



"In cold weather the proper ingredients are ginger, pepper, cinnamon and cloves."

Bartolomeo Platina -
De honesta voluptate,
1474

Flavor Profile

Sauerbraten

Pot Roast with a German Accent



The first days of Autumn coincide with the celebration of Oktoberfest. Cooler temperatures renew our seasonal appetite for some of the heartier dishes that typify German cuisine. One of the most iconic dishes in the German culinary repertoire is *sauerbraten*.

Sauerbraten meaning "sour roast" (*sauer* = sour + *braten* = roast), gets its name from the fact that it is a large piece of meat traditionally marinated several days or as long as several weeks in an acidic liquid. Sauerbraten is made in numerous regions of Germany and the acid used ranges from cider vinegar, to wine and even buttermilk. Acid marinades are a long culinary tradition for their ability to break down connective tissue and tenderize meats as well as for their preservative effect. Food historians date the emergence of sauerbraten to the Roman Empire when Julius Caesar purportedly sent ceramic pots of beef marinated in wine to the newly founded Roman colony of Cologne.

Sauerbraten is most commonly made with a beef roast, often from the knuckle or bottom round. Other meats such as pork, venison and even horse meat have all been known to be used in this preparation. Gourmands consider the version of sauerbraten from the Rhine River Valley or *Rheinischer sauerbraten* to be some of the best. This regional variation is finished with lemon juice and raisins. Other variations may be finished with tomato puree or sour cream. A very common practice when making sauerbraten is to thicken the gravy with crushed ginger snaps or *lebkuchen*. This technique enhances the flavor of sweet spices used in the marinade.

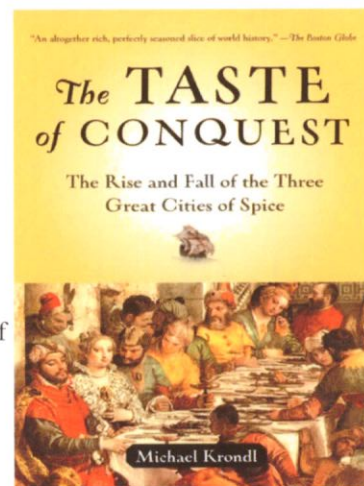
The most popular accompaniments for sauerbraten are braised red cabbage and potato dumplings. Though beer is the most common beverage to serve with sauerbraten, it is a dish that pairs well with a full bodied red wine. So, give your autumn menu some *gemütlichkeit* with some savory sauerbraten.

Hot Print

The Taste of Conquest

The Rise and Fall of the Three Great Cities of Spice

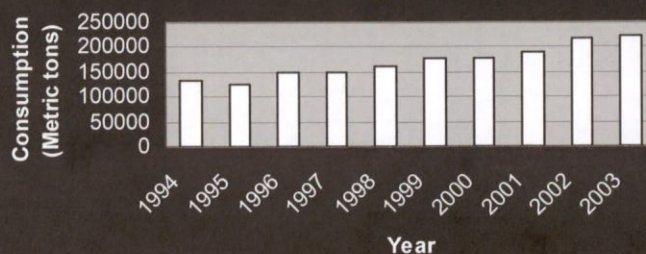
The Taste of Conquest by Michael Kronidl is an engrossing exploration of the impact the human desire for flavor has had in shaping history and culture. Indeed, three great empires of Europe were founded on their ability to deliver flavor in the form of tropical spices to the continent. The first European empire built on the spice trade was Venice. The power of the doges emanated from the money brought into the city state from its trading fleet. The Venetians controlled the Mediterranean from its lagoon all the way to Constantinople, the western terminus for spice caravans from the East. After landing in Venice spices were trekked north over the Alps into Central Europe and the rest of the continent. The comparatively bland food of the Middle Ages was enlivened with spices from the East during the Renaissance. Spices weren't simply flavor, they were fashion, status, currency and medicine.



Lisbon's short-lived period of unrivaled power in Europe came from its ability to wrest the spice trade away from Venice. The desire for spices fueled Portuguese exploration of

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U.S. Spice Consumption



Source: www.fao.org