

THE BOOK ABOUT THE COOKBOOK

A Jewish Woman's Cookbook
by Mrs. Rosenfeld from Subotica

Our idea was to present an authentic Jewish cookbook which will testify to a long lost time. Homemakers' recipes, traditional way of running a Jewish kitchen and kosher regulations that rule in it are an unexplored part of the cultural identity of our town.

The book which was written and published by Mrs. Rosenfeld in the 1920's testifies about the Jewish identity of Subotica of that time. Her cookbook was popular in the entire Hungarian speaking territory inhabited by the Ashkenazi Jews from the former Austro-Hungarian Empire, so it represents a sort of an inherited multicultural picture of central Europe which was a unique space despite the newly established borders.

Her tested recipes enable you to make the selected dishes in a traditional manner, and so revive a long lost world and enjoy the flavours of the old days...

Reading and actual trying of recipes is a special experience. And to those who are eager to try and prepare some of the dishes found in our Book about the cookbook, a world will come to life, the flavours and aromas of sweet Jewish Subotica which disappeared in the horrors of World War II, with nothing more surviving than the synagogue, the cemetery, memories, and Mrs. Rosenfeld's cookbook.



Mrs Rosenfeld's

JEWISH COOKBOOK



 **Interreg** 
Danube Transnational Programme
REDISCOVER



Mrs Rosenfeld's JEWISH COOKBOOK



Subotica 2021



THE BOOK ABOUT THE COOKBOOK

A Jewish Woman's Cookbook
written and compiled by Mrs. Rosenfeld

Kosher cuisine, actually the manner of preparation of food and beverages in compliance with ritual regulations is a perpetually valid and a constantly current Jewish topic.

According to the information we obtained, Mrs. Rosenfeld's *A Jewish Woman's Cookbook* was published in Subotica before 1925 by the *Minerva* printing house. The first edition is 372 pages long with an appendix which holds the typographical errors with their corrections.

It is assumed that the second edition is 377 pages long with a 9-page appendix.

The Széchényi National Library (*Országos Széchényi Könyvtár*) fund in Budapest holds the third edition of Mrs. Rosenfeld's *A Jewish Woman's Cookbook* from 1938 under no. 74.984. This third, expanded edition has 377 pages and an 11-page appendix. It was published by *Schlesinger Books* from Budapest, and in the production of Fémek Book Printers also from Budapest.

The apparently very popular Mrs. Rosenfeld kosher cookbook was republished between the two world wars in the Hungarian speaking region. We know, for example, that the *Makabi Printing House* published this book on 363 pages in 1993 under the following title: *A Jewish woman's book: Kosher cuisine*. To be honest, the author was named as Mrs. Hermann Rosenfeld, but there is a correction in the Széchényi National Library: [! Mártonné].

We could start the analysis of Mrs. Rosenfeld's book by ascertaining that the author's style is direct, cordial, and the sentences light, devoid of anything superfluous.

Before each chapter, as a kind of an introduction, there are short discourses written with the aim to run the household as rationally as possible. She wishes to spare the less experienced homemakers of extra expenses with her pieces of advice. Here is an example how Mrs. Rosenfeld does it.





Preface

May this book offer advice and other kind of assistance to Jewish women, by the grace of God.

My intention while writing and publishing this book was to help Jewish women who are not able to run their households accordingly in these new times, yet respecting the traditional laws. I do this with the religious customs instilled in me by my Mother, in possession of practical knowledge and years-long experience.

While writing this book, I took into consideration the current economic relations, and most of the recipes are selected from that perspective. There are recipes in my book which require more expensive ingredients, but they are meant for special, festive times. One can hardly imagine that there are no such occasions when, unlike on ordinary days, we wish to please our families with something better, more delicious.

Accept this book with the kind of love and understanding and good intentions I compiled it with.

Mrs. Rosenfeld

The notes at the very beginning of the book are very practical, and they confidently stir the housewife who wants to be active in the kitchen. For example:

„Good planning is more important than anything. If the homemaker is confident in her household, she will not waste more time doing something longer than she has time for. The commonplace chores are done the most quickly. The homemaker needs to get used to getting up in time, because the half of an hour wasted in the morning can hardly be made up for... Expertly guided, delicious cuisine is not expensive with good planning, what is more, it is a lot more frugal than many think because it can be simple and modest. In households guided in this manner leftovers do not pile up, so nothing goes to waste. We will gladly eat the leftover, delicious dishes from the previous day, especially when those leftovers are served as a new dish, while in the kitchens where no attention is paid to cooking and taste, where only the quantity matters, dishes become dull, and the leftovers are wasted.”

On cooking in general. In this short section, Mrs. Rosenfeld writes:

„The firmest support for health is good cooking. Modern days don't leave even cooking intact. Many refrain from using foreign, unknown, so far unused spices, and there is no reason for this because these spices make the dishes really delicious. We are not talking about new dishes, but new flavours and ingredients. That is why everyone can with a peaceful mind dive into the preparation of these dishes because I wrote these recipes down only after I thoroughly checked them in practice. Each recipe needs to be carefully read. The ingredients should be acquired in due time and prepared. If we follow the instructions to the letter, our efforts will inevitably be crowned with success.”

We can say that her approach is modern even today – it is creative and stimulating for the less experienced housewives, but also for those who still have a desire to learn and experiment.

Useful instructions. This subtitle at the beginning of the book offers a series of good advice. The author defines the essence of kosher cuisine here. *„The first condition of kosher cuisine is impeccable cleanliness. Even more so, as the translation of the word 'kosher' is, – cleanliness.”*

The concise description of the way to keep the Sabbath dishes warm is especially interesting.

“In the winter, when fire needs to be lit because of the frost, before a person of a different denomination does it for us at our request, the person should be given a plate of matching dimensions to put on the stove or in the oven, or maybe just a plain brick, and the dish with the meal prepared for Sabbath should be placed on it. The dish with the prepared meal can also be placed into a bigger container that has several inches of water in it so it can be heated on that plate. Cooking is forbidden. We can prepare the dishes for other festive occasions the same way, because we don't have to cook them the previous day because if the holiday is not on Shabbath, cooking is allowed. In that case, the ingredients also need to be prepared. The exception is Pesach, I will write about it in more detail.”





A Jewish Woman's Cookbook is a voluminous work in every aspect. Complemented with kitchen tips and religious regulations, this book presents recipes for Jewish dishes in 57 chapters:

1. *Running the household*, with 5 thematic units ; 2. *Fish*, 26 recipes; 3. *Soups*, 41 recipes; 4. *Side dishes for soups*, 27 recipes; 5. *Various warm appetizers*, 31 recipes; 6. *Dishes from eggs*, 27 recipes; 7. *Risottos*, 4 recipes; 8. *Warm sauces* for differently prepared meat and other dishes, 17 recipes; 9. *Sauces for boiled meats*, 15 recipes; 10. *Warm dairy-based sauces*, 17 recipes; 11. *Various sorts of butter*, 6 recipes; 12. *Cold sauces for appetizers*, 13 recipes; 13. *Cold appetizers*, 47 recipes; 14. *Sandwiches*, 30 recipes; 15. *Dairy-based appetizers*, 22 recipes; 16. *Vegetable side dishes with meat*, 21 recipes; 17. *Goose meat dishes*, 14 recipes; 18. *Duck meat dishes*, 2 recipes; 19. *Chicken meat dishes*, 15 recipes; 20. *Turkey meat dishes*, 5 recipes; 21. *Squab meat dishes*, 4 recipes; 22. *Veal liver dishes*, 6 recipes; 23. *Veal dishes*, 15 recipes; 24. *Beef dishes*, 31 recipes; 25. *Lamb and mutton dishes*, 15 recipes; 26. *Smoked meat dishes*, 6 recipes; 27. *Side dishes*, 32 recipes; 28. *Vegetable side dishes*, 39 recipes; 29. *Dairy-based vegetable side dishes*, 7 recipes; 30. *Salads*, 21 recipes; 31. *Boiled pasta*, 12 recipes; 32. *Dough fried in fat*, 17 recipes; 33. *Strudels and warm doughs*, 5 recipes; 34. *Puddings*, 15 recipes; 35. *Souffles*, 5 recipes; 36. *Sweet toppings*, 3 recipes; 37. *Sour doughs*, 26 recipes; 38. *Sponge-cakes*, 19 recipes; 39. *Cakes, creams, icings*, 32 recipes; 40. *Various Petit fours and tea cakes*, 52 recipes; 41. *Bombons*, 9 recipes; 42. *Sweets and creams*, 17 recipes; 43. *Ice-creams*, 19 recipes; 44. *Parfaits*, 13 variations; 45. *Fruit salads*, 46. *Beverages*, 26 recipes; 47. *About cooking fruit in general*, 16 recipes; 48. *Compotes*, 8 recipes; 49. *Sugared compotes*, 13 recipes; 50. *Jams*, 19 recipes; 51. *Pickling*, for preserves, 7 recipes; 52. *Vegetables and greens*, for the winter, 24 recipes; 53. *Entertaining* – one text; 54. *Special occasions menu*, 21 menu; 55. *Simple menus*– suggestions for lunch and dinner for each day of the week according to season (one week lunch and dinner for all the four seasons); 56. *Preparations for the Pesach*, with an introductory text and 117 recipes, and finally, in the third edition, in chapter 57. *Several tested recipes as an appendix to the 3rd edition* Mrs. Rosenfeld publishes recipes for 43 more dishes, 30 of which are 30 savoury and sweet pastries and 14 dishes.

Some differences can be noted in the sentence formulation in the third edition from 1938. But the really interesting thing is that in the appendix of the third edition we can find recipes for typically south-Slavic or Serbian dishes. Such is, for example, *alva* (taken into Serbian from the Turkish *halva* or *alva*), the name for an oriental sweet. South-Slavic recipes are also the ones for the *salad with oily dressing* or *đuveč*, and also zucchini, eggplant, skewers – written as variations of their Serbian names. This also shows that in the new, changed circumstances the cuisines of nations living together mix. Mrs. Rosenfeld somewhat changed the preparation of those dishes so they would comply to the religious regulations.

Mrs. Rosenfeld published 976 recipes for various dishes, but we must say that in several cases, her recipes describe variations of basic dishes. That is what makes the ways to prepare described dishes even bigger.

Mrs Mózes Deutsch, the wife of the orthodox chief rabbi in Subotica, wrote the recommendation for this cookbook, and it is as follows:

A single noble cause led our fellow citizen when she set out to write a manual for kosher cuisine, because in the crisis times of today, when “modernism” lurks from everywhere and makes keeping our old traditions more difficult each step of the way, it is a very pleasant fact that our fellow citizen who, in the same faith, contemplated in an ideal manner, and who, sparing no effort, compiled such a cookbook which will help every Jewish homemaker prepare kosher meals which will please the most refined palates as well.

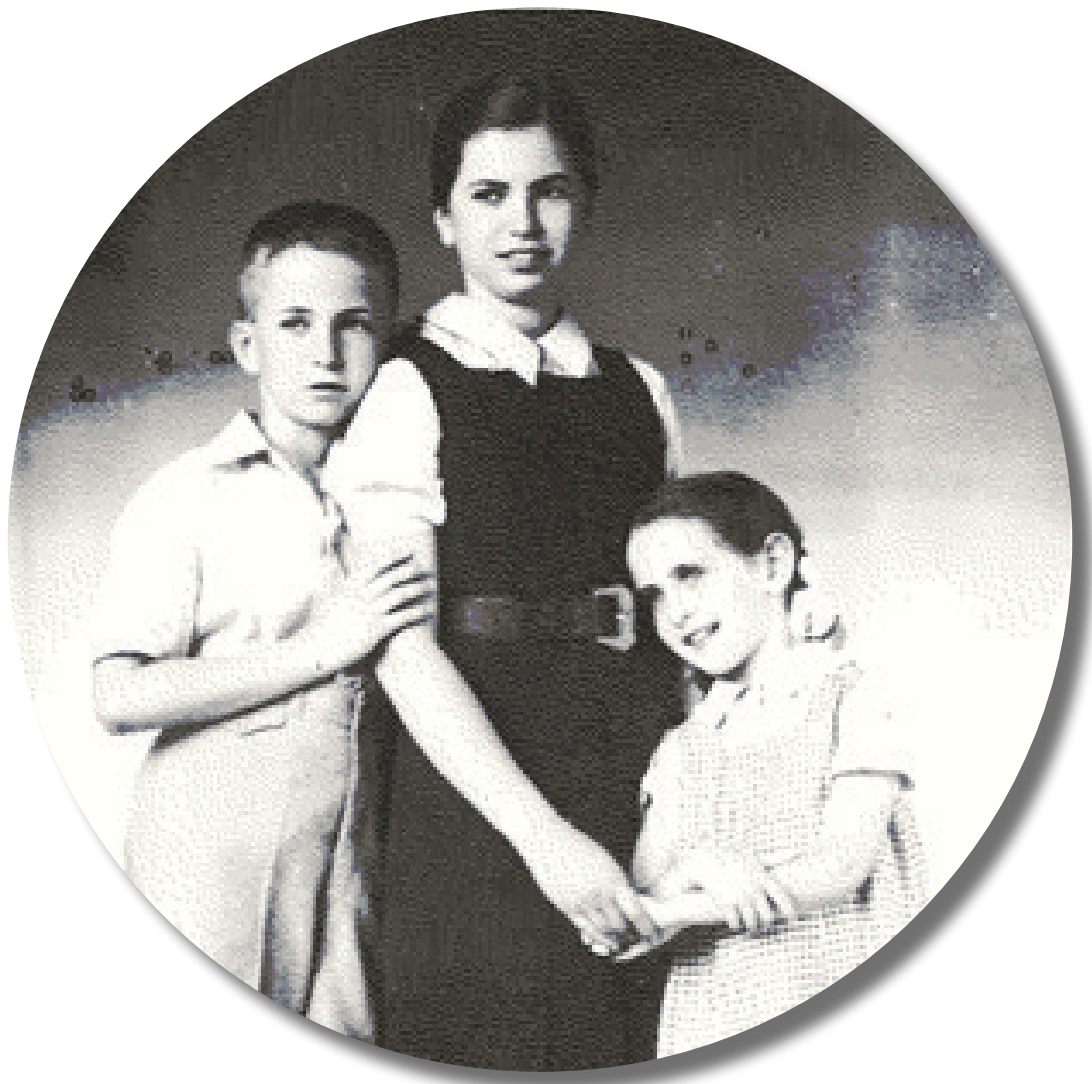
I hope and believe that this book will reach two goals: That it will be of assistance to those homemakers who cannot make almost any of the hundreds and hundred recipes of our gastronomic art, apart from the everyday dishes, and to those who for any reason do not run their households according to our deeply held rituals, it offers an opportunity to to learn those rules in a light manner, and those Jewish women can fulfil their important task accurately and conscientiously.

I believe that I am doing the right thing when I convey gratitude to the author on behalf of all those who will use this book for her hard and beautiful work .

*Mrs. Deutsch,
the wife of Mózes Deutsch, the orthodox chief rabbi in Subotica*

Such a rich collection could rightfully be, and was, the pride of its author, but it was also a great treasure of the community under whose wings it saw the light of day. The Jewish religious community in Subotica gained popularity between the two world wars among the Jews living in the Hungarian speaking region due to this book, too. The work of Mrs. Rosenfeld is of use nowadays as well.





ARANKA – MRS. ROSENFELD

*“Aranka saw all her children die in her lifetime.
She had a very tragic life, really. She was a lovely, amazingly sweet person.”*

Jelena Blumenberg, her granddaughter

Aranka Rosenfeld, nee Span, was born in Szikszó, in the eastern part of Hungary 1892, and she died in Belgrade on 7 March 1981. She had six sisters and a brother. Aranka married Márton Rosenfeld. They settled in Subotica, where they owned a large hardware store in the town centre and lived upstairs. The store was successful, and the family was well off. Around 1938, the Rosenfelds moved to Belgrade to open a stove manufacturing factory.

The family was religious. They were a typically Neolog (conservative) Jewish family. They upheld Kosher rules and celebrated the holidays. Aranka, the housewife and a very talented cook, took care of the Kosher diet. She was obviously very well organized because, beside raising three children, she wrote “A Jewish Woman’s Cookbook”.

When the Holocaust began, the family went back to Subotica from Belgrade, where they stayed until deportation.

Márton, her husband, was killed in Auschwitz together with approximately 80 members of Aranka’s family. Her son Imre was killed by the Germans in 1944 while fighting for a resistance movement. Aranka and her daughters Eva and Vera were deported to a labour camp in Austria and survived the Holocaust.

After the liberation, Aranka went back to Subotica, to once successful Jewish community which was only a pale semblance to what it used to be. Their ornate synagogue could not always draw a “minyan” 10 Jewish men for public prayers, but Aranka, who came to Kabbalat Shabbat services every Friday evening, would be counted in the “minyan”.

Mrs. Rosenfeld’s life was not the same either. She had problems adapting to the new circumstances, the new system. She was quite well off before war, she had a carefree life. In the new society she could not accept the poverty imposed by the end of the war. That is probably the reason why she occasionally held cooking classes for women – non-Jewish, as there were no Jewish women any more.

In the 1960’s, she had been going to Budapest trying to obtain the pension after her son who died as a Hungarian resistance fighter. When she finally got it, it was so measly that it was hardly worth the effort she put in.





Around that time, Aranka Rosenfeld travelled to Israel to visit her daughter Vera. During her stay she wrote another cookbook which was dedicated to recipes for eggplant, as at that time in Israel, it was the only food that could easily be obtained.

In the following decade, Aranka wrote another cookbook which was printed and published in Novi Sad (Serbia) in which she presented recipes for preserving food.

Aranka lived to a ripe old age and she died when she was ninety years old.

The text originated from interviews with her granddaughters Judita Jovanović from Belgrade and Jelena Blumenberg from New York which were published on the following websites:

- *<https://www.centropa.org/biography/judita-jovanovic>*
- *<https://www.jta.org/2015/11/30/lifestyle/joan-nathan-cookbook-brings-families-together>*
- *and recounts of her granddaughter Judita Jovanović.*

LIFE OF A BOOK ON ANOTHER CONTINENT

The text about Aranka Rosenfeld partially came from the article written by Hillel Kuttler “Joan Nathan cookbook brings families together” which was published in 2015 on the Jewish Telegraphic Agency website.

Kuttler occasionally wrote columns about people who were looking for their long-lost relatives, and that is why a friend came to him with a request to help him find his grandfather’s sister. He knew that she was born in Hungary, that she survived the Holocaust and that her name was Aranka Rosenfeld.

They could not find her, but Kuttler found another Aranka Rosenfeld, the wife of Márton Rosenfeld - the author of “A Jewish Woman’s Cookbook”.

During his research, Kuttler found an article by Joan Nathan, an authority in the American culinary circles, who quoted a text of a certain Tara Lotstein who purchased a copy of the “A Jewish Woman’s Cookbook” online.

He writes about it in more detail in his article “Seeking Kin: Notes in a Cookbook Fuel One Woman’s Search” which was published on the same website a year before, in February 2014. Here he states that Lotstein is a young researcher and a translator, and that she was perhaps more intrigued by the notes written in pencil on the inside of the cookbook’s covers, than the cookbook itself.

On the inside of the front cover, the following is written in Hungarian: “In memory of a really good friend (chavera)” and it is signed *Irene* (Since there are spelling mistakes in the notes, the signature was misread, so it does not say Irene, but “from Icu” (Icutól), which is a diminutive of the Hungarian name Ilona, author’s remark). Someone wrote “Admont October 7, 1946” in capitalized print. On the opposite page, on the margin of the foreword, there are several handwritten words: the name “Izsák Roth” and “Kolozsvár”. And on the last page of the text, someone jotted a recipe for “pogácsa” – all of it in Hungarian.

Lotstein explains in her work that Kolozsvár is the Hungarian variant for the name of the Romanian town Cluj-Napoca, and that Admont was the name of a displaced persons camp set up in Austria following World War II.

She doesn’t know who Izsák Roth was, beyond likely being a young boy — a deduction based on his handwriting (which is also disputable, author’s remark). She doesn’t know who Irene was, nor who was the “pogácsa” maker. She knows that the author of the cookbook is Mrs. Márton Rosenfeld, and the foreword was written by Mrs. Mózes Deutsch, the wife of the chief Orthodox rabbi of



Subotica. The author of the study did not find out anything about their destinies.

She wondered what happened to the boy, Izsák Roth, whether he survived the Holocaust. What was the fate of those people? The author was not successful in that quest, as the researcher of the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum Peter Black said that their names are too common to yield results quickly.

He also said that the Museum is interested in adding “A Jewish Woman’s Cookbook” into their collection as it can be perceived as a Holocaust artefact and that even if it was not written during the Holocaust, it may have had meaning for someone whose life was changed by the Holocaust.

He said that he doubted that someone who was in a concentration camp could have kept this cookbook because it could not help an inmate survive. The book must have been important to its owner, and was something that held sufficient sentimental value and reminiscent of the pre-war world that was gone forever.

- <https://www.jta.org/2015/11/30/lifestyle/joan-nathan-cookbook-brings-families-together>
- <https://www.jta.org/2014/02/21/lifestyle/seeking-kin-a-cookbooks-jottingsTra-prompt-a-womans-search>





RECIPES

Preparations for Shabbath and holidays

On cooking in general

FISH

Fish with walnuts

Cold fish vinaigrette with onions

SOUPS

Cold sour cherry soup

Wine soup

SAUCES

Garlic sauce

Horseradish sauce

Pickled cucumber sauce

Plum sauce

MAIN COURSES

Bean cholent

Goose breast cacciatore

HOLIDAY MENU – SPECIAL PASSOVER DISHES

Passover dishes

Matzo balls

DESSERTS

Kindli

Floden



Preparations for Shabbath and holidays

Greenness of everyday is broken by Saturdays - Shabbath and holidays. To celebrate Saturdays and other festive days well, the homemaker needs to comply with numerous and very precisely determined rules. For Saturday to be blessed, not only physical, but also mental peace is required. Well before the evening comes, the dishes need to be warmed and placed on the rim of the stove. Two challah need to be placed on the set table, and covered. Two candles need to be placed in the candleholders, or as many as the lady of the house usually lights. They need to be lit at least $\frac{3}{4}$ of an hour before the stars become visible. All work must then cease and a blessing is said.



FISH

Fish with walnuts

We cut carrot and a parsley root into eight pieces, chop 1 onion, add salt and pepper, 1 potato and boil everything. We strain the stock. We put a pike or barbel in a pot, and we pour enough stock over it to cover it. When it is half done, we put on a plate two fistfuls of chopped walnuts, a little sugar, 1–2 spoonfuls of flour and add water and whisk it. When it is smooth, we dilute it with fish stock and add it to the fish. We cook it for a while longer, and sprinkle the dish with roughly chopped walnuts before serving.

