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Soviet Meals Fattening

(This is the second in a series of reports on activities by the Good News Singers of America in the Soviet Union this summer. Other parts of the series are appearing daily in The Star this week.)

By JO ANNE YATES

Warning: Beware of expanding waistline when dining in the Soviet Union!

It takes a good 45 minutes to wander through a typical three-course Russian meal. The meal always begins with a slice or

two of moist white or black bread with unsalted butter and an appetizer, which may be sardines, a green salad, cottage cheese, eel slices on boiled eggs or salami slices.

Next comes a huge bowl of "everything" soup in which a discriminating young gourmet may find anything from cabbage to black olives and frog heads. The main course is naturally the climax of the meal, usually a generous serving of lean beef, reindeer or chicken with potatoes, carrots, or green peas and always a slice of cucumber.

Russian ice cream immediately made a hit with the Good News Singers. Ice cream and cookies was a favorite dessert with Americans and Russians as well. Soviet-made ice cream is very rich and is flavored in an interesting way with coffee, vanilla or chocolate.

For three evening meals, the singers enjoyed "different" menus which included stuffed bell peppers, stuffed squash, and a meat croquette made with sour cream and flour. These foods were the heaviest and proved a bit too greasy for some, but they were interesting and typically Russian.

Breakfast is a meal that differs a great deal in the United States but is very typecast in European countries. Especially in Russia, the choir members had a daily encounter with the "continental breakfast" — hard rolls and coffee. A pleasant variation of this meal occurred in Moscow when the group was served sweet pancakes with sour cream and salami.

Now, a quick word about beverages. In Russia, the main type of beverage is referred to as "limonade." Actually, limonade is carbonated fruit juice in flavors which

Americans find a bit strange — pear, apple and banana.

The water in some parts of Russia is unsafe for drinking, but in Moscow and Leningrad choir members were able to drink water with meals. All drinks are served at room temperature in Russia, which explains why some Good News Singers are still thrilled at seeing ice cubes in drinks.

Most choir members described Russian dining as "fascinating." Some were a bit homesick for country ham, corn on the cob, green beans, and iced tea, but for the most part everyone enjoyed the formal place setting and the unusual foods served in the Soviet Union.

The suspension-type cars of the Shonan Monorail are the first of their kind to be used for public transportation in Japan. The cars travel above the track, straddling the rail. According to spokesmen for the Shonan Monorail Company, among the many advantages the suspension-type cars offer riders are greater comfort and safety.



JO ANNE YATES