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Giving Thanks (and please pass the dressing)

Still finalizing your Thanksgiving menu? Look no further! Within the holdings of the National Archives, you can find many favorite recipes from the First Families, as well as recipes prepared by White House kitchen staff for special events through the years.



The [Harry S. Truman Presidential Library](#) recently digitized and added many of First Lady Bess Truman's recipes to the Catalog. Several of these recipes are favorites that Mrs. Truman shared with family and friends, or contributed to charity cookbooks.

It isn't too late to add some of these tasty (and historic!) recipes to your Thanksgiving table. This selection of dishes from Mrs. Truman's recipe box is sure to please your guests!

Photograph of President Harry S. Truman and Mrs. Bess Truman on the Porch of Their Independence, Missouri Home , 1953 [National Archives Identifier 596500](#)



Complete Setting of Truman White House China, Crystal, and Silverware, ca. 1975. [National Archives Identifier 6778782](#)

Worried that turkey may be dry? Try preparing [Ham in Sherry](#) instead:

HAM - in sherry

For a 3/4 inch slice of ham, mix:

2 tablespoons brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon ground cloves
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

Rub mixture well into each side of ham,
place in frying pan over SLOW heat and cook until
slightly brown on both sides.


Then, add 2 oz. sherry, cover tightly and
cook over slow heat until done. 10 - 15 min.

Recipe for Ham in Sherry. [National Archives Identifier 139308932](#)

Can't find Grandma's recipe for Turkey Dressing? [Mrs. Truman's recipe](#) can be doubled to feed a crowd:



Turkey Dressing
"A Service Institution"

1 loaf bread cut in cubes
& toasted.
2 cups diced celery - 
1/4 # butter.
2/3 cup onion diced.
Liquid from cooked giblets
enough to soften.
2 tps. chopped parsley -
poultry seasoning to taste
(approx. 1/2 oz) 2 Tbls. plus
a little ground sage & salt
& pepper to taste.
Sometimes use 1 pt oysters & leave
out onions.
Double recipe for large turkey

Recipe for Turkey Dressing. [National Archives Identifier 139308816](#)

How about serving the [Bran Rolls](#) that have been prepared for [White House dinners](#)?

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

Bran Rolls

1/2 cup sugar
2/3 cup shortening
1 cup All Bran
2 teaspoons salt

Pour over this one cup of boiling water, stir until dissolved and cool.

Add two eggs, beaten slightly. Two cakes of yeast, dissolved.

1 cup warm water
Add 7 cups white flour. Put in ice box. Make out two hours before using

(400° to bake - 15 to 20 minutes)

Monday
October 13
1947

CABINET LUNCHEON

Honey Dew Melon

Pork Roast
Apple Rings
Mashed Sweet Potatoes
Broccoli
Hollandaise Sauce
Bran Rolls

Hearts of Lettuce
Roquefort Dressing

Coffee Mallow

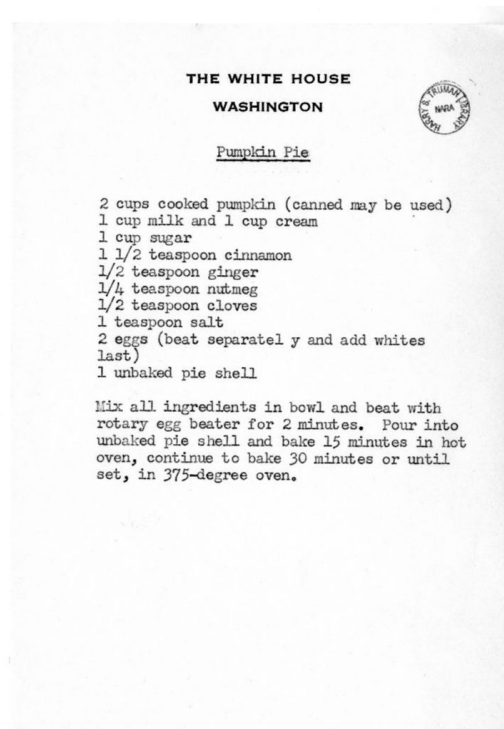
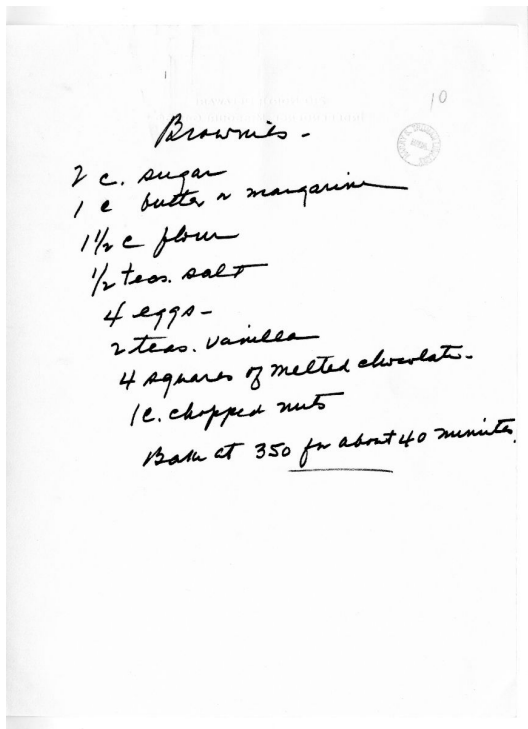
DINNER

Club Sandwich

(L) Recipe for Bran Rolls. [National Archives Identifier 139308778](#)

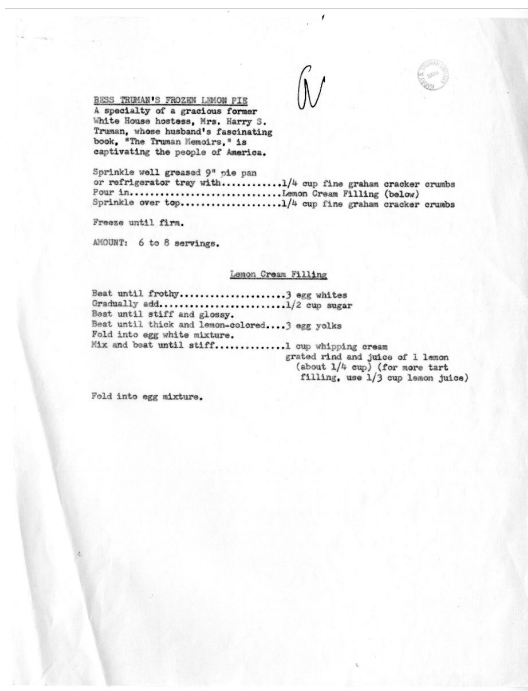
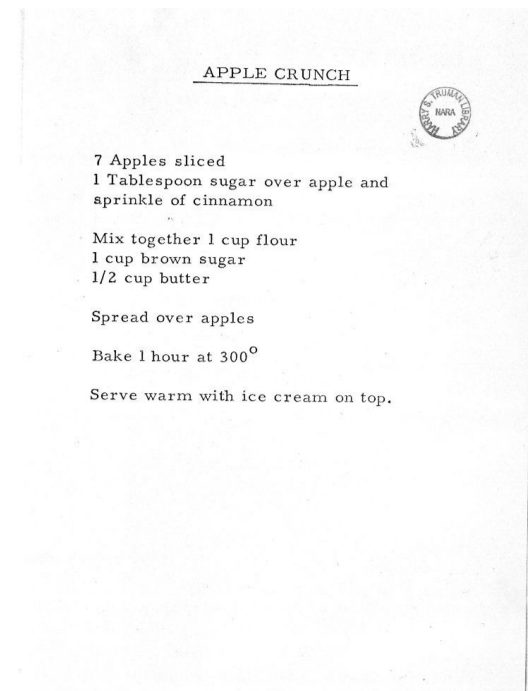
(R) White House Luncheon and Dinner Menu, 10/13/1947. [National Archives Identifier 7582998](#)

The Thanksgiving table is not complete without dessert! These recipes are sure to satisfy your sweet tooth.



(L) Recipes for Brownies. [National Archives Identifier 139308916](#)

(R) Recipe for Pumpkin Pie. [National Archives Identifier 139308776](#)

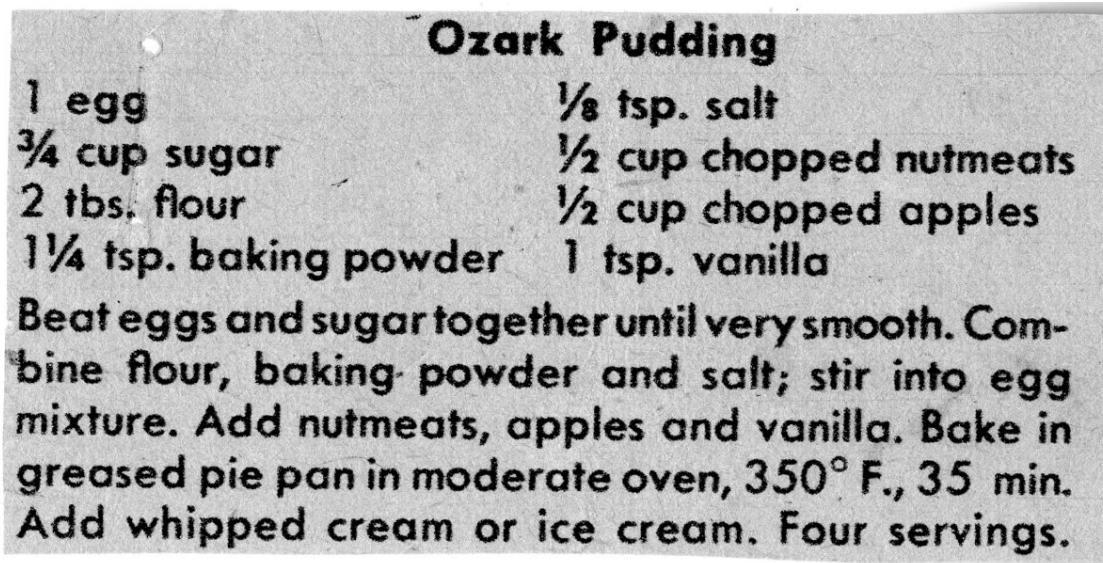


(L) Recipe for Apple Crunch. [National Archives Identifier 139308853](#)

(R) Recipe for Bess Truman's Frozen Lemon Pie. [National Archives Identifier 139308898](#)

Sometimes Recipes Can Be Controversial...

Bess Truman's Ozark Pudding was one of President Truman's favorite desserts, and was published in various newspapers in the days leading up to the 1949 Inaugural, as part of the human interest stories about the Trumans. A number of newspapers made mistakes with the recipe, misprinting quantities, or leaving ingredients out entirely, and Mrs. Truman received some criticism about this recipe. Sugar and butter were still fairly expensive, valuable ingredients to waste on a dessert you had to chisel out of the pan, according to some people who wrote to her.



The infamous Ozark Pudding clearly didn't work out for the "Disgusted Housewife" who wrote a rather harsh letter to Mrs. Truman complaining that hers repeatedly overflowed the pan:

"The next time you sign your name to a recipe, and before you are paid for doing so, kindly try the recipe out first and avoid making a fool of yourself and hundreds of respectable housewives."

Thursday

Dear Madam:

I have just completed making your "Ozark Pudding" twice.

When I didn't succeed the first time, I thought perhaps I did not follow the directions carefully. The second time well --- maybe I followed the recipe too perfectly.

The recipe calls for a greased pie pan to bake it in. I did this and it overflowed. The second time I used a cake pan (deep) still it overflowed and smoked up my lovely new kitchen. It is just full of water and nothing left in the pan, and it would never serve any person, let alone you.

- 2 -

It is bad enough that food is so expensive and everything pointing to inflation. (your husband proved it by asking for a raise. That is his way of fighting inflation. -- (also, your people received an increase in your food budget, which proves further that inflation is here.

So, madam, take your "Ozark Pudding" back to the Hill Billy mountains and feed it to them.

The next time you sign your name to a recipe, and before you are paid for doing so, kindly try the recipe out first and avoid making a fool of your self and hundreds of reputable housewives.

Disgraced Housewife in
High Top Harry's U.S.A.

Letter from Anonymous Woman to Bess W. Truman, ca. 1/1949, [National Archives Identifier 7560720](#)

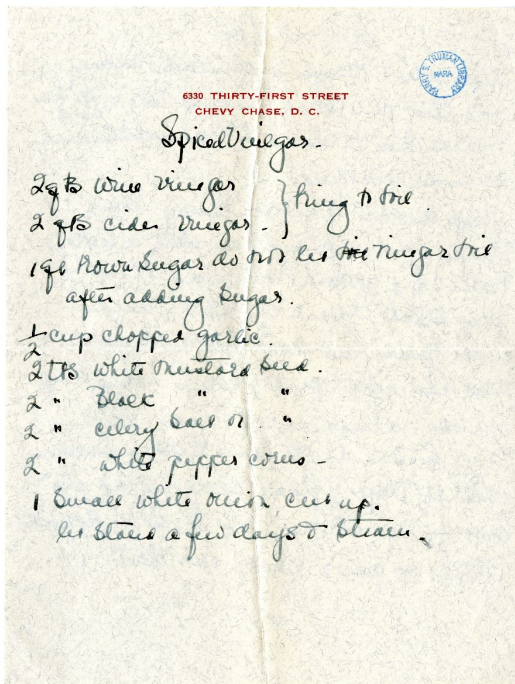
Have you tried making Mrs. Truman's Ozark Pudding, or any of these recipes in this newsletter? Put on your best historic chef hat, and let us know how they turn out!

Share your creations on social media! Tag [@USNatArchives](#) and [@Truman.Library](#) on Twitter or Instagram, or email us at catalog@nara.gov

Citizen Archivist Transcription Mission: First Lady Bess Truman's Recipes

When the dishes have been cleared, and the guests have departed, why not relax with a [transcription mission](#)?

Explore and [transcribe Bess Truman's recipes](#) to make them more discoverable.



Get started transcribing!

500,000 pages enhanced by Citizen Archivists!

We reached a BIG milestone! As of this month, 500,000 pages in the National Archives Catalog have been enhanced by Citizen Archivists. That means 500,000 pages of historical records are now easier to find in the Catalog, thanks to your contributions of tags, transcriptions, and comments!



This Thanksgiving, we are grateful for all of our citizen archivists who help unlock history and make the records of the National Archives more accessible. Here are the users that contributed within the 24-hour period that brought us to 500,000 pages enhanced!

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