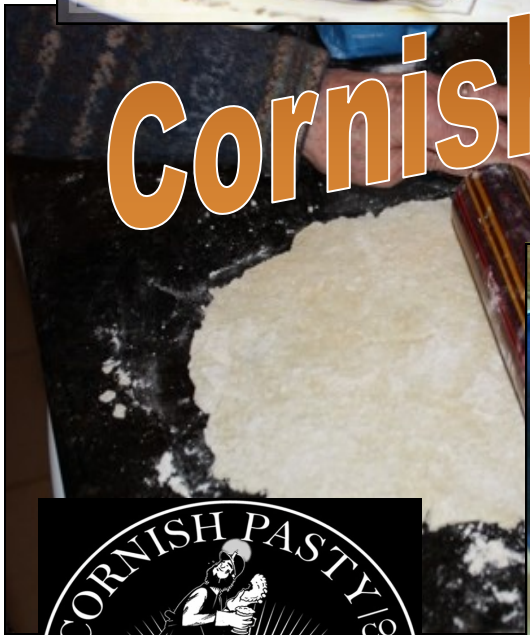




Cornish Pasties



The Cornish Pasty

Exact origins of the pasty are unclear; it is commonly accepted as a staple of Cornwall England. The pasty became popular in Cornwall during the 17th and 18th centuries where tin miners and other mine workers adopted it due to its unique shape, forming a complete meal that can be carried easily and eaten without cutlery.

Side-crimped pasties gave rise to the suggestion that miners would eat the pasty holding the thick rolled crust edge, ensuring dirty fingers (possibly including traces of arsenic and lead) did not touch food or mouth.

Other theories suggest miners ate the pasty from end to end. The earliest Cornish recipe books claim "the true Cornish way" to eat a pasty is from end to end, so any uneaten portion could be saved for later.

Any excess pastry from a miner's pasty might sometimes have been left for the knockers, capricious spirits in the mines who might otherwise lead miners into danger. There is also a humorous belief that the pastry on a good pasty should be strong enough to withstand a drop down a mine shaft.

The pasty's dense, folded pastry could stay warm for 8 to 10 hours. Miners always carried their pasty to work in a two-part lunch pail. The bottom portion contained piping hot tea, the top portion their pasty along with a piece of heavy cake, a couple current cookies, or a saffron bun.

