



Regular egg and a finished Pasche Egg

INGREDIENTS

- 4 free-range eggs
- 4 large red onions
- Tinfoil

DIRECTIONS

- 01** Peel the onions carefully, so the skins stay as whole as possible. Wrap the skins around the eggs in a random way - you do not need to cover the egg completely.
- 02** Fold a piece of tinfoil around the onion-covered egg. Make sure it's completely covered.
- 03** Boil the eggs for about 15-20 minutes. Take off the heat and rinse in cold water.
- 04** Peel away the foil and the onion skins – the eggs should be beautifully coloured!
- 05** You can "polish" the eggs with a bit of butter to deepen the colours and give them a gloss.

You can now hide the eggs as part of an Easter egg hunt, serve them as part of a tasty lunch, or have a go at Egg Dumping or Egg Rolling!

You can use beetroot or spinach stalks in the water, instead of onion skins, to make pink and green eggs too.

PASCHE OR PACE EGGS

Making Pasche or Pace Eggs is an Easter tradition from Cumbria.

Eggs are boiled with onion skins, spinach stalks or beetroot to turn them beautiful colours.

Originally, the Pasche Eggs would then have been used in Egg Rolling (seeing whose egg could roll the furthest without cracking) or Egg Dumping (tapping your egg against an opponent's, seeing whose egg cracks first), before being eaten over the Easter weekend.

These games are still played today, not just in Cumbria, but all over the world.



Image: Fidget Pie, courtesy of www.essentiallycatering.co.uk

HUNTINGDON FIDGET PIE

Recipe by Booths Food, Wine and Grocery

A “fidget pie” is a traditional snack from the Midlands – it’s a bit like a Cornish pasty, but from further up country.

The pie was traditionally made and given to farm workers during the late summer harvest, when apples were plentiful.

The name is said to derive from “fitchett” which is the Old English word for polecat: apparently, the polecat’s musky scent smells a bit like cooking apples. I’m still trying to decide if this is a good thing, or not!

INGREDIENTS

FOR THE PASTRY:

- 200g plain flour
- ¼ tbsp salt
- 100g chilled unsalted butter, cubed
- 1tsp fresh thyme
- 3tbsp chilled water

FOR THE FILLING

- 4-5 large eating apples
- 450g unsmoked bacon with the rind removed
- 1 large onion, chopped
- Handful of chopped fresh parsley
- 1tsp caster sugar
- 2tbsp plain flour
- 1tsp corn flour
- 250ml dry cider
- 1 egg yolk to glaze

METHOD

To make the pastry, add the flour, salt, thyme and chilled butter to a food processor then blend until you have a mixture that resembles breadcrumbs.

Tip into a bowl, add the cold water and bring the dough together with a blunt knife. Knead the dough until smooth, cover with cling film and refrigerate for 30 minutes.

For the filling, peel, core and chop the apples into bitesize chunks and pop into a bowl. Cut the bacon into bitesize pieces (removing all the rind) and add to the apples with the chopped onion and parsley. Season with salt, milled pepper and caster sugar, then toss all the ingredients in the corn flour. Place the filling into a 20cm pie dish.

Next mix the plain flour and 3 tbsp of the cider to form a paste, then gradually whisk in the remaining cider. Pour this over the apple mixture in the pie dish. Roll out the pastry to about the thickness of a pound coin and cut out a circle slightly larger than the pie dish. From the excess pastry cut a 2cm strip.

Brush the edge of the pie dish with water and place the strip around the edge of the dish. Then brush the pastry rim with water and carefully place the pie lid on top. Lightly press the edge with the back of a fork to seal. Chill in the fridge for 30 minutes.

Preheat the oven to 180°C / gas 4.

Brush the pie top with the egg yolk and cook for 45-50 minutes until the pastry is golden.



Top right and left: *primroses and violets in the garden*
Bottom right: *Finished! Sugared flowers ready to use*

INGREDIENTS

- Edible spring flowers (e.g. primroses, violets, violas)
- 1 x free range egg white, beaten until frothy
- Bowl of caster sugar
- Small, clean paintbrush

SUGARED FLOWERS

My grandmother used to make amazing sugared flowers, not out of fondant or royal icing, but using flowers from the garden.

In theory they were cake decorations, but (I confess) we used to sit together at the kitchen table and eat them like sweets.

There's something particularly satisfying about sugared flowers: I'm not sure whether it's capturing the essence of a spring day in the soft yellow of a primrose or the shy purple of a violet, or the fact that these beautiful flowers taste as lovely as they look.

Whatever the reason, they are well worth the slightly fiddly parts of the recipe, and will look fabulous on a cake for Easter, or popped on the side of a plate as a charming treat.

METHOD

- 01** Pick the flowers on a sunny day, early in the morning, when they're just unfurling their petals. It's worth reading through the rules on picking wild flowers in the UK – if possible, pick flowers from your own garden. Also, make sure that they're not somewhere that dogs have been – no one likes dog pee as an added flavour!
- 02** Give the flowers a good (but gentle) shake and take them indoors. Put them head-down on some baking paper and leave them for an hour. This will give any beetles living inside the stamen chance to escape!
- 03** When you're ready, whip up your egg white until it's frothy, then carefully paint all the petals with the egg white.
- 04** Once the flower is completely wet with egg white, hold it over the bowl of sugar and use a teaspoon to gently coat the flower in sugar. It needs to be thoroughly covered, inside and out.
- 05** Place the flower gently on some baking paper to dry – this takes around 24 hours.
- 06** Once the egg white and sugar have set, your flower is ready to store (it should keep for at least two weeks), to use on a cake – or to eat.



KULICH

Russian Easter Bread

Kulich is a delicious sweet bread from Russia, which is commonly eaten on Easter day.

Similar in shape and flavour to Italian panettone, kulich is packed with fragrant spices, dried fruits and citrus peel.

Bake up a batch for breakfast on Easter Sunday!

** Recipe courtesy of Great British Chefs*

INGREDIENTS

- 450g of strong white bread flour
- 1/2 tsp salt
- 1 1/2 tsp mixed spice
- 1/2 tsp cinnamon
- 50g of butter
- 50g of caster sugar
- 14g of fast-action dried yeast, (2 packets)
- 210ml of milk, tepid
- 1 egg, beaten
- 100g of mixed dried fruits
- 25g of citrus peel, mixed

ICING

- 100g of icing sugar

METHOD

1. Begin by washing and drying 6 empty tin cans. Butter the tins well and line each with some buttered baking paper.
2. Sieve the flour, salt, ground mixed spice and cinnamon into a large mixing bowl and rub in the butter using your fingertips. Make a well in the centre of the mixture and add the sugar and yeast.
3. Add the beaten egg and tepid milk to the flour and mix together to form a soft, pliable dough.
4. Turn out the dough onto a lightly floured work surface. Carefully work the mixed dried fruit and mixed peel into the dough until well combined. Knead lightly for 5 minutes, or until smooth and elastic.
5. Shape the dough into a ball and place it into a buttered mixing bowl, then cover with a clean tea towel and set aside in a warm place for 1 hour to prove.
6. Turn out the proved dough onto a lightly floured work surface and knock back the dough. Shape it into a ball again and return it to the bowl, then cover again with the tea towel and set aside for a further 30 minutes to prove.
7. Place the dough onto a lightly floured work surface and divide it into 6 equal pieces. Roll each piece into a ball, then roll them into a long cylinder shape and put them into the buttered and paper lined tins. Cover the tins with a tea towel and set aside to rise for 25–30 minutes.
8. Preheat an oven to 240°C/gas mark 8.
9. Once the buns have risen in the tins to about ¾ of the way up, place them on a baking sheet and bake for 25–35 minutes, or until pale golden-brown and sound hollow when turned over and tapped on.
10. Turn the Kulich out of the tins onto a wire cooling rack and allow to cool completely before icing.
11. To make the icing, add the lemon juice to the icing sugar, spoon by spoon, until you have a thick but runny icing that will cover the Kulich buns and dribble a little down the sides. Spoon the icing over Kulich and scatter the glacé cherries, toasted almonds and sprinkles over the top.