

FAMILY CELEBRATIONS

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Ticket to Ride Europe from gameoutfitter.com.

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Our family has enjoyed playing Ticket to Ride in America for quite some time, so when I found out that the company also produced Ticket to Ride in Europe, I was inspired to begin a journey through Europe with my family. For our excursion, I created a railway dining car in our dining room by placing our table in the corner under our window. Using brown paper, scissors, string, and a washer, Jedidiah created a scalloped shade for the window to lend to the overall dining car atmosphere.

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After I covered the table with a white linen tablecloth, I positioned a tiny little night lamp right below the shade. Then I set the table with our crystal and silver.

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Dressed for dinner, we entered our dining car for a very British meal.

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The first course was cheese soup.

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After the soup, we had shepherd's pie and spinach salad with Stilton cheese, followed by tea and cookies. After dinner I read about Daniel Defoe and excerpts from Robinson Crusoe. Then I read about William Blackstone and excerpts from his Commentaries on English Law, followed by a wonderful trip through Britain via a travelogue.

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On the following morning, Sonia and I changed the setting slightly to include our cranberry glasses, silver tea caddy, little crystal dishes filled with preserves and teapot napkin ring holders. Sonia surprised me with a British newspaper placed at Jon's place, lemon curd in one of our crystal dishes, teas from Britain, canned kippers, and some shortbread biscuits. I did not know that on one of the trips she and her father had taken to the library to pick up movies, she had Jon take her to the little British shop on Main Street in St. Charles to acquire some goodies for our party. I was totally surprised and delighted with the additional authentic props. Jon, of course, filled us in on British news, which he read at the table.

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src="images/stories/newsletter/jan-march 10 139.jpg" /></p> <p> ♦</p> <p> ♦</p> <p>
For breakfast, we made scones and oatmeal with brandied raisins. While everyone ate
breakfast, I read about Matthew Henry and his Meeting God in the Morning and about William
Law and A Serious Call to a Devout and Holy Life.</p> <p> ♦</p> <p> </p> <p> ♦</p> <p> </p> <p> ♦</p> <p> ♦</p> <p>
After breakfast, I surprised the children with our new family game Ticket to Ride Europe, which
we played for most of the day. Have fun!</p> <p> ♦</p> <p> </p> <p> ♦</p> <p> ♦</p> <p>
COME GATHER AT OUR TABLE</p> <p> ♦</p> <p>
<span data-scayt_word="Beemster"
data-scaytid="3">Beemster <span data-scayt_word="Vlaskaas"
data-scaytid="4">Vlaskaas Cheese and Ale Soup
(<span data-scayt_word="Schnucks"
data-scaytid="5">Schnucks)</p> <p> ♦</p> <p> All of us really
enjoyed this soup.</p> <p> ♦</p> <p> ♦ c. butter</p> <p> ♦ c. flour</p> <p> 3 cans 14
oz. chicken broth</p> <p> 1 12 oz. bottle ale</p> <p> 1 pint half and half</p> <p> 1 t.
salt</p> <p> 1 clove garlic, minced</p> <p> 12 oz. <span
data-scayt_word="Beemster" data-scaytid="6">Beemster <span
data-scayt_word="Vlaskaas" data-scaytid="7">Vlaskaas cheese, shredded</p>
<p> ♦</p> <p> Melt butter. Add flour and whisk. Stir in broth, ale, half and half, salt and
garlic. Simmer 8-10 minutes or until creamy. Remove from heat. Gradually add cheese. Stir
until smooth. Makes about 10 cups.</p> <p> ♦</p> <p> Cheddar Shepherd's
Pie (Martha Stewart)</p> <p> ♦</p> <p> 2 lbs. baking potatoes</p>
<p> 1 T. oil</p> <p> 6 carrots, halved lengthwise, quartered if large and thinly sliced</p>
<p> 6 celery stalks, thinly sliced</p> <p> 1 large onion, chopped</p> <p> ♦ t. thyme</p>
<p> ♦ c. flour</p> <p> ♦ c. tomato paste</p> <p> 2 lbs. ground chuck</p> <p> 1 c.
milk</p> <p> 1 ♦ c. shredded sharp white cheddar</p> <p> ♦</p> <p> Cook potatoes in
salted water until easily pierced with knife, roughly 15-20 minutes. While cooking, heat oil. Add
carrots, celery, onion, and thyme. Cook, stirring occasionally until vegetables are tender, about
8-10 minutes. Add flour and tomato paste, cook while stirring for 1 minute. Add beef, cook,
stirring occasionally, until no longer pink, 6-8 minutes. Add 1 c. water. Bring to boil and simmer
1 minute.</p> <p> ♦</p> <p> Drain potatoes; return to pan. Cook over medium heat,
stirring, until liquid has evaporated and a thin film covers bottom of pan, about 1 minute.
Remove pan from heat. Add milk and 1 c. cheese. Mash until smooth. Season with salt and
pepper.</p> <p> ♦</p> <p> Pour beef filling into <span data-scayt_word="13x9"
data-scaytid="10">13x9 pan. Drop dollops of topping over filling. Spread to
edges. Using fork, make decorative peaks. Sprinkle with remaining ♦ c. cheese. Bake at 450♦
until topping browned, about 20 minutes. Let stand 5 minutes before serving.</p> <p> ♦</p>
<p> Oatmeal</p> <p> ♦</p> <p> Did you see the billboard several
years ago that displayed donuts with the caption that read: Life is too short for oatmeal? I
actually smiled every time I passed one because, as you know, I love to prepare desserts for
my family and even love to provide them with lovely sweet treats in the morning, as well.
However, I have never been one to avoid giving credit where credit is due and I always speak
the truth, so I must confess that although I loved that billboard, it is sad that oatmeal was
presented in such a negative way since it is so good for us. My grandfather, who boasted of his

daily consumption of oatmeal, lived to be either 94 or 96—I cannot remember—maybe I should have eaten more oatmeal. Could there be a connection? Well, not only are oats a great source for multiple nutrients, but also they are a good source of protein and contain cancer fighting properties, while also lowering cholesterol and reducing the risk of heart disease.

Oatmeal makes a wonderful winter breakfast because it not only fills the tummy but also warms it as well. For a most delicious bowl of oatmeal, place 1-2 T. of sweet cream butter in each bowl. Cover with the hot oatmeal. Sprinkle with brown sugar and cover with cream. I also love to soak raisins in brandy while the oatmeal cooks and then add these as well. Yummy!

Cranberry Oat Scones (Valerie Belley's recipe)

This is a very good scone recipe.

2 c. oats
1 c. flour
1 c. sugar
2 t. baking powder
2 c. dried cranberries
12 T. butter
1 c. cream
4 T. milk
4 T. sugar

Combine first 5 ingredients and cut in butter until resembles coarse meal. Pour in cream. Blend into a ball. Turn dough onto a floured board and roll 1/2-inch thick. Cut out 20 rounds with a 2-inch biscuit cutter. Place on lightly greased baking sheet and brush with milk. Sprinkle with sugar. Bake 15-20 minutes at 350.