



*Rex Stout, creator of detective-gourmet Nero Wolfe, displays a walnut pudding. The recipe is one of many contained in his latest opus, "The Nero Wolfe Cookbook."*

# Walnut Pudding

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The sweet mystery of life is not what fattened up detective Nero Wolfe, star of over 60 popular novels. The real caloric culprit is the food he downs between solving crimes: "Creole Fritters with Cheese Sauce," "Squabs Marinated in Cream" and "Walnut Pudding" have set many a mystery fan's mouth a-watering.

Rex Stout, author of the Nero Wolfe series, doesn't have much in common with his corpulent fictional sleuth—Stout is not eccentric, overweight nor anti-feminist. But both

the character and his creator share an unbridled enthusiasm for good food. "I began cooking at the age of six," says the 86-year-old writer, "and over the years I've tried every single one of those dishes described in the books."

All of these recipes have now been gathered together in the recently published "The Nero Wolfe Cookbook" (The Viking Press). A typical treat is the Walnut Pudding, a rich, baked custard. Investigate it the next time you have company—it might be the perfect solution to a dessert dilemma.

## Nero's Way

|                             |                              |
|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 3 tablespoons<br>butter     | 2 large eggs                 |
| 1/2 cup brown sugar         | 1/2 teaspoon salt            |
| 1/4 teaspoon<br>baking soda | 2 cups bread<br>crumbs       |
| 1 3/4 cups milk             | 1 1/2 cups minced<br>walnuts |
| 1/4 cup Marsala wine        | Whipped cream                |

In a skillet, melt the butter and add the brown sugar, stirring over a low heat to avoid burning. Add the baking soda to the milk and wine and gradually add it to the melted sugar.

Simmer for 2 to 3 minutes, then remove from heat and allow to cool. In a mixing bowl beat the eggs; sprinkle with salt and add to the milk/sugar mixture. Butter a 1 1/2-quart baking dish and spread the bread cubes evenly over the bottom of the dish. Sprinkle on a half cup of minced walnuts. Pour in the custard, and sprinkle the top with another half cup of walnuts. Bake at 350 degrees for 40 to 45 minutes. Serve with whipped cream and remaining crushed walnuts.