

A PASTY STORY

By
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PASTIES



EMPANADAS

Over the years there have been many “Pasty Stories” some funny, some sad, but most of them entertaining.

My own story comes from a fond memory I have concerning a certain incident that took place during my time as a merchant seaman serving on a British cargo ship plying out her trade during the late 1950s from Latin America.

Now, as regards pasties, I well remember sitting in a Cantina (Bar come cafe) with several other young Cornish shipmates while on an evening out at a place called Rosario in the upper reaches of the River Plate in Argentina.

As the ship we had all joined from our home port of Falmouth in Cornwall England was now alongside this ports towering silos loading its cargo of South American grain, it had been good to get away from all the insects and dust flying around its jetties and muddy banks.

Enjoying a few chilled beers in the friendly atmosphere of the nearby bar that was obviously accustomed to the visits by foreign crews, we were amazed when halfway through the evening a tray of what appeared to be pastys’ were ceremoniously brought out above our heads and placed on a table before us. Startled and quite taken back by what can only be described as the cultural shock caused by seeing such a familiar sight now thousands of miles away from where we thought their rightful place should be, each of us wondered as we pondered over this unexpected culinary gift; who? As we looked at them longingly; was going to take the first bite!

Any lingering doubts we had were suddenly dislodged when a lone voice tinged with urgency loudly and firmly declared in a melodious Cornish accent,

“well boys! I dunno ‘bout you lot, but I’m bleddy ‘ungry!”

Turning to look at this lad now sitting miles away from his home town of Penryn back in Cornwall, we were instantly relieved, when between hasty mouthfuls, as he merrily chomped into the mystery crimped pastry envelope, stated with a determined look of utter satisfaction on his face

“Yep boys it’s a bleddy pasty oright! then nodding to himself in self approval repeated,” bleddy good one too!”

With doubt and caution swiftly ebbing away, in eager anticipation we all grabbed what we considered was our individual share from the tray and without exception after biting into its contents, confidently looked and nodded to each other in agreement with his findings. Then with a series of vocal conformations all around; jointly exclaimed,

“Yep, it’s a bleddy pasty alright!” – “A bleddy good pasty!” – “Mmmmmmm hot an’ ‘ansome!” – “Yer, Jus’ like ‘ome!” “Mind you not so good as mothers but ‘ansome jus’ the same!”

It had beef, potatoes seasoning and a few vegetables, some of which we were not quite sure of, but to us it was a pasty and a very tasty one too.

Calling to our host and pointing to our tasty treat and with what limited Spanish we knew, to show our appreciation for the unexpected fare we managed a unanimous “ muchas gracias senior, pasty bueno, pasty bueno!” (Many thanks sir, the pastys’ are very, very good)

To which with a smile, he turned and pointed to the attractive lady who throughout the evening had also been constantly serving from behind the bar and raising his arms motioned in a flowing gesture towards her, leaving us in no doubt that she had been the creator of our special treats. This in turn brought a response that needed no prompting and without exception all present stood up to raise their glass in salutation towards her.

The lady upon receiving our cheers and loud claps of appreciation, followed once again by the raising of glasses and a limited verbal offering of “Muchas gracias senora para el pastys’, (Many thanks Mrs for the pastys’) then also with a lovely smile raised her hand and waved her finger from side to side as if we were naughty boys, stated quite firmly in broken English, “No! No! Not Pasty! is Empanada! Empanada!

Well! we didn’t know what an Empanada was, as a pasty was a pasty to us, then realizing that by our puzzled expressions the gaiety of the moment had become somewhat suppressed, gave us a much bigger smile, threw up her hands as if resigned to the inevitable, shook her head from side to side and laughingly but graciously declared,

“Ok – Ok - Marineros Ingleses – Pasties que es! (Ok – Ok, English sailors, Pasty it is!)

An amiable concession that at the time we cheerfully and whole heartedly agreed with, further more and needless to say the whole evening turned out to be a most enjoyable and unforgettable experience for us all.

It wasn’t until much later that we found out Empanada and Pasty were almost one of the same, but consoled ourselves with the theory that it had been a Cornishman that had taken the recipe there in the first place.

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