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Appalachian Heritage, Volume 35, Number 4, Fall 2007, pp. 95-97 (Article)

Published by The University of North Carolina Press

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/aph.2007.0033>



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BITTER AND SWEET PERSIMMONS

Sidney Saylor Farr

Persimmons grow wild in dry woodlands, open fields and fence rows. Unlike the foreign imports, our persimmons have seeds, several in each small fruit.

Persimmon leaves are often pale, slightly yellowish green in youth, turning a dark, glossy green as they age. Under mild autumn conditions the leaves often turn dramatic shades of yellow, orange and red. Tea can also be made from fresh or dried leaves.

Persimmons start falling after the first frost. Three weeks later, they are at their prime, changing from bitter to sweet and from green to orange. You can eat persimmons after a hard frost with temperatures around 25 degrees. When they are frozen, they are sweet, like dates.

If you gather your own persimmons, you can remove seeds and skin by cooking the fruit and pressing it through a food mill.

PERSIMMON PUDDING

(somewhat like a brownie, but heavier, more moist and sweeter)

2 cups sugar
1-½ cups bread flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
½ teaspoon cinnamon
3 eggs
2 cups fresh persimmon pulp
1-½ cups milk
½ cup melted butter

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Grease a 13x9x2-inch glass baking dish. In a large bowl, whisk together sugar, bread flour, baking powder and cinnamon. Form a well in the center of dry ingredients and add

eggs, whisking until fully mixed. Mix in persimmon pulp, milk and butter. Pour batter in baking dish. (When Persimmon Pudding is baked, it rises up, and when it is cooled, it falls back down.) It will be sticky, chewy and smooth. It tastes somewhat like a date or plum pudding, only sweeter.

Bake 50 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into the middle comes out clean. If you jiggle the pan, the center should be set.

Cut into squares, and serve with vanilla ice cream or whipped cream. Serve pudding in late fall, winter, or through the holidays.

NOTE: To make a Pawpaw Pudding, replace persimmon pulp with 2 cups pawpaw pulp.



Dining room at the Old Kentucky Home