

Fruit Cake

One of the most divisive Christmas desserts, the fruit cake dates back to Roman times. However, it gained a huge surge in popularity in Victorian England, when it became a vital part of celebrating holidays and weddings. Recipes spread throughout the commonwealth and became, for many, a staple Canadian Christmas tradition.

Made with or without alcohol, and covered with marzipan or frosting, or just served plain, it's definitely a dessert you either love or hate! Try one of the following recipes and see which one is your favourite!

Fruit Cake #1

1 pound flour, 1 of sugar, three-quarters of butter, 2 of raisin, 2 of currants, 1 of citron, a half an ounce of mace, and a wine-glass of brandy, 1 of wine, 8 eggs, stir the sugar and butter to a cream, add the flour gradually, then the wine, brandy and spice, and the fruit just before it is put in the pans; it takes over two hours if the loaves are thick

The Dominion Home Cookbook, A Thorough Housewife (Toronto, 1868). [Available via Canadiana Online.](#)

Fruit Cake #2

Half pound of butter, half pound of sugar; rub well together; four eggs well beaten, half a teaspoon of soda, one wine glass of whiskey, half a nutmeg, fruit to suit the taste, flour to stiffen; bake in slow oven; this cake will keep for weeks

The Home Cook by the Ladies of Toronto and Chief Cities and Towns of Canada (Toronto, 1881) available via: <https://archive.org/details/homecookbook00stew/page/n8/mode/2up>

Fruit Cake #3 (without eggs or butter)

1 cup brown sugar, 1 cup molasses, 1 cup sour cream, 1 tablespoon soda (put in cream when dissolved), 1 tablespoon boiling water (to dissolve soda), 3 ½ cups flour, 2 pounds raisings, ½ pound currants, citron, 1 cup preserves, pinch of salt, spices, almond flavour.

If made 1 month before using, this will be found a very moist cake and may be kept at any length of time.

Five Roses Cook Book, Lake of the Woods Milling Company Limited, 1915.

Fruit Cake #4

1 ½ pounds currants, 2 pounds raisins, 1 coffee cup butter and 1-3 cup lard, 2 coffee cups brown sugar, ¼ coffee cup milk, 1 ½ teaspoons soda, 5 eggs, ½ glass brandy, ½ wine glass maple syrup, ½ pound citron peel, 1 pound almonds, 2 halves lemon peel, 1 teaspoon each of cinnamon and cloves, 3 ½ coffee cups flour. Bake in slow oven.

Woodstock Cook Book by the ladies of St. Marys Church, 1917 (recipe courtesy of Mrs. A.W. Moore)

