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**Living Homegrown Podcast – Episode 81**  
**Easy Delicious Steamed Pudding**  
**Show Notes are at: [www.LivingHomegrown.com/81](http://www.LivingHomegrown.com/81)**

Theresa: This is the "Living Homegrown" podcast, episode number 81.

Announcer: Welcome to the "Living Homegrown" podcast, where it's all about how to live farm-fresh without the farm. To help guide the way to a more flavorful and sustainable lifestyle is your host, national PBS TV producer and canning expert, Theresa Loe.

Theresa: Hey there, everybody. Welcome to the "Living Homegrown" podcast. I'm your host, Theresa Loe, and this podcast is where we talk about living farm-fresh without the farm, and I usually talk about things like canning of the harvest, raising backyard chickens, food crafts like fermenting or yogurt making, backyard food growing in small spaces, or just simple ways that you can live more sustainable in your lifestyle. As always, you can dive deeper into any of these topics and learn more about my online canning academy or any of the other things that I have cooking up by just visiting my website, [livinghomegrown.com](http://livinghomegrown.com).

Today's episode is about something a little different. I'm going to be talking about steamed pudding, and I know you're probably thinking, "That's a little odd. Why are we talking about steamed pudding?" Well, this entire podcast is about living closer to your food, and part of that is about traditional cooking and cooking from scratch and making real food and avoiding GMOs, avoiding preservatives, avoiding processed foods, all of that, and at Christmas time there are so many traditional recipes that you might want to give a try to, and I think steamed pudding is something to give a try. I really think you would enjoy it.

Now, in my world, steamed pudding has been part of our family tradition for my entire lifetime, but today it's not very trendy, and most people don't even know or understand what it really is. It's not even popular in England anymore and that's really where it originated, so I wanted to talk about it because I think doing a steamed pudding, a traditional steamed pudding with maybe some new modern ingredients is so worth your time. Like I said, they've been a tradition in my family since I was a little girl, and when people taste them they go nuts. I've shared our family recipes with many, many people, and later I find out that

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they have incorporated them as a tradition in their families as well, and you're probably thinking, "Okay, this sounds intriguing, but what is a steamed pudding, exactly?"

Well, I describe it as a cross between a super-rich, moist cake and a custard. It is not runny like a custard. It's firm, more like a cake. It's probably like a super-moist pumpkin bread or zucchini bread. That's how I would describe it, but you can make them with anything. It can be chocolate. It can be apple, blueberry, persimmon, nuts and fruit, all sorts of different things. You may have heard of plum pudding which, interestingly enough, does not have any plums in it. A traditional plum pudding is made with raisins and spices, so that's what most people think of when they think of steamed pudding, but a modern steamed pudding is so much more than that.

I'll tell you what it's not. It's not fruitcake. It's not mincemeat pie. It's not even really a pudding texture, but what it is is absolutely delicious. It's like a very rich bread, like a rich, rich pumpkin bread that is super moist and not dry, and when you top it with a sauce or a homemade whipped cream, maybe a spiked whipped cream with a little brandy or Irish cream in there, it's absolutely delicious, and I will make one up for the holidays and then I will have one that I wrap up and freeze, because steamed pudding freezes really, really well, and then I can have the second one on New Year's or later in the year for just for fun or for an event that I might be going to in February, so you can make more than one at a time and freeze the extra.

Now, I have to tell you that I think I know part of the reason why it's kind of fallen out of favor. I've noticed on the Internet that there's a lot of not so good recipes on making steamed pudding, and I've also noticed that a lot of chefs, when they do share information about steamed pudding, they make it sound really complicated and hard, and honestly, steamed pudding is one of the easiest things you can make, because you whip it up, it's like a regular cake recipe made from scratch, you put it inside of a mold, and you steam it for a few hours, and I think it's the steaming it for a few hours that throws people off. They think, "Oh, this must be really hard or complicated."

It's not. That's actually the easy part, because I usually throw it into the steamer and then I wrap presents or that's when we decorate our tree, something where I'm going to be home for a few hours while it steams, and that's it. It comes out as this super-moist cake, but a lot of the recipes on the Internet, they don't sound really appetizing and I've made a few of them that

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didn't work, so what I wanted to do today is share two of my family's recipes with you in the show notes so that you can actually make recipes that I know for a fact work and are delicious, and that would be a much better introduction, because I want you to be successful if you decide to try this, so I would start with my recipes and then you can branch out from there.

The two recipes that I'm going to share in the show notes are for steamed persimmon pudding and for mocha chocolate pudding, which is my kids' favorite. I love the persimmon pudding. That is for me, what I have to have every Christmas, but my kids love the chocolate, so we make both every year, and steamed puddings are traditionally made ... In the modern way to make them is using a steamed pudding mold, and those are those molds that look like a Bundt cake with a lid.

You'll definitely see them at antique stores, but you might also see them at some of the kitchen supply stores, and they are not really popular. Most people don't really know what they are, but that's all they are, is a mold with a lid, and I'll tell you how you can make this if you don't have a steamed pudding mold. I collect steamed pudding molds. I have since I was about 18. I have, gosh, I don't even know how many, but a lot of them are turn-of-the-century molds. They're really beautiful, and I use all of them. I use them throughout the year for different holidays, and I love the way they look, and I'll talk to you more about molds in a minute.

First, I just wanted to tell you a little bit of history, because in case you're wondering where did steamed pudding even come from, well, it actually dates back to the 17th century. Steamed puddings that we make today are actually descendants of boiled puddings made back then, so through the centuries, especially in England, they were typically either savory, like meat-based puddings, or they were sweet, and the sweet ones were made with flour and nuts and sugar, and they were wrapped up in a special bag and boiled and that was how they were made and served, but today, people mostly make sweet-based puddings and they use different types of fruit, so you might see a pudding made with persimmon or apple or blueberries, or you might see a plum pudding recipe, which is chopped up raisins and nuts and spices. Then I like to make the chocolate one, which is made with melted chocolate mixed in with flour and sugar so it makes a true from-scratch chocolate moist cake.

Now, as for the pudding molds, like I said, you can find them at kitchen supply stores. You can order them online. I will have

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links in the show notes for how you can find some of these molds, and by the way, the show notes for all of my episodes are always at [livinghomegrown.com](http://livinghomegrown.com) slash, and then the number of the episode, so for today's episode it's [livinghomegrown.com/81](http://livinghomegrown.com/81). You go there and I'll have links and more information, including the recipes that I'm talking about.

If you are looking for an actual steamed pudding mold, they're not very expensive if you buy a new one. They usually come circular. They look like little mini Bundt pans, but they can also be rectangular. They can be tall or they can be short. They can be fancy, with all kinds of carvings into them, or they can be very straight edge. It's all up to you as to whatever you want. I personally like the fancy ones because they look so pretty sitting on the dessert table, and you can get whatever you want, though.

Now one word of caution is if you decide to buy a steamed pudding mold at an antique store, sometimes you'll find a newer mold that just looks old that's not actually old, so just because it looks old doesn't mean it's 100 years old or 50 years old. It could be 10 years old and have a very old look to it, because the actual steaming process, the more you use the mold the more it ages the mold and makes it look old, so it's tricky if you haven't researched this to know if a particular mold that you find is really, really old or not, so just be wary of that.

However, you can use an old or new mold, or if you want to make this and you don't have a traditional steamed pudding mold with the snap-on lid that usually has a handle so you can pull it in and out of the steamed water, if you don't have that, you can get away with using a Bundt cake mold, so what you would do is you would take the Bundt cake mold and then you would create a lid using parchment paper or aluminum foil, and you could either tie with a cotton string or use a rubber band to hold that lid on during the steaming process.

Now, the reason that a Bundt cake mold works so great is because it has that center hole in the middle so that the steam and heat can get into the center of the cake as well as around the outside, but if you didn't have that, you could do this in just a metal bowl, and you might have to just steam your cake a little bit longer so that the pudding, when it's all finished, will be cooked all the way to the center, but a Bundt cake works perfect if you don't have a steamed pudding mold.

Now once you make a steamed pudding, the typical way to serve it is just to serve it at room temperature. I don't usually heat

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mine up when I serve it. I have it sitting on a dessert buffet and people can just slice it like a cake and add whipped cream, but you can also serve it by flaming it. That's another thing that people have done in the past, is you finish the steamed pudding, you have it sitting there on the dessert plate, and just before serving it you pour some brandy over the top and you light it on fire. It's very dramatic, but I don't typically do that. It's certainly possible, though, if you'd like to have a little flair on your holiday table. Hopefully just have a little fire extinguisher on the side just in case, but that's something that a lot of people like to do.

Okay, so let me walk you through exactly how to make a steamed pudding. I'm going to go through all the steps so you understand how to do it overall, no matter what recipe you're doing, and I'm going to also talk to you a little bit about my favorite recipe, which is a steamed persimmon recipe, and for that particular recipe I use Hachiya persimmons. Now, if you're not familiar with persimmons, there are basically two types.

There's the Fuyu persimmon, which is eaten firm. It's kind of flat and squatty, kind of like a pumpkin shape, and you eat that when it's firm and it's sweet, but the other type of persimmon is a Hachiya persimmon, and it's only sweet when it's very, very ripe. You don't want to eat it when it's firm. For that one, you want to eat it when it's very, very soft, and it's native to North America.

Both persimmons look beautiful on the tree. They're ripe in the fall time, and that's one of the reasons why they're so great to make for steamed pudding for the holidays, because this is the time of year when you can usually find them in your grocery store, or if you're lucky like me and have a friend who has a persimmon tree you can get them that way, but for the recipe that is on my website in the show notes you want to use a Hachiya persimmon, and for that you will want to buy the ... You can buy them firm and then just set them on the counter and let them sit until they get very, very soft. It usually only takes a few days. It's like ripening a pear. You can buy the pear when it's firm and then you set it on the counter and let it soften up a little bit to be edible, and that's the way the Hachiya persimmons are.

Usually for a typical steamed persimmon recipe, you would only need about two large Hachiya persimmons. I usually buy three, or what I do, because I get them from my friend, is I have already puréed them into one-cup measurements and I keep them in the freezer, and then whenever throughout the year

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that I want to make a steamed persimmon pudding, I already have it already raring to go, so that's what you would need to make the persimmon, and then of course, chocolate you would just follow the recipe that I have for you. It's just chocolate and flour, and oh my gosh, it's so good. Either one of those recipes you can use to make a steamed pudding, and here's basically what you do. First of all, you're going to want to choose your recipe, of course, whether you're using mine or something off the Internet, so pick what you want to make for your very first recipe, and the second thing you're going to want to do is gather up your equipment.

Now, you don't need anything odd or unusual other than the steamed pudding mold, but I've already told you that you could get away with not having a mold at all, so just gather it together what you would need, so either your mold or a Bundt cake with some aluminum foil or parchment paper, something to hold that on, and then what you're going to use to do the actual steaming is a tall stockpot or a canner with a lid, and this is also why I thought this was a great recipe to talk to you guys about, because so many of my listeners are canners, so you probably already have a very tall stockpot or a large canner that you would use, and it doesn't have to be huge.

It could just be a tall spaghetti pot, you know, a tall stockpot that you would use for making your noodles for spaghetti, as long as the mold that you're going to use or the Bundt cake that you're are going to use, mold, whatever mold you're using, can fit inside the pot and that there would still be an inch or so above the pot from the top of the mold. That's all you need, so you'll need your stockpot with a lid.

The other thing that I like to have but it is not necessary is to have a few marbles, a few glass marbles, and the reason is that if you accidentally forget about your steamed pudding while it is steaming away on the stove, if your water level gets too low and you have marbles in there they'll start banging around and it just gives you an audio clue that your water level is too low, so I like to use marbles in my steamed pudding pot, that's hard to say, in your steamed pudding pot, just as a way for safety so that you don't accidentally boil your pot dry while you're steaming, because that could ruin your pot, so I keep a few marbles in there, and then I like to have a tea kettle or a small pan of water sitting on the stove as well so that I can add more water throughout the process if my water level gets too low.

Lastly, another thing that's handy to have is to either have a timer or your phone so that you can set off timers for yourself so

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that you can check the water level periodically so that you don't forget about your pot of boiling water sitting on the stove.

After you have all of those things gathered together, you're going to need a large window of time in order to do the steaming. Now, that doesn't mean that it's difficult or that it's a time-consuming task. You just need to be home and around for about two to three hours to make this pudding, to be available while it's steaming. You're not actively doing anything but monitoring it, so that's why I say this is not hard.

When someone sees the recipe and they're going, "Oh my gosh, there's two or three hours of steaming," well, you're not doing anything. You're just watching the pot. You're watching a pot of boiling water and to make sure that everything is going along fine and you don't run out of water. Otherwise, it's pretty simple. You're just going to be mixing up the batter, putting it into the steamed pudding mold or your Bundt pan, and then boiling it for a few hours. That's it. Pretty easy.

What I usually do is I will make my steamed pudding when I'm doing other Christmas activities like wrapping gifts, or maybe I'll be decorating the Christmas tree with the family, or we might just be home watching a movie and I will have a steamed pudding going, so it's pretty simple. You just want to make sure you're home for that amount of time. Don't forget and run out the door while you have the steamed pudding going. That's probably the hardest part, is just not to forget about it.

Just so you understand, really what you're doing here is you are cooking this cake or bread-like mixture very, very slowly inside your steamed pudding mold so that all the moisture is kept inside, and what you end up with is this dense, flavorful cake that's uniformly moist all the way through and is yet packed with flavor. It's just a really, really delicious dessert.

Okay, so the next step after you have made sure that you have all of your ingredients and you have your window of time is you're going to grease the inside of that mold, and that's pretty easy. You can either use a nonstick spray, or what I like to do is either butter the inside or I'll use an organic vegetable shortening, and I cover not only all the nooks and crannies that are inside there, if you have a very ornate pan, but I also will add a little bit of greasing up on the lid because the cake does tend to rise all the way up and hit the lid of your mold and you don't want it to be stuck to the lid as well.

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Once your mold is all set then you're just going to mix up your recipe, and this should only take a few minutes, so whichever recipe you are making, the chocolate or the persimmon or something else, mix up your recipe and then you fill the mold only two thirds of the way up. Now, if you are making smaller molds, like for instance you can take a standard steamed pudding recipe and you can mix it up and pour it into individual Bundt pans or individual steamed pudding pans or you could break it up into two smaller pans, it doesn't matter, all that matters is that you fill that mold only up to two thirds of the way up, and that allows the steamed pudding to expand inside the mold.

Once you have the mold filled up two thirds of the way up, then you're going to place on your lid, or if you're using a Bundt pan you would add your paper, it could be waxed paper, parchment paper, or aluminum foil that has been greased, over the top, and you can tie it with a cotton string to hold it in place. You can use a rubber band. I've used rubber bands in the past and that seems to work as well too, but I usually tie it with a string. That worked great.

Then you're going to set your large pot, whether it's your canner or your large stockpot, on the stove and placed the steamed pudding mold into the pan and add enough water to that pan that it comes up halfway up the mold, and that's really important. You don't fill it up too high because you don't want the water to boil into your mold if you're using a Bundt pan, but you only want it to come up to about halfway up the mold, and then you're going to turn on the heat. I start out with the heat very high until the water starts to get hot and then I lower it to about medium, and you keep the heat up until you start to get a steady, gentle boil. When you have that first amount of water, also throw in a couple of those glass marbles so that they will make a noise if the water level gets too low.

Now at this point, remember, you're going to be steaming the cake or the pudding. You are not trying to boil the heck out of it, so you only need a gentle boil or a strong simmer so that it is creating a lot of steam, and once you have your heat adjusted so that you have a very gentle boil, then you keep the lid on and you set your timer for about 30 minutes.

Now, your recipe will probably call for around two and a half hours. Some recipes say two hours, some say three. It depends on which one you're using, but most recipes it's around two and a half hours, even if you get one off the Internet, and I tell you to set your timer for 30 minutes. Make a note of when you

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started so you know where your overall time is going to be, but every 30 minutes you want to check your water level, because if you are boiling pretty strongly, in 30 minutes the water is going to be pretty low. If you're doing a gentle simmer and not boiling super hard, then you can probably go an hour without adding any water, but I always set my timer for 30 minutes and every 30 minutes I check the water level.

Now, this is the point where you will have a tea kettle or another pot of water that you have sitting there warmed up, and when your timer goes off after 30 minutes you can heat up any extra water that you need to and add that. You always want to ask hot boiling water. Don't add cold water or it's going to slow down your process, and you really need to add time so that you can make sure that the cake is cooked all the way to the center, but if you add boiling water you can just keep right on going and it won't affect your time, so let's say you check it after 30 minutes or an hour and your water level is getting lower. You just add more water, bring it back up to halfway, and set your timer for another 30 minutes, and you just continue this until you've reached the full amount of time that you're supposed to cook that steamed pudding.

As you check that steamed pudding every 30 minutes or so to make sure everything is going okay, always have an ear out for those marbles that should have been added at the beginning. Always keep your ear open for those marbles making a lot of noise. If the water level got too low and you're not paying attention, they will start banging around like crazy and that will be your clue to go check and add more water, so that'll keep it so you don't have to worry about it. You'll know. You'll hear it if you need to add extra water.

Once you hit your designated time, so if it's been two and a half hours, once you hit that then it's time to turn off the heat and remove your steamed pudding, and I will say that if you accidentally go extra, like you accidentally go another 10, 15, 20 minutes past the time, it's perfectly okay. That won't affect your steamed pudding or the cake-like consistency at all, but it's not good to shorten the time. If you shorten the time, you run the risk of the cake or the pudding not being fully firmed up and cooked in the middle, so definitely you could go over time, but don't go under time.

Once your time is up, turn off the heat and remove your steamed pudding, and I let it sit for about 10 minutes before I open it up. Now, that's probably the toughest part of the whole thing is waiting because you're dying to look inside and see

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what it looks like, but after about 10 minutes it's come down in heat a little bit, then I open it up and I take the lid off and I let it sit for about another 10 or 15 minutes before I flip it out onto a plate or a serving dish or a pedestal cake dish.

At this point you're going to notice that it's very wet-looking and moist, but don't worry. As it sits, a lot more of the steam comes out of it and it dries out just a little bit while still keeping its cake-like consistency, so it's very moist and firm, but it is not runny or overly wet. Once it's completely cooled and it's at room temperature, you have a couple choices. You can either wrap it in plastic wrap and store it in the refrigerator for up to about a week and a half, or you can wrap it in plastic wrap and freeze it, or if you're going to be eating it within just a couple of days it is perfectly all right to store it at room temperature.

I still keep it wrapped just so that it doesn't lose its moisture, and I will either wrap it or I will put it under a glass covering like a cake cover so that it stays moist and fresh and nothing lands on it or it doesn't get dusty or anything like that, but it's perfectly okay to sit out at room temperature for several days, so you would serve it at room temperature sitting on a buffet or dessert table. It would be just fine, just like a tea bread would be. It's traditional to sprinkle a little bit of powdered sugar on top and place a sprig of holly if you are serving this at Christmas time, but you certainly don't have to do that. It looks lovely just sitting on a beautiful plate.

Now, if you decide to freeze your steamed pudding, it freezes really, really well. I wrap it in several layers of plastic wrap and it will freeze for several months, and if you do this and you decide you're ready to defrost it, you just pull it out of the freezer, but don't unwrap it, and leave it wrapped and sitting at room temperature, and when you do that all of the moisture of the pudding coming back up to room temperature will be on the outside of the plastic so that your cake or pudding will not become soggy, and then once it's at room temperature then you can remove the plastic wrap and serve it.

I like to serve steamed puddings with homemade whipped cream. I like to make a spiked whipped cream with either brandy or Irish cream. It's absolutely delicious, or you can just make a traditional homemade whipped cream from whole cream, sugar, and a splash of vanilla, or you could make a typical bourbon sauce that you would serve with bread pudding. That is also equally delicious with a steamed pudding recipe.

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Now, if you would like the full instructions and recipes that I have for you for both persimmon pudding and mocha chocolate pudding, you can get them in PDF format on my website in the show notes for this episode. You can go to [livinghomegrown.com/81](http://livinghomegrown.com/81), so hopefully one of those recipes will sound like fun to you and you might want to give this a try. If you do, I think you'll really enjoy it, and you might want to just make it after the holidays and make it for New Year's Day, and my kids are particularly fond of the mocha chocolate, but I love the steamed persimmon.

The steamed persimmon, to me, tastes like a really rich pumpkin bread. I love it. For me, it means Christmas, so I've had that since I was little. We've passed this recipe down through our family. I don't even know where it originated, but it's absolutely delicious, and I think you'll love either one, so hopefully that will get you into your holiday baking mood, or for New Year's, your New Year's baking mood, and I hope that you really enjoy either one of those recipes or you'll give steamed pudding a try. Until next time, just try to live a little more local, seasonal, and homegrown. Take care.

Announcer: That's all for this episode of the "Living Homegrown" podcast. Visit [livinghomegrown.com](http://livinghomegrown.com) to download Theresa's free canning resource guide and find more tips on how to live farm-fresh without the farm. Be sure to join Theresa Loe next time on the "Living Homegrown" podcast.