

Bara Ceirch - Oatcakes

Oatcakes are a Welsh tradition that survives still today mostly (as far as I can tell) unchanged (3). In his journals, Gerald of Wales wrote of meals served on trenchers of oat bread rolled out thin and baked on a griddle until hard (6). As with many bread recipes, the method for creating them was handed down through families and not often written down.

In *The Forme of Cury*, a close example can be found under Crispels.XX.VIII.III (11)

Take and make a foile of gode Past as thynne as Paper, kerue it out and fry it in oile. Ober in be grece and be remnaunt, take hony clarified and flaunne therwith, alye hem up and serue hem forth.

These thin cracker like “cakes” were used as plates and trenchers when meals were served. In *A Book of Welsh Bread* by Bobby Freeman a modern recipe is given with the strict instruction that no rolling pin should be used. The dough is to be worked by hand, spreading it out from the center with the palm of the hand until it is thin enough to see light through it (3, 6).

Using a combination of the recipe from *Forme of Cury*, modern recipes and trial and error I finally achieved the proper consistency in the dough and after cooking, they will make good trenchers.



Redaction -

1 1/4 C ground whole oats
1 1/4 C oat flour
Dash of salt
8 Tbls Butter - room temperature
1/2 C COLD water



Mix oats, oat flour, and salt, cut in butter and rub into flours until mix is crumbly. Add one tablespoon of cold water at a time mixing with fingers or fork after each addition. When dough begins to hold together in loose, moist, clumps stop. Pull dough together in bowl, it should be slightly sticky and wet. Once it comes together, knead dough on a clean dry surface until it begins to look smooth and pliant, about 5 - 10 min. Shape dough into a log about 2” in diameter.

To make oatcakes - slice off about 3/4” of dough from end of log. Working from the middle of the slice out, press into the palm working out from the middle until dough forms a thin disk that you can see light through. Bake on med hot griddle or stone for 4 - 5 minutes on each side.



Teisen Berffro

This recipe is one I have wanted to tackle for quite some time. There is a claim that they can be dated back to the 13th century and are tied either to a church completed during the reign of Owain of Gwynedd (1137-1170) in relation to pilgrimages or that the wife of the King saw the sea shells and ordered cakes to be made in their shape. As I have not done any research into these claims I have simply taken a little time to try the recipe with period ingredients. I will admit that, although I made a few using an actual scallop and the rest were pressed into a pan that had scallop shaped forms.

The original recipe comes from *Flavors of Wales* (1)

6 oz Butter
8 oz flour
4 oz Sugar

Redaction using period ingredients -

I chose hazelnut flour to give the biscuit a nuttier flavor. Hazelnuts were a common snack and there is some evidence of the flour being used in baking (4, 11) In Wales, with little access to wheat crops, especially in the highlands, things like hazelnuts and oats would have been more commonly used for baking (18).

Teisen Berffro - Aberffraw biscuits

8 Tbls Butter - room temperature
1/4 C Honey
1 C Spelt flour
1/4 C hazelnut flour (may be replaced with spelt or oat flour)

Preheat oven to 400F.

Stir together butter and honey until well mixed and resulting mixture looks light and fluffy. In separate bowl combine flours. Slowly mix flour mixture into butter mixture until combined. Dough should be stiff and malleable. Press small balls of dough into shell to shape biscuit. You can dust shell lightly with flour or sugar to make it easier to remove biscuit.

Place on baking stone and bake until set - about 12 minutes.

This is a work in progress. When the recipe is finalized and vetted to be historical I will try to cook them on a baking stone in the cooking fire.



Tarten lus ac afalau - Rysshews of Fruyt - Quince and bilberry hand pie

This is an updated redaction from one that I worked on in my prior research. In my research I found evidence of both forms, hand pie or full sized tart (11, 16). Either would have been made in period depending on the occasion. Small hand pies were a good way to make food portable for bringing out in the fields or while you went out to check the flock in the hills.

As with many versions of this type of recipe it contains fruit, marrow (or suet) and a basic short crust (8, 10, 14, 16). All ingredients in recipe have been researched to period and references in song refer to tarts of quince and berry. I have used a modern recipe to help with the redaction from the original source in *Forme of Cury* (7).

The original recipe from *Forme of Cury*

Rysshews of Fruit XX.IX.II -

Take fuges and raisouns. Pyke hem and waiss hem in Wyne. Grind hem with apples and peers. Ypared and ypiked clene. Do therto gode powdours and hole spices make bailes therof fryen in oil and serue hem forth

The modern recipe from *Welsh Heritage Food & Cooking* (21).

Whinberry and apple tart -

2 cooking apples
2 tsp cornstarch
3 cups whinberries
3 tablespoons sugar
Milk for brushing pie crust
Pie crust (2)

Place one crust in bottom of pie tin. Peel apples, core and chop roughly. Toss apples with cornstarch until evenly coated and place in bottom pie crust. Scatter bilberries on top of apple mixture and sprinkle with sugar. Place top pie crust on and seal. Bake at 375F for 30 – 40 min or until crust is golden.

Redaction:

2 quinces
2 tsp oat flour or hazelnut flour
1 cup whinberries (bilberries) – blueberries work here
3 tablespoons honey
2 tsp cinnamon
1/2 tsp cloves
1/2 tsp ginger
Pie crust -

Spelt flour, butter, salt, water, oat flour, egg (for glazing and sealing)



Rough chop quinces and blueberries, mix with honey and spices and toss all in a large bowl. Roll out dough, cut into large (3") circles, place a spoonful of filling on each circle. Use beaten egg around outside edge of circle and fold in half to seal. Use egg to glaze top of pastry.

For this recipe today, due to availability and cost I have substituted blueberries for the bilberries.

Cawl Cennin a pannas – Cabbage and parsnip soup

Cabbage soup would have been a staple in any household. Cabbage was readily available and makes a flavorful base for broth. It is mentioned in a number of early cookery manuscripts. In Liber Cure Cocorum (7,10) this recipe can be found:

For oþer ioutes.

*Take cole and strype hom þorowghe þi honde
And do away þo rybbys I undurstonde;
In fat bre fresshe of befe I wene,
þay schalle be soþun ful thykk by dene.*

In his description of his journey through Wales, Gerald of Wales describes cawls cooked over the fire and fortified with good fat (6). For this recipe I used a recipe from Form of Cury with the addition of parsnips for added flavor and with a stock started with thick bacon.

Caboches in Potage IIII

Take caboches and quarter hem and seeth hem in gode broth with oynouns y mynced and the whyte of lekes y slyt and corue smale and do per to safroun an salt and force it with powdour douce. (11)

Redaction:

1 head cabbage chopped rough
3 leeks – whites only sliced thin
1 parsnip – peeled and rough chopped
1 tsp cinamon
¼ tsp ginger
Pinch nutmeg
1 tsp honey
Pinch of saffron
2 rashers bacon
2 quarts water

Heat stock pot over medium flame and add bacon. Cook bacon until browned and cooked through. Add water and the rest of the ingredients, bring to a boil, reduce to a simmer, and cook one hour or until root vegetables are fork tender.

For the first recipe I followed the redaction as written. For the second recipe I used vegetable stock and no bacon to accommodate vegetarians.

Tarten porc a iar - Pork and hen pie

One of the many ways in which meat was preserved was to cook it in a coffyn or pie. If forms were available a regular short crust pastry could be used. However, there are many examples in art and in recipes of free standing coffyns (5,16,19). A coffyn is described as a thick pastry that would seal in the filling and in the case of meats could be used as a way to preserve it. These pies

would also be sturdy enough to be taken on a journey and could be warmed near the fire or eaten cold. Bardic tales reference good pies filled with all types of meats baked in the fire (14,18).

For the filling of my pie I chose pork and chicken. As the year progressed and the available forage diminished, households would begin to slaughter pigs, cattle and chickens because feed was not readily available and was too costly (9,19,20) I chose a recipe from *Forme of Cury* adapting it to a more Welsh flavor by using ingredients that would be found in the region. Also, the filled coffyns were baked on a bakestone. Though I have attempted this over a cookfire, due to weather and time constraints these were cooked on a stone in a modern oven.



Chewettes on a Fleshe Day XX.IX.V (11)

Take ther lire of Pork and kerue it al to pecys. And hennes therwith and do it in a panne and frye it and make a coffyn as to a pye smale and do therinne and do theruppon zolkes of ayrenn, hares, powdour or gyngur and sale, couere it and frye it in crece. Other bake it well and serue it forth.

Ingredients -

- 1 pork tenderloin
- 2 chicken breasts - boned and skinned
- Bacon grease for cooking
- 1/4 C verjuis
- 2 Tbsp Honey
- 3 Egg yolks
- 1/2 tsp Powder forte
 - Cinnamon
 - Ginger
 - Pepper
 - Cloves
- 1 C Chicken stock
 - Chicken
 - Sage
 - Thyme
 - Bayleaf
 - Salt

Hot crust pastry (see recipe below)

Preheat bakestone in oven (or over hot coals) to 400F

Dice pork and chicken and brown in bacon grease over medium high heat, about 5 min. Once browned, sprinkle with powder forte and mix well. Reduce heat to med-low and add verjuis, simmer and reduce, about 10 min. Remove from heat and cool completely.

Make hot crust pastry as directed. When coffyn crusts are ready add pork and chicken mixture in base, filling to top, add top crust (cutting steam hole in center) and seal by crimping around the top edge to create a crenelated “castle” appearance.

Bake on bakestone 30 min or until crust is browned. Remove from oven and add 1 to 2 tsps chicken stock through hole in top crust.

Coffyn - Hot crust pastry – Research in progress

This was a compilation of two recipes one was early period, one from the early 14th century and the second was a 18th century(7). The difference was the inclusion of eggs. Earlier manuscripts mention using a coffyn, a thick pastry case often made from strong flour, for use in various types of pies often containing meat. However, like many bread recipes, the method of making this is assumed to be known and no specific directions/recipes are given (1).Redaction is as follows:

Hot crust pastry –

2C (300g) spelt flour
1 ¼ C (150g) oat flour
¾ C (100g) stone ground wheat flour
4 oz (8 tbsp) chilled butter – grated
½ tsp salt
3 oz (6 tbsp) butter
2 eggs separated (yolks and whites beaten separately)
1C milk

- Prepare 4 jelly jars or similar sized glasses by wrapping tightly in parchment paper or cling wrap or by covering liberally in oil set aside
- Combine flours and salt in a large bowl
- Cut in 4 oz chilled butter and gently rub into flour with fingers
- In a small saucepan heat milk and 3 oz butter until butter is melted and mixture comes to a simmer
- Temper egg yolks with tablespoon of milk mixture then add into saucepan and mix quickly while removing from heat.
- Pour warm milk mixture into flour mixture and stir with spoon
- As soon as it is cool enough to handle knead into smooth dough, handling as little as possible.
- Working quickly (dough will become hard to work as it cools) separate dough into four portions for the coffin crusts cut a small piece (about ¼) off each piece for the lids
- Shape coffins around around the bottom of each jar, cutting the rough edge so it is smooth and not too tall. When is it slightly cool it will hold shape – you may put in the refrigerator for about 10 min.
- Shape each top into circle slightly larger than the opening of the jelly jar top and cut small hole in center of each one. Set aside, or place in refrigerator with jars
- When bottom crusts are set, gently remove from jar by sliding paper/cling wrap off jar and then pulling it out of crust. If you have used oil, slide the crust off, if it sticks – put warm water into the jar and it should loosen and come off.

- Fill bottoms with desired filling
- Place tops on top and pinch to sides of bottom crust
- Use whisked egg whites to seal and brush top and sides for a golden brown finish
- Bake as directed for recipe – recommended to bake at a min of 400F for at least 35 min to obtain crisp crust.

Flummery

Oats were served as part of the meal often with roasted meats (5,6,14) This recipe is still in research stages. My best Welsh reference comes from *Food of the Bards* though there is no actual recipe there. Currently I am working from a combination of two recipes one, a period recipe from *Curye on Inglysch* and the other a more modern recipe from *The Tudor Kitchen*.

Frumenty - Curye on Inglysch

To make frumente. Tak clene whete & braye yt wel in a mortar tyl the holes gon of: sethe it til it breste in water. Nym it up & lat it cole. Tak good broth & swete mylk of kyn or of almand & tempere it therwith. Nym yelkys of eyren rawe & saffroun & cast therto; salt it; lat it naught boyle after the eyren ben cast therinne. Messe it forth with venesoun or with fat motoun fresch.

Frumenty

*150g pearl barley
500ml single cream
2 tablespoons honey
¼ tsp ground cinnamon
¼ tsp nutmeg*

Place pearl barley in a saucepan with enough cold water to cover it. Bring to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer gently until just cooked – it should still have some bite to it. Drain through a sieve and refresh with cold water to stop it cooking further. Place all other ingredients into a pan and heat gently to a simmer. Add the cooked barley and stir well until heated through.

Redaction:

1 cup groats
2 cups boiling water
½ cup cream
2 tablespoons honey
Pinch cinnamon
Pinch nutmeg
Cooked sliced venison or steak

Cook groats in boiling water until tender but not mushy and water is evaporated. Set aside in a small bowl. Warm cream, honey and spices in pot until simmering, add groats back in cook additional 5 to 10 min at the simmer. Serve with slices of meat (cold or warm)