

An Appetite for Murder

Book 1 of the Key West Food Critic Mysteries

Recipe

Lucy Burdette's One Bowl Chocolate Cake

When it came time to pick a pen name for my new Key West food critic series, I didn't hesitate. I chose my maternal grandmother's name, Lucille Burdette, AKA Lucy. I don't know if she was ever called Lucy as she died when I was only five or six. But I do have a few oil paintings that she did and a few memories of her as a sweet, warm grandmother.

I imagine that she might have been a good cook, as my mother and both of her sisters loved to get together for dinners and holiday meals. And recently, when sorting madly through my messy drawer of recipes, I found a recipe for chocolate cake from Nana, AKA Lucille Burdette. I tried the cake out on two confirmed chocoholics. They both had seconds.

Ingredients

- 1/2 cup Crisco (I am not a fan, so I used a stick of butter)
- 1 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup Hershey's cocoa
- 1 egg
- 1/2 cup sour milk (or sweet, with one TBSP vinegar added)
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 and 1/2 cups all purpose flour
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup boiling water

My grandmother's instructions were as follows: Put all ingredients into bowl and mix. Bake as usual.

Here's my interpretation: Beat softened butter and sugar until well combined. Then add the other ingredients one at a time, mixing after each. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees. Grease a bundt pan, add the batter, and bake for about 30 minutes until cake springs back when touched. If it's Christmas, ice with Vanilla Candy Cane Frosting.

Vanilla Candy Cane Frosting

- 3 tbsp unsalted butter
- 1 cup powdered sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 2 Tbsp milk
- 2-3 candy canes

When the butter is soft, whip it until smooth with the powdered sugar. Stir in the vanilla. Break up the candy canes to smallish pieces. (I put them in a Ziplock bag and mashed them with a rolling pin.) Stir the candy into the icing, add milk to thin it to your desired thickness.

When the cake is cool, slather on the icing and decorate any other way you choose!