

*Happy Holiday's from Pequannock Twp. Library
Team*



A few passes over a spice grater and nutmeg releases an irresistibly warm and sweet aroma that is perfect for cakes, pies, and spirited drinks. While nutmeg—and its sibling spice, mace—often remind us of snowy window panes, holiday desserts, and cozy beverages by the fireplace, its origins are tropical and tumultuous.

Spice of the month

Nutmeg



A Brief Nutmeg Timeline

Sixth Century A.D. Arab spice traders bring mace and nutmeg to Constantinople. These early spice traders shrouded their spices in misinformation and spice lore, charging high prices as a result. By the end of the 12th century, most wealthy and elite Europeans had tried these exotic spices and fell madly in love with them.

1512 Portuguese explorers 'discover' the source of nutmeg and establish themselves on and around the Banda islands, stocking up on mace, nutmeg, and cloves. This breakthrough makes mace and nutmeg more available and affordable in Europe.

Early 1600's Dutch East India Trading Company seizes control over all the Banda islands except the island Rhun, which was claimed by the English. The Dutch ferociously controlled the overwhelming majority of the nutmeg trade, destroying any plantations outside the Bandas and enforcing their monopoly by death penalty.

1667 The Dutch East India Trading Company officially trades the island of Manhattan (a fur trapping colony at the time) to the English for the Bandanese island of Rhun, solidifying their monopoly on nutmeg and mace.

1770 French spice traders successfully smuggle nutmeg trees to the island colony of Mauritius, inciting the downfall of the Dutch nutmeg monopoly. This is done by none other than Pierre Poivre (anglicized and Peter Pepper), a famous French botanist who introduced many spice plants to other French colonies.

1843 Nutmeg was introduced to Grenada by English merchants, eventually becoming the most successful producer of nutmeg and mace in the West Indies. As of 2019 Grenada is the world's second largest nutmeg producer after Indonesia. Grenada's flag even depicts a nutmeg fruit.



Homemade Wassail

Wassail is a hot mulled cider with Nordic roots. It's traditionally enjoyed during wassailing, which is the ancient Yuletide practice of singing door-to-door

Prep Time: 5 min
Cook Time: 30 min
Servings: 10

Ingredients:

2 apples
8 cups apple cider
2 cups orange juice
4 cinnamon sticks
15 whole cloves (or 1/2 teaspoon ground cloves)
1/4 teaspoon ground ginger
1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1 tablespoon light brown sugar

Instructions :

1. Poke the whole cloves into the apples on all sides
2. Add all of the ingredients, including the apples, to a large pot over medium-low heat.
3. Bring to a simmer. Simmer for 30-45 minutes. Remove the apples and whole cloves. Ladle into mugs and enjoy!

Note: while this recipe contains no alcohol, traditional wassail is often served with an added splash of brandy, bourbon, rum, or whiskey.

*Source for these recipes:
www.tastesbetterfromscratch.com*



Candied Pecans

Candied pecans are made with sugar and spice - specifically cinnamon and nutmeg - and everything nice! These are a holiday favorite!

Prep Time: 15 min

Cook time: 1 hour

Servings: 20

Ingredients:

1 Large egg

1/2 tablespoon vanilla extract

1/2 tablespoon water

1 cup of sugar

3/4 teaspoon kosher salt

1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon

1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg

1 pound raw pecan halves

Directions:

1. Preheat the oven to 250 degrees. Butter a rimmed baking sheet.

2. In a bowl, beat the egg white, vanilla, and water until frothy. In a separate bowl, combine the sugar, salt, cinnamon, and nutmeg.

3. Add the pecans to the egg-white mixture and gently toss to coat. Transfer the nuts to the sugar mixture and toss to coat. Spread the nuts evenly on the baking sheet.

4. Bake for 1 hour, stirring every 10-15 minutes. Watch the pecans carefully during the last 15-20 minutes of cooking for doneness. The nuts should be golden brown, crunchy, and evenly coated with the hardened sugar coating when they come out of the oven.

Store the pecans in an airtight container in a cool, dry place for up to two weeks.