

PIE & TARTS

PIE

A pie is a baked dish which is usually made of a pastry dough shell that covers or completely contains a filling of fruit, meat, fish, vegetables, cheeses, creams, chocolate, custards, nuts, or other sweet or savoury ingredients. Pies can be either "filled", where a dish is covered by pastry and the filling is placed on top of that, "top-crust," where the filling is placed in a dish and covered with a pastry/potato mash top before baking, or "two-crust," with the filling completely enclosed in the pastry shell.

HISTORY OF PIE

The first pies, called "coffins" or "coffyns" were savory meat pies with the crusts or pastry being tall, straight-sided with sealed-on floors and lids. Open-crust pastry (not tops or lids) were known as "traps." These pies held assorted meats and sauce components and were baked more like a modern casserole with no pan (the crust itself was the pan, its pastry tough and inedible). The purpose of a pastry shell was mainly to serve as a storage container and serving vessel, and these are often too hard to actually eat. A small pie was known as a tartlet and a tart was a large, shallow open pie (this is still the definition in England). Since pastry was a staple ingredient in medieval menus, pastry making was taken for granted by the majority of early cookbooks, and recipes are not usually included. It wasn't until the 16th century that cookbooks with pastry ingredients began appearing. Historians believe this was because cookbooks started appearing for the general household and not just for professional cooks.

Historians have recorded that the roots of pie can loosely be traced back to the ancient Egyptians. The bakers to the pharaohs incorporated nuts, honey, and fruits in bread dough, a primitive form of pastry. Drawings of this can be found etched on the tomb walls of Ramses II, located in the Valley of the Kings. King Ramses II was the third pharaoh in the nineteenth dynasty. He ruled from 1304 to 1237 B.C. After years of the tomb being looted and weathered, great amounts of effort are in progress with the hope of returning the tomb to a somewhat presentable stage.

Historians believe that the Greeks actually originated pie pastry. The pies during this period were made by a flour-water paste wrapped around meat; this served to cook the meat and seal in the juices.

The Romans, sampling the delicacy, carried home recipes for making it (a prize of victory when they conquered Greece). The wealthy and educated Romans used various types of meat in every course of the meal, including the dessert course (*secundae mensea*). According to historical records, oysters, mussels, lampreys, and other meats and fish were normal in Roman puddings. It is thought that the puddings were a lot like pies..

The Roman statesman, Marcus Porcius Cato (234-149 B.C.), also known as Cato the Elder, wrote a treatise on agriculture called *De Agricultura*. He loved delicacies and recorded a recipe for his era's most popular pie/cake called *Placenta*. They were also called *libum* by the Romans, and were primarily used as an offering to their gods. *Placenta* was more like a cheesecake, baked on a pastry base, or sometimes inside a pastry case.

The delights of the pie spread throughout Europe, via the Roman roads, where every country adapted the recipes to their customs and foods.

TO MAKE A PASTRY DOUGH FOR ALL SHAPED PIE

Take flour, the best that you can get, about two handfuls, depending on how large or small you would have the pie. Put it on the table and with a knife stir in two eggs and a little salt. Put water in a small pan and a piece of fat the size of two good eggs, let it all dissolve together and boil. Afterwards pour it on the flour on the table and make a strong dough and work it well, however you feel is right. If it is summer, one must take meat broth instead of water and in the place of the fat the skimmings from the broth. When the dough is kneaded, then make of it a round ball and draw it out well on the sides with the fingers or with a rolling pin, so that in the middle a raised area remains, then let it chill in the cold. Afterwards shape the dough as I have pointed out to you. Also reserve dough for the cover and roll it out into a cover and take water and spread it over the top of the cover and the top of the formed pastry shell and join it together well with the fingers. Leave a small hole. And see that it is pressed together well, so that it does not come open. Blow in the small hole which you have left, then the cover will lift itself up. Then quickly press the hole closed. Afterwards put it in the oven. Sprinkle flour in the dish beforehand. Take care that the oven is properly heated, then it will be a pretty pastry. The dough for all shaped pastries is made in this manner.

REGIONAL VARIATIONS

Meat pies with fillings such as steak and cheese, steak and kidney, minced beef or chicken and mushroom are popular in the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand as take-away snacks. They are also served with chips as an alternative to fish and chips at British chip shops. The combination of pie and mash is traditionally associated with London. Shepherd's pie (which does not involve pastry) is also a favourite amongst people throughout Britain.

These meat pies contain beef and gravy in a shortcrust piecase, often with a flakey top. A peculiarity of Adelaide cuisine is the Pie floater.

Pot pies with a flaky crust and bottom are also a popular American dish, typically with a filling of meat (particularly beef, chicken or turkey), gravy, and mixed vegetables (potatoes, carrots and peas). Frozen pot pies are often sold in individual serving size.

Fruit pies may be served with a scoop of ice cream, a style known in North America as *à la mode*. Apple pie is a traditional choice, though any pie with sweet fillings may be served *à la mode*. This combination, and possibly the name as well, is thought to have been popularized in the mid-1890s in the United States.

PIE THROWING

Cream filled or topped pies are favourite props for humour, particularly when aimed at the pompous. Throwing a pie in a person's face has been a staple of film comedy since the early days of the medium, and is often associated with clowns in popular culture. Pranksters have taken to targeting politicians and celebrities with their pies, an act called pieing. Activists sometimes engage in the pieing of political and social targets as well. One such group is the Biotic Baking Brigade. "Pieing" can result in injury to the target and assault or more serious charges against the pie throwers.

SAVOURY PIES

- ✘ Bacon and egg pie
- ✘ Butter pie
- ✘ Chicken and mushroom pie
- ✘ Corned beef pie
- ✘ Cottage pie
- ✘ Kalakukko
- ✘ Meat pie
- ✘ Meat and potato pie
- ✘ Pasty
- ✘ Pizza pie
- ✘ Pork pie
- ✘ Pot pie
- ✘ Quiche
- ✘ Scotch pie
- ✘ Shepherds' pie (mashed potato crust)
- ✘ Stargazy pie
- ✘ Steak pie
- ✘ Steak and kidney pie

SWEET PIE

Some of these pies are pies in name only, such as the Boston cream pie, which is a cake. Many fruit and berry pies are very similar, varying only the fruit used in filling.

- Apple pie
- Blackberry pie
- Buko pie
- Chess pie
- Key lime pie
- Pecan pie
- Shoofly pie - a pie filled with molasses
- Sugar pie
- Banoffee pie
- Blueberry pie
- Cheesecake
- Cream pie
- Lemon meringue pie
- Pumpkin pie
- Sweet potato pie
- Banana cream pie
- Boston cream pie
- Cherry pie
- Custard pie
- Mince pie
- Rhubarb pie
- Strawberry pie

TARTS

A **tart** is a pastry dish, usually sweet, that is a type of pie with an open top that is not covered with pastry. The *Tarte Tatin* is a particular kind of "upside-down" tart, of apples, other fruit, or onions. Savoury varieties include German Zwiebelkuchen (Onion tart), or Swiss cheese tart made from Gruyère.

Egg tarts, custard tarts, or egg custard tarts are a kind of pastry popular in many parts of the world but particularly in Chinese and Western European cuisines. The tarts consist of an outer pastry crust, filled with egg custard and baked.

HISTORY

Custard tarts were introduced in Hong Kong in the 1940s by cha chaan tengs and western cafes and bakeries to compete with dim sum restaurants particularly for yum cha. It later evolved to become egg tarts today.^[1] At the time, egg tarts were twice the size of today's tarts. During the 1950s and 1960s when the economy started taking off, Luk Jyu took the lead with the mini-egg tart.

One theory suggests Chinese egg tarts are a Chinese adaptation of English tarts with custard filling. Guangdong had long been the region in China with most frequent contact with the West, in particular Britain. As a former British colony, British food naturally assimilated to local Hong Kong tastes. Another suggests that they are evolved from the very similar Portuguese egg tart pastries, possible through the influence of Portuguese Macau.

HONG KONG STYLE EGG TARTS

Today egg tarts come in many variations within Hong Kong cuisine. These include egg white tarts, milk tarts, honey-egg tarts, ginger-flavoured egg tarts (the two aforementioned variations were a take upon traditional milk custard and egg custard, which was usually served in cha chaan tengs, chocolate tarts, green-tea-flavoured tarts and even bird's nest tarts.

Overall, Hong Kong-style egg tarts have two main types of outer casings: shortcrust pastry, and puff pastry made with lard rather than butter or shortening. Most Hong Kong Chinese food purists hold the egg tarts made with puff pastry in higher regard.

Unlike in English custard tarts, milk is normally not added to the egg custard, and the tart is not sprinkled with ground nutmeg or cinnamon before serving. It is also served piping hot (preferably) rather than at room temperature as per English custard tarts.

CULTURAL REFERENCE

Chris Patten, the last British Governor of Hong Kong before the transition to China in 1997, was known in Hong Kong popular culture to be fond of this pastry. He particularly enjoyed the egg tarts sold at Tai Cheong Bakery, and thus the egg tarts sold at the bakery became known as "Fei-Paang egg tarts" (literally "Fat Patten's Egg Tart", "Fat Patten" being the governor's nickname in Cantonese). The story still remains popular among Hong Kong citizens. In subsequent visits he makes a routine stop to help himself to his favourite Hong Kong speciality.

PORTUGUESE STYLE

Portuguese-style egg tarts were evolved from "*pastel de nata*", a traditional Portuguese custard pastry that consists of custard in a *crème brûlée*-like consistency caramelized in a puff pastry case. It was created more than 200 years ago by Catholic Sisters at Jerónimos Monastery (Portuguese: *Mosteiro dos Jerónimos*) at Belém in Lisbon. *Casa Pastéis de Belém* was the first pastry shop outside of the convent to sell this pastry in 1837, and it is now a popular pastry in every pastry shop around the world owned by Portuguese descendants.

The Portuguese-style egg tarts known in Macau originated from Lord Stow's Café in Coloane, owned by a Briton named Andrew Stow. Stow modified the recipe of *pastel de nata* using techniques of making English custard tarts. It has since become available at numerous bakeries, as well as Macau-style restaurants and Chinese, Hong Kong and Taiwan branches of the KFC restaurant chain. There was a craze in Singapore and Taiwan in the late 1990s.