

Unlike many class handouts, this is extra information, not really covered in the class.

Definition- Marzipan is a confection consisting primarily of sugar or honey and almond meal (ground almonds), sometimes augmented with almond oil or extract. (Wikipedia)

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marzipan>

- mar·zi·pan (modern) noun - a sweet, yellowish paste of ground almonds, sugar, and egg whites, often colored and used to make small cakes or confections or as an icing for larger cakes. (*Merriam-Webster*)

Names

Marzipan – German (15th c), English

Mandel - German

Marchpane – English, from “March Bread”.

Latin America – Mazapan, more usually made with peanuts than almonds. (Wikipedia)

Palermo, marzipan (marzapane)

Portugal, where the confection has been traditionally made by nuns, marzipan (maçapão)

Toledo in Spain - mazapán

In Lebanon, marzipan (known as لوزينه lozina, lowzineh, or Marçabén (مر ص بان) [Arabic word derived from lawz = "almond"]) is flavoured with orange-flower water and shaped into roses and other delicate flowers before they are baked. Marzipan can also be made from oatmeal, farina, or semolina.

badem ezmesi in Turkish

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Etymology – From Wikipedia - <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marzipan>

The German name has largely ousted the original English name marchpane with the same apparent derivation: "March bread". (The word marchpane occurs in Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, Act 1, Scene 5, Line 9.) Marzapane is documented earlier in Italian than in any other language, and the sense "bread" for pan is Romance. The origin could be from the Latin term "martius panis", which means bread of March. However, the ultimate etymology is unclear; for example, the Italian word derives from the Latin words "Massa" (itself from Greek Μάζα "Maza") meaning pastry and "Pan" meaning bread, this can be particularly seen in the Provençal massapan, the Portuguese maçapão (where 'ç' is an alternative form for the phoneme 'ss') and old Spanish mazapán – the change from 'ss' to 'z' in Latin words was common in old Spanish and the 'r' appeared later. It could also be derived from martis pan, bread of March. Among the other possible etymologies set forth in the Oxford English Dictionary, one theory proposes that the word "marzipan" may be a corruption of Martaban, a Burmese city famous for its jars.

The Real Academia Española suggests the idea of the Spanish word mazapán to be derived from the Hispanic Arabic ميم ميم ميم pičmát, which is derived from the Greek παζαμάδιον.

Another source could be from Arabic ميم ميم ميم mawthābān "king who sits still". The Arabic, Latinised as matapanus, was used to describe a Venetian coin depicting an enthroned Christ the King. These coins were stored in ornate boxes. From about the fifteenth century, when the coins were no longer in circulation, the boxes became decorative containers for storing and serving luxury sweetmeats. One such luxury that crept into the box in the sixteenth century is the now-famous almond-flavoured marzipan, named (at least proximately) after the box in which it was stored.

However, if marzipan has its origin in Persia, it is not unlikely that the name may come from Marzban (in Persian: مرزبان, derived from the words Marz مرز meaning "border" or "boundary" and the suffix -bān ميم ميم meaning guardian), a class of margraves or military commanders in charge of border provinces of the Sassanid Empire of Persia (Iran) between the 3rd and 7th centuries.

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Origins – Maybe China, maybe Spain.

Christa Schwab to MaryAnne Anja Bues Bartlett - 15th c. - as soon as there are more German cook books. Also the "Puch von den chosten" takes the name from the Arabian original and calls it "Lauczinicz" but then the "Puch" is a translation of a translation.

But there is something very close to Marzipan in the Buoch von guoter spise (14th c) - which is call "Heidnische erweiz" ("Heathen peas", basically - which figures since Marzipan is a 'heathen' recipe.)

Heathen peas.

If you want to make Bohemian peas, take almonds, pound them quite fine, and mix with honey that is one third the amount of almonds. Mix well with good spices, the best he has. The dish is served cold or warm.

The consistency depends on how runny your honey is. If I have very soft honey or if the weather is very warm I usually up the almonds a bit until I can form 'peas'.

From House Capuchin's 2020 Feast Cookbook

Subtleties – Chess set, Mushrooms

Chess sets – Marzipan pieces, shortbread boards – Vanilla extract and rosewater used to flavor, pink used saunders. Edible gold glitter. Black pieces were cocoa.



Basic Marzipan

- 1 pound confectioner's sugar
 - 1 pound almond meal
 - ¼ to ½ cup of vanilla extract (recipe follows) or rosewater
 - Food processor with blade
 - 2 to 2 ½ cup air-tight container
 - Hard spatula
1. Put almond meal in one side of food processor and sugar into the other side.
 2. Pulse until mixed well, shaking or stirring as needed.
 3. Dribble the vanilla down the “snoot” of the food processor, slowly, with it running on medium speed. It will first resemble crumbs, then begin to clump and the food processor will slow, audibly.
 4. When it suddenly starts rolling a ball of stuff around, stop dribbling and turn off the food processor.
 5. Scrape the dough into a 2 to 2 ½ cup airtight container, getting even the dry stuff the sometimes remains on the bottom. Dribble a few drops of your vanilla onto this last, then seal up and let stand at least overnight before using.



Note – If you don't have a container this size, press the dough into itself, tightly and dribble a few drops of vanilla on top.

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Vanilla extract

- 3 good vanilla beans
 - Fifth of rum
 - Sharp knife
1. Open your rum bottle
 2. Using the sharp knife, split two beans lengthwise and drop into the bottle.
 3. Chop the other into ½ inch pieces and drop into the bottle.
 4. Put in a cool place and agitate daily for at least a month before using. Keep the beans in the bottle.
 5. Beans may be used a 2nd time, then dump the chopped bean (use it in coffee!), chop the split beans and split another.



Shortbread – Chess boards and cookies – cocoa powder added to chess board “black” squares

1, 2, 3, 4 Shortbread – recipe by Anja - I couldn't find a decent shortbread recipe that worked for what I wanted so I put together cookie knowledge and invented an easy one. It's not as sweet as some and very crumbly. It won't make decent cookies, but the method given works. It's fun to do with extra sprinkles to fancy it up and you can vary the recipe by changing the amount of flavoring or “adds”. It's also an easy to remember recipe, although I've written it up for a stand mixer. Adjust to fit. This recipe is forgiving!

- 1 sugar
- 2 butter
- 3 flour
- 4 pie pans.
- Optional, up to 2 tablespoons alcohol-based flavoring (used vanilla) and either 1 tablespoon ground spices (used nutmeg/ginger), or 1 cup mixed nuts and/or dried fruit. (Didn't use for feast) ...Skor chips also work...
- Decorate with colored sugar or sprinkles, if you want.

Method

1. Preheat oven to 350F.
2. Warm butter, it should be at about 75F. I usually zap it for a minute in the mixing bowl in the nuker.
3. Put the mixing bowl in the stand and turn to “cream butter”, 7 on mine.
4. Once the butter is fairly smooth, add the sugar and flavoring and/or spices (if any) and nuts, etc. (if any). Turn the mixer down, or the dough will start crawling out....
5. Put the mixer on the lowest speed and add the flour, one cup at a time, scraping down the sides of the bowl.
6. Divide into 3 or 4 pie pans and smooth out. If you have nuts, etc in, you need 4 pans, otherwise you can use 3 and they'll just be thicker. If you use 4 with the no-nuts dough, they might be thin enough to burn.

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7. Bake for 30 minutes or so. The edges will brown first and that's the sign to check every 3 minutes or so.
8. When the top is browning, pull the pans one at a time and flip onto a cheap paper plate and cut immediately with a rolling cutter (I use a pizza cutter). I usually do 12 or 16 pieces. Leave the cookies on the plate for cooling. Do it *fast*. Even a minute out of the oven will cause the stuff to crumble upon cutting. ...Then pull the next and repeat.
9. Store airtight for up to a month. These are a great "shipping cookie" if you find a tin that is just the size of the paper plates.

[Ea Fleming](#) – On Facebook 1/24/20

5 hrs

Bits and pieces: We sometimes look for examples of period subtleties for inspiration. Here are two I came across in a record of the purchases and costs for a banquet given by Henry VIII for Queen Catherine on 6 May 1526. The source wasn't listed but may possibly be in the Eltham Ordinances. This is a brief summary of the entries relating to the subtleties and their construction.

Listed under "Acatry and the Kitchen" are the following:

"To Hugh, master cook to the Princess, for cutting of a tower set on a marchpane, and 2 chess boards and chessmen, garnished with 100 fine gold". [It looks as if Hugh was paid 5 shillings. The Princess is Princess Mary who was then 10 years old.]

Various people on Medieval & Renaissance Cooking and Recipes were very helpful.

Variations

Persipan (from Persicus ([peach](#)) and [marzipan](#); also known as Parzipan) is a material used in [confectionery](#).^[1] It is similar to marzipan but [apricot](#) or [peach](#) kernels are used instead of [almonds](#).^[2] Persipan consists of 40% ground kernels and 60% [sugar](#). The kernels have a strong bitter flavour caused by the presence of [amygdalin](#), a toxic [cyanogenic glycoside](#) which has to be detoxified before the kernels can be used. The cores are normally not used otherwise, originally making persipan lower-priced than marzipan. It also has a somewhat different taste. Persipan often contains 0.5% [starch](#) so that it can be easily differentiated from marzipan with an [iodine test](#). (Wikipedia)

Frutta martorana (also frutta di Martorana or, in [Sicilian](#), frutta marturana) are traditional [marzipan](#) sweets, in the form of fruits and vegetables, from the provinces of [Palermo](#) and [Messina](#),^[1] [Sicily](#).

Realistically coloured with vegetable dyes, they are said to have originated at the [Monastero della Martorana](#), Palermo, when nuns decorated empty fruit trees with marzipan fruit to impress an archbishop visiting at [Easter](#). They are traditionally put by children's bedsides on [All Saints' Day](#).

In [Lebanon](#), marzipan is flavoured with orange-flower can also be made from oatmeal, [farina](#), or semolina.^[10]

[Indian](#) state of [Goa](#), marzipan (maçapão) was introduced from Portugal. However, the Goan version uses [cashew nuts](#) instead of almonds.

[Philippines](#) marzipan was brought from Spain, mazapán de pili ([Spanish](#) for "pili marzipan") is made from [pili nuts](#).


green pistachio marzipan

Halvah (sesame seeds) might count as a variation.

French marzipan (called 'massetain') is made by combining ground almonds with sugar syrup

German marzipan is made by grinding whole almonds with sugar and partially drying the paste

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[Ea Fleming](#)  [Laura Hunt Hume](#), I note that [Michelle Crocker](#) is asking specifically for marzipan coloring agents. You - or others - might want to winnow down the list that is here, since these coloring agents (from "The Colorful Cook", Compleat Anachronist #109) are for all foods as well as sugar paste and marzipan. Here's a list of the coloring agents from that CA, plus a few other additional items I have squirreled away in my computer. Here goes.....

PERIOD FOOD COLORING AGENTS

COMPLEAT ANACHRONIST, #109, THE COLORFUL COOK; Cindy Renfrow, Elise Fleming

<https://members.sca.org/apps/#Store>; in search box, type in "Colorful Cook"; \$4.50

RED:

Alkanet, barberries, beet roots, brazel, bugloss, carrot, cherries, corn poppy, cowslips, galingale, gum lac/kermes/cochineal, mulberry, pomegranate, quince, rosa paris, rose, sandalwood/saunders, turnsole, vermilion

YELLOW: egg yolks, marigold, rose, safflower, saffron, sap green

WHITE: egg whites, wheat starch (amydown)

METALLIC COLORS: gold and silver leaf, tin leaf (white, red or green)

GREEN: barley, beet greens, betony, elder bark, Indian lake, mallows, mint, parsley, sap green, spinach, turnsole, wheat blades, woad, wood sorrel

BLUE: azure/blew, bluebottles in corne, borage, elder bark, indigo, turnsole, woad

PURPLE: elderberries, mulberry, turnsole, violets

BROWN: cinnamon, ginger

BLACK: blood, burnt bread

FROM OTHER SOURCES:

Blue: lapis lazuli (blue); sky blue ("ceruse" with lapis lazuli), indigo with ceruse
green (lapis lazuli with saffron), chard

Widowes Treasure, 1585: 'A very good green' – the juice of rue, verdigris (basic copper acetate) and saffron

Emerald green – verdigris, litharge (lead monoxide) and mercury, beaten together and ground 'with the pisse of a young childe'

Gold – orpiment (arsenic trisulphate), ground with clear quartz, saffron powder and the gall of a hare or a pike, stored in a phial in a dunghill for five days, and kept for use

"Either gum-wter (a solution of gum tragacanth) or egg white was used to provide a thickening and drying medium, which made the colours easy to apply with a brush and gave a hard finish, usually with a slight gloss."

"Order of Colours", John Murrell, 1617, A Daily Exercise for Ladies and Gentlewomen
111 – Order of Colours

Sap-greene, Rosa-Paris, blew, yellow smalt, all these colours must be ground with thinne gum-

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Arabicke water, and are fit to garnish but perilous to eate.

112- Of Colours that may be eaten.

A white Rose dried, and ground with Alome-water maketh a faire straw colour. The second barke is Eldger, ground with gum-water and a little Alome, maketh a faire green.

113 – Other Colours to colour Leach.

Your saffron water maketh a yellow: iuyce of green Wheat in the blade, maketh a greene: Turnsoill giueth a red, and the white of it selfe.

From #76, “To make any other conceit as Butons, Beades, Chaines, &c.

Having fashioned your buttons made of this stuffe all of a bignesse [this is in the marchpane section], either with your hand and knife, or in a mould, if with a knife, then you may turn vp the ridges and the nib, like the threds of silke buttons, and the ground-worke is white of it selfe, if you will haue them green and white, then temper sap-green with gum Arabick water on the top of your pensill, and strike it down the ridges of the button, not touching the button on the creases. If you will haue them siluer, then strike them downe with shell-siluer, the like may be done with shell-gold. If blew, then Azur being first steept in vinegar, for else it is verie dangerous, the vinegar killeth the strength of the blew: If you would haue them red, then vse Rosa-paris on the top of your pensil: when these buttons be readie and drie, you may set them vpon a card of Sugar plate, and fasten them with Gum-dragon steept in damaske Rose-water and the owne paste tempered verie soft, serue it in on plates of glasse or keepe it as long as you will.

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Period recipes

1604 Ouvreture de Cuisine –

To make Marzipan.

Take almonds appointed as above, & flatten the paste as for making a tart, then form the marzipan as fancy as you want, then take sifted sugar & mix with rose water, & beat it together that it is like a thick batter, cast there a little on the marzipan, & flatten with a well held knife until the marzipan is all covered, then put it into the oven on paper: when you see that it boils thereon & that it does like ice, tear apart from the oven, when it doesn't boil, & sprinkle on nutmeg: if you want it golden, make it so.

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Sources

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Marzipan 101 - <https://veenaazmanov.com/marzipan-101-marzipan-uses-marzipan/>