

Pokeweed (*Phytolacca americana* L.)
by M. J. Harvey, illustrator.

APPETIZING TRADITIONS OF ARKANSAS

by Ruth Moore Malone, Editor:

Holiday Inn International Cook and Travel Book
(sixth edition)

Where to Eat in the Ozarks—How it's Cooked

Swiss Holiday Recipes (Ozark Wine Recipes)

Dogpatch Cook Book (Dogpatch USA)

A mess of "salit," dipper gourd hoe cake, ham and sweet 'taters, catfish and hushpuppies, wild duck with rice dressing, chicken and dumplings, buttermilk biscuits, sorghum gingerbread, hill country wedding cake and dozens of other recipes reflect the heritage of Arkansas. The people who live in each part of the state have shared recipes for this collection. Some were handed down by word of mouth from generation to generation. Others were culled from old files. Included are cherished secrets from the yellowed pages of treasured "receipt books."

Pioneer Arkansas Wedding Stack Cake

A favorite wedding cake in early days when sugar was not plentiful was the stack cake. Folks going to a wedding each took along a thin layer of sorghum cake to add to the stack making the bride's cake. A bride took great pride in the height of her cake for it meant she had many friends if her wedding cake was high. Some say the footed cake stand became popular because it would make a bride's cake appear to be tall even if she did not have enough friends to bring stack layers for a high cake. The bride's mother furnished applesauce to go between each layer. Sometimes frosting was used to cover the top.

Stack Cake

This recipe for stack cake layers is similar to a rich cookie dough

1½ cups sifted flour

½ teaspoon salt

¾ cup sugar (½ sorghum, ½ sugar)

½ cup shortening

2 heaping teaspoons milk

½ teaspoon baking powder

½ teaspoon soda

1 egg

1 teaspoon vanilla

Sift together flour, baking powder, salt, soda and sugar. Cut in shortening until mixture looks like coarse meal. Blend in egg, milk and vanilla. Divide dough into 3 parts. Roll out on floured board. Cut size of round cake pan or dinner plate. Place on ungreased cookie sheet, and bake at 375 degrees for 8 minutes.

Central Arkansas

wild duck and rice dressing	German potato salad
catfish and hushpuppies	German cole slaw
strawberry shortcake	sweet potato pudding
rice pudding	

Central Arkansas where rice fields attract thousands of wild ducks.

Roast Wild Duck

Prepare duck for roasting in the same way other fowl are prepared. Wash well and place in pan of cold salted water for 1 to 2 hours. Wash again and place in small roaster. Stuff cavity of duck with apple or carrot. Either of these will absorb some of the wild taste. Season with salt and pepper. Cover breast with butter or thin slices of salt pork or bacon. Add 1 cup of water. Cover roaster. Cook in 450 degree oven. For rare duck allow 20 to 30 minutes. For well done duck allow 45 minutes to 1 hour. Take off roaster top to brown duck during last few minutes. Make gravy after removing duck. Add table-spoon flour to part of pan drippings and blend. Brown a little then add 1/2 to 1 cup water and cook until thickened. Serve with Arkansas rice dressing and fresh apple or grape jelly.

Arkansas Rice Dressing

Heat 1 tablespoon cooking oil and 1 tablespoon flour over low flame until brown. Add 2 cups duck or chicken broth and cooked, chopped duck giblets. Add 1 chopped onion and 2 tablespoons chopped parsley. Simmer for 20 minutes, then mix with 4 cups cooked Arkansas rice. Heat well. Some of the dressing may be placed in duck cavity opening when top of roaster is removed to brown duck.

Catfish and Hushpuppies

The streams and rivers of Arkansas teem with catfish, goggle eye, trout, perch, and bass, so fish dinners are popular. Arkansas folk like to fry fish outdoors in big kettles of hot lard or cooking oil. Fresh caught fish are cleaned and washed well, then dried and dipped in cornmeal. (Dipping fish in flour is blasphemy!) Fish are dropped in hot oil and cooked until done. The cooking time depends on size and thickness of fish (or pieces of fish.)

Hush Puppies

2 cups cornmeal	1 egg, beaten
2 teaspoons baking powder	2 tablespoons grated onion
1 teaspoon salt	1 cup milk, scalded

Sift dry ingredients. Add onion and hot milk, then the egg. Shape in finger lengths or drop by spoonful in lard where fish was fried. Drain on paper. Fresh ground cornmeal is best.

Strawberry Shortcake

Strawberries are grown in many sections of Arkansas, but there are strawberries in the north central area that are excellent.

Wash and hull fresh strawberries. Save a few to decorate the shortcake, and mash the rest, adding sugar to taste. Let set for at least 30 minutes before using so sugar will dissolve in juice. With pastry blender cut 1 cup flour and 1 stick butter. Moisten with 2 tablespoons ice water. Roll out as for pie. Cut in circles about size of saucer for tea cup. Place on cookie sheet. Prick and bake at 450 degrees for a few minutes until golden. (Watch closely as they burn easily!) Place circle on plate adding berries and sweetened whipped cream. Place strawberry on top of each serving. If no cream is desired, add another circle on top of first circle and berries, then spoon berry juice over top circle.

North Arkansas

mess of salit	mountain trout
fried chicken	Ozark apple pudding
dipper gourd hoe cake	Ozark wines
old water mill Buhr	Italian spaghetti
cornmeal bread	peach preserves

North Arkansas has free flowing rivers, mountain streams, lakes, and the picturesque Ozark Mountains.

Mess of Salit

The best time to pick a mess of salit greens is in the early morning while they are moist with dew and before the sun has risen enough to make the picker uncomfortable. The only tools needed are a case knife and a basket.

Some of the better known greens to look for are lamb's quarter, dandelions, old hen and chicken, plantain, hen pepper, narrow leaf dock, mouse ears, speckled breeches, old sage, wild lettuce, poke, wild mustard and watercress.

The secret of a good mess of wild greens is knowing how to blend them before putting them on to cook. A real wild-green picker uses extra care in mixing, so the greens won't be too slick from using too much poke or too hot from too much wild mustard. Wash greens thoroughly and place in iron pot with water. Add ham hock or hog jowl and seasonings to taste. Let come to boil, then simmer turning gently with fork while cooking. Cook water low unless "potlikker" (soup to be served separately) is desired.

Ozark Fried Chicken

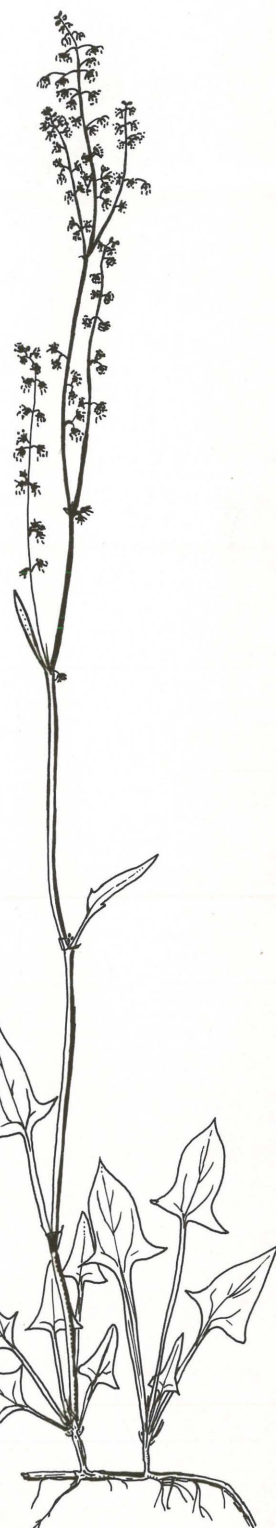
Clean each chicken to be fried and cut at joints. Wash well and dry. Place in paper sack with flour and seasonings of salt and pepper. Place chicken in cooking oil or shortening which is at least 1 inch deep (or more) and is hot. Add chicken to pan and do not crowd. Cook large, thick pieces together. Place lid on skillet or pan and let brown before turning. Cook after turning until chicken is done, lowering heat as necessary to keep chicken golden brown when cooked. After all the chicken is cooked and is drained, pour off all of grease except 2 to 3 tablespoons. Add flour and blend. Add hot sweet milk and cook until thickened for cream gravy. (The secret of perfect fried chicken is clean, fresh fat or cooking oil).

Ozark Apple Pudding

The Ozark region is apple country, so many dishes have been made using the delicious fruit.

1 egg beaten until thick and lemon colored
2/3 cup sugar
1/4 to 1/3 cup flour
1/4 teaspoon salt
1 1/2 teaspoons baking powder
1 cup raw apples (peeled and chopped)
1/2 cup nuts (preferably Ozark black walnuts)

Add sugar gradually to beaten egg. Sift flour, salt and baking powder together. Add to egg mixture. Fold in apples and nuts. Pour into well-buttered pie pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 30 minutes, or until crisp. The pudding will rise, then fall a little. Serve with whipped cream.



Sorrel (Rumex acetosella L.)
by M. H. Harvey, illustrator.

South Arkansas

sorghum gingerbread
country ham and red eye gravy
hominy grits
candied yams

creole pralines
shrimp creole
pound cake

South Arkansas, nestled in the piney woods, borders Creole country.

Sorghum Gingerbread

1/2 cup sugar	1 teaspoon soda
1/2 cup butter and shortening mixed	1 teaspoon cinnamon
1 egg, beaten	1/2 teaspoon cloves
1 cup sorghum (or molasses)	1 teaspoon ginger
2 1/2 cups sifted flour	1/2 teaspoon salt
	1 cup hot water

Cream shortening and sugar. Add egg, sorghum, then dry ingredients which have been sifted together. Add hot water last. The batter is soft, but it makes a fine cake. Bake in moderate oven at 325-350 degrees in greased shallow pan. Serves 15 people.

Country Cured Ham and Red Eye Gravy

Heat a heavy iron skillet and grease lightly with ham fat. Place ham steaks in skillet and cook quickly. It is best not to crowd meat. Sear on both sides, turning once. Do not overcook, but if slices are thick a little water may be added to let ham cook until done without browning too much. Remove ham to hot serving plate. Pour 1 cup of water in skillet and stir well to get all of drippings. A little strong black coffee may be used for part of the water, to make gravy darker and flavor richer. Country cured Arkansas ham is a real treat. In olden days wild razorback hogs were often used. Today the choice hogs of the state are used, and there are a number of excellent places to obtain hams and bacon.

Hominy Grits

Early Arkansas cooks had to make their hominy before grinding it, to make hominy grits that can be bought prepared today. Hominy was made by boiling wood ashes (1 gallon for 30 minutes) with plenty of water. This was allowed to stand until it settled, then drained into an iron kettle. Last, 1/2 gallon of white corn was added and boiled for 1 hour. Then it was washed in clear cold water and the process was repeated until the water was almost clear. Then the corn was cooked until tender (about 6 hours). Next the corn was spread out on a dry cloth to dry and later was ground for grits. Grits is coarse and makes many excellent dishes. Hominy is excellent served with butter.

1 cup hominy grits
5 cups boiling water
1 teaspoon salt

Stir grits slowly into boiling, salted water in heavy saucepan. Return to boil. Reduce heat and cover. Cook slowly for 30 minutes, stirring occasionally. Serve with butter, salt and pepper, red eye gravy, or as a cereal with milk and sugar. Serves six.

Eastern Arkansas

Fourth of July picnic barbecue

cawn puddin'	peach pickle
cracklin' bread and crowder peas	white fruit cake
buttermilk biscuits	chess pie
peach brandy	chicken 'n dumplings

Eastern Arkansas, with the mighty Mississippi River as the state boundary line, is a land of rich delta plantation country.

Fourth of July Picnic Barbecue

Celebrations that include all day picnics have always been popular in Arkansas. This is especially true in the eastern part of the state where plantations make distances between neighbors far. All day get togethers are days set aside for friends to come from far and wide to visit. Often a Sunday School picnic on the bank of a river is a day for people to become better acquainted. Sometimes politicians speak at "a dinner on the ground." It does not matter what the occasion may be as long as the food is traditionally done—an old time barbecue. The day before the celebration pits are dug and hickory wood cut so whole hogs or large pieces of meat may be slowly barbecued over live coals to make the best barbecue in the world. Some barbecue sauce recipes have been passed down from father to son for several generations, and there are old black men who are well known over the state for their talents in preparing a perfect barbecue. The sauce is basted on the meat over a long period of time. Generally this is done with a mop made of a clean cloth tied on a long stick. This is dipped generously into the sauce and then spread over the meat.

Barbecue Sauce

1/2 pound butter	1 tablespoon hot sauce
1 pint water	or Tabasco
1/3 cup vinegar	1 tablespoon black pepper
1 teaspoon dry mustard	1 tablespoon paprika
1 to 2 tablespoons sorghum (or brown sugar)	1 onion, chopped fine
1 to 2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce	1 tablespoon salt
	2 tablespoons chile powder
	1/2 teaspoon red pepper

Combine ingredients and simmer over low heat for 40 minutes to 1 hour. Stir occasionally while cooking. Sauce is sufficient for 12 pounds of meat or more.

Cawn Puddin'

7 to 8 ears sweet corn (cut corn off cobs)
5 to 6 whole eggs (beaten slightly)
1 1/2 to 2 cups cream
sugar and salt to taste

Butter heavy casserole well. Pour in corn mixture in order given above. Place casserole in pan of hot water, and cook in 400 to 425 degree oven. After pudding has cooked 15 minutes, stir so corn will mix through pudding. Cook until pudding sets (about 45 minutes to 1 hour). If mixture seems too thick before cooking, add more milk.

Western Arkansas

Brunswick stew	fried okra
squaw bread	pumpkin pie or cake
watermelon rind pickle	persimmon pudding
fresh fruit cobbler	Indian pudding

Western Arkansas is well known for its famous hot springs, Ouachita Mountains, Indian mounds, game preserves and old river ports.

Brunswick Stew

Church suppers, bazaars and Brunswick stew go together and always have in Arkansas.

Cook 4 squirrels or 1 fat hen until tender and ready to fall off bones. (Squirrel and chicken may both be used for excellent flavor). Remove meat and cut in pieces. Cut 4 pounds Irish potatoes (peeled) into cubes. Cut up 1 pint okra and 3 large onions. Place in large kettle with water. Add 1 pint corn, 1 pint tomatoes, 1 can tomato paste, ½ bottle Worcestershire sauce, ⅓ pound unsliced bacon (take out before serving stew). If only squirrels are used, add ¼ pound butter. Last, add juice of 1 lemon and season to taste. Add meat and stock. Cook over low heat for 2 to 3 hours. Add more water if stew is too thick, but it should be quite thick. Stir with long handled spoon occasionally to keep stew from scorching. Makes about 4 quarts or more.

Squaw Bread

3 cups flour	1½ cups milk
3 teaspoons baking powder	deep fat
1 teaspoon salt	

Combine flour, baking powder, and salt. Add enough milk to dry mixture to make biscuit dough consistency. Roll out on floured board ½ inch thick. Cut into 2 by 3 inch squares. Cut hole in center of each. Fry in deep fat. Serve while hot. Allow 1 cup flour for each 3 to 4 persons.

Watermelon Rind Pickle

Dice rind of watermelon in small pieces. Soak in mild salt water overnight. Drain, soak in fresh water 2 hours. Drain. Have ready for every pound of rind: 1 cup water, 1 cup cider vinegar, 2 cups sugar, 3 inches stick cinnamon, and 8 cloves without heads. Tie spices in bag. Place in kettle with other ingredients. Boil 5 minutes. Add drained fruit. Boil for 30 minutes or until clear. Remove spice bag. Place rind in jars, cover with vinegar mixture and seal.

Some of the finest watermelons are grown in this part of the state so this recipe to use the rind is a favorite.

Persimmon Pudding

Wait until after the first frost before gathering persimmons. Rub 1 quart of real ripe persimmons through colander with

1 pint of sweet milk	1 teaspoon cloves
1 cup butter	1 teaspoon cinnamon
1½ cups sugar	1 teaspoon nutmeg

3 well beaten eggs	½ teaspoon ginger and
3 cups flour	allspice (equal amounts)

Cream butter and sugar. Add persimmon mixture and eggs. Add flour which has been sifted with rest of dry ingredients. Place in well buttered dish and bake in slow oven (300 degrees) for 1½ to 2 hours.

Receipes not included in the text may be obtained by writing to Mrs. Rurth M. Malone; 1 River Ridge Road, Little Rock, Arkansas 72207, or from Where to Eat in the Ozarks, a Pioneer Press publication, Little Rock, Arkansas, 1964.



Dandelion (Taraxacum officinale)
by M. J. Harvey, illustrator.