Kliņģeris

Kliņģeris is a large yeast-dough sweetbread that is traditionally served on birthdays. It is shaped like a pretzel. When Chris Marley was at my mother’s for a birthday celebration, my mother mentioned that we would be having a birthday pretzel. Chris assumed that this was a joke and was taken aback when a giant pretzel, with candles was brought in and we all began to sing “Happy Birthday”.

1 envelope dry yeast  ½ tsp saffron
1 tsp sugar  ½ tsp cardamom
¼ cup lukewarm water  1 ½ cups raisins
¾ cup lukewarm water  ½ cup finely chopped citrus peel
½ cup soft butter  ½ tsp grated lemon rind
2 egg yolks  ¾ cup sliced or slivered almonds
¼ cup sour cream  1 egg white
½ tsp salt  1 tbsp strong tea
3 ¾ to 4 cups flour

Dissolve yeast and 1 tsp sugar in ¼ cup lukewarm water for 10 minutes. Steam the saffron in ¾ cup lukewarm water. Beat the next 5 ingredients together. Add the yeast mixture, liquid strained from the saffron, 2 cups flour and cardamom. Beat until smooth.

Add raisins, peel, rind, ½ cup of almonds and enough remaining flour to make a soft dough. Knead until smooth and turn into a greased bowl.

Cover and let rise until doubled. Punch down and form the dough into a long roll by rolling in between the hands and on the board until the roll is 3 feet in length. Form on an oiled cookie sheet into a pretzel shape. Oil the outside of 3 empty baby food cans or frozen juice cans and let stand in the 3 pretzel openings. Cover and let rise until puffy (2X). Brush with a mixture of egg white and tea and strew with remaining almonds.

Bake at 400 F for 10 minutes, then reduce heat to 350 F and bake 30 minutes. Cool and serve.