

RECIPE FROM THE HISTORIC KITCHEN

TURKISH DELIGHT

ORIGINAL RECEIPT

The Canadian Family Cook Book; A Volume of Tried, Tested and Proven Recipes, edited by Grace Denison, revised and enlarged, (Toronto: McLeod and Allen, 1914), page 431.

1 oz. gelatine. **1 lb. granulated sugar.**
 $\frac{1}{2}$ cup cold water. **Juice of 1 lemon, 1 orange, and a teaspoonful of rum.**

One ounce gelatine, soak in one-half cup of cold water for two hours; one pound of granulated sugar put in a pan with one-half cup of cold water. Stand the pan over the fire until the sugar is melted and comes to the boil; add soaked gelatine and boil steadily for twenty minutes; flavor with the juice of one lemon and one orange and a tablespoonful of rum. Wet a tin in cold water and turn the mixture in, having it about one inch thick; when it is hard or jellied, spread icing sugar over the top and cut into inch square pieces; roll in the icing sugar. A few chopped nuts added with the flavoring makes it much nicer. Let the mixture stand in the pan over night before cutting, as it is very sticky.

N. B. -- This is one of the most wholesome of candies and will not injure any person either sick or well, as it is really jelly.

HISTORIC BACKGROUND

Turkish Delight is "one of the oldest [of sweetmeats] and represents the survival of the original honey confectionery of the East" (*Skuse's Complete Confectionery*, London, 1922). It is descended from the court cuisine of pre-13th century Persia, before the Mongols introduced their style of cooking to Persia (now Iran). It was a favourite sweet in Europe and North America by the 1860s. Sometimes, as in *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (1870) by Dickens and *Eight Cousins* (1875) by Louisa May Alcott, Turkish Delight was called "Lumps of Delight". Beautiful imported boxes of it were sold at Eatons and Simpsons in their confectionery departments at the turn of the century. Recipes appear infrequently in the candy sections of cookery books of the period. This receipt (recipe) is flavoured with **orange, lemon and rum**, but other flavours were almond, apricot, banana, peach, peppermint, pineapple, rose and vanilla.

Although it epitomized luxury, Turkish Delight was also considered suitable for invalids, “**as it is really a jelly**”. Its original name was *Rahat Lokum*, meaning “giving rest to the throat”. Jellies are sweetened fruit juices stiffened with gelatine and are easy to digest. By the time this recipe was printed, **gelatine** could be purchased in 2 easily used forms: leaf and granulated (or powdered). Gelatine is a tasteless, clear and transparent substance obtained from boiled beef bones and cartilage. Previously, cooks had to make their own gelatine at butchering time. Other types of gelatine were isinglass (derived from the swim bladders of sturgeon) and Irish moss. All gelatines have the property of thickening and stiffening whatever liquids they're incorporated into, so they can retain the shape of a mould. In general, 1 Tbsp. of granulated gelatine has a similar setting capacity as 4 leaves.

The Canadian Family Cook Book was a compilation of family receipts (recipes) from prominent Canadian women, such as "Mrs. Timothy Eaton". Many of them were published earlier in *The New Cook Book* (Toronto, 1906). Editor Grace Denison wrote for *Saturday Night* magazine as columnist "Lady Gay".

OUR MODERN EQUIVALENT

Some inconsistencies appear between the list of ingredients and the instructions. In the former, 1 teaspoon of rum is suggested, but in the latter it is 1 tablespoon. Half a cup of cold water is included twice in the directions, but only once in the ingredient list.

As the original text suggests, nuts are a nice addition; chopped walnuts, pistachios and almonds are all mentioned in other recipes of the late 19th and early 20th century recipes for Turkish Delight.

Granulated gelatine no longer needs to be soaked. Today, it is sprinkled onto cold water, blended, and then boiling water is added. It is then ready to use. The instructions reflect this updated method.

45	mL	granulated gelatine	3	Tbsps.
180	mL	cold water	$\frac{3}{4}$	cup
60	mL	boiling water	$\frac{1}{4}$	cup
500	mL	white sugar	2	cups
1		lemon, juiced	1	
1		orange, juiced	1	
5-15	mL	rum	1-3	tsps.
125	mL	walnuts or pistachios or almonds, finely chopped [optional]	$\frac{1}{2}$	cup
250	mL	sifted icing sugar	1	cup

Sprinkle: gelatine over 60 mL ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup) cold water; blend briskly
Pour: boiling water over softened gelatine; stir briskly again
Combine: sugar with remaining 125 mL ($\frac{1}{2}$ cup) of cold water in large saucepan (about 3L / 3 ts.)
Bring: to boil
Stir in: soaked gelatine
Boil: steadily for approximately 20 minutes
Remove: from heat
Stir in: flavourings and optional nuts
Dampen: 20 cm x 20 cm (8" x 8") cake tin and shake off excess water
Pour: mixture into dampened tin
Sprinkle: with 50 mL ($\frac{1}{4}$ cup) of icing sugar; be careful to leave no surface exposed to air, otherwise crust develops
Leave: to set for several hours or overnight

"Cut into: inch square pieces"
Roll: pieces in remaining icing sugar
Store: in airtight container for several weeks
Yield: 36 pieces

Date: December 1997 a:\CND FAM CB\Turkish Delight

All rights reserved. Permission is required to reprint.

 **TORONTO Culture**
Spadina Historic House & Gardens