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THE DOC AND THE FROCK, A STRANGE STREET PRODUCTION.

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THE PAVLOVA WAS NOT INVENTED IN NEW ZEALAND OR AUSTRALIA
THE PAVLOVA MAY NOT HAVE EVEN BEEN NAMED IN NEW ZEALAND OR AUSTRALIA
BRAGGING RIGHTS BELONG TO THE UNITED STATES AND GREAT BRITAIN

Pavlova is a dessert consisting of a meringue base or shell filled with whipped cream and fruit. For many decades there has been a rivalry between Australia and New Zealand as to which country first 'invented' it.

In 2008 the Oxford English Dictionary deemed the first 'true pavlova' recipe (meringue) to be 'Pavlova Cake' submitted under the pseudonym Festival and published in the N.Z Dairy Exporter Annual, October 1929.

Similarly the first recorded non-meringue dessert named 'pavlova' was dated to 1926. This first pavlova was a colourful four layered jelly published in the book Davis Dainty Dishes, by the Davis Gelatine Company, Sydney, Australia.

Dr Andrew Paul Wood and Ms Annabelle Utrecht after nearly two years of research for an intended documentary and book project, can categorically state that this is not the case.

The recipe appropriated as pavlova, is in fact much older. We have found more than 150 pavlova-like meringue cakes in existence between 1901-1926, with most recipes originating in the USA.

Additionally we have also found over fifty citations for Pavlova-named foods dating between 1911-1927; and have further identified a number of never before cited savoury dishes in Europe and the US, all named after Anna Pavlova prior to 1921.

Most significantly though, we have discovered that the earliest naming of a pavlova dessert dates to 1911, not 1926 as previously identified. The 1911 dessert is called 'Strawberries Pavlova' - a berry and raspberry ice, or glacé. This recipe is first found published in the North Island of New Zealand in Auckland in the New Zealand Herald and then a month later on the South Island, in Oamaru in the Oamaru Mail.

Our discovery of 'Strawberries Pavlova' makes it now the world's oldest published pavlova-named recipe - and its existence 15 years before Anna Pavlova's first visit to the southern hemisphere, casts serious doubt on the current theory of the pavlova having an exclusive Antipodean origin. Despite being found in New Zealand, Strawberries Pavlova is actually a northern hemisphere haute or commercial cuisine.

We have traced the history of meringue and know where the pavlova comes from. It emerges from the aristocratic tables of the Austrian Habsburgs, democratising slowly into the kitchens of the middleclass, before eventually travelling to the US where it evolved into its final form.

The idea that it was invented in New Zealand or even Australia is fiction, as is the notion that the first pavlova desserts are of Antipodean origin. The first recipe for a pavlova dessert is not the 1926 Davis Gelatine jelly. It is the 1911 'Strawberries Pavlova' recipe and this dessert is a dish on the move.

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