

Methodology options of protected and half-way accommodations

Methodology / guidelines (Non-formal learning and method)

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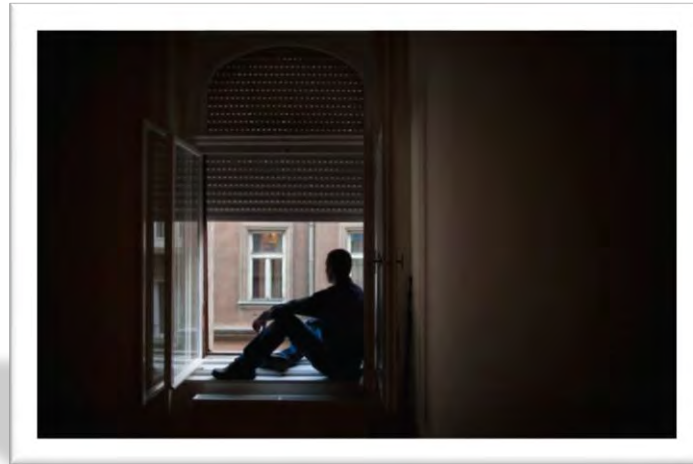
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**Lindner Lília Klára - Mészáros Mercedes:
Halfway Flat / Halfway House: operation, maintenance. Professional
programme / policy¹**

VÁLTÓ-SÁV ALAPÍTVÁNY



I Context

I.1 About the organization (Váltó-sáv Alapítvány)

The Váltó-sáv Alapítvány (hereinafter VSA) is a national, non-governmental, professional organization for the social and labor market (re)integration of deviant, disadvantaged/marginalized, vulnerable groups and their relatives, as well as of socially disadvantaged people, offenders, addicts, prisoners and released persons. Our main activity is to provide care, training and mental health support to the target group, as well as to reduce prejudices and carry out sensitization, and to strengthen social inclusiveness (www.valtosav.hu).

Our programme started in 1997 within the framework of another organization, and in August 2002 we became an independent organization. Since then we have been operating continuously and we consider this a great achievement.

Some of our programmes take place inside prisons, others after release, but we also have activities implemented in both places.

¹ The supported activity is implemented with the support of the Ministry of Interior and the Hungarian Crime Prevention Council.

In penal institutions:

- trainings (so-called licensed adult training courses, 13 of them): communication and self-knowledge, Focus on work - developing labor market competences, Peer helper training, Digital competence training, etc.
- groups: Developing parenting skills (Father groups, mother groups), so-called art therapy groups (ReadingSpace, CreativeCircle, Creative Writing, Creative Workshop, etc.), game therapy groups (Board game group);
- facilitating helping conversations: supporting contact/ supporting conversation (mentoring programmes), coaching programmes (individual and team coaching).

In penal institutions and after release:

- job coaching programmes (introduction to work, job hunt and keeping a job, etc.);
- mentoring programmes;
- Váltó-sáv Information Base: collecting, storing and updating relevant information for prisoners, ex-prisoners, relatives.

After release:

- Halfway Flat programme (housing, work, training, structured leisure time, money management, practical and life skills - a complex and synergistic programme);
- combating discrimination, social awareness (e.g. trainings: Tolerance strengthening, anti-discrimination training, exhibitions, spot films, etc.);
- training of professionals (My possibilities, competences in reintegration work, Change Fever board game - training of game leaders - licensed adult training, CHANGE FEVER: possibilities of support work in the /re/integration of offenders /detainees, released persons/ - social training programme, under certification, etc.).

We have 5-10 people working for our organization, all with degrees in Human Sciences (social worker, culturalist, social politician, psychologist, coach, teacher, mediator, and a narcology assistant).

We have ca. 500 detainees and/or ex-detainees each year participating in our programs but there were years with a much larger number of clients (2012: 896 clients, 2013: 1384 clients, 2014: 994 clients).

After many years of research and experience, daily practical work and continuous contact with the marginalized target group, Váltó-sáv Alapítvány considers the creation of realistic life chances as the most important thing; the key to which is the development of competences, providing education and training for the vulnerable target group, and the complex and synergetic (psychological, social, pedagogical) support work. The organization carries out its activities and projects according to this principle, constantly adapting to the needs and wants of the target group.

Our activities and experiences in general:

- ongoing professional presence in punishment institutions, client group and family support upon release;
- groups inside punishment institutions supporting social reintegration, and/or life-long adult education (including groups in arts, health improvement, parental skills development etc.);
- 2 exhibitions for social sensitization: one entitled FROM INSIDE: an exhibition from the works of arts by detainees; the other entitled LÉLEKVETÉS (SOUL REVIEW): a virtual exhibition from works of arts by detainees (http://www.valtosav.hu/bm_17_kiadvanyok.html);
- an anthology of creative literature by detainees (LÉLEKVETÉS ISBN 978-615-00-3478-2, 'monogram', etc.);
- Practical Information Upon Release: a yearly updated publication for those released and their relatives, and for professional experts;
- conducting several research for a more efficient support of the target group (detainees and ex-detainees);
- operating a Charity Shop with ex-detainee employees (2013-2014) – a recycling project both on a material and on a social integration level, where donators and ex-detainees can meet, prejudice mitigation;
- we had several programs in punishment institutions for women (Kalocsa Strict and Medium Regime Prison) and operated a social meeting space for women in a high-risk group of criminality and addiction in one of the “no-go” districts of Budapest and in a segregate (Kalocsa)
- VSA is an accredited adult education institution, with 13 accredited adult education programs;
- VSA developed a board game supporting the preparation for release and social sensitization. It is called Váltó-Láz (Change-Fever), patented under M 17 00317 (National Office of Intellectual Property);
- we also made a digital version of Váltó-Láz, that can be used offline;
- we had a KA2 project within Prison, Reintegration, Education (PRE-project) 2015-2017, qualified as a project worth spreading, with partners from Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Lithuania). In 2015-2016, VSA participated in a E.U.R.O.P.E multinational project (European for Citizens, main tenderer: Collegium Civitas Poland, partners: Polish, Greek and Hungarian organizations); our TRANSPORTER project was realized in 2018-2020 (Knowledge Sharing in Transnational Cooperation EFOP-5.2.2-17-2017-00019, with the participation of 1 Slovak, 1 Serb and 3 Romanian partners);
- we have ongoing education for professionals and organize seminars for young experts in the Young Professionals Workshop;
- we continuously develop our methods and tools that help our activities with the special target group;
- in 2018 we edited a publication on methodology summary, Opportunities for Creative Programs in Law Enforcement, supported by the Ministry of the Interior. This cca.200 pages publication featured two programs in the field creative writing, Reading Space and creative artisan programs: encaustic and paverpol, developed specifically for the use with clients in strictly closed institutions;
- VSA was the first organization in Hungary to operate a so-called “halfway” flat for ex-detainees (as part of a complex reintegration model), between 2010 and 2016, and again from 01.12.2019 (complex reintegration model).

I.2 Halfway Flat – the reasons behind the programme, concept

The Hungarian social care system does not specifically mention those released from detention, and there is no specific legislation for this client group in terms of support work. However, the situation of this client group is complex, because their current/future status affects several types of care systems: judicial, social, educational/pedagogical/andragogical, health, employment/labor, social, etc. The client group has complex problems (housing, employment, socialization, administration, health, family, addiction, etc.), which in the long run represent a major cost, challenge and response for the care system.

The family is there to fill the gaps in the care system. If there's a family, the person has everything (with a little exaggeration): housing, human relations, resources, etc. However, in many cases we see that the family relationships of the client group are dysfunctional, often unsupportive, and do not provide the resources to help them live a crime-free life.

In 2006, Váltó-sáv Alapítvány carried out two researches to gather information for the implementation of the Halfway Flat Programme.² Although the research is not new, our day-to-day implementation of programmes for detainees and our ongoing contact with released prisoners confirms the 2006 findings: little or no change (from a prisoner/released prisoner perspective) in this area.

With family roots and other human/community ties severed, a significant number of high-security detainees are unable to secure permanent housing. No family, no housing. The only options left are the homeless shelter, or old friends and mates. At the same time, prisoners see homeless shelters as the lowest point in their lives and do everything they can to avoid them:

"If people have nowhere to go, there's not much chance. You can look at the repeat offenders. They don't stand a chance. A rented apartment requires a 3-month deposit if you want to rent. I guess no one wants to go to a homeless shelter. How is that better than prison?" (SK4)

"I think anybody would rather commit a crime than go to a social institution, because there they are dependent on someone else, they are bossed around." (GY5)

"I don't want to be anybody's client, I want to live my own life, and in the end, in this crisis situation (meaning: becoming homeless after being released), I didn't want to accept it either, I don't even know why... That I would go into a homeless shelter; in the evening in and in the morning out... So there was no perspective at all." (É2)³

"I would rather choose the prison any day." (V5)

² Feasibility study for the implementation of a halfway house for prisoners released from detention. [Megvalósítási terv ún. félutas lakás ház létrehozására fogvatartásból szabadultak számára.] Edited by: Csáki Anikó-Mészáros Mercedes. Budapest, 2006. In: http://www.valtosav.hu/szakmai_anyagok/feasibility_study_magyar.pdf

Csáki Anikó-Mészáros Mercedes-Sponga István: Possibilities for the social (re)integration of young adults released from detention [Fogvatartásból szabadult fiatal felnőttek társadalmi (re)integrációjának lehetőségei.] Budapest, 2006. In: http://www.valtosav.hu/szakmai_anyagok/tanulmany.pdf

³ Excerpts from interviews with prisoners

In the same research, we also asked professionals what they think about why people released from prison do not want to go to a homeless shelter, even if they do not have a secure housing⁴:

"Q: In our experience, a halfway house or a homeless hostel is not an attractive housing option for many prisoners on the verge of release. Why do you think this is the case?"

A1: A homeless shelter is an admission of being permanently marginalized, no longer able to live independently even in terms of housing. It is also another forced community.

A2: They are afraid of being stuck there and not having the opportunity to reintegrate.

A3: Lack of a humane atmosphere.

A4: Provides too much constraint and few individual solutions. Individual attention and joint problem solving should be encouraged. Housing is an important starting point for moving on and making a fresh start.

A5: Some regimes are so strict that they have a 'prison-like' feel, which deters those referred to them.

A6: Because of it being impersonal and lacking privacy. The confinement is also difficult to bear for those who are released. Not enough accurate information about housing.

A7: Many places have poor staffing and professional programmes. It could be done better."

A few initiatives from the church NGOs, and later the prison service, recognised the need for a halfway house type of institution for prisoners, and since then there have been several attempts, with varying degrees of success.

In general, the objective and task of the halfway house is to support the social and labor market integration of the target group - people released from detention - by providing them with housing, employment options and other psychosocial services to help them overcome specific life problems and avoid re-offending. In other words, the aim of the halfway house is to "throughcare" the client, who will live and shape his/her life in the light of the values and norms of the majority society. The halfway flat/halfway house⁵ programme is thus a complex reintegration model in which housing, although a key element, is only one element of the integration and reintegration process, of work.

To summarize the reasons behind its creation, one important factor in preventing recidivism is the provision of secure housing for those who are released. Released prisoners in general (especially in relation to the length of their sentence) often lack supportive family and human relationships (representing the values and norms of the majority society), their housing after release is often unresolved or they are placed in the social care system (homeless care),

⁴ Research by Váltó-sáv Foundation on Social Inclusion: Possibilities for the social (re)integration of young adults released from detention. Research summary available at www.valtosav.hu. Question 59 of the interview questionnaire was as follows: Have you ever heard of a halfway house? If yes, what is your opinion about it?

⁵ The term halfway house / halfway flat does not refer to the professional content but to the difference in the housing - house or flat. However, there may also be differences in terms of programmes, as a rural house or an inner-city apartment may have different challenges to address and therefore different programme elements may be included in the professional programme. The two terms are often used synonymously.

making the social integration of released prisoners with complex and specific problems difficult, often impossible. A key element of social and labor market reintegration is the provision of secure housing. After a prison sentence, services are needed to provide reintegration opportunities for released people with multiple disadvantages who have been marginalized. One way of doing this is to provide complex services through the Halfway Flat / Halfway House programmes, which have already been operating abroad with many positive examples (Latvia, Lithuania, Germany, Poland, etc.). The positive effects of the reintegration aspects of housing and work are forward-looking and significantly reduce the risk of reoffending. Halfway house programmes have so far appeared in Hungary on a scattered, ad hoc basis, mainly in connection with projects. The Hungarian Prison Service and VSA share a common recognition that cooperation is essential in this field and area, and that joint development will significantly improve the effectiveness of re-offending prevention. Collaboration is not only about service development, but also about continued operation and resource generation, i.e. the creation of 'objective', economic factors.

I.3 Halfway houses abroad and in Hungary

Between 2010 and 2016, Váltó-sáv Alapítvány ran a halfway house programme for prisoners released from detention, funded by grants. Before starting the operation, we tried to gather experience both abroad and at home, and we are continuously doing so. Before starting operations we visited Latvia (Riga), Austria (St. Pölten) and Germany (Brandenburg). We visited the Mécses Charity Service programme in Tas-Alsószenttamás, the Boldogkert Residential Home in Debrecen (supported housing programme for addicts) and the rehabilitation programme of the Living Hope Foundation in Dunakeszi.⁶

In 2018, we visited the Slawek Foundation (Mienia) Halfway Programme in Poland and also visited Alytus, Lithuania, to see the professional work being done there.

Overall, the experience is that while the basic concept of the Halfway House / Halfway Flat programme is the same - housing support - the additional operational elements are different in each case, and there is no uniform definition of the concept. There are programmes where the programme is part of the prison system and can be interpreted as a high-level transitional group (Alytus), where it also provides accommodation for 'going out' prisoners (Mienia); in the Austrian model it is part of the homeless care system, while in Germany it is operated as a multi-level care system (the highest level of service is one person/one dwelling, full autonomy). Overall, however, it can be said that it is found in all models:

- the housing programme;
- the provision of additional services;
- additional attention and support to the person released;
- the participants in the programme are in a tough situation use the service as a result and only out of necessity.

⁶ Feasibility study for the implementation of a halfway house for prisoners released from detention. [Megvalósítási terv ún. félutas lakás ház létrehozására fogvatartásból szabadultak számára.] Edited by: Csáki Anikó-Mészáros Mercedes. Budapest, 2006. In: http://www.valtosav.hu/szakmai_anyagok/feasibility_study_magyar.pdf, PRE-project (Prison, Reintegration, Education): <http://www.preproject.hu/contact.html>

I.4 Halfway House – Halfway Flat: concept clarification

The concept, the elements of the services and the methodological basis of the Halfway House / Halfway Flat operated by the Váltó-sáv Foundation:

- aims to reduce the risk of reoffending by providing help to prisoners whose reintegration into society is not resolved;
- released prisoners are provided with accommodation, meals and basic necessities for a start in life (e.g. toiletries) - no money is provided and other material items are only in the first month after their release;
- the provision of complex services: housing, human relations, labor market services, training and learning, management of life problems and being stuck in life, practical matters (administration), health promotion;
- psycho-social support and care, as well as helping work;
- the programme is based on cooperation and agreement between the person released and the professional staff of VSA (i.e. participants are expected to be autonomous or to strive for autonomy).

The basic conditions and elements of the operation of the Halfway House / Halfway Flat: due to the release from a totally closed institution, our concept includes basic principles that enhance the possibility of human dignity, of an autonomous, responsible, stuck (unresolved housing, release crisis) person, who is motivated to move on and change. At the same time, it is very important to underline that the Halfway House, as its name implies, is "halfway" between a closed institution (prison) and a fully free life. In other words, in addition to providing housing, it is a complex service that the released person is also required to participate in and undertake (not a "free rent"). Halfway Housing is not there to relieve families ("there are too many members of my family living in one place, I can't go there").

It is important to clarify all this because, based on our experience so far, the Halfway House programme is not something that people are happy to do, but something that they do out of necessity, as everyone would prefer to live a completely independent, unchecked life after their release, not to live with other people, while it is not always the case that everyone is willing to participate in the developments we consider important (e.g. digital competence development).

The current concept of the Halfway House is based on reintegration into the big city (the capital), i.e. the location of the Halfway House is in Budapest, where the greatest opportunities for labor market employment and the provision of "supplementing" complex services are offered. However, the metropolitan nature can also pose greater risks of recidivism for those released, which should be addressed by the right professional background and support if - the alpha and omega of all - the *selection*, i.e. the enrolment in the programme, is eligible.

I.5 Enrolment in the programme; selection, admission

Our organization considers selection as a *process*, the first step of which is to be contacted by the released person from the prison. As the probation officers have the best insight into the

situation and possibilities of the released prisoners, it is of course important and appropriate that a professional relationship between the probation officer and the organization is established. At the same time, it is not a disadvantage in terms of motivation in such cases if the prisoner also seeks contact with VSA.

After the contact, a personal meeting will take place with the prisoner in the prison, preferably at least 3 times⁷. We consider it extremely important for further cooperation that we meet several times during the detention, talk, clarify questions and possible misunderstandings. It is important to emphasize that the applicant is being placed in *a programme* of which housing is part (even if it is a very important objective reintegration factor). Part of the commitment is to cooperate with the organization and to participate in the competence development activities that we plan for the released person together, but often at the suggestion of the organization. We clarify the content, meaning and importance of the house rules, the agreement, the weekly plan and the weekly report⁸.

We attach great importance to the fact that the apartment is "protected": it is reserved for our clients, so visitors are only allowed by prior arrangement. We believe it is important to work (job hunt and keeping that job), to follow and keep rules, to establish the basics of independent living, while the halfway apartment still provides controlled housing. Maintaining a balance between independence and controlled contact is crucial for the success of the programme - and therefore ultimately the (re)integration of the released person.

A person using the Halfway Flat programme and services must have the motivation and desire to change. It is important to recognize and admit that they are responsible for their own destiny and that they are capable of change - even if with help. The programme supports the person to be aware of his/her own resources, to develop and expand them, to recognize his/her own responsibility and to develop his/her coping capacity. The framework is based on this approach, and we definitely reject the idea that the client is responsible for external factors and the external environment, because it is this attitude that we want to change. And as we are dealing with people in difficult situations, often disadvantaged (or severely disadvantaged), this change of attitude and outlook is the most difficult or the most difficult to change, as it is the root of the life path so far.

This is why we do not wish to do anything for our clients, but we teach them everything they need to know to carry out these tasks by themselves and provide them with all the information they need. We do not look for the job for them, but together and/or fully assist them in finding and keeping a job. In our view, this professional approach may be time-consuming, but in the long run it is the only way to make the programme effective and functional, both for the programme and for the participants, and in the long run it is the only way to help them develop a quality of life that will lead them to a healthy, fulfilling, happy life, free from recidivism and crime.

II Halfway Flat / Halfway House: operation, maintenance. Professional programme elements

II.1 Target group of the Halfway Programme

⁷ See Annexes 1 and 2 for the documents recording the establishment of the contact.

⁸ The documents can be found in the annexes.

The target group of the project consists of released prisoners for whom effective social reintegration cannot be solved independently without external help in the absence of a supportive environment (family, relatives, friends), and who are willing to and motivated to cooperate and change their lifestyle (which includes the acquisition and application of the values and norms of the majority society), i.e. they choose a crime-free life and are willing to do something to achieve this goal.

Options of attainment: a) with the help of probation officers working in penal institutions, b) by sending spots, short films, information brochures to penal institutions, c) with the prisoner directly contacting us, d) by other professional contacts (church, psychologist, etc.).

This is followed by an initial interview, called an orientation interview, with the prospective detainee/released person (this can also be done in a group). The selection process will continue with additional individual interviews with potential participants on at least 3 occasions (with a approximately every other week). It would also be useful to provide a 'pre-care session.

In terms of gender, the Halfway Programme can be male-only, female-only or co-educational - there are no rules on this, as there is a mix of men and women in the natural environment too. In fact, it is up to/can be up to the residents to decide together whether or not gender segregation is necessary (and this is a professional issue).

In terms of age, it is advisable to include the 18-45 age group, as this is the age group that can be integrated into the labor market (which is a key element of the programme). There may be a difference in each direction, which is a matter of professional consultation. However, the older age group should be excluded from this programme in several respects (employment, chances of change).

For the Halfway Programme, the nature of the crime is irrelevant. In terms of length of sentence, those with longer sentences and longer time in prison are the focus: firstly because they are more likely to experience a loosening of external ties, and secondly because a long sentence plays a greater role in motivating change based on our experience so far (i.e. they are more motivated to change).⁹

Meeting the needs of the target group: several researches have been carried out to assess the needs of the target group; Váltó-sáv Alapítvány has been running a half-way house programme for 6 years, so the needs and wants have been identified and defined. Several models from abroad are available and their experience will be incorporated into the pilot. The services to be implemented will be continuously adapted to the needs and requirements of the target group members included in the programme. At the same time, it is important to note that VSA will always keep the basic professional concept, but the image of the particular Halfway Flat / Halfway House will be determined by the people living in it, so the services will/can change dynamically to adapt to the emerging clientele.

⁹ It follows from all this that this is not the right programme for a 60-year-old released from a 20-year sentence, because although the client has spent a lot of time in prison he is not eligible for the labor market. The present concept does not take into account sheltered employment.

II.2 Basic conditions of operation

Due to being released from a totally closed institution, our concept includes basic principles that enhance the possibility of human dignity, of an autonomous, responsible, stuck (unresolved housing, release crisis) but motivated to move on and change personality, thus:

- a building or part of a building suitable for the purpose, which can accommodate up to 6 persons (neither the appearance nor the operation of the Halfway Flat / Halfway House should be reminiscent of a prison cell or a homeless shelter);
- the bedrooms are single, maximum double;
- required communal space: living room, kitchen, dining room, bathroom, toilets;
- the living space must provide a certain level of autonomy, personality, expression of individuality, possibility for free interior design, keeping one's own objects, etc., represent the value of freedom;
- the rules of communal living must be respected;
- developing the personality, key and transversal competences of released prisoners, supporting their skills and opportunities on the labor market;
- organizing structured and semi-structured leisure programmes;
- making reparation programmes and specific rules of conduct enforceable;
- creating a future-oriented climate of opportunity for change, i.e. a climate where problems and obstacles can be faced and articulated, but where there is adequate inspiration and support (professionally and locally) to change and move on;
- to ensure that life crises and stuck situations can be addressed;
- providing self-time, time to do one's own activities (accepted by all).

To sum up, the programme is implemented with 2-6 people living in a rented apartment¹⁰ at the same time, whom, in addition to housing, receive complex services, the cornerstone of which is the cooperation with helping professionals and other residents (released people). In fact, the service starts already in the prison with the selection and preparation process for release by the penal institution probation officer (hereafter: probation officer) and the helping professionals of Váltó-sáv Alapítvány. During the selection process, after the pre-screening of the probation officers (potential residents), the prison and the helping professionals of Váltó-sáv Alapítvány jointly conduct the so-called first interviews and motivational interviews (usually 3 times, with a period of about 1 week inbetween sessions) to map out the prisoner's motivation, willingness to cooperate, situation, possibilities and needs. The prisoner is fully informed about the rules of the Halfway House, the expected and required living arrangements, the mandatory commitments, services, programmes and opportunities. Upon release, the selected applicants are allowed to move into the flat, where they will be assisted by a mentor who will give them extra intensive attention (daily presence) for the first day and the first week. The first week will be spent on managing personal documents and planning, followed by a focus on job and job search. The aim is for the person released to find a job (with a work contract) as soon as possible, and in any case within the first month after release. The VSA's support staff will provide all the assistance needed to find a job, but the person released must decide on the type of job/employment, as this also contributes to his/her autonomy. VSA basically helps its clients to enter the open labor market, and we have several

¹⁰ Váltó-sáv Alapítvány is currently renting a 100 m² apartment from a large company in the 8th district, not far from the organization's headquarters. So far, all our rented apartments have been in the 8th district, within walking distance of the office - this is very important for job hunt, other administration and compatibility with other activities of the staff. It also makes it easier for residents to get to work (everything is within easy reach, no need to travel across town for work, administration, etc.).

years of experience in the methodology and service of helping to find employment (we have conducted several researches on this and are currently conducting one). While the client is looking for a job, it is their "job" (job = looking for a job), so we provide them with food and cleaning supplies for the first month of the programme, if necessary, so that they have the basic necessities until their first pay - if they have no or very little money when they leave the prison.

The VSA's helping professionals also cooperate with the probation officers in the prison, holding professional discussions (case meetings) as necessary, and providing each other with the information necessary for support. In many cases, professional cooperation with other professionals and helpers is also justified.

II.3 Formation and continuous improvement of the living environment

The basic condition for a halfway house to function is the existence of a building or part of a building that is fit for purpose. In the present concept, this is in the capital, Budapest, and in a central location, very close to the VSA's headquarters and operational site. A flat of at least 100 m² is required to accommodate 6 persons, with at least 3 bedrooms, a common area, kitchen and bathroom. The location should (and does) give the impression of 'sheltered housing', which is both a home for the client for a limited period of time and a place where the client can - and should aim to - live independently in the long term. If the present location is the client's home, the living space should also provide a certain level of autonomy, personality and expression of individuality. Bedrooms can therefore be decorated to suit individual tastes. Free shaping of the interior, keeping their own objects, etc. are values of freedom. However, while creating a 'home atmosphere', it should be remembered that the residents are also a group/community, so the rules of community living must be enforced. This is also the case in natural living environments/units (e.g. a family).

Meal times and schedules are not regulated (adapting to individual lifestyles, determined mainly by the time periods at work), however, if it is a lifestyle issue or interferes with others, it should be addressed individually in the helping work. If it violates the rules of civilized coexistence, the problem will be discussed in a group discussion at a common occasion.ü

The house rules are based on the values of freedom and autonomy, with a few simple, strict and consistently enforceable rules: no drugs, alcohol, violence or weapons of any kind in the house, and no criminal or legal offences. For reasons of practicality and taking into account the natural living quarters, everyone in the house cleans according to his or her schedule.

In this safe environment the client, next to being provided with housing, also contract to being helped in his/her reintegration. Thus, the institution represents the value and norm system of the majority society, meaning that it forms expectations but at the same time helps the clients to meet those.



II. 4 Services in the Halfway Programme

Services provided in the Halfway Flat:

- individual case management (with various methods: consultation, coaching);
- employment and keeping the job (career orientation and job coaching);
- providing the Váltó-sáv Information Base service (providing and making accessible all information needed for release);
- health promotion, supporting the client to participate in screenings;
- continuous development of social and life management competences (even with services like putting together a weekly meal plan, learning the basics of cooking, learning how to use a map, how to use the public transportation, questions related to etiquette, the ‘rules’ of administration, telephoning, etc.);
- supporting change management;
- digital competence development (even in the framework of a licensed adult training: E-000363/2014/D005, 50 hours);
- development of foreign language competences (English language);
- an opportunity for the development of self-knowledge and communication skills (even in the framework of a licensed adult training: E-000363/2014/D004, 30 hours);
- facilitating, supporting the client to join in other training;
- other art therapy programme elements (biblio and manual developments, arts and crafts programmes – creating/realizing an opportunity for personality development and restoration);
- operating a residents’ group (to reduce the difficulties of living together, to form and continuously develop self-reflection which then significantly reduce the risk of re-offending);
- providing structured leisure activities and opportunities (joint holidays, forming traditions, other spontaneous and organised activities);
- ensuring cleanliness of the living environment, possibility for developments;
- facilitating further supportive human relations, integration into communities and groups;
- where possible, sorting out family relationships;

- possibility and facilitation of restoration programmes;
- supporting participation in other voluntary, community events.

II.5 Organizational establishment and sustainability

The minimum amount of employees needed to run the programme is 3 professionals, mainly with qualifications in humanities. The staff will meet 1 time a week to discuss the organizational/operational tasks of the house, to distribute the work and to have a place to share their thoughts for the helpers. In addition, however, there is constant contact between the helpers. The staff decides on the admission of new residents, the conditions of admission/removal, the details of the house rules and all matters concerning the running/maintenance of the house. The staff decides when and in what decisions the residents will be involved and which rules cannot be changed. The staff members carry out contact building work and networking in the penal institutions.

Professional sustainability: a key element of sustainability is to ensure that as many professional participants (reintegration officers, probation officers, helping professionals) as possible are informed about the service - in the longer term, the development and conduct of a training programme, including through licensed and/or certified adult education/social training, is planned. The aim would be to develop, alongside the pilot, as many individual and unique Halfway Houses as possible in the country (e.g. in rural areas, in relation to agricultural work and production, etc.), and for each Halfway House to develop its own professional services, taking into account the needs and wants of the target group. This requires, however, a basic body of knowledge and information about the target group, the Halfway House and its operation, which can be transferred through training.

Sustainability could also be helped by networking: information exchange between the individual Halfway Houses, professional consultation, and methodological developments.

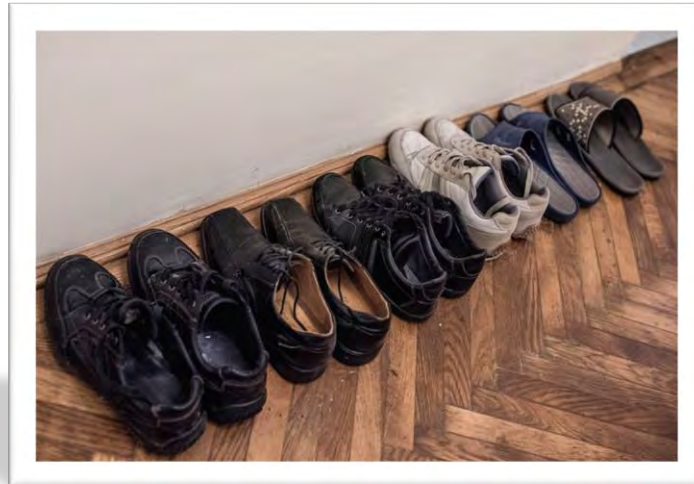


II.6 Economic plan and sustainability

The VSA operated a so-called Halfway House in Budapest for 6 years between 2010 and 2016, in rented apartment(s), with funding from a grant. The deposit of the rented apartments was 100% refunded in each case, with no damage or other environmental deficit. We believe that care, attention and concern are key issues for this service. At the same time, it can be seen that it is a so-called high threshold service, i.e. there are high costs in relative and immediate

terms (although in the longer term these costs are obviously recovered), but at the same time the organization running the programme is significantly affected at the time. Economic sustainability is therefore thought to be either achieved through further applications or by an organization 'generating' the necessary money from its services and/or by building it into the state budget.

At the moment and in the next few years, it seems appropriate to build on EU and national funding (as we have done so far). This could be supplemented (however little) by client fees. Donations should also be considered. In the long term, some kind of for-profit business activity (with the participation of residents and/or creative/other works, possibly a social business) is also suggested.



Annexes

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professional leader: Mészáros Mercedes
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Interview outline – contacting in a penal institution

Name of the interviewer:

Time of the interview:

Location of the interview:

Serial number:

Name of the interviewee (with inmate ID number!):

Age of the interviewee (time and place of birth):

Mother's name:

The exact place where she/he will be released to (address):

Other contact information (name of family member, phone number, e-mail address, etc.):

Exact date of release:

Name of the penal institution he/she will be released from:

Duration that he/she spent in a penal institution in connection with last sentence:

Was sentenced for how many months and for what last time:

I Personal data and criminal career

1. Address before starting the (last) sentence
 - a) name of the city:
 - b) legal title of the dwelling (property, rented, sub-let, workhouse, homeless shelter, street, etc.):
2. Did you grow up in a family or in state care (in an institution, foster care)?
3. If in an institution or in foster care, at what age did you live in an institution/foster care?

- a) 0-2
- b) 3-6
- c) 7-14
- d) 15-18
- e) in different periods:

4. What are your educational qualifications? What kind of vocations do you have?
5. How many years have you attended school since age 15?
6. When did you finish your studies or dropped out of school?
7. If dropped out of school: which grade and what type of school did you drop out of?
8. If dropped out of school: why did you drop out of school?
9. Was sentenced one or more times:
10. If more than one times:
 - a) how many times were you sentenced:
 - b) how many times were sentenced to imprisonment:
 - c) how long did you stayed in penal institutions:

II Employment before prison sentence

11. Did you have a job before imprisonment? What was the last one? How was you employed (with a work contract, with insurance)?

If you didn't work before the sentence, why?

12. Did you use to like your job? Why?
13. What was your relationship like with your colleagues, boss?
14. What kind of work did you do mostly outside of prison? How long did they last? If you have worked in more than one job: what was the reason for changing jobs?

15. Have you had any negative experiences when looking for a job/having a job? If yes, what was it, what happened?
16. Have you encountered prejudice when looking for a job/having a job? If yes, what happened?

III Plans after release

17. Plans after release: how does he/she plan his/her first day / first week / first month / first year (in general)?
18. What do you plan to do, where and how will you work after your release?
19. Do you think you will have difficulties in finding a job? If so, what type? What problems do you expect?
20. Do you have any medical conditions that make your employment more complicated?

IV Summary

21. Do you think your job hunt might be affected by the fact that you have been in prison? Why/how?
22. Who can you get help from? Who can you count on? What internal resources can you rely on?
23. What do you think about the halfway programme? Do you think this type of complex service would be good for you? Would you want to participate?

Short summary of the interview:

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Case log

Name of the service user:

Location:

Date:

Duration:

Used service:

Note:

Signature:

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HOUSE RULES FOR THE RESIDENTS OF VÁLTÓ-SÁV ALAPÍTVÁNY'S HALFWAY FLAT

I undertake to respect basic hygiene rules and to take part in keeping the apartment clean.

I use the rooms and furnishings of Váltó-sáv Alapítvány's Halfway flat according to their intended purpose, taking care to protect the community property and to use them in an energy-efficient way. In all cases, the person who caused the damage shall be liable to pay compensation.

I understand that smoking is not allowed in the apartment or in the stairwell, and that smoking is only allowed on the balcony or on the open corridor.

I understand that it is prohibited to consume or store alcoholic beverages, drugs, or to stay intoxicated or under the influence of any substance in the flat.

I agree that if I violate the rules of the house rules or behave in a way that is in breach of the house rules, the professional staff of Váltó-sáv Alapítvány may terminate my housing agreement with immediate effect.

No person other than the contracting parties may stay in the apartment without special permission.

The apartment must be vacated between 9am and 4pm every day (except weekends). Only the person actively working is allowed to deviate from this rule.

Participation in group activities and other pre-arranged programmes on weekends and other occasions is obligatory.

The house rules apply to all rooms in Halfway flat. It applies to residents, relatives and visitors.

Anyone to whom the house rules apply to can request a modification in the house rules. In all cases, the Foundation's professional leader will decide on the basis of the proposed amendment, after consulting the professional staff.

Date:

.....
resident

.....
professional leader

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professional leader: Mészáros Mercedes
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Attendance sheet

Name of the service:

Duration, date:

Location:

Programme leader:

Participants:

Name:	Signature
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10.	
11.	
12.	
13.	
14.	
15.	

.....
Programme leader

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Agreement¹¹

Concluded between Váltó-sáv Alapítvány and(mother's name:

....., date and place of birth:
.....) in regard to providing accommodation in the half-way house of Váltó-sáv Alapítvány under the following conditions:

1. undertakes:

- That by signing this agreement, has acknowledged the rules of the halfway flat and agree to abide by them.
- Agrees to work during the period of occupancy (in the absence of work, you will look for a job).
- Agrees to a regular pre-saving payment of at least HUF 10,000 per month or 20% of his/her current salary. In case of monthly payment of the salary amount, the HUF 10,000 amount must be paid in one lump sum. Payment of the amount must be made by 7pm on Friday of the week in question.
- The amount collected during the pre-savings period may be used during the project period only in a manner agreed in advance with the helpers. The minimum amount of the pre-savings is HUF 10,000, which is compulsory for all beneficiaries of the programme.
- To participate in group sessions, pre-arranged training, recreational programmes and individual development programmes in order to establish his/her independent living skills.
- To prepare a weekly plan and a weekly report (with a different distribution if requested).

Date of moving in to the halfway flat:

Expected end day :

¹¹ Service contract

2. Váltó-sáv Alapítvány undertakes:

- To provide accommodation in an apartment rented by Váltó-sáv Alapítvány (maximum capacity: 5-6 persons).
- To provide the necessary conditions for housing (cleaning, bathing, resting, etc.) in the apartment rented by Váltó-sáv Alapítvány.
- To provide group and individual development programmes, trainings, recreational programmes and individual support.
- To help in finding a job, finding employment, and solving other life problems.

.....acknowledges that the housing provided under this Agreement will cease in the following circumstances:

- breach/non-compliance with any of the terms of the agreement,
- breach of the house rules

This Agreement may be amended by mutual agreement between Váltó-sáv Alapítvány and

.....

Budapest,

.....

client's signature

.....

helper's signature

.....

Mészáros Mercedes
professional leader
Váltó-sáv Alapítvány

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Weekly plan

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Weekly report





Niovi Stavropoulou:
The journey towards Social Re-integration- Halfway Accommodation
Hostel in Greece

AMAKA ASTIKI MI KORDOSKOPIKI ETAIPIA

INTRODUCTION

Most offenders face significant social reintegration issues after their release. These include family and community stigmatization, difficulty in finding jobs or accommodation, return to formal education or develop individual capacity and social networks. Other factors that may cause offenders' relapse are early victimization, learning disabilities, substance dependence, lack of social support and weak family relationships. Unless they receive support to manage these issues, they face the risk of sliding back into undesirable or unhealthy behavior, and getting caught up in a vicious cycle of failed social reintegration and social marginalization. Thus emphasis should be placed on interventions aimed at promoting desistance from crime and facilitate the social adaptation of offenders after their release in order to prevent recidivism.

Social reintegration is not only a duty of the State but a fundamental right of citizens. In this sense, social reintegration is considered the right of citizens to equal opportunities for reintegration, which entails the obligation of the state to ensure the conditions that allow the social reintegration of those released from prison.

In Greece, social reintegration as a social right is based on the constitutional principle of the welfare state which is reflected in the Hellenic constitution: "the respect and protection of the value of the human being are the primary obligation of the State" (article 2/paragraph 1 of the constitution) while article 4 paragraph 1 declares that the principle of equality as a basic principle of social coexistence "Greeks are equal before the law". Finally, the article 5 highlights that "everyone has the right to freely develop his/her personality and to participate in the social, economic and political life of the Country, as long as he/she does not infringe the rights of others and does not violate the Constitution or morals".

NATIONAL CONTEXT: REINTEGRATION AND HOUSING PROGRAMS IN GREECE

Over time, incarceration can lead to a decline in the person's functionality in the outside world involving disruption of the family and social relationships (Kushel et al. 2005, p.1747) and lack of housing after release or even precarious and inappropriate housing conditions that hinder any serious attempt of reintegration.

In a period characterized by exclusion of the individual and significant difficulty in accessing basic social services and benefits, the lack of housing creates a vicious circle in which incarceration leads to homelessness and homelessness in turn can, among other risk factors, contribute to a new incarceration (Kushel et.al 2005, p. 1747). As also pointed out by British research, the lack of housing is a frequent phenomenon in the cases of high recidivism minor crime (Zaraphonitou 2004, p.233). In general the research literature seems to compare the existence of a link between the lack of housing stability and the history of incarceration, demonstrating that during periods of homelessness the risk of recidivism significantly increases. The reported difficulties are linked to a combination of socio-legal and psychological factors as well as with the incarceration itself or even the earlier life of the released.

Halfway Accommodation comes to tackle this phenomenon by providing a “structured, controlled residence combined with the freedom of residents to seek employment and other activities in the free community” (Latessa & Travis, 1991, p. 54). Previous studies show that offenders who participated in Halfway Accommodation programming are at less risk for recidivism compared to nonparticipants (Austin, 2001; Lowenkamp & Latessa, 2005).

In Greece there is only one official, governmental facility called “EPANODOS”, which provides Halfway Accommodation as part of its whole re-integration strategy. “EPANODOS” organisation belongs to the competence of the Ministry of Justice, Transparency and Human Rights and provides vocational training, rehabilitation, financial support, and the preparation and promotion of the general social reintegration of prisoners as well as those released from prison. But most important, it supports released people in matters of housing and work. In the next part EPANODOS mid-term housing program will be presented in more detail.

PART ONE: EPANODOS HOUSING PROGRAM

AMAKA based the information provided here on a pilot research which was divided in 2 steps. This pilot study had 5-month duration in total. For the purpose of this IO, AMAKA NGO got in contact with EPANODOS organization. The research steps involved:

1. Communication with EPANODOS’ staff and desk research: This involves EPANODOS official regulation and operational plan. The information provided in Part One and Part Two of the current dis drawn from a desk research about Governmental information on social reintegration services in Greece and EPANODOS services. Some of the information here was provided by the professionals working at EPANODOS and the material they provided to AMAKA’s researchers.
2. Interviews with ex-detainees and service users of EPANODOS: The methodology applied is further analyzed in Part 3 of the current document.

Description of EPANODOS organizational structure

In the context of the institution's policy, EPANODOS housing program is structured in three levels: (a) short-term, (b) medium-term and (c) long-term.

(a) The short-term stay includes the accommodation of serviced released prisoners in partner hotels. The referral of those served to the hotels is made by EPANODO's consulting group executives and includes a few days of hospitality. 1-20 days

(b) Medium-term stay refers to the stay of those served in the EPANODO **Temporary Accommodation Hostel for Released Persons**. Referrals to the Hostel are made by EPANODO's consulting group staff. The duration of the stay at this stage is from three to six months, the limits can be modified according to the course of the guest after recommendation from the manager of the hostel

(c) The third level refers to a longer-term housing perspective that includes subsidized accommodation from EPANODOS and special supervision in an apartment, or referral to a subsidized housing program of another cooperating agency. This third level is for people who have already been accommodated in the temporary accommodation hostel and based on the assessment of the manager and their overall course they are in the process of immediate re-integration.

Due to the special features of each intervention (short term/mid-term/long term), we will only present the Mid-term housing, named by Epanodos “**Temporary Accommodation Hostel**”.

The **Temporary Accommodation Hostel** aims to bridge the gap between custodial and community living by facilitating offenders substantial interaction with the community and contact with their family and with potential employers.

The flats reside at the same building of EPANODOS central headquarters. In this way residents are provided with much more than a safe place to stay. Being in the same building with the offices, they have immediate access to the various services which are provided to both residents and non-residents, such as vocational training, employment promotion, rehabilitation, financial support and the preparation and promotion of social reintegration in general.

Specifically "EPANODOS":

- a) Implements psychological evaluations of the residents in order to join the appropriate program of counselling, psychosocial support, professional training and promotion in the labor market
- b) Offers psychosocial support programs
- d) Informs residents on issues concerning their legal and social situation, their psychological support and the development of social assistance in favor of them and their families,
- e) Implements therapeutic and counselling programs for former drug users in cooperation with other actors.

Residents' Characteristics

The groups of beneficiaries of EPANODOS housing program present some specific demographic characteristics. They have low educational, social and economic level and are disappointed, closed in themselves and most often with a lack of trust in other people. Especially when it comes to people who may have been incarcerated for a number of years, we can see strong elements of institutionalisation as well as a significant lack of social skills. In other words, due to limited or non-existent contact with the "outside" world and living in a very specific, almost unchanged in its characteristics environment, individuals become especially phobic when they are released, flooded among other things with feelings of suspicion, anger and with shattered self-esteem. No age limit exists for the inclusion of beneficiaries for their inclusion in the services.

Counselling and Psychosocial Support

The Counselling and Psychosocial Support Sector is the most extensive and developed action of EPANODOS. It is the kind of support that frames all the others. The sector is staffed by external partners (social worker, psychologists, legal advisers and employment advisers) and offers integrated services of psychological support, legal advice and employment advice. It consists of empowering and mobilising the individual in order to successfully carry out all the individual steps of his/her personal plan. It also includes counselling regarding the person's basic relationships with their loved ones. EPANODOS often comes into contact with some of their relatives or friends, by phone or in person. It is sought that these persons meet in the presence of the released person or at least with his/her knowledge, so that the relationship of trust with the beneficiary is not broken. Most of the times the psychological empowerment of the relatives is helpful and supportive for the offender as well.

Material Supplies

The material benefits of EPANODOS are very limited. In particular, financial benefits are almost non-existent. Neither the philosophy nor the role of the organisation is financial support. EPANODOS aims to reintegrate ex-prisoners by activating and mobilising them. The effort must also come from them. Such actions boost the client's self-confidence and integrate him socially. In addition to the above, and within the framework of the counselling relationship, the released person is provided with calling cards and tickets are also provided free of charge (on a case-by-case basis and after assessing the circumstances) to those released from prison, in order to facilitate communication with their familiar environment and their movement during the first period after their release.

Since 2013, EPANODOS provides also vouchers for dining at a contracted restaurant to its benefits. Depending on the needs of the person served, the days of providing the coupon are also given.

In overall, the main goal of EPANODOS is the provision of psychosocial support for released prisoners and their comprehensive social reintegration. Specifically, the facilitation of each released person to assume personal responsibility for his/her smooth reintegration and the development of the required motivation towards this direction.

EPANODOS, in other words, doesn't provide "chewed food", but the necessary actions are planned and implemented, so that the released people can take responsibility for their life by mobilizing all their potential. Of course, it would be desirable if there was the possibility for greater material benefits, especially in the case of people facing particularly critical problems, such as a physical disability, a very serious illness, advanced age or even a complete lack of a supportive environment.

PART TWO: OFFICIAL REGULATION AND OPERATIONAL PLAN OF MID-TERM EPANODOS HOUSING PROGRAM

The official regulation and operational plan includes the principles, goals, policy, rules and operational procedures of the Mid-term housing program.

Framework of principles

The work with the residents is committed to human dignity in the principles enshrined in the United Nations Charter in the Constitution and national and international law. The work with temporary residents is free from any form of prejudice and discrimination on the basis of economic and social origin, educational level, nationality, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, physical abilities, sexual orientation and their legal status.

Principles that abide both professionals and beneficiaries

- confidentiality is ensured at all levels
- fair treatment is provided
- interdisciplinary cooperation is sought

Goals

- the hostel accommodates male adults released from prison.
- the hostel is a safe framework during the transitional period of release.
- it plays a decisive role for the subsequent reintegration process of the released individuals.
- it provides the appropriate psycho-social and legal support to released individuals in order to deal with the problems that arise from the condition of recent incarceration
- It helps combat stigma by connecting people with the community

Hours and days of operation

- the hostel operates 24 hrs a day throughout the year.
- supervision of the hostel is carried out by the manager of the hostel who is appointed by the Board of Directors of the transition services.
- the hostel provides people released from prison hospitality, psychological social and legal support from a specialised scientific staff as well as support in learning skills through psychosocial workshops.
- the hostel facilitates networking with other agencies in case it is deemed necessary according to the special needs and requests of the guests.

Policy

In terms of hospitality, the hostel offers accommodation that includes housing and food. At the same time it financially supports the travel of the guests. The food is supported by a weekly allowance of €30 which is granted in the form of checks that can be cashed in a supermarket. Cards of 10 tickets per week are also provided for travel. In the event of a major need related to the facilitation of the reintegration of the guest, emergency extra financial aid is provided.

Psychosocial Support

- Regular sessions of individual psychological counselling with the aim to help in setting goals and organising an action plan
- The empowerment and emotional support in the implementation of the plan at all the duration of the stay
- Group sessions aimed at cultivating skills
- Continuous evaluation of the clinical picture of the guests and referral to a psychologist in case of appearance of dysfunctional elements
- Continuous cooperation with the other counsellors, (psychologist, legal, employment counsellor) who monitor the guest and evaluate the course
- Reformulation of the plan in case it is deemed necessary
- Referral to a social worker for issues related to access to health and connection with other housing agencies.

Admission to the hostel

The referral to the hostel is made by a counsellor. In case the counsellor assesses a candidate suitable for accommodation in the hostel, he/she is referred to the manager of the hostel. The manager starts the evaluation process for admission to the hostel. The process lasts three to four weeks and includes taking a psychosocial history, referring him/her in consultation with

the legal and labor support advisors and the competent social worker, assigning projects according to the needs of the candidate and monitoring his/her progress.

Evaluation

A short evaluation report is made by the manager of the hostel which also includes the comments of the other advisors who monitor the candidate regarding the issues related to each specialty and a recommendation is made to the director. The director informs the Board of Directors of the positive or negative outcome of the case. In case of disagreement between the presenters or between the presenters and the director, the Board of Directors decides. In collaboration with the consultants involved, the estimated time of stay at the hostel is defined and announced to the prospective guest.

Inclusion requirements

Prisoners/detainees who are soon to be released are informed about the existent social reintegration services in Greece, by the social service of the penal institutions. After their release they are able to contact EPANODOS service and make a request for accommodation and support. In some cases, ex-detainees are directly referred to EPANODOS services by the social service of the prison but, as mentioned during the interviews of the current study, ex-detainees rarely follow these referrals. Those who are reaching out to EPANODOS and are about to be accommodated are thoroughly informed. They are asked to sign a consent form/reintegration contract which includes the rules governing the operation of the hostel. This is facilitated by the Professional who is responsible for the management of the Hostel and for the intakes. The contract includes the regulations of the flat and everything that is needed for the smooth living of the guests within the structure. The hostel and its staff commits to the provision of specific services and guarantees of specific human rights. The ex-detainees as well commit themselves to the obligations arising from their hospitality and to the compliance of the operating rules of the service. EPANODOS Housing facility in Athens can host up to 5 people. The entry requirements of the EPANDOS are:

- low socioeconomic status,
- penalty decision of release
- absence of severe psychiatric disorder followed by the psychiatric assessment (including drug dependence and abuse)
- absence of a serious motor/sensorimotor/intellectual disability or assessment on the level of autonomy/self-functionality (based on psychological assessment)
- willingness to conform with the regulations of EPANODOS Housing facility
- willingness to search of a legal occupation/work reintegration

After the decision of accepting an ex-offender for accommodation, ongoing evaluation takes place for assessing the compliance (particular emphasis is placed on the drug and violence-free regulation of the services).

Duration of stay

The hostel operates as a mid-term stay accommodation and the stay period is defined from three to six months. The person in charge of the hostel monitors and evaluates the course of the guest in collaboration with the group of consultants. The overall evaluation of the course of the guest is carried out in relation to the initial goals and based on this, the continuation or

the termination of the stay is decided. Upon completion of the evaluation process, the board of directors is informed of any changes and developments. The accommodation may be prolonged in some cases, depending on the service availability, individual needs and status of the beneficiaries.

Removal procedure

In case of non-compliance with the regulations of the hostel, the following procedure is provided:

- a. recommendation from the manager of the hostel
- b. inform the counsellor who monitors the guest of the recommendation
- c. in the case of a second recommendation, the guest is informed that he/she must leave the hostel
- d. the board of directors is informed by the management about the removal of the guest

It is stated that beneficiaries have been expelled from the facility in the past, mostly for issues related with illegal activity, violence or drug abuse.

Rules of the Hostel

- We do not allow visitors
- We are responsible for keeping our room in the house clean
- We are expected to be back in the hostel every day at 11 PM not later
- Only on Saturday we can return later after we have informed others in the house
- Entering the hostel we are careful not to disturb others
- We keep our voice down, we don't make loud noises and don't play music loud - in general we try not to disturb the others
- No smoking in the common areas.
- No drugs or alcohol allowed
- We can smoke in the balcony or in the room if we keep the window open and ventilate the space.
- We take care of the electric equipment - we don't leave them working unattended
- We don't leave the light on without reason.
- It is obligatory to lock the outside door and close the balcony when we are away
- In general we keep the hostel secure and safe
- We take care of our personal hygiene.
- We don't cause any damage to the hostel
- We keep the schedule, the meetings and the action plan
- Our presence in the team meetings is obligatory
- We take care of our own stuff and their money upon
- Others have no responsibility for my security during my staying in the hostel and cannot be held responsible in the event that something happens to me by deliberate or un-deliberate action and/or by another person

What are the duties of a manager

- Referral to EPANODOS workshops
- Liaison with other agencies
- Escorting or the arrangement of escorting in critical issues of the guest in case there is a request from the same

- Care for educational or recreational visits that promote the reintegration effort,
- Preparation for leaving the hostel,
- Conducting follow-up sessions upon the departure of the guest from the guesthouse
- Conducting follow up sessions with the departure of the guest from the hostel

PART THREE: EVALUATION OF THE TEMPORARY HOUSING PROGRAM

AMAKA followed a qualitative methodology in order to develop IO9. The purpose of this pilot study was to evaluate the impact of the Temporary Housing Program and to explore the perceptions of the people who turned to the specific reintegration structure and whether they consider their reintegration successful. Short semi structured interviews were conducted by AMAKA's researchers with service users who have experienced imprisonment and have benefited by the EPANODOS Temporary Housing Program service in the past. The semi-structured interview is a data collection method that relies on asking questions within a predetermined thematic framework. However, the questions are not set in order or in phrasing. In research, semi-structured interviews are qualitative in nature; they serve as a guide for the interviewer who establishes new questions during the flow of the interview. They are common in field social research, giving everyone the same theoretical framework, but allowing them to investigate different facets of the research question (Cooligan, 2009).

The interviews were conducted individually, face-to-face or via telephone depending on participants' preference. Each interview had 15-25 minutes duration and in total 4 interviews were conducted. Participants testified their experience and the impact the facility has had in their lives and experience of being re-integrated in the community. Potential participants were provided with basic information about the study in order to establish their interest. Out of 9 participants only 3 were included in this report based on criteria of reference with the purpose of the project and objectives, based on their availability, willingness and informed consent to participate. The recruitment strategy followed the Exponential Non-Discriminative snowball sampling method (Cooligan, 2009). According to this type, the first subject was recruited from a visit to Epanodos Temporary Housing Apartments and then he/she provided multiple referrals, which only 4 were possible to reach. Following the British Psychological Society Code of Research Ethics (BPS, 2019) and due to GDPR and confidentiality issues of EPANODOS limited information and details of the personal characteristics of the beneficiaries are provided. Following the confidentiality value of social research, participants are referred with pseudonyms.

Interview 1.

How did you find yourself in prison?

"I found myself in prison after quite a long life-journey, at first for minor offences and then participation in thefts and trafficking".

How was the first period after you got out of prison? How did you learn about Epanodos?

"I was lucky enough to be told by one of my own people. I came here, found some acquaintances, from prison, from my past life. I had come for the first time shortly before my release from prison. But I had come very angry and thought they were making fun of me. I thought "better homeless" and I left. It was also the remains of the prison so the first contact

was not successful. After some days I came back because I wanted to be close to people who are facing the same reintegration problems as me."

What changed after being released?

"Everything and nothing. I am 5 years out of prison. I have the same reasoning as before. And for society and for everything. About how hard things are. And it's not just for me, it also applies to the others who haven't been to prison. As a mood, I feel that there is someone supporting me. Some person who is inside things with laws and rules supports me. Now I am working in the street magazine Schedia as an accredited vendor and live on lease in a small apartment in Athens. Having this job and my own house is very important for me. It gives me decency and motivation to keep on. "

Panagiotis, 40 years old, 5 years imprisonment

Interview 2.

How did you find yourself in prison?

"Trafficking was the main reason I got into delinquency and generally some bad stuff."

How was the first period after you got out of prison? How did you learn about EPANODOS?

"The social worker from prison sent me. I had in mind the RETURN. I had it in my mind that as an organized framework it takes care of finding the prisoner a house and job. I told my story, we understood each other well. They put me on. I knew then that I will have a place to stay, sit down, wake up in the morning, see my to-do list and come back to meet the consultant and talk about work. I wanted my own job more. Can someone find it for me? Can there be a framework that will break the image of the prisoner?"

it was a tremendous help to me that EPANODOS existed."

What changed after being released?

"I think I am very well. I live with my sister and work as gardener. I feel that I have returned, I feel that my family and my surroundings see me with a different eye, I know very well in my heart that no one forgets what I have done and I don't want to forget them either, because I am afraid of not doing them again. I try very hard."

Sakis, 43 years old, 4 years imprisonment

Interview 3.

How did you find yourself in prison?

"Well, the reason was drug trafficking."

How was the first period after you got out of prison? How did you learn about EPANODOS?

"When I was released, I had no place to stay, no family to look after me, not even a plate of food. The social worker from prison told me about EPANODOS. I came straight from prison with my suitcase. Coming to EPANODOS was the best thing that happened to me at that time. You don't start from scratch "where will I stay, what will I eat". However in the beginning the hardest part was "what am I going to do now that I'm out?". I was so scared that I didn't want to leave the flat the first days. I thought that if people outside looked at me they would know all about me, being a prisoner and everything. I guess I was just lucky because actually, from what I hear from others who have been released, if you don't find support at the beginning, the risk of doing the same thing and ending up in prison again is high. I am lucky that I had EPANODOS."

What changed after being released?

"I think about what I have experienced in prison and I get scared. I'm glad I'm out of jail and I don't have to turn around to see who's behind me. I've acquired a lack of risk and I'm proud of that. I entered this world, I came out. I have been out of prison for 10 years but unfortunately I still feel like I don't have many solutions. I work as a builder now and still I don't want to say my last name because I'm afraid I'll be fired from my job tomorrow. Nowadays I live on lease in a small apartment in the suburbs of Athens"

Christos, 46 years old, 5 years imprisonment

Conclusions:

The purpose was to evaluate the impact of the Temporary Housing Program and to explore the perceptions of the people who turned to the specific reintegration structure and whether they consider their reintegration successful. Firstly, we notice that in all cases the interviewees mention that their contact with EPANODOS was mostly positive. Negative experiences of participants were focused mainly on the lack of services support or the lack of information where to get support before they reached EPANODOS services. Participants mentioned that in this way they "got in-line" by solving the tormenting questions like "what am I going to do now that I'm out" and that "I have to find a place to stay, and I also have to find a job". These statements allow us to conclude that Temporary Accommodation Hostels, including psychosocial programs, vocational trainings and employment opportunities enhance reintegration into society. It empowers released people to overcome the "stigma of incarceration" with their release and make a new start in free society, away from illegal activity, after serving their sentence.

Two interviewees emphasized the importance of building a professional identity after release, recognizing that the work keeps them alert and apparently away from delinquency. and one highlighted the need to be close to people who have the same reintegration problems". Both mentioned that the reintegration process was a traumatic experience but they had to go through it because they feel that they owe it either to themselves or to their family.

Finally, an important part of the process is the desire to take charge of their life. Housing solved many problems, but work reintegration seems to be of most importance responding to the current needs of the released.

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APPENDIX 1

Semi-structure interview guide

1. Building rapport & introductory questions
 - "Is this the first time you've tried something like this?"
 - "How are you feeling about this?"
 - "Do you think there's anything I can do to make this easier for you?"
2. Experiences led to imprisonment
 - Would you like to share some past experience concerning your life prior to imprisonment?
 - Why were you imprisoned?
 - Did you have a happy childhood?
3. Experience of imprisonment
 - What was the worse thing you experienced during your incarceration?
 - Did you have any moment worth keeping?
 - Did the experience make you stronger?
4. Preparation for release, barriers of reintegration
 - Was there any re-integration program in the prison?
 - Did you participate? Did it help you at that time?
 - Did the reintegration program helped you long-term?
5. Services support & the experience of being a service user
 - Did you have any support after your release?
 - Do you feel re-integrated?
 - Did EPANODOS service helped you to start a new life?

The interview summed up four set of questions:

- How did you find yourself in prison?
- How was the first period after you got out of prison? How did you learn about EPANODOS?
- What changed after being released?

Tünde Ricz Dencs
Possibilities for the development of social and life management competence:
story/tale therapy development program in the Halfway Flat Program
Udruzenje za mentalnu higijenu Antropos / Antropos Mental Hygiene
Association

Antropos Mental Hygiene Association presents a series of 3 hour tale therapy sessions consisting of five sessions, the aim of which is to facilitate the reintegration of the residents of the half way house. The further goals of the tale therapy workshop series are to review and work on the feelings and experiences that newly released people face on a daily basis. It also aims to use their existing competences in a more conscious way and in accordance with social norms. During the workshop series, they face their limiting beliefs and eliminate them to the best of their ability. Since the series of workshops also form an independent unit, it is possible for someone not to be present from the first occasion and still be able to "profit" from it or to participate in all five sessions. Furthermore, at the end of each workshop, they are given a task that can be implemented in real life, which creates the opportunity to implement in practice what was said during the session. Each session has its own goal, which is described below.

The sessions are built around a fairy/folk tale, which is told during the session. In all cases told and not read. Based on several schools and experimental methodologies, fairy/folk tales have a positive effect on the development of all competencies. With regular storytelling, social competence, mother tongue and thinking can be developed spontaneously.

Focused, simultaneous external and inward attention helps to activate the creative imagination while listening to fairy/folk tales. During the process, internal images are formed and rearranged. A shared story time is a unique experience.

Listening to and working with fairy/folk tales can reduce stress, relieve depression and improve concentration.

The following workshop management suggestions apply to all sessions:

- Sitting in a circle (this creates an opportunity for the group leader to see everyone, and for everyone to see him/her.)

- Everyone repeats the following sentences:

“I only focus on myself, on my own thoughts, imagination and feelings.”

“I'm honest.”

“I do not turn towards my companions with ill intentions or malice.”

The workshops below are designed for, but not limited to, the residents of the halfway house. The sessions are designed to be usable for all target groups who are in the process of reintegration. For example, they can be used in prisons, in addiction care systems, or even in sessions for homeless people. For each session, we will indicate what changes are proposed for larger headcounts.

Workshop no.1

I have a lot of work ahead of me!

Aim

To direct the focus of the participants to the here-and-now, to map out everything they have, to help them to distinguish the essential from the non-essential, to support them in the process of organization, to recognize and use their existing different resources, their coping strategies, and to strengthen the adaptive ones.

Area of competence affected: social competence

Competencies to be developed

Individual survival, preservation and improvement of the quality of life through the development of personal competencies.

The following will also be emphasized in this workshop:

- knowledge of the basic rules of social behavior
- internalizing positive patterns
- introducing and developing methods and rules for asserting interests
- tolerance, relationship-building ability, conflict management ability
- ability to help and cooperate, ability to debate, social evaluation ability
- developing the ability to think in the present
- development of prioritization

Brief theoretical background

One of the biggest challenges of the period after release is reintegration into the outside world. There are also "visible" stages of this process, such as getting the appropriate documents, finding and keeping a job, finding a long-term solution to the housing issue, and there are those processes that take place from within, in the souls of those who have just been released. We are convinced that these processes cannot be separated bluntly, because what happens "outside" affects the processes "inside" and vice versa. In this session, which optimally takes place in the period after release, we go through the triad of independence (differentiation) - flexible adaptation - integration. By becoming independent in this case, we mean working with internal motivation, a sense of responsibility and independence, and by flexible adaptation we mean working with feelings of anger, sorrow, letting go, as well as increasing bearing capacity. In the process of organizing, we emphasize self-control, tact, and motivation for deliberate action.

The French folktale (The Boat That Went Both on Land and on Water) fits well with this trio, in which the hero of the folktale has to prove himself several times while being in a disadvantaged position (not being as skillful as his brother and not knowing right away what he'll do in order to solve the task). The folktale hero walks the above mentioned threefold path, and his life's journey also helps to provide a guide to the "how to". Working with the folktale creates an opportunity to recognize what skills need to be balanced in order to win the princess and the kingdom. Integrating the helpers in the folktale as parts of the self enables the victory of starting from a disadvantage.

Presentation of the workshop plan

Tools:

- ↳ DIXIT card
- ↳ Pictures showing foods, drinks, technical equipment, forms of exercise, entertainment devices
- ↳ Large paper
- ↳ Felt-tip pens
- ↳ Questions printed on colored paper (as many as there are participants)

Check-in circle/getting to know each other: choose a DIXIT card that best represents you.

In tune with the tale/each other:

Try to group the following pictures according to some system and justify why you did so? (The pictures show foods, drinks, all kinds of technical equipment, forms of exercise and entertainment devices.)

Storytelling: I. The Boat That Went Both on Land and on Water (French Folktale)¹²(see the text of the tale in the appendix!)

Questions related to the folktale:

1. How did the tale affect you?
2. Which tale image touched you?
3. What did the hero of the tale know?
4. Let's list what this folktale hero does:
 - goes into the forest
 - tries to do something, even though he does not know where to start
 - being respectful
 - takes advice
 - sorts out the essential from the non-essential
 - pays attention
 - connects, recognizes different abilities, finds companions
 - forgives

(Do the task together, write the answers on a large piece of paper and place them in a clearly visible place)

Personalized questions/tasks related to the folktale:

1. The hero of the folktale had special companions whose skills helped him to victory. What skills do you have? What makes you special? What are your abilities?
2. Guideline:
 - Where are you going?
 - What should you pay attention to?
 - Who should you be kind/respectful to?
 - What advice should you take?
 - What is important and what is unimportant in your life right now?
 - What should you pay attention to?
 - What abilities do you need to connect/activate?
 - From what situations should you not back down?

¹²https://www.mordent.com/folktales/french/boat/index.html?fbclid=IwAR2oZUBGAoMiudBShZsh770cp7tcY2iQIsI3x-OGTetds_wd-UM6-R-Qg

Where should you place your various skills?
Where should you rule?
(Hand out the questions that were written down in advance on colored paper)

Homework

In the upcoming period, observe how well you manage to operate according to the answers to the above questions.

When you succeed, put a smiley face/plus next to it, and if you don't (e.g. you played too much on your phone - important-irrelevant), then a sad face/minus.

Closing round: How are you now? What feelings and experiences do you leave with?

Methodological guide for workshop leaders

With the help of the **DIXIT cards** used in the check in round, on the one hand, the association skills of the participants are assessed, and on the other hand, the process of thinking in images are helped. If a participant has difficulty introducing him/herself with the cards, we can help with additional questions (e.g. I see a star in the picture, what does that say about you). In all cases, we deal out more cards than there are participants. It may happen that a participant cannot choose or would choose more than one card. In this case, too, it is worth encouraging him/her with helpful questions, and if he/she chooses several cards, encourage him/her to talk about the one that best describes him/her. An instruction may also be given that the best choice is always the one we selected first.

In the **matching task**, participants practice setting priorities. One optimal solution is that drinks, food, different forms of movement, technical equipment, etc. are grouped separately, but of course there is more than one solution, if the participants who solve the tasks individually and do other solutions (e.g. put them together by color) are accepted. It is worth asking why they were grouped as they did. With this, we develop their reasoning technique and communication skills. Of course, if someone does not want to participate in this exercise, we accept that too. If we are working with a larger group, in other environments this can be a group task from a time-saving point of view.

We can also ask for feedback on how they felt about this task (did they succeed in realizing their ideas, what obstacles they encountered, how they were overcome). Giving feedback is not mandatory, but an option (if someone doesn't want to share his/her opinion it should be respected).

When processing the questions related to the folktale, it is optimal if all participants speak, but if someone does not want to participate, it should be respected. It is important to highlight that there is, no wrong answer, all answers are accepted, while supporting them in sharing their feelings and articulating their inner content more precisely.

With the individual tasks related to the folktale, we may encounter some resistance when trying to figure out their uniqueness or what abilities they have. This can be solved by, on the one hand, helping them by telling them that everyone is special, and on the other hand, everyone knows something that they do a little better than the people they know. It is not worth going through this task quickly and superficially, because they focus on their resources. We answer the questions printed on pre-prepared colored paper together, but everyone applies them to themselves, and then there is a joint sharing. During this, the workshop leader helps

to make them as specific as possible. By answering the questions, they actually get a guide as to what they have to do in the coming period.

Workshop no.2

Pick up the thread of your life!

Aim

Placing the emphasis on the activation of the active force, and further discussing the essential and non-essential questions of life, priorities. By essential and non-essential life questions, we actually mean an order of importance. The prioritization of what is important, so that the person can distinguish between what is no longer viable or past its time (e.g. dwelling on past events) or not yet in time (e.g. cool cars, trips, etc.) and what is important in the here and now. We do not want to establish an order of importance between the values, but to shift the focus from the unimportant (not current, it is not the time) to the important. To activate their acting part with situational exercises and various role-playing games.

Area of competence affected: social competence

Competence to be developed

Within the category of autonomous action, the following is considered as the most important competencies:

1. Action with a comprehensive approach or with broad connections in mind
2. The development and implementation of life plans and personal ideas
3. The competence to emphasize and assert one's own rights, interests, limitations and needs

Brief theoretical background

Autonomous action combines two central, interrelated ideas: on the one hand, the development of self-determination and personal identity (including the value system), and on the other hand, the practice of relative autonomy in the sense that in the given context, the person him/herself decides what role he/she wants to play and implements it in an active and responsible manner, constantly reflecting on it. All this means that the individual needs competences that provide him/her with the opportunity and ability to develop his/her self-image and express it in an appropriate way, to exercise his/her rights and take responsibility in various areas of life. This usually requires a future orientation, a sensible life plan.

The period after release from prison presents a range of emotions (from initial euphoria to despair). In the meantime, however, the active force must be kept alive, because it will actually be one of the keys to a fuller life. Below you can read an outline of a tale self-knowledge session that is meant to activate and keep this alive. Mother Holle's tale has many analogies with the reintegration process. The yarn cuts the girl's finger, and her blood stains the yarn. We can look at the thread, as the thread of life, and when it gets stained, it also stains fate. In her great effort to wash the yarn clean, the spool from her hand and it falls into the well. These images are decisive even for those who are just starting their lives anew. What is lost must be found. You have to jump into the well and look for what was lost. In terms of the target group, it symbolizes "jumping into" the outside life. At the bottom of the fairy-tale well, the girl starts to rebuild herself, for which she needs bread and apples. More specifically, the ability to sort out what is no longer viable or out of date are needed (burnt bread, rotten apples) and also what has not yet come of age (raw pasta, unripe apples). In this way, the tale conveys an important message: let us not lament the past, let us not deal with things that are far away, but rather focus on what is in the present, the time for which has just come. The

possibility of learning how to deal with time is extremely important: doing something just in time.

Meeting with Mother Holle means acquiring the ability to be happy. To bring pleasure to oneself and others. Those who can pick up the thread of their life again and become able to act will have a golden dress.

The story of the pitchy girl serves as a counterexample: the reward for work not done on time is pitch.

Presentation of workshop plan

Tools:

- ↳ Scones
- ↳ Yarn on sticks
- ↳ Scarves
- ↳ Apple and bread silhouettes
- ↳ Felt-tip pens
- ↳ Stationery paper
- ↳ Gilded paper coins

Entering the fairytale space: What are you doing all the way out here? Are you looking for something or are you running from something? For the road, take a scone baked in ashes. (Tools: scone)

Now that you have entered, choose from the yarns on the floor the one that most appeals to you. (Tools: yarn on sticks)

What does this thread say about your life? (Everyone introduces themselves based on the chosen thread.)

Fantasy well

The group leader builds a fantasy well out of scarfs and tells the group that this well can contain anything: tangible objects and intangible things as well.

Each group member should draw a full bucket of "something" from the well that they need very much right now. For each item, everyone determines exactly how and for what they will use the thing they pulled out. After every tangible thing, an intangible things must also be pulled out.

Storytelling

I have brought you a tale where both the well and the yarn play a big role. (Tool: Koshi¹³)

Mother Holle (fairy tale by the Brothers Grimm) ¹⁴ (see the text of the tale in the appendix!)

Questions related to the story:

1. How did the story affect you?
2. Which fairytale image touched you?
3. What path does the diligent girl take in the story?
4. What does the diligent girl have to learn at the bottom of the well?

¹³ <https://windchimesaustralia.com.au/koshi-wind-chimes/>

¹⁴ <https://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/lfb/re/refb32.htm>

Activities related to fairy tale

Put the apple and the bread loaf silhouettes into the previously built well, and then ask the participants to "jump into it" one by one and pick up apples and bread loafs according to the following criteria:

- What is no longer viable in their lives, what do they have to let go of? (rotten apples, burnt bread loaf)
- What is not in time yet? (raw pasta, unripe apples)
- What is it that is in the right state that they are dealing with here and now? (Tools: apple and bread loaf silhouettes)

The silhouettes taken out are labeled, they can even be colored if there is enough time for it, then they are put into groups and feedback is given.

Now let's look at the apples and bread loafs that are just right. What is on them?

Let's write them on a piece of paper! Then we will write next to it what needs to be done, and when will this happen?

For example, I have to find a job - I have to write my resume - after the workshop.

Homework

Next to the prepared action plan, write a smiley face if it was implemented, a sad face if it was not, in the case of the latter, you must explain why it was not.

Exit

Everyone can choose a gold coin as a reward for having the courage to "jump into the well" (Tools: gold paper coins)

Methodological guide for workshop leaders

Entering and exiting serves to create a rite, a boundary situation, in order to separate the participants from everyday life, helping them to move away from stereotyped thinking and to see the topics of the workshop in a completely different light. With the unusual question (What are you doing all the way out here?) we actually establish the passage between the cerebral hemispheres. Giving the scone also reinforces the rite of starting the journey, and is also a symbol of departure, because as we know from fairy tales, we never set out on a journey (of self-knowledge) with an empty bag. With the yarn wound on the sticks, on the one hand, we tune the participants to the theme of the tale and the workshop, and on the other hand, we put them in a decision-making situation, because various colors, thickness of yarn must be chosen.

In the **introductory part**, they use these tools while they talk about how this coiled yarn describes their lives. The preparedness of the group leader and the size of the group determine the depth to which he/she allows the participants to introduce themselves. The long introduction and the telling of the life story may take a lot of time, and may bring to light injuries that cannot be ignored by a group leader. Since the theme of the workshop is activating the power of action, the group leader can even ask the participants to introduce themselves by unwinding the yarn from the stick into a ball of yarn.

During the fantasy well session, someone might say, for example, that he/she would want to pull a lot of money out of the well. When pulling out a bucket full of money from the fantasy well, it is important to give reasons and support participants in thinking about the intangible things that might be hidden in the well (e.g. I pulled out a bucket full of money - what would

you use the money for? what would you spend it on? / or I pulled out love - how would love be expressed? how would it show that you love?) It's worth continuing this exercise as long as participants enjoy it (often inspiring each other), but it's always worth doing at least one round at a time.

Before storytelling, the use of the Koshi is recommended because it helps to create focused attention.

For the **post-tale activities**, it is recommended that the bread loaf and apple silhouettes are printed out at a larger size so that they are convenient to write on. Allowing enough time and facilitating the participants to work with the unripe/ripe/rotten apple and raw/just right/burnt bread silhouettes, as this is an important stage of the workshop. It is best to follow the storyline, working on the apples first and then on the bread loafs. In this case, it is also useful to separate the external and internal, thus supporting the creation of a coherent narrative.

For the last task (bread loaf of just the right texture and ripe apple), it is important to list as many specific things as possible and to put them in order of time and action.

Workshop no.3

Decision making (inability)

Aim

To draw awareness to the importance of decision-making, especially with regard to (couple) relationships. Emphasizing the development of social competence, the importance and quality of different relationships. Attempting to eliminate possible communication difficulties in order to facilitate movement in the relationship space.

Area of competence affected: social competence

Competence to be developed: interpersonal competence

The emphasis is placed on the development of communication, decision-making, highlighting, life management, cooperation, problem-solving and critical thinking skills. We focus on all the forms of behavior that are necessary for effective and constructive participation in the life of society and for the resolution of possible conflicts. Which are an essential part of personal and group interaction.

Brief theoretical background

One of the rarely questioned theories of modern societies is that the more options there are, the better. Decades of psychological research support this belief. The ability to make decisions increases internal motivation, perceived control, task performance, and life satisfaction. Based on several social psychological theories (attribution theory, dissonance theory, reactance theory), we can say that even the appearance of a decision has a good effect.

If we want to find the best choice, we have to take into consideration all the possibilities and consequences, and then evaluate them according to our goals, which is a huge job, so we often become indecisive.

Postponing decisions is not only likely when we have to choose from too many alternatives. It may happen that the decision is already difficult between two alternatives. This is particularly typical in the case of conflicting decisions where there is no dominant solution (i.e. there is no choice that is not worse than the others in any aspect, but better in at least one aspect).

*Ruth Chang*¹⁵ philosopher draws attention to the fact that the world of values cannot be measured with real numbers, but we all have the power and ability to create reasons for ourselves as to why we choose what we do. In her opinion "hard choices are precious opportunities for us to celebrate what is special about the human condition, that the reasons that govern our choices as correct or incorrect sometimes run out, and it is here, in the space of hard choices, that we have the power to create reasons for ourselves to become the distinctive people that we are." In the case of difficult choices, we should not think about which option is better, rather we should pay attention to the reasons from within and answer the question: "Who should I be?"

In this case, the decision-making process is brought into the relationship space (i.e. decisions related to the (couple) relationships of the participants come into focus). According to House's¹⁶ theory, social relations affect the social integration of individuals through three main processes: social support, social regulation or control, and social conflicts and demands.

According to him, social support is an interpersonal transaction that includes at least one of the following:

1. Emotional care (love, empathy)
2. Instrumental help (goods, services)
3. Information (about the environment)
4. Appreciation (the information relevant to self-evaluation)

To elaborate on the above topics, we chose a Danish fairy tale as a starting point, in which the decision and the consequences of its inability on the (couple) relationship appear very plastically. The tale shows a model for the beneficial effect of firm and sure choices, and for a relationship free from self-deception and lies. The tale also presents a network of relationships burdened with bad decisions and indecision, which starts to find reassuring solutions when one of the characters starts making decisive decisions. It is important that the fairy tale also helps us by showing how it is possible to make a decision that is not motivated by the grievances and wounds of the past, but by the gained experience.

Presentation of workshop plan

Tools:

- ↳ Basket
- ↳ White and red petals
- ↳ OH cards

Entering:

After entering, participants have to choose between white and red rose petals.

¹⁵ https://www.ted.com/talks/ruth_chang_how_to_make_hard_choices

¹⁶ House, JS - Umberson, D. - Landis, KR (1988) Structures and Processes of Social Support. Annual Review of Sociology, 14, 293–318.

Introduction/Tuning in

Introduction: Why did you choose the petal you did? Did this cause any difficulty?

Ask the participants to form pairs and then take turns reporting their mood by completing the following sentence:

I feel like the forest when...

The task of the member of the couple who listens to it is to try to identify, along the lines of the analogy, what feelings and emotions may prevail in their partner. You have to keep trying until you get it. If he/she succeeds, then the roles change and the other participant of the couple finishes the sentence above. If the participants like this exercise, you can play with other, similar sentences:

My mood is like the sea....

My mood is like a tree that...

I'm in the mood like a bird that...

Storytelling: III. King Dragon (Danish Fairytale)¹⁷ (see the text of the tale in the appendix!)

Questions related to the fairytale:

1. How did the tale affect you?
2. Which fairytale image touched you?
3. What does this fairytale picture say about you, about your life?
4. What causes the first conflict in the fairytale?
5. How are you with the decisions? When did you make a good decision?

Related tasks

Who do I advise?

The group leader randomly distributes as many OH picture card¹⁸ to each participant, as many participants are present in the group. Then asks them to find a situation in their life when a decision had to be made. This can be quite topical. Ask the participants to choose one of the cards in their hand that best represents this decision situation. Set this card aside. The rest will be used later. The first participant lays out his/her chosen card and briefly explains the situation in which he/she has to make a decision, along with the possible choices. The other participants choose one of the cards in their hand, which they think would be a good decision, and give reasons for it. All participants do this. Then follows the second participant, who also narrates the life situation in which a decision must be made, and the others reflect on it.

Before discussing the exercise, participants are asked to recall their question, and then their attention is drawn to the fact that the advice given to others is actually meant for themselves.

Aspects for its discussion:

- Why couldn't I apply to myself the advice I gave?
- What do I plan to do with my own advice after this?
- What and which advice helped in decision-making?

¹⁷ <http://oaks.nvg.org/martg.html>

¹⁸ https://oh-cards.com/index.php?article_id=58&clang=2

Three doors - with imagination

Sit comfortably on the chair, close your eyes and pay attention to your breathing. With each exhalation, the tension leaves you and a comfortable, pleasant relaxed state takes its place. Imagine three different doors you are standing in front of. You can only enter one. Head towards the doors and decide which one to open. In the meantime, notice the changes in your body? Where do you feel these changes? Around your heart, in your head, maybe around your stomach. If you opened the door, look around. There might be an item there for you to bring with you. Once you have this item, slowly come back to this room at your own pace.

Feedback:

With which part of our body do we make a decision (heart, brain, stomach, rationality, emotion, intuitive)? What item did you bring with you (if you did) and what would you use it for?

Homework: draw the object you brought with you.

Closing Round: How did you feel here today? What decision did you make?

Methodological guide for workshop leaders

With the entering and the exiting, we frame and thread the workshop to the topic.

In the “**My mood is like...**” exercise series, the relational space designated as the goal, the interactions between each other, become emphasized. It is important that, if possible, people who have known each other for not too long choose each other. It can be imagined that communicating in images and encoding them into emotions may be difficult for some group members at first, but this obstacle can be overcome with group leader facilitation.

It is important to reflect on the questions related to the fairy tale, but this can also mean that even deep, traumatized content may come to the surface. We should only do this if we have the appropriate competence to handle the situation.

A certain ability to associate is important for the “**Who do I advise?**” exercise. If we judge that this would not work for most of the group members, then we would rather skip this exercise. If we want to assess their association skills, then before the start of the exercise, they should choose a card and test it.

In the case of the “**Three doors – with imagination**” exercise, the level of competence of the group leader also determines the depth of the exercise. If you have adequate qualifications in the field of imagination and relaxation, you can imagine more deeply than described, if you do not have such previous experience and knowledge, then follow the above instructions.

Workshop no.4

In the web of connections

Aim

To develop parenting skills, to present and support attachment patterns, to revise the emotional and active part of child rearing, to review transgenerational messages, to raise awareness of the injuries, and to map transgenerational resources.

Area of competence affected: social competence.

Competence to be developed: parental competence.

Brief theoretical background

One of the fundamental factors of healthy spiritual development is the early attachment between the infant and the parent(s). Based on Bowlby's¹⁹ attachment theory a newborn has an evolutionary, innate need to form a close, lasting relationship - emotionally and physically - in the first year of his/her life. It is important to remember that attachment to the parent is not the innate factor, but the urge, the need to make a relationship close is present.

The bond itself is always two-wayed. On the one hand, it designates the infant, who has innate physical and emotional needs, and on the other hand it designates the attachment person who satisfies these needs and desires, so the attachment, as a bond between caregiver and child, unfolds along the lines of mutual interactions and everyday care. Bonding is formed with the help of regular communication and physical contact with adults, and thus becomes a form of mutual behavior characteristic of the given relationship. The attachment pattern formed in infancy accompanies a person throughout his/her life. We return to this pattern as adults when we form a new relationship or attachment in the course of our lives.

Research on the determining nature of the family socialization function in early childhood and its future-shaping effects in young adulthood points to the connections between the family's structure, composition, way of functioning and the child's personality development, as well as successful integration and functioning in society.

For some individuals with a prison history, family relationships have loosened during the years spent in prison or were no longer protective in the first place.

Deviant family relationships can play a role in the commission of crimes leading to imprisonment, thereby indirectly creating the prison experience. At the same time, deviant family relationships can also provide social support and contribute to increasing self-esteem. It is often difficult to cut ties with friends or family members who live from crime, because they are very important in terms of social support (respect, love, care). What deviant family relationships usually cannot and do not want to provide is the social control that tries to deter the released from committing crimes.²⁰

All these factors play a role in how they judge their own current or future parenthood. The following workshop provides clues in this regard. In the folktale Kisa the Cat, the next generation must lift a heavy curse, because otherwise the family system becomes "immobilized" by losing legs, i.e. stuck in development. In the tale, the good deed that the previous generation was unable to perform appears plastically, and this also gives the opportunity for correction regarding the next generation. The tale carries the message and guidance that every next generation gets a chance to live differently than its predecessors.

¹⁹ Bowlby, J. (1982). Attachment and Loss: Vol. 1. Attachment. Hogarth Press, London

²⁰ http://real.mtak.hu/30999/1/biro_csaladi%20kapsoladok%20szerepe%20a%20bunelkovetesben%20bortonelme%20reintegracioban_bortonon%20innen%20es%20tul.pdf

Presentation of the workshop plan:

Tools:

- ↳ Small children's toys (cubes, cars, plush figures, etc.)
- ↳ Stones
- ↳ Colored beads
- ↳ Bottles
- ↳ Scarfs
- ↳ Big sheet of paper

Introduction/Tuning in: Choose a toy that appeals to you the most and use it to introduce yourself.

The fathers-mothers-children

The workshop leader asks the participants what comes to mind when they hear the word mother/father/son/daughter. It does not have to refer to them in any way, they just have to say the phrases that come to mind when they hear the listed words.

The workshop leader writes these associations down on a large piece of paper and when no one can or want to add anything else, he/she sums it up and reads it out loud.

Storytelling: IV. Kisa the Cat (Adapted from New Zealand folktales)²¹ (see the text of the tale in the appendix!)

Questions related to the tale:

1. How did the tale affect you?
2. Which fairytale image touched you?
3. Where do you see yourself in the tale?
4. What are they doing there?
5. Who or what can help at that location?
6. What would they do exactly like their father/mother?
7. What would they do differently than their father/mother?
8. What fathers/mothers wouldn't be?
9. What are your fears about parenthood?

Tasks related to the tale

Social Atom

Run through your timeline in your mind. Find the people (these can be family members, friends, acquaintances, teachers, colleagues, even people who are no longer alive) who have had a positive impact on you at any time during your life.

After that, choose the one that best symbolizes you from the inlaid stones, beads, and bottles. Then find a stone, glass, or pearl for each person you mentioned. Then, in comparison to yourself, put these people as close or far as you feel their positive influence.

When everyone is done, they present their social atom (i.e. who everyone got on it, and for what reason).

When we have completed this exercise with everyone, we ask for feedback.

²¹ <https://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/lfb/br/index.htm>

Social atom – part II

In the sequel, think about the connections that have been made to the social atom. Find a sentence that comes from this person and is very important to you. This should be done for every person who is on the social atom. Write the sentences on a piece of paper and read them again. Which sentence stands out from the rest? Why? What does this sentence mean to you? How can you relate to it? How does it make you feel? What action does it encourage?

Giving feedback is not mandatory, but an option (if someone doesn't want to share his/her opinion it should be respected).

Homework: Choose a stone from your social atom and take it with you. Explain why you chose that one.

Closing Round: How did you feel here today? What do you take with you?

Methodological guide for workshop leaders

The function of this exercise is to introduce the participants to the topic of the workshop. Optimally, the workshop leader should give an example of a father, mother or child to help the participants to make free associations. Of course, if one of the participants does not want to try this exercise, do not force it.

The processing questions that follow the tale open up a wide palette for formulating parenting competencies, even as a counter-pattern. This should be deepened in the event that there is enough time and the appropriate psychological competence to hold any deeper, more emotionally intense manifestations.

Setting up the **social atom** basically has a resource-enhancing effect, it is worth helping the participants with auxiliary questions so that they can nominate at least 4-8 people.

When doing **the social atom – part II**, some participants may need help in formulating the sentences. The workshop leader should try to help in such a way that the sentences are as personalized as possible. Of course, if one of the group members shows resistance, there is no need to force it.

When doing the homework: When choosing the elements of the social atom, an acceptable answer is: “I like it”. Of course, the workshop leader may also seek a deeper answer without being directive.

Workshop no.5

On the road

Aim

Raising awareness to the importance of spiritual self-care. Development of protective mechanisms for critical periods of life. Preparation of a medium-term action plan for the period when the individual is no longer a resident of the halfway house. Some elements of this plan can be tested using roll-play. Preparation of a symbolic “scone baked in ashes”, which is kneaded from the experience gained during the workshop.

Area of competence affected: social competence.

Competence to be developed: the ability to be resilient.

Brief theoretical background

Self-care is any activity that we do in some form for our own well-being. This includes preserving our physical and mental health, taking care of our physical environment, nurturing our relationships, dealing with our emotions, developing our creativity, knowledge, abilities, skills, spiritual development, consolidating our financial situation, and any contribution to making the world a better place. In a broader perspective, it is not only what we do for ourselves that is interesting, but also how we feel about ourselves, how we think about ourselves. It is important to recognize our inner/hidden needs and to find a way to satisfy them.

Emphasizing the self-care of the released is also important because the time spent in prison has actually unaccustomed them to this. Their rigidly structured schedules, meeting their basic needs, neglecting their mental needs all contributed to their having to relearn this skill. Mental self-care becomes particularly important, as they may not have had the means or opportunity to learn this even before the time spent in prison.

During the following workshop, the focus will be on spiritual self-care, of course keeping in mind that physical and mental well-being can almost never be sharply separated. We have chosen a story that shows very vividly what happens when we forget to take care of ourselves. The footsteps of the (tale's) wanderer become heavier and he slows down. He carries burdens that incapacitate him. By leaving the various aggravating circumstances, he actually starts the path of physical and mental self-care.

Presentation of workshop plan

Tools:

- ↳ DIXIT card
- ↳ Paper
- ↳ Felt-tip pens
- ↳ Pencils
- ↳ Scone silhouettes

Entering

The workshop leader awaits the participants with two questions: What path are you on right now? What are you carrying?

Introduction/Tuning in

From the DIXIT cards in the middle of the circle, they choose the one they associate with their own future.

Storytelling: V. A story on the way (Oriental tale)²² (see the text of the tale in the appendix!)

²² Nossrat Peseschkian: Oriental Stories as Techniques in Positive Psychotherapy, Publisher: AuthorHouseUK, Release date: August 15, 2016 (page: 151 – 152)

Questions related to the story:

1. How did the tale affect you?
2. Which tale image touched you?

Tasks related to the tale**What am I becoming?**

Participants write their name on the top of a piece of paper, then write 8-10 sentences after the beginning of the next sentence: I will become a person who is...

When everyone is finished, they exchange the paper with the group member sitting next to them. Everyone reads the intentions of their neighbor on the left. The papers are then passed around again, and the process continues until everyone has read everyone's additions.

When the papers have returned to the starting point, everyone reports on their feelings and thoughts regarding the others and their own intention to change.

A glance into the future

Choose an image from your own future (the sentences from the previous exercise can help), try to imagine it as vividly as possible. Then this picture is presented one by one, in such a way that the individuals in the picture are displayed by the group members.

The workshop leader conducts a classic interview with the future participant (where are we now? who is here with you? how did you get here? what obstacles did you encounter? how did you overcome them?)

When everyone's future image has been outlined, the participants describe them and one by one talk about the feelings and thoughts this exercise evoked in them.

Self-care:

The workshop leader summarizes the importance of self-care, and then together with the participants review the list below to see what they consider feasible.

Physical self-care:

1. I regularly exercise and play sports.
2. I get enough sleep.
3. I eat healthy food.
4. I generally pay attention to my appearance.
5. I participate in medical examinations.
6. I rest when I need it.

Psychological self-care:

7. I take time for myself / I regularly schedule me-time.
8. I pay attention to my feelings and try to live them.
9. I meditate and relax.
10. I try new things.
11. I talk about something that is bothering me.
12. I keep a diary/journal.

Social self-care:

13. I spend quality time with people that are important to me.
14. I have exciting and interesting conversations.
15. I keep in touch with my friends and family members.
16. I make time for my relationship (if having one).

17. I use social media sites consciously.

Personal self-care:

18. I regularly practice my hobbies or create a hobby for myself.

19. I develop myself, I learn new things.

20. I gain new experiences.

21. I set goals for myself.

Professional self-care:

22. I strive for a work-life balance.

23. I study, train myself.

24. I establish my boundaries (time and task limits).

Financial self-care:

25. I manage my finances consciously.

26. I avoid impulsive purchases.

27. I pay attention to my expenses.

Homework

Write specific things next to the list above.

For example, I talk to someone if something bothers me. With who? Phone number, etc.

Closing round

The task is to prepare each other's "scone baked in ashes" (i.e. a bundle for traveling, which will help them realize their future plans). As each group member has read/seen the other's vision, they write on the scone or bundle silhouette what they think the other needs to achieve the goals that he/she have outlined. In the case of a small group (e.g. 3 people), everyone makes everyone else's, so they will end up with as many scones baked in ashes/bundles as there are people in the group. Together they give feedback on how it felt to propose a specific activity and how it felt to read it.

What will they do with this bundle/scone baked in ashes?

Methodological guide for workshop leaders

The workshop leader should try to get as clear answers as possible to the questions asked during the entry. For example, what road are you on? "Smooth?" Bumpy? Are there any obstacles? Etc.

During the “**What am I becoming?**” exercise, the workshop leader may encounter some resistance due to the writing. He/she can help the participants with additional sub-questions, and it is worth agreeing to avoid canned answers (e.g. I will be a person who is good...), to support them in creating as specific sentences as possible.

When doing the “**A glance into the future**” exercise, it is worth asking as specific questions as possible so that an action plan can be drawn up to achieve the desired image. When setting up the future image, it is also worth paying attention to the physical relationship with other people participating in the image.

For larger groups, it is recommended that the **closing round** exercise is done by forming triads. The task will be to prepare each other's "scone baked in ashes", i.e. a bundle for traveling, which will help them realize their future plans.

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Nossrat Peseschkian: Oriental Stories as Techniques in Positive Psychotherapy, Publisher: AuthorHouseUK, Release date: August 15, 2016 (page: 151 – 152)

Appendix

Tales

I. The Boat That Went Both on Land and on Water (French Folktale)²³

There, was once a great kingdom whose king had a daughter to marry off. A bit proud she was, but more beautiful than any. The king was in no hurry to find her a husband. He loved to have her with him, for she was as quick as a warbler, as straight as an arrow, and as sunny as an Easter day. He didn't look forward to letting any young man have her, not even a king's son. "Anyway," thought he, "where will I ever find a real match for her? She's my daughter, after all, the daughter of a great king."

But in time, the queen, the dishwasher, the minister, and the cobbler, in fact everyone in the castle and in the streets, began reminding the king at every turn that this daughter of his was his only child and that she had to get her married -- not to a prince, perhaps, if she couldn't think of a suitable one, but at least to a capable lad who could one day govern the kingdom.

"Is that what you want?" cried the king one morning, as his minister brought the subject up for the umpteenth time. "Is that your wish? You want a capable lad? All right, at the stroke of noon, have it announced with a flourish of trumpets that I'll give my daughter to anyone who takes wood from my forest and builds me a boat that goes both on land and on water. Yes, I'll say, to anyone who comes asking for her riding a boat like that!"

To himself he said, "A lot of water will flow under the bridges before any mother's son brings me a boat you can sail over fields and waves. These fools won't pester me anymore with their nonsense about having to get my girl married!"

In the same kingdom, near the castle, lived two brothers, both country boys. The elder was so clever, I tell you, his hands could make him anything he wanted. He could have made a cat a new pair of eyes, as they say.

He knew he was clever, though. In fact, he knew it a bit too well. Self-confidence is fine, but you see, you shouldn't count too much on your own cleverness. The lad said to himself, "If anyone's to build this boat that goes both on land and on water, why, it has to be me! I'll build it and I'll win the king's daughter. If I don't, no one else around here will!"

He took up his saw, his ax, and his adze; he filled his toolbox with chisels, gouges, and hammer. Then with a light step he set off for the king's forest.

On his way over Three Beech Trees Hill he met an old woman like the ones who comb the woods for dead branches. She greeted him.

"Good day, journeyman carpenter!" she cried. "Did you wake up this morning in good spirits?"

²³https://www.mordent.com/folktales/french/boat/index.html?fbclid=IwAR2oZUBGAoMiudBSH770cp7tcY2iQIsI3x-OGTetds_wd-UM6-R-Qg

Courtesy should have made him stop, since she'd struck up a conversation. But he strode proudly by, filled as he was that morning with self-importance -- he who always seemed to have the world at his fingertips. He only nodded to her.

"Where are you off to?" she asked.

"To look after my business."

"What are you going to do with all your tools?"

"Make me some skittles!"

"Very well then, journeyman, skittles they shall be!"

When he got to work in the king's forest, everything he felled, shaped, or carved turned to skittles. He began again with elm and ash instead of beech, but it all ended up the same: skittles, nothing but skittles.

Being hot-tempered, he got angry and swore, then hurled adze, gouge, saw, and chisel through the trees. That way he labored twice: first throwing, then picking up.

In the evening he came home looking as though he'd been taken down a peg or two. "I ran into one of those old women with the evil eye," he complained to his younger brother. "Anyway, it was stupid of me to get wrapped up in the idea of building that boat. A boat that sails both on land and on water! Why, it'll be a month of Sundays before anyone builds such a contraption! The king just wanted to show everyone who's boss."

"You never know!" the younger objected. "Time is the father of miracles. You should have kept at it."

"You keep at it, then," growled the elder, angry again. "You go to the king's forest tomorrow and waste your time."

The younger didn't answer. He wouldn't have started the job on his own, but he wasn't going to turn away from it now. You have to let yourself be led and trust that you will be led.

The next morning he took the toolbox and set off for the king's forest, humming a song. On Three Beech Trees Hill he met an old woman hobbling along, bent in two, with one hand on her hip. She looked like one of the women who gather deadwood in the forest.

"Good day, journeyman carpenter," she greeted him.

"And to you, good lady."

"Where are you off to work?"

"My brother sent me to the king's forest. He wants me to see if I can build this boat the king's asking for. I don't know quite what I'll do, but sometimes ideas come when you try."

"A good thought, journeyman. Why shouldn't you succeed? Just get to work."

"Oh, don't worry, I will."

"And when you've built it, go up and show it to the king. On the way you'll meet six men-at-arms. Have them board your boat one after the other. The time will come when you'll need them."

The younger brother tipped his hat to her and took careful note of what she'd said. Then he thanked her and said good-bye.

He came to the king's forest, took off his jacket, and began felling trees.

Believe it or not, the wood he cut fell into place all by itself. One branch made an axle, another the rudder; one length made the gunwale, another the rail. The pieces joined themselves each to each by tenon and mortise, fitted themselves where they belonged, and worked out what the next piece would be. The whole design grew by itself. At last the boat the king had dreamed of, without even knowing what it might look like, took shape under the lad's fingers just as a pine cone takes shape on the tree -- but a mite faster.

The journeyman sang and the work went forward. By midday the boat was finished -- perfectly finished, and even rather nicely decorated with delicate carvings.

The lad went aboard to try it out. The boat rolled down to the pond, launched itself, came back to land, and sailed as well on land as on water! So he steered it toward the castle where the king lived.

Without horses or mules, this carriage-boat sailed so straight over rivers, ponds, fields, and moors that the tall poplars bent low out of its path and the whole landscape glided swiftly by. The lad rolled along, hair to the wind; but he still didn't assume, as many others would have done in his place, that he was the best in the world.

The first person he met on the way was a man-at-arms with a belly like a huge water-skin, lying flat on his stomach by the river. When someone wanted to cross, he'd swallow the river at one gulp so the person could go dry-shod.

"Ahoy, what are you doing there?" the lad cried.

"Drinking up the river!"

"That's all you do?"

"Yes, and I live very well by it!"

"Come aboard, I'll take you to the king's castle."

A little farther on he found another man-at-arms with a mouth like that of an oven, gnawing furiously at a mountain.

"Say, what are you doing there?"

"Chewing up the mountain!"

"That's all you do?"

"Yes, and I live very well by it!"

"Come aboard, I'll take you to the king's castle."

What did he see a little farther on? Another man-at-arms with a backside as round as the full moon. The fellow was lying on his back, and the wind from his behind was turning nine mills on the hill.

"Say, what are you doing there?"

"Living off my wind!"

"That's all you do?"

"Yes, and I live very well by it!"

The lad took this third man-at-arms on board his rolling boat.

Next was a fourth man-at-arms with ears like cabbage leaves. He was lying full-length on his side, with one ear to the earth, listening to dandelions grow on the other side of the world. This Sharp-Ears had no other trade and he lived very well. The lad had him come aboard, then sailed on toward the king's castle.

And next? A fifth man-at-arms, with arms like staves, who was throwing stones and knocking down larks for a hundred leagues around. That was all he did, and it gave him a good living! On board, on board! He too boarded the boat that went both on land and on water.

And last? A sixth man-at-arms, with legs like poles, who'd put on these legs to catch hares and who could out-race any hare! That was all he did, and it gave him a good living.

"Come aboard, come aboard!" cried the lad, "you too!" The man-at-arms with the long legs got in, and they sailed off to see the king.

In no time all seven reached the castle. Everyone came out to look and shouted with amazement. People rushed to the castle from all around and they couldn't believe their eyes, which they opened very wide. The grubby kitchen boy was there; and the old woman who darned the rags (she came panting up, needle in hand); and the king, the queen, and the damsel too.

The king stared and stared, with his crown askew on his head. Though amazed and frustrated, he'd given his word. He'd said what he'd said and he'd had it announced with flourishes of trumpets. Could he refuse his daughter to the one who came asking for her, quite simply and honestly, with just the boat he himself had requested -- the one that went both on land and on water?

"Yes," he admitted, smoothing his beard, "the boat seems to be the one I'd imagined. My word's a king's word and I won't take it back. But there's one little thing, a mere nothing, to look after before the wedding. The heat's rather soured the wine in my cellar. It would be wrong to throw the wine away, and it wouldn't be right, either, to serve it for my daughter's wedding. So you or one of your men," he said to the lad, "must drink it all up before nightfall. Tomorrow I want my barrels filled with good, new wine!"

The lad, hat in hand, listened respectfully. When he'd heard the king out he gave a sign to River-Drinker.

River-Drinker started in as though he hadn't drunk for nine hundred years. The job was quickly done. Of course the king's cellar was impressive. What vast stores of wine it held, what leagues of tunnels and chambers, what rows and rows of hogsheads and barrels! But River-Drinker swallowed all the wine, and he'd have swallowed the barrels too if anyone had asked him.

The amazed king wrinkled his nose. "Just one more thing," said he, "the tiniest thing. Whoever drinks up the sea should also eat the fishes. There's still the bread. It wouldn't be right to serve stale bread for my daughter's wedding, so by nightfall you or one of your men must eat up all the bread in my kitchen."

The lad gave a sign to Mountain-Cruncher. Mountain-Cruncher started crunching, and the job was quickly done! In no time he'd devoured all the buns and loaves. He'd have eaten the baskets and hampers too if anyone had asked him, and the stones of the oven as well.

The king frowned. "Well," he said, "there's one more thing, a mere trifle to look after before the wedding. My castle seems to me set a little too much toward the shade. You or one of your men must blow on it till it turns a quarter-round toward the sun."

The lad, hat in hand as always, gave a sign to Mill-Puffer. Mill-Puffer lay down on his back and drew back his folded legs, facing (so to speak) one wing of the castle. The castle turned three times around like a top.

The king frowned more and more blackly.

"I'm going up to the highest room of my highest tower," he declared, "to whisper in my daughter's ear what she must fetch for her wedding.

You or one of your men must hear the secret and repeat it to me exactly as I said it."

The lad winked to Sharp-Ears, who had only to prick up his ears to hear the king's secret. The king told his daughter to fetch her wedding jewels from the treasure tower, deep in the mountains.

Off rode the damsel on her fine white horse, racing as though to clear her own mind. Perhaps she hadn't yet decided what she thought of this marriage.

The king pulled his pipe from his pocket, stuffed it, lit it, and smoked it. Everyone waited in respectful silence for the princess to come back. The lad himself was wondering whether they really were going to ring the wedding bells. He didn't yet dare believe himself in paradise.

Time went by.

"Heavens!" the king suddenly cried. "I forgot to give my daughter the key to the tower! That puts a stop to everything. We won't be able to have any wedding. The only hope," he went on, knocking out his pipe on his thumbnail, "is if you or one of your men can catch up with her on foot, just as you are, and get back here at exactly the same time she does."

The lad nodded to Long-Legs, who set off with great strides. In no time he caught up with the king's daughter, gave her the key, and went with her to the tower. She took out the wedding jewels, then turned her horse's head around and galloped rather fast toward home.

She was a bit proud, as you can tell. She had her father's tendency toward swiftness and secrecy. As far as she was concerned, why not marry a village boy. But she still hadn't even glanced at this lad. That's why she was driving her white horse so hard. It was running like the wind.

That was nothing for Long-Legs. He'd have been constantly passing her if he hadn't held himself back. When the king's daughter saw this, she thought of a trick. She pretended to be tired, stopped her horse, sat down on a bit of green grass under a tree, and said she was going to take a nap.

It was growing dark. Long-Legs, the runner, sat down nearby and dozed off too. His head sank onto his chest and he set off for the land of dreams.

He'd taken care to sit on the end of the damsel's train, but being clever she very gently got it out from under him. Next she jumped into the saddle, walked her mount ever so softly over the grass, then spurred it on and headed for home at a full gallop. Long-Legs was still asleep by the path.

The lad, meanwhile, was thinking about the damsel. Yes, he wanted her, though she still hadn't even looked at him! He was watching for her return, and it bothered him terribly not to see her or Long-Legs coming.

"Sharp-Ears!" he called, "listen carefully and tell me what's happening!"

"What's happening," replied Sharp-Ears, "is that your runner is snoring. He's fallen asleep somewhere and the king's daughter is coming home all alone."

"Your turn, Stone-Slinger, quickly! Wake him up with a pebble on the tip of his nose!"

Long-Legs jumped up when the pebble hit him.

Here came the princess in a cloud of dust. You could see her yonder, at the last turn in the road. Her white horse was going like a whirlwind, striking sparks in the midst of the cloud with his iron shoes.

But Long-Legs too rushed into view, his feet hardly touching the ground, leaping along like lightning. Though the horse galloped, he still came on. Now he was three strides ahead, and he had to slow down to get there at exactly the same time as the princess, right in front of the king and everyone else.

This time the king just had to give his daughter to the younger brother who'd built the boat.

The evening after their wedding, the bride told her husband they should take Sharp-Ears along with them on their honeymoon.

The king wouldn't let them take the boat that went both on land and on water, and anyway, the lad had spotted two or three very black looks shot their way. There was a plot brewing, as far as he could tell, and trouble was coming. But he was full of love for the king's daughter, and since she'd sworn to love him too, nothing bad could happen to them.

After all, the girl had finally looked at him when she came home to the castle on her white horse. She'd wanted to see what he was like, this boy who'd so cleverly overcome all the impossible obstacles willfully put between her and him by the king. She'd seen a village lad whose eyes after all spoke her own language, a lad who'd won out after all these tests, yet who wasn't strutting or boasting. Hat in hand, straight as a poplar tree, cheerful and smiling, he told very simply how the fairy had done everything for him and how she'd appeared to him on Three Beech Trees Hill.

The princess was clever. Since she knew the ways of the court, the evening after her wedding she had Sharp-Ears listen to what people there were saying.

"Madam," said Sharp-Ears, "they've told your father so many awful things that he's furious about your marriage. He's just ordered three thousand men to pursue you. They're to get rid of your husband and bring you back to the castle!"

"Well then!" she cried. "It's just as well to keep informed! But we certainly are in trouble now!"

That minute they started preparing for war. Sharp-Ears took up his post on a knell to listen. He kept the young couple constantly up-to-date on what was happening at court and in the army's camp. Long-Legs dashed everywhere, carrying orders. Stone-Slinger struck the first blow in the battle with a barrage of baked apples. Meanwhile Mountain-Cruncher crunched up a mountain so that the young couple could get away, and River-Drinker drank up a river so they could cross dry-shod. Then when the king's army appeared, River-Drinker spat the river out again and the army was stopped by the water.

Finally, Mill-Puffer lay in wait. He lay on his back, tucked up his legs, and let go. What a storm struck then! Hats, plumes, capes, and belts flew left and right in the fearful gale. Chariots too, and teams of horses, cannons, battalions, and squadrons -- everything flew like oat chaff. In less than two minutes the battlefield was cleared.

The lad had carried all before him by good white magic, over land and water, before the wedding and after. The king had gotten nowhere at all. And at last his anger subsided.

He told himself that his son-in-law had the fairies on his side and that he might as well get along with a fellow like that. The two of them made up. Now life rolled on in a friendly way for young and old, in good seasons and bad, just like that famous boat that rolled so nicely over land and water.

II. Mother Holle (fairy tale by the Brothers Grimm) ²⁴

Once upon a time there was a widow who had two daughters; one of them was pretty and clever, and the other ugly and lazy. But as the ugly one was her own daughter, she liked her far the best of the two, and the pretty one had to do all the work of the house, and was in fact the regular maid of all work. Every day she had to sit by a well on the high road, and spin till her fingers were so sore that they often bled. One day some drops of blood fell on her spindle, so she dipped it into the well, meaning to wash it, but, as luck would have it, it dropped from her hand and fell right in. She ran weeping to her stepmother, and told her what had happened, but she scolded her harshly, and was so merciless in her anger that she said:

'Well, since you've dropped the spindle down, you must just go after it yourself, and don't let me see your face again until you bring it with you.'

Then the poor girl returned to the well, and not knowing what she was about, in the despair and misery of her heart she sprang into the well and sank to the bottom. For a time she lost all consciousness, and when she came to herself again she was lying in a lovely meadow, with the sun shining brightly overhead, and a thousand flowers blooming at her feet. She rose up

²⁴ <https://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/lfb/re/refb32.htm>

and wandered through this enchanted place, till she came to a baker's oven full of bread, and the bread called out to her as she passed:

'Oh! take me out, take me out, or I shall be burnt to a cinder. I am quite done enough.'
So she stepped up quickly to the oven and took out all the loaves one after the other. Then she went on a little farther and came to a tree laden with beautiful rosy-cheeked apples, and as she passed by it called out:

'Oh I shake me, shake me, my apples are all quite ripe.'
She did as she was asked, and shook the tree till the apples fell like rain and none were left hanging. When she had gathered them all up into a heap she went on her way again, and came at length to a little house, at the door of which sat an old woman. The old dame had such large teeth that the girl felt frightened and wanted to run away, but the old woman called after her:

'What are you afraid of, dear child? Stay with me and be my little maid, and if you do your work well I will reward you handsomely; but you must be very careful how you make my bed—you must shake it well till the feathers fly; then people in the world below say it snows, for I am Mother Holle.'

She spoke so kindly that the girl took heart and agreed readily to enter her service. She did her best to please the old woman, and shook her bed with such a will that the feathers flew about like snow-flakes; so she led a very easy life, was never scolded, and lived on the fat of the land. But after she had been some time with Mother Holle she grew sad and depressed, and at first she hardly knew herself what was the matter. At last she discovered that she was homesick, so she went to Mother Holle and said:

'I know I am a thousand times better off here than I ever was in my life before, but notwithstanding, I have a great longing to go home, in spite of all your kindness to me. I can remain with you no longer, but must return to my own people.'

'Your desire to go home pleases me,' said Mother Holle, 'and because you have served me so faithfully, I will show you the way back into the world myself.'
So she took her by the hand and led her to an open door, and as the girl passed through it there fell a heavy shower of gold all over her, till she was covered with it from top to toe.

'That's a reward for being such a good little maid,' said Mother Holle, and she gave her the spindle too that had fallen into the well. Then she shut the door, and the girl found herself back in the world again, not far from her own house; and when she came to the courtyard the old hen, who sat on the top of the wall, called out:

'Click, clock, clack, our golden maid's come back.'

Then she went in to her stepmother, and as she had returned covered with gold she was welcomed home.

She proceeded to tell all that had happened to her, and when the mother heard how she had come by her riches, she was most anxious to secure the same luck for her own idle, ugly daughter; so she told her to sit at the well and spin. In order to make her spindle bloody, she stuck her hand into a hedge of thorns and pricked her finger. Then she threw the spindle into

the well, and jumped in herself after it. Like her sister she came to the beautiful meadow, and followed the same path. When she reached the baker's oven the bread called out as before:

'Oh! take me out, take me out, or I shall be burnt to a cinder. I am quite done enough.'

But the good-for-nothing girl answered:

'A pretty joke, indeed; just as if I should dirty my hands for you!'

And on she went. Soon she came to the apple tree, which cried:

'Oh! shake me, shake me, my apples are all quite ripe.'

'I'll see myself farther,' she replied, 'one of them might fall on my head.'

And so she pursued her way. When she came to Mother Holle's house she wasn't the least afraid, for she had been warned about her big teeth, and she readily agreed to become her maid. The first day she worked very hard, and did all her mistress told her, for she thought of the gold she would give her; but on the second day she began to be lazy, and on the third she wouldn't even get up in the morning. She didn't make Mother Holle's bed as she ought to have done, and never shook it enough to make the feathers fly. So her mistress soon grew weary of her, and dismissed her, much to the lazy creature's delight.

'For now,' she thought, 'the shower of golden rain will come.'

Mother Holle led her to the same door as she had done her sister, but when she passed through it, instead of the gold rain a kettle full of pitch came showering over her.

'That's a reward for your service,' said Mother Holle, and she closed the door behind her.

So the lazy girl came home all covered with pitch, and when the old hen on the top of the wall saw her, it called out:

'Click, clock, clack, our dirty slut's come back.'

But the pitch remained sticking to her, and never as long as she lived could it be got off.

III. King Dragon (Danish Fairytale)²⁵

Once on a time there was a King who had a most beautiful queen. But they had no children, and this made the King feel very sad, and the queen even sadder. So one day as she was walking, lost in thought, she came to an out-of-the-way place. There she met an old woman who asked whether the queen would not tell her why she was so sad. The queen looked up and said, "Ah, what good would it do if I told you? There is nothing you could do to help me!"

"Perhaps I could," said the old woman, and once more begged the queen to confide in her. And so the queen told her she had no children, and that was the reason she was so sad. Why, that could be remedied, said the old woman; she might have children if she wished. In the evening, at sundown, she need only take a dish and lay it on the ground, bottom up, in the northwest corner of the garden. In the morning, at sunrise, when she lifted it up, she would

²⁵ <http://oaks.nvg.org/martg.html>

find two roses beneath it, a red rose and a white one. "And if you eat the red rose, you will have a boy; but if you eat the white rose, it will be a girl. But you must not eat both roses."

The queen went home, and did as the old woman had told her. In the morning at sunrise, she went to the garden and raised the dish from the ground, and there were the two roses, the red rose and the white one. But she could not decide which to eat. If she chose the red rose, it would be a boy, and he might have to go to war and be slain; and then she would be without a child again. So she thought she had best take the white rose; then it would be a girl, who would stay at home with her, and marry and become the queen of some other land. So she took the white rose and ate it. But it tasted so good that she took the red one and ate it as well.

For she thought to herself, "If they are twins, why, they will count as one."

Now it chanced that the King was at war when the queen wrote him that they were to be blessed with a child. But when the child came it turned out to be a little dragon, who slipped under the bed in her room, and made that his nesting-place. After a time came a letter from the King, saying that he would soon be home. And when the King did come home, and drove up to the castle in his coach, and the queen came out to meet him, the little dragon came out to greet him at the same time. He leaped up in the air beside the coach and cried: "Welcome home, father!"

"What!" said the King, "Am I your father?"

"Yes, and if you do not want to be my father, I'll tear you to pieces, and smash the whole castle to bits!" So the King had to agree to be his father. Then they went into the castle, and the queen had to confess all that had passed between her and the old woman.

A few days later the whole council and all the nobles assembled to welcome the King back to his own country, and to congratulate him on his victory over the enemy. And the dragon came, too, and said, "Father, now I want to marry!"

"That's all very well," said the King, "but who do you think will marry you?"

"Well, if you do not find a bride for me, young or old, large or small, rich or poor, I'll tear you to pieces, and smash the whole castle to bits.!"

The King wrote to every Kingdom to ask whether anyone would marry his son. And a beautiful princess came, though she thought it strange that she was not allowed to see her intended until they stood in the room in which they were to be married. Only then did the dragon make his appearance and stand beside her. The wedding-day came to an end, but no sooner were they alone, then the dragon devoured her.

Time went on, and the King's birthday came. Then, when they were all sitting around the table, the dragon came and said, "Father, I want to marry!"

The King replied, "Where is the woman who would be willing to marry you?"

"Well, if you don't find a bride for me, some kind of a bride, I will devour you and swallow the castle as well!"

Once more the King sent letters to all the other kingdoms, to ask whether any one wished to marry his son. And again a beautiful princess appeared, from a far country. She did not lay

eyes on her intended until they stood in the room where they were to be married. Then the dragon appeared, and stood beside her. But when the wedding was over, and they were alone, the dragon did away with her.

Not long after came the queen's birthday. The dragon came in when all were sitting around the table and said, "Father, I want to marry!"

"Well, I cannot find you another bride," said the King. "The two powerful Kings whose daughters I gave you, want to make war on me, so what am I to do?"

"Oh, just let them come! So long as you are on good terms with me, their coming need not worry you, though there were ten instead of two of them. But if you do not find me a bride, young or old, large or small, rich or poor, I will tear you to pieces and smash the whole castle to bits!" On this the King had to yield; but he felt very unhappy.

Now there was an old man who was the King's shepherd. He had a little hut in the woods, and a daughter. The King went to him and said, "Listen, my dear fellow, won't you give your daughter to my son for a bride?":

"No, I could not do that; first of all, I have only this one child to take care of me in my old age and, besides, the prince, if he has no pity on such beautiful princesses, will surely have none to spare my daughter, which would be a sin!"

But the King insisted on having the girl, and the old man had to yield. The old shepherd went home and told his daughter, and she felt very unhappy; and went off with her sad thoughts to the woods. As she was walking, she met an old woman, in a red coat and a blue jacket, who was also going to the woods, to pick berries and crab-apples.

"Why are you so sad?" the woman asked her.

"I have good reason to be sad," said the girl, "but there is little use in my telling you, since there is nothing you can do to help me!"

"Perhaps there is," said the old woman, "so tell me what it is!"

"Well, I am to marry the King's son, but he is a dragon who has already done away with two princesses, and I am sure he will make way with me as well."

"If you listen to me, there is a way to help you," said the old woman. And the girl was glad to listen to her advice. "When you have been married, and are alone with the prince, you must wear ten shifts. If you do not own that many, you must borrow them. Then you must ask for a bucket of lye, and one of fresh milk, and a bundle of switches. These things must be brought to the room. When he comes in he will say: "Lovely maiden, take off your shift!" Then you must say: "King Dragon, take off your skin!" And so he will say to you, and you to him, until you have taken off nine shifts, and he has slipped out of nine skins. Then he will no longer have any skin left; but you will still have a shift. Then you must take him, for he will be no more than a skinless lump of flesh, dip the switches into the lye, and beat him until he well-nigh falls apart. Thereupon you must bathe him in the fresh milk, wrap him in the nine shifts, and put him to bed. And then you will fall asleep yourself, though but for a short time." The girl thanked the old woman for her good advice; but in spite of it she was afraid, for after all, it was a daring game to play with such a sinister beast.

The wedding-day came, and two court ladies drove up in a large and magnificent coach, to adorn the maiden with her bridal finery. She was brought to the castle and to the room; the dragon came and stood beside her, and they were married.

Evening came, and they were left alone. Then the bride called for a bucket of lye, and one of sweet milk, and the switches. The courtiers made fun of her, and spoke of peasant superstitions; but the King said that she was to have what she wanted. And it was given her. Before she was left alone with her husband she put on the nine shifts she had obtained over the one she wore. Then the dragon said, "Lovely maiden, take off your shift!" And she replied, "King Dragon, take off your skin!" And thus it went, until she had taken off nine shifts and he nine skins. Then she regained her courage, for the dragon lay on the floor and could scarcely move. So she took the switches, dipped them in the lye, and beat him as long and as hard as she could, until the switches were worn out. Then she dipped him in the fresh milk, wrapped him in the nine shifts, and put him to bed. Then she at once fell asleep herself, for it was late. When she awoke she saw a handsome prince standing before her.

When morning came, none dared look through the door of the room, for all thought she had met with the fate of her two predecessors. But the King determined to have a peep, and as soon as he opened the door he cried out, "Come on in! Everything is as it should be!" And he went himself, full of joy, and brought in the queen and the whole court. There stood the newly-wedded pair, and received the congratulations showered on them. Now the wedding was celebrated all over again with the utmost splendour and happiness, and the King and queen grew very fond of their daughter-in-law, and could not do enough to show her how much they thought of her, who had delivered their dragon.

Now war broke out again, and the old King and King Dragon were both with the army when the young queen was blessed with two handsome boys. At that time there was a knight at court called the Bed Knight. He was sent to King Dragon with a letter, to tell him that he was the father of two fine boys. The Red Knight rode a little way, then opened the letter, took it out, and wrote instead that there were two young pups at the castle. This letter the King received, and it made him very sad, since he found it strange that his children should be pups; he would rather have expected a dragon or something of that sort. He wrote back that they were to allow the creatures to live until his return, if they showed any signs of life at all. This letter the Red Knight was to take back with him. But when he had ridden a while, he opened this letter as he had done the first, and wrote another one, saying that they were to burn up the queen, together with the children.

Now this letter saddened the old queen greatly, for she was very fond of her young daughter-in-law. Shortly after there came a letter from the King announcing his return home. Then they were frightened, and did not know what to do; for the old queen could not make up her mind to have them burned at the stake. She had the children handed over to a nurse, bidding her take care of them, since she thought that, after all, when the King reached home he might change his mind for the better. And she gave the young queen food and some money, and told her to hide away in the woods.

So the young queen went into the woods, and wandered about for two whole days, and was in great straits. Then she saw a lofty mountain, and climbed to the top without stopping by the way. On the top of the mountain were three benches, and she seated herself on the one in the middle, and longed for her children, whom she missed at her breast. Then, as she sat there, came two great birds, a swan and a crane, who placed themselves beside her, and begged that

she would nourish them, in place of her children, who had been taken away. And when, out of the kindness of her heart, she had done so, they were suddenly changed to two of the handsomest princes one could imagine, and the mountain turned into the most splendid royal castle one might hope to see, with courtiers and well-filled stables, and gold and silver, and everything such a castle should have. The two princes had been enchanted, and could never have been released from their enchantment, had they not met a bereaved queen, who in her pity had nourished them as she would her own lost little ones. So the queen stayed at the castle with King Stork and King Crane who, now that they had been delivered, wanted to marry her.

Meanwhile King Dragon came home, and asked for his queen.

"Well," said the old queen, "that is about all there is lacking that you should ask for her! You are a fine fellow! You never even remembered that she rescued you from the profoundest wretchedness! You could even write us to burn her and the children at the stake! You ought to be ashamed of yourself!"

"No," said King Dragon, "you wrote me that instead of two fine sons she had given me two young pups; and I wrote back to let the creatures live until I reached home!"

Then there was a great deal of talk, and at last they found out that the Red Knight had been the traitor. So they seized him, and he had to confess. And when he had confessed he was put in a barrel spiked with nails, to which four horses were harnessed, and they galloped off with him over hill and dale.

The King was filled with sorrow because of his wife and children, especially when he found out that they had been two fine boys. But the old queen said to him: "Do not worry! The children are well taken care of, for I have handed them over to a nurse; but as to your wife, I do not know what has become of her. I gave her some food and some money, and told her to hide in the woods, and since then I have had no news of her."

Then the King commanded that the children be brought back to the castle, and he took food and some money, and went into the woods to look for his wife. He wandered about looking for her three days; but could find no trace of her. When he met people in the woods, he asked them if they had seen a strange maiden go into the forest; but no one had seen her. At length he came to the castle in the woods, and decided to enter and see the royalties who lived in it. So in he went. And the moment he went in, he saw his young queen, and she saw him; but she was afraid that he had come to burn her up, and ran away. Then the two princes came along, and all began to talk, and became good friends. They invited King Dragon to stay to dinner. He said that they had a beautiful maiden in their castle, and where did she come from? They replied she was very kind indeed, and that she had released them both from their enchantment.

Then King Dragon wanted to know from what sort of enchantment she had released them, and they told him the whole story. He said that he liked her, too, and asked whether they could not come to some agreement as to which of them was to marry her. How would it be to put too much salt in the dinner; then, whichever one of them she should ask to drink with her, should have her. The two princes were well content with this proposal, as in this way they could decide at once which of them was to get her hand; for they did not believe that she would ask the stranger to drink with her.

So they went to dinner, and before long she said, "It seems to me that the dinner is very salty.

"King Swan sits close to me,

King Crane is kind to me,

King Dragon, drink with me!"

King Dragon at once took up the silver tankard and drank to her health, and the others drank to their own health; and then they had to drink her health and his as well, though they were not content. But King Dragon told them how she had released him from enchantment before releasing them, so that he really had the first claim to her. The two princes said that he ought to have told them so straight off, as then they would have surrendered the queen to him. But King Dragon replied that he could not have been altogether sure of that.

Then King Dragon returned home with his queen, and the children also had been brought home in the meantime. King Swan kept the palace in the woods, and married a princess from another kingdom. And King Crane went into another land, and married there. So each of them got something. King Dragon and his queen were held in high esteem all their life long. They were very happy and had many children, and the last time I visited them they gave me a tin sandwich in a sieve.

IV. Kisa the Cat (Adapted from New Zealand folktales)²⁶

Once upon a time there lived a queen who had a beautiful cat, the colour of smoke, with china-blue eyes, which she was very fond of. The cat was constantly with her, and ran after her wherever she went, and even sat up proudly by her side when she drove out in her fine glass coach.

'Oh, pussy,' said the queen one day, 'you are happier than I am! For you have a dear kitten just like yourself, and I have nobody to play with but you.'

'Don't cry,' answered the cat, laying her paw on her mistress's arm. 'Crying never does any good. I will see what can be done.'

The cat was as good as her word. As soon as she returned from her drive she trotted off to the forest to consult a fairy who dwelt there, and very soon after the queen had a little girl, who seemed made out of snow and sunbeams. The queen was delighted, and soon the baby began to take notice of the kitten as she jumped about the room, and would not go to sleep at all unless the kitten lay curled up beside her.

Two or three months went by, and though the baby was still a baby, the kitten was fast becoming a cat, and one evening when, as usual, the nurse came to look for her, to put her in the baby's cot, she was nowhere to be found. What a hunt there was for that kitten, to be sure! The servants, each anxious to find her, as the queen was certain to reward the lucky man, searched in the most impossible places. Boxes were opened that would hardly have held the kitten's paw; books were taken from bookshelves, lest the kitten should have got behind them,

²⁶ <https://www.sacred-texts.com/neu/lfb/br/index.htm>

drawers were pulled out, for perhaps the kitten might have got shut in. But it was all no use. The kitten had plainly run away, and nobody could tell if it would ever choose to come back.

Years passed away, and one day, when the princess was playing ball in the garden, she happened to throw her ball farther than usual, and it fell into a clump of rose-bushes. The princess of course ran after it at once, and she was stooping down to feel if it was hidden in the long grass, when she heard a voice calling her: 'Ingibjorg! Ingibjorg!' it said, 'have you forgotten me? I am Kisa, your sister!'

'But I never HAD a sister,' answered Ingibjorg, very much puzzled; for she knew nothing of what had taken place so long ago.

'Don't you remember how I always slept in your cot beside you, and how you cried till I came? But girls have no memories at all! Why, I could find my way straight up to that cot this moment, if I was once inside the palace.'

'Why did you go away then?' asked the princess. But before Kisa could answer, Ingibjorg's attendants arrived breathless on the scene, and were so horrified at the sight of a strange cat, that Kisa plunged into the bushes and went back to the forest.

The princess was very much vexed with her ladies-in-waiting for frightening away her old playfellow, and told the queen who came to her room every evening to bid her good-night.

'Yes, it is quite true what Kisa said,' answered the queen; 'I should have liked to see her again. Perhaps, some day, she will return, and then you must bring her to me.'

Next morning it was very hot, and the princess declared that she must go and play in the forest, where it was always cool, under the big shady trees. As usual, her attendants let her do anything she pleased, and sitting down on a mossy bank where a little stream tinkled by, soon fell sound asleep. The princess saw with delight that they would pay no heed to her, and wandered on and on, expecting every moment to see some fairies dancing round a ring, or some little brown elves peeping at her from behind a tree. But, alas! she met none of these; instead, a horrible giant came out of his cave and ordered her to follow him. The princess felt much afraid, as he was so big and ugly, and began to be sorry that she had not stayed within reach of help; but as there was no use in disobeying the giant, she walked meekly behind.

They went a long way, and Ingibjorg grew very tired, and at length began to cry.

'I don't like girls who make horrid noises,' said the giant, turning round. 'But if you WANT to cry, I will give you something to cry for.' And drawing an axe from his belt, he cut off both her feet, which he picked up and put in his pocket. Then he went away.

Poor Ingibjorg lay on the grass in terrible pain, and wondering if she should stay there till she died, as no one would know where to look for her. How long it was since she had set out in the morning she could not tell—it seemed years to her, of course; but the sun was still high in the heavens when she heard the sound of wheels, and then, with a great effort, for her throat was parched with fright and pain, she gave a shout.

'I am coming!' was the answer; and in another moment a cart made its way through the trees, driven by Kisa, who used her tail as a whip to urge the horse to go faster. Directly Kisa saw

Ingibjorg lying there, she jumped quickly down, and lifting the girl carefully in her two front paws, laid her upon some soft hay, and drove back to her own little hut.

In the corner of the room was a pile of cushions, and these Kisa arranged as a bed. Ingibjorg, who by this time was nearly fainting from all she had gone through, drank greedily some milk, and then sank back on the cushions while Kisa fetched some dried herbs from a cupboard, soaked them in warm water and tied them on the bleeding legs. The pain vanished at once, and Ingibjorg looked up and smiled at Kisa.

'You will go to sleep now,' said the cat, 'and you will not mind if I leave you for a little while. I will lock the door, and no one can hurt you.' But before she had finished the princess was asleep. Then Kisa got into the cart, which was standing at the door, and catching up the reins, drove straight to the giant's cave.

Leaving her cart behind some trees, Kisa crept gently up to the open door, and, crouching down, listened to what the giant was telling his wife, who was at supper with him.

'The first day that I can spare I shall just go back and kill her,' he said; 'it would never do for people in the forest to know that a mere girl can defy me!' And he and his wife were so busy calling Ingibjorg all sorts of names for her bad behaviour, that they never noticed Kisa stealing into a dark corner, and upsetting a whole bag of salt into the great pot before the fire. 'Dear me, how thirsty I am!' cried the giant by-and-by.

'So am I,' answered the wife. 'I do wish I had not taken that last spoonful of broth; I am sure something was wrong with it.'

'If I don't get some water I shall die,' went on the giant. And rushing out of the cave, followed by his wife, he ran down the path which led to the river.

Then Kisa entered the hut, and lost no time in searching every hole till she came upon some grass, under which Ingibjorg's feet were hidden, and putting them in her cart, drove back again to her own hut.

Ingibjorg was thankful to see her, for she had lain, too frightened to sleep, trembling at every noise.

'Oh, is it you?' she cried joyfully, as Kisa turned the key. And the cat came in, holding up the two neat little feet in their silver slippers.

'In two minutes they shall be as tight as they ever were!' said Kisa. And taking some strings of the magic grass which the giant had carelessly heaped on them, she bound the feet on to the legs above.

'Of course you won't be able to walk for some time; you must not expect THAT,' she continued. 'But if you are very good, perhaps, in about a week, I may carry you home again.' And so she did; and when the cat drove the cart up to the palace gate, lashing the horse furiously with her tail, and the king and queen saw their lost daughter sitting beside her, they declared that no reward could be too great for the person who had brought her out of the giant's hands.

'We will talk about that by-and-by,' said the cat, as she made her best bow, and turned her horse's head.

The princess was very unhappy when Kisa left her without even bidding her farewell. She would neither eat nor drink, nor take any notice of all the beautiful dresses her parents bought for her.

'She will die, unless we can make her laugh,' one whispered to the other. 'Is there anything in the world that we have left untried?'

'Nothing except marriage,' answered the king. And he invited all the handsomest young men he could think of to the palace, and bade the princess choose a husband from among them.

It took her some time to decide which she admired the most, but at last she fixed upon a young prince, whose eyes were like the pools in the forest, and his hair of bright gold. The king and the queen were greatly pleased, as the young man was the son of a neighbouring king, and they gave orders that a splendid feast should be got ready.

When the marriage was over, Kisa suddenly stood before them, and Ingibjorg rushed forward and clasped her in her arms.

'I have come to claim my reward,' said the cat. 'Let me sleep for this night at the foot of your bed.'

'Is that ALL?' asked Ingibjorg, much disappointed.

'It is enough,' answered the cat. And when the morning dawned, it was no cat that lay upon the bed, but a beautiful princess.

'My mother and I were both enchanted by a spiteful fairy,' said she, 'we could not free ourselves till we had done some kindly deed that had never been wrought before. My mother died without ever finding a chance of doing anything new, but I took advantage of the evil act of the giant to make you as whole as ever.'

Then they were all more delighted than before, and the princess lived in the court until she, too, married, and went away to govern one of her own.

V. A story on the way (Oriental tale)²⁷

Persian mysticism tells of a wanderer who trudged along on a seemingly endlessly long road. He was loaded down with all sorts of burdens. A heavy sack of sand hung on his back; a thick water hose was draped around his body. In his right hand, he carried an oddly shaped stone, in the left hand a boulder. Around his neck an old millstone dangled on a frayed rope. Rusty chains, with which he dragged heavy weights through the dusty sand, wound around his ankles. On his head, the man was balancing a half-rotten pumpkin. With every step he took, the chains rattled. Moaning and groaning, he moved forward step by step, complaining of his

²⁷ Nossrat Peseschkian: Oriental Stories as Techniques in Positive Psychotherapy, Publisher: AuthorHouseUK, Release date: August 15, 2016 (page: 151 – 152)

hard fate and the weariness that tormented him. On his way, a farmer met him in the glowing heat of midday.

The farmer asked, “Oh, tired wanderer, why do you load yourself down with this boulder?”

“Awfully dumb,” replied the wanderer, “but I hadn’t noticed it before.” With that, he threw the rock away and felt much lighter.

Again, after going a long way down the road, a farmer met him and asked, “Tell me, tired wanderer, why do you trouble yourself with the half-rotten pumpkin on your head, and why do you drag those heavy iron weights behind you on chains?”

The wanderer answered, “I’m very glad you pointed it out to me. I didn’t realize what I was doing to myself.” He took off the chains and smashed the pumpkin into the ditch alongside the road. Again, he felt lighter. But the farther he went, the more he began to suffer again.

A farmer coming from the field watched him in amazement and said, “Oh, good man, you are carrying sand in the sack, but what you see far off in the distance is more sand than you could ever carry. And your big water hose - as if you planned to cross the Kawir Desert. All the while there’s a clear stream flowing alongside you, which will accompany you on your way for a long time.” Upon hearing this, the wanderer tore open the water hose and emptied its brackish water onto the path. Then he filled a hole with the sand from his knapsack. He stood there pensively and looked into the sinking sun. The last rays sent their light to him. He glanced down at himself, saw the heavy millstone around his neck and suddenly realized it was the stone that was still causing him to walk so bent over. He loosened it and threw it as far as he could into the river. Freed from his burdens, he wandered on through the cool of the evening to find lodging.

Andrey Momchilov: Crash Course in Cooking

CRIME PREVENTION FUND - IGA

INTRODUCTION

The inspiration for this booklet came in UNLOCKED, a project aiming to help disadvantaged young adults - people living in closed institutions, prisons, foster homes - who have experienced years of institutionalization. The trigger for writing it came from the realization that few of them have had to independently take care of themselves, and very few of them were taught how to cater for themselves when it comes to eating tasty and healthy food.

But even if you don't come from a foster home, prison or other institution where you got "served" and did not need to cook, cooking is a skill that every person should learn. There are numerous reasons behind this:

- if you can cook, you can eat whatever you like most, learning to prepare your favorite meals according to your own personal taste and preference;
- if you can cook, you can reduce greatly your spending on food, as homemade food is always going to be cheaper than buying fast food or packed meals, let alone dining in restaurants;
- if you can cook, you are in control of the aspects of eating healthy, choosing to reduce the consumption of fat, sugar, salt, too much red meat, while enjoying the benefits of vegetables, lentils and legumes etc. You can easily control the amount of calories you ingest and relate it to your lifestyle;
- if you can cook, you can boost your self-esteem. Master a recipe, get your friends together and impress them with your skills; this is a great booster for your confidence, apart from having the chance to spend quality time with friends over a nice meal;
- if you can cook, you can open a window to the world, discovering different cultures just by practicing dishes typical for the numerous cuisines around the world;
- if you can cook, you can use your brain in a variety of ways, including calculating, learning, multitasking and budgeting;
- if you can cook, you have one very powerful tool to relieve everyday stress;
- if you can cook, you can express yourself just like artists do – take your own ideas to the kitchen as an artist would do to the empty canvas, mix ingredients never mixed before, change dishes completely just by altering the herbs and spices used etc.

This booklet aims to encourage you to cook. It will not focus on recipes, but on knowledge and skills, so that when you want to prepare a recipe, you will know what you are doing and why. Ultimately you will be able to create your own dishes following the rules of classical culinary tradition.

We will then take a look at common equipment that you will find at professional establishments. In the end you might want to pursue this as a profession.

You will learn about measures in cooking and how to get around cups, teaspoons and tablespoons easily.

We will take a look at flavors and balancing them, and of course – the cooking methods and techniques used by chefs and amateurs alike.

At the same time you will get some tips on how to prepare recipes that you find in cook books or on the Internet.

Once we take out the basics, we will focus on ingredients and how to cook meats, fish, vegetables, etc.

We will not forget baking, regardless of how intimidating it may seem – we all had to start somewhere, so tips on preparing dough for cakes, desserts or pasta are also included. We will then delve deeper into flavor zone, looking at how to prepare stocks and sauces, and will finish off with the use of spices and herbs as flavor agents. Enjoy your journey to good homemade food!

Common kitchen equipment

If you are just starting out cooking at home, you will most often find just a few pieces of cooking equipment around: a stove (also called range) with an oven and hot plates, a griddle and perhaps a chopper/ blender, a mixer. A couple of pots, pans and baking/ roasting trays should also be available, as will be some knives and basic utensils. The recipes in this book are suited for preparation at home.

Nevertheless, if you decide at some point to pursue a career in culinary, you can be overwhelmed by the range of equipment in professional kitchens. Therefore here an overview is provided of the most common types of the basic food production equipment you will find in **professional kitchens**.

Burners

They are used for cooking, boiling, and steaming. They often operate on Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG). Now induction burners and hot plates are available, which operate on electricity. They come with open top, mesh top, or flat top.



Cooking Ranges

Cooking range is the most versatile equipment as it can perform a range of functions such as cooking, frying, boiling, grilling, and baking. It comes in two basic versions

- **Restaurant range** – Less expensive, good for less food volume, and is stand alone.
- **Heavy duty range** – Expensive, suits a large volume of food production, and can be banked with other ranges using a battery.



Ovens

They are used for cooking, baking, roasting, and browning. They operate either on LPG or electricity. There are various oven models such as **Rack** with the option of rotating or steady racks, **Deck**, and **Tunnel** depicting their shape and working style.



- **Rack oven** – It contains a set of stacked racks often placed equidistant, one above the other in a tall stainless steel frame. This oven is good to produce large volume of food items such as breads, cookies, and croissants.
- **Deck oven** – It contains racks or rotisseries that can cook various meats such as chicken, duck, lamb, etc. simultaneously and evenly.
- **Tunnel oven** – It comes in direct heat and indirect heat variants and is suitable for high temperature baking (think pizza).

Griddles

They are flat plates made of iron, stainless steel, or aluminium, which transfer heat to the food.



They are mainly used for preparing breakfast items such as omelets, scrambled eggs, patties, sandwiches, burgers, and pancakes. Normally, the residual grease needs to be wiped out. Teflon surface griddles are more durable and efficient.

Pans and Cooking Spoons

There are a wide range of pans, pots, and spoons used for cooking.

- **Pans** – they serve the purpose of shallow frying, boiling, and stir frying.
- **Pots** – they are used for cooking and preparing stocks. They come with lids and sometimes a steamer, used to prepare steamed food such as rice or dumplings).



- **Spoons** – The spoons help to check the thickness of liquids, tenderness of solids, stir, and turn the food in the pots and pans. Various spoons used during cooking are skimmer, turner, masher, ladle, fork-spoon, and utility spoon.



Kettles

They are used for cooking, warming, and storing food. They are two layered pots- one inside the other with a gap in between for steam. They are usually jacketed, agitator tilting for better view and food handling. The kettles also have a product discharge valve to transfer products without damaging delicate food items.



Deep kettles are best for soups, gravies, spaghetti sauces, pie fillings, and puddings as the quality of these food items remains the same irrespective of their volume and frequent stirring. Lentils, beans, and pasta can be cooked in deep kettles.

The shallow kettles are best for cooking and warming stews, patties, steamed vegetables, where this kettle offers better view and less food handling.

Vegetable Cutters/Choppers

The cutters or choppers are used in cutting, dicing, shredding, and slicing vegetables in various shapes and sizes. They are also used to cut bread into small pieces for puddings or soups. The handheld cutters are used for cutting fruits, salads, etc. for presentation.



Mixers

The overhead motor vertical mixer is most commonly used in commercial food production units. Mixers are used for mixing and blending. There are broadly two types of mixers – table mounted and floor mounted.



Mixers have the following standard accessories –

- **Flat beater** – Mashing and beating foods of medium consistency such as boiled potatoes.
- **Wire whipper** – whipping cream, eggs, frosts and other light foods that contain air. It works on high speed.
- **Dough arm** – It handles heavy and bulky ingredients such as bread dough at low speed.

Cookers and Steamers

Commercial cookers and steamers largely operate on electricity. The cooks use these for cooking rice, lentils, and vegetables.



Fryer

There are two basic versions of a fryer – **Electric fryer** and **Gas fryer**. The frying time and oil temperature varies directly with the food type and the size of the fryer.



The fryers can be used to fry potato chips, *Pooris* (fried Indian bread), doughnuts, bagels, onion rings, shrimp, fish, chicken, okra, and zucchini.

Juicer

Juicers extract juices and pulps from fruits and vegetables. It separates the juice and left over peels and unused fibers from the fruits. There are three types of juicers –

- **Centrifugal** – It works by crushing fruits. It is quick and yields plain juice.
- **Masticating** – It works longer to yield juice of specified texture and consistency.
- **Twin-gear** – It uses various gears and membranes to yield best quality juice of almost any fruit, carrot, tomato, or leafy vegetables. It also helps to prevent oxidation of the juice.



Maintenance Equipment in Commercial Kitchen

Dish Washer

It can wash multiple dishes and bowls simultaneously and eliminates a great effort required for traditional dish washing. There are two basic types of dishwasher –

- **Door-type** – It is large machine. It can clean from 50 to 125 dish racks depending upon the size of the machine.
- **Under-counter** – It is smaller and can fit under the kitchen platform.



Glass Washer

There are two types of glass washers – rotary and pass-through. They are mostly used at bars for washing glasses of various shapes meant for various beverages.



Dish Warmer

It can dry as many as 1800 dishes an hour and eliminates the possibility of contamination caused by conventional drying methods.



Special Equipment in Commercial Kitchen

There are a few special equipment used in commercial kitchen to make the tasks easy.

Nut cracker

It is used to crack the shells of hard nuts such as almonds, walnuts, hazelnuts, pine nuts, palm nuts, and pistachio. Some machines are also capable of shelling watermelon and pumpkin seeds, and peeling peanuts, cashew nuts and almonds.



Shredders

A shredder cuts the fruits and vegetables into string-like fine pieces, which are useful in salads and vegetarian cookery.



Kitchen Knives

Knives are used across various small volume dicing, cutting, slicing, carving, and filleting. There are various knives used for different cutting and carving purposes –

- **Paring knife** – It is used for fine cutting work, removing onion skins, and cutting small fruits.
- **Utility knife** – It is used in general purpose cutting and scraping.
- **Steak knife** – It is used for cutting steaks.
- **Santoku knife** – Originated in Japan, this knife is used for cutting, dicing, and mincing. (Santoku = Three virtues)
- **Chef's General knife** – It is a multi-purpose knife used on multiple commodities such as vegetables, fruits, meat, and poultry. For a beginner this should be your first knife, and it is important to pay a little extra to obtain a good quality knife. It will hold edge longer and let you work quickly.



- **Serrated knife (Bread Knife)** – It has a long thin blade with serrated edge that provides sawing-like motion. It is used to slice certain foods with firm skins or outer layers such as bread, tomatoes, and capsicums.
- **Boning/Filleting knives** – They come with a narrow, sharp, and flexible blade and a protruding heel near the handle. They can run along the bones of flat fish or ribs smoothly.
- **Carving knife** – This knife comes with a long, thin and sharp blade to ensure neat and accurate cutting.
- **Slicing knife** – It has a long sharp blade that tapers at the end and helps slicing fruits and vegetables finely.
- **Turning knife** – It is an essential component to present the food in a unique way. This knife has a small curved blade that is used to carve the vegetables into the shape of a container.
- **Cleaver** – It is a butchers' knife. It is very strong and sharp to cut through large pieces of meat such as pork and beef.

Cooking measures

Temperatures

The chart below explains what exactly is meant when terms like “low” or “medium” heat are used. An useful addition is the mentioning of the exact temperatures at which your common cooking fats/ oils start boiling (and burning, hence the “smoking point”).

TEMPERATURES	From °C	To °C	Oils and fats smoking point °C
Low heat	107	120	Linseed oil, unrefined sunflower oil – 107
Low to moderate heat	121	161	Unrefined corn oil, cold pressed olive oil – 160
Moderate heat	162	189	Butter, sesame seed oil – 177, Pork fat – 180
Moderate to high heat	190	231	Virgin olive oil, grape seed oil – 216
High heat	232	343	Refined sunflower oil – 232

Volume measures

This simple chart will help you convert between the main volume measures used in cooking: cup, tablespoon and teaspoon (you will often find them written “tbsp” and “tsp” respectively),

Cup measures	Table spoon	Tea spoon	Mililiters
1 cup	16	48	240
1/2 cup	8	24	120
1/4 cup	4	12	60
1/8 cup	2	6	30
1/16 cup	1	3	15

Sometimes it would be hard to understand the measures written in a recipe, especially if you don't have dedicated kitchen scales. The chart below will help you measure some common products with a cup, and determine the weight of its contents.

VOLUME TO WEIGHT RATIOS	
Product	Grams per milliliter
Plain flour	0.48
Whole wheat flour	0.51
Butter	0.96
White sugar	0.85
Brown sugar	0.72
Powdered sugar	0.48
Starch	0.59
Cocoa	0.40
Honey	1.44
Peanuts, almonds	0.64
Hazelnuts, pistachios	0.57
Walnuts	0.45
Dried fruit	0.70
Rice	1.02
Bread crumbs	0.40

Cooking methods and techniques

Below is a list of the main cooking methods and techniques you will encounter in recipes. This list and the chart below is one that you will probably return to quite often in the beginning.

Al dente

Cooking pasta or rice until it is thick but not hard. It also refers to vegetables that are no longer raw but are still slightly crunchy.

Blanching

It is mainly used for fruits and vegetables. It involves immersing the product in boiling water for a very short time (5-10 seconds), removing and immediately cooling under running cold water.

It is used for:

- neutralization of bacteria that normally develop in the product, with the aim of keeping it longer. It also applies before freezing.
- easier peeling of some products, such as tomatoes, plums, etc.
- improves the taste of some products, such as broccoli, etc.

- improves the color of some products, such as broccoli, etc.

Blanching potatoes: the potatoes are dipped briefly in boiling fat.

Boiling

Boiling is the cooking of food completely immersed in a liquid (water, broth, milk, sugar syrup). Water boils in the range of 95° to 100°C, depending on atmospheric pressure (altitude). It is a curious fact that strongly boiling and lower boiling water have the same temperature. Cooking relaxes the connective tissue of the meat and makes it tender. It also softens the cellulose in vegetables, fruits and grain products. During cooking, part of the liquid evaporates, which when preparing sauces, for example, leads to their thickening.

Water bath

Another container with the product to be cooked is immersed in a container of boiling water; it is usually used for cooking easily burning mixtures, for example sauces or creams. The main advantage of the water bath is that it provides an even distribution of heat. Another advantage is that it provides better temperature control, as the boiling of the water in the outer vessel is easily controlled visually, and the temperature in the inner vessel is very close to, but lower than, that in the outer vessel.

Glazing

It represents pouring the finished product with glaze, in order to give a finished, aesthetic look and taste. It is mainly applied to sweets, fruits, bread and meat. Glazes are usually sweet.

Grilling

Cooking the meat by grilling directly on the heat source, usually a grill. Although electric grills are often used, the best flavor is obtained by burning suitable solid wood such as oak, beech, etc. until embers are obtained. The meat is usually pre-marinated in order to acquire a richer flavor and to prevent it from drying out during baking.

Deglazing

After cooking meat, fat and concentrated, caramelized juices usually remain in the dish. The meat is removed and the pan is reheated, adding water or stock and stirring until a sauce is formed, which is then served over the meat.

Caramelization

Heating usually sugar or sugar syrup until it reaches a dark caramel color. This process results in oxidation, breakdown of complex sugars to simple ones and subsequent reactions between them. Visually, the sugar melts and changes color to dark brown, producing a nutty aroma. Caramelized sugar is used in icings, candies, in some sauces, etc.

Liquid pickling

It is usually applied to game meat, beef or mutton. The marinade is prepared from equal parts of vinegar and water, adding salt, pepper, allspice, a little sugar, and chopped cubes of aromatic roots (celery, fennel root, parsley root). The mixture is boiled for a short time, then allowed to cool and filtered. The pieces of meat are placed in it, and there should always be liquid above them, and it is usually left to stand for 24 to 48 hours.

This is a basic marinade recipe. Various products are added, such as garlic, wine, lemon juice, onion, soy sauce, etc., depending on the particular dish being prepared.

Refreshment

Rinsing vegetables, immediately after cooking them with cold water before serving, in order to stop the heat treatment process and preserve the color and nutritional qualities.

Cooling

A process in which the temperature of semi-finished products or ready meals and products is lowered to a temperature of 0° or 5°. Serves for short-term storage. It strongly slows down the development of most of the bacteria or spores contained in the products.

Breading/ Battering

The product is rolled in breadcrumbs, then fried. There are different types of breading, the main ingredient being flour (wheat or corn), crumbled dried bread, or breadcrumbs. Another main ingredient is egg (yolk, egg white, or both).

Mashing

Pureeing. Crushing and tearing a given product, using a blender or blender, to obtain a homogeneous consistency, without lumps and pieces.

Baking

Preparation process by dry heating the products. The temperature varies according to the product within 100° - 300° C. Baking is most often done in an oven, but it is also baked in a pan, microwave oven, etc.

Frying

A method of preparation in which the product is immersed in hot fat until cooked. Varies greatly by product, type of fat, amount of fat, container used, etc.

Reduction

Thickening by boiling liquids or sauces, as a result of which their flavor and aroma are concentrated. However, long boiling should be avoided, as some of the aromas may disappear.

Sautéing

Quick frying in a very hot pan with a little fat, in which the products are not mixed, but turned by moving the pan. The pan should be large enough so that the products are located on one level. Add fat, just covering the bottom. The products should be so that they are evenly distributed on the bottom of the pan, without overlapping. Fry until lightly browned, then turn them over by moving the pan. The pan should have straight walls, passing to the bottom with a curve, so that the products can be turned over.

Traning

Cutting cooked meat into serving pieces. It is applied to large pieces of meat, or whole parts and birds, such as, for example, a whole leg, shoulder, chicken, turkey, etc.

Stuffing

Filling the inside of a product with finely chopped vegetables, meat, fish. Whole birds, peppers, eggplants, tomatoes, shoulder, etc. are usually stuffed. In meats, the opening after filling is sewn up with a thick thread.

Filleting

Cutting a piece of boneless meat with a flat, wide shape suitable, for example for a schnitzel. The fish is cut with a sharp, narrow knife each into two halves of the fish, moving the knife along the spine, first on one side and then on the other side.

Flambé

It is a cooking technique in which ethyl alcohol is added to the dish in a pan and ignited, and most often this is done in front of the customer, when serving. Burning the alcohol is thought to release some of its flavor, but perhaps the main advantage of flambéing is the spectacle it creates when the food is served.

It is officially considered that flambéing was discovered in 1895 in Monte Carlo by the waiter Henri Carpentier, who accidentally set fire to a pancake being prepared for the young, not-yet-crowned King of Great Britain, Edward VII.

Spiking

The meat is pierced with a narrow knife and the resulting gap is filled with various products such as bacon, garlic, celery, carrot, onion, herbs, spices etc. It gives extra flavor and the bacon keeps the meat from drying out.

Schpritzing

Extruding a creamy product under pressure through a tip of a certain shape (syringe), whereby the outflowing stream takes the shape of the tip. It is used to decorate savory and sweet dishes, cakes, cakes, etc.

Here's a main cooking methods cheat sheet. Heat is displayed at a scale from 0 to 10, so adapt to your equipment – i.e. if your stove top adjusts heat from 0 to 6, then 5 on this scale will be your 3 and 6 on this scale will be your 4. For your oven, refer to the temperature chart in the previous section.

Dry methods	Heat	Application
Roasting	3>9	Anything
Broiling/ Grilling	10	As main cooking method, or to create a crispy crust or browning
Deep frying	6	Crispy texture
Water bath	1	For delicate ingredients
Frying	6	Anything, using little oil/ fat
Sautéing	8	Browning/ searing anything in little oil/ fat
Braising	3	Long cooking of ingredients under cover
Flambéing	10	Desserts, roast meat

Wet methods	Heat	Application
Blanching	10>0	Vegetables. Cool with cold water as soon as removed from the heat.
Boiling	10	Anything. Also use this method for reduction.
Stewing	3	Long cooking under cover, ingredients almost covered by liquid.
Poaching	3	Keeps the shape of ingredients.
Pouleeing	1	Light browning then slow stewing of delicate meats / ingredients
Simmering	2	Soups and stews, reductions. Thickens and concentrates flavor.
Steaming	1	Keeps precious compounds such as vitamins and amino acids.

How to read and prepare recipes

There are a few tips that will help you understand what the recipe you have decided to try out is telling you to do:

- Start simple. If you are a complete novice, forgiving dishes like soups, stews and oven braised/ stewed one pot dishes are going to be your best friend.
- Make sure you have all the ingredients, or desired substitutes. This also applies to herbs and spices required. The more experienced you become, the more power you will have to decide what can be substituted and when;
- Make sure you are measuring the ingredients correctly. You can always refer to the respective charts provided in this booklet;
- Adapt the required use of heat to your equipment. You can refer to the temperature chart discussed above;
- Make sure you have the required type and material cooking vessel. Some you can substitute with limited effect (i.e. using a stainless steel frying pan instead of a cast iron one will not hurt the recipe much; on the other hand using a non-stick one will not do if browning of ingredients is required, and especially if the recipe relies on deglazing to make the sauce.

Once you've ticked all of the above, you can proceed with preparing the desired recipe. Here are a few useful tips:

- Get all your ingredients ready, in one convenient location place. Meat is usually cooked at room temperature, so take it out some time before you start cooking. Vegetables on the other hand need to be as fresh as possible. Some ingredients will require soaking in advance, so always pay attention to such instructions;
- Pay attention to instructions telling you when to turn the heat on. For example, making stocks always requires the ingredients to be put in cold water, which is then heated gradually. Most of the time oven based recipes will require that the oven is preheated to the desired temperature. But sometimes you will find recipes asking you to do the opposite and place your to-be-roasted or baked dish in a cold oven. Keep in mind that if you cook in earthenware/ clay vessels, they have to be heated gradually. In most cases this is also valid for cast iron.

- Cut, chop, dice all your ingredients in advance, unless there are ingredients that have to be added much later in the cooking process – you don't want to wait for the meat to be almost perfectly browned to start peeling your onions;
- Until you become experienced by cooking regularly, follow the recipe to the letter. As a beginner, you will benefit greatly if you choose recipes that are written in as much detail as possible. Even better – look for ones with videos or pictures showing the different stage of preparation of the recipe.
- Time your cooking properly. Not all dishes get on well with reheating, so always keep in mind the time you are expected to serve the dish, and work out backwards when you will have to start, and always give yourself about 10 or 20 minutes on top of the cooking times described. With experience, you will be able to make decisions for yourself about what stages of recipe preparation can be “delayed” or “sped up” and for how long (i.e. reducing boiling to a simmer will work in most cases, unlike increasing the oven temperature to speed up the cooking of a piece of meat that contains a lot of connective tissue).
- And last but not least – don't be afraid to try and make your own impact on the dish, depending on what you like. Just be gentle and it will work. For example the humble author of this booklet loves garlic, so I would add a tiny bit of it to many recipes that do not require it. This is also valid for the use and mixing of herbs and spices, which, as your experience grows, will become a great source of fun.

Flavors

Many of us were taught that humans can sense four tastes: salty, sweet, sour, and bitter. But did you know that there are actually seven tastes?

Salty

This is the simplest of the tastes. Salt is actually the compound sodium chloride, which is necessary for the human body. That's because it regulates fluids and creates nerve impulses. Humans perceive it as warming, soothing and drying. Foods with sodium chloride are perceived as salty: soy sauce, celery, seaweed, olives etc. Salt plays two very important roles in flavouring a dish. Firstly, it balances against bitterness. Secondly, it enhances most other flavours present in the dish - particularly sweetness.

Sweet

Sweetness indicates the presence of sugars in foods, along with certain proteins. The sweet taste is pleasurable, as it is calming and relaxing. Common foods that taste sweet are sugar, cinnamon, dill, honey, butter, wheat, almonds, carrots and avocado. Sweetness will counteract bitter and sour flavours. It can also be used to cut down the heat of a particularly spicy meal.

Sour

Sour tastes mark the presence of acids in foods. Acid stimulates the digestive system, metabolism and appetite, but, as an added bonus, can also relieve gas. Citrus fruits yogurt, sour cream, tomatoes, vinegar, goat cheese, pickles and sauerkraut are all perceived as sour. Acidity works wonders in balancing a dish, adding liveliness and counteracting sweetness and heat.

Bitter

The bitter taste receptors identify bases in foods. Humans taste bitterness so that we may avoid naturally toxic substances, most of which taste bitter. Because of this, it is the taste we are most sensitive to. Bitter foods include coffee, unsweetened cocoa and citrus peel. Though not everyone's favorite, bitterness is critical to balance. The taste of grapefruit, dark greens (like spinach, broccoli, letuces, watercress and kale) or beer can help to cut through the richness or sweetness of a meal.

Umami (Savory)

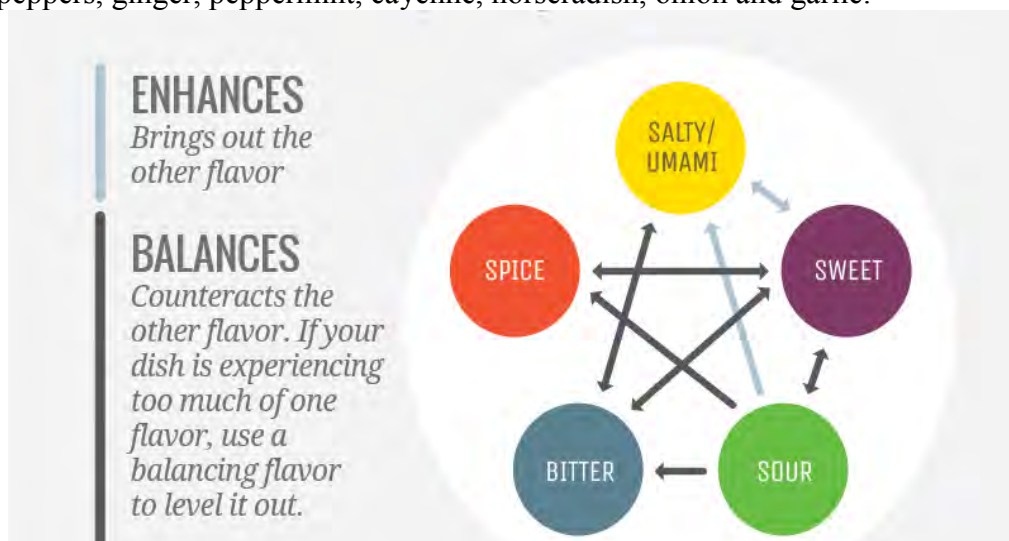
This flavor is often described as "savory" or "meaty." Umami-rich foods include Parmesan cheese, miso, soy sauce, mushrooms, walnuts, grapes and broccoli. To a lesser degree, it's also found in meats. Umami is best used to complement other flavours - perfect for a dish that seems balanced but is still lacking.

Astringent

This taste is in addition to the basic five tastes that humans perceive. Astringent foods contain tannins, which constrict organic tissue. It causes a puckering sensation that may also be described as rubbery, styptic, dry or rough. In addition, it may be described as harsh when found in wine, or tart, in sour foods. The astringent flavor is found in tea, unripe fruit, nutmeg, rosemary, green apples, spinach and lentils.

Pungent

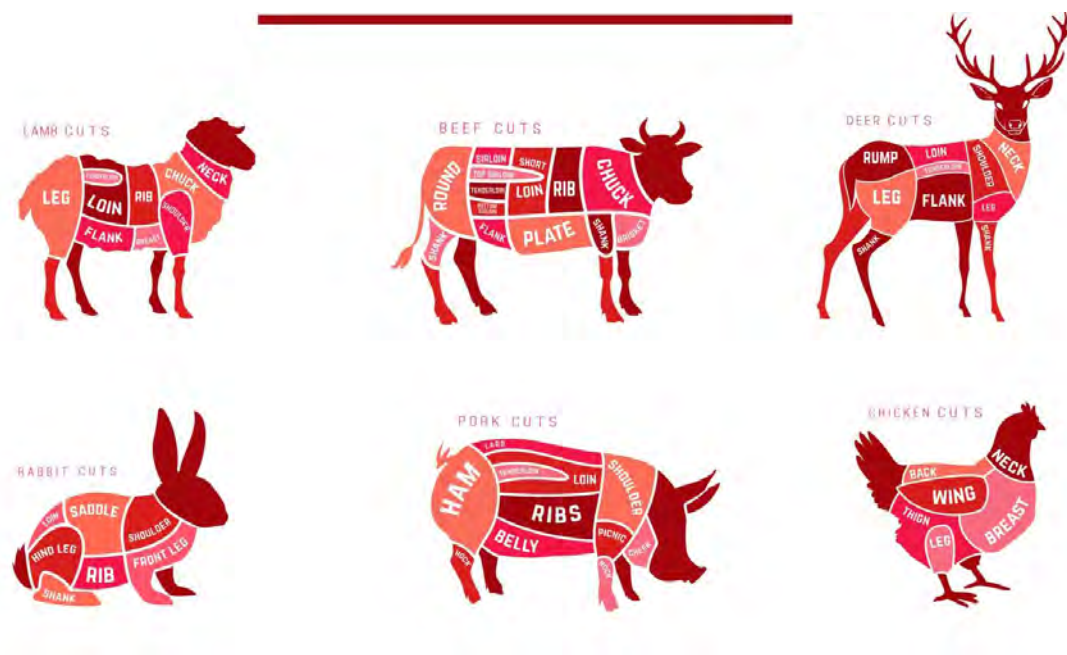
The pungent taste is perceived as dry heat. It can boost metabolism and circulation, aid digestion and reduce body fat. Examples of pungent foods and spices are basil, chili powder, all hot peppers, ginger, peppermint, cayenne, horseradish, onion and garlic.



Here's a chart you can easily refer to when you want to achieve a balanced taste.

Meat cuts and cooking meats

The graphic below shows the various meat cuts of common animals we use for food.



The five basic principles of cooking meat

1. Use High Heat to Develop Flavor

Browning creates a tremendous amount of flavor and is a key step when cooking meat. This happens through a process called the Maillard reaction, named after the French chemist who first described it in the early 1900s. The Maillard reaction occurs when the amino acids and sugars in the food are subjected to heat, which causes them to combine. In turn, hundreds of different flavor compounds are created. These compounds break down to form yet more new flavor compounds, and so on, and so on. When browning meat, you want a deep brown sear and a discernibly thick crust on all sides—best obtained by quick cooking over high heat.

To ensure that meat browns properly, first make sure the meat is dry before it goes into the pan; pat it thoroughly with paper towels. This is especially important with previously frozen meat, which often releases a great deal of water. Second, make sure the pan is hot by preheating it over high heat until the fat added to the pan is shimmering or almost smoking. Finally, make sure not to overcrowd the pan; there should be at least 1/4 inch of space between the pieces of meat. If there isn't, the meat is likely to steam instead of brown. If need be, cook the meat in two or three batches.

2. Use Low Heat to Preserve Moisture

For large cuts of meat or poultry, we often advocate a low-and-slow cooking method. We find that this approach allows the center to come up to the desired internal temperature with less risk of overcooking the outer layers.

Even cooking isn't the only benefit of slow roasting: It also helps minimize the loss of flavorful juices (and fat). Proteins shrink less and express less moisture and fat when cooked at moderate temperatures than when roasted at high heat. Cooking at the wrong temperature is a common mistake.

3. Match the Cut to the Cooking Method

Tough cuts, which generally come from the heavily exercised parts of the animal, such as the shoulder or rump, respond best to slow-cooking methods, such as pot roasting, stewing, or barbecuing. The primary goal of slow cooking is to melt collagen in the connective tissue, thereby transforming a tough piece of meat into a tender one. These cuts are always served well done.

Tender cuts with little connective tissue generally come from parts of the animal that receive little exercise (like the loin, the area along the back of the cow or pig). These cuts respond best to quicker, dry-heat cooking methods, such as grilling or roasting. These cuts are cooked to a specific doneness. Prolonged cooking increases moisture loss and can turn these tender cuts tough.

4. Don't Forget about Carryover Cooking

Since the temperature of meat will continue to rise as it rests, an effect called carryover cooking, meat should be removed from the oven, grill, or pan when it's 5 to 10 degrees below the desired serving temperature. Carryover cooking doesn't apply to poultry and fish (they don't retain heat as well as the dense muscle structure in meat). The following temperatures should be used to determine when to stop the cooking process.

5. Rest Your Meat

The purpose of resting meat is to allow the juices, which are driven to the center during cooking, to redistribute themselves throughout the meat. As a result, meat that has rested will shed much less juice than meat sliced straight after cooking.

MEATS – OVEN ROASTING						
Meat	Cut	Weight (kg)	Oven temperature °C	Oven time (minutes)	Resting time (minutes)	Minimal internal temp °C
Chicken	Whole	1-1.5	180	75-90	40	74
Chicken	Whole	1.5-2	180	90-120	40	74
Chicken	Whole	2-3	180	120-150	40	74
Duck	Whole	2-3	180	120	40	74
Goose	Whole	4-5	180	180	40	74
Goose	Whole	5-6	180	210	40	74
Turkey	Whole	4-5	180	135-150	90	74
Turkey	Whole	5-6	180	150-180	120	74
Turkey	Whole	6-7	180	180-210	120	74
Turkey	Whole	7-8	180	210-240	120	74
Lamb	Shoulder	2	180	240	30	63
Lamb	Leg	2	220	75-90*	30	63
Lamb	Ribs	5-7 ribs	190	25-45*	10	63
Pork	Fillet, ribs	2-3	240 then 180	30 then 60	30	63
Pork	Fillet, ribs	3-4	240 then 180	30 then 90	30	63
Pork	Fillet, ribs	4-5	240 then 180	30 then 105	30	63
Pork	Belly	2-3	180	120-150	30	63
Pork	Shoulder	3-4	240 then 170	30 then 150	30	63
Pork	Shoulder	4-5	240 then 170	30 then 180	30	63
Beef	Ribs	2-2.5	160	100-130	40	63
Beef	Fillet	1.5-2	160	100-140	30	63

When you fry, braise or boil meat on your stove top it is not hard to tell when it is ready – you just test (or taste) it. But as a beginner, and with large chunks of meat, your oven will be your best friend.

The chart below will advise you how to roast common meat cuts based on their weight. Pay attention not only to the cooking times, but also the time the meat needs to rest after you take it out of the oven. Oh, and by the way – invest in a simple kitchen thermometer and pay attention to the column on the left end – this is the minimal temperature the meat should have reached when you insert the thermometer in the middle of its thickest part (stay away from the bones though, they heat more than the surrounding flesh, so could give you a false reading). Remember this advice well – it can be the difference between savory perfection and hospitalisation.

Fish, types of fish and cuts and cooking fish

Fish are more delicate, so they rarely need a lot of heat to cook. A rule of thumb is that fish is cooked when the internal temperature has reached 43 to 46 degrees Celsius.

As with meats and meat cuts, not all are the same, and not every cooking method would apply to various fish. Here is a chart showing some of the most common fish and cuts, and the recommended cooking methods and times for them. Of course this is only a recommendation, so you are free to use other methods. Just remember that fish meat is delicate and can easily crumble, which will not make a good presentation.

FISH COOKING TIMES (minutes)	Grill	Fry	Roast	Steam	Deep fry
Cod fillet	8	9	20	15	4-6
Salmon fillet	6-8	6-7	15-20		
Herring fillet	4-6				
Mackerel fillet	5	7-8	15-20		
Skate wing	7-8	7	20	15	
Haddock steak	13	8	20	15	
Salmon steak	6-8	7-8	15-20		
Swordfish steak	8-10	6-8	20	12	
Tuna steak	8	6-8	20		
Herring whole	6-8	7-8	20-25		
Mackerel whole	8-10	10-12	20-25		
Sea bass whole	8-10	6-8	20-25	15	
Sea bream whole	8-9	6-8	20-25	15	
Calamari (squid)		0.5-1			2-3
Shrimp	6-8	4-6			2-3
Octopus	120 boil then 5	120 boil then 4-5		20-45	

Vegetables and how to cook them

You can cook veggies separately, or as an ingredient in various dishes. The rules remain the same as to what time is needed for a vegetable to be perfectly cooked to the desired texture.

The chart below outlines the most common methods of cooking vegetables. It contains a list of common vegetables used in modern and traditional culinary with suggested methods for each, as well as cooking times.

Just remember – these times would apply if you cook the vegetables separately. If you put them as an ingredient in dishes, then the respective times would apply as well. For example, if you are adding a vegetable from the list to a stew, the boiling time for that vegetable would apply.

VEGETABLE	Steam (minutes)	Blanche (minutes)	Boil (minutes)	Other (minutes and temperatures)
Artichoke (whole)	30-60		25-40	
Artichoke (heart)	10-15	8-12	10-15	Fry - 10
Asparagus	8-10	2-3	5-12	Fry - 5
Green beans	5-15	4-5	10-20	Fry - 3-4
Broad beans	10-20	5-10	20-30	
Beet root	40-60		30-60	Roast - 60 at 180°C
Broccoli (stems)	8-15	3-4	5-10	Blanch then roast
Broccoli (heads)	5-6	2-3	4-5	Fry - 3-4
Brussels sprouts	6-12	4-5	5-10	Halve then fry - 3-4
Cabbage (whole or rough cut))	6-9		10-15	Stuffed
Cabbage (chopped)	5-8		5-10	Fry - 3-4
Carrot (whole)	10-15	4-5	15-20	Roast - 30-40 at 180°C
Carrot (chopped)	4-5	3-4	5-10	Fry - 3-4
Cauliflower (heads)	15-20	4-5	10-15	Blanch then roast - 20 at 180°C
Cauliflower (buds)	6-10	3-4	5-8	Fry - 3-4
Corn (cob)	6-10	3-4	4-7	Soak – 10 then roast at 190°C
Corn (portion)	4-6	2.5-4	3-4	Fry - 3-4
Aubergine (whole)	15-30	10-15	10-15	Roast – 30 at 205°C
Aubergine (cubed)	5-6	3-4	5-10	Roast - 10-15 at 220°C
Leaf vegetables		8-15	30-60	
Young cauliflower	4-6	4-5	5-8	Fry - 2-3
Kohlrabi	30-35		15-30	Roast - 50-60 at 180°C
Mushrooms	4-5		3-4*	Fry - 4-5
Onion (whole)	20-25		20-30	Roast – 60 at 205°C
Onion (chopped)	15-20	2-3	10-20	Stew - 15-25
Parsnip	8-10	3-4	5-10	Roast – 30 at 160°C
Peas	3-5	1-2	8-12	Fry - 2-3
Bell pepper	2-4	2-3	4-5	Fry - 2-3
Potato (whole)	12-30		20-30	Roast - 40-60 at 205°C
Potato (cut)	10-12		15-20	Roast - 25-30 at 205°C
Spinach	5-6	2-3	2-5	Fry - 3
Pumpkin (cut)	5-10	2-3	5-10	
Pumpkin (halved)	15-40		5-10	Roast - 40-60 at 190°C
Pumpkin (whole)			20-30	Roast - 40-90 at 180°C

Tomatoe	2-3	1-2		Halve then roast - 8-15 at 205°C
Turnip (whole)	20-25		15-20	Roast 30-45 at 180°C
Turnip (chopped)	12-15	2-3	5-8	Fry - 2-3
Courgette/ Zucchini	5-10	2-3	5-10	Broil - 5

Legumes, lentils and grains

All that has already been said regarding vegetables also applies to this group of ingredients. The chart below provides you with some useful information though – how much water you will need to cook these, what time it would take, and what volume of cooked product you will end up in the end. So, pay attention to this, because in some recipes it would not be possible to add water in the middle of recipe preparation just because, say, you mistook Arborio for regular rice.

LEGUMES, LENTILS AND GRAINS - BOILING				
Product (1 cup)	Soaking	Water (cups)	Time (minutes)	Volume when ready (cups)
Manna croup		2	10-15	3
Black beans	12+ hrs	4	2-4	2.4
Oats		2	4-5	2
White rice		2	10-15	1.8
Brown rice		2	25-30	1.5
Arborio rice		4-5	8-10	2.2-3
Wild rice	4 hrs	2	20-25	3.5
Brown lentils	optional 20 mins	2	20-30	1.4
Red lentils		2	20	2.3
White beans	12+ hrs	3	60-90	2.5
Black eyed peas	12 hrs	3	60-90	2-2.5
Chick peas	12+ hrs	4	60-120	1.6
Peas		3	45	1.9
Broad beans	12+ hrs	4	60-90	2.50
Wheat		2.5	30-40	3

Doughs and the basics of baking

Baking can be rather intimidating and rightly so. It requires a great deal of experience with textures, as well as knowing your equipment very well. So, if you are just a beginner, don't go straight to dough products like pâte à choux, sponge or bread. Pancakes, fritters and pies are usually more forgiving, while cookies and biscuits can be achieved with a bit of practice.

Follow the exact proportions in the recipes you want to prepare. Once you've tried it several times, you will get experience in telling the right texture and the tricks of baking in the oven.

The chart below gives you the product ratios for some of the common doughs, along with baking temperatures and key notes on the process of preparing the dough and baking the finished product.

DOUGH RATIOS (parts)	Flour	Liquid (water or milk)	Fat	Eggs	Sugar	Oven temperature	Notes
Bread	5	3				210	Knead until you can stretch it so much it becomes translucent. $\frac{1}{4}$ teaspoon yeast and $\frac{1}{2}$ salt per cup of flour. Let it rise for a few hours, shape the bread and let it rise again for about an hour before baking.
Pasta	3			2			Knead till smooth and rest for 10 minutes. Eggs/ yolks can be substituted with water/ oil. For green pasta use 2 parts flour, 1 part eggs and $\frac{1}{2}$ blended spinach.
Pie	3	1	2			185	Mix all ingredients, do not overknead. Sugar can be added, as well as 2 parts nuts and 1 part eggs.
Biscuit	3	2	1			180	Mix all ingredients, do not overknead. 1 teaspoon baking powder per cup of flour.
Cookie	3	1	2			175	Beat the butter to creamy texture (sugar is optional), then add the flour, beat it smooth and slowly dilute with the liquid. 1 teaspoon baking powder per cup of flour.
Pâte à choux	1	2	1	2		Start at 215, after 15-20 mins reduce to 155	Bring the fat and water to a boil, add the flour, stir till smooth, remove from the heat, slowly add the eggs. If you wish, add sugar or grated parmesan at this point.
Sponge	1		1	1	1	180	Beat butter and sugar to creamy texture, add the flour and eggs. 1

Meringue	1			3	3	Preheat to 180, bake at 80 190	teaspoon baking powder per cup of flour. Beat sugar and eggs till fluffy and holding shape. Flour is optional and is omitted when pure meringue is needed. Mix the wet and dry ingredients separately, then combine. 1 teaspoon baking powder per cup of flour. For sweet muffins add 1 part sugar.
Muffin	2	2	1	1		Fry till golden	Mix the wet and dry ingredients separately, then combine. A pinch of salt and 1 teaspoon baking powder per cup of flour. For sweet fritters add 1 part sugar.
Fritter	2	2		1			
Pancake (flap jack)	2	2	1/2	1		Fry till golden or the edges start browning Fry (wipe a drop of oil on the pan) till brown spots appear	Mix the wet and dry ingredients separately, then combine. A pinch of salt and 1 teaspoon baking powder per cup of flour. For sweet pancakes add sugar. Mix the wet and dry ingredients separately, then combine and stir. Choose your liquid according to preference (milk, yoghurt, cream) but make sure you get the desired thickness. .
Pancake (crepe)	1/2	1		1			

Stocks, roux (thickeners), basic, secondary and other sauces

Stocks and sauces are flavor carriers, used to provide unity of the ingredients, finish and balance a dish. A pan fried/ grilled beef steak is simply a beef steak until you pour over your favorite sauce, one that will make you ask for a piece of bread to wipe the plate after the meal is gone.

Although stocks, thickeners and sauces may seem different and not related at a first glance, there is almost a mathematical relation between them. You can imagine it as a set of formulas:

Liquid + Thickener = Primary sauce

Primary sauce + Other ingredients = Secondary (derived) sauce

Before you delve deep into the amazing world of sauce preparation though, you will need to come to terms with some terms. You will be finding them over and over again in the charts below, and in professionally written recipes. Here are some of them:

Roux – the term used for thickeners. Roux is used to provide a desired thicker texture of sauces, stews and some soups. It often involves frying flour in fat to a different point.

Mirepoix – basically a flavor base consisting of certain vegetables, added to stocks and sauces, either boiled or fried. In classical (read French) cuisine you will find the inevitable

threesome: onion, celery and carrot. In Latin America the carrot is often omitted and green bell peppers are added. Garlic is also added quite often as it is versatile and provides nice background flavor. Sometimes ingredients can be substituted purely for aesthetical reasons, i.e. if you want your soup, stew or sauce to be light colored, you can substitute parsnip for carrots as they have similar taste and contents.

Onion brûlée – all onions are born the same, but not all will end up the same in the dish you make. Onion brûlée is basically halved onion, placed on its cut side and blackened in a dry pan (steel or cast iron, as non-stick pans should never be used dry plus it will not allow proper “blackening”). Remember – you want really dark color, light brown will not do the trick.

Onion pique – take a raw onion, halve it, and then use one or two dried cloves to attach a dried bay leaf to the cut side of each half. After the stock is ready, simply discard the onion, cloves and bay leaves.

In recipes you read you may also find terms not mentioned here, such as *bouquet garni* (a small bunch of required herbs tied with a string and placed in the pot with one end of the string hanging outside to let you take it out easily), or *sachet d’epices* (serving the same purpose but used for spices and herbs that cannot be tied with a string, think a teabag, but filled with spices).

Stocks

Sure you can boil rice in plain water, and this is often done when you plan to use it as garnish or side dish. But prepare the rice using nice homemade chicken stock instead, and it will become a dish in itself – think risotto alla Milanese, where rice is the only ingredient, flavored with butter, white wine, saffron and, most importantly, meat stock.

The chart below tells you how to make each of the five main kinds of stock prescribed by classical cuisine. Simply weigh the ingredients you will make stock from. For each stock the respective mirepoix is specified, as well as the spices you will have to add. Pay attention (and if necessary refer to the cooking methods chart we already discussed) to the required technique – boiling, simmering, reducing.

Stock	Light chicken	Light veal/ beef	Brown	Fish	Vegetable
Foundation	Chicken Bones 8, Water 10	Veal/ beef bones 8, Water 10	Veal/ beef bones 8, Water 10	Fish bones 10, Water 8	Water 10, Vegetables 3
Mirepoix (flavor base)	Onion 1/2, Celery 1/4, Carrot 1/4 (Parsnip 1/4)	Onion 1/2, Celery 1/4, Carrot 1/4 (Parsnip 1/4)	Onion 1/2, Celery 1/4, Carrot 1/4, Tomato 1/2	Onion 1/2, Celery 1/4, Carrot 1/4 (Parsnip 1/4)	Onion 1, Celery 1/2, Carrot 1/2 (Parsnip 1/2)
Spices	Bay leaf, Thyme, Parsley, Pepper, Garlic (Onion brûlée, Onion pique)	Bay leaf, Thyme, Parsley, Pepper, Garlic (Onion brûlée, Onion pique)	Bay leaf, Thyme, Parsley, Pepper, Garlic (Onion brûlée, Onion pique)	Bay leaf, Thyme, Parsley, Pepper, Garlic, Devesil (Onion brûlée, Onion pique)	Bay leaf, Thyme, Parsley, Pepper, Garlic (Onion brûlée, Onion pique)
Preparation	Boil from cold, add mirepoix and spices, simmer for 3-4 hours, strain.	Boil from cold, add mirepoix and spices, simmer for 6-8 (8-10) hours, strain.	Roast the bones for at least an hour (190), boil from cold, fry the mirepoix with tomatoes, simmer for 6-8 (8-10) hours, strain.	Bring to a boil from cold, add mirepoix and spices, simmer for 30-45 minutes, strain.	Vegetables and mirepoix are fried for 10 minutes, covered with water (and tomato), boil for 45 minutes, strain.

Roux

Next we turn our attention to roux. They are used to thicken a sauce, stew or soup to a desired texture, most often compared to syrup. A rule of thumb is that a sauce is thick enough if slowly filling traces are left on the saucepan when you run the spoon across the bottom.

The chart below tells you how to prepare the five classical types of roux.

ROUX (THICKENERS)					
Roux	White	Blonde	Brown	Egg yolk	Reduction with starch
Proportions	Fat 1, Flour 1	Fat 1, Flour 1	Fat 1, Flour 1	Cream 2-3, Yolks 1	As needed
Preparation	The fat is heated and the flour is added. Cook for a few minutes on medium heat.	The fat is heated and the flour is added. Cook over medium heat until desired color.	The fat is heated and the flour is added. Cook over low heat until desired color.	Beat well, dilute with a little of the liquid, return and heat to 80 degrees.	Reduce the liquid and add corn/ rice starch as needed

Basic (primary) sauces

If you follow the formula above, you will know where we're getting to. Classical cuisine defines five primary sauces, most of which are incorporating stock and roux/. These five are often used as standalone sauces, but at the same time they are actually foundations for most of the secondary sauces you will read about in recipes.

In the chart below you will find instructions on how to make the five primary sauces.

PRIMARY SAUCES					
	Bechamel	Velouté	Español	Hollandaise	Tomato
Liquid	Milk	Light stock	Brown stock	Butter	Stock and tomatoes
Roux	White	Blonde	Brown	Egg yolk	Optional
Preparation	Prepare a roux over a slow fire, cool slightly, slowly whisk in the milk, bring to a boil (add onion pique), simmer for 30 minutes, strain.	Mirepoix (1) is stewed in oil (1) over low heat, prepare a blond roux, pour the broth (20), bring to a boil, add thyme, parsley, bay leaf and pepper, simmer for 1 hour, strain.	Fry the Mirepoix (1) until golden, prepare a brown roux, add diced tomatoes (2-3) and stock (20), stir until boiling, add bay leaf, thyme and parsley, simmer for 2 hours (or reduce to 2/3), strain.	Vinegar (2), salt and pepper are reduced to <i>au sec</i> (almost dry), withdraw, add 1 1/2 cold water, strain, beat with egg yolks (3) over a water bath, remove from the heat, very slowly pour and mix in the butter, flavor with lemon (1/2) and cayenne pepper.	Salted pork (1/4) is boiled till softened, add Onion (1/2) and Carrot (1/2), when softened add finely chopped Tomatoes (8), Tomato puree (4), Pork bones (1), Garlic, Rosemary, Bay leaf, Thyme, Pepper, simmer for 2 hours, strain, taste.

Secondary sauces

Remember the formula above? Here's the idea of preparing secondary sauces out of the basic ones by just adding simple ingredients.

There are tens, if not hundreds, of sauces derived from primary and secondary ones, so in the chart below you will find only an example. I encourage you to look for others, or as you now know how the preparation of sauces works – design your own.

Sauce Proportions	Morne	Supreme	Demi-glace	Maltese	Spanish
	Béchamel 8, Gruyere 1, Parmesan 1/2, Butter 1/2	Chicken veloute 8, Cream 2, Butter 1/4, Lemon	Español 1, Brown stock 1	Hollandaise 8, Orange juice 1/2 - 1 and 2 tsp/l. Orange peel.	Tomato sauce 8, Onion 1 1/2, Green pepper 1, Mushrooms 1, Garlic
Preparation	The cheeses are added to the hot bechamel until melted, removed from the heat and finished with the butter.	The velouté is reduced to $\frac{3}{4}$, the cream is mixed with a little sauce, returned, simmered, finished with butter, seasoned and strained.	The liquids are simmered until reduced to $\frac{1}{2}$	Orange juice and zest are added to the sauce. Served with asparagus.	Sauté the onion and pepper in small cubes, add the sliced mushrooms, sauté, add the sauce, season to taste (+ hot tomato sauce).

Other sauces

Outside the classical tradition, there are sauces that have become very common, so it would be useful if we took a look at some of them.

Love gravy? Hate scraping dirty frying or roasting pans? There's a saying that the best friend of the sauce chef is a dirty pan. Remember the method of deglazing? This is basically all you need to prepare a great gravy, and here's one basic recipe: just add a handful of classic mirepoix to the "dirty" roasting tray or pan, fry till only fat is left and any water or liquid has evaporated, then add a little bit of stock of your choice, simmer till you get to the desired thickness, strain and you're ready to go.

Love Chinese cuisine? Here's how to make the classic sweet and sour sauce: fry 1 part onion in $\frac{1}{4}$ part vegetable oil, add 1 part sugar, 3 parts diced pineapple, $\frac{3}{4}$ parts fresh diced ginger until the ingredients start caramelizing, then add $\frac{3}{4}$ parts lime juice, 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ parts vinegar and some cayenne pepper, when it starts simmering remove it from the heat, blend everything with a blender and then strain. Your sauce is ready.

Using and mixing herbs and spices

With spices you only have two considerations – does this fit with the ingredients you are using, and does this fit with other spices or herbs. Therefore here are two useful tools. The first is a chart showing how common spices fit common main ingredients.

	Breads	Cheese	Eggs	Beef	Poultry	Pork	Lamb	Fish / Shellfish	Vegetables	Pasta	Sweets / Desserts	Soups	Sauces	Fruits
Allspice														
Anise Star														
Basil														
Bay leaf														
Caraway														
Cardamom														
Celery														
Chives														
Cilantro														
Cinnamon														
Cloves														
Coriander														
Cumin														
Dill														
Fennel														
Garlic														
Ginger														
Mace														
Marjoram														
Mustard														
Nutmeg														
Onion														
Oregano														
Paprika														
Parsley														
Pepper														
Rosemary														
Sage														
Salt														
Savory														
Sesame														
Sugar														
Tarragon														
Thyme														
Turmeric														

The second tool is a list of well (and not so well) known spice mixes. As a challenge I dare you to take a recipe you like and cook often, omit all the spices required by the original, and replace them with one of the mixes below. I guarantee that you will have a different dish everytime!

COMBINATIONS OF SPICES By parts (optional in brackets)		
Cajun	Chinese five spices	Garam masala
Cumin 2, Coriander 2, Paprika 2, Salt 1 1/2, Black pepper 1 1/2, Oregano 1, Cayenne pepper to taste	Cinnamon 1, Szechuan pepper 1, Star anise 1, Clove 1, Fennel seeds 1	Coriander 2, Cumin 1, Cardamom 1, Peppercorns 1, Fennel seeds 1, Mustard seeds 1, Cloves 1/2, Turmeric 2, Hot peppers
Chile	Old Bay	Jamaican Jerk
Chili powder 2, Cumin 1, Coriander 1, Coconut powder 1, Garlic powder 1/2, Cayenne pepper 1/4, Salt 1/2, Red pepper 1, Smoked paprika 1	Celery salt 1, Smoked pepper 1/4, Black pepper 1/8, Cayenne pepper 1/8, a pinch of dry mustard, nutmeg, cinnamon, cardamom, allspice, cloves, ginger	Garlic 3, Cayenne pepper 2-3, Onion powder 2, Thyme 2, Parsley 2, Sugar 2, Salt 2, Paprika 1, Allspice 1, Black pepper 1/2, Sweet paprika 1/2, Nutmeg 1/2, Cinnamon 1/4
Curry	Greek	Provence
Cumin 2, Coriander 2, Turmeric 2, Cardamom 1 1/2, Cinnamon 1/2, Cayenne pepper 1/2	Garlic powder 1, Basil 1, Oregano 1, Salt 1 1/2, Black pepper 1 1/2, Parsley 1 1/2, Rosemary 1 1/2, Thyme 1 1/2, Nutmeg 3/4	Thyme 3, Savory 2, Oregano 1, (Rosemary 3), Marjoram 2, (Lavender 1)
Harissa	Caribbean	Zaatar
Hot peppers, Cumin 1, Coriander 1, Cumin 1, Garlic 2, Salt 1, Olive oil 6	Cayenne pepper 2, Salt 2, White pepper 1, Black pepper 1, Basil 1, Thyme 1/2, Paprika 2	Thyme 1, Sesame 1, Sumac 1
Quatre epices	Italian	Chicken mix
White pepper 2, Nutmeg 1/4, Cloves 1/2, Cinnamon 1/4, Ginger 1/4	Basil 2, Oregano 2, Thyme 1, Rosemary 1, Garlic powder 1, Onion powder 1/4, Salt 1/4	Sage 1, Thyme 1, Marjoram 1, Rosemary 1, Celery seeds 1, Black pepper 1
Berbere	Creole	Ras el Hanut
Coriander 4, Fenugreek 2, Black pepper 1, Allspice 1/2, Cardamom 1, 1/2 Cloves, Onion powder 8, Paprika 6, Hot peppers, Salt 4, Nutmeg 1, Ginger 1, Cinnamon 1	Onion powder 2, Garlic powder 2, Oregano 2, Basil 2, Thyme 1, Black pepper 1, White pepper 1, Cayenne pepper 1, Paprika 5, Salt 3	Cumin 2 1/2, Coriander 2, Cinnamon 1, Ginger 2, Black pepper 2, Turmeric 1, Cardamom 1/2, (pinch of saffron)
Panch phoron	Memphis Dust	Color salt
Cumin 1, Caraway seeds 1, Fenugreek seeds 1, Black mustard seeds 1, Nigella 1	White sugar 6, Brown sugar 6, Paprika 4, Garlic powder 2, Black pepper 1, Ginger 1, Onion powder 1, Rosemary 1	Fenugreek 1, Savory 2, Paprika 1, Oregano 1, (Thyme 1), Salt 1, Pumpkin seeds powder 2

Recipes

STUFFED TOMATOES – GEMISTA (Greece)



Ingredients

½ cup long grain rice
⅓ cup olive oil (it doesn't have to be extra virgin)
1 large red onion halved, mince ½ of the onion and slice the other
4 garlic cloves, minced
½ lb lean ground beef (you can use any ground meat)
salt and black pepper
1 tsp ground cumin
¾ tsp dried oregano
½ tsp allspice
½ tsp ground nutmeg
2 cups canned crushed tomatoes
½ cup white wine
¼ cup water
1 cup chopped fresh parsley
½ cup chopped fresh spearmint
6 large tomatoes

Instructions

1. Rinse the rice well, place in a bowl and cover with water. Soak for 15 to 20 minutes until you are easily able to break one grain of rice between your fingertips. Drain.
2. Meanwhile, preheat the oven to 190 degrees Celsius.
3. Place a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add ⅓ cup olive oil and heat until just shimmering but not smoking. Add chopped onions (but not the sliced onions) and garlic, toss briefly until fragrant (do not brown the onions and garlic.) Add the ground meat, season with salt, pepper, cumin, oregano, allspice and nutmeg. Cook the meat for about 5 minutes or until fully browned and cooked through (use a wooden spoon to break the meat apart to avoid large chunks.)

4. When meat is fully browned, add drained rice to the meat mixture in the skillet. Add crushed tomatoes, white wine, and water (a pinch of salt if you like.) Bring the saucy mixture to a boil, turn the heat down and let simmer for just 10 minutes or so (the simmering is an optional step, but it is helpful to get the rice cooking a little bit.) When ready, stir in the fresh herbs. Season with salt to taste.
5. Meanwhile, prepare tomatoes for stuffing. Cut tomato tops (about ½ inch from top). Set the tops aside (they will be used later). Take a small pairing knife and carefully go around the edges of the tomato to loosen/separate the flesh. Then using a spoon, carefully scoop out the tomato flesh. Chop the flesh into large pieces and set it aside for later use (see photo in the tutorial above).
6. Prepare a 9 x 13 baking pan. Oil the bottom of the baking pan with olive oil. Spread the chopped tomato flesh and sliced onion the bottom of the baking dish and add the chopped tomato flesh and sliced onion to make a bed for the stuffed tomatoes.
7. Now, spoon the saucy meat and rice mixture into the empty tomato shells. Arrange the stuffed tomatoes in the prepared baking dish. Cover the stuffed tomatoes with the reserved tops. From one of the corners of your baking dish, carefully pour about ¾ cup of water. Add a little pinch of salt and a generous drizzle of olive oil on top.
8. Cover the baking dish with aluminum foil and bake in heated oven for about 30 to 45 minutes, then uncover and cook for another 45 minutes to 1 hour or so (a total of 1 ½ hours or until the rice is fully cooked. The tomatoes will collapse well and become super tender. Be sure to check during baking and add a little water if needed.

Voila! Your dish is ready!

You can fully prepare and cook the stuffed tomatoes the night before you need to serve them. Take them out of the fridge and let them sit at room temperature for a bit, then add a little bit of water to the bottom of the pan, cover and warm through in a medium-heated oven. OR you can prepare the tomatoes and stuff them but do not bake them. Cover and refrigerate in a refrigerator-safe dish. Take them out a bit before baking so they are not too cold. Assemble in the baking dish as instructed and bake accordingly.

MOUSSAKA (Greece)



Base ingredients

6 eggplants
5 potatoes (optional)
vegetable oil (for frying the eggplants)

For the meat sauce

750g beef or lamb mince
2 red onions (chopped)
2 cloves of garlic (chopped)
1 tin chopped tomatoes (400g)
2 tbsp tomato paste
1 teaspoon sugar
1 glass of red wine
Pinch of sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 bay leaf
A pinch of cinnamon or one cinnamon stick

1/4 of a cup olive oil

For the bechamel sauce

900ml milk
120g butter
120g flour
a pinch of nutmeg
2 egg yolks
100g Parmigiano-Reggiano or Kefalotyri or your favourite hard cheese (3.5oz)
salt to taste

Instructions

To prepare this Greek moussaka recipe, begin by preparing the eggplants. Remove the stalks from the eggplants and cut them into slices, 1 cm thick. Season with salt and place in a colander for about half an hour.

Rinse the eggplants with plenty of water and squeeze with your hands, to get rid of the excessive water. Pat them dry and fry in plenty of oil, until nicely colored. Place the fried eggplants on some paper, in order to absorb the oil. (For a lighter version of the traditional Greek moussaka try drizzling the aubergines with some olive oil and bake them for 20 minutes instead of frying them). Set aside when done.

If you are adding potatoes to your moussaka, now its time to slice them into 0.5cm, half a finger width slices. Fry them or bake them in the same way as the eggplants. Season with some salt and set them aside when done.

Prepare the meat sauce for the moussaka. Heat a large pan to medium-high heat and add the olive oil. Stir in the chopped onions and sauté, until softened and slightly colored. Stir in the mince breaking it up with a wooden spoon and sauté. When it starts to brown, add the the garlic and tomato paste and sauté until the garlic starts to soften. Pour in the red wine to deglaze the meat juices and wait to evaporate. Add the tinned tomatoes, the sugar, a pinch of cinnamon, 1 bay leaf and a good pinch of salt and pepper. Bring to the boil then turn the heat down and simmer with the lid on for about 30 minutes or until most of the juices have evaporated. Set aside when done.

Prepare the béchamel sauce for the moussaka. Use a large pan to melt the butter over low-medium heat. Add the flour whisking continuously to make a paste. Add warmed milk in a steady stream; keep whisking in order to prevent your sauce from getting lumpy. If the sauce still needs to thicken, boil over low heat while continuing to stir. Its consistency should resemble a thick cream.

Remove the béchamel pan from the stove and stir in the egg yolks, salt, pepper, a pinch of nutmeg and the most of the grated cheese. Reserve some cheese to sprinkle on top! Whisk quickly, in order to prevent the eggs from turning an omelette! Season with salt to taste. Take one spoon full of béchamel and stir it in the meat sauce. Set the béchamel sauce aside.

Now its time to assemble the moussaka. For this moussaka recipe you will need a large baking dish, approx. 20x30cm / 8x12inch and 8cm/3 inch deep). Butter the bottom and sides of the pan and layer the potatoes first (if you're using them), then half the eggplants. Pour in all of the meat sauce and spread it out evenly. Add a second layer of eggplants, top with all of the béchamel sauce and smooth out with a spatula.

Sprinkle with the remaining grated cheese. Preheat you oven at 180 degrees Celsius and bake your moussaka for about 60 minutes or until its crust turns light golden brown. Even though it will be really hard to do so, you should wait for the moussaka to cool down and be just warm to the touch before cutting into pieces. This will prevent the béchamel sauce from pouring out when you're cutting your pieces.

Voila! Your dish is ready!

TZATZIKI (Greece)



Ingredients

½ cucumber, halved and deseeded
170g pot yogurt
1 small garlic clove, crushed
handful mint leaves, chopped

Instructions

Coarsely grate the cucumber, sprinkle with a pinch of salt and squeeze out all the liquid. Tip into a bowl with the yogurt, garlic and mint, and mix well. Great served with slow roast lamb or as a dip.

Voila! Your dish is ready!

SARMA (Vojvodina, Serbia)



Ingredients

1 large head of sauerkraut

1 kg mixed minced meat (700 g pork mince and 300 g beef mince)

A couple of dried pork ribs, smoked sausage

Rice (a 200 ml cup)

600-700 g of onion, 3 cloves of garlic

Chicken and herb salt (basically salty chicken bullion cube and some thyme), pepper, bay leaf, sweet and spicy paprika powder

Oil or lard

Instructions

Heat the oil or lard in a pot and fry the finely chopped onion. Once it gets a golden colour add chopped garlic, the mixed minced meat, rice. Add the chicken and herb salt and pepper according to taste. Also add a lot of sweet paprika powder and a bit of spicy paprika powder. Stir and fry for 15 minutes.

Once the meat is fried the next step is the rolling of sarmas. Into each cabbage leaf place about a 2,5 spoonfuls of meat and continue doing so until you run out of the mixture. Once you finish all the rolling, place two to three cabbage leaves on the bottom of a deeper pot and then begin packing the sarmas on across the pot. In between each layer of cabbage rolls place pieces of the chopped pork ribs, smoked sausage, and a couple of bay leaves and peppercorn. In pan, heat about two spoons of lard or oil, add the sweet paprika powder and then pour that over the sarmas. Cover them with 2 to 3 leaves of cabbage, add as much water as necessary and leave to simmer.

Cook on stove for about 2 to 2 and a half hours on low heat. The longer it cooks the more delicious it is!

Voila! Your dish is ready!

BAKED BEANS – PREBRANAC (Serbia)



Ingredients

500 g beans
3 dl oil
1 kg onion and 2 cloves of garlic
1 bay leaf
Paprika powder, ground pepper and salt

Instructions

Put white beans in a pot, cover them with water and bring to a boil. Drain, pour hot water over them and cook until the beans become soft. Then drain them again.

Peel an onion and put it to rest in cold water for about ten minutes. Then slice it into thin rounds. Heat one part of the oil and fry the onions until they turn golden. Add a bit of ground pepper, paprika powder and salt.

Cover the bottom of the dish with oil and then place some of the beans evenly. Pour fried onions over them. Do this until you run out of beans and onions. Always pour some oil on the layer of onions. The last layer has to be of beans.

Put a bay leaf on top as well as two cloves of garlic and a dry hot pepper if you wish. Then pour some oil over that. Cook in a preheated oven at 160-180 degrees Celsius for about half an hour.

Voila! Your dish is ready!

ĆEVAP (Serbia)



Ingredients

1 onion
¾ kg minced beef, ¼ kg minced lamb
2-3 cloves of garlic
Salt to taste and 1 teaspoon of baking soda

Instructions

Start by boiling the finely chopped onion in a little water. You will need about 50 ml of onion flavored “stock”.

Season the meat with salt, mix it and pour over it 50 ml of water with onion which you’ve cooked earlier. Mix well with your hands and leave in the fridge overnight.

Next, grind the meat in a meat grinder twice and leave it to warm up to room temperature for a couple of hours. Then put it back in the fridge.

Before you start shaping the ćevaps, mix in the baking soda. Form thin “fingers” about 5-6 cm long and 2 cm thick. Grill on a griddle until ready. A good indicator of this is that the cevaps should “spring” back when you press them, retaining their shape.

Voila! Your dish is ready!

GOULASH (Hungary)



Ingredients

1kg beef steak (or venison if it is available and you can afford it)
2 tbsp plain flour
vegetable oil
2 medium onions, diced
4 medium carrots, diced
2 celery sticks, leaves and all, diced
1 red pepper, seeded and diced
5 garlic cloves, crushed
4 tbsp good sweet (if possible Hungarian) paprika
2 tbsp caraway seeds, crushed
60g/ 4 tbsp tomato purée
3 bay leaves
2 litres good beef stock (you could use cubes, but why not practice your stock preparation skills)
4 potatoes, peeled and chopped into small cubes
salt and black pepper
sour cream and flat-leaf parsley, to garnish

Instructions

Trim the meat and cut it into bite-sized chunks. In a large bowl, mix the flour with a teaspoon each of salt and pepper. Add the beef and toss so that all the chunks are dusted with flour.

Heat a tablespoon of oil in a large frying pan and brown the beef in small batches, setting each batch aside while you brown the next. Take care not to overcrowd the pan or the beef will steam rather than brown.

Meanwhile, heat a little oil in a large pan, add the onions, carrots, celery, red pepper and garlic. Cook gently for about 10 minutes until they start to soften.

Add the beef, paprika, caraway seeds, tomato purée and bay leaves, then pour in the beef stock.

Stir well, cover the pan and simmer for at least 1½ hours until the beef is starting to get tender. Add the potatoes and continue to simmer for another 30 minutes. Check the seasoning before serving.

Serve the soup in bowls with a generous swirl of soured cream and a good sprinkling of parsley.

Voila! Your dish is ready!

TOMATO-PEPPER STEW – LECSÓ (Hungary)



Ingredients

¼ cup neutral oil (sunflower oil works well)
500 g yellow onions, halved and sliced
1 heaping tablespoon sweet paprika
½ teaspoon smoked paprika (if without meat)
2 tablespoons tomato paste
500 g ripe tomatoes, diced large
1 kg cubanelle or bell peppers (12 to 15 cubanelle or 8 to 10 bell), cut into 2- to 3-inch strips
1 teaspoon fine salt, plus more to taste
300g smoked sausage, such as kielbasa, sliced into rounds (optional)
Sour cream and/or fresh dill, for serving (optional)

Instructions

In a large, heavy-bottomed pot over medium-high heat, warm the oil until shimmering. Add the onions, stir to coat in the oil, cover and cook, stirring intermittently, until soft and lightly golden, 8 to 10 minutes.

Add the paprika (both kinds, if not using meat) and tomato paste and cook, stirring, until fully incorporated, 1 to 2 minutes. Add the tomatoes, stirring to deglaze the browned bits from the bottom of the pot. Cook until the tomatoes begin to release their juices, 2 to 3 minutes.

Add the peppers and salt, and stir to incorporate. Decrease the heat to medium-low, cover and cook until the peppers have reduced and softened, stirring every 5 minutes, about 20 minutes.

Add the sausage, if using, and cook until the peppers are soft but retain a bit of bite, about 10 more minutes. Taste it, and season with more salt, if desired, then remove from the heat. Ladle into bowls, top with a dollop of sour cream and/or a little dill, if desired, and serve. Lecsó is typically eaten with bread or rice to make a more filling meal.

Voila! Your dish is ready!

CHICKEN PAPRIKASH - PAPRIKÁS CSIRKE (Hungary)



Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons pork lard (lard is traditionally used for the best flavor, but you can substitute it with sunflower oil)
- 1.4 kg chicken pieces, bone-in and skin-on (this is traditional and creates the most flavor)
- 2 medium yellow onions, very finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, finely minced
- 2 tomatoes, seeds removed and very finely diced
- 1 bell pepper, diced (optional)
- 3-4 tablespoons sweet paprika (Hungarian paprika is recommended if you can find it, if not just look for quality paprika)
- 2 cups chicken stock (you are encouraged to make your own, following the recipe in the Stocks and Sauces section of this booklet)
- 1 1/2 teaspoons sea salt
- 1/2 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 3/4 cup full fat sour cream, room temperature (important to avoid lumps; be sure also to use full fat)
- 1/4 cup heavy whipping cream

Instructions

1. Heat the lard in a heavy pot and brown the chicken on all sides. Transfer the chicken to a plate. In the same oil, add the onions and fry until golden brown. Add the garlic and tomatoes (and pepper if using) and fry another 2-3 minutes. Remove the pot from the heat and stir in the paprika, salt and pepper. Paprika becomes bitter if scorched and it does so in seconds, so be very careful. Make sure you have the chicken pieces and the stock right next to you.
2. Return the chicken to the pot and place it back over the heat. Quickly pour in the chicken stock. The chicken should be mostly covered. Bring it to a boil. Cover, reduce the heat to medium-low and simmer for 40 minutes. Remove the chicken and transfer to a plate.
3. In a small bowl, stir the flour into the sour cream/ whipping cream mixture to form a smooth paste. Stir the cream mixture into the sauce, whisking constantly to prevent lumps. Bring it to a simmer for a couple of minutes until the sauce is thickened. Add salt and pepper to taste. Return the chicken to the sauce and simmer to heat through.
4. Serve the chicken paprikash with Hungarian nokedli, to make for a really authentic experience. You can always choose another side dish of your preference, like pasta, mashed potatoes or rice.

Voila! Your dish is ready!

COLD CUCUMBER SOUP - TARATOR (Bulgaria)



Ingredients

2 cucumbers (about 500 g)
500 g plain yogurt
3 -4 garlic cloves
2 -3 tablespoons of crushed walnuts (optional)
1 bunch fresh dill
sunflower/ vegetable oil
salt
water (optional)

Instructions

Cut the cucumbers into small cubes and put them in a bowl. You may also grate them but it changes the look and the consistency.

Beat the yogurt with a fork until it gets liquid and pour it over the cucumbers.

Add the crushed garlic, the walnuts and the minced dill as well as salt and oil to taste.

If needed add some water to make the soup as liquid as you like but take care not to make it too "thin".

Put into the refrigerator to cool or add ice cubes (again take care not to make it too thin).

Serve cold.

Voila! Your dish is ready!

FISH SOUP – TETEVENSKA SALAMURA (Bulgaria)



Ingredients

2 portion sized trouts (300-350 g each)
1 can (fresh will not do) diced tomatoes (400g)
800 ml water
coarse salt
dill
vinegar
chili peppers

Instructions

First of all, this soup is not for the faint hearted. It *has* to be salty, sour and spicy. If you don't start sweating when you are eating it, then it is not good enough.

Cover the cleaned whole fish with coarse salt. Don't forget to fill the belly with salt too. Let it rest in the fridge for 12 hours.

Put the water and tomatoes in a pot and bring to a boil, the mixture needs to cook for about 20 minutes.

While the tomato "sauce" is cooking, take the fish and pat them so the coarsest salt grains are removed. Do not wash off the salt! Put the fish on a preheated griddle and grill for about 4-5 minutes on each side, till ready. Resist temptation to eat the fish at this point! Place 2-3 chilli peppers on the grill too, until they start to "pop" and form black spots.

When the fish is cooked, carefully remove the meat from the bones and put it into the tomato and water mixture. Add the whole chili peppers (or chop them at your own peril), a generous amount of fresh or dried dill and at least 2 tablespoons of vinegar and simmer for about 20 minutes. You can serve this soup hot or cold.

Voila! Your dish is ready!

POTATO PIE - PATATNIK (Bulgaria)



Ingredients

Potatoes – 7 medium potatoes (about 700g)
Onion – 1 medium white onion
Bulgarian White Cheese or Feta Cheese – 200g
Eggs – 4 medium eggs
Garlic – 2 cloves
Fresh mint – 1 bunch (or 1 tbsp dried mint)
Salt – 1/2 tsp
Black Pepper – 1/2 tsp
Sunflower Oil – 1 tbsp

Instructions

Grate the potatoes and add them to a bowl. Mix in the salt and leave aside for 5-7 minutes so that the salt removes the moisture from the potatoes. Then, with your hands or cheesecloth, squeeze as much liquid as possible from the potatoes. Throw away the liquid and add the drained potatoes to a clean bowl. Grate the onion and add it to the bowl with the drained grated potatoes.

Beat 3 of the 4 eggs with a fork, whisk, or hand mixer, and add them to the bowl with the potatoes and onions. Add the minced garlic, black pepper, crumbled Bulgarian white cheese or feta cheese, and chopped mint to the bowl. Mix it well.

Grease a baking dish with the oil, and add the potato mixture, about 2-3 cm thick in height.

Preheat the oven to 200° C. Bake the patatnik for about 35 minutes.

Beat the remaining egg. Take the patatnik out of the oven, and with a pastry brush (or a spoon), spread the egg over the patatnik. Put the patatnik back in the oven and bake for about another 15-20 minutes until fully cooked and nicely browned on the outside.

Voila! Your dish is ready!

PANCAKES (Universal)



Ingredients

2 cups all-purpose flour

2 teaspoons baking powder

¼ teaspoon salt

2 eggs

1½ to 2 cups milk

2 tablespoons melted and cooled butter (optional), plus unmelted butter for cooking, or use neutral oil

Instructions

Heat a griddle or large skillet over medium-low heat. In a bowl, mix together dry ingredients. Beat eggs into 1½ cups milk, then stir in 2 tablespoons melted cooled butter, if using it. Gently stir this mixture into dry ingredients, mixing only enough to moisten flour; don't worry about a few lumps. If batter seems thick, add a little more milk.

Place a teaspoon or 2 of butter or oil on griddle or skillet. When butter foam subsides or oil shimmers, ladle batter onto griddle or skillet, making pancakes of any size you like. Adjust heat as necessary; usually, first batch will require higher heat than subsequent batches. Flip pancakes after bubbles rise to surface and bottoms brown, after 2 to 4 minutes.

Cook until second side is lightly browned. Serve with your favorite topping.

Voila! Your dish is ready!