



Research Document

Key: 5276

QUEEN ELIZABETH CAKE

The Dirigo Hotel

SERVES - 8

- 1 C - chopped dates
- 1 C - boiling water
- 1 tsp - baking soda

- ¼ C - butter
- 1 C - sugar
- 1 - egg
- 1 tsp - vanilla

- 1½ C - cake flour – original recipe called for all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp - baking powder
- ¼ tsp - salt
- ½ C - chopped walnuts

- 5 T - brown sugar
- 2 T - cream
- 3 - 4 T - butter
- ½ C - coconut shreds
- coconut extract (optional)

Heat oven to 350°.

Grease and flour a 9” x 9” square pan.

Mix dates, boiling water and baking soda. Allow to cool.

Cream the butter, sugar, egg and vanilla together.

Add the date mixture.

Sift the flour, baking powder and salt together.

Add to the date mixture.

Add the chopped walnuts.

Bake about 30 minutes.

Heat the butter in a saucepan. Add the cream, brown sugar and coconut and cook until blended.

Spread the topping on the warm cake and return to the oven for a few minutes until the topping melts.

This recipe was given to Meredith Rich (later Mrs. Kenneth Hutchins) by Mrs. Leach, the pastry cook at the Dirigo Hotel in 1952.

Recipes for Queen Elizabeth Cake, a date and nut cake with a broiled topping, were sold in Canada, for 15 cents a copy, as a fund-raiser during the Second World War. As Queen Elizabeth, the Queen Mother, was very popular in Canada and rallied people during the war, it may have been named in her honor. The recipe appeared in wartime cookbooks during the 1940's and again in Canadian cookbooks in 1953, in celebration of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II. Queen Elizabeth Cake has been a staple at Canadian country fairs for many years. Recipes for it can be found in England and in the States, but are more frequently found in Canada.

One author was told by her grandmother that this cake is the only thing the Queen Mother actually baked herself in her kitchen. The claim that the recipe was baked by or a favorite of the Queen Mother and given to worthy groups as a fund raiser during World War II is unfounded as the Queen's Lady-in-Waiting was quick to point out. "I fear I have to tell you that, although we have known about this recipe for many years, it did not originate from either Buckingham Palace or Clarence House...However as Her Majesty always made it a rule, due to the number of requests received, never to give "favorite recipes", I fear that I have to tell you that you that should you wish to include this recipe in any cookbook, it should only be called a 'date and walnut cake' with no reference to the Queen Mother."

One recipe from Quebec's Eastern Townships includes this footnote: "This is not to be passed on but must be sold for charitable purposes for 15 cents." - Adapted from several sources, among them – The Forties chapter of "A Century of Canadian Home Cooking: 1900 through the '90s" by Carol Ferguson and Margaret Fraser, Prentice-Hall Canada, 1992, p. 115.