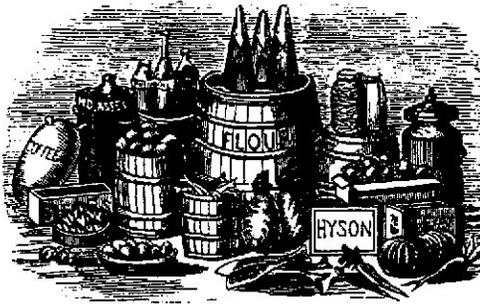


CULINARY HISTORIANS OF ONTARIO

Winter 1996

Number 7



- TORONTO REGION -

Not your typical Conference!

The Culinary Historians of Ontario in partnership with Doon Heritage Crossroads, Kitchener, Ont., are pleased to announce "From Rations to Riesling: Remembering Ontario's Food Heritage" on Saturday, September 21, 1996.

Why is this conference not like any other? Because participants will have the opportunity not only to come together to discuss the importance and diversity of Ontario's food history, *but also to experience it.*

The cost for this event will be \$35.00 which includes recipe packages and an historic lunch. Other details of the conference are in the planning stages but we hope the itinerary for the day will include a slide presentation of a chronology of Ontario's food history, as well as a special guest speaker who will comment on why culinary history has become so popular and why people continue to celebrate their culinary traditions.

Attendance for the conference will be a maximum of 100 so that afternoon workshops will be a reasonable size. Participants will attend three different hands-on workshops out of a possible 15 - 18 in the kitchens and modern facilities available at Doon Heritage Crossroads. Possible workshop themes already being discussed include *open hearth cooking techniques, bake ovens, wine tasting and appreciation, how to boil puddings, how to make haggis, heritage apple tasting, how to create a heritage garden and then use the produce in an historic kitchen, and finding ingredients to replicate period recipes.*

At this point we would like to ask members and colleagues to submit papers or proposals for other potential workshops. The submissions should reflect your research and experience with the topic chosen. This can be a

formal paper or an informal workshop proposal which should include an outline and a bibliography. We anticipate that the workshops will be about 50 minutes in length so submissions should keep this time constraint in mind as well as the high emphasis placed on interaction and hands-on experience within the workshop. Submissions for the workshops should be sent to: **Culinary Historians of Ontario**
c/o Fiona Lucas
1227 College St.
Toronto, Ontario
M6H 1C1
Application deadline is March 31, 1996.

Eventually we will need your help with planning as September gets closer and we will especially need your help the day of the conference. We are determining now what committees will be set up and what kinds of responsibilities they will have.

In our upcoming issues we will keep you posted on the planning process. We will include registration forms, requests for volunteers, lists of the available workshops to choose from and more details about the conference.

We look forward to hearing your ideas, working with fellow members and colleagues, and seeing all of you at the conference in September!

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.

CULINARY COLLECTION -- HISTORIC RECIPE #9

The modern version of this recipe is written to be as similar as possible to the original. We invite you to submit recipes to this ongoing column. Please use this format.

SCOTCH HAGGIS

This recipe is from the manuscript collection of Thomas Montgomery, innkeeper at "The Sign of the Plough" on the Dundas Highway in Etobicoke Township from 1830 to 1856.

Original Text:

"Clean the bag lay it all night in salt & water parboil the pluck mince the heart & lights & grate the liver take 1 lb 2 oz of toasted oatmeal two minced onions season with pepper & salt put all into a basin put two pints of the water the pluck was boiled in & mix with [sic]

Turn the bag with the plain side but fill with the mixture (leaving room for swelling) sew up (a worsted thread does best) put it into a pot of boiling water prick with a needle to prevent bursting let it boil briskly for 3 hours.

I often put it on with cold water moving it about until it boils then it will never burst & requires no pricking."

Maggie's Modern Version:

Kidneys are used instead of lungs ("lights"). Quantities of toasted oatmeal and water are reduced.

- 1 sheep's stomach
- 1 sheep's heart }
- 2 sheep's kidneys } "pluck"
- 1 sheep's liver }
- 1/2 lb. oatmeal (not rolled oats)
- 2 large onions
- 1/2 lb. suet, grated
- 1 tsp. salt
- 1 tsp. pepper
- 2 tsps. seasoning herbs: sage, parsley, thyme

This is a 2 day operation, either on the crane over the fire in an historic house kitchen or in a modern kitchen. The night before you start, soak the heart, kidneys and liver (the "pluck") in salt water to draw out any blood or impurities.

Day 1:

1. Parboil the "pluck" in plenty of water for half an hour. Reserve the water for moistening the oatmeal mix on day 2.
2. Wash the sheep's stomach or "bag" clean of any contents. Scald it, then scrape both inside and out. Leave it to soak in cold salt water overnight. *Note:* Don't soak bag in hot water: it becomes tough and inelastic and impossible to clean.
4. Toast the oatmeal on a tray in a bake oven or modern oven, or on a tray in front of an open fire.

Day 2:

5. Mince the onions. Grate the suet. Grate the parboiled meats. *Note:* If a meat grinder is accurate in your historic kitchen, or if you're working at home,

it gives a much smoother consistency than a grater, and helps the meats blend.

6. Combine the meat, toasted oatmeal, onions, suet and seasonings. Add a teacup of water saved from boiling the meat. Stuff the bag. Sew it shut with strong thread. *Note:* As the historic recipe suggests, one side of the stomach is "plain" and the other is highly textured. The plain side looks nicer as the outside casing of the finished haggis.

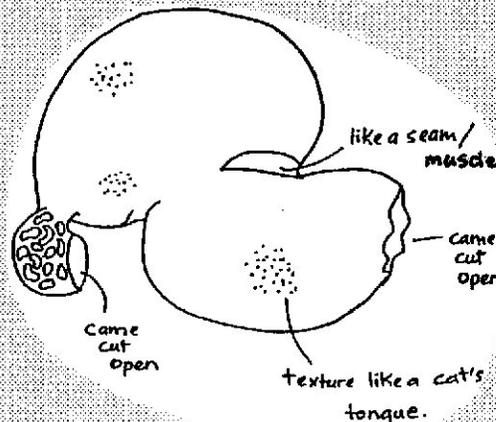
7. Place the stuffed stomach in the boiling water, cover the pot and boil for approximately 3 hours. Keep a second pot of water going to replenish the water as it boils away. *Note:* To keep haggis submerged in hot water, it may be necessary at first to repeatedly prick it with a darning needle and hold it down with a wooden spoon until the air escapes from the bag.

8. Serve the haggis with potatoes and turnip, and perhaps a wee nip.

Maggie's Editorial Comment:

Although this historic recipe is from Montgomery's Inn, I first made haggis at Gibson House in 1989. I combined a variety of traditional recipes. Some recipes call for sheep's "lights" or lungs, which I used in one early effort but they are very unappetizing when cooked: the airways become tough and rubbery, and the flesh is spongy and grey. In addition to being a culinary adventure, making haggis is a good opportunity to discuss the frugal use of every last bit of food available, and a great introduction to Sheep's Head Soup! Obtaining the ingredients can be the greatest challenge.

A Sheep's Stomach



Maggie Newell is an interpreter at Montgomery's Inn, operated by the City of Etobicoke as a living history museum.

CULINARY CONTEMPLATIONS #2

We invite other readers to write about the genesis of their interest in culinary history.

• BOB WILDFONG •

Leaven from Heaven

In early rural Ontario, even to the beginning of the 20th century, food was more than a commodity; it was life itself. In food history, we often find ourselves studying life. If food is life after all, we cannot understand food unless we understand the lives of those who made and ate it.

For the subsistence farmer, life was an ever-repeating cycle of planting and harvest, whose purpose was to produce the food which fed the producers. Hard work and good planning notwithstanding, food came from God or it didn't come at all.

When the majority of the population lived and worked on farms (only a century ago), religion and agriculture went hand in hand. More than just a chore, the harvest was a blessing. Perhaps seen more clearly after the work was done, it equated food with personal and community values. Every grain was a drop of sweat, and every morsel had personal, as well as financial value.

Thanksgiving meant what it stood for, not just a passing mental note of gratitude, but a great sigh of relief that another year of existence had been secured. Hymns of agricultural supplication are still sung at Thanksgiving, but seem strangely out of place in today's urban churches. For most of us, it takes some imagination to comprehend the value and reverence which such a lifestyle placed on common food.

In stark contrast to the past, today's museum visitor has probably never felt a profound personal connection to their food. Neither have they felt the grief of a crop failure, the hollow helplessness of watching a field battered to death by a late-season hailstorm. Not that it matters anyway. If the food is lost or spoiled you can just buy more.

Supermarkets and modern agricultural commodities systems distance the consumer from crop failures which occur regularly in various

parts of the world. If a certain food is not available from the usual country of origin, it is simply shipped from another. Prices fluctuate, but not radically because only a small fraction of the store price represents the cost of the raw product. Most of the time, consumers are unaware of the convoluted journey that their food has taken.

Food was once considered sacred; in every culture, a gift of heaven. In our society it is now seen as nothing more than an economic commodity, no more significant to life on Earth than transistors and toothpaste. Is it any wonder that the custom of giving thanks before a meal has all but lost its meaning?

The contrast between the early farmer's and the modern consumer's perception of food cannot be overemphasised in historical food interpretation. The essentiality of gardening, food storage and larder management is too easily lost on the visitor who forgets that the food cannot be easily replaced if it spoils. Even a common activity such as canning can become an affecting revelation to the visitor who is encouraged to consider the consequences of a lost or poorly-stored harvest.

In food history, it is all too easy to become engrossed in the processes and the ingredients of our foods. The best story-tellers are those who can put their audiences into the shoes of their characters and make stories come alive around them. As food story-tellers, we can create enlightenment as well as dinner, by summoning back the sense of reverence and necessity which good food deserves.

Bob Wildfong is the Head Gardener at Doon Heritage Crossroads, a long-time member and promoter of the Heritage Seed Program and Secretary of the Waterloo Historical Society.



CULINARY 'CONOCLAST #1

We received this letter from member Mary Williamson. She offers revisionary comments on the place of spices in Ontario's culinary history:

● CURRY ●

Recipes in [many Ontario] collections call for a number of spices, such as cinnamon, ginger, nutmeg, mace and cloves. However, if you believe some Canadian food writers you would have a very different impression of early Ontario cooking.

In *Across the Table: an Indulgent Look at Food in Canada* (Prentice-Hall, 1985) Cynthia Wine writes:

"We had little use for spices and odd herbs in our early days of settlement.... For years, our lack of familiarity with spices and our suspicion that strange-tasting foods and culinary exotica were somehow contrary to the democratic spirit, bequeathed us a legacy of distrust for odd flavours." (p. 19)

And Sondra Gotlieb in her earlier *The Gourmet's Canada* (New Press, 1972) writes:

"Take a large dose of American cooking, from old-fashioned New England johnny cake to the contemporary New York strip sirloin; mix with a good amount of tea (still brewed in a pot, English style); add a handful of oatmeal and some Mennonite dumplings from Waterloo County, and season everything with Hungarian paprika and Italian oregano, or 'pizza spice'. Stir it up, bake for 200 years (remember to add spices only at the end) and there you have it, Ontario cooking." (p. 69)

Because this strikes me as defamation of a sort, I have made a point of reproducing some receipts for curry powder found in 19th century Canadian cook books. One that my friends have received on many occasions reads:

Curry powder. - Turmeric and coriander seeds, of each, 4 oz.; black pepper, 2 1/2 oz; ginger, 14 drs.* [7/8 oz.]; cinnamon, mace, and cloves, each, 1/2 oz.; cardamom seeds, 1 oz.; cummin seeds, 2 drs. [1/8 oz.]; cayenne pepper, 1 oz.; powder and mix.

R. Moore, *The Artizan's Guide and Everybody's Assistant*, (Montreal: John Lovell, 1873, p. 75)

* *Editors' note:* drs. is short for drachm, pronounced "dram". For apothecaries, it equalled 1/8 fluid ounce (liquid) as well as 1/16 avoirdupois ounce (weight). Confusing!

See: Mary Williamson, "Curry: a Pioneer Canadian Dish", *Multiculturalism*, vol. 2., no. 3 (1979), pp. 21-24.

CULINARY CLUB

Individuals:

Doris Brummel, Napanee
Annette Caron, Kapaskasing
Mrs. Richard Thorner, Mississauga
Kerry Savage, Toronto
Barbara Truax, Toronto

Other groups:

Historic Foodways Society of the Delaware Valley, Pennsylvania
The Women's Culinary Network, Toronto

And thanks to all those who renewed their memberships!

ONTARIO AGRICULTURAL MUSEUM

● CLOSING ●

One of the best known museums of agriculture and rural life, the **Ontario Agricultural Museum**, will be closing March 31 1997, due to provincial government cutbacks. Some 80,000 people visit the Museum annually and it is considered to be one of North America's leading agricultural centres. In response to these events, a committee called Ontario's Rural Heritage Preservation Committee (ORHPC), has been formed to discuss the future of the Museum. This group will devote its efforts to "preserving the site, buildings, artifacts, programmes and archives" of the Museum.

For more information contact:

Peter Ledwith or Susan Bennett (905) 878-8151

CULINARY CAREER

● VOLUNTEER HISTORIC COOKS ●

The Toronto Historical Board is launching a volunteer programme for historic cooks. Are you interested? The THB operates 6 sites, 4 with active kitchens, ranging from an 1826 officers' mess to an upper middle class Edwardian mansion. A full training programme in historic cookery techniques will be offered.

Want more information? Please call:

Fiona Lucas, Senior Domestic Interpreter for the THB, at (416) 392-6910 after February 15.

CULINARY CALENDAR

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

February

Montgomery's Inn Valentine's Day Tea Wednesday Feb. 14, 2:00 - 4:00 pm. Adults \$3.00, Children \$2.00. 4709 Dundas St. W., Etobicoke, Ont. (416) 394-8113.

The Seagram Museum An Evening of Icewine: A Vertical Tasting on Ontario's Vidal Grape Join Lesley Prantera, Marketing Director of Stonechurch Vineyards, for an evening that will begin with a glass of Vidal wine, followed by the sweeter late harvest, and tastings of three Stonechurch Icewine vintages ('91,'92,'93). Thursday Feb. 22, 7:00 - 9:00 pm. Cost \$39.14 including GST. To register contact Conestoga College at (519) 748-3516 and refer to course # 90298200. 57 Erb St., Waterloo, Ont.

Doon Heritage Crossroads Seedy Saturday A celebration of Canadian gardening heritage, the history of seeds and their distribution in the region of Waterloo, and the importance of heritage seeds in maintaining a diverse gene pool in modern horticulture. Saturday Feb. 24. 10:00 - 4:00 pm. Admission is \$2.00 per person. Homer Watson Blvd., Kitchener, Ont. (519) 748-1914.

The Seagram Museum Wine Appreciation II This five week course provides a detailed exploration of all aspects of winemaking and drinking, including the partnering of food and wine. Tuesdays, Feb. 27 - March 26, 7:00 - 9:30 pm. Cost \$84.53 including GST. Pre-register by calling Conestoga College (519) 748-3516 and refer to course # 90229401.

Montgomery's Inn The China Connection... A Century of Ceramics Uncovered Exhibit runs from Feb. to Oct. 4709 Dundas St. W., Etobicoke, Ont. (416) 394-8113.

March

Essex Region Conservation Authority - John R. Park Homestead Maple - First Taste of Spring Savour the aroma of fresh maple syrup. See traditional and modern methods of making maple syrup, then enjoy a delicious pancake breakfast. Sunday March 10, 10:00 - 4:00 pm. Essex Rd. 50, between Kingsville & Cochester, just 45 min. southeast of Windsor and Detroit.

Montgomery's Inn St. Patrick's Day Tea Sunday March 17, 2:00 - 4:00 pm. Adults \$3.00 Children \$2.00. 4709 Dundas St. W., Etobicoke, Ont. (416) 394-8113.

Campbell House March Break Bring your family and enjoy gingerbread baking over the hearth. March 11 - 15, 9:30 - 4:30. Adults \$3.50, Seniors/Students \$2.50, Children \$2.00. Family rate available. 160 Queen St. W., Toronto, Ont. (416) 597-0227.

Montgomery's Inn March Break Sign your children up to enjoy a week of games, cooking, and crafts.

March 11 - 15 & March 18 - 22. 9:30 - 3:30 pm. Pre-registration required. Cost \$150.00 per weekly session.

The Gibson House March Break Adventures This programme offers children ages 5 - 12 an opportunity to bake using the open hearth, make candles, learn about lighting, play 19th century games and much more. March 12 & 13, or March 19 & 20 ages 5 - 7. March 14 & 15 or March 21 & 22 ages 8 - 12. 10:00 - 12:00 pm. Cost to be announced. Pre-registration required. 5172 Yonge St., North York. (416) 395-7432.

April

The Seagram Museum Put a Cork in it Discover the "ins" and "outs" of cork in corking and corkpulling demonstrations. Explore the versatility and significance of this unique, natural product. Saturday April 20 & Sunday April 21. 11:00 - 5:00 pm. (519) 885-1857.

The Gibson House Hearth Cooking Workshop This workshop will introduce you to various hearth cooking techniques. Saturday April 20, 10:00 - 2:00 pm. Cost to be announced. Pre-registration required.

The Ontario Historical Society Out of the Frying Pan, Into the Fire Find out what spiders, spurtles and girdles have in common. Pre-registration required. March 29, 10:00 - 4:00, Cost \$20.00 for OHS members, \$40.00 for non-members. London Public Library, 305 Queen's Avenue, London, Ontario. (416) 226-9011.

May

The Ontario Historical Society Consuming Passions II: Feeding the Multitudes This conference will take an in-depth look at eating and drinking traditions in Ontario. May 2, 3 & 4. Radisson Hotel, Ottawa Centre, Ottawa.

CULINARY CREDITS

- Fiona Lucas (416) 534-1405
- Christine Lupton (519) 749-1645
- Bridget Wranich (416) 690-7062

Thanks for this issue to: Bob Wildfong, Patsy Beeson, Mary Williamson, Maggie Newell.

Deadline for next issue: March 15.

Our address is: c/o Christine Lupton, 60 Church St. E., Apt. E, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada N2G 2S2

E-mail: chrilupt@village.ca

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