

OUR EASTERN EUROPEAN ROOTS: WE ARE WHAT OUR ANCESTORS ATE

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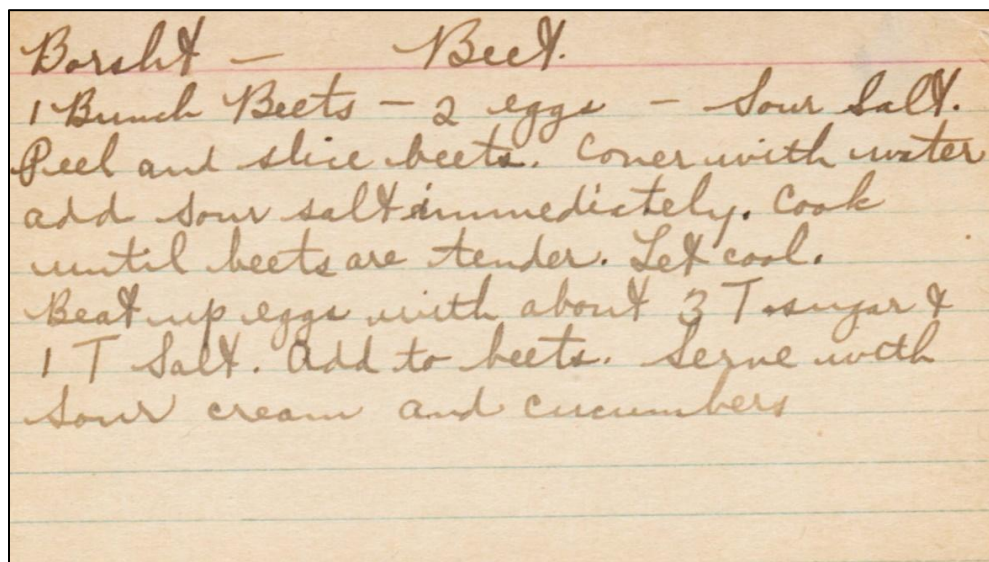
Introduction

When researching Jewish ancestry, it can be difficult to determine where ancestors lived in the “Old Country”. For many of Ashkenazi origin, family stories as well as preliminary research into American census and vital records may indicate origins in “Russia” or “Austria”. We yearn to know more and wish we had asked more questions of our grandparents years ago. Some of us are fortunate to have some treasured keepsakes from our beloved grandparents. Many of us have warm memories of the ethnic foods we grew up with, which we cherish even more as remembrances of our family holiday gatherings so many years ago. Can those fondly remembered meals reveal clues about our family history?

The accompanying presentation will discuss the regional differences in the foods our Ashkenazi ancestors ate in the shtetls of the Russian Pale of Settlement and Galicia.

Please note that the discussion will be limited to shtetl life in the Pale of Settlement and Galicia. Due to time limitations, not all regional foods will be discussed.

What does this recipe card tell us about where the family lived in the “old country”?



Glossary

(Spellings may differ due to transliteration from Yiddish and differences in regional dialects)

Black bread	Bread made from rye flour
Blini	Pancake
Blintzes	Thin pancakes folded around filling, then baked, fried, or sautéed
Borscht	Beet or cabbage soup
Broyt	Bread
Bulbes	Potatoes
Challah	Braided loaf of egg bread, traditionally baked for Shabbat
Cholent	Slow-cooked stew served for lunch on Shabbat
Chopped liver	Liver pate
Chrain	Grated horseradish
Fleyshik	Meat
Galicia	Region within former Austria-Hungary Empire that today comprises areas of western Ukraine and eastern Poland
Galitzianer	Jew from Galicia
Gedempte fleisch	Pot roast
Gefilte fish	Fish loaves made of ground fish
Gehakteh herring	Chopped herring
Grivines	Onions fried in schmaltz
Holishkes	Stuffed cabbage
Karnatzl	Spiced beef salami or sausage in narrow tube shape
Kartofl	Potato
Kasha	Porridge made from cooked buckwheat (or similar grain)

Kasha varnishkes	Kasha with noodles or farfel
Kichel	Sweet cookie, baked in bowtie or diamond shape
Kishka	Stuffed derma filled with mixture of flour, onion, fat, and seasonings
Knaidlech	Matzah balls
Kosher	Food that meets the requirements of Jewish dietary laws
Kreplach	Boiled dumpling, often eaten in soup
Knish	Baked dough filled with meat, potato, barley, or other filling
Kugel	Sweet or savory noodle or potato casserole
Kvass	Fermented beverage traditionally made from bread
Latkes	Fried potato pancakes
Litvak	Jew from the territory of the former Grand Duchy of Lithuania
Lokshen	Noodles
Mamaliga	Cornmeal porridge
Mandlbrot	Cookies similar to biscotti (literally, almond bread)
Matzoh	Unleavened bread eaten during Passover
Milkhik	Dairy
Pale of Settlement	Region within former Russian Empire that today comprises Lithuania, Belarus, Moldova, and parts of Latvia, Ukraine, and Poland
Pareve	Neither dairy nor meat
Pastrami	Cured meat coated with mix of spices, smoked and steamed
Pickle	Cucumber preserved in brine and seasonings
Rugelach	Pastry made by rolling triangle of dough around a filling
Schav	Cold soup made from sorrel leaves or other greens

Schmaltz	Chicken or goose fat
Schmaltz herring	Pickled herring
Shochet	Ritual slaughterer of meat and fowl
Shtetl	Small towns where Jews lived in Eastern Europe, primarily in the Russian Pale of Settlement and Galicia
Treyf	Forbidden food that does not comply with Jewish dietary laws
Tsibbeles	Onions
Tsimmes	Carrot compote or stew
Yiddish	Language spoken by Ashkenazi Jews in Eastern Europe
Zis	Sweet
Zoyer	Sour
Zup	Soup

Transliteration and translation sources:

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