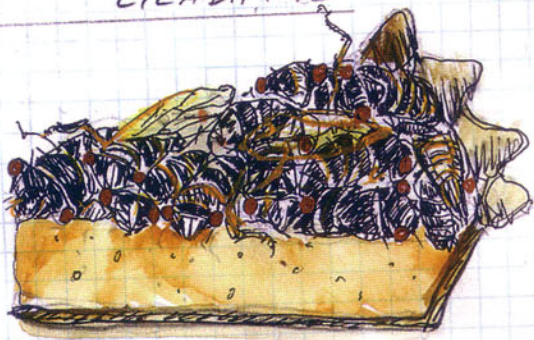


PIE #1

CICADA PIE



THE TAO OF PIE

It can't get much simpler than Water Pie, also known as "poor man's pie": a pie shell and some sugar, flour, butter, nutmeg, and water—a true exercise in cupboard-cleaning resourcefulness. The recipe is one of many at the Pie of the Month Club, a website (www.pieofthemonth.org) created by Sue Anne Zollinger, a former art student turned pie expert.

Escaping a sweltering Chicago summer, Zollinger fled to a local air-conditioned public library and discovered long-forgotten cookbooks. She was immediately hooked on the many odd pie recipes—Gravel Pie, Funeral Pie—and their arcane history. Zollinger began to create hand-drawn postcards of these recipes and share them with friends. Last year she moved the club from the mailbox to the Internet.

Recipes like Shoo-Fly Wet-Bottom Pie and Pralined Cicada Pie are jumping-off points for history lessons and folk-art illustrations. There's an actual recipe for 4 & 20 Blackbird Pie, circa 1598 (the birds go in alive and fly out alive).

For \$20 you can become a member and receive a hand-drawn membership badge and a new recipe/art card in your mailbox each month, but everything's there at the site for free. "I'd like to think that Pie of the Month Club is the epitome of postmodern pie," says Zollinger. "It's like pie without the actual pie. It's 'pie' entirely about pie and refers back to all the history, creating something new and fresh." — Eric Steinman