

# MAPPING THE GASTRONOMIC HERITAGE

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KECSKEMET

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# Introduction

Perhaps it is not an exaggeration to say that there is no other part of the Hungarian folk culture which is so unreservedly tradition-bound and at the same time so unreservedly receptive as the culture of folk dietary customs.

It is due to this intense attachment to traditions combined with an innovative openness that the gastronomic history of the peoples of Central-Europe is so complex and diverse, abounding with several topics never to be sorted out. Surely, there was a real competition between the various nations, especially during the era of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, to acquire the privilege and have the reputation as the creator of certain widely popular dishes.

In the culinary approach of the Hungarians, who had found their home and settled in the Carpathian Basin, there has always been an intention to adopt the European dietary customs. Onion, one of the most important basic materials, as well as garlic were first ordered to be brought into the country by Beatrix, the Italian spouse of King Matthias in the 15th century. At that time Hungarian cuisine was enriched by adopting the most sophisticated methods of the Italian cookery which preserved a great deal of the ancient Greco-Roman traditions. The 150-year-long Turkish rule (1526-1686) also left a distinctive mark on our gastronomic culture. Some of the dishes, brought here by the Turks, became part of the Hungarian national tradition. The most important impact and the change made by the Turks was that they introduced the treasures of the American continent: paprika, tomato and maize. It was at that time that coffee drinking as well as the habit of smoking became widely spread. In the 18th century in the households of the nobility it became fashionable to hire chefs from abroad, who - needless to say - served to the Hungarian nobles Viennese and French dishes as a special treat. At that time French cuisine undoubtedly had an effect on Hungarian cuisine: as a consequence of the French influence our cuisine grew in sophistication - sauces, gravy, cream-soups, pastes, jelly-type dishes, like *kocsonya /meat-jelly, i.e. cold pork in aspic/* appeared. At the beginning of the 19. century we learned from the French how to prepare the various highly sophisticated tarts and pastry, how to produce confectionery, whereas we got the methods of home-made pasta by watching the Austrians.

Our region - the area of Kecskemét, its surroundings and the Kiskunság */Little Cumania/* - is by no means an exception: the gastronomic culture here, too, is characterized by this rich diversity. This historic-ethnographic region bears the specific tastes associated with the land of Hungary. The Hungarians, Germans, Greeks, Jews and the Roma people who have been living here in peaceful co-existence for centuries, or - for that matter - the Hungarian and Slovak population who came from the Felvidék */Upland now belonging to Slovakia/* to settle here - all enriched our gastronomic traditions by adding various and different tastes, savours and flavours. The different nationalities who found their home in this country preserved a lot from their ancient culinary code, but they happily accepted and enjoyed also the dishes and the tastes offered by this land. The tastes of the different nationalities differed from each other also according to the class of society they belonged to: the shepherds' diet differed

from that of the well-to-do peasants living on the *tanya* /farmsteads scattered on the outskirts of the villages/, and also from the poor peasantry, or the day-workers who did not own land, furthermore there were the peasant-burghers who had strong ties with both farming and the urban life-style, as well as the middle- and lower middle class burghers of the towns, and the nobility.

The present study focuses mainly on the dietary customs of the three big market-towns: Kecskemét, Kiskunhalas and Kiskunfélegyháza.

Kecskemét, this one-time market-town is usually considered geographically as part of the Kiskunság region, although in fact it is part of the so-called Homokhátság /Sand Ridge/, the geographical area of the Sand Ridge between the Danube and Tisza rivers. The historic Kecskemét, i.e. Greater Kecskemét from the 16th to the 20th century used to be part of the historic-ethnographic area called *Három Város (Three Towns)*, together with Nagykőrös and Cegléd towns, and did not belong to the historic-ethnographic area first called Kiskunság, later Jászkunság /Jazygian Cumania/. The famous *puszta* (lowland wilderness) of Bugac in earlier centuries used to be part of Greater Kecskemét, right until the administrative reform in 1950. Just as the notion of the vineyards and the fruit-growing culture on the sand is inseparably associated with the name of Kecskemét, the *puszta* of Kecskemét and the shepherds' way of life is strongly forged with the name of Bugac.

## The Production of the basic Materials Of food

In the 16-17th century, during the almost two-century-long Turkish rule, the natural environment as well as the man-made assets in the area between the Danube and Tisza rivers suffered a terrible devastation. A great number of prospering market-towns and villages depopulated, the once cultivated land became wild and unmanaged. Greater Kecskemét was in a somewhat better situation than the villages of the Kiskunság due to the anti-Turk alliance with the neighbouring towns of Nagykőrös and Cegléd, within the framework of which they were able to provide a relatively safe way of life for the local population. After the expulsion of the Turks, at the beginning of the 18th century it was the raids carried out by the Serbs, as well as the payment of tributes forced upon the population by the *kuruc* and *labanc* (insurrectionist and pro-Austrian soldiers in the 18th century Hungarian wars of independence) armies that hindered the peaceful farming activities. The repopulation of the deserted *puszta* areas of the Kiskunság was carried out within the framework of a nation-wide settlement scheme. The people of the Kunság /Cumania/ region lost their ancient privileges, but in the middle of the 18th century they fought out their freedom and emerged from the status of serfdom through the so-called *redemption*, i.e. by paying for it, which was a serious financial burden. This new situation of freedom, the establishment of private civil ownership made the evolvement of the capitalist development possible.

It was not only in Kecskemét, but also in the Jászkun /*Jazygian-Cumanian*/ Districts that the pattern of land ownership differed from that of the national average. In the area of Greater Kecskemét and the Kiskunság - due to its specific historical development - the system of large landed estates was not established. Plant cultivation over the centuries has always been adjusted to the requirements of animal husbandry. Right next to the so-called *telelő* /*winter shelter*/ railed off spaces were set up for the purpose of plant cultivation, where the annually needed crop was grown, furthermore the *telelő* could be used also as the storage space for animals' fodder. In the course of time these "gardens" became almost entirely separate from the extensive, nomadic type of stock-raising, and the pieces of land located on the *puszta* near the town had been converted into plough-land. The stock of cattle stayed on the pasture in the open-air all the year round, that means also in the winter, and no actual foddering was provided for them. In the 18th century, but even in the first half of the 19th century the cultivation of grain crops and the pasturing animal husbandry constituted predominantly the basis of farming. The soil in the Homokhátság area was most favourable for growing rye, but apart from pure wheat the cultivation of *tönkebúza* /*emmer* (*T. dicoccum Schranck*)/ was also popular. Millet was also a widely spread cultivated plant in this region. Among the hoed plants melon played an outstanding role, it was grown also for large scale sale. Maize - which after the discovery of America gained reputation in Europe - has been widely grown in our region ever since the 1770s. Potato - which also originated from the New World - has become one of the main sources of the staple diet since the end of the 18th century. The sandy soil of Greater Kecskemét is particularly suitable for vine-producing and fruit-growing cultures, at the same time this type of cultivation has been playing an important role in binding the soil in this area of wind-blown sand ever since the end of the 18. century. The establishment of vineyards has gained even more impetus since the end of the 19th century, after the devastation caused by the vine-pest - this advantage is due to the fact that on sandy soil this vine-louse /*Phylloxera vastatrix*/ - which lives on the root of the vine - does not cause any harm.

The livestock-breeding in Kecskemét has a long history of more than thousand years. The most famous and largest territory of this activity of animal husbandry was the *puszta* in Bugac, where large scale horse-, cattle- and sheep-breeding was carried out. In the Middle Ages cattle-breeding was the most important sector of animal husbandry. The characteristic Hungarian breed of cattle - white coloured with a greyish hue, having unique big curved horns - was the one that created the wealth of Kecskemét, raising the town to a higher level than that of its neighbours. The traditional way of keeping this livestock was nomadic or semi- nomadic. Horse-breeding - similarly to livestock- and sheep-breeding - was also extensive.

The horses were running on the pastures as long as the weather permitted. According to the stories told by shepherds it could easily happen - as late as in the 19th century - that the horse- man had even his Christmas meal, the traditional *mákoscsík* /*poppy-seed pasta*/ out in the *puszta*, right next to the *cserény* /*wattle enclosure; no roof, no door*/, a typical structure made by the shepherds. Horse-breeding in Kecskemét, in the surroundings of Kecskemét, in the Kiskunság and on the area between the Danube and the Tisza rivers has never played such an important role in animal breeding as livestock- and sheep-breeding.

On the vast *puszta* - that immense barren lowland wilderness which extended farther than the eye could reach - there was no natural *enyhely* /shelter; the Hungarian expression is a play on the words “mild” and “place”/ whatsoever which could have provided cover or shelter for the shepherds and the animals against the wind. For that purpose the shepherds built various types of *szárnyék* /lean-to roof, wind screen; the Hungarian expression is a play on the words “wing” and “shade” - or can be understood as the first letter of the word “szél”=“wind” + “shade”/: *szárnyék* for sheep, for foals, for cattle. To build it they used whatever was available on the spot: reed, juniper, tussock, corn-stalk. The *szárnyék* was always placed by taking into consideration the prevailing wind, thus man and animal could always enjoy a place sheltered from the wind. Another important edifice of livestock-breeding was the *baromakol* /fold or pen/, originally built just to keep the animals in one group. Adjacent to the pen there was the *szénáskert* /hay-garden/, which was an enclosure with a wattle-work fence used for the purpose to store tame hay or rough fodder.

The unique type of *enyhely* called *cserény* played an essential role in the life of the horse-men and herdsmen. In its simplest form it consisted of two wattle-work “walls”, erected at right angles to each other. The place where the shepherds put their clothes was in the corner, right next to it was the cupboard for food, and in front of the *cserény* stood the *szolgafa* /pot- hanger; the Hungarian word means “wooden servant”/ with the stew-pot or cauldron.

In the 16-17th century livestock-breeding played the leading role in animal husbandry; in the 18-19th century, however, sheep-breeding became predominant.

## The traditions of folk dietary customs

### Mush-type dishes and pulpy food

As far as the utilization of the grain crops is concerned the *kása-* /mush- or *pap-/* type dishes, as well as the various types of unleavened *lepény* /girdle-cake/ can be considered as the most ancient types of food. The meaning of the word *kása* is twofold: it means the raw material made from floury grains - i.e. the whole grain from which the chaff or husks are removed -for the purpose of preparing food - and it means also the food, the dish itself cooked from that rawmaterial.

The use of *köleskása* /millet-mush/ was customary in the peasants’ diet in Kiskunfélegyháza until the 1950-60s. Millet was typically grown in the peasants’ farms, but in the agricultural co-operatives it was not grown any more. Over the latest decades, however, the advocates of healthy food, as well as some of the nostalgic elderly have started to prepare the traditional dishes of millet again. Millet-mush was the basic material for a number of dishes cooked both in the peasants’ kitchens and at the open fire of the shepherds. The *köleskásaleves* /millet- mush soup/ or simply *kásaleves* /mush-soup/ used to be an everyday dish for the poor, usually prepared on Tuesdays and Saturdays. It was cooked together with a variety of vegetables, and was thickened with roasted

flour seasoned with garlic and red condiment paprika. In the case of milky mush-soup first the millet is put to be boiled in water, together with vegetables - then the milk is added and it is boiled to make it ready to be eaten. Both the peasants living on the *tanya* and the shepherds cooked it often, especially on Fridays and other fasting days, as well as during the Lent - since it was made without lard. At certain places in the Kiskunság the shepherds had a special name for the milky millet-mush soup cooked in a cauldron, they called it *fölyhőleves* /"fölyhő"-soup; where *fölyhő* is a vernacular form of "*felhő*"=cloud/. The *förgetegleves* /"storm"-soup/ of the shepherds was cooked with just a little millet-mush, it was thickened with just a little flour roasted on lard, and they scooped it with spoons directly from the cauldron, eating it without bread. They seldom cooked it, it was their meal only if they were in great straits, when they suffered deprivation. In Petőfiszállás in wintertime the *cibereleves* /sour soup/ was cooked in the *kemence* /beehive oven/. To make this soup the millet was first left to mature in vinegar-and-water for several days, then - similarly to the soup made from dried beans - it was cooked with smoked meat. From millet they also made thick mush- or pap-type dishes - in Kiskunfélegyháza the most popular among these were the *fordított kása* /turned-over mush/ and the *tejbekása* /milkymush/.

In the first half of the 20th century among the peasantry in Kiskunfélegyháza the *fordított kása* was mostly cooked in cauldron, for dinner - at the time of harvesting. First the onions were stir-fried in bacon-lard until tender but not brown, then the millet was added as well as the red condiment paprika and the potatoes, just to be stewed or steamed a little bit. Water -as much as just to cover it - was only added then. When it was boiled long enough to be tender, it had to be "turned over" - the whole "mass" had to be turned over at once, but - since it was on lard - this trick could be done easily. Tiny bits of diced smoked sausage was also added and cooked together.

The milky mush made from millet was also an ordinary dish in the kitchen of the peasants living on the *tanya*. Usually they cooked it on fasting days and Wednesdays - this was the custom until the 1950s. The almost obligatory main dish after the milky mush on weekdays was the *gulyásleves* /goulash soup/. At certain places in the Kiskunság shepherds cooked the so-called *mezítlábos kása* /"barefooted" mush/, which was boiled in very little water, and they turned it over just as it was done with the *fordított kása*.

Until the middle of the 20th century the *köleskásás hurka* /millet-mush pudding or sausage made from the chitterlings/ used to be one of the treats at pig-killing feasts, but later it has been replaced by another type of pudding: one made with *rizskása* /rice-mush/. The millet was boiled in the *abalé* /rich meat-fluid, left after the head and the chitterlings of the pig were boiled in water without any seasoning; it was made only at pig-killings/. The Czombos family in Ferencszállás said that by the end of the II. World War - referring to the war as the time "when the frontline was near" - "instead of rice we put millet-mush into the pudding, but then we had to add more meat, because it was very dry."

One of the favoured dishes of the peasants in Kiskunfélegyháza was the *birkapörkölt köleskásával* (mutton stew with millet-mush/, they cooked it once a year at harvest time, and it was consumed

as a harvest lunch. First the mutton stew was boiled in plenty of liquid, then the millet was added and boiled until the meat was tender.

Millet-mush played a significant role in the festive meals, too. For centuries the milky mush made from millet used to be one of the main courses of the menu at the wedding feast - it was sweetened in order to make the life of the newly married couple sweet, too. As a matter of fact, fertility was also attributed to the millet. The sweet millet-mush was left out from the menu of the peasants' wedding feast by the turn of the 19-20th century, and was replaced by sweet rice-mush. The millet-mush was prepared by a cook, at these feasts it was usually a woman, who - by the end of the dinner - appeared among the guests, with bandages on her hand, holding her ordinary wooden spoon. As a joke she pretended that her hands have been burnt while she was cooking the mush. She walked around and asked *kásapénz /mush money/* from each man guest so that she could heal her "burnt" hands.

The primary role of wheat in the folk diet was to make bread, it was only rarely used to prepare mush-type dishes. Nevertheless, there was a weekday dish in Kiskunfélegyháza, which peasants living on the *tanya* used to cook until the middle of the 20th century: that was the *búzarizsleves* or *búzakásaleves /wheat-mush soup/*. This dish was prepared like the millet- mush- or rice-mush soup, cooked together with vegetables - the only difference was that they made it from *búzakása /wheat grain/*.

The *csíramálé /polenta made from germinated wheat grain/* is in fact a baked polenta (a pap or pulp). It used to be a favoured fasting dish for the peasants in Kiskunfélegyháza, until the 1950s. The wheat grains were steeped in water and left there until they germinated and the green appeared. Then they crushed the grains and sprouts, passed the pulp through a sieve and mixed it with rye-flour. By adding fried butter, sugar and salt they made a liquid pulp, which was then put into a previously greased cake pan and was baked.

Barley was mostly used as fodder for the animals. The *árpakása /barley-mush/* or *gersli/pearl barley/* was rarely the basic material for a main dish in the 20th century, neither the peasants, nor the urban middle class used it. More often it was put into the sausages or puddings made at pig-killing, or into the filling of the *szárma /stuffed sour kraut or cabbage/*, or directly into the *savanyúkáposzta /sour kraut/* to thicken it in order to make it a *főzelék /boiled vegetables thickened with flour on lard, and seasoned with various other components (like onion, garlic, paprika, dill, etc. depending on the vegetable)* Sometimes vegetable soup was thickened with *gersli*.

Maize (corn) was the basic material for a number of mush-type and pulpy food. The way to prepare it is to grind the grains of maize, then sift it through a sieve. The fine, particulate, powdery part that went through the sieve is the corn flour, the other part consisting of coarser granules is the *kukoricadara* or *kukoricakása /corn-grits or cob meal/*. In the peasant kitchens of Kiskunfélegyháza until the middle of the 20th century the following dishes were made from *kukoricakása* or corn

flour: *görhe*, *kása*, *ganca*, *málé*. These are mush-type, either cooked or baked pulpy dishes. The basic material for *kukoricakása* /*corn-mush*/ as a dish is the *kukoricadara*, which is boiled in salty water. They consumed the warm mush with cold milk or *aludttej* /*curds*/, but if the mush was cold they had it with warm milk.

Corn-mush was a favoured dish in the kitchen of middle class burghers in the towns, one of its varieties is a dessert, the *kukoricakása-koch* /*pudding or mould made from corn-grits and milk*/. The corn-grits are boiled in milk until they are absolutely tender, then a mix of egg-yolk and sugar as well as the whipped egg-white are added, the mixture is seasoned with raisin and candied orange-peel, then it is baked in a previously greased cake pan until it is nice brownish-red.

The *ganca* is a pulp made by boiling corn flour. A simpler way of preparing it is to make a dough by mixing and stirring the flour with warm water, then just leave it for a while so as to let it sweeten, then tear it to bits with a spoon and put the pieces into boiling water and boil it. There is another, more tasty version of the *ganca* which is popular and often prepared in peasant kitchens to this day: the corn flour is added to eggs whipped with sugar and salt and made thinner with warm water, then the mixture is stirred thoroughly. Then they tear it to bits with a spoon and put the pieces into boiling water and boil it. When it is done they strain it, and - traditionally - mix the pieces with breadcrumbs stir-fried in hot lard. Nowadays it is more popular to put grated cheese on it.

There were two types of *kukoricalepény* /*girdle-cake made from corn flour*/: the *kukoricamálé* /*corn polenta*/ was prepared unleavened, while the *görhe* was made by leavening the dough.

The *málé* was prepared in the following way: they poured hot water onto the corn flour and then left it for a night so as to let it sweeten, then next day they baked it in a previously greased cake pan. Peasant housewives prepared a more sophisticated, more tasty version as well: it was not simply water, but also milk, sugar, butter or oil that they added to the corn flour, occasionally even wheat flour was also added.

In Petőfiszállás *kukoricamálé* was baked in the oven. They poured salty water onto the corn flour the evening before they wanted to bake it. It was left for the night and by morning it fermented. It became a little bit sweeter. In the morning they poured oil into the cake pan, then spread a thin layer of the dough in the pan, at last they sprinkled with oil, and then baked it in the oven. The more crispy it became the tastier it was.

The *görhe* is a type of *kukoricalepény* made by leavening the dough. The yeast was put into luke-warm milk with a little sugar to start fermentation, then it was crumbled in the flour. Then the pulp created in this way was *beaten* with a wooden spoon until it was *full of blisters* - like in the case when the dough is prepared to make *fánk* /*doughnut*/. Raisin was added, then they spread the pulp in a cake pan that was previously greased and dusted with flour, and baked it. When it was done it was dusted with vanilla-sugar. Usually it was the main course at a meal, or it was the dessert, occasionally served as a replacement for pastry.

In Szabadszállás - if a child happened to have a desire for it - they even prepared corn grits with sausages, onions and lard.

Pulpy dishes made from potato were the same as the ones made from corn (maize). Potato is a food of a rather recent date, too: in Hungary it first gained ground in the 18th century. The essential type of food made from potato is also the pap or pulp. The simplest version of the *krumplikása /potato-mush/* is when potatoes are boiled in water, then thickened with flour, seasoned with onion and lard. It was a popular dish of the peasants' diet as late as in the 20. century. But even in the poorest peasant kitchens a more tasty version was also known: they boiled the potatoes together with diced onion and garlic, then it was thickened and boiled with flour. Onion rings stir-fried in bacon and lard was at last put on top of this potato-mush. It was usually the second course of the lunch.

In the 20th century among the peasants living on the *tanya* a popular dish was the *krumpliderc /baked potato-mush/*. The potatoes were boiled in their jackets, then crushed. Diced onion was stir-fried on lard until it was tender but not brown, and then mixed with the crushed potatoes. This mix was further fried in a braising pan, and became one solid fried piece of the mush.

When they turned it over it was folded and thereby took the form of a semicircle. It was a favoured course on Saturdays, after the *gölödinleves /soup with gölödin = dumpling/*. In the period after pig-killing - as long as they still had some sausages - a bit of fried sausage was served with it, and they ate it with bread. The *krumpliderc* and the *sterc /mashed potatoes/* were dishes which - interestingly enough - originated from the urban cuisine of the middle class burghers, and then found their way to the peasants' diet.

Rice - originally coming from India - reached our country during the time of the Turkish rule, but it was as late as in the 1930s that adequate local varieties were successfully developed - it became widely spread only after that. Ever since the 1960s rice-mush has almost entirely displaced millet-mush and barley-mush in the peasants' diet. Before long rice replaced millet and barley in every respect: soon appeared the *rizskásaleves /rice-mush soup/*, the *tejberizs /milk-rice, rice boiled in milk/* (first as a festive dish served at wedding feasts), and the *rizskoch* or *rizsfelfújt /rice-milk pudding or mould/*, and rice was used also in the sausages made from chitterlings and in the filling of stuffed sour kraut. Rice is one of the most popular side dishes to go with meat as the main course. Rice is also the basic material of the various types of *húsoskása /mush containing meat/*, among which the *ludaskása /rice-mush with goose-gIBLETS/* is equally popular in the diet of peasants and middle class urban families. The *rizses lecsó /rice with lecsó = ratatouille, a vegetable casserole made from fresh tomatoes, paprika and onion /* is a very popular Hungarian specialty.

During the 19-20th century mush-type dishes were occasionally prepared from dried beans as well, and this practice has a long tradition, too. In our region the *törvebab /crushed beans/* was a popular dish: dried beans were boiled to pulp, until it lost all the liquid and then it was mixed with on-

ions previously stir-fried on lard until tender but not brown. There was a more substantial version of it: dried white beans were boiled in water together with smoke-cured ham or ribs, thickened with flour and garlic, seasoned with sour cream and vinegar. This dish is an excellent example to demonstrate how the mush-type dishes made originally from vegetables changed and became *főzelék* - that is a Hungarian specialty, meaning that the boiled vegetable is thickened with flour on lard, and seasoned with various other components (like onion, garlic, paprika, dill, etc. depending on the vegetable). Nevertheless, these dishes preserved their old names (i.e. they were not called *főzelék*) for a while. The traditional *törvebab* was often served as the main dish or as a second course, and they ate it with just bread or with fried bacon. The *törvebab* cooked together with smoke-cured meat used to be offered as lunch for the harvesters working on the *tanya*.

The *cirokkása /sorghum-mush/*, that means the seed of the sorghum was used in the 1940s - these were the years of deprivation. They used it instead of rice or millet in the sausages made at pig-killing, but milk-mush and soup were also made from it.

## Bread

On the sandy soil of Greater Kecskemét and the Kiskunság rye yielded much better than wheat, thus right until the middle of the 20th century bread was mainly baked from rye. If the actual yield of rye was not sufficient they milled wheat and mixed it with rye. At certain places rye- or wheat flour was mixed with potatoes and corn flour.

The actual cultivation of grain crops was the task of men, but after the grain had been milled, the outcome: the flour fell under the responsibility of the housewives. In the 19. century the mills were grinding the grain in bulk - i.e. by the shipment of grain sent in by the individual farms. Then the women assorted the flour at home by sifting it through three different sieves, one after the other. First it was sifted through a coarse or wide-meshed sieve, then a close- meshed sieve, and at last a very fine sieve followed. The flour that went through the second and third sieve was considered as the flour for bread. The wheat and the rye were milled similarly, the pure wheat, however, was sprinkled with salty water before it was taken to the mill to avoid that the chaff or the husks break and get mixed into the flour in this broken form, to make sure that the flour is "loose". From the end of the 19th century the three types of flour were assorted by the mills. The first flour was used for baking *kalács /light sweet milk-loaf or -cake/*, the second one for baking bread and producing pasta, the third one served as the basic material for making *tarhonya /egg barley, a type of pasta; it is hard dough fallen apart into barley-size pieces, then dried in the sun/*. The "double" flour */wheat and rye grown and ground mixed/* was considered as the one producing the best taste of the bread, but since the wind-mills and horse-driven mills had ceased to exist, and the steam mills had become exclusively dominant, it was impossible to have this type of flour, because the big mills mixed all the different incoming grains.

It is a historically acknowledged fact that in the 16-17th century the best bread in Hungary was

baked in Kecskemét. In our region, in the lowland part of the area between the Danube and the Tisza rivers in the 20th century the most popular type of bread was the white bread with a very soft inner part and a crispy bread-crust. To produce a really fine white bread with an almost “foamy” inner part it is not sufficient to use wheat varieties of high gluten content and to adopt the adequate grinding and sifting techniques - the skill of the baker is also an important factor.

Evlia Celebi, a Turkish traveller in the 17th century is one of those who noted that the *white loaf of bread* was one of the most favoured foods of the Hungarians. In other regions of Europe the white bread baked in Hungary is considered as something next to unsurpassable - and within Hungary it was the Southern Plain where the most delicious bread was baked.

Lot of people liked to eat rye bread as well, although in the 20th century in this region it was rather considered as the bread of the poor. Very good quality rye bread was baked in Kiskunhalas and Kiskunfélegyháza. High standard technical skills were required to make the dough for the rye bread, because *leaven* had to be added *generously*. However, generally some wheat flour was also added in order to prevent the dough from spreading all over the place too easily. There are but a few people nowadays who can still remember the wonderful, unique taste of this dark brown bread.

Bread was also baked at home. Occasionally a smaller part of the dough was pinched off, and then it was baked at the “mouth” of the oven, near the *flame* - its name *lángos /flame cake/* refers to its origin. *Lángos* - nowadays prepared in a slightly different way */a handful of yeast dough flattened out and quickly fried in lots of hot oil/* - is a popular food at Hungarian markets and fairs. In those old days the *lángos* was the much-expected breakfast on the day when bread was baked. When they put sour cream on top of it - then it was considered as a “princely food” indeed.

In the surroundings of Kecskemét it was the village Szentkirály where the best quality wheat was grown, nevertheless on the huge territory of the outskirts of Kecskemét the proportion of rye was more significant. Kecskemét and Nagykőrös, the two neighbouring market-towns used to be fighting a lot over the ownership of those pieces of land where the best wheat was grown.

To bake the bread at home was customary right until the middle of the 20th century not only in the peasants’ kitchens, but also in the homes of middle class burghers in the towns. In the 1910-20s the Kircz family in Kecskemét baked bread at home every 8-10 days. They never bought bread from a bakery - whoever could manage or afford baked bread for his family at home. The maid noticed when the bread was coming to an end, and made the necessary steps already in the evening. The wheat flour was prepared - rye flour of the quantity of half of the wheat was added. The ingredients of the dough were mixed according to a precise proportion: 75 % flour was mixed with 25 % boiled and then smashed potatoes, seasoned with salt and cumin. Boriska, the maid *megkovászolt /prepared the leaven/* in the evening: that means that she put the dried piece of the dough left from the previous bread-baking into water to dilute it, and added some yeast. She put the flour into a *vejdling /mixing bowl/*, and into a separate part of the bowl she poured the leaven that she

had just prepared. By morning the dough has risen. In the morning the maid fastened up her hair with a kerchief, put on a clean apron and washed her hands. Then she was kneading the dough with both of her hands - she was doing it until the dough at last did not stick to her hand any more. That took more than half an hour. By the time the eight-kilogram dough was put on the moulding board the maid's face kindled and beads of sweat were sitting on her forehead. The dough was divided into two parts: a loaf and a smaller round loaf were formed. Then the loafs were put into the *szakajtó* /bread-basket/ padded with a tea-towel - there the dough was rising for another two-three hours, and usually at 10 o'clock the loafs were taken to the baker. Olga Kircz was talking about her memories and said: *"As a teenager I was waiting there, too, together with the other women, while the baker - standing in front of the fiery, very hot oven - from his 4-5-meter-long wooden peel, pushing it slightly, put the loafs into the oven. At about three or four o'clock in the afternoon we went to the baker to take home the bread which was baked red-brown, it stayed fresh and did not dry for a week, it was seasoned with cumin and tasted so wonderfully. I can feel its taste in my mouth to this day."*

In the Kiskunság the rye bread of Kiskunhalas had a reputation. The people of Kiskunhalas considered bread as the utmost value, even poor families were respected if they were able to produce their daily bread. The poorest families brought bread from the bread-baking women or the bakers piece by piece, in small amounts. The bread-baking peasant women baked huge, eight-ten-kilogram loafs, and sold them on the market. Generally they baked bread once in two weeks, and if possible they leavened it on Saturday so that on Sunday they could eat the freshly baked bread. They never baked on Friday, because it was a widespread belief that it would bring trouble to the household. In wintertime they took the flour from the larder well in advance so that it could warm up while the *korpaélesztő* /bran-yeast/ was soaked in a ceramic pot. They dried bran-yeast once or twice in a year. The bran was added to the bread-dough, then it was crumbled and spread on a table-cloth to let it dry. They put it in small linen bags and stored it in the larder, or in the attic - it kept well for years. The bran-yeast soaked in lukewarm water was sifted through a close-meshed sieve and so it was added to the flour. The bran ground in steam mills was of the quality of flour, which was not suitable any more for leavening, thus the bran-yeast was replaced by the *morzsoltka* /crumbled bread-dough with flour/. The bread-dough was rubbed with flour until it became loose and somewhat powdery, then it was put into bags and kept at a place of mild temperature. Unfortunately the bread made with *morzsoltka* was not so tasty as it used to be when it was made with bran-yeast. A type of leaven made from hop was also known, then by the end of the 19th century yeast was at last available in the grocery shops. Before she started kneading the dough for making bread the housewife heaved a sigh of prayer: *"Uram, Jézus, segíj mög!"* /"Lord, Jesus, help me!" - said in the local dialect/ After the kneading she sprinkled flour on the dough, and with hand carved a cross on it so that the dough would rise properly to produce a perfect bread.

*"God's blessing"* - said the people in Kiskunfélegyháza to express their respect when they referred to the daily bread on their table. Mrs. Márton Móra Anna Juhász (1842-1924), mother of the author Ferenc Móra, was the daughter of a cotter family of shepherds. At the beginning she worked beside

her husband who was a furrier - she made the embroidery on the furs. But when her husband had to give up his trade, and could earn their living only as a day-worker, she - inventive and clever as so many other women among the poor - became a *bread-baking woman*. The delicate figure of this frail, but in her work extraordinarily energetic woman was alive in the memory of the people of Kiskunfélegyháza even by the end of the 20th century: her home-made bread had a reputation all over the town.

The bread-baking woman - the people in Kiskunfélegyháza called them by the pet name *kenyérsütögető asszony /the woman who keeps baking bread/* - was a home-craft artisan who did not belong to a guild or trade association, procured the raw materials herself and baked bread in her home on a regular basis, generally to sell it on the market. At the turn of the 19- 20th century these women came mostly from the poorest layer of the society of the market- towns.

Obviously, apart from the bread-baking women, there were also bakeries in the market-towns. The traditional distinction of the bakers - referring to their typical products - survived until the middle of the 20th century. The *fehérpék /white-baker/* baked both bread and baker's ware like rolls, buns, etc., the *feketepék or kenyérpék /black-baker or bread-baker/* baked only bread.

The bakers and the housewives who baked good quality bread have always been held in high esteem. Although there are great differences in the tastes of people, in terms of what one considers as "good bread". Some people prefer the light-coloured bread with a loose texture of the soft part, others like it if the bread-crust is crispy and red, and the inside is dense. To produce a really fine white bread with an almost "foamy" inner part it is not sufficient to use wheat varieties of high gluten content and to adopt the adequate grinding and sifting techniques - the skill of the baker is also an important factor. Using the techniques of mechanization it is impossible to achieve the quality of a hand-kneaded bread - the bread- baker has to "feel" the dough.

By the end of the 19th century in Kiskunfélegyháza for baking bread they used mainly rye flour, or a mixture of one-third wheat- and two-third rye flour. In the 20th century there was a shift in proportions toward wheat- and pure wheat flour, while rye bread became mainly the food of the poor. In times of deprivation corn- or barley flour, or even boiled potatoes were used as a replacement for wheat flour. In some of the households they baked "*potato-bread*" not under the pressure of necessity, but also because it tasted better and stayed soft longer than the bread baked from flour only.

Mrs. Márton Móra, Aunt Anna baked a bread of excellent quality: the inside was dense, but at the same time *foszlós /spongy/* like a cake, the bread-crust was crispy - and she never used potato. The father, Márton Móra transported the grain to the mill on a wheelbarrow, the elder son, István delivered the bread to the customers, all around the town. If he carried just one bread, he put it on his head, if it happened to be two loaves he wrapped them in a tablecloth and hung it in his neck, he carried it either on his chest or on his back. Mrs. Márton Móra baked bread twice, sometimes three times a day, six loaves at each time. Apart from delivering bread to the homes of the customers, the Móra family transported bread on wheelbarrow, in big baskets to sell the bread on

the market. Aunt Móra was selling her products on the market as a *kenyeres kofa /bread-woman or basket-woman/*. In the course of time the delivery and the wheelbarrow transport of the bread became the task of Ferenc - the future author - and his younger sister. Ferenc became to be known in the town as the “*son of the bread-baking woman.*”

Lajos Kiss Muthnay, a baker in Kiskunfélegyháza, summarized his opinion about a good quality bread as follows: “*It must be porous with an equal distribution and size of the holes, the bread-crust must be crispy, it should ‘bring the water to one’s mouth’... It should be tasty... very tasty... Rye bread is the one I would recommend to eat with bacon. However, if I happen to eat bread with milk or coffee, I would rather recommend wheat bread, that means white bread.*”

## Milk

### Cow’s milk and the processing methods - Milky dishes

Until the end of the 19th century the primary aim of livestock-breeding was to provide cattle for slaughter and draught animals, and to raise calves - milk was just a secondary benefit.

Milk and dairy products at that time were hardly ever used for sale, and they did not even play an important role in the peasants’ diet. Until the 1930-40s only the cows belonging to the herd were used for milking, the herdsman only milked a few of the cows kept on the *puszta*, mainly for self-subsistence. The demand for milk and dairy products increased from the 1880-90s as a consequence of the sales activities gaining ground on the town markets. The shepherds in Kiskunfélegyháza preserved the ancient techniques of processing milk right until the middle of the 20th century.

It was not easy to tame a wild cattle that has just brought forth its calf: to achieve that it gets used to being milked. To be able to do it the shepherd had to tether the cow to a post - in the Kiskunság there were at least three or four “milking” posts at each shepherd’s place. The cows - which went with the herd only in the daytime - were, however, milked in the stable. Originally milking the cow was the task of men: the herdsman and the farmers did the milking. The herdsman were milking the wild cattle standing right beside the animal, leaning forward, pressing their forehead to the side of the cow, holding the pail in one hand. From the 1880s milking the cow has gradually become the task of women, which happened in close connection with the changes of breeds and the upward trend of dairy farms.

By 1900 milking in Kiskunfélegyháza was done in a sitting position, and men and women were equally involved. In Kiskunmajsa, by contrast, at that time mainly women did the milking, sometimes men did it, mainly sitting, but sometimes still in a standing position.

If the herdsman needed milk, he selected a cow from among the tamer ones, and milked it before dawn. Herdsman drank even the raw milk, the younger shepherd boys sometimes sucked the cow,

but *tarhó* was the most favoured form of consumption. It was the only type of dairy product that the herdsmen of wild cattle made by processing milk. *Tarhó* is a type of curds (and whey) produced at high temperature. Both herdsmen and shepherds used this technique: *tarhó* was made from both cow's milk and ewe-milk. In the 1930s the shepherds in Kiskunfélegyháza made it in the following way: the milk was brought to boiling point (scalded) in the cauldron, then it was poured into a bucket, and was left there to cool until the finger of the herdsman "*elállja a melegit*" /*he could stand the heat of it*/. At that point it was treated (curdled) with *tarhómag*. It was either pressed into the milk through a cloth, or a spoonful of *tarhómag* was mixed with a drinking-bell of milk and then it was poured into the bucket of warm milk. The *tarhómag* was the leftover of the *tarhó* made earlier - but if there was no such leftover, then first they had to make the *tarhómag*. The process was the following: a piece of well-matured ewe-cheese was smashed together with the soft part of bread, then it was mixed in half a litre of scalded milk which cooled by then to body temperature. It was this mixture with which the shepherd treated (curdled) 2 litre of milk, from which in turn the following day he took two spoonfuls to once again curdle some milk - thus the *tarhó* was gradually strengthened. If the milk were curdled when it is too warm, then it would turn sour, on the other hand, if it were too cold it wouldn't curdle. Once the *tarhó* was complete it was kept in a cool place. In case the shepherds *ráéheztek* /*happened to feel a hunger for it*/ in the daytime, they took some of it, but the *tarhó* never constituted the main meal. If there was a plenty of it, and they could not finish it in its raw form, they cooked *tarhóleves* /*tarhó-soup*/, or put it into small linen bags as *tarhótúró* /*tarhó-cheese*/.

Occasionally they mixed it with sour cream, and ate it so.

The milking-herdsman processed the cow's milk mainly to make cheese. After milking the milking-herdsman or the first maid strained the milk, then warmed it to make it as warm as the udder and then treated it with a rennet. The rennet was made from the stomach (maw) of the sucking lamb: before being slaughtered the lamb was suckled, in order to thus fill its stomach with milk, then the stomach was taken out, and the milk curdled in it; they stuffed salt into it, tied it tight and it was hung to be cured with smoke. After the smoke treatment it was washed and then left to dry for eight days in a shady place. If they needed the substance, the stomach was cut open, its content was put into a bowl and they poured salt on it; once it has dried up it was ready to be used. This was the so-called *száraz-ótó* /*dry rennet*/. Another method was to pour the content of the stomach into a jar, then to add one litre of sweet, hot whey to it, and put also a whole small red paprika into the jar, then the jar was covered and tied tight. This was the so-called *kanalas-ótó* /*spoon-rennet*/, which was then strained through a cloth before added to the milk. The treated milk curdled in about half an hour, and then the milking-herdsman *kigyúrta* /*kneaded sufficiently*/, i.e. squeezed or moulded the cheese out of it. They scalded the whey that was left to make cottage cheese, and the whey that was dripping out was collected and put into the swill for the pigs.

While the shepherds milked the cows only for self-subsistence, on the peasant-farms the cow

played an important role in the period of private farming, until the middle of the 20th century. They consumed fresh milk, and also produced various dairy products - curds, *tarhó*, *tejföl* /sour cream/, cheese, *túró* /cottage cheese/, as well as the various forms of butter: *írós vaj* /not dried fresh butter/, *sült vaj* /clarified butter/, *vaj-alja*. They ate all these products either directly or used them as the ingredients of various dishes, pastry, etc.

The fresh milk right after milking was called *édestej* /»sweet«-milk=new milk/, and they drank it raw or scalded. The first milk after calving was called *föccstej* - this was of a yellowish colour, often there was purulent matter or blood in it. For a week after calving people did not drink the milk, only the calf was sucking it, or they fed the pigs with it. But if a child was constipated they made him drink *föccstej*. In some places they baked a certain type of *pite* /pie/ from it: “*It was very tasty. They stirred it ‘latya’, i.e. liquid and poured it into the cake pan.*”

The calf sucked as many times as it wanted. The cow was tethered and the calf was there beside the suckler-cow. When it was 3-4-months old the calf was weaned, and then it was also tethered. A so-called *pallóka* /small board/ was put on the nose of the calf: the *pallóka* was made from leather with long wrought iron nails in it. If after the weaning the cow refused to provide milk they pursued the method called *mártatás* /dipping/. “*We let the calf suck, but just a little bit.*” In other households they were stroking the lower part of the cow’s abdomen, and put the calf there in order to calm the cow.

**Curds.** At the milking of the cow the milk was collected in a *zsétár* or *veder* /milkpail or bucket/ and this was then taken to the house, where the milk was *strained*. They poured the milk into bowls, jugs and jars. For the straining they used either a filter or strainer, or a loosely woven white cloth. The milk was left to curdle either in the larder or in another cool place: “*We used the larder, but in the time of my father there was a building, the ‘hombáros’ /granary/ and a cellar underneath - then they kept the milk in the cellar, and they processed it there, too.*” Curds was made from raw (not scalded) milk, and the job was considered successful if it was *szíjjas* /rather tough, like jelly/. Curds in itself was a favoured food for breakfast, they ate it with bread. Cottage cheese was also made from curds, and the surplus was sold.

**Sour cream.** The top layer, the cream was skimmed off the curds - this was to become the sour cream. On the *tanya-gazdaságok* /tanya-farms/ sour cream and cream were not distinguished. In the fresh milk - kept in a cool place - the top layer of a perfect cream takes shape in 16-20 hours’ time. They used to skim it with a spoon; nowadays separator machines separate the sour cream. Sour cream is often used as an ingredient to season various dishes (pasta with cottage cheese, *paprikás csirke* /chicken stew with sour cream/); it is also the basic material for a number of dishes (baked pasta dishes, *körözött* /spiced cottage cheese mixed with diced onion, condiment paprika, mustard and sour cream/ - but it is popular just in itself on a slice of bread or a roll.

**Butter.** The butter was made from *édestejföl* /sweet « cream»=top layer of the cream/ by churning or *összeveréssel* /shaking/ it. Until the beginning of the 20th century the churns were made

from wood, later they used earthenware churning devices. The leftover liquid after churning is the *író* /buttermilk/, and the product produced by churning is the *írós vaj* /not dried fresh butter/. The *író* was scalded - the outcome was the *savótúró* /whey cottage cheese/: they poured some milk into it so that they would have more of it. They put the fresh butter into lukewarm water, and so they tried to squeeze the water out of it. They grasped it and *kitapsi-kolták* /clapped with hands/ to expel the water from it. They preserved the *írós vaj* by frying it - that was the *sült vaj* /clarified butter/. They fried until it was nice yellow. The *sült vaj* kept well, even for a year. The *vaj-alja* /salty butter preserved by frying and thickened with flour; it could be of both soft and hard substance/ was made in the following way: the butter was fried, then pastry /course/ flour was added to it to thicken. At the bottom of the strained butter tiny bits and pieces were settled. They spread it on a slice of bread, or warmed it up and put it on pasta or *nudli* /noodles/. The dishes prepared with butter were mainly served on fasting days - then the butter was a replacement for lard.

**Cottage cheese.** Several types of *túró* /cottage cheese/ was made from curds and whey. In the first half of the 20th century the method used on the Czombos farm in Kiskunfélegyháza was the following: they *felöntötték* /poured/ the curdled milk on a cloth, the whey was dripping out, the fresh cottage cheese remained on the cloth - and then it was mixed and *összegyúrva* /kneaded/ with sour cream. Another type was the *érett túró* /mature cottage cheese/ : the *túró* was leavened in a big jug, it took two weeks to become mature, and then it kept for a long time. The mature cottage cheese was made by freshening, i.e. kneading the old *túró* with the newly made *túró* over and over again. The generally accepted opinion was that the older the *érett túró* the better. From the *író* left after the churning of the butter *savótúró* was made. On the Czombos farm, mentioned above, there were 42 head of cow and calf, as well as 40 head of sheep - on this farm cow-milk and ewe-milk were always mixed, and every dairy product was made from this mixed milk. No specific *juhtúró* /curdled ewe-cheese/ was made. On their *tanya-farm* the Csányi family favoured the *sovány túró* /fatless cottage cheese/ mixed with sour cream. From the 1930s they prepared *körözött*, it was a favourite dish for breakfast, for a snack in the afternoon and for supper. On their farm the Pajkos-Szabó family warmed the curds in the oven, then put it on a linen cloth, and let the whey drip out. Apart from fresh cottage cheese they also made *érett túró* in the following way: the fresh cottage cheese was salted, and then it was kneaded thoroughly every day for a period of two weeks - then it kept well even for a month. They had *túró* for breakfast, as a snack in the afternoon and for supper - they had it with bread, onions, radish, fresh paprika or tomato. To cure the *túró* with a smoking treatment was still known at the beginning of the 20. century in Kiskunfélegyháza. Shepherds and navvies used to eat it, because it kept well.

**Cheese.** Peasants who kept various breeds usually did not make cheese separately from cow- milk and ewe-milk - they mixed the milks of the different breeds. The shepherds - the sheep- herders in particular - were the specialists of how to process ewe-milk. On the *tanya* of Vince Csányi in the 1940s cow-milk and ewe-milk were utilized in equal proportion. They made the milk lukewarm, then added the *oltó* /rennet/, which they either purchased in the pharmacy, or from the *sajtkofo*

*/cheese-woman/* on the market. With this method the milk curdled in two hours. Then they put it into a cloth, squeezed most of the whey out, what was left was put on the *sajtszék /cheese-press/* to be pressed. The fresh cheese was in the cheese-press for a week. The *érett sajt /mature cheese/* was in the attic for maturation for one or two months. From a mixed milk of half cow-, half ewe-milk they also made *gomolyasajt /a type of ewe-cheese or smearcase/*: the curdled milk was put in a cloth and shaped it as a cone, and it was not pressed. In the first half of the 20th century the Pajkos-Szabó family made cheese on their farm from cow-milk. They made the fresh milk lukewarm, then the *oltó* was added. They put the curdled milk in a cloth, then *kisodorták /drifted or swept/* the whey out of it, at last it was put in the press. After that it was kept in salted water for two-three days, then it was left on a board in front of the farmstead to dry, while once in a few days it was repeatedly washed with lukewarm water, and left to dry again. It took three-four weeks to have the completed cheese. This family had the cheese with bread for breakfast, they also favoured it to have it with pasta, or as *sajtos nudli /cheese noodles/*, sometimes they put it into *palacsinta /pancake/*. In the first half of the 20th century the rennet itself was often made at home, by the farmer. When the calf was still sucking (at the age of 5-6 weeks), it was slaughtered, and the rennet was made from the stomach of the calf. Before being slaughtered the calf was suckled, in order to thus fill its stomach with milk. When the stomach - full of milk - was taken out, they salted it thoroughly both outside and inside, then tied it tight, at last they hung it in the attic to let it dry. After a few weeks of drying the ground the stomach and put into a jar, and stored it in the larder. They could use it for several years. Lajos Czombos, a farmer in Ferencszállás, in the 1920-30s bought the rennet made from calf-stomach from his neighbour, the Tréfás-Tóth family. They put the rennet in a small piece of cloth, which was then *csüngesztve /placed so that it would hang down into the milk/*. Then they lined a big bowl with cloth, poured the curdled milk into it, then *göngyölgették /kept rolling it/* until the whey was removed. Then they turned it, holding the cloth at both ends they wrenched and twisted it - to make it of a round shape. Then it was put on the *sajtszék*, which was screwed down on both ends. The cheese was left to dry on a shelf under the eaves, in the meantime every once in a while they washed the cheese. It was never left under the eaves for more than a week lest the flies fly- blow it.

**Tarhó.** To make *tarhó* on the *tanya-farms* was a routine activity in Kiskunfélegyháza, during the period of private farming, until the middle of the 20. century. Some families, however, made it even in the 1960-70s - it was the task of the women. On the Pajkos-Szabó farm the *tarhó* was made in the following way: the milk was scalded then they let it cool until it was lukewarm. On the previous occasion of *tarhó*-making a *tarhómag* had to be left, which was then mixed with the milk, they covered it, and in two hours the milk curdled. On Vince Csányi 's *tanya-farm* the *tarhó* was made from mixed milk: half cow-milk, half ewe-milk.

From the 1960s they bought the *tarhómag* in the pharmacy, but earlier they had purchased it from shepherds who had made it from calf- or sheep-stomach. When the rennet was already in the milk, they put it under pillows, and in two hours it was ready to be eaten. They had it when it was fresh for breakfast, or as a snack in the afternoon, but took it even when they went to harvest. The

consistency of the *tarhó* is tougher than that of the curds, it has a slightly sourtaste.

The housewives of the middle class burgher families in the town purchased the dairy products needed for the subsistence of the family on Fridays and Tuesdays, i.e. the regular market- days. On these days there was a specific *tej-piac /milk-market/*. They used milk for preparing soups, sauces and various types of *főzelék*. Milk or sour cream was used for *habarás /thickening boiled vegetables by adding and stirring flour + milk or sour cream until it is brought to boiling/*. Cottage cheese and cheese were parts of pasta dishes, and also the ingredients of pastry and cakes. By the 20. century dairy products became the standard part of everyday meals. Thrifty housewives of craftsmen's and tradesmen's families bought the milk, but sometimes they made curds, *tarhó* and fresh cottage cheese at home. The home-made fresh *tarhó* was usually a snack in the afternoon.

**Ewe-milk and its processing.** In the Middle Ages Hungarians produced cottage cheese and yogurt, and they did it without using rennet - in modern times this practice has been supplemented with the culture of cheese-making adopting the method of using rennet either made from stomach, or of a plant origin. In medieval Hungary cheese was almost entirely missing. By the turn of the 18-19th century from the vicinity of Venice wandering Italian cheese-makers arrived in our country. The cheese-makers usually arrived in springtime, their servants travelled with them, and during the summer they were engaged in cheese-making, then in the autumn they went home. László Nagy Czirok studied the activities of these people, and he came to the conclusion that the wandering cheese-makers visited Kiskunság region, too. They went to the farmsteads, one after the other, and undertook the task of making cheese. They were much sought after, because they did a good job.

To the processing of ewe-milk the use of rennet was closely related. From the curdled congealment the precipitated parts were strained out - the *gomolya* was made from this. They either ate it fresh, or it was left to mature further and then by chopping it up more valuable types of cheese, or *juhtúró* were produced. The fatty *savó /whey/* was either considered as an end-product, or it was further processed. After having scalded the whey some fatless cottage cheese precipitated, that either they were eating with a spoon together with the liquid part of it - this was called *zsendice* - or the cottage cheese was strained out and another type of cheese was made from it.

Until the middle of the 20th century the shepherds drank the raw ewe-milk, the milking- shepherds even made *tarhó* for themselves, but the main thing was always to press cheese and to knead cottage-cheese. The real masters of cheese-making were undoubtedly the milking- shepherds.

In the 19th century and until the middle of the 20th century, in the period of private farming, the shepherds processed the ewe-milk in the following way: after milking the milk was strained into the curdling trough, then as it *föladta a fölit /the top layer of the cream took shape/*, they *megfölozték /skimmed/* it. After that they poured the milk into a cauldron and warmed it to make it as warm as the udder and then treated it with a rennet. When the milk curdled, they cut it with a wooden spoon - if they wanted to make two cheese, they cut it into two halves. Each of the halves

was then put in a cloth, and *kicsurgatták /squeezed the whey out/* in the following way: they took all the four corners of the cloth in one hand, and in the curdling trough squeezed the whey out, which through a hole dripped into a bucket. Then the shepherd shook the would-be-cheese in the cloth, folded it properly and then put it in the *sajtszék*. In the evening the cheese was taken out from the press, and was put into salted water, where it stayed for 4-5 days. Then it was washed in warm whey, and then they put it on a shelf to let it dry.

For making *gomolya* they used “thin” milk that had been skimmed twice, and they used a stronger rennet, than that in the case of cheese. The curdled milk in the cloth was not pressed, instead it was smoked on the shelf beside the oven for 3-7 days. The *zsiros túró /fat cottage cheese/* was made from the treated substance of the cheese, they kneaded it thoroughly then they crammed it into a tub. From the whey that was left after the kneading of the cheese they made *savótúró*. The ewe-butter was made from cream until the beginning of the 20th century.

**Goat’s milk and its processing.** Until the middle of the 20th century goat’s milk and goat’s milk cheese were considered as the food of the poor, because mainly the poor peasants had goats. The goat is an unassuming (or it can be said that a “wantless”) animal being totally satisfied with the weeds, twigs and leaves to be found beside the road or on the bank of a ditch - thus to keep a goat meant practically no cost.

To make goat’s milk cheese the milk was scalded, then the rennet - bought from the *milk- women* on the market - was added and the milk curdled. Then they put it in a white homespun hand-cloth and pressed, kneaded it until all the whey was squeezed out. When it was a solid mass, it was put in the cheese-press, and afterwards into salted water for a week.

**Mare’s milk and ass’s milk.** Our ancestors at the time of the conquest of the Carpathian Basin (10th century) milked the mares, and from the milk *kumis /koumiss/* was fermented. The nowadays used word *kumis* came from the Mongol language, the ancient original Hungarian name of this drink is not known any more. As far as the use of mare’s and ass’s milk is concerned in the Kiskunság region traces of its use in the 20th century can only be found in the field of folk medication: it was recommended in the cases of pulmonary consumption and pectoral diseases, and they also gave it to coughing children.

## Meat

**Horse-flesh.** In the 20th century there is no reference to horse-flesh as one processed or consumed as a meat. Originally *virsl /Vienna sausage or wienerwurst/* was made also from horse-flesh. Jewish families had horse-sausage instead of sausage made from pork. The Roma people were willing to eat the meat of perished horses.

**Pork.** The most common breed of pig in the 19th century was the *mangalitza*, although the breeds called *jenei* and *kisküküllői* were to be found, too, and occasionally the breed called *szalontai* also

occurred. The breeds from abroad - the Berkshire and the Yorkshire pigs - first appeared at the end of the 19th century. According to the custom in Kiskunhalas the pig had to be slaughtered by the day of “pig-killing Thomas”/St. Thomas, 21 December/, because it was a strong belief that after this day the pigs are not getting fat any more. This rule was observed even by the Calvinists. In the middle of the 19th century the guests arriving to the feast at pig-killing were welcomed with *bölléropogácsa* /pig-sticker’s scones/ and *pálinka* /home-made spirit distilled from fruits/. The apricot-, plum- or *törköly* /grape-pálinka distilled from marc/ *pálinka* was offered in a bottle, and it was the host who had the drink first - with the greeting *Adjon Isten jó reggelt!* /The Lord may give you good morning!/. They had some more shots while singeing the pig, but once the meat has been taken inside the house they had mulled wine. While the various parts of the meat were sorted and the meat for making sausage was chopped up, the women cleaned the *kolbászbőr* and *hurkabőr* /casing for sausages and black, etc. puddings/. By then it was lunch- time. As the first course they served kidney-soup, followed by the *savanyúmáj* /sour liver/, at last they had the *pecsenye* /roast meat/. At the dinner of the pig-killing feast they served five courses as the least. The first course was the *lúdgége tészával rakott tyúkhúsleves* /chicken-broth with shell-shaped pasta/, followed by the *szárma*, followed by the *tyúkpaprikás* /poulard stew with sour cream/. The fourth course was the roasted or fried sausages and black pudding, and at last they had various types of *rétes* /strudel/ with walnut-, cottage cheese-, apple- or poppy-seed filling, or else they served *pampuska* /doughnut/. As they were having dinner wine in a pitcher was handed around the table, after dinner - listening to the music of a *tambura* - they were dancing and singing until dawn.

In Kiskunfélegyháza the pig-killing season lasted from December to February, and it was associated with noted days: from *Elisabeth-day* (19 November) to the day of *Jégtörő Mátyás* /”Mathias the Ice-breaker”/ (24 February) - (it is to be noted that in Hungary we celebrate not just birthdays, but also name-days, i.e. the day of the Saint of one’s Christian name), or from *Mindenszentek* /All Saints’ Day/ (1 November) to *Gyertyaszentelő Boldogasszony* /Candlemas Day or Ground-hog Day; Feast of the Purification of the Virgin Mary/ (2 February). It was a tradition both in peasant- and in middle class families to schedule the pig-killing for Christmas, and further noted days have always been the name-day of the host, the wedding feast, the harvest, then - ever since the second half of the 20. century - the birthday and the *ballagás* /valediction, i. e. graduation from the grammar school/.

The pig was actually stabbed by either the host or a hired pig-sticker, then followed the singeing of the pig. Until the 1940s the singeing was done with burning straw, later wood, nowadays with a device burning natural gas. The pig was drawn on the spot of the singeing, laid down horizontally either on the door of the pigsty, or on a plank. In olden times the pig used to be drawn in a way called *orjára*, which means that after the removal of the hams they cut off the head and left the *orja* /backbone and the spare-ribs/ in one piece. Then they turned the carcass and put it in a prone position, and continued to cut it into further pieces. The cleansing of the entrails was the women’s task. Among the processed products there were three types of *szalonna* /bacon/ (salted,

smoked, steamed); two types of sausages (thin and thick); three or four types of *hurka* /puddings/ *sausages made from chitterlings*/ (white and black pudding, one made with rolls, one made with liver). In the first half of the 20. century they mixed the chitterlings with millet, then with soaked rolls, from the middle of the century rice was used. Liver-paste was also very popular. Needless to say, that *tepertő* (or *töpörtyű*) /*crackling*/ was one of the favoured products. The leaf-lard was also utilized: mainly for making pastry (*rétes*, *pogácsa*, tarts with fillings/. During the weeks after the pig-killing *kocsonya* was a standard meal on the table.

**Beef.** István Tálasi carried out his research in the 1930s and came to the conclusion that during the period of extensive animal husbandry meat consumption in the Kiskunság was much bigger than in the time of his investigation: not only the memories of the story-tellers, but the official court records, too, provide the evidence. Economic reasons offer the explanation for this considerable meat consumption. Without the sufficient opportunities for sales the farmers consumed more from their livestock, and since they produced only narrowly as much of the grain crops as was necessary for their subsistence, it was obvious that the livestock - kept on the pastures by thousands - was also meant to be a source of meat. Defective or superannuated animals were also used for this purpose, so there was a continuous supply of beef.

**Dishes made from mutton.** Mutton - as opposed to beef - became more and more popular from the middle of the 18th century on. What the shepherds slaughtered most willingly was either a one-year-old lamb or a wether. They never slaughtered the ram in the summer, because *üzödése már augusztusban megindul* /it is in rut already in August/. The shepherds were the real masters of slaughtering and processing sheep even in the second half of the 20th century. The *birkapörkölt* /*mutton stew*/ was considered as a festive dish: they served it at wedding feasts, at dinners celebrating the completion of the harvest - and whoever could afford asked a man, i.e. a “specialist” to cook it.

**Dishes made from poultry.** At the turn of the 19-20th century the rearing of poultry was common on the *tanya-farms* located on the outskirts around the towns. On the occasion of the weekly fair tens of thousands of fowls broke the stillness of Kiskunfélegyháza. A reporter of the time described it as follows: “*The fair starts at early dawn. The carriages transporting fowls from the farmsteads are standing there by hundreds. In the middle of the square heaps of the transporting baskets and crates of the wholesale traders of poultry are piled up - by noon they provide the shipment for an entire freight train, so that the wagons - furnished specifically for transporting either fowls, or the cases packed with thousands of slaughtered poultry - could run out from here in all directions, some even as far as London. It is from this market that at Christmas time 35,000-40,000 turkeys travel to London, and most spas and seaside resorts in Germany are supplied with chicken, capon, goose and eggs also from this market. The town’s feather trade reaches as far as Paris. The annual turnover of this market is several thousand korona /the currency of the time/.*”

On the *tanya*, on the peasants’ farms during the 19-20th century a wide variety of fowls were reared: chicken, turkey, duck, goose, guinea-fowl and pigeon.

In the 1930-40s the following dishes were made from poultry on the *tanya* of the farmer Vince Csányi in Kiskunfélegyháza. From the giblets of turkey they cooked soup. When the meat was tender they took it out from the soup, and roasted or *kirántották* /bread-crumbed and deep-fried in hot oil or lard/. Since the meat of the turkey is dry, they mostly made *pörkölt* /stew/ from it. Recently, in the last 10-15 years it became fashionable to serve roast turkey wing at Christmas, and at other festive meals celebrating name-days or birthdays. The wings are larded with smoked bacon and garlic, to make it juicy, and it is roasted in just a little lard in the oven. French fried or mashed potatoes, *rizibizi* /rice with green peas/, pickles or stewed or preserved fruit are served as side-dishes. From the breast and the upper leg of the turkey they usually make *pörkölt* with rice as garnishing. The roast autumn goose used to be a Sunday dish: the fattened goose was cut into four pieces and was roasted in the oven, it was served with mashed potatoes. The goose-liver was also roasted beside the meat in the meat-pan, but it was put in the oven later. The duck, too, was roasted in a meat-pan, in the oven, they seasoned it generously with salt, pepper and red condiment paprika - they rolled it in the paprika to make it “nice red”. There was hardly any lard in the pan, but a little water was needed. In the last 20-25 years they put compressed soup cube and garlic in the liquid. The side-dish is mashed potatoes prepared in a frying pan, mixed with red paprika and onion fried on lard. From the giblets a soup was cooked. They fried the liver for breakfast. From the legs and the neck of the duck they prepared stuffed duck. The filling was made from dry rolls soaked in water or milk, seasoned with parsley simmered with salt and pepper. The filling was stuffed under the skin of the legs and the neck. Chicken was also prepared as a Sunday meal: a soup and the pieces of meat bread-crumbed and deep-fried in hot lard. The stuffed poulard was also favoured: they cut the bird in halves, stuffed the filling under the skin and roasted it - it was best if made from a one-year-old hen. As the side-dish for the *tyúkpörkölt* /poulard stew/ they served *nokedli* /dumplings/. The *zúzapörkölt* /gizzard stew/ is some sort of a novelty, but already very popular. Apart from the hen soup they often prepared *göngyölthús* /rolled-up meat/: they beat the slices of chicken breast to tenderize, then stuffed it with filling made from rolls, then rolled it up and deep-fried in hot oil. When served the rolls were sliced. The side-dish was either rice or potatoes, but it could be *főzelék*, too. It was delicious even if served cold. From the traditionally (i.e. not fed with nutriment) reared turkey in older times they even made turkey-sausages. The turkey-neck was excellent for cooking soup - similarly to the guinea-fowl and the pigeon.

**Game and fish.** In the 18th century the *redemptus* layer of the society - those who paid for their freedom and thereby emerged from the status of serfdom and became peasant-burghers - was granted autonomy. Within the framework of this *jászkun* autonomy they had the right to make decisions concerning the utilization and the income of their newly acquired possessions. The usufruct of the waters, the utilization of the income by the community also fell under the authority of their council. The usufruct of the waters covered the following activities: *nádlás* /reed cutting/, *sziksóseprés* /native-soda sweeping/, collecting bulrush and fresh-water turtles, as well as fishing, loach-catching and collecting leech.

In the 20th century fish consumption constituted a very small portion of the diet of the peasantry living on the *tanya*. They only had fish occasionally: if they happened to get it cheap, or when they could catch or buy fish for fasting days.

The characteristic dish of the Hungarian cuisine called *káposztás csík /loach with cabbage/* was mentioned as late as in the records of the 19th century - “on other occasions they served cabbage with the fried fish (loach)” - but by the end of the 20th century nobody remembered this dish.

The fishermen were real masters of preparing dishes of fish. In the 20th century there were no fishermen in Kiskunfélegyháza - the peasants themselves caught fish in the nearby waters and the women fried it. From the middle of the 20th century the fish dishes - already popular in the middle class cuisine - started to be known among the peasantry, too. Some of the housewives prepared the fish bought in shops or on the market themselves, but the scaling of the fish was the task of the men. In the household diary (1890-1913) of Mrs. Imre Hoffer Róza Büchlbauer - a household can be considered as a representative of the well-to-do middle class families - there are but a very few references to fish: “fish in mussels”, “coldfish with mayonnaise” as a starter, “slices of bread with sardine” and “*hamis hal*” /“fake fish”=*cold veal in aspic, sliced*/.

Until the middle of the 20th century fish played an important role in the Jewish cuisine in Kiskunfélegyháza: according to their religious rules they are allowed to eat all scaly as well as finned fresh water- as well as sea fish. They had fish mainly on Saturdays and on various festive occasions. The individual taste of the family played an important role in their choice of fish. Usually there were fears regarding the safety of children because of the bones. The Kerekes family had fish only on the occasion of Jewish holidays: the housewife prepared the dishes - both the soup and the fried fish - for the four members of the family from just one big fish. They cooked the fish-soup with a whole onion, without condiment paprika. The *paprikás hal /fish with red paprika/* was a simple everyday dish prepared without lard: the diced onion, seasoned with salt, pepper and condiment paprika was simmered in just a little water until it was tender, the slices of fish was put into it, and it was ready in a few minutes’ time. They served it with peeled potatoes - cut in either rings or cubes - and boiled in water. The characteristic dish of orthodox Jews at Passover was the *dióval töltött hal /fish stuffed with walnut/*. It was prepared in the following way: they pulled out the fish from its skin, then it was cut into small pieces and mixed with walnut, the mixture was then re-stuffed into the skin, and it was fried in oil. This stuffed fish was a favoured dish on other noted occasions as well: Friday evening, towards Saturday evening (before the Sabbath came to an end), as part of the light supper before the *hosszúnap /Day of Atonement/*, in the afternoon before Yom Kippur, as well as on family occasions. At Passover half of the filling was *macesz-morzsa/crumbs of unleavened bread/*, half of it was walnut, and it was seasoned with onion, garlic, salt, pepper, ginger - and they mixed it with whipped eggs. The head of the fish was boiled separately, then it was passed through a sieve, and put it on the raw fish, boiled it all together to bring it to the state of jelly - this was the *halkocsonya /fish-jelly/*.

They often prepared *rántott hal /bread-crumbed fish fried in oil/*: the small fish was bread-

crumbed as a whole, the bigger fish were sliced. Sometimes they used paprika and flour instead of bread-crumbs. They served it with mashed potatoes on butter, seasoned with salt and pepper.

Similarly to fish dishes game was not often served neither in peasant- nor in middle class urban families. As it was recorded in 1786 in Kiskunfélegyháza *“hunting has never been on árenda / taken on lease/, since there are only small game in this area, there are neither woods nor groves to be found here. At last the decision was made that only hunting would be offered on lease, not fishing.”* Lajos Kádár, speaking about the year 1908, mentions that a man hauled small crows to Cigányfalu in Kiskunfélegyháza, some of the “tender” crows weighed as much as half kilogram. The boys collecting crows received four pennies for each bird, but then they were sold for twelve.

Over the years of the 19-20th century game was served on noted occasions even in the well- to-do middle class families. In the household diary of Mrs. Imre Hoffer Róza Büchlbauer the following game dishes are included among the recipes and menus: “back of venison with sauce”, “hare paste”, “hare meat-loaf with butter”, “hare cooked in serviette”, “hare seasoned with garlic”, “hare galatea” /hare meat, goose liver, bacon mixed and ground/, “wild boar paste”, “venison- or hare paste”, “roast pheasant”.

## The order of meals

### The daily meals

On the scattered farmsteads on the outskirts of Kiskunfélegyháza some of the poor peasant families had three meals in a day in summer, and two meals in wintertime. This was the case as late as until the middle of the 20. century, although in most cases the adults had already three meals a day, and often it was supplemented with a fourth: a snack in the afternoon.

The well-to-do peasant families had three meals. Three meals were also customary in middle class families, but the children had a snack at 10 o'clock in the morning and one in the afternoon, too. Children could have fruit any time they wanted.

The family of János Sántha, a well-to-do peasant living on their *tanya* in Ferencszállás in the 1920-30s had three meals a day, both in summer- and wintertime: they had breakfast between 6-8 in the morning; depending on the work they had lunch between 12-13 o'clock, and dinner between 18-20 o'clock; they did not have snacks. Vince Csányi also lived on his *tanya*, his family in the 1930-40s had four meals in a day in the summer and two meals in the winter. In summertime they had breakfast at 8, lunch was sharp at noon, they had a snack between 15-16 o'clock in the afternoon, and they had a supper at 21 o'clock. In wintertime they had breakfast between 8-9 and lunch at 15 o'clock. The school-children had some food packed that they took to the school; when

they came home from the school meal was served for them separately from the adults. The family of the mill-owner Pajkos-Szabó in the 1920-40s had breakfast at 7 o'clock both in the summer and the winter, they had lunch between 12.30-13.00. In the summer they had a snack at 17 o'clock in the afternoon, and supper at about 20 o'clock. In the winter they had supper at about 19 o'clock in the evening. Mrs. Sándor Hegedűs Piroska Dongó and her family belonged to the poor peasantry - in the first half of the 20th century in the winter, but often also in the summer they had just two meals. The winter meals were later: breakfast after 9 in the morning, lunch at 15 o'clock, the summer lunch was at noon, dinner at about 18 o'clock. In the family of Klasz - a tradesman in the first half of the

20. century - breakfast was at 7 o'clock, lunch at noon, dinner between 17-18 o'clock. The children had snacks at about 10 in the morning and at 16 o'clock in the afternoon. In the first half of the 20th century in the farmer families living on the *tanya* - depending on their social status and the basic materials available on the farm and, of course, according to the individual family customs - a great variety of dishes were served.

## Meals on the puszta

In the 19th century food - bread, bacon, mush or *tarhonya* - was included in the shepherds' wages. Sometimes they could get hold of potatoes as well. These were the basic materials they used to prepare their meals. For seasoning they used salt, paprika, cumin and onion - although at the beginning of the century onion and paprika were not yet common - a shepherd did not really appreciate and consume vegetables. Milk and dairy products were available, and sometimes they could even get meat. Usually they cooked soups for breakfast and lunch, and they had more substantial dishes for dinner.

From millet most often they cooked mush soup and *fordított kása* or milky mush. They often cooked *tarhonyaleves /egg-barley soup/*, later potatoes-soup became an everyday dish. During the periods when meat was available in abundance they often felt a hunger even for cumin soup. Into the soups they put a handful of dried meat - one for each. They carried dried meat in the sleeves of their coats, so that they could munch it while pasturing the livestock. The mixture of potatoes boiled in just a little water with *öregtarhonya /»old« egg-barley/* was called *rackakása /mush named after "racka"=indigenous Hungarian breed of sheep/*. Apart from the cooked meals there were bread, bacon, milk, cottage-cheese, cheese and *tarhó*. They often ate roast (fried) bacon, and if they had time on their hands they even toasted the bread to go with the bacon. The specific - rather unique - way of roasting bacon has been preserved and maintained by both the shepherds and the peasants right until the 20. century. They made deep slits in a huge, thick piece of white bacon, and as it was roasted, the already well done parts were gradually cut down. If they got any, they ate onion with it, and ever since the 20. century fresh paprika, tomato and cucumber, too. For the *fordított kása* and the *paprikás krumpli /potatoes stew/* they melted mutton-fat, but for *tarhonya* they preferred to have bacon to provide the lard as the basis. The wages of the

shepherds did not include meat, but they were clever enough to get hold of what they needed. Mutton was their favourite. The mutton was cooked with red condiment paprika in the cauldron, on top of the meat they put *hurka* made from the chitterlings, with the soft part of the bread or corn-grits as the filling, seasoned with salt, pepper and paprika. The *hurka* formed the shape of a wreath on the top. The food in the cauldron was never stirred, it was always turned over - so the *hurka* ended up at the bottom, and were eaten as the last pieces of the food.

### Meals during the work on the fields

Until the middle of the 20th century, during the era of private farming, the peasants living and farming on the *tanya* were not far from the farmstead while working on the fields, thus they had their meals at home. At noon they went back to the farmstead, had their lunch, then they took time for a nap or rest for one- or one-and-a half hours, and afterwards returned to the fields to continue working. If they went out very early in the morning they took their breakfast; if they happened to work far from the farmstead they had lunch and a snack in the afternoon out on the fields. Where the soil was sandy, they put the braising pan with the warm food in it deep into the warm sand which thus kept the temperature until lunch. It even occurred that they prepared the eggs in the sand: by noon the eggs put in the sand were hard-boiled eggs.

The most difficult work of the year on the fields was the harvest, i.e. the gathering in of the crops. At harvest time the well-to-do families had four or five meals a day, and even the poorer tried to have more substantial meals. The poor peasant Dongó family had the following meals at harvest time in the first half of the 20th century: scrambled eggs with cucumber salad made with sour cream for breakfast; the snack at about 10 o'clock was curds and cottage cheese; for lunch and dinner they had the usual everyday dishes *tarhonyás krumplileves* /potatoes soup with egg barley/ and various types of pasta. In the family of the farmer Vince Csányi some 10-12 men did the harvesting: starting from Peter-Paul's day (29 June) it lasted two or two-and-a-half weeks. They went to the fields early at dawn, at 3 o'clock in the morning. They took the breakfast to the fields: the *nap megsütötte az avas szalonnát* /the rancid bacon was sun-kissed/, apart from the bacon they had cheese, cottage cheese, sour cream, milk, bread. Lunch was sharp at noon. One day they had *babgulyás* /beans-goulash/, which was also called *aratógulyás* (harvesters' goulash/, followed by pasta mixed with either bread-crumbs, grits or potatoes; the other day they had chicken broth, the meat was separately put on lard and red condiment paprika, with mashed potatoes as a side-dish, but mostly they had various types of *paprikás* /stew with sour cream/. A favoured harvest meal was the first boiled then smoked ham bread-crumbed and fried in oil, they had it with cucumber or lettuce. The *törvebab* was also a common dish at harvest time: white dry beans were boiled, always together with smoked thin flank of pork or ham, then it was lightly thickened, seasoned with sour cream and vinegar. The *aratógulyás* was made from smoked spare ribs cooked with dry beans and vegetables (carrot, potatoes, parsley, onion, garlic, tomato, paprika, cabbage) - they often had it for dinner as well. As the last course of the lunch they had baked walnut- and poppy seed cakes or pancakes. They had their afternoon snack out on the fields:

mixed fresh ewe- and cow-milk, yogurt, sausages, bacon, boiled ham and bread. Once the day's work was finished at about 21-22 o'clock in the evening they had a warm meal again as supper: they mainly had various types of pasta. The three main types were: *keménylebbencs leves /soup made with potatoes and "lebbencs"=dry pasta cut into square-shaped pieces/*, *kemény- tarhonya /egg-barley with potatoes/* and *paprikás krumpli*.

The well-to-do *tanya-farmer* who was also a miller even slaughtered a sheep for the harvest, and the *aratógulyás* was also common.

The *tanya-farmers* made every effort to slaughter a sheep at the autumn harvest of grapes and fruits. Then they made *birkagulyás /mutton goulash/*, *birkapörkölt*; the egg-barley or the potatoes were boiled separately, whereas millet mush was put into the stew. The *juhhúsos tarhonya /mutton with egg barley/* was also an old, favoured dish at the autumn harvest. At poorer houses when they could not afford a sheep, a goat was slaughtered. They made soup from the bony parts, the rest was prepared as *kecskepörkölt /goat stew/*. At these houses *birkapörkölt* was a dish to be served at wedding feasts, the *juhhúsos tarhonya* was a dish for the autumn harvest.

The day of pig-killing had its specific customs in terms of the meals and the food. The closing event was always the feast, the dinner in the evening which was considered as a festive occasion.

On the Pajkos-Szabó *tanya* until the 1960s they slaughtered pigs twice in a year, one pig at each occasion. The day of the pig-killing was Saturday. Before the actual pig-killing, at 5 o'clock in the morning they had their first breakfast, then they had a shot of *pálinka* and salty scones. Later, at 8 o'clock they had the second breakfast: *vérpaprikás /blood fried in lard with onion/* with bread and pickles. For lunch at noon they served freshly roasted meat with bread and pickles. When the work was finished, at 20 o'clock in the evening they had dinner, which was the actual feast. The courses of this meal were the following: *orjaleves tésztával /soup with vermicelli/*; the meat boiled in the soup with freshly grated horseradish with vinegar; *töltött káposzta*; roasted or fried sausages and black pudding with bread and pickles; at last they served *hájastészta /shortcake or pastry made with leaf-lard/* with jam or walnut filling.

They drank *pálinka* and wine for the dinner.

The day of bread-baking was also an honoured occasion in the life of the family. On the *tanya* of the Csányi family they baked their own bread until 1965, during the following ten years they took the half-ready bread to be baked in the bakery of Kiss Lajos. They baked six loaves of bread in every two weeks - this was meant to provide bread for 8 persons; one bread weighed 4-5 kilogram. The housewife baked three pieces of *lángos* - each of the size of the baker's peel. These were ready to be eaten at about 7 o'clock in the morning. These were baked in front of the *láng /flame/*, not in the oven together with the bread. The family could hardly wait to have the freshly baked, crispy and warm *lángos*, on top of which they melted lard, and put sour cream, garlic and often even grated cheese on it. With the *lángos* they drank milk, coffee with milk or cocoa. The

mother baked half-kilo loaves, one for each member of the family - all of them ate this loaf on that very day. These loaves were put into the oven together with the bread, but they were baked ready in a shorter time than the bread - they put lard on it and usually ate it immediately. The warm bread-and-drippings was a much favoured treat for everybody. The other meals of the day were as regular as on any other day.

In the 20th century on market-days in the summer the housewives in the town went to the market early in the morning, and started cooking the meals later. On these days they usually had a lunch that could be prepared quickly: soup made from sour cherry or some other fruit, and *lángos* bought on the market or baked at home.

On the *tanya* of the Csányi family - until the middle of the 20th century, during the era of private farming - the mother and the three daughters were spinning during all the winter, they worked only with wool and hemp, there was no flax. They worked in the morning and also in the afternoon, spinning kept the women busy all the way through the winter. While working they always had some food that facilitated the secretion of saliva: preserved fruits, apple, bread-and-jam, milky pie with jam.

## Festive meals

In this study the dietary customs on holidays and at festive occasions in the 18-20th century are presented as those of the Roman Catholic denomination which constituted the majority of the population in Kiskunfélegyháza. As far as the Calvinist and Lutheran communities are concerned, they represented an insignificant minority in the 19-20th century, and their religion does not specify dietary rules for weekdays and holidays. The Adventist community- as one that parted from the protestant religion - does not impose obligatory rules on its members either - what they have are only recommendations promoting the healthy diet.

According to the Roman Catholic liturgy the beginning of the canonical year is Advent: the time of expectancy before Christmas, commemorating the birth of Jesus Christ, a four-week- long period of fasting. At the beginning of the 20th century the rules of fasting were rigorously observed. On Wednesdays and Fridays they did not eat dishes prepared with lard, they used oil or butter. A characteristic dish of the Advent fast was the *cibereleves*: wheat bran was left in a warm place to make it sour, then it was strained and rice was boiled in the sour liquid, at last they broke whole eggs into it and then it was thickened with flour and sour cream. For breakfast they had baked or boiled jacket-potatoes with oil, or bread dipped in oil. Another specific dish of fasting was the *csipegetett* or *csipedett leves* /soup with “*csipegetett*”= *tiny pieces of pasta - boiled in it*/: they boiled potatoes and vegetables in salty water, then put the pasta - made also with oil - into it.

The vigil, the eve of the church holiday is on 24 December, the last day of the preparations: the time to tidy the house up, set the outhouses, pigsties, stables and the courtyard in order; feverish

cooking-baking is going on, they decorate the Christmas-tree. Until the middle of the 20th century the layout of the Christmas-table was traditional. The housewife placed apple, walnut, honey and garlic on the table. If they reared livestock or sheep they put also hay on the table. *“It was arranged in such a nice way that all sides were identical...”* On that part of the table where the housewife was sitting they placed a hen made from paper which was carefully *pingálva /painted/*. In some of the homes they even placed a mangle at the leg of the table, and they said *“may the health of the family be as good as that of the mangle - because it is so clean, and it must be so clean.”* It was the housewife who was supposed to place the mangle or the washing-beater at the leg of the table. The animal that had problems with urinating had to walk over this mangle or beater. It was usually the task of the farmer to place hay or straw, as well as a *szakajtó* of maize, or a mixture of wheat, oat and maize under the table of fasting. These were later distributed among the animals. In several homes they put also a hat under the table. They collected the crumbs in the hat, and then all the year round they clapped the sick animals with this hat. In the course of the traditional fasting dinner of Christmas first they ate garlic dipped in honey, then walnut and grapes. Beans soup was the next course, followed by poppy-seed pasta or *mákos guba /leavened cake, scalded, dusted with poppy-seed/* with honey. In other families the main fasting meal at Christmas was not the dinner, but the lunch. *“On the day of the vigil of Christmas we did not go out. We did not eat until noon, did not drink alcohol - this day was devoted to fasting”* - this was the traditional attitude in those olden days. At the beginning of the 20th century - influenced by the customs of the urban middle class - in peasant homes became popular to have fish for the fasting dinner of Christmas; from the 1930s well-to-do peasant families served preserved fruit as a side-dish. Ever since the second half of the 20th century roast fish and *halászlé /fishermen’s brew=a special fish-soup/* are the most popular dishes for both lunch and dinner on the vigil of Christmas. Apple was never missing from the Christmas table; it was part of the lunch or dinner. There was also a custom that on the day of the vigil of Christmas they put two-three apples into a bucket of water and lowered it into the well, and it was first pulled up on Twelfth-Day (Epiphany, 6 January). Then the head of the family cut it into pieces and gave one to each member of the family thereby to make sure that they would be healthy in the coming year. Some families pulled the apples up on New Year’s Day, and the slices of apple were distributed at lunch. This custom was preserved as late as the 1970s. In some cases on Twelfth-Day they first drank from the water the apple was kept in - *“we drank and the animals, too”* - and then the apple was distributed. In many homes they put apple not only in the well, but also in a glass of water, and this was what they drank. They said: *“May God give us health just as this apple is healthy.”* Some families prepared dried apple, boiled and sprinkled with sugar. It was common to bake *rétes* as well as poppy-seed and walnut *bejgli /“folded” pastry/*. *“Preferably it was baked to be ready by midnight. This was the way we did it in those olden days.”* - remembered Mrs. Sándor Hegedűs Piroska Dongó. On the *tanya* of the Szécsényi family they even made *fasting szárma*, that means they prepared “stuffed sour kraut without meat”: the filling was made from hard-boiled eggs, bread-crumbs fried on oil, sour cream and soaked roll.

The carnival lasted from Twelfth-Day until Ash-Wednesday - but in terms of folk customs it was

rather just the last three days: Shrove Sunday, Shrove Monday and Shrove Tuesday.

These days were called the *Háromnapok /Threedays/* - frolic, merriment, eating-drinking was the way people entertained themselves, both the peasants on the *tanya* and the middle class burghers in the town. It was in 1883 that the bakers and the millers organized their first carnival ball which was a “charitable dancing party. An interesting feature of the ball was the dance around a huge pretzel held up high by three dancers, around whom there were dancing pairs some holding sacks.” Among the peasantry living on the *tanya* the main occasions of the carnival were the so-called *padkaporos bálók /"dusty-bench" balls/*. This type of ball was named after the dust that came from the floor of beaten earth (a common type of floor in those houses) when the boots of the dancers broke it up. It was often the case that the floor had to be sprinkled with water. The youth of the *tanya* people went to these balls which were held at “hospitable houses where they allowed them to gather and did not mind dancing.” The girls offered pastry, the lads took wine to the balls.

On fasting days it was common - both in peasant- and middle class households - to make doughnuts. The masked entertainers of the carnival usually received eggs, bacon, sausage and *disznósajt /pig cheese/* - which they all ate together at the ball. The simplest dish was scrambled eggs, but occasionally they had *haluska /pasta with cottage cheese and cracklings/*. If girls were invited they took mainly doughnuts or scones, occasionally meat-loaf or bread-crumbed meat as cold snacks. *Kalács*, a shot of *pálinka* or a glass of wine was often offered to the guests. The *batyusbál /"bundle" ball/* or *kosaras bál /basket ball/* was in fact a picnic party where married couples went, taking food packed in “bundles”: meat-loaf, bread-crumbed meat, poultry as cold snacks, as well as *kalács*, pastry, tarts. Whoever could afford, scheduled a pig-killing for the carnival, thus they had food in abundance. The most common dishes during the carnival time were: *orjaleves*, chicken broth, stuffed sour kraut, *kocsonya*, ham, black pudding, sausages, doughnut, *csöröge /fritter-like pastry/*, scones, leavened cakes, strudel, *béles /turn-over pie/*. On the Pajkos-Szabó-*tanya* doughnut was indispensable on the three Shrove Days, on other days they prepared the customary dishes: mainly pasta, meat on Sunday and Thursday, otherwise pasta and potatoes, *tarhonyaleves* and *paprikás krumpli* on Saturday.

The carnival - officially - ended at midnight on Shrove Tuesday. The next day, on Ash- Wednesday commences the forty-day-long Lent. This is the time of preparation for Easter - a period when the food had to be made without lard and meat, wedding feasts and parties with music were forbidden. “By Ash-Wednesday we have eaten everything, nevertheless, on Shrove Tuesday it was allowed to eat meat. On Ash-Wednesday we had ‘rántott leves’ - a thick brown soup made simply from fried flour - and pasta with cheese or cottage cheese. During the forty-day-long Lent it was allowed to eat meat because we still had some left from the pig-killing, but during Passion Week it was taken more seriously” - remembered Mrs. Vince Juhász Franciska Pajkos-Szabó.

In Kiskunfélegyháza fasting was observed seriously mainly on Wednesdays and Fridays. Despite the Decree issued by the Pope in 1900 - which granted permission to cook with lard during Lent,

with the exception of Good Friday - the Catholics usually refrained from using lard. *“On Shrove Tuesday we washed the utensils, and did not cook with lard in them for the rest of the Lent... On Good-Friday there was a frantic fasting - we could hardly wait to go home from the church after Resurrection to have something to eat at last.”*- remembered Mrs. Mihály Szabó Erzsébet Kurucz. *“During Lent in our family it was the custom to lock the attic where the bacon was stored, and then it was locked for forty days.”*- says Mrs. Ferenc Tóth Ilona Csányi recalling her memories. *“Potatoes - baked in their jackets in the oven - mixed with oil was a common dish, as well as cottage cheese and mature cheese which was made in the autumn. We had a lot of dairy products since we had a cow. Fasting dishes were the görhe, málé, kása, tejespite /milky pie/, palacsinta, tarhonya, pasta with cheese, potatoes, jam, cottage cheese, poppy seed, walnut. Grandmother prepared ciberelevés and csíramálé. And we had ganca, too. We cooked with oil, during Lent pig-killing was not appropriate, and it was strictly observed. Certainly, we the youth could hardly wait to be freed from the prohibitions, and to have some sausages or bacon, and to be allowed to cook with lard.”* On the Pajkos-Szabó tanya in the first half of the 20th century kukorica-gölgödin- /corn gölgödin- / and krumpli-gölgödin /potatoes gölgödin/ soups, vajas bablevés /beans soup with butter/ and the various tarhonya soups were the favourite soups during the Lent. They had derelye /pasta pockets/ with various fillings, like poppy seed, cottage cheese, jam, as well as dumplings with jam. On Good-Friday the adults did not eat until noon, but the children were allowed to have bread-and-butter or jacket potatoes. On Holy Saturday they had bread and sour cream with milk, the lunch was tarhonyalevés with butter and kalács, but they were allowed to have some from the large fonott /”braided”/ kalács baked at home specifically for the feast. In the afternoon the task was to boil the ham, the sausages and to make the kocsonya - the smoked disznókörom /pig’s trotter/ has been saved from the pig-killing for that particular purpose. In the evening, when the family went home from the Holy Liturgy of Resurrection, the dinner was kocsonya and sausages, ham, eggs with bread and pickles. The breakfast on Sunday morning was the same as the dinner in the evening, for lunch they had tyúkhúslevés, grated horseradish with vinegar was served as a side-dish for the meat, then roast sausage and boiled ham followed, and as the last course they had pogácsa and sweets: *“We started making linzer /shortcake/ on the basis of the Vánicza recipe-book, and lepény with sour cherry, rétes and kalács as well. We cooked in two places: out on the tanya, and for the grandmother, who lived in the town with the children who went to school there”*. On Easter Monday they served ham slices, sausages and hard-boiled eggs for the boys and the men who visited the girls and the women to perform locsolás /”sprinkling”=widespread Easter folk custom: men sprinkle the women traditionally with water, in modern times with cologne - originally a fertility rite/.

The family of Vince Csányi, tanya-farmer in the 1930-40s, as well as the families of his children right until the 1980s had the following diet during the 40 days of the Lent:

For breakfast and dinner: bread with sour cream, cottage cheese, körözött or jam; boiled or baked potatoes dipped in oil; milk. For lunch: sour potatoes soup with eggs, fasting-style vegetable soup, cabbage soup, ciberelevés, tomato soup; as a second course various types of pasta, usually with

fried bread-crumbs and jam or sugar, as well as *palacsinta*, and pasta with potatoes, jam, poppy seed, cabbage or cottage cheese.

Good-Friday - For breakfast: hard-boiled eggs, boiled potatoes with oil, cottage cheese, *körözött*, milk. For lunch: traditionally sour potatoes soup and pasta with fried bread-crumbs. For dinner: coffee with milk, one slice of bread.

Holy Saturday they were fasting until noon. For breakfast: same as on Good-Friday, with milk and coffee. For lunch: beans soup without meat, pasta with cottage cheese. For dinner: boiled smoked ham, hard-boiled eggs, *kocsonya*.

In Petőfiszállás the first cut in the Easter ham was made - traditionally - only after the Resurrection procession on Easter Eve.

Easter Sunday - For breakfast: boiled smoked ham with *kalács*, hard-boiled eggs, *kocsonya*, at last *hajtott* or *hajtogatott kalács* /"folded" *kalács*/ with poppy seed, walnut or applefilling.

For lunch: *tyúkhúsleves* with *csigatészta* /shelf-shaped pasta/; the second course was often *paprikás* made from lamb (the lamb was slaughtered on Saturday), but occasionally from *toklyó* /mutton of 1-2-year-old sheep/, or chicken, the side-dish was boiled potatoes with pickled cucumber, paprika or cabbage salad. At last they had pastry: *linzer* with walnut, *lepény* with apple, from 1943-44 even tarts.

They never cooked a meal on Easter Monday, they had the leftover from Sunday. The male guests were welcomed with wine, the children with raspberry-juice. *Hájastészta* pastry was very popular - the leaf-lard was saved from the pig-killing for this purpose.

For the Easter holiday they used to bake the bread on Holy Thursday. On Good-Friday it was prohibited to bake bread, to cook, to do the washing or the house-cleaning - just like on a day of mourning. It was a widespread belief that the house where they bake bread on Good-Friday would be hit by a thunderbolt. A portion of each of the traditional festive dishes prepared for Easter was consecrated in the church after the Holy Mass on Sunday. "*We took a dish of 'kocsonya', a piece from the 'kalács' and the sausage, a slice of ham and some eggs. We put all these together in a white tea-towel... And then my mother, after the Holy Mass, made the sign of the cross on it with consecrated water and thus consecrated the food...*" - remembered Mrs. László Nagy Veronika Mogyoró who lived on a *tanya* in Kunszállás. Some families put the food to be consecrated into a *garaboly* /round-shaped basket with a handle/ and then took it to the church. Easter Monday was the time of the cheerful *locsolás* closely associated with hospitality. For The boys and lads got hard-boiled eggs - painted for the occasion - from the girls and women.

In Ferencszállás the flower decoration of the procession of Corpus Christi was a matter of action due to a belief or supposition. "*There were some people who made churning stick from it, in order to use it and thereby make a lot of butter from the cream. I saw it, although I never did it. Some were*

*keen to do it, they usually used the thick branches.*” - said Mrs. László Fekete Margit Csányi recalling her memories.

In the 20th century the characteristic spring folk customs of Pentecost performed by the Catholics in Kiskunfélegyháza were somehow overshadowed by the *búcsú /feast on the patron saint's day of the church/* held on Pentecost Saturday and Sunday in Pálósszentkút, a monastery which earlier belonged to the neighbouring Ferencszállás, then to Petőfiszállás. The families living on the *tanya* flocked to the feast, either by horse-drawn carriages or by foot. They packed some food as well: *rántott hús* with bread and baked pastry.

On the patron saint's day of the local churches the families used to have a festive lunch, by and large the same as a Sunday meal. Nevertheless, as part of the entertainment of guests, there was a wider choice of pastry and drinks.

## Public dining

What we call *csárda* used to be a pub or inn located on the outskirts of the villages, right by the side of the busy roads, the routes to the places where markets and fairs were held. The *csárda* as an “institution” has a history of several hundred years - but when the railroad network was built they became useless, most of them closed, or perished. In our region some of the oldest ones are: *Kisbugaci csárda*, Kecskemét; *Nyakvágó /"Neck-cutting"/ csárda* Kunszentmiklós; *Falkafogyasztó /"Diminishing the flock"/ csárda*, Kiskunhalas; *Falilincses /"Wooden door-handle"/ csárda*, Szank; *Pipagyújtó /"Pipe-lighting"/ csárda*, Bócsa; *Kutyakaparó /"Dog-scratching"/ csárda*, in the vicinity of Kecskemét. In the 19. century the *csárda* was the characteristic establishment of the catering trade in Hungary - a place that offered the opportunity for the travellers, for people coming from foreign countries to meet, to exchange news. Those of the *csárda* where famous *betyárok /outlaws/* used to turn up gained a special reputation, and not the least those that were located on the border between counties, where the *betyárok* had the chance to escape from the *pandúr /gendarme/* of the counties' constabularies. On the menu of the *csárda* just very simple dishes and drinks were on offer, but the local *pálinka* and wines, as well as the *pogácsa* baked in the oven were absolutely essential.

In the middle of the 18th century the contracts of lease and the licences for operating a hotel or a pub serving wine, *pálinka* and beer fell under the less significant royal rights of usufruct. It was around that time that a group of entrepreneurs engaged in catering and trade was formed in Kiskunfélegyháza. The first immigrant entrepreneurs were Greeks, then Armenian, Greek, Bulgarian, Albanian and Serb merchants arrived from the Balkans. Later followed the leaseholders of Austrian-Bavarian origin - András Liebenberger and Fridrik Mittenczvy - who took on lease five pubs in the town between 1771-1774; among others the *Nagyvendégfogadó /"Large Inn or Hostel"/* and the *Kiskocsmá /"Small pub"/*. Mihály Ring was the tenant of two pubs in the town-centre and

three pubs in the outer parts between 1776- 1779, then in the following years he took on lease the *Nagyvendégfogadó*. This latter had been leased almost always by tenants arriving from foreign counties, mainly of German origin - who, however, gradually and rather quickly adopted Hungarian ways. The first local landowner who individually took on lease a pub was Ferenc Bánhidi, a *redemptus*-nobleman, the member of one of the wealthiest families of the town.

In 1872 the municipality granted the following “pub licences”: the *Nagyvendégfogadó* (or *Duttyán*)), the *Hattyú* /”The Swan”/, those four pubs which had the licence for serving spirits on the occasions of national fairs, as well as 26 special licences for pubs in the four so-called “decimal districts” of the town: 7 licences in district No.1; 6, 7 and 6 in the others, respectively.

At the turn of the 19-20th century right next to the building of the Principal Grammar School stood the *Hotel Európa* /”Europe”/, on the ground floor of the hotel was the *Kneffel Kávéház*

*/Café/*. The chief of the restaurant, Béla Kneffel was the son of Kiskunfélegyháza, but in his work he utilized his experiences gathered during his study tours in London, Paris and Vienna. The *Hotel Korona* /”The Crown”/ was “a good old favourite place for the strangers coming to the town”, and it was here that the carnival balls and other major events, banquettes were organized. “The old *Duttyán*, this famous old restaurant of Kiskunfélegyháza, which had a far-reaching reputation” used to stand in its place. “It can be said, indeed without boasting, that along this main road leading from Vienna to Transylvania there is no such a fine restaurant that could be compared to the *Duttyán* - but the public opinion is that no other restaurant is even needed.” At the southern end of the market place stood the *Hattyú* which was a restaurant until the middle of the 1880s, and right here was also the pub named *Hattyú*: István Petrovics (father of Sándor Petőfi, the world-famous Hungarian poet) took on lease this pub in 1822, together with József Wagner and János Göizvein.

In the first half of the 20th century the *Schwarz kifőzde* /*eating-house*/ and the restaurant of the *Hotel Korona* were the most popular places where the middle class burghers went to dine. Mainly single men, well-to-do clerks, merchants and tradesmen as well as temporary guests passing through the town were the regular customers. Most middle class families though did not dine in restaurants, they visited the pastry shops or confectionery shops more often.

In Kecskemét the *Hotel Beretvás* is still in the living memory of the people. It was opened in 1858, and it had a restaurant and a café as well. It was founded by the master builder Pál Beretvás the Elder, from 1871 it was managed by his son, the wine-grower and tradesman Pál Beretvás Jr. The restaurant offered Hungarian style dishes and excellent wines. The hotel used to be the venue of important public events, banquettes and dinners, where the wife of the owner served the guests.

A major event of the farmers’ and tradesmen’s society in Kecskemét has been - ever since 1934 when it was launched - the annually organized exhibition under the name “*Hírös Hét* “ /”*Famous Week*”/ where they presented their produce and products: in the poetic words of a Hungarian

folk tale these are “szóló szőlő” /”speaking grapes”/, “csengő barack” /”jingling apricot”/ and “mosolygó alma” /”smiling apple”/, as well as the apricot pálinka and the wines produced on the sand. At this agricultural exhibition - apart from the produce of the local vineyards, orchards and wineries, the vegetables and decorative plants - the products of the canning industry and the apiaries were also presented. It was an exhibition and fair enriched with cultural events. As the Secretary of State for Agriculture at that time put it: “*The largest delicacy shop in Europe is Hungary, and the most beautiful showcase of this shop is Kecskemét.*” Nowadays it is a one-week series of events under the name “*Hírös Hét Festival*” - organized jointly by the town and the villages in its surroundings - where the local produce of agriculture and the products of handicrafts are presented. Almost every village in the Kiskunság region has its own festival or competition associated with its local characteristics: Wine- and Pálinka Days, Honey- and Sour Cherry Festival, Competition in Cooking *Kakaspörkölt* /*cockerel stew*/, Goulash Festival, Rétes Festival, Pastry Baking Competitions for housewives - a wide variety of events where gastronomic folk traditions and innovations truly harmonize with each other.

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## VOCABULARY (Food - Others)

### A

*abalé* /rich meat-fluid, left after the head and the chitterlings of the pig were boiled in water without any seasoning; it was made only at pudding pig-killings/

*aludttej* /curds; curds and whey/ *aratógulyás* (harvesters' goulash/ *árpakása* /barley-mush/

*avas szalonna* /rancid bacon/

### B

*babgulyás* /beans-goulash/

*ballagás* /valediction, i. e. graduation from the grammar school/

*baromakol* /fold or pen/

*batyusbál* /"bundle" ball/ *bejgli* /"folded" pastry/ *béles* /turn-over pie/ *betyár* /outlaw/

*birkagulyás* /mutton goulash/

*birkapörkölt köleskásával* (mutton stew with millet-mush/

*böllérpogácsa* /pig-sticker's scones/

*búcsú* /feast on the patron saint's day of the church/

*búzakása* /wheat grain/

*búzarizsleves* or *búzakásaleves* /wheat-mush soup/

### C

*cibereleves* /sour soup/ *cirokkása* /sorghum-mush/

### CS

*csárda* / pub or inn located on the outskirts of the villages, beside busy roads, leading to markets and fairs/

*cserény* /wattle enclosure; no roof, no door /

*csigatészta* /shelf-shaped pasta/

*csipegetett or csipedett leves /soup with “csipegetett”= tiny pieces of pasta - boiled in it/  
csíramálé /polenta made from germinated wheat grain/  
csöröge /fritter-like pastry/*

## D

*derelye /pasta pockets with filling/  
dióval töltött hal /fish stuffed with walnut/  
disznósajt /pig cheese, or head cheese, made mainly from the pig’s head/*

## E

*enyhely /shelter; the Hungarian expression is a play on the words “mild” and “place”/  
édestej /»sweet«-milk =new milk, the fresh milk right after milking/ édestejföl /sweet «cream»=top  
layer of the cream/  
érett sajt /mature cheese/  
érett túró /mature cottage cheese/*

## F

*fánk /doughnut/  
fehérpék /white-baker/  
feketepék or kenyérpék /black-baker or bread-baker/ fonott /”braided”/ kalács /light sweet  
milk-loaf or -cake/ fordított kása /turned-over mush/  
foszlós /spongy/  
föccstej /the first milk after calving/  
fölyhőleves /”fölyhő”-soup; where fölyhő is a vernacular form of “felhő”=cloud/  
företegleves /”storm”-soup/  
főzelék /boiled vegetables thickened with flour on lard, and seasoned with various other compo-  
nents (like onion, garlic, paprika, dill, etc. depending on the vegetable))*

## G

*ganca /pulp made by boiling corn flour/ garaboly /round-shaped basket with a handle/ gersli /  
pearl barley/*

*gomolyasajt / a type of ewe-cheese or smearcase/ gölődinleves / soup with gölődin=dumpling/  
göngyölt hús / rolled-up meat/  
görhe / girdle-cake made from corn flour by leavening the dough/ gulyásleves / goulash soup/*

## H

*habarás / thickening boiled vegetables by adding and stirring flour + milk or sour cream until it is brought to boiling/  
hájastészta / shortcake or pastry made with leaf-lard/ hajtott or hajtogatott kalács / "folded" kalács/ halászlé / fishermen's brew=a special fish-soup/ halkocsonya / fish-jelly/  
haluska / pasta with cottage cheese and cracklings/ hamis hal / "fake fish"=cold veal in aspic, sliced/ hombáros / granary/  
Homokhátság / Sand Ridge/  
hurka / white-, black, etc. puddings/sausages made from chitterlings/ húsoskása / mush containing meat/*

## I

*író / buttermilk/  
írós vaj / not dried fresh butter/*

## J

*Jászokunság / Jazygian Cumania/  
jászkun / Jazygian-Cumanian/  
juhhúsos tarhonya / mutton with egg barley/ juhtúró / curdled ewe-cheese/*

## K

*kakaspörkölt / cockerel stew/  
kalács / light sweet milk-loaf or -cake/  
kanalas-ótó / spoon-rennet=rennet bought in the pharmacy, and portioned by spoon/ káposztás csík / loach with cabbage/  
kása / mush or pap/ kásaleves / mush-soup/ kásapénz / mush money/ Kávéház / Café/ kecskepörkölt / goat stew/ kemence / beehive oven/  
keménylebbencs leves / soup made with potatoes and "lebbencs"=dry pasta cut into square-shaped pieces/*

*kemény-tarhonya / egg-barley with potatoes/*

*kenyeres kofa /bread-woman or basket-woman/*

*kenyérsütögető asszony /the woman who keeps baking bread/*

*kétszeres liszt /"double" flour = wheat and rye grown and ground mixed/*

*kifőzde /eating-house/*

*kirántott hús /slices of meat bread-crumbed and deep-fried in hot oil or lard/*

*Kiskunság /Little Cumania/*

*kocsonya /meat-jelly, i.e. cold pork in aspic/*

*kolbászbőr and hurkabőr /casing for sausages and black, etc. puddings/ korpaélesztő /bran-yeast/*

*kosaras bál /basket-ball/ köleskása /millet-mush/ köleskásaleves /millet-mushsoup/*

*köleskásás hurka /millet-mush pudding or sausage made from the chitterlings/*

*körözött /spiced cottage cheese mixed with diced onion, condiment paprika, mustard and sour cream/*

*krumpliderc /baked potato-mush/ krumplikása /potato-mush/*

*kukoricadara or kukoricakása (as basic material) /corn-grits or cob meal/ kukoricakása (as a dish) /corn-mush/*

*kukoricakása-koch /pudding or mould made from corn-grits and milk/ kukoricalepény /girdle-cake made from corn flour/*

*kukoricamálé /corn polenta made unleavened/ kumisz /koumiss= fermented mare's milk/ Kunság /Cumania/*

*kuruc and labanc (insurrectionist and pro-Austrian soldiers in the 18th century Hungarian wars of independence/*

## L

*lángos /flame cake; a small part of the dough is pinched off, and baked at the "mouth" of the oven, near the flame/*

*lángos - nowadays: /a handful of yeast dough flattened out and quickly fried in lots of hot oil/ lebbencs /dry pasta cut into square-shaped pieces/*

*lecsó /ratatouille, a vegetable casserole made from fresh tomatoes, paprika and onions/ lepény /girdle-cake/*

*linzer /shortcake/*

*locsolás /"sprinkling"=widespread Easter folk custom: men sprinkle the women traditionally with*

water, in modern times with cologne - originally a fertility rite/

*ludaskása /rice-mush with goose-giblets/*

*lúdgége tészával rakott tyúkhúsleves /chicken-broth with shell-shaped pasta/*

## **M**

*macesz-morzsa /crumbs of unleavened bread/ mákoscsík /poppy-seedpasta/*

*mákos guba /leavened cake, scalded, dusted with poppy-seed/ málé /polenta or girdle-cake/ /*

*mártatás /dipping/*

*mezítlábos kása /"barefooted" mush/ morzsoltka /crumbled bread-dough with flour/*

## **N**

*nádlás /reed cutting/ nokedli /dumplings/ nudli /noodles/*

## **O**

*oltó /rennet/*

*orja /backbone and the spare-ribs/*

*orjaleves tészával /soup made from spare rib with vermicelli/*

## **Ö**

*öregtarhonya /»old» egg-barley=egg-barley boiled to be dense and tough/*

## **P**

*padkaporos bál /"dusty-bench" ball/*

*palacsinta /pancake/*

*pálinka /home-made spirit distilled from fruits/ pallóka /small board made from leather for calves/ pampuska /doughnut/*

*pandúr /gendarme/*

*paprikás /stew with sour cream/*

*paprikás csirke /chicken stew with sour cream/ paprikás hal /fish with red paprika/*

*paprikás krumppli /potatoes stew/ pecsenye /roast meat/ disznókörom /pig's trotter/*

*pite /pie/ pörkölt /stew/  
puszta (lowland wilderness)*

## R

*rackakása /mush named after “racka”=indigenous Hungarian breed of sheep/ rántott hal /bread-crumbed fish fried in oil/*

*rántott hús /bread-crumbed meat fried in oil/*

*rántott leves /thick brown soup made simply from fried flour/*

redemption = megváltakozási szerződés /contract concerning freedom fought out by payment to emerge from serfdom/

redemptus /who paid for being freed from serfdom/

*rétes /strudel/*

*rizibizi /rice with green peas/ ,*

*rizses lecsó /rice with lecsó = ratatouille, a vegetable casserole made from fresh tomatoes, paprika and onions/*

*rizskása /rice-mush/ rizkásaleves /rice-mush soup/*

*rizskoch or rizsfelfújt /rice-milk pudding or mould/*

## S

*sajtkofa /cheese-woman on the market/*

*sajtos nudli /cheese noodles/ sajtszék /cheese-press/ savanyúkáposzta /sour kraut/ savanyúmáj /sour liver/*

*savó /whey/*

*savótúró /whey cottage cheese/ sovány túró /fatless cottage cheese/ sterc /mashed potatoes/*

*sült vaj /clarified butter/*

## SZ

*szakajtó /bread-basket/ szalonna /bacon/ száraz-ótó /dry rennet/*

*szárma = töltött káposzta /stuffed sour kraut or cabbage/*

*szárnyék /lean-to roof, wind screen; the Hungarian expression is a play on the words “wing” and “shade” - or can be understood as the first letter of the word “szél”=“wind” + shade/*

szénáskert /hay-garden/

szíjjas aludttej /rather tough curds/

sziksóseprés /native-soda sweeping/

szolgafa /pot-hanger; the Hungarian word means “wooden servant”/ “iron servant” if iron

## T

tanya /farmsteads scattered on the outskirts of the villages/ tanya-gazdaság/tanya-farm/

tarhonya /egg barley, a type of pasta; it is hard dough fallen apart into barley-size pieces, then dried in the sun/

tarhonyaleves /egg-barley soup/

tarhonyás krumplileves /potatoes soup with egg barley/

tarhó /a type of curds (and whey) produced at high temperature/ tarhóleves /tarhó-soup/

tarhómag /the leftover of the tarhó made earlier/

tarhótúró /tarhó-cheese/ tejbekása /milky mush/

tejberizs /milk-rice, rice boiled in milk/ tejespite /milky pie/

tejföl /sour cream/

tej-piac /milk-market/

telelő /winter shelter/

tepertő (or töpörtyű) /crackling/

toklyó /mutton of 1-2-year-old sheep/

töltött káposzta = szárma /stuffed sour kraut or cabbage/ tönkebúza /emmer (T. dicoccum Schrank)/

törköly /grape-pálinka distilled from marc/ törvebab /crushed beans/

túró /cottage cheese/

## TY

tyúkhúsleves /chicken broth/

tyúkpaprikás /poulard stew with sour cream/ tyúkpörkölt /poulard stew/

## V

*vaj-alja /salty butter preserved by frying and thickened with flour; it could be of both soft and hard substance/*

*vajas bableves /beans soup with butter/*

*veder /bucket/ vejdling /mixing bowl/*

*véres hurka /black pudding/*

*vérpaprikás /blood fried in lard with onion/ virsli /Vienna sausage or wienerwurst/*

## Z

*zúzapörkölt /gizzard stew/*

## ZS

*zsétár /milkpail/*

*zsendice /scalded whey with some precipitated fatless cottage cheese/ zsíros túró /fat cottage cheese/*