

Koekerye (1570)

The Koekerye (Cookery) printed in Lübeck in 1570 is one of two surviving printed Low German recipe sources. It is expressly not intended to reflect local tradition, but meant to teach local housewives and maids Saxon cooking. The format, however, is quite unusual. At a time when most printed cookbooks in High German were large, comprehensive works, this is a short pamphlet assembling a number of recipes united by little more than their novelty value. We find such works in England, but not usually in Germany, and we cannot exclude that despite the claim of imparting the Meissner tradition, it may be influenced by English recipe literature. Some of its recipes have obvious parallels in High German texts, but not all.

One obvious drawback of the text is its origin with Johan Balhorn, a printer infamous for misunderstanding High German to the extent his name became proverbial for such misguided rendering as ‘verballhornen’. This is especially vexing with the term *brundo(e)ck*. It occurs in several recipes that I have not yet found parallels for and though it could mean burdock, it might just as well be a misrendering of a perfectly sensible High German word.

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Cookery

Or speaking of many delicious tasty dishes common in Meissner (i.e. Saxon) lands and in the houses of lords and princes, very useful to read for women and girls and female cooks.

1 An egg tart

Make a crust from eggs and white flour. Take eggs and a little milk, cinnamon and sugar, beat it together, put a little butter and saffron into the crust and let it melt, then pour the eggs and milk into it and let it bake in an oven till it is done.

2 A plum tart

Make a crust as before and take Damascene plums, cook them in water till they are soft, pass them through a haircloth with a little wine, put in sugar, cinnamon, and egg yolks, stir it together, put it

into the pie and let it bake till it is done in an oven.

3 A snow in summer

Take almonds, grind them in milk so that they become snow white (*zne?*) and a suitable large amount of sugar (*lacuna*) ... it into a wooden container, add to this thick cream of milk and the white of eggs, stir it (with) the cream for a long time until it foams and take off the foam often into a small bowl until no more foam comes up. Then let it stand a little in the cool, pour the foam over the ground almonds and stick pieces of rosemary on it, and put cinnamon and sugar around the rim.

4 A white jelly

Take the white of eggs and cream of sweet milk, strain it together, add sugar and stir it on the fire so that it thickens, and pour it into a basket so that the liquid runs off. Thereafter turn it out into a big bowl and mash it up small, and when it is small, put it into a wooden bowl and strew almonds and cinnamon on it.

5 Chickens with lemons

Take a chicken and cook it in water till done, cut lemons into a pot, add half wine and half broth of the chicken and a few crumbs of a white wheaten (*semmel*) loaf cook it till soft and mash it fine, pass it through a sieve and cut the (other?) lemons in strips. Add spices, white sugar, saffron, ginger, cinnamon, pour the water off of the chicken and put it into this sauce, and boil it in that.

5 Finches or Geese

Take a goose and cut it up, *koele se tho* (set it to cook at low heat?) and pour water onto it and let it boil. When it is almost done, pour in wine vinegar and saffron, cinnamon, sugar, and raisins or other (dried) berries, let it cook till done and strew cinnamon on it.

6 Of oxmeat

Take fat oxmeat, *koele ydt vaken aff* (set it to cook long at low heat?) and boil it till done. Take horseradish and grate it, pour off the broth and fat from the meat, let the horseradish cook (in it) till done, and pour it over the meat.

7 Another way

Take oxmeat and skim off the scum so often that the broth becomes clear, and let it boil till half done. Then take the broth and the fat, add mace, cut ginger, and parsley root and let it boil together. Slice white bread into a wooden bowl, put the meat on that and pour the broth over it, then cut up parsley finely and strew it on.

8 Another way

Take peas and put them in lye for one night, let them soak till the shells are all off, then boil them in water till done in short broth (till short broth results?). Then let them boil dry, mash them up and add sweet milk, and let it boil till done with this so that it turns out thick like almond puree. Put a little butter on top.

9 A prophet's cake

Take eggs and white flour, make a dough of this, roll it out thinly, spread saffron and May butter on it and bake it in an oven till it is done.

10 A cheese *flecken* (tart)

Take eggs and flour and make a thin bottom of that with a rim. Pass eggs through a sieve and pour them onto the bottom, and then take English cheese, break it up small and scatter it over the eggs. Pour warm molten butter over it, put it in the oven and let it bake till it is done.

11 A *Plats* (flan or flat dish in general)

Take eggs and flour, make a dough of it, and make a bottom with a rim of that dough. Pass eggs through a sieve and pour that on the bottom, make it evenly thick. Pour thin molten butter over it and let it bake in the oven till it is done.

12 Another way

Take pears, peel them, cut them in half, pour a little water on them and let them cook. Take molten

butter and let it become very hot, and pour them onto it when they are boiling, and let it fry till it is done. Then strew sugar over it.

13 Another way

Take eggs, flour, and wine, and make a thin dough of that. Take apples, peel them, and cut them up as big as you want them, turn them over in the dough and fry them in butter. Strew sugar over it.

14 Of pears

Take peeled pears and fry them in a pan in the flame with butter, and do not hold the pan still until they are brown. Strew sugar and cinnamon over them.

15 Butter *struucken* (funnel cake – probably a rendering of *strauben*)

Take eggs and flour and make a thin dough of that. Let the dough run through a funnel that has a narrow hole, and heat butter, as much as you wish to have of the cakes, and fry them till they are done. Strew sugar over them.

16 To preserve quinces

Take sugar and melt it in a pan, add wine to it, let it boil, and cleanly take off all the scum. Beat in a little white of the egg and afterwards take the white of the egg out again with all the scum so the sugar becomes pure. Now take the quinces, cleanly take out the pips and peel them, and place them in the sugar. Boil them so they become soft, and add a little saffron. Once they are soft, take them off fire and put them into (the container) you want to have them in. Let the liquid cool down, pour it onto the quinces, and tie well shut. And once they have stood for 14 days, see how they are. If they are *beschlagen* (mouldy?), pour the syrup clean off, boil it, let it cool down again, and pour it in again. This lasts a whole year.

17 A chicken with wine sops

Take a chicken and roast it till done and place it in a wooden bowl. Take a *poth* (a liquid measure) of wine, sugar, spice powder, cinnamon, and *Brundock* and let it boil. Take bread and toast it, put it into a wooden bowl, place the chicken on it, and pour (the wine sauce) over it.

18 Sugar eggs

Take milk and let it boil up, then add isinglass, let it boil, stir in the other milk, add sugar, spice powder, and cinnamon, let it boil well, and pass it through a haircloth. Pour it into a wooden bowl, let it cool, and stick almonds and raisins into it.

19 A duck

Take a duck and boil it till it is completely done. Add to it plums, soft cakes (white bread), pepper, spice powder, a little wine, and *Brundoeck*, let it boil till it is done, place the bird in a wooden bowl, and pour the sauce over it.

20 A chicken

Take a chicken and boil it in water till it is half done. Pour off half the water, fill it back up with wine and cinnamon, spice powder, sugar, and an egg yolk, and stir it till it boils up again. Toast bread, place it in a wooden bowl, put the chicken on top, and pour (the cooking liquid) over it.

21 Oxtongue

Take an oxtongue and stick it with cloves and cinnamon, stick it on a spit and let it roast. Drizzle it with butter and spice powder, and when it is done, cut it in two along the middle and place it in a wooden bowl. Take a cookpot and put in it wine, sugar, cinnamon, spice powder, pepper, *Brundoeck*, and currants, let it boil together and pour it over (the tongue).

22 To cook fish well

Make a good fire under them without smoke, and when the bones come out (easily), they are done. Take off the scum well and season them with good spices and salt, pour plenty of good vinegar over them, place them in a wooden bowl and serve them. But if they are served dry, strew good pounded ginger over them, then you have a good dish.

23 To make sausages of fish

Chop them very fine, then grind them in a mortar, add good spices and salt and fill the intestines with it. Boil them with wine like fish and make a pepper sauce of that, so you have a tasty dish.

24 To make small cakes out of fish

Prepare them well. Collect their blood and take out the bones, keep the head, tail and guts, but discard the gall. Take the fish, chop them up thus raw uncooked, grind them well in a mortar, add flour, raisins, good spices, salt and butter and bake (or: deep-fry) that well. That is how it's done. The other dish: make an entree dish of the fish heads and guts, well boiled in wine and cooked like other fish, yellow, well spiced and salted.

Those are two good dishes of fish.

25 Three dishes of one fish although the fish seems to be whole

Cut a pike or other large fish into four parts. Roast the first part on a griddle. Boil the second part with wine and good spices. The third part (is) filled. For the fourth part, bake (or: deep-fry) the tail. And the fish is put back together, each part as though it were still whole, and strewn well with good parsley, and put on the table. With it, good spice sauce should be served, or vinegar with spice powder, in many small bowls so that everyone eats what he likes. This is a marvelous dish and a masterpiece.

26 To prepare filled fish in summer, even though they won't keep

When you prepare fish, keep the blood, scales and bones, boil that in an earthen pot, take off the scum well, grind it up in a mortar, pass it through a cloth with its own broth and put salt and two or three ground laurel berries on it, then it will last. Then put the fish in water after they are cooked, taste to see what is missing, vinegar, salt, or spices, let it boil in a pot, then pour it onto the fish and pickle them. If you want to strew almonds and roses on them, do it early (?), that way they stay clean and have a good taste.

27 Keeping fish so that they stay good for long

Put them in an earthen pot, pour good vinegar over them and strew parsley over it. Close the pot tightly and place it in a cold cellar. When you take out fish and vinegar, always fill it up with fresh

vinegar and close it tightly again. That way they stay fresh and good for long.

28 Of crawfish

You should cook them with water, vinegar, and salt, and cook them in such a way that the foam rises over (the edge) two or three times. The shells of the crawfish, burned to ashes and drunk with honey and gentian, heal the bites of mad dogs.

29 Notabile

Fish, crawfish, milk and all manner of other foods of cold nature need to be tempered with good spices. But sick people of hot nature do not need many spices nor much salt as that increases their illness. If you understand your nature, you also understand what is against your nature. Prepare your food accordingly.

A person of cold nature is harmed by everything that is cold and slimy such as fish, and the fatter they are, the worse they are, though they be cooked as well as one can etc. Therefore think how your food and drink shall be prepared and what belongs to your nature. Those who would have long life and proper reason must understand himself, each according to his estate and abilities, according to the four complexions that are ordained for humans by God, which are hot, cold, dry and moist. But nature is helped with medicine.

30 How to cook crawfish well

Place them in a pot and cover them well, pour wine, vinegar, and water onto them, salt and pepper them well (and cook them) by a good fire, and when they turn red, they are done. You should put them on the table hot, in covered wooden bowls, and with fish and crawfish you should have good wine and spice sauce.

31 Of eels

An eel may live eight years, and be without water for 6 days.

32 A good cherry puree

Break the stems off and grind them in a mortar with stones and all. Take figs, raisins, then soft white bread, and cut it into wine, stir it well together, pass it through a cloth with other wine and make it neither too thin nor too thick. Add flour and butter, stir it well around in a pan, add fat and spices and bring it to the table like that. You can also make purees of sweet cherries, strawberries, and others of this kind that way.

33 Gilding

Make a little honey water, brush the almonds with it, then put the gold or silver on them, and push it down with cottonwool where it does not lie straight.

You can also gild gingerbread and other things this way. Prepare a broad stick to lift up the gold with. Do not touch it with the bare hand or it will spoil.

Printed in Luebeck by Johan Balhorn, 1570