

The Culinary Historians Of Ontario



Autumn 2001 Number 30

The Culinary Historians of Ontario is an information network for foodways research in Ontario. It is an organization for anyone interested in Ontario's historic foods and beverages, from those of the First Nations to recent immigrants. We research, interpret, preserve and celebrate Ontario's culinary heritage.

Mark Your Calendars for these CHO Events!

A CENTURY OF CANADIAN HOME COOKING

Veal & Ham Pie. Borscht. Divinity Fudge. Mock Duck. Party Sandwich Loaf. Wacky Cake. Bacon 'n' Cheese Dogs. Caesar Salad. Zucchini Bread. Grilled Char with Lime and Cilantro Marinade. Ten Recipes. Ten Decades. A snapshot of the 20th century in Canada as seen through the wonderful cookbook *A Century of Canadian Home Cooking: 1900 through the '90s*.

The stories of a people's food provide an intimate glimpse into their daily lives, creating a very personal history. A recipe for an "eggless, butterless, sugarless" cake brings home the reality of food rationing during World War II. Tinned tuna, mushroom soup, chow mein noodles and potato chips combined in the Perfect Tuna Salad offers the classic taste of the pre-packaged lives many Canadians lived in the 1950s suburbs. The recipes included in *A Century of Canadian Home Cooking* give Canadians at the beginning of the 21st century an opportunity to sit down at the table with Canadians of an earlier time. Tasting the foods that graced Canadian tables through the decades helps us to understand ourselves, and our country's history.

In *A Century of Canadian Home Cooking* authors Margaret Fraser and Carol Ferguson took us on a fascinating journey through Canada's culinary history.

On Thursday, November 15th at 6:15 at the Deer Park Library, we are pleased to present celebrated cookbook author Margaret Fraser as she shares her own journey of discovery through a century of food traditions and the stories behind writing this celebration of Canadian cuisine.

Please call Elizabeth at (416) 406-0146.

...more Events listed on page 5

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**Sunday 4 November
Montgomery's Inn Ballroom
1:00 – 5:00**

**call Fiona to RSVP and
for directions
• (416) 534-1405 •**

Bring nibbles to share.
We'll provide coffee & juice.

<i>What's Inside:</i>	<i>page</i>
Mark Your Calendars	1
Cookery Collection: <i>Mince Pies</i>	2
<i>Fiona's Musings</i> by Fiona Lucas	3
<i>Meals in Sophia Menab's Diary</i> by Amy Scott	4
<i>Family Fare</i> by Ed Lyons	5
Culinary Calendar	6

Cookery Collection: Mince Pies for the Season

Mistress Margaret Dods (Christine Isobel Johnstone), *The Cook and Housewife's Manual*, 5th ed, Edinburgh & London, 1833, p 328, no 815.

Original Receipt

"...Par-roast, or bake slightly, a couple of pounds of the fine lean of good beef or tongue. Mince this, or scrape it. Mince also two pounds of fresh suet, two of apples, pared and cored, three pounds of currants, rubbed, picked, and dried, and a pound and a half of good raisins stoned. Let the things be separately minced till fine, but not so fine as to run together; then mix them well with a pound of beat sugar, and add a teaspoonful of salt, a half-ounce of ground ginger, the same weight of allspice and bruised coriander-seeds, some beat cloves, two nutmegs grated, the juice and grated rind of two lemons and of two Seville oranges, half a pound of candied lemon and orange-peel, and a quarter-pound of candied citron sliced. Mix the seasonings equally with the meat. Keep the minced-meat for use closely pressed in cans, in a cool, dry place. Put a half-pint of brandy, or pine-apple rum, into a bottle with double that quantity of Madeira or sherry, and a half pint of orange-flower-water. When to be used, cover pans of any size, small saucers, or a small pie-dish, with puff or plain paste, and moisten the meat, if hard, with a little of the white wine and brandy, and fill the pies. Put a cover of puff-paste over them, or, if a plain paste, ice it. Pare the edges neatly, and mark the top with a paste-knife. Half an hour of a moderate oven will bake them. Slip them out of the tins, and serve them hot."

Modern Equivalent

To get a truer historic texture use a knife to mince the beef and suet, but you may prefer to use a grinder. The pastry can be "puff or plain paste", whichever you prefer. They are definitely best eaten hot. Since the original quantities are so huge, they're reduced here, but this is still enough filling for three 23 cm (9") pies or at least 36 tarts of 5 cm (2"). Any extra mixture freezes well if wrapped in tinfoil. If you don't plan on using it all at once, freeze the extra without the liquor.

500	mL	cooked lean beef or tongue, minced	2	cups
500	mL	fresh beef suet, minced	2	cups
500	mL	4 - 5 cooking apples, pared and chopped	2	cups
750	mL	currants	2	cups
375	mL	seedless raisins	1½	cups
250	mL	white sugar	1	cup
2.5	mL	salt	½	tsp
5	mL	each dried ginger and nutmeg, freshly grated	1	tsp
5	mL	each allspice, coriander seeds, cloves	1	tsp
1		lemon, grated and juiced	1	
1		(Seville) orange, grated and juiced - if available	1	
125	mL	minced candied orange and/or lemon peel	½	cup
65	mL	minced candied citron	¼	cup
125	mL	each brandy or pineapple rum and orange flower water	½	cup
250	mL	sherry	1	cup

1. "Let the things be separately minced till fine, but not so fine as to run together."
2. "Mix the seasonings with the meat": Thoroughly combine all the meats, fruits (fresh, dried and candied), sugar, salt, spices, and grated lemon and orange rind in a very large bowl.
3. Moisten the mixture with the juices and liquors.
4. Turn into your raw pastry shells, then cover with raw pastry lids. Crimp the edges and slash vents into the top to allow steam to escape. Decorate the pies with leftover pastry pieces.
5. Bake at 180°C (350°F) for about 45 minutes or until pastry is lightly golden; if it appears to be browning too quickly, cover with foil.

FIONA'S MUSINGS

Teaching and Writing Food History

Sometimes you have to do something. For me, recently, that something was attending a conference at Williams College. Turns out it's in a picture-perfect, clapboard-clad New England town in north-western Massachusetts, which required a tedious overnight bus across the border (both ways). But the travel was worth it!

Plainly entitled "Food History Symposium", the conference was co-sponsored by *Gastronomica: The Journal of Food and Culture*, the eclectic new journal whose editor, Darra Goldstein, is a Williams professor, and by IACP (International Association of Culinary Professionals). The themes caught my attention: "Teaching Food History", "Food Has a Past", and "Food History in Cookbook Writing", in combination with the roster of speakers, including Amy Bentley, Betty Fussell, Sandra Oliver, Andy Smith, Joyce Toomre and Sidney Mintz. They are eminent food scholars, but also attending were chefs, journalists, school teachers and vocational cooking teachers. I seem to have been the only museum person, although Sandy Oliver retains strong museum connections. Until the end I also thought I was the sole Canadian, although three women told me (wistfully) they are ex-pats.

As Barbara Haber, Curator of Harvard's Schlesinger Library, home to a rich culinary collection, stated, No longer is it "Does food have a history?" but "Food has a history". Several themes emerged:

- ◆ **Food is biography.** Food is the essential embedded symbolic language of all peoples, families and cultures.
- ◆ **Teaching food history is daunting.** What to include? Exclude? How to make it relevant to bored, disengaged students, or, shape it for excited students?
- ◆ **Food history** (production, distribution, consumption) **must be differentiated from culinary history** (cuisines). Me, I remain confused about this distinction, preferring the term "foodways". Apparently, however, Food Studies is the au courant academic term
- ◆ **Non-western viewpoints must be incorporated into cultural studies.** Many speakers said this in many ways.
- ◆ **Good sources don't necessarily have "food"**

in their titles. The lack of readable English-language secondary textbooks has been a perennial problem, but happily this is changing as the field of food history / culinary history / foodways / food studies expands.

◆ **Being a professional includes knowing what preceded you,** be you a lawyer, a doctor, a sociologist, a teacher, or a chef.

◆ **A food historian must be a cook, and vice versa,** otherwise terrible errors of understanding arise. An effective historian cannot be an armchair culinary and kitchen theorist but must be a practitioner. I was able to make this point several times by explaining out how living history sites with active kitchens can offer an empirical experience unavailable elsewhere.

From the many teachers present (public, college, university, vocational), came a strong sense that incorporating food and its history into general studies is perceived as odd among their colleagues. Thus these teachers feel subversive when employing food as a vehicle to understand geography, politics, genetics, family studies, art, etc. One high school art teacher has a class called "What Did Michaelangelo Eat?" that addresses food, music and clothing to understand his personal, ethnic and cultural environment. and therefore his art. Another teacher, of student cooks and chefs, has answers when his despairing students ask, when their puff pastry doesn't puff nicely, "Who thought this stuff up?"

Before ending I must also mention our three stunning meals that featured local Massachusetts produce, like heritage tomatoes and pheasant, in beautifully presented, tasty ways. Some petit fours, for instance, were tiny miraculous works of art that melted in the mouth.

I sallied forth prepared to enjoy myself, to learn, and to network, and so I had a great time. I renewed contacts, made new ones, heard new ideas and familiar ideas expressed in new ways, and, despite the fatigue of travel, returned refreshed in culinary spirit. Definitely the friendliest conference I've ever attended. It was a wonderful reminder that I'm part of an expanding community which understands my culinary and historical obsessions.

Names and Times of Meals in the Diary of Sophia Macnab, 1846

By Amy Scott.

Sophia Macnab, daughter of Sir Allan Napier Macnab, lived at Dundurn Castle in Hamilton, Canada West. She was thirteen years old when she took up her pen in 1846 to record the daily events of her life. She began her diary at the suggestion of her mother, who was terminally ill. As a chronicle of quotidian life in an affluent household, it provides many insights into upper-class foodways of Ontario in the mid-19th century, especially mealtimes. In addition, it is a fascinating picture of the foods consumed by an invalid in the early Victorian period.

The entry for January 21, 1846 notes, “[Mamma] took some Oysters for her dinner, which she relished very much and then she went to sleep.... After that we soon had tea”. “After tea I went up to Mamma’s room and found her better. We gave her, her tea made her comfortable kissed her for good night and went to bed” [25]. There are two possible interpretations of this sequence of meals based on the trends in mealtimes of the 18th and 19th centuries. ‘Dinner’ could be the evening meal, which was followed after a couple of hours by the drinking of tea and coffee while socializing in the drawing room. The latter informal meal was called ‘tea’. This is the pattern that was common in England among the gentry at the turn of the 18th century, and is vividly portrayed in the novels of Jane Austen. The other interpretation is that ‘dinner’ is the mid-day meal, served at noon or perhaps one o’clock, and ‘tea’ is the meal later known as ‘high tea’, a substantial meal eaten in the evening.

Sophia’s account of January 25th (a Sunday) states that on returning from morning service, “we found Mamma much better than we left her, and busily employed eating her lunch which consisted of nine Oysters and half a tumbler of beer.” She then notes that her sister Minnie “came and asked me to go & sit with papa while she had her lunch.” Sophia and Minnie took turns sitting with their father, who was also ill at the time, while the other “was at her dinner” [27]. In this context, the words ‘lunch’ and ‘dinner’ are used interchangeably and clearly refer to a midday meal. The same entry mentions watching Minnie play-wrestling with their uncle in the dining room “before tea” and “after tea”. Her nine o’clock bedtime is mentioned later with no intervening serving of food, suggesting that ‘tea’ was the final evening meal.

Another entry early in February informs us, “After lunch I went over to Aunt Maria’s for half an hour. I came home at two o’clock.” This probably means the meal lasted from noon until one o’clock. The entry later states, “I sat with Mamma until the candles came and then wrote my journal until tea time” [29], meaning that ‘tea’ was eaten well into the evening. In early February, sunset would be around 5:40 p.m.

On Sunday, February 22nd, Sophia notes, “We sat in Mamma’s room until she got her dinner which consisted of a Pygion (this is Mamma’s usual diet at

one o’clock every day) and a tumbler of Beer.” Later on that day, “after tea papa read a sermin” [33]. Here again, dinner is the midday meal, although it seems that the invalid Mamma is eating at a different time than the rest of the household. Even for those members of the household who were in good health, mealtimes seem to have varied depending on day-to-day circumstances. A drizzly day in March is marked as much by the fact that “We had dinner about one” [38] as by the trip into town that followed. About a week later Sophia sat up so long with her mother that “After I had my tea I was obliged to go to bed immediately as it was long past my bed hour” [41]. A few days later she is invited to spend the day with her aunt and notes, “we had dinner at two” [42].

In contrast, when Sophia and her father visit her aunt and uncle in Toronto at the beginning of Lent, she eats lunch at midday and spends her afternoon visiting. She reports, “I returned just in time to prepare for dinner. After dinner I sat in the drawing [room] until nearly ten o’clock when I went to bed” [34]. The next evening she does not go out to dinner with ‘papa’ due to some dental work she suffered through in the afternoon. Clearly, in the big city ‘dinner’ is the term applied to the evening meal. Later in her visit, she reports that her father “went out to dinner” while she “had tea about ½ past five” [35] at a friend’s home.

The variety of mealtimes and names documented in the few short months of Sophia’s diary shows their fluidity in 19th century society. City and country dwellers kept different hours, but adapted quickly to the different patterns when visiting. Mealtimes may also have shifted based on the time of year, in step with the change in daylight. In Montreal to attend Parliament in June, Sir Allan was at his dinner when Sophia came home around eight o’clock [56]. ‘Tea’ seems to be well defined as the evening meal among inhabitants in the countryside, although references to ‘drinking’ tea at someone’s home seem to refer to the after-dinner social occasion that has its roots in 18th century practices. On the same visit to Montreal, Sophia notes that her aunt and older sister “drank tea at Mrs Arnoldi’s this evening” [57]. For country folk, ‘dinner’ and ‘lunch’ are both used to describe the midday meal, whereas in the city only ‘lunch’ is used, and ‘dinner’ is always the evening meal.

Sophia Macnab’s 1846 diary is an artless and candid record of mid-19th century life, incorporating in its very ordinariness a reliable description of foodways for an affluent household in Ontario. The picture it provides shows us a pattern of mealtimes that was well established from the beginning of the century and yet is reasonably flexible. The fluidity and changeableness is primarily in the names of meals, which vary depending on the social context, whether in the city or the country, or due to differences in social or economic class.

FAMILY FARE by Ed Lyons

This is a column for our readers to share old family recipes. These recipes should have been used in families for 2 or more generations. We would also like some of the history attached to the recipes and your families.

In the Winter 2001 issue (#27), I gave the family recipe for schmaltz, the Jewish term for rendered poultry fat. One of my favourite uses for schmaltz is in chopped liver. Our recipe is very simple and I hope you will love it even though it isn't for the health conscious!

Chopped Liver

2 kilos chicken livers
½ kilo onions, chopped medium fine
Schmaltz to taste (250 – 500 grams)
Salt & pepper to taste

Soak chicken livers in salt water for 1 hour, drain and flush with fresh water.

Broil livers at highest oven temperature for 5 minutes, turn and broil for 5 minutes more. (Since ovens vary, check occasionally to make sure the livers do not burn.)

Put to one side to cool.

Fry onions in 125 grams of schmaltz until golden brown. (Do not burn.)

Using coarse grind, put livers through mincer, adding the onions as the liver is being minced.

Add 125 grams of schmaltz, 2 tsp of salt and a pinch of ground pepper to the mixture. Mix well.

Taste and add more schmaltz in small quantities until satisfied with the taste and texture. Add more salt, if required, but be careful: too much salt will ruin the concoction and it is not good for you! The texture and the taste should be smooth.

If you have not tried Jewish chopped liver before, don't worry. Find the proportions of schmaltz and salt that you like. If you can, try it on a Jewish friend and bask in the praise.

Chopped liver is excellent as a vorsepe (yiddish for appetizer) on soda crackers, matzoh, RyVita, etc. It may be kept in the fridge for several months if you squash it into mason jars (to eliminate air pockets) and cover it with a ¼" layer of schmaltz. When you want to use the liver, mix in the schmaltz and serve.

In the previous issue, ¾ cup of milk was omitted from Peter Iveson's recipe for his Great, Great Grandmother Maley's Pound Cake. The editors apologize for this omission.

Please send your family recipes in to me along with some historical notes. Ed Lyons

E-mail: lyons@idirect.com

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Ed spends part of his retirement time volunteering as an historic cook at Spadina Museum in Toronto.

UPCOMING CHO EVENTS *continued from page 1*

Thursday January 17, 2002

Northern District Library, 6:30 – 8:30:

Two Speakers, One Evening!

HOW TO TICKLE THE PALATE WITH A PEN □ *Nathalie Cooke*

*Recent sales suggest there's a fascination not only with food but also with books about food. But what satisfaction lies in writing and reading about food? Natalie Cooke ponders this question, exploring the tasty fare served up by some of Canada's best-loved word chefs – both writers of cookbooks, including Mrs. Flynn and Kate Aitken, and fiction about food, such as L. M. Montgomery's *Anne of Green Gables*, Carol Shields' *The Stone Diaries*, and Gabrielle Roy's *The Tin Flute*.*

OF COURSE THERE'S MORE TO COOKING CANADIAN THAN BUTTER TARTS !! *Mary Williamson*

The butter tart is a relatively recent delicacy in Ontario: its origins go back a mere 100 years or so. While in a country as large as Canada, with a daunting range of climates and cultures, it's pointless to try to pin down "national" dishes, there are obvious regional traditions of cookery. In Ontario it is possible to trace many dishes that were once widely popular but have dropped out of today's cookbook culture. These foods were enjoyed in the Southern Ontario of the earliest Loyalist settlers of the late 18th century, on through the 19th century, and well into the 20th. Many are seen by our friends south of the border as quintessentially American. It is time that we resolutely retrieved as part of our Ontario culinary heritage dozens of North American dishes such as johnny cake, popovers, doughnuts, and pumpkin and apple pies. And when the thousands of Canadians living in Los Angeles are asked to bring a heritage dish to a communal dinner they should be able to think beyond butter tarts and nanaimo bars

Culinary Calendar

Please send CHO information about your upcoming food history or related events. We are pleased to include them in the newsletter.

November

Scottish Soups

Mackenzie House 416-392-6915

November 10 11 am - 4 pm

Prepare Scottish National soups in an 1859 kitchen. Pre-registration required. Adults: \$45 + GST
Call 416-392-6910.

Christmas and Hogmanay Treats

Gibson House Museum 416-395-7432

November 17 10 am-2 pm

Learn to prepare shortbread, plum puddings, mincemeat and mulled cider over the open hearth using authentic 19th century recipes. Pre-registration & pre-payment required. Adults: \$25 - includes GST and course materials.

"Stir up Sunday" Cooking Workshop

Montgomery's Inn 416-394-8113

November 18 or 25 1 - 4:30 pm

Leave this one-day workshop with a plum pudding and a generous supply of mincemeat, created in our open-hearth kitchen with Victorian "receipts" 19th century style tools and your very own hands! Adults (16 and up) \$35. Friends of Etobicoke's Heritage \$30. Includes supplies. Pre-registration required.

Mennonite Butchering Bee

Joseph Schneider Haus 519-742-7752

Kitchener, ON

November 17 10 - 5 pm

Watch costumed staff prepare link and summer sausage.

"Kids in the Kitchen" Workshop

Montgomery's Inn 416-394-8113

Nov. 24, Dec. 1, Dec. 8, 9:30 am - 12 pm

Children ages 9-12 will explore 19th century holiday traditions by making seasonal decorations and gifts and preparing festive foods in the Inn's open-hearth kitchen. \$15 per day. \$40/series. Pre-registration required.

December

Cookies & Pretzels

Joseph Schneider Haus 519-742-7752

Kitchener, ON

December 1 & 2

The prized cookie cutters are brought out and traditional cookies such as Sand Hearts, Lebkuchen and Pfeffernusse are prepared. Pretzels, the symbol of the Winter Solstice, are twisted and sampled.

Christmas Desserts By Lamplight

Scarborough Historical Museum 416-431-3441

Saturday, December 8 6:30-9 pm

Enjoy sumptuous desserts during a truly magical Victorian Christmas-themed evening, lit entirely by lamplight. Pre-registration only. Adults: \$11, Seniors/Children: \$5.00

St. Martins Goose

Joseph Schneider Haus 519-742-7752

Kitchener, ON

December 15 & 16

The favourite festive fowl is prepared in the cookstove. Uses of the goose and feathers, and the making of quill pens and goose toys are demonstrated.

Christmas By Gaslight

Spadina Historic House & Gardens 416-392-6910

December 20, 21, 22 - 7 to 9 pm

The ambience of gaslight, the aromas and tastes of turn-of-the-century (1900) hors-d'oeuvres & dessert menus, and period music are all brought together to help our guests feel as if they are at an Edwardian holiday celebration. \$20.00 plus GST per person. Reservations only.

Hogmanay!

Mackenzie House 416-392-6915

December 28, 29, 30 - 7 to 9 pm

A "New Year's Eve" party - with Scottish flare! Traditional foods and music; festivities and tours are illuminated by gas and candlelight. \$15.00 plus GST. Reservations only.

Stroke of Midnight

Gibson House Museum 416-395-7432

December 29 & 30 - 8 - 10:30 pm

A seasonal favourite! Two opportunities to experience David & Eliza Gibson's gracious 1851 home by candlelight and celebrate the festivities of the Scottish New Year! Ring in the new year with an evening of music and song, delicious holiday foods and beverages and a visit from the first-footer bringing greetings, gifts and good wishes for the coming year. Reservations only. Licensed. Tickets: \$15.00 + GST

January

Queen Charlotte's Birthday

Historic Fort York 416-392-6907

Jan. 26, 2002, 1:00 pm - 10:00 pm

A new day long event focusing on entertaining in the Canadas in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. Includes afternoon dance workshop, illustrated Lectures, Supper and evening Ball. Cost TBD. Pre-registration required.

Culinary Credits

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