Recipe for: Fattigman, or "Poor Man's Cookie"

From the kitchen of: Shelley McEuen-Howard

Norwegian Recipe for Fattigmand Bakkelse Cookies

- 12 egg yolks
- 1/4 cups Sugar
- 1/4 cups rich cream
- 3 egg whites
- dash salt and baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon cardamom
- 1 tablespoon Cognac (brandy)—not necessary
- 1 lemon peeling rind shredded
- Lard or Crisco
- Flour

Beat the egg yolks very well with the sugar. Whip the cream until stiff. Add the spices and Brandy. Sift in enough flour to make a soft enough dough to roll out.

It is very wise to make the dough in the evening (but don’t put in refrigerator), cover with cloth, and then use the dough the next day.

Roll out the dough as thin as possible using as little flour as possible. If you are doing this, it would be better if you cut out all the Fattigmand before you start frying them.

Put 1/4 an orange peeling in the grease when you put the grease on to heat. Probably for making a nice flavor. When you roll out the dough it might shrink back, but don’t worry. Just keep on until it gets thin. Use a pastry cutter. Cut them in long thin diamond pieces.

Norwegian Fattigmand Cookies (continued)

Make a sift in the middle and then turn one end in when making it to put in the grease. Put the lard in a deep frying pan and use a fork to turn them just like you make doughnuts. Light brown. Be careful so the lard does not get too hot and make the cookies too brown. When you take the cookies out of the fat with a fork don’t blow on them. Put them on a paper towel to absorb the excess grease.
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Story

Fattigman, or "poor man's cookie" has a long history in Norway, where my grandfather was born. There are iterations of this cookie from Italy, France, and Sweden, all involving fried dough of some kind.

The name "poor man's cookie" is misleading, as the ingredients were considered quite expensive and special. The actual cookie is quite delicate.

Our Fattigman recipe calls for cardamum, and my grandmother always used a bit of cognac. I can remember heading to Grandma Ellen and Grandpa Ben's home in Walla Walla, Washington, for Christmas dinner and looking on top of the refrigerator for the Fattigman made the week before. They were a family favorite, sprinkled with powdered sugar. I've made Fattigman with family and friends since 2006.