

Our culinary trip around the world is continuing daily, and we have discovered some recipes that have not only added variety to our meals, but have given us an appreciation for the cultures of the countries that make these dishes integral parts of the national cuisines.

We haven't loved everything enough so that each of these foods will enter our future menus. But, most of them have been satisfying and enjoyable and have added to our taste and appreciation for spices we seldom use and for new ways to use old ingredients.

Partly, this is because we haven't bought anything new to us for this cooking and baking. If we didn't have the ingredients in our freezer, fruit cellar, root cellar, or cupboard, we chose something else. So, I had to eliminate many recipes it would be fun to try because I didn't have what I needed to make them.

We have already found some favorites that will undoubtedly make their appearance on our table in the future. One of the recipes I have liked best so far is Githeri—a Kenyan bean and corn stew. And the Kenyan flatbread that I made to go with it was also very good and an unusual variation on chapati. The flour tortillas from Mexico we ate with a pork/corn/pepper filling were very tasty. Runo probably would name the Canadian maple butter tarts as his favorite in this first half of the month. It wouldn't be hard to agree with that. They were delicious.

Piernik, the spiced cake from Poland, was also tasty. I am sure I will bake that again soon. And the Cockaleekie chicken/leek soup from Scotland was also worth second helpings.

We are having such a good time with this project. I am tempted to extend it through the next month, as well. After all, there are unlimited new recipes from around the world, and we have to eat every day. So, it makes sense to use our same old ingredients in new ways to let us sample new flavors and combinations.

We have noticed that in all the northern countries we have "visited" with this project, potatoes play a huge role in the cooking that has sustained the population ever since the tubers were introduced from the New World in the 16th century. In our own families, we know what a big part potatoes have played. And, they continue to do so. In our household, there are very few days without potatoes appearing on the table. That's the way we ate

when we were growing up, but then, it was the same in nearly every local household, both here in our neighborhood and in rural Sweden, where Runo lived. That is not the case today. Pasta, rice, pizza, and potato chips have taken the place of that staple of northern Europeans and their American descendants, the boiled potato.

I am happy to see all the potato recipes and their importance in the various countries. There's nothing I would rather eat than a potato. And, with the good crop we had this past year, there is no danger that our supply will run out before spring.