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A quick lesson in raisins

By Lori Gysel & Gerry Kentner

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What's Cookin

A couple of years ago, we had an article discussing raisins. Shortly afterwards, one of our loyal readers sent me this photo. It was taken while they were on holiday in Chile.

While out driving one day, they started driving by these fields and decided to pull over and see what it was all about. Low and behold they were fields of raisins (or rather grapes) drying in the sun. So thank you for sending the photo, very interesting to see how my beloved raisins come to be.

I am a huge raisin fan. I love a handful of them to munch on, I love them covered in milk chocolate and eaten in the dark of the movie theatre. And I especially love them in this dessert that

dates back to my Grandma Kentner (as a matter of fact, the pan that my mom still makes them in also dates back to my Grandma Kentner's days perhaps that is why they taste so good.)

One little trick that you may find handy is that as raisins sit in the cupboard, their natural sugars begin to crystallize, making the raisins taste gritty.

This can be solved by soaking them in hot water for a few minutes. The hot water melts the crystallization away, and rehydrates the raisin, leaving you with a softer, warm and somewhat less sweet great for a snack after supper when there's no dessert to be had!

Raisin Squares

Serves 9-12

FILLING INGREDIENTS

- 2 and a quarter cups sultana raisins
- 2 cups water
- One half cup sugar
- 3 tbsp flour
- One half tsp salt
- 1 tsp lemon juice

PASTRY INGREDIENTS

- 2 cups all purpose flour
- One half tsp salt
- 1 cup shortening
- Few tbsp ice water

METHOD

1. Bring water and raisins to a boil. Simmer for 5 minutes.
2. Mix sugar, flour and salt together. Add to simmering raisin mixture, stirring constantly. Simmer 2 minutes. Add lemon juice, then cool.
3. Mix flour and salt for pastry together. Cut in shortening until only pea-sized pieces of shorten-



ing are showing in the flour.

4. Add just enough water for the pastry to come together. Do not overmix.

5. Spray an 8 square pan with non-stick spray.

6. Roll out pastry and line pan with pastry (all the way up the sides, as well as the bottom).

7. Pour filling into pastry. Top with a piece of pastry, same size as the pan. Seal edges with water. Cut a couple of steam vents. Brush top with water and sprinkle with sugar.

8. Bake at 375 degrees for approximately 45 minutes. Allow to cool before serving.

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