

Delicious Death

from In Our Grandmothers' Kitchens

Ingredients:

1 pound golden raisins
1 pound pecans, chopped
3 cups sifted flour
1 teaspoon salt
1 pound butter (4 sticks) at room temperature
2 cups sugar
6 eggs, separated
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 tablespoon warm water
1/4 cup Grand Marnier or Cointreau, plus additional liqueur as needed

Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 250 degrees. Butter and flour the inside of a 10-inch, 12-cup tube pan or bundt pan (or butter and flour a number of smaller pans, and adjust your cooking time accordingly).

In a large bowl, combine the raisins and the pecans. Sprinkle the flour and salt over them, and toss the mixture with your hands until blended. Set aside.

Place the butter in the bowl of an electric mixer. Gradually beat in the sugar. Cream the mixture well; then add the egg yolks, one at a time, beating constantly. Blend the baking soda and the warm water, and beat them into the batter. Beat in the Grand Marnier. Pour this batter over the nut mixture, and blend it in with your hands (which will smell WONDERFUL from the Grand Marnier!).

After thoroughly washing your beater and bowl, beat the egg whites until they are stiff, and fold them into the rest of the batter with your hands. Continue folding until you can no longer see the whites.

Spoon and scrape the mixture into the prepared pan, smoothing the top with a spatula. Bake for 2 to 2-1/4 hours, or until the cake is puffed above the pan and nicely browned on top. (If the cake starts to brown on top too soon, cover it with aluminum foil.) Remove the cake from the pan after about 15 minutes. Tapping the bottom of the cake pan with a heavy knife will help loosen it.

When the cake has cooled, wrap it in cheesecloth, and sprinkle Grand Marnier on it to moisten it. Wrap it in foil, place it in a plastic storage bag, and hide it until you wish to use it—ideally for about 10 days. (It will keep longer, but you may have to re-douse it and refrigerate it after a month or so.) Makes 1 10-inch cake.