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Belgian Women Make Five Pies at One Time, Recipe Gladly Given

Cabbage and Potatoes Cooked Together, Termed 'Jat,' Ranks High as Favorite Among Belgian Families in Wisconsin; Leek Soup, Too, Has an Excellent Reputation

This article on traditional Belgian foods prepared and served by the descendants of Belgians who settled in Wisconsin is the first of a series describing customs and recipes mingling the culinary art of many nations in our state. Cornish foods will be the subject of an article on Wednesday's Woman's Page.

By Jean Templeton

TO GREEN BAY, flourishing trading post for northern Wisconsin and Michigan, went many of the sons and daughters of Belgium to find work, to marry and settle down and raise families, not quite so large perhaps as the ones from which they came. The tales of those early days are still told around there, even though the old-world practices are just a story to the second and third generations.

Marie Simonet was 14 when she left her home in Belgium to come to this strange new land with her mother and brothers and sisters. That was in September, 1881. Her father and one brother had come a few months earlier. Blacksmith, her father was, and it was a good trade there in Belgium, but the family was large—there were 16 children—and the United States represented opportunity to Mr. Simonet.

Customs in the old land were quite different, remembers Mrs. Joe Rollin who was Marie Simonet. She tells that her grandmother did the white laundry only once a year, yet because of the vastness of her linen closets her menfolk were always clothed in white shirts and the bed linen was always fresh and clean. When the time came for the annual washing the clothing was brought down from the attic where it had been stored. It was carted to the nearest creek. There it was scrubbed with soft soap dug from the soap barrels, and spread on the grassy banks to dry. Sometimes ashes were stirred into tubs of water, and then when the ashes had settled and the water was clear, this homemade lye solution was sprinkled on the clothes to hasten the bleaching as they lay on the banks in the sunshine. Often it took two weeks to complete all the washing and ironing.

Farms in Small Plots

In Marie's own family the laundry was done more frequently—every two weeks at least. There were too many children to equip with such extensive wardrobes.

Only a few of the great farms in Belgium were all in one piece. Frequently it was necessary for the men to travel some distance between their plots of ground. When a farmer died his land was divided up among his sons, and soon a man's land would consist of a few acres here, a few acres there, making a trip to the fields an all-day occasion. Beer was plentiful during the summer days on a farm. It was purchased in barrels like oil is today, and every farmer had his thirst-quenching supply for the hot days.

If beer was plentiful, butter was scarce. Likely it came to the table only on Fridays and Sundays. Meals were many; in fact, how could one ever get really hungry with breakfast at 6 and another at 8, dinner at 12, dessert and coffee at 4 and supper at 7?

Apples for Breakfast

For breakfast there would be bread and butter with apples fried in pork fat, and plenty of coffee. At the noon meal there would be perhaps a good thick soup, meat and potatoes, and then late in the afternoon a dessert and more coffee. Supper was simple, mainly boiled potatoes with a sweet-sour dressing and red cabbage sliced and served raw.

Going to the brewers for yeast and carrying it home in a pitcher was a chore the little Belgian children enjoyed. Ovens for baking the bread were built out-of-doors, of white stone. The fire was built early in the morning inside this oven, and when the coals had heated it just right, the stones would take on a peculiar intense whiteness, and then it was time to brush the coals away from the center and slip in the 20 round loaves to bake fragrant and crusty. The door was propped shut, not to be opened until the exact time when the bread would be done. To let it go too long would mean burned bread, a calamity. To open it too early would waste heat, delay baking, and turn out a second-rate bread of which no Belgian housewife could be proud.

Prized by all Belgians and their descendents is the pie they make in quantity.

"A single pie?" Mrs. Alex Kaye questioned dubiously. "We never make just one. We set them in a cool place and they keep several days, even a week. Would you like a recipe for five pies?"

Recipe for Five Pies

Here we have the famous Belgian pie recipe, this one made with baking powder, although many are mixed up with yeast.

Three-fourths cup sugar, one-half cup lard, two eggs well beaten, one and one-fourth cups milk, four teaspoons baking powder, one teaspoon salt, flour enough to make as stiff as cookie dough. Cream sugar and lard, add eggs and milk and dry ingredients alternately. Pat into greased pie tins to line them, about one-fourth inch thick. To make the filling, stew two pounds of prunes with one-half teaspoon cinnamon, one-half teaspoon cloves, and when cooked add one teaspoon vanilla. Rice the prunes and fill piecrust. For the frosting put one pint of cottage cheese through a ricer to make it creamy. Add two beaten eggs, one-half cup sugar and one teaspoon cinnamon. Spread over prunes. Bake about 20 minutes in a moderate oven, 350 degrees fahrenheit. This makes five pies.

Stewed apples can be used instead of prunes. We are warned against rolling out the crust because too much flour may work in.

Defendant for the yeast method of making the pies is Mrs. Ed Collard, sister of Mrs. Rollin, who for many years cooked in a northern lumber camp. The yeast way is really the older method, for it was used long before baking powder was known.

While I was actually eating a piece of this pie about which I'd been hearing so much, and trying to make each crumb last so that I might relish its flavor longer, Mrs. Collard gave me her recipe. Cross between a pie and a coffeecake, I'd call it, made in the shape of a pie, with a coffeecake foundation.

Eight or Nine Pies With Yeast

Eight or nine pies can be made with these proportions, and I'm giving them to you just as Mrs. Collard gave them to me, without dividing down to just one pie.

Five eggs, well beaten, two cups milk, three-fourths cup butter and lard mixed, two yeast cakes, one-fourth cup lukewarm water, one-half cup sugar, two tablespoons salt and about 10 cups flour.

Put shortening in milk and set on stove to melt slowly. When fat is melted and cooled to lukewarm, add beaten eggs. Soak yeast in the one-half cup lukewarm water into which the one-half cup sugar has been mixed. Add yeast to egg and milk mixture, and stir in flour until a soft dough like coffeecake is reached. Let raise until double in bulk. Divide into balls the size of a cup and place on a board to raise. Grease pie tin and spread dough in with hand. Let raise again, pushing the dough up the sides of the pan if it shrinks down. Then put in either the prune or apple filling, and cover with the cottage cheese topping. Mrs. Collard likes to add one-half cup whipping cream to the cottage cheese mixture. Bake in a moderate oven for about 30 minutes.

Favorite Carrot Dish

Lumberjacks with appetites whipped by long hours in the crisp fresh air of the woods used to consume huge helpings of carrots as only Mrs. Collard knew how to cook them, and here is the recipe:

Four cups raw sliced carrots, one-half cup pork drippings, salt, pepper, nutmeg, one large tablespoon sugar. Set over very slow fire and simmer for one and one-half hours.

Galettes were a favorite dish for Friday night supper, or for Sunday night or any afternoon lunch, in Belgium. Made like our waffles, they were piled in a dish and sweetened milk spiced with cinnamon was poured over the cakes. Each person then served himself from this dish. Another way was to pile the cakes one on top of the other and sprinkle brown sugar between.

As a national supper dish, potatoes and cabbage cooked together, and termed "jat" by Mrs. Kaye, ranks high.

Fry a piece of bacon, dice it, add onion to the fat and add sliced raw potatoes. Add enough water to just about cover the potatoes. Shred one-fourth head cabbage—red or Savoy—and spread over potatoes. Season with salt, pepper and nutmeg. Cover tightly. When potatoes are cooked, mash and serve.

Fried cabbage alone is frequently served in families of Belgian descent. Boil curly cabbage in salted water. Drain. Fry onion in bacon fat, add finely chopped cooked cabbage. Season with salt, pepper and nutmeg and fry until lightly brown.

Red cabbage may be cut fine, covered with salted water and boiled until tender. When done, drain water, add one-fourth cup vinegar and one-half cup sugar and two tablespoons butter. Serve.

Representative of the delicious soups all old-world countries make is this leek soup:

Clean the white part of four good-sized leeks. Dice fine. Cut potatoes into small pieces. Boil together in salted water to cover. When potatoes are done, mash. Add one quart of milk and let come to the boiling point. Add butter the size of a walnut and season with pepper.

Fresh Belgian Rolls

Fresh rolls are a specialty at the Kaye home, and the directions for making are not difficult.

One quart lukewarm milk, two tablespoons sugar, one egg beaten well, one-half cup lard, two squares yeast, one tablespoon salt. Melt lard, add to milk, and when both are lukewarm add the yeast which has been soaking in one-half cup of the milk and the sugar; add salt and enough flour to make a sponge. When raised add flour to make a dough not quite as stiff as for bread. Let raise, make into rolls. Let raise again, and when double in bulk bake 20 minutes at 350 degrees fahrenheit.

Oatmeal Bread

Three loaves of bread sprinkled throughout with nutmeats and raisins and flavored with oatmeal are the happy outcome of this recipe.

Two cups oatmeal, one-half cup shortening, one-half cup sugar, two teaspoons salt. Pour over this three cups boiling water and set aside to cool. Soak two and one-half cakes yeast in one cup warm water. When first mixture is lukewarm, add the yeast and two-thirds cup nutmeats and one cup raisins. Knead in enough flour to make a dough. Let raise until double in bulk. Make into three loaves. Let raise again, and when doubled, bake in medium oven, 350 degrees fahrenheit, about 50 minutes.

Send Christmas Recipes

WHAT will the Norwegian, Finnish, Polish, German, Icelanders, Swiss, Cornish French, Swedish, Hungarian, Bohemian, Welsh, Irish, English and Scotch descendants in our state be planning to bake for Christmas? What are the favorite foods soon to be filling the kitchens of the state with appreciated aroma? Will foods hang on the Christmas trees? We're interested. Will you tell us? We will print the most interesting recipes we receive. Address them to Jean Templeton at The Journal.

Appreciation of Pies in Quantity

"CAN you make Belgian pie?" was the question they asked me up around Green Bay when I knocked at the door asking for typical Belgian recipes.

Especially at kermiss, the harvest festival that begins on the second Sunday in September and lasts for two or three days, these pies are served, but any holiday or family celebration warrants their appearance. These festival pies were photographed at Rosiere, Wis.

Driving along the smooth highways in the Door county peninsula, it isn't hard to see why these Belgian families chose to settle there on the farmland, the air fresh and sweet, washed by the bay and lake winds. Red brick houses, and now and then a log house or barn still in use, and an occasional stone house are found on thrifty-looking farms. —Journal Staff Photo

Apron Tied Twice

—Journal Staff Photo

BELGIAN women tied their aprons twice, as the Belgian doll with her back turned illustrates. When working around the farm home the skirt was pulled up over the second tying in bustle effect to save the hem. The Belgian farmer in authentic costume is carrying a duck in his basket.

These dolls, recently imported from Belgium, are available in Milwaukee. Ask Betty Ann where you may find them.

Official White House Party Dates for Season Announced

WASHINGTON, D. C.—(AP)—The White House has signalled a gay December in the capital by setting an early opening for the social season.

President and Mrs. Roosevelt have dated up officialdom for five state dinners and as many formal receptions beginning with a cabinet dinner Dec. 14. Last year the White House social program began Jan. 3.

Announcement of the dates cleared the way for other capital hostesses who withhold party plans to avoid conflict with White House functions, which must be accepted.

Early return of legislators for the special session gave impetus to the scramble for dates. Many of them will remain in the capital over Christmas holidays.

The White House dates, which mean top hats and tiaras, tail coats and low-cut gowns, bright lights and marine band music, are as follows:

Dec. 14, Tuesday, cabinet dinner.

Dec. 16, Thursday, diplomatic reception.

Jan. 6, Thursday, vice-president's dinner.

Jan. 11, Tuesday, judicial reception.

Jan. 13, Thursday, diplomatic dinner.

Jan. 18, Tuesday, congressional reception.

Jan. 20, Thursday, dinner to the chief justice and the supreme court.

Feb. 3, Thursday, reception to the officials of the treasury, post office, interior, agriculture, commerce and labor departments and federal agencies.

Feb. 8, Tuesday, speakers' dinner.

Feb. 17, Thursday, army and navy reception.

Medieval and Gothic Antiques at London Fair

LONDON, England—Queen Mary is patron of this year's antique dealers' fair at Grosvenor House and has lent several picked treasures from her collection at Marlborough House. Chief among them is the George II silver cup, designed by the Huguenot smith, Simon Pantin, in 1730, and presented to King George V and Queen Mary by their children on the occasion of their silver jubilee in 1935.

Remarkable Tankard

Lord Lee of Fareham has lent some of his remarkable silver trophies from White Lodge, Richmond, and the Worshipful Company of Goldsmiths have allowed some of the best examples of the work of the great English goldsmiths and silversmiths of the past to be shown. These include a remarkable tankard of 1661, made from the silver supports of the canopy carried at Charles II's coronation by the Barons of the Cinque Ports, whose perquisite the silver became.

Apart from the loan section, everything at the antique dealers' fair is for sale. Nothing made after 1830 is on view, and this year two periods are stressed; the early nineteenth century and the medieval period. According to one well-known furniture dealer, a vogue for early nineteenth century and Victorian furniture is upon us. This is borne out by the popularity of mahogany and the darker woods which is quite ousting the glass and chromium modernist trend. The duke and duchess of Gloucester have some magnificent mahogany pieces at York House. Walls and furniture fabrics provide the modern treatment for mahogany, and this wood looks well with the plain walls so much in vogue today.

Byzantine Jewelry

Many Gothic and medieval pieces are shown at the fair—chairs, tables, fifteenth-century tapestries, velvets, silks, early medieval jewelry, statuettes, wood-carvings. There is not much furniture prior to 1500, but ivory pieces may go back as far as the twelfth century, and some of the jewelry is Byzantine.

Antique dealers in Britain have enjoyed a very satisfactory business year, due to the presence of so many American and dominion coronation visitors. A number of Americans are visiting this fair, which has been held every fall since 1932.

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Stuffed Kittens

PATTERN 402

FOR youngsters it wouldn't be Christmas unless some cuddle toys were at hand. When a jolly family of cats is as easy to make as these, you'll be glad to please the children. The large puss sits 13 inches high, and the kittens are about five inches tall. You can use scraps of material as well as new cloth, which is an economical way to make the kiddies happy!

To obtain this pattern, send for No. 402 and enclose 10c in stamps or coin. Address The Milwaukee Journal Pattern Department.

Belt That Sparkles

Hollywood, Calif.—(AP)—Shimmering silver lame cut in a slim column makes a new afternoon frock designed for Constance Bennett, film actress. It is accented by a black leather belt sparkling with diamante trimming.

For Dressy Kitchen

Sheer white curtains, or white with a small bright design, edged with colored ball fringe, will effectively dress up your kitchen.

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