

1934

In Sweden Meals Are a Rite

Gretchen Prouty
Iowa State College

Follow this and additional works at: <http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker>



Part of the [Home Economics Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Prouty, Gretchen (1934) "In Sweden Meals Are a Rite," *The Iowa Homemaker*: Vol. 14 : No. 4 , Article 4.
Available at: <http://lib.dr.iastate.edu/homemaker/vol14/iss4/4>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Student Publications at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Homemaker by an authorized editor of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.

Miss Gabrielson Says

In Sweden Meals Are a Rite

By Gretchen Prouty

THE Swedish homemaker—what is she like?

"She is the most immaculately clean creature that you can possibly imagine—in fact, they speak of the 'superhuman' cleanliness of the Swedish people," answers Miss Mary Gabrielson, of the Textiles and Clothing Department, who spent her summer vacation in that country.

"We got our first sample of Swedish housekeeping on the Swedish-American liner on which we sailed. The crew was entirely Swedish, and seemed always occupied with pails and brushes, scrubbing the hallways to gleaming spotlessness."

The city of Stockholm, built on a group of islands, is also very clean, she says. Many boats load and unload cargoes at the wharves, and impossible as it may seem, these look as clean as a city boulevard. The city is less smoky than American ones, perhaps because there is little coal mined in Sweden and a great deal of coke and wood is used, especially in kitchen stoves.

"Perhaps the next thing you notice is the extreme courtesy of the people," says Miss Gabrielson.

"No matter what the occasion, after dining you arise and go around to the host and hostess shaking the hand and saying 'tact för matt' (thank you for the meal); even the children in the family do this to the father and mother. 'Tact' is the word meaning 'thank you so much.' One hears it continually. The servants are also very courteous. No service, no matter how small, is performed without a murmured 'var so gud' (if you please).

"Perhaps the most distinctive feature of the Swedish food service on shipboard was the first course, a sort of glorified hors-d'oeuvre called the 'smör gås bord.' This is generally extremely elaborate. On a large table, all delectably spread out, would be three or four cold meats, sausages, salads, several different kinds of fish—among them the favorite 'sill' or pickled herring rolled or perhaps spiced, breads,—both dark and light 'knäckebröd,'—resembling our rye-crisp only better, butter in little curly-cues and even potatoes. Plates are piled upon the big table, where you help yourself as liberally as you choose and then go to a smaller table to eat. You can go back as many times as you please, but it is wiser merely to sample (though you can make a complete meal from the spread), because later at the little tables, a soup course, a main course, consisting of meat and potatoes, and sometimes,

but not always, a dessert will be served."

The Swedish people do not find sweets so necessary as we do, she noted. Even the desserts, particularly pastries, are not so sweet as ours, perhaps because they must import most of their sugar. A waffle, served cold, may be consid-



ered a dessert. Another favorite is a French pancake, very thin, evidently prepared in the morning to serve in the evening, spread with jam and then rolled up.

SALADS do not occupy such a place of importance as we give them. Potato and beet salads were the two appearing most frequently. Vegetables are not served too often—but there are always potatoes. The butter is always most excellent, quite unsalted, but unmistakably fresh and sweet.

The 'smör gås' with its huge, laden table, appears at breakfast as well as at other meals. In the morning it is followed by cereal, eggs or perhaps meat again. It makes one final appearance at 10 o'clock in the evening, when the tempting array of food makes one wish that dinner had not been eaten so recently.

"Meals seem to be more of a rite over there than here," said Miss Gabrielson. "The food is always good, well cooked and well seasoned. The very first meal of the day is early morning coffee, served right after one arises. Breakfast, like ours (called 'frukost'), comes later and in restaurants lasts up until 1 o'clock. The noon meal is served at 2 or 3 o'clock. It may be lunch or dinner, as our noon meal often is, according to the place; however, they do not seem to have any set or definite time for meals as we do.

Always, there is afternoon coffee. Generally small cakes and cookies are served with it. When one entertains it is customary to have seven kinds of little cakes and cookies—all home made. The cookies, like the Swedish Spritz we have adopted in America, are so very rich with butter that they almost crumble, but they are not very sweet.

The coffee is very, very good, she says, and always served with real cream, contrary to the custom in the rest of Europe where hot milk is served with it. In eating places, the coffee is so fresh it seems to have been made for each order. It is served in little pots ranging in size according to the number of people at a table. Tables set out on the sidewalk are popular for afternoon coffee, as well as for regular meals. As a rule, the evening meal comes at 7 or 7:30 o'clock.

IN the large cities the people live almost exclusively in apartments, though in the smaller villages and towns you see many houses and bungalows. In Stockholm, particularly, many new apartments are being built in the modernistic manner with extremely large windows.

Miss Gabrielson visited in the newly built, small house of a teacher in a rural village. The village itself was a small cluster of houses near a school. It was four or five miles from the real town with postoffice and stores, but the house had electric lights, water and heat—a small separate compartment in the kitchen range heated water for the radiators in the house. Rag carpets in border design, woven by the teacher's mother, were the special attraction of the house.

Most of the houses are furnished in a combination of the modern and the old, according to Miss Gabrielson. One sees more modern apartments furnished with really modernistic pieces than one does here. Noteworthy are the lovely old chests—hand-made—and, of course, the bright colored peasant chests, which each girl receives as soon as she is born.

"The Swedish people have beautiful table linens," she says, "and the industry is being revived to a great extent. It is all 'hemsloyd' (home work), and is done in attractive colors, some in linen and some in cotton. These are brought in by the women to be sold.

"Many tables are seen in Swedish homes. They are always covered with some sort of woven material. The covers are often woven in wool, linen warp with the wool carrying the design in the filling. They are nice in design, showing peasant motifs, allegorical figures and floral designs. The Swedish women also make beautiful tapestries in lovely patterns and figures, trying to keep alive in the home work the old designs. Not so much embroidery seems to be done."

(Turn to page 15)

Meals Are a Rite

(Begins on page 3)

The Swedish people make fine china in attractive designs. It is not crude, as some peasant work is, but it seems more elegant, probably influenced by French art.

Swedish glass made at "Orefors" is known the world over. It is beautifully hand-etched, and the name of the artist-designer always appears upon it. It is very expensive. Recently a wine glass set was sold in a department store for \$1,000.

The pottery made in Sweden is good in design and is mostly hand done. The Swedish people like pottery of good quality and construction, substantial and still artistic.

In many of the cities one sees shops of silver-smiths. Their work is exquisitely done by hand in original designs. The most famous designer, though not Swedish, is George Jensen of Copenhagen.

In the Swedish department stores it is possible to find practically anything one wants, Miss Gabrielson noted, except shoes. Shoes seem to be made in very few lasts and sizes, though one feels sure that the people possess varying widths and lengths of feet. All the better silk stockings are of American make, and most of the national brands appear. Even American rain-apes are on display.

In each department store are interpreters wearing the flag of the country whose language they speak. Some have as many as six badges, and they are glad to help you.

Sweden, as Miss Gabrielson paints it, with its cleanliness, its friendly courtesy, its attractive home life, and its many beautiful products of art, sounds like a happy, prosperous place, and one very much worth visiting.

Alumnae Echoes

(Begins on page 8)

Mildred E. Miller, '30, is teaching at Gilman, Iowa.

* * *

Josephine Mishler, '33, is employed in the food service department of the Savery Hotel, Des Moines.

* * *

Opal (Wind) Coad, '24, is in the nutrition department of the Douglas County FERA, Omaha, Neb. She writes that the work is strenuous, but interesting and she enjoys it very much.

To remove indelible stains, use alcohol. Sponge the spot first with denatured alcohol and then wash with water. Indelible pencil contain graphite, so after treating the purple pencil-mark with alcohol, remove any traces of black graphite with soap and water.



SMITH JEWELRY STORE

Glassware and China

224 Main Street

Let us show you how to make hats, belts, novelties, rugs, curtains, etc., with Dennison Crepe Paper. It's easy and interesting.

STUDENT SUPPLY STORE

NEXT TO AMES THEATRE



MYSTERY TWIST

A Sensation in Ladies' Fine Hose—

- Clear
- Sheer
- Two way flex
- Slenderizing ankle
- Resists snags



Why the Eggs?

Twelve reasons for serving eggs are suggested by Mrs. Clara G. Snyder of the Institute of American Poultry Industries:

- They are economical.
- They are plentiful.
- They are good.
- They are easy to prepare.
- They combine well with other foods.
- They can be prepared in a thousand different ways.

They are rich in vitamin D, the sunshine vitamin.

They help build up resistance to colds and other infections by providing vitamin A.

They are important in dental health because they contribute the minerals, phosphorous and calcium which are main constituents of teeth.

They are rich in that elusive mineral, iron.

They provide efficient, complete protein for building and repairing body tissue.

They are recommended in the daily diet by nutritionists, dentists, and physicians.

Tricks of the Trade

(Begins on page 7)

Provide ample light of an evenly distributed quantity.

Do not direct light from the front.

Have no great contrasts between light and darkness.

Take every possible precaution to eliminate reflected and indirect glare from the reading page, mirrors, furniture, and other objects.

* * *

Have you ever entertained at "brunch"? It is a late leisurely breakfast which combines breakfast and lunch. Table cookery helps make it delightful and easy—an electric toaster, waffle iron or grill may be used. The menu might be:

Iced Honeydew Melon	
Scrambled Eggs	Crisp Broiled Bacon
Radishes	Carrot Sticks
Toast	Breakfast Cheese
	Marmalade
Date Bread	Coffee

These Formal Fashions

(Begins on page 5)

scheme this winter. A bunch of artificial posies will do the trick of a corsage. But keep them off the shoulder. Place them on the waistline either in front or in back where they won't be smashed by your dancing partner.

Don't all these gowns and hats and shoes sound romantic? Feminine frippery has taken on an exciting aspect such as it hasn't had since the days of feather fans. So start planning those little tricky details of your outfit right away. See you at the Prom!