



INTERNATIONAL FOODS PROJECT

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How much do you know about the lands that have given us so many of our favorite foods and customs? After you've completed this 4-H project, you'll know a lot. We'll take fascinating "tours" of four countries—Mexico, Germany, Italy, and Japan—sampling their foods and sharing their traditions.

With the help of neighbors, friends, and relatives of different nationalities, you can bring each of these lands right into your meeting room. You can also learn a great deal from foreign restaurants, magazines, newspapers, radio, television, travel folders, films or slides from airlines, and your local schools. Most embassies, consulates, and travel bureaus will send information free or for a small charge.

Enhance your project with authentic music and decorations, which are often easy to come by. Many supermarkets carry a wide choice of international foods.

Plan to have at least two meetings devoted to each country. You'll find the meetings so interesting you may even want to plan more!

Germany



German Meals

German food has a wonderful staying quality well suited to an energetic people in an invigorating land. Just reading a menu of German foods with its sweets and sours, thick soups, zestful sausages, dark breads, and delicate cakes is enough to make your mouth water. This, along with the stick-to-your-ribs, easy-on-the-budget goodness of a German meal, helps explain the popularity of German foods in the United States.

German cuisine is thrifty; this is evident in the kitchen where not a scrap of usable food is wasted. Even the snout and ears of the pig end up, deliciously, in a stew!

The German Way with Food

Many of Germany's best dishes came about as practical answers to economic necessities. In the days when women and children commonly worked in the fields, foods were needed that could cook slowly with little or no watching. Many such foods were cooked in heavy utensils with plenty of liquid to keep them from boiling dry. Not wishing to waste food, the traditional hausfrau (hows-frow), or housewife, thickened the liquid and served it as gravy.

Other German dishes developed from the need to preserve food: preserves, fruit butters, and vinegars; salted vegetables such as sauerkraut; cured and smoked meats; sausages, cheese, and butter; smoked and pickled fish; and pickled meats and game, including sauerbraten (SOWER-brah-ten), or German pot roast, pickled beef, and hasenpfeffer (HAH-sen-feffer), or marinated rabbit stew.

Germany also gave us the delicatessen with its tantalizing assortment of cold meats and other foods. Liverwurst, potato salad, and even pickles originated in the German delicatessen. And two of our favorite foods—hamburgers and frankfurters—are named for their German cities of origin.

A hearty, substantial meal is traditional in Germany. The meal usually is relaxed and unhurried so that every tasty morsel can give full pleasure. Foods are served family-style and passed around the table.

A simple, early breakfast of coffee, bread or toast, and marmalade starts the day. A second breakfast is served between 10 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. in many homes. This meal might be sandwiches or a variety of sausages and cheese.

The main meal, abendessen (AH-bent-essen), is usually served midday. This may consist of an all-in-one dish or stew or a hearty meat-and-vegetable soup. Pork or sausage, sauerkraut, and rutabaga or kale are often cooked together. Other favorite combinations are mutton with green beans and beef with carrots or kohlrabi. Desserts make "the end more sweet."

Supper is served around 7:30 p.m. This might include open-faced sandwiches, cold cuts, sausages, salads, cheese, beer, and wine. A hot dish of eggs, potatoes, or mushrooms may precede the cold foods in some homes. Fruit, often with cheese, is a favorite dessert for supper.

Do as the Germans

Forks and knives are handled quite differently in Germany (and other parts of Europe) than in America. To eat abendessen, for example, hold the fork and knife as you would to cut a piece of meat. Use the knife to cut or to push food onto the back of the tines of the fork. Raise the fork to your mouth without changing its position in your hand. The knife stays in your hand, even when you have no use for it. This is often called the continental use of silver.

In setting the table, place the fork to the left, knife to the right, and spoon crosswise above the plate.

Let's Cook German

As satisfying as the following meal might be, a typical German hausfrau would add several more items. Some of these dishes, especially sauerbraten, take longer to prepare than American foods. Decide who will marinate and partially cook the meat before your meeting.

Sauerbraten

SOWER-brah-ten (German Pot Roast)

Kartoffelklosse

Kar-TOFF-el-KLAY-seh (Potato Dumplings)

Saft

Sahft (Gravy)

Warme Kopsalat

VAHR-mah KOHPF-sah-laht (Wilted Lettuce Salad)

Apfeltorte

AHP-fel-tor-teh (Apple Tart)

Sauerbraten (German Pot Roast)

4 pounds boneless beef pot roast (chuck roast may be less expensive; may also use round, rump, or sirloin tip)

2 cups wine vinegar or cider vinegar

2 cups water

2 onions, peeled and sliced

3 bay leaves

1/2 teaspoon black pepper

6 whole cloves

2 tablespoons sugar

1/4 cup fat

1. Place meat in a large, deep bowl.
2. Place all other ingredients, except fat, in a saucepan and bring to a boil. Pour over meat.
3. Cover and refrigerate 48 hours or more, turning meat several times to season evenly.
4. Remove meat, reserving marinade. Dry meat well with paper towels.
5. Heat fat in a heavy saucepan or Dutch oven over medium heat. Brown meat well on all sides.
6. Strain marinade and add 1 cup to meat. Reserve remaining marinade.
7. Cover and cook meat over low heat until fork-tender (about 1 1/2 hours). Add more marinade, if necessary, to keep 1/2-inch liquid in the pan.
8. Remove meat to a warm platter, slicing it first, if desired. Makes 10 to 12 servings.

To make gravy (saft): Thicken liquid in pot with a thin flour-and-water paste. Allow 1 1/2 tablespoons flour for each cup of liquid. Add more marinade or water for the desired flavor and consistency. Cook to thicken and blend flavors. Check seasonings. Strain, if necessary. Pour part of the gravy over meat and pass the rest.



Kartoffelklosse (Potato Dumplings)

6 medium potatoes

3 eggs

3/4 cup enriched flour

3/4 cup fresh bread crumbs

1 teaspoon salt

1/2 teaspoon nutmeg

1. Peel potatoes and boil until tender. Drain and mash or force through sieve or food mill. Spread on paper towels to remove excess moisture.
2. Beat eggs to blend in a medium-size bowl.
3. Add potatoes and other ingredients to eggs and mix until blended.
4. Shape into balls about the size of large walnuts. Add more bread crumbs if mixture is too soft to handle.
5. Drop balls into boiling salted water. After they rise to the surface, cook about 3 minutes.
6. Remove with a slotted spoon. Makes six servings

Warme Kopsalat (Wilted Lettuce Salad)

6 cups bite-size pieces of lettuce

4 slices bacon

4 green onions, thinly sliced

1/4 cup vinegar

1 tablespoon sugar

1/2 teaspoon salt

Pinch of pepper

2 sliced hard-cooked eggs (optional)

1. Place lettuce in serving bowl.
2. Fry bacon over low heat until crisp. Drain on paper towels. Crumble bacon.
3. Add onion to hot bacon drippings and fry until golden.
4. Remove pan from heat and add vinegar, sugar, salt, and pepper.
5. When ready to serve, bring dressing to a boil. Pour over lettuce and toss lightly to coat all leaves.
6. Garnish with crumbled bacon and sliced eggs. Serve immediately. Makes six servings.

For variety, use a combination of greens, or substitute spinach, Swiss chard, or Chinese cabbage for the lettuce.

Apfeltorte (Apple Tart)

1 egg
1/3 cup sugar
1/4 cup milk
2 cups enriched flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
2 large apples
1 egg
1/4 cup sugar
2 tablespoons evaporated milk
2 tablespoons sugar

1. Place 1 egg, 1/3 cup sugar, and milk in a medium-size mixing bowl and beat until blended.
2. Sift together flour, baking powder, and salt. Gradually stir into egg mixture to form a soft dough that can be handled.
3. Place dough in greased 9- or 10-inch round baking pan. Pat dough to cover the bottom and sides.
4. Peel and slice apples. Arrange them in overlapping slices over dough.
5. Beat together 1 egg, 1/4 cup sugar, and evaporated milk in a small bowl. Drizzle over apples.
6. Bake about 20 minutes in a 400°F oven or until tart is brown and apples tender.
7. Remove tart from pan and place on cooling rack or serving plate.
8. Sprinkle the 2 tablespoons sugar over hot tart. Serve while warm. Makes six servings.

For variety, substitute other quick-cooking fresh fruit or canned or dried fruit.

More Good German Sweets

Pfefferneusse

FEH-fer-noo-seh (Christmas Spice Cookie)

1/2 cup honey
1/2 cup molasses
1/4 cup margarine or butter
1 egg
3 1/2 cups flour
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
1/2 teaspoon cinnamon
1 teaspoon ground allspice
1/4 teaspoon ground anise seeds

1. Heat honey and molasses in a saucepan, but do not allow to boil.
2. Add margarine and mix. Cool mixture, then beat in egg.
3. Sift together all dry ingredients and gradually stir into honey mixture.

4. Turn onto floured baking board and smooth out dough with hands.
5. Place in refrigerator for about 30 minutes.
6. Shape dough into 3/4-inch balls
7. Bake on greased cookie sheet in a 350°F oven for 12 to 15 minutes. Makes about four dozen.

Apfelnuss Kuchen (Applenut Cake)

1 egg
2/3 cup sugar
1/2 cup flour
1 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 cup chopped apples
1/2 cup chopped walnuts
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1. Beat egg in electric mixer until light and fluffy; gradually add sugar and continue beating until well mixed.
2. Sift together flour, baking powder, and salt; fold into egg mixture.
3. Add apples, nuts, and vanilla and stir until well blended.
4. Pour batter into a greased and floured 8-inch square or round baking pan. Bake 30 to 35 minutes in 350°F oven. Serve cake warm with whipped topping. Makes four to five servings.

Stollen (Christmas Bread)

1 package dry yeast
1/4 cup lukewarm water
2 teaspoons sugar
1/4 cup butter or margarine
1 cup milk
3 eggs, room temperature
5 to 6 cups flour
1/3 cup sugar
1 teaspoon salt
1/2 cup chopped blanched almonds
1/2 cup mixed candied fruits, cut small
1/2 cup raisins

1. Dissolve yeast in water with 2 teaspoons sugar.
2. Melt margarine. Add milk and heat to warm. Combine with egg, 2 cups flour, 1/3 cup sugar, and salt in bowl of an electric mixer.
3. Beat for a couple of minutes at medium speed; add yeast mixture and mix well.
4. Add additional flour to make a thick batter and continue beating, scraping the bowl occasionally.
5. Add more flour until the mixer cannot handle the beating. Stir in enough flour to make a soft dough.
6. Turn out onto a floured board and knead about five minutes. Knead nuts, candied fruits, and raisins into the dough.
7. Place in a greased bowl, turning over once to grease both sides of dough.

8. Cover and let rise in a warm place until double in bulk, about 1 1/2 hours.
9. Punch down dough and divide into three pieces.
10. Roll out each piece into an 8- x 12-inch oval; fold in half lengthwise and place on a greased baking sheet.
11. Cover and let rise again in a warm place until double in bulk, about 40 minutes.
12. Bake in 350°F oven about 25 to 30 minutes or until done.
13. Remove from baking sheet and cool on wire racks. Ice with confectioners' sugar frosting while still warm and, if desired, decorate with additional almonds and candied fruit. Makes three loaves.

Share a Custom

If you want to celebrate Christmas with a German custom, make an Advent wreath. Wire together branches of evergreens to form a wreath. Trim with red ribbons and insert four red candles, equally spaced apart. Use the wreath as a centerpiece or suspend it from the ceiling. Light one candle on each of the four Sundays before Christmas.

More Things to Do

- Learn "O Tannenbaum," one of Germany's favorite Christmas carols. Find out the origin of the Christmas tree. Find out how many of our Christmas customs came from Germany.
- Learn a typical German folk dance, such as the schottische or polka. Listen to music by the great composer Strauss. Or dance the waltz. The waltz originated in Germany and Austria in the late 1700s and is still a favorite.
- Learn a German roundelay, such as "Schnitzelbank."

The German Daily Four

Milk Group—Cheese appears many times on the German table—as part of the main course, as snacks, and as dessert. Some milk is used as a beverage. Because German gravies and sauces are often made with milk as well as sweet and sour cream, these foods are also sources of calcium. In the United States, we lower the fat by using less cream and using just milk to make the gravies and sauces.

Meat Group—Germans eat generous amounts of meat—fresh and cured pork, veal, some beef, poultry, fish, and rabbit and other game. They especially favor sausage, which forms the basis of many meals. A typical German market offers at least two dozen kinds of liver sausage plus several dozen combinations of beef and pork, each blended, flavored, or cured in a distinctive way.

Dried peas and beans, used in hearty soups and main dishes, provide an additional source of protein.

Vegetable-Fruit Group—The Germans produce many vegetables, but the ones that appear most frequently on family tables are those that store well through the winter. Potatoes are so popular that they may be served three times in a meal—in a soup, in a vegetable dish, and in a salad. Potatoes fried, mashed, baked, or boiled often take the place of bread. Potato dumplings and pancakes are German specialties.

People in Germany also enjoy eating cabbage. They eat large amounts of sauerkraut, a dish they have made world-famous.

Potatoes and cabbage are generally eaten in such quantities that they provide significant amounts of vitamin C. Other vegetables and fruits, along with milk, cream, butter, cheese, eggs, and liver, are a source of vitamin A.

Bread-Cereal Group—Germany is famous for its dark breads and baked desserts. While white flour is used for fancy breads, pastries and cakes, everyday bread is whole-grain.