

TASTE OF HONEY

“If I hadn’t eaten honey, I would have died forty years earlier.”

(Pythagoras 582 – 496 BC)

Honey is used in the preparation of various dishes and beverages, both in old recipes from our grandmothers, as well as in more contemporary dishes which – quite often – offer unusual and exotic combinations of flavours and ingredients.

We have collected some »classic« and some »modern« recipes which contain honey as an ingredient. Our partners within the project contributed their own national recipes, whilst visitors are asked to share their knowledge, spirit of innovation and creativity with us, and give us your recipe for a dish containing honey.

RECIEPS IN THE PAST

Before sugar was introduced into Europe, honey was the only sweetener available. Because of the small-scale production, it was used in limited quantities and on special occasions. Due to technological development of sugar manufacture from sugar cane and sugar beet, sugar gradually replaced honey.

Lect (lebkuchen) is the name for semi-durable pastry made of honey dough in the form of discs or ornamental figures.

'Lebkuchen' production first emerged in the Slovenian territory in the 17th century, but the trade remained relatively undeveloped until the 18th century.

Originally, the honey dough was made with rye flour with the addition of the salt of hartshorn and potash. The pastry was decorated by hand in wooden moulds, later pressed using tin stencils. The wooden moulds that have been preserved feature around 100 different motifs.



Photo: Borut Križ



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Honey cookies baked in wooden moulds are known as *loški* after the town of Škofja Loka, whilst the hand-decorated forms are called *dražgoški* after the town of Dražgoše where this craft has been preserved the longest.

Did you know? Salt of hartshorn, which was often used to prepare the honey cookies, is a mixture of ammonium hydrogen carbonate and ammonia carbonate. It used to be acquired from the antlers of the hart, which explains its name. Today it is produced by the synthesis of ammonia (NH₃), carbon dioxide (CO₂) and water. It is used as a leavening agent in heavy pastry and biscuits, such as honey cookies and similar.



Janez Vajkard Valvasor (1641-1693) was a Carniola nobleman, scholar and polymath. His notes on mead:

»...Then you can enjoy the tasty and pretty sweet beverage, which is pleasantly sharp on the tongue, though it is nothing but water and honey without yeast or hops. Mead has a beautiful and clear golden colour and can be preserved for a year if properly prepared. It is stronger than any wine, thus it swiftly deals with those who drink it and sends them home well pickled...

Though one may find bad and greedy farmers who adulterate mead during its preparation, with a type of weed called ryegrass. This makes drinkers so wild and enraged - as if they drank the strongest mead - though it is actually quite the opposite...

Farmer's mead is a far better beverage than that made by a confectioner, which tastes of spices and reminds one more of a medicine than a beverage. In Ljubljana, the confectioners also make mead with spices, but it doesn't sell well because people prefer the farmer's mead to the so-called German one...«

Dough recipe:

The honey is first boiled in a kettle, then you add rye flour, ground cinnamon and cloves. The dough is kneaded until it feels firm, left for 24 hours and kneaded again with a utensil similar to that used to break flax. The dough is left for two weeks before being pressed into carved wooden moulds.

Murn honey-bread workshop, Novo Mesto

HONEY RECIPES FROM SLOVENIA

Carrot salad (Slovenia)



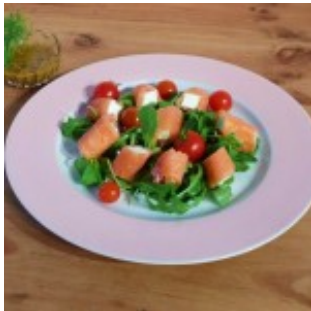
40 g honey, 800 g carrots, 2 tsp roasted ground cumin, juice of one lemon, 60 g soaked dried apricots, 50 g roasted cashew nuts, 0.3 dl olive oil, chopped garlic and fresh parsley, salt, ground white pepper

Peel the carrots and boil in salted water for 8 minutes. Meanwhile, mix the garlic, roasted cumin, honey, lemon juice, olive oil, pepper and salt with a hand blender. Drain the carrots and slice them whilst still warm, into a bowl. Pour the prepared dressing over the carrot and add apricot cubes. Put the salad in a cold place for an hour so that the carrots absorb all the juices.

Before serving, sprinkle the salad with freshly chopped coriander and chopped roasted cashew nuts.

Med (Honey), Kmečki glas Publishing, Andrej Goljat, photo Cveto Sonc.

Salmon roulades with fresh cheese (Slovenia)



200 g fresh cheese, lemon juice, 160 g thin slices of smoked salmon, 2 tbsp silver fir honey, 2 tbsp yellow mustard, pepper, 125 g cherry tomatoes, dill, rocket (rucola), 100 g lamb's lettuce.

Mix the fresh cheese with the pepper and lemon juice. Put the slices of salmon on transparent film, sprinkle with young cheese and roll the salmon around the filling with the help of the film. Chill in a freezer for about an hour. Meanwhile, mix the silver fir honey and mustard and add ground dill. Wash and dry the rocket, lamb's lettuce and cherry tomatoes and garnish the plate. Take the roulade out of the freezer, cut it into slices and arrange on the plate. Sprinkle the dish with balsamic vinegar, olive oil and some red pepper. Serve it cool, with honey and mustard sauce.

Beekeeping Lužar (<http://www.cebelarstvo-luzar.si/recepti/>)

Gnocchi (potato noodles) with honey and walnuts (Slovenia)



Potato dough: 500 g potato, about 200 g white flour, 2 eggs, 50 g butter, salt
Sauce: 120 g honey, 80 g ground walnuts, 40 g butter, ground cinnamon, lemon zest

Potato dough

Boil and peel the potatoes, mash them, add butter and leave to cool. Mix the cooled potato with eggs, flour and salt. Immediately knead the dough and shape it into noodles which are then dropped into boiling salted water. When they float to the surface, pick them out with skimmer, put in cold water for couple of minutes and then drain.

Sauce

Sauté the drained gnocchi in melted butter and honey, sprinkle with ground walnuts, ground cinnamon and lemon zest, stir, garnish by your taste and serve.

Med (Honey), Kmečki glas Publishing, Andrej Goljat, photo Cveto Sonc.

Vegetable soup (Amalia Božnar, Slovenia)

2 garlic cloves, 4 potatoes, 1 onion, a little kohlrabi, a little celery, 6 cups water, 2 tbsp oil, 3 tbsp flour, 1 tbsp mustard, 3 tsp flower honey, 1 tsp basil, 1/2 tsp cumin and 1/2 tsp parsley.

Wash the vegetables, chop and boil for 20 minutes. In a separate pan, heat the oil, add the flour and stir until it turns yellow. Then add honey and mustard. Pour in the water used to boil the vegetables, add the spices and cooked vegetable. Allow the soup to boil for another 10 minutes. Serve hot.

http://www.czs.si/cebelar_recepti.php

Honey bread (Amalia Božnar, Slovenia)

500 g boiled and cooled honey, 200 g sugar, 4 dl milk, cinnamon, cloves, lemon zest, 500 g flour, 120 g chopped walnuts, baking powder, 2 eggs, 2 tbsp rum.

Mix the flour, honey, milk, sugar and spices. Leave the dough for 12 hours. Then add eggs, rum, walnuts and baking powder. Pour the dough into greased tin and bake for 45 minutes at 170 °C. Leave to cool, cut into slices and bake again until golden.

http://www.czs.si/cebelar_recepti.php

Honey roll, Potica (Slovenia)



Dough: 500 g flour, 50 g yeast, 50 g flower honey, 2 yolks, 1 tsp salt, lemon zest, 1 tbsp rum, 2.5 dl milk, fat and bread crumbs for tin, egg white for glazing.

Filling: 300 g honey, 50 g butter, 2 tbsp rum, 200 g ground walnuts, 1 egg, handful of bread crumbs

Mix yeast with 0.5 dl milk, a teaspoon of honey and a teaspoon of flour. Allow the yeast to prove and then stir it into sifted, warm flour. Separately melt the fat, add the remaining milk, honey, egg yolks, salt, rum and lemon zest. Stir well and pour into the flour. Knead the dough and allow it to rise in a warm place. Then turn the dough on to a lightly floured surface and roll it out, one centimetre thick. Spread the filling evenly over the dough and carefully roll. Put in a floured and greased tin and let it rise again. Bake for about an hour at 180 to 200 °C.

http://www.czs.si/cebelar_recepti.php

HONEY RECIPES FROM SWEDEN

Rosemary pork chops with honey and curry cream (Sweden)



Photo: Urša Vodopivec

Serves 4 persons

4 pork chops, 1 / 2 tsp salt, 1 pinch black pepper, 4 sprigs fresh rosemary, 1 tbsp butter & canola oil

Potato wedges: 1 kg potatoes, 1 tsp salt, 1 tbsp butter & canola oil

Honey and curry cream: 250 g quark light, 2 tsp liquid honey, 1-2 tsp red curry paste

Preheat the oven to 225 °C.. Wash and cut potatoes into wedges. Put them in a roasting pan. Sprinkle with salt and drizzle with butter & canola oil. Bake in middle of oven 25-30 min. Mix the potatoes around in some time during roasting. Cut fat edge of chops. Season the chops with salt and pepper. Place a rosemary sprig on each cutlet. Fry the chops in butter & canola oil, first hand with rosemary. Fry chops for 4-5 minutes per side and let the rosemary to remain at the meat throughout the cooking. Mix ingredients for curry paste. Trim the fat from the edge of the meat. Serve with curry cream, potato wedges and salad.

Ribs with honey glaze (Sweden)



Photo: Katarina Stanovnik

Serves 6 persons

1 kg thick-cut pork ribs, 2 tbsp butter & canola oil, 1 tsp salt

Glaze: 4 tbsp honey, 4 tbsp butter & canola oil, 2 tsp soy, 2-3 tsp ground ginger, 2 pinches black pepper

Preheat the oven to 175 degrees. Brush the damper with butter & canola oil and sprinkle with salt. Add ribs on a rack with the fat side up. Place a roasting pan in a little water in. Bake in centre of oven about 1 1/2 hr. Turn the ribs once during cooking. Mix together glaze. Brush the ribs on bone side with half the glaze and cook for another 10 min. Turn over and brush the flesh side, fry 10 minutes to. Cut ribs to pieces.

Lime fillet (Sweden)

For 4 persons

500 g pork tenderloin, 1 tsp salt, butter, 1dl water, 2 cups sour cream, 2 tbsp veal stock, 1/2 - 1 tsp sambal oelek, 1 tsp soy sauce, 1 tbsp honey, shredded peel and juice of 1 lime

Cut the meat into slices and season with salt. Fry them in butter in a frying pan. Whisk together water, sour cream, veal stock, sambal oelek, soy sauce, honey, lime zest and juice in a low and wide saucepan. Add the meat and let it simmer for about 5 minutes. Serve with couscous or rice and fried vegetables.

HONEY RECIEPS FROM CZECH REPUBLIC

Widgeon on honey (Czech Republic)

For one piece of widgeon:

Duck meat (1 widgeon), 100 g honey (forest bee honey), 200 g orange, 0.5 dl red wine, flour, oil, salt.

Put a cleaned and salted widgeon in the frier and fry approximately one hour at 170°C. While frying pour over honey and baste where necessary. Take out the fried duck, powder the rest with smooth flour, cook and add red wine. Pour it over the duck placed on warm slices of orange.

Honey cuts – Medovník (Czech Republic, originated from Russia)



In a warm bath warm up egg, fat, sugar and honey and then fold in 22 dg of smooth flour. Mix the second half of the smooth flour with soda and sift it on the rolling board. Add the honey mixture and make out smooth dough. Let it rest in the fridge for a while and then roll out 3 cakes (or 2 and more) and bake at 200 °C on a baking tin lined with baking paper and bake till it turns golden. Soften the butter cube.

While baking, prepare a cream. With a semi-wholemeal flour and milk cook a paste and cool it. Rub up the butter and slowly whisk the floury paste in it. Add sugar and if you want also a little bit of rum. Arrange the cuts in layers: spread the first cake with a half of the cream. Spread the second cake with jam on one side and lay this side on the cream. Spread the second side of the second cake with the other half of cream. Spread the last cake with jam on one side and lay this on the cream. Decorate with chocolate icing.

Let the cuts stand till the next day and serve with a whipped cream at pleasure.

HONEY RECIPES FROM HUNGARY

Honey-cake (Hungary)



There are several recipes but the main ingredients are flour, pounded sugar, honey and eggs. This is one of them.

The ingredients are mixed, the paste is kneaded, let it rest in cool place, flattened, then shaped. The paste can be formed easily but if it is warm it might become clammy.

Finally, the cake is decorated and baked.

Decoration

- It can be decorated with whites of eggs beaten to a stiff froth
 - It is glazed with egg-white due to which it becomes glossy
 - It is glazed with red paint
 - It is covered with whites of eggs beaten to a stiff froth which makes it white
 - It is covered with cocoa fluid which makes it brown
 - It is decorated with seeds (almond, sunflower, marrow, sesame)
- Other ornamental elements: mirror or ornamental paper

Honeyed macaroon (Hungary)



3 eggs, 100 g granulate sugar, 50 g frozen margarine or butter, 700 g flour, 1 level tsp sodium bicarbonate, nut, walnut

The eggs, sugar, honey and butter are mixed until they become foamy, then the flour is added to the paste gradually, finally the sodium bicarbonate is added, and all this is kneaded thoroughly.

The paste is rolled out on a floured moulding-board until it becomes 3 to 4 mm, it is cut into pieces to taste, nut or walnut is put on the top of every piece and it is baked in hot oven (200 degrees). Do not burn it because it becomes bitter. It should be protected from air; in metal box it can be stored for weeks. The longer it is stored the more delicate it will be.

HONEY RECIPES FROM PORTUGAL

Honey Pudding (Portugal)

½ tsp ground cinnamon, 1 lemon, 10 eggs, 2 tbsp butter, 3 tbsp rosemary honey, 350 g sugar
For decoration (optional): cherries in syrup, egg threads

Lightly beat the eggs and sugar until you make an eggnog homogeneous. Add half the softened butter and honey, then add the lemon zest and cinnamon. Mix together and pour on a previously greased with butter.

Bake for 45 minutes and then make sure it is cooked by inserting a toothpick in the centre (the pudding is done if the toothpick comes out clean). Let cool and unmold it. If desired, garnish with egg threads and well drained cherries.

Olive oil and honey pudding (Portugal)

¼ teacup olive oil for greasing, 500 g sugar, 8 large eggs, ¼ teacup olive oil, 4 tbsp honey, zest of 1 lemon

Grease a baking dish for pudding (20 cm diameter x 6 cm) at ¼ cup (tea) of olive oil and place in freezer. Leave for about 10 minutes. In a bowl place the sugar, eggs, ¼ cup olive oil, honey and lemon zest. With the help of a whisk or wooden spoon, beat well until the sugar dissolve. Remove the baking dish from the freezer and pour the mixture from the bowl. Bake in preheated oven at 200 °C + / - 45 minutes. Check cooking the pudding sticking with a toothpick. Will be ready when it gets out clean. Let the pudding sit for 10 minutes before it to unmold serve. Serve it warm with vanilla ice cream.

Note: You can also put a little olive oil on top before serving.

Sagres Honey Cake (Portugal)

250 g sugar, 300 g flour; 8 eggs; 2 dl olive oil, ¼ l honey, 10 g baking powder

Beat the egg yolks well with sugar.

Separately, a pan, put the olive oil and honey that lead to heat to boiling.

Allow to cool and add to the sugar with the beaten egg yolks. Mix the flour with the baking powder and finally the egg whites.

Pour into greased baking sheet with butter and sprinkled with flour, it takes the oven to cook.

Cut into squares when cold. You can also bake in shape and decorate with the taste.

HONEY RECIPES FROM SCOTLAND

Burns Night Crannachan (Scotland)

25 g (1oz) of pinhead or coarse oatmeal, 250g (10oz) of fresh raspberries, 300ml (½ pint) double cream, 1x 15ml tbsp honey, extra raspberries and honey for garnishing

Toast the oatmeal in a frying pan on a high heat until lightly brown. Blend the raspberries in a liquidiser until smooth. Whisk the cream to a soft consistency. Mix in the oatmeal and honey. Fold in the raspberries. Serve in glass bowls and decorate with honey and fresh raspberries.

HONEY RECIPES FROM DENAMRK

Olive oil and honey bread (Denmark)

1-2/3 cup warm tap water (or 1-1/2 cups water if you mix it by hand), 1-1/2 tbsp olive oil, 1 tbsp honey, 1 tsp salt, 4 cups whole wheat flour, 2 tsp (or 1 packet) yeast

I generally mix this in the bread machine and bake it in the oven. If you mix it by hand then you'll need to use a little less water.

To Mix and Bake in a Bread Machine: Measure all of the ingredients into the bread pan in the order listed. Make a well in the flour and sprinkle the yeast into it. Set the machine to the Whole Wheat Cycle. On my machine this lasts for 3 hours and 40 minutes. Press Start and let the machine work its magic. Remove the cooked bread from the pan after baking and allow it to cool before slicing. Make a 2 lb loaf.

To Mix in a Bread Machine and Bake in the Oven: Measure all of the ingredients into the bread pan in the order listed. Make a well in the flour and sprinkle the yeast into it. Set the machine to the Dough Cycle. On my machine, this lasts for 1 hour and 30 minutes. Press Start and let the machine work its magic. When the dough is done mixing and rising, take it from the bread machine and punch it down. Shape into a loaf. Place it into a well oiled 9 by 5-inch bread pan. I use an extra tablespoon of olive oil to grease the pan. Roll the dough in the oil so it is well coated. Cover the dough with a napkin or waxed paper and allow it to rise for about 45 minutes, or until doubled in bulk. Bake at 375 °C for 30 to 35 minutes. It will be done when you can turn the loaf over, thunk it and hear a dull hollow sound. Remove the bread from the oven and turn it out of the pan. Allow it to cool before slicing. Make a standard sized loaf of homemade bread.

To mix & bake by Hand: Get out a large bowl. Measure all of the ingredients into it. Mix and mash everything together until you get nice soft dough. If the dough is too soft to knead, then add a bit more flour. When the dough is of good consistency for kneading, go to work. Knead the dough for 15 minutes by the clock. Time it to make sure you don't shave a little time off due to muscle exhaustion. Keep kneading until the dough is satiny smooth.

Now coat the dough with a little extra olive oil and allow it to sit in a warm spot to rise. I leave it in the mixing bowl, but you can use a clean or new bowl if you prefer. You want the dough to double in bulk which can happen in as little as 1 hour or as long as 2 hours. Be patient and let the yeast do its work. When the dough is well risen, punch it down. Shape the dough into a loaf shape. Oil your bread pan with a bit more olive oil. Place the loaf in the pan and turn it round to coat it with oil. Cover the pan with a napkin, dishtowel or waxed paper. Allow it to rise for about an hour, or until doubled in bulk again. Bake at 375° for about 30 to 35 minutes. It should sound hollow if you tap the bottom with your finger. Remove the pan from the oven and tip the bread out of the pan. Allow it to cool before slicing.

Danish Honey Hearts (Denmark)



400 g honey, 200 g butter, 2 eggs , 500 g flour, 2 tsk baking soda, 2 spsk cold water, 2 tsk cinamonkanel, 2 tsk cardamom

Melt the honey and butter in a saucepan, then cool until mixture is lukewarm. Add eggs, flour, spices and baking soda and blend with the mixture. Let the dough rest at least a day, then knead the dough and roll until approximately 4mm thick. With a cookie cutter cut out hearts. Bake at 190 degrees for 8-10 minutes. When cooled, frost the hearts with egg white frosting made from 2 egg whites, 2 tsp vinegar + icing sugar. Spread frosting on hearts.