

# ***Mustard in German Culinary Manuscripts -13<sup>th</sup> through 16<sup>th</sup> Centuries***

*by Serena da Riva*

## *The Mustards:*

From *Libellius de arte coquinaria*, 13<sup>th</sup> Century

#8. Another Sauce: Yellow Mustard, Wild Flower Honey and Apple Cider Vinegar.

#9. Another One: Yellow Mustard, Wild Flower Honey, Apple Cider Vinegar, Cinnamon and Anise

From *Daz buch von guter spise*, 14<sup>th</sup> Century

#48. A Little Sauce: Yellow Mustard, Wild Flower Honey, Apple Cider Vinegar, Caraway, Anise, Pepper and Saffron.

From *Ein Kochbuch aus dem Archiv des Deutschen Ordens*,  
15<sup>th</sup> Century

#31. If you want to make pickled cabbage: Yellow Mustard, Wild Flower Honey, Wine (contains sulfites) and Caraway.

From *Das Kochbuch der Sabina Welserin*, 16<sup>th</sup> Century

#34. To make the mustard for dried cod: Yellow Mustard, White Wine (contains sulfites), Pears, Sugar, Cinnamon and Cloves.

From *Ein New Kochbuch*, 16<sup>th</sup> Century

#10. Pears in sweet syrup: Brown Mustard Flour, Wine (contains sulfites), Anise, Coriander.

#12. Brown mustard made up with clear vinegar is good: Brown Mustard, Apple Cider Vinegar.

Variants on #12 with White Wine Vinegar and Malt Vinegar.

*Appendixes:* Details on ingredients where needed.

## Introduction

This research project was instigated by a theme for Magna Faire of two years ago; the theme was St. Ambrose – the patron saint of Beekeepers. I began by looking for recipes that featured honey and started with the oldest Northern European text that I have access to which is *Libellus de arte coquinaria*. Of the 34 recipes within the manuscripts there are only two recipes in the text that call for honey and they are both mustard sauces, so that provided my starting point.

For those unfamiliar with the text it is a compilation of three 13<sup>th</sup> century manuscripts that the scholars believe are copies of a single, earlier manuscript (referred to as the Urtext). The three surviving texts are written in three different languages: Danish, Icelandic and Low German. The authors of the compilation present a case that the Urtext was most likely written in Low German and was almost definitely of Germanic origin (3).

From there I chose to proceed forward in time in the German manuscripts I have found translated into English. The following method details the results of this research. Since the original project I have undertaken some translation of my own and have added one mustard found in the Rumpoldt source. Also this project reflects a refinement in the original concept to focus solely on the mustards and the process in making them. To this end honey has taken a decidedly secondary role.

## The Method

From the two mustards in *Libellus* I moved to *Daz buch von guter spise*, a German manuscript dated to 1350. Of the 98 recipes in *Guter Spise* 14 of them call for honey. Of these 14, one is a sauce with mustard. Adding this sauce to the list I went on to *Ein Kochbuch aus dem Archiv des Deutschen Ordens* which is a cookbook from the archives of the Teutonic order (an order of German Knights) dated to the 15<sup>th</sup> century.

The Teutonic cookbook contains 33 recipes, three of which call for honey and of those three one is a method for pickling cabbage in a honey and mustard sauce. With this the number of mustards with honey in them had risen to four, with representations from the 13<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. Moving into the 16<sup>th</sup> century there are two manuscripts available in translation form, *Das Kochbuch der Sabina Welserin* and Rumpolt's *Ein New Kochbuch*, with Welserin dated to 1553 and *New Kochbuch* dated to 1581.

In these two 16<sup>th</sup> century cookbooks I found a distinct scarcity of honey. Welserin has 205 recipes with only five calling for honey, none are mustards. *Ein New Kochbuch* is a partial translation, but of the 215 recipes none call for honey. I have since undertaken my own translation project of this text and have yet to compile the honey references (of which are few and far between). What I have found is an additional recipe for mustard in the chapter on Condiments to Dunk Roasts Into. All of these recipes I added to the list for comparison. This brought me to the end of our period of study.

## The Mechanics of Mustard Making

Mustard at its most basic is vinegar and mustard seed ground together. During our period of study the primary tool to accomplish this task was the mortar and pestle. For my original project, with its focus on the role of honey in history, I chose to create the mustards utilizing all modern equipment in the form of a coffee grinder and food processor. For this presentation I have chosen to be a bit more authentic.

To achieve this authenticity I had to procure the large mortar and pestle you see before you, please feel free to pound on some seeds with it to get the feel. For my first attempt at grinding I was uncertain whether to put both the seeds and vinegar into the mortar together or grind the seeds alone. On reading the recipes one can make an argument for either method. I began by placing the seeds and the vinegar together. This created a situation with mustard seeds floating around and not being receptive to

pounding. I then drained off about half of the vinegar so that there were more seeds than vinegar, this helped immensely.

An hour and a half later I had achieved something that resembled mustard, but there were still many, many un-pounded seeds. This excessive amount of time led me to decide that it would be wiser to grind the seeds first and then add the liquid components. Grinding the seeds with the mortar and pestle alone took approximately 45 minutes to achieve an acceptable level of ground seeds. While a cook in period would have had a helper that they could have grind the seeds for them, I unfortunately do not. Although my spirit might have been willing to grind all seven mustards by hand, the body (specifically the arm) was weak. So I developed the following process:

After I completed a batch of seed by hand I sifted them using two grades of strainers, one fine and one coarse. This allowed me to separate the ground seed into 3 distinct components; flour, coarse grind, and cracked seeds. I measured each component and you can see them here on display. I then experimented with various kitchen appliances to achieve the same component distribution. The coffee grinder produced even flour, which was no good. One of my grinders just moved the seeds around in little cyclones and the food processor did the same. At last a small handy chopper that I have produced an almost acceptable product by grinding for 30 – 35 seconds. This, when subjected to the sieves, produced almost the correct proportion with about 1 T too many cracked seeds. By placing the cracked seeds into the mortar and pestle and pounding on them for about 5 minutes I achieved the right balance. So, my final method for grinding the mustard was 30 – 35 seconds in the handy chopper and 5 minutes in the mortar and pestle until I achieved the correct consistency.

After the proper grind was achieved all of the seeds went back into the mortar and the other ingredients were added. These mixtures were pounded together in the pestle until I achieved mustard. Please feel free to browse Appendix C for photos of this process. In recipes where spices were called for I ground the spices in the mortar and pestle the only exception being the cinnamon. I pounded and pounded and was unable to achieve an acceptable product. After sifting the pounded mess I had managed to reduce about half of the cinnamon to reasonable powder – the rest of it went into the coffee grinder for further refinement.

Presented here today are seven mustards and two options for dipping. I have chosen to provide unsalted pretzels in that they are small, easily dip-able and relatively neutral in flavor. These are modern pretzels and I make no claim to their authenticity except that there were some forms of pretzels in period and they were shaped as these are. Also served is a plate of carrots for cleansing the palate between mustards. On experimenting upon my husband we determined that a crisp carrot worked much better than water or any other liquid. He also determined that dipping the carrots directly into the mustard was not bad either.

You might notice that there are actually nine mustards on display. That is a little side experiment of mine that I am sharing. Due to the prevalence of apples in all of these German manuscripts I use apple cider vinegar where recipes call for vinegar. It is a mild vinegar that produces a mustard of general appeal. With more research into vinegars in *Ein New Kochbuch* I have found indications that the other two prevalent vinegars would have been Wine Vinegar and Ale Vinegar. Because mustard #12 is the most basic of the mustards I decided to try it out with all three vinegars and let people taste the difference that the vinegar makes. I believe it is still a matter of personal preference, but it is fun to experiment.

## The Mustards

*Libellus de arte coquinaria: An Early Northern Cookery Book* (3)

VIII. Item de aliis salsas.

Man skal takæ synup oc latã til fiarthæ deld hunugh oc malæ hænnæ mæth goth ædik. Thænnæ ær fyrætiughæ daghæ goth.

### 8. Another Sauce

One should take mustard [seeds], and add a fourth part of honey, and grind it with good vinegar. It is good for forty days.

Ingredients:

2/3 C Yellow Mustard Seeds

2 T + 2 t Wildflower Honey

3/4 C Apple Cider Vinegar

Process seeds as described above and then place into mortar. Add honey and combine with hands until well mixed. Add 1/2 C vinegar and mix/pound until well combined. Transfer to a sealed container and allow to sit overnight. On the next day add the remaining 1/4 C of vinegar or until desired consistency is achieved.

IX Item de aliis.

Mal aftær sinup oc lat til thrithi deld hunugh oc tyndæ deld aniz oc slikæ tu kaniæl, oc mak hænnæ mæth goth ædikæ oc lat i læghæl. Thæt ær got thre manæth.

### 9. Another One

Next grind mustard [seeds] and add a third part of honey, and a tenth part of anise and twice as much cinnamon, and grind it with good vinegar and put it in a cask. It is good for three months.

Ingredients:

2/3 C Yellow Mustard Seeds

scant 1/4 C Wildflower Honey

1 T Whole Anise (ground in mortar)

2 T + 2 pinches Ground Cinnamon

1 1/2 C Apple Cider Vinegar

Process seeds as described above and then place into mortar. Add spices and honey and combine with hands until well mixed. Add vinegar and mix/pound until well combined.. Transfer to a sealed container and allow to sit overnight. On the next day add the remaining 1/2 C of vinegar or until desired consistency is achieved.

**Notes:** Unless specified otherwise I have chosen to use yellow mustard seeds, this is a personal flavor preference. I have also chosen to use Wildflower honey because it does not impart any specific additional flavor to the end product as would a single source honey.

48. Ein condimentlin/

Mal kumel/ vnd enys mit pfeffer/ vnd mit essige vnd mit honige/ vnd machs gel mit saffran/ vnd thu darzcu senff In disem condimente machtu sulcze petersilien Piren vnd clein kumpost oder ruben was du wilt.

48. A little sauce

Grind caraway and anise with pepper, vinegar, and honey, color it yellow with saffron, and add mustard. In this sauce you can prepare jellied meat with parsley berries and some sauerkraut or turnips, anything you want.

Ingredients:

2/3 C Yellow Mustard Seeds

1/4 C Wildflower Honey

1 1/2 C Apple Cider Vinegar

1 T Whole Caraway (ground in mortar)

1 T Whole Anise (ground in mortar)

1 t Whole Pepper (ground in mortar)

Pinch Saffron

Place saffron into 1 C of vinegar and allow to steep. Process seeds as described above and then place into mortar. Add honey and spices and combine with hands until well mixed. Add vinegar and mix/pound until well combined. Transfer to a sealed container and allow to sit overnight. On the next day add the remaining 1/2 C of vinegar or until desired consistency is achieved.

**Notes:** Because this is a comparison of mustards I have chosen to present only the mustard and not any of the end use products.

*Ein Kochbuch aus dem Archiv des Deutschen Ordens (2)*

31. Wilthu machenn eyngemacht Crautt:

so seudt weysse Heuptt und ein zweythell Sennffs und das dritthell Hoengs und die selbing mach undereinander mitt Wein und thu darein Koemel und einß des genug und leg dan des gesotten Kraut darein und [[nnd\_Ed.]] gibe es kalt. also magst auch priesen die Seudt mitt Würzczenn und gyb sy hin.

31. If you want to make pickled cabbage

Boil white cabbage heads, take two parts mustard and one part honey, mix them with wine and add caraway /einß/ (?) it enough, put the boiled cabbage into it and serve it cold. You can also season the broth and serve it.

Ingredients:

1 Head Cabbage

½ C Yellow Mustard Seeds

¼ C Wildflower Honey

1 C Spätburgunder Wine (see Appendix A)

1 ½ T Whole Caraway (ground in mortar)

Process seeds as described above and then place into mortar. Add honey and spices and combine with hands until well mixed. Add vinegar and mix/pound until well combined.

Transfer to a sealed container and allow to sit overnight.

**Notes:** As with the *Guter Spise* mustard I present the mustard on its own and not with the cabbage. I have tested this with the cabbage and have found that it does not appeal to modern taste, smell or sight.

Another point that needs to be addressed is that the translator was unable to determine the meaning of the word /einß/. I have chosen to assume that it was a fairly vague instruction to mix the mustard until it has been combined thoroughly, possibly stir. These types of instructions are common in period manuscripts and I doubt that it is something else that would drastically affect the outcome of the dish.

*Das Kochbuch der Sabina Welserin*

34. Den senff zúm stockfisch zú machen

Nempt senffmel, riert ain gúten wein daran vnnd birenlattwerin vnnd thiet zúcker daran, souíl eúch gút donckt, vnnd macht jn/ jn der dickin, wie jr jn geren est/ so jst esain gúter senff (6)

34. To make the mustard for dried cod

Take mustard powder, stir into it good wine and pear preserves and put sugar into it, as much as you feel is good, and make it as thick as you prefer to eat it, then it is a good mustard (5).

Ingredients:

½ C + 2 T Yellow Mustard Flour

½ C Reisling Wine (see Appendix A)

½ C Pear Preserves (see Appendix B)

1 T Sugar

Measure mustard powder into a mixing bowl and add wine. Stir until all lumps are gone. Add pear preserves and sugar. Stir until well combined. Transfer to a sealed container and refrigerate.

**Note:** This is the only one of the mustards prepared with purchased, pre-ground mustard flour as stipulated in the recipe.

10. Seudt Birn in süßem Most / thu sie auß auff ein saubers Bret/ vnd laß kalt warden / laß den Most weiter siden / biß er dick wirt / laß in darnach kalt warden / streichs mit braunem Senff durch / thu alsdenn die desotten Birn darein / so wirt es gut vnnd wolgeschmack. Wiltu aber ein guten Senff haben / so stoß Aniß vnnd Coriander durcheinander / streichs durch mit braunen Senffmehl / vnd süßen gesottenem Wein / so wirt es gut vnnd wolgeschmack.

10. Cook Pears in sweet cider syrup/ then put it off onto a clean Board / and let it become cold / let the cider syrup continue to boil / until it becomes thick / let it also become cold / press it through a sieve with brown Mustard / then also put in the Pears / so it will be good and well tasting. When you would have a good Mustard / so pound Anise and Coriander altogether / press it through a sieve with brown Mustard flour / and sweet boiled wine / so it will be good and well tasting. (7)

Ingredients:

½ C Brown Mustard Flour

2 T Whole Coriander seeds (ground in mortar)

2 t Whole Anise seeds (ground in mortar)

1 C Spätburgunder Wine (see Appendix A)

Place 1 C of wine in a small saucepan and bring to a rolling boil. Reduce wine until it reaches 2/3 C. Process Brown Mustard seeds in a coffee grinder and sift to achieve mustard flour. Combine Mustard, Coriander and Anise in the mortar and pound a little, and then sift through a strainer. Add reduced wine and combine well. Transfer to a sealed container and allow to sit overnight.

12. Braun Senff mit lauterm Essig angemacht/ ist auch gut.

12. Brown mustard made up with clear vinegar/ is also good. (4)

Ingredients:

½ C Brown Mustard Seeds

2/3 C Apple Cider Vinegar

Process seeds as described above and then place into mortar. Add vinegar and mix/pound until well combined Transfer to a sealed container and allow to sit overnight.

**Note:** These two recipes are the only ones of the mustards prepared with brown mustard seeds because it is what is stipulated in the recipes. For the first recipe I was unable to purchase brown mustard flour so I created it using a coffee grinder.

## Bibliography:

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