



Dietary Habits and Local Food in Latvia

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- Rīga Stradiņš University
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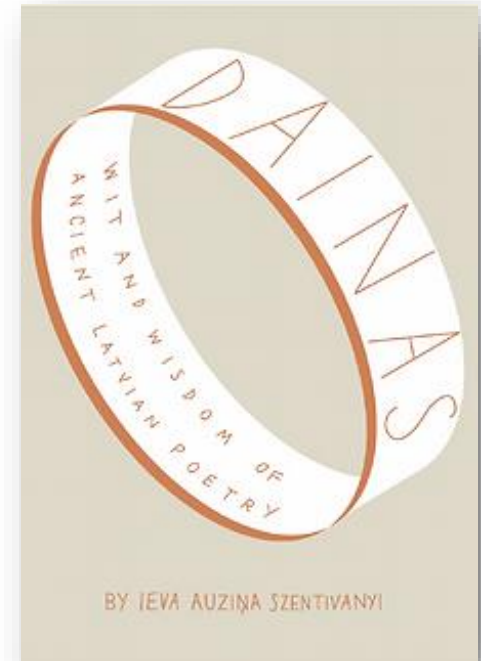
Content

- Latvian *Dainas*
- Celebration meal traditions:
 - Easter
 - Midsummer
 - Christmas
- Traditional food and beverages

Latvian *Dainas*

Dainas – Wit and Wisdom of Ancient Latvian Poetry by Ieva Auziņa Szentivanyi

“Latvian *dainas* are poems, each a small, perfectly self-sufficient miniature, polished by the generations who passed them on orally. They express the deep wisdom of the ancient Latvians and are as profound as any literature of other great cultures, such as the Bible”



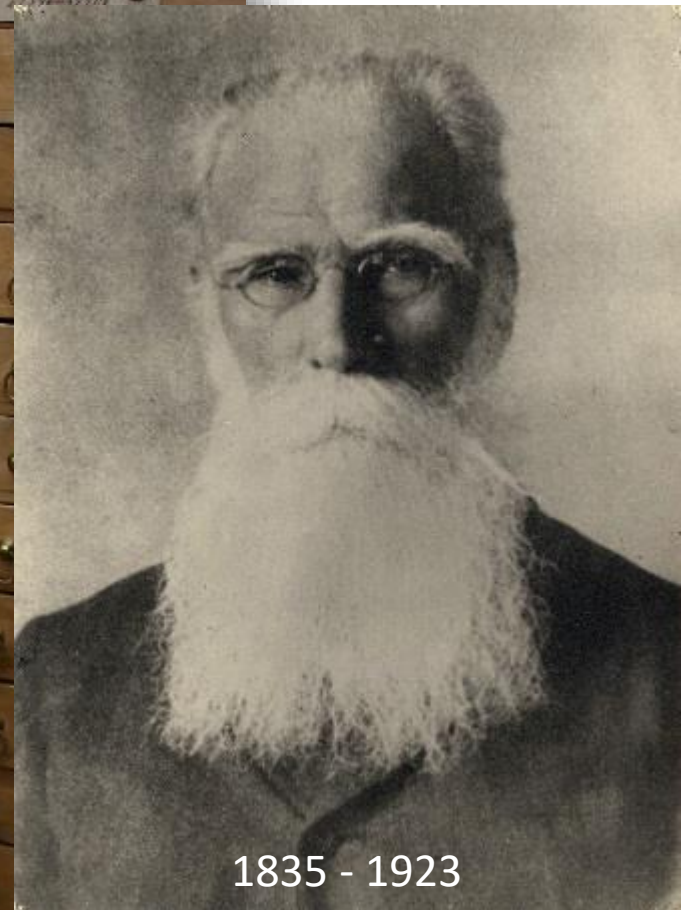
Latvian *Dainas*

- The oldest documentation of *dainas* – late 1500s
- In written form since the late 1800s
- \approx 1.4 million four-line poems

Content

- Specific historical events
- Significant personal transitions
- Grief, sorrow
- Humor
- Celebration rituals

Dainu skapis



1835 - 1923

- 6 volumes 1894 - 1915
- 217 996 folk songs (poems)

UNESCO
LATVIJAS *dārgumi*



Dainu skapis

268,815
cards



Easter Traditions

Latvian *Dainas* (171)

- Eggs
- Beer
- Buns
- Pies
- Hemp
- Rye
- Butter
- Cheese
- Barley

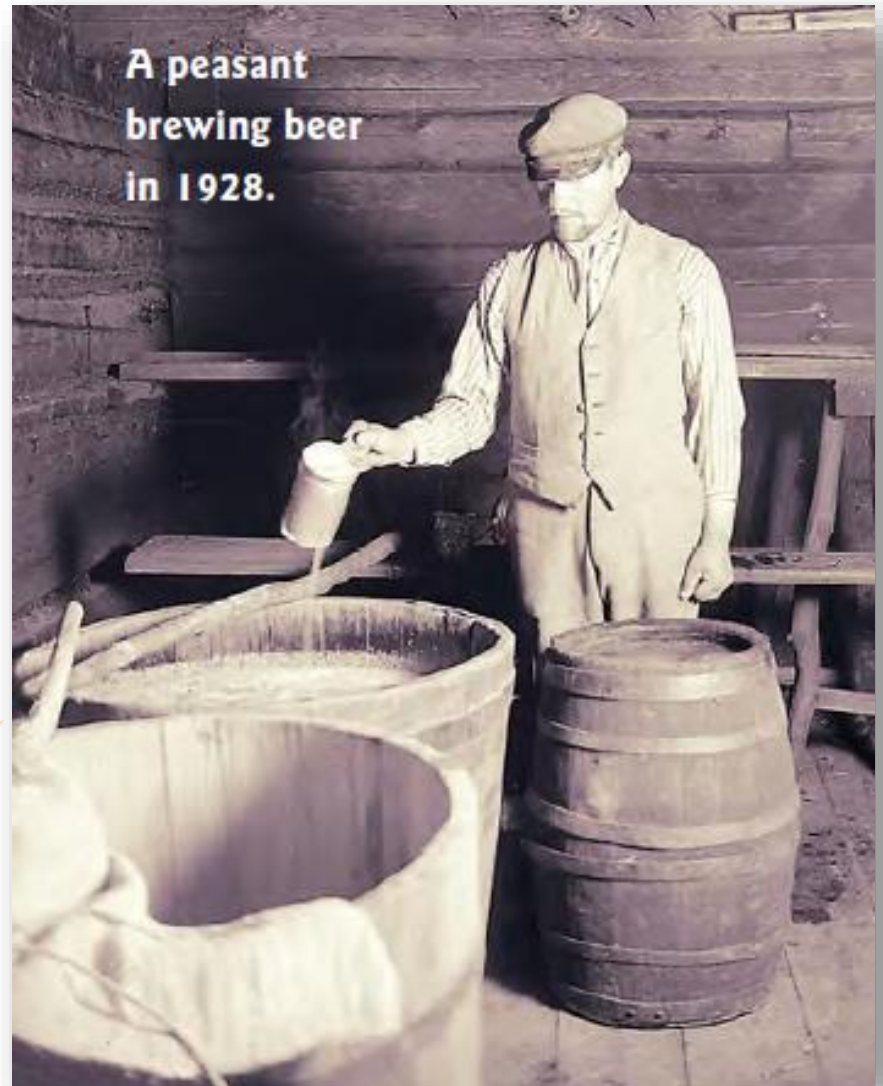




Traditional and Modern Latvian Foods and Beverages, 2014

Traditional Beverages

Beer/Honey Beer



Traditional Beverages

Birch/Maple sap



Traditional Beverages

Birch/Maple sap

“The overall content of Latvian maple (*Acer platanoides*) sap is richer in bioactive substances and mineral salts as compared to birch (*Betula pendula*) sap”

- Glucose and Fructose – birch sap
- Sucrose - maple sap
- Ca^{2+} and K^{+} ions
- Mn^{2+}
- Sulphate ions
- Ascorbic acid – 56% ↑ in maple sap
- Antioxidants in total > 2x in maple sap





Traditional Food

Rye bread



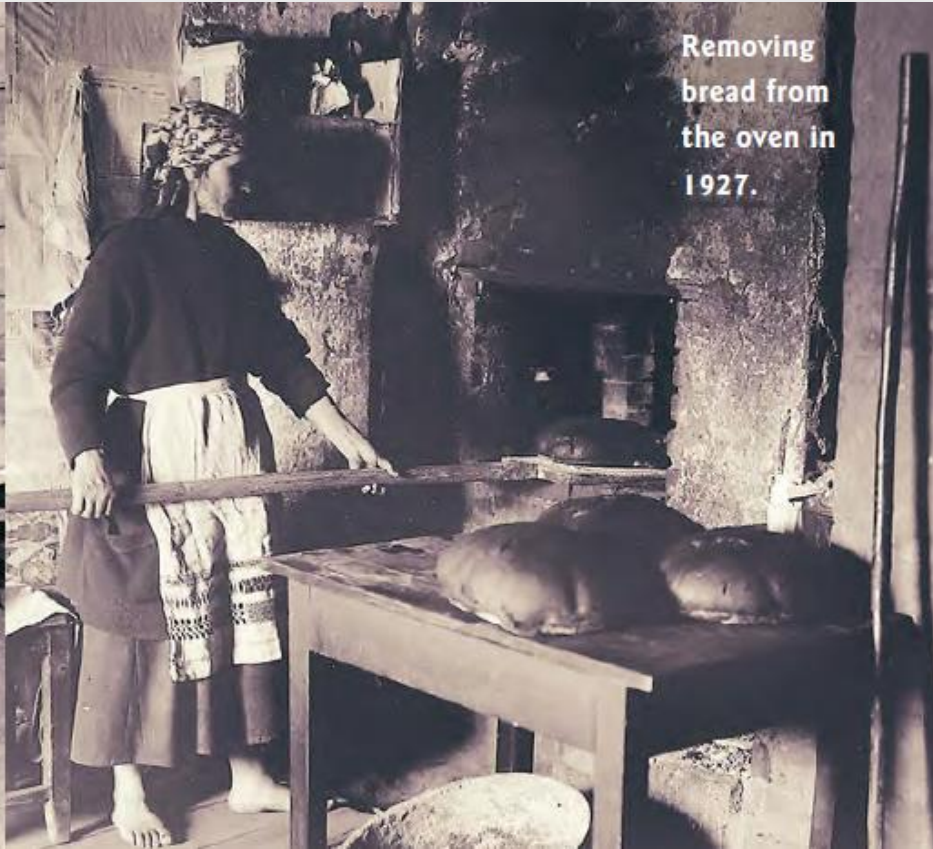
Traditional Food

Rye bread

Churning
butter in
1926.



Removing
bread from
the oven in
1927.



Traditional Food

Hemp (*Cannabis sativa*) butter/spread

100 g of product:

- Unsaturated fatty acids
30,1 g
- Protein 26 g
- Fiber ~ 17 g





Traditional Food

Hemp products



Jāņi (Midsummer) Traditions

Latvian *Dainas* (1860)

- Cheese
- Beer
- Rye bread
- Butter
- Hemp
- Honey

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Jāņi Specialties

Jāņu siers (Midsommer cheese)

100 g of product:

- Protein
- Calcium 120 – 150 mg
- ↑ Folates, Choline
- ↓ Lactose



Jāņi Traditions



Christmas Traditions

Latvian *Dainas* (796)

- Rye
- Bread
- Pork
- Beer
- Barley
- Sausage
- Beans
- Porridge
- Cabbage
- Pies
- Peas

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Christmas Specialties

Grey peas with meat/bacon



Christmas Specialties

Blood sausage with
pearl barley



Roast pork with
sautéed sauerkraut



Christmas Specialties

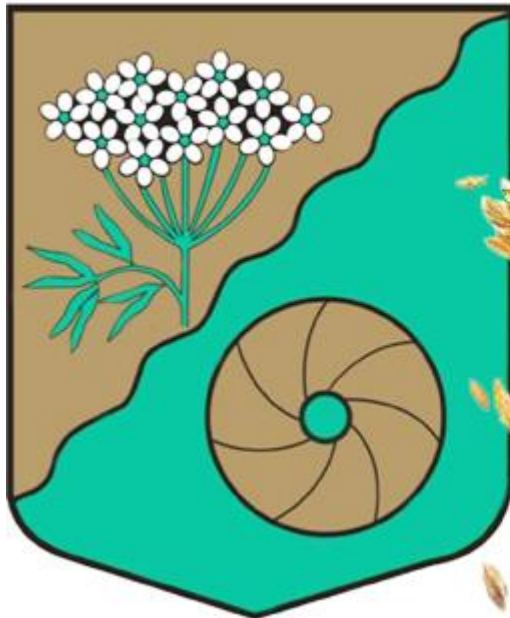
Piparkūkas



Traditional Beverages

Allažu ķimelis (Allasch Kümmel)

200 years in Latvia



<https://www.laikmetazimes.lv>

Nutritional and Health Aspects of Traditional and Ethnic Foods of Eastern Europe. (2021).

Elsevier. <https://doi.org/10.1016/C2015-0-06909-X>

Traditional Beverages

Riga Black Balsam

- 1752 - original recipe by pharmacist Albert Kunze
- 1845 – produced commercially
- Essence (24 herbs + spirit/water mix) = honey etc.



Traditional Beverages

Herbal teas

- Linden blossom
- Peppermint
- Chamomile





2 months left to Midsummer Solstice

References

Pictures

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