

# From Dungeon To Tower

by Lynne Belluscio

I made two Jell-O Plum Puddings for the Candlelight tours this past weekend and shared them with the folks who went on the tours. Jell-O Plum Pudding is very interesting and delicious. I think many people were surprised at how good it tastes, especially with whipped cream. I made one with lemon Jell-O as listed in the recipe. The other one I made with orange Jell-O and I think I liked it better.

I have made this recipe often for Christmas and each time I make it a little different. This year I went to my cupboard and discovered I had chopped dates, not prunes, so I used the dates instead. I also am not a fan of citron so I left it out. That's a matter of taste. I also threw in a few more Grape Nuts. When you read the original recipe, you'll note that it mentions stoned raisins. As I explained to a few folks, at one time, there weren't seedless grapes and so there weren't seedless raisins, and before you could add raisins to any recipe, someone had to take out the seeds. It was a laborious job, sometimes done with a fork, but if you had the money, you could buy a raisin seeder. I have a couple in my personal collection, and there are a couple in the collection at LeRoy House.

Original plum puddings were laborious to make. After the batter was mixed up, it was poured into a floured pudding bag or cloth, tied with a string and submerged into a huge pot of boiling water. It had to be boiled for many hours to cook completely through. It often had beef suet in it, and it was very heavy! When it was first turned out onto the platter, it looks like a huge white stone, because the flour used to seal the pudding cloth, stays white, until the pud-

ding starts to cool, and then it turns dark brown. I have never used brandy on a steamed pudding, but have seen it set on flame at a historic site. It's quite a presentation!

When Jell-O was introduced, they wanted to show that all the old Victorian recipes could be made simpler with Jell-O and the Jell-O Plum Pudding is a good example. A small tri-fold booklet was placed in a box of Lemon Jell-O with the directions and this is the history of the plum pudding:

Years back in Merrie England, in the days of great manor halls and gay roistering squires and other jolly things, Christmas was a very important and exciting affair indeed. Preparations for the masque, the dance and the dinner began weeks beforehand. The whole castle, from dungeon to tower, bustled with activity. A score of men and boys went out into the woods and cut a splendid tree to provide the Yule Log. It was dragged home with shouts of glee, and kept in readiness for the night when it should be rolled into the wide hearth and lighted with a branch saved from the Yule Log of the Christmas before.

In the kitchen, too, cooks and scullery boys were busy for days in advance. Christmas dinner in those days was made up of many strange dishes. A boars head baked with an apple in his mouth and decorated with rosemary. Great roasts of venison and beef, garnished with holly. A peacock pie at one end of which the plumaged head with gilded beak rose above the crust,

while the tail feathers flourished at the other end. A proud pie! And finally the plum pudding, steamed for twelve hours, and brought in bursting with fruits and aflame with burning brandy!

Plum pudding is a very old dish. The earliest recipe known is that by the Chevalier d'Arvieux in 1655. But the most modern and delicious recipe is the Jell-O Plum Pudding described in this folder. After a hearty holiday dinner, Jell-O Plum Pudding is a most delightful and appropriate dessert. Its rich fruit and nut flavor fulfill every tradition of the plum pudding of olden times. Because it is light and digestible, Jell-O Plum Pudding tempts the appetite when a heavier dish is unwelcome. Jell-O Plum Pudding is made in

a few minutes. Give your family a Jell-O Plum Pudding on the next holiday. They will all love it.

Dissolve a package of Lemon Jell-O in a pint of boiling water and while still hot stir in three fourths cup of Grape Nuts, three fourths cup stoned raisins, three fourths cup English walnuts meats, three fourths cup of cooked prunes and one fourth cup citron – all cut fine; also one half teaspoonful cinnamon; one fourth teaspoon full cloves. Salt to taste. Mix and let harden in a mould. Turn out on a large plate and garnish with holly. Serve with whipped cream or pudding sauce.



JELL-O PLUM PUDDING

