



The Bullsheet, a forum for news, humor, and community dialogue, is funded by DCGA, recycles, and is printed each day that classes are in session. Submissions must be sent before our editors shamble into the office for next day publication via e-mail to: bullsheet@denison.edu. Submissions herein solely reflect the opinions of the authors.

Edited last night by: Big Helium
Delivered this morning by: Big Grass
vol. LXIX / no. 85 / February 3rd, 2023

LAST NIGHT HUFFMAN HAD BORSCHT

If you know one thing about me, it is that I love Soup. Soups, Stews, Slushes, Porridges, all sorts of brothy beverages. I love the way they slide down my gullet. I love the way they goat my tongue with goodness. I love how you can eat them with little spoons and out of bowls. Would not we--as a society--be better off if we went back from eating out of hand carved wooden bowls with out only utensil (a spoon) which we named and carried wherever we went? Our society used to mean something.

Oh to be a peasant, with nothing but a crust of bread and a bowl of soup to save me from the winter's cold.

If you know another thing about me, it is that I love Central and Eastern European food. Gulasch, Borscht, Knoedel, and Knedliky. Stroganoff, Pierogi, Holubky and Szalonna, among others. All these things and more fill my little heart with joy, and open up the chambers of my gullet. They are devoured. They shall not see the light of day. Rather they shall be digested. They shall give me energy.

As I write this the staff at Huffman hall are preparing a feast. Beets are being cut and prepared, cabbage leaves boiled then stuffed, potatoes begin to fear the end that awaits them. In a few hours time Huffman shall open its doors to hungry crowds. When that happens I will descend, I will be the first through the doors and the first at the counter. I will hold out my peasant's platter and I will ask--no, demand--that they fill it to the brim. And I shall eat the treasures they heap upon my plate, and I shall savor each bite. And then, and only then, shall I return. I will wind my way across the chapel walk, I will not step on the seal, I will stare out across campus from the Southquad overlook, and I will think. I will ask myself these questions:

- 1) is it delectable?
- 2) does it fill you up?
- 3) is it healthy?
- 4) How many quarters could I reasonably hide in this?

These four guiding questions are the keys to my award winning career as a food journalist. If you would like to learn more about my process I am currently accepting mentees. I only accept payment in smoked Hungarian paprika (a cup per hour). I will also accept Pilsners (from Plzeň), pálinka, or Stroh. Leave them on a stump in the woods at midnight. I will find them.

Having reviewed these foods with my four-point method I will then come back to the office and reveal my thoughts and opinions upon these dishes. My advanced taste buds shall guide us into a new world, one where I do not have to face ridicule when I eat beets. One where my roommates do not hate upon my vast collection of pickled eggs and other delicacies. If you would like to see the truth. If you would like to know my thoughts on food, then flip this paper over. It is, however, not too late. You can turn away. You can put this paper down. The choice is yours, but I guarantee you...

that somewhere in the following page I will talk about parsnips.

Now I love parsnips. They are like spicy potatoes, or starchy carrots, they really bring fun to the root vegetable party. Now that I've gotten that out of the way I can get to the serious work, reviewing Huffman Ukranian food.

Borscht: Delectable? Yes I would say so, however it gave off the vibe of being one of those Bon Appetit soups that was just all the week's leftovers thrown in a pot. Which, while something I enjoy, took away from the comforting, homemade vibes of a truly good Borscht. I also would have liked a little more beets. Fulfilling? Yeah. A good scoop of sour cream really helped to even it out. If it had a nice loaf of farmer's bread would have been even better. Healthy? I guess so, there was a whole lot of vegetables in it. Quarters? Whooo boy, I could fit a whole lot of quarters in this borscht.

Holubtsi: Delectable? It was alright. The filling was kinda bland and the stems of the cabbage were a bit hard. Fulfilling? I had two, but I could imagine eating them more often so yeah. Healthy? Honestly, I'm starting to realize that I don't really know what makes food healthy or not. I think it's healthy, just cabbage rice and chicken, what more could you want (Spices. Spices is what more you could want. Or pork fat or something). Quarters? I bet I could fit at least a whole roll of quarters in one of these bad boys, that's 10 whole dollars!!

Banush: Delectable? The mushrooms had a bit of a rehydrated dried mushroom feel to them, which upped the chewy level to such an extent that it wasn't necessarily as tasty as it could have been. Fulfilling? Yes, Yes, Yes, a million times yes. It made me feel warm and happy inside, like my grandma had just ladled me some off the stove. Healthy? I know grits may have a bit of a bad rap given their association with southern grits, or cheesy grits, (which are absolutely delicious) but these grits were much lighter than I expected, leading me to believe that they were, in fact, rather healthy. Quarters? This dish is the quarter king. If you put a whole bunch of quarters in a bowl you just need to spread a thin layer of Banush over the top and then you should be good. I would say--depending on the size of the bowl--you could probably fit upwards of five rolls of quarters in banush without people noticing.

Deruny: Delectable? I can't imagine anyone ever failing to make a delicious potato pancake. They are the gold standard of tasty foods, creamy, crispy around the edges. Fulfilling? Why am I asking this question? Why are you still here? We all know the answer. Of course these little pancakes of joy are fulfilling. Healthy? I regret to inform you that nothing that tastes this good is free of sin. There's gotta be a bunch of butter or grease or something to get them to pan-fried goodness. Quarters? These deruny were a little thinner than I expected so they will regrettably not be able to hold that many quarters. Maybe 4 or 5. They go great with sour cream or the dill-paprika sauce they had.

Pampushky: Delectable? Honestly I thought these were kinda bland. I was expecting something kinda like the garlic knots you get from the local Italian joint back home. I loved their fluffiness though, went great when dipped in the borscht. Fulfilling? They were kind a snack, couldn't imagine eating just them for a meal. Healthy? Probably not, all things being what they are, I bet they have a bunch of butter. Quarters? A surprisingly large amount ngl. Despite their small size, their puffiness and the pocket in the center means that I think that they could hold seven or more quarters.

Thoughts? Comments/Concerns? Please don't contact me.

- Will Kelsey, Foodie



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