



## Puddings

The history of puddings is a complicated one since many different kinds of foods have been known by this name throughout the centuries. A 21<sup>st</sup> century child, familiar only with Jello instant pudding, would hardly recognize the puddings of the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Medieval puddings were mainly meat based. In the 17<sup>th</sup> century they were either savory (meat) or sweet (flour, sugar and nuts) and were boiled in bags. By the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, fewer puddings were meat based and by the 19<sup>th</sup> century, even though most puddings were still boiled, they were becoming more like very moist cakes.

18<sup>th</sup> century cookbooks offer an almost endless variety of pudding recipes, including bread, flour, apple, carrot, tongue, rice, corn, potato, squash, lemon, plum, oatmeal, beef, pork, barley, quince, quaking, chestnut – and the list goes on. Most puddings include milk, eggs, butter and spices and are cooked by boiling, but can also be baked in a dish without a shell (crust). Modern puddings are more like custards, which are thickened by gentle heating.

**HAGGIS**, the “national dish” of Scotland, is a type of pudding. “Made of suet, spices, onions, oatmeal and a sheep’s pluck – heart liver and lights – boiled in a sheep’s stomach, haggis is a form of sausage that seems to generate violent passions and arouses both reverence and mirth among Scots, who have been eating it for at least 400 years. ...the origin of haggis, as with many other national dishes, is obscure. A similar dish was known to the ancient Greeks and Romans and is mentioned in 14<sup>th</sup> century chronicles.” *Quote: Fare of the Country: Haggis History and Humor, New York Times, January 5, 1986 (sec. 10, p.12)*

**YORKSHIRE PUDDING** is made from a batter of egg, flour, milk and beef drippings. It remains a traditional accompaniment to roast beef in Great Britain.

**PEASE PUDDING** is related to pottage, an ancient dish of boiled legumes. Pottage is a medieval term for a semi-liquid cooked dish, typically based on cereal, which, in various forms was a mainstay of diets for many centuries.

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### Miller Homestead Bread Pudding (Our measurements are approximate since we don’t usually measure when we cook.)

5 or 6 slices stale, dry bread (we used whole wheat bread) broken into large crumbs

½ cup currants or raisins and 1 apple-peeled and chopped into small pieces

4 or 5 eggs depending on their size                      a handful or 2 of flour

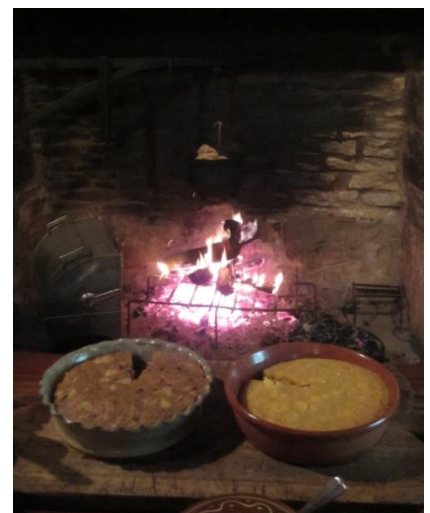
about 1 cup heavy cream and 1 cup milk (or 2 cups half and half) possibly more depending upon how dry the bread is.

brown sugar, raw sugar or molasses to taste – you decide how sweet you like it

spices to taste – we used cinnamon, allspice, clove and nutmeg – you decide.

4 tablespoons of butter – melted (also enough to butter your baking dish)

Moisten bread in milk. Add eggs, butter, sugar, spices, mixing after each. Add cream and mix. Fold in the apple and the raisins or currants. Thicken with flour as necessary. The consistency should be moist enough to plop off an overturned spoon. Pour into a buttered baking dish. If you want the pudding to be moist throughout, try steaming it in the oven by placing it inside a larger oven safe baker with a lid with the pudding dish set in water. When we bake ours in the cast iron Dutch oven on the hearth, we put about an inch of water in the Dutch oven. The stoneware baking dish is placed on a low trivet inside the Dutch oven. We set the oven on a bed of hot coals on the hearth, put the oven lid on and place more hot coals on the lid. The coals are changed several times to keep consistent heat. In your oven at home, I think a medium heat (350) for about 45 minutes to an hour should do it. Our pudding is very moist but firm enough to slice.



*M.P. Swauger for the Oliver Miller Homestead, October 2015*

Photo: Bread pudding is on the left, corn pudding on the right and the pumpkin pudding is boiling in a bag suspended in the kettle over the fire.