

## Mi, Kima, and Whitebait Souffle. Embassy Recipes 1964-65

August 2025

The idea was simple. Ask the wives of the many Ambassadors /High Commissioners/Charge d'Affaires/ Counsellors living in Canberra to contribute a recipe to a new weekly feature in the *Canberra Times* – Embassy Recipes. The first was published on 1 July 1964 – a recipe for Mi given by Mme. Isarabhakdi, wife of the Ambassador for Thailand, Mr. Vadhana Isarabhakdi.<sup>1</sup> The last, number 51, was published on 23 June 1965 and was for Danish stuffed white cabbage contributed by Mrs N. C. Stenderup, wife of the Minister of the Royal Danish Legation.<sup>2</sup> All the recipes are Appendix 1.

I've been writing about the history of Australian food for 30 years but have never heard of this until coming across one of the recipes while searching on a different matter. I immediately got excited. Some of my writing recently has been about examining the history of food in Australia through a multicultural lens. Here was a yearlong project that I wanted to bring into that history small though it was, only for readers of the *Canberra Times*. I am blocked in saying more as I have had no response from the paper to an inquiry for the backstory to the feature. It would have been interesting to know how the project was presented to the women.

### The Women

All but one are wives of the Ambassadors /High Commissioners/Charge d'Affaires/ Counsellors. The one who is not was the sister of the Official.

We learn a little about just four of them.

Mrs. Hazlett, - who is from a rural community in the South Island, says she is more used to cooking for shearing teams than for big dinner parties.<sup>3</sup>

Miss Sheila Massand sister of the Indian High Commissioner, Mr. B. K.. Massand. Miss Massand said yesterday that since living in Australia she had become a good cook. "I never cooked in India," she said. "Here, I have given so many demonstrations of Indian cooking that I now consider myself a competent chef."<sup>4</sup>

Mrs. H. H. van Niekerk, wife of the Charge d'Affaires of South Africa, is an enthusiastic and experienced cook and is keen to share her country's recipes with Australians.<sup>5</sup>

We learn about their hosting/entertaining .

This week's Embassy Recipe, Polio a La Narangha — chicken with orange — is a recipe which Mrs. Ezpeleta, wife of the Ambassador for the Philippines, Mr. M. Ezpeleta, of ten serves at private dinner parties.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Canberra Times 1 July 1964 p. 21

<sup>2</sup> Canberra Times 23 January 1965 p.16

<sup>3</sup> Embassy Recipe No.21 White Bait Souffle *Canberra Times* 18 November 1964 p. 18

<sup>4</sup> Embassy Recipe No.26 Sheek- Kebab *Canberra Times* 23 December 1964 p.13

<sup>5</sup> Embassy Recipe No. 34 South African Chicken Pie *Canberra Times* 7 February p.18

<sup>6</sup> Embassy Recipe No.9 Polio a La Narangha —chicken with orange *Canberra Times* 14 October 1964 p.18

Mrs Eduardo Manzella, wife of the Charge d'Affaires of the Argentine Embassy, is a resourceful and indefatigable hostess. She is as skilled in selecting menus for formal dinners, as in ordering food for a barbecue lunch for 100 people or preparing a tasty family meal.<sup>7</sup>

Occasionally we hear about their approach to dining.

Mrs. Eoin MacWhite, wife of the Ambassador for Ireland, Dr. MacWhite, feels it is more important to cook simple food so that the flavours are brought put than to make complicated sauces and dressings.<sup>8</sup>

Greek food takes a long time to prepare, but it can be cooked in advance and re-heated at meal time, says Madame Frantzeskakis.

Mrs. Ohta suggests that when cooking is done at table, meat and vegetables should not be cooked all at once. While guests have a first helping, add more meat and vegetables, and, if necessary, more soy sauce, sake, sugar and/or stock.

### **A sample of dishes**

These are samples of the descriptions of the dishes. They give insight to their cuisine and some of the cultural forces that shape the dish.

Piccata, a light main course for a Sunday evening supper, or luncheon. Piccata is a speciality from the Italian-speaking part of Switzerland.<sup>9</sup>

Chinese Lamb. "Although many Chinese do not eat lamb," Madame Chen said "there is a large Moslem population in China that does, and Fried Lamb Slices is a favourite recipe".<sup>10</sup>

Chicken with orange. For hundreds of years, the islands of the Philippines have been under Western influence and their foods, as well as their cultural heritages, are a blend of East and West. Filipino dishes are derived from many countries and feature Malay, Chinese, American and European styles of presentation.<sup>11</sup>

Egyptian Semolina cake. Mrs. Abdel-Hamid serves Semolina cake with morning coffee or afternoon tea and says it is also delicious as a dessert. A traditional Egyptian sweet, it is sold in coffee shops and from roadside stalls all over the country.<sup>12</sup>

Sukiyaki can be cooked at table on a lamp stove or in an electric fry pan. Soy sauce, sake, stock and sugar come to the table in matching containers, and the vegetables and sliced meat are attractively arranged on a large plate. Experienced cooks use long cooking chopsticks to turn the food, but kitchen tongs are as good.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Embassy Recipe No. 50 Asado de tira a la Cacerola *Canberra Times* 16 June 1965 p.18

<sup>8</sup> Embassy Recipe No.5 Salmon Steaks *Canberra Times* 29 July 1964 p.18

<sup>9</sup> Embassy Recipe No. 2 Piccata *Canberra Times* 8 July 1964 p.21

<sup>10</sup> Embassy Recipe No. 7 Chinese Lamb *Canberra Times* 12 August 1964 p.18

<sup>11</sup> Embassy Recipe No. 16 Chicken With Orange *Canberra Times* 7 October 1964 p. 16

<sup>12</sup> Embassy Recipe No. 41 Semolina Cake *Canberra Times* 7 April 1965 p.18

<sup>13</sup> Embassy Recipe No.15 Sukiyaki *Canberra Times* 7 October 1964 p.16

Empado de Camarao. Shrimp Pie with Palm Tree Hearts. Palm tree hearts the luxuries that require the sacrifice of an entire palm tree, are combined with shrimps to make a gourmet Brazilian dish.<sup>14</sup>

### **Celebratory/festive dishes**

Recipes were given that traditionally were made for some annual celebration or festival.

#### **Pumpkin Pie**

Tomorrow we will celebrate Thanksgiving Day. To mark the day, Mrs. J. Lydman, wife of the Charge d'Affaires of the United States Embassy, provides a special menu with a traditional recipe, pumpkin pie.<sup>15</sup>

#### **A Yuletide Recipe From Sweden. Saffron Buns.**

The Christmas season in Sweden begins on St. Lucia's Day, December 13. which was celebrated as the longest day in the year when the old Gregorian calendar was used. It was the custom to start with a large breakfast in preparation for the long day ahead. A tray of saffron buns was traditionally served with early morning coffee on this day.<sup>16</sup>

#### **Hotpotch**

On October 3, the old Dutch city of Leyden will commemorate the lifting of the Spanish siege in 1574 with the eating of Hotchpot.<sup>17</sup>

### **Cuisine Commentaries**

All the recipes have commentaries on their cuisine.

"I have discovered that typical Korean dishes are not very popular here," she said. "Our principal foods are rice, meat, fish and vegetables prepared by methods handed down from generation to generation. "The taste is hard to describe and only those Westerners who have eaten the food in Korea can appreciate its unique flavour."<sup>18</sup>

Mrs. Chen, herself an accomplished cook, explained that red cooking is a culinary method, like stewing or braising. "There are many ways of red cooking; for instance, we have red cooked beef as well as fish." she said. "This particular recipe comes from Shanghai and is quite different to the Cantonese type of Chinese food mostly served here."<sup>19</sup>

Mrs Olita, pictured here with the ingredients for Tempura. says cooks in her country take as much pride in the artistic presentation of raw food as they do in the finished dish.<sup>20</sup>

A traditional country party in Uruguay consists of barbecued meat cooked very, very slowly over an open fire. If the wind is right ! it may take three hours; but if it is wrong it may be five hours before the' meal is ready. Empanadas are used to fill the gaps until the meat is cooked.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Embassy Recipe No. 20 Empado de Camarao *Canberra Times* 11 November 1964 p.21

<sup>15</sup> Embassy Recipe No. 22 Pumpkin Pie *Canberra Times* 25 November 1964 p.21

<sup>16</sup> Embassy Recipe No. 24 Saffron Buns *Canberra Times* 9 December 1964 p.21

<sup>17</sup> Embassy Recipe No. 14 Hotpotch *Canberra Times* 30 September 1964 p.18

<sup>18</sup> Embassy Recipe No. 38 Korean Crabmeat Omelettes *Canberra Times* 17 March 1965 p.18

<sup>19</sup> Embassy Recipe No.39 Chinese Red Cooked Fish *Canberra Times* 24 March 1965 p. 19

<sup>20</sup> Embassy Recipe No.42 Japanese Tempura *Canberra Times* 14 April 1965 p.18

<sup>21</sup> Embassy Recipe No.11 Chinese Red Cooked Fish *Canberra Times* 9 September 1964 p.19

This week's Embassy recipe is redolent with spices and the flavour is fiery. The recipe, for Kima — ground beef with elan—is a Pakistani dish and was supplied by the Begum Kaiser, wife of the High Commissioner for Pakistan. So fiery is the dish that for Australian palates the quantities of curry, chilli powder and cayenne may need to be reduced.<sup>22</sup>

This recipe is probably originally Czechoslovakian. We were left a legacy of wonderfully varied recipes after World War I when many of the countries of the Austrian Empire became independent.<sup>23</sup>

### **Coda**

This article is a brief look at the Embassy Recipes feature of the *Canberra Times* 1964 – 1965. The feature brought 50 cuisines to the multiculinary Australian Table, most of which are not represented there. It's a shame no-one thought the project valuable enough to warrant being collected in the one volume.

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<sup>22</sup> Embassy Recipe No. 40 Kima *Canberra Times* 31 March 1965 p.19

<sup>23</sup> Embassy Recipe No. 36 Plum Dumplings *Canberra Times* 3 March 1965 p.18

## **Appendix 1. List of All Recipes and Their Contributors**

No.1 Thailand – Mme. Isarabhakadi wife of the Ambassador for Thailand, Mr. Vadhana Isarabhakdi. Mi.

No.2 Switzerland - Mrs. Frederic Gyax, wife of the Ambassador for Switzerland. Piccata.

No.3 Pakistan - Begum Kaiser wife of the High Commissioner for Pakistan, Mr. K. M. Kaiser. Prawn Curry, Carrot Halwa..

(No. 4 Missing)

No.5 Ireland - Mrs. Eoin MacWhite, wife of the Ambassador for Ireland, Dr. MacWhite. Salmon Steaks.

No.6 Belgium - Mrs. Willy Van Cauwenberg, wife of the Ambassador for Belgium. Flemish Beer Stew (Carbonnade Flamande), Rice Torte (Tarte Liegeoise).

No.7 China - Madam Chen, wife of the Ambassador for China, Dr. Chen Chih-Mai. Chinese Lamb, Fried Lamb Slices, Stirred Broccoli.

No.8 Germany - Frau Ritter, wife of the Ambassador for Germany, Dr. J. F. Ritter. Koenigsberger Klops

No. 9 Greece - Madame Frantzeskakis wife of the Charge d'Affaires for Greece. Moussakas.

No. 10 Canada - Mrs. E.W. T. Gill, wife of the Canadian High Commissioner. Tourtiere.

No. 11 - Mrs. Perez del Castillo, wife of the Charge d'Aflaires at the Legation of Uruguay. Empanados Criollas.

No. 12 France - Madame Briere, wife of the French Ambassador, M. Francois J. F. L. Briere. French pancakes.

(No. 13 missing)

No. 14 Netherlands - Mrs. Simons, wife of the Counsellor for the Netherlands, Mr. F. Simons. Hotchpot.

No.15 Japan - Mrs. Saburo Ohta, wife of the Ambassador of Japan. Beef Sukiyaki.

No.16 Philippines - Mrs. Ezpeleta, wife of the Ambassador for the Philippines, Mr. M. Ezpeleta. Pollo a La Narangha.

No. 17 Argentina - Mrs. E. Manzella, wife of the Charge d'Affaires of the Argentine Republic. Matambre.

No. 18 Italy - Mrs. da Rin. wife of the Charge d'Affaires for Italy, Dr. E. da Rin. Pesto A La Genovese.

No. 19 Ceylon - Mrs. Muttukumaru, wife of the High Commissioner for Ceylon. Meat Curry With Yellow Rice.

No. 20 Brazil - Senhora Leao de Mourn, wife of the Ambassador for Brazil. Empada dc Camarao.

No. 21 New Zealand. Mrs. Hazlett, wife of the High Commissioner for New Zealand, Mr. J. Luke Hazlett. Whitebait souffle.

No. 22 United States of America. Mrs. J. Lydman, wife of the Charge d'Affaires of the United States Embassy. Pumpkin Pie.

No. 23 South Africa - Mrs. van Niekerk, wife of the First Secretary of the South African Embassy, Mr.H. H. van Niekerk. Sosaties

No. 24 Sweden - Mrs. Petersens, wife of the Swedish Ambassador. Saffron Buns.

No. 25 Portugal - Senhora de Rebello de Andrade, wife of the Charge d'Affaires of the Embassy of Portugal. Prawn Rissoles.

No. 26 India - Miss Sheila Massand, sister of the Indian High Commissioner, Mr. B. K.. Massand. Sheekh Kebab.

No. 27 Indonesian - Mrs. Joewono, wife of the Charge d'Affaires of the Indonesian Embassy. Chicken With Peanut Sauce

No. 28 Vietnam - Mrs. Nguyen Van Hieu, wife of the Ambassador of the Republic of Vietnam. Sweet Green Beans.

No. 29 Cambodia - Mrs. Sin-Suop, wife of the Cambodian Attache. Bananas In Rum, Baked Bananas, Bananas In Red Wine.

No. 30 Canada - Mrs. E. W.T. Gill, wife of the Canadian High Commissioner. Strawberry Romanov.

No. 31 Belgium - Madame Willy van Cauwenberg, wife of the Belgian Ambassador. Jellied Fish.  
No. 32 Germany - Frau Ritter, wife of the German Ambassador. Sherry Bavarian Cream.

No. 33 Philippines – Mrs. Ezpeleta, wife of the Ambassador of the Philippines. Chicken-Pork Adobo, Veal In Rum.

No. 34 South Africa - Mrs. H. H. van Niekerk, wife of the Charge d'Affaires of South Africa. South African Chicken Pie

(No.35 Missing)

No. 36 Austria - Mrs. A. Peithauer, wife of the Ambassador of Austria. Plum Dumplings.

No. 37 Denmark - Mrs. N. C. Stenderup, wife of the Minister for Denmark. Danish Apple Cake

No. 38 Korea - Mrs. Chung Duk Lee, wife of the Korean Ambassador to Australia. Korean Crabmeat Omelettes.

No. 39 China – Mrs. Chen, wife of the Chinese Ambassador. Chinese Red Cooked Fish.

No. 40 Pakistan – Begum Kaiser, wife of the High Commissioner for Pakistan. Kima.

No. 41 Egypt - Mrs. Abdel Hamid, wife of the Ambassador of the United Arab Republic. Semolina Cake.

No. 42 Japan – Mrs. S. Ohia, wife of the Japanese Ambassador. Tempura.

No.43 New Zealand - Mrs J. Luke Hazlett. the wife of the New Zealand High Commissioner. Lamb and Mushroom Casserole.

No. 44 Ireland - Mrs E. MacWhite, the wife of the Irish Ambassador. Irish Bacon Cois Fhairrge.

No. 45 Italy - Mrs E. Da Rin, the wife of the Counsellor at the Italian Embassy. Zabaglioni

No. 46 The Netherlands – Mrs. F. Simons, the wife of the Counsellor for the Netherlands. Cobblers Tart.

No. 47 Indonesia – Mrs R. A. Kosasih, the wife of the Ambassador of Indonesia. Nasi Kunning.

No. 48 Chile – Mrs. G. Bucchi, the wife of the Charge d'Affaires for Chile. Cola dc Mono.

No. 49 Austria - Mrs A. Reitbauer, the wife of the Ambassador of Austria. Austrian Cabbage Meat.

No. 50 Argentina - Mrs Eduardo Manzella, wife of the Charge d'Affaires of the Argentine Embassy. Asado de tira a la Cacerola.

No. 51 Denmark - Mrs N. C. Stcnderiip, wife of the Minister of the Royal Danish Legation. Danish stuffed white cabbage.