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Dried Apple Pie on the Chisholm Trail

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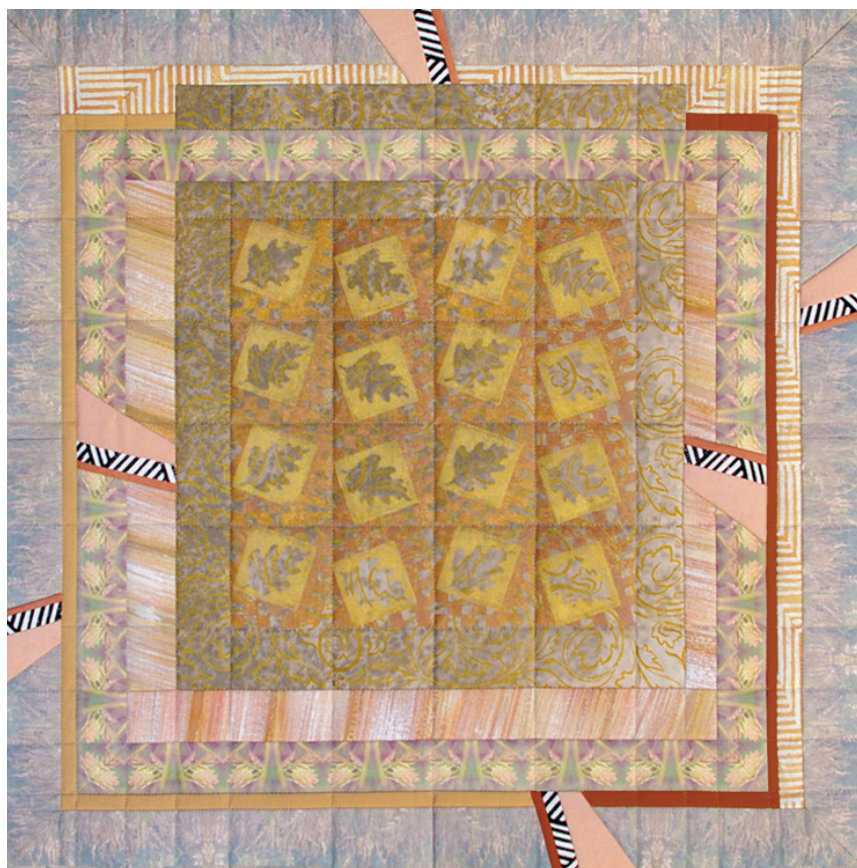
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INDIGENOUS 2
Chris Edmonds

DRIED APPLE PIE ON THE CHISHOLM TRAIL

*Spit in my ears
And tell me lies,
But give me no more
Dried apple pies!*

Cowboys on the trail lived on such a steady diet of beans, sowbelly, biscuits, Arbuckle coffee, and dried apples that they told jokes and sang ditties like this one. Camp cooks did their best to vary three meals a day for the three-month trip up the Chisholm Trail from Texas to Kansas. For dessert there was pie made with “doctored up” dried apples.

Camp cooks often cut the cattle company’s brand in the top crust. They then baked the pie in a Dutch oven, placing the pot over a smooth bed of coals, sliding the heated lid on top, and then covering it with hot coals.

Modern recipes advise cooking the pie for thirty to forty-five minutes.

Some cooks used biscuit dough for crust. “Although he might enclose his

fruit in a crust only a wagon cook dare make and only a cowboy could eat, it was devoured with relish,” wrote Ramon J. Adams in *Come an’ Get It*. “It has been said that the cowboy ‘would go to hell for a piece o’ pie.’” But perhaps not the same kind for ninety days straight.

AN ORIGINAL RECIPE FOR DRIED APPLE PIE

Wash dried apples and soak overnight in water. In the morning stew slowly until nearly done. Sweeten to taste.

The crust should be rolled thin; a thick crust to a fruit pie is undesirable.

THE MODERN TRANSLATION

Soak 2 cups dried apples in water overnight. Drain off water and mix apples with 1 teaspoon allspice and 1 teaspoon cinnamon. Line an 8-inch metal pie pan with crust, add apples, dot with 3 tablespoons butter, and cover with top crust.

Jane P. Marshall grew up on a farm near Elmdale in Chase County. She taught food writing and food history at Kansas State University before her retirement.