



THE GOURMET'S TRAIL

IN LA PROVINCE DE

*Hermès
Sagné*



QUÉBEC

JE ME SOUTIENS



*Adventures in
French Canadian Cuisine*

presented by

L'OFFICE DU TOURISME
DE LA PROVINCE DE QUÉBEC

(Provincial Tourist Bureau)

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La Palmette
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FROM one juicy steak to another, the trail, for any famished male between luncheon and dinner time, extends from one restaurant to the next in almost any city in the world. Call it *Chateaubriand aux pommes* or minute steak, have it rare or well done, smothered in onions or broiled over charcoal, however fancy the name, a steak is a steak and the staple fare of millions of people in New York, Paris, Stockholm, London, Montréal or Kalamazoo. To some more adventurous souls, however, there exist other dishes, exotic or indigeneous, better devised to satisfy a craving for the unusual or the different.

When it comes to regional cuisine, specialties, to be fully enjoyed, must be had in the country of their origin, cooked according to time honoured methods and with a care lavished by loving and knowing hands. "As mother used to make it" is not only a sentence destined to poison the life of one's wife. It has deep-rooted reasons, for gourmets, as well as chefs, are traditionalists and even reactionaries.

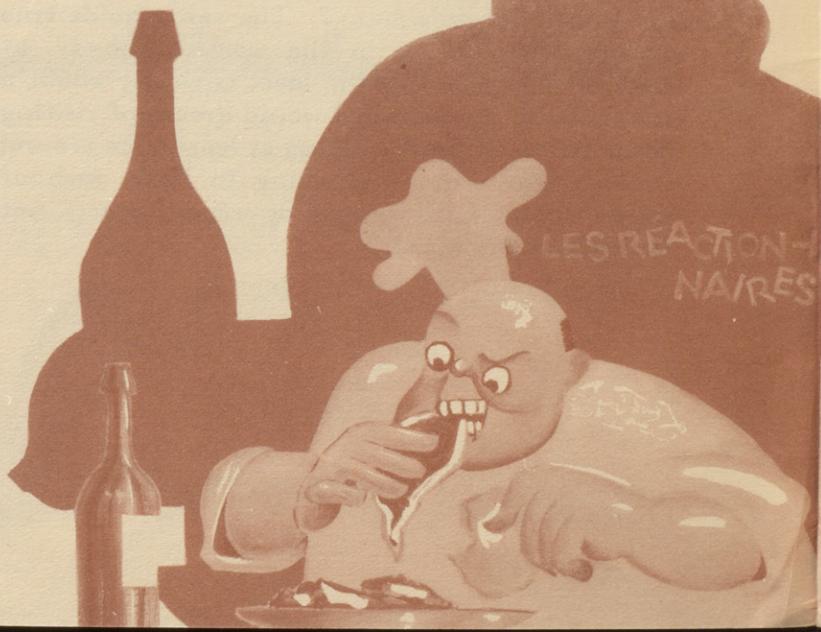
Who'd think of passing through the South without trying fried chicken *à la créole*, or Gumbo, or the famed Virginia ham? The same holds true of any other region in the world. Nobody, at least nobody who has the least curiosity about a country and its customs, would dream of visiting Scandinavia without walking at least once around the *smorgasbord*, or of going to Paris without trying a *canard aux oranges* or *crêpes Suzette*, not to mention the wines.



Unknown to many a tourist French Canada has a cuisine all its own. Though reminiscent of its French origin, it has acquired through the years, partly on account of the climate and partly on account of the sturdy sons of the soil to whom it catered, a ruggedness and a richness which are very pleasing to many. What it might perhaps lack in *élégance* it makes up for in hunger-satisfying solidity. The lover of green salads, made up of a couple of leaves of lettuce, a dash of sour cream, two or three nuts and a few raisins on a bed of raw carrots, will probably shrink as if mortally wounded by its *fumet* and its richness. If you are one of those, read on no



EXOTIQUE





further. This is for the sturdy male with an appetite whetted by a day's touring along the Gaspé Coast or in the clean fresh air of the Laurentides ; for the amateur gourmet who can't resist the lure of a new dish or the hunter coming into camp after a day's tramping through the woods.

Take the case of what might be called Canada's National Dish. *Soupe aux pois à la Canadienne*, pea soup to you. Of course you've had it at home. But did you try it in Québec ? To French Canadians there is nothing very special about it. They have it at home at least once a week. Here is one mess of potage for which you don't have to give up any of your inheritance; though we believe it's well worth while. We know some people who'd be ready to plow through three feet of snow to get to it, hot and smoking, full bodied and palate satisfying. Of course you're a bit sceptic. You order it because you've heard it's the thing to have in Québec. The maid brings it, and from then on you are no more a *gourmet* but a *gourmand*. After a while, you ask yourself what makes it different from the one you've had elsewhere. Before you're quite sure, you find out, to your surprise and chagrin, that you've already emptied your plate. Deeply engrossed you pay no heed to reason's pleading and you order another plateful. This time you are careful. Slowly you savour it. Spoonful by

spoonful, tasting each one carefully. Better than the last time you notice the delightful flavour, the faint taste of herbs, the slight aroma of *lard salé* and an elusive something that you can't analyse. To catch it, and purely in the interest of science and a better knowledge of cuisine, you might throw caution to the winds and try again. If you do, watch out! The *cuisinière* might feel flattered but don't think of your figure too much.

Now if you had had *ragoût de pattes* or pig knuckles Canadian style, you should think of it. This is a man's dish. Something to fill the stomach as well as the mind with pleasant memories and maybe add a few inches round the waist, if one is over enthusiastic as one is apt to be when one is having *ragoût de pattes*.

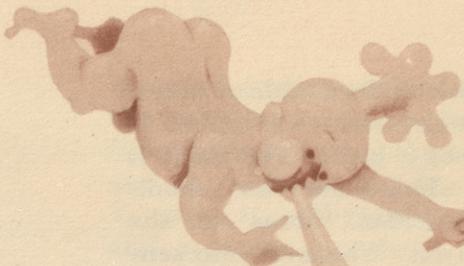
This dish is special to Québec. It is seen on the tables of everyone, rich or poor, but especially in the country. No *réveillon* around Christmas time would be complete without it. Here comes your plate, filled with rich brown gravy, a large pig's knuckle in the center, flanked by gravy-covered potatoes. Don't try it now. Before you get to



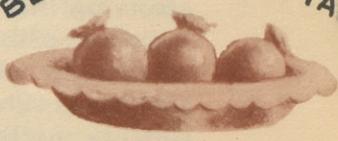
work with the knife and fork sniff a couple of times. Didn't we tell you? Now cut with your knife. It opens up like the breast of a bird. The meat is rosy, incredibly tender. There are two schools of thought about pig knuckles. Some eat the gelatinous skin, others do not. Whatever your sentiments you'll agree with the majority, who would not dream of leaving the gravy on the plate. Through force of habit you look around and, if no one's looking, ignoring your wife's horrified pleadings, you clean the plate with a heavy piece of *habitant* bread, also something worth of mention. And then you relax. In wily fashion you throw an eye towards the kitchen door. What, again? But the beaming hostess by now loves you like a son. You are a *bonne fourchette*. She grins slyly : *Il sait ce qui est bon celui-là*.

But there are dozens of French-Canadian *spécialités*. Most of them are known elsewhere but always they are distinguished by a certain something not to be found outside the Province. This is especially true of our Pork and Beans. Without





BLEUETS-3'À LA TAR



LES BONNES
VIEILLES FÈVES



CHICOUTIMI

PAIN



LA SOUPE AUX POIS



BIÈRE



LES LAURENTIDES

PETITS POISSONS

QUÉBEC

FROM
DE L'ISL



TROIS-
RIVIÈRES



LA PETITE MORUE



FROMAGE D'OKA

CIDRE

TOURTIÈRE



OKA

MONTREAL

RAGOUT
DE PATTES

SHERBROOKE



SAUMON



LA CÔTE NORD

MORUE



PRÉS
SALE



HOMARD

LA GASPÉSIE

RIVIÈRE
DU LOUP

MORUE-HOMARD — Codfish and lobster to be found fresh and tasty in their native country, picturesque Gaspésie, and still better when caught by yourself.

PRÉ-SALÉ — Salt-marsh lamb, a specialty around Rimouski and Rivière-du-Loup.

FROMAGE DE L'ISLE — Peculiar to the Isle of Orléans. This cheese is prepared only once a year.

PETITE MORUE — Small fresh-water codfish taken through the ice; ought to be frozen before fried. Found around Batiscan.

CIDRE — A genuine product of the Rougemont and the Beloeil region.

TOURTIÈRE — The meat pie is a typical French-Canadian dish. A real treat for the Christmas *Réveillon*.

RAGOUT DE PATTES — Pig knuckle stew, always a delight after a ski party or any other strenuous exercise.

SAUMON — A "poor fish" with a world-wide reputation is the salmon of La Côte Nord.

BLEUETS — Here's the particularly big and juicy Blueberry of the Lac Saint-Jean region. "Three make a pie", the natives used to say.

PAIN — Out-door oven bread. Stop, and try it with creamy butter.

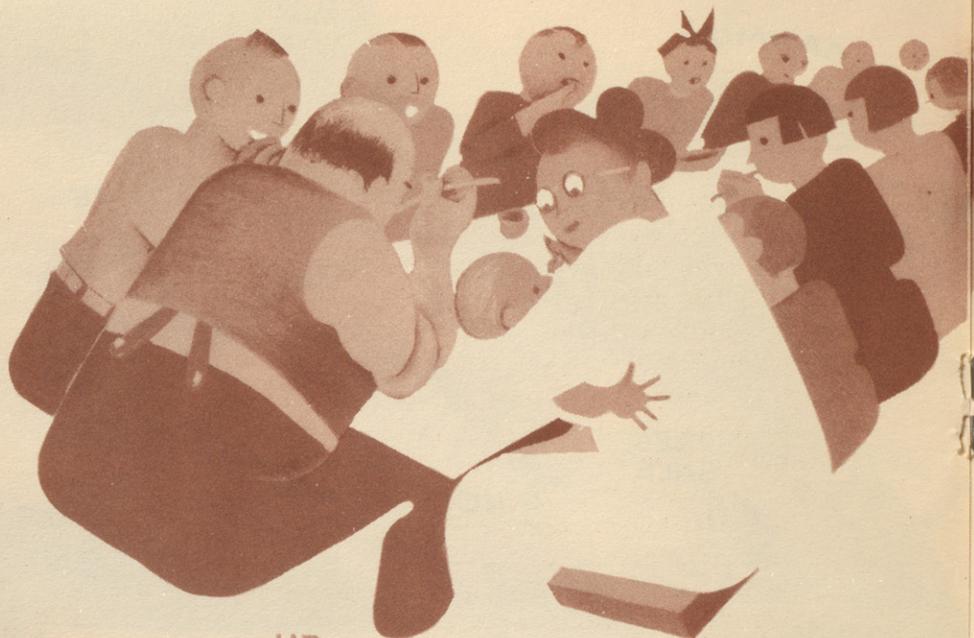
BIÈRE — Nowhere in the world can there be found a better beer. Supplies the pep for a hunting party.

TRUITE — One trout makes a grand dish, but, you've already caught a dozen before the meal! Our lakes and brooks are full of them.

FROMAGE D'OKA — The King of refined cheese in Canada, prepared only by the Trappist monks.

FÈVES AU LARD — Whether cooked in burning ashes, in the sand, or in an oven, Pork and Beans is always a masterpiece in the Laurentian Mountains.

SOUPE AUX POIS — Our national dish! Taste it and know why. You'll wish for immediate naturalization.



LA SOUPE AUX POIS EN FAMILLE

claiming a reputation as well established as those of Boston or Vermont, they are not to be sneezed at. No sir! If you ever happen to be up near Lac Labelle or anywhere in *les pays d'en haut* where they still have the famous raftmen or *draveurs*, you'll know what we mean. When those worthies pitch camp at night and the famous "*la soupe!*" "*Come and get it*" is heard, they sit down to a plateful of beans that for flavour and aroma leave nothing to be desired. And do not imagine for a minute that those huskies are'n't choosy. Beans are'n't beans to them unless they're just right. And if you don't believe us get chummy with one of their cooks, or with that ubiquitous gentleman whom raftmen call the "*showboy*" For one bottle of beer you'll get a plateful of those beans plus a pie that the Ritz would like to duplicate, if it could. And we bet you'll never forget it.

Let us for a moment leave the north country for the greener pastures of the South Shore of the Saint-Laurent. Down near Rivière-du-Loup, in lush and pleasant fields, young gambolling lambs frolic and

play. And, as all young lambs, come spring and fine weather, they do not let their sport interfere with the more serious task of feeding. How could they resist that tender and luscious grass which cushions their playfields. Look at that young one with the gourmet's eye. He picks and chooses ; nothing is too good. This tuft he leaves but that other he snatches up adroitly, with an expert twist of the tongue. What a fine salty meal ! And this bit of seaweed and that piece of alga ! What a feast ! For weeks, these lambs are allowed to feed upon grass on which the wind has brought a fine salted spray and where the tide has deposited rich iodized seaweeds.

But, what is this ? Somewhere, far-off, can be heard the ominous fanfare of knives beating upon knives, sharpening to a fine edge. It sounds the twilight of the lambs. Their day is done so that ours can begin.

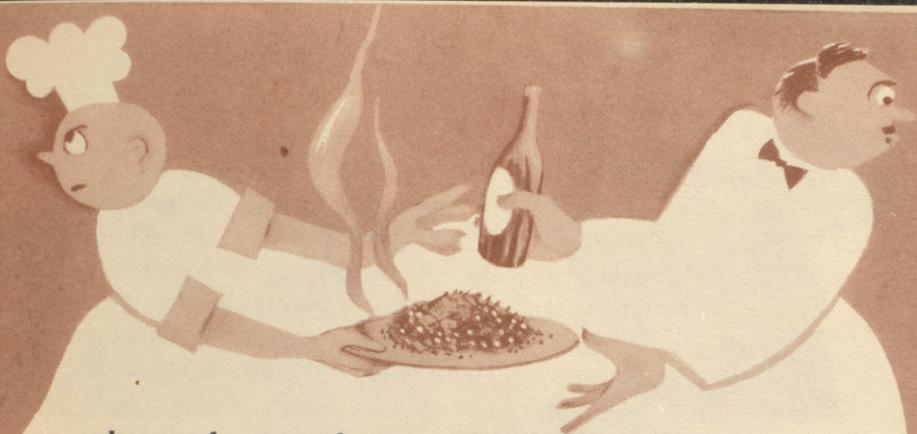
Now far away from Rivière-du-Loup or better still in the region itself, you are sitting in front of a fine roasted leg of lamb. That's *pré-salé* ; lamb that has been fed upon alga in salted meadows, near the sea. Your thoughts at that moment are far from the idyllic scene described above. You think only of the moment to come. That instant when with anxious eyes everyone watches the golden, crusty roast. Is it too well done ?



Too rare? The only sound to be heard is the swishing of the knife as it cuts open the tender meat. Under the expert carving the meat shows succulent and the slightest bit rosy. You've hardly had time to say please to a second helping and already there's nothing left but that gleam in your eye and a warm feeling of thankfulness in your tummy.

Now, every good meal is worthy of a *grande finale*. Did we hear you say cheese? Well! What will you have? *Fromage d'Oka* from the old Trappists monastery? The Good Fathers for years now have made that odorous and splendid cheese. Like the monks of old who kept the secret for the fabrication of liqueurs and cordials, handing down the closely guarded recipe, the Oka Fathers jealously kept theirs. Then there is *fromage raffiné de l'Ile d'Orléans*. No less odorous it is, if anything, more famous than the other. Only ten families have known how to make it from father to son during the last 250 years. Then there is what is commonly known as strong Canadian





cheese, *fromage fort canadien* ! Somewhat like a cheddar it is, when well cured, a delicate morsel. Or would you rather try a fine cream cheese. Belœil is the place for you. A nice, creamy, sweetly flavoured cheese, with the perfume of a fragrant chestnut, it is well liked by those who are a bit wary of the stronger taste of the others.

However it is possible, though regrettable, that you are not a cheese lover. How then would *bleuets du Lac Saint-Jean* appeal to you ? Blueberries of the Lac Saint-Jean, Saguenay region, have a reputation in the whole of Canada and even in the U. S. A. The people around the district are a bit like fishermen about their blueberries. You know ? "That big !" they'll say showing a fist. "Three to make a pie". If you show your incredulity they'll shrug their shoulders and say : "Well, all right. As big as a marble, then." And if still you are not convinced they'll show them to you. Covered with the heavy cream of the district it is a dish fit for the gods.

But to know French Canadian cuisine one must have been to a ré-



PRÉ-SALÉ

AH-DEUX DOIGTS!



veillon, after midnight mass on Christmas morning, in the country. In town one must count with the fashion. What with *madame's* diet for the waist or hips, or some new fad from a dietitian, teas in the afternoon and getting up late in the morning, a man must be pretty stern to get the meal he wants in his own home. But in the country those silly habits have not yet taken hold. A woman holds that her man, a hard worker in most cases, needs a good meal and she sees that he gets it, all of it.

Imagine for a moment that you've been invited to one of those Christmas *réveillons*. At the door you are heartily welcomed by the master of the house. You'll probably be offered *un p'tit coup*. You say all right to a quick one, just to take the chill from the bones. The womenfolk greet you shyly and rush back to their oven where most of the meal is still on. In the dining room you notice that the table is already heavily laden. Quietly you ask yourself what else could be added to what's already on the table, groaning under the weight of half a dozen *tourtières* or meat pies, a fifteen pound roast of pork, faintly perfumed with garlic, *cretons* and *tête fromagée*, and all around it pies of every description, golden and tantalizing under the light. The famous *tarte à la ferlouche* made of molasses and nuts, a real deep apple pie, maple syrup pie, and a number of others made from preserves carefully stored since the summer

before. But from the kitchen a well known perfume tickles your sensitive nose. Yes that's right, your old friend *ragoût de pattes*.

But nothing can scare you now. Well bolstered by a few of those *p'tits coups*, you feel yourself able to tackle anything. And you do. And when you emerge, defeated, from the struggle with your better judgment as to the advisability of having a last helping of *tarte à la ferlouche*, you are more than ready to swing your pink cheeked and charming partner for a few *danses carrées*. we know, you'd much rather hide somewhere and sleep, but a few dances with a buxom lass will keep you awake. Bet she outlasts you too!

Of course you have not yet tried our trout from the cool lakes of the Laurentides, or the Gaspé Salmon, the king of the crop, anybody else to the contrary. And codfish tongue and lobster from les Iles de la Madeleine or our *petits poissons des Trois-Rivières*.

Oh! your incursions into our well stocked larder are not finished yet, but we're afraid you won't have time or room for that last helping. So we'll expect you next year; and do bring your appetite...



"CENSURÉ"

