

Recipes of Winnifred Kirkman Baird

By [Karen Baird](#) on Saturday, June 4, 2011 at 1:49pm

RECIPES OF WINNIFRED KIRKMAN BAIRD

On April 7 1986 Vera wrote the following letter to Clair and Janell,

Early this spring Beth wrote to me a letter, in which she said you were trying to get some recipes that had been ones our mother used. Beth mentioned that she didn't remember Mother having a cookbook. I have been thinking about comments of Beth, and thought that I should tell you what I remember and have.

I remember that Mother did have a recipe book. She used to keep it in the drawer in which she kept the tablecloth. I don't remember it ever having a back. It was missing as I remember this book, and finally mostly a lot of loose pages. When she lived in Idaho Falls, she still had a recipe collection that she kept in a box in the cupboard. I remember my daughters and myself looking at it, and copying some of them. However I don't have these papers we copied. I'm not sure if one of my daughters have them or not. I will check with them.

Some of the recipes I've collected I've copied into a small tablet, and do have some of these from Mother's file. I don't have any in her handwriting.

One great problem we had with using recipes, we didn't usually have all the ingredients, so didn't do the recipe.

I remember when I started to High School that Mother insisted that I took cooking. I thought I got plenty of that around home so wanted to skip this course. Mother said she thought I needed this course to learn how to follow a recipe. When I cooked something, I never followed the recipes she had, and it provoked her greatly. It all came down to the idea that we cooked what we had to cook.

I'm sure that I don't have the same form, because I mostly copied ingredients in many cases.

These are ones that I have today. We made some of them so much that I knew them by heart, so never looked in book.

BREAD PUDDING: Mix together, put in baking pan, and bake 350 degrees until set. 2½ cup bread crumbs. (Sometimes whole wheat was used), 4 c milk, 2 tablespoons melted butter (skip butter and add some cream to milk), ½ c sugar, or enough to taste sweet, ¼ teaspoon nutmeg. 4 beaten eggs.

VINEGAR PIE: Mix in saucepan and cook over low heat until thick, cool slightly to warm stage. Pour into baked piecrust. 2 eggs mixed with 1½ c sugar 1/3 cup flour, ½ teaspoon lemon extract (can be added after cooking) 1½ c water and ¼ cup cider vinegar.

LEMON PUDDING: (Libby Christensen used to make this same thing for the cafe in Firth) Mix together; ¾ cup sugar, 1 T butter, 2 egg yolks, 2 T flour. (T is tablespoon, t is teaspoon) Add juice and rind of 1 lemon, then add 1 cup milk. Stir until sugar is dissolved. Fold in 2 stiffly beaten egg whites. Bake in slow oven or until set. (This is supposed to separate during baking so that you have cake in a sauce)

OLD FASHIONED TOMATO PRESERVES: (Peel if desired) & quarter about 50 tomatoes, small ones, or medium size. Cover with 8 cups sugar, and let stand overnight. Drain off juice and boil into a syrup until it spins a thread (about 232 degrees) Add the tomatoes, 1 orange sliced thin, 1 lemon sliced thin. Cook over low heat until transparent. Put into sterilized jars and seal.

EGGLESS, MILKLESS, BUTTERLESS CAKE: This is one copied when Mother lived at Canal Avenue in Idaho Falls, Idaho

Mix together 2 c raisins, 1 c sugar, ¾ c brown sugar, ½ t salt, 3 c water, ½ c oil, 1 t cinnamon, ½ t ginger, ½ t allspice. Bring to boil in large kettle. Boil hard about 5 minutes. Cool to lukewarm. Add ½ t soda. Mix well.

Sift together 3½ c flour, ½ t baking powder, and add to first mixture. Add 1 cup nuts. Bake in greased & floured pan 13 x 9 inches for about 75 minutes at 350 degrees.

PLAIN CAKE: We've also called this our BOWL & BEATER CAKE. This is something Mother taught me to do about the time Beth was born, and sometimes I still use this recipe. You need a pan of some kind in which to mix the batter. It is stirred and beaten with a hand beater. Then you need dripper, muffin tins, plates in which to bake the batter. They need to be greased and floured.

Put into the pan 2 eggs and beat until creamy and lemon color add 1½ c sugar and beat until there are no grains left in mixture. Add ½ c soft shortening. (We usually used lard, & it was soft because of no refrigerator) beat. Add ¾ cup milk and beat. It may go curdle, but this is natural. Mix and add: 2¼ c flour, ½ t salt, 3 t baking powder, 1 t vanilla. Mix well, batter should not be stiff, but more on thin side. If too thick add more

milk. Bake until desired doneness: About 1/3 cup cocoa can be added to flour mixture to make chocolate cake. Or add spices to flour if a spice cake is desired.

Honey can be used instead of all sugar. If honey is used, use 1 c honey to which has been added pinch of soda.

SPONGE CAKE: Mother used to say she wasn't especially fond of this cake, but it served a purpose, that when she was out of lard, this cake could be made with eggs, which she usually had.

(1) Combine 1¼ c sugar, 1 c water & boil without stirring to softball stage (about 230 degrees). Whip 6 egg whites to stiff, but not dry. Pour syrup over egg whites, beating constantly, & beat until cool.

Beat 6 egg yolks until thick; fold into them the egg whites, blend well. Add 1 t vanilla. Sift together 1 c flour, ¼ t salt, 1 t cream tartar. Fold carefully into other mixture, add flour in small portions, spooning it into egg mixture.

Bake in ungreased pan about an hour in slow oven. (I call a slow oven about 300-325 degree) Cool before cutting.

Mother did have another sponge cake recipe, but I liked this one best so is one I copied. (2) Have seen recipe with same amount of ingredients, called 6 egg sponge cake, in which egg yolks were beaten, then the water added to yolks instead of syrup being made then whipped whites added then flour. This is the method used usually in mother's recipe. It is not one only used by mother, rather common fifty years ago. Usually mother didn't take time to make the syrup, so it is just a matter of how to put ingredients together, and I think that is what bothered mother about my not following a recipe.

The ingredients are amount copied from mother. I didn't even copy the method from mother's recipe, so added that to 1st method, as that is the way I have used her amount of ingredients .

PRUNE BREAD I copied this from Mother. She got it from Aunt Susie.

Cook ½ pound of dried prunes without sugar, then cut up with scissors into small pieces. Mix in large bowl 1 c sugar, ½ t salt, 1 c sour milk or buttermilk, 1½ c white flour, 1 t soda, 1 c whole wheat flour, 2 t baking powder, mix with prunes, then add 2T shortening soft or oil, 1 large egg.

Divide into 2 loaf pans, put in greased and lined with paper. Bake at 375 degrees about 75 minutes. Reduce heat to 350 degrees the last half hour. (Raisins, dates, or figs may be used instead of prunes)

Some other thoughts: Many times cake made was not frosted. We only got frosting for some special occasion, or Sunday. Powdered sugar wasn't used much in our home, because it was too expensive. What usually happened was that more eggs were used, with only the yolks being used in the cake. Then the whites were whipped, sugar added, to taste, and this was spread on the cake. Sometimes it was baked, sometimes we just ate it spread on the cake.

From the time I started to school, thru school days, we had to take our lunch. Many times at night I have made or helped mother to make what she called "Little Cake" for our lunch. This was making her recipe of PLAIN CAKE, and baking batter in the muffin tins. They weren't frosted. We took them plain to school for lunch. No paper muffin liners were used. Just grease the tins and fill about half full of batter *and* bake. During my teen years, mother got used to using powdered sugar, instead of egg whites. When we lived in Basalt across from Laura Larson, she made good cakes, and usually frosted them with a powdered sugar frosting. I remember sister Larson showing mother how she made frosting, by sifting the powdered sugar, and putting into sugar warmed milk, until it was thick as she wanted it for spreading. After this mother used more powdered sugar, when she had money to buy it.

Mother used to make a cooked frosting, and I don't have her recipe for this. It was her fudge recipe for candy, and not being cooked as long, so it spread on the cake. Or she made what we call a divinity frosting today. ... Beat 2 egg whites. Boil about a cup of sugar with 1 cup water, until spins a thread, then beating into whipped egg whites. Sometimes she colored this pink.

I don't have her fudge recipe on paper, but I know how she made it. Put about 2 cups of sugar in frying pan. Add pinch of salt, and about a third cup of cocoa. Mix together until there are no lumps. Add and mix 1 cup milk. Then cook until thick over low heat. It was done when it would form ball when a small amount was dropped into cold water. A lump of butter was added, and 1 teaspoon vanilla. Beat until cold, or creamy, pour into pan, and cool. Sometimes this recipe was doubled, or even made with 3 cups sugar and 1½ c milk.

When as a child I remember Mother used to make chocolates. I remember her making some when Kieth was a baby, and I wanted to help her, but she said that I could watch, but I had to hold the baby. She did let me take some of the fondant she had cooked and roll it into balls, then when they were hard she dipped them in melted chocolate.

She would buy chocolate at the store, which was a pound wrapped in paper. It was Bakers chocolate with picture of a woman on the cover of the wrapper. This she would melt over hot water for dipping chocolates.

I remember holding the baby, and sitting and watching her dip chocolates. What she did was put a cold chocolate center her hat pin, then dip it into the melted chocolate, then put it on a buttered platter to cool. I remember living in Riverside and Wapello when Mother would make these chocolates for Christmas. I think that was about the only time of year she made them, because she didn't have money to do it more often. Other times she made fudge and patience.

Another thing I remember we done, that when this is mentioned to anyone they flip. We fried or boiled eggs for our lunch for school, but sometimes the eggs were sold or exchanged for other food at the store. We used to make chocolate (cocoa) sandwiches for school. Some other families did the same thing. I remember trading my chocolate sandwich to another child for a meat sandwich, which meat sandwich I didn't like as much, because I thought the bread was not as good, and the meat hard. However I did it anyway at various times.

To make a chocolate sandwich you put some sugar and cocoa into a small bowl. Add hot water to it to make a thick paste, then spread on your bread, which was usually buttered. Sometimes it was not buttered, so we had only bread and chocolate paste. (If we had vanilla, we added some to the paste.)

In later years mother learned to make chocolate centers with powdered sugar, and I think that she no longer cooked fondant for centers of chocolates. The year we moved to Basalt, I went to a primary party for Easter, and they showed us how to make candy with potato and powdered sugar. I went home and showed mother what I had learned, and after that we made candy with potatoes and powdered sugar. I have never seen a recipe for this, but what you do is cook a small potato. When it is soft mash with a fork, and mash into it all the powdered sugar you can. The warm potato melts and sort of cooks the sugar. Add flavoring as desired, also nuts, fruit, etc.

Later Mother had a recipe from Pet Milk Company she used for candy. I think same recipe is still found on Pet Milk cans.

Another cake frosting or topping Mother used was to mix little melted butter, brown sugar, and either nuts or coconut, then put on cake as it was finished baking, and return to oven a couple of minutes, or until brown.

The way Mother fed her babies, after they were a year old, was to scrape carrots, slice and boil them until tender. Then a thickening of flour and water was stirred in carrots, water, and cooked until thick. Sometimes a little milk was added to this. Carrots were

mashed and with mashed potato was baby's dinner. This was also done with string beans and peas, but mostly carrots, and sometimes with potatoes.

I remember Mother counting some eggs, putting them in an old syrup or lard bucket, then putting on the lid. Inside she enclosed items she wanted to get in place of the eggs. She then put me on a horse, gave me the bucket of eggs, and sent me to the store. I remember doing this during years of living in Riverside and Wapello. Usually I got there without any egg breakage, and I'm sure that I couldn't do that today. I remember once an egg was broken and mother was upset, because then she didn't have enough for what she wanted to get, so I had to get more eggs and go back to stores and we had to eat the broken egg. Another time I remember mother putting two extra eggs, saying I could get candy with them. The horse got frisky and went into a canal by the road. I ended up with 3 broken eggs and no candy.

This is a glimpse back into our food past. One of my children was asking for something like this, and I have been thinking about writing about our home cooking, when as a child. Always with love, Vera