

Review of the Butler's edition of "German Cuisine: Refined, Soulful and Delicious (Mini Recipe-Book)"

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Abstract

This work reviews a cookbook published in the Butler series "German cuisine: exquisite, soulful and delicious (mini recipe book)". Germany: Naumann and Göbel. Volume: 240 pages. Illustrations: 138. Date of publication: December 15, 2010. ISBN: 978-3625126881. Hard cover. Language: German¹

Keywords

German Cuisine; Recipes; Regional Cuisine; Cookbook; Germany



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¹ Original title: *Deutsche Küche: Raffiniert, herzhaft und lecker (Minikochbuch)* (2010). Deutschland: Naumann and Göbel.

Обзор кулинарной книги серии Батлер «Немецкая кухня: изысканая, душевная и вкусная (маленькая книга рецептов)»

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Аннотация

В статье приводится обзор кулинарной книги, вышедшей в серии Батлер («советы дворецкого») «Немецкая кухня: изысканая, душевная и вкусная (маленькая книга рецептов)». Германия: издательство Naumann und Göbel. Объем: 240 с. Иллюстрации: 138. Дата публикации: 15 декабря 2010 г. ISBN: 978-3625126881. Твердая обложка. Язык публикации: немецкий.

Ключевые слова

немецкая кухня; рецепты; региональная кухня; кулинарная книга; Германия



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Unusual culinary experiments are certainly rarely associated with German cuisine. When speaking about German food one thinks immediately of sour cabbage, sausages, sour roasts, meat balls and hand-made cheese. The German cuisine is considered to be simple and healthy and above all meat-heavy. Recently the German cuisine, even challenged by various recipes coming from different parts of the world, has been experiencing a new upswing (Schulmeister, 2017). Traditional dishes are used to meet today's demands and the conscious consumer is looking for seasonal and especially regional products. Recent years have shown that chefs are once again concentrating more on traditional German cuisine. National German dishes are increasingly finding their way into local menus in addition to still popular Italian or Asian food.



Fig. 1. Typical German dish. Sausages with potatoes

Marinated and braised beef, Königsberg meat balls, potato pancakes and steam noodles.....Who doesn't get their mouth watered when thinking about these classics of German cuisine? The reviewed book "German cuisine: exquisite, soulful and delicious" by an anonymous author or group of authors presents classical German dishes that make the hearts of gourmets beat faster: from tasty soups and snacks to meat and fish dishes to exquisite desserts. The book provides an overview of the special features of the different regional kitchens in Germany and is illustrated with beautiful color shots. It also offers detailed step-by-step cooking instructions on each dish based on thoroughly calculated price-performance ratio (so very German, this feature!).

The focus of the book is on the recipes. All are well elaborated and described in a practical way, so that even the beginners won't have a hard time cooking the dishes.

The book is divided into several chapters that contain recipes of first courses, second courses, desserts, namely:

1. Salads: for instance, Bavarian herb salad with bacon, pasta salad with meat sausage, lentil salad with apples;
2. Appetizers and soups: for instance, bacon pancakes with vegetable salad, Swabian soup with parsley, tomato soup with thyme;
3. Fish and seafood: for instance, breaded coalfish fillet with cucumber salad, trout with almonds, carp in red wine sauce;
4. Poultry: for instance, roasted chicken with cucumber salad, stuffed turkey breast with ham and mushrooms, roasted pigeon with forest mushrooms;
5. Meat and game: for instance, meat pie with potato salad, Königsberg meat balls with salted potatoes, roasted pork with Bavarian cabbage;
6. Desserts and sweets: for instance, apple pancakes with buckwheat, cherry pie, rice pudding with rhubarb juice etc.



Fig. 2. A German desert. Bavarian cream

One of the advantages of the reviewed book is that the recipes it lists are typically German national recipes, the treasures of German alimentary culture (unlike some other cookbooks, that have far too many international recipes for standard meals – pizza, bolognese, curry etc).

Another good feature is the interesting preface on pages 8-11. From this preface the reader learns about peculiarities of regional cuisines in Germany. The author underlines that there is no uniform German cuisine. As versatile and varied as the German landscapes are, so full of contrasts is the cuisine. Every region in Germany – from the sea to the mountains – has its own way of cooking. If one travels through the country, one finds the same dish easily, though it often has different names depending on the region. The example that comes to my mind is the way pancakes are called in Germany – they are *Eierkuchen* (egg cakes) in Berlin, *Pfannkuchen* (frying pan cakes) or *Krepps* (the word borrowed from French) in other regions and so on.

The author gives more examples – fried minced meat balls is a popular German dish called *Bulette* in the northeast, *Klops* in the east, meat pieces in the south and meatballs in the west. And as if that weren't enough, you can also say chopped cookies or meat crabs. The same with the sweet yeast dough products baked in liquid fat: there is no uniform name for them either. In Berlin and much of East Germany they are called fritters (the most common name is probably *Berliner*) but they are also called doughnuts, puffs and carnival cakes depending on the regional and dialectal traditions.

The author then provides some brief information on peculiarities of regional cuisines. We learn that the Swabian cuisine is characterized by a variety of pastries and dishes made of kidneys, hearts, liver and veal entrails. The so called ox-mouth salad comes from this region, as well as the Swabian snail soup and cherry pie. The Bavarian cuisine enjoys the reputation of “soulful” and “hearty” among the Germans. Here, the potatoes are universal favorites and they are usually processed into dumplings. The typical tea-and-bread lunch is consumed in and around Munich with pretzels and a dressed Camembert. A curious fact – people eat sausages with beer before 12 o'clock, even if it is still early in the morning, because after 12 o'clock sausages may no longer be eaten according to Bavarian tradition. The Bavarians love pork with herbs, liver cheese rolls and fish fried on skewers.

In Hesse one can appreciate sour milk cheese with onions, which is traditionally consumed with apple wine. There are also varieties of cream cheeses, served with roast potatoes or a chicken cooked in wine. Typical Hessian sweets are the *Bethmännchen* from Frankfurt, a marzipan specialty. The large province of North Rhine-Westphalia is known for sour roast meat, Düsseldorf mustard roast, pea soup with blood sausage and peppered hare meat.



Fig. 3. A typical German dish. Fish and roast potatoes with remoulade sauce

Further north you come to Lower Saxony and Bremen. Here people eat a lot of meat dishes, like lamb and wild poultry, and also various sorts of sausages. Near the coast, where the climate gets harsher, one warms up with crusty stews such as a stew with turnip top or pears, beans and bacon. In the north, in Hamburg and Schleswig-Holstein, fish dishes dominate. Near the coast the fish of preference are herring and mackerel, in the area of rivers and lakes mainly trout and eel are found on the menus. One can taste here the famous Hamburger eel soup and a salad of fresh herrings with potatoes. Fish leftovers are then recycled to become a delicious pan dish. Other typical North German specialties are cabbage roulades and potatoes with beef. For sweet mouths the cuisine of the German North offers fruit cereals with vanilla sauce and berry soup. The cuisine of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern is considered to be simple and savoury. Potatoes in any form are used as the basis for many dishes.

To put it short, in these pages the author sings a hymn to German cuisine with its rich regional varieties and local traditions of preparing and consuming food. Together with colourful and seductive pictures and detailed recipes the book makes a really enjoyable reading.

Now to the drawbacks of the edition. I didn't find many, apart from this: what the book definitely lacks is its own input data. In a book published in the 21st century

it is very strange indeed to find no mention of authors, publishing house, ISBN, typographical data etc — nothing but the title on the front page. I had to search in the Internet to find out who published the book and when, and I had to count the number of pages and the number of pictures myself for the review.

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