

Evolution of baking and pastry making



SYNOPSIS

The purpose of this project was to understand the evolution of baking and pastry making. How it has evolved throughout time, what changes and techniques came that helped in the development of this field and how this profession today is one of the most important professions in the food industry.

INTRODUCTION

Baking is one of the cooking methods in which the food is baked in ovens using dry heat. Breads are the most commonly baked products, but many other food items can also be baked. When the heat travels from the surface to the centre of the products like cakes, cookies or breads, it forms a stiff crust and a spongy centre and converts the batter or dough's into baked goods. A combination of baking and barbecue can be created by either cooking twice or one before the other. Masonry oven is one of the concept of baking which is similar to smoke pit concept of barbecuing, therefore baking and barbecuing can be related.

Originally baking was done by women at home for their own consumption, then later on men started working in bakeries and restaurants and started baking for local consumption, as the time passed and technologies changed and big machines came into the market the production was industrialized and hence baking was later done by large machines and in huge factories. Breads being the common food are economically as well as culturally very important therefore the nutritive values have to be kept in mind. A professional, baking goods is known as a baker.

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EVOLUTION OF BAKERY AND PASTRY ARTS

WHAT IS BAKING?

Cooking by dry heat method in large ovens is known as baking. Apart from cakes, breads and pastries; meats, vegetables, poultry and fish can also be baked. (Adams, 2013)

Baking can be done by three methods:

1. Dry Baking

The water content in the food rises and forms a steam, the dry heat of the oven and the steam formed combine to cook the food.

Example: Pastries, Cakes, and Baked Jacket Potato.

2. Bain Marie

While baking, the food is placed in a water container because of which the heat in the oven modifies resulting the slow cooking of food which ensures that the food is not over cooked or over heated.

3. Increased Humidity Baking

Humidity of the oven is increased either by placing a bowl of water in the oven or by injecting steam, resulting in the increase of water content in the food and hence the quality of the food is improved.

(Anon., 2012)

HOW DID IT START?

The evidence of baking first took place when the wild grass grains were soaked in water and then everything was mixed together and mashed into a broth like paste. Cooking of this paste was done by pouring it on a flat hot rock and was cooked till it resulted in a bread like substance. Roasting this paste on hot embers made bread making easier, since it could be made any time fire was created.

Yeast was previously being used to brew beers, but Ancient Egyptians started using it to bake breads. The art of baking bread began around 600 BC in Ancient Greece which led to an invention of enclosed ovens.

The art baking bloomed in the Roman Empire. The occupation of pastry cook was known as the Pastillarium. It was the most respected line of work as pastries were considered most decent, and Romans loved to eat them in festivals and loved to celebrate with them. Hence the baking of pastries started on special occasions and especially for large banquets. Whenever a new treat was invented by any pastry chef they were highly rewarded.

Number of pastry chefs increased in Rome during 1 AD. There were 300 pastry chefs at that time. Romans had their own mills to grind grain flour and baked bread in ovens with chimneys. (Gisslen, 2005)

BAKING IN MIDDLE AGES

Baking as a profession totally disappeared after the collapse of the Roman Empire. It slowly came back in the latter part of middle age as an important business in the service of upper class. Bread making was no more done by homemakers it was continued by professional bakers since the constant

tending of the ovens was required. Ovens were usually disconnected from the building due to the possibility of fire, they were generally outside of the city walls.

Guilds were setup in France in the 12th century and were called taneliers or sifters, their job was to sift the flour that was sent to them. During that time there were 62 guilds, and they were granted the ownership of manufacturing breads but not beyond the borderlines of Paris.

When the bran is sifted with coarse sieves only some part of the bran is removed, white flour is made by sifting the bran with finer sieves which removes either parts of the bran or whole bran. The yield of the white flour is lower since most of the grain is removed while sifting hence the white flour was more expensive. In 1650 CE bakers started buying sifted flour from the mills.

The weight, quality and cost of the breads were specifically decided by the royal decree. The loaves which were not of the appropriate weight were confiscated and then given away to the poor.

Insurance against illness was also provided by the guilds: each day a loaf or two were handed over to a hospital and priority hospitalization for free was in return guaranteed. Free breads were supplied to the executioner and were placed upside down by the baker who supplied it to them. They were kept upside to ensure the other customers that the hands of the executioner will not get in contact with any other loaves. People started believing that it was inauspicious to keep the bread loaves upside down hence giving rise to a superstition.

The word taneliers was soon replaced by Boulanger which comes from the Picardy word Boulenc. The literal meaning of the word Boulanger is 'one who makes round bread'.

(Gisslen, 2005) (Gisslen, 2009)

MODERN BAKING AND TECHNOLOGY

The time of great technical progress started in the nineteenth century. With the development of automatic machines the task of the manual labor reduced and because of the development the bakers could perform many more tasks with the machines. Roller Milling was the most important technological development. Before this development milling of grains was done by grinding them between two stones, then the resultant flour had to be bolted or sifted numerous times in order to separate the bran. The manual labor process was very slow and took a lot of time but after the invention of Roller Milling the process became more efficient and faster.

New availability of flours was another important development of that period, they were grown in the wheat growing areas of North-America. They were higher in proteins than compared to those grown in Northern Europe. This wheat was exported to Europe which led to large-scale production of white breads.

Many more technologies developed in the twentieth century. New types of ovens and refrigerators came. Air transportation also played a huge role in the development of baking and pastry making. Transportation of fresh ingredients around the world became more convenient.

Many ingredients that were once rare and expensive are now easily available and reasonably priced because of the Preservation Techniques. Preparation and processing of food can now be done before shipping on behalf of bakeshops and food operations as modern food preservations technology have made it possible. Hence convenience foods have come into existence. Cooking styles and eating habits have changed because of these developments.

Evolution of cooking and baking has been going on for hundred years and still continues to. In the later parts of the twentieth century, travelling around the world became easy hence immigrants traveled in Europe and North America, which led to the increase in the taste and awareness for regional dishes. Knowledge about different cuisines grew among the chefs apart from the traditional cuisines of other parts of Europe they learned about the cuisines of Asia, Latin America, and of many more different regions.

Different techniques and ingredients of more than one regional cuisine came in use in a single dish and came to be known as Fusion Cuisine, this cuisine can at times yield poor results as it does not belong to any one culture and gets to mixed up. Fusion cuisine was true in 1980s as the idea was fresh and new.

(Gisslen, 2009)

CONCLUSION

The evolution of baking has took centuries to perfect, from the ages of the wild grass paste to the modern ways of bread making machinery. Slowly some of the technique are moving out of the scenario with raising health issue and concerns . People are moving out of the heavy fats and oils, moving into more of lighter fats and healthier flour. The future of baking will me more innovative ovens, healthier and whole grain breads and innovations in the bakeries organizations.

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