

## Documenting the “Four P”s: Pannukakku, Piirakka, Pulla, and Pasty in Finnish American Cooking

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Thank you for participating in this essay/documentation project regarding Finnish food traditions. We at the University of Wisconsin-Madison are seeking to gather information about some of the rich traditions that surround four favorite Finnish/Finnish-American dishes: *pannukakku*, (*karjalainen*) *piirakka*, *pulla (nisu)*, and *pasty* (the Four P’s). The idea of this study is to try to look at all the varied ways in which these dishes become part of “lived” Finnish American culture, past and present. You may know about one or more of these dishes from family life, from the cooking of friends, from local businesses, or from other circumstances. You don’t need to be Finnish or Finnish American to supply information: if you have perspectives to share regarding cooks who are Finnish or Finnish American, or people of any background who make or enjoy these dishes, we’d love to hear from you! We’re also interested in other Finnish food traditions besides the four P’s, so if you have memories or experiences of, say, *mojakkka* or *viilli* to share, please do!

The following questions are meant to get you to share what you know or can find out about the Four P’s. Answer any or all of the questions that you’d like and submit your completed questionnaire as a single essay with the release for archiving to this email address: [folklife@letscli.wisc.edu](mailto:folklife@letscli.wisc.edu).

Please include a postal and email address at the end of this form. We will give awards to the four most complete and most informative essays!

1. **Recipes.** Do you have recipes for any (or all) of the four Ps (or other dishes)? Write about what these dishes consist of in terms of raw materials and the key steps in making the dish in terms of technique (you do not need to share the entire recipe if you do not wish to do so). What marks a truly skilled cook of this dish/these dishes? Are there variations in the recipe, different ways of making the dish? Do people ever argue about what characteristics make the “best” version of the dish? What tools or techniques do people need to know?

2. **Ingredients.** Are there ingredients that are key to making this/these dish(es)? Do you know of any differences between the way the dish is made in Finland (if indeed it is made there) and how it is made in the US? Are there substitutes that people know for ingredients that are used in Finland but that are hard to get in the US? Are there particular stores that you go to or Internet sites that you access to procure the needed ingredients? Do you know of people bringing ingredients (or finished products) back home after a trip to, say, Finland or the Upper Peninsula?

3. **Great makers.** Are there people (past or present) that you know who are especially well known for their skill in making one (or more) of these dishes? What makes them great? How do people recognize greatness in this tradition? Do you know anyone who’d be open to being documented (filmed) making one of these dishes (including yourself!)? If so, please tell us their name and address!

4. **Learning the ropes.** When did you first learn? Who taught you/how did you learn? How do others learn to make one (or more) of the dishes mentioned here? Do people learn from a cookbook (if so, which one?) or do they learn from a more experienced cook, or from Youtube

videos, or from cooking classes, or from some other avenue? Was there someone you know who was/is particularly good at showing others how to make the dish?

5. **Key occasions.** In your experience, was/is this dish made on a regular basis or reserved for only special occasions? How often was/is it made? Are there particular holidays or seasons that this dish is associated with? Would this dish be out of place if prepared at some other time of year? Has this changed over time?

6. **Success stories.** Do you have stories about times when this dish came out really well, or occasions in which this dish was served that were really successful and gratifying? (They can be stories about repeated times or single occasions.)

7. **Disaster stories.** Do you know any stories about times when someone really had a disaster trying to make this dish? What happened/what went wrong? Was the dish entirely spoiled or was it possible to eat it after all? How did the cook and the diner(s) react to the disaster?

8. **Finnishness.** Do you and people you know think about these dishes as distinctively Finnish? Do people make or share them as a way of sharing a sense of Finnish culture and identity? Or are they simply useful or tasty dishes that are good to make regardless of who you are?

9. **Legacy.** Has the making of this dish declined at all in your experience? Is it still as common as it was in the past? Are there ways it has been “updated” or changed over time? Are there new makers or does the dish seem to be disappearing? What do you think the future holds for the making of these dishes?

10. **Lisää...** Is there anything more you'd like to share about this dish from your own experience or from talking to others? We appreciate any and all of your stories or input!

**Release:**

Thank you for participating in this documentation project.

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Paljon Kiitoksia! Tom DuBois and the UW-Madison Folklore program