Welcome to a new feature for Fall – a bonus series in addition to regular episodes, a jump backward in cooking and cultural history. Since October, November, and December all contain holidays celebrated with food, I will be digging into newspaper archives and giving you recipes from early- to mid-20th century newspapers every week, or in some cases, family recipes where newspaper coverage falls short. This month, we'll be enjoying all kinds of recipes that celebrate Halloween, or Samhain. All of these recipes come from the October 26, 1913 issue of The Washington Herald, and all are different kinds of homemade candies. Some are familiar, some are difficult, and some have potentially crippling typos, but all show the difference that a century can make in popular tastes. I hope you enjoy the series.

Welcome to Bonus Episode 1, a bonus episode in a bonus series for October, November and December in The Family Cookbook. This is more than just the family cookbook, this is actually a jump back in cooking and cultural history. Since October, November, and December all contain holidays celebrated with food, I will be digging into newspaper archives and giving you recipes from early- to mid-20th century newspapers every week. This month, we'll be enjoying all kinds of recipes that celebrate Halloween, or Samhain, or Sam-hain if you want to sound wrong. Next month, we'll look at Harvest festivals and Thanksgiving. And in December, we'll look at recipes for Christmas, Kwanzaa, and Hanukkah.

All of today's recipes come from the October 26, 1913 issue of The Washington Herald. Every major newspaper of the early 20th century (and probably every minor newspaper as well) had a page like The Herald's Page for Every Woman. It was directed specifically at women. It was about food, housekeeping, and fashion. Although some of the ingredients, some of the clothes, and the overall lifestyle shot above the pocketbooks of many of its readers, the page painted a portrait of the perfect American housewife. If you think about current women's magazines, or even just popular Instagram feeds, you can see the same intent being actualized in modern media.

This page was edited by Julia Chandler Manz. She was a popular drama critic of the day, and Every Woman was her solid gig. She had a little column called Fables Of Everyday Life, where she wrote Christian-flavored morality tales. She suggested seasonal menus, gave cleaning tips, recommended perfect party favors, and generally told all women how to be the best wives they could be.

This particular issue was centered on Halloween, and featured recipes for sweets. The recipes themselves are familiar, but the ways in which they are strange or vary from now-common ingredients or methods provide an interesting glimpse of the American palate of a century ago. So, let's make some candy.

First, Fudge. The recipe reads:

"There is no end to the variety of fudges. Here is the recipe for a particularly good one:

"One quarter cup full of butter, 1 cup of brown sugar, 1 cup of white sugar, 1/4 cup of molasses, 1/2 cup of cream, two squares of chocolate, 1 1/2 teaspoon full of vanilla.

"Mix the cream, molasses, white and brown sugar; add to the butter, which must previously have been melted. Bring to a boil and boil vigorously for 2 or 3 minutes, stirring rapidly all the while. Add the grated or scraped chocolate. Boil for 5 more minutes, stirring rapidly at first, then more slowly. Remove from the fire and add the flavoring. Stir until it thickens. Pour into buttered pans and set away too cool. Dates or nuts, chopped, can be added."

The really interesting part of that recipe is how heavily it relies on brown sugar and molasses rather than just chocolate. I guess that would make it less expensive to make. Also, dates in chocolate fudge? Not my method or taste, but interesting.

Next up: Walnut creams

"2 cups white sugar, 1/3 cup of milk.

"Boil together for 7 minutes, then remove from the stove and beat vigorously. Add to this 2 pounds of chopped English walnuts. These must be stirred well into the cream. The candy must be cut or molded into forms."

That's a shockingly easy one. And a friend showed me the other day that there are both brain- and maggot-shaped silicone molds at Michael's, so this could be some walnutty Halloween fun.

Next is something I'd never think of for Halloween, and you might want to hang onto it for Christmas. But again, it shows how notions of appropriate seasonal eating have changed over a century.

Halloween fruit cake

"Cream 1/2 a cup full of butter and one cup full of granulated sugar, then add it to one cup full of sour milk, in which one teaspoonful of soda (baking soda) has been dissolved; then mix in 2 cupfuls of flour, a pinch of salt, 1 teaspoon full of ground cloves, one scant teaspoon full of nutmeg, 2 teaspoons full of ground cinnamon, 1/2 cup full of seeded raisins, 1/2 cup full of currents, a little finally cut up orange peel, also a little itron cut up fine (that means finely-grated lemon peel). Some cut-up figs or dates can also be added – the more fruit the better. Lastly, add half a cup full of chopped nutmeats. The fruit must have flour mixed well through it to prevent sinking. Bake in a moderate oven about 1 hour."

The only trick there is the moderate oven. What is moderate? I would think 350 degrees fahrenheit, but I would suggest looking at other fruitcake recipes for reference.

Finally, here are two that are only for the more advanced candymakers. One is difficult because it's just plain difficult, and the other is difficult because there's a typo in the recipe and they actually left an amount of an ingredient out. So, you'll have to play a guessing game. The first one, the difficult one, is Fondant. Again, Fondant Slugs would be the BOMB.

"1 pound confectioners sugar, 1 teacupful of cold water, 1 saltspoonful of cream of tartar.

"Stir all three ingredients together. Boil until it forms a jelly-like mass when dropped in cold water. Remove from the stove and let stand 10 minutes. Beat vigorously until soft, creamy consistency is reached. To the cream may be added chopped nuts or fruits, or it may be used to stuff dates or figs."

Again with the dates! Now the main problems I have with that are that fondant has always sounded like it's hard to make, and the measures in this recipe are a teacupful and a saltspoonful, both of which are imprecise measures in today's kitchen. Also, there's the "jelly-like mass" visual, which is just freaking me out in a general sort of way.

Finally, you tell me how much coconut milk needs to go into this because I'll be darned if I can figure it out myself. They completely left it out of the recipe. Nevertheless, here is the majority of the recipe for Coconut Candy.

"1 cup grated coconut, 1 1/2 pounds granulated sugar, 1/4 pound stoned raisins (that means seeded, not wasted or drunk), 1/2 pound of almonds, 1 pint pecans, 1/2 cup of chopped walnuts, 1/2 pound of chopped figs.

"Boil sugar and milk of coconut together for 5 minutes. Add the grated coconut. Boil for 10 minutes more, stirring constantly. Pour half of this mixture into a pan. Into the other half stir the raisins, almonds, pecans, walnuts, and figs. Be sure that the mixing is complete; then

pour this over the portion which is already in the pan."

I gather they want you to cut it up after that. Somebody didn't do their homework when they were writing this up. It's woefully incomplete, but it still sounds good.

And that's our Halloween bonus for the week! Thank you to Christopher L. Tanner and Connie Sabo for becoming valued members of the Patreon support family. They've joined my crew, which means they get to see exclusive how-to videos, among other perqs! You can join too at patreon.com/ancestorsalive. Happy Samhain and BOO! Expect Surprises!

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