

PLUMB CAKE

The following recipe is based on Amelia Simmons's "Plumb Cake," first published in *American Cookery* (Hartford, 1796). The original recipe (for a cake four times the size of this adaptation), with commentary, can be found in Keith Stavely and Kathleen Fitzgerald's *Northern Hospitality: Cooking by the Book in New England* (University of Massachusetts Press, 2011).

MAKES ONE CAKE, 16 SERVINGS

Preheat oven to 375° F.

¼ teaspoon nutmeg	1 cup sliced almonds
¼ teaspoon mace	5-6 medium eggs
¼ teaspoon cinnamon	1½ pkgs. dry yeast (10-12g)
¼ teaspoon salt	¼ cup warm water
6 cups all-purpose flour, sifted	a pinch of sugar
½ cup currants	¼ cup Madeira wine
½ cup citron, diced	¾ cup heavy cream
½ cup candied orange peel, diced	½ cup raisins

In a large bowl, mix the spices, salt, and flour. Add the currants, citron, orange peel, and sliced almonds.

In a separate bowl, whisk the eggs.

In a one-cup liquid measuring cup, dissolve the yeast, along with the pinch of sugar, in the warm water (100°-115° F), and let rest for 10-15 minutes until the yeast is activated and bubbles up to the edge of the cup.

Place the eggs in the bowl of a stand mixer or in a large bowl. Add the yeast, Madeira, cream, raisins, and flour mixture. Mix with a dough hook or by hand for about 5 minutes. The dough/batter will be thick and sticky.

Pour (or, if very stiff, spoon) the cake dough/batter into a greased and floured 9-inch cake pan and let rest for 10-15 minutes.

To emulate the falling oven temperatures of a traditional wood-fired brick oven, bake the cake uncovered at 375° F for 20 minutes, then lower the oven temperature to 350° F and bake 20 minutes. Finally lower the temperature to 325° F and bake for about 45 minutes. If the top browns too quickly, cover loosely with aluminum foil.

Turn off the heat and leave in the oven for an additional 15-20 minutes, until a knife inserted in the middle of the cake comes out clean.

Place on a wire rack to cool. Serve plain, or with a small pool of custard sauce or whipped cream on the side.