



# COOKING HISTORY

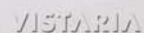
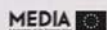
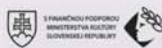
★ 6 WARS ★ 10 RECIPES ★ 60 361 024 DEAD ★

[www.cookinghistory.net](http://www.cookinghistory.net)



DOCUMENTARY FILM ABOUT ARMY COOKS

WRITTEN AND DIRECTED BY PETER KEREKES DIRECTOR OF PHOTOGRAPHY MARTIN KOLLÁR EDITOR MAREK ŠULÍK MUSIC MAREK PIAČEK  
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## COOKING HISTORY

**\*6 WARS \* 10 RECIPES \* 60 361 024 DEAD\***

documentary film about army cooks

Documentary film about army cooks, about how everyday needs of thousands of armed stomachs affected victories and defeats of the statesmen. About field kitchen as a model of the world where food preparation becomes a fight strategy. A fight for great ideals standing on strong legs of the kitchen table.

The film is based on eleven recipes of the cooks since the Second World War till the war in Tchechenia, from France through Balkan to Russia.

### CAST:

Klavdia Matveevna Lobanova, Franz Weinhart,  
Heinz Rüdiger, Liepke Distel, Békés Mihály  
Jacques Besson, René Bianchi  
Ljudmila Vladimirovna Korneva  
Branko Trbović, Mladen Vlahinja  
Branka Mudrinić, Ankica Pavković  
Peter Silbernagel

written and directed by  
director of photography  
music  
film editor  
sound designer  
sound mixer  
producer:

Peter Kerekes  
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Daniel Němec  
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Pavel Strnad



Documentary film

88 min

35mm

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## DIRECTOR'S OUTLINE

### THE COOKS

The main characters in „Cooking History“ are army cooks.

Simple men in aprons put on the uniform with their task to look after filling the giant stomach of a big hungry child - the army.

At first sight, their role is less important than that of the tank crews, aircraft unions or landing divisions. However, when a proper filling and emptying of the stomach is secured, it can also provide a fluent occupying and leaving of the army positions.

Thus, army cooks can affect the mood and actions of the soldiers and influence the history through their spoons.

However, cooking and fighting have a lot in common: strategizing, judging the correct proportion of ingredients, flavouring. Food preparation becomes a metaphor for the battle.

### CUISINE

I have chosen the European region for the „cuisine“ in my film. It is the „cuisine I understand“.

The film was shot with cooks in Britain, France, Czech Republic, Hungary, Croatia, Serbia, Bosnia, Russia and Israel.

### TONGUE

In many languages the word „tongue“ has two meanings.

Tongue – part of the body used for tasting.

Tongue – language we speak.

Tongue and language – both form the basis of the national culture. Both tongue and taste are already formed in childhood. Not surprisingly we speak about mother tongue and mother's kitchen.

Both are results of a long cultural development influenced by geographical conditions and historical circumstances.

Each nation has its master of speech: the French have Franca Villon and Brillat-Savarin, the Hungarians Petöfi and Grundel.

Spitefulness between nations is reflected also in spitefulness towards national cuisines.

There is something like nationalism of tastes deep-rooted in subconsciousness of our taste cells. We do not like foreign meals simply because we do not trust them and we are able to raise our „national“ meals to a national symbol and are ready to defend it anytime.

Each nation tries to maintain and sometimes even extend its LANGUAGE territory. Invasions of foreign nations have enriched our vocabulary by new words and our menu through new meals.

In our film you can hear and cook in seven languages.

I hope the film will be to its viewers' liking.

## TIME

Time is the most important variable in the army and the kitchen as well.

Individual tasks shall be fulfilled in a proper time order and during an exactly determined time period.

We can not beat a cutlet after having roasted it and a gun fire can not be started during the infantry's attack.

In the film each cook is telling his own story, his own recipe for life.

Thus the time coverage in the film is limited by the age of direct eyewitnesses.

As one of the cooks, Mr. Békés from Hungary, says – „limited by lifetime of the human material“.

In the film the veterans are telling their stories from the Second World War, the Algerian War, the Hungarian Revolution of 1956, Occupation of Czechoslovakia in 1968, Balkan Wars and the war in Tchechenia.



## RECIPE

The cooks are different. Some are cooking by using recipes, keeping obediently the instructions.

Some are constantly experimenting, have their own view on the cuisine and the world as well.

The Slavonic languages use an expression „to cook by sight“ – denoting people experienced in cooking, with knowledge of situations /in life and a pot as well/ that helps them to evaluate the given status of things by sight.

One of the main topics of the film is looking for a recipe of how people should behave.

Are the orders recipes?

Shall we follow the recipes in our lives? Who has the right to write cooking books? When can we refuse to live according to a recipe and when shall we cook according to an order?

The cooks – soldiers, colleagues, enemies. How would they behave at their professional meeting? Would they fight against each other or would they exchange their recipes?

And what about the moral message of the pots?

If all the cooks in the world would refuse to cook, would there be no wars?





## COOKING HISTORY - protagonists

**Vassily Nikolaevich Logunov**  
**Russian cook in Tchechenia**  
**Moscow / Russia**

SHASHLIK  
For a Russian troop

One smaller cow  
10 litres of red wine  
10 litres of grape juice  
12 kg of tomatoes  
0,7 kg of red paprika  
a pinch of salt

He entered the troops in Tchechenia as a volunteer in 1994, because all his classmates from the Military school decided to volunteer.

After being loaded up on the train, someone /of the officers/ had stolen the best part of food provisions. Puree /for filling up the stomach/, lard /protecting against cold/ and sugar /providing the necessary energy/ was what remained.

After the arrival to Tchechenia the old sweets stole sugar and lard and traded it off for vodka. Instant puree was what remained but it could not fill up the stomach properly. The soldiers were hungry and so they shooted dead a cow on a field.

A Tchechenian old bloke owning the shot cow went to complain to partisans. The partisans began to bombard the Russian baseline with rockets. The headquarters in Moscow decided to strengthen their troops in Tchechenia and called up more recruits. But in Moscow someone had stolen food provisions and just puree, sugar and lard remained. Sugar and lard had been stolen in Tchechenia by the old sweets which traded it off for vodka. The soldiers were hungry, eating just the disgusting puree and so they decided to shoot dead a cow..."

**Franz Wienhart**  
**Wehrmacht's baker**  
**Schliersee / Germany**

Bread

For 18 millions of German soldiers

4 500 tons of meal

1 350 tons of bakers'yeast – *meal mixture for yeasting, other than a yeast*

3 600 tons of meal mixture

23 850 hectolitres of water

54 tons of yeast

157,5 tons of „basic mixture“

a pinch of salt

Both his father and grandfather were bakers and his son is a baker too.

At the beginning of the war he was supposed to serve in tank gunnery but he was transferred to bakers, what he was ashamed of at first. Just like most of his coevals he also wanted to fight. After having experienced marching through neverending Russian steppes, his enthusiasm for fight disappeared. After all, he had been passing almost through all European fronts and had baked for Wehrmacht in France, Russia and Normandy.

„On all fronts, were they in the west or in the east, in the north or in the south, on land, on water or in air, the soldiers always could rely on getting their portion of „komiss“, their military portion of bread“.

**Klavdia Matveevna Lobanova**  
**Russian cook during the Leningrad blockade**  
**Petersburg/Russia**

GRIDDLE-CAKES

For 11 millions of fallen Russian soldiers

726 tons of smooth flour

8 800 000 eggs

5 500 hectolitres of water  
6 600 hectolitres of milk  
55 tons of sugar  
121 tons of butter  
a pinch of salt

She served as cook at army's airport during the Leningrad blockade. Her task was to bake Griddle-cakes – Russian pancakes filled with cream, meat or jam. Thanks to her griddle-cakes the soldiers were in good mood and fought against German airplanes. She had baked a heap of pancakes at that time. Maybe even a million. And maybe the Russians won the war thanks to her.

**HEINZ RUDIGER –  
German cook during the Second World War  
Chemnitz / Germany**

SUGAR  
for a Rumanian girl  
5 grams of sugar

A period of exhausting retreat and worsened food delivery arrived. Once they were camping in Rumania. An older Rumanian – civilian, entered the kitchen. His daughter was dying and longing for a piece of sugar. The round-shouldered villager suppliantly asked for the piece of sugar. But the military rules did not allow to give food to civilians. The cook was afraid to break the rules and did not give him anything. The girl died and all villagers took part in her funeral passing by his field kitchen. He had to stand the stabbing look of the little girl's relatives. „Abhorrence was what remained for me“.

The question is, where is the limit when one does not have to follow the order anymore.





## **Liepke Distel**

### **The man who poisoned bread for German war captives.**

#### **POISONED BREAD**

For 1000 captured SS men

500 kg of meal  
360 kg of rye meal  
40 kg of wheat meal  
265 litres of water  
6 kg of yeast  
8 l of arsenic  
a pinch of salt

Liepke Distel survived a concentration camp. After liberation he became member of the Jewish resistance movement. The group believed that the Germans, as a nation, are co-responsible for killing off the Jews and should be punished for that. First they intended to poison the water piping in Nürnberg but they failed /luckily/. Then they decided to poison bread in the American prison camp Nürnberg – Langwasser where also the Gestapo and SS men were gathered.

Mr. Liepke began to work in bakery and one day he and his helpers put arsenic on more than thousand bread slices. Then they escaped to different countries. Some sources say, 600 to 800 died but another say, the action was revealed and the stomachs of the captives were emptied /New York Times from April 23, 1946, reported 207 brought to hospital/.

## **Békés Mihály**

### **Hungarian cook during the 1956 Anti-communist uprising**

#### **Cegléd / Hungary**

#### **HUNGARIAN SAUSAGE**

For 120 000 Soviet occupants

40 tons of pork  
800 kg of ground sweet paprika  
200 kg of ground hot paprika  
120 kg of garlic  
80 kg of cumin /whole pieces/  
24 km of casings  
a pinch of salt

*„When a soldier is given nothing to eat and knows that he will get nothing but tins, he becomes fearful. Soldiers can show courage only with full stomach.“*

In 1956 the Hungarian Anti-communist uprising broke up. First, Mr. Békés had been cooking for soldiers protecting the munitions warehouse against insurgents.

After the revolutionary government had assumed power, he got on its side together with the army.

At the risk of his life he had been cooking for the unit protecting the new government against Soviet tanks.

*„My only interest was to provide good food for soldiers. I did not interfere with politics.“*

After suppression of the revolution he continued cooking for the army, this time for Soviet officers tanks of which had been bombarding him in 1956.

*„Life goes on and soldiers have to eat. Be it a Frenchman, Hungarian or Russian“.*



**Jacques Besson & René Bianchi**  
**French cooks in Algeria**  
**Lyon/ France**

COQ AU VIN  
For 500 000 French soldiers

100 000 roosters  
50 tons of carrots  
170 tons of onion  
5 ½ tons of garlic  
200 000 bay leaves  
a digger bucket of thymian, cloves, pepper and salt

400 hectolitres of Marc de Bourgogne  
200 thousand bottles of Burgund red wine  
half a million of baguette breads

When two people do the same thing, it's never the same.

Jacques Besson is a professional cook, he had cooked in exquisite restaurants all his life.

He does not like army cuisine that can be summarized in a Maggi bouillon cube when considering its simplicity.

He is a mason and has ability to read symbols in his surrounding and in cooking as well.

He spent most of the time of his obligatory military service in the kitchen. He does not like to speak about fighting and prefers to speak about good food.

René Bianchi was a paratrooper, one of the red berrets.

In small groups they were taking part in actions aimed at detecting „fellagas“ - the Algerian partisans. He does not like to speak about cooking and prefers to speak about fighting.

In hard situations he had to rescue his friends and many time he had put his life at risk.

*„What would happen if the cooks refused to cook? – They would have to go and fight, they would not feel safe in their kitchens anymore“.*



**Liudmila Vladimirovna Korneva**  
**Cook in the Soviet occupational army in Czechoslovakia, 1968**  
**Petersburg/ Russia**

STEWED MUSHROOMS  
For 500 000 Soviet occupants

25 tons of clean mushrooms  
100 000 bay leaves  
200 000 allspice corns  
400 000 pepper corns  
5 ½ tons of onion shredded into thin slivers  
½ ton of horse radish  
440 kg cumin  
320 kg mustard seeds  
200 hectoliters of vinegar  
500 hectoliters of water  
a pinch of salt

Liudmila arrived in Czechoslovakia in the night of August 21-22. Her army unit was located in the forests not far from Milovice.

She served as a cook in the field hospital. After fighting against Czechoslovakian contra revolutionaries they were expecting big amount of injured Soviet soldiers. But the Czechoslovakians did not offer resistance and the field hospital had nothing to do. They were walking through the forest picking the mushrooms. So many had been found that year! Liudmila had stewed 5 litres of mushrooms and took the bottle home.

On New Year's Day they were eating the Czechoslovakian stewed mushrooms. Her father said then to her: *„This year you have been on a very good mushroom picking tour!“*.

**Branko Trbovich**  
**Marshal Tito's personal taster**  
**Belgrade / Serbia**

THE LAST DINNER  
For Marshal Tito

0,2 litre of meat bouillon  
0,3 kg of unboned chicken meat  
0,3 kg of potatoes  
0,06 kg of butter  
a pinch of salt

He was responsible for tasting the food for Josip-Broz Tito, the leader of Yugoslavia. The food had to meet both safety and taste requirements. It had to be exactly to his liking.

By and by the taste of Branko Trbovich was in a perfect accordance with that of Marshal Tito.

After Tito's death, his personal taster lost his sense of taste.

*„There were not any tastes, there was nothing anymore...“*

**Mladen Vlachyňa**  
**Croatian cook in the „War of Independence“**  
**Varazdin / Croatia.**

**CALF MEAT**

For 80 000 Croatian soldiers

75 tons of calf meat

50 tons of potatoes

3 ½ tons of onion

25 hectolitres of oil

1 600 kg of Vegeta spices

1 240 kg of red paprika

a pinch of salt



In 1991 he volunteered for the newly formed Croatian army.

He had been commanding 35 cooks. One day the cooks decided voluntarily to conquer the line 255 - a death line at which people were dying every day.

The commander asked them not to go because if he would lose his cooks, it would be a total shithole.

*„There is no war without food!“*

**Branka Mudrenić & Ankica Pavlović**  
**Serbian cooks during „Civil War“**  
**Zvecsevo/ Croatia**

**PAPRIKASH**

For 74 000 Serbian soldiers

75 tons of pork  
50 tons of potatoes  
3,5 tons of onion  
25 hectolitres of oil  
1600 kg of Vegeta  
1240 kg of red paprika  
a pinch of salt

Both cooks had been cooking for Serbian militia in the „Republic of Serbian Country“.

*„We had been cooking for our people – and against Croatians, of course“.*

Both were refugees and served in army kitchen since it was the only way for them to get food supply. Each day they got a kilo of bread and had been living from one day to another.

*„After the war my brother-in-law from the other /Croatian/ side told me: Ankica, being on the other side of the front we knew when you were cooking. You were cooking tasty, our soldiers had full stomachs and were shooting more precisely at us. I was proud but felt sorry for the people which had to suffer on the other side.“*

**Peter Silbernagel**

**The only one member of the crew to have survived sinking of submarine Hai  
in 1963**  
**Sylt / Germany**

**Schnitzel**

For 19 drowned friends

400 g of pork meat  
8 eggs  
18 spoons of milk  
20 decagrams of meal  
30 decagrams of bread-crumbs  
4 dcl oil  
a pinch of sea salt

*„The submarine cook is the second most important person after the captain. Good food equals good mood of the crew and if the food is not good their mood is also going down.“*

The soldiers' most favourite food was a piece of meat with potatoes, Schnitzel at the best.

On an autumn day 1963 the cook prepared just a dry dinner. Bread with salami and pickled gherkins. After the dinner the submarine started to surface. It reached the water surface but still remained lying at a 25-degree angle. Suddenly a scream came out the machine room announcing inflowing water.

14 of the 21- member crew managed to climb onboard and jump into cold water. Seven seamen remained hampered in the submarine which definitely sank down soon.

Mr. Silbernagel had been waiting together with four seamen in the middle of freezing sea for someone to rescue them.

In such cases the shipwrecked have to stay in place in order to be found by the rescuers. His colleagues were falling asleep and freezing in the water slowly.

Peter Silbernágel realized he had to move and began to swim towards the North regardless of the rules. He had been swimming for 14 hours till an English fisher-boat take him out.

*„I do not know the recipe for my surviving...“*

