



We've all heard jokes about the awful fruitcake that gets re-gifted again and again, year after year.

*Well, this ain't your grandma's fruitcake.*

Sure, it has the fruitcake fruit and nuts ... but **Christmas Bread** has a lighter bread batter that tones down the sticky sweetness of traditional fruitcake. Try it once and it'll quickly become an anxiously-awaited holiday treat.

This recipe was adapted from *The Southern Hospitality Cookbook* (<http://amzn.to/2i6F1Kl>) written by Winifred Green Cheney back in 1976 (~\$4 incl. shipping, if bought used on Amazon).

## INGREDIENTS\*:

- 3 cups self-rising **Flour**
- 1 cup **Sugar**
- 1½ teaspoons ground **Cinnamon**
  
- ¼ cups chopped **Candied Fruit** (cherries, pineapple, citron, orange, and lemon peel)
- ¼ cups **Raisins**, dark and/or golden
- ¼ cups chopped **Pecans** (or **Walnuts**)
- ¼ cup self-rising **Flour** to dust the fruit
  
- 2 large **Eggs**, room temperature
- 1½ cups **Milk**
- 1 teaspoon **Vanilla Extract**
- 2 tablespoons **Vegetable Oil**
  
- disposable **Baking Pans**
- **Non-stick Spray**
- **Flour** to dust baking pans
- **Candied Cherry Halves**
- **Pecan Halves**

Makes 1 large loaf (pan 11 in. x 5 in. x 3 in.), 2 medium loaves (pans 8 in. x 4 in. x 2 in.), or 5 small loaves (pans 6 in. x 4 in. x 2 in.).

### \*TIPS:

Pull out the **eggs first** so they can warm up to room temperature as you gather all your ingredients and tools.

**Flour** is used three times in this recipe (batter, dusting fruit, and dusting pans).

We like to mix the flavors of both dark and golden **raisins**.

This recipe calls for **cups** of **candied fruit**, which is typically sold by **weight**. A rough conversion is [ 1¼ **cups** = ~6 **oz.** ] per batch. So, the 32-ounce package we bought will make about 5 batches.

We prefer the convenience of disposable (gift-able) **baking pans** but you can always use normal pans, lined with wax paper.

Many of these ingredients have coupons available online (check [Coupons.com](http://Coupons.com) (<http://Coupons.com>) and various brand websites). This season I got \$1.50 off Fisher Pecans, \$.50 off Candied Fruit, and \$1 off Disposable Baking Pans.

## PREPARE:

1. Pull out 2 **eggs** to warm on the counter.
  2. In a large bowl, sift 3 cups of **flour**. Stir in **sugar** and **cinnamon** and set aside.
  3. In a medium bowl, stir together **candied fruit**, **raisins**, and **pecans**. Toss with ¼ cup **flour** and set aside.
  4. In a small bowl, beat room-temperature **eggs** until light. Then blend in **milk** and **vanilla extract**.
  5. Pour this **egg mixture** into the large **flour mixture** bowl and mix well on medium speed.
  6. Mix in **vegetable oil** gradually.
  7. Finally, stir in the dusted **fruit and nut mixture**.
  8. Spray the **baking pans** with **non-stick spray** and dust with a little **flour**.
  9. Pour **batter** into loaf pans (only 2/3 to 3/4 full).
- Preheat oven to 325-350°F while you let the **batter** stand for 30 minutes.
  - Decorate loaf tops with **pecan halves** and **candied cherry halves** just before baking.

## BAKE:

**Christmas Bread** has a dark batter that may easily over-brown. With that in mind, you should err on the side of baking a little longer at a slightly lower temperature.

Bake at 325-350°F. Baking times will vary, based on your particular oven and pans:

- 1 large loaf takes 75-90 minutes (1 hr. and 15-30 min.).
- 2 medium loaves take 50-60 minutes.
- 5 small loaves take about 45 minutes.

Loaves should be a golden brown when done ... but test with a toothpick to confirm.

Cool on a wire rack. If using normal (non-disposable) pans, remove loaves from pans after 10 minutes and continue cooling on the wire rack.

## SERVE AND EAT:

At our house, the first bits of **Christmas Bread** are typically eaten with fingers, straight from the pan, nearly burning the roof of my mouth (:^p). More restrained people actually allow it to cool a little.

Try it plain (pure?) ... or top with butter or cream cheese.

## LATER:

**Christmas Bread** tastes great fresh out of the oven or at room temperature but it also reheats easily in the toaster oven or microwave.

Baked loaves will stay fresh for a week or two if wrapped in foil or kept in a disposable pan with a plastic lid. Ours get eaten much too quickly to verify this projected shelf life.

## GIFT IDEAS:

Take a large, hot loaf of **Christmas Bread** to your next Christmas party.

Give a small loaf, wrapped in a cute kitchen towel, to each of your neighbors as a friendly Christmas morning gift.

***Just be sure to tell folks it's **Christmas Bread**  
— not typical fruitcake —  
so they'll give it a chance!***

*... Or, just bake it for yourself and hide it from everyone, in the hoarding style of pre-ghost-visitation Ebenezer Scrooge.*