



WE EAT WHAT?

A CULTURAL ENCYCLOPEDIA OF
UNUSUAL FOODS IN THE UNITED STATES

JONATHAN DEUTSCH, EDITOR



We Eat What?

A Cultural Encyclopedia of Unusual Foods in the United States

JONATHAN DEUTSCH, EDITOR
BENJAMIN FULTON, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR
ALEXANDRA ZEITZ, RECIPE EDITOR



GREENWOOD™

An Imprint of ABC-CLIO, LLC
Santa Barbara, California • Denver, Colorado

Additionally, bone marrow is one of the best sources of the amino acid glycine. Glycine is one of the 20 amino acids used to make protein in the body. Therefore, it is essential for many different bodily functions, as protein is what builds the human tissue that forms the body's organs, muscles, and joints. Glycine promotes muscle growth, repairs and protects joints, helps boost the immune system, slows the effects of aging, fights fatigue, and assists in balancing levels of blood sugar. For all of these reasons, many people consider bone marrow to be a "superfood."

Amy S. White

Roasted Bone Marrow

Yield: 1–2 servings

Ingredients

Marrowbones

Coarse sea salt

Toasted bread

Directions

1. Place the bones in a baking dish. Fill the dish with cold salt water, adding one teaspoon of salt for each cup of water. Refrigerate, and soak the bones for a minimum of 12 hours, changing the salt water every couple of hours. This will remove the blood from the marrow.
2. Preheat oven to 450°F.
3. Remove the bones from the water and pat them dry with a paper towel. Line a baking sheet with aluminum foil and place the bones, cut side up, on the sheet. Sprinkle the bones with sea salt and roast for 15 to 20 minutes.
4. Use a spoon or knife to spread the marrow on toasted bread.

Further Reading

Canora, Marco, and Tammy Walker. 2015. *Brodo: A Bone Broth Cookbook*. New York: Pam Krauss Books.

Harvey, Katherine, and Ryan Harvey. 2016. *The Bare Bones Broth Cookbook: 125 Gut-Friendly Recipes to Heal, Strengthen, and Nourish the Body*. Harper Wave.

McLagan, Jennifer. 2005. *Bones: Recipes, History and Lore*. New York: Morrow.

BOOYAH

Green Bay Packer fans, Wisconsin Walloons, Michigan Yoopers, and ethnic-fare epicures of central Minnesota love their booyah, a thick, slowly simmered, whole-chicken-based stew most often crafted outdoors over wood fires in huge cast-iron cauldrons or custom-made "booyah kettles." Local historians think modern booyah is most likely a New World culinary successor to what was once a thin, clear soup—a "bouillon"—brought to the Door County region of northeast

Wisconsin by Walloon-speaking immigrants arriving from southern Belgium from 1853. Booyah morphed in Wisconsin from “a broth made from boiling a chicken with onion and celery, salt and pepper” (Defnet 1997) into its present canoe-paddle-stands-up-straight-in-it thick potage, as from the 1930s onwards it became the go-to one-pot-feeds-all focus of family gatherings, charity events and community celebrations, parish picnics and church suppers, and other “feeds” and fund-raisers.

“Booyah” is an event, as well as a regional dish, with natives usually booyah-ing in the autumn, as part of their traditional Kermis harvest festival time, sharing their foodstuffs with friends, with neighbors, with family, with visiting guests, and with curiosity-filled tourists interested in distinctive foods and customs. Booyah events remain popular, with volunteers ladling up as much as 420 gallons of the cherished fare in a single communal fête.

The origin of the word “booyah,” like the stew itself, is murky. The diverse regional linguistic accents of the original 19th-century Walloon immigrants, speaking a language that became increasingly Frenchified after World War I, most likely account for the curious folk explanations for how the term “booyah” may have derived from the French-like Old World Walloon word *bouillon*, or *bouyon* (the latter literally meaning “reheated stock”). But no one actually knows for sure whence came the name “booyah,” although it appeared in print as early as the 1880s, with varied spellings. Mary Ann Defnet, a respected local cultural historian, cautions the curious to forget about the origin of the name and just enjoy the booyah like the pragmatic locals: “We don’t really need a scientific answer,” Defnet points out, “we just eat and enjoy!” (Defnet 1997).

What is known for sure is that folks of the “Booyah Belt” love their legendary stew. The Booyah Belt lies in an area extending from the Central and Western Upper Peninsula of Michigan (“the UP” or “Yoooper” country) to Green Bay and Door County in Wisconsin, and from there west to the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and Saint Paul, and from there slightly northwest to embrace a few areas in and around St. Cloud, Minnesota. According to Dan Nitka, chef for the Booyah Shed, a popular mobile restaurant in Green Bay offering “stick-to-your-ribs” booyah, the town of Brussels in Door County, Wisconsin, is “the mecca for booyah” (Wells 2016). The area around Brussels is said to be the largest Belgian American settlement in the United States, with generations dating back to the migrations of the 1850s, vying only with South Saint Paul in Minnesota as the Booyah Capital of the World.

South and west of the Booyah Belt, descendants of German immigrants observe Oktoberfest, celebrating their fall harvest with the classic German foods and beers for which Wisconsin is most famous. Folks there are not much into booyah. In 2015 State Representative John Macco (R-Ledgeview) circulated a bill that would designate “Belgian Booyah” as the official state soup “as a way to honor Wisconsin’s Belgian heritage and celebrate booyah’s ability to bring Wisconsin communities together.” Rep. Macco’s bill received strong bipartisan support in northeastern Wisconsin, while an informal survey at the state capitol in Madison (in southern Wisconsin) “found that a sizable handful of Wisconsinites . . . have never even

heard of the dish" (Opoien 2015). Booyah is not generally known beyond Madison to the southwestern or western central areas of Wisconsin—that is, from Madison to Prairie du Chien and north to La Crosse. This is not surprising, as that area was early on settled mainly by Cornish miners and Irish and Welsh laborers, and the area from Madison to Milwaukee was largely settled by 19th-century German immigrants.

North of the Booyah Belt and in and around Door County and the Upper Peninsula, descendants of the other major 19th-century immigrant group, the Finnish Americans, gather with friends for fall and late winter "fish boils"—often referring to the events by the English term "fish booyah." *Kalamojakka*, a term of unknown origin not recognized today in Finland, refers to "soup" or "leftovers soup" of the fish rather than a beef variety. *Kalamojakka*, which, like booyah proper, originated in the Lake Superior region, continues to be made with potatoes accompanying the chunks of fish and other various ingredients, and seasoned with allspice. Even earlier, similar boiled fish dishes were popular with Upper Great Lakes indigenous peoples, and with the French missionaries and explorers (Gilmore 2004). Today, a boil of lake trout or whitefish (usually), *mahnomin* (wild rice), and onion remains part of local Native American ceremonial feasts and spiritual sweat lodge ceremonies, served with fresh berries and fry bread. Modern "fish booyahs" remain popular with neighboring Finnish American community groups, and other folks from the "UP" and from Door County to Port Wing, Wisconsin—but not Minnesota—and as with booyah proper, "you don't just eat a fish boil; you attend one."

"Real" booyah today generally starts with a huge cauldron or giant cooking pot into which one throws several whole chickens, and builds from there, with various combinations of potatoes, peas, navy beans, corn, carrots, cabbage, celery, onions, and rutabagas—added at different times—plus almost anything else one might have left over in the freezer, in addition to one or more "secret ingredients." In days of old, booyah most often also featured oxtail, some traditionalists maintaining to this day that "it's not real booyah without the oxtail!" And, in the days of old, snapping turtles and wild game occasionally made it into the 10-, 20-, or even 55-gallon kettles. Today, beef and pork land with the chicken in pots so big that the ever-attentive cooks stir their mash with canoe paddles.

At least five Brussels–Green Bay area grandfathers independently "invented booyah," or so claim their descendants, with family members recalling "the handwritten original recipe" secreted away by the ancestral "inventor" in some relative's family possessions. But "saying someone invented booyah is like saying someone invented chili," asserts Mary Jane Ann Herber, local historian and genealogist of the Brown County Central Library, and a native of De Pere, who further advises against trusting any secondhand oral history older than 85 years (Srubar 2015). Nonetheless, kinfolk today prize their family formulae, some even having an official "keeper of the recipe," albeit all modern-day booyah versions are admittedly variants of the "original," and that "original recipes" are actually "more like a blueprint" or a grocery list than a traditional recipe (Fleming 2016). Seasonings vary from recipe to recipe, from cook to cook, and from town to town. There may not actually be "as many booyah recipes as there are booyah cooks," as is sometimes asserted, but there certainly are as many recipes as there are booyah families,

with numerous variations, of course. Families proudly recount their grandfathers' contributions to regional booyah lore and tradition; the obituary of the recently deceased Donald Edward Baye of Green Bay, for example, eulogizes the deceased as "a gentle soul [who] . . . every summer . . . manned the booyah kettle at the cottage on Shawano Lake" (Brault and Butnick 2017).

And booyahs are manned. Men rule the booyah roost, often under the more-or-less coordinated leadership of an acknowledged "booyah king." A two-day (or more) public preparation of the booyah is a classic male-bonding event, with the prized potage continuously monitored by a cooking crew consisting of several sous-king-cooks, prep cooks, line cooks, and opinionated onlookers, as is lucidly shown in the 2007 PBS television documentary *The Meaning of Food: "Booya Kings—Dads & Sons."* Booyah is now often served along with "kneecaps" for dessert, a fried cream-puff-doughnut sort of sweet treat, although very early on community members often brought homemade fruit tarts to their celebrations. As one might guess, beer and booyah are inseparable. Cooking contests are frequent, with judges checking largely for flavor, body, and appearance as they ceremoniously sample the thickened mash between beer chasers. Greenhorn booyah eaters are the preferred judges, so as not to be prejudiced by the taste, appearance, consistency, or reputation of their own family favorites.

Folks universally have warmhearted memories of booyahs past. I fondly remember how in the early 1950s the volunteer firemen of my small hometown (still "firemen" in those days) had great fun charging by the make of one's car for booyah parking; the Chrysler cost \$1 (there was only one in town), Buicks and Olds were 50 cents, Fords and Chevys were 25 cents, and the Nash Rambler and the Henry J were free. Of course everyone in town knew everybody's car. Reminiscing about booyahs of her youth, a Green Bay native in 2013 reflected, "I . . . didn't know until later in life that the Green Bay Catholic Church's picnics having 'Chicken Booyah' was special to Green Bay; the church community bought potatoes and veggies and other stuff and it was made in 3 or more large witches' kettles, so yummy if it turns out right. We used to be so hungry from the smell [when we were] in Catholic Mass waiting to eat the booyah later. We would sing the hymn 'Hallelujah' 3 times; was it [ever] hard not to sing 'Chicken booyah' 3 times in your head!" (Steinbrinck 2013). One can only guess that the shout "Booyah!"—an "exclamation of extreme pleasure, joy, or approval" that entered the English language in the 1990s—might have come full circle from the earlier booyah "hallelujahs" in Walloon churches.

The hallelujahs for chicken booyahs continue to this day, to include commercial versions sold at Green Bay Packer games, at farmers' markets, and in a half-dozen or so area restaurants, each chef, of course, having perfected their own particular special version, which they serve with the traditional oyster crackers or crispy saltines. Most commercial kitchens offer bring-your-own-container carryout by the quart or by the gallon, just as they do at community booyahs. Many say booyah tastes even better the next day.

Neither the professional chefs nor the booyah king and his court seek fame or glory—nor even an audible hallelujah. They seek only to provide good food and camaraderie, but they do smile, at least inwardly, when eaters pause long enough

to look up from their hearty heart-and-body-warming fare with a simple Midwestern musing of approval: "That's booyah!"

In the era of the Internet, online booyah recipes abound—and not all of the published recipes have been well received (Srubar 2016). But 25 years after its publication, *The Flavor of Wisconsin*, from the Wisconsin Historical Society Press, remains "the authoritative history of Wisconsin's culinary traditions" and offers a well-received booyah recipe originally submitted by Judy Ullmer of Green Bay (Hachten and Allen 2009). The slightly-more-than-a-blueprint recipe is adapted below from the original. Try adapting your own version, in the spirit of booyah cooks "everywhere," and, like Judy, make it a little different each time.

Tim Roufs

Chicken Booyah

Yield: 3–4 gallons (Remember, making booyah is not an exact science!)

Ingredients

- 5–7 pounds chicken, cut up
- 1 pound beef stew meat, in one piece
- Oxtail or soup bone
- 2 pounds chopped yellow onions
- 4–5 bay leaves
- Salt and pepper, to taste
- 1 pound cabbage, shredded
- 1 bunch celery, sliced
- 1 pound carrots, sliced to thickness of cook's preference
- 1 28-ounce can chopped tomatoes (or use fresh with seeds and skins removed)
- 2 pounds red potatoes, diced or chopped, depending how big the cook wants the pieces
- ½ pound green beans, chopped
- ½ pound corn kernels
- ½ pound green peas
- Juice of 2 lemons
- 2 to 3 teaspoons soy sauce
- Chicken broth (optional)

Directions

1. Place beef in a 3- or 4-gallon pot with half of the onion, all the bay leaves, and some salt and pepper. Add enough cold water to fill the pot one-third full. Bring to a simmer, skim surface as needed, and cook 30 minutes. Add chicken, more water (to cover all the meat), and a little more salt. Continue to simmer 1 to 2 hours.

2. When meats are tender, lift them out of the broth. While meat is cooling, add the prepared vegetables (including the remaining onion). (Some prefer to add the vegetables an hour or so before serving, so as not to overcook them. Others argue that they need to be added early to impart more flavors. It's the cook's call.)
3. Continue to simmer.
4. Take out meat and bones and debone chicken and take meat off of the soup bone. Remove bones and skin from the cooled chicken and beef. Chop the meats and add to the pot after all the veggies have been added. Simmer at least 2 hours—much longer is preferred. The mixture should continue to simmer until it is thick enough for your canoe paddle to stand straight up. Alternatively, water or chicken broth may be added during the cooking process as necessary, if you prefer a consistency between a soup and a stew.
5. Season it with lemon juice, soy sauce, bouillon (if desired), and salt and pepper to taste.
6. Serve it with oyster crackers and some good Wisconsin beer.

Adapted from pp. 206–207 in:

Hachten, Harva, and Terese Allen. 2009. *The Flavor of Wisconsin: An Informal History of Food and Eating in the Badger State*. Madison: Wisconsin Historical Society Press.

Further Reading

- Brault, Kathy, and Sharon Butnick. 2017. "Donald Edward Baye's Obituary on Green Bay Press-Gazette." *Green Bay Press-Gazette*. March 16. <http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/greenbaypressgazette/obituary.aspx?n=donald-edward-baye&pid=184471949&fhid=14324>.
- Brough, J. M. K. 2017. "Walloon—English Gastronomy Dictionary." Project Babel. Accessed September 5, 2017. http://proj babel.org/walloon_gastronomy.htm.
- Chamberlain, Chris. 2016. "Door County Wisconsin's Iconic Fish Boils Are History in a Cauldron." *Food Republic*. November 21. <http://www.foodrepublic.com/2016/11/21/door-county-wisconsins-iconic-fish-boils-are-history-in-a-cauldron>.
- Defnet, Mary Ann. 1997. "Origin of Booyah." *Wisconsin's French Connections*. <http://www.uwgb.edu/wisfrench/kitchen/booyalet.htm>
- "The 1858 Rosiere Kermis." 2017. *Wisconsin Historical Markers*. Accessed September 5, 2017. <http://www.wisconsinhistoricalmarkers.com/2014/03/the-1858-rosiere-kermis.html>.
- Fleming, Jess. 2016. "Want to Make Your Own Booya? Here's What It Takes." *Pioneer Press*. October 13. <http://www.twincities.com/2016/10/11/booya-minneapolis>.
- Gilmore, Janet C. 2004. "Sagamité and Booya: French Influence in Defining Great Lakes Culinary Heritage." *Material Culture Review / Revue De La Culture Matérielle*. <https://journals.lib.unb.ca/index.php/MCR/article/view/18000/21960>.
- Harris, Patricia, David Lyon, and Sue McLaughlin. 2005. *The Meaning of Food: The Companion to the PBS Television Series Hosted by Marcus Samuelsson*. Guilford, CT: Globe Pequot Press.
- Leon, Michelle. 2010. "Booya Season Is Here: We Talk to a Master of the Mystery Stew." *City Pages*. September 30. <http://www.citypages.com/restaurants/booya-season-is-here-we-talk-to-a-master-of-the-mystery-stew-6609977>.
- Opoien, Jessie. 2015. "Booyah! This Northeastern Wisconsin Tradition Could Become the Official State Soup." *Capital Times*. December 10. <http://host.madison.com/ct/news>

- /local/govt-and-politics/booyah-this-northeastern-wisconsin-tradition-could-become-the-official-state/article_cc13c0ac-80e5-5b29-a84f-894851b1bf75.html.
- Roufs, Timothy G. 2017. "Booyah." *Anthropology of Food*—University of Minnesota Duluth. March 19. <http://www.d.umn.edu/cla/faculty/troufs/anthfood/afbooya.html#title>.
- Srubas, Paul. 2015. "Getting to the Bottom of Booyah." *Green Bay Press Gazette*. November 19. <http://www.greenbaypressgazette.com/story/news/2015/11/19/getting-bottom-booyah/75528814>.
- Srubas, Paul. 2016. "Rivers of Booyah All Flow toward One Man." *Green Bay Press Gazette*. January 16. <http://www.greenbaypressgazette.com/story/news/2016/01/16/rivers-booyah-all-flow-toward-one-man/78845862>.
- Steinbrinck, Ashley. 2013. "10 Silly Things We Say in Wisconsin." *WhooNEW*. January 7. <http://whoonew.com/2013/06/10-silly-things-we-say-in-wisconsin>.
- Steinbrinck, Ashley. 2015. "The Real Reason We Call It Chicken Booyah in Wisconsin." *WhooNEW*. January 7. <http://whoonew.com/2013/10/the-real-reason-we-call-it-chicken-booyah-in-wisconsin>.
- Wells, Millaine. 2016. "Your Wisconsin: Booyah." *We Are Green Bay*. August 8. <http://www.wearegreenbay.com/news/local-news/your-wisconsin-booyah/527567303>.
- Zanger, Mark. 2001. "Chicken Booyah," pp. 38–41 in Mark Zanger, *The American Ethnic Cookbook for Students*. Phoenix, AZ: Oryx Press.

BOUDIN BLANC AND NOIR

The word "boudin" broadly refers to several varieties of sausages. While there is no clear etymology for the origin of "boudin," the word may derive from Anglo-Norman French, meaning "sausage," or perhaps "entrails" in general. Boudin vary widely depending on origin. French-style boudin are typically made from pork, chicken, or veal blended with spices and sometimes cognac or cream. Cajun boudin historically included rice for substance and flavor. While there are many kinds, the two most common types of boudin found globally are boudin blanc and boudin noir.

Boudin blanc is a finely textured white sausage made from pork liver and organ meat, often including the heart. Boudin blanc is usually made with milk and always without the use of animal blood, resulting in the pale white color reflected in the name.

The recipe for boudin blanc is thought to have originated in the northeast French region of Champagne-Ardenne during the Middle Ages, most likely in the village of Rethel. It was especially enjoyed at Christmas meals, where it was served with tomato or truffle sauce, and sometimes raisins, although the recipe at the time was little more than a milky porridge to which bread, eggs, and minced meat were added to bind the mix together.

Historical accounts suggest that the creation of boudin blanc was indirectly influenced by Cardinal Richelieu, principal minister to King Louis XIII. Legend has it that Richelieu was an emphatic opponent to the aristocracy of the time, and in 1626 he issued a decree banning all forms of dueling under threat of severe penalty. An officer of the king, Jacques Augustin Henri Chamarande, ignored the decree. Having participated in a duel, Chamarande fled to Rethel to escape punishment. Once there, he opened a butcher shop featuring sausage made from pork, the