
Pascale Le Draoulec

American Pie

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Q: You met many interesting characters along your journey. Have you been able to keep in touch with any of them? If so, can you give us an update on them?

A: I've stayed in touch with Kathy Knapp, in Pie Town, New Mexico. Interestingly, she decided to lease the Pie-O-Neer Cafe to a young woman chef who, like her, fell in love with the place while visiting one day. Kathy has moved on to help her new beau run a bed and breakfast in another rural town in New Mexico. She's baking breakfast pies now . . . Apparently, the beau fell in love with Kathy (and her pie) passing through Pie Town one day. She was still married at the time so he didn't act on his impulse. It was kismet when, years later, Kathy stopped at his B & B while traveling around the state.

I've also kept in touch with Carl Dennis in New Orleans. He's the son of the pie-baking preacher, Minister Edgar Crawford. Sadly, Carl just called a couple of weeks ago to let me know that his mother, Archie Ernestine, had passed. He wanted me to know the book was on her nightstand.

I occasionally get e-mails from Ann and Rodney Roach in Plymouth, Massachusetts, now grandparents. They've threatened to drop in on us on Thanksgiving Day and we keep hoping they will.

Last August, I had the privilege of attending the annual Pie Festival in Braham, Minnesota: What a hoot! It was great seeing the Aunes again. Jerrie was wearing her red shoes, of course. I was relieved that fast-talking Phyllis Londgren had no hard feelings about my duct tape comment . . .

Q: Do you continue your search for pie either on planned trips or just randomly?

A: The quest for pie never ends. The metaphor, the quest for a slower, gentler pace of life has only intensified since I became a mother in October. As for dessert pie? While I don't seek it out systematically, though I do always order a slice when I see it on menus and it's homemade.

Q: In North Carolina, you met a woman named Laura who urged you to return to New Orleans for Dick and Jenny's lemon meringue pie. You weren't able to go back there on that trip. Have you since then gone to New Orleans in search of that pie? If so, how was it?

A: To my chagrin, I've yet to make it back to New Orleans. It's on my list, though, not just for the pie, but to visit Carl and his father as well as Greg Guirard. I'm really hoping to make it to Catahoula for Good Friday this year. Wouldn't it be grand to see my baby girl among all the other new babies spread out on a quilt under a tree?

Q: At the end of the book, you are preparing to make a huckleberry and peach pie for your realtor Elena: How did your first pie turn out? Are you a veteran pie maker now? If you plan to have children, will you be passing along this culinary art form to them?

A: What I loved about Elena she passed away a year ago was her take-no-prisoners frankness. I never told her this was my first pie effort and she had no idea how pivotal this pie would be in the book when I dropped it on her doorstep and told her to give me her feedback. She called the next day to say the filling was wonderful, but that the crust was a little ornery.

Elena passed away seven months before I gave birth to my daughter, Mina Claire. Yes, I do plan to pass on this art form to Mina: In fact, when Ty and I were testing recipes for the paperback, we took turns wearing her in a sling as we rolled out dough. She already has her first miniature rolling pin sent to me by a reader in Connecticut. I am not a veteran but I am definitely feeling more confident. Still, when we're pressed for time and Ty offers to make the dough, I gladly accept.

Q: You've eaten countless amounts of pie since you started your quest. Give it up which one is your favorite? And may we have the recipe please?

A: I won't lie. I'm a sucker for that huckleberry pie ([click here](#) for recipe). I think I like saying it as much as I love eating it. I like both versions in the book equally. Though Ty and I have been experimenting with buckwheat crusts and, I must say, buckwheat blends beautifully with the huckleberry. In Dave the bear trapper's crust recipe, we simply use one cup buckwheat flour and two cups regular flour (instead of three cups of flour). The buckwheat flour needs to be sifted twice it's so heavy. The coarse buckwheat gives the pie a rustic, woody flavor that complements the intense, wild berries nicely. I'm sure Dave would agree and I hope I have the chance to make it for him someday.