

Holidays sparkle with CHRISTMAS DOUGHNUTS

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Iowa Farmer Today

BRIGHTON — Iowa Farmer Today learns about great cooks in many ways.

Sometimes, one of their children calls or drops us a note, recommending Mom or Dad. Often, a neighbor lets us know.

That's how we happened upon Katie Mineart of Brighton. We called Karen Schafer to see if she would do a cook story with us. She agreed. Her husband, Lee, wondered if we were looking for a Christmas cook.



Katie Mineart

Of course, we said.

Well, just across the road, Katie Mineart makes doughnuts every Christmas and gives them to her neighbors.

So, on the day we went to do a story with Karen, we stopped in and visited Katie's kitchen, too.

Katie stood at the counter, tending what looks like a waffle iron. All the while her husband, Leroy, sat at the kitchen table. He dipped a broad-bladed knife into sugary icing, slathering each doughnut.

The Schafers enjoy their neighbors — and the doughnuts.

These aren't common doughnuts. They come out of an iron with triangular molds, and she uses paraffin, not grease.

"I've had it for 58 years," Katie says.

But the doughnut maker dates back almost a century, she says. A small metal nameplate on the front of the iron reads, "Brown Bobby Greaseless Doughnut Machine."

The recipe works only with this machine, Katie says, noting it has been unsuccessfully tried with other doughnut-makers.

She has only half of the machine, which originally made a dozen doughnuts at once. The doughnut maker came from her best friend's mother, who ran a restaurant in Missouri, before 1910. Her friend, Jeanne Kemmerers of Idaho, has the other half. From what she and the Schafers can tell, the company licensed the recipes to cafe and restaurant owners, who bought the doughnut makers.

Katie is content to make the doughnuts for her family and friends. But she worries just a bit someone will think she's infringing on a patent.

"Nobody better get the idea I'm selling (doughnuts)," she says. "We do it for family."

The Christmas tradition remains popular with the Schafers' two daughters. Both have moved away, but remain fans of the triangu-

lar doughnuts.

"I talked to Amy last night," Karen said, referring to their youngest daughter.

"And she asked, 'Is it going to be pink frosting or white?'"

Since it wasn't Christmas-time when Katie made doughnuts, she opted for white frosting.

"We'd like to find another machine," Katie says.

Seated at the table, hard at work frosting doughnuts, Leroy isn't so sure.

"In the end, you may not want to find one," he counters. "It's an awful lot of work."

Katie has looked far and wide. She knows of another in the Quad Cities. She found a company sign in a Kansas antique store.

She makes doughnuts in batches, seven to eight dozen at a time. When making them for Christmas, Katie decorates the doughnuts with Red Hots or Christmas candies.

Karen explains just how hooked her daughters are on these treats.

"My girls come here and they don't even say 'Merry Christmas,'" Karen confides. "They say, 'Has Katie been here?'"

Fortunately, Katie makes the doughnuts five or six times a year. "I make 'em at Easter. At Valentine's Day."

She pauses.

"What a deal, four, five, six times a year."

She often makes a double batch. The doughnuts freeze well, she says.

Thanksgiving and Christmas finds a gaggle of children and grandchildren in this Washington County farmhouse.

The Minearts are semi-retired from farming. Their daughter, Rosemary Pacha and husband Gerald live down the road. Gerald farms the Minearts' land.

The Minearts have six children, 22 grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.

"I think last year we had 44" for Thanksgiving dinner, Katie says.

"We have to have snacks that last all day."

This includes Pumpkin Chiffon Pie; Pizza Rye Snacks, which freeze well; Gumdrop Cookies; and Dip.

Katie makes Gumdrop Cookies throughout the year. But the recipe came from her mother, who called them Sugarplum Bar Cookies. She baked them only at Christmas.

When it comes down to a taste test, the Light Pumpkin Pie might tie the much-beloved triangular doughnuts. The kids love the pie, too.

"Can't have Christmas or Thanksgiving without it."



ABOVE: Katie Mineart of Washington County whips up another batch of triangular doughnuts on her nearly 100-year-old "Brown Bobby Greaseless Doughnut Machine." She says despite its age, it keeps working.

LEFT: Mineart's husband, Leroy, uses a broad-bladed knife to slather frosting on the doughnuts.

Mineart makes doughnuts in batches, seven to eight dozen at a time. When making them for Christmas, she decorates the doughnuts with Red Hots or Christmas candies.

Pumpkin Chiffon Pie

- ¼ C. cold water
- 1¼ C. canned pumpkin
- ½ C. milk
- ½ tsp. ginger
- 1 envelope unflavored Knox gelatin
- ½ tsp. nutmeg
- ½ tsp. cinnamon
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1 C. sugar
- 3 eggs, separated
- 1 baked pie crust

To slightly-beaten egg yolks, add ½ C. sugar, pumpkin, milk, salt and spices. Cook in a double boiler until thick. Pour cold water into a small bowl and sprinkle gelatin on top. Add to pumpkin mixture. Mix thoroughly and cool. When it begins to thicken, add remaining sugar and fold in stiffly beaten egg whites. Pour into a previously baked pie crust. Chill in the refrigerator. Pie may be covered with whipped cream. May use graham cracker crust.

Sugarplum (Gumdrop) Cookies

- 2 C. brown sugar
- ½ C. butter
- 3 eggs
- 2 T. sour milk

- 2 C. flour
- pinch of salt
- 2 tsp. baking powder
- 1 C. gumdrops, cut up
- ½ C. nuts (optional)
- 1 tsp. cinnamon

Cream butter and sugar together. Add eggs, beaten lightly. Add sour milk. Mix flour, baking powder and salt. Add to creamed mixture. Add gumdrops and nuts. Bake 25-30 minutes at 350° on cookie sheet. Mix gumdrops with part of the flour mixture, which keeps the gumdrops from sticking together. If you use a jelly roll pan, make in 1½ to 2 batches, then adjust baking time a little.

Jenny's 3-Cheese Dip

- ½ lb. Cheddar cheese
 - ½ lb. Swiss cheese
 - ½ lb. Velveeta cheese
 - 1 T. sugar
 - 2 C. mayonnaise
 - 1 tsp. dry mustard
 - 1 tsp. Accent
 - ½ tsp. garlic powder
 - 1 T. onion, chopped
- Grate Cheddar and Swiss. Grate Velveeta, then mix with mayonnaise, sugar and spices. Add grated Swiss

and Cheddar. Chill. Keeps well. Freezes well.

Pizza Rye Snacks

- 2 lbs. hamburger
- 1 lb. hot sausage
- 1 lb. regular sausage
- 2 lbs. Velveeta cheese
- 3 loaves small, party rye bread

Brown, cook and drain sausage and hamburger. Melt cheese and add to meat. Add garlic powder to taste. Spread on small rye slices. Place on cookie sheets and freeze, then put into containers and freeze. When needed, place on cookie sheets and heat 10-15 minutes at 350°.

Oyster Cracker Snacks

- 1, 12-oz. pkg. oyster crackers
- 1 envelope Hidden Valley Ranch salad dressing mix (original version)
- ½ tsp. garlic powder
- ½ tsp. lemon pepper
- 1 tsp. dill weed
- ½ C. vegetable oil

Warm the vegetable oil, sprinkle seasonings over crackers in a bowl with lid. Shake or stir gently. Cover and let stand for an hour before eating. Stir a few times, waiting 10 minutes each time.