

A Study in White

A White Aspic from a German Recipe

Aspic has intrigued me for years and I wanted to experiment with it. I discovered two different thickening agents that were easily accessible to me. I found a recipe for White Aspic in a German cookbook that fascinated me. I experimented with the recipe using both thickeners individually and in combination. What follows are the result of that experiment.

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Das Kochbuch der Sabina Welserin

In the name of the Holy
Trinity I, Sabina Welserin,
begin this cookbook.
God grant me His holy
grace and wisdom
and understanding and judgment
with which I
through His Holy will live
here in this time and
with Him forever. Amen. anno 1553

Original German Recipe:

Welt jr ain weisse súltz machen

So nempt ain mandel vnnd wessert jn jber nacht ein/ jn ain rerwasser/ so wirt er weiß, am morgen ziechet jn aús/ vnnd land jn aúfs klenest stossen oder reiben/ so múglich jst darnach nempt ain rerwasser/ 4 oxenfiesß/ vnnd thiets jn ain haffen/ lands woll sieden/ aber die fiessß sollen vor schen gewaschen sein/ lands aber fein gemacht sieden wie ein súpen/ damit die brie nit trieb werd, múgt aúch ain wenig haúsenblater daranthon, wan es also gesotten jst/ das jr vermaint, das das wasser gnúg gesotten/ vnnd gestreckt sey, so seicht es fein dúrch ain peútelúch/ treibt den mandel mit dúrch, wieúil jr dan machen welt/ nempt darnach dasselbig vnnd thiets fein jn ain messine pfannen/ vnnd lands sieden/wie lind gesotten air/ thiet vill zúcker darein/ vnnd ain wenig gút rossenwasser/ darnach last dieselbig brie dúrch den wúlin sack laffen, bis jn 3 mall oder bis sý fein laúter wirt/ darnach schits jn ain schissel, behalt aber ain wenig brie/ das dús darjber kintest giessen, wan dú wellest, lass also jn der schissel woll stan/ darnach schneit heraús, was dú wilt, vnnd geúsß gelb, schwartz, braún darein/ wie dú wilt/ so jsts ain schene súltz/ magst aúch steren machen oder was dú wilt/ darnach magst dús mit der brie, die dú behalten hast, wider jbergiessen/.

Translation:

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Then take almonds and soak them overnight with spring water, then they become white. In the morning remove them and let them be pounded or grated as finely as possible. Afterwards take the spring water and four oxen feet and put them in a pot. Let them cook well, but the feet should be washed well beforehand. Let them simmer slowly like a soup, so that the broth does not become too cloudy. You can also put some isinglass into it. When it has cooked in this way, so that you believe that the water has boiled and thickened enough, then strain it through a cloth bag, pass the almonds through with it, as much as you would like to make. Afterwards take it and put it into a brass pan and let it boil as long as a soft-boiled egg. Put abundant sugar into it and some good rose water. Then let the same broth run through a wool sack up to three times, or as long as it takes to become clear. Afterwards pour it into a bowl, reserve a little of the broth, so that you can pour it over whenever you would like. In this manner let it become firm in the bowl. After that cut out what you will and pour yellow, black and brown into it, as you will, then it is a pretty aspic. Afterwards you can pour the reserved broth over it again.

Recipe and Translation copyright by Valoise Armstrong 1998

http://www.daviddfriedman.com/Medieval/Cookbooks/Sabrina_Welserin.html

Ingredients:

Almond Milk

Sugar

Rose Water

Isinglass

Gelatin (processed cow hooves)

Notes:

I was not able to get fresh cow hooves. However after a brief bit of research, I discovered that most brands of gelatin are actually extracted and processed from cow hooves. Isinglass is another name for Agar-Agar or Irish Moss, which is found in most grocery stores. For the purposes of this dish preparation, and in the name of science I wanted to try three different batches. The first will be made with Agar-Agar, the second will be made with gelatin, and third batch will be with a combination of the two thickeners. The purpose of this is to determine if there is a flavor and texture difference using each thickening agent individually or in combination.

I made various attempts to determine the best proportions of Almond Milk to gelatin agents. I used commercially available almond milk for that procedure.

My process:

I soaked the blanched (skinned) almond kernels overnight. I drained them then ground them in a food processor for a few minutes. I then placed them in boiling water. The proportion was 1 ¾ cups of water to 1 cup of ground almonds. I brought it up to a gentle simmer and stirred for 15 minutes. I removed it from the heat and let cool. I strained through a fine sieve to remove the almond meal. I left the almond milk in a jar overnight to let any leftover solids settle to the bottom of the jar.

The next day I heated the 2 ½ cups of home made almond milk with the sugar and rosewater to a simmer in a sauce pan. Once the milk was warm, I reserved ½ cup for the pour over at the end. I separated the remainder into two pans. I then added the Agar-Agar to one and gelatin to the other. I stirred each until mixed well and poured all but 1/3 cup of each into different molds and left them to set.

The took the 1/3 cups of the two almond milk mixtures and mixed them together and poured them into a third set of molds.

Recipe:

Almond Milk	2 ½ Cups
Sugar	2 ½ Tbsp
Rose Water	1 ½ tsp

Agar-Agar	1 Tbsp
Gelatin	1 Tbsp

Bring the almond milk to a light simmer; add the sugar and rose water.

Reserve ½ cup of the milk for serving

Separate the milk into two sauce pans.

Add the Agar-Agar to one pan and gelatin to the other, stir for 3 minutes or until blended well. Remove from heat. Reserve 1/3 cup of each of the milks and mix together.

Prepare the molds. Pour the milks into the appropriate molds and chill.

When ready to serve, remove the aspic from the molds and pour a bit of the reserved milk over the aspic when served.

On a lark, I tried google translate on the original. This is the result (and this is why we don't trust Google Translate):

Make world jr ain white súltz

So do not eat an almond, and eat it in the night
on water / that's how he knows, in the morning
and land jn aúfs klenest poke or rub / as possible jst
thereafter, nempt ain water / 4 oxenfiesß / vnnd thiets jn
Ain haffen / lands want to boil / but the fiessß should before
his country but finely chopped
a súpen / so that the brie nit be drd, aúch aúch a little
háusenblater daranthon, wan it then jost jr
vermaint that boiled / stretched the water gnúg,
so shallow it finely dúrch ain peúteltúch / drives the almond with
dúrch, wieúil jr dan make world / nempt after that same
and thiets fine jn ain messine pans / lands boiling /
how do you booze air / thiet vill zúcker in and ain
little gút rossenwasser / after which last dieselbig brie dúrch
Unwrap the wúlin bag until you reach 3 or until it is fine
he / she cuts it off, but keeps little
brie / dú darjber kintest pour, wan dú wellest, so leave
In the shit you want to stan / afterwards snow, what dú
wilt, good and yellow, black, brown / how dú wilt /
so jsts ain schene súltz / magst aúch steren or what
dú wilt / thereafter dú likes to stay with the brie who dú
have, against jbergiessen /.

The printed edition is the University of Heidelberg C. Winter available : ISBN: 3-8253-2905-4, paperback

On Line edition: University of GeiBen :

<http://www.staff.uni-giessen.de/gloning/tx/sawe.htm>

WHO WAS SABINA WELSERIN?

Taken from:

<https://www.curiousfrau.com/2009/04/02/introduction/>

The Welser family, along with the Fuggers, were one of the “commercial nobility” families of Augsburg. The Welser Brothers banking firm provided major financing to the Spanish Crown and received the right to establish a colony in Venezuela in exchange (Fiske, p.433).

There are two ladies in the Welser family with the name Sabina who could have written the cookbook.

The first Sabina, born in 1532, was the daughter of Ulrich Welser and married Conrad Voehlin, an Augsburg citizen, in 1550. He later became Mayor in 1562. She died in 1599. If she wrote the cookbook, she would have written it at age 21 (Classen, p. 351).

The second Sabina was born in 1515 to Anton Welser and Felicitas Baumgartner. In 1535 she married Leonhard Hirsvogel, a Nuremberg citizen. It was a short lived marriage, as she divorced him four years later. She died in 1576. If she wrote the cookbook, she would have written it at age 38 (Classen, p. 352).

Whichever of these two Sabina’s wrote the cookbook, it reads to me like a collection of family favorite recipes written down for a bride to take to her new house. It has both the special fancy dishes for feasts and holidays and the comfort food for everyday.

Valoise Armstrong’s translation of Sabina’s cookbook found online

Thomas Glonig’s transcription of the Middle High German text is available online at Das Kochbuch der Sabina Welserin c.1553

Fiske, John, Appletons’ Cyclopædia of American Biography. 1889.

Classen, Albrecht. The Power of a Woman’s Voice in Medieval and Early Modern Literatures: New Approaches to German and European Women Writers and to Violence against Women in Premodern Times. Fundamentals of medieval and early modern culture, 1. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2007.