Planning a hochzeit? **Serve kuchen!**

Claudia Burrer made homemade kuchen and pickles for a wedding reception last year in Lincoln. In many rural communities across North Dakota, kuchen (the German word for cake) is common. But for one of Claudia’s nieces, who was visiting from out-of-state, the kuchen was a real treat. She kept raving about the recipe, and saying that younger generations needed to learn how to make the dessert and keep their family heritage alive.

Claudia, a Capital Electric Cooperative member, agreed to give a hands-on demonstration. In August 2012, the family held a reunion at the Mehlhoff Lodge east of Aberdeen, S.D. Daughters, daughter-in-laws, nieces and nephews’ wives spent the better part of a day learning to make kuchen. The men went boating or fishing, and when they came back to the lodge, the kuchen was warm and ready to eat. Claudia’s brother, Milbert, entertained the family with accordion music.

The original recipe, passed down from Claudia’s mother-in-law to sister-in-law, originally used cream and eggs instead of pudding.

“In those days, you had cream and eggs galore,” she reflects. Claudia adapted the recipe and makes a variety of fruit kuchen. She says prune is her favorite, but many of her five children, nine grandchildren and six great-grandchildren prefer peach.

Born near Hosmer, S.D., Claudia Mehlhoff married Edmund Burrer in 1949. The couple bought land north of Wing to farm, and moved to North Dakota in 1966. She has lived in the couple’s retirement home a few miles down the road, since 1982. Ed passed away in 1992.

Claudia Burrer, a Capital Electric Cooperative member from north of Wing, was dubbed the “kuchen queen” by family members, who treasure her recipe and their German heritage.

A remarkable example of Touchstone Energy’s® value of commitment to community, Claudia serves as secretary of the Wing Senior Center and treasurer of the Bethlehem Evangelical Lutheran Church women’s group. She also coordinates and makes beautiful quilts — and her mother’s lemon pie recipe, blachinda (pumpkin turnover) and many other German dishes. She also enjoys gardening and canning. Claudia is 87 years old.

This summer, the family plans to reunite at the lodge, and Claudia is once again giving a lesson. This time, her family has requested to learn how to make “Bismarcks,” a raised doughnut made light with yeast rather than baking powder. Bismarck doughnuts can be stuffed with jelly filling and topped with icing.

In this issue of North Dakota Living, Claudia shares her Kuchen and Raised Doughnuts recipes. We thank her for inviting North Dakota Living staff to her home and sharing some peach kuchen.

If you are planning a wedding this summer, give guests a taste of German heritage with Claudia’s Kuchen recipe. Claudia warns that it doesn’t always turn out the same way, so make it several times before the big day. And, make sure you have plenty of friends to share with — or plenty of freezer space — as the recipe makes 12 pie-like pastries.

“Viel Gluck!”

**Recipe Roundup**

**by Carmen Devney**

Claudia Burrer, a Capital Electric Cooperative member from north of Wing, was dubbed the “kuchen queen” by family members, who treasure her recipe and their German heritage.

**Claudia Burrer** is a communications specialist for the North Dakota Association of Rural Electric Cooperatives, Capital Electric Cooperative and Mor-Gran-Sou Electric Cooperative.
KUCHEN

DOUGH
- 2 packages yeast (4 tsp.)
- 3 eggs, beaten
- ¾ cup Crisco
- 1 cup sugar
- ½ tsp. salt
- 2 cups warm water, divided
- 5 or 6 cups flour

FILLING
- 5 oz.-box vanilla pudding, cooked according to package and cooled
- 2 cups sugar
- 2 cups cream
- 6 eggs
- 4 T. flour
- Pinch of salt

For dough, mix 1 cup water, sugar and yeast; let rise. In a large bowl, mix sugar, Crisco, eggs, salt and remaining warm water. Add yeast mixture and 5 or 6 cups flour to make soft dough; let rise for 1 hour. Roll out dough portions for each 9” pan; let rise approximately ½ hour. For the filling, mix the sugar, cream, eggs, flour and salt; add a third of the pudding. Pour on top of crust and sprinkle with cinnamon. Bake at 350 degrees until the filling sets.

Claudia’s test notes: Plan to spend a lot of time! This recipe makes about 12 kuchen, depending on the thickness of the crust. I use 9” x 1 ½ circular pans and bake two at a time. You can use this same recipe and add prunes, peaches, apricots, blueberries, or even cottage cheese to each pan. Pour the filling on top of the fruit. The kuchen freezes well.

RAISED DOUGHNUTS
- 2 cups milk
- 2 packages yeast
- 6 ½ cups flour, divided
- ½ cup Crisco
- ½ cup sugar
- 2 tsp. salt
- 2 eggs

Heat milk to lukewarm. Add yeast and 2 ½ cups flour; cover. Let rise about 2 hours. Cream Crisco, sugar and salt; add eggs and blend. Stir mixture in yeast sponge and add about 4 cups flour. Mix and let rise again, about 2 hours. Roll out, cut, and let rise 1 or 2 hours. Deep fry. Drain on paper towel. Glaze, sugar or frost.

Claudia Burrer, Wing
Capital Electric Cooperative
Published in the Wing Music Boosters/Kitchen Highnotes cookbook