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Gastronomic Reforms under Peter the Great

At the birth of Peter the First in 1672, a wondrous display of molded sugar-paste confections concluded the celebratory dinner prepared for Peter's proud father, Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich. The sugar conceits included

> a cinnamon spice cake (*kovrizhka*) made with sugar[1] in the shape of the Muscovy coat of arms; a large, cone-shaped cinnamon spice cake decorated with colors, weighing 2 *puds*[2] 20 pounds; large, molded sugar confections shaped like eagles with the royal orb, one white and the other red,[3] each weighing 1 1/2 *puds*; a 2-*pud* swan of molded sugar; a half-*pud* sugar duck; a 10-*pud* sugar parrot and an 8-*pud* sugar dove; a sugar Kremlin with infantry, calvary and two towers, with eagles soaring above them, and the city molded into a square surrounded by cannons; two large 15-pound horns made of sugar and flavored with cinnamon, one red and the other white; two large marzipan cakes made with sugar, one on 5 rounds, the other made with hard candies; two candy spires, one red and one white, each weighing 12 pounds; 40 dishes of sugar decorations depicting infantry and cavalry and other figures, half a pound on each plate; 30 dishes of various fruit-flavored hard candies, 3/4 pound on each plate; 10 plates of crystallized sugar with spices, a pound on each plate; a half chest of figs, candied rind, lemons, nutmeg and bitter oranges, dried apricots and peaches, ginger in syrup, watermelon, melon, and other fruits -- in all there were 120 dishes on the table.[4]

Such regalement reflected the standards of Muscovite hospitality, which dictated the preparation of elaborate confections for all guests invited to royal events. At the end of these feasts, guests were given additional confectionary to bring home, the amount determined by each person's rank. This *podacha* or presentation was

a ritualized aspect of Russian hospitality, and those who received it basked in the favor of the Tsar. Couriers delivered the *podacha* to anyone unable to attend the festivities.

The cost of these confections must have been astronomical. Russia's first sugar refinery did not begin production until the early 1720s,[5] so before then processed sugar had to be imported through the far northern port of Archangel on the White Sea. The journey from Archangel to Moscow, covering nearly 1,000 miles by river and land, could take several weeks, depending on the weather. After the rivers became navigable in late spring, barges could easily sail down the Dvina and Sukhona Rivers to the town of Vologda. But there the route to Moscow continued overland, and the Russian roads of late spring were notoriously muddy. If merchants waited for the roads to dry out, the water level in the rivers sometimes dropped low enough to make passage extremely slow. The price of sugar was not really an issue, though, since the Tsar's expenditures bore little relation to financial reality. As for most Russians, they had never even tasted sugar, thanks to the wide availability of Russia's native sweetener, wild honey. Even those who had remained suspicious of it, since sugar was rumored to be refined with blood and therefore unsuitable for fast days.[6]

The Russians took fasting very seriously, dividing the year into feast (*skoromnyi*) and fast (*postnyi*) days, the sequence of which they strictly observed. No meat or dairy products were allowed on fast days, which added up to nearly two hundred days a year. However, for the well-to-do, fast days did not necessarily mean deprivation. A mid-seventeenth-century state dinner given for the English ambassador Carlisle lasted for eight hours, with no less than five hundred dishes served, not one made with meat products. For the dinner's finale three small trees were brought to table, each covered with gilded cakes, which Carlisle and the boyars released from the branches and ate for dessert.[7]

For those who could afford it, even the fast-day diet proved ample and varied. This we know from an inventory of the foods served on Palm Sunday, 1656, to Boyar Boris Ivanovich Morozov, head of the Treasury under Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich. Morozov's ability to procure the finest products does not seem to have been affected by the losses he suffered during the 1648 uprising against the higher salt tax levied by his department. Breaking into Morozov's house, the mob headed straight for his cellars, where they drank barrels of mead and vodka. What they were unable to drink, they smashed, carousing knee-deep in liquor. When Morozov's house caught fire, many brawlers perished as the alcohol went up in flames.[8] But Morozov recovered his wealth quickly enough, and eight years later enjoyed the following meal:

> Fine wheat bread, cabbage with herring, pressed caviar, black caviar, red cisco roe, sturgeon marrow (*viziga*) with horseradish, steamed herring, boned salted pike with horseradish. Backbone of spawning (*narostovye*) sterlet, fresh sturgeon garnished with cucumbers. Fish filet (*telo*) with cucumbers. Salmon (*losos'*) with lemons. Fresh salmon (*semga*) with lemons, pike, steamed bream, steamed pike-perch, steamed sterlet, half a head of sturgeon, pancakes; salmon back, white salmon back, beluga belly, white salmon entrails, red pike, fish pie (*prosypnoi*), black sterlet, pie with fish filets in brine. Pike soup, pie with filets of [fish] (*s telesy so mnevymi)*, perch soup, pie with sturgeon milt, crucian soup, white salmon pie, tench soup, a large sturgeon (*osetra*) pie, bream in brine, sour fish pies; [fish] (*kolotka*), small pancakes, perch in brine, long pies[9] with dried peas, half heads of fresh sturgeon, fresh herring in pastry, white salmon backbone, crucian with fish filets (*s telom*), lateral backbone (*zvena bocheshnye*) of beluga, fritters, central backbone (*zvena stupishnye*) of sturgeon, whitefish with sauce, Ladoga whitefish [*lodoga*] with horseradish, soup with fish belly and tongue. 2 fish bellies, 2 sturgeon vertebrae. For the *derzhal'niki*:[10] cabbage with herring, sturgeon marrow, sturgeon with cucumbers, buckwheat groats with fish, perch

> soup (*ukha*), long pies. Whitefish, Ladoga whitefish, *five dishes*. For the servants, *six dishes*. For the *podacha*, 20 beluga and sturgeon vertebrae.[11]

This menu reflects the refinement of the Russian palate in regard to fish. Not only did well-to-do Russians enjoy a variety of fish, they also appreciated parts of the anatomy that our own culture generally discards, such as the entrails and the backbone, even distinguishing between the marrow and the flesh surrounding the lateral and central portions of the backbone. They considered the backbone of spawning sterlet especially succulent, since fish is at its fattiest as it heads to the spawning grounds.

This refinement was not always apparent to foreign visitors to Muscovy, who generally complained about the awful food they encountered there. The irrepressible Polish nobleman and adventurer Jan Chryzostom Pasek, invited to the tsar's table in 1662, puts a humorous spin on Russian dining practices. Ultimately , however, his tale reveals the Russian connoisseurship of fish:

> ...The next day an imperial banquet was to take place; that evening Mikhailo Afanasovich, the son of that lord of the table, and another boyar, came to me with a specch: '*Tsar, Osudar, Velikii Biloei i Chornyei Rusi Samoderzhtsa i Obladatel, tebe ster priatela swoigo prosit zaiutra na biluzhnye koleno i na lebedye khuzno*' ['The Tsar, Grand Monarch of White and Black Ruthenia {part of Muscovy}, aboslute ruler and sovereign lord, invites you, as his friend, for tomorrow for knee of beluga and rump of swan'].
>
> I being unfamiliar with that etiquette of theirs, sulked; think I to myself, what practice is this, to go inviting someone for a KNEE and an ARSE, and I did not yet know what a beluga was. Right then, I wanted to exclaim: 'Tell him to eat arse himself'; then I restrained myself. *Nemo sapiens, nisi patiens* [He who is not patient, is not wise]. I replied that I thank his lordship the tsar for the gracious invitation to his banquet, but being an ordinary soldier, I am loath to feed on

delicacies; though I'll make my appearance, I'll find something else to eat there, and those celebrated dainties I leave to the gentlemen envoys. The interpreter having seen how I frowned on it, says: 'Be not upset, Your Honor, for this is a custom of our people, just as in your country, gentlemen invite one another for boiled beef, even though hazelhens be found there too, and many other such game, so with us it is for rump of swan, though there be many dishes; and when we mention both rump of swan and knee of beluga it is to signify an illustrious banquet.'

I inquired then: 'What is this beluga anyway, and what is so special about its knees?' He said that it's a larger river fish, and that one spot near the gills has so fine a flavor, no other fish is as tasty, and the rest tastes like sturgeon; that piece being round, which they cut from the fish and bring round to the table, they call a knee. I also made inquiry about why they invite guests for a rump -- why not a head, or a wing, or a breast? He said that this piece is the tastiest part of a swan. At this, I observed it would be better to invite one for a whole swan rather than the rump alone; in our country the rump of a fat capon is also rather savory, but we don't invite anyone for the rump, but in general for the capon. Said he, it's the custom.[12]

On a 1689 visit to Muscovy, the envoy Foy de la Neuville declared with a Frenchman's absolute disdain that the Russians "eat and drink extremely badly" and are "gluttons" to boot.[13] He describes a *podacha* sent from the table of the then seventeen-year-old tsar Peter the First, consisting of "a forty-pound piece of smoked beef, several dishes of fish cooked in nut oil, half a pig, a dozen half-cooked pies made of meat, garlic and saffron, and three big flagons of vodka, Spanish wine and mead."[14] Neuville comments that "[i]t is easy to judge from the list of these dishes that the greatest pleasure I found in this sumptuous feast was the honour that was being done me." Unwilling to prevaricate when asked how he had enjoyed the meal, Neuville confessed that "unfortunately French cooks had so spoiled my taste that I could eat no other cooking." So Prince Boris

Golitsyn and Andrei Matveev took this opportunity to wangle an invitation from the gastronome, stating that they had long hoped to try French roast meats. Golitsyn and Matveev were apparently "so satisfied with this meal that they sent several dishes to their wives and unceremoniously took away all the dry sweetmeats with them, assuring me that they had never eaten so well, and that I should not have to wait long to be entertained in like manner by them." Indeed, three days later Neuville "was very properly entertained" at Matveev's house, where he enjoyed a Lenten meal consisting entirely of Caspian Sea and Volga River fish that had been transported live to Moscow. The Russians might not have done justice to roast meats, but Matveev's meal demonstrates that they certainly knew how to prepare fish.

Grigorii Kotoshikhin, under-secretary (and later turned traitor and murderer) to Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich, describes the year-round furnishing of the tsar's table with fish from distant waters.[15] Fisheries in Nizhnii Novgorod, Kazan, and Astrakhan on the Volga, as well as on the Terek River in the Caucasus, provided various sizes of sturgeon (beluga and osetr). The fish was transported to Moscow whole or in pieces, salted or brined in barrels; the backs and bellies were generally dried and jerked. Sterlet was salted in barrels and transported along with burbot roe, sturgeon liver, fine caviar (both beluga and osetr), blocks of pressed caviar, sturgeon marrow, and strips of dried white salmon. From Velikii Novgorod and Lake Ladoga came whitefish, Ladoga whitefish, and whitefish caviar; from Vologda, Archangel and the Kolsk peninsula near Murmansk -- salmon (*losos'*) and salted salmon (*semga*). Fresh sturgeon, white salmon, sterlet, salmon, pike, bream, pike-perch, perch, and many other sorts of excellent fish were caught for the tsar's table in the rivers and ponds around Moscow. [16]

By terming the Russians "gluttons" Neuville revealed a superficial understanding of Russian culture. What he saw as gluttony was, in fact, the flip side of the "Waste Not Want Not" mentality that ruled much of western culture. When it came to regalement, wastefulness was not an issue. Russia has always been noted for its extremes: appalling poverty and equally appalling wealth, scientific brilliance and extreme superstition, shocking cruelty and the most devout charity. Such stark dichotomies are reflected as well in the rigid Orthodox sequence of fasting and feasting. Ever aware of imminent belt-tightening, when feasting was allowed wealthy Russians indulged to the utmost, experiencing glee at their own wantonness. Part of their pleasure, too, lay in an awareness of the scarcity that prevailed just beyond their mansion walls; this unfortunate attribute of human character only served to increase their delight in excess. Muscovite Russia had no sense of the egalitarianism that was already brewing in western Europe. And so the wealthy went to extremes, with apparently total disregard for restraint.

When meat-eating was allowed, they piled their tables high with "rumps" in addition to "knees." Pickled or salted beef, ham, suckling pig, elk, boar, lamb, and rabbit all appeared on the table. Swan was considered the most luxurious of birds, though the wealthy also feasted on crane, heron, black grouse, hazel hen, partridge, lark, goose, duck, and chicken. Veal was rarely consumed, and capons, in contrast to their popularity in Poland, were virtually unknown.[17] Hot and cold soups, noodle dishes, roasts, and sauces were seasoned with onion, garlic, pepper, saffron, and sometimes savory.[18] The combination of sweet and sour so typical of medieval foods throughout Europe was especially compatible with Russian taste. Rich, dark swan meat was often served with vinegar or a combination of sour milk, pickles, and prunes.[19] One of the earliest Russian garnishes for meat, *vzvar*, rivals the confits offered at today's trendiest

restaurants. To make *vzvar*, slices of onion are moistened with vinegar and sweetened with honey, then sprinkled liberally with pepper. The onions are then cooked slowly until caramelized and translucent.

Onions and pepper were deemed especially compatible with caviar, as in the Muscovite dish *kal'ia*, for which pressed caviar was cut into thin rounds. Chopped onion, pepper, pickles, pickle brine, and water were added, then the mixture was steamed in an earthenware pot in the great Russian stove, with additional pepper added on serving. Commenting on a seventeenth-century embassy to Tsar Mikhail Fedorovich's court, the German scholar Adam Olearius describes eating fresh caviar, too, with pepper and onions. Olearius notes that vinegar and butter were sometimes used to dress caviar in place of the pepper and onions, although he considers lemon juice a better appetite stimulant.[20] He also mentions a dish prepared especially for hangovers, called, like the hangover itself, *pokhmel'e*. Cold roast lamb is cut into small pieces, "like cubes, but thinner and broader," then mixed with peppers and cucumbers similarly sliced. Over this, equal parts of vinegar and cucumber juice are poured. "The [Russians] eat this with a spoon," writes Olearius, "and afterwards a drink tastes good again."[21] *Pokhmel'e* is clear evidence of the Russian urge to excess, as it was devised primarily to enable -- even encourage -- further drinking. This hangover specialty likely evolved into the popular soup *rassol'nik*, now made with kidneys and pickle brine.

Hangovers were already a significant problem in the seventeenth century, and the earliest *lubki* or broadsides warned against intemperance. Contrary to popular perception, vodka -- known simply as *vino*[22] or wine until the mid-nineeenth century -- was not the Russians' drink of choice; they far preferred mead, which they brewed from honey. Russia's forests contained so many swarms of wild bees that passage could be dangerous. Travelers write of "great

pools" and "lakes" of honey,[23] and such immense wild hives gave rise to legend. One oft-repeated story, invoked as fact rather than tall tale, tells of a man who accidentally fell into a honey-filled hive and was unable to extricate himself from the sticky substance. He remained there for two days until, to his good fortune, a bear appeared. When the bear began to climb into the hive to feast on the sweet honey, the man grabbed his tail and shouted, at which the startled bear bolted from the hive, pulling the man out along with him.[24] The bear's irrepressible urge to take whatever he wants caused considerable fear in the early Russians. By calling the bear *medved'* or "honey-eater," they avoided naming him directly (as Jahweh refers indirectly to God). This ancient fear eventually led the Russians to appropriate the bear as a cultural symbol, and thereby make him safe. Yet they could not foresee that the buffoonish image of an intemperate creature destroying hives to appease his abundant appetite would come to reflect certain of their own cultural traits.

Fruits and vegetables were also important components of the affluent diet. Radishes, turnips, cucumbers, onions, garlic, beets, and cabbage were cultivated, as were cherries, raspberries, pears, plums, red currants, and apples. One exquisite sort of apple had translucent flesh. Held up to the sun, the seeds could be seen right through the skin.[25] Extremely sweet melons were grown in southern Russia near Astrakhan at the mouth of the Volga. Numerous travelers report on the existence of a fabulous melon that grew in the shape of a lamb and consumed the grass beneath it, turning itself as needed to find more pasture. When ripe, the melon reportedly had a "furry skin like that of a lamb," which could be dressed and used as fur, the finished hide similar to the crinkly coat of the Astrakhan lamb. The mythical properties ascribed to this melon were so great that it was said even to trap wolves, the only animal that would eat its flesh.[26]

Russia seemed so exotic to early visitors that tales of strange creatures frequently arose. Even the reliable Herberstein cannot resist describing a humanoid fish said to live "in the river Tachnin," though he strongly disclaims the likelihood of its existence. "Reluctant to omit anything," he tells of "a certain fish, with a head, eyes, nose, mouth, hands, feet, and in other respects almost entirely resembling a man, but without voice, which, like other fish, affords excellent food."[27] Fish of all varieties were certainly abundant, and many of them did indeed look strange, such as the huge beluga sturgeon which often exceeded nine feet in length,[28] and which was killed only for its roe. Samuel Collins found this lack of frugality regrettable, as his Puritan peers would have: "...'tis pitty, seeing this Fish is one of the greatest Dainties that comes out of the watry Element, especially his belly, which surpasses the marrow of Oxen."[29]

With its plentiful assortment of fish, meats, fruits, vegetables, and grains, the diet of the well-to-do could hardly have contrasted more with the meager rations of most of the population, who frequently subsisted on little more than oatmeal gruel (*tolokno*)[30] and rye bread. Although the soil around Moscow and in the south of Russia yielded excellent orchard produce, the growing season was short, and most people did not have access to a variety of foods. For centuries Slavic agriculture had been largely grain-based: hearty crops like rye, oats, barley, buckwheat, and millet provided the mainstay of the Russian diet. Wheat was also cultivated in the south, but it remained of secondary importance.[31] Grains were supplemented by legumes (*gorokh*), which were such an important feature of early Russian culture that the expression *pri tsare Gorokhe* ("when Tsar Pea ruled") still means "in days of yore." A Russian version of pease porridge, *Gorokh kolodkoiu* ("Peas Like a Trough"), was made by boiling dried peas until soft, then pureeing them. After mounding the puree onto a plate, an indentation

or trough was made into which hempseed oil was poured as the sole seasoning. Salt was so expensive that only the wealthy could afford to use it.

Even soup was a luxury, especially if it contained a bit of lard.[32] The monotony of the poor man's diet was relieved by catching freshwater fish and foraging for mushrooms and berries, though later, under serfdom, tightfisted property owners often did not allow their serfs to benefit from the estate's fields, woods, and streams. Those who did have access to fish usually salted it, and Olearius complains that "in Moscow, they use coarse salt fish, which sometimes stinks because they are thrifty with the salt. Nevertheless, they like to eat it."[33] Neuville ascribes the spoiled fish less to thriftiness with salt than to the practice of drying it in the sun, averring that "the fish which they serve is dried in the sun and almost always rotten, causing terrible illnesses."[34] The regular fare of the common folk also included beets, turnips, cabbages, and cucumbers.

But whether food was prepared for a royal feast or a simple peasant meal, it was invariably cooked in the Russian stove, massive enough to take up nearly one-third of a peasant cottage. Not just in fairytales, but in daily life, too, this stove could do everything -- bake, roast, fry, steam, and braise -- and its constantly falling temperatures made it extremely adaptable. In fact, the Russian stove's special properties determined the nature of the indigenous Russian cuisine. When newly fired and extremely hot, the *pod* or hearth was perfect for baking pies and breads. After the temperature began to fall, soups, stews, and grain dishes could bake slowly in the diminishing heat of the oven, which imparted a special flavor. When meat was affordable, large pieces were either roasted at high heat or slowly braised. Even blini, which today we associate with stovetop cooking, were baked (the Russians still say *pech'* [bake] *bliny*). All sorts of dairy products, both cultured and fresh, were prepared using any residual

oven heat. Whether the medieval Russian diet was varied or sparse, the cooking methods for rich and poor were nearly analogous.

Peter I ascended the throne in 1689, and as is well known, his reforms affected virtually every aspect of Russian life. Men and women were instructed to dress in European fashions, the women in décolletage. Men had to shave their beards. Upper-class women were freed from the secluded *terem* and allowed into male company. As the sexes mixed freely, the etiquette of upper-class dining changed dramatically, at least on the surface (Peter's reforms did little to temper the hearty sense of extravagance underlying Russian meals). Peter's institution of the assembly (*assembleia*), a social gathering similar to a ball, forced men and women to mingle and even eat at the same table. To ensure proper etiquette, he posted strictly defined rules of conduct;[35] if the rules were breached, the social penalty could be quite severe. Well-versed in the ways of Saint Petersburg society, Russia's great poet Aleksandr Pushkin describes an assembly in historical detail in one of his lesser-known stories, "The Negro of Peter the Great."[36] On a visit to Russia from Paris, the nobleman and dandy Korsakov is invited to an assembly, where he sees a beautiful young girl. He immediately asks her to dance the minuet, thereby transgressing the established rules. As punishment, Korsakov is forced to drink a huge goblet of sweet, heavy malmsey, to the amusement of all. While Peter the Great's famous eagle-shaped goblet was surely not as enormous as Ivan the Terrible's ceremonial *kubok* (which weighed almost forty-four pounds and was nearly seven feet high),[37] Korsakov is nevertheless no match for it. After downing the wine, he stumbles and nearly falls as he tries to leave the dance floor. His humiliation is made all the more bitter by Peter the Great's obvious delight.

Pushkin's tale hardly exaggerates. At the assemblies and other gatherings Peter often plied his guests with drink in order to find out what was really going on at court. A cult of Bacchus prevailed at Peter's court, with drinking binges that lasted for days at a time during official and religious holidays. Even the most highly-placed government officials took part in these bouts, considering "service to Bacchus" a valorous way to gain the Tsar's favor.[38] The Danish envoy Just Juel reports that

> at all of the feasts, as soon as people had gathered, and before they even began drinking, the tsar ordered a double guard placed at the doors so that no one could escape, not even those who were sick to their stomachs. The tsar himself rarely drank more than one, or at most two bottles of wine, so that I rarely saw him roaring drunk. But he forced his guests to drink until they could no longer see or hear, and then he would begin to chat with them to find out what they were really thinking.[39]

Institutionalized drinking extended beyond the court, as well, as Peter organized carnival celebrations and other ritualized occasions for drinking as a way to placate and control his subjects.

While his people were downing mead and beer, Peter turned to beverages that were not at all traditional for Russia. Unlike his forebears, he drank "Dutch aniseed brandy which was called 'state' brandy, and Hermitage and Hungarian wine, previously unknown in Russia."[40] Although Peter forbade imitation of his imperial ways, the nobility nevertheless mimicked his tastes, stocking their cellars "not only with the 'state' aniseed brandy, but also with Danzig brandies [and] also with Hermitage, Hungarian wine, and several others."[41] At first these expensive wines and brandies were served only sparingly, on special occasions. The hosts "were not ashamed to bring in a sealed quart or flagon, and having

poured a glassful from it for each guest, to seal it up again and send it back to the cellar."[42] But over time their lavish use became requisite for any fine meal.

Ever since vodka was introduced in the late fourteenth century, the Russians had shown a distressing proclivity for strong spirits. Both the Church Council of 1551 and the *Domostroi* (the sixteenth-century manual for Russian households) railed against the *korchmy*, the earliest public drinking establishments, where drunkenness prevailed.[43] The first taverns or *kabaki* were set up by Ivan the Terrible for the sole benefit of his elite guards, the *oprichnina*; in contrast, the common people were permitted to drink only on the major holidays,[44] and any infraction could lead to arrest and imprisonment. For the next century the royal attitude toward vodka vacillated between strict and lax, with Ivan's son Tsar Fedor Ivanovich ordering all *kabaki* destroyed, and his successor Boris Godunov reinstating them. By the end of the seventeenth century a system of *otkup* was in place, which allowed private individuals (usually the clergy or boyars) to run the taverns and profit from them, as long as they gave a percentage of their income to the government. This system led to rampant corruption and high public discontent, periodically expressed in "tavern revolts" (*kabatskie bunty*). Peter I initially affirmed the *otkup* system, largely because he needed revenue for his war with Sweden. But by 1716 popular dissatisfaction was so great that he issued an edict authorizing the free distillation and sale of vodka. Both the stills and the finished product were subject to taxation.[45] In addition to deregulating vodka production, Peter I influenced the technology of distillation by designing an improved pot-still[46] and encouraging successive distillations as well as the use of charcoal filters over the traditional isinglass. He himself is said to have favored triple-distilled vodka flavored with anise.[47] The commoners, however, were not convinced that the

tsar's refinements improved their beloved herb-infused spirits, the *dobroe zeleno vino* of folklore and song.

Despite his pursuit of new libations, Peter did not have a refined palate. He might appear suddenly in any odd corner of Petersburg, drop into a house at random, sit down at the table and enjoy the simplest food.[48] At other times he contentedly stayed at home with his favorite Limburger cheese, which he was known to measure with a compass before eating.[49] He did not especially like to host ceremonial feasts (even though they provided an opportunity for intelligence-gathering) and generally left grand entertaining to his favorite, Prince Aleksandr Menshikov, who staged magnificent dinners. When Peter did entertain, he made use of special contraptions he had devised for serving. In order to receive food promptly from the outdoor kitchen, his dining room was outfitted with a a small opening in the wall through which food was passed.[50] And in "Hermitage," one of his pleasure palaces at Peterhof, he placed an elaborate table:

> ...in one of Peter the Great's little pleasure palaces there was a table which mounted by machinery from the kitchen below to the dining-room above. The plates, or rather, the centre of the table, performed this evolution. Each plate did the same, and its owner had in front of him a string, which pulled a bell, and, as each bell had a different note, the cook always knew which of the guests it was that wanted his plate changed.[51]

While Menshikov's palace on the embankment of Vasilevsky Ostrov lacked a mechanical table, it was equipped with a large kitchen and open hearth with a spit (*vertel*) for roasting wildfowl and small game in the Muscovite style. Dining among the upper classes had previously been a private affair,[52] but Menshikov's dinners were so successful that other noblemen began to imitate

them. Soon the custom of keeping an open table was introduced in many homes, causing a certain prandial intimacy to be lost. By the close of the eighteenth century the open house took on excessive proportions, as in the home of Lev Aleksandrovich Naryshkin, at whose table any nobleman, invited or not, was welcome to dine and sup daily. Naryshkin often did not even know the names of his guests, yet all were accorded equal welcome.[53] The conservative Prince Mikhail Shcherbatov rued the loss of simplicity that had prevailed before Peter's era. In his treatise <u>On the Corruption of Morals in Russia</u>, written near the end of the eighteenth century, he complains that the nobility's excessive socializing at table led to moral deterioration:

> The meals were not of the traditional kind, that is, when only household products were used; now they tried to improve the flavour of the meat and fish with foreign seasonings. And of course, in a nation in which hospitality has always been a characteristic virtue, it was not hard for the custom of these open tables to become a habit; uniting as it did the special pleasure of society and the improved flavour of the food as compared with the traditional kind, it established itself as a pleasure in its own right.[54]

What troubles Shcherbatov most is the idea of the table as "a pleasure in its own right," with no thought given to our relationship to the food we eat or our moral and religious obligations as we partake of it. Such seeming indifference goes against the very grain of what Shcherbatov judges to be true hospitality, which he correctly considers at the core of Russian culture. Perhaps food and drink came from God, but hospitality also reflected the largesse of the host, and thus contained an element of personal pride:

> The highest mark of respect and friendship they show a guest at

> a feast or in the course of a visit, to convey that he is welcome and that they approve of him, is as follows. After the guest has been fed, the Russian has his wife, richly dressed, brought out to the guest to present him with a cup of vodka from her own hand. Occasionally, as a mark of particular favor to the guest, he is permitted to kiss her on the mouth. This great honor was rendered me personally by Count Lev Aleksandrovich Shliakhovskii, when I was last in Moscow, in 1643.[55]

In contrast to the infrequent and symbolic appearance of women at Muscovite gatherings, Peter the Great's reforms seated the hostess directly at the table; the female presence was now required for more than a ritual proferring of a cup and a kiss. But because many people were unsure of how to conduct themselves when dining publicly, the need arose to educate them in proper decorum. Thus, in 1717, Peter commissioned a handbook, The Honorable Mirror for Youth, aimed at young men entering into society. The book actually represents a partial translation of Erasmus's De civilitate morum puerilium first published in 1530.[56] That nearly two hundred years passed before the Russians felt the need for this sort of secular etiquette manual reflects the inward, domestic nature of Muscovite society. Following Erasmus, The Honorable Mirror for Youth contains the following recommendations for good table manners:

> Sit up straight and don't grab food until offered, don't eat like a pig, and don't blow into soup so that it sprays everwhere, don't wheeze while you eat, don't be the first to drink, be moderate, avoid drunkenness, drink and eat only as much as you need, don't take food until it's been offered several times, then take a portion and give the rest to someone else and thank him. Don't leave your hands resting a long time on the plate, don't shake your legs all around, when you drink don't wipe your lips with your hand but

> with a towel, and don't drink until you've swallowed your food, don't lick your fingers and don't gnaw bones, but cut them with a knife, don't clean your teeth with a knife but with a toothpick, and cover your mouth with one hand while you clean them, don't cut bread while holding it against your chest,[57] eat what is in front of you and don't grab elsewhere, and if you want to put something in front of someone else, don't take it with your fingers like some people are now accustomed to do. Don't smack your lips over food, like pigs, and don't scratch your head, don't speak with food in your mouth, because that's what peasants do. It's not proper to sneeze frequently, blow your nose, and cough. When you eat an egg cut some bread first and be careful that [the egg] doesn't drip and eat it quickly. Don't crack the egg shell, and while you're eating the egg, don't drink, meanwhile don't soil the tablecloth, and don't lick your fingers, don't make a fence of bones, bread crusts, etc. around your plate. When you've finished eating thank God, wash your hands and face, and rinse your mouth.[58]

By refining his people's table manners, Peter hoped also to civilize them by controlling their behavior.

No less notable than the new dining etiquette were the changes in table settings. Until Peter's reign, tables had been covered with short cloths, the edges of which were used to wipe hands and mouth while eating.[59] Peter introduced napkins from Holland. Before Peter's time, even at ceremonial dinners, plates had been given to individual guests only as a mark of the highest honor. For other meals, including relatively formal ones, each diner had his own spoon for eating out of a communal wooden or clay bowl. Under Peter, however, the communal bowl gave way to individual bowls, and at the most refined tables, to individual plates. As for cutlery, forks and knives previously had been shared among several people, because large joints of meat were carved and served in small pieces at table. But Peter encouraged the use of individual two-pronged forks, although they were not yet *de rigueur*.[60] The elaborate drinking vessels that

the Russians had used for centuries -- *chasha, charka, kubok, stopa* -- were gradually replaced by the shotglass (*riumka* from the German *Römer*) and the goblet (*bokal* from the French *bocal*). The old *kubok* disappeared entirely, except for ceremonial occasions, as did drinking horns made of gilded or silver-plated buffalo and oxen horns. Gone were the silver vases for mead, which required three hundred men to fill them.[61]

The wealthy dined off silver and pewter, and numerous observers report the use of gold plates.[62] Prince Shcherbatov, however, denies such ostentation, claiming never to have seen "a proper silver dinner-service in the Masterskaya Palata"[63] and concluding that the royalty used pewter for their daily meals. This may well be true, but Olearius makes it clear that dearer metals would have been preferable had they ensured greater attention to their care. He was appalled by the "black and repulsive" pewter and silver plate the Grand Prince used for serving foreign ambassadors and was clearly disgusted by tankards "that had not been washed for a year or more."[64]

In the kitchen, the most significant development for Russian cuisine was the introduction of the Dutch range which, contrary to the traditional Russian stove, relied more on a cooktop (*plita*) than on oven chambers. This change necessitated different cooking utensils. The customary *gorshok* or earthenware pot -- perfect for the falling temperatures of the Russian stove --was largely replaced by the *kastriulia* or saucepan (a corruption of the Germanic *Kastrol*).[65] Similarly, the cast-iron pot (*chugun*) gave way to the *protiven'*, a griddle derived from the German *Bratpfanne*. The colander (*durshlag*) likewise entered into Russian from the German (*Durchschlag*).

The foods that were served also underwent transformation. Here, however, Peter's reforms were initially less visible for the simple reason that only the wealthiest families could afford to import new products. Overall availability

continued to be dictated by what was locally produced, and the poor soil surrounding Saint Petersburg was not conducive to good agriculture. (Moscow, with its rich surrounding farmlands, had more variety in its diet, though even there grains and vegetables continued to be the mainstay of the diet.[66]) The provisioning of Saint Petersburg proved to be a serious problem. From the very start, the laborers who built the city subsisted on little more than coarse bread, occasionally supplemented with garlic or a simple gruel of flour and water (*muchnaia pokhlebka*). Just Juel marveled at their apparent acceptance of these rations,[67] though it is hard to believe that they ever felt replete, especially since their paltry wages barely allowed for the purchase of extra food.[68] The high mortality rate of the workers can be traced to lack of nutrition as well as disease.

Because of Saint Petersburg's location, most edible provisions had to be brought in from great distances; freshwater fish were virtually the only readily-available product. To increase access to his new city and thus ensure a better food supply, Peter dreamed of a system of canals that would eventually connect Petersburg with the Baltic, White, Black, and Caspian Seas by means of Russia's central rivers. This grand project began with the construction of a canal to connect Petersburg's Neva River with the Msta and Tsna Rivers feeding into the Volga. Peter also ordered that a bypass canal be built around Lake Ladoga, which was often treacherous to navigate.[69] In 1712 the imperial court moved from Moscow to Saint Petersburg, and in 1713, ten years after the city's founding, construction began on *Gostinyi dvor*, the commercial center, whose design incorporated a canal right in the middle of the building so that boats could unload their wares on site.[70]

The provisioning of Saint Petersburg was shaped not only by the city's geography, but also by its demographics. Peter the Great offered foreigners generous benefits to come to his city and participate in the building of industry

and the development of the arts and social institutions.[71] Petersburg's significant foreign population influenced the city's eating habits, and foods such as waffles and artichokes found welcome reception. Furthermore, the Russians whom Peter had sent abroad to further their education returned with new tastes along with new skills. Seeking more variety in their diet, they began to import exotic foods. When Peter hired a foreigner as his private chef (Johann Velten, the Saxon cook to the Danish ambassador to Russia),[72] the nobility soon followed suit. Thus Russia's first foreign chefs came primarily from Saxony, Bavaria, and Austria.[73] It was only later in the century that French chefs came into vogue.

Peter was eager to acquaint Russians with new foodstuffs and culinary methods from his extensive travels. He is said to have introduced the potato as early as 1716 by putting several in a sack and sending them from Rotterdam to Count Sheremet'ev at his estate. However, it took an ukaze under Catherine the Great to enforce their cultivation, and even then they didn't gain wide acceptance until the nineteenth century.[74] From Holland Peter also imported aged cheeses, which the Russians did not know how to make. Finally, he brought the European method of churning butter from fresh cream.[75] Until Peter's reign, the Russians did not know good butter; the unsalted butter they prepared from sour cream grew quickly rancid. Traditional Russian cuisine relied more often on vegetable oils pressed from nuts, poppies, and hempseed.

The vocabulary introduced into Russian over the course of the eighteenth century reveals influences from the Dutch, German, English, and ultimately French cuisines. Such foreign terms as almond, anchovy, apricot, artichoke, asparagus, biscuit, bottle, bouillion, casserole, chocolate, cocoa, coffee, dessert, fruit, gelée, glaze, kitchen, lard, lettuce, orange, peel, pineapple, pudding, roast beef, sauce, soup, starch, stockfish, tavern, vanilla, and waffle now belong to the standard Russian lexicon.[76] Some of these foods, such as sauce, already existed

in the Russian repertoire, but now they were designated by a Latinate instead of a Slavonic form. Thus *vzvar*, the traditional sweet-and-sour condiment served with meats, became simply *sous*, while the sweet *zaedki* served after a meal became the more fashionable *desert*. Other foods, however, were entirely new, and these became a source of delight and competition among the wealthy, who engaged in a game of one-upmanship in which the stakes grew continually higher. Out of vanity and the need to appear *au courant*, the nobility sought ways to entertain ever more lavishly.

When pineapples were introduced in 1721/22[77] they were embraced with particular passion, and those with the resources began to grow them year-round in hothouses. Most often pineapple was served fresh, but certain well-known gourmands were famed for their special concoctions. At a time when most people had never tasted pineapples, or even heard of bananas, Count Petr Ivanovich Shuvalov cultivated both fruits in abundance and prepared an exotic pineapple wine.[78] One nobleman, Zavadovsky, was not content to eat pineapple fresh or in jam, so he chopped and soured it like cabbage in barrels and then used it for pineapple *shchi* and *borshch*. Not surprisingly, Zavadovsky died in penury, having squandered his fortune on the expensive fruit.[79]

Peter the Great evinced a personal interest in grapes, seeking varietals that could thrive in southern Russia and placing the two-centuries-old Astrakhan winery under the supervision of a French vintner to increase its quality and production.[80] Most of these wines he sent to his own table, but in other areas he had the people's interests more at heart. Near Voronezh he set up an experimental garden to determine which sorts of vegetables could be adapted to the Russian climate, and in 1713 he created a garden for medicinal herbs in Saint Petersburg. This plot lent its name to Pharmacist's Island and eventually grew into an important botanical garden. Peter's interest in botanicals also prompted

him to open the first free pharmacies for the population at large.[81] Not least, he developed the mineral springs that gushed near the newly-established cannon foundry in Petrozavodsk, in 1714 establishing Russia's first spa, "Martial Waters,"[82] where generations of dyspeptic diners subsequently sought relief. Local Petersburg mineral waters were bottled under the Poliustrovo label, which is still sold today.

Not all of Peter the Great's commercial food ventures were as healthful as vegetables, herbs, and mineral waters. He also increased the use of tobacco in Russia. English merchants had imported tobacco through Archangel as early as 1553,[83] and by the late seventeenth century it was already being cultivated in Ukraine and Siberia from American seed. At first tobacco was not regulated, but Tsar Mikhail Fedorovich issued edicts against its use. Anyone caught in possession of the substance risked not only arrest, but torture and death: The miscreant could be flogged, his nostrils torn, his nose cut off.[84] When Peter I ascended the throne he, like his predecessors, forbade tobacco's use. However, he changed his mind after his foreign travels, and from 1697 on tobacco was freely sold and used in Russia. The first tobacco-processing factory was built around 1714 in Kharkov province, but after Peter's death it fell into disrepair, and domestic tobacco production was not revived until the reign of Catherine the Great.[85]

Although various food industries engaged Peter the Great's interest, his first love remained the sea. Thus it is not surprising that he focused particular attention on Russia's ports. The founding of Saint Petersburg had caused trade at the important port of Archangel to decline. Between 1700 and 1718 its revenue fell from three million to three hundred thousand rubles, while Petersburg's grew from nothing to four million rubles.[86] So in 1721, in order to help revive Archangel, Peter issued an ukaze ordering his people to eat ocean fish.

Previously the Russians had used only freshwater fish from rivers and lakes,[87] and many were suspicious of such strange species as cod, whiting, and mackerel.[88] Even into the late nineteenth century the peasantry still used *treskoed* or "codeater" as a pejorative term for the inhabitants of the White Sea coast.[89] But if the peasantry remained skeptical of newfangled foods, the nobility positively reveled in novelty, seeking out the most unusual foods for their tables. Throughout the eighteenth century, they transported flash-frozen fish on sledges from Archangel to Petersburg and Moscow in the wintertime, and once the fish was in their kitchens they competed to create the most sophisticated dishes. This contest led to such ridiculous-sounding preparations as *labardan ograten* [*au gratin]*, where the foreign words were thought to lend a toney flair. [90] *Labardan* gained literary fame in Nikolai Gogol's play *The Inspector General* when the hero Khlestakov has his first taste of the fish. After a long monologue, he leaves the stage declaiming "*Labardan! Labardan!*," which sounds hilarious to the Russian ear.

Under Peter the Great, table service began to evolve toward the sequence of four courses that is familiar today. In the seventeenth century, banquets had begun dramatically with a roast bird such as swan or peacock,[91] but in the eighteenth century cold, open-faced sandwiches with meat or cheese -- a direct borrowing from Dutch practice -- were presented at the beginning of the meal. At the same time, salted and smoked foods including caviar, salmon, sturgeon, herring, pickles, and ham were offered before the main course, an early version of the *zakuski* or hors d'oeuvres which became the hallmark of Russian cuisine.[92] Peter's grandees laid their tables with ham, sausages, and other salted and smoked meats that were prepared with generous amounts of butter, garlic, and onion. After these cold dishes, various soups, roasts, and other hot foods were

served, followed by dessert consisting of fruit offered either fresh or cooked in syrup.[93]

The culinary changes wrought during Peter's thirty-six year reign were so great that by the time his daughter Elizabeth seized the throne in 1741, lemons and oranges were no longer a luxury, and English beer was in greater vogue than traditional Russian brews.[94] If we think of our era as one of celebrity chefs, we need only look at Elizabeth's Russia to find that there, too, the most sought-after chefs received enormous salaries.[95] Peter the Great had been less interested in the actual preparation of foods than in introducing them; he favored the scientific over the gastronomic (though it is curious that in a list of books purchased in 1716, including such predictable titles as Künstliche Machinen vür Wasserkunst Mühlewerk und Feuer Spritzen and Manière de fortifier les places par le plus fameux Ingenieur, avec figures, we find also Delices de la Grande-Bretagne, Delices d'Italie, Delices d'Espagne et du Portugal).[96] But the Empress Elizabeth loved luxury, and during her reign a process of culinary refinement began. Many at court considered Elizabeth's frivolity and taste for things French a relief after the practicality of Peter's reign.[97]

As the century progressed, more and more European influences came to bear on traditional Russian methods, until by the close of the eighteenth century food in the homes of the wealthy was unabashedly French. Russia's most affluent families regularly employed French chefs, who supplanted the Germanic influences of Peter's era. Chic Russians now ate *sup* instead of *ukha* or *pokhlebka*, *sufle* instead of their native *drachena*, an ancient whipped-egg dish.[98] The nobility even went so far as to order pies, breads, and sweets directly from Paris, which arrived in Petersburg within six days.[99] Those who were not content with mail

order simply took themselves to Paris, returning with tales of the latest trends in food and dining.

With so much foreign influence, Russian cuisine lost its simple national character and became increasingly complex. The vocabulary surrounding meat is particularly revealing of the changes that occurred. When Peter took the throne, large joints of meat were still roasted or braised in the great Russian stove, or grilled on a spit, but by the end of century, meat was cut up into small pieces that demanded complicated handling. Fancy menus of the day began to list *bifshteks, entrekot, file, shnitsel'*, and *klops* along with the standard Russian *zharkoe* or roast.

As noble families strove to outdo one another in the preparation and service of food, novelty and luxury became the norm. By the late eighteenth century, meals served by such well-known gastronomes as Prince Grigory Potemkin, Catherine the Great's favorite, provided grand occasions for showing off. Not only did Potemkin have a silver dinner service for daily use, he also reputedly had kitchenware of pure silver, including vast stockpots that held sixty-five gallons each.[100]

Like Shcherbatov, the eighteenth-century poet and playwright Aleksandr Sumarokov found the societal changes unsettling. In a treatise entitled "On the Use of Foreign Words in the Russian Language" he excoriates those who choose foreign words over native Russian ones, making his point with several examples from the culinary sphere. Although he allows for the introduction of foreign words for animals and fruits that are not native to Russia -- such as carp, sardines, capers, olives, lemon, oranges, and bitter oranges -- he maintains that there is no reason to call the woodcock, *kulik*, by the French term *bekas*. In what

way is *sup* preferable to the traditional and evocative Russian *pokhlebka*, which up until now has served its purpose more than adequately? "What need is there to say instead of *plody*, *frukty*? instead of *stolovoi pribor, stolovoi serviz*?...instead of *nachal'nyi povar, kikhenmeister* and even more strangely, *kukhmistr*?...German and French deform our language."[101]

But the conservative voices of Shcherbatov and Sumarokov were lost in the nobility's quest for prestige, and as the nineteenth century drew near, European dining habits were firmly entrenched in Russia. Peter the Great's reforms and the subsequent refinements to the table had broadened and polished Russian cuisine. Russia was entering the western world, with all of its attendant temptations, not the least of which lay in the realm of gastronomy. Adapting western trends to their own needs and tastes, the Russians ultimately made their table quite sophisticated.

The impetus for Peter's reforms lay not so much in the betterment of his people, but in his own personal ambitions. He wanted the prestige of ruling a country that was a player on the world stage, not a "rude and barbarous kingdom."[102] In 1721 Peter proclaimed Russia an empire, and his reforms, so visible on the surface, quickly thrust his nation into the larger world. However, although Peter succeeded in refining his people's manners, it proved much more difficult to change their basic behavior. Ultimately, a Russian bear still resided beneath the new clothes and smooth-shaven faces, only now he held a fork in his hand.

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[1]The *kovrizhka* is a type of *prianik* or gingerbread that was made from the earliest times in Russia. The traditional sweetener is honey; the fact that the description notes the use of sugar emphasizes the cake's extravagance.
[2]A *pud* (pood) is equal to roughly 36 pounds.
[3]*Krasnyi* or "red" sugar most likely refers to sugar paste that has been colored red. Cochineal was introduced to Europe in the late sixteenth century, so it would also have been known at the Russian court. When mixed with alum and tartaric

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acid, cochineal yields a brilliant carmine red, which would have appealed to Russian sensibilities. (Cf. the etymological closeness of *krasnyi* 'red' and *krasivyi* 'beautiful'; the original meaning of the modern word for "red" was "beautiful" [hence, Red Square]). Other early red coloring agents were powdered sandalwood and brasil wood.

For more on sugar artistry see Laura Mason, Sugar-Plums and Sherbet: The Prehistory of Sweets, Devon, England: Prospect Books, 1998, especially pp. 137-150 and 195-199; and Ivan Day, "Sculpture for the 18th Century Garden Dessert," Proceedings of the 1998 Oxford Symposium on Food History, forthcoming.

[4]A.V. Tereshchenko Byt russkago naroda: narodnost', zhilishcha, domovodstvo, obraz zhizni, muzyka, svad'by, vremiachislenie, kreshchenie i pr. i pr., 7 vols, St. Peterburg: Tipografiia ministra vnutrennykh del, 1848, pp. 264-5. Tereshchenko does not provide a source. M.I. Pyliaev offers a slightly different description in his Staroe zhit'e: ocherki i razskazy, St. Petersburg: tip. A.S. Suvorina, 1897, p. 4, citing Opyt trudov vol'n. ros. sobr. pri Imper. Moskovsk. univers., ch. 4, p. 158. In Semnadtsat' pervykh let v zhizni imperatora Petra veikago 1672-1689, M.P. Pogodin also briefly describes the sugar confections and states that the dinner took place in the Faceted Palace on June 29, following Peter's baptism and christening. See Semnadtsat' pervykh let, Moscow: Tip. V.M. Frish, 1875, p. 8.

[5]In 1718 the Moscow merchant Pavel Vestov (Westhoff) was commissioned to build a sugar refinery near Moscow but chose to build it in Petersburg instead. To enable Vestov's refinery to work without competition, the government forbade the import of refined sugar; in return, the refinery had to promise to produce sugar equal in quality to the imported product and to sell it at a price advantageous to consumers. As long as native production fully supplied the domestic market, this sort of protectionism from foreign competition was common under Peter I. See V.G. Geiman, "Manifakturnye predpriiatiia Peterburga," Peterburg Petrovskogo vremeni, edited by A.V. Predtechenskii, Leningrad: Leningradskoe gazetno-zhurnal'noe i knizhnoe izd-vo, 1948, pp. 69-70. Geiman names 1720 as the date when sugar production began in Russia; R.E.F. Smith and David Christian give the date as 1723, citing the Russian historians Solov'ev and Liubomirov. See Smith and Christian, Bread and Salt: A Social and Economic History of Food and Drink in Russia, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984, p. 177.

[6]See Byt russkago naroda, p. 272. The German scholar Adam Olearius, who travelled to Russia on an embassy from Holstein in 1647, reports that "a foreign merchant named Bock told the Patriarch that eggwhite was used to purify sugar," thus making it *skoromnyi*. In The Travels of Olearius in Seventeenth-Century Russia, translated and edited by Samuel H. Baron, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1967, p. 270. Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich's British physician, Samuel Collins, also reports a proscription against sugar on fast days. See Samuel Collins, The present state of Russia, in a letter to a friend at London; written by an eminent person residing at the Great Tsars court at Moscow for the space of nine years, London: Dorman Newman, 1671.

[7]Byt russkago naroda, pp. 259-61.

[8]The Travels of Olearius, p. 208

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[9]"Long" (*dolgii*) pies, oval or rectangular in shape, are differentiated from "round" (*kruglyi*) pies.
[10]*Derzhal'niki* were poor nobility who lived under the patronage of their wealthier relatives, usually in the same house.
[11]"Rospisi kushan'iu boiarina Borisa Ivanovicha Morozova," in Vremennik imperatorskogo moskovskogo obshchestva istorii i drevnostei rossiiskikh, kn. 6 (pod red. Iv. Zabelina), Moscow: v un. tip., 1850, pp. 53-4.
[12]Memoirs of the Polish Baroque: The Writings of Jan Chryzostom Pasek, A Squire of the Commonwealth of Poland and Lithuania. Edited, translated, with an introduction and notes by Catherine S. Leach. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976, pp. 139-40.
[13]Foy de la Neuville, A Curious and New Account of Muscovy in the Year 1689 (translation of Relation curieuse et nouvelle de Moscovie [1698]), edited and introduced by Lindsey Hughes and translated from the French by J.A. Cutshall, London: School of Slavonic and East European Studies, University of London, 1994, p. 57.
[14]Ibid., p. 12. All of the following quotes from Neuville are from this passage.
[15]Kotoshikhin's contemporaneous description refutes Prince M.M. Shcherbatov's later insistence that before Peter the Great's reforms, the Russian tsars ate very simply. See Shcherbatov's description of fish in M.M. Shcherbatov, O povrezhdenii nravov v Rossii. In On the Corruption of Morals in Russia, edited and translated with an introduction and notes by A. Lentin, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969, p. 121.
[16]Grigorij Kotosixin, O Rossii v carstvovanie Alekseja Mixajlovica. Text and commentary by A.E. Pennington, Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1980, p. 92.
[17]M.M. Shcherbatov, O povrezhdenii nravov v Rossii, p. 120. All English translations of Shcherbatov's work are taken from this edition.

Regarding the Russians' dislike for veal, Olearius writes that the False Dimitri (1605-6) was recognized as an imposter because he "himself ordered the cook to prepare veal and other dishes that the Russians, who consider them loathsome, do not eat." See The Travels of Olearius, p. 186. And Neuville states that "[the Russians] eat no veal because of a scruple which is too infamous to name..." In A Curious and New Account of Muscovy, p. 57.
[18]Knigi vo ves' god v stol estvy podavat' (dopolnenie k Domostroiu blagoveshchenskago popa Sil'vestra), in Vremennik imperatorskogo moskovskogo obshchestva istorii i drevnostei rossiiskikh, p. III.
[19]Sigismund von Herberstein, Notes upon Russia: Being a Translation of the Earliest Account of that Country, entitled Rerum Moscoviticarum Commentarii, translated and edited by R.H. Major, New York: Burt Franklin, n.d., vol. I, p. 128.
[20]Ibid.
[21]The Travels of Olearius, p. 156.
[22]Technically, vodka is *khlebnoe vino*, or "wine made from grain," whereas regular wine is *vinogradnoe*, "made from grapes," and often referred to as *frantsuzskoe*, "French."
[23]Notes upon Russia, Vol. II, p. 204.
[24]This story, attributed to a certain Demetrius, ambassador of the Duke of Muscovy, is first reported by Herberstein (Notes upon Russia, Vol. II, p. 204). It is repeated by Tereshchenko in Byt russkago naroda, pp. 202-3, and by the

historian I.G. Pryzhov in Istoriia kabakov v Rossii v sviazi s istoriei russkago naroda [1868], reprint Moscow: book chamber international, 1991, p. 14.
[25]The Travels of Olearius, p. 121. Olearius continues, "However, although they are of excellent appearance and taste, they cannot be stored long, unlike German apples, because of their extremely high water content." This variety is most likely the "Yellow Transparent" that still grows wild in Kazakhstan. USDA horticulturalist Philip Forsline sampled this apple on a seed-collecting trip to Kazakhstan in 1995. He notes that "Flesh flavor is aromatic. Bruises easily. Fruit size is larger than 50 mm. Very blemish free, almost 'Yellow Transparent' color." See the USDA web site http://www.ars-grin.gov/gen/apple.html, query on PI 588859.
[26]The Travels of Olearius, p. 122. Collins also mentions this strange plant, but considers tales of its existence to be "fables, which have not the least shadow of truth." (The present state of Russia..., p. 85.) The apple is also mentioned in Elizabeth Justice's later description of Russia, where she writes: "...they have an Apple, which is called a Transparent Apple; and when it is ripe, is so clear, that you may see the Kernels through it: The Taste is superior to any Apple I ever met with in *England*." Elizabeth Justice, A Voyage to Russia, York: Thomas Gent, 1739, p. 35.
[27]Notes Upon Russia, Vol. II, pp. 41-2.
[28]As recently as 1998 Caspian fishermen caught a thirty-year-old beluga weighing 1,000 pounds and measuring three and one-half yards in length. It contained 110 pounds of caviar. AFP on-line news service, November 16, 1998.
[29]The present state of Russia..., p. 134.
[30]*Tolokno* was staple peasant fare well into this century. It is made by crushing (*toloch'*) oats rather than grinding them. The resulting flour retains all of the nutrients that are lost in milling and has excellent flavor. It is then mixed with water to make a gruel.
[31]L.N. Semenova, Ocherki istorii byta i kul'turnoi zhizni Rossii pervaia polovina XVIII v., Leningrad: Nauka, 1982, p. 214.
[32]Staroe zhit'e: ocherki i razskazy, p. 1.
[33]The Travels of Olearius, p. 155.
[34]A Curious and New Account of Muscovy, p. 62. Elsewhere Neuville notes that "the half-rotten salted fish which the soldier was obliged to eat to keep Lent, which the Russians hold in the month of August, carried off many people [on the Muscovite expedition to the Crimea], and left an enormous number of others unable to go any further." Ibid., p. 27. Neuville was probably correct in his assessment. Dried in the hot summer sun of Russia's continental climate, whole fish were likely to spoil. As H.G. Muller explains, "Both drying and dehydration are accelerated by increasing the temperature of the food, but micro-organisms also grow better at slightly elevated temparatures. So when drying food, there is always a race between desiccation on the one hand, and bacterial growth on the other...If the temperature is high, the food to be dried must be small in size or thin." H.G. Muller, "Industrial food preservation in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries," in 'Waste Not, Want Not': Food preservation from early times to the present day, edited by C. Anne Wilson, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991, p. 108. Wet weather can also increase the likelihood of spoilage.
[35]O povrezhdenii nravov v Rossii, p. 142.

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[36]A.S. Pushkin, "Arap Petra velikogo" (1828), in Sochineniia, vol. 3, Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1971, p. 206.
[37]N.I. Kostomarov, Domashniaia zhizn' i nravy velikorusskogo naroda: utvar', odezhda, pishcha i pit'e, zdorov'e i bolezni, nravy, obriady, priem gostei, Moscow: Ekonomika, 1993, p. 82. [get original pub. date]
[38]Ibid., p. 32.
[39]Iu. Iul', Zapiski, Moscow, 1900, pp. 91-2. Cited in Evgenii Anisimov, Vremia petrovskikh reform, Leningrad: Lenizdat, 1989, p. 33.
[40]O povrezhdenii nravov v Rossii, p. 141. Hermitage is a fine wine produced from Syrah grapes, and the most famous northern Rhone appellation. Beginning with Peter I, it was particularly favored by the Russian court.
[41]Ibid.
[42]Ibid.
[43]Istoriia kabakov v Rossii, p. 38.
[44]Herberstein maintains that on holidays the common people "abstain[ed] from labor, not for divine worship, but rather for the sake of the drink." See Notes upon Russia, vol. I, p. 80.
[45]V.V. Pokhlebkin, Chai i vodka v istorii Rossii, Krasnoiarsk: Krasnoiarskoe knizhnoe izd-vo; Novosibirskoe knizhnoe izd-vo, 1995, p. 210; Kniga o vodke, edited by G. Ivanov, Smolensk: Rusich, 1995, p. 15.
[46]Nicholas Faith & Ian Wisniewski, Classic Vodka, London: PRION Books, 1997, p. 38.
[47]Ibid.
[48]Vremia petrovskikh reform, p. 27.
[49]Iu.M. Lotman and E.A. Pogosian, Velikosvetskie obedy, Sankt-Peterburg: Pushkinskii fond, 1996, p. 89. This anecdote is reported in Staehlin... [from Massie, p. 796]
[50]Nikita Ivanovich Kashin, "Ruskoi soldat, povestvuiushchii o Petre pervom," Ruskoi vestnik na 1808 god, no. 10 (okt.), p. 42.
[51]The Dowager Marchioness of Dufferin and Ava, My Russian and Turkish Journals, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1916, p. 40. Compare the *table machinée* that was popular in royal residences in eighteeenth-century France. This mechanical table (also known as a *table volante* or "flying table") actually disappeared into the floor as another fully-set one descended from above. See Rodolphe el-Khoury, "Delectable Decoration: Taste and Spectacle in Jean François de Bastide's La petite maison," in Taste, Nostalgia, edited by Allen S. Weiss, New York: Lusitania Press, 1997, p. 60.
[52]O povrezhdenii nravov v Rossii, p. 142.
[53]M.I. Pyliaev, Staraia Moskva, St. Petersburg: A.S. Suvorina, 1891. Reprinted Moscow: Svarog, 1995, p. 239.
[54]O povrezhdenii nravov v Rossii, p. 143.
[55]The Travels of Olearius, p. 158. Kotoshikhin also describes the practice of allowing the guests to kiss the host's wife and drink a goblet of double- or triple-distilled vodka. See O Rossii v carstvovanie Alekseja Mixajlovica, pp. 159-60.
[56]For details regarding The Honorable Mirror for Youth and its publication history see Max J. Okenfuss, The Discovery of Childhood in Russia: The Evidence of the Slavic Primer, Newtonville, MA: Oriental Research Partners, 1980, pp. 45-8.

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[57]This is the way that peasants typically cut bread. Urbane Italians also considered cutting bread against the chest a mark of peasant behavior. See Odile Redon, Françoise Sabban, & Silvano Serventi, The Medieval Kitchen: Recipes from France and Italy, translated by Edward Schneider, Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1998, p. 9.
[58]Iunosti chestnoe zertsalo, Saint Petersburg, 1717. Reprint Moscow: Khudozhestvennaia literatura, 1976, pp. 40-43.
[59]Byt russkago naroda, p. 260. Also in V.O. Kliuchevskii, Istoriia russkogo byta: Chteniia v shkole i doma [1867], reprint Moscow: Vash Vybor TsIRZ, 1995, p. 23. The original publication appeared as a supplement to the Russian translation of P. Kirchman's Istoriia obshchestvennogo i chastnogo byta.
[60]Istoriia russkogo byta, p. 23.
[61]Reported by le capitaine Margaret, Estat de l'empire de Russie et Grande Duché de Moscovie, Paris, 1607, p. 20. Cited in Byt russkago naroda, p. 249.
[62]Tereshchenko gives an overview of these accounts in Byt russkago naroda, pp. 247-8.
[63]O povrezhdenii nravov, p. 120.
[64]The Travels of Olearius, p. 155.
[65]Maks Fasmer, Etimologicheskii slovar' russkogo iazyka, Moscow: Progress, 1986, v. II, p. 208.
[66]B.A. Rybakov, Ocherki russkoi kul'tury XVIII veka, part IV, Moscow: izd-vo MGU, 1990, p. 279.
[67]Iu. Iul', Zapiski datskogo poslannika pri Petre Velikom, Moscow, 1900, p. 55. Cited in Ocherki istorii byta i kul'turnoi zhizni Rossii, p. 215.
[68]Peterburg Petrovskogo vremeni, p. 129. Soldiers in Peter's newly-created army similarly had nothing but bread to eat. However, the navy, Peter's pride, fared better, receiving in addition to bread ham, butter, fish, vinegar, and wine. See ibid., p. 134 , and Ocherki istorii byta..., p. 219.
[69]Peterburg Petrovskogo vremeni, p. 88. The Ladoga canal was not completed during Peter's reign.
[70]Ibid., p. 90.
[71]Ibid., p. 138.
[72]Bread and Salt, p. 174. [chk also Staehlin]
[73]Kukhnia petrovskoi perestroiki, Rostov n/D: izd-vo Rostovskogo universiteta, 1990, n.p.
[74]L. Ivanchenko, Entsiklopediia domashnego khoziaistva, t. 1. Kartofel' i griby: 1000 kulinarnykh retseptov, Moscow: Pisatel', 1993, p. 7. Smith and Christian cite the date as 1697-8. See Bread and Salt, p. 199.
[75]Byt russkago naroda, p. 274.
[76]E.E. Birzhakova, L.A. Voinova, and L. Kutina, Ocherki po istoricheskoi leksikologii russkogo iazyka XVIII veka: Iazykovye kontakty i zaimstvovaniia, Leningrad: Nauka, 1972, pp. 337-409.
[77]Ibid., p. 341.
[78]O povrezhdenii nravov v Rossii, p. 222.
[79]Pyliaev, Staroe zhit'e, p. 17.
[80]Byt russkago naroda, p. 277.
[81]Peterburg Petrovskogo vremeni, p. 102.
[82]N.I. Kovalev, Entsiklopediia gurmana, p. 277.

[83]Byt russkago naroda, p. 291.
[84]Ibid., p. 292.
[85]Ibid., p. 302.
[86]L. Jay Oliva, Russia in the Era of Peter the Great, Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969, p. 129.
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[88]V.V. Usov, Ryba na vashem stole, Moscow: Pishchevaia promyshlennost', 1979, pp. 25-6.
[89]N.I. Kovalev, Bliuda russkogo stola: Istoriia i nazvaniia, St. Petersburg: Lenizdat, 1995, p. 203.
[90]*Labardan* is probably a corruption of the old English term *haberden* for cod or haddock, especially the large sorts used for salting.*Labardan* eventually referred even to herring, which Elena Molokhovets calls for in her recipe for *Labardan*. See Elena Molokhovets, Podarok molodym khoziaikam ili sredstvo k umen'sheniiu raskhodov v domashnem khoziaistve. St. Petersburg: Tip. N.N. Kolbukova, 1901, p. 739 (recipe #2611) Reprint Moscow: Polikom, 1991. For an English translation of this recipe from the 1897 (20th) edition of the book, see Joyce Toomre, Classic Russian Cooking: Elena Molokhovets' *A Gift to Young Housewives*, Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992, p. 573.
[91]Notes Upon Russia, p. 128; Staroe zhit'e, p. 3.
[92]See Bread and Salt, p. 174.
[93]Ibid., pp. 3-4.
[94]O povrezhdenii nravov v Rossii, pp. 223-225.
[95]Ibid., p. 223.
[96]"Rospis' o vziatykh knigakh" in "1716 goda," Sbornik vypisok iz arkhivnykh bumag o Petre velikom, pp. 30-31.
[97]Zabelin, khronika, p. 362 [chk]
[98]*Drachena* lacks the delicacy of a souffle made with separated eggs. A half dozen whole eggs are beaten, with flour added gradually to make a smooth, thick batter. Then enough milk is added while beating constantly to make a liquid batter, which is poured into a buttered skillet and baked until light and puffy.
[99]Zabelin, p. 274.
[100]Staroe zhit'e, p. 6.
[101]Polnoe sobranie vsekh sochinenii v stikhakh i proze...Aleksandra Petrovicha Sumarokova, Moscow: v un-skoi tip. u N. Novikogo, 1781, chast' IX, p. 275.
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