

= Squab pie =

Squab pie is a traditional dish from South West England , with early records showing it was associated with Cornwall , Devon and Gloucestershire . Although the name suggests it contains squab ( young domestic pigeon ) , in fact it contains mutton and apples . The pie was eaten around the world in the 1900s , though outside South West England it generally did contain pigeon . It is no longer a popular dish , with less than 3 % of British teenagers surveyed having eaten it .

= = Origins = =

Although it is not known exactly where squab pie was first made , it is clear that it was somewhere in South West England . There are references to it originating in Gloucestershire , Devon and Cornwall . Although it appears that squab pie did originally contain pigeons , mutton and apples have been used as a substitute since at least 1737 using a recipe that has remained in cookbooks for years afterwards . This misnaming has meant that the pie is considered to be a surprise . Squab is described as tender with a mild berry flavour , and so it is possible that the combination of mutton and apples created a similar flavour . There is also a theory that the name squab pie is short for " squabble pie " , as it stems from a disagreement over whether to have a meat or apple pie .

There are many variations to the squab pie in England , although it traditionally includes mutton , it has come to mean a pie with many ingredients or a " scraps pie " . Squab pie in Devon can be served with clotted cream . Alternatively , in America , it is cooked with squab , and is synonymous with pigeon pie .

= = Recipe = =

Squab pie is a mutton pie with a shortcrust pastry lid . It should be made with at least one layer of onions , followed by alternating layers of sliced apples and mutton chops . The mixture should be covered with water , though less than in some pies , covered with pastry and baked in the oven for about two hours .

= = = Variations = = =

Within the UK , the most common variation is to use lamb instead of mutton . Gloucester Squab pie did not require lamb and suggests any leftover meat could be used . Other ingredients can be included , for example Agatha Christie produced a variant which included hard @-@ boiled eggs and another recipe took the concept of serving with clotted cream and adds cream to thicken .

Outside of England , the concept of squab pie does exist , but in a more literal form actually containing squab . Known as Picconi All 'Inglese , one Italian chef explains that he is aware that the recipe does not match the traditional English version , but he " [ does ] not care a fig " . In America , squab pie still uses squab . It was included in a " Cooking for profit " book in San Francisco , to make a pie using 18 squabs in a gravy .

= = Reaction = =

In 2009 , less than 3 % of British teenagers had tried the dish and it has been listed amongst the " at risk " British Classics . A prominent critic of squab pie was Charles Dickens ' journal All the Year Round :

Of all the west country pies , squab pie is , in our humble estimation , the most incongruous and the most detestable . The odious composition is made of fat clumsy mutton chops , embedded in layers of sliced apples , shredded onions , and ? O tempora ! O mores ! ? brown sugar ! The result is nausea , unsociability , and , in course of time , hatred of the whole human race . The greasy sugary , oniony taste is associated , in our mind , with the detested name of Bideford .

Using its many ingredients definition , squab pie was used by Gallynipper as an analogy for New

York City . This is a positive comparison , explaining that New York does " not smell bad ... nor look uninviting " and that it is " a wonder and a success " .

= = = Poetry = = =

Squab pie has been the subject of poetry . In " The Squab @-@ Pie . A Devonshire Tale " published in 1827 , John Taylor uses verse to tell of the captain of a ship in Plymouth who forgot to get meat for his trip . A boy on the ship goes into town to claim a large squab pie from the bakery for a penny , though it was not meant to be his . Set on a Sunday , the family who had commissioned the pie from the baker so that they would not have to cook , try to find it , but to no avail . Taylor explains the moral is that if you believe it is a sin to cook on a Sunday , you should not be still having a big meal by getting a baker to cook for you .

The ingredients are given in verse by a Cornishman from Bodmin , during William Sandys ' 1846 tour around Cornwall . Sandys also includes a story of Christmas @-@ time in Cornwall which includes the pie served with mashed potatoes and pilchards . In " Verses Occasioned by Ben Tyrrell 's Mutton Pies " , published in 1772 , Thomas Warton also confirmed that the squab pie was mutton based and came from Cornwall . The Devon author , William Crossing , writing in 1911 , discusses a short folk rhyme about squab pie : " Mutton , onions , apples and dough , Make a good pie as any I know . " He does not say , however , from where he heard it . In the song " Glorious Devon " written by Sir Edward German in 1905 , several Devonshire dishes receive praise : " Squab pie , junket and cider brew , Richest cream of the cow , What ' ud Old England without ' em do ? "

= = = The Devil in Cornwall = = =

Another legend surrounding squab pie , along with the other unusual pies of Cornwall , is that they were the reason that the Devil never came to Cornwall . In his book Popular Romances of the West of England ; or , The drolls , traditions , and superstitions of old Cornwall , a collection of Cornish traditions , Robert Hunt explains that the Devil crossed the River Tamar to Torpoint . The chapter , entitled " The Devil 's Coits , etc . " , reasons that the Devil discovered the Cornish would put anything in a pie and decided to leave before they took a fancy to a " devilly " pie , returning to Devon .