

Honey and Mustard in German Culinary Manuscripts -13th through 16th Centuries

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Introduction

This research project was instigated by the theme for Magna Faire, St. Ambrose. 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 13th 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.

The Method

From the two mustards in *Libellus* I moved to *Das 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 15th 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 13th, 14th and 15th centuries. Moving into the 16th 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 16th century cookbooks I found a distinct scarcity of honey. Welserin has 205 recipes with only five calling for honey, none are mustards. *New Kochbuch* is a partial translation, but of the 215 recipes none call for honey. There is the possibility that there are recipes with honey in the untranslated portions, but I will have to wait until they are translated to determine this. If *New Kochbuch* follows the trend of Welserin my supposition is that there will be very few. While there is a lack of honey, each text contains a single recipe for mustard. These recipes I added to the list for comparison. This brought me to the end of our period of study.

With the evidence discovered it seems to imply the relatively sudden displacement of honey by sugar sometime in the 16th century. In a broader historical context that coincides with the influx of cheap sugar from the New World, but that is beyond the desired scope of this project and would be a research paper in and of its self.

By presenting these six mustards I hope to illustrate in a very tangible fashion how changes in history affected the day to day lives of the people of the time. Independent of the social and political reasons, the recipes and the mustards themselves indicate that a change occurred. I believe they can speak for themselves and in their example possibly inspire a further investigation into the how's and why's.

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:

½ C Yellow Mustard Seeds

1/8 C Wildflower Honey

¾ C Apple Cider Vinegar

Measure mustard seeds into a coffee grinder and process until as fine as desired. Transfer mustard to a food processor and add honey. Process mixture until combined and then add ½ C of vinegar. Transfer to a sealed container and allow to sit overnight. On the next day add the remaining ¼ 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 ¼ C Wildflower Honey

1 T + 1 pinch Ground Anise

2 T + 2 pinches Ground Cinnamon

1 ½ C Apple Cider Vinegar

Measure mustard seeds into a coffee grinder and process until as fine as desired. Transfer mustard to a food processor and add honey and spices. Process mixture until combined and then add 1 C of vinegar. 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: Due to the prevalence of apples in all of these German manuscripts I chose to use apple cider vinegar where recipes call for vinegar. It is also a personal preference for flavor. I also chose to use yellow mustard seeds, again a personal preference. I chose 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 Ground Caraway

1 T Ground Anise

1 t Ground Pepper

Pinch Saffron

Place saffron into 1 C of vinegar and allow to steep. Measure mustard seeds into a coffee grinder and process until as fine as desired, set aside. In a food processor combine caraway, anise, pepper, honey and saffron infused vinegar. Add mustard powder, process until 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 present the mustard on it's own as well as in combination with turnips. The turnips were prepared by first peeling and then boiling until they were fully cooked. After they cooled I sliced them thinly and then reheated them in the mustard sauce.

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 1/8 C Trollinger Wine (see Appendix A)

1 ½ T Caraway

Cut head of cabbage in quarters and remove core, then cut each quarter in half. Bring a pot of water to boil and then add cabbage. Boil for ten minutes, drain well. Measure mustard seeds into a coffee grinder and process until as fine as desired. Transfer mustard to a food processor and add honey and caraway. Process mixture until combined and then add Wine. Combine cabbage and mustard and place in sealed container. Allow to sit and serve cold.

Notes: As with the *Guter Spise* mustard I present the mustard on it's own as well as in with the cabbage. For the stand alone mustard I reduced the wine to ¾ C to improve consistency. I do not believe that this dish will be terribly palatable to modern tastes. It is an odd set of flavors and I do not think pickled cabbage is a taste many care to cultivate. Upon testing it on unsuspecting volunteers I received a fair range of reactions from individuals who truly liked it, some that thought it was edible and one lady who dashed from the room to spit it out in the bathroom and wash her mouth out. One comment that I found interesting was that one volunteer found it similar to Kim Chee, a Korean delicacy that contains cabbage and various combinations of radish, carrots, ginger, garlic, horseradish and vinegar.

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. My final interpretation is that I have chosen to chop the cabbage to facilitate the cooking, mixing and sampling; I believe that the chopping is implied and would have also been done in period.

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.

Ein New Kochbuch (4)

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

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

Ingredients:

½ C Brown Mustard Seeds

2/3 C Apple Cider Vinegar

Measure mustard seeds into a coffee grinder and process until as fine as desired. Transfer mustard to a food processor add vinegar, process until well combined. Transfer to a sealed container and allow to sit overnight.

Note: This is the only one of the mustards that was prepared with brown mustard seeds because that is what the recipe called for.

- (1) Adamson, Melitta Weiss. *Das buch von guter spise*. Krems; 2000. Original dated 1350.
- (2) *Ein Kochbuch aus dem Archiv des Deutschen Ordens*, 15th Century; Translated from Old German to Modern German by Dr. Thomas Gloning; Translation from German to English by Volker Bach, © 2002. Unpublished, all nonprofit use permitted.
- (3) Grewe, Rudolf and Heatt, Constance B. *Libellus de arte coquinaria: An Early Northern Cookery Book*. Arizona, 2001.
- (4) Rumpolt, Marx, *Ein New Kochbuch* c. 1581; Translated from Old German to Modern German by Dr. Thomas Gloning; Translated from German to English by Gwen Catrin von Berlin. http://clem.msced.edu/~grasse/GK_Rumpolt1.htm
- (5) Welserin, Sabina. *Das Kochbuch der Sabina Welserin*. From handwritten manuscript, Augsburg, 1553. ed.. by Hugo Stopp, trans. by Ulrike Giessmann. Heidelberg: Carl Winter Universitätsverlag, 1980. Translated by Valoise Armstrong ©1998. http://www.daviddfriedman.com/Medieval/Cookbooks/Sabrina_Welserin.html
- (6) Welserin, Sabina. *Das Kochbuch der Sabina Welserin*. Hg. von Hugo Stopp. Mit einer Übersetzung von Ulrike Gießmann. Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag C. Winter Heidelberg, 1980. web at: <http://staff-www.uni-marburg.de/~gloning/sawe.htm#english>

