



## ARTS &amp; LIVING

# Recipe Corner



by Christine Vartanian

## Holiday Stollen

Celebrate with Holiday Stollen from *For the Love of Apricots Cookbook*

The apricot has been the symbol of the Armenian nation and victory for centuries. Armenians currently cultivate around fifty apricot varieties, which are typically harvested from the middle of June until the end of August. In the Middle Ages, Armenian kings and knights would go to battle wearing apricot-colored ornaments called "tsirani." One of the three colors of the tri-color Armenian flag is also the color of the apricot. Apricots are listed as one of the "healthiest foods" in the world, says George Mateljan, Founder of the World's Healthiest Foods website. The California apricot, one of nature's nutritional powerhouses, not only has a rich history, California is the leader of apricot production in the United States. Over 300 growers in California, covering 17,000 acres in the San Joaquin Valley, along with many heritage orchards in the San Francisco Bay Area, produce over 85% of the apricots grown in the United States.

Celebrate the holidays with this traditional Stollen by Lisa Prince Newman, author of the bestselling cookbook/memoir *For the Love of Apricots: Recipes & Memories of the Santa Clara Valley*; now in its second edition. Lisa's family moved to the Santa Clara Valley in the 1960s where they settled in Saratoga on a fruit orchard property.

For the Love of Apricots blends historic photos and images of California's apricot orchards, from today and not so long ago, when orchards covered much of the Santa Clara Valley landscape. The cookbook's more than 60 recipes range from breakfast to desserts and cocktails, using apricots in every form.

"I've loved apricots all my life," says Lisa. "They color my memories of growing up in the Santa Clara Valley. In the 1960s, orchards extended in every direction, and as a child, I assumed they always would. Of course, this area is now known as Silicon Valley, the world's greatest engine of innovative technologies. Not long ago, it was a magical landscape known as the 'Valley of Heart's Delight.'"

"Each Christmas, my mother made Stollen for our family, and served it sliced, toasted, and buttered while we opened presents. Fresh apricot jam is a perfect accompaniment.\* I like the subtle taste of cardamom in this recipe, which reminds me of when I lived in Norway where it is a traditional spice," adds Lisa.

### INGREDIENTS:

#### For the Bread:

- 1 tablespoon active dry yeast
- 1/4 cup warm water
- 1 cup scalded milk
- 1 stick unsalted butter, softened
- 1/4 cup sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cardamom
- 4 to 4 1/2 cups unbleached all-purpose flour
- 1 egg slightly beaten
- 3/4 cup chopped dried apricots
- 1/4 cup golden raisins
- 1/4 cup currants
- 1/4 cup sliced almonds
- 2 tablespoons grated orange peel
- 1 tablespoon grated lemon peel

#### For the Glaze:

- 1 cup confectioner's sugar
- 2 tablespoons hot water
- 1 teaspoon unsalted butter

Yield: 3 small Stollen, serving 4-6 each. (You can make 2 larger loaves or 1 very large loaf with this recipe.)

### PREPARATION:

Combine the yeast and water in a large bowl and stir until dissolved; set aside for 5 minutes. Combine the scalded milk, butter, sugar, salt, and cardamom in a large bowl and cool to lukewarm. Stir in 2 cups of flour and beat well by hand or use a mixer with a dough hook. Add yeast mixture and the egg. Stir in the apricots, raisins, currants, grated orange, lemon peels, and the almonds.



Beat for 10 minutes, gradually adding the remaining flour until the dough begins to pull away from the sides of the bowl.

Turn out onto a lightly floured surface and knead for 8 to 10 minutes until smooth and elastic, adding flour as necessary to prevent stickiness. Place dough into a large, lightly oiled bowl, turning to coat all sides. Cover with plastic wrap and let rise in a warm place until doubled in bulk (about 1 to 1 1/2 hours). Punch down the dough, turn out again on a lightly floured surface, and divide into 3 equal pieces. Cover with a kitchen towel and let rest 10 minutes.

Roll each portion into a 10 x 6 inch rectangle then fold the long side over to within an inch of the opposite side. Fold the remaining side over and gently seal with your fingers. Place on a parchment-lined baking sheet and let rise again until double in bulk (about 1 hour).

Bake the loaves in a preheated 375° F oven for 15 to 20 minutes until golden brown. Remove from oven. Make the glaze and brush it over the top of the Stollen while still warm. Note: Adding your choice of food coloring to the glaze gives a festive touch. Enjoy this holiday blogpost and recipe at: <http://fortheLoveofApricots.com/2016/12/apricots-in-europe-for-the-holidays>

\*To accompany your Holiday Stollen, see Lisa's Apricot Jam recipe at: <http://fortheLoveofApricots.com/2016/06/now-what-do-i-do-with-all-these-apricots/>

**ORDER TODAY:** *For the Love of Apricots Cookbook* is a perfect holiday gift for friends and family. Lisa will personally sign and include a special Apricot Bookmark in every cookbook she ships. A For the Love of Apricots Tote Bag is also available for sale. To order, go to: <http://fortheLoveofApricots.com>.



For the Love of Apricots: Recipes & Memories of the Santa Clara Valley by Lisa Prince Newman  
Published by Prince of the Orchards Publications, 2020, 178 pages  
Food Photography Copyright © 2018, 2020 by Jessica Yager Photography  
Orchard Photography Copyright © 2018, 2020 by Eric Larson

Go to Lisa's Apricot Shop to purchase apricots year-round at California orchards through mail order at: <http://fortheLoveofApricots.com/shop-for-apricots/>

## Review

### Tigranes the Great: The Rise and Fall of An Ancient Empire

by Joshua J. Mark

*Tigranes the Great: The Rise and Fall of an Ancient Empire* (A Comprehensive Historical Biography) by Serge Momjian is an instantly engaging work on the life and reign of the Armenian monarch Tigranes II (the Great, r. c. 95 - c. 56 BCE) written for a general audience. The book reads like a novel through the use of dialogue, carefully reconstructed settings, and an excellent command of narrative form and progression.

The author presents Tigranes' story in an accessible form and style, easy to read and unimpeded by citation. The intention is to engage a reader fully in Tigranes II's life and world. In A Note to the Reader, the author explains the goal of the work:

This is not historical fiction, but a political biography based on true history with real historical figures... The idea is to bring the ancient past to life. It is hoped that this work will be accessible to those who love history but may never have read about Tigranes' reign. (xvi)

Mr. Momjian admirably succeeds in this, bringing Tigranes II to life fully through clear prose and precise description of places and events. Mr. Momjian has a background in creative writing and journalism which is apparent in his thorough research, attention to detail, and engaging presentation. He has published articles, novels, and non-fiction works and is the 2015 CE recipient of the William Saroyan Medal, awarded by the Ministry of Diaspora of the Republic of Armenia.

The book is a slim volume of 142 pages, divided into 24 chapters plus an appendix that features maps and images relating to the text and a chronology of Armenian monarchs. There are a number of especially well-executed scenes and sequences throughout the book, but among the best is the Battle of Tigranocerta of 69 BCE, pitting Tigranes II against the Roman army under the general Lucius Lucullus. Tigranes was the son-in-law of Mithridates VI (r. 120-63 BCE) of Pontus who fought the Mithridatic Wars with Rome between 89-63 BCE. The Romans demanded Tigranes II hand Mithridates VI over to them, and when he refused, they invaded.

The battle did not go well for Tigranes II whose troops were caught off-guard by Lucullus and defeated. In describing a pivotal moment, Momjian writes:

A few moments later, the sound of galloping horses could be heard from the rear of Tigranes' army stationed on the riverbank. All his soldiers looked back and saw Lucullus' cohorts coming at full speed towards them... Panic spread throughout the line of his army, which began to collapse, as his vassal kings and nobles deserted him in haste for Roman protection. As a result of calculated attacks by the Romans, Tigranes' army disintegrated in a matter of hours and he himself took flight northwards. (104)

Tigranes II would eventually submit to the Roman general Pompey the Great (l. c. 106-48 BCE) and his empire would be absorbed by Rome, but at the height of his reign, he commanded a vast empire and is recognized as one of the greatest kings of his age.

Unlike other works on the topic, written for an academic audience, Momjian's book serves as a lucid introduction to Tigranes II's life for any audience with an interest in ancient history. It was my great honor to be asked to consult on the work in manuscript form fact-checking and proofreading, and I recommend the book highly. Although I have known Tigranes' story for many years, when I read Momjian's book I found myself in suspense toward the end, eager to learn how things might turn out for the protagonist.