

Azalea Inn

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For Immediate Release ** Note Micheal is spelled "e" before "a"

It's a Wonderful Life: An Old-Fashioned Savannah Christmas at the Azalea Inn Bed and Breakfast Mansion

Family traditions ease into the Christmas scene at historic Savannah's Azalea Inn near Forsyth Park. Beautiful blooming winter gardens outside rally with at-home leisure inside ... joyful hosts, tantalizing family recipes, warm hearths and festive holiday décor.

SAVANNAH GEORGIA [December 20, 2005] Orchestrating an old fashioned Christmas, Savannah travelers who rendezvous at Azalea Inn discover a life a celebration ... of the present and the past. Arriving to the intoxicating aroma of fresh coffee cakes in the oven, 19th century fireplace hearths aglow, and nature embellished in decorator finery on the Christmas tree and mantles, it's impossible to miss the southern Christmas spirit in the very southern Victorian mansion in historic Savannah.

Blooming winter gardens adorn the exterior, while soft Christmas music gives a first-impression hint of an at-home feeling inside the Cotton Exchange executive's family home. One North Carolina business traveler arrives with an invitation from the gregarious innkeeper, Teresa Jacobson, to join her in the kitchen while she finishes up the layering of her Mom's Coffee Cake.

"My boys will eat this whole thing in one sitting," Teresa relates as she smiles with great pleasure in continuing her holiday tradition. "These keep very well in the freezer, so I bake for weeks ahead to have plenty."

Lionheart Interior Design's Dottie Hughes was commissioned to design and implement the Inn's casually sophisticated holiday décor. Choosing to accentuate the Inn's outdoorsy, interior designer Dottie Hughes reiterates the Inn's garden appeal by introducing majestic butterflies; sparkling poinsettia; dazzling, elongated gold and green leaves; red wisteria garland; brilliant red birds; to carved windowpane gold ornaments to bold red and gold ball ornaments. The easy-going personalities of the Inn's new owners, Teresa and Micheal Jacobson, played into the decisions to include whimsical jesters.

Even in Savannah's temperate December, the Inn's landscaped 19th century heritage gardens show off in lush greenery and colorful florals -- winter azaleas, old fashion camellia sasanqua and picture-perfect winter Swiss chards. The Inn is located in the rediscovered colonial Savannah Garden District on brick-cobbled Huntingdon Street in the National Historic District of Savannah.

The at-home hospitality on Christmas day layers with more family traditions -- eggnog, mulled spiced cider, and cookies. The Jacobson family's private dinner will feature a

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small turkey, prime rib, potatoes/ sweet potato gratin, fresh green beans, breads, relish, and desserts.

What's for breakfast in the morning? Buttermilk Pecan Pancakes with sorghum cane syrup or orange blossom honey. It's a wonderful life!

My Mom's Coffee Cake

Azalea Inn, Savannah Georgia USA

Traditionally only baked at Thanksgiving and Christmas. I am not sure how the tradition started, but it is so delicious and moist, I think I may have to break tradition!

1/2 cup shortening
3/4 cup granulated sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3 eggs
2 cups sifted flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 pint sour cream (1 cup)
6 tablespoons butter or margarine, softened
1 cup brown sugar, packed
2 teaspoons cinnamon
1 cup chopped nuts

Cream shortening, sugar, and vanilla thoroughly. Add eggs one at a time, beating well after each addition. Sift together flour, baking powder, and baking soda. Add to creamed mixture alternately with sour cream, blending after each addition.

Grease a 10-inch tube pan and line bottom with wax paper. Turn half the batter into pan. Cream softened butter with brown sugar and cinnamon. Add nuts and toss to make crumbly. Place half of mixture over first layer. Spread with remaining cake batter and top with remaining nut mixture. Bake at 350 degrees F 45 to 50 minutes, or until cake springs back when lightly touched.

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Buttermilk Pecan Pancakes

Azalea Inn, Savannah Georgia USA

These pancakes are light and moist; the texture is a cross between a crepe and a pancake.

1 cup all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons yellow cornmeal
2 tablespoons (packed) golden brown sugar
1 teaspoon baking powder

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1 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup buttermilk
1 cup plain whole-milk yogurt
1 large egg
1 1/2 tablespoons unsalted butter, melted

Additional unsalted butter

Chopped Pecans (1 cup)

Combine first 6 ingredients in large bowl; whisk to blend. Whisk buttermilk, yogurt, and egg in medium bowl to blend; add to dry ingredients and stir until just blended but still lumpy. Gently mix in 1 1/2 tablespoons melted butter. Avoid over-mixing the batter (it is okay if there are lumps) to ensure that the pancakes will be airy. Heat griddle or large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Spread thin coating of butter over griddle and let melt. Working in batches, drop batter by 1/3 cupfuls onto griddle, spacing apart. Cook pancakes until brown on bottom and bubbles form on top, about 3 minutes. Turn pancakes over and sprinkle chopped pecans on top; cook until bottoms are brown and pancakes are barely firm to touch. Transfer to plates. Repeat with remaining batter, adding more butter to griddle as needed. Makes 4 servings of three pancakes each.

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About Azalea Inn.

The historic Savannah bed and breakfast mansion of Azalea Inn is located in the Landmark Savannah Historic District within two walking blocks of Forsyth Park, the city's famously verdant and captivating central park. Relaxed southern comforts allure guests seeking casual Savannah charm to the Queen Anne Italianate inn's 10 rooms. Amenities include a southern U.S. cuisine full breakfast, courtyard garden swimming pool, private off-street parking, 19th century heritage garden, sociable rattan rockers under tree canopied balconies, and inviting porch verandahs.

The Queen Anne Italianate urban manor (circa 1889) was built for Walter K. Coney, competitive yachtsman and Cotton Exchange executive, on farm plots formerly designated for colonial settlers' garden (ca. 1733 Georgia colonization) features original mantles and handsome craftsmanship from Savannah's Victorian era. The Azalea Inn was purchased in August 2005 by Micheal "Jake" and Teresa Jacobson, parents of a graduate of the Savannah College of Art and Design. 217 East Huntingdon Street, Historic Savannah, Georgia USA 31401-5714. Toll Free 800-582-3823 (within the USA). Telephone 912-236-2707. Email info@azaleainn.com Internet www.azaleainn.com