

enduring favourite

A recipe for an old-fashioned pudding binds a family and preserves the memory of a much-loved matriarch.

WORDS SARAH NEIL PHOTOGRAPHY LISA COHEN STYLING TESSA KAVANAGH

This unusual pudding is indeed a family heirloom, having been enjoyed by five generations for at least 100 years. “The recipe was handed down to me by my grandmother Myra Madeline and my mother, Myra Margaret, also cooked it for us during her lifetime,” says reader Frances Endres.

Born in London in 1870, Myra Madeline Clark emigrated to Australia at the age of 24 with her mother and younger sister. The Clarks came to live in the outback Queensland town of Roma, where Myra’s aunt and uncle had a sheep property. She later married James McLean, who became the mayor of Charleville and died in the Spanish flu pandemic of 1919, leaving Myra to bring up their three young daughters.

“Although my grandmother passed away when I was 11, I remember her as a very special person,” Frances says. “She was gentle and softly spoken, and I loved listening to stories of her early life in London.”

Frances’s mother made velvet pudding to celebrate birthdays and anniversaries, and also on Sundays. “We used to have a roast dinner for Sunday lunch and velvet pudding was often served for dessert,” she says.

An egg custard sweetened with golden syrup and topped with meringue, this pudding is probably named for its wonderfully soft texture. “It’s very velvety to eat — it just melts in your mouth — and the golden syrup gives it a flavour all its own,” Frances says. “Both of my daughters and I love to serve it on special occasions, and my granddaughter has now learnt to make it. It has always been a favourite pudding in our family.” *

VELVET PUDDING

SERVES 6-8

- 2 teaspoons caster sugar
- 2 egg yolks
- 3 teaspoons custard powder
- 475ml milk
- 3 teaspoons golden syrup
- 1 teaspoon vanilla essence

MERINGUE

- 2 eggwhites
- 2 tablespoons caster sugar

Preheat oven to 220°C. Place sugar and egg yolks in a medium heatproof bowl and whisk until creamy.

Place custard powder in a small bowl. Add 2 tablespoons of milk, and stir until smooth and well combined.

Place remaining milk in a medium saucepan and bring to a simmer over a medium heat. Gradually add hot milk to egg yolk mixture, whisking constantly, until smooth and combined. Add custard-powder mixture and whisk to combine. Return to pan. Place over a medium heat and add golden syrup. Stir constantly with a wooden spoon until mixture boils. Simmer for 3 minutes or until custard thickens. Add vanilla essence, and stir to combine. Strain custard through a fine sieve into a 4-cup capacity baking dish.

To make meringue, using an electric mixer, whisk eggwhites in a clean, dry bowl until soft peaks form. Gradually add sugar, 1 tablespoon at a time, and whisk until sugar dissolves and meringue is thick and glossy.

Spoon meringue over custard in baking dish. Bake for 5-7 minutes or until meringue is golden brown. Serve at room temperature.

SHARE YOUR FAMILY FAVOURITES

Do you have a recipe that has been passed down through generations? Send us your recipe, the story behind it and, if possible, a photograph (preferably a copy or scan) of the relative who passed it on. Remember to include a daytime telephone number. Email Sarah Neil at sarah.neil@news.com.au or send a letter to Heirloom Recipe, Country Style, Locked Bag 5030, Alexandria, NSW 2015. Note: recipes may also be published online at homelife.com.au

FOOD PREPARATION AND RECIPE TESTING TIFFANY PAGE



ABOUT THE HOUSE

- Dulux Natural White is used on all the interior walls that aren't timber-paneled. 132 525; dulux.com.au
- Inax green Japanese tiles in the kitchen splashback are from Artedomus in Melbourne. (03) 9428 9898, artedomus.com
- Custom-mixed tiles in the bath surround are On Trend from Signorino Tile Gallery in Victoria's Richmond. (03) 9427 9100; signorino.com.au
- The oriental rug in the sitting room was a wedding gift from Catherine's father and came from I & B Perryman Oriental Carpets in Sydney. (02) 9327 3910; antiquerugs.com.au
- The timber dining table was made by Rabbit Trap Timber in Bowral, NSW. The business specialises in handcrafted furniture made from aged timbers. 0432 214520; rabbittraptimbers.com.au
- Catherine and David have collected Indigenous artworks at William Mora Galleries in Melbourne. (03) 9429 1199; moragalleries.com.au
- The garden has matured under a succession of hands, including David and Catherine's. They commissioned James Pfeiffer Landscape Architects in Bowral to further design the garden when they were newly married. (02) 4861 6999.

**...THIS HOUSE ALREADY
RESONATES WITH FOND
ASSOCIATIONS AND MEMORIES.**

