

Decomposed cabbage rolls (aka Varza a la Cluj) with polenta - Romania

- 5 Zuurkool naturel (sour cabbage)
- 2 tsp smoked (or sweet) paprika powder
- 1.5 kg lean pork minced meat (if possible from the butcher)
- 5 cups of rice
- 4 onions
- 2-3 tsp Thyme
- 4 tbsp of tomato passata
- 2 beef bouillon cubes
- A few tablespoons of oil
- 4* Crème fresh for serving
- corn flour 5 cups



Instructions:

- Pre-heat the oven at 200 degrees

On the stove:

- Strain the sour cabbage (zuurkool) and fry it in a bit of oil at low temp for 5-10 mins until slightly crispy when the stove is off, add the paprika and mix well

In a separate pan:

- Cut the onions in small cubes and pan fry them in a bit of oil until softened (3 mins)
- Add the meet and mix well (5 min)
- When the meat is half cooked add the rice and fry for (2 mins)
- Add the tomato paste, the thyme, bouillon cubes and let it boil

Mixing the layers:

In an oven tray:

- Start with one layer of cabbage
- Then a layer of meat/rice mixture
- Repeat the layers
- Always finish with the cabbage
- Drizzle tomato paste and thyme on top of the last cabbage layer
- Cover with aluminum foil and put in the oven for 40 min to 1 h.

Polenta

- mix 5 cups of corn flour with 13 cups of water, 2-3 teaspoons of salt and 3 tablespoons of oil and bring to boil while stirring constantly
- boil and stir for 10 mins
- ready to serve in a bowl

Cauliflower salad (on bread) - Romania

- 2 large cauliflowers
- Potato Masher
- 2 breads
- 1 Onion



Home made mayo

- 3 eggs
- 3 spoons mustard
- Oil
- Salt

Preparation

In water (no salt) boil the cauliflower until tender. When done, drain and mash it with a potato masher. Place the cauliflower mash in the freezer until cold (avoid frosting it)

In parallel, in a bowl, drop the 3 egg yolks, 3 spoons of mustard and some salt. Start by adding one spoon of oil, mix all ingredients well. Once mixed, add another spoon of oil and mixing until uniformly blend. Continue adding one spoon of oil at the time & blending until you get the mayo texture (white and fluffy)

Mix in the cold cauliflower mash the home-made mayo and enjoy on bread!

Fried fish - Czech Republic

Ingredients:

Fish - filets

3 eggs

Flour

Breadcrumbs

Oil for frying (I use peanut oil, in NL arachide/pinda olie)

Salt, pepper

Instructions:

Fish filets cut them in 30 pieces. First put salt and pepper on the fish, then coat them with flour, then with eggs and finally coat with breadcrumbs. Fry in the oil



Potato salad - Czech Republic

Ingredients:

- 1kg potato - the smaller the better (shorter time for cooking)
- 4 carrots
- 2 parsnips
- 1 small celery
- 2 onions, chopped
- 3 eggs
- 1 pickled cucumber – small jar
- 1 can of peas
- 1 jar mayonnaise - middle size would be enough
- 2 tablespoons of mustard
- 1 small Greek yogurt
- Salt and pepper



INSTRUCTIONS:

Boil the whole potatoes in one pot (15-20 minutes, it depends on a size of potatoes)

Boil carrots, parsnips and celery (all peeled) in another pot because we keep the water from vegetable for next use.
Boil eggs.

When everything has cooled down, we can start to do the potato salad.

For the potato salad, prepare a bowl, peel potatoes and dice. Carrot, parsnips, celery, eggs and pickled cucumbers dice as well. Add chopped onions, peas, salt and pepper and stir gently. Add yogurt, mustard, mayonnaise and stir gently again. If necessary, add little water from boiling vegetables for a good consistency.

The potato salad is finished.

Zucchini alla Scapece from Italy

Ingredients

1 kg Zucchini

4 cloves Garlic

1 cup Balsamic vinegar

1 Bunch of fresh mint

Salt as needed

Sunflower oil

Extra virgin olive oil as needed

Preparation

Prepare a marinade with the garlic cut into very small pieces, mint, salt and vinegar.

Wash and clean the zucchini at the edges, then cut them into thin round slices. Fry the zucchini in sunflower oil for a few minutes.

Turn the zucchini and take them out as soon as they become amber.

Arrange the zucchini on a plate and season with the marinade prepared earlier, to which you have added 5 tablespoons of frying oil.

Gently mix the zucchini and let them rest for a few hours before serving on the table.



Pesce in crosta di sale (Whole Red Snapper Baked in a Salt Crust) from Italy

Ingredients

- 1,8 kg coarse salt
- 2 cups water
- 2 2-pound whole red snapper, cleaned, leaving head and tail intact
- 2 lemons
- fine-quality extra-virgin olive oil for drizzling

Preparation

Preheat oven to 230 degrees

In a bowl stir together salt and water until combined well. On a large baking sheet spread half of salt mixture in a rectangle just larger than the red snapper and set fish on top. Halve lemon crosswise and cut 3 slices from 1 half, reserving remaining half. Insert slices into cavity of fish. Pat remaining salt mixture over fish to cover completely and bake in middle of oven 30 minutes.

Rap all around edge of salt crust with the back of a large spoon to loosen and lift top off. Squeeze juice from reserved lemon half over fish and drizzle with oil.



Pasta alla Norma from Italy

6 Aubergines
240ml Olive Oil
10 Garlic Cloves, thinly sliced
2-4 mild dried chilies
4 x 400g tins of Plum Tomatoes
10 Sage Sprigs
1 tsp Sugar
1kg Rigatoni
90g Mature Pecorino Romano
40g Basil Leaves, torn
Salt & Black Pepper



Method

Preheat the oven to 220C fan.

Using a peeler and working from top to bottom of each aubergine, shave off long alternating strips of peel so that they look striped, like zebras. Cut widthway into 1cm thick slices and place in a bowl with 75ml of oil, 3/4 teaspoon of salt and a generous grind of pepper. Mix well, then spread out on two large parchment-lined baking trays. Roast for 30-35 minutes, until dark golden-brown. Remove from the oven and set aside to cool.

Put 2 tablespoons of oil into a sauté pan and place on a medium high heat. Add the garlic and chilies and fry for 1-2 minutes, stirring constantly, until the garlic is golden brown. Add the tomatoes, sage, sugar, 1/2 teaspoon salt and a grind of pepper. Reduce the heat to medium low and cook for 10 minutes, until the sauce is thick. Remove the sage sprigs and stir in the aubergine. Set aside.

Cook the pasta according to packet instructions and once al dente, drain and retain some cooking water.

Add the rigatoni to the sauce and mix well, adding two thirds of the pecorino and basil, add a few tablespoons of the cooking water if the sauce has become too thick.

Top with the remaining pecorino, basil and a tablespoon of oil.

Gnocchi alla Romana from Italy

Make the recipe twice

- 1 Liter whole milk
- 175 grams semolina flour
- 1 tsp salt, plus more as desired
- 4 tbsp unsalted butter, divided, plus more for greasing
- 100 grams freshly grated Parmigiano-Reggiano cheese
- freshly ground black pepper
- 2 large egg yolks



INSTRUCTIONS

1. Heat the milk in a large saucepan over medium-high heat until tiny bubbles start to form around the edges of the pan and the liquid is just short of boiling.
2. Reduce the heat to low and slowly add the semolina flour in a very thin steady stream with one hand as you stir the mixture steadily with a stiff large whisk. The mixture will cook for roughly 15 to 20 minutes total, or until it becomes very thick and begins to pull away from the sides of the pan. It will be very loose for the first few minutes and will thicken to the consistency of a loose pudding within about 5 minutes. Once the mixture thick enough that it becomes difficult to continue whisking, switch to a wooden spoon. Continue stirring with a wooden spoon, scraping the sides of the pan as well, until the mixture begins to form a loose-ish mass and begins to pull away from the sides (approximately 15 to 20 minutes of total cook time). Remove from the heat. Allow the mixture to cool for a minute or two.
3. Stir in 2/3 of the grated parmesan cheeses, 2 tablespoons unsalted butter, and salt. Season to taste with salt and freshly ground pepper. Allowing the mixture to cool slightly will also prevent the eggs from coagulating. Add the egg yolks and mix rapidly with a wooden spoon until fully incorporated.
4. Moisten a half sheet pan with cold water over a sink and allow the excess water to drip off the pan. Spoon the hot semolina mixture onto the moistened sheet pan, spreading it with an offset spatula into an even layer that is just under 1/2-inch thick. Let cool for 30-40 minutes.
5. Preheat the oven to 220 degrees with a rack in the center position. Grease the bottom and sides of an oven-safe baking dish (roughly 2 quarts in capacity) with unsalted butter. Using a small biscuit cutter (roughly 2.5-inch), cut the semolina into disks, dipping the biscuit cutter into water continuously to prevent sticking. Transfer and layer the semolina rounds into the greased baking dish, overlapping the slices slightly with each row to resemble roof shingles. Distribute the top of the polenta with the remaining 2 tablespoons butter, divided into small pieces. Sprinkle the top with the remaining grated cheese. Gnocchi alla romana can be prepped ahead up this stage and stored, covered with plastic wrap, in the refrigerator for up to 2 days.
6. Bake uncovered at 220 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes or until a light golden crust is formed. Allow to cool for a few minutes before serving.

Vanillekipferl - German X-mas cookies ca 80 pieces

Ingredients for the dough

- 2 vanilla pods
- 420 g soft butter
- 500 g flour
- 140 g sugar
- 200 g ground almonds



Ingredients for the sugar coating

- 500 g Icing sugar
- Vanilla sugar
- Extra flour for the work top

Preparation

Preheat the oven to 200 degrees (convection) or 180 (fan). Have baking paper at place for several baking sheets.

Slice open the vanilla pods and scrape out the vanilla. Mix together with the butter, flour, sugar and almonds into a smooth dough. Roll into cling film and let it rest in the fridge for ca 60 min.

Divide the dough into four pieces, flour the work top and roll each out into a roll of 20 cm long. Cut this into 1 cm discs. Roll these discs into approx. 5 cm rolls and form little croissants with pointy ends.

Bake until golden in the oven in 10-12 min.

Meanwhile, spread the icing sugar on a flat plate. Take the kipferl out of the oven, still hot roll in sugar and allow to cool in the sugar.

For very sweet kipferl you can also use vanilla sugar instead of icing sugar.

Store in tin cans.

Rumwürfel mit Kokos – Chocolate squares with coconut flakes - Germany

For the dough

160 g soft butter
400 g sugar
4 eggs
500 g flour
60 g cocoa
1 sachet of baking powder
100 ml milk

For the icing

300 ml rum
625g icing sugar
200g dark chocolate
250 g desiccated coconut



Preparation

Preheat the oven to 180 degrees (convection) or 160 degrees (fan)

Mix the butter with the sugar until you see bubbles. Add one egg after the other.

Sift the flour and then mix it with the cocoa powder and the baking powder, and add the milk. Mix until you have a nice consistency.

On a baking tray put a sheet of baking powder and pour the dough onto the tray. Put it in the center of the oven and let it bake for approx. 45 min. It shouldn't be too dark.

Let the cake cool down for a couple of minutes and then cut into 5x5cm squares.

While you are baking you can prepare the icing.

Grate the chocolate finely and mix with the icing sugar. Slowly add the rum (so much that is needed to get a thick icing). Dip the squares carefully in the chocolate icing. Let excess drop off and then roll in the desiccated coconut. Let it rest and dry on a cooling rack.

Store in airtight containers (preferably tins)