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EXPERIMENTS IN CULTURAL FOOD PATTERNS AND CUSTOMS

Emma Gail White
Honors Project
3 Hours Credit
Spring, 1973

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SUMMARY OF EXPERIMENTS IN CULTURAL FOODS

The circumstances under which one eats are largely determined by the culture. Food habits may have existed for centuries, and such a heritage may account for great conservatism in accepting change. These patterns reflect the social organization of the people, including their economy, religion, beliefs about the health properties of certain foods, and attitudes toward various members of the family. The emotional reactions to the consumption of certain foods may be so deeply rooted that effecting acceptance of them is almost impossible. Cultural food patterns exist particularly within countries. Perhaps nowhere in the world can one find so great a variety of foods and methods of preparation as in the United States. The dietary patterns are an amalgamation of the foods native to the region and the habits and customs handed down by generations of foreign born.

Taking these facts into consideration, the author felt a need and a desire to undertake a study of cultural foods as an Honors Project. Some goals and purposes are as follows:

- (1.) To learn characteristic food patterns and habits of cultures by actual kitchen preparation.
- (2.) To become familiar with cultural foods as an optional course for American Dietetic Association membership.
- (3.) To collect magazine and newspaper articles pertaining to food habits and patterns. These will be preserved in

a scrapbook for future reference.

(4.) To become familiar with new foods and flavors.

(5.) To gain skill in planning and evaluating meals.

Each experiment follows the same basic pattern. The procedure was to research characteristics of each culture, plan and prepare the meal, and evaluate afterwards. Magazine and newspaper articles pertaining to food patterns were collected for the scrapbook. The "key to score" for evaluation remained the same for each experiment, and the same three persons scored each meal. Four factors: appearance, texture, flavor, and odor were used to judge each meal.

Weekly results were recorded in the diary which included the menu, recipes, grocery list, time allowance, number of guests served, individual evaluation charts, total evaluation charts, and recommendations and/or conclusions.

For the purpose of brevity, only the menu, time allowance, number of guests, total evaluation chart, and conclusions have been included in the summary.

EXPERIMENT I

FRENCH COOKERY

The classic French cuisine includes a world of truffles, subtle sauces, gloriously decorated dishes, jewellike aspics, high-rise souffles, puffed pastries, exotic soups and spun-sugar desserts. French cooking is an art; each dish is a masterpiece to enchant both the palate and the eye. The menu is carefully planned to insure a felicitous blend of textures, colors and flavors. Perfection is the goal of French cooking, and this cuisine is more demanding and precise than any other. Sauces are a hallmark and must be subtle. They complement the flavor of a dish, never smother it. Sweet and sour flavors are never mixed, and a sweet sauce is never served with fish. Everything must be cooked exactly to the point, and must be served at a precise temperature. Except for salads, raw food is rarely served.

The proper selection of wines is an integral part of the classic cuisine. Scrupulous care must be taken in the selection of the types and vintages of wines to be served with the food.

The service of the food is every bit as important as its preparation. It must never be piled on the plate; the classic style dictates that the food must be served in small portions, with more available as the appetite desires. Every dish must be impeccably served to do justice to the food.

MENU

French Bourguignonne

Green Salad Dressing

Croissants Butter

French Strawberry Tart

Demitasse

Time Allowance and Preparation Procedures:

The French Bourguignonne (stew) was begun approximately three hours in advance of the meal. Approximately three hours were needed for the rolls to rise. The strawberry tart was prepared in advance the night before. The salad and coffee were prepared just prior to the serving of the meal.

Number of Guests Served:

Four persons were served, but only three (including myself) evaluated the meal.

SCORE CHART -- Total of 3 Evaluations -- 20 Points Possible

<u>Factors:</u>	<u>Bourgnignonne</u>	<u>Salad</u>	<u>Croissants</u>	<u>Tart</u>	<u>Demitasse</u>
Appearance	3.33 ¹ / ₃	5.00	4.66 ² / ₃	5.00	4.33 ¹ / ₃
Texture	4.33 ¹ / ₃	4.00	4.33 ¹ / ₃	4.33 ¹ / ₃	-----
Flavor	4.66 ² / ₃	3.66 ² / ₃	4.33 ¹ / ₃	4.33 ¹ / ₃	3.33 ¹ / ₃
Odor	4.33 ¹ / ₃	4.00	4.66 ² / ₃	4.33 ¹ / ₃	4.66 ² / ₃
TOTAL:	16.66 ² / ₃	16.66 ² / ₃	18.00	18.00	N.A.

Key to Score:

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Very Undesirable | 4. Desirable |
| 2. Undesirable | 5. Very Desirable |
| 3. Acceptable | |

Note: Individual evaluations of the meal are included in the "diary".

Recommendations and/or Conclusions:

The meal was considered successful and was enjoyed by all. The coffee received the least favorable response probably because it was different from what we are accustomed. The bread and dessert course met with excellent response.

EXPERIMENT II

MEXICAN FOODS

A blending of the food habits of the Spanish settlers and the native Indian tribes formed the basis for the present food patterns of the people of Mexican heritage. Highly seasoned foods are characteristic; ground red chili powder is essential to most dishes. Garlic, onion, and salt are used in abundance. Lard is the basic fat used for cooking. For centuries corn has been the basic grain used as both bread and cereal. Masa (dough) is made from dried corn which has been heated and soaked in lime-water. This dough is formed into thin cakes and baked on a hot griddle to make the typical tortilla. This method of using corn as a base for several dishes such as tamales, tacos, and enchiladas is peculiar to the Mexican culture.

The chief foods of the Mexican-Americans are dried beans, chili peppers, and corn, but wheat is gradually replacing corn. Most families eat one good meal daily at noon, such as lentil-noodle soup, and breakfast consists of a sweet coffee or sometimes milk and tortillas. Those of low income use very little meat, usually for flavoring beans, soups, and vegetables. Typical foods include beef, chicken, pinto or calico beans (refried), chile con carne, enchiladas, tacos, tamales, and topopo (corn tortilla filled with refried beans). Corn is the most often used vegetable with beets, cabbage, and beans being used frequently.

The chief beverage is coffee with much sugar. Large amounts are used, and in most families coffee is served to young children.

MENU

Tamale Pie

Spanish Rice

Guacamole Doritos

Carmel Pudding

Limeade

Time Allowance and Preparation Procedure:

No early preparations were necessary. All courses could be prepared easily and quickly.

Number of Guests Served:

Four guests were present for the meal, but only three (including myself) evaluated.

SCORE CHART -- Total of 3 Evaluations -- 20 Points Possible

<u>Factors:</u>	<u>Tamale Pie</u>	<u>Rice</u>	<u>Guacamole</u>	<u>Pudding</u>	<u>Limeade</u>
Appearance	4.66 ² / ₃	4.66 ² / ₃	5.00	4.00	5.00
Texture	4.00	4.00	3.33 ¹ / ₃	3.66 ² / ₃	5.00
Flavor	4.66 ² / ₃	4.33 ¹ / ₃	4.33 ¹ / ₃	3.33 ¹ / ₃	5.00
Odor	<u>5.00</u>	<u>5.00</u>	<u>5.00</u>	<u>5.00</u>	<u>5.00</u>
<u>TOTAL:</u>	<u>18.33¹/₃</u>	<u>18.00</u>	<u>17.66²/₃</u>	<u>16.00</u>	<u>20.00</u>

Key to Score: 1. Very Undesirable 4. Desirable
 2. Undesirable 5. Very Desirable
 3. Acceptable

Recommendations and/or Conclusions:

The tamale pie and the limeade received the highest scores. The pudding received the lowest score, likely because it was a "simple" dessert. A more elaborate dessert is recommended. The recipe was excellent for tamale pie; often such recipes tend to be high in fat and seasonings.

EXPERIMENT III

CHINESE COOKERY

Traditional Chinese cooking is based on three principles: (1) the natural flavors must be enhanced, (2) the texture and color must be maintained, and (3) undesired qualities of foods must be masked or modified. The Chinese cook feels that refrigeration lessens natural flavors. They select the freshest possible foods, hold them the shortest possible time, then cook them quickly at a high temperature in small amounts of liquid or fat. By these means natural flavor, color, and texture are preserved. Vegetables are cooked just before serving so that they are crisp and flavorful when eaten. The only sauce that may be served with them is a thin, transparent one, perhaps made with cornstarch. A thick gravy is never used. To mask some flavors or to enhance others, foods that have been salted, pickled, spiced, candied or canned may be used as garnishes or relishes.

Soy sauce is a basic seasoning. Almonds, ginger, and sesame seeds are also used. The most frequently used cooking fats are lard and peanut oil.

The traditional beverage is unsweetened green tea. Rice is the staple grain used at most meals.

The "stir-fry" method is characteristic of Chinese cooking. Cooking oil is heated over a high flame and ingredients are added and stirred constantly. For "stir-frying" all ingredients are ready to be used before cooking begins. Foods

are cut in various ways depending on how slowly or quickly they are to be cooked. The preferred method is to cut the vegetables on a slant so that the maximum surface is exposed to allow the flavor of the vegetable to be distributed. Because of this careful preparation, the vegetables cook in two to three minutes.

Flatware does not appear on the table in the Chinese home. Orientals use chopsticks for both cooking and eating. Mastery of eating with them just requires practice. Since most food is cut into small pieces, eating with them is easy to learn, even for young children.

MENU

Sweet-Sour Pork

Rice or Chow Mein Noodles

Asparagus Tips

Sesame Cucumbers

Fortune Cookies

Tea

Time Allowance and Preparation Procedures:

The cookies were made the day before. Other courses were prepared prior to serving. No food item was complicated or time consuming.

Number of Guests Served:

Five persons were present, but only three (including myself) evaluated.

SCORE CHART -- Total of 3 Evaluations -- 20 Points Possible

<u>Factors:</u>	<u>Pork</u>	<u>Asparagus</u>	<u>Cucumbers</u>	<u>Cookies</u>	<u>Tea</u>
Appearance	5.00	4.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Texture	4.66 ² / ₃	3.66 ² / ₃	4.66 ² / ₃	4.33 ¹ / ₃	5.00
Flavor	4.66 ² / ₃	3.66 ² / ₃	4.66 ² / ₃	4.33 ¹ / ₃	4.66 ² / ₃
Odor	<u>5.00</u>	<u>5.00</u>	<u>5.00</u>	<u>5.00</u>	<u>5.00</u>
<u>TOTAL:</u>	<u>19.33¹/₃</u>	<u>16.33¹/₃</u>	<u>19.33¹/₃</u>	<u>18.66²/₃</u>	<u>19.66²/₃</u>

Key to Score:

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Very Undesirable | 4. Desirable |
| 2. Undesirable | 5. Very Desirable |
| 3. Acceptable | |

Note: Individual evaluations of the meal are included in the "diary".

Recommendations and/or Conclusions:

This meal rated very acceptable. The guests seemed to enjoy it immensely. Chopsticks were used for fun, but forks were also provided. The fortune cookies were especially interesting. This type of meal is recommended for a party or other special event because the "foreign atmosphere", chopsticks, and cookies create an air of enthusiasm.

EXPERIMENT IV

JAPANESE COOKERY

Japanese food patterns are in some ways similar to Chinese. Rice is the basic constituent of the diet, soy sauce is used for seasoning, and tea is the main beverage. However, there are some characteristic differences. The Japanese diet contains more seafood, especially raw fish. A number of taboos prohibit certain food combinations or certain foods at specific times. Some of these taboos are associated with religious practices such as ancestor veneration.

A specific sequence of courses is followed at most meals. A dinner is served in this order: green tea, unsweetened; some appetizer such as soy or red bean cake, a raw fish (sashimi) or radish relish (komono), broiled fish or omlet; vegetables with soy sauce; plain steamed rice; herb relish; fruits in season; a broth base soup (shurimise), and perhaps more unsweetened green tea. Typical dishes include tempura (batter fried shrimp) and aborakge (fried soybean curd). Sukiyaki (the most popular Japanese dish in America) is a mixture of sauteed beef and vegetables served with soy sauce. Soybean oil is the main cooking fat.

A reflection of Japanese sensitivity toward food is the great attention paid to each ingredient in the dish. In clear Japanese soup, for example, that bit of carrot used as garnish is quite distinct in taste, color, and shape from the rest of the soup. Often a Japanese cook will go still further to

make his dishes visually appetizing, perhaps by cushioning a plate with several freshly washed maple leaves or by adorning it with a pine sprig or a crisp green leaf.

MENU

Sukiyaki

Oriental Rice

Ginger Fruit Oriental

Snow Pudding

Tea

Time Allowance and Preparation Procedure:

The fruit salad and pudding were prepared a day in advance. Other courses were prepared just prior to serving. No courses called for excessive time or special skills.

Number of Guests Served:

Four guests were present for the meal, but only three (including myself) evaluated.

SCORE CHART -- Total of 3 Evaluations -- 20 Points Possible

<u>Factors:</u>	<u>Sukiyaki</u>	<u>Rice</u>	<u>Fruit</u>	<u>Pudding</u>	<u>Tea</u>
Appearance	4.66 ² / ₃	4.00	4.66 ² / ₃	4.33 ¹ / ₃	5.00
Texture	4.00	3.66 ² / ₃	5.00	4.00	5.00
Flavor	4.33 ¹ / ₃	3.33 ¹ / ₃	3.66 ² / ₃	3.33 ¹ / ₃	4.66 ² / ₃
Odor	<u>5.00</u>	<u>5.00</u>	<u>5.00</u>	<u>5.00</u>	<u>5.00</u>
TOTAL:	18.00	16.00	18.33¹/₃	16.66²/₃	19.66²/₃
Key to Score:	1. Very Undesirable				
	2. Undesirable		4. Desirable		
	3. Acceptable		5. Very Desirable		

Recommendations and/or Conclusions:

A very enjoyable meal, but all seemed to agree that rice cooked the "American way" was preferred. Chopsticks were used and forks were also supplied. Some of the ingredients such as candied ginger were purchased at the "Pier I Import Store".

EXPERIMENT V

GERMAN COOKERY

Most of us think of German food as an endless succession of sausages and sauerkraut, working up to a grand climax of Sauerbraten and dumplings, with every dish served with beer. In a sense these characteristics are true, but authentic German cookery includes much more.

The sausages -- sliced, spread, poached or fried -- come in the hundreds, from delicate Weisswurst (veal-based stuffing), to Getruffelte Ganselberwurst (a goose-based liver sausage with fragrant truffles). The sauerkraut will be fine in texture and flavor and may be cooked with pineapple, oranges or apples. Other dishes include sauerkraut cooked in beer, wine or champagne. Sauerbraten, a traditional Germanic favorite, begins with juicy round steak marinated in an expertly seasoned mixture of vinegar, cloves, peppercorns, and marjoram, then oven-roasted until tender.

Germany's thick soups made from potatoes, robustly flavored with sausage and onion, and thickened with flour are famous throughout the world. Delicious clear soups are also popular such as double consommés garnished with tiny marrow dumplings.

Meat is the cornerstone of German cooking, and roast is the national dish. Among the smaller meats, chops and steaks are sometimes plainly broiled, sauteed or slow cooked; more often, they are stuffed or garnished with mushrooms, goose

livers, meat dressings and the like. The most widely used of all meats is pork, fresh or cured. Though the Germans have developed a number of chicken dishes, their greatest achievements in fowl cookery are based upon duck and goose. German cuisine boasts magnificent dishes of duck braised in beer or wine, or roasted with a stuffing of apples and prunes. Goose is stuffed with onions, apples, herbs, liver and pork.

Each German vegetable has its own status or lack of it. The most humble are winter vegetables such as cabbages and roots. At the top of the status scale are asparagus and mushrooms. Whenever a guest is to be honored for dinner in a German home, these two vegetables are included.

The meal comes to an end with a selection of desserts called *süsse Speisen*, or "sweet dishes". It may be rice pudding cooked with fruit and nuts, apple or other fruit pancakes with a sweet sauce, egg custards, almond or hazelnut creams, and fruit and wine jellies embellished with rococo swirls of whipped cream.

MENU

German-Noodle Sausage Casserole

German Fried Apples

Beer Biscuits Butter

Cherry Kuchen

Beverage

Time Allowance and Preparation Procedures:

The dessert was prepared a day in advance. Other courses

were prepared prior to serving.

Number of Guests Served:

Five persons were present. Three (including myself) evaluated the meal.

SCORE CHART -- Total of 3 Evaluations -- 20 Points Possible

<u>Factors:</u>	<u>Casserole</u>	<u>Apples</u>	<u>Biscuits</u>	<u>Kuchen</u>
Appearance	4.00	5.00	3.66 ² /3	5.00
Texture	4.33 ¹ /3	4.00	4.00	4.66 ² /3
Flavor	4.00	5.00	4.00	5.00
Odor	4.33 ¹ /3	5.00	3.66 ² /3	5.00
<u>TOTAL:</u>	<u>16.66²/3</u>	<u>19.00</u>	<u>15.00</u>	<u>19.66²/3</u>

Key to Score: 1. Very Undesirable 4. Desirable
 2. Undesirable 5. Very Desirable
 3. Acceptable

Recommendations and/or Conclusions:

The apples and dessert course: received extremely favorable responses. Flavors such as sauerkraut and beer were rated objectionable to some but very acceptable to others. Personal likes and dislikes seem to determine the success of the meal.

EXPERIMENT VI

ITALIAN COOKERY

The sharing of food and companionship is an important part of the Italian pattern of life. Meals are associated with much warmth and fellowship, and special occasions are marked by the sharing of food with families and friends. Leisurely meals are customary, with a light breakfast, the main large meal in the middle of the day, and a small evening meal.

Pastas, available in a great variety of shapes, are an important staple of the Italian diet. Crusty white bread is widely used. Milk is not widely used, but cheese is included in most dishes.

A typical Italian breakfast would include fruit, bread with butter, and coffee with hot milk and sugar. The main noon meal may consist of broth with noodles, meat or chicken or pasta with sauce, vegetables, green salad, bread without butter, fruit, and coffee with milk. The evening meal includes a substantial soup as a main dish, Italian bread, coffee with milk and sugar, sometimes cold cuts or cheese or salad, and sometimes wine.

Italian food is brightly colored, each thing unmistakably separate. The distinct hues correspond to distinct tastes. Herbs and spices are used to produce a variety of flavors. Other foods and seasonings such as butter, olive oil, and salt pork are used frequently.

MENU

Italian Meatloaf
 Spaghetti Parmesan
 Italian Green Salad
 Italian Rolls Butter
 Tutti-frutti Tortoni
 Beverage

Time Allowance and Preparation Procedures:

The dessert and rolls were prepared a day in advance. The rolls were re-heated. Other foods were prepared just prior to serving.

Number of Guests Served:

Six persons were present, but only three evaluated.

SCORE CHART -- Total of 3 Evaluations -- 20 Points Possible

<u>Factors:</u>	<u>Spaghetti</u>	<u>Salad</u>	<u>Meatloaf</u>	<u>Rolls</u>	<u>Tortoni</u>
Appearance	4.66 ² / ₃	5.00	4.33 ¹ / ₃	4.00	4.33 ¹ / ₃
Texture	3.66 ² / ₃	4.66 ² / ₃	4.00	4.33 ¹ / ₃	4.33 ¹ / ₃
Flavor	3.33 ¹ / ₃	4.66 ² / ₃	4.66 ² / ₃	4.33 ¹ / ₃	4.66 ² / ₃
Odor	4.33 ¹ / ₃	5.00	4.33 ¹ / ₃	4.66 ² / ₃	5.00
TOTAL:	16.00	17.33 ¹ / ₃	19.33 ¹ / ₃	17.33 ¹ / ₃	18.33 ¹ / ₃

Key to Score:

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Very Undesirable | 4. Desirable |
| 2. Undesirable | 5. Very Desirable |
| 3. Acceptable | |

Recommendations and/or Conclusions:

The meal met with favorable response. No specific changes need to be made.

EXPERIMENT VII

SOUTHERN U.S.A.

Fried chicken, country ham, and hot biscuits are specialties of the South. Green vegetables such as turnip tops, collards, kale, and mustard greens are well liked; they are likely to be cooked for a relatively long time with fat pork as a flavoring agent. The water in which the vegetables are boiled (pot liquor) is often consumed, thus retaining some of the minerals and vitamins that would otherwise be lost. Sweet potatoes are preferred to white potatoes, and corn is the cereal of choice, although rice and wheat are also widely used. Corn appears in such forms as corn pone, corn bread, hominy grits, spoon bread, and hush puppies.

MENU

Praline Pork Chops and Yams

Turnip Greens

Cornsticks Butter

Frosted Ginger Bars

Lemonade

Time Allowance and Preparation Procedures:

The lemonade and ginger bars were prepared in advance. Other courses were prepared just prior to serving.

Number of Guests Served:

Five persons were present; three (including myself) evaluated the meal.

SCORE CHART -- Total of 3 Evaluations -- 20 Points Possible

<u>Factors:</u>	<u>Chops and Yams</u>	<u>Turnip G.</u>	<u>Cornbread</u>	<u>Bars</u>	<u>Lemonade</u>
Appearance	4.66 ² /3	3.66 ² /3	4.66 ² /3	4.66 ² /3	4.66 ² /3
Texture	4.00	3.66 ² /3	4.33 ¹ /3	4.66 ² /3	4.66 ² /3
Flavor	4.33 ¹ /3	3.66 ² /3	5.00	4.66 ² /3	4.66 ² /3
Odor	4.66 ² /3	3.33 ¹ /3	5.00	5.00	4.66 ² /3
<u>TOTAL:</u>	<u>17.66²/3</u>	<u>14.33¹/3</u>	<u>19.00</u>	<u>19.00</u>	<u>18.66²/3</u>

Key to Score: 1. Very Undesirable 4. Desirable
 2. Undesirable 5. Very Desirable
 3. Acceptable

Recommendations and/or Conclusions:

The meal was considered a success. In spite of the fact that all guests were "Southerners", it was concluded that this style of cooking was not really characteristic of the area.

EXPERIMENT VIII

CREOLE COOKERY

Creole cooking is one of the most exciting and distinctive of American cuisines. A blend of French, Spanish, Indian, and Negro culinary tradition, this Southern Louisiana cookery offers a variety of flavors. Curry powder, pimento, onion, basil, parsley, and oregano are used to flavor the soup and fish dishes that are so characteristic of Creole cookery. Highly seasoned sauces are also used for many meats and vegetables.

MENU

Creole Pot Roast Rice
 Potpourri of Peas, Onions, and Mushrooms
 French Bread Butter
 Parisienne Pastries
 Coffee

Time Allowance and Preparation Procedures:

The French bread and pastry were made a day in advance. Other courses were prepared just prior to serving.

Number of Guests Served:

Five guests were present for the meal, but only three evaluated.

SCORE CHART-- Total of 3 Evaluations -- 20 Points Possible

SCORE CHART (Continued).

<u>Factors:</u>	<u>Roast</u>	<u>Potpourri</u>	<u>Bread</u>	<u>Pastry</u>
Appearance	4.66 ² / ₃	4.33 ¹ / ₃	4.33 ¹ / ₃	5.00
Texture	4.66 ² / ₃	4.00	4.33 ¹ / ₃	5.00
Flavor	5.00	4.00	4.33 ¹ / ₃	4.66 ² / ₃
Odor	<u>5.00</u>	<u>5.00</u>	<u>4.66²/₃</u>	<u>5.00</u>
<u>TOTAL:</u>	<u>19.33¹/₃</u>	<u>17.33¹/₃</u>	<u>17.66²/₃</u>	<u>19.66²/₃</u>

Key to Score:

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Very Undesirable | 4. Desirable |
| 2. Undesirable | 5. Very Desirable |
| 3. Acceptable | |

Recommendations and/or Conclusions:

The "spicy" roast was enjoyed by all, and the French pastry rated almost perfect. Other courses were generally well accepted.

EXPERIMENT IX

NEW ENGLAND COOKERY

Typical of New England cookery is the "boiled dinner" which consists of meat (lamb or beef), potatoes, and vegetables cooked in a bland flavored sauce. One is also likely to encounter such favorite dishes as codfish cakes, lobster, clam chowder, and other seafood specialties. Pumpkin pies, squash, Indian pudding, and turkey originated with the Pilgrim fathers who made adaptations of foods used by the American Indians. Tradition has associated baked beans and brown bread with typical Saturday nights.

Within the New England area the Pennsylvania Dutch have a culture of their own. Characteristic foods include potato pancakes, many kinds of sausage, Philadelphia scrapple, sticky cinnamon buns, pickles and relishes ("seven sweet and seven sours"), and shoofly pie.

NOTE:

Actual preparation of New England Cookery was not deemed necessary since many of these dishes are served often in the typical American home.

EXPERIMENT X

COOKING OF THE BRITISH ISLES

British cooking depends on the excellence of the raw material, the rhythm of the seasonal crops and a simple style of preparation that permits the flavors of the food to come through. Sauces are not characteristic of British cooking. The indigenous and characteristic aspects of British cooking that have earned it a culinary niche in the world's cuisines dates back centuries. As great meat eaters, they perfected the art of roasting. Splendid specialties have also evolved: steamed puddings and raised pies; potted, jellied, and pickled meats and fish; and an enormous range of breads and cakes.

Because of the rural, regional nature of the land and the close-knit family ties, food tends to be home-grown, home-reared, and homemade. There is nothing about the British eating pattern to occasion highly contrived restaurant eating. The food is uncomplicated, reassuring to the palate, a repository of familiar, cherished flavors. There are no harsh seasonings to upset the delicate balance of digestion. Armed with a good breakfast of sausage, bacon, grilled tomato and fried egg, served with cups of strong, sweet, milky tea, anyone can start the day with a flush of warmth and well-being. Afternoon calls for the promise of tea with scones and jam or crumpets oozing with butter. Above all, British foods are comforting and relaxing -- the kind you turn to when you

are tired, cold, hungry, miserable or sick.

MENU

Irish Beef and Carrots

Pease Pudding

Pickled Red Cabbage

English Raisin Scones

Tea

Time Allowance and Preparation Procedure:

The pickled cabbage was prepared a week in advance and stored in the refrigerator. Other courses were started 3 to 4 hours in advance of serving time. The scones were baked during the meal so they would be fresh and hot.

Number of Guests Served:

Five persons were present for the meal, but only three (including myself) evaluated.

EVALUATION CHART -- Total of 3 Evaluations -- 20 Points Possible

<u>Factors:</u>	<u>Beef & Carrots</u>	<u>P. Pudding</u>	<u>Cabbage</u>	<u>Scones</u>
Appearance	4.66 ² / ₃	4.00	4.66 ² / ₃	4.66 ² / ₃
Texture	4.33 ¹ / ₃	4.00	4.66 ² / ₃	5.00
Flavor	4.00	4.33 ¹ / ₃	4.33 ¹ / ₃	5.00
Odor	<u>4.00</u>	<u>4.33¹/₃</u>	<u>4.33¹/₃</u>	<u>5.00</u>
TOTAL:	17.00	16.66²/₃	18.00	19.66²/₃

Key to Score:

- | | |
|---------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Very Undesirable | 3. Acceptable |
| 2. Undesirable | 4. Desirable |
| | 5. Very Desirable |

Recommendations and/or Conclusions:

The meal was rated as successful. It was noted that British cooking is much less flavorful than American. This probably accounts for reduced scores on the flavor factor. The English scones rated very high on the evaluations, and the pickled cabbage was also highly recommended.

EXPERIMENT XI

POLYNESIAN COOKERY

Distinctive Polynesian dishes are produced by cooking styles ranging from the primitive ground oven and leaf wrappings of the islands to the refined and exquisite court cuisine of Thailand. At first it would seem that such varied cuisines would have very little in common with one another, but all depend heavily on coconut, pineapple, rice, and spices.

The best and proper way to celebrate anything is with a luau or feast. The word, luau, simply means the leaf of the taro plant. Two taro-leaf dishes, luau and laulau, still appear at every genuine feast, and the Hawaiians do not seem to be at all confused by having to eat "luau" and "laulau" at a "luau" -- although nowadays when a party is on a small scale, most natives call it a poi supper. From an epicurean standpoint, the celebration would begin early in the afternoon by placing a fresh dressed pig in a hole-in-the-ground oven. The first course of the meal is a tender fish steamed in ti leaves and a squid cooked in coconut milk. The baked pig, central food of the luau, is served with sweet potatoes, luau, laulau, and lomi lomi. The luau dish is a pot of chopped taro leaves and chunks of chicken or fish with coconut milk. The laulau dish comes to the diner as a fist-sized bundle wrapped in shiny, dark green ti leaves, warm and steamy. Unfolded, it discloses chunks of pork mixed

with chopped taro leaves. Finally, for dessert there is a sweet, sticky pudding called haupia, made of coconut milk and arrowroot.

The purple taro poi of Hawaii is one of the most ridiculed foods in the world. There is nothing in it but the tuberous root of the taro plant, the most healthful and least fattening of all the world's staple starches. Cooked and peeled, the root is pounded with a little water to make a doughlike mass called paiai. Fresh poi has virtually no flavor; two or three days of fermenting develops a mildly sour taste that is especially enjoyed by the natives.

Even where cooking techniques are sophisticated, good cooks use large leaves as utensils for steaming and for cooking liquid or juicy foods. When wrapped in ti or banana leaves, all manner of foods can be placed directly on a charcoal fire without burning and without losing their juices. The moist, tough leaves insulate the food, and their moisture turns to steam which gently cooks the fish or vegetables within.

MENU

Island Broiled Chicken

Kona Rice Pilaf

Ambrosia

Bread Butter

Hawaiian Cake

Punch

Time Allowance and Preparation Procedures:

The cake was made in advance, along with the ambrosia salad and marinade. Other courses were prepared just prior to serving.

Number of Guests Served:

Four persons were present for the meal. Three (including myself) evaluated the meal.

SCORE CHART -- Total of 3 Evaluations -- 20 Points Possible

<u>Factors:</u>	<u>Chicken</u>	<u>Rice</u>	<u>Ambrosia</u>	<u>Cake</u>
Appearance	4.66 ² / ₃	3.66 ² / ₃	4.33 ¹ / ₃	5.00
Texture	4.33 ¹ / ₃	4.00	4.66 ² / ₃	4.66 ² / ₃
Flavor	4.33 ¹ / ₃	4.33 ¹ / ₃	4.00	5.00
Odor	<u>4.33¹/₃</u>	<u>4.66²/₃</u>	<u>5.00</u>	<u>5.00</u>
TOTAL:	17.66²/₃	16.66²/₃	18.00	19.66²/₃

Key to Score: 1. Very Undesirable 4. Desirable
 2. Undesirable 5. Very Desirable
 3. Acceptable

Recommendations and/or Conclusions:

The meal was generally successful. The cake was especially well liked. The chicken recipe was judged excellent.

EXPERIMENT XII

RUSSIAN and POLISH COOKERY

Russians are enormously gregarious, and not even the cramped space of an older apartment can keep them from entertaining friends with heaps of food. Borsche (beet soup), pork goulash, stuffed cabbage and peppers, dumplings, trout, outlets, and puffed pastries are characteristic dishes.

The day begins with a simple breakfast of bread and tea with an egg. Lunch will start with soup and end with a full course of meat or fish and potatoes and other vegetables. Dinner has the same courses with the addition of a modest zaskuska (Russian hors d'oeuvres), a sweet dessert, and a cup of coffee or tea. The tea is often served with fruit preserves stirred into it.

The traditional loaf of bread is generally made of rye flour because rye is a dependable crop for the short and fickle Russian growing season. The flour is coarsely ground, and the customary leavening is dough left over from an earlier baking. Other grains such as millet, wheat and barley are often used, but white bread made of refined wheat flour is a rarity. Most Russians prefer very dark bread cut into thick slices. If butter is used, it is spread at least as much as half an inch thick.

Soups are a Russian favorite, made with a wide range of materials and used in many ways. Shchi, a hearty cabbage soup, and borshch, a beet soup laden with vegetables and

meat and enriched by sour cream, are often served as one-course meals. Delicate fish soups include the classic ukha and colorful rybnaia solianka. Okroshka is a cold vegetable soup for summer.

Fresh fruits and vegetables are not very plentiful. To make up for these deficiencies, Russian housewives are eager canner and preservers of fresh products in season. When cucumbers are plentiful, they put down great tubs of pickles, and they wait patiently for fresh strawberries, cherries, plums and apples — anything that can carry the cheer and flavor of the growing season into the cold months.

Ever since it was introduced in the 14th Century, the Russian taste for vodka has never slackened. It is customary to drink from a small glass in a single gulp, accompanied by an appetizer or any part of the meal except dessert. Vodka should be ice cold, but preferably not served on the rocks to avoid dilution by the ice.

Fish, pork, beef, chicken, and caviar are popular constituents of the Russian cuisine.

MENU

Russian Beef Stroganoff
 Hot Buttered Noodles
 Russian Salad Dressing
 Black Bread Butter
 Prune-Cheese Pastries
 Hot Tea

Time Allowance and Preparation Procedures:

The pastries were prepared a day in advance. Other foods were prepared just prior to serving.

Number of Guests Served:

Five guests were present, but only three evaluated the meal.

SCORE CHART -- Total of 3 Evaluations -- 20 Points Possible

<u>Factors:</u>	<u>Stroganoff-Noodles</u>	<u>Salad</u>	<u>Pasteries</u>
Appearance	4.66 ² / ₃	4.66 ² / ₃	4.00
Texture	4.66 ² / ₃	4.66 ² / ₃	4.00
Flavor	5.00	4.33 ¹ / ₃	4.33 ¹ / ₃
Odor	5.00	4.33 ¹ / ₃	4.33 ¹ / ₃
<u>TOTAL:</u>	<u>19.33¹/₃</u>	<u>18.00</u>	<u>16.66²/₃</u>

Key to Score: 1. Very Undesirable
 2. Undesirable
 3. Acceptable
 4. Desirable
 5. Very Desirable

Recommendations and/or Conclusions:

The meal was rated generally as a success. The stroganoff was especially enjoyed. The black bread was not listed on the evaluation chart, but most guests had never eaten it before.

EXPERIMENT XIII

JEWISH FOOD CUSTOMS

Orthodox Jews observe dietary laws based on Biblical and rabbinical regulations (the rules of Kashruth). These laws pertain to the selection, preparation, and service of food. Food selected and prepared accordingly is called kosher food, meaning "right" or "fit". Traditional food restrictions are as follows:

- (1.) Meat must be of cloven hoofed quadrupeds that chew the cud (cattle, deer, sheep, and goats), and only the fore-quarters may be used.
- (2.) Chicken, turkey, goose, pheasant, and duck may be eaten
- (3.) The animal must be killed in the prescribed manner for minimum pain to animal, and for maximum blood drainage. Blood is associated with life and may not be eaten. Meat is made "kosher" (clean) by soaking it in cold water, thoroughly salting it, allowing it to drain for an hour, and then washing it in three waters.
- (4.) Meat and milk may not be combined at the same meal. This prohibition is based on the Old Testament command, "Thou shalt not seethe a kid in its mother's milk."
- (5.) Milk or milk food may be eaten just before a meal, but not for six hours after eating a meal that contains meat.
- (6.) In the Orthodox Jewish home it is customary to maintain two sets of dishes, one for serving meat meals and the other for serving dairy meals.
- (7.) Only fish with fins and scales are allowed; no shellfish or eels may be eaten.
- (8.) No eggs containing a blood spot may be eaten. Eggs may be taken with either dairy or meat meals.
- (9.) There are no special restrictions on fruits, cereals, or vegetables.

Many traditional Jewish foods are related to the different festivals of the Jewish calendar. No food is cooked or heated on the Sabbath. Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement) is a 24-hour period of fasting from food and drink. The Passover, sometimes referred to as "The Feast of Unleavened Bread", lasts for eight days and commemorates the release of the Israelites from the slavery of Egypt. During this period only unleavened bread is used. Only utensils and dishes that have no contact with leavened foods may be used during this time. Thus, the Orthodox Jewish home would have four sets of dishes: one for meat and one for dairy meals during the Passover, and one for meat and dairy meals during the rest of the year when leavened breads and cakes may be used.

The Passover begins with the Seder when everyone sits down to a beautifully set table. On a platter are foods that commemorate the Exodus from Egypt: matzoth, the unleavened bread the Jews ate when they left Egypt; a bone as a reminder of the sacrifice of the lamb by the Jews; bitter herbs for the bitterness of slavery; and harosseth, a mixture of apples, nuts, cinnamon, and wine to look like the clay of which the Jews made bricks in Egypt.

In general one may conclude that the Jewish diet is rich in pastries, cakes, many preserves, and relishes. Breads and cereals, legumes, fish, and dairy products are used abundantly. Fruits and vegetables are not used very often.

CONCLUSIONS

Food has many meanings, and a person's food habits are intimately tied up with his whole way of life. The health professions are constantly confronted with the fundamental question of why people eat as they do. Food habits, like other forms of human behavior, are the result of many personal, cultural, social, and psychological influences. Perhaps everyone tends to be somewhat ethnocentric -- centered in his own culture -- so that he views his own way as the best or right way.

In reaching the goals of this Honors Project, the author hopes to have gained greater insight and newer concepts of cultural food patterns and customs.

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