



Slektforskningklubb
Fjell dalen Lodge #6-162
Highlands Ranch – Fjell dalen.com



What's Cooking

A look at what and how the Norwegians cooked

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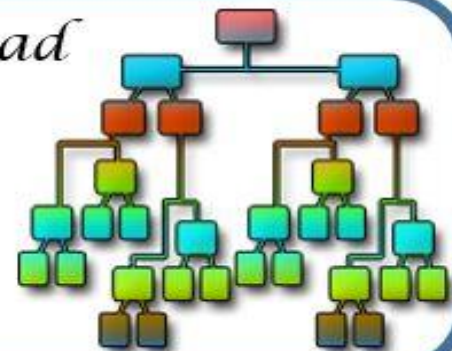
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What's Cooking

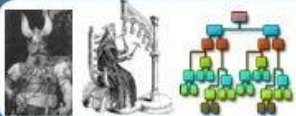
- This is a lecture
- This is designed to take about an hour
 - Questions will be taken and answered or postponed if we will cover them later
 - Questions about your people will be handled after as time permits
- There are no references – too many sources were looked at with no one source providing the actual information – what you see is a compilation from many places, including historical fiction



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What's Cooking

- Norwegian cuisine in its traditional form was based largely on the raw materials readily available in Norway and its mountains, wilderness, and coast. It differed from continental cuisine due to the stronger focus on game and fish. Many of the traditional dishes are the result of using dried or “canned” food, fruits, vegetables, and herbs. This was necessary because of the long winters.



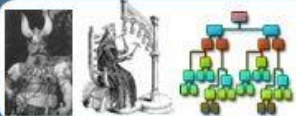
What's Cooking

- In Norway, Norwegians ate mutton and some beef that they raised. They also ate wild game and fish. They milked goats and some cows and made cheese. They grew some crops and harvested wild plants and fruits.
- In America, Norwegians ate mutton and some beef that they raised. They also ate wild game and fish. They milked goats and some cows and made cheese. They grew some crops and harvested wild plants and fruits.



What's Cooking

- Cod was not an exception.
- In Norway, those along the coast ate cod regularly, but inland Norwegians would obtain dried cod. Once railroads were established, occasionally those closer to the coast – a day's train ride away, could get “fresh” cod.
- The same was true in America. For the Dakotas and Minnesota, this resulted in more of a reliance on lutefisk.



What's Cooking

- The early people were nomadic hunters and gatherers who moved with the seasons and the availability of what was available. They brought simple tools, weapons, and the clothes they were wearing. Everything else they needed to thrive, had to come from the land surrounding them.
- The Norwegian climate was harsh; with long, cold winters – and short, intense summers. During the winter, the ground often froze and was covered by a thick layer of snow.
- Fishing and hunting provided food all year round. However, most plants, nuts, and berries were only available during a few summer and autumn months.



What's Cooking

- Finding enough food every day, demanded a plan, lots of experience, and lots of luck. They seldom found the food that they wanted but had to eat the food that was available to them which usually did not have the required level of nutrients.
- The nomads had brought their expertise in drying meats and fish, but this was mostly just the catch of the day and little was left for next season
- Cooking and recipes were not really a choice.



What's Cooking

- Once agriculture worked its way up from the southern regions of Europe, the Norwegians developed an annual cycle of food gathering.
- During summer and autumn, people harvested both the cultivated and non-cultivated land. They put the food into their storage houses – the stabburs – and frost-free cellars.
- From the milk provided by the domesticated animals, people made cheese and butter.
- Dried and fresh game and seafood were equally important food sources.
- While fishing and hunting continued in the winter, there had to be enough cultivated food to tide people over until next spring and early summer.



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What's Cooking

- The earliest cooking was done using dishes made from wood and bone, with one or two imported pots. Knives were a premium item – usually one to a clan. Bone tools were used when knives were not available.
- Cooking in the longhouses was done in holes that were dug in the floors, being thus used as earth ovens. A variety of cooked meats and dairy products were stored in vats of sour whey. Bread was made mostly of barley (or of a mixture of barley, wheat, oat, and rye flours).
- Cool nights and short summers made storage much easier.
- Because of the lack of recorded recipes, most information about the Norse cuisine stems from subsequent historical and archaeological extensive research.



What's Cooking

- Beverages were mead, wine, buttermilk, and weak ale.
- Fresh water was mainly used for everyday purposes.
- Pickling (and lutefisk) started in the early Viking age as the men saw these techniques being used on their trading visits and raids.
- The Vikings also captured slaves and brought them home to do household chores – such as cooking. They brought their knowledge of recipes and cooking methods.
- Except for cast iron stoves and more pans, there was little change in foods, recipes, or cooking methods until the 15th century.



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What's Cooking

- Within the nomadic culture, the role of women and men was that of equals with both sharing duties in animal breeding and in leading the migration process, as well as serving as warriors or leading tribes at times of war.
- This nomadic tradition led to the more equal status of women in Viking and later Nordic society.



What's Cooking

- Viking Age society at home and abroad was essentially male-dominated. Men did the hunting, fighting, trading and farming, while women's lives centered around cooking, caring for the home and raising children.
- However, women in Viking Age Scandinavia did enjoy an unusual degree of freedom for their day. They could own property, request a divorce and reclaim their dowries if their marriages ended.
- Norse women had full authority in the domestic sphere, especially when their husbands were absent.
- If the man of the household died, his wife would adopt his role on a permanent basis.



What's Cooking

- However, cooking and household chores were almost always accomplished by slaves or thralls.
- Thralls were a lower class than slaves – captured opponents of war and their descendents.
- Slaves were people convicted of crimes, who owed money, or who became too destitute to be free.
- Slaves and thralls were freely bought and sold



What's Cooking

- There were three “classes” of households:
 - Larger farms with several to many dependant small house holds – tenants and crafts people
 - Tenants and crafts people – working for pay as well as room and board
 - Slave/thrall households – man/wife/kids – working for room and board



What's Cooking

- Larger farms – the slaves/thralls did the cooking and household chores for the whole farm, as well as supplying labor for the farm
- Tenants and crafts people – usually the woman did the cooking and household chores, but mostly they ate in the longhouse with the owners
- Small farms – the women of the farm did the cooking and household chores. It took more than 1 man and woman to run a farm.



What's Cooking

- Slave/thrall households – did the cooking and chores for the owners and ate the leftovers. They were only supplied a bunkhouse with a bed
- Norwegians abandoned slaves and thralls in the 13th century – but “household help” continued.
- Basically, all were free, but farms of all sizes had laborers and the women became the “household help”



What's Cooking

- Most recipes had to be simple and made enough for the entire group or to last several meals.
- Bread from rye and other flours was served at every meal.
- Usually, meals were a stew of whatever available vegetables and meat were available.
- Celebrations and feasts would have freshly slaughtered meat and might have roasts as well as stew.



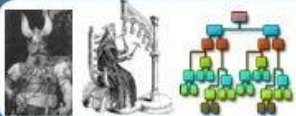
What's Cooking

- Breads and fried dough
 - Early Vikings hired out to the Romans (500 AD) and brought home bread recipes.
 - Norwegians perfected “crisp” breads as a way of making breads that would last through the winters.
 - As fried bread started to be talked about by travelers, krumkake, fattigman, and other fried breads were developed.
 - Lefse arose from dumpling recipes that had arrived with pasta from the far east via travelers. It was a way to store potatoes over the winter.



What's Cooking

- Lutefisk
 - Since salt – the traditional way of preserving fish - was not as readily available, the Norse relied on dried fish.
 - Dried fish, while being nutritious, was tough to eat after being rehydrated. Adding ash from beech or birch trees (lye) would make it easier to eat – but did require good rinsing to remove the lye.
 - The process did not work near as well on dried venison, so jerky and pemican type recipes were mainly used.



What's Cooking

- Hot Pots

- In the 15th century, the potato was introduced to Norway by Catholic clergymen. Initially used for feeding livestock, it quickly was used in stews.
- With the advent of better growing methods, more wheat became available, so flour for thickeners and pasta also became available.
- This led to the development of the Hot Pot or Hot Dish – a thicker stew with meat, pasta, and potatoes.
- This was still mainly single dish eating.



What's Cooking

- Jams and dried fruit
 - Most of the nomads would have known how to dry various fruits
 - In the 15th century, sugar cane was found in India, so jams and jellies worked their way through Europe to Norway
 - Since many more successful “farms” now had stoves, this also led to desserts being more routinely cooked



What's Cooking

- Cardamom
 - One of the earliest spices and mainly from India.
 - Didn't arrive in Norway till the Vikings brought it from Turkey and Constantinople around the end of the Viking age.
 - Viking warriors loved the pungent taste and quickly encourage the cooks at home to incorporate it into meals and breads.
 - Norway, Sweden, and Finland consume about 60% of the total production.



What's Cooking

- By the 17th century, Norwegian farm life and cooking was much the same as any other country – only still with a larger reliance on seafood and wild animals.
- Trade brought cookbooks and cooking methods and spices needed, as well as exotic fruits, vegetables, and even meats.
- Norwegians still relied on bread, hot pots, seafood, and desserts made from local fruits for daily food.



What's Cooking

- Owners – Bonde - and renters
 - Generally had a bruk or a gard, consisting of one or more bruks. Typical size of a gard was up to 30 acres of farmland, with more land for logging, hunting, and places for help to live. Bruks generally were 5 to 15 acres of farmland.
- Husman / cotters
 - Would be given nicer lodging and a lot or plot for good work but were required to provide labor on a weekly and seasonal basis. Some owners gave larger plots – up to a bruk - and demanded a percentage of the crops. Typical size was $\frac{1}{4}$ acre.
- Servants/Laborers
 - Were provided room – bunkhouses or shared cottages - and board for 11-15 hours of daily labor. Could work in spare time and earn some extra money.



What's Cooking

- Up to around 1850:
 - Owners – Bonde - and renters
 - Ate well – if they were profitable. Meat and vegetables in a stew (Hot Pot) or roasted. Laks, torsk, lutefisk, rømmegrøt, pinnekjøtt, reker, meatcakes, lefse, geitost, reindeer, moose, elk, various breads
 - Servants / slaves / household help / laborers got leftovers, but usually day or two old. Leftover meats often re-used into stews before making it to this class
 - Husman / cotters
 - Would have to take meats in lieu of wages or buy/trade for them. They grew their own vegetables – usually on a small lot up to $\frac{1}{4}$ acre – would trade or sell excess crops
 - Did their own cooking – but generally same types of meals – just less meat or meat less often



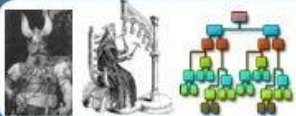
What's Cooking

- Up to around 1850:
 - Servants, Laborers, Husman without land
 - Worked for food and a place to sleep in lieu of wages
 - Seldom did their own cooking – got what was left from the Husman's or owner's table
 - 3-5 meals a day
 - breakfast of bread and maybe porridge or cheese
 - several meals of a cold sandwich – usually without meat for lower class and with meat for upper
 - Evening meal of a stew which might not have meat, eaten with bread – a single dish. Owners would often have a fried or roasted meat such as chops, roast, poultry and might have 2 or 3 dishes and a Sunday treat.



What's Cooking

- Up to around 1890:
 - Owners – Bonde - and renters
 - Little change from 1850, however Hot Pots became more varied and were used several times during the week.
 - Servants / slaves / household help / laborers – generally a designated cook for laborers and help – used leftovers from owners but also added more food. Usually, cooked stews and Hot Pots that served a larger group.
 - Husman / cotters
 - Usually paid a wage for work as fewer laborers
 - Still did their own cooking generally, but processed and canned foods were being introduced



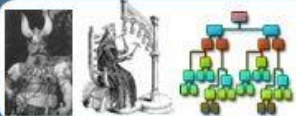
What's Cooking

- Up to around 1890:
 - 3-5 meals a day
 - breakfast might be packaged ground porridges instead of breads. Meat and eggs for owners and better off human
 - several meals of a cold sandwich – usually without meat for lower class and with meat for upper. Lunch as meal – more than a sandwich but generally not a hot meal - was being introduced, but mostly used when active field labor not needed.
 - Evening meal of a stew which might not have meat, eaten with bread. Prosperous owners generally ate a sit-down dinner with 2 to 4 dishes and a Sunday dessert.



What's Cooking

- Bottom Line – what your ancestor ate was largely dependent on their class and prosperity of the land unit they were on.



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Bentsen and Reed
 Ancestral Lines



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The Happiness of Pursuit



Walzs from Mahanomen
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