For centuries pemmican was a staple among the Plains Indians. Hunters would roam the land and carry supplies of this dried meat mixture in leather pouches. Tribes would eat this during the winter months when other foods were scarce. The original recipe, a forerunner of mincemeat as we know it today, was a mixture of lean beef or venison, dried and pounded to powder, melted fat, and berries, most likely buffalo berries. Later, with the arrival of spices and apples, the recipe was refined and emerged as a filling for fritters, turnovers, and pies.

The following recipe can be used as a pie filling. Lean ground beef may be substituted for ground venison. This recipe would have originally been cooked with suet, or raw animal fat found around the loins and kidneys, but has been replaced with heart healthy olive or canola oil.

Venison Mincemeat

Ingredients:

- 1 quart apple cider
- 2 cups raisins
- 1 cup dried currants or cranberries
- 3 apples, peeled, cored, and chopped
- ¼ c. olive or canola oil
- 2 pounds ground venison
- 1 tsp. salt
- 2 tsp. cinnamon
- 2 tsp. ginger
- 1 tsp. cloves
- 1 tsp. nutmeg
- ½ tsp. allspice

Directions:

1. Place the cider, raisins, currants, apples, and oil in a large, heavy kettle, cover and simmer for 2 hours.
2. Stir in remaining ingredients, and simmer, uncovered for 2 hours, stirring occasionally. Us as pie filling.