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# The Wedding Cake: White House Chef

WASHINGTON, June 1 (AP)—Tricia Nixon's wedding cake will be a White House extravaganza, six tiers high, towering more than 6 feet tall and weighing more than 350 pounds.

It's a lemon-flavored, old-fashioned pound cake from a recipe provided by Mrs. Richard M. Nixon, and three chefs will put it together. It will have the initials of the President's daughter and her bridegroom, Edward Finch Cox, and will be iced in white, decorated with blown sugar love birds, white roses and pink-tinged cherry blossoms.

There will be enough for 600 people, although there will be only 400 wedding guests.

Henry Haller, the White House chef, was called in today to explain the creation for reporters. He promised that Tricia won't have trouble cutting the cake, as Lynda Bird Johnson did at the last White House wedding.

It took the bride, the bridegroom, Marine Maj. Charles Robb, and President Lyndon B. Johnson to cut the first slice of that wedding cake with a ceremonial sword. Their trouble was using that sword, Mr. Haller explained. He said the knife has to be put in properly at a 45 degree angle and because of the curvature of the sword, it is impossible to cut straight down.

#### Predicted Success

Tricia, the White House chef predicted, "will do a very fine job."

Work on the wedding cake began two weeks ago, and it will be assembled June 11, the day before the wedding. It is to be placed on a specially built 30-inch-high table to stand before a huge mirror in the entrance hallway of the White House for the wedding-day cake-cutting.

The mammoth cake will be built around a sugar-coated pole that rises through the six tiers, with powdered sugar and egg white between each section.

Not all of the cake is real. Mr. Haller said the main cake is the huge 5-foot-diameter,



Look Magazine

Tricia Nixon and her mother size up a cotton-and-cardboard mock-up of the wedding cake.

4-inch-high bottom layer. It is made with a dummy center and eight sections, using a specially designed pan. There are two small dummy top layers, that will hold special decorations the White House is keeping secret at the moment.

Heinz Bender, White House pastry chef since 1968, will make the cake in sections starting Saturday.

The German-born former hotel chef and Mr. Haller are calling on an old friend to create the blown-sugar decorations. He is Maurice Bonte,

pastry chef at Le Perigord restaurant in New York. Mr. Bonte started the creations two weeks ago. He will put them in a glass case and bring them to the White House by air-conditioned station wagon Saturday.

The baking starts Saturday, too, and will go on through next week, with the last layer baked three days before the wedding. The whole thing will be put together a day before the wedding with the three chefs getting in on the effort.

The details were all so complicated that Constance Stuart, Mrs. Nixon's press secretary, had to summon Mr. Haller in his white chef's outfit up from the White House kitchens today to explain it all. And it took him a half hour.

He confided that caviar and foie gras had been eliminated from the wedding buffet items "for economical reasons."

#### Hot Delicacies

But the reception will have a variety of hot delicacies including kabobs, brioches, crêpes, fondue and shrimps in coconut; canapés of capon, smoked salmon, Alaska king crab, rolled ham and roast beef, Roquefort cheese tartlets and oeufs farcis. The pastries include heart-shaped pink and white petits fours, éclairs, almond slices, berrichons, and napolitains.

The White House has provided a recipe for a scaled-down version of Tricia Nixon's wedding cake that could be baked for home use. It's one layer, big enough to serve 25 people.

1. Preheat oven to 325 degrees.

2. Cream together in a blender: one pound (2½ cups) sugar, one pound butter at room temperature, two cups and one tablespoon (8 ounces) cake flour, grated rind of two lemons and a pinch of salt.

3. Add slowly, 11 egg whites unbeaten.

4. Sift together four cups and two tablespoons cake flour and ¼ ounce (two teaspoons) baking powder. Then add to unbeaten egg mixture slowly, until smooth.



# Explains Mrs. Nixon's Recipe

5. Beat seven egg whites. Add one cup (seven ounces) sugar slowly to egg whites before egg whites are completely stiff.

5. Fold egg whites into cake flour mixture.

6. Pour batter into a 12-by-2-inch round, paper-lined cake pan and bake for about 45 minutes.

## Royal Icing:

Three egg whites,  $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon cream of tartar; and confectioner's sugar sifted as needed.

Put eggs in a large bowl. Add two tablespoons sugar and beat three minutes using

Spread cake thinly with a perforated wooden spoon.

Repeat until  $1\frac{1}{2}$  cups of sugar are used. Add cream of tartar gradually as mixture thickens. Continue adding sugar by spoonful, beating until frosting is stiff enough to spread.

icing. When this has hardened, put on thicker layer, which should be somewhat stiffer than first layer.

## Warning! It May Not Work

By **RAYMOND A. SOKOLOV**

It remains to be seen what the very high-profile wedding cake now in preparation for Tricia Nixon's wedding will taste like. But by the evidence of the recipe handed out by the White House yesterday, there may have to be some last-minute revisions—perhaps executed painstakingly on yellow legal paper like drafts of Tricia's father's speeches—if the wedding guests are going to have anything remotely resembling cake to eat.

A pilot test of Tricia's cake by Jean Hewitt, The New York Times home economist, following the official game plan down to the last pinch and smidgeon, produced mush on the outside of the layer and soup on the inside. Some parts of the proposed 12-by-2-inch layer burned even before the suggested 45-minute cooking time was over.

The oven was a mess.

The trouble was that the

cake batter overflowed the pan. The White House chef, Henry Haller, appears to have forgotten that the Nixon Administration long ago abandoned the doctrine of overkill for that of sufficiency. The Tricia cake recipe simply calls for too much egg white.

Once the batter has been poured into the specified pan (which, by the way, is a professional layer pan and not found in most households) and placed in the oven, it begins to rise, , , and rise. Even people with self-cleaning ovens will not want to risk such fallout damage.

No doubt thousands of Tricia fans across the country have already tested the recipe on their own—and found that it makes none of this perfectly clear. What can be done?

An even-handed approach is definitely required. Restraint is all important. First of all—and it must be

stressed that these are tentative suggestions which a Presidential commission will undoubtedly be able to improve on—the oven should probably be turned up higher, to 350 or so.

There are far too many egg whites, which produced too big a bang for a buck, as it were. And finally, the cooking time will probably have to be lengthened.

These problems all probably result from someone's having scaled down a large-quantity recipe without testing and making the necessary changes.

Even if the official cake does not topple on the distinguished White House guests, even if it does not make the White House ovens look like the end of a pillow fight, it will still be a lemony, sweetish nonentity of a cake. One does not, in any case, envy Mr. Cox and Miss Nixon the job of cutting into it in front of official Washington.