

CLUES TO YOUR FAMILY'S CULINARY HERITAGE

Finding clues to what your particular family ate can be seen at the family reunion or the Thanksgiving table or even in old family photos.

Consider what shows up at your table for family gatherings? Do sausages and bratwurst represent your German heritage? Do your relatives sit down for afternoon coffee with pulla? Their Finnish heritage is evident!

The more time immigrant ancestors and subsequent generations spend in a country, their food preferences may have changed or the traditional foods may have changed based on what was available in their new country. That's okay. The basics are typically still there and recognizable as traditional recipes.



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Food brings people together on many different levels. It's nourishment of the soul and body; it's truly love.

~ Giada De Laurentiis

Find Clues in Traditional Genealogy Research

As you research your immigrant ancestors you will be finding clues and definitive evidence of where your ancestor immigrated from.

Find the place of birth for your immigrant ancestor(s) and the birth place of their parents in census records. Does the census record indicate your ancestor was naturalized or filed papers for naturalization? Seek those out to learn where your ancestor immigrated from. Ship passenger lists will often indicate where a passenger is from and potentially what town.

COMMUNITY RESOURCES FOR CULINARY HERITAGE

If you want to learn more about what types of foods your ancestors ate, look to their community.

Seek out the history of the community and who settled the area. Was that community's culture heavily influenced by the settlers' home country? You can discover that by learning the local history.

Discover community clues and resources in:

- [Google Books](#) - Great for local histories
- **Community and Church Cookbooks** - Often found at the local library and [Google Books](#)
- Read the **local newspapers** for recipes and community gatherings
- Perform a **Google Search** for traditional cultural foods



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Food is not rational. Food is culture, habit, craving and identity.

~ Jonathan Safran Foer

Why Culinary Heritage?

Why should we pursue our culinary heritage?

As genealogy researchers, we research records and get excited to investigate cemeteries. After all, knowing what our ancestors ate and how those foods continue to appear on our own tables will not get us further back in the generations.

You're right. It won't tell who that 4th great grandmother is.

But knowing our culinary heritage will connect us through the generations. **Cultural foods will help children and non-genealogy family members connect to the previous generations.** The food at celebrations and family dinners starts family history conversations!