

MAKE THIS SAUCE ANYTIME before Christmas. It's quick, simple and wickedly rich.

- 1/2 cup brandy
- 1/2 cup butter
- 2 eggs
- 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup stale bread crumbs
- 1/2 cup plain flour
- 1/2 cup cooking oil
- 1/2 cup bicarbonate soda
- 1/2 cup cinnamon powder
- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup pudding clover

roughly chop all dried fruit and combine with apple, lemon and brandy. Cover and stand for at least two days.
Beat butter and sugar together. Add the eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Combine the butter mixture with the fruit mixture and bread crumbs. Stir well and add to sheet, one side of each pudding cloth.
With flour and shake of excess, put two tablespoons of pudding mixture in the corner of each cloth on the floured side, draw the edge up and neck with sugar. Turn so that two tightly packed they will expand when cooking.
Boil a pot of water. Fork them on a rack in a single layer. After they have been in a baking dish, pour the boiling water in the pan so that it almost comes level to the rack. Cover with foil and on the stove top, steam them for an hour.
After an hour you will need to hang the puddings to dry in a well-ventilated spot. Before serving, give them an hour of hot steam. Repeat the same procedure with the open side up. They will be hot and place them on a plate with the butter sauce from with fattening of candy sauce.

Brandy Sauce

<i>1/2 cup</i>	butter
<i>1 cup</i>	sugar
<i>4</i>	egg yolks
<i>1/2 cup</i>	port
<i>1/2 cup</i>	brandy
<i>1 cup</i>	cream

Cream the butter and sugar together until pale and fluffy. Add the egg yolks and beat well. Mix in the port, brandy and cream. Transfer to the top of a double saucepan and cook over simmering water, constantly stirring, until mixture is the consistency of thin honey.

Cool and store in sealed jars in the refrigerator. Get the sauce out a little earlier before the dessert so it isn't too cold and pour over the hot Christmas puddings. This sauce will keep for months in the fridge, if, of course, there's any left.

BY THIS STAGE everyone will be lying about the living room panting like beached whales, bemoaning the third helping of goose and ham and that extra spoonful of brandy sauce. A bracing walk out in the snow would probably be the most sensible move; but then again, just having a few delicious Christmas biscuits as a digestive with coffee would be even wiser. If you're going to spoil yourself, you may as well go right over the edge.

Almond Christmas Wafers

<i>1 1/2 cups</i>	butter, softened
<i>1 cup</i>	superfine sugar
<i>1 tsp</i>	vanilla essence or powder
<i>2</i>	eggs
<i>1 1/2 cups</i>	plain flour
<i>3/4 cup</i>	almonds, ground
<i>5 tbsp</i>	confectioner's sugar

Beat butter, sugar and vanilla until creamy. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Gradually add the flour and almonds and mix them so that they become a firm dough. Wrap the dough in plastic and refrigerate for three hours. (Make this just before the guests arrive so it is chilling while you tuck into the goose). The cooking time is just 10 minutes, so you can easily pop them into the oven when some of your guests are flagging and loudly proclaiming they can't eat anything more — the aroma of these cookies ought to bring them round.

Preheat oven to 180° Celsius. Divide the chilled dough into four portions, roll them out into wafer thin thicknesses (about 5 mm) and cut them into clever shapes.

Bake them on a greased and lined baking tray for just ten minutes, or until they are golden. Dust them with a little confectioners sugar before serving. You can probably get about 30 biscuits from these ingredients (if you don't nibble too much raw dough).

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