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A CROATIAN BARBECUE

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The untimate symbol of the home-broke smelter-man is a solicitude for getting home at the end of a day's work, washing himself, get on the outside of the evening meal, then grab the day's paper, light a pipe and sink into the folds of the easiest chair. There are times, when the paper fails to hold his interest, which may account for an hour's chat with a neighbor, or an interval of snorey snoozing before climbing into the blankets. But regardless of what the day or evening holds in store, a smelterman can always sleep. A continuous, 24-hour work schedule at the smelter as well as the change shift program account for that.

But there is one day in the year when the smelter-man's wife and the alarm clock don't need to cooperate it getting ^g out of bed and to work on time in the morning. On this ^{kind} particular day, the old man will be up and about long before

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Ols Sol puts into appearance. Of the entire 365 days that make up the year, this is his day of days, and the one he insists on observing.

During the preceding week the old man began to show signs of ailing. To the unsophisticated he was coming down with some complaint. He worried about the weather--whether the sun would shine on the coming Sunday. There was a time--shortly after she married, that mother would show alarm over her husband's annual actions. But that was long ago. Now she notices the annual ailment with patient solicitude, and incidently feels a peculiar sensation of her own.

The old man retired early last night, but instead of drowsing off, as was his usual custom, he passed a restless night. Once he awakened the wife to inform her the meat was burning. He would no sooner get to sleep again than the better half was again awakened over some imaginary happening. It was a tough night for the housewife, but toward morning, naturex asserted itself and she fell asleep. When she awoke her better half was missing. Silently, like the thief in the night, he had slipped away.

As for the old man! In company with several boon companions he was busily engaged in digging a pit somewhere in the North Fork country, or maybe it was up Lost Creek or on Upper Race Track. And as he labored, rivulets of saliva coursed from the corners of his mouth. Today was

another of his day of days--the annual Croatian barbecue.

The day has hardly begun before the pit is finished. Then comes the building of the fire, and this is no ordinary fire. The sticks of wood and fagots are arranged under the supervision of the "fire-boy". Next to the chef, he is the most important man connected with preparation of the prospective feast. And his labors do not end with the building of the fire. He must remain on the job until the piece de resistance is ready to consume.

With the Croats and their Slav cousins, pig is the most favored for a barbecue. Lamb and beef follow in that order. The latter is generally used at the larger gatherings, and a steer requires from eight to twelve hours to go democratin over a bed of glowing coals. During the barbecuing of a steer, the "fide boy" is continuously on the job, as the fire must be shifted so as to bring extra heat on certain parts of the carcass, such as the front and hind quarters.

While the size of the animal determines the length of time for cooking, the average lamb is generally finished in three hours, and a pig in five hours.

It is after the "fire boy" pronounces the bed of coals is ready, that the real ceremony of preparing the feast gets under way. The chef, attired from head to foot in white jacket, trowsers and apron, goes into action. A metal spit is inserted through the carcass lengthwise, and fastened so there is no chance of slipping with strands of wire. There

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are never less than four wire anchors, and sometimes more, depending on the size of the animal to be cooked.

During the process of roasting the meat is continually turned, so that no spot differs from another in the amount of heat. And as the meat turns, the chef anoints the sizzling meat with a large white wash brush which he dips in a kettle of melted grease from time to time. Some chefs show partiality to basting the roast with slabs of bacon or side port~~x~~ attached to a stick. While the roasting continues underway, the chef determines how far the cooking has progressed by jabbing the critter with a long sharp knife.

Before the carcass dangles from the spit, it has been subjected to a thorough cleansing and seasoning. Both outside and inside are washed clean and seasoning rubbed into the meat. The average cooking crew usually consists of the chef, fire-boy and four helpers.

When^w the chef decides the roast is ready, a signal is given, and the happy pickickers flock to the fire for portions that are carved off with sharp knives. If the feast is a stag affair, bread and beer comprise the side dishes, but if there are women and children present there is also plenty of vegetable and salads.