

**There are all kinds of silly holidays** spread throughout the year. Emma M. Nutt Day is coming up on the first of September. Why do we celebrate Emma? Why not – after all, she was the first woman telephone operator in America. Don't forget Mad Hatter Day on October 6. No, it's not a day devoted to finding the perfect hat. Forget shopping and enjoy a topsy-turvy day filled with *Through the Looking Glass* riddles and contradictions.

**Anyway, along with the list of excuses** to eat pie and fly kites, is one holiday I can get behind. Yes, Middle Child Day and it's this coming Sunday, August 12. In case you missed it, I am one of those poor, pitiful, stuck in the middle children. (By the way, you don't need the calendar to tell you to eat pie or fly a kite. You can do either or both on most any day you like.)



**So, what's up with middle children** and our ridiculous attachment to Middle Child Syndrome? First of all, let be clear: all sorts of child experts and psychologists confirm that MCS is real. I don't know if they call it MCS or not but I just did and here's how it works:

**First borns are anxiously awaited and then celebrated with the greatest joy.** At least for a year or three, she has her doting parents all to herself. She enjoys the riches of unfettered attention, new toys and never-before-worn onesies. Youngest children aren't so much celebrated as coddled. Ask any older sibling, the baby of the family is not only spoiled; he gets away with everything. Middle borns are just that – stuck in the middle.

**Unlike the first born, a middle child is not heaped with praise at every turn.** Take for instance, the first time she ties her shoe or rides a bike. Mom and Dad don't immediately jump on phone with grandparents, post videos for all the world to see or suggest a parade down Main Street. They've seen it all before. Besides, the baby is crying and demanding to be fed or changed. In case you've forgotten, that crying baby – he's the one who stole that poor middle child's bedroom.

**The experts tell us that, although surrounded by siblings,** middle children tend to be the most independent. Crowded on all sides, sometimes the best, the only, thing to do is get out. That could mean joining your neighborhood pals at the swings or finding some peace and quiet in the basement. As a child, I did both with regular frequency. When I hit my twenties, I did more than wander out into the neighborhood. I moved half way around the world.

**Along with independence,** middle children are known for being agreeable and diplomatic. We are the great compromisers. We just want everyone to be happy and get along. That said; I did inherit a bit of a stubborn streak from my mother. She was an only child. Some might disagree but I tend to think that I have an inordinately long fuse. I comply and compromise again and again until, BAM, that's IT. I've had enough. As of right now, I'm no longer listening, no longer negotiating. I want my way ... otherwise; I'm taking marbles and going home.

**If you are a middle child, be sure to indulge yourself** this coming Sunday. If you have a middle sibling or are the parent with a middle child, feel free to shower that her with a little extra attention and unmitigated praise.

Have fun and bon appétit!



## Almost Nana Nye's Blueberry Cake

*Although I've made a few changes (that's the cook's prerogative isn't it?), this cake comes from my grandmother's recipe box. Since we have many summer birthdays in our family, our blueberry cakes are generally slathered with cream cheese frosting, decorated with blueberries and topped with candles. Enjoy!*

2 1/4 cups plus 2 tablespoons flour, divided and more for the pan  
 3 teaspoons baking powder  
 1 teaspoon cinnamon  
 1 teaspoon ginger  
 1/2 teaspoon salt  
 Grated zest of 1 lemon  
 1/2 cup (1 stick) butter, at room temperature and more for the pan  
 3/4 cup brown sugar  
 1/2 cup granulated sugar  
 2 eggs  
 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract  
 3/4 cup sour cream  
 1 overflowing cup fresh blueberries plus more for garnish



Butter and flour 2 (8-inch) cake pans or a 9x13-inch pan. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

Put 2 1/4 cups flour, the baking powder, spices and salt in a bowl and whisk to combine. Add the lemon zest and whisk again. Set aside.

Put the butter and sugars in a bowl and, using an electric mixer, beat on medium high until light and fluffy. Add the eggs and vanilla, reduce the mixer speed to medium and beat until smooth. Add the sour cream and beat again until smooth.

With mixer on low, slowly add the dry ingredients and continue beating until just combined.

Toss the blueberries with the remaining flour and, using a rubber spatula, fold the blueberries into batter. Spread the batter in the prepared pan(s) and bake at 350 degrees until golden and a cake tester inserted into the center comes out clean or with just a few crumbs attached, about 35 minutes.

Cool the cake completely. If you like, slather with Cream Cheese Frosting and decorate with more blueberries.

### **Cream Cheese Frosting**

8 ounces cream cheese, at room temperature  
 1/4 cup butter, at room temperature  
 2 teaspoons pure vanilla extract  
 1 pound confectioners' sugar

Put the cream cheese and butter in a large bowl and beat with an electric mixer on medium speed until smooth. Add the vanilla and beat until well combined.

With the mixer on low, slowly add the confectioners' sugar and mix until well combined. Increase mixer speed and continue beating until the frosting is light and fluffy, 2-3 minutes.