

FIKA, FULLY



THE COOKFUL

Edited by Lyndsay Burginger and Christine Pittman

Fika, Fully

Get everything you need to know about Fika, the Swedish coffee break tradition, from making the best cinnamon buns to how to make a great cup of coffee.

Last Autumn I was fortunate enough to study communication for a semester in the beautiful country of Sweden. While living in the small town of Jönköping, I spent many afternoons enjoying what Swedes have turned into a national coffee break phenomenon: Fika.

Fika isn't only a coffee break though. It's turned into a lifestyle for the people of Sweden. It's a tradition set in place for people to socialize and get to know one another.

When I first arrived in Sweden I noticed at once how big the event of Fika actually was. Halfway through my first lecture on journalism my professor (who wore jeans and preferred to be called by his first name), stopped class to look at the clock. He exclaimed that it was "Fika Break" and we had fifteen minutes to grab some coffee (only 5 kronor at the student union!) and a small treat. I was amazed.

I joined in with the other students only to find out that each class I took from that day forward included one or two fika breaks. I was in heaven.



THE COOKFUL

Once I arrived back in the States I knew I wanted to share this amazing food-and-coffee based social gathering with everyone. And sharing it with all of you gets the word out even further.

In this ebook are some of my favorite treats from my time abroad in Sweden. You'll learn what you need to prepare a proper fika, some amazing recipes to make at home and you'll even learn a bit of Svenska.

Let's grab a cup of kaffe and a kanelbulle!

Lyndsay :)



THE COOKFUL

Table of Contents

The Essential Shopping Guide for Fika	5
What is Fika?	7
Swedish Pearl Sugar	9
Kanelbullar: Swedish Cinnamon Buns.	10
Chokladbullar: Swedish No-Bake Chocolate Balls	12
The Perfect Cup of Swedish Coffee	14
Semlor: Swedish Almond Filled Buns	15
Kladkaka: Swedish Goopy Chocolate Cake	17
The Dos and Don'ts of Fika.	19
95 Recipes for Fika	21

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The Essential Shopping Guide for Fika

Get authentic! Take a look at our picks of what you need for the perfect Swedish coffee break.

By Lyndsay Burginger

In Sweden, the term fika (pronounced: fee-ka) translates as “to drink coffee”. However Swedes now-a-days have turned this national tradition into a cultural phenomenon. Many schools and offices have fika breaks in which all the students and employees take ten to fifteen minutes off to grab a cup of coffee and a sweet treat.

Creating your own fika doesn't require much; just a pot of coffee (or tea), some friends and a sweet treat to nibble on. Here are some of our favorite items (all authentic!) to host your own fika.

Every fika needs something warm to drink and with Sweden being one of the biggest

Shopping Guide

Continued from previous page

consumers of coffee in the world, you might want to try their [coffee](#) (especially when you drink it in a cute Swedish-inspired [mug](#)).

Coffee nay-sayer's have no fear! There is delicious Swedish [tea](#) available too. Serve it in a modern [teapot](#) alongside a [carafe](#) for keeping your coffee warm. Want to add a little flavor to your warm drink? Sprinkle in some [vanilla sugar](#), it'll add a sweet touch with a hint of bold flavor.

You can't have fika without something delicious to nibble on. Traditionally most Swedes reach for a cinnamon bun, topped with [pearl sugar](#). How about a fresh bun topped with whipped cream and [lingonberry preserves](#)? Or even a [princess cake](#) served atop a beautiful [cake stand](#).

A set of basic mugs with plates for your sweets is also a great idea. [This set](#) is inexpensive and just the thing.

Now you're ready to grab your coffee, pick out a sweet treat and enjoy your afternoon fika.



What is Fika?

By Lyndsay Burginger

Join the coffee craze from Sweden. Go on, take a coffee break, grab a cinnamon bun and enjoy a fika.

I studied abroad in Sweden for five months and one of the things I've missed the most since living back in the States is the daily fika. Fika, pronounced, [fee-ka] is literally translated as the word, "coffee," however the act of having a fika is much more than just coffee. It's a culture and lifestyle in Sweden.

First, let's start with when fika happens. In Sweden most work places and schools take fika breaks throughout the day to drink coffee and socialize. Most offices take a fika at 9 A.M then a later one after lunch at 3 P.M.

Going out to fika is also a common way to get to know someone, and from what I've heard, most Swede's first dates are fikas.

What is Fika?

Continued from previous page

So how do you ask someone for a fika? It's simple really! Here's the most commonly used phrase:

Vill du fika? (Will you have a fika?)

Most fika breaks revolve around a cup of coffee and a sweet treat, such as a cinnamon bun or piece of cake. It's a pause in the day to sit back and relax, and there's no doubt I wish we had more of that here in the States!

Because I'm so fika obsessed, I've spent some time making some delicious fika treats. On the pages ahead I'm sharing some of my favorites with you.



Swedish Pearl Sugar

By Lyndsay Burginger

Learn why Swedish pearl sugar is a useful ingredient and where to find it.

The first two recipes we're going to share with you use an ingredient that you might not be familiar with. I thought I should fill you in before starting in on the recipes. The ingredient is pearl sugar and it's used to decorate the tops of our upcoming cinnamon buns and our Swedish no-bake cookies. It's crunchy. It's sweet. It's so fun to eat (that rhymes!).

So what is Pearl Sugar? It's a product of refined white sugar. The sugar is compacted, crushed then sifted to create little tiny pebbles of sweet crunchiness. It is sometimes called nib sugar.

One of the best things about pearl sugar is that it doesn't melt like normal granulated sugar. This is great when topping the cinnamon buns because it leaves a crunchy bite. Try it on muffins, cakes, and even roll truffles in it for a great texture.

The easiest place to find pearl sugar is, of course, the internet. We picked ours up at [Amazon](#) where it was shipped within a couple of days.



Kanelbullar: Swedish Cinnamon Buns

By Lyndsay Burginger

A Swedish cinnamon bun so good that it doesn't even need frosting (I'm looking at you, American cinnamon rolls).

The cinnamon bun is to Sweden what apple pie is to America. You smell it walking down the clean sidewalks in the morning, the cinnamon welcoming you in like a lit doorway in the dark. (For those of you who don't know, in the winter Sweden sometimes only gets six hours of daylight). Soft and filled with spices, Swedish cinnamon buns, Kanelbullar, are a great addition to the daily fika.

What makes this cinnamon bun different from our American counterpart? The first difference is the addition of cardamom. Cardamom, a spice originally found in India, can be described as warm and aromatic; a similar flavor profile to cinnamon yet with a sharper bite.

Swedish Cinnamon Buns

Continued from previous page

Another difference is the shape of the cinnamon bun. In America, most rolls are baked pushed together in a pan, creating a crisp top, but a soft and bread-like middle and exterior along the sides where they were up against other buns. Swedish cinnamon buns are baked individually, creating a flatter bun with crisp edges on all sides.

The final, and biggest difference, is the Swedish cinnamon bun lacks an icing. Instead pearl sugar is used, which adds a slight crunch and pop of sweetness.

Yield: 18 servings

Prep Time: 1 hour, 30 minutes

Cook Time: 10 minutes

Total Time: 1 hour, 40 minutes

Ingredients:

Bun Dough

2 cups milk, warmed

2 envelopes yeast

3/4 cup granulated sugar

5 1/2 cups all-purpose flour

2 tsp. cardamom

1/2 tsp. salt

1/3 cup softened butter

Filling and Topping

3/4 cup softened butter

1 cup granulated sugar

1 Tbsp. cinnamon

1 egg, beaten

1/2 cup pearl sugar

1. In small bowl combine warm milk and yeast. Stir until the yeast is dissolved and begins to bubble, about 5 minutes.
2. In separate bowl combine dry ingredients: sugar, flour, cardamom and salt. Add in milk and yeast mixture. Using your fingers, add little knobs of butter. Using a dough hook or your hands, form the dough and knead until the dough holds its shape, around 10 minutes. Cover the dough with a moist towel and let rise until doubled in size, around 45 minutes.
3. Once the dough has risen, divide it in half and roll each portion of the dough into a large rectangle.
4. For the filling, combine butter, sugar and cinnamon. Spread on both rectangles of dough evenly.
5. Preheat oven to 425°F.
6. Roll up each rectangle from the smallest end and cut into 1 1/2 inch slices. Place buns on baking sheet and cover with a towel, proof until doubled in size, around 20 minutes.
7. Whisk the egg until frothy. Brush on buns and sprinkle with pearl sugar. Bake until golden brown, about 8-10 minutes.



Chokladbullar: Swedish No-Bake Chocolate Balls

By Lyndsay Burginger

Oats, coffee and chocolate. These little golf-ball-sized treats are the perfect pick-me-up during a busy day at school or work.

One of the first treats I had in Sweden was a small chocolate confection that looked like a truffle. The tag on the sign said, “Chokladbullar,” and being curious I bought it.

Oh, man, was it good! Over the course of the semester I ate so many of these tasty little Swedish treats.

These Chokladbullar are great to eat with a cup of coffee or tea, and they are very fast to make. A few simple ingredients and you’ll be enjoying them in no time.

Also what makes these even more amazing is that you can make them ahead of time and just pop them in the fridge. I’ve been munching on them for days now, someone help me!

No-Bake Chocolate Balls

Continued from previous page

Yield: 18 balls

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cook Time: 0 minutes

Total Time: 5 minutes

Ingredients:

1/2 cup butter, softened

1/2 cup sugar

2 tsp. vanilla extract

3 Tbsp. cocoa powder

1 and 1/3 cup rolled oats

2 Tbsp. strong coffee, cooled

1/3 cup pearl sugar or
coconut flakes

1. In bowl, beat together the butter, sugar, and vanilla until fluffy. Mix in the cocoa powder.
2. Add the rolled oats and coffee. Mix everything well.
3. Shape the mixture into small balls, about a tablespoon each.
4. Roll in pearl sugar or coconut flakes. Refrigerate until serving.

The Perfect Cup of Swedish Coffee

By Lyndsay Burginger

You can't have a Swedish coffee break without the most important part: coffee.

Drinking coffee is a way of life for most Swedes. And not surprisingly the average citizen in Sweden drinks four cups of coffee a day. A day! This stuff has got to be good.

So what makes Swedish coffee different from, say, the typical coffee we drink here in the states?

The main difference would be in the beans Swedes use: Arabica, which has almost half the amount of caffeine than Robusta, a popular bean used in North America.

One of the main exporters of Swedish coffee is [Gevalia](#), a Swedish company that has spent the last 150 years perfecting the simple cup of coffee (kaffe for you Swedes). They boast their bold flavors and aromas, which I can agree too! The first cup of coffee I had in Sweden was very different from the coffee we get here at the states. It's strong, and most Swedes drink it black or with just a touch of milk.

Want to make your own pot of authentic Swedish coffee?

Try brewing up a pot of [Gevalia Kaffe](#) using the European method of measuring: 1 rounded tablespoon of ground coffee to 8 fluid ounces of water. Brew it the way you regularly do, whether that be in a coffee drip machine or in a coffee press. Taste and see if you notice the difference too.





Semlor: Swedish Almond Filled Buns

By Lyndsay Burginger

Think of Semlor as denser, bigger, almond filled cream puffs. Oh yea, there's no wonder Swedes eat 20 million of these a year.

Semlor (singular: semla) are small buns filled with almond paste and whipped cream and are a staple in Swedish bakeries. Traditionally Swedes ate semlor every Tuesday between Shrove Tuesday and Easter. Now most bakeries start stocking their windows with semlor in the early months of the year.

The semla starts with its base: a rich yeast dough which is almost reminiscent of Easter bread. Then once cooled, slice the top and pop out a tiny bit of the bun to allow room for the filling. Go in with some almond paste. It can usually be found in the baking aisle of your grocery store, usually in a box or tube, or you can [get it online here](#).

Almond Filled Buns

Continued from previous page

Top it with whipped cream and the little bun hat and you've got yourself a fantastic treat to enjoy.

Yield: 4 dozen

Prep Time: 45 minutes

Cook Time: 10 minutes

Total Time: 55 minutes

Ingredients:

1 and 1/4 cup milk, warmed
2 Tbsp. instant dried yeast
2 eggs, divided
1/2 cup sugar
1/2 tsp. salt
4 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 cup butter, softened
5 oz. almond paste
1 and 1/2 cups heavy
whipping cream, whipped

1. In small bowl combine warm milk and yeast. Stir until the yeast is dissolved and begins to bubble, about 5 minutes.
2. Add one egg and stir. Mix in the salt, sugar, and flour. Add in butter. Using a dough hook or your hands, form the dough and knead until the dough holds its shape, around 10 minutes. Cover the dough with a moist towel and let proof until doubled in size, around 30 minutes.
3. Preheat oven to 475°F
4. Shape the dough into 48 round buns and place on baking trays lined with parchment paper. Let rise until doubled, about 15 minutes.
5. In a small bowl beat one egg with water. Brush on buns and bake until golden brown, about 8-10 minutes. Cool completely.
6. Cut a lid off each bun and scrape out a hole in the bun. Fill with a teaspoon of almond paste. Spoon whipped cream on top, topping with the bun lids.



Kladdkaka: Swedish Gooney Chocolate Cake

By Lyndsay Burginger

Ooey gooey, soft and chewy. This Swedish kladdkaka mud cake just begs for a dollop of fresh whipped cream.

You know what this cake tastes like?

Heaven.

And yet, here it is on earth right in front of me. Or it was. Until I ate it all.

The Swedish Kladdkaka cake is like a cross between a fudgy brownie and cake. How can that possibly be bad?

The first time I had this cake was at an event my University put together called a “Food Safari” where teams of two would go to a different house for each part of their meal. My team made

Gooney Chocolate Cake

Continued from previous page

appetizers, we visited some friends who were from Italy for the entree and for dessert our Swedish classmates made Kladdkaka. And I most definitely thanked them. Profusely.

Yield: 8 servings

Prep Time: 5 minutes

Cook Time: 15 minutes

Total Time: 20 minutes

Ingredients:

1/2 cup butter

2 eggs

1 and 1/4 cup granulated
sugar

1 cup all-purpose flour

4 Tbsp. cocoa powder

1/4 tsp. salt

1 and 1/2 tsp. vanilla extract

1. Preheat Oven to 350°F. Line bottom of 9” spring form cake pan with parchment paper. Grease the sides of the pan.
2. Melt butter and set aside. In separate bowl whisk eggs until light and fluffy. Stir in melted butter.
3. In bowl, mix together flour, cocoa powder and salt. Gently stir into the egg mixture. Add vanilla extract and pour the batter into the prepared cake pan.
4. Bake the cake 14-20 minutes, depending on how sticky you want the cake. Remove from oven and allow to cool for 5 minutes. Remove cake pan top. Loosen the cake and transfer to a plate, if desired. Serve with whipped cream or ice cream.



The Dos and Don'ts of Fika

By Lyndsay Burginger

Pop on over to the local Ikea, listen to some ABBA and grab a kanelbullar: it's fika time!

One of the greatest aspects of a fika (a Swedish coffee break) is its informality. The following are tips to have the best fika, but feel free to incorporate your own ideas into your coffee break.

DO

Invite your friends out to enjoy a fika! That cutie over there catching your eye? Most Swedes say their first dates are fikas because it's more casual than a dinner date. (My bf took me out for a fika on our first date ;))

The Dos and Don'ts of Fika

Continued from previous page

DON'T

Don't order any kind of fancy coffee drink. No whipped chocolate mocha cupcake iced lattes here! A simple cup of coffee or tea is all you need.

DO

Order a kanelbullar, a semla or another fun Swedish treat. They pair perfectly with a cup of warm coffee.

DON'T

Don't rush your fika! While Swedes are known for their punctuality, they never look like they are in a rush. Sit back, take a breath and take a sip of coffee.

DO

Learn how to order coffee like a local: *Kan jag ha en kaffe?* [Can I have a coffee?]

DON'T

Don't forget to thank your host or hostess, Tack!

95 Recipes for Fika

By Nicole Johnson

After reading all that you want to have your own fika, right? We've got all kinds of tasty ideas for you, 95 of them in fact.

Having a fika is my new favorite thing. Who wouldn't want a daily coffee break with amazing treats? Seriously, let me know because I'm going to do my best to avoid those people from now on. So kick back, relax, and pick out one of these recipes to make your next coffee break amazing.

The Cookful's Fika Recipes

1. [Swedish Cinnamon Buns – Kanelbullar](#)
2. [Swedish No-Bake Chocolate Balls – Chokladbullar](#)
3. [Swedish Almond Filled Buns – Semlor](#)
4. [Swedish Gooey Chocolate Cake – Kladdkaka](#)
12. [Lemon Almond Biscotti](#)
13. [Hazelnut Cardamom Biscotti](#)
14. [Mint Brownie Brittle Biscotti](#)
15. [Lemon Biscotti](#)
16. [White Chocolate Cherry Almond Biscotti](#)
24. [Coffee Cake and Buttermilk Sauce](#)
25. [Oatmeal Cake](#)
26. [Easy Tropical Angel Food Cake with Pineapple and Toasted Coconut](#)
27. [Lemon Coriander Cake](#)
28. [Strawberry Chocolate Paleo Cake](#)

Biscotti

5. [Hazelnut Almond Biscotti](#)
6. [Ginger Almond Biscotti](#)
7. [Cinnamon Dark Chocolate Chip Biscotti](#)
8. [Espresso Salted Dark Chocolate Biscotti](#)
9. [Coconut Pumpkin Biscotti](#)
10. [Eggnog Biscotti](#)
11. [Gingerbread Biscotti](#)
17. [Classic Vanilla Pound Cake](#)
18. [Angelica Cake with Nutella](#)
19. [Italian Fresh Cream Lemon Cake](#)
20. [Bananas Foster Upside Down Cake](#)
21. [Pear Canela Coffee Cake](#)
22. [French Yogurt Cake with Cherry Syrup](#)
23. [Lemon Cream Cheese Coffee Cake](#)
29. [Mexican Chocolate Bundt Cake](#)
30. [Strawberry White Chocolate Almond Pound Cake](#)
31. [Apple Butter Gooey Butter Cake](#)
32. [Banana Layer Cake with Peanut Butter Cream Cheese Frosting](#)
33. [White Almond Spiced Almond Cake](#)

Cake Eaters for the WIN

95 Fika Recipes

Continued from previous page

34. [Glazed Lemon Blueberry Pound Cake](#)

35. [Mini Lemon Bundt Cakes](#)

36. [Yeasted Chai Spiced Apple Butter Coffee Cake](#)

37. [Individual Raspberry Jam Cakes](#)

38. [Tiramisu Cake Roll](#)

39. [Blueberry Fritter Cake](#)

Cookies

40. [Rondo's](#)

41. [Tiramisu Cookies with Mascarpone Cream Filling](#)

42. [Ginger Snaps](#)

43. [Honey and Orange Madeleines](#)

44. [Brown Butter Pecan Madeleines](#)

45. [Chamomile and Caramelized Honey Macarons](#)

46. [Sesame Tahini Cookies](#)

47. [Lemon Chamomile Shortbread Cookies](#)

48. [Lemon Almond Shortbread Cookies](#)

49. [Easy Chai Cookies](#)

50. [Peanut Butter S'mores Cookies](#)

51. [Meyer Lemon Earl Grey Shortbread](#)

52. [Mini Vanilla Macaroons](#)

53. [White Chocolate Dipped Coffee Shortbread](#)

54. [Cranberry Chai Tea Cookies](#)

55. [Paleo Gingerbread Cookies](#)

56. [Roasted Walnut Shortbread Cookies](#)

57. [Coconut Oatmeal Chocolate Chip Skillet Cookie](#)

58. [Flourless Peanut Butter Chocolate Cookies](#)

59. [Banana Oatmeal Chocolate Chip Bars](#)

60. [Kentucky Derby Chocolate-Pecan Cookie Bars](#)

61. [Florentine Cookies](#)

62. [Salted Maple Blondies](#)

Quick Breads

63. [Lemon Poppy Seed Bread](#)

64. [Buttermilk Cinnamon Bread](#)

65. [Blueberry Lemon Olive Oil Bread](#)

66. [Whole Wheat Banana Nut Bread](#)

67. [Lavender Tea Bread](#)

68. [Lemon Poppyseed Bread](#)

69. [Double Chocolate Banana Bread](#)

Scones

70. [Blackberry Jam Cream Tea Scones](#)

71. [Lemon Poppy Seed Scones](#)

72. [Carrot Cake Scones](#)

73. [Coconut, Date, and Pecan Scones](#)

74. [Petite Vanilla and Orange Scones](#)

75. [Almond Blueberry Scones](#)

95 Fika Recipes

Continued from previous page

Doughnuts

- 76. [Orange Drop Doughnuts](#)
- 77. [Baked Double Chocolate Doughnuts](#)
- 78. [Healthy Doughnuts](#)
- 79. [Chocolate Mocha Baked Donuts](#)
- 80. [Caramel-Glazed Baked Donuts](#)

So cool! Unique Recipes

- 81. [Conchas](#)
- 82. [Rum Balls](#)
- 83. [Hot Chocolate Brownies](#)
- 84. [Pound Cake Fries](#)
- 85. [Kouign Amann](#)

Muffins

- 86. [Coffee Cake Muffins](#)
- 87. [Ricotta Lemon Muffins](#)
- 88. [Triple Berry Glazed Muffins](#)

Gluten-Free

- 89. [Salted Caramel Brownies](#)
- 90. [Matcha Shortbread Cookies](#)
- 91. [Victoria Sponge Cake](#)

Vegan Fika

- 92. [Chocolate Chai Cake](#)
- 93. [Black Walnut Pear Bread](#)
- 94. [Cinnamon Streusel Mini Muffins](#)
- 95. [Dark Chocolate Truffles](#)

Contributors

Many thanks to our writers for this edition of *The Cookful*.



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It's always entertaining when Lyndsay's in the kitchen. She's even been known to belt out Broadway show tunes while making dinner (a handy whisk as her microphone, of course). She currently writes for Cook and a Good Book, a personal blog focusing on recipes based on literature. Lyndsay is also on the editorial team at The Cookful.



Christine Pittman, editor

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Christine is the Founder and Senior Editor of The Cookful. She also blogs at COOKtheSTORY where she specializes in easy healthy homemade recipes. Healthiness aside, she has been known to shred cheese onto a dinner plate, microwave it for 30 seconds, and then eat the messy goop with a spoon.



Nicole Johnson

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Nicole has been blogging for 5 years at orwhateveryou.do.com, when not chasing her 7 kids around or working full time for CoSchedule. She basically lives, breathes, and eats blogging. And cookies. A pasta fanatic and dedicated tomato fan, she occasionally branches out into crazier things like oh, rice and potatoes. She features mostly from scratch cooking with a healthy smattering of easy convenience meals tossed in to keep it real.

About The Cookful

Do you love to geek-out over food and cooking? Then The Cookful is where you need to be.

We cook and write about one topic at a time, diving in deep to help you cook (and eat!) better than ever. Each topic comes with How-To's, innovative recipes, and a bunch of interesting tidbits so that you can learn all about it. Some topics we've covered are Margaritas, Quick Soups and Popcorn. Head over to [The Cookful](#) to find out what our next topic is and then get ready to go off the deep end with us.



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