

JianBing Fu / Article on JianBing



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1614 - 1715
Qing dynasty teacher and
writer of 'Liaozhaizhiyi'
a.k.a. 'Strange Tales from a
Chinese Studio'
The article on JianBing was
published posthumously,
though written sometime
around the year 1700.



作品原文

听语音

煎饼之制，何代斯兴？漫合料豆，磨如胶饧，扒须两歧之势，釜为鼎足之形，掬瓦盆之一勺，经火焰而滂澎，乃随手而左旋，如磨上之蚁行，黄白忽变，斯须而成。“卒律葛答”，乘此热销。一翻手而覆手，作十百而俄顷。圆如望月，大如铜铤，薄似剡溪之纸，色似黄鹤之翎，此煎饼之定制也。若易之苡屑，则如秋练之辉腾。杂之以蜀黍，如西山日落返照而霞蒸，夹以脂膏相半之豚肋，浸以肥膩不二之鸡羹。晨一饱而达暮，腹殷然其雷鸣。借老饕之一啖，亦可以鼓腹而延生。若夫经宿冷羹，尚须烹调，或拭鹅脂，或假豚膏，三五重叠，炙膊成焦，味松酥而爽口，香四散而远飘。更有层层卷扫，断以厨刀，纵横历乱，绝似冷淘，汤合盐豉，末挫兰椒，鼎巾水沸，零落金条。时霜寒而水冻，佐小啜于凌朝。额涔涔而欲汗，胜金帐之饮羊羔。奈尔东人运蹇，奇荒相继，豆落南山，凝于珠粒。穷惨淡之经营，生凶荒之妙制。采绿口于十椒榆，渍浓液以杂治。带黎烟而携来，色柔滑而苍翠。野老于此，效得酱于仲尼，仿缩葱于侯氏。朵双颐，据墙茨，咤咤彬彬，鲸吞任意。左持巨卷，右拾遗坠，方且笑锅底饭之不伦，侑五侯鯖之过费。有锦衣公子过而羡之曰：愿以我鼎内之所烹，博尔手中之所遗可一乎？野老恍然，掉头不易！

Translated from the original text into English by:



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What is the way to make JianBing? What is its origin?

Firstly, soybeans, rice and wheat are soaked overnight and ground in a pestle to make a paste.

A hotplate is made ready over fire, and then a ladle of paste is quickly scooped onto the surface. The paste is spread in a circle with a BahZi blade, like a wave of ants rushing to escape. The motion should be made like an old man stroking his beard to punctuate a thought.

The JianBing is spread to the thickness of DaiChen paper and when a colour like the crane's crest appears it is separated from around the edges and flipped.

It will look like the surface of the moon, and roughly the size of the copper hand gong that is struck for warnings and celebrations. This is the basic JianBing.

If Naked Oat flour is used, the JianBing will take on the hue of a misty sunset in autumn. If Sichuan Sorghum is used it will look like the scene when the sun has set behind the mountains and it feels as if a huge fire is cooking the last clouds.

A JianBing spread with the dripping of suckling pig or congealed chicken soup, eaten in the morning, will keep you fed until dinnertime, filling your stomach to the point of thunderous belching. Share some with an old epicure, for they know the way to a healthy stomach and long life.

If cooled overnight, the JianBing can be made crisp. When reheated in layers with roast goose or pork belly the texture is delicious, both crunchy and soft. When bitten into you can feel the aroma releasing to the four points of the compass. This JianBing, layered one on top of another, then split in two with a knife, is like looking upon the aftermath of a battle, crisscrossed and chaotic.

When fermented soybeans and LanJiao chilli are boiled together, they make the JianBing sauce, so beautiful that the inside of the pot seems sprinkled with gold. When the weather turns cold and the water freezes in the morning, you may eat together with a nip of very strong whiskey and start to feel a sweat coming to your forehead. A great feeling, even better than eating lamb stew in a golden yurt!

The people of Shandong often experience misfortune. Beset with unbelievable disasters, famine and isolation, food is often scarce. But, amongst such harsh conditions their ingenuity finds means of survival. Collecting the tender green flowers of the YuJiao tree, they create a paste for eating. When the smoke begins rising from the chimneys, the YuJiao JianBing is being prepared inside, so delicate, fresh and green. An old man once said he learnt to make JianBing sauce from Confucius himself and learnt to wrap a spring onion inside from Mrs. Hou.

It is common to see people squatting at the edge of the courtyard, taking such big bites of the JianBing that you can hear their munching. Free to eat like whales, their left hand holds the big wrap, while their right hand catches pieces as they fall. Sometimes they laugh at those eating overcooked rice, sometimes they laugh at the wealthy who have paid too much just to eat. Even the well-dressed aristocrats become curious and ask, "Please, will you take the last of my fine cooked meats in exchange for your last JianBing?" At first surprised, then embarrassed, they turn away without answer.