

get to know a

# LIVERPOOL TART

(OR LIVERPOOL JUDY?)



a booklet in adobe pdf format published by

**Gerry Jones**

LIVERPOOL MUSICIAN

Get to know a  
**Liverpool Tart**  
(or Liverpool Judy?)



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# Contents

Introduction	1
History of the Liverpool Tart	2
Liverpool Tart, 1897	3
Liverpool "Judy" Tart, 2007	5
Mission Statement	7
Progress, February 2009	7
Liverpool Judies?	11
"Wet Nellies"?	12

# get to know a Liverpool Tart

## Introduction

On the pages that follow is the history of the Liverpool Tart and how it all started for me. I hope this will give you the taste to go out and buy one. They really are delicious!

# get to know a Liverpool Tart

## History of the Liverpool Tart

This revival and re-discovery of the Liverpool Tart started in January 2007 when I tried a Manchester Tart in the coffee-shop of John Lewis store, Liverpool (George Henry Lees, the old store). I wondered if there was such a thing as a Liverpool Tart, and I thought that there really should be one to rival or replace the Manchester Tart, especially with Liverpool's about to celebrate its year as European Capital of Culture.

Google had endless references to "Liverpool Tarts", all of them about brassy young ladies, but a search for 'liverpool tart recipe' came up with just one page; a hand-written family cookbook dating back to 1897, owned by a resident in a village called Evershot, in Dorset. This has proved to be an excellent basis, with a distinctive and possibly unique taste. It is also be handy having this "provenance" - being able to prove that OUR tart goes back over 100 years.

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## Liverpool Tart, 1897

*This is the original recipe as it was written all those years ago.*

*8oz. Moist (?) sugar*

*2oz. Butter*

*1 egg*

*1 lemon*

*pastry*

*Put the butter and sugar into a moderate oven to melt. When melted, let it cool.*

*Boil your lemon whole very slowly (ot it will break) until quite soft. Mince it whole as it is, saving the juice as much as possible and taking out the pips.*

*Mince very fine.*

*Beat the egg well. Mix all well together.*

*Line a flat open tart dish with good paste (ie pastry) and pour in mixture to one uniform thickness (about ½ an inch).*

*Cross bar over and bake. Serve hot or cold.*

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"Cross bar over" probably means laying twisted strips of pastry across the surface, in both directions, like your Gran used to.

I did try "Liverpool tart" in Google, but this only produced many thousands of references to a certain type of young lady. In stark contrast, searching for "Liverpool tart recipe " produced only this one single hit, out of the millions of pages.

When you try this recipe, please let me know how you get on, or what problems you found. Do remember that the aim is not just to produce a nice recipe, but something which can become a "standard" and a "local delicacy", as popular locally as Bakewell Tarts or Chelsea Buns or Eccles Cakes. Something which can be made at home, and which will sell in cake shops and tea-rooms.

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After a few attempts, I believe the recipe today should now read more like this, for today's cooks, with today's machinery.

## Liverpool "Judy" Tart, 2007

### Pastry

your best pastry

*8oz. Flour*  
*4oz. Fat/marge/butter*  
*1 tsp. icing sugar*  
*Pinch of salt*  
*4 tbsp. Cold water*

Make the pastry, and after leaving it in the fridge, (so it won't shrink later) grease two four-yorkshire-pudding baking trays, to make eight individual tarts. Cut eight disks from this amount of pastry with a 110mm pastry cutter.

### Filling

*8 oz. Dark Muscovado sugar*  
*2oz butter or marge*  
*1 egg*  
*1 whole unwaxed lemon*

Melt the butter & sugar, then let it cool but not solidify. Cut lemon in pieces small enough to remove pips.

Use a blender to mash it fairly fine (10 seconds should be about right), put everything into a mixer, with an egg, and beat until fairly smooth, (a bit of "texture" does no harm), and ladle the mixture into the pastry trays; about three tbsp per tart should be enough. Do not use more than this or the filling will only overflow during baking.

# get to know a Liverpool Tart

Bake at Gas 5, until just before the pastry starts to brown, or the filling to crisp. This will mean about 22 minutes on Gas 5 on the middle shelf. (The second tray, on a lower oven shelf, will then need another ten minutes on the top shelf.)

NB; on removal from the oven there will be an (attractive) "butter-bloom" on the surface, but this will fade overnight to a uniform dark brown.

## Topping

The original said "Cross bar over" i.e. twist strips of pastry across the top in both directions, and this would be an ideal simple version for home baking.

Definitely something white. Dust with icing sugar? Blobs of whipped Cream? Liver Bird shape on top? Liver Bird cutters may be bought as one-off special orders from [KITBOX](#) in Bristol. If you try this, then I suggest you use sugarpaste. Using fondant icing is not a good idea, the tart is sweet enough, and the extra sweetness of the icing can spoil the special taste of muscovado and lemon, and make people think instead of "mince pies".



This what people think is meant by cross-over.

# get to know a Liverpool Tart

## Mission Statement

My aim is to publicise the "Liverpool Tart" recipe until it becomes a standard item of confectionery alongside the Bakewell Tart and the Eccles Cake in bakeries, cake-shops and homes, locally then nationally, starting in Liverpool in 2008.

This recipe has been on the [Evershot Village page](#) for a while, and on [my page](#) since February 2007. This means that the Liverpool Tart Recipe is firmly in the "public domain", and is "open source" , belonging to nobody. It is now impossible to copyright the basic recipe, everyone is free to develop their own version.

## Progress, February 2009

Three professional bakers, [Dafna's of Wavertree](#), [Satterthwaites of Crosby](#) and [Barbara of Neston](#), have now developed a product that will sell. I am now convinced that the "moist sugar" and lemon" taste is very distinctive and unique, and has to be at the heart of the Liverpool Tart.

To this end I have bought some Liver Bird pastry-cutters, and made the birds with sugarpaste or flowerpaste.. I did try covering most of the dark filling with icing, and adding colour to the Liver Bird. But this extra sugar weakened the lemon tang, but has made the overall taste closer to "mince pies" and so it lost the very distinctive taste of the dark tarts.

Rice paper has been tried but does not seem promising.

**Pastry:** the original recipe just says "line with good paste". I use a very standard pastry, but using self-raising flour, and a spoon of icing sugar too. This can be rolled very thin, as it does thicken well, and goes well with the filling. However, a thick pastry crumbles with the filling in the mouth in a pleasant way. Some tasters tell me that they always use Plain Flour for pastry, and the professionals have their own secret recipes.

# get to know a Liverpool Tart

**Sugar:** Dark [Muscovado](#) sugar has proved to be a good translation of "moist" sugar. This made a lovely brown background, crying out for "something white" to go on top. It is a lovely taste, with the lemon coming through most unexpectedly. This very dark sugar, however, tends to impart a rather "treacle tart" taste and appearance to the mix, which may be either ideal or just distracting. Some element of icing sugar certainly tones down the lemon tang, but in the view of some testers, it changes the overall taste to that of "mince pies", so that won't do.

Light Brown sugar was tried, and it proved to be half-way in colour between white and muscovado, still rather red than brown, but closer than white sugar to the "renowned local delicacy" we are aiming for, and I do not plan to try it again. Perhaps somebody else will?

I am inclined to discount Demerara sugar, because - although the colour may be similar - I fear it may produce a slightly gritty feel on the tongue. On the other hand, Liverpool is a "gritty real-life" city, and "Togo" is an old Liverpool name for raw sugar. However, [Satterthwaites](#) made their own judgement that their customers would prefer a filling based on demerara plus cake-crumbs, which is much less sweet, and would appeal to another sector of the public.

I did start with white granulated sugar but this did not "melt." The tarts had the "lemon surprise" taste, but looked like very ordinary "marmalade" tarts. No further action planned.

Caramelising? one suggestion is that a cook's blow-torch be used to caramelize the sugary surface. Must try it, even though it is unlikely to be taken up in any mass-production process.

**Lemon:** I am convinced this is essential, with its flavour coming as a surprise through the "toffee" of the dark sugar. In the first batches, I used a good big lemon each time, which gave a flavour too strong for some tastes, and also will have cost implications. So I am now trying rather smaller lemons, as sold in packs of four, and settling on "unwaxed" lemons as I have been told this can help to avoid bitterness. Alternatives such as artificial lemon juice would not provide the "bulk",

# get to know a Liverpool Tart

leaving just sugar and butter, while the semi-crunchy attractive texture on the tongue would be missing.

**Topping:** The dark muscovado filling clearly calls out for something white - icing or cream. A light dusting with icing sugar is cheap and very attractive. Rosettes of whipped cream would look marvellous, while anything with cream might help control the sweetness. Not meringue, I tried little meringue swirls, which looked lovely, but the meringue and the lemon cancelled each other out, leaving a taste of "nothing".

**Shapes and images:** Feb 07 I tried making a cutter (from an "egg-ring") of a Liver Bird, and the results were immediately recognised by test groups, and looked spectacular.

On the other hand, another local bakery chain felt the dark appearance by itself would not "sell", and are trying a Liver Bird on top, made of coloured sugarpaste.

This looked good but fondant icing would ruin the muscovado-lemon taste. There are other ways of using liver bird shapes, and white images of the Liver Bird above the Mersey Waves.

**Sizes:** Three possible sizes spring to mind.

Individual: A four-inch single tart, for serving in restaurants and tea-shops.

Multipack: A three-inch small tart, as sold in packs of three or more. Except that these would be too small to be satisfying. I did try a few in most batches, to use up excess pastry and filler. Also these would call for a very small Liver Bird cutter from which it is very fiddly to remove the Bird.

Family size: [Barbara of Neston](#) is (Feb 09) the only major supplier who makes family size tarts, approx 6.5 inches but could make it bigger if required. She reports that they are a great success, especially when sliced warm with cream). The metal star cutters are standard and can

# get to know a Liverpool Tart

be purchased at good catering shops, I got mine in Heswall, but Kytch n Sync sell them as do many other shops eg. Lakeland.

Trying it at home: I tried an eight-inch tart, cut into six or eight wedges.(4 Feb 07) It didn't really work

1. The pastry mix as given will line two 9-inch tart-tins, but the filling mix will only fill ONE of them!
2. The baking took over twice as long, and even then the filling stayed runny for a long time. No doubt a proper cook can sort this.

**Liver Bird cutters:** Having the Liver Bird on the tart is a real bonus, and is a real attraction. When making these tarts at home, it is still possible to make a recognisable Liver Bird by using a couple of pairs of pliers to re-shape an "egg-ring." Alternatively, a Liver Bird can be drawn free-hand with food-colour Pens on rice paper - or indeed you could do something with the "potato-cut" printing we did at school onto rice paper or sugarpaste. I suggest you avoid actual icing as this adds too much extra sweetness.

If you are in business and want to make professional looking Liver Bird shapes, then these will be made to order by Dyck Willis of Bristol, Dyck Willis of Bristol, trading as "[KitBox](#)", The birds will need to be prised out using a cocktail stick, and it helps if you dip the cutter into icing sugar or cornflour first. This takes too much time for a mass-production version.

The alternative as used by [Dafna's](#) is to buy a Liver Bird flat shape made by [Alan Roberts Engravers Ltd](#), Liverpool) to hold over the tart while you sprinkle on some biscuit crumb/powder.



# get to know a Liverpool Tart

## Liverpool Judies?

*Should we call this delicacy a "Liverpool Judy?"*

There is a generation gap growing here; most people above a certain age will know that the term "Judy" was used for many generations as a term for "girl-friend", and was used in a pleasant and friendly way, with a smile. Many people Under a certain age will need to have that explained to them.

There is indeed a Liverpool sea-shanty, whose chorus is "...and it's Row, Row bullies, row; those Liverpool Judies have got us in tow". a fanciful image of the girls they left at home in Liverpool all pulling on a theoretical tow-rope to bring their sailor-boy lovers safely home soon. "Liverpool Judies" in Google gives over 400 mentions of this term, mainly from this one sea-shanty.

As far as I know, use of the term "Judy" for girl-friend is pure Liverpool, and not used anywhere else in the world. . I would also personally prefer "Liverpool Judy" as this is a Non-Specific Name, one which does not specify any particular kind of confection. I think this makes it feel more traditional and local, and therefore more attractive to visitors. One friend suggested "Judy-cakes" but I think this means it would have to be a cake, and could not be a tart. Chorley, Eccles and Dundee have their Cakes. Manchester, Bakewell and others have their Tarts or their Biscuits. I would prefer Liverpool to go that bit further to be distinctive and quirky.

# get to know a Liverpool Tart

## "Wet Nellies"?

Some people say, "Why don't we settle for "Wet Nellies"? That has been a "Liverpool delicacy" for donkey's years."



Wet Nelly. Nelson Cake. Belly-wedge

Because these relied on using unsold and "beyond-date" left-over cake materials for the filling. Health & Safety would make it very difficult for anyone to get away with that these days, more's the pity. Also, while they are extremely well-known in Liverpool, they do not "project the Liverpool brand" because of not having the "Liverpool " name.