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History-A 363

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The Hoosier Menu

Lovers of mysterious blends of ground up meats stuffed into tubular casings call their favorite food by many names. We have heard this cylindrical length of fat and protein called frankfurter, hot dog, wienie, bratwurst, sausage, and tube steak. Variations of this versatile food item have been boiled, fried, barbequed, smoked, roasted over an open fire, steamed, and microwaved. It has been served on a bun, cut up and mixed with pasta or beans, served with eggs, and sliced into coins for stir-fry, soup, or chili. Competitive folks have spirited discussions about which kinds and which brands are the best. Each believes their favorite variety is the only true item of this food group.

A similar discussion can arise when people are asked “what is a Hoosier?” Although we can agree it is not a food type, I’d like to answer the question by using a series of food metaphors. Here are my metaphoric recipes for a variety of Hoosier characteristics studied in Indiana history.

Obesity Boulder Selections

These main entrée choices have been traditional Indiana comfort and fun foods for many years.

- Sugar Cream Pie
- Breaded Pork Tenderloin
- Chicken and Noodles
- Biscuits and Gravy
- Persimmon Pudding
- Fried [name favorite food on a stick] at the State Fair

They contribute to our national leadership in obesity, which Governor Mitch Daniels called “a really big boulder to move” (337). Perhaps they became Hoosier favorites because some of things to eat (described below) were not so palatable.

Watered-Down Anti-Federal Soup

- 1 cup individual freedom broth
- 1 cup small government potatoes
- ½ cup chopped anti-federal artichokes
- 255 federal programs
- 1 tablespoon stubborn reluctance
- 1 tablespoon wariness

This medicinal recipe dates from 1957, ten years after the Welsh administration reversed the state resolution against federal aid and began seeking help in areas the state could not finance alone. (Madison 311)

Basketball Barley Soup

- 1 cup Milan Memory broth
- 15 large-gymnasium banner shreds
- ½ cup pure-shooter net fragments
- 1 cup single-class malted milk

Combine all ingredients in a blender and pour into a slow-cooker. Heat on low for several decades to bring out the addictive pleasures fondly remembered by basketball fans. (336). Wear Converse All-Stars while consuming this soup.

Not-So-Green Salad

- ½ cup dried algae from the Calumet River
- 1 sewage-flavored fish from the White River
- 2 cups coal-dusted Edwardsport mustard greens

- 1/2 cup Sycamore Land Trust mushrooms
- 1 cup ACRES fresh wild flower sprouts

Combine ingredients in a bowl and add *Forbes* 49th rank dressing to make these 2007 water quality by-products palatable. (310-11) A newer, post-EPA variation might be much improved now, in 2016.

Conservative Red & Blue Jell-O

- 1 package red bible powder
- 1 cup boiling hot Republican water
- 1/2 cup cold liberal Democrat water
- 1/2 cup cold moderate bipartisan water
- 1/4 cup third-party blue berries

Dissolve the fundamentalist Christian powder in the hot Republican water and stir well to bring out the anti-legislation flavors against abortion, same-sex marriage, gun control, and women's rights issues. Add the two cold waters and the blue berries to counter the inflammatory properties of the hot mix and to begin the gelling compromise process. This salad does not suit all social issue tastes, but it does make political candidates think about them. (322-35)

Color-Line Education Coleslaw

- 1/2 cup shredded purple anti-slavery cabbage
- 1/2 cup shredded 1960s Civil Rights Commission carrots
- 9 cups shredded NAACP social action cabbage
- 1/2 cup 1959 School Reorganization Act raisins
- 2 1/2 tablespoons juice from *Bonner v. Daniels* lemon
- 1/4 cup charter school milk
- 1/3 cup School Voucher sugar
- 1 1/2 cups low-income vinegar

The taste of this coleslaw will please many state residents, but not all. The education flavor is best for those with good incomes living in the best neighborhoods. Minorities in inner-city schools and many students in rural schools will not get full nutritional value from this salad.

(326-28)

Philanthropic Pudding Parfait

Chocolate Volunteer Pudding:

- 2 cups food pantry milk
- 1 cup chocolate literacy pudding mix
- 1/2 cup chocolate homeless shelter pieces

Vanilla Public-Private Pudding:

- 2 cups Eskenazi Health milk
- 1 cup vanilla Lilly Endowment pudding mix
- 1/2 cup Historical Society toffee pieces

Mix and whip the two puddings separately, and then blend one into the other creating swirls.

Offer to the local community of your choice. This pudding is popular all over the state. (333)

Automobile Plant Pie

- 2 cups blue collar flour
- 1/2 cup petroleum lard
- 2 cups old or new auto-parts fruit*
- 3/4 cup hard-hat sugar

Mix and roll out the crust like any other and place in a nine-inch pie pan. Combine the fruit and sugar and pour into pie crust. Bake in pre-heated auto-plant furnace at 400 degrees.

**Fruit brands may include: Cummins, Auburn, Fauracia, Arvin, Toyota, Honda, Delco-Remy, Guide Lamp, and Subaru. (290)*

Hoosier Arts Stew

- 1 pound of literary meat from these choices:
 - Kurt Vonnegut's *Slaughter House Five*
 - Booth Tarkington's *The Magnificent Ambersons*
 - Theodore Dreiser's *Sister Carrie*
- 1 cup of chopped musical vegetable from these choices:
 - Leroy Carr's *How Long Blues*
 - Hoagy Carmichael's *Stardust*
 - Cole Porter's *Kiss Me, Kate*
- 1 cup of cubed painting potatoes from these choices:
 - Grant Wood's *American Gothic*
 - T. H. Benton's *Threshing Wheat*
 - T.C. Steele's *Selma in the Garden*

Brown the meat in a deep cast iron skillet. Add 2 cups water, the vegetables, and the potatoes. Season to taste with home-grown herbs and simmer for two or three decades. Serve with wine from local vineyards.

When going to a restaurant to dine, members of the same family will not always agree on what to eat. In the same way, we cannot easily define a Hoosier. Residents of Indiana, whether born here or not, are not all the same. They are a smorgasbord of menu items.

Works Cited

Madison, James. *Hoosiers: A New History of Indiana*. Bloomington: Indiana Historical Society Press, 2014. Print.