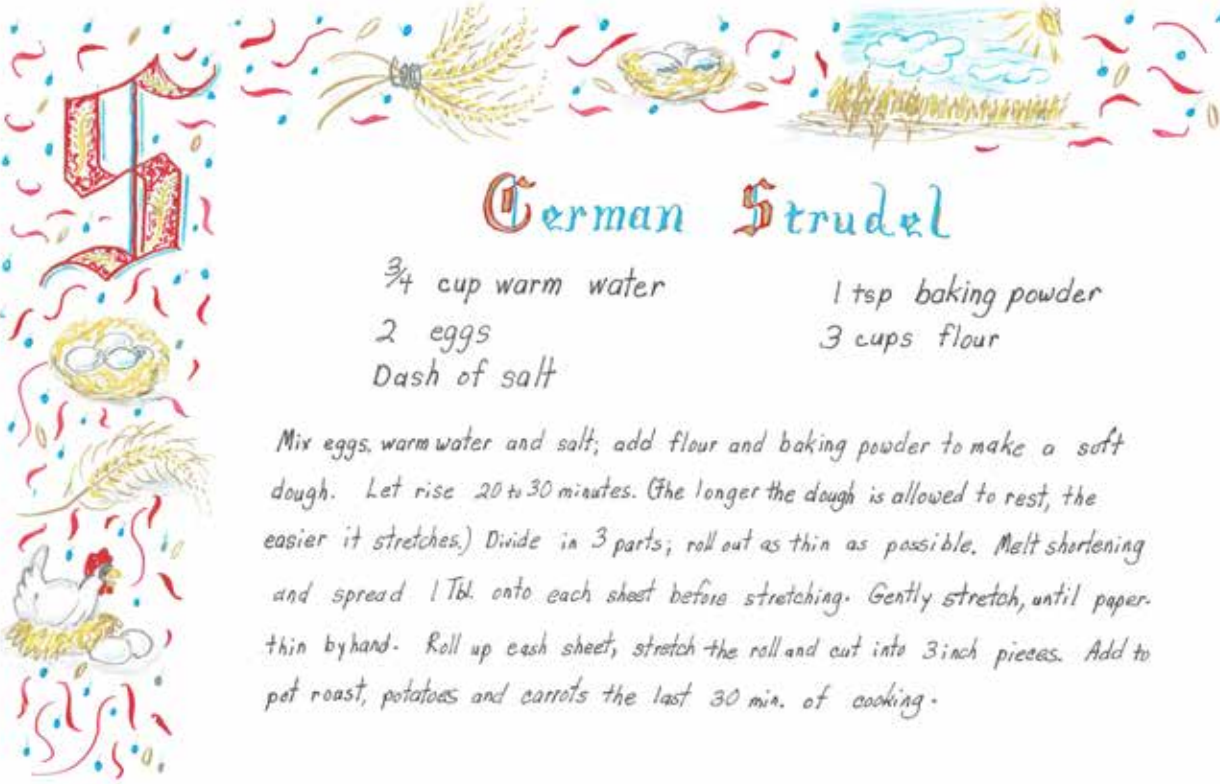


Food for Thought: Fraktur and Decorative Recipe Cards



German Strudel

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup warm water
2 eggs
Dash of salt

1 tsp baking powder
3 cups flour

Mix eggs, warm water and salt; add flour and baking powder to make a soft dough. Let rise 20 to 30 minutes. (The longer the dough is allowed to rest, the easier it stretches.) Divide in 3 parts; roll out as thin as possible. Melt shortening and spread 1 Tbl. onto each sheet before stretching. Gently stretch, until paper-thin by hand. Roll up each sheet, stretch the roll and cut into 3 inch pieces. Add to pot roast, potatoes and carrots the last 30 min. of cooking.

Activity, Time and Materials

ACTIVITY:

As a group or one-on-one, discuss favorite foods and the folklore connected to food. On large index cards, create Fraktur designs for favorite recipes based on the name of the dish or its ingredients. Write or print the recipe on the index card with the Fraktur design. These decorative recipe cards may be mailed as postcards to family and friends. Artists, staff, perhaps kitchen staff, or volunteers can direct the lesson plan.

TIME:

Two to three hours over two sessions.

MATERIALS:

- Paper
- Pens
- Large index or recipe cards (Common size index cards may be too small to accommodate the visual and mobility issues of some elders. Therefore, using 5" x 8" or even 8" x 10" card stock or heavier paper is recommended.)
- Colored pencils, colored fine-point markers, or colored pens
- Large sheets of self-stick, easel-pad paper (25" x 30" is standard)
- The book *Sundogs and Sunflowers: Folklore and Folk Art of the Northern Great Plains*

“THREE PLAGUES” (LONELINESS, BOREDOM, HELPLESSNESS):

These activities are designed to increase social interaction between individuals within the care facility and with their family and friends outside of the facility through the sharing of recipes and recipe cards. Loneliness and boredom will be addressed in this way. To address the residents’ sense of helplessness, those who physically are unable to create Fraktur designs can participate by being engaged in the discussion, by writing or reciting their own recipes, and by suggesting design ideas for others.

ASSOCIATED MEDICAL STUDIES:

Assessment questionnaires and self-report surveys were used in determining that professionally conducted, community-based, cultural programs resulted in higher overall ratings for physical health, fewer doctor visits, less medication use, fewer instances of falls, and fewer miscellaneous health problems for the participants versus a control group that was not engaged by similar programs.

--Cohen, G.D., S. Perlstein, J. Chapline, J. Kelly, K.M. Firth, and S. Simmens. “The Impact of Professionally Conducted Cultural Programs on the Physical Health, Mental Health, and Social Functioning of Older Adults.” The Gerontologist 46, no. 6 (2006): 726-734.

“Negative emotions can intensify a variety of health threats. We provide a broad framework relating negative emotions to a range of diseases whose onset and course may be influenced by the immune system; inflammation has been linked to a spectrum of conditions associated with aging, including cardiovascular disease, osteoporosis, arthritis, type 2 diabetes, certain cancers, Alzheimer’s disease, frailty and functional decline, and periodontal disease. Production of pro-inflammatory cytokines that influence these and other conditions can be directly stimulated by negative emotions and stressful experiences. Additionally, negative emotions also contribute to prolonged infection and delayed wound healing, processes that fuel sustained pro-inflammatory cytokine production. Accordingly, we argue that distress-related immune dysregulation may be one core mechanism behind a large and diverse set of health risks associated with negative emotions. Resources such as close personal relationships that diminish negative emotions enhance health in part through their positive impact on immune and endocrine regulation.” [Abstract]

--Kiecolt-Glaser, J.K., L. McGuire, T.F. Robles, and R. Glaser. “Emotions, Morbidity, and Mortality: New Perspectives from Psychoneuroimmunology.” Annual Review of Psychology 53 (2002): 83-107.

Activity Plan

SESSION 1 (1 HOUR):

1. Food is integral to the familial and ethnic identity of a person. It plays a key role in special occasions, such as holidays, weddings, funerals, community gatherings, and birthdays. The power of food to bring people together—to break the ice, to share, to visit, and to connect—should not be underestimated. Even the mere smell of food can generate memories that will help to encourage social interaction. It is in this way that preceding or concluding arts and other activities with coffee and snacks can be used to great benefit.

2. Ask a series of questions and read examples of food folklore from *Sundogs and Sunflowers* to spark the interaction and memory recollection process. This can be done either as a group or one-on-one.

- What foods are prepared for your family’s Christmas celebration? (For examples from *Sundogs and Sunflowers*, read folklore item 41 on page 215 and items 43, 44, 45, and 46 on page 218. Read and show pages 216-217, especially noting the “Christmas Day” entry on page 217.)
- What foods are cooked for your family’s Easter, Thanksgiving, or other holiday celebrations? Does your family make certain things for birthdays, on Sundays, for weddings or funerals? (For examples, if needed, from *Sundogs and Sunflowers*, read folklore items 49 and 50 on page 219.)
- What kinds of foods do you remember for potlucks or

smorgasbords?

- Did you hunt? If so, did you make meals from wild game like duck or deer? How did you prepare it? (From *Sundogs and Sunflowers*, read the folklore article on page 235.)

Note: The person leading this lesson plan may refer to pages 277-287 of *Sundogs and Sunflowers* for further examples. *Kuchen*, *lefse*, *lutefisk*, *czarnina*, “red-eye,” and others may be mentioned to further engage the discussion.

3. Ask participants to name and describe their favorite dish. What ingredients go in it? Who made it—you, your mother, your father, aunt, uncle? Typically, when was it made? Was it made for special occasions? Who taught you how to make it, or who gave you the recipe? (These questions are very important to the lesson plan, so allow plenty of time for discussion.)

4. Ask each participant to identify two or three of their favorite recipes and bring the complete written recipe for each dish to the next meeting. (Some people may not know the exact measurements of the ingredients. They may have made the dish by touch, feel, and sight, using general measurements like “a pinch” of salt or a “handful” of flour. Reassure the participants that it is fine to write the recipe that way.) They also should indicate from whom the recipe was obtained and when it typically was made. The writing of the

recipes and gathering of information likely will require volunteers, kitchen staff, or the person directing the activity plan to follow up with contributing individuals after this session and before the next.

SESSION 2: (1 TO 2 HOURS)

1. Ask each participant to identify and describe their favorite recipe or dish to the group. Hand out large recipe or index cards, one for each recipe.
2. Explain that the participants will now create an artistic recipe card with decorative Fraktur designs inspired by their favorite dish. Show and read the article “The Art of Fraktur: A Living Tradition” on pages 338-339 of *Sundogs and Sunflowers*. Show them the decorative alphabet and the use of Fraktur designs in each of the book’s chapter introductions.
3. The Fraktur letters and designs can be as simple or as ornate as one wants to make them. However, this task may be daunting to some initially. Offering guidance and recommending a step-by-step procedure may provide the nudge some folks will require to achieve the desired lettering and design result. For instance, on an enlarged sample, point out that the designs are made up of repeated lines and shapes, often in some kind of sequence. Identify various kinds of lines that one could use by referring to things the participants already know, such as curved lines which resemble the letters “s” or “e” or “c.” Point out various shapes that are seen in the Fraktur example, such as flowers, leaves, fruits, and dots. Demonstrate that a pattern is created by repeating lines, shapes, images, and colors. Taking the time to do

this will make the creation of Fraktur designs more comfortable for the participants. Demonstrate examples of the lettering and designs on several large sheets of self-stick, easel-pad paper hung in different places in the room, making it easier for the participants to see. On the easel-pad paper, the person directing the activity should feel free to replicate the examples on the following pages when demonstrating how to do the artwork.

4. Explain that each participant will select a letter from the alphabet representing the first letter of the word that best names their dish. Refer to the alphabet designs on page 339 of *Sundogs and Sunflowers*. The participants can use these same or similar designs. For example, a large, decorative letter “L” would be created in the upper left corner of the index card for a *lefse* recipe, “K” for *kuchen*, “R” for “red-eye,” and so on. Geometric or floral designs blocking the letter are then drawn around it. Colored pens, pencils, or markers can be used. Then a horizontal and vertical geometric or floral decorative element should be drawn along the top and side of the recipe card, flowing from the large Fraktur letter.

For example, for *lefse*:



For “red-eye”:



5. If the participants wish, they may incorporate images, colors, and designs for the Fraktur work specific to the ingredients in the recipe. To generate these ideas for various ingredients, ask, “What comes to mind when you think of [mention the ingredient]?” These questions can be asked as part of a group or with a partner. Then list what comes to mind. One or more of the responses may be used as an

element in the Fraktur design.

For example, for an apple pie recipe:

- What comes to mind when you think of apples? The apples and apple pies themselves, the color red, trees, green leaves?

Apple Pie 425° 40 to 45 min.

6 cups, thinly sliced, peeled apples
3/4 cup sugar
2 Tbl. all-purpose flour
3/4 tsp. cinnamon
1/4 tsp. salt
1/2 tsp. nutmeg
1 Tbl. lemon juice
(9 inch pie plate)

In large bowl, gently mix filling ingredients; spoon into crust-lined pieplate. Top with second crust. Wrap excess top crust under bottom crust edge, pressing edges together to seal. Cut slits or shapes in several places on top crust.
Bake 40 to 45 min. Cool at least 2 hours before serving.

For a German *strudel* recipe:

- What comes to mind when you think of eggs? The eggs themselves, chickens, feathers, crowing, nests, the colors white and yellow?

- What comes to mind when you think of flour? Wheat, grain, fields, sunrises, the colors yellow, gold, and white?



German Strudel

$\frac{3}{4}$ cup warm water
2 eggs
Dash of salt

1 tsp baking powder
3 cups flour

Mix eggs, warm water and salt; add flour and baking powder to make a soft dough. Let rise 20 to 30 minutes. (The longer the dough is allowed to rest, the easier it stretches.) Divide in 3 parts; roll out as thin as possible. Melt shortening and spread 1 Tbl. onto each sheet before stretching. Gently stretch, until paper-thin by hand. Roll up each sheet, stretch the roll and cut into 3 inch pieces. Add to pot roast, potatoes and carrots the last 30 min. of cooking.

6. On the back of the recipe card, the participants should be asked to record the name of the person from whom they received the recipe or who taught them how to make it. Identify that person's relationship to the participant (for example, mother, father, or neighbor). Record when the dish typically was made (for example, on Sundays, for birthdays, when someone was ill, or for Easter). Was it made for special occasions, or was it someone else's favorite dish? This contextual information can provide added emotional meaning and connection for both the person who gives and the person who receives the recipe.

7. Make photocopies of the completed recipe cards. Share copies with other participants in the care facility. Perhaps the care facility kitchen staff and dieticians could prepare some of the dishes for special gatherings or occasions that enlist the oversight of the person from whom the recipe was obtained. It also is recommended that participants create recipe "postcards," with added contextual information as mentioned above, that are blank on one side and can be sent to family members and friends. The creation and sending of recipe postcards encourages interaction between the participants and their family members and friends outside of the care facility. Artwork created on 5" x 8" recipe cards would work well as postcards. Artwork on the larger 8" x 10" heavy paper or card stock could be photocopied to a smaller format for mailing as a postcard. The artwork also could be framed for an exhibition.

AUTHOR • TERESA ROTENBERGER:

Teresa is a Fraktur and ornamental penmanship artist from Milnor, North Dakota. She apprenticed to a Hutterite Fraktur artist through the North Dakota Council on the Arts' *Folk and Traditional Arts Apprenticeship Program*. Fraktur art is an elaborate, colorful, and rare tradition used to decorate hymnals, baptism and wedding certificates, and for recording genealogy in family Bibles, as well as other illuminated, manuscript-like texts. Teresa also practices Spencerian, or ornamental, penmanship and flourishing. Her interest in this tradition began in her early teenage years after seeing a book owned by her great-grandfather and after using this art as physical therapy for her right hand.

AUTHOR • TROYD GEIST:

Troyd is the state folklorist with the North Dakota Council on the Arts who is charged with encouraging the preservation and continuation of folk and traditional arts, heritage, and culture. He holds a Master of Arts degree in Sociology/Anthropology from North Dakota State University, and has participated in and conducted projects involving the impact of folk art and folk traditions on personal health and well-being. Those efforts include traditional storytellers working with fetal alcohol research and prevention programs, Bell's palsy as viewed and treated in traditional cultures, familial Alzheimer's disease tracking using anthropological methods, and the use of culturally infused narrative and traditional music for guided imagery. He directed the original *Art for Life* pilot project in 2001-2003, which measured the effects of long-term folk arts and artist interaction on combating the negative impact of the "Three Plagues" (loneliness, boredom, and helplessness) that many residents in elder care facilities experience. Subsequently, he developed the *Art for Life Program*. With Dr. Timothy J. Kloberdanz, Troyd co-edited, co-compiled, and co-authored the book *Sundogs and Sunflowers: Folklore and Folk Art of the Northern Great Plains*.

(All artwork by Teresa Rotenberger. Activity plan by Troyd Geist, North Dakota Council on the Arts.)

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