

## Edith's Cake That Thrilled the French.

---

Twenty-three chefs who cooked for world royalty and heads of state (The Club des Chefs des Chefs) were, during their 1987 visit to the U.S., wined and dined with the best our finest chefs had to offer

Twenty-three chefs who cooked for world royalty and heads of state (The Club des Chefs des Chefs) were, during their 1987 visit to the U.S., wined and dined with the best our finest chefs had to offer. What impressed them most? Lunch at an Amish farm in Pennsylvania, where they ate homegrown new potatoes, string beans with cream sauce and corn, charcoal-grilled chicken, and baked ham, washed down with homemade root beer and peppermint tea, served by the family in a barn lined with handmade quilts.

They were stunned. Happily so, it seems. The chef for the president of France said, "Cooking has evolved so much. Nobody presents the true product as it is, and all of a sudden we were presented that."

But the desserts impressed them most. Especially one they couldn't name. One they described as a light "pain d'épices" (spice cake) with a layer of chocolate filling. Gilles Brunner, chef to Prince Rainier of Monaco, was so taken with the cake, which he described as a chocolate gingerbread, that he tried to get the recipe. His request was refused.

The Amish family did not want their identity revealed, which refusal greatly hampered efforts to identify the cake as well. Research by Phyllis Richman, then food editor of the Washington Post, seemed to show that the mystery dessert was Amish applesauce cake with chocolate frosting, and the Post printed a version of it contributed by Betty Groff, a cookbook author from the Pennsylvania Dutch country.

Which applesauce cake turned out to be pretty much what our family had been enjoying since my father married Edith Kennedy in 1977, and which Edith's family had been enjoying long before that? Her daughter, Lorenelle Doll, who gave me the recipe, says that it was a favorite of my father and Lorenelle's husband Arnie. (So far as I know, Edith didn't actually feed any to a French chef.)

I like to think Edith's version is better than Betty Groff's, because that recipe says to "frost with vanilla or chocolate frosting if desired." Whereas Edith's gives a recipe for chocolate frosting MADE WITH BUTTER. And in my view the humblest frosting made with butter is better than the fanciest frosting made without. I'm not implying that Edith's frosting is humble. It isn't. It's purely wonderful, as is her cake.

Edith Kennedy Glidewell went to be with her Lord in March 2002, but before that she gladdened many hearts in many ways, this applesauce cake not the least of them.

### EDITH'S APPLESAUCE CAKE

Cream together 1/2 cup room temperature butter or shortening and 1 cup sugar. Add 1 egg and beat together. Mix in 1-1/2 cups applesauce.

Sift together 2 cups flour, 1 tsp. baking powder, 1 tsp. soda, 1 tsp. salt, 1 tsp. cinnamon, 1/2 tsp. allspice, 1/2 tsp. nutmeg, and 1/4 tsp. cloves. Add to applesauce mixture, along with 1 cup raisins and 3/4 cup chopped walnuts.

Lightly oil a 9" x 12" pan and dust with flour. Add the cake mixture and bake at 350 degrees 50 to 60 minutes, until the top of the cake's center springs back when touched. Frost with chocolate frosting when cool.

Chocolate Frosting: Combine in a heavy saucepan or double boiler 1 square baker's unsweetened chocolate, 1 cup sugar, 1/4 cup butter, and 1/3 cup milk. Bring to a boil, stirring constantly, and cook 1 minute. Cool and beat until the frosting has a satin finish.

