

Russia's Revolutionary Fruit Cake

Recipe

Ingredients:

To Bake:

- 225g Peasants and Workers discontentment.
- 225g Alienated Intelligentsia.
- 300g Tsar's failure to listen to opposing groups.
- 215g Witte's economic policy.
- 115g Economic depression.
- 350g Repressive Measures.
- 230g Trade Unions.
- 75g Revolutionary Groups.
- 75g National minorities and Russification.
- 100g 1890's social and economic changes.
- 300g Russo-Japanese War.



Method:

1. Combine the 1890's social and economic changes with Witte's economy, and whisk. *-Sergei Witte was Russia's finance minister from 1892 to 1903; he was the engineer of Russian industrialisation. At this time Russia had vast reserves of oil, coal, iron, and timber however no one had successfully discovered how to exploit them. Witte believed that Russia could catch up with the rapid industrialisation of other countries if they sufficiently used their natural resources. Consequently, Witte launched Russia into a heavy industry era, with the building and expanding of the railways acting as a springboard. The railways expansion scheme demanded many new workers but also demanded many resources such as coal iron and steel, this meant that many industrial jobs opened up and peasants flocked to the railways, towns, and cities in order to fill these jobs. This meant that the social structure changed because peasants were now living alongside other workers and middle class*

people. However workers in these factories experienced very bad working conditions, very poor pay combined with high indirect taxes, and poor living conditions, this resulted in a very poor quality of life for the workers, hence encouraging them to join revolutionary groups in order to alter and improve their quality of life.

2. Sprinkle in peasant's discontentment and mix. – *When the Russian economy grew under Witte's leadership, many peasants poured into overcrowded towns and cities to take up industrial jobs. Their pay was generally poor and living conditions squalid. Those peasants who did not take up industrial jobs stayed working on the land, however several years of failed harvests lead to widespread famine. Consequently it didn't matter if you worked in industry or agriculture; most peasants were destined for a life of poverty. This lead to a great deal of discontentment among the worker and peasant population and encouraged them to riot and join social revolutionary groups.*
3. Add a large amount of alienated intelligentsia and continue to mix. – *The social changes taking place in this time lead to a new middle class emerging; these people included businessmen and professionals. This class spent a great deal of time looking at how the government managed its affairs. They believed that their well-educated and wealthy lifestyles should allow them to play an active part in the running of society. They proposed that they wanted some form of national assembly or parliament elected by the more wealthy members of the population. The Tsar's didn't consider the idea and refused to work with these people. This alienated the intelligentsia group because they believed that the regime needed to change and the Tsar wouldn't even listen to their ideas. Additionally the Tsar's alienated the group in other ways, such as closing down universities, other higher education establishments, and newspapers. Students protested the closure of these higher education facility closures, however all protests were repressed by the Tsar's strict police force. Many of this group were encouraged to form and join reformist groups and they were seen as the liberals (moderate reformers).*
4. Blend the previous steps mixture with revolutionary groups. – *The popularity of revolutionary groups was largely increasing at the time, due to the ever growing feeling of dissatisfaction with the Tsarist regime and the idea that they can and will change the system. Social Revolutionaries wanted to give peasants political power and Social Democrats wanted to create a completely new type of society, which gave power to workers and peasants. Both groups were willingly use violent methods of protest to get their way.*
5. Sprinkle repressive measures into the mixture and whisk thoroughly. – *Repressive measures enforced by the Tsarist regime were designed to put a stop to the revolutionary groups and their protests. The measures included, prohibiting gatherings of more than 12 people and cutting the number of people allowed to vote in elections, in Moscow and St.Petersberg only 0.7% of the population could vote.*

These repressive measures seemed to work in the short term, but in the long term only angered people more and encouraged them to protest and rebel.

6. Dollop trade unions into the mixture and stir. – Sergei Zubatov (head of the Moscow Okhrana) believed that repressive measures wouldn't be enough to combat the spread of socialism. He believed that workers needed to be convinced that their lives could be improved within the existing system, so he set up trade unions for workers. These unions provided workers with a mechanism to voice their criticisms and demands legally and without the threat of being arrested. These unions soon became cover ups for radicals and the system blew up in the face of the government, they seemed to have shot themselves in the foot, and lead to the sacking of Zubatov.
7. Crack some national minorities into the mix. – National minorities such as Poles, Jews and Finns wanted an end to the system of Russification. Russification is the idea that all non-Russians must use the Russian language and follow the beliefs, traditions, and customs of the Russian culture. Evidently, there was a large emphasis on the superiority of the Russian way of life. This infuriated national minorities as they saw Russification as a fundamental attack on their way of life. This meant that the national minorities wanted a change to the regime, so Russification could be stopped.
8. Add the Russo-Japanese War and the cake should be ready to bake for a few months. - This war undermined the support for the Tsarist regime. Russia was aiming to expand its empire in the late 19th Century, it wanted to expand to Korea, North China, and take hold of the Ice-free Port in Manchuria, because these areas were rich in resources and markets. Japan however already held claim on Korea. A compromise was reached that Japan would have control over Korea and Russia could dominate and control the Ice-free Port. Russia didn't respect the compromise, which lead to the Japanese attacking them. The Russians completely underestimated Japan in all aspects of warfare and were defeated. This lead to claims that the autocratic government were 'irresponsible, incompetent, and reckless.' The autocratic government had begun to look increasingly vulnerable by this time.