



europæana  
food and drink

**Grant Agreement 621023**

## ***Europeana Food and Drink***

# **Europeana Food and Drink Touring Exhibition Materials**

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### Statement of originality:

This deliverable contains original unpublished work except where clearly indicated otherwise. Acknowledgement of previously published material and of the work of others has been made through appropriate citation, quotation or both.

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### 1 Introduction

This document includes specifications for the Europeana Food and Drink Exhibition 'Cake!' forms part of the Work Package 3.

'The touring exhibition 'Cake!' is developed by the exhibition cluster, consisting of CAG and KMKG. It is one of the ten innovative market-ready products demonstrating the commercial and creative potential of food and drink-related Europeana content, as stated in the Description of Work. By focusing on the theme of cake and cake traditions, the exhibition touches two of the three thematic focuses of the DoW: both My Food and Drink Life (family moments etc.) and Food and Drink in the Community (cake traditions).

The panel exhibition will be displayed in 5 different locations in Belgium: Veurne (Bakery Museum), Voeren (Library and Community Centre), Sint-Truiden (City Hall), and Leuven (WZC Remy, home for elderly people). As long-term viability and repeatability was, from the beginning of the project, one of the main aims, the exhibition does not tell a unique Belgian story. Texts are in Dutch, but also available in English (as part of the virtual exhibition). The template, in a PDF-format, is replicable in every European country. The exhibition framework includes a wider European cake story, with a general approach in the first 4 and final 2 panels. The 5 middle panels can be adapted according to national traditions. The exhibition can be complemented with objects. But this will not be the case in Belgium (due to budget limitations mainly).

To create partnerships with industry and other organisations and to build communities, many activities are organised around the touring exhibition. Most of them take place at the occasion of a well-known Belgian food festival, Week van de Smaak (further on Week of Taste). Bakers are invited to go ahead with an old cake recipe and create a 'heritage cake'. Those cakes will be sold during Week of Taste, wrapped in a newly designed and printed 'heritage cake box'.

# Week van de Smaak



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During that same Week of Taste, 7 digital community engagement sessions will be organised in different cities, with the help of local heritage cells. Those sessions are called 'Op de koffie', Dutch for 'having a cup of coffee with someone'. People can come and bring their traditional (cake) recipes and pictures to be photographed or scanned. In return they get a cup of coffee and a piece of cake. Their cake stories will be recorded. All materials will be uploaded on a HistoryPin channel. A selection of those materials will be used to enrich the virtual exhibition.

## 2 Approach

The cluster began discussions by brainstorming a number of ideas, making use of the business model canvas to focus on one idea which is suitable for all partners, has potential to engage with commercial and other partners and can be replicated in other cities / under other circumstances.

Cake is the perfect food for celebrating: a birth, a birthday, a wedding, a holiday like Easter or Christmas, harvesting. Name an occasion and somewhere in Europe there is a special cake to go with it. Often it's even not just a cake, but a whole series of traditions from baking it to eating it. Cake is all about immaterial cultural heritage.

CAG and KMKG found the Bakery Museum in Veurne immediately willing to give advice and support.



Bakery Museum

## 3 Scope and aims

The scope and aims of the exhibition are:

- To create an exhibition which promotes food and drink heritage
- To create an exhibition which can travel through Belgium as a test case
- To build communities around the exhibition
- To achieve a defined number of visitors
- To create an exhibition framework that can be repeated in other countries
- To strengthen international relationships
- To form a basis for the virtual exhibition

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- To ensure (virtual) exhibition visibility through marketing / promotion
- To engage with a number of commercial partners
- To engage with other heritage partners
- To create an exhibition framework that can be repeated in other countries
- To strengthen international relationships
- To form a basis for the virtual exhibition
- To enrich Europeana with cake related materials

## 4 Product Idea

CAG and KMKG explicitly chose for a pan-European theme: cake. Cake is a typical European product. The choice for a pan-European theme will make it easy to engage with a variety of venues, all over Europe.

The exhibition explores some general themes first. How to define 'cake', for example? It then tells the history of the eating of cake in general: from a very luxurious dessert – because of very expensive ingredients such as sugar – it became a dessert for everyone, at every festive occasion. The evolution took about one century: from the middle of the 19th century until the 1950s. But cake is not only celebration food. Throwing cake is a way of make a (political) statement as well, although in originated in the comic movies scene.

After this general introduction, the exhibition focuses on some more particular cakes: the Belgian Epiphany cake, birth and baptism cakes, birthday cakes, wedding cakes, fruit cakes and pies. The exhibition concludes with some border crossing: how are holy days celebrated in other cultures? Not with cake, but always with something sweet!

The Virtual Exhibition (see D3.12) will initially be based on the framework created by CAG and KMKG and expanded to include content from Food and Drink project partners and crowd sourced content. It will be created on Google Cultural Institute's platform and feature as a Europeana exhibition as well.

## 5 Specifications

### 5.1 Content and process for gathering

#### *Exhibition*

The content used in the exhibition is related to the exhibition theme of cake. Content is spread over 11 panels, covered with text and images. Texts have been researched and written using the most recent literature on cakes and baking traditions. The images were sourced mainly from the Bakkerijmuseum, but also from the Rijksmuseum, private persons and smaller archival and heritage institutions. All the

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images will be ingested in Europeana, making them available to a wider European audience. So the material is a mix of both new content, sourced via the Food and Drink project (i.e. material from the Bakery museum), as well as existing content (i.e. from the Rijksmuseum).

In order to guarantee the timely production of the exhibition CAG had to rely on existing sources, since very few specific imaging with regards to cake was available under the correct rights of use in Europeana.

### *Crowdsourcing events*

Seven crowdsourcing events, organised in Belgium during Week of Taste, will supply an estimated 200 photographs which will all have appropriate rights. Pictures will be uploaded on HistoryPin and will be delivered to Europeana as well.

Each consortium member is invited to submit materials related to cake. When rights are cleared, they will go to Europeana as well. Partner materials will also be used in the Virtual Exhibition (D3.12).

## 5.2 Content: Details

The exhibition is made out of 12 panels. For a preview of the panels, see the accompanying PDF files. Texts are written in Dutch. For an English translation, see Appendix. An overview:

- 1 – Cake? Cake!: on the origin and definition of the word ‘cake’
- 2 – Big celebration: on cake as a (very) luxurious product
- 3 – Small celebration: on cake entering ‘normal’ household from the 1950s onwards
- 4 – Pieing: on throwing cake as a political statement
- 5 – Epiphany: on epiphany cake
- 6 – New life: on birth cakes and baptism cakes
- 7 – Happy Birthday!: on birthday cakes
- 8 – Wedding Cake: on wedding cakes
- 9 – Harvest cake: on fruit cakes and pies
- 10 – Around the world: on celebration sweets in other cultures
- 11 – Sweet voiced: on the universal longing for sweet
- 12 - Credits

An accompanying touch screen interactive will feature two applications, mainly aimed at children, but interesting and amusing for grownups as well: a quiz and a puzzle.

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The quiz will consist of nine multiple choice questions. Answers have to be given within a certain time. Both in case of a right and of a wrong answer, the correct answer is explained in detail. The puzzle applications shows on of the exhibition images and leaves a choice between three degrees of difficulty (number of pieces of the puzzle). The puzzling is, just as the quizzing, against the clock.

### 5.3 Design

The exhibition is designed as 4 pieces of cake.



The design is by Bailleul Ontwerpbureau ([www.bailleul.be](http://www.bailleul.be)), a well-known Belgium designer with a lot of expertise amongst others temporary exhibitions.

### 5.4 Technical specifications

#### Measurements

The basis of one piece is an isosceles triangle: 90cm x 174cm. The height of the panels is 200 cm (75 cm for the touch screen desk).

To create enough space for walking around and reading texts you need for each piece 2,90 x 3,75m.

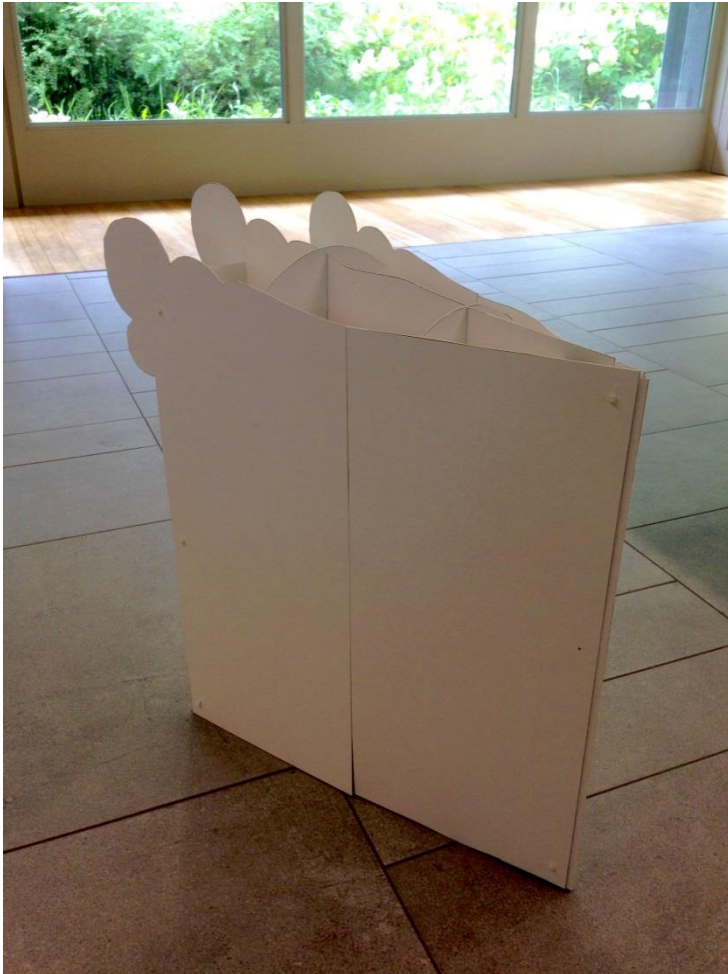


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Pieces can be placed in a circular form, the space needed then is 6m x 6m. The four pieces in a row will require 4 by 8,50m.

### *Materials*

Since the exhibition is temporary, Bailleul opted to work with recyclable materials. The four pieces are made out of thick cardboard with a honeycomb structure. Cardboard is easy to print on.



Small scale example of an exhibition 'piece of cake'

Since the exhibition is touring, materials have to be easily to transport. That is certainly the case with cardboard. The cake pieces can be 'unfold' so that they can be transported with a small van.

## 6 Target audience

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Different audiences are targeted on different locations and at different occasions.

-Veurne, Bakery Museum: broad public (home bakers), heritage lovers, children (educational programme), tourists. Bakery Museum will organise extra activities and workshops to go with the exhibition. Those people will visit the exhibition as well.

-Voeren (Library and Community Centre): broad public, library visitors

-Sint-Truiden, City Hall/Tourism Centre: broad public, tourists

-Leuven (WZC Remy, home for elderly people): elderly people, visitors. In Leuven extra activities will be organised at Erfgoeddag (Heritage day, 24<sup>th</sup> April 2016). Those activities will have an intergenerational character and aim at bringing in contact elderly people and children. CAG will be working on cake memories and passing through traditional recipes.



Sint-Truiden

## 7 Success Metrics

### *Exhibition*

Most important success metric for the touring exhibition are the numbers of visitors. For the total touring period we aim at reaching a minimum of 1000 visitors.

### *Crowdsourcing events*

Estimating how many people will take part in the crowdsourcing events is difficult. Seen the wide communication about them (national media, but also specific communication via partners), we would like to reach 50 participants at each location.

### *Cake box & 'heritage cake'*

Thanks to VLAM we can reach 1400 Flemish bakers by email. VLAM hopes to convince 50 bakers to take part and bake a heritage cake during Week of Taste.

### 8 Marketing and communication

#### *Exhibition*

The touring exhibition will be widely marketed, both online and in media. Our online communications will focus on: Europeana Food and Drink website, Facebook and Twitter account, CAG website & Facebook, KMKG website, EFD partner websites, Bakery Museum website & FB, website Week of Taste, websites of the different venues, Heritage Day website and different newsletters (EFD, CAG, Bakery Museum, Erfgoed Haspengouw, Stad Leuven, heritage institutions within the CAG network).

Offline there is mainly the Week of Taste newspaper (distributed together with De Standaard, one of the national Belgian newspapers, 100 000 copies), an announcement in a national women's magazine (Libelle, 250 000 copies), the cake box (10 000 copies) that will mention the exhibition & local newspapers.

Professional bakers taking part in the 'heritage cake' action will communicate the exhibition as well. They will be provided with postcards (100/ baker) and wobblers on the exhibition.

#### *Crowdsourcing events*

Crowdsourcing events will be widely communicated by all partners involved (newsletters, Facebook, websites). Main communication is held by Week of Taste (newspaper, website, Facebook).

#### *Heritage cake*

The heritage cake action is especially for professional bakers. They will be invited to participate with a direct mailing. After registration they will get a cook book with old recipes, to make their own creation out of one of the recipes. In return for their work, they will get promotional material for their 'heritage cake': postcards and wobblers.

#### *Heritage Day, April 24<sup>th</sup> 2016*

At the Leuven location extra activities will be organised at Heritage Day. Heritage Day is widely covered in national media. Specific communication will be organised by CAG (website, newsletter, Facebook) and the Leuven Heritage Cel.

### 9 Repeatability

There are two ways to replicate this project. The first is by repeating the same theme in different venues/countries. The exhibition templates are free to share. Interested

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partners can receive the templates of the design. They will have to replace some of the text and images and take care of translation.

The second way to replicate the project will be by sharing a 'toolbox' outlining the approach and actions needed to create a parallel project.

## 10 Business model and value proposition

The value represented by the touring exhibition can be:

- Generating general public interest in shared cultural heritage (educational aspect)
- Raising awareness for the contributing organisations, as they are credited in the exhibition
- Raising awareness for the virtual exhibition (advertising aspect)
- Potential to engage with commercial partners (bakers, producers, heritage institutions, museums)

The exhibition is part of a series of actions involving the general public, bakers and creative industries around the pan-European theme of cake. As the diagram below shows, the general public, heritage institutions, designers, sponsors, food promotion organisations and professional bakers are brought together to work together on the theme of cake. They create exhibitions, design cake boxes, contribute recipes, stories and images, bake cakes, visit locations and share cake culture.

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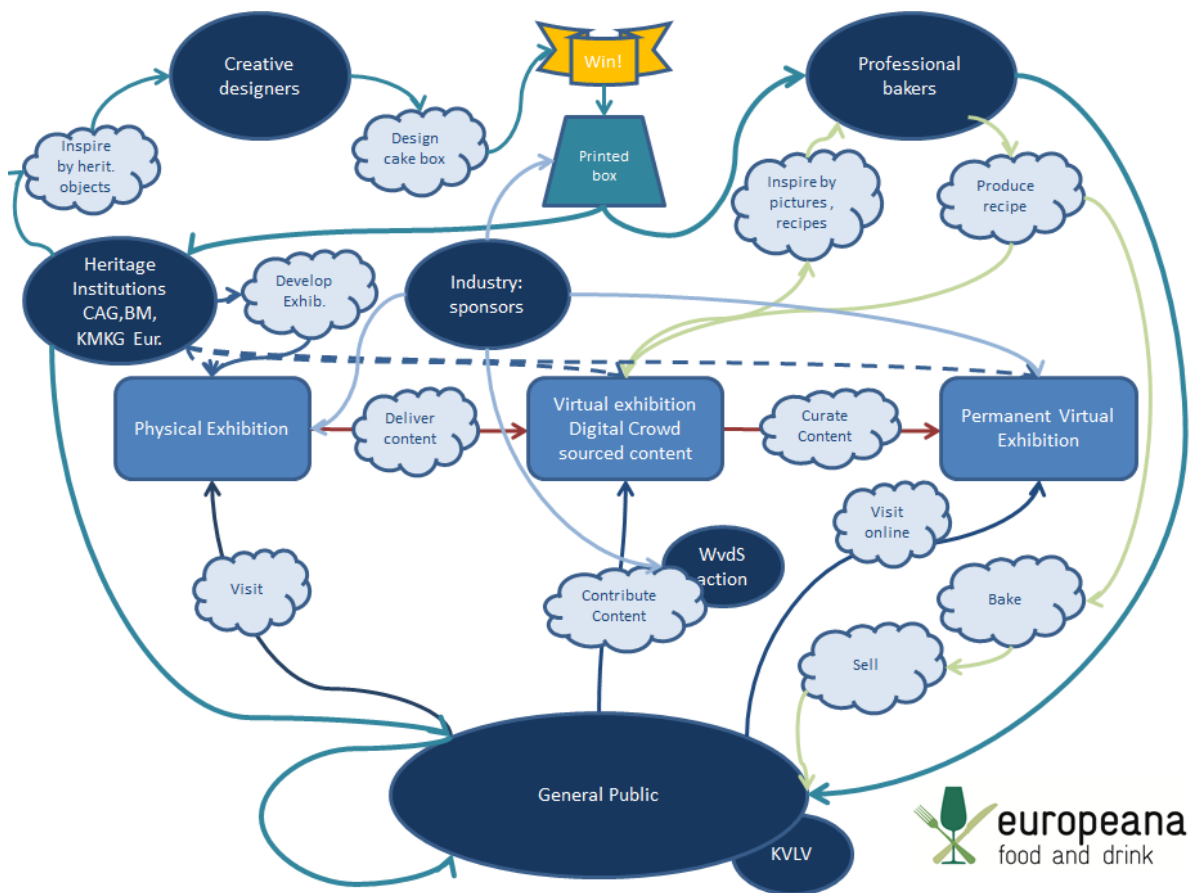


Diagram illustrating the model and the processes involved

## 11 Revenue-sharing model

The exhibition will use the free model as entry is free for visitors, either as part of a larger exhibiting organisation (Bakkerijmuseum) or as a venue providing exhibition space. The spaces in which the exhibition will be on display are sometimes unmanned. Locations will not organise paying events in relation to the exhibition. The bakers who will create a 'heritage cake', will sell that cake during Week of Taste. They are free to determine their price. This action will be evaluated to see what the benefits are for the cultural sector and what the effects are on revenue creation.

The actions related to the exhibition and accompanying events have already led to a number of free or sponsored opportunities:

- 10 000 printed cake boxes are sponsored by VLAM ([www.vlam.be](http://www.vlam.be)), Flanders' Agricultural Marketing Board. VLAM is a non-profit organisation promoting the sale, the added value, the consumption and the image of products and services of the Flemish agriculture, horticulture, fishery and agro-alimentary sector in Belgium and abroad. It is commissioned by the business community and by the Flemish government and cooperates actively with as many links in the food chain as possible.

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- The boxes will be distributed by Puratos ([www.puratos.be](http://www.puratos.be)), a supplier of bakery ingredients
- Publicity for the project is included on the Week of Taste website <http://www.weekvandesmaak.be/>
- Coffee at crowdsourcing events will be provided by Week of Taste

Exhibition space is being provided for free by all locations.

## 12 Exploitation

CAG has taken the overall co-ordination of the project. It has selected the exhibition venues and generated content (text & images). CAG has also taken responsibility in organising the crowdsourcing events and the partnerships with VLAM and Week of Taste. It is exploiting opportunities to tour the exhibition to additional venues, also after the projects' timespan.

KMKG aims to exploit new mechanisms for interaction with public and application of CH objects through this project. They have done this through the development of a series of related events with other organisations and the general public, in which different aspects of heritage and memory are featured. This is strategically important as research institutes are becoming increasingly dependent on the public as a resource in terms of research but also financially as government funding is reduced.

## 13 Value for Europeana

The main value for Europeana lies in the images (and metadata) that will be added (exhibition images, partners' images and crowdsourced images). But the touring exhibition will guide people to the virtual exhibition as well.

Each virtual exhibition that is added to the Europeana family allows to extend the reach of our partner's collections. Exhibitions are important because they allow Europeana to connect to niche audiences that might be interested in learning more about a very specific topic. The context added to the content (metadata, descriptions) is also valuable in terms of online discoverability of content.

## 14 Commercial value

### *The exhibition*

The exhibition has commercial value, mainly indirect. Some activities are sponsored. For organisations (e.g. museums) that charge, the exhibition can be an added attraction. Only one of the five selected locations will charge: the Bakery Museum

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(adults: €2,50 pp, Children (6-12 yrs): €1 pp). 'Secondary spend' at the venues can be stimulated as well. The exhibition's main aim though, is to act as a catalyst to bring together cake heritage and customs to a wide audience.

### *Crowdsourcing events*

The crowdsourcing events have significant social value. It is expected that exchange and sharing generate new contacts. CAG, KMKG and EURO will monitor the development of such occasions closely and support where possible.

Bakers will bake cakes inspired by recipes contributed through the crowdsourcing events and virtual exhibition. They will sell the cakes in the specially designed cake boxes sponsored by VLAM. The revenues of the cake sales go directly to the bakers.

### *Commercial decisions and implications*

We have ensured that the exhibition can fulfil its aim of reaching a wide audience at minimal cost to us by negotiating use of the exhibition spaces free of charge. It is anticipated that the exhibition could cause a rise in visitor numbers. This could directly contribute to a rise in revenue at the Bakery Museum. Additional income may also be generated through indirect sales such as refreshments at the venue or in the local area.

The crowdsourcing events are organised by many partners. Coffee is sponsored by the Week of Taste. All needed materials (scanners, etc.) will be made available by the hosting organisations. These events can cause an increase in revenue through sales in and around the locations.

## **15 Next steps/timeline**

2015

September: production touring exhibition & production touch screen interactive

September 1<sup>st</sup>: mailing to bakers

September 15<sup>th</sup>: deadline registration bakers

September 20<sup>th</sup>: cake box design ready for production

October 2<sup>nd</sup>: opening expo in Veurne, Bakery Museum

November 12<sup>th</sup>-22<sup>nd</sup>: distribution of cake boxes during Week of Taste

November 13<sup>th</sup>: pinning session Roeselare

November 14<sup>th</sup>: pinning session Leuven

November 15<sup>th</sup>: pinning session Hoepertingen

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November 18<sup>th</sup>: pinning session Eeklo

November 20<sup>th</sup>: pinning session Brussels

November 21<sup>th</sup>: pinning session Antwerp

November 22<sup>th</sup>: pinning session Ghent

2016

February 22<sup>th</sup> – March 10<sup>th</sup>: exhibition in Voeren

March 12<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup>: exhibition in Sint-Martens Voeren

March 22 – April 20<sup>th</sup>: exhibition in Sint-Truiden

April 22<sup>th</sup>- end of May: exhibition in Leuven

April 24<sup>th</sup>: Heritage day, extra activities around the exhibition in Leuven

## 16 Conclusion

This document has includes the specifications for the Europeana Food and Drink Touring Exhibition, created by the exhibition cluster consisting of CAG and KMKG. The document has outlined the approach, process for design and content creation, technical and design features of the web app, marketing and opportunities for revenue generation.

It is the submission for deliverable 3.10 of the Europeana Food and Drink project, part of the Work Package 3.

## Appendix

English translation of the Dutch exhibition texts

### 1 Cake? Cake!

What is cake? Do we call something cake because it is round? Or because it is covered in cream and all sorts of goodies? And what is the difference between cakes and other pastries?

A good definition for cake is difficult. In Dutch for instance, various definitions can be given to describe it. The origin of the word 'cake' is not clear. Some say that it derived from the Viking word 'kaka' which describes the bread-like cakes of our ancestors. 2000 years ago the Greeks and Romans ate tortas at parties and these were also particularly bread-like cakes. Torta led to the French 'tarte', the German 'torte' and the Dutch 'taart'. Certainly, for a long time, cake differed little from bread. Only during the 18th century did the first cake recipes appear with a similar resemblance to today's recipes and, even then, only from the mid-19th century, can we truly speak of 'modern cake'. Yeast was replaced by baking powder and baking soda to make cake lighter and, as a result, the difference between bread and cake became more distinct. Additionally, technical improvements in regulation,



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such as oven temperature, made it easier to bake a cake that was different from bread. Many products became more affordable, such as refined sugar, chocolate and (exotic) fruit. The best definition: a cake is mostly round, with a flat bottom and topped or filled with mmmm ... goodies!

### **2 Big celebration!**

Until the end of the 19th century, sweet ingredients, such as sugar, chocolates and indigenous and exotic fruits, were expensive and so cake baking was considered a luxury. Only the nobility and the upper middle class could afford cakes for special occasions or celebrations. Sometimes the 'cake' was simply used as a decoration statement. The French pastry chef Antonin Carême (1784-1833) made the most wonderful *pièces montées*. These were created with sugar and nougat and show similar resemblances to a contemporary wedding cake. According to Carême, pastry was the most important fine art and should be considered above painting, sculpture, music, architecture and poetry. His works of art could be shaped like a Chinese pavilion or a Roman temple and served to impress the guests of his client. Tasting, however, was not permitted.

At the end of the nineteenth century cakes gradually began to sometimes appear on the tables of ordinary people. It still was not common, however, as sugar was only slightly more affordable and remained too expensive for many people. By the 1920s, this social frontier dividing rich and poor through the luxury of sweet ingredients began to fade. As prices dropped further, no feast or special occasion would take place without a cake: a birthday, a baptism, a Holy Communion, a wedding, a funeral, New Year, Epiphany, Ash Wednesday, Easter, Christmas, a carnival, a fair, a saint's day. Many national and local communities and families established their own traditions for such celebrations.

### **3 Small celebration**

Cake is not limited to only big parties. It makes a feast of every occasion: cake on Sunday with grandmother or a cake to surprise someone or to cheer them up. Cake has a connecting function as it brings people together. It's a delicacy that is always shared. A beautiful example of a simple cake for a small celebration is the Maltese Pudina tal-Hobz. This is a bread pudding, made of stale bread. Rather than wasting old bread, leftovers can be transformed into a cake by mixing it with raisins, currants, grated rinds of lemon and orange and chocolate.

By the end of the nineteenth century, long before cake was within everyone's reach, cake influenced social factors.. Girls were taught how to bake cakes in domestic science schools.

"just think of the role cake will play when, on Sundays, the family sits around the table at the end of the meal, and of the favorable impact cake will have on the children during the week, well then, there is clearly no time to waste! "The 'Sunday cake' is homemade , or picked up at the bakery. Nowadays, the baker has cake ready every single day!

### **4 Pieing**

Cake is not only eaten, but it can be thrown particularly if it has lots of cream! This is done for comedic effect. This 'cake fight' even has an official name: 'taarten' in Dutch, 'entarter' in French and 'pieing' in English In 1909, the protagonist in the silent film 'Mr. Flip' was the first to have a cake thrown in his face and this joke soon was copied elsewhere. In the Laurel & Hardy comedy 'The Battle of the Century' from 1927, 3,000 cakes were thrown.

The record was set in 'The Great Race' (1965), when 4000 cakes were thrown. It was around this time that cake throwing earned another, less laughable meaning. From the end of the sixties, 'pieing' was done to emphasise a political, generally progressive, statement. Noël Godin, a rebellious Belgian

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writer and filmmaker, is the world's godfather of political pieing. In 1969 he hit the French writer Marguerite Duras when she presented her film *Détruire, dit-elle*. Alone, or with 'gang members', he subsequently made 28 more victims such as Microsoft CEO, Bill Gates, who was pelted in 1998. Godin's targets were, according to him, all conservatives. His example continues to globally inspire certain people today.

Pieing is punishable under different national penal codes. Those that do not want to run risk of punishment can find certain charity events where pieing is an unpolitical activity and is instead done simply for fun. In such events, the person that donates the most to charity can throw his pie at a prepared guest of honour.

### 5 Epiphany

On January 6, twelve days after Christmas, Epiphany is celebrated. According to Christian tradition, Caspar, Melchior and Balthazar, three kings (or the 'wise men') from the East, visited Jesus on this day. But the origins of the feast date back further. The first days of January have been celebrated by both Germans and Romans to mark the New Year and beginning of spring. In the course of their celebrations, the Romans also elected a king for a day. They did this by hiding a bean in pastry. This bean stood for a new and sprouting life. Whoever had the bean in his cake, could 'reign' for a day. The tradition of choosing a king through this method was quietly adopted into the Christian version of the feast. From the late Middle Ages onwards, Epiphany was an important family celebration in many European countries. Epiphany cakes – with or without a bean – can be found in Belgium, France, Spain, Portugal, Bulgaria and Switzerland. In Spain and Portugal, the cakes are O-shaped: referring to the ring of the kings (Roscón de Reyes in Spanish, Bolo rei in Portuguese). In Belgium and France they make a round cake with almond dough. But in all cases the custom follows the tradition of hiding a present within the cake. There should always be one piece left: God's share. Resemblance with the vasilopita tradition is clear. From the sixteenth century onwards the Belgian, Spanish and French kings-for-a-day received a gilded or silver cardboard crown. The symbolism of the crown still remains a part of the tradition surrounding epiphany cakes that you find in bakeries today. Epiphany goes with a lot of traditions everywhere. The most well-known is the star singing for money and sweets. In some of today's Epiphany songs, references to the God's share are still made.

### 6 New life

Just as a bean stands for fertility, so do cherries. Cherry pie is used in several places to announce a pregnancy. The red cherry is associated with the colour and shape of the uterus. This tradition is rather new. Certainly until the 1950s, a taboo surrounded the topic of pregnancies. Whilst the Church emphasised the idea that marriage was to produce children and deemed the 'blessed state' of the pregnant wife, it simultaneously contradicted itself by considering pregnant women as impure. Around this time, a comparable atmosphere surrounded birth. A birth was also considered unclean. As a result, the baptism of a child rather than the birth was celebrated. Until the Second World War, children were baptized as soon as possible to protect them against purgatory. In wealthy circles, the christening feast was completed with a christening cake which would be very luxurious. This tradition originated in Great Britain. British nineteenth-century recipe books always contain a recipe for a 'christening cake'. As of the 1960s, the time between birth and baptism became longer and both occasions were celebrated separately. A birth was celebrated with sweets - for a sweet baby. Cake was served at a christening. This cake was no longer made according to a special recipe but generally, there would be an inscription referring to the occasion. Some couples kept a piece of their wedding cake at their wedding and ate it at the christening feast.

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Today, fewer children are baptized and birth is celebrated all the more exuberantly. At a baby shower, a birth cake will be shared amongst family and friends. Birth cake is a new concept: a sponge cake with pink or blue decoration, with or without the name and the date of birth of the new-born. Pink for a girl and blue for a boy. This is the opposite of past tradition as pink began as a 'boy's colour'. It's only since the fifties of the twentieth century that it became a 'girl's colour'.

### 7 Congratulations!

A birthday goes with gifts, cards and... cake! But it hasn't always been this way. The Egyptians, Greeks and Romans celebrated the birthdays of gods and kings, but not those of ordinary mortals. And because no birthdays were celebrated in the Bible, Christians didn't celebrate birthdays either. Have you considered that in order to celebrate the same day every year, a calendar is needed where each year has as an equal number of days? The Julian calendar used by the Romans was adapted in the sixteenth century to a system that is still prevalent today: 365 days per year with a leap year every four years, except for any century years that are not multiples of 400. Birthday calendars, showing dates but not days, can be reused year after year. These have been printed since the nineteenth century.

In the nineteenth century, the bourgeoisie started to celebrate birthdays, but in a much more sober fashion than today. Since the beginning of the twentieth century, anniversaries were more commonly celebrated with gifts, cards and cakes with candles. Many long-held traditions have been preserved and are still survive today. It is important, for example, that the birthday cake comes out well to ensure a long and happy life ahead. A failed birthday cake means that the year might be the celebrator's last birthday. When the candles are blown out in one breath, the birthday boy or girl can make a wish. That wish can only come true if it is not revealed. This custom goes back to the ancient Greeks. Artemis, goddess of the moon, had cakes offered in the shape of the moon with candles on top of it. Blowing out those candles at once, would propitiate the goddess.

Before blowing out the candles there is singing. Calling and singing will ward off evil spirits. 'Happy Birthday', the most famous English song, was composed in 1912.

### 8 Wedding cake

One of the highlights of a wedding is the cutting of the wedding cake. Of French origin, but also reflected on Belgian menus, is the 'croquembouche' - a cone of profiteroles, glued together with caramel sauce. The iced wedding cake built upon different tiers is of British origin. When Queen Victoria married Prince Albert in 1840 she received a cake weighing one hundred and fifty kilos, with a diameter of 1 meter. Bigger cakes were impossible to bake. In order for the next generation to compete with and surpass such extravagance, they raised the height of the cake. The first layered cake was shown at the occasion of the first World Exhibition in 1851 held at Crystal Palace, London. This venue was a gigantic glass temple in Hyde Park, and the Exhibition displayed the latest and newest versions of every conceivable thing. This includes the latest machines and techniques, the newest cars and, for the bakers, the layered cake!

For confectioners to work in height they often used the magnificent sugar and nougat *pièces montées* constructions. But they served for decoration only as the layered cake could not easily be eaten. In 1858, the eldest daughter of Queen Victoria married and she celebrated with a wedding cake with three tiers. With every royal wedding came another tier. From the beginning of the twentieth century, the British wedding cake was part of every royal - or at least very luxurious - marriage in the Western world. Fifty years later it appeared at ordinary wedding parties and often with an American twist: a bridal pair at the top. Three tiers became the standard and each tier

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represented the various stages of married life. The top layer is made of white candy to represent sweet, young love; the second layer consists of pastry with a few bitter almonds; and the last layer is made of ordinary cake, although still under a thin layer of sugar.

### 9 Harvest = fruit = pie

A successful harvest is celebrated with a festival and all the hard work is rewarded with fairs and with cake. This often takes the form of fruit cake - with fresh strawberries, raspberries, blackberries and juicy pears – or with pies containing cherries, apricots, plums and gooseberries. Unlike today, in the nineteenth century fresh fruit was not available throughout the year. Some apple or pear varieties could be stored for long periods but not long enough to last until the next harvest. Fruit was preserved in the form of syrup, jam or compote. From the early twentieth century, fruit could also be canned.

Fruit has played a strange role in our cake history. Unlike sugar, considered a luxury product by rich and poor alike, fruit was for a long time only a luxury product in the eyes of the rich. In the countryside fruit was available from late spring until autumn. Despite this, only in the beginning of the twentieth century did fresh fruit become regarded by ordinary people as a possible cake topping or filling. With its sweet taste, it was a cheap alternative to sugar.

### 10 Around the world

'Cake' in its often round-shaped pastry form and topped with goodies and sweets is of Western European origin. But all cultures celebrate and indulge at religious events and other occasions with sweet pastry. Or at least with something sweet as not everywhere bakes their sweet treats. Western European habits did spread, however. An example is in Lebanon, a French mandate from 1920 until 1943, where they still bake 'katoe' (from the French *gateau*).

Arab and Northern African cuisine has its very own tradition of pastry as well. A festive dinner, at the occasion of a wedding, the Sugar Feast, or after the Hadj, is only truly festive when the two H's are looked after: *hamal* (lamb) and *halwa* (sweets). Those sweets are baklava, but also 'cornes de gazelle' and Ma'amoul, date pastry. Christians in the Arab world prepare that same Ma'amoul at the occasion of Easter. A Jewish feast can't pass without pastry either. Sweet pastry, honey cake or Lekach at Rosh Hashana (the Jewish New Year) will sweeten the New Year. Soufganiot, filled doughnuts, go with Chanouka, the feast of the light and the oil. At Pesach, Jewish Easter, one has to bake without flour as it is not permitted to eat risen food. Despite this, pastry with whisked egg is allowed.

African cuisine hardly contains pastries or cake. In Western Africa, sweet beignets are served at festive occasions. But 'sweets' are simply fruits very often. In the South East Asia there is little tradition of baking. In China, festive dinners often end with sweet soup. Only at the Moon Feast, celebrated on the fifteenth day of the eighth month of the Chinese calendar, do people bake. Moon cakes are round, made of puff pastry and filled with lotus seed paste.

### 11 Sweet voiced

Where does this human fondness for sweet come from? That is something many anthropologists have been examining. Symbolism is found in all eating habits and dietary patterns, but with 'sweet', there is something special going on. There is no nation in the world that has no word for 'sweet', and there are very few nations where sweets do not accompany a feast.

There are different theories to explain the predilection. But one thing all researchers agree on, the love is partially innate. For primates and humans, a sweet taste - from berries and other fruits - was a guarantee of edibility and so the love was born. The importance of sweet immediately explains the

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importance of sweeteners, of which the quest for them continues. Honey is the oldest known, sugar cane and sugar beet is the best known. The sugar cane plant was domesticated in New Guinea around 8000 BC and travelled from there to the Indian archipelago. Cane sugar was probably for the first time produced at the beginning of the Christian era. From the eighth century, Arab peoples brought the sugar to the Mediterranean area and from there it entered North Western Europe around 1000AD. Arab and Southern European sugar cane production came to a standstill when, in the 17th century, sugar was imported from the colonies. This, as a consequence, made it beneficial for only the elites. By the 19th century Europeans had figured out a way to be independent of importing sugar cane by instead extracting sugar from sugar beets. Because of its white colour, the refined sugar from beets was considered even more precious and pure than the light brown cane sugar. Industrial production of sugar from beets made sugar cheaper and more widely used. From the 1950s onwards sugar slipped in a lot of food - not only in pie!

Today, the search is primarily directed to find healthy sweeteners, as refined sugars are not that healthy. But with agave and maple syrup it is very well possible to continue to make celebration cakes!