

tourtiere

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Tourtière

The Québécois meat pie eaten at *réveillon*, the meal after midnight mass on Christmas Eve. Ground pork, sometimes with beef or veal, bound with potato and seasoned with a specific and unusual spice bill: cinnamon, cloves and allspice in a savoury pie, which is a survival of medieval French cooking.

Regional versions differ sharply. The Lac-Saint-Jean *tourtière* is a deep pie of cubed game and potato baked for six hours; the Montreal version below is the shallow, everyday one.

What makes it work

- **Warm spices in a savoury filling.** Cinnamon, clove, allspice and savory — the herb — in with the pork. It sounds wrong and it is the entire identity of the dish. See [Spices](#).
- **Grated potato or breadcrumbs bind it.** A boiled, mashed potato stirred through absorbs the fat and stops the filling crumbling when cut.
- **Cook the filling, then cool it.** Twenty minutes' simmering with stock, cooled fully before the pastry goes on.
- **A little liquid left in the filling.** Not dry — the potato will take up more as it cools.
- **Lard in the pastry** is traditional and gives the right sturdy, savoury crust; see [baking fats](#).

Ingredients

One 23 cm double-crust pie. Serves 8.

- 1 batch [all-butter pie crust](#), preferably half butter and half lard
- 700 g ground pork
- 250 g ground beef or veal
- 1 onion, finely diced
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 celery stick, finely diced
- 250 ml chicken or beef stock
- 1 large potato, boiled and mashed, about 200 g
- 5 g ground [cinnamon](#)
- 2 g ground cloves
- 3 g ground allspice
- 2 g ground savory or thyme
- 8 g fine salt, plenty of black pepper
- 1 [egg](#), beaten

Method

Cook the onion, garlic and celery in a little fat until soft, eight minutes.

Add both meats and cook, breaking them up, until no pink remains. Add the stock, the spices, salt and pepper, and simmer uncovered **20 minutes**, until most of the liquid has gone.

Stir in the mashed potato. Taste and season hard — a cold filling tastes flatter than a hot one, and this pie is often served cold.

Cool completely.

Heat the oven to **200 °C / 400 °F**. Line the tin, fill, lay the top crust over, seal, crimp, and cut vents. Glaze with egg.

Bake **20 minutes** at 200 °C, then **180 °C / 350 °F for 30–35 minutes**, until deep gold.

Rest 20 minutes before cutting.

Notes

- **Served with ketchup, chili sauce or pickled beets** in Québec, and the acid genuinely helps. See [Beets](#).
- **Freezes very well**, baked or unbaked, for three months. It is traditionally made in quantity in December.
- **Keeps four days refrigerated** and is often eaten cold the next day.

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