Norwegian Desserts (Kransekake Recipe)

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Norwegian Desserts

Foodways

Informant: Karla Childers is my aunt. She is the middle child in a family of 3 children, she was adopted into the family after my grandmother did not think she could have more children after having my father. She spent part of her years growing up in Sacramento, before moving to our family’s farm in Meridian, California. Our family has owned property on that same stretch of land since the late 1800s. My aunt Karla was very close with great grandma Nora who passed on Norwegian stories and traditions to my aunt Karla. Karla and her family still reside on our family farm in Meridian, California.

Context: The text for this folklore came from a conversation I had with my aunt about the Norwegian desserts that we eat during our annual get together for the women who came from the ancestral lines of Nora and Anna Pederson. The recipe included in this piece was collected later. This recipe is from a cookbook that my aunt purchased from eBay when she became interested in hosting tea’s. Within the photo of the recipe you will see the notes from my aunt, these reflect the learning curb my aunt has experienced over the years of mastering this dessert. The Kransekake specifically is a Norwegian wedding cake. It is made of rings upon rings of dough. You eat the cake by breaking the pieces off piece by piece.

Text: It’s easy, everything that you make that is a Norwegian dessert. This is going to sound bad. It’s all white. It is like eggs flour sugar, ceriman. It’s like a dough that you make, it’s not really a dough its more runny. And um, it’s like pancake batter and you just put it on the iron and press it. And I will tell you that last year I got to make lefso over at Thea’s last year and one of the Pederson’s had one of the iron’s their, which would have been the granddaughter of one of Anna and Nora’s brothers. Um they have perfected the lefsa recipe over years and years. I mean they have the griddle and the turner and they have everything. I’m not going that far. One of them had the old iron, like from their grandma, and they tried to use it was a mess, and it didn’t work at all.

Doug [Karla’s husband] actually um cardboard foil and a compass made the rings and I had to do that like that and it looked terrible. The Norwegians who come to visit sometimes, you know the real
Norwegians, they saw that and they sent me the forms and they sent me the forms. And that’s why, I mean it still looks like Mt. Crumpet sometimes but that’s how that came about.

Norma Wangsness’s Kransekake:

2 cups of soft butter

1 cup of almond paste

2 cups of sifted powdered sugar

2 tsp. almond extract

4 egg yolks

5 cups of flour
Texture: Karla told this story laughing. Over the years it has certainly been quite the task to master the art of making the Norwegian desserts. This was a joyful conversation with many switches in intonation and tone. Karla was animated, you could tell that hosting the Norwegian tea and the process of making all the desserts for the event has brought her joy over the years.

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