

КАРТА ТАЛОНОВ НА ВОДКУ ДЛЯ Г. МОСКВЫ

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2. При утере не восстанавливается.
3. Подписка производится по закону.
4. Товары реализуются в течение времени, указанного на талоне.

МТГ.

Март  
ВОДКА

Февраль  
ВОДКА

Январь  
ВОДКА

Цена 10 коп.

Slava Brodsky

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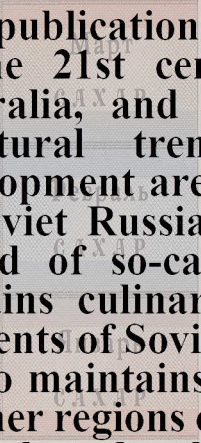
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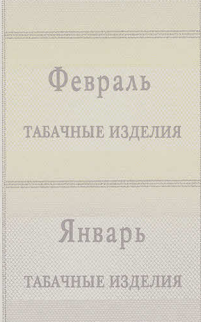
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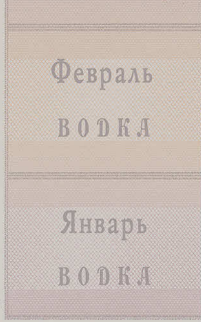
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ISBN 9781936581245



Slava Brodsky

**THE GREAT COOKBOOK  
OF DEVELOPED SOCIALISM**



*Manhattan Academia*

Slava Brodsky  
The Great Cookbook of Developed Socialism

Translation from Russian by Olga Zvenyatsky,  
authorized by Slava Brodsky

Manhattan Academia, 2023  
[www.manhattanacademia.com](http://www.manhattanacademia.com)  
[mail@manhattanacademia.com](mailto:mail@manhattanacademia.com)  
ISBN: 978-1-936581-24-5

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*To my friends,  
with whom I have feasted*





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## **Preface to the Russian Edition**

While sorting through old papers in the attic of my Millburn home recently, I found one of my old manuscripts. It was a cookbook, which was essentially ready for publication. I wrote it back in Moscow in the late eighties of the last century. The final additions were likewise made there at the very beginning of the nineties. The book was never published. Although it could have been quite valuable and useful in those days. In current times, it seemed to me at first, it had lost the relevance of the moment as a cookbook per se. Although those of my friends who had once upon a time read the manuscript and who currently live in Moscow have told me that in some ways, it has retained its relevance to this day. Nonetheless, initially I thought there was no reason to publish the book now. However, after rereading it, I changed my mind. And here is why.

Probably, not everyone knows about communism being built in Russia in 1980. Everyone there had been waiting for it for such a long time. Yet when it finally dawned, it was somehow overlooked. Although during this very period, the communists themselves changed their minds a bit and began to call what they had built developed socialism. They probably thought that there would be some

other phase, more advanced than this developed socialism. And then they would call it communism.

Many believe that there was no other phase. But I think the communists were right. After all, what was happening in the eighties was not yet total communism. And it is probably very fitting to call it developed socialism. Communism, as defined by the communists themselves, is the final stage of a socialist society. And in 1990 ensued the final stage of socialism and its transformation into communism. And the fact that it was the final stage and therefore it was quite legitimate to call it communism, became obvious just two years later.

But in actual fact, it doesn't really matter whether one believes that communism ensued in 1980 or that it descended in 1990, while in the eighties there was just developed socialism. The difference between these two periods is visible, but not very significant. And many presume that communism and developed socialism are actually one and the same.

At any rate, whatever your belief, one thing I can say for certain is that I have lived under communism. And at times, I think about how lucky I have been in this regard. While I really feel sorry for people who have not lived under communism. My sympathy towards them extends in an informational sense. Because of the wealth of information that has completely bypassed them. It goes without saying that I sympathize even more with those who have lived under communism. But that sympathy is of a completely different kind.

And it occurred to me that perhaps my cookbook might be interesting to those who have not had the good fortune of living under communism. Not because of its culinary recipes but because of that very information from a

first-hand witness of the era.

Again, one never knows where, when and in what form socialism might resurrect itself. Just when it appears to have completely and irrevocably discredited itself, someone plasters an assortment of socialist slogans on their election campaign banner. And for some reason (apparently, by some universal law of nature) these slogans again become attractive to the multitudes.

Now imagine - in some new place, real socialism is built, which will inevitably turn into advanced socialism and then into communism. And lo and behold, there you have my book, ready and waiting. So it will certainly be easier and most likely, more enjoyable for people to live under communism with my cooking recipes. For one thing, they will realize that they are not the first to be so lucky. And for another, they will be able to use the book for its intended purpose.

It was due to the combination of reasons above, that I decided to publish my book at this point in time. And I hope the readers will receive it favorably.

Slava Brodsky  
Millburn, New Jersey  
June 11, 2010



**THE GREAT COOKBOOK  
OF DEVELOPED SOCIALISM**

**for gourmets and ordinary people  
of Moscow and Leningrad**





## Introduction

I have always been annoyed by cookbooks with recipes consisting of obscure ingredients. So from the very beginning, when the initial idea about a book came to me, I had already decided that first and foremost, it would be practical. I decided that the recipes I would offer would contain only those ingredients that it would be possible (though not always, but at least with some tangible certainty) to buy at the local store. Exotic ingredients should never be part of any recipe.

There is not much point in talking about how to cook buckwheat porridge if it's practically impossible to get your hands on buckwheat. Or one might ask, what's the use of a recipe that has bananas as one of the ingredients. You may have the good fortune of buying a couple of bananas once in your lifetime. But even then, it's unlikely that you would want to "ruin" them. You would bring them home, show them to everyone. Divide them into several pieces, according to the number of women and non-adult men in the family. And after that, each individual would do what she or he deemed best with their allotted share.

So I had no doubt whatsoever that my book would

be practically leaning. What puzzled me initially was to whom I could address it.

Obviously, I wanted my readership to be as broad as possible. And I asked myself, could I write a book that would be relevant beyond the borders of the country where I lived? Of course, I replied to my own question in the negative. And this negative response flowed directly from my intention to include only practically fulfillable recipes.

Indeed, how would I know what it is possible to buy in some distant place like, say, New York? I have no idea when and in what form potatoes are sold there. I don't know whether they make sauerkraut in New York. They may not even have a clue as to what it is. How would I know what kind of fish appears on the shelves of their shops and how often? I very much doubt that it is possible to buy frozen capelin in New York. I can't explain why, but somehow, I can't imagine it would be. Although I fully accept that it might be much easier to find frozen whiting there than it would be here, in Moscow or in Leningrad.

Even today, after the curtain surrounding the outside world has lifted somewhat, we still know very little about distant lands. And the information that has gradually begun to filter in often tends to be quite contradictory. On one hand, you are told fantastical stories about some wine shops where dozens of types of beer are sold in unlimited quantities. On the other hand, it may be impossible to find simple, ordinary things.

A friend of my Moscow acquaintances somehow ended up in Boston. For about a week, he was staying at the apartment of distant relatives who were

vacationing somewhere else. At some point, the handle of the frying pan he was using broke off. Naturally, he decided to fix it. To accomplish this, all he needed was one solitary screw, or even a nail.

So he went out into the street in search of that single nail or screw. Why he went into the street instead of going to the store, I cannot say. It's possible he didn't know exactly which store it was that he needed. Or maybe it was difficult for him to get there. And anyway, why go to the store to get one single nail? Truly, was it not easier to just find that nail on the street? The streets should be teeming with them. Well, I assume he thought the streets should contain a multitude of such nails.

And so he wandered the streets of Boston, trying to find one single nail. (All this was conveyed to me by my Moscow acquaintances.) So, do you think he found that nail? No, he did not. And he was filled with sorrow on that count.

I cannot even fathom such a situation here in Moscow. If you don't find a nail out in the street the moment you begin your search, you can walk over to any construction site. There, you can dig up as many as a hundred nails in just a couple of minutes.

So why should such a blunder occur in Boston? Could it be that nails are expensive there? Or maybe the streets there are swept every month? No one can really answer these questions.

Here is what else that friend of my Moscow acquaintances told them. When he was flying to America, their plane landed in Canada. On the plane they were given vouchers for free Coca-Cola. Naturally, he ran out and tried to find some. And while he was

looking for where it was being distributed, he passed all sorts of goods displayed right in the aisles.

And as he started checking out the prices, a sweater caught his eye. But when he looked at the price tag, he saw that the sweater cost more than four hundred dollars. He multiplied this by the ruble-to-dollar exchange rate and came up with some astronomical figure. It even occurred to him that maybe he should fly straight back, he said. Since he only had about three hundred dollars with him, with which he was going to buy a used computer in New York in order to re-sell it in Moscow for forty thousand rubles and use that money to buy a summer house in a Moscow suburb. Before he left Moscow, he buzzed my friends' ears incessantly about what he'd found out regarding all these computers. And he had even found out that such a computer, with which you could buy a summer house in a Moscow suburb, is called a "second-hand computer" in New York.

And here is another situation that confirms my belief that far from everything is easy to understand about distant lands.

My father recently decided to start writing to his nephew (my cousin), who had moved to America around twenty years ago and settled in New York. My father calculated that striking up such correspondence had now become completely safe. So he started asking his nephew all sorts of questions about life in New York, the prices of this and that, and whether it was easy to find it all.

To my father's great surprise, his nephew began to spout something not very clearly understandable. And

that's when dad wrote to him, "okay, forget about all my previous queries, which are probably too complicated, but please answer one simple question – is it easy to buy matches in New York and how much do they cost?"

Dad told me that this information would be quite sufficient for him. If he found out the price of matches, he would be able to formulate an overall picture of life in New York.

And once more, much to my father's surprise, his nephew replied something not terribly convincing. He wrote that matches were probably easy to buy. But he didn't know exactly where they were sold or how much they cost.

Dad complained to me about this. He talked about how difficult it was, after all, to understand THEM. Was it really possible that his nephew actually did not know the price of matches? And what did that "probably" mean? How was it possible to say that matches were PROBABLY easy to buy?

That's how I moved away from the idea of making my book international, so to speak. And I decided to write it solely for my compatriots. As a rule, I think cookbooks should only be produced domestically. Well, perhaps that does not apply for every nation. But for ours, this is indisputable.

Also, I thought about the huge difference between the fantastic variety of foods supplied to stores in major cities, as opposed to the scarcity of products in the shops of villages and provincial towns. And one of Ernest Hemingway's precepts came to mind – to write only about what you know well. And that's when I made the decision to write my book solely for Muscovites and

Leningraders.

In my book, I go beyond just providing recipes and offer many relevant tips, with the help of which the reader can execute those recipes much more easily. And in this regard, I think my book will be more useful for Muscovites than for Leningraders. Here is why.

Leningrad residents survived the siege. Few survivors remain today. But it is crystal clear to me that the memory of the blockade and blockade skills are passed down from generation to generation. And purely blockade-specific techniques work now, under communism. Here is the most recent example.

During the siege, desperate people tried to use bread ration stamps of people who had died. And in current times, the use of food ration stamps that belong to dead people is, unfortunately, quite a widespread tactic. As soon as food coupons were introduced in Leningrad, this technique almost immediately returned to the surface of the communal memory of Leningrad residents. I have no doubt that Muscovites will follow suit. But a bit more time needs to pass before this happens.

So what relevant tips do I provide in my book? A special place among them is assigned to useful advice on the purchase and storage of food.

Everyone knows that non-perishable food (such as sugar, salt, all grains) should be purchased in the greatest quantities possible. Not much needs to be added to that. As for the care that needs to be afforded to perishables, it probably wouldn't hurt to provide a few reminders.

There are two main points on that front. The first

is that the food item should be treated with care and stored correctly. The second point involves being able to rescue a food item that is on its last legs. Of course, I would never presume that you could possibly throw out any food to which something, somewhere happened to some degree. But I do believe it could be particularly useful to get acquainted with the advice of someone extremely experienced in this regard.

A friend of mine advised me to include a special section for war veterans. Without a doubt, that advice came out of ignorance. For some reason, there is a widely held belief that war veterans enjoy food benefits. I can attest with certainty that this does not correspond to reality. My father is a war veteran. And he received store coupons in fulfillment of the communist-society-building program just once and only quite recently. Those coupons were for underpants and shoe polish. It's unlikely that anyone would call underpants a food item. And God forbid a time would come when shoe polish would be included in that category.

The original title of my book was "The Cookbook of Developed Socialism." And although it is now becoming more and more obvious that the country has entered the final phase of communism building, I decided to leave the official name of the current period in the title of the book, nonetheless.

By the time I finished working on the book, the supplies to stores in major cities had deteriorated significantly. And some products, which I had previously imagined as easily obtainable, began to appear less and less frequently. This led me to wonder whether I should exclude some of the recipes from the

book. Ultimately, I ended up rejecting that idea. Instead, I merely edited the title, calling the book "The Great Cookbook of Developed Socialism." By virtue of this title, I wanted to emphasize that not all recipes were easily fulfillable. I included some of them in the expectation of an occasional lucky break – a successful purchase. And I really hope that these circumstances will not result in too much displeasure among the readers of my book.

Slava Brodsky  
Moscow  
July 11, 1991



# APPETIZERS

## *Tasty pork fat*

This dish consists of just two ingredients: pork fat and garlic. At first glance, they may seem to be almost impossible to find. But this is not quite true. Obviously, the most challenging part is getting the pork fat. Garlic makes an occasional appearance at the shops. And it can keep in the refrigerator for quite a long time. In extreme cases, it can be purchased at the farmers' market.

I know that people go to the market only when someone in the family is sick. But garlic is an exception. Of course, it is very expensive there. But for our purposes, only a small quantity is necessary. So it won't break the bank to buy one head at the market.

Now on to the pork fat. In this instance, I wouldn't advise anyone to make a trip to the farmers' market. Pork fat can quite easily be hunted down in a regular grocery store. You must just exhibit a bit of patience.

Do you need to go inside the store to determine whether anything has appeared on the shelves? No, you don't. If something is available, then first of all, an unusually large crowd of people will be visible through the store window. And secondly, you will sense it even without needing to look through the window. How does this feeling arise? It's hard to say. How do you determine that an old person is standing before you, as opposed to a young one, even though he does not have wrinkles? There is a certain, to a degree, subconscious set of signs that enables you to recognize this. The same applies to the store. Perhaps

people come out of the shop with inspiration emanating from their faces. Or maybe they enter it with a look of overwhelming concern. Or it could be something else, not quite perceptible. But one way or another, you immediately know that something you can actually buy is there, inside.

So let's presume you found out that the shop is selling pork. It is highly unlikely that you will end up among the first to arrive at the counter. In all probability by the time you enter the shop, a huge queue will already have formed there. So what do you do now? Well, it's a somewhat lengthy and complicated process. I will help you figure it out.

Go to the very front of the queue and stand about three meters from the counter. It's crucial that everyone gets used to you and understands that you are not trying to cut in before it's your turn.

The butcher is cutting up the pork. The best cuts are disappearing, and the inferior ones remain. When these substandard pieces fill the entire space, the saleswoman announces that there will be no other pork. Not everyone understands that this is not true, and therefore the pork continues to disappear from the counter, albeit at a reduced tempo. And that is why your time has not yet come. You need to wait around fifteen more minutes. If you make a move now, the queue will kill you.

Wait until all the decent cuts have been sold out. Usually, the saleswoman will ask those at the very front of the queue whether they will be buying anything. That's where you come in. Only don't rush. Wait a couple more seconds and say that you are prepared to buy the worst, fattiest cut.

Without a doubt, at that moment a barrage of curses

will befall you. Everyone will hate you. And you must behave accordingly. It is best to put your hands up in the air and hold them there for a time, until everyone calms down. Raised hands are a very effective technique. But something else needs to be added. You need to find some kind of soothing words to quell the queue. For instance, you might say, "If someone buys the bad cuts, then the butcher will resume carving." And immediately start offering to those at the front of the line to grab these bad cuts.

It is highly unlikely that those at the front of the queue will immediately begin to grab the substandard cuts. In all likelihood, they will tacitly agree to cede this right to you. Don't wait for everyone to concur with this. Don't worry if someone continues to scold you. Act with confidence. Request a couple of cuts at once. Say that you want "this one and this one." Then, when the saleswoman throws them on the scales, add, "and this one." After a short pause, you can say, "and that one over there." At this point, a sizable rumble will emanate from the queue. But the most important thing for you is how the saleswoman reacts to this. And without a doubt, she, tormented by the demands of the fussy customers at the front of the line, will pile everything you pick onto the scales.

You cannot use this method to buy beef. Because there are no bad cuts of beef. That is, obviously there are lots of bad cuts. I would even say that all the cuts of beef are usually bad. But they are all pretty uniform. And that's why the method I'm offering you is only suitable for pork.

In short, a brief while after you had entered the store, you will be exiting with a sizable bundle of the purest pork fat of your very own. Well, not exactly after that brief a while. You will have spent an hour waiting for an opportune moment. The weighing will have been very fast – a mere

five to ten minutes. Then you'll still need to stand in the check-out line. (Later, I'll give you some tips on getting a spot in the queue). That's probably no more than half an hour. Returning to the counter to pick up your pork fat is nothing (ten minutes at most). If you add it all up, it will still amount to a couple of hours that you would have spent there. Which of course, is nothing compared to the time that would have been spent by someone who waited their turn in the queue honestly.

Precisely the same strategy can be used for almost anything. That's how I purchased a "Dnipro-11" tape recorder. It was a long-time dream of mine. I like listening to music. And as you are well-aware, this is (and always has been) under the strictest prohibition. Whereas with a tape recorder, one's music-listening opportunities expand to an extraordinary degree. That said, buying a tape recorder is absolutely impossible. And everyone knows that.

There is, however, one little-known trick. You have probably begun to guess what it is, having been introduced to my story about the pork fat. If not, I can explain everything from the very beginning.

It's not that tape recorders are never for sale. Sometimes they are. But the first to find out about this, and in advance, are the relatives and friends of those who sell them. Everyone else will only find out in the morning of the day of the sale. This type of news travels extremely fast. Let's say if tape recorders become available for sale at eleven in the morning at a shop on New Arbat, then by twelve, all of Moscow knows about it.

So what is one to do? Race to the store? Nobody does that. Because it is absolutely clear to everyone that there are not enough tape recorders even for the relatives and friends of the shop workers. That's why nobody jumps up and

rushes to the store.

Nobody but me. I don't want to boast, but the ingenuity with which nature imbued me from birth gives me a great advantage over an ordinary Soviet buyer. In such cases, I set out for the shops immediately. But here it's necessary to exercise a degree of cruelty and drop everything. A sick wife, the need to feed the children, an urgent work conference – none of these constitute an excuse. What may be a once in a lifetime opportunity cannot be missed.

That day, by the time I arrived, all the tape recorders had already been sold. But the huge queue failed to disperse. It was no simple matter for me to fight my way to the counter. When I finally made it there, I noticed that there was an unsold tape recorder on one of the shelves. I asked the saleswoman what the deal was. And she replied that the tape recorder was defective. So I asked the people at the head of the queue whether they wanted to buy a non-working tape recorder. No one expressed such a desire. Not everyone might be brave enough to spend a hundred and forty-five rubles (more than a month's salary) on a non-functioning tape recorder.

In short, a mere hour later, I was carrying my "Dnipro-11" tape recorder out of the store. The following day I took it to a warranty repair shop. And two weeks later, I got it back, in working order. End of story.

Now let's get back to the moment when you are leaving the shop with a sizable bundle of pork fat. So finally, you've arrived home. You unwrap your pork fat. You notice it contains occasional streaks of meat. You can roast those sections and celebrate your luck. As for what remains, spike it with garlic, dress it with a thick layer of salt, and off to the freezer. Only I beg you, don't eat the pork fat immediately

after salting it. Let it cure. In addition, pork fat straight out of the freezer is a delicacy. Be a bit patient. And when you finally take it out of the freezer a few days later, that's when I bid you, bon appétit!

## *Cheese*

We do not eat cheese every day. We serve it as a delicacy when guests come for a visit. And cheese has always been and will always remain one of the most popular appetizers. You can see this for yourself at every gathering. Long before you have served the main course, all the cheese has usually been devoured. There may be herring or some sort of salad left over, but for cheese to remain on the table is simply not possible.

Although these days, I probably wouldn't believe that there could be herring or salad left on the table either. Yet not all that long ago, such a thing was easily possible.

In the old days, say twenty or so years ago, I remember how even cheese had the potential of remaining on the table. Especially among wealthy families. And at the time, there was a lot of talk about how to store sliced cheese in the refrigerator without it drying out or becoming misshapen. One day someone came up with a phenomenally simple method: to add a sugar cube to the container of cheese. How and why the cheese remained completely fresh in that container – no one knew. Nor does anyone today. I would imagine that now, nobody would even remember the very method of storing cheese with sugar. No one remembers

this for the simple reason that these days sliced cheese doesn't have a chance of being left over on the festive table. These days, the challenge lies not in how to preserve the cheese after the guests depart. The challenge lies in how to save the cheese before the guests arrive.

And now a bit about what can happen to cheese if it has been lying for a long time (hopefully in the refrigerator) in wait of particularly esteemed guests. Nothing all that terrible should have befallen it. However, it may have gone a bit moldy.

Well, when we say the cheese has gone a bit moldy, that does not literally mean that it is somewhat moldy. It may very well be the case that its degree of moldiness is quite substantial. But even in such a scenario, it is customary to say that the cheese has gone a bit moldy.

Why, then, do we phrase it that way? Well, what would you have us say in such cases? That the cheese has molded to hell? No. Cultured people don't talk like that. And you live in Moscow or Leningrad, don't you? That means you are a cultured person.

So what to do if the cheese has gone a bit moldy?

Fortunately, mold is always quite noticeable on cheese. Furthermore, mold on cheese cannot permeate all the way through. This makes the battle with it much easier. You just need to cut off the moldy parts.

I once observed a friend do just that. She cut off a thick moldy layer off all six sides of the chunk of cheese. And although the layers she had cut off were thin, she ended up having to discard a substantial amount of cheese.

In some advanced cases, this method is the only feasible one. But most of the time, it is sufficient just to scrape off the mold with a knife. Only it's essential to



employ a knife with a smooth, rather than a serrated edge.

My recommendation to gourmets is to go over each side of the cheese twice. Initially, the main layer of mold gets scraped off. Then the knife gets washed. The second scraping is carried out with very gentle pressure. And it is carried out for the sole purpose of removing any bits of mold inadvertently remaining after the first scraping.

Now the cheese can get a spot on the festive table. It may so happen that one of your guests will detect the flavor or aroma of mold. In that case, ask him whether he has ever eaten French cheese. And without waiting for a response, move the cheese platter away from him and closer to the other guests.

### *«Olivier» Salad*

In order to prepare this delectable appetizer, you will need two exceedingly rare ingredients – green peas and mayonnaise. But since this dish is served only on particularly special occasions, you may entertain some hope of being able to buy them in advance. And if you've had the fortune of obtaining them, you and your guests will be rewarded.

The other ingredients of the salad are relatively easy to find. You will need boiled potatoes and pickled cucumbers. All the above will have to be mixed in any ratio, depending on what you have in your possession and in what quantity. Just go easy on the pickled cucumbers.

The salad can be garnished with green herbs.

Unfortunately, these cannot be procured in advance. For that reason, it is more than likely that you will be lacking them on your special occasion.

Here is my suggestion for a simple solution. Take a page of green paper. Fold it in half and glue it together. Now you have a sheet of paper which is green on both sides. Cut intricate shapes out of it, resembling sprigs of parsley. Stick three or four of these cut-outs into the salad. It will look beautiful.

Some people will probably wonder about how to get their hands on green paper. This is simple enough if you possess even the most basic hoarding skills.

In Moscow and Leningrad, various international exhibitions are organized, albeit rarely. At these exhibitions, representatives of foreign companies hand out catalogs of their products, totally free of charge. Each of these is printed on phenomenal-quality paper and contains a multitude of colorful pages. Obviously, there are many more people wanting to get one of these catalogs than there are actual catalogs. So in order to avoid excessive competition, my advice to you is to stand next to something that is not of particular interest to everyone. I wouldn't plant myself in an area that exhibits cameras or tape recorders. Instead, ensconce yourself among some sort of pumps and wait patiently. Most importantly, don't fuss. If you do manage to score a catalog, don't immediately ask for another one. Pretend that you are reading it. Then the company representative may be deceived and hand you a few more brochures. With skillful and calm conduct, you will be in possession of a stack of trade catalogs in no time.

I hope you understand that it is best not to rely on luck. And I trust that you will hide the brochures before heading

for the exit. Otherwise, the KGB guards may confiscate them. Of course, the probability of such a situation depends on which pavilion you are exiting. If, say, it's Finnish pumps, then the likelihood of sneaking the brochures out is reasonably good.

One time I faced the challenge of trying to slip the catalogs out of an Israeli books pavilion. The KGB men were lined up at the exit in tight rows. This is what I did. I stuffed the brochures in the back of my pants, pulled my shirt out and slowly advanced towards the exit. As a precautionary measure, I assumed an absent-minded, boring facial expression, as though I was thinking about something else. On that occasion, no one stopped me. But while I was heading for the exit, I was filled with regret over failing to have practiced the maneuver in front of the mirror the day before.

Now back to our festive dish. You've cut the intricate parsley leaves out of green paper and stuck three or four of them into your Olivier salad. Now you can serve it to your guests!

## *Herring in a Fur Coat*

Later I will talk about how to determine the freshness of fish. With herring, things are considerably simpler. Its unsightly appearance does not necessarily bode any trouble. At first glance, your herring may seem completely spoiled. Usually due to its rusty color. Nevertheless, its taste can still

be excellent. At any rate, neither I nor any of my friends have ever got food poisoning from eating herring. In fact, I've never even heard of any such cases. And what provides the guarantee is the heavy degree of salting of the herring.

And now on to the actual recipe.

It goes without saying that it's necessary to give the herring a thorough rinse. Maybe even to soak it. That is, to place it in water for several hours.

Then you need to thinly slice and arrange it on the bottom of a herring bowl. After that, cover it with boiled, grated beets mixed with mayonnaise and chopped boiled potatoes.

Yes, here mayonnaise is also simply vital. Unfortunately, it does not lend itself to long-term storage. It can only be stored for extended periods in glass jars. Around two years ago, I had the fortune of buying ten plastic jars of mayonnaise. And I started pondering how to retain its freshness. It was clear that merely putting it in the refrigerator would not make it keep for more than a few months. So I had no choice other than to load it into the freezer. Unfortunately, when I retrieved it from the freezer around half a year later, I was extremely disappointed. The mayonnaise had separated. And in spite of my best attempts to mix everything back together, much was lost in the taste department.

However, if you come across plastic mayonnaise jars, do not hesitate - store them in the freezer. There is no other way to preserve them. I would think it's better to have mayonnaise out of the freezer than not to have any at all. I also believe that no matter what, your herring in a fur coat will turn out delicious and your guests will be quite happy with it.

## *Salted and Dried Capelin*

All you need is capelin and salt. When capelin is called for, it's not all that easy to find. Although it often occupies store shelves, and no one buys it. And the reason they don't buy it lies simply in human folly. Because people don't know how good it is when dried. And as a result, it is sometimes undeservedly labelled as a strafbattalion or punishment squad.

When you stumble upon capelin in the store, my advice is to buy as much of it as possible. At least three or even four kilograms.

Salt it and let it sit for a day. Don't be afraid to overdo it on the salt. The capelin will not absorb more salt than necessary.

Now you need to string all your capelins onto something. The easiest material to use for this purpose is wire. This can be found in the vicinity of pretty much any construction site. Just be sure to clean any rust off your wire and wash it thoroughly.

You will be stringing the capelin through the eyes. And any residual rust will, one way or another, find its way inside the fish heads. What do you do in that case? Should you throw out the heads?

No. That would be unnecessarily wasteful. Many people don't like to eat fish heads. I consider that to be a big mistake. The head of a fish is probably the tastiest part. So what to do? Does some kind of a wire substitute exist?

Here I will again express the hope that you possess

some level of hoarding aptitude and that you can dig up some rigid thread among your possessions. The catch is to twist it and make it multi-stranded. And of course, the best substitute for wire would be thick fishing line.

Now that you have strung all your capelins onto a wire, thread, or fishing line, you need to find somewhere to suspend the bundles. By the way, when all the capelins are hanging in rows, that's when the strafbattalion image comes to mind. But I must say, this association is not an unpleasant one for me.

So where will you string up your strafbattalion? If you live in a communal apartment, you can hang your entire project outside the window. Personally, I live in a separate apartment that has a balcony. And on the balcony, it's possible to hang up even more bundles than I need. Therefore, I have no problems whatsoever with capelin suspensions.

Well, almost no problems. The thing is that my strafbattalion starts dripping salty water. And a few days later, that turns into dripping fish oil. Needless to say, everyone in the household suffers from the strong fishy smell. Fortunately, this does not last long. After a week, everyone gets used to the smell, even though it becomes more intense with each day.

Here is another minor problem that arises. At some point, flies start to assault the capelin. What can you do about this? I will explain exactly what you can do.

It's best not to do anything. If you cover the capelin even with something as thin as a cheesecloth, the natural flow of air will be impeded. And a high probability will ensue that the capelin will not dry out sufficiently fast. Consequently, it may rot a little. So please let those flies land on your capelin. As far as I know, no one has ever met his

demise because of flies.

How long does it take to dry capelin in the open? That depends on the weather. If the weather is hot, one month may suffice. In bad weather, two months may not be enough. Either way, you can taste your capelin after just a few days. It will not yet be dried capelin. It will be salted capelin. But I can guarantee that you will experience solely positive gastronomic sensations.

Don't let your capelin get overly dry. After a couple of months, once it turns a nice brownish color, you will need to put it in the refrigerator.

Here is a question for you. Do you throw out used plastic bags? No, of course not. Only dimwits would do that. I'm certain you don't throw them out. You wash your bags, dry them, and store them somewhere in your kitchen. And now they will become extremely useful. I strongly advise you against storing capelin in the refrigerator without encasing it in bags.

If you failed to listen to my earlier advice and bought less than two kilograms of capelin, then you will end up with nothing to put in the refrigerator. By the time the capelin is ready, you will have tasted all of it away. What can you do then? Reassure yourself that people learn from their mistakes.

In any case, I hope that you will be able to store at least something away for a special occasion in the future. And when you proffer your capelin to your friends, they will no doubt be absolutely amazed at how delicious it is. And it is very likely that they will ask you for a recipe. Just keep in mind that if there are gourmets in the ranks of your friends, they don't need to know about the flies.

## *Sliced Salami*

It's unlikely anyone would disagree that salami embellishes any festive table. It does not need to be cooked. All it requires is slicing. And everyone has long known how to slice it before serving. Naturally, thick slices are out of the question. Only idiots would do that. The sliced circles should be translucently thin and cut sort of at an angle. Then these circles won't be mundanely circular, but elegantly oval.

Yes, I know, I know – circles cannot be oval. And if you do have something oval, then it's in no way related to circles. But that's what a sweet young girl once told me in a forest belt between two immense square fields of sunflowers near the city of Saratov. And I still find it very charming.

Actually, the challenge lies not in how to slice salami, but in how to obtain it. But if you repeatedly venture out to various shops in the course of a month before, say, your birthday, then you should eventually get lucky.

Unfortunately, all stores currently have a demeaning rule: to release a mere two hundred grams of salami per person. What advise can I offer here? None, I'm afraid. None whatsoever.

Well, not entirely. There is still a thing or two you can try. It doesn't cost you anything to tell the saleswoman that your son had been there with you all along, but just ran off somewhere at the last moment. And that you will kill him for that. After that, twist your face into a nervous smile.

Instead of your son, you can mention your wife or husband. And in doing so, it's important to express your indignation with maximum vigor. You can (and actually



should) call your husband a fool. Or in the case of your wife, you can grumble something unintelligible through gritted teeth and stumble in the middle of the phrase. The saleswoman will fully understand everything and may take pity on you.

Get a spot in the check-out queue while you are lining up for the salami. The salami queue moves slowly. For that reason, reserve several spots in the check-out queue. Line up at a few different registers.

By the way, not everyone knows how to get a spot in a queue correctly. One might think this would be very straightforward. But here too ingenuity is a must.

You need to attract as much attention to yourself as possible. So how does an ordinary customer reserve a spot in a queue? He asks, "Who is last in line?" and when someone replies, he says, "I'm behind you." And that's all.

This, of course, is completely unacceptable. Who do you think will remember you? Picture yourself being able to return to that queue only after ten or fifteen minutes. Who will recall you then? Most likely no one.

So how do you queue up correctly?

Well, naturally, you ask who is last in line. Then you inquire who is second to last. In addition, you ask who is in front of the second-to-last person. Now it's necessary to get into a conversation with all these people. And not just any conversation. You need to say something memorable. A woman might be told that she looks like Sophia Loren. It doesn't matter whom she actually looks like. And you are not doing this for the sake of flattery. You are doing this with a very pragmatic goal in mind. When you return to the queue and everyone insists that you were never actually in that queue, you exclaim, "What do you mean?! Don't you remember? I'm the one who said you look like Sophia Loren."

If someone in the queue is reading a newspaper, you can ask what it says about the weather. If it's summer, say you heard that snow is expected tomorrow. If it's winter, say rumor has it that the temperature is expected to reach twenty degrees Celsius. If someone is reading the sports section, announce that Bashashkin scored an incredible goal yesterday by somersaulting over himself, though unfortunately, into his own team's goal. The more ridiculous your comment, the more likely you are to be remembered.

Many people think that it's necessary to wait until someone lines up behind you. Obviously, that wouldn't be at all bad – to wait until someone lines up behind you, that is. But what if you urgently need to run and check on one of your other queues? What do you do then?

Ask the woman in front of you to warn others that you are queued up behind her. She'll probably shrug her shoulders unenthusiastically. Don't pay much attention to this. But be sure to say something memorable. For instance, announce that you are going in for surgery tomorrow. Why would you say that? Not important. What matters is that you don't lose your spot in the queue.

I would even go as far as to claim that the key to your grocery acquisition success lies in your ability to get and hold your place in the queue. And if you become proficient in this, you will always have elegant oval circles of salami adorning your festive table.

**SOUPS**  
**(FIRST COURSE)**

## *Chicken Soup*

The most important thing in making chicken soup is to get your hands on a chicken. Everything else is pretty straightforward.

Pluck the large feathers from the chicken by hand. Burn the rest off using a gas stove. Place the chicken in salted water and boil for about two hours.

Without a doubt, it would never occur to anyone to throw out the chicken neck. However, some people cut off the head. This is obviously a grave and unforgivable mistake. And the trouble lies not in the act of the removal of the head. The head can, and even should be severed. It's throwing it out that is in no way permissible. The same can be said about the chicken feet. Combining all these parts will not only increase the amount of the broth, but also significantly embellish your entire meal.

So what should you do after the chicken is cooked? I hope you don't need to be reminded that it costs two rubles and sixty-five kopeks per kilo. Indeed, that is very expensive. On top of that, this exorbitantly priced chicken was not exactly easy to find.

A workmate of mine told me recently that all this is completely baffling to him. Raising chickens, he said, is incredibly easy. And it's only in our parts that it's so expensive. Everywhere else around the world chicken costs a fraction of the price of red meat. So he simply doesn't understand why we don't raise them on a mass scale. And if we don't know how to raise them, then why can't our

intelligence agents spy that out? After all, look at how much they have spied out. They've spied the secrets of the atomic bomb. And the schematic drawings of all sorts of engines, airplanes, steamships, rockets – they've spied all that too. Computers, televisions, tape recorders, refrigerators – all spied as well. Anything from large factories to tiny screws – every single thing spied. Even all sorts of different books – look at how many of those they've spied out. But ask how to raise chickens, and for some reason they cannot spy on that.

Well, unfortunately, I cannot answer such complex questions. I can only provide answers to simple questions. So I will try to dish out advice to anyone who is cooking chicken soup and is lacking an innate sense of frugality.

Remove the chicken from the broth. You will use it to prepare the main course (see recipe for “Boiled Chicken”). Leave the chicken entrails, head, neck and feet in the pot. Now add diced potatoes and onions. Cook all that for another half an hour.

When serving the soup, award the chicken head to someone who has recently accomplished something exemplary. For instance, to a child who has earned a good grade in school. In the absence of anyone with exemplary accomplishments, it is customary to serve the chicken head to the head of the household.

## *Exquisite Borscht*

How would you answer the question, “What is the most important component of borscht?” Do you think it's

beets? Nope. The main component of borscht is water. Thank God you don't live in Feodosia, where water is turned on for a couple of hours, only once a week. You have as much water as you'll ever want. Just make sure that you let the tap run for a bit, so that rust or other nasty stuff doesn't make its way into your borscht.

What vegetables do you put in your borscht besides beets? The answer is obvious – whichever ones you have. And what are you likely to have? Why, cabbage and potatoes, of course.

If you don't have potatoes, cut up the cabbage and put it in a saucepan to cook. If you have potatoes but no cabbage, then you first need to boil a couple of potatoes. Then mash the potatoes and throw them back into the same water you cooked them in before mashing.

Next, while the cabbage or mashed potatoes are cooking on one burner, start boiling the beets on the other one. Peel the cooked beets, grate them, and put them in the saucepan that occupies the other burner. Bring everything to a boil. But don't keep boiling it. Otherwise, the redness of your borscht will inevitably fade and turn to a dirty shade of brown.

I hope you have no issues with salt. Don't skimp on it. I detest under-salted borscht. Not in the sense that I wouldn't eat it. I would certainly eat it. I simply meant that I hate it when the borscht is under-salted.

And of course, borscht without sour cream cannot be considered full-fledged borscht. Unfortunately, sour cream is now becoming more and more of a rarity. All the more important to learn how to use it correctly.

I do not doubt that if you had the fortune of finding sour cream someplace, you bought enough for more than just one or two helpings. You are most likely in possession

of a large jar of sour cream. And I must commend you for always carrying around an empty jar to all the shops, so as not to miss your lucky break.

The sour cream you bought will suffice for about two months or so. But here, there is a pitfall. Sour cream can go moldy. I have already explained how to deal with mold on cheese. But sour cream is not cheese. It is soft. And the technique for battling with mold in this case is completely different.

Let's start from the moment you took the jar of sour cream out of the refrigerator. Now you need to add a spoonful of that sour cream to the bowl of borscht. Do not shove the spoon into the very depth of the jar. Try to fill the spoon by skimming the sour cream off the surface. Mold forms in open sections of sour cream. It will never travel deep into the jar unless you poke some sort of holes in there. It's also important to skim the sour cream carefully from the entire surface of the jar because then the mold will not have the opportunity to form in any appreciable amount. If, however, mold has appeared, you can easily remove a thin layer from the very surface without much loss.

So, you have now added a spoonful of sour cream to your bowl of borscht. You've taken your time mixing it in. Now you are in for a very pleasant experience.

## *Sauerkraut Soup*

I know that sauerkraut is great without any soup. And it would be a difficult decision to make soup out of it. On the other hand, sauerkraut can get a bit over-sour. And eating it

by itself will no longer be quite as appetizing. Well, it is precisely this type of kraut that makes even better soup than normal kraut. In fact, I would say that the sourer the kraut, the better the soup.

Well, obviously up to a point. Sauerkraut sold in stores sometimes reaches the very final stage of sourness. And a gourmet may turn his foolish nose away from it. Nevertheless, that sauerkraut is often quite suitable for making soup. You just need to smell it before buying it.

How would you do that? It goes without saying that you can't ask the saleslady to let you sniff the kraut. Such a request would be completely useless. The saleslady wouldn't go as far as slapping you in the face for such impudence, but she would certainly consider it. So what can you do?

Wait until another customer buys some of the sauerkraut. Then ask to see it, because you think (and be sure to use these exact words) it looks really great. A normal customer would willingly carry out such a request. Just don't lean too close to the sauerkraut when it is being unwrapped for you. That would be both impolite and unnecessary. If the sauerkraut odor does not reach you from one meter away, or if it is only faint, then the sauerkraut is good and quite suitable for making soup.

Sauerkraut, potatoes, and water are the sole components of sauerkraut soup. Needless to say, it certainly wouldn't hurt to throw in some mushrooms as well. But where would one find them these days, when there are more mushroom pickers in the woods than there are actual mushrooms, as the joke goes.

In the good old days, people picked only the most common mushrooms, leaving lots of little-known ones for the experts. In those happy times, no one bothered with the



bruising webcap. People were scared off by its poisonous violet color. The pickers were afraid even to touch the parasol mushrooms because they had too close a resemblance to the dangerous fly-agaric. Oyster mushrooms got picked only from the ground, having been mistaken for russules. No one picked them from trees. False chanterelles never got picked merely because of the word “false” in their name.

Sadly, those happy times are long gone. Now, in order to pick a decent number of mushrooms, sufficient for more than one cook-up, you would either need to spend the night in the forest during mushroom weather (that is, when it’s raining), or to discover new mushrooms.

But it’s not all that easy to discover new mushrooms. And it gets harder and harder every year. A mere two years ago, I found a mushroom similar to a bell at nearly every country house garbage dump. It’s called a shaggy ink cap. It emits a bright blue liquid similar to ink. But this mushroom is quite edible. Unfortunately, these days even it often gets picked and is no longer all that easy to find.

So, what’s left? Nothing. For a regular person who likes picking mushrooms, nothing remains.

Although there is a certain totally smooth, white mushroom called a squeaker. There is no way anyone would pick it. And it’s a good thing that nobody picks it. One day, I decided to try it. I boiled it for a long time. Then salted it. Several months passed before I tasted it. It wasn’t poisonous or even mildly bitter. However, it had absolutely no taste. It felt like I was chewing some kind of soft rubber. I’m sure that gourmets would have thrown it out after the very first sampling. But I continued sweating over it. I tried to find some worthy quality in it. Ultimately, I ended up having to throw it out.

However, I must say that even these days I always manage to pick lots of mushrooms. How do I do it? Would you like a bit of advice?

Well, here it is, if you please. It's necessary to assume that all mushrooms are good. The only serious exception is the death angel. Word has it that in the Ryazan region, there were numerous cases of death angel poisoning because it got confused with the parasol mushroom.

Needless to say, you shouldn't pick any red fly-agarics. They can cause serious poisoning. Everyone knows that. Not everyone, however, knows that it's possible to get poisoning from mushrooms that look very similar to good ones. Therefore, my advice to you is to go mushroom picking as often as possible with someone experienced. Such as myself, for instance. Then, you will always be able to eat sauerkraut soup with mushrooms.

HOT DISHES  
(SECOND COURSE)

## *Delicious Kotlets*

Why do we like minced meat?

The fact of the matter is that meat, by its nature, is very sinewy and tough. I'm aware that many people try to tenderize it. Some may do this with a heavy mallet. Others might put it in the freezer in the hope that later, when it thaws, some of the sinews will have weakened.

In my opinion, all these hassles are unnecessary. I always manage to turn any meat into delicious meat patties – kotlets. How do I do this?

First of all, a little bit about the meat.

I cannot imagine that you would actually keep meat long enough for something to go wrong with it. But anything can happen. And the meat can go off just a bit. More than likely, it is still quite usable, but it may have developed a less than pleasant smell. In such instances, gourmets say that the meat has acquired an odor.

What does one do in such a case? How to eliminate this odor?

The easiest method is to marinate the meat. Place it in a small saucepan, add some three percent vinegar, and leave in the refrigerator for a day or so.

Not everyone may know how to make three percent vinegar. It's actually very simple if you still have a faceted bottle of nine percent vinegar from the old days. How much water do you use to dilute it? I know many might assume that you would need three times the amount. This would certainly be very economical but not quite accurate. Try

diluting your nine percent vinegar with twice the amount of water. Trust me, you will get three percent vinegar.

After that, everything is pretty straightforward. Run the meat through a grinder. Soak chunks of white bread in water. Mix them into the mince. Don't skimp on the salt or, crucially, on the pepper. Now, all that remains is to fry the kotlets. It is no great tragedy if you don't have any oil. Cover the frying pan with a lid. Then, as you fry, keep adding small amounts of water. You will end up with steamed, rather than fried kotlets. But that's not really important. The crucial thing is to avoid tasting the kotlets as you cook them. Otherwise, you may not be able to stop.

## *Boiled Chicken*

To prepare this dish, you will need the chicken you used to make your chicken soup. An apt housewife will be able to feed a family of five with this bird for two days. The method is to cut the chicken into ten sections. What comprises these ten sections? Four halves that made up the legs, two wings, and you've already got six servings. Now you just need to carve the torso into four parts. As you can imagine this in itself does not present any difficulties.

Naturally, the chicken should be served with plenty of side dishes. I believe ordinary boiled potatoes to be best suited to chicken.

Well, that's if you don't have any cabbage. But if you do have cabbage and no potatoes, then stewed cabbage complements chicken best.

If you have neither, I will be forced to conclude that you made a strategic error. Instead of buying chicken, you should have focused on finding potatoes and cabbage. Chicken on its own, without any side dishes, is eaten only by high-flying roosters (that is, foreigners), who have more money than they can peck at.

## *Mouthwatering Fried Potatoes*

How do you wash potatoes? My advice is to scrape off the bigger chunks of soil over a large saucepan. Then flush all the dirt down the toilet. Otherwise, your sink can get seriously clogged up.

Next, peel the potatoes and rinse them once more. Do the green spots need to be cut out of the potatoes? For gourmets – certainly. However, there is no special necessity for this.

Now the potatoes need to be cut up and thrown onto a frying pan. Any oil you have been able to find is suitable for the frying process.

Sometimes I get asked whether it's good to fry potatoes in ghee. This question comes from people who don't know how ghee is made or what it is used for.

Ghee is made by melting ordinary butter. In the process, the amount of butter decreases, but one useful property is acquired. It can be stored for a long time without refrigeration. So if you find yourself in a situation where you have nothing but ghee, your only option is to use it to fry your potatoes. In all other situations, the use of ghee is an unforgivable waste.

Even more often, I get asked what to do if there is no oil at all available. And once a friend asked me what to do if there are no potatoes. In which case, my advice was to drink a glass of vodka and go to bed.

Which is what he did. Later, he told me that he had some sort of fantastic dream. It was summer and he was sitting on the terrace of his country house in the shade of an umbrella. There were servants scurrying around him. One of them was opening a can of ice-cold beer for him. Another was turning out the contents of an entire half-liter jar of ghee onto a hot frying pan. And a third was cutting up strips of pre-peeled potatoes, which were completely smooth, free of any defects, and each the size of a football.

### *Special Hot Cabbage*

For some reason, I have never met anyone who would admit to not knowing how to fry or stew cabbage. I won't offend you with unfounded suspicions. I will simply offer you a few tidbits of useful advice.

How do you store your cabbage? There is not enough room for it in the refrigerator. That much is obvious. Those who live in old brick buildings have no problems in this regard. In such dwellings, bricks beneath the kitchen window are usually hollowed out, creating a recess. And that's where cabbage and potatoes are stored.

I live in a concrete panel building. So naturally, I cannot hollow anything out under any windows. My house was built in the era of the corn man Nikita in the early sixties. At

the time, everyone said it was being built temporarily, just to solve the acute housing problem. They also said this type of building was designed to last no more than thirty years. After the thirty years, it would be dangerous to live in it. At that point, all such buildings would be demolished and replaced by good quality permanent ones. And I always hoped that they would have specially designed alcoves under the kitchen windows, for storing cabbage and potatoes.

But those thirty years have now passed. No one has any plans for demolishing the buildings. No one even remembers that they were designed to last only thirty years. On the other hand, so far, I have never heard of such buildings collapsing out of the blue. So the hope is that they still have some margin of safety.

And now, on to how to cook the cabbage. Let's start from the beginning. If you've noticed any dark spots, do not remove and discard the entire leaf. Only wasteful gourmets would do such a thing. Remove the dark spots only. Now chop everything up roughly. Do not, under any circumstances, cut out the stalk. If you are intending to eat it separately, that's another matter. But simply throwing it out is criminal.

Keep in mind that while cooking, cabbage becomes significantly reduced in volume. I am well-aware that you often put too little cabbage in the pan. And you do this for two reasons. Firstly, you know theoretically that cabbage shrinks. However, in practice, when you see a mountain of raw cabbage in the frying pan, you find that difficult to believe. Secondly, even if you fully realize that you'll end up with very little cabbage, you assume that you can't add any more cabbage to this frying pan because then it will be impossible to stir it. And of course, you are right.



Although not entirely.

Don't be afraid to put too much cabbage into the frying pan. Don't worry that it is about to spill over the edges of the pan. In a few minutes, the cabbage will shrink. Stir it, scooping particularly from the center, from the very bottom. Then it will shrink further. And in no time, you will be able to add more cabbage. And a few minutes after that, more yet. Every time you add fresh cabbage, try to "bury" it inwards.

Many, and I would even say all people, overcook the cabbage. If you leave it over a flame for too long, it turns dark brown, soggy, over-salted and unappetizing. I leave it to the reader, as homework, to figure out why it turns out over-salted.

By the way, I wanted to ask you whether you know the difference between stewed and fried cabbage. When you stew cabbage, you cover the frying pan with a lid. When you fry it, you leave the lid off. Therein lies the big difference.

Although the difference is significant only if the cabbage is kept over a flame for a long time. For speedy cooking, there is no difference whatsoever. Which is precisely why I call it hot cabbage.

Unfortunately, the cabbage dish is low in calories.

## *Canned goods*

Without a doubt, each of us has more than once come across a tin can with a bloated lid. The generally accepted opinion is that it's extremely dangerous to consume the contents of such a can. Without trying to dispute this

viewpoint, I would like to offer a piece of advice that may, in some situations, help save that food.

Open the can. Smell the contents. If the smell is terrible, then it really may be best to throw it all out. But if there is no unpleasant smell, or if it is only minor, then you can do as I was once taught in a small village near the town of Saratov.

Transfer the contents into a clean glass jar. In doing so, you will increase the chances of stopping the rotting process. Now you need to try the contents. Taste a small amount, the size of a pea. I don't think that little will make you sick, even if the contents of the can really have gone bad. After you have swallowed the trial portion, don't even think about finishing off the rest right away, even if you really liked it. Now you need to wait at least one day. If nothing bad has happened to you during that period, then the can of food is deemed good.

Although gourmets believe that a second test is necessary. They feel that the second time you need to eat a whole teaspoon of the contents. And then wait for another day.

Some might advise giving a trial portion to a cat. Unfortunately, a cat will not eat the contents of a bloated can.

### *Whiting baked in sour cream*

Frozen whiting, the main object of our seafood aspirations, makes increasingly rare appearances on store shelves these days. Nonetheless, each of us should entertain

the hope that one day luck will have to be on his side. Or perhaps luck has already paid you a visit. Maybe you bought some whiting ages ago, deposited it in the freezer, and are waiting for a special occasion?

Well, here is a simple recipe for whiting baked in sour cream.

Grease a pan with oil. Spread the fish evenly over its entire surface. Cover it with a thin layer of sour cream. Then top it with thinly sliced potatoes and onion rounds. Next, another thin layer of sour cream and a layer of thinly sliced potatoes and onions. The sour cream can (and preferably should) be substituted with mayonnaise or a mixture of mayonnaise and sour cream. Now the entire thing goes into the oven on medium heat for about an hour and a half to two hours. (I assume you don't need to be warned that the frying pan handle needs to be made of metal.)

And that's pretty much it.

I often get asked whether the whiting in this recipe can be replaced with other types of fish. The question gets posed to me by Moscow fishermen. They try to catch fish in local reservoirs, where it has long-since been contaminated with factory waste. But the Moscow fishermen's qualifications exceed all expectations. And they still manage to get a catch.

They make all their uncomplicated equipment on their own or ask their friends to do it. The elastic bands they need for fishing from river bottoms get cut out of gas masks in chemical laboratories. And all the metal parts get made for them at factories or in experimental workshops.

Their catch comes from the Moscow River and even from the Yauza. These two rivers are among the dirtiest in the world. And it goes without saying that they should not

contain any fish at all. But the fishermen at the Moscow and Yauza Rivers hold their ground in spite of everything. And if a single fish has somehow managed to survive there, then they will definitely reel it in.

So this is the type of fish I would never recommend you use for our recipe. Mainly because it's bony. And it would not be right to bake it in sour cream with potatoes. Therefore, you will still need to try to get some whiting for our recipe.

And here is something else I'd like to add. With fish, you must be careful. And before putting the whiting in the frying pan, you need to make sure that it's fresh.

Naturally, I don't mean that it needs to be fresh in the literal sense of the word. After all, your whiting is frozen. What I mean is that you must make sure that your whiting has not spoiled. Because you can get serious food poisoning from substandard fish. So how can you tell that you need to exercise caution at this specific moment with this particular fish?

The very first indicators are smell and appearance. If the fish does not smell, or smells only slightly, and if its appearance does not arouse distinct suspicions, then it is considered fit to use. If the fish has a strong smell, the most important thing to work out is the nature of that smell. Every fish smells. Therefore, it is important to determine whether your fish just smells like fish or like rotten fish. If a rotten smell emanates from it, then I would advise you to throw it out.

I know that in such cases, many people try to salt the fish in order to dry it later. I would avoid doing that for the following reason.

Everyone knows that dried fish always gives off a smell. But this smell is acquired in the process of drying. And this

point is extremely significant. If the fish smells rotten before salting, it is simply too dangerous to eat.

So no matter how offensive it sounds, you should still follow my advice – if the fish smells rotten, discard it as soon as possible. Drying such fish is both pointless and dangerous. Here is how you can comfort yourself. No one eats dried fish without beer. And beer has practically disappeared from store shelves. So why would anyone need dried fish these days?!

### *Meat scrap goulash*

Meat scraps. A veteran Leningrader's heart leaps at the very mention of these words. Because meat scraps are real meat at the price of 45 kopeks per kilo. As far as I know, these scraps are sold only in Leningrad and in the one and only store, on Krestovsky Island, not far from the Sverdlovsk Hospital.

People assume that this store is for dogs. And these offcuts are sometimes called dog scraps. Although no one has ever seen any dog lovers inside this establishment. Everyone buys the offcuts for themselves but refers to them as dog scraps. And this is done without an iota of offense and, I would even say, with reverence.

How do you make the goulash? To be honest, the exact recipe is not all that important. The crucial thing is to get your hands on the meat scraps.

Cut your scraps into smaller pieces and put them in a

pot to stew along with any filler you have in the house.

You are guaranteed to experience pleasant gastronomic sensations, complemented by a sense of deep satisfaction at the memory of how much you paid for that meat.

SWEETS  
AND BAKED GOODS  
(THIRD COURSE)

## *Pierogies and blintzes*

There was a time when flour was sold only on major holidays. And in order to buy it, it was necessary to spend the whole day in a queue. Fortunately, those times are long gone. Unfortunately, also gone are the days when flour could be purchased on a regular day and at an ordinary store.

For that reason, these days, even if you have flour, it would have been purchased long ago, through lucky chance. And stored by you ever since. And if your flour has been stored for a long time, it is almost certain to have worms in it. Gourmets may discard such flour. But that would be exceedingly foolish - to throw out flour just because it happens to contain worms.

Getting rid of worms (without any loss of flour whatsoever) can be quite easy. You just need to sift the flour through a sieve.

You know perfectly well what to do after that and don't need my advice. You can just make blinis - crepes. And out of these crepes, you can make blintzes filled with cabbage.

In the past, I remember people often baking apple pies. But where would one get apples these days? Apples are completely impossible to find now. Although, I might have a few tips for Leningraders.

If I may ask, do you like Pushkin? Well for those who are fond of Pushkin, no other tips are necessary. True Pushkin connoisseurs instantly understood everything upon my mere mention of his name.

Of course, I mean "Mikhailovskoye," the Pushkin State



Memorial Historical, Literary and Natural Landscape Museum and Reserve in the Pushkin Mountains. It just so happens that those areas are replete with abundant apple orchards. At the same time, the sale of apples is not a business the locals are involved in. Therefore, apples can be purchased there relatively cheaply. But it is extremely difficult for a regular person to get there. And that's where the tour bus is simply a life saver for many lovers of Pushkin and of apples.

Pushkin's apples are known only to a select smattering of the cultural intelligentsia. Nevertheless, in autumn, it is virtually impossible to reserve a Pushkin Mountains excursion ticket at the Leningrad Municipal Tour Bureau. The demand for these is so overwhelming, that it significantly exceeds the supply of tour guides. It becomes necessary to recruit guides from other tours. Obviously, they are unlikely to mix up such October dates as the nineteenth and the twenty-fifth. And they won't announce that Pushkin was born in the Svyatogorsk Monastery, or anything along those lines. But they could easily convey some other inaccuracies to their listeners.

Nonetheless, they do know the tricks of their trade. I mean they do know all the apple tricks. And they will inform their tourists of the accurate going price of apples as well as the best time to purchase them - whether on the way there or back. Usually, they advise buying apples on the way back but purchasing at least a few before entering the reserve. Because if tourists with no apples are shown around Mikhailovskoye, Trigorskoye or Petrovskoye, they start grabbing apples from the vases on the tables and stuffing them into their pockets. And as soon as the tour guide turns away, half of the apples in the vases are usually gone.

In the past, apple gourmets strove to get to the Pushkin

Mountains long before the crimson forest began to shed its attire. And there was a reason for that. The fact of the matter is that the locals (all pious people) did not pick the apples before the Apple Feast of the Savior, that is before August 19. So during that period (if one was to skip some tours and wander around the neighboring villages) apples could be picked right from the ground. And no one had any objections to this. Of course these days, one would not even have a hope of this. Nevertheless, Pushkin lovers from Leningrad have not yet had to pass a winter without apples.

And what if you live in Moscow? What to do then? Then apple pie is a closed door for you. And you have no other choice but to make cabbage blintzes. But there's no need for regrets. Because no matter how good an apple pie can be, I still think everyone will agree that there is nothing in the world tastier than cabbage blintzes.

### *High-calorie Napoleon cake*

A good friend of mine once told me a story. One day, he was lucky enough to buy two jars of sweetened condensed milk. And they sat on his shelf for a long time, unused. He intended to make something special with them. But kept putting it off indefinitely.

A day came when he stumbled upon these tins. And something inexplicable led him to grab a hammer and a nail, punch two small holes in one of the cans, and begin drinking the condensed milk. And he told me that it was so delicious, that he couldn't bring himself to stop until he finished the entire can. So he picked up the hammer and nail and was

about to open the second can when he realized that he had already done that and had drained both cans of condensed milk. He stood there staring at the two empty tins in confusion, unable to understand how this could have happened to him.

So if one day you are lucky enough to buy sweetened condensed milk, you should try to avoid behaving as recklessly as my friend did. Trust me, the best thing you can make with sweetened condensed milk is the Napoleon cake.

I will give you my mother's recipe, exactly as I wrote it down in her words on the 19th of November, nineteen eighty-nine.

Here it is:

Grab two bags of flour, 200–250 g of butter, 3–4 cups of ice-cold water, and a can of sweetened condensed milk.

Prepare the room. Cool it down.

Using two very, very cold knives, chop the butter together with the flour, gradually adding in the water. Without touching the dough with your hands, use the knives to roll it into a sausage shape and cut that into seven small sausages. Put them in the refrigerator for at least half an hour.

After that, roll out two of the sausages with a rolling pin (a vodka bottle with the label removed), liberally sprinkling it with flour. Place the rolled-out sausages in baking trays and put them in the oven. You don't need to grease the baking trays. Roll out the rest of the sausages. You'll need to repeat the above process with them later.

The resulting seven cake layers can be prepared in advance. One of them will be used for sprinkling.

Now you need to make the cream. Mix the butter with the sweetened condensed milk and whip using two forks (under no circumstances should this mixture be "over-

whipped"). Then spread the cream over the cake layers and sprinkle the crumbs on top.

A cake made using this recipe is mind-blowingly delicious. The cake slices that last until the following day are even more tasty. Therefore, try to save at least a couple of them "for tomorrow." I understand that my advice is difficult to follow. But please attempt it anyway.

One of the advantages of this cake is that it is extremely high in calories.

## *Bread*

Sweet hot tea with slices of rye bread sprinkled with sugar - that's what Osip Mandelstam liked so much when he feasted at Nikolai Gumilev's during the first reading of "Tristia" in St. Petersburg at the beginning of 1921. So what was it that Osip Emilievich found so enjoyable?

Nikolai Stepanovich made real (not carrot) hot tea, sliced rye bread, drizzled sunflower oil over it and added a bit of salt. Each guest then sprinkled his bread with a bit of sugar.

Unfortunately, this recipe contains three difficult-to-find ingredients at once (except for sugar, which is sold through ration stamps): real tea, bread, and sunflower oil. For this reason, it is not always possible to follow the recipe in current times.

I'd like to mention something else about bread. We all know that it goes stale quickly. Yet it is absolutely unacceptable to throw out stale bread. So what is one to do

with it?

For white bread, soak it in a bit of water and then fry it. This will make it even tastier than fresh bread. If you add a bit of sugar to the frying pan, you'll end up with something akin to pastries. Just be sure to flip the bread in the pan frequently to prevent the sugar from burning.

Speaking of sugar... How do you store yours? If all you have is a small packet or bowl of sugar, then you needn't worry too much about how to store it. I know that it didn't even occur to many to stock up on sugar when it was still sold without ration stamps. Moreover, people tried to get rid of the surplus when it was part of the grocery order at work. I certainly hope you weren't that frivolous and had the foresight to stock up on enough to last at least a while. I also hope that you don't store your sugar in an open container. The fact is that it absorbs water easily. It is believed that if you put a bucket of water next to a bag of sugar, that bag will "drink" all the water overnight. Naturally, salesladies in stores take advantage of this. And for that reason, sugar is always sold somewhat moist. And when placed in a sugar bowl, it hardens.

What advice can I offer in this situation? Try to purchase sugar in its original factory packaging. And what if you are buying bulk sugar and the saleslady rolls up a paper cone and pours your sugar into it? In this case, there is no advice to be proffered. Your sugar is guaranteed to be moist. Drying it is laborious and essentially pointless. But as a general rule, that is not really such a tragedy. Especially when you are using the sugar for frying bread.

What else can be done with stale bread? Rye bread can be cut into small pieces, salted and left to keep drying further. It will then be very appropriate for serving to guests who

have come over for a game of cards or for a kitchen discussion about the peculiarities of the economic system under socialism.

## *Candied Watermelon Skins*

In early autumn, my advice to you is to be very mindful of what is happening out in the streets. Because in autumn, in those streets, they may be selling watermelons. When you spot the first huge mesh enclosures with watermelons, join the queue immediately, no matter how long it is. Don't postpone buying watermelons until tomorrow. They disappear just as suddenly as they appear. And your next opportunity to buy them will be in a year's time at best.

In your estimations of how long you will have to queue up, keep in mind that watermelons fly out quickly. So you won't need to linger in line for long. Usually, the wait is around an hour.

There are never limits on how many watermelons a person can buy. The reason is obvious. Even if there is a mesh bag concealed in your pocket (and I certainly hope you never, under any circumstances, leave home without a mesh bag), even then you will not be able to carry many watermelons.

And now, let's address an important strategic matter. Is it necessary to cut out a sample piece from the watermelon to check for ripeness? If you are buying one watermelon, then it probably wouldn't hurt to make an incision. If, however, you are buying several and are not intending to consume them all within a day or two, then clearly you

should not make test cuts in all of them. Otherwise, they can spoil.

Monitor the samples cut for those ahead of you in the queue. If they are mostly good, then you can take a chance and not check your watermelon. If you've noted several substandard samples, then it's best to check one or even two of the most suspicious watermelons.

I won't bother teaching you how to eat a watermelon. That would be ridiculous. If you eat it without using a knife, then for one thing, you look like an uncultured person (I know that many will not be deterred by this). And in addition, you then preclude the secondary usage of the watermelon.

So we agree. You will be eating your watermelon with a knife. In which case when you are done, the skins remain a pleasure to behold.

Now we can move on to the preparation method for the candied watermelon skins. Remove the green outer layer. Cut the skins into half-thumb-sized pieces. Then boil them in a thick sugar syrup.

It's important to avoid adding a lot of water to the syrup. So start with the following. Put a very small amount of sugar and literally a teaspoon of water into a saucepan. Once the sugar is heated, the mixture will liquefy. That's when you can add a bit more sugar and a couple of watermelon skins. They will release some juice and now the process should move along faster. Add more sugar and then more watermelon skins. Ultimately, all the watermelon chunks will be in the pan and covered with the sugar syrup.

Cook the skins on low heat for at least an hour. When almost no sugar syrup remains, turn off the heat. Let the mixture cool for a while. Now distribute the watermelon between plates, making sure that the pieces are not touching.

(The skins need to dry out but remain a bit moist.) Then lightly dust them with sugar.

What next? At this point, your watermelon skins need to dry at room temperature for a long time. Where is it best to dry them? I know you don't have room for this exercise. And for that reason, few people make candied watermelon skins. And unfortunately, no one can provide any helpful advice on this matter.

No one but me.

If you are an intellectual (and you most certainly are an intellectual), then the walls of your room are covered with bookshelves from floor to ceiling. There is usually a small gap between the top row of shelves and the ceiling. And that is exactly where you need to put your plates with watermelon skins. They will not be visible to anyone there. And in all likelihood, you yourself will forget about them for a while. And that will be ideal. Because your candied watermelon skins will need to dry for quite a long time. So if you remember about them, say, in two months' time, that will be perfect. Just try not to polish off your entire delicacy in one sitting.



# DRINKS

## *Moonshine Alcohol*

Everyone knows that a pressure cooker comprises one of the two main components of a moonshine still. And this is one hundred percent true. Many believe that the second indispensable part of the device is a coil tube, and that this coil tube is extremely difficult to procure. And this, too, is one hundred percent true. I mean it's absolutely true that many believe so. The fact is, the coil tube is not all that difficult to obtain. Besides, it is not at all indispensable for a moonshine still. And here is what I mean.

But first, a word about the pressure cooker. We do not use it because it's necessary to brew moonshine under high pressure. Not at all. It just so happens that the pressure cooker appears to be specially designed for making moonshine. It has a secure, hermetically sealed lid. On top of the lid, there is a valve, which is very convenient for connecting the rubber tube through which vapors are diverted into the coil tube.

Now back to how to obtain this hard-to-find coil tube. Naturally, I'm not talking about a metal coil tube. Metal coil tubes are only for aesthetes. Ordinary people have always made do with glass coil tubes.

So where does one get one of these glass coil tubes?

Ask your friends and close acquaintances. Someone they know is sure to work in chemical tech. You need to be introduced to that person. Then you ask him about those glass coil tubes. He will place an order with the glass-blowing workshop. And he will be issued a coil tube a few

days after that. In autumn or spring, this coil tube is relatively easy to sneak out of work under cover of a raincoat. The standard fee for a coil tube is a bucket of moonshine.

And now allow me to make a minor lyrical digression. Taking a coil tube from the workplace is not entirely risk-free. There are cases where people do not succeed in getting it through the gate of their work building. On occasion, they get caught. And stealing goods from a workplace is clearly a very serious and unpleasant matter.

So, if you ever hear of such an incident, take note of the fate of the person who attempted to sneak out the coil tube. If he wasn't kicked out of work... Well, how shall I put it... If he wasn't kicked out of work, then he didn't need to be kicked out of work. Get my drift?

If he did something that would absolutely warrant getting kicked out of work, no matter how good an employee he may have been, and yet he wasn't kicked out. That means he did something to deserve not getting kicked out. This time you are certain to have understood my meaning.

I would think it is easy to understand. Imagine that a person did something terrible. For instance, tried to sneak a component of a moonshine still out of his workplace. Generally speaking, he would be tried for that. And the person we are referring to did not even get kicked out of work. Well, then, why didn't he get kicked out? Get it?

Why am I beating around the bush about this instead of saying what I think outright? It's just that in Russia, it's customary to hint about such things. For example, if our classmate Aleshin dobs to the KGB, it's customary to describe the situation as, "our classmate whose name starts with 'A,' well, you know, ops-ops, dobs-dobs."

Why this is customary, no one knows. But it is

customary, and that's that. It's as if it's part of the Russian language to talk about such things in intimations. And I, for one, treat the traditions of the Russian language with respect. And that's why I'm speaking to you now in intimations. It would also be suitable to wink with my left eye while at it. But unfortunately, I don't know how this could be accomplished in writing.

Anyway. Now you are certain to have understood everything, so enough on the subject. Let's get back to our coil tube.

What do you do if you cannot find a friend who works in chemical tech? To be honest, it's quite a bad thing if you don't have such a friend. And I cannot even think of what to suggest in such a case.

No, I don't mean the coil tube. The coil tube is not something you need to worry about. You can find a substitute for it. But regardless, you will need small pieces of rubber tubes of different diameters. So you will still need to stretch your imagination a bit and find some connections in the chemistry field. Rubber tubing is no coil tube. Even someone you don't really know can sneak it out of work for you. And while you're at it, ask him to bring along some density meters. You will use them to determine the percentage of the alcohol content in your moonshine.

So what do you do if you cannot get your hands on a glass coil? Don't worry. There is a way out. Muscovites need to go to Gorky Street. And to pop into the "Pioneer" shop (Leningraders need to figure out for themselves where they need to go). The "Pioneer" shop has always sold aluminum tubes, and it does to this day. All you need is two aluminum tubes. The longer they are, the better. The tubes need to be of different diameters, so that one of them easily fits inside the other.

When you get home, insert one tube into the other. Connect the inner tube to the pressure cooker valve using the rubber hose. The moonshine will drip through it. Now connect the outer tube to the cold-water tap. Make sure that the moonshine vapor and the cold water are counterflowing towards each other. And that's it!

The only other thing you need to know is how to prepare the wort.

Pour water into a three-liter jar, stir in a packet of yeast and a kilo of sugar. Now put your jar in a warm place to ferment for about ten days. When the ten days are up, fill the pressure cooker two-thirds full of wort, put it over a flame, and wait for the authentic moonshine to start dripping from the narrow aluminum tube. Only I beg you, don't ask me where to get the sugar and yeast!

### *Moonshine "Lux"*

Can you drink moonshine alcohol straight? Of course, you can. But sometimes it's worthwhile adding a bit of flavor. Anything that has a nice aroma is suitable for this purpose. Pharmacies sometimes stock oak bark. This will give your moonshine the hue and taste of cognac.

When you are paying for the oak bark at the check-out and the cashier asks you which department to ring it up against, stay on your guard. Don't accidentally blab, "The liquor department!" I have personally witnessed such situations on several occasions. Though not with oak bark. I've seen people buying eau de cologne at the pharmacy. Those who were still only tipsy told the cashier to ring it up

against the liquor department as a joke. But the ones who were sufficiently drunk said it quite seriously. And they were absolutely certain that eau de cologne could be sold solely in the liquor department.

Once I infused my moonshine with some wormwood. The result was rather revolting. Fortunately, there are some real moonshine experts in the ranks of my friends. Though not in terms of making it, but rather in terms of consuming it. They assured me it was the best thing they'd ever drunk in their lives.

I really hope that upon establishing your moonshine production, you won't throw out your vodka ration stamps. That would be an unforgivable mistake. Vodka stamps are of great value. There are numerous opportunities for their application. For instance, they can be used to pay a plumber for minor repairs. They can be exchanged for sugar stamps. At the very least, vodka stamps can serve as a creative complement to a gift for any occasion.

## *Kombucha*

Everyone has a three-liter jar of kombucha on their windowsill these days. And everyone knows where to get the culture and how to feed it. If someone pinches off a small piece of the culture for you and you take good care of it, it will expand over the entire surface of your jar in a matter of just a few months. Every day you can pour yourself a cup of this delicious beverage from the jar. Naturally, you then need to top up the jar with a cup of water. Periodically, you also need to add sugar and brewed cooled tea.

I know that both sugar and tea are not all that easy to procure in current times. Yet I remain optimistic about your resourcefulness and frugality.

Of course, tea is not considered an essential item. But no one would be the worse for stocking up on it if an opportunity presents itself. Luck may be on your side only once in your lifetime. And that's what once happened to me.

One day I accidentally wandered into a tiny shop in the backwoods of Saratov. There, I spotted a massive plywood box lined with foil. My heart immediately skipped a beat. And I stepped closer.

It was Indian tea at the price of six rubles per kilo. Large leaves with light veins - I had never seen such tea before. For some inexplicable reason, a sticker on the box said "Second grade." Which is probably why it cost only six rubles.

It was clear as day to me that an opportunity like this would never present itself again. I would just need to take my time and not mess it up. To begin with, I asked the saleslady if she had first-grade tea. Naturally, she replied that she did not have first-grade tea. And I put on a disappointed face.

After that, I asked her to roll up a big paper cone and pour the tea into it. Then I asked her to roll up a second one. And so gradually, jesting and chitchatting, I bought whatever remained in that box.

Tea very easily absorbs foreign odors. So as soon as I returned to Moscow, I fished out the jar sealing kit with a sealer and lids and sealed my entire treasure into thirty-two three-liter jars. And for the third year in a row, I have been brewing superb Indian tea with large leaves and light veins.

My book is coming to an end. And I have only this left to add. Of course I would like for you to read it carefully.

And without a doubt, it would really make me happy if you actually started using my recipes and tips. And if you do, I hope that despite the difficult times in which we all live here, you will also get to eat the wonderful dishes I eat, and that like me, you will always be able to brew similarly excellent, albeit second-grade, tea with large leaves and light veins.

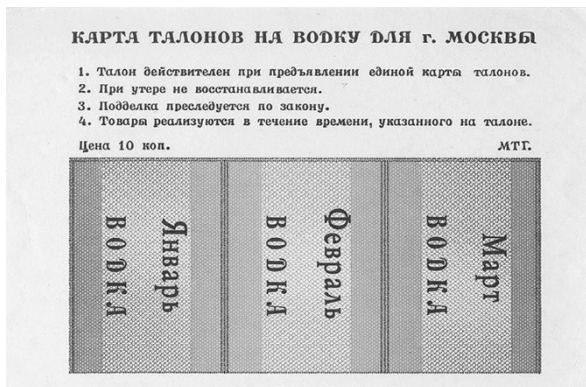
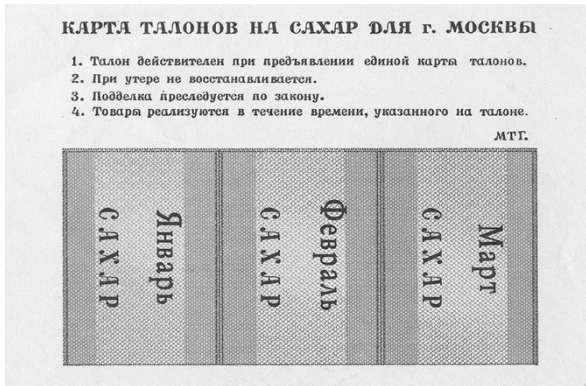
By the way, do you own a jar sealing kit? I don't remember the exact quote, but some communist theorist said something along the following lines: You can live under communism only once you have enriched yourself with the knowledge of all the treasures that humanity has created. I don't know how much truth this saying holds in general. But when applied to the jar sealer, it's right on target. I believe that the jar sealing device belongs first and foremost to such indispensable treasures. And if you do not own such a device, then I'm sorry, but you are not yet ready for life in a communist society.

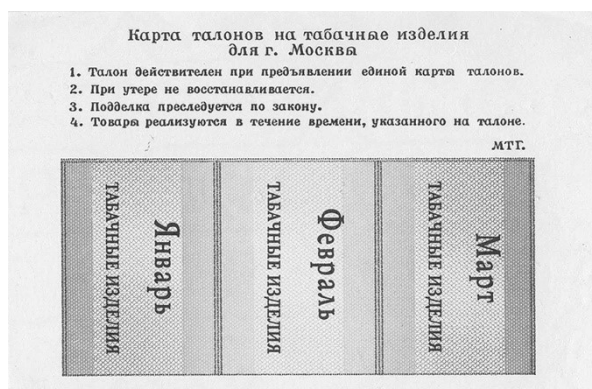


# Appendix

## Ration Stamps of Developed Socialism

In this Appendix, I include three ration stamps from the period of developed socialism, which were in circulation in Moscow, the capital of Soviet Russia. This type of ration stamps first appeared in the late 80s and made it possible for Moscow residents to buy sugar, vodka, and cigarettes. At the time, these stamps were issued to me as well. However, I decided not to use them but rather to preserve them as a historical record of that period.





In each of the months listed (January, February, March) the stamps made it possible to buy 1 kg of sugar, 1 bottle of vodka, and 3 packs of cigarettes.

Besides the time restrictions, the stamps indicated that the buyer must additionally submit a special permit for their use. They also stated that if lost, they would not be replaced and that their forgery would be prosecuted.

A vodka ration stamp incurred a fee of 10 kopeks. Clearly, that fee covered the stamp only. When buying vodka, it was necessary to pay for the vodka itself. Ration stamps for sugar and cigarettes were issued free of charge. Naturally, only the actual stamps were free. When buying sugar and cigarettes, payment was required for the items at the time of their purchase. The creators of these ration stamps considered the issuance of free stamps for sugar and cigarettes, in contrast to paid ones for vodka, a humane measure.

## About the Author

Slava Brodsky is a graduate of the Mathematics Division of Moscow University's Mechanics and Mathematics Department. He is the author of numerous papers and several monographs in the field of applied mathematical statistics.

He has been living in the United States since 1991. His American career began in a small New Jersey computer firm that developed financial systems. A year and a half later he joined Chase Manhattan Bank. Since then, he has worked in Manhattan at the largest financial companies in America.

In 2004, he founded the Millburn Literary Club, which has since become one of the most respectable and authoritative Russian-speaking literary associations in America. And from 2011, "The Annals of the Millburn Club" collection became a regular publication under his editorship.

In 2004, Limbus Press published Slava Brodsky's first book, "A Delusional Soup." Later, his other books were published.

Slava Brodsky also engages in various styles of fine art. A special place in his creative portfolio is occupied by ceramics, on which he works at the ceramics workshop in his home in Millburn (New Jersey).

His website: [www.slavabrodsky.com](http://www.slavabrodsky.com).

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