

Food Matters: Cueno's Bakery's rum cake, baking with parchment

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Cueno's famous rum cake revival

It's been 50 years since Cueno's Bakery on Guadalupe Street closed, but people can't seem to forget the bakery's legendary rum cake.

Monica Kass Rogers, a longtime food writer in Chicago who digs up long lost recipes for her site, LostRecipesFound.com, received a request for Cueno's rum cake earlier this year. She was able to track down Rita Bruton and James Kennedy, whose dad, Ray Kennedy, was the production manager at Cueno's for many years. After Kennedy left Cueno's in the early 1950s, he worked another 25 years at Ms. Johnson's Bakery. Ray Kennedy was in his 60s when he retired, says his son, James. "A lot of people tried to get him to open a specialty shop, but when we retired, he was ready to be done."

Ray Kennedy died in 2003, but his children still had the recipe for the famous cake, which the Statesman ran in 1977 and Kass Rogers adapted for home cooks who aren't baking on a commercial scale.

When Kass Rogers served the cake to guests at her house, she realized why memories of the cake outlasted the bakery. "People were going crazy over that cake," Kass Rogers says. "It really has something to do with that syrup. ... One of my sons says this is now his favorite cake ever."

Next year, the site will evolve to allow readers to help one another track down lost recipes, but for now, it's Kass Rogers who gets to hunt down almost forgotten favorites. "Everybody has a recipe that they've loved, but lost," she says. You can read more about Kass Rogers' hunt for the rum cake - and find stories about other recipes and tell her about one you've always wanted to find - at LostRecipesFound.com.

Pleasures of parchment

It only takes one time of using wax paper instead of parchment paper when baking a sheet of cookies to learn that the two often-confused products aren't interchangeable. After the smoke from the wax paper clears the kitchen, you can read the fine print that says it's not meant for baking, unless lining a cake pan, where the paraffin wax is covered completely.

The French technique of "en papillote" means to wrap in paper and is most often used for fish, but food writer Brette Sember goes beyond en papillote in her new book, "The Parchment Paper Cookbook" (Adams Media, \$17.95). Parchment allows you to use less oil than other cooking methods, and because it creates a tight seal in which you cook meat or vegetables, they stay moist when baked instead of drying out. Parchment is more expensive than wax paper or aluminum foil, but it can be reused if lining something like a cookie sheet.

Roasted Carrots, Parsnip, and Rutabaga with Maple Syrup

12 baby carrots

1/4 rutabaga, peeled

1 parsnip, peeled

Salt and pepper, to taste

1 Tbsp. maple syrup

1/4 tsp. apple cider vinegar

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Slice carrots as thinly as possible. Slice rutabaga and parsnip into thin rounds. Place all the vegetables on parchment. Drizzle the maple syrup on top. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Drizzle the vinegar over top. Using a fork or your hands, lightly toss all the ingredients together. Fold up the parchment and bake for 40 minutes. Serves 4.

- From "The Parchment Paper Cookbook" (Adams Media, \$17.95), by Brette Sember

Openings, closings and coming soon

- Opening Friday: Noble Pig Deli and Charcuterie, an extension of the Noble Pig sandwich shop at 11815 RM 620 North. After the success of the sandwich shop, Noble Pig owners John Bates and Brandon Martinez decided to offer a place where customers could just buy bread, charcuterie and condiments, including bacon, rillettes, pickles, chutney and a variety of mustards, which are all made in-house. 382-6248, noblepigaustin.com.
- Open: Blue Dog Pizza, a trailer selling stone-baked pizzas at 601 W. Live Oak St. 800-918. Search "Blue Dog Pizza Austin" on Facebook.
- Open: Co-op Market, a small grocery store next to the University Coop at 2304 Guadalupe St. The store features mostly convenience items, but also sells beer and wine. universitycoop.com, 476-7211.

Food briefs

- H-E-B is hosting its 22nd annual Feast of Sharing dinner from 4 to 8 p.m. on Tuesday at the Palmer Events Center, 900 Barton Springs Road. The free dinner is open to anyone, and H-E-B officials estimate that they'll give away more than 13,000 meals. The San Antonio-based grocery store will also be giving away meals through Meals on Wheels on Thursday. Free parking will be available in the Palmer Events Center parking garage for the event.
- Lidia Bastianich, the PBS host and author of six cookbooks, will be signing copies of her newest book, "Lidia's Italy in America" at 6:30 p.m. on Nov. 30 at Whole Foods, 525 N. Lamar Blvd.
- Fall Creek Vineyard in Tow is hosting its annual Fall Creek Christmas Artisan Fair and Post-Thanksgiving Lunchtime Feast from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday with mulled wine, Christmas music and a number of artists and food artisans. Reservations are required for the lunch, which costs \$17.50, not including wine. 325-379-5361, fcv.com.
- Jocelyn Leffall of Suga-Plump Pastries has created a line of holiday-inspired cake balls, including Chocolate Bourbon Pecan Pie and Sweet Potato Pie. Several of the cake balls are infused with local wines and spirits, including Kohana Coffee Cold Brew, Llano Estacado Winery Cellar Select Port, Tito's Vodka and Deep Eddy Sweet Tea vodka. Infused cake balls cost \$40 per dozen, but Leffall also makes traditional pies that cost \$15 or \$20 each, and today is the last day to place an order for delivery by Thanksgiving. sugaplumppastries.com
- Nicole Patel of Delysia chocolates has another fun Thanksgiving treat: Chocolate turkeys. The solid molded turkeys cost \$10 each, and you can order them at delysia.com.

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