

Chapter 48

Foods of Western, Northern and Southern Europe

The Proof Is in the Pudding

Directions: Read the following selection. Then answer the questions under *Thinking Critically*, and complete the activities as directed by your teacher.

If you're looking for an alternative to the usual dessert, why not try a bread pudding or steamed pudding? Despite what the name suggests, these puddings are more cake than custard, although puddings share certain qualities of each. They are rich and filling and great comfort food.

Puddings have a long and colorful history. The word itself may come from *boudin* (boo-DAN), the French word for sausage because many early puddings were meats, not sweets. Even today, the terms pudding and boudin are sometimes interchanged. In England, black and white puddings are types of sausages. The popular steak and kidney pie is a variation of steak and kidney pudding.

Dessert puddings are long-time favorites as well. Recipes dating from England in the 1400s include baking staples of the time, such as eggs, honey, and raisins, as well as violet petals and saffron. Bread pudding seems to be an English invention, first appearing around 1600. When Charles Dickens wrote *A Christmas Carol* in 1843 with its glowing description of the steamed plum pudding, this dessert was becoming a Christmas tradition. While steamed pudding is often called plum pudding, it usually contains no plums. The word plum is an older word for raisins, which are a traditional ingredient in puddings. The word also describes the plump, firm texture of the cooked pudding, which Charles Dickens likened to "a cannonball."

Like sausages, puddings were originally cooked encased in animal intestines. By the 1700s, the preferred technique was to tie the sticky mass in a bag and drop it into boiling water, giving rise to the name boiled pudding. As ovens were introduced to the English kitchen over the next century, baked puddings became more common.

English colonists in America adapted their pudding recipes to local foods. Cornmeal, a mainstay of the Native American diet, replaced the flour or oatmeal in hasty pudding, which was made in as little as half an hour.

This new version required constant stirring as it cooked into a thick paste. It then simmered for several hours afterward. The dish was further transformed with the addition of rye flour, molasses, milk, butter, eggs, and spices. Baked to a rich brown, this so-called Indian pudding resembled gingerbread in texture and flavor.

Hasty pudding wasn't the only pudding that evolved throughout the years. Bread pudding has come a long way from its humble origin as a means of using up stale bread. It's now considered a specialty of New Orleans, a city renowned for excellent cuisine.

In a basic bread pudding, torn pieces of bread are soaked in a soupy mixture of eggs beaten with milk, sugar, vanilla extract, and cinnamon or nutmeg. The pudding is poured into a casserole, baked until set, and served warm.

Variations of this recipe are as limitless as the imagination. Raisin bread may replace plain bread. Shredded coconut and pineapple chunks create a tropical taste; sweet potatoes and pecans give a Southern flair. Main-dish puddings may include mildly sweet cheeses and mushrooms. Additions such as fresh apples or peaches, dried cranberries or currants, or swirl jam or jelly create a memorable taste when added to the mixture. Gourmet recipes may call for chocolate, white chocolate, or heavy cream. Other recipes are crowned with a sweet, buttery vanilla, lemon, or caramel sauce.

After assessing these ingredients, you can see that, even unadorned, traditional bread pudding is high in fat. For a low-fat version, try using skim milk, egg substitute, and margarine in the pudding. Substitute fruit juice for some of the sugar, cream, and butter in the sauce.

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Thinking Critically

1. Bread and steamed puddings began to lose popularity in the 1930s. Why do you think this occurred?

2. Compare and contrast these variations of bread pudding: Yorkshire Pudding, Plum Pudding, Semmel Knödel (ZEM-mel KNUR-derl). Use Internet or print resources in locating your answers.

3. What are your favorite European-based foods? Why do you think they have become so well-liked?

4. What impact has food from Western and Northern Europe had on your diet? Why is this so?

For Further Study

- ◆ Create a Venn diagram of two or more intersecting circles. Compare the similarities of common ingredients used in two or more “pudding” dishes of Western or Northern European countries. Share your diagram with the class.
- ◆ Explore the origin of fondue. Find recipes and prepare a cheese fondue and a dessert fondue. Bring the aura of fondue to your class by setting up a fondue experience. How are puddings and fondue similar and different? Discuss your thoughts with your classmates during your fondue experience.
- ◆ Further explore steamed puddings. Use Internet or print resources to locate a recipe. Prepare the recipe and serve it to your class with a *hard sauce*, which is a rich butter-based syrup that is chilled until it hardens, like butter.

Chapter 48

Foods of Western, Northern and Southern Europe

Glossary of Food Terms from Southern Europe

Directions: Read the following selection. Then answer the questions under *Thinking Critically*, and complete the activities as directed by your teacher.

The advice: “It helps to know a second language” could have very well originated among creative chefs and daring diners. Foods are often imported from other cultures with foreign terms intact. Some of these terms are defined below. Deciding what to cook or eat can depend on an understanding of the terms. Which of the dishes described sounds appealing to you?

- ◆ **Abacate** (ah-bah-KAH-ta). *Portuguese*. Avocado.
- ◆ **Acini di pepe** (ah-Chee-nee dee PEE-pee). *Italian*. Used to describe rice-shaped pasta; peppercorns.
- ◆ **Bacalhao** (bah-kah-LAH-oh). *Portuguese*. Salt cod used in many dishes.
- ◆ **Basilico** (bah-ZEE-lee-koh). *Spanish* or *Italian*. Basil.
- ◆ **Burgos** (BOOR-gous). *Spanish*. A firm, goat’s milk cheese that is white in color.
- ◆ **Cacciatore** (kah-chuh-TOR-ee). *Italian*. Hunter style; cooked in broth or wine with herbs, garlic, tomatoes, peppers, and mushrooms.
- ◆ **Carbonara** (cahr-buh-NAHR-uh). *Italian*. A briefly cooked pasta sauce with olive oil or butter, cooked ham, eggs, and grated cheese.
- ◆ **Cervellata** (cher-veh-LAH-tah). *Italian*. A Milanese pork sausage flavored with saffron.
- ◆ **Chalote** (shah-LOU-tah). *Spanish*. Shallot.
- ◆ **Con carne** (carn). *Spanish* or *Italian*. With meat.
- ◆ **Con funghi** (cahn FOON-ghee). *Italian*.
With mushrooms.
- ◆ **Dátil** (DAH-teel). *Spanish*. Date.
- ◆ **Díples** (dee-pless). *Greek*. Fried pastry bows topped with honey and chopped walnuts.
- ◆ **Ensalada** (een-sah-LAH-tah). *Spanish*. Salad.
- ◆ **Ervilha** (her-VEEL-yah). *Portuguese*. Peas.
- ◆ **Espresso** (ess-PRESS-oh). *Italian*. A coffee-brewing method in which hot water is forced through finely ground, dark-roasted coffee.
- ◆ **Fiambre** (fee-AHM-bray). *Portuguese* or *Spanish*. Cold, cooked ham or cold meats.
- ◆ **Florentine** (flawr-un-TEEN). *Italian*. Prepared with spinach.
- ◆ **Marinara** (ma-uh-NAR-uh). *Italian*. Mariner style; a spicy tomato sauce with mashed or chopped anchovies.
- ◆ **Minestrone** (mee-ness-TROH-nay). *Italian*. Big soup; used to describe a vegetable soup flavored with herbs and sometimes garnished with pasta; there are variations made with rice, bacon, tomatoes, sage, and cheese.
- ◆ **Parmigiana** (pahr-mih-JAH-nuh). *Italian*. Made with Parmesan cheese.
- ◆ **Pesto** (PEH-stoh). *Italian*. A sauce of ground, fresh basil, pine nuts, garlic, Parmesan cheese, and olive oil.
- ◆ **Piccata** (Pih-CAH-tuh). *Italian*. A thin sauce made with oil or pan drippings, lemon juice, and parsley.
- ◆ **Primavera** (pree-muh-VAYR-uh). *Italian*. Springtime; served with chunks of fresh, cooked vegetables, especially in place of a tomato sauce.
- ◆ **Tetrazzini** (teh-truh-ZEE-nee). *Italian*. Served with spaghetti in a rich sauce made of cream, eggs, and cheese.

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Thinking Critically

1. How have Italian food dishes been adapted to American tastes?

2. What are your favorite Southern European foods? Why do you think they have become well-liked dishes?

3. With which Southern European food terms are you most familiar? How did they become part of your cooking vocabulary?

4. What impact have the foods from Southern Europe had on your diet? Why?

For Further Study

- ◆ Create a Venn diagram of two or more intersecting circles. Compare the similarities of foods or dishes of two or more Southern European countries. Write a summary about your comparison and submit it to your teacher.
- ◆ Expand the provided glossary of food terms from Southern Europe. Then use puzzle-making software to create a crossword puzzle of foreign food terms. Share your puzzle with the class.
- ◆ Use Internet or print resources to investigate varieties of Italian sausage, such as Genoa salami, pepperoni, soppresso (sop-PRESS-soh), and sweet Italian sausage. Find three recipes using any of these sausages. Add them to your recipe file.