

The Gift of Friendship



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In a world that seems, at least from where I sit, as torn by violence and conflict today as ever before in human history, it seems worthwhile to ponder ways of reaching out to others in the year ahead.

When people break bread together, they celebrate life and affirm their common humanity. In anticipation of new friends and allies, we might all start the new year with old-fashioned Amish Friendship Cake. For anyone who doesn't know it, the recipe appears below.

Starter

3 cups sugar

3 cups flour

3 cups milk

On day 1, combine 1 cup sugar, 1 cup flour, and 1 cup milk in a glass or plastic bowl. Stir the mixture with a wooden or plastic spoon (do not use metal or an electric mixer). Drape a paper towel, cloth towel, or waxed paper over the bowl and leave it out at room temperature. (Do not refrigerate.)

On days 2, 3, and 4, stir the mixture once, again using only a wooden or plastic spoon.

On day 5, add 1 cup sugar, 1 cup flour, and 1 cup milk, afterward stirring.

On days 6, 7, 8, and 9, stir the mixture once, again using only a wooden or plastic spoon.

On day 10, add 1 cup sugar, 1 cup flour, and 1 cup milk. Give 1 cup of the mixture to each of three friends, reserving the rest of the starter for yourself, and make the cake following the recipe below.

Amish Friendship Cake

1 cup starter	2 tsp vanilla
2/3 cup oil	1-1/2 tsp cinnamon
3 eggs	1 cup sugar
2 cups flour	1/2 cup raisins, chopped apples, candied fruit, chopped dates, mashed banana, or chopped nuts (optional)
2 tsp baking powder	
1/2 tsp baking soda	
1/2 tsp salt	

Combine all of the ingredients in a mixing bowl. Grease and flour or sugar two 5 x 9 inch bread pans. Divide the batter between the pans and bake in a 350 degree oven for 40-45 minutes. Cool, turn out, and slice.

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