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## **Best Recipes: Christmas Plum Pudding**

**By Donna Monday**

## **Best Recipes: Christmas Plum Pudding**

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Most of us not from England are only familiar with plum pudding from those much-loved holiday movies that show scenes of English families gathered for the family meal enjoying their delicious plum pudding. Plum pudding is also mentioned in numerous stories and songs.

Of course, I had no idea of what plum pudding really was until I saw it advertised in food catalogs. Plum pudding isn't really a pudding at all, it's a steamed cake filled with fruit, nuts and spices. Plum pudding is traditionally served around the holidays.

If you make this plum pudding, I don't know if you'll be inspired to write dreamy stories about it, but you'll definitely enjoy savoring every bite.

### **Christmas Plum Pudding**

**PLUM PUDDING** ½ cup all purpose flour 1 teaspoon ginger ½ teaspoon salt ½ teaspoon baking powder ½ teaspoon cinnamon ¼ teaspoon nutmeg 1/8 teaspoon allspice ½ cup butter, chilled 1 cup seedless raisins 1 cup golden raisins 1 cup chopped pitted prunes ¼ cup slivered almonds ¼ cup mixed candied fruit peel 1 cup plain bread crumbs ¾ cup firmly packed dark brown sugar ¼ cup brandy (can substitute apple juice) 3 eggs, beaten

**HARD SAUCE** ½ cup butter, softened 1 cup powdered sugar 2 tablespoons brandy (can substitute ¼ teaspoon brandy extract, plus enough water to equal 2 tablespoons)

### **Directions**

Generously grease a 1-quart mold or ovenproof glass bowl; line with double thickness of cheesecloth.

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Lightly spoon flour into measuring cup; level off. In large bowl, combine flour, ginger, salt, baking powder, cinnamon, nutmeg and allspice; mix well.

With pastry blender or 2 knives, cut ½ cup butter until mixture resembles coarse crumbs. Add raisins, prunes, almonds and fruit peel; toss until fruit is well coated with flour mixture.

Add bread crumbs and brown sugar; mix well. Stir in brandy and eggs; mix well. (Mixture will be very thick and almost crumbly)

Spoon mixture into greased and lined mold, packing firmly with back of spoon as mold is filled. Cover tightly with lid or heavy-duty foil; tie foil in place, if necessary.

Place rack in bottom of Dutch oven or 6-quart saucepan. Add water until it reaches top of rack. Bring to a boil. Set mold on rack; carefully pour hot water around mold until about half way up mold. Return to a boil.

Reduce heat to low; cover Dutch oven. Simmer 2 ½ to 2 ¾ hours or until toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Add boiling water as needed.

Meanwhile, in small bowl, combine all hard sauce ingredients; beat until smooth. Line a 10 oz custard cup or decorative mold with plastic wrap. Spoon hard sauce mixture into lined cup. Cover; refrigerate until serving time.

Remove pudding from Dutch oven; cool in mold for 1 ½ hours. Turn out of mold; carefully remove cheesecloth. Place on serving plate.

Unmold hard sauce onto small plate; remove plastic wrap. Top each slice of pudding with small slice of hard sauce.

Makes 8 servings.

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Donna Monday

Got a brownie craving? Satisfy it here

### **INTERNET OFFERS HOLIDAY FUN FOR FAMILY, CO-WORKERS**

**By Maria Heckaman**

### **INTERNET OFFERS HOLIDAY FUN FOR FAMILY, CO-WORKERS by Maria Heckaman**

Whether you celebrate Christmas, Chanukah, or Santa Claus, the holiday season is the perfect time for having fun with family and co-workers.

Of course, the Internet proves to be a great resource for gathering recipes, crafts, songs, and interesting tidbits about the holidays.

Santa's Net and The Kids Domain are two of the best holiday Internet sites, both offering information for many beliefs.

Do you know what year the British Parliament officially abolished the celebration of Christmas? What about the date and location of the first printed reference to a Christmas Tree? How do you say "Merry Christmas" in Bohemian, Yoruba, and Chinese?

Santa's Net can help you find the answers to such questions, while filling you up with many more holiday facts and myths.

On its home page, visitors can countdown to Christmas and choose from many categories to browse, including carols and songs, Christmas traditions from other countries, recipes, toys, Christmas movies, bookmarks, and more.

Keeping with its world-holiday theme, the site also has posted recipes such as Amaretti from Italy, Billy Can Pudding from Australia, Christmas Lebkuchen from Egypt, and Kourabiethes from Greece.

The Kids Domain may sound like a place, well, just for kids, but the whole family can find something fun and interesting at the site.

It offers gift-making ideas, electronic greeting cards, crafts, games to download, holiday clipart, recipes, book suggestions for parents, music, stories and world traditions.

The site includes holiday variations for several countries and/or beliefs such as Kwanzaa and Ramadan. There also is the Grownups Place for parents.

Children have the opportunity to send Santa Claus a letter, provided in an easy-to-use form.

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Other sites that offer letters to Santa are The North Pole's Christmas Mission, Claus.com, Santa at Home, Dear Santa Claus, Santa Claus Online, and The Christmas Pages.

Finally, children of all ages can track Santa Claus' travels on Christmas Eve at [www.noradsanta.org](http://www.noradsanta.org).

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