



## **Herbaria: chickpeas, skirret and poorer quality meat**

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**Information about what the inhabitants of Krakow ate during the Renaissance can be derived from herbaria.**

Herbaria contributed to the propagation of soup veges and fruits were grown in today's Malopolska Region. In "Herbarz" Marcin from Urzędów, even mentions that in Kraków's Zwierzyniec, at the request of Queen Bona, chickpeas were planted.

Herbaria are also a clue when looking for flavors that have already been forgotten by Polish cuisine. As an example, the roots of a plant from the Umbelliferous family: skirret called "sugar root" (or kucmorka and in the accounts of the royal court it is called cruczmorka or cuczmorka). Surenusz in "Herbarium" writes about it: "Kucmorka is close kin to those we used to eat ... For those of us in Poland, and especially in Krakow, it is seeded during the days following blackthorn winter. It is not known elsewhere and they use it for strength during Lent. It is pleasant to the stomach and a useful dish especially when boiled. It is commonly boiled with rice and with raisins. Also, instead of fish, it is fried in butter or in olive oil, after being cooked then dipped in wheat flour or in a bagel dough and fried in butter or hot olive oil, and seasoned with some salt and pepper. Others do not boil it first, but fry it raw, until they are well-browned, then put it on the meat and cook it until soft, then add some wheat flour to make the soup thick and eat it with white bread and ground sugar. A little bit of ground pepper will make this dish very unique. For those with consumption, this dish is very useful: after cooling the roots, cut into slices, boil in fresh milk until soft, then strain it. You can have skirret as a salad - clean the roots, take care of them well, place in cold water, add salt and vinegar, and season with oil." It is not always easy to identify which type of plants the authors of herbaria were referring to. This is the case with skirret. This name was used both for the marsh woundwort (*Stachys palustris*) and the main name skirret (*Sium sisarum*). Sreniusz wrote about the second one of these.