



HOW TO ENJOY

SMÖRGÅSBORD

MS KUNGSHOLM
SWEDISH AMERICAN LINE

The Swedish language has enriched the English vocabulary with two very useful words. They are — yes, you've guessed it! — SKÅL and SMÖRGÅSBORD. They also go well together, in fact, many a gourmet claims that they are inseparable. On board we serve Smörgåsbord in its authentic form, and when we say SKÅL! we hope that you enjoy Sweden's contribution to gracious dining pleasure.

Origin in Viking times.

When the Swedes first started serving Smörgåsbord is not definitely certain. It is highly probable that some clever Viking wife thought it a good idea to give "the boys" something to eat when they said "skål" a few times. But it is also possible that the Smörgåsbord originated when the country folks got together for some fun. Each household brought some tasty tidbits along — and there it was: The variety of dishes we call Smörgåsbord!

When in doubt . . .

Are you slightly confused when you are confronted with the abundance of delicacies on the Smörgåsbord? Well, don't fret! There are some simple basic rules you can learn in one easy and tasty lesson. But first the name SMÖRGÅSBORD, what does it mean? Literally it means "sandwich table" or "cold cut table", and is pronounced *smir-gauze-board*, never mind other versions like schmoorgasboard and similar falsifications!

STEP No. 1: Get set for the snaps and skål! This important, and you may goof on other details but not this one, if you want to be popular with the Scandinavians. As you know from experience, Swedes are serious-minded people, at least before the first skål, and before your glass is filled with snaps (pronounced snaps), which is the common name for aquavit, you are supposed to refrain from nibbling on the food. The salute SKÅL, is the fuse that sets off the aperitif A-bomb, which is spiced grain alcohol. You are supposed to take your drink in one operation and follow up with a beer chaser — which you should be thankful for. Also, have some delicious pickled herring and a small boiled potato handy, because they belong to the preliminaries of your Smörgåsbord culinary adventure.

STEP No. 2: First taste the herring dishes, fish, shrimp, lobster, crab. There are so many surprising things on the Smörgåsbord. You may not fall in love with herring in all forms at your first try, but give the wine sauce variety or the lobster sauce herring

a chance! More advanced herring eaters swear by the "glaziet brand" with chopped chives and sour cream. The Swedish anchovyfillets in spice sauce, so different from the Mediterranean brands in taste, should also be given a try on your first Smörgåsbord plate. The small Swedish shrimp, cooked in salt right on board the fishing smack, are deliciously different, the lobster and crab meat, the smoked eel, the "böckling" — a smoked Baltic herring — and the smoked mussels are other dishes you should taste. "Jansson Temptation" is the very descriptive name of an au-gratin-herring with onions. Try it, will you?

STEP No 3: Meats, salads if you please! Next, you help yourself to a clean plate and after another skål you want to taste the spiced ham, roast beef, boiled tongue, head cheese with red beets, Swedish meat balls, small sausages, omelets, kidney and mushroom saute, etc.

Cheeses of all kind, Swedish, Danish, Italian, Swiss, Dutch and American, served with crackers and the Swedish crisp bread, usually tops off the Smörgåsbord.

When you have reached this stage of the game you are usually joining in the native Swedish songs about the "snaps", and since there are about as many different songs as there are Swedes in the party it is absolutely impossible to go into details trying to describe this type of ballads. However, when your Swedish host raises his glass and looks you in the eye, know that this is the time to do likewise and return his salute, drink, and repeat the salute! At more formal gatherings, like a banquet, you are not supposed to "Skål" with your host or hostess unless asked to do so. The hostess is the "pace setter" and toasts her guests one by one during the dinner. However, you can say "Skål" to anybody else around the dinner table, but be sure to start with the lady at your right! If you happen to be the guest of honor you should say a few words of thanks to your hosts at the dessert and ask your fellow guests to join in a "thank you" toast.

Not in any way encouraging a sampling down the line, we still like to give the names of the various snaps, from the first one, which is called "Helan", to No. 13 (which you are not likely to remember anyway). Here goes: Helan, halvan, tersen, kvarten, kvinten, rivan, rafflan, rännen, smuttan, smuttans unge, 15 droppar, lilla Manasse, and No. 13 Lilla Manasses bror. From there on you may give them any name you can think of, if you still manage to say "Skål".

SKÅL

In the Viking language we toast the word known throughout the world, SKÅL. There have been many discussions as to what the word means and how it derived it's name.

The belief that the word SKÅL comes from the Vikings drinking toasts to each other from human skulls is untrue. The Vikings always drank from a horn not from a skull. The horn usually was handsomely carved and ornamented with silver and gold. The more ornate the horn the higher the standing of the Viking who possessed it. The word SKÅL comes from a more romantic legend. In the old Viking days it was customary for all the warriors to join some outstanding Viking Chief for a winter festival after the summer forays. On such occasions several thousand Vikings met with the Chief in a very large hall drinking and eating Smörgåsbord. The main table was called the Långtaffel (long table). Here the Chief presided and on all such occasions the seat on his right was always reserved for a special Viking selected by the Chief. On one particular occasion in the tenth century the word Skål was originated as a toast word. The Chief said, "The Viking who can propose a toast with the most meaning and fewest words possible shall have the honor of sitting on my right." One young Viking raised his horn and said "SKÅL". The Chief looked at him and remarked, "It is short — only one word, but what does it mean?" The young Viking answered:

"S stands for Styrka — Strength

K stands for Kärlek — Love

Å stands for Alder — Old Age

L stands for Lycka — Luck"

The Chief said, "Indeed it is short but the meaning is long You shall have the honor of sitting on my right during this festival."

So friends, we drink to you for Strength, Love, Old Age and Luck.

SKÅL!!