

What's Cookin' with Marion Diaz

Little Walter defined the sound of Chicago blues harp, establishing a standard for modern blues harmonica players and fundamentally altering listeners' expectations of the harmonica. He earned 14 top-ten hits between 1952–1958, and was one of the best blues artists produced by the post-war Chicago blues movement. Today, Little Walter's legacy lives on through his daughter, Marion Diaz, who established the Little Walter Foundation. The Foundation aims to inspire and engage the children of Chicago and surrounding regions in programs for the creative arts. Marion also carries on the family tradition with this delicious butter pound cake, named after one of her father's songs, "Hate to See You Go."

Marion shared this anecdote with the *Blues Festival Guide*: "This cake recipe has been in the family for over 70 years, originally coming from my great-great-grandmother. This cake is good for all occasions, so we used to have it for dessert many Sundays after church. I can recall one time, my dad, Little Walter, came into the kitchen after my grandmother had just baked the cake. She turned around to find him trying to cut the cake for a bite before she'd even put on the icing, so she grabbed the dish towel and chased him out! You don't mess around with Grandma's kitchen!"

For more information on the Little Walter Foundation, visit: littlewalterfoundation.org. 🎵



Marion Diaz and her "Hate to See You Go" butter pound cake – both as sweet as can be. Photo by Jasmine Reacco

Those who are lucky enough to know Marion, also know she has a gift when it comes to baking.

"These cakes are nothing short of amazing! The texture is so moist and the flavor is unbelievable. I ordered two cakes for the holidays and my family devoured them in less than a day!" – Cheri Younger

"Her pound cakes are my favorites, they give you that down-home country cooking feeling that warms your heart." – Monique Diaz

"What Marion Cake means to Sammiejay: First, it has a lot of love, she puts her own little twist into baking a cake. Second, when you take that first bite, you immediately want another. Third, Marion Cake is just as sweet as Marion – filled with love, joy and happiness. Once you have some Marion Cake, you won't eat anyone else's. Her cake got me saying, 'My baby don't stand no cheating, she don't stand none of that midnight creeping' – that's my Marion Cake to me!" – WDCB's SammieRogers

"Hate to See You Go" Butter Pound Cake

3 sticks salted butter (softened)	8 ounces cream cheese
3 cups sugar	2 tsp vanilla extract
6 eggs	2 tsp almond extract
3 cups cake flour or 3 cups regular flour with 1 tsp baking powder	1 cup milk

Preheat oven to 325 degrees, and grease (I use Baker's Joy Spray) and lightly flour a 10-inch tube pan. Combine your butter, sugar and cream cheese until it's creamy, then add the vanilla and almond extracts and beat well. Alternately add 1 egg and 1 cup flour at a time, beating well after each addition. Add milk and beat well. Pour into prepared tube pan. Bake approximately 1 hour 15 minutes to 1 hour 30 minutes. Enjoy plain or with any icing you like!