



DANISH SISTERHOOD *of* AMERICA

Connect with Your Danish Heritage

Recipe: Danish Christmas Foods

A traditional Danish Christmas dinner will most likely feature a rice dish – either Risengrød or Ris a l'amande. Risengrød—Rice Porridge was usually offered in earlier days, when it was served hot before the meat and potato course—probably to help fill you up, making sure there would be enough of the roast goose to go around. In the last 50 years, however, the heavy rice porridge has almost completely given way to the lighter and sweeter Ris a l'Amande, which is served cold and as dessert. Both versions, of course, will contain a single almond, and the person who finds the almond in his portion of rice will be the recipient of that year's almond prize—traditionally a marzipan pig, but any kind of candy will do.

Risengrød *(Rice Porridge)*

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup short grained rice
- 3–4 cups water
- 5 cups milk
- 1–2 teaspoons salt
- 1 whole blanched almond

DIRECTIONS

Boil rice in water 2–3 minutes. Add milk and bring to a boil while stirring. Simmer covered, on low, 40–50 minutes, depending on the desired firmness of the porridge. Add salt and the almond. Serve warm, and offer cinnamon sugar to sprinkle on top and extra milk, if desired. Traditionally it was served with a big lump of butter on top.

Serves 4

Ris a l'Amande *(Rice Pudding)*

- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup water
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup short grained rice
- 3 cups milk
- grains of 1 vanilla bean, or a little vanilla extract
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- $\frac{1}{4}$ cup blanched almonds, minced
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 whole blanched almond
- Warm cherry sauce or cherry pie filling

Bring water to a boil in a thick-bottomed sauce pan. Add rice and stir. Boil about 2 minutes. Add milk and vanilla; bring to a boil, stirring constantly. Simmer on low heat, covered, about 35 minutes, stirring off and on. Cool the pudding and stir in sugar and minced almonds. Whip the cream stiff and fold into the cooled pudding. Add more sugar to taste—and the whole almond! Chill 3 hours. Serve with warm cherry sauce.

Makes 4–6 servings

Danish Christmas Foods, continued

Æbleskiver og Gløgg *(Apple Fritters and Mulled Wine)*

Another holiday favorite in my family is æbleskiver and gløgg—something to enjoy during advent along with—or in place of Sunday afternoon coffee. The lit candles on the advent wreath and the aroma of the gløgg warming on the stove are sure to create real Danish hygge in the room. To make these you will need a special æbleskive pan!

- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon baking soda
- ½ teaspoon ground cardamom
- 1¼ cup buttermilk (add 1½ tablespoons vinegar to milk and let it “curdle” 5 minutes to make “buttermilk”)
- 2 egg yolks, well beaten, until stiff
- ½ teaspoon vanilla
- 2 egg whites
- A little grated lemon rind, optional

Mix flour, sugar, salt, soda, and cardamom and set aside. Combine buttermilk, egg yolks, and vanilla. Stir half the milk mixture into the dry ingredients; mix just till smooth. Stir in remaining buttermilk mixture. Fold in beaten egg whites. Heat æbleskive pan over medium-low heat; oil each “cup” lightly. Spoon scant 2 tablespoons batter into each cup. Cook 2–3 minutes, or until bubbles form and edges appear dry. Gently turn the dough with a fork or knitting needle. Cook 2–3 minutes more, or until done. Serve warm with jam or jelly and sprinkle with powdered sugar.

Gløgg

This recipe makes lots: 1½ gallons. You may want to scale it down!

- 2½ cups raisins
- 1 tablespoon ground cardamom
- 2 teaspoon whole cloves
- 2 sticks cinnamon
- Zest of one orange
- 2½ cups granulated sugar
- 8 cups water
- 1 gallon dry red wine
- Whole Blanched almonds, to serve

Combine spices, raisins, orange peel, sugar, and water. Bring to a boil. Turn down heat and simmer for at least 15 minutes. Strain saving the raisins for serving. Add the liquid to the wine in a pan large enough to accommodate both. When ready to serve, heat to simmering. Place 2–3 almonds and a few of the raisins in each punch cup (or mug), and ladle the mulled wine into the cup. Serve with cookies or, of course, æbleskiver.

Note: If desired, some Danish aquavit (snaps) or vodka may be added to the wine mixture when heating.