



14 DECADES OF DINNER RESEARCH REPORT

*A menu inspired by Europe's
food journey over
NEFF's 140 year history*

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INTRODUCTION

Since NEFF pioneered the first stove and oven in 1877, food has changed a lot, shaping the way our kitchen and homes look, how we interact with friends and family and even society at large. The evolution of food speaks of our evolution as individuals, as families and as nations.

To celebrate 140 years of NEFF, we have partnered with Olia Hercules, a Ukrainian born food anthropologist and cooking enthusiast, to reveal an inspiring timeline of the most significant social, political and technological changes in Europe from the past 140 years, to reveal the impact these events have had on shaping iconic recipes and food trends through the decades.

From the influence of a prohibition-era America on the British bar scene to post-WWII where traditional cuisine changed drastically as women chose to swap time spent in the kitchen for time spent in the workplace, to the present day where communal eating has become the norm as food is viewed as something which should be shared, both physically and digitally.

The resulting narrative of our recent food history brings these trends and NEFF's rich history to life as the two interweave throughout the decades, guiding what and how we eat to shape our world today to reveal *14 Decades of Dinner*.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: OLIA HERCULES

Olia Hercules is a multi-national chef and food writer, currently taking the culinary scene by storm and casting a light on Eastern European cuisine.

Born in Soviet Ukraine and with a family history that covers half of Eurasia, from Siberia to Azerbaijan, Olia has always been passionate about food anthropology and has spent plenty of time researching cuisines from all over the world.

Olia's family left Ukraine when she was 12, emigrating to Cyprus. Olia continued to discover more of Europe's countries and culture as her studies took her first to the UK to study Italian and International Relations at the University of Warwick and then to Italy to complete her Master's degree. Olia decided to settle in London, pursuing a journalistic career but the financial crisis of 2008 gave Olia the nudge she needed to pursue her dream of cooking for a living.

She earned her culinary stripes by honing her skills in Yotam Ottolenghi's fiery kitchen before going freelance as a successful recipe tester and developer for a variety of food magazines.

Within the UK alone, her recipes are regularly featured in the 10 Best column of The Guardian's Cook supplement and The Observer named her their Rising Star of 2015 in the Food category.

She is also the author of a bestselling cookbook *Mamushka*, which celebrates her family recipes, from Ukraine and Moldova to Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan. She is also launching a new book in August 2017 called *Dedakatsi: The Cookbook – A Journey Through the Wild East*.

Olia is also a food stylist and her work can be found on [Instagram](#) (24.6k followers).



NEFF BRAND HISTORY

A flame was lit and the first roast was cooked in a coal oven from NEFF. That was in 1877, when Carl Neff founded his range and oven plant. But there was something more to the appliances he produced: Carl Neff always endeavoured to make cooking and baking a little bit easier. NEFF continues to do this to this day, creating quality appliances with unique features that revolutionise people's experience in the kitchen and, in turn, produce generation after generation of cooking enthusiasts.



Carl Neff

1877

When locksmith Carl Neff founded the NEFF stove and oven factory (Herd- und Ofenfabrik NEFF) in Bretten, Baden, in 1877 he had a revolutionary idea: the focus of his appliances would be on the people who use them rather than the technology. Based on this principle, the young company soon went on to develop stoves and ovens that were different from those previously available, namely more professional, more uncompromising and more imaginative.



NEFF's first patented gas burner

1900s

The ability to anticipate change has always been an important skill for successful entrepreneurs. At the turn of the century, cafés became a new type of public forum, as the bohemians called bourgeois norms into question with their anti-establishment and unorthodox lifestyle. Carl Neff was quick to recognise that confectioners needed better ovens if they were to satisfy the sweet cravings of these customers who regularly frequented cafés as hubs for lively discussion, paving the way for...

1910s

The first patented gas burner for bakeries was launched by NEFF in 1919.

1920s

In the 20s, NEFF manufactured small, space-saving stoves, specially made to fit on the wagons of travellers wandering through the countryside. The enamel was decorated with small, colourful flowers.

The 1940s

In the 40s, NEFF processed sheet metal for airplanes. And it was these very sheets that NEFF later used in Bretten when the company returned to making stoves, some of them for the US Army barracks. Dr Alfred Neff had been running the company on his own since his father's death in 1940, and not only that, for a time he also served as mayor of the municipality of Bretten. Meanwhile, production experienced steady growth.



NEFF space-saving camper stove



NEFF's new stand-alone stove

The plant was destroyed during a bombing raid in 1945 but by the time of the 1948 currency reform, 424 employees were again working in the newly constructed workshops. NEFF was on its way to becoming an international brand.

NEFF's drive toward revolutionising kitchen appliances continued throughout the post-war era. The new stand-alone stove with enamelled surfaces was the first to be equipped with separately controlled top and bottom heat.

1950s

No one could have imagined such a development. Out of the rubble of post-war Germany emerged the economic miracle. Between 1950 and 1960, the economy tripled. "Made in Germany" became the mark of quality for export goods.

NEFF was riding this wave of success. The demand both at home and abroad grew exponentially, as did the number of employees. In 1950, NEFF became the first manufacturer to install thermostats in standard ovens, as well as introducing the first appliances with a uniform design in terms of shape, colour, and size.



NEFF introduces thermostats in standard ovens



NEFF's first microwave

In 1952, the new "Arcus" stove became one of the hottest commodities in Europe. Soon the company made the easy transition from stove manufacturer to home appliance manufacturer and introduced refrigerators and washing machines to the market. One of NEFF's most successful decades was rounded out with numerous developments:

- A refrigerator in every home:** In the mid-50s, the refrigerator became the symbol of a new zeitgeist, the dawning of the modern era. NEFF expanded its product range accordingly, thereby contributing to a new breakfast and supper culture as refrigerators made cold cuts, cheese platters and fruit yogurt part of everyday life
- The first microwave oven:** In 1957, NEFF caused a real stir and simplified cooking by introducing Europe's first microwave, then known as the "electron oven"
- Cooking on a cold burner:** In 1958, NEFF introduced another sensation; Europe's first operational appliance with induction cooking

1960s

NEFF stoves and home appliances also travelled. The 60s were a time of almost constant growth for the company, in part because the world finally discovered NEFF. Exports rose steadily as more and more shipments were sent abroad; as



The NEFF induction hob

far as Ethiopia, Angola, Bolivia, India and Hong Kong.

Plus, as of the early 60s, all NEFF stove types were matched in terms of size and colour. They could also be combined within kitchens and no longer just as stand-alone appliances. NEFF was the first manufacturer to feature built-in ovens, stoves and cooktops integrated within cabinets, thus igniting the explosive success of the built-in kitchen.

The size of the oven was also adapted. In 1967, NEFF increased the oven volume in response to the continued growth of exports. While the traditional German roasts and chickens were an easy fit, the old ovens were a bit too small to accommodate the equally traditional turkey in many other countries. From then on, there was room for the Thanksgiving and/or Christmas turkey, which has since found its way into the occasional German oven as well.



An advertisement for NEFF's CircoTherm® convection system

1970s

In the 70s, Germany was opening up. By 1971, every tenth employee was a foreign national. Many worked at NEFF, arriving from Italy, Greece, Turkey and Yugoslavia. What's more, colour invaded the kitchen. Colourful patterns covered the walls and NEFF set the tone with its new DESIGN LINE for stoves. "Exclusive chestnut brown goes with any kitchen," read one advertisement.



NEFF VitaFresh refrigerator

At the start of the 70s, pioneer Rudolf Wilhelm Begerodas came up with one of NEFF's greatest success stories: the CircoTherm® convection system. The system came onto the market in 1974, making it possible to cook and bake on several levels at once without intermingling flavours and is a hot trend still going strong today.

1980s

The 80s were all about firm bodies and hairdos, made possible by aerobics and hairspray. Munching on a carrot was already considered a meal by many young aerobics fans but at least the carrot was guaranteed to be crisp; in 1989, NEFF launched its first refrigerators with VitaFresh®. In the various zones with their different humidity levels and 0°C temperature, vegetables and lettuce, as well as fish and meat, could be stored for longer without drying out.

There was also the telescopic CLOU® pull-out oven shelf introduced by NEFF in the 80s. Rails on ball bearings let them slide easily and the new linear lights allow cooks to see what they're sliding in and out of the oven.

1990s

While MC Hammer sang "U Can't Touch This", NEFF released the "Elegance" series of ovens, which were now completely touchable thanks to the especially low surface temperatures.



NEFF's 'Elegance' series with touchable, low surface temperatures

Starting in 1995, NEFF's new EasyClean® system also set the standards for oven features.

2000 to present

The past 16 years have seen countless unique features from NEFF to continue to make the kitchen a home for enthusiastic cooks to experiment in:



NEFF FlexInduction cooktop with TwistPad®

- **TwistPad®:** The contemporary one-button control with a digital display that is, of course, removable for easy cleaning
- **FlexInduction cooktops:** Not only do they offer the well-known benefits of induction – namely, heat applied precisely and directly while the burner remains cold – but they also sense the size of the pan used so that no energy is wasted
- **FullSteam:** Combines the heating modes of a conventional oven and steam cooker so that vegetables come out fresh, vitamins are retained and flavours are intensified.
- **VarioSteam®:** Adds moisture to the oven in the form of steam so that roasts, for example, are much juicier. The heart of the system is a sensational NEFF innovation. The dual-pump water system provides a steady supply of fresh water



NEFF's iconic Slide&Hide® oven

- **Slide&Hide®:** When an oven is installed in the most practical location – namely, where it can be used without bending over – the door gets in the way. Unless, of course, it's hidden away, like the Slide & Hide® retractable oven door that simply disappears underneath the oven
- **Extractor hoods:** Whether ducted or recirculating, extractor hoods from NEFF not only draw steam but also draw admiring looks, thanks to their unique design. NEFF's CleanAir recirculating module is also unique, reducing odours by an additional 25%

Notably, we're especially pleased by the fact that every year, NEFF wins major international design awards for aesthetics, for functionality and for making cooking so easy and efficient.

NEFF 14 DECADES OF DINNER RESEARCH

“It has occurred in most fields of human evolution down the ages; new technologies are a source for the progress of cooking”
Ferran Adria and El Bulli

The 14 Decades of Dinner research takes inspiration from key food trends throughout Europe over the past 140 years to create a menu of unique dishes that brings to life the varied cuisines, ingredients and developments of this recent history.

Each decade is represented by an iconic dish inspired by the historical developments and transitions occurring in its country of origin, whether this was technological, social or a combination of both.

The resulting feast showcases an inspiring display of Europe’s culinary breadth and celebrates each country’s contribution to today’s multicultural tapestry of food available for passionate foodies to discover.

1877-1887

THE DISH – Germany

To reflect this decade’s trend for regional cuisine, we will serve the regional German fruit bread Hutzelbrot, which is made with dried fruits, nuts and pears.

Historical Developments

At the start of our 140-year journey, the industrial revolution was in full swing. The population was rising rapidly, with farmers moving from countryside to the city. The result was a rapidly emerging working class with a demand for faster, nutritious meals to feed them.

New canning technologies and steam trains enabled the transport of those migrating to the city as well as their favourite local delicacies, regional cuisines, previously confined to local provinces, began to be appreciated and demanded by wider audiences.



1887-1897

THE DISH – Spain

To honour this decade, we will be serving mini churros as part of our petit fours, served with coffee and, of course, chocolate sauce.

Historical Developments

As the Spanish Empire declined, this decade saw a rise in the influence of The New World. The art of cooking emerged from the confines of aristocratic homes to infiltrate kitchens throughout all of Spain. The country also experienced the rising popularity of chocolate, as chocolaterias appeared across the

country and gave rise to the fashionable churros, a phenomenon which is still booming today.

1897-1907

THE DISH – France

We will serve a Melba toast inspired canapé, topped with pigeon and chestnut pâté, inspired by a forgotten Viennese dish from the era.



Historical Developments

This decade marked the beginning of fine dining and was heavily influenced by Auguste Escoffier, the French chef, restaurateur and culinary writer. Escoffier popularised and updated traditional French cooking methods, significantly impacting the food culture in both France and Britain. His recipes, techniques and approaches to kitchen management remain highly influential today.

In 1897, following the illness of famed opera singer Dame Nellie Melba, during which she was only able to eat toast, Escoffier invented a dry, crisp and thinly sliced toast in her honour, which was subsequently christened ‘Melba Toast’ by Cesar Ritz in conversation with the Escoffier.

1907-1917

THE DISH – Britain

To reflect Oxo’s – a dried beef stock cube – status in British kitchens, we are including our very own version of the popular broth: a strong beef stock frozen into the form of an ice cube and wrapped in a gold leaf. It’s served in a small bowl or cup, as boiling water from a teapot is poured over it to create a shot of broth.

Historical Developments

This period saw the trend of the rich regularly frequenting restaurants and bars continue to grow. However, the iconic Oxo cube also began to really make its name during the 1910s as class divisions loosened as commercialism and consumerism began to enter people’s kitchens and homes in Britain.



1917-1927

THE DISH – Britain

To celebrate the invention of the ultimate champagne cocktail, we’ll be serving our own modern version of the Buck’s Fizz, with rosemary and blood orange.

Historical Developments



The 1920s witnessed the rise of The Ritz, indulging in small bites and the art of drinking champagne. This occurred in conjunction with the era of Prohibition in America, resulting in many American bartenders migrating to Europe to find work, especially in Paris and London. Among these was the legendary Frank Meier, who became the head bar tender at The Ritz in Paris. Here he invented two delectable cocktails - the Bees Knees, which included gin, lemon and honey, and the famous rum-based Pompadour.

Over in the UK, the legendary morning champagne cocktail Buck's Fizz was invented as an excuse to begin drinking early in the day. The concoction was named after London's Buck's Club, where it was first served in 1921.

1927-1937

THE DISH – Sweden

To honour the Nordic theme, we will serve an interesting interpretation of gravlax, with some beetroot, orange and dill. It's served as a delicate little canapé on a Borodinsky rye crostini.

Historical Developments

In the late 1930s, the Swedish smorgasbord became internationally known following the New York World's Fair, where it was presented at the Swedish Pavilions Three Crowns Restaurant. The smorgasbord is typically a celebratory meal. Smorgasbords are comprised of a range of dishes from which guests can help themselves to.

Consequently, the word 'Smorgasbord' also entered the English language, applying not only to food, but also used to signify 'an array of objects'.

1937-1947

THE DISH – Britain

In honour of Lord Woolton's role in popularising this essential dish during the Second World War, which helped the nation get their essential nutrients despite the rationing, we will be serving a Woolton Pie.

Historical Developments

During the Second World War in Britain, meat, eggs and dairy were considered the ultimate luxuries until rationing was eventually abolished in 1954. Instead, the government campaigned to urge people to make more use of vegetables and pulses. This included the famous 'Dig for Victory' campaign of 1941, which encouraged the population to use any spare land to create 'victory gardens', often to plant potatoes and other root vegetables.



During this period, The Woolton Pie was created by the head chef at the Savoy in honour of the head of the Ministry of Food, Lord Woolton. Mainly consisting of potatoes, cauliflower, swede, carrots, onions, vegetable extract, onions and oatmeal, the recipe could be adapted to reflect the availability and seasonality of ingredients.

1947-1957

THE DISH – Italy

We'll be serving a Bistecca alla Fiorentina, a favourite of Tuscan cuisine in which a Florentine T-Bone steak is marinated in balsamic, anchovies and herbs.

Historical Developments

During the aftermath of the Second World War, Italy became prosperous and the nation saw increasing numbers of women enter the workforce, and consequently they valued the precious time they had outside of the workplace more. Accordingly, women began to abandon more traditional recipes that took a long time to prepare and required intricate processes in favour of simpler and quicker dishes.



1957-1967

THE DISH – Switzerland

We will be serving the popular party dish, fondue, alongside a selection of crudités.

Historical Developments



This decade is the era of dinner parties, where favourite culinary trends and entertainment traditionally found in restaurants were instead brought into people's homes, with fondue proving to be the biggest craze of the period.

Microwave ovens also became available to the masses for the first time and microwave dinners quickly became a staple, as five-minute meals were hailed by microwave enthusiasts such as Cecilia Norman, who published books such as 'Microwave Cookery for the Housewife'.

At the same time, the introduction of induction cookers continued to revolutionise the kitchen with its ability to heat liquids to a boiling point quicker than ever before resulting in cooking times becoming more efficient.

1967-1977

THE DISH – Eastern Europe

We will serve a selection of pickles, such as pickled peas, pickled cauliflower and whiskey pickled heritage carrots to reflect this decade's unique pickling trend.

Historical Developments

While other parts of the world enjoyed rapid economic growth, people all over the Soviet Union were experiencing food shortages during Brezhnev's Era of Stagnation. Empty shelves, which often only held bottles of vinegar, meant that pickling was on a massive rise as the nation found ways to preserve the food available to them.



1977-1987

THE DISH – Belgium

In honour of Belgium's love of Nouvelle Cuisine, we are serving a beautiful and light starter or canapé featuring endives, goat's curd, sorrel and rehydrated barbaries, combining Belgium's most prized vegetable with a nod to exoticism, which is still popular today and embraces fusion cuisine, a la Yotam Ottolenghi.

Historical Developments

During this decade, the trend for Nouvelle Cuisine, where dishes were daintier, less butter-heavy and the vegetables were cooked for less time, continued to rise, followed by a quick and sudden fall out of fashion.

Spearheaded by the prominent chef Bocuse, the trend for Nouvelle Cuisine brought a taste of globalisation to restaurants and kitchens, giving rise to a new obsession around fresh ingredients of the highest quality, as well as the use of exotic ingredients. The Belgians were particularly receptive to this new French trend and embraced its innovative approach to cuisine.

1987-1997

THE DISH – Italy

To celebrate Petri's movement, we will serve sourdough bread with some well-made fermented butter. Both dishes take time, love and care to produce and cannot be rushed.

Historical Developments

This decade saw the growth of Carlo Petri's Slow Food movement, which was born in Italy as a backlash to McDonalds and its 1989 manifesto. The grassroots movement, which has since spread worldwide, strives to preserve traditional and regional cuisine and encourages the farming of plants, seeds and livestock characteristic of the local ecosystem.

1997-2007

THE DISH – Spain/Greece fusion

In honour of Spain and Greece, the original ‘sharing’ nations, we will serve a dish of grilled octopus with skordalia (garlicky mashed potato purée) and pickled rhubarb and radishes.

Historical Developments

This decade kick starts the beginning of the tapas or sharing plates era, moving away from the conventional starter-main-pudding format. Instead, restaurants and people embraced the communal style of Spanish tapas or Greek meze, which enables them to share food with friends and sample a greater variety of dishes.



2007-2017



THE DISH - Germany

To celebrate 140 years of NEFF, its role over the past 14 decades and the millionth Slide&Hide oven, we will create a modern interpretation of the Black Forrest Gateau, nodding to NEFF’s German origins.

Historical Developments

Baking becomes the key re-emerging trend of the decade as shows like The Great British Bake Off is syndicated in 24 countries around the world following the show’s runaway success in the UK and new technology makes creating stunning cakes much easier.

THE 15TH COURSE

Comment from NEFF Executive Vice President Klaus Karl

NEFF PREDICTS KITCHENS TO BECOME PLAYGROUNDS FOR EXPERIMENTAL COOKING

For 140 years, NEFF has inspired generations of cooks, helping them keep up with life demands and foodie trends that fuel culinary exploration. From creating the first thermostat ovens in the 50s for more precise baking to catering for an increased demand for fresher-for-longer fruit and vegetables with the introduction of clever refrigerators in the late 80s, NEFF has nurtured and inspired generations of cooks over the last 14 decades. But after 140 years of kitchen discovery, what does the next decade hold for passionate foodies?

“Show me what you cook and I’ll tell you who you are” rings even truer today, when cooking is less functional and increasingly personal, less about feeding the family and more about feeding the soul or creating unique experiences in the kitchen. It’s a personal expression of who you are, where you’ve been and how you like to live.

The Kitchen’s A Stage

Increasingly savvy and adventurous, NEFF cooks go on a journey of discovery whenever they open the fridge or oven door. From travelling the world through their choice of ingredients to elevating food to a platform for social gatherings, the NEFF foodies of the future will treat the kitchen as their playground for experimentation, a stage for self-expression.

Depending on the mood or the moment, the dinner companions or the ingredients, meals will be less planned and more experimental, as cooks embrace mixing and matching to let their creativity flow.

And We Are All Watching

As smart functionalities and virtual personal assistants become even more integrated within kitchen appliances across the globe, a sense of spectacle is set to become the ubiquitous ingredient on the next decade’s menus. But it’s not just the cooking process itself that will be infused with showmanship. The dinner table will gather your friends and family in flesh, while others will join in virtually. There will be no boundaries to showing up.

With the cooks and their tasty experiments constantly in the spotlight, the configuration of the home will change too, reflecting the new status of kitchens as the focal hub of any home. Increased connectivity will emphasise this change; virtually-assisted cooking will make it possible to start preparing a dish before even getting in the kitchen.

SUMMARY

NEFF's 14 Decades of Dinner research offers the perfect opportunity to take inspiration from the past 140 years and celebrates Europe's culinary heritage. The journey from 1877 to 2017 reveals a rich tapestry of trends which interweave throughout the decades, ebbing and flowing as the continent's relationship with food evolved.

While the research highlights several trends that recur throughout the decades and across various countries, it clearly begins and ends with technological innovation as the industrial revolution causes the mass migration of workers from countryside to city. The ripple effects of this occurrence are felt throughout the decades. Food trends develop to accommodate this new and increasing city-based population, including: the popularity of cafés as a place to meet and discuss views, the commercialism of previously exclusive ingredients and the invention of the microwave offering increasingly quick and convenient meals. Alongside this, current innovations in oven technology have become central to today's baking trend phenomenon.

The research highlights three further significant trends to inspire our cooking; community, indulgence and ingenuity.

Community

Throughout the decades, food has consistently served to bring people together. As recently as the 00s, when the Spanish and Greek influence of sharing plates became the norm across Europe, our food journey has shown that people throughout our recent history enjoyed food as a communal experience. Times of merriment recurrently focus around a feast, like the 60s dinner party, which was not complete without the experience of sharing a Swiss fondue with guests, or the Swedish smorgasbord, which was typically brought out for celebratory occasions.

Indulgence

Whether it's Escoffier's velvety fine dining or Nouvelle Cuisine's fresh and exotic vegetable focused dishes, food as a form of indulgence appears consistently throughout the 14 Decades of Dinner research. Europe's never-ending love story with food demonstrates that rich ingredients, such as chocolate or innovative ways to enjoy decadent dishes or drinks, like the invention of the morning champagne cocktail, Buck's Fizz, never go out of fashion.

Ingenuity

The ability to be creative with food both in times of prosperity and famine can be seen all the way through Europe's recent food history. However, this trend to find ingenious new ways to use ingredients becomes particularly inspiring when we review people's resourcefulness in times of austerity. This was clearly evident in Eastern Europe, where pickling was used to extend the lifespan of vegetables, and in Great Britain, where the creation of the Woolton Pie recipe ensured the nation was still able to nourish itself despite the imposed rationing.

However, as present technology continues to advance in kitchen innovation, is it meeting the needs of a new generation of food lovers? Smart technology and high tech advancements are facing an increased backlash from a younger audience of foodies, who are opting to reverse their view within the kitchen, to slow down modern improvements and to transform their kitchens into a place of refuge, where they can create headspace by enjoying the simple pleasures preparing food for friends and families can provide.