

Jan. 15, 2014

It's time once again to party like a Scotsman

Jan. 25 gatherings mark birthday of beloved poet Robert Burns.

By Susan Dalzell
Contributing Writer

On Jan. 25, people around the world will gather for special dinners honoring Scottish poet Robert Burns, the writer of "Auld Lang Syne." It's an annual tradition for Scots – and admirers of Scottish culture – to throw a birthday party for Burns, who would be turning

255 years old this year.

"It's a great excuse to get together to celebrate our Scottish heritage," said Robert Reid, vice president of the Cincinnati Caledonian Society. His group will host its Burns dinner at Loveland on Jan. 25. (For more details, go online to www.caledoniansociety.org or call 513-574-2969.)

Traditionally, the meal consists of a main course of haggis (a large sausage filled with sheep's liver, heart and lungs mixed with herbed oatmeal), accompanied by neeps and

taters (turnips and potatoes), cock-a-leekie soup (chicken broth and leeks), and a Scottish dessert, such as cloutie dumpling, a pudding made with spices and dried fruit, or cranachan, a dessert with whipped cream, whiskey, honey and raspberries.

Scottish continued on D8

Recipes inside on D8

- » Gwlenys Reid's Cranachan
- » Lenora Gilmour's Cloutie Dumpling
- » Dalzell (D-L) Shepherd's Pie



A cloutie dumpling is a traditional desert to serve at a Robert Burns supper. CONTRIBUTED

Scottish

continued from D1

There's a formal order to the dinner, which includes a toast to the haggis – complete with a ceremonial stabbing of the steaming dish – and readings of Burns' poems. Bigger cele-

brations offer Highland dancing, bagpipe music and a ceilidh, which is similar to a square dance. "We like to do a bonnie knee contest," Reid said, referring to the men who will attend in kilts.

To host a dinner yourself, it is possible to source a haggis stateside. Reid's fami-

ly orders theirs from <http://cameronbritishfoods.com>. You can also buy one from www.scottishgourmetusa.com.

If haggis just isn't your idea of appealing dinner fare, then other Scottish-inspired options for the main course include salmon, roast beef or a shepherd's pie. Below, we've provided a few recipes, including Reid's mother's cranachan recipe and his family's favorite

cloutie dumpling dish. We've also included a shepherd's pie recipe, a favorite from the family of this writer's husband.

If you choose to honor Burns with a dinner this year, no matter what food you serve, one item is indispensable: "I always tell people when we go, bring a single-malt Scotch," Reid said.

Contact this contributing writer at susan.dalzell@gmail.com.

GWLENYS REID'S CRANACHAN

Four servings

5 tablespoons of porridge oats (butter and sugar if required)	Honey to taste
5 ounces whipping cream	2 tablespoons whiskey if required
	14 ounces raspberries

Toss the oatmeal in a non-stick pan until the oats are golden. I add butter, and also sugar to taste, to nicely caramelize the oats. Cool.

Whip cream until thick, but not too stiff. Then stir in four tablespoons of oatmeal. Reserve the rest of the oatmeal for decoration.

If whiskey is required, stir it into the oatmeal. Or, if children will eat this dessert, you can include whiskey in individual dishes as required.

Start with a layer of raspberries, then layer cream and the rest of the raspberries in either a big glass dish or individual glass dishes. (Reserve a few raspberries for decoration.) End with a layer of cream mixture. Decorate with toasted oatmeal and raspberries. Serve immediately or leave in fridge for up to an hour.

LENORA GILMOUR'S CLOOTIE DUMPLING

1 pound all-purpose flour	2 teaspoons ginger
1 cup sugar	1 teaspoon baking soda
1 cup breadcrumbs	1 tablespoon black treacle
4 ounces margarine	½ cup milk
1 pound raisins	1 grated apple
1 teaspoon allspice	1 piece of white cloth 24" x 24"
1 teaspoon cinnamon	

Rub margarine into the dry ingredients. Add the fruit and spices. Dissolve the baking soda with the milk and the treacle. Mix to a stiff dough.

Place the dough mixture in the center of the dampened and flour-dusted cloth. Tie the edges with a piece of string (leaving room for expansion).

Place in a large pot of water and boil for 3½ hours, topping up the water regularly. Do NOT allow the pot to boil dry.

DALZELL (D-L) SHEPHERD'S PIE

Pie:	1 tablespoon tomato paste
2 tablespoons oil	1 shot of whiskey (for the true Scot)
1 onion, finely chopped	
1 carrot, finely chopped	
2 leeks, chopped	
2 tablespoons parsley, chopped	
1 pound ground lamb (or beef)	
1½ cups beef stock	
1 tablespoon all-purpose flour	
2-3 teaspoons Worcestershire sauce	

Topping (Clapshot):

1 pound potatoes
½ pound of turnips or swede (rutabaga)
2 tablespoons butter
1 teaspoon nutmeg, grated
3 tablespoons milk
Salt and pepper, to taste

Heat the oil in a pan; add the onion, carrot and leeks and cook, stirring occasionally, until softened and turning brown. Stir the beef into the pan and cook, stirring to break up the lumps, until lightly browned. Add the parsley and stir in thoroughly.

Blend a few spoonfuls of the stock with the flour, then stir mixture into the pan. Stir in the remaining stock and bring to a simmer, stirring. Add the Worcestershire sauce and tomato puree, (plus shot of whiskey if desired), then cover and cook gently for 1 hour, stirring occasionally. Uncover the pan towards the end of cooking to allow any excess liquid to evaporate.

Peel the potatoes and turnips or swede, then cut them into evenly sized small chunks. Place the chopped vegetables in a pot and cover with cold water. Bring to a boil over medium heat, then reduce the heat and simmer approximately 15-20 minutes, until vegetables are cooked. Drain the vegetables (in a colander) and return them to the pot. Mash the vegetable mixture, adding butter and milk to make creamy. Grate the nutmeg and mix into the mash.

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees Fahrenheit. Pour the meat mixture into a large casserole dish. Cover meat mixture with an even layer of the vegetable mash and make ridges on the top of the mash with the prongs of a fork. Bake for 25 minutes until golden brown.