



Christmas, or Plum Pudding is the traditional end to the British Christmas dinner. But what we think of as Christmas Pudding, is nothing like the original.....

Christmas pudding originated as a 14th century porridge called 'frumenty' that was made of beef and mutton with raisins, currants, prunes, wines and spices. This would often be more like soup and was eaten as a fasting meal in preparation for the Christmas festivities. By 1595, frumenty was slowly changing into a plum pudding, having been thickened with eggs, breadcrumbs, dried fruit and given more flavour with the addition of beer and spirits. It became the customary Christmas dessert around 1650. In 1714, King George I re-established it as part of the Christmas meal, having tasted and enjoyed Plum Pudding. By Victorian times, Christmas Puddings had changed into something similar to the ones that are eaten today.

Over the years, many superstitions have surrounded Christmas Puddings. One superstition says that the pudding should be made with 13 ingredients to represent Jesus and His Disciples and that every member of the family should take turns to stir the pudding with a wooden spoon from east to west, in honour of the Wise Men.

The Sunday before Advent Sunday is sometimes know as 'Stir-up Sunday'. This is because opening words of the Collect for the day (the main prayer) in the Book of Common Prayer of 1549 said:-

"Stir-up, we beseech thee, O Lord, the wills of thy faithful people; that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may of thee be plenteously rewarded; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."

During Victorian times, puddings in big and rich houses were often cooked in fancy moulds, similar to jelly moulds. These were often in the shapes of towers or castles. Normal people just had puddings in the shape of balls. If the pudding was a bit heavy, they were called cannonballs!