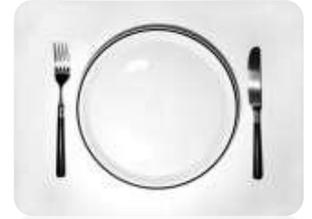




St Brigid's Day Recipes



Like feast days throughout the world food is involved in the celebration of St. Brigid's life.

Colcannon, Boxty Cakes, Spiced Beef and St. Brigid's Oatcakes for the children were big favourites. You'll notice that the ingredients reflect the simplicity of the time and are easily found. To this day they are still favourites in many Irish homes. Colcannon in particular was eaten in many Irish homes especially on Fridays when up to very recently meat wasn't eaten as part of religious observances.

Colcannon (serves 6)

- 1 ½ lbs. Green Cabbage
- 2 cups water
- Knob of butter
- 1 ¼ lbs peeled and quartered potatoes
- 1 tablespoon chopped parsley
- 1 cup cleaned and chopped leeks white part only
- 1 cup milk
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Butter Bomb (a ball of butter)



Simmer the cabbage in two cups water and oil for ten minutes, then drain, and chop fine. Boil potatoes and water, and simmer 'til tender. Simmer the leeks in milk for ten minutes 'til tender. Drain and puree the potatoes. Add leeks and their milk and the cooked cabbage, and mix in. Add the salt and pepper. Mound on a plate and bury the "butter bomb" in the middle of the mound. Garnish with parsley.

Our School Principal once told us that in his house there was a tradition of "hiding" money wrapped in tin-foil in the colcannon and you had to eat your way through the colcannon to find the cash. He thinks that this tradition wasn't very widespread but was his Mam's way of getting the kids to eat all that veg!! Clever woman!!

St. Brigid's Oatcakes (serves 4)

- 2 cups uncooked, old-fashioned rolled oats (*not instant*)
- 1¼ cups buttermilk
- 2 ½ cups sifted bread flour
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon baking powder
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Vegetable oil spray



A day ahead, combine the oats and buttermilk in a small bowl. Blend thoroughly, cover and refrigerate overnight. The next day, preheat the oven to 350 degrees F/180 degrees C. Remove the oat mixture from the refrigerator. Combine the bread flour, baking soda, baking powder, and salt in a large bowl. Slowly add the oat mixture and stir with a wooden spoon 20 to 30 times, or until you have a smooth dough. Grease a baking sheet with the oil spray. Turn the dough onto the baking sheet, and use your hands to form a round, cake-shaped loaf about 1-inch thick. Use a sharp knife or pizza cutter to cut the dough into 4 quarters. Move the quarters apart slightly, but keep them in the original round shape. Bake until the cakes are light golden brown and firm to the touch, 30 to 35 minutes. Cool slightly on a rack, and serve with butter and jam or preserves. Makes 1 loaf (in quarters).

Boxty Cakes (makes 12)

½ lb hot cooked potatoes
½ lb grated raw potatoes
2 cups flour, 1 teaspoon baking soda
1½ cups buttermilk
Butter for frying
Salt and pepper



Drain, peel and mash the hot potatoes. Stir in the raw potatoes, flour and baking soda. Add salt and pepper to taste. Mix well with enough buttermilk to make a stiff batter. Shape into 3 inch patties about ¼ inch thick and fry on hot greased griddle until crispy and golden on both sides.

Irish Spiced Beef

Brigid is closely associated with her red-eared cow and the farm and beef. While spiced beef is traditionally eaten on Christmas it goes with Brigid's day quite well. Takes a few days to prepare and cure properly!!



You'll need - 20 cloves of Garlic, 2 tsp ground allspice or cinnamon, 6 Shallots, 2 tsp Prague Powder (Curing Salt), 1 Pound Kosher Salt (coarse), 1 tsp. black pepper, three tsp. ground mace (or nutmeg), 7-8 lb. beef. 2-3 bay leaves, Two Pints Guinness /Stout.

Grind all dry ingredients and mix them well together. Add finely chopped shallots. Then rinse the beef and place in plastic or glass container (*avoid iron*). Split the spice/salt mixture into 7 equal amounts then take 1 seventh of the spice/salt mixture and rub it all over the meat. Place the meat back into container, cover and set in a cool spot-*if too warm out place in fridge*. Each day for seven days rub the meat with one seventh of the mixture, turn over and re-cover. Leave the liquid that forms with the meat. At the end of seven days place meat and liquid into a big pot -add water to top up and cover the meat and boil until the meat is tender, (*a fork should just barely be able to lift up strands of meat-don't over do it!*) Change water adding clean water and boil for another 30 minutes. Then add veg-large carrots, onions, and potatoes-cook until almost done. Add two pints of Guinness and boil for another 10-20 minutes.

You can eat this hot or leave to cool overnight-place meat into colander with weight on it and plate or dish under it. Enjoy!!

Some other Simple Ideas!!

Butter Making: Fresh butter was traditionally churned on St. Brigid's Day. To make some with children, simply place a clean marble in a baby food jar and pour in some room temperature full cream. Screw the cap on the jar, shake vigorously for five minutes or so until you get passed the whipped cream stage. Then, pour out the liquid and enjoy the butter left behind.

Charity Baskets: Traditionally, wealthier farmers gave mutton, fowl and pork away to poorer neighbours on St. Brigid's Day. St. Brigid herself was also known for great charity. Model this by having a playdate for your children's friends and ask all playdate attendees bring food items. Then, together, decorate a food basket and make cards to be dropped off at a local homeless shelter. Alternately, since St. Brigid is patron to babies, have each playdate attendee bring a baby shower item, such as clothing, rattles or blankets. Put these together in a basket to give to a local maternity hospital or local children's charity.

Nature Walk: "St. Brigid loved to wander the woods befriending the animals," go on a nature walk together, perhaps leaving a trail of bird seed or other food that animals at this time of year might appreciate.