

UKRAINE

/ Food and
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Ukraine: Food and History. Kyiv: O.Braichenko, 2020. 286 pages

ISBN 978-966-97882-4-5

This book tells the story of Ukrainian cuisine by placing it in its cultural context and presenting Ukrainian cooking as part of the intangible cultural heritage of Ukraine. The publication also explores the potential of cultural diplomacy and includes recipes that will make you fall in love with Ukraine.

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Publishing Licence
ДК #6118 as of 02.04.2018
Publisher: Olena Braichenko
Tel.: +380 67 878 67 67

yizhakultura.com
ui.org.ua

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Ukrainian cuisine is becoming recognised across the world, both in high-end restaurants and as part of home cooking traditions. The rapidly developing restaurant industry and artisan food production in Ukraine have attracted international food tourists and foreign investors. Nonetheless, all too often some of the most popular dishes known all over the world are not seen as part of Ukrainian cooking, national culinary traditions and Ukrainian cuisine as a brand. We have produced a publication which both tells the story of modern Ukrainian cuisine and serves as a guide to national culinary practices and regional specialities and flavours.

In the modern globalised world, food serves as an entry point to a country's culture, history, traditions and lifestyle. Food unites us and creates a positive atmosphere for communication, important not only for family and friends but also in establishing diplomatic relations. Food presentation, tableware and table decor, and the atmosphere they create, are all part of the dining experience. This was exactly the thinking behind the Ukrainian Institute's decision to select culinary diplomacy as one of its focus areas.

We are not only interested in the practical aspect of cooking; we also delve into the history of food. The history of Ukrainian traditional cuisine is narrated through the technologies and environment behind food production. We have used food to discuss Ukrainian lifestyles, the country's geography and wildlife, the customs and traditional beliefs of Ukrainians as well as their history of migration, and the many national and ethnic traditions which exist side by side in Ukraine.

Food culture has become a subject of anthropological studies, a discipline which is actively developing in Ukraine and the world. This publication has been developed with support from leading experts from all over Ukraine. We are grateful to the *izhakultura* project and the team of chefs who made this book possible. The chefs re-designed Ukrainian recipes especially for this book, so that readers across the world will be able to recreate them and enjoy the flavour and texture of Ukrainian dishes cooked to perfection using modern culinary technologies. This publication will be useful to those who want to gain a deeper insight into Ukrainian cuisine and share their knowledge. We cordially invite you to enjoy the flavours of Ukrainian cooking and embrace the richness and diversity of Ukrainian food traditions.

Volodymyr Sheiko,
General Director,
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Food unites us all. Communal dining helps forge relationships, exchange information and do business. Just as the conversation, body language and general mood at the table reflect the guests' intentions, plans and relationships, so food traditions are reflective of fashions, ideas, convictions and identity. In this respect, food speaks for us.

Ukrainian cuisine is fascinating, rich, diverse and modern. Each season is marked by its own original flavour. One and the same dish tastes different when cooked according to its many regional variations. The strength and beauty of Ukrainian culinary culture lies in using high quality products and food production technologies which have been tried and tested through the centuries. Ukraine's diverse geography and the many nations living side by side have helped forge amazing cooking traditions we can boast of and share with the rest of the world.

Our cuisine has become our voice which we use proudly to tell the story of our culture and beliefs. This publication includes academic chapters which will help readers get a firmer grip on the Ukrainian style of cooking and food traditions, and a better insight into Ukrainian history and culture. We are promoting Ukrainian gastronomic heritage as a soft power with all the potential to become another powerful tool to propagate Ukrainian culture, preserve cultural diversity and advocate for the country's interests. This book will make you fall in love with Ukrainian cuisine, even more so if you try cooking according to its recipes, which were specially developed and tested by leading Ukrainian professional chefs to reflect a significant part of Ukrainian culinary heritage.

Olena Braichenko,
founder of the *izhakultura* project
and *izhak* publishing



Ukrain - Food



Ukraine: Food and History





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Section I.

From the history of Ukrainian cuisine



Ihor Lylo

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Sometimes a flavour
makes you pause.
You want to stop time
and savour this moment
forever, picturing in your
mind the culture and
people who created it.
This is one of the ways
to discover Ukraine.



Ukrainian cuisine has a history steeped in tradition, which is reflected in contemporary culinary practices and dominant flavours. At the same time, Ukrainian cooking is constantly changing and adapting, so that it mirrors both the customs of the past and the trends of the future. Today we continue to analyse and rethink culinary traditions and rediscover the abundance of flavours in different regions of Ukraine. As we step outside our comfort zones whilst travelling across the country in search of adventure or just exploring, we are always able to find something familiar in traditional Ukrainian cuisine. Ukrainian signature dishes like borshch, home-made bread, kovbasa or sausage, varenyky (dough pockets with sweet or savoury filling) and holubtsy (stuffed cabbage rolls) all have a different regional spin. These cultural differences have also helped create the culinary terms by which Ukraine is known internationally. The famous Ukrainian perogies, first made popular by Ukrainian immigrants to Canada, are most widely known in Ukraine as varenyky. The difference in terminology can be explained by migration patterns – for the most part, Canada welcomed immigrants from western Ukraine, where this type of dumpling is still called a perogie. But bear in mind that if you order perogies in central Ukraine, you will most likely be served a pie. This is how, with the first taste of a local dish, we enter into the infinite world of flavour for which Ukrainian cuisine is renowned and begin to discover Ukraine and its history and culture anew.

Today, farmers' and artisan food products are growing in popularity in Ukraine. Consumers are willing to pay extra for natural flavours and unique tastes. The process of "going back to our roots" has become ever more popular, and old recipes are making a comeback. The number of people showing a preference for Ukrainian cuisine continues to grow, reflected in the rapidly increasing number of re-published Ukrainian cookery books. It feels high time to discuss modern food culture and emerging Ukrainian cuisine that is steeped in rich tradition.



Flavours in Ukrainian cooking

Traditional Ukrainian views on the flavour, freshness and presentation of food are born out of age-old experience shaped by local community custom. The same product, depending on the region and on processing, storing and cooking methods, acquires a distinct taste and presentation. Food processing technologies were honed over many generations to ensure that harvested produce (grain, vegetables and fruit), meat of domestic or wild animals, fish, mushrooms and wild berries were utilised efficiently, stored properly, complemented the variety of available food and lasted for extended periods of time.

Ukraine has a temperate climate with, at times, bitterly cold winters. As a result, fresh garden produce – the basis for traditional staple diets – was only seasonably available and fresh meat, fish and mushrooms had to be prepped for long-term storage. This is why Ukrainian culinary culture adopted and perfected technologies to dehydrate or dry foodstuffs, to pickle them, preserve in salt or cure them with smoke. Such preserved foods have become Ukrainian regional specialities.



Sweet flavours

Modern-day sweet flavours with high sugar content and added artificial sweeteners did not exist in the past. Instead, fermented grain and vegetable dishes were the only sweet treats.

Ukraine has strong grain growing traditions. The most popular grains, including barley, millet, rye, oats and wheat, are used to make porridge and bake bread. Before the mass introduction of potatoes (in the late 1800s–early 1900s) grain was a staple food. Up until the end of the nineteenth century, some of the most popular Ukrainian dishes included fermented grain or flour which, through the fermentation process, acquired a distinct sweet and sour taste. Boiling water was poured over oats or wheat bran, stale rye bread was added and the mixture allowed to sit for a couple of days in a warm place to ferment, after which it was slowly cooked. In the past, as now, fermented meals and beverages were prepared using malt (germinated rye or barley grain). Unfortunately, a whole variety of fermented drinks, rich in taste and calories, like oatmeal kisil and other drinkable oatmeal or barley porridges, have long since disappeared from modern Ukrainian cuisine. All these cereal-based dishes, depending on their thickness and richness of flavour, could be served hot or cold; as a main course of mash or porridge with a drizzle of oil, or for dessert with added honey or hemp seed milk.

Ukrainians have long kept bees and highly esteemed honey for its natural sweetness. Honey was consumed in a variety of ways: fresh, dissolved (a technology used before the advent of industrial production, when boiling water was poured over honeycombs to dissolve and separate the wax), in the form of beverages and dessert (such as fruit cooked in honey).

Cultivation of sugar beet and the rapid development of the sugar processing industry in Ukraine in the mid 1800s greatly increased the variety of sweet flavours: sugar itself became a sweetmeat (for example, it became customary to sip tea through a lump of sugar) and more sugar-based products came on the market: sweets, biscuits, halva, pastilles, jam and candied fruit were all produced on an industrial scale.



Sour flavours

Products with a sharp sour flavour resulting from fermentation remain popular. The Ukrainian term for sour fermented products (*kvasny*) has the same etymology as kvas, a popular sourish drink and source of live bacteria. Ukrainians preferred rye bread kvas and beetroot kvas, which they also used to cook other meals. Nowadays shop-bought kvas beverages are mass produced. In the 1900s, naturally fermented home brewed kvas became less popular, and beetroot kvas is practically unknown today. However, Ukrainian food bloggers, culinary experts, foodies and professional chefs keep the interest alive and regularly experiment with fermented beetroot.

Modern-day Ukrainians still show a preference for fermented vegetables like cabbage, cucumbers (which have been cultivated in Ukraine from ancient times) and tomatoes as well as aubergines and peppers which came to the country a century ago. Fermented vegetables are eaten as a separate dish, as an appetiser or as an ingredient in other dishes.

In the south of Ukraine you will be impressed by the taste of fermented watermelon, in the north, sour cabbage (sauerkraut) with cranberries will tickle your taste buds, and in Odesa region you will enjoy the spicy flavour of fermented aubergines. This vegetable is relatively new to Ukraine and became known in the early 1900s, but quickly became popular across the country. Just a few decades ago, fermented beetroot was used in a wide variety of recipes, and beetroot kvas was used for cooking borshch, a traditional Ukrainian soup, as well as to complement meat dishes. Borshch is still cooked using beetroot kvas, but not as widely as before.

In the twentieth century home-made fermented products were replaced by preserved vegetables and fruit. But some homemakers, especially in rural areas or urban dwellers with access to a root cellar, continue to ferment products without adding preservatives like vinegar, relying only on salt and natural herbs (horseradish, cherry leaves, dill flower heads, garlic, onion, and so on).



Salty flavours and pickling methods

Ukraine's history of salt production and trade goes back several centuries. One of the oldest active salt mines in Ukraine, in operation since the fourteenth century, is located in Drohobych, in the west of the country. Here salt is extracted by boiling brine (natural salt solution). In west Ukraine salt was also mined in Greater Kolomiya and a number of other towns and cities; in the south salt is still harvested from saline lakes on the Black Sea coast and in Crimea from the Henichesk Salt Lake. Kolomiya salt is mentioned in the *Description of Ukraine* (1651) by Guillaume Levasseur de Beauplan, a French explorer and military engineer. "They make another sort of salt of elder and oak ash, which is good to eat with bread, they call this salt Kolomey."

Donetsk region was famous for its salt mines. Starting from the fifteenth century, Ukraine developed an ox-cart trading industry in goods including salt. The name for such a merchant trader was a *chumak*, and the lifestyle was referred to as *chumatstvo*. In the nineteenth century Ukraine mostly mined rock salt, the bulk of it mined on an industrial scale in the Donbas region. The Soledar salt mine in Donetsk region, located 300 meters underground, is a unique by-product of this industry. One of its chambers is so large and has such wonderful acoustics it is used for symphony orchestra concerts.

A whole variety of produce could be salted. Salt cured meat was a popular product. Large pieces of lard, meat and pork belly were cured inside special wooden barrels (*bodnyas* in Ukrainian) which could store the tightly-packed meat for several months. The meat was used to cook borshch, kulish (millet-based porridge) and other dishes. Salt cured lard is a popular product even today, but the general term *solonyna* used in Ukraine to refer to salt cured meat and lard has fallen out of use.





Ukrainians are also fond of salted fish, which holds an important place in Ukrainian cuisine. In the past it served as a valuable trade commodity. Freshly caught fish was salted and dried, according to Guillaume Levasseur de Beauplan who describes the methods of curing fish used by the Zaporizhian Cossacks, who also added cinders for the process. Affluent townspeople of the eighteenth century were especially fond of cured fish fillets, mostly sturgeon, which were popular in the late 1800s and early 1900s. Sturgeon was fished on an industrial scale in the coastal areas of the Sea of Azov and Black Sea, and transported thousands of miles inland. In 2000 Ukraine introduced a ban on sturgeon fishing, as it is now an endangered species, and nowadays sturgeon farming has replaced open sea fishing.

Historically, rural areas close to the river Dnipro and its tributaries had a developed culture of curing fish with salt. The fish was gutted, washed, salted and laid out on rye straw while traditional stoves were lighted and allowed to burn down. The embers were removed and the fish put in their place on wooden spades covered with straw and left until the stove cooled, resulting in dried or semi-dried fish depending on the length of time. Dried fish was stored through the winter and used as an ingredient in the famous Dniprovsky borshch.

The technology to dry and salt-cure different types of river fish is still alive today. Almost every Ukrainian food shop or market offers a variety of dried, smoked or otherwise cured small fish. In the old days salted and dried fish was used in recipes; now it is consumed as a separate dish or snack. Salted and dried fish has a rich umami flavour (the fifth taste) and connoisseurs are well versed in the types of river, lake and sea fish with the richest taste.

Fish can also be preserved in brine, a salt-curing method most suitable for herring. Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, herring from Crimea and fished from the Don and Danube rivers was widely available. Historical fifteenth to eighteenth century documents discovered in the city of L'viv include references to Danube and Baltic herring imported in barrels. The fish was consumed as a separate dish with a drizzle of oil and vinegar. To get rid of excess salt it was first soaked in water or milk. The Danube herring is highly prized for its taste today and considered a regional delicacy.

Vilkovo, a Ukrainian town on the Danube estuary before it drains into the Black Sea, has even given its name to the Vilkovo herring (or *dunaika*, from the Ukrainian name for the Danube). Another popular south Ukrainian dish is salt-cured fish (usually carp or bream) sprinkled with sunflower oil and marinated in vinegar with onion.

Curing with salt is not limited to meat and fish; pickled vegetables and cheese are also popular. Salted or pickled cheese was produced by daily adding thin layers of freshly made cheese to a crock filled with brine. The crock would be stored in an outside shed, where during bitterly cold winters the contents would freeze over, allowing storage for extended periods of time. The cheese was used for pies and varenyky. As the twentieth century drew to a close this traditional recipe went out of use completely, although salted cheese is still popular today. The ancient technique of curing layers of cheese with salt is reflected in traditional Ukrainian varenyky with salted cheese and dill with a side of fried onion or pork crackling.

Nowadays Ukrainian consumers can get fresh vegetables all year round, but their pickled varieties garnish every festive occasion. Pickled mushrooms, gherkins and tomatoes, salted fish, pickled peppers, garlic and aubergines (served separately or on a single plate) are always welcome and well received. These products are available at practically every farmer's market however small and almost every Ukrainian family has at least one home-pickling recipe.



Curing in smoke

Smoking is another traditional way to preserve food in Ukraine. Traditional smoked products include meat, lard, fish, plums and pears. In Zakarpattya, west Ukraine, you should definitely try a local specialty called *shovdar'*, leg of pork which has been treated with salt and then lightly smoked using only fruit tree wood. Ukrainians use different types of wood for smoking – apple, cherry, pear, elder and oak – and produce from the process a range of colour from light yellow to golden brown, dark brown and black. In Halychyna in west Ukraine meat smoking was practised both at home and on an industrial scale; whole townships specialised in making smoked products, especially in the period before the Easter holidays. These traditional methods of curing meat are still alive today – smoked salo, meat and fish in central and eastern Ukraine; Polissya *matsyk* and *bohuk* cured meats and hand-stuffed sausages from Polissya and Volyn regions in north Ukraine.

Dry cured products

Drying is another ancient method to preserve food. Nowadays dried fruit is mostly considered a snack but in the past it was used to make beverages like uzvar (a dried fruit infusion) and to cook other dishes like varenyky, pies and kisil. Apples, pears, plums and cherries were prepped to be used in home recipes or sold at market; the drying process inside an oven or over hot embers gave the fruit a distinct smoky flavour.

In the 1900s dried fruit was produced on an industrial scale in special drying ovens. Nowadays modern restaurateurs are resurrecting old recipes for their menus, like adding smoked pears, with their delicate smoky flavour, to traditional Ukrainian borshch.



Typical dishes and products





Bread

Till the mid 1900s bread was the staple diet of Ukrainians. In rural areas it was baked at home, a difficult and complicated task which fell to the women of the household. Bread was baked once a week in batches of four to twelve loaves depending on the size of the household. The dough was kneaded and left to rise in specially designed conical or cylindrical baking moulds made of tightly fitted wooden planks. Ukrainian language and tradition contains hundreds of folk tales, idioms and sayings involving bread.

The most ancient type of bread in Ukraine is unleavened bread. Slowly this was replaced by fermented sourdough bread, which was baked in the mountainous regions of Ukraine till the mid 1900s using oatmeal or barley flour. The Ukrainian highland Boyko and Hutsul people still bake unleavened *oschipok* bread from barley, and traditional Hutsul hearth-cakes like *korzh* and *malay* (made with maize) remain popular. Unleavened flat bread with or without filling is still baked in the coastal region of the Sea of Azov, popular among Urum and Roumean Greek communities.

Ukrainians of Bulgarian and Greek descent make pita bread (flat round unleavened bread). Crimean Tatars make bread in a type of outdoor baking oven called a furun. Another recipe is used to bake round *qalaqay* bread, which is made without yeast and with added melted butter.

Before the advent of yeast, leaven starter extracted from hops, sprouted barley and rye was used to make bread. Sometimes a leftover piece of dough from the previous batch was used as a leaven, as it contained just enough fermentation material to produce a new batch.

A large loaf of festive wheat bread has long been associated with Ukrainian hospitality, although in no way does it reflect the rich diversity of bread baking traditions in the country. Big cities, in contrast to rural areas, had their own traditions of bread baking, selling and quality control. In L'viv, which in the fourteenth century adopted the Magdeburg rights, there is documented evidence of a Baker's Guild which can be traced back to 1349. The guild's stamp included a pretzel (a dough pastry shaped like a knot). Women were banned from entering the guild, but many were involved in occupations connected with milling and baking or otherwise associated with the final product.

Martin Gruneweg, a German traveller originally from Gdansk, describes L'viv in the late sixteenth century: "I have travelled through half of Europe, I've been to the most famous cities of the world, but nowhere have I seen so much bread delivered to the market every day, whatever country you come from you will find baked goods from your homeland – bread, rolls, pastry or whatever it is called." L'viv bakeries used to make brown and white bread, Jewish matzah and challah, Armenian lavash, Krakow pretzels and L'viv *yurashky*. The name of these original sweet pastries can be traced back to popular food fairs organised on St George's day to celebrate L'viv's patron saint. Ancient Ruthenian phonetics transformed the saint's Greek name into Yuri, and so *yurashky* got their name.

The city employed special representatives to control bread quality and price. Bakers caught short-changing customers were subjected to the humiliating ordeal of being suspended in the air by a special system of pulleys installed on the market square.

It is not at all surprising that Ukraine with its fertile fields naturally suited to grain production has become known as the "Breadbasket of Europe". The term was coined at the time of the Russian Empire in the early 1900s, when international trade was on the rise. Almost 90% of all grain exported from the Russian Empire was of Ukrainian origin. Wheat from Ukraine was known all over the world. The origin of Red Fife (1842), the oldest Canadian heritage wheat, at least in legend can be traced back to the Halychanka grain from the west of Ukraine. This wheat variety grew well in harsh Canadian weather and produced better quality products.

Introduction of the Halychanka wheat variety was probably the one single event which set Canada well on its way to becoming one of the world's largest grain producing nations.

All over the world, each next generation of Ukrainian immigrants retain their culinary traditions, even if they no longer speak the language. In the Americas Ukrainians joke that all their churches and schools have been built using the proceeds from selling borshch, varenyky and home baked pastry.

In Soviet times the assortment of bread and baked goods available to most of the population was quite small, and vastly differed in quality even though the country had a stringent formal system of quality control. Many regional bread varieties disappeared and the Soviet economy crushed privately-owned cafes and bakeries which usually offered fresh pastries. Only central stores in big cities could offer a wider variety of baked goods.

Today restaurants and small and large bakeries are introducing new recipes, varieties and forms of baked goods including gluten- and yeast-free bread, as they strive to satisfy the demand both for traditional baked goods like all-purpose rye and brown bread, and festive bread such as the traditional Easter *paska* and wedding *korovai*. Ukrainian celebrity chefs and food bloggers are exploring Ukrainian baking traditions, experimenting and promoting the culture of home baking and making bread in food outlets. Today we are witnessing a revival of ancient baking traditions which are relevant today.



Oils

Oil is vital for cooking and is used to enhance the flavour in a variety of dishes. It is a commonly held misconception that Ukrainian cooking is mostly dominated by animal fats; in fact it uses a wide variety of vegetable oils. Today Ukraine mostly relies on sunflowers for oil extraction, however this was not always the case. Before the 1900s most dishes were cooked with other types of oil such as hemp, linseed, rapeseed and camelina (false flax).

Flax and hemp are vital for agriculture. Before textiles were produced commercially the plants were cultivated on private land plots, processed at home and spun into fabric. Recently there has been a rise in demand for oil produced from these plants.

However, sunflower oil continues to dominate the market. It comes in two varieties: purified oil for cooking or baking, and extra virgin sunflower oil, more commonly known in Ukraine as home-grown oil. Ideal for salad dressings, home-grown sunflower oil has a distinct flavour, golden colour and intense aroma.

Oil-bearing seeds were used in preparing meals and as an alternative to dairy products. Poppy and hemp seeds were used to extract vegetable milk which was used for cooking porridge. Today this method is widely used by the vegan and vegetarian community. In Slobozhanschyna region, situated in the north-east of Ukraine, hemp milk was used to make home-made pasta. For this recipe hemp seeds were lightly roasted, crushed in a mortar, sieved and mixed with water.

Dairy products

Cow's milk and its derivatives which include whey, buttermilk, butter, baked yogurt and milk, cream and sour cream (*smetana*), curdled boiled milk (*huslyanka*), naturally soured milk (*kyslyak*), cheese and cow colostrum are absolutely vital to Ukrainian cuisine. Sheep herding traditions in western Ukraine have spun a culture of cheesemaking using fermented sheep's milk and producing fermented milk beverages similar to kvas. Sheep's milk and its products are highly acclaimed, including the Hutsul sheep *bryndzia*, *budz* (rennet cheese), *vrda* (boiled cheese) and cheese made from naturally soured milk. In recent decades small and medium-sized goat farming enterprises have been on the rise in Ukraine, helping fulfil the demand for goat's milk and its derivatives including milk, cheese and kefir. Each of these milk products can be consumed on its own, or used for cooking or as a side dish.

It is only now that milk is consumed fresh. Previously it was left to simmer inside a stove for several hours; as a result the milk acquired a delicate flavour and golden colour and could be safely stored for longer periods of time. This milk was called baked or stewed milk.

Naturally soured or curdled fresh milk (*kyslyak*) is another popular milk product. Now it is usually consumed with bread but our ancestors ate it with baked potatoes and onion. It is also used to make cheese. In Zakarpattya region in west Ukraine curdled boiled milk (*huslyanka*) is a popular dish. A thickly textured substance something between cheese, butter and sour cream, *huslyanka* can be kept safely in cold storage for several months.

Ukraine does not have a tradition of making hard cheese. Instead, Ukrainians continue to make home-made curd cheese. Sour milk is left to simmer on the stove, closely watched while the whey separates, after which the curd is drained. Home-made curd cheese is eaten fresh and used for cooking in pies, varenyky, scones, strudel, puddings, cheese fritters and stuffed pancakes. A popular traditional dessert for children is curd cheese mixed with fresh milk and an occasional sprinkling of sugar. This soft cheese is used not only for dessert but also for savoury dishes; it goes well with salted dill as well as caraway and garlic, and tastes wonderful with freshly baked bread.

Whey, the liquid produced from simmering milk and draining the separated curd, was used for cooking, baking bread and making pancakes (as a substitute for water). It is the best thirst quencher on a hot summer's day.

Ukrainian cooking has a special place for smetana or sour cream, consumed as a separate dish or as a sauce, added to borshch and to sweet or savoury varenyky with sugar or dill and garlic. Smetana is an all-purpose dressing for salads of tomatoes, cucumbers, dill and onion. It has a sweet and sour flavour, varies in fat content and texture and is produced in a number of ways. A Ukrainian expression to describe the highest degree of comfort in life runs: "To swim like varenyky in smetana."

Buttermilk, a side product from making butter, was considered an important ingredient for cooking and making festive bread.



Ukrainian salo (pork lard)

Salo has become a signature dish of Ukrainian cuisine. Anyone unfamiliar with its complex method of production and culture of consumption may be surprised by its supposed popularity, but in fact, contrary to commonly held opinion, Ukrainians' universal love of salo is more myth than historical fact. Depending on the period, economic status, region and religious beliefs, the proportion of meat and salo in diets varied significantly across the country. In the past, most of the Ukrainian population consumed vegetable and fish dishes, vegetable broth, borshch and various kinds of *kulich* (grain porridge).

But Ukrainians do have a soft spot for salo. It holds an important place in Ukrainian food culture and has given rise to a plethora of jokes – Ukrainians know how to have a good laugh about salo. Salo has entered popular food culture and art in a dish called chocolate-covered salo, or a L'viv museum-restaurant entirely devoted to salo.

In Ukraine, salo production and large-scale pig farming varied historically and regionally. In central and left-bank Ukraine (east of the Dnipro river) pig farming was significantly spurred on by the rapidly developing distillery industry which shaped the economy in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Pig farmers started feeding distillery by-products to pigs kept in paddocks, where the animals rapidly gained weight because of lack of movement and the energy-rich feed.

At the same time, many households in Polissya region in the north of the country kept free-range pigs. The meat differed in taste and texture because the animals grazed in forest and meadowland on wild grasses, acorns and nuts. The cultivation conditions and nutritional aspects of different pig farming methods have produced well over a dozen varieties of salo.

The taste of salo is also determined by its thickness. It can be under three centimetres or, as Ukrainians say, “two fingers thick”, or over ten centimetres, thick as the palm of a hand. Salo with a thin strip of meat is most esteemed; even better if it has several. Regional varieties of salo from Vinnitsya, Poltava and Ternopil could easily set the international standard for this dish.

Pig farming conditions are not the only factor affecting the quality of salo. In order to understand why salo is an important component of Ukrainian food culture, the methods of manufacture must be explored. The correct dressing procedures are vital. The skin of the slaughtered animal is scorched with cinders, after which it is cleaned, covered with straw and scorched again. The layer of lard is removed and left to mature for several hours and even days before the pieces are cured with salt. This process ensures the quality and specific flavour.

Salted salo is served as an *hors d'oeuvre* with bread, pickled or fresh tomatoes, onion, mustard, horse radish or fresh garlic. Salo was originally a perfect snack for people working in the fields, highly valued for its nutritional qualities and the fact that it does not spoil in the heat. Over a long period it can become slightly yellowish and change flavour, and becomes an all-purpose stock food. Thus is not surprising that the price of salo changes according to season and can be more expensive than meat.

Ukrainian borschch

If you ask someone who has spent a significant amount of time in Ukraine to name the country's most popular dish, the response will definitely be borschch. Borschch is a signature dish, always present both at home and on an exquisite restaurant menu. Ukraine has over a hundred recipes for borschch. Ancient Ukrainian borschch cooking traditions have become part of the national list of the country's intangible cultural heritage.

Borschch is well-loved soup which, depending on the ingredients and type of broth, can serve as a proper meal or a light vegetable consommé. The Soviet system of public eateries has somewhat damaged borschch's reputation, when every office canteen, café and restaurant served a standardised version in regards to taste and presentation. Nowadays however you can savour all types of borschch prepared in different regions and following different recipes. Practically everyone who knows their way around a kitchen has their own favourite recipe for borschch.

It is not surprising that Ukrainian borschch differs in flavour, as it depends on seasonal ingredients and region. Borschch can vary in texture, from “thick enough to hold a spoon” to the so-called nobleman's borschch served in drinking cups. It can be served both cold (*kholodnyk*, from Ukrainian *kholod* – cold) and hot.

Borschch can be vegetarian, or made using meat broth. Meat-free borschch uses vegetable or fish stock as a base, and mushrooms and beans instead of meat. White borschch uses mushroom stock as a base. Chicken or other meat stocks are the base for meat borschch.





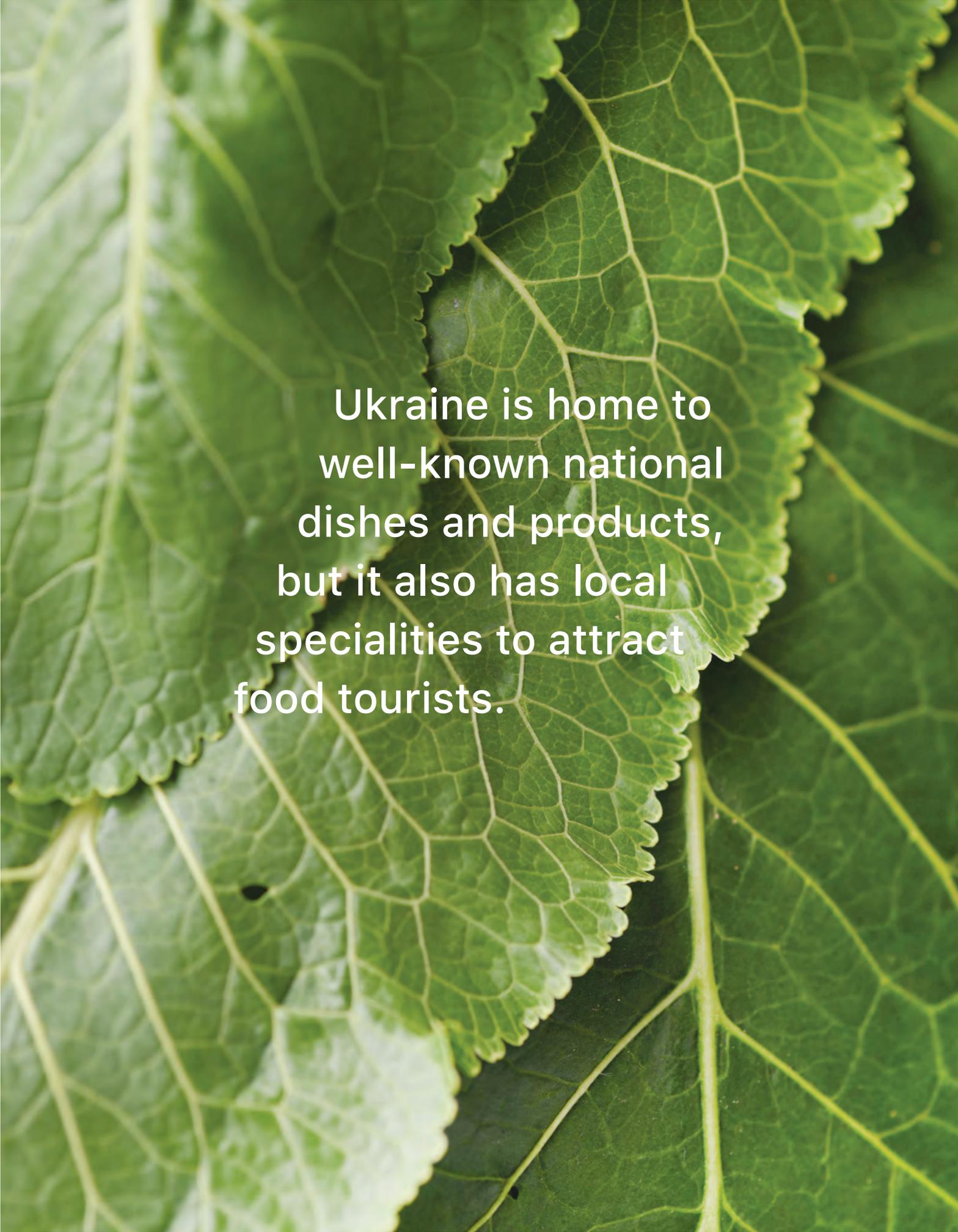
Borshch flavour varies from sweet to sour. Kvas is the most ancient ingredient used to give it a sour taste. Kvas was originally produced using wild herbs, in time replaced by beetroot and bread. With the arrival of tomatoes, these became the key sour ingredient as they became more widespread and easy to use. But there is still a plethora of regional ingredients which give borshch its sour flavour including sour cherries, wild pears, rhubarb, plums, strawberries and cranberries.

Historically borshch recipes include specific local ingredients. Communities living close to rivers and lakes usually add fish, either baked on straw or dried and cured with salt. In Podillya region smoked pears are added. Wedding borshch often has millet. Festive Christmas meat-free borshch has tiny ear-shaped dumplings with a filling of prunes, mushrooms or herring.

Ukrainian borshch can always be fortified, jazzed up and otherwise improved. Cooks have special tricks at their disposal using salo, smetana, flour and oil to improve the taste and nutritional value. Crushed salo with salt and garlic can be put in, or a mixture of fried flour and sour cream or stock added 5–10 minutes before the soup is ready.

Borshch also varies in colour, from milky-white and pink to shades of red and even green (sorrel or nettle borshch). It is usual to add smetana which regulates the temperature and flavour.

Borshch figures in many folk sayings. Some reflect its important place in the Ukrainian diet, like “Borshch is the main dish”. Others refer to allegorical and nutritional qualities: “Two mushrooms in a borshch” (don’t overdo it), “Let the borshch be thin, but keep it sweet”, or “Only borshch improves with time” (borshch left overnight matures and acquires a richer taste). And the most concise saying of all: “Borshch is best.”



Ukraine is home to well-known national dishes and products, but it also has local specialities to attract food tourists.

Local specialities

Ukraine is home to well-known national dishes and products, but it also has local specialities to attract food tourists.

Sheep herding traditions in Ukraine are truly ancient and remarkable. Hutsul sheep bryndzia cheese is the first Ukrainian product with a geographical indication of origin from highland districts in Chernivtsy, Zakarpattya and Ivano-Frankivsk regions. Rakhiv (Zakarpattya region) holds an annual Hutsul sheep bryndzia food festival. The cheese is produced using methods dating back to the fifteenth century, from the milk of sheep grazed on highland meadows. The milk is fermented, matured and cured with salt.

Bryndzia is used in a variety of dishes. Rich in flavour, light yellow in colour and with a crumbly texture, it is stored dry in tight containers. Bryndzia is a wonderful addition to vegetables and baked potatoes, and is essential for such typical dishes as banosh and kulish.

Odesa region is famous for its Bessarabiya bryndzia cheese. Manufactured using a different technology, it is stored in brine, and its salty taste compliments salads, tomatoes or jam.

Yavorivsky pie is another local signature dish. Together with Yavorivsky *zabavky* (traditional toys), it could soon become an official part of Ukraine's intangible cultural heritage. This pie, indigenous to the Yavoriv and Horodotsky districts of L'viv region, has both a meat-free version and a more traditional recipe with fried bacon and mushrooms. Karaim cooking traditions, namely *et aiaklak* (meat pasties) are also part of Ukraine's intangible cultural heritage. However, today *et aiaklak* is a signature dish of the Melitopol Karaim community in south Ukraine.





Section II.

Ukrainian traditions of hospitality



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Traditions of hospitality and food culture are two variables in an equation with two unknowns, where **x** stands for “what” and **y** explains “how”. Such equations have multiple solutions. Publications such as this one are made to guide the process.



Across the world, traditions of hospitality manifest themselves most completely through festive meals like family celebrations, celebratory dinners and banquets. Aside from the actual process of food preparation, the usual sequence of events follows a universal scenario which involves inviting the guests, developing the menu, deciding on food presentation and seating arrangements, delegating table duties, and following a specific dining etiquette. In high society this sequence of actions has been perfected to the level of art, but ordinary people in their daily lives follow more simple and pragmatic scenarios. Fine dining also follows the standards of haute cuisine, incorporating the latest international culinary trends, while common dining traditions more perfectly reflect ancient folk customs. The history of Ukrainian hospitality even among the upper classes includes examples of socially inclusive and respectful treatment of guests. In respect to cultural diplomacy, this aspect is especially important. Ukrainians usually entertain guests indoors. But in summer it is not unusual to organise festivities outdoors, for example beneath the canopy of a fruit tree. This custom was widespread not only in rural areas but in big cities. Urban residents of low-rise working class housing estates, military housing complexes or buildings with walled yards like those in Odesa, often organised community celebrations outdoors where all the neighbours could meet at one big table. In rural areas from the mid till late 1900s, weddings and jubilees were celebrated by organising *shalashy* – tented street parties. A wedding tent was erected outside, its size depending on the number of guests invited; some tents could hold over 300 people. Usually the tents were made of wood and canvas, and disassembled when the party was over. On collective Soviet housing estates built during the Khrushchev and Brezhnev eras (called *Khrushchevky* and *Brezhnevky* respectively) residents also entertained guests. These architecturally monotonous mass-produced blocks of flats with low ceilings and tiny kitchens helped provide almost every family with a flat in the 1960s. However, meeting for a joyous celebration outside or in a café, public canteen or restaurant was much more preferable.



Invitations

In Ukraine guests are traditionally invited to mark important occasions like baptisms, weddings and funerals, or local saint's days. In some provinces saint's days were celebrated on a massive scale, especially if they coincided with a major religious festival. According to folk tradition these feast days were known as "Petrykuvaty" after St Peter, or "Tie-up Vasy!" after St Basil (two of the most revered saints in Ukraine). Easter and Christmas celebrations included traditional Christmas dinner and Easter breakfast, but could also be celebrated outside the family together with guests or through social calls. In the twentieth century Soviet era of anti-religious propaganda, religious feast days were replaced by "Red Dates" in the Soviet calendar, usually marked as national holidays and days off work. New Year and 8th March (International Women's Day) became the new occasions for family and friends to meet at the dinner table. More Ukrainians also started to celebrate birthdays.

The formal invitation process has changed as well. Until recently in Ukraine wedding invitations were made in person by the bride and groom, together with the best man and bridesmaid. The company would enter in a procession through the gate and bow to the master and mistress of the house with the words: "On behalf of our dearest parents we invite you to our wedding," before presenting a *shishka* – a small sweet pastry shaped like a pine cone which can be considered the original wedding invitation card.

Greeting guests of honour with decorated bread and salt is another tradition which is still alive in Ukraine. This formal ritual was most often for close family members rather than strangers. Bread and salt, as well as religious icons, were used by the parents of newly-weds to greet them on their return from the church wedding. Greeting with bread and salt is a now formal ritual used in modern Ukraine to greet foreign and national state dignitaries.

SEATING ARRANGEMENTS

In the past the seating arrangements were determined not so much by available space but by a timeline which reflected the existing hierarchy. If you were not invited as a guest of honour, there was no need to arrive on time, as that might create the impression that you were “hungry enough to eat a horse.” As a result, guests usually trickled in as the festivities progressed, and newly-arrived secondary guests were seated arbitrarily, as is common in other cultures. But the seating arrangements for the chief guests and hosts are determined by custom. The master and mistress of the household sit at the head of the table (except during weddings). The lady of the house however is usually away from her place at the table as she is typically busy in the kitchen cooking or supervising the hired help, be it in an old manor house or a modern apartment. The woman is usually called back for an important toast, only to be “released” again to go back to her duties. Traditionally the guests of honour were seated in close proximity to the hosts, and sometimes occupied their place. Paul of Aleppo, a seventeenth century cleric, traveller and chronicler, describes how during an official visit of Patriarch Macarius of the Church of Antioch to Bohdan Khmelnytsky, one of the founding fathers of the Ukrainian state, Khmelnytsky invited Paul of Aleppo to take his own place at the head of the table.

It was customary in both Ukrainian folk and urban popular culture not to seat children at the table together with adults. Children usually found it difficult to sit through a long dinner, so they would go away and play only to come back and sit on their parents’ laps or the edge of a chair to grab a snack. Nowadays children are no longer treated as “little people” to be kept at a separate children’s table. Modern Ukrainian parents follow the French approach, seating children together with adults at the common table where they can take part in festivities.

In modern Ukraine, just like the rest of the world, the seating arrangements during official occasions are organised using name cards and according to customised seating plans.

/ TABLE DÉCOR AND FOOD PRESENTATION

A festive dinner table is usually covered with a tablecloth, sometimes richly embroidered. Today a whole variety of cotton and linen tablecloths, both decorated and plain, is commercially available from the Ukrainian textile industry. Tablecloths are usually kept in a separate drawer, crisply and pristinely pressed. Festive table linen, quality tableware and a flawlessly set table with rich and exquisite foods makes for a perfect dinner party. Other table decorations like flowers and other frills are considered to take up valuable space, preventing easy access to dishes and free-flowing conversation.

Setting the table correctly, precisely and symmetrically is vital. All available space should be utilized, and it is considered good taste to use matching tableware. In the twentieth century Ukrainian households start using domestically manufactured tableware decorated with flowers, accompanied by round or oval salad dishes and oval herring plates of coloured glass or crystal. A large plate with the main dish (such as a roast or duck with stuffing) is placed at the centre of the table. A well laid table with aesthetically presented dishes creates a profusion of colour.

Serving methods in the past are also interesting. Each member of the household had their own personal custom-made or bought spoon – the most ancient table utensil. Travellers who, custom dictated, should be invited to join the family for dinner always carried their own spoon which they kept tucked inside their belts. Everybody ate from a single bowl. With time it became customary to serve food on plates, and spoons were replaced by forks and table knives.

The upper classes in Ukraine, namely the Cossack military leadership in the eighteenth century and wealthy merchant classes in the nineteenth century, typically used silver and gold-plated tableware which included dishes, plates, cups, salt shakers and sugar bowls.

UKRAINIAN MENU

A typical Ukrainian menu, although it slightly differs between towns, regions and cultural communities, contains the signature dishes which have shaped Ukrainian cuisine. Among them are borshch, holubtsy, baked potatoes with meat, pickles, jellied meat or aspic, varenyky and pancakes. Each community has a staple list of dishes which were typically defined by the region's economic activity. For example, a festive menu in Ukrainian fishing communities living by the river Dnipro or Shatsky lakes could boast a larger share of fish compared to other communities which traditionally lived off the land. Lively inter-cultural exchange is also an important factor in developing a festive menu, and regional inter-cultural communities freely borrow from other cuisines – thus, for example, in the south of Ukraine sweet peppers and aubergines became popular. But typically the list of dishes remains practically the same from region to region and Ukrainian homemakers always have a staple list of dishes they can rely on. It is not the cooking they are mostly concerned with, but the planning, because every big dinner or banquet is different except, of course, for the delicious food! Banquets typically differ in the number of guests, which means that food has to be procured in sufficient quantities and homemakers need careful timekeeping to prepare all the food and set the table.

Nowadays festive celebrations in Ukraine include three courses: the starter, the main dish, and dessert. However, till recently rural communities followed a more old-fashioned sequence. Cold starters were served first, including fresh seasonal vegetables; in the twentieth century the assortment was extended to include salads, pickled and salted vegetables, cold meat dishes like jellied meat, and cold fish. This course was followed by hot dishes like holubtsy, even though these could be served before or together with other hot dishes. Then it was time to serve borshch, meat stock or soup, which was followed by roast chicken or duck. Then the guests were treated to stuffed foods like varenyky and filled pancakes. Kisil was the final dish. Nowadays this course has been replaced by coffee and tea accompanied by sweets. As living standards in Ukraine improved, it became customary to entirely or partially re-set the table, replacing dirty dishes and utensils with clean ones. But before washing up was made easy, guests were usually expected to keep their plate as a show of courtesy. Hired kitchen help would circle the table collecting food scraps between courses.

/ TABLE DUTIES

Typically, the duty of coordinating a festive event is delegated to the lady of the house. However, for large-scale events like weddings often a chef was hired, usually a woman (*varylykha* in old Ukrainian) who also acted as banqueting steward. The lady of the house could also request assistance from a relative or neighbour. Modern Ukrainian women raised in urban culture still feel compelled to help out in the kitchen and often leave the table to collect dirty dishes, wash up and dry, re-lay the table and bring out new dishes. Meanwhile the man of the house makes sure the glasses are full, the guests are having fun and the toasts keep coming. If he is not a perfect fit for the job, there is always a friend nearby who can fill his shoes. In the latter half of the twentieth century in former Soviet countries the Georgian word *tamada* became widely used to mean a master of ceremonies. With the late twentieth century commercialisation of popular culture, festivities are now commonly organised by specialised companies which provide an all-round deal including catering, venue and guest entertainment like dance and musical performances and other types of amusement.



Established formalities

/ TIME OF ARRIVAL

In ancient rural culture, guests never felt compelled to be on time, and as a result arrived at random. However, urban popular culture is different because late arrivals create problems in accommodating the guests.

/ GIFTS

In ancient rural communities of Ukraine it was traditional for a guest attending a celebration to bring food like eggs, cheese, honey, bread, and so on. Ritual festivities called for ritualised gifts, for example wedding guests would bring a live chicken, and for Easter celebrations it was customary to bring a home-baked paska. In urban popular culture, which with time has also shaped rural tradition, it is customary to bring a bottle of alcohol or a dessert, like a cake or a box of chocolates, and a bouquet of flowers. In Soviet times when life was tougher, festive occasions like New Year and 8th March were celebrated by a potluck, with every guest bringing what they could, whether it was winter preserves, a home-made pie, salad or biscuits. At the end of the evening before guests headed home the hostess would present each guest with a doggie bag, usually containing dessert.

/ THE CULTURE SURROUNDING CONSUMPTION OF ALCOHOL

In folk tradition consumption of strong spirits is highly regimented. First of all, the shot glasses used in the past were much smaller than modern ones. Secondly, historical records indicate that during weddings all the guests drank from a single cup which was passed around, and it was the duty of the wedding master of ceremonies to make sure the cup was always full. Alcohol consumption is regimented by the toasting schedule,

a relatively new invention. The host or master of ceremonies keeps track of the toasting schedule, so that every guest or family member can make a well-wishing toast and, as a result, legitimise another round of drinks. It is considered improper and rude to pour your own drinks and consume alcohol in-between toasts. Traditionally the duty of pouring or refreshing the drinks is delegated to a man or several men sitting behind the dinner table within reaching distance. As the festivities progress, the time between toasts is extended. The first three toasts are more or less traditional and follow in a short sequence one after another. In both rural and urban communities, the third toast is always to women or love.

DINING ETIQUETTE IS REGULATED BY SOME GENERAL RULES

For example, when reaching for a dish it is good manners to offer a person sitting close to you a helping.

Ukraine does not have a tradition of not leaving anything on the plate as a way of paying respect to the hosts. Sometimes it is best to leave some food on the plate, to avoid creating an impression that all you were interested in was the food. In general, whether to demonstrate an appetite for food or conceal it depends on the situation, family traditions, and regional norms of hospitality.

CONVERSATION IS ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT COMPONENTS OF FESTIVE DINING IN UKRAINE

The guests discuss news and the latest developments and tell jokes. In Soviet times it was good table manners to exchange “safer” tested political jokes, as untested ones could well be misinterpreted and unappreciated.

Till recently it was quite a tradition for guests to join in a sing-along. Following the first course, a suggestion to sing would usually come from the guests, or the song would spontaneously erupt and everyone would join in. The standard repertoire included popular festive songs, and as the festivities drew to a close most local songs would have been sung. In rural communities local women with good singing voices were often invited to join in the festivities. Collective singing and listening to folk songs was a form of entertainment enjoyed in-between eating and drinking.

For a short period, sing-alongs had a place in urban festive culture as well but they were quickly replaced by watching a concert on TV, listening to recorded music on a cassette player or reel-to-reel recorder, and dancing.

Serving coffee or tea signals that the evening is drawing to a close. In the past *kisil* served as such an indication. Nowadays, as previously, after dessert the guests start heading home. It is customary in Ukraine to approach the hosts and thank them for their hospitality. In the twentieth century it became customary to toast the hosts as a show of appreciation for an enjoyable evening when tea or coffee is served.

The guests who volunteer to help clean and wash up stay on. In rural communities guests who had travelled from neighbouring villages, for example to attend patron saint day religious festivities, stayed overnight. In big cities well into the 1980s it was not unusual for guests to stay overnight, often sleeping on the floor because public transport was unreliable and catching a night cab was difficult.

In the past few decades, ordinary Ukrainians have enthusiastically embraced the new popular culture of a leisurely weekend breakfast or brunch at home, and then eating out for dinner.



Modern Ukrainian
hospitality and dining
etiquette reflects
standard international
trends, while at the
same time following
ancient tradition.





Ukraine: Food and History

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Cob bread



- ingredients:
- *stone-ground wheat flour* – **4 kg**
 - *water (+28 °C)* – **3.2 l**
 - *salt* – **100 g**
 - *solid wheat leaven starter* **50 %**
hydration – **1.6 kg**

Combine the flour and water in a kneading bowl. Mix on first speed for 3 minutes and let it rest for 1 hour; then add the leaven and salt. Knead the dough for 8 minutes on first speed, until it becomes soft and elastic. Transfer the dough into another container and cover with a cloth. In the meantime, prepare tins for the bread to rise by generously dusting them with flour. Divide the dough into 4 equal parts, shape them into balls and place in the tins. Set aside for 12 hours at 13 °C to let them rise.

Preheat the oven to 250 °C. Turn out the loaves from the tins onto a baking tray. Put the tray in the middle of the oven. Steam the oven by pouring 100 grams of water directly onto the bottom of the oven or inside a clean tray on the lowest shelf. Bake for 50 minutes at 250 °C, then let the bread rest for 4–5 hours.



Buckwheat bread



ingredients:

- *high-grade wheat flour* – **750 g**
- *wholegrain buckwheat flour* – **800 g**
- *wholegrain wheat flour* – **450 g**
- *water (+20 °C)* – **1.3 l**
- *salt* – **40 g**
- *dry yeast* – **6 g**
- *liquid wheat leaven starter 100 % hydration* – **400 g**
- *leftover fermented dough* – **400 g**

Combine all the flour in a kneading bowl, season with salt, add the yeast and fermented dough leaven starter, then add the water. Knead the dough on first speed for 3 minutes, then let it rest for 5–6 minutes. Again knead on first speed for 3 minutes and let it rest for 5–6 minutes. Knead the dough on second speed for 1 minute. Transfer the dough to a different container and set aside for 2 hours. After 1 hour knead the dough with your hands, and after another hour divide the dough into 4 equal parts, each weighing 1 kilo. Shape each piece into a ball and let them rest for 25 minutes covered with a cloth.

Dust the inside of the tins with flour and place the dough inside to rise. Set aside for 1 hour. Preheat the oven to 250 °C. Turn the loaves out of the pans onto a baking tray. Put the baking tray in the middle of the oven. Pour 100 grams of water directly onto the bottom of the oven or inside a clean tray on the lowest shelf. Bake at 250 °C for 35 minutes. Let the baked bread rest for 2–3 hours.

/ Make sure the dough has risen by pressing your finger onto the surface. If the dough slowly returns midway, it is ready for baking.

/ You can save a piece of freshly made dough and use it for the next batch.





Wheat and rye bread



- ingredients:*
- *high-grade wheat flour – 1 kg*
 - *sifted rye flour – 675 g wholegrain wheat*
 - *flour – 350 g*
 - *water – 1.4 l*
 - *salt – 52 g*
 - *dry yeast – 3.75 g*
 - *solid wheat leaven starter 50 % hydration – 1 kg*

Combine the flour, yeast, fermented dough and solid leaven starter in a kneading bowl, season with salt and add water. Mix on first speed for 3 minutes. Then switch to second speed and knead the dough for 8 minutes until it is moist and soft. Transfer the dough into a different container and set aside for 2 hours. Then divide it into 2 equal parts, shape the dough into balls, flatten gently and transfer into prepared tins to rise. Keep in a cold place (5 °C) for 12 hours.

Preheat the oven to 240 °C, using both top and bottom heat.

Dust the loaves with flour and turn them out of the tins onto a baking tray. Score the bread's surface. Place the tray in the middle of the oven. Pour half a cup of boiling water directly onto the bottom of the oven or inside a clean tray on the lowest shelf. Close the oven immediately. Bake for 1 hour at 240 °C.



Flavoured butter



ingredients:

Herring flavoured butter:

- *butter 82.5 % fat – 100 g*
- *mild cured herring fillet – 30 g*
- *green apple – 15 g*
- *ground coriander – 2 g*
- *salt and pepper to taste*

Blend the finely diced apple with the herring fillet and butter, season with spices and mix using a blender until smooth.



ingredients:

Cep flavoured butter:

- *butter 82.5 % fat – 100 g*
- *ceps – 30 g*
- *thyme – 3 g*
- *butter (for frying) – 10 g*
- *salt and pepper to taste*

Blend the butter with finely-chopped fried mushrooms seasoned with thyme, add spices and mix until smooth using a blender.



ingredients:

Butter with herbs and garlic:

- *butter 82.5 % fat – 100 g*
- *garlic – 10 g*
- *fresh parsley and dill – 20 g*
- *salt and pepper to taste*

Blend the butter with finely-chopped dill and parsley, add crushed garlic, season and then mix until smooth using a blender.

For these recipes bring the butter to room temperature. Wrap each batch of flavoured butter in cling film and shape as desired, or use a special mould, then freeze the mixture. Let the butter soften before use, then dice or remove from the moulds. These butters are a wonderful addition to canapés and meat dishes served hot.

/ Fresh ceps can be replaced with dried ones, which need to be soaked in hot water before cooking.





Radish, cucumber and tomato salad



- *radish – 50 g*
(2–3 radishes)
- *cucumber – 80 g*
(1 cucumber)
- *tomato – 80 g (1 tomato)*
- *celery stalk – 40 g*
- *lettuce – 50 g*
- *fresh red guelder rose berries*

For the smetana-based dressing:

- *smetana – 50 g*
- *dill – 5 g*
- *linseed*
- *salt and pepper to taste*

For the oil-based dressing:

- *linseed oil – 50 g*
- *parsley – 5 g*
- *mustard seeds – 5 g*
- *salt and pepper to taste*

Wash the vegetables. Thinly slice the radish in circles; cut the cucumber in strips 5–8 millimetres thick; slice the tomatoes in semi-circles. Thinly slice the celery stalk using a vegetable slicer. Wash and dry the lettuce, then tear it with your hands.

To make the smetana-based dressing: mix the smetana with minced dill and linseed; add seasoning.

To make the oil-based dressing: mix linseed oil with minced parsley and mustard seeds; add seasoning.

Arrange the sliced tomatoes, radish, cucumbers and lettuce on a plate and dress the salad. Garnish with guelder rose berries.





Tomatoes with Hutsul bryndzia

1  /  /  /  / 10–15 min  / 2 

- *yellow tomatoes* – **130 g (1 tomato)**
- *pink tomatoes* – **120 g (1 tomato)**
- *black prince tomatoes* – **120 g (1 tomato)**
- *Hutsul bryndzia* – **80 g**
- *virgin sunflower oil* – **40 g**
- *shelled pumpkin seeds* – **30 g**
- *dill and parsley* – **10 g**
- *lettuce* – **50 g**
- *salt and pepper to taste*

Wash and slice the tomatoes into circles 5–6 millimetres thick. Arrange the tomatoes in rings on a plate: black tomatoes first, then yellow, then pink, repeating to the centre. Finish by placing the lettuce in the middle of the ring.

Crumble the bryndzia cheese. Divide the pumpkin seeds into two (saving some for decoration). Blend one half with the bryndzia crumbs and finely-minced parsley and scatter on top of the tomatoes. Grind the other half with minced dill, season with salt and pepper, and sprinkle on the lettuce.

/ Roast the pumpkin seeds.

/ It is recommended to use tomatoes at room temperature.





Parsnip, apple, cherry and mint salad



- *parsnip* – 60 g
- *green apples* – 40 g
- *fresh cherries* – 40 g
- *spinach leaves* – 50 g
- *bell peppers* – 50 g
- *shelled walnuts* – 20 g
- *fresh mint* – 10 g
- *sunflower oil* – 20 g

For the dressing:

- *hemp oil* – 40 g
- *honey* – 10 g
- *apple vinegar* – 5 g
- *salt and pepper to taste*

Wash and pat the vegetables dry with a cloth. Chop the parsnip and bell peppers into small triangles and fry in sunflower oil, or use a grill.

For the dressing: mix the honey and apple vinegar, season and gradually add hemp oil until the mixture becomes smooth.

Wash and dry the spinach leaves. Cut the apple into thin strips, add the crushed walnuts and some dressing. Pit the cherries and mix with minced mint.

Arrange the fried vegetables on a plate mixed with some spinach, followed by the apple mixed with walnuts and blended with the remaining spinach. Dress the salad and sprinkle with cherries mixed with mint.

Spinach leaves can be replaced with lettuce, and fresh cherries with dried cherries or any other sweet and sour type of soft berry.





Asparagus with shovdar' and brynzdia



- asparagus – 300 g
- lemon juice – 10 g
- shovdar' (smoked leg of pork) – 50–60 g
- Hutsul brynzdia – 30 g
- vegetable oil – 20 g
- butter – 20 g

Clean the asparagus and cook for 1 minute in boiling water. Transfer to a strainer and cool under running water. Cut the asparagus at a 45° angle into slices 0.5 centimetres thick. Use a knife or a slicing machine to cut the shovdar' into thin slices 1–1.5 millimetres thick.

Heat some vegetable oil in the frying pan, add butter and keep up the heat; transfer the sliced asparagus into the pan. Fry for 2 minutes, stirring all the time, add lemon juice and mix. Put onto a paper towel to soak up any excess fat.

Arrange the fried asparagus in a pile on a plate, top with the shovdar' slices and sprinkle with brynzdia.

Carpathian shovdar' could be replaced with smoked dry-cured pork, and Hutsul brynzdia with any ripe cheese (optionally use goats cheese).





Marinated baked beetroot (Hutsul varya salad)



10 min



pre-cooking period 24 hours

2



- beetroot – 300 g (1 beetroot)
- white beans – 100 g
- sauerkraut – 100 g
- prunes – 50 g
- herbs – 5 g

For the dressing:

- sunflower oil – 20 g
- mild mustard – 50 g
- honey – 50 g
- apple vinegar – 10 g
- salt – 2 g

For the beetroot marinade:

- french mustard – 25 g
- fresh thyme (optionally dried thyme) – 1 g
- vegetable oil – 20 g
- honey – 25 g
- garlic – 10 g
- apple vinegar – 10 g
- salt – 2 g
- ground black pepper – 1 g

Soak the beans in cold water for 3 hours, then rinse and cook over a low heat until ready. Wash the beetroot and wrap it whole in foil. Bake at 200°C for 1.5 to 2 hours. Cool and remove the skin, then slice the beetroot and additionally cut each slice into 3–4 different sized triangles. Also soak the beans in cold water and let sit for 3 hours.

For the marinade: mince the garlic using a fine tooth grater on a vegetable cutter, add the rest of the ingredients and mix. Add the sliced baked beetroot, place in a food container and keep refrigerated for 24 hours.

Soak the prunes in boiling water for 5 minutes, drain and cut into strips. Chop the sauerkraut (if the strips are too long).

Combine the marinated beetroot, cabbage, prunes and boiled cooled beans in a bowl. Dress the salad, arrange on a plate and decorate with herbs.

/ Alternatively, use canned white beans in water.

/ Repeatedly rinse the sauerkraut under running water to get rid of the sour taste if it is too intense





Green beans



- *green beans* – 300 g
- *smetana* – 60 g
- *egg* – 1
- *soft cheese* – 100 g
- *smoked ham* – 80 g
- *onion* – 60 g
- *carrot* – 40 g
- *salt* – 4 g
- *ground black pepper* – 1 g
- *butter* – 50 g

Clean the green beans by cutting off the tails and removing the string along the length of the bean. Cook in water for about 15 minutes depending on the maturity of the beans: young green beans will take 5 minutes, more mature beans require more time. Place in a strainer and cool under running water.

Peel the carrot and onion. Grate the carrot using a fine tooth grater, finely dice the onion. Melt the butter in a frying pan, add the onion and fry for 2 minutes, stirring. Add the grated carrot, continue to stir and cook for 1 more minute. Add the cooked green beans, season with salt, mix and transfer to a baking dish.

Cover the green beans with thinly sliced smoked ham. Blend the egg and smetana, season with salt and pepper and pour over the ham, then add grated soft cheese. Bake at 180 °C for 10 minutes.



The dish could be made vegetarian by omitting the smoked ham. If you are cooking young green beans (you can tell if they snap easily and are translucent inside) just add the beans to the fried vegetables without pre-cooking them.





Beans with ceps



- dried ceps – 50 g
- boiled beans – 240 g
- cherry tomatoes – 100 g
- vegetable oil – 30 g
- garlic – 10 g
- butter – 30 g
- sugar – 20 g
- salt – 3 g

For the sauce:

- butter – 100 g
- fresh thyme – 2 g
- wheat flour – 20 g
- milk – 70 g
- salt – 1 g

For the sauce: melt the butter in a saucepan, stirring with a wire whisk. Add the flour and mix well. Gradually add the milk, season and keep stirring till the sauce starts to thicken.

Use a knife to make a single criss-cross cut on the cherry tomatoes, put them in boiling water for 10 seconds, remove and put in cold water. Remove the skins. Melt the butter in a frying pan, add sugar, turn up the heat while constantly stirring the mixture and add the tomatoes to caramelize them. Put them on a paper towel to soak up the excess fat and pat dry.

Soak the dried ceps in water for 10 minutes. Rinse the mushrooms and chop them if they are too large. Cook them in boiling water with added salt for 10 minutes. Then fry the mushrooms in oil for approximately 5 minutes, season with salt, add the cooked beans and crushed garlic and fry for 1 more minute, stirring, and then add the tomatoes.

Spoon some cream sauce onto a plate, add the beans with ceps and tomatoes, and decorate with fresh thyme.

Optionally use pre-cooked store-bought beans and replace ceps with other varieties of ungi. For the photo we have used pickled honey mushrooms. However, ceps are recommended for a bolder flavour.

It is recommended to use large white beans known as *yas'ka* or *yas'ko* in Ukraine. This variety of fleshy beans has a faint sweet flavour.





Baked potatoes



45-60 min / 4 /

- *small potatoes – 1 kg (9-12 potatoes)*
- *fresh thyme – 20 g*
- *salt – 20 g*
- *pepper mix – 10 g*
- *sunflower oil (or home-made hemp oil) – 100 g*
- *garlic – 25 g*
- *fresh dill – 20 g*
- *smetana – 200 g*
- *chives*

Thoroughly wash the potatoes to remove the dirt and pat dry. Dress with oil (use $\frac{1}{4}$ of the oil in the recipe), season with salt and pepper and marinade for 15–25 minutes with sprigs of thyme. Then put on a baking tray and bake at 200 °C for 40 minutes.

Peel and mince the garlic together with fresh dill; add some oil. Set aside for several minutes for the flavour to deepen.

Spoon some smetana onto a plate and top it with the baked potatoes. Make a single criss-cross cut on each potato and drizzle with the aromatic vegetable oil. Decorate with chives.





Roast vegetables



50-65 min / 4 /

- white cabbage – 400 g
- beetroot – 200 g (1 large or 2 smaller beetroots)
- carrot – 100 g (1 carrot)
- onion – 100 g (1 onion)
- courgettes – 150 g (2 courgettes)
- tomatoes – 150 g (2 tomatoes)
- celeriac – 100 g
- bell pepper – 150 g (1 bell pepper)
- garlic – 65 g
- salt – 10-15 g
- pepper – 2-3 g
- thyme – 15 g
- hemp oil – 75 g

Chop the vegetables at random. Mix the salt, thyme and oil; use the mixture to dress the vegetables and leave them to marinate for 30 minutes. Spread them onto a baking tray lined with baking parchment and roast at 200-220 °C for 40 minutes. At the end you can switch to the grill to give the vegetables a crispy crust. Lightly sprinkle the ready vegetables with hemp oil.

Smetana sauce with horseradish seasoned with fresh herbs goes perfectly with roast vegetables.



Varenyky with salty soft cheese and smoked smetana dressing



For the dough:

- milk – 60 g
- butter 82.3 % fat – 30 g
- eggs – 1–2
- wheat flour – 130 g
- sugar – 3 g
- salt – 3 g

For the filling:

- home-made soft cheese with high fat content – 200 g
- fresh dill – 10 g
- salt to taste

For the smoked

smetana dressing:

- smoked bacon or ham – 20 g
- smetana – 60 g

For the sauce:

- hard cheese – 20 g
- cream 30 % fat – 100 g

Prepare the smoked smetana dressing. Slice the smoked bacon or ham and place the slices in a bowl together with the smetana; cover with cling film and let rest for 2 hours.

To make the filling: mix the soft or curd cheese with minced dill, season with salt and mix with a blender.

To make the cheese sauce: bring the cream to the boil, remove from the heat and add the grated cheese. Stir with a whisk until the mixture starts to thicken and becomes smooth; season with salt.

For the dough: pour the milk into a saucepan, add the butter, salt and sugar. Bring to the boil. Lower the heat and gradually add half the flour. Keep stirring energetically with a wooden spatula until the batter has thickened. It should turn into a smooth ball; at the bottom of the pan the batter should form a lightly golden brown crust. Take off the heat and continue to stir. As it cools down to 65–70 °C, gradually one by one fold in the eggs. Keep stirring for 2 more minutes, add the rest of the flour and knead the dough for 5 more minutes. Cover the ready dough with a cloth and refrigerate for 1 hour. Then remove it from the fridge and roll it out 3–5 millimetres thick. Cut out the varenyky with a cutter or use a cup. Distribute the filling and seal the varenyky, then place them onto a chopping board sifted with flour. Cook in lightly salted boiling water until the varenyky rise to the surface. Arrange the varenyky and smetana on a plate. Dress with cheese sauce.

/ Optionally decorate with fresh dill and cucumber.



Twin varenyky with potatoes and wild mushrooms



For the dough:

- water – 100 g
- wheat flour – 250 g
- salt – 3 g

For the mushroom filling:

- onion – 80 g
- fresh chanterelles – 60 g
- oyster mushrooms – 50 g
- sunflower oil – 20 g
- salt and ground black pepper to taste

For the potato filling:

- potato – 100 g
- salt and ground black pepper

Dressing:

- smetana – 60 g
- dried ceps – 5 g
- marinated mushrooms – 30 g
- fresh dill – one sprig

First, make mushroom powder dressing by grinding the dried mushrooms in a mortar or coffee grinder. Roast in a frying pan without any oil.

For the mushroom filling: clean the fresh mushrooms, fry in a hot frying pan with oil, add onion and fry until golden brown. Season with salt and pepper. Gently mince with a blender. Make sure the filling appears minced but does not fall apart.

For the potato filling: peel, chop and boil the potatoes till soft. Drain the boiled potatoes and rub through a sieve. Season to taste with salt and ground pepper.

For the dough: dissolve the salt in water and add the flour. Mix in a stand mixer. The dough will come out somewhat dry and crumbly. Put the dough in a plastic bag in the freezer for 20 minutes. Then continue to knead the dough with a stand mixer until smooth. Roll out the ready dough to 3–5 millimetres thick. Cut out circles with a cup or use a cutter; distribute the potato and mushroom fillings.

Seal the varenyky, keeping those with potato filling separate from those with mushroom filling. Then take one of each and stick them together. Place the ready varenyky on a chopping board sifted with flour. Cook in lightly salted boiling water for 3–5 minutes until they rise to the surface. Put the varenyky and smetana on a plate. Sprinkle with the cep mushroom powder and add marinated mushrooms. Decorate with dill.

It is recommended to use fresh wild mushrooms. Keep the varenyky bite-sized, as they taste better and are easier to manage.





Meat borshch



ingredients:

To yield approximately

2 litres:

- potatoes – 300 g
(1–2 potatoes)
- pork ribs – 800 g
- carrots – 50 g (½ carrot)
- beetroot – 100 g
(1 beetroot)
- onion – 60 g (1 onion)
- cabbage – 70 g
- beans – 40 g
- garlic – 20 g
- tomato paste – 20 g
(or 1 fresh tomato)
- sugar – 40 g
- apple vinegar – 10 g
- bay leaves – 1–2
- smoked pears – 1
- sunflower oil – 50 g
- water – 2 l
- salt and pepper to taste

To make stock boil the beans together with the pork ribs in water over a low heat for approximately 1 hour. Wash the beetroot and potatoes and bake them whole on a baking tray in the oven. Cut the carrot into thin strips, and add to the meat broth and beans. Peel the baked potatoes and beetroot. Dice the onion and fry with the tomato paste, sugar and vinegar. Mash the potatoes, cut the beetroot into strips. Add all these ingredients to the borshch.

Add the sliced cabbage and bay leaves; cook over a low heat until ready (approximately 30 minutes).

Before the borshch is finished add a whole smoked pear together with crushed garlic. Bring to the boil once again and allow the borshch to mature well.

Serve with smetana and minced fresh herbs.

/ Soak the beans in water overnight to help speed up the cooking process.



Lenten borschch



ingredients:

To yield approximately

2 litres:

- potatoes – **300 g**
(1–2 potatoes)
- carrots – **50 g** (½ carrot)
- beetroot – **100 g**
(½ beetroot)
- onion – **60 g** (1 onion)
- cabbage – **70 g**
- beans – **40 g**
- garlic – **20 g**
- tomato paste – **20 g**
(or 1 fresh tomato)
- sugar – **40 g**
- vinegar – **10 g**
- bay leaves – **1–2**
- prunes and/or smoked
pears – **20 g**
- beetroot juice (extract
the juice by grating the
beetroot or use a juicer) –
200 g
- sunflower oil – **50 g**
- bean-based stock – **2 l**
- salt and pepper to taste

Put the beans in water and cook until almost ready. The cooking time depends on the size and variety of beans. Make sure the beans are not fully cooked when you start adding the vegetables.

Wash and peel the beetroot, carrot and onion. Cut the beetroot into strips and marinate it for half an hour in a mixture of vinegar and sugar. Cut the carrot into thin strips and fry in sunflower oil together with diced onion. Add the marinated beetroot, tomato paste or diced (preferably skinned) tomato and crushed garlic.

Add the diced potatoes to the bean-based stock, add the sliced cabbage, fried vegetables and bay leaves, season and cook over a low heat until ready.

Before finishing the borschch add the beetroot juice and the dried fruit. Bring to the boil once again and immediately set aside. Let the borschch to mature for at least 2-3 hours.

For the vegetarian filling:

- dried ceps – 50 g
- onion – 150 g
- salt – 3 g
- vegetable oil – 40 g

To make the dough for the vegetarian dumplings:

- wheat flour – 250 g
- water – 120 g
- salt – 2 g
- vegetable oil – 5 g

For the meat filling:

- boiled potatoes – 100 g
- prunes – 20 g
- minced pork – 100 g
- salt – 3 g
- ground black pepper – 1 g

To make the dough for the meat dumplings:

- wheat flour – 250 g
- water – 60 g
- egg – 1
- salt – 2 g



Borshch with mini-dumplings



ingredients:

- water – 2 l
- smoked brisket – 300 g
- ceps to make alternative stock – 100 g
- fresh beetroot juice (extract the juice by grating the beetroot or use a juicer) – 150 g
- carrots – 70 g
- potatoes – 250 g
- onion – 70 g
- cabbage – 150 g
- garlic – 20 g
- vinegar – 10 g
- salt – 10 g
- sugar – 10 g
- vegetable oil – 50 g
- fresh dill – 10 g
- tomato juice – 500 g

Wash and peel the vegetables. Combine the smoked brisket and water if you are cooking a meat borshch, or replace the meat with dried ceps if you are making a vegetarian version. Cook over a low heat for 2 hours if you are cooking with meat and for 40 minutes if you are cooking with mushrooms. Strain the stock. Discard the smoked brisket. Slice the mushrooms and add them back to the stock.

Dice the potatoes into 1×1 centimetre cubes. Peel the carrot and cut into semi-circles, dice the cabbage into 1.5×1.5 centimetre cubes. Dice the onion into small cubes, sauté in oil and then add finely minced garlic. Add the potatoes, carrots, cabbage and onion to the stock together with the garlic. Slow cook the tomato juice in a frying pan; when it has reduced two-fold add it to the borshch. Slow cook for 40 minutes. Five minutes before the borshch is finished add the beetroot juice, vinegar and sugar and season with salt.

To prepare the filling for the meaty dumplings: mince all the ingredients using a meat grinder.

To prepare the mushroom filling: boil the mushrooms in water for half an hour, then strain. Dice the onion and sauté with oil. Season the mushrooms with salt and mince them together with the onion using a meat grinder or blender.

Use the ingredients listed above to make an elastic dough. Roll it out 1 millimetre thick and cut out squares of 2.5–3 centimetres. Spoon the filling in the middle, pinch the corners to make triangles, seal the edges and form mini-dumplings. Cook the dumplings in lightly salted boiling water. Once the water boils, simmer over a low heat for 5 minutes. Serve the borshch in a bowl topped with 7 mini-dumplings (feel free to add more). Sprinkle with finely chopped fresh dill, add a spoonful of smetana to meat-based borshch.

GREEN BORSHCH

ingredients:

For the vegetable stock:

- water – 800 g
- carrots – 20 g (½ carrot)
- onion – 25 g (¼ onion)
- parsley root – 15 g
- celeriac – 10 g
- parsnip root – 15 g
- spring garlic, unpeeled – 5 g
- bay leaves – 1 g
- salt – 3 g

For the meat stock:

- water – 800 g
- boneless pork meat – 100 g
- bay leaves – 1 g
- onion – 50 g (½ onion)
- carrots – 30 g (½ carrot)
- salt – 3 g



Ukraine: Food and History

Section II



Green borschch



Ingredients:

To make the soup:

- new potatoes – 100 g (4–5 small potatoes)
- carrots – 40 g (½ carrot)
- spinach – 40 g
- nettles – 20 g
- onion – 50 g
- butter – 30 g
- cream 30 % fat – 70 g
- salt – 5 g
- sugar – 4 g
- ground black pepper – 1 g
- apple vinegar – 5 g

To serve:

- 1 boiled egg
- smetana – 50 g
- spring onion – 10 g
- sorrel – 40 g

To make the vegetable stock: wash the vegetables (there is no need to cut or peel them); add water and simmer over a low heat with the lid closed for about 1 hour. You can prepare a large quantity of stock and freeze part of it for later use. You can also cook the borschch without stock, just double the quantity of vegetables in the dish, however keep in mind that in this case the flavour will not be as intense.

To make the meat stock: combine the meat and peeled whole vegetables seasoned with spices, bring to the boil and cook over a low heat for 40 minutes. Discard the vegetables but keep the meat as it will be used later in the recipe.

Bring the stock to the boil and add the peeled potatoes. Peel the carrot, cut in semi-circles, add to the borschch and cook for 15 minutes. Sauté the finely diced onion with butter, add to the borschch and pour in the cream in a thin trickle. Cook the nettles in boiling water for 5 minutes, put in a strainer and rinse with cold running water; get rid of all of the excess water. Chop the nettles and washed spinach, dice the cooked pork into 1×1 centimetre cubes and add to the borschch 5 minutes before it is ready. Season with salt and pepper, add the sugar and vinegar.

Serve the green borschch in a bowl with rinsed and chopped fresh sorrel, half a boiled egg and a spoonful of smetana on the side; garnish with a sprinkling of finely chopped spring onion.

Vegan green borschch can be cooked using vegetable stock without any meat, butter, smetana or eggs, and by adding non-dairy cream. Ukrainians traditionally make preserves with sorrel, which are added to the borschch 5–10 minutes before finishing.





V'YACHESLAV POPKOV

inspired by Kateryna Kalyuzhna's
recipe

Borshch with catfish



For the borshch:

- catfish – 1 kg
- beans – 50 g
- parsley root (or parsnip root) – 80 g (1 root)
- Chioggia beetroot – 80 g (1 beetroot)
- potatoes – 200 g (3 potatoes)
- onion – 80 g (1 onion)
- carrots – 100 g (1 carrot)
- cabbage – 150 g
- tomato – 80 g (1 tomato)
- sunflower oil – 20 g
- fresh dill – 60 g
- salt, black and chilli pepper to taste

For the pickled tomato sauce:

- red tomatoes – 1 kg
- salt – 50 g

To make the pickled tomato sauce for the borshch: cut ripe tomatoes into quarters, put them in a saucepan and add salt. Mix, cover with a cloth and put a weight on top of it so the tomatoes start to release their juice. Leave for 3–4 days. The cloth should be washed and ironed daily to prevent mould. Mince the tomatoes with a blender or rub through a sieve. The sauce can be stored in a refrigerator for several days and used to make other dishes.

Roast the catfish head and meaty portions in the oven or fry in a pan.

Boil the beans in water, then add the beetroot strips and cook until the beetroot has lost its colour. Add whole potatoes.

In the meantime, sauté the onion in vegetable oil, add the carrots, parsley root or parsnip root and before finishing add a skinned fresh tomato with 150–200 grams of pickled tomato sauce.

Before the potatoes have fully cooked, add the roasted/fried catfish head and meaty portions, then add the sautéed vegetables. Later on add sliced cabbage.

Before finishing, mash the potatoes and season the borshch with salt and pepper. Set aside for 20 minutes to mature. Serve seasoned with hot chilli pepper and chopped dill.









Chicken soup with home-made noodles



ingredients:

For the stock:

- water – 3 l
- organic chicken – 1.2–1.3 kg
- carrots – 150 g (1 carrot)
- onion – 120–150 g (2 onions)
- whole black pepper – 10 g
- celeriac – 75 g
- fresh parsley – 25 g
- bay leaves – 3–4
- salt – 10–15 g

For the noodles:

- wheat flour – 250–300 g
- eggs – 3
- vegetable oil – 30 g
- salt – 5 g

To serve:

- herbs, meat and vegetables from the broth

Soak the organic chicken in cold water for 3–4 hours and rinse. Put in a saucepan, add water and bring to the boil, skimming off the froth. Cut the carrot, onion and celeriac in half and add to the broth together with the parsley. Season with salt and bay leaves, cook the broth over a low heat with a closed lid for 1.5–2 hours until the meat falls off the bone.

To make the noodles, beat the eggs seasoned with salt, add the sifted wheat flour and oil; knead until the dough becomes elastic. Cover with a cloth and let it rest for 25 minutes. Roll out the dough thinly and cut into noodles. Cook the noodles in the stock or in the water using a separate pan.

Pour the clear stock with noodles into a dish, add the chicken. Decorate with chopped herbs.

You can make clear chicken stock by straining the ready stock through a fine sieve or cheesecloth. It is recommended to simmer the stock over a low heat, and regularly skim off the froth.

Before cooking you could lay out the noodles to dry on a piece of cloth.

Mushroom soup



ingredients:

- *dried ceps – 35 g or fresh/frozen ceps – 140 g*
- *water – 440 g + 525 g*
- *vegetable oil – 26 g*
- *onion – 80 g (1 onion)*
- *carrots – 18 g (¼ carrot)*
- *celeriac – 13 g*
- *wheat flour – 23 g*
- *salt – 2.5 g*
- *whole black pepper – 0.4 g*
- *cream 30 % fat or smetana – 80 g (non-dairy cream for a vegan dish)*

To serve:

- *fresh garlic – 1 clove*
- *fresh parsley/dill – 1 g*

Thoroughly wash the dried ceps under running water, rinse several times and soak in 440 grams of water for 1 hour. Cook the mushrooms in the same water over a medium heat. Strain the stock into a clean saucepan (use a very fine sieve). Cut the mushrooms into strips and set aside.

Peel the onion and dice into small cubes, lightly sauté with oil, add the flour, keep stirring the mixture until it turns light golden in colour.

Wash the carrot and celeriac, peel and cut into large strips. Combine the vegetables with the strained mushroom broth, add the rest of the water and cook until ready. Take off the heat and start gradually adding the flour and fried onion roux, keeping stirring so the roux is smooth.

Add the cream or smetana and start heating the soup again, then add the sliced cooked mushrooms and season with salt and pepper. Keep cooking for 5–10 minutes. The soup should thicken and become smooth and silky in texture.

Serve the soup garnished with crushed garlic and chopped dill or parsley.

/ The soup tastes great with halushky or boiled white beans.





Banosh (maize porridge) with bryndzia and pork crackling



For the banosh:

- medium-fine maize meal – 153 g
- salt – 6 g
- home-made smetana 30 % fat – 900 g

Garnish:

- shponder (smoked belly bacon or uncured salo) – 200 g
- Hutsul bryndzia – 100 g

Bring the smetana to the boil, season with salt and pour in the maize meal in a thin trickle, stirring with a wooden spatula. Cook and continue to stir. The dish is cooked when the porridge no longer sticks to the sides of the pan and has developed golden oily droplets on the surface.

Banosh is traditionally served with freshly made pork crackling or added smoked belly bacon (*shponder* in Ukrainian) and a sprinkling of bryndzia. The pork crackling and bryndzia could be served on the side.

It is next to impossible to find an alternative to Hutsul bryndzia. In respect to its salty flavour it could be replaced with a feta-type cheese; in texture it is similar to unripened crumbly cheeses which could be grated and seasoned with salt.

BANOSH (MAIZE PORRIDGE) WITH CEPS





Banosh (maize porridge) with ceps



For the banosh:

- medium-fine maize meal – **153 g**
- salt – **6 g**
- water – **436 g**
- cream 30 % fat – **262 g**
- smetana 20 % fat – **262 g**

For the ceps and cream white sauce (roux):

- fresh or frozen ceps – **600 g**
- cream 30 % fat – **430 g**
- smetana 20 % – **280 g**
- wheat flour – **8 g**
- salt – **11 g**
- ground white pepper – **0.8 g**
- water – **157 g**

For the ceps and smetana sauce:

- fresh or frozen ceps – **600 g**
- home-made smetana 30 % fat – **900 g**
- salt – **10 g**
- ground white pepper – **0.5 g**
- sprig of thyme

Combine the water, smetana and cream and bring to the boil. Pour in the maize meal in a thin trickle, season with salt. Cook over a medium heat until the mixture starts to thicken and the liquid evaporates, stirring with a wooden spatula. Let the mixture cool with the lid closed. The freshly cooked banosh is a little runny, but as it cools down it gradually thickens.

To make the sauce with smetana and ceps: thoroughly wash the mushrooms, boil them in slightly salted water, then drain. Allow them to cool and then slice them. Heat the smetana, add the sliced mushrooms and cook over a medium heat, stirring continuously, until the mixture thickens. Season and add thyme for a more herby flavour. Garnish the banosh with the sauce.

To make the white sauce (roux): mix roasted flour with water in a frying pan. Add the smetana, stirring until smooth, and then pour in the cream. Slice the cooked mushrooms, put in a clean pan and heat to evaporate the excess liquid. Gradually add the smetana and cream mixture; season with salt and pepper. Bring to the boil and then leave to cool. Use this alternative roux sauce to garnish the dish.

For the holubtsy:

- 1 cabbage (preferably spring cabbage) or fermented white cabbage – 1–1.2 kg
- roasted buckwheat – 100 g
- smoked pork ribs or pork brisket – 300 g
- minced pork – 300 g
- minced beef (chuck steak, bottom round, short ribs or loin) – 300 g
- onion – 100 g (1 onion)
- carrots – 100 g (1 carrot)
- peeled garlic – 10 g
- fresh parsley – 20 g
- fresh dill – 20 g
- sunflower oil or lard – 30 g
- salt and pepper to taste

For the sauce and to serve:

- home-made smetana with high fat content – 200 g
- onion – 100 g (1 onion)
- fresh wild mushrooms or frozen mushrooms – 150 g
- fresh garlic – 5 g
- sunflower oil – 30 g
- salt and pepper to taste





Holubtsy with meat and buckwheat filling



Cut out the stem of the cabbage, keeping the leaves intact. Boil salted water in a large saucepan. Place the whole cabbage in the pan so it is completely submerged. Use two forks to separate the leaves from the head, cook the leaves individually for approximately 5 minutes until just tender. Cool the pre-cooked leaves of cabbage and cut each down the middle. Trim away any tough veins with a knife.

For the filling: soak the buckwheat in 500 millilitres of boiling water, cover with a lid and stew for 30–40 minutes. Transfer into a sieve and drain.

Dice the onion into small cubes and fry in a pre-heated frying pan with sunflower oil or lard until soft and slightly golden in colour.

Use a large tooth grater to grate the carrots and add them to the mixture, cook for 2–3 minutes remembering to stir.

Combine the two types of minced meat in a bowl, add the cooked and drained buckwheat, fried onion and carrots, and crushed fresh garlic with herbs, season with salt and pepper and mix well.

Put half a cabbage leaf on a work surface, outer side down. Spoon 50 grams of filling onto the centre of the leaf close to where the leaf has been cut down the middle, fold the edges to cover the filling and tightly wrap.

Line the bottom of a baking dish with thin slices of smoked pork brisket or small cuts of rib. Stack the tightly wrapped holubtsy on top of the meat, seam down. When all the holubtsy are stacked inside the dish, top them with the remaining pre-cooked cabbage leaves and pour over lightly salted cold water or stock (meat, mushroom or vegetable stock) so that the holubtsy are partially submerged. Cover the dish with a lid or foil and stew the cabbage rolls in the oven for 1.5 hours at 160 °C.

Let the holubtsy completely cool inside the same dish in the stewing liquid. Serve with home-made smetana or warm mushroom sauce.

For the mushroom sauce: dice the onion and mushrooms into small cubes, fry with sunflower oil in a pre-heated frying pan until golden brown, add smetana and finely minced garlic, and season with salt and pepper. Simmer over a low heat for 5–7 more minutes.







Holubtsy with millet and wild mushrooms



ingredients:

For the holubtsy:

- whole fresh cabbage or fermented white cabbage – 1–1.2 kg
- millet – 300 g
- fresh wild mushrooms (chanterelles, ceps and slippery jacks) – 700 g
- onion – 100 g (1 onion)
- fresh peeled carrot – 100 g (1 carrot)
- peeled garlic – 10 g
- fresh parsley – 20 g
- fresh dill – 20 g
- sunflower oil – 80 g
- salt and pepper to taste

Cut out the stem of the cabbage, keeping the leaves intact. Boil salted water in a large saucepan. Add the cabbage so that it is completely submerged. Use two forks to separate the leaves from the head, cook the leaves individually for approximately 5 minutes until just tender. Cool the pre-cooked leaves of cabbage and cut each down the middle, trim away any tough veins with a knife.

For the filling: soak the millet in 500 millilitres of boiling water, cover with a lid and set aside for 30–40 minutes. Then put in a sieve, rinse well under running water and drain completely.

In the meantime, dice the onion into small cubes and fry in a pre-heated frying pan with sunflower oil until lightly golden in colour. Use a large tooth grater to grate the carrots and add them to the mixture; continue to cook for 2–3 minutes, stirring. Dice the mushrooms into small cubes and fry in a different frying pan until golden in colour.

Combine the fried mushrooms, strained millet, fried onion and carrots and crushed fresh garlic with herbs in a bowl. Season with salt and pepper and mix well.

For the sauce:

- *home-made smetana* – **200 g**
- *onion* – **100 g (1 onion)**
- *fresh wild mushrooms or frozen mushrooms* – **150 g**
- *fresh garlic* – **5 g**
- *sunflower oil* – **30 g**
- *salt and pepper to taste*

Set half a cabbage leaf on a work surface, outer side down. Spoon 50 grams of filling onto the centre of the leaf close to where the leaf has been cut down the middle, fold the edges to cover the filling and tightly wrap.

Stack the tightly wrapped holubtsy inside a baking dish, seam down. When all the holubtsy are stacked inside the dish, top them with the remaining pre-cooked cabbage leaves and pour in lightly salted cold water or stock (mushroom or vegetable stock) so the holubtsy are partially submerged. Cover the dish with a lid or foil and stew the cabbage rolls in the oven for an hour at 170 °C.

Let the holubtsy completely cool inside the same dish in the stewing liquid. Serve with home-made smetana or warm mushroom sauce.

For the mushroom sauce: dice the onion and mushrooms into small cubes, fry with sunflower oil in a pre-heated frying pan until golden brown, add smetana and finely minced garlic, season with salt and pepper. Simmer over a low heat for 5–7 more minutes.





Deruny (oven-baked potato pancakes) with ceps



For the deruny:

- potatoes – 250 g
(2–4 potatoes)
- onion – 30 g (½ onion)
- sifted wheat flour – 30 g
- eggs – 2
- vegetable oil – 20 g
- salt and pepper to taste

For the mushroom sauce:

- butter – 25 g
- portobello mushrooms – 50 g
- ceps – 25 g
- onion – 35 g (½ onion)
- cream – 100 g
- Hutsul bryndzia – 45 g
- fresh parsley – 10 g
- salt and pepper to taste

Wash, peel and grate the potatoes. Add the eggs and flour. Peel the onion and grate it (or finely dice it in a kitchen processor) and add to the potatoes and flour. Season with salt and pepper, mix well and fry as pancakes in a frying pan until golden brown.

Finely dice the portobello mushrooms and ceps. Add finely chopped onion, season and fry in butter. Add the cream and simmer for a while, then add the bryndzia.

Put the fried potato pancakes into a baking dish, pour over the mushroom and cheese sauce and bake at 180 °C for 15–20 minutes. Decorate with fresh parsley.





Roast carp with buckwheat



- *fresh carp – 1–1.2 kg (1 whole carp)*
- *salt – 10 g*
- *pepper – 3 g*
- *sugar – 5 g*
- *sunflower oil – 25 g*
- *thyme – 5 g*
- *buckwheat – 50 g*
- *onion – 50 g (1 onion)*
- *carrots – 30 g*

For the smetana and ceps

sauce:

- *smetana – 100 g*
- *milk – 50 g*
- *ceps – 45 g*
- *onion – 25 g (1 onion)*
- *garlic – 10 g*
- *butter – 25 g*
- *herbs – 5 g*

Use clean cold water to rinse the carp. Scale and gut the fish. Rinse again, then rub with a mixture of oil, salt and pepper with sugar and thyme leaves. Set aside for 30 minutes.

Pre-cook the buckwheat. Peel the onion and carrot and cut into small strips, fry in oil and add the pre-cooked buckwheat.

Stuff the carp with the mixture, put on a baking tray and bake for approximately half an hour at 200–220 °C.

For the sauce: sauté the finely chopped ceps in butter, add onion and garlic, pour in the smetana and milk, and simmer until the sauce starts to thicken. When it is ready, sprinkle the sauce with chopped herbs and serve together with the baked carp.





Roast duck with millet porridge



For the roast duck:

- whole duck or half a duck – **1.2–1.3 kg**
- rosemary – **5 g**
- vegetable oil – **25 g**
- dry white wine – **100 ml**
- honey – **75 g**
- green apples (Antonovka apples) – **200 g**
- butter – **25 g**
- sugar – **50 g**
- salt and pepper to taste

For the porridge:

- millet – **200 g**
- salt to taste

To serve:

- dried cherries – **20 g**
- chives or spring onion – **5 g**

Thoroughly rinse the duck under running cold water, remove the insides and any extra fat and, if necessary, singe the duck with an open flame or over a stove. Rinse again and pat completely dry. Rub the duck with wine on all sides and inside. Mix salt, pepper and rosemary leaves and rub the surface of the duck with this mixture. Marinate for 2 hours, then lightly rub with oil and bake in a pre-heated oven inside a baking sleeve (or wrapped in foil) for 60–90 minutes at 180–200 °C, depending on the size of the duck. About 10–15 minutes before it is cooked, cut the sleeve open (or unwrap the foil packet) and baste the duck with the cooking juices, rub in the honey and then complete cooking until golden brown.

Cut the apples into six segments, remove the cores and fry in butter with some sugar to caramelize. But if you are cooking a whole duck, bake the fresh apples drizzled with honey inside the duck. While the duck is in the oven, boil the millet in lightly salted water until cooked.

Arrange duck the half or whole duck in a dish. Add a side dish of millet porridge with baked apple pieces. Decorate with dried cherries and spring onion.

/ It is best to use sour, juicy apples with a firm texture.

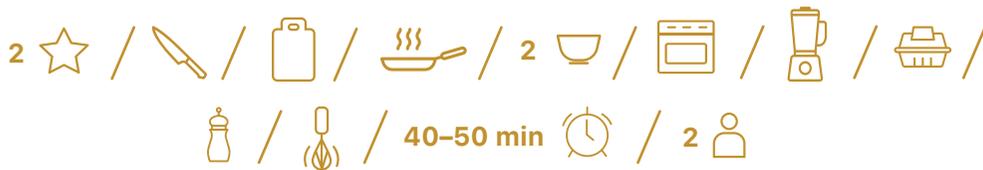
/ The duck tastes great with a helping of sweet and sour sauce made with wild berries.

/ Thoroughly rinse the millet under cold running water before cooking.





Minced fish cutlets with tomatoes



- river fish fillet – **300 g**
- eggs – **2**
- milk – **50 g**
- white bread – **40 g**
- cream – **50 g**
- sunflower oil – **40 g**
- onion – **60 g** (½ onion)
- tomatoes – **200 g**
(2 tomatoes)
- fresh coriander – **20 g**
- tomato juice – **120 g**
- salt and pepper to taste

Peel half an onion, dice it into small cubes and fry with oil. Soak the white bread in milk. Combine the fish fillet, fried onion and bread soaked in milk together with cream; season. Mince all the ingredients together with a blender until smooth. Separate the egg whites from the yolks, whisk the whites to the consistency of firm snowy peaks and fold into the mixture with the minced fish. Add the egg yolks separately. Use the mixture to form fish cutlets and lightly sauté them in a frying pan.

Skin the tomatoes and remove the seeds, finely dice them and fry with the remaining onion in oil, add the tomato juice and season. Pour the sauce over the cutlets in the frying pan and stew for 20–25 minutes. To bake in the oven, transfer into a baking dish and cook at 180–200 °C for 20–25 minutes.

Garnish the dish with chopped fresh coriander.

✓ To easily peel a tomato, cut an X on the bottom and drop into boiling water for several seconds.

✓ The best river fish include catfish, pike perch, jack pike, or any other whitefish variety.

For the chicken Kyiv:

- chicken breast – 300 g
- butter – 50 g
- fresh dill and parsley – 4 g
- garlic – 2 g
- wheat flour – 40 g
- eggs – 6
- coarse white bread –
1 loaf
- oil – 3 g
- salt and pepper to taste

For the garnish:

- oyster mushrooms – 60 g
- ceps – 60 g
- shiitake mushrooms – 60 g
- chanterelles – 60 g
- red onion – 60 g (½ onion)
- sunflower oil – 30 g
- wheat flour – 1 g
(a pinch of flour)
- dry white wine – 120 g
- butter – 120 g
- garlic – 2 g
- fresh dill and parsley – 4 g
- salt and pepper to taste



Chicken Kyiv



Cut the crust off the bread, cut half the loaf in slices and dice into 6–8 millimetre cubes. Spread the cubes on a baking tray and bake in the oven for 2 hours at 80° C to make croutons. Make the remaining half into breadcrumbs using a grinder or blender.

Put the chicken fillet through a meat grinder, season with salt and pepper and mix well. Divide into 4 parts, form them into balls and use the palm of your hand to lightly flatten them. Put a piece of butter in the middle, add chopped herbs and sliced garlic. Fold and form into balls again, making sure the butter is positioned in the centre. Freeze for 1–2 hours.

Roll the chicken balls in flour, then in egg mixed with bread crumbs, then again in egg and then in the croutons. Squeeze to make sure the croutons have stuck. Freeze for half an hour.

Pre-heat the oven to 170 °C. Remove the chicken Kyivs from the freezer, brush with oil using a pastry brush, put on a baking tray and bake for 20 minutes at 170 °C.

Prepare the garnish. Slice the mushrooms, fry them in a frying pan, add the sliced red onion and finely sliced garlic and pour in the wine. Wait until the alcohol has evaporated and add the flour. Mix, and add 30 grams of water. Simmer for 3–5 minutes. If the liquid has evaporated, add more water. Then add the butter, season with salt and pepper, and garnish with chopped herbs. Keep stirring until the mixture has thickened.

Arrange the garnish on the plate and put the chicken Kyiv on top.

For a traditional chicken Kyiv recipe, you may want to use boned chicken breast.





Roast pork



- *pork* – 1.5 kg
- *onion* – 500 g (4–5 onions)
- *garlic* – 20 g
- *vinegar* – 20 g
- *honey* – 20 g
- *fresh chilli pepper* – 40 g
- *salt* – 15 g
- *ground black pepper* – 3 g

Chop the garlic, mix the vinegar with honey, add the chopped chilli pepper and season with salt and black pepper. Rub the pork with this mixture. Slice the onion into rings, and use half of the onion to line the bottom of the baking tray. Put the pork on top, cover with the remaining onion, tightly cover in cling film and set aside for 4 hours, turning the meat from time to time.

Pre-heat the oven to 220 °C. Transfer the pork without the onion onto a clean baking tray and roast the meat for 15 minutes. Then sprinkle the roast with the marinating juice, reduce the temperature to 180 °C and roast for an additional 20–25 minutes, from time to time basting the roast with the meat juices.

/ You can pre-marinate the meat 24 hours beforehand.





Stewed ribs with plums



ingredients:

- *pork ribs* – 800 g
- *sunflower oil* – 80 g
- *tomato juice* – 200 g
- *sugar* – 30 g
- *butter* – 50 g
- *garlic* – 40 g
- *plums* – 160 g
- *honey* – 50 g
- *thyme* – 10 g
- *onion* – 60 g (½ onion)
- *pear* – 120 g (1 pear)
- *parsley* – 20 g
- *mint* – 10 g
- *chilli pepper* – 10 g
- *tomatoes* – 80 g (1 tomato)
- *apple vinegar* – 20 g
- *salt and pepper to taste*

Rub the ribs with a mixture of salt and pepper, add minced garlic, oil and tomato juice. Marinade for 1–2 hours.

Slice and sauté the plums in butter, add the sugar to caramelise them by turning up the heat to a high temperature. Place the plums in a bowl and add a burning sprig of thyme, then cover the bowl with a lid or plate. The smouldering thyme will lightly smoke the plums.

Peel the tomatoes and remove the seeds, fry in a frying pan with a little oil, add the finely chopped onion and caramelised plums, then add honey and blend with a blender until smooth.

First fry the marinated ribs until golden brown, then rub in the mixture of honey, plums and tomatoes and stew until ready, for 30–40 minutes.

Peel and finely dice the pear, mix with finely chopped chilli and chopped mint; mix well and season with apple vinegar.

Put the stewed ribs on a plate, and sprinkle with the vibrant mixture of pears with chilli, mint and caramelised plums. Decorate with parsley leaves.

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Pot roast



- *potatoes – 200–250 g (3–4 potatoes)*
- *peeled onion – 50 g (½ onion)*
- *carrots – 50 g (1 carrot)*
- *dill – 5 g*
- *boneless pork – 150 g*
- *sunflower oil – 20 g*
- *wheat flour – 25 g*
- *butter – 15 g*
- *dried fruit – 20 g*
- *salt and pepper to taste*

Peel the potatoes and dice into medium cubes, dice the carrot and onion. Fry the vegetables over a high heat with sunflower oil. Then add the chopped pork and dried fruit which has been previously soaked in water. Continue to cook, season with salt and pepper.

Roast the flour without adding any oil until it gains a nutty flavour. Add the butter and some meat juices from frying and mix well, so there are no lumps and the sauce starts to thicken.

Put the fried vegetables and pork into a saucepan or baking tray, pour in the roux and bake until ready for 40–50 minutes in the oven at 180–200 °C.

Put the ready pot roast on a plate and sprinkle with chopped dill.

Roast leg of lamb with herbs

ingredients:

- lamb (boneless leg of lamb or lamb shoulder) – **1.35 kg**



For the marinade:

- fresh rosemary – **15 g**
- fresh thyme – **3 g**
- garlic – **31 g**
- ground black pepper – **1.5 g**
- coriander – **1 g**
- marjoram – **1 g**
- ground bay leaves – **1 g**
- salt – **18 g**
- sunflower oil – **15 g**

For the vegetables:

- peeled carrots – **100 g** (2 carrots)
- celeriac – **50 g**
- celery stalks – **100 g**
- onion – **150 g** (1–2 onions)
- garlic (whole cloves) – **110 g**
- bay leaves – **0.5 g**
- fresh rosemary – **3 g**
- fresh thyme – **2 g**
- sunflower oil – **30 g**
- parsley/dill stems
- salt to taste

Clean the excess fat from the meat, make cuts in the meat with a knife. Remove the rosemary and thyme leaves from their stalks. Crush the garlic. Blend the green herbs, spices and oil into a smooth mixture, using a blender or a mortar if necessary, and rub into the cleaned lamb. Roll the roast and tie it with cooking twine. Marinade for 12 hours.

Slice the vegetables at an angle into 1–1.5 centimetre slices, season with salt. Line the baking tray with parchment, put in the vegetables and herbs, place the roast on top and drizzle with oil. Roast at 220 °C for 20 minutes until golden brown, then reduce the heat to 200 °C and cook for 20 more minutes. Wrap the roast in foil, add some water to the baking tray and cook for an additional 60–90 minutes at 180 °C. From time to time spoon the meat juices over the roast. Add more water if necessary.

Test the meat with a wooden skewer to see if it is ready: the juice will run pink if it is medium cooked, or grey if the roast is fully done. The skewer should go in softly and smoothly.

Let the roast rest for 10 minutes after cooking.

/ Use the vegetables as a side dish.

Varenuukha (simmered fruit infusion)

1  /  /  / 3-6 hours  / 4  / 

ingredients:

- *ground cinnamon* – **1.5 teaspoons**
- *cardamom seeds* – **7 seeds**
- *cloves* – **7 cloves**
- *allspice* – **7 berries**
- *whole black pepper* – **7 peppercorns**
- *honey* – **2 tablespoons**
- *fresh ginger* – **10 g**
- *paprika* – **0.5 teaspoon**
- *peel from 1 whole orange, dried fruit mix (apples, pears, plums and cherries)* – **200 g**
- *water* – **1 l**

Wash the dried fruit and add to 1 litre of water. Bring to the boil and then leave to infuse in a warm place. If possible, transfer it into a thermos for several hours. Otherwise, let it infuse for half an hour and then strain the liquid. The cooked fruit can be placed on a separate plate or used as a filling for pies or in other desserts.

Season the liquid with the spices, bring to the boil, tightly close the lid and simmer over a very low heat for 1.5 hours. The infusion could be left inside an oven for several hours. It is important for the fruit infusion to slowly simmer without boiling.

When ready, strain the infusion once again. Serve warm or cold.





Section III.

Seasonal Cooking



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The flavour and structure of Ukrainian cuisine, its rhythm and vibrant colours are best understood through savouring seasonal cooking. The culinary year in Ukraine is an exciting journey of discovery.



As the Ukrainian staple diet is plant-based, seasonal availability has led to the emergence of seasonal cuisine. Over generations the calendar year has become a significant factor in menu development, shaping tastes and cooking techniques and playing an important role in popularising particular dishes or products. With time, technological progress in agriculture and food production has somewhat negated seasonal food restrictions, but seasonal cuisine is still important. The tourist industry and national restaurateurs try to popularise seasonal cuisine, while seasonal fruit and berry festivals are gaining popularity in Ukraine. The food season in Ukraine is marked by products and dishes which are steeped in history and culinary tradition.

Spring arrives in Ukraine together with collecting birch sap. This is directly tapped from birch trees growing on private garden plots as well as in natural parks, forests or hedgerows. Birch sap is harvested fresh for family use, and is also used to make kvas, a fermented drink produced by adding roasted oat grains and sultanas. Maturity and added ingredients determine how sharp the flavour becomes; it is highly recommended to mature birch kvas for several months. In Soviet Ukraine it became popular to drink mass-produced tinned birch sap.

The spring season in cooking is marked by an abundance of salad plants and herbs like spring onions, spring garlic, dill and parsley, all of which are used to make salad with smetana dressing or a drizzle of vegetable oil. In spring green borshch and soup recipes use sorrel, spinach, spring nettles and sometimes even goosefoot.

In spring, restaurant menus boast a special line-up of dishes with asparagus and rhubarb. Both welcome on the table, these vegetables are grown both commercially and in private vegetable gardens. As referenced in many historical documents, rhubarb arrived to Halychyna, west Ukraine, in the nineteenth century. In time, rhubarb began to be grown commercially for fruit jelly sweets, which were sold through a network of stores. Asparagus, commonly known as sparrow grass, was only harvested from the wild.



As spring progresses, wild and garden strawberries come into season. From time immemorial, Ukrainians have harvested wild berries either for personal consumption or commercially. Wild strawberries are eaten fresh or dried. As May draws to a close, garden strawberries grown on private garden plots or commercially flood Ukrainian markets and food stores. Strawberries are eaten fresh, mashed with a dressing of smetana mixed with sugar or honey, or used to fill varenyky and make jam.

With the advent of summer, the cherry season descends on Ukraine. Although Ukrainians grow cherries almost everywhere across the country, the Melitopol variety, which includes over forty sub-types, is a local popular brand and part of the European geographical indications system.

Much loved bilberries are also in season. In Ukraine blueberries are grown commercially, but harvesting wild bilberries is still popular. Usually bilberries are eaten fresh with ice cream, smetana or yogurt, or added as an ingredient to desserts. Varenyky with bilberries is a popular summer dish. The wild berries are also used to make jam, syrup and liqueur. Many people would dry bilberries to add later to dishes or beverages. Small dried bunches of wild strawberry and bilberry stems complete with leaves are used in herbal teas.

Ukrainians are particularly partial to raspberries. Just like strawberries they are grown in practically every rural garden. Harvesting wild raspberries is not as popular as it used to be, as the wild variety has much smaller berries and is laborious and time consuming to pick. As a result, wild raspberries are totally absent from the market, unlike bilberries and wild strawberries, which are freely available.

Ukrainian seasonal cuisine is not only famous for fruit and berries. Ukrainians love their cucumbers. Small soil-grown cucumbers, which have a distinct aroma, texture and sweet flavour, are highly prized, and are used to make quick pickled (fermented) cucumbers. It takes just a few days to transform fresh cucumbers into a spicy appetiser, a wonderful addition to lightly-cooked new potatoes with a sprinkling of dill. This delicious duo is the highlight of the summer menu in Ukraine.

Friesland chronicler Ulrich von Werdum (1632-1681), who travelled to Ukraine in the seventeenth century, mentions cucumbers as a local speciality, and says they were eaten by holding them between two fingers. Nizhynsky cucumbers, named after Nizhyn in Chernihiv region, have a special history in Ukraine steeped in elaborate legend. The city even has a monument dedicated to the cucumber. Famed for its pickling qualities, this variety has now almost disappeared, but the history of commercially grown cucumbers and pickling recipes is still alive and goes back to the nineteenth century. Today, Dobropasove in Dnipropetrovsk region is a centre of cucumber cultivation, with every second household growing them commercially.

It is almost impossible to imagine local cooking without tomatoes. Although they are a much more recent addition to Ukrainian cooking, tomatoes have carved out their place in national cuisine and changed the flavour of borshch. Tomatoes are not just a staple dietary item; they are an essential borshch ingredient. As August draws to a close the selection of different sizes, colours and varieties of tomato on the market is staggering. Almost anyone who knows their way around the kitchen can make an appropriate choice and select the variety most suitable for eating fresh, in salads or for making tomato juice, *adjika* hot sauce, pickled tomatoes or “borshch preserve”, a home-made pre-cooked preserve used as a base for borshch in winter. Tomatoes grown in south Ukraine in Kherson and Odesa regions are specially prized, particularly those originating from Utkonosivka in Odesa region.

Zalischyky in Ternopil region is known for its early-season tomatoes, bell peppers and cucumbers. Zakarpattya is another Ukrainian region where the mild climate allows cultivation of many crops, including vineyards.

Cucumbers, tomatoes and bell peppers are immensely significant for Ukrainian cuisine. In high season many Ukrainians pickle and preserve the produce as separate dishes or as part of a vegetable mix.

The much-loved watermelon marks the end of summer. The tradition of cultivating watermelons, mostly on the north Black Sea coast, goes back to antiquity. They are mentioned by travelling chroniclers and explorers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries – Johann Heinrich Blasius

(1809–1870), a German university professor and natural scientist, notes an abundance of watermelons for sale at Kremenchug Fair in Poltava region. By the eighteenth century watermelons were commercially available in Kyiv. Today the Kherson watermelon is another possible contender for the list of geographical indications.

Eating watermelon with bread seems somewhat strange to us, but it was quite common among some Ukrainians as a midday snack or travel food. Nowadays, an unusual way to serve watermelon is with hard cheese, a wonderful snack to go with rye beer. In the south of Ukraine, locals continue to make watermelon syrup, commonly known as *bekmez* (or *bekmes*, *pekmes*, *betmes*) by boiling the juice till it becomes thick and gooey. This method is also popular among the Ukrainian Greek communities living in the Sea of Azov coastal region. In Manhush in Donetsk region, locals would boil diced watermelon and then dry it to make sweets known as *rechel*.

Pickled or fermented watermelon is a signature dish in south Ukraine, as common as fermented cabbage or sauerkraut in the rest of the country. Nineteenth century ethnographers describe how Ukrainians pickled watermelons as a winter preserve, using smaller watermelons and adding dill, the same way that cucumbers were pickled. Watermelons are a common motif in folk art of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

The culinary autumn arrives in Ukraine with baskets of fresh wild mushrooms, strings of dried mushrooms, heaps of pumpkins and cabbages as well as carrots, beetroot and onions.

Although cultivation of pumpkins is quite widespread across the country, Ukrainian cuisine has not really found much practical use for them.

Mushroom foraging is an ancient Ukrainian activity. Now the process usually involves the whole family, though in the past it was mostly done by children. In Ukraine the cep mushroom comes first on the list of preferences. Commonly known as the king mushroom or true mushroom, it is dried, pickled, fried and used to make mushroom soup. Mushrooms most suitable for pickling include honey fungi, saffron milk caps and slippery jacks; chanterelles taste best fried or stewed, and ceps are perfect for drying. Ukrainian cooking has an abundance of recipes which include

store-bought portobello and oyster mushrooms. In the past, forest, field and August varieties of portobello mushrooms widely grew wild. Now many regions in Ukraine are capitalising on the mushroom season, and large quantities of ceps and chanterelles are exported.

Autumn in Ukraine smells of mushrooms and pumpkins, and is saturated with the aroma of apples. This fruit is consumed in Ukraine all year round; private fruit orchards usually include several varieties of apple tree. Now many apple varieties are lost, but a rich culture of using apples in cooking remains. Sour green apples called Symyrenko Renet, a late season variety, are very popular in Ukraine. Originally from Cherkasy region, this variety was bred in the late 1800s and bears the unofficial title of “national apple of Ukraine”. Symyrenko apples are added as an ingredient to borshch and used for baking poultry dishes. The apples have a firm texture and sour, spicy flavour, perfect for soured or pickled apples.

Ukrainian var recipes are ancient. Var is a drink made (*varyty* in Ukrainian) from dried apples, pears and plums. Till the mid-1900s this drink was widespread mostly in rural areas, but in time it started to be added to menus in city canteens, cafes and restaurants. Crimean Tatars even today have a popular apple and fruit beverage called *hoshaph*. In Halychyna apples are used to make a summer soup called *yabchanka* (*yabluko* is apple in Ukrainian), while Berdychiv beer is brewed with apples. When describing the rich and bountiful lands of Podillya region, amazed foreign travellers would say that if you planted a dry stick in the fertile soil, the next year you would harvest apples.

Plums are among some of the most celebrated fruits in Ukraine. In the seventeenth century Ulrich von Werdum described the vast plum orchards surrounding L'viv and the plum trees lining the country roads in Halychyna. He even mistook the local plum jam for butter. Poltava region was also known for its plums. Plums from Opishnya are mentioned in Ivan Kotliarevsky's *Eneyida*, an eighteenth century burlesque-travesty of Virgil's *Aeneid*. Opishnya plums were sold at food markets across the country; the plums were cured with smoke so they could be transported to far-flung regions. The garden plum is widespread in modern Ukraine and can often be seen in private gardens.

Plums are eaten fresh, pickled or in jam. Peppery pickled plums are a spicy appetiser, served as a separate dish or used as an ingredient in roast pork, for example. For centuries plums were dried and smoked to prep them for making uzvar, put in pies or added as an ingredient to stewed fresh cabbage or sauerkraut. In some regions of the country borsch is impossible without smoked plums to enhance and deepen the flavour.

Winters in Ukraine are much cosier with a stock of preserves. Pickled and fermented cucumbers, tomatoes, aubergines, garlic, cabbage and mushrooms and canned vegetable mixes like pre-cooked borsch base and spicy *adjika* sauce are all on the list of storage foods produced in both urban and rural Ukrainian kitchens as summer moves on.

In cities and villages, different storage facilities were used for preserves. Beer and root cellars, basements, utility rooms and attics filled with winter preserves helped people survive difficult times. Storage facilities depended on the local climate and landscape. In Central Ukraine and the Carpathian Mountains, locals have always preferred to keep their food stores close to hand. In big cities, in times of war or epidemic monastery cellars and armouries were transformed into food storage facilities. In Soviet times, as Ukrainians moved into blocks of flats they were forced to store preserves in cupboards and ad hoc storage lockers usually located on the balcony. Some blocks of flats in modern Ukrainian towns and cities still have root cellars in communal yards.

Plant-based Ukrainian seasonal cuisine could always be enhanced by dairy products, fish and meat.



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Bruschetta with vegetable spread



For the vegetable spread:

- aubergines – 400 g
- bell peppers – 200 g
- tomatoes – 200 g
- garlic – 20 g (3–4 cloves)
- red onion – 200 g
- peeled rhubarb stems – 100 g
- nut oil – 50 g
- sugar – 10 g
- salt – 5 g
- pepper mix – 5 g

To serve:

- wholemeal rye bread – 85 g
- smoked paprika (one large flake) – 5 g
- hazelnuts – 20 g
- salad leaves – 10 g

Wash the vegetables and dry them with a towel. Place the whole vegetables in a baking dish and bake at 200° C for 30 minutes (you could also use a grill). Let the cooked vegetables cool. Carefully remove the skins, take out the seeds, and separate the pulp. Peel and crush the garlic, and lightly toast it in a frying pan without adding any oil. Add to the vegetable pulp together with the other seasoning. Blend the pulp until smooth by gradually adding the nut oil. To serve, cut the bread into 5–8 slices, cut off the crust and toast in a frying pan or oven. Place the baby salad leaves on top of the bruschetta, and top with the vegetable spread. Sprinkle crushed hazelnuts on the top and decorate with paprika flakes.

Before roasting whole vegetables like aubergines and tomatoes, pierce the vegetable skins in several places – this way they will keep their shape.

Rhubarb brings out a delicate sourish flavour in the dish; peel the rhubarb stalks before cooking.





Quick pickled organic cucumbers with honey dressing



20 min + 48 hours to pickle / 4 /

- *fresh small gherkin-type cucumbers (7–8 cm) – 1 kg*
- *water – 1 l*
- *salt – 50 g*
- *sugar – 20 g*
- *garlic – 50 g*
- *blackcurrant leaves – 1 handful*
- *horseradish leaves – 3 stalks with leaves*
- *cherry tree leaves – 1 handful*
- *dill flower heads – 15 g*
- *fresh mint – 20 g (several stalks)*
- *blossom honey – 100 g*
- *linseed – 50 g*

Wash the cucumbers thoroughly with cold water. Soak the green leaves and dill heads in water to wash them. Wash the horseradish stalks and cut them into 2 or 3 pieces. Use the cucumbers whole, but cut off the ends. Peel and slice the garlic.

Put all the ingredients in a jar, arranging the cucumbers and green leaves in alternate layers with leaves on the bottom layer. Scrunch the leaves gently with your hand first to make the flavours come out. Dissolve the salt and sugar in cold water, then pour the water into the jar until the cucumbers are fully submerged. Leave for at least 48 hours in a cool dark place.

To serve, slice the pickled cucumbers and dress them with honey and linseed. Alternatively, decorate them with berries or minced mint leaves.





Delicate drinking borschch from Halychyna



ingredients:

For the vegetable base:

- beetroot – 130 g (1 beetroot)
- carrot – 45 g (1/2 a carrot)
- parsley root – 13 g
- onion – 65 g (1 onion)
- celery stalks – 25 g
- tomato paste – 20 g
- water – 100–200 g
- sunflower oil – 20 g
- vinegar 9 % – 8 g
- sugar – 5 g
- allspice – 0.3 g
- whole black pepper – 0.3 g
- bay leaves – 0.1 g
- water – 100 g

For the flour-based roux:

- wheat flour – 15 g
- butter – 15 g
- sunflower oil – 5 g

For the delicate borschch:

- water – 920 g
- salt – 18 g
- ground black pepper – 0.2 g
- smetana 30 % fat – 150 g

Wash and peel the vegetables. Grate the beetroot and carrot. Dice the parsley root, cut the onion into slices, and slice the celery stalks into semi-circles. Place all the vegetable ingredients in a saucepan or deep frying pan; add water, tomato paste, oil, seasoning and spices. Stew with the lid closed over a medium heat until fully cooked.

Next, prepare the flour-based roux. Mix the butter and oil in a heavy-bottomed saucepan, and use this mixture to roast the flour until golden in colour.

Slowly add the roux to 900 grams of hot water, whisking the mixture with a wire whisk until the lumps dissolve and add the smetana. Bring to the boil and keep cooking for 5 minutes over a medium heat until the flour thickens into a smooth mixture. Add the stewed vegetables to the hot smetana mixture. Bring to the boil but do not allow it to boil! Set the saucepan aside and let the mixture rest for half an hour. Strain, season with salt and pepper. Boil at medium heat for one minute, stirring continuously. If the borschch is kept constantly boiling it will lose its colour. Allow to cool.

Optionally add crushed garlic and finely minced fresh herbs.

/ This delicate borschch is traditionally served in drinking cups together with filled or plain pancakes, pies, savoury pastry or Yavorivsky pie.

Pancakes with meat filling



ingredients:

For the dough:

- sifted wheat flour – 102 g
- milk 3.2 % fat – 237 g
- sunflower oil – 39 g
- carbonated mineral water – 78 g
- eggs – 63 g (1.5 eggs)
- baking soda – 0.05 g
- vinegar – 2 g
- sugar – 1.5 g

For the filling:

- beef – 216 g
- pork – 216 g
- onion – 66 g
- mayonnaise 67 % fat – 129 g
- salt – 4.2 g
- ground black pepper – 0.3 g
- fresh dill – 9 g

For frying:

- eggs – 125 g (2.5 eggs)
- dried bread crumbs – 100 g
- sunflower oil – 100 g
- butter – 50 g

Make the batter using a mixer: start by gradually adding the flour to the milk, then add the eggs, baking soda activated with vinegar, and sugar. As the lumps dissolve, lower the speed and gradually add the water and oil. The batter should have a runny consistency.

Oil a hot frying pan and pour into it a small quantity of batter to make a thin pancake. Fry for one minute on one side, then flip over and fry for another minute.

Prepare the filling. Mince the fresh meat together with the onion using a meat grinder. Add the mayonnaise, finely chopped fresh dill, and season with salt and pepper.

Place a cooked pancake on a clean work surface or chopping board. Spoon the meat filling onto half the pancake and fold in two; then fold again to form a triangle. Trim the edges with a knife.

Roll the meat-filled pancakes in the beaten egg, then in the bread crumbs. Fry over a medium heat in a mixture of butter and oil on both sides till the filling is cooked and the pancakes are golden brown.

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Choux puffs with herring



To yield 500 grams

of choux pastry:

- sifted wheat flour – 150 g
- salt – 10 g (1 teaspoon)
- butter – 100 g
- milk – 250 g
- eggs – 4

To serve the dish:

- choux pastry puffs – 60 g
(6 puffs of 10 grams each)
- cream cheese – 40 g
- smetana – 20 g
- mild cured herring fillet – 70 g
- spring onion – 15 g
- boiled quails eggs – 3
- pike caviar – 15 g
- red onion – 20 g

Preheat the oven to 220 °C. To make the choux pastry: slowly heat the butter and milk with a pinch of salt. As the butter dissolves, turn up the heat and bring the mixture to the boil. Start gradually adding the flour. Take off the heat and keep stirring till the batter no longer sticks to the sides of the pan. Let it cool for 15 minutes. Fold the lightly beaten eggs into the batter and keep stirring until smooth and glistening. Use a pastry bag to pipe the mini puffs – round balls 3–5 centimetres in diameter. Arrange the puffs on a baking tray lined with baking parchment.

Turn off the heat in the preheated oven and put the puffs inside for 10–15 minutes. Then bake at 160–180 °C for 30 minutes, and leave to cool.

To make the filling, mince the herring fillet and blend with cream cheese, smetana and chopped spring onion.

Cut the top off the cooled choux puffs, and fill them with cream cheese and herring. Decorate with halved boiled quail eggs, pike caviar and fine red onion slices.

/ Smetana can be replaced with plain yogurt.





Mini sponges with cheese and spinach



For the sponge:

- eggs – 240 g (4 eggs)
- sugar – 5 g
- fresh parsley – 25 g
- fresh dill – 25 g
- sunflower oil – 70 g
- smetana – 50 g
- salt – 2 g
- sifted wheat flour – 120 g
- baking powder – 5 g
- spinach powder – 5 g

For the filling:

- vurda boiled cheese – 300 g
- fresh dill – 20 g
- salt – 3 g
- pepper – 2 g
- salmon fillet, pickled or smoked – 100 g

Separate the egg whites from the yolks. Whisk the whites with the sugar to the consistency of firm snow peaks. Use a blender to mince the fresh dill and parsley with smetana, oil and some salt. Mix the flour with the baking powder and spinach powder; fold into the herb mixture and add the egg yolks. Mix well.

Pour the batter into a baking tray lined with baking parchment and bake for 15–17 minutes at 160 °C. Let cool, peel off the parchment, trim at the edges, and cut lengthwise into two halves. The baked sponge should be approximately 1.5 centimetres thick.

To make the filling: finely chop the fresh dill, blend it with the cheese, add salt and pepper. Spoon the cheese filling over one sponge and cover with another, trim the edges, fill any holes with cheese mixture, and press with a light weight. Set aside for several hours. Cool and cut with a sharp knife into 20 squares. Top each mini cake with a piece of finely sliced salmon fillet.

The vurda cheese should be at room temperature.

It could be replaced with cream cheese.

Salmon fillet could be replaced with fresh cherry tomatoes or sun dried tomatoes.





V'YACHESLAV POPKOV

inspired by

Marianna Dushar's recipe

Savoury biscuits



- *pork lard with crackling* – **150 g**
- *sifted wheat flour* – **300–350 g**
- *poppy seeds* – **100 g**
- *onion* – **2**
- *egg* – **1**
- *baking powder* – **12 g**
- *salt, pepper, and sugar to taste*

Mix the flour, poppy seeds and baking powder, add the lard; mix well using your hands. The mixture should become sticky. Peel and grate the onion; add it to the mixture. Add the egg, a pinch of salt, some sugar and season with pepper. Knead the dough. The dough should be thick and a bit sticky. Put the ready dough in the fridge for 2 hours, then roll it out and cut out various shapes (circles, diamonds or squares). Arrange the biscuits on a baking tray lined with baking parchment, bake at 190–200 °C for 25–35 minutes.



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Section III



Baked pasties with filling



ingredients:

For the leaven:

- warm milk – 250 ml
- fresh yeast – 30 g
- sugar – 20 g
- sifted wheat flour – 70 g

For the dough:

- softened butter – 100 g
- sugar – 80 g
- eggs – 2
- pinch of salt
- sifted wheat flour – 550 g

DOUGH

The dough is prepared using a leaven. To make the leaven: pour warm milk into a bowl, use it to dissolve the sugar and yeast, add the flour, cover the bowl with cling film and let it rest in a warm place. The mixture should double or triple in size.

For the dough: use another bowl to whisk the butter, sugar and eggs with a wire whisk. Add salt and fold in the leaven, mix well and add the flour. Oil a work surface with sunflower oil, and knead the dough until it becomes elastic and non-sticky. Transfer into a lightly greased bowl, cover with cling film and let it rest in a warm place for 1–1.5 hours.

FORMING AND BAKING PASTIES

Shape the dough into balls of 30–40 grams each. Roll them out into circles 6–8 centimetres in diameter. Spoon 40 grams of filling into the middle of each circle. Fold into pasties. Arrange them on a baking tray lined with greased baking parchment, either seam-side down or seam-side up if they are decorated. Use a pastry brush to brush each pasty with egg or egg yolk. Leave them to rise for 10–15 minutes, then bake in a pre-heated oven at 170 °C for 15–25 minutes until golden brown.



FILLINGS

Cabbage filling: soured cabbage (sauerkraut) – 1 kg, onion – 200 g, carrot – 100 g, sunflower oil – 50 g, salt and pepper to taste.

Cook the cabbage in 3 litres of water over a medium heat for 20 minutes, then drain in a sieve. Sauté the finely chopped onion and finely grated carrots in a preheated oiled frying pan until the vegetables become soft but not brown. Add the cabbage and fry for approximately 10 more minutes, season with salt and pepper and let cool.

Bean filling: dry white beans – 200 g, onion – 150 g, sunflower oil – 50 g, baking soda – ½ teaspoon, salt to taste.

Soak the beans in a large quantity of water for 12 hours. Transfer to a pan and add 2 litres of water, add baking soda and cook until ready for 1–1.5 hours. Mash the cooked hot beans with a blender or use a mincer. In a frying pan, fry the finely chopped onion in oil until golden brown, add the mashed beans, mix well and season with salt.

Curd cheese filling: curd cheese – 400 g, fresh dill – 20 g, fresh egg yolk – 1, salt and pepper to taste.

Rub the cheese through a sieve, add finely chopped dill, egg yolk, salt and pepper; mix well.

Egg and onion filling: eggs – 7, spring onion – 40 g, cooked white rice – 100 g (optional), salt and pepper to taste.

Boil and finely chop the eggs, add the chopped onion, season with salt and pepper; mix well.

Pumpkin filling: peeled sweet pumpkin – 600 g, honey – 50 g, walnuts – 50 g.

Dice the pumpkin into medium size cubes, put on a baking tray and bake in the oven at 200 °C for 20 minutes till golden brown. Let them cool on the baking tray, chop into smaller cubes, transfer into a bowl, add honey and chopped roasted walnuts.

Poppy seed filling: poppy seeds – 200 g, sultanas – 100 g, sugar – 100 g, honey – 50 g.

Place the poppy seeds into a bowl or saucepan and soak in 1 litre of boiling water for 2 hours with the lid closed. Drain in a sieve, rinse well and leave to drip. In a mortar or *makitra* (a special earthenware bowl for grinding poppy seeds), grind the seeds with the sugar till the seeds turn grey in colour. Add the honey and sultanas which have been previously soaked in hot water for half an hour.

Cherry filling: pitted cherries – 700 g, sugar – 150 g, corn starch – 30 g.

Put the cherries into a sieve to drain, then transfer to a bowl, add the sugar and starch and mix well. Use immediately as a filling.

Apple filling: red apples – 8, honey – 80 g.

Core and dice the apples, put on a baking tray and bake in a preheated oven at 200 °C for 20 minutes. Cool and add honey.



Mini halushky with sauce



- sifted wheat flour – 500 g
- egg – 1
- warm water – 100–150 g
- butter – 40 g
- fresh ceps for decoration – 200 g
- vegetable oil – 50 g
- fresh parsley – 10 g
- salt to taste

For the sauce:

- fresh or frozen cep mushrooms – 300 g
- onion – 200 g
- sunflower oil – 70 g
- cream 30 % fat – 200 g
- salt – 5 g
- ground black pepper – 1 g

Mix the flour, eggs, salt and warm water to make dough for the halushky. Cover the dough with cling film and set aside for 30 minutes. Form the dough into a roll or sausage 1 centimetre thick, slice into 1 centimetre portions and shape the halushky. Cook them in salted boiling hot water for 2–3 minutes (till they rise to the surface). Drain, then add butter. Cook the ceps for decoration in water for 10 minutes. Let them cool. Slice them, soak up the excess water with a paper towel, then fry them in vegetable oil on both sides till golden brown, season with salt.

For the mushroom sauce: cook the mushrooms in water for about 15 minutes. Dice the mushrooms into 1×1 centimetre cubes. Peel the onion, dice into 0.5×0.5 centimetre cubes and sauté in vegetable oil for 5 minutes; add the mushrooms and fry all the ingredients together for 15–20 minutes; douse in cream and stew for an extra 5 minutes, season with salt and pepper. Scoop the mushroom sauce onto a plate, top it with the cooked mini halushky dressed in butter. Decorate with fried cep slices and chopped parsley.

A serving suggestion for a cocktail party: spoon 20 grams of mushroom sauce onto a plate, top it with three mini halushky with a cep slice on the side seasoned with fresh herbs.

The halushky dough could be made using other types of flour, such as buckwheat, spelt and wholegrain flour added in a proportion of 1 to 3; for example, 100 grams of buckwheat flour mixed with 300 grams of regular flour. Halushky can also be cooked in milk and different types of stock.

ingredients:

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PLACINTA (SKILLET PIE) WITH MACHANKA (DIPPING SAUCE)



Placinta (skillet pie) with machanka (dipping sauce)



For the pastry:

- sifted wheat flour – 220 g
- water – 100 g
- salt – 4 g
- sunflower oil – 20 g

For the filling:

- curd cheese – 180 g
- fresh herbs – 15 g
- spring onion – 15 g
- egg – 1
- salt to taste

For the machanka dipping sauce:

- kefir – 50 g
- smetana 30 % fat – 50 g
- fresh herbs – 2 g
- garlic – 1 g
- salt to taste

Dissolve the salt in warm water, add the vegetable oil, fold in the flour and mix well with a wooden spatula. Cover the pastry and set aside for 30 minutes. Use this time to prepare the filling and the dipping sauce.

For the machanka: mix together the kefir and smetana, add the chopped herbs and garlic, season with salt.

For the filling: chop the spring onion, add the cheese and egg (use a whole egg or just the yolk). Season with salt and mix well.

Divide the pastry into 4 parts, and roll them into balls. Grease a work surface and roll out the pastry to 2–3 millimetres thick. Evenly spoon the filling into the middle. Seal the pastry by pulling the edges to the centre. Put in a hot frying pan without adding any oil, and fry on both sides until golden brown. Put on a plate, cover with kitchen towel and let it rest for 10 minutes.

Serve the placinta with machanka.

— If the cheese is too dry, use a whole egg. In case it is too moist, add yolk egg to make it more pliable.



YAVORIVSKY PIE





Yavorivsky pie



For the dough:

- sifted wheat flour – 180 g
- water – 90 g
- fresh yeast
(active yeast) – 10 g
- sunflower oil – 15 g
- sugar – 2 g
- salt – 2 g

For the filling:

- buckwheat grain – 50 g
or steamed buckwheat –
- 110 g
water to steam the
- buckwheat – 90 g
- boiled potatoes – 500 g
- onion – 150 g
- sunflower oil – 45 g
- ground black pepper – 0.5 g
- garlic – 10 g
- salt – 7 g

Mix the yeast and sugar, add a small quantity of warm water to thicken the mixture, cover with cling film and let it rest in a warm place. Within 15–20 minutes the yeast should foam. Season the flour with salt, mix and add the remaining water, then add the yeast mixture and oil. Make a soft dough. Cover and leave to rest in a warm place for 1 hour to rise.

Wash and peel the potatoes, then boil them in lightly salted water. Drain and mash the cooked potatoes. Wash the buckwheat and put it in boiling water, cover with a lid and bring to the boil, then set it aside and let it swell for 30 minutes. Dice the onion and fry it in oil until golden brown. Mix the mashed potatoes and buckwheat (drain any excess water); add the fried onion, season with salt and pepper and add the crushed garlic or garlic powder. The filling should not taste bland. Roll out the dough into a circle with thin edges. Spoon the filling into the middle, slightly compress it. Bring the edges together like a sack and seal up. Gently roll the pie with a rolling pin. Shape it into a circle, paying special attention to the seams where the dough is thickest, as it should not be too uneven. The pie should fit into a 22–24 cm baking dish.

Lightly oil or grease the dish. Turn over the pie and put it inside, seam side down. Cover with a tea towel and set aside for 20 minutes to rise. Optionally, season with sesame seeds or cumin. Bake in a pre-heated oven for 25–30 minutes at 180 °C.

If there is excess moisture at the bottom of the pie, remove it from the dish and then put the dish back in the hot oven, which will get rid of the dampness.

Yavorivsky pie with chicken machka gravy



ingredients:

For the dough:

- sifted wheat flour – 180 g
- water – 90 g
- fresh yeast – 10 g
- sunflower oil – 15 g
- sugar – 2 g
- salt – 2 g

For the filling:

- buckwheat grain – 50 g
or steamed buckwheat –
110 g
- water to steam the
buckwheat – 90 g
- boiled potatoes – 500 g
- uncured salo – 120 g
- onion – 150 g
- sunflower oil – 45 g
- ground black pepper – 0.5 g
- garlic – 10 g
- salt – 7 g
- oregano – 0.5 g
- ground nutmeg – 1 g

Mix the yeast and sugar, add a small quantity of warm water to thicken the mixture, cover with cling film and let it rest in a warm place. Within 15–20 minutes the yeast should foam.

Season the flour with salt, mix and add the remaining water, following which add the yeast mixture and oil. Make a soft dough. Cover and leave to rest in a warm place for 1 hour to rise.

Wash and peel the potatoes, then boil them in lightly salted water. Drain and mash the cooked potatoes. Wash the buckwheat and put it in boiling water, cover with a lid and bring to the boil, then set it aside and let it swell for 30 minutes. Dice the salo and fry it so that the fat melts. Finely chop the onion, and fry in oil until golden brown. Blend the mashed potatoes, buckwheat, salo, onion and spices. Mix well. The filling should have a distinct garlicky aroma and spicy peppery flavour.

Roll out the dough into a circle with thin edges. Spoon the filling into the middle, slightly compress it. Bring the edges together like a sack and seal up. Gently roll the pie with a rolling pin. Shape it into a circle, paying special attention to the seams where the dough is thickest, as it should not be too uneven. The pie should fit into a 22–24 cm baking dish.

For the glaze:

- egg – 1
- milk – 20 g

For the chicken machka gravy:

- chicken quarters – 720 g
- water – 150 g + 1250 g
- salt – 15 g
- celery stalk – 20 g
- carrot – 20 g
- onion – 20 g
- bay leaves – 0.2 g
- whole black pepper – 0.2 g
- allspice – 0.2 g
- sifted wheat flour – 50 g
- turmeric – 1 g
- ground black pepper – 1 g
- garlic – 10 g

Lightly oil or grease the dish. Turn over the pie and put it inside, seam downwards. Cover with a tea towel, and set it aside for 20 minutes to rise. Brush the top with egg yolk mixed with milk, and prick with a fork. Optionally season with sesame seed or cumin. Bake in a pre-heated oven for 25–30 minutes at 180 °C.

To prepare the machka gravy, wash the chicken quarters and put them in cold water. Cook over a medium heat for at least 1 hour, removing the froth. Add the washed and peeled carrot, onion and celery. Ten minutes before finishing the broth, add the bay leaves, allspice and whole black pepper. Strain the broth. Remove the meat and skin from the bone, and transfer it back into the broth. Roast the flour in a frying pan, let it cool. Dissolve the flour in cold water until smooth. Gradually add this mixture of flour dissolved in 150 grams of water to the hot broth, stirring with a spatula or spoon. Bring the broth back to the boil for several minutes over a medium heat. Season with salt and pepper, add garlic and turmeric.

Serve the gravy in a separate bowl or use it to garnish each piece of pie.

If there is excess moisture at the bottom of the pie, remove it from the dish and then put the dish back in the hot oven, which will get rid of the dampness.



Vorschmack with apples



For the vorschmack:

- fillet of herring – 200 g
- butter 82.5 % fat – 60 g
- egg – 1
- white bread – 60 g
- milk – 80 g
- onion – 20 g
- Symyrenko Rennet apples
(or any other sour variety of
apples) – 40 g

For the caviar:

- pike caviar – 80 g
- shallots – 10 g
- sunflower oil – 10 g

For the marinated apples:

- apples – 160 g
- white wine vinegar – 50 g
- water – 100 g
- whole pepper mix – 2 g
- whole coriander – 2 g
- salt – 4 g
- sugar – 24 g

To serve:

- rye bread or rye-wheat
bread – 100 g

Finely dice the onion and soak it in boiling water for 1 minute.

Hard-boil the egg for at least 8 minutes; cut in half. Soak the white bread in the milk. Let the butter soften at room temperature. In the meantime, core the apples. Put the herring fillet in a blender with the other prepped ingredients, except for the butter, and blend. Then fold in the butter and mix with a spoon or spatula. Add a pinch of salt if necessary.

Quarter and thinly slice the apples, then marinate them. To prepare the marinade: mix all the ingredients in a saucepan, bring to the boil and then cool. Put the marinated apples in the fridge for 1 hour.

Finely dice the shallots and mix with the pike caviar. Mix with a wire whisk and gradually add the oil.

Toast the bread in a frying pan without adding oil until crispy.

Spoon the vorschmack onto a plate with the caviar and marinated apples. Serve with warm croutons.

Stuffed carp (gefilte fish)



ingredients:

- carp – **2.6–3 kg**
(1 whole carp)
- onion – **1.5 kg**
- butter – **150 g**
- water – **2 l**
- salt crackers – **300 g**
- semolina – **50 g**
- eggs – **2**
- egg yolk – **1**
- cream 20 % fat – **250 ml**
- sugar – **2 teaspoons**
- beetroot – **1 kg**
- carrot – **1 kg**
- bay leaves – **2**
- salt, black pepper to taste

Peel the onion and slice it into semi-circles. Sauté the onion with butter until golden brown in a saucepan with a heavy bottom. Set aside to cool.

In the meantime, wash and scale the carp. Soak up the excess moisture with a paper towel. Use scissors to carefully cut off the fins so as not to damage the skin. Then make 2–3 cm cuts on the skin around the head starting from the bottom fins. Use a spoon handle to nudge under the skin and carefully separate the skin from the fillet all the way down to the tail. Pull off the skin and cut it off at the fish's tail.

Separate the fish fillet – you can use a spoon to remove the remaining meat off the bone (do not discard the bones and fins). Cut the fillet into small pieces and mix with the onion. Freeze for 1 hour.

While the fillet is in the freezer, cook the bones and fins in 2 litres of water without salt to make a broth.

Peel the beetroot, carrot and onion, cut the vegetables in circles and semi-circles 2–3 millimetres thick. Soak the salt crackers in cream.



Remove the fish fillet from the freezer, add the wet crackers and put the mixture through a meat grinder, repeating if necessary. Add the semolina to the minced fish, add the eggs, egg yolk, salt, pepper and sugar. Mix well and put in the fridge for half an hour, then use it to stuff the carp skin.

Layer a third of the vegetables in the bottom of a deep baking dish with a lid, alternating between beetroot, onion and carrot. Season with salt, add bay leaves, place the stuffed carp on top and cover with the rest of the vegetables, add more salt. Pour over it, through a sieve, the broth prepared earlier. Cover with the lid and bake in the oven for 3 hours at 160 °C.

If the broth has boiled away, add some more. Set aside for 3 hours after cooking, then refrigerate overnight. Cut the carp into portions the next day.





Meat rolls with smoked plums



For the meat rolls:

- pork or beef steak – 360 g
- sunflower oil – 30 g
- sweet mustard – 40 g
- eggs – 80 g (2 eggs)
- sifted wheat flour – 60 g
- ryazhanka (fermented baked milk) – 200 g
- fresh plums – 100 g
- butter – 40 g
- sugar – 5 g
- thyme sprig, salt and pepper to taste

For the maize porridge biscuits:

- maize meal – 50 g
- water – 150 g
- salt and pepper to taste
- butter – 20 g

To serve:

- spring onion – 5 g
- baby spinach – 5 g

Lightly tenderise the meat on both sides, season with salt and pepper, rub in the mustard, add some sunflower oil and marinade for 20–30 minutes.

In the meantime, cut the plums into small pieces and fry them in butter with a bit of sugar so that they are lightly caramelised. Transfer the plums into a bowl, place a burning thyme sprig inside the bowl and cover with a tray or plate; as the thyme burns it will lightly smoke the plums and give them a smoky flavour.

Pour the maize meal into boiling water and cook into porridge. Spread the ready porridge evenly 6–8 millimetres thick over any flat surface and let it harden. Cut the biscuits as desired and fry with butter on both sides until golden brown.

Spoon the caramelised plums on top of the marinated steak and roll the meat by folding the edges. Roll in beaten eggs first, then in flour, and repeat.

Fry in a frying pan until golden brown, then add the ryazhanka and continue to stew the meat rolls for 20 minutes.

Cut the ready meat rolls into 6–8 millimetre slices and put them on cocktail sticks. Arrange a baby spinach leaf on top of the maize biscuit and add a meat roll on a stick so the plum filling is clearly visible. Decorate the dish with finely sliced spring onion.





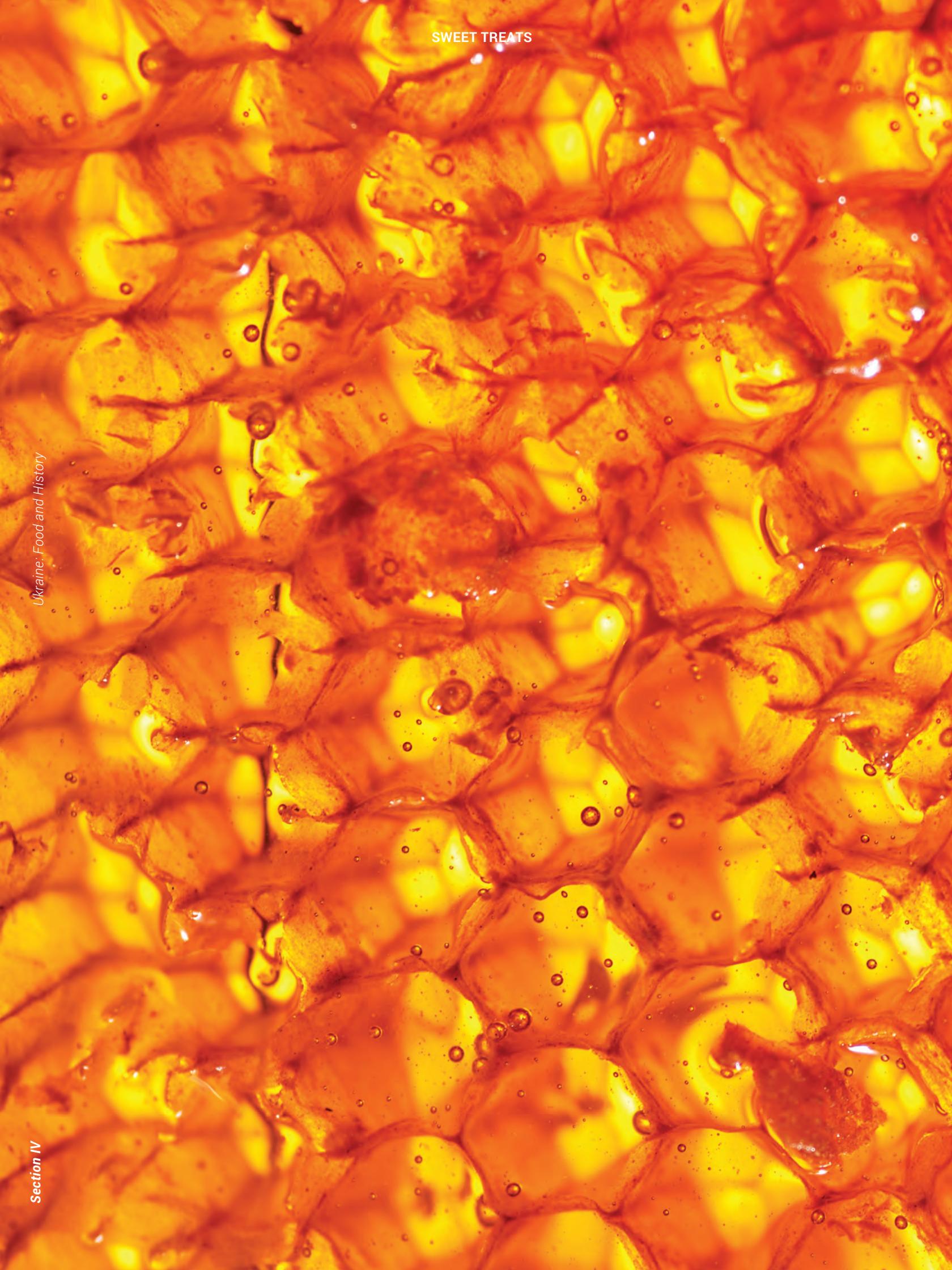
Holubtsy in beetroot leaves

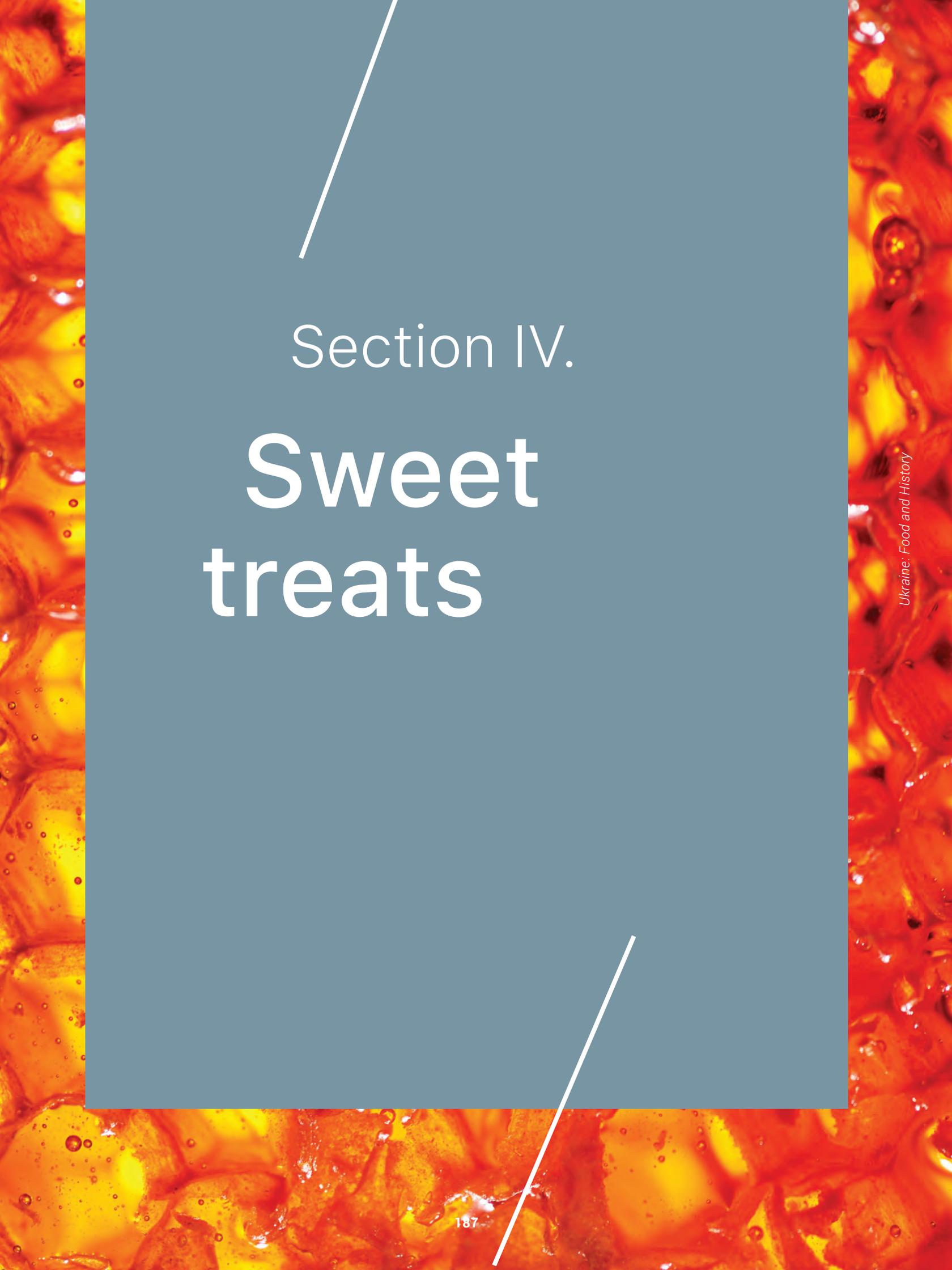


- *young beetroot leaves* – **1 bunch**
- *rice* – **50 g**
- *carrot* – **65 g (1 carrot)**
- *onion* – **65 g (1 onion)**
- *minced meat*
(pork/beef) – **250 g**
- *sunflower oil* – **30 g**
- *smetana* – **300 g**
- *salt and pepper to taste*

First, prepare the filling. Pre-cook the rice in slightly salted water. Peel the onion and carrot, grate the vegetables and fry them in oil. Mix the minced meat and pre-cooked rice with the fried vegetables, season with pepper and stir thoroughly to combine.

Rinse the beetroot leaves in cold water, then submerge them for several seconds in boiling water and transfer into a bowl with cold water (optionally add ice). Take each leaf and spoon the filling on top of it, and roll into holubtsy. Put the holubtsy into a pan or dish, douse in smetana and stew for 30–40 minutes. In case the smetana is too thick, add some water.



A detailed microscopic view of honeycomb cells, showing the hexagonal structure and the golden-brown color of the honey. The image is used as a background for the page, with a central blue rectangle containing the text.

Section IV.

Sweet treats



In today's world we are absolutely overwhelmed by the abundance of sweets, chocolate, cacao-based products, fine pastries and cakes. It is almost impossible to believe that in the past sweetmeats were an expensive treat only a few could afford. For the most part, sweet flavours could be found in fermented cereal-based dishes; fresh, cooked and dried fruit, and of course honey.

/ HONEY

For generations honey has been king. Ukrainian honey harvesting traditions go back to the Kyivan Rus. Along with beeswax, it was one of the country's main food export commodities. The harvesting process was strictly controlled, and every single batch of honey and beeswax was tagged, subjected to various checks, and taxed.

Honey harvesting is first mentioned in historical documents going back to the tenth century. Professional beekeepers were called *bortnyky* (from the word *bort*, which referred to a tree-trunk hive and, with time, to a primitive man-made beehive). Harvesting wild honey was a hazardous business which required skill and knowledge. Honey was used to make beverages (like mead, soured honey and honey wine) and honey cake. Some honey-based beverages were left to mature in barrels for at least a decade. Mead was made by naturally fermenting honey; some recipes included mixing honey with berry juice. The most basic type of mead was called *syta*. Honeycombs were doused with hot water and drained, producing diluted honey which was used to make other honey-based beverages. A whole plethora of folk songs and proverbs refer to honey. A common well-wishing phrase in Ukraine refers to "drinking honey *horilka* (vodka)". In the past couple of decades, *medovukha*, a mead like beverage made with fermented honey has made a triumphant come-back, becoming one of the most popular alcoholic drinks on the market.

Honey is not just a popular product in Ukrainian cooking, but an important export commodity to this day. Ukraine is one of the top five honey exporting countries. Honey is considered a delicacy, consumed with pancakes, soft cheese and fruit, added to tea or milk, and used in salad dressings and meat sauces.



Ukraine has well-developed beekeeping traditions, and consumers are well versed in types of honey. Acacia honey is almost colourless and clear. Wildflower or forest honey, with a greenish tint, is collected from bittercress, rosebay willowherb, lungwort, heather, sage, clover and sedge. White honey is tender and has a distinct aroma; sunflower honey has a particular golden colour, while buckwheat honey is thick and dark. Each variety of honey is associated with a particular season and natural landscape, and as a result has its own flavour. In Ukraine honey is commercially available from private farms specialised in beekeeping. It can also be purchased from individual beekeepers, who sell surplus honey from apiaries of a couple to several dozen beehives.

/ SUGAR

The 1800s revolutionised the history of confectionery in Ukraine. The change was brought about by the cultivation and processing of sugar beet, which significantly sweetened national desserts.

Making sugar from beet was much cheaper than extracting it from sugar cane. In the late 1800s sugar beet was grown in fertile fields around Kyiv, Chernihiv, Kharkiv, Sumy and in Podillya in south-west Ukraine. The regional competition in sugar production helped usher in the age of technological development. The Ukrainian sugar business was controlled by several powerful and wealthy clans like the Tereschenko and Kharytonenko families, who set sugar prices on the London stock exchange. Mass production of sugar served as a powerful impetus for building new factories and an extensive railway network, boosting trade and, as a result, developing diplomatic relations and culture. Ukrainian sugar was exported to the Near East and Western Europe. New sugar mills sprang up in Halychyna and Bukovyna.

Apart from sugar mills and processing plants, Ukraine could also boast confectionery factories which exported produce to European countries. The Krokhmalnikov brothers confectionery firm was practically the first of its kind to produce cakes and sweets in Odesa. In 1820 Abraham Krokhmalnikov, a national of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, began the

SWEET TREATS

successful family business when he opened a bakery selling fresh bread and sweet pastry. Products manufactured by Julius Meyerovych and Ivan Larionov were hailed for their quality; Victor Fisher's steam-powered confectionery and sugar mill also produced top-notch products.

Odesa was world-famous for its *halva*, locally produced at the Lazarus Duvardjoglu confectionery factory. In 1904 Duvardjoglu *halva* received an award at the London trade fair. Kharkiv-based plants run by Heorhy Borman, and Valentyn Ephimov's confectionery business based in Kyiv, manufactured vast amounts of high quality products. In 1878 the Borman Corporation received a gold medal at the Paris World Fair, and in 1904 Ephimov products won gold medals in London and Brussels.

Some of the largest plants in Halychyna included Branka confectionery based in L'viv, and Fortuna Nova in Peremyshl launched by Klymentyna Avdykovych, a successful businesswoman. These two confectionery factories were later merged by the Soviets to create *Svitoch*, which is today a well-known confectionery brand in Ukraine and overseas.

In the early 1900s Ukraine could boast a vast variety of confectionery products and about seventy brand names for sweets and caramels, biscuits, cakes, chocolate bars, *halva*, fruit jellies and pastilles, waffles, jam and chocolate.

Sweets and confectionery were sold in individual shops as well as through street trading networks in cities and towns. Modern Ukraine is famous for confectionery like dried fruit and nuts in chocolate and sweets manufactured by large-scale producers as well as by individual food artisans.

The expansion of restaurant culture stimulated the invention of new fancy desserts and confectionery. The late 1800s marked a rapid increase of cafés, patisseries, sweet shops and coffee shops. Often foreign chefs were invited to run these confectionery outlets, and the new cooking methods they brought with them took root in Ukraine. Sweets also helped to define the buyer's position on political and social matters. Sometimes an extra fee was added to the price of a box of chocolates or biscuits, which was later donated to a worthy cause.

Long before Soviet *plombir* (from the French *plombières*) accrued its mythical associations, Ukrainians were well acquainted with ice cream. Cookbooks printed in early 1900s L'viv and Kyiv included pages of ice cream recipes. Ukraine was first introduced to the taste of ice cream back in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. A French cookery book (*Le Cuisinier François*, 1651) discovered in the library of Walerjan Alembek (1617–1676), a medical doctor and mathematician from a prominent L'viv family, includes an ice cream recipe. The earliest reports dating from the eighteenth century indicate that L'viv pastry cooks were already using ice to make their products, and in the summer of 1775 one of the city's defensive towers, known as the Rymarska or Lorimar Tower, was used as an ice cellar. We know that some of the most popular desserts in L'viv included ice cream with coffee, orange, apricot and wild berries.



/ JAM

In the past “Kyiv glace jam” made of fruit cooked in honey (later replaced with sugar syrup) was one of the city’s trademark desserts.

Known by the German term *konfekt* in the eighteenth century, this sweet treat which in texture and flavour was similar to fruit jelly, jam or *confiture* was very popular among affluent city folk. In the 1800s and 1900s this dessert was considered an exquisite present and delicious souvenir from Kyiv. Some of the most popular varieties were made from rose petals, wild strawberries, raspberries, redcurrants, cherries, pears, apricots, peaches, varieties of plums and sloes. More unusual combinations included grapes and green walnuts.

However, the history of dried fruit, especially caramelised pears smoked in earth ovens and fruit cooked in honey dates back to the seventeenth century, when horticulture was developing rapidly and many city dwellers and large monasteries had well-kept gardens. Lush orchards of cherry, sloe, cornelian cherry, plum and pear trees became Kyiv’s trademark. It is not at all surprising that Klymentiy Zynoviyiv, a seventeenth-century Ukrainian Baroque poet, devoted one of his poems to the gardeners planting new gardens and grafting fruit trees. Paul of Aleppo, a traveller to Ukraine in the seventeenth century, wrote in his chronicles of tasting jam made from green walnuts and cherries generously seasoned with spices.

In the cities in the 1800s, jam, glace fruit and other confectionery production became a big and highly competitive business. In the Left Bank region of Ukraine, especially in Slobozhanschyna, garden tea parties became quite a tradition and it was popular to serve sweet treats like loaf sugar, honey and jam.

Jam was often made over an open fire in orchards and vegetable plots. The process usually involved the whole family. The jam was boiled slowly and set aside several times to mature; the cook would regularly skim off the froth and taste the product.



/ PASTRY

Western Ukraine has always been known for its sweet pastries. From the late Middle Ages till the present day two types of pastry were baked in L'viv: plain soft pastries without decoration, and hard pastry with elaborate decoration. Decorated pastries were considered a suitable present for high dignitaries and officials as well as near and dear ones. City residents served soft baked pastries on the Christmas table, or as a light snack. Dried gingerbread was even supplied to the military for use as a preventative medicine. In the past it was considered an appropriate chaser for *horilka* (vodka) or other alcoholic beverages.

With time, gingerbread grew more popular and became a well-known local dessert with an original recipe and unique local name. The name *yurashky* can be traced back to the annual food fair dating from the 1600s, held on the square in front of the Cathedral of St George, known in L'viv as St Yuri. Traders would start arriving two weeks before St George's day, celebrated on 6th May, and trade would continue for two weeks afterwards.

In the past, apothecaries traditionally manufactured and sold sweets. Spices from the Far East, marzipan, jam and citrus fruit would be displayed on the shelves along with medical remedies. Apothecaries also sold cake and biscuit moulds.

Western Ukrainian pastry and cake-making tradition prides itself on L'viv cream cheese fritters and strudels. In recent years L'viv has reclaimed many of its desserts, which have become signature dishes of the city. Ukraine has done a lot to revive some of its traditional layer cake recipes, like Kyiv cake originating from the capital of Ukraine, Frankivsk cake from Ivano-Frankivsk, coalminer's cake from Luhansk, and a signature dessert from Zakarpattya, Uzhgorod cake.





Distinct confectionery traditions in the south of Ukraine are mostly inspired by Mediterranean cuisine. The Crimean Tatars, indigenous people of the Crimean Peninsula and Ukraine, also have strong confectionery traditions which include *kurabiye*, a sweet biscuit that melts in the mouth, crunchy *baklava*, tender *fultu*, *helva* for ceremonial occasions, and jam made from izyum-irik plums. These desserts were born in the mountains and wild steppes, where they soaked up the sun and sea breeze.

All over the south of Ukraine, from the coast of the Sea of Azov to Moldova, *placinta* is a popular dish. This is a pie made with different fillings like apple, cherry and strawberry. Other popular recipes include varenyky with dried cherries and prunes with nuts and smetana.

Ukrainians adore home-made desserts, whether made for a festive occasion or for everyday. Home-made desserts include different butter biscuits, fruit rolls, buns with sweet cream cheese, poppy seed, apple and cherry, and long strudel-like pastry rolls called *pliatzky* with different types of cream filling, nuts or layers of fruit and berries.



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Plump varenyky with assorted fillings



To yield approximately

1 kg of dough:

- whey – 250 g
- eggs – 2
- sifted wheat flour – 550–600 g
- salt – 5 g
- sugar – 20 g
- dry yeast – 6–8 g
(or 18–24 g of compressed/fresh yeast)

For approximately

1 kg of berry filling:

- stoned cherries or strawberries – 750 g
- sugar – 250–300 g
- starch – 75–90 g

For the dressing:

- smetana – 200 g
- sugar – 50 g

To make the dough: beat the eggs and mix with the whey. Mix the flour with sugar, salt and dried yeast, and add to the whey mixture. Knead the dough well, then let it rest for 20–25 minutes.

To make the filling: lightly sauté the fruit and sugar in a saucepan until the fruit gives out its juice and the sugar dissolves. Add starch and mix well to avoid lumps. Leave it to cool.

Roll out the dough, and use a cup to cut out circles. Evenly distribute the filling (maintain a ratio of 1:1). Pinch at the edges to stick together.

Cook the varenyky for 3–5 minutes in boiling water, till they rise to the surface.

Serve with smetana or whipped cream.

Change the colour and presentation of the varenyky by replacing water or whey with an equal quantity of carrot, beetroot, spinach or cherry juice.

There is no need to add starch if the fruit and berries used for the recipe are not as juicy.





Baked varenyky with curd cheese



- *dough (ready-made dough or any dough recipe for varenyky from this publication) – 300 g*
- *soft or curd cheese
9% fat – 300 g*
- *caster sugar – 40 g*
- *egg yolks – 4*
- *cooking cream
30% fat – 300 g*
- *salt – 6 g*
- *butter – 40 g*

Roll out the dough into a 3 millimetre-thick sheet. Rub the cheese through a fine sieve, add the egg yolks and caster sugar and mix well. Use a cup to cut out circles from the rolled dough. Spoon the filling on top while maintaining a ratio of 1:1, and pinch the edges together.

Cook the varenyky in water with a pinch of salt for 8–10 minutes until ready. Transfer to a strainer or sieve to drain. Place the varenyky in a baking dish or on a baking tray. Butter the varenyky, pour over the cooking cream and bake for 5–10 minutes at 200 °C.

— Nuts or dried berries could be added to the cheese filling (soak the berries in water before use).





Lazy varenyky with berries



- *soft or curd cheese 9 % fat* – **500 g**
- *sifted wheat flour* – **125–150 g**
- *egg yolks* – **5**
- *sugar* – **50 g**
- *melted butter* – **50 g**
- *salt* – **2 g**

Mix the cheese with a blender or rub through a sieve. Add the egg yolks mixed with sugar, melted butter, a pinch of salt, and flour. Mix into a dough and roll into a thin sausage on a chopping board dusted with flour. Lightly flatten the dough sausage and cut into small pieces. Cook the pieces in lightly salted boiling water till they rise to the surface. Place in a strainer or sieve to drain the excess water.

Serve with smetana or dress with melted butter and seasonal berries.

/ If a blender is not available, put the cheese through a fine sieve two or three times.

FILLED PANCAKES WITH CURD CHEESE



Ukraine: Food and History

Section IV



Filled pancakes with curd cheese



For the batter:

- sifted wheat flour – 500 g
- sugar – 40–50 g
- eggs – 5
- milk – 1–1.2 l
- sunflower oil – 25 g
- salt – 8 g
- butter – 50 g

For the filling:

- curd or soft cheese
9 % fat – 600 g
- caster sugar – 25 g
- egg yolks – 3
- butter – 50 g

Pour the milk into a bowl. Add the sugar and salt, and use a mixer to blend. Add the eggs and blend again. Gradually add the sifted flour. Mix well to avoid lumps and add the oil. The batter should be liquid and easy to pour. Use a ladle to scoop up a small amount of batter and pour it thinly and evenly into a heated frying pan. Fry for 10–15 seconds on each side. Butter the hot pancakes.

To make the filling, put the cheese through a fine sieve, add the egg yolks and caster sugar, and mix well. Place some filling on top of each pancake, fold the edges inwards and roll up. Butter each roll, place in a baking dish and bake in the oven pre-heated to 180 °C for 10–20 minutes.

SWEET CHEESE FRITTERS



Ukraine: Food and History

Section IV



Sweet cheese fritters



For the fritters:

- curd cheese – **220 g**
- sugar – **20 g**
- semolina – **30 g**
- egg yolk – **1**
- sifted wheat flour – **30 g**
- oil for frying – **50 g**
- smetana 20 % fat – **80 g**
- caster sugar – **10 g**
- fresh mint (optional)

For the sauce:

- fresh ripe soft apricots, raspberries or strawberries – **150 g**
- sugar – **20 g**
- water – **50 g**

Start by making the sauce. Put the finely diced apricots or berries in a small saucepan, add water and sugar, and bring to the boil. Slow cook for 3 minutes, sieve, and leave to cool.

Drain any excess moisture from the cheese approximately an hour before cooking (wrap it in cheesecloth, place in a sieve, rest a weight on top of it and leave to drip). Following this, put the cheese through a fine sieve, add the sugar, semolina and egg yolk, mix well. Separate into balls of 25 grams each, roll in flour and use your hands to shape into round or leaf-shaped fritters.

Fry the fritters right away in a heated pan with oil, till golden brown on both sides. Place on a paper towel to soak up the excess fat. Arrange on a plate, dress with the sauce, sprinkle with caster sugar, add smetana and decorate with fresh mint.

BAKED CHEESECAKE

Ukraine: Food and History



Section IV



Baked cheesecake



- *curd cheese* – **300 g**
- *egg* – **1**
- *egg yolk* – **1**
- *smetana 20 % fat* – **50 g**
- *sugar* – **30 g**
- *sifted wheat flour* – **15 g**
- *butter* – **10 g**

Put all the ingredients except the butter into a bowl and mix well using a blender until smooth. Place the mixture in a buttered baking dish, and put in the oven pre-heated to 180 °C. Bake for 20 minutes. Take the cheesecake out of the oven, and cover with a clean kitchen towel or a loosely-placed lid. Let it cool to room temperature. The dish can also be cooked in individual ceramic moulds.

Sultanas, dried apricots, prunes and walnuts can be added; sugar can be replaced with vanilla sugar or honey.





Apple rings in batter



- egg – 1
- home-made kefir or kefir with 2.5 % fat content – 400 g
- sugar – 50 g
- salt – 1 g
- sifted wheat flour – 250 g
- fresh apples – 3
- baking soda – 0.5 teaspoon
- frying oil – 50 g
- caster sugar – 20 g

Pour the kefir into a bowl. Add baking soda, mix and let rest for 5 minutes. Add the salt, sugar and egg. Mix and add the flour. Mix the batter well with a wire whisk until smooth and moderately thick. Core the apples and slice into rings 0.5 millimetres thick.

Pour enough oil into the frying pan to create a layer 1 centimetre thick. Heat to medium temperature. Dip each individual apple ring in batter and put in the frying pan, flipping four times to fry both sides. Put on a paper towel to soak up the excess grease. Arrange the apple rings on a plate and sprinkle with caster sugar.







Pirnyky



- *sugar* – **100 g**
- *egg yolks* – **3**
- *butter* – **50 g**
- *smetana 20 % fat* – **100 g**
- *baking powder* – **5 g**
- *sifted wheat flour* – **150 g**

Place the softened butter in a bowl, add the sugar and mix using a wire whisk. Add smetana and baking powder, mix and let sit for 5 minutes. Then add the egg yolks, mix again and add the flour. Knead the dough on a clean surface until it is elastic, soft and non-sticky. Gradually add flour if needed.

Roll out the dough into a layer 1.5 centimetres thick. Use a knife to cut out diamond shapes, or cut out round shapes with a cup. Arrange them on a baking tray lined with baking parchment. Bake in a preheated oven at 180 °C for 10–15 minutes.





Honey biscuits with chocolate



90 min / 5-6

- *butter – 200 g*
- *sugar – 100 g*
- *honey – 100 g*
- *egg – 1*
- *sifted wheat flour – 220 g*
- *cacao powder – 80 g*
- *ground cinnamon – 5 g*
- *baking powder – 5 g*
- *crushed roasted walnuts – 50 g*

Place the softened butter in a bowl, add the sugar and mix with a mixer. Add the honey and blend with a spatula. Add the egg and mix again. Add the flour, cacao powder, baking powder, cinnamon and crushed walnuts, and mix again. Knead the dough well on a clean surface using your hands. Wrap the dough in cling film and put in the fridge for 20–40 minutes.

Take out the dough and shape it into round balls of 8–10 grams each. Arrange the balls in zigzag order on a baking tray lined with parchment. Bake in a preheated oven at 160 °C for 10–15 minutes.

For this recipe sugar can be replaced with honey.
Dried cherries and/or cranberries could be added.





Zavyvanets (poppy seed roll)



ingredients:

For the dough:

- sieved wheat flour – 1 kg
- dry yeast – 12 g
- sugar – 250 g
- milk – 400 g
- eggs – 3
- butter – 150 g
- salt – 15 g
- vanilla sugar – 10 g
- vegetable oil – 10 g

For the filling:

- loose poppy seeds – 400 g
- butter – 50 g
- sugar – 300 g
- apricot jam – 200 g

For the glaze:

- egg yolks – 2
- milk – 2 tablespoons

Put the poppy seeds in a saucepan and add boiling water, leave to steep for 1 hour. In the meantime, make the dough starter. Put the dry yeast into a bowl, add one tablespoon of sugar, 100 grams of warm milk and 100 grams of flour. Mix well, cover with a cloth and let it rest in a warm place for half an hour. Use another bowl to break the eggs, add the remaining sugar, vanilla sugar and salt and mix well with a wire whisk. Add the dough starter to the eggs and sugar and add the softened butter with the rest of the milk to the mixture. Mix well. Gradually add the flour to make a dough. Dust a work surface with flour, place the dough on it and knead until it becomes non-sticky. Place the ready dough in a greased clean bowl, cover with a tea towel and let it rest for 1–2 hours in a warm place to rise.

Use this time to prepare the filling. Drain the poppy seeds through a fine sieve. Return them to the pan and bring to the boil in water with added butter. Slow cook for 40 minutes, then drain the cooked poppy seeds in a sieve. Place the poppy seeds in a shallow bowl, add the sugar and mix. Grind the mixture with a blender, add apricot jam and mix well. Lightly knead the risen dough on a work surface sprinkled with flour. Divide into 2 pieces, let them rest for 20 minutes and then roll the pieces into rectangular sheets 1 centimetre thick.

Take a 200-gram portion from the poppy seed filling. Equally divide the remaining mixture between the sheets of dough, spreading it evenly on the surface to within 1 centimetre of the edges. Roll up each sheet of dough. Place the rolls onto greased baking trays. Cover with a tea towel and leave to rest in a warm place for half an hour. Then brush the rolls with a mixture of egg yolk and milk, decorate with the remaining poppy seed filling, cover with a kitchen cloth and again leave to rest for 20–30 minutes. Preheat the oven to 180 °C. Bake for 40–50 minutes.





Poppy seed cake with hazelnuts



To yield 500–600 g of cake:

- eggs – 6
- poppy seeds – 90 g
- butter – 120 g
- sugar – 150 g
- crushed hazelnuts – 80 g

To make the sweet sauce:

- smetana 25 % fat – 100 g
- caster sugar – 15 g
- fresh mint – 10 g
- pine cone jam – 75 g

Separate the egg yolks from the whites. Whisk the egg whites separately, and mix the egg yolks with sugar. Add the softened butter to the yolks and sugar, add hazelnuts and poppy seeds. Mix. Fold the whisked egg whites into the batter and mix gently.

Line the baking tray with parchment, pour the batter into it and bake in a preheated oven at 180 °C for 30–40 minutes. When the cake is ready, let it cool a little.

In the meantime, mix the smetana and caster sugar, add half the liquid from the jam and mix together. Cut the cake into slices and put it on a plate. Top it with the sweet smetana sauce and then dress with the remaining jam.

Mince the jam pine cones and use them to sprinkle on the cake. Decorate with fresh mint.

Hazelnuts can be replaced with walnuts. To get rid of the bitter taste in the poppy seeds, they can be lightly cooked or steeped in boiling water.

Pine cone jam can be substituted with green walnut jam or any other; however, the jam should have a high sugar content and thick texture in order to saturate the cake.





Cream cheese dessert



- *heavy whipping cream*
35 % fat – **100 g**
- *caster sugar* – **10 g**
- *soft cheese 9 % fat* – **160 g**
- *raspberries* – **30 g**
- *blackberries* – **30 g**
- *wild strawberries* – **30 g**
- *hazelnuts* – **20 g**
- *honey* – **15 g**
- *oat flakes* – **30 g**
- *fresh mint* – **10 g**

Whip the chilled cream together with the caster sugar, add the cheese which has been rubbed through a sieve, and blend until smooth. Roast the oat flakes in a frying pan, add the ground hazelnuts and honey and let them caramelise. Remove from the frying pan and cool.

Wash and dry the berries. Use a biscuit cutter to shape the cheese and cream mixture, or pipe it through a pastry bag. Arrange the shapes on a plate; put the wild berries on top and sprinkle with the crunchy oat and nut mixture. Decorate with fresh mint.

/ Use different seasonal wild berries.

/ Crushed hazelnuts with caramelised oat flakes give the dish a wonderful crunchy texture and bring out the flavours.





Honey cake



For the cream:

- smetana – 520 g
- sugar – 170 g
- cream 30 % fat – 210 g
- vanilla sugar – 5 g

For the cake:

- honey – 160 g
- sugar – 100 g
- butter – 250 g
- sifted wheat flour – 650 g
- baking soda – 12 g
- vinegar 9 % – 15 g
- eggs – 2

For the cream: blend the smetana together with the sugar and vanilla sugar. Whip the cream in a separate bowl and fold it into the smetana mixture with a spatula.

For the cake: put the honey in a bowl, add the sugar and butter, and place in a bain-marie. Heat to 90 °C, and add the baking soda activated with vinegar. Keep stirring, gradually adding 300 grams of flour. At the end, when the mixture cools, add the eggs and mix the rest of the flour into the dough. Cover with cling film and put in the fridge for 3 hours. Roll out the dough into circles 26 centimetres in diameter and 1 millimetre thick. Place the sheets onto baking parchment and prick with a fork so they do not rise when baked. Use the parchment to transfer the dough onto a baking tray lined with a silicone mat. Bake at 200 °C for 5 minutes without convection. When the cake layers are ready, trim them so that they fit the 24 cm cake tin.

Disassemble the cake tin, and line it with baking parchment. Stack the cake layers with cream in-between them. The cake should have 7 to 9 layers, or up to 12. Crush the cake trimmings with a rolling pin and put them aside to use to sprinkle on the cake.

Store the cake in the fridge for 24 hours. This will allow the cream to soak into the sponge. Sprinkle the top with the cake crumbs. Remove from the tin and cover the sides of the cake with crumbs.

/ Freezing and de-frosting the cake can speed up the soaking process.



Kyiv cake



For the cake layers:

- egg white – 300 g
- sugar – 345 g
- vanilla sugar – 15 g
- hazelnuts – 120 g
- peanuts – 60 g
- de-shelled sweet chestnuts – 45 g
- sifted wheat flour – 66 g

For the cream:

- milk – 240 g
- butter 82.5 % fat – 210 g
- sugar – 60 g
- vanilla sugar – 6 g
- corn starch – 30 g
- de-shelled chestnuts – 60 g
- nut liqueur – 15 g
- cacao powder – 6 g

For the cake: whisk the egg whites with a mixer at medium speed to the consistency of snowy peaks; gradually add the sugar and vanilla sugar. Whisk until the sugar completely dissolves. Reduce the speed and add the nuts, and slowly blend them together with the flour.

Line the tray with baking parchment and spread the batter evenly about 1.5–2 centimetres thick. Bake in the oven for 30 minutes at 150 °C, reduce the heat to 100 °C and continue baking for another hour. Trim 4 layers of cake to fit the mould. Crush the trimmings in a blender and use them to decorate the sides of the cake.

To make the cream: use the blender to mix the milk, sugar, vanilla sugar and chestnuts. Transfer into a saucepan and add the corn starch. Cook over a medium heat, continuously stirring till the custard thickens. Keep cooking for 2 more minutes and then remove from the heat. Cool the cream to 60° C and add the butter. Blend till smooth. Add the liqueur to the cooled mixture.

Separate 1/5 of the cream mixture and add cocoa powder to make brown chocolate cream.

Sandwich white cream between the 4 layers of cake, and cover the sides with cream as well. Cover the top layer with brown chocolate cream. Cover the sides of the cake with cake crumbs. Decorate the top of the cake with a trellis pattern with white cream, using a pastry bag with a piping tip. If you feel inspired, draw leaves and flowers with coloured cream. Refrigerate for 6 hours.

- / It is recommended to first roast the chestnuts, then cook them in water.
- / Chestnuts can be replaced with hazelnuts.





Mushroom- flavoured ice cream with pine cone jam



- *cream 30 % fat – 200 g*
- *milk – 100 g*
- *dried ceps – 10 g*
- *sugar – 50 g*
- *egg yolks – 2*
- *pine cone jam – 50 g*

Combine the milk and cream, and use the mixture to cook the mushrooms for several minutes, then let it rest with the lid closed for 1–2 hours. Drain the mixture and discard the mushrooms. Blend the sugar and egg yolks, and gradually fold into the mushroom-flavoured milk mixture. Heat to 75–80 °C in a double boiler/bain- marie, until the mixture starts to thicken. Transfer into the mould and freeze. Serve with pine cone jam.

/ This ice cream tastes great with poppy seed rolls.





Milky kisel with honey and Berry kisel (jellied beverage)



- *milk* – 1 l
- *honey* – 65 g
- *starch* – 30–40 g
- *sugar to taste*

Pour the milk into a saucepan, bring to the boil and cook for 15–20 minutes over a slow heat. In a separate dish, dissolve the starch in a small quantity of water or milk. Slowly pour it into the hot milk in a thin trickle; keep stirring the mixture till it thickens. Add honey and mix. Leave to cool.

/ The starch/water ratio can be altered depending on the desired thickness of the mixture.



- *cherry, raspberry or any other variety of berry* – 600–800 g
- *water* – 1–1.5 l
- *sugar* – 60 g
- *starch* – 50–60 g

Put the berries in a saucepan, sprinkle with sugar and add water. Bring to the boil and cook for 15–20 minutes. Drain and continue to cook the mixture. In a separate dish, dissolve the starch and add it to the berry mixture, stirring till it thickens. Leave to cool.





Baked apples and Stuffed prunes with nuts



- 1 fresh apple – 150 g
- shelled walnuts – 15 g
- honey – 25 g
- fresh mint – 3 g

Wash the apple, cut it lengthwise in half and remove the core. Pierce it on all sides with a wooden skewer. Wrap it in foil and put on a baking tray in the oven, preheated to 180–200 °C. Bake for 10–15 minutes. Open the foil and dress with honey; bake for another 10 minutes.

Finely crush the walnuts. Arrange the baked apple on a plate, sprinkle with crushed walnuts and decorate with fresh mint. Dress with pure honey (optional).



- prunes – 500 g
- shelled walnuts – 160 g
- blossom honey – 60 g

Smetana dressing:

- smetana – 150 g
- vanilla sugar – 10 g

Lightly roast the walnuts and leave to cool. Crush the nuts and mix with honey. Wash the prunes in cold water, then soak in boiling water to soften for 10–15 minutes. Dry the prunes. Stuff the nut filling inside each prune. Blend the smetana with sugar and dress the dish. Optionally sprinkle crushed nuts on top.

UZVAR (FRUIT INFUSION)





Uzvar (fruit infusion)



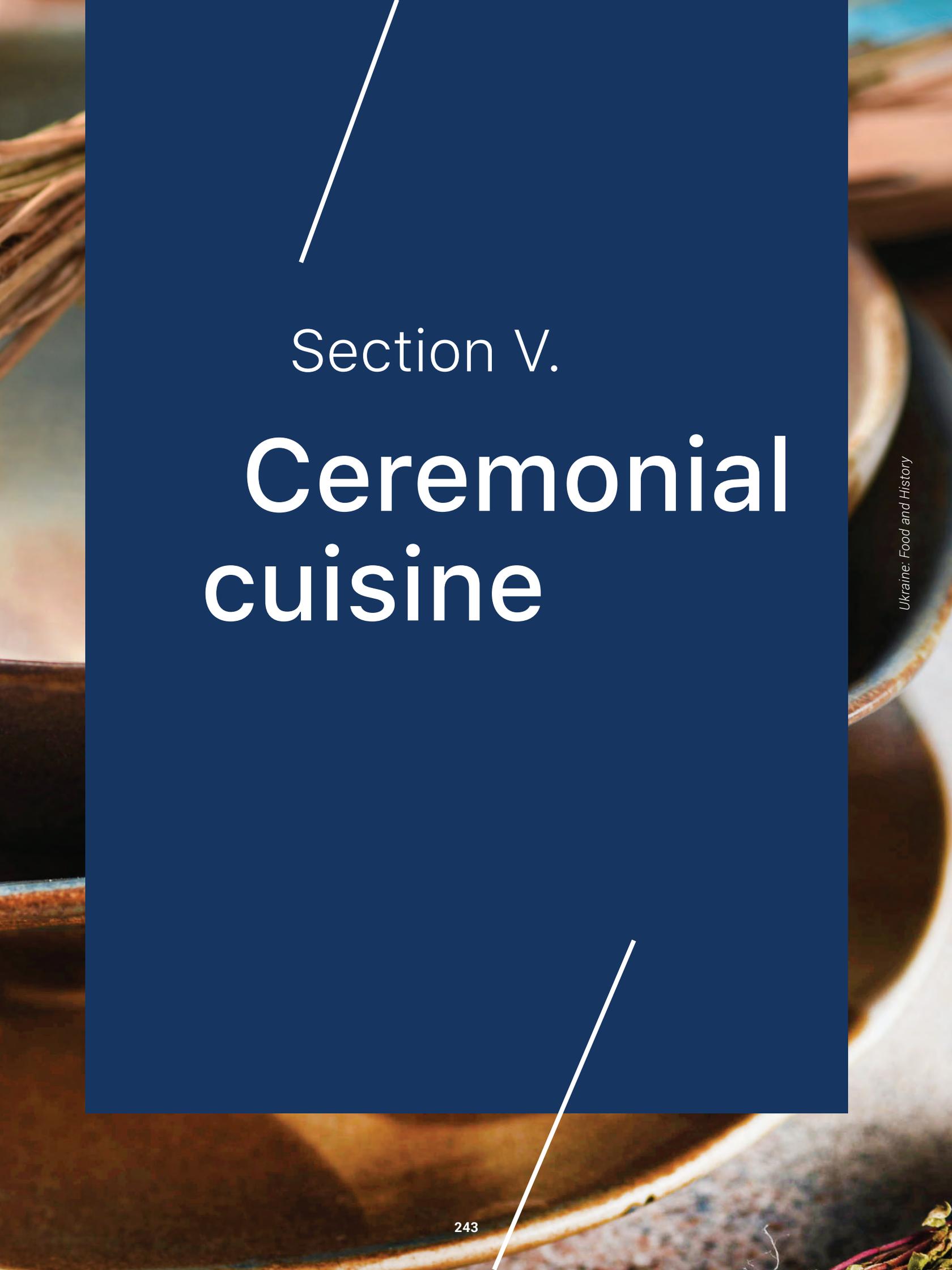
60 min +1 hour to infuse  / 4  / 

- water – 2–3 l
- dried apples – 200 g
- smoked pears – 300 g
- dried rosehips – 100 g
- dried bilberries – 50 g
- honey – 75–100 g

Soak the dried fruit in water, rinse, add to boiling water and cook for 40–60 minutes with the lid closed over a low heat. As the uzvar cools, add honey and leave to infuse.

/ Different combinations of dried fruit and berries can be used.





Section V.

Ceremonial cuisine





Ukraine's rich, dynamic food culture has evolved not only throughout the country's history, but through the calendar year. The year is marked by twelve traditional Christmas festive dishes like sweet, cereal-based *kutia*, and, for Easter, soft wheat-flour or cream cheese *paska* cakes and coloured Easter eggs called *krashanky*. These dyed boiled eggs are an edible addition to the Easter dinner table, and are used to play "egg battles", a game popular amongst children and adults alike. *Krashanky* differ from Ukrainian *pysanky*, which are much more intricately decorated blown eggs presented as gifts.

A *korovai* decorated loaf is essential to wedding celebrations, while guests invited to a housewarming traditionally arrive with a loaf of freshly baked bread. Birthdays are always celebrated with a cake. The Jewish people of Ukraine make their own festive food like *matzah*, *challah* and *kreplach*; the Crimean Tatars make *kobete* and *qalaqay*. Even though these dishes are strongly associated with religion, they are also part of everyday cooking and accompany festive occasions which have nothing to do with religious ritual.

The majority of dishes in modern Ukrainian cuisine, now available from every deli counter and featured widely on restaurant and daily menus, were originally strongly associated with religious ritual. Ukrainian *varenyky*, pancakes, Lenten *borshch* and cheese *paska* or *babka* cakes have gradually lost this association, even though till recently they were an important part of ritual ceremonies connected with birth, marriage and death. But as these dishes have been appropriated by urban culture, they have not completely lost their religious significance. For example, *helva*, a traditional Crimean Tatar dessert, and *kolyvo*, an old Ukrainian cereal-based porridge similar to *kutia*, are both served at funerals; Easter is celebrated with a *paska*; and *kutia*, a wheatgrain-based dish with poppy seeds, nuts and honey, is strongly associated with the winter religious cycle of Christmas, St Basil's Day and Epiphany.

There are many recipes for *kutia*. It can also be made with rice, dried and candied fruit and honey. The cooking process was steeped in ritual. To serve the dish properly, householders would use brand-new earthenware dishes; the men would also get involved by grinding the poppy seeds in a

special earthenware bowl called a *makitra*. Although it is a sweet dish, kutia is the first to be served at Christmas dinner. After the meal, some kutia is put on a clean plate and left on the windowsill or table to feed the souls of dead relatives. Nowadays such Christmas rituals are widely popularised by Ukrainian media, with Ukrainian celebrities often sharing their own kutia recipes before the start of the Christmas holidays. Ready-made kutia is sold in food stores, and open air markets or can be ordered to go in restaurants. Pre-packaged kutia ingredients are available from almost every Ukrainian food store.

Today in Ukraine the number of dishes on the table on Christmas Eve still usually corresponds to the ritual number twelve, and includes traditional Lenten dishes like baked or stewed fish and pickled herring, mushrooms, sauerkraut, varenyky and pasties with different pea, cabbage and bean fillings, bread, borshch and uzvar. Meat dishes like shynka (a baked ham dish), kovbasa (sausage), jellied meat and roasted meat and poultry are served on Christmas Day.

Easter is an important feast day in Ukraine. As Ukraine has strong ancient traditions of grain cultivation, paska cakes made with white wheat flour have a special significance. There are as many paska recipes as there are cooking methods. In the past, it was considered the height of elegance and sophistication to add saffron, figs, raisins and other dried fruit. Most importantly, a paska should be well-risen, sweet and delicious. The Easter table should also include krashanky (dyed eggs), kovbasa (sausage), butter, cheese, shynka (baked ham) and ground horseradish coloured with beetroot juice or mixed with grated beetroot. Horseradish with beetroot is a very popular condiment in Ukraine, commercially produced on an industrial scale. Wild horseradish is often foraged in fields and gardens.

In Halychyna, small Easter pats of butter are traditionally shaped like lambs; it is also customary to lay out freshly made soft cheese separately on a decorated small plate. Wonderful Ukrainian Hutsul edible decorations for the Easter festive table are cheese horses (sometimes with riders) shaped from special cheese which is made using milk coagulated with *gleg*, an enzyme from calves' stomachs. Making cheese horses is a traditional skilled Hutsul craft which masters are happy to share at food fairs and festivals.

In the past it was traditional for affluent families in urban Halychyna to bake not only paska but other Easter desserts including honey cakes, *mazuryky* (a type of fruit and nut biscuit), soft cheese fritters and miniature biscuits. In rural areas it was popular to make poppy seed and cream cheese buns.

Ukrainians follow the festive yearly cycle along with ceremonial traditions celebrating the family.

Korovai, an essential ritual bread, is traditionally part of wedding ceremonies. Across Ukraine korovai loaves differ in shape, size and decoration. In the past, the task of baking a korovai usually fell to happily married women. Nowadays a korovai can be custom-ordered from artisan bakeries or industrial bread factories, usually by the parents of the newlyweds. A korovai can be round or rectangular, decorated with red ribbons, periwinkle flowers and clusters of guelder rose berries. The korovai is placed on the wedding table in front of the newlyweds. Every region in Ukraine has its own customs, but usually at the end of the wedding when it is time for dessert the korovai is ritually cut and divided among the guests.



- 250 Kutia with poppy seeds, walnuts and dried cherries
- 252 Paska with dried cranberries and hazelnuts
- 256 Kobete (Crimean meat pie)
- 257 Cheese paska with sultanas
- 258 Challah





Kutia with poppy seeds, walnuts and dried cherries



- *wheat grain* – 500 g
- *poppy seeds* – 100 g
- *honey* – 2–3 *table spoons*
- *walnuts* – 75 g
- *sultanas* – 30 g
- *dried cherries* – 50 g

Rinse the wheat grains well and cover with water in a saucepan. Bring to the boil, skim off the froth and keep cooking over a low heat for about 20 minutes.

Pick clean the sultanas, and soak them in boiling water for 5-10 minutes. Soak the poppy seeds in boiling water for 15 minutes, drain and mince them in a blender or grind them in a traditional Ukrainian mortar or *makitra*. Crush the shelled walnuts; finely chop the dried cherries. Dissolve the honey in a small quantity of water.

Season the cooked wheat porridge with honey mixed with water, add the other ingredients and mix.

/ If the poppy seeds are slightly bitter in flavour, steep them in boiling water and then boil for several minutes to get rid of the bitter taste.





Paska with dried cranberries and hazelnuts



For the paska:

- sifted wheat flour – 1 kg
- milk – 310 g
- eggs – 6
- butter – 300 g
- sugar – 1.5–2 tablespoons
- fresh yeast – 50 g
- salt – 3–5 g
- sultanas – 150 g
- hazelnuts – 75 g
- dried cranberries – 75 g
- vanilla – 3 g
- lemon zest – from 1 lemon

For the glaze:

- egg whites – 2
- icing sugar – 300 g
- fresh lemon juice – 2 tablespoons

A paska is an essential part of Easter celebrations. Ukrainians bake their own paska cakes, or buy them from food shops and farmer's markets, or order them from restaurants. There are many recipes, but the best use wheat flour seasoned with sultanas or raisins, nuts, spices and glaze or dried fruit.

Soak the sultanas and dried cranberries in water. Lightly soften the yeast, add one tablespoon of sugar and gradually add the milk, stirring all the time. Then add 150 grams of flour to make the leaven (the consistency should be similar to pancake batter). Cover with a cloth and put in a warm dry place for half an hour until it doubles in volume; season with salt.

Separate the egg whites from the yolks. Put the egg whites in the fridge. Blend the yolks with the remaining sugar and vanilla, and carefully fold into the leaven and mix. Then add the lemon zest together with the melted butter, making sure the butter is not too hot. Add the roasted and crushed hazelnuts, then add the whipped egg whites, remaining flour, sultanas and cranberries, and mix together.

Knead the dough and put it in a warm place until it doubles in size. Knead again, transfer into a baking tin and let it rise again. Brush with egg yolk and bake at 180–200 °C for 30–50 minutes depending on the size of the tin.

To make the glaze: beat the egg whites and icing sugar with lemon juice for 3–5 minutes and spread over the top of the cake.

/ To help the sultanas and cranberries mix evenly with the dough, dry and dust each one with flour before adding to the dough.

KOBETE (CRIMEAN MEAT PIE)





Kobete (Crimean meat pie)



ingredients:

For the pastry:

- sifted high-grade wheat flour – 300 g
- butter – 200 g
- 1 egg
- salt – 5 g
- wine vinegar – 20 g
- cold water – 80 g

For the meat filling:

- beef – 400 g
- butter – 50 g
- potatoes – 500 g
- onion – 400 g
- fresh coriander – 50 g
- stock – 100 g
- salt – 3 g
- ground black pepper – 2 g
- chilli powder – 1 g
- ground cumin – 2 g

Kobete is one of the most popular dishes in Crimean Tatar cuisine. It is cooked to celebrate important family occasions and annual holidays, like weddings and New Year. It was a popular tradition in rural Crimea to ritually divide the kobete pie three days after a wedding, when the in-laws on the female side of the family and other relatives came to visit the bride in her new home.

For the pastry: combine the flour and chunks of cold butter, and mix to make a crumbly texture. Add the egg mixed together with vinegar, water and salt. Quickly knead the mixture. Divide into two parts of two-thirds and one-third; wrap in cling film and store in the fridge for 1 hour.

In the meantime, dice the onion and beef into small cubes, add butter, salt, both kinds of pepper, cumin, fresh herbs and cold stock. Separately prepare the potatoes by thinly slicing them.

Take two-thirds of the pastry, roll it into a thin sheet and use it to line a 24 cm pie dish. Lay on top half the thinly-sliced potatoes and season with salt. Next add the meat filling, and finish with the remaining sliced potatoes. Thinly roll out the remaining pastry for the upper crust, and cover the pie. Tightly seal the edges with your fingers. Brush the top with egg mixed with stock and put in an oven pre-heated to 200 °C. Bake for 50 minutes at 180 °C. Serve hot.

Cheese paska with sultanas



45–60 min + time for setting  / 4 

ingredients:

- *cheese with 9 % fat content or higher – 1 kg*
- *sugar – 100–150 g*
- *egg yolks – 5*
- *butter – 150–200 g*
- *cream 30 % fat – 200 g*
- *sultanas – 20 g*

Put the cheese through a sieve or mix with a blender, add the sugar, egg yolks and butter and mix well. Soak the sultanas in boiling water for 10–15 minutes, then drain. Add the sultanas and cream to the cheese mixture and blend until smooth. Tightly pack the mixture inside a mould lined with cheesecloth, squeeze out any excess liquid and put in a cold place. Place the paska mould on a plate or inside a shallow dish to collect any excess liquid. Store in a cold place.

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Challah



- *sifted high-grade wheat flour* – 1 kg
- *water* – 120 g
- *fresh yeast* – 36 g
- *large eggs* – 6
- *salt* – 16 g
- *sugar* – 140 g
- *butter* – 120 g

Egg and milk mixture:

- *eggs* – 1–2
- *milk* – 31 g

Challah is a traditional Jewish bread served on the Sabbath. It became one of the most popular types of festive bread, and for generations any plaited or braided white bread was called a challah.

Start by preparing the leaven. In a bowl combine water at a temperature of 35 °C with the fresh yeast. Add 100 grams of flour, mix and set aside for 15 minutes. Use a different bowl to beat the eggs, seasoned with salt and sugar. Then add the leaven and softened butter. In another dish or bowl combine the remaining flour and prepared liquid ingredients. Knead the dough in a food processor at first speed for 3 minutes. Let the dough rest for 5 minutes. Switch to second speed and knead for 8 more minutes. Transfer the ready dough into a greased bowl and let it rise for 2 hours.

Knead the dough again and divide into four. Shape each piece into a ball and then again divide into four. Shape the dough into round balls once again, cover with cling film and let rest for 10 minutes.

Roll 4 balls of dough into 45 cm-long sausages on a flour-dusted surface. Lightly powder them with flour. Four sausages of dough are needed for each challah bread. Line them up together and plait into a loaf. Put the challah on a baking tray, cover with cling film and leave to rise for 2 hours.

Pre-heat the oven to 180 °C. Before baking, brush the loaves with the egg and milk mixture. Put the tray in the middle of the oven and pour half a cup of boiling water onto the bottom of the oven, following which immediately close the oven door. Bake for 30–35 minutes at 180 °C. The ready challah bread should be left on a rack to cool for two hours.





Section VI.

Culinary diplomacy



Vitaly Reznichenko

Ph.D., History



For Ukraine, cultural diplomacy is an important strategic component and a soft power tool; it helps find mutual understanding between cultures and garner international support.



THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CULINARY DIPLOMACY

Within the current system of globalised international relations, rapidly changing political situations and threats to national security, state institutions seek to utilise all available global tools to protect their national interests.

The international image of any country in the modern system of international relations depends not only on its political, economic and military capital, but also on its ability to project its cultural identity. Cross-cultural exchange remains an important component in constructive, long-term bilateral and multilateral relations. Discovering the culture of another country breeds respect for its people – political decision-makers come and go, but the cultural experience remains.

In the global context, inter-cultural communication is a powerful tool to promote national interests. Nevertheless, effective cultural diplomacy requires substantial effort, time and resources.

Cultural diplomacy is a series of actions encouraging the exchange of ideas, information, values, traditions and other aspects of culture, in order to achieve cross-cultural understanding.

CULTURAL DIPLOMACY AIMS TO:

- support the country's foreign relations, improving national prestige and presenting the government and its policies favourably in the context of international relations as well as before the international public;
- fight stereotypes associated with a particular nation and mitigate the negative effects of some policies and ideologies; strengthen the country's international image and show that the country adheres to the principles of transparency and supports democratic values;
- support the country's efforts to shape a multi-national foreign policy which reflects existing global cultural diversity and countries' mutual dependence;
- attract international investment by fostering a favourable commercial environment and supporting development of the tourist industry;
- represent culture as part of a national brand and a means of showcasing the country's high academic, technological and cultural potential.

Cultural diplomacy is vital to Ukraine's strategic thinking, a soft power tool to establish effective relations with other country representatives and garner global political support. Cultural diplomacy can be an effective means of campaigning for national interests if applied in a concerted and sustained manner, with exclusively high quality content. Every state learns to prioritise and develop its own national strategy to promote its national culture.

/ CULINARY DIPLOMACY OR GASTRODIPLOMACY

Culinary diplomacy or gastrodiploMACY is an emerging diplomatic trend and an important tool in building cross-cultural relations. It utilises national cuisine, as a vital part of a nation's cultural heritage and intimate reflection of its history, in order to promote or build the country's reputation.

The term gastrodiploMACY was first coined by the *Economist* in 2002 to describe promotion of Thai culture under the State Global Thai plan, which was designed to boost the number of Thai restaurants worldwide.

Culinary diplomacy could be described as a sustained effort to utilise national culinary traditions as part of formal diplomatic relations, during visits of heads of state and other dignitaries as well as official embassy receptions. It provides diplomats with the opportunity to present national products, dishes and culinary arts, which help to ease communication and perhaps arrive at mutually agreeable solutions. Food creates an emotional bond between people, and breaks down language barriers. "Breaking of bread" is a Biblical phrase that has become an aphorism. It means sharing one's bread and victuals with others in order to form a lasting bond or, to use another expression, "win hearts and minds" and, in the context of diplomacy, establish positive relations between nations.

Food traditions are part of any culture and as a result they relay meanings, norms and values which translate into socially acceptable food practices. In this sense, culinary traditions are a language which, perhaps subconsciously, opens a window on daily practices and social and cultural activities. In this sense, food culture should be interpreted as a social phenomenon.

Culinary diplomacy goes far beyond advertising campaigns designed to promote national foods. It aims to engage the international public and promote national food brands together with discovering the nation's culinary history. It is also distinguished from food diplomacy, which is using food aid as a tool of public outreach to reduce global hunger and poverty in parts of the world affected by natural disaster, civil conflict and war.



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Section VI



Official state dinner receptions are organised in such a way as to include national traditions and cultural nuances. The products, cooking methods, dinner agenda and traditional five course menu, as well as participants' speeches and toasts, should blend harmoniously and reflect the culture of the hosting party and guests.

Nowadays any country entering the international arena aims to create a positive impression and impress with its national culinary traditions. This makes state dinners especially important. The head chef together with the department of protocol are responsible for creating an appropriate dining atmosphere. Modern international dinner protocol includes gala dinners, a versatile type of reception used to mark multi-national events like conferences, summits and inter-parliamentary or inter-governmental assemblies. A gala dinner is a traditional formal reception with a varied menu, where the guests are free to make speeches and toasts, followed by a conventional music programme. All these components tremendously help to ease communication, confirm previously achieved agreements and establish informal connections.

However, culinary diplomacy is not limited to state officials. It can be used by civil society organisations and representatives from business, academia, arts, culture and the media, all of whom can promote national cuisine beyond the country's borders.

Anybody who has travelled knows not only about Italian pasta and Greek moussaka, but about Ukrainian borshch. Parma ham is as much a tourist attraction as Murano glass or Venetian mosaic. Food and wine festivals are growing in popularity, as is culinary tourism which explores a country's national traditions and culture and also serves as a means of globally promoting and supporting a country's image. State-supported culinary diplomacy programmes developed by South Korea, Japan and Taiwan are textbook examples of effectively promoting the country's image through gastrodiplomacy. Such an approach helps promote the country's culture and national traditions, support international trade and tourism, attract international investment and thus strengthen the country's economic growth and competitiveness.

In 2002, Thailand became the first country to apply the principles of culinary diplomacy in practice. Following that venture's success, in 2012 the US Department of State launched its own Diplomatic Culinary Partnership. Over 80 US chefs travelled overseas as part of the American Chefs Corps to promote US national cuisine and officially serve on US diplomatic missions.

France, Italy and Spain lead the world for gastronomic brands which have historically established reputations as the culinary centres of Europe. Today, other lesser-known but established brands include Nordic cuisine promoted jointly by Sweden, Denmark and Norway. In 1995 Skåne County (Sweden) and Bornholm Island (Denmark) founded Regional Culinary Heritage Europe, a network of food producers formed under the auspices of the tourism industry to promote local organic produce as a tourist attraction.

Ukraine also supports using its culinary traditions as a tool to strengthen its position on regional and global markets. In 2015 Ukraine, in partnership with Armenia and Israel, participated in the Culinary Diplomacy Project organised by Kadir Has University (Turkey) and the Centre for Corporate and Social Responsibility Development (Ukraine) with support from the Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation. Recently Ukraine joined Regional Culinary Heritage Europe, which now has over 300 business members from 30 regions across Europe.

The expansion of food festivals and culinary tourism over the last few decades attests to culinary diplomacy's growth as a trend. The process is determined on one hand by internal food industry dynamics; and on the other by globalisation and the growing role of cross-cultural communication, interaction and integration.

/ A UKRAINIAN DIPLOMATIC RECEPTION

That the term culinary diplomacy is quite a recent invention does not mean it was not practiced before. Foreign diplomats have routinely used it, well aware that beautifully served, delicious food accompanied by an important conversation in a pleasant setting has always been a powerful weapon of diplomacy.

When we look back on the history of Ukrainian diplomacy, and especially the figure of Ivan Mazepa, one of the most talented diplomats of his time, we find many examples of the Ukrainian hetman artfully utilising official banquets and dinners to forge good, dependable relations with friend and foe alike, while digging for strategic information and avoiding conflicts and misunderstanding. In 1704 Jean Casimir Baluze, an envoy of Louis XIV, arrived in Russia for negotiations with Peter I. The negotiations did not go as planned for the French, and on his way back to Europe Baluze stopped in Baturyn, Mazepa's Ukrainian military and political stronghold. Baluze stayed with Mazepa for several days, most probably hoping to find out some strategic information about the intentions of the Russian Tsar. Instead he himself fell victim to Mazepa's diplomatic ruses. The Ukrainian hetman made him drunk, and the Frenchman blurted out important information about a secret Turkish mission ("...and here his head grew hot and he spoke to me", wrote Mazepa in his report to the Russian Tsar).

It would have been hard to crack such a savvy diplomat as Baluze. Instead, he would have willingly shared secret information as a show of trust, most probably impressed by Mazepa's reception. Reportedly, Mazepa's residence on the outskirts of Baturyn boasted a great hall designed for official receptions, celebrations and banquets. A French ambassador in a family letter recalls being impressed by the portraits of European and Turkish nobility, Mazepa's library, his vast collection of weapons and knowledge of European languages. Mazepa hosted receptions for foreign ambassadors, bishops and the boyars of Peter I. He organised his banquets in so-called Polish fashion, often accompanied by a choir from Poland. From Samuel Velichko's chronicle we know that Mazepa organised Easter Day celebrations at his residence for the Cossack military elite. Mazepa was also known as a master of the art of giving gifts.



Historical reports testify to the age-old Ukrainian diplomatic tradition and show that an official reception goes well beyond delicious food. The right setting and décor, a well-thought-out programme and the art of formal and informal conversation all play an important role and are key to culinary diplomacy.

Ukrainian culinary diplomacy post-independence has its own history. However, most of it is not yet recorded and its story is waiting to be told.

A modern Ukrainian diplomatic reception first and foremost aims to adhere to the high international standards of diplomacy, but at the same time to reflect national culture. This eclectic approach is used by the overwhelming majority of the world's diplomatic missions. Receptions held by missions from the Far East usually offer a "shadow menu" which offers guests a selection of less exotic food but at the same time allows them to sample national cuisine.

Diplomatic culture has evolved to be diverse, which, in a positive sense, means that it reflects the global trends affecting the diplomatic community. Today's Ukrainian diplomats gently weave into standard official protocol some bold Ukrainian signature concepts, mostly through interior decor, tableware and menus.

An official dinner reception traditionally starts with a warm up. The host welcomes the guests who make themselves comfortable, greeting and exchanging news and neutral conversation. Guests are served aperitifs of alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks and snacks, and while they interact with the host they subconsciously focus on the interior design as they explore the new setting. Besides, savvy diplomats are always aware of their surroundings for reasons of safety. First impressions are always important, and it is vital to represent Ukrainian culture appropriately through interior design. In the living room of a veteran diplomat, alongside exotic items brought from overseas travels, are works by Ukrainian artists, a quality selection of decorative folk art and a library mainly of albums and coffee-table books.

Together with more traditional alcoholic beverages the Ukrainian aperitif menu at a diplomatic reception includes small shots of well-chilled horilka. The snack menu is also culturally diverse, including less exotic

international snacks as well as Ukrainian specialities. Before the main dinner reception, mini-canapés are served. A wonderful chaser for a shot of chilled horilka are mini-canapés with small pieces of herring or thin slices of high-quality salo. Ukrainian sausage-making traditions could be showcased with Drohobych kovbasa, served in mini-portions, of course.

As the guests sit at the table their focus is still on the décor. Traditionally in Ukraine guests arrive to a table already set with elaborate food, but when it comes to diplomatic dining the table is decorated and laid, but without food. Ukrainian organisers follow the principles of diversity and make sure that the tableware is supplied by internationally renowned brands while Ukrainian culture is displayed through table linen, usually embroidered round the edges. It is always a good idea to use traditional and modern Ukrainian ceramics; sometimes yellow and blue bouquets of flowers representative of the Ukrainian flag brighten up the table. However, there is no need to use all these types of decoration. If the table is covered with an embroidered tablecloth then decorative ceramics are excessive. Elements of Ukrainian culture could appear in the guests' place cards, which could be designed in Ukrainian folk style with traditional Petrikivtsy flower motifs or embroidery patterns.

Before the dinner starts, the only food on the table is bread and butter, in order to highlight the centrality of these foods to national cuisine. The bread could be served in traditional wicker baskets or in ceramic dishes made by modern Ukrainian ceramic artists and/or with embroidered cloth coverings, but the key principle is to keep the decor simple and understated.

Before the food is served, guests are asked their drinking preferences. Wine is traditionally served at diplomatic receptions and the wine list should include Ukrainian-made wine. Usually guests are happy to sample the local wine and go on to drink well-known, more traditional wines. At this stage, diversity continues to be the main theme.

Salads are not traditional to Ukrainian national cuisine. They are a much more recent addition, and as a result it is practically impossible to impress guests with a traditional Ukrainian salad. Beetroot-based dishes however are a real godsend, as beetroot is strongly associated with Ukrainian

cuisine. It tastes great marinated, and delicate slices of beetroot form a delightful colour combination with green salad leaves (like baby spinach, lettuce, rocket or romaine lettuce). Beetroot is absolutely delicious with salted cheese like Hutsul bryndzia, dressed with honey and mustard. It could be served as a “shadow dish” to the main traditional salad, similar to the trend launched by the diplomatic missions from the Far East.

When it comes to serving the main course, Ukrainian dishes should be served in individual portions as an alternative to the main, thus changing the original purpose and presentation of the dish. For example, Ukrainian savoury varenyky (with potato, cabbage or cheese filling) should be served not as a main but a mini side dish. Mini-holubtsy make a delicious hot snack. During Ukrainian diplomatic receptions, meat and poultry are traditionally served Ukrainian style as meat rolls. Guests at Ukrainian diplomatic dinners and receptions seem to be always impressed by traditional smetana-based sauces.

It is worth remembering that not all traditional Ukrainian dishes are suitable for diplomatic dining. Pork-related products are forbidden for practising Muslims and Jews, for example. However, it is important to take into account not only religious considerations but other common dietary restrictions.

True culinary professionals are able to turn such seemingly unsuitable diplomatic dining products as buckwheat and sorrel into dinner table gems. Larry and Margaret Dickenson, a diplomatic couple from Canada, are famous for their receptions and are true experts in culinary diplomacy and cooking. Margaret is of Ukrainian descent and grew up on a remote farm in the north of Canada surrounded by Ukrainian cooking traditions. She earned a degree in nutrition, married a diplomat who served as ambassador on a number of diplomatic missions overseas, and went on to develop professional recipes and write award-winning, best-selling cookery books. One of her original recipes is a sorrel cappuccino soup which can be served warm (during official dinners) and cold (at cocktail receptions). She has also developed a number of buckwheat-based recipes, the most impressive being a side dish with dried blackcurrants and nuts.



Undoubtedly Ukrainian cuisine is full of potential which could be utilised by the Ukrainian diplomatic community to its benefit, but the effort could go further and transform Ukrainian diplomacy into a brand in its own right.

Dessert offers Ukrainian diplomats an opportunity to impress their guests with varenyky and pancakes (with sweet cheese, berries or fruit) served as an alternative to more traditional sweets.

Guests should be able to enjoy classical music recordings by Ukrainian composers like Mykola Lysenko, Viktor Kosenko and Borys Liatoshynsky, but the music should be a quiet background for conversation.

Earlier we mentioned Mazepa's Easter dinner receptions for his military elite. Important Ukrainian holidays could be wonderful occasions for official dinners highlighting Ukrainian traditions. Ukrainian Christmas folk theatre could be the theme for a Christmas dinner reception, for example. However, one should be extra careful with ritual dishes.

With regard to large dinner receptions to celebrate events like National Independence Day, or cocktail receptions which accompany cultural events, all the above recommendations apply albeit with some corrections and on a different scale. At a buffet reception, as large quantities of food are served to a large number of people, a basic menu is offered, and in this case varenyky and holubtsy are not necessarily served as mini-versions. A buffet reception also goes well with a music or dance performance. Recently almost all diplomatic receptions to celebrate national holidays have followed this format. Cocktail parties which accompany a cultural event are a delicious addition to the event itself and usually require only finger-food catering.



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 Difficulty level	 Frying pan	 Chilled
 Servings	 Pastry brush	 Plate
 Cooking time	 Wire whisk/mixer	 Scissors
 Vegetarian dish	 Saucepan	 Skewer
 Blender	 Mortar	 Wooden hammer
 Oven	 Sieve	 Deep fryer
 Bread tin	 Vegetable peeler	 Tongs
 Twine	 Rolling knife	 Glass
 Knife	 Strainer	 Foil
 Chopping board	 Salt and pepper mill	 Stand mixer
 Bowl	 Glass jar	 Straining spoon
 Wooden spoon	 Silicone mat	 Cob bread
 Mould	 Meat grinder	 Buckwheat bread
 Paper towel	 Grater	 Wheat and rye bread
 Wooden rolling pin	 Ladle	
 Wooden spatula	 Pastry bag	
 Cheesecloth	 Baking parchment	
 Towel	 Rolling knife with scalloped edge	
 Baking tray	 Fork	





Acknowledgements

A team of people have contributed their knowledge and industry to create this truly unique and special publication. We are eternally grateful to all those who readily contributed their experience and advice to the project. Ukrainian anthropologists have made sure that the chapters are engaging and wide-ranging. Ukrainian food expert Marianna Dushar contributed interesting facts about Ukrainian borshch; together with Dmytro Sikorsky we discovered the food flavours most popular in Odesa region in the south of Ukraine, and Kateryna Kalyuzhna shared with us an original borshch recipe from Kherson region. Myroslava Pavlyk provided photos of the Crimean Tatar biscuits. We greatly appreciate expert contributions from Avrora Ohorodnyk, Olexiy Sokyрко, Andriy Paramonov, Mykhailo Krasikov, Olha Kotsiubanska, Natalia Samruk, Svitlana Bohdanets and Anastasia Pankova. Ukraine's finest artisans and companies ensured that the food presentation is up to the highest standards: we appreciate the help and support of INTERIOMANIA (Ukrainian home textiles online company), "Mriyi Mariyi" art and design store, Gunia Project (brand selection of unique designs), Maistrenko Ceramics artisan studio, GORN, "Chebrets" ceramic studio, ceramics artist Yaroslav Chebaniuk, and Dyka Svichka artisan wild beeswax candle-making company.

We are confident that readers will be able not only to appreciate the brilliance of Ukrainian cuisine and its signature recipes, but also recreate the dishes as pictured. All recipes from this publication were developed and tested in real kitchens by Ukrainian chefs. We fondly recall our food photo sessions, and the time we spent cooking and savouring the wonderful cuisine. The dishes depicted in the photographs were prepared by chefs V'yacheslav Popkov and Yaroslav Artiukh with assistance from Serhiy Sid'ko, Vitalia Guluzade and Euhenyi Sayenko.

UKRAINE

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History



ISBN 978-966-97882-4-5



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Друк ТОВ "Нілан-ЛТД"
Наклад: 500