



King Arthur Flour
Heritage Recipe Baking Contest
at Historic Deerfield
December 6, 2014

Stories and Recipes

Contest Winners:

Best Story ~ Mary Kay Felton for Spitz Buben

Best Recipe – Amy Stout for Sweet Dough Apricot Danish

Most Creative – Johanna Swartzentruber for Clara's Croquembouche

Winner for Best Story

Spitz Buben – Story

Mary Kay Felton, Camden, Maine

On Sunday April 29, 1945, Anna Maria (“Marie”) Payer, closed the door of her home in Harkau, Hungary, and walked across the border into Austria, with her children, Frida, Ernst, Emma, and Fritiz. Marie’s husband, Samuel, who spoke Hungarian, German, and English, was taken to a prisoner of war camp, to serve as an interpreter, though he’d never been a soldier. Frida, Ernst, and Emma, who were barely teenagers, were taken in by different villagers in Innerhergesteich, where they would spend the next five years working in exchange for a bed and the meager amount of food available in a war stricken area. Only young Fritz could stay with his mother.

The evacuation of Harkau came on short notice. News of the Russian advancement was announced at church and evacuation began at the close of the service. There was no time to gather personal belongings, photographs, or mementos. No one knew they would never be back. Later, my mother, Emma, often wished she could show us a picture of herself as a child, or of the ribbons and blue birds hand painted on the ceiling of her home, a fashionable luxury for a village farmer. Because no tangible items survived their 1945 journey across the border to Austria, and their eventual immigration to the United States in 1950, their food heritage became all that more important. Today, the family recipes, carried out from Harkau in my grandmother’s head, provide the missing piece of tangible family history. When I form the sweet, short crust pastry dough for Spitz Buben, which translates in English to “Spiffy Boys,” I think of my mother, grandmother, and others who performed this ritual before me. Although I can’t say how many generations have prepared this recipe, I suspect it’s been quite a few. The recipe probably evolved long ago from the Austrian Linzer torte, which began appearing in print in the early 1700s. With my family having lived in Harkau, just across the Austrian border, for over five hundred years, it stands to reason that some of their food had Austrian origins.

Apparently, the Austrian Linzer torte took on a peasant or country form in Harkau, the same way country furniture styles developed from the more sophisticated forms produced in Boston, Philadelphia and other furniture centers. This recipe probably served many purposes, a family dessert, a breakfast pastry, a field snack eaten with callused hands during a break from hours spent walking behind a plow horse. I like the feel of this soft dough when I hold it in my own hands, press it into the pan, and shape snakes to a form a lattice top, over a layer of jam. I like the idea that I can create, over and over, a tangible piece of my family’s history, and hand a slice of it to my own children. It is a simple dish, from a simple people, who lived in a complex era. Somehow this dish helps me keep things in perspective and make sense of what really matters. Despite everything these immigrants went through, late in life my uncle said, “We had family, good friends, good food. We ate; we drank; we danced. We really lived our lives.” The resilience of these people is amazing, as I’m sure was the resilience of many of my immigrant ancestors. Whether they came on the Mayflower, as did Richard Warren, from whom I descend on my father’s side, or landed in Peabody, Massachusetts in 1634, like my 10th great grandfather, Nathaniel Felton, or came to the U. S. as “Stateless Person[s]” in 1950, like my mother’s family, they are all people who saw the promise that America offered and took a chance to get here. I’m proud to hail from a Mayflower family on my father’s side, and be a first generation American on my mother’s side.

My mother is gone now, but I have her recipes, and her mixing bowl. When I make her recipes I feel connected to her and to myself as a child. I remember standing on a chair, so I could help measure ingredients into her bowl, the way my daughters do now. What better way to feed our kids some family history, than on a plate, warm, right out of the oven. When asked what they'd like to bake today, my two youngest children, ages 5 and 3, often enthusiastically say, "Spitz Buben!"

Spitz Buben - Recipe
Mary Kay Felton

In a large mixing bowl, combine:

2 sticks (1/2 pound) unsalted butter, softened
1 cup sugar
2 eggs
1 teaspoon vanilla

Measure 3 cups King Arthur All Purpose Flour and add to it:
1 teaspoon baking powder, incorporating the baking powder into the flour.

Add the flour to the butter mixture, and stir until a soft dough forms.

Press 2/3 of the dough evenly into an ungreased 13 x 9 inch glass baking dish.

Spread 1 and 1/2 cups of jelly, jam, or preserves on top of the dough. Grape jelly or apricot preserves are the two most traditional choices for this recipe, but any flavor could be used.

Roll or form the remaining third of dough into snakes about 1/3 inch thick and lay across the top of the dough in each direction, lengthwise and crosswise. This will usually be 4-6 lengthwise strips and 6-8 crosswise strips.

Bake at 350 degrees F for 30 minutes or until the pastry is just beginning to lightly brown.

Cut into 24 squares and serve warm, cold, or at room temperature.

Serves 12 with 2 squares each.

Winner for Best Recipe

Mom's Apricot Danish: Inspired by and in Memory of Carol Jenks ~ Story Amy Stout, Montague, Massachusetts

I grew up first eating and then baking these Sweet Dough Apricot Danish every holiday season with my Mom, Carol Jenks. She stopped baking when she developed Alzheimer's, many years before she passed away in 2012. I am inspired to carry on my mother's holiday tradition of baking this cherished, once-a-year family favorite, and have had my niece Peyton join me many times. We pick a day, usually the day before Thanksgiving and Christmas Eve. We start early by making the sweet yeast dough in the morning, setting it by the woodstove to rise, then we move on to hand chopping the apricots for the puree filling. Soon we are on to the fun part of rolling out and filling the sweet dough, stretching it into a horse shoe or circle, snipping the edges, so the rings will rise and then baking to a golden perfection. Then Peyton and I take turns glazing and garnishing with Maraschino cherries, maybe eating a few cherries, just for good measure. Since we only make these Apricot Rings once or twice a year, we usually make many to share and give as gifts. They are a true family tradition, a recipe that our entire family treasures and enjoys while remembering my Mom.

Sweet Dough Apricot Danish – Recipe Amy Stout

Sweet Dough

1 cup Whole milk, scalded

1 cup Margarine (2 sticks) Melted & mixed into scalded milk

Mix 2 Packages Active Dry Yeast and $\frac{1}{2}$ cup warm water with pinch of sugar in small bowl. Cover and set aside to allow yeast to activate.

In large bowl combine 6 cups King Arthur white flour, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup sugar and 1 tsp salt.

Make hollow in flour mixture. Add 1 egg at room temperature into well.

Once yeast has activated, tripled in size, add Scalded Milk mixture, Yeast Mixture and egg to the flour mixture in a large bowl.

Mix until combined. Turn dough onto pastry sheet and hand knead until dough is smooth and not sticky.

Move dough to well-oiled large bowl, set aside in a warm draft-free place covered with a clean dish towel to rise until double in size.

Apricot filling

1 lb dried apricots (minced in food processor or chopped by hand)

$\frac{1}{4}$ cup water and 2 tsp cinnamon

Mix together and cook down until apricots are soft and a paste forms

$\frac{1}{2}$ cup Margarine (1 stick) melted, to spread under apricot filling (see below).

Confectioner's Glaze

1 cup confectioner's sugar and 1 TBSP water mixed to form light glaze for cooled rings.

1 jar Maraschino Cherries, drained, cut in halves and dried for garnish

Assembling the Danish:

Once sweet dough has doubled in size, move to clean pastry sheet, punch down, split dough into 3 or 4 balls depending on size desired.

Roll dough out on pastry sheet into a rectangle, dough should be rolled very thin.

Cover rolled dough with melted margarine, sprinkle with cinnamon & sugar, and spread Apricot Puree over entire rectangle.

Starting at narrow end of rectangle, roll the filled dough pulling and stretching dough as you roll toward yourself. Shape filled, rolled dough into desired shape. We like the horseshoe, almost touching circle.

With clean scissors, snip outer edges of filled shaped dough to expose filling, about $\frac{3}{4}$ inches apart.

Cover filled ring with clean kitchen towel and set aside to rise again.

Bake filled rings in preheated oven at 350 degrees until golden brown and tapped ring sounds hollow. About an hour depending on size.

Cool uncovered. When completely cool, drizzle Confectioner's Glaze over ring and garnish with Maraschino Cherry Halves.

ENJOY!

Winner for Most Creative

Croquembouche Season – Story

Johanna Swartzentruber, Greenfield, Massachusetts

By the time my youngest daughter Clara was about twelve, she considered herself a seasoned baker and was discovering the power of initiating, planning, and executing her own baking projects. Just before Christmas, she came across a glorious photo of the classic holiday centerpiece Croquembouche, a tower of cream puffs draped with strands of caramelized sugar. "Mom, I want to make THAT!" Cream puffs were already in her repertoire, but neither of us had ever spun sugar. She followed the directions exactly and was amazed and delighted when it worked perfectly-she was able to lift the whisk from the caramelized sugar and drape her cream-puff creation with crackling, delicious, hair-thin strands of caramel that magically melted away on the tongue. She was hooked! For a week or two that holiday season, we enjoyed an endless stream of croquembouches; she made one for our relatives, for the friends we visited, for our neighbors. And then she decided to make one during a sleepover at a friend's house. She directed the other girls in the boiling, the egg-cracking, the beating, the piping, the baking, the whipping of the cream, the filling of the puffs, the powdered-sugar dusting. Then it came time for the spun sugar. They put it on to caramelize and were having a great time entertaining each other...until they turned around to an awful burning smell and smoke pouring from the pot! Fortunately they had the presence of mind to open the back door and toss the acrid black mess out onto the snow. I heard they enjoyed their cream puffs, but I never did hear what became of the pot. My daughter is now grown, but our family croquembouche tradition continues. Every winter, it is the centerpiece of our holiday table and we remember the story of that first "croquembouche season."

Clara's Croquembouche—Recipe
Johanna Swartzentruber

I. Puff pastry:

Preheat oven to 400. Bring

4 eggs

to room temperature.

Bring to a boil in a heavy-bottomed pot/saucepan:

1 c water

1/3 c butter

½ tsp salt

up to 3 Tablespoons sugar (optional)

Turn heat to LOW. Dump in all at once, and using a wooden spoon, stir, stir, stir! -

1 c King Arthur flour

As soon as the dough becomes smooth, clumps together and keeps an indentation when pressed, take off heat and let cool just a bit.

With a wooden spoon, beat in the eggs one at a time, getting the dough smooth after each addition. This takes some elbow grease!

As soon as the last egg is incorporated and a bit of the dough will stand erect, it is ready.

Use two spoons to form little round 'cabbage' shapes with about 1 Tablespoon of dough each, or pipe out dough with a pastry bag and a plain large nozzle.

Bake ten minutes at 400 and 20 more at 350, until puffed up, quite firm and light brown.

Cool away from drafts, or puffs will collapse.

II. Filling:

Whip:

1 1/4 c heavy (whipping) cream

with:

2 Tablespoons confectioner's (10X) sugar

Fill puffs only when completely cool.

Cut puffs in half and fill with a spoon, or use a pastry bag with a small round nozzle to puncture puffs and pipe filling in.

Dust with:

2 Tablespoons confectioner's sugar, shaken through a fine sieve.

III. Spun sugar:

In a small, heavy-bottomed saucepan, mix thoroughly:

1 c sugar

1-2 Tablespoons corn syrup (to help prevent graining)

½ cup water

Have a small bowl of cold water with some ice ready for testing.

With the lid on, heat the mixture and let it boil for a while, to let condensation wash away any crystals.

Then take the lid off. Once the bubbles are dense and small, the water has evaporated.

Just before the syrup starts turning darker yellow, start dropping a bit in the cold water to test the stage:

it will go through soft ball, hard ball, soft thread/crack, and finally hard thread/crack stage. After soft ball, the stages go very fast. Hard thread is where you want it, not beyond. On a candy thermometer, this is 300 degrees.

Dip a bit of each puff into the caramel and stick some together in a circle on the platter, then build them up into a pyramid, sticking them together with the caramel.

To spin the sugar syrup into hard, hairlike threads, lift the whisk high, letting threads form and drizzle over your creation.

Bon appétit!