

# Learn Belgian pie baking From one who knows how

By DOROTHY FLEMING

"Simple Simon met a pie man going to the fair. . ." A modern Simple Simon might be going to a Kermis and he would most likely meet a Belgian housewife who had just finished making a batch of Belgian pies.

This is Kermis time in Door county, a time of Thanksgiving for the harvest. Kermisses have been celebrated for over one hundred years in this area. They begin the last weekend in August and continue for seven weekends in the various towns and villages.

They are so arranged that the folks in each town will have an opportunity to visit relatives and friends in all the other locations. Like most Thanksgiving observances, it is a time for feasting and merry making and for families and friends to get together.

Friends go from house to house renewing acquaintances or stop to dance and have a glass of beer at a tavern where there is always fun and festivity. It's a must to have a piece of Belgian pie which is always given free to all guests at this time. Housewives have a variety of Belgian pies to treat all who drop in for a visit.

Belgian pies are made by the dozen and the women try to outdo each other in making the most delicious pies in their community. Unlike pies of pastry, the crust is made of a raised dough. They usually have fillings of prunes, raisins, apples or rice, although other families may count as their favorite a filling of apricots, pineapple or other fruit.

They are topped with cottage cheese that is baked, with the rice pies usually have a whipped cream topping, although this may be optional with other bakers who may use either cheese or cream toppings.

The best thing about Belgian pie (despite Emily Post) is that it is customary to pick up a piece with your fingers and eat it as a roll or slice of bread. Washed down with good Wisconsin beer, it can really be called "finger lickin' good."

Today's Simple Simon, if he were smart instead of "simple," would head for the home of Mrs. Ray (Jean) Guth in Brussels, who is famous for her Belgian pies, not only at Kermis time but also the year around. She made 20 of them to be served at her husband's tavern before the Kermis in Brussels.

Today she shares her know-how with Advocate readers. Here, in her own words is how she makes her mouth-watering delicacies:

## BELGIAN PIES

Crust for 12 pies:  
Dissolve 1/4 cake of Fleischman's yeast in 1/2 cup warm water and 1 tablespoon of sugar. Let stand until it gets "bubbly." Beat six whole eggs with 1/2

cup of sugar and 1 teaspoon salt. Beat well and add one cup of scalded cream (slightly cooled) and 1 cup of butter softened to room temperature. Do not melt butter.

Add yeast mixture to eggs and slowly blend in 5 cups flour. The dough will be soft and you may have to add more flour to handle it. Divide into 12 balls and let stand for five minutes. Roll out on floured board to fit the pie tins, which have been well greased with lard or shortening.

## FILLINGS

Prune filling for 4 pies: Cook one pound of prunes, cool, pit and then put through food chopper. Add sugar to taste and spread on crust. Add cheese topping.

Raisin filling for 4 pies: Cook one pound of raisins until soft. Drain and add 1/2 cup cream and 1/2 cup sugar. Mix one tablespoon of flour in a little water and add to mixture. Stir until slightly thickened. Spread on four crusts, add topping.

Rice filling for 4 pies: Wash rice until water runs clear. Boil in 2 cups of water with 1 teaspoon salt and simmer slowly for 1/2 hour. Use a heavy kettle as it is better if rice is not stirred while cooking. Mrs. Guth uses Uncle Ben's Converted rice for her pies. When rice is cooked, add 1 1/4 cups milk and 1/4 cup thick cream. Add two beaten eggs yolks and 2/3 cup sugar. Cook until it thickens and then add one teaspoon of vanilla and spread on crusts.

Other dried fruits and fresh apples may be used by the same method as the raisin filling.

## CHEESE TOPPING

Put through food chopper or strainer two pounds of dry cottage cheese and two pounds of creamed cottage cheese. Add 1 1/2 cups sugar, 1 teaspoon salt and the beaten yolks of six eggs. Enough cream may be added to make it spread easily. Spread topping over fillings.

Bake pies at 350 degrees for 12 to 15 minutes or until crusts are a golden brown. Rotate from top to bottom shelves of oven when half baked. Mrs. Guth bakes six pies at a time.

Rice and apple pies are topped with whipped cream although some bakers use the cheese topping on apple pies, too.

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MRS. RAY GUTH doesn't wait for kermis time to roll around to bake her famous Belgian pies. Her delectable concoctions are made by the dozen. Unlike many excellent bakers, Mrs. Guth willingly shares her recipes in an accompanying article. —Frances Badtke