

DARVAS

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World of Cuisine Provides a New Role for Actress

By CRAIG CLAIBORNE

ALTHOUGH the theater has always been a first love for Ali Darvas, the actress, there is a rival at hand. It is the world of cuisine.

"I will not give up acting," she said this week in her Manhattan apartment, "but it is becoming more and more difficult to find good parts—I hate the word jobs—in the theater."

The auburn-haired woman, who has appeared in many Broadway productions (her last role in a long-running production was in "A Far Country," which dealt with the life of Sigmund Freud), enters her new role, that of caterer, shortly after midnight tonight. She will cater a private after-theater party for an actress who is leaving a play for the summer.

"There will be 50 guests," Miss Darvas said, "and I will serve a molded salmon dish with shredded cucumber, a Transylvanian casserole and fresh fruits. Very simple, but very good."

"I've always loved to cook," she added, "but not until now did I consider it seriously."

Many people have praised Miss Darvas' cuisine, but she never took them seriously.

She Comes From Budapest

The actress is a native of Budapest and was married to Ferenc Molnar, the late Hungarian playwright, author of "The Guardsman" and "Liliom."

In Miss Darvas' opinion, her late husband was not only one of Hungary's leading playwrights, but also one of Budapest's foremost gourmets.

"Molnar was a great eater," she recalled this week, "and knew so much! In Budapest in old, gay times, the chefs in the restaurants were trembling when he came. He had a great retinue of friends and they went where he went."

"We had a big apartment and once, I remember, he invited all his friends for a grand buffet with the richest foods Hungary had to offer, both cold and hot."

There were, she recounted, whole goose livers, paprika fish in aspic, Hungarian salamis, roast geese, Szekeley goulash with pork, rich tortes and a special table for liqueurs, still wines and champagne.

Speaking of her venture into catering, she added:

"I want so much to get away from the usual catered dishes, the fruit cup, the lobster newberg and all the rest."

She intends to specialize in Hungarian dishes. She has an extensive repertory, of which she speaks with relish and authority.

Assisting her in this enterprise is Mrs. Dorothy Callaway, an expert cook who has been with the family for 21 years. Mrs. Callaway learned European cooking from Miss Darvas's mother, who, the actress explained, "is the only person I've ever known who could turn out a perfect soufflé on a two-burner electric stove."

The actress has an ardent interest in European desserts, such as chestnut cakes, almond cakes and hazelnut roulades.

Inquiries as to her services may be directed to Miss Darvas at 240 East 79th Street, BU 8-3953. Three recipes from her kitchen follow.

LAURA TORTA

- 5 tablespoons dry bread crumbs
 - 6 egg whites
 - 1 cup very fine sugar
 - 2 cups whole almonds, blanched and grated
 - 7 teaspoons instant coffee
 - 5 tablespoons very strong brewed coffee
 - 5 tablespoons sweet butter
 - 5 egg yolks
 - 1 cup confectioners' sugar
 - 1 cup heavy cream, whipped
 - ½ cup blanched, slivered toasted almonds.
1. Preheat the oven to 400 degrees.
 2. Grease two eight-inch lay-

er pans, line with wax paper, grease the wax paper and sprinkle each with one tablespoon bread crumbs.

3. Beat the egg whites until frothy. Very gradually add one-half cup sugar, beating until very stiff.

4. Fold in the remaining sugar, all but three tablespoons of the grated almonds, the remaining bread crumbs and four teaspoons of the instant coffee. Divide the mixture evenly between the two prepared pans. Bake 15 to 20 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

5. Remove the layers from the pans and peel off the wax paper. While still hot, sprinkle the layers with the strong coffee. Cool on racks. The layers will shrink as they cool.

6. Beat the butter, egg yolks and confectioners' sugar together until well blended. Fold in remaining grated almonds, the whipped cream and the remaining instant coffee.

7. Place one cooled layer on a serving dish. Top with half the cream mixture. Put remaining layer on top. Cover sides and top with the remaining cream mixture. Sprinkle top and sides with the toasted almonds.

Yield: Eight to ten servings.

TRANSYLVANIAN MEAT AND SAUERKRAUT

- 2½ pounds lean pork, cut into one-inch cubes
- ¼ cup flour
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tablespoon sweet paprika (see note below)
- ½ pound lard
- 2 large white onions, peeled and chopped
- ¾ cup water
- 1 pound sauerkraut
- 1 cup sour cream
- ½ cup rice
- 1 pound smoked Polish sausage (see note below), cut into thin slices.

1. Dredge the pork in a mixture of the flour, salt, pepper and one-half tablespoon of the paprika. Heat all but two tablespoons of the lard in a skillet and lightly brown the meat in it. Remove meat and add the onions to the skillet. Cook until onions are light brown.

2. Return the meat to the skillet. Add one-half cup of the water. Cover and cook over low heat until meat is tender, about

one hour. Add more water, if necessary.

3. Meanwhile, wash the sauerkraut under cold running water. Drain and squeeze gently to remove excess water. Place sauerkraut in a saucepan and add two tablespoons of the liquid in which meat is cooking. Add one-quarter tablespoon of the remaining paprika. Cover and simmer slowly 30 minutes.

4. Remove the meat from the skillet and set aside. Turn off heat under skillet and stir sour cream into the sauce remaining in the skillet. Stir vigorously until sour cream is mixed in well. Add salt to taste.

5. Cook the rice, stirring, in the remaining two tablespoons lard, about five minutes. Add remaining quarter cup of water. Cover and steam until rice is tender. Add remaining paprika.

6. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

7. Arrange the foods in alternate layers in a heatproof casserole as follows: sauerkraut, pork cubes, rice, sausage slices, sauce. Continue building up layers until all ingredients are used, ending with the sauce and a garnish of sausage slices.

8. Bake casserole 30 minutes, or until top is golden brown and crisp.

Yield: Six servings.

Note: Sweet paprika is available at Paprikas Weiss, 1546 Second Avenue. Polish sausage is available in many pork stores and supermarkets.

SERBIAN FISH

- 1 three-pound whole white fish
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 strips smoked bacon, each cut into eighths
- 1 tablespoon flour
- 1 teaspoon paprika
- 3 large potatoes, peeled
- Salted water
- 2 green peppers, seeded and cut into half-inch rings
- Boiling water
- 3 tablespoons dry bread crumbs
- 3 medium-size ripe, firm tomatoes, sliced
- ⅔ cup sour cream
- ½ cup milk.

1. Have the fish cleaned, boned and split lengthwise, but leave the skin intact. Sprinkle fillets on both sides with salt and pepper. Place the fillets, skin side up, on a board. Using



a sharp pointed knife, make eight incisions through the skin of each fillet. Plug each incision neatly with a piece of bacon. Dredge the fillets in a mixture of the flour and paprika.

2. Place the potatoes and salted water to cover in a saucepan. Bring to a boil and par-boil 5 to 10 minutes. Drain. Cut potatoes into half-inch slices.

3. Drop the pepper rings into boiling water and cook two minutes. Drain.

4. Preheat the oven to 350 degrees.

5. Butter or grease an oblong heatproof baking dish large enough to accommodate the fish. Sprinkle dish with bread crumbs. Arrange sliced potatoes over the bottom of the dish. Arrange green pepper rings over the potatoes, and top each ring with a tomato slice. Sprinkle vegetables with salt and pepper.

6. Place one fillet, skin side down, on the bed of vegetables. Cover with the other fillet, skin side up. Bake in oven.

7. Blend the sour cream and milk. When the fish has baked about 15 minutes, baste it with the cream and milk mixture. Baste several times during baking with the mixture and the juices in the baking dish. The total baking time is 30 to 35 minutes, or until potatoes are tender and fish flakes easily when tested with a fork.

Yield: Six servings.

