

NOTABLE EDIBLES

DOWN UNDER, IN RED HOOK

For years my Aussie husband searched the city in vain, desperate for something approximating Australian meat pie, the dietary staple more popular in his native land than pizza and Chinese takeout are here. Traditionally filled with beef and gravy, the savory pies are beloved quick lunches or snacks at footy games; Australia's top pie maker, Four'N Twenty, produces 50,000 pies per hour. But NYC was bereft of meat pies until Gareth Hughes launched DUB (Down Under Bakery) Pies in late '04. Proper Aussie pies! (OK, Gareth is from New Zealand,

but close enough.) Initially a peripatetic wholesale operation, DUB Pies has settled on the Red Hook waterfront at Columbia and Degraw, open seven days a week.

The shop offers the most authentic Aussie meat pies available in the States—antipodean classics like steak mince and chunky steak pies, featuring top-grade meat bound with rich onion gravy and encased in the loving arms of flaky pastry. My delighted mate claims they're the best he's eaten, even counting those back home. The main deviation is that DUB uses better ingredients, but we're willing to overlook the lack of gristle and rancid meat traditionally crammed into the fast-food staple.

While meat pies are the star attraction, DUB's individual best-seller is its concession to vegetarians, a vegetable medley bathed in a lightly spicy curry. Another perennially popular pie is the Philly cheesesteak-like steak and white cheddar, a New Zealand staple, but heresy to expat Aussies. "I've had death threats," Hughes says. "They write me to say 'you *do not* put cheese in pies.'"

The core menu offers a dozen pies, but Hughes has a repertoire of four dozen and plans to introduce experimental rotating specials like Thai chicken and smoked fish and sweet potato pies. Also on the drawing board are plans to expand DUB Pies to more locations, starting with a shop on Atlantic Avenue. Until then, expats and adventurous natives can voyage to Red Hook for a taste of Australia's iconic national dish. And you don't have to get your passport stamped.

—Stacy Cowley

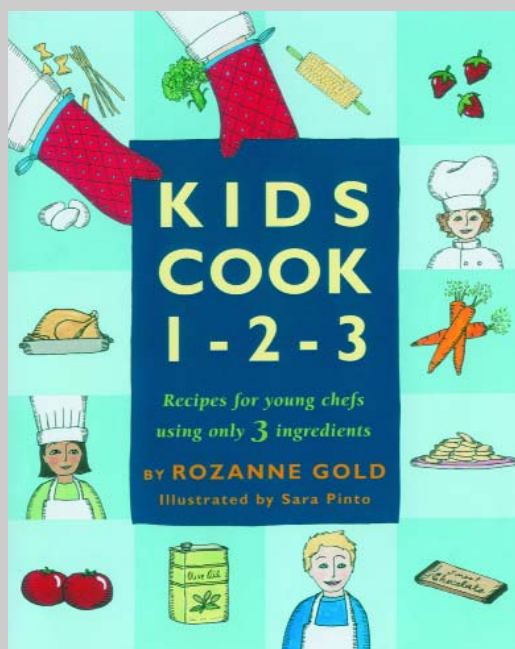


TWEENS IN TOQUES?

As you know, dear reader, we humbly feel that Brooklyn is home to the best eats on earth. And it's famously a great place to raise wee ones.

One of the borough's most celebrated cookbook authors combines those two trends in a new title that's enough to make us decide to reproduce. *Kids Cook 1-2-3: Recipes for Young Chefs Using Only 3 Ingredients* (Bloomsbury) brings three-time James Beard Cookbook Award-winner Rozanne Gold's genius culinary formula of guess-how-many items to the Borough's tweens, ensuring this magazine will have great food minds to interview for a generation to come.

Thinking peanut butter on celery sticks and applesauce studded with red hots? Think again. Gold was first chef at Gracie Mansion



by age 23, and evidently feels such culinary precociousness is nothing special. Though the illustrations show almond-eyed 11-year-olds and suggest a grown-up "kitchen buddy" should help with the blender, cooking terms include "reduce" and "zest," and recipes climb confidently into such grown-up terrain as candied bacon, roast chicken, homemade butter, and pineapple-glazed salmon steaks. Gold not only offers three variations for tuna salad, but even advises young readers that the empty can is handy for frying perfect eggs and cutting short-cakes. Cheers to Gold for a book so deliciously smart we plan to cook from it ourselves. As she tells her protégés, these dishes are so good, "your mom might ask you for the recipe."



LOCAL GIRL HITS THE ICE CREAM JACKPOT

When Häagen-Dazs and the Food Network announced a contest to create the next big ice cream flavor, Bushwick's Judiaann Woo knew exactly what her entry would be. "I'd been noticing sticky toffee pudding on menus everywhere," including Park Slope's *Tempo*, she remembers.

Sticky what? "It's a British dessert," she explains patiently, perhaps not for the first time. "You know how they call everything pudding?" Indeed. Woo knew other existing desserts, like crême brûlée and dulce de leche, had been re-interpreted into successful flavors, and had a hunch this captivating combination could win the judges' hearts and minds.

She was right. Months after her filmmaker husband shot a video of her explaining her submission, Woo was invited to the elimination round.

"We flew the finalists to our research and development facility to make their flavors," recounts Diane McIntyre, Senior PR manager for Häagen-Dazs. "A panel of our food scientists and marketing team tasted all the flavors, and narrowed it down to Cannoli, Sticky Toffee Pudding and Toasted Coconut Sesame Brittle. Then we held a tasting weekend in our shops, and the public voted."

Of her confectionary victory, Woo is a modest: "I seriously didn't think I was going to win. Sure I hoped, but it was a shock."

When the pints hit Brooklyn, Woo got enthusiastic texts from friends in the frozen aisle: "It's landed at Key Food!"

And, yes, she's been approached by adoring strangers. "I walked into a party Saturday and someone shouted, 'You're the sticky toffee pudding lady!' And I've gotten a lot of fan e-mail from across the country, people saying 'I love your flavor!'"



She's not the only one hearing from the vox populi. The contest winner was slated to appear only as a six-month limited edition. But mail poured in at H-D HQ, begging them not to discontinue the flavor. Explains Woo, "It turned out this particular flavor always sells out and people stockpile it when they see it. Some people out there are desperate." Their words did not fall on minds suffering brain freeze. Sticky Toffee Pudding has been promoted from limited edition status into the permanent canon.

Woo's husband is among her proudest fans. "He went to all the bodegas that carried it. He'd point at the ice cream, point at me, and say "Local girl."

ON THE RIM OF HERITAGE HOG HEAVEN

Porchetta is a newcomer to Smith Street, but it's winning us over fast. The restaurant's name means little pig, taxidermy-inspired sculptures adorn the zebra-painted, pig-stenciled walls, and, yes, the menu encourages wallowing in pleasures of the flesh—pig flesh that is. Chef Jason Neroni, most recently of the hal-lowed 71 *Clinton Fresh Food*, sends diners to heritage hog heaven, cooking up a very rare breed of pork called the Red Wattle, delivered by those champions of pastured protein, *Heritage Foods USA*. Willy-nilly bacon kisses are on every chef's lips lately, but a pork margarita?

"It's not on the menu, but when you sit down, it's the first thing the server tells you about," explains the bartender, Adam Cain. "Some people get it because it sounds great, others because it's so out there. Everyone orders a second, pretty much always. Last night I sold 50."

So...what *is* it? "The food here is so important," Cain continues, "we don't want to destroy people's palette's before dinner. We put in fresh tan-



gerine juice, a whole lime and a splash of Cointreau." The tequila is smoky and woody. But there's one more twist.

You see, *Porchetta* goes through a lot of pigs (check out their special monthly pork-tasting dinners including, yes, pork for dessert) and hates to see a single mouthful of trimmings go to waste. So every other day, Jason dries the skins for four hours, puts them in the food processor with lots of salt and a little black pepper, and voilà, the perfect finish for a pork palace margarita: cracklin salt. "This cocktail says *Porchetta* from nose to tail," says Neroni, speaking figuratively and literally.

"Everyone loves it," reports Cain. "You can tell because they always drink their way around the whole rim."