

On The Homefront

Each week a different business-person, artisan or professional who lives or works in Lansing will share some aspect about his or her occupation that may be useful to Lansing residents. Interested in sharing your skills? Call us at 533-7963.

La Galette Des Rois (A French Traditional 12th Night Cake)

By Aline Chenavier Shulman

With the American holiday season almost behind us, I'm sure you won't be surprised to learn that in many parts of Europe the season's festivities are prolonged with the celebration of the arrival of the Three Wise Men on January 6th.

Known as the Feast of the Epiphany, from the Greek word "epiphaneia" (arrival), this holiday is known to have been observed before 194 AD -- farther back than known observances of Christmas itself!

In my native village, and many parts of France, the tradition of the Wise Men Bearing gifts is no longer celebrated with exchanges of Frankincense and Myrrh. Instead, we prepare a special *tarte* called a Galette des Rois, or 12th Night Cake.

Though many different recipes exist, all of them are created with a base of almond paste. Before the cake goes into the oven, the baker hides two little figurines representing a king and queen. In times gone by, royalty would fashion elaborate porcelain figurines while more modest families would insert fava beans to do the trick.

The youngest person at the table de-

side in which order the portions will be offered. Whoever finds the figurine in his or her portion is declared "royalty" for the day, receives a golden paper crown, and may lead the party in holiday singing.

Even today, with most galettes des rois manufactured by industrial bakeries by the hundreds of thousands, the tradition continues with the youngest child allocating the portions and everyone searching for the figurine within.

Because the French take their food and festivals quite seriously, this scene repeats itself wherever friends and colleagues get together (kids sporting teams, offices, schools, hospitals, etc.).

Because the traditional *galette des rois* from the Isere region of France where I come from takes many, many hours to prepare, I hope you'll find this quick Savoyard version tempting enough to try. Of course, if you're not satisfied with my recipe, you can always offer yourself a trip to France to taste the real thing.

Bon appetit!

The Twelfth Night Cake

Preparation time: 30 mn

Baking time: 30 mn

Ingredients:

3 eggs	12 Oz white flour
3/4 Oz butter to grease the pie dish	4 Oz of powdered white sugar
4 Oz of almond paste	2 colored beans and 2 paper crowns

In a large bowl, whisk the yolks with the sugar; then add the almond paste.

In a second bowl, beat the egg-whites until stiff.

Working in the first bowl, gently incorporate 1/4 of the flour to the yolks.

Next, transfer a quarter of the stiff egg-whites from the second bowl to the first bowl and slowly but thoroughly mix the ingredients.

Continue the process of adding flour, then egg whites, to the first bowl until all the ingredients have been carefully worked together.

Pour into a greased 9" pie pan and bake at 350 F for 30 minutes.

After baking, let the cake cool on a serving plate for 10/15 minutes. Make two small incisions with the point of a knife on the bottom the cake into which you'll slide 2 different colored beans to symbolize a king and a queen.

Slice and immediately serve the cake. (Don't forget to have the kids prepare two paper crowns for the "king" and "queen.")



DREAM TEAM members Jeff Clark (left), Kevin Kauffman and Joe Spadolini distribute gifts to Ludlowville's Timothy Walters and other patients at the Cayuga Medical Center's pediatric ward Christmas night. The Dream Factory raises funds to fulfill ill children's wishes. Interested? Write POB 92, Lansing, NY 14882.

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