RECIPE

Erbsensuppe
(German Split Pea Soup)

This recipe is based on one that appears in *German Home Cooking* by Dr. August Oetker (Bielefeld, 1963). The addition of a little flour gives the soup a smooth texture, while celery root adds an earthy note.

- 2 tbsp. extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 slices bacon, finely chopped
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 1 rib celery, finely chopped
- 1 large carrot, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 small celery root, peeled and finely chopped
- Kosher salt, to taste
- 2 tbsp. flour
- 10 sprigs flat-leaf parsley
- 8 sprigs fresh thyme
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 lb. green split peas, rinsed and drained
- 2 large smoked ham hocks (about 2 lbs. total)
- Freshly ground black pepper, to taste

1. Place oil and bacon in a 6-qt. pot and cook over medium-high heat until crisp, about 6 minutes. Transfer bacon to paper towel with a slotted spoon; set aside. Add onions, celery, carrots, and celery root, season with salt, and cook, stirring occasionally, until soft, about 10 minutes. Stir in flour; cook for 3 minutes.

2. Tie parsley, thyme, and bay leaves together with kitchen twine; add to pot with peas, ham hocks, and 7 cups water. Bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce heat and simmer, covered, until peas are very tender, about 1 hour. Remove from heat. Discard herbs. Transfer hocks to a plate to let cool; pull off and chop the meat; discard fat, skin, and bones. Stir meat into soup, season with salt and pepper, and ladle soup into bowls. Sprinkle with reserved bacon.

A CHRISTMAS STORY

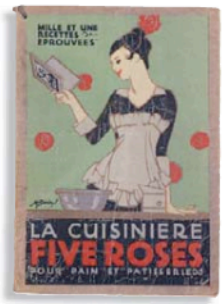
THE YEAR my family moved to Germany, my dad decided to commemorate our first holiday in the country by booking us on a bus trip into the Taunus Mountains, north of Frankfurt—a daylong adventure that included lunch, dinner, and the chance to chop down our own Christmas tree.

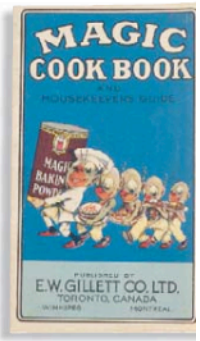
The excursion did not begin auspiciously. Mom, Dad, my three-year-old brother, Casey, and I piled into the trusty Volvo we'd had shipped over from the States, but when Dad turned the key, the engine wouldn't start. We made it to the bus depot in time, but when we tried to board, the driver claimed that we had paid for just one person. After Dad produced our receipt, we were allowed to get on, only to find that passengers were already squeezed in two to a seat. Three uncomfortable hours later, we stopped at a roadside *Gasthaus*, where we were met with cold blood sausage and potatoes. Mom was horrified. Dad nibbled cautiously. My brother and I made do with crackers. Outside, the sky darkened and the temperature dropped.

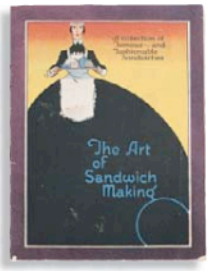
When we arrived at our destination, things didn't improve. There weren't enough axes. There weren't enough trees. In the end, we had to trudge into the woods to find a worthy specimen. As our legs sank deeper into the snow, Casey and I staved off hunger by sucking on

icicles. Finally, Dad spotted a fine six-foot fir, chopped it down, and dragged it back to the bus. Unfortunately, all the roof space had been taken up by other trees, so, with pine needles flying, we had to wrestle our tree on board.

Wet and exhausted, we groaned when the bus parked in fr the same *Gasthaus* for di But, to our surprise, this we received a dose of salv generous bowls of erbsens a fragrant, nourishing spl soup. Each steamy, sn ham-and-vegetable-pa spoonful warmed our b and revived our spirits. a few minutes of silence, m started to laugh; soon, my followed suit. Maybe it wa erbsensuppe, or maybe my pa knew, then and there, that the a good Christmas story they tell and retell for years to —*Todd Coleman*







OH, CANADA!

CANADIAN COOKS, take note: Elizabeth Driver is after the treasures buried in your kitchen drawers. For more than a decade, Driver, a Toronto-based food historian, has been exploring Canada's rural routes and highways, shuttling from research libraries to small-town museums to the dining rooms, attics, and pantries of ordinary homes—all in the hope of uneart the ephemera of her cou culinary past. The result o quest is the new compen *Culinary Landmarks: A Bi raphy of Canadian Cookb 1825–1949* (University Toronto Press), a 1,257- encyclopedia that catalo nearly every cookbook, ch pamphlet, and community ipe collection printed in Ca

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: COURTESY WILLIAM COLEMAN; COURTESY UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO PRESS (6); LANDON NORDEMAN

during the 124 years the book covers.

Lacking the historical authority of French cuisine and the romantic frontier mythos of America's, Canadian food has long been something of a cipher, even for those interested in the subject—which makes Driver's work all the more groundbreaking. "I realized that until we knew what cookbooks had been written and published in Canada and where you could find them, no one could really understand and appreciate the scope and breadth of our history," she explains. Until the mid-20th century, Canada had no national library charged with collecting and recording culinary texts (and unfortunately, the cache that was shipped to the British Library for storage was destroyed by a bomb during World War II), so Driver had to prepare her project from scratch. Indeed, nearly half of the volumes profiled in *Culinary Landmarks* were discovered in private homes. "Cookbooks are the source of a real grassroots kind of knowledge," Driver says, "and it has been protected and saved and valued by ordinary people."

Driver's bibliography, which includes a handful of recipes, in effect traces the evolution of Canada's cuisine and its diverse regional components. Two centuries ago, when British influences dominated Canadian foodways, there was little difference between a cookbook published in Nova Scotia and one published in Alberta. But over time, the combined forces of climate, landscape, and immigration began to shape new Canadian cooking styles. After 1900, the Atlantic provinces could lay claim to such regional gems as Miss Nora E. Smith's scalloped clams (*National Sea Food Recipes*, Nova Scotia, 1923) and Mrs. John Robinson's moose meat pie (*Fredericton Cathedral Organ Fund Cookery Book*, New Brunswick, 1907), while folks in Winnipeg were savoring fare influenced by the Icelandic, German, and Ukrainian families who settled there.

Other books cited in *Culinary Landmarks* reveal as much about cultural mores as they do about diet and tastes. Take the entry for the *Five Roses Cook Book*, a hugely popular compilation, created by a Montreal-based flour company, that was published, in both English and French, in 1915. Driver reproduces the covers of both editions; the English-language version depicts a wholesome-looking child in mary janes and a toque, while the apparently more libertine Quebecois are treated to a likeness of a slender, chic woman in a revealing French-maid ensemble.

Light reading this is not, but despite the book's sprawling purview, its 2,276 entries perform a remarkable service: they resurrect the legacy of cooks who would otherwise have been lost from the historical record. Open to any chapter, and you find the work of groups of women who got together to raise funds for hospitals, schools, and churches or simply to preserve their kitchen know-how in writing for a new generation of cooks. Even the tiny subarctic mining town of Yellowknife, perched on the northern shore of the Great Slave Lake, had its scribes: the Daughters of the Midnight Sun, who generously shared recipes for bannock and caribou à la mode. There is an intimacy to these glimpses of lives lived long ago and far away. For her part, Driver remains hungry for more knowledge of her country's patriot-cooks. "I can't believe I'm still interested in the subject." Driver says. "But for me, this is the beginning of a story, not the end of it."—*Lea Zeltserman*

SMALL BLESSINGS

A FEW YEARS AGO I INVITED friends over for a holida featuring kitschy cocktail foods. It had seemed like a g at the time, but a few hours before everyone arrived, I p that everything I'd prepared, from the sweet-and-sour meatball clam dip with Triscuits, seemed far more ironic than delicious. peration, I ransacked my refrigerator for something else to whip u I remembered canapés, those dainty toasted white-bread cutou pied with savory toppings. Although canapés hail from the tradition, they became popular in the States in the 1930s, when can home cooks were masters of creative thrift. With a hodgep everyday ingredients, I made canapes with Roquefort–walnut t anchovy–herb butter, and even a tasty chopped-ham spread wit pickle relish. Alas, the retro crab dip went uneaten; the meatba sampled, then ignored. But the canapés were such a hit that I've r them for every cocktail party I've hosted since. —*Dana Bowen*

METHOD

Roquefort and Walnut Canapés

This creamy blue cheese spread (pictured above, bottom left) mak perfect counterpoint to crisp toast. For recipes for the other canap tured above, go to SAVEUR.COM/CANAPES. Using a 2" round cookie cut out 32 circles from sixteen 1/4"-thick white bread slices, preferab peridge Farm Very Thin Sliced Bread. Brush both sides of each circl melted unsalted butter and transfer to a baking sheet. Toast brea 400° oven, turning once, until light golden, about 10 minutes. Mea beat 8 tbsp. softened unsalted butter, 4 tbsp. softened cream che tbsp. brandy, and 1/2 tsp. dried mustard powder in a medium bowl. 8 oz. crumbled blue cheese, preferably Roquefort. Season with kosh Spread about 1 tbsp. cheese mixture onto each bread circle and g with a flat-leaf parsley leaf and a piece of walnut. Makes 32 canapés