



Dining for Women

***Making Connections
November 2007
Bosnia-Herzegovina***

War is not a computer-generated missile striking a digital map. War is the color of earth as it explodes in our faces, the sound of a child pleading, the smell of smoke and fear. Women survivors of war are not the image portrayed on the television screen, but the glue that holds families and countries together. Perhaps by understanding women, and the other side of war, we will have more humility in our discussions of wars. Perhaps it is time to listen to women's side of history.

Zainab Salbi, founder WfWI, *The Other Side of War*

Learning about the women of Bosnia-Herzegovina may pull us from one emotional extreme to another this month. As we remember what has been forgotten by most of the world since the war and news coverage ended, as we confront what has gone unconforted, we may feel horrified, angry, and profoundly sad. As we encounter women who are struggling to recover lives and livelihoods, to find personal and communal reconciliation, we'll be inspired and share in their hope. Both extremes—horror and hope—need to be acknowledged. WfWI views dealing with the horror as an important aspect of taking positive steps in hope. Horror and hope are the realities of Bosnia's women. And somehow, amazingly, they hold onto life in between.

Please note: *FYI* and *Voices* appear in their usual order here, but I've repeated them in an appendix at the end so that chapter leaders who want to use them their meetings can print them more easily. I've also reprinted the excerpt fr. *War Cake* for leaders who want to print it to read before dinner. And please see the **announcements** preceding *Dining with Women*.

FYI: The Horror and Necessity of Remembering Rape as a Weapon

"They were victims twice—when they were raped and when they were forgotten," says one human rights activist working in Bosnia. Rape has been a weapon of war for as long as humans have done battle. But calling it a weapon, acknowledging the brutality of it, and counting its victims—these have been rare. Helping victims recover even rarer. As Marsha put it in her blog a few weeks ago while writing about a *New York Times* report on the ongoing rape campaign in Congo, "This isn't for the faint of heart, but we need to know. Women must know. We all must know."

Thousands of women—estimates vary from 20,000 to 50,000—were sexually assaulted and tortured during the war. Rape was a weapon of terror and ethnic cleansing, designed to humiliate and destroy ethnic minorities. It was also done, as a doctor treating victims in Congo puts it, “to destroy women.” As one Bosnian woman said, “Men feared being killed; women feared being caught alive.” Women were raped in public and in their homes, often before being expelled and seeing their men or entire villages murdered. The Serbian military organized 16 rape camps where women and girls were kept as slaves and raped on a daily basis for months. If a woman became pregnant, she was held until late pregnancy and then put out.

For many, rape came with the loss of family, home, and community to other weapons of war. For others, it brought abandonment by spouses and shunning by community. The stigma of rape is so brutal in itself that many victims keep silent and society looks away. Many of the children of rape have been locked away in orphanages and forgotten. Others face a life with a shameful label. There is not enough help for victims who now suffer from poverty, unemployment or the only alternative—further exploitation in the growing sex traffic market. Not enough help in the form of recovery counseling and healthcare.

And justice? Because enough brave Bosnian women have come forward, putting themselves and their families at further risk, rape was defined for only the second time in world history (Rwanda was the first) as a crime against humanity by an international tribunal. Very few perpetrators, however, have been prosecuted or jailed. As time goes on, society forgets even to overlook, but victims cannot forget. Nor should we.

Martha Adams heard about the rape camps on the radio in her Hendersonville, NC home. No doubt many heard that same report in horror and quickly turned away. But Martha is a poet and a grandmother, and she particularly could not forget the testimony of fifteen-year old “Rachel.” She remembered by doing what grandmothers, mothers, sisters, and aunts have done for centuries when their daughters have been victimized. She cried out a mournful yet defiant song giving wing to Rachel’s words in poetry.

The Voice of Rachel SWS-87

*A voice is hear in Ramah lamenting
and weeping bitterly; it is Rachel
weeping for her children, refusing to
be comforted for her children, because
they are no more. Jer. 31:15; Mt. 2:18*

*Quotes and story from an interview
with SWS-87 on NPR; 1996*

I am SWS-87, eleven birthday candles blown
in a place I didn’t know was heaven
a place I just called home, Ledici
Ledici, Bosnia—it sang my tongue—
four birthdays, no candles
in a place I now call hell.

It was April 1992 they came

spring rain like wool on the mountain.
They took me to a filthy cell
for “interrogation purposes.”

Accused me of lying,
my girl body quivered like a sapling tee.
They stripped me bare
and climbed me there
five rough men, a pimpled boy
always one laughing
watching, pressing his gun
to my head. My god, the smell
of them, their swollen members
blades between my legs.
They numbered me SWS-87
and I survived to tell.

They took me to my school
where I had learned my numbers
how to read and write and play
and say my name, and locked me
with the others—girls, cousins
lamenting mothers, Auntie B.
We were ashamed. At first
we hardly spoke, the bitter weeping
of our dreams provoked the drunken
guard. We soon became their raping pool
they used us every day. For me
it happened at night. They took
me to the gymnasium, and hell
went on, and on, and on
eight months or more.

But I had learned my numbers
how to read and write and play
and say my name. I am SWS-87
and I survived to tell.
One night they set me naked
on a table like a jug of wine
commanded me to dance
for Montenegrans officers.
One purchased me for
two week’s pay and took me
to his private hole to have his way.

When terror finally bled

into the chambers of the law
our woman stories were
“too embarrassing to consider
in court.” For our woman shame,
our guilt many, even sisters
want to silence us. “There are things
outsiders should never know,” they say.
I tremble speaking out. My daily fear
reprisals on my friends and family—
the ones who have not disappeared.
But I am now fifteen. I have
learned my numbers
how to read and write and play
and say my name. I am SWS-87
I am not ashamed.
For more on Martha’s poetry, see *Resources*.

Recommended Books

I’ll offer two since the first was recommended the last time we supported a WfWI project. Written by WfWI’s founder Zainab Salbi, it pays tribute to women survivors of war in Rwanda, DRC, Bosnia, Afghanistan, and elsewhere. The stories of women, along with dozens of compelling photographs, more than make the case for thinking of war not as “a computer-generated missile striking a digital map” but in terms of its human costs. I was inspired by the book to compose a litany for chapter meetings the last time we supported WfWI (in Rwanda, Oct. 06). This time, I’ll be including material from Bosnian women in *Voices*, but you’ll want to see their photographs and read more about them in the book. Zainab Salbi, *The Other Side of War: Women’s Stories of Survival and Hope* (National Geographic, 2006).

I’m breaking my own rule about only recommending works by women; but I expect that many of us consider this author an “honorary woman” because Saturday mornings on NPR’s Weekend Edition Scott Simon gives us the sense that he listens and understands. As a war correspondent in Bosnia, he listened to a lot of people—some of them teenage girls growing up in that horror. He remembers them in his novel about the costs of war to tender young hearts, *Pretty Birds* (Random House, 2005).

Socially Responsible Shopping

Igbala Gabela is 40 years old and lives with her husband and two children in Gorazde. During the war, she and her family lived in eight different places and lost many of their belongings. Her husband was diagnosed with tuberculosis and Igbala was forced to support her family by sewing. Igbala was immediately interested when her friend told her about Women for Women International's program. She enrolled in the Bosnian Crochet course, which is a very complicated form of crochet and only the most talented are able to do well. Igbala used the skills she learned in the crochet course to add intricate and traditional designs to her sewing projects, which helped her attract more clients. She used the confidence she gained to apply for a microcredit loan and to expand her business

to support her family. Igbala loves the friendships she made through Women for Women International and still helps other women improve their sewing and embroidery skills.

Bosnian women are known for their traditional weaving (such as *kilim*) and needlework. Colorful scarves and hats—just in time for cold weather—and a few other items made by Bosnian women in programs supported by WfWI and other non-profits are available through the following sources:

--For you fashionistas, Kate Spade has designed two cleverly chic winter hats that are made by women in WfWI programs in Bosnia: <http://www.katespade.com/sm-thought-bubble-hat--pi-2779330.html> .

--Less expensive but equally colorful and warm knitted items are available from <http://www.globalgoodspartners.org/154>, <http://www.globalgirlfriend.com/>, and <http://www.womenforwomen.org/bazaar.htm>

--To help Bosnian refugee women living in Connecticut, romance novelist Kate Rothwell has dedicated a website to their handicrafts made and distributed through a non-profit in that state. Kate was thrilled to learn of DFW when I contacted and says the women are knitting, weaving, and crocheting-away. You can see examples and order through <http://www.katerothwell.com/crafts.html> .

Announcements: More WfWI info and calling all cooks...

1. WfWI has a very good introductory video that you can access at <http://www.womenforwomen.org/watch.htm> . Due to the small format, it isn't ideal for viewing in chapter meetings, so we encourage you to view it prior to your meeting.
2. We're all about making connections—further and deeper. WfWI offers a particularly compelling way for DFW members to continue to connect with the women it serves. For \$27 a month for one year, an individual (or perhaps a DFW chapter) can sponsor a woman in one of WfWI's training programs, correspond with her, get to know her. We won't mind if \$27 of your monthly DFW contribution goes toward a sponsorship, but please let us know and share your experience with us as it develops. And please let WfWI know your DFW connection. For more info, see the downloadable brochure on our program schedule page (with the other November materials).
3. We'll be doing something a bit different next month as we focus on a cause rather than a single country—saving the lives of new mothers through the work of Venture Strategies. I'll cook up something appropriate in *MC* – and appropriate for the season. And, I'm asking you all to do a little cooking up too. Would you please send me your favorite, tried and true (or maybe new but at least tried and successful) holiday-appropriate/DFW potluck-appropriate recipes? These might be family heirlooms, mom's specialties, things you just ran across and loved, your chapter's greatest hits, or ethnic dishes that remind you of some of the work we've supported this year. I won't be recipe-testing these, so make sure you don't leave out anything important. Send them to me by Nov. 20 at latest in an email (body of email or Word/WP attachment with your name, chapter, and contact info): corrienorman1959@yahoo.com
3. I love researching recipes and cooking, but the menus for DFW can be quite time consuming and a little tough on my household budget. (DFW does not have a budget for educational expenses/food). So I'd love to get more people in on the fun and have a little help. If you are an experienced cook, good at following recipes and/or writing down how

you improve them, and are willing to test some dishes please let me know. I'll be happy to get you going on January's menu. Ideas also welcome.

Dining with Women: Let's All Eat Cake

Before the spread of nationalism and the war, Bosniaks, Serbs, Croatians, and others lived together quite peaceably for the most part and no where is this better symbolized than in Bosnian food. Influences from Muslim and Orthodox Christian traditions, the days of Ottoman and Austrian rule, and neighbors all around make it a very eclectic and interesting cuisine. I've chosen dishes representing both Middle Eastern and eastern European styles of cooking employed by almost every Bosnian no matter her ethnic mix. I encourage you especially to indulge in some really good cakes this time, use one of the recipes below, make a favorite of yours, or buy one from a *really good* bakery. Bosnians still enjoy cake and coffee at mid-afternoon. A celebration just isn't a celebration without cake there and life just isn't quite life. Memoirs and letters from the war period and siege of Sarajevo often mention cake as a symbol of hope and affirmation of community, family, and humanity in the midst of war. Floridian Linda Beekman was a humanitarian aid volunteer during the Siege of Sarajevo. The importance of cake hit home with her too. Here's how she describes it in her memoir entitled *War Cake*:

In war, time often seems to stand still, but it doesn't. People fall in love, marry, have babies, observe anniversaries and celebrate birthdays... As in many parts of the world, the ritual of celebration, whatever the occasion, is not complete without a cake. In Bosnia during the war, it is called ratni kolac (pronounced kolach) or war cake.

When I go to Italy to buy supplies, I always bring back cinnamon and vanilla, almond, and lemon flavoring for women in the neighborhood. Some might think it a frivolous gift, but the tiny bottles are inexpensive and take no space in my pocket. The small gifts return the women to a tiny part of their pre-war reality of creating desserts with real flavoring. Women tell me sweets are a big part of Sarajevan culture. It is only after the war that I understand how important! When the stores reopen, I discover dessert shops scattered all over town, especially on every block of the main pedestrian cobblestone street of the old town.

Cake or kolac as it is called in Bosnian, tops the list of favorite desserts, especially ones made at home. A good host would not be caught without kolac to offer unexpected guests. Bosnians pride themselves on their hospitality, especially hospitality given to strangers.... Although cake improvised in war circumstances usually can outwardly be recognized as cake, many times it's difficult to identify the ingredients. Certainly, it won't contain eggs, and maybe not milk, flour, or flavoring. There is no shortage of flour. I arrived with several tons of it on my first flight into the city, but with the absence of electricity and gas, flour is useless unless you want to make dried pasta for a future meal or glue for a child's art project.

Bread or cracker crumbs top the list as the best flour substitute for war cake. Ana calls it "bread cake." She mixes a couple of cups of dried breadcrumbs with a little oil, sugar or artificial sweetener, a little powdered milk or water, and presses it into a cake pan. Before serving, she spreads the top with the cream mixture made from powdered milk and yeast.

On the birthday of a friend's four-year-old daughter, a teenage boy, brings a gift - the cake. The children and the adults are surprised to find raisins in the cake, but the teenager

says no, they are not real raisins; they are artificial: “My mother made them from soy flour and concentrated juice.” Everyone is amazed at how much the chewy dark brown pieces resemble raisins. Later he admits it is a joke. The raisins are real. Then someone comments, “It is sad, even tragic; we have gone without for so long we do not recognize reality even when we are eating it.”

During my visits to Sarajevo in the siege, various hosts serve me war cake. Always, they place two pieces on the plate - I think a symbol of abundance and of generosity. If only one piece is available, they cut it in half to make two. I never question the custom or the ingredients. The taste is not important. What is important is the woman’s hospitality and her effort to maintain a sense of normalcy and tradition for herself and for her family amid the chaos of war.

Celebrating milestones such as birthdays, weddings, and anniversaries affirms our existence and help us define who we are. For anyone caught in war - guest or host - kolac, however prepared, brings a sense of sanity and hope for the future.

I’ve included two *kolac* recipes from the former Yugoslavia here. One reflects the Greek/Middle Eastern side of the cuisine while the other is more Euro-Russian. For that one, I offer a variation that honors one of the women WfWI has helped. Here’s her story:

Milka Kusmuk is 47 years old and has been a microcredit client for three years. She lives with her husband, her three children and her parents outside of Sarajevo on a small farm. When Milka received her first microcredit loan, she began growing raspberries on her farm to supplement the income her family was earning from selling dairy products and vegetables. Now her family's main source of income is from her raspberry business. Over the past three years, Milka's business has grown rapidly and now she wants to expand her business to grow blackberries as well. In addition to earning enough income to support her family of 7, she also employs local citizens during the busy season. Milka has a contract with the largest bakery in Bosnia, and has become Chief of her microcredit center and advises other women who want to start a business.

Other women in WfWI programs grow potatoes and mushrooms, own small dairies, or make jams for export. Our menu uses these ingredients; remember them as you cook and eat the dishes. (Their photos and stories are in *The Other Side of War*. For more info on *War Cake*, see the resource section or www.warcake.com. And if you’d like to see the recipes for coping that Bosnian women developed during the war check out the war cookbook at <http://www.friends-partners.org/bosnia/surcook.html> .

MENU

Phyllo Cheese Tartlets

Bosnian Meatballs (*Cevapcici*) with pita, yogurt sauce, and red pepper relish (*Ajvar*)

Stuff Cabbage Rolls

Shredded Duck in Sour Cherry Sauce

Dorothy’s Potatoes

Side Dish or Veggie Main of Creamy Eggplant and Mushroom

Chocolate *Kolac a la Milka* or *Varazdin*

Coconut Walnut *Kolac* with Carmel Icing

RECIPES

Phyllo Cheese Tartlets

Makes 3 dozen or more.

This is a quick and delicious variation on the phyllo spirals that Bosnian women might make using cheeses unavailable to us—this mix is a reasonable and tasty substitute.

3-4 dozen phyllo tart shells (in freezer section—don't thaw before using)

1/2 lb feta cheese (preferably Bulgarian), finely chopped

1 c whole milk cottage cheese

1/2 c freshly grated parmesan cheese

1/4 c flour

2 large eggs, beaten lightly

1/2 t sweet or sharp paprika, plus more for sprinkling on top

Preheat oven to 400. Mix cheeses, eggs, flour, and 1/2t paprika together. Fill the tart shells (not quite full) with the mixture and place on a baking sheet. Sprinkle with more paprika.

Bake until slightly puffed and golden, 10-15 minutes. Serve hot or room temp.

Cevapcici, Pita, Yogurt Sauce, and Ajvar

adapted fr. <http://www.marga.org/food/int/bosnia/cevap.html>

You know you're Bosnian when you have pita with *cevapcici* four nights a week and cabbage rolls the other three, according to a Bosnian website I ran across. They may represent different ends of the Bosnian food spectrum but both are great uses for ground meat stuffing. Buy your *pita* from a good source or use the Afghan Nan recipe that appeared in *MC April 07* (that edition also has a suitable *Yogurt Sauce* recipe—you can omit the mint from it for this menu). Bosnian pita tends to be “puffier” than the pita usually found here—more like that delicious Nan. *Ajvar*, Sweet Red Pepper relish with eggplant, is as ubiquitous in Bosnia as ketchup or salsa here. I used the recipe from an NPR story @ <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=6430271>. Amounts can vary to taste; I chopped the garlic and cooked it in the olive oil with a few hot red pepper flakes before blending everything in the food processor. It keeps very well in the fridge, but bring to room temp to serve.

1 T butter

1/2 yellow onion, finely chopped

1 garlic clove, finely chopped

2 lbs of ground meat: lamb, beef, or a combo. You can also mix in ground pork.

1 egg white, lightly beaten

1T sweet Hungarian paprika (you can use part hot paprika if you like)

2 t salt

1 large thinly sliced onion for serving

1. Heat the butter in a small frying pan and when it starts to foam add the onions and garlic. Fry, stirring occasionally, until soft, around 6 to 8 minutes. Allow to cool.
2. Mix the meat, egg and spices in a bowl. Add the onion and garlic mixture. Mix well. Shape into small cylinders, approximately 1" x 2" and arrange in a plate. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate at least an hour and up to one day (make sure your ground beef

is very fresh if you intend to store it that long), to let the flavors settle and the mixture become firm.

3. Traditionally, *cevapcici* would be placed on skewers about 1/4" apart from each other and grilled. But you can broil them on an oiled broil pan (skewered or not), turning for even cooking. Or pan fry over medium heat until done.

4. Arrange the raw sliced onion (cook the sliced onion in a little olive oil if you like or it seems strong) on a platter and place the *cevapcici* on top. Serve with pita bread, yogurt sauce, and *ajvar*.

Stuffed Cabbage Rolls

adapted fr. Trish Davies, The Balkan Cookbook (Southwater/Anness 2000)

Culinary historians and ethnic cooks debate the origin of cabbage rolls—they may have originated in the mid-East rather than eastern Europe. No matter here—in Bosnia there are both traditions and probably as many recipes as cooks. Often minced smoked beef is used in the filling in Bosnia, probably reflecting Muslim influence. This version is homey and so good and uses pork, but if you can find good smoked beef brisket, feel free to try it instead. You can make the filling ahead, but add the egg to it just before making the rolls. Makes 10-15 rolls.

1 white cabbage, cored

1 c long-grain rice

6 T butter

1 medium onion, finely chopped

11 oz mixture of ground pork, veal or beef, and lamb

2 oz bacon, diced

1 beaten egg

1 T chopped parsley

1 T chopped thyme leaves (opt)

2 minced garlic cloves

6 T water

thyme leaves or parsley to garnish

14 oz can tomato sauce (I use Muir Glenn and cook it with a little olive oil and garlic)

salt and pepper

1. Preheat oven to 375. Place cabbage in a large pot, cover with water and add salt. Cook for 30 minutes. Drain, cool, and separate leaves. (Leaves may begin to separate in cooking, you can remove and drain them as they separate if you like.)

2. Boil the rice in a generous pot of salted water (as you would pasta) until it is tender (about 15 minutes, but check at 10). Drain well and place in a large bowl.

3. Cook the onion and garlic in the butter for a couple of minutes until the onion is soft, add the meat and bacon and cook until browned. Pour this into the bowl with the rice. Add the parsley and the egg and mix well.

4. Oil a 9x13 or slightly smaller casserole dish. Lay out the cabbage leaves, removing any thick ribs with a knife. Divide the meat mixture among the leaves. Roll them as best you can (doesn't have to be perfect) and place them in the casserole dish, seam down, tightly together. Sprinkle the water over the rolls, cover and cook in the oven 20 minutes or so.

5.Heat the sauce and pour it over the rolls, making sure to get some down between the rolls and pan edges. Put back in the oven another ten minutes. Garnish with parsley or thyme. Can be made ahead—quite good reheated.

Duck Sauce with Dried Cherries

adapted fr. Jeff Smith, The Frugal Gourmet on Our Immigrant Ancestors (William Morrow, 1990)

Very Euro, very good. It's easy to serve since the duck is shredded into the sauce. Most of us will have to buy a whole frozen duck. Allow it to thaw a day or two in the fridge and cut it into four pieces (save the backbone for stock). Since you won't be serving the pieces whole, don't worry about cutting it perfectly. Plan to make most of the dish ahead—the flavor gets even better. Serves 8 at least on a buffet over Dorothy's Potatoes or egg noodles. If you can't find the cherries, use dried cranberries or apricots cut in pieces.

3-4 lbs duck pieces (leg, thigh, breast)

1/3 c olive oil

2 c onion, peeled and thinly sliced

4 cloves garlic, chopped

1/4 c parsley, chopped

1/4 c celery leaves, parsel or lovage, chopped, or minced celery stalk

3 c chopped canned tomatoes (drain off most of the juice)

1/4 c dry marsala

1 1/2 c dry red wine

2 whole cloves

2 bay leaves

1/4 t freshly grated nutmeg

2 sprigs fresh rosemary (or 2t dried)

2 t Sweet Hungarian Paprika

1c pitted, dried sour cherries

1/2 c brandy

salt and pepper

1. In a large heavy ovenproof pot (enameled cast iron casserole works well), heat the olive oil on medium-high. Salt the duck pieces and brown them well in the olive oil. You may need to do this in batches—don't overcrowd the pan. Remove the pieces as they brown. You're also melting off the plentiful fat a duck usually has. Drain off all but 1/4c-1/3c of the fat from the pot (save it for future cooking if you like).

2. Add the onions and garlic to the pot and cook until tender but not brown. Add the parsley and celery leaves and cook a couple of minutes longer. Add the tomatoes and simmer 15-20 minutes. Meanwhile, preheat oven to 375.

3. Add the marsala, wine, and seasonings. Bring to a boil. Return the duck pieces to the pot, turning them in the sauce a couple of times. Cover the pot and place it in the oven. Cook until the duck meat is falling off the bones, about two hours; stir a few times during the cooking. In the meantime, warm the brandy and soak the cherries in it.

4. When the duck is done, take it out of the pot, leaving behind the sauce. Let the duck cool just enough so that you can remove the meat from the bones. Duck has a lot of little bones, so be thorough. Return the meat to the pot. You can cool and then store the sauce in the fridge at this point for a day or two—it even improves. When you want to finish the dish, skim off any solidified fat on top of the dish. Bring the sauce back to a simmer.

Add the cherries and brandy to the pot. Simmer uncovered until the sauce reduces to a nice thickness, about 15 minutes.

Dorothy's Potatoes

Homemade potato-fresh cheese dumplings are a culinary art form of the region. But for our buffets, my mother-in-law Dorothy's potatoes make a great substitute. This is perfect for when you want mashed potatoes but need to do them for a crowd and ahead of time.

Serves 12

3lbs. Russet potatoes, peeled and chunked

Salt

1 stick unsalted butter in pieces, room temp (divide in 2T and 6T portions)

8 oz. Cream cheese at room temp.

1/2 c sour cream, room temp.

2/3 c milk, warmed

more salt and pepper to taste, paprika to garnish (opt.)

1. Boil the potatoes until tender in salted water. Drain well. Cook a minute over the burner to dry further, shaking so they don't stick.
2. Remove from the heat. Using a mixer, break them up on low. Gradually add 6t butter and beat until it's absorbed. Gradually add cheese, sour cream, and finally the milk—a little at a time (it may not take all the milk). Season.
3. Butter a 9x13 baking dish or large casserole and scrape in the potatoes. Smooth and then twirl little peaks on the top that will brown in the oven. You can keep them in the fridge, covered, for two days like this.
4. Preheat oven to 350. Scatter remaining butter in small pieces over the dish and dust with paprika if you want. Bake 1 hour to heat through and slightly brown top. (It will only take a 1/2 hour if you haven't chilled them.)

Creamy Eggplant and Mushrooms

adapted fr. Trish Davies, The Balkan Cookbook (Southwater/Anness 2000)

They do love their dairy products in Bosnia. This rich, wonderful dish is a great side for the duck or a good veggie main course over the potatoes. I've included a meat option that turns it into a nice variation of chicken paprikash. Serves 6; can be doubled or tripled with an adequate pan.

2 medium-large eggplants, peeled and sliced into sticks 3" long x 1/4" wide

1/2 c butter

3 c sliced button mushrooms

1/2 c chicken stock

1 c heavy cream, or part sour cream/heavy cream

4 T chopped parsley

salt and pepper

1. Put the eggplant sticks on a large kitchen towel and sprinkle liberally with salt. Roll up the towel, put it in a colander, and set something heavy on it (a large can will do). Allow to sit for half an hour and then squeeze out the moisture the eggplants exude.

2. Heat the butter in a large frying pan (non-stick is good for this). Add the eggplant and mushrooms. Cook about ten minutes until the veggies are softened and the mushrooms have given up most of their liquid. Add the stock and cook 10 minutes more, stirring occasionally. Season with salt and pepper. You can also add some sweet Hungarian paprika if you like. (You can make the dish ahead up until this point. Reheat and then proceed.) Add the cream and but don't boil. When the cream is incorporated and slightly thickened, add 3T parsley and stir well. If too thick, add more cream or stock. If too thin, cook a little longer. Garnish with the remaining parsley.

3. To make this a meat main dish: Sauté 1 lb boneless chicken breast pieces in the butter plus 1T vegetable oil. When no longer pink, remove. continue with the dish, adding back the chicken with the stock. If the dish doesn't have enough sauce, add more stock or cream. You'll definitely want to add some sweet Hungarian paprika (1-2t) in the cooking here.

Caramel and Coconut Cake

adapted fr. Paula Wolfert, Paula Wolfert's World of Food (Harper and Row, 1988)

Among my favorite food writers is the indefatigable Paula Wolfert, whose is a poet and an anthropologist of traditional cuisines. Make that an epic poet—her recipes tend to the long side, but are always worth it. This is an easier one, and I'm suggesting a way to make it even easier if you want. Ms. Wolfert found this cake in the southwestern part of the former Yugoslavia, near Greece, and the influence of Greek and Middle Eastern sweets shows in the use of nuts, unsweetened dried coconut (found in health-oriented or middle eastern stores if not your grocers) and a soaking syrup. It's a cross between a coffee cake, layer cake, and baklava (but less sweet). The caramel frosting is great, but you can omit it and have a perfectly delightful coffee cake not unlike the ones many Bosnians keep on hand for guests. If you proceed to the caramel stage, have confidence. The trick is to get it on the cake and spread it fast, but expect to have to keep pushing it back up the sides until it cools. This won't take long. You won't get a perfectly smooth icing; the toasted coconut can cover any flaws. Whichever variation you choose, you need to make the cake a day ahead.

For the cake:

1 1/2c flour, sifted

1 1/3 c (5 1/2oz) walnuts, finely ground (food processor works best for this; note that you'll need another 1/2 c nuts—coarsely chopped—see below)

2/3 c (2oz.) unsweetened shredded coconut

1 t baking powder

1/2 t cinnamon

14/ c unsalted butter, softened

1/2 c sugar

4 eggs, separated

1/2 c coarsely chopped walnuts

For the soaking syrup:

3/4 c sugar

2/3 c water

1 T fresh lemon juice

For the caramel frosting:

1 1/2c (packed) light brown sugar

1/4 c whole milk
pinch salt
6 T butter at room temp
1/2 t vanilla
1 c sweetened flaked coconut, toasted until most flakes are golden (in a dry skillet or the oven) and cooled

1. Preheat the oven to 325. Line the bottom of a 9x5x2 1/2" loaf pan with parchment or wax paper and grease the sides well with butter or vegetable oil. Beat the egg whites until stiff and set aside. Combine the first five dry ingredients in a bowl and set aside.
2. Beat the butter until creamy and gradually add the 1/2 c sugar. Beat until very pale yellow and fluffy. Add the yolks one at a time and mix well. Fold the whites into the batter. Fold in the dry ingredients with spatula just until blended. Put the batter in the pan, smooth, and top with the chopped nuts. Bake until a skewer inserted in the center of the cake comes out clean, 50 minutes to 1 hour. Cool the cake for 1 hour in the pan.
3. Put the syrup ingredients in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil and then simmer 5 minutes. Pierce the cake in a dozen or so places with a skewer and pour the hot syrup over the cake. Cover with foil and allow it to sit overnight at room temp. You can stop here, unmolding the cake the next day and placing it on a platter nut-side up.
4. If you want to frost the cake (recommended, especially for dessert after dinner), the next day, turn out the cake and cut it into 2 even horizontal layers. Set the top layer on the serving plate, nut-side up. Invert the bottom layer over it and press lightly (so that the bottom of the cake is now the top and walnuts form a sort of light "filling").
5. For the frosting: Heat the brown sugar, milk, and salt over medium heat, stirring until the sugar dissolves. Increase the heat to high and boil until the mixture registers 235 on a kitchen thermometer (this is the "soft ball stage"—it will be slightly thick but don't overcook it—it will thicken as it cools). Remove the pan from the heat, stir in the butter and allow the frosting to cool 10 minutes. Then add the vanilla and stir again. Beat the frosting with a mixer until light and creamy and just beginning to hold its shape, about 5 minutes. Working pretty quickly, frost the top and sides of the cakes—see head note. When the frosting is pretty well set (not sliding down the sides anymore), pat the coconut onto the tops and sides, using it to cover any places where frosting is lacking or rough. You'll have a "fringe" of coconut at the bottom of the cake—it's decorative. Serve at room temp. Makes 10 plus servings—lucky ones get the ends with extra caramel!

Chocolate Torte a la Milka or Varazdin

adapted fr. Trish Davies, The Balkan Cookbook (Southwater/Anness 2000)

Torte Varazdin is one of those classic euro-cakes with a luscious chestnut cream filling. I, however, could not find chestnut puree in Greenville. But I had just been raspberry picking and thought of Milka's story. So, I offer a variation in honor of her and of Lucija, another WfWI grantee who makes fruit jams and *ajvar*.

For the Cake:

1 c butter, room temp
1c (generous) sugar
7 oz semi or bittersweet chocolate, melted
6 eggs, separated

1 c (generous) flour, sifted

For the Filling :

1 c heavy cream, lightly whipped

1 3/4 c canned chestnut puree

1/2 c sugar

OR

Raspberry Preserves

For the Frosting:

10 T unsalted butter, room temp

1 1/4 c confectioner's sugar, sifted

4 oz. semi or bittersweet chocolate, melted and slightly cooled

candied chestnut pieces, chocolate curls, or fresh raspberries to garnish

1. Preheat oven to 350. Line the bottom of a 9" springform pan and grease the bottom and sides with butter. (Alternately, use 2 9" cake pans, pouring half the batter in each and adjusting cooking time.)
2. Beat egg whites until stiff.
3. Cream the butter and sugar until pale and fluffy. Stir in chocolate and egg yolks. Fold in the flour. Add a dollop of the beaten whites to the batter and stir to lighten it. Then carefully fold in the rest of the egg whites. Spoon batter into the pan. Bake 45-50 minutes until a skewer inserted in the center of the cake comes out clean. Cool in pan on a rack. When cold, unmold and slice in half horizontally to make 2 layers.
4. Either combine the ingredients for the chestnut filling or warm the raspberry jam. Place either filling between the cake layers (How much jam? More than a swipe but not so much that it oozes out when the layers are pressed together).
5. Cream the butter and sugar for the topping and add the chocolate. Mix well. Spread over the top and sides of the cake. Garnish as you wish (see suggestions above).

For other Bosnian recipes, see the following websites:

http://www.superluminal.com/cookbook/index_flat_recipes.html

http://findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_m0FDE/is_1_23/ai_n6023685/pg_3

Voices: Hearing Hope in Rebuilding, Recovery, and Reconciliation

When we think of war, we do not think of women. Because the work of survival, of restoration, is not glamorous work. Like most women's work, it is undervalued, underpaid, and impossible. After war, men are often shattered, unable to function. Women not only work, but they create peace networks, find ways to bring about healing. They teach in home schools when the school buildings are destroyed. They build gardens in the middle of abandoned railroad tracks. They pick up the pieces, although they usually haven't fired a gun.

Eve Ensler, playwright, *Necessary Targets*

In Eve Ensler's play, *Necessary Targets*, American women volunteers in Bosnia hear the stories of women who have survived the war. Horrified by their testimonies of rape, death, and abandonment and inspired by their perseverance and courage, the Americans who

came to “help” are themselves transformed. Inspiring us here are the real voices and stories of Bosnian women. Names are given for women involved with WfWI. You can see their photos in *The Other Side of War*. Anonymous quotations come from interviews conducted by former U.S. Ambassador and founder of Women Waging Peace, Swanee Hunt, that appear in *This Was Not Our War: Bosnian Women Reclaiming the Peace*.

Safeta

She remembers a time when she was young and in love. When she became pregnant, she remembers thinking her life was “perfect.” Then Serbian forces attacked Bosniak settlements. Her husband was taken to a concentration camp. She was raped repeatedly. They survived, but continue to struggle. Safeta picks wild berries to sell and cleans homes. Her husband works seasonally. But her home exudes warmth and order. “I am a happy and cheerful woman because I have my family alive and well.... How could I possibly show my children the right path in life if I let life break me down.” When she hears the voices of men outside, however, she goes to her window. “In case it is one of them, I want them to see that I am still alive, that they did not kill me, neither body nor soul.”

Nothing is too difficult for us.... We are women and women can do anything they think of.

Senija

“We collect scrap metal lying along the road, old structures destroyed in the war, and waste that people throw out on the street. I pick up metal all day long. I pound cans with a hammer... but I am not ashamed. I manage to make a hot lunch for my children and provide a clean and tidy home.”

I died millions of times during those years. Every one of us did. I was humiliated as a human being. But ... we have this gray brain matter, and all our abilities are there. We have to share them with others, out of gratitude.

Dedovica

“I am 42 years old and I am displaced from Foca. I have two children. My husband was killed in the war and I was left alone with my children. I heard about Women for Women International from my friends. I decided to join and do something with my life. Joining the organization was a recovery for me. With the support of Women for Women International and other sisters in the program, I realize I am in the right place. I feel like a new woman. I started to think differently, positively, to talk more and establish more contacts with people. I chose to learn to weave. It was a skill I had practiced in the past. I have started to weave small carpets on the weaving loom I borrowed from Women for Women International. Very soon I hope to sell the carpets and earn a significant amount of money. Very, very soon I hope to be completely recovered, to not have any doubt to go on, and to believe in myself as I get my life in my own hands.”

Ethnic backgrounds aren't important to us.... We understand each other very well. Why wouldn't we? We're all women.

We have bitter in our mouth, but we know we have to go on because of our children.

Zejneba

“In one night entire families from my village – fathers, sons, husbands, brothers – disappeared. Women were dying of sadness and helplessness,” recalls Zejneba, a 42 year-old mother of two. Her husband’s mother was murdered in front of her eyes. She and her husband took their children and ran. When the children could no longer walk, they carried them. Zejneba has been a microcredit client since 1997, when the program was introduced in Bosnia. With a loan from Women for Women International, Zejneba bought a cow, then land and ultimately established a dairy products business that supports the whole family. “When I finish my work late at night, I thank God for giving me an opportunity to survive the horror and for helping me find women who give me self-confidence,” she says.

At some point women just have to take over situations and make decisions. We’ve got to take responsibility.

Women should change the rules so men take on more home responsibility. They’d have less time for violence, and women would have time to create peace initiatives.

I wish I could sit down by myself and tell my story—from beginning to end. I just haven’t had time.

I wish you all the luck, as everyone needs her. Best regards from me and my family. Stay well!

Resources

- Mark Mazower, *The Balkans: A Short History* (Chronicle Books, 2000).
Zlata Filipovic, *Zlata’s Diary: A Child’s Life in Sarajevo* (Viking, 1994)
Anna Cataldi, *Letters from Sarajevo: Voices of a Besieged City* (Element, 1993)
Swanee Hunt, *This Was Not Our War: Bosnian Women Reclaiming the Peace* (Duke University Press, 2004)
Scott Simon, *Pretty Birds* (Random House 2005)
Zainab Salbi, *The Other Side of War* (National Geographic, 2006)
Vladimir Mirodan *The Balkan Cookbook* (Pelican, 1987)
Jeff Smith, *The Frugal Gourmet on Our Immigrant Ancestors* (William Morrow, 1990)
Paula Wolfert, *Paula Wolfert’s World of Food* (Harper and Row, 1988)
Trish Davies, *The Balkan Cookbook* (Southwater/Anness 2000)
Linda Beekman, *War Cake* (2001)
<http://www.thebostonphoenix.com/boston/arts/theater/documents/02046236.htm>
<http://ipsnews.net/news.asp?idnews=32406>
<http://www.csmonitor.com/2005/0727/p15s01-lign.html>
<http://www.barnsdle.demon.co.uk/bosnia/rapes.html>
<http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/2868.htm>
<http://www.friends-partners.org/bosnia/surintro.html>
<http://www.everyculture.com/Bo-Co/Bosnia-and-Herzegovina.html>
<http://www.answers.com/topic/ethnic-cuisines>
<http://www.friendsofbosnia.org/>

<http://samaha.wordpress.com/2007/10/04/you-know-youre-bosnian-when/>
<http://www.chowhound.com/topics/395503>
<http://www.ruralpovertyportal.org/english/regions/europe/bih/index.htm>
<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9A04E4DB133CF934A35753C1A9619C8B63>

For information on obtaining the new book of poetry by Martha Adams, *What Your Heart Needs to Know*, contact Martha at moadams@bellsouth.net .

For Linda Beekman's book, *War Cake*, see <http://www.warcake.com/>, contact Linda at lfbeekman@juno.com or send a \$10 check to her, PO Box 17202, Clearwater FL 33762.

Note: Printable versions of *FYI*, *Voices*, and *War Cake* follow in the Appendix beginning on page 18. Please scroll down.

Appendix: FYI and Voices

These take us from horror to hope and were designed to be read in tandem, with a moment of silent remembering in between. The excerpt from *War Cake* follows.

FYI: The Horror and Necessity of Remembering Rape as a Weapon

“They were victims twice—when they were raped and when they were forgotten,” says one human rights activist working in Bosnia. Rape has been a weapon of war for as long as humans have done battle. But calling it a weapon, acknowledging the brutality of it, and counting its victims—these have been rare. Helping victims recover even rarer. As Marsha put it in her blog a few weeks ago while writing about a *New York Times* report on the ongoing rape campaign in Congo, “This isn’t for the faint of heart, but we need to know. Women must know. We all must know.”

Thousands of women—estimates vary from 20,000 to 50,000—were sexually assaulted and tortured during the war. Rape was a weapon of terror and ethnic cleansing, designed to humiliate and destroy ethnic minorities. It was also done, as a doctor treating victims in Congo puts it, “to destroy women.” As one Bosnian woman said, “Men feared being killed; women feared being caught alive.” Women were raped in public and in their homes, often before being expelled and seeing their men or entire villages murdered. The Serbian military organized 16 rape camps where women and girls were kept as slaves and raped on a daily basis for months. If a woman became pregnant, she was held until late pregnancy and then put out.

For many, rape came with the loss of family, home, and community to other weapons of war. For others, it brought abandonment by spouses and shunning by community. The stigma of rape is so brutal in itself that many victims keep silent and society looks away. Many of the children of rape have been locked away in orphanages and forgotten. Others face a life with a shameful label. There is not enough help for victims who now suffer from poverty, unemployment or the only alternative—further exploitation in the growing sex traffic market. Not enough help in the form of recovery counseling and healthcare.

And justice? Because enough brave Bosnian women have come forward, putting themselves and their families at further risk, rape was defined for only the second time in world history (Rwanda was the first) as a crime against humanity by an international tribunal. Very few perpetrators, however, have been prosecuted or jailed. As time goes on, society forgets even to overlook, but victims cannot forget. Nor should we.

Martha Adams heard about the rape camps on the radio in her Hendersonville, NC home. No doubt many heard that same report in horror and quickly turned away. But Martha is a poet and a grandmother, and she particularly could not forget the testimony of fifteen-year old “Rachel.” She remembered by doing what grandmothers, mothers, sisters, and aunts have done for centuries when their daughters have been victimized. She cried out a mournful yet defiant song giving wing to Rachel’s words in poetry.

The Voice of Rachel
SWS-87

*A voice is heard in Ramah lamenting
and weeping bitterly; it is Rachel
weeping for her children, refusing to
be comforted for her children, because
they are no more. Jer. 31:15; Mt. 2:18*

*Quotes and story from an interview
with SWS-87 on NPR, 1996*

I am SWS-87, eleven birthday candles blown
in a place I didn't know was heaven
a place I just called home, Ledici
Ledici, Bosnia—it sang my tongue—
four birthdays, no candles
in a place I now call hell.

It was April 1992 they came
spring rain like wool on the mountain.
They took me to a filthy cell
for “interrogation purposes.”

Accused me of lying,
my girl body quivered like a sapling tree.
They stripped me bare
and climbed me there
five rough men, a pimpled boy
always one laughing
watching, pressing his gun
to my head. My god, the smell
of them, their swollen members
blades between my legs.
They numbered me SWS-87
and I survived to tell.

They took me to my school
where I had learned my numbers
how to read and write and play
and say my name, and locked me
with the others—girls, cousins
lamenting mothers, Auntie B.
We were ashamed. At first
we hardly spoke, the bitter weeping
of our dreams provoked the drunken
guard. We soon became their raping pool
they used us every day. For me

it happened at night. They took
me to the gymnasium, and hell
went on, and on, and on
eight months or more.

But I had learned my numbers
how to read and write and play
and say my name. I am SWS-87
and I survived to tell.
One night they set me naked
on a table like a jug of wine
commanded me to dance
for Montenegrans officers.
One purchased me for
two week's pay and took me
to his private hole to have his way.

When terror finally bled
into the chambers of the law
our woman stories were
"too embarrassing to consider
in court." For our woman shame,
our guilt many, even sisters
want to silence us. "There are things
outsiders should never know," they say.
I tremble speaking out. My daily fear
reprisals on my friends and family—
the ones who have not disappeared.
But I am now fifteen. I have
learned my numbers
how to read and write and play
and say my name. I am SWS-87
I am not ashamed.

For more on Martha's poetry, see *Resources*. *Voices* follow on the next page.

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Nothing is too difficult for us.... We are women and women can do anything they think of.

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Women should change the rules so men take on more home responsibility. They'd have less time for violence, and women would have time to create peace initiatives.

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I wish you all the luck, as everyone needs her. Best regards from me and my family. Stay well!

Excerpt from Linda Beekman, War Cake:

In war, time often seems to stand still, but it doesn't. People fall in love, marry, have babies, observe anniversaries and celebrate birthdays... As in many parts of the world, the ritual of celebration, whatever the occasion, is not complete without a cake. In Bosnia during the war, it is called ratni kolac (pronounced kolach) or war cake.

When I go to Italy to buy supplies, I always bring back cinnamon and vanilla, almond, and lemon flavoring for women in the neighborhood. Some might think it a frivolous gift, but the tiny bottles are inexpensive and take no space in my pocket. The small gifts return the women to a tiny part of their pre-war reality of creating desserts with real flavoring. Women tell me sweets are a big part of Sarajevan culture. It is only after the war that I understand how important! When the stores reopen, I discover dessert shops scattered all over town, especially on every block of the main pedestrian cobblestone street of the old town.

Cake or kolac as it is called in Bosnian, tops the list of favorite desserts, especially ones made at home. A good host would not be caught without kolac to offer unexpected guests. Bosnians pride themselves on their hospitality, especially hospitality given to strangers.... Although cake improvised in war circumstances usually can outwardly be recognized as cake, many times it's difficult to identify the ingredients. Certainly, it won't contain eggs, and maybe not milk, flour, or flavoring. There is no shortage of flour. I arrived with several tons of it on my first flight into the city, but with the absence of electricity and gas, flour is useless unless you want to make dried pasta for a future meal or glue for a child's art project.

Bread or cracker crumbs top the list as the best flour substitute for war cake. Ana calls it "bread cake." She mixes a couple of cups of dried breadcrumbs with a little oil, sugar or artificial sweetener, a little powdered milk or water, and presses it into a cake pan. Before serving, she spreads the top with the cream mixture made from powdered milk and yeast.

On the birthday of a friend's four-year-old daughter, a teenage boy, brings a gift - the cake. The children and the adults are surprised to find raisins in the cake, but the teenager says no, they are not real raisins; they are artificial: "My mother made them from soy flour and concentrated juice." Everyone is amazed at how much the chewy dark brown pieces resemble raisins. Later he admits it is a joke. The raisins are real. Then someone comments, "It is sad, even tragic; we have gone without for so long we do not recognize reality even when we are eating it."

During my visits to Sarajevo in the siege, various hosts serve me war cake. Always, they place two pieces on the plate - I think a symbol of abundance and of generosity. If only one piece is available, they cut it in half to make two. I never question the custom or the ingredients. The taste is not important. What is important is the woman's hospitality and her effort to maintain a sense of normalcy and tradition for herself and for her family amid the chaos of war.

Celebrating milestones such as birthdays, weddings, and anniversaries affirms our existence and help us define who we are. For anyone caught in war - guest or host - kolac, however prepared, brings a sense of sanity and hope for the future.