

FESTIVE FAVORITES

10 RECIPES FOR 2020

PEGGY MARKEL





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10 FESTIVE WINTER FAVORITES

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ABOUT

PEGGY MARKEL'S CULINARY ADVENTURES

FOOD AND TRAVEL ARE MY “RAISONS D’ETRE”. THEREFORE, THIS HOLIDAY SEASON I COMPILED A BOOKLET OF MY FAVORITE FESTIVE RECIPES FROM AROUND THE WORLD. I FOUND MYSELF MAKING, BAKING AND DRINKING HOLIDAY CHEER AND IT WAS EASY. ENTERTAINING SHOULD BE LIKE THAT. THE FOCUS IS ON CREATING A WARM ATMOSPHERE FOR YOUR GUESTS, WHETHER FRIENDS OR FAMILY.

I lead a nomadic life that takes me to India, Morocco, Italy, Spain and Portugal in spring and fall for a total dive into their culinary expressions both traditional and contemporary. I’m constantly exploring and designing new ways to understand and experience a culture through it’s food traditions. Taking people on retreats and food adventures, as well as documenting through blog, newsletter and photography are ways that I share this passion.

I cook and entertain the most when I’m at home in Colorado. Therefore most of these food photos are from my kitchen. The stories and recipes however, are from my travels.

I hope you enjoy this sweet collection of Festive Favorites and I hope we can travel together one day.

Welcome to our global culinary community!

Warmly,

Peggy

*Photo by Jimena Peck



ANDALUCIAN ALMOND CAKE

'TORTA DE ALMENDRAS'

Looking for a simple cake to please everyone, even a no-gluten glutton? Here is a recipe from the Spanish trio of Kim Schiffer, Ashley Mulligan and myself from the last program we did together in 2012.

This almond cake rocks my socks ~ it's easy and delicious... that is if you have a place to buy almond flour. Bob's Red Mill has a nice one.

INGREDIENTS

butter for the pan
almond flour for the pan (because regular flour is not gluten free)
 6 **eggs**, separated
 1 cup **sugar**
 1/2 tsp **cinnamon** (optional)
 zest of 1 **lemon**
 zest of 1 **orange**
 2 cups **almond flour**
orange marmalade or **peach jam** for garnish
chopped pistachios

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Butter an 8 or 9" springform pan, then dust with flour, shaking off the excess.

Beat eggs yolks and sugar together preferably in a standing mixer until thick and light in color. (If you are doing this by hand, it will take a good 10 minutes or more; in a mixer about 5 minutes).

Stir in the cinnamon, lemon and orange zest, and almond flour.

With clean beaters, beat the egg whites in a large bowl until stiff peaks form. Fold into egg and almond mixture.

Pour into prepared pan. Bake 30-45 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean. Cool on a rack, take a knife and run it around the sides of the springform pan to loosen, then remove the sides of the pan.

When cool, spread the marmalade on the cake and sprinkle with chopped pistachios on top as a garnish.

Inspired by our delicious Culinary Adventure in Andalucia, Spain



CLASSIC SABAYON

My first visit to the Hacienda de San Rafael in Seville, Andalucia, was wrapped in mystery. Upon arriving, I encountered a silky classic sabayon lavished over fresh red raspberries that reminded me of my southern childhood. Everything that followed after that captivated me.

That being said, my first meeting with chef Isabel, I consider invisible. I distinctly remember her touch, this deliciousness that showed itself on the plate with energy, attention and flavor. I wanted to meet her. She drew me in like a moth to a flame. “She’s shy”, my friend Anthony said. I had to wait a week, then I was allowed into her kitchen. I felt like I knew a bit about her by the essence of her food. Shy indeed, but her food was bold and spoke volumes. She knows her territory, steeped in history and sherry.

This Classic Sabayon reminds me of her. Sweet, potent, and feisty. Not at all shy.

INGREDIENTS

1/4 cup **Pedro Ximenez Sherry**
6 **egg yolks**
80g **sugar** (approx 1/2 cup)

CHEF ISABEL'S SPEEDY PREPARATION

In a mixing bowl combine egg yolks and sugar. With an electric mixer, whip at medium-high speed until ribbon consistency.

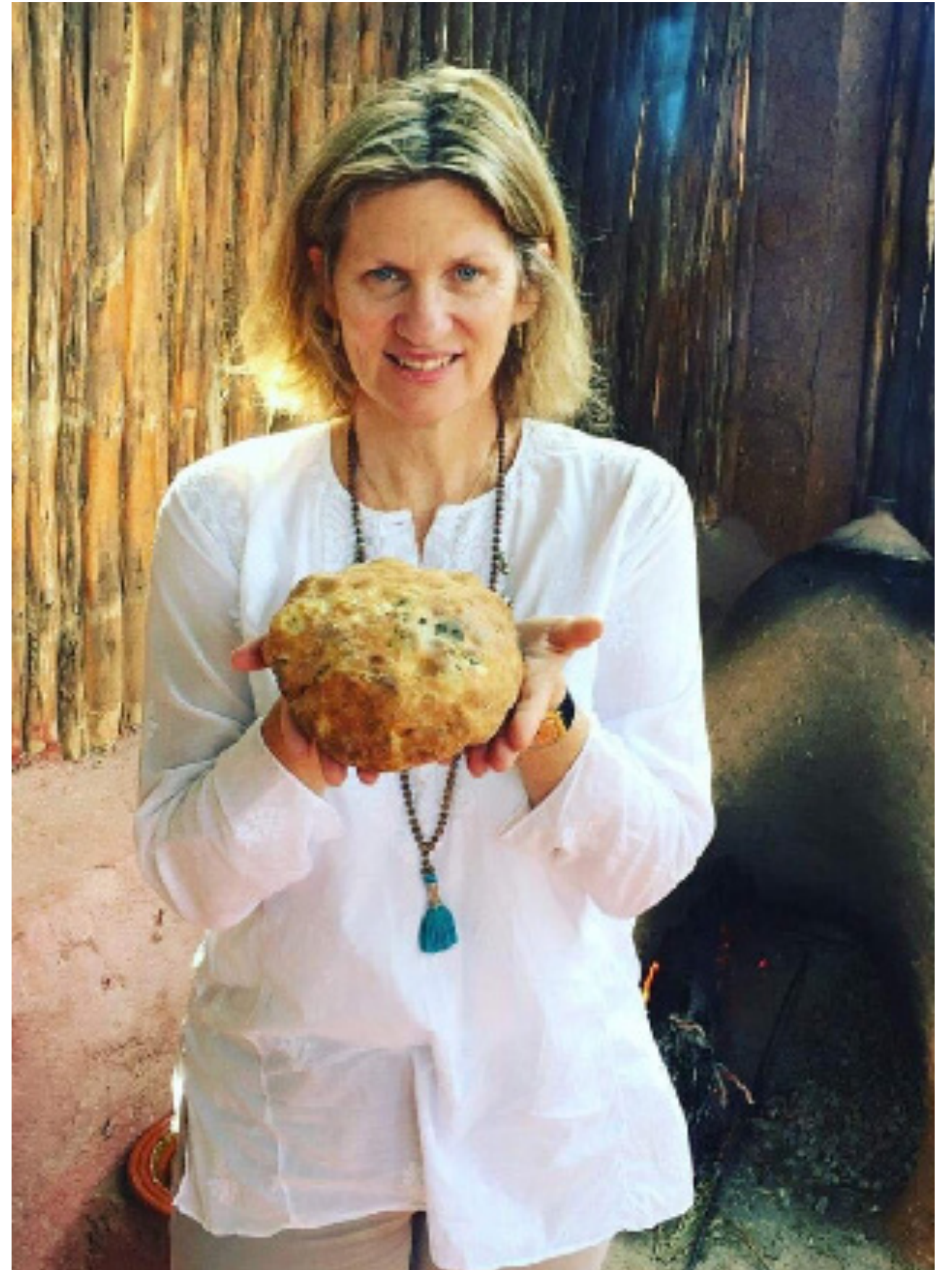
On a stainless-steel bowl set over a water bath (Bain Marie) on the stove at medium heat, warm the sherry until small bubbles appear on the edges (light simmer). Whisk in egg and sugar mixture and whisk constantly until warmed through – a few minutes. Don't overcook or eggs will curdle. Remove from heat and serve sabayon over sliced fruit.

Inspired by our delicious Culinary Adventure in Andalucia, Spain

PEGGY MARKEL

“I FEEL WE HAVE FOUND A WAY THROUGH FOOD TO BUILD A BRIDGE FOR MEANINGFUL CONVERSATION. IN DOING SO, WE ARE CREATING A MORE PEACEFUL WORLD. AFTER 27 YEARS, I HAVE GAINED SIGNIFICANT CONFIDENCE AND TRUST TO MOVE BETWEEN CULTURES. WE NEED AN ANTIDOTE TO THIS SOMEWHAT CRAZY WORLD AND WHAT BETTER WAY THAN MAKING AND BREAKING BREAD WITH THE LIGHT OF OUR OWN SMILES?”

PHOTO BY @IAMSTEPENSMITH / MOROCCO





HACHIYA PERSIMMON PECAN CAKE

Last year I visited Japan where I encountered persimmons hung like jewels on leafless branches of the tree like ornaments. Harvested and strung up in front of Japanese country houses like coral necklaces, this colorful display announces the end of fall and beginning of winter.

That memory ([read more here](#)) prompted some late-night baking to create a cake with persimmons and pecans, plus prunes with Armagnac! The result: a travel-inspired treat, great with a cup of matcha.

INGREDIENTS

3 1/2 cups sifted **All-Purpose flour**
1 tsp **salt**
2 tsp **baking soda**
1 tsp **cinnamon** (or nutmeg, your choice!)
2 cups **sugar**
1 cup melted **butter**, cooled to room temperature
4 **eggs**, lightly beaten
2/3 cups **Armagnac** (or bourbon or whiskey)
2 cups persimmon puree (from 4 ripe **Hachiya persimmons**)
2 cups **pecans**, toasted and chopped
2 cups **prunes**, chopped (or other dried fruit)

DIRECTIONS

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Butter and flour a cake pan or 2 loaf pans, tapping any excess.
2. Sift together all the dry ingredients: flour, salt, baking soda, cinnamon and sugar in a large mixing bowl. Make a well in the center and pour in the melted butter, beaten eggs, and Armagnac. Add the persimmon puree, pecans, and prunes and stir to combine.
3. Pour batter into prepared pans and bake for 1 hour or until a toothpick inserted into the center comes out clean. This is a dense cake so make sure it's cooked through. Cool in the pan. Enjoy!



OMAR SHARIF COCKTAIL

Sitting at the bar at The Kitchen in Boulder, Colorado a few years ago, I needed a drink to go along with a Moroccan menu that chef/owner Hugo Mathison and I were featuring at The Kitchen Upstairs. Bartenders Steve Peters and Karim Boulet weighed in and we created a cocktail poised for an evening of magic. Collaborations are the most creative.

Preserved lemons, seductive spices, tantalizing tagines, oranges in orange blossom water, and a close-to-the-lips encounter with 'Omar Sharif'. That is what Moroccan dreams are made of... While you await the departure of your magic carpet ride to Marrakech, sip on this elegant cocktail wherever you are!

INGREDIENTS

1 1/2 oz **Ketel One Citron**
1 oz **pomegranate liqueur**
1 oz **pineapple juice**
1 squeeze of **lemon**
2 or 3 shakes of **cinnamon**
5 or 6 **mint leaves**

DIRECTIONS

Shaken not stirred...

Collaboration between Peggy Markel, Steve Peters and Karim Boulet.

Photo by Colleen Duffley

Inspired by our delicious Culinary Adventure in [Morocco](#)



CHIARA'S PEAR TORTE

'TORTA DI PERE DELLA CHIARA'

I bake cakes in winter. Pies in summer. Every fruit has its season and Chiara's Torta di Pere is this winter's best-loved. It reminds me of skipping into Chiara's lively Trattoria Camillo for a hearty Florentine meal and having this dolce for dessert.

I have admired, acquired, and stolen this recipe from my friend Rolando Beremendi's new cookbook *Autentico*, in which he pays homage to his dear friend Chiara. I love catching Rolando there on a random evening sitting in his 'mayor's seat', happy as Harry with rosy cheeks near the kitchen. This cake inspires me as it has very little flour and bakes for two hours, allowing the pears to mostly mingle and melt with cream, vanilla and rum. (Sorry gluten-free friends, I have not found flour substitutes to work as well.)

When you get a juicy ripe pear, it's delightful. Baked into this slow-cooked torta ~ it's the piece de resistance. Here is Rolando (and Chiara's) recipe almost verbatim.

INGREDIENTS

1 Tbsp **unsalted butter**
1 cup plus 2 T **Demerara sugar**
1/2 cup of **All-Purpose flour**
1/2 tsp aluminum-free **baking powder**
1/4 tsp fine **sea salt**
2 large **eggs**, lightly beaten
1/2 cup **heavy cream**
2 Tbsp **dark rum**
1 1/2 tsp pure **vanilla extract**
6 medium **pears** ~ I like *comice pears*, but you can use any other firm pear, peeled, cored and thinly sliced.

DIRECTIONS

Preheat oven to 350F. Thoroughly butter a 10-inch springform pan. Sprinkle 1 Tbsp of sugar to evenly coat the bottom and sides of the pan.

In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, salt, eggs, 1 cup of sugar, cream, rum and vanilla to combine. Add the sliced pears. Use your hands to gently fold the pears into the batter. Pour into the pan, arranging the pears to give a nice presentation later. Sprinkle the last remaining Tbsp of sugar on top.

Bake slowly for two hours. Let rest for 5 minutes, then run a knife around the sides of the pan before separating. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Inspired by our delicious Culinary Adventure in [Tuscany](#)



SAFFRON-INFUSED GIN AND TONIC

A Saffron Gin Tonic met me under the moonlight at the end of the pool in Marrakech with a bowl of black oil-cured olives. I fell in love with that land and its magic. And since then, saffron-infused gin and tonics have been my dreamy drink-of-choice, hands-down.

I adore saffron. Infused together with craft gin makes it absolutely medicinal, in that “can cure what ails you” kind of way, everything from depression to dry skin. It was also touted as an aphrodisiac in ancient Sanskrit texts — but don’t get me started. This cocktail will take you on a trip along the Old Spice Route through India, the Middle East and last, but not least, the Old Silk Roads of Spain.

Our trips to India, Morocco and Spain are steeped in Saffron. Its completely intoxicating red threads leave a lasting impression.

INGREDIENTS

2 oz **Saffron-infused gin** (instructions below)
2 oz **tonic water**, such as Fever-tree Indian Tonic Water
Ice

DIRECTIONS

Start by infusing a bottle of your favorite gin with a pinch of saffron. Bombay Sapphire works well. (Instead of a couple of cups) and let it sit overnight.

When ready for an unforgettable G&T, place ice in a glass, add saffron-infused gin and top with tonic water. Garnish with a few threads of fresh saffron.

Enjoy! Crunchy, olive-oil potato chips make the perfect accompaniment. And while you sip this saffron treat, start planning your next Culinary Adventure with Peggy Markel in [Morocco](#).



PEGGY MARKEL'S CULINARY ADVENTURES

JOIN US ON AN UPCOMING
CULINARY ADVENTURE IN 2020

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ORANGES WITH CINNAMON AND HONEY

On any given day in Morocco, oranges with cinnamon and honey is a succulent end to a fabulous meal. Citrus, oranges especially, are most beloved, with mandarins a close second.

Morocco has a long growing season and the right conditions for citrus, making oranges the easiest and most natural dessert that aids digestion as well as pleases the palate. As you know, preserved lemons are a staple of the cuisine as well.

I truly love sitting in the garden of Jnane Tamsna outside of Marrakech where we stay during our Culinary Adventure in Morocco. Biting into the juicy oranges, with the aroma of orange blossom water and cinnamon wafting under my nose while my eyes feast on the nearby orange trees, is sublime.

INGREDIENTS

3 **oranges**, peeled and sliced on the round
Your favorite **honey**
Orange blossom water
Cinnamon

DIRECTIONS

Arrange the sliced oranges on a plate. Drizzle with a few tablespoons of your favorite honey. Add a few tablespoons of orange blossom water on top. Serve in a dish with a sprinkle of cinnamon and a sprig of mint on top as a garnish.

Photo by Collen Duffley

Inspired by our delicious Culinary Adventure in [Morocco](#)



“PICK ME UP!” TIRAMISU

A few years ago, our friend Moya told us a story about her Tuscan mother-in-law, who used this phrase when her husband told a bit of gossip. She would say, “Tiramisu le calze!! Well, pick up my stockings!”

Tiramisu is a rich dessert, yet light as a feather. Spooning into the cream and scooping up a bit of coffee and liquor-soaked biscuit at the same time is certainly a spirit-lifter. You can top it off with chocolate shavings or fancy fruit or both. It's the most elegant dessert and always pleases.

INGREDIENTS

3 **large eggs**, separated
3/4 cup **sugar**
1 (8-oz) container **mascarpone cheese** (1 scant cup)
1/2 cup chilled **heavy cream**
2 cups very strong **brewed coffee** or **brewed espresso**, cooled to room temperature
2 Tbsp sweet **Vin Santo** (more traditionally Tuscan) or Marsala wine
18 **savoardi** (crisp Italian ladyfingers, 6 oz)
1/4 cup fine-quality **bittersweet chocolate** shavings or 2 tablespoons unsweetened cocoa powder

DIRECTIONS

Beat together yolks and 1/2 cup sugar in a large bowl with an electric mixer at medium speed until thick and pale, about 2 minutes. Beat in mascarpone until just combined.

Beat whites with a pinch of salt in another bowl with cleaned beaters until they just hold soft peaks. Add remaining 1/4 cup sugar a little at a time, beating, then continue to beat whites until they just hold stiff peaks. Beat cream in another bowl with cleaned beaters until it just holds soft peaks. Fold cream into mascarpone mixture gently but thoroughly, then fold in whites.

To assemble the dessert, line 8 wine glasses in a row. Stir together coffee and Vin Santo in a shallow bowl. Dip 1 ladyfinger in coffee mixture, soaking it about 2 seconds on each side, break it into with your fingers and transfer to the wine glass. Pipe the mascarpone mixture into the glass with an icing pipe bag and layer with another soaked ladyfinger. Top it off with another swirl of mascarpone mixture. Fill the glass only half full. Fill your other wine glasses.

Chill tiramisu, covered, at least a couple of hours. Just before serving, sprinkle with cocoa or shaved chocolate.

Inspired by our Culinary Adventure in [Tuscany](#).



VEGAN FLORENTINE ALMOND COOKIES

Before veganism, or the term anyway, I was macrobiotic for at least 10 years. Maybe it's a right of passage to renunciate at some point in our evolution and stick to it.

I dove in and became a medicinal cook. Using food as medicine, I was able to consider the energetics of the food I was preparing, I knew the healing properties from a Chinese medicine point of view and would take great joy in knowing what was needed to prepare a healing meal for someone. I still rely on those skills to this day.

One of my favorite things to make was a cookie with only two ingredients. Ground almonds and rice syrup. No dairy, no eggs, no sugar, no flour. The nutty goodness is chewy, crunchy and highly satisfying. It's an alternative cousin to a classic Florentine cookie, just a little more hip. Since I also live in Florence half the year, I like to riff on it.

INGREDIENTS

3 cups whole almonds

1 cup Lundberg's Sweet Dreams brown rice syrup (Barley malt is ok, but not the same taste.)

DIRECTIONS

Grind nuts in a food processor. Pulse the nuts until you get an even grind, but not too fine. You want them a tiny bit chunky: look at the picture.

Add the rice syrup and stir with a wooden spoon. Prepare a cookie sheet with parchment paper. Spoon a three-inch ball onto the sheet. (Set a cup of water near you to dip your spoon in if it gets too sticky.) Press with a fork to flatten.

Bake at 350F for 5-7 minutes. Keep your eyes on these cookies so they don't spread too thin. They can be as thin as a normal Florentine, but I like them a little more dense. Let cool. Use a spatula to take them off the paper, to put on a platter. Drizzle chocolate if you like.

Inspired by our Culinary Adventure in [Tuscany](#).



HEIRLOOM DRIED APPLE PIES

My aunt Sarah’s old home place was Home with a capital H, also for heart and hearth. A destination to touch, not unlike going to a special place inside yourself, yet, this place had hot dried apple pies. The apples came from a 100 year old pear-apple tree, with smallish fruit, more like an asian pear. Sarah would gather the pear-apples in a bucket and cut them up on the porch. Then she would lay the wedges on a drying screen and put it in the back of her old Plymouth. There the apples would dry quickly in the hot Alabama sun, a perfect dehydrator with the windows rolled up.

Those dried apples would be stored waiting until the winter holidays to be reconstituted with a little water, cinnamon and sugar and put into a flat round of rolled out biscuit dough, folded over to make a half moon. A fork would be used to crimp the edges, as well as to poke a few holes into the top of the dough to let the steam come out. These beloved pies, were not fried as they are often called, they are baked. Keep them in a cookie tin. They are dangerously good to snatch while skipping through the kitchen when no one is watching.

INGREDIENTS

APPLE FILLING

3 cups of **dried apples**
1 cup **sugar**
1 cup **water**
2 tbsp **cinnamon**
dash of **clove** and **nutmeg**

BISCUIT DOUGH

5 cups of **White Lilly**
all-purpose flour
1 T **baking powder**
1 T **salt**
1/2 c **mayonnaise**
1 1/2 cups **buttermilk**

DIRECTIONS

Apple Filling Preparation

If you didn’t dry your apples in your car, you can purchase dehydrated apples for this recipe. Put the apples, sugar and water in a pan and stew over medium heat until soft. Add spices. Let cool before spooning onto dough.

Biscuit Dough Preparation

Preheat oven to 400 F. Sift together flour, baking powder, and salt into a large bowl. Add the mayonnaise and mix together with a spoon then mash with your fingertips. Make a well in the flour and pour in the buttermilk, stirring to make somewhat of a wet dough. Adjust with a ‘dab’ more buttermilk if need be. Turn on to a floured surface or your grandmothers ‘biscuit cloth’. Knead a bit. Roll out dough to about a half an inch. Flour a glass that has a 2 to 3 inch opening. Cut out as many circles as you can. Roll them flat out thin. Put your cooled apple mixture to one side of the circle and fold over the dough to make a half moon. Take a fork and press down all around the curve of the moon. Fork prick the top twice. Lay out on an ungreased baking sheet. Bake at 350 F for 12-15 minutes. Let cool. Eat them warm or store them in a tin for as long as you can resist them!

Inspired by my dear aunt Sarah.



PEGGY MARKEL'S CULINARY ADVENTURES

#GOWITHPEGGY

UPCOMING SCHEDULE 2020

INDIA

FEBRUARY 2 - 14, 2020

MOROCCO

MARCH 9 - 18, 2020
NOVEMBER 1 - 10, 2020

SPAIN

APRIL 18 - 25, 2020

PORTUGAL

TBD 2020

SICILY

MAY 13 - 20, 2020

AMALFI COAST

JUNE 13 - 20, 2020
JUNE 20 - 27, 2020

SICILY + AEOLIANS

SEPTEMBER 19 - 26, 2020

TUSCANY

OCTOBER 5 - 14, 2020

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