

# Plum Duff

Plum Duff, was a treat for sailors who served on board ships like *Constitution*. This recipe comes from Sandra Oliver's *Saltwater Foodways* (Mystic, Connecticut, Mystic Seaport Museum: 1995) and is delicious. Like most batter puddings boiled in a cloth, its exterior is gummy, but inside the texture is moist and cake-like.

## Ingredients

2 cups flour	¼ cup sugar
½ teaspoon baking soda	⅔ cup raisins
1 teaspoon cream of tartar	⅔ cup water
pinch of salt	1 pudding bag or cloth
¼ cup melted shortening	

## Directions

1. Set a large pot of water on and heat to boiling.
2. Sift together dry ingredients.
3. Stir in melted shortening, sugar, and raisins. Wet the pudding bag or cloth in the boiling water, and dust it liberally with flour.
4. Add the water to the dough and mix well; the dough should be fairly thick, but not stiff. Turn into the pudding bag, tie the bag leaving room for the duff to expand. Or put in a greased pudding mold.
5. Put the duff in the boiling water, suspending it by tying it to a spoon if necessary to keep it from touching the bottom of the pot.
6. If in a bag boil for four hours; steam for five hours if in a mold.
7. When done, turn it out of the cloth onto a serving dish. Let it stand a moment to set up.
8. Slice it and serve with molasses.

**Serves 12**

## \* History Note

If overcooked, Sailors Duff will come out very hard. According to Dr. Edward Cutbush in his *Observations on the Means of Preserving the Health of Soldiers and Sailors*, (Philadelphia: Fry and Krammer, 1808), “the puddings, generally made by the men, are almost as hard as a thirty two pound shot; if they receive no nourishment from them, it is certain they cannot complain that they have not something in their *stomachs that they can feel*; and sometimes, among those whose digestive powers are weak, violent pains of colic are the consequence.” Regardless of the dangers to one’s digestive tract, cut into slices and served with molasses, duff provided a welcome respite from salt meat and biscuit.

# 1812 Hot Chocolate

There is nothing like a cup of hot chocolate on a cold day. This recipe comes from an 1814 book called *The Artist's Companion, and Manufacturer's Guide, Consisting of the Most Valuable Secrets in Arts and Trades*. It is similar to what is called "Mexican Hot Chocolate" today. While officers may have had access to the somewhat exotic ingredients needed for this recipe, sailors probably made do with sugar and water. Mrs. Child, in *The American Frugal Housewife* (1833), suggests that nutmeg improves the taste of chocolate, and since this was a common spice, seamen could have grated it into their cups.

## Ingredients

Cocoa	<i>Optional:</i>
Cubed (Lump) Sugar	Vanilla
Water or Milk	Cinnamon
Stove	Nutmeg
Pot	Mexican Pepper
Spoon	Cloves
Wax Paper	

## Directions

*"A receipt for making chocolate.*

1. Dissolve in a copper pan some pulverised royal lump sugar, with a little orange water. When the sugar is turned into a syrup throw in the cocoa, the vanelloe [vanilla], the cinnamon, Mexican-pepper, and cloves, all, and every one of which, ought to have been first reduced to an impalpable powder. Stir all well while it boils; and when you judge it to be sufficiently done, pour the paste on a very smooth and polished table [use wax paper to allow paste to cool], that you may roll it, and give it whatever form and shape you like.
2. To prepare it with either milk or water, in which, when boiling hot, you first dissolve it, then, with a box-mill, with a long handle, you mill it to froth in the pot in which it is making, and pour it afterwards in cups to drink."

**Serves 1 cup of liquid (water or milk) to 1 person.**

**Sugar, cocoa and spices to taste.**

## \* History Note

In 1785, Thomas Jefferson wrote, "the superiority of chocolate, both for health and nourishment, will soon give it the same preference over tea and coffee in America which it has in Spain," and indeed, its popularity soared after 1800. Sailors in the Navy could buy it from the purser for 37 1/2 cents per pound.

