

Pastry Picks

They're a sweet and satisfying accompaniment to a cup of coffee or tea. Sample some traditional pastries that are served up in other countries.



Cannoli — A favorite in Italy, these tube-shaped shells of fried dough are stuffed with creamy, slightly sweet ricotta cheese. Chocolate, nuts and powdered sugar are sometimes added as garnishes.

Bo lo bao — Its name means “pineapple bun” in Cantonese, but there’s no fruit in this Hong Kong specialty. The roll is named for its sugary crust’s crisscross pattern that resembles a pineapple.

Pastelito — The traditional filling for this Cuban puff pastry is guava and sweet cream cheese. Pineapple and coconut are also favorites.

Scone — Popularly served with tea, this British baked treat looks similar to a biscuit, but has a crumbly texture and lightly sweet taste. It’s typically topped with clotted cream and jam.

Gulab jamun — Balls of fried dough are soaked in a syrup flavored with sugar, rose water and cardamom to make this Indian dessert.

Franzbrötchen — A cross between a cinnamon roll and a croissant, this flaky, spiral pastry is a breakfast staple in the German city of Hamburg.

A Little Red Wagon

It hauls toys, children and pets, and with a little imagination, it can also be a race car, spaceship, dump truck and more. The iconic Radio Flyer wagon has inspired playtime adventures for more than a century.

The wheels first began turning in the early 1900s, when young Italian immigrant Antonio Pasin built wooden wagons to tow materials around his Chicago cabinet shop. Soon he was selling more wagons than cabinets, and in 1917, he formed the Liberty Coaster Co., named after the Statue of Liberty.

Inspired by the automotive industry, Pasin began mass-producing 1,500 steel wagons a day. He labeled them with the name Radio Flyer to reflect his passion for two inventions: the radio and the airplane. The wagons sold well, even during the Depression, and the company became the world’s largest maker of toy wagons.

Production halted during World War II, but the thriving post-war baby boom era had wagons rolling off the assembly line. From toting tots to hauling garden goods, families found an array of functions for the four-wheeled buggies. Wagon designs expanded over the decades, inspired by new trends and technology.

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50 Years of Earth Day

The modern-day environmental movement kicked off 50 years ago on the first Earth Day, April 22, 1970.

The annual event was created by Gaylord Nelson, a senator from Wisconsin who wanted to organize what he called a “national teach-in on the environment” that would educate the public about growing concerns such as pollution and deforestation. On the first Earth Day, 20 million people, about 10% of the country’s population at the time, took part in rallies, raising awareness about environmental issues and appealing to protect the health of the planet.

Earth Day’s success contributed to several landmark changes, including many of the first laws against air and water pollution, as well as the creation of a new government organization to respond to such issues, the Environmental Protection Agency, which began work in December 1970. By 1990, Earth Day became a worldwide observance.

Today, about 1 billion people in nearly 200 countries celebrate Earth Day.

Gnome Sweet Gnome

Many yards and flower beds are home to whimsical statues known as garden gnomes, which are believed to bring luck to all that grows around them.

A number of European cultures include legends about gnomes — small, humanlike creatures, usually men with white beards, who live in forests and gardens. Mischievous, yet wise and helpful, gnomes were said to come to life at night to help humans with their plants as well as protect property and nature.



Ornamental versions of these beings were used in gardens as early as the 1600s, but they were carved totems rather than statues. The modern garden gnome emerged from the work of various craftspeople in the 1800s. One such artist in Germany, Philipp Griebel, made gnomes from terra cotta, and is credited with giving gnomes their now-iconic red cone-shaped hat. His statuettes became popular throughout Europe.

Garden gnomes continue to pop up in outdoor decor and have also appeared in advertisements and entertainment.

The Battle of Okinawa

This month marks the 75th anniversary of the last major battle of World War II, the Battle of Okinawa.

Capturing the tiny island in the Pacific Ocean was crucial due to its location. It would serve as a base for the Allies to launch a planned ground invasion of Japan’s main islands. To implement the attack, which was code-named Operation Iceberg, divisions of the U.S. Army and Marine Corps were merged to create the 10th Army, led by Lt. Gen. Simon B. Buckner Jr.

On April 1, 1945, troops stormed Okinawa’s beaches. But unlike D-Day, they were met with little resistance. Farther inland, however, came fierce fighting, compounded by torrential rains and rugged terrain.

After 82 days, the Battle of Okinawa ended on June 22, 1945. Although the Japanese were defeated, both sides suffered huge losses. Over 12,000 American troops, including Buckner, were killed; 35,000 were wounded. About 100,000 Japanese troops were killed, and an estimated 150,000 Okinawan civilians died. Less than two months later, Japan surrendered to the Allies, ending World War II.

The Battle of Okinawa was the largest amphibious landing in the Pacific theater of World War II.



