

Perok, Fish Pie — PiRuq

PIRUQ PITURNIRTUQ. – PEROK TASTES GOOD.



Photo: A golden brown, freshly baked Perok.

Alutiiq cuisine, like Alutiiq culture, is a mixture of Native and European traditions that reflects Kodiak’s rich cultural history. Foods inspired by Russian culture can be found on many Alutiiq tables: berry tarts in the summer, sweet *kulich* bread at Easter, and *perok* throughout the year. *Perok* is a fish pie made with rice and vegetables. Although families enjoy *perok* for supper, it is often served at special occasions, including birthday parties, holiday celebrations, potlatches, wedding receptions, and funeral repasts.

Cooks across Alaska make *perok* with a variety of ingredients. Some people use root vegetables like turnips and rutabagas. Others add slices of hardboiled eggs, parsley, sautéed onions, or ground bacon. On the Kenai Peninsula, you may find moose meat in your pie, and in the Pribilof Islands, chefs fill their *perok* with halibut. Kodiak Islanders prefer salmon *perok*, particularly pies made with fresh sockeye or king salmon. Tasty modern versions include hamburger, corned beef, and even gravy. Each cook makes *perok* a little differently, but you can build a delicious pie from this basic recipe.

Make a large batch of piecrust. Use the crust to cover the bottom and the sides of a rectangular baking dish: a 9-by-13-inch pan works well for a family meal. Cover the bottom crust with a layer of partially cooked rice. Cover the rice with a layer of fish. You can use canned fish, but soak it first to remove some of the salt. Pepper the fish and add a layer of sautéed vegetables, hardboiled eggs, or whatever you like. Moisten the fish and vegetables with a few pats of butter and then cover with a second layer of rice. Cover the entire pie with the remaining crust and bake it for one hour at 350 degrees. Serve hot and don’t forget the ketchup.