

Hungarian Incredible Edible Christmas Tree Ornaments ("Szaloncukor")

The Partner Church Committee is pleased to sponsor this event to allow MUF folks a chance to share the Christmas experience with our Partner Church in Sinfalva, Romania. This section of Romania is known as Transylvania (literally "The Land Beyond the Woods") and was taken from Hungary and given to Romania after World War I. It is called Erdely in Hungarian.

A Christmas tradition among Hungarians, including the residents of Sinfalva, is that of "szaloncukor". This word translates as "parlor sweets" and refers to brightly wrapped candies that are hung from the Christmas tree. Szalon is the same word as "salon" or parlor, which is where the Christmas tree would be placed. Here is a picture. The bulge in the middle is the candy, usually marzipan or "fondant" (cooked and flavored sugar and water paste).



In my family we have always used pieces of chocolate cut from a large chocolate bar and twisted in wrapping paper.

Hungarians have several interesting Christmas customs. First there is St. Nicholas day, known as Mikulas in Hungarian, which is December 6th. This is sort of a pre-Christmas. Children put out their shoes and in the morning find them filled with candies and fruit and small gifts (at least the good ones do). The tree is not

decorated until Christmas Eve, December 24th but then the gift-giving happens right away, rather than waiting until the morning of December 25th.

The szaloncukor-wrapping was also a Christmas ritual in my family. Instead of buying the pre-made marzipan and fondant candies, we cut up chocolate bars, cut the wrapping paper and tissue paper into rectangular pieces, cut fringes into the ends of the papers, and cut lengths of green string for hanging onto the tree.

There are at least three points of dispute regarding szaloncukor (Hungarians love to argue).

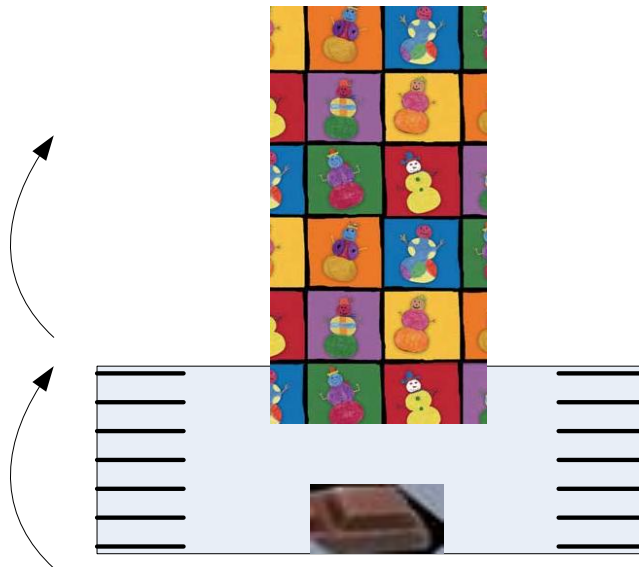
- 1) Should the wrapping paper indicate by means of a code what kind of candy is inside, or should this be random, so that you get a surprise each time?
- 2) Should people eat the candy whenever they want to, or should some time be allowed to elapse before they become fair game?
- 3) When eating a candy, should the person take away the empty wrapper, or leave it on the tree?

(My personal positions are that eating should be allowed immediately, there should be a color code so I don't waste my time and appetite on things I don't like much, and empty wrappers should be left on the tree. – Gabor)

We hope that you enjoy yourselves making these edible ornaments. Please take some with you but also leave some here so that we can decorate our tree. When you see (and eat) them later, we hope that you will be reminded of our Partner Church in Sinfalva, Romania.

Directions. (These might seem complicated, but it is easy once you have seen it done)

- 1) Place a wrapping tissue rectangle so that a wide edge faces you (the fringes should be to the right and to the left)
- 2) Put a piece of chocolate on the middle of the edge closest to you.
- 3) Roll the chocolate in the wrapping tissue, leaving about ½ inch unrolled.
- 4) Put a narrow edge of a rectangle of shiny wrapping paper face-down on the unrolled part of the tissue, so that they overlap. Keep rolling.



- 5) When you are all done rolling the tissue will be inside and the shiny paper will be outside. The chocolate will be in the middle of the roll.
- 6) Grab the roll as close to the chocolate as you can, and give it a twist. You can twist both sides at the same time, or one at a time. This twist keeps the chocolate from falling out. The fringed tissue paper will peek out of the shiny paper.
- 7) Take two of the wrapped chocolates and connect them with a loop of string. These pairs of candies are easier to hang from branches of the tree.