

Gribenes, Yuch/Yoich - from Craig Harris

My family was from Yampol and Soroki. (Others were from GerShobar (now, Ingulets) and Jablonka Koscielna (which is in Poland and, absolutely, was beyond the Pale. (Pardon the pun.)

This weekend's NYTimes covered 'gribenes,' which was one of my mother's favorites.

Last week, Yefim referred to "Yuch", which was to him a chicken soup. "Yuch" or "Yoich" is Yiddish for broth, and it's usually applied to Chicken soup (Goldener yoich).

Here's the story and the recipe for Esther Danilovich's "Yoich". When she or any of her sisters (there were seven of them) made their Pesach seder, they always used everything at hand. The highlight for many (lowlight, for others) was "Yoich". Anyone marrying into the Danilovich sisterhood were required to enjoy their yoich helping with great pleasure, and to comment on how tasty it was. That was, of course, hard to do, and my wife of 45 years still recoils because I make yoich every year.

To make Yoich:

1. Heat the broth left after making gefilte fish.
2. Strain
3. Throw out or reserve most of the broth for later use.
4. Break lots of matzah into the juice reserved.
5. Heat the matzah/broth mixture.
6. Serve with relish. (That's actually a pun -- horseradish is better. Relish is reserved for use as Charoset.)

So, "Yoich" is nothing more or less that heated-up matzah and fish juice.

My Mother's family, both in Europe and the United States was very poor. This dish epitomizes that -- nothing, not even the watery remains of the gefilte fish pot, went to waste.

Here's another specialty from my Mother:

Esther Danilovich Harris's "Second Night Chicken"

1. Serve the chicken the first night (one for a family of five; not bad)
2. Next night, serve the Chicken Bones, heated in broth, over noodles or rice.

This one was reserved for immediate family members only.

And a last memory, related to my father;

Nathan Wishniewsky Harris -- Recipe for Greeting Someone Coming Into the House

1. Open the Door
2. Ask, "Would you like a schnapps?"
3. Pour a small taste for each individual (male) present

4. Say, "L'Chaim"