

Patrick E. McGovern, *Ancient Brews Rediscovered and Re-Created* (WW Norton, 2017)

## Additional Meal Pairings and Mood-Enhancing Atmospherics

### Chapter 2: *Midas Touch*

#### Other Meal Pairings

##### Entrée: Bouillabaisse

by Zach Dick and Kevin Downing

Serves 6

This more modern recipe is partly based on ancient aquatic finds from the site. Freshwater mussels (*Unionidae*) and carp (*Cyprinidae*) have been identified. No lobster remains have yet been found, but various species inhabit the Mediterranean and Black Seas, as do the other fish and shellfish included in the recipe.

#### Ingredients

Bread, one rustic French loaf, sliced

½ cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra for brushing the croutons

4 garlic cloves, minced

1 live lobster (1–1¼ pounds)

2 large tomatoes, peeled and coarsely chopped

1 large onion, small dice

1 pound boiling potatoes

⅓ cup finely chopped fennel fronds (sometimes called anise)

1 Turkish or ½ California bay leaf

¼ teaspoon crumbled saffron threads

1½ tablespoons coarse sea salt

½ teaspoon black pepper

7 cups white fish stock (homemade or store-bought)

2 cups *Midas Touch* or homebrew interpretation

3 pounds white fish fillets (such as monkfish, turbot, red snapper, striped bass, porgy, grouper, cod, other native species from the Mediterranean, the Black Sea or inland Turkey, and/or comparable species elsewhere), cut into 2-inch pieces

½ pound cockles or small hard-shelled clams, scrubbed

½ pound cultivated mussels, scrubbed and any beards removed

½ pound large shrimp in shells

#### Preparation

*Make the croutons:*

Put an oven rack in the middle position and preheat the oven to 250°F. Arrange the bread slices in a single layer in a shallow baking pan and brush both sides with oil. Bake until crisp, about 30 minutes. Rub 1 side of each toast with a cut side of garlic.

*Make the soup:*

Plunge the lobster headfirst into a 6- to 8-quart pot of boiling water, then cook, covered, 2 minutes from the time the lobster enters the water. Transfer the lobster with tongs to a colander and let stand until cool enough to handle. Discard the hot water. Put the lobster in a shallow baking pan. Twist off the claws with knuckles from the body, and then crack the claws with a mallet or rolling pin and separate the claws from the knuckles. Halve the body and tail lengthwise through the shell with kitchen shears, and then cut crosswise through the shell into 2-inch pieces. Reserve the lobster juices that accumulate in the baking pan.

Cook the tomatoes, onion, and garlic in the ½ cup oil in the cleaned 6- to 8-quart pot over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, until the onion is softened, 5 to 7 minutes. Meanwhile, peel the potatoes and cut them into ½-inch cubes. Stir the potatoes into the tomatoes with the fennel fronds, bay leaf, saffron, sea salt, and pepper. Add the stock and beer and bring to a boil. Then reduce the heat and simmer, covered, until the potatoes are almost tender, 8 to 10 minutes. Add thicker pieces of the fish and the cockles to the soup and simmer, covered, for 2 minutes. Stir in the mussels, shrimp, lobster, lobster juices, and remaining fish and simmer, covered, until they are just cooked through and the mussels open wide, about 5 minutes. Stir 3 tablespoons of the broth from the soup into the rouille until blended. Arrange 2 croutons in each of 6 to 8 deep soup bowls. Carefully transfer the fish and shellfish from the soup to the croutons with a slotted spoon. Then ladle some broth with vegetables over the seafood.

Top each serving with 1 teaspoon rouille and serve the remainder on the side.

### **Other Meal Suggestions**

You can round out the meal with many accompanying dishes, inspired by Turkish and Middle Eastern cookbooks (see suggestions for Chapter 4, below). At the first “King Midas feast,” Pam Horowitz prepared the following: garbanzo and olive spread, Turkish mezze salad plate, dried apricots with nutty sheep’s milk cheese, caramelized fennel tarts with pomegranate jus, chicken currant dolmades, and as the *pièce de résistance* for dessert, Midas-touched white chocolate truffle. Full recipes can be found @ <http://www.penn.museum/sites/Midas/recipes.shtml>.

Similar ingredients can be substituted for difficult-to-obtain or less preferred native ingredients. For example, Pam could have adorned the Midas-touched truffle with local carob instead of chocolate, which is from the New World and was not introduced into Turkish and Middle Eastern cuisine until well after the Phrygians were no more. But she preferred the more elite and tasty delicacy of the Mayans and Aztecs (Chapter 7). Chicken of east Asian origin was also a compromise. We can only guess at Phrygian food preparations, based on the archaeobotanical and archaeozoological evidence of what was recovered at Gordion and other sites. For example, you might add a little bitter vetch or wild fenugreek to really spice up your stew. You can consult Chapter 2’s bibliography and my website (<http://www.penn.museum/sites/biomoleculararchaeology/>) for academic and popular articles, including downloadable pdf’s, under “Articles” and “News.”

We do not have any “Phrygian cookbooks,” as such, from later, more literate Greek and Roman times when remnants of the kingdom still existed. For educated guesses on Anatolian native ingredients and cuisine from 2nd millennium B.C. literary texts, written in ancient Hittite (a once “lost” Anatolian language) and Akkadian (the language of Mesopotamia), see Harry A. Hoffner’s *Alimenta Hethaeorum: Food Production in Hittite Asia Minor* (American Oriental Series, vol. 55, New Haven: American Oriental Society, 1974). Phrygian cooking probably continued along similar paths in the 1st millennium.

### **Mood-Enhancing Atmospherics**

To drink your Dogfish Head *Midas Touch* or your homebrew interpretation in style, you can draw on an embarrassment of “riches” for re-imagining and re-creating your ideal setting for quaffing *Midas Touch*. Pull up an armchair, and peruse photographs of the tomb and its artifacts. You will see the king laid out on his purple-and-blue royal textiles, surrounded by his 160 drinking vessels, gleaming like gold. For a series of videos, including the excavation of the ancient palace and the long walk down the corridor to the tomb, see the following:

<https://roundthing.wordpress.com/tag/midas/>.

The Penn Museum has produced several videos on the early excavation and local village life: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1VFVyiiOzwc&feature=youtu.be>  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KZG6iUThN-I>  
[https://archive.org/details/upenn-f16-0715\\_1957\\_Gordion](https://archive.org/details/upenn-f16-0715_1957_Gordion)  
[https://archive.org/details/upenn-f16-0727\\_Gordium\\_1951](https://archive.org/details/upenn-f16-0727_Gordium_1951)

If you’re able to travel to Gordion and Turkey, you will be rewarded with even more ideas. Entering the burial chamber deep within the Midas Tumulus is almost an otherworldly experience. Taking in the sights, sounds, and aromas (some good, some bad) of traditional village life can be illuminating. You can visit the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations in the capital of Ankara and see the drinking vessels up close, laid out in a realistic model of the tomb.

Of course, when you think of Midas, you think first of gold—lots and lots of gold! But for the genuine touch of Midas, you don’t need a body lying in state, genuine molluscan Royal Purple, or even real gold. You’ll still want to give the impression of wealth and prestige. That can be accomplished, like it was in the tomb, by using a look-alike “fake,” namely highly polished brass. I found and bought drinking-bowl imitations of those with handles from the tomb in the Ankara bazaar, and they are indistinguishable from the real vessels. Turkish baths, in Turkey and abroad, use a handleless bowl nearly identical to the tomb’s *omphalos* (belly-button) drinking-bowls.

All kinds of other brass paraphernalia and fittings can serve as a golden backdrop to your beverage and meal, even if they’re not attested as such in the tomb. Flickering light and heat from candleholders can add a mysterious aura. Antique-looking figurines and statues have their place, since we know of them from other tombs. Phrygians were much taken with standing, frontal poses of their chief goddess, Matar or Cybele, often shown holding an offering cup,

presumably full of the Midas elixir, before her. Figures posing with real animals, such as lions, goats, and horses, as well as imaginary sphinxes, are other possibilities.

You might cover your floors and walls with carefully chosen Turkish rugs and pillows with embroidered designs, to lean back on. Their intricate geometric designs, like the decoration on the ancient wooden furniture in the tomb, often carry symbolic meanings of life and death. Scatter some brass *fibulae* (Latin, “buckles”), the ancient equivalent of large safety-pins for holding garments together, on the rugs, like they were found in the tomb. Some jewelry or old coins, which were invented in western Anatolia soon after Midas, here and there will add to the effect.

Some of you may have been fortunate enough to see the Penn Museum’s exhibition “The Golden Age of King Midas” in 2016. It was the first time that any of the drinking vessels had traveled outside Turkey. These were on display in an interior room of the exhibit, similar in size and feel to the tomb.

An even more intimate setting was provided by a tent caravansary (Persian, “traveling trader’s palace”) when the exhibit first opened. The caravansary was a testament to Gordion’s location along the route that later become the Silk Road. When you sat inside the tent, surrounded by Middle Eastern rugs, wooden furniture, and bronze plates and drinking-cups, you felt as if you might be sitting in the original tomb. If you want a glimpse of what the caravansary looked like from the inside, we did a television spot for the local Philadelphia CBS station: <http://tinyurl.com/jxkpmm7>.

The caravansary couldn’t capture all the atmospherics of the funerary feast. For example, it didn’t have the aroma of whole lamb roasting on the spit, like we had when we did our television re-creation. A colleague of mine once piped this aroma, which she had purchased as a condensate from a London purveyor, into an exhibit room of an ancient Greek cooking and drinking exhibit in Athens, “Minoans and Mycenaeans: Flavours of Their Time” (available as a book with the same title, eds. Y. Tzedakis and H. Martlew, Athens: Greek Ministry of Culture and National Archaeological Museum, 1999). That exhibit, no doubt with some enticement from the smell of lamb and the fermented beverages to follow, was the most popular exhibit ever at the National Museum. You might search the internet for this aroma and others (saffron, honey, Muscat grapes, anyone?), or barbecue your lamb over a nearby grill.

Music, the “universal language of humankind,” is also an essential accompaniment to food and drink. In the background at the ancient feast, we might imagine hearing the mourners chanting their funerary dirges and rituals, the jubilant music during the feast that followed, or the more mundane sounds of the meal being prepared. The traditional Phrygian musical instruments were the double-flute, and the lyre or harp. Midas got his donkey ears, according to legend, when he decided in favor of Pan’s pipes to Apollo’s lyre.

The Phrygian mode or scale, which was very popular among ancient Greeks and Romans, was different from what our Western ears are accustomed to. It could be, by turns, very

energetic, even frenzied, but then tranquil. It has a Middle Eastern minor sound to it, which is similar to Spanish flamenco (shades of bouillabaisse?), which is said to be composed in the “gypsy mode.”

Examples of Greek tunes in this mode can be found on YouTube and as CDs:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JWBnPZIkKCA>  
<http://tinyurl.com/hlwzzgp>

For a modern musical take on the Phrygian mode, try listening to Metallica’s “Wherever I May Roam”: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dHUHxTiPFUU>

Loreena McKennitt’s “Beneath a Phrygian Sky” is calmer: <http://tinyurl.com/hp2ml3p>

Miles Davis explores this “cooler” mode in his jazz album, “Sketches of Spain”:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tSGUPsAeL34>

For those of you familiar with the classic TV science-fiction series *Doctor Who*, its pulsating theme music is in the Phrygian mode: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a3YAEhWU6k>

Musically, we can branch out further into the combined celebratory and mournful aspects of the ancient feast and tomb. Neil Young’s “Heart of Gold” is upbeat. Like Midas (and apparently more successfully), he keeps “searching for a heart of gold,” which keeps him “perfect.” Billy Joel’s “Only the Good Die Young” laments the early passing of those we hold most dear, as does Pink Floyd’s “Wish You Were Here.”

Of course, music and dance go together. Although the available evidence is slim, Phrygian dance was likely of an intense, ecstatic kind. It might have been similar to the mind-numbing gyrations still performed today by Sufi Whirling Dervishes in central Turkey. I once witnessed a performance in the heartland of ancient Phrygia inside a caravansary. You might accompany your movements to J. L. Fulks’s “Phrygian Dance”: <http://tinyurl.com/zbeav3s>.

Phrygian clothes have their appeal, too. Women wore long, flowing, and embroidered gowns (the watercolors by Piet de Jong, are gorgeous: see *The Golden Age of King Midas*, special issue devoted to Midas and the Phrygians, *Expedition 57:3* (2015)). Both men and women wore the distinctive Phrygian cap, which was pointed like a ski cap; its top was usually slung forward. It later came to represent the female equivalents of the French and American revolutions, Liberty and Columbia. The leather shoes of the ancient Phrygians also had pointed toes; if you could afford it, they were also decorated with gold coverings.

Above all, your “King Midas Funerary Feast” should be a celebration of life in death, like an Irish wake. You are not confined to the silence of the tomb, and are free to experiment. You should take the detailed scientific information from the tomb and intuitively elaborate upon it, like a shaman of old with fermented beverage in hand. The same advice applies to the atmospherics for the other *Ancient Ales and Spirits*.

### Chapter 3: *Chateau Jiahu*

#### Other Meal Pairings

Unlike the spicy barbecued lamb and lentil stew which accompanied “King Midas” into his afterlife (Chapter 2), we do not have any direct chemical evidence for the meals and side dishes served at Neolithic Jiahu. My fellow-chefs, Kevin Downing, Zach Dick, Christopher Ottosen, and I have based our inferences on the plant and animal remains at this and other Neolithic sites in China, and made the reasonable assumption that the cuisine, although varying from region to region, has remained remarkably constant up to the present. We have included some basic recipes for making your own home-cultured black beans and daikon radishes (also in the hard-copy of the book), on the assumption that your average Jiahu villager had to prepare most of the ingredients from scratch and could not run to the neighborhood Asian food store.

A recent find from the late Neolithic site of Lajia, northwest of Xi’an, shows what we may expect from future excavations. Very long and thin millet noodles—up to 20 inches long and about 1/3 inch thick—were found inside a “soup bowl” (see Lu, H., et al. 2005, Culinary archaeology: millet noodles in late Neolithic China, *Nature* 437:967–69). These could only have been made by flattening out the dough and stretching it out over and over again, as is still done today to make La-Mian noodles. We suggest trying this yourself for traditional Chinese chicken noodle soup (below).

Among the more intriguing dishes with ancient roots, *dim sum* comes from southern China, specifically Guangdong province with its capital at the port city of Guangzhou (previously known as Canton) and neighboring Hong Kong. Steamed buns (Chinese, *baozi*) stuffed with meat and vegetables were also known in the north, but Cantonese cuisine developed into a fine art with every kind of ingredient and spice imaginable. You can have the wonderful experience of tasting *dim sum* here in the States (Chinatowns are the best places to look), if you can’t get to China. The delectables are usually served up in steamer baskets from trolleys, and you pick out those you want. But the best way to appreciate what goes into the buns and their contents is to make them yourself—not an unpleasant task, especially with a goblet of *Chateau Jiahu* in hand.

You need not restrict yourself to the Chinese recipes here, and you don’t even need to use a wok. But if you want to bring out the flavor of *Chateau Jiahu*, the more traditional, the better.

N.B. Unusual ingredients, if not available locally, can be ordered from online stores, several of which are suggested here.

#### 1) Entrée or soup course: traditional Chinese chicken noodle soup

by Christopher Ottosen

Serves 4

#### Ingredients

*Broth*

1 whole chicken  
1 tablespoon butter  
1 onion, chopped  
1 tablespoon fresh or dried hawthorn berries<sup>1</sup>  
1 tablespoon fresh ginger, grated  
1 teaspoon licorice root,<sup>2</sup> minced  
1 teaspoon angelica root,<sup>3</sup> minced  
1 teaspoon Sichuan pepper, ground  
Pinch of salt

#### *Noodles*

2 cups millet flour  
Pinch of salt  
1 whole egg  
2 egg yolks  
1/3 cup water  
Chinese leeks, chopped and cleaned

#### **Preparation**

##### *Make the broth:*

Chop the chicken into small pieces after removing internal organs and any blood or waste. Caramelize the bones in a frying pan for 1 to 2 hours until they are dry. Add the butter, onion, and spices and mix well. Cover the bones with water, and simmer for 10 to 15 minutes. Lower the temperature and cover the pan. Strain the broth after 1 hour with a fine sieve. Cool down the broth quickly, or keep lukewarm if to be used immediately.

##### *Make the noodles:*

Combine the flour and salt, and, using your fingers, shape the mass into a mound with a hollow in the middle. Add the whole egg and yolks to the hollow, and beat them gently with a fork, while also incorporating some of the flour from the sides of the hollow until the eggs are no longer liquid. Work the rest of the flour into the dough, and knead the dough until it has a smooth texture, usually in 10 to 20 minutes. Form the dough into a ball, cover in plastic wrap, and refrigerate for a minimum of 1 hour or preferably overnight. Next, divide the dough into 4 portions. Take each portion of the dough and flatten it with your hands. Then roll out the dough as a rectangle to the desired thinness. Make sure to lightly dust the dough with flour in between steps, so that it doesn't stick to the working surface. Loosely roll up each rectangular portion of dough into a cylinder. Slice each cylinder crosswise into 1/4-inch-wide sections. Unroll the

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<sup>1</sup>Online resources: <http://tinyurl.com/z5dembw>, and <http://tinyurl.com/hw83hu8>

<sup>2</sup>Online resources: <http://tinyurl.com/j6aclkr>, and <http://www.herbsandheirlooms.com/id177.htm>

<sup>3</sup>Online resources: <http://tinyurl.com/zrwn7jl>, and <http://tinyurl.com/z48ovka>

sections to separate and lay out each strip. Cut the strips to desired lengths. Boil noodles in a pot for 2 to 3 minutes in the water. Drain, and transfer the noodles to a deep serving bowl. Add desired amount of Chinese leeks to the bowl. Finish by pouring the hot chicken broth over the noodles.

### **2) Side dish: roasted red rice**

by Christopher Ottosen

**Serves 4**

#### **Ingredients**

2 ounces onions, minced  
2 tablespoons canola oil  
7 ounces red rice  
4 tablespoons *Chateau Jiahu* or homebrew interpretation  
4 cups vegetable broth  
1 teaspoon garlic, minced

#### **Preparation**

Sauté the minced onions in 1 tablespoon of the canola oil until lightly colored, and add the red rice and *Chateau Jiahu* or homebrew interpretation. After evaporation and reduction of the liquid down to a third, add the vegetable broth. Boil for 30 minutes until the rice is al dente. Add the remaining oil to a hot frying pan. Then add the garlic, followed by the al dente rice, and shake the pan until the rice becomes light and crispy.

### **3) Side dish: Fermented daikon or Asian radish**

by Christopher Ottosen

**Serves 4**

#### **Ingredients**

6 teaspoons salt  
1 quart unchlorinated water  
Chinese leeks or garlic  
Daikon or Asian radish (any color), thinly sliced

#### **Preparation**

Dissolve the salt in the water at room temperature. Cover the bottom of a pint glass jar with Chinese leeks or garlic. Fill two-thirds with radish slices. Add the water with dissolved salt to the jar's top. Seal the jar and leave it at room temperature for about a week. Open the lid every day to relieve the pressure. When gas build-up has stopped or at pH 3.3, seal and store the jar in a cool, dark place—the longer, the better.

### **4) Appetizer: Barbecued pork baozi buns**

by Kevin Downing and Zach Dick

**Serving 25 buns**

**Ingredients***Baozi bun*

1 package dried yeast or 1 cake fresh yeast  
1 cup lukewarm water  
4½ cups flour  
¼ cup sugar  
2 tablespoons melted Crisco or vegetable oil  
½ cup boiling water

*Barbecued pork filling*

2 tablespoons sesame seed oil  
1 scallion, chopped fine  
1 clove garlic, chopped fine  
½ pound barbecued pork cut into small cubes (recipe follows)  
2 tablespoons light soy sauce  
2 tablespoons oyster sauce  
1 tablespoon sugar  
1 tablespoon cornstarch, dissolved in 2 tablespoons water or chicken stock

**Preparation**

Dissolve the yeast in 1 cup lukewarm water. Add 1 cup of the flour. Mix thoroughly. Cover the yeast mixture with cloth. Let rise 1 hour, until bubbles appear. Dissolve the sugar and Crisco or vegetable oil in ½ cup boiling water. Stir well. Cool until lukewarm. Pour into the yeast mixture. Add the remaining 3½ cups flour. Knead the dough on a lightly floured board until smooth. Put the dough into a large, greased bowl in a warm place. Cover with a damp cloth. Let rise until doubled in bulk, about 2 hours.

Heat the sesame seed oil in a wok. Stir fry the scallion and garlic for 30 seconds. Add the pork and stir fry 1 minute. Add the soy sauce, oyster sauce, and sugar. Pour in the dissolved cornstarch. Stir fry quickly until the pork is glazed. Remove to a bowl and allow to cool.

On a floured board, knead the risen dough 1 minute and roll into one long, sausage-like roll 2 inches in diameter. Slice the roll crosswise into 1-inch pieces. Flatten each piece with the palm of your hand and roll with a rolling pin into 3-inch rounds. Place 1 heaping tablespoon of pork filling on each round. Gather dough around the filling by pleating along the edges. Bring the pleats up and twist securely and firmly. Place each bun 2 inches apart on aluminum foil on a steamer tray. Cover with a towel. Let rise 1 hour or until the dough springs back when touched with a finger. Steam over briskly boiling water 10 minutes.

**5) Appetizer: Barbecued pork****Ingredients**

1½ pounds pork butt  
2 cloves garlic

2 tablespoons *Chateau Jiahu* or homebrew interpretation  
Chinese rice wine, or dry sherry  
4 tablespoons sweet bean or hoisin sauce  
1½ tablespoons soy sauce  
1 tablespoon honey  
2 teaspoons brown sugar  
¼ teaspoon five-spice powder  
A few drops red food coloring, optional

### **Preparation**

Cut the pork into strips approximately 2 inches wide and 5 inches long. Smash and peel the garlic, and mash it with a mortar and pestle or a fork. In a medium bowl, whisk together the *Chateau Jiahu* or homebrew interpretation, rice wine or sherry, sweet bean or hoisin sauce, soy sauce, honey, brown sugar, mashed garlic, and five-spice powder. If using the red food coloring, add it now. Place the pork in a shallow 9-by-13-inch glass baking dish. Pour the marinade over it. Marinate the pork in the refrigerator, covered, for 3 hours. Remove the pork from the dish. Reserve the marinade. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Fill a shallow roasting pan with ½-inch of water and place in the bottom of the oven. Place the pork on a rack above the water. Roast approximately 1 hour until golden brown, brushing 2 or 3 times with the reserved marinade. When the final internal temperature of the pork is 160°F., remove and cool. When the pork is cool enough to handle, cut across the grain into ¼-inch-thick pieces.

### **6) Appetizer: Vegetarian egg rolls**

by Kevin Downing and Zach Dick

**Makes approximately 2 dozen egg rolls**

### **Ingredients**

2 tablespoons canola oil  
1 teaspoon finely minced garlic  
1 teaspoon finely minced fresh ginger  
1 tablespoon sesame oil  
1 teaspoon hot sesame oil  
½ pound cabbage, sliced  
2 celery stalks, sliced fine on a bias  
½ pound carrots, julienned  
1 yellow onion, sliced  
2 green onions, sliced  
½ pound shiitake mushrooms, julienned  
¼ cup low sodium soy sauce  
1 teaspoon sugar  
3 tablespoons minced chives  
Coarse sea salt to taste  
Black pepper to taste  
⅓ cup cornstarch

2/3 cup water or chicken stock  
24 large egg roll wrappers  
4 cups deep-fry oil

### **Preparation**

Heat the canola oil in a large roasting pan. Add the garlic and ginger, and sizzle. Add the sesame oils. When the garlic and ginger are cooked halfway, add the cabbage, celery, carrots, onions, and shiitakes. Sauté until the vegetables are tender. Deglaze with the soy sauce and sugar. Once cool, put the filling in a cheese cloth and wring out all the liquids. Mix in the chives. Salt and pepper to taste.

Mix the cornstarch and water or stock, slowly adding the liquid to the cornstarch until you have a “glue,” which will be used to seal the wrappers. To wrap, lay an egg roll wrapper out in front of you as a diamond. Place approximately 1/4 cup of filling in the middle of the wrapper, spreading it out but not getting it too close to the edges. Roll the corner closest to you over the filling. Brush the top corner with the cornstarch slurry. Fold in the sides of the wonton and continue rolling until it is closed. Press to seal, set aside, and repeat the process until you have 24 egg rolls.

Heat the deep-fry oil in wok. When it is hot (it should be bubbling), slide each egg roll carefully into the wok one at a time. Deep-fry until they are golden brown, and then drain on a deep-fry rack or paper towels. Keep on a tray lined with fresh paper towels until all are ready. Serve with soy sauce or Chinese hot mustard.

### **Mood-Enhancing Atmospherics**

*Chateau Jiahu* takes us back to the dawn of civilization in the early Neolithic period when our ancestors were going through a revolutionary transformation from a nomadic hunting-and-gathering existence to a sedentary way of life based on farming newly domesticated plants. Chapter 4 delves into suitable atmospherics for how best to drink a fermented beverage as a hunter-gatherer who is constantly on the move. For this extreme fermented beverage, we need to transport ourselves back to the Yellow River valley around 7000 B.C., and view the world from the perspective of an ordinary inhabitant of Jiahu, one of the earliest villages on the planet.

In our mind’s eye, we can see the village stretched out before us in the midst of a marshy plain, teeming with animal and plant life. It is fairly large for the time—about 5.5 hectares or 13 and a half acres—and might have been home to about 500 people. The very small, one-room houses, several meters across, are more like huts. Their foundations were dug down into the soil, and a wood, reed, and mud superstructure was built overhead. Each dwelling likely housed an extended family. Some structures might have been set aside for specialized purposes: stone tool and pottery production, basketry and textile weaving, jewelry-making, etc. The houses are cheek-by-jowl, with the occasional open space, storage or refuse pit, and pottery kiln in between. Domesticated dogs, pigs, and chickens run through the streets.

A few houses have additional rooms (perhaps the abode of a shaman?), but none stands out as large and ostentatious. Social class distinctions, usually marked archaeologically by special artifacts clustered in one place, appear to be absent. In other words, we are not dealing with an

advanced urban culture at Jiahu, but rather a small community that pools its efforts and works, plays, and worships together.

We can imagine that the people were still very much in touch with their surroundings, so that many activities, such as food preparation, arts and crafts, celebrations and religious rites—might have been communal and out of doors in courtyards. The huts might have been mainly for sleeping and private time.

As we stand in a courtyard, we might hear the sounds of a flute playing a traditional Chinese song, full of melancholy and yearning. A red-crowned crane, from whose bones the flutes were made, might fly overhead or be seen doing its mating dance in a nearby field. Stalks of the first domesticated rice wave in the wind in another field. Boats ply the nearby waters where fish are jumping. Women go about picking hawthorn tree fruit, grapes, apricots, and pears—some domesticated and others wild.

The cemetery for the venerated ancestors lay directly alongside the village, as if signaling its importance for the community. Like the houses, the graves are shallow pits in the ground and the accompanying grave goods are modest. All have pottery jars for the Jiahu grog beside their heads.

Some burials, however, stand apart. The deceased are adorned in jade and turquoise jewelry, and they are accompanied by pairs of bone flutes and/or tortoise shell “rattles” full of pebbles and sometimes incised with what have been interpreted as proto-Chinese characters. These tombs are quite possibly those of the shamanistic leaders of the community, who set the course of Chinese culture for millennia to come. The presence of millstones and awls in these tombs, however, shows that they could also engage in more menial pursuits.

Beyond imagining the possibilities of Neolithic life—its buildings and courtyards, music, dance, clothes, rituals, etc.—you can view the “Dawn of Civilization” videos, prepared by CCTV (China Central Television)-9 International, on-line:

Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ecSYHf0fxrw>

Part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ehWr0EPbW38>

Part 3: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7c\\_dg1XSUvg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7c_dg1XSUvg)

Part 3 is largely devoted to Jiahu and its flutes. A Chinese orchestra with the traditional 20 instruments plays the folk music of the country, which might well trace its roots back to that of Jiahu.

I would also recommend a trip to China to immerse yourself in traditional village life and to view the stupendous archaeological collections in the national museum in Beijing, as well as those in provincial museums throughout the country, many of which have been newly refurbished. The Shanxi Provincial Museum in Taiyuan presents a very realistic portrayal of Neolithic life at Jiahu on film. To my knowledge, it is not available outside of China.

If a trip is not in the offing, perusing some of the many books on Chinese daily life, past and present, can inspire you in developing your atmospherics for seriously enjoying *Chateau Jiahu*. Catalogues for recent blockbuster exhibits on China are very helpful.

Many American cities have their Chinatowns, too, which capture much of the spirit of traditional Chinese life, from the grocery stores and restaurants to the stores filled with antiques, clothing, CDs, and herbal medicines.

You cannot go far wrong whatever you decide to do, because Jiahu helped lay the foundation for subsequent Chinese tradition up to the present. Although silkworms are yet to be found at the site, the wife of Yellow Emperor, who later ruled over the region, is credited with discovering and first weaving the diaphanous silk material. You would be justified in creating and wearing a costume of regal appearance—perhaps a flowing silk gown or tunic, adorned with vibrant yellow or golden chrysanthemums, red peonies, and fiery, horned dragons. You could even go so far as to cover yourself from head to toe in a jade burial suit. But since we're back in the Neolithic, it is probably better to stick with basic Neolithic leather and hemp, which was used to make fishing nets at Jiahu. Accessories might be some roughly cut turquoise jewelry and a necklace made of natural products, such as flowers, shells, teeth, bone—think “flower power” of the 1960s hippies.

You might bring your drinking session to life in a small, intimate room or outside in a traditional Chinese garden or courtyard. A shallow grave is possible, but not recommended. Chinese paper lanterns, primitive-looking calligraphic characters, bamboo furniture, large pottery jars (plain or decorated), perhaps an imitation Neolithic flute if you can find one (I was presented with a fine jade example at the Jiahu 25th anniversary conference), colorful oranges and other fruit, some hawthorn fruit and grapes (they needn't be native Chinese), beans, roots, and rice grains scattered about, or the randomly placed tortoise shell will add to the ambience. Above all, imagine yourself a Neolithic man or woman in the Yellow River valley.

The Jiahu people appear to have been a peaceful and fun-loving people. Their bones do not show signs of traumatic injuries from warfare, and their life-expectancy was about 40 years. They apparently took this attitude to their graves. Sam is fond of saying that they had a real hootenanny in the afterlife. I would say that the jars of extreme fermented beverage near their heads were certainly meant to be enjoyed, but had a more serious religious purpose, as well.

The flutes in the tombs signal the need to accompany your Neolithic bash with some Chinese music based on the traditional scales or modern riffs on the same. You can search the internet or the traditional section of your local Chinatown music store for all and sundry. An ancient shamanistic rendition of a lion, dragon, sky, feather, silk, or shield dance might be in order. Chinese opera combines these elements of music, dance, and theatre.

For an example of a modern take on the ancient musical modes, you might listen to the alternative band Incubus's “Aqueous Transmission” on their *Morning Star* album, which was written outside on a beach Neolithic-style and whose principal instruments are flute and pipa, the

traditional four-stringed Chinese lute.

Trivium's "Kirisute Gomen" on their *Shogun* album takes a more violent, electric guitar approach to traditional Chinese music, while classical guitar virtuoso Steve Vai's "For the Love of God" (symphony version) is tamer. This piece leads off with soothing flute music, and unfolds into bombastic guitar solos, backed by a massive orchestra. By the end, you sense the monumental changes of the "Neolithic Revolution" that our Jiahu ancestors must have been going through.

## Chapter 4: *Ta Henket*

### Other Meal Pairings

Our suggested recipes are based on the available archaeological, archaeochemical, archaeobotanical, and archaeozoological evidence, as well as inferences from historical and traditional Egyptian and Middle Eastern cuisine. A very thorough, well-illustrated, and scholarly approach to this fascinating topic is provided by the following:

Berriedale-Johnson, M. 2008. *Food Fit for Pharaohs: An Ancient Egyptian Cookbook*. London: British Museum.

Ikram, S. 1994. "Food for Eternity: What the Ancient Egyptians Ate & Drank." Part 1: "Meat, Fish, Fowl," and Part 2: "Greens, Bread, Beverages & Sweets." *KMT* 5: 24–33, 53–60, and 75–76.

Other cookbooks, which variously combine ancient and modern concepts, include:

Bishara, R. 2014. *Olives, Lemons & Za'atar: The Best Middle Eastern Home Cooking*. London: Kyle Books.

Mehdawy, M., and Hussein, A. 2010. *The Pharaoh's Kitchen: Recipes from Ancient Egypt's Enduring Food Traditions*. Cairo: American University in Cairo.

Riolo, A. 2013. *Nile Style: Egyptian Cuisine and Culture*. New York: Hippocrene Books.

Roden, C. 2000. *The New Book of Middle Eastern Food*. New York: Knopf.

You can also consult other recipes on-line.

N.B. Unusual ingredients, if not available locally, can be ordered from online stores, several of which are suggested here.

### 1) **Appetizer: hummus with pita bread**

by Kevin Downing and Zach Dick

**Serves 6**

#### **Ingredients**

##### *Hummus*

2 cups chickpeas, well-cooked and drained, or canned, liquid reserved

½ cup tahini (sesame seed paste), optional, with some of its oil

¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus oil for drizzling

2 cloves garlic, peeled, or to taste

Salt to taste

Freshly ground black pepper to taste  
1 tablespoon ground cumin or paprika, or to taste, plus a sprinkling for garnish  
Juice 1 lemon, plus more as needed  
Parsley, to garnish

*Pita bread*

$\frac{3}{4}$  cup water  
1 tablespoon honey  
One  $\frac{1}{4}$ -ounce package active dry yeast  
2 cups all-purpose flour  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  cup Middle Eastern or Greek yogurt, plain and full-fat  
2 tablespoons canola oil  
 $\frac{1}{2}$  teaspoon coarse sea salt  
 $\frac{1}{4}$  cup minced cilantro  
Melted ghee, for brushing

**Preparation**

*Hummus:*

Put everything except the parsley in a food processor and process at high speed. Add the reserved chickpea liquid or water as needed to produce a smooth purée. Taste and adjust the seasoning (I often find I like to add much more lemon juice). Serve in a bowl, drizzled with the olive oil and sprinkled with a bit more cumin or paprika and some parsley.

*Pita bread:*

Heat the water to 115°F. Stir the heated water and honey in a bowl. Add the yeast and let sit until foamy, about 10 minutes. Add the flour, yogurt, oil, and salt; stir until dough forms. Using your hands, knead the dough in a bowl until smooth, about 5 minutes. Cover the dough with a damp cloth. Let it sit in a warm place until doubled in size, about 1 hour.

Transfer the dough to a floured work surface; divide it into 10 balls. Working with 1 ball at a time and using a rolling pin, roll the dough into a 7-inch circle about  $\frac{1}{4}$ -inch thick. Sprinkle with cilantro, and press it into the dough.

Heat a 12-inch nonstick skillet over medium-high. Working with 1 piece of dough at a time, cook plain side down on the skillet until bubbles appear over the surface, about 45 seconds. Flip the dough; cook until bubbles appear once more, about 30 seconds. Remove the skillet from the heat, and transfer the pita to a large plate. Using tongs, additionally cook the pita about 2 inches above an open flame, flipping once, until browned in spots, about 1 minute. Alternatively, finish cooking the pita in pan until browned in spots, about 1 minute. Return the pita to the plate, brush with the clarified butter (see recipe for kale and chard in buttermilk, Chapter 6), and sprinkle with more cilantro. Serve hot.

**2) Side dish: Pickled chamomile buds**

by Christopher Ottosen

Serves 4

**Ingredients**

Desired amount of fresh chamomile flower buds;<sup>4</sup> only 1 tablespoon needed for goose recipe (see Chapter 4). Other edible flower buds can be substituted.

Coarse salt

2 tablespoons date vinegar

4 tablespoons date syrup

6 tablespoons water

**Preparation**

Layer buds with a handful of salt per layer in a jar. Seal and store in a cold, dark place for 2 months. To pickle, rinse the buds in cold water to completely remove the salt. Mix 1 part vinegar, 2 parts syrup, and 3 parts water (e.g., 1 ounce, 2 ounces, and 3 ounces), and boil. Place the buds in a clean jar, and cover them with the boiled liquid. Seal and store in a cold, dark place for 2 to 3 weeks.

**3) Side dish: Fava bean and cheese salad**

by Christopher Ottosen

**Serves 4**

**Ingredients**

3 cups fava beans, fresh if available

1 white onion

1 turnip

5 radishes

2 tablespoons lemon juice, freshly pressed

4 tablespoons date syrup

6 tablespoons grape juice, freshly pressed

1 tablespoon dried rose petals, or 1 teaspoon rose water

1 quart water

1 tablespoon salt

¼ cup olive oil

Pinch salt

2 ounces sour white cheese (*mish*)<sup>5</sup>, available in Middle Eastern speciality stores. You can also substitute spicy, aged Middle Eastern cheeses, such as *shanklish*<sup>6</sup>, which is usually covered in za'atar and Aleppo pepper:

Parsley, minced

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<sup>4</sup>Online resources: <http://tinyurl.com/gm2ej55>, <http://tinyurl.com/gns7ulm>, and <http://tinyurl.com/hfl3ocn>

<sup>5</sup>Online resource: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyptian\\_cheese](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Egyptian_cheese)

<sup>6</sup>Online resource: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Shanklish>

**Preparation**

Use a mandoline to slice vegetables to approximately  $\frac{1}{10}$  to  $\frac{1}{5}$  inches in thickness. Place in a lidded container. Combine lemon juice, date syrup, grape juice, and rose petals. Bring to a boil in a saucepan, and then pour over the vegetables. Put lid on container, and cool to room temperature before refrigerating.

Boil the water with the 1 tablespoon salt. Prepare a container with cold water and ice cubes. Blanch the fava beans in the boiling water until the outer shells begin to shrink, about 30 seconds, and then transfer to the ice water. When the beans are cold, after a few minutes, remove the outer shells. Dry the shelled beans and add to the vegetable container.

Mix the fava beans and pickled vegetables in a bowl with the olive oil and pinch of salt. If desired, add a teaspoon of pickle liquor. Crush the cheese by hand and sprinkle it over the vegetable salad on a serving platter. Finish with the chopped parsley and a sprinkle of olive oil.

**4) Side dish: Glazed dates and figs**

by Christopher Ottosen

**Serves 4**

**Ingredients**

1 tablespoon lemon zest  
1 teaspoon lemon juice, freshly pressed  
2 tablespoons grape juice, freshly pressed  
1 tablespoon date, fig, or grape syrup  
1 tablespoon dried hibiscus flower,<sup>7</sup> if available  
1 teaspoon dried rosehips, or 1 teaspoon rose water  
10 dates, fresh or dried  
5 figs, fresh or dried  
1 tablespoon goose fat (see Chapter 4)

**Preparation**

Combine the lemon zest, lemon juice, grape juice, syrup, hibiscus, and rosehips or rose water in a small saucepan. Boil, then set aside for 20 minutes to infuse. Strain. Destone the dates, and halve them and the figs. You can peel the figs, as desired. Place the goose fat in the hot frying pan, and add the dates and figs, cut side down. Fry several minutes until golden in color, and then add the infusion. Constantly move the saucepan and spoon the infusion over the fruit until glazed. Serve when the glaze has a caramel-like consistency.

**5) Side dish: Grilled vegetables**

by Christopher Ottosen

**Serves 4**

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<sup>7</sup>Online resources: <http://tinyurl.com/gsrz52j>, <http://tinyurl.com/hayk5p5>, and <http://tinyurl.com/z9xeo8a>

**Ingredients**

5 small squashes with flowers, preferably of different colors  
3 peppers, preferably in different colors  
2 little gem lettuces  
5 scallions (spring onions)  
1 fennel frond  
Pinch salt, or more to taste  
Pinch cayenne pepper, or more to taste  
2 tablespoons date vinegar  
2 tablespoons olive oil  
1 garlic clove, minced  
1 tablespoon za'atar<sup>8</sup> spice mix  
Parsley, minced, for garnish  
Cilantro, minced, for garnish

**Preparation**

Start the grill. Wash the vegetables. If small squashes with flowers are not available, prepare the squash by halving or cross-sectioning. Cut each pepper into four pieces, and remove the seeds and stems. Halve the little gems. Remove the outer layers of the scallions and cut the tops off. Cut the fennel in half-inch strips. Mix the vegetables, salt, cayenne pepper, date vinegar, olive oil, garlic clove, and za'atar spice mix in a bowl. Mix gently with your hands and let marinate. Barbecue the vegetables until al dente. Do the little gems last. Top with parsley or cilantro.

**6) Side dish: Bread baked in cast iron pan**

by Christopher Ottosen

**Serves 4**

**Ingredients**

1½ pounds emmer flour  
⅔ pounds spelt flour  
3 teaspoons salt  
1 tablespoon dry yeast  
6 tablespoons cold water

**Preparation**

Place the dry ingredients in a large bowl. Mix well with the water, to form a dough. Cover the bowl with a kitchen towel and refrigerate for at least 12 hours. Preheat the oven to 480°F. Warm a large cast iron pan for 2 minutes in the oven. Sprinkle lightly with flour, and place flattened circular dough gently in the pan. Bake for 30 minutes. Then turn down the temperature to 390°F and bake for another 15 minutes. Let cool, and serve lukewarm.

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<sup>8</sup>Online resource: <http://tinyurl.com/z9jz568>

### **Mood-Enhancing Atmospherics**

*Ta Henket* appeals to the nomadic spirit in all of us. We are Africans at heart. Our hunting-and-gathering proclivities were honed on this continent over millions of years, almost the entirety of our species' existence on this planet. Beyond that, *Ta Henket* is a prehistoric and protohistoric extreme beverage of the Saharan desert and its oases, encompassing one region in southern Egypt through which the Nile River winds its way, like an elongated oasis that nourishes the soil and makes life possible. The sites of Wadi Kubbaniya, Nabta Playa, and Abydos provide us with the archaeological, botanical, and chemical evidence for reconstructing a drink that stretches out in time for 15,000 years. Each has its own story to tell, which together can provide the suitable atmospherics for enjoying this unique beverage.

Wadi Kubbaniya epitomizes the nomadic or Bedouin (Arabic *badawī*, "desert dweller") way of life, going from oasis to oasis in search of food and drink. If you haven't had the opportunity to explore the Sahara, you can get a partial sense of it by harking back to your camping days. We have all had our adventures trekking into *terra incognita*, sleeping out under the stars, and avoiding dangerous animals. You find out what it means to "be in touch with nature." One of my most memorable was a week-long canoe trip into the wilds of Algonquin Park in Canada when we had to fend off hungry bears and shoot the rapids. Although exciting, it was a welcome relief to make it back to base camp for a shower, hamburger, and milkshake.

African and Middle Eastern deserts aren't as lush as North American woodlands. Besides a lot more sand, which you might spread around on your back patio or even a room in your house (like a Wild West saloon with sawdust on the floor) for atmospherics, imagine palm trees, loaded down with *dom* fruit, swaying in the wind, there for the picking and making into a fermented beverage. Plastic palm trees can be bought in stores or online. Or think of the lake at Wadi Kubbaniya, teeming with fish and attracting desert animals of all kinds, including fellow humans. They fished and hunted the oasis, leaving behind evidence of their periodic encampments and fireplaces along its shores over thousands of years. A body of water, even a swimming pool, can also add to the background feeling.

A clear sky or, minimally, a ceiling decorated with stars is essential. It is amazing to look up into the millions of stars, filling up every square inch of the celestial vault, especially in the desert. I have viewed it in wonder not only in the Sahara, but in the Sinai desert, on the Transjordanian plateau at the Nabataean rose-red city of Petra, and in the Syrian desert of Iraq. The remoter the location, the better. Preparing your meal over an open fire, while you sip on your *Ta Henket*, enhances the experience.

Nabta Playa provides the Neolithic setting with its village of brush-constructed huts, like those at Jiahu (Chapter 3). The site represents the beginnings of Egyptian civilization, again like Jiahu for China, and sets Egypt on the cultural and stylistic course it will take for thousands of years, including pottery design, fermented beverage production, a cuisine based on domesticated

plants and animals, music, dance, religion (note the Stonehenge-like monument of boulders near the site), and much else.

The artifacts in Scorpion I's tomb provide the physical evidence and a starting point for embellishing your *Ta Henket* atmospherics. For example, the tomb yielded the earliest hieroglyphic signs in Egypt, which served as labels for Scorpion I's funerary offerings. As these logograms developed over the centuries, they provided a fascinating and realistic glimpse into ancient Egyptian nomadic and settled life, including scorpions, jackals, ibises, field-workers, crowns, tools, nursing women, boats, and much, much more. Although schematic, they rarely departed from their original intent, unlike cuneiform characters that bear little resemblance to the initial image. Hieroglyphs were a kind of miniaturized version of the elaborate painted reliefs in the country's tombs over the 3,000 years of pharaonic history. The reliefs show scenes of daily life, gods sitting on their thrones and blessing the recently departed, as well as wine-, beer-, and bread-making factories to assure plenty to drink and eat in the great beyond (the Western Sky). Some hieroglyphs, like the *ankh*-sign meaning "life," are instantly recognizable. You can wear this sign as a jewelry element or make life-size versions, as was done in antiquity.

Another hieroglyph, the scarab in the form of a dung beetle, symbolized eternity, and was closely tied to the sun-god, Ra, the supreme deity of ancient Egypt. If you look carefully at well-rendered examples, you will see that the beetle holds a dung ball between its front legs, which it uses to navigate its way in a straight line across the desert, just like the sun in its daily journey through the sky. Next to the omnipresent expanse of the desert and the life-giving waters of the Nile, the sun dominated Egyptian life. The tops of the pyramids were lined with gleaming basalt, so the sun could shine in all its glory. The Great Seal of the United States, which appears on the U.S. dollar, replaces the basalt with the all-seeing eye of providence.

Scorpion I had masses of linen clothing in cedar boxes in his tomb, many simply skirts that left the upper body and lower legs bare, for sensible relief from the heat but also to display one's machismo. A blouse or tunic might also cover the upper body. The natural white of fine linen reflected the light from the hot desert sun, like the Saudi *thobe* or the Egyptian *gallebaya*. These flowing robes are extremely comfortable, with their wide folds billowing in the wind. I remember one harrowing trip to an oasis in the Sinai with the director of the Austrian Institute of Archaeology in Cairo, Manfred Bietak, and his family. We had just set up some tattered tents from Manfred's days of excavating in Nubia, when suddenly a white figure appeared high above us on a cliff at sunset. It was Manfred, who had donned his *gallebaya* for the occasion. He looked like a reincarnation of Lawrence of Arabia.

A pharaoh, of course, was arrayed in jewelry (pectorals, armllets, bracelets, anklets, etc.), whose symbolic images acted magically on his or her behalf. Decorated belts with codpieces in front and a lion's or bull's tail behind, together with a leopard's skin slung over the shoulder, announced the rulers' prowess in war and on the hunt. Ostentatious headdresses, accompanied by

tall crowns of Upper and Lower Egypt, were signs of their universal might. But if you want to forego the elaborate headgear, you might simply wrap a plain or decorated cloth around your head, in the fashion of an Arab *keffiyeh*. Footwear is a cinch: you can go barefoot, or slip on a pair of sandals, which were well-adapted to desert life.

Women wore tightly fitting, longer wrap-around or strapped dresses, which were sometimes diaphanous or exposed their breasts. Dancers, much like modern Egyptian belly dancers, had skimpier outfits of a short skirt or bikini with bra. Makeup was applied heavily to eyes, cheeks, lips, and nails. Jewelry, like that for men, consisted of brightly colored semi-precious stones set into gold fittings, contrasting nicely with the white fabrics. Large wigs, intricately braided and adorned with jewelry among the upper classes, were customary. The less wealthy made do with less expensive faience and natural materials.

Egyptian perfumes were renowned in the ancient world. Although many stone vessels were recovered from Scorpion I's tomb, which might have contained some unctuous liquid, chemical evidence is thus far lacking. Nevertheless, based on later examples of similar types, as well as tomb depictions, you can justifiably douse yourself in fragrant oils. Large quantities of liquid are seen being poured over the heads of fair Egyptian ladies in the reliefs, and many wore "perfume cones," tall pyramidal containers filled with sweet-smelling ointments, on top of their heads. Burning incense of aromatic tree resins from terebinth, frankincense, and myrrh would have filled the air of the private houses, temples, and palaces.

The Scorpion I tomb yielded beer bottles and wine vessels galore, as I have already described. You need to have some replica pottery vessels of Egypt or Middle Eastern types sitting on low tables of inlaid wood (those in mother-of-pearl are especially appealing) or brass. Faience Egyptian jewelry is cheap and plentiful, but replica adornments in more expensive materials add to the mystique. Arab rugs with floral, geometric, and symbolic designs might cover your floor instead of sand. Desert fruits and plants, as well as Arab spices from the market, can be scattered about.

No Egyptian-style statues of gods, sphinxes, pharaohs, and animals were found in the Scorpion I tomb, but again, later popularity legitimates their presence in your re-created space for *Ta Henket*. A picture of a mummy in a corner might invite cursing.

You can top off these visual atmospherics with some vibrantly painted columns and reliefs in Egyptian style. For more ideas, visit an art museum in your area, which usually have a sampling of Egyptian artifacts, view YouTube videos of excavations and finds, or leaf through the many well-illustrated books for the general reader. Hollywood has produced its share of ancient Egyptian blockbusters (Elizabeth Taylor playing Cleopatra is one example), but they are not always based on careful scholarship and must be taken with a grain of salt.

Music, as a backdrop, is all-important in re-creating the aura of ancient Egypt for your *Ta Henket* quaffing and feasting. We do not have any musical instruments from the Palaeolithic period or Scorpion I's tomb, but based on the long-standing traditions of Middle Eastern music, it was likely in a plaintive minor scale, similar to the Phrygian mode (Chapter 2). Instrumental groups, generally women, are shown playing flutes, double-clarinets, lyres, lutes, harps, cymbals, rattles, etc.—in tomb reliefs, with dancers often joining in the festivities, e.g.:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=btQaXn0ONJw>

The closest equivalents today to what ancient Egyptian music might have sounded like are the classical Arabic orchestras and soloists, who play traditional instruments and songs, e.g.:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UevFQqsd0Ls>, a recording of “The Ruins” (Arabic, *El Atlal*), a tale of unrequited love, by the famous Egyptian singer, Umm Kulthum, who performed for hours on end.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TJp5IDVm0Lc>: belly dancing.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbBINgb4Ls8>: a modern interpretation of ancient Egyptian music by the composer and multi-instrumentalist, Michael Atherton.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f4izWydINP8>: mood music; one piece is entitled “Scorpion desert.”

You may prefer an even more contemporary take on ancient Egyptian music by improvisatory musical groups and instrumentalists, who seem driven on by the gods, e.g.:

“Ushabti Reanimator” and “Dusk Falls Upon the Temple of the Serpent on the Mount of Sunrise,” by the progressive death metal band Nile.

“Let It Be,” by the Beatles.

The albums *Axis: Bold as Love* and *Band of Gypsys*, by Jimi Hendrix.

These works capture the spirit of how Sam and I fortuitously discovered some of the ingredients for *Ta Henket* in the busy Cairo suq.

## Chapter 5: *Etrusca*

The recipes here are again based on the available archaeological, archaeochemical, archaeobotanical, and archaeozoological evidence, as well as inferences from historical and traditional Tuscan cuisine. Many of the same plants for which Tuscany is still renowned—for example, pomegranates, hazelnuts, grapes, and olives—are found in ancient Etruscan sites and tombs. Of course, other plants from around the world—rice, tomatoes, even wheat for pasta—swept in from time to time and became standard ingredients in the modern Italian cuisine.

Unfortunately, we have no ancient Etruscan cookbook. In fact, the Etruscan language, which is non-European, is still far from understood, and existing texts are generally listings of personal names or very succinct and uninformative.

The first proper ancient cookbook is Apicius's *De re coquinaria* (Latin, *On the Subject of Cooking*), attributed to a 1st century A.D. Roman author who compiled a compendium of recipes for the upper class in the 4th–5th centuries A.D. You can also consult other historically based cookbooks, such as:

Faas, P. 2005. *Around the Roman Table: Food and Feasting in Ancient Rome*. Trans. S. Whiteside. Chicago: University of Chicago.

Dalby, A., and Grainger, S. 2012. *The Classical Cookbook*. Rev. ed. Los Angeles: J. Paul Getty Museum.

For a selection of online recipes, see:

<http://www.press.uchicago.edu/Misc/Chicago/233472.html>

<http://english.segnietruschi.it/MEDIACENTER/FE/CategoriaMedia.aspx?idc=43&explicit=SI>

(citing Buseghin, M. L. 2003, *The Etruscan Table*, Umbria: Futura Soc. Coop).

And don't forget the truffles, *garum* (fermented fish sauce), and ortolan buntings (a ghoulish favorite of the Roman emperors and modern celebrity chefs), and a hard sheep's milk cheese like Pecorino Romano (for topping off your extreme fermented beverage, similar to the Greek *kykeon*—Chapter 5).

N.B. Unusual ingredients, if not available locally, can be ordered from online stores, several of which are suggested here.

### Other Meal Pairings

**1) Entrée: Puttanesca** (Italian, “spaghetti in the style of a prostitute”)

by Kevin Downing and Zach Dick

**Serves 6**

### Ingredients

1 pound dried spaghetti or linguine

5 garlic cloves, forced through a garlic press  
2 teaspoons anchovy paste  
½ teaspoon hot red-pepper flakes  
1 teaspoon salt  
½ teaspoon pepper  
⅓ cup extra-virgin olive oil  
One 28-ounce can whole tomatoes with juice (preferably Italian)  
½ cup pitted Kalamata olives  
2 tablespoons drained capers  
Pinch of sugar, optional  
¾ cup coarsely chopped fresh basil

**Preparation**

Boil the spaghetti in a large pot in 6 quarts of water with 2½ tablespoons of salt until barely al dente.

While the pasta boils, cook the garlic, anchovy paste, red-pepper flakes, salt, and pepper in the oil in a 12-inch heavy skillet over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until fragrant and pale golden, about 2 minutes.

Purée the tomatoes with juice in a blender.

Add the tomato purée to the garlic oil along with the olives and capers and simmer, stirring occasionally, until the pasta is ready. Stir in sugar if desired.

Drain the pasta and add to the sauce. Simmer, turning the pasta with tongs, until al dente, about 2 minutes. Sprinkle with the basil.

**2) Side dish: Roasted chestnuts**

by Christopher Ottosen

**Serves 4**

**Ingredients**

½ pound lardo  
½ pound pancetta  
2 tablespoons goose or duck fat (see Chapter 4 and Chapter 7 meal pairing recipes)  
2 garlic cloves  
½ pound small white onions, peeled  
1 pound fresh chestnuts, peeled  
1 teaspoon dried thyme or 3–4 fresh thyme stems  
1 bay leaf  
½ cup chicken stock

**Preparation**

Preheat the oven to 390°F. Roast the lardo, pancetta, and goose or duck fat in an iron saucepan until golden in color. Then add the following ingredients sequentially a few minutes apart: garlic cloves, onions, chestnuts, thyme, bay leaf, finishing with the chicken stock. Put the lid on the pan, and cook in the oven for 20 to 30 minutes. Serve.

**3) Side dish: Pici in vegetable broth**

by Christopher Ottosen

Serves 4

**Ingredients***Pici*

½ pound spelt flour

½ pound semolina

Pinch of salt

Water

*Vegetable broth*

½ pound small white onions, peeled and halved

Pinch of salt

1 bay leaf

¼ cup grated carrot

¼ cup grated celery

¼ cup grated fennel

1 tablespoon ground gentian root<sup>9</sup>**Preparation***Pici:*

Mix the spelt, semolina, and salt in a large bowl. Gradually mix in enough water to make an elastic dough. Shape the dough into a ball, wrap it in a clean dish towel, and let rest for 30 minutes.

Unwrap the dough and take one small piece of pasta at a time, about the size of a large nut, and rub it back and forth on the counter with your fingertips until it resembles thick spaghetti. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add the pasta, and cook it for 2 to 3 minutes, until tender but still firm (al dente). Drain.

*Vegetable broth:*

Sear the onions, cut side down, in a preheated large frying pan. When the onions are golden in color, put them in a small saucepan, cover with water, and add a pinch of salt and the bay leaf. Boil them gently, covered, until tender. While the onions cook, using a coarse grater, grate the carrot, celery, and fennel into a medium-sized bowl; add gentian root. Strain the cooked onions over the vegetables. Allow the vegetables to macerate for 1 to 2 minutes, and then strain the broth into a teapot. Pour the broth over the pasta. Finish with a little Parmesan or other hard cheese.

**4) Side dish: Veal stomach served on thin bread with fresh cheese**

by Christopher Ottosen

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<sup>9</sup>Online resource: <http://www.herbco.com/p-763-gentian-root-cs-wild-crafted.aspx>

**Serves 4****Ingredients***Veal stomach*

1 veal stomach  
2 carrots, chopped  
2 celery stalks, chopped  
1 fennel frond, chopped  
1 white or yellow onion, chopped  
4 garlic cloves, peeled and mashed  
Parsley, minced  
1 teaspoon dried thyme or 3–4 fresh thyme stems  
1 bay leaf  
1 teaspoon peppercorns  
Pinch of salt

*Bread*

2 pounds Italian “00” flour  
½ cup olive oil  
1½ cups water or stock from the veal  
1 tablespoon salt  
2 tablespoons Italian cheese of your choice—soft or hard, flavored or unflavored

**Preparation***Veal stomach:*

In a large saucepan, cover the veal stomach with cold water. Bring to a boil, and skim off the foam that comes to the top. Add the vegetables, herbs, and spices. Let the stock simmer slowly until the meat is tender and can be cut with a fork, 3 to 4 hours.

*Bread:*

Preheat the oven to 530°F. Knead all the ingredients, except the cheese, in a food processor. Let the dough rest for 30 minutes before rolling it as thin bread. Place it on a baking tray, and sprinkle the cheese over the dough. Then roll another layer of thin dough, and place it on top of the first to make a “sandwich.” Bake for 2 to 3 minutes.

When the meat is ready, place it on top of the thin cheese-bread, with some fresh herbs, such as parsley, or edible greens as garnish.

### **Mood-Enhancing Atmospherics**

The best way to get in the mood for *Etrusca* is simply to search for “Etruscan frescoes” on your computer. Up will pop the vibrant, technicolored images of Etruscan society from ages past. The 2,500-year-old images seem as fresh as the day they were painted, having been kept well-preserved inside numerous tombs in Tuscany at archaeological sites such as Tarquinia, Cerveteri, and Fufluna (today Populonia), named for the Etruscan wine god and equated with Dionysus. The frescoes are much more lifelike than the posed and stilted stances of humans in the Egyptian tombs. In both cases, the goal is to depict our earthly world in the afterlife. The more realistically and beautifully this was done, the fewer worries you might have about continuing to enjoy everything you did in this life in the next.

When you examine the tomb images, you will see why the Etruscans were considered the ultimate partiers in the ancient world. Although the Romans had their rollicking good times and appropriated much from the Etruscans, they were sometimes offended by how far the Etruscans went in “living it up.” They eventually conquered their neighbors, leaving behind the frescos as a glorious reminder of the Etruscan heyday.

Notice that there is no discrimination between men and women in the scenes. They sit side-by-side on couches, drinking and eating. The scenes are reminiscent of the Near Eastern and Greek symposium (later the Roman *convivium*)—the after-dinner drinking party with intellectual repartee and all manner of music, dance, amorous pursuit, and games.

Take a look at each sex’s colorful, free-flowing cloaks, tunics, gowns (sometimes diaphanous), and shawls. Examine the animated instrumental musicians and dancers. Watch the birds soaring overhead, horse and chariot trampling through the countryside, grapevines and olive trees flourishing, naked wrestlers facing off against each other, ships on the high seas, and much more. You will feel yourself transported back in time. You are reminded of the adage: “the more things change, the more they stay the same.” If you travel to Tuscany, people may be wearing different clothes and speaking a different language than the Etruscans of old, but the natural surroundings and much of the cuisine and fermented beverages are the same.

The Etruscans lived both in countryside villas, where they tended their fields, orchards, and animals, and in more crowded villages perched on hilltops, like Cortona (the setting for Frances Mayes’s *Under the Tuscan Sun*), which were originally founded by the Etruscans whose settlements lie far below the surface of the later towns.

We experienced something of the carefree, fun-loving ancient Etruscan lifestyle on one of our trips to Tuscany. We had arrived early in the day at the Rome airport, and, as we started north in our rental car, a ferocious thunderstorm with huge lightning strikes out over the Tyrrhenian Sea threatened us from the west. We headed inland, and took refuge in a small restaurant beside the Etruscan ruins of Vulci. There we enjoyed a delicious meal of pasta and fish, finished off by the house’s digestif, which was intriguingly spiced with local herbs. The proprietor, who appreciated our gustatory interest, presented us with more of the liqueur in a repurposed bottle, to see us on our way. As we wandered across the beautiful countryside, we

spotted the hilltop town of Pitigliano, where we easily secured a room on the village square for the night. Throwing open the windows to our room, we stared down in sheer terror at the precipitous drop to the ground below. The days that followed, including an ancient wine conference in Scansano (another hilltop town about 70 kilometers/50 miles farther north), only reinforced our first impressions of the locals and their land with its ancient Etruscan roots.

Etruscan music is yet to be reconstructed, but it was probably as vivacious and captivating as Phrygian music (above). You cannot expect otherwise from such a lighthearted people. YouTube renditions of Etruscan music, however, are very slow and dour.

Perhaps the Phrygian or another Greek or Near Eastern scale was adopted or melded with a native scale. The frescoes show whole orchestras of wind instruments (especially the double-flute, sometimes tied around the forehead to steady the mouthpiece), copper and iron horns (straight and curved), string instruments (with sound boxes of wood and turtle carapaces), and percussion instruments (e.g., bells and castanets) that accompany both lively and slow expressive dancing. Some instruments have been recovered from excavation.

In the absence of other musical clues, you might fall back on Phrygian, Greek, or Middle Eastern music in a minor key. I might also opt for a more modern Italian opera, which we enjoyed during the evening on a University of Rome excavation in Syria on an old phonograph. The music often cut off when the power failed, a common occurrence.

Although you should bring a deliberate ancient approach to your re-created drinking and eating festivities, you should also try to capture as much of the exuberant Etruscan spirit as possible. Beautiful, balmy days, like those of Tuscany, are perfect for quaffing *Etrusca* whether at home or in an airy, fragrant garden.

## Chapter 6: *Kvasir*

### Other Meal Pairings

The recipes here are based on the available archaeological, archaeochemical, archaeobotanical, and archaeozoological evidence, as well as inferences from historical and traditional Scandinavian cuisine. You can also consult other recipes on-line and in cookbooks, such as:

Nilsson, M. 2015. *The Nordic Cookbook*. London: Phaidon.

Riddervold, A., 1988. *Food Conservation*. London: Prospect.

N.B. Unusual ingredients, if not available locally, can be ordered from online stores, several of which are suggested here.

### 1) Entrée: Grilled and braised lamb shoulder

by Christopher Ottosen

Serves 4

#### Ingredients

1 lamb shoulder

Salt and pepper to taste

10 garlic cloves, crushed

1 or more handfuls meadowsweet,<sup>10</sup> preferably fresh, dried and ground

1 or more handfuls yarrow,<sup>11</sup> preferably fresh, dried and ground

1 or more handfuls bog myrtle (sweet gale),<sup>12</sup> dried and ground

1 or more handfuls cut and dried grass (hay) or several juniper branches and/or flowering branches of the herbs, if available

2 cups *Kvasir* or homebrew interpretation

#### Preparation

Start the grill, using only charcoal or wood, not gas, since the meat is to be smoked with herbs. Season the meat with salt and pepper to taste. Prepare a deep baking tray by distributing the garlic cloves and about half of the herbs (be generous) on its bottom.

As you grill the meat, sprinkle additional herbs on both sides of the meat. 5 minutes before grilling is complete, cover the fire with the hay and/or branches and close the lid of the grill. Smoke the meat for 2 to 3 minutes.

Place the grilled meat on the prepared baking tray. Cover tightly with aluminum foil. Preheat the oven to 325°F, and cook for 4 hours. During the last hour, remove the aluminum foil, and pour the *Kvasir* or homebrew interpretation over the meat. The lamb shoulder is done when

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<sup>10</sup>Online resources: <http://tinyurl.com/hoc8vmy>, and <http://www.brewbrothers.biz/Meadowsweet>

<sup>11</sup>Online resources: <http://tinyurl.com/hpl8uew>, and <http://tinyurl.com/zdo44pr>

<sup>12</sup>Online resources: <http://wildfoods.ca/dry-goods/sweet-gale/>

the meat easily pulls away from the bone. Finely sieve the cooking juices from the bottom of the baking tray, reduce to half in a small saucepan, and serve as an accompanying broth. Pour the broth over the lamb.

## **2) Side dish: Potatoes with sour cream, brown butter, and lingonberries**

by Christopher Ottosen

**Serves 4**

### **Ingredients**

1 pound new potatoes

$\frac{2}{3}$  cup coarse sea salt

1 handful meadowsweet,<sup>10</sup> preferably fresh, dried and ground

1 handful bog myrtle (sweet gale),<sup>11</sup> dried and ground

$\frac{1}{2}$  pound salted butter

4 tablespoons lingonberries,<sup>13</sup> thawed if frozen, dried and ground

1 tablespoon birch syrup,<sup>14</sup> preferably fresh (if unavailable, substitute honey)

Sour cream

1 handful fresh yarrow<sup>15</sup> leaves, preferably fresh, dried and ground

### **Preparation**

Place the potatoes in a 6- to 8-quart pot with cold water, and boil over moderate heat, stirring in the salt, meadowsweet, and bog myrtle. Cook the potatoes until tender, and drain. Brown the butter in a saucepan, and then remove from the heat. Add the lingonberries and birch syrup to the butter. When plating, add a spoonful of sour cream on each potato. Pour a generous amount of browned butter on top. Finish with a handful of fresh yarrow leaves, if available.

## **3) Side dish: Kale and chard in clarified butter**

by Christopher Ottosen

**Serves 4**

### **Ingredients**

10 chard leaves

10 kale leaves

Salted butter

### **Preparation**

Wash the chard and kale leaves, preferably with their stems. Melt the butter on very low heat in a saucepan. Separate the liquid butter fat (clarified butter) which forms on top from the milk solids at the bottom by carefully pouring the liquid into a jar. Add 2 tablespoons of the clarified butter

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<sup>13</sup>Online resources: <http://tinyurl.com/hwd5ghf>, and <http://tinyurl.com/jcbwllv>

<sup>14</sup>Online resource: <http://www.alaskabirchsyrop.com/albipr.html>

<sup>15</sup>Online resources: <http://tinyurl.com/juyl723>, and <http://tinyurl.com/jxcrw7z>

to a frying pan, and heat gently. Add the kale and chard leaves, cover with a lid, and simmer for about 30 to 40 seconds. Serve immediately. The extra clarified butter can be refrigerated for future use.

#### **4) Side dish: Grated and lightly pickled root vegetables**

by Christopher Ottosen

**Serves 4**

##### **Ingredients**

1 carrot

1 beet

1 parsley root

1 turnip

2 cups apple cider vinegar or berry vinegar (recipe follows)

½ teaspoon sugar

Salt to taste

##### **Preparation**

Grate the root vegetables and place them in a jar. Boil the vinegar with the sugar and salt. Pour the boiling liquid over the root vegetables, and seal the jar. Let the vegetables cool. Serve cold or at room temperature.

#### **5) Berry vinegar**

by Christopher Ottosen

**Serves 4**

##### **Ingredients**

1 cup fresh, ripe red currants

2 cups fresh, ripe lingonberries<sup>17</sup> or any berry in season, thawed if frozen

##### **Preparation**

Crush the berries and pour them with their liquid into a cloth-covered jar. Allow to ferment at room temperature for about a week, or until fermentation has ceased (i.e., no more bubbling). Strain the berries through a cheesecloth and collect their juice in another jar (do not press down on the berries, but let the weight squeeze out the juice). About 2 hours are required to extract all the juice. Cover the jar mouth with a cloth, and set aside at room temperature for 5 to 8 days or until it has turned to vinegar. Transfer the vinegar into sterilized bottles, seal, and keep in a cool, dark place.

### **Mood-Enhancing Atmospherics**

To properly appreciate the deep, rich flavors of *Kvasir*—the bounty of berries, herbs, flowers, grasses, and tree saps of the Far North—you should immerse yourself in movies (think of Ingmar Bergman’s dark and symbolic scenes), music, books, comics like *Hägar the Horrible*, even Alaskan “reality” TV shows that describe and portray the vast tundra, forests and lakes, high mountains covered in snow, and the turbulent seas merging into the Arctic ice pack. You can experience the midnight sun and see the northern lights in virtual reality. If you’re daring enough, you can go into the wilderness to hone your survival skills. Or, watch Dick Proenneke, who single-handedly built a log cabin and lived off the land for over thirty years in Alaska (see *Alone in the Wilderness* on YouTube).

My wife and I have had a passing taste of Norway’s stunning wilderness in our travels above the Arctic Circle to the Lofoten Islands of Norway, where we stayed in a cod fisherman’s cabin in the off-season and traveled out to the farthest islands in the North Sea. My wife, who has always been entranced by the frozen north, once left me in Edmonton, Canada (I flew back to work) and traveled alone in our VW camper all the way from there to Inuvik where the Mackenzie River flows into the Arctic Ocean. She followed the only road there was—the graveled Dempster “Highway”—and saw cavorting grizzly bears and all manner of birds who had migrated from farther south to breed on the northern tundra. A small Piper Cub took her out over the icecap for a glimpse of a polar bear.

While the modern feel of Scandinavia and the Arctic can be captured by starkly contrasting colors of your interior space—especially, white for snow and clouds, blue for sea and sky—the ancient spirit can be conveyed in other ways. A long room in your house, might be outfitted like a medieval mead hall, with drinking horns mounted on log or wood-paneled interiors. Some solid, large wooden furniture, like high-backed chairs, is good. If you have an outdoorsy rug, perhaps that of a grizzly or polar bear, put it on the floor. Spread around swords, metal cups and cauldrons, pictures of elves and hobgoblins, and rock art depicting dancers and ships.

Clothes and jewelry, recovered from excavations and inferred from the Norse sagas, bring the Viking and earlier times to life, as well. The costumes in the popular TV show *Game of Thrones* are thought to be based on ancient Swedish styles, and you might take those as starting points. You see there clothing that combines leather, wool, fur, and linen. Men wore vests and shirts, capes and coats, trousers, leg wrappings, heavy socks and shoes, and usually a Phrygian-style cap (Chapter 2), sometimes with ear flaps. Contrary to popular belief, early Scandinavians and Vikings, in particular, did not wear horned helmets. Women generally wore long dresses and coats, unless you were the Egtved Bronze Age priestess-dancer. A shorter, apron-like dress with shoulder straps might also be worn. Simple caps were the rule, and women’s shoes matched those of the men. Clothes could be highlighted by brightly colored purple and blue embroidery, the colors of royalty in the Near East and possibly influenced by Canaanite and Phoenician trade goods (Chapter 5).

You might choose to accent your costume by some intricately worked and ostentatious jewelry, which was worn by both sexes. It could be a necklace of heavy amber beads or massive arm-rings, bracelets, and neck-rings (torques). You can let your fancy run wild with symbolism, like the interlocking spiral belt buckle of the Egtved woman that represents the Nordic sun-god.

Many animal motifs—bulls, horses, chickens, eagles, boars, rabbits, pigs, snakes—are shown in flowing, dramatic fashion.

The Scandinavians also had their own monster of the sea, represented by a dragon. We had our own brush with this fantastical, otherworldly creature.

During our sojourns in Scandinavia, my wife and I tracked down the Norwegian side of my family in the high plateau region of Oppland, northwest of Oslo. We discovered and wondered at the medieval burial plots of my ancestors, the Kjøs, in the churchyard at Vang-i-Valdres. The church was a traditional wooden stave structure, with multiple roofs and turrets climbing up to the sky. A large carved dragon, a vestige of the pagan past, projected over the entranceway to the grounds; inside, a medieval baptismal font had probably served to anoint my ancestors.

There is conflicting evidence as to whether ancient Scandinavians tattooed or painted their bodies with similar motifs. The Britons, a Celtic people, did apply bright blue indigo-dyed art to their bodies before going into battle. The Iceman of the Alps also had a series of incised lines and crosses, filled with charcoal, on many parts of his body in an acupuncture-like pattern. They are now thought to be medicinal rather than decorative or symbolic.

What little is known about ancient Scandinavian and Viking music is excellently summed up, with musical snippets played on reconstructed ancient instruments, online at <http://tinyurl.com/gpzmjzt>. Accompanying illustrations of the musical instruments and scores, as well as quotes from Roman and Arab travelers' accounts, medieval documents, and the Icelandic sagas, enliven the discussion and point to diverse, rich musical traditions. You might play a series of musical excerpts directly from the website while you sip your *Kvasir*.

To some, the Nordic music reminded them of untamed howling dogs or obscene religious chants, accompanied by much drinking and lasciviousness. To others, it conveyed noble exploits in battle, calm and beautiful natural settings, or lively folk music and dancing. It's likely that much of the music had its origin in oral tradition and impromptu "jam sessions" passed down through the ages. If you've been to a folk festival or enjoy traditional Celtic or even country music, you'll get the idea.

The musical instruments were those common in the ancient world: stringed lyres, flutes (often made from bird bones—compare the Jiahu flutes), and drums of a shamanistic sort. One instrument was of a distinctively Nordic type: the lur, a long straight or curved trumpet-looking device, up to two meters (six and a half feet) long. They were made of hollowed-out wood, glued back together, and bound with willow or birch bands; other examples occur in bronze. When the Norsemen took to the seas, they played their lur music on the way, as beautifully illustrated in Bronze Age Scandinavian rock paintings. When accompanied by the deep, sonorous sounds of the horns, you will be literally blown away: <http://tinyurl.com/hhgqld5>.

The Nordic musical mode probably had its roots in the Near East and Greece, but its seeming discordance to an Arab ear, according to one account, suggests that it was based on the Lydian mode that has the major rather than the minor sound of the Phrygian mode (see *Atmospherics* for Chapters 2, 4, and 5, above).

The lyrics to a very evocative musical piece are recorded in the Icelandic Njáls saga as the Darraðarljóð (“Song of Arrows”). They depict the horse-mounted female Valkyries of Valhalla, who weave tapestries of the fate of warriors in bloody human heads and entrails, ferociously riding into battle. These lyrics are based on a historic battle outside of Dublin in the 11<sup>th</sup> century A.D. Wagner’s “Ride of the Valkyries” captures the dramatic moment at the beginning of Act 3 of *Die Walküre*, the second opera of his Ring Cycle: <http://tinyurl.com/om6wjd4>. Sadly, we lack the actual music to go with the lyrics.

You can also provide a musical backdrop for your enjoyment of *Kvasir* by playing on the colors (blue and white) and other associations of the Nordic wilderness. Glenn Gould, the great Canadian pianist and interpreter of Bach’s music, was drawn to the “Great White North.” His intricate and enthralling interpretation of J. S. Bach’s *Goldberg Variations* is a fitting tribute to all things Nordic: <http://tinyurl.com/nm973jm>.

Dark bluesy jazz, such as John Coltrane’s “Blue Train,” takes you in another direction: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0mqoSbwcsHc>. As the saxophone wails, you are transported to a snowy wonderland in the Far North.

The French heavy metal band, Gojira (Romanized Japanese or rōmaji, “Godzilla”) takes us deeper into the forest primeval with “Born in Winter” on its album, *L’enfant sauvage* (French, *Wild Child*): <http://tinyurl.com/qb7vrzq>. The rich, psychedelic sounds, backed by an intense drum beat, carry us into the world of a feral boy, Victor of Areyron, who survived in the wilderness without human contact for years. He became inured to the cold as he played in the snow. After a meditative beginning, the piece crescendos to a wild finale, which leaves you exhausted and in awe of raw nature.

**Chapters 7–9: *Theobroma, Chicha, and Two-Rabbit Pulque*****Other Meal Pairings****1) Side dish: Grilled corn on the cob**

by Christopher Ottosen

**Serves 4****Ingredients**1 handful of lemon verbena,<sup>16</sup> fresh or dry

4 ears of corn, preferably multicolored flint, not shucked

*Glaze*

1 tablespoon salted butter or corn oil

2 tablespoons agave syrup<sup>17</sup>1 $\frac{2}{3}$  cups lemon juice, freshly squeezed

1 teaspoon lemon verbena, fresh or dry

Pinch of salt

**Preparation**

In a small pan, melt the butter or heat the corn oil. Add the agave syrup, lemon juice, teaspoon lemon verbena, and pinch of salt. Infuse on low heat for 2 minutes. To enhance the flavor, add a handful of lemon verbena beneath the corn leaves before grilling. Grill the corn until done, remove the burnt husks, and brush the hot corncobs with the glaze before serving.

**2) Side dish: Prickly pear and squash salad**

by Christopher Ottosen

**Serves 4****Ingredients**12 squash blossoms<sup>18</sup>

4 prickly pears, peeled and cut into small pieces

*Frying dough*

3 ounces flour

Pinch of salt

1 whole egg

1 teaspoon corn oil

Water

Frying oil

*Vinaigrette*

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<sup>16</sup>Online resource: <http://tinyurl.com/jojwyl>

<sup>17</sup>Online resource: <http://tinyurl.com/zbedq3u>

<sup>18</sup>Online resource: <http://tinyurl.com/hjc9eko>

3 tablespoons agave syrup<sup>17</sup>  
¾ cup corn oil  
2 tablespoons prickly pear vinegar  
1 teaspoon epazote<sup>19</sup> (Mexican tea/wormseed)  
1 teaspoon allspice  
2 tablespoons fresh Mexican oregano, chopped  
1 teaspoon chepiche,<sup>20</sup> fresh if possible  
3 tablespoons pepitas (pumpkin seeds)

### Preparation

#### *Frying dough:*

Place the flour in a medium bowl. Add a pinch of salt and mix. Add the egg and corn oil. Mix gently. Pour in a little water and mix; continue to add water while stirring until the batter is thick.

#### *Vinaigrette:*

Mix the prickly pear vinegar and agave syrup together in a medium-sized bowl. Add the corn oil, and smoothly whisk to form a vinaigrette. Set aside.

#### *Salad:*

Heat the frying oil in a saucepan or deep fryer. Dip the squash blossoms in the dough and immerse them in the frying oil for 2 to 3 minutes. Turn the flowers over with a fork when they begin to brown. Dry on a paper towel.

Place the prickly pear pieces in a salad bowl, and add the vinaigrette, herbs, and pumpkin seeds. Gently mix together. Then, carefully spread the fried squash blossoms over the salad before serving.

### 3) Side dish: Herb-filled peppers

by Christopher Ottosen

#### Serves 4

4 large bell peppers, any color

#### *Filling*

2 garlic cloves, finely chopped  
2 tablespoons corn oil  
3 tablespoons pepitas (pumpkin seeds)  
3 tablespoons peas, fresh  
1 handful of watercress, fresh  
1 handful of mint, fresh  
1 handful of cilantro, fresh  
1 handful of parsley, fresh

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<sup>19</sup>Online resource: <http://tinyurl.com/jyca4kh>

<sup>20</sup>Online resource: <http://tinyurl.com/gslftgm>

1 handful of marjoram, fresh  
Pinch of salt

### **Preparation**

Preheat the oven to 400°F. Remove the pepper interiors by cutting the stalks and coring the interiors. Sear on a hot grill until evenly colored and slightly burnt. Transfer to a small bowl, and cover with plastic wrap. Once cool, peel off the skins. Sear the garlic gently in the corn oil, and add the pepitas and peas. When the vegetables have softened, add the herbs and spices. Stir, salt to taste, and cool. Spoon the filling into the peppers. Place the peppers in a roasting pan, drizzle on corn oil, and bake in the oven for 20 minutes. Serve straight from the oven.

### **Mood-Enhancing Atmospherics and Other Meal Pairings South of the Border**

Those of you who have already been immersed firsthand in a Latin American culture in the vast area that reaches south of the U.S., through Mexico and Central America, and on to Patagonia and Cape Horn at the tip of South America, will easily re-create the atmospherics of being among its vivacious peoples, who combine native American and Spanish/Portuguese influences in every aspect of their lives. If you have visited archaeological sites and museums, you already have ideas about the ostentatious attire and jewelry of the Mayan, Aztec, and Incan rulers, as well as the tools and implements of everyday life—from gourds and drinking tubes to pestles and mortars—as you drink your ancient extreme fermented beverage.

For those of you who have not been so privileged as to travel to Latin America, I have tried to bring alive some of the pageantry, dress, art, homes and their furnishings—whether by the sea, in a mountainous village, or deep in the jungle—in the New World chapters. Modern life carries on from where ancient communities left off, whether a prehistoric village in Patagonia or Honduras, a fortified town at the top of the Andes, or a beverage maker's house set in the highlands of agave country or among the rich flora of Amazonia. You can also draw on the atmospherics of your favorite Latin American restaurant or market, whether Mexican, Peruvian, Brazilian, or other nationality. Visits to museums, which display ancient American antiquities, is also highly recommended, as is a perusal of the artwork in the Spanish chronicles, such as Sahagún's *General History of the Things of New Spain*. You might also pipe in some fitting aromas, perhaps some mesquite smoke, which is associated with chipotle chiles and recalls how traditional *mezcal*s are made.

Details may differ from one country to another, but there is remarkable uniformity in how these peoples express themselves. Think of the their boldly colored art and attire, which are full of life, even in death (e.g., the Mexican dancing skeletons and skulls wearing sombreros). This intermingling of cultural expressions is already apparent in ancient times as one domesticated plant after another, whether of Mexico, Central America, or South America, quickly made its way to another region. The wide adoption of *chicha* across the several continents, soon after corn was domesticated in southwestern Mexico, well illustrates the phenomenon. Manioc, potatoes, and much more traveled in the reverse direction. Having lots of brightly colored native fruits, beverages, herbs, maybe a mushroom or hallucinogenic cactus or two, ready to hand will add to your setting and possible enjoyment. If you're daring, try salivating some corn or manioc.

You can go a step further, and tailor your setting to the specific *Ancient Ale* or *Spirit*. Chocolates, cacao beans, and chiles of all kinds are a must for *Theobroma*. You might erect a miniature pyramid, draped with lush jungle vegetation, with a monkey cavorting in a nearby tree in search of ripe cacao pods. *Chicha* calls for multi-colored ears of corn, perhaps specially arranged as is done every year for the murals adorning the Corn Palace in Mitchell, South Dakota—the home of my ancestors. Rabbit figures, which come in all shapes and sizes, depictions of the Two-Rabbit god Ometochtli and his mother Mayahuel, and a rabbit foot tossed in for good luck can be effective for *Pulque* and *Mezcal*.

Your extreme fermented beverage should also be accompanied by the appropriate music, ideally played on traditional instruments (such as flutes, drums, trumpets, panpipes, and lutes). By simply searching online for ancient Mayan, Aztec, or Incan music, you will find many YouTube possibilities. You might also go with the sounds of a more modern mariachi or Andean band, so common in large American and European cities. I once had a ringside seat to watch traditional *mezcal* being made at a “moonshine” operation in the backwoods of the Jalisco province in Mexico. The head *mezcalero* (Spanish, *mezcal* maker) arrived on a donkey, carrying his guitar, to add some local color and atmospherics.

If you want to go even further in a modern direction, then any number of lyrical love songs might provide the right backdrop for *Theobroma*, Percy Sledge’s “When a Man Loves a Woman,” Barry White’s “Can’t Get Enough of Your Love,” Marvin Gaye’s “Let’s Get It On,” or Al Green’s “Let’s Stay Together” are possibilities.

Another kind of love, the sense of communal brother/sisterhood—you might call it social lubrication—pervades *chicha*-making and drinking. Bob Marley’s “One Love,” The Black Keys’ “Too Afraid to Love You” on their *Brothers* album, and “Sanctity of Brothers” by the progressive heavy metal band Uneath, capture some of that spirit.

If you’re willing to venture still further out, the progressive and even psychedelic sounds of “Schism” on Tool’s album *Lateralus*, may be a fitting accompaniment to sipping your *Two-Rabbit Pulque*. You feel as if fermented and distilled into a re-created, fiery being,

Of course, as with any *Ancient Ale* or *Spirit*, *Theobroma*, *Chicha*, *Two-Rabbit Pulque*, and *Mezcal* can be enjoyed in and of themselves. Accompanying meals and mood-enhancing atmospherics can enhance the experience, but may draw your attention away from the nuances of these ancient extreme fermented beverages.