



Sons of Norway
HERITAGE PROGRAMS



IdeaBank#47

THE VIKING DINNER FANTASY

Prepared by: Laura B. Clemsntsen
Harlford 3-474

October 1992

(Based on "The Vinland Sagas," translated by Magnus Magnusson and Herman Pålsson (Penguin Classics, 1965), copyright© Magnus Magnusson and Herman Pålsson, 1965.

Used by permission of Penguin B

Introduction

RECIPES FROM THE VIKING DINNER THEATER

Purre Suppe (Leek Soup)

One bunch of leeks (should make 4 cupfuls when sliced; if not enough, add chopped onion to make the amount.)

1 medium potato	1/4 tsp. white pepper
6 Tbsp. margarine	1 46-oz. can chicken broth (6 cups; do not use bouillon cubes or granules)
1/2 cup flour	

Wash leeks carefully to get out any grit that may cling. Dry leeks. Grate potato, but not in advance because it will darken if done early. Melt margarine in large pan. Add leeks and grated potato. Cook 5 minutes, stirring to prevent sticking or browning. Tender leeks will cook in less time. Add flour and pepper, stirring constantly. Heat broth in separate pan. Stir in hot broth. Cook briefly if leeks are not tender.

Serve hot. Sprinkle chopped parsley or chives over top of soup. Makes 9 cups.

Apple Crisp

5-6 apples, sliced	3/4 tsp. salt
1 cup flour	1 egg
1/2 cup sugar	1/3 cup melted margarine
1 tsp. baking powder	cinnamon

Place sliced apples in lightly greased 6 x 10 baking dish. Mix flour, sugar, baking powder, salt, and egg to a crumbly mixture. Sprinkle over apple slices. Pour melted margarine over top. Sprinkle lightly with cinnamon. Bake 30-40 minutes at 350°. Serves 8.

Cabbage Salad

1 small cabbage, finely shredded
1 small onion, chopped fine
1 finely shredded carrot and/or small amount of red cabbage, finely shredded, if desired
oil, vinegar, water, salt, pepper

Very hard to specify amounts. Salad must be tasted and seasoning adjusted to individual preference. Dash of sugar may be added. Drizzle small amount of oil over shredded cabbage

and onion. Add vinegar and water (more vinegar than water). Add salt and pepper, and then sugar if desired. Chill and serve.

NOTES ABOUT THE PRODUCTION OF THE VIKING FANTASY

There is no stage in the hall we used. Tables were set up along two sides of the room, the long sides of the room. The area in the middle of the hall thus became the stage. Locations—Iceland, Greenland and Vinland—were indicated by signs tacked on the walls. There was no ship, only a sign carried in front of the crew.

A minimum of props was used. Although there was doubling of cast (one person did two or more parts) there was an identifying costume for each character.

PROPS INCLUDED:

helmets, various caps

shields, axes, halberds, swords, weapons

a bench for the bride (used by skald also)

amber-colored beads

a magic stone

a baby-doll wrapped in a blanket

table for sibyl, chairs

paste-on whiskers and beards

circlet of vines and “flowers” for bride

make-up

cold cream

tissues

Tickets were made up ahead of time and sold. No tickets sold at the door—everyone had a reservation.

Sons of Norway

The Viking Dinner Theater

A Fantasy

(Medieval music on ancient instruments—taped—played as an introduction.)

NARRATOR: Welcome to the Viking Dinner Theater. We want to create for you the feel of what it might have been like to have lived in the exciting period, about 1000 A.D., when the Norsemen carried out their exploits across the North Atlantic.

You have heard that the Vikings were raiders and plunderers as well as traders and explorers. Thus in writing tonight's play, we have raided all sources and plundered freely, borrowing various sagas and other material.

We want you to keep to the spirit of the evening. And as skalling is an ancient custom, we hope you will keep your cups at the ready to skål at appropriate times. The thralls will refill your cups as you wish.

Let us skål the beginning of the fantasy!

(Taped music—"The Light Cavalry Overture" by Von Suppé—played briefly)

(Eirik and Thjodhild stand before the lawspeaker and the plaintiffs. Others stand around.)

NARRATOR: It appears that a trial is going on here in Iceland.

LAWSPEAKER: As lawspeaker, it is my duty to inform those who are ignorant of the law. As you know, our moral code rests on personal dignity, honor, and loyalty. An injury to one's honor or family demands payment in blood or money or banishment. As in today's case, for killing of a man or men, the accused may be sentenced to outlawry, to spending three or more years in the wild. No one may harbor the outlaw. None may give him money or transport. The plaintiffs have the power to enforce the penalty they set.

GEIRSTEIN: Eirik, son of Thorvald, stands before us. I charge him with the killing of two of my brother Thorgest's sons. It's true that Eirik had

lent Thorgest his benchboards, which Thorgest had not yet returned, but there was no reason for Eirik to kill when he tried to seize those miserable boards.

ODD: I recall that Eirik and his father were declared outlaws for some killings back in Norway before they came here to Iceland. He knew he shouldn't kill again. Yes, we sentence him to outlawry.

(Some nod in agreement. Others murmur "We've always been friends." Thjodhild comforts Eirik as they walk away.)

EIRIK: I remember that Gunnbjorn, son of Ulf Crow, sighted a place when he was sailing last year and was driven off course by the strong winds. He said it was a barren land. Come, Thjodhild, we can try to find that place and if it proves habitable, we can ask some of our friends to join us there in three year's time.

NARRATOR: And so they left Iceland and went to Greenland. Let us now look at a seemingly unrelated event some years later.

SCENE II

(Taped music—"I'm Popeye the Sailor-man" and (second song) "Trains and Boats and Planes"—played briefly)

(Bjarni and crewmen are aboard the "ship.")

CREWMAN #1: Bjarni, do you know what you are doing? You wouldn't let us unload the ship when we came to Iceland.

BJARNI: I know. I had always had a custom of enjoying my father's hospitality over the winters when I wasn't sailing to some foreign land. I didn't know my father had left Iceland to go to Greenland to live where Eirik has started a colony. I want to sail my ship to Greenland.

CREWMAN #2: We will do whatever you think best.

BJARNI: This voyage of ours will be considered foolhardy, for not one of us has ever sailed the Greenland Sea.

CREWMAN #2: We set sail days ago. Fog set in and we have not been able to get our bearings until today.

CREWMAN #1: Land! Land!

CREWMAN #2: What country might this be?

BJARNI: I think it cannot be Greenland.

CREWMEN: Do you want to land here or not?

BJARNI: I think we should sail in close.

(Restart the tape and play briefly.)

NARRATOR: They sailed in close. They saw that the country was not mountainous, but was well-wooded and had low hills. After two more days they sighted land once more.

CREWMAN #2: Bjarni, do you think this is Greenland? Are we there yet?

BJARNI: I think this cannot be Greenland any more than the previous one, for there are said to be huge glaciers in Greenland, and I see none here.

CREWMAN #1: Do you want to land here, Bjarni? We need firewood and water. We could look for them on the flat place over there.

BJARNI: No, never mind. I am of the opinion that we have enough supplies. Hoist the sail.

(Continue taped music briefly.)

NARRATOR: They sailed for many more days until they sighted a fourth land. This was Greenland. Bjarni gave up trading and stayed with his father and carried on farming after his father's death.

Let us skip ahead in time about 15 years and look in on Bjarni's ship as it is being loaded.

SCENE III

(Bjarni, Leif, Freydis, Thjodhil, and Eirik—watching crewmen loading the ship.)

LEIF: *(To Bjarni):* That's a very good ship you have sold me. There is so much talk of discovering new countries. Everybody's talking about it. I want to see what is out there. *(Pause, then to Eirik):* Father, you should be leading this expedition.

EIRIK: Aw, Leif my son, I'm getting old and can't endure hardship the way I used to in the old days.

LEIF: But, my father, you can still command more good luck than any of our kinsmen.

EIRIK: I am not meant to discover more countries than this one we now live in. This is as far as we go together. Besides, on my way here today, the horse I was riding stumbled. I fell and hurt my leg. You know that's a bad omen. I couldn't go.

FREYDIS: Leif, you haven't asked Thorvard and me to go. I want to go with you.

LEIF: Freydis, my half-sister, you and Thorvard are newly married. You have a big estate that Thorvard, wealthy as he is, cannot manage alone. You should stay home. Besides, I don't have room for you on the ship.

FREYDIS: You just don't want me! *(She stomps off, towing husband Thorvard along behind her.)*

SCENE IV

NARRATOR: Leif and his crew made their ship ready and put out to sea. The first landfall they made was the country that Bjarni had sighted last. They sailed right up to the shore, cast anchor, and landed.

CREWMAN #1: There is no grass to be seen.

CREWMAN #2: There are large glaciers over there.

CREWMAN #1: Between the glaciers and the shore, the land is like on great slab of rock. It looks like worthless country.

LEIF: Now we have done better than Bjarni where this country is concerned. We have at least set foot on it. I shall give this country a name and call it "Helluland" which means Slabland.

(Taped music—"Midway March"—played briefly)

NARRATOR: They sailed in a northeast wind for two days until they sighted land again. They sailed toward the land. They went ashore and looked

about them in the fine weather.

CREWMAN #1: There is dew on the grass. Let us put it to our lips.

CREWMAN #2: Isn't it the sweetest thing you have ever tasted?

LEIF: This looks like a good place to set up. We can build some stone and sod enclosures to live in temporarily. But first I want to divide our company into two parties so we can explore the countryside a bit. Half of the company is to remain and work on the buildings while the other half goes exploring. Those who go must not go so far that they cannot return the same evening. They must stay together and not become separated.

(Continue the tape briefly.)

SCENE V

(Taped music—"Storm" from "Four Sea Interludes" by Benjamin Britten—played briefly)

CREWMEN: *(Who have been exploring talk all at once, trying to explain to Leif):*
We tried to stay together. We don't know where he is. We don't know how he got separated from the rest of the party.

LEIF: *(Angrily):* Let me get this straight. You mean you came back without Tyrkir? You let him get separated from the rest of you?

(Enter Tyrkir, stumbling and muttering to himself in German)

LEIF: *(Running to him):* Why are you so late, Tyrkir my foster-father? We were so worried. How did you get separated from your companions?

TYRKIR: *(Continues to mumble in German, but after some time):* I did not go much farther than the rest. I have some news. I have found vines and grapes.

LEIF: Is that true, foster-father?

TYRKIR: Of course it is true. *(Reels a little.)* Where I was born in Germany, there were plenty of vines and grapes. Even if I am a little drunk, I know what I have found.

LEIF: Let me think about this. You have found grapes. Now we have two

tasks on our hands. On alternate days we can gather grapes and cut vines, and then fell trees to make a cargo for my ship. (*Musing to himself*): Oh, this is a fine land. Grapes, huh? Perhaps I should call this land Vinland.

(*Continue taped music from Scene IV—“Midway March”—briefly*)

SCENE VI

NARRATOR: Later that same year, they put out to sea and had favorable winds from Vinland all the way, until they sighted Greenland and its ice-capped mountains.

CREWMAN #1: (*to Leif*) Why are you steering the ship so close to the wind, sire?

LEIF: I am keeping an eye on my steering, but I am also keeping an eye on something else. Don't you see anything unusual?

CREWMAN #1: I see nothing in particular.

LEIF: I am not quite sure whether it is a ship or a reef I can see. Wait—it looks more like a reef. Oh yes, it is a reef and I think I can make out people on it. (*pause*) I want to sail close into the wind in order to reach these people. If they need our help, it is our duty to give it. But if they are hostile, then the advantages are all on our side and none on theirs.

(*Continue taped music—“Midway March”—briefly.*)

NARRATOR: They cautiously approached the reef and landed.

(*Enter Thorir, Gudrid, and others.*)

LEIF: Who is your leader?

THORIR: I am the leader. I am called Thorir. I am Norwegian by birth. What is your name?

LEIF: I am Leif, son of Eirik.

THORIR: Are you a son of Eirik the Red of Brattahlid, about whom I have heard so much?

LIEF: That I am. I see you have your wife with you. What is her name?

THORIR: She is called Gudrid. She is the daughter of Thorbjorn of Laugarbrekka.

LEIF: My father has a large farm at Brattahlid. I am sure there will be room for you and your company to stay over the winter. I invite you aboard my ship with as much of your belongings as the ship will take.

THORIR AND

THE OTHERS: That would be great! We don't know how to thank you.

NARRATOR: From then on, Leif was called "Leif the Lucky" because he had rescued a shipwrecked party. Disease broke out among Thorir's crew that winter. Thorir and many of his men died of the disease. Eirik the Red also died that winter.

Now let us listen in on Eirik's sons, Thorvald and Leif, the next year.

SCENE VII

(Thorvald sits pondering.)

LEIF: Thorvald, my brother, what is it that you are thinking so hard about? You have sat there so long thinking about something serious.

THORVALD: Yes, I am thinking. There has been so much talk about your voyage to that fine land you call Vinland. So many others have sailed their Viking ships across the seas, but none has found quite the same fine land as you have. I think that country has not been explored extensively enough. I am a good sailor. I could do it. Let me have your ship so I can go.

LEIF: Thorvald, you can have my ship to go to Vinland if you like, but first I want to send it to fetch the timber that was left on the reef where Thorir was shipwrecked.

NARRATOR: That was done. Thorvald prepared his expedition with his brother Leif's guidance and he engaged a crew of 30. They reached Leif's houses in Vinland. They sailed along the coast exploring. They found the country attractive. Once they ran into a fierce gale. Another time they were attacked by natives whom the Vikings called

Skraelings.

We join Thorvald on the ship during an attack:

THORVALD: *(To two of his men)*: The arrows are flying thick and fast. Is there any among you who is wounded by them?

CREWMEN: We are not hurt, sire.

THORVALD: I have a wound in the armpit here. An arrow flew up between the gunwale and my shield, under my arm. Here it is. I advise you now to go back to Greenland. But first I want you to take me to the headland I thought so suitable for a home. I seem to have hit on the truth when I said that I would settle there for a while. Bury me there and put crosses at my head and feet to please my mother, Thjodhild, who has given up the old religion and become a Christian. Let the place where you bury me be called *Krossaness* forever afterwards.

(Taped music—"The Old Rugged Cross"—played briefly)

NARRATOR: With that, Thorvald, son of Eirik the Red, died. His men did as he had asked. In the spring, they set off to Greenland, leaving Vinland behind.

SCENE VIII

NARRATOR: That same summer, a ship arrived in Greenland from Norway. Her captain was a man called Thorfinn Karlsefni. He spent the winter with Leif Eiriksson at Brattahlid. He quickly fell in love with the widow Gudrid and proposed marriage. Gudrid asked Leif to answer on her behalf. And so she became betrothed to Karlsefni and the wedding took place that same winter, right after Christmas.

(Gudrid is seated on the bride's bench, surrounded by women, admiring her bridal gown.)

LEIF: *(To Karlsefni)*: Have you a gift for your bride?

KARLSEFNI: Of course. I can present it to her now.

(They walk over to Gudrid. Karlsefni presents her with a string of "amber" beads. She thanks him. All admire the gift.)

LEIF: We have not yet drunk to the health of the bridal pair. Thralls, bring

on the ale and fill every cup!

(Thralls fill cups.)

LEIF: *(Lifting his cup):* To the bridal pair, Karlsefni and Gudrid! Skál!

(All drink.)

LEIF: We have not heard from the skald either. *(To Einar):* Come, Einar, give us a song!

(Einar the Skald sings “La Oss Leve for Hverandre” refrain first, the verse, and the refrain again, accompanying himself on the dulcimer) (All applaud.)

LEIF: That was very good, Einar. Let us continue to be merry. Let us dance, Everybody can join in.

(Taped music of a simple, well-known dance—“The Chicken Dance”—played. Everyone, including audience, encouraged to dance.)

(When the dance is done, Thorbjorg the Sybil and Freydis are seated in a corner.)

FREYDIS: Tell me, Thorbjorg, oh, Sybil, what does the future hold for me?

THORBJORG: *(rubbing her magic stone):* I see two strangers, brothers, Helgi, and Finnbogi. You will join them on an expedition to Vinland. You will arrive safely, but there will be a lot of trouble. When you want to return to Greenland, you will bargain for Helgi’s ships because they are bigger than yours. You will accuse them of humiliating you. To avenge that, your husband Thorvard and his men will drag Helgi and Finnbogi’s men from their beds. You will kill them with your own axe. You will also kill all five women in the company. You will threaten the others in the party not to reveal the killings. But Leif, your half-brother, will find out sooner or later. Only ill-will can be thought of you and yours after that.

(Taped music—“Gloomy Sunday”—played briefly)

SCENE IX

NARRATOR: There was still the same talk about Vinland voyages. Everyone, including Gudrid, kept urging Karlsefni to make the voyage. In the end, Karlsefni decided to sail. He gathered a company of sixty men

and five women. He asked Leif if he could have the houses in Vinland. As before, Leif said he would lend them, but not give them away.

Karlsefni's company put to sea and arrived safe and sound at Leif's houses. They had plenty of supplies. A large whale had been driven ashore. There was no shortage of food. They made use of all the natural resources of the country. The next summer, they had their first encounter with *Skraelings* when a great number of them came out of the woods one day.

About this time, Gudrid gave birth to a child.

(Taped music—"Sarabande" by Grieg—played until Karlsefni has finished speaking)

GUDRID *(Offering the baby to Karlsefni)*: Husband, what do you think of this child?

KARLSEFNI *(Looking him over)*: I think he is a most extraordinary baby.

GUDRID: What shall you call him?

KARLSEFNI: I think we should call him Snorri, for he will become a fine lad.

NARRATOR: Then, the next winter, the *Skraelings* returned in much greater numbers than before. There was an encounter. Many *Skraelings* were killed. In the spring, Karlsefni announced that he had no wish to stay there any longer. They made ready for the voyage to Greenland. They put to sea and reached Eiriksfjord safely.

(Taped music—"Millom Bakkar og Berg")

NARRATOR: We do not know how many voyages were made by Vikings to the North American continent, or why or when the explorations stopped. Even those of us who cannot trace our roots to the Vikings can appreciate the land those western pathfinders found, the glorious land we inhabit. Let us end our fantasy, our saga, by standing and singing a song.

(All sing):

O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!

America! America!
God shed his grace on thee,
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!