

***Recipes from The Darling Dahlias and the Voodoo Lily***

Susan Wittig Albert

<https://susanalbert.com/the-darling-dahlias-and-the-voodoo-lily-book-9/>

**Chocolate-Chicory-Coffee Cake**

You won’t want to include the mysterious fatal ingredient. But even without that, this chocolate-chicory cake is a to-die-for Southern favorite. If you’re new to chicory, you might want to fill in the backstory by [reading this informative article from *The Smithsonian Magazine.*](https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/chicory-coffee-mix-new-orleans-made-own-comes-180949950/)

Cake

1/4 cup roasted chicory, granular (available online and from spice shops)

1 cup coffee, very hot (instant okay)

3/4 cup packed dark brown sugar

1 cup mayonnaise

1 3/4 cups all-purpose flour

1/3 cup cocoa

1/2 teaspoon baking soda

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Icing

2 cups semisweet or bittersweet chocolate chips

1/2 cup canned evaporated milk

4 tablespoons butter

1 teaspoon vanilla

2 cups powdered sugar

For the cake:

In a heatproof 2-cup measure, pour the hot coffee over the chicory and steep for 10 minutes. Strain the brew, discard the chicory. Let cool.

In a medium bowl, whisk the brown sugar and mayonnaise to blend. Add the brewed chicory-coffee and whisk until no sugar lumps remain. Add the vanilla. (Don’t worry if it looks a little curdled.)

In a large bowl, whisk together the flour, cocoa, baking soda and baking powder. Add the chicory liquid to the dry ingredients and whisk until smooth.

Pour batter into prepared pans. Bake for 20 minutes or until the tops spring back when lightly pressed. Cool in the pans for 15 minutes, then turn out of the pans onto a rack. Remove the parchment paper and cool at least 1 hour.

For the icing:

In a microwave-safe bowl, combine chocolate chips, evaporated milk, butter and vanilla. Microwave on full power for 30-40 seconds. Remove and whisk until chocolate chips are melted. (return to microwave for a few seconds if necessary). Add powdered sugar and whisk until smooth.

To assemble the cake:

Working with warm icing, spread ½ cup over the layer. Repeat with second and third layers. Use the remainder for the sides. The icing will become firm as it cools.

**Euphoria’s From-Scratch Sweet Potato Pie**

“Sweet potatoes had long been grown by the Indians in Louisiana, where de Soto found them in 1540, and as far north as Georgia. By 1648 the colonists in Virginia were cultivating them. The sweet potato was especially valued during the war against the British and the Civil War, for it grows quickly and its underground habit makes it less vulnerable than surface crops to deliberate destruction."—*Oxford Companion to Food*

This pie isn’t in the book, but it should be! It’s especially good served with molasses whipped cream.

Filling

3 pounds sweet potatoes (about 6 medium-size sweet potatoes, about 2 inches in diameter)

 1 1/4 cups granulated sugar

 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour

 1/4 teaspoon ground allspice

 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger

 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg

 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves

 1/4 cup syrup (sorghum, molasses, cane) or honey

 1/3 cup cold unsalted butter, chopped into small pieces

Prepare your favorite crust for a 9” 2-crust pie and refrigerate until ready to use.

To make filling:

Wash whole, unpeeled sweet potatoes and place in a large pot with enough water to cover plus about two inches. Over high heat, bring to a boil. Reduce heat and cook until tender enough to be sliced, about 25 to 35 minutes. Drain and cool; while cooling, make spice mixture. When sweet potatoes are cool, peel and slice crosswise 1/4” thick. Toss with 2/3 of the sugar-spice mixture.

To make sugar-spice mixture:

In a small bowl, mix sugar, flour, allspice, ginger, nutmeg, and cloves in a small bowl.

Preheat oven to 350°F. Fill piecrust with sweet potatoes, mounding them a little higher in the center. Sprinkle remaining sugar-spice mixture over top of pie; drizzle with syrup or honey, and dot with butter pieces. Top with crust and crimp edges. Cut 4-6 slits in top to vent steam.

Bake in preheated oven about 55-60 minutes, until crust is browned and filling is bubbly. Top with molasses whipped cream.

To make molasses whipped cream:

1 cup cold whipping cream or heavy cream

2 tablespoons molasses (not blackstrap), pure cane syrup, or sorghum syrup

1/2 teaspoon vanilla

In a large chilled bowl, beat cream with electric mixer on high speed about 2 minutes, until thickened. Add molasses and beat about 2 more minutes, until stiff peaks form. Add vanilla; beat 1 minute. Cover and chill until ready to serve.

**Mrs. Meeks Famous Overnight Icebox Rolls**

Electric refrigerators were invading American kitchens in the mid-late 1930s. But the old word “ice box” still clung to the appliance. Newspapers from the Great Depression era are full of recipes for “icebox cake,” “icebox pie,” and “icebox cookies.” (Some of us may be old enough to remember the ice man himself, ice tongs in his hand and burlap bag on his shoulder, handing out chips of ice to the lucky kids who met his truck at the curb.)

The good thing about this 1930’s recipe for icebox rolls: you can make the dough, store it in the fridge (for up to 3 days), and bake the rolls in batches, as you need them.

1/2 cup sugar

1/2 cup shortening

1 1/2 teaspoon salt

1/2 cup scalded milk

1 packet active dry yeast

1/2 cup lukewarm water

1 large egg, beaten

3 to 3 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

In a large bowl, blend shortening, sugar, and salt. Add hot milk and mix until sugar dissolves. Let cool.

Add yeast to lukewarm water and let stand about 5 minutes, until frothy. Add yeast and beaten egg to the shortening-sugar-milk mixture and stir together well. Add flour and beat with a spoon until well mixed.

Place dough in a greased bowl, mold plastic wrap closely over it to protect from air, and cover the bowl tightly. Refrigerate 6 hours or longer. When you’re ready to bake, punch down refrigerated dough, place in a warm bowl, and let rise in a warm place for 2-3 hours, until double. On a floured board, roll out to about 1 inch thick, cut out circles with a biscuit cutter, and place on an ungreased baking sheet, just touching. Cover with a dish towel and let rise until almost double. In a warm room, this can be 15 minutes; in a cool room, up to an hour.

Bake 15 minutes at 350° or until lightly browned. Remove from pan and cool on wire rack. Brush tops with butter while warm. Makes about a dozen rolls.

If you like, you can take out enough to make rolls for one meal and rewrap and return the dough to the fridge for the next day’s baking. Wrapped and tightly covered, the dough can be refrigerated for up to 3 days.

**Suzie Franklin’s Icebox Pickles**

When Roseanne trekked into the swamp to visit Big Lil, she took mustard pickles, which are a little complicated to make. Here is an easier pickle that can be stored in your refrigerator. This is my grandmother’s recipe, and she grew the cukes and peppers in her Missouri farm garden. Because they were my grandfather’s favorite, these pickles appeared on the table at every meal—even breakfast. Grandma Franklin must have made hundreds of gallons of this in her lifetime.

2 cups sliced trimmed pickling cucumbers

1 cup sliced bell peppers, red or yellow or both

1/2 cup sliced onion

2 cups white vinegar

2/3 cup sugar

1 teaspoon salt

1 Tablespoon mustard seed

1 1/2 teaspoon celery seed

3/4 teaspoon turmeric

2 whole cloves

Wash and scald 1 quart or 2 pint Mason jars and lids. (Wide mouth are easier to work with.) Layer vegetables in the jar(s), packing lightly. Fill within a 1/2” of the jar top.

In a nonreactive pan, combine vinegar, sugar, salt, and spices. Bring to a boil and boil for 3 minutes. Pour vinegar-spice liquid over vegetables. Put the lid on and cool for 30 minutes. Refrigerate for 2 weeks before using; use within 3 months. Recipe can be doubled or tripled.

**Zelda’s Pocket Pies**

Zelda’s handheld pies are a version the ubiquitous “pastie” that came to America from everywhere else. Food writer Craig Claiborne says this: "There are Cornish pasties, which indicate the early presence of Welsh miners in Michigan, the Mexican-influenced *empanadas* and *empanaditas* of the West and Southwest, and the curiously named hot-ta-meat pies of Louisiana that indicate a borrowing from the Spanish. Even spring rolls—the more refined version of egg rolls—can be found almost anywhere in the nation where Chinese chefs have settled.—*The New York Times Food Encyclopedia*

For the shredded chicken, you can use leftover rotisserie or you can start from scratch with home-cooked chicken (simmered, baked, broiled). These handy little pies can go directly from the freezer to the oven; or when baked, to the freezer to be heated in the microwave.

Makes 10 pocket pies

1 1/4 cup shredded chicken

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

1/2 cup chopped onion

1/3 cup thin-sliced celery (1 large stalk)

1/3 cup thin-sliced carrot (1 carrot)

2 tablespoons all-purpose flour

1/2 teaspoon salt

1 1/2 cups chicken broth

1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese

Cream Cheese Pastry Dough

1 stick unsalted butter, softened

4 ounces cream cheese softened

1/4 cup heavy whipping cream

1 1/2 cups plus 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour plus more for rolling out dough

1/2 teaspoon salt

To make the filling:

In a medium skillet, sauté onion, celery, and carrot in butter over medium heat for 2 to 3 minutes. Stir in flour and salt and cook for another minute. Add chicken broth and stir until thick, about 2 minutes. Add shredded chicken and Parmesan cheese and mix well. Refrigerate to cool.

To make the crust:

Mix butter, cream cheese, and cream. Add flour and salt and mix just until it holds together in a ball. Refrigerate 30 minutes. Roll dough to about 1/4” thickness. Using an overturned bowl as a pattern, cut 10 five-inch circles. Distribute filling equally among pies (about 1/4 cup for each), fold, and seal by brushing the edges with water and crimping with a fork. Place on a greased or parchment-lined baking sheet. Bake at 375° for 20-25 minutes until golden brown.

You can wrap and freeze the unbaked pies, or bake the pies and then wrap and freeze. Bake frozen unbaked pies for a few extra minutes; baked pies can be heated in the microwave.

**Raylene’s Double Chocolate Pie with Karo Meringue**

Karo corn syrup was introduced in 1902 and quickly became a culinary staple. The word "karo" may have been chosen to honor the inventor's wife, Caroline, or it may have been derived from “Karomel,” an earlier table syrup trademark. In the 1930s, the wife of a Karo corporate sales executive discovered a new use for Karo. She created pecan pie by mixing corn syrup with sugar, eggs, vanilla, and pecans and baking the mixture in a pie shell. To this day in the South that same recipe is called Karo pie, just as cooked meringue made with corn syrup is still called Karo meringue. Raylene’s cooked Karo meringue “stays up” when uncooked meringues shrink or wilt.

But in 1967, High Fructose Corn Syrup (HFCS) appeared on the market. It is more refined and far sweeter than “regular” corn syrup. Excessive consumption of HFCS may contribute to the incidence of obesity.

**Double Chocolate pie filling**

1 9” single pie shell, baked

1/4 cup cocoa powder

1/4 cup cornstarch

1 1/2 cups sugar

1/4 teaspoon salt

3 cups whole milk

4 large egg yolks, well-beaten

6 1/2 ounces bittersweet chocolate, broken into pieces

2 tablespoons butter

2 teaspoons vanilla

In a large saucepan, mix the cocoa, cornstarch, sugar, and salt. Add milk and beaten egg yolks. Cook over medium heat, stirring, until the mixture comes to a boil. Remove from heat and stir in the chocolate pieces, butter, and vanilla. Pour the chocolate filling into the cooled shell. Gently press a piece of plastic wrap over the filling and chill until set, 3 to 4 hours. (If you’re lucky enough to have any filling left over, indulge yourself—or store it in the fridge, covered.)

**Karo meringue**

1/3 cup sugar

1/4 cup light Karo syrup (or other corn syrup)

2 Tablespoons water

2 pinches salt

2 large egg whites

1/8 teaspoon cream of tartar

In a small saucepan over medium heat, mix sugar, corn syrup, water and 1 pinch salt. Cook, stirring, until the sugar has dissolved completely. Remove from heat.

In a medium bowl, beat egg whites until frothy, about 1 minute. Add cream of tartar and 1 pinch salt and beat for 30 seconds. Continuing to beat, drizzle the hot syrup mixture in a constant stream into the egg-white mixture. mixing bowl in a constant stream, then turn the speed to high and whip until the mixture forms stiff peaks (about 3 minutes).