

## Papa's "Baked Goods of the Month Club" Recipes

*By Diane Flynn Keith*

Finding the right gift for Dad can be daunting. For many years, in anticipation of Father's Day, Christmas, or his birthday, I asked Papa what he would like for a gift. He'd think about it for a minute, and tell me he didn't really need anything. Then, he'd say, "I like it when you bake for me." He especially enjoyed cookies and breads that I made. So, one year, I invented my own "Baked Goods of the Month Club," designed to surprise him each month of the year with a homemade baked goodie. He enjoyed it so much, that I simply renewed his subscription every year thereafter. ☺ Here are twelve months of recipes that are Papa-tested-and-approved...



### JANUARY

#### Biscotti

Start off the year with an Italian treat. Biscotti, a classic twice-baked cookie, has been popular since medieval times. It is especially good with espresso, coffee, or warm milk. Papa grew up in the outer Mission district of San Francisco, and his neighborhood included first generation immigrants from all over the world. He remembered eating biscotti that his friend's Italian mother made. This recipe was passed down over several generations. It's fun to make and even better to eat.

#### *Ingredients:*

½ c butter, at room temperature  
 2 cups sugar  
 6 eggs  
 3 tablespoons vanilla extract  
 5 ½ cups unbleached, all-purpose flour  
 1 tablespoon baking powder  
 2 tablespoons anise seeds  
 Confectioners' sugar



#### *Directions:*

Preheat oven to 350° F. Grease 2 baking sheets.

In a large bowl, cream together the butter and sugar. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating after each addition. Add the vanilla and mix well.

In a separate bowl, mix together the flour, baking powder, and anise seeds. Add to the egg mixture and stir to blend thoroughly. Chill dough for 1-12 hours.

Lightly rub powdered sugar over your hands. Separate the dough into two even batches. Rub powdered sugar lightly over the two batches of dough. Place one batch on each baking sheet. Use your hands (or a rolling pin covered with powdered sugar) to form the dough into two flat loaves, about ¾” thick, 4 to 5” wide, and almost the length of the baking sheet. Bake in a 350° F oven until lightly browned at edges, and springy to the touch, about 25 minutes. Be sure to switch the positions of the baking sheets about halfway through baking.

After the first baking, let the cookie loaves stand on the baking sheets until they are just cool to the touch. Then, cut each cookie loaf into diagonal, ½” slices. Arrange slices close together, cut side down. Return to oven and bake at 350° F until cookies are lightly browned – about 7 minutes. (Don’t forget to switch the positions of the cookie sheets halfway through the second baking.) Then, remove the trays from the oven, and using tongs, turn the cookies over. Put them back in the oven and bake for another 7 minutes or until lightly browned. (Make sure to switch the positions of the baking sheets halfway through baking.)

Transfer biscotti to racks and let cool. Serve, or store in an airtight container. Biscotti freezes well for longer storage.



## **FEBRUARY**

### **Heart-Shaped Valentine Sandwich Cookies**

#### **Filled with Raspberry Jam**

When I made these Valentine cookies for Papa he said, “They look too pretty to eat.” They are beautiful to look at, which is why they make a great gift. They are so rich and delicious it only takes one or two to satisfy any sweet tooth.

#### ***Ingredients:***

1 cup unsalted butter, softened  
 2/3 cup sugar (or sugar substitute)  
 1 egg  
 1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
 1 teaspoon almond extract  
 ¼ teaspoon salt  
 ¼ teaspoon baking powder  
 2 cups all-purpose flour, plus extra for work surface  
 1 cup confectioners (powdered) sugar (not to be used in dough)  
 1 cup seedless raspberry jam or raspberry preserves (you can use sugarless jam or fruit spreads as well)

You will also need two heart-shaped cookie cutters: one large, 3-inch size, and a smaller 1-inch size that easily fits inside the larger one.

***Directions:***

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Grease cookie sheets or use non-stick cooking spray.

In a medium bowl, beat the butter and sugar (or sugar substitute) until light and fluffy. Add the egg, vanilla extract, almond extract, salt and baking powder and beat until well-combined. Add the flour and stir until well-blended.

Divide the dough in half and use a rolling pin to flatten each half into two disks. Wrap each disk in plastic wrap and refrigerate until cold and firm, but not hard. About 30 minutes to 1 hour.

On a lightly floured pastry board, use a lightly floured rolling pin to roll the dough until 1/4 inch thick. Use the 3-inch heart-shaped cookie cutter that has been dipped in flour (to prevent sticking) to cut the rolled sheet of dough into heart shapes.

Then, use the 1-inch heart shaped cookie cutter that has been dipped in flour, to cut out the center of only half of the 3-inch cookies. (Note: Set aside the small, 1-inch heart shapes cut from the centers of the larger cookies to bake and enjoy separately.) Re-roll any scraps to make more cookies. Briefly refrigerate the dough if it becomes too soft to handle.

Place the large cookie cut-outs (including the ones with the centers removed) on the greased baking sheets about one inch apart. Bake one cookie sheet at a time until the cookies are a light golden color on top and slightly darker at the edges, about 7-10 minutes. Remove cookies from baking sheets with a spatula and place on a wire rack to cool.

***Assembly:***

Spread about a teaspoon of raspberry jam over each cookie without the middle cutout. Then, using a fine-mesh sieve, sprinkle the tops of the cookies that have the middle cutout with confectioner's (powdered) sugar, making sure the cookies are evenly and completely covered. Carefully place the cutout cookies dusted with powdered sugar on top of the jam-covered cookies, to create a heart-shaped, jam filled, sandwich cookie. Beautiful!

*Note:* You can bake the small 1-inch heart-shaped cookies (that were the centers you removed from the larger cookies). Allow to cool and dust with powdered sugar.



## MARCH

### Irish Soda Bread

A St. Patrick's Day tradition, Irish Soda Bread comes in many variations. Papa was fond of this recipe. He enjoyed a thick slice, toasted and lightly buttered, for breakfast.

#### *Ingredients:*

3 ½ cups of unbleached all-purpose flour  
 ½ cup of oat bran  
 ½ cup of sugar (or sugar substitute)  
 1 teaspoon double-acting baking powder  
 2 tablespoons of caraway seeds  
 ¼ cup of butter  
 1 cup dark raisins and 1 cup light (golden) raisins  
 1 1/3 cups buttermilk  
 1 egg  
 1 teaspoon baking soda  
 1 egg yolk, beaten



#### *Directions:*

Preheat oven to 375° F. Grease a 2-quart casserole dish. In a mixing bowl, stir together flour, oat bran, sugar, baking powder, and caraway seeds. With 2 knives, scissor-fashion, cut in butter until mixture is like coarse cornmeal. Stir in dark and light raisins.

In a separate bowl, combine buttermilk, egg, and baking soda (it may start to foam and bubble). Stir the buttermilk mixture into the flour mixture until just moistened – do not over mix. Turn dough onto a lightly floured surface and knead until the dough is just smooth. Shape the dough into a ball, and place it in the prepared casserole dish. With a sharp knife, make a 4” cross, ¼” deep, in the top center of the dough. Brush the whole top of the dough loaf with the beaten egg yolk.

Bake 50-60 minutes until done, or until a toothpick inserted in the center of the loaf comes out clean. Cool in pan for 10 minutes. Remove the loaf from the casserole dish and place it on cooling rack. Allow the loaf to cool completely before slicing.



## APRIL Carrot Cake!

Welcome Spring with this simple, easy-to-make-and-bake Carrot Cake! Papa liked cake without a lot of frosting. This recipe fits the bill!

### *Ingredients:*

3 cups grated carrots  
1 cup unsweetened apple sauce  
1/3 cup vegetable or canola oil  
1 cup sugar or sugar substitute  
1/2 cup brown sugar  
2 eggs and 1 egg white  
1 1/2 cups unbleached, all-purpose flour  
1 cup whole wheat pastry flour  
1/2 cup oat bran  
2 1/2 teaspoons cinnamon  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
4 teaspoons double-acting baking powder  
1/2 cup raisins  
1/2 cup chopped nuts (optional)



### *Directions:*

Preheat oven to 350° F. Spray a tube or bundt cake pan with non-stick cooking spray.

Grate the carrots with a box grater and set aside. In a large mixing bowl, mix the apple sauce, oil, sugar (or sugar substitute), and brown sugar. Add the grated carrots and mix well. Add the eggs and egg white, mixing well.

In a medium bowl, stir together the unbleached flour, whole wheat pastry flour, oat bran, cinnamon, baking soda, and baking powder. Add the dry ingredients to the carrot mixture and mix them together until well blended. Fold in the raisins (and optional nuts).

Pour batter into tube/bundt pan. Bake for 1 to 1 1/2 hours or until a toothpick inserted into the cake comes out clean.

Cool cake on rack for 5 minutes and then invert the pan on the rack. Turn the cake right side up on the rack, and allow cake to cool completely. Dust with powdered sugar before serving.

## MAY

### Mexican Wedding Cookies

Here's a nod to Cinco de Mayo (a day that celebrates the Mexican defeat of the French at the Battle of Pueblo on May 5, 1862) and one of Papa's favorite cookie recipes. Mexican Wedding Cookies are a fitting celebration for your Papa any time of year, but they taste even sweeter on May 5<sup>th</sup>!

#### *Ingredients:*

1 cup butter  
 3 cups confectioners' sugar (powdered sugar)  
 2 teaspoons vanilla  
 ¾ cup finely chopped pecans  
 2 ¼ cups unbleached, all-purpose flour



#### *Directions:*

Preheat oven to 375° F. Spray baking sheets with non-stick cooking spray.

In a mixing bowl, use an electric mixer to cream the butter with just ½ cup of the confectioner's sugar until light and fluffy (setting aside the remaining 2 ½ cups of powdered sugar). Beat in vanilla and pecans. Add the flour and combine well. Chill the dough, covered, for at least 6 hours, or overnight.

Let the dough stand at room temperature until it is just pliable enough to form into balls about 1" in diameter. Arrange the balls of dough about an inch apart on baking sheets sprayed with non-stick cooking spray. Using the palm of your hand or the bottom of a glass, flatten the balls slightly to form disks. Bake the cookies in the middle of a 375° F. oven for 7-12 minutes until just lightly golden brown.

While the cookies are baking, put the remaining 2 ½ cups of confectioners' sugar into a shallow bowl. When the cookies come out of the oven, use a spatula to immediately transfer the cookies into the bowl of powdered sugar to thoroughly coat them. Transfer the cookies to a wire rack and let them cool. Once cool, roll the cookies in the powdered sugar again. Makes about 3-4 dozen cookies.





## **JUNE**

### **Blueberry Muffins**

Papa LOVED these Blueberry Muffins so much that I made them for him every Father's Day. I think your Dad will enjoy this recipe too!

#### ***Ingredients:***

1/3 cup applesauce  
2 Tablespoons room-temperature butter  
3/4 cup granulated sugar or sugar substitute (i.e., Xylitol)  
1 egg and 1 egg white  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
2 teaspoons baking powder  
2 cups blueberries (mash 1/2 cup with a fork)  
1 3/4 cup all-purpose flour mixed with 1/4 cup oat bran  
1/2 cup milk or soy milk  
2 tablespoons sugar mixed with 1/2 teaspoon of ground nutmeg

#### ***Directions:***

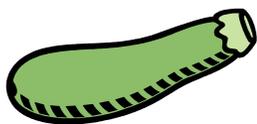
Heat oven to 375° F. Spray regular sized 12-cup muffin pan with cooking spray. Spray not only inside the cups, but the top of the pan as well.

In a large bowl, mix together applesauce and butter. Add sugar and beat until well-combined. Beat in egg and egg white. Beat in vanilla and baking powder. Mix the 1/2 cup mashed blueberries into the batter. With a spatula, gently fold in half the flour-oat bran mixture, followed by half the milk. Fold in remaining flour/oat bran and then the remaining milk. Fold in remaining 1 1/2 cups blueberries.

Scoop batter into muffin cups. Lightly sprinkle the tops of the batter in the muffin pan with sugar/nutmeg mixture.

Bake 25 minutes until light golden brown. Remove from oven and set muffin pan on cake rack. Let muffins cool for 1/2 hour in the muffin pan before you remove them. Enjoy!

## JULY Zucchini Bread

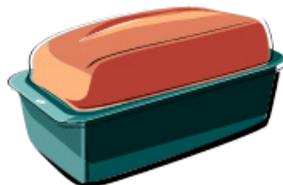


If you live in the northern hemisphere and have a garden, July is the month zucchini is plentiful. Papa loved visiting our garden and really enjoyed meals prepared from the harvest. This recipe for Zucchini Bread was one of his faves, so I always made two loaves for him; one to eat right away, and one to freeze for later.

(This recipe makes 2 loaves.)

### *Ingredients:*

3 cups unbleached, all-purpose flour  
 2 cups sugar or sugar substitute (i.e., Xylitol)  
 1 teaspoon baking soda  
 1 teaspoon baking powder  
 1 teaspoon cinnamon  
 1 teaspoon ground cloves  
 ½ teaspoon salt  
 2 cups shredded zucchini  
 ½ cup unsweetened apple sauce  
 2 Tablespoons vegetable or canola oil  
 4 egg whites, lightly beaten  
 ½ cup chopped raisins or dates (optional)  
 ½ cup chopped walnuts or pecans (optional)



### *Directions:*

Preheat oven to 350° F. Spray two 8x4-inch loaf pans with nonstick cooking spray.

In a large bowl, combine flour, sugar (or sugar substitute), baking soda, baking powder, cinnamon, cloves, and salt.

In a small bowl, combine zucchini, apple sauce, oil, and egg whites. Stir zucchini mixture into flour mixture just until moistened. Optional: Fold in raisins or dates and/or walnuts or pecans.

Divide batter in half and spread into prepared loaf pans. Bake for 40-50 minutes or until toothpick inserted in the center of each loaf comes out clean. Remove from oven and cool in pan for 10 minutes. Invert onto wire rack, and then turn loaves right side up on racks. Allow to cool completely before slicing.

## AUGUST

### Blackberry Cobbler

Almost every summer, my family vacationed near the Sacramento River delta. Blackberries grow in abundance along the riverbank and Papa would lead the way as we foraged for them. We'd always wind up with buckets full of berries that my mom and grandmother would turn into pies, cobblers, and jams. Papa loved this recipe for blackberry cobbler.



#### ***Ingredients:***

2 Tablespoons of cornstarch  
¼ cup cold water  
1 ½ cups sugar  
Juice of one lemon (about 2 Tablespoons)  
4 cups of blackberries, rinsed and drained  
1 cup unbleached, all-purpose flour  
1 teaspoon double-acting baking powder  
½ teaspoon salt  
6 tablespoons cold, unsalted butter (about ¾ stick)  
¼ cup boiling water  
Vanilla Ice Cream (to serve with the cobbler)

#### ***Directions:***

Preheat oven to 400° F. Grease an 8-inch casserole dish (about 2" deep) with non-stick cooking spray.

In a bowl, stir together the cornstarch and ¼ cup water until the cornstarch dissolves. Add 1 cup of the sugar (reserving the other ½ cup) and the lemon juice, and mix together. Gently combine the blackberries with the mixture until thoroughly coated. Transfer the mixture to the prepared casserole dish.

In a bowl, combine the flour, the remaining ½ cup sugar, baking powder, and salt. Use your fingers to quickly blend in the butter until the mixture is like coarse meal. Add ¼ cup boiling water and stir the mixture until it just forms a dough. Do not over mix.

Place the casserole dish with the blackberry mixture on top of the stove and bring the mixture to a boil. Turn off the heat and carefully drop spoonfuls of the dough on top of the hot mixture. Place the cobbler in the middle of the preheated oven for 20-25 minutes, until the topping is a golden color. (Note: You can put a sheet of foil under the casserole dish to catch any overflow.) Serve the cobbler warm with a scoop of vanilla ice cream.



## SEPTEMBER Apple Crisp

September is the peak of apple season, and the perfect time to take advantage of the harvest. Papa had a prolific apple tree in his backyard, and we used the delicious apples to make pies and other goodies. Here is Papa's favorite Apple Crisp recipe.

### ***Ingredients:***

4 cups of your favorite apples (such as Golden Delicious, Fuji, Pippen, or Macintosh)  
Juice from 1 lemon  
¼ cup of water  
½ cup of unbleached all-purpose flour  
¼ cup of rolled oats  
¾ cup of sugar or sugar substitute  
¼ cup of packed brown sugar  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
½ cup of butter  
Whipped cream or vanilla ice cream as an accompaniment

### ***Directions:***

Preheat oven to 350° F. Grease a 9" x 9" baking dish or coat with non-stick cooking spray.

Peel, core, and slice the apples. Put the apple slices in the baking dish. Toss them with the lemon juice and water.

In a separate bowl, mix the flour, oats, sugars, and cinnamon. Cut the butter into the flour mixture until all of it is coarse and crumbly. Spread the mixture evenly over the apples.

Bake 40-60 minutes, or until the apples are tender when pierced with a fork and the crust is lightly browned. Serve with a dollop of whipped cream or vanilla ice cream.

## OCTOBER

### Pumpkin Date Nut Bread

Papa taught my sister, brother, and I how to carve a Jack-O-Lantern from a pumpkin. After Halloween, we cut the pumpkin into quarters and set it skin side up on a foil-lined cookie sheet. We baked it at 350° F for 1 hour, until it was tender. Once the pumpkin cooled, we removed the skin and put the soft, cooked pumpkin into a blender and pureed it until it was smooth. We used the pumpkin puree to make Papa's favorite Pumpkin Date Nut Bread. (Makes 2 loaves.)

#### *Ingredients:*

1 ½ cups sugar or sugar substitute  
 1 2/3 cups unbleached all-purpose flour  
 ¼ teaspoon baking powder  
 1 teaspoon baking soda  
 1 teaspoon cinnamon  
 1 teaspoon cloves  
 1 teaspoon nutmeg  
 2 eggs, beaten  
 ½ cup vegetable or canola oil  
 ½ cup water  
 1 cup cooked, mashed pumpkin (or canned pumpkin)  
 ½ cup chopped dates  
 ½ cup chopped pecans



#### *Optional Topping:*

2 cups whipped cream or non-dairy whipped topping  
 1 Tablespoon light molasses  
 ½ teaspoon nutmeg  
 Mix together and serve a dollop on sliced pumpkin date nut bread. Yum!

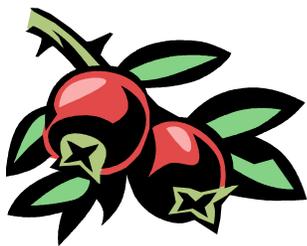
#### *Directions:*

Preheat oven to 325° F. Grease and flour two 8" loaf pans.

Mix all the dry ingredients (sugar, flour, baking powder, baking soda, and spices) in a large bowl. In a medium bowl, mix the eggs, oil, water, and pumpkin. Add the pumpkin mixture to the flour mixture and beat until well blended. Fold in the dates and pecans.

Pour the batter into the loaf pans and bake for 40-50 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the center of each loaf comes out clean. Cool for 5 minutes in the loaf pans, then, using a thin knife, trace the edge along the sides to loosen the loaves. Remove them from the pans, and set on a rack until they are completely cooled. Slice and serve with a dollop of whipped topping. You can also enjoy it the way Papa preferred; just toast and butter a slice for breakfast. ☺

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## NOVEMBER Cranberry Bog Bread

Cranberries are the fruit of a trailing evergreen bush or shrub that grows in bogs. Papa liked their tangy flavor that is enhanced in this recipe that uses the whole berry. The beautiful color of the whole berries, look like jewels decorating each slice. (Makes 2 small loaves.)

### *Ingredients:*

1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub> cups unbleached all-purpose flour  
1/4 cup oat bran  
1 cup sugar or sugar substitute  
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/2 teaspoon baking soda  
1 egg, beaten  
3/4 cup orange juice  
2 tablespoons vegetable or canola oil  
3 tablespoons grated orange rind  
1 cup whole cranberries  
1/2 cup chopped pecans (optional)

### *Directions:*

Preheat oven to 350° F. Grease and flour 2 small loaf pans.

Mix dry ingredients (flour, oat bran, sugar, baking powder, salt, and baking soda) together thoroughly. Mix together egg, orange juice, oil, and grated orange rind. Add orange juice mixture to flour mixture until just combined – do not over mix. Fold in cranberries and nuts (if desired).

Divide mixture evenly into prepared loaf pans. Bake approximately 40-60 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the middle of the loaves comes out clean. Remove from oven and cool in pans for 5 minutes. Remove from pans and continue cooling on racks. Wrap in plastic wrap (or keep in an airtight container) until ready to serve. This bread also freezes well.



## DECEMBER Gingerbread

Ahhhh...the aroma of freshly baked, old-fashioned, gingerbread perfumes the air, warms the heart, and teases the tummy. It's a perfect treat on a winter afternoon, and one of Papa's favorite holiday treats. Enjoy!  
(This recipe makes two round cake-like loaves.)

### ***Ingredients:***

3 cups unbleached, all-purpose flour  
 1 teaspoon baking soda  
 2 tablespoons ground ginger  
 2 teaspoons cinnamon  
 ½ teaspoon ground cloves  
 ½ teaspoon allspice  
 1 cup butter, softened  
 1 cup firmly packed light brown sugar  
 1 cup unsulfured molasses  
 4 large eggs  
 ½ teaspoon lemon extract  
 1 tablespoon brandy (or vanilla extract)  
 1 cup buttermilk  
 Powdered sugar for dusting the cake (when cool)

### ***Directions:***

Preheat oven to 350° F. Butter two 9" round cake pans.

Into a bowl, stir together the flour, baking soda, ginger, cinnamon, cloves, and allspice.

In a separate bowl, use an electric mixer to cream the butter and brown sugar until the mixture is light and fluffy. Add the molasses and beat until the mixture is well-combined. Beat in eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition. Beat in the flour mixture. Add the lemon extract, brandy (or vanilla extract), buttermilk, and beat well.

Pour the batter into the prepared baking pans, smoothing the top. Bake (in the middle of the oven) for 35-40 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center of each cake comes out clean. Let the gingerbread cool before running a thin knife along the edges to loosen from the pan. Turn upside down onto plates, dust with powdered sugar, and serve.

Note: To make an even nicer presentation, take a paper doily and place it on top of the gingerbread cakes and use it as a stencil to sift the powdered sugar over. Carefully remove the doily and you will have a lovely snowflake pattern on the top of the cake.

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