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Pie for All
by Evelyn Burchard

WASHINGTON, Lincoln, and Pie are immortal." These words of Ellis Parker Butler give us only a hint of the popularity of pie, the bulwark of American food.

From every corner of the country, from Maine to California, from Florida to Washington, pie is the All-American favorite food, not only for dessert, but for every conceivable place on the menu. It is eaten for breakfast, for lunch, for dinner, for teas or for between-meal snacks. It may be the main course of the meal when served as a meat pie, or the salad when the ingenious house-wife has prepared a tart filling such as cranberries or an ice-box preparation. She has discovered many and varied ways of using her ability in turning out pies, not like mother used to make, but products of perfection, the results of thousands of experiments carried out by home economics experts, by commercial manufacturers, and by other homemakers.

Thousands of stories and recipes have culminated about this great American favorite. It is not only the home-maker who is interested in making more perfect pies, but also the commercial pie bakers who hold anxious consultations about their pie difficulties and discoveries. They hold huge conventions in the larger cities of the country to talk over their problems and exchange their pie-ideas!

The American Bakers Association reports that between 80 and 100 million dollars worth of pie is baked in commercial bakeries annually. Schrafft's in New York City report that apple pie is the favorite for both men and women in all forty of their restaurants and tea rooms. The Fred Harvey Restaurants of the Middle West, which prepare upwards of 12 million meals annually, report that apple pie is the favorite for men, and lemon meringue holds first choice among the women. The Bakers Association concludes that apple pie is first the country over and cherry is a close second.

As a dessert, men prefer pie of any kind while women are more likely to choose a pie with a soft filling. Commercially, some sections of the country consider September as the peak pie month, while others contend that February holds that distinction in the pie belt.

Can you think of anything more American than pie? It can be found any place in the country, in the smallest railroad lunch counter or in the Waldorf-Astoria dining room. There is always a place on the menu for pie.

It is hard to believe, in the face of these facts, that pie had its origin not in America but in England. It was evidently a part of the menu before 1360—this would give it a pre-Christopher Columbus pedigree! In 1581, it appears in a Latin context, in an entry about the use of fruit "in pyes" for Bolton Priory. "He coude roste, and sethe, and broille, and frye, maken mortreux, and wel bake a pye."

Americans are not the first to use the immortal pies as a source of amusement in their slapstick comedy and pie throwing fun of the films, for in 1665, the English wags livened their days by serving live frogs and birds in their pies. It was great sport to tease their ladies with the frogs from the pies, and especially when the second pie was cut and the birds flew out, and by their flying wings extinguished the lights! This all constituted a grand joke on the ladies present. Old King Cole had his fun as well with his pie of four and twenty blackbirds.

Spring brides, setting out to please, are hoping that the Goddess of Luck will preside with them in their kitchens. But in these days when our teachers no longer teach with "watch me do it" method, success is as easy as failure if we follow carefully the scientifically prepared and tested recipes that are ours only for the asking. Pie is good, and good for us. Not only is it full of flavor, but it is brimming with minerals, vitamins, carbohydrates, and proteins!

From Henry Ward Beecher's Lyric Sermon on pie to a song hit of several years ago, "Let's have Another Cup of Coffee and Let's Have Another Piece of Pie," this most important portion of the nation's favorite luncheon menu is a topic of interesting discussion anywhere and everywhere in the country. So let's have another piece of pie right now. Shall we make it apple?