



*Wandering into
the
world of gastronomy
of Szentes*

- Flavour, dishes,
- Hungaricums,
- Eating out

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Eating habits in Szentes

Southern Great Plain, an area formerly rich with forests, games and fish became a deserted region, as a result of Ottoman (Turkish) occupation. Since meat dishes were too expensive, the peasants took a turn to corn based dishes. In the field of Szentes, people grew grain crops such as wheat, barley and maize for own consumption. While for the areas which were prone to flood, the fields are sowed with millet instead. In the beginning, there were mush meals (from hulled and rough-ground grains), then people made pulpy meals, pies, bread, cooked and baked pastries. The base of mush was mainly millet and maize. Millet mush was cooked with millet with a lot of lard, sausages and potatoes. The dish was consumed mainly as an evening meal in Szentes, while the Catholics substitute lard with oil during Lent. Corn-meal mush appeared at the beginning of the last century. It was cooked with fat, seasoned with pepper and mainly eaten with sausage or pork. Barley, millet and corn-meal mush were replaced with potato and rice. The mushes were mainly cooked in milk ; however, some cooked it with a lot of fat and serve the dish with meat. This habit of cooking the dish with fat and serving with meat is still common till these.

The order of meals were determined by village life, religious holidays, work and the changing of seasons. In the Middle Ages people dined only twice a day, this custom has remained during the winter months.

In such a custom, they had breakfast between 8a.m. and 10 a.m., then had lunch in the afternoon. For breakfast, they had bread, langosh, loaf, bacon or lard, duck fat, goose fat, milk, sour cream, cottage-cheese and sheep cheese. For the main course, they had paprika potato with spare-ribs, sausages or sparerib soup with bean. Then they made some pies or milk-loaf. In poor peasant families the main course was 'tarhonya' (a form of pearl pasta), 'lebbencs' (a sheet of dry pasta broken into pieces), fatty mush, corncake or corn mush.

In the 18th century, the habit of having three meals a day began to spread but in the winter months people still ate twice a day.

During the seasonal work in summer, people had a snack both in the morning and afternoon. Tuesday and Friday were usually the 'pasta days', Thursday was for meat dishes such as bean soup with smoked meat, on Saturday there was a one-course meal with 'tarhonya' or paprika potato. On Sunday





they ate poultry: chicken, pigeon, goose or duck. They made soup, roast duck, chicken paprikash or boiled millet with goose-giblets. Cold supper was bread, bacon sometimes with sheep cheese. In Autumn they made baked pumpkin and plum jam. In the family of the squire, people cooked 'tarhonya' and millet-mush even for the farm labourers.

The peasant lifestyle, the hard agricultural work and navying were typical in the area of Szentes. The work was usually connected to river control. People had to work long hours so they needed a lot of energy. In addition, during the Ottoman (Turkish) occupation, there was plenty of corn but lack of meat. They made food out from what they could grow in their garden and ate animals that they bred. Land owners had to be sure that food from these materials were sufficient to feed their farm labourers.

With the influence of the local folk traditions, lifestyle, changes in modern art of cooking and tastes, the most common meals in the area of Szentes are: Chicken-broth with shell-shaped pastry, 'lebbencs' soup, dumpling soup, sweet or salty 'tarhonya' with sausage and potato, paprika potato, lecho, cutlets with lecho, stews, one-course dishes of pork, bread and lots of vegetables. The eating habits of Szentes and its area are greatly influenced by vegetable production. A highly developed, world standard vegetable production has been established here. The off-season vegetables are sold in large quantities to many places. There are always fresh vegetables in the greenhouses of the area. As a result, local people always have fresh vegetables on the table. The most famous vegetables are: white paprika of Szentes and Pritamin Bonnet pepper of Szentes. Tomato, cucumber and cauliflower are also grown in large quantities.

Few people know that as many as eight vegetables were declared 'Hungaricum', a recognition in the field of vegetable and fruit production. Hungaricums of Szentes: kohlrabi of Szentes, kosszarvú (ram-horned) paprika of Szentes, delicate white paprika of Szentes, white cabbage of Szentes, earliest red radish of Szentes, bonnet pepper of Szentes, rose medlar of Szentes and red cabbage of Szentes. We may well say that Szentes is a town of Hungaricums.

The eating habits in the area are very peculiar even today. Cakes and pastry products have remained almost unchanged for the area of Szentes. While some main dishes no longer the original recipe due to the change of eating habits. Nevertheless, the regional and folk features have remained.

Try our unique dishes, flavours and Hungaricums!

Dishes from Szentes and its area

Soups

In Szentes, red paprika is regularly used as flavouring in the many varieties of soups till today. People in other parts of the country would not even think of flavouring some of the soup this way. For example : apple soup, gooseberry soup and garlic soup; while the method is uncommon in other parts of the country. Sour potato soup is made in a 'white' way (with cumin, bay leaf, sour cream and vinegar), unlike the colour of egg soup has come from red paprika.

Tarhonya and Lebbencs

Tarhonya is a kind of pasta which is made from flour and eggs, sieved and dried on a table. Tarhonya is only made once or twice a year in large quantity and it has always been eaten by locals. Generally, this pasta is known around the southern and middle region of the Great Hungarian Plain.

The oldest dish cooked with tarhonya was the one cooked in milk. Another known dish is potato tarhonya. To prepare this dish, first sweat some onions with bacon or lard, next add some potatoes, paprika and finally add in a handful of tarhonya. Sausages may be added to enhance the taste. Other common tarhonya dishes are fried tarhonya and meat tarhonya (made with paprika)

As making tarhonya is time-consuming, people these days do not really make it at home. Instead, they prefer to buy the so-called 'grated pasta' in shops.

The pasta of lebbencs is similar to that of tarhonya. People who made tarhonya out of sheer eggs, made lebbencs with half-and-half method (i.e. for every egg, half an egg shell of water is. The kneaded, rested and rolled out dough was dried and stored in pieces. Which bring about the name 'lebbencs, trod in a shack'. The noodles, tarhonya and lebbencs were stirred in a white linen bag. In the houses of big landowners, a great quantity of 'tarhonya' and 'lebbencs' was stored in bags. 'Lebbencs' was cooked as soup pasta. All peasant classes liked it. In the farms of the landowners, it had very hot taste so that the servants and labourers could not eat much.

Nowadays, the dry pasta, soup pasta and pastry are parts of catering in schools and workplaces.

Belüle Soup

Ingredients: 100 gm onion, 1 tbsp. lard, 1 tsp. ground paprika, 3 ltr. broth of dried beans, 120 gm vermicelli, salt, to taste.

Preparation: Make broth out from beans. Set aside. Cut onion into big cubes, fried with hot lard and add ground paprika (this was called suhanték) Next pour in the bean broth, sprinkled with salt and put in vermicelli. Garnish the soup with fried onion rings (instead of meat)

Garlic Soup

Ingredients: 1 tbsp. lard, 1 ½ tbsp. flour, 4-5 cloves garlic, 20 ml sour cream, 3 ltr. water, salt, to taste

Preparation: Heat lard, fry flour with lard, then put in the finely chopped garlic, pour in the water and add salt, to taste. Bring the soup to a boil and stir-in the sour cream. For a richer version of the same soup, you may use pigeon or giblets soup as a base. Thicken the soup with garlic sauce. Again, flavour it with sour cream.

Corndumpling Soup

Ingredients: 1 tbsp. lard, 100 gm carrot, 100 gm parsley (stalk only), 50 gmm onion, 1 tsp. ground paprika, 1 bundle of parsley leaves, 3 ltr. water.

For the dumpling: 1 egg, 300 gm wheat flour, 1 tbsp. rendered fat, a pinch of salt, a pinch of ground pepper, water for kneading.

Preparation: Cut the vegetables and onion into small pieces, sweat it in lard, sprinkle some ground paprika, pour-in some water. Mix corn flour, wheat flour, egg and fat, knead into dumplings. Cook dumplings in boiling water.

Tarhonya Soup with milk and paprika

Ingredients: 1 tbsp. lard, 150 gm home-made tarhonya, 1 tsp. salt, 1 tsp. ground paprika, 1 tsp. flour, 2.5 ltr. milk, 2 dried paprika.

Preparation: Brown tarhonya in lard. Remove tarhonya from heat. Next add-in flour, ground paprika, salt and dried chili paprika and pour-in the milk. Do not overboil the milk. Serve the soup with the chili paprika sprinkled around the plate (Not onto the soup). This soup is best in its spicy taste.



Sauerkraut Soup

Ingredients: 400 gm. sauerkraut, 800 gm smoked knuckle of ham ; or 250 gm smoked sausage, 3 ltr. water a pinch of ground pepper, a pinch of salt, 1 dried red paprika, roux (1 tbsp. lard, 1.5 tbsp. flour).

Preparation: Cook sauerkraut in a pot of water to make broth. Next add-in the meat, pepper, salt and paprika. When cooked, thicken it. It is believed that the more times the soup is re-heated, the better it would taste. Flavour the soup with 1 tbsp. of sour cream per serving/plate.

Boiled Pasta Soup

Ingredients: 800 gm smoked spare-ribs, 3 ltr. water, *For the pasta:* 350 gm flour, 100 gm lard for baking., 2 eggs, a pinch of salt.

Preparation: Mix together flour, eggs, and a pinch of salt, knead dough to make pasta. Roll-out the pasta into thin and flat dough, then cut into small pieces. Next, fry pasta in lard. Make a broth from spare-rib by boiling it in water. Remove spare-ribs from soup and strain the soup. Serve by pouring soup onto a plate of pasta, with meat served separately and with horseradish as a side dish.

Lebbencs Soup of Szentes Art

Ingredients: 120 gm lebbencs pasta, 500 gm cleaned and sliced potato, 50 gm bacon, 1 small piece of onion, 1 bundle of parsley, 1 green or dried paprika, 1 tsp. ground paprika, 3 ltr. water, a pinch of salt.

Preparation: Cook the sliced smoked bacon in a stew pot or iron pot. Soon, the air will be infused with the smell of bacon. Add lebbencs pasta into the pot, brown the pasta then sprinkle the ground paprika on top. Next, add-in the potato, water, salt, parsley and green paprika. Cook all ingredient till well-done and the soup is ready to be served.

Dumpling Soup of Szentes Art

Ingredients: 250 gm pork chuck, cut into cubes, 50 gm lard, 1 small onion, 2 cloves of garlic, 100 gm carrot, cut into cubes, 100 gm root, 40 gm celery, 1 bunch of parsley leaves, 1 tsp. salt, 1 green paprika. *For the dumpling* 500 gm potato, boiled, 50 gm onion, sliced and browned, 1 bunch of parsley, sliced, 200 gm flour, ½ egg, optional, a pinch of ground pepper.



Preparation: Brown meat with onion and vegetables in oil, pour-in some water and season it. Knead the ingredients of the potato dumpling, make it into small dumplings. Put dumplings into the soup when served. Sour cream is optional as added flavouring.

Tarhonya Soup

Ingredients: 150 gm home-made tarhonya, 500 gm potato, small pieces, 50 gm lard, 50 gm onion, small pieces, salt, to taste, 1 dried paprika, 1 green paprika, 1 potato, 1 bunch of parsley, 1 tsp. salt, 1 tsp. ground paprika

Preparation: Fry onion pieces in lard until transparent. Next, add-in the potato pieces, salt, paprikas, tomato and some water. When the potato is medium soft, add 'tarhonya' and cook it until it is ready. Serve the soup with finely chopped parsley

Milk-pasta soup

Ingredients: 3 ltr. milk, 150 gm vermicelli or square pasta, 50 gm sugar., a pinch of salt

Preparation: Boil the milk. Then, boil the pasta in the milk, add some salt and sugar and cook it until it is ready.

Marrow soup

Ingredients: 600 gm shredded marrow, 2 tbsp. lard, 1 bunch of dill, 50 gm onion, 1 tbsp. flour, 1 tsp. salt, 20 ml sour cream, vinegar

Preparation: Cut onion into small pieces, then sweat it in lard. Next, add-in flour, water, salt and vinegar. Add in the shredded mallow, dilute it, then cook it until it is ready. Before serving, put some sour cream or whey on it.

Onion soup

Ingredients: 350 gm onion, 1 ½ tbsp. flour, 2 tbsp. lard, 20 ml. sour cream, 3 ltr. water, 1 tsp. salt, 80 gm vermicelli, seasoning paprika

Preparation: Cut onion into small pieces, fry it in lard, add some seasoning paprika, salt and water. Bring the soup to a boil with low heat. When boiling, thicken it with flour. Serve it with sour cream and vermicelli.



Pidgeon Soup with green peas and round pasta

Ingredients: 2 cleaned young pigeon, 500 gm husked green pea, 100 gm parsley (stalk only), 100 gm carrot, 40 gm onion, 5-6 peppercorns, 1 bunch of parsley leaves, 1 level spoonful of salt, *For making pasta* 120 gm flour, 1 egg

Preparation: Quarter the cleaned pigeons and cook it in cold water. Bring the soup to a boil, add salt, and continue cooking with low heat. Slice up the vegetables and add-in to the soup, then add onion, parsley leaves and peppercorns. When the meat and vegetables are medium soft, add the husked green peas. Then, shred in small pieces of home-made pasta and continue cooking till pasta is ready. The dish is usually served with fried meat (coated in breadcrumbs) and served as the main course or with potato garnish. You may also serve it with boiled meat.

Main courses, one-course dishes

Grilled Fish and potato (in clay)

Disembowel the freshly-caught fish, but leave the scales on. Heavily season the inside of the fish, then smear 1-1.5 cm layer of clay on the fish. The best type of clay can be found in Bogaras, a place which is popular with fishermen. Do the same thing with the potato. Put the fish and potato on glowing embers. The clay will begin to split in about 1 ½ hours. That's a good sign! Remove the clay and the fish's scales and potato skin will come off easily with the clay.

Duck stuffed with apple

Salt the duck. Spread marjoram inside and out of duck and stuff with apples. Slit the duck skin. Placed it on a fire-proof pan and pour in some water. Brush the duck occasionally with its gravy during the roasting process.

Mutton in stew-pot, a' la shepherd

Ingredients: 2 kg. mutton, 300 gm onion, 1 tbsp. salt, 3 spicy paprikas, 40 gm seasoning paprika, 100 gm lard

Preparation: Layer the ingredients into the stew-pot as follows: Begin with layer of meat, then garlic, spicy paprika, and repeat again. When the stew is cooked, remove the fat generated at the top of stew, mix the fat with the seasoning paprika, pour the mixture back to the stew-pot and bring it to a boil. Shepherds used to eat the stew together with bread immediately after boiling.



Steamed Cabbage

Ingredients: 1.5 kg. sliced cabbage, 2 tbsp. lard, 1 tsp. salt, some cumin seeds

Preparation: Cook the sliced cabbage with lard until it is soft, during which add some salt and cumin seeds to taste. It used to be a filling one-course dish after adding smoked sausage, but nowadays it is mainly a garnishment of meat dishes.

Dónát Cutlet

Ingredients: 8 chopped, boned pork chops, 1 tbsp. lard, 1 tbsp. flour, 1 tsp. salt, 5-6 cloves of garlic, 80 ml. sour cream

Preparation: Beat the slices of meat, then add some salt. Heat lard in a frying pan, dip the slices of meat in flour and deep-fry them until both sides are golden. Put the meat in another pot. Use the remaining fats to fry the onion, pour the sour cream on it, salt it then put back the slices of meat in the frying pan. Cook it for about 5-6 minutes. Season it to taste. Serve it with baked potatoes.

Reversed tarhonya

Hozzávaló: 1 tbsp. lard, 100 gm. smoked bacon, 250 gm tarhonya, 500 gm peeled and sliced potato, 150 gm. onion, finely chopped, 20 gm seasoning paprika, 1 tsp. salt

Preparation: First brown tarhonya and leave it aside. Brown the finely chopped onion and bacon in a stew-pot. When browned remove pot from heat, add seasoning paprika, the previously browned tarhonya, put in the sliced potato and salt. Pour water over it enough to cover ingredients and cook it until the water reduced and evaporates. It has the name 'reversed', because the lard turned over by itself in the process of cooking in stew-pot.

Guba Bread

Ingredients: 1 slice of dried bread, 1 egg, 1 small piece of bacon-rind, onion, chopped - to taste, salt, to taste, water

Preparation: Cut the dried pieces of bread into cubes. Beat and whisk the egg, add some water and salt. Dip the bread pieces in the egg. Slice the bacon-rind, put it in a big stew-pot, add some water and braise it. Then, put in the chopped onion and bread pieces, cook it under the dish lid till water reduced completely. Then, stir it continuously until it becomes brown.



Mush with Duck meat

Ingredients: 800 gm. duck giblets, 100 gm. parsley root, 100 gm. carrot, 150 gm. millet mush (or substitute with rice), 1 tsp. salt, a pinch of ground pepper

Preparation: Cook the giblets with cleaned vegetables and add-in some salt. When it is simmering hot, put in the millet mush (or rice). Cook until mullet is thick, serve together and additional vegetables.

Lamb Stew (in stew-pot at the Kurca)

Ingredients: 2 kg. bony lamb meat, 200 gm. lard, 400 gm. onion, 2 green paprika (non-spicy, it can be white paprika, as well), 2 tomatoes, 1 cherry-pepper or spicy green paprika, 2 cloves of garlic, cumin seeds, pepper, salt, 'Red Gold' paprika paste (piros arany) to taste.

Preparation: Wash the meat with vinegary water and remove the suet. Cut up the meat, then put half of it -parts with more bones- into a greased stew-pot. Slice the onion, then put half of it onto the meat, add-in some cumin seeds. Put the other half of the lamb meat into the stew-pot then add the remaining onion, again, add-in some cumin seeds and salt. Stew it for a while, pour-in some water enough to cover the meat. Cook it on high heat, but be sure it won't burn. When it is half cooked, add the non-spicy paprika, peeled tomato, and garlic. Add some 'Red Gold' to taste, be careful because of its salt content. Lower the heat, or put the stew-pot higher, otherwise it can be sticky because of the 'Red Gold'. When the meat is almost ready, put some spicy paprika on it. When the it is cooked (the meat comes off the bone), put in the tasty Hungarian seasoning paprika, but watch the quantity (put about 3-4 heaped spoonful of it into a 10 litre stew-pot)

Dish of lentils

Ingredients: 400 gm. lentil, 30 gm. lard, 20 gm. flour, 1 small onion, 10 ml. sour cream, salt, vinegar, seasoning paprika, bay leaf, smoked bacon or crackling (garnishing)

Preparation: Clean and wash the lentil several times in clean water, then use flour, finely chopped onion and seasoning paprika as thickening agents for gravy. Cook the lentil in water flavoured with salt and bay leaves. Thicken it with the paprika flavoured gravy, bring it the a boil, next add some vinegar and sour cream. Garnish the dish with smoked bacon or crackling.



Hungarian dish of fish seasoned with paprika

Ingredients: 1 kg. sliced sheat-fish fillet, 100 gm. lard, 300 gm. onion, 2 cloves garlic, 1 tbsp. ground paprika, 40 gm. green paprika, 20 ml. sour cream, 2 tbsp. flour, 10 gm. salt, a pinch of ground pepper

Preparation: First make some fish broth, then put the sheat-fish slices into the fish broth. Remove fish fillet when it is soft (10-15 minutes). Make gravy out of the fish soup by adding flour, sour cream and lard. Put the cooked fish slices into the gravy, then simmer it for a few minutes. Suggested garnishing are dumplings topped some sour cream.

Fried Cabbage

Ingredients: 800 gm. sauerkraut, 200 gm. smoked bacon, 200 gm. smoked sausage, 400 gm. potato, 200 gm. smoke-cured ribs, lard

Preparation: Wash the sauerkraut, then place it on a baking pan. On top, put the smoke-cured ribs, sliced sausage, smoked meat pieces, and peeled, sliced potato, too. Finally, fry it.

Browned Tarhonya

Ingredients: 300 gm. Tahonya, 150 gm. smoked bacon, 100 gm. onion, 1 tbsp. lard, 1 tsp. salt, 1 tsp. ground paprika, 1 ½ ltr. water

Preparation: Render the finely chopped bacon, brown tarhonya using drippings from bacon. Next, add-in finely chopped onion and continue stewing it. After some mins. add-in ground paprika, continue stirring, add some salt and water, cook it until soften.

Cabbage dish

Ingredients: 4 medium sized cabbages, 150 gm. sugar, 30 ml. sour cream, 1.5 tbsp. flour, 2 tbsp. lard, ½ ltr. water, 1 tsp. vinegar, a pinch of salt

Preparation: Clean cabbage, cook it in salted water, then thicken it with oil. Add some salt, vinegar, and sour cream. Serve it with slices of smoked bacon.

Roast meat

Only bacon was prepared the ancient way: on a skewer. Meat usually was roasted in oven, on glowing embers.



Besides, people of the Great Hungarian Plain have cooked in cooking oven, stew-pot, cauldron, pan and they used different amount of fat. It was common to use the word 'rántott' (fried in breadcrumbs) meat, although today we use the word 'Parisian' for the same kind of food. Frying in flour-egg-bread crumbs wasn't in the traditional cuisine. During pigsticking, the pieces of meat were layered in pots and pans, then lard was poured on it. People just had to warm up some pieces for lunch.

Roast goose

Salt the goose, then spread some marjoram on the inside and outside. Put it in a heat-proof pot and add some water to cover it. During frying, use its own gravy to brush/prinkle on the surface of duck.

Szárma Stuffed Cabbage

Ingredients: 1.5 kg. minced pork meat, 10 sauerkraut leaves, 1 kg. pickled cabbage, 150 gm. rice, 4 cloves garlic, 1 level spoonful ground paprika, 10 ml. water, 20 gm. salt, some ground pepper and cumin seeds

Preparation: Cut the paprika in half, smash the garlic, mince the meat. Put the pickled cabbage and paprika in a pot. Mix the minced meat, garlic and rice well. Fill the sauerkraut leaves with this mixture and put them on the pickled cabbage. Add water to cover it, then cook it for 2 hours with the pot lid on. Thicken it, and cook it for another 10 minutes. Serve it with sour cream.

Pigeon Tarhonya of Szentes Art

Ingredients: 2 big pigeons, 300 gm. home-made tarhonya, 60 gm. lard, 2 green paprikas, 1 onion, 20 gm. salt, seasoning paprika, to taste

Preparation: Clean/wash the pigeon meat thoroughly, cut-off the heads and legs of pigeons, and chop up the meat. Cut the onion and green paprika into small pieces. In a pot, put lard and cook pigeon meat in lard, add the seasoning paprika, salt and water to the meat. When the meat is almost soft, add more water, bring it to a boil, next add-in tarhonya, some salt and cook until meat/tarhonya is ready.

The dish is sometimes cooked in a stew-pot. Chicken or duck meat can be used instead, as well.



Flavour of the Lecho Festival in Szentes - or what do you need for a good lecho?

Lecho is a type of vegetable stew whose ingredients and method of preparation are not specified ; however, lecho fans agreed that the basic ingredients shall include: onions, tomatoes and fresh paprika. The quantity used also varied from places. In Szentes, the standard portion is: 1 portion of onion, 2 portions of tomato and 4 portions of fresh paprika.

The basic concept of cooking lecho is : Cut-up the vegetables, firstly sauté the onions, followed by adding in tomato and fresh paprika, then cook till vegetables are ready.

Apart from that, there are numerous variations for the methods of preparation and ingredients. The first important decision to face with is what fat to use for frying the onion. It can be fat of bacon, lard, oil, margarine or even goose fat, the only thing that matters that it must be a kind of grease. Besides the grease and onion we can use sausage, and after the onion is fried we can put some red paprika on it. Of course, there are some, who can't do without garlic, in that case garlic must be fried together with onion. Opinions differ about which comes first: potato then paprika, in reverse order or at the same time. Many put salt in it, it can happen during frying, after that or when tomato and paprika are added ; adding salt when lecho is ready might be too late. In a pot, brown bacon for the fat. Once browned, remove bacon from the pot and set aside. Next, use same fat to fry the onions. Pour in some water while frying the onions to soften it. Continue stirring until onions break into pieces. To those who prefer a spicier version, you may add "bogyiszló" fresh pepper (paprika). For a real gourmet, spicy green long pepper (paprika) are used. Also, one can substitute half or whole portion of paprika with zucchini or custard marrow. The changes will give a slightly different taste, but it is definitely worth a try.

Sauté the tomatoes and fresh pepper (paprika) -or even potatoes as an option- till transparent then add regular sausages and Vienna sausages. To further enrich the flavour, one may add sausages (regular, Vienna or Lecho sausages) to the dish, by cutting the sausages to smaller pieces or 10cm chunk.

Stir-in the browned bacon into the vegetables and sausages.



Lecho is served with rice as a side. Of course, it is a good idea to prepare rice before starting to cook lecho (optional, depending on individual taste). Potato is also a good addition to the dish, simply by adding potatoes at the same time as tomato and fresh pepper (paprika) (again this is optional, depending on individual taste). Dumplings can also be part of the dish. You may add-in dumplings when vegetables are medium soft, or you may choose to cook dumplings separately. In the latter case, dumplings should be added when lecho is ready.

Another variation is lecho with egg(s). Egg(s) can be added to the steaming hot dish. You may thicken the gravy by beating-in raw eggs directly into lecho or prepare the eggs separately.

The thickness of the gravy also varies from individual. You may prepare it according to your taste.

Rich Lentil Lecho of Szentes Art

Ingredients (Serves 10): 300 gm smoked bacon, 1 ½ kg onions, 1 ½ kg lecho paprika, 1 ½ kg tomatoes, 2 cloves of garlic, 300 gm dried lentils, 300 gm champignon mushrooms (average-size), 5 pcs. Vienna sausages, 300 gm spicy smoked sausages, for seasoning, 4 tbsp salt, 4 tbsp sweet ground paprika, 1 tbsp ground pepper, ½ tube red-gold paprika paste (delicate), spicy red-gold paprika paste, to taste

Preparation: Firstly, soak lentils overnight. Cut bacon into cubes (1cm), melt bacon in low heat. Peel and chop onions, sauté until transparent. Remove grains from paprika, chop it finely. Half the tomatoes, and removed the stem from the tomatoes. Add into the pot of sautéed onions. Stir for 30mins. in high heat and season it. Next, smashed cloves of garlic, remove the skin. You may cook it as is or chop it finely.

Clean champignon mushrooms, remove stem, chop it finely, then add to the pot of vegetables. Quarter the champignon mushrooms and put aside. Cut up the sausages. When the green paprika is soft enough, add the lentils, pour in the water and cook it in medium heat, not for too long as the lentils are in. Next, add the mushrooms, stir for 5 minutes then add the sausages and continue to stir for another 5 minutes before adding Vienna sausages and finally, stir for another 10 minutes and the dish is ready. Serve with sour cream and chopped spicy paprika as a side.



Tarhonya Duck of Szentes Art

Ingredients: 1 small duck, 300 gm home-made Tarhonya, 60 gm lard, 2 green paprika, 1 onion, 20 gm salt, seasoning paprika, to taste

Preparation: Clean duck thoroughly, then cut into pieces. Cut onion and green paprika into rings. Heat lard in a pan, fry onion and green paprika in lard. Next, add the duck pieces. Season with salt and braise with some water. When meat is almost soft, add some water enough to cover the meat until boiling. Add Tarhonya, season with salt again and cook until meat is ready. Optional :- The dish can be prepared in a stew pot.

Tarhonya Chicken

Ingredients: 1 whole chicken, 2 tbsp lard, 200 gm home-made Tarhonya, 10 gm red ground paprika, 150 gm onion, 1 tsp salt, 2 green paprikas, approx. 2 ltr. water

Preparation: Cook chicken in a same way of stew. When cooked, add water enough to cover chicken meat. Put in the home-made Tarhonya and cook it in low heat until Tarhonya soften. During cooking, occasionally, pour in approx. 20 ml of water each time when necessary. Optional seasoning :- ground black pepper or spicy paprika. Serve as main dish together with pickled salad or usual salad as a side.

Tarhonya Potatoes

Ingredients: 250 gm Tarhonya, 200 gm potatoes, 100 gm smoked bacon, 1 paprika, onions, ground paprika, salt

Preparation:

- 1) cut onions into fine pieces.
- 2) melt bacon in stew pot. Use the fat from bacon to brown the onions.
- 3) When browned, remove stew pot from heat. Season the onions and bacon with ground paprika, next put in the potatoes, paprika and salt. Pour in some water.
- 4) Bring it to boil and finally add in Tarhonya and cook it till sauce is thicken.

Pulps, mashes, sauces

Fish soup of Tisza

Ingredients: carp fish - including head and tail, onions, lard, spicy cherry paprika, sweet paprika, salt, seasoning

Preparation: Clean the fish thoroughly, prepare fish broth out of fish head and tail in a pot with water, sliced onions and spicy cherry paprika. Bring to a boil with low heat for 4 - 5 hours. Sieve the fish broth, and return it to heat. Next add lard, salt, ground paprika and seasoning. Continue to cook with low heat for a while. Finally, add-in remaining pieces of fish meat into soup and cook for 10-15 mins.

Green Peas Paprika

Ingredients: 1kg green peas, 1 onion, 20 gm flour, 20 ml sour cream, a pinch of sweet paprika, hard boiled egg, lard, salt, to taste

Preparation: Cut green peas into 5-6cm pieces. Boil green peas in salty water until soften and sieve. Chop onions and brown in lard, sprinkle some sweet paprika on it. Next, put in the soften green peas adding some of the green peas broth. Bring to a boil and thicken it with sour cream, continue to cook.

Optional:- you may add lemon juice to taste.

Vegetables meat

Ingredients: 1 kg of pork (legs/chuck/spare ribs); chicken (breasts/legs/wings); cured game (rabbit); goose meat or leg of lamb, 2 walnut-size cooking margarine / 2 to 3 tbsp of poultry fat ; or cooking oil, 1-2 large onions (cut into 8 pieces each), 1-2 large cloves of garlic, 4 large paprika (cut into 4 pieces each), white wine (non-sweet), salt and pepper, to taste

Preparation: Cut meat into 3cm pieces. Salt meat in advance except when cured game is used. Cook meat thoroughly in grease. Cover meat until juice of meat evaporated. Next, pour-in the non-sweet white wine, stir it until it is medium done. Add-in onions, garlic and paprika. Sprinkle pepper to taste. Cook it until meat is well done. Serve with any type of garnishing

One type of pulps is maize porridge, which is primarily made from corn flour and milk. Another type of pulp, Ganca, is cooked in water, it is cut into pieces when the paste thickens. Then pieces will be mixed with breadcrumbs and finally topped with cinnamon sugar. Raw pasta was made of eggs, wheat flour, and shaped into dumplings. The dumplings later will be fried in heated lard or oil. Lastly flavoured with cottage cheese and eggs. Dumplings which are fried in oil is especially suitable during lent month for the Catholics .

Beans, lentils, peas or potatoes were mashed with a wooden ladle and added to the pulp. Browned ground paprika and onion were added to the pulp. These food were mainly eaten with fried bacon and without thickening. Corn mush used to be a popular dish for breakfast. The mush is made from grated corn flour (sieved) and some water. It is flavoured with fried sausage or crackling. While in winter, corn mush was cooked until it became thick, and potato was added. Today, only rice pudding belongs to this type of food, which is the descendant of millet mush.

Quince Apple sauce

Ingredients: 4 pcs. Quince apple, finely chopped, approx. 20 ml water, sugar, salt, *seasoning* 2-3 cloves, 1 tsp. ground cinnamon, *For thickening* 10 ml sour cream, 1 tbsp. flour, 10-20 ml water.

Preparation: Braise the finely chopped quince apples, sugar, salt and water until medium soft. Add more water enough to cover. Next put in the seasoning, braise till soften and thicken it. Serve the dish with fried, boiled or well-done meat and garnish with fried potatoes.

Garlic sauce

Smashed garlic and cook into light brown roux, pour in some water. Finally, add in sour cream and sugar.

Millet Mash

Ingredients: 300-400 gm millet, 500 gm smoked meat, 2 tbsp. lard, 1 tsp. ground paprika, 1 tsp. salt

Preparation: Cook smoked meat in a water. Remove smoked meat from water when ready. Next, put millet in the same water and cook till ready. In another pan, heat lard and fry ground paprika. Serving : Top meat and millet with fried ground paprika.

Ganca (from groats)

Ingredients: ½ cup groats, 2 cups flour, 20-30 gm lard, 100 gm browned breadcrumbs, 1 tbsp. sugar, ½ ltr. water, boiling, a pinch of ground pepper.

Preparation: Mix flours with groats. Heat it in a pot. Pour in the boiling water and stirring it quickly. Heat lard. Dip a spoon into hot lard and use the same spoon to cut into the groat mixture in order to place the mixture into another pot by layering in the following fashion, 1 layer of groat mixture, topped with sugar, group pepper, hot lard and browned bread crumbs.

Corn Ganca

Ingredients: 1-2kg corn flour, 1 ltr. milk, ½ ltr water, slightly salted, 20 gm lard, heated, a pinch of salt.

Preparation: Brown the corn flour without lard until dark yellow in colour. Next, pour- in slightly salted water and milk. Stir in the heated lard and the dish is ready to be served.

Corn Mash

Ingredients: 500 gm ground and sieved corn, 20-30 gm lard, 1 onion, 2 cloves garlic, 200-250 gm sausages (fried) ; or cracklings, ½ tsp. ground paprika, 1 tsp. salt, 1 ltr. water.

Preparation: Bring 1 ltr of water to a boil, add in salt, ground & sieved corn, stir continuously until texture is of a mash. Brown ground paprika with onions. Serve mash topped with browned ground paprika and onions and fried sausages or cracklings.

Tarhonya in Milk

Ingredients: 300-400 gm tarhonya, 20-30 ml milk, 10 gm butter, sugar, a pinch of salt, a pinch of cinnamon.

Preparation: Cook tarhonya and salt in boiling water. Pour in milk and sugar. Serve with butter and cinnamon.

Horseradish Sauce

Ingredients: 3-4 tbsp. grated horseradish, 2-3 tbsp. oil, 1-2 tbsp. flour, meat broth (or 2/3 milk, 1/3 water and salt), sour cream & vinegar/mixture of milk and water ; or a few drops of lemon juice, salt, to taste, sugar, to taste

Preparation: Set aside the freshly grated horseradish outdoor for 30 mins., to reduce the spiciness. Prepare thickening from oil and flour. When it is half browned add in the horseradish, and continue the browning process. When browned, add in sugar, meat broth and let it boil . If meat broth is being used, add- in sour cream and vinegar while if milk is being used, add few drops of lemon juice when served. The dish goes well with boiled/smoked meat and boiled/smoked ham.

Also, horseradish can be substituted with onions or garlic following the above same recipe and method of preparation. And the onions and garlic sauce would go well with boiled meat as well.

Zupa

Prepare a light brown thickening in grease, add some water, salt, sliced potatoes, parsley and cook it.

Pastries and Cakes

Pies

Pie -bread without leavening- used to be made with of ground seeds. (This type of pie was baked on a heated stone). In the course of time, with the improvement of grinding technique, flour has become finer. Today, only guba and langosh have preserved the shape and method of preparation (without leavening) of this pie.

Salty pie and egg pie were made with wheat and corn flour, hot milk and egg. These pies are particularly for Lenten month. During Lenten month, Langosh was made from leavened dough, but in a shape of a pie. The method of preparation is different as well: langosh was put on the bottom of the oven, and while in the process of preheating the oven, it was baked. Guba was made with either bread or any type of pastry which was baked with butter. It was Lentan or Christmas dish, flavoured with honey and poppy.

Doughs and noodles

The method of preparation of these dishes are similar to that of hard bread. The ingredients are: corn flour, egg, some water, salt. Rolling pin was used to roll out the dough, then it was dried and preserved for later use.

One of its type is noodles for soup, such as: shell-, crescent- and plum stone-shaped pasta, broth cubes of different size, ribbon noodle, vermicelli, small ball-shape pasta and grated pasta. It was cut in so many different forms because people thought different shapes had different taste. Shell-shaped pasta was the main ingredient for meat soup during holidays and wedding parties. (It is even today).

Dried pasta or ribbon noodle were also made with corn flour, egg, some water and salt. It was a bit thicker and softer than vermicelli. During preparation it was first boiled, then added some water and tossed in lard, butter or oil. Flavours were: walnut, poppy, sour cream, cottage cheese, bread crumbs or plum jam which could be found in every household.

The derelye (also known as barátfüle - flat dumplings stuffed with jam) is totally different from other noodles in shape. One half of it was stuffed with some plum jam or cottage cheese. Then, the cook folded back the other half, flattened the pasta around the plum or cottage cheese and cut them into square shapes. After that, it was boiled, sieved and rolled in browned bread crumbs.



Vermicelli was used on 'Pasta Days', after the soup together with baked pastry. On 'Pasta days', cumin seed soup and thick brown soup were also common.

Raised Dough

Raised dough was used to make curd cake and (plum) jam filled roll. Hard scone is a type of raised dough, made with corn flour, lard, sour cream or milk, salt, yeast and bran. Potato scone was made in winter and scone made with pork crackling was the usual food during pigsticking season. Barátfüle was made from the dough similar to making scones. A pinch of plum jam was put in the diamond shaped dough. The two sides were pressed together and baked in a pan.

In poor, peasant families scones and ammonium bicarbonate dough were made. The self-supporting land owners (small holders, medium landowners, big landowners) made milk-loaf, pie and strudel more often. Strudel was extremely popular not just during Christmas, New Year's Eve but on weekdays, as well, usually as main dish at lunch. During and after pigsticking season, favourite dishes were: scone with pork crackling and pastry made with lard. The latter was prepared by folding its dough and spreading some lard or goose fat -in winter- on it.

Pastries fried in lard:- Csörge is a type of pastry fried in lard (Its shape is similar to that of water-chestnut or chicken leg). Boiled Pretzel is a kind of cooked pasta.

Mixed pastries: pie, crepe, tart, wheat germ pudding and corncake.

Barátfüle

Ingredients: 1 kg flour, 50 gm yeast, 250 gm lard, 3 tubs of sour cream, 1 tsp. salt, 2 eggs, plum jam, sugar

Preparation: Raise the yeast by dissolving yeast in some sour cream and some sugar. Mix flour together with lard, add in the raised yeast, eggs and salt to taste to make a dough. Estimate quantity of sour cream to be added into dough for easy process of rolling. Leave the dough aside for 20 mins., to rise in pre-heated oven. Roll-out the dough into 0.5cm in thickness, then cut flatten dough in square pieces. Spread 1 tsp. of plum jam on the middle of each square. Fold the dough into diamond shape. Place the pastry on greased (baking sheet) baking tray and baked till golden brown.



Bocskor

Ingredients: 200 gm flour, 30 gm frozen lard, 1 egg, 20 ml sour cream, salted water (left-over dough may be used for this recipe as well)

Preparation:

- 1) make a dough from the ingredients given above.
- 2) Roll-out the dough into size of a palm. Twirl the sides of the dough, and spread sour cream on the dough.
- 3) Bake it until it is ready.

Bodag

The salty (fat) bodag is made from bread dough.

Ingredients: 1kg flour, 20 gm salt, 20 gm yeast, 1 ltr. water, lard, egg

Preparation: Scrap residue of pastries on baking tray from previous baking; mix with lard, flour and salt to make a dough from it. Roll-out the dough into finger size, slit the top of the dough and glaze with egg. Bake it until it is ready.

Kneaded Bodag: Mix 1 kg of flour, 4 eggs and salted water, Roll-out dough into finger size, slit the top of the dough, glaze with egg and sprinkled with salt. Bake it until it is ready. This bread is particular for lent month.

Wheat Germ Pudding

Preparation: The selected healthy wheat seeds is placed on a wet piece of cloth, spread into thin layer. Next cover the germ with another piece of wet cloth. Leave the germs to sprout in a dark and humid room/area for a few days (growth of 3-5 cm). Ensure germs are not green in colour. When sprouting process is complete, grate the germs in a mincer, add luke warm water to mincer. Drained away the water. Wash/Clean the grated germs in water.

Make 2 ltr. of white germ juice from ½kg. of wheat, which will be used as a base of the pudding. Add corn flour to juice to a consistency of crepe mix. Stir the mixture well, pour mixture onto baking pan and bake for 2-2 ½ hours.

Csöröge (Fritter)

Mix 8 egg yolks with a tablespoon of sugar and 5ml rum, next add-in flour to a consistency of preparing noodle's dough. Roll-out the dough to thickness of noodle. Cut finish dough into size of half a palm and fry it in hot lard . Fry for short period of time, and it is ready!

Serve with sprinkle icing sugar.



Pretzel

Ingredients: 1 kg flour, 12 eggs, 20 gm yeast, add sugar and salt to taste

Preparation: Make warm leaven from flour, yeast (or leaven seeds) and water. Use remaining half of the flour, eggs, sugar and water to make a stiff dough. Knead the dough till not sticky to hands. When dough is ready, cut dough to pieces of a size of palm and further cut the palm-size dough to thin slices. Pull the thin slices of dough into shape of pretzel using your fingers. Put the pretzel into hot but not boiling water, leave it until the pretzel float to the surface of the water. Remove pretzel from water with a spoon carefully and leave it aside to dry. Heat traditional coal-oven until coal is glowing and bake dried pretzel in it. Pretzels which were baked in tradition coal-oven is tastier and crunchier compared to the ones baked on a grill. The pretzels are presented in a garland, using a string

Semolina Doughnuts

(The doughnut is rarely eaten these days.)

Ingredients: ½ ltr. milk, 20 ml semolina, 2 eggs (additional eggs for coating), lard for baking, a pinch of salt, sugar

Preparation: Put semolina, sugar and salt into boiling milk. Boil until mixture is stiff. Leave it aside to cool.

When mixture is cooled, beat-in 2 eggs and it should be a texture of stiff dough. Place dough on a cutting-board and cut it into pieces using a cookie-cutter. Coat the dough with eggs and fry it in hot lard.

Corn Pie

Ingredients: 40 ml corn grits, 1 tbsp. semolina, 2 tbsp. of strudel flour, ½ ltr. milk, 1-2 tbsp. sugar, 1 tbsp. poultry fat; or 100 gm margarine, 50 gm raisins (washed), 1-2 eggs, ½ packet baking powder, grated lemon zest (skin), a pinch of salt, vanilla sugar

Preparation: Mix corn grits and semolina (mush). Boil milk with sugar and poultry fat. Pour the hot milk concoction onto the mush. Stir it well. Put on the lid and leave aside for 1-2 hours. When ready, add-in the grated lemon zest (skin), vanilla sugar, raisins, eggs and baking powder. If the mixture is runny, add more baking powder to thicken it. Pour the mixture into a greased tall baking dish and bake it at 200°C for 45 mins. You can tell that it is ready when the pie shrank from the side of baking dish while the colour should be golden yellow.



Wedding Milk-Loaf

Serves : 5-6 pots of milk-loaf (quantity can be halved or quartered)

Ingredients: 70 gm yeast, 1 ltr. milk, ½ kg. flour, ½ pkt. margarine, ½ cup sour cream, 1 egg, 1 tbsp. lard, 1 tbsp. salt, 2 handful sugar, a pinch of sugar, salt, to taste

Preparation: Warm-up 20 ml of milk, dissolve the yeast and a pinch of sugar in milk. Leave it aside to raise. Meanwhile, heat up the remaining milk, add-in 2 handful of sugar and salt. In a separate bowl, mix margarine, sour cream and egg together.

Pour the warmed milk and raised yeast into a bowl, add-in the flour and mix well. Next, in the same bowl, add-in a handful from margarine/sour cream/egg mixture, knead to become a dough, do this one at handful at a time the process should take 20 mins. Leave dough aside to raise for 30 mins. Knead the dough once more and leave aside again for 1 ½ hours. Next, shape dough into balls, and leave them aside on the work-top. Roll out the dough to the length of the table and inter-weave the dough and shaped to the desired patent. Placed the shaped dough into a pot and further raise it. While the dough is raising, preheat the oven. When oven is heated enough, brush/glaze the top of the dough with 2 eggs and bake it in oven. When loaf is ready, prepare a syrup from 1 ladle of sugar with water. Brush the syrup onto the hot loaf to give a nice shine.

Rich and Cheesy Wedding Pretzel

Ingredients: 600 gm. flour, 400 gm cheese, grated, 20 ml sour cream, 250 gm lard, 1 tbsp. ammonium bi-carbonate, 2 tsp. salt, egg for brushing/glazing

Preparation: Mix together flour, lard, sour cream, salt and 300 gm of grated cheese, ending with sodium bi-carbonate. Shape the dough into a loaf, next cut the loaf to 3cm pieces. Twist each piece and shape to resemble pretzel. Place into a greased baking tray. Brush with egg. Sprinkle with remaining grated cheese and bake it.

Pie (raised pie)

This pie is actually a thicker version of crepe, made from flour, milk and egg. The consistency of the crepe mix is thicker than the regular crepe mix. Pour the mixture on to a greased pan, remember the crepe should be thicker than the usual. Bake it in the oven. While by adding yeast into the mixture, you will get a raised pie.



Cottage Cheese Doughnut (Chicken leg/ Tyúkláb)

Ingredients: For dough 200 gm. cottage cheese, 1 pinch of salt, 1 tbsp. icing sugar, sieved, 2 eggs, 1 tbsp. sour cream, 1 pinch of sodium bi-carbonate, flour (as much as necessary), For baking approx. 20 ml. oil, For rolling 150 gm. vanilla sugar, sieved

Preparation: Mix together ingredients to make dough, put in as much flour as necessary to a texture of medium-stiff, until dough do not stick to the bowl. Cover the bowl with cling film, set inside the fridge for few hours. For convenience, you may prepare dough a night before or in the morning of baking. Shape the dough 6cm in length and 2cm in diameter, cylinder shape. Next, cut the dough to 2cm pieces.

Heat oil in tall frying pan, when oil is sizzling put in 4 chicken legs (it is called this way because of its shape of a chicken leg). Only allow 4 in per frying as the dough will expand. Fry one side with lid on, while the fry the opposite side without the lid. Remove doughnut from oil and placed on napkins to absorb away excess oil. When the oil from doughnut lessen, dip doughnut into vanilla sugar. Serve and eat it hot as in few hours the doughnut will be harden.

Cottage Cheese Pie

Ingredients: For making dough (pie pastry) ½ ltr. milk, 1 kg flour, 3 tbsp. sugar, 50 gm. yeast, 1 tbsp. salt, 1 egg, 2 baking dish 50x50 cm, For fillings 5kg. cottage cheese, ¾ kg. sugar, 20 eggs, 200 gm. flour, salt, to taste, For toppings ½ kg. sour cream, 100 g. butter (** If you wish to prepare only 1 baking dish of 50x50cm, you should halved the ingredients above.)

Preparation: Preheat oven. Dissolved yeast into luke warm sugared milk for raising. Add-in the flour and knead it. Set it aside to raise for 1 hour. Next, roll out the dough to the exact size of baking dish. Beat 20 eggs into a mixer, add-in cottage cheese and flour, mix it well until smooth texture. Finish off the fillings by putting in the sugar and salt to taste. Spread the fillings onto the dough. Finally spread ½kg sour cream on top of fillings together with sliced butter. Bake it in a preheat oven until golden brown.



Trudge in water (Vizen Kótt / Vízön Kullogó)

Ingredients: 500 gm. flour, 100 gm. lard / butter, 2 egg yolks, 20 ml. sour cream, 10 ml. milk, 20 gm. yeast, lemon peel, pinch of salt, granulated sugar, walnut

Preparation: Dissolve yeast in milk and leave it to raise. Next, mix the raised yeast with flour, lard or butter, add-in sour cream, salt, egg yolks and lemon peel and mix it well. Knead the dough. Sprinkle some flour onto a clean kitchen towel. Next, wrap the dough in the kitchen towel loosely, so that the dough could have room for raising. Hang the wrapped dough onto a wooden ladle and put into a pot of cold water. Leave it for an hour, until it rises to the surface. Sprinkle the work-top with sugar and finely chopped walnut, then lay the dough on it. Roll 10 cm long sticks from the dough, and make crescent-shaped rolles out of them. Put the crescents in a baking tray to rest then bake them on medium heat.



*Hungaricum*s

Kosszarvú (ram-horned) paprika of Szentes

Attributes: unique, twisted shape, similar to the horn of a ram.

The ram-horned paprika of Szentes (*Capsicum annuum* L. convar. *Longum*) is a type that is cultivated in arable soil. Other parts of the vegetable is similar to those of other paprika types found in Hungary.

The stem is between 40 and 50 cm, usually it has three branches, its leaves are medium green and 6-8 times 3-4 cm large (in the case of intensive cultivation, leaves can be bigger) and heart-shaped. The hanging paprika is 18-25 cm long, light green and pointed. Its flesh is 2-3 mm. thick. (It is biologically ripe when its green colour turns into red, but it is only important in terms of seed growing) Its seeds is 40-50 g, very sweet and spicy in aroma but not in taste. It has much more seeds than other (grass-tasting) type of paprikas with higher productivity. During the process of development, it has become smooth, not as curved as the 'ancient' Bulgarian type. (Today, there are several similar types, both sweet and hot.)

People usually eat it raw. It is especially popular with people who don't really like the extremely hot paprika for breakfast with cold meats. (Of course, at home it is served in one piece, but in restaurants it is cut into rings) As this type has very good qualities, it was used for home-made pickles because even with pickling, it maintained its tastiness and crispness, unlike other, otherwise appealing and yielding types. Its market value has decreased because of the changed -industrial- consumption requirements. Today it is only preserved for domestic use.



Delicate white paprika of Szentes

A Szentesi étkezési fehér paprika (*Capsicum annuum* L. Delicate white paprika of Szentes (*Capsicum annuum* L. convar. *Grossum*) is 6-9 times 5-7 cm. long. There are usually three, but mainly four veins in this blunt vegetable. Actually, it is the predecessor of the so called blocky type of paprika which can be found mainly abroad. The Bulgarian people who settled in Szegvár grew a special type of paprika, the predecessor of modern day paprika which is used for stuffing. It was called Kalinkói and had four veins. This paprika was replaced by a dull tipped, white paprika which was still grown at some places in the 80s.

The first record of using green seasoning paprika as “eating” paprika or pickles, is from 1860, in Kiskunfélegyháza. The record says that it was common to keep the paprika green to use it as pickles, and the best way to conserve paprika is to use French vinegar.

Other early publications that mentioned the large and fleshy paprika are :

In 1918, an economic course book (elementary school year 5 & 6), which recommended the planting, water and fertilising of the fleshy paprika for garden production. The text also stated that this particular type of paprika is mainly cooked with stuffing.

In 1939, Csongrád, in an agricultural publication, called Farmer Education, 3 pickles recipes were featured, namely, Whole paprika in Vinegar, Chopped Paprika Salad and Paprika (Salad) Stuffed With Cabbage. All three recipes used the word “fleshy”, while in one of the recipes they added “light yellow”; however, the type of paprika was not mentioned.

Today, cultivated paprika is exclusively sold for fresh consumption to both abroad and in Hungary. When cooked, it is mainly used as stuffed paprika. In the last 2-3 years it has been used -again- as pickles and stuffed with white or red cabbage and preserved in souse.



White cabbage of Szentes

White cabbage of Szentes (*Brassica oleracea* var. *capitata* f. *álba*) has a round shape with smooth surface. It has relatively few bloomy leaves and fine veins. Its colour is light green, diameter is about 25-28 cm and its weight is between 600-1000 gm. If it is overripe, it can split easily. It grows very fast, its texture is delicate, white and has an excellent, sweet taste. Cabbage was an important, widespread food since the Middle Ages, mainly cooked with meat or stuffed. Because of its importance, it was grown in "cabbage gardens", what's more, its shape was said to resemble to the shape of the country, that's why it was called the "Arms of Hungary" in the 16th-18th. century. The similarity was first written in a Zrínyi-cook book before 1662. János Lippai, the writer of the first Hungarian horticultural book, mentioned cabbage as a widespread, Hungarian basic food in 1664. Mátyás Bél spoke highly of cabbage with bacon and pork in the beginning of the 18th century. János Gvadányi described cabbage and meals with cabbage as number one "National Dishes".

The 150-year-old Turkish rule and its consequence, the settlement of Balkan and South Slav ethnic groups, probably helped to spread and popularize the Hungarian cabbage. It was also an important type of food to the Serbians who lived in Hungary, i.e. stuffed cabbage. According to nutrition science, is a counterpart of a Turkish meat dish (rolled up in vine-leaf) or the Central European porridge. The white cabbage of Szentes is one of the earliest land produce. It is recommended to eat fresh and not to use for pickling. This domestic type has soft veins so it can be cooked easily.

The earliest red radish of Szentes

Earliest red radish of Szentes (*Raphanus sativus* L.) is grown in very large lands in Hungary. One of its type the Giant Butter of Szentes has a diameter of 3.5-5 cm, it is red with thin skin and round shaped root. It is exclusively used when it is fresh, mainly for cold meats. But is also common after being chopped, as one of the ingredients of mixed salad.

Kohlrabi of Szentes

Kohlrabi of Szentes (*Brassica oleracea* L. con-var. *gongyloides*) has a lot of different types. Szentes has the most types of kohlrabies in the world, and also the first in the



number of production for the market in a specific area. All kohlrabies have a few things in common; they are delicious, delicate and the most importantly: they don't tend to be stringy, apart from their violet or greenish-white colour. Their time of cultivation is between 45 and 90 days.

Kohlrabi needs some kitchen work before it becomes ready, but preservation is not necessary as people can buy fresh one at any time of the year. In the period when there are less vegetables, it can be eaten raw, almost as a fruit. It is a basic ingredient, after shredding, of the widespread and popular vegetable soup. Stuffed kohlrabi is made by cutting out its root and simmering it together with meat stuffing. (This food is available in some reputable restaurants.)

Red cabbage of Szentes

Red cabbage of Szentes (*Brassica oleracea* L. convar. *capitata rubra*) is dark purple, delicate, round, thick and nice. It weighs about 1-1.5 kg. Its head and leaves are smooth. The size and number of its leaves are average. Its texture is crumbling and has a delicious taste.

It is usually sold raw in the markets, but people make salad (usually mixed) or garnishing from it at home. In restaurants, red cabbage is usually a garnishment.

Bell pepper of Szentes

Bell pepper of Szentes (*Capsicum annuum* L. convar. *Grossum*) is 8-12 cm long, 4-5 cm wide, its position is on the slant. Its surface is smooth, a bit cleft and it has 3 or 4 veins. It ripples from light green colour to scarlet, and weighs 80-150 gm. Its meat is 6-8 mm thick. It is of a sweet taste. The ripe pepper is hardly sold for the public in markets or shops. A small part of raw bell peppers is exported, through wholesalers in boxes after shining them up, the rest is also exported, in a pre-processed form, to foreign preserving-factory. To meet the local demands, these factories marinate, chop up, dry (or use other types of preservation) or turn the pepper into an additive agent.

In Pest, Buda and later Budapest, many actors used recipes with bell pepper for generations.

Salad was made with equal proportion of tomato and green pepper, with some oil, lemon juice, parsley leaves and salt.

In cook books, under the headword home-cunning, bell



pepper is in the recipes of peach cheese and bottled currant. Preparation: Cut the bell pepper into 4-6 pieces, put them into boiling water with some vinegar, sugar, ground pepper and salycil. This kind of pickles is served with meat or used for sandwiches.

Rose medlar of Szentes

Special features: It is the tastiest type of medlars, and more and more popular as an ornament as its large flowers are very nice. Its foliage is the gem of gardens and parks.

This type of medlars (*Mespilus germanica* L.) has an unknown origin, but in Szentes it is widespread and has been known for a long time. It is harvested in early spring, for about a month. Its fruit is spectacular, has a pear-shape. Its length is 40-45 mm, more than its width. It weighs 22-30 gm. Its skin and meat is the most light-coloured of all domestic types. The skin is light greenish-yellow or fawn, but it can only be eaten when it is greyish-brown. Its meat is also greyish-brown when it is ripe, the taste is better than any other medlars. The foliage is loose, its size is average but because of its dark green colour, it is very decorative. The twigs are straight and thin. Its flowers are of average size, snow-white, papulose. It blooms late, in the middle of May when there is no danger of spring frost. It is self-fertilizing.

It can be eaten only after after-ripening. The fruit is rich in vitamins and pectin, it is consumed fresh, but can also be made into jam, purée, glacé fruit, bottled fruit with rum or brandy, and for wine or liqueur. It is perfect for making fruit juice, combined with other types of fruit. Tea which is made from its seed, is good against nephropathy.

Eating out

Restaurants

Aranykalász Restaurant

18, Apponyi square, Szentes H-6600
Tel : +36-63/312 046 , +36-20/955 6442
Fax: +36-63/312 046
E-mail: aranykalasz@pannongsm.hu
Web: www.restaurantguide.hu/aranykalasz

Castellum Guest-house and Restaurant

3, Régiposta street , Szegvár H-6635
Tel: +36-63/364-375, 70/215-5926
E-mail: panzio@szegvar.hu
Web: www.megapress.hu/panzio

Chicago Restaurant and Bowling Pub

2, F. Nagy street, Szentes H-6600
Tel: +36-63/562-002

Főnix Restaurant and Brasserie

2, Mátyás király street, Szentes H-6600
Tel.: +36-63/316 282 , +36-30/328 8051
Web: www.restaurantguide.hu/fonix_etterem

Galéria Restaurant

7/A, Petőfi street, Szentes H-6600
Tel.: +36-70/570 1238

Town Centre Restaurant

2, E. Ady street, Szentes H-6600
Tel.: +36-63/401-097

Liget Restaurant

4, Gábor Csallány riverbank, Szentes H-6600
Tel.: +36-63/400 397
Email: ligetetterem@invitel.hu

Nádas Inn

1/A, Nádas avenue, Szentes H-6600
Tel./fax: +36-63/400 941
E-mail: nadas96@vnet.hu
Web : www.restaurantguide.hu/nadas_szentes

Páterház Restaurant

1, Kossuth street, Szentes H-6600
Tel : +36-63/444-112 , +36-30/935-9435
Fax: +36-63/444-112
Web : www.restaurantguide.hu/paterhaz_szentes

Szentes SÉF Ltd.

3, Attila street, Szentes H-6600
Tel: +36-63/510-500, +36-30/249-1293
Fax: +36-63/510-501
E-mail: sef@szentesi.hu
Web: www.cegorigo.hu/sef

Szinbád Restaurant and Café

11, Mihály Horváth street, Szentes H-6600
Tel: +36-63/314-619

Pubs, Pizzerias

Buffalo Saloon

51, E. Ady, Szentes H-6600
Telephone: +36-30/259-27-55

Chicago Bowling Pub, Billiard Saloon

2, F. Nagy street, Szentes H-6600
Telephone: +36-63/562-002

Panorama Brasserie and Café

5, Kossuth square, Szentes H-6600
Telephone: +36-63/444-063

Taverna Pizzeria

7, Mihály Horváth street, Szentes H-6600
Telephone: +36-63/401-051

Venezia Pizzéria

12-14, Szent Imre Herceg street, Szentes H-6600

Telephone: +36-63/444-064

Confectioneries

Füsti Confectioneries

15/a, Kossuth street, Szentes H-6600

Telephone: +36-63/317-888

3/4, Zsigmond Kiss street, Szentes H-6600

Telephone: +36-63/321-684

Zoltán Nagy's Confectioneries

K. Zolnay street, Szentes H-6600

109, Honvéd street, Szentes H-6600

Telephone: +36-63/311-439

Petőfi Confectionery

2, Petőfi street, Szentes H-6600

(entrance from Kossuth street)

Telephone: +36-63/400-479

