



The Culinary Art of Hungary

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HUNGARIAN STYLE SCRAMBLED EGGS WITH BACON

A Hungarian professor, a gentleman in his early 50s, very active in sports, not only back home in Hungary but in the United States, where he is spending his second year in one of the top-ranking universities, confessed to me the other day that what he really misses more than anything else in the Hungarian breakfast his mother fixes for him at home on Sunday mornings, when he spends the whole day in sports.

"If you could give me," he said, "a good recipe for the real Hungarian scrambled eggs with bacon drippings, and with a nice, crispy crown of smoked Hungarian bacon on the top, with some yellow, fleshy, mild peppers, which are in abundance in September and October in the United States, I would be very grateful."

Asking around among Hungarians who have lived here a long time, second generation youngsters, and newcomers, I realized that the professor is not alone with this wish, so here is the recipe for preparing Hungarian-style scrambled eggs.

8-ounce slab bacon, with rind on

1/4 cup thinly sliced onions

1/4 cup sliced peppers

8 eggs

8 tablespoons milk or half-and-half

1/2 teaspoon salt

1/4 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper

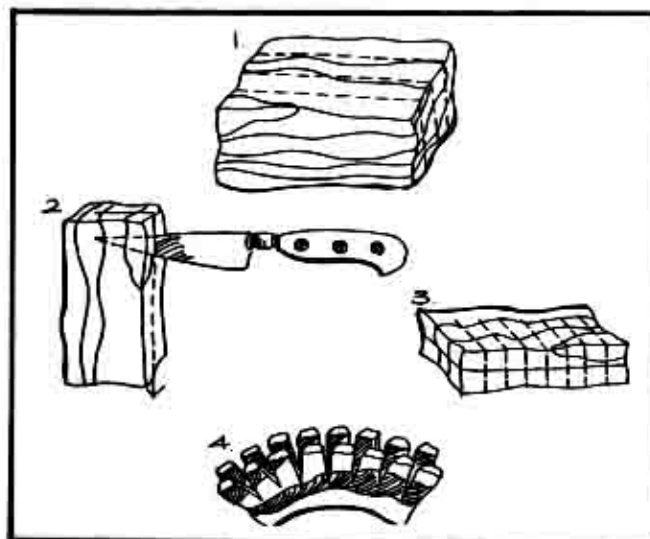
1 tablespoon sweet Hungarian paprika

1. With a very sharp knife, cut the bacon slab into 4 equal pieces and prepare slices as shown in the illustration.

2. Place bacon in a cold skillet, put over medium heat, and cook bacon pieces on both sides, turning occasionally, until they turn into "crowns", as shown in the illustration. Set the crowns aside and keep warm.

3. Add sliced onions and green peppers to rendered bacon fat in same skillet. Sauté for 5 minutes, increase heat to very high, and immediately pour in eggs, beaten with milk, salt, and pepper.

The edges will start to cook at once. Move the cooked egg from the edges with the circular motion of a large cooking spoon toward the middle of the pan and scrape the bottom, letting the soft egg from the middle move toward the outside. As soon as all the egg starts to firm up, scrape to the middle and immediately remove skillet from heat. Keep stirring for another minute and remove soft,



but not runny, eggs to a serving platter.

4. Sprinkle top with paprika, arrange bacon crowns, and serve at once with rye toast, generously buttered.

5. If you live close to Hungarian stores, you can buy Hungarian bacon; if not, write to Bende & Son Salami Co., 114 W. Fay Street, Addison, IL 60101. They make an excellent smoked Hungarian bacon with the rind on.

If the bacon is too streaky with lean meat and does not render 1/4 to 1/3 cup of fat, add some butter or oil. This dish is good only if it is prepared in plenty of hot shortening.

If you wish, you can add half a pound of smoked Hungarian sausage to the bacon drippings together with the onions and green peppers. You could use either the csabai style or the gyulai style, both available by mail from Bende & Son.