

EATING & DRINKING

By GABRIELLA GERSHENSON

IN MANY WAYS, this holiday season will be different from other holiday seasons. We won't be cooking the same feasts we would have in years past, because we won't be gathering in groups as we have in years past. But we still need that feeling of festivity, familiarity and togetherness that the holidays and the foods that go with them provide. So what can take the place of the turkeys and hams that feed multitudes, of tables groaning with sides and a battery of baked goods? What one dish can accomplish what all those others do in aggregate? My answer: the savory pie.

For starters, nothing says comfort quite like it. A savory pie has everything you'd normally find on a dinner plate, but swaddled in pastry—or, in the case of cottage pies, cloaked in equally reassuring mashed potatoes. It marries a sense of occasion with the all-in-one convenience of a one-pot meal.

As demonstrated by the world's greatest practitioners of this branch of gastronomy, the British, savory pies can be simple and homey, à la shepherd's pie, or as splashy as you're up for (see: the hand-raised pie episode of "The Great British Bake Off"). According to culinary historian Polly Russell, pies have always been multitaskers. In the England of seven centuries ago, they were a means to store, preserve and transport food. The crust was an inedible pastry case called a coffin; the filling sealed within would be eaten, and the pastry would be reused or discarded. By the 17th century, edible pastry became the norm and a vehicle for cooks to create elaborate decorated pies.

The world of British savory pies is as vast as its history, and there are plenty of variations on the spectrum between humble cottage pies and the over-the-top ceremonial pies. Those might include steamed steak and kidney puddings made with suet pastry; the steak and ale pies you'd be likely to eat in a pub; sturdy hand-held pasties that once fed miners and now sustain commuters; and cold picnic pies with fillings of pork and hard-boiled eggs.

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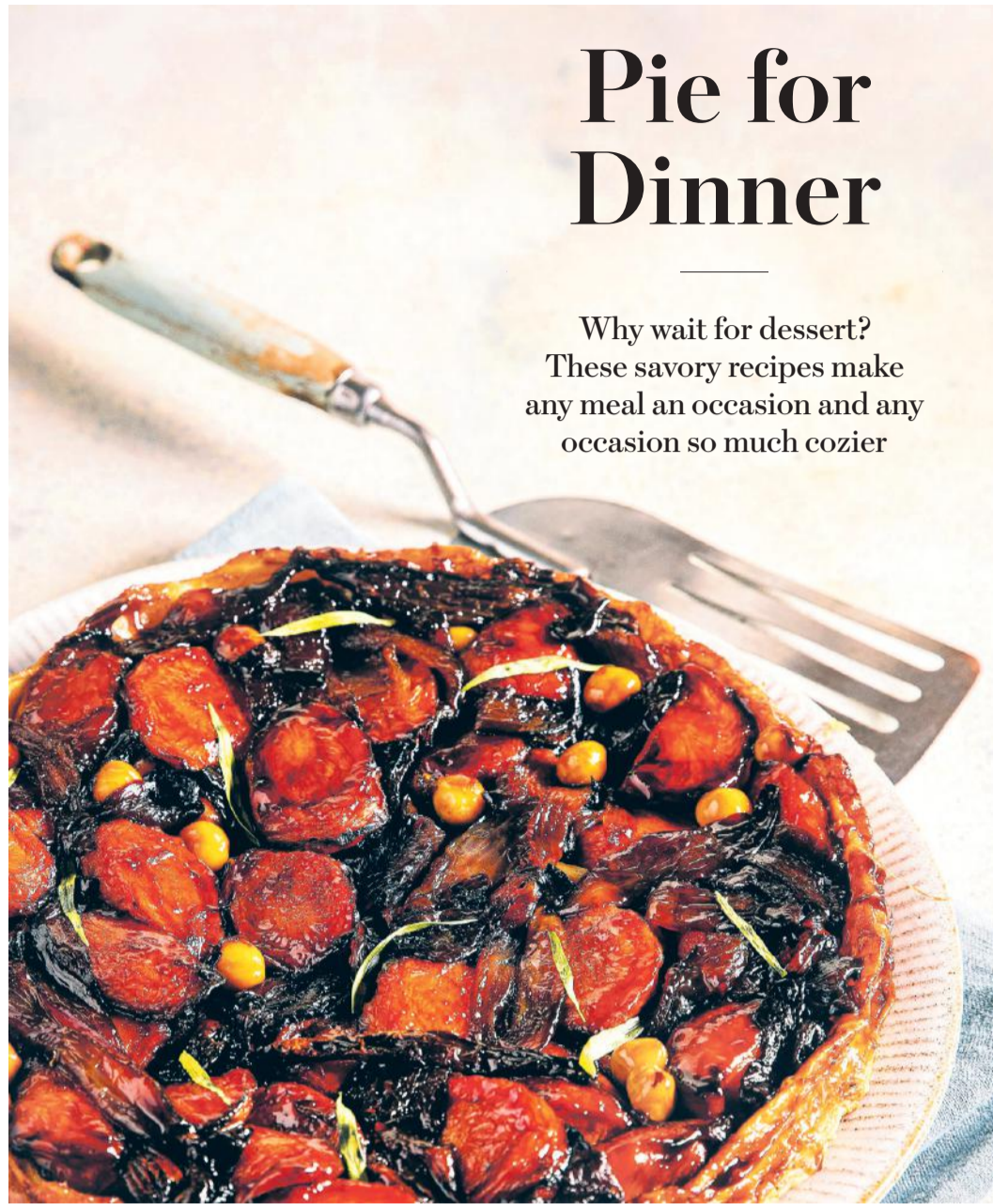
If one chef is credited with reviving the craft of the British savory pie, it's Calum Franklin. Adjacent to Holborn Dining Room in London, where he is executive chef, Mr. Franklin opened the Pie Room in 2018. There, he and his staff construct the types of ornate pies you see in period dramas or Victorian etchings. In his new book, "The Pie Room" (Bloomsbury Absolute), Mr. Franklin publishes classic recipes as well as creations of his own, such as a Thanksgiving-perfect pie filled with turkey, cranberries and stuffing, and the diabolically good, carb-on-carb macaroni and cheese pie. The red onion, carrot and hazelnut tatin at right leans a little



► Find the recipe for this Mac 'n' Cheese Pie at wsj.com/food.

French. If you use store-bought puff pastry, it's remarkably easy to make and still an absolute stunner.

As Mr. Franklin put it, "In all the years I have been doing it, I have never ever met a British person who said, 'I don't like pies.'"



Red Onion, Carrot and Hazelnut Tatin

In Mr. Franklin's book, the recipe includes instructions for making your own rough puff pastry. Here we opt for the easy route (above): store-bought frozen puff pastry. It greatly shortens the time and labor and works just beautifully.

Active Time 1 hour
Total Time 1½ hours
Makes 1 (9-inch) tart

3 medium red onions
4 large carrots, peeled and cut into 1½-inch chunks
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
½ teaspoon salt
¼ cup blanched whole hazelnuts
1 tablespoon unsalted butter
1 tablespoon plus 1½ teaspoons extra-fine sugar
2 teaspoons balsamic vinegar
1 sheet store-bought all-butter frozen puff pastry, defrosted according to package instructions
2 tablespoons tarragon leaves, soaked in an ice water bath and patted dry

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees.
2. Peel onions and cut them in half through the roots so they stay intact, then cut each half through the root again into four wedges, and again into eighths.
3. On a baking sheet, sprinkle carrot chunks and onion wedges with vegetable oil and salt. Toss

well to evenly coat. Roast vegetables in middle of oven until they get soft and start to brown and caramelize, 30 minutes. Add hazelnuts and roast 5 minutes more.

4. In a 9-inch cast-iron pan or other heavy ovenproof pan, warm butter, sugar and balsamic vinegar over medium heat, stirring constantly, until sugar dissolves. Bring mixture to a boil and continue mixing until it has thickened enough to coat the back of the spoon, 2-3 minutes more. Add roasted vegetables and nuts to pan and use a spoon to toss well and coat with glaze. Set aside to cool 10 minutes.

5. Unroll puff pastry carefully. Use a rolling pin, if needed, to even out dough, then cut out a 9-inch round.

6. Bunch the vegetables together in the pan, leaving a ¾-inch gap around sides of the pan. Cover vegetables with pastry, tucking it slightly under, and press lightly into skillet all around the edge. Prick pastry all over with a fork and bake tart tatin until the pastry is puffed up and golden, 20 minutes. Use an oven mitt to remove pan from oven and while handling pan. Place a flat plate large enough to go over top of pan and quickly flip it over, centering the pie on it.

7. Dress top of tart tatin with the tarragon leaves, and serve warm.

Pie for Dinner

Why wait for dessert? These savory recipes make any meal an occasion and any occasion so much cozier

1 (10-ounce) bag frozen peas, thawed
3 tablespoons capers
½ cup finely chopped chives
1 cup flat-leaf parsley leaves, chopped
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
¾ teaspoon salt

1. Preheat oven to 400 degrees.
2. Make the potato topping: Put potatoes in a medium pot and add enough cold water just to cover them. Salt water and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat to medium and simmer until potatoes are very tender, 20-25 minutes. Drain potatoes, then return them to pot along with milk, heavy cream and butter. Mash together until smooth. Add egg yolks and salt, and mix until well incorporated. Set aside.

3. Make the filling: In a medium pan over medium heat, bring milk and cream to a simmer. Drop in cod, salmon, smoked haddock and prawns, and poach 2 minutes. The seafood will look cooked on the outside but will be somewhat raw on the inside. Drain fish, reserving poaching liquid in a bowl.

4. Clean pan and add butter. Melt it over medium heat until small bubbles appear, then whisk in flour. Reduce heat to low and cook for 8 minutes, whisking continuously. Do not let it brown. Slowly whisk in half of the reserved poaching liquid, increase heat to medium-low and cook, stirring continuously to prevent any lumps from forming, until thickened, 10-15 minutes. Add remaining poaching liquid and continue whisking until thick and smooth, 10-15 minutes more. Add peas, capers, chives, parsley, mustard and salt, and mix well. Lightly fold in drained fish, taking care not to break up the pieces.

5. Spoon fish mixture into a 9-by-13-by-3-inch ovenproof dish and level the surface. Spread mashed potato topping over fish mixture, taking it right to the edges of the dish, then drag the tines of a fork over the top to create texture. Scatter grated cheese evenly over the top.

6. Bake until sauce is bubbling up at the sides and the potato topping has developed a golden crust, 35-40 minutes. Serve warm.

—Recipes adapted from "The Pie Room" by Calum Franklin (Bloomsbury Absolute)

The Ultimate Fish Pie

Capers and mustard punctuate the saucy filling in Mr. Franklin's take on a British classic. If you can't find smoked haddock, other cold-smoked fish fillets, such as salmon, will work fine.

Active Time 3 hours
Total Time 4 hours
Serves 8-12

For the potato topping:

4 medium large Russet potatoes (about 3 pounds), peeled and quartered
1 cup whole milk
½ cup heavy cream
4 tablespoons unsalted butter, cut into four pieces
2 large egg yolks, beaten
¾ teaspoon salt, plus more for salting water
½ cup grated cheddar cheese (about 2 ounces)

For the filling:

2¼ cups whole milk
1¼ cups heavy cream
10 ounces skinless cod fillet, cut into 1-inch dice
7 ounces skinless salmon fillet, cut into 1-inch dice
7 ounces skinless smoked haddock fillet or other cold-smoked fish, cut into 1-inch dice
½ pound raw tiger prawns or other medium shrimp, peeled and cleaned
4 tablespoons unsalted butter
½ cup all-purpose flour



JOHN CAREY

SLOW FOOD FAST / SATISFYING AND SEASONAL FOOD IN ABOUT 30 MINUTES



The Chef Donny Sirisavath

His Restaurant Khao Noodle Shop in Dallas

What He's Known For Thai and Lao street food and noodle dishes inspired by the foods he grew up on. Spinning a buzzy series of pop-up dinners into an award-winning restaurant.

Cabbage Stir-Fry With Rice and Scallions

A YEAR AGO, Donny Sirisavath's Khao Noodle Shop in Dallas was humming, garnering awards and acclaim. He was planning an expansion. Now, that's off. "Thankfully, we hadn't signed the lease," he said. Yet even with revenue down 80% compared with this time last year, Mr. Sirisavath continues to forge ahead and find inspiration, with expanded outdoor seating at the restaurant and a new pop-up series in the works.

He's working around the clock, with less time than ever to refuel at home. When he does, he'll often make this cabbage stir-fry. A 20-minute, two-step recipe, his final Slow Food Fast contribution is also deeply satisfying, with layers of umami flavor thanks to leeks, oyster sauce and soy sauce. As the succulent cabbage leaves cook, they caramelize in the pan,

turning meaty and sweet.

It's a great way to showcase cabbage, a real kitchen workhorse: affordable, available year-round, a shelf-life all-star and versatile, too. This recipe permits a broad range when it comes to cooking time; stir-fry the cabbage to your own taste. "I cook it until it wilts," Mr. Sirisavath said. "If you want it sweeter and softer, keep cooking it down."

When he has more time, he makes this as part of a larger spread. These days, for quick comfort, the chef serves the stir-fry simply, over rice, with a garnish of sliced scallions. Either way, it brings him comfort. "I always ate this as a kid when I was sick and needed to feel better. Mom would serve it with a pickled egg, greens and rice porridge," he said. "So good." —Kitty Greenwald

Total Time 20 minutes
Serves 4

3 tablespoons grapeseed or other neutral oil
4 cloves garlic, minced
1 medium head white cabbage, leaves thinly sliced
1 leek, thinly sliced
½ cup water
1 tablespoon sugar
¼ cup oyster sauce
2 tablespoons light soy sauce

2 scallions, thinly sliced, for garnish
Coarsely ground black pepper
6 cups cooked jasmine rice, for serving

1. Set a wok or a large sauté pan over medium-high heat. Add oil and heat until it shimmers. Add garlic and stir-fry until golden, 2 minutes. Stir in cabbage and leeks, thoroughly coating vegetables in garlicky

oil. Stir-fry vegetables until they are beginning to soften, about 5 minutes. Add water, sugar, oyster sauce and soy sauce, stirring until well combined. Continue to stir-fry until sauce cooks down and cloaks vegetables, and cabbage wilts and caramelizes in spots, 5-10 minutes more.
2. Garnish cabbage stir-fry with scallions and plenty of freshly ground pepper. Serve hot with jasmine rice.



NICE SAVORY Oyster sauce, soy sauce and a splash of water cook down to cloak the cabbage leaves and give them umami oomph.

JENNY HUANG FOR THE WALL STREET JOURNAL, FOOD STYLING BY TYINA HOANG, PROP STYLING BY BEATRICE CHASTICA; MICHAEL HOEWELER (ILLUSTRATION)