

## Gougeres

As a feeling, an epiphany is a sudden realization, insight or rebirth, often brought on by a life-altering event.

Originally from the Greek for "appearance" or "manifestation," Epiphany is a Christian feast, also known as Twelfth Day, as it is the twelfth day after Christmas. Traditionally, this coincides with the visit of the Magi. The day is marked by feasting and celebration. Gougeres originated in France, and are traditionally served this time of year, with champagne—dry, not brut.

1 cup water  
1 stick unsalted butter, cut into small pieces  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1 cup flour  
4 large eggs  
1 1/2 cups coarsely grated Gruyere cheese

Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Line a baking sheet with parchment paper. Place the water, butter and salt in a saucepan and bring to a boil, then reduce heat to moderate. Add flour all at once and beat with a wooden spoon until the mixture pulls away from side of pan.

Transfer mixture—known as pate a choux—to a bowl and use an electric mixer to beat in the eggs, one at a time. If the batter is too stiff, add another egg.

Stir the Gruyere into the pate a choux and drop by tablespoons about one inch apart on the baking sheet. Bake for about twenty-five minutes, or until golden brown. Serve warm.

## *Three Kings Cake*

Three Kings Day, or Epiphany, is the culmination of a month of celebration on the Caribbean island of St. Croix, a place famed for its sugar, molasses and rum. Wedding Fruit Cake is so dense and richly flavored that it must be served in small pieces as a memento of the event.

Place five pounds of mixed dried fruit (currants, raisins, dates, figs, prunes) in a very large bowl, and cover it with about three cups of Cruzan rum. Set this aside to macerate for two days or up to a week.

To make the cake, you will need the macerated fruit, plus:

2½ cups flour  
1½ teaspoons baking powder  
1 pound brown sugar  
1 teaspoon cinnamon  
1 teaspoon vanilla  
1 cup molasses  
½ pound butter at room temperature  
6 eggs

Beat the butter in a large bowl and add the sugar, cinnamon, vanilla and molasses. Add the eggs one at a time. Beat in flour and baking powder and then stir in the fruit mixture.

Pour into two or three well-greased 13x9-inch baking pans. Bake in a 350°F oven for about 1 hour.

A cheer for the snow--the drifting snow;  
Smoother and purer than Beauty's brow;  
The creature of thought scarce likes to tread  
On the delicate carpet so richly spread.

–Eliza Cook, English poet

### Morning Muffins from the Sky River Bakery

1-1/2 cups flour  
3/4 cup ground flax seed  
3/4 cup oat bran  
1-1/2 cups brown sugar  
2 teaspoons baking soda  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 tablespoon ground cinnamon  
3/4 cup milk  
2 eggs, beaten  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1/2 cup vegetable oil  
2 cups peeled and shredded carrots  
2 apples, peeled and shredded  
1/2 cup raisins or currants  
1 cup chopped walnuts

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Mix flour, flax seed, bran, brown sugar, baking soda, baking powder, salt and cinnamon. In a separate bowl, combine the milk, eggs, vanilla and oil. Add to the dry ingredients. Fold in the carrots, apples, raisins and nuts. Fill prepared muffin cups 2/3 full with batter.

Bake for 15 to 20 minutes.

### Dutch Hot Chocolate

1 1/2 cups milk, half and half, or light cream  
2 heaping teaspoons of Droste cocoa powder  
1/4 cup sugar (or to taste)  
1/4 cup ground dark chocolate (use chocolate that has 60% or more cocoa content)  
ground nutmeg or cinnamon to taste

Heat milk to just below boiling. Whisk in cocoa powder, sugar, ground chocolate and spices.

*Comfort Food*

Ouma's Milk Tart is a traditional southern African dish.

Pastry ingredients:

- 3 tablespoons butter
- 3 tablespoons caster sugar
- 1 egg
- 1 cup flour
- 2 teaspoons baking powder

Filling ingredients:

- 5 cups milk
- ½ cup white sugar
- 2 tablespoons cornmeal
- 6 eggs, separated
- 2 tablespoons flour
- 1 tablespoon butter
- 2 teaspoons vanilla essence
- ½ teaspoon salt
- cinnamon and nutmeg

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. To make the pastry, cream the sugar and butter together, add the egg and beat, then add the flour and baking powder to form a soft dough. Press the dough into a large pie plate and set aside.

Then make the filling by mixing the sugar, egg yolks, flour, cornmeal, salt and vanilla essence. Melt the butter in a saucepan and add the flour. Whisk in the milk and heat gently until it thickens. Add the egg yolk mixture, whisking to avoid lumps; remove from heat.

Beat the egg whites until glossy, stiff peaks form and fold into the custard mixture. Pour this into the pie crust. Bake in the lower third of the oven for about 25 minutes, or until the top is golden brown. Sprinkle with cinnamon and nutmeg, and allow to cool completely. Serve with berries or other fruit.