

Marshmallows and Jell-O - Yum Yum

by Lynne Belluscio

I frequently give talks about Jell-O and one of the images that I share is an image of a molded lemon Jell-O with five huge marshmallows perched on top. And I tell the folks, that of all the unusual Jell-O dishes that I have prepared, this is the only one that no one ever sampled. The horseradish Jell-O, the Prune Whip (which I call geriatric Jell-O), the Roman Sponge (a terrible name but a great recipe), and the Jell-O shots are all gobbled up, but somehow, huge big marshmallows and Jell-O aren't too appetizing. A while back I started researching marshmallows and discovered a very unusual history, but I never did much with it, but recently I thought I'd revisit marshmallows.

If you can believe it, the Egyptians knew about marshmallows. It was made from the sap of the marsh mallow plant and it was considered food only for the gods - - and pharaohs. Much later the French concocted a confection from whipped egg whites, sugar and the sap of the marsh mallow. The ingredients were heated and whipped together by hand and then molded in to small little individual molds and then coated with cornstarch. The process was so labor intensive that only the rich could afford to buy them or make them.

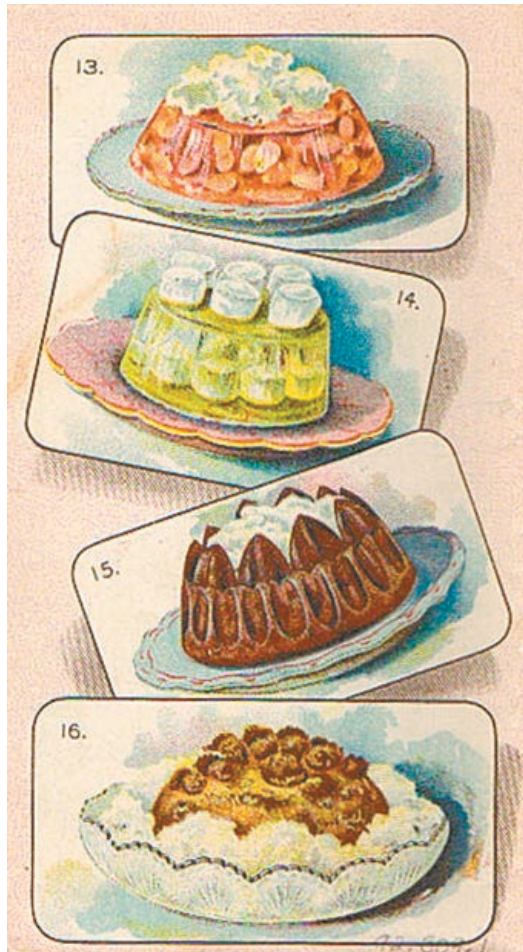
In the late 1800s less expensive gelatin was substituted for the marsh mallow sap and the little confections could be mass produced. It was in 1927 that the Girl Scout handbook included directions for the graham cracker, chocolate and marshmallow concoction we call S'Mores. In 1937, Mildred Day and Matilda Jensen, of the Campfire Marshmallow Company developed the first Rice Krispies marshmallow treat that was used as a fund-raiser for the Campfire Girls.

In 1948, Alex Doumakes of Illinois developed a machine that extruded the marshmallow mixture which was then cut into precise lengths and the marshmallow industry took several leaps forward. If you want

to learn about marshmallow peeps and marshmallow fluff, that is all on the internet. The marshmallow based "Circus Peanuts" - - those orange colored things that you either love or hate - are manufactured by the Spangler Candy Company of Ohio. (We learned that on our trip to Ohio this past spring.)

Well, getting back to Jell-O and marshmallows. The lemon Jell-O and marshmallow recipe is found in the 1904 Jell-O recipe book. Through the years Jell-O has included several recipes for Jell-O and marshmallows. Various editions of the "Joys of Jell-O" include Marshmallow Parfaits, Banana Fluff, Fruit Dessert Elegant, Ring Around the Fruit, Orange-Mallow Ring, Jeweled Dessert, Cherry Supreme, Ribbon Salad, and Marshmallow Surprise. Most of these recipes call for mini marshmallows. I still haven't discovered who manufactured the first mini-marshmallows, but I did learn that 13 mini marshmallows equal one regular-sized marshmallow. The early recipes instructed the cook to cut the marshmallows into small pieces. (I'm sure, they stuck to the scissors or the knife.)

The red gelatin mold image is from the Campfire Marshmallow recipe book. Campfire brand marshmallows were introduced in 1917 by the Imperial Candy Company. Their



and then the marshmallows were dipped into the candy. The last little note in the recipe book mentions that marshmallows were made from only pure wholesome ingredients and were the best sweet for children. "Let them eat all they want, either plain or in table dishes." With all the concern for obesity today, I wonder if Mayor Bloomberg in New York would outlaw marshmallows!

Then of course is the song, "Lime Jell-O Marshmallow Cottage Cheese Surprise" written by William Bolcom. The words go something like this: "Ladies, the minutes will soon be read today. The Garden Club and Weaving Class I'm sure have much to say ... But next week is our Culture Night, our biggest, best event. And I've just made a dish for it you'll all find heaven sent. It's my Lime Jell-O Marshmallow Cottage Cheese Surprise, with slices of pimento, you won't believe your eyes. All topped with a pineapple ring and a dash of mayonnaise. My vanilla wafers round the edge will win your highest praise." If I thought the lemon Jell-O with marshmallows wasn't popular, one can only imagine this "heaven sent" dish.

Actually, in 1997, when we opened the Jell-O Gallery, I think someone created this luscious treat. I think we considered it more of a centerpiece than something to eat.

recipe book is filled with some strange recipes - "Splendo" which was a combination of dates, bananas, nuts, cream and marshmallows. Baked apples with a marshmallow on top. The forerunner of marshmallow fluff was marshmallow cinnamon toast. Scotch Mallows were made from sugar, corn syrup, molasses, vanilla and marshmallows. All the sugar was cooked until it would harden to a brittle coating

Campfire Marshmallow Jelly

