

September 2023

SWEET, SWEET PINEAPPLE:

**Australian Fresh Pineapple and Lemon Salad
with Pineapple Sage**

**Cinnamon Fried Pineapple over Pound Cake
with Ice Cream**

**Grilled Pineapple with Ice Cream and Cardamom Sauce
Pineapple Cake**

Pineapple Pudding with Mascarpone and Sour Cream

Biologically, the pineapple, *Ananas comosus*, is a somewhat unusual fruit since each beautiful fruit we see is, in truth, a group of berries that have coalesced. It was first observed and tasted by European explorers during their visits to the Americas. Christopher Columbus recorded the encounter in Guadeloupe in 1493. The striking resemblance to pine cones was noted and led to the name *piña* and eventually to the name by which we know this fruit, pineapple. How the fruit survived the long ocean voyages to Europe without molding has long puzzled me, but pineapples did reach Europe. It was nothing less than a sensation after an initial stumble or two. Emperor Charles V was completely turned off since his first taste was from a pineapple that had simply rotted by the time it was presented to him. Other presentations were more successful prodding the wealthy to press their estate gardeners to attempt cultivation in greenhouses. The rotting produce soon sprouted and became prized specimen plants for European royals. Perhaps they found the real gold they had been seeking . . .



developing pineapple bud in field

The pineapple is said to have been introduced to the Sandwich Islands, later Hawaii, in the 1500s, becoming a commercial product when John Kidwell began cultivation. However, it was not until 1900, when James Dole established a pineapple plantation, that cultivation reached the level of profitability as a commercial export. The company began with a plantation of sixty acres on Oahu. Hawaiian cannery operations were discontinued by Dole in 1991 and, subsequently, in 2008, by Del Monte. Dole Plantation did, however, continue pineapple cultivation on Oahu, shipping its harvest to other canneries.



mature pineapple: berries have coalesced

The Portuguese had successfully introduced the pineapple into cultivation in India, Indonesia, Madagascar, and Java; the French encouraged pineapple cultivation in their African colonies, but in the 1980s Hawaii was still satisfying seventy-five percent of the world's demands. With the advent of steamships and then airplanes, the crop loss during transport was greatly reduced, the cost of pineapples decreased, and more and more people both in Europe and the United States could afford pineapples.

In the 1950s fresh Hawaiian-grown pineapples began to appear with increased frequency in our grocery stores, even in the small Long Island village where we were living. The modest supply was descended upon by homemakers and restaurant chefs. If you were late to the feeding frenzy, you were just out of luck. My mother always chatted with the greengrocer and got a heads-up so that she wouldn't miss the arrival of the pineapples. It was like the arrival of the first bottling of the fragile French *Beaujolais* or the midnight release of a tell-all book or a fifteen-minute price cut in the old E. J. Korvettes department store. I can remember the fragrance of ripe pineapple wafting from the display bins in our local A & P.

Pineapple is very successfully canned with little loss of the from-the-field taste experience. The biting sting of bromelain and the raphides of calcium oxalate, to which some people are particularly sensitive, can be avoided with the canned fruit. Both fresh and canned pineapple products are always available, no more queuing up before dawn for the pineapple delivery. Most of the pineapple we can buy today in our local markets comes from Costa Rico, Brazil, and The Philippines, now the largest producers, but if you have ever had the opportunity to taste from-the-field Hawaiian pineapple with just a sprinkling of salt, I know you haven't forgotten.

You will find forty-one recipes from all over the world in which pineapple is a principle ingredient in the two volumes of *A Worldwide Vegetarian Journey to Discover the Foods That Nourish America's Immigrant Soul*. If that is not enough for you, this month I have gathered a few more.

AUSTRALIAN FRESH PINEAPPLE AND LEMON SALAD WITH PINEAPPLE SAGE

TPT - 4 minutes

Living in the North is considerable challenge when it comes to pineapple sage because it so very, very tender. Year after year the plants will grow full and bushy and then, in September, just before the divine red flowers are ready to burst forth, we will get an early frost. No matter how we try to protect the pineapple sage, the still coldness seeps under the row covers or sheets or peach baskets and zaps the plants. It is absolute joy when we win and can enjoy the beauty of and the taste of the pineapple sage blooms which are deliciously fruity with just a hint of mint. Since only fresh pineapple sage leaves will do, remember this refreshing and beautiful salad at the end of the summer, when the pineapple sage in your herb garden is flourishing.

The small pineapple cultivars are generally sweeter than the larger varieties so the small, cored produce-department offering are often a better choice than going to all the work to prepare the whole uncut fruit.

1 small, cored fresh pineapple (about 1 pound)

—peeled and cut into chunks to yield about

2 1/2 cups*

2 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice

1 1/2 teaspoons wildflower honey

**1 teaspoon finely slivered, home-grown, spray-free
pineapple sage leaves****



Home-grown, spray-free pineapple sage flowers
—stamen and pistils removed—for garnish***

In a shallow serving bowl, scatter the pineapple chunks.

In a small bowl, combine lemon juice, honey, and the *finely slivered* pineapple sage leaves. Combine thoroughly. Pour over pineapple. Stir to coat each pineapple chunk with the lemon–honey mixture. Refrigerate, if not to be served immediately.

When ready to serve, garnish with the pineapple sage flowers.

Yields 4 servings

Notes: *Pear halves or pear slices can be prepared in the same way.

**Insects often lay their eggs on the underside of leaves so be careful to wash herb leaves well.

***Pineapple sage (*Salvia elegans*) is indeed an elegant member of the large sage family. It is hardy only to zone 9 and, therefore, is generally treated as an annual in all but the warmest of winters. The pineapple-scented leaves and the scarlet flowers, which appear in the late summer, attract bees and hummingbirds to the garden, making this a must in any herb garden plan. Under ideal conditions of full sun and sufficient water, a pineapple sage plant will usually reach two to three feet in height. Even if pineapple sage is grown only for the leaves, it is a beautiful and wonderfully fragrant plant.

This recipe can be halved or doubled, when required.

1/4 SERVING – PROTEIN = 0.4 g.; FAT = 0.5 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 14.7 g.;
CALORIES = 58; CALORIES FROM FAT = 8%

CINNAMON FRIED PINEAPPLE OVER POUND CAKE WITH ICE CREAM

TPT - 29 minutes

Pineapple, prepared like this, is a delicious ending to a meal just as it is. Spooned over pound cake with the sweet buttery sauce in which it was simmered, it becomes quite sophisticated. Add some ice cream and it's a very special splurge for a very special celebration. Our favorite ice creams to gild this beautiful combination are French vanilla and chai [see recipe archive – April 2022].



2 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons light brown sugar
**1 cup pineapple chunks or tidbits, canned in
pineapple juice—well-drained**

3/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon
1/2 teaspoon vanilla paste*

2 slices pound cake

2/3 cup ice cream, of choice

In a skillet set over *LOW-MEDIUM* heat, melt butter. Add brown sugar and well-drained pineapple chunks. Allow to cook, stirring frequently, for 10-15 minutes.

Add ground cinnamon and vanilla paste. Simmer, stirring frequently, until the syrup thickens and coats the pineapple. Remove from heat. On each of two dessert plates place a slice of pound cake. Spoon *one-half* of the pineapple chunks with syrup over each slice of pound cake. Divide the ice cream between the servings.

Serve at once.

Yields 2 individual servings

Note: *Vanilla paste is a way to add the flavor of vanilla to your cooking inexpensively and without the alcohol used to make vanilla extract. Flavorful vanilla seeds, scraped from pods, are immersed in a sugar base. It is available online from several mail order sources.

This recipe can be doubled, when required.

1/2 SERVING – PROTEIN = 5.2 g.; FAT = 23.6 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 66.1 g.;
CALORIES = 489; CALORIES FROM FAT = 45%

GRILLED PINEAPPLE WITH ICE CREAM AND CARDAMOM SAUCE

TPT - 20 minutes

I had a lovely cored pineapple and I, luckily, had made ice cream the day before. We had an elegant ending to an impromptu evening of good conversation. Since the warm cardamom sauce solidifies into a crisp topping when it hits the cold ice cream, there is contrast of textures in this dessert that is unusual.

3 tablespoons butter
1/4 cup light brown sugar
1/2 teaspoon ground cardamom

4 slices fresh pineapple

2 cups vanilla ice cream, of preference

In a **sauce warmer** set over *LOW-MEDIUM* heat, melt butter. Add sugar and ground cardamom. Cook, stirring frequently, until sauce becomes thick enough to coat the spoon—about 10 minutes. Remove from heat. Set aside until required.

Using a preheated grill pan set over *MEDIUM-HIGH* heat, grill pineapple slices briefly. Turn once after first side shows grill markings and grill the other side until it too is marked.

Place a grilled slice of pineapple on each of four dessert plates. Place a scoop of ice cream on top of each pineapple slice. Spoon some of the warm cardamom sauce over.

Serve at once.

Yields 4 individual servings

Notes: *The sauce can be prepared a day ahead of time, refrigerated, and warmed just before serving.

This recipe is easily halved or doubled, when required.



1/4 SERVING – PROTEIN = 4.5 g.; FAT = 18.4 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 46.9 g.;
CALORIES = 367; CALORIES FROM FAT = 45%

PINEAPPLE CAKE

TPT - 1 hour and 30 minutes;
40 minutes = cooling period

The softness of cake flour creates a contrasting textural medium into which pineapple can insert its brash brightness perfectly. Pullet eggs are still available in our local markets. These small eggs can be useful tools to the cook who is downsizing recipes like this. If you do not buy jumbo eggs or pullet eggs, use the whites of one and one-half large eggs.

1 jumbo egg white or egg whites from 2 pullet eggs

3/4 cup sifted cake flour

3/4 teaspoon baking powder

1/4 (scant) teaspoon baking soda

3 tablespoons butter—softened to room temperature

5 tablespoons sugar

6 tablespoons crushed pineapple—well-drained

3/4 teaspoon freshly squeezed lemon juice

**1/4 teaspoon very finely crushed dried mint or
pineapple sage leaves, as preferred**

Preheat oven to 350 degrees F. Prepare a **6-inch cake pan** by coating with lecithin non-stick spray coating.

Using an electric mixer fitted with *grease-free* beater(s) or by hand, using a *grease-free* wire whisk, beat egg whites in a *grease-free* bowl until *stiff*, but *not dry*. Using a spatula, scrape the whipped egg whites into a small bowl. Set aside until required.

In a small bowl, combine sifted cake flour, baking powder, and baking soda. Stir to mix well. Set aside briefly.

Using the electric mixer fitted with a paddle, cream butter until light and fluffy. Add sugar and continue creaming until again light and fluffy. Scrape down sides of bowl as necessary.

Add dry ingredients. Beat into creamed ingredients until well-blended.

Add *well-drained* crushed pineapple, lemon juice, and *very finely* crushed, dried mint or pineapple sage leaves. Combine well.

Add whipped egg whites and *whisk-fold* them into the batter. Turn into prepared cake pan. Bake in preheated 350-degree F. oven for 25 minutes, or until the cake is firm in the center and light brown. Do not allow the cake to brown around the edge. Transfer to a wire rack and allow to cool completely—at least 40 minutes. Transfer to a serving plate.

Cover leftovers to preserve moistness. Refrigerate leftovers but bring to room temperature before serving.

Yields 6 servings

1/6 SERVING – PROTEIN = 2.0 g.; FAT = 7.2 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 24.3 g.;
CALORIES = 172; CALORIES FROM FAT = 38%



PINEAPPLE PUDDING WITH MASCARPONE AND SOUR CREAM

TPT - 6 minutes

Peeled and cored fresh pineapple is a joy but does not keep well so it requires a bit of menu planning where there are only two of us for dinner. One evening I decided I wanted to use up the fresh pineapple that was in the refrigerator but I wanted to do just a bit more with it than I had done the evening before. The refrigerator yielded mascarpone from Ray's heritage and sour cream from mine. In minutes we had a dessert that seemed quite special; not just fruit, but a pudding as well. Oh I do love a "pud" as easy as this.

2 tablespoons mascarpone cheese—brought to room temperature

1 tablespoon light dairy sour cream

1 tablespoon fat-free sweetened condensed milk

2 slices fresh pineapple—sliced into tidbit-sized pieces

In a mixing bowl, using a wooden spoon or wooden spatula, work *mascarpone* cheese until soft.

Gradually work sour cream into the cheese and then *gradually* mix in the sweetened condensed milk. Mix until smooth.

Add pineapple pieces. Fold them into the cheese–sour cream mixture.

Refrigerate for no more than an hour before serving.

Serve chilled.



Yields 2 servings

1/2 SERVING – PROTEIN = 2.2 g.; FAT = 3.8 g.; CARBOHYDRATE = 18.2 g.;
CALORIES = 123; CALORIES FROM FAT = 28%

*I've gathered a few recipes for next month
to use some of those tools we all have squirreled away in our kitchens,
tools that really could contribute to prep. efficiency.
Do drop by as our winter cooking season closes in,*

Judy

Please note that all food value calculations are approximate and not the result of chemical analysis.

Copyright © 2021