

The Historic Table

The Danish Feast

To mark the end of this first section of your study, try some foods from medieval Denmark and other Nordic traditions. Vikings and people living along the North Sea and Baltic regions had plentiful access to fish, which was a staple of their diet. Cured salmon (gravlax), along with various cheeses, pairs well with a variety of Northern European flatbreads, such as knækbrød/knäckbröd or lefse. You can find various types of flatbreads at stores like Whole Foods or Aldi, or you can try our recipe for lefse below! Various types of cheese also date back to the medieval period, including gjetost, or brunost, which you can find in many grocery stores.

Cured Salmon (Gravlax)

- 1 lb. fresh salmon, skin on
- 1 bunch of fresh dill, roughly chopped
- 1 c. granulated sugar
- 1 c. coarse salt

1. Grab a baking dish large enough for the salmon to fit in. Line with plastic wrap.
2. Combine the dill, sugar, and salt in a small bowl.
3. Pour some of the salt mixture onto the cling wrap where the salmon will go. Then, place the salmon on top, skin side down.
4. Use the rest of the salt mixture to completely cover the salmon. Then wrap up tightly in the plastic wrap.
5. Add weight to the top of the covered salmon—this could be a small, heavy cast iron skillet, a small flat baking sheet weighed down with canned goods, or even a brick! You just want weight pressing down on the fillet.
6. Next, place in the refrigerator and leave to cure for 12 hours.
7. After 12 hours, flip the salmon and again weigh it down. Leave to cure for another 12 hours.
8. Depending on how hard of a cure you like, you can remove the plastic wrap and all remaining salt mixture after 24 hours, or flip again and leave to cure another 24-48 hours. 24-36 hours will give you a medium cure, while 36+ hours will give you a harder cure, closer to jerky.
9. After you've wiped off the salt mixture, slice and enjoy!

Lefse

- 1 lb. gold potatoes, peeled and rinsed
- ¼ c. unsalted butter, divided
(2 T. melted, 2 T. set aside for the pan)
- 2 T. heavy cream
- 2 t. salt
- 1 c. flour

1. Add the potatoes to a pot and cover with water, then bring to a boil over medium-high heat.
2. Once the water is boiling, turn heat down to medium-low, cover, and simmer for 20-25 minutes, until the potatoes are fork tender.
3. Drain the potatoes and mash well—if you have a potato ricer, even better! You want to get rid of as many lumps as possible.
4. Mix in the melted butter, cream, and salt.
5. Let the potatoes chill for at least one hour. (You want these to be cold and dried out. I like to thinly spread these out in a metal baking pan, then put in the refrigerator uncovered. These can sit overnight if you don't mind waiting!)
6. Once the potatoes have cooled, add them to a mixing bowl with the flour. Using your hands, knead the flour into the potatoes until a dough forms. You do not want this to be too wet or sticky, so add flour as needed to reach the right consistency.
7. Divide the dough into eight smaller balls of dough.
8. Heat a skillet over medium heat.
9. On a floured surface, pat and press the first ball of dough into a flat circle like a pancake, about one quarter-inch thick.
10. Add the butter to the pan, then add the flattened dough. Cook for about two minutes on each side, until it's speckled brown and cooked through. Set aside.
11. Repeat with the remaining balls of dough.
12. These are delicious warm straight from the pan. They're delightful with jam, preserves, hazelnut spread, or with more savory toppings like cured salmon!

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The Middle Eastern Feast

What delicious foods would Eleanor have tried when she went on Crusade? What did Shahrazad eat at the royal palace? Let's explore the cuisine of the medieval Middle East! In *One Thousand and One Arabian Nights*, you read about guests being served sharbat; this refreshing drink is easy to make, and you can have all kinds of fun with different fruit juices! Our recipe below makes a lemon mint sharbat. If you want to dive into some Middle Eastern cuisine, we've also included a recipe for mujaddara, a mixture of lentils, rice, and caramelized onions that is delicious as a meatless main, or as a side dish with roasted chicken.

Sharbat

- 4 c. water
- 2/3 c. sugar
- Juice from 3 large lemons (about 2/3 c.)
- 1 bunch of mint, coarsely chopped

1. Stir together the water, sugar, and chopped mint in a medium saucepan over medium-high heat, and bring to a boil.
2. Reduce the heat and allow to simmer for about five minutes, until the sugar has dissolved.
3. Strain the lemon juice into a pitcher.
4. Strain the mint mixture into the pitcher with the lemon juice.
5. Stir to combine, then chill before serving over ice.

Mujaddara

- 3 c. chicken broth
- 1 c. brown basmati or jasmine rice
- 3/4 c. brown lentils, rinsed
- 1/4 c. olive oil
- 2 medium yellow onions, thinly sliced
- 1/2 t. cumin
- 1/2 t. smoked paprika
- 1/2 t. salt
- 1/2 t. pepper
- Fresh parsley, for garnish
- Lemon wedges, for garnish

1. Bring the chicken broth to a boil in a medium saucepan, then add the rice and lentils. Cover and reduce heat to a simmer for 40-45 minutes.
2. While the lentils are cooking, heat the olive oil in a large skillet over medium-low to medium heat. Once the pan is heated, reduce the heat to low.
3. Add the onions to the pan with a pinch or two of salt, then leave to slowly caramelize, stirring occasionally. (To get nice, rich caramelized onions, you'll want to cook them low and slow, around 45 minutes.)
4. When the rice and lentils are done, remove from heat but leave to sit, covered, until the onions are ready.
5. When the onions have browned and caramelized, add the cumin, paprika, salt, and pepper, stir to mix, and cook another minute or two. Then, remove from heat.
6. Mix the onions into the rice and lentils, and garnish with the fresh parsley and a squeeze or two of fresh lemon juice.

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The Anglo-Saxon Feast

Serve dishes that may have been enjoyed by the knights of King Arthur, or by the epic Robin Hood. Most of the food at this time was simple: bread, meat from game, grains, and foraged berries. The spice trade was just beginning to connect the East and West, so spices were not readily available to most people. Cook authentic dishes, dress up, perform your ballad, and stage an archery competition! To get ideas on what to cook and serve, the following resources will be helpful:

<https://amerrierworld.com/2011/02/22/beowulfs-feast-the-broth-the-bread-and-the-spit-roasted-chicken/>

Experiment with traditional medieval recipes and cook a medieval dinner for your family using the following website, which features recipes from Europe spanning the twelfth-sixteenth centuries:

www.godecooking.com/mtrans/mtrans.htm

For a really authentic experience, serve your stew in stale trenchers of bread!

Simple Bread Loaf

1 ½ c. warm water
¾ T. active dry yeast
¾ T. coarse salt
4 c. all-purpose flour

1. Lightly oil a large bowl.
2. Add all ingredients to the bowl, then mix with a wooden spoon. Once the ingredients have all started to come together, use your hands to shape into a ball.
3. If needed, add a bit more oil to the sides of the bowl, cover with a towel, and leave to rise in a warm place for two hours.
4. Scrape the dough out of the bowl and shape back into a ball. Then "cloak" the dough by gently stretching the top surface of the ball over and around to the bottom. Do this on all four sides, tucking the dough back up under the bottom. The bottom doesn't need to look nice, but the top of the dough ball should be smooth.
5. Set the dough on a lightly floured surface to rest for another 20 minutes.
6. Preheat the oven to 450 degrees. Set your baking stone in the oven to heat along with the oven.
7. When the oven is preheated, lightly flour the top of the dough and use a serrated knife to make two perpendicular cuts across the top.
8. Move the dough to the heated baking stone, and bake for 40-50 minutes.
9. When the crust has turned a deep golden brown, take the loaf out of the oven and allow to cool for about an hour. Slice and enjoy!

Beef Stew

2 T. oil
1-1 ½ lb. stew meat, cubed
1 medium yellow onion, diced
1 T. minced garlic (about 3 cloves)
4 c. beef broth
3 medium russet potatoes,
peeled and cut into 1" cubes
2-3 carrots, peeled and roughly chopped
1.5-2 c. baby bella mushrooms, chopped
¾ t. of chili powder, if desired
1 T. paprika
(smoked paprika, if you've got it!)
1 t. oregano
¾ t. thyme
1 T. dried parsley
2 T. flour

1. Heat the oil in a large pot over medium to medium-high heat.
2. Add the cubed beef to the pot, searing on all sides, about five to six minutes. Remove from the pot and set aside.
3. If needed, add a bit more oil to the pot, then add the onion and cook until translucent, stirring occasionally.
4. Add the minced garlic and cook another minute or so.
5. Add the meat back into the pot and stir, then add the beef broth.
6. Next, add the potatoes, carrots, mushrooms, and spices, and stir to mix. You can also add a pinch or two of salt and pepper.
7. Stir in 2 cups of water to the pot, then bring to a boil.
8. While bringing the stew to a boil, create a slurry by mixing the flour and two tablespoons of water in a small bowl.
9. Once the stew is boiling, add the flour mixture to the pot and stir to combine.
10. Let boil for another minute or two, then turn down the heat to medium-low and allow to slow simmer for at least an hour, but up to three. (The longer it simmers, the thicker the stew gets, and the more the flavors meld together!)



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The West African Feast

Jollof rice is perhaps one of the best-known dishes from West Africa! Considered a staple of West African cuisine today, it has its roots in the Middle Ages. We've included a recipe below, but more and more grocery stores now also carry mixes or pre-made jollof rice. Another star of West African cuisine, Mali in particular, is tiguadege na, or "meat in peanut sauce." You can use chicken, lamb, or beef in making this delicious, comforting stew!

Tiguadege Na

- 2 ½ T. oil, divided
- 2 lb. beef stew meat, roughly 1" cubes
- 2 onions, chopped
- 3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1-14 oz. can diced tomatoes
- 1 T. tomato paste
- 4 c. beef broth
- 3 T. peanut butter
- 2 t. smoked paprika
- 1 t. cumin
- 1 t. ground ginger
- 1 t. cayenne, if desired
- ½ t. salt
- ½ t. black pepper
- 3 carrots, chopped into ¾" pieces
- 5-6 gold potatoes, or 2 russet potatoes, chopped into ¾" pieces

1. Heat 2 tablespoons of the oil in a heavy-bottomed pot over medium-high heat, then brown the meat on all sides before setting aside on a plate.
2. Turn the heat down to medium. If needed, add the remaining oil to the pan to heat. Then, add the onions and cook until softened, about three minutes. Next, stir in the garlic and cook for another minute until fragrant.
3. Add the tomatoes and tomato paste to the pan, then stir in the broth, peanut butter, and spices.
4. Add the meat back into the pot, along with the carrots and potatoes, and then bring the pot to a boil. Once it begins to boil, cover the pot, reduce the heat to medium-low, and allow to simmer for 45 minutes. Then, remove the lid and simmer for another 15 or so minutes, or until the sauce has reached desired thickness.
5. Serve over rice.

Jollof Rice

- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped
- 1-14 oz. can diced tomatoes, drained
- 2 red bell peppers, sliced
- ¼ habanero pepper, stem removed
- 2-3 c. vegetable stock, divided
- ½ t. salt
- ¼ t. black pepper
- 1 t. curry powder
- ½ t. garlic powder
- ½ t. onion powder
- ¼ t. dried thyme
- ¼ t. ground ginger
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 c. long-grain rice (basmati or jasmine)

1. Working in batches, puree the onions, tomatoes, and peppers in a blender or food processor. Use 1 cup of the vegetable stock to help blend smoothly.
2. Pour the blended mixture into a large pot or Dutch oven.
3. Add the salt, black pepper, curry powder, garlic powder, onion powder, thyme, ginger, and bay leaves, and stir to combine.
4. Bring the mixture to a simmer over medium heat, stirring occasionally, until reduced by half.
5. Add the remaining cup of stock to the pot, stir to combine, and then bring to a boil.
6. Stir in the rice, cover the pot with aluminum foil, and then add the lid on top of the pot, sealing in the steam and flavor.
7. Reduce the heat to low/medium-low and leave to cook for 30 minutes.
8. After 30 minutes, remove the lid and foil and stir the rice, checking to see if it's cooked through and/or if the mixture needs more liquid. If the rice is still crunchy and needs to keep cooking, stir in another ½ c. of stock or water and continue to steam until cooked through.

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The Chinese Feast

Chinese dumplings are traditionally dated to ancient times, even before the medieval period! Delicious to eat and fun to assemble, try making your own dumplings! For an even easier approach, you can also find pre-assembled dumplings or potstickers in the freezer section of most grocery stores.

Pork Dumplings

- .5 lb. ground pork
- 1 c. cabbage, chopped
- 1 T. minced ginger
- 1 T. soy sauce
- 1 T. sesame oil
- 1 package of dumpling/potsticker wrappers
(You can find these in the freezer section; just be sure to thaw in the fridge one day before.)

Makes approximately 20-25 dumplings. (You can easily double the recipe and freeze the assembled, but not yet cooked, dumplings for later.)

1. Combine pork, cabbage, ginger, soy sauce, and sesame oil in a bowl. Set aside.
2. Fill a small bowl with water and set at your work station—you'll be dipping your fingers into the water to wet and seal your dumplings as you assemble them.
3. Working one by one, scoop about 1 tablespoon of the pork mixture into the center of a wrapper. You'll want to dip your finger in the water and then wet the outer edge of your wrapper. Then, fold the wrapper in half, creating a half-moon shaped dumpling, and press the edges together.
4. You can also experiment with different folding techniques for sealing your dumplings! For example, you can pleat one edge of the wrapper as you seal it closed, like we normally see dumplings. Or, you can make a small pouch by pulling the edges all together in the center and twisting (like a soup dumpling).
5. As each dumpling is assembled, set aside for cooking.
6. To pan fry your dumplings, heat 1 T. of oil in a large nonstick skillet over medium heat. Working in batches, add the dumplings to the pan and cook until the bottoms begin to brown, about one to two minutes. Add 1/3 cup of water to the pan, cover, and let cook for another two to three minutes. Then, uncover the pan and continue cooking until the water has evaporated. Repeat until all dumplings have been cooked.
7. To steam your dumplings, fill a steamer pot with water and bring to a boil. Spray the steamer basket with a nonstick spray, or you can line it with cabbage leaves, and then add the dumplings. Cover and steam for 10-12 minutes, until cooked through.
8. Serve with dumpling sauce, chili oil, or soy sauce, and enjoy!

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The Spanish Feast

As explorers continued to expand their horizons and broaden the spice trade, new flavors were incorporated into the traditional dishes of European nations. Because of its geographic, religious, and political history, Spain's medieval cuisine incorporated a number of exciting flavors to create dishes that are still widely served today. Andalusian cuisine is particularly enduring. For a sweet taste of Andalusia, try making torrijas, a beloved Easter dish that can be eaten for breakfast or dessert!

Torrijas

4 c. milk
1 c. sugar, divided
Zest from 1 lemon
Zest from 1 small orange
1 t. ground cardamom
Scraped vanilla bean
1 c. olive oil
4 eggs
1 unsliced loaf of bread,
the staler the better!
2 t. cinnamon
Honey, for garnish

1. Add milk, ½ c. sugar, lemon and orange zest, cardamom, and scraped vanilla to a medium saucepan over medium heat, bringing to a slow simmer for about 10 minutes. Set aside to cool slightly.

2. Slice the bread into thick slices, at least 1 inch-thick. You should have around 8 slices. Lay out the slices on a rimmed baking sheet.

3. Pour the cooled mixture over the slices of bread. Leave the bread to absorb the mixture for about five minutes. Then, flip the slices and allow to sit and absorb the mixture for another five minutes.

4. Heat the oil in a large, deep frying pan over medium-high heat. (You want the oil to come about half an inch up the sides of your pan, half the width of your bread slices.)

5. Cover a large plate or dish with paper towels and set to the side of your stovetop.

6. Beat the eggs in a shallow dish, then dip the bread slices one by one into the eggs, allowing the excess to drip off before adding them to the hot pan.

7. Fry each slice until golden brown on both sides, flipping after three to four minutes. When a slice is golden brown, remove from the pan and set on the paper towel-lined dish.

8. Once all the slices have been fried and set aside, mix together the remaining sugar and the cinnamon in a small bowl. Sprinkle the cinnamon sugar mixture over the fried bread, then drizzle with honey and serve.

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The Renaissance Feast

Host a simple Renaissance feast and a Bocce game!

Play a Game of Bocce

Bocce is a popular game that has existed in Europe for centuries. It became so popular that some kings eventually outlawed it because people spent so much time playing it! It is a fun game to play with family and friends, and you can purchase bocce sets at your local sporting goods stores. Learn more about it at the following website:



www.modaruniversity.org/Bocce.htm

The delicious marriage of pasta and cheese dates as far back as the Roman Empire, and while the origins of macaroni and cheese specifically are somewhat murky, clear references exist in cookbooks dating all the way back to the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries! Make your own homemade version, or you can always opt for a box mix. You can use any cheese you like, although I recommend shredding the cheese yourself rather than using pre-shredded cheese—it'll melt better. You can also add in meats or veggies, if desired!

Macaroni and Cheese

1 lb. macaroni pasta
¼ c. butter
¼ c. flour
2 ½ c. whole milk, heated
½ t. salt
¼ t. black pepper
6 oz. gruyere, shredded and divided
4 oz. smoked gouda, shredded and divided

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees.
2. Cook the pasta according to package instructions but stop a minute or two shy of the al dente cook time. Drain and set aside.
3. Melt the butter in a medium saucepan over medium-low heat. Slowly add the flour to the pan, whisking constantly until the mixture turns a light golden color.
4. Slowly whisk in the heated milk and bring the mixture to a boil for about a minute.
5. Lower the heat back down, stir in the salt and pepper, and cook for another two to three minutes, until the sauce has thickened.
6. Remove the sauce from the heat and gradually whisk in two-thirds of each of the cheeses until the mixture is smooth.
7. Pour the cheese mixture over the cooked pasta and stir to combine. Then, pour into a large baking dish.
8. Sprinkle the remaining one third of the cheese over the top of the pasta, and bake for around 30 minutes, until the cheese is bubbling and the top has turned golden. (You can also broil for an additional minute or two if you want to really brown the top.)
9. Remove from the oven, allow to sit for 10-15 minutes, then serve!