

CHRISTMAS PUDDING HISTORY

**The Origins Of The
Traditional English
Christmas Pudding**

The rich dark Christmas pudding we know today can be traced as far back as pre-Christian past



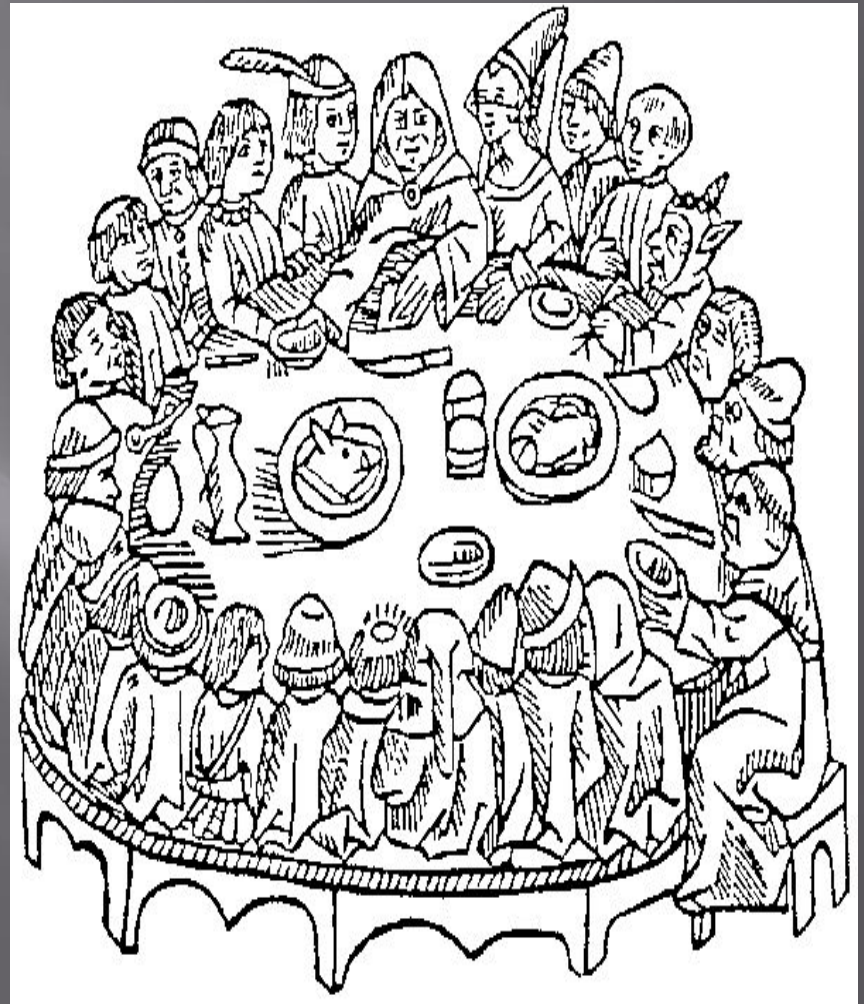
It started
out as a
Celtic
Christmas
porridge
called
frumenty



This was originally made from cereal (wheat or corn) boiled in milk



Due to the cold of the northern hemisphere people would worry about the land and how it would provide them with the grain they needed to keep alive in the year to come. They therefore tried to ensure the land's fertility by preparing a magical 'pudding'.



This simple pudding was boiled
wheat in milk



The Christians adopted this cereal dish but suppressed or forgot about its origins as a 'magical' dish of significance, using the dish as a breakfast meal on Christmas Eve. Though this was slowly faded out and it became a side dish to the meat course at the Christmas dinner



Gradually it was added to with other ingredients such as eggs, prunes, and even meat. But eventually the meat was left out and plums added to make the delicious pudding of today



By the end of the sixteenth century, frumenty was beginning to evolve into plum pudding. It was thickened with eggs, breadcrumbs and dried fruit and was flavoured with ale and spirits



The Puritans banned Christmas pudding in 1664 on the grounds it was a lewd custom and its rich ingredients were "unfit for God fearing people"



In 1714
plum pudding
was
restored to
its rightful
place on the
Christmas
table by
George I



By the
Victorian
era, the
Christmas
pudding as
we know it
had evolved



At this time the tradition of having a Christmas tree was introduced by Queen Victoria's husband, Prince Albert. The manner of celebrating an English Christmas has not changed significantly since Victorian times



One of the many customs surrounding Christmas puddings is that they should be made at the beginning of Advent on "stir Saturday" when every member of the family should take turns to stir the pudding east to west in honour of the three Kings



The Christmas pudding was traditionally made with 13 ingredients, to represent Jesus and his Disciples



Another custom is for silver coins or charms to be put into the pudding mixture before it is baked - whoever finds them will have health, wealth and happiness for the coming year



The tradition of "stir Saturday" has changed a little. Nowadays Christmas puddings are made in October so that they have plenty of time for the flavour to develop



English currency no longer includes any silver coins, but many households have old silver sixpences saved through the generations especially for the Christmas pudding



When someone finds one of the "lucky" coins, it is traded for a coin which is in legal tender and which represents the wealth of the forthcoming year

