

# Winter Wonderland

by Lydia Lovell



Along about this time of year, spirits tend to flag. In spite of winter's late arrival in our part of the world, once cold weather sets in, it soon seems as though signs of spring will never come. A little winter, in other words, goes a long way. And we're far more fortunate, here on the Cape, than folks in most parts of the country. Comparatively, our winters are mild ones. Yet they do drag.

Treats from the kitchen can do a good job of perking us up on February days when ice, snow, or freezing rains seem endless. Even the pantry can disappoint us, though, if we've taken too often from stored supplies. When all the strawberry preserves are gone, when the last jar of beach plum jelly has been consumed, and when the only fruits left on the shelf are stewed prunes, Aunt Olivia always used to say, "Now it's time to make **Pinecot Jam.**"

1 #2 can (approx. 2½ C.) crushed pineapple in natural juice	¼ C. lemon juice
1 6-oz. pkg. dried apricots	1 t. cinnamon
3 C. sugar	1 t. ground cloves
	½ t. ground ginger

Snip or cut the apricots into small pieces and soak overnight in one cup of cold water. Drain the juice from the can of crushed pineapple; add to apricots and bring to a boil. Cook for 15 minutes. Add the pineapple, sugar, lemon juice, and spices. Cook over medium heat, stirring frequently with a wooden spoon, about 30 minutes or until thick. Remove from heat and let stand until cold. Spoon into two pint containers and store in refrigerator. Serve Pinecot Jam with homemade Cream of Tartar Biscuits. Even if skies are gloomy and gray, the sunny colors of apricots and pineapples combine to brighten the dreariest of mornings.

Aunt Olivia's recipe file includes several rules for **Cream of Tartar Biscuits**. Among them is an ancient recipe calling for a "quart sifter, heaping-full, of flour." Adapted to more modern methods, this recipe would read:

4 C. flour	½ t. sugar
3 heaping t. baking powder	Shortening the size of a large egg
2 t. sugar	2 C. milk, more or less

Sift dry ingredients together and add shortening. Work shortening into flour mixture with fingers until free of lumps. Using a table knife (not a spoon), mix in enough milk to make a sticky dough. Turn onto lightly floured pastry board. Pat to about 1½ inches thick. Cut into rounds and place close together on well-greased pans. Allow to sit for 10 minutes before popping into 450° oven. Reduce heat immediately to 300°, and bake about 20 to 25 minutes. Serve hot with Pinecot Jam.

Lacking apricots and canned pineapple, you might stew up a batch of **Carrot Marmalade**:

4 C. ground carrots	Juice & grated rind of
Juice only of 3 lemons	2 oranges
	3 C. sugar

Grind carrots and cook in ½ C. water for half an hour. Drain; shake pan over hot burner to evaporate water, but do not let carrots burn. Add fruit and sugar and cook over low heat, stirring often, until thick. Pour into jars and store in refrigerator. Serve with Cream of Tartar . . . or Baking Powder . . . Biscuits.

Should Sunday mornings be the time when the clan gathers at your house for a visit, you're always on the lookout for a not-too-sweet coffee cake. You'll like this one and so will your visitors. Aunt Olivia calls it **Cara's Coffee Cake**. (She nicknamed my mother "cara.")

½ C. (scant) sugar	2 T. baking powder
1 T. butter	1 T. vanilla
½ C. milk	1 egg white, beaten stiff
1 C. flour	3 T. brown sugar, 1 T. cinna- mon, mixed
Chopped nuts (optional)	

Mix in order given, folding in beaten egg white last. Turn into 8" x 8" x 2" greased pan. Sprinkle top with mixture of brown sugar and cinnamon; add chopped nuts if desired. Bake at 350° about 30 minutes. Test with toothpick (should come out dry when inserted in center, if done). Can also be baked in a 9" round layer cake pan. Best when eaten fresh-made.

Occasionally found in Aunt Olivia's collection are directions for using up leftovers in ways most of us would probably disdain today, yet when we hear there are people in this

country who are going hungry, we have to wonder if one reason for it may be that a good deal of edible food winds up in the garbage.

For instance, from a very old cookbook containing only handwritten recipes, comes a rule for **Loaf Brown Bread**. It appears here exactly as given in the book. You can decide if you'd like to adapt this recipe to your own use.

In a mixing bowl put any leftover biscuits, bread ends, or cake pieces. Pour over them sufficient boiling water to soften. Add: 1 t. baking soda, ½ C. molasses, a good pinch of salt. Stir in a scant cupful of white cornmeal to thicken; more if necessary. Pour into a quart-size lard pail, well-oiled, and tightly covered. Place in large kettle half-filled with boiling water, by way of making a double boiler. Keep water to ¾ level of lard pail. Boil for two hours or longer, until loaf is done to touch.

Leftover bread might be stored in your freezer until enough accumulates to experiment with this recipe. And, since quantities can only be guessed at, experimenting would be required. A 3 lb. shortening can (if you can still find one) might substitute for the lard pail (which I'm sure you cannot find anywhere except in an antique shop). Questionable, too, unless you heat and do some cooking with a woodstove, is whether the fuel-cost of boiling anything for two hours is an economy. The principle of "using up" and "making do" intrigues me, though.

Another **Brown Bread** recipe is similar to the first, but this one, too, is over 200 years old!

4 C. white corn meal	1 t. baking soda, dissolved in sour milk
2 C. flour	4 C. sour milk
1 C. molasses	¼ t. salt

Mix together, pour into covered lard pail (or 3 lb. shortening can), and steam (as described above) for four hours.

And a final recipe for **Baked Brown Bread** uses essentially the same ingredients and quantities, but directs that the batter be poured into a greased and covered Dutch oven and baked in a very slow oven—250° to 300°—for 6 to 7 hours or overnight.

What to serve with Brown Bread? Baked beans, of course. A Saturday-night-supper fit for the gods!