

Hemispheres



**The International Area Studies Outreach Consortium
at the University of Texas at Austin
Asia, Latin America, the Middle East, and Russia, East Europe & Eurasia**

<http://inic.utexas.edu/hemispheres>
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Fall 2003 Newsletter

In this issue:

Food, Culture & Recipes

Borrowing the theme from this year's annual Teachers' Summer Institute, "Explorers, Traders and Immigrants: Tracking Cultural Contact through Food," this issue of *Hemispheres* is dedicated to food culture. Inside, you'll find recipes for traditional foods from around the world, as well as information on the significance and history that go with them. More information on food culture, links for recipes, and information on the summer workshop can be found at the Hemispheres Website: <http://inic.utexas.edu/hemispheres/>

Centers Receive Renewed Title VI Funding

We're pleased to announce that the four National Resource Centers at the University of Texas that comprise Hemispheres have recently been re-awarded funding under the Title VI program by the U.S. Department of Education. These grants, which provide funding through the summer of 2006, total almost \$1 million per year and will help Hemispheres provide more services to improve world studies in Texas and throughout the United States. In addition, our new partner, the Center for International Business Education and Research (CIBER) at the University of Texas, will help expand our programming in new directions (see the back cover for details). Watch our Website and future issues of *Hemispheres* for more information!

Coming Soon to a School Near You

Longing to attend a Hemispheres workshop but can't get release time? A creative solution is now available. Hemispheres now offers in-service professional development workshops right in your school. We can come in for a day or half-day and give international area content training and resource sharing. There is no cost for the presentations; travel assistance may be necessary, but the more schools and districts we visit per trip, the lower the cost. Our 2004 schedule already includes schools and districts in Arlington, Houston, and El Paso.

If you're interested in having us visit, please contact us at:
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Food Culture: India

Indian Food Culture & History

India's cuisine is as rich and diverse as her people. The spectrum of Indian cuisine can be said to lie between two dietary extremes: vegetarian and meat-eating. In Vedic times (1500-500 BC), cows and other animals were sacrificed in temple rituals, and their meat was eaten. Ghee (clarified butter) and other dairy products were vital for temple rituals and the cow eventually became sacred. With the rise of Buddhism and Jainism, vegetarian cuisines became popular.

Muslim influence in the northern Indian subcontinent caused a revolution in the cuisine. The main influence

was a marriage between the non-vegetarian fare of the Middle East and the rich gravies that were indigenous to India. Spices were added to cream and butter, rice was cooked with meat, and dishes were garnished with almonds, pistachios, cashews and raisins. India was also introduced to kebabs and *pulaos*. The Mughal Emperors were great patrons of this style of cooking. Lavish dishes were prepared especially during the reigns of Jahangir (1605-27) and Shah Jahan (1627-58). Mughal cuisine, although emphasizing meat, co-exists with vegetarianism. Like all other facets of life, India's culinary tradition is constantly changing.

Ghee "Clarified butter"

Ghee is butter that has the milk solids and water removed. It has a nutty flavor and aroma. Ghee does not require refrigeration if you keep moisture out of it; for example, don't dip a wet spoon into the ghee jar. Making it at home is not a difficult task, and flavored ghees are created by simply adding ingredients such as ginger, peppercorns, or cumin at the beginning of the clarifying process.

Bring one pound of butter (organic is best) to boil in a medium saucepan. Reduce heat to medium and cook

uncovered. When the butter first starts to boil there will be a lot of bubbling, which will eventually subside. Next, the ghee will begin to develop foam at the top. At this point the ghee is done.

After the butter turns a clear golden color, dip a strip of paper into the butter, then move away from the butter and all other flammables and light the strip of paper on fire. If the paper sputters, crackles, and pops, then the water has not been completely cooked-out and the ghee is not yet done.

Pulao Rice with Peas and Nuts

Festive meals include pulao rice. The word 'pulao' describes the method of cooking rice with vegetables and spices. The best rice to use for this is basmati rice, which stays light and fluffy.

Ingredients:

2/3 cup basmati rice
 4 tablespoons ghee
 1 teaspoon cumin seeds
 1 medium onion, sliced
 4 cloves
 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
 1 teaspoon garam masala (curry powder)
 1/2 teaspoon salt
 5 ounces of frozen peas
 1/4 cup cashew nuts
 1/4 cup raisins
 1 cup water

Put rice in a bowl and carefully rinse with water. Change the water until it runs clear and drain the rice in a strainer.

Heat the ghee in the saucepan with the cumin seeds. After 3 minutes add the onion, cloves, and cinnamon. Fry gently until the onion is brown. Add the rice and cook for 2 minutes to evaporate the water. Stir in the garam masala, salt, peas, nuts, and raisins. Pour in the water and bring to a boil. Turn the heat down to a simmer, stir, and cover the saucepan. Cook for 15 minutes. Take the pan off the heat and leave for 5 minutes with the cover on before serving.

Food Culture: Latin America

The Marvelous Plantain

Plantains, also known as *platanos*, are certainly not unique to Latin America, but are a common element in the cuisine of many Latin American countries. The plantain, scientifically named *Musa paradisiaca*, is part of the banana family but is generally not eaten raw. Plantains are tropical fruits and are grown in many African nations, as well as in India.

Plantains are a popular dietary staple in the tropical countries where they are grown in abundance, because they are versatile and can be used in main courses, side dishes, and desserts. Additionally, they provide a nutritious, filling, and fairly inexpensive food source. Plantains can be found in the cooking of Panama, Puerto

Rico, Colombia, Nicaragua, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, and other Latin American countries.

Plantains are somewhat larger than bananas and are sold green, which is the stage required when using plantains in many traditional recipes. Although plantains are ripe and ready to be eaten raw when their outer skin is black, they are not usually eaten this way because they are dryer than a banana and not as sweet and flavorful.

Each country has its favorite plantain recipe, whether it is Puerto Rico's *mofongo*, Panama's drunken plantains, Trinidad & Tobago's plantain and fish casserole, or the *tostones* and *maduros* (fried green or sweet plantains) found throughout the region.

Baked Plantains

This easy-to-make dessert comes from Guatemala.

Ingredients:

- 2 very ripe (black) plantains
- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine, cut into small pieces
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1 tablespoon honey

Preheat the oven to 350 F.

Peel the plantains and cut them in half lengthwise. Put them in a 8- by 8-inch buttered baking dish and sprinkle with the butter pieces, sugar, and allspice. Drizzle with honey.

Bake for 20-30 minutes or until plantains are soft and light brown. Serve warm in small bowls with fresh cream and more honey if desired.

Tostones (Fried Plantains)

This side dish is popular in the Caribbean. However, it involves frying plantains in a lot of oil and should not be attempted by children.

Ingredients:

- 2 green plantains
- 2 cups canola oil
- salt, add to taste

In a large frying pan or deep fryer, heat the oil.

Peel and slice the plantains diagonally into one-inch thick rounds. Place them in the hot oil and cook for about 3 minutes, turning to brown evenly.

Remove from oil and pat dry with a paper towel. Place each round inside a sandwich bag and smash it with the bottom of a bottle or with a "tostonera" (a gadget that helps to flatten the plantain) to a half-inch thickness.

Put the plantains back in the hot oil for about 3 minutes, turning until golden brown on both sides. Remove from oil and pat dry with a paper towel. Add salt to taste.

Hemispheres

AREA STUDIES RESOURCES FOR TEACHERS

AVAILABLE FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

HEMISPHERES NEWSLETTER is distributed to schools throughout Texas to be shared with social studies, geography, language, English, literature, math, and science teachers within each school. This biannual newsletter is a tool for teachers who use, or would like to incorporate, area-studies materials in the classroom.

Please distribute copies of *Hemispheres* to all who may benefit from our resources!

HEMISPHERES LISTSERV You can sign up to receive workshop announcements and other information from the centers' outreach programs via this electronic distribution list. We also invite you to use this listserv to communicate with fellow teachers regarding area-studies issues.

To subscribe to the list, go to <http://inic.utexas.edu/hemispheres/> and fill out the form at the bottom of the page.

Food Culture: Middle East

Don't get your Felafel in a bun!

We've all heard the expression "as American as apple pie." Regardless of its origins, apple pie has become an instant symbol of comfort to Americans around the world. Other foods - like chop suey and bangers and mash - have become symbols of their respective nations, whether by design or accident.

Consider if you will, the poor felafel. Felafel is a quintessential - nay, stereotypical - Middle Eastern food. You can buy it on street corners from Cairo to Aleppo; Beirut to Dubai, and all places in between. What you put on your felafel says as much about you as your sign on the zodiac and where you stand on the Coke/Pepsi debate. Lately, however, the poor felafel has become an unwitting player in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Felafel isn't a new idea. Cooking texts from the Abbasid era (around the first millennium, CE) describe deep fried balls made of bean puree. Felafel itself isn't a consistent creature - in Egypt it's made with fava beans and called *tamiyya* to the horror of felafel purists in Israel and the Levant who insist that a true felafel can only be made with chick peas. Cousins to the felafel can be found as far afield as Brazil, where it's made with black-eyed peas and called *acarajé*. In India, fried bean patties are called *bhaji*, and in the United States a

similar item is made with corn and called a *hush puppy*. Like its cousins, it's not a particularly healthy food, being mostly carbohydrates and high in cholesterol. It's also a working class food, devoid of pricy meats and managing to be filling at the same time. So where did the political dimension come from?

Over the past half-century, felafel has become part of the Israeli national cuisine the same way it is part of the cuisine of the Arab nations around it, having been introduced by both Sephardim and Arabs. Among other things, felafel meets the strict dietary requirements of both the Jewish and Islamic religious codes, and quickly became a favorite among Israelis at home and abroad. Since the beginning of the second *intifada*, controversy has erupted on a number of college campuses throughout the U.S. when Israeli-themed events have served felafel as a typical Israeli food, to which many Arab and Palestinian groups have taken exception. There's even a felafel movement afoot among some right-wing Israelis who insist that the food has its origins in the Bible and was, in fact, misappropriated by the Arabs in the first place.

Whichever way you want to look at it, eating felafel with hummus is an experience you're likely to have anywhere in the Middle East. Just take care not to get your felafel in a bun thinking about it.

Felafel

Have children shape the balls, but make sure an adult is present to do the frying.

Ingredients:

1 cup dried chickpeas
5 cups water
1 teaspoon baking soda
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon cumin seeds
1 teaspoon coriander
1 onion, quartered
2 tablespoons minced parsley
2 cloves garlic, mashed
freshly ground black pepper
1 tablespoon lemon juice
pinch chili pepper
vegetable oil for deep frying

Soak chickpeas for 24 hours in water, then drain them. (Try not to use canned chick peas as they provide a mushy texture.) Place the chickpeas and the remaining ingredients, except oil, in a blender or food processor and pulse until mixture is loose and crumbly. Pour two inches of oil into a wok or pan for deep frying and set over medium low heat. The oil should be 350-375 degrees.

While oil is heating, shape the first batch. Use a generous spoonful and shape a patty about 2.5 inches across and 3/4 inch thick. Slide into oil and fry about four minutes, turning at least once. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towels.

Hummus

Ingredients:

2 15-oz cans chick peas (2 1/2 cups)
1 cup tahini (look in the ethnic or kosher section)
1 1/2 cups lemon juice, or more to taste
1 1/2 teaspoons salt
5 cloves garlic
2 tablespoon chopped parsley

Mix first five ingredients in a blender or food processor. Sauce should be thick and smooth - about the consistency of bean dip. Garnish with parsley and a few whole chick peas. Drizzle with a little olive oil. Chill. Makes approximately six cups of sauce.

To serve, arrange felafel balls around hummus on a platter. Serve with pita bread chips.

Food Culture: Russia

A Brief Introduction to Russian Food: It's Not All Borshch!

In Russia, the average growing season lasts only four months, thus definitively limiting the number of crops grown. Rich soils, irregular rainfall, and dry winter and spring seasons have all contributed to crop reduction and food shortages. The poor harvests have an immediate effect on meat production, as animals have to be slaughtered when they cannot be fed over the winter months due to grain shortages. The Russian diet tends to be hearty, in keeping with the harshness of its climate.

Breakfast, *zavtrak*, is usually a quick meal during the working week. Adults are likely to have an open-faced sandwich and a cup of tea, while children typically receive a hot meal of a boiled egg, omlette or *kasha*. *Kasha* is any cooked grain or cereal, such as buckwheat, served with milk, sugar, and butter.

Obed is the main meal of the day, usually eaten between one and three o'clock in the afternoon. *Obed* starts with a small *zakuska*, salt herring or salad, followed by soup made from a homemade stock. Generally, a whole chicken, or perhaps a chunk of beef, is simmered for several hours with vegetables, and is eaten with dried peas or beans, oats, rice, or barley. Among the favorite soups in Russia are cabbage soup, *shchi*, and the Ukrainian beetroot soup, *borshch*.

The main course follows the soup course. Fish is popular, and Russians prefer freshwater varieties like carp and pike. Meat stews are eaten frequently, with flavorings of wild mushroom, pickled cucumber, or smetana. Cabbage leaves are stuffed with meat and rice in tomato sauce. *Sosiski*, or frankfurter-type sausages, are also very common, as are meatball dishes. The main course is served with potatoes, pasta, cereal,

or salted cucumbers, and is always served with bread. *Obed* ends with coffee, tea, *kompot* (stewed fruit) or *kisel* (fruit juice thickened with cornflour).

Supper, called *uzhin*, is customarily eaten with the family gathered around the table, where news of the day is exchanged. Soup may be served again, accompanied by the favorite, dark rye bread. A main course can be vegetarian, such as potato cakes with mushroom sauce or *tvorog*, cottage cheese. Tea or milk follows.

Russian tea, mostly drunk black, is kept in a *samovar*, a portable water boiler. When tea is needed, it is made in a small teapot. The Russian people enjoy tea with sweet cakes and fruit conserve. Coffee is a common drink in Russia but not nearly as popular as tea.

As for other beverages, vodka is the national drink of Russia. Russians like to flavor vodka with cranberries, lemon peel, pepper or herbs. Vodka is accompanied by foods such as sour cucumber, pickled mushrooms, black bread, or salt herring. In Russia's northern regions, people drink not only vodka but also fortified wines, like port, sherry, and Madeira. Wines produced in Russia include sparkling reds and Riesling. The popular white wines are Tsinandali and Gourdzhvani, the heavy reds are Mukuzani and Saperavi. The classic summer wines are Aligote and Riesling while Cabernet and Romanesti are traditional wines aged and kept for special occasions.

Beer is as popular in Russia as in Europe. Russian beer is still made by traditional home brewing methods of a very high standard. *Kvas* is a summer drink made from fermented rye bread. Other Russian drinks include *kerfir*, made from fermented cows milk, that is thick and refreshing. *Prostokvasha* is thicker than *Kerfir* as it has whey added to fresh milk and is fermented overnight.

Madigan, Teresa, et al. "Introducing Russian Food." Special of the Day.

<http://www.schools.ash.org.au/thscmpst/Russia/Russia1.html>

Kotlety Pozharskie

(Courtesy of Olga, food editor, RussianFoods.com)

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup milks
- 2 lbs boneless skinless chicken breasts
- 5 white bread slices
- 1/4 lb unsalted butter
- 3/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon white pepper
- 2 cups dried bread crumbs
- 10 tablespoons unsalted butter

Put bread slices in a bowl and pour in milk. Soak bread for 15 minutes. Squeeze bread dry.

Grind the chicken fine then combine with bread slices. Gradually beat in the butter, softened, along with salt & pepper, until mixture is smooth. Make 6 patties from this mixture. Roll them in bread crumbs coating completely.

Clarify butter in large skillet over low heat. Remove from heat and allow to sit for 3 minutes so whey will settle out. Spoon off clear butter, dump the whey, and return 6 tablespoons of butter to skillet. Place over medium-high heat and fry the patties for approx. 5-6 minutes per side or until done. Serve at once, pour remaining butter over patties. Very good with a dollop of plain yogurt or sour cream on each patty. *Source:*

Olga, RussianFoods.com

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CIBER Becomes Hemispheres' Newest Partner

The Center for International Business Education and Research (CIBER) has joined Hemispheres as our newest partner on the University of Texas campus. Established in 1990 with a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, CIBER promotes international business education on the University campus, in other institutions of higher learning, and in K-12 schools. CIBER's partnership with Hemispheres will allow us to expand the content of our newsletter and workshops to include information on the global business environment and specialized components directed at teachers of civics, economics, government, and the social studies. More information on CIBER can be found on their Website at <http://www.mcombs.utexas.edu/~ciber>

Upcoming Events:

November 16-21, 2003
International Education Week

March 6, 2004
Explore UT

June 8-11, 2004
Summer Teachers' Institute

June 2004
Teachers Abroad Program in Brazil

For more information about upcoming events, see the Hemispheres Website: <http://inic.utexas.edu/hemispheres>