

## Christmas Tourtiere Pie

by Brenda Athanus

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Here in Maine we await a "super storm" that is huge and rushing across the United States, or so they say. Six to twelve inches of snow, turning to freezing rain with high winds. Sounds like Winter weather in Maine, not too unusual. It isn't the size of the storm it's what you find to make it fun that counts and I have a plan to enjoy it! In between plowing I will be making our Mother's tortiere pies and perhaps having a slice for lunch and another with a pot of hot tea in the afternoon to warm up.

What is tortiere pie? To my family it is a ground pork and beef pie flavored with chopped onions, spices and thickened with mashed Maine potatoes then put into a double butter crust. I said my family, the Gagne family, my Mother's recipe, made the same way for at least 5 generations. It isn't like the Belanger's who add no beef just pork, a totally different spice mixture and a Crisco crust or the Bourassa family that adds small chunks of pork instead of ground pork, they add no potatoes, quatre spice and a lard pastry crust.



Well, you get the picture – everyone make their tortiere pie differently and their family recipe is VERY sacred! One must be brave to share a wedge of tortiere pie with someone that grew up

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eating meat pie. It opens a whole new conversation on "oh, how different yours is" – like there was something wrong with your filling and they felt badly for you. Nothing compares to the tortiere flavor you grew up with and when the pies bake and permeates the air it really launches the Holiday season for me!

There are small white lights to untangle, a tree to choose, cookies to bake and a big piece of tortiere pie to recharge me, in oh so many ways...

### The Gagne Family Tortiere Pie Recipe – Gaspé Style

1½ pounds fresh ground pork  
1½ pounds fresh ground beef, 85% lean  
1½ cups chopped onions, not too fine-1/2 inch chop  
1 tablespoon ground allspice, I always buy a new fresh package for this event from Penzeys Spices  
2 large baking potatoes, peeled, boiled in water and then mashed coarsely

Salt and Pepper to taste

Water

In a 5 quart pot over medium heat add the ground pork and beef, stir to combine. When it starts to change color but not brown add the onions and 1/2 a cup of water, stir well. Simmer over low heat for 25 minutes, add a touch more water so it will not stick and remember to stir every 5 minutes. Add the allspice and the mashed potatoes, the mixture should be medium thick and when it bubbles it should have the consistency of polenta. If you need to add more water add it, if you have added too much water just cook it until it evaporates and become the right consistency.

Let cool in the refrigerator overnight to let the flavors meld together, bake in a double butter crust the next day. Bake at 375°F for approx. 50 minutes or until golden and gorgeous.

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Remember to make plenty of slits in the top crust to vent all that moisture.

*Brenda Athanus runs a small gourmet food shop in Belgrade Lakes, Maine with her sister Tanya called the Green Spot.*

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