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Corona, Annette Ogrodnik. *The New Ukrainian Cookbook*. New York, NY. Hippocrene Books, Inc. 2012. Index. Illustrations by Laurette Kovary. xvii+270 pp. \$29.95 (hardcover) ISBN 978-0-7818-1287-0.

Why is a cookbook being reviewed in a folklore journal? The answer is simple. This book presents more than recipes; it tries to provide cultural information about Ukrainian foodways and about the use of food in custom and ritual. As Ogrodnik Corona tells us, her earliest and fondest food memories were of her grandmother's kitchen where food nourished soul as well as body, where it linked family members with each other and with the surrounding social and natural world. The author tries to capture the pleasure of her own Ukrainian food experiences by providing numerous recipes and by supplementing them with extensive and varied background information.

The book begins with maps and information about Ukraine and its foodways and the importance of food in Ukrainian culture. Next come the recipes. These are given roughly in the order in which they would be served during a fancy, multi-course meal: first the appetizers, then the soups and salads, then the various components of a main course such as vegetables and grains, meat and fish, breads and pasta. The main course section is followed by one on eggs and omelets. The book concludes with a section on desserts and various flavored alcoholic beverages. Each chapter begins with a discussion of how a particular food category is served and consumed. We learn about the appearance of various dishes, typical accompaniments to them, the etiquette that goes with the presentation and consumption of the foods discussed. For example, we are given five different ways of serving *kulesha*, a cornmeal mush typical of Hutsul cuisine, and, of course, we are told that *horilka*, the Ukrainian word for vodka, should not be sipped but downed in one gulp and followed immediately by some sort of salty or savory *zakuska* – food which might also be an appetizer. In addition to the information on the various dishes themselves, there is general cultural information about such village events as potato-digging parties, where villagers take turns helping

each other bring in the potato crop and then are treated to a special meal. We learn what kinds of flowers to bring on which occasion and we are told never to bring an even number of flowers as a hostess gift since even numbers of flowers are appropriate only for funerals. There is a brief note on Kozaks and Kozak food, the sorts of dishes that men on a campaign might prepare. The *rynok* or farmer's market, a wide-spread institution in Ukraine, is described. We learn about the Crimean Tatars, ethnically different from Ukrainians but now citizens of Ukraine, and how their cuisine was adopted by the Ukrainian mainstream. Some Tatar foods have been accepted as is and are now considered Ukrainian; others have been altered slightly, producing Crimean-Ukrainian fusion. The book tells us about fishing and hunting as Ukrainian pastimes. And we learn how to make a proper Easter basket to take to church before Easter and how to prepare and present a Christmas Eve Lenten meal. All dishes are given a descriptive name in English with their Ukrainian name in transliteration underneath. All in all, the book provides a treasure trove of information about Ukrainian foods, their preparation, and their ritual and customary uses.

The book is largely accurate in its presentation of Ukrainian material. The transliterations use a modified Library of Congress system. The vowels я and ю are rendered as ya and yu instead of ia and iu, but this is probably an easier transliteration for the non-academic reader to understand. All other aspects of the transliteration would keep a purist happy. The background information is largely accurate. The author seems to have traveled to Ukraine and, although her observations, with a few exceptions, describe city rather than rural life, they do reflect Ukraine as it is today. Her Ukraine is a real one and not the imagined and romanticized Ukraine of many in the Diaspora. I disagree with some of the depictions of ritual practices, such as the description of the appearance and use of the wedding bread or *korovai* and the behavior during Easter and Christmas celebrations – but then again Ukraine is a large country with much regional variation. The author, while privileging information from western Ukraine, the region that most Ukrainians residing in the United States and

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Canada come from, is aware of variation and does give variants of a number of dishes. In the case of *borshch*, for example, she gives 8 different types. I do not agree with all of the information that Corona provides. For example, I object to certain statements about ancient Ukrainians and their practices. Such statements are in vogue in both Ukraine and the Diaspora, but without proper documentation, we cannot know what ancient peoples did or thought.

A cookbook review, even one for a folklore journal, would not be complete without a discussion of the recipes themselves. The ones in this book are not likely to promote heart health. Oгородnik Corona routinely calls for extra-large eggs and heavy cream. Fats are used in large quantities and they include, not just butter and vegetable oils, but also goose fat, chicken fat, lard, and bacon drippings, among other fats. There are even instructions for extracting goose and other fats and for making one's own pork cracklings and goose cracklings. Corona is a farm girl and her maiden name, Oгородnik, actually means farmer or gardener. This is seen in recipes that call for chicken feet, whole sucking pig, pork heart, beef tongue, and other ingredients not typically found at the neighborhood supermarket. Tracking down all of these ingredients would probably require a foodie's dedication, as would pitting one's own sour cherries and making noodles from scratch. Many of the recipes given are not for the casual cook and require a significant time commitment. I personally am not about to go shopping for chicken feet or pig's feet and, although I have pitted many cherries, this is not something I am willing to do routinely. This does not mean that I did not find many useful and easy recipes in this book. In fact, I felt that Corona took the mystery out of some dishes for me and I learned a lot in terms of technique and in terms of regional variation. Besides, one does not need to use the exact ingredients listed. More conventional fats can be substituted for the ones the author recommends, and one does not need to use the full amount of shortening. With most cookbooks, I cut the amount of fat and salt considerably and the same can be done here. Corona herself provides variations to her recipes and lists possible substitutions. One thing that I find lacking in this

book is photographs. There are drawn illustrations and these are indeed charming, as the book jacket claims; but if one does not already know what a particular item should look like, the illustrations are not always helpful. Similarly, if one does not know a technique such a *pyrohy*-pinching or cabbage leaf rolling, the author's descriptions, as thorough as they are, can be inadequate. Better and more numerous illustrations, even drawn ones, would have helped.

In sum, this is a book that is both interesting and useful. As already noted, foodies should find some very exciting culinary adventures in this book. For people of Ukrainian heritage, this book should be a godsend. Food is often associated with heritage and, because it is taken into the body, that association is of the most intimate kind; it is literally visceral. Many heritage Ukrainians want to make dishes that they feel should be part of their identity, but do not know how. This book will tell them how and it will give them both practical information and cultural information. It will, as said at the beginning of this review, feed both body and soul.

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