

Putting Bread On The Table In Adrigole

Recepies, Memories & Stories from Women in Adrigole



INTRODUCTION

We eat bread every day. It is such a basic part of our lives we often take it for granted. Certainly the significance of the phrase 'Putting Bread on the Table' has changed over time along with the dynamics of family life.

This little booklet reminds us of the taste and flavour of home baking. It is a nourishing, comforting taste one we can never find within the packet of a mass-produced loaf. Alongside the recipes are a few stories and memories associated with bread which offer a slice of life as it used to be here in Adrigole.

We hope you enjoy it.

*'There are people in the world so hungry
that God cannot appear to them except in the form of bread'*

Mahatma Gandhi

FROM THE BASTIBLE TO THE BREADMAKER



In the picture you can see the bowls and containers that were used. Cream for churning and buttermilk for baking were stored in containers like these.



We all recognise the bastible, though not for baking bread in but in our gardens with flowers blooming in them. Long ago the bastible was used daily to bake such as: the soda bread, the apple cake, the sunday cake and during harvest time the threshing cake. Each house had two bastibles made of cast iron, one large and one medium size. It could also be used to roast meat.

When baking, a cross was always made on top of the cake and not to do so was and indeed still is, regarded as unlucky. The bread/cake was then placed into the bastible and covered tightly, the red embers/ coals placed on top over the open fire. Baking time approx 45mins.

The secret of nice bread was the buttermilk, which was made weekly in this churn. Cows were then milked by hand twice daily and the milk strained into galvanised containers or dishes to settle for over 12hrs. The cream from this was then skimmed and used to churn butter. It took about approx. 35mins. and plenty of elbow grease.

Things are much different today as the modern housewife can add her ingredients and yeast, all bought in as required, and make her bread. She can press the button on her breadmaker and walk away. Another job done.



Mary A O'Sullivan

'When baking, a cross was always made
on top of the cake and not to do so was and
indeed still is, regarded as unlucky.'

Julianne Crowley

Mary ^A Sullivan

Brown Soda Bread

- 1 lb of wheatmeal.
- 1 level teaspoon of salt.
- 2 level teaspoons of Bread Soda.
- $\frac{3}{4}$ pt. of sour milk.
- if desired one egg.

Method :-

Place wheatmeal, salt, soda into a bowl. Mix well to allow air into the mixture. Add egg - to the milk (if using egg). Pour sufficient milk into bowl to make a fairly soft dough. Turn out into a floured board and knead. Form into a round shape and lightly cut a cross over the top. Bake in a pre-heated oven 425° F or gas MARK 6 for approx. 45 mins. Cool on a wire tray.



THE BREAD DELIVERY MAN

Many years ago in Adrigole the bread used to be delivered very late in the evening, often into nightfall, as the area was large and vans few at the time. In those heady days before rural electrification, and with a lack of any form of organised amusement, the young men of the area would congregate at the crossroads where if they had any few shillings they would buy and share 'bracks' with one another.

This bread delivery man had a helper who, unknown to him, took pity on one poor man in the area who was then in need and had no money. So when the bread man was gone into the shop with the bread the helper got his chance. The poor man would emerge from the bushes where he was hiding and the helper would throw a loaf through the air – which invariably he caught, being a good footballer and agile. This went on for quite a while. He got several loaves as on each trip he was waiting his chance.

There came a time when due to an inheritance or some such circumstance this poor man 'came into money' as they say. Having a guilty conscience and little sense he decided to pay for the loaves, so he approached the delivery man on the next occasion with the money and the statement, *'I took everyone of them in the air'* Needless to say it was the helper who was down on his luck next having been duly sacked from his job.

(A true story)

Mary Anne O'Sullivan



CHILDHOOD MEMORIES OF BREAD BEING DELIVERED TO HOMES BACK IN THE FIFTIES

The bread van would stop at a lot of different homes. After we got out of school we went out to collect the bread from the van at the gate. The fresh smell of the bread, all shapes and sizes, will live with me forever, especially on occasions when the bread man gave us a fistful of fresh breadcrumbs.

In later years he would also deliver cakes and we would get a treat once in a while. This memory I will never forget.

Joan Desmond

Scones

Ingredients:

- 1 lb Plain flour.
- 2 level teaspoonful Bicarbonate of Soda.
- 2 level teaspoonfuls Cream of Tartar.
- Good pinch of Salt.
- 3 ozs. Margarine.
- 3 ozs. Sultanas.
- 1 ozs Sugar
- 2 egg - reconstituted.
- $\frac{1}{2}$ pint Milk.

Method

- Sieve Dry Ingredients together twice.
- Rub in Margarine.
- Add Sugar & Sultanas.
- Mix into a soft dough with egg and milk.
- Turn onto a floured slab and knead lightly.
- Roll out to about $\frac{1}{2}$ inch thickness.
- Cut out scones, if using a 2 inch cutter, this quantity makes about 24 scones.
- Place on floured baking sheets and brush tops with beaten egg or milk.
- Bake at 500, for 10-12 minutes, in the middle runner of the oven.

GOODIE

Goodie was used years ago as a food suitable for people returning to a normal diet following illness. For the most part people were allowed no solid foods, only fluids followed by a slow introduction to solids.

The Goodie used then did not include fruit or custard: it was made in what was known as the 'basin', the equivalent to the present day 1^{1/2} pint pudding bowl.

Christina Neill



THE STATIONS

The tradition of the station Mass goes back to 1690 when Ireland was in the grip of the Penal laws. At that time people gathered at Mass Rocks and in their homes to celebrate Mass.

The day of the station was surely a day to remember. Each house took it in turn. Two stations were held in a year, so in a townland of 10 houses the station would fall every five years.

The preparing for the station usually started two weeks in advance. The house was overhauled and painted upstairs and downstairs – the whitewash was in great demand! The outside walls and cabins got the same treatment. Windows were shining and the nice set of china and good teapot were taken out of the press and that same set of china could be seen in several houses, as the neighbours always helped each other out, and to borrow the candlesticks was very acceptable.

Goody.

Recipe: 2-3 slices white Bread.
(with or without crusts.)
 $\frac{1}{2}$ Pint milk (approx)
2 ozs Sultanas, currants
or Raisins
or combination of either
currants + Raisins
or
Sultanas + Raisins
or combination of all three
Sugar to taste (level
tablespoon-ful)

Method:

Cut the bread into squares, (stale bread is best). Place in a small bowl, add the fruit and sugar. Heat the milk, do not allow to Boil. Pour over the ingredients in the bowl and serve hot.

As an alternative.

The milk could be replaced by a custard mix of a pouring ~~not~~ consistency.

The day before the station was a very busy day for the woman of the house. She baked all the soda bread and the 'Sunday cake' with caraway seeds, sultanas and a fist of sugar. The special barm bracks would be ordered in the shop a couple of weeks before and we would always get a loaf of 'shop' bread in case the priest would ask for toast and it would be toasted in front of the fire on a fork. (The electric toaster was out of order!) The menu was the same in every house – free-range eggs and wonderful home baking. I can remember being at a station when the first Gateaux cake arrived and if I could only just have another piece: nothing has tasted as good, ever since!

The night before the station, all the neighbours and friends would gather to help for the big day. Each one got the job they knew best – like making the butter balls, filling the bowls with sugar lumps and putting jam into those nice dishes, but that would never happen until all children in the house were in bed. You would never guess why!

The 'room' table was then set up for breakfast, beautiful white tablecloth and so many nice things. The children could be heard to say, "Why don't we have something like this at Christmas?".

The morning of the station everybody was up early as the Mass was usually at 9 or 10 a.m., as at that time people usually fasted from midnight, if they were receiving communion. Two fires were always burning and there was a "cead mile failte" for everyone! – Such happy memories!

There were two priests in every parish – the parish priest and the curate. The parish priest usually heard confessions while the curate got the altar ready for the Mass. The table was always raised upon two chairs. The altar cloth was white linen and always kept for the station Mass.

It was a great honour to eat with the priest, so the man of the house was first and 3 or 4 good conversationalists were invited to 'the room'. It was the custom that the water the priest washed his hands in after the Holy Communion was passed around to the women and they all had a sip. It was supposed to contain a cure! Then they got a cup of tea in their hand while they waited for the table to be ready. Everybody helped and the pot of eggs was always full. I know a young man of 10 who had a bet that he would eat six eggs one morning at a station and won the bet. But he has never eaten an egg since!

When breakfast was finished and the priests went on their way, there was always a bottle or two found in the press and the party began. The ladies all got punch and the men always liked that 'clear' bottle! People were invited from outside the station district and the singing and dancing went on well after midnight. Life was simpler then – they were good times.

Julianne's Apple Cake.

2 1/2 lbs S. R. Flour,
pinch salt, 1/2 tsp Bxtester, stake of cinnamon
1/4 lb Marg (or Butter) - 2 table spoons Sugar
1/2 pt cream 1/2 pt Milk & 2 eggs

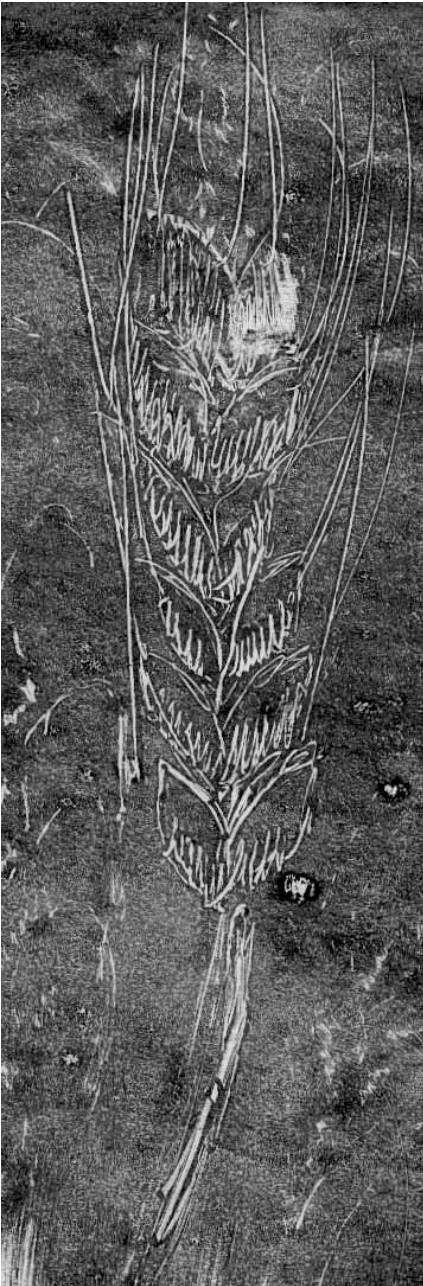
Mix all dry ingredients together, mix in Marg
& Sugar, Beat the eggs, & add to the cream
& Milk, Mix to a dough, just like the
Soda bread, & divide into 2/3 & 1/3 the
larger piece for the bottom
Grease a 12" old frying pan or Basting
Roll out the dough & line the bottom
& sides of pan, Peel & slice 4 large
Cooking Apples into the pan, add a cup
of Sugar & some cloves Roll out the
remaining dough & dampen the edges
& seal very well to keep in all the
juices. Bake in a moderate oven for
about 1 hour & 10 mins

"The Sunday Cake"

This recipe can be adapted to make
the Sunday cake just add a fist of
Corranby seeds, & a fist of Sultan as
to the dry ingredients & make into
a cake (omit the Apples) & bake
as Soda Bread (for) about 45 mins

enjoy! enjoy! enjoy!

GRAIN GROWING AND THRESHING



People in rural Ireland have grown grain for many years. Way back in the old days people grew enough for themselves and their animals. The grain would be sown in the spring and when ripe in the fall the crop would be cut and bound into sheaves by hand. It would then be threshed by primitive methods. The grain would be beaten off the sheaves by flailing them, the grain collected and a process called winnowing used where the wind would blow away the chaff, leaving the grain.

The grain would then be ground down into flour using two types of stone called quern stones, one hollow and one placed on top with a hole in the middle which the grain would be poured through. The top stone would be turned against the underlying stone to crush the grain till it turned into flour.

Rationing of flour occurred during World War II from 1939-45. Flour was by then being milled in local mills. People were issued with 'ration books'. Where there were a large number of people in a household you came out better! The child getting equal rations to the grown-ups. The farming community reverted back to growing and grinding wheat again for themselves. Men bought threshers and would travel out to the neighbouring farms for the threshing.

All the men in the townland would come along to give a hand in each farm and follow on to the next farm. The 'yarns' and the 'craic' would be enjoyed by all over the 'tea sessions' in each farm, where they would be served with a good slice of threshing cake. People were so helpful and gave so freely of their time for the enjoyment as much as for the work.

The grain was then during these years brought to a central point in the parish for grinding into flour – all for the same purpose, to put bread on the table.

Mary Anne O'Sullivan

Threshing Cake
3 Lbs Plain flour
½ Teasp Salt
1½ " Biscad Soda
1 " Bix tartar
4 oz's Butter (or Marg)
4 " Sugar
1 lb Sultanas
Shake of Annason
Mix all dry ingredients together
mix in Butter, add the
Sugar & Sultanas add
½ pint of Buttermilk
& Mix to a dough roll
out on Biscad Board
& shape as you require
Bake in a hot oven 180°
or Gas Mark 4 for
approx 40 mins

Julianne Crowley

'Those men must have eaten a lot
of cake as they went round the farms!'

Julianne Crowley

WOMEN PUTTING BREAD ON THE TABLE

ways women used to contribute financially to the home

Every week the women used to gather the eggs and save them. At the weekend the eggs were sold in scores (20 is a score) and the money would be used to pay for food.

Women also made the butter. The butter in any two houses probably never tasted exactly the same as shop butter does these days. To make the butter, milk was stored in a dish for twenty-four hours. The cream rose to the top of the milk and this was taken off and stored in a large crock for a week. At the end of the week this cream was churned into butter, and salt was added to help preserve the butter. Enough would be kept for the house and the remainder sold.

Most homes would be very self-sufficient and would try to make most things. In order to make clothes a little more colourful, dyes were made for the wool.

Yellow flowers would be picked off the furze bushes, boiled and left overnight. In the morning the liquid would be strained to make sure that it was clean. Wool would be soaked in the liquid overnight with salt added to keep the colour.

Jane O'Sullivan

Boxty

Raw potatoes, salt, and flour,

Peel and grate potatoes, put into

clean cloth and squeeze liquid out. (liquid can be used to thicken soup) Add salt to taste and flour to make more solid. Extra flour for solid cake loaf for a pancake.

Tradition cooked in basket as today's

Jane O'Sullivan

Potato Cake

Boiled Potatoes
Salt to ~~the~~ taste

Flour
stick

Onions and herbs (optional -
but often added for flavour)

Mix all the ingredients together
to form a cake. Cut into small
slices.

Traditional cooked in bastibal
on a heavy frying pan.

Nowadays would be cooked in the oven.
Could be reheated, better hot than
cold.

Jane O'Sullivan

ROSCAHA

Many years ago there lived a poor family down by the sea in the townland of Droumlare. Once during the Famine a travelling woman came to the house begging for food. The woman of this poor household gave her their last grain of wheat even though she needed it herself to plant.

When her husband returned home that evening he was very annoyed with her. He said in an angry voice, 'We will starve to death', to which his wife replied, 'We will sow the chaff'.

She eventually persuaded him to plough a field by the sea and they broadcasted the chaff on it. Come autumn of that year they reaped as fine a field of grain as was ever grown in the area – hence that field, or point as it was known, has been called Roscaha, which means Point of the Chaff.

Mary Anne O'Sullivan

*"Walk softly, o man, past an acre of wheat
with awe in your heart and your face*

*- The Body of Christ comes from sanctified wheat"
from Ballad of an Irish Wheat Field.*



Mary A O'Sullivan



Maureen Crowley

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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The women who participated in this project are going to continue to meet at the Caha Centre. This group is open to all women living in Adrigole. For more information please ring the Caha Centre tel. 60909.

One thing we are interested in doing is another publication: this time a memoir of stories and memories of life in Adrigole in the past. We already have quite a lot of interesting stories. These are being kept at the Caha Centre and you are very welcome to drop in, have a cup of tea and read them. You may indeed have something you would like to contribute?

As well as the funding bodies and support agents many thanks go to everyone involved, especially -

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The artists -

Eileen O'Sullivan and Rachel Parry

The facilitator -

Helen Quinn

And last but not least -

The Caha Centre for hosting and facilitating this project and for initiating an ongoing programme of events in Adrigole.

Further copies of this booklet are available at the Caha Centre @ 3 euro each.



