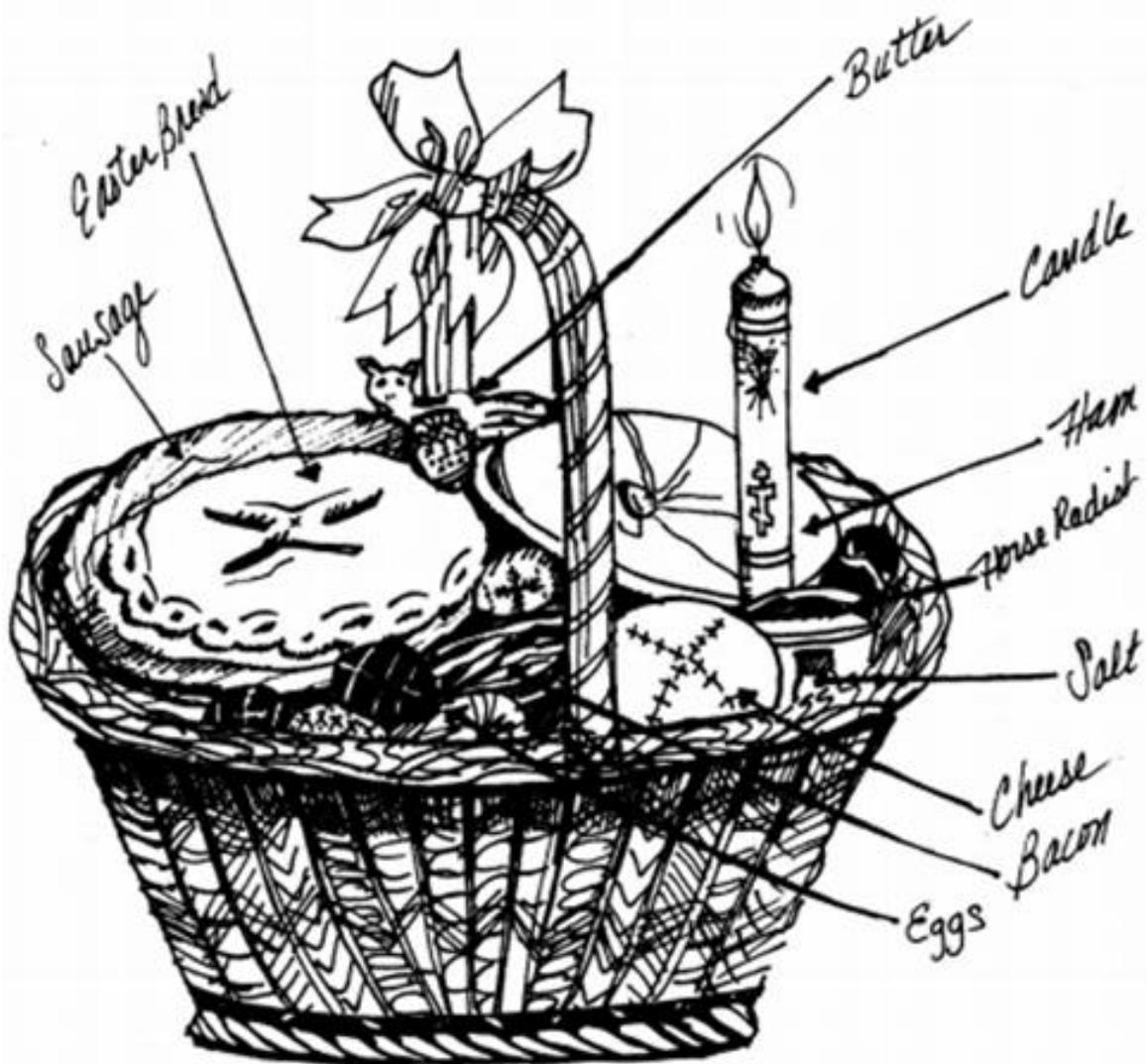
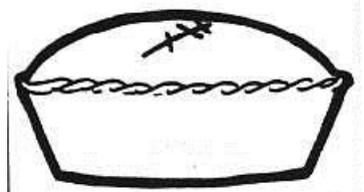


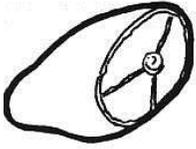
How to Put Together a Traditional Easter Basket

Among the Slavs, especially the Ruthenians, the custom of bringing an Easter Basket to church on Easter Sunday is an age old tradition. It stems from the desire of the Christian community to ask God's blessings on the foods that will break the Great Fast (Lent) and from which they have abstained during this forty day period. The religious significance attached to the foods eaten are symbolic of Christ Himself, our true Passover. The prohibition of particular foods during the Lenten season, namely, meat and dairy products naturally become the main staple during the festive time of the Resurrection celebration. We have here listed the articles of food traditionally placed in a wicker basket and brought to the Church for Easter Matins, after which a solemn blessing takes place. Then the faithful take their foods home to be enjoyed by the whole family. It should be noted that if you have abstained from these foods during the Lenten season and particularly Holy Week, they will naturally taste better on Resurrection Sunday.



PASCHA (paska) is the Easter Bread. It is a sweet, yeast bread rich in eggs, butter, etc. Symbolic of Christ Himself Who is our True Bread. Usually a round loaf baked with a golden crust decorated with a symbol indicative of Christ. Sometimes a cross of dough is placed on top encircled by a plait giving it a crowned effect, or Greek abbreviations for the name of Christ. The letters XB indicate the Slavonic for "Christ is Risen."

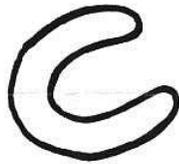




HAM (šunka - pronounced *shoon-ka*) The flesh meat popular with Slavs as the main dish because of its richness and symbolic of the great joy and abundance of the

Resurrection. Some may prefer lamb or veal. This is usually well roasted or cooked as well as other meats (prepared in advance) so that the festivity of the day will not be burdened with preparation and all may enjoy the Feast.

SAUSAGE (kolbasi) A spicy, garlic flavored sausage of pork products, indicative of God's favor and generosity.



EGGS (pisanki) Hard boiled eggs brightly decorated with symbols and markings made with beeswax. They are indicative of new life and the Resurrection.

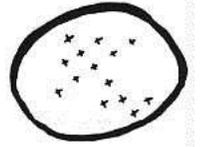
HORSERADISH (chirin - pronounced - *khrin*)

Horseradish mixed with grated red beets. Symbolic of the Passion of Christ still in our minds but sweetened with some sugar because of the Resurrection. A bitter-sweet red colored mixture reminds us of the sufferings of Christ.



CHEESE (hrudka or sirets, pronounced - *hroód-ka or sí-rets*)

A custard-type cheese shaped into a ball having a rather bland but sweet taste indicative of the moderation that Christians should have in all things. The cheese may be decorated with a cross made of cloves or pepper balls.



BUTTER (maslo - pronounced *má-slo*)

This favorite dairy product is shaped into the figure of a lamb or small cross and decorated as the cheese. It reminds us of the goodness of Christ that we should have toward all things.



BACON (slanina - pronounced - *sla-ní-na*) A piece of uncooked bacon cured with spices. It is symbolic of the overabundance of God's mercy to us.



SALT (sol') A condiment necessary to flavor our food, reminding us as Christians to "flavor" life about us with the values of Christ.



These articles are placed in a wicker basket and a ribbon or bow is tied to the handle. A decorated candle is placed in the basket and is lit at the time of blessing. A linen cover usually embroidered with a picture of the Risen Christ or symbol with the words "Christ is Risen" (Christ is Risen! =- *Christos Voskrese!* or *Хрістось воскрес!* Indeed, He is Risen! = *Voistinu Voskrese!* or *Воистину воскрес!*) is placed over the foods when brought to the church. In some places a large Easter Bread (Paska) is made and brought separately in a large linen cloth. If the origin of the people was from a wine growing region, a sweet wine may be brought.