

When it's a special time of year, most cultures celebrate, among other ways(1), with traditional food. In England, we have lots of special food, both savory and sweet, that we enjoy during Christmas and the New Year. I have started my own tradition of making English trifle during the winters. It is a very well-known dish that can be enjoyed any time, really. But for me, because it is my favorite, I keep it for the winter holiday season. One reason for that is that it is creamy. In the long, cold winter months, most people I know feel like eating heavier food. Instead of salads and other light dishes, we feel like rich food, lots of calories, things like meat, potatoes, cheeses, and cream. Well, I'm a fan of cream, but it has to be respected: don't use too much, and don't make it too sweet. I make trifle from scratch(2), and cream makes it extra special. The base of a trifle is custard: a mixture of milk, eggs, flour, salt, sugar, and vanilla. My secret ingredient is evaporated milk which I add after I have cooked the custard. It's heaven! Then, I pour some sherry over 'ladies' fingers' which are like a very light sponge cake. Then the technique is simple: you layer everything. So, you layer the ladies' fingers with jam, thin slices of banana, and then custard. When the bowl is full, you make a layer of heavy, whipped cream (not sweetened), topped with toasted, sliced almonds. When you have finished, the trifle needs to be chilled all night. Then, finally, you use a long, large spoon to serve it, because each person needs to have several layers of the trifle. I suppose it's like making fine art; you have to take time, and work hard to produce something special.

1. 'Among other ways' in the first sentence means 'there are many ways, but we will focus on one particular way.' The phrase is used with other nouns, not just 'ways'.

a. What I need for college, among other things, is a laptop.

b. He explained, among other grammar points, the subjunctive and imperative.

c. We visited Stonehenge, among other sites.

2. 'From scratch' when you are talking about cooking, means that you made it yourself; no part of it was pre-made.

a. If you make the meal from scratch, it will take longer than using pre-made food.

b. They never make anything from scratch; they always eat food from a box.

3. 'To whip' is the verb we use when we beat cream or butter. When we do the same thing to eggs, we use the verb 'to beat'.

a. Whip the cream and slowly add some powdered sugar, then spread it on the cake.

b. You must beat the eggs; add the spinach. Fry the omelette and then add cheese.

4. 'To chill' or 'chilled' are used in cooking.

a. You must chill the dessert to get the right texture.

b. He poured the martinis into chilled glasses.

5. 'To sweeten' is to add sugar or something else that is sweet.

a. Do you like to sweeten your coffee?

b. The Cherokee Indians would sweeten their food with honey or sap from the maple tree.

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