

Funny how one thing reminds you of another? We grew up in a big rambling house in the west side of Vancouver. It was a time of parents putting work-horses across the road so the kids could play hockey, Hallowe'en would be the scent of smoky piles of raked up maple leaves, and all the neighbours would bring their fireworks to our front yard. We had the dentist that always gave us each a toothbrush, the grumpy old man that no one would go to his door, and a woman who made decorated cookies for us that were barely palatable (thank goodness for our Newfoundland, Tasha). Our Dad worked in the food import business, mainly food from China. We were always excited to see just what he'd found to pass out to the Trick or Treaters. The best were the orange flavoured jelly slices that were wrapped in a Goldfish printed wrapper, with a long flowing tail and a shiny orange ribbon.

This recipe is from Elva Thorpe, a dear lady who lived kitty-corner to us across the lane. That's how we used to talk! I hope people still do. She was old enough to be our grandmother, and made wonderful apple muffins and this loaf. I still have Mom's hand-written recipe cards from then. I've used other recipes, but still come back to Mrs. Thorpe's, it's either because it's the best one, or it always triggers memories of a wonderful childhood.

Cranberry Orange Loaf

This makes enough for two 9" x 5" loaves or three smaller 8"x4" loaves. I always believe that if you're going to take the time to bake, make a bit more. It's nice to share, or simply to put in the freezer for when you don't have the time to bake.

Cranberries are fresh in the fall and winter months. Just put a couple of bags in the freezer and they'll last for at least 6 months. Also, you're going to be using the zest of two oranges, but the juice of four. Zest all the oranges, and put half of the zest in the freezer for another use and use the rest in the recipe.

Ingredients:

4 c flour

1½ c sugar

1 T baking powder

1½ t salt

1 t baking soda

½ c canola oil

zest from 2 oranges

juice from 4 oranges – you'll need 1½ c of juice if you don't have quite enough, top it off with water.

2 eggs

2 c cranberries, chopped (I use a processor, noisy but effective!)

1 c chopped walnuts (optional)

Directions:

Preheat the oven to 350°

Prepare pans by oiling the bottoms only. This helps the loaves to rise properly and stops them from doming.

Whisk the dry ingredients together in a large bowl.

In another bowl, mix together the oil, zest, juice & eggs. Mix until uniform.
Add the liquid ingredients to the dry ingredients. Mix until just moistened.
Stir in chopped cranberries and nuts.
Put equal amounts in the pans, and level with a spatula.
Bake in the center of the oven for 1 hour for small loaves, or 1 hour 10 minutes for the larger ones. Test the loaves with a toothpick at the time shown. It should come clean with no batter sticking to it. If there's some batter, give it another 5 minutes, and recheck.
Let cool in the pans for 20 minutes before moving to racks to finish cooling.
Slice and enjoy!