

## Lynne Godden



*In the spring of 1979 we moved to 178 Hurst Grove to a beautiful double fronted Edwardian house with a large walled garden. It had been a home for unmarried mothers but when we bought it, it was divided into bedsits. In this perceived 'no go' area we found a community where people talked to us and shops which stayed open late, selling interesting and varied foods.*

We initially took in students from the Bedford English Study Centre and at our busiest, had eleven staying. We provided bed, breakfast and evening meal, always cooking fresh food, often bought locally. Lemon meringue pie was a favourite and I couldn't go wrong with traditional English puds such as Bakewell tart, banana custard and steamed puddings, which they all loved, regardless of their nationality. When time was tight, we had Instant Whip (or was it Angel Delight?), synthetic flavours which I wouldn't dream of buying today!

Later we changed from a guesthouse to the Hurst House Hotel, which was used mainly by young professionals and business people visiting WH Allens', Charles Wells etc. Dinner was now an optional extra but steak and kidney pudding made in individual ceramic dishes was a firm favourite.

We ran the hotel for two hectic years but in 1985 we regretfully sold up and moved as a stopgap to Winifred Rd; twenty-one years later, we're still here! I have many fond memories of the dozens of people who stayed with us and amazingly can't recall any fussy eaters, no food fads or allergies then, so what does that say for how we view food today?



*178 Hurst Grove, before and after being bought by the Goddens. Now in flats.  
(top) (left)*

Below are two easy recipes, which were always popular.

### **Gratin of Seafood with Garlic Crumble (serves 4)**

*550g fish of any variety, skinned and filleted*  
*110g peeled prawns*  
*425ml milk*  
*2 bay leaves*  
*Pinch of powdered mace*  
*40g butter*  
*40g flour*  
*1 tblsp lemon juice*  
*1 small onion chopped*  
*1/2 green pepper*  
*1 tblsp capers*  
*1 tblsp chopped fresh parsley*  
*1 tblsp oil*

Preheat oven to 190C/375F, gas mark 5. Place fish (not prawns) in a heavy pan with milk. Add bay leaves, mace, salt and pepper, and then poach fish lightly for approx. 6 mins until barely cooked. Strain. Make the sauce by melting the butter in a pan, stir in the flour and cook the roux for a couple of minutes without browning. Add the fish liquid and lemon juice a little at a time until you have a smooth sauce. Cook gently for 5 mins. Meanwhile, heat the oil in a frying pan and cook the onion and green pepper until soft. Flake the fish and place in a 3 pint (1.7 litre) ovenproof dish. Add the prawns, onion & pepper mix and capers. Stir the parsley into the sauce and pour over the fish and vegetables.



For the topping:

*110g breadcrumbs*  
*2 cloves garlic, crushed*  
*50g grated cheese*  
*25g butter*

For the crumble topping, mix the breadcrumbs, garlic, grated cheese and butter pieces together. Season then sprinkle on top of the fish. Place in a preheated oven for approx. 20 mins until golden brown.

### **Carrot Cake**

*175g carrots*  
*2 eggs*  
*100g raw brown sugar*  
*75ml sunflower oil*  
*100g wholemeal SR flour*  
*1 tsp ground cinnamon*  
*1/2 tsp ground nutmeg*  
*50g desiccated coconut*  
*50g raisins*

Grease and line a 1lb loaf tin. Whisk the eggs until thick and creamy. Whisk in the oil slowly, then add the remaining ingredients and mix well together. The mixture will be runny. Spoon mixture into prepared tin and level the surface. Bake in a preheated oven at 190C/375F or gas mark 5 for approx. 20 mins or until firm to the touch. The cake should be golden brown and a skewer inserted in the centre should come out clean. Cool on a wire cake rack.