Food from the Old Country

Freeman is an interesting town located in the southern part of South Dakota. Many of its inhabitants are of German-Russian ancestry, and there is also a strong Mennonite influence in that region. Knowing that the people of Freeman are celebrating their 100th birthday as a community this year, and also knowing that a special cuisine has been developed there, we asked some of the Freeman residents to share their favorite recipes. The following is a selection of some of those old favorites:

Breads
Zwieback

3 cups scalded milk
3/4 cup shortening, lard if possible
1 cake yeast
2 eggs
1/2 cup sugar
2 tbsp. salt
Flour to make soft dough
Mix well. The dough should be slightly softer than bread dough. Let rise until doubled. Form dough into small balls size of a walnut. Place these balls on top of a slightly larger one. Let rise about 1 hour.

Bake in 400 degree oven 20-25 minutes.
Variation: use 2 cakes yeast.

Geraschta Zwieback
(Roasted Zwieback)
When buns begin to get cold, cut in half and put on cookie sheet. Have oven on low heat and roast until dry. This is good to dunk in coffee.

Stritzel, Kuchens, etc.

Rullkuchen

1/2 cup shortening
4 eggs
1/2 cup milk
5 cups flour
1 tsp. salt
1 tsp. baking powder
Mix and roll out thin. Cut into 2x4-in. rectangles. Slit in middle and turn one end through slit. Fry in deep fat until light brown. Serve with watermelon.

Rullkuchen
(Salty Doughnuts)

3 eggs, 1/2 cups milk, 1 cup cream (if sour cream is used, add 1/2 tsp. soda), 1 1/2 tsp. baking powder, 2 tsp. salt. Enough flour to make a soft dough that can be rolled out. Cut into 2x4-in. pieces (or any size
Wuchdich
Cut small pieces of bread dough and roll and lay on floured board to rise. Put in iron kettle to which a little water and lard has been added. Bring to steaming until you begin to hear spatter sound. About 25 minutes. Don't uncover while cooking. Made a medium white sauce and pour over dumplings on your plate.

Schnecki
1 cup cream
2 eggs
1 tbsp. sugar
½ tsp. salt
3 tsp. baking powder sifted with
1½ cups flour
Mix in order given, add enough flour for a very soft dough. Roll out ¾-in. thick. Cut into 4-in. squares and bake 10-12 minutes at 375 degrees.

Coffee Cake
(Honkelich)
Use a basic sweet dough. Spread a very thin layer of dough in pan 12x16x2 inches. Sprinkle ½ cup chopped nuts on top of dough. Mix together well:
½ cup brown sugar
½ cup white sugar
½ cup shortening
1 cup flour
¼ tsp. cinnamon
Pinch of salt
Pinch of nutmeg
Spread mixture over nuts and dough. Sprinkle cream over top to moisten. Let rise about an hour or until double in bulk. Bake in moderate oven.

Poppy Seed Krofflen
1 cup poppy seed cooked in 2 cups
Making brotwurst sausage, which is sold at Freeman's schmeckfest. In the foreground is a sausage-stuffer.

cream. Cool. Add 2 eggs beaten, 1 cup sugar to sweeten, little flour, cinnamon and 2 cups raisins, vanilla. Put in sweet roll dough which has been rolled out and cut in squares. Pinch edges together. Put seam side down on pan and sprinkle with sugar and cinnamon. Let rise and bake.

Kroffeln
(Dried Fruit)
Cook until done, drain and mash
1 box dried apricots
1 box dried peaches
1 cup prunes
1 cup dried apples
1 cup raisins
Mix together and add to dried fruit
1 cup heavy sweet cream
1 ½ cups sugar
6 eggs
Add enough cracker crumbs to make mixture stiff as cake dough. Let this mixture set for at least 2 hours, overnight if possible.
Prepare sweet roll or zwieback dough. Proceed as for buns, roll out each bun with rolling pin. Put a tablespoon of the dried fruit mixture in the center of the piece of dough. Fold over and press edges together. Put on baking sheet with sealed edge downward. Do not let them rise but bake immediately at 350 degrees until brown. Do not over bake because the fruit mixture need only be heated enough to take out rawness of eggs. Brush with shortening after removing from oven. Makes 50.
Variations:
1. Letting rise at least 15-20 minutes, then bake.
2. Use any combination of dried fruit you have on hand. Even home grown plums, fresh or canned may be used with dried fruit.
3. Roll out portion of dough in square, cut into 3 or 4-inch squares, then proceed to put as much fruit on the dough as you are able to enclose without having it come out. The less dough—the more fruit—the tastier the roll.

Noodle Soup
1 cut up stewing hen. Simmer slowly about 3 hours or until tender in 3 quarts of water to which 2 tsp. salt has been added. Strain broth and bring to boil again. Add noodles (about one pound) and cook about 5 minutes or until noodles are tender. Serve. Chicken may be served with the soup if desired. Other traditions leave the chicken pieces in the soup and skim off fat.

Green Bean Soup
Ham bone with some meat on it
1 quart green beans
5-6 potatoes cubed
Boil ham bone in plenty of water until done. Add beans and potatoes. Need not add salt because of the ham. Just before serving add 1/2-1 cup sour cream.

**Russian Borsch**

4 cups raw potatoes, diced
2 cups cooked navy beans
1 cup pickled beets with juice
Salt to taste
1/2 cup sour cream
Cook potatoes in salted water until tender. Add beans and beets. Bring to boil. Add sour cream and serve. If you use 2 medium-sized beets, raw, add 1 tsp. vinegar and 1 tbsp. sugar. Can add a ham bone to the beans while cooking.

**Main Dishes**

**Stewed Beef**

(Dampffleisch)

Bring to boil, simmer slowly
1/2 cup lard
3-lbs. stewing meat
1 cup water
1 onion cut into quarters
Salt and pepper to taste
Simmer slowly for 2 hours or until tender. Serves about 6 depending on how much bone is with the meat.

**Anten**

Take a cleaned duck, rub salt all over skin and add filling. Place in roaster. Add water to bottom, place in not too hot oven. Baste with grease once or twice. An hour and half before done add sliced peeled potatoes to grease and leave roaster uncovered so potatoes and duck get brown.

**Filling for duck:**

Boil about 1/2 cup rice
Soak 2 cups bread crumbs in milk
1 egg
1 small onion
Salt and pepper to taste
Grind heart, liver and gizzard
Potato Dumplings
Grate 2 cups potatoes and squeeze the juice out with a cloth sack. Then add 1 cup flour, 1 egg, 2 tbsp. sour cream to which ¼ tsp. soda has been dissolved and salt to taste. Mix well. Then form into small balls with wet hands and put in boiling water and boil for 20 minutes. Drain. These may be eaten with the following white sauce: Bring to boil 1 cup cream, salt, and 1 tsp. flour.

Another recipe suggests to omit the sour cream and soda.

Gebratene Kartoffeln
Peel raw potatoes, slice fine. Rinse with cold water. Add several tablespoons shortening in skillet and heat to hot. Add potatoes, salt and pepper and fry until brown on one side. Turn and fry until brown on other side. Fry slowly until done. To make cooked fried potatoes, cook potatoes with skins on. Cool and peel. Slice with slicer and fry in lard or oil until lightly browned. Season to taste with salt and pepper.

Fried Apples
2 tbsp. butter in skillet
Add enough sliced apples for your family
Add sugar to taste and cinnamon
Serve warm. Add cream if desired.

Miscellaneous
Lebkuchen
1½ lb. granulated sugar
1 cup water
Boil until this spins a thread.
Remove syrup from fire and add during constant stirring, 1 pt. honey. Cool to lukewarm.
Add:
One-eighth lb. butter
5 well-beaten egg yolks or 2 whole eggs
1 tsp. soda
1-1½ tsp. cinnamon
½-1 tsp. cardamom
6-8 cups flour
Be careful not to add too much flour; dough must be soft enough to handle easy in rolling out.
1-2 cups nuts—walnuts, almonds, or both
Chopped candied peel may be added if desired. Mix dough, cover, let stand overnight. Roll out, cut with cutter, and bake at 350 degrees from 10-12 minutes. Cookies should be only lightly browned. Must be stored in airtight container for together, add small amount of hot liquid and add to milk mixture:
¾ cup sugar
½ cup flour
½ tsp. salt
Let come to full boil. Cool at once in cold water and stir often. When cool, add cooked fruit. Can be made with just plums or with prunes, apricots and raisins.

Baked Apples
Core large apples. In each apple put a mixture of brown and white sugar. Bake, cool and serve with cream.

Cream Puffs
½ cup butter, add spoon lard
2 cups hot water
Put butter in hot water while still on stove, put in 2 cups flour. Put off stove, add 8 eggs one by one. Put by spoon full on pan and put in stove but do not look in stove for at least 15 minutes.

Egg Pancakes
4 eggs, whip these and put in about ¼ cup cream mixed with milk, ½ cup flour and salt. Fry in butter.

Russian Pancakes
1 egg
½ tsp. salt
1 cup flour
1 cup milk
Beat egg until light. Measure and sift flour and salt together. Add to beaten egg. Add milk gradually and beat until batter is smooth. This is a very thin batter. Pour some pancake batter into hot, greased frying pan, allowing it to run over the entire surface of the pan in a thin layer. When the edges are golden brown, turn and fry on the other side. These may be rolled up or served with butter and sugar, syrup or jam.