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THE RUBBER BAND DOOR KNOB

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A Simple Pie

It's August, in the middle of fruit season when I think about pies. I love a great 4 berry, strawberry-rhubarb or an old-fashioned banana cream pie. I am not a big dessert eater, as I prefer a great cheese plate, but on occasions, I have a slice or two. I have a bad habit of saying, "no dessert for me," but when someone orders one for the table along with a couple of spoons, I end up digging in. I like the simplicity of pie because of its flaky pastry, singular flavors and the ease involved in eating it. When you cut into the pie, an easily definable point shows you where to stick your fork. The round shape allows you to cut a sliver or even eat half the pie. It looks good in the pan when baked right. As I thought about this and all the possible flavors - fruit, cream, sugar and sweetmeats - I realized I missed something. It's my favorite pie that I could eat every week and never grow tired of. The pork pie is at the top of my list. However, most who grew up on this side of the Atlantic have no clue what this is. Few places in the U.S. even make it. The team at Publican Quality Meats in Chicago makes a good version. You can buy a whole one at the market or enjoy a slice across the street at the Publican as part of their tasting plates. I applaud chef Kahan for keeping this English tradition alive and well.

I am writing this on a sunny day in the backyard of my sister's house in the UK. One of the first things I do when I return to this part of England is to stock up on a few things for the refrigerator. It's kind of like a reverse detox; I want to eat all the unhealthy food that I just flushed out on a cleanse I got suckered into. It's a supply of sausages and beer for breakfast, good crisps (potato chips for those of you who need me to translate), real mature white cheddar, and, of course, a pork pie or two. So what is a pork pie? **Watch this short video to find out.**



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Check out this great magazine, [Four](#).



Eater is the source for people who care about dining and drinking in the nation's most important food cities, like Chicago. A favorite of industry pros and amateurs alike, Eater has an uncanny knack for finding out what's opening where, who's serving what, and how it's all going down. Find out [what's new](#) in Chicago.



The modern commercially run of the mill pork pie, which lines the shelves of most British grocers, is fine for the beginner just like a burger from McDonald's. It is made of cured ground pork that can be a little salty and its pink color might not be appealing to people. From the revolution in how we see mass-produced food in the stores, as well as the gourmet burger business, the same is happening in Britain with traditional handcrafted foods. The common pork pies have a bad reputation, but young local chefs and artisan butchers are bringing back the art of the hand-raised Melton Mowbray pie. One unique part of the pork pie is the hand-raised crust and diced uncured meat. Instead of using a traditional cut crust where cold fats are "cut" into the flour and kept cold, this pie uses a hot water or boiled crust process. The fat of choice is lard, which produces a rich, incredibly crispy crust. The lard is boiled in water, blended into the flour and kneaded slightly. When cooled, it's rolled out to place a mold on the dough, and then the dough is pulled up around the mold. The mold is removed; the filling is placed inside and then sealed with a reserved portion of the dough. After it cools, a flavored jelly made from pork stock is poured into the open cavity of the pie. This is a working man's pate. The other unique ingredient is the anchovy essence in the filling. Yes, anchovies, which provide a unique umami that you won't find in other similar preparations, such as classical French terrines and pates.

I am not asking you to run out and buy one, but for those of you who may travel to Britain, stop at a pub for lunch or for groceries, find yourself a Melton Mowbray pie and grab a quick pint. For me, it is a simple food pleasure just as satisfying as a slice of blueberry or cherry pie with a scoop of ice cream on a summer's eve.

- Chef John Reed, CEC, CCA

TWO GREAT LOCAL BUTCHERS

BEER

So of course you need a pint.
I am letting you in on my
favorite local pint:

Temperance Smittytown



Shhh! Don't tell anyone!

Publican Quality Meats



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