

You know those ?Traditional Mince Pies? we all see in the supermarkets at this time of year? There should be a trading standards case against anybody who has the audacity to use the word Traditional in relation to the mince pies presently on offer! Below is a real traditional recipe from ?The English Housewife? published in 1615. Not a great deal of comparison to the icing sugar dusted mass-manufactured oddities in aluminium foil cases, I think you?ll agree:-

?Take a Legge of Mutton, and cut the best of the flesh from the bone, and parboyl it well then put to it three pound of the best Mutton suet & shred it very small; then spread it abroad, and fashion it with Salt Cloves and Mace: then put in good store of Currants, great Raisins and Prunes clean washed and picked a few Dates sliced, and some Orenge-pils sliced ; then being all well mixt together, put it into a coffin, or into divers coffins, and so bake them and when they are served up, open the lids and strow store of Sugar on the top of the meat and upon the lid. And in this sort you may also bake Beef or Veal, onely the Beef would not be parboyld, and the Veal will ask a double quantity of Suet."

From Gervase Markham The English Housewife, (London: 1615)

A coffin isn?t the wooden box you to granny to rest in. It?s a pastry case!