



Gilded Age with Francine Segan Recipes & more

Lemon Pound Cake

Adapted from *Miss Beecher's Domestic Receipt Book* (1846),
by Catherine Beecher

Serves 10

This perfect mouth-watering lemony tart-sweet cake comes from the wildly successful 1846 cookbook by Catherine Beecher, whose sister Harriet Beecher Stowe wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin*.

For the Cake:

8 tablespoons (1 stick) unsalted butter, softened
1 cup sugar plus 2 tablespoons
4 eggs, separated
Juice and zest of 1 large lemon
2 cups all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons baking powder
1/4 cup milk, at room temperature

For the Glaze:

1 cup confectioners' sugar
2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice
Zest of 1 lemon
Candied violets (optional)

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees. Butter and flour a 9-inch cake pan and set aside.

In a mixing bowl, using an electric mixer, cream the butter and 1 cup of sugar together on high speed until light and fluffy, about 5 minutes. Add the egg yolks, one at a time, mixing well after each addition. Add the lemon juice, zest, and baking powder and mix well.

Slowly stir in the flour and milk. Mix on low speed until combined.

In another bowl, whip the egg whites with an electric mixer set on high. When the egg whites begin to get frothy, sprinkle with 2 tablespoons of sugar. Continue beating until the egg whites are stiff and hold a soft peak.

Gently stir about 1/4 of the whites into the cake batter to lighten it. Fold in the remaining whites until just combined, being careful not to over mix. Pour the batter into the prepared pan and bake for about 30 minutes, or until golden and a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

Cool the cake on a rack in the pan for 10 minutes, then invert and cool completely.

To make the glaze, whisk together the confectioners' sugar and lemon juice until smooth. Pour half of the glaze over the top of the cooled cake, allowing it to drip down the sides. Let the cake stand for 10 minutes, then top with the remaining glaze. Garnish with the lemon zest and candied violets, if using.

Assorted Gilded Age Tea Sandwiches

Serves 6

These sandwiches, which back in the Gilded were served cut into triangles or into rounds using curly edged cookie cutters, are typical of the assortment offered for Afternoon Tea. For an added period touch, garnish with radish roses, lemon zest, or edible flower petals.

8 thin slices white sandwich bread
4 thin slices whole-wheat sandwich bread
6 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened
1/2 cup thinly sliced cucumbers (1/2 cucumber)
1/4 teaspoon dried dill
1/2 cup walnuts, very finely chopped
1/2 cup grated Gruyere cheese
1/4 teaspoon cayenne
1/2 pint fresh figs, chopped
1 teaspoon freshly squeezed lemon juice
2 tablespoons finely chopped peanuts

Lay the white and wheat bread slices out on a work surface and butter each slice on one side.

To make Cucumber Sandwiches: divide the cucumbers between 2 slices of buttered white bread, sprinkle with dill and top each with another slice of white bread. Press the sandwiches together lightly. With a sharp knife, remove the crusts, and cut each sandwich into quarters. Transfer to a large platter.

To make Gruyere Walnut Sandwiches: In a small bowl, stir together the walnuts, Gruyere, and cayenne until combined. Divide the mixture between 2 slices of buttered white bread and top each with another sliced of white bread. Press the sandwiches together lightly. With a sharp knife, remove the crusts and cut each sandwich into quarters. Place on the platter with the cucumber sandwiches.

To make Fig Peanut Sandwiches: In a very small saucepan over low heat, simmer the figs with the lemon juice until very soft, about 12 minutes. Mash the figs with a fork and cool. Divide the mashed figs between 2 slices of buttered wheat bread and top each with 1 tablespoon of the peanuts. Top with the remaining bread slices and press each sandwich together lightly. With a sharp knife, remove the crusts and cut each sandwich into quarters. Add to the other sandwiches on the platter.

Ginger-Lemon Ices

Serves 6

Flavored ices were a popular between course palate cleaner in the Gilded Age.

5 lemons

2 cups sugar

3 tablespoons minced candied ginger

Combine the sugar with 4 cups of water in a medium saucepan over high heat. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to medium, and simmer for 15 minutes.

Meanwhile, zest 2 of the lemons and reserve. Juice all 5 lemons, you should get about 1 cup of juice. Using a spoon, remove any remaining pulp from the 6 un-zested lemon halves. Cut about 1/4 inch off the ends of the lemons so they will sit upright. Place them on a plate and freeze.

Once the sugar water has boiled for 15 minutes, add the zest, lemon juice and ginger and stir. Pour the mixture into a shallow metal or plastic cake pan and freeze for 1 hour. Stir the mixture with a fork to break up any large crystals. Repeat every 30 minutes, until the mixture is completely frozen into very small crystals.

To serve, spoon the ginger-lemon ice into the frozen lemon cups.

Mrs. Astor's Chocolate Apricot Drops

Serves 8

This recipe for tiny chocolaty cookies dotted with apricot jam was created by a turn of the century chef at New York's Delmonico's Restaurant and named after famed Gilded Age socialite Mrs. Astor.

8 tablespoons unsalted butter, softened

1/2 cup dark brown sugar

1 large egg

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1/2 cup cocoa powder

1 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

Pinch of salt

Granulated sugar, for rolling cookies

1/2 cup apricot preserves

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees.

In a mixing bowl with an electric mixer set on high speed, blend the butter and brown sugar together until very light and fluffy, about 5 minutes. Add the egg and vanilla and mix well. Reduce the mixer speed to low and add the cocoa powder, mixing until combined and smooth. Slowly add 1/2 of the flour until a stiff dough begins to form. Add the remaining flour and salt and stir with a spoon until well combined.

Take about 1 teaspoon full of dough and form balls, about 3/4 inches in diameter. Roll the balls in sugar and place on a parchment-lined baking sheet. Using your pinky, make a small indent into the center of each cookie. Fill each cookie center with a bit of apricot preserves.

Bake for 10 minutes, or until the cookies are set. Serve warm or cool.

Peach Melba

Serves 6

The world-renowned French chef, Auguste Escouffier, created this luscious treat that he named after Gilded Age opera singer Nellie Melba.

- 3 large peaches
- 2 cups plus 3 tablespoons sugar
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract
- 1 ten-ounce bag frozen raspberries
- 1 pint vanilla ice cream

Halve the peaches and remove the pit. Reserve. In a large saucepan, bring 3 cups of water and 2 cups of the sugar to a rolling boil. Add the vanilla and peach halves, turning the cut side down, into the saucepan. Remove from the heat and cover. Allow the peaches to steep in the liquid for about 20 minutes, until softened.

Meanwhile, puree the raspberries and remaining 3 tablespoons of sugar in a blender. Pass the puree through a mesh strainer to remove the seeds. Reserve.

To serve, remove the warm peach halves from the vanilla syrup and place onto 6 dessert plates or bowls. Top each peach with a small scoop of ice cream and drizzle the raspberry sauce over the top.

Gilded Age Flowers and their Sentiments

- Amaryllis- Exceptional beauty
- Buttercups- Riches
- Bluebell-Gratitude
- Carnation-Fascination or Bravery
- Chrysanthemum (white)- Cheerful under misfortune
- Daisy- I share your sentiments
- Marigold-Grief
- Mountain Laurel- Ambition
- Orchid-Beauty
- Periwinkle-Sweet Memories
- Rose- Beauty
- Tulip-Declaration of love

Popular toasts of the Gilded Age

- Love, liberty, and length of days.
- Beauty without affectation; and virtue without deceit.
- Long life, pure love, and boundless liberty.
- May we never want for a friend, nor a bottle to share with him.
- No party except mankind.
- High wages and sense to keep them.
- May the sons of liberty marry the daughters of virtue.
- The greatest happiness of the greatest number.
- A lasting peace or an honorable war.
- As we bind, so may we find.

-To taste of Bacchus' blessings now and then.

Gilded Age Etiquette Dos and Don'ts

- Do not rock in a rocking chair. "Rocking is only fit for a nurse putting a baby to sleep."
- Invite crude people to your gatherings. No matter the obligation. "Avoid giving invitations to bores. They will come without."
- "American ladies never curtsy in the street."
- A gentleman does not offer his arm to a lady other than his wife, fiancée, or relative in the CITY unless it is "evening, or slippery pavements, or when the streets are very muddy. In the COUNTRY the custom is different."
- Ladies do not sit "cross-kneed, and jogging your feet. Humming a tune before strangers. Singing as you go up and down stairs."
- Do not permit a gentleman to "unclasp your bracelet, or still worse, to inspect your brooch."
- Do not tell puns too often, "The fashion of punning dates from the times of the early Greeks, but its age does not entitle it to veneration."
- "Never indulge in conversation that will lead to heated debate in social circle. Politics and religion should be tabooed."
- "A married couple should not dance together more than once in an evening."
- Napkin rings should never be used for a dinner party "as it is an open secret that the use of a napkin ring suggests the repetition of the use of the napkin..."
- Give your female guest a fan if the room is warm.
- At a dinner party "When you wish to an introduction to a stranger lady, apply to your hostess...you will then be led up and presented to her."
- "The proper age for a young girl to be presented to society is when she has left school...this age is from eighteen to twenty." Up to that the debutante is never to appear at any gatherings outside her father's house.
- "White glove (kid of course) are worn. Light and very delicate shades are permitted. Gloves are only removed from the hands at supper."
- It is permissible to eat artichokes, celery, and asparagus with the fingers.
- "Ten is a very good number to seat at dinner."
- "Guests should be prompt, arriving at least 10 minutes before the hour set for dining."
- Eat cheese with a fork, not a knife.
- Break your bread, do not cut it.

Above from:

Miss Leslie's Behavior Book, 1859

Youth's Educator for Home and Society, 1896

Mixing in society, 1869