self-raising flour
- 1 teaspoon mixed spice
- ¼ teaspoon bicarb soda

Instructions

Place the fruit, sugar, pineapple and butter into a saucepan.

Boil until the sugar is dissolved and the butter is melted.

Let it cool, and then mix in the eggs and sifted dry ingredients.

Bake for 90 minutes at 180°C.

Coconut Cakes

Ingredients

- 1 cup coconut
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar
- 2 cups self-raising flour
- 2 eggs
- 125 g butter

Instructions

Rub butter into flour.

Add sugar and coconut.

Mix in beaten eggs.

Roll into balls about the size of walnuts.

Roll in sugar and bake in a moderate oven.

Apple Sponge

Ingredients

- 65 g butter
- 65 g sugar
- 1 beaten egg
- 1 cup self-raising flour
- 1/3 cup milk
- 600 g apple purée or stewed apples

Instructions

Preheat the oven at 180°C and grease an oven-proof dish.

Cream the butter and sugar and add the beaten egg.

Stir in the flour and milk alternately.

Place hot apple into the dish, spread the cake mixture over the top and bake for 30 to 40 minutes.

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Biscuits & Slices

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Biscuits & Slices

Alma must have cooked an unimaginable amount of patty cakes and biscuits over the years—they would have to number in the many thousands! Each year, there were two special occasions: the school sports day, and the Christmas tree concert, both of which caused Alma to cook for days on end to supply enough sweets for all who were attending.

The school sports day was held each year at Tarrawingee. All the kids and parents in the Brewer family travelled there on the back on Nick Ramsay's truck. Alma always baked a lot of scrumptious special cakes for the sports day. The spread would include things like the Neenish tarts, apple cakes, butterfly cakes, jelly cakes and so on. The Christmas tree concert was also made very special because of the delicious food made by Alma. The best part was that as this was really the kids' night, the children all got to go to supper before anyone else did.

Biscuits and slices were not only for special occasions: Alma made them other times too. One day, she'd made coconut ice. Later, when Vince came home from work, Alma asked little three-year-old Thellie to go and fetch some for her dad. Little Thellie's good deed was not rewarded: while climbing onto a chair to get the coconut ice from the kitchen cabinet, she slipped and knocked out her two front teeth on the corner of the chair. Her dad was so upset that he threw the teeth in the fire. Thellie was very disappointed as she thought the tooth fairy wouldn't come. The story does have a happy ending. Even though her tooth perished in the fire, the following morning Thellie still found a coin under her pillow.

Coconut Ice

Ingredients

- 125 g copho (vegetable fat shortening)
- 250 g desiccated coconut
- 500 g sifted pure icing sugar
- 2 egg whites, lightly whisked
- ½ tablespoon vanilla extract
- 3 drops red liquid food colouring

Instructions

Line a square 20 centimetre wide cake pan with non-stick baking paper, allowing the paper to hang over the sides.

Melt the copho in a small saucepan over a low heat.

Remove it from the heat and set aside for 10 minutes or until cooled to room temperature.

Combine the coconut and icing sugar in a large bowl.

Add the copho, egg white and vanilla extract and stir until well mixed.

Divide the coconut mixture in half and press one half over the base of the prepared pan.

Add the red food colouring to the remaining coconut mixture and stir until well combined and evenly coloured.

Spread the pink coconut mixture over the mixture in the pan and smooth the surface.

Cover the pan with a plastic wrap and place it in the fridge for 1 hour or until set.

Remove the coconut ice from the pan.

Use a sharp knife to cut it into sixteen small squares, and serve.

Raspberry shortbread

Ingredients (base)

- ½ cup sugar,
- ¼ cup butter or margarine
- yolks of 2 eggs
- 1½ cups self-raising flour
- ¾ to 1 cup of raspberry jam

Ingredients (Topping)

- 2 egg whites
- ½ cup castor sugar
- 1 cup coconut

Instructions

Grease a slice pan and preheat the oven to 180°C.

Whizz all the base ingredients except the jam in a food processor until it combines and forms dough.

If it is a bit dry, then add a little water.

Press the dough into slice tin.

Spread raspberry jam over the base

For the topping, beat the egg whites till stiff and add the sugar.

Keep beating until the sugar dissolves.

Fold in the coconut and spread the topping over the jam.

Cook for 15–20 minutes.

Cool in the tin, and then cut into slices.

Yo-Yo's

Ingredients

- 1 cup self-raising flour
- ½ cup custard powder
- ⅓ cup icing sugar
- ⅔ cup margarine

Instructions

Heat the oven to 170°C and grease the oven trays.

Sift the flour, custard powder and icing sugar.

Rub in the margarine and work to a stiff dough.

Roll the dough into three dozen balls and place on the trays.

Flatten each ball a little with a fork.

Bake for 15–20 minutes until pale brown.

Cool and join together in pairs with jam or icing, or both.

Scones

Scones were usually on the menu on Sunday nights as the bread van only came on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. By Sunday night there would be little or no bread left, and what left was stale, so really only good for toast. Sunday night tea was usually cold roast meat leftover from the Sunday roast, salad and hot scones. No real recipe exists for Alma's scones. She didn't really measure the ingredients and made them in large quantities.

The scones were made with self-raising flour and sometimes some cornflour added to give extra lightness. The flour is mixed with butter and milk or old cream. Alma would mix the ingredients together and then roll the dough out on the floured kitchen table. The secret with scones is not to over-knead the dough. She would then cut the scones into squares with a knife. Sometimes a glass was used to get round shapes. Finally, she would bake them in a hot oven for about 8–10 minutes.

Napoleon Slice

Ingredients (pastry)

- 240 g self-raising flour
- 120 g firm margarine
- milk to mix
- a pinch of salt

Ingredients (filling)

- 90 g butter
- 90 g sugar
- 2 large eggs
- 1½ cups self-raising flour
- 3 tablespoons milk
- salt
- vanilla

Instructions

Sift the flour and salt.

Grate the margarine with a coarse grater into the flour, mixing all the time so it doesn't stick together.

Mix to a medium dough with very cold milk.

Chill for 1 hour in the fridge.

Roll out half of the pastry to fit the bottom of a lamington tray that has been well greased (or lined with baking paper), and spread with raspberry jam.

Cream the butter and sugar, and add vanilla.

Add eggs and beat till smooth.

Add half the flour, then the milk, and then the rest of the flour.

Spread over the pastry and spread with more jam.

Roll out remaining pastry and put this on top.

Prick the pastry in a few places.

Bake in a moderate oven for 30 minutes.

Ice with lemon icing.

Mushrooms

Ingredients

- good short crust pastry
- patty tins
- 2½-inch cutter

Instructions

Line patty tins with pastry and prick the bottom of the pastry.

Roll small bits of pastry into stems and bake with cases.

Bake at 200°C for 10–15 minutes.

Put jam into the bottom of the cases.

Cover jam with whipped cream.

Dust with cinnamon.

Place stems into centre.

Neenish Tarts

Ingredients

- 125 g butter
- 125 g sugar
- 250 g self-raising flour
- 1 egg
- 2 teaspoons vanilla
- pastry cases

Ingredients (filling)

- 90 g fine bread crumbs or coconut
- 60 g icing sugar
- 1 egg white
- 1 tablespoon condensed milk
- Vanilla essence, sherry, fruit juice, rum, almond essence or jelly

Instructions

Rub butter, sugar and flour well and add a well-beaten egg and vanilla.

Mix to a firm dough and roll out very thinly.

Cut with a biscuit cutter in greased patty tins for 10–15 minutes.

Before baking, prick the bottoms with a fork to stop the centres from rising.

Cool and store in an airtight tin.

Add a few drops of vanilla essence, sherry, fruit juice, rum, almond essence or jelly to the filling.

Combine all ingredients for the filling, and then mix to a smooth and soft consistency.

Fill pastry cases and level the top with a knife.

Ice half the top with white icing and half with brown icing.

The filling requires no cooking.

Alma always used half bread crumbs and half coconut and icing sugar.

The cases can be filled with jam and cream, apple and cream, or pineapple or lemon filling.

Turkish Delight

Ingredients

- 2 greased shallow cake tins
- 45 g gelatine
- 250 ml hot water
- 2 cups sugar
- ½ teaspoon citric acid
- ½ teaspoon vanilla
- optional ½ teaspoon rose water for pink colouring
- 30 g cornflour
- 15 g ounce icing sugar

Instructions

Heat sugar water and gelatine in a saucepan.

Stir until the sugar is dissolved.

Bring the mixture to the boil and simmer for 20 minutes, but do not stir.

Remove from the heat and cool for ten minutes.

Add the colouring, and then pour the mixture into the tin.

Allow to stand for 24 hours.

To serve, cut into squares and roll the pieces in icing sugar and corn flower mix.

Honey Jumbles

Ingredients

- 1¾ cups self-raising flour
- 60 g butter or margarine
- ¼ teaspoon bicarb soda
- ¼ teaspoon ground ginger
- ¼ cup castor sugar
- ¼ teaspoon cinnamon
- ¼ teaspoon mixed spice
- 1 egg yolk
- 1½ tablespoon milk
- 1½ tablespoon honey

Instructions

Sift flour and dry ingredients into a bowl and rub in the butter.

Add the sugar.

Make a well in the centre and add the beaten egg yolk, honey and milk.

Mix into a soft dough.

Roll into sausage shapes 5 cm by 4 cm, and place them on a greased tray, allowing room for them to spread during the baking.

Bake for about 15–20 minutes in a moderate oven.

To finish, ice the jumbles with glacé icing.

Powder Puffs

Ingredients

- 3 eggs
- 1 teaspoon cream of tartar
- ½ cup flour
- ½ teaspoon bicarb soda
- ½ cup cornflour
- whipped cream and icing sugar
- ¾ cup castor sugar

Instructions

Sift the dry ingredients together.

Beat eggs for two minutes and gradually add sugar.

Beat for 10–15 minutes until the mixture forms a figure-eight shape.

Fold in the dry ingredients.

Place half teaspoons of mixture on the tray and bake at 190°C for 6–8 minutes.

Once cold, the puffs will store well in an airtight container.

Sandwich them together in pairs with whipped cream and dust with sifted icing sugar before serving.

Ginger Creams

Ingredients

- 2½ cups plain flour
- 1 tablespoon golden syrup
- 1 cup sugar
- 1½ teaspoon ground ginger
- 250 g butter
- 1 tablespoon bicarb soda
- 1 egg

Instructions

Cream the butter and sugar.

Add the egg and golden syrup.

Add the dry ingredients.

Put teaspoons full of mixture on an oven tray.

Cook for 15–20 minutes at 180°C.

Join with icing sugar.

Monte Carlo Biscuits

Ingredients

- 125 g butter
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 egg
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ½ cup coconut
- 1 teaspoon honey
- ½ teaspoon vanilla essence
- 1 cup self-raising flour
- 1 cup plain flour

Instructions

Cream the butter and sugar.

Add the egg and salt and mix till well blended

Add the coconut, honey and vanilla essence.

Sift together the self-raising flour and plain flour and add to mixture.

Roll into small balls, and then press with a fork.

Bake in a moderate oven for about 10 minutes.

Join with butter icing and raspberry jam.

Biscuit Pastry

Ingredients

- 2 cups self-raising flour
- ¼ pound margarine
- ½ cup sugar
- 1 egg
- some milk

Instructions

Cream the butter and sugar and add a beaten egg.

Add self-raising flour in two lots.

To make the dough, add small amounts of milk until you have a firm dough.

Apple Cakes

Ingredients

- 120 g butter
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar
- 2 eggs
- $2\frac{1}{2}$ –3 cups self-raising flour
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup milk
- salt
- vanilla essence
- apples
- lemon icing
- cinnamon

Instructions

Cream the butter and sugar and add the eggs.

Add the sifted flour with some salt, alternately with the milk.

Add vanilla as required.

This should be a stiff dough. If it is too soft to handle, cool the dough in a refrigerator for half an hour.

Roll out the dough and cut circles.

Place the circles in patty tins and place a teaspoon of apple in the pastry.

Cover with a small circle of pastry.

Cook for 10 minutes at 200°C.

Ice the cakes with lemon icing and sprinkle with cinnamon.

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Jams & Drinks

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Jams & Drinks

Alma was a prolific jam maker and, over the years, she gave away large amounts of jam to family, especially as gifts after a visit.

Back in Eldorado, Alma's children picked blackberries down by the creek, where they had to be very alert for snakes. The best berries always seemed to be just out of reach. Apricot jam was a favourite for all. The kids had the job of climbing the tree and pick the fruit—that is, if they hadn't already been up in the tree and eaten most of the apricots. For the kids, the surreptitiously obtained apricots were of course the best ones ever tasted.

Fruit was collected from anywhere and everywhere for jam. The big old cherry plum tree yielded many jars of jam every year. Melon and pineapple jam was another favourite. Sometimes the kids would go up to Pyle's to pick figs, which Alma also turned into yummy jam. In later years, Alma, Sue and Rhonda picked blackberries on the river at Porepunkah, and Alma also picked a variety of berries at the berry farm in Stanley. Every year she also made a trip out to Oxley to buy raspberries.

All the family were asked to collect and deliver their empty jars back to Alma's. There never seemed to be enough of them, despite her phone calls pleading for more jars.

When Sue was born, Alma was in hospital and the apricots were ripe, so Thellie and Noreen bit the bullet and made the jam that year, starting the transference of the jam-making tradition.

Apricot Jam

Ingredients

- 500 g apricots
- 350 g sugar
- juice of ½ a lemon

Instructions

Wash the apricots, remove the stones, and cut the fruit into small pieces. Put the apricots in a pan, boil them until they are soft, and add the sugar and lemon juice.

Boil the mixture until it sets.

Add a little bit of water if necessary.

Plum Jam

Ingredients

- 3 kg plums
- ½ litre water
- 3 kg sugar

Instructions

Add 1 kg of sugar to the water and boil for 10 minutes.

Cut up the big plums and stone them before placing them in the water.

Boil for 20 minutes, and then add the remainder of the sugar and boil for another 10 minutes.

Bottle and seal the jam while still hot.

Fig Jam

Ingredients

- 3½ kg figs
- 1 litre water
- 3 kg sugar
- juice and rind of 2 lemons
- 125 g preserved ginger

Instructions

Wipe figs, cut off the ends, and remove any skin marks.

Cut into pieces, and then cover with half of the sugar and allow to stand overnight.

The next morning, squeeze the juice from the lemons and cut ginger finely. Add the water, ginger, lemon juice, peel and the rest of the sugar to the figs.

Boil for about 2 hours.

Remove pieces of lemon peel and bottle.

Raspberry Jam

Ingredients

- 1 kg raspberries
- 1 kg sugar
- No water, except that which clings to washed fruit.

Instructions

Put the berries in a pan, crush and boil for 7 minutes.

Slowly add the sugar and boil for another 7 minutes, until the jam becomes a jelly.

Test the jam on a little on a saucer.

Lemon Syrup Cordial

Ingredients

- 2 kg castor sugar
- 1 litre water
- 30 g citric acid
- 30 g tartaric acid
- Juice from 6 to 8 lemons
- Finely grated rind of 2 lemons

Instructions

Heat the sugar and water until the sugar is totally dissolved.

Dissolve the citric and tartaric acid into the mixture.

Cool the mixture, and add the lemon juice and sugar.

Bottle the cordial.

50/50 cordial

Ingredients

- 3 lemons
- 3 oranges
- 6 cups sugar
- 6 cups boiling water
- 300 g citric acid
- 300 g tartaric acid

Instructions

Put the sugar and citric and tartaric acids into a bowl.
Grate the fruit rinds, and add the juice from all the fruit.
Pour boiling water over the sugar and fruit.
Stir till the sugar is dissolved and mixture has cooled.
Serve with 1 part of lemonade and 4 parts of water.
The cordial will keep for 2–3 weeks.

Lemon Syrup

Ingredients

- 10 cups hot water
- 4 cups sugar
- 30 g citric acid
- 1 teaspoon lemon essence

Instructions

Dissolve the sugar in the hot water.

Add the lemon essence and citric acid.

Bottle when cool.

Ginger Beer

Ingredients

- 8 sultanas
- juice of 2 lemons
- 1 teaspoon lemon pulp
- 4 teaspoons sugar
- 2 teaspoons ground ginger
- 2 cups cold water

Instructions

Place all ingredients in a bowl and let it stand for four days, until the mixture starts to ferment.

After it starts to ferment, each day for one week add two teaspoons of ground ginger and four teaspoons of sugar.

To make the ginger beer you need a further:

- 4 cups of sugar
- 1 litre of boiling water
- juice of 4 lemons

Put the sugar and water in a large bowl and add the lemon juice.

Strain the plant (the fermented liquid) through a fine cloth into the mix.

Add an additional 7 litres of cold water.

Put into airtight bottles and store.

Seven

Epilogue

Food is a powerful part of the emotional story of our lives. Smells and tastes can evoke feelings of the past, taking you on a journey of culinary time travel. Thinking about our favourite childhood dishes floods the brain with positive memories of those care-free days.

Alma's grandchildren remember their favourite dishes she fed them or taught them to cook, such as Luke's golden syrup dumplings or Jo's frangipani pie. Some grandchildren recall how Alma used to make toast on the gas heater in her lounge room. At one time, she had to call a repair man because the heater stopped working. He inspected the heater and suggested that cooking toast on a gas heater was not a good idea, as the build-up of crumbs had caused the device to break down.

Anyone who visited Alma knows that no one ever left her place empty handed. She was generous to a fault and would always give whatever she had. Whether it was a bag of lemons, a dozen eggs, some jars of jam or a pot plant, there was always something. Almost the whole family has some of her special yellow violets or geraniums growing in their gardens. This recipe book is Alma's final gift to the family.



Pictured above: 1. Apple Cakes 2. Powder Puffs 3. Chocolate Cake 4. Mushrooms 5. Ginger Creams 6. Jelly Cakes 7. Napoleon Slice 8. Neenish Tarts 9. Patty Cakes 10. Butterfly Cakes 11. Swiss Rolls 12. Raspberry Shortbread