Sparclear's Christmas Pudding

1 large & 2 small pudding basins - judge it when you see the bulk of the mixture. They have to fit on a low trivet inside saucepans which have adequate lids. Wholemeal breadcrumb, carrot and sunflower oil make for lighter textured, healthier versions of the traditional suet laden cannonball.
Choose the best quality organically grown dried fruit obtainable. Can use golden sultanas. Pine nuts or sunflower seeds instead of almonds.

8oz raisins
8oz currants
8 oz sultanas
8 oz wholemeal breadcrumbs
4 oz plain wholemeal flour
4 oz chopped almonds
1 large cup of sunflower oil
1 level teasp. mixed spice
1 grated carrot
1 grated apple
1 wineglassful brandy
8 oz runny honey
3 eggs
1 level teasp. salt
Milk to mix.

Mix all, stand overnight, boil 8 to 10 hours."

Apportion into lightly greased pudding basins filled to within an inch of the top. Cover each basin with two layers of greaseproof paper and tie it round. Using a strip of clean linen rag, or one made of severally folded aluminium foil, lower basin into saucepan, not resting it on the base but on trivet. Trivet can be improvised using two forks. Have ready a large kettle of boiling water and a funnel. Lift the ends of the rag or foil so you can reach them to lift the pudding out. Water in the pans comes ⅔ of the way up the side of each pudding basin; the funnel helps avoid soaking the top of the pud.
During the long boil the water in the saucepans will need checking & topping up, using funnel and kettle again. A whole day of cooking turns the pudding perfectly dark and fruitily gorgeous. Commercial ones cheat using black treacle, barbados sugar, etc.

At the end, lift them from the pans, let them cool, remove the old paper, and tie down with fresh. Store in freezer if not wanted for a few months. Making several allows you to keep them for years.

Some people have perfected a rapid-cook method with a microwave. I would like to hear how they get on.
On Christmas Day reheat by the same system, 2 to 3 hrs depending on size. Or use the microwave again.

To get it out of the pudding bowl: use a knife around inside first. Invert onto a heatproof dish which has 1' sides. Finish with **blue flame**.
Small glassful of *brandy and vodka warmed together* in a saucepan. Vodka burns at a lower T^0 so you needn't get heat up too near boiling point.
Alert diners and turn off electric lights. Spill warmed alcohol over pud and touch with lit match.

Chef thinks clotted cream is vulgar with this pud. **Brandy Butter**, or half-fat creme fraiche, possibly. Custard, definitely not.
Leftovers can be deliciously fried in thick slices over a low heat.