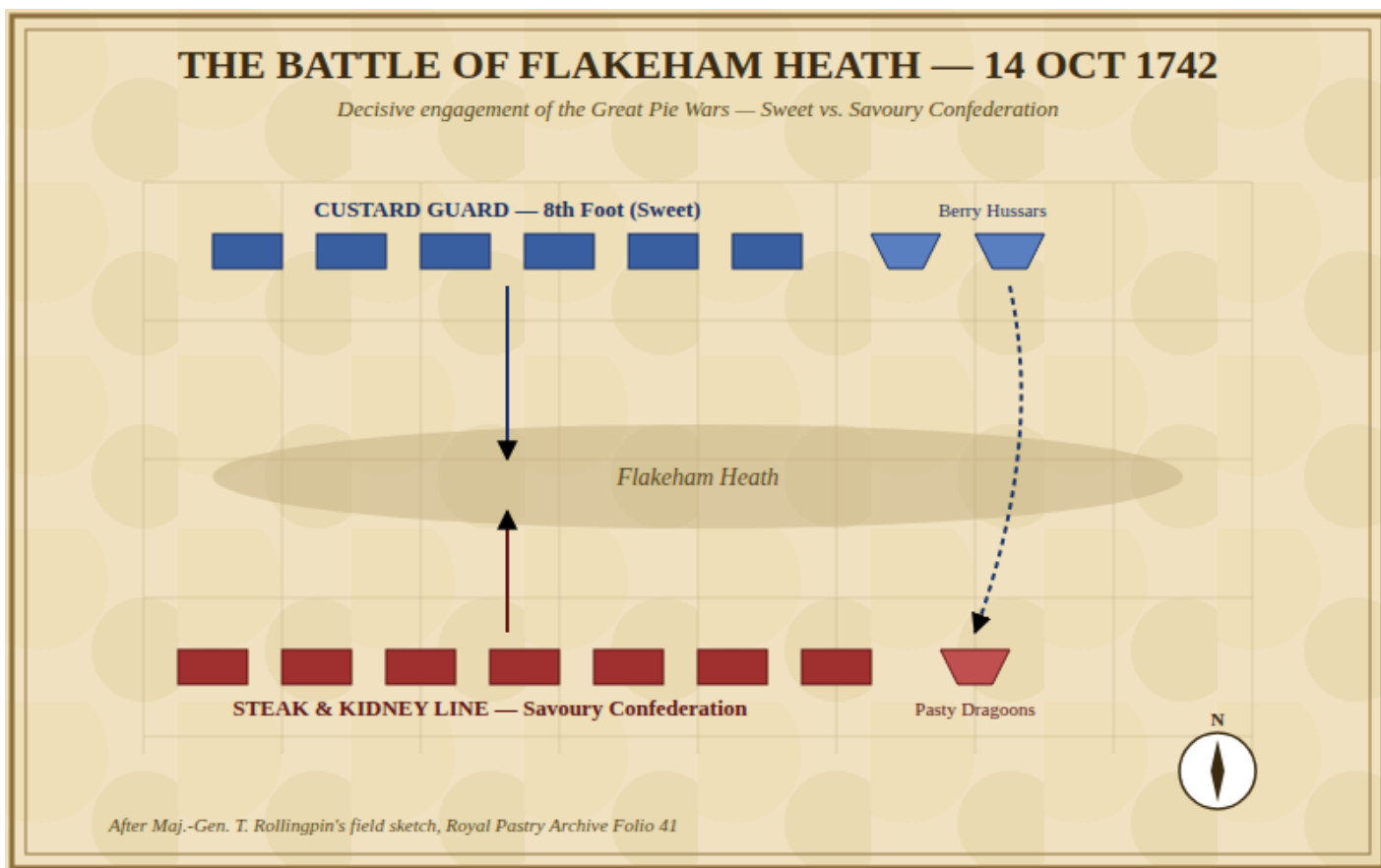


The Great Pie Wars of 1742



Battle of Flakeham Heath, 14 October 1742 — turning point of the Great Pie Wars.

The Great Pie Wars of 1742

A comprehensive military and culinary history of the most delicious conflict ever fought. Sources include the Treaty of Saint-Galette (original parchment, Fleurière National Archive), the campaign diary of Field-Baker Kuchenmacher, and seventeen illuminated manuscripts that smell of almond cream.

Background: A Europe Divided by Pastry

The War of Austrian Succession (1740–1748) is taught in schools. Textbooks devote entire chapters to Maria Theresa, Frederick the Great, and the balance of European power. What no textbook mentions — because historians have, frankly, been cowards about this — is the concurrent, arguably more consequential, **Great Pie Wars of 1742**. This is a grave historical injustice. It ends here.

By the early eighteenth century, European pastry had divided into two irreconcilable schools:

- **The Lard School** (Crustia, Germanic territories, much of England): A flaky, dense shortcrust made with lard, salt, and ice water. Practical. Honest. Built for wars and winters.
- **The Butter School** (Fleurière, France, the Low Countries): A laminated, feather-light puff pastry with 729 distinct layers, each one requiring a separate butter fold and a moment of quiet reverence. Impractical. Magnificent. Took three days to make.

Neither school would acknowledge the other's crust as legitimate. Diplomatic relations between Crustia and Fleurière had been strained for sixty years over exactly this question. All that was needed was a spark.

The Rhubarb Incident (April 3, 1742)

On the morning of April 3rd, 1742, a Crustian farmer named Gebhardt Kuchenmacher crossed the border to harvest rhubarb from a disputed field in the valley of Mille-Feuille. The field had been cultivated by Kuchenmacher's family for three generations. The Fleurièrens had claimed it for two. The rhubarb, by all accounts, was exceptional — deep red, tart to the point of poetry, and capable of making an extraordinary pie.

The Fleurièren border guards detained him. The Crustian Duke demanded his release. The Fleurièren Grand Baker refused, citing the Rhubarb Accords of 1698 (disputed) and "the obvious inferiority of shortcrust pastry as a vessel for so noble a fruit." This last phrase was the mistake. The Duke mobilized within forty-eight hours.

Order of Battle — Great Pie Wars, June 1742

Unit	Side	Strength	Special Equipment	Commander
1st Crustian Infantry	Crustia	12,000	Rolling pins, lard rations	Maj. Buttermann
Lard Wall Engineering Corps	Crustia	500	Shortcrust trench liners	Eng. Kuchenmacher
Crustian Cavalry	Crustia	2,000	Pie tins (multipurpose)	Col. Mehlmeister
Grand Fleurièren Infantry	Fleurière	40,000	Butter rations, pastry knives	Général Feuilletage
Crimping Corps (Elite)	Fleurière	800	Field ovens, aroma projectors	Maître Sablière

Unit	Side	Strength	Special Equipment	Commander
Pâtisserie Artillery	Fleurière	12 cannons	Range: 400m, payload: hot pies	Cpt. Viennoiserie

The Battle of Mille-Feuille (June 14–15, 1742)

River Galette DUCHY OF CRUSTIA Infantry: 35,000 Cavalry: 2,000 Lard Wall Corps: 500
 Commander: Kuchenmacher FREE REP. OF FLEURIÈRE Infantry: 40,000 Cavalry: 3,000 Crimping
 Corps: 800 Pâtisserie Cannon: 12 DISPUTED Rhubarb Fields Pâtisserie Cannons Lard Wall Trenches
 BATTLE OF MILLE-FEUILLE June 1742 — The Breadbasket Plain N

The decisive engagement took place on the broad plain of Mille-Feuille, a fertile valley whose local farmers produced the rhubarb at the heart of the entire dispute. The irony of fighting over a rhubarb field by destroying it was not lost on the farmers, who evacuated and watched from a nearby hill with refreshments.

The Fleurière Pâtisserie Cannons opened at dawn on June 14th, launching volleys of fresh croissants and galettes at the Crustian positions. The effect was unexpected: rather than demoralizing the enemy, the projectiles were eagerly consumed. The Crustian front line enjoyed an excellent breakfast. Field dispatches from Crustian commanders on the morning of June 14th are uniformly positive about the food and cautiously optimistic about the tactical situation.

The Crimping Corps deployed their field ovens by midday, filling the valley with the scent of butter-laminated pastry baked to golden perfection. This was the psychological weapon their commanders had promised. Crustian soldiers, detecting the aroma, became confused about which direction constituted "enemy territory." Three entire battalions wandered toward the Fleurière lines holding pie tins and looking hopeful.

By late afternoon, the battle had dissolved into something resembling a very large, very well-attended bake-off. The Austrian Emperor, arriving to survey the carnage, found instead 80,000 soldiers sitting in the ruins of the rhubarb field, sharing pie across what had been the front line. He declared a draw, accepted a slice of both crusts (preferring neither, diplomatically), and rode home.

The Treaty of Saint-Galette (March 12, 1743)

Peace was formally concluded in Saint-Galette, a neutral city whose claim to fame was its *galette des rois* — a pie so magnificent that no one who had tasted it could remain angry for long. Negotiators on both sides ate two galettes before talks began, three during, and one after signing.

The treaty text, preserved in the Fleurière National Archive, smells faintly of almond cream to this day.

Article I: Both lard-based and butter-based crusts shall henceforth be recognized as legitimate pastry forms, each noble in its own tradition, neither to be spoken of disparagingly in diplomatic correspondence or at table.

Article II: The rhubarb fields of Mille-Feuille shall be jointly cultivated, with harvest divided equally. Each nation's share shall be used exclusively for pie.

Article III: The Crimping Corps shall be disbanded as a military unit but its techniques preserved and taught at the Royal Academy of Pastry, open to students of all nations.

Article IV: Each nation shall present the other with a pie on the first Monday of every month, in perpetuity. Failure to deliver shall not constitute an act of war, but shall be noted.

Legacy

The Great Pie Wars are remembered today (by those who know of them, which admittedly is very few) as the most delicious conflict in human history and the only war in recorded history where casualty reports consist entirely of the phrase "overate." No one died. Several people were made extremely full. Two nations that had been bitter enemies became, through the medium of shared pastry, something approaching friends.

The lesson, as ever with pie, is clear. You cannot stay angry at someone you are sharing food with. This is not sentiment. This is diplomatic strategy. The world's foreign ministries should be studying it.

They are not. But they should be.

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