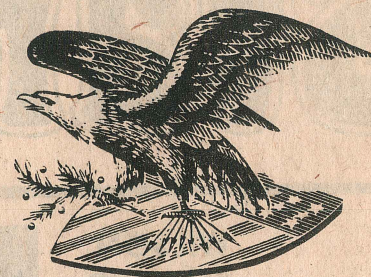


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"Rememberances of Days Gone By"

Celebrating Christmas In Sweden

The celebrating of Christmas is a sacred occasion in many countries throughout the world, and Sweden is no exception. The Swedes are devout followers and believers of tradition and ritual in their holiday observances. They are known to copy or take hold of new things or ideas, especially if it is foreign in origin.

Christmas is a real festival for all people of the country, whether they be rich or poor, city or rural dwellers, they all find a common goal in the celebration of this religious holiday.

The activities of the Christmas season are oriented more towards the enjoyment of the children of the country while their parents have the assurance that with this holiday comes many charming memories of their own childhood days.

Preparations for the Christmas celebration begins at least a month before for all country people. With this comes the preparing of the Christmas ale, a non-intoxicating drink and popular beverage of the Swedish people. Common or traditional foods found in the Swedish households include pig for the country people, ham for the city dwellers, korf, (sausage), sylta, (preserves or head cheese), Christmas bread such as pepparkakor, (ginger-bread), and klenater, (pastry).

Another popular dish enjoyed on Christmas is the Lutefish. Preparation of this meat begins around December 13. The fish is fixed in a solution called Lte which is changed every day up to the 25th. The cooking of the fish depends on the individual family as the recipe used is handed down from each generation of the respective families. Yule-groten, or rice porridge, is also commonly served with this meal. A superstition of the Swedish is that if a grown son or daughter finds a mandel or almond in the dessert, then tradition has it that this person will be married before the next Christmas. When eating the porridge a short rhyme or poem is read about yl-groten.

The giving of presents is carried out and all are neatly wrapped in brightly colored paper adorned with Christmas symbols such as tomtar, the Swedish symbol for Santa Claus. The packages generally contain a short Christmas poem and are then sealed with sealing wax to prevent them from being opened easily before Christmas.

The traditional evergreen tree is also a treasured symbol in the lives of the Swedish people. They are purchased up to two weeks before to make sure one will be found in their home. Many of the farmers raise their own and sell them at a nominal cost. Trees were sold for two crowns or approximately \$1.40 in American money back in 1938. They are garnished with candles, colored paper, karamellor (candy) and other finery on Christmas Eve.

Businesses close at noon on Christmas Eve and all of the streets are empty shortly after for the Christmas festival is one celebrated in the home and almost all the activities are done as a family.

Following the evening meal the visit from Santa Claus takes place. He appears at the door carrying his sack full of toys, each neatly wrapped and bearing the name of the child it is to go to. Hymns are sung around the piano and the evening ends early because of yuotta or Christmas Matin which begins at 7 a.m. the next morning.

Hymns are sung at the service with "Var helsad skona morgonstund" (All Hail to Thee, O Blessed Morn) always a part of the service.

Christmas is a wonderful holiday for the people of the world and it is a time to give thanks for the birth of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. This Christmas, why not think of this holiday as our ancestors did?

These Swedish Christmas recipes were among the family favorites of the late Susie Johnson, mother of A.K. Johnson. The Johnsons and their sons, Bill and Charles, and their families continue this Swedish tradition of food during the Holiday Season:

Swedish Rye Bread

4 cups potato and water (med. size and mashed)
2 tablespoons shortening
1 cup molasses
1-1½ cups white sugar
2 cakes yeast (You may also follow new yeast method—found it works well)
2 cups rye flour
2 teaspoons (scant) salt
Optional as to liking: 1 teaspoon anise seed, 1 teaspoon caraway seed

Combine rye flour, shortening, seeds, salt and molasses—pour hot potato water over mixture—cool to lukewarm after blending. Add yeast dissolved in pint of potato water.

Add white flour until firm. (It will be like satin when ready.) Do not try to turn out to knead until you can handle—Knead well—20 minutes at least.

Let raise once—cut with knife into 4 portions—raise again—300 degrees for 45 minutes.

4 loaves—small sized bread pans—can be cut in half

Julekage

2 packages compressed yeast
¼ cup water
2 cups milk scalded
½ cup shortening (marg. or butter)
Two-thirds cup sugar
2 teasp. salt
¼ teasp. crushed cardamon
2 beaten eggs
4 cups sifted flour

1 cup shredded citron
1 cup chopped maraschino cherries, drained
4 cups sifted flour
Soften yeast in warm water—110 degrees, compressed yeast—85 degrees.

Combine milk, shortening, sugar, salt and spice. Cool to lukewarm.

Add softened yeast and then eggs

Mix well—add 1st 4 cups flour, slowly working into above.

Add fruits and remaining flour

Place in large greased mixing bowl and cover with aluminum foil.

Put in warm place.

Let rise till double in bulk—punch down—then knead lightly on floured surface. Work with greased butter on hands.

Form in small 6" loaves of dough—made round—place on greased cookie sheet—let rise till double in bulk.

Bake 350 degrees at 45 minutes. Frost with colored sugar.

This can be braided or baked in 2 loaves.

Spritz

2 c. butter
1½ c. sugar
2 eggs
1 teasp. baking powder
¼ teasp. salt
2 teasp. almond extract
5 cups flour (sometimes more)
Cream butter, add sugar gradually, add egg un-beaten.
Sift flour 3 times, add baking powder, salt and extract.
400 degrees for 10-12 minutes.
Use all purpose flour.