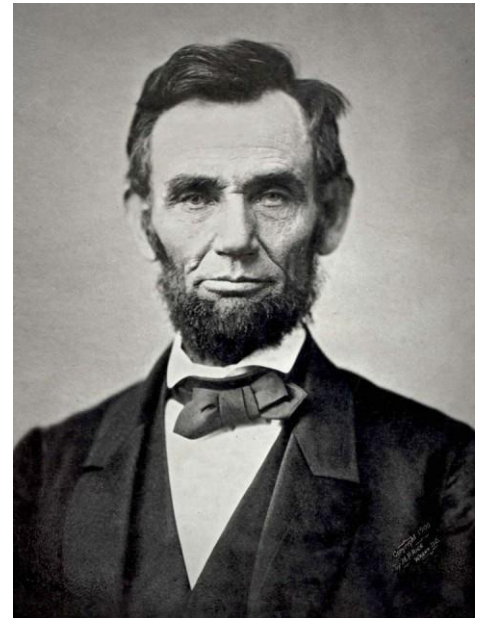


## Abraham Lincoln's Birthday

Abraham Lincoln was born on February 12, 1809 in a one-room log cabin on Sinking Spring Farm in Hardin County, Kentucky. From humble pioneer beginnings, Lincoln rose to become one of America history's most celebrated Presidential leaders. He guided our nation through the Civil War. His leadership helped bring an end to slavery and peace to our war-torn nation.

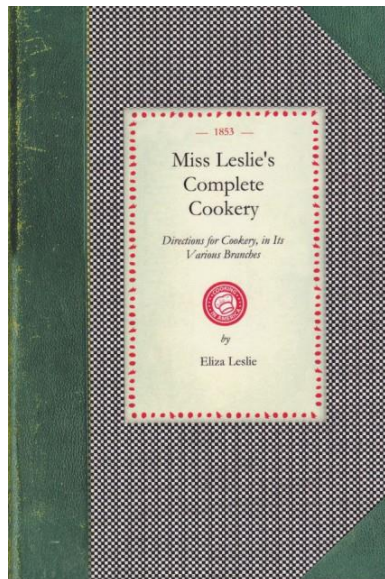
Abraham Lincoln was inaugurated on March 4, 1861 as the 16th President of the United States. When Abraham and his wife Mary Todd Lincoln moved into the White House, Mary owned a cookbook– “Miss Leslie's Complete Cookery”– that she had purchased while living in Springfield, Illinois. This book, written by Eliza Leslie and originally published in 1837, was considered the most authoritative American cookbook of the time period. It was also the most widely read. Miss Leslie's straightforward approach to cooking made her recipes popular with both urban and rural families. When married to Lincoln, then a Springfield lawyer from a simple country background, Mary ran her household on her own. It seems that Mary took her new domestic role to heart. She taught herself to cook from the recipes found in “Miss Leslie's Complete Cookery,” and regularly prepared meals for her husband and children. Knowing how much Mrs. Lincoln relied on this cookbook, it is safe to assume that President Lincoln tasted many of the recipes in the book during his lifetime. Because of this, it seemed fitting to make a recipe from the book in honor of Abraham Lincoln's birthday.



Abraham Lincoln, at age 54 –  
November 8, 1863.

There are hundreds of recipes in Miss Leslie's book. When choosing one to honor Abraham Lincoln, I settled on a dish made with apples. President Lincoln was known to like apples, and often ate the fruit with milk as a light lunch at midday. He once explained his affinity for apples to a fellow Illinois lawyer, Charles S.

Zane: “Apples agree with me; a large percent of professional men abuse their stomachs by imprudence in drinking and eating, and in that way health is injured and ruined and life is shortened.” Lincoln was not known for excess, and tended to graze at his meals rather than indulge in large portions. This apple bread pudding would have been in keeping with Lincoln’s dietary habits, and it can easily be replicated in a modern kitchen. While there is no way to know with certainty that Lincoln enjoyed this particular dish, the recipe is a historically accurate glimpse at the way food was approached by Mary Todd Lincoln and other women of her social standing during Abraham Lincoln’s lifetime.



Here is the recipe exactly as it appears in “Miss Leslie’s Complete Cookery”:

#### Aple Bread Pudding

*Pare, core, and slice thin, a dozen or more fine juicy pippins, or bell-flowers, strewing among them some bits of the yellow rind of a large lemon that has been pared very thin, and squeezing over them the juice of the lemon. Or substitute a tea-spoonful of essence of lemon. Cover the bottom of a large deep dish with a thick layer of the sliced apples. Strew it thickly with brown sugar, then scatter on a few very small bits of the best fresh butter. Next strew over it a thin layer of grated bread-crumbs. Afterwards another thick layer of apple, followed by sugar, butter, and bread-crumbs as before. Continue this till you get the dish full, finishing with a thin layer of crumbs. Put the dish into a moderate oven, and bake the pudding well, ascertaining that the apples are thoroughly done and as soft as marmalade. Send it to table either hot or cold, and eat it with cream-sauce, or with butter, sugar, and nutmeg, stirred to a cream. This pudding is in some places called by the homely names of Brown Betty, or Pan Dowdy. It will require far less baking, if the apples are previously stewed soft, and afterwards mixed with the sugar and lemon. Then put it into the dish, in layers, interspersed (as above) with bits of butter, and layers of grated crumbs. It will be much improved by the addition of a grated nutmeg, mixed with the apples.*

The original recipe below was transcribed, adding measured amounts, cooking times and temperatures where appropriate. The original recipe remains otherwise unchanged.

## APPLE BREAD PUDDING INGREDIENTS

- 12 small baking apples (original recipe calls for Pippins-- I used Granny Smiths)
- 1 large lemon, juiced
- 1 tsp lemon zest
- 1 tsp nutmeg
- 1/4 cup unsalted butter, plus more for greasing the dish
- 1 1/4 cup brown sugar
- 1 cup bread crumbs (homemade crumbs from artisan bread are best)



- Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Peel and core the apples, then slice them very thin. Place the slices in a large mixing bowl. Pour lemon juice and lemon zest over the apples along with the nutmeg. Toss the apples with a spatula till evenly coated by the lemon juice, zest, and nutmeg.
- Chop the unsalted butter into several very small chunks.
- Grease a 9x13 baking dish with unsalted butter. Create a single thick layer of apple slices on the bottom of the dish, covering the entire surface with apples.
- Sprinkle a generous layer of brown sugar on top of the apples.
- Dot a few bits of butter across the top of the sugar.
- Sprinkle a thin layer of bread crumbs on top of the butter.
- Repeat this process of layering-- apple slices, brown sugar, butter, and bread crumbs-- until the dish is full. Finish the dish with a thin layer of bread crumbs.
- Bake the pudding uncovered for 50-60 minutes until the edges brown, the pudding is cooked through, and the apples are soft. Serve warm topped with cream sauce, if desired.

## **CREAM SAUCE INGREDIENTS**

- 1 pint heavy whipping cream
  - 1/4 cup powdered sugar
  - 1 tsp nutmeg
  - 1 tsp almond extract
- 
- Pour heavy whipping cream into a small pot and warm slowly over medium heat, whisking occasionally as it warms.
  - When cream begins to boil, whisk in powdered sugar, nutmeg, and almond extract.
  - Remove from heat. Strain the sauce through a mesh strainer or sieve into a serving dish.
  - Serve warm sauce over hot slices of Apple Bread Pudding. This is not a thick sauce, and it will need to be stirred from time to time to keep a skin from forming on the surface. Best if served immediately.