

Heritage Recipes

You can share old family recipes and traditions

St. Julian Taffy (2 Recipes)

From Dorcas Society Cookbook

St. John's Lutheran Church, Enterprise, Ohio

Submitted by Roger

My extended family descended upon our home after Christmas for many years for a taffy pull. My mother ruled the kitchen so no one is really sure about the quantities she used or any ways in which she might have "tweaked" the recipe. About 40 years ago we the tradition ended but, this year my cousins and I (we were all kids when the last taffy pull took place) have decided to resurrect the tradition in order to give our children the sense of "family" that we grew up with. The recipe is found in a cookbook (handed down to me from my mother) compiled by the Dorcas Society of St. John's Lutheran Church in Enterprise, Ohio. There is no date on the cookbook but from the looks of it, I would imagine that it might have been a wedding present from when my parents were married in 1931.

St. Julian Taffy

6 lbs. granulated sugar
3 lbs. white Karo molasses (syrup?)
2 eggs
1qt. cream
1qt. milk
3 oz. crystal flake gelatin (company went out of business around 20 years ago so I substitute with unflavored gelatin)
1 oz. Paraffin
1 T. vanilla
3 C. chopped nuts

Beat eggs, add sugar, molasses, cream, paraffin and gelatin which has been dissolved in milk. Boil until it cracks in cold water. Add vanilla and nuts. Let cool and then pull.

We use an old meat hook for pulling. Keep hook and your hands buttered so the

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taffy doesn't stick. Taffy should still be a little warm for pulling. When taffy starts to get stringy it is time to stop pulling. Put pulled taffy on wax paper and cut into 1 inch pieces.

St. Julian's Taffy From Bill

My family traditionally makes this taffy at Christmas. Hand pulling the taffy is hard work and the recipe makes over ten pounds of candy, so you'll want plenty of help. So it's a great event for extended family or friends, and fun for children too. The recipe is nearly identical to Roger's recipe above. Differences are noted below.

Ingredients:

6 lb granulated sugar
3 lb glucose (*)
2 eggs
1/2 gal cream (Roger uses 1 qt of cream and 1 qt of milk)
3 oz crystal flakes (**)
1 oz paraffin
1 T vanilla
3 C chopped nuts (we use black walnuts exclusively)

* - glucose is available at shops specializing in cake- and candy-making supplies. Roger's recipe calls for Karo syrup instead, which should work fine. If you use Karo, make sure to get "Karo Light" (light color), NOT "Karo Lite" (low-calorie).

** - Crystal flakes are no longer available. A local candy company told us this is generically "baker's shortening", and we substituted "Paramount crystal flakes", which worked fine. They're available online or from candy-making shops (as they're widely used for chocolate). I think you could even use Crisco shortening, but Paramount flakes are completely flavorless.

You need a chilled slab to pour the taffy onto for rapid cooling. We use marble

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tabletops from my parents' antique furniture, and set them outside in the cold several hours before we start cooking. At the last minute bring the slab into the work area, wipe it clean, and grease with butter.

You will also need waxed paper to wrap the candy. Two rolls of waxed paper cut into 4in x 4in squares will be enough.

Combine all ingredients except nuts and vanilla and heat slowly to 245 F. A candy thermometer is critical. Overheating even by half a degree will make it almost impossible to pull the taffy.

At 245 F, add the vanilla and nuts, stir, and watch temperature closely. As soon as it hits 245 again (maybe only seconds later), remove from heat and pour onto the chilled, buttered slab. Use a spoon to spread the liquid into a thin layer.

At this point you're racing a clock. If the taffy cools too slowly the sugar will crystallize, ruining the smooth, chewy texture. But if the taffy gets too cold it will be too hard to stretch. (But either way the flavor will still be great!)

Watch carefully as it begins to cool. You will see the texture change and become glossy as it hardens, beginning at the edges. Have all your helpers butter their hands.

As the taffy cools and firms, pull away a handful at a time from the outer (coolest) edges. The taffy should be just as hot as you can stand to work with. Each person works a handful of taffy, stretching and folding it. You'll see the taffy's color lighten as air is worked into it. Use plenty of butter on your hands.

(You should also remove any rings from your fingers, unless you want to include a "secret prize" in a random bit of taffy. :-)

After a minute or so of hand stretching, we put the taffy on a taffy hook, which allows one person to keep working the taffy while the rest of the crew empties the chilling slab. You should have the slab empty in just a few minutes. If you don't have a hook, have half your crew keep pulling their taffy by hand while the

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other half empties the slab, adding their handfuls to the pullers' masses. But you probably won't be able to work it as nicely as on a hook.

You want to pull the taffy until it is light in color (like creamed coffee) and begins to form strings as you pull. Keep working it while someone grabs these strings and pulls them loose from the mass.

Each string is laid out on a non-stick surface (the marble slabs or waxed paper sheets), formed a little to make it about 3/4 in diameter, then cut into bite-size pieces about 1 in long. Wrap each piece in a square of waxed paper.

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