

THE CORNISH PASTY

The pasty was a devised meal for the tin mines. The miners could hold the pasty by the "crimp" and eat it from the side. The crimp would then be thrown away to avoid poisoning from the arsenic on their hands.

Pastry

The pastry must be stretchy to wrap and curl, hold its shape and not crack open.

250g SR Flour
85g fat (1/2 lard, 1/2 margarine)
Pinch salt

Method

Lightly rub fat into flour and salt. Add sufficient water lightly to make a soft, elastic dough.

Meat

Chuck or skirt steak is best used as it is good for producing gravy and will not disintegrate after long cooking. A little fat on the meat is necessary. Meat should be finely cut but not minced.

Vegetables

1 small potato - Older potatoes are best as they soften more

1 turnip about the same size as the potato

1/2 onion

Salt and pepper

Vegetables are chipped according to the time they will take to soften while cooking. They need to be chipped instead of dicing as dicing is too lumpy and mincing is too soggy.

Constructing the Pasty

Take a section of the pastry - handle lightly and roll out to about 15cm in diameter.

- Bottom layer is turnip - chip into irregular slices the size of a thumbnail
- Next is the potato - only use 3/4 of the potato - chip into pieces about the size of a 5c piece
- Spread on the layer of meat - going right to the corners
- Salt and pepper
- Chip the onion all over - about the size of currants
- Finally, the last of the potato is put on top as this prevents the meat sticking and drying out

Closing the pasty

- Lift the edges of the pastry to meet in the centre of the filling. Lightly press the edges together
- Trim off a small triangle of pastry at either end
- Using both thumbs and forefingers, starting from your right, turn in 1cm of double edge, meanwhile holding the second 1cm outwards
- Proceed to fold over the second, over the first and so on
- This will securely wrap everything inside
- Put a small prick near the crimp to allow the steam to escape
- Glaze with milk just before putting in the oven

Baking

- Put the pasties into a hot oven 220C for 10 minutes and then turn temperature down to 190C for another 20 mins
- This allows the pastry to set and allows the inside to cook thoroughly
- When pasties come out of the oven let them stand for another 5 mins to allow the steam inside to soften them a little and improve the flavour

Note - Pasties today usually include trombone as well, but this was not available in Cornwall where the miners originated. Also, pasties have over the years had the fillings mixed together rather than be put into layers.