



A monthly e-newsletter brought to you by Merit Swiss Asian School of Hotel Management, Ooty.



A gamut of events at MERIT!

SPECTRUM



"Just as our eyes need light to see, our mind needs ideas in order to conceive."
Mr. Pumpko

DECEMBER 2010 - JANUARY 2011

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Dear Readers,

To begin with, we at MERIT wish you a beautiful winter!!!

November flew by quite rapidly for our final year post and undergraduates as they were busy suiting up for the placement interviews. We can see a sense of maturity, responsibility and excitement on each face as they take a step further to enter into the real world and take control of their lives. Wishing them all luck and success for the next set of interviews in January.

The chilling cold and rain in Ooty did not deter the MERIT spirit of getting together and celebrating, by even a fraction. This month we hosted the "Discovering India" Quiz competition for all English speaking schools in Nilgiris. Eighteen teams participated, and oodles of chocolates were given out, not just to the contestants but also to the audience, but hey, only if you got the answer right! We dedicate this issue to the festive occasion of Christmas featuring an article on the significance of its various traditions. There's something special for our food lovers - delicious and easy to prepare Christmas recipes. Go on, spoil yourself in its sweetness! We thank Mr. Mani of Chennai for sending us some captivating pictures on imaginative craft ideas using fruits & vegetables. I'm sure they'll excite the hidden artist in all of us.

Lastly, on behalf of the entire editorial team, I apologise for not being able to drop off our January issue in your inbox as we will be closing for Winter Vacations till 16 January 2011. Once again, wishing you a MERRY CHRISTMAS and a not so far NEW YEAR 2011. We will eagerly await your New Year's Resolutions in our inbox!

Deshna Chaudhary

Editor of the Month



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The tradition of Christmas



CHRISTMAS celebrates the birth of the Old English *Christes Maesse*, or except the Armenian Church observe Armenians follow the old Eastern custom of honouring Christ's birth on January 6 and in some parts of the United States this date has been celebrated as "Old Christmas" or "Little Christmas".

Burning the Yule log was adopted to English custom from the ancient Scandinavian practice of kindling huge bonfires in honour of the winter solstice. The idea of using evergreens at Christmas time also came to England from pre-Christian northern European beliefs and they symbolise eternal life.

The evergreen holly was worshipped as a promise of the sun's return, and some say that Christ's crown of thorns was made of holly. Legend tells that the berries were once white, but when the crown was pressed upon Jesus' brow, the drops of blood turned the berries bright red.



While there are many ideas about the origin of the Christmas tree, it is widely believed that Martin Luther began the custom in Germany. The sight of an evergreen tree on Christmas Eve, with stars blazing above, is said to have made a great impression on him, and he put a similar tree, decorated with lighted candles, in his home.

A well-loved Christmas custom is the singing of Christmas carols. The word "carol" is thought to have originally denoted a dance accompanied by singing. 13th century Italy is considered the birthplace of the real Christmas carol, and St. Francis of Assisi, who led songs of praise to the Christ Child, is thought to be the father of this custom.



The beloved image of Santa Claus as a fat, jolly, bearded old man derives from St. Nicholas, an austere-looking 4th century Christian bishop of Asia Minor, who was noted for his good works. But the image of Santa in fur-trimmed dress that ultimately captured the imagination was drawn in the US by the cartoonist Thomas Nast in 1863.



The tradition of Christmas

As we get ready to welcome Christmas with you my recipe of Christmas Plum



Mr. D. Rajmohan
Sr. Faculty-Patisserie

2011, it gives me great joy to share Cake and Chocolate Fudge.

Christmas Plum Cake

For soaking:

- Cashewnut powder- 50 gms
- Raisins- 100 gms
- Candied fruits- 100 gms
- Glazed cherry- 50 gms
- Black currants- 50 gms
- Dates- 50 gms
- Orange peel- 20gms
- Ginger peel/ ginger powder- 20 gms
- Spice powder- 20 gms
- Rum- 100 ml
- Brandy- 100 ml
- Red wine- 50 ml
- Whisky- 50 ml

Take all the fruits, orange peel, ginger peel and cashewnut powder in a big bowl and mix it thoroughly. Pour all the liquors in the bowl. The mixture should be well soaked in the liquor. Cover it tightly and keep aside. Use this mixture during preparation. Soak the fruits at least a month before preparation.



For the Cake :

- Flour- 250 Gms
- Sugar- 250 Gms
- Margarine-250 Gms
- Eggs- 5 nos
- Black jack- As Required
- Baking powder- 5 gms
- Mixed fruit essence- As required

Whisk the eggs with sugar and keep it aside. Sieve the flour with baking powder. Cream the fat well and add the sieved flour along with it. Add the beaten egg mixture with fat mixture little by little. Add the essence. Add the soaked fruits along with the mixture. Make sure the mixture should not curdle. Pour the batter in a prepared mould. Bake it at 180°C for about 30 to 40 minutes. After baking, demould , cool and serve it.

Please note : Soaking can be done 3 or 4 months in advance to enhance the flavour of the cake. Plum cake tastes better with age. If the mixing procedure is done hygienically, the cake stays fresh for even six months.



Home-made Chocolate Fudge

- Condensed Milk- 1 tin(400 gms)
- Chopped & roasted Cashewnuts or Almonds - 100 gms,
- Cocoa Powder- 50 gms
- Butter- 50 gms
- Sugar- 100gms

Pour Milkmaid into a thick bottomed pan. Add butter and sugar in to the pan. Add cocoa and nuts. Stir on gentle heat till the mixture leaves the sides of pan. Pour evenly in to a buttered dish. Allow it to set & cool. Then cut and serve.



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PAGE 4, DEC '10- JAN '11

Foodland!! Imaginative creations with fruits & vegetables

Mr. K. R. Mani
Parent of student, Rakshaa Mani





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Quizmaster Dr. N Gopalakrishnan conducted the Quiz in a flamboyant manner.

Discovering India

Quiz Competition 2010

36 Participants. 12 Finalists. 6 Winners!!



The winners!! First and second place goes to J S S International School, Ooty. Third place goes to Laidlaw Memorial School, Ketti.



Vegetable carving on display, the creation of Mr. Nandakumar and his dextrous team.



Manoj, MERIT's very own P C Sarkar, kept the audience spellbound with his magic tricks.



MERIT students-the perfect hosts! They cooked and served our guests a sumptuous lunch