**RECIPE ROUNDUP**

**‘Bless this food’ a German-Russian practice**

by Kent Brick

Heads bowed before the bountiful noon meal, our German-Russian ancestors of a century ago would offer this prayer: “Segne, Vater, diese Speise, Uns zur Kraft und dir zum Preise. Amen.” (Translation: “Father, bless this food, for our nourishment and to your glory. Amen.”)

Though the language, the communities and the customs have faded, commitment to the food those remarkable pioneers cooked and blessed has not.

Preserving the food traditions of the Germans from Russia is one of the key activities of the North Dakota State University (NDSU) Libraries’ Germans from Russia Heritage Collection (GRHC). GRHC is located in the main library on the NDSU campus.

The mission of GRHC is, “To collect, document, preserve, exhibit, translate, publish, promote and make accessible resources on the culture, history, folklore, textiles and clothing, and food ways of the Germans from Russia.” The office focuses on German-Russians who produced North Dakota and Northern Plains descendents.

GRHC Director and Bibliographer Michael Miller says he is proud the collection houses the largest German-Russian cookbook and recipe collection of its kind in the world. Miller, whose German-Russian roots are in Strasburg, says mastery and ingenuity with basic farming staples were the keys to how people survived.

**RUSSIAN BORSCHT (vegetable soup)**

- 1 lb. boneless beef chuck, cubed
- 1/4 lb. soup bone
- 3 qts. water
- 1 qt. tomato juice
- 1 T. salt
- 1/2 tsp. pepper
- 2 cups grated beets


Taken from page 7 of the Food ‘N Customs: Recipes of the Black Sea Germans cookbook

Recipe by Vi Schielke

**POKED CHOPS WITH KRAUT**

- 6 pork chops, cut 1/2” thick
- 1 1/2 cups liquid (sauerkraut juice supplemented with water)
- 1 T. shortening
- 1 cup onion, chopped
- 1 cup coarsely chopped unpared raw apple
- 1 can (1 lb. 11 oz.) sauerkraut, drained (save juice)

Brown chops in shortening on both sides in 12” skillet. Remove chops. Add onion and apple to pan droppings, and heat. Stir in sauerkraut, liquid, brown sugar and caraway seed. Arrange chops on top. Sprinkle with salt. Cover and cook over low heat 30 minutes or until chops are tender. Add additional water if needed, a small amount at a time, to keep sauerkraut moist. Serves 6.

Test notes: Instead of cooking on top of a stove, put the skillet containing the assembled dish in a 300-degree oven and bake for 1 hour 15 minutes.

Taken from page 60 of the Sei Unser Gast (“Be Our Guest”) cookbook

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**GRHC has 62 original, locally produced cookbooks for sale, along with the extensive archive of non-circulating cookbooks and massive index of German-Russian recipes. This is strong proof that German-Russian offspring of today want to preserve their culinary culture.

For this month’s Recipe Roundup, the GRHC has furnished three cookbooks from among those it sells (to browse these, go to: http://library.ndsu.edu/grhc/). Challenging as it was, North Dakota LIVING has selected and published one recipe from each cookbook.

The first cookbook is Food ‘N Customs: Recipes of the Black Sea Germans, by The Germans from Russia Heritage Society, Bismarck, 2004; cookbook committee: Josephine Eckman, Vi Schielke and Katherine Meidinger. This book’s introduction emphasizes the importance of publishing specific ingredients, measurements and techniques to preserve what had been just oral family folklore. It reads: “Grandmothers from the old country were brought up in ‘humble beginnings’ and lived close to the earth. Many had no formal education, so recipes were handed down verbally. They felt the recipes in their hands.” From this cookbook we present the Russian Borscht recipe.

The second cookbook is Sei Unser Gast: Be Our Guest.
produced by the North Star Chapter, American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, Minneapolis-St Paul, 2008. This group consists of about 100 family members in the Twin Cities, with most of the German areas in Russia represented. According to its introduction, this cookbook is presented, “…to document German-Russian cuisine and food ways so that present and future generations can enjoy their unique culinary heritage.” From this cookbook we present the Pork Chops with Kraut recipe.


In the opening Mayer writes, “The recipes in this documentation of our family’s heritage kitchen are authentic. They are the recipes we have all come to love. Mom and I have spent hundreds of hours together writing down proportions and cooking instructions that were passed to her verbally or through experience throughout the years.” Donna’s family roots are in the Lehr area. From this book, the recipe we present is Florence’s Pumpkin Blachinda.

The GRHC encourages present-day German-Russian family members to get familiar with and add to the collection’s resources. In addition to the Web site http://library.ndsu.edu/grhc/, contact the GRHC by telephoning Michael Miller at (701) 231-8416 or Acacia Stuckle, GRHC special collections associate, at (701) 231-6596. To learn more about the Germans from Russia Heritage Society in Bismarck, go to http://www.grhs.org/.

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**FLORENCE’S PUMPKIN BLACHINDA**

**Dough**
- ½ cup shortening
- 2 cups sweet cream
- 1 cup sugar
- ½ tsp. salt
- 3 eggs
- 5 cups all-purpose flour

**Filling**
- 9 cups pumpkin
- 1 cup sugar
- ½ tsp. salt
- 1½ tsp. cinnamon
- Rolling mixture
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1 cup sugar

Mix dough gently and set aside. Mix filling in separate bowl and set aside. Roll out a large walnut-sized piece of dough on rolling mixture into a 6- to 8-inch-round disc. Put 1 to 2 heaping tablespoons of filling mixture on one half of dough disc. Fold over the half without filling and roll the edge of a plate around the edge to seal. (Re-use the leftover dough scrap into the next walnut to be rolled.) Cut two small vent holes on top of Blachinda and place on greased cookie sheet. Back at 350 degrees for 20 minutes.

Taken from page 61 of the Connecting Generations cookbook.