

Candlelight Supper

Recipes 2009



Three Trees:
Detail of a page from *Sarum Horae*
Paris (Pigouchet for Jean Richard) 1494

Feasts and Banquets

Today these terms are used almost interchangeably, in the late 16th and 17th centuries there was a clear distinction between the two. A banquet was composed overwhelmingly of sweets, fruits, often preserved, cakes and wafers. A feast was composed of two or three courses each made up of a substantial number of dishes. The precise composition of the dishes depended on whether it was a 'fish' day or a 'feast' day, but they were overwhelmingly based around protein rich ingredients, flesh, fish, eggs, and dairy produce, although the later two were not unusual as ingredients in banquet dishes.

The banquet was the final course to a feast but was often held in a different room or even a different building. This was probably to allow the dishes to be carefully and gently set out in advance rather than served to table. Banquets do not seem to contain hot dishes and seem to work on a buffet basis.

The Gourmets Guide 1580-1660. Stuart Peachy. Stuart Press.

A Recipe for Pease Pottage

The use of pease ... being dry they serve to boil into a kinde broth or pottage, wherein man doe put Tyme, Mints, Savoury, or some other such hot herbs, to give it the better relish and is much used in Towne and Country in the Lent time, especially of the poorer sort of people.

It is much used likewise at Sea for those of them that goe long voyages, and is for change, because it is fresh, a welcome diet to most persons therein.

John Parkinson, *Paradisus in Sole, Paradisus Terrestris* (London, 1629)

Another recipe for Pease Pottage

Take the best old pease you can get, wash and boil them in fair water, when they boil scum them, and put in a piece of interlarded bacon about two pound, put in also a bundle of mince, or other sweet herbs; boil them not to thick, serve the bacon on snippets in thin slices and pour on the broth.

Robert May, *The Accomplish't Cook* (London, 1666), p.95

Modern Recipe Notes

1 1/2 cup whole peas, rinsed and picked over
8 cups water (plus additional water for soaking peas)
4oz thick sliced bacon, coarsely chopped (optional)
Handful of herbs e.g. mint

Place peas in a bowl and add water to cover by 3 inches. Leave overnight for cooking in the morning or soak all day to cook for dinner.

Drain peas and discard water. Place peas and bacon in a large pot and add 8 cups fresh water. Bring to a boil over a high heat, then turn heat down to gentle simmer for 2 hours or until peas are soft and easily mashed. Add water if necessary to keep from burning

Braised Beef with Carbonado sauce

Take a piece of beefe, and cutte in pieces, and wash it very cleane, and put it in a faire pot with ale, or with halfe wine, then make it boyle, and skumme it cleyne, and put into your pot a faggot of rosemary and time, then some parsely picked fine, and some onions cut round, and lit them all boyle together, and season it with sinamon and ginger, nutmegs, two or three cloves and salt, and serve it on soppes and garnish it with fruite.

From The Good Huswife's Jewell, Thomas Dawson 1596

Another recipe for Carbonadoed Beefe

Touching the toasting of beefe or mutton or ant other joint of meate, which is the most excellentest of all carbonadoes, you shall take the fattest and largest that can possibly be got (for leane meate is losse of labour, and little meat not worth your time), and having scorcht it, and cast salt upon it, you shall set it on a strong fork, with a dripping pan underneath it before the face of a quick fire, yet so far off, that it may by no meanes scorch, but toast at leisure; then with that which falles from it, and with no other basting, see that you baste it oft, that it may soake and brown at great leasure; and as oft as you baste it, so oft sprinkle salt upon it, and as you see it toast, scotch it deeper, and deeper, especially in the thickest and most fleshy parts where the bloud most resteth: and when you see that no more bloud droppeth from it, but the gravy is clear and white, then shall you serve it up either with beefe sauce or carbonado sauce; with vinegar, pepper, and sugar, cinamond and the juyce of an orange mixt together, and warmed with some of the gravie.

To make venison sauce: take vinegar, breadcrummes, and some of the gravy, which comes from the venison, and boile them wel in a dish: then season it with sugar, cinnamon, ginger and salt.

The English Huswife 1648 Gervase Markham

Chicken with Capers and Anchovies Salad

To make a Sallet of a cold hen or a capon

Take the breast of an hen or capon, and slice it as thin as you can in steaks, put therein Vinegar and a little sugar, as you think fit; then take six anchovies, and a handful of capers, a little long, grosse or a carrigon, and mince them together, but not too small, stew them on the Sallet, garnish with Lemons Oranges or Barberries, so serve it up with a little salt.

W.M. The Compleat Cook 1655

Modern Recipe Notes

Chicken breast
Capers a handful
Anchovies 6
Vinegar
Sugar a little
Oranges, lemons, barberries

Slice the chicken breast into thin steaks
Season with vinegar and sugar
Coarsely mince the anchovies and capers and scatter on the chicken
Garnish with the oranges, lemons or barberries.

Gammon Pie

A Gammon of Bacon Pie

Take a gammon of bacon, and only wash it cleane, and then boyle it on a soft gentle fire, till it be boyld as tender as is possible, ever and anon fleeting it clean' that by all means it may boyl white: then take off the swerd, and searse it very well with all manner of sweet and pleasant sersing herbs: then strow store of pepper over it and prick it with thick cloves; then lay it into a coffin made of the same proportion, and lay good store of butter around it and upon it, and strow pepper upon the butter, that as it melts, the pepper may fall upon the bacon; then cover it, and make the proportion of a pigs head in paste upon it, and then bake it as you bake deer, or things of the like nature, only the paste would be of wheat-meal.

The English Huswife 1648 Gervase Markham

This is the original pork pie. On many 16th Century pies this pastry serves more as a disposable container than part of the meal.

'Gammons of Bacon Which must be kept long, would be bak't in a moist, thick, rough, course and long lasting crust Kneaded only with hot water and a little butter, or sweete seame (suet)'... This robust dish will travel well and is ideal for picnics as well as formal meals.

Salt Fish Fritters

Except on the coast, fresh sea-fish sold for more than salt fish. The carriage of goods by river or road was still very slow, and sea-fish deteriorated too quickly to be brought far inland.

Richard Carew of Antony in his survey of Cornwall 1602 tells us about the processing of fish in Cornwall in Elizabethan times. The largest part of a catch was processed by the fishermen themselves to preserve it:

Some are polled (that is, beheaded), gutted, split, powdered (salted), and dried in the sun, as the lesser sort of hake. Some beheaded, gutted, jagged and dried, as rays and thornbacks. Some gutted, split, powdered and dried, as buckthorn made of whittings ... and the smaller sort of conger and hake.

It was during Elizabeth's reign that seamen from the West Country began fishing off Newfoundland for cod and other varieties.

Modern Recipe Notes

250g salt cod, chopped, skinned and boned
30g flour
250cc milk
1 1/2 tbsp olive oil
1 egg yolk
2 egg whites
1/2 clove garlic crushed
1tbsp minced parsley
fresh ground black pepper

Soak the salt cod for 24 hours in plenty of cold water, which must be renewed every 8 hours. Drain it and bring to a boil in water to cover. Reduce the heat. When froth begins to form in the water, drain and crush the fish.

Mix the cod with the oil and the flour in a bowl; add the egg yolk lightly beaten and the milk. Add the crushed garlic, parsley and pepper to taste. Stir thoroughly. Beat the whites till stiff and mix with the cod paste immediately before the fritters.

Drip small spoonfuls of the paste in hot oil. Wait until the balls rise and are a light golden brown.

Spinach Tart

A Spinage Tart

Take a good quantity of spinage and boyle it, and when tis boyled, put it into a cullender, that the water may run out from it, then shred it very small and season it with good flow of sugar, and a pretty quantity of melted butter, then put in yolks of eggs, and beat them altogether. Then make a sheet of paste very thin, and put it upon a dish; so put your tart stuff upon it, then another sheet to cover it....

Elizabeth Birkett's commonplace book, 1699

Sweet spinach tarts were popular in 17th Century England. Some included dried fruit, usually currants, almond macaroons, spices and rose-water and sugar. They were served at the second course of dinner.

Modern Recipe Notes

225g short crust pastry
1Kg spinach
125g butter
4 eggs
30ml rose water
5ml sugar
good pinch of ground ginger
good pinch of grated nutmeg
salt and pepper

Line a 22cm loose bottomed flan tin with the pastry and blind bake

Meanwhile cook the spinach gently in the water that clings to the leaves after washing. Drain very thoroughly by pressing out the juice through a colander and dry over a low heat. Melt the butter in another saucepan and add the spinach, stirring until it is mixed well. Beat the eggs with the rose-water, sugar, spices and seasoning. Remove the spinach from the heat and add the egg mixture, stirring well. Pour the mixture into the pastry case and bake for 25-35 minutes at 190°C gas 5 until well risen, golden and set.

Salads

To the 17th Century cook the term salad could cover every vegetable dish, cooked or raw, hot or cold. They included the massive grand salads loaded with dried fruits, citrus fruit and nuts, cold meat based salads with sauces and hot sweet buttered and spiced vegetable purees.

Grande Sallet

Take buds of al kind of good hearbes and a handful of French capers, seven or eight dates cut in long slices, a handful of raisins of the sun, the stones being pickt out, a handful of almonds blancht, a handful of currans, five or six figs sliced, a preserved orange cut in slices: mingle all these together with a handful of sugar, then take a faire dish fit for a shoulder of mutton, set a standard of paste in the midst of it, put your aforesaid sallet about this standard, set upon your sallet foure halfe lemons, with the flat ends downwards, right over against one another, halfe way betwixt your standard and the dishes side, picke in every one of these lemons a branch of rosemary and hang upon the rosemary preserved cherries, or cherries fresh from the tree: set foure halfe egges, being roasted hard, between your lemons the flat ends downward, pick upon your egges sliced dates and almonds: then you may lay another garnish between the brim of the dish and the sallet, of quarters of harde egges and round slices of lemons: then you may garnish up the brim of the dish with a preserved orange, in long slices, and betwixt every slice of orange a little heap of French capers. If you have not a standard to serve in: then take halfe a lemmon, and a faire branch of rosemary.

Murrells Two Books of Cookerie and Carving John Murrel
5th Edition 1638.

Boyled Sallets

Scrape boyled carrets, being ready to eate, and they will be like the pulpe of a roasted apple, season them with a little sinamon, ginger, and sugar, put in a handful;; of currans, a little vinegar, a peece of sweet butter, put them into a dish, but first put in another peece of butter, that they burne not to the bottome: then stew your rootes in the dish a quarter of an houre: if they beginner to be drie, put in more butter: if they be too sweete, put in alittle more vinegar.

Murrells Two Books of Cookerie and Carving John Murrel
5th Edition 1638.

Banquets

The banquet in the 17th century was the sweet course. Guests would retire to another room where the banquet course would be served.

In 'A Delightful Daily Exercise for Ladies, 1621' (John Murrel) cooks were instructed to '*Serve your banquetting stufte in silver or guilt boules, or glasse plates*' and to '*put in every boule two or three severall fruits, but not wet and dry together*'.

The Good Huswifes Handmaide For The Kitchen at the start of the section on banquetting dishes gives a list of the required ingredients:

'synamon, sugar, nutmegs, pepper, saffron, saunders, coleander, aniseeds, licoras, all kind of comfets, oranges, pomegranate, torsall, lemmans, prunes, corrans, barberries conserved, paper white and browne, seeds, rosewater, raisons, rie flower, ginger, cloves and mace, damaske water, dates, cherries conserved, sweet oranges, wafers for your marchpanes, seasoned and unseasoned spinnedges.'

Sticky Gingerbread

Makes approximately 32 pieces

300g margarine
250g dark brown sugar
400g golden syrup
400g treacle
2 level teaspoons ground ginger
2 level teaspoons ground cinnamon
568ml milk
4 eggs beaten
2 level teaspoons bicarbonate of soda
2 tablespoons hot water
600g plain flour

Put margarine, sugar, syrup, treacle, ginger and cinnamon in pan. Heat gently until melted. Stir to blend. Add milk, eggs and bicarb dissolved in the hot water.

Sift flour into bowl, pour in mixture and beat well together until mixed.

Pour into a lined and greased tin bake at 160°C gas 3 for about 1 hour 30 minutes.

Yorkshire Curd Tarts

400g curds
2 medium eggs
100g sugar
50g butter
small knob of butter
grated rind of one lemon
a pinch of nutmeg
shortcrust pastry

Mix the curds in a bowl with the dried fruit, nutmeg and lemon rind. Beat eggs and add to the milk with the sugar and butter. Line tart cases or an ovenproof dish with pastry and spoon in the curd mixture. Bake until set and golden in a moderate oven.

Fruit Tarts and Pies

The English country house, farm, or labourers cottage would normally have had an adjacent orchard. These could grow a wide variety of fruit from apples, pears, plumbs, and cherries to medlars, peaches, nectarines, mulberry and service berries. The kitchen gardens provided a wealth of soft fruits including raspberries, gooseberries, strawberries and bilberry. In season these were consumed fresh in tarts, pies and other dishes or preserved for later use.

The pie of the period differed from a tart mainly in its depth, tarts normally being only an inch or two deep.

Pippin (apple) Pie

Take your pippins and pare them, make your coffin of fine paste, and cast a little sugar in the bottomme of the pie. Then put in your pippins, and set them as close as ye can: then take sugar, sinamon, and ginger, and make them in a dredge, and fill the pie there with: so close it, and let it bake two houres but the oven must not be too hot.

The Good Huswives Handmaide For The Kitchen.