

A little bit Hungarian, a little bit German, and very tasty



When it comes to Swabian cuisine, Gábor Schneider is our man. He saves recipes from oblivion, has cooked many, many meals himself and shares these with anyone interested in his blog. Besides, he is an editor for Dunántúli Napló and a PTE alumnus. His dedication to gastronomy is proved by the fact that he not only offers recipes and cooks for himself: recently he gave a Swabian dinner party for the public at Balkán Bisztró.

Where did you get your love for Swabian cuisine?

Basically I like cooking as a hobby, for family or friends. I started a food blog (<http://pekeskifli.blog.hu>) six years ago, which, after a while, developed into a thematic blog since it only covered Swabian dishes. Today it functions as a kind of online cookbook: over 100 recipes can be found here, and, of course, I write new entries when I find something new or something interesting happens with respect to its topic. I consider Swabian cuisine at least as much important as any other aspects of Hungarian ethnic German culture, which all have their own pursuers and nurturers. As for me, I can experience my Swabian roots and identity through cooking. While others learn and perform songs and dances, I learn recipes and introduce them to possibly more and more people. I think it is a value which is worth sharing.

How do Swabian dishes differ from other kinds of food?

It is an extremely simple and thrifty cuisine: mainly seasonal ingredients are used which could be grown around the house. Everything has its own place and process; nothing goes to waste. For example, when making bean soup, they used as much beans as is enough to make salad or a vegetable dish from the rest. And, not least, they are very characteristic and tasty dishes, such as Tuniges, which is a kind of stew with a lot of onions, or Stifolder, which is a typical Swabian meat product.

Do you also produce your own ingredients at home?

Yes, I have a garden where I produce a lot of things. Of course I don't have enough room and time for everything, but, for instance, I have an herb garden with at least twenty kinds of herb, and the fresh seasoning adds a lot to the dishes. It is an entirely different feeling when you cook what you produce.

How open are people to Swabian cuisine these days?

A lot of people find and browse my blog; I can see they are interested. Of course I won't save the world, but it's not my goal, either: I find pleasure in it and have fun doing it. The dinner party was a full-house event, too, I could see people were curious. In Pécs you can find food from several nationalities, from Chinese to Turkish and Italian, which is a very good thing. And there is a large number of Swabians living in Baranya county, and their traditions are not negligible, either. So why could there not be a place where their cuisine is available, too?

Are you planning to write a cookbook? Or perhaps to open a restaurant?

The idea of a book has occurred to me more than once. There is no Swabian cookery book satisfying today's demands, so it is an open possibility. As for now, the restaurant is only a dream, but maybe some time the story will take that direction. I would be happy, in spite of the fact that the blog was not started with that goal in mind. Anyhow, I started a two-year chef course last autumn so that I not only can speak and write about cooking but also get some qualification.