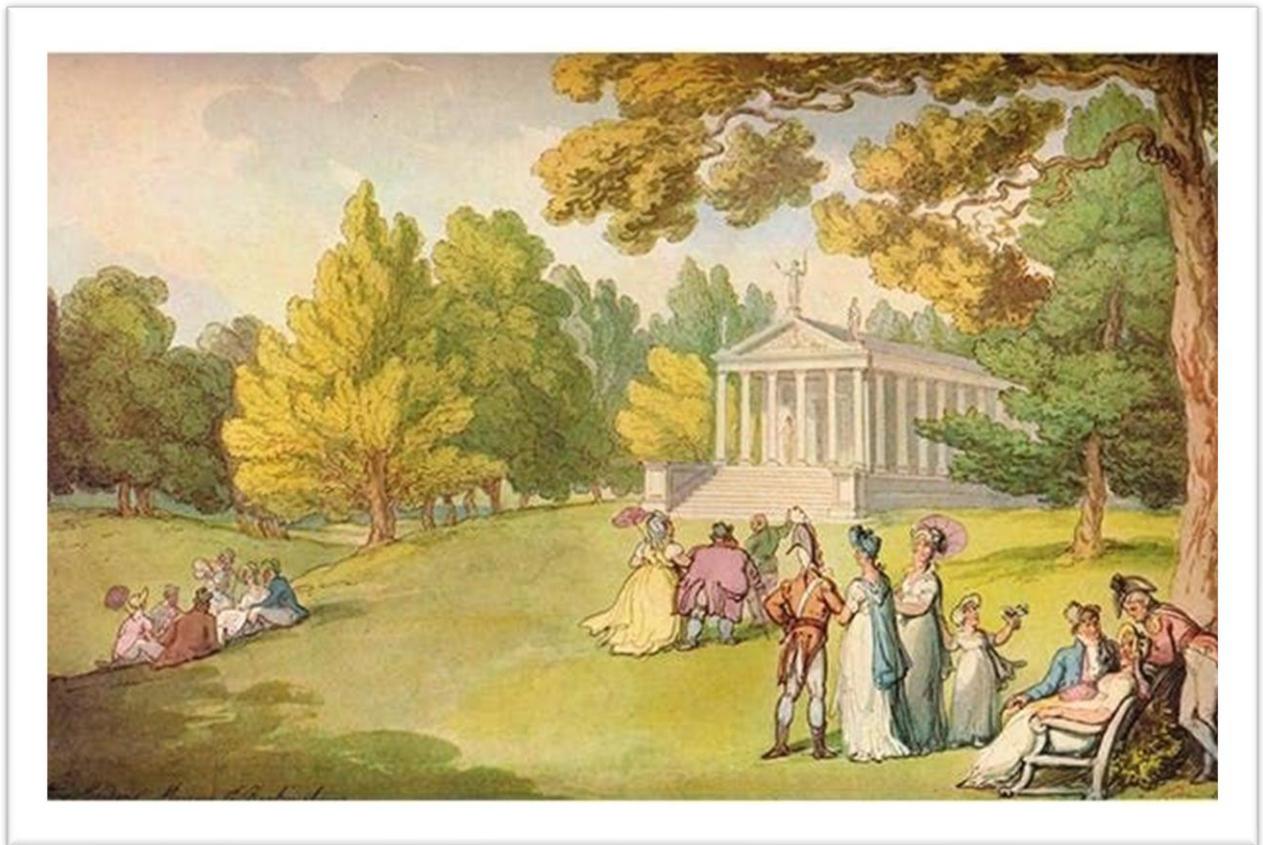


THE REGENCY COOK'S
#JaneAustenPicnicExperience
ONLINE



Saturday 17th July 2021

Recipes and notes



Dear reader,

A picnic feast awaits.

Within these pages you have all you need to recreate four classic dishes from the early nineteenth century.

Pigeon, Chicken or Artichoke Pie, Salamagundy, Gooseberry Fool and Rout Cakes.

Included also are potted histories behind these dishes for reference.

But do not fear. There are videos as part of the Jane Austen Picnic Experience that will enlighten you more. The booklet is for your reference only.

Treat it as an aide-memoire of time spent either online with others during the live section of this course or time spend watching me recreate these dishes for you on your own video screen.

Please do contact me if you need more information than these pages, or the videos can contain. Or if any aspect needs illuminating.

I remain your humble servant,

The Regency Cook

Paul Couchman

A short, potted history

Pigeon, pies and pigeon pies

The first pastry made in Britain was a crude flour and water dough mixture invented by the Romans. At the time any food that was not bread was baked in an oven covered with this flour and water dough paste. The paste was wrapped around meat and game before roasting and was not intended to be eaten but helped to retain meat juices and aroma.

The paste, or pastry as it later became to be known as, protected softer mixtures such as stews or even egg batter from the heat of the baking ovens.

As time passed the pastry was enriched with fat. Think of modern pork pies. These were the standing pies of medieval banquets called coffers, or coffins. Again the pastry was thick and mostly inedible but through experimentation pastry changed and became lighter and softer. Baking techniques improved and pastry began to resemble today's shortcrust.

Cold pigeon pies were originally served at the weddings of nobility they were enormous in size. An early recipe for pigeon pie was given in *A Proper Newe Booke of Cokerye*, published in London in 1575.

Pigeon pies in Jane Austen's time were often made either with puff pastry or hot water crust pastry. Today we are making one which

combines the best of both pastries to create the ideal take-away food for a Jane Austen Picnic.

The pie on the course is made with a light hot water crust pastry with less lard and instead butter added. It produces a hybrid pastry which can be formed into a raised pie but retains the deliciousness of a pastry with butter.

Salamagundy

Salamagundy is a mixed salad usually with a bitter/sweet element. It often includes chicken and fish. It can include olives, pickled cabbage, celery, sorrel (bitter), and is sometimes decorated with edible flowers. The salad was served in a decorative way either in rows or in intricate circular patterns. Each ingredient was kept separate until eating.

In the 17th century it was an egg and herb salad which became enhanced with cold roast capon and anchovies. And over the centuries more and more ingredients were added.

Hannah Glasse has 3 different recipes for it. Here is one from her book *The Art of Cookery Made Plain and Easy* (1747):

Mince two chickens, either boiled or roasted, very fine, or veal, if you please: also mince the yolks of hard eggs very small, and mince the whites very small by themselves; shred the pulp of two or three lemons very small, then lay in your dish a layer of mince-meat, and a layer of yolks of eggs, a layer of whites, a layer of anchovies, a layer of your shred lemon pulp, a layer of

pickles, a layer of sorrel, a layer of spinach, and shallots shred small. When you have filled a dish with the ingredients, set an orange or lemon on the top; then garnish with horse-radish scraped, barberries, and sliced lemon. Beat up some oil with the juice of lemon, salt, and mustard, thicken, and serve it up for a second course, side dish, or middle-dish, for supper.

For a picnic I suggest employing a tip of Mrs Beeton's from the later Victorian picnic. Put the different ingredients into jam jars and assemble at the picnic.

Alternatively, an individual layered Salamagundy in a jar would be both authentic in taste, convenient and (most importantly?) instagrammable.

Routs and rout cakes

The Oxford English Dictionary's description makes routs sound positively demure: an 18th and 19th century fashionable gathering or large evening party.

From their early beginnings a rout meant the more people the better. Five hundred people were invited by the Duchess of Wellington in 1820 for her rout at Apsley House where she threw open the library, saloon, picture and even the china-room. But the poor Marchioness of Lansdowne only managed to get three hundred fashionables to her house in Lansdowne Square in the same year.

Sometimes the rooms became so hot and overcrowded and there was no room for guest to sit for conversation or a game of cards, or even space to move about. Indeed, so cramped and disorderly that some people felt it necessary to remove their furniture.

While not always enjoyed routs were popular because they provided many hours of society gossip. If you could find company round a chair and table there was also sometimes music, conversation about books and art, occasionally cards and certainly food. The recipe for a successful rout included serving dishes of sliced beef or ham, seed cakes, sweetmeats and wine. But, more importantly for us, rout cakes were also eaten.

Rout cakes are tiny rich sweet cakes made for routs and are mentioned in contemporary sources but also in the literature of the 18th and 19th centuries.

In Jane Austen's *Emma* she was: *a little shocked at the want of two drawing rooms, at the poor attempt at rout-cakes, and there being no ice in the Highbury card parties. Mrs Bates, Mrs Perry, Mrs Goddard and others, were a good deal behind hand in knowledge of the world, but she would soon shew them how everything ought to be arranged.*

And in Thackeray's *Vanity Fair* Joseph Sedley: *managed a couple of plates full of strawberries and cream, and twenty-four little rout cakes that were lying neglected in a plate near him.*

Here's a rout cake recipe from the *Cook and Housekeeper's Dictionary* by Mary Eaton (1822):

To make rout drop-cakes, mix two pounds of flour with 1 pound of butter, one pound of sugar, and one pound of currants, cleaned and dried. Moisten it into a stiff paste with two eggs, a large spoonful of orange-flower water, as much rose water, sweet wine and brandy. Drop the paste on a tin plate floured, and a short time will bake them.

A fool by any other name...

A fool is a dessert made by blending sweetened pureed acidic fruits – often gooseberries– with cream. But it seems the exact origin of the name of this dish is lost in time.

Could it be that old recipes for *trifle* were in fact recipes for *fool*?

There is a recipe for trifle in *The Good Huswives Jewel* by Thomas Dawson written in 1596. The recipe goes as follows:

Take a pint of thick cream, and season it with sugar and ginger, and rose water. So stir it as you would then have it make it luke warm in a dish on a chafing dish and coals. And after put it into a silver piece or a bowl, and so serve it to the board.

As yet no fruit.

So it seems that the words 'trifle' and 'fool' have been used interchangeably for a few hundred years or so.

There is a strawberry or raspberry fool in *The Compleat Housewife: or Accomplished Gentlewoman's Companion* by Eliza Smith written in

1739. This appears to be one of the first recipes of a fool with fruit. The fruit is squeezed and orange flower water is added, then cream.

Why a fool? Some claim that it is derived from the French verb *fouler* when used to describe pressing grapes with your feet.

And when do fools and trifles separate into the words we know today? There is a proper trifle recipe in a cookbook by Hannah Glasse in 1747. That recipe has the soaked bread or sponge layer we expect from a trifle.

For a perfect picnic experience pile your fruit fool into a jam jar. Mrs Beeton and Jane Austen would approve.



Cold Pigeon Pies

From *The Jane Austen Cookbook*, but made with chicken.

Makes 5 hand-sized pies, each pie to serve two polite or one greedy person.

Ingredients

- 1 kilo (35oz) hot water crust pastry (see below)
- 6 chicken thighs, or 2 large chicken breasts (or 6 pigeons, plucked, gutted and deboned)
- salt and pepper
- 1 large carrot, thickly sliced
- 1 large onion, peeled and roughly chopped
- spice bundle (some black peppercorns, allspice and juniper berries, 2 cloves) tied in a muslin bag
- 2 large banana shallots, peeled and chopped (or 4 small round shallots, or some onions)
- 112g (4oz) button mushrooms, quartered
- 4 tbsp unsalted butter
- 170g (6oz) sliced cooked ham or gammon, cut into small strips
- 225g (8oz) pork mincemeat, ideally fatty
- seasoned flour for sprinkling
- 2 hard-boiled eggs, halved
- 1 egg, beaten

Method

Season the birds and put into a fairly large pan with the carrot, onion and spice bundle. Cover with water. Simmer for about 10 minutes, then strain the stock into a bowl and discard any bones, vegetables and spices. Break the meat into smaller pieces.

Meanwhile sauté the shallots and mushrooms in about 2 tablespoons (25g/1oz) of the butter until both are softened. Use more butter if you need it. Add the ham or gammon. Set aside to cool.

Pre-heat the oven to 210° C/190° C fan/410° F/375° F fan/gas mark 6.

Sprinkle the pork mince with seasoned flour, then line the pastry with it as your form the pie (see below).

Add the shallots, mushrooms, ham mix and the chicken or pigeon into the pie. Add half a hard-boiled egg on the top, dome side up. Fill up the dish with some of the juices and leave to cool a bit more. There should be little pastry collar left above the top of the filling. Let this open outward a little.

Top off the pies with pastry lids (see below).

Gently put the pies onto a baking tray and brush with egg. Make sure the sides get fair attention from the brush.

Bake the pies for 45 minutes. Allow to cool before serving.

Hot water crust pastry

This hot water crust recipe uses some butter which makes a softer pie case though less amenable to a very high sided pie than other mixtures. It is important to allow cooling time before working. It is very forgiving to work with.

Makes 1 kilo of pastry.

- 595g plain flour
- 127g unsalted butter, firm but not fridge-cold, cubed
- 127g lard
- 230ml water
- ½ tsp salt

In a large mixing bowl, rub the butter into the flour with your fingertips until it resembles breadcrumbs. Add in the salt.

In a small pan, heat the water and lard over a low heat, until the lard has melted. Add the water and lard to the flour and butter. Stir to combine. With your hands, bring the pastry together into a ball. Turn it over and press it down just a couple of times with the back of your palm to firm up the ball. Leave to cool.

To form a raised pie case by hand

For equal size pies weigh and divide your pasty dough. 190-200g (say 7oz) per pie. You will need a pie dolly or a jam jar that measures about 7-8cm (3 inches) across the bottom.

From each pastry ball take a 40g (a scant 1½oz) of pastry from each ball. Roll it out into a round lid and put on a lined baking tray to cool (fridge is good).

Flour a clean, dry surface. Take a ball of pasty and flatten it out into a circle slightly wider than your dolly. Dust your dolly with flour, centre it on top of the pastry and press down firmly into the dough. The pastry will rise up the sides of the dolly and puff out.

Lift the dolly out of the dough and dust it again. Return the dolly to the centre of the pasty. Cupping the edges of the pastry in both hand, squeeze the dough up the dolly while at the same time turning and pushing down on the dolly. Imagine a potter's wheel as you turn and squeeze. Keep going, squeezing and turning. From time to time you will need to take the dolly out and flour it again.

When the pie sits about four fingers high, carefully remove the dolly from the pie case.

If using a jam jar, use a light wipe-over with neutral oil instead of flour.

To top off your pie with its lid

Take a filled pie and wet the pastry collar round the top with a little water. Lay on a lid. Press the collar and lid firmly together. Crimp the edges with your fingers. Make a small hole in the pie lid with a skewer or tip of a knife.

Pies with other pastries

Shortcrust pastry, home-made or shop-bought, lining a pie tin or fairly deep baking ring will make a fine pie using. Try for pies about 7cm to 8cm across and 4cm to 6cm high. Gluten-free shortcrust pastry will also work in a tin or ring. Flaky puff pastry is delicious but can be impractical for picnicking, especially on breezy days.

An excellent pie book

For chapter and verse on pies I recommend *The Pie Room* by Calum Franklin (Bloomsbury).

Artichoke pie filling

An alternative to the chicken or pigeon filling, this makes a delicious pie in its own right.

Fills 5 hand-sized pies.

- 480g (16oz) artichoke hearts (drained weight of contents of two 400g tins)
- salt and pepper
- ½ tsp nutmeg
- 1 tsp finely grated lemon zest
- 225g (8oz) button mushrooms, thinly sliced
- 2 hard-boiled eggs, quartered
- 3-4 generous tbsp cream
- salt and pepper
- butter for frying and to go in the pie

Fry the mushrooms in a little butter until a juice begins to form. Do not overcook. Add the cream and cook on a low heat, stirring, so the cream thickens. Season well with salt and pepper. Add the nutmeg and lemon zest. Set off the heat to cool.

Make a pie case in the usual way. Thickly slice the artichoke hearts and place into the pie. Add the mushrooms, creamy sauce and hard boiled eggs. Dot with small pieces of butter. Close up the pie, wash with beaten egg.

Cook for 45 minutes at 210° C/190° C fan/410° F/375° F fan/gas mark 6.

Mrs Elton's Rout Cakes

Makes 12-14 individual small cakes.

Ingredients

- 150g (5oz) plain flour
- Pinch salt
- 50g (1¾oz) butter at room temperature
- 50g (1¾oz) caster sugar
- 1 small egg
- 40g (1½oz) currants
- 1 teaspoon orange flower water (or diluted orange essence)
- 1 teaspoon rose water
- 2 teaspoons brandy

Method

Preheat the oven to 180° C/160° C fan/350° F/320° F fan/gas mark 4.

Grease and line a baking tray.

Sift the flour and salt into a large bowl.

Rub in the butter using the tips of your fingers to make a crumbly mixture. Then stir in the sugar.

Beat the egg and stir in the orange flower water, the rose water and the brandy.

Gradually mix the liquid into the dry ingredients to make a smooth dough.

Finally stir in the currants.

Spoon small heaps of the mixture onto the baking tray and bake for 16-18 minutes until golden brown.

When cool dust with sieved icing sugar.

If you prefer, you can bake the sponge as one piece by spreading the mixture evenly to fill the baking tray.

When the sponge has cooled down, you can then cut out, and perhaps decorate, individual cakes with a shaped cutter of your choice.

Decorating with hundreds and thousands would be an apt. Sugar sprinkles date back to at least the late 18th-century, if not earlier, when they were called nonpareils.



Salamagundy

Makes 1 large plate

Ingredients

The salad

- 2 heads of lettuce freshly picked
- 1 lemon
- 4 hard-boiled eggs
- 3 red onions
- grapes
- anchovies in oil (optional)
- your choice of 3-4 of the following additional ingredients to taste: parsley, pickled red cabbage, gherkins, pickled onions watercress, spinach, cooked green beans
- edible flowers, e.g. nasturtiums, cornflowers or borage
- half an orange or lemon for the centre of the dish
- Optional: cold cooked chicken, turkey, pickled herring etc

Vinaigrette dressing

- 1 tbsp wholegrain mustard
- 4 tbsp white wine vinegar
- ½tsp salt
- ½tsp ground pepper
- 4fl oz/120 ml/½ cup olive oil

Method

Thinly slice the red onions. Heat some oil in a pan on a low-medium heat. Add the onions. Stir/shake to prevent sticking or burning. The red onions will get soft and then translucent when they are done. Set aside and let cool.

Place half an orange or lemon in the centre of your dish. Shred the lettuce and lay on a plate as the base layer.

Slice the eggs and layer these on along with the cooked onions.

Add layers of your additional ingredients.

Decorate the plate with grapes and lemon slices.

Mix the vinaigrette and dress the salad with it just before serving.

Cold cooked chicken, turkey, pickled herring etcetera may be added if desired.

Summer Fool

This idea is taken from the wonderful *Jane Grigson's Fruit Book*. She found it in Hannah Wolley's *Accomplisht Lady's Delight* of 1675. The summer fool did not change much between 1675 and the Regency era.

For 6 people.

Ingredients

- 500g (18oz) fresh raspberries, gooseberries or redcurrants
- 250ml (8fl oz) single cream
- 125ml (4fl oz) double cream
- 1 tbsp icing sugar
- caster sugar for dusting
- rosewater

Method

Remove 3 tablespoons of the fruit and crush them on a plate with a fork. Push the puree through a sieve into a pudding basin. Sugar the rest of the fruit lightly.

To the fruit puree add the icing sugar, the single cream and the double cream. Whisk until fluffy. Fold in the sugared fruit with any juice.

Mix in gently a teaspoon of rosewater. Try it for strength and add more, gradually, until you just catch a mysterious and harmonising flavour at the end of the taste.

Cover the bowl with a plate and store in the fridge. Before the picnic bring out into the kitchen and divide between individual glasses. Do not put back into the fridge, as it is best eaten cool rather than chilled. If travelling a screw top jar is a handy serving vessel.

Serve with roud cakes.



Notes

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