



Pryanik R U S S I A

A grandmother's recipe brought to St. Louis from Russia, Lana's honey cake is spiced with an unusual blend of black tea, orange peel, and currants. A beautiful treat topped with powdered sugar and rings of pecans.

4-1/2 cups all-purpose flour
1 cup sugar
1/2 cup powdered sugar
2 cups honey
3 eggs
2 cups strong black tea
3 tbsp olive oil (plus more for pan)
2 tbsp liqueur
1 tbsp vanilla extract
1 cup orange peel and currants (or other dried fruit)
1/2 cup chopped pecans
1 tsp baking soda
1 tsp nutmeg
1 tsp cinnamon

Preheat the oven to 325°F. Oil a 10-inch tart pan with removable bottom.

In a large bowl, beat eggs. Add all ingredients except flour, dried fruit, and pecans. Mix well. Slowly add the flour and beat until well combined. Fold in dried fruits and pecans. Continue mixing until dough is evenly combined and smooth. Pour the dough into the prepared pan and fill three quarters full.

Bake for 60-80 minutes, checking often for doneness. Remove cake, cool on rack, and decorate with pecans and powdered sugar.



Halvah G R E E C E

Evanne's baklava, made from her grandmother's secret recipe, is so moist and sweet, it's best served in small bites. While this one can't be shared, she's passed along another favorite family recipe. After making the Halvah cake, cut it into tiny morsels to match her homemade baklava and serve the two together. Evanne's legendary baklava can be special ordered on her newly launched website.

CAKE

10 eggs
3 heaping tsp baking powder
1-1/4 cups sugar
1/2 pound melted butter
3 tbsp melted butter-flavored Crisco
1 tsp vanilla extract
1-1/4 cups all-purpose flour
1-1/4 cups farina

SYRUP

3 cups sugar
1-1/2 cups water
Juice one lemon

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Separate egg yolks from whites. Beat whites until stiff and set aside. Beat egg yolks in a large bowl and then mix in one ingredient at a time in the following order: baking powder, sugar, melted butter, Crisco (at room temperature), vanilla, farina, and flour. Once well combined, beat in egg whites. Pour batter into a 9x13-inch greased pan. Bake for 45 minutes or until an inserted skewer comes out clean.

Immediately after putting the cake in the oven, make the syrup. Stir sugar and water in a medium saucepan and bring to a boil. Once liquid is clear, add lemon juice and remove from heat. The syrup needs to cool completely before being poured over the cake.

When done, remove the cake from the oven. Pour half of the syrup over the cake. Cut the cake into diamond shapes (make six cuts lengthwise, then diagonally starting in one corner and ending in the opposite corner). Pour remaining syrup over the cut cake. Once cake is cool, use a fork to remove the pieces.

YIAYIA E'S

www.yiayiabaklava.com



Cheesecake JAPAN

Midori shares two recipes for Japanese-style, American cheesecake with the unusual addition of two authentic ingredients: matcha and violet yam. In the spirit of Japanese cooking, cut each cake into small pieces for just a taste of something sweet.

MATCHA CHEESECAKE

250g cream cheese
50g butter
100ml milk
60g cake flour
20g corn flour
1 tbsp matcha green tea powder
5 egg yolks
1/4 tsp salt
5 egg whites
1/4 tsp cream of tartar
120g sugar

Preheat the oven to 320°F. Melt cream cheese, butter, and milk in a double boiler. Once cool, fold in cake flour, corn flour, and matcha. Mix well. Add egg yolks and salt. Mix until well combined. In a separate bowl, beat egg whites with cream of tartar until foamy. Add the sugar gradually until stiff peaks form. Fold one third of the whites into the yolk mixture using a rubber spatula until incorporated.

Pour mixture into an 8-inch cake pan lined with greaseproof paper. Bake the cheesecake in a water bath for 40 minutes. Reduce the heat to 300°F and bake for another 40 minutes until the cake is golden and an inserted skewer comes out clean. Let cool and dust with powdered sugar.

VIOLET YAM CHEESECAKE

1 cup graham cracker crumbs
3 tbsp unsalted butter
1 tsp nutmeg
1 tsp cinnamon
2/3 cup Japanese purple yam (baked until soft, skin removed, and mashed)
1/3 cup cream cheese
2 tbsp honey
1 tsp sugar
2 eggs
1 cup heavy cream
3 tbsp sifted all-purpose flour
1 tsp vanilla extract

Preheat the oven to 340°F. Make sure butter and cream cheese are at room temperature. Line an 8-inch springform pan with parchment paper. Mix the butter, graham cracker crumbs, nutmeg, and cinnamon. Pour into the prepared pan, and press down lightly to make an even base.

In a bowl, beat the cream cheese until soft. Add the yams and beat until smooth. Slowly add the other ingredients one at a time, mixing well. Continue until mixture thickens. Pour into the pan and bake for 45-50 minutes until the top is golden brown. Remove from oven and cool. Refrigerate in a covered container for a thicker and richer cake. Dust with powdered sugar before serving.



Dolci ITALY

No holiday table is complete without homemade Italian cookies. A St. Louis institution, Missouri Baking busily calls numbers as locals line up early to pick their favorite sweets. Sesame crescents, anise rings, and coconut snowballs are our favorites, but some recipes can't and shouldn't be shared. Just another excuse to plow through the snow, and visit the local bakery.

SESAME CRESCENTS

ANISE RINGS

COCONUT SNOWBALLS

Missouri Baking
2027 Edwards St.
St. Louis, MO 63110
314.773.6566



Sticky Rice Pudding TAIWAN

After emigrating from Taiwan, Peggy opened the Chinese Noodle Café, one of the first businesses to revitalize our East Loop neighborhood. Here she shares her recipe for sticky rice pudding made with mung beans and coconut milk. Sprinkled with toasted cashews and served with a cherry on top, it's an American-inspired twist on a Taiwanese favorite.

1 cup sticky rice
1/2 cup mung beans
1 14-oz can coconut milk
1/2 cup water
1/4 cup toasted cashews or walnuts
Maraschino cherries (optional)

Soak the sticky rice in water overnight. Reserve a quarter cup of coconut milk and refrigerate. Pour the rest of the coconut milk, 1/2 cup of water, mung beans, and rinsed rice into a saucepan and bring to a boil. Simmer covered until the liquid has evaporated and the rice is cooked yet firm.

Serve hot or cold with or without a drizzle of chilled coconut milk. Top each individual bowl with a sprinkling of toasted nuts and one cherry.

CHINESE NOODLE CAFÉ

6138 Delmar Blvd
St. Louis, MO 63112
www.peggyhou.com



Choco Flan MEXICO

This two-tone dessert in the shape of a bundt cake makes a graphic statement for the holiday table. The family behind Mi Ranchito shares their favorite recipe for bringing rich, creamy Mexican flan to any American-style chocolate cake.

FLAN

- 4 eggs
- 1 8oz container cream cheese
- 1 can condensed milk
- 1 can evaporated milk
- 2 tsp vanilla extract

CHOCOLATE CAKE BATTER

Follow a recipe of your choice

Choose your favorite chocolate cake recipe and prepare the batter. Preheat the oven to 380°F. Combine all flan ingredients in a large bowl and mix until smooth. Prepare a bundt pan and pour in the flan mixture. Pour the cake batter over the flan. Cover the bundt pan with aluminum foil and bake in a water bath for 65 minutes.

MI RANCHITO

887 Kingsland Ave.
University City, MO 63130

www.mi-ranchitostl.com



Buñuelos de Yuca CUBA

Studying English at the International Institute, Liz cooked a favorite sweet from her recently departed home of Cuba. She translated the recipe for us to share.

SIMPLE SYRUP

- 2 cinnamon sticks
- 1 lb sugar
- 1 cup water
- 1 tsp vanilla (optional)

Make a simple syrup with sugar, water, cinnamon, and vanilla.

Boil the yuca with salt. Once tender, drain, and let cool. Peel the yuca and grind in a meat grinder or mash with a fork. Add the remaining ingredients and three to four tablespoons of syrup. Work the yuca into shapes and fry them in the hot oil. Dry on paper towels and serve with remaining syrup for dunking.

DONUTS

- 1 lb fresh yuca
- 1 egg
- 2 tbsp butter
- 1/2 cup milk
- Salt to taste
- 1 cup vegetable oil for frying



Bakewell Tart ENGLAND

Jane's perfectly petite Bakewell Tart is a classic pastry of jam, almonds, and fondant. Her English sweets are made in small batches and sold at local farmer's markets and by special order. Here she adapts her recipe for the home cook. Enjoy with a hot cup of milky tea.

PASTRY BASE

- 1 - 2/3 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 oz butter (at room temperature)
- 2 oz lard (at room temperature)

FILLING

- 3 tbsp raspberry preserves
- 1 stick butter (at room temperature)
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 3/4 cup ground rice flour (Bob's Red Mill, whole grain, brown rice flour)
- 1/2 cup ground almonds
- 2 eggs
- A few drops almond essence
- 1 tbsp powdered sugar to decorate

Cut butter and lard into pieces. In a large bowl, add the butter and lard mixture to the flour. Rub the flour and fats together with fingertips until the mixture resembles fine breadcrumbs. Chill in the refrigerator.

Gradually add the water, a little at a time, until the mixture comes together and forms dough. Turn out onto a floured surface and work until all cracks are gone. Roll out into a circle 1/8 of an inch thick. Transfer to a lined 9-inch round pie dish. Refrigerate until needed.

Preheat the oven to 375°F. Spread the raspberry preserves over the base of the pastry-lined pie dish.

Put sugar and butter into a large bowl. Cream together with a wooden spoon then alternately add the rice flour, almonds, and egg. Fill the pastry with the mixture. Bake in the oven for 40 minutes. Cool on a wire rack and decorate with powdered sugar.

QUEEN'S CUISINE

www.qconline.us



Kheer INDIA

A subtly sweet, gently spiced Indian rice pudding to serve for dessert or as an accompaniment to a meal. Hema adapts her newly opened Haveli restaurant's recipe for chilled saffron Kheer.

1/4 cup basmati rice (washed and drained)
4-5 cups milk
2-3 cardamom seeds (crushed)
2 tbsp blanched and slivered almonds
1 tbsp chopped pistachio nuts
1 tbsp raisins
2-3 tbsp sugar

Put the rice, milk, and crushed cardamom seeds in a pan. Bring to a boil and simmer gently until the rice is soft and the grains are starting to break open. Add almonds, pistachios, and raisins and simmer for three to four minutes. Add the sugar and stir until completely dissolved. Remove from heat and serve either warm or chilled. Sprinkle with nuts and raisins as desired.

HAVELI
9720 Page Ave.
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www.havelistl.com



Pumpkin Flan CUBA

Ana is a naturalized citizen who came to the US as a Cuban refugee in 1994. Now a teacher at the International Institute, she shares her recipe for pumpkin flan. Her American interpretation of this Cuban classic is a holiday favorite among staff and students.

5 eggs
1 can sweetened condensed milk
1 can pumpkin
1 tsp vanilla extract
7 or 8 tbsp sugar

Start by preparing the caramelized coating. Cook sugar over high heat until the liquid becomes a caramel color. Coat all sides of the mold with the liquid caramelized sugar. Set aside and cool.

Preheat the oven to 350°F. In a bowl, beat the eggs. Add condensed milk, pumpkin, and vanilla and beat until well combined. Pour flan mixture into a coated mold. Bake in a water bath for 60 minutes or until an inserted skewer comes out clean.



Crème de Abacate BRAZIL

Carla's super-simple avocado dessert is an unexpectedly refreshing citrus treat. A family recipe from Brazil, its combination of sweet oranges and fresh cream is perfect for the holidays.

3 ripe California Avocados, pitted and chopped

1/3 cup fresh lime juice

1 cup fresh orange juice

Zest of one lime

Zest of one small orange

1/4 cup sugar

Roughly mash avocado chunks and lime with a large fork or potato masher in a bowl. Combine avocado and lime mixture with orange juice, zest, and sugar in a blender or food processor. Puree until smooth and creamy. Refrigerate for three hours and serve with a dollop of fresh whipped cream.

Variation: Fold in one cup of fresh whipped cream after all other ingredients have been blended. Refrigerate.



Joulutortut FINLAND

A recipe enjoyed at Christmas in her native Finland, Tuija has prepared her family's pinwheel prune tarts every holiday since immigrating to the US. For a special winter treat, she serves them with steaming cups of Glögi.

FILLING

1 lb pitted prunes

1/3 cup water

1/2 cup sugar

PASTRY

4 cups all-purpose flour

1 lb butter

3/4 cup cold water

Powdered sugar for dusting

For filling, steam prunes in water until soft. Mash until the consistency of fruit preserves. Add sugar and let cool.

For pastry, mix flour with ½ pound of butter until mixture resembles coarse crumbs, then add water, continue mixing to form dough. Chill for 30 minutes. Roll out dough and dot with a quarter of the remaining butter. Fold dough from front toward back, back toward front, and from each side toward the center. Chill for 30 minutes. Repeat process of dotting with butter, folding, and chilling three times, using a quarter of the remaining butter each time.

Once the dough has chilled, roll it out and cut it into 3-inch squares. Cut 1-inch slits at each corner of the squares. Place a spoonful of prune filling in the center. Turn up alternating corners (as if making a pinwheel) and pinch together in the center. Chill for 30 minutes. Bake at 400°F for 13 to 15 minutes until golden. Once cool, dust with powdered sugar.