

Mince Pie Cookbook

copied from manuscripts and printed books, 1750-1862



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King David within an illuminated initial "B" from the St Andrews Psalter ([msBX2033.A00](#))

For its Christmas 2013 blog post on [Echoes from the Vault](#), the Special Collections Division of the University of St Andrews Library gathered together several recipes for mince pies from their collection of manuscript and print resources. These recipes have been copied here directly from the sources -- they often contain old measures, spellings and cooking methods. The original sources have been given here as well, for future consultation and cooking.

The University of St Andrews Library wish all that consult these old recipes a very happy Christmas and a wonderful New Year!



Mince Pies – Agnes McIntosh, [ms37114](#)/6 1862 – contains meat

Scottish

1lb beef

1lb suet

1lb currants

1lb raisins

1lb apples

1lb Sugar

¼lb lemon peel

1oz ginger

Mix all together. Take a puff paste, put a layer in the tin, then some of the mixture, then a layer of paste above, pinch around the edges and bake in a moderately hot oven [180°C]

Mince pies - from the Midlands, [ms38784](#), 1846-1859

1lb suet chopped

2lb raisins stoned and cut in small pieces

1lb apples chopped

2lb currants well dried by the fire

1lb loaf sugar sifted

Juice of 2 lemons and the grated peel

Mix all together with $\frac{1}{2}$ a pint of brandy and $\frac{1}{2}$ pint port wine [port] and put in a jar. Add citron, lemon and orange peel when you make the pastry [suggesting you marinade the mixture for a while first].

Minced pies – from the Forbes Collection, [msdep7](#), c.1825 – contains meat

Scottish

Boil the fresh tongue

2lb suet chopped

2lb currants washed and dried

1lb raisins stoned and chopped

3/4lb powdered sugar

Juice of 2 lemons

½ oz cinnamon, mace and nutmeg

½ oz cloves

½ a mutchkin of white wine and the same of red (¾ pint or 424ml)

Boil the tongue and chop these together. Mix these ingredients well together, put them in a jar and stir them often, do not cover the jar, add as you make the pies a hard [boiled] egg minced and an apple.

Lemon mince pies – from Bedfordshire, [ms38783](#), c.1790

One large lemon or 2 small lemons, pared thin and boiled to a pulp, pounded in a stone mortar

$\frac{3}{4}$ lb suet chopped fine

$\frac{3}{4}$ lb currants

$\frac{1}{2}$ lb moist sugar

Juice of the lemons

Mix together well.

Mince Pyes - from Bedfordshire, [ms38783](#), c.1760

Two-penny loaf

3lb beef suet

2 dozen pippins

4 lb currants washed and dried

2 lb raisins stoned and shredded

1½ lb sugar

1oz cinnamon

¼ oz mace

¼ oz cloves

¼ oz nutmeg grated

½lb almonds blanched and cut in quarters

Orange and lemon peel cut

1 pint of brandy

3 gills of white wine [$\frac{3}{4}$ pint]

Mixt well together.

A quick way to make Mince Pyes - from Bedfordshire, [ms38783](#), c.1760

Four lemons (the juice first squeezed out)

$\frac{3}{4}$ lb suet chopped small

1 lb sugar

$\frac{1}{2}$ pint currants

spice as you like

1 glass of brandy

Juice of the lemons

1lb of raisins stoned and chopped

1 apples chopped

Boil the lemons til tender, put in a marble mortar and beat fine.

Mix all well together.

To make Mince Pyes – Sister Harvey, from Bedfordshire, [ms38783](#), c.1750 – contains meat

2lb meat

4 or 2lb suet

2lb raisins stoned and chopped

2lb apples chopped

4 or 2lb currants

½ oz mace

¼ oz Jamaica pepper

¼ oz each of nutmeg, cloves, ginger

Peel of 2 lemons grated

Juice of 2 lemons

Juice of one Seville orange

Wine, Brandy, Sweetmeat as please (candied peel)

2lb sugar

Pint of wine

Mix together well.

Mince Pies – Agnes McIntosh, [ms37114](#)/6, 1862

Scottish

1lb apples minced small

1lb currants

1lb raisins

¼ lb suet

¼ lb sugar

Salt

Ginger

Lemon and orange peel

Mix well together.

Mince pies, Mrs King's recipe book, [msdep137/7](#), c.1830 – contains meat

1 ½ lb meat

2 ¼ lb suet

¾ oz spice, nutmeg, mace, cloves, the least quantity cloves

Beat spices all very fine

3lb currants

¾ lb moist sugar

¾ pint of mountain wine (Malaga wine – Briony has a near equivalent to this and is happy to give it for this recipe)

near same of brandy (ie ¾ pint)

Juice of 2 large lemons and some peel shredded fine

Mixt together.

Meg Dods Mincemeat Recipe (1826) – contains meat

Common Mince Pies

These are made in an endless variety of ways. Indeed every family receipt book teems with prescriptions. We select what is, after experiment and mature consideration, considered the best formula. – Par-roast, or bake slightly a couple of pounds of the fine lean of good beef. Mince this, or scrape it. Mince also two pounds of fresh suet, two of apples pared and cored, three pounds of currants washed, picked, and dried, and a pound and a half of good raisins stoned. Let the things be separately minced till fine, but not so fine as to run together; then mix them with a pound of beat sugar, and add a tea-spoonful of salt, a half ounce of ground sugar, the same weight of allspice and bruised coriander seeds, some beat cloves, two nutmegs grated, the juice and grated rind of two lemons and of two Seville oranges, half a pound of candied lemon and orange peel, and a quarter pound of candied citron sliced. Mix the seasonings equally with the meat. Put a half pint of brandy, or pine apple rum into a basin with double that quantity of Madeira or sherry. Keep the minced meat closely pressed in cans in a cool dry place. When to be used cover pans of any size, small saucers, or a small pie-dish with puff or plain paste. Moisten the meat if hard with a little wine or brandy, and fill the pies. Put a cover of puff paste over them, or if plain paste ice it. Pare the edges neatly, and mark the top with a paste knife. Half an hour of a moderate oven will baste them. Slip them out of the tins, and serve them hot.

Observations. – Mince pies may be made cheaper, and yet very good, by substituting gravy for wine; or by using home made wine, (ginger wine is best,) by lessening the quantity of expensive fruits and spiceries, and taking any bit of lean dressed beef the larder affords, or a piece of the double tripe minced fine.

Source: Christian Isobel Johnstone (Meg Dods), *The cook and housewife's manual*. Edinburgh, 1826.

St Andrews copy at [=s TX717.J6 \(SR\)](#), pp. 266-7

NB. See Meg Dods' pastry recipes from the same book

Meg Dods Mincemeat Recipe (1826) – contains meat

Superlative Mince Pies

Rub with salt and mixed spices a fat bullock's tongue. Let it lie three days, and parboil, skin, and mince or scrape it. Mince separately three pounds of Zante currants, picked, plumped and dried, a dozen of lemon pippin apples pared and cored, and a pound of blanched almonds. Mix them, and add a half pound of candied citron and orange peel minced, and an ounce of beat cinnamon and cloves, with the juice and grated rind of three or four lemons, half an ounce of salt, and the same quantity of allspice, and a quarter pound of fine sugar pounded, a pint and a half of Madeira, and a half pint of brandy. Line the pans with a rich puff paste, and serve the pies hot with burnt brandy.

Observations. – The brandy is best when burnt at table as it is used. Though the mince meat will keep good for some time, it is best not to be too old. The fruit, suet, and wine may be added when the pies are to be made, as the suet and raw apples are apt to spoil, and the dried fruits, though in less danger, do not improve by keeping in this state. Mince pies will warm up very well in a Dutch oven, or in a slow oven.

Source: Christian Isobel Johnstone (Meg Dods), *The cook and housewife's manual*. Edinburgh, 1826.

St Andrews copy at [=s TX717.J6 \(SR\)](#), p. 267

NB. See Meg Dods pastry recipes from the same book

Meg Dods Pastry Recipes (1826)

Puff Pastry

To Make Puff Paste

Have the best flour, fresh and free of damp. Take half its weight, or rather more, of fresh, or washed salt butter. Crumble a third part of the butter among the flour, mixing it well, and make it into dough with a proper quantity of water. Throw dry flour on the table to prevent it from sticking, and work it up quickly to a stiff paste by kneading it beneath your hands. Roll out the paste when smoothly kneaded, which will be known by pressing it between the finger and thumb. Divide what remains of the butter into four parts. Take the first, break it into bits, and stick it equally over the paste. Strew flour lightly on the butter, and clap it down to make it stick; fold up the crust, roll it out, and repeat the process till all the butter is used. The sooner puff paste is baked after it is made the lighter it looks, from the folds rising distinctly.

Source: Christian Isobel Johnstone (Meg Dods), *The cook and housewife's manual*. Edinburgh, 1826.

St Andrews copy at [=s TX717.J6 \(SR\)](#), p. 254

“Plain Paste”

The Common Mince Pie recipe refers to puff or plain paste. There is no recipe called “plain paste” in the book but there is a Common Paste for Savoury Pies and a Short Crust.

Common Paste for Savoury Pies

To two pounds of good flour take six ounces of butter; break it down among the flour, and mix with a couple of beat eggs and a pint of hot water. Knead it smooth, and roll out and double it three or four times. Cold paste is made as above, only use cold water.

Source: Christian Isobel Johnstone (Meg Dods), *The cook and housewife’s manual*. Edinburgh, 1826.

St Andrews copy at [=s TX717.I6 \(SR\)](#), pp. 254-5

Short Crust for Preserved Sweets

To a pound of the finest flour, put half a pound of fresh butter, the beat yolks of two eggs, and three ounces of fine sifted loaf sugar. Mix up with hot milk, knead it smooth, and ice the paste when ready. Cream may be used, and less butter.

Observation. – The more finely the butter is crumbled down among the flour the shorter will the crust eat. Those who dislike sweet crust may either omit entirely or use only half the quantity of sugar. The above paste is only used to line tin pans.

Source: Christian Isobel Johnstone (Meg Dods), *The cook and housewife’s manual*. Edinburgh, 1826.

St Andrews copy at [=s TX717.I6 \(SR\)](#), p. 255

Maria Rundell Mincemeat Recipe (1806) – contains meat

Mince Pie

Of scraped beef free from skin and strings, weigh 2lb., 4lbs. of suet picked and chopped, then add 6lbs of currants, nicely cleaned and perfectly dry, 3lbs of chopped apples, the peel and juice of two lemons, a pint of sweet wine, a nutmeg, a quarter of an ounce of cloves, ditto mace, ditto pimento, in finest powder; press the whole into a deep pan when well mixed, and keep it covered in a dry cool place.

Half the quantity is enough, unless for a very large family.

Have citron, orange, and lemon peel ready, and put some of each in the pies when made.

Source: Maria Rundell, A new system of domestic cookery, formed upon principles of economy, and adapted to the use of private families. By a lady. London, 1806.

St Andrews copy at [=s TX717.R8](#), pp. 134-5

NB. See Maria Rundell's pastry recipes from the same book

Maria Rundell Mincemeat Recipe (1806) – vegetarian

Mince Pies, without Meat

Of the best apples six pounds, pared, cored, and minced; of fresh suet, and raisins stoned, each three pounds, likewise minced – to these add of mace and cinnamon a quarter of an ounce each, and eight cloves, in finest powder, three pounds of the finest powder sugar, three quarters of an ounce of salt, the rinds of four and juice of two lemons, half a pint of port, the same of brandy. Mix well, and put into a deep pan.

Have ready washed and dried four pounds of currants, and add as you make the pies, with candied fruit.

Source: Maria Rundell, *A new system of domestic cookery, formed upon principles of economy, and adapted to the use of private families.* By a lady. London, 1806.

St Andrews copy at [=s TX717.R8](#), p. 135

NB. See Maria Rundell's pastry recipes from the same book

Maria Rundell Mincemeat Recipe (1806) – vegetarian

Lemon Mince Pies

Squeeze a large lemon, boil the outside till tender enough to beat to a mash, add to it three large apples chopped, and four ounces of suet, half a pound of currants, four ounces of sugar – put the juice of the lemon and candied fruit, as for other pies. Make a short crust, and fill the patty pans as usual.

Source: Maria Rundell, *A new system of domestic cookery, formed upon principles of economy, and adapted to the use of private families.* By a lady. London, 1806.

St Andrews copy at [=s TX717.R8](#), p. 135

NB. See Maria Rundell's pastry recipes from the same book

Maria Rundell Mincemeat Recipe (1806) – vegetarian

Egg Mince Pies

Boil six eggs hard, shred them small – shred double the quantity of suet, then put currants washed and picked, one pound or more if the eggs were large; the peel of one lemon shred very fine, half the juice, six spoonfuls of sweet wine, mace, nutmeg, sugar, a very little salt; orange, lemon, and citron candied. Make a light paste for them.

Source: Maria Rundell, *A new system of domestic cookery, formed upon principles of economy, and adapted to the use of private families.* By a lady. London, 1806.

St Andrews copy at [=s TX717.R8](#), p. 135

NB. See Maria Rundell's pastry recipes from the same book

Maria Rundell Pastry Recipes (1806)

Rich Puff Paste (p. 138)

Weigh an equal quantity of butter with as much fine flour as you judge necessary – mix a little of the former with the latter, and wet it with as little water as will make into a stiff paste. Roll it out, and put all the butter over it in slices, turn in the ends, and roll it thin – do this twice, and touch it no more than can be avoided. The butter may be added at twice; and to those who are not accustomed to make paste it may be better to do so.

A quicker oven than for short crust.

Excellent short Crust (p. 139)

Make two ounces of white sugar, pounded and sifted, quite dry; then mix it with a pound of flour well dried; rub into it three ounces of butter so fine as not be seen – into some cream put the yolks of two eggs beaten, and mix the above into a smooth paste; roll it thin, and bake in a moderate oven.

Light Paste for Tarts and Cheesecakes (p. 139)

Beat the white of an egg to a strong froth – then mix it with as much water as will make three quarters of a pound of flour into a very stiff paste – roll it very thin, then lay the third part of half a pound of butter upon it in little bits – dredge it with some flour, left out at first, and roll it up tight. Roll it out again, and put the same proportion of butter; and so proceed till all be worked up.

Source: Maria Rundell, *A new system of domestic cookery, formed upon principles of economy, and adapted to the use of private families.* By a lady. London, 1806.

St Andrews copy at [=s TX717.R8](#)

Joseph Bell's Mincemeat Recipe (1817) – vegetarian if made with vegetarian suet instead of beef suet

Mince Meat

1lb. beef suet, 1lb. Naples biscuits, 1lb. apples and citron, 1lb. raw sugar, 1lb. candied lemon and orange, 3lb. clean currants, a pint of raisin wine, and a gill of brandy. – The suet must be picked and shred very fine; the apples, sweetmeats, and biscuits, must also be shred fine; mix all the ingredients together; and put them into a jar; tye them over, and it will keep good for twelve months.

Source: Joseph Bell, A Treatise on Confectionary, in all its branches, with practical notes, and illustrated with appropriate engravings. Newcastle, 1817

St Andrews copy at [=s TX783.B2](#), pp. 48-49

Bell gives a recipe for Naples biscuits elsewhere in the book (p. 8):

8 eggs
1 lb. of sugar
1 gill of water
1 lb. 2oz. of flour

A Naples biscuit frame is about eight inches long, three inches broad, and one inch deep; in this frame the partitions are quite upright, which must be papered neatly. Put the sugar and water into a small pan; let it dissolve, and boil; then whisk the eggs, pouring in the sugar by a gentle stream; keep whisking until it is very light, which you may know by its rising; when it is perfectly cold, scatter in the flour, and mix it until smooth, but stir it as little as possible; put it into the frames well filled, and bake them in a good oven, but not too hot; a dust of sugar must be thrown over them as they are going into the oven.

NB. See Joseph Bell's pastry recipes from the same book

Joseph Bell Pastry Recipes (1817)

To make Puff Paste (p. 43)

3 lb. butter and 3 lb. flour. – The butter must be tough; if salt, wash it in two waters the night before it is used; take half of it, and rub it in the flour; make it into paste with pure water the same stiffness as the butter; roll it on a marble slab, about half an inch thick; spot it with small pieces of butter; dust it with flour; then double it up, and roll it out again; spot it as before, and roll it out again; spot it the third time; then double it up; roll it out again twice; and cut it into shreds, about two inches broad, when it will be fit for use.

Crisp Tart Paste (p. 44)

1 lb. butter and 2lb. flour. – Rub the butter and flour very finely together; then mix it with water into paste the stiffness of the butter. This is choice paste for tarts made of fresh fruit.

Sweet Tart Paste (p. 44)

6oz. butter, 2oz. sugar, and 1 lb. flour. – Beat two whites of eggs to froth; rub the butter and flour very finely together; make the paste into a proper stiffness with the whites of eggs and a little water.

Source: Joseph Bell, A Treatise on Confectionary, in all its branches, with practical notes, and illustrated with appropriate engravings. Newcastle, 1817

St Andrews copy at [=s TX783.B2](#)

James Cox Mincemeat Recipe (1822) – contains meat

Minced Pies

Chop small six pounds of beef suet, four pounds of lean raw beef or good tripe, three dozen of apples, one pound and a half of candied orange and lemon peel, half a pound of candied citron cut small, six pounds of currants, three pounds of moist sugar, a table-spoonful of salt, one ounce of powdered ginger, two ounces of powdered allspice, half an ounce of ground cinnamon, one bottle of brandy, and the rind grated of three lemons, and mix all well together; sheet your pans with tart paste, fill them well with the minced meat, cover them with puff paste, and bake them in a warm oven: be careful your currants are well washed and dried afterwards.

Source: James Cox, The Practical Confectioner, embracing the whole system of pastry, and confectionery, in all their various branches. London, 1822.

St Andrews copy at [=s TX763.C6](#), p. 103

NB. See James Cox's pastry recipes from the same book

James Cox Pastry Recipes (1822)

Tart Paste (p. 101)

Rub half a pound of butter into a pound of flour with your hand, wet it with water, and mix it up rather stiff.

Puff paste (p. 100)

Rub half a pound of butter into one pound of flour with your hand, make it into paste with water, about the consistence of your butter; then roll out the paste thin, and break half a pound more butter in pieces the size of a shilling and stick them all over the paste; fold up the paste, let it stand a short time, roll it out, and fold it up three times, when it will be fit for use.

Source: James Cox, The Practical Confectioner, embracing the whole system of pastry, and confectionery, in all their various branches. London, 1822.

St Andrews copy at [=s TX763.C6](#)



Robert Seymour fecit

Christmas Dinner

"Christmas dinner" from The book of Christmas illustrated by Robert Seymour (St Andrews copy at St Andrews copy at [es GT4895.H2](#))