

History of bread in Latvia and in the world

- 15 thousand year ago people started to harvest and cultivate cereals.
- 5-6 thousand years ago Egyptians knew how to loosen the dough by means of tiny organism – bread yeast and lactic bacteria. Egyptians baked bread on a fire.
- The first bread oven was created in Egypt.
- Originally bread was baked at home.
- In 14th – 15th century the first bakeries appeared in towns, only men worked in the bakeries.
- Everything changed in 1940, when soviet power entered Latvia. They started to manufacture the bread in factories, the quality didn't matter, emphasis was put on catering the people;
- In 1980 the traditional bread-baking traditions were restored. They started baking collective farm bread.
- "Lāči" restore the ancient bread-baking traditions, it was possible to buy the bread only in the market "below the counter".
- When Latvians speak about the national identity of their land, nothing can characterize it better than a loaf of rye-bread. Bread symbolizes, of course the welfare of a person also elsewhere in the world, but for Latvians it symbolizes also the folklore, traditions and culture.
- Rye and barley is the most ancient crop in our geographic position, that's why this is also the most suitable for our harsh northern nature.
- Wheat spread later in Latvia but the land of different regions has never yielded and still doesn't yield equally rich harvest – tables in Zemgale have always been richer than the one in fishermen huts.
- Rye-bread is a special bread that is available only in Latvia. Earlier it was baked in every Latvian farm and also nowadays a real rye-bread is baked according to ancient recipes. Bread in Latvian cuisine has always been a main course. Bread for a Latvian has also a cultural value – no other meal starting from making a dough to putting a loaf on the table has been wrapped with so many beliefs and rites. Primitive in its look and taste – rye-bread is a symbol of Latvian nation.
- Bread is created by people through careful and agreed cooperation with the nature. Latvians understand the nature and it is manifested as an ancient rite that starts cultivating the land and seeding, continues through cutting and grinding the grains and reaches a new dimension when the dough is risen, and the stove is fired. The room is filled with the unique aroma of just baked bread, people and nature get as one, and Latvian feels satisfied.
- The idea of bread includes just as much as symbols as grain turned into flour.
- To understand a Latvian one has to understand the story about his bread.

