



AUNT LYDIA'S ORANGE CUSTARD

A Note From Margaret Atwood:

Aunt Lydia sometimes saved up the oranges and eggs left at the foot of her statue by her devotees and got the cooking Aunts at Ardua Hall to make a special treat for her. The batter separates into a spongy top and a custard underlayer. (We at Ardua Hall avoid using the word “bottom.” It is too suggestive for chaste ears.) The recipe is Victorian and was passed down through *The Joy of Cooking*, 1972 edition. Luckily the Aunts are allowed to read.



INGREDIENTS:

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| $\frac{3}{4}$ cup sugar | 2 or 3 eggs, whites and yolks separated |
| 1½ tablespoons butter | 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour |
| 1 tablespoon grated orange rind or 2 teaspoons lemon rind | $\frac{1}{3}$ cup orange juice or $\frac{1}{4}$ cup lemon juice |
| | 1 cup milk |

METHOD:

1. Preheat oven to 350°.
2. To create the cream, mix the sugar, butter, and orange or lemon zest.
3. Add egg yolks to the mixture and beat well.
4. Stir in all-purpose flour. Alternately, mix in orange or lemon juice and milk.
5. Beat egg whites until stiff, but not dry. Fold them into the yolk mixture.
6. Place the batter in buttered custard cups, or in a 7-inch ovenproof dish, set in a pan filled with 1 inch of hot water. Bake for about 45 minutes for the cups and about 1 hour for the baking dish or until set.
7. Serve hot or ice-cold with a thick cream or raspberry sauce.