

cornish pasty

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Cornish Pasty

Beef skirt, potato, swede and onion, raw, sealed in a shortcrust semicircle and baked for nearly an hour. It has Protected Geographical Indication status in the United Kingdom, which specifies the shape, the crimp on the side rather than the top, and the requirement that the filling go in uncooked.

That last point is the interesting one, and it is what makes the pasty different from every other pie here.

What makes it work

- **The filling goes in raw.** It cooks in its own steam inside the pastry for 50 minutes. The vegetables release liquid, the beef renders, and the whole thing becomes its own gravy — which is why there is no stock and no sauce.
- **Slice, do not dice, and never mince.** Thin slices of potato and swede and roughly chopped skirt. Minced beef gives a completely different, and inferior, texture.
- **Layer in order: potato, swede, onion, beef, seasoning, butter.** The potato insulates the pastry from the meat juices.
- **Season more than feels right.** A great deal of black pepper. Raw filling under pastry cannot be tasted and corrected.
- **A strong pastry, with some lard or a bread flour.** A pastry was carried down a mine in a pocket; it needs to survive being handled. See [flour](#).
- **Crimp along the side,** not over the top. Twenty crimps or so, folded over each other.

Ingredients

Makes 4 large pasties.

Pastry:

- 500 g strong white [flour](#)
- 125 g lard or [shortening](#), cold
- 125 g unsalted butter, cold
- 8 g fine salt
- about 175 ml cold water

Filling:

- 400 g beef skirt, in 1 cm pieces
- 350 g potato, peeled and sliced 3 mm
- 200 g swede (rutabaga), peeled and sliced 3 mm
- 150 g onion, finely sliced
- 40 g unsalted butter
- 6 g fine salt, and a great deal of black pepper
- 1 [egg](#), beaten

Method

Rub both fats into the flour and salt, bind with the water, knead briefly to a firm dough, wrap and chill one hour. Pasty pastry, unusually, benefits from a little gluten development.

Divide into four and roll each to a 20 cm circle.

On one half of each, layer potato, then swede, then onion, then beef, seasoning between the layers. Dot with butter. Leave a 2 cm border.

Damp the edge, fold over, and press out the air. Crimp along the curved edge: fold a corner of pastry over on itself and press, then repeat along the whole seam.

Set on parchment, brush with egg, and cut a small slit in the top.

Bake **200 °C / 400 °F for 20 minutes**, then **165 °C / 325 °F for 35–40 minutes**, until deep gold.

Cool at least 15 minutes — the inside is molten.

Notes

- **Swede, not turnip**, though the Cornish call it turnip. It is the sweetness that matters.
- **They freeze raw** and bake from frozen with 20 minutes added, which is what they were designed for.
- Cheese and onion, or pork and apple, are the common non-PGI fillings.

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