

Bon Appétit



The early French Canadian settlers made delicious bread in their outdoor bake-ovens of clay and stone. Especially good was an extra large loaf weighing fully six pounds [2.8 kg], which was called 'Moccasin Bread'. On the golden crust was a cross, which the head of the family had traced on the unbaked dough with a knife point—his way of saying "Thanks to God for the good bread!"

L. Newman, *An Historical Almanac of Canada*

Tourtière

1 lb. lean, ground pork ¼ tsp. ground cloves
 1 medium onion, chopped 1 bay leaf
 salt and pepper ¼ cup boiling water
 ¼ tsp. savory short pastry for 2 crusts

Put first 7 ingredients in a saucepan and mix well. Add boiling water and simmer uncovered for 20 minutes, stirring occasionally. Remove bay leaf and skim off any fat.

Roll out half the pastry and line a 9-inch pie plate. Place filling in pie plate and cover with the remaining pastry. Make an incision in the centre to allow steam to escape.

Bake in a preheated 375° oven for 30 minutes, or until the crust is golden. Serve hot. Serves 4-5.

M. Beaulieu, *The Cooking of Provincial Québec*, p. 59

Fruit

Apples
 Cucumbers
 Melons
 Strawberries
 Raspberries
 Blackberries
 Wild Plums
 Cranberries
 Currants
 Wild Cherries
 Blueberries

VEGETABLES

peas
 lentils
 beans
 asparagus
 onions
 leeks

Pot au Feu

Other traditional dishes are best known by the cooking implement used in their preparation. The "pot au feu," a black iron kettle with a good lid, was part of every girl's dowry; this was used for the long, slow simmering of soup or stew, or for special pies. Meat simmered in a liquid with lots of fragrant root vegetables was the true "pot au feu." This was served with big slices of homemade oven bread, toasted on the wood stove. A slice of bread was placed in the bottom of a large deep soup plate, then bouillon from the "pot au feu" was poured on top until it was soaked up by the bread; the bread was then topped with pieces of meat and vegetables. A black iron frying pan for meatloaf and sausages, and plenty of earthenware pudding dishes were essential to a habitant kitchen as well.

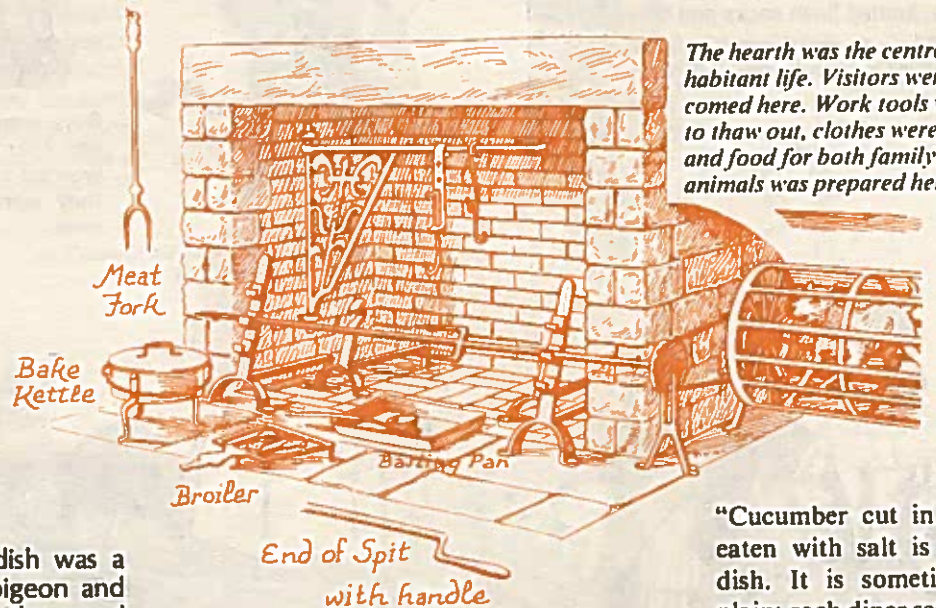
M. Beaulieu, *The Cooking of Provincial Québec*, p. 10



A pine dough box. Away from drafts, bread dough was placed in this box to rise.

In France the *tourtière* pie-dish was a kitchen utensil for cooking pigeon and other birds. Over the years the word 'tourtière' came to mean a pâté of fowl or game cooked and seasoned according to a special household recipe in the family stewpan, for into it went not merely turtle-doves but every kind of edible bird: partridge, 'white birds', snipe, teal, plover, bustard, duck. Every housewife possessed her own secret recipe, jealously preserved from generation to generation. It was in this way that some venturesome housewives began to prepare 'pièces tourtières' not only with birds but with the meat of both wild and domestic animals.

R. Douville and J. Casanova, *Daily Life in Early Canada*, trans. Congreve, pp. 56-57



The hearth was the centre of habitant life. Visitors were welcomed here. Work tools were placed to thaw out, clothes were warmed and food for both family and animals was prepared here.

"Cucumber cut in slices, and eaten with salt is a delicious dish. It is sometimes served plain; each diner secures one of these refreshing *cucumis*, peels it, cuts it into slices and eats it with salt, quite plain as one does a radish. Melons are plentiful here. They are always served with sugar, never with wine or brandy."

R. Douville and J. Casanova, *Daily Life in Early Canada*, trans. Congreve, p. 55

The potato was known to the *Canadiens* but looked on with contempt. They called it "the root" and ate it only during food shortages. In 1737 the Mother Superior of the Hôtel-Dieu in Québec wrote in a letter that during a famine the settlers had been forced to eat "the buds of trees, potatoes, and other foods never meant to be eaten by human beings."

R. Douville and J. Casanova, *Daily Life in Early Canada*, trans. Congreve, p. 55