

## More about Life in World War II Britain

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## A Mahali Recipe

Wondering what to do with your MAHALI zester? The MAHALI Lemon Lime Vinaigrette recipe will add zing to your salad.

## About the Author

“Mum” is a 93 year old with a razor sharp memory and the gift of gab. The 1940’s were a time of World War and a worldwide Depression. Mum’s memories and “Make-Do” recipes are a testament to her resourcefulness!

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## LET US EAT CAKE

Ingenuity in World War II

Kathleen “Mum” Kirby



**RATIONS:** We received meager rations in World War II England. Per person, per week, we were allotted:

- 1 ounce butter
- 4 ounces margarine
- ½ pound of sugar
- 4 ounces of meat
- 1 egg
- 2 ounces bacon

(Occasionally, 1 box of dried eggs. These rations from the Americans, roughly 1 dozen eggs, made lovely omelets, lovely scrambled eggs, and pancakes.)

**FAMILY:** With my husband Arthur, my son Michael, and four girls under five years old, there were seven of us. Rationing didn’t recognize children’s need for milk until 1943, when Churchill’s coalition government gave free milk to babies and children in low-income families.

**FRUIT:** There were no oranges or bananas. We had oranges at Christmas or other rare occasions. We had apples when they were in season.

**MANAGING:** Money was hard to come by. I can’t remember buying anything. Clothing and material were on ration and I made most clothes from any odds and ends I could conjure up: warm mittens from the tops of old woolen socks, dresses for the girls from my garments, and bathing suits from old sweaters; these suits always looked wonderful until they got wet.

**SUNDAYS:** Sunday food was the highlight of the week. The meager dinners were never expensive. Very often, the “afters” were fruit salad, comprised of dried fruit, if I could get it. Or we had custard, if I had enough milk. Custard powder was easy, if I could get off the ration.

All week I traded rations. Then, with a little ingenuity, we had the special treats that made our Sunday tea the greatest event of the week!

Frequently, we had company. To teach the children good manners Arthur would mutter, “FHB,” code for Family Hold Back. My well-behaved children watched and waited, while the visitors devoured the day’s treats.

### About Mum's Recipes

*The War made one inventive. The following recipes are for Sausage Wellington, Jam Tarts, Éclairs, Cup Cakes, and Battenberg.*

### Rationale

**MUM:** Because my husband Arthur was a vegetarian, we received extra cheese and 1 egg once a fortnight. We also received ½ pound of sausage meat once a fortnight.

### Mum Manages

I created a recipe that made ½ pound of sausage into 2 pounds of meat. The ingredients were conditioned upon what was available. Hopefully, I could get onions – hopefully, nearly a pound!

## SAUSAGE WELLINGTON

### SAUSAGE MIXTURE

#### Ingredients:

- ½ pound sausage
- Bread crumbs (as much as available - up to ½ pound. to stretch the meat)
- 1 diced large onion (or 2 small ones)
- 1 egg

#### Instructions:

1. Mix ingredients well.
2. Shape into a roll to fit into the pastry shell.

### ROUGH PASTRY

#### Ingredients:

- 8 ounces flour
- 2 ounces fat dripping
- Water

#### Instructions:

1. Mix flour and fat.
2. Add cold water and mix into a ball.
3. Roll out pastry into an oblong shape. Then roll sausage mixture inside.
4. Brush egg or milk onto top of pastry.
5. Baked in medium oven (375° F.) until crust is golden.

## JAM TARTS

#### Ingredients:

- ½ pound flour
- 2 ounces margarine
- Cold water
- Jam

#### Instructions:

1. Mix ½ pound flour, 2 ounces margarine and cold water to make the pastry dough.
2. Roll out pastry, cut into rounds, and place them in a greased tart pan.
3. Fill each with jam.
4. Bake for ¼ hour in medium oven (375° F.).

## Éclairs

**MUM:** Chocolate Éclair desserts are sure to please. Choux, the pastry shell, was very easy to make.

## Cream Filling

**MUM:** This “ration recipe” is for a cream filling made without cream.

# ÉCLAIRS

## CHOUX PASTRY SHELL

### Ingredients:

- 1½ ounces margarine
- 2½ ounces flour
- 2 dried eggs, reconstituted with a tablespoon of water
- ¼ pint of water

### Instructions:

1. Place water and margarine in a saucepan and bring to a boil over medium flame.
2. Quickly stir in flour until it forms a ball.
3. When cool, mix in eggs until the dough becomes soft.
4. With a spoon, place small piles of dough, fairly wide apart, on a tray.
5. Bake for thirty minutes in oven set at a high temperature (450° F./250° C.).
6. Slit to let the steam out; the pastry shell will be empty and lovely inside.

Yields 1 dozen choux, circa 3 inches across.

## CREAM FILLING

### Ingredients:

- Heaping tablespoon corn flour
- ½ pint of milk
- Butter or margarine
- Vanilla extract

### Instructions:

1. Mix corn flour and milk until it is nice and firm like custard.
2. Add butter or margarine and mix with great force, to give mixture texture.
3. Add the vanilla extract, the main ingredient, which gives a lovely flavor.
4. Mix corn flour and milk, heating over a low flame, as custard. The mixture has the texture of cream.
5. Spoon into each bun as much filling as possible.

### Chocolate Topping

*Have fun! This Éclair topping is your chance to be a Jackson Pollock.*

### Bartering

**MUM:** During the war, the ingredients for these cup cakes were very dear. That's when ration bartering became an art form.

### Mum's Secret to Making It Work

For example, we didn't eat sugar much (and to this day, none of my children eats sugar very much). Therefore, I swapped the 3½ pounds sugar that had been allotted to our seven-member family for the required confection sugar and dried fruit.

### Mum Makes Do

The ingredients were conditioned upon what was available – whatever one could beg, borrow, or steal.

## CHOCOLATE TOPPING

### Ingredients:

Heaping tablespoon corn flour  
½ pint of milk  
Butter or margarine  
1 teaspoons cocoa  
Sugar as needed

### Instructions:

1. Mix corn flour and milk until it is nice and firm like custard.
2. Add butter or margarine and mix with great force, to give mixture texture.
3. Sweeten cocoa with sugar and add to the mixture. Mix very well. (Before blenders and mixing machines, the mixing always required great energy!)
4. Heat over low flame, as you would custard.
5. Bring to a gentle boil, remove from stove and cool.
6. Spoon the cooled chocolate on top of each bun.

## CUP CAKES (PETIT FOURS)

### Ingredients:

1 8X10 sponge cake  
Confection sugar  
Vanilla extract  
Green, yellow or red food coloring as available  
Diced walnuts, currants, and assorted dried fruits  
Sweet cherry

### Instructions:

1. Cut the sponge cake in half. Make diamond shapes out of one half and circles and squares out of the other.
2. Save the odd bits for the Battenberg marzipan recipe described below.
3. Mix vanilla extract flavoring and food coloring into the confection sugar.
4. Cover tops and sides of the shaped pieces with the sugar mixture.
5. Cover each piece with 100's of the tiny fruit fragments.
6. Top with a sweet cherry.

**Fun Food For Parties  
& Kids**

**MUM:** This cake has a striped appearance when cut into squares.

## **BATTENBERG**

### **SPONGE CAKES**

**Ingredients:**

2 sponge cakes baked in two separate tins.

**Instructions:**

1. Slice sponge cakes in half. Place side-by-side and even by cutting out the odd bits.
2. Save crumbs for the marzipan (recipe below).

### **FRUIT FILLING**

**Ingredients:**

Jam or overly ripe fruit/vegetables

**Instructions:**

The cakes need “sticking together” with jam, if available, or any fruit/vegetable that is “going.” Perhaps you’re able to pick wild blackberries from the hedgerows in autumn.

### **MARZIPAN COATING**

**Ingredients:**

Almond extract  
Left over pieces of plain sponge cake from above  
1 ounce margarine

**Instructions:**

1. Mix ingredients until smooth.
2. Coat sponge cake edges with the marzipan mixture.

### **ICING**

**Ingredients:**

Standard vanilla icing (made with icing sugar, water and vanilla extract)  
Red food coloring

**Instructions:**

1. Create two batches of icing by mixing food coloring into half.
2. Coat 2 sponge cake slices with red icing and 2 with the white.
3. Place the sponge cake together by alternating the red and white layers.