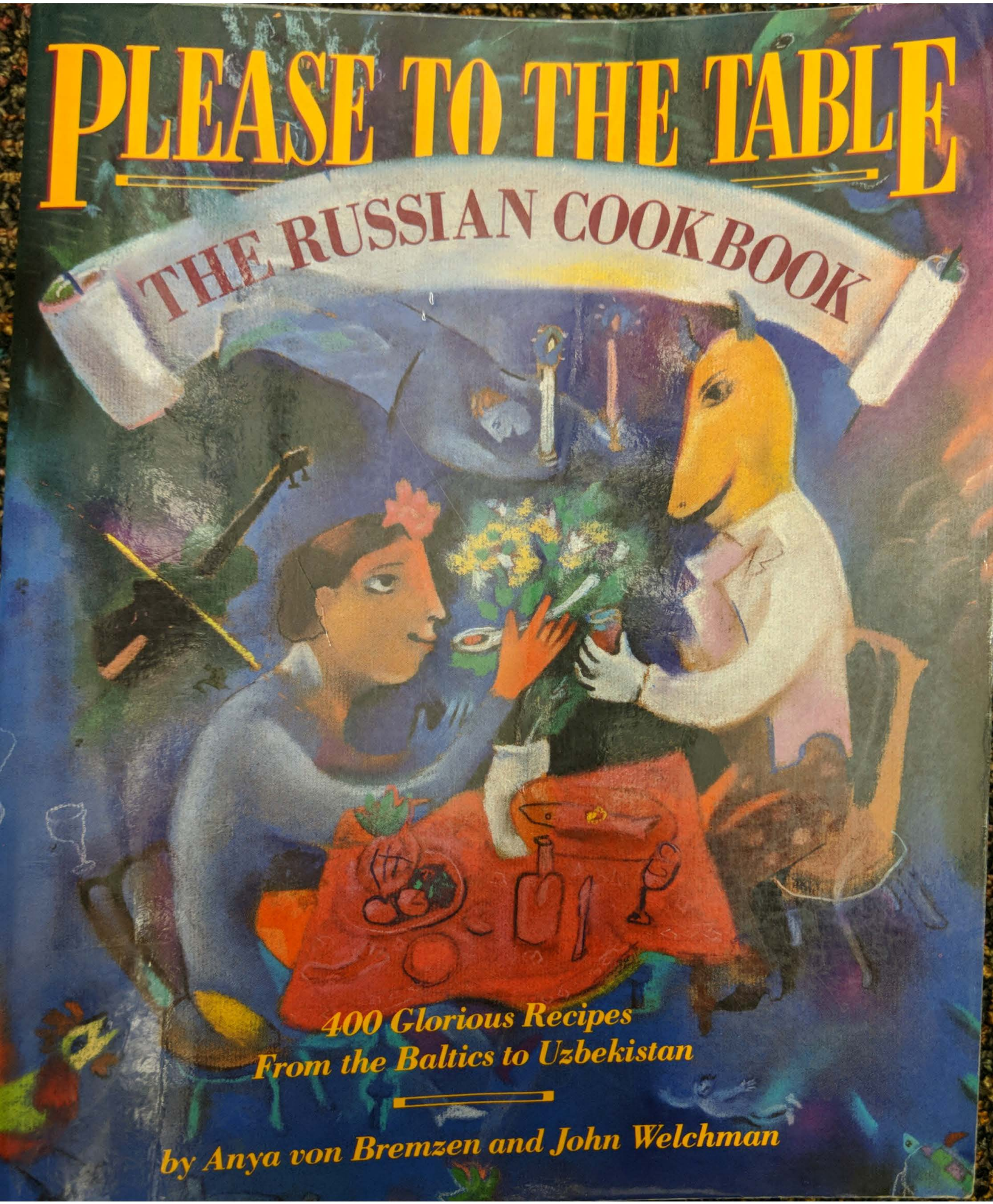
PLEASE TO THE TABLE

THE RUSSIAN COOKBOOK



400 Glorious Recipes
From the Baltics to Uzbekistan

by Anya von Bremzen and John Welchman

1 In a large soup pot, bring the lamb and stock to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer, covered, until the lamb shanks are tender, about 1½ hours. Remove the lamb shanks from the stock. Cool until manageable, then remove the meat from the bones, discarding the gristle and fat. Set the meat aside.

2 Refrigerate the stock, uncovered, until the fat rises to the surface, about 40 minutes. Skim the fat off.

3 Meanwhile, place the split peas and 3 cups water in a medium-size saucepan. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat to low and simmer, covered, until the peas are tender but not mushy, about 40 minutes. Drain and set aside.

4 With a very sharp knife, make two crosswise incisions in the stem end of each chestnut. Cook the chestnuts in boiling water to cover for about 10 minutes.

5 Drain the chestnuts and cool until manageable. Remove their shells and skins, rinse, drain, and set aside.

6 In another large soup pot, melt the butter over medium heat. Add the sliced onions, turmeric, and cinnamon and sauté until the onion softens, about 10 minutes.

7 Add the defatted stock, the quince, prunes, and tomatoes. Simmer for 15 minutes.

8 Add the chestnuts, split peas, lamb, mint, basil, lemon juice, cayenne, and saffron and simmer for 10 minutes more. Adjust the seasoning, spicing the soup generously with salt and pepper.

9 Sprinkle with the chopped mint and serve with the minced red onion and sumakh on the side.

Serves 6 to 8

Spicy Mixed-Meat Soup

Solianka

I often serve *solianka* as a one-dish meal, in which case the amount of meats added can be increased. Remember, that wherever there are pickles, there must be vodka.

8 imported dried wild mushrooms, well rinsed
6 tablespoons (¾ stick) unsalted butter
3 large onions, coarsely chopped
1 cup diced cooked veal
1 cup diced cooked ham
1 cup diced Polish kielbasa or frankfurters
2 quarts Beef Stock (see Index) or canned broth
Bouquet garni (2 bay leaves and 8 black peppercorns tied in a cheesecloth bag)
2 medium-size dill pickles, diced
2 tablespoons drained capers
10 to 12 small marinated mushrooms, preferably My Mother's Marinated Mushrooms (see Index) but jarred is acceptable
1 can (16 ounces) Italian plum tomatoes, drained, seeded, and chopped
2 tablespoons tomato paste
1 tablespoon all-purpose flour
12 Greek olives
¼ cup chopped fresh dill
¼ teaspoon dried marjoram
3 large cloves garlic, minced
¼ cup juice from dill pickle jar
Generous pinch of sweet Hungarian paprika
Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
Lemon slices for garnish
Sour cream for garnish (optional)

About Solianka

There has been much debate among food historians about the origins of the name of this traditional Russian soup. Some say that it derives from the word *sol* (salt), because of the addition of salty pickles, olives, and capers. Others argue that the original name was *selianka*, which is related to the word *selo* (village), and thus points to the rural provenance of the dish. In addition, we now know that the version we have today using mixed meats and tomatoes came into being only in the nineteenth century. However, there's no debate at all about the soup's excellent taste!



1 Soak the mushrooms in ½ cup water for 2 hours. Drain the mushrooms and strain the liquid through a coffee filter. Set the mushrooms and soaking liquid aside.

2 Melt 4 tablespoons of the butter in a large soup pot over medium-low heat. Add the onions, veal, ham, kielbasa, and dried mushrooms and sauté over medium-low heat, stirring occasionally, 10 minutes.

3 Add the stock and soaking liquid and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat to low and add the bouquet garni, pickles, capers, and marinated mushrooms. Simmer, covered, about 10 minutes.

4 Meanwhile, melt the remaining 2 tablespoons of butter in a small skillet over low heat. Add the tomatoes and tomato paste and sauté, stirring, 5 to 7 minutes. Stir in the flour and continue to sauté for another minute.

5 Add a ladleful of the soup to the skillet, scrape the bottom with a wooden spoon, and whisk the mixture back into the soup. Add the olives, dill, marjoram, garlic, pickle juice, and paprika. Stir the soup well, season with salt and pepper, and simmer, covered, over low heat for 10 minutes.

6 Remove the soup from the heat; remove the bouquet garni, taste, and correct the seasoning. Let stand for 10 minutes before serving.

7 Serve garnished with a slice of lemon on each serving and sour cream on the side, if desired.

Serves 6

My Mother's Chicken Soup with Dumplings

Kuriniy Bulyon s Kliotskami

Every mother has a recipe for a comforting soup intended to bring her child strength during the sundry ailments and afflictions of childhood; and every child out of childhood will swear by that remedial soup to the end of his or her days. This is my oath.

Although my mother is not the kind of cook who would knead her dough with time-consuming vigor and passion, nor does she clarify stocks and separate eggs, her recipes are always elegant, delicious, and, of course, super quick. In Moscow she was ceremoniously dubbed the "queen of soups." This "eat-it-it-will-make-you-better" soup is all of the above and much more.