TRADITIONAL FOODS AND DISHES IN HUNGARY

‘Gulyas’ – beef soup – made of beef, carrot, potato, onion, garlic, oil, parsley, celery, ‘csipetke’ (small egg dumplings)²,⁷

‘Hortobagyi huos palacsinta’ – crepes filled with meat from ‘Hortobagy’ – filling is made of ground meat, either beef or pork, and prepared like stew.²,⁷

‘Pörkölt’ with ‘galuska’ – stew with egg dumplings – stew is made of pork, beef or poultry, oil, onion, garlic, pepper, spices.²,⁷

‘Turos csusza’ – pasta with cottage cheese sprinkled with bacon.²,⁷

‘Korozott’ – cottage cheese with paprika, salt, and garlic served on bread or toast.²,⁷

‘Retes’ – strudel – can be filled with sweetened cottage cheese, apple, sour cherry, or pumpkin.²,⁷

Palacsinta – crepes – can be filled with sweetened cottage cheese, apple, jam, fruit, and chocolate syrup²,⁷

TRADITIONAL EATING PATTERNS

An average Hungarian family will eat breakfast at home. It usually consists of bread, butter, cold cuts, eggs or cereal.² Some children eat lunch at home, while others eat in the school, which consists of soup and a main course, which is often a vegetable stew (fozelek, and very nutritious.² In some traditional families, the father may go home to eat lunch; however more common to eat at cafeterias.²

Around 10 a.m. adults as well as children in school eat snack called ‘tizorai’, which can be toast, a simple sandwich, sweets, coffee or tea.²

The family gathers around the table for dinner around 7 p.m. It is usually a warm meal: homemade stew (porkolt) or soup, ham and eggs.

Weekend lunch traditionally is a big family meal, which includes homemade meat soup with noodles, meat with rice or potato accompanied by pickled vegetables.²

Hungarians do not frequently use ready-to-eat meals.⁵ Traditional ‘fast’ foods can be made quickly at home when time is pressing.⁶

MAJOR RELIGION IN THE CULTURE

More than half of Hungarians are Roman Catholic; others are Calvinist, Lutherans, Greek Orthodox, and Jewish.²,³

Religion does not have major effect on diet.² Jewish people very rarely follow kosher diet.²
**THE FOOD AND CULTURE FACT SHEET OF HUNGARY**

**HOLIDAY FOODS**

**Christmas**

Bakeries are filled with challah-like cakes filled with poppy seeds and walnut called ‘beigli’ or ‘kalacs’.

Christmas Eve Dinner: fish with potato salad and tartar sauce.

Christmas Day dinner: stuffed turkey, chicken, or roasted duck with cabbage and potato.

**New Year’s Eve** is called ‘Szilveszter’: Hungarians drink sparkling wine or champagne.

Dinner: roasted suckling pig with red cabbage and potato.

**Easter**

Hungarians eat boiled colored eggs with boiled smoked ham, grated horseradish, and challah bread for breakfast. Catholics usually abstain from eating meat.

Farms’ markets are popular and preferred.

Red pepper is ground – ‘Piros Arany’ meaning red gold.

Fruits are turned into jam, or compote at home. They make sugary syrup called ‘szorp’, served as a beverage with water.

Sour cream is a must have in a Hungarian kitchen.

‘Turo’ is very popular; the closest ingredient in USA is cottage cheese.

Grilling is not common in Hungary; but cooking ‘gulyas’ outdoors in a big cauldron called ‘bogracs’ is.

Soup is an everyday meal in Hungary.

Hungarians were forced to be economical; therefore their food is not complicated. It is easy to prepare it in the USA.

**CURRENT FOOD PRACTICES IN BOTH THE NATIVE COUNTRY AND IN THE USA**

Hungarian diet: traditional ingredients regardless of economic status.

Hungarians are mainly meat eaters; pork is dominant.

Very few Hungarians are vegetarians.

Shopping: in local grocery stores.

Farmers’ markets are popular and preferred.

Butcher’s shops carry all animal parts.

Root vegetables are often used.

Beverages

Palinka is an extremely strong alcoholic beverage, like brandy.

Hungarian mineral water is famous for its high mineral content. They drink both mineral and tap water.

Coffee is usually a strong espresso served with a glass of water.

‘Tokaji aszu’, is a top quality white wine from the Northern hills, and ‘Egri Bikaver’ is red wine from the Southern hills.

**SYMNOLOGICAL FOOD WITH SPECIAL MEANING**

Bread: celebrating the new bread symbolizes prosperity.

Festivals: celebrating harvest of important crops with cooking competitions for ‘gulyás’ and ‘halászlé’.

**‘Paprikas csirke’ - Paprika Chicken Recipe**

2 tbsp lard (or oil)

2 large onions, peeled and minced

1½ tsp salt

2–3 tbsp sweet paprika

1 or 2 tomatoes, chopped

2 lb chicken pieces

1 banana pepper, sliced into rings


