

This is "cider and doughnuts" season in many people's views. There is something about the cool fall days, the ripe apples that can be ground and pressed into the sweet juice we call cider, and the festivity that goes along with the process that seems to call for an accompaniment of doughnuts.

My mother made doughnuts now and then, and I have also made them, but not recently. Our local Yoder's of Tustin store has delicious raised doughnuts on Fridays and Saturdays, and one or two now and then satisfy our taste buds.

But, I do make what many call "cake doughnuts," but what we have always referred to as "friedcakes." A few times a year, I spend a couple of hours making them by the old recipe that my maternal grandmother used.

The recipe itself is half the fun of making the friedcakes. It begins like this: "Two eggs beaten fine as silk; a cup of sugar, a cup of milk. Then add flour, just enough; not too much, or they'll be tough." The rest of the ingredients are given in a more conventional way, but the rhyme that leads into the friedcake recipe always makes me smile.

And, the friedcakes are good. I always make a double batch, so I begin with "four eggs beaten fine as silk."

Many people are deathly afraid of animal fat, so those folks wouldn't want to indulge in my friedcakes. I fry them in home-rendered lard from the pigs we raise. We usually buy a couple of small pigs in early summer when our two milk cows come fresh. Their calves take part of the milk, we milk out the rest, and we separate the milk. We churn the butter into cream, and the pigs get the skim milk. This is milk from cows that live on the grasses, forbs, and legumes of the summer pasture, and the bright, yellow butter is evidence of this. The skim milk is just as much a product of this wholesome vegetation, and we feel that the pigs are benefiting from the pasture, as well. In addition, they get all kinds of garden produce. They especially seem to enjoy zucchini, other squash, melons, and cucumbers. Tomatoes disappear from their trough, too, and we cook potatoes for them. So, though our pigs are not "free range" they are basically fed from the farm. We look on the lard from

their fat as a wholesome food.

My mother had a specific way to cook the friedcakes. When one drops them into the hot fat, the cakes bob to the surface. She flipped them over immediately, let them cook on the other side, then turned them again to the first side that had received just a "sealing" in the lard.

When they are brown, I take them out and drain them on paper lined pans. They do not taste greasy, and the amount of lard left after frying five dozen friedcakes is evidence that they have not taken up much of the fat. But, they have the flavor of the rich, home-rendered lard.

Many people prefer the friedcakes plain. Others want powdered sugar or chocolate frosting, or cinnamon and sugar coating them. I like just a fine dusting of granulated sugar. They still are not overly sweet, and most of the friedcakes go immediately into the freezer, so our consumption is somewhat regulated.

When I describe friedcakes to some people I know, their immediate distaste shows in their expressions. But, if they ever take a bite of a homemade friedcake, most of them revise their original opinions. And, we all have individual likes and dislikes, so, we are perfectly happy to consume the friedcakes without imposing them on guests.