

Mrs Greenkeeper's Own Corner

with Ann Mawson

Dates are always a good standby for your storage cupboard, and there are so many different ways you can use them. Dates may be stuffed in so many ways, and they make delicious little desserts for cocktail, luncheon or dinner parties.

Stuffed Dates

Wash and dry the dates and cut them through on one side to remove the stones. Fill with any of the following fillings; roll them in icing sugar.

Fillings

Chopped or quartered walnuts, chopped glace or crystallized ginger, mixed with whipped marzipan coloured in various shades; rolled in a shape to fill the dates and topped with half a blanched almond, brazils, skinned and mixed with a little icing sugar, moistened with orange juice, glace pineapple mixed with lemon-flavoured fondant.

The uncooked marzipan and fondant are excellent for these and very easy to make.

Plain Fondant

1 lb. fine icing sugar, the white of one egg, pinch of cream of tartar, 1 teaspoonful lemon juice, 1 dessert-spoonful water.

Turn the sugar on to a large sheet of white paper and roll it until it is free from all lumps, rub it through a fine sieve, put it into a basin, add the cream of tartar and mix well. Stir in the water and lemon juice and continue stirring until evenly distributed. Thoroughly whip the white of a very fresh egg, and work it in gradually until it is a pliable paste which can be kneaded as you would bread. More white of egg may be needed; it depends on the size of egg you use. Put the paste on a board which has been well dusted with icing sugar, and knead it for a few minutes until it is very pliable. Leave it to "settle" for one hour. If you want a cream fondant add two tablespoonfuls

of cream to the sugar, just before adding the egg white.

Coconut Fondant

To the cream fondant add 1 oz. of fine desiccated coconut, form them into small rough pieces and roll them in coconut.

Fruit Fondant

These are made by adding 1 oz. chopped glace cherries, or any glace fruits and 1 oz. blanched almonds, finely chopped.

Coffee Fondant

Work as many drops of coffee essence into the cream as necessary to colour it, and a few drops of vanilla essence to flavour.

Marzipan

4 oz. ground almonds, 2 oz. icing sugar, 2 oz. castor sugar, enough egg to mix to a stiff paste.

Mix together. Roll out and cut pieces to the size you require.

All these will make fillings for your stuffed dates.

Date Cream

2 tablespoonfuls hot water, 1 level tablespoonful powdered gelatine, grated rind of half lemon, 1 pint milk, 1 tablespoonful of castor sugar, 2 eggs, 1 lb. dates, $\frac{1}{2}$ oz. butter.

Generously butter a mould. Wash and stone the dates, cut them into halves, line the buttered mould with them. Divide the whites from the yolks of the eggs. Beat the yolks with the sugar, scald the milk, and add to the beaten yolks together with the grated lemon rind. Stir over a gentle heat until very hot, but do not let this boil. Set aside to cool. Dissolve the gelatine in the hot water and stir into the warm milk. Strain into a bowl. Beat the egg whites until stiff and fold them in. Turn into the prepared mould; spoon it in carefully so as not to disturb the dates. Leave until set.

To serve four people.

—Until June . . .