

The South African Milk Tart – Origins and Originality

by

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Submitted as requirement for the

Master's Degree in Social Sciences (History)

in the

Department of Historical and Heritage Studies

Faculty of Humanities, University of Pretoria

November 2020

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“The cuisines of the world come together at the southern tip of Africa.”

Marthinus Versfeld (1909-1995)

PREFACE

This study originated from my daily work as chef and co-owner of Carlton Café + Delicious The Food Shop in Menlo Park, Pretoria. Patrons often asked me to prepare a typical South African dessert or teatime treat when they were entertaining foreign guests. *Melktert* was the dessert most requested and thus began my quest to learn more about the dish that my mother and grandmother often prepared. Having completed this study I now know that I have found so much more than recipes.

A study of this nature would not have been possible without the mentorship, wisdom and passion of my supervisor, Prof. Karen L. Harris, to whom I am exceptionally grateful. Schalk le Roux acted as my sounding board for the unfolding narratives I discovered and deserves my thanks for sharing his experience and generously assisting to help source valuable material in the Cape. Without the support of Allett Nell, the Information Specialist for Historical and Heritage Studies at The Merensky Library, many sources would never have reached my desk, especially during the Covid-19 lockdown. She was invaluable to my research endeavours, which I sincerely appreciate. I would like to acknowledge and thank Mogamat Kamies Kamedien, James Prescott, Jorik and Elsa Piso, Roger Fisher, the staff at the Brenthurst Library in Johannesburg and the National Library in Cape Town for their assistance and friendly encouragement. Louise de Beer and Naomi Lourens both deserve my respect and gratitude, not only for the women and chefs that they are, but for indulging me to finish this study while we were embarking on a new venture. Lastly, I wish to express my gratitude to my husband, Nico, for his support and patience.

I dedicate this study to all the women who have come before me, who made a difference, often without being acknowledged, seen or heard.

The financial support of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation is acknowledged with gratitude.

DECLARATION

I hereby acknowledge the financial support of the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. However, the views expressed, and conclusions arrived at, are those of the author, and should not be attributed to the funder.

ABSTRACT

In this study the origins and originality of the South African milk tart (*melktert*) are investigated and used as an artefact of food culture to enable a better understanding of food as a vehicle for identity, food as memory as well as communication through food. Although the milk tart has many roots and was introduced to South Africa by way of different influences, it is the general perception that the milk tart derived from Afrikaner tradition and culture. This is however not entirely founded. Moreover, milk tart has been adopted, adapted, and subsumed by women of different cultures and backgrounds into South African heritage. It has been indigenized to such an extent that it is now considered a national treasure regardless of background and even commemorated with ‘National Milk Tart Day’.

Therefore the aim of this study is to investigate the South African milk tart through a model that includes three sequential stages – introduction, adaptation and subsuming – in the process of indigenization of food identities when different cultures meet. This model, borrowed from the Philippines, interprets the term “indigenization” as food being the product of having been influenced by that of many others. Like the Philippines, South Africa was also exposed to many other culinary traditions and influences and thus this approach is appropriate in tracking the journey of the milk tart over time and continents until it became a household name and was subsumed as part of everyday life in South Africa.

At the crux of the matter lie questions of identity, belonging and heritage which arise at the intersection of food culture and history. Food has the power to shape place, time and social interaction if one analyses the complex and dynamic ways that gender is expressed in food and cooking.

In this dissertation recipe books and food writings are used as primary sources to investigate the origin and originality of milk tart, and the trans-cultural role it played for women across the cultural divide. Given the reservations that exist regarding record keeping and in particular where household matters are concerned, this study has adopted a wider and “more generous and more inclusive archival lens.” In researching this history, the local recipe books, compiled predominantly by women, are used as “the archive” that reflects on the context, ingredients and methods germane to them along with the silenced voices that partook in the process. The milk tart recipe books are thus the diaries, the memory bank, and in effect a gendered food archive that reflects as a particular identity marker within the South African context along with the “other” within this domain.

Key words: South African cuisine; food history; alternative archive; milk tart; *melktert*; food culture; gender

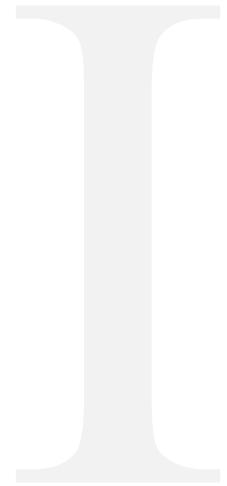
TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Context of study	1
1.2 Aim of study	5
1.3 Definitions	6
1.4 Methodology, Models and Sources	14
CHAPTER 2: OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE AND SOURCES	20
2.1. Introduction	20
2.2. Global Food History	21
2.3. South African Food History	33
CHAPTER 3: FOOD, GENDER AND THE ALTERNATIVE ARCHIVE	51
3.1. Introduction	51
3.2. Memory and the Language of Food	55
3.3. Women’s History	57
3.4. The Kitchen	62
3.5. Gender and the Alternative Archive	67
3.6. Conclusion	70
CHAPTER 4: MILK TART THROUGH THE AGES	72
4.1. Introduction	72
4.2. Compilations and Anthologies	73
4.3. Cookery Books as Sources Through the Ages	79
4.3.1. Before the Tenth Century CE	79
4.3.2. The Tenth to the Fourteenth Centuries CE	81
4.3.3. The Fifteenth to the Sixteenth Centuries CE	85
4.3.4. The Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries CE	91
4.4. Geographical and Cross-Cultural Exchanges	96
4.5. Conclusion	98
CHAPTER 5: MILK TART IN SOUTH AFRICA	99
5.1. Introduction	99
5.2. Tracing Recipes for the South African Milk Tart	101
5.3. Unpublished Manuscripts and Personal Documents	104
5.4. Published Sources	109

5.4.1. Recipe books	109
5.4.2. Periodicals	122
5.4.3. Digital and Other Media	128
5.4.4. Community Cookbooks and Recipe Books about Communities	130
5.5. Conclusion	137
CHAPTER 6: BEYOND THE INDIGENIZATION OF MILK TART	138
6.1. Introduction	138
6.2. Associations with Communities and Identity	140
6.3. Associations with Memories and Personal Narratives	142
6.4. Associations with Political Affairs	146
6.5. Conclusion	148
APPENDIX 1: RECIPES	149
SOURCE LIST	183

LIST OF FIGURES

- Figure 5.1:** The cover and unnumbered inner pages of *Keuke boek van mijn De Weduwe Blanckenberg gebore Zeeman Den 15 October 1819*. Recipe 49 (centre) is for a *Room taart* (Cream tart) and Recipe 75 (right) for a *Melk taart* (Milk tart). (Renata Coetzee Collection, Library of the Stellenbosch Museum) 104
- Figure 5.2:** Milk tart JHB, from ‘E.C. Botes, Resepte’. Handwritten manuscript in private collection, p. 46 107
- Figure 5.3:** Incidentalia – an envelope and a note page as loose inserts with the ingredients for milk tart recipes as found in ‘G.E. Basson. Note book’. Handwritten manuscript, Private collection of recipes 107
- Figure 5.4:** A photograph of a fundraising fair at the teachers’ college in the town of Paarl clearly shows that that cake, buns and milk tart were being sold. ‘Die kermis op die Perel [sic]’, *Die Huisgenoot*, 13 March 1925, p. 33 123
- Figure 5.5:** Marion Abrahams-Welsh holds a plate that reminds her of her childhood in District Six <https://www.districtsix.co.za/project/huis-kombuis/>, access: October 2020 135
- Figure 5.6:** The embroidered tea cloth with the recipe for Melk Tert made by Marion Abrahams-Welsh. <https://www.districtsix.co.za/project/huis-kombuis/>, access: October 2020 135



CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Food history is as important as a baroque church. Governments should recognize cultural heritage and protect traditional foods. A cheese is as worthy of preserving as a sixteenth-century building. – Carlo Petrini¹

1.1 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

Raphael Samuel (1934-1996) argues that social history in academia concerns itself with “real life” and “ordinary people” being more interested in the everyday events.² Writing in the mid-1980s he claimed that:

The general effect of the new social history has been to enlarge the map of historical knowledge and legitimate major new areas of scholarly inquiry – as for example the study of house-holds and kinship; the history of popular culture, the fate of the outcast and the oppressed. It has given a new lease of life to extra-mural work in history, more especially with the recent advent of women’s history to which social history has been more hospitable than others.³

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- 1 Carlo Petrini is the founder of the slow food movement, which “was started in the 1980s with the initial aim to defend regional traditions, good food, gastronomic pleasure and a slow pace of life. In over two decades of history, the movement has evolved to embrace a comprehensive approach to food that recognizes the strong connections between plate, planet, people, politics and culture”. <https://www.slowfood.com/about-us/our-history/>, access: October 2020.
 - 2 R. Samuel, ‘What is Social History?’, *History Today* 35(3), 1985, p. 2.
 - 3 R. Samuel, ‘What is Social History?’, *History Today* 35(3), 1985, p. 7.

In addition, Samuel also highlights how social history had “demonstrated the usefulness – and indeed the priceless quality – of whole classes of documents which were previously held in low esteem, including house-hold inventories as an index of kinship, obligations and ties”.⁴ Three and half decades later, social history can reflect on a rich and dominant position in historical research and teaching having expanded the boundaries of what history as a discipline encompassed. More recently, Eric Evans pointed out that social history also easily assimilated the work of cultural historians arguing that the “‘social’ and the ‘cultural’ are mutually informing” and that “approaching society and culture as inextricably linked enables a fuller understanding of both”.⁵ It is in this light that this research study focuses on the history of the South African milk tart. Heralded as one of the symbols of South African cuisine, it has been identified as being part of the culture of some and has been consumed over centuries by many. It has been assumed as part of South African daily lives, part of heritage and history, yet its geneses and history are either unknown or contested. Where it originated, how it developed, what it portrays and why it assumed the identity it has remains to be investigated.

Thus, this enlargement of the historical landscape now provides an ideal opportunity – a recipe – to include food studies. At the start of the twenty-first century, Ken Albala stated that: “the interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary nature of all food scholarship suggests that eventually there will be a recognizable discipline known as food studies, of which food history will be an indispensable part.”⁶ In the same article he suggests that the recent “abrupt and intense” awareness of food studies might be deceiving as it could lead one to consider food history as an emerging field. He argues, on the contrary, that the history of food as a division of history is as old as history writing itself. He expresses excitement at the fact that:

There are few other subdisciplines so equally divided within and without academia, and this ironically provides great strength, each contingent balancing the deficiencies of the others. It is becoming increasingly difficult both to write boring food history, and to do it with poor scholarship. For the discipline this bodes very well, as does the practical necessity of venturing outside of history for methodology. Food historians today regularly make use

4 R. Samuel, ‘What is Social History?’, *History Today* 35(3), 1985, p. 7.

5 E. Evans, ‘Social History’, Institute of Historical Research, University of London, 2008. https://archives.history.ac.uk/makinghistory/resources/articles/social_history.html, access: March 2020.

6 K. Albala, ‘History on the Plate: The Current State of Food History’, *Historically Speaking* 10(5), 2009, pp. 6-8.

of anthropology and sociology, art history, literary studies, economics, philosophy.⁷

Aligned to this take on food history is the view of Raymond Grew, a social historian, who maintains that human migrations have, for the longest time, been partly motivated by a search for food. This means that food habits and recipes accompanied travellers wherever they went, and he therefore argues that: “Food, the object of considerable record keeping, makes an invaluable historical indicator.”⁸ He also asserts that there is much to be said for the ability of a cuisine to spread and infiltrate, but also to change and adopt, features of other cuisines. This spreading and adopting does however not mean that the recipient culture loses its identity or its ability to distinguish itself from other cultures.⁹ According to Massimo Montanari, an expert in medieval histories, “Food cultures (in fact cultures in general) are so much richer and more interesting when the encounters and exchanges have been lively and frequent.”¹⁰

Although food history as a research field is often ambiguous, much has been written on the subject of the history of food and food culture, how our early ancestors ate and what they ate, what kind of implements they used in preparing food and how the food of different societies influenced one another. In investigating the question of identity, exchange, traditions and “origins” in *Food is Culture*,¹¹ Montanari states that society normally turns to food history to provide answers when roots and origins are researched as a way to preserve a particular identity.¹²

Like spoken language, the food system contains and conveys the culture of its practitioner; it is the repository of traditions and of collective identity. It is therefore an extraordinary vehicle of self-representation and of cultural exchange – a means of establishing identity, to be sure, but also the first way of entering into contact with a different culture.¹³

7 K. Albala, ‘History on the Plate: The Current State of Food History’, *Historically Speaking* 10(5), 2009, p. 8.

8 R. Grew, ‘Food and Global History’, in R. Grew (ed.), *Food in Global History*, p. 13.

9 R. Grew, ‘Food and Global History’, in R. Grew (ed.), *Food in Global History*, p. 3.

10 M. Montanari, *Food is Culture*, p. 139.

11 M. Montanari, *Food is Culture*, p. 133.

12 M. Montanari, *Food is Culture*, p. 134.

13 M. Montanari, *Food is Culture*, p. 133.

In *Understanding Culture: Food as a Means of Communication*, Nevana Stajcic indicates that through the influence of the media, food has gained prominence in recent years. Questions relating to cultural context, including aspects like origin, taste and history, easily follow from our conversations about food.¹⁴ She argues that:

The main reason we should view food as a form of communication is because it is directly linked to both ritual and culture, where ritual is defined as ‘the voluntary performance of appropriately patterned behaviour to symbolically effect or participate in the serious life’. Nowhere can this serious life be viewed more closely than in rituals involving food. It is at the centre of every important event in our lives, such as birthdays, weddings, holidays and funerals. Within ritual contexts, food often ‘stands in’ for expressions of life, love, happiness or grief.¹⁵

In Stajcic’s view, the importance of food communication lies in the fact that it relates to everyday experiences in ordinary lives. At the same time, she states that this may be the reason that food communication research has been neglected, or even ignored: it is so very integral to the everyday.¹⁶ The point is clearly made that the interesting relationship between food and culture, and the understanding of culture through food, means that one needs to ask questions that relate to ingredients, method, name, origin and serving. The answers to these questions exceed culinary discovery, but serve to educate us about a culture’s attitude towards life.¹⁷

In *Remembrance of Repast – an anthropology of food and memory* the anthropologist David Sutton refers to an article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* that acknowledges food studies as “a hot new field”,¹⁸ but also that it initiated a debate over the academic legitimacy of food studies, which was labelled as “scholarship lite”.¹⁹ In *How we eat – Appetite, Culture, and the Psychology of Food* social psychologist and author Leon Rappoport also refers to this article when he states that, despite the growing popularity of studies in the historical, social and cultural meaning of food, it is still regarded as an “inconsequential

14 N. Stajcic, ‘Understanding Culture: Food as a Means of Communication’, *Hemispheres* 28, 2013, p. 5.

15 N. Stajcic, ‘Understanding Culture: Food as a Means of Communication’, *Hemispheres* 28, 2013, p. 13.

16 N. Stajcic, ‘Understanding Culture: Food as a Means of Communication’, *Hemispheres* 28, 2013, p. 14.

17 N. Stajcic, ‘Understanding Culture: Food as a Means of Communication’, *Hemispheres* 28, 2013, p. 14.

18 D.E. Sutton, *Remembrance of Repasts – An Anthropology of Food and Memory*, p. 3.

19 D.E. Sutton, *Remembrance of Repasts – An Anthropology of Food and Memory*, p. 3.

form of scholarship”. He adds, “There has been little or no effort to examine the deeper lying psychological foundations of cuisine investigated by Lévi Strauss and Mintz.”²⁰ These perspectives serve as added motivation and justification to explore the relationship between food and culture as one of the themes of this study.

1.2 AIM OF STUDY

The aim of this study is therefore to investigate the history of the South African milk tart. It sets out to do this through the lens of Doreen G. Fernandez (1934-2002),²¹ who proposes three sequential stages – introduction, adaptation and subsuming – in the process of indigenization of food identities when different cultures meet.²² As the foremost authority on the history of food in the Philippines, her interpretation of the term “indigenization” is based on Filipino food having been influenced by that of many others. Like Grew, she argues that cuisines are dynamic, fluid and evolving, but also momentary and improvised, and that food studies stimulate memories, thoughts and even debates about matters that are not normally related to the gastronomic world.²³ Like the Philippines, South Africa was exposed to many culinary traditions and influences and it therefore makes sense to apply her model in tracking the journey of the milk tart over time until it became a household name and part of everyday life in South Africa.

Through the study of the history of the milk tart as cultural artefact a better understanding of food as a means to confirm identity (belonging), food and communication, food and memory and food and the senses are explored. The aim is to unearth some of the silent voices in women’s history and those who have never been heard, but played an important role, not only in the kitchen, but also influenced South African food culture.

20 L. Rappoport, *How We Eat – Appetite, Culture, and the Psychology of Food*, p. 134.

21 Where available, biographical dates are given for deceased persons.

22 B. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett & D.G. Fernandez, ‘Culture Ingested – On the Indigenization of Philippine Food’, *Gastronomica* 3(1), 2003, p. 61.

23 J. Dusselier, ‘Understandings of Food as Culture’, *Environmental History* 14(2), 2009, p. 334.

Montanari argues that different methods employed for the same ingredients deliver different results.²⁴ “If the discourse is food, it means the way in which it is prepared, served and eaten.”²⁵ The real difference therefore lies in the end result. The English custard tart,²⁶ Portuguese *pastéis de nata*,²⁷ Greek *galaktoboureko*,²⁸ Spanish and French flans,²⁹ Basque tart,³⁰ the Chinese egg custard tart,³¹ French *crème brûlée*,³² egg pie from the Philippines,³³ American buttermilk pie³⁴ and baked custard,³⁵ Indian custard tart³⁶ and the Dutch *vlaai*³⁷ are all custard tarts that share core ingredients with a milk tart. Moreover, in England, France, Italy and Spain, custard tarts developed according to the same time frame and were undoubtedly influenced by one another.³⁸ An analysis of recipes and recipe books – the culinary archive – may provide clues to the origin and originality of the South African milk tart and may provide some insight into the silence of various voices of those who prepared the dish before it was documented.

1.3 DEFINITIONS

It is prudent to outline some of the key concepts and notions relevant to this study.

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- 24 M. Montanari, *Food is Culture*, p. 100.
- 25 M. Montanari, *Food is Culture*, p. 101.
- 26 I. Beeton, *Mrs Beeton's Household Management*, pp. 615-616.
- 27 C.Y. Hamilton, *Cuisines of Portuguese Encounters*, pp. 290-291.
- 28 V. Alexiadou, *Vefa's kitchen*, p. 590.
- 29 A. Davidson, *The Penguin Companion to Food*, p. 365.
- 30 S. Roseman, 2016. <https://festival.si.edu/blog/2016/gateau-basque-the-signature-basque-dessert/>, access: June 2018.
- 31 Anjelihuh, 2008, *Chinese Egg Tarts Recipe*, <http://nibbledish.com/chinese-egg-tarts/>, access: June 2010.
- 32 A. Davidson, *The Penguin Companion to Food*, p. 285.
- 33 Anon., 25 January 2013. Filipino Egg Tarts Recipe, <https://www.panlasangpinoyrecipes.com/filipino-egg-tarts-recipe/>, access: April 2019.
- 34 C. Mahrlig, 2017. Old-Fashioned Buttermilk Pie, <https://spicysouthernkitchen.com/old-fashioned-buttermilk-pie/>, access: April 2019.
- 35 M. Cunningham, *The Fannie Farmer Cookbook*, pp. 940-941.
- 36 R. Khambaty, n.d., How to make a Custard Tart, www.bawarchi.com/recipe/custard-tart-oettV1gbgcich.html, access: February 2019.
- 37 C.A. Den Boon, & D. Geeraerts (eds). *Van Dale Groot Woordboek van de Nederlandse Taal*, p. 3942.
- 38 J. Tiffin, 2004, ‘The Great Custard Tart Caper’, A&S Culinary Research paper submitted to the Drachenwald A&S Faire 2004, written under the pseudonym Baroness Jehanne de Huguenin. <http://www.3owls.org/sca/cook/custard.htm>, access: June 2010.

Milk tart

The Penguin Companion to food writes about South African desserts as follows:

Desserts that have become ‘national’ dishes, mostly of Dutch or Cape Malay origin, include koeksisters or koesisters, which has nothing to do with sisters but are a sort of sweet, spiced doughnut based on an Indonesian original; melktert, a cinnamon flavoured egg custard tart...³⁹

Similar references are listed in other sources that refer to typically South African fare. The *Oxford Essential Dictionary of Foreign Terms in English* refers to milk tart as being typically South African and explains: “Melktert noun Afrikaans (from *melk* milk + *tert* tart, pie)”.⁴⁰

It is generally accepted that a milk tart is a rich short crust or puff pastry base filled with an egg custard thickened with flour and cornflour that is first cooked on the stove and then poured into the pastry shell and baked until just set. When removed from the oven it is sprinkled with cinnamon. The milk for the custard can be infused with peach leaves, almond or vanilla extract, and possibly citrus peel.⁴¹ The flavour is most delicate and the tart quite fragile.⁴²

The criteria that a milk tart has to comply with when it is subjected to judging at competitions or agricultural shows are outlined in the *Handleiding vir tentoonstellings en beoordelaars: gebak, lekkers, gepreserveerde produkte, plaasprodukte* (Manual for exhibitors and judges: confectionary, sweets, preserved products, farm produce). It states that the crust should be light and flaky, and the filling should be almost filled to the brim of the crust. The tart should be sprinkled with cinnamon and when it is cut it should be firm and free of any lumps.⁴³ While the core ingredients of eggs, flour, milk, butter and sugar

39 A. Davidson, *The Penguin Companion to Food*, pp. 885-886. For further reading the following are listed: Leipoldt (1976), Renata Coetzee (1982) Vida Heard and Lesley Faull (1975), Hildagonda Duckitt (1891 and later editions) and Veldsman (1999) are listed.

40 J. Speake and M. LaFlaur, 1999. *The Oxford Essential Dictionary of Foreign Terms in English*, <http://www.oxfordreference.com>, access: March 2019.

41 V. Heard & L. Faull, *Cookery in Southern Africa – Traditional and Today*, p. 253.

42 Departement van Nasionale Opvoeding, *Handleiding vir tentoonstellings en beoordelaars: Gebak, lekkers, gepreserveerde produkte, plaasprodukte*, pp. 23-24.

43 Departement van Nasionale Opvoeding, *Handleiding vir tentoonstellings en beoordelaars: Gebak, lekkers, gepreserveerde produkte, plaasprodukte*, pp. 23-24.

can be considered universal as they are all easily available from agrarian sources, the flavouring agents like spices, extracts, leaves and peel, allow for adaptation according to availability or personal preference.

Culture and food culture

In 2006 Montanari defined culture thus:

What we call *culture* takes its place where tradition and innovation intersect. Tradition is made up of knowledge, techniques, values which were handed down to us. Innovation exists inasmuch as this knowledge, these techniques, these values modify the place of man in the environmental context, rendering him able to experience a new reality. *A very successful innovation*: that is how we could define tradition. *Culture* is the interface between these two perspectives.⁴⁴

Of the many definitions on the subject the following statement is applicable to this study: “Culture, in a similar way to that of identity, is ... seen as fluid and organic.”⁴⁵ The same authors refer to cultural theorist Steven Hall who believes that culture is defined by shared meanings as encoded and decoded within specific contexts and that culture can be seen to be supreme in the hierarchy of systems of evolution, with the artefact having the agency of communication within the cultural system. They add:

The artefactual residue of our culture gives us proxy to experiences in the past even though we are absent from the event. It is the extension of the present into the reaches of the dimmest past of an emergent human intellect. The agency of the meme [an element of a culture or system of behaviour passed from one individual to another by imitation or other non-genetic means] is not through our bio-physical selves but our presence in and receptivity to our cultures. Hence the linearity of genetic inheritance is circumvented and culture, as a complex and circuitous (synchronic) system of interaction and feed-back, is thereby freed not only from our direct, hence linear (diachronic) biological inheritance but also from the immediate present and from the limitations of having to gain only from directly experienced events.⁴⁶

44 M. Montanari, *Food is Culture*, p. 7.

45 R.C. Fisher, M.E. Lange & M.E.N. Nkambule. ‘Cultural hybridity in the teaching of architecture within a decolonised society’, *Paranoá 18*, 2017, p. 5.

46 R.C. Fisher, M.E. Lange & M.E.N. Nkambule. ‘Cultural hybridity in the teaching of architecture within a decolonised society’, *Paranoá 18*, 2017, p. 5.

If culture is to be understood to be free of the shackles of only primary sources and freed from only relaying directly experienced events, it certainly fits into the world of food culture.

As food culture falls in the sphere of cultural history, it could be useful to refer to cultural historian Matilda Burden's model for cultural history⁴⁷ to be able to place food history in context. She states that the ideal of cultural history is a proper study of the cultural product and to place that product in the context of cultural history in its totality, so as to allow a reading of the context from which we may draw comparisons between different dimensions and components to coherently explain and foster a better understanding of what we are investigating.⁴⁸ If we apply Burden's model to the topic of milk tart it is clear that one could refer to it as a "cultural product".

Elizabeth Elliot-Cooper discusses the importance of food in understanding a variety of viewpoints and provides examples of the works of others, including Claude Levi-Strauss' (1908-2009) understanding of food rules as a reflection of the underlying patterns of human thought and Sidney Mintz's (1922-2015) political economy assessment of the role of sugar in modern history.⁴⁹ These works demonstrate that food allows us to think across the full continuum of cultural, materialist and idealist outlooks and to interrogate issues of history, power and human agency, while still connecting with a subject that is familiar and accessible to scholars. Elliot-Cooper concludes that "... food and culture as learned, shared, integrated, based on symbols and dynamic is no gimmick. It is a potent, and sometimes difficult, knowledge – knowledge that students can sink their teeth into."⁵⁰

The above indicates that there are several definitions of culture and food culture and how the "grammar of food" plays a role in our everyday lives. These will be applied to the journey of the milk tart and how it got to southern Africa and subsequently became part of a broader South African culture and what is deemed South African cuisine. To address this,

47 M. Burden, 'Die Metodologie van Kultuurgeskiedenis', *SA Tydskrif vir Kultuurgeskiedenis* 14(2), 2000, p. 21.

48 M. Burden, 'Die Metodologie van Kultuurgeskiedenis', *SA Tydskrif vir Kultuurgeskiedenis* 14(2), 2000, p. 17.

49 E. Elliott Cooper, 'Something to sink their teeth into: Teaching culture through food', *Journal of inclusive scholarship and pedagogy* 23(2), 2013, pp. 93-95.

50 E. Elliott Cooper, 'Something to sink their teeth into: Teaching culture through food', *Journal of inclusive scholarship and pedagogy* 23(2), 2013, p. 102.

it will be necessary to give a brief history of the custard tart with a description of how it developed from the Classical times, through the Middle Ages and beyond, until it ended up in southern Africa.

Cultural identity

When looking at the significance of cultural identity one should understand what role culture plays in the understanding of relationships, gender equality, class structures and social relations as it gives insight into cultural symbolism. One can rightly argue that food is critical to cultural identity because it arouses memory.⁵¹ Taste, then, forges social relations and produces separations: it allows the bridging of differences even as it is central to the reproduction of inequalities. It is central to processes of recognition and as such it is key to processes of daily practices and ideas of inclusion and exclusion. Taste points literally and metaphorically to the flavour of life – taste is sensual connection.⁵²

For example, the fact that people remember their mother's or grandmother's milk tarts with nostalgia is typical of the memory of taste. The mere notion that emigrants long for milk tart, koeksisters and biltong while living abroad, attests to this fact.⁵³ It is not just the physical object that invokes this memory but also cultural identity and longing. The fact that some restaurants abroad serve typical South African cuisine, including milk tart,⁵⁴ is a further reminder of how strong the bond between memory and identity is.⁵⁵ This is supported by several new interpretations of the milk tart that became prominent recently – from cheesecake, soufflé, milk tart liqueur, liquid milk tart, milk tart shooters to milk tart *brûlée* doughnuts, to name but a few.⁵⁶

“Cape Malay”

While many authors who write about South African food and food culture make reference to the phrase “Cape Malay”, it is a contested term that is often misconstrued and understood to be impertinent. While the first part of the phrase indicates a geographical reading, namely

51 R. Spronk & C. Klaufus, ‘Taste’, *Etnofoor* 24(2), 2012, p. 9.

52 R. Spronk & C. Klaufus, ‘Taste’, *Etnofoor* 24(2), 2012, p. 10.

53 S. Nieuwoudt, ‘Emigrante klou oorsee vas aan melktert, koeksisters en biltong’, *Beeld*, 3 July 2003, p. 3.

54 J.H. van der Westhuizen, *Jan: A Breath of French Air*, pp. 149, 179.

55 C. Smith. ‘Kaliforniese Afrikaans so saam met die melktert’, *Beeld*, 5 December 2003, p. 17.

56 C. Maritz and M-L. Guy, *The South African Milk Tart Collection*, p. 101.

from the Cape, Cape Town or the province of the Western Cape, the second word – Malay – if geographically framed, refers to a person originating from either Malaysia or Indonesia, according to the *Collins English Dictionary*.⁵⁷ This geographical construct proves to be problematic in South African history as the word “Malay” in the Cape could also refer to Muslims or to a specific linguistic group.⁵⁸ Gabeda Baderoon and others have very strong opinions about this identity crisis and the role that it has played in the history of the country and their place in it.

The first Muslims arrived in southern Africa in 1658 either as free servants or slaves of the Dutch. Islam and slavery were so intertwined during this period that people brought in as slaves from different origins around the Indian ocean (including Mozambique, Madagascar, India and South East Asia) were often called ‘Malay’. The word refers to the *lingua franca* of Bahasa Melayu which was the common language spoken by enslaved people at the Cape. Therefore, the word “Malay” became the word for “Muslim.”⁵⁹ The term “Cape Malays” is still used today, while descendants of slaves would sometimes refer to themselves as “Cape Malay”.⁶⁰

Pumla Gqola refers to historian Shamil Jeppie’s view of shifting naming patterns in the course of history when it comes to Cape Muslims. There is a distrust of the historical record keeping of the time and one cannot rely on sources regarding self-identification of this community under colonial rule as the voices of the poor and those without political standing were seldom heard, making it difficult to establish what they called themselves. The possibilities include “Maleier”, “Muslim” and “Malays” and sometimes the derogatory terms “*slamse*” and “coloured Moslems” were used.⁶¹ Gqola writes:

Historically, as Jeppie shows, Islam was the dominant religion among the slave and exile community. This was a strand which most resembled the one practiced in South East Asia. It could therefore work as a cohesive force

57 *Collins English Dictionary*, p. 985.

58 G. Baderoon. *Regarding Muslims, from slavery to post-apartheid*, p. 13. (It could also refer to a type of cuisine prepared by Malays)

59 G. Baderoon. *Regarding Muslims, from slavery to post-apartheid*, p. 9.

60 G. Baderoon. *Regarding Muslims, from slavery to post-apartheid*, p. 13.

61 P.D. Gqola, *Shackled Memories and Elusive Discourses? Colonial Slavery and the Contemporary Cultural and Artistic Imagination in South Africa*, PhD Thesis, University of Munich, 2004, p. 161.

within the enslaved communities, at the same time as it signalled difference from the articulations of Islam among the Indian indentured communities in KwaZulu-Natal. Islam became central to the identity of Cape Malays to numerous ends.⁶²

This, however, constitutes a problem when the same reference is used to describe a person who is not Muslim. The broad race classification of “Coloured” or “Cape Coloured” was used during the years of Apartheid to refer to “a person of racially mixed parentage or descent”.⁶³ This imposed grouping is considered as being offensive, and as Gabeda Baderoon points out:

In addition to misrepresenting a crucial part of the country’s history, this poses the risk that people classified after emancipation as ‘Coloured’ are not fully included in the national South African narrative, which can generate self-ethnicising and further fracture.⁶⁴

Gqola, on the other hand describes a different scenario, in the sense that in post-Apartheid South Africa⁶⁵ there has been an upsurge of diplomatic exchanges between South Africa and South East Asia with a shared warmth on both sides “accompanied by loud claims of shared parentage and affability.”⁶⁶ The result of this budding relationship has been the commemoration of rekindled expressions of Cape Malay and/or Capetonian Muslim identities that have been fiercely criticised by historians, including Baderoon, who do not subscribe to a Cape Malay identity as part of Capetonian Muslim / Coloured identity. They are annoyed by the let-down of advocates of a Cape Malay diasporic identity to acknowledge that the conjunction of narratives they take part in has political consequences for other people who live in South Africa and South East Asia. Gqola states:

62 P.D. Gqola, *Shackled Memories and Elusive Discourses? Colonial Slavery and the Contemporary Cultural and Artistic Imagination in South Africa*, PhD Thesis, University of Munich, 2004, p. 162. The example given here is the question of whether a Khoi convert should be referred to as ‘Malay’ or ‘Muslim’.

63 *Collins English Dictionary*, p. 336.

64 G. Baderoon, *Regarding Muslims, from slavery to post-apartheid*, p. 16

65 Gqola refers to the state visit by Indonesian (the study refers to Malaysian) President Suharto in 1997, as well as other Malaysian sponsored initiatives and festivals celebrating Islam in South Africa, p. 165. This relationship was also recently celebrated by both governments at the launch of the book: M. Haron, and A.E Arby, *Indonesia – South Africa: A South-South Partnership in the Making A Commemorative Book Celebrating the 25th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations Between the Republic of Indonesia And the Republic of South Africa*, <https://saiia.org.za/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/The-Printed-Book-Final.pdf>, access: October 2020.

66 P.D. Gqola, *Shackled Memories and Elusive Discourses? Colonial Slavery and the Contemporary Cultural and Artistic Imagination in South Africa*, PhD Thesis, University of Munich, 2004, p. 165.

To identify as Cape Malay in the celebratory manner which foregrounds mutual recognition and sameness across the diaspora, negates the “African” dimension in politics of location as (Black) South African. Diasporic identities are always defined as much towards a community as they are against another, and the rehearsal under discussion is predicated on more troublesome moves.⁶⁷

She concludes that it is clear that both Malaysian and Indonesian and/or Cape Malay interactions accentuate mutual acceptance. Therein lies the challenge to the success of the intended estrangement by slavery. It also eliminates the power of collective memory of home to orchestrate diasporic identity.⁶⁸ This mutual acceptance is also promulgated by Cass Abrahams who, in her book *Cass Abrahams Cooks Cape Malay: Food from Africa* published in 1995, was the first local Muslim author to write about the pan-African nature of Muslim cuisine that became so deeply creolised since the arrival of the first slaves. Even Baderoon admits that:

Abrahams’ signal contribution to food writing in South Africa is to assert the ‘African’ character of Muslim food, to give credit to its African, Asian, creole elements, rather than foregrounding its Asian history.⁶⁹

As there is no clear answer to this conundrum, for the purposes of this study the researcher will only refer to “Cape Malay” or “Malay” where it appears in the original text or title of a source cited.

Indigenization

In the first half of the twentieth century, the renowned South African author Christian Louis Leipoldt (1880-1947) addresses the question of national identity of food as follows:

The truth of the matter is that the cookery of every nation has borrowed freely, often with unblushing audacity, from that of every other nation, and that only where it has succeeded in impressing its own stamp on its cooking technique, by the practice of local methods and the employment of local foodstuffs, can

67 P.D. Gqola, *Shackled Memories and Elusive Discourses? Colonial Slavery and the Contemporary Cultural and Artistic Imagination in South Africa*, PhD Thesis, University of Munich, 2004, p. 167.

68 P.D. Gqola, *Shackled Memories and Elusive Discourses? Colonial Slavery and the Contemporary Cultural and Artistic Imagination in South Africa*, PhD Thesis, University of Munich, 2004, p. 169.

69 I. Govender, ‘Cass Abrahams Cooks Up a Culinary Revolution’, 6 September 2019, <https://www.newframe.com/cass-abrahams-cooks-up-a-culinary-revolution- p.4>, access: September 2020.

it be said to have reached the level that merits a distinctive territorial adjective.⁷⁰

In this context, indigenization can refer to becoming distinctive of a particular people or place. Thus, for milk tart to be subsumed into South African culture – according to Fernandez’s model⁷¹ – it can be argued that it needs to be indigenized to such an extent that ownership is taken of the product. If it is indeed subsumed into the culture of the recipient nation it would gain the reputation of an originally produced South African product. It would seem that the milk tart became a household item for which almost every cook seems to have had his or her own recipe that was passed on through generations, ensuring its longevity as a cultural product. Moreover, milk tart has become commercially available and is widely stocked at supermarket chains and home industry outlets throughout the country.

1.4 METHODOLOGY, MODELS AND SOURCES

The study will follow the steps proposed by Grew for historical comparison, namely asking questions, identifying historical problems, designing the appropriate research, and reaching and testing significant conclusions.⁷² In this regard Grew informs that:

The search is for patterns of behaviour and circumscribed hypothesis, and it is likely to result in the recognition of unexpected connections between aspects of society previously thought to be unrelated as in general theory. In practice, the importance of such findings will more often be measured by the stimulus they give to subsequent research than by formal validation.⁷³

Grew further states that the devotion to food in literature and other fields such as art strengthens the impact that entire cultures reveal themselves through the way they experience food.⁷⁴ In addition to Grew’s view, the article *Understandings of Food as Culture*⁷⁵ by J. Dusselier is also a prominent informer of this study. Therein she describes

70 C.L. Leipoldt, *Leipoldt’s Cape Cookery*, p. 14.

71 B. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett & D.G. Fernandez, ‘Culture Ingested – On the Indigenization of Philippine Food’, *Gastronomica* 3(1), 2003, pp. 61-62.

72 R. Grew, ‘The Case for Comparing Histories’, *The American Historical Review* 85(4), 1980, p. 769.

73 R. Grew, ‘The Case for Comparing Histories. *The American Historical Review* 85(4), 1980 p. 773.

74 R. Grew, ‘Food and Global History’, in R. Grew (ed.), *Food in Global History*, p. 3.

75 J. Dusselier, ‘Understandings of food as culture’, *Environmental History* 14(2), 2009, pp. 331-338.

her own involvement in food studies and that she was greatly influenced by the work of Sidney Mintz and his research on sugar, and the work of Roland Barthes (1915-1980) and Claude Lévi Strauss, who both argued that food is a “system of communication” with rules. They placed the study of food within the sphere of scholarly research, which was previously thought of as “mundane and not worthy of scholarly attention” in the same way as language or linguistics were. She subscribes to Mintz’s argument that, over time, knowledge about food cannot survive in a vacuum as it is so closely linked to social, political, historical, economic and cultural contexts.⁷⁶

The three stages of Fernandez’s model mentioned above – introduction, adaptation and subsuming⁷⁷ – will be employed to investigate if, and how, the various adaptations of custard desserts from other cultures led to it being subsumed into South African culture. If we consider the first stage, namely introduction, one may ask if it is possible that other cultures influenced the use of the core ingredients, flavourings and the method of making. With this in mind it is necessary to consider if the milk tart is indeed new and unique to South Africa and whether it has connections with other cultures.

In her study of food culture in colonial Asia, Cecilia Y. Leong-Salobir describes the cuisine as being “hybrid” as it maintained traditionally British culinary traditions while incorporating local ingredients and food ways. The British were dependent on the indigenous people for the preparation of their food, the significance being the development of a hybrid cuisine.

The reality and practicality of settling in lands vastly different from Britain, along with the colonists’ dependence on the local inhabitants, necessitated negotiation and collaboration, especially between mistresses and servants. This dependence resulted in colonists seeking to maintain social distance in ways that were contradictory and paradoxical.⁷⁸

76 J. Dusselier, ‘Understandings of food as culture’, *Environmental History* 14(2), 2009, p. 331.

77 B. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett & D.G. Fernandez, ‘Culture Ingested – On the Indigenization of Philippine Food’, *Gastronomica* 3(1), 2003, pp. 61-62.

78 C.Y. Leong-Salobir, *Food Culture in Colonial Asia: A Taste of Empire*, p. 1.

This is in direct contrast with the argument of Hettie Claassens, who claims that there was limited intercultural influence in the Colonial Cape.⁷⁹

Furthermore, Keith Hopkins (1934-2004) argues that it is the social historian's responsibility to highlight and focus on the "large holes" in the record keeping of the past. Therefore, the past has to be reconstructed with imagination, but the historian always has to be careful of fantasizing. Hopkins states that: "Imagination is needed, not merely to fill the gaps in our sources, but also to provide the framework, master picture into which the jigsaw fragments of evidence can be fitted."⁸⁰

In his argument about filling the gaps, historian Antony G. Hopkins (1938-) refers to the fact that we are informed as to what happened next in history. We have the advantage of hindsight and that should not be taken lightly. This statement makes the argument for exactly what the problem entails, as important slices of history are forever lost, leaving us with guess work. Therefore, the history that we are pursuing in this study could never constitute just a pile of facts for the simple reason that we do not have all the facts as there is no archive, in the traditional sense, to consult. Antony G. Hopkins further argues that we will have to consider this narrative carefully and let it unfold, as a moral tale, an essay in academic exploration.⁸¹

Related thereto the American historian Alan Taylor opines that one should not underestimate the power of narratives for the very reason that they are entwined with life and not simply enforced upon an experience retrospectively.⁸² "Social history is not a particular kind of history; it is a dimension which should be present in every kind of history",⁸³ including the history of food and the people who prepared it. Prominent food writer and restaurant critic Ruth Reichl writes in the Foreword of *Eating Words: A Norton Anthology of Food Writing*: "The truth is that you can enter history at almost any point and

79 H.W. Claassens, *Die Geskiedenis van Boerekos 1652-1806*, DPhil Thesis, University of Pretoria, 2005, p. 457. See discussion later in this study.

80 R. Samuel, 'What is Social History', *History Today* 35(3), 1985, p. 12.

81 R. Samuel, 'What is Social History', *History Today* 35(3), 1985, p. 12.

82 K. Halttunen, 1999, 'Cultural History and the Challenge of Narrativity', in V.E. Bonnell and L. Hunt (eds), *Beyond the Cultural Turn: New Directions in the study of Society and Culture*, p. 170.

83 R. Samuel, 'What is Social History', *History Today* 35(3), 1985, p. 16.

find out a great deal merely by listening to writers describing their meals.”⁸⁴ Describing the importance of memoirs and food writing, Sandra Gilbert and Roger Porter are of the opinion that memoirs about food and meals do not remain simple but it could possibly lay the foundation for one’s identity.⁸⁵ Walter Benjamin (1892-1940), a social and political philosopher, was of the opinion that food explains a lot about human happiness, despair and sorrow. “Benjamin saw food as an index of culture.”⁸⁶

Leong-Salobir argues that cultural artefacts of the domestic realm are now being considered as valuable contributions to historical research. “Cookbooks and household manuals are one genre that have become an important source as historical documents.”⁸⁷ In this Masters’ study, recipe books and recipes consulted date as far back as 1819. In most cases there are no introductory notes to the recipes or an explanatory indication of where the recipes come from. In some cases there is not even a proper instruction of how to make the dish, except for a cryptic list of ingredients. These books were mostly written by women and one can assume that they were of the opinion that most of their “sisters” would know what to do.

The women whose hand-written books and published guides or recipe books, as well as those of their servants, will not be found in history books or the traditional archive. Women’s history, especially in the domestic domain and their role as caregivers of the family, were not considered important enough to be documented. Penelope Hetherington explains that women’s history was ignored in the documentation of national history at least until 1960, “...so that before that time women were almost invisible in the historical record...”⁸⁸ The result of this omission means that women’s history was neglected – white women, black women, but also the servants, slaves and indentured. Ena Jansen states that “The textual silence surrounding the lives of servants is, of course, additional proof of the silence and violence of *all* archives.”⁸⁹ She adds that she has investigated the archive in vain

84 R. Reichl, ‘Eating Words. A Norton Anthology of Food writing’, in S.M. Gilbert and R.J. Porter (eds), *Eating Words. A Norton Anthology of Food writing*, foreword.

85 S.M. Gilbert & R.J. Porter, ‘At the family hearth. Memory, Identity, Ethnicity’, in S.M. Gilbert and R.J. Porter (eds), *Eating Words. A Norton Anthology of Food writing*, p. 84.

86 S.M. Gilbert & R.J. Porter, ‘Hunger Games: The Delight and Dread of Eating’, in S. M. Gilbert and R. J. Porter (eds), *Eating Words. A Norton Anthology of Food writing*, p. 193.

87 C.Y. Leong-Salobir, ‘Spreading the word: using cookbooks and colonial memoirs to examine the foodways of the British Colonials in Asia, 1850-1900’, in C. Helstosky (ed.), *The Routledge History of Food*, p. 154.

88 P. Hetherington, ‘Women in South Africa: The Historiography in English’, *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 26(2), 1993, p. 242.

89 E. Jansen, *Like Family. Domestic workers in South African History and Literature*, p. 5.

and in the hope that it would shed some light on the predicament of white and black labour relations faced in the domestic environment.⁹⁰ In the South African context Gabeda Baderoon also describes the colonial kitchen as an “... unrelenting, perilous and transformative arena in which an uneven contest between slave-owner and enslaved was fought. Ultimately enslaved people came to shape South African cuisine in unexpectedly potent ways.”⁹¹ It is these voices that are intrinsic to the pages of the recipe books.

The research of this study will employ an interdisciplinary search into the history of the milk tart with the help of an alternative, gendered archive. One cannot, as G.M. Trevelyan (1876-1962) suggests, leave out any branch of history to enable the researcher to document one part of history.⁹² A holistic view is required so as not to let any histories fall through the cracks – this view includes the history of food.

The study comprises six chapters. This first chapter sets out the aims of this study as well as defining key concepts and outlining the methodology, models and sources to be used.

Chapter 2 comprises the literary overview that discusses relevant literature and established sources. As noted, there is no traditional archive that could be consulted for this study and the absence of primary sources is problematic, as will be indicated in the next chapter. The researcher had to make use of contemporary literature, recipe books, oral accounts and memoirs in order to access gaps that exist due to the fact that, for long, food has not been considered as an important historical vehicle. As will be evident, very few South African historical documents were available that could be consulted on the history of food, especially for the early colonial period in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

Chapter 3 is concerned with food, gender and the alternative archive to broaden the scope of the investigation and to compensate for the fact that the role of women has, for most parts of culinary history, been ignored. This chapter argues that a variety of informal and nonacademic sources, including the archives about women’s daily lives and about their

90 E. Jansen, *Like Family. Domestic workers in South African History and Literature*, p. 6.

91 G. Baderoon, *Regarding Muslims: From slavery to post-apartheid*, p. 50.

92 Quoted by David Cannadine in R. Samuel, ‘What is Social History’, *History Today* 35(3), 1985, pp. 1-31.

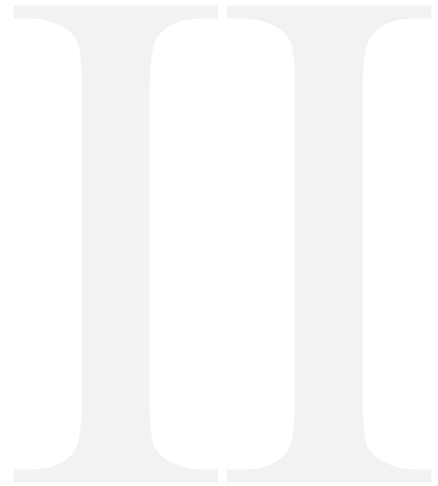
various roles and responsibilities, can be validated as sources for research in this study as they allow us to trace their existence, their recipes and culinary experiences.

Chapter 4 traces the milk tart through the ages. It is agreed that the milk tart has its origins in the custard tart, and so this chapter investigates the route that the custard tart took all over the world to end up at the southern tip of Africa. Using Fernandez's model the researcher endeavours to establish whether the milk tart is a wholly South African invention or whether it was influenced by other cultures to become the product that is known and enjoyed by large groups of South Africans today.

The next chapter, Chapter 5, considers the route the custard tart might have taken to reach southern African shores. Beyond sparse administrative records from the mid-seventeenth century onwards, very little was documented about the daily lives of ordinary people – men or women, free or enslaved – at the Cape since the arrival of European settlers. Foreign visitors to the Cape were also more inclined to write travelogues that described the landscape and the indigenous people than they were to give accurate historical accounts of everyday life at the Cape. This would only start to change in the nineteenth century, but at a very slow pace. It is in this lacuna where the alternative archive is employed – recipe books, stories, household accounts and similar informal sources are used to put together the journey of the milk tart and the transition of custard tart to milk tart. These sources are interrogated to determine the possible indigenization of milk tart according to Fernandez's three tier model.

Chapter 6, an epilogue, explores local perceptions of, and associations with, the milk tart beyond indigenization and the physical artefact. It investigates the dish's associations with communities and identity, memories and personal narratives, and how it metaphorically and symbolically manifests in South African political affairs.

An appendix serves as a chronicle of recipes deemed central to, and indicative of, the origins and historical narratives of the South African milk tart and its antecedents.



CHAPTER 2: OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE AND SOURCES

Books break the shackles of time – proof that humans can work magic.
– Carl Sagan (1934-1996)

Nothing has really happened until it has been described [in words].
– Virginia Woolf (1882-1941)

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This is essentially a literature study that uses both literature and sources in the public domain. It is important to note from the outset that primary and secondary sources are not always clearly distinguishable in the context of this study. Furthermore, some of the sources no longer exist in their original form and therefore one has to rely on translations thereof or what remains of the original work, sometimes even in later editions. The second part of the dilemma is that there is no conventional archive to be consulted for this study. Apart from the sources that present historical developments, the sources consulted for this study can be divided into three major groups: books that only contain recipes, books that contain recipes and histories, and books that contain recipes, stories and memories. There are obviously more sources available to consult in the European context which contribute to reconstructing the development of baking, pastry making and the custard tart in context through the centuries. However, when the South African context is discussed, far less information is available in the form of primary sources. In this instance the recipe books that still exist are utilized as the archive in order to trace the history of the milk tart in this

country. An awareness needs to be drawn to the fact that many recipes were transferred orally between the “lady of the house” and the servants who worked in the kitchen and also within families between grandmothers, mothers and daughters. As a result, many of them based on a form of oral evidence handed from one generation to the other. Raymond Grew endorses this by commenting that:

With respect to food, technology violates the natural rhythm of the seasons and modernity undermines the convivial rituals and religious meanings associated with eating. Ever more available, food loses the savor preserved only in memories of produce fresh from the garden and prepared in mother’s kitchen from recipes so traditional they were never written down.¹

The following overview of the related literature includes books, journal articles, recipes as well as articles from the popular press and internet publications. The first section of the review will give a bird’s eye view of the literature on the global development of food history through the ages. The second section of the overview will discuss the work done on South African food history and the last part the sources available.

2.2 GLOBAL FOOD HISTORY

Cookbooks are often taken for granted – they are essential in many a kitchen, but beyond a utilitarian use they are not often accorded more importance than the functional or the nostalgic, as in the case of manuscripts. Nonetheless, the array of cookbooks available is overwhelming as myriads of sources on food writing over the centuries exist.

While “[c]ookery books seem to have been numerous in antiquity, ... only one has come down to us, and that is in Latin. It bears the name of Apicius”.² The name of the book is *De re coquinaria*, meaning The Art of Cooking. There seems to be confusion around the real identity of Apicius, when he lived and whether he is indeed the sole author of this book on cookery. In their introduction the translators refer to a few people known by the name of Apicius, but that there was only one of them who was known to have written books on

1 R. Grew, ‘Food and Global History’, in R. Grew (ed.), *Food in Global History*, p. 5.

2 B. Flower and E. Rosenbaum, *The Roman Cookery Book, a critical translation of The Art of Cooking by Apicius*, p. 9.

cooking. His name was M. Gavius Apicius and he apparently lived during the reign of Tiberius in the first century.³ The translators are also of the opinion that the book referred to cannot be the work of Apicius, but that it is believed to be the work of an editor who lived in the late fourth and early fifth century. He compiled the book under the name of Apicius and stayed completely anonymous.⁴

The individual recipes originally had individual creators – the slave cooks – but the work as a whole, and collections like it, actually evolved *in situ*, and may not have been published in the same way as, say, works of history or poetry were.⁵

In the series of six volumes of books, *A Cultural History of Food*, written by several authors under the general editorship of Fabio Parasecoli and Peter Scholliers, the history of food is covered from Antiquity (800BCE-500BCE) to the Medieval Age (500-1300), the Renaissance (1300-1600), the early Modern Age (1600-1800), the Age of Empire (1800-1900) and lastly, the Modern Age (1920-2000).⁶ Each volume is divided into the same ten sub-sections: Food production; Food systems; Food security; Safety and crisis; Food and politics; Eating out; Professional cooking; Kitchens and service works; Family and domesticity; Body and soul; Food representations; and lastly, World developments. This structure facilitates the comparison of histories. In general, these volumes look at the influence of food on spiritual, cultural and social dimensions through the ages and collectively are heralded as the “definitive work on food history”.⁷ The volumes mostly focus on the West and North America, but at the end of each volume there is a short summary of the expansion of research into other parts of the world, for instance the Islamic and Judaic worlds, Africa, India, China, Central America and South America.

In the volume on “Antiquity”, Paul Erdkamp makes the point that:

3 B. Flower and E. Rosenbaum, *The Roman Cookery Book, a critical translation of The Art of Cooking by Apicius*, p. 12.

4 B. Flower and E. Rosenbaum, *The Roman Cookery Book, a critical translation of The Art of Cooking by Apicius*, p. 13.

5 S. Grainger, ‘The Myth of Apicius’, *Gastronomica: The Journal of Food and Culture* 7(2), 2007, p. 72.

6 F. Parasecoli and P. Scholliers, *A Cultural History of Food*, 6 volumes.

7 Bloomsbury Books, ‘A Cultural History of Food’, <https://www.bloomsbury.com/uk/a-cultural-history-of-food-9781847883551/>, access: March 2020.

The control of production, processing and distribution of edible and nonedible goods required a complex administration, which gave rise to an innovation that changes our understanding of these societies dramatically: the development of writing.⁸

He continues by claiming that access to written documents gives us an insight into the world of food in different societies, what they ate, preparation of the food and what role it played in the culture of the specific society.⁹

In her article about “Food and Politics” in medieval times, Anne McBride states that the institution of the meal was “... a social reality that crossed through all societies, but with variations in intensity and complexity in the ‘grammar of food’ that structured it ‘within time and space.’”¹⁰ In “Family and Domesticity”, Charles Hindley states that, from ancient times, the fireplace was the most important factor strengthening the family bond. “The fires, in other words the kitchens, *are* the families”¹¹

In his book, *Food is Culture*, Montanari states that: “Far more than spoken language itself, food can serve as a mediator between different cultures, opening methods of cooking to all manner of invention, cross-pollination, and contamination.”¹² His book is divided into four sections: Creating One’s Own Food; The Invention of Cuisine; The Pleasure and the Duty of Choice; and lastly, Food, Language, Identity. He discusses the various processes that “man” uses to put food on the table. Again, the concept of fire and cooking, creating a kitchen, is emphasised. He claims that what distinguishes man from animal is the fact that we “prepare food”.¹³ He describes “taste” as a cultural product and discusses the “grammar” of food by referring to the availability and usage of spices in the Middle Ages. The price of the spices separated those who could afford and obtain them from those who could not.

8 P. Erdkamp, ‘Introduction, Food and Commensality in the Ancient Near East’, in P. Erdkamp (ed.), *A Cultural history of Food in Antiquity*, vol 1, in F. Parasecoli and P. Scolliers, *A Cultural History of Food*, 6 volumes, 2012, p. 4.

9 P. Erdkamp, ‘Introduction, Food and Commensality in the Ancient Near East’, in P. Erdkamp (ed.), *A Cultural history of Food in Antiquity*, vol 1, in F. Parasecoli and P. Scolliers, *A Cultural History of Food*, 6 volumes, 2012, p. 4.

10 A. McBride, ‘Food and Politics’, in M. Montanari (ed.), *A Cultural History of Food in The Medieval Age*, vol 2, in F. Parasecoli and P. Scholliers, *A Cultural History of Food*, 6 volumes, p. 4.

11 C. Hindley, ‘Family and Domesticity’, in M. Montanari (ed.), *A Cultural History of Food in The Medieval Age*, vol 2, in F. Parasecoli and P. Scholliers, *A Cultural History of Food*, 6 volumes, p. 125.

12 M. Montanari, *Food is Culture*, p. 133.

13 M. Montanari, *Food is Culture*, p. 29.

Morphology also plays a significant role as it directs the gaze to the ways in which ingredients could be used and adapted to create different dishes to comply with the variety of demands of consumption.¹⁴ The book is a lesson on how food should be seen as “culture” and what an important role nature and food play in our everyday lives creating our own identities.

In her book, *Savouring the Past, The French Kitchen and Table from 1300 to 1789*, Barbara Ketcham Wheaton studies the history of French cooking from the Middle Ages to the French Revolution.¹⁵ She describes cookbooks and cooking in the sixteenth century and moves on to diners, dining and festivals in the seventeenth century before she writes about the markets, guilds, ingredients and new foods. She claims that kitchens and cooks form part of the beginnings of fine cookery, and also discusses French cooks abroad with a whole chapter being dedicated to pastry, baking, confectionary, and table ornament. She points out that her understanding of the history of French food through the four centuries was based on consulting cookbooks in the hope that they would supply the necessary information. She also warns that too much emphasis should not be put on the detail as publication dates can be misleading. She adds:

Outright plagiarism is a permanent feature of cookbooks, with the result that individual recipes often have life spans reaching across the publishing histories of more than one writer’s books.¹⁶

The records of French cooking that survived from the Middle Ages show that it was very similar to that of Western Europe. Reference is made to an international cuisine that revolved around the royal courts of the time. Changes began to take place by the sixteenth century with specific reference to the technique of confectionary making and baking. The interest of diners in their health was a point of concern from the sixteenth century onwards, with everything consumed in moderation.¹⁷ Wheaton declares that Medieval cooks had a variety of flavours to combine in their cooking and that the use of spices and sharp-flavoured fruits mixed with meats are reminiscent of Indian and Near Eastern cooking. She

14 M. Montanari, *Food is Culture*, p. 100.

15 B. Ketcham Wheaton, *Savouring the Past, The French Kitchen and Table from 1300 to 1789*.

16 B. Ketcham Wheaton, *Savouring the Past, The French Kitchen and Table from 1300 to 1789*, pp. xx-xxi.

17 B. Ketcham Wheaton, *Savouring the Past, The French Kitchen and Table from 1300 to 1789*, p. xxi.

asserts that cinnamon was probably the spice of choice at the time as it was often called for in recipes.¹⁸

Barbara Santich's doctoral study is titled *Two Languages, Two Cultures, Two Cuisines: A Comparative Study of the Culinary Cultures of Northern and Southern France, Italy And Catalonia in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*. It entails a comparison of the regions mentioned in the title. She discusses sugar, fast-day meats, fast-day fish, Medieval cuisine, Medieval culinary Renaissance and its texts.¹⁹ This thesis contextualises the Medieval world in terms of the use of spices, the fact that the cuisine of this period is deemed to be a "higher cuisine" of the elite and the educated, which is placed in an urban context. It is only normal that the cookbooks from this period were written in these circumstances, although particular attention is paid to medical and dietetic traditions, which were, according to Santich, "returned to western Europe via Arab scholarship."²⁰ She estimates the most distinctive feature of Medieval cuisine in Europe was the use of spices and refers to the tradition of sweetening food with sugar or honey, or even concentrated grape juice, in Mediterranean cuisine. The Arab influence is indicated by the combined use of sugar and almonds, which was often used in Medieval cuisine.²¹ While this is an exhaustive study on the Medieval regions mentioned in the title, Santich uses quotations in French as well as names for dishes, which are not translated either in the text or in the end notes. Following her argument is, as a result, sometimes extremely difficult for someone who is not fluid in French. However, at the beginning of her study she importantly states:

All culinary histories include approximations and generalisations. Due importance ought to be accorded an uncertainty principle in these generalisations, but this does not negate their value. The gastronomic past is just as important as the artistic or economic one.²²

18 B. Ketcham Wheaton, *Savouring the Past, The French Kitchen and Table from 1300 to 1789*, pp. 14-15.

19 B. Santich, *Two Languages, Two Cultures, Two Cuisines: A Comparative Study of The Culinary Cultures of Northern and Southern France, Italy And Catalonia in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, PhD Thesis, Flinders University of South Australia, 1987.

20 B. Santich, *Two Languages, Two Cultures, Two Cuisines: A Comparative Study of The Culinary Cultures of Northern and Southern France, Italy And Catalonia in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, PhD Thesis, Flinders University of South Australia, 1987, p. ii.

21 B. Santich, *Two Languages, Two Cultures, Two Cuisines: A Comparative Study of The Culinary Cultures of Northern and Southern France, Italy And Catalonia in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, PhD Thesis, Flinders University of South Australia, 1987, pp. iii-iv.

22 B. Santich, *Two Languages, Two Cultures, Two Cuisines: A Comparative Study of The Culinary Cultures of Northern and Southern France, Italy And Catalonia in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries*, PhD Thesis, Flinders University of South Australia, 1987, p. 2.

Ken Albala, in his introduction to the book *A Cultural History of Food in the Renaissance*, states that the late Middle Ages (meaning from 1300 to the end of the fifteenth century) was a time of great difficulty with crop failures early in the fourteenth century and the Bubonic Plague of 1348 in which an estimated third of the European population perished. On the other hand, these events meant that there was a bigger demand for labour and therefore more economic activity that allowed people to afford meat. He writes:

Access to the cuisine of elites, most notably in the use of spices and exotic flavourings imported from the East, meant that cuisine, much like Gothic art, flourished not only in the courts of kings and powerful magnates, but among mercantile and professional classes of less exalted wealth. For this and other reasons late medieval cuisine had an international appeal.”²³

During the Middle Ages there was more contact between different regions as travels meant that known recipes and cooking techniques were imparted and transferred from one region to the next and were handed down from the upper to middle classes.²⁴ Albala states that the sixteenth century was distinctly different from the late Middle Ages and he sees the sixteenth century as the beginning of the early modern period. As a matter of fact, in his view the late Middle Ages, the Early Modern Age and the Renaissance should be read together, which included the development of the modern nation-state, the Reformation and the discovery of the new world. As such, a global economy developed where merchants endeavoured to trade directly with other countries.²⁵ For instance, *The Viandier*, written by Guillaume Tirel (1310-1395), also known as Taillevent (this nickname refers to the way Taillevent handled his knives and means “wind-slicer”), is widely accepted amongst historians as the most important book written in the late Middle Ages. Tirel served the King of France, Charles V, from the mid 1300’s onward and continued to serve Charles VI thereafter. As with Apicius, there is no certainty that Tirel actually wrote the book as it included manuscript sources from before his birth. It is believed that he compiled these manuscripts, or that they carried his name because he was the most famous chef of his time. Albala’s description of the recipes in the extant manuscripts indicate that they were

23 K. Albala, ‘Introduction’, in K. Albala (ed.), *A Cultural History of Food in the Renaissance*, vol. 3, in F. Parasecoli and P. Scholliers, *A Cultural History of Food*, 6 volumes, p. 1.

24 K. Albala, ‘Introduction’, in K. Albala (ed.), *A Cultural History of Food in the Renaissance*, vol. 3, in F. Parasecoli and P. Scholliers, *A Cultural History of Food*, 6 volumes, p. 1.

25 K. Albala, ‘Introduction’, in K. Albala (ed.), *A Cultural History of Food in the Renaissance*, vol. 3, in F. Parasecoli and P. Scholliers, *A Cultural History of Food*, 6 volumes, p. 2.

probably written for professional chefs who needed no guidance with quantities or instruction. With a basic knowledge by the reader assumed, these manuscripts are sometimes just notes made to jog the cook's memory.²⁶ *Le Menagier de Paris*, another source dating from the late fourteenth century, was a household manual apparently written, according to Albala, by a professional man to help his young bride, although a portion of it is copied verbatim from the *Viandier*.²⁷ *The Forme of Cury*, the English equivalent of *The Viandier*, was written around 1390 at the court of King Richard II. This book also contains "international" recipes from Europe made with spices, using colouring agents in food as well as dried fruit and nuts.²⁸ Reference is also made to Thomas van der Noot's (1475-1525) book *Een Notabel Boecxken van Cokeryen* (A Remarkable Book on Cooking), published around 1514.

The *Opera* by Italian chef Bartolomeo Scappi from Dumenza, in the northern region of Italy,²⁹ was the first known illustrated cookbook and was published in 1570. He was a chef at the Vatican until he was promoted to cook for Pope Paul IV and later became the personal chef of Pius V. Reference is made in his book to flans, sweet milk soups, cream tarts and milk snow.³⁰ Albala describes Scappi's influence on Europe's gastronomy as "enormous".³¹

Melitta Weiss Adamson has done a study on *Food in Medieval Times*. In this book she examines Medieval times by referring to cookbooks and the problems related to the books that have come down to us, the ingredients used during that time in cooking and, lastly, she describes the early cuisines of Britain, France and Spain.³² The book starts with a timeline beginning in the year 541 BCE during which the Byzantine-Roman world suffered from the bubonic plague causing famine in both Europe, the Middle East and Asia. The timeline ends in 1500 when the Portuguese explorer, Pedro Álvares Cabral, discovered Brazil while on

26 K. Albala, 'Introduction', in K. Albala (ed.), *A Cultural History of Food in the Renaissance*, vol. 3, in F. Parasecoli and P. Scholliers, *A Cultural History of Food*, 6 volumes, p. 6.

27 K. Albala, 'Introduction', in K. Albala (ed.), *A Cultural History of Food in the Renaissance*, vol. 3, in F. Parasecoli and P. Scholliers, *A Cultural History of Food*, 6 volumes, pp. 6-7.

28 K. Albala, 'Introduction', in K. Albala (ed.), *A Cultural History of Food in the Renaissance*, vol. 3, in F. Parasecoli and P. Scholliers, *A Cultural History of Food*, 6 volumes, p. 8.

29 K. Albala, 'Introduction', in K. Albala (ed.), *A Cultural History of Food in the Renaissance*, vol. 3, in F. Parasecoli and P. Scholliers, *A Cultural History of Food*, 6 volumes, p. 24.

30 K. Albala, 'Introduction', in K. Albala (ed.), *A Cultural History of Food in the Renaissance*, vol. 3, in F. Parasecoli and P. Scholliers, *A Cultural History of Food*, 6 volumes, pp. 24-25.

31 K. Albala, 'Introduction', in K. Albala (ed.), *A Cultural History of Food in the Renaissance*, vol. 3, in F. Parasecoli and P. Scholliers, *A Cultural History of Food*, 6 volumes, p. 26.

32 M. Weiss Adamson, *Food in Medieval Times*.

his way to India. He continued his journey to India later and passed the Cape of Good Hope in the process. This was to become a preferred shipping route, critically important in the spice trade.³³ She explains in her Introduction to the book that it is a daunting task to undertake research into the culinary world of the whole continent of Europe spanning over a thousand years. This undertaking is made even more difficult as there is a scarcity of sources for many regions in Europe. One might think that cookbooks from the period would provide some of the answers, but according to Weiss most of the cookbooks that survived from Medieval times date back to the latter half of the fourteenth century and the fifteenth century. Therefore, very little information was passed down from the early Middle Ages. What is even more puzzling is that these books were compilations and copied by the educated, mostly the elite, clergy, nobility and rich bourgeoisie who did not bother to document the habits of the lower classes. On the bright side, these books do give some indication as to what people ate during this time period as well as the ingredients they used. Although dishes were called by names there is more often than not no indication as to measurements and quantities.³⁴ Weiss writes that a study of this magnitude cannot be undertaken by only referring to the recipe books, rather this excavation of facts needs to be attempted by working in an interdisciplinary manner using account books, courtly literature, chronicles, archaeology as well as visual presentations like tapestries, furniture, dinnerware and kitchen utensils.³⁵

The cookbooks produced in the second half of the sixteenth century generally broke away from the style and recipes of the cookbooks of the elite and also began to be published more regularly. These books were aimed at housewives and would often include household remedies and other domestic instructions. One such a manual was Thomas Dawson's *The Good Huswife's Jewell* of 1596. All these "new books" indicate the shift to cookbooks aimed at housewives, especially for the future.³⁶ Although these books were printed for the benefit of women in the household, it has to be noted that literacy among most women was generally quite low. This possibly resulted in another divide between the classes as these cookery books were most likely bought by those who could read and afford them.

33 M. Weiss Adamson, *Food in Medieval Times*, pp. ix-xv.

34 M. Weiss Adamson, *Food in Medieval Times*, p. xviii.

35 M. Weiss Adamson, *Food in Medieval Times*, pp. xviii-xix.

36 K. Albala, 'Introduction', in K. Albala (ed.), *A Cultural History of Food in the Renaissance*, vol. 3, in F. Parasecoli and P. Scholliers, *A Cultural History of Food*, 6 volumes, p. 26.

Furthermore, ingredients – for example sugar, spices and livestock – would more likely be available to the higher spheres of society.³⁷

According to Beat Kümin the early Modern Age introduced a new innovative period. She refers to the following key developments during this time: the invention of print which made mass communication possible in Europe; the initial trans-atlantic development; the importance of science; and finally, the competition the church faced from other religions (Catholic, Lutheran and Reformed).³⁸ These she regards as critical factors that would impact on the realm of cooking. Chef Bartolomeo Scappi published a book with more than a thousand recipes. The banquets of the time had to be as lavish and luxurious as possible and to obtain ingredients for the dishes served at these banquets, chefs relied on the ever-growing trading links with Asia.³⁹ The most outstanding development of the Early Modern age was the impact that the “Columbian Exchange”, so called after Christopher Columbus had reached the New World. The transoceanic voyages in the fifteenth and sixteenth century resulted in the exchange of plants such as vegetables, animals, culture, human populations, technology and diseases between the Americas, West Africa and the “Old World”. Another important development during this age came from religion, including the abolishment of the fasting rules by the Protestants.⁴⁰ The church still advocated against excess eating and drinking and emphasis was still placed on moderation and health as is illustrated by Platina’s book *De honesta voluptate et valetudine* (On right pleasure and good health).⁴¹ When the Protestant church broke away from the Catholic Church, it meant that there was a relaxing of certain Catholic teachings, which included fasting rules. The Lutheran and Presbyterian churches believed that it was up to the individual to fast or not to fast.⁴² Kümin claims that: “Europe in general – and people’s diet in particular – became more differentiated, commercialized, and globally embedded.”⁴³

37 T. Dawson, *The Good Huswifes Jewell*, 1596. <http://www.medievalcookery.com/notes/ghj1596.txt>, access: July 2020.

38 B. Kümin, ‘Introduction’, in B. Kümin (ed.), *A Cultural History of Food in the Early Modern Age*, vol. 4, in F. Parasecoli and P. Scholliers, *A Cultural History of Food*, 6 volumes, p. 3.

39 B. Kümin, ‘Introduction’, in B. Kümin (ed.), *A Cultural History of Food in the Early Modern Age*, vol. 4, in F. Parasecoli and P. Scholliers, *A Cultural History of Food*, 6 volumes, p. 6.

40 B. Kümin, ‘Introduction’, in B. Kümin (ed.), *A Cultural History of Food in the Early Modern Age*, vol. 4, in F. Parasecoli and P. Scholliers, *A Cultural History of Food*, 6 volumes, p. 7.

41 B. Kümin, ‘Introduction’, in B. Kümin (ed.), *A Cultural History of Food in the Early Modern Age*, vol. 4, in F. Parasecoli and P. Scholliers, *A Cultural History of Food*, 6 volumes, p. 7.

42 D.M. Pondt, *The Decline and Subsequent Resurgence of Fasting in the Church*, p. 73.

43 B. Kümin, ‘Introduction’, in B. Kümin (ed.), *A Cultural History of Food in the Early Modern Age*, vol. 4, in F. Parasecoli and P. Scholliers, *A Cultural History of Food*, 6 volumes, p. 12.

Parasecoli ends his chapter, which focuses on “World Developments in Early Modern Age”, with the statement that this period created the foundations for the political and cultural undercurrents in the nineteenth century with regards to the distribution, consumption and production of food which had far reaching impacts that are still present today.⁴⁴ He states:

And yet, much remains to be discovered (if not permanently elusive), particularly for the relatively scarcely documented pre-modern period. When we move from general trends to personal experience, the sheer diversity of individuals, contexts, and factors confronts historians with almost impossible challenges.⁴⁵

To take on this challenge, the historian’s task entails research on the choice of foods that certain communities or individuals prefer and the symbolic meaning thereof, and as a result of this research facets such as “human rights, communication structures, leisure pursuits, material culture and consumer demand, the dynamic and innovatory potential of the early modern period”⁴⁶ becomes increasingly important and relies, just as with the research on the Middle Ages, on interdisciplinary exploration.

The author of the book *The History of Cookbooks*, Henry Notaker, makes the comment that the documentation of food and its history appears not to have been as important in history as, for example, literature is. He states that:

Cookbooks have a long history, at least as long as many other types of texts we encounter in our daily lives. But these culinary texts have rarely been studied with the methods used in most histories of literature.⁴⁷

Notaker describes the development and history of cookbooks over seven centuries. He deals with the relationship between the writer and the creator of the recipes, how a book is put together, the naming of recipes and the organisation, or structure, of the cookbook. He

44 F. Parasecoli, ‘World Developments: Early Modern Age’, in B. Kümin (ed.), *A Cultural History of Food in the Early Modern Age*, vol. 4, in F. Parasecoli and P. Scholliers, *A Cultural History of Food*, 6 volumes, p. 199.

45 B. Kümin, ‘Introduction’, in B. Kümin (ed.), *A Cultural History of Food in the Early Modern Age*, vol. 4, in F. Parasecoli and P. Scholliers, *A Cultural History of Food*, 6 volumes, p. 11.

46 B. Kümin, ‘Introduction’, in B. Kümin (ed.), *A Cultural History of Food in the Early Modern Age*, vol. 4, in F. Parasecoli and P. Scholliers, *A Cultural History of Food*, 6 volumes, p. 12.

47 H. Notaker, *A History of Cookbooks: From Kitchen to Page over Seven Centuries*, p. ix.

surmises that there had been an increase in these books being regarded as important sources, adding:

But [scholars] have not been interested in the texts of these works per se; rather, they see these books only as possible sources for the subjects they are investigating, such as food history, culinary development, table manners, and social distinction.⁴⁸

In his book, Notaker, not unlike other authors, refers to the first books ever written and takes great effort to refer to their respective authors. He also points to the fact that plagiarism was something that often happened in this realm. He cites an example from the 1460's: Platina (previously known as Bartolomeo Sacchi) wrote a book, *De honesta voluptate et valetudine* (On right pleasure and good health), but he was also involved in the book written by Martino's text *Libro de arte coquinaria* (Book of Culinary art). Bruno Laurioux, a French historian, wrote biographies for both Platina and Martino by studying the documents in the Italian archives of the fifteenth century. Notaker comments that:

[Laurioux] finds it too much of a coincidence that Platina's and Martino's books, 'innovative in their tone, their style, and their conception, while sharing a great part of the contents' were created independently at the same time.⁴⁹

In his chapter about "Printed Cookbooks – Diffusion, Translation and Plagiarism", Notaker refers to the fact that recipes in Europe were already spreading before the increased printing of cookbooks as the result of the Gutenberg Press being invented. Notaker explains that cooks travelled extensively and gained new knowledge along the way. He warns that when a foreign recipe is added to a book one cannot be sure whether the recipe has actually been adopted into that country's cuisine or it might just be something that the cook added to their repertoire. He gives the example of Martinez Martiño who made use of Portuguese recipes while he was employed at the court in Lisbon. Notaker states that foreign recipes were included in cookbooks when foreign books were translated.⁵⁰

48 H. Notaker, *A History of Cookbooks: From Kitchen to Page over Seven Centuries*, p. ix.

49 H. Notaker, *A History of Cookbooks: From Kitchen to Page over Seven Centuries*, p. 4.

50 H. Notaker, *A History of Cookbooks: From Kitchen to Page over Seven Centuries*, p. 65.

Turning specifically to the place of the custard tart in world cooking, J. Tiffin's 2004 research paper "The Great Custard Tart Caper",⁵¹ refers to the custard tart or cream tart as an open pastry that is filled with a custard or cream. The custard is generally made from eggs, sugar and milk or cream. She indicates that, globally and over time, these tarts were apparently not in short supply,⁵² as she traces their origin from the fourth to fifth century with Apicius and ends in 1660, in England with a book by Robert May, *The Accomplisht Cook*.⁵³ In this paper she also refers to the various custard tarts by the name that they are known by in the country of origin. Tiffin states that if one compares the list that she compiled of the different countries and the dates that custard tarts became available one comes to the logical conclusion that there were recipes for custard tarts in most cuisines in every century spreading across the globe.⁵⁴ Tiffin claims that the first recipes on English shores were published in the *Form of Curye* (The method of cooking) in 1390 and were then called "Daryols".⁵⁵ Considering the range of dates that she provides for the apparent simultaneous development of the custard tart in England, France, Italy and Spain, it becomes obvious that these cuisines probably copied one another, as she explains: "This is seen particularly strongly in the carry-over of the names across time and space: Daryols, Diriola, Daryals across France, England, Italy and two centuries."⁵⁶

This selection of sources from the global perspective reflects on a rich range of literature that refers to or focuses on baking, pastry making, the use of eggs and milk as binding agents and the custard tart, which will be argued in later chapters, was the antecedent of the South African milk tart.

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- 51 J. Tiffin, 'The Great Custard Tart Caper', A&S Culinary Research paper submitted to the Drachenwald A&S Faire 2004, written under the pseudonym Baroness Jehanne de Huguenin. <http://www.3owls.org/sca/cook/custard.htm>, access: June 2010.
- 52 J. Tiffin, 'The Great Custard Tart Caper', A&S Culinary Research paper submitted to the Drachenwald A&S Faire 2004, written under the pseudonym Baroness Jehanne de Huguenin. <http://www.3owls.org/sca/cook/custard.htm>, access: June 2010, p. 2.
- 53 J. Tiffin, 'The Great Custard Tart Caper', A&S Culinary Research paper submitted to the Drachenwald A&S Faire 2004, written under the pseudonym Baroness Jehanne de Huguenin. <http://www.3owls.org/sca/cook/custard.htm>, access: June 2010, pp. 2-4.
- 54 J. Tiffin, 'The Great Custard Tart Caper', A&S Culinary Research paper submitted to the Drachenwald A&S Faire 2004, written under the pseudonym Baroness Jehanne de Huguenin. <http://www.3owls.org/sca/cook/custard.htm>, access: June 2010, p. 4.
- 55 J. Tiffin, 'The Great Custard Tart Caper', A&S Culinary Research paper submitted to the Drachenwald A&S Faire 2004, written under the pseudonym Baroness Jehanne de Huguenin. <http://www.3owls.org/sca/cook/custard.htm>, access: June 2010, p. 2.
- 56 J. Tiffin, 'The Great Custard Tart Caper', A&S Culinary Research paper submitted to the Drachenwald A&S Faire 2004, written under the pseudonym Baroness Jehanne de Huguenin. <http://www.3owls.org/sca/cook/custard.htm>, access: June 2010, pp. 3-4.

2.3 SOUTH AFRICAN FOOD HISTORY

One of the recent, and most contentious, books written on South African food history is *Die Geskiedenis van Boerekos, 1652-1806* (The History of Boerekos, 1652-1806) by H.W. Claassens,⁵⁷ which was based on a doctoral study completed in 2003. Claassens states that the main point of her study was: “*om na te vors waar die oorsprong lê van die koskultuur wat in die sewentiende eeu aan die Kaap gekom het, wat die koskultuur behels het en wie daardie koskultuur aan die Kaap beïnvloed het*” (to research the origins of the food culture that came to the Cape in the seventeenth century, what it entailed and who influenced that food culture - own translation).⁵⁸ She correctly points out that few publications written by South Africans could be used for this study as primary sources. Manuscripts from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and even early nineteenth centuries were scarce because recipes were normally transferred from mother to daughter within the family. Claassens states that: “*Huisvroue het eintlik eers teen die laaste kwart van die agtiende eeu sporadies begin om hulle resepte neer te skryf. Voorkeur is aan resepte vir gebak gegee.*” (Only in the last quarter of the eighteenth century did housewives begin to sporadically write down their recipes. Preference was given to recipes for baking - own translation).⁵⁹ She makes the valid point that cooking is an international skill and that communities borrowed recipes from each other over the centuries.⁶⁰ In the light of this, it is both perplexing and a pity that the study concludes that the slaves did not make any contribution to the food culture at the Cape except for the fact that they named certain dishes. She incorrectly claims that they would never have been allowed by their mistresses to improvise.

Claassens's study also addresses the origins of where the slaves came from and then states that they could not have had an impact on the cooking culture in the Cape as they were not accustomed to cooking with spices because she assumes that they were “*te arm*” (too poor) to cook with spices in their countries of origin. She also states that it is not the poor in a community who play a role in what the traditional food of that community would constitute,

57 H.W. Claassens, *Die Geskiedenis van Boerekos 1652-1806*, Protea Boekhuis, Pretoria.

58 H.W. Claassens, *Die Geskiedenis van Boerekos 1652-1806*, DPhil Thesis, University of Pretoria, 2005, p. 23.

59 H.W. Claassens, *Die Geskiedenis van Boerekos 1652-1806*, DPhil Thesis, University of Pretoria, 2005, p. 13.

60 H.W. Claassens, *Die Geskiedenis van Boerekos 1652-1806*, DPhil Thesis, University of Pretoria, 2005, p. 22.

but rather the gourmards and the rich. According to her the poor in a community strive to better themselves by copying the elite.⁶¹

When this thesis was published in book form in 2006, it was immediately reviewed in rather negative terms. What was supposed to be a seminal work about the cuisine of the Afrikaner was severely criticised for not being accurate in several magazine and newspaper articles. Much of the debate and debacle centred around the origins of “bobotie”,⁶² but also included criticisms of Claassens’s statements made about the slaves and the claim that they had no influence on South African cuisine. One of these articles appeared in the popular *De Kat* magazine, where journalist Johan Liebenberg gave a very extensive and thoroughly researched critique of why the conclusions in the work by Claassens were not accurate.⁶³ Apart from sorting out the bobotie debacle, the issue of women in the kitchen still remained. In his confutation, Liebenberg referred to Dr Susan Newton-King, Professor of History at the University of the Western Cape, who supports the notion that there had always been slaves in European households in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Newton-King further argued that male elite cooks were unheard of at the Cape and adds that many senior Dutch East India Company (DEIC) officials had worked in Batavia before being sent to the Cape and it is therefore only logical that they would have been accustomed to and acquired a taste for the “spicy flavours of Asian cuisine”.⁶⁴ Secondly, it is apparent that in Batavia most female companions of DEIC officials and free burghers were either Asian or Eurasian. There were very few Dutch women in Batavia, and so the Asian women were sought after as marriage partners by Batavian senior officials. Liebenberg also states that not all people who came to the Cape were slaves. One has to make provision for the fact that some of them were aristocrats. He concludes:

To claim that the slaves had *no* influence on Cape Cuisine aside from naming dishes - seems highly improbable. It also does not conform to the Unesco approach. And to put rather a fine point on it, the Asian slaves were not able to write down their recipes. They were not able to keep dairies or journals

61 H.W. Claassens, *Die Geskiedenis van Boerekos 1652-1806*, DPhil Thesis, University of Pretoria, 2005, p. 134.

62 Bobotie is a dish made of lamb or beef mince cooked in spices and then baked with a savoury egg custard poured on top to bind the meat.

63 J. Liebenberg, ‘Whose Bobotie is it?’, *De Kat*, May/June 2013, pp. 62-65.

64 J. Liebenberg, ‘Whose Bobotie is it?’, *De Kat*, May/June 2013, p. 64.

because they were too busy toiling in the fields, the gardens, in the homes and in the kitchens of their masters and mistresses.⁶⁵

There were also comments about the book and its claims on social media at the time. Noticeably limited responses seem to have come from the Cape Muslim community. They did not appear to contest the allegations made, but a comment made by “Nawhal” on Facebook was quite insightful:

Until this day our slave ancestors are being questioned on their food. Let’s hope someone with the necessary skills will come up with details on who bobotie really belongs to. I’m rooting for a Cape Malay slave, stolen from Penang, who worked as a cook in some Cape Dutch household and she should ‘suma’ also be the one who added cinnamon and cardamom to the once boring milk tart, turning it into a ‘regte melktert’ (authentic milk tart), while bringing her version of Penang curry with flaky rooti to the Cape.⁶⁶

Dine van Zyl, author of the *Great Boerekos Book*, suggests that recipes almost never stay static. Adaptation takes place over the years as family and friends add to the recipes or leave out ingredients to suit their palate. It is also important to note that what is available and affordable also plays a big role in a recipe. In contrast to the work by Claassens, Van Zyl points out that:

Apart from its obvious Dutch connection, Boerekos also evolved through the legacies of our Huguenot ancestors, of the Germans and the Portuguese, of indigenous people and slaves brought in from the East, Madagascar and the rest of Africa.⁶⁷

She also argues that recipes, if not written down in the family context, are handed down from mother to daughter and from generation to generation as time is spent in the kitchen. Van Zyl states that she is on a mission to preserve the traditional foods of those who came before us. She sees it as her task to preserve Afrikaner culture and takes up the task of communicating the rich old traditional recipes to the new generations. She comments: “A

65 J. Liebenberg, ‘Whose Bobotie is it?’, *De Kat*, May/June 2013, p. 65.

66 S. Smith, ‘Battle over Bobotie’, 27 June 2013, <https://capemalaycookingdelights.com/2013/06/27/battle-over-bobotie>, p. 6.

67 D. van Zyl, *The Great Boerekos Book*, p. 8.

recipe does not exist in isolation: it has a history. Where did the recipe originate? What routes did it follow to get to the Southern tip of Africa?”⁶⁸

Hildagonda Duckitt is the author of two books, *Hilda's 'where is it' of recipes*⁶⁹ and *Hilda's Diary of a Cape Housekeeper*.⁷⁰ The first is a compilation of recipes that Hilda put together to help immigrant wives to adjust to the circumstances of this “new” land. Although it only contains recipes, Duckitt mentions the origins of some of the recipes, and acknowledges the person who gave her a particular recipe. These recipes paint a better picture of the context that these women were expected to thrive in. The *Diary of a Cape Housekeeper*, published in 1902, states that it is a chronicle of daily events and work in a Cape household. It includes numerous cooking recipes and notes on gardening and poultry keeping. In true colourful style, the book is “by permission, respectfully dedicated [to the Princess of Wales] as an expression of loyalty and devotion”.⁷¹

Duckitt writes in the Preface to *Diary of a Cape Housekeeper* that her previous recipe book was so well received in England and South Africa that she decided to continue her work by sharing more of her “housekeeping notes”, especially for those who live in the Cape, or those planning to make the Cape their home or those officials stationed in South Africa. She informs her readership that she consulted with reliable sources to gather information on other parts of South Africa, to be included in this book, as she has no first-hand experience of those areas.⁷² The introductory chapter on her family history and a description of what she calls: “my own old home, where more than half my lifetime was so happily spent”⁷³ sets the scene for Duckitt’s seemingly romantic lifestyle. Duckitt’s grandfather was in the service of the Treasurer-General’s office in London. He was asked to come to South Africa and oversee the establishment of model farms where suitable conditions would enable the production of cereals and hay, amongst others. In his journal she found an account of the journey with a staff of thirty servants, farming implements, some stock, sheep

68 D. van Zyl, *The Great Boerekos Book*, p. 9.

69 H. Duckitt, *Hilda's 'Where is it?' of recipes*, first published 1891. On the title page it refers to contain “practical and tried recipes, many old. Cape, Indian and Malay Dishes and preserves also directions for polishing furniture, cleaning silk etc. and a collection of home remedies in case of sickness”.

70 H. Duckitt, *Hilda's Diary of a Cape Housekeeper*, published in 1902.

71 H. Duckitt, *Hilda's Diary of a Cape Housekeeper*, First page dedication.

72 H. Duckitt, *Hilda's Diary of a Cape Housekeeper*, Preface.

73 H. Duckitt, *Hilda's Diary of a Cape Housekeeper*, p. 1.

and cows to the Cape. He settled in Claver Valley, where he later died. Duckitt's own home was on the nearby Groote Poste (in the Darling district), which her father acquired in 1839. The house was built in 1808 in the old Colonial style, a mixture of Dutch and oriental, for Lord Charles Somerset, who she refers to, as one of the early Governors of the Cape, who frequently visited the farm for hunting.⁷⁴ Her father married Hildagonda Versveld, a Dutch lady, who apparently had an "excellent English education."⁷⁵

Duckitt describes how the farm labourers were treated and the labour they performed on the farm. She notes that visits from friends and relatives from the town and suburbs were a frequent event. She writes that one of the perils of living on a farm far from town was that all food was cooked at home.⁷⁶ The kitchen had a large built-in oven, heated by huge quantities of wood, to bake all the bread for the farm, sponge- and tea cakes and turn-overs for picnics. Fresh butter and enough poultry in the yard enabled them to entertain guests quite easily.⁷⁷ An entry in her Diary dated October 7 states that pastry is always in need in a household, therefore she has been collecting good recipes for a variety of uses and wrote them all down under the letter "P" in her own copy of *Hilda's Where is it?* for ease of access.⁷⁸ From this account of life on the farm, the reader gathers that the Duckitts were part of the elite in the Cape. Descriptions of monthly activities on the farm, visits from and to friends, family trips and picnics are evidence of a privileged life.

C. Louis Leipoldt, in the Preface to the publication of three of his books under the rubric: *Leipoldt's Food and Wine*, is described as an author, poet, playwright, novelist, journalist, medical doctor, botanist and chef. He travelled extensively in Europe and the East and spent some time working in hotel kitchens while he was a student and later worked as a medical inspector of schools in London. He returned to South Africa in 1914 after leaving for London in 1902. The Preface describes him as follows:

Leipoldt's nostalgia and respect for the traditions of his forefathers, his keen interest in the historical origins of things, and his rigorous, no-nonsense

74 H. Duckitt, *Hilda's Diary of a Cape Housekeeper*, p. 2.

75 H. Duckitt, *Hilda's Diary of a Cape Housekeeper*, p. 3.

76 H. Duckitt, *Hilda's Diary of a Cape Housekeeper*, p.15.

77 H. Duckitt, *Hilda's Diary of a Cape Housekeeper*, p. 15.

78 H. Duckitt, *Hilda's Diary of a Cape Housekeeper*, p. 207.

approach to food and to old manuscript recipes are wonderfully balanced by his subversive and revolutionary quest for culinary ingenuity.⁷⁹

This trilogy contains three of Leipoldt's works relating to food: *Leipoldt's Cape Cookery* published in 1976; *Culinary Treasures*, a translation of *Polfyntjies vir die Proe* published in 1963, which was a compilation of the articles that Leipoldt wrote for the popular magazine *Die Huisgenoot* between 1942 and 1947⁸⁰ and *Three hundred years of Cape Wine* published in 1952. The editors of this work observe that food and language are valuable vessels in culture and history. Leipoldt's contribution to both the culinary and linguistic arts suggest that "poetry is in the eating, the flavour in the words".⁸¹ Leipoldt gives a description of the origins of Cape cooking in the first chapter of his book *Leipoldt's Cape Cookery*. The content of *Leipoldt's Cape Cookery* includes methods of cooking, spices, herbs and flavourings, soups, fish and seafood, meat and meat dishes, sauces and salad dressings, vegetables, veldkos or food from the veld, egg dishes, game and camp cookery, fruits and sweet dishes and a chapter called "odds and ends". It is in the latter that he deals with milk and milk dishes. He concludes that our forefathers were of the opinion that milk was far more valuable in the form of cheese than a liquid that is simply drunk. Several recipes for milk dishes are provided, including Bread-and-milk that asks for boiling milk into which a spoon of butter, honey or sugar is dissolved, to be poured over a piece of stale bread cut into pieces and topped with a sprinkling of nutmeg.⁸² There are also recipes for "Milk brawn", "Sago milk", "fat milk", "Toast and milk" and "Milk and wine". This latter old recipe is produced by boiling a half cup of milk and a cup of wine; two wine glasses of white wine are stirred in when it has reached boiling point and then boiled again. It is then removed from the heat and the impurities floating on top are scooped off before a mixture of sugar and spices is added. This drink can be served hot or cold. Duckitt refers to a similar drink that she calls "egg-flip" made in the winter months. Her recipe uses beaten eggs instead of milk and she adds cinnamon and cloves. Apparently, this dish was eaten with great gusto on cold wet Cape evenings.⁸³

79 C.L. Leipoldt, *Leipoldt's Food and Wine*, p. xix.

80 C.L. Leipoldt, *Polfyntjies vir die Proe*. This is a compilation of fifty-five essays that Leipoldt wrote for *Die Huisgenoot* in his column 'Kelder en Kombuis' (Cellar and Kitchen).

81 C.L. Leipoldt, *Leipoldt's Food and Wine*, p. xix.

82 C.L. Leipoldt, *Leipoldt's Food and Wine*, p. 177.

83 H. Duckitt, *Hilda's Diary of a Cape Housekeeper*, p. 8.

Leipoldt writes that flour in any shape or form was a favourite of the “old cooks”, of which wheat flour was probably used the most although he also points out that barley, oats, rye, other cereals including mielies (mealies) were not sought after at first. Mealie meal only became a staple to the poor in the nineteenth century.⁸⁴ He discusses several other traditional dishes and explains their origins to the best of his knowledge, but also from his own experience while traveling abroad. These include koeksisters, soetkoekies, tameletjies and more. He draws the reader’s attention to the fact that coffee was hardly known at the Cape in the seventeenth century: “Its use was restricted in Holland till 1680, and only after that date do we find mention of it at the Cape.”⁸⁵ Leipoldt argues that apart from certain veld food and the preparation of porcupine skin, the question to be addressed is the existence of any gastronomic items that can be truly defined as “genuinely” and “indigenously Afrikaans”.⁸⁶ In his view there is seemingly no “Afrikaans-dish” of which the ingredients and preparation method were unfamiliar to our forebears in Europe.⁸⁷

Renata Coetzee’s book *The South African Culinary Tradition, the origin of South Africa’s culinary arts during the 17th and 18th centuries, and 167 recipes of this period* was published in 1977. (This was the English version of the Afrikaans book *Spys en Drank*). The book is full of historic illustrations copied from sources mentioned in the beginning of the book. The bibliography references early cookbooks, diaries and travelogues. This book was heavily criticised by Claassens for not being “factually correct.” Claassens argued that: “...geen bewysplase [word] verstrek vir (soms foutiewe) stellings nie, soos dat daar nie winkels in die agtiende eeu aan die Kaap was nie” (No sources are given for (sometimes incorrect) statements, for example that there were no shops in the eighteenth century in the Cape).⁸⁸ Claassens also finds herself in the same boat at times.

Coetzee sets out the story of life at the Cape with information boxes on spices, recipes and descriptions of the illustrations of equipment used by the housewife of the time. In contradiction to Claassens, Coetzee’s title refers to South African culinary traditions instead

84 C.L. Leipoldt, *Leipoldt’s Food and Wine*, pp.185-186.

85 C.L. Leipoldt, *Leipoldt’s Food and Wine*, p. 191.

86 C.L. Leipoldt, *Leipoldt’s Food and Wine*, p. 226.

87 C.L. Leipoldt, *Leipoldt’s Food and Wine*, p. 226.

88 H.W. Claassens, *Die Geskiedenis van Boerekos 1652-1806*, DPhil Thesis, University of Pretoria, 2005, p. 4.

of “Boerekos”. In *Spys en Drank*⁸⁹ Coetzee states that “Boerekos” was only established with and after the “Groot Trek”.⁹⁰ Mogamat Kammies Kamedien⁹¹ tends to agree with Coetzee in this regard as he writes:

...being cut off from the cape as the centre of civilization or the metropole of the Cabo de Goede Hoop’s colonial world. The voortrekkers going on their own by dis-engaging themselves from their places of orientation, had to survive by adapting to their localities where ever they found themselves at any given time – therefore it was boerekos in terms of district or region, not so much a blanket non-geographical setting. More like indigenization or “inburgering” of using local sources in terms of abundance of fruit and vegetables.⁹²

The book is an account of life and society at the Cape and chapters entail the beginnings of fruit, vegetable and grain cultivation, and the development of Cape cookery. Coetzee argues that culinary traditions in the Cape should be interpreted against the history and kaleidoscope (“mixed masala”) of the various traditions and cultures of the people who settled here.⁹³ She discusses the contributions of the Dutch, Germans, French settlers and the eastern influence brought by the “Malay” slaves. Coetzee maintains that the Malay, or eastern, influence on South African cooking had a far-reaching effect as it endowed the Cape with an abundance of recipes. She indicates that the men who came from there were skilled carpenters, tailors, musicians, coachmen and fisherman, while the women were excellent cooks who introduced oriental dishes to the Cape.⁹⁴ She also provides an in-depth description of the edible wild plants (“veldkos”) from the Cape with some recipes in which they can be used.

Lady Anne Barnard (1750-1825), according to Coetzee, was apparently so smitten with the species of protea called ‘sugarbush’ (*Protea repens*) which is used to make a *bossiestroop*

89 R. Coetzee, *Spys en Drank*. This book is a re-edition of the 1977 version published by Struik. It does not contain a recipe for milk tart and was never re-published in English.

90 R. Coetzee. *Spys en Drank*. Acknowledgements.

91 M.G. Kamedien is an independent historian and archival researcher on Cape slavery.

92 M.G. Kamedien, ‘Renata Coetzee’, e-mail to R.C. Botes, 27 July 2020.

93 R. Coetzee, *The South African Culinary Tradition. The origin of South Africa’s culinary arts during the 17th and 18th centuries, and 167 authentic recipes of this period*, p. 37.

94 R. Coetzee, *The South African Culinary Tradition. The origin of South Africa’s culinary arts during the 17th and 18th centuries, and 167 authentic recipes of this period*, p. 45.

(bush syrup), that she sent some to England to her friends.⁹⁵ The old Cape kitchen and its layout is discussed together with baking days, storage of foods, slaughtering days, preserving of foods, table manners and social customs, silverware, glassware and copper pots and napkins together with the entertaining of guests and serving of food. A wedding reception is portrayed as a splendid affair amongst all the other feast days deliberated in this section. It is on this page that the recipe for milk tart is given in an information box. Unfortunately, she does not give the source of the recipe, nor the era that it dates from.⁹⁶ Coetzee writes that women played a pivotal role during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as their cooking was praised as particularly outstanding.⁹⁷

In the last chapter, that focuses on the earliest cookery books,⁹⁸ Coetzee refers to a book written by a Mrs Kindersley who visited the Cape and subsequently published a book (no name is given) in 1777 wherein she claimed that young ladies at the Cape could read, write and were also tutored in music. They spoke Dutch and English well and learnt French mostly by listening to visitors. They also picked up some Portuguese from slaves. Nevertheless, the most important skill these ladies were taught was to cook and bake. The old Dutch cookery books were no longer helpful and, according to Coetzee, it was therefore up to the women to compile their own recipes. These handwritten manuscripts were the first South African recipe books.⁹⁹ Coetzee lists the four earliest printed recipe books: *Kook-koek- en Resepteboek* by E.J. Dijkman, Hildagonda Duckitt's, *Hilda's 'where is it?' of recipes*, Mrs Hewitt's *Cape Cookery, simple yet distinctive*, A.R. Barnes's *The Colonial household guide*. After 1900 there were a number of other books published, but according to Coetzee their main focus was not necessarily traditional cooking.¹⁰⁰ Coetzee writes that the recipes in her book were compiled by using old recipes, some handwritten, some from the published books mentioned above and some from traditional recipe books and modern

95 R. Coetzee, *The South African Culinary Tradition. The origin of South Africa's culinary arts during the 17th and 18th centuries, and 167 authentic recipes of this period*, p. 55.

96 R. Coetzee, *The South African Culinary Tradition. The origin of South Africa's culinary arts during the 17th and 18th centuries, and 167 authentic recipes of this period*, p. 84.

97 R. Coetzee, *The South African Culinary Tradition. The origin of South Africa's culinary arts during the 17th and 18th centuries, and 167 authentic recipes of this period*, p. 104. No source for this statement is given.

98 R. Coetzee, *The South African Culinary Tradition. The origin of South Africa's culinary arts during the 17th and 18th centuries, and 167 authentic recipes of this period*, p. 105.

99 R. Coetzee, *The South African Culinary Tradition. The origin of South Africa's culinary arts during the 17th and 18th centuries, and 167 authentic recipes of this period*, p. 105.

100 R. Coetzee, *The South African Culinary Tradition. The origin of South Africa's culinary arts during the 17th and 18th centuries, and 167 authentic recipes of this period*, p. 113.

publications.¹⁰¹ Claassens states that Coetzee confuses her readers by not adding dates to the dishes in the book.¹⁰² She also disagrees completely with Coetzee's attribution of recipes and the use of spices by the slaves, as well as the spices Coetzee lists as being available at the time.¹⁰³

The earlier mentioned *The Culture and Cuisine of the Cape Malays* by Cass Abrahams, published in 1995, is a colourful book in the sense that the chapters are divided according to the traditions and feast days on the Cape Malay calendar and the recipes served at these events. Like for most groups, food plays a prominent role in family and religious feasts of the Cape Malay community. Abrahams says that the hospitality of the Malays is justly portrayed by the Old Javanese tradition that says:

...it is not sufficient that a man should place good food before his guest; he is bound to do more. He should render the meal palatable by kind words of treatment, to soothe him after his journey and to make his heart glad while he partakes of refreshment.¹⁰⁴

Abrahams also explains that when guests are invited to a dinner at a Malay house the host expresses a 'niyyat', which means it is his intention to have a feast. Also, unlike the Western tradition, where some consider it rude to take leftovers home, the opposite is true in the Cape Malay community. Abrahams points out that the Islamic religion dictates what foods are permissible to eat. Abrahams's book also gives a very good insight into the day-to-day life of the Cape Muslims that, for those who are unfamiliar with Islam, could prove valuable. One example is the term 'motjie-kok' (a good cook) that is used for women whose excellent cooking skills are in great demand. They are normally the ones asked to cook for weddings and funerals when they are assisted by a team of women under their command. They could sometimes cater for up to a thousand people, which means that the conventional kitchen in the house would simply be inadequate, therefore this kind of cooking is done outdoors over open fires. The curious thing is that these women never accept any money

101 R. Coetzee, *The South African Culinary Tradition. The origin of South Africa's culinary arts during the 17th and 18th centuries, and 167 authentic recipes of this period*, p. 15.

102 H.W. Claassens, *Die Geskiedenis van Boerekos, 1652-1806*, DPhil Thesis, University of Pretoria, 2005, p. 4.

103 H.W. Claassens, *Die Geskiedenis van Boerekos, 1652-1806*, DPhil Thesis, University of Pretoria, 2005, pp. 4-5.

104 C. Abrahams, *The Culture and Cuisine of the Cape Malays*, p. 7. This quote, according to Abrahams, is from the book by T.S. Raffles, *The History of Java*, published in 1817.

for their services, but tradition stipulates that when they need assistance from a family that had made use of her services the family has to oblige. According to Abrahams: “This custom dates back to the days of the slaves when they would exchange services. This is known as *kanala werk* and the custom is still practised today.”¹⁰⁵

Abrahams states that, just as with their “master’s” custom, recipes were handed down from generation to generation. Most of the dishes that are cooked today are still prepared in the way that their foremothers did. Recipes are closely guarded, as described in the discussion of Gabeda Baderoon’s book, below. She adds that in the community it is a great honour to be known as the “best pastry maker” or the “best Beryani maker”. In this context she states that some essential ingredient would be left out if an outsider asks for a recipe.¹⁰⁶ Abrahams states that, while researching this book, she came across different recipes for the same dish. This indicates to her the origin of the recipe as the flavour of the dish would be an indication of the community from whence it came.¹⁰⁷ This is significant as freed enslaved people settled in different areas in Cape Town – some stayed in Constantia, where they worked, while many of the slaves from Bishops Court moved to Claremont. Cooks in Claremont and Constantia adapted their recipes to those spices that they could easily obtain as the distance between the suburbs and Cape Town or Bo-Kaap was too vast for them to travel for shopping.¹⁰⁸ The reader also finds insights into the practices and laws of Islam and the religious and family feasts celebrated; here we find the recipe for milk tart under *Doopmaals* (christenings). Other events described include Ramadan, weddings, tamat and funerals.

Regarding Muslims from slavery to post-apartheid, a book by Gabeda Baderoon, which focuses on the disregard of the role that Muslims have played in the creation of South African cuisine and in South African society at large. She suggests that a romantic view of slavery at the Cape has been upheld for a very long time. This is a viewpoint supported by historian Robert Ross, who states that the romantic notion of the slave-owner with a degree of nostalgia has been replaced by an oversimplified regard of the “noble” slaves who

105 C. Abrahams, *The Culture and Cuisine of the Cape Malays*, p. 9.

106 C. Abrahams. *The Culture and Cuisine of the Cape Malays*, p. 9. This statement has been made several times by Cass Abrahams, both in her own books and in her personal interview with Gabeda Baderoon, which was relayed in *Regarding Muslims from slavery to post-apartheid*, p. 62.

107 C. Abrahams, *The Culture and Cuisine of the Cape Malays*, p. 9.

108 C. Abrahams, *The Culture and Cuisine of the Cape Malays*, p. 9.

maintained their dignity and humanity despite the unspeakable atrocities of their owners.¹⁰⁹ Baderoon describes how pictures of submissive, but kindly, Muslim men and washerwomen were present in the history of South Africa, but also that the trauma of slavery was conveniently erased.¹¹⁰ She writes about the vital standing Muslims had in the history of slavery, colonialism, Apartheid and in post-Apartheid South Africa.¹¹¹

Baderoon essentially focuses on making Muslims visible by relating the narratives of their history. In the chapter on kitchen language, Baderoon appears to be following Ross's cue that one can read a lot from body language, meaning that there are many aspects that one can learn from social relations through the body, as well as through food, which Ross regrets falls outside the scope of the historian's experience.¹¹² The book does not contain any recipes, but refers to how Muslims are portrayed in cookbooks. The title of the book uses the word "regarding" (in the present tense) which she describes as meaning "to look" and to "respect", "to stare" and to contemplate", "to gaze" and to "consider".¹¹³ The author ties this reference in with the chapter named "To steal with the eye: Taste, secret knowledge and hidden meanings".¹¹⁴ To steal with one's eye is regarded as the skill of being able to watch a recipe being executed by someone else and subsequently being able to produce it yourself, without a written recipe. Baderoon explains that taste, secret knowledge and hidden meanings emphasise the reluctance of some Muslim women to part with their recipes and, as stated, that they leave out some crucial ingredients when they do supply a recipe. She tells the history of the hidden meaning [events in history portrayed by food], of the "Hertzoggie" a famous "Cape Malay" cookie or biscuit. It is essentially an open tart with two fillings, typically contrasting in colour. In 1936 General J.B.M. Hertzog (1866-1942) was in the race to become Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa. He promised the Muslim community that if he was victorious he would give women the vote and elevate former slaves to the status of white people. The legend goes that the community became excited by these promises and baked a tartlet filled with apple jelly, topped with egg white and coconut. When he had won the election, Hertzog did not deliver on his promise to the

109 R. Ross, *Cape of Torments, Slavery and Resistance in South Africa*, p. 2.

110 G. Baderoon, *Regarding Muslims, from slavery to post-apartheid*, p. 1.

111 G. Baderoon, *Regarding Muslims, from slavery to post-apartheid*, p. 9.

112 G. Baderoon, *Regarding Muslims, from slavery to post-apartheid*, p. 46. Baderoon refers to Robert Ross's book *Status and Respectability in the Cape Colony 1750-1870*, p. 2.

113 G. Baderoon, *Regarding Muslims, from slavery to post-apartheid*, p. 1.

114 G. Baderoon, *Regarding Muslims, from slavery to post-apartheid*, p. 62.

Malay people. The coded message is now being portrayed in a tartlet with two colours of icing, pink and brown, being called a *twee-gevreetjie* (a hypocrite).¹¹⁵

Baderoon also reviews some cookbooks by South African food writers who endeavoured to bring Muslim food to the general public. She indicates that unfortunately, their patronising view of the skilled and usually unnamed “Aya”¹¹⁶ in the kitchen still enforces the remnant patronising perceptions of slavery.¹¹⁷

Given the multi-varied cultural profile and intricate history of southern Africa, the history of its cuisines is also complex and layered. In fact, the whole question of what constitutes South African cuisine is thus equally complex and layered. Moreover, records pertaining to food history are also few and far between. Hence the historian who studies food history in early colonial South Africa is reliant on travel descriptions, memoirs, diaries and discussions of the day-to-day life of the elite. Meals were only discussed when it was a formal occasion and also only often in vague terms. No conventional archive existed or exists for local food writing. In this context, recipe books are seen as an alternative archive which, when read “against the grain” and within a particular context, can possibly cast some light on food history.

To date it has been difficult to find recipes that appeared before the late 1800s. J.C. Pretorius is of the opinion that it was up to the immigrant women at the Cape to compile their own recipe collections as there was a total lack of printed recipe books. She also argues that recipes were usually handed down from generation to generation and that we may therefore deduce that such recipes were commonly used. Milk tart is notably prominent among the categories of such recipes that Pretorius discusses.¹¹⁸ This is further supported by the notion that: “Every housewife had her family recipe and every young bride aspired to create a more tender and luscious melktert than her neighbour.”¹¹⁹ After 1890, milk tart recipes with a

115 G. Baderoon, *Regarding Muslims, from slavery to post-apartheid*, pp. 62-63.

116 G. Baderoon, *Regarding Muslims, from slavery to post-apartheid*, p. 47. This term is used throughout Baderoon’s kitchen and usually refers to the female servant doing the cooking. Although it could be a term of endearment, it is now considered to be derogatory.

117 G. Baderoon, *Regarding Muslims, from slavery to post-apartheid*, p. 57

118 J.C. Pretorius, *Die Afrikanervrou as Kultuurdraer en Kultuurskepper tot 1806*. DPhil Thesis, University of Pretoria, 1977, p. 76.

119 V. Heard and L. Faull, *Cookery in Southern Africa – Traditional and Today*, p. 253.

great deal of similarity in ingredients and method were documented in South African household guides and recipe books, as well as popular media. It is therefore not surprising that Laurens van der Post wrote:

The melk-tert in South Africa is not so much a dish as a national institution, almost a fundamental prop of such democratic constitution as we have left in the land... It is produced without apology at all hours of the day and night.¹²⁰

It is of interest to note that many of the English recipe books and texts use the Afrikaans and English names interchangeably – as Van der Post did in the quotation above. This may indicate a wide acceptance of the name or names. Does this enable us to believe that the South African milk tart had, by then, been fully indigenized? When considering that much is still written about the subject today, one could also ask why milk tart still plays such a prominent role in our culture as it is now celebrated every year on National Milk Tart Day¹²¹ and is being incorporated into the national Heritage Day celebrations on social media.¹²² This humble tart has been tried and tested and adapted to produce a range of unique versions of it. British celebrity chef, Jamie Oliver, topped his milk tart with caramel shards and his compatriot Paul Hollywood made an Earl Grey-infused milk tart topped with a sprinkling of nutmeg.¹²³

In this regard it is perhaps prudent to mention that in addition to National Milk Tart Day, milk tart also has a book completely dedicated to it. A compendium of milk tart recipes was published in English and Afrikaans in 2017. In *The South African Milk Tart Collection*¹²⁴ by Callie Maritz and Mari-Louis Guy the authors state that they were astonished by the variations on the simple recipe for melktert and when they compiled the 60 recipes published in the book they realised that they have only scratched the surface. They write:

120 L. van der Post, *First Catch Your Eland: A Taste of Africa*, p. 203.

121 S. van Taak. 'Die geboorte van Nasionale Melktertdag', *Weg* 124, p. 88.

122 Louana, 'Milk Tart collection by Louana', <https://za.pinterest.com/louanavd/milk-tart/>; Instagram, '#milk Tart', <https://www.instagram.com/explore/tags/milk Tart/>; Weg, 'Nasionale Melktertdag', <https://www.facebook.com/Nasionale-Melktertdag-347992178651599/>, access: September 2020.

123 J. Oliver, 'Jamie Oliver makes SA's milk tart famous on Instagram', 10 September 2014, <https://www.food24.com/jamie-oliver-makes-sas-milk-tart-famous-on-instagram/>, access: August 2020; P. Hollywood, 'Paul Hollywood's Earl Grey Milk tart', 26 July 2017, <https://www.facebook.com/FoodNetworkSouthAfrica/videos/1454190484618452/>, access: August 2020.

124 C. Maritz and M-L. Guy, *The South African Milk Tart Collection*.

However much we consider the milk tart to be a South African icon, the truth is we cannot lay claim to the original idea. The French can claim *pâte feuilletée* or *feuilletage* (flaky puff pastry) through an invention by an apprentice pastry cook Claudius Gele in 1645, but pastry itself has its roots in Egypt and Central Asia.¹²⁵

In their introduction to the book Maritz and Guy present a condensed history of the milk tart informed by their research. They conclude with what is believed to be the most popular narrative on the origin of the South African milk tart – the Dutch cookbook, *Een notable boecxken van cokeryn* (A notable book on cookery) by Thomas van der Noot who published it in approximately 1514.¹²⁶ For that reason the authors began their collection with the recipe for a Dutch Mattentaart, a cousin of the milk tart made with milk and buttermilk, almond essence and puff pastry.¹²⁷ They include a recipe for every taste and preferences, including “melksnysels” or “Slinger- om- die smoel” (milk noodles).¹²⁸ There is even a recipe for a “Proper milk tart” that is so named because most people consider a milk tart without a collar as not being a proper traditional, or old-fashioned tart.¹²⁹ Each recipe has a short introduction of either the origin of the recipe or an explanation of its name.

The first Muslim cookbook written in South Africa, *Indian Delights, Book of Recipes*, was published in 1961 and edited by Zuleikha Mayat.¹³⁰ This book was a compilation of recipes collected by the Women’s Cultural Group in Durban. It concerns itself with the history of the Indian community, who arrived in South Africa as indentured workers from 1860. Thus, one has to distinguish between the Indian slaves brought to the Cape Colony in the seventeenth century – who have become part of the Cape Muslim group – and the indentured labourers brought to Natal by the British to work on the sugarcane plantations. Mayat states that:

Indian Delights was not solely a book of recipes but, with its inclusion of advice and stories about the challenges faced by Indian indentured labourers

125 C. Maritz and M-L. Guy, *The South African Milk Tart Collection*, p. 9.

126 C. Maritz and M-L. Guy, *The South African Milk Tart Collection*, p. 9.

127 C. Maritz and M-L. Guy, *The South African Milk Tart Collection*, p. 10.

128 C. Maritz and M-L. Guy, *The South African Milk Tart Collection*, p. 15.

129 C. Maritz and M-L. Guy, *The South African Milk Tart Collection*, p. 26.

130 Z. Mayat (ed.), *Indian Delights, Book of Recipes*, Women’s Cultural group.

in South Africa, it demonstrated that cuisine was an important way of preserving cultural identity in a strange land.¹³¹

The Foreword to the 1961 edition of the book (which has seen many re-prints and special editions) was written by Professor Fatima Meer (1928-2010), who states categorically that the Indians are not a homogeneous people. From the success of *Indian Delights*, the women's group was able to support their community. The book is described as follows:

Although seemingly generic, the name 'Women's Cultural Group' signals some of the complexities that have been part of the group's fifty-year existence. The organization was to be composed of, and run by, women; a culture-based ontology would provide a platform for its activities, educational endeavours, social exchanges; it was to be a formal society with a regular membership.¹³²

The early days were difficult but over the years the group was able to raise a great deal of money through the sales of the book to apply in charitable funds.

District Six Huis Kombuis: Food and Memory, first published in 2016, is a cookbook that was the product of a community project initiated by the District Six Museum. This book contains history, memories, stories and recipes. The museum created workshops to enable participants to access their memories and nostalgia around a community that was forcefully and brutally destroyed and fragmented by the Apartheid government. "Reminiscences of the past stimulated links between craft, design, culture, culinary history and heritage values and linked them to food and cooking."¹³³ The purpose of the workshops was to design and produce tea-tray cloths on which recipes were hand embroidered. The workshops were a huge success and the interactions between participants and their shared memories facilitated keeping their "old" life alive. It was then decided to publish a recipe book describing the participants' memories of their homes, kitchens and their way of life. A poem by Don Mattera published in 1987, on the first page of the book puts everything in context:

131 G. Baderoon, *Regarding Muslims, from slavery to post-apartheid*, p. 59. Here Baderoon is referring to Devarakshanam Betty Govinden's book *'Sister Outsiders': The Representation of Identity and Difference in Selected writing by South African Indian Women*.

132 G. Vahed and T. Waetjen, *Gender, Modernity and Indian Delights: The Women's Cultural Group of Durban, 1954-2010*, p. 3.

133 T. Smith, *District Six Huis Kombuis: Food and Memory*, p. 14.

Gone.
Buried.
Covered by the dust of defeat – or so the conquerors believed.
But there is nothing that can be hidden from the mind.
Nothing that memory cannot reach or touch or call back.¹³⁴

Both writing and reading about food represents the significance of the act of eating, further highlighting gastronomic appetite, cultural memories and the symbolic value we ascribe to the most basic element of our physical needs.¹³⁵ In the introduction to her book *Hunger for Freedom – The story of food in the life of Nelson Mandela*, anthropologist and author Anna Trapido states that her aim was not to write a cookbook but rather a book that opens up Nelson Mandela's hunger for freedom – both through his political career in the public domain and also in a metaphorical way dealing with his private life. She describes the book as a “gastro-political history with recipes”.¹³⁶ To write a book about a man's life through food might seem frivolous, but this book gives the general public a privileged view of the man that was considered in a dualistic way of opposites, first a villain and then a god. Trapido gives us a glimpse of her methodology:

To look at an epic life through food cuts past the God mirage into the daily existence of a very real man: a man who has nourished South Africa and the world with his unstinting appetite for freedom.¹³⁷

The writing of the book was undertaken with the patronage of the Nelson Mandela Foundation. Mandela described the work of the foundation as putting the emphasis on the recovery of memories and stories that were covered-up in the past. Trapido argues that by relaying the stories of the invisible hands in Mandela's life as part of his legacy and history, especially the women in the various kitchens who communicated their support through the food that they cooked for him, contributes to the “memory of justice”.¹³⁸

Three issues become apparent from this select review of literature on South African food history, the first being the overlap between the primary and secondary sources due to the

134 T. Smith, *District Six Huis Kombuis: Food and Memory*, p. 5.

135 S.M. Gilbert and R. Porter (eds), *Eating Words: A Norton Anthology of Food Writing*. Kindle edition, loc. 458.

136 A. Trapido, *Hunger for Freedom – The story of Food in the Life of Nelson Mandela*, p. xi.

137 A. Trapido, *Hunger for Freedom – The story of Food in the Life of Nelson Mandela*, p. xi.

138 A. Trapido, *Hunger for Freedom – The story of Food in the Life of Nelson Mandela*, p. xiv.

fact that there is no traditional food archive. The second is that most of the books are written from a specific cultural perspective – whether it is Afrikaans, Muslim, Indian, English, Portuguese, or another. These books often include morsels of food history by referring to the origins of a certain recipe or speculating about its origins.¹³⁹ The last is that there is a relatively limited number of secondary sources focusing on South African food history, which is further compounded by the general omission of African, and in particular South African cuisine, in global food history studies. This lacuna, in turn, justifies the present study and its focus on one item on the menu of South African food history.

139 S. Smit and M. Fulton, *The South African Encyclopaedia of Food and Cookery*, p. 227. In general, this book is more a food dictionary than an encyclopaedia. It contains items that are not South African by origin, e.g., Melba toast. The description of milk tart is limited to “a South African custard tart flavoured with a sprinkling of ground cinnamon or cinnamon sugar, an innovation introduced by the Cape Malays who used spices to add flavour to the solid Dutch fare of the 17th and 18th centuries”. No source is given for this statement. It does, however, proceed to give a recipe for an “Old fashioned melktert”.



CHAPTER 3: FOOD, GENDER AND THE ALTERNATIVE ARCHIVE

To understand is not necessarily to pardon, but there is no harm in trying to understand.¹

3.1 INTRODUCTION

While the previous chapter investigated established and formal sources, there are others that have, throughout history, often been overlooked and neglected and therefore became invisible. The purpose of this chapter is to investigate and unlock these alternative sources of knowledge because the history of food, including that of milk tart, is incomplete and thin without the narratives, nuances and lived experiences that recipe books and other formats in the alternative archive (with an emphasis on gender), reveal to the researcher.

In 1935, Mary Ritter Beard (1876-1958),² an American women's rights activist, historian and archivist, embarked on organising a world centre for women's archives. Beard's slogan was very much in line with early twentieth-century archival theory: "No documents. No

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- 1 H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners – Biography of a people*, p. xiii. Here Giliomee refers to the Greek scholar of slavery in ancient Greece. He uses this as his inflection for the book he wrote about the Afrikaners, with empathy but no prejudice, he claims.
 - 2 J.W. Scott, 1986, 'Women's Archives and Women's History. Comments delivered on the dedication of Christine Dunlap Farnham Archives', 10 October 1986, https://www.brown.edu/research/pembroke-center/sites/brown.edu.research.pembroke-center/files/uploads/JWSExcerpt_06957_0.pdf, access: March 2020, p. 1.

history.”³ She knew that without visibility, women would not be included in the history books and records of the past, leaving them without historical memory and identity. One of the aims of her endeavour was to record the experiences of those who came before in a reference system so as to enable present and future generations to understand what was lost. What is more, Joan Wallach Scott, with reference to Beard, quotes Michel Foucault (1926-1984) who emphasises the significance of memory: “It is vital to have possession of this memory, to control it, tell it what it must contain.”⁴ Thus, archives provide the substance of memory, the resources to create a collective identity, and to secure a place in history.

The absence of a traditional, formal archive on the history of women, and the fact that only a handful of them, regardless of race or class, are included in the meagre collection of primary sources locally available, poses a challenge to this study, especially as one of its aims, as stated in Chapter 1, is to discover hidden or lost voices, not only in the kitchen, but also in South African food culture as a whole. Therefore, one has to turn one’s gaze elsewhere to fulfil Mary Beard’s ideal. It must however also be kept in mind that, as quoted in Chapter 1, culture is not bound to the restrictions of documented primary sources.⁵ This approach validates secondary and oral histories as instruments to transmit lived experiences, even when doing so indirectly. Consequently, it is possible to consult other sources and alternative methods to create the memory of women which, in turn, will (re)create or supplement the archive of women’s lives. With that said, one has to guard against portraying singular narratives, as Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie reminds us:

I’ve always felt that it is impossible to engage properly with a place or a person without engaging with all of the stories of that place and that person. The consequence of the single story is this: It robs people of dignity. It

3 J.W. Scott, 1986, ‘Women’s Archives and Women’s History. Comments delivered on the dedication of Christine Dunlap Farnham Archives. 10 October 1986’, https://www.brown.edu/research/pembroke-center/sites/brown.edu.research.pembroke-center/files/uploads/JWSExcerpt_06957_0.pdf, access: March 2020, p. 1.

4 J.W. Scott, 1986, ‘Women’s Archives and Women’s History. Comments delivered on the dedication of Christine Dunlap Farnham Archives. 10 October 1986’, https://www.brown.edu/research/pembroke-center/sites/brown.edu.research.pembroke-center/files/uploads/JWSExcerpt_06957_0.pdf, access: March 2020, p. 2.

5 R.C. Fisher, M.E. Lange and M.E.N. Nkambule, ‘Cultural hybridity in the teaching of architecture within a decolonised society’, *Paranoá* 18, 2017, p. 5.

makes our recognition of our equal humanity difficult. It emphasizes how we are different rather than how we are similar.⁶

Inexplicably, early women scholars have been omitted from historiographical writing on both social and food history.⁷ This study employs the history of the milk tart, a simple yet intricate part of the tradition of kitchens and the women who prepare it, to retrieve, where possible, the ordinary women of this country's voices and actions. Thus, when documenting our food culture and the role of women in its development, we need to look for alternative sources.

In the *Oxford Handbook of Food History* Ken Albala states that food historians need to use cookbooks as sources to reconstruct the past.⁸ Simultaneously he also points to the danger of taking translated texts, or those adapted for the modern kitchen, at face value and therefore proposes five questions that the historian must answer when intending to use a recipe book as a historical document. Essentially these questions align with those of internal and external criticism⁹ and, while they are not novel, the sources he poses in terms of the five questions are:

1. Who wrote the book?
2. What was the intended audience?
3. Where was it produced?
4. When was it produced?
5. Why was it written?¹⁰

In the context of cookbooks, these questions may not always prove easy to answer and researchers are therefore obliged to consider the context of their sources with care. When analysing these alternative texts, it is important to determine what it is that the historian is looking for: change in food preferences over time, rules for serving of food, formal or

6 C. Ngozi, The Danger of a Single Story, July 2009, https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story/next?language=en, access: August 2020.

7 K.W. Claflin, 'Food among the Historians: Early Modern Europe', in K.W. Claflin and P. Scholliers (eds) *Writing Food History – A Global Perspective*, pp. 39-40.

8 K. Albala, 'Cookbooks as Historical Documents', in J. Pilcher, (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Food History*, p. 227.

9 R.J. Shafer, *A Guide to Historical Method*, pp. 127-170.

10 K. Albala, 'Cookbooks as Historical Documents' in J. Pilcher, (ed.) *The Oxford Handbook of Food History*, p. 228.

informal settings (including table settings), table manners and etiquette, and mealtimes, are all important indicators learnt from cookbooks as they are not just suggestions but directions. Other important pointers may include stains on pages and marginalia¹¹ or other side notes that may be invaluable as they could indicate that there was a thoughtful interaction between reader and recipe. Most importantly these blemishes and scribbles are proof that the recipe was probably not just read but actually cooked. A comment by Sarah Noble reminds us that recipes represent more than a set of ingredients and instructions:

Collectively, recipes give us insight into different parts of history. How people lived, what they had available, what their homes and families were like, how society functioned, among many more things. Recipes often times have deeper meanings and connections within our lives than we realize. History is certainly reflected in the cookbooks, diaries, and other examples of culinary literature. By studying recipe books throughout time, we are able to better understand how we came to be where we are with food today.¹²

Cookbooks are treasure troves for historians in finding information about more than cooking, but also on gender roles, class, ethnicity and race.¹³ Moreover, particular consideration should be given to the cookbooks written for immigrant communities and they might reflect on an effort to preserve identity in a “strange” land. Albala thus suggests that:

The early twentieth century produced scores of cookbooks that taught second or third generation descendants of immigrants the traditional recipes and skills that were in danger of being lost.¹⁴

These then stand as a critical source to reflect on the transference of culture, while on the other hand it can show traces of an acculturation process.

11 Literally ‘in the margin’, referring to notes, mostly handwritten, made in the margin or close to the recipe after the fact.

12 R.A. Snell, ‘Recipes as Sources for Women’s Lives: Student Reflections on Food, Feminism, and Femininity’, 2017, <https://recipes.hypotheses.org/9724>, access: 24 September 2020.

13 K. Albala, ‘Cookbooks as Historical Documents’, in J. Pilcher (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Food History*, pp. 229-231.

14 K. Albala, ‘Cookbooks as Historical Documents’, in J. Pilcher (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Food History*, p. 235.

3.2 MEMORY AND THE LANGUAGE OF FOOD

Jon Holtzman is of the view that gender takes centre stage when studying food and memory, especially female forms thereof. He writes:

...a wide body of literature emphasizes memory, structured through what is construed as women's special relationship to food, providing access to histories and memories not found in other types of accounts.¹⁵

Alon Confino claims that the history of memory is useful both in the way it symbolises the past in, for instance, the museum, but also as to how it recalls the *mentalité* of a people from the past, hence providing greater insight into commingled beliefs, practices and symbolic representations that make up perceptions of the past.¹⁶ In this context he refers to historian Robert Mandrou (1921-1984), who stated that this kind of history of memory should aim at:

... reconstructing the patterns of behaviour, expressive forms and modes of silence into which worldviews and collective sensibilities are translated. The basic elements of this research are memories. These are reflected as representations and images, myths and values recognized or tolerated by groups or the entire society, and which constitute the content of collective psychologies.¹⁷

While food, as a cultural product, can be instrumental in defining collective attitudes, the hierarchies of ethnic food may also result in the absence of a national cuisine. To corroborate this, Rachel Dwyer indicates that:

... global cosmopolitanism encourages the search for ever newer, rarer, and more esoteric cuisines as ethnic cuisines become a substitute for the cultures they are to represent – cuisine becomes a sort of museum for cultures under threat of extinction in the face of globalization.¹⁸

15 J.D. Holtzman, 'Food and Memory', *Annual Review of Anthropology* 35, 2006, p. 370.

16 A. Confino, 'Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method', *The American Historical Review* 102(5), 1997, p. 1389.

17 A. Confino, 'Collective Memory and Cultural History: Problems of Method', *The American Historical Review* 102(5), 1997, p. 1389.

18 R. Dwyer, 'Editorial: The Cultural Meaning of Food in South Asia', *South Asia Research* 24(1), 2004, p. 5.

Therefore, food is flexible and symbolic in the understanding of self-identity as a result of the solicitation of a series of inflexible cultural stereotypes that link a specific food to a specific identity. As mentioned earlier, the fact that people express a longing for their mother's or grandmother's milk tart, or that ex-patriots yearn for the dish, serves as strong indicators of food's ability to evoke emotion and nostalgia. It is not just the physical object that rekindles this memory, but also cultural (or even national) identity, tradition and a need for (be)longing. The preparation of food is integral to both culture and heritage, but the role of women in this act is often overlooked in accounts of cultural studies.¹⁹

According to Albala²⁰ an early example of a cookbook documenting native traditions was Richard Warner's *Antiquitates Culinariae* (The Old Kitchen) from 1791.²¹ Books like these usually propagated nation building, the subscription to folklore, native music and dress, and the preservation of buildings. From this perspective food historians are encouraged to venture outside the preconceived limits of history by consulting cookbooks and engage these through the lens of gender, class and politics, in their quest for a "bigger historical importance".²²

Arjun Appadurai who, in his writing about post-colonial India, poses two critical considerations for post-colonial researchers: first he questions the reasons why the culinary history of India was neglected and not properly documented; second, he probes the role of external influences, including those of colonial powers, that contributed to the neglect of a national Indian cuisine.²³ These questions are also relevant to the South African context as there is a lack of academic documentation of our cuisines. In addition, it is increasingly difficult to speak of a national dish or cuisine in South Africa due to our fragmented and colonial past, and the richness of ethnic diversities and cultural nuances found here. What then are the markers for dealing with the differences of the variety of cuisines that exist in this country? How does one go about defining a national cuisine or tradition as part of a

19 G. Vahed and T. Waetjen, *Gender, Modernity and Indian Delights: The Women's Cultural Group of Durban, 1954-2010*, p. vii.

20 K. Albala, 'History on a Plate: The Current State of Food History', *Historically Speaking* 10(5), 2009, p. 8.

21 The book's full title is *Antiquitates Culinariae or Curious Tracts Relating to the Affairs of Old English, with preliminary discourse, Notes and Illustrations*, published in 1791 by The Reverend Richard Warner.

22 K. Albala, 'History on a Plate: The Current State of Food History', *Historically Speaking* 10(5), 2009, p. 8.

23 A. Appadurai, 'How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India', *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30(1), 1988, p. 10.

combined heritage? Thabo Mbeki, former President of South Africa, recalls that he was often served cuisine from the national cultural heritage of countries he visited during his tenure, but that this was not always the case locally, as we presented visitors with a standard universal menu, while vast and mostly undocumented cultural heritage is embodied in the diverse cuisines of our country, especially because it differs from region to region.²⁴ Incidentally the milk tart recipe of his personal chef is recorded in Hilton Little's *Bon Appétit, Mr President*²⁵ and it is noted as a dish often served at formal events. Mbeki's concerns align with those of Arjun Appadurai.

It is this fusion of different cultures that sets the stage for the process of indigenization of food identities described by Doreen Fernandez.²⁶ On the other hand, certain dishes, like milk tart, have been elevated in different cultures as a traditional, as opposed to a national, dish.

3.3 WOMEN'S HISTORY

Because it was seldom recorded, women's history has, with notable exceptions, been ignored for so long that it is referred to as the "silence of sources".²⁷ Helen Bradford argues that if these forgotten gender and feminist experiences are included in a broader reading of history it will transform our interpretation and understanding thereof.²⁸ Gerda Lerner takes this further indicating that the history of:

... 'notable women' does not tell us much about those activities in which most women engaged, nor does it tell us about the significance of women's activities to a society as a whole.²⁹

24 H. Little, *Bon Appétit, Mr President*, p. i.

25 H. Little, *Bon Appétit, Mr President*, p. 137.

26 B. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and D.G. Fernandez, 'Culture Ingested – On the Indigenization of Philippine Food', *Gastronomica* 3(1), 2003, p. 61.

27 H. Le Dantec-Lowry, 'Reading Women's Lives in Cookbooks and Other Culinary Writings: A Critical Essay', *Revue Française d'études américaines* 116(2), 2008, p. 100.

28 H. Bradford, 'Women, Gender and Colonialism: Rethinking the History of the British Cape Colony and its Frontier Zones, c. 1806 -1870', *Journal of African History*, 1996, 37(3), p. 352.

29 G. Lerner, 'Placing Women in History: Definitions and Challenges', *Feminist Studies* 1975(3), p. 5.

In her view traditionally trained historians will be partial when writing women's history, as it will be the history of "women's worthies" or "compensatory history".³⁰ Alternatively, she says women's history could also be read as a contribution to society where women were judged according to male standards and on their contribution to a specific movement. Lerner asserts that the real history of women is the documentation of their day-to-day existence, on their own terms, in a male-dominated world. The oppression suffered unfortunately does not provoke the story of women's history and is therefore of limited use to the historian.³¹ Consequently, traditional historical questions have been applied to women in an attempt to fit their narratives into male-defined vacuums where it is thought they should have been. Lerner declares that:

The decisive historical fact about women is that the areas of their functioning, not only their status within those areas, have been determined by men. The effect on the consciousness of women has been pervasive. It is one of the decisive aspects of their history, and any analysis which does not take this complexity into consideration must be inadequate.³²

The distortion extends to different social classes of women and their respective histories and corresponds with archival historian Antoinette Burton's view that the definitive example of the part of history that is forever lost is epitomised by the lives of slaves that were not recorded.³³ Similarly, Ena Jansen draws a parallel to the South African phenomenon where the role of servants and domestic workers has been largely ignored and overlooked.³⁴ Both of these opinions are of critical relevance to this study.

Historian Hermann Giliomee ascribes the disregard for women in local history to a lack of records due to low literacy rates in some communities until at least the early twentieth century.³⁵ He argues that there were very few European women at the Cape of Good Hope³⁶

30 G. Lerner, 'Placing Women in History: Definitions and Challenges', *Feminist Studies* 1975(3), p. 5.

31 G. Lerner, 'Placing Women in History: Definitions and Challenges', *Feminist Studies* 1975(3), p. 6.

32 G. Lerner, 'Placing Women in History: Definitions and Challenges', *Feminist Studies* 1975(3), p. 6.

33 A. Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive. Women Writing House, Home and History in Late Colonial India*, p. 144.

34 E. Jansen, *Like Family. Domestic workers in South African History and literature*, p. 5.

35 H. Giliomee, 'Allowed such a state of freedom: Women and gender relations in the Afrikaner community before enfranchisement in 1930', *New Contree* 59, 2010, p. 30

36 The Cape was initially christened *Cabo Tormentoso* (Cape of Storms) by the Portuguese and later changed to *Cabo da Boa Esperança* (Cape of Good Hope) according to O.J.O. Ferreira and S.W. le Roux, *Sagres & Suiderkruis, Raakpunte tussen Portugal en Suid-Afrika deur vyf eeue*, p. 8.

when the refreshment station was founded and that manumitted³⁷ slave women formed a major part of the married women there in the seventeenth century.³⁸ In this regard he is correct.

The first slaves were brought to the Cape from the west coast of Africa in 1658, but thereafter slaves were imported in a number of ways, including sponsored voyages from Madagascar, Mozambique (by then a Portuguese stronghold) and the east coast of Africa, through returning commercial fleets from Batavia and British ships on their way to the Americas.³⁹ June McKinnon refers to the suffering and danger that all women who lived in the Cape in the early years faced as the thread that linked them, regardless of whether they were “Khoeh-khoe, Bushmen, slave or European”.⁴⁰ She experienced difficulty in finding information on these women’s lives and states: “Sadly, no individual letters or diaries survive from the 17th Century: the voices of the women themselves are silent.”⁴¹

A select few stories of slaves have been recorded, including that of Angela van Bengale (c.1638-1720),⁴² Armosyn Claasz van die Kaap (c.1661-1733)⁴³ and some other slaves or free women who played a prominent part in the country’s history, but these descriptions are rare and only speak of a few notable women.⁴⁴ This results in the regrettable situation that the majority of all women’s history is overlooked, which aligns with both Lerner and Giliomee’s statements on the lack of their representation.⁴⁵

37 Freed slaves.

38 H. Giliomee, ‘Allowed such a state of freedom: Women and gender relations in the Afrikaner community before enfranchisement in 1930’, *New Contree* 59, 2010, p. 33.

39 J.C. Armstrong and N.A. Worden, *The slaves, 1652-1834 in Elphick and Giliomee, The Shaping of South African Society, 1652-1840*, pp. 112-118.

40 J. McKinnon, *A Tapestry of Lives, Cape women of the 17th Century*, pp. 11-12.

41 J. McKinnon, *A Tapestry of Lives, Cape women of the 17th Century*, pp. 12, 14.

42 H.F. Heese. *Groep sonder grense – Die rol en status van die gemengde bevolking aan die Kaap 1652-1795*. (Translated in English with new research added, by Delia Robertson, *Cape Melting Pot – The role and Status of the Mixed Population at The Cape 1652-1795*), p. 26.

43 H.F. Heese. *Groep sonder grense – Die rol en status van die gemengde bevolking aan die Kaap 1652-1795*. (Translated in English with new research added, by Delia Robertson, *Cape Melting Pot – The role and Status of the Mixed Population at The Cape 1652-1795*), p. 38.

44 J. McKinnon, *A Tapestry of Lives, Cape women of the 17th Century*. p. 14. McKinnon’s book traces the history of Company Wives and describes the lives of several prominent slaves and the daily routine of settler women and “Khoi Khoi” women. For purposes of this study their importance in history is acknowledged but impossible to describe all. The researcher sees this as proof that there were skilled women who could run households and execute certain farming activities. It is therefore quite possible that they would be able to cook and use their culture in their cooking, be it on a very small scale.

45 G. Lerner, ‘Placing Women in History: Definitions and Challenges’, *Feminist Studies* 3, 1975, p. 5.

The patriarchal system under the Dutch dictated that women were not allowed to hold public office, but that, once married, they shared the status of their husbands under Roman-Dutch law.⁴⁶ By the turn of the eighteenth century men at the Cape outnumbered women at least twofold. Therefore, marriages between white men and “fair-skinned non-white women”⁴⁷ were quite common. The children born from a mixed marriage between an imported slave and a person of European descent were incorporated into white society. It is suggested that the practice of marrying imported slaves continued into the eighteenth century and that the majority of slaves in these marriages originated from the Indian subcontinent.⁴⁸

While slavery was initially only prominent in Cape Town, it slowly permeated sections of the interior. Mark Vink describes the region as a whole as a true slave society where the enslaved played an important role:

...in both luxury and productive capacities, empowering particular groups of elites, deeply influenced cultural developments, and formed a high proportion of the total population.⁴⁹

Over time, and as the number of slaves increased, the white community became more reliant on slave labour. According to Jansen the white community’s “... sense of physical threat influenced attitudes to “others” in general, leading to a malignant colour consciousness that would have far-reaching implications for all South Africans in years to come.”⁵⁰ She also asserts that the rules that determined what people of colour could, or could not do, became more harsh and inhumane in the period of over a century and a half between the abolition of slavery in 1834 right through to the first democratic elections in 1994.⁵¹ The system of influx control and the subsequent enforcement of pass laws by the Apartheid government further encroached on the rights of people of colour and their freedom of movement. From 1957 women were also required to carry pass books and a man whose wife did not have a

46 H. Giliomee, ‘Allowed such a state of freedom: Women and gender relations in the Afrikaner community before enfranchisement in 1930’, *New Contree* 59, 2010, p. 34.

47 H. Giliomee, ‘Allowed such a state of freedom: Women and gender relations in the Afrikaner community before enfranchisement in 1930’, *New Contree* 59, 2010, p. 35.

48 H.F. Heese, *Groep sonder grense – Die rol en status van die gemengde bevolking aan die Kaap 1652-1795*. (Translated in English with new research added, by Delia Robertson, *Cape Melting Pot – The role and Status of the Mixed Population at The Cape 1652-1795*), pp. 26-27.

49 M. Vink, ‘The World’s Oldest Trade’: Dutch Slavery and Slave Trade in the Indian Ocean in the Seventeenth Century’, *Journal of World History* 14(2), 2003, p. 148.

50 E. Jansen, *Like Family. Domestic workers in South African History and literature*, pp. 32-33.

51 E. Jansen, *Like Family. Domestic workers in South African History and literature*, pp. 32-33.

pass could be deported to one of the so-called homelands that existed under the Apartheid regime.⁵² This, in no small way, continued to silence the voices of the working class and especially those of black women who were employed as domestic workers in white households. Rebecca Ginsberg comments on the forced and intimate relationship between domestic workers and their employers as follows:

Domestic workers placed considerable amounts of their own physical and emotional energies into other people's households. Many were proud of their work, even aware of their madams' occasional envy of their ways with the children or the successes of their baking.⁵³

Evidence of the silencing influence of the patriarchal construct is also found in the negating of a married women's identity by defining her as an extension of her husband's status and name. Examples abound and in this study's context include the handwritten cover of a personal recipe collection from 1819 of a lady who identified herself as the Widow Blanckenberg (née Zeeman).⁵⁴ The researcher's own maternal grandmother, Rachel Cornelia Coetzee (née Pretorius) (1915-1976) identified herself as *Mevr.* (Mrs) M. Coetzee, referring to her husband whose first name was Max, on the cover of her handwritten manuscript of recipes.⁵⁵ The cover and title page of *South African Cookery Made Easy*, published in 1912, lists the author as Mrs P.W. de Klerk, but she signed the preface as M. de Klerk.⁵⁶ Similarly the South African cookbook author Jeanette C. van Duyn first published under her maiden name,⁵⁷ but was credited as Mrs H.M. Slade in her later work.⁵⁸ Likewise a contribution for a milk tart filling recipe in *The Paarl Cookery Book in Aid of War Funds* from 1918 is attributed to "Mrs. Septimus de Villiers" from the Paarl.⁵⁹ Even Anna Elizabeth Botha (1943-1997), spouse of P.W. Botha (1916-2006) former State President of South Africa, signed the preface of the 1980 book *Resepte van Heinde en Ver*

52 H. Giliomee and B. Mbenga, *Nuwe Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika*, p. 321.

53 R. Ginsberg, 'Serving Apartheid? Domestic workers and the racial geographies of white suburban households, Johannesburg, South Africa', *Historical Geography* 27, 1999, p. 68.

54 De Weduwe Blanckenberg, *De Keuke boek*, 15 October 1819. Stellenbosch Museum.

55 M. Coetzee, *Resepte Boek*. Manuscript in private collection.

56 P.W. de Klerk, *South African Cookery Made Easy*.

57 J.C. van Duyn, *The Household Science Cookery Book*. 1920.

58 H.M. Slade (Jeanette C. van Duyn), *Mev. Slade se Afrikaanse Kookboek*. 1939.

59 Stall Holders of the Country Market, *The Paarl Cookery Book – In Aid of War Funds*, p. 60. "Septimus" is undoubtedly the first name of a man, most probably that of the contributor's husband.

(Recipes from near and far)⁶⁰ as A. Elize Botha, but the title printed under her signature referred to her as Mrs P.W. Botha.

Biographical information on women food writers, including those mentioned above, is scarce and intermittent if anything is available at all. This trend is not limited to authors of the early twentieth century, but also applies to women like Sannie Smit (1940-1991), who was well-known as the chief home economist of the then South African Meat Board and food writer who co-authored *The South African Encyclopaedia of Food and Cookery*.⁶¹

Against this background it is argued that it is impossible to fully understand the history of gender, women and their identity in South Africa today without including the silent voices when historians try to fill the gaps between romance and reality. What is certain, is that both free and enslaved women influenced the family life, the households they were running, and the psychology of the society at the Cape under colonised rule.⁶² This correlates with the views of Victorian-era English writer Isabella Beeton, who advocated that the role of an ordinary housewife was to cook a good meal and create a well-organised home.⁶³ This paradigm of patriarchy and class systems that silenced the voices of women certainly continued into the following centuries and across continents.

3.4 THE KITCHEN

From the very outset of the colonial period between 1657 and 1808 slave women were an integral part of households at the Cape as they prepared the meals for their masters, and also often shared in that meal, but obviously not at the same table. This pattern continued to the nineteenth century where a number of slave women were cooks and, as Baderoon⁶⁴ also

60 Kaapse Nasionale Vroue van die Parlement, *Resepte van Heinde En Ver*, 1980.

61 S. Smit and M. Fulton, *The South African Encyclopaedia of Food and Cookery*, 1986.

62 R.C-H. Shell, *Children of Bondage. A social history of the slave society at the Cape of Good Hope, 1652-1838*, p. 285.

63 I. Beeton, *Mrs Beeton's Household Management*, 2006.

64 G. Baderoon. *Regarding Muslims, from slavery to post-apartheid*. In the chapter on "Kitchen Language": Muslims and the culture of food, Baderoon refers to J.E. Mason's (2003) assessment that by the 1820's and 1830's two thirds of female slaves performed domestic work, p. 47, and that skilled cooks could demand a much higher price; this is confirmed by Leipoldt in *Leipoldt's Cape Cookery*, p. 18.

states, domestic workers.⁶⁵ By the year 1822 “mulatto slaves” (slaves of whom one parent was European) created a new class of slaves and were called the “Africander” slaves. The female slaves of this group were in high demand as they were perceived as being able to perform duties of running the household satisfactorily and were entrusted with matters more valuable. The slave mistress also relied on these women more as companions, but neither of them ever forgot their place in the hierarchy regardless of how familiar their actions were in private; in public, the slave-mistress relationship prevailed.⁶⁶

The memoirs and meticulous household records of Joachim Nikolaus von Dessin (1704-1761), who was secretary of the orphan chamber in Cape Town,⁶⁷ give a clear indication of his wealth, the number of slaves he had and how they were treated. His entry on 30 April 1756 informs us that he bought a young slave named Jason of Madagascar who was an accomplished cook and baker of all kinds of confectionary, including tarts.⁶⁸ It is interesting that the detail that is provided as the sole identifier of the slave points to the importance of his culinary skills. He also stands as one of the two male slaves mentioned in the Cape colonial kitchen, as this was exclusively a female domain.

Baderoon believes that “it is in the art and the daily, unremarked practices of cooking that some of the most radical possibilities of food as history can be seen.”⁶⁹ In this context, Jessamyn Neuhaus reminds us that the gendering of home cookery was something created in the twentieth-century, while nineteenth-century middle-class women were assigned the term “household managers” as they were managing the household staff instead of doing the work themselves.

Women, it was assumed, learned how to cook from their mothers (or more accurately, learned how to run a household, for most readers of early

65 R.C-H. Shell, *Children of Bondage. A social history of the slave society at the Cape of Good Hope, 1652-1838*, p. 313.

66 R.C-H. Shell, *Children of Bondage. A social history of the slave society at the Cape of Good Hope, 1652-1838*, p. 298.

67 *The Argus*, ‘Commemorating the first public library in South Africa’, 11 June 2016, <http://www.theheritageportal.co.za/article/commemorating-first-public-library-south-africa>, access: May 2020.

68 J.L.M. Franken, ‘ ‘n Kaapse Huishoue in die 18de Eeu uit Von Dessin Se Briefboek En Memoriaal’, in *Argief-jaarboek vir Suid Afrikaanse Geskiedenis* (3) Part 1, p. 60.

69 G. Baderoon, *Regarding Muslims from slavery to post-apartheid*, p. 65.

nineteenth-century cookbooks were elite and middle class women, who oversaw servants who did the cooking).⁷⁰

This is a critical observation as it points to a layering of the silencing in the hierarchy of the gendered kitchen. For example, the memoirs of Petrus Borchardus Borchards (1786-1871)⁷¹ describe the domestic affairs of a Stellenbosch household under the control of the lady of the house. She had servants who were taught the art of needlework and who fulfilled the necessary tasks of making sure bedrooms, nurseries, the pantry and the kitchen ran smoothly. While this could be construed as a romanticised view of women working side by side in harmony, the truth is that, from slavery to Apartheid, the kitchen has been a place of traumatic and stressful intimacy with power struggles that had serious cultural consequences that, according to Baderoon, denies the brutality of slavery.⁷²

For many, the heterogeneous cultures and ways of life that the slaves brought with them to the Cape made the possibility of forming a community and a compatible culture impossible. Historian Robert Shell (1949-2015) assesses the geographic origin of slaves at the Cape to be represented as 25.9% from India, 22.7% from Indonesia, 26.4% from East Africa and 25.1% from Madagascar.⁷³ According to historian Robert Ross slaves were brought here from the Indonesian Archipelago, Bengal, South India and Sri Lanka, Madagascar and the east African coast. Shell and Ross's assessments are slightly altered by Parbavati Rama in her thesis of 2005, where she ascertains that the majority of slaves were Cape-born or creole slaves (29.19%), followed by those from east Africa, west Africa and Madagascar (27.8%), India (25.6%) and the Indonesian Archipelago (16.83%).⁷⁴ This differential in statistics might be due to the time at which the calculations were made. The important issue is that the slaves at the Cape were comprised of a diverse origin.

70 C.R. Lobel, 'Reviewed Works: Manly Meals and Mom's Home Cooking: Cookbooks and Gender in Modern America by Jessamyn Neuhaus', *Reviews in American History* 33(2), 2005, p. 264.

71 P.B. Borchards, *An Autobiographical Memoir: Being a Plain Narrative of Occurrences from Early Life to Advanced Age, Chiefly Intended for His Children and Descendants, Countrymen and Friends*, 1861, pp. 196-197, https://play.google.com/books/reader?id=JcQNAAAQAAJ&hl=en_GB&pg=GBS.PA197, access: September 2020.

72 G. Baderoon, *Regarding Muslims, from slavery to post-apartheid*, p. 50.

73 R.C-H. Shell, *Children of Bondage. A Social History of the Slave Society at the Cape of Good Hope, 1652-1838*, p. 41.

74 P. Rama, *A Forgotten Diaspora: Forced Indian Migration to the Cape Colony, 1658 to 1834*, PhD Thesis, University of the Western Cape, 2015, p. 94.

Although it might be conceivable to search for, and find, pre-colonial links from the areas from which the slaves originated, Ross argues that they are too unsubstantiated to argue a case for common culture to have developed between the slaves. He vividly describes their situation as follows:

To cope with the problems of human existence – the explanation of misfortune, the construction of ritual, the grammar of relationships, the necessity for communication – the Cape slaves had to acculturate to each other as much as to the Europeans who were their masters.⁷⁵

This concoction of identities has violated history just as much as it was to the advantage of those in power. The house slaves had their designated duties to perform which included being nanny, cook, cleaner and confidante of the mistress.⁷⁶ There was apparently nothing strange about the way slaves communicated with each other, either sign language or by making odd noises to make themselves understood.⁷⁷ More recently, the cooks that Baderoon interviewed state they could learn recipes by staring back, looking and observing, a technique referred to earlier that they call “stealing with the eye.”⁷⁸ The generalisation and creolization of Dutch in the early days of the Colony emerged from domestic contact between slaves and servants, whether imported, creole or indigenous.

These slaves initially spoke Malayo-Portuguese, but in the late eighteenth century a new language developed in the true creole sense of the word and was sometimes referred to as “kitchen Dutch”.⁷⁹ This evolved into the most dominant identity and language that served the Dutch, English, French, Germans and *Vryswarten* (Free Blacks⁸⁰). The convolution of early Cape culture was partly influenced by the ever-changing oceanic slave trade and resulted in the forging of a system to communicate with each other, a system that the slave

75 R. Ross, *Cape of Torments, Slavery and Resistance in South Africa*, p. 14.

76 H. Giliomee, ‘Allowed such a state freedom: Women and gender relations in the Afrikaner community before enfranchisement in 1930’, *New Contree* 59, 2010, p. 45.

77 R.C-H. Shell, ‘The Tower of Babel: The Slave Trade and Creolization at the Cape, 1652-1834’, in E.A. Eldridge and F. Morton (eds), *Slavery in South Africa: Captive Labor on The Dutch Frontier*. p. 28.

78 G. Baderoon, *Regarding Muslims, from slavery to post-apartheid* p. 5.

79 R.C-H. Shell, ‘The Tower of Babel: The Slave Trade and Creolization at the Cape, 1652-1834’, in E.A. Eldridge and F. Morton (eds), *Slavery in South Africa: Captive Labor on The Dutch Frontier*. p. 29.

80 Free Blacks were a sub-group of burghers who originated from the slave population where some were former political exiles and others were Chinese convicts. They were the poorest of all slave owners and their exact legal status is still disputed by historians. R.C-H. Shell, *Children of Bondage. A social history of the slave society at the Cape of Good Hope, 1652-1838*, p. xxxii.

owners adhered to and adopted to later call their own. This was the Afrikaans language, which according to Shell:

... can be shown to have originated from the richly textured, syncretistic, domestic creole culture of the Cape's slave population and in particular from the crucible of colonial identities – the kitchen.⁸¹

As indicated the expectation created by the early colonial system was that settler women were assumed to manage the household, and by implication also the kitchen space, where they were, more often than not, assisted by enslaved and indentured people. As in other colonised places, the colonists' dependence on local labour, ingredients and methods necessitated compromise and cooperation between the classes.⁸² This, according to Chris Eason, undoubtedly produced a:

... cuisine of acculturation: British colonists adopting ingredients and cooking techniques from the indigenous population as well as from earlier generations of European settlers and the Malay and Indian slaves they imported.⁸³

An early source that gives insight into the running of a typical privileged farmstead is the above-mentioned *Hilda's Diary of a Cape Housekeeper*, published in 1902, by Hildagonda Duckitt (1839-1905). This chronicles the daily events and monthly work in a Cape household. She writes in her introduction that she:

... shall be glad indeed if what I have learnt by life long experience and experiment should lighten the labour of those beginning the responsibilities of housekeeping in our dear old Colony, under conditions new and strange to them.⁸⁴

Duckitt shares her romantic version of the relationships between mistress and servants under colonial rule. Many of the men and women were indentured to work on the farms and, according to her, they made “excellent servants”.⁸⁵ They had a man cook, who was a “rescued slave”, and who was responsible for baking on Tuesdays and Fridays. The

81 R.C-H. Shell, 'The Tower of Babel: The Slave Trade and Creolization at the Cape, 1652-1834', in E.A. Eldridge and F. Morton (eds), *Slavery in South Africa: Captive Labor on The Dutch Frontier*. p. 11.

82 C.Y. Leong-Salobir, *Food Culture in Colonial Asia: A Taste of Empire*, p. 1.

83 A.R. Barnes, *Where the Lion Roars. An African Colonial Cookery Book*, p. 5.

84 H.J. Duckitt, *Hilda's Diary of a Cape Housekeeper*, Preface.

85 H.J. Duckitt, *Hilda's Diary of a Cape Housekeeper*, p. 6.

daughters of the house had to supervise the dairy and were assisted by a “very capable coloured woman”.⁸⁶ When they travelled for their annual Christmas holiday they were accompanied by a cook, the housemaid and servants who carried water and brought wood.⁸⁷ It appears from her diary that they trained young servants to help the others. They taught them how to read and write and work, so that “life may go on”.⁸⁸

The references to kitchens – and more broadly, households – in the early Colonial period resembles the real picture of the advancing authoritarian and ranked society that had emerged at the Cape and which would spread northwards and persist well into the twentieth-century. The public sphere, in contrast to the household scenario, has been written about in traditional histories to the detriment of the domestic environment, erroneously sketching a romanticised version of reality. Shell makes the case that research should shift from interclass relationships to the relationships on a personal level, being “those in the household”⁸⁹. Moreover, too many studies of slave societies still present slavery as static, and much of the literature focuses on the introduction and termination of the slave system. Yet, very little is written on the changes within slave societies. Shell declares that changes during the seventeenth, eighteenth and nineteenth centuries need to be incorporated for history to be meaningful and not “frozen in time”.⁹⁰

3.5 GENDER AND THE ALTERNATIVE ARCHIVE

The link between food, memory, identity and culture is therefore evident and it has also been shown that in the South African context, like elsewhere, and for a considerable time, women have acted as the role player primarily, but customarily silently, responsible for the household. This they did from a privileged position as mistress and housewife, or as unacknowledged domestic worker. Regardless of women’s social status, or lack thereof, their reality remained one that has been dominated by an overtly patriarchal system that

86 H.J. Duckitt, *Hilda’s Diary of a Cape Housekeeper*, p. 9.

87 H.J. Duckitt, *Hilda’s Diary of a Cape Housekeeper*, p. 13.

88 H.J. Duckitt, *Hilda’s Diary of a Cape Housekeeper*, p. 24.

89 R.C-H. Shell, *Children of Bondage. A social history of the slave society at the Cape of Good Hope, 1652-1838*, p. xxx.

90 R.C-H. Shell, *Children of Bondage. A social history of the slave society at the Cape of Good Hope, 1652-1838*, p. xxx.

relegated them to the kitchen, where aspects of their everyday existence remained muted outside of their private domain and therefore absent from the archive and silent in the sanctioned records of their communities.

To address this shortcoming, it has been suggested that women's histories may be discovered through interdisciplinarity in places other than the obvious record.⁹¹ This would allow them to enhance the reading of official histories by the addition of their personal experiences through oral accounts, autobiographies and ethnographies.⁹² Proponents of this more inclusive method of alternative archives suggest alternative means of record-keeping that facilitate histories that are cognisant of a multi-cultural and boundaryless world. Jeannette Bastian therefore advocates for the reinterpretation of the structure and substance of the archive to include a complex variety of human activities, including writing diaries, sending memos, cooking a local dish or celebrating a public holiday.⁹³ The role of cookbooks, women in the kitchen and their relationship with the rest of the community is therefore now being examined.⁹⁴ Appadurai believes that the mere existence of cookbooks represents an attempt to standardise the management of the kitchen and the traditions of the journey from kitchen to table. He also explains that: "Language and literacy, cities and ethnicity, women and domesticity, all are examples of issues that lie behind these cookbooks."⁹⁵

In this approach the contribution of context is paramount to frame the reading of such sources to include all voices and records.⁹⁶ In the light of this Burton questions the nature of an archive and proposes that, beyond its conventional application of producing documents to be read for its disciplinary meaning, it should also be understood:

... to indicate that a text like the 'Family History' is itself an enduring site of historical evidence and historiographical opportunity in and for the present...

91 K. Springer, 'Unexpected: Women sources, and histories', *Journal of Women's History* 16(4), 2004, p. 28.

92 A. Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive. Women Writing House, Home and History in Late Colonial India*, p. 21.

93 J.A. Bastian, 'Reading Colonial Records Through an Archival Lens: The Provenance of Place, Space and Creation', *Archival Science* 6, 2006, pp. 278-281.

94 H. Le Dantec-Lowry, 'Reading Women's Lives in Cookbooks and Other Culinary Writings: A Critical Essay', *Revue Française d'études américaines*, 116(2), 2008, p. 100.

95 A. Appadurai, 'How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India.' *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30(1), 1988, p. 3.

96 J.A. Bastian, 'Reading Colonial Records Through an Archival Lens: The Provenance of Place, Space and Creation', *Archival Science* 6, 2006, pp. 283-284.

in addition to serving as evidence of individual lives, the memories of home that each woman enshrined in narrative act – for us – as an archive from which a variety of counter histories of colonial modernity can be discerned.⁹⁷

If this alternative archive, proposed by Burton, reflects the various roles of women, it should also explicate their roles as, amongst others, carers and cooks, and by definition embrace the documents that represent aspects of routine domesticity in whatever format they exist. These will include family manuscripts and collections of recipes that were handed down from mothers to daughters. This transmission within the home, where generations of women have taught and demonstrated their family recipes and kitchen lore to the next generation, has been frequently documented.⁹⁸ Besides, women have, for the longest time, exchanged recipes in various formats and these exchanges form the essential process that underlies the production of cookbooks.⁹⁹ Utsa Ray reminds us that: “The innumerable recipes that women produced cannot be explained away as being engendered by the hand of patriarchy.”¹⁰⁰

Historians only recently began to pay attention to women’s history through the lens of the connections between women in the kitchen and their community.¹⁰¹ As Leong-Salobir states: “... food carried the flavour of memory, forging material continuities between past and present and connecting the personal to the collective”.¹⁰²

In *Writing Food History – A Global Perspective*, Scholliers and Claflin included contributions from a variety of historians, but also from contributors who stand outside academia. They found that studies in food and food history benefit from contributions of

97 A. Burton, *Dwelling in the Archive. Women Writing House, Home and History in Late Colonial India*, p. 5.

98 See, for instance: Department of Agriculture, *Kos en Kookkuns: Die Huisvrou se Gids*, 1947, Preface; J.C. Pretorius, *Die Afrikanervrou as Kultuurdraer en Kultuurskepper tot 1806*, DPhil thesis, University of Pretoria, 1977, p. 76; G. Baderoon, ‘Everybody’s mother was a good cook: meanings of food in Muslim cooking’, *Agenda* 51, 2002, pp. 4-15; G. Vahed and T. Waetjen, *Gender, Modernity and Indian Delights: The Women’s Cultural Group of Durban 1954-2010*, p.109; Also refer to the numerous instances mentioned in T. Smith, *District Six Huis Kombuis: Food and Memory cookbook*; E. du Toit, 2019. *Share: A century of South African community recipes*, pp. 7-9.

99 A. Appadurai, ‘How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India’, *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 30(1), 1988, pp. 5-7.

100 U. Ray, *Culture of food in Colonial Bengal*. PhD Thesis, Pennsylvania State University, 2009, p. 111.

101 H. Le Dantec-Lowry, ‘Reading Women’s Lives in Cookbooks and Other Culinary Writings: A Critical Essay’, *Revue Française d’études américaines* 116(2), 2008, p. 100.

102 C.Y. Leong-Salobir, ‘Spreading the word: using cookbooks and colonial memoirs to examine the foodways of British Colonials in Asia, 1850-1900’, in C. Helstosky (ed.), *The Routledge History of Food*, p. 155.

merit, regardless of whether it originated within the academy or not.¹⁰³ This normative approach contradicts those of a previous generation of food historians who exclusively considered academic sources, a case in point being the controversial study on *Die geskiedenis van Boerekos 1652-1806* by Claassens.¹⁰⁴

When Baderoon states that we find “traces of history”¹⁰⁵ in our favourite dishes, the following questions arise: Where will we find the recipes for these favourite dishes? Where is this dish from? Who first prepared it? What will inform the ingredients and the methods of preparation they require? How should they be served? What nuances and narratives do these dishes represent and what meaning do they embody to those who prepare and ultimately partake of them? A variety of sources, many of which fall outside the definition of the traditional, formal archive, will be examined in an effort to address these and other questions about the milk tart. This includes personal records like memoirs, handwritten manuscripts and correspondence, anecdotal and oral accounts, travelogues, printed material like household guides, recipe books, community forums and publications, popular media including magazines, periodicals and newspapers, and literature. This list would be incomplete if it did not take account of the evolving format of our day-to-day archives and should therefore include various formats of social and electronic media, blogs and vlogs.

3.6 CONCLUSION

The fact that women were left out of history books is not something that can be pardoned, but as Giliomee says: “To understand is not necessarily to pardon, but there is no harm in trying to understand.”¹⁰⁶ – put differently one could try to understand, which should extend to trying not to forget. It is that empathy that is now put to work to explain, research and understand women’s history through all aspects of their lives, even their recipe manuscripts,

103 P. Scholliers and K.W. Claflin, ‘Introduction. Surveying Global Food Historiography’, in K.W. Claflin and P. Scholliers (eds), *Writing Food History – A Global perspective*, p. 5.

104 H.W. Claassens, *Die Geskiedenis van Boerekos 1652-1806*, DPhil Thesis, University of Pretoria. Journalists, like Johan Liebenberg, social media participants and radio stations all commented on the conclusions reached in her research.

105 G. Baderoon, ‘Everybody’s mother was a good cook: meanings of food in Muslim cooking’, *Agenda* 51, 2002, p. 14.

106 H. Giliomee, *The Afrikaners – Biography of a people*, p. xiii.

books and oral transmissions of recipes. It is also a reality that the archive is changing and that many women no longer have family recipe manuscripts because the internet of things and search engines make it possible to source and collect recipes online. It is therefore, now more than ever, important to document women's past and to connect the dots when it comes to the history of their everyday lives. Informal and nonacademic sources (writings by chefs, restaurateurs, cookbook writers and even hostesses)¹⁰⁷ are important informants for those who study history and culture. This chapter showed how different sources, including the archive that makes women's voices heard and documents their daily lives as carers, cooks or household managers, of low or high social standing, are validated as sources for this research. In the following chapter sources that can be classified as traditional recipe and cookbooks, mostly written by men for male chefs in a mostly professional world, are investigated for their historical contribution to aid our understanding of the history of the custard, and ultimately, the milk tart.

107 M. Robins, *The Cape Cookbook*, Preface.

IV

CHAPTER 4: MILK TART THROUGH THE AGES

Every translation is by its nature partly interpretation.¹

4.1 INTRODUCTION

According to sociologist and anthropologist Jack Goody (1919-2005) the collection of recipes for professional kitchens (as opposed to domestic or more informal settings for food preparation) developed in countries with long written traditions. He also claims that:

... with the development of a written record of cuisine which made the cumulative increase of knowledge possible, man has answered the need for an authentic and unique body of information, of a kind unavailable, at least in tangible form, to societies still clinging to oral traditions.²

Additionally, Massimo Montanari explains that Europe serves as an example of this practice as most of the documented recipes from this continent, where there is a long-standing written tradition, were penned for and about the elite of the time. Accordingly, the poor and illiterate – who relied on oral transmission of knowledge – were ignored.³ This, as indicated in the methodology in Chapter 1, remains a concern for research into food history as one

1 B. Flower & E. Rosenbaum, *The Roman Cookery Book, a critical translation of the Art Of Cooking by Apicius*, p. 18.

2 M. Montanari, *Food is Culture*, p. 35.

3 M. Montanari, *Food is Culture*, p. 36.

has to keep in mind that there are also hidden or invisible participants who should not be overlooked for their possible contribution to our understandings of food history.

Taking this into account, this chapter traces recipes for custard tarts and milky puddings, the forerunners of the milk tart, through the ages and across several continents. As only written accounts could be accessed for this research the researcher, in some instances, had no choice but to rely on translations of original manuscripts, and in other instances on second or third tier interpretations of translations, as pointed out in the opening quotation of this chapter taken from Barbara Flower and Elizabeth Rosenbaum. These recipes, in so far as they still exist and could be traced, are therefore used as the written and alternative archive for the research in this chapter. For the most part very little, if any, information was available about the authors of the recipes and the people who prepared the dishes they describe. In response to this lack of contextual information the researcher had to depend on clues that include aspects of language, place, culture and religion, ingredients and techniques to frame an understanding of the text.

4.2 COMPILATIONS AND ANTHOLOGIES

As general references, compilations and anthologies on gastronomic knowledge contribute to our understanding of some of the origins and perceptions of the milk tart and its antecedents. These sources deal with recipes and ingredients in an explanatory manner and with an encyclopaedic approach that cover a wide variety of ingredients and cookery methods, thus not confining themselves to singular points of view. A number of contemporary compilations and anthologies were therefore consulted on tarts, tortes, flans, fillings and crusts. The search was extended to regional and cultural compendia as well as exemplary household guides from the nineteenth century.

Mrs Beeton's Household Management, authored by Isabella Beeton (1836-1865) and first published in 1861, is a voluminous food and household encyclopaedia intended to assist a housewife in early Victorian Britain and beyond to "... be thoroughly acquainted with the theory and practice of cookery, as well as be perfectly conversant with all the other arts of

making and keeping a comfortable home”.⁴ It also provides insight into social conventions of the mid-nineteenth century. Several options for custard are given, including baked custard (as a single dish or baked in separate moulds) where bitter almonds may be substituted with lemon rind,⁵ boiled custard pudding flavoured with cinnamon,⁶ vanilla custard sauce to serve with puddings,⁷ boiled custards flavoured with laurel leaves, lemon rind or vanilla and served in glasses.⁸ The recipe for *Darioles A La Vanille*, sub-titled ‘Sweet entremets’,⁹ is essentially a recipe for small milk tarts. The *dariole* moulds are lined with puff pastry, the custard – flavoured with vanilla, lemon, cinnamon or almonds – is poured into the pastry-lined mould and baked in a “good oven”. Once baked they are removed from the moulds, sprinkled with sugar and served.

The pioneer of American food writing, Fannie Farmer (1857-1915), published *The Boston Cooking-School Cook Book* in 1896.¹⁰ The book subsequently became known as *The Fannie Farmer Cookbook*.¹¹ This copious work contains everything there was to know about American cooking. It is interesting to note that the publication of the original *Fannie Farmer cookbook* in 1896 falls within the same timeframe of the publication of the first printed South African cookbooks, which will be discussed in Chapter 5. There are several custard dessert recipes in this book and one also has to be aware of the fact that, in American English, “cream” could also mean “custard” and “pie” could mean “tart”. Farmer writes: “Imagine a world without creamy custards, sweet soufflés, rich creams, icy sherbets, simple puddings – what joy would we lose.”¹²

She discusses different kinds of custards and refers to baked custard in cups as “one of the most familiar homy American desserts.”¹³ “Soft custard” or “boiled custard” is a runny custard mostly used as sauce for fruit desserts and other puddings. “English custard” (*crème*

4 I. Beeton, *Mrs Beeton's Household Management*, Preface.

5 I. Beeton, *Mrs Beeton's Household Management*, p. 615.

6 I. Beeton, *Mrs Beeton's Household Management*, p. 615.

7 I. Beeton, *Mrs Beeton's Household Management*, p. 653.

8 I. Beeton, *Mrs Beeton's Household Management*, pp. 681-682.

9 I. Beeton, *Mrs Beeton's Household Management*, p. 683. An “entremets” is a small dish served between courses.

10 F.M. Farmer, *Boston Cooking-School Cook Book*. At the time she was the principal of the cooking school.

11 M. Cunninham, *The Fannie Farmer Cookbook*, 13th revised edition, 1994. This is the edition in the researcher's collection.

12 M. Cunninham, *The Fannie Farmer Cookbook*, p. 933.

13 M. Cunninham, *The Fannie Farmer Cookbook*, p. 934.

Anglaise) is a richer custard made with egg yolks rather than whole egg, rendering a creamier result. This custard is also used as a base recipe for other desserts like “Bavarian Cream”. “Blancmange” (after the French term – literally ‘white food’¹⁴) is also listed under custards. This is the simplest form of custard base thickened with a starch.

A most peculiar recipe in this work is called “Slipped Custard Pie”. Here the pie base is pre-baked and the vanilla-flavoured custard is baked separately in another pan of exactly the same size and height of the pan used for the pie base. The custard is then baked *bain-marie*-style (in a water bath for gentler baking) until just set. It is chilled until needed. Just before serving, the fragile custard is gently removed from its pan and slipped carefully into the pie base.¹⁵ Reference is also made to a “Basic Cream Filling”¹⁶ (*crème pâtissière*) or confectioner’s custard that is used to fill cream puffs, pies and other pastries. *Crème brûlée* is mentioned with a note attached that it is a very popular recipe.¹⁷ The recipe for “Cream Pie” requires a pre-baked tart pastry shell; the custard (with similar ingredients to the milk tart and also flavoured with vanilla) is cooked on the stove and once it has thickened it is poured into the base and refrigerated.¹⁸ The recipe for “Baked Custard” stands out for its close resemblance to the milk tart. It was traditionally served in brown cups and is described as a “nourishing and comforting dish”. The custard is made with both egg yolks and whole eggs, milk, sugar, vanilla and a sprinkling of nutmeg.¹⁹ Although many editions of the book now exist, the recipes for “boiled custard”,²⁰ “baked custard”,²¹ “custard soufflé”²² and “custard pie” topped with a sprinkling of nutmeg²³ correspond with those in the original edition.

The Penguin Companion to Food explains that the French word *crème* refers to cream as well as custard. It is important to note that, in this context, custard could be sweet or

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- 14 M. Cunninham, *The Fannie Farmer Cookbook* 13th revised edition, p. 934. It has to be noted that Blancmange can also be a savoury dish where the custard is used as a binding agent.
 - 15 M. Cunninham, *The Fannie Farmer Cookbook* 13th revised edition, p. 918.
 - 16 M. Cunninham, *The Fannie Farmer Cookbook* 13th revised edition, pp. 847-848.
 - 17 M. Cunninham, *The Fannie Farmer Cookbook* 13th revised edition, p. 942.
 - 18 M. Cunninham, *The Fannie Farmer Cookbook* 13th revised edition, pp. 918-919.
 - 19 M. Cunninham, *The Fannie Farmer Cookbook* 13th revised edition, pp. 940-941.
 - 20 F.M. Farmer, *Boston Cooking-School Cook Book*, pp. 345-346.
 - 21 F.M. Farmer, *Boston Cooking-School Cook Book*, pp. 347-348.
 - 22 F.M. Farmer, *Boston Cooking-School Cook Book*, p. 332.
 - 23 F.M. Farmer, *Boston Cooking-School Cook Book*, p. 391.

savoury: in “quiche Lorraine” the custard is a savoury binding agent, while it finds sweet versions in *crème pâtisserie*²⁴ and *crème brûlée*.²⁵ Custard was widely used as a binding agent for tarts and flans during the Middle Ages and the word relates to “crustade” (French: *croustade*) that refers to a crust or a tart with a crust.²⁶ During this time custards were usually baked when the oven had cooled a little after the bread had been baked. It moved to a small (and cooler) side oven towards the end of the Middle Ages and subsequently to the gentler heat of a chafing dish on coals.²⁷

The Penguin Companion describes flan two-fold: first, the English flan is described as “an open pastry or sponge case containing a (sweet or savoury) filling”.²⁸ Short crust pastry is typically used and could be blind baked before a hot filling is poured into it. Alternatively, it could be baked with the filling. A sweet flan would normally contain a custard filling. Second, in France the technique may include the English recipe, as explained above, or it is a sweet custard baked in a mould until it is set before it is served in the mould or turned out. The old French word *flaon* derived from the Latin *flado* forms the base for the term meaning custard. From this base developed the words *flathon* and *flawn* which later became “flan”. Flan is a standard dessert in Spain, Portugal and Mexico.²⁹

The *New Concise Larousse Gastronomique*³⁰ (first published in 2007) describes different kinds of sweet³¹ and savoury custards, most of which have variations. Sweet custards are divided into two categories, namely pouring custard with a sauce-like consistency, and a baked or set custard.³² In the 2009 edition,³³ a Parisian custard tart was added that is similar to that for a *Flan à la Parisienne* found in *The Art of French Baking* (first published in

24 A. Davidson, *The Penguin Companion to Food*, pp. 272-273. The French term for confectioner’s custard to which a little flour is added as this custard is used as fillings for profiteroles and cakes.

25 A. Davidson, *The Penguin Companion to Food*, p. 272. The French term for an enriched baked custard as cream is used instead of milk.

26 A. Davidson, *The Penguin Companion to Food*, pp. 271, 285.

27 A. Davidson, *The Penguin Companion to Food*, p. 286.

28 A. Davidson, *The Penguin Companion to Food*, p. 365.

29 A. Davidson, *The Penguin Companion to Food*, p. 365.

30 J. Robuchon, *New Concise Larousse Gastronomique*, 2007, pp. 392-395, 494, 1167-1169.

31 These include *crème Anglaise* (a sauce), *crème pâtisserie*, sabayon (a mousse-like variation), baked custard and *crème brûlée*, *crème caramel* and fried custard (fritters). J. Robuchon, *New Concise Larousse Gastronomique*, pp. 392-395.

32 J. Robuchon, *New Concise Larousse Gastronomique*, p. 392.

33 Paul Bocuse Institute, *New Concise Larousse Gastronomique*, p. 44.

1938) by food writer and lecturer Ginette Mathiot (1907-1998).³⁴ Both of these recipes closely resemble that of a crustless milk tart.

The Culinary Institute of America's *Baking & Pastry, Mastering the Art and Craft* (2009) states that its audience is "pastry professionals and serious home bakers".³⁵ The book is also prescribed for students enrolled in the Culinary Institute. It describes a basic custard, consisting of eggs, milk or cream and sugar, that is baked until set. It also categorises baked custards as either cold or warm. For the cold baked custard all ingredients are blended together, poured into the pastry base and baked. For the warm baked custard milk or cream is heated and infused with spices or vanilla beans, which is most popular. The eggs and sugar are then added and stirred until the mixture has thickened. It is strained before being poured into the mould to be baked in a water bath,³⁶ similar to the process described for a "Slipped Custard Pie" in *The Fannie Farmer Cookbook*. A recipe is given for a cinnamon flavoured *crème brûlée*³⁷ and a "Vanilla Cream Pie". The latter has exactly the same ingredients as a milk tart.³⁸

Gil Marks's *Encyclopaedia of Jewish Food* focuses its discussion on custard under that of the flan, which is described as a baked custard. It provides an outline of the history of the dish, from Roman through Medieval times. He explains that: "Unlike the English, who used the word custard, most other Europeans never developed a specific word for the dish. Early sweet custards were typically flavored with wine, brandy, or spices...".³⁹ Specific reference is made to a delicate and subtly sweet *leche flan* (milk custard) that is prepared with eggs, sugar and cream and baked in an earthenware dish, like its Roman predecessor that will be discussed later in this chapter. This dish is said to have originated in the Iberian peninsula during Medieval times when that region was under Arab rule.⁴⁰ Marks gives a recipe for "Sephardic baked *matza*⁴¹ custard", originating from the Hispanic Jewish community, that

34 G. Mathiot, *The Art of French Baking*, p. 255. This book originated from *Je sais Faire la Pâtisserie* (I know how to make pastries).

35 Culinary Institute of America, *Baking and Pastry, Mastering the Art and Craft*, p. viii.

36 Culinary Institute of America, *Baking and Pastry, Mastering the Art and Craft*, pp. 352-353.

37 Culinary Institute of America, *Baking and Pastry, Mastering the Art and Craft*, p. 361.

38 Culinary Institute of America, *Baking and Pastry, Mastering the Art and Craft*, p. 526.

39 G. Marks, *Encyclopaedia of Jewish Food*, 2010, pp. 201-202.

40 G. Marks, *Encyclopaedia of Jewish Food*, 2010, p. 201.

41 *Matza* or *matzo*, a traditional Jewish unleavened flatbread, are crushed and used instead of flour in this recipe.

is baked *bain-marie*-style and seems very similar to a crustless milk tart. It is made with eggs, milk, cream, vanilla and sprinkled with cinnamon.⁴²

India: The Cookbook, is the result of twenty years of research into family recipes from all the regions of the Indian subcontinent by food historian Professor Pushpesh Pant.⁴³ He explains that Indian food intermixes many influences, including those from central and southeast Asia and Turkey, and also discusses the contribution of Europeans, who introduced ingredients and techniques that are now widely used in conjunction with native foods.⁴⁴ He states that tribal recipes “...are rarely written down and have been blended and incorporated into the various local cuisines of India over many years. He also notes that it is hard to pinpoint their origins precisely...”⁴⁵ Pant includes many recipes for puddings prepared with rice, milk and almond milk and a variety of spices from regions like West Bengal, Punjab, Delhi and Awad. A recipe worth mentioning is that of the sweet porridge-like cooked dessert from Hyderabad, *gil e Behisht* (milky clay of paradise), which is prepared with milk, milk solids, ghee, rice flour and flavoured with cardamom and saffron.⁴⁶ It should be noted that the reference to a porridge consistency is not unlike that of a custard and that the filling of a milk tart is still often referred to as the milk tart porridge in South African kitchens.

Moroccan rice pudding, as described in Paula Wolfert’s *The Food of Morocco*,⁴⁷ shows many similarities to the sweet dishes from India where rice is the thickening agent and the end product also has a porridge-like consistency. It is prepared with rice, almonds, sugar, cinnamon, butter, milk and flavoured with orange flower water and almond extract. Wolfert describes a Marrakesh speciality, “sweet *bastila*⁴⁸ with milk and almonds”, where the custard-like sauce corresponds with a milk tart porridge, except that no eggs are used, and the sauce is layered with fried sheets of thin pastry, like phyllo pastry. The list of ingredients is similar to that of milk tart and includes almonds, sugar, cinnamon, cornflour, milk and a

42 G. Marks, *Encyclopaedia of Jewish Food*, 2010, p. 202.

43 P. Pant, *India: The Cookbook*, 2010.

44 P. Pant, *India: The Cookbook*, 2010, p. 9.

45 P. Pant, *India: The Cookbook*, 2010, p. 24.

46 P. Pant, *India: The Cookbook*, 2010, p. 692.

47 P. Wolfert, *The Food of Morocco*, p. 451.

48 *Bastila*, also written as *b’stilla*, typically refers to a dish like a pie in Arab speaking North Africa.

pinch of salt while the flavouring agents are either rose water or orange flower water.⁴⁹ A variation, named “sweet *bastila* with pastry cream”, uses eggs, butter and cream, which renders a thicker consistency, with vanilla.⁵⁰

These descriptions contribute to our understanding of the context of sweet dishes and the role of crusts and custards across the globe, both of which are essential components of a milk tart. It is therefore necessary to search for these elements in the antique texts, manuscripts and recipe books so as to establish possible links with the South African milk tart and its origins.

4.3 COOKERY BOOKS AS SOURCES THROUGH THE AGES

4.3.1 Before the Tenth Century CE

While the occupation of a professional chef or cook is often considered to be a recent one, Robert I. Curtis believes that a professional life in the culinary arts is firmly rooted in Antiquity. He argues that there were probably professional chefs working in Ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt, but very little is known about them or their place of work.⁵¹ Veronica Grimm points out that, although the main sources about customs of the ancient classical world are literary, archaeological sources help to inform us on auxiliary aspects of food habits such as the layout of kitchens, the tools used, and animal bone fragments found around the villages or settlements.⁵² She also points to the shortcomings in literature, which she regards as selective and thus resulting in a lack of evidence of the flavours, methods and aromas used by the ancient cooks.⁵³

Fortunately, a more detailed account is available of some of the Greco-Roman culinary professionals and the way their kitchens were managed. The work of cooks and bakers, along with that of musicians, were referred to as *artes vulgares* (ordinary arts) and while a

49 P. Wolfert, *The Food of Morocco*, p. 477.

50 P. Wolfert, *The Food of Morocco*, p. 478.

51 R.I. Curtis, ‘Professional Cooking, Kitchens, and Service Work’, in Erdkamp (ed.), *A Cultural history of Food in Antiquity*, vol 1, in F. Parasecoli and P. Scolliers, *A Cultural History of Food*, 6 volumes, p. 113.

52 V. Grimm, ‘The Good Things That Lay at Hand’ in P. Freedman (ed.), *Food the History of Taste*, pp. 69-70.

53 V. Grimm, ‘The Good Things That Lay at Hand’ in P. Freedman (ed.), *Food the History of Taste*, p. 71.

good cook could demand a large sum for his services, he remained a servant and subject to punishment like other slaves. “Roman cooks received on-the-job training as fellow slaves or as slaves of slave or freedman cooks.”⁵⁴ The Roman cook supervised assistants who were assigned special duties in the kitchen, but just like his Greek equivalent, he was expected to not only be knowledgeable on food preparation, spices, cooking and utensils, but also the whims of his master. A wealthy master would own several slaves who specialised in different areas of kitchen work, including bakers, a variety of pastry cooks and sausage makers.⁵⁵

The only cookery book that supposedly survived from all the books written between the first and third centuries is the already discussed *De re coquinaria* (The art of cooking) supposedly written by M. Gavius Apicius who lived during the reign of the Emperor Tiberius (14-37 CE). As indicated, it is speculated that this collection of recipes were not in general circulation during the lifetime of Apicius and that they might have been collected during the third century.⁵⁶ This notion is supported by the fact that the book was not written in classical Latin, but rather in different styles of Latin.⁵⁷ This differentiation in the use of vocabulary and grammatical forms supports the argument for multiple authors.⁵⁸ In certain circles it is even believed that Apicius’ contribution to the book was minimal.⁵⁹ Grainger ascribes the work to nameless slave-cooks and argues that, unlike other classical texts such as works of history and poetry, collections like this book evolved over time and *in situ*. It is a known fact that, in Rome, cooking was a slave’s duty,⁶⁰ and Grainger therefore states that: “We should celebrate the fact that this is a slave text, perhaps the only one we have, and for that reason alone it is a remarkable survival.”⁶¹

54 R.I. Curtis, ‘Professional Cooking, Kitchens, and Service Work’, in Erdkamp (ed.), *A Cultural history of Food in Antiquity*, vol 1, in F. Parasecoli and P. Scolliers, *A Cultural History of Food*, 6 volumes, p. 124.

55 R.I. Curtis, ‘Professional Cooking, Kitchens, and Service Work’, in Erdkamp (ed.), *A Cultural history of Food in Antiquity*, vol 1, in F. Parasecoli and P. Scolliers, *A Cultural History of Food*, 6 volumes, p. 124, 132.

56 Apicius, *De Re Coquinaria*, translated and edited by J.D. Vehling and published digitally as Project Gutenberg’s *Cooking and Dining in Imperial Rome*, E-book: 29728, no page no. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/29728/>, access: March 2020.

57 B. Flower & E. Rosenbaum, *The Roman Cookery Book, a critical translation of the Art of Cooking by Apicius*, p. 12.

58 S. Grainger, ‘The Myth of Apicius’, *Gastronomica: The Journal of Critical Food Studies* 7(2), 2007, p. 75.

59 S. Grainger, ‘The Myth of Apicius’, *Gastronomica: The Journal of Critical Food Studies* 7(2), 2007, p. 72.

60 P. Faas, *Around the Roman Table*, p. 125.

61 S. Grainger, ‘The Myth of Apicius’, *Gastronomica: The Journal of Critical Food Studies* 7(2), 2007, p. 77.

A recipe for something similar to a milk tart filling appears in this work as “Tyropatinam” (milk and egg sweet).⁶² It calls for milk sweetened to taste with honey. Eggs were then beaten into the sweetened milk before the mixture was strained into an earthenware dish and cooked over a slow fire in a water bath.⁶³ When set, it was sprinkled with pepper and served. The recipe, for which no author or date is known, appears under the section for *Dulcia Domestica* (home-made sweets). The Roman matron did not cook. In all other countries and provinces, a women’s place was in the kitchen, but in Rome cooking was a male slave’s job. In theatrical plays most cooks are male, and we know Joseph Vehling contextualises this by noting that the occupation of *Dulciarius* (sweet maker) was a highly skilled one that, at the time, was outsourced to professional bakers and confectioners.⁶⁴

The sources cited above make it clear that custard topped with a flavouring agent already existed around two thousand years ago, as did the method of using gentler heat in the form of a water bath. It is also apparent that pastry chefs, as we know them today, were then already a designated group and on the rise.

4.3.2 The Tenth to the Fourteenth Centuries CE

The earliest known cookbook in Arabic dates from the tenth century and was titled *Kitāb al-Tabīkh*⁶⁵ (The Book of Dishes) by Ibn Sayyār al-Warrāq, an author from Baghdad.⁶⁶ Some consider it to be the earliest cookery book handed to us from the Middle Ages in any language.⁶⁷ It comprised of 132 chapters and contained 615 recipes that were compiled by drawing on more than twenty cookbooks that were written or commissioned by caliphs,

62 Apicius, 2009, *De Re Coquinaria*, translated and edited by J.D. Vehling and published digitally as Project Gutenberg’s *Cooking and Dining in Imperial Rome*, E-book 29728, Recipe 301, no page no. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/29728/>, access: March 2020.

63 H. McGee, *On Food and Cooking: The Science and Lore of the Kitchen*, p. 93, refers to the gentle heat required to prevent overcooked or curdled custards. He reasons that: “The gentler these dishes are heated, the greater the safety margin between thickening and curdling.”

64 Apicius, 2009, *De Re Coquinaria*, translated and edited by J.D. Vehling and published digitally as Project Gutenberg’s *Cooking and Dining in Imperial Rome*. E-book 29728, note to heading number 294, no page no. Internet: <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/29728/>, access: March 2020.

65 Another notable book with the same title, dating from 1226, was written by Muhammad bin al Hasan bin Muhammad bin al-Karīm al-Baghdadi (d. 1239) and famously translated to English by A.J. Arberry in 1939. See N. Nasrallah. *Annals of the Caliph’s Kitchens - Ibn Sayyār al- Warrāq’s Tenth century Baghdadi Cookbook*, p. 1.

66 N. Nasrallah. *Annals of the Caliph’s Kitchens - Ibn Sayyār al- Warrāq’s Tenth century Baghdadi Cookbook*, 2007.

67 H.D. Miller. ‘The pleasures of consumption – The Birth of Medieval Islamic cuisine’ in P. Freedman (ed.), *Food the History of Taste*, p. 148.

princes, physicians, politicians, literary figures or other professionals.⁶⁸ Nawal Nasrallah, the scholar who translated the seminal work into English, writes:

Its wealth of medieval recipes is an obvious merit, but so are its citations of an extensive number of culinary sources none of which has survived the ravages of time. As such, it indeed stands as a tangible testimony to the vibrant Arabic culinary culture, which we see exemplified only in anecdotes and gastronomic poetry in historical and literary sources.⁶⁹

She also explains that desserts were usually served in the form of puddings cooked in pots. Milk and rice puddings of this era are still served today, even in the Western world.⁷⁰ Of interest is the dessert *Muhallabiyya* (milk pudding with eggs).⁷¹ It requires twenty cups of fresh milk – still warm from milking – heated over a water bath until reduced by half to which thirty eggs, mixed with two pounds of sugar and a pound each of crushed walnuts and almonds, are added. It is cooked while stirring until the mixture thickens. Honey could be added as an extra sweetening agent.⁷²

Another recipe for milk pudding with noodles⁷³ is made by mixing milk with white cane sugar and boiling it for one hour until it thickens. Thirty beaten eggs are added with walnuts or almonds. This dish should be served as soon as it is cooked.⁷⁴ The section on *Zalābiyat* (fried fritters) shares a recipe for *Zalābiya* which is made by mixing flour, eggs and milk and steaming it in a sealed pot over a low fire and a water bath. The cake is ready when the pot is knocked and makes a hollow sound. It is then turned out onto a large plate to cool and flipped over to be sliced and drenched in a mixture of milk, clarified butter and honey (or oil) to moisten the pastry. It is finally sprinkled with black pepper and sugar.⁷⁵ The

68 N. Nasrallah, *Annals of the Caliph's Kitchens – Ibn Sayyār al- Warrāq's Tenth century Baghdadi Cookbook*, p. 13.

69 N. Nasrallah, *Annals of the Caliph's Kitchens – Ibn Sayyār al- Warrāq's Tenth century Baghdadi Cookbook*, pp. 24-25.

70 N. Nasrallah, *Annals of the Caliph's Kitchens – Ibn Sayyār al- Warrāq's Tenth century Baghdadi Cookbook*, p. 28.

71 N. Nasrallah, *Annals of the Caliph's Kitchens – Ibn Sayyār al- Warrāq's Tenth century Baghdadi Cookbook*, p. 43.

72 N. Nasrallah, *Annals of the Caliph's Kitchens – Ibn Sayyār al- Warrāq's Tenth century Baghdadi Cookbook*, p. 407.

73 It should be noted that, despite its name, the recipe makes no reference to noodles.

74 N. Nasrallah, *Annals of the Caliph's Kitchens – Ibn Sayyār al- Warrāq's Tenth century Baghdadi Cookbook*, p. 408.

75 N. Nasrallah, *Annals of the Caliph's Kitchens – Ibn Sayyār al- Warrāq's Tenth century Baghdadi Cookbook*, pp. 415-416.

steaming process renders a softer dough than baking would have. The fact that it is drenched with milk, honey and butter, and sprinkled with the mix of pepper and sugar, makes this a typical milk pudding. Using black pepper as a flavouring agent reminds one of the Apicius recipe discussed earlier.

A recipe for a custard pie named “Tharîda with Flat Breads in a Tajine”⁷⁶ appears in *The Book of Cooking in Maghreb and Andalus in the era of Almohads*, by an unknown author, also known as the *Anonymous Thirteenth Century Andalusian Cookbook*. As the full title indicates, it covers the Islamic empire in North Africa (Maghreb) and parts of the Iberian peninsula (Andalus) and probably dates from the late twelfth and first half of the thirteenth centuries. The recipe describes how light flatbreads are layered with a runny egg custard in a tajine⁷⁷ and half-baked before more custard is poured over for the final baking. This delicate dish was cut and sprinkled with sugar before serving.⁷⁸

According to Claudia Roden, cookbook writer and cultural anthropologist,⁷⁹ the Arab legacy of sweet making, which includes milk puddings, is evident throughout the Mediterranean world. Through the influence of the Ottoman Empire many countries in this region instituted guilds of milk pudding makers and pastry makers, whose skills were jealously guarded. Their recipes have been handed over from generation to generation.⁸⁰

Roden explains that:

Cakes made with ground almonds, pastries filled with chopped nuts or marzipan fritters, milk puddings, sweets made with dried and preserved fruits or garnished with pine-nuts or bathed in a sugar syrup, those perfumed with cinnamon, orange zest and honey, rose and orange blossom water, are all attributed to Saracens, Moors and Turks.⁸¹

76 Anon., *The Book of Cooking in Maghreb and Andalus in the era of Almohads*, by an unknown author, also known as *Anonymous Andalusian Cookbook*, pp. 172-173.

77 Tajine here refers to a traditional North African shallow earthenware dish with a conical lid.

78 Anon., *The Book of Cooking in Maghreb and Andalus in the era of Almohads*, by an unknown author, also known as *Anonymous Andalusian Cookbook*, pp. 172-173.

79 N. Nasrallah, ‘The Historiography of Arab Cuisine: Issues and Perspectives’ in K.W. Clafin and P. Scholliers (eds), *Writing Food History – A global perspective*, p. 154.

80 C. Roden, *Mediterranean Cookery*, Revised Edition, p. 315.

81 C. Roden, *Mediterranean Cookery*, Revised Edition, p. 315.

Her recipe for a milk and pastry pudding, considered to be the national pudding of Egypt, is called ‘*Om Ali*’ (mother of Ali,⁸² also written as Um Ali, Omali, Umm Ali, or Oumm Ali).⁸³ It is named after the first wife of Sultan Izz al-Din Aybak (d. 1257), whose second wife was supposedly murdered by being beaten with a servant’s wooden slipper in an act of revenge, ordered by his first wife. After the gruesome death of the second wife, Om Ali commissioned the dish as a celebratory dessert in her own honour. Initially served in bowls, it is made with layers of puff-pastry, pistachio nuts, almonds, raisins, honey and sweetened milk, which is baked and served warm or cold, with cinnamon to taste. It later became a popular dessert all over the Mediterranean region and is still served at big events, weddings and during Ramadan.⁸⁴ Roden’s recipe combines milk and cream with phyllo pastry that renders a lighter dessert.

Nawal Nasrallah argues that there are similarities between Western medieval and Muslim Arab dishes when it comes to the sweetening of savoury dishes and the use of sugar in desserts. Another similarity is the use of spices like cinnamon, ginger, cumin, coriander and cardamom, and the corresponding techniques of the colouring of dishes and the use of rose water. She observes that Arab names appear in what is considered to be the first European cookbook, *Liber de Coquina* (The book of cooking) that dates from the thirteenth century, as well as in the fourteenth century Italian *Libro della cucina* (Cookbook). The speculation on how this fusion came about is an ongoing debate. Some scholars assert that it was the Crusaders’ contact with the Middle East, while others think that it was due to the Arab presence in Andalusia for 800 years.⁸⁵

82 D. Sharif, ‘Revisiting Um Ali, The Dark History of the Traditional Egyptian Dessert!’, 3 March 2014, <https://www.dimasharif.com/the-dark-history-of-um-ali/>, access: June 2020.

83 C. Roden, *Mediterranean Cookery*, Revised Edition, p. 331.

84 D. Sharif, ‘Revisiting Um Ali, The Dark History of the Traditional Egyptian Dessert!’, 3 March 2014, <https://www.dimasharif.com/the-dark-history-of-um-ali/>, access: June 2020. Just as there are different versions of the name of the dish, folklore present different versions of how the dessert got its name. A different version has it that it was named after a woman who prepared the dish for the visiting Ottoman sultan. Although there are variations on the recipe, the core ingredients are seemingly always the same. The dish is apparently also served in India – see S. Mishra, ‘The Dark Story Behind The Traditional Arab Dessert Umm Ali’, 13 October 2018, <https://recipes.timesofindia.com/articles/features/the-dark-story-behind-the-traditional-arab-dessert-umm-ali/photostory/66192819.cms?picid=66192832>, access: June 2020.

85 According to M. Montanari, ‘Introduction’, in M. Montanari (ed.), *A Cultural History of Food in The Medieval Age*, vol 2, in F. Parasecoli and P. Scholliers, *A Cultural History of Food*, 6 volumes, p. 6: Arab trade, including the spice trade, bridged the divide between Europe and the East up to the beginning of the crusades. Note that N. Nasrallah, ‘The Historiography of Arab Cuisine: Issues and Perspectives’, in K.W. Clafin and P. Scholliers (eds.), *Writing Food History – A global perspective*, p. 148, refers to the opposing views of C.A. Wright – who cites the agricultural revolution as the formative influence on Mediterranean and European cuisine – and that of C.A. Wilson’s thesis that the diet of Western Europe was considerably influenced by the return of the crusaders.

“Custard tarts! Gosh, there are a lot of them in medieval cookbooks”⁸⁶ writes Jessica Tiffin, whose research shows that the custard or cream tart was so ubiquitous during the Medieval era in Europe that chefs listed milk tarts and cream flans on menus only by name and did not care to give descriptions or recipes for them. Her studies also indicate that custard tarts existed from the fourteenth century in England and that they were also found in Germany, France and Italy. It is evident that the custard tart evolved almost simultaneously in the above-mentioned countries and around the same timeline. This argument is based on the use of small variations in the names used for custard tarts over time in France, Italy, Spain and England, including *daryols*, *diriola* and *daryalys*.⁸⁷

The *Forme of Cury* (Forms of cooking) was published around 1390 by the master cooks of King Richard II of England (1367-1400), who reigned from 1377 until 1399. Presumably this is the oldest cookery book in the English language. The recipe for *daryols* is a brief one and, therefore, one can assume that it was written for someone with baking experience as only instructions, and no quantities, are given. It instructs the cook to take the cream of cow’s milk, or of almonds, before adding eggs and sugar with saffron and salt. It should be well mixed and then poured into a pie shell and baked.⁸⁸

4.3.3 The Fifteenth to Sixteenth Centuries CE

During the fifteenth century it became common for butter and egg yolks to be added to custard tarts in Europe so as to give a richer and creamier taste and a deeper yellow colour.⁸⁹ It is also apparent that:

The tendency for Elizabethan and other late-period recipes to show recurring differences from earlier recipes, is as much a function of the drift away from

86 J. Tiffin, ‘The Great Custard Tart Caper’, A&S Culinary Research paper submitted to the Drachenwald A&S Faire 2004, written under the pseudonym Baroness Jehanne de Huguenin. <http://www.3owls.org/sca/cook/custard.htm>, access: June 2010, p. 2.

87 J. Tiffin, ‘The Great Custard Tart Caper’, A&S Culinary Research paper submitted to the Drachenwald A&S Faire 2004, written under the pseudonym Baroness Jehanne de Huguenin. <http://www.3owls.org/sca/cook/custard.htm>, access: June 2010, p. 4.

88 S. Pegge, *The Forme of Cury, a roll of ancient English cookery. Compiled, about A.D. 1390*, 1 May 2006. <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/8102>, access: May 2020.

89 J. Tiffin, ‘The Great Custard Tart Caper’, A&S Culinary Research paper submitted to the Drachenwald A&S Faire 2004, written under the pseudonym Baroness Jehanne de Huguenin. <http://www.3owls.org/sca/cook/custard.htm>, access: June 2010, p. 8.

true medieval into early modern cooking, as any regional or cultural difference.⁹⁰

Cinnamon, one of the first traded spices, was one of the “good powders” used as flavouring agent by English bakers until the Elizabethan era (1558-1603), when nutmeg, ginger, cloves and mace became available due to increased trade with the East. It can be argued that this change is also attributable to historical developments that relate to the age of exploration and the rise of England’s influence. Subsequently, honey (and much later sugar) was used as sweetener and saffron was introduced for its distinctive taste and colour.

Maestro Chiquart, master chef of Amadeus VIII (1383-1451), the Duke of Savoy, describes cream flans in his book *Du Fait de Cuisine* (On Cookery) of 1420. Of significance in this flan recipe is the role of the people producing the flans: one cook makes the filling and the pastry-cook does the baking. The recipe for “Flans of almond milk”⁹¹ requires almond milk to be mixed with *amidon* (starch) and a little saffron. It is then strained, and salt and sugar are added. When this mixture is prepared the pastry cook should be called to put the pastry crusts in the oven to harden (bake). When the pastry shells are ready the pastry cook is called to fill the flans with the almond milk mixture with a ladle or a spoon inside the oven. This is probably done not to spill any of the mixture by removing the crusts from the oven to fill – this technique is still used by chefs today. Chris Woolgar refers to a Chiquart recipe for a sauce that required sugar, cinnamon, ginger, pepper, grain of paradise cloves and other spices like mace and nutmeg. According to Woolgar these kinds of flavourings were first used in Northern Europe around the time of the Crusades. It became part of the trade across the continent. Some of the spices originated in modern day India, Indonesia and China.⁹²

Little is known about the biography of fifteenth century Italian chef Martino of Como, whose real name was Martino de Rossi. His book *Libro de Arte Coquinaria* (The Art of Cooking) was written in 1465 with the title page reading: “Composed by the Eminent

90 J. Tiffin, ‘The Great Custard Tart Caper’, A&S Culinary Research paper submitted to the Drachenwald A&S Faire 2004, written under the pseudonym Baroness Jehanne de Huguenin.
<http://www.3owls.org/sca/cook/custard.htm>, access: June 2010, p. 10.

91 Maistre Chiquart, *Du fait de cuisine*, translated by E. Cook.
http://davidfriedman.com/Medieval/Cookbooks/Du_Fait_de_Cuisine/Du_fait_de_Cuisine.html, access: January 2020, recipe no. 28.

92 C.M. Woolgar. ‘Feasting and Fasting, Food and Taste in Europe in the Middle Ages’ in P. Freedman (ed.) *Food the History of Taste*, p. 176.

Maestro Martino of Como – a Most Prudent Expert in this Art, Once Cook To The Most Reverend Cardinal Trevisan Patriarch of Aquileia.”⁹³ He was known for including techniques and quantities and proper instructions in his recipes. Three of his recipes are of importance in searching for the link with milk tart. The first is the recipe for custard (actually a tart).⁹⁴ The instructions state that a dough should be prepared as for a pie and that this shell should be filled with flour and blind baked in the oven. When the shell is cooked the flour is discarded and filled with a mixture of eggs, milk, sugar and cinnamon. It is then baked, and the baker is instructed to turn it often and even stir the mixture until it is just set, when it should still tremble “like a junket”. Rose water is finally poured over the tart.

The second recipe is for “Lenten custard”.⁹⁵ This custard is made without eggs⁹⁶ like the Dutch *vasten vladen* that is discussed later in this chapter. Almond milk, sugar, rose water and cinnamon are combined on the stove with a little starch to thicken it. The third recipe is for custard pie in the Sienese style.⁹⁷ In this dish the custard, made by combining crushed blanched almonds with sugar, eggs and milk, is not baked in a crust. Cinnamon, salt and finely crushed *provatura* (fresh mozzarella cheese made with buffalo milk) is added. This filling is poured into a pan that has been brushed with butter and sprinkled with flour before it is baked far from the flame. A note to this recipe indicates that lasagne cooked in a broth can be optionally added. When cooked, the tart is sprinkled with sugar and rose water.

It is said that Maestro Martino of Como was an inspiration for another Italian, Bartholomeo Sacchi (1421-1481), also known as Platina – a Renaissance writer, historian, librarian, biographer, gastronomist and humanist. His 1474 book *De honesta voluptate et valetudine* (On Right Pleasure and Good Health) received high acclaim and is considered to be the first printed cookbook and regarded as a testimonial of medieval cuisine in the Renaissance.

93 Martino of Como, *The Art of Cooking - The First Modern Cookery Book*, translated by J. Parzen, title page.

94 Martino of Como, *The Art of Cooking - The First Modern Cookery Book*, translated by J. Parzen, p. 90.

95 Martino of Como, *The Art of Cooking - The First Modern Cookery Book*, translated by J. Parzen, p. 91.

96 It is required of Christians who observe the six weeks of Lent to forego luxuries during that time.

97 Martino of Como, *The Art of Cooking: The First Modern Cookery Book*, translated by J. Parzen, p. 136.

It was a very popular book and was translated from Latin to Italian and then into French,⁹⁸ thereby spreading Roman ideas about gastronomy throughout western Europe.⁹⁹ Platina was concerned with the balance between health and pleasure and it was not uncommon for writers of his time to give medical advice with a recipe. Ken Albala comments on this aspect:

What makes this work especially rich is precisely this juxtaposition of erudite classical and medical scholarship with courtly international medieval dishes. It gives us insight into what people of the past thought they should be eating and what they really wanted to eat.¹⁰⁰

Platina's recipe for "Custard tart"¹⁰¹ could not be simpler as it only describes the custard. He instructs the cook to make a crust as is described in his section on rolls. Then one beats egg yolks with milk, cinnamon and sugar, and stirs it near the fire until it thickens. It seems that this recipe is written for someone who already knows how to cook as it gives no instructions for the baking process or the making of the pastry crust.

The so-called "Black Book of King Edward IV of England" (d. 1483), who reigned from 1461-1470, is part of *A collection of ordinances and Regulations for the Government of the Royal Household, Made in Divers Reigns. From King Edward III (reign from 1327-1377) to King William and Queen Mary (1689-1694) Also Receipts in Ancient Cookery* that contains a great deal of the household information of the ancient kings of that land.¹⁰² The

98 K. Albala, 'On Right Pleasure and Good Health: A Critical Edition and Translation of De honesta voluptate et valetudine, edited and translated by Mary Ella Milham and Libellus de arte coquinaria: An Early Northern Cookery Book, edited and translated by Rudolph Grewe and Constance B. Heiat.' *Gastronomica* 2(2), 2002, pp. 110–111.

<https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1033&context=cop-facarticles>, access: July 2020.

99 Anon., 'Bartolomeo Platina', <https://peoplepill.com/people/bartolomeo-platina/>, access: July 2020.

100 K. Albala, 'On Right Pleasure and Good Health: A Critical Edition and Translation of De honesta voluptate et valetudine, edited and translated by Mary Ella Milham and Libellus de arte coquinaria: An Early Northern Cookery Book, edited and translated by Rudolph Grewe and Constance B. Heiat.' *Gastronomica* 2(2), 2002, pp. 110–111.

<https://scholarlycommons.pacific.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1033&context=cop-facarticles>, access: July 2020.

101 Platina, *De Honestata Voluptate Book 8*, 1475, translated by E.B. Andrews, 1989. www.pbm.com/~lindahl/cariadoc/desserts.html#25, access: May 2020.

102 Anon., *A collection of ordinances and Regulations for the Government of the Royal Household, Made in Divers Reigns. From King Edward III (reign from 1327-1377) to King William and Queen Mary (1689-1694) Also Receipts in Ancient Cookery*. <https://archive.org/details/collectionofordi00soci/page422/mode/2up>, access: March 2020. The Council of the Society of Antiquaries took a decision to publish the Black Book of King Edward IV in 1787. Some of the recipes are also found in the *Forme of Cury* (1390), discussed earlier in this chapter.

recipes published in the Addendum (Arundel Collection) have no date, name or author, but it seems that this addendum contains recipes from the early fifteenth century which were apparently transcribed from the original texts.¹⁰³ Recipe 344 for *daryalys* requires the cook to combine either almond cream or cow's milk with eggs and beat it well. It is then mixed with sugar and good spices and poured into small pastry coffins (shells) to be baked and served.¹⁰⁴

The book, *Two fifteenth-century cookery books*,¹⁰⁵ based on manuscripts in the British Museum that date from 1450, contains two recipes that are of interest to this study. The first recipe is for *Flathons*¹⁰⁶ that are prepared by straining milk and eggs and adding sugar and melted butter with a little salt. The mixture is baked in pre-prepared pie shells and sprinkled with sugar when removed from the oven. The second, for *Custard lumbarde*,¹⁰⁷ calls for bone marrow, dates and prunes to be added to the bottom of the pastry shell that is blind baked and then filled with a cream and egg mixture flavoured with sugar and salt. It concludes with the instruction to substitute cream and eggs with almond cream during Lent.

Probably the first documented Dutch recipe relating to a custard or milk tart was a manuscript from the second half of the fifteenth century that was published in 1872 as *Keukenboek, uitgegeven naar een handschrift der vyftiende eeuw* (A kitchen book published in the handwriting of the fifteenth century).¹⁰⁸ A recipe for "Moelgen te makene" (To make a nice titbit) from circa 1484 is described as a sweetened mixture of sheep's milk, egg yolks and saffron boiled in a water bath. Holes are made in the custard for spices and sugar when

103 Anon., *A collection of ordinances and Regulations for the Government of the Royal Household, Made in Divers Reigns. From King Edward III (reign from 1327-1377) to King William and Queen Mary (1689-1694) Also Receipts in Ancient Cookery*, p. 424.

<https://archive.org/details/collectionofordi00soci/page422/mode/2up>, access: March 2020.

104 Anon., *A collection of ordinances and Regulations for the Government of the Royal Household, Made in Divers Reigns. From King Edward III (reign from 1327-1377) to King William and Queen Mary (1689-1694) Also Receipts in Ancient Cookery*, p. 443.

<https://archive.org/details/collectionofordi00soci/page422/mode/2up>, access: March 2020.

105 T. Austin (ed.), *Two fifteenth-century cookery-books*, 1888,

<https://archive.org/details/twofifteenthcent00aust>, access: March 2020.

106 T. Austin (ed.), *Two fifteenth-century cookery-books*, 1888,

<https://archive.org/details/twofifteenthcent00aust>, access: March 2020, p. 51.

107 T. Austin (ed.), *Two fifteenth-century cookery-books*, 1888,

<https://archive.org/details/twofifteenthcent00aust>, access: March 2020, p. 74.

108 Anon., *Keukenboek*, University Library of Ghent 1035, reprinted as *Keukenboek, uitgegeven naar een handschrift der vijftiende eeuw* by C.A. Serrure in 1872, later renamed as *Wel ende edelike spijs* (Good and Noble Food) when translated to English by C. Muusers,

<https://www.coquinaria.nl/kooktekst/Edelikespijse0.htm>, access: July 2020.

it has cooled. It must be pointed out that there are several other Dutch sources containing custard tarts going into the sixteenth century.¹⁰⁹

Just as with the Dutch custard tarts, there are also versions of milk puddings or custards that originated from Portugal in the fifteenth century. It would seem that literature on the history of Portuguese cuisine in English is sparse. In this context, *A Treatise of Portuguese Cuisine from the Fifteenth century*¹¹⁰ makes for interesting reading, albeit that it only gives recipes and no descriptions or histories of the dishes. What we can deduce from these recipes is the fact that there are several versions and names for what later became known as ‘*Pastéis de Nata*’ (Portuguese custard tarts) discussed in the next section. Two recipes in this book are noteworthy. The first is for *Pastéis de Leite* (Milk pastries)¹¹¹ that are essentially custard tartlets made with separated eggs where the yolks are thickened to a paste with corn flour and the egg whites are, seemingly, added to the milk mixture on the stove. In this case a recipe is given for the pastry crust that is blind baked. The final product is brushed with butter before it is returned to the oven, presumably to ensure a golden colour. The second recipe is for *Tigelada de leite* (Milk custards),¹¹² where egg yolks are beaten with sugar, flour and a pinch of salt. This version is baked in butter-brushed clay ramekins.

While designating certain recipes to specific countries, Tiffin argues that: “The cuisines of different countries borrowed so heavily from each other that one cannot make facile assumptions about trends or ingredients.”¹¹³ An example of cross-cultural exchanges between regions pivots on the sojourns and layovers of the ruling class in sixteenth-century western Europe. When, in 1565, the Portuguese Infanta Maria of Guimarães (1538-1577) married Alessandro Farnese (1545-1592), an Italian nobleman who was brought up in

109 See the discussion on other Dutch sources later in this section, including that on T. van der Noot, *Een notable boexcken van cokeryen*, 1510.

110 F. Gomez, (translator), *A Treatise of Portuguese Cuisine from the 15th Century*, 2017, <http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra-visor/um-tratado-da-cozinha-portuguesa-do-seculo-xv--0/html/#PagMedi>, access: July 2020.

111 F. Gomez, (translator), *A Treatise of Portuguese Cuisine from the 15th Century*, 2017, <http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra-visor/um-tratado-da-cozinha-portuguesa-do-seculo-xv--0/html/#PagMedi>, access: July 2020.

112 F. Gomez, (translator), *A Treatise of Portuguese Cuisine from the 15th Century*, 2017, <http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra-visor/um-tratado-da-cozinha-portuguesa-do-seculo-xv--0/html/#PagMedi>, access: July 2020.

113 J. Tiffin, ‘The Great Custard Tart Caper’, A&S Culinary Research paper submitted to the Drachenwald A&S Faire 2004, written under the pseudonym Baroness Jehanne de Huguenin. <http://www.3owls.org/sca/cook/custard.htm>, access: June 2010, p. 10.

Spain, she took a handwritten document – *O Livro de Cozinha* (The Cookbook)¹¹⁴ – with her as part of her trousseau. It is said that this document contains recipes for milk tarts and that it mentions the sprinkling of sugar and cinnamon on top of the tart, which is an aspect attributed to the Moorish influence.¹¹⁵ It is also believed that the cookbook travelled with the couple to the Low Countries when Farnese was appointed as governor-general of the Spanish Netherlands, where he later became regent and would stay on even after succeeding his father as Duke of Parma and Piacenza.¹¹⁶

4.3.4 The Sixteenth to the Nineteenth Centuries CE

Albala points out that cookbooks took on a new theme towards the latter half of the sixteenth century when they were intended for a readership of housewives with recipes and tips on cooking, but also advice on making jams, carving, sewing and the duties of servants, to name a few.¹¹⁷ Thomas Dawson, an English cookery and housekeeping writer, authored a number of such accounts aimed at women. Amongst them were *The good Hus-wifes handmaid for the kitchen* (1594), *The Booke of Carving and Sewing* (1597) and his *Booke of Cookerie* (1620). His recipe for custard in *The Good Huswifes Jewell*,¹¹⁸ published in 1585, has some similarities to that for “Custard lumbarde” referred to earlier in this chapter. Strained eggs are mixed with cream and dates and currants are added when it had cooked to the desired thickness. It differs from “Custard lumbarde” as it is flavoured with saffron, cloves, mace, ginger and cinnamon.

As far as could be established the first cookbook penned by a woman dates from 1553 and was written in Middle High German and entitled *Das Kochbuch der Sabrina Welserin* (The Cookbook of Sabina Welserin). Albala refers to it as “... a working manuscript that seems to have been used by its owner.”¹¹⁹ The book is a goldmine of custard recipes, with eight

114 It was not possible to obtain an English copy of this document; thus, its content has not been verified. It is believed to be held in the National Library of Naples (reference code IE-33), according to <https://lerparaser-projectogulbenkian.blogspot.com/search?q=livro+de+cozinha+da+infanta+d.+maria+de+portugal>, access: July 2020.

115 M. Kronld, *The Taste of Conquest, The Rise and Fall of the Three Great Cities of Spice*, pp. 118-119.

116 J.L. Charles, Alessandro Farnese, duke of Parma and Piacenza, 2019, <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Alessandro-Farnese-duke-of-Parma-and-Piacenza>, access: July 2020.

117 K. Albala, ‘Introduction’ in K. Albala (ed.), *A Cultural History of Food in the Renaissance*, vol 3, in F. Parasecoli and P. Scholliers. *A Cultural History of Food*, 6 volumes, p. 26.

118 T. Dawson, *The Good Huswifes Jewell*, <http://www.medievalcookery.com/notes/ghj1596.txt>, access: July 2020.

119 K. Albala, ‘Introduction’ in K. Albala (ed.), *A Cultural History of Food in the Renaissance*, vol 3, in F. Parasecoli and P. Scholliers, *A Cultural History of Food*, 6 volumes, p. 27.

that contain either custard or are a custard tart of sorts. She uses either butter or fat, as well as a variety of flavourings including cinnamon, rose water and almonds. The recipe that closely resembles the milk tart reads as follows:

To make a cream tart: For three tarts, which should each be about a foot wide, take one quart of the best cream that you can find, and put it in a pan over the fire. And put two eggs, which are well beaten, into it, and when it begins to boil, then take six more eggs and let them be well beaten and put them into it, and some good flour and pour it slowly into the pan. And one should stir it constantly, so that it does not burn. After that, when the eggs have been poured in, throw a quarter of a pound of fresh butter into it and let it simmer together, until it becomes thick. Afterwards let it cool, and when it is cold, then put it into three pastry shells, each of which is a foot wide. And let it bake in the tart pan. If you would put it straight away on the table, then sprinkle a quarter pound of sugar over all three, together with a little rose water. And one should serve it forth while it is yet warm. This recipe was given to me by the elder Bernhard Meiting, I have not yet prepared it.¹²⁰

Undoubtedly the Dutch *Een notable boecxken van cokeryen* (A Notable Book on Cookery), published by Thomas van der Noot around 1510 in Brussels, is the most cited source for Dutch milk tart. It contains recipes for three types of *vladen* (*vla* in contemporary Dutch, or simply custard) which is defined as a thick sweet dish that is eaten cold and is made with eggs, milk, flour and a variety of flavourings.¹²¹ Van der Noot gives recipes for *saen vladen* (cream custard),¹²² a baked custard¹²³ and baked *vasten vladen* (custard for the fasting)¹²⁴ in which almond milk and ground rice replace eggs and dairy to comply with the fast-day rules. It is flavoured with cinnamon and ginger and sweetened with sugar. Numerous South African writers, including Maritz and Guy, often argue that our South African milk tart recipes can be traced back to Van der Noot's book without mentioning any of the other antecedents.¹²⁵

120 S. Welserin, *Das Kochbuch der Sabina Welserin*, translated by V. Armstrong, http://www.daviddfriedman.com/Medieval/Cookbooks/Sabrina_Welserin.html, access: May 2020. Recipe 122.

121 C.A. Den Boon and D. Geerarts (eds), *Van Dale Groot Woordenboek van de Nederlandse Taal*, p. 3942.

122 T. van der Noot, *Een notabel boecxken van cokeryen*, translated by C. van Tets. http://users.telenet.be/willy.vancammeren/NBC/nbc_r120.htm, access: March 2020, Recipe 120.

123 T. van der Noot, *Een notabel boecxken van cokeryen*, translated by C. van Tets. http://users.telenet.be/willy.vancammeren/NBC/nbc_r120.htm, access: March 2020, Recipe 120.

124 T. van der Noot, *Een notabel boecxken van cokeryen*, translated by C. van Tets. http://users.telenet.be/willy.vancammeren/NBC/nbc_r120.htm, access: March 2020, Recipe 122.

125 C. Maritz and M-L. Guy, *The South African Milk Tart Collection*, pp. 9-10.

It does however seem that *vladen* was very popular in the sixteenth-century Netherlands. Equivalents for the cream and fasting versions are also found in another Dutch publication from that time, namely *Eenen nyeuwen coock boeck, kookboek samengesteld door Geraert Vorselman en gedrukt te Antwerpen in 1560* (A new cookbook compiled by Geraert Vorselman and printed in Antwerp in 1560).¹²⁶ A simple custard tart flavoured with rose water was also included in the Dutch *Cocboeck*¹²⁷ (Cookbook) published by Carolus Battus (or Carel Baten) in 1593. His recipe for a fine tart (*fijn taerte*) is very short and limited instructions are given. There is no indication of a crust and it simply indicates that eggs should be mixed with sweet milk and that sugar and rose water should be added after cooking.¹²⁸

The popularity of these dishes in the Dutch-speaking world is confirmed by many later versions, including an eighteenth-century recipe for an egg tart that is flavoured with lemon zest and baked in a crust,¹²⁹ and another from the nineteenth century for a *Roomtaart* (Cream tart) that seems very similar to a milk tart:

Mix together sixty thimbles of sweet milk and some fat from cream, six egg yolks, wheat flour, sugar, grated lemon zest and one stick of cinnamon that would be removed later, and stir on the fire. Let it cool before pouring it into the crust and bake until done. They are also suitable for tartlets.¹³⁰

Robert May (1588- circa 1664) published the *Accomplisht Cook* in 1660. His work was lauded for providing a fresh approach to the culinary scene of the time and by not plagiarising other books while reflecting recipes reminiscent of the well-to-do in seventeenth-century England.¹³¹ He publishes a recipe for *Capilotado* (custard in the Hungarian fashion) prepared in a pot or baked in an oven.¹³² Goat's and cow's milk or

126 G. Vorselman. *Eenen nyeuwen coock boeck, kookboek samengesteld door Geraert Vorselman en gedrukt te Antwerpen in 1560*, 1971. Published as a collection identified as 'Gent KANTL 15', volume 2, translated by C. Muusers, <https://www.coquinaria.nl/kooktekst/KAGent15.2.2.htm#2.73>, access: March 2020.

127 Full title as follows: *Eenen seer schoonen, ende excellenten Cocboeck, inhoudende alderleye wel gheëxperimenteerde cokagien van ghebraedt, ghesoden, pasteyen, taerten, toerten, vlaeyen, saussen, sopen ende diergelijcke. Oock diversche confeytuieren ende drancken, etc.*

128 C. Battus, *Cocboeck*, <http://www.kookhistorie.nl/index.htm>, access March 2020, Recipe 242.

129 Anon., *De Volmaakte Hollandse keuken meid met aanhangsel*, Recipe 50, p. 27.

130 J. Noorduyn, *De Volmaakte Geldersche Keukenmeid*, p. 179.

131 C. Dickson Wright, *A History of English Food*. Kindle edition: Loc. 2385/6771.

132 R. May, *The Accomplisht Cook, or, The whole Art and Mystery of Cookery, fitted for all Degrees and Qualities*, 28 September 2007. <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/22790>, access: May 2020.

cream are mixed with five eggs or ten egg yolks, a pound of sugar, some cinnamon, salt and saffron. The mixture is strained and cooked or baked and when it is cooked, the juice of five oranges and a little white wine, rose water and ginger are poured over the baked custard.

Portuguese *Pastéis de Nata* (plural, meaning cream tarts)¹³³ are probably one of the world's best-known custard tarts. Considering its fame, it is no wonder that there is more than one theory on how these tarts came to us. At first glance it seems that they were only invented in the 1800s in the Mosteiro dos Jerónimos, now part of Lisbon. It is speculated that the nuns were responsible for the variety of sweet fare produced during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries after sugar plantations in the New World made sugar more affordable and available in Europe. This, together with the influence of the Moors, discussed earlier, enabled the nuns to create eggy sweet puddings, cakes and other sweet things.¹³⁴ The monastery used egg whites to clarify their wine and to starch the nuns' habits. As a result, they had a surplus of egg yolks and it is rumoured that this was how the *Pastel de Nata* (singular, cream tart), which requires many egg yolks, was born.¹³⁵ The monastery sold the tartlets to the public, until a revolution in early 1800 destroyed the monasteries, which resulted in the sale of the recipe to Domingo Rafael Alves. The pastries were subsequently brought back into production in 1837 and have since been sold at Antiga Confeitaria de Belém, a bakery close to the Mosteiro dos Jerónimos, where it is said to have originated. This business registered the trade name *Pastéis de Belém* in 1911 and it has since become the quintessence version of *Pastéis de Nata*.¹³⁶

The second theory revolves around a Portuguese princess, Catherine of Braganza (1638-1705), who married Charles II (1630-1685), King of England, Scotland, and Ireland. She is said to have brought tea to the English when she arrived in London in 1660 and took the cream tarts back to Portugal when she returned there after the death of her husband. According to this version, *Pastéis de Nata* are actually of English origin as Catherine liked them so much that she took the recipe back home. The famous English custard tart was so

133 Leites Culinaria, 'Pasteis de Nata', 2004. <https://leitesculinaria.com/10264/writings-history-pasteis-de-nata.html/print>, access: April 2020.

134 E. Lambert Ortiz, *The Food of Spain & Portugal – The Complete Iberian Cuisine*, p. 277.

135 Leites Culinaria, 'Pasteis de Nata', 2004. <https://leitesculinaria.com/10264/writings-history-pasteis-de-nata.html/print>, access: April 2020.

136 Leites Culinaria, 'Pasteis de Nata', 2004. <https://leitesculinaria.com/10264/writings-history-pasteis-de-nata.html/print>, access: April 2020.

popular that a version thereof called “Maids of Honour” was served to Henry VIII at Hampton Court.¹³⁷ Food historian Clarissa Dickson Wright (1947-2014) opines that:

The pastry you find in the Portuguese version is, in my opinion, the sweet ruff puff pastry of the Tudor court. I’m sure I’ll receive horrified letters about this, but I am fairly convinced that it’s true. All I can say is ‘lucky old Portuguese’- they kept the recipe and we didn’t.¹³⁸

A third theory alludes to the fact that these pastries have been around much earlier because the Portuguese found desserts indispensable “... proving that the Portuguese love of sugary and eggy confections goes back a long way and has a very respectable tradition.”¹³⁹ Versions of the recipe apparently appear in the first book published on Portuguese food in 1660 by Domingos Rodrigues – *Arte de Cozinha* (The art of cooking). These pastries were transported to all the Portuguese colonies from Macau, Goa, Angola to Brazil and were adopted from Macau by Cantonese bakers and are now called *dan tat* (egg tart).¹⁴⁰ With Portugal’s colonial expansion and the “discovery” of the New World, Africa, Asia and the Oriental trading routes, came the development of global trade. Portugal played an important role in connecting Europe with the New World, Africa, the Middle and Far East. It would therefore be obvious to assume that influences took place across the culinary spectrum.¹⁴¹ A last theory to consider states that the Moors were responsible for bringing a variety of egg-based sweet desserts and bites to Portugal. *Porto pudim flan* (Porto flan pudding) contains only heavy cream, milk, egg yolks and sugar with a dash of fortified wine from Madeira.¹⁴²

From the above research it is clear that the custard tart or custard pudding may have had different names in the various regions they originated from, but the similarity in ingredients

137 C. Dickson Wright, *A History of English Food*. Kindle edition: 2676/6771

138 C. Dickson Wright, *A History of English Food*. Kindle edition: 2676/6771.

139 E. Vieira, ‘Salt Cod, a Portuguese Obsession’ in H. Walker (ed.), *Food on the Move, Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on food and cookery 1996*, p. 322.

140 Anon., ‘Pastéis de nata’, http://www.sweetinvention.net/Sweet_Invention/Dictionary_p_q.html, access: 31 March 2020.

141 M.J. Santos, ‘The Traditional Cuisine of Penafiel in the context of Portuguese Food History’, in *Regional Museums and Local Gastronomic Heritage*, Proceedings of the 2011 and 2012 ICR Conferences Kristiansand, Norway, 22-28 August 2011 Belgrade and Prijepolje, Serbia, 23-28 September 2012, <http://fliphtml5.com/xdjw/zaiu/basic/201-244>, access: August 2020, p. 204.

142 T.G. Roufs and K.S. Roufs, *Sweet Treats around the world: An Encyclopedia of Food and Culture*. E-book: <https://sanviscreations.files.wordpress.com/2016/10/9781610692205.pdf>, access: March 2020, p. 278.

and method of preparation is undeniable with additional flavourings, notwithstanding the cross-cultural references mentioned.

4.4 GEOGRAPHICAL AND CROSS-CULTURAL EXCHANGES

While some references have been made to cross-cultural exchanges and how the cuisines of cultures borrowed from one another in the preceding sections of this chapter, they have not necessarily been made explicit and some of the connections were not discussed in the structure and chronology of the foregoing research. It is therefore necessary to point out some such instances so as not to overlook their importance in tracing possible influences on the milk tart.

Trade and other exchanges across the Mediterranean region occurred before, during and after the period of classical antiquity. While it is known that Roman slaves were imported from all over the Empire, often as prisoners of war, it has also been established that many kitchen duties were part of a slave's daily itinerary.¹⁴³ By the same token, Patrick Faas reminds us that "Romans were familiar with many [food] products from Africa and Asia."¹⁴⁴ Another worthy example is the Arab legacy of sweet making that has lived on throughout the Mediterranean world, especially in the Iberian Peninsula.¹⁴⁵ While Tiffin argues that cross-cultural exchanges relied on the journeys undertaken by the ruling classes of Europe during the sixteenth century,¹⁴⁶ the establishment of permanent trade routes by European explorers during the Age of Exploration also facilitated cultural exchange, notably between the Portuguese, Spanish, Dutch and English and their respective trade partners from the East and the "New" world.

Portugal dominated early trade around southern Africa to the Indian Ocean during the sixteenth century¹⁴⁷ and established trading posts along the coast of the Indian subcontinent

143 P. Faas, *Around the Roman Table*, pp. 125, 176.

144 P. Faas, *Around the Roman Table*, p. 3.

145 N. Nasrallah, 'The Historiography of Arab Cuisine: Issues and Perspectives' in K.W. Clafin and P. Scholliers (eds), *Writing Food History – A global perspective*, p. 154.

146 J. Tiffin, 'The Great Custard Tart Caper', A&S Culinary Research paper submitted to the Drachenwald A&S Faire 2004, written under the pseudonym Baroness Jehanne de Huguenin.
<http://www.3owls.org/sca/cook/custard.htm>, access: June 2010, p. 10.

147 R. Ross, *Cape of torments, Slavery and Resistance in South Africa*, p. 1.

from where they traded with merchants from Arabia, Siam, Java, Malacca, Persia, China and Japan. As C.T. Sen proclaims: “Gastronomically, the Portuguese legacy was widespread, profound and enduring.”¹⁴⁸

The Portuguese dominance was subsequently surpassed by the Dutch and the English, who followed their predecessor’s example and established significant settlements *en route* to, and within, Southeast Asia and on the Indian subcontinent and southern Africa.¹⁴⁹ In most cases this would lead to occupation and inevitably to colonial exploitation that embedded cultural interactions. Cecilia Y. Leong-Salobir explains the fusion character that resulted in Asian cuisine under British supervision as follows:

The fundamentally hybrid character of the colonial cuisine derived from a multiplicity of influences, including the food practices of the Britons who ruled India, Malaysia and Singapore, and the food traditions of the indigenous peoples of these colonies. ... Significantly, this cuisine developed largely through the reliance of the colonizers on their domestic servants for food preparation.¹⁵⁰

An example of this principle is found in the book *Dainty Dishes for Indian Tables*, first published in Calcutta in 1881, which lists recipes for custard fritters, baked custard pudding, a finer baked custard and even Yorkshire pudding.¹⁵¹ This illustrates the statement by Pushpesh Pant that Indian cuisine blends many influences, including those of the European colonisers.¹⁵² Then again, popular Indian dishes like “Lagan Nu” (wedding) custard¹⁵³ originates from Persia through the southward migration of Parsis¹⁵⁴ between the eighth and tenth centuries.¹⁵⁵ The dish is essentially a rich baked custard that is flavoured with vanilla, saffron, cinnamon, nutmeg and topped with a sprinkling of cardamom powder.

148 C.T. Sen, ‘The Portuguese Influence On Bengali Cuisine’, in H. Walker (ed.) *Food on the Move, Proceedings of the Oxford Symposium on Food and Cookery 1996*, p. 289.

149 R. Ross, *Cape of Torments, Slavery and Resistance in South Africa*, p. 1.

150 C.Y. Leong-Salobir, *Food Culture in Colonial Asia: A Taste of Empire*, p. 16.

151 Anon., *Dainty Dishes for Indian tables*, pp. 245-277.

152 P. Pant, *India: The Cookbook*, p. 9.

153 R. Makan, *Die Suid-Afrikaanse Indiër-Kookboek*, p. 90.

154 Followers of Zoroastrianism who fled from invading Arabs.

155 K. Smara, ‘Lagan Nu Custard with Persian Flair’, 2018, <https://kitchenpostcards.com/2018/08/17/lagan-nu-custard-with-persian-flair/>, access: August 2020.

The Dutch interests in Southeast Asia were established by the *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (Dutch East India Company) in the early seventeenth century and were centred in the Dutch East Indies (now Indonesia). Examples exist of the Dutch influence on Indonesian traditional dishes. A twentieth-century remnant of this Indonesian-Dutch fusion is found in the Dutch baked *Klappertaart* (Coconut tart)¹⁵⁶ that mixes grated coconut (a key product of Indonesian agriculture) and raisins with the ingredients that are typical of a custard or milk tart, namely flour, milk, sugar, eggs, butter and cinnamon.¹⁵⁷

The journeys that the European colonial powers undertook around the southern tip of the African continent would have a significant impact on the history of South Africa at various levels. Their influence on our food culture was one such domain and will be discussed in the next chapter of this study.

4.5 CONCLUSION

At the beginning of this chapter it was stated that comparisons would be made between recipes that could be considered custard tarts or milk puddings and therefore could be related to, or have influenced, the South African milk tart. It is clear from the above enquiry that brothers, sisters and cousins of what we know as the South African milk tart have, for centuries, existed with similarities, but in some cases also regional variations, in various parts of the world, but specifically in the Middle East, continental Europe, England, India and Southeast Asia. It has therefore conclusively been shown that the South African milk tart is neither unique, nor original. The next chapter will give an overview of the history of the milk tart in South Africa by exploring the various ways that people came to this land and how cultures might have influenced one another in this regard, to create a fusion of flavours and food.

156 C. Handoyo, Clarissa, C. Grace, Milka and S.A. Firdayanti, 'Klappertaart: An Indonesian-Dutch influenced Traditional Food', *Journal of Ethnic Foods* 5(2), June 2018. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jef.2017.12.002>, access: September 2020, pp. 147-152.

157 C. Handoyo, Clarissa, C. Grace, Milka and S.A. Firdayanti, 'Klappertaart: An Indonesian-Dutch influenced Traditional Food', *Journal of Ethnic Foods* 5(2), June 2018. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jef.2017.12.002>, access: September 2020, p. 150.



CHAPTER 5: MILK TART IN SOUTH AFRICA

Culinary identities were not inscribed in the heavens.¹

5.1 INTRODUCTION

It has already been established in Chapter 3 of this study that food and culture are interwoven. Massimo Montanari's statement, quoted above, deals with the notion that culture, tradition and identity are not static, but rather forged through complex and dynamic exchanges and interactions. It is thus through hindsight that traditions, as part of cultural identities, become evident and attain meaning. Montanari also makes the point that the visible outcomes – products or artefacts – of collective identities do not define the extent or scope thereof, as there are numerous invisible and diffuse components that contribute to, and sustain, cultural identities and designs over time.² This chapter, therefore, is structured according to the format in which the recipes appeared in South African history and over time. It considers recipes, manuscripts as well as other unpublished and published sources.

Prior to the arrival of Europeans in the southern parts of Africa, the San and Khoikhoi had inhabited the region for millennia. Then Bantu-speakers, originally from the Niger-Congo region, began to settle in the area now known as South Africa during the first millennium

1 M. Montanari, *Food is Culture*, p. 137.

2 M. Montanari, *Food is Culture*, p. 139.

adding agriculture to the prevailing hunter-gatherer and pastoral lifestyles.³ From the mid-seventeenth-century the Cape of Good Hope, in the southern part of the subcontinent, was used as a victualing station serving the spice trade between Europe and the East. Over time and with thriving trade it became a Dutch Colony, until the British annexed it at the turn of the nineteenth century and some settlers moved northward in the early nineteenth century to escape British rule that would dominate until the formation of the Union of South Africa in 1910. Although slavery was officially abolished in 1834, European settlers still dominated society and not much had changed by 1948, when the system of Apartheid was decreed. Classification by race would continue to formally segregate South African society until the first democratic elections were held in 1994 and a new constitution, promulgating human rights for all, was subsequently adopted.⁴

In the previous chapter formal and established sources, predominantly recorded by men, indicated that recipes for custard and cream tarts and milk-based desserts were known in many cultures, including that of the Portuguese, Dutch, English, Indian and Indonesian peoples. Cultural transfers from these and other places reached local shores over a period of more than four centuries in direct and indirect ways through free, enslaved or indentured individuals. It could be argued that the intersecting of their customs introduced an acculturated cuisine to local shores.

This chapter investigates the possible indigenization of milk tart according to Fernandez's three-tier model of introduction, adaptation and subsuming as part of the process of the intersecting of different cultures and food identities.⁵ It is informed by recipes for milk tart from South Africa that were found in a variety of sources, including manuscripts, published books, popular and social media, community cookbooks and other contributions from the alternative archives that relate mainly to women's history.

3 R. Ross, *A Concise History of South Africa*, pp. 6-10.

4 R. Ross, *A Concise History of South Africa*, Epilogue; H. Giliomee and B. Mbenga, *Nuwe Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika*, pp. 4, 122, 307.

5 B. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and D.G. Fernandez, 'Culture Ingested – On the Indigenization of Philippine Food', *Gastronomica* 3(1), 2003, p. 61.

5.2 TRACING RECIPES FOR THE SOUTH AFRICAN MILK TART

Jane Dusselier points to the connection between food experiences and memories,⁶ to which Carody Culver adds that, while cookbooks may lack fictional elements, the structured sequence and descriptions found in recipes could be interpreted as a form of narrative. She adds: “Cookbook authors use memories, anecdotes and imagery to conjure scenes to which readers can aspire or relate, perhaps prompting responses similar to those experienced when reading fiction.”⁷ In this context Raymond Grew prompts researchers to look for patterns of behaviour in order to identify associations that may have not previously been pertinent.⁸ As discussed in Chapter 3, personal documents, including manuscripts of recipes, form an integral part of a gendered alternative archive and they represent aspects of routine domesticity and rituals that may, over time, easily become invisible and forgotten. These aspects all relate to the research presented here to trace recipes for the milk tart from local sources and, as indicated in chapter 3, reflect not only on what people ate and what ingredients they used but, also indicate reflections of history in recipe books, diaries, and other culinary literature of the time.

On 3 December 1659 Jan van Riebeeck (1619-1677) recorded in his journal that enough grain had been produced at the Cape to allow company cook Louwys Richart and Claes Lamberstz the right to become free bakers and be released from their contractual obligations to the *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie* so as to allow them to sell:

*... wittebroot, koeckjes, kraeckelingen en ander geback souden mogen maecken, tot gerief van die wat delicateser willen leven, mitsgaders soodanigh gebuyt broot mogen vercopen tot 3 braspenningen 't ... ende fijnder na discretie (... white bread, cakes, crackers and other pastries for the convenience of those who desire to live more gracefully, and that they will be permitted to sell such bolted bread at 3 tokens ... and finer qualities at [their own] discretion).*⁹

6 J. Dusselier, ‘Understandings of food as culture’, *Environmental History* 14(2), 2009, p. 334.

7 C. Culver, ‘My Kitchen, Myself: Constructing the Feminine Identity in Contemporary Cookbooks’, *M/C Journal* 16(3), June 2013, <http://journal.media-culture.org.au/index.php/mcjournal/article/view/641>, access: September 2020.

8 R. Grew, 1980, ‘The Case for Comparing Histories’, *The American Historical Review* 85(4), p. 773.

9 J. van Riebeeck, *Dagverhaal van Jan Van Riebeeck, Commandeur Aan De Kaap De Goede Hoop, IIIe Deel (1859-1662)*, https://archive.org/stream/dagverhaalvanjan03rieb/dagverhaalvanjan03rieb_djvu.txt, access: September 2020, p. 245.

Since no bakery had yet been built, the bakers were permitted to use the Company's oven and baking house. It is important to note that Louwys Richart had a reputation as a pastry-maker and cook.¹⁰ It is also noteworthy that these men are specifically named, while women (colonial and enslaved) who were an intricate part of the Cape kitchen are barely ever mentioned; this is indicative of the values of a patriarchal society. Other material on the early development of baking at the Cape is sparse. C. Louis Leipoldt writes that there were no locally printed cookbooks in the seventeenth century under Dutch rule in South Africa, but he refers to some of the books discussed in Chapter 4 that were available in Europe.¹¹ It could therefore be argued that copies of books with recipes related to custard or milk tarts, such as *Die Volmaakte Hollandse keukenmeid met aanhangsel* (The perfect Dutch kitchen maid with an appendix)¹² published 1769, could have eventually found their way to the Cape. In *The Cape Malay Cookbook* author Faldela Williams refers to the Malay cooks who were in high demand in Dutch households in the seventeenth century at the Cape.¹³ In this way, she states, they learned to prepare Dutch dishes, to which they would add their own touches, including the addition of spices that connect to the Indian influence on Malay cuisine.¹⁴

One of the first references to sweet dishes appears in the journals kept by Lady Anne Barnard (1750-1825), a Scottish writer and painter who accompanied her husband to the Cape of Good Hope during the first British occupation (1795-1802). Her journals have often been quoted for their descriptions of the social life at the Cape.¹⁵ In her journal dated 1797-1798 she describes a very opulent dinner they were served at the farmhouse of one of the colonists. She writes about:

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- 10 J. van Riebeeck, *Dagverhaal van Jan Van Riebeeck, Commandeur Aan De Kaap De Goede Hoop, IIIe Deel (1859-1662)*, https://archive.org/stream/dagverhaalvanjan03rieb/dagverhaalvanjan03rieb_djvu.txt, access: September 2020, pp. 245-246.
 - 11 C.L. Leipoldt, *Leipoldt's Food and Wine*, p. 15.
 - 12 Anon., *Die Volmaakte Hollandsche keukenmeid met aanhangsel*. A copy of this book is held in the Renata Coetzee Collection in the Library of the Stellenbosch Museum at Erfurthuis, 37 Ryneveld Street, Stellenbosch.
 - 13 F. Williams, *The Cape Malay Cookbook*. First publication in 1988 and first published in soft cover in 1993 with 13 more reprints between 1995 and 2008. It was reprinted twice in 2010 and reprinted in 2012, 2014, 2015 and 2016.
 - 14 F. Williams, *The Cape Malay Cookbook*, p. 7.
 - 15 P. Ball, 'Meet Lady Anne Barnard', 22 December 2018, <http://www.theheritageportal.co.za/article/meet-lady-anne-barnard>, access: May 2020.

... a dish of egg puddings too greasy for me to attach them... We had pastry of all kinds and after supper an immense punch bowl full of wood strawberries.¹⁶

This is a valuable vignette as no other recipes for milk or custard tarts could be located for the eighteenth-century, or earlier, at the Cape. In her thesis Hettie Claassens refers to the Lady Anne Barnard event and translates the greasy egg pudding to *gebakte vla* (baked custard)¹⁷ in Afrikaans. On the face of it this translation may not be entirely accurate, but Barnard's entry does confirm that pastries and egg puddings were known and made in the Cape during the late eighteenth-century.

Hilda Gerber (1904-1954) points out that Cape cookery includes dishes and influences from Dutch and French settlers, but reinforces the notion that Eastern slaves also contributed to the cuisines of their masters:

Especially in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the food customs of Batavia were assiduously copied by the settlers at the Cape. In time South African cookery came to be a blend of these Eastern and Western ways.¹⁸

Leipoldt does explain that the earliest cookery books in South Africa, as elsewhere, were in manuscript form consisting of domestic recipes, traditional methods of cooking, directions of how to run a household, home remedies and also health advice.¹⁹ He adds that such manuscripts were brought to local shores as family treasures and that they were "... carefully preserved and judiciously expanded by their owners."²⁰ The tradition was certainly continued and historian Celestine Pretorius points out that recipes were handed down orally over generations from mothers to daughters up to, and including, the eighteenth century before printed recipe books were commonly available. She refers to a number of sweet items made during that time by name and refers specifically to milk tart.²¹ According

16 A.L. Barnard, *The Cape Journals of Lady Anne Barnard 1797-1798*, p. 252.

17 H.W. Claassens, *Die Geskiedenis van Boerekos 1652-1806*. DPhil Thesis, University of Pretoria, 2005, p. 129.

18 H. Gerber, *Cape Cookery*. Introduction.

19 C.L. Leipoldt, *Leipoldt's Food and Wine*, p. 14.

20 C.L. Leipoldt, *Leipoldt's Food and Wine*, p. 15.

21 J.C. Pretorius, *Die Afrikanervrou as Kultuurdraer en Kultuurskepper tot 1806*. DPhil Thesis, University of Pretoria, 1977, p. 76.

to an unpublished manuscript by Hilda Gerber, by the early nineteenth century a great variety of baked goods, including confections, were available at the Cape.²²

5.3 UNPUBLISHED MANUSCRIPTS AND PERSONAL DOCUMENTS

As indicated above, local housewives in the early Cape had to make do by compiling their own recipe collections during the eighteenth and early part of the nineteenth century. The earliest local milk tart recipe found for this study was in a handwritten manuscript identified as *Keuke boek van mijn De Weduwe Blanckenberg gebore Zeeman Den 15 October 1819* (Kitchen book of mine, the widow Blanckenberg born Zeeman The 15th October 1819).²³ (See the cover –Figure 5.1.)

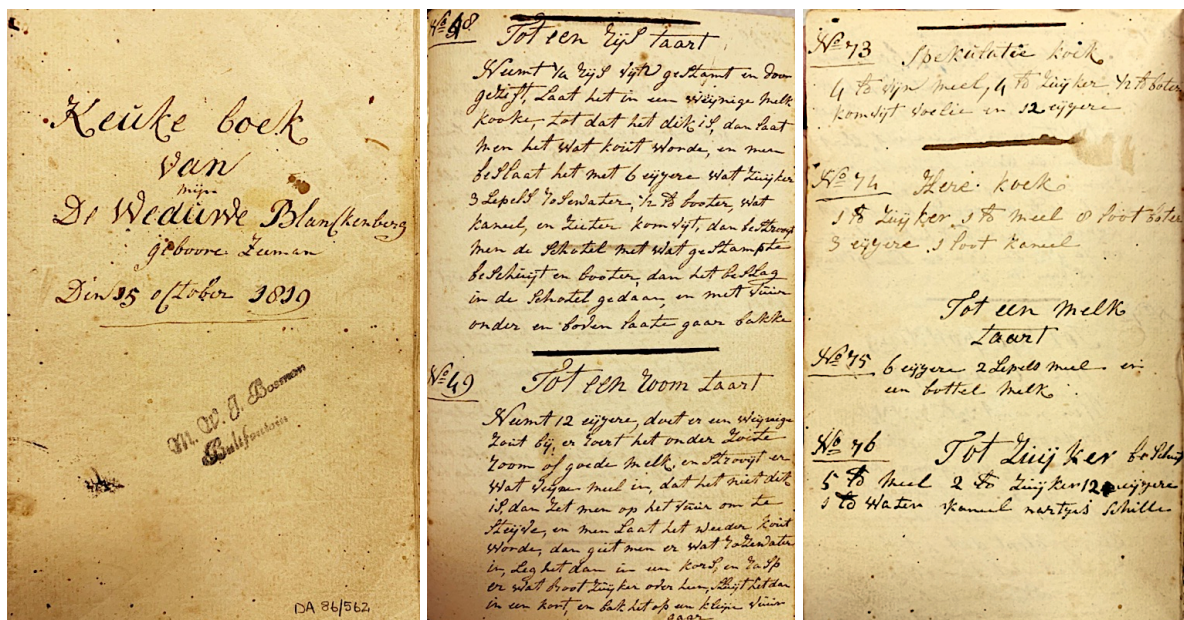


Figure 5.1: The cover and unnumbered inner pages of *Keuke boek van mijn De Weduwe Blanckenberg gebore Zeeman Den 15 October 1819*. Recipe 49 (centre) is for a Room taart (Cream tart) and Recipe 75 (right) for a Melk taart (Milk tart). (Renata Coetzee Collection, Library of the Stellenbosch Museum)

- 22 H. Gerber, 'History in the pantry: A study of Food in South Africa from 1652-1820', Unpublished manuscript with handwritten corrections and notes by the author, Chapter VII p. 37. Brenthurst Library Collection. The author passed away before the work was completed and was therefore not published.
- 23 Weduwe Blanckenberg, *Keuke boek van mijn De Weduwe Blanckenberg gebore Zeeman Den 15 October 1819*. Renata Coetzee Collection, Library, Stellenbosch Museum. While no page numbers are given, recipes are numbered and indexed accordingly.

Recipe 49 is for a *Room taart* (Cream tart)²⁴ that is made with eggs and sweet cream or good milk. A little flour is added to stiffen the mixture. It is left to cool before the mixture is poured into a tart base and baked until cooked. It is finally sprinkled with sugar. This recipe is similar to that of a milk tart, except for the fact that no butter is added to the filling and it is not flavoured in any other way. Recipe 75, for *Melk taart* (Milk tart), is briefer and makes no reference to the method, crust or flavourings. It simply reads “6 eyeren, 2 lepels meel en een bottel melk” (6 eggs, 2 spoons of flour and 1 bottle milk).²⁵

A handwritten recipe in Dutch for a *Melk Taart* (Milk Tart) forms part of a series of documents labelled as “Cookery book Mrs S.J. Hofmeyr February 1884”.²⁶ It lists ingredients to be measured in a *kommetjie* (a cup, small bowl or similar vessel) and calls for combining milk, eggs, a little flour and cinnamon sugar. Again, no reference is made as to what should be done with the filling once it is cooked. It can thus be argued that the tart could be similar to a crustless baked custard or that Mrs Hofmeyr knew the method by heart. One explanation for these omissions is the intergenerational oral transmission mentioned by Celestine Pretorius.²⁷ But one will also often find that manuscript recipes lack specific measurements, methods of cooking or, commonly for early milk tart recipes, that the ingredients and method for the pastry crust is not included. Another example is found in a recipe for a milk tart that was included in a letter sent to Mrs Malan from Klein Drostyd, Swellendam, dated 29 November 1932. The unidentified writer relates the recipe from an Aunt²⁸ Nonnie and mentions some of the secret tips for success by underlining them. These hints included that a little cold milk should be mixed with the flour and sugar before it is added to the hot milk, presumably to avoid lumps. Another instruction warns that the egg whites should be well beaten to ensure that the mixture is quite stiff for it will otherwise collapse during baking.²⁹

24 Weduwe Blanckenberg, *Keuke boek van mijn De Weduwe Blanckenberg gebore Zeeman Den 15 October 1819*. Recipe 49.

25 Weduwe Blanckenberg, *Keuke boek van mijn De Weduwe Blanckenberg gebore Zeeman Den 15 October 1819*. Recipe 75.

26 S.J. Hofmeyr, MSC 56 AA Fullalove 3, MSC 56 3(1) ‘Cookery book Mrs S.J. Hofmeyr February 1884’. No page numbers. National Library of South Africa, Cape Town.

27 J.C. Pretorius, *Die Afrikanervrou As Kultuurdraer En Kultuurskepper tot 1806*. DPhil Thesis, University of Pretoria, 1977, p. 76.

28 Although the letter was written in Afrikaans, the writer refers to the English “Aunt” instead of the Afrikaans equivalent of *Tannie*.

29 Anon., MSB 853,2(1): Letters with recipes, unnumbered pages. Katie Malan Collection, National Library of South Africa, Cape Town.

It is also possible that recipes or parts thereof could have been documented elsewhere in a housewife's manuscript, or not at all. The handwritten recipe collection of the researcher's maternal grandmother, Rachel Cornelia Coetzee (née Pretorius) (1916-1976), has a heading for *Melk Tert* (Milk Tart), but it was crossed out and the recipe left blank.³⁰ According to one of her daughters, Elizabeth Piso (née Coetzee) (b. 1944), milk tart was a popular item that was often prepared in the Coetzee house, as well as for church bazaars and school fetes. The recipe, however, was orally transmitted and known by heart by members of the household. As she had known it for decades, the researcher's aunt could pen down the recipe with ease, albeit that the quantities of ingredients were estimated and lacked the specificity of recipes we find in other manuscripts and books.³¹ In this instance the significance of oral transmission, tradition and memory comes to the fore.

Another handwritten manuscript of recipes in the researcher's private collection is that of her husband's maternal grandmother, Maria Elizabetha Magdalena Potgieter (née Schalekamp) (1906-1994), in which four references to milk tart occur. The headings are for *Melktert met Koekkors* (Milk tart with a Cake Crust³²), *Melktert – kors met olie* (Milk tart – crust with oil³³), *Nog 'n melktervulsel* (Another milk tart filling) and *Melktervulsel met Tennisbeskuitjies* (Milk tart filling with Tennis biscuits). The ingredients, with precise measurements and quantities and clear instructions for the method, are provided for the first two recipes, while the other two are written in a narrative format as paragraphs. The manuscript of recipes belonging to one of her daughters, Elsie Catharina Botes (née Potgieter) (1938-2016) contains three different milk tart recipes, namely that for a *Korslose melktert* (Crustless milk tart),³⁴ *Melktert JHB* (Milk tart JHB)³⁵ with a note that refers to *Mammie* (Mother)³⁶ and another annotation that reads *Baie goed* (Very good) – see Figure 5.2.

30 *Mevr. M. Coetzee – Resepte Boek*, Handwritten manuscript in private collection. Unnumbered pages. The author was married in 1940 and it is suspected that the collection was started around that time.

31 E. Piso (née Coetzee), 'Ouma Ray se veelberoemde melktert', e-mail to Botes, R.C., 10 February 2020.

32 M.E.M. Potgieter, *Resepte*, Handwritten manuscript in private collection. Unnumbered pages. The cake crust refers to a spreadable crust (Afrikaans: *smeerkors*).

33 M.E.M. Potgieter, *Resepte*, Handwritten manuscript in private collection. Unnumbered pages. In this recipe butter in the pastry is replaced with oil, although butter is still used to prepare the filling.

34 E.C. Botes, *Resepte*, Handwritten manuscript in private collection, p. 13.

35 E.C. Botes, *Resepte*, Handwritten manuscript in private collection, p. 46.

36 E.C. Botes, *Resepte*, Handwritten manuscript in private collection, p. 46. The term of endearment used here probably refers to the author of the manuscript's mother-in-law who resided in Johannesburg during the late 1960s. This is most probably why the abbreviated reference JHB is used in the title of the recipe.

Melktert JHB. (Waanne)

Kors: 2 koppies meelblom Bass goed.
 1 desertlepel bakpoes
 2 eiers, 2 eetlepels suiker
 1/4 lb. botter en sout

Meng droë bestanddele en voeg botter in. Klits die eiers en maak aan. Rol uit.

Vulsel: 4 eetlepels botter, 4 eiers
 2 pinte melk, knippie sout
 8 eetlepels suiker, 4 eetlepels maizena
 4 eetlepels meelblom. (eetlepels rondvol nie hoogvol)

Kook die melk en suiker saam met 'n bietjie pypkanneel, meng meel en maizena tot 'n pasta. By kookpunt roer meel en maizena in, - gebruik 'n houtlepel. Laat 15 min kook, haal af, roer botter in. Laat afkool. Klits eiergeel goed en wite stoff, voeg 1/2 teel vanille in vulsel, dan eiergeel en dan stoffgeblywe wit. Doon in kors en bak ± 25 min. Strooi pypkanneel oor wanneer koud.

Figure 5.2: Milk tart JHB, from E.C. Botes, *Resepie*, Handwritten manuscript in private collection, p. 46.

Melktert F. Maizena

1 E. L. Maizena
 1 E. L. Maizena
 1 E. L. Maizena

Lette 1 E. L. Maizena
 2 eiers gesieb
 Sout.

1 E. L. Maizena
 7-8 T. L. Suiker
 Botter in Melk.
 1 t. Vanille.
 Saarte & eier
 Witte

1 E. L. Maizena
 1 E. L. Maizena
 1 E. L. Maizena
 2 eiers gesieb
 Sout & (Suiker 8-9)
 2 eiers geel met melk
 Sout tot al die bestanddele
 Klits Wit & van dit in
 met Vanille.

Lette se Melk tert
 2 Terte

Figure 5.3: Incidentalia – an envelope and a note page as loose inserts with the ingredients for milk tart recipes as found in G.E. Basson, *Note book*, Handwritten manuscript, Private collection of recipes.

The third recipe is titled *Dolly se melktert* (Dolly's milk tart)³⁸ and is also indicated as being very good. As discussed in Chapter 3, Albala refers to the importance of such marginalia and other notes. In the instances above the provenance of the recipes are partly explained and the notes that assess each recipe clearly indicate that they were not just penned down, but also successfully prepared and enjoyed.

One of the notebooks in the recipe collection of Gwendoline Eunice Basson (née Bondesio) (1912-2005) includes a recipe for a milk tart filling,³⁹ but there are also loose inserts, including an envelope⁴⁰ and a note page, referring respectively to *Melktert* and the name *Lettie* and *Lettie se melktert* (Lettie's milk tart) with brief annotations for ingredients, which seems to be the same for both inserts – see Figure 5.3.⁴¹ Such additions are referred to incidentalialia as it supplements the content of manuscripts and speaks to the universality of Appadurai's view that women exchange recipes in various formats, as referred to Chapter 3. It would seem that the envelope and note page were at hand when it was necessary to quickly jot down a recipe.

Although a timeline for the induction or introduction of milk tart is not well-defined at this stage, the unpublished manuscripts and personal documents discussed in this section seem to indicate that the first stage of Fernandez's process of indigenization⁴² occurred. It also seems reasonable to argue that the second stage of being adopted occurred between the nineteenth and mid- twentieth centuries. The sources consulted so far can, however, not provide conclusive evidence to this claim.

38 E.C. Botes, *Resepete*, Handwritten manuscript in private collection, p. 69. Dolly refers to the sister of the author, Anna Francina Susanna van der Merwe (née Potgieter) (b. 1931).

39 G.E. Basson, *Note book*, Handwritten manuscript, Private collection of recipes. Unnumbered pages.

40 The envelope is stamped with the emblem of the Perm (SA Permanent Building and Investment Society) as part of the Nedperm Bank Group, which makes it possible to date the envelope from the period between 1988 and 1992.

41 According to Mrs. Basson's daughter, Lettie was her mother's neighbour and lifelong friend. She was also known as an expert baker.

42 B. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and D.G. Fernandez, 'Culture Ingested – On the Indigenization of Philippine Food', *Gastronomica* 3(1), 2003, p. 61.

5.4 PUBLISHED SOURCES

5.4.1 Recipe Books

Leipoldt suggests that Dutch, German and French books on cookery were found at the Cape by the eighteenth century.⁴³ In his opinion the first locally published recipes were in a pamphlet printed around 1870 in Pietermaritzburg in Natal (now KwaZulu-Natal).⁴⁴ The first substantial locally sourced and printed recipe book is *The Colonial Household Guide* by Mrs A.R. Barnes, published in 1889.⁴⁵ The author tellingly refers to herself on the title page as ‘A Housewife of the Colony’. While little is known about the author, it is apparent that she was from Kimberley – at the time a bustling mining town starting to thrive after the discovery of diamonds. In the preface Barnes declares that: “The chief object of this book is to assist in their duties the house wives and mothers of the colony”⁴⁶ as women here could no longer rely on cookbooks written in England to prepare recipes with local ingredients. She expressed the hope that her book would lend some support to women who have had little or no experience in cooking. The designation as “housewives and mothers” is in itself indicative of the position and perception of women at the time.

Barnes includes a recipe for boiled custard pudding of which the ingredients resemble that of a typical milk tart filling, but it is steamed in a cloth.⁴⁷ In the sixth revised and enlarged edition, published in 1913, it is stated that the content was revised due to the “conditions in the country” and new dishes had been introduced that are considered to be more traditional. This edition includes a recipe for a baked custard pudding that closer resembles what we now know as a milk tart.⁴⁸ Like the recipes by Apicius, Fannie Farmer and others discussed in Chapter 4, it is baked in a water bath or *baine-marie*-style and without a crust. There is also a recipe for Custard Creams that, apart from the fact that it was made with cream, resembles the preparation of a milk tart filling where it is poured in glasses and sprinkled with cinnamon or sugar on top.⁴⁹ The statement by Barnes that the book was revised to

43 C.L. Leipoldt, *Leipoldt's Food and Wine*, 2004, p. 15.

44 C.L. Leipoldt, *Leipoldt's Food and Wine*, 2004, p. 22. An earlier compilation of printed recipes might have existed in pamphlet form at the Cape, but has not survived.

45 A.R. Barnes, *The Colonial Household Guide*.

46 A.R. Barnes, *The Colonial Household Guide*, Preface.

47 A.R. Barnes, *The Colonial Household Guide*, p. 78.

48 A.R. Barnes, *The Colonial Household Guide*, 6th revised and enlarged edition, p. 105.

49 A.R. Barnes, *The Colonial Household Guide*, 6th revised and enlarged edition, p. 119.

adapt to the “conditions” in the country already hints, at this early stage, to the indigenization process suggested by Fernandez.

While *Cape Cookery: Simple Yet Distinctive* by A.G. Hewitt,⁵⁰ published in 1890, does not refer to milk tart, she gives clear instructions for preparing tart crusts⁵¹ and the first local reference to tart pans and the distribution of heat:

Copper tartpans are to be had of various sizes, and are much used in country places where stoves are not known. Charcoal is used to heat them, and fire is made above and below.⁵²

Di Suid Afrikaanse Kook-, Koek- en Resepte Boek (The South African cook, cake and recipe book) by Ms E.J. Dijkman (1840-1908)⁵³ also dates from 1890.⁵⁴ The foreword explains that the book was a response to requests of friends and family to share the recipes she had collected over 25 years.⁵⁵ By 1956 this book had seen 18 published editions, with facsimiles of the original reprinted in 1979 and 1982. It included what appears to be the oldest published recipe for *Melk Tert Fulsef*⁵⁶ (Milk Tart Filling), of which two versions are noted.⁵⁷ The first is flavoured with cinnamon and pounded almonds and it is indicated that the filling could be transferred to raw or prebaked pastry cases. In the second recipe, *Fulsef fer Melk Tert, No. 2* (Filling for Milk Tart no. 2), the milk is first infused with a cinnamon stick while the sugar is added and boiled. In the latter “*masina*”⁵⁸ (a trade name for cornflour, now written as ‘Maizena’) replaces the flour as thickening agent. Her third recipe is for *Kustard Fulsef fer Terjiis* (Custard Filling for Tartlets)⁵⁹ that is flavoured with either almond or lemon oil. Despite the reference to filling in the titles, she provides instructions

50 A.G. Hewitt, *Cape Cookery: Simple Yet Distinctive*.

51 A.G. Hewitt, *Cape Cookery: Simple Yet Distinctive*, New illustrated edition, p. 71.

52 A.G. Hewitt, *Cape Cookery: Simple Yet Distinctive*, New illustrated edition, p. 71.

53 E.J. Dijkman, *Di Suid Afrikaanse Kook-, Koek- en Resepte Boek*, 1891.

54 The author was identified as *Mejufvr.* (Ms) E.J. Dijkman in 1890 and was subsequently known as Mrs E.J. Dijkman Senr. for the first English edition of 1905. In later editions of the Afrikaans version, such as the fifteenth improved edition, she was *Mevrou* (Mrs) E.J. Dykman. This indicates the importance of titles in society, as discussed in Chapter 3, as well as the development of the Afrikaans language where ‘y’ replaced the Dutch ‘ij’ in the written language.

55 E.J. Dijkman, *Di Suid Afrikaanse Kook-, Koek- en Resepte Boek*, 1982.

56 The spelling for filling in Afrikaans would later be standardised as *vulsef* instead of *fulsef*, albeit that the phonetic pronunciation is similar.

57 E.J. Dijkman, *Di Suid Afrikaanse Kook-, Koek- en Resepte Boek*, 1908, p. 31.

58 E.J. Dijkman, *Di Suid Afrikaanse Kook-, Koek- en Resepte Boek*, 1908, p. 31.

59 E.J. Dijkman, *Di Suid Afrikaanse Kook-, Koek- en Resepte Boek*, 1908, p. 30.

up until when the filling is poured into pastry or tartlet bases, albeit that the type of pastry used is not specified. In a later chapter she does, however, explain how to prepare different types of pastry, including one for a warm tart.⁶⁰ These recipes constitute the first published versions that closely resemble our current understanding of a milk tart.

It is of interest to note that she also gives a recipe for a *Klapper Tert Fulsel* (Coconut Tart Filling)⁶¹ that, except for the absence of cinnamon and raisins, appears to be principally similar to the Indonesian-Dutch coconut tart discussed in Chapter 4. Dijkman mentions that the coconut tart should be baked in *blikborde* (enamel plates). This type of plate would later be considered the traditional dish for the preparation of a milk tart. A translation was published in 1905 as: *Mrs Dijkman's Cookery and Recipe Book in English translated from the Cape Dutch Cookery and Recipe Book*.⁶² In this edition there are three recipes for custard fillings for tarts, one custard for tartlets and three for types of *Fla*⁶³ (Custard).⁶⁴ The first is a baked custard with cinnamon, the second used peach leaves to infuse the milk and adds nutmeg for the custard that is baked in cups. The third gets pounded coriander and “nartje” (tangerine) or lemon peel added before it is baked in a warm oven, preferably in a water bath.

Hildagonda Duckitt's *Hilda's 'Where is it?' of Recipes* – in itself a telling tale – was published in 1891. She includes a recipe for a milk tart that is subtitled “Old Dutch *Spécialité*”.⁶⁵ Although her recipe is recognisably that of a milk tart flavoured with cinnamon, she does not give a clear description for the preparation of the crust. Both her recipes for coconut tarts, also rereferred to as old Dutch recipes,⁶⁶ prescribes the use of puff pastry, for which a recipe is given elsewhere.⁶⁷ Leipoldt considers this book as:

60 E.J. Dijkman, *Di Suid Afrikaanse Kook-, Koek- en Resepte Boek*, 1979, p. 102.

61 E.J. Dijkman, *Di Suid Afrikaanse Kook-, Koek- en Resepte Boek*, 1908, p. 31.

62 E.J. Dijkman, *Mrs Dijkman's Cookery and Recipe Book In English translated from the Cape Dutch Cookery and Recipe Book*, 1905.

63 The spelling for custard in Afrikaans would later be standardised as *vla* instead of *fla*, albeit that the phonetic pronunciation is similar.

64 E.J. Dijkman, *Mrs Dijkman's Cookery and Recipe Book In English translated from the Cape Dutch Cookery and Recipe Book*, 1905, pp. 63, 65.

65 H.J. Duckitt, *Hilda's 'Where is it?' of Recipes*, p. 238.

66 H.J. Duckitt, *Hilda's 'Where is it?' of Recipes*, p. 238.

67 H.J. Duckitt, *Hilda's 'Where is it?' of Recipes*, p. 194.

... an authoritative and comprehensive work on Cape cookery that for a long time remained the standard book on the subject and may even now be consulted with advantage as a thoroughly trustworthy and excellently written and annotated collection of Cape cookery recipes.⁶⁸

From the works by the women who were the pioneers of early cookery writers in South Africa – Barnes, Hewitt, but especially Dijkman and Duckitt – it is apparent that, by the late nineteenth century, there was a clear understanding of how to prepare a milk tart, that it was baked in a pastry crust in copper pans over a fire or in enamel plates⁶⁹ in an oven, and that it was mostly, but not exclusively, flavoured with cinnamon. With reference to Fernandez’s three-tier model, it is clear that introduction had been achieved. In the following section it will become clear that Fernandez’s second tier – adaptation – occurred during the early twentieth century.

The first adaptation relevant to this study appears in the *Oranje kook-, koek- en receptenboek voor Zuid Afrika* (The Orange Cook, Cake and Recipe book for South Africa) of 1906 by an author only known as Mrs DJH from Bethlehem. Its recipe for *Melk Taartvulsel* (Milk Tart Filling)⁷⁰ is the first recipe found where the filling (milk, flour, butter, sugar, fine cinnamon) is cooked and cooled before beaten eggs are folded in. It is then poured into a prepared pastry base and left to set – the filling is not baked. The first source found to consistently use the current spelling of ‘milk tart’ was *South African Cookery Made Easy*⁷¹ by Mrs P.W. de Klerk of Springfield, published in 1912. Like Dijkman, De Klerk also proposes that peach leaves, tangerine peel or pounded almonds be used in addition to the customary cinnamon flavour. It can thus be argued that the method that excludes the baking of the filling and the confirmation of flavouring agents, other than almond⁷² and cinnamon, starts pointing towards the adaptation of the milk tart locally.

68 C.L. Leipoldt, *Leipoldt’s Food and Wine*, p. 26.

69 The thin copper pans and enamel plates both conduct heat well. This ensures that the pastry does not become stodgy at the bottom when baked, but rather makes for an evenly cooked tart base.

70 DJH, *Oranje kook-, Koek- en resepte-boek Voor Zuid Afrika*, p. 58. The book was originally published in 1906 and again in 1913 with both “Melk taartvulsel” and “Klapper Taartvulsel” on p. 90.

71 P.W. de Klerk, *South African Cookery Made Easy*, p. 42.

72 Peach leaves, as well as apricot or peach kernels, emulate the taste of almonds as a flavouring agent and can therefore be used as an alternative to the nut’s distinctive taste.

The fourth edition of *Belinda's book for Colonial Housewives* saw the light in 1916.⁷³ No biographical information could be found on the author, apart from the fact that Durban is listed as the place of publication. Quite tellingly, Belinda refers to the fact that in South Africa “white servants are still a luxury”, pointing out that if the cooking is not done by the mistress of the house herself, it is done under her “very strict supervision”.⁷⁴ Although there were so many cookery and housekeeping books available she found that there was still a need for the South African housewife to have a practical cookbook devoted to her needs, and that was why she included home remedies and household tips.⁷⁵ The section on “Puddings and Sweets” contains a discussion on baking, steaming or boiling puddings as well as recipes for “Puff Paste” (Puff Pastry) and “Short Crust” (Short Crust Pastry).⁷⁶ This is the first time a recipe for short crust pastry is found in print; it is made with beef dripping, and baking powder is added to give it a lighter texture.⁷⁷ Two recipes for boiled custard are included as well a recipe for baked custard. As was the case before, the custard is baked *baine-marie* style. She flavours her custards with brandy or maraschino.⁷⁸ The book appears to have had an impact and ranked among some of the more prominent books of the time. It is of interest to note that that Eve Palmer (1916-1998), South African writer and botanist who grew up on the farm Cranemere, refers to the books used in their farm kitchen, including Hewitt’s *Cape Cookery* and Duckitt’s “*Where is it*” of recipes. She adds that:

Both my mother and Hannie depended greatly on a book, *Belinda's Book for Colonial Housewives*, published in Durban (date unknown), that I have never seen elsewhere, but which seems to have been part of early Cranemere cooking.⁷⁹

Mrs D.F. Malherbe⁸⁰ (1887-1959) published *Tafel-Vreugde* (Table Delight) in 1918. She is listed as Jacomina Elizabeth Hendrina (J.E.H.) Malherbe (née Mostert), who is known as

73 Belinda, *Belinda's Book for Colonial Housewives*, 4th Edition. The date of first publication is not certain as some sources state 1917 as the publication date. The edition used for this study is the fourth edition dated 1916 on the title page. It is assumed that the first edition appeared much earlier, but no information is available in that regard.

74 Belinda, *Belinda's Book for Colonial Housewives*, 4th Edition, Introduction.

75 Belinda, *Belinda's Book for Colonial Housewives*, 4th Edition, Introduction.

76 Belinda, *Belinda's Book for Colonial Housewives*, 4th Edition, pp. 117-119.

77 Belinda, *Belinda's Book for Colonial Housewives*, 4th Edition, p. 119. Nowadays the pastry is made with butter and baking powder is an optional ingredient.

78 Belinda, *Belinda's Book for Colonial Housewives*, 4th Edition, p. 126.

79 E. Palmer, *Return to the Camdeboo: A Century's Karoo Foods and Flavours*. E-Book loc. 164-165/464.

80 D.F. Malherbe, *Tafel-Vreugde*, p. 58.

Mynie, who published under the name of her husband, poet and writer Daniël Francois Malherbe (1881-1969).⁸¹ She lists two recipes for milk tart with slight differences, one of which is flavoured with orange flower water. More conspicuous is the fact that there is very little consistency in the description of the ingredients and methods of preparation. An example is found in the second of her recipes for the filling where ingredients that are omitted from the list are mentioned in the method.⁸² In this recipe she also instructs that the pastry should be rolled out until very thin before enamel plates are lined therewith.⁸³ The pastry recipe that she suggests for milk tart is a combination of flour, butter, brandy, water and salt.⁸⁴ A dusting of cinnamon is mentioned, if so preferred.⁸⁵

Jeanette C. van Duyn (b. 1884), author of the 1920 book *The Household Science Cookery Book*, opens her book with a statement that: “Cooking is an art that is now being studied by the most intellectual women.”⁸⁶ This can be seen as reflecting a key change in the mindset and attitude to cooking and hints at it being more than a mother’s job thereby claiming a more “respectable role for women as housewives”. Van Duyn was the secretary of the Transvaal Home Industries and formerly a lecturer in household science. Her intention in writing this book was to rouse interest and to promote a better understanding of cooking by explaining the scientific principles; thus, it is not just a collection of recipes. The book was aimed at “inexperienced housekeepers” and the hope was to assist them in becoming “intelligent workers”.⁸⁷ It hosts an extended chapter on pastry, including puff pastry, confectioner’s puff pastry and short crust pastry.⁸⁸ She gives a recipe for “Dutch Milk Tart” which was, by then, quite a standard recipe where milk is infused with a cinnamon stick, but notes that almond essence may be used or finely chopped almonds added to the filling as alternatives to cinnamon. She makes the point that, if preferred, the eggs may be separated and the stiffly beaten egg whites folded in.⁸⁹ Her recipe for a “Coconut Cream

81 Wikitree, ‘Jacomina Elisabeth Hendrina (Mostert) Malherbe (1887-1959)’, n.d. www.wikitree.com/wiki/Mosterd-290, access: October 2020.

82 D.F. Malherbe, *Tafel-Vreugde*, p. 58.

83 D.F. Malherbe, *Tafel-Vreugde*, p. 58.

84 D.F. Malherbe, *Tafel-Vreugde*, p. 128.

85 D.F. Malherbe, *Tafel-Vreugde*, p. 58.

86 J.C. van Duyn, *The Household Science Cookery Book*, Introduction.

87 J.C. van Duyn, *The Household Science Cookery Book*, Introduction.

88 J.C. van Duyn, *The Household Science Cookery Book*, pp. 407-417.

89 J.C. van Duyn, *The Household Science Cookery Book*, p. 419.

Tart” is made with milk, desiccated coconut, eggs, butter, lemon rind and castor sugar. She instructs the baker to follow the same method as for the “Dutch Milk Tart”.⁹⁰

*Die Praktiese Kookboek vir Suid-Afrika*⁹¹ by S. van H. Tulleken (née Bosman) (d. 1945) was first published in 1923 with a foreword dated 30 December 1922 by Mrs Issie Smuts (1870-1954), whose husband, Gen. J. C. Smuts (1870-1950), was the Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa at the time. The book was also published in English as *The Practical Cookery Book for South Africa* in the same year. Both were reprinted numerous times. In the foreword the author motivates that she was asked by friends and famous people to compile the book and that she tried to accommodate both ladies from farms and those who lived in town.⁹² This comment can be understood to reflect on the stark division between the rural and the urban folk of the time. It was a division that mirrored a distinct divide in society. Tulleken includes a milk tart recipe under the heading *Boere-melktert*⁹³ in the Afrikaans and “Boer Milk Tart”⁹⁴ in the English version. Both are flavoured with almond oil that could be substituted for cinnamon. These books each include a chapter on pastry and describes different types in detail.

C. Louis Leipoldt’s *Kos vir die Kenner* (Food for the Expert), published in 1933, contains a recipe for “Custard tart, Melktert”, to which an author’s note points out that there are many variations of this “simple recipe”. In his opinion the rule for a good milk tart is that the crust must be light and the filling thick and juicy. Leipoldt adds that variations of ingredients of a milk tart provides us with a variety of outcomes. As an example, he is of the opinion that rice flour, instead of wheat flour, should be used for a milk tart⁹⁵ and explains that wheat would not produce a light filling. *Leipoldt’s Cape Cookery* was written in a separate English manuscript just before he died in 1947.⁹⁶ The book, however, was only published in 1975. In it he gives his take on tarts in general, including that the most important aspect was the filling. He opines that:

90 J.C. van Duyn, *The Household Science Cookery Book*. p. 419

91 S. van H. Tulleken, *Die Praktiese Kookboek vir Suid Afrika*, 1923.

92 S. van H. Tulleken, *Die Praktiese Kookboek vir Suid Afrika*, 1923, Introduction.

93 S. van H. Tulleken, *Die Praktiese Kookboek vir Suid Afrika*, 23rd edition, 1948, p. 21.

94 S. van H. Tulleken, *The Practical Cookery Book for South Africa*, unknown edition, c. 1940, p. 13.

95 C.L. Leipoldt, *Kos vir die Kenner: ‘n Kookboek met meer as Duisend Goeie Resepte*, pp. 364-365.

96 C.L. Leipoldt, *Leipoldt’s Cape Cookery*. A note on the Author. p. 9.

The best was undoubtedly the old-fashioned milk or custard filling, modified from the old Italian recipes in so many different ways that almost every cook had his, or her, own way of making it – and thoroughly despised anybody else’s method. They were all very tasty, being good-baked custards intensively flavoured and sinfully rich.⁹⁷

He shares three recipes for milk tart. The flavours vary from the use of coconut milk, cinnamon, dried tangerine peel, honey, bitter almonds, peach kernels to nutmeg.⁹⁸ He also suggested that coconut tart was made in the same way by using freshly grated coconut.⁹⁹ It is a pity that his sources¹⁰⁰ are not available to the reader, as it would have given more insight into the origins of the recipes he wrote about. On the other hand, as mentioned earlier, it is not uncommon for cookbook authors to share and take over recipes without any indication of provenance. The following recipe, which is quite rich and exotic, serves as an example of one with an unknown origin:

You may make this by pounding in a mortar a handful of blanched sweet and one bitter almond with a few apricot or peach kernels, three tablespoonsful of sugar candy, a teaspoonful of rice flour, some flicks of mace and a bit of dried tangerine peel, which mixture you must wash with coconut milk through a sieve. With what comes through you must mix its own amount of cream skimmed from the morning’s milk, and the yolk of as many eggs as will equal it in weight. When you have well mixed these you may add, also, the white and yolk of one egg beaten up with a glass of brandy or sweet wine. This you pour into the pie dish, which you have lined with paste rolled out 14 times at least, and you must bake it quickly in a hot oven. When done you may put on top of it some grated nutmeg and little crosses made of citron peel.¹⁰¹

Here the additional preferences to the basic recipe are clearly apparent.

97 C.L. Leipoldt, *Leopoldt’s Cape Cookery*, p. 153.

98 C.L. Leipoldt, *Leopoldt’s Cape Cookery*, pp. 153-154.

99 C.L. Leipoldt, *Leopoldt’s Cape Cookery*, p. 154.

100 C.L. Leipoldt, *Leopoldt’s Cape Cookery*, p. 12.

101 C.L. Leipoldt, *Leopoldt’s Cape Cookery*, p. 154.

Towards the end of the Great Depression in 1934, the Department of Agriculture of the Union of South Africa published a pamphlet *Kos en Kookkuns* (Food and Cuisine)¹⁰² to disseminate a limited number of carefully chosen, tried and tested recipes to meet the needs of the “South African housewife”. Attention was paid to nutritional value and economical menu planning with consideration of the availability of ingredients. Again, this reflects on the designated role of women in a heavily patriarchal white society. A section on typical South African fare, reflecting South Africa’s culinary history, was also incorporated.¹⁰³ It includes a recipe for *Ou Hollandse Melktert* (Old Dutch Milk Tart)¹⁰⁴ that is flavoured with a cinnamon stick or dried tangerine peel and is baked in a flaky or puff pastry shell. A separate entry provides instructions for cream tarts with custard and variations thereof, which includes an option for grated coconut.¹⁰⁵ In the 1967 edition the reference to Old Dutch was omitted and the dish was renamed to *Outydse Melktert* (Old-fashioned Milk Tart).¹⁰⁶ This version recommends that peach leaves be added to simulate the taste of almonds. This note did not appear in the 1934 or 1947 editions.

One of the best-known South African cookbooks of the twentieth century, *Kook en Geniet* (Cook and Enjoy),¹⁰⁷ was self-published¹⁰⁸ in 1951 by author S.J.A. de Villiers (née van Schalkwyk) (1919-2010). Her obituary states that the book is found in many South African kitchens and that it contains “... hundreds of traditional recipes including bobotie, waterblommetjebredie, milk tart and vetkoek”.¹⁰⁹ This reference underlines, as in many

102 Department of Agriculture, Union of South Africa, *Kos en kookkuns* (Pamphlet no.115), 1934. Pretoria: Government Press. According to WorldCat, ‘Kos en kookkuns (die huisvrou se gids)’ <https://www.worldcat.org/title/kos-en-kookkuns-die-huisvrou-se-gids/oclc/556925669>, access: 12 October 2020, it was revised and combined with *Preservering van vrugte en groente* (Preserving of fruit and vegetables) in 1938. Various revised editions were published until 1990.

103 Department of Agriculture, Union of South Africa, *Kos en kookkuns – Die Huisvrou se Gids*, (Pamphlet no. 115), 1947, p. 7.

104 Department of Agriculture, Union of South Africa, *Kos en kookkuns*, (Pamphlet no. 115), 1934, p. 125.

105 Department of Agriculture, Union of South Africa, *Kos en kookkuns*, (Pamphlet no. 115), 1934, pp. 124-125.

106 Department of Agriculture, *Kos en Kookkuns* (Pamphlet no. 385), 1967, p. 293.

107 S.J.A. de Villiers, *Kook en Geniet – Suid-Afrikaanse Kook- en Resepteboek*, 1951. She also published the English translation – *Cook and Enjoy It* – in 1961.

108 According to the author’s obituary local publishers were not interested in publishing her book, which led to her undertaking the task with financial assistance from her husband. *Weekend Argus*, ‘Pioneer of SA Cookery SJA de Villiers dies in Stellenbosch at 91’, 26 September 2010, <https://www.pressreader.com/south-africa/weekend-argus-sunday-edition/20100926/282213712162630>, access: October 2020.

109 *Weekend Argus*, ‘Pioneer of SA Cookery SJA de Villiers dies in Stellenbosch at 91’, 26 September 2010, <https://www.pressreader.com/south-africa/weekend-argus-sunday-edition/20100926/282213712162630>, access: October 2020.

other cases, the key role that milk tart had in what can be regarded as traditional South African cuisine. It was also mentioned that the work had been reprinted several times in its original format. Through the years De Villiers included the same two recipes – one for a single milk tart¹¹⁰ and the second for an old-fashioned or traditional milk tart.¹¹¹ In both the milk is flavoured with cinnamon, the filling is baked in a puff-pastry base and cinnamon sugar is sprinkled on top before serving.

It would seem that these shared characteristics, not dissimilar to, but rather evolved from, those written about by the first local women cookery writers, became the norm by the middle and third quarter of the twentieth century. This can partly be attributed to the popularity of the book and its continued commercial success.¹¹² In addition, it should be noted that the recipe for the traditional milk tart yielded six to eight tarts. It is possible to deduce that this would be the ideal recipe for those who baked for home industries and for fundraising efforts at cake sales, at church bazaars and for school fetes, which in turn would amplify its popularity if successfully prepared and enjoyed. It can be argued that this was the case, as the recipe has been reprinted for fifty-eight years.¹¹³ From the mid-1970s De Villiers includes a crustless milk tart¹¹⁴ that still appears in the 2019 edition.¹¹⁵ The author stated that she regularly added newer interpretations and versions of recipes in order to keep each successive edition up to date with “contemporary lifestyles.”¹¹⁶

The years during and after World War II (1939-1945) saw the rise of radio as a popular medium for information and entertainment. Springbok Radio, at its inception the only commercial radio station in South Africa, commenced broadcasting on 1 May 1950¹¹⁷ and included a programme called “This is how” from that year. It was changed to an Afrikaans-

110 S.J.A. de Villiers, *Kook en Geniet – Suid-Afrikaanse Kook- en Resepteboek*, 2nd Impression, 1952, pp. 320-321.

111 S.J.A. de Villiers, *Kook en Geniet – Suid-Afrikaanse Kook- en Resepteboek*, 2nd Impression, 1952, pp. 402-403.

112 S.J.A. de Villiers, *Cook & Enjoy*, Revised Edition, 2019. The back cover states that, in total, more than a million copies of the book have been sold since 1951 and that it is still a bestseller, also with South Africans living abroad for whom it “evokes tastes of home”.

113 S.J.A. de Villiers, *Cook & Enjoy*, Revised Edition, 2019, p. 359. In this edition the recipe that yielded six to eight tarts was omitted and replaced by a recipe for a traditional milk tart in the chapter for tea-time treats.

114 S.J.A. de Villiers, *Kook en Geniet*, 39th Impression, 1977, p. 367.

115 S.J.A. de Villiers, *Cook & Enjoy*, Revised Edition, 2019, p. 359.

116 S.J.A. de Villiers, *Kook en Geniet*, 39th Impression, 1977, Preface.

117 Anon., ‘Springbok Radio’, n.d., <https://onlineradiobox.com/za/springbok/>, access: October 2020.

language program, called *Só maak mens* (This is how it's done), in 1957. This program, presented by broadcast stalwarts Esmé Euvrard (1919-1993) and Jan Cronjé (1921-1997) until the station's closure in 1985, became a popular, if not legendary, forum for the exchange of recipes and household tips.¹¹⁸ The last half of the twentieth century also saw a steady increase in the availability of recipe books. This can, in part, be attributed to the fact that advances in printing processes increased the affordability and popularity of printed media in all formats, which in turn elevated interests in cultural activities, including the arts and cooking. Undoubtedly the introduction of television in South Africa in the mid-1970s, albeit heavily censored by the Apartheid regime, added visual appeal for those in the clusters of society who had access to state-sponsored broadcasts. While popular periodicals, the daily press, cookbooks, radio and television initially did not function as reciprocal entities, it set the scene for a more open flow of information, at least in some respects, that was indicative of a smaller world that would become more connected in the global village that emerged by the end of the twentieth century.

By the same token, some of the aspects of milk tarts that came to the fore through recipe books published during the last half of the twentieth century, or early in this century, ironically also denote some of the oldest influences on the dish and recall the elements that contribute to enriching and refining a cuisine. This aligns with what historian Maxime Rodinson refers to as: local traditions, ancient techniques and adopted exotic elements.¹¹⁹ It should be noted that “Cape Malay” cuisine and all its elements was often considered to be exotic, according to writer, I.D. du Plessis (1900-1981) who writes that many of the “Cape Malay” dishes are exotic but inexpensive as most of the ingredients are locally available.¹²⁰ Hilda Gerber's *Traditional cookery of the Cape Malays* published posthumously in 1954, includes a recipe for milk tart flavoured with cinnamon and rose water.¹²¹ As mentioned in Chapter 4, rose water was commonly used as a flavouring agent in the Middle East, North Africa and the Mediterranean region, Western Europe and England for centuries. Similarly, cardamom was documented as being used in conjunction with vanilla and cinnamon in their

118 Encyclopaedia of South African Theatre, Film, Media and Performance, ‘Esmé Euvrard’, https://esat.sun.ac.za/index.php/Esmé_Euvrard, access: October 2020.

119 N. Nasrallah. ‘The Historiography of Arab Cuisine: Issues and perspectives’ in K.W. Clafin and P. Scholliers (eds), *Writing Food History – A Global Perspective*, p. 143.

120 H. Gerber, *Traditional Cooking of the Cape Malays*. Foreword. As discussed in Chapter 1 the term “Cape Malay” in this study is only used when referred to or used by the author of a certain source consulted for this research.

121 H. Gerber, *Traditional Cooking of the Cape Malays*, p. 85.

milk tarts by the ladies who shared their recipes with Betsie Roodt when she was compiling material for her book *Maleierkookkuns* (The Art of Malay Cooking) that was published in 1977.¹²² As discussed in Chapter 4, cardamom is a spice commonly used in Indian cooking, but its use was also recorded to flavour sweets in the Middle East by the tenth century and it was also known in parts of the Mediterranean after that.¹²³

Roodt's own recipe for milk tart, documented in *101 Traditional South African Recipes*,¹²⁴ is flavoured with cinnamon or tangerine-peel and very little lemon or almond essence. In Chapter 4 the use of pounded almonds, almond milk and almond cream was mentioned in England and Italy during the fifteenth century and in Dutch recipes in the sixteenth century, especially for Lent when almonds were part of the ingredients that replaced eggs and dairy. Citrus has been used in cooking and baking for the longest time and especially lemon zest and orange flower water was used by the English and Dutch to flavour custards and cream tarts. It could be argued that the use of dried tangerine peel as an alternative is due to the fact that this South African loose-skinned tangerine is easily peeled, that the skin dries well and retains a clean, but sweet, citrus flavour.

Portuguese-South African food writer Mimi Jardim refers to *Sericaia* (Milk Pudding) as the Portuguese "...version of milk tart. She says it is believed that this recipe was brought to Portugal from India."¹²⁵ In this recipe lemon rind is added to a milk tart-type filling with beaten egg whites before it is spooned into a dish in layers dusted with fine cinnamon to be baked in a hot oven. In Peter Veldsman's *Teetyd-treffers* (Teatime Favourites), published in 1993, the author, who is a prominent South African chef and food writer, explains that a little turmeric is added to the filling of a milk tart in the Boland region of the Cape to enhance the colour. In addition, the milk is sometimes infused with cardamom. His milk tart recipe is, however, flavoured with cinnamon, tangerine peel and almond essence.¹²⁶

Legendary South African chef, Cass Abrahams, writes in her autobiographical work *'n Lewe met Kos* (A Life with Food) that she flavours her version of milk tart with orange peel

122 B. Rood, *Maleierkookkuns*, pp. 73-74.

123 N. Nasrallah, 'The Historiography of Arab Cuisine: Issues and Perspectives' in K.W. Clafin and P. Scholliers (eds.) *Writing Food History – A global perspective*, p. 148.

124 B. Rood, *101 Traditional South African recipes*, p. 38.

125 M. Jardim, *Cooking the Portuguese Way in South Africa*, p. 140.

126 P. Veldsman, *Teetyd-Treffers*, p. 56.

and sprinkles it with cinnamon sugar.¹²⁷ In *The Cape Malay Cookbook*,¹²⁸ published in 2016, Faldela Williams writes that seventeenth-century Malay cooks adapted the Dutch recipe for a basic custard pie by adding a feathering of ground nutmeg or cinnamon.¹²⁹ She provides a contemporary recipe with almond essence, cinnamon or nutmeg, cardamom and custard powder.¹³⁰

In the same year chef Zola Nene published her first cookbook, *Simply Delicious*, that includes a recipe for a Milk Tart Swiss Roll.¹³¹ It can be argued that, around this time, unusual and more creative adaptations of the familiar flavours that have come to characterise a milk tart, became popular. Many such adaptations were included in the recipe book dedicated to milk tart: *The South African Milk Tart Collection* written by Callie Maritz and Mari-Louis Guy published in 2017. With this publication the journey of the milk tart is temporarily complete as they incorporate traditional recipes and fashionable variations in several formats, from milk tart brûlée doughnuts to liquid milk tarts and milk tart shooters.¹³² In their introduction the authors reiterate that every family has a cherished milk tart recipe that they believe to be the best. Some would consider anything but the traditional – with its leafy puff pastry collar – sacrilegious, while others prefer a crumblier short crust, or even no crust at all.¹³³

As we have seen with the recipes discussed above, there is a clear understanding of what a milk tart should or could be, but it is also true that the nuances of different flavourings and varied methods of preparation allow each baker to take ownership of their recipe.

127 C. Abrahams, *'n Lewe met Kos*, p. 87.

128 F. Williams, *The Cape Malay Cookbook*. First published in 1988 and published in soft cover in 1993, with 13 more reprints between 1995-2008. It was reprinted twice in 2010 and reprinted again in 2012, 2014, 2015 and 2016.

129 F. Williams, *The Cape Malay Cookbook*, p. 7.

130 F. Williams, *The Cape Malay Cookbook*, p. 69.

131 Z. Nene, *Simply Delicious*, 2016, E-book Loc. 80-84/237.

132 C. Maritz and M-L. Guy, *The South African Milk Tart Collection*, pp. 126-133.

133 C. Maritz and M-L. Guy, *The South African Milk Tart Collection*, Introduction.

5.4.2 Periodicals

The Afrikaans magazine *Huisgenoot* (House Companion),¹³⁴ also published in English from 1987, is the oldest commercial periodical that is still published in South Africa and still has the highest circulation figures of any South African magazine.¹³⁵ In the first edition of May 1916 it was announced that:

Dit sal seker 'n blye tijding wees vir die vrouens van ons land om te hoor, dat die Redaksie van 'De Huisgenoot' dit goed gedag het om elke maand 'n paar bladsije spesiaal aan die belange van die die vrou te wij. Die tijd, dat koerante en tijdskrifte alleen vir mans gedruk word, is verbij. (It would be good news for the women of the country to hear that the editorial staff of 'De Huisgenoot' thought it appropriate to dedicate a few pages on issues concerning women every month. Gone are the days when newspapers and magazines were printed only for men.)¹³⁶

The fact that only a few pages would be dedicated to women's issues is an indication of the overtly paternalistic societal values of the time. The article states that women play an important role in current society¹³⁷ and that their actions were “starting” to influence society, which served as motivation to develop their ways of thoughts and work – albeit still seriously gendered. This column appeared monthly until *Die Huisgenoot* was published weekly in 1923 and addressed knitting and sewing patterns, party planning, advice on caring for babies and recipes.

In 1925 alone, two unrelated references to milk tart were made in separate editions that indicate that this dish was already entrenched in at least the Afrikaans-speaking communities of two towns that are approximately one thousand kilometres apart. In the edition of 13 March 1925, one of four photographs depicting a fundraising fair at the teachers' college in the town of Paarl (now in the province of the Western Cape) shows a

134 J. Froneman, 'Dominante motiewe in die transformasie van Huisgenoot, 1916-2003', *Ecquid Novi* 25:1, 2004, DOI: [10.1080/02560054.2004.9653278](https://doi.org/10.1080/02560054.2004.9653278), access: October 2020, p. 62. According to Froneman the original title was *De Huisgenoot*, which later became *Die Huisgenoot* and subsequently *Huisgenoot*.

135 J. Froneman, 'Dominante motiewe in die transformasie van Huisgenoot, 1916-2003', *Ecquid Novi* 25:1, 2004, DOI: [10.1080/02560054.2004.9653278](https://doi.org/10.1080/02560054.2004.9653278), access: October 2020, p. 62.

136 Geertruida, 'Die Vrouw en die Huis', *De Huisgenoot*, Mei 1916, pp. 7-10.

137 The phrase 'current society' probably refers to the fact that it was written during World War I (1914-1918). At the time women had no power of their own, but they were called upon to help in the war effort by knitting and sewing and persuading able-bodied men to join the war. This was probably why it is stated that the population should be taught how to think and work. One must also consider that white woman gained the right to vote in 1930 and black women in 1994.

banner that clearly indicates that “*Koek Bolletjies Melktert*” (Cake Buns Milk Tart) were for sale – see Figure 5.4.¹³⁸



Figure 5.4: A photograph of a fundraising fair at the teachers’ college in the town of Paarl clearly shows that that cake, buns and milk tart were being sold. ‘Die kermis op die Perel [sic]’, *Die Huisgenoot*, 13 March 1925, p. 33.

In the edition of 24 July 1925 an article entitled *Wat die vrouens op hulle dorpe doen* (What women do in their towns) relates how the women of a congregation in Lady Grey (now in the Eastern Cape) raised funds by establishing a coffee shop. “*Omtrent elke Saterdag is daar melktert, wafels, pannekoek, koeksisters, sowel as allerhande lekker nuwemodese koek op die spyskaartjie*” (Almost every Saturday there is milk tart, waffles, pancakes, koeksisters, as well as all sorts of tasty new fashionable cakes on the menu).¹³⁹ This indicates that, by the mid-1920s, milk tart was well established as a confection and, from the latter contribution, that it was not considered to be a new or fashionable item, but rather a traditional one considering the context of pancakes and koeksisters in which it is mentioned.

138 Anon., ‘Die kermis op die Perel’, *Die Huisgenoot*, 13 March 1925, p. 33.

139 Anon., Die Koffiehuis van die Gemeente Lady-Grey, ‘Wat die vrouens op hulle dorpe doen’, *Die Huisgenoot*, 24 July 1925, p. 41.

In April 1935 *Mrs Slade's South African Good Housekeeping Magazine* was launched with Jeanette C. van Duyn, also known as Mrs Slade or Mrs H.M. Slade (the latter refers to the initials and surname of her husband, Herbert Mabin Slade) as its editor. The issue of May 1935 contains recipes for both baked and boiled custard,¹⁴⁰ while the issue of July 1935 has a detailed contribution on “The Secrets of Making Puff Pastry”.¹⁴¹ In August 1935’s Questions and Answers section Mrs A.L.C. Kimberley asks for a really good recipe for “melktert”.¹⁴² The response was the previously published recipe for a “Dutch Melktert” from the editor’s 1920 work *The Household Science Cookery Book*.¹⁴³ The filling for this milk tart is repeated in the September issue which dealt with “Sweet Pies”.¹⁴⁴ According to the research of A. Fairbairn Rommelspacher *The South African Women’s Who’s Who* stated: “...Jeanette [van Duyn] hoped that the magazine would benefit women that lived in rural areas and could therefore not easily attend her various and numerous [food] demonstrations”.¹⁴⁵ The magazine continued to inspire women until 1948,¹⁴⁶ which is also the year that *Mrs. Slade’s South African Cookery Book* was published with the “Dutch Milk Tart” recipe she seemed so fond of.¹⁴⁷

The first recipes for milk tart in *Die Huisgenoot* appear in 1937 in an article entitled *Lekker Outydse Melktert* (Tasty Old-fashioned Milk Tart).¹⁴⁸ The author explains that it is called “old-fashioned” milk tart because her generation believed that they would not be able to bake milk tarts as tasty as those of their grandmothers. She nostalgically recalls the day that she asked her grandmother for her recipe because she knew men liked milk tart.¹⁴⁹ Her grandmother shared the recipe from memory. The article concludes with three recipes for milk tart filling, the first being a plain version without butter, the second being a richer

140 H.M. Slade, ‘Baked Custard’, *Mrs Slade’s South African Good Housekeeping*, May 1935, p.70.

141 H.M. Slade, ‘The secrets of making puff pastry’, *Mrs Slade’s South African Good Housekeeping*, July 1935, pp. 150-153.

142 H.M. Slade, ‘Questions and Answers’, *Mrs Slade’s South African Good Housekeeping*, August 1935, p. 239.

143 H.M. Slade, ‘Questions and Answers’, *Mrs Slade’s South African Good Housekeeping*, August 1935, p. 239.

144 H.M. Slade, ‘Sweet Pies’, *Mrs Slade’s South African Good Housekeeping*, September 1935, pp. 246-247.

145 A. Fairbairn Rommelspacher, *The everyday Lives of White South African Housewives 1918-1945*, MA (History) Dissertation, Stellenbosch University, 2017, p. 24.

146 A. Fairbairn Rommelspacher, *The everyday Lives of White South African Housewives 1918-1945*, MA (History) Dissertation, Stellenbosch University, 2017, p. 14.

147 H.M. Slade. *Mrs. Slade’s South African Cookery Book*. 10th edition. Introduction.

148 A. Brandt, ‘Lekker outydse melktert’, *Die Huisgenoot*, 28 May 1937, p. 79.

149 The paternalistic tone of this comment cannot be ignored.

version made with butter, almond essence and ground almonds, while the third was prepared with butter, cinnamon, ground almonds, and *mosbeskuit* or *sodabeskuit* (two variations of leavened dough rusk) crumbs. It is of interest to note that a fourth recipe, for a coconut tart filling, is part of this article. The reader is instructed to follow the first recipe and add one cup of coconut.¹⁵⁰ A page marked as *Almal se Bladsy* (Everyone's Page) in *Die Huisgenoot* of 24 May 1940 shares *Outydse Resepte om die Kampvuur* (Old-fashioned Recipes around the Campfire), including one for a milk tart. It is made with puff pastry and mention is made that it is best to add the filling while hot so as to prevent a stodgy pastry. This milk tart is flavoured with orange blossom water and cinnamon sugar.¹⁵¹

In 1977 the name of the magazine was shorted to *Huisgenoot*¹⁵² and food columns became a regular feature with titles like *Wat kook ek vandag?* (What do I cook today?), *Gunstelingresepte* (Favourite recipes) and from the 1980s onwards *Wenresepte* (Winning recipes)¹⁵³ which published contributions from readers that had been tried and tested by a member of the editorial staff. An example of such a recipe is the *Uithaler-melktert* (Ace Milk Tart),¹⁵⁴ which was also marked as a “star recipe”. It was submitted by Mrs Elbé Esterhuysen of Johannesburg, who wrote that her mother, who had a reputation for her outstanding milk tarts, recently shared her secret recipe with her and that she felt obliged to share it with readers. Apart from the shortcrust pastry, the recipe is rather similar to that of the benchmark recipe by S.J.A. de Villiers.¹⁵⁵ A similar recipe, named *Die melktert wat almal wil bak* (The milk tart that everyone wants to bake) appeared in the weekly column *Resep van die week* (Recipe of the week), that became a regular feature by the mid-1980s and was branded *Getoets deur Huisgenoot* (Tested by *Huisgenoot*), which by then reiterated the success of the magazine's food columns and the reliability of the recipes it published.¹⁵⁶

The magazine's brand loyalty was amplified when recipes from the popular *Wenresepte* feature were compiled into a series of cookbooks – *Huisgenoot se Wenresepte*

150 A. Brandt, 'Lekker outydse melktert', *Die Huisgenoot*, 28 May 1937, p. 79.

151 Anon., 'Almal se Bladsy: Outydse Resepte om die Kampvuur', *Die Huisgenoot*, 24 Mei 1940, p. 69.

152 J. Froneman, 'Dominante motiewe in die transformasie van Huisgenoot, 1916-2003', *Ecquid Novi* 25:1, 2004, DOI: [10.1080/02560054.2004.9653278](https://doi.org/10.1080/02560054.2004.9653278), access: October 2020, p. 62.

153 A. Human, *Huisgenoot se Wenresepte 1*, Preface.

154 A. Human, 'Wenresepte', *Huisgenoot*, 11 August 1983, p. 100.

155 S.J.A. de Villiers, *Cook & Enjoy*, Revised Edition, 2019, p. 359.

156 Anon., 'Resep van die week', *Huisgenoot*, 14 March 1985, p. 93.

(*Huisgenoot's* Winning Recipes) – of which the first edition was published in 1981.¹⁵⁷ In this edition there are two recipes for milk tart, with one marked as “easy” that was submitted by Mrs A Jansen from Mariental, herself a grandmother, who is quoted as stating that she submitted an old family recipe “from her mother’s kitchen”.¹⁵⁸ The reference to the handing down of recipes, again, refers to the longevity of a milk tart recipe within a family and could possibly point to be part of a particular heritage and nostalgia. Her recipe is similar to the others with a shortcrust pastry published in *Huisgenoot*. The second recipe, for a coconut milk tart, uses Tennis biscuits and desiccated coconut in the crust.¹⁵⁹ Mrs Matthee from Parow contributed this recipe and she states that she has had to share it so many times that it must be considered a “winning recipe”. In the second volume¹⁶⁰ of the series a crustless milk tart,¹⁶¹ *Besondere Melktert* (Special Milk Tart)¹⁶² and Mrs Esterhuysen’s Ace Milk Tart¹⁶³ (see above) was published alongside a recipe for a pineapple milk tart.¹⁶⁴ More variations appear in volume three,¹⁶⁵ including a milk tart cheesecake, an apple milk tart and a fridge milk tart.¹⁶⁶ Like in the previous volumes, each recipe was again introduced with a note from, or about, the women¹⁶⁷ who contributed their recipes and an account of its particular popularity in their communities, families, or circles of friends.

In 2013 the editorial staff of the travel magazine *Weg* (literally “away”, but also meaning “a way” or a route) declared 27 February “Milk tart day” because it was the only snack that could relieve the late afternoon summer drowsiness in their office. It soon became known as National Milk Tart Day as some South Africans bought into the idea. It was stated that the magazine wanted to give the “humble” milk tart the recognition that it deserved as part

157 A. Human, *Huisgenoot se Wenresepte 1*.

158 A. Human, *Huisgenoot se Wenresepte 1*, p. 178.

159 A. Human, *Huisgenoot se Wenresepte 1*, p. 182.

160 A. Human, *Huisgenoot se Wenresepte 2*, 1984, Cape Town: Human & Rousseau.

161 A. Human, *Huisgenoot se Wenresepte 2*, p. 161.

162 A. Human, *Huisgenoot se Wenresepte 2*, p. 163.

163 A. Human, *Huisgenoot se Wenresepte 2*, p. 162.

164 A. Human, *Huisgenoot se Wenresepte 2*, p. 161.

165 A. Human, *Huisgenoot se Wenresepte 3*, 1987, Cape Town: Human & Rousseau. In 1987, the same year that this volume was published, Nasionale Pers (now known as Media24) launched *You* as an English language sister. The magazine to *Huisgenoot* initially only published in Afrikaans. The winning recipe publication that followed is indicative of the popularity and broader reach. A third title was added when *Drum*, a magazine aimed at a largely black readership, was acquired.

166 A. Human, *Huisgenoot se Wenresepte 3*, pp. 151-154.

167 All of the contributions mentioned were submitted by women.

of our culinary vernacular.¹⁶⁸ This led to a national competition for the best milk tart recipe – one of many such competitions.¹⁶⁹

Woman and Home Magazine – the South African edition of the international periodical – published a recipe for The Zola Milk Tart in February 2017.¹⁷⁰ It is named after chef Zola Nene, whose Milk Tart Swiss Roll was discussed earlier in this chapter. The Zola Milk Tart has a cinnamon-infused filling that remains unbaked and is poured into a prebaked shortcrust pastry. It was also published as ‘The Zola’ in *The South African Milk Tart Collection*¹⁷¹ and online by Woolworths¹⁷² and Food 24.¹⁷³ Nene became the resident chef on the popular television program *Expresso Morning Show* on SABC 3 in 2010 and went on to present other television shows for local and international channels.¹⁷⁴ This established her as a South African celebrity and the association with the recipe is therefore based on her popularity. Another local celebrity chef and television presenter with an active online presence is chef Siba Mtongana,¹⁷⁵ who adapted a recipe for milk tart that she received while attending culinary school in Cape Town. Her variation renders a light filling, which is a typical outcome when gently folding beaten egg whites into the custard. Mtongana retains the traditional Cape flavouring agents of cinnamon, cloves, cardamom and vanilla. The sugar sprinkle for the topping of this tart includes cinnamon and nutmeg.¹⁷⁶

168 S. van Taak, ‘Die geboorte van Nasionale Melktertdag’, *Weg* 124, 2015, p. 88.

169 See, for instance, Anon., ‘Beste melktert in die land – hier is die resept!’, *Sarie*, 27 May 2009, <https://www.netwerk24.com/Sarie/Kos/Resep/beste-melktert-in-die-land-hiers-die-resep-20170914>, access: October 2020; Anon., ‘Milk Tart King credits his baker’, *Cape Argus* on Facebook, 22 May 2015, <https://www.facebook.com/CapeArgus/photos/milk-tart-king-credits...ehind-every-successful-man-is-a-great-woman-as-/391157541009593/>, access: October 2020; Anon., ‘Smul aan die Melktert-meester se resept’, *Maroela media*, 1 March 2016, <https://maroelamedia.co.za/nuus/sa-nuus/smul-aan-die-melktert-meester-se-resep/>, access: October 2020.

170 M. Loewenstein, ‘The Zola Milk Tart’, *Woman and Home Magazine*, 24 February 2017, pp. 3-4. <https://www.womanandhomemagazine.co.za/recipes/zola-milk-tart>, access: October 2020.

171 C. Maritz and M-L. Guy, *The South African Milk Tart Collection*, p. 78.

172 Z. Nene, ‘Milk tart’, n.d. https://www.woolworths.co.za/content/recipe/local-lovelies/from-the-famous-foodies/bakes-to-destress/milk-tart/_A-cmp207399, access: October 2020. Also refer to their sponsored television broadcast with Zola Nene on the *Expresso Morning Show* on SABC3 – see *Expresso Recipes*, ‘Woolworths Milk Tart’, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LTZSqEKZF50>, 31 January 2017, access: October 2020.

173 Z. Nene, ‘Milk Tart’, <https://www.food24.com/recipe/milk-tart/>, access: October 2020.

174 Z. Nene, ‘About me’, n.d. <https://www.zolanene.com/about-me/>, access: October 2020.

175 S. Mtongana, ‘About Siba’ n.d. <https://sibamtingana.com/about/>, access: October 2020.

176 Mtongana demonstrated this recipe in Australia – see: S. Mtongana, ‘Milk Tart by Siba Mtongana’, 1 November 2018, <https://lovebaking.com.au/milk-tart-by-siba-mtingana/>, access: October 2020.

5.4.3 Digital and Other Media

As the above examples indicate, popular media formats have become linked in order to reach a wider audience. What appears in printed media may also be broadcast on television as demonstrations or sponsored inserts that will also find their way to web pages, personal blogs, social media and even end up as a book. The order in which these links unfold depends on the specifics of the narrative, the preferences of the participants, their popularity and possibly the interests of patrons or sponsors. The general public is not necessarily buying and paging through recipe books as frequently as they used to, with the result that the cookbook is being replaced by digital formats and media. In this sense the internet has broken what once seemed a natural tie between the recipe and the cookbook, just as it has broken the tie between the news story and the newspaper. The result is that you can now find any recipe you want online.¹⁷⁷

It also means that personal collections of recipes are gathered differently from how they were a century ago. This may also affect the intergenerational exchange of treasured recipes over the long run as individuals can now gather recipes of their preference by liking, pinning, sharing or tagging¹⁷⁸ them on social media platforms. Amongst the plethora of such examples one finds different categories, including occasional food bloggers, regular food writers who may, or may not, work across platforms and in different media, and digital communities whose aim it is to share recipes and tips.¹⁷⁹

177 A. Gopnik, 'Our Hunger for Cookbooks', in S.M. Gilbert and Roger. J. Porter (eds), *Eating words, A Norton Anthology of Food Writing*, Kindle edition, p. 459.

178 J.J. Omena, E.T. Rabello and A.G. Mintz, 'Digital Methods for Hashtag Engagement Research', *Social Media + Society* 6(3), 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1177/2056305120940697>, p. 2: "The use of hashtags is undoubtedly a part of our digital life. There is a hashtag for almost every social interest, for example, political causes or protests (#elenão vs. #elesim) ... gastronomy (#foodporn), memories (#tbt), and so on." A search on Instagram conducted on 26 October 2020 indicated that there were more than 20 600 results for #milkart and 7 700 for #melktert.

179 See, for instance, the collection of 35 milk tart recipes at: Anon., 'Versameling – Melktert Resepte', on *Lekker resepte vir die jongergeslag*, 26 February 2013, <http://lekkerreseptevirdiejongergeslag.blogspot.com/2013/02/melktert-resepte.html>, access: September 2020; Abundant entries at: Your Recipe Blog, 'Search Results for: Melktert', <https://yourrecipeblog.com/?s=melktert>, access: September 2020; The responses to a request for a milk tart recipe "with tennis biscuits and without condensed milk" in the Facebook group 'Lockdown Recipes': M.J. Bezuidenhout *et al.* <https://www.facebook.com/groups/230211888130717/permalink/267460804405825>, access: July 2020.

Salwaa Smith has hosted a popular local food blog entitled *Cape Malay Cooking and Other Delights* since 2011.¹⁸⁰ She has since published a book, based on her blog, with the same title.¹⁸¹ Mogamat G. Kamedien,¹⁸² who wrote the foreword, finds it inspiring that food bloggers like Smith are documenting, preserving, recording and promoting the feared loss of Cape Malay food traditions and heritage. According to Smith, Cape Malay cuisine has its roots in the “colourful history of intermingling cultures brought together by the seventeenth century slave trade”.¹⁸³ This is a rather over-romanticised and even glib reference to an intensely harsh period of South African history. Her book contains a recipe for a “Self Crust Milk Tart”¹⁸⁴ flavoured with cinnamon and another where she uses butter, oil, self-raising flour and cake flour for the pastry, but no flour or corn flour for the filling. Instead, 12 eggs are added to enable the tart, baked in a square dish, to be cut into squares for serving when it has cooled down.¹⁸⁵

Occasional bloggers, like Heleen from Parow, with her 2012 blog *Kombuis Stories* (Kitchen Stories) share food memories and recipes about milk tart,¹⁸⁶ while Errieda du Toit – who is a chef, researcher, respected food writer and presenter – regularly blogs on the webpage *Huiskok* (Home Cook).¹⁸⁷ Here she shares narratives and personal food memories, instructs and informs, writes significant articles and shares recipes on every possible aspect of South African cuisine, including milk tart.¹⁸⁸ Her blog on National Milk Tart Day in 2017¹⁸⁹ relayed several tips for preparing a successful milk tart, including a discussion on flavouring

180 S. Smith, ‘Cape Malay Cooking & Other Delights’, <https://www.facebook.com/capemalaycooking>, access: October 2020. On 26 October 2020 her page had 329,378 followers.

181 S. Smith, *Cape Malay Cooking and Other Delights Cookbook*.

182 Mogamat G Kamedien is the co-author of *Bibliographies of Bondage: selected bibliographies of South African Slavery and Abolition*, 2007, an independent archival researcher of South African slave history at the Cape of Good Hope, and cultural heritage activist in respect of the South East Asian connections of the UNESCO Trans Indian Ocean Slave trade route studies.

183 S. Smith, *Cape Malay Cooking & Other Delights Cookbook*, p. 7.

184 S. Smith, *Cape Malay Cooking & Other Delights Cookbook*, p. 102.

185 S. Smith, *Cape Malay Cooking & Other Delights Cookbook*, p. 106.

186 Heleen, ‘Lekker Outydse Melktert’, on *Kombuis Stories*, 26 Augustus 2012, <http://kombuisstories.blogspot.com/2012/08/lekker-outydse-melktert.html>, access: October 2020

187 E. du Toit, ‘Huiskok’, <https://huiskok.com/>, access: 10 April 2020.

188 E. du Toit, ‘Mrs J se Marvellous Melktert’, *Huiskok*, 27 February 2020, <https://huiskok.com/2020/02/>, access: April 2020.

189 E. du Toit, ‘Melktert op haar mooiste’, *Huiskok*, 27 February 2017, <https://huiskok.com/2017/02/>, access: April 2020.

agents,¹⁹⁰ handling of the pastry, and the importance of using an appropriate dish for baking. In the same entry she pays homage to the milk tart when she writes:

Melktert is 'n monument vir die selfbemaagtiging van die tannies nommer sewe wat met die inkomste van hul tuisnywerheidmelkterte hul kinders geleer kry. So 'n tert verdien 'n nasionale dag. (Milk tart is a monument to the self-empowerment of the ladies number seven¹⁹¹ who use the income of the sales of their home-industry milk tarts to educate their children. Such a tart deserves a national day.)¹⁹²

This again endorses the place of the milk tart within a national heritage and nostalgia for some in South Africa.

5.4.4 Community Cookbooks and Recipe Books about Communities

Errieda du Toit writes that the first community cookbooks appear to have been published during the American Civil War (1861-1865) in an effort to raise funds for field hospitals. The concept spread to much of the English-speaking world, including South Africa, where the earliest edition was found to be the *Paarl Cookery Book*, published in 1918, in aid of the Red Cross.¹⁹³ According to Du Toit:

Being involved in a book empowered women and gave them the feeling of doing something meaningful for their community. It was all about working and building together. In contrast to commercial cookbooks, which usually carried the name of one author, these charity books involved entire communities working together as volunteers.¹⁹⁴

With reference to the cake sales undertaken by the Women's Cultural Group of Durban in the 1950s, Goolam Vahed and Thembisa Waetjen write: "Baking was a women's skill, built upon a heritage of matrilineal knowledges, large family sizes and the alchemy of thrift and

190 Peach leaves, cinnamon sticks, nartjie peel, vanilla or cardamom, apricot stones. She also advises that almond flavour should be used sparingly and with vanilla.

191 In South Africa members of home-industries are often identified by a number allocated to them. Du Toit here refers to the universal member number seven who is assumed to be a master baker of milk tarts.

192 E. du Toit, 'Melktert op haar mooiste', *Huiskok*, 27 February 2017, <https://huiskok.com/2017/02/>, access: April 2020.

193 E. du Toit, *Share: a century of South African community recipes*, p. 9.

194 E. du Toit, *Share: a century of South African community recipes*, p. 9.

pleasure.”¹⁹⁵ This point is reiterated by Mariëtte Crafford-Barnard, who explains that women in this country have built many a church, old age home, school, parsonage and community hall through fundraising by organising cake sales.¹⁹⁶ The storyline of women raising funds through cake sales in order to improve the lives of their communities is a universal one. Turning to milk tarts, Du Toit writes:

Judging by the number of recipes for milk tarts with easy-to-spread crusts rather than puff pastry, you realise that the ladies of the parish appreciated tradition, but looked for a short cut to something for teatime.¹⁹⁷

Interestingly Du Toit adds on another note: “I also learned something about the owner of the book from the fervent ‘Flop!’ she scrawled across a recipe for crustless milk tart.”¹⁹⁸

An undated¹⁹⁹ community cookbook, typed and bound with treasury tags, is identified by a handwritten title, *Tried and Tested Recipes Compiled by the Hatfield Branch of the Transvaal Agricultural Union*,²⁰⁰ on the first page above the foreword.²⁰¹ The table of contents lists sections – including pastries and tarts – but there are also inserts without page numbers – including one on icings and frostings – that are not listed on the contents page and were thus added later. It is of interest to note that the last half of the pages are left blank so as to allow the owner to pen in her own recipes and other notes, as indeed the owner did. This adds the layer of a personal manuscript to the community cookbook that goes beyond the occasional marginalia, which is also found in the typed section of this book. Two milk tart recipes appear here, with the first in the numbered pages under the section on The uses of “German Pastry Recipes”²⁰² and the second on an unnumbered page. The former calls

195 G. Vahed and T. Waetjen, *Gender, Modernity and Indian Delights: The Women’s Cultural Group of Durban, 1954-2010*, p. 248.

196 M. Crafford-Barnard, *Kermiskos*. Introduction.

197 E. du Toit, *Share: a century of South African community recipes*, p. 9.

198 E. du Toit, *Share: a century of South African community recipes*, p. 9.

199 The original owner, Gwendoline Eunice Basson, joined the Agricultural Union in the early 1940s and it is thought that the booklet appeared in the late 1940s or alternatively early in the 1950s.

200 *Tried and Tested Recipes Compiled by the Hatfield Branch of the Transvaal Agricultural Union*, undated, Private collection of recipes. The foreword does mention that the cover, which this copy had lost, was drawn by Miss Renee du Preez.

201 The Transvaal Agricultural Union (TAU), now only known by the acronym TLU SA, was founded in 1897. It is noteworthy that a woman, Mrs Arendse, served on their Management Committee as early as 1934. Anon., ‘TLU SA History’, <https://tlu.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2019/07/HISTORY.pdf>, access: October 2020.

202 Hatfield Branch of the Transvaal Agricultural Union, *Tried and Tested Recipes Compiled by the Hatfield Branch of the Transvaal Agricultural Union*, undated, Private collection of recipes, p. 25.

for a cooked filling poured into a pastry shell baked in a Pyrex plate (in certain instances the Pyrex pie dish replaced the enamel dish), while for the latter eggs are separated and the beaten egg whites are folded into the filling before it is baked in an uncooked pastry shell. This recipe is flavoured with vanilla and almond essence, while the first only asks for almond. Both require a dusting of cinnamon as a finishing touch.

Uitgesoekte Resepte (Selected Recipes)²⁰³ is a community cookbook compiled by the Potgietersrus (now Mokopane) branch of the *Suid-Afrikaanse Vroue Federasie* (South African Women's Federation),²⁰⁴ of which at least four editions were printed in the 1960s and possibly later.²⁰⁵ The chapter on tart bases is extensive,²⁰⁶ as is the section on milk tarts, which includes a recipe for large quantities of fillings for wedding receptions.²⁰⁷ The old-fashioned milk tart recipe supplied by Mrs C. van Vuuren catches the eye. In her list of ingredients for the crust she adds "artificial butter" (might that be margarine?), but for the filling she lists "real butter". The tart is flavoured with orange essence.²⁰⁸

As discussed in Chapter 3, Ken Albala argues that historians use cookbooks as sources to reconstruct the past.²⁰⁹ By the same token, Du Toit describes community cookbooks as "treasure troves" of information as they give the reader an untainted look into the lives of ordinary people and what they eat. She writes: "They have been described as cultural selfies that tell the story of who and what we were and are – both the good and the bad."²¹⁰ It is of interest to note that a previous owner of the copy of *Uitgesoekte resepte* in the researcher's collection marked favourite recipes with drawings of hearts and even identified the recipe for pineapple tart submitted by one G. Vorster with "My ma se teri" (My mother's tart [recipe]).²¹¹ Like the added inscription of 'flop' referred to by Du Toit above, and the notes

203 SAVF Tak Potgietersrus, *Uitgesoekte Resepte*.

204 The *Suid-Afrikaanse Vroue Federasie* was founded in 1904 with the aim to provide welfare services, including family care, aged and disabled care and social development services. SAVF, <http://www.savf.co.za>, access: April 2020.

205 E. du Toit, *Share: a century of South African community recipes*, 2019, p. 189, lists three dated editions from 1961, 1964 and 1966; the copy in the researcher's collection is undated but suspected to be from circa 1968 or later.

206 SAVF Tak Potgietersrus, *Uitgesoekte Resepte*, pp. 69-72.

207 SAVF Tak Potgietersrus, *Uitgesoekte Resepte*, pp. 94-97.

208 SAVF Tak Potgietersrus, *Uitgesoekte Resepte*, p. 94.

209 K. Albala, 'Cookbooks as Historical Documents', in J. Pilcher, (ed.) *Handbook of Food History* Oxford, p. 227.

210 E. du Toit, *Share, a century of South African community recipes*. p. 7.

211 SAVF Tak Potgietersrus, *Uitgesoekte Resepte*, p. 88.

in unpublished manuscripts discussed earlier in this chapter, marginalia – being the annotations, critiques or comments made in the margin – add a layer of personal meaning through which the reader is able to add an assessment or *aide-mémoire* for future reference. In the same copy of *Uitgesoekte resepte* there are several such handwritten notes that indicate that more butter should be added to a recipe or that converts imperial to metric quantities, again a reflection on the changing times in terms of ingredients and measurements.

Knuppeldik aan Koningskos (Food fit for a king), a recipe book compiled by the Pretoria Police Officers' Women's Club and sold for the benefit of employees of the South African Police Services, has been reprinted twenty-six times since it was first published in 1985. The 2020 impression is still available. The contributor of each recipe is mentioned and anecdotes and useful tips are shared throughout. As with *Uitgesoekte Resepte* discussed above, there are notes from the compilers to identify recipes considered to be *lekker* (tasty) or *heerlik* (delicious). Mrs Joey Pienaar submitted most of the milk tart recipes, including one for a baked coconut milk tart with the crust made from coconut biscuits and desiccated coconut. The filling does not require any flavouring agents.²¹² Her recipe for a milk tart filling – described as “very tasty and creamy” – can also be used for tartlets. Pienaar gives a tip to add a mixture of coconut, brown sugar and margarine that is spread onto the base of the milk tart before the filling is poured in to be baked.²¹³

The last three books that are discussed in this chapter are recipe books about communities and although they may appear as commercial books, at least two of them are sold for the benefit of community-based institutions. The strength of community bonds and reminiscences of days gone by are captured in the *Bo-Kaap Kitchen – heritage recipes and true stories*, published in 2013.²¹⁴ Residents of the Bo-Kaap (literally the Upper-Cape, referring to the enclave on the slope of Signal Hill in Cape Town) are descendants of some of the enslaved people who were brought to the Cape, as discussed in Chapter 3. The book depicts aspects of this community’s culture as it records aspects of their history, identity, language, architecture, faith and family bonds. It is arranged according to personalities

212 Dames van die Pretoria Polisie Offisiërsvroueklub, *Knuppeldik aan Koningskos*, p. 324.

213 Dames van die Pretoria Polisie Offisiërsvroueklub, *Knuppeldik aan Koningskos*, 2018, pp. 336-337.

214 C. Fraser, *Bo-Kaap Kitchen – heritage recipes and true stories*.

whose narratives and memories unfold before their recipes are shared. The story of the milk tart recipe in this book is linked to the personal narrative of Hajira Ely, who has a community reputation for her milk tarts. She was taught to cook and bake by her grandmother and still bakes milk tart for anyone who asks her to. She writes: “People always compliment me on my milk tart. I give them the recipe, but they say it just does not come out the same.”²¹⁵ Ely’s milk tart recipe is described as a “sweet, creamy custard pie”.²¹⁶ She makes her crust with self-raising flour, sugar and margarine. For the filling she uses milk, seven eggs, custard powder and vanilla essence.

The *District Six Huis Kombuis Food and Memory cookbook*²¹⁷ captures the bygone spirit of daily life in District Six, established in 1867 and so named as it was the Sixth District of the Municipality of Cape Town. By the mid-twentieth century it was home to a mixed-race, cosmopolitan community with richly layered food cultures. In 1966 the Apartheid regime declared District Six a “whites-only” area, which initiated a process of forced removals and demolitions between 1968 and 1981.²¹⁸ The book is the outcome of memory methodology workshops involving former residents who collected and documented narratives “...about food that is deeply rooted in the cultural practices and heritage that exists in the fragile memories of those who were forcibly displaced.”²¹⁹ Tina Smith, curator of the museum and the author of the book, accounts for the significance of the project as follows:

The ... title, *Huis Kombuis* [Home Kitchen], was inspired by descriptions of kitchens in participants’ homes as being the heart of the home, its central social space. Here traditional recipes were brought to life in the rituals of cooking, eating and the sensory exchange at the *tafel* [table]. Culinary rituals and home-craft practices maintained and reinforced deep significances and connections with District Six as a place of home, family and community. The recipes in the book comprise facets of the collective memory of District Six that unlock complex narratives about family histories and cultural life in the District. For many, the story of food is inseparable from the spirit of place and a sense of belonging.²²⁰

215 C. Fraser, *Bo-Kaap Kitchen – heritage recipes and true stories*, p. 171.

216 C. Fraser, *Bo-Kaap Kitchen – heritage recipes and true stories*, p. 175.

217 T. Smith, *District Six Huis Kombuis Food and Memory Cookbook*.

218 T. Smith, *District Six Huis Kombuis Food and Memory Cookbook*, pp. 28-29.

219 District Six Museum, ‘Huiskombuis Food and Memory Cookbook launch’, <https://www.districtsix.co.za/project/district-six-huiskombuis-food-and-memory-cookbook-mini-exhibition-and-launch-2016/>, access: October 2020.

220 T. Smith, *District Six Huis Kombuis: Food and Memory Cookbook*, p. 15.

Magdalena Welsh's *Melk Tert* recipe was contributed by her granddaughter, Marion Abrahams-Welsh, who recounts the tradition of Sunday afternoon tea that was served with treats, which was often milk tart or cake. Welsh's recipe includes a short crust pastry and a filling that is flavoured with a cinnamon stick. Nutmeg is sprinkled on top before baking.²²¹ Abrahams-Welsh embroidered her grandmother's speciality "melktert" recipe as a "reminder of afternoon tea in District six."²²² This is part of the creative textile and craft design workshops of former residents with an emphasis on "reflection, remembrance and innovation".²²³ Images of these embroidered tea cloths are available as postcards – see Figures 5.5 and 5.6.



Figure 5.5: Marion Abrahams-Welsh holds a plate that reminds her of her childhood in District Six.



Figure 5.6: The embroidered tea cloth with the recipe for *Melk Tert* made by Marion Abrahams-Welsh. <https://www.districtsix.co.za/project/huis-kombuis/>, access: October 2020.

The book *Pniëlers Bak & Brou – Resepte van die dorp se mense ... van toeka tot nou* (Pniëlers Bake & Botch – Recipes from the village's people ... from days of yore to the

221 T. Smith, *District Six Huis Kombuis: Food and Memory Cookbook*, pp. 228-229.

222 T. Smith, *District Six Huis Kombuis Food and Memory Cookbook*, p. 229.

223 T. Smith, *District Six Huis Kombuis Food and Memory Cookbook*, p. 14.

present)²²⁴ was published in 2020 as part of the celebrations that marked the 175th anniversary of the Pniël Congregational Church. The settlement of Pniël, located between Stellenbosch and Franschhoek in the Western Cape, was the first missionary station established by the Apostolic Union in 1843 with the aim to serve the spiritual needs of freed enslaved people.²²⁵ The recipes for the book were contributed by the community and tested by the three teachers who compiled the book. A recipe for a milk tart filling was submitted by Sandra Myburgh, granddaughter of Sarah Maria de Wet (née Adams) (1890-1996), who was also known as *Ouma* or *Ma* (Grandmother or Mother) Sêr, a formidable woman and mother of nine children who is fondly remembered as “baker of note”.²²⁶ Her recipes, including one for milk tart, are still used by the family for celebrations and special occasions.²²⁷ The milk tart filling is flavoured with lemon essence and the recipe stipulates that egg whites should be whisked and folded into the custard before it is baked in a puff pastry shell.²²⁸ Hers is one of the few milk tarts that are not finished with a sprinkling of cinnamon. Food writer Myrna Robins provides context for this exception with this description:

Milk tart (*melk tert*) is a Cape custard tart which has become a South African institution: it’s our most famous and popular sweet tart and is a typical example of 18th century Dutch fare sparked with a favourite Cape Malay spice – cinnamon. This is a hotly debated dessert with numerous versions, from those with featherlight layers of pastry to crustless modern kinds. The search for the best version is never-ending...²²⁹

It is evident from the above that the milk tart bakers, their recipes, but more so their milk tarts, have a place of prominence in the memories of a range of community members who shared or enjoyed their baked treats. Bakers, and their communities, have time and again been proven to have a close association with a specific recipe, which often had its roots in fundraisers and bake sales for church bazaars or school fêtes. It also emerged that, in some

224 C. Klate, L. Myburgh and M. Myburgh, *Pniëlers Bak & Brou – Resepte van die dorpie se mense ... van toeka tot nou*.

225 L. Cyster, M. Cyster, E. Damon and F. Simpson, *Pniël en sy mense*, 2008, pp. 8-9.

226 S. Adams, E.D. Damon, G. Henry and R.M. Petersen, *Van Toeka tot Nou: Die stamregister van Carel Cyster en Sara Willemse van Pniël 1844-2019*, p. 257.

227 C. Klate, L. Myburgh and M. Myburgh, *Pniëlers Bak & Brou – Resepte van die dorpie se mense ... van toeka tot nou*, p. 70.

228 C. Klate, L. Myburgh and M. Myburgh, *Pniëlers Bak & Brou – Resepte van die dorpie se mense ... van toeka tot nou*, p. 109.

229 M. Robins, *The Cape Cookbook*, p. 89.

communities, specific bakers are respected and valued for their milk tarts as, if you will, the milk tart queens of those community.

5.5 CONCLUSION

The three-tier model of Fernandez was discussed in Chapter 1 in terms of new foodstuffs that are introduced to a culture, adopted and adapted by that culture and thus subsumed and indigenized by that culture. From the analysis in this chapter it is clear that the presence of certain ingredients (milk, eggs, sugar and a variety of possible flavouring agents) created an understanding of what a milk tart is and that there were few variants once the mother recipe was established and associated with the name “milk tart”. It would seem that this point was achieved by the mid-twentieth century. At the same time, the nuances of different flavouring agents and the assorted methods of preparing the filling and the pastry (if there was one) allowed each baker to take ownership of their recipe. This gave rise to the association of a person’s name with a specific recipe and the memories associated with that person. On the other hand, related recipes, including that for coconut tart, and interpretations of the benchmark recipe into newer adaptations, from drinks to imaginative new applications based on the same flavour profile, indicate that the milk tart has indeed been subsumed and indigenized into the South African culinary frame of reference as set out in the Fernandez model.

The last chapter, the epilogue, will explore the milk tart beyond indigenization and the physical artefact. It will reflect on the milk tart as an integral part of South African everyday life and vocabulary, both literally and metaphorically.

WMI

CHAPTER 6: BEYOND THE INDIGENIZATION OF MILK TART

The cuisines of the world come together at the southern tip of Africa.¹

6.1 INTRODUCTION

This opening statement by philosopher Martin Versveld (1909-1995) depicts a romantic view of the diverse cultural influences that has become the South African cuisine we know today. Myrna Robins, a South African food and wine writer, agrees with Versveld when she refers to the “... rainbow people, and a rainbow mix of customs and culinary ways”² that characterises South African people and traditions. If one is not familiar with the history that brought about this convergence, some of which was discussed in Chapter 3, one could be tempted to subscribe to their idealism. Unfortunately, the history of South Africa’s hybrid cuisine also involves struggles that developed over centuries and continue to evolve. This fragmented and chequered history plays a prominent role in the journey of the milk tart. This chapter, therefore, is structured according to the format in which the recipes appeared in South African history and over time.

1 M. Versveld, *The philosopher’s cookbook*, p. 183.

2 M. Robins, *The Cape Cookbook*, Preface.

Ruth Reichl, a chef and food writer, is of the opinion that: “For food evokes words; we enjoy speaking about food and taste almost as much as we enjoy eating itself.”³ In *Hunger for Freedom – The story of food in the life of Nelson Mandela*,⁴ anthropologist Anna Trapido asserts that food allows for the examination of the past in a manner that bypasses standard responses. Trapido describes the act of eating as universal, but also visceral, when she writes how familiar tastes may invoke memories, “complete with associated emotions”.⁵ For this reason she argues that food may act as a means through which a reader may access historical events in context so as to experience what it was like to be there. She uses recipes as “... archaeological evidence to capture the mood of the moment. They are an era as reflected in the bowl of a soup spoon.”⁶

In times of difficulty and pain – such as when lovers are separated – narratives are built on the memories of favourite meals.⁷ A poignant example relates to *amasi* (fermented milk in the Zulu and Xhosa languages) that features in a letter Nelson Mandela (1918-2013) wrote to his wife, Winnie, from prison on Robben Island. Mandela wrote:

I long for *amasi* – the food for which I loved to sharpen my teeth and to stretch out my tummy, the act that I really enjoyed, went straight into my blood and into my heart and that produced perfect contentment.⁸

In Chapter 4 of this study the roots of the milk tart were examined and it became clear that the dish is not unique or original to South Africa. Chapter 5 studied the development and history of milk tart in South Africa and conclusively found that, in terms of Fernandez’s three-tier model,⁹ it had been introduced, adapted and subsumed into South African culinary and cultural identities. This chapter investigates the unseen components, referred to above, as symbolic attributions of the milk tart that surpass food’s purpose of nourishment and in so doing, transcend the recipe and the physical artefact. It considers factors that are vital

3 R. Reichl, ‘A Toast to Taste’, in *Eating Words: A Norton Anthology of Food Writing*, 2015, loc 385/9332, Kindle edition.

4 A. Trapido, *Hunger for Freedom – The story of Food in the Life of Nelson Mandela*, 2008.

5 A. Trapido, *Hunger for Freedom – The story of Food in the Life of Nelson Mandela*, p. xii.

6 A. Trapido, *Hunger for Freedom – The story of Food in the Life of Nelson Mandela*, p. xii.

7 A. Trapido, *Hunger for Freedom – The story of Food in the Life of Nelson Mandela*, p. 112.

8 A. Trapido, *Hunger for Freedom – The story of Food in the Life of Nelson Mandela*, p. 35.

9 B. Kirshenblatt-Gimblett and D.G. Fernandez, ‘Culture Ingested – On the Indigenization of Philippine Food’, *Gastronomica* 3(1), 2003, p. 61.

components of food culture that ultimately contribute to social, cultural and ritual activity in people's lives – in other words, their identity and subsequently their heritage.

These associations manifest strongly, especially in the latter half of the twentieth century, as figurative connotations with aspects of daily life, including political affairs, the collective accounts of communities and the narratives presented by, or about, individuals. The following thematic analysis investigates these aspects and their associations with milk tart.

6.2 ASSOCIATIONS WITH COMMUNITIES AND IDENTITY

From the middle of the twentieth century more narratives appear in the daily press about women's activities, albeit about eminent women more than others. An example from the early years of the National Party's Apartheid rule relates to a function organised for Mrs J.G. Jansen (1889-1979) and Mrs J.G. Strijdom (1910-1999), respectively the wives of the Governor-General and the Prime Minister of the Union of South Africa at the time, at the Voortrekker Monument in October 1956. According to the journalist of the *Rand Daily Mail*, the function was described as decidedly formal and Victorian, but "... no Victorian food was ever as good as the melktert,¹⁰ the bubble-thick pastries with relishes inside and the cut rolls covered with sliced biltong".¹¹ In the same year Mrs Jansen again featured in the news in an article about prominent ladies who contributed recipes to a community cookbook in aid of the high school in Dundee (now in KwaZulu-Natal). Mrs Jansen's secretary sent a note attached to a recipe for milk tart explaining that Mrs Jansen submitted the recipe for milk tart as it is one of her favourite sweet treats.¹² Also in 1956, Hastings Beck¹³ writes about milk tart in his book *Meet the Cape Food* as follows:

10 Note that the *Rand Daily Mail*, an English newspaper that regularly expressed opposition to, and criticised, the Apartheid regime, treated the Afrikaans word *melktert* as it would any other English word – see Chapter 1.

11 Anon., 'Victorian Party in City for Mrs. Jansen, Mrs Strijdom', *Rand Daily Mail*, 12 October 1956, p. 8. Again, it is notable that the ladies, both wives of important men, were addressed by their husband's initials and surname.

12 Anon., 'Bekende Vroue se Resepte' in *Byvoegsel tot die Burger, Die Volksblad en Die Oosterlig*, 19 Mei 1956, p. 30.

13 There is very little biographical information available on Mr Beck. The researcher found a reference to him in an article that refers to him as the head of the Censor Board during the period 1929-1943.

During the war a general who is, in the grand phrase of Izaak Walton, now with God, visited a school in the Cape, somewhat suspect of subversive activities. On his return he declared, ‘There is absolutely nothing wrong with that school. Why! they entertained me with milk tart!’

This, said in all seriousness, indicates the symbolic significance of the milk tart in the Cape cuisine. Milk tart is more than a pastry. It is a gesture, like the breaking of bread or the offering of salt in other times and places. When judges go to circuit or Important Persons open bazaars, they must be served milk tart. To fail to do so would be a social solecism if not an actual affront.¹⁴

The topic of compiling collections of recipes is also central to another article published in the *Rand Daily Mail* of 1 November 1967 that reported that the South African Women’s Club of London published a booklet, available from the diplomatic mission in Trafalgar Square, that featured their recipes for “... koeksisters and melktert¹⁵ ...”, among other South African favourites.¹⁶

During the South African Border War (1966-1990) communities who supported the erstwhile South African Defence Force often collaborated in their support of soldiers, including organising entertainment and transport¹⁷ for national servicemen (and -women). Trains transporting soldiers to and from the so-called “operational areas” in South West Africa (now Namibia) and the Angolan border passed through the Karoo town of De Aar daily, where, in the mid-1970s, the nine local women’s organisations decided to take turns to serve tea and refreshments, including koeksisters and milk tart, to the soldiers. “Sometimes we have two trains with five hundred boys a day, but we always have something delicious for them to eat.”¹⁸ The gesture by the ladies of De Aar is patently to provide the soldiers with a break and some comforting treats, such as melktert, that remind them of home. To this end a soldier is quoted as saying: “It’s a little bit of home and I know they really care about us. Every soldier here feels the same way.”¹⁹

14 H. Beck, *Meet the Cape Food*, p. 47.

15 Refer to footnote 12 above.

16 Anon., ‘From S.A. to London with Taste’, *Rand Daily Mail*, 1 November 1967, p. 11.

17 According to the Dictionary of South African English a ‘Belleryna’ was “A woman acting as a telephone contact for national servicemen needing transport between cities.” Dictionary of South African English, <https://dsae.co.za/entry/belleryna/e00696>, access: October 2020.

18 C. Lazar, ‘Koeksusters from the ‘tannies’ at De Aar’, *Rand Daily Mail*, 1 October 1976, p. 4.

19 C. Lazar, ‘Koeksusters from the ‘tannies’ at De Aar’, *Rand Daily Mail*, 1 October 1976, p. 4.

Milk tart has frequently been identified as a symbol related to South Africa or associated with South African identity. One instance where it found metaphorical application is in the article “Community policing: ‘Cherry pie’ or *melktert?*”,²⁰ by Bill Dixon, a professor of criminology. He postulated that, just as cherry pie is considered to be a confection that is recognisably American, milk tart is similarly identified with South Africa. Another example is found in *Lig* (Light), a local magazine, in which the editor, Adri-Louise van Renen-Fourie, wrote about a project of Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu to collect Bibles for a million children. She concluded with the following statement: “*Die ‘Arch’ – só deel van Suid-Afrika se lief en leed soos melktert by ‘n boere-tee.*” (The Arch²¹ – so much part of South Africa’s ups and downs as milk tart at a tea party).²² Neither of these articles deemed it necessary to clarify what a *melktert* was or its connection to the country, as it was so integral to a broad cultural understanding.

6.3 ASSOCIATIONS WITH MEMORIES AND PERSONAL NARRATIVES

Zindzi Mandela (1960-2020), daughter of anti-Apartheid activists Nelson Mandela and Winnie Madikizela-Mandela (1936-2018), recalls how they often received milk tarts during the monthly visits from the ladies of the Black Sash²³ while the Mandela women were exiled to the Free State in the late 1970s and early 1980s.²⁴ On one occasion, she remembers how activists Helen Joseph (1905-1992) and Barbara Waite were arrested when they brought a milk tart to celebrate Zindzi’s mother’s birthday. Zindzi Mandela reminisces: “She [Waite] knew we couldn’t live without her milk tart, so she kept sending them even when we were moved to Brandfort.”²⁵ Waite’s recipe, which is also included in Trapido’s

20 B. Dixon, ‘Community policing: ‘Cherry pie’ or *melktert?*’, *Society in Transition* 35(2), 2004, pp. 251-272. DOI: [10.1080/21528586.2004.10419118](https://doi.org/10.1080/21528586.2004.10419118), access: October 2020.

21 With reference to his former position as Archbishop, Desmond Tutu is fondly known among South Africans as the ‘Arch’ – see Anon., ‘Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Mpilo Tutu’, n.d. <https://www.sahistory.org.za/people/archbishop-emeritus-desmond-mpilo-tutu>, access: October 2020.

22 A-L van Renen-Fourie (ed.), ‘Van my Lig’, *Lig*, 1 September 2010, p. 4.

23 “The Black Sash was formed in 1955 and it began as a tea party of six women, Jean Sinclair, Ruth Foley, Elizabeth McLaren, Tertia Pybus, Jean Bosazza and Helen Newton-Thompson. The women were opposed to the Senate Bill which asked for a two thirds majority of both houses of parliament to remove coloureds from the common voter’s role. The organisation grew into an avenue for liberal women to oppose government policies by means of marches, convoys, demonstrations and vigils.” Anon., ‘Black Sash’, n.d. <https://www.sahistory.org.za/article/black-sash>, access: September 2020.

24 A. Trapido, *Hunger for Freedom – The story of Food in the Life of Nelson Mandela*, pp. 129-131.

25 A. Trapido, *Hunger for Freedom – The story of Food in the Life of Nelson Mandela*, p. 131.

book,²⁶ is made with a shortcrust base that is baked. She does not bake the filling, which is flavoured with vanilla, but pours it into the baked base and leaves it sprinkled with cinnamon sugar. Reflecting on this, Trapido comments that: “Cross-culturally, food is an invaluable social tool for communicating emotional messages.”²⁷

Messages of love and endearment through the description of food are portrayed in letters between couples separated as a result of circumstances, as described above. Similarly, it is also possible to communicate love to the eater without saying a word. The heart surgeon Chris Barnard (1922-2001) engages with the notion of love instilled in baking in his article “What is food without love?”²⁸ Barnard refers to aunt Lalie, who was an exceptional *melktert* baker, who he met as a young doctor. He often teased her and threatened to steal the recipe and have it analysed in the hospital laboratories. She would always laugh it off by responding that she knew the recipe by heart and that it was not written down. Instead, she advised that the analysis should rather be of the touch of a woman’s fingers, as she believed that anybody could make a *melktert*, but that making it for somebody special made the difference. Her husband, Oom Willem, never touched *melktert* again after aunt Lalie died, which prompted Barnard to declare that the widower knew the difference between love and food. This storyline reminds one of the words of Hajira Ely from the Bo-Kaap, referred to in Chapter 5, when she says that people are not interested in her recipe for milk tart as it is not the same when she does not prepare it.²⁹

In the autobiographical poem *Familieresep?* (Family recipe?) renowned author and poet Antjie Krog reflects on her own lanky hands that, seemingly, are unable to produce many things that her grandmother excelled at, including milk tarts. In the first stanza she asks:

26 A. Trapido, *Hunger for Freedom – The story of Food in the Life of Nelson Mandela*, p. 128.

27 A. Trapido, *Hunger for Freedom – The story of Food in the Life of Nelson Mandela*, p. xvi.

28 C. Barnard, ‘What is food without love?’, *Rand Daily Mail*, 30 November, 1981, p. 14.

29 C. Fraser, *Bo-Kaap Kitchen – heritage recipes and true stories*, p. 171.

wat was daar in die hand van my ouma
wat pasteikorse eierwitlig kon vou
melkterte kon vul met die heilgenot van manna
wat brode oornag smuls kon laat uitboud uit haar vaal panne

(what was there in the hands of my grandmother
that could easily fold beaten egg whites into pie dough
that could fill milk tarts with the joy of manna
and could allow breads to swell out of her grey pans)³⁰ (own translation)

A century of recipes, personal reflections and family narratives are recorded in the earlier mentioned *Return to the Camdeboo* by Eve Palmer (1919-1998).³¹ In the book a variety of puddings made by the Palmer women on the family farm Cranemere is described: “There were Maizena puddings eaten with cinnamon and sugar, ...baked custards and milk tarts. Some recipes were never written down”.³² Nonetheless, the author argues that knowing the background and origin of food creates an interest that makes a dish more attractive. Palmer writes:

It is a pleasure to know that the East Indies sent us our spices – the cinnamon, nutmeg and pepper, the mace and ginger and cloves – that are so much part of our Cranemere cooking; and that my father’s favourite bobotie was known in Europe in the Middle Ages after the Crusaders had brought back turmeric from the East (so, at any rate, the great Leipoldt says).

It is fun to know that Malays brought us koeksisters and the English roly-poly, that the first milk tarts came from Italy and that Hannie and Sita’s quince honey came originally from ancient Greece.³³

As with the bobotie mentioned above, the author also relied on Leipoldt to establish the possible origins of milk tart. Even so, Palmer chose to use a recipe published by the *Farmer’s Weekly*, claiming it to be the “prince of melktert”.³⁴ Note the masculine connotation to the normally feminine milk tart.

30 A. Krog, *Otters in Bronslaai*, p. 37.

31 E. Palmer, *Return to the Camdeboo: A century’s Karoo foods and flavours*. 1992.

32 E. Palmer, *Return to the Camdeboo: A century’s Karoo foods and flavours*, E-Book loc. 157/464.

33 E. Palmer, *Return to the Camdeboo: A century’s Karoo foods and flavours*, E-Book loc. 162/464.

34 E. Palmer, *Return to the Camdeboo: A century’s Karoo foods and flavours*, E-Book loc. 369-370/464.

The subtitle on the cover of the magazine *You* of 22 March 2018 announces: “I want to take milk tart & mealiepap to the rest of the world”.³⁵ This was a quote from Charlene, Princess of Monaco, who grew up in South Africa. The article that the headline was based on revealed that the princess wished to compile a cookbook with the aim of including recipes, the stories behind them and related folk tales in order to introduce simple and scrumptious South African cuisine to a global audience.³⁶ It also states that the princess is passionate about:

... the meals of her childhood in South Africa. Milk tart, bobotie, and braai broodjies are just a few of the dishes she dreams of – which is why she wants to launch a cookbook featuring these and more.³⁷

While food has the power to evoke powerful memories, it can also stir up feelings of nostalgia and even act as a symbol of escapism, as artist Henk Serfontein recollects in ‘*My Ouma in Kaneel*’ (My grandmother in cinnamon),³⁸ published in the weekly online paper *Vrye Weekblad* (Free Weekly Press) in May 2019. As a point of departure Serfontein employs the poem ‘*My nooi is in ‘n nartjie*’ (My sweetheart is tangerine) by poet D.J. Opperman (1914-1985), in which flavours are assigned to various women until the poet declares that, in fact, there is a woman in every fragrance. Serfontein explains that he keenly associates the smell of cinnamon (which he describes as an anti-depressant) and vanilla with his grandmother, who baked milk tarts in her apartment in Sunnyside, Pretoria. Longing for the days of his youth, he refers to her handwritten ‘*Recepte*’ (Recipes) manuscript as the “diary of his youth” and a “family album”.³⁹

35 *You*, 22 March 2018, No. 589.

36 M. Fockema, ‘Princess of Potjie’, *You*, 22 March 2018, p. 9. At the time the article was written there were no details as to where the recipes should be sent to or when the publication was anticipated.

37 M. Fockema, ‘Princess of Potjie’, *You*, 22 March 2018, p. 9.

38 H. Serfontein, ‘My ouma in kaneel’, *Vrye Weekblad*, 10 May 2019, <https://www.vryeweekblad.com/lewenstyl-en-kos/2019-05-10-my-ouma-in-kaneel/>, access: May 2019.

39 H. Serfontein, ‘My ouma in kaneel’, *Vrye Weekblad*, 10 May 2019, <https://www.vryeweekblad.com/lewenstyl-en-kos/2019-05-10-my-ouma-in-kaneel/>, access: May 2019.

6.4 ASSOCIATIONS WITH POLITICAL AFFAIRS

While it was mentioned in Chapter 4 that milk tart was often served at state events during the Mbeki presidency,⁴⁰ he was certainly not the first South African head of state to do so. The front page of the *Rand Daily Mail* of 6 January 1975 announced that “Melktert and eclairs for tea...”⁴¹ were served at formal talks where the South African Prime Minister John Vorster (1915-1983) hosted Britain’s Foreign Secretary, Mr James Callaghan (1912-2005), in Port Elizabeth.

Milk tart was a conciliatory symbol when former President Nelson Mandela went to the Afrikaner enclave of Orania in August 1995 to visit Mrs Betsie Verwoerd (1901-2000), widow of the former Prime Minister Hendrik Verwoerd (1901-1966), who is known as the architect of Apartheid. This was a bitter-sweet visit that was tainted with irony as Mrs Verwoerd then lived in self-imposed “exile” while, at the time, Mr Mandela lived in the house she once occupied as first lady of the country thirty years before. Author, Kate Sidley describes the event as follows:

It is a picture that borders on the surreal – Nelson Mandela and Betsie Verwoerd chatting over tea and coffee, melktert and koeksisters, in the company of the Verwoerd daughter, Anna, and of course Cachalia⁴² and Sisulu.⁴³ Verwoerd’s son-in-law, Carel Boshoff, the founder of Orania, hovered about.⁴⁴

Apparently, Mandela told Verwoerd, then 94, that he was looking forward to the visit and that he was happy to be there. It was well-known that Mandela was devoted to the principle of reconciliation and the visit was seen as a generous gesture during a turbulent time in South Africa’s history. After tea the group took a short walk to the statue of Hendrik Verwoerd and as Mandela was towering over the statue he proclaimed: “I didn’t know he was so small”.⁴⁵

40 H. Little, *Bon Appétit, Mr President*, p.137.

41 Anon., ‘Melktert and eclairs for tea...’, *Rand Daily Mail*, 6 January 1975, p. 1.

42 Amina Cachalia (1930-2013) was a struggle stalwart and friend of Nelson Mandela.

43 Albertina Sisulu (1918-2011), also referred to as The Mother of the Nation, was married to struggle icon Walter Sisulu (1912-2003).

44 K. Sidley, *100 Mandela Moments*, p. 179.

45 K. Sidley, *100 Mandela Moments*, p. 180.

Staying with politics, it was the suspension of then Public Prosecutor, Vusi Pikoli, that resulted in the appointment of a commission of inquiry that led to the reappearance of milk tart in the headlines. “Frene and the melktert of ‘national interest’” was the heading in the *Mail and Guardian* of 18 October 2007. In what the paper sarcastically called “politics”, President Mbeki was reported to have muddled the suspension of Pikoli and subsequently appointed Frene Ginwala, former Speaker of the National Assembly, to head a commission of inquiry to regain the public’s confidence through open hearings. The commission’s terms of reference placed great emphasis on national security, which was understandably not easy to achieve in a public and open forum. Political analyst Richard Calland remarked that defining national interest was “like trying to nail a melktert⁴⁶ to the ceiling”,⁴⁷ indicating that it was a hopeless action.

On 2 April 2009 Mbeki’s successor, President Jacob Zuma, met with various Afrikaner organisations where he proclaimed that: “Of all the white groups that are in South Africa, it is only the Afrikaners that are truly South Africans in every sense of the word.”⁴⁸ In response columnist Karen Bliksem,⁴⁹ who proudly claimed to be of Afrikaner heritage, named “her” weekly column in the *Sunday Independent* of 5 April “Tough times for the souties⁵⁰ as Onse Jacob⁵¹ blesses the melkterts”. The columnist wrote about that “she” felt all warm and fuzzy after the President’s announcement. In this context melktert is used as a metaphor for Afrikaans-speaking white South Africans and, once again, the Afrikaans term is used as an English word.

46 Once again, an English newspaper made reference to *melktert* as if it were an English word.

47 R. Calland, ‘Frene and the melktert of ‘national interest’’, *Mail and Guardian*, 18 October 2007, p. 33.

48 Anon., ‘Zuma: Afrikaners true S Africans’, *News 24*, 2 April 2009, <https://www.news24.com/News24/Zuma-Afrikaners-true-S-Africans-20090402>, access: October 2020.

49 Journalist Jeremy Gordin wrote under the pseudonym Karen Bliksem, which is a play on the name of Danish author Karen Blixen (1885-1962) who wrote *Out of Africa*, which was also the title of Bliksem’s column in the *Sunday Independent*. The word ‘bliksem’ in Afrikaans is a derogatory term for a scoundrel, but could also refer to bolt of lightning or to clobber someone.

50 A slang reference to English-speaking South Africans.

51 Literally translated as ‘Our Jacob’.

Evita's Kossie Sikelela, a cookbook by Evita Bezuidenhout,⁵² mixes recipes with invented personal narratives that have bearing on, and parodies, South African politics.⁵³ The recipe for “Tannie’s Melktert” (Aunty’s Milk Tart) is introduced by this homage to the dish:

I voted for the NP! ⁵⁴ No wonder so many of us Afrikaners are so deeply disturbed. And then I was introduced to melktert. It was soft on my pain, candy floss against my fears. Melktert is more than milk and less than tart. It is that kiss of life from one who knows life to one who needs love. Melktert is the cushion after a traumatic fall from Hell, the duvet of warmth after the avalanche of guilt has frozen your soul. Melktert is the ultimate weapon of sweet destruction. Hand a piece of melktert to the person who confronts you with a gun. You will end up with that gun, leaving the antagonist with another few kilos on his hips.⁵⁵

6.5 CONCLUSION

As indicated by Versveld at the beginning of this chapter, it is evident that the cuisines of the world came together at the tip of southern Africa. In most cases it was not a willing or voluntary convergence and therefore the process to reach the fusion of these cuisines must have been troublesome. It is apparent from many of the recipes discussed in this dissertation that the influences of the custard tarts described in Chapter 4 were introduced and adopted in the early colonial era by the people doing the cooking, either on their own or under instruction. It is clear from the recipes investigated that a basic milk tart recipe evolved over time, but that each baker had her own secret to milk tart success, be it in the method, the pastry, the preparation of the filling or its flavouring. The role and influence of all the women from diverse cultures is undeniable in this process and most often not acknowledged. Considering the milk tart as an artefact, it becomes clear that the archive was not only silent about the women in history, but also about their day-to-day activities – whether it was baking a milk tart or recording a recipe for the family collection.

52 Actor and satirist Pieter-Dirk Uys uses the stage name Evita Bezuidenhout for one of his most famous characters. She is supposedly a former ambassador, a socialite and an activist – see P-D. Uys, ‘About us’, <https://evita.co.za/about/>, access: 26 October 2020.

53 E. Bezuidenhout (P-D. Uys), *Evita's Kossie Sikelela*, Cape Town: Umuzi, 2010.

54 Refers to the National Party that ruled South Africa from 1948 until the first democratic elections in 1994.

55 E. Bezuidenhout (P-D. Uys), *Evita's Kossie Sikelela*, p. 107.

A1

APPENDIX 1: RECIPES

The recipes documented in this appendix comprise of those from international sources (Recipes 1 to 31), with the remainder from South African sources. They have been ordered chronologically as far as available knowledge on their dates of documentation or publication allowed. Where possible existing translations were transcribed, but in cases where that was not possible free translations (indicated as an own translation) have been used. The sources are quoted in the format of footnotes used in the main body of this study.

RECIPE 1: “Tyropatinam” (Milk and egg sweet)

Origin: Roman, 1st-3rd century CE

Estimate the amount of milk necessary for this dish and sweeten it with honey to taste; to a pint of fluid take 5 eggs; for half a pint. Dissolve 3 eggs in milk and beat well to incorporate thoroughly, strain through a colander into an earthen dish and cook on a slow fire [in hot water bath oven]. When congealed sprinkle with pepper and serve.

Apicius, 2009, *De Re Coquinaria*, translated and edited by J.D. Vehling and published digitally as Project Gutenberg’s Cooking and Dining in Imperial Rome, E-book 29728, Recipe 301, no page no. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/29728/>, access: March 2020.

RECIPE 2: “Tharîda with Flat Breads in a Tajine”

Origin: North Africa and/or the Iberian peninsula, 13th century CE

Knead two ratls [1 ratl=468g] of white flour [with water] and make very thin flatbreads, then cook in the bread oven a little.

Take a qadah [~1 lit.] and a half of milk and stir in it eight beaten eggs and some flour, and cook on the fire [makes a thin egg custard].

Take a new tajine and a ratl [1 ratl=468g] of fresh butter and put some of it [the butter] in the bottom of the tajine, and some of the milk [custard], and put on it a flatbread made according to this recipe, until the flatbreads and the butter are used up [this means you continue the layers of butter, bread and custard, reserving some of the custard]. Then put in the top of the tajine a thick flatbread to cover everything [to protect the top from burning]. Then send it to the bread oven.

And when it is partly cooked, send for it [retrieve it] and moisten with the rest of the milk [custard], so that it is used up and all of it is absorbed. Then return it to the oven until completely cooked.

Then send for it and put it on a plate, and break the tajine carefully so that it comes out whole. [You must remove the bread “lid”, and you can then try to invert it, rather than breaking your pot. Be careful. This is a delicate custard pie.] Then split with a knife into two separate pieces, and sprinkle with sugar, and present, God willing.

Anon., *The Book of Cooking in Maghreb and Andalus in the era of Almohads*, by an unknown author, also known as Anonymous Andalusian Cookbook, pp. 172-173.

RECIPE 3: Daryols

Origin: England, 1390

Take cream of cow milk, or of almonds; do thereto eggs with sugar, saffron and salt. Mix it evenly. Place in a pie shell two inches deep; bake well and serve. (Own translation)

S. Pegge, *The Forme of Cury, a roll of ancient English cookery. Compiled, about A.D. 1390*, 1 May 2006. <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/8102>, access: May 2020.

RECIPE 4: Daryalys

Origin: England, early 15th century CE

Take almond cream or cow's milk and eggs and beat them together well and make small pastry shells and pour in the mixture and add sugar to the mix and good spices or take good fat cheese and eggs so as to give it different colours, green, red or yellow and bake them and serve. (Own translation)

Anon., *A collection of ordinances and Regulations for the Government of the Royal Household, Made in Divers Reigns. From King Edward III (reign from 1327-1377) to King William and Queen Mary (1689-1694) Also Receipts in Ancient Cookery.* <https://archive.org/details/collectionofordi00soci/page422/mode/2up>, access: March 2020, Recipe 344, p. 443.

RECIPE 5: Milk pastries

Origin: Portuguese, 15th century

Boil 230g of water in a pot. As soon as it reaches a boil, add 230g of milk and 230g of sugar. Next beat a dozen eggs, whites and yolks separately, adding a little wheat flour, just enough to make it hold together. Dissolve this mixture in a little milk, to make a paste. Then pour everything into the boiling broth. Remove it as soon as it's cooked. Make a pastry dough with sugar, 2 egg yolks and a little butter. After it's well kneaded make the pastries in appropriate shapes and take them to the oven, not letting them bake completely. Remove the molds from inside the pastries, filling the pastries with the sweet egg filling. Next, brush the pastries with butter and put them back in the oven to finish baking. This recipe makes 6 large pastries.

F. Gomez, (translator), *A Treatise of Portuguese Cuisine from the 15th Century*, 2017, <http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra-visor/um-tratado-da-cozinha-portuguesa-do-seculo-xv--0/html/#PagMedi>, access: July 2020.

RECIPE 6: Milk custards

Origin: Portuguese, 15th century

Beat 4 eggs very well with 5 spoons of sugar, 5 of wheat flour, and a pinch of salt. Next grease some little clay ramekins with lots of butter, and place the cream inside, putting them in the oven to cook with a little butter on top.

F. Gomez, (translator), *A Treatise of Portuguese Cuisine from the 15th Century*, 2017, <http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra-visor/um-tratado-da-cozinha-portuguesa-do-seculo-xv--0/html/#PagMedi>, access: July 2020.

RECIPE 7: Flans of almond milk

Origin: Duchy of Savoy, Western Europe, 1420

And again, flans of almond milk: according to the quantity of flans which you are making take the quantity of almonds, have them well and cleanly blanched and washed and then have them very well brayed; and take very clean fair water and let him strain his almond milk into a bowl or a cornue which is fair and clean according to the quantity of flans which he should make. And then take fair amidon and wash it in fair fresh water and put it in a fair bowl when it is washed; and then take your almond milk and put it into your moistened amidon [starch], and put in a little saffron to give it color; and then strain it through a fair strainer into a fair and clean bowl, and put in a little salt and a great deal of sugar. And when this is made call your pastry-cook who is making the crusts and let him put them in the oven a little to harden; and then let the said pastry-cook have a fair spoon either of wood or of iron attached to a good stick to fill in the oven the little crusts of the said flans.

Maistre Chiquart, *Du fait de cuisine*, translated by E. Cook.

http://davidfriedman.com/Medieval/Cookbooks/Du_Fait_de_Cuisine/Du_fait_de_Cuisine.html, access: January 2020, recipe no. 28.

RECIPE 8: Flathons

Origin: England, 1450

Take milk and three yolks of eggs, pour through a strainer. Blend sugar with melted butter and add to the mix with salt, make good pie shells and put into the oven until baked through. Then take a [saucepan?] filled with the mix. Pour into the pie shells and bake a while longer. Remove and place on a serving dish and sprinkle with white sugar and serve. (Own translation)

T. Austin (ed.), *Two fifteenth-century cookery-books*, 1888,

<https://archive.org/details/twofifteenthcent00aust>, access: March 2020, p. 51.

RECIPE 9: Custard lumbarde

Origin: England, 1450

Take good cream and [parsley] leaves and whole eggs, break them into the mix, strain them through a strainer so that that the mix is thick enough to hold together [I presume their equivalent of beating the mix], take [faire Mary?] and dates cut in halves or thirds and prunes, put them in a pie shell. Then put the pie in the oven and bake until hard. Remove from the oven. Pour the mix into the pie, and return to the oven and bake until done [the next part says: add sugar and salt to the mix that is put into the pie.] If it is Lent [the period before Easter when you sacrifice the luxuries of your daily fare!] use cream of almonds and leave out the eggs and [Mary?]. (Own translation)

RECIPE 10: Custard

Origin: Aquileia, Northern Italy, 1465

Prepare a dough as for a pie and fill well with flour so that it is flat, and cook it in a pan until it is a little bit dry [thus blind baking]. Once you have done this, remove the flour and take some egg yolks, some milk, some sugar, and some cinnamon. Once you have mixed these things together, place on the dough and cook the same way you would a torte, turning it all around, and stirring often with a spoon. When you see that it begins to thicken, add a little rose water and stir well with a spoon. When it has finished thickening, it is done. Note that it should not be overcooked and it should tremble like a junket.

Martino of Como, *The Art of Cooking - The First Modern Cookery Book*, translated by J. Parzen, p. 90.

RECIPE 11: Lenten custard

Origin: Aquileia, Northern Italy, 1465

Take some almond milk and sugar, and some rose water and some cinnamon. In order to make it thicken, add a little powdered starch; follow the same directions as in the recipe above [see Recipe 4].

Martino of Como, *The Art of Cooking - The First Modern Cookery Book*, translated by J. Parzen, p. 91.

RECIPE 12: Custard pie in the Sienese style

Origin: Aquileia, Northern Italy, 1465

Take twenty almonds, blanch and crush as finely as possible; take a half libra of sugar, twelve eggs, and a pint of milk, and two quatrini worth of cinnamon, a sufficient amount of salt, a half cup of fresh provatura that has been crushed as fine as possible; grease a baking pan with butter and then flour and add the mixture. Place the pan or baking pan far from the flame, covered, over moderate heat. Note that in the mixture you can also add a ladleful of lasagne cooked in good broth, and as soon as it is done, top with sugar and rose water.

Martino of Como, *The Art of Cooking: The First Modern Cookery Book*, translated by J. Parzen, p. 136.

RECIPE 13: Custard pie in the Sienese style

Origin: Italy, 1474

Make a little crust as I said in the section on rolls. Put in two egg yolks that have been well beaten, milk, cinnamon and sugar, and stir it near the hearth until it thickens.

RECIPE 14: To make a nice titbit

Origin: Dutch, c.1484

Take sheep's milk in a pot and yolks of eggs ground into it and temper it with this. Add saffron and enough sugar. Then take a white linen cloth and put this [folded] two or three times over the opening of the pot. Tie it round the neck of the pot. Then put the pot in a kettle full of boiling water and let it boil a long time. Let it then cool and make all round [in] the pot two or three small holes straight [down] with a spoon. Put on the dish enough sugared spices and sugar.

Anon., *Keukenboek*, University Library of Ghent 1035, reprinted as *Keukenboek, uitgegeven naar een handschrift der vijftiende eeuw* by C.A. Serrure in 1872, later renamed as *Wel ende edelike spijs* (Good and Noble Food) when translated to English by C. Muusers, <https://www.coquinaria.nl/kooktekst/Edelikespijs0.htm>, access: July 2020.

RECIPE 15: To make cream custard

Origin: Dutch, 1510

So, you shall take eighteen eggs or nine yolks in a pot of cream and a little flour mixed into it. Into this one shall add potsugar. Thus, one shall let it bake until it is enough.

T. van der Noot, *Een notabel boecxken van cokeryen*, translated by C. van Tets, http://users.telenet.be/willy.vancammeren/NBC/nbc_r120.htm, access: March 2020, Recipe 120.

RECIPE 16: For a Lenten custard

Origin: Dutch, 1510

Take almond milk and rice well ground and passed through [a sieve]. You shall also put in to it wheat flour. To this you shall also take sugar and cinnamon powder with ginger powder. Mix this all together and put it in there. Let them stand thus to bake until they are enough. When they are baked enough so take them out and let them stand to cool.

T. van der Noot, *Een notabel boecxken van cokeryen*, translated by C. van Tets, http://users.telenet.be/willy.vancammeren/NBC/nbc_r120.htm, access: March 2020, Recipe 122.

RECIPE 17: To make an English tart

Origin: Bavaria, Western Europe, 1553

First take one third of a quart of cream, some three quarters of a pound of fat and a quarter pound of sugar, which must be allowed to cook with the milk and the fat. After that take six eggs, according to how [large]

they are, and, also six egg yolks, beat two eggs with a small spoonful of flour and stir it until smooth, and when it is well-beaten, then beat into it all the eggs, put it all in a pan and let it simmer together until it becomes fairly thick, and watch out that it does not burn, and when it is cooked then salt it a little and pour in a little rose water on it while it is still warm, and let it bake.

S. Welserin, *Das Kochbuch der Sabina Welserin*, translated by V. Armstrong, http://www.daviddfriedman.com/Medieval/Cookbooks/Sabrina_Welserin.html, access: May 2020, Recipe 36.

RECIPE 18: An egg tart

Origin: Bavaria, Western Europe, 1553

Take eight eggs, beat them well and take one quart of milk. Let it boil in a pan and put the eggs into it and stir it around until it becomes thick, and let it become cool, so that the water evaporates. Put in it sugar and a little butter. If you would like, you can also put into it ground almonds and rose water. And let it bake.

S. Welserin, *Das Kochbuch der Sabina Welserin*, translated by V. Armstrong, http://www.daviddfriedman.com/Medieval/Cookbooks/Sabrina_Welserin.html, access: May 2020, Recipe 78.

RECIPE 19: If you would make an egg tart

Origin: Bavaria, Western Europe, 1553

Then take eggs and milk and prepare them as for an egg cake and put almonds and sugar into it. It is delicious and good.

S. Welserin, *Das Kochbuch der Sabina Welserin*, translated by V. Armstrong, http://www.daviddfriedman.com/Medieval/Cookbooks/Sabrina_Welserin.html, access: May 2020, Recipe 104.

RECIPE 20: To make a cream tart

Origin: Bavaria, Western Europe, 1553

For three tarts, which should each be about a foot wide, take one quart of the best cream that you can find, and put it in a pan over the fire. And put two eggs, which are well beaten, into it, and when it begins to boil, then take six more eggs and let them be well beaten and put them into it, and some good flour and pour it slowly into the pan. And one should stir it constantly, so that it does not burn. After that, when the eggs have been poured in, throw a quarter of a pound of fresh butter into it and let it simmer together, until it becomes thick. Afterwards let it cool, and when it is cold, then put it into three pastry shells, each of which is a foot wide. And let it bake in the tart pan. If you would put it straight away on the table, then sprinkle a quarter pound of sugar over all three, together with a little rose water. And one should serve it forth while it is yet warm. This recipe was given to me by the elder Bernhard Meiting, I have not yet prepared it.

S. Welserin, *Das Kochbuch der Sabina Welserin*, translated by V. Armstrong, http://www.daviddfriedman.com/Medieval/Cookbooks/Sabrina_Welserin.html, access: May 2020, Recipe 122.

RECIPE 21: To make an egg tart

Origin: Bavaria, Western Europe, 1553

Make a dish of egg-milk with ten eggs and three quarts of milk. Pour it on a cloth so that the water trickles out, pour it in a bowl and stir it up well. Put an abundance of sugar and cinnamon into it. And if you think that it has not drained off well enough, then beat into it two more eggs and strain the water off. Make a pastry shell with an egg and put a hazelnut-sized piece of fat into it and roll the dough out well. Pour the filling on the crust and bake it slowly until it is crisp, or else it will be doughy.

S. Welserin, *Das Kochbuch der Sabina Welserin*, translated by V. Armstrong, http://www.daviddfriedman.com/Medieval/Cookbooks/Sabrina_Welserin.html, access: May 2020, Recipe 128.

RECIPE 22: An egg tart with beaten eggs

Origin: Bavaria, Western Europe, 1553

Take eight eggs for a repast and beat them well and prepare them as for an egg dish. Take a half handful of blanched almonds, pound them small and put rose water therein, take a half handful of rice and let it cook a little, pour it on a cloth, so that it drains, and pound it with the almonds, take the beaten eggs and mix them also into it. Put cinnamon therein, pour it on a small pastry shell, let it bake nicely, so that it becomes brown, and when you will bring it to the table, then sprinkle it with cinnamon.

S. Welserin, *Das Kochbuch der Sabina Welserin*, translated by V. Armstrong, http://www.daviddfriedman.com/Medieval/Cookbooks/Sabrina_Welserin.html, access: May 2020, Recipe 129.

RECIPE 23: An egg tart

Origin: Bavaria, Western Europe, 1553

Take twenty eggs and as much milk as eggs and beat it well together. Let it cook together like egg-milk, then stir sugar into it. Make a pastry shell and roll it smooth. Then put rose water therein and put it into a tart pan, put heat under and over it, bake it until brown.

S. Welserin, *Das Kochbuch der Sabina Welserin*, translated by V. Armstrong, http://www.daviddfriedman.com/Medieval/Cookbooks/Sabrina_Welserin.html, access: May 2020, Recipe 135.

RECIPE 24: How to make milk tarts

Origin: Bavaria, Western Europe, 1553

Take two pints of good milk and bring it to a boil and put into it a fist sized piece of fat and beat ten eggs, put them into the milk and then when it is well blended, so that it becomes very firm, then watch out, that it does not burn. Take it off and pour it onto a cloth, so that the water runs off and let it cool. Put afterwards sweet wine into it, some cream, sugar and small raisins, salt it a little, and make a tart dough under it, but don't cover it.

S. Welserin, *Das Kochbuch der Sabina Welserin*, translated by V. Armstrong, http://www.daviddfriedman.com/Medieval/Cookbooks/Sabrina_Welserin.html, access: May 2020, Recipe 187.

RECIPE 25: To make a custard

Origin: England, 1585

Break your eggs into a bowl, and put your cream into another bowl, and strain your eggs into the cream, and put in saffron, cloves and mace, and a little cinnamon and ginger, and if you will, some sugar and butter, and season it with salt, and melt your butter, and stir it with a ladle a good while, and (dubbe?) your custard with dates or currants. (Own translation)

T. Dawson, *The Good Huswifes Jewell*, <http://www.medievalcookery.com/notes/ghj1596.txt>, access: July 2020.

RECIPE 26: How to make a fine pie

Origin: Dutch, 1593

Take nine eggs with the white or fourteen eggs and a pint of sweet-milk. Leave together to boil and when it is cooked, add much sugar and rose-water.

C. Battus, *Cocboeck*, <http://www.kookhistorie.nl/index.htm>, access March 2020, Recipe 242. English translation by J. Presscott.

RECIPE 27: “Capilotado” (custard in the Hungarian fashion)

Origin: England, 1660

Take two quarts of goat or cow's milk, or two quarts of cream, and five fresh eggs or ten egg yolks, a pound of sugar, half an ounce of cinnamon, a little salt, and some saffron. Strain it and bake it in a deep dish; add the juice of four or five oranges, a little white wine, rose water, and beaten ginger when baked. (Own translation)

R. May, *The Accomplisht Cook, or, The whole Art and Mystery of Cookery, fitted for all Degrees and Qualities*, 28 September 2007, <http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/22790>, access: May 2020.

RECIPE 28: How to make an egg tart

Origin: Dutch, 1769

Add sugar, orange water and butter to egg yolks and allow to set on the fire; grate lemon zest over, pour it in a crust and allow to bake. Dusting it with sugar is a good idea. (Own translation)

Anon., *De Volmaakte Hollandsche Keuken Meid met aanhangsel*, p. 27.

RECIPE 29: How to make a fine pie

Origin: Dutch, 1824

Mix together 60 thimbles of sweet milk and butter, 6 egg yolks, flour, a little sugar, zest of one lemon, grated, a cinnamon stick that will be removed, place on the fire while stirring, remove from the fire and let cool. Pour the mixture into a pastry case and baked until cooked. Own translation.

J. Noorduyn, *De Volmaakte Geldersche Keukenmeid*, p. 179.

RECIPE 30: Klappertaart (Coconut tart)

Origin: Dutch/Indonesian, 20th century

Five young coconuts, 3 to 4 tablespoons plain flour, half a bottle of fresh milk, 3 to 4 spoons of sugar, eight egg yolks, four tablespoons butter, 8 egg whites, 4 tablespoons raisins, cinnamon powder to taste.

Place the butter in a saucepan on the stove and slowly heat for the butter to melt, add the flour, milk and sugar and keep stirring. In a separate bowl, blend together a ladle of the hot milk mixture and egg yolks, add this mixture to the mixture on the stove and keep stirring until the mixture has thickened. Remove from the heat and stir in the raisins and chopped coconut. Pour the filling into a pastry crust and bake for 15 minutes. In the meantime, beat together the eggs and some sugar to form a stiff meringue consistency. After fifteen minutes remove the tart from the oven and top with the meringue mixture, return to the oven and bake for a further 20 minutes. Sprinkle with cinnamon.

C. Handoyo, Clarissa, C. Grace, Milka and S.A. Firdayanti, 'Klappertaart: An Indonesian-Dutch influenced Traditional Food', *Journal of Ethnic Foods* 5(2), June 2018, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jef.2017.12.002>, access: September 2020, p. 150.

RECIPE 31: Lagan Nu (Wedding custard)

Origin: Persian/Indian, 20th century version, but its origin could date back to the 8th Century

Makes 6-8 ramekins of custard.

Ingredients:

Eggs 4 large

Milk 2 cups (preferably whole milk)

Sugar ½ cup

Vanilla essence 1 tsp or Vanilla beans

Saffron 1 tsp
Nutmeg powder ½ tsp
Cinnamon powder ½ tsp (optional)
Nuts – Pista (Pistachio nuts) and almonds – ¼ cup for garnish (optional)

For Baking: Pre-heat the oven to 325° F or 162° C. Take a baking tray and fill water to one fourth its capacity. Place ramekins in it – 4-6 – however many you can fit and adjust the amount of water making sure it doesn't rise above the halfway mark on the outside of each ramekin. I place the water bath in the oven while it is preheating to warm it up.

The custard mix: Measure milk and stir in saffron (crush strands in a pestle before adding), ground nutmeg, cinnamon and cardamom. Mix with a fork and let it stand while you cream sugar and eggs.

In a mixing bowl measure sugar and then whisk in eggs, one at a time. Once the sugar has been creamed add the vanilla essence. I used essence, but if you have vanilla beans then extract the seeds and add about a teaspoon's worth into the mixture.

Finally, combine milk and eggs. Pour in the egg and sugar mix into the milk and gently mix it in. You could use a whisk or even a spatula and mix as if folding stiff eggs. Saffron and the yolks will give it a really nice yellow colour which will deepen during the baking process.

Pour equal amounts into clean ramekins or cups, filling up only about half of each. If you pour more mix then it might rise over the edges while cooking.

Simply open the oven and place the ramekins in the baking tray water bath. Bake for 30 minutes or until a cake tester or toothpick comes out clean.

Note: The custard could also be steamed in a stove top steamer.

K. Smara, 'Lagan Nu Custard with Persian Flair', 2018,
<https://kitchenpostcards.com/2018/08/17/lagan-nu-custard-with-persian-flair/>, access: August 2020.

RECIPE 32: Tart (Milk) Old Dutch *Spécialité*

Origin: South Africa, 1891

1 pint milk.
2 tablespoonfuls of Sugar.
A tablespoon of Butter.
A tablespoonful of Maizena.
2 eggs.
A stick of Cinnamon.

Boil the milk with sugar and cinnamon, stir butter and maizena and a little cold milk together, pour into the boiling milk. Boil for five minutes,

pour into a basin, and when cold add two eggs well whisked. Line a tart-dish with paste, pour in this mixture, and bake for twenty minutes.

H.J. Duckitt, *Hilda's 'Where is it?' of Recipes*, p. 238.

RECIPE 33: Milk Custard for Tarts

Origin: South Africa, 1905

1 Pint of milk, 3 tablespoonsful of white sugar, 1 large tablespoonful of butter, a heaping tablespoonful of maizena, 3 or 4 eggs, a small stick of cinnamon. Mode. - Put the cinnamon in the milk near the fire in a saucepan to steep for half an hour or longer, then boil with the sugar, strain and return it to the saucepan, stir in the butter, mix the maizena with a little cold milk, and stir it to the milk butter and sugar. Boil for three or four minutes, take care that it does not burn. Now pour the mixture into a basin and when cold beat up the yolks of the eggs very lightly and stir them into the mixture, whisk the whites to a stiff froth, and stir these in also. Grease and line a tart pan or deep tin plate with puff paste, glaze the edge with well beaten egg, pour in the mixture and bake in a hot oven for twenty minutes.

E.J. Dijkman, *Mrs Dijkman's Cookery and Recipe Book In English translated from the Cape Dutch Cookery and Recipe Book*, p. 63.

RECIPE 34: No. 190 Melk Poeding (Milk Pudding)

Origin: South Africa, 1906

3 cups of flour, 5 eggs, 1 cup of butter, ½ teaspoon baking soda, 1 cup sugar, 1 bottle milk, very little tangerine peel and ginger. (Own translation)

DJH, *Oranje kook-, Koek- en resepte-boek Voor Zuid Afrika*, p. 29.

RECIPE 35: Milk tart filling, no. 1

Origin: South Africa, 1908

Bring half a “kommetji” (bowl, glass or cup) of milk to the boil. In a separate bowl mix together half a “kommetji” finely ground flour (cake flour), with half a “kommetji” milk and stir this mixture into the boiling milk, while boiling, add a good lump of butter, ¼ lb (pound) white sugar, 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon, a small cup finely pounded almonds and 6 beaten eggs. Stir until well combined and pour the mixture into a pre-baked pastry shell or into a prepared uncooked shell and bake in a hot oven. (Own translation)

DJH, *Oranje kook-, Koek- en resepte-boek Voor Zuid Afrika*, p. 31.

RECIPE 36: Filling for Milk Tart, no. 2

Origin: South Africa, 1908

1 bottle milk, 4 eggs, 2 tablespoons Maizena, 3 tablespoons sugar, 1 large spoon butter, 1 cinnamon stick.

Bring the milk, sugar and cinnamon to a boil. Mix the Maizena with a little cold milk to form a paste and add to the boiling milk, keep stirring. Remove the cinnamon stick. Let the Maizena and milk mixture simmer for 3 to 4 minutes, add the butter and then the egg yolks, stir until well combined. Lastly, stir in the well - beaten egg whites. Line well-greased enamel plates with pastry, one may also use small moulds. Pour the milk mixture into the plates or moulds. Paint the edges of the pastry with beaten egg using a small feather or pastry brush, making sure that the egg does not spill over the edges as this would result in the tarts not baking evenly. Bake in a hot oven, place the tarts approximately 2 fingers apart to bake evenly. Place a piece of raw dough inside the oven to test whether it is hot enough. (Own translation)

E.J. Dijkman, *Di Suid Afrikaanse Kook-, Koek- en Resepte Boek*, p. 31.

RECIPE 37: Coconut Tart Filling

Origin: South Africa, 1908

Finely grate the inside of a fresh coconut. Beat together 4 eggs with a ¼ lb. (pound) white sugar, add the coconut and beat well. Line enamel plates with pastry dough and pour the filling into the lined plates. (No instruction as to what the next step should be is provided.)

DJH, *Oranje kook-, Koek- en resepte-boek Voor Zuid Afrika*, p. 31.

RECIPE 38: MILK TART (Very good)

Origin: South Africa, 1912

3 glasses milk
3 tablespoonfuls sugar
1 tablespoonful butter
1 tablespoonful flour
2 tablespoonfuls Maizena
3 eggs
A stick of cinnamon

Boil 3 glasses milk with sugar and cinnamon, mix maizena with a little cold milk, pour into the boiling milk, and boil, add butter, when slightly cool stir in the eggs well whisked. Line plates with paste, pour in this mixture, and bake for twenty minutes. [Note: there is no mention as to the removal of the cinnamon stick.]

P.W. de Klerk, *South African Cookery Made Easy*, p. 42.

RECIPE 39: MILK TART (Very good)

Origin: South Africa, 1912

3 cups milk
1 tablespoon butter
2 tablespoons sugar
2 tablespoons flour
1 tablespoon cornflour
3 eggs

Put 3 cups of milk on fire with some peach leaves; when the milk tastes strongly of this flavouring take out leaves. Mix flour and sugar with a little cold milk, pour into the boiling milk, and boil stirring. Take from the fire, stir in butter, when slightly cool stir in the eggs well whisked. Put into paste-lined plates. Put cinnamon and sugar over the top and bake for 20 minutes. I preferred cinnamon, almonds and nartjie peel pounded and stirred into the milk paste is very nice too.

P.W. de Klerk, *South African Cookery Made Easy*, p. 42.

RECIPE 40: No. 542 Baked Custard Pudding

Origin: South Africa, 1913

Beat up 2 eggs with 1 tablespoonful of white sugar, pinch of salt, with any flavouring essence desired; add 1 pint of fresh (or condensed) milk diluted. Well grease a pie-dish with butter, pour in custard, and bake (placing it first in a baking-tin of water to prevent its boiling) in any heat of oven till set.

A.R. Barnes, *The Colonial Household Guide*, 6th revised and enlarged edition, p. 105.

RECIPE 41: No. 643 Custard Creams

Origin: South Africa, 1913

Mix the beaten yolks of 4 eggs with a pint of cream; add 3 dessertspoonsful of sifted sugar, and 3 or 4 drops of essence of vanilla, lemon, noyau [French liqueur], or other flavouring. Lastly, introduce the white of an egg beaten to a firm froth, put the mixture into a jug, and place it in a saucepan filled with cold water; put it on the fire and stir until the cream thickens. It must on no account boil. Pour into custard glasses and strain [sic] the top with powdered cinnamon comfits or sifted sugar.

A.R. Barnes, *The Colonial Household Guide*, 6th revised and enlarged edition, p. 119.

RECIPE 42: Baked Custard

Origin: South Africa, 1916

Beat three or four eggs till light, stir in a pint of milk, sugar to sweeten, and any kind of flavouring. Pour into a pie dish, stand the dish in a tin containing a little water (this will prevent it from curdling), and bake in a moderate oven. (Note: flavourings mentioned are maraschino, brandy or any other flavourings.)

Belinda, *Belinda's Book for Colonial Housewives*, 4th edition, p. 126.

RECIPE 43: Milk Tart Filling

Origin: South Africa, 1918

2 bottles milk,
2 cups cake flour,
1 cup sugar,
Pinch of salt
1 large spoon butter

Bring the milk to the boil. Stir the flour and a little cold milk together to form a smooth paste, add to the boiling milk. Add the sugar and salt. (Note: no mention is made regarding the butter or what to do with the filling.)

D.F. Malherbe, *Tafel-Vreugde*, p. 58.

RECIPE 44: Milk Tart Filling (enough for 3 tarts)

Origin: South Africa, 1918

3 cups milk, a good lump of butter, $\frac{1}{4}$ lb (pound) sugar, orange essence, 5 egg yolks

Bring everything to a boil. Mix together 2 spoons of flour with 1 spoon of Maizena in a bit of cold milk, add to the boiling mixture. Remove the mixture from the heat once it has thickened to resemble Maizena porridge. Leave to cool for a bit then stir in the beaten yolks and whites of the 5 eggs. Line the 3 enamel plates with very thinly rolled pastry and divide the milk porridge evenly between the plates. Bake in the oven until golden brown. Cinnamon sugar may be sprinkled on top if so preferred. (Own translation)

D.F. Malherbe, *Tafel-Vreugde*, p. 58.

RECIPE 45: Dutch Milk Tart

Origin: South Africa, 1920

Boil 2 cups milk with 4 tablespoons sugar, 1 tablespoon butter and a stick of cinnamon. Blend 4 tablespoons Golden Cloud flour with a little cold milk, then pour into the boiling milk, and cook for 5 minutes. Remove from fire and add two well-beaten eggs, return to cooler part of the stove or cook over boiling water until the eggs are set, but do not allow the mixture to boil, otherwise it will curdle. Line a pie plate with

paste, pour in this filling, when cooled down, sprinkle a little cinnamon on top, and bake for about 20 minutes.

Instead of cinnamon, almond essence may be used as flavouring. Finely chopped almonds make a nice addition; and if liked, the egg whites may be beaten until stiff and then added. (Golden Cloud flour is a brand name for wheat flour.)

J.C. van Duyn, *The Household Science Cookery Book*, p. 419.

RECIPE 46: Coconut Cream Tart

Origin: South Africa, 1920

2 cups milk, 1 cup desiccated cocoanut, 3 eggs, 2 tablespoons butter, 4 tablespoons sugar, grated rind of lemon, and 2 teaspoons of castor sugar. Follow directions for “Dutch Milk Tart”.

J.C. van Duyn, *The Household Science Cookery Book*, p. 419.

RECIPE 47: Boer Milk Tart

Origin: South Africa, 1923

Line a plate with puff or flaky pastry. Boil 1 ½ bottles milk, beat yolks 4 eggs, mix 2 large tablespoons flour with a little cold milk till it is smooth and free of lumps, add 2 ½ tablespoons sugar to the boiling milk, add yolks to the mixed flour, and stir into the milk. Beat whites very stiffly and add to rest. Remove from fire, and stir in the whites evenly. Add 8 drops almond essence. Fill 2 lined plates with this mixture. If cinnamon is preferred leave out the almond essence and sprinkle cinnamon and coarse sugar over, and bake in hot oven. (Note that in the Afrikaans edition enamel plates are specified and the egg whites are only added after the milk mixture is removed from the stove.)

S. van H. Tulleken, *The Practical Cookery Book for South Africa*, p. 13.

RECIPE 48: Aunt Nonnie’s Milk Tart Recipe

Origin: South Africa, 1932

1 bottle milk
1 cup Flour (small)
1 cup sugar (large)
4 to 5 eggs
a good lump butter
A knife point cinnamon and also some nartjie peel

Prepare the porridge (filling) as one would usually do.

Bring the milk to a boil and pour over the flour and sugar (Which has first been blended with a little cold milk).

When the mixture has been blended thoroughly, bring back to the boil and let simmer for a good while.

Remove from the fire and add the lump of butter and stir in the well beaten egg yolks. Don't stir it again.

Beat the egg whites well and stir into the mixture. The porridge (filling) has to be a stiff mixture otherwise the filling will collapse during baking.

Anon., MSB 853,2(1): Letters with recipes, unnumbered pages. Katie Malan Collection, National Library of South Africa, Cape Town.

RECIPE 49: Custard tart, Milk tart

Origin: South Africa, 1933

In a double boiler, add a few cups of milk and a cup of cream, add three ounces of sugar and stir until the sugar is dissolved. Separate 6 six eggs. Stir the egg yolks into a few spoonful of cold milk without beating it. Add the egg yolk mixture to the milk in the double boiler and stir in one direction until the mixture thickens. Remove from the fire, add the flavourings and a small teaspoon of brandy. Beat the egg whites to soft peak stage and stir into the filling, keep stirring or beating until the mixture is almost cold. Pour into the base and bake in the oven. The custard should be at least 3 inches high. (According to Leipoldt this recipe is one of the best milk tart recipes.)

C.L. Leipoldt, *Kos vir die Kenner: 'n Kookboek met meer as Duisend Goeie Resepte*, p. 365.

RECIPE 50: Baked Custard

Origin: South Africa, 1935

2 eggs, 1 cup milk, 1 teaspoon sugar, pinch of salt. Beat the eggs slightly, together with sugar, then gradually add hot milk. Pour into greased pie-dish or individual moulds, stand in a pan of water, then put into a moderate oven for 30 minutes until set.

H.M. Slade, 'Baked Custard', *Mrs Slade's South African Good Housekeeping*, May 1935, p. 70.

RECIPE 51: Dutch Milk Tart

Origin: South Africa, 1935

1 cup milk, 3 tablespoons flour, 3 tablespoons sugar, 2 eggs, 2 tablespoons butter, pinch of salt, few drops almond essence and if liked 2 tablespoons ground almonds.

Melt the butter in saucepan, blend in the flour, then gradually add the milk. Stir until smooth and thick, add the milk, add the sugar and salt, remove from the fire, add the ground almonds and essence, then the

slightly beaten yolks of eggs and lastly the stiffly beaten egg whites. Pour into half-baked pie shell and bake as directed above. Before serving sprinkle a mixture of sugar and cinnamon on top.

(Baking instructions are: moderate oven of 350 degrees fah. And cook until the filling is nice and firm.)

H.M. Slade, 'Sweet Pies', *Mrs Slade's South African Good Housekeeping*, September 1935, p. 246.

RECIPE 52: "Lekker Outydse Melktert" (Good Old-fashioned Milk Tart)

Origin: South Africa, 1937

2 eggs; ½ cup sugar; 2 cups milk; 4 tablespoons flour (tablespoons must be evenly full); 1 teaspoon flavouring; pinch of salt ½ cup cold milk. Bring the milk to boiling point, add the sugar and stir till dissolved; blend the flour with the cold milk to a paste and add the boiling milk very slowly to this mixture; add the salt; place the mixture back on the heat and simmer until the mixture thickens; keep stirring; when the mixture has thickened, remove from the heat and leave to cool; beat the egg yolks and egg whites separately and add to the cooled milk mixture; pour mixture into a pie dish lined with pastry and bake.

A. Brandt, 'Lekker outydse melktert', *Die Huisgenoot*, 28 May 1937, p. 79.

RECIPE 53: Ouma Rae's Milk Tart Recipe, as remembered by her daughter

Origin: South Africa, c.1940

Because her mother often made the recipe from memory there are no specific quantities given but rather a narrative of the method.

For the crust eggs, farm butter, custard powder and flour and baking powder are mixed with a little milk to form a dough. The dough was left to 'rest' in the refrigerator for a while and then pressed with the hand into a square oven tray. The pastry in the oven tray was covered with baking paper and the tray was then filled with dried beans after which the dough was baked 'blind' and removed from the oven when cooked.

The filling was made by pouring milk into a saucepan and bringing it to the boil. 6 egg yolks were mixed with custard powder, vanilla, a pinch of salt and sugar in a soup bowl to form a paste. The egg whites were beaten with a fork in a separate soup bowl until they were so stiff that the fork could stand in it (this was a very important step). When the milk is hot enough the custard powder egg yolk mixture is slowly poured into the milk while stirring continuously to avoid lumps. The milk mixture is left to simmer for a few minutes until thickened. It is removed from the heat and the egg whites were carefully folded in with a metal spoon. The filling is poured into the pre-baked pastry and baked in a moderate oven until set. Once it is removed from the oven it is sprinkled with cinnamon. The tart is cut into squares.

RECIPE 54: Milk Tart, Old Fashioned Recipe

Origin: South Africa, 1940

Line tart plates with puff pastry.

Ingredients:

6 cups milk
1½ cup flour
1½ cup sugar
2 ounces butter
6 eggs separated (keep 6 egg yolks and 3 egg whites)
Few drops orange flavouring

Method:

1. Mix flour with approximately 1½ cup of milk to a paste and add salt to taste.
2. Bring the rest of the milk till just under boiling point. Add the flour mixture and keep stirring until the mixture is cooked.
3. Add the sugar and butter and also the beaten egg yolks; keep stirring until the mixture is cooked.
4. Add a few drops of orange flavouring and fold in the beaten egg whites.
5. Immediately pour the hot mixture into the pastry lined plates and bake.
6. When the tarts are baked and, if so preferred, one may sprinkle them with a little cinnamon sugar.

Very important: to prevent the bottom of the tart pastry to become soggy it is essential to pour the hot mixture onto the pastry, if it is not blind baked before.

Anon., 'Almal se Bladsy: Outydse Resepte om die Kampvuur', *Die Huisgenoot*, 24 Mei 1940, p. 69.

RECIPE 55: Old Dutch Milk Tart

Origin: South Africa, 1947

1 pint milk
4 tablespoons sugar
2 tablespoons butter
2 eggs
4 tablespoons flour or 1 ½ tablespoon corn flour
1 stick cinnamon
1 teaspoon tangerine zest

1. In a double boiler, bring the milk and the cinnamon to boiling point.
2. Mix together the flour (or corn flour) and sugar.
3. Slowly add the hot milk to this mixture.

4. Return mixture to the double boiler and keep stirring until thick. Put the lid on and boil for 15 minutes.
5. Remove from the heat and stir in the butter.
6. When cooled add the beaten eggs, keep stirring
7. Line a pan or pie dish with flaky or puff pastry; pour in the mixture and bake for 20 minutes in a hot oven; reduce the heat for the last 10 minutes. A small amount of cinnamon and sugar may be sprinkled on top.

Department of Agriculture, Union of South Africa, *Kos en kookkuns – Die Huisvrou se Gids*, (Pamphlet no. 115), 1947, p. 193.

RECIPE 56: Dutch Milk Tart

Origin: South Africa, 1948

Blend together 4 tablespoons butter and 6 tablespoons flour, then gradually add 2 cups milk and 6 tablespoons sugar. Remove from the fire, add a ¼ teaspoon salt, the well-beaten yolks of 3 eggs, a ½ teaspoon each of almond and vanilla essences, the stiffly beaten whites, and if liked, 2 tablespoons ground almonds. Pour into a pie plate lined with short or sweet pastry, and bake. Before serving, sprinkle a little sugar and cinnamon on top.

Note: this recipe is verbatim the same as the 1939 version.

H.M. Slade, *Mrs. Slade's South African Cookery Book*, 1948, p. 355.

RECIPE 57: No. 177 Melktert

Origin: South Africa, 1950

1 lb. flour; cold water for mixing
 1 lb. butter
 1 egg-yolk
 Juice of 1 lemon

Put the yolk of 1 egg into a wine glass and fill the glass with ice water. Add the contents of the glass to the flour and knead well. Let the dough rest for about 20 minutes. Then roll it out evenly but do not make the piece too big. It should be thick. Divide butter into three equal parts. Roll each part in a little flour. Place the first piece on the dough and fold dough over like an envelope to cover butter completely. Roll dough out gently so that the butter does not seep through. Fold dough over to the middle, from either side. Repeat rolling and folding. Allow dough to rest for 10 minutes. Then roll in the second piece of butter in exactly the same way. Finally repeat the process with the last piece. It is best to make the pastry the day before you wish to use it.

Filling:

2 cups milk and a pinch of salt.
 4 eggs
 2 T. cornflour or flour

1 T butter
2 t. sugar
A little piece of cinnamon stick

Boil 2 cups milk with the butter and cinnamon stick. Add a pinch of salt. Moisten flour with a little cold milk or water and add it to the boiling milk. Allow the mixture to boil and thicken and then remove it from the fire. Beat up yolks with the sugar and add it to the cooled milk. Lastly fold in the beaten egg-whites. Line the tart with pastry and fill with the milk filling. Bake in a moderate oven for 35 minutes. (Some people pre-bake the pastry in a hot oven for 7 minutes and then fill the tarts.)

(Note that there is no instruction to remove the cinnamon stick.)

H. Gerber, *Cape Cookery*, pp. 38-39.

RECIPE 58: Old Fashioned Milk Tart

Origin: South Africa, 1952

2½ cups cake flour
2½ cups sugar
¼ teaspoon salt
4 bottles milk
10 eggs
3 tablespoons butter
4 pieces of cinnamon
Puff pastry (recipe on page 313)

1. Blend together the cake flour, sugar and salt and add just enough milk to form a paste.
2. Slowly heat the remaining milk with the cinnamon sticks until it starts to boil. Remove from the heat and add the boiling milk to the flour mixture, keep stirring to avoid lumps. Return the saucepan to the heat and keep stirring over low heat until the mixture thickens.
3. Simmer for 5 minutes before adding the eggs one by one. Remove from the heat.
4. Add the butter and keep stirring until the butter is dissolved.
5. Line tart dishes with the puff pastry, making sure that the bottom is very thinly rolled out. Pour the filling into the lined pastry dishes.
6. Bake for 25 minutes in a hot oven (400 degrees F.). Reduce the heat for the last 10 minutes.

Remove the tarts from the oven and let cool for a bit before cinnamon sugar is sprinkled on top and serve warm.

Note: This recipe yields 6-8 milk tarts.

S.J.A. de Villiers, *Kook en Geniet – Suid-Afrikaanse Kook- en Resepteboek*, 2nd impression, pp. 402-403.

RECIPE 59: Milk tart

Origin: South Africa, 1954

Line a tart-tin with puff pastry and fill it with the following: Boil up 2 cups of milk and add 1 tablespoon of butter, a small piece of cinnamon stick and a little rose-water. Thicken with 2 tablespoons of Maizena [cornflour] or flour. Remove the pot from the fire and add 2 tablespoons of sugar and the well-beaten egg yolks of 4 eggs. Lastly fold in the stiffly beaten whites of 4 eggs. Bake the tarts in a moderate oven until they are brown. This filling is enough for two tarts. Some people just put in the eggs without beating the whites separately.

H. Gerber, *Traditional Cooking of the Cape Malays*, p. 85.

RECIPE 60: Milk-tart with flaky pastry

Origin: South Africa, 1977

Filling:

750 ml milk

32 g sugar (40ml)

Salt to taste

Very little lemon or almond essence

3 eggs, separated

1. Boil the milk with sugar and cinnamon or dried peel, add butter to melt, remove peel and cinnamon.
2. Mix corn-flour, cake flour and salt with a little cold water to a paste, add a little boiling milk, stir well and pour liquid back into the casserole with the rest of the boiling milk.
3. Cook slowly while stirring constantly until thick and done.
4. Remove from heat, add flavouring very sparingly. Allow to cool completely.
5. Beat egg-yolks and combine with mixture until smooth.
6. Whisk whites till stiff and fold into mixture thoroughly.
7. Before pouring the filling into the pastry case, brush the pastry with egg-white.
8. Bake in a hot oven (220°C) for 10 minutes.
9. Reduce heat and bake for another 10-15 minutes. Cool slightly and sprinkle sugar and cinnamon over the baked filling if preferred. Serve hot.

Flaky pastry:

250 g cake flour (500ml)

Salt to taste

230 g cold butter (250ml)

15 g lard (15ml)

15 ml brandy or 20 ml lemon- juice or the yolk of 1 egg

1. Sift cake-flour and salt a few times.

2. Divide butter into 4 portions, put 3 back into the refrigerator and cut the other portion with lard into the flour, work in lightly with fingertips.
3. Mix brandy or juice or beaten egg yolk with ice-cold water.
4. Add mixture to the flour to make a rather stiff dough. Knead thoroughly but lightly on a very lightly floured board to an elastic consistency. Keep the dough as cool as possible- no warm hands.
5. Roll dough about 6mm thick; always roll lightly away from yourself. Do not roll from side to side.
6. Remove a portion of the butter from the refrigerator; you may grate it evenly over the dough or cut it in small pieces onto the pastry. Dust with a little flour if preferred. The main object is to work quickly and to keep the dough as cool as possible.
7. Fold one third of the dough over, and then fold the remaining third over to form a long rectangle. Fold it again into thirds to form a square. Press down edges to prevent air escaping.
8. Let it rest for a couple of minutes in a cool place.
9. Roll out again in the same way as prescribed above. Repeat the process with the rest of the butter portions.
10. Let the dough rest after each rolling.
11. Fold dough in a square shape after last rolling, wrap in waxed paper or a damp cloth and leave for at least 1 hour or more or overnight in a cold place or refrigerator, or even longer until required.
12. Roll dough out (or as much as you need) to a thickness of 6mm. Handle as lightly and little as possible.
13. Two main rules must be obeyed – cold pastry into a very hot oven 220-260°C, reduce heat after 7-10 minutes depending on the bottom heat of your oven, bake for another 20 minutes or more.
14. To glaze puff pastry: Before baking mix 1 egg-yolk with 15ml cold water and a small pinch of sugar. Beat well to blend and use a pastry brush to brush it lightly onto the edges of the pie or rolls. Then bake.

B. Rood, *101 Traditional South African recipes*, p. 38.

RECIPE 61: Ace Milk Tart

Origin: South Africa, 1983

Mrs Elbé Esterhuysen of Johannesburg writes that this recipe is her mother's recipe that she kept secret for years but has now decided to share it with her daughter. Therefore, she decided to send it in to Huisgenoot.

Crust:

125 g butter or margarine at room temperature
 100 g (125ml) sugar
 275 g (500ml cake flour)
 1 egg, beaten
 10 ml baking powder
 Pinch of salt

Filling:

1 litre plus 125ml milk
30 ml butter or margarine
3 eggs
200 ml sugar
15 ml cake flour
15 ml corn flour
Pinch of salt
Cinnamon to taste

Pre-heat oven to 200° Celsius.

Grease 2 tart plates with a 1 litre capacity each with a little butter. Mix together the butter and sugar, add the egg and mix thoroughly. Sift together the flour, baking powder and salt. Add the egg mixture and blend to form a dough. With your hand press the dough as thinly as possible into the prepared tart plates, covering both the bottom and the sides. Cut the edges neatly and make impressions with your fingers or cut shapes out of the remaining dough and 'glue' them to the edges with a little water. Bake for 10-12 minutes until the edges start to turn golden brown. Meanwhile prepare the filling.

Bring the 1 litre milk and butter to a boil in a large saucepan. Separate the eggs. Beat together the remainder of the milk with one whole egg and 2 egg yolks, sugar, flour and corn flour to form a paste. Beat a little of the boiling milk into this mixture. Add this mixture to the boiling milk while beating constantly, it is better to use a whisk for this step to avoid lumps. Beat the egg whites until soft peak stage and fold gently into the milk porridge. Pour this mixture into the baked tart bases and let cool until the mixture is set. Sprinkle with a little cinnamon. This recipe makes 2 medium sized tarts.

A. Human, 'Wenresepte', *Huisgenoot*, 11 August 1983, p. 100.

RECIPE 62: The Milk Tart Everyone Wants to Bake

Origin: South Africa, 1985

For the crust:

400 g (750 ml) Flour
15 ml baking powder
Pinch of salt
125 g cold butter or margarine
3 eggs, beaten
Approximately 75 ml ice water

For the filling:

1 l milk
125 g cold butter or margarine
200 g (250 ml) sugar
40 g (75ml cake flour)
25 ml corn flour

2 ml salt
4 eggs, separated
5 ml vanilla or 2 ml almond essence
Cinnamon to taste

Sift the flour, baking powder and salt together in a bowl. With your hands rub the butter or margarine into the flour mixture until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Make a hole in the centre of the flour mixture and pour the eggs in. Using a palette knife, cut the eggs into the flour mixture and add a little ice water at a time until the mixture forms a dough. Sprinkle a little flour onto your working surface and divide the dough into 3 portions. Roll each portion into a circle and lift each circle by gently rolling it around the rolling pin and place in it into the prepared tart dish. The dish should be 23 cm in diameter. Be careful not to stretch the dough. Press the dough onto the bottom and the sides and cut the edges neatly. End the edges off by pressing with a fork. Cover the tart bases with a wet cloth to prevent the dough from drying out and set aside while you make the filling.

Pre-heat the oven to 180° Celsius. Heat the milk over medium heat until it reaches boiling point. Add the butter or margarine to melt. Mix together the sugar, cake flour, corn flour and salt in a mixing bowl. Remove the milk from the heat. Using a whisk quickly whisk in the flour mixture and keep whisking to ensure that there are no lumps. Return the milk mixture to the heat and keep stirring until the mixture starts to boil. Remove from the heat. Beat the egg yolks in a bowl and add a little of the hot milk mixture and beat well, add this mixture to the milk porridge. Add the flavouring.

Beat the egg whites to soft peak stage (be careful not to beat them too stiff, this will make it difficult to fold into the mixture). Gently fold the egg whites into the hot mixture with a metal spoon. Pour the filling into the lined tart dishes. Sprinkle with a little cinnamon. Bake the tarts for 30 minutes in the centre of the oven. Serve tarts warm or cold. This recipe yields 3 medium sized tarts.

Anon., 'Resep van die week', *Huisgenoot*, 14 March 1985, p. 93.

RECIPE 63: *Sericaia, Cerica (Milk Pudding)*

Origin: Portugal and South Africa, 1991

6 eggs, separated
250 g sugar
10 ml lemon rind
100 ml flour
500 ml milk
1 stick cinnamon
Ground cinnamon

Beat the egg yolks with the sugar and lemon rind until creamy. Blend the flour with the milk and stir into the yolk mixture. Add the cinnamon

stick. Pour into a saucepan, bring to the boil and cook until thick, stirring all the time. Remove from the heat and allow to cool slightly. Remove the cinnamon stick and fold in the stiffly beaten egg whites.

Spoon mixture into a greased ovenproof dish. Alternate - one horizontal, one vertical spoonful – and sprinkle ground cinnamon between each spoonful.

Bake in a very hot oven (200°C) for 15-20 minutes, or until it is well set and split across the top. This dish is normally baked in a wood fire oven.

M. Jardim, *Cooking the Portuguese Way in South Africa*, p. 140.

RECIPE 64: Milk Tart

Origin: South Africa, 2015

Puff / Flaky pastry:

250 g cake flour

2 ml salt

250 g margarine

125 ml ice water

10 ml vinegar

Filling:

30 ml cake flour

60 ml sugar

500 ml milk

2 eggs, separated

5 ml grated orange rind

Pinch of salt

For the pastry:

Sift the flour and salt together. Rub one fifth of margarine into the flour. Add the water and vinegar to the flour mixture using a knife to form a stiff dough. Knead the dough for approximately 3 minutes until elastic.

Divide the remaining margarine into 3 portions (if using butter, it should be grated). Roll out the dough until very thin. Dot little pieces of one portion of the margarine on the dough. Sprinkle with a little flour. Fold the dough to cover the margarine and roll out to seal the margarine in. Let the dough rest in a cool place for 10 minutes. Pre-heat the oven to 230°C (The oven must be very hot). Repeat the rolling process with the remaining margarine portions. Roll dough out to line the pie dish. Arrange layers of the dough on the rim of the pie dish to form a collar. Brush with egg yolk to ‘glue’ the pastry in place.

For the filling:

Mix together the flour and the sugar. Add a little of the milk to the flour and mix to form a paste. Pour the remaining milk into a saucepan and slowly bring to the boil. Add the flour and milk paste and let boil for 3 minutes. Remove from the heat and let cool slightly. Beat the egg yolks

and add to the milk mixture. Fold in the beaten egg whites and stir in the orange rind. Pour the mixture into the lined pastry dish. Bake in pre-heated oven for 10 minutes, reduce temperature to 190°C and bake for a further 10 minutes.

Note: Ensure that the ingredients are cold and that the tart and pastry are prepared in a cool place. Don't let the pastry cling to the roller or rolling surface.

C. Abrahams, *'n Lewe met Kos*, p. 87.

RECIPE 65: Self-crust Milk Tart

Origin: South Africa, 2015

1 ½ cups self-raising flour
4 cups milk
6 large eggs
1 cup sugar
2 tsp vanilla essence
50 g melted butter
Pinch of salt
1 tsp fine cinnamon

Put all the ingredients together into a bowl or food processor and beat to a smooth batter. Pour into a greased pie dish, approximately 23 cm in diameter. Sprinkle the cinnamon over the top. Bake for 40 minutes at 180°C. Serve warm or cold.

S. Smith, *Cape Malay Cooking & Other Delights Cookbook*, p. 102.

RECIPE 66: Milk Tart

Origin: South Africa, 2015

Base:

1 large egg
125 g butter/margarine
¼ cup sunflower oil
¾ cup sugar
2 cups self-raising flour
1 cup cake flour
1 tsp vanilla essence
1 tsp baking powder

Cream the egg, sugar, softened butter and oil together until light and fluffy. Add the vanilla essence. Add the flour and baking powder and mix well to form a dough. Line a 20 cm x 20 cm oven proof dish with approximately half of the pastry. The pastry should be as thin as possible with no holes. (Leftover pastry can be frozen or you can use it to make short crust biscuits). It is very important that the base contains no holes as it will cause the base to rise resulting in an upside-down milk tart.

Filling:

1 litre milk
12 large eggs
1 cup sugar
½ tsp ground cardamom
½ tsp cinnamon powder

Boil the milk in a saucepan. Allow to cool completely. Whisk the eggs and sugar in a separate mixing bowl until light and fluffy. Pour in the cooled milk and mix well. Add the cardamom and cinnamon. Gently pour the filling over the base. You may use a jug or a cup if it is easier for you. Don't pour the filling in one place only, as it can cause a hole in the base. Bake at 180°C in a pre-heated oven until the filling has set, approximately 40-50 minutes. Remove from the oven, allow the milk tart to cool down then slice into squares.

S. Smith, *Cape Malay Cooking & Other Delights Cookbook*, p. 106.

RECIPE 67: Milk Tart with Poached Fruit

Origin: South Africa, 2016

Sweet Pastry:

125 g cold unsalted butter, cut into small cubes
500 g all-purpose flour, plus extra
20 ml baking powder
Pinch of salt
125 g icing sugar
1 vanilla pod, split in half and seeds scraped out
1 large egg, beaten

Filling:

3 large eggs, separated
1,125 l full-cream milk
80 g sifted cake flour
65 g corn flour
Pinch of salt
110 g granulated sugar
250 g unsalted butter, cut into small cubes
15 ml vanilla extract
2 large egg yolks
10 ml cinnamon sugar

For the pastry: In a food processor blend together the butter, flour, baking powder, salt and icing sugar until the mixture resembles breadcrumbs. Add the vanilla seeds and blend at high speed. Add the egg and gently work it together using your hands until you have a ball of dough. Be careful not to overwork the pastry. Sprinkle a little flour over the dough and pat the ball into a flat round to a thickness of 2,5 cm. Sprinkle with flour and wrap in plastic wrap. Rest in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes.

Using a rolling pin, carefully roll out the pastry on a lightly floured work surface until it is about 6 mm thick. Use the rolling pin to lift the pastry and place it in a lightly greased loose-bottomed tart tin. Gently press the pastry onto the bottom and sides of the tin and trim off the excess. Prick the dough with a fork. Place the tart shell in the freezer for 30 minutes.

Pre-heat the oven to 180° Celsius. Remove the tart shell from the freezer and place a large piece of wax paper on the inside. Fill the dish with rice or dried beans to the rim. Bake the pastry base blind for 10 minutes or until golden brown. Remove the paper and baking beans and leave to cool.

To make the filling: Whisk the egg whites until stiff peaks form. Set aside. mix 125ml of the milk, the cake flour, cornflour, salt and sugar together until smooth. In a saucepan, heat the rest of milk until just below boiling point, then remove from the heat and stir in the cornflour mixture. Return to the heat stirring continuously until the mixture is smooth and thick. Add the butter a little at a time and blend well, then add the vanilla. Lightly beat the egg yolks and add to the custard mixture. Fold in the whisked egg whites and pour the filling into the baked pastry shell. Bake for 20 minutes at 180° Celsius, remove from the oven and set aside to cool. Sprinkle with cinnamon sugar.

J.H. van der Westhuizen, *Jan: A Breath of French Air*, pp. 149, 179.

RECIPE 68: Milk Tart

Origin: South Africa, 2016

Biscuit Pastry:

(This pastry is ideal for fruit tarts and a melktert base)

200 ml castor sugar

30 ml sunflower oil

250 g butter or margarine

2 eggs

5 ml vanilla or lemon essence

500 ml cake flour, sifted

500 ml self-raising flour

Cream sugar, oil and butter together until well-blended. Add eggs and essence and stir to blend. Fold in flours and mix to a soft dough. Use as crust for pies and tarts.

Makes about 600g.

Filling:

10 eggs

125 ml sugar

1 litre milk

30 ml custard powder

15 ml cake flour

5 ml sugar

10 ml vanilla essence

5 drops almond essence

2 pieces cinnamon sticks
3 pods cardamom, slightly bruised
60 ml butter
3ml ground cinnamon or nutmeg

Line a deep 40 cm x30 cm oven dish with biscuit pastry.

Beat eggs and 125ml sugar until well blended. Mix 50ml milk to a paste with custard powder, flour and 5ml sugar. Heat remaining milk to almost boiling, then stir into the custard mixture. Return to the stove and cook, stirring, to form a thin runny custard. Fold into egg mixture, add vanilla and almond essence, cinnamon sticks and cardamom pods and mix well. Spoon filling into biscuit crust, dot with butter and sprinkle with cinnamon or nutmeg. Bake at 160° C for 35-45 minutes or until the filling is set. Eat hot, cut into squares. Serves 16.

F. Williams, *The Cape Malay Cookbook*, p. 69.

RECIPE 69: The Zola Milk Tart

Origin: South Africa, 2017

Crust:

60 g butter, at room temperature
¼ cup (50g) castor sugar
1 egg
1 cup (140g) cake flour
1 tsp (5ml) baking powder
A pinch of salt

1. Pre-heat the oven to 180° Celsius. Grease a 23 cm tart tin.
2. Cream the butter and castor sugar together.
3. Add the egg and stir to combine.
4. Add the flour, baking powder and salt and mix into a stiff dough.
5. Press the dough onto the base and sides of the tart tin.
6. Prick the base of the pastry all over with a fork.
7. Blind bake for 30 minutes or until golden and crispy.

Filling:

2 ¼ cups (565ml) milk
1 cinnamon stick
1 egg
½ cup (100g) sugar
1 tbsp plus 1 tsp (20ml) cake flour
1 tbsp plus 1 tsp (20ml) corn flour
1 tsp (5ml) vanilla essence
20 g butter
1 tsp (5ml) ground cinnamon

1. In a saucepan set over moderate heat, add the milk and cinnamon stick and bring to a boil. Remove the cinnamon stick.
2. Whisk together the egg, sugar, flour, corn flour, and vanilla essence

3. While whisking continuously, slowly add the hot milk to the flour mixture.
4. Return the mixture to the saucepan and set over moderate heat. Whisk until the mixture has thickened.
5. Add the butter and stir through.
6. Pour the filling into the prepared pastry crust.
7. Sprinkle with the cinnamon.
8. Allow to cool completely before refrigerating.

M. Loewenstein, 'The Zola Milk Tart', *Woman and Home Magazine*, 24 February 2017, pp. 3-4. <https://www.womanandhomemagazine.co.za/recipes/zola-milk-tart/>, access: October 2020.

RECIPE 70: Anna Ziezanna Dirktiena's Sunnyside Milk Tart (Crustless)

Origin: South Africa, 2019

3 eggs
 2 tablespoons melted butter
 1 cup sugar
 1 teaspoon baking powder
 Pinch of salt
 1 cup flour
 4 cups milk
 1 teaspoon Moir's vanilla
 Cinnamon

Separate the eggs and beat the egg whites until stiff. Blend together the melted butter, sugar and egg yolks, beat well. Add the baking powder and salt with the flour and mix the flour mixture with the egg yolk mixture until smooth. Add the milk and vanilla. Lastly, fold in the beaten egg whites and beat with a hand beater. Pour this mixture into a prepared tart dish and bake for 25 minutes in a medium oven (175° Celsius). When baked remove from the oven and sprinkle generously with cinnamon.

H. Serfontein, 'My ouma in kaneel', *Vrye Weekblad*, 10 May 2019, <https://www.vryeweekblad.com/lewenstyl-en-kos/2019-05-10-my-ouma-in-kaneel/>, access: May 2019.

RECIPE 71: Milk Tart by Siba Mtongana

Origin: South Africa, 2018

250 ml all-purpose flour
 125 ml butter
 60 ml icing sugar
 15-30 ml iced cold water (optional)

Milk custard filling:

750 ml Full cream milk
 1 stick cinnamon
 2 whole cloves

1 cardamom seed
60 ml all-purpose flour
80 ml white sugar
2 ml salt
30 ml butter
3 eggs separated
5 ml vanilla extract

Sugar sprinkle
5 ml ground cinnamon
2 ml nutmeg, very finely ground
30 ml caster sugar

Place the pastry ingredients in a food processor and pulse until the mixture resembles coarse breadcrumbs. Tip onto a clean surface and gather to form into a dough. Cover with plastic wrap and chill in the fridge for at least one hour.

Pre-heat the oven to 180° Celsius. Remove the dough from the fridge and place on a lightly floured surface. Dust a rolling pin with flour and gently roll the dough out. Place over a 23 cm loose bottom tart tin, with the edges of the dough slightly higher than the tin.

Chill in the fridge for 30 minutes, then prick the bottom with a fork a few times and blind bake it in the oven for 10 minutes until half baked. Remove from the oven.

Heat 625 ml of the milk and the spices in a heavy bottomed saucepan until just below boiling point. In a small bowl, mix the flour, sugar and salt together and add the remaining milk, stirring to prevent lumps. Add to the hot milk mixture and whisk well. Cook over low heat, stirring continuously until slightly thickened. Remove from the heat and stir in the butter. Allow to cool.

Remove the spices, beat the egg yolks together with the vanilla extract, and stir into the cooled milk mixture. In a large clean bowl, whisk the egg whites until they're softly peaking and gently fold into the custard mixture. Pour into the half-baked pastry shell and bake for about 25-30 minutes until set.

Mix the sugar sprinkle ingredients together and sprinkle over the milk tart once it has cooled slightly. Serve at room temperature or chilled.

Tip: Blind baking is necessary when the filling requires less time to cook than the pastry. In this instance, half bake the pastry by covering it with baking paper and filling it with rice or dried beans to weigh the pastry down and prevent it from puffing up while baking. Once half-baked remove the beans or rice and paper.

S. Mtongana, 'Milk Tart by Siba Mtongana', 1 November 2018, <https://lovebaking.com.au/milk-tart-by-siba-mtongana/>, access: October 2020.

RECIPE 72: Grandmother Ser's (Sarah) Legendary Milk Tart

Origin: South Africa, 2020

Pastry:

1 kg cake flour
2 x 500g butter
1 teaspoon salt
2 cups boiling water

1. Sift the cake flour in a bowl and make a hole in the centre.
2. Add the salt.
3. Cut 500g butter in small squares.
4. Pour 2 cups boiling water over the butter.
5. Add the butter and water mixture to the flour.
6. Mix together with a stainless-steel spoon.
7. Knead the pastry with the palm of your hand until the dough is elastic. Place dough in a plastic bag and refrigerate for a couple of hours.
8. Divide the other 500g of butter in half.
9. Roll the dough out into a square, cut one half of the butter into strips and place on top of the pastry.
10. Fold the dough 3 times and seal the ends to keep the butter inside and to prevent air from escaping.
11. Place the dough in the refrigerator for the butter to set.
12. Repeat the rolling and folding with the second half of the butter.
13. Place the dough back in the refrigerator for a couple of hours.
14. Remove the dough from the fridge and repeat the rolling process, refrigerate again for a couple of hours. The longer the dough stays refrigerated before use the better it will "flake".

For the filling:

1 litre milk
6 eggs separated
2.5 ml salt
250 ml sugar
4 tablespoons corn flour
2 tablespoons flour
50 g butter
1ml lemon essence

1. Bring the milk and butter to boiling point.
2. Mix together the corn flour, flour, sugar and the egg yolks together with 100 ml milk to form a paste, add the lemon essence.
3. Remove the milk and butter from the heat and add the corn flour paste while stirring to prevent lumps.
4. Place the milk mixture back on the heat and bring to a boil. Simmer for a few minutes.
5. Beat the egg whites until stiff and remove the milk mixture from the heat.
6. Gently fold in the beaten egg whites.

7. Pour the mixture into a pastry lined tart or pie dish and bake in a pre-heated oven (180° C) for 30 minutes.

C. Klate, L. Myburgh and M. Myburgh, *Pniëlers Bak & Brou – Resepte van die dorpie se mense ... van toeka tot nou*, pp. 70, 107.

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