

We grew up in a large house built in the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It stood on the corner lot, anchoring our neighbourhood. There seemed to be kids in every second house, parents with good friendships built during their time there, and we were all well known to each other. We'd play Kick-the-Can through the summer evenings using a four-block area, and we'd make wild sled courses in the wonderful occasions of snow, down through 35<sup>th</sup> Avenue.

Through these years, our neighbours from two doors down, the Scotens would come over for lunch on Christmas day. I'm sure all of us children had been up for hours by this point in the day. Between their family of 8 and ours of 6, it made for a house full, slightly chaotic with a large dog thrown in for measure. Lunch was made up of simple sandwiches and treats. And every year, Mrs. Scoten, known much more familiarly as Auntie Paul (Pauline), would bring Cheesy Pleasies, and Rumballs; one extremely savory, and the other sweet. For us the Rumballs were probably our first taste of alcohol, and feeling very grown up, we'd savor them. Their rich chocolateness filled with cherries and nuts was very much our Christmas treat. When I'd moved away from home, and was going to do my own family Christmas, I remember writing to Auntie Paul and asking for the recipe. She passed away this year, well into her nineties; I know she'd be so pleased to have me share her recipe.

As you'll see this is a very simple recipe with broad measurements for several of the ingredients. I usually use all the smaller amounts listed, but have been know to fill them chock full of cherries and nuts on occasion, and you'll need the larger amount of sour cream to help bind them together if you decide to go this route.

### *Auntie Paul's Rum Balls*

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#### **Ingredients**

1 c cocoa

1 c icing sugar

2 c fine chocolate wafer crumbs (I use the boxed Oreo brand crumbs, or make my own using slender chocolate wafers, and crush them with a rolling pin.)

½ - 1 c glacé cherries, drained & chopped

½ - 1 c chopped walnuts

¼ c dark rum

¼ - ½ c sour cream

Chocolate hail or finely chopped walnuts to roll the Rumballs in

#### **Directions**

In a good-sized bowl, whisk together the icing sugar and cocoa.

Mix in the cookie crumbs.

Add in the cherry pieces, and mix.

Add in the walnut pieces, and mix.

Drizzle the rum over the mixed ingredients, and stir well.

Add in the sour cream, and mix until all the ingredients are well incorporated.

Form the mixture into 1" balls; it will be slightly messy.

Roll in the topping of your choice.

Store in wax paper separated layers in a sealed container (an old cookie tin works perfectly), at room temperature for up to 2 weeks.

The Rumballs can be served simply on a plate, or in individual mini paper baking cups.