

Interpreting Historic German-American Cookbooks

Using original German-American cookbooks from the nineteenth century for German instruction is more complex than using other texts. At the same time these materials provide a unique context to the language and a fascinating insight into many cultural aspects.

Fraktur

The cookbooks are written in the old German *Fraktur* script. While finding it confusing at first sight, most students can decipher the different characters rather quickly. Examples of *Fraktur* styles can be found at:

- <http://www.Fraktur.de>
- <http://www.fraktur.com>

Spelling and Punctuation

Spelling and punctuation do not necessarily agree with today's rules. For example: *Thee* = *Tee*/tea; *Zimmet* – *Zimt*/cinnamon

Measuring Units

In the original German edition of Henriette Davidies' book **ingredients** are measured in gram/kilogram for solids and liters/milliliters for liquids. For the American edition these were changed to American units. However, in addition to *Unzen*, *Pfund*, *Pint* and *Teelöffel* some archaic forms can also be found. For example:

- *Gran* - grain, troy-grain: an old weight unit, used for small amounts, mostly in apothecaries. 1 gran = 34.8 mg
- *Dram* (or *Dirhem*): an old weight-unit of Turkish origin, used mainly for weighing silver. 1 dram = 3-4g, depending on the region where it was used.

Oven temperatures are given, for example, as *34 Grad* or *36 ½ Grad Fahrenheit*. This refers to old stove settings and can be read as 340 and 365 degrees Fahrenheit, respectively.

For a **conversion chart** look to <http://www.pasterywiz.com/conversion.htm> or use an online conversion service, such as <http://www.convert-me.com/en/> or <http://www.onlineconversion.com/>.