

Book of Tasty and Healthy Food

Ministry of the Food Industry,
USSR

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CONTENTS

Introduction	i
1 Selecting Dishes for Breakfast, Lunch and Dinner	1
2 Order of Dinner Preparation	6
3 Setting up the Table	11
4 Sample Menus for All Seasons	21
5 Cold Dishes and Appetizers	34
6 Soups	93
7 Fish	169
8 Meat	215
9 Poultry and Game	282
10 Vegetables and Mushrooms	302
11 Grain and Flour Dishes	361
12 Dairy and Egg Dishes	407
13 Pastry	431
14 Sweets	508
15 Baby/Child Food	554
16 Special Diets	574
17 Preserves, Marinades, Pickles	657
18 Cold and Hot Beverages	685
19 Old Recipes	697
20 Conversion	715

INTRODUCTION

"Book of Tasty and Healthy Food" - Iconic Cookbook of the USSR

"Book of Tasty and Healthy Food" is a soviet collection of culinary recipes and food-preparation hints, curated by the USSR Ministry of Food and by people's commissar Anastas Mikoyan himself. It was first published in 1939.

This book discusses the basics of healthy eating, provides information about food products made in USSR and gives recipes of various dishes.

Updated editions of the book were coming out almost every year. There were about 8 million copies of the book printed since 1952.

Currently the "Book of Tasty and Healthy Food" is viewed as one of canonic symbols of Soviet propaganda: the assortment of ingredients described in the book was almost never available in stores to an average Soviet citizen.

History and Background

The idea to create a modernized and universal culinary book first appeared in mid-1930s, after food ration cards were done away with. It was first envisioned as a scientific work, emphasizing the importance of healthy nutrition. It was written by experienced chefs, doctors and prominent scientists. First edition was published in 1939.



SELECTING DISHES FOR BREAKFAST, LUNCH AND DINNER

Correct distribution of nutrients and selection of dishes during the day is one of the most important requirements of rational nutrition.

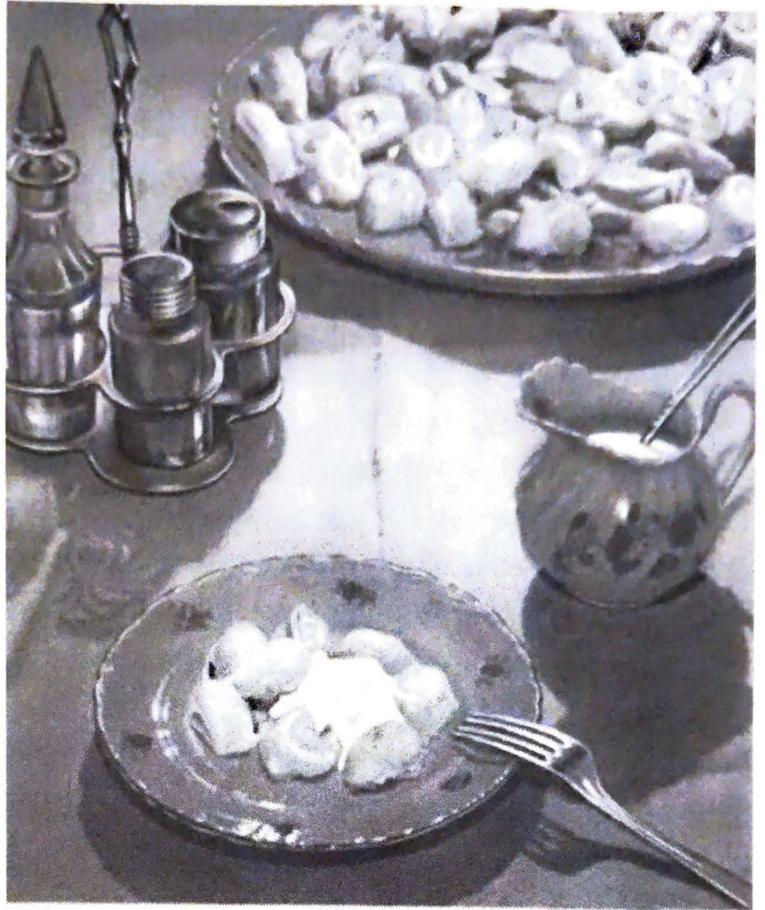
While selecting ingredients for breakfast, lunch, and dinner, you have to consider which particular foods and their quantities are required for different members of the family, depending on their age and occupation.

A person who leaves their home in the morning without having breakfast will quickly tire at work and will experience loss of energy far ahead of lunch. Overabundant lunch on the other hand will result in drowsiness and loss of productivity.

Adults should eat three to four times a day, while children and adolescents should eat four to five times.

All these circumstances require us to consider how to plan our meals, how to allocate food products throughout the day, what to cook for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.





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Breakfast first of all has to be nourishing, it could consist of boiled or fried meat or fish, eggs, cheese, bread, tea, coffee, or milk. It's advisable to eat porridge (oatmeal, buckwheat, millet) with milk or butter, and fruits.

Lunch - about three to four hours after start of work - should include one hot dish, preferably vegetarian (casserole, ragout, burgers), sandwiches with tea (or milk or coffee). It can also include hot dogs or bratwurst.

It is recommended to have dinner sometime after finishing work, when a person had some rest and managed to work up an appetite. Dinner could have up to three courses. First

course - meat, vegetable, or fish soup, second course - roasted or fried meat, fish, or vegetable dish, and dessert - compote, pastry and fruits. To improve the appetite before the beginning of dinner it is recommended to serve an appetizer or a salad.

If a meat-based soup (shchi, borscht, pickle soup) is served for the first course, then the second course should be light - cooked from vegetables, grain, or fish; and conversely, if the first course is light (broth with vegetables or soup-puree), then the second course should be more substantial - dishes with meat or fish with garnish.

Supper is always assumed to be light, and should be eaten no later than two to three hours before sleep. Recommendations include salads, yogurt, eggs, sandwiches, vegetable casseroles, milk, tea, vegetable and fruit juices.

If work schedule or other circumstances do not permit to eat four meals per day, three meals can be eaten instead - a big breakfast before work, another meal during a break and dinner after work.

Cumulative amount of food per day (or daily ration) depends on height, weight, age, climate, type of work and season. It is not advisable to eat too much meat. It is recommended that plenty of plant-based foods are included - vegetables, fruits and berries.

The menu must have variety. Oftentimes, this is overlooked. Not all housewives take the time and effort to make a plan for food preparation in advance. Mostly they only have around 10 or 12 dishes that they alternate throughout the years, and the family receives monotonous meals.

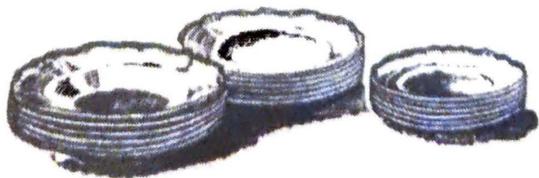
Seasons should also be taken into

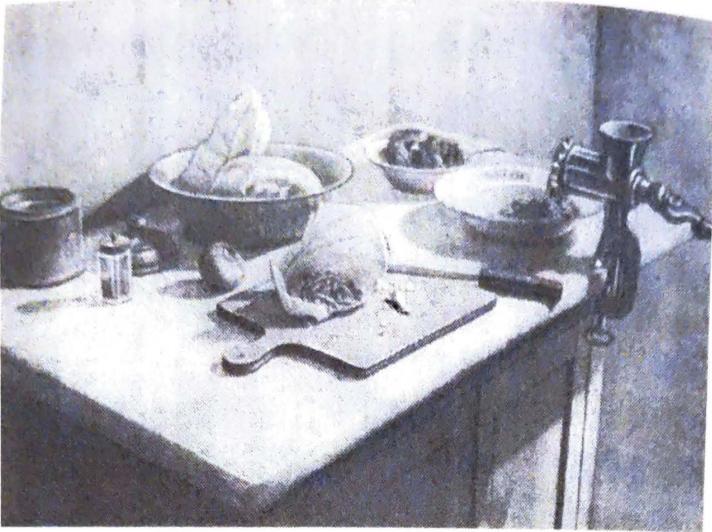
consideration. In the fall and winter hot meat and fish soups should be consumed, and in the spring and summer many prefer cold soups - cold borscht, fruit and berry soups. Fish products are more plentiful in the spring and fall, and during spring and summer dairy, eggs, fowl and vegetables are abundant.

Very important for menu selection is the frequency with which different dishes and ingredients are consumed. Borscht, shchi, cutlets will taste more delicious if they appear on the menu once every ten days, or every week, at most. Therefore it is important to think of daily menu for ten days in advance and stick to it, if possible. Combining foods is also important - for example, if potatoes or porridge were eaten for breakfast, it is better not to eat these foods again for lunch - it is better to eat a vegetable casserole instead.

If there are small children or ill people in the family, it is important to account for that. Also, people who are engaged in physically demanding labor need to eat more than those who have sedentary lifestyles.

Housewives should keep in mind that some foods take longer to prepare than others, and plan accordingly for meals such as breakfast, when everyone is in a rush, and quick preparation is essential.





ORDER OF DINNER PREPARATION

Before starting to cook lunch, breakfast, or dinner, it is necessary to decide what time it needs to be ready by, and determine how much time will be needed to prepare this meal. Also keep in mind that as soon as lunch, breakfast, or dinner is ready, it is best to serve it immediately, otherwise it will get cold and will no longer taste great.

It is important to be punctual when serving breakfast, lunch or dinner. Each dish should be delicious and have a visual appeal.

If there is too little time remaining before lunch you should select ingredients that can be cooked fast. In this case, it is better to use meat or fish-based ready-to-cook foods. You can buy different kinds of vegetables - fresh, canned, frozen - already cleaned, washed, and peeled.

Ready-to-cook foods used can be of different types and varieties - cutlets, steaks, shish kebabs, fish fillets, etc. Different types of sauces can be purchased and used for these dishes.

Dinner can be quickly made from canned food - meat or fish soups, stewed meat, fish with different sauces, corn with butter. Canned fruits and berries make excellent desserts.

Dinner preparation can be sped up by combining ready-to-cook foods with canned foods. For example, cutlets can be served with garnish of canned corn, beans or green peas. Fish fillet can be prepared with canned beans. Different salads can be complemented by canned fish, crab meat, crayfish, etc. Mayonnaise can be used as dressing for these types of salads.

Finally, a wide assortment of already-made products such as sausages, smoked goods, meat pates, hot dogs, bratwurst, dairy, etc., allows preparing and serving lunch or breakfast in 10 to 15 minutes.

Using ready-to-cook foods saves a tremendous amount of time and frees the housewife from the most labor-intensive and unpleasant work in the kitchen - cleaning fish, vegetables and meat. It makes cleaning the kitchen easier and there are not that many dishes to be washed afterwards.

Besides ready-to-make and canned foods, there are other options available in stores, such as bouillon concentrates and powdered soups that can be used when meal preparation time is limited. In this case preparation time will be as quick as boiling a pot of water.

The recipes in this book contain the amount of ingredients needed to prepare a dish for approximately 4-5 people. It is understood that if there are more or less people, the amount of ingredients must be adjusted, but proportions should remain the same. For 500 grams of meat that's used for borscht it is recommended to take

around 800 grams of different vegetables; if there is more meat, for example 750 grams, then 1,200 grams of vegetables should be used, and more water as well. Incorrect proportion of water and vegetables will make borscht either too thick or too watery. For cutlets, incorrect amounts of bread or liquid added to ground meat can make the cutlets less juicy and shapely than they otherwise could have been.

The amount of garnish should also correspond to the amount of the main product. For example, if each person is served 100 grams of meat or fish, garnish should be 150-200 grams of potatoes or 100-150 grams of macaroni or porridge.

When starting to make dinner, in order to save time it is first recommended to start on ingredients that need longer cooking, or those that need to be served cool.

Let's take for example a three-course dinner with an appetizer of herring. First course is meat-based shchi, second course is cutlets with fried potatoes and third is kissel. Preparing this meal would begin with cooking meat and boiling broth. Part of the washed meat, placed on a board, should be put aside in a bowl for cutlets, and the rest of meat and bones should be placed in a pot with water and put on a stove. Herring that previously has been soaked in water can be cleaned, cut and served on a plate, shaped as one whole fish. Boil the potatoes, which will be needed as garnish for cutlets and herring. Then, after thoroughly washing hands, boil kissel, which must cool off before lunch. While kissel is being made, broth will start to boil. Fire underneath the pot needs to be reduced. Now it is time to take care about onions and cabbage for shchi - clean,

wash them and cut them, and fry them if desired.

By this time the broth is almost ready, it needs to be strained into a soup pan, put the meat there, add cabbage, salt, pepper, bay leaf and continue to boil.

While shchi is boiling, prepare ground meat and cutlets, cover them in breadcrumbs, put them before frying on a board or on a plate and cover with a towel. Boiled potatoes need to be peeled, cut and fried (part of boiled potatoes can be used as garnish for herring), and start frying cutlets on another frying pan.

In 15 to 20 minutes after this dinner will be ready. Remove meat from shchi, cut it, put it on plates, pour shchi into them, add sour cream and parsley.

Ready cutlets and garnish (fried potatoes) are placed on a plate. Pour some broth into the frying pan where cutlets were frying, boil it, strain and use as sauce for cutlets. Sprinkle potatoes with parsley.

Some lunch dishes can be prepared so that leftovers might be used for dinner or breakfast. For example, potatoes can be boiled in such amounts so that there is enough to use some for dinner's salad. Some of leftover cutlets can be eaten during dinner or breakfast.

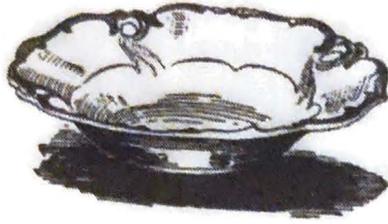
Finally, broth can also be made for two days. In this case, half of the broth can be used for shchi, and another half can be used the next day to make a different kind of soup.

Food storage is very important, even for short periods of time, like one or two days. Meat, fish, dairy, fresh vegetables and fruits deteriorate rapidly, losing their smell, taste and color. Cold is the best way of keeping these products fresh.

After finishing your meal, wash all dishes

MINISTRY OF THE FOOD INDUSTRY, USSR

and silverware with hot water and soda or soap,
rinse with cold water, dry it and store away.
Leaving dishes unwashed is unacceptable,
because food remains rot, smell and attract flies. It
also makes dishes turn dark over time.





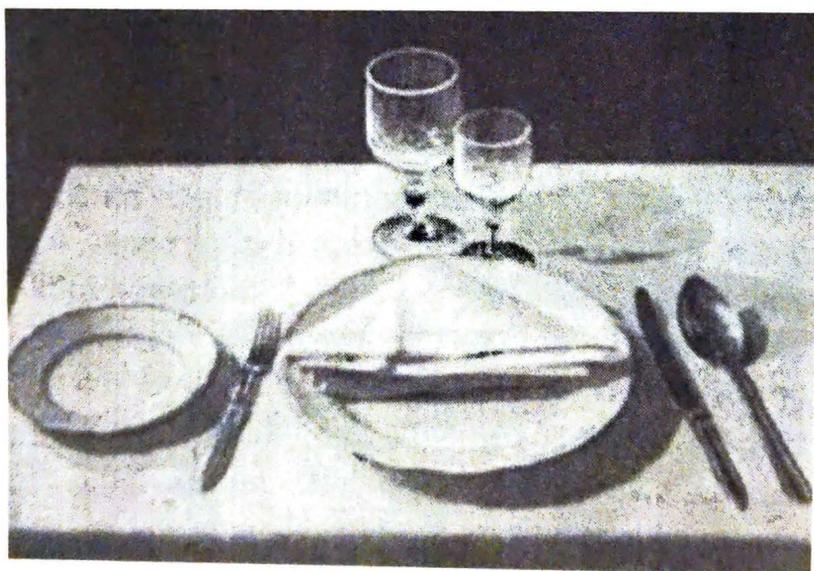
SETTING UP THE TABLE

Cover the table with white, well-pressed tablecloth. Middle fold of the tablecloth should be at the center of the table. It is recommended to place flannel or some other type of heavy, soft cloth underneath - tablecloth will be resting straight and the noise of plates and silverware will be reduced.

Depending on the number of people at the table, put two or three plates of thinly sliced black and white bread, positioning them in such a way so that they are close to each set of silverware. Wine (except champagne) needs to be served in bottles that have already been opened. Same goes for mineral water. Vodka should be served in decanter. Open champagne immediately before pouring it into glasses. Appetizers should be positioned throughout the table.

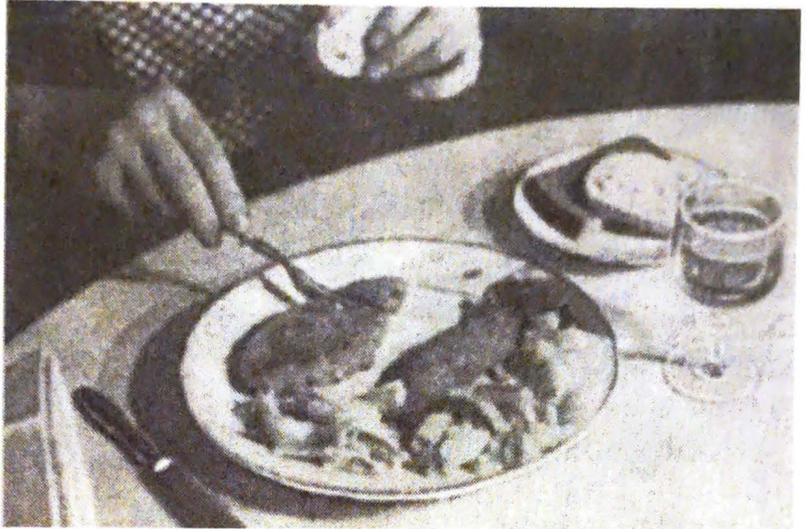


Quantity of containers with pepper, vinegar, sauces, mustard and salt would depend on the number of meal participants. It is desirable to place containers with seasonings closer to the middle line of the table. Silverware and plates should preferably be from the matching set for the whole table.



Each guest and family member will have a shallow plate with appetizer plate on top of it, and a dessert plate on the left side of it. To the right of the plate put a spoon and a knife (knife's cutting

edge should be facing the plate), and to the left put a fork. Spoon and fork should lie with their concave side on the top. Ideally, a small salt shaker should be placed next to each person or be shared between two people. Napkins, folded into a triangle or cap shape is placed on top of the appetizer plate.



Usually there is a limited variety of wine during a home meal. Therefore, there is no need for extra glasses on the table. If you are having a celebration, put a shot glass for vodka, a glass for wine, and a tall glass for mineral water or fruit/tomato juice next to each person.

Flowers will add beauty to the table. Place them in the middle of the table in vases that are not too tall.

Next to the dining table, next to the hostess' seat, you may put a small table where a soup bowl, clean soup plates, etc., can be placed.

If there are 5 or 6 people sitting at the table, the host or hostess may easily pass the dishes around the table. If there are more people, it might be more convenient to carry the dishes around. Keep the following rule in mind - if the food is

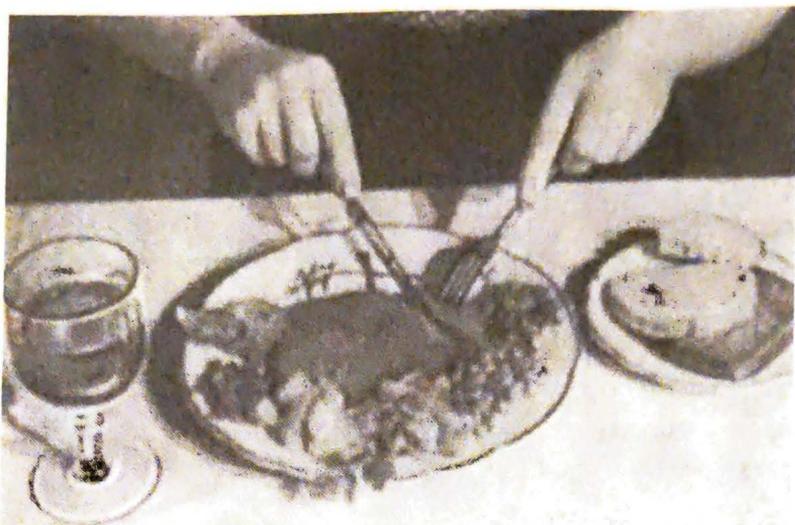
already placed on the plate for the guest to eat, give it to them from the right side; if the food is given on a serving plate for each guest to take it into their individual plates and then come to the guest from the left.



If dinner consists mostly of cold foods, they may be placed on the table right away, if the size of the table allows that, of course.

Approximately in the middle of the table, place a plate with stew, to the right and to the left of it put plates with fish and appetizers. Between the plates put wine bottles and pitchers with tomato and fruit juices. Sauceboats should be placed in different locations, depending on the size of the table and the number of guests.

Place only knife and fork, since soups are rarely served for supper. If broth has been prepared, serve it in broth bowls and place a dessert spoon on little plates.



Evening tea (which sometimes can replace supper) is served somewhat differently. Put tablecloth on the table, preferably multi-colored. Samovar or kettle with hot water is placed on a little table next to the main one, by the hostess, who will pour tea.

In the middle of the table put vases with candy and jams, next to them - bowls with cookies covered with napkins, little plates with thinly sliced lemon, decanters with fruit and berry juices, cognac, cream or milk, sugar. It would also be nice to serve one or two bottles of dessert wine for this table.

If tea is replacing a light supper, then have some butter, ham, cheese, cold beef and other sandwich meats on the table. Distribute decanters with fruit and berry juices, wine or cognac evenly around the table. Each family member or guest will have a dessert plate with a tea napkin placed on top of it. To the left of the plate put a dessert fork, and to the right - dessert knife.

Main goal of setting up the table is comfort, neatness and pleasant look of the dinner or tea table. Here is a sample set of tableware for 6 people:

Deep Plates 6
 Shallow Plates 6
 Appetizer Plates 6
 Dessert Plates 6
 Plate for Herring 1
 Salad Bowls 2
 Soup Bowl 1
 Sauceboat 1
 Round Dish 1
 Oval Dish 1
 Dish for Bread 1
 Broth Bowls with Saucers 6
 Containers for pepper, mustard and vinegar 1
 Decanter for Water 1
 Decanter for Fruit Juice 1
 Decanter for Vodka 1
 Wine Glasses 6
 Shot Glasses 6
 Champagne Glasses 6
 Knives, forks, desert forks 6

Children should be taught how to behave properly while eating and how to use spoon, knife and fork. They need to be taught to sit up straight and not lean on the table, as it disturbs their neighbors. Unacceptable behaviors include rocking in the chair, playing with tablecloth - it is possible to drag the tablecloth off the table and burn yourself with hot broth. Children should never be allowed to put knives in their mouth - it is possible to cut lips and tongue. This is where the rule of not eating off the knife comes from. Another categorical rule is never to pick your teeth with anything other than a toothpick. After eating it is advised to rinse the mouth with warm water that has been boiled and baking soda.



Cutlets, meatballs, fish, boiled vegetables and similar foods are not cut with a knife, but rather just divided into smaller pieces with a fork. Fork is held in the right hand in this particular case. If the second course includes food that needs to be cut with a knife, then the fork needs to be held in left hand, and knife in right hand, since it is easier to cut with right hand.

While cutting food with knife, fork is to be held in a tilted position. If fork is held perpendicular to the plate, it might slip and throw the contents of the plate onto the table.

When children are done eating, they should put their fork and spoon not on the tablecloth, but on the plate instead.

Meat and other foods should not be cut into small pieces immediately on your plate, they should instead be cut gradually, as you're consuming them during the course of the meal. Small pieces get cold very quickly and eating them might affect digestion negatively.

Children should know that they should not use their own individual knife, fork and spoon to take food from common plates and dishes that are used to serve everyone at the table.

For common plates and dishes their own utensils are used. Most of the time these utensils are of different shape and size than individual ones. Only these utensils are to be used to put food on your plate. It is also unacceptable to cut bread with your own knife. This rule is dictated by common sense concepts of personal hygiene.

In addition, children should be taught to chew their food well, not rush and be neat. Bad table habits of eating loud and messy should not be allowed to form - this will become a burden to them and those around them.

