

# A GRANDMA FOR CHRISTMAS

75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY EDITION



ALTA HALVERSON SEYMOUR





A  
**GRANDMA**  
FOR  
**CHRISTMAS**

75<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY EDITION

TO MY SISTERS AND BROTHER,  
WHO WITH ME OFTEN LISTENED  
TO CHRISTMAS STORIES OF NORWAY  
TOLD US BY OUR FATHER,  
THE GUNNUF OF THIS STORY.



ILLUSTRATED BY  
Janet Smalley  
and  
Jeanne McLavy



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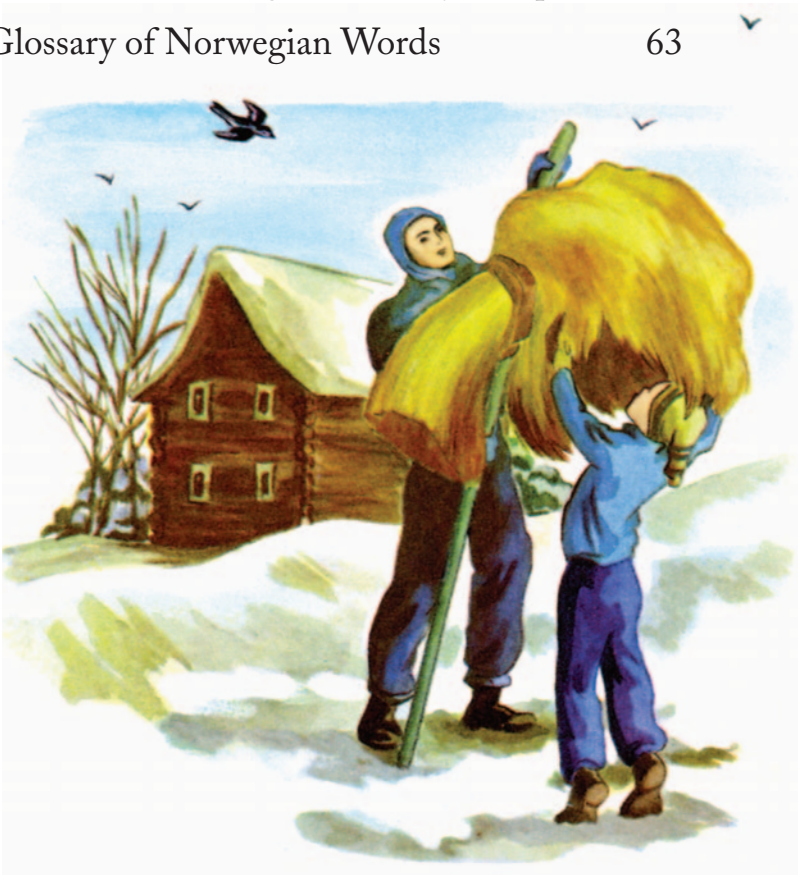
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## CHRISTMAS PLANS AT ROLAND FARM

Gunnuf was running home from school as fast as he could go through the snowy dusk. Darkness set in early these December days in the Norwegian mountains where Gunnuf lived, but he didn't mind in the least, for the summer days were long enough to make up for it. Besides, the short days meant that it was getting on toward Christmastime, and Christmas on the Roland Farm, where Gunnuf lived, in the picturesque land of Telemark, was the very jolliest season of the year and the one he liked best of all.

There was a fresh snowfall today, and that always made him feel as frisky as the lambs in spring frolicking about his father's high mountain pastures. Of course it had meant that



he must stop to throw snowballs at the boys and dodge the ones thrown at him, and also put snow down the necks of his laughing, squealing sisters Aaslaug and Ragnhild, and Cousin Signe, and any other little girls he could capture.

All this delayed Gunnuf, and he had important business on hand, so at last he had broken away from the others and started to run home very fast. He had promised to help his sister Helga after school. They would thread the Christmas flatbread through the round hole in the middle of each one onto long poles and hang them high for safekeeping. And not only was he looking forward to the crisp, delicious bits Helga would give him in return for his services, but he hoped to enlist her help in a Christmas project of his own.

To Gunnuf, the little log bakehouse was always one of the most attractive buildings on the farm, but at Christmas-time it was doubly so. Sister Helga was in charge out there, for mother was too busy with the Christmas spinning and weaving to have time for anything else. But the other girls helped too—Margot and Kristina and even Aaslaug and little Ragnhild.

This afternoon the bakehouse looked very cozy with



the firelight gleaming through the little window on the dancing snowflakes, and he pelted down the path and threw open the door to find Kristina kneeling on the hearth baking the *lefse* which Helga was rolling out, while great stacks of flatbread stood, freshly baked, on one corner of the well-scrubbed hearth.

“It’s about time young man!” said Helga. “Shut that door and come in here and get to work.” But though she sounded severe, her brown eyes smiled, and she pointed to a little heap of fresh, broken bits of flatbread which she had saved for him.

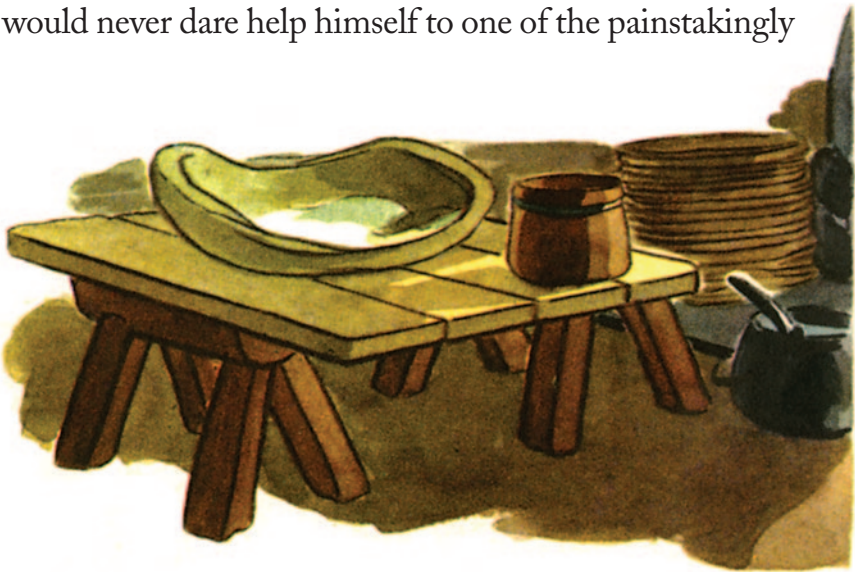
Gunnuf had hoped to find Helga alone, and now he offered to tend the baking if Kristina had something else to do in the main house, but the girls only laughed at him. “A fine mess you’d make of it,” said Kristina, turning her cakes with care. “You’d burn these up and then where would our Christmas baking be?”



So he drank the mug of good cold sour milk Helga had ready for him, smacked his lips over the bits of flatbread, and then set to work stringing the large crisp disks on their poles.

Helga finished rolling out the *lefse* and started to make the delicious rosettes, Gunnuf's favorite of all the Christmas goodies. She must make a batter for these, dip the rosette iron into it, and then fry the cakes, one by one, in a deep kettle of fat on the hearth. It was a mouth-watering business, but a slow one, and Kristina had her work finished while Helga was still in the midst of frying rosettes.

To Gunnuf's great satisfaction, Kristina went away then, and he prepared to unfold his project to Helga, but he only had time to begin, "Helga, I want to see if you'll help me with something, and it's a secret," when Brother Ole came into the room, sniffed the air with pleasure, and helped himself to a rosette. It would be fun, thought Gunnuf somewhat enviously, to be grown-up enough so one could do just that. He would never dare help himself to one of the painstakingly



made rosettes without permission. But Ole was the big brother of the family and had a good many privileges.

“Father and I are going fishing up the mountain tomorrow morning,” he announced, and Gunnuf gave a little sigh. He remembered those Christmas trips his father and brother took, to fish through the ice in the little mountain lake high above them. How he had longed to go last year, and Father had promised that when he was a little older he should be one of the party. “We want to get plenty of fish to smoke and to pickle for Christmas because there will be lots of company this year,” said Ole.



# TRADITIONAL NORWEGIAN

## ROSETTES

2 eggs	1 cup milk	Powdered sugar
2 tablespoons sugar	1 cup flour	
Pinch of salt	Oil for frying	

Beat eggs, sugar, and salt well. Add milk and flour alternately. Heat oil in a saucepan, with rosette iron in it, until very hot. Dip iron into batter, then into the oil. Fry rosettes until golden brown, peel rosettes off iron and drain on paper towels. Sprinkle with powdered sugar when done.

## FATTIGMANN'S BAKKELS

1 egg and 1 egg yolk	Pinch of salt
1/2 cup sugar	1/2 teaspoon cardamom
2 tablespoons butter	1 1/2 to 2 cups flour
3 tablespoons cream	Oil for frying
Pinch cream of tartar	Powdered sugar

Cream butter, sugar, eggs. Add cream and flour, to which cream of tartar and salt have been added. Mix in enough flour to roll thin. One teaspoon of cognac or brandy may be added for flavor. Chill dough for at least 30 minutes or overnight. Roll and cut into thin strips, one inch wide and three inches long. Tie into loose strips. Fry in hot oil. Sprinkle with powdered sugar when cool.



# HOLIDAY RECIPES

## KRINGLA COOKIES

1 cup sugar	Cardamom to taste
½ cup butter	2 cups flour
½ cup cream	2 teaspoons baking powder
4 egg yolks	Sugar and chopped nuts

Cream butter, sugar, eggs. Add cream and flour to which baking powder and salt have been added. Chill dough for at least 30 minutes or overnight. On a floured surface roll into rope, cut into 8 inch lengths, shape into figure eights. Sprinkle with sugar and chopped nuts. Bake at 350° until lightly golden, 8-9 minutes.

## LEFSE

2 cups hot boiled potatoes	1 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons cream	Flour enough to roll

Mash potatoes, mix in salt and cream, then chill. Gently add flour, roll into large thin cakes. Cook on hot, slightly greased griddle. When cool, spread with butter and brown sugar or preserves. Roll and cut into 4-inch pieces.

## FLØTEGRØT

4 cups whole milk	¾ cup flour
½ cup melted butter, with extra for serving	¼ cup sugar
	Cinnamon and sugar

Heat milk to 195°, stirring so it doesn't burn. Melt butter in a pan, gradually whisk in flour and sugar. Cook about three minutes until bubbly. Gradually pour in hot milk, whisking constantly. Bring to a boil for one minute while stirring. Remove from heat. Serve in bowls, top with some of the extra melted butter, sprinkle with cinnamon and sugar.

### KAKER (EASY TO MAKE) - THUMBPRINT COOKIES

½ cup butter

¼ cup brown sugar

1 egg, separated

Pinch of salt

1 cup flour

½ cup chopped nuts

Jelly, jam, or marmalade

Cream butter, sugar, salt. Add egg yolk and beat, add flour, mix and form into one-inch balls. Dip into egg white, roll in chopped nuts. Make a small dent in center of each ball. Bake about 15 minutes at 350°. When cool, put jelly, jam, or marmalade in each center.

### HAVREKAKER (EASY TO MAKE) - OATMEAL COOKIES

1 cup butter

1 cup sugar

2 cups oatmeal

2 cups flour

2 teaspoons baking powder

1 egg

3 tablespoons cream

Pinch of salt

Mix butter and sugar well. Add egg, mix again. Mix in remaining ingredients. Drop onto greased cookie sheet and bake about 15 minutes at 350°.



## GLOSSARY OF NORWEGIAN WORDS

*Fattigmanns bakkels*, literally, “poor man’s cookies” or “poor man’s cakes.” But a poor person could not be very poor, after all, to bake these for they are made from eggs and cream and sugar and flour and fried in oil.

*Flatbread*, a large, round, crisp flat cake with a hole in the middle, usually of rye flour, water, and salt, rolled thin and baked very crisp. Preferably on a hot clean hearth.

*Flategrøt*, a very special pudding made of cream and fine white flour, served with sugar and cinnamon sprinkled on top.

*God Jul!* Merry Christmas!

*Gjetöst*, goat’s milk cheese.

*Jul log*, Yule log.

*Lefse*, made of hot mashed potato, cream, flour, and salt, rolled fairly thin, baked on a hearth. Later spread with butter and brown sugar or preserves, rolled up, cut into lengths, and eaten with delight.

*Lutfisk*, cod or other fish treated with lye. It is as hard as a stick when ready for use, and must be soaked and skillfully cooked until it is tender and delicious. It is usually served with melted butter and boiled potatoes, and is a favorite Christmas Eve dinner in many Norwegian households.

*Primöst*, a favorite Norwegian cheese made of whey.

*Rosettes*, very delicate cakes fried in oil.