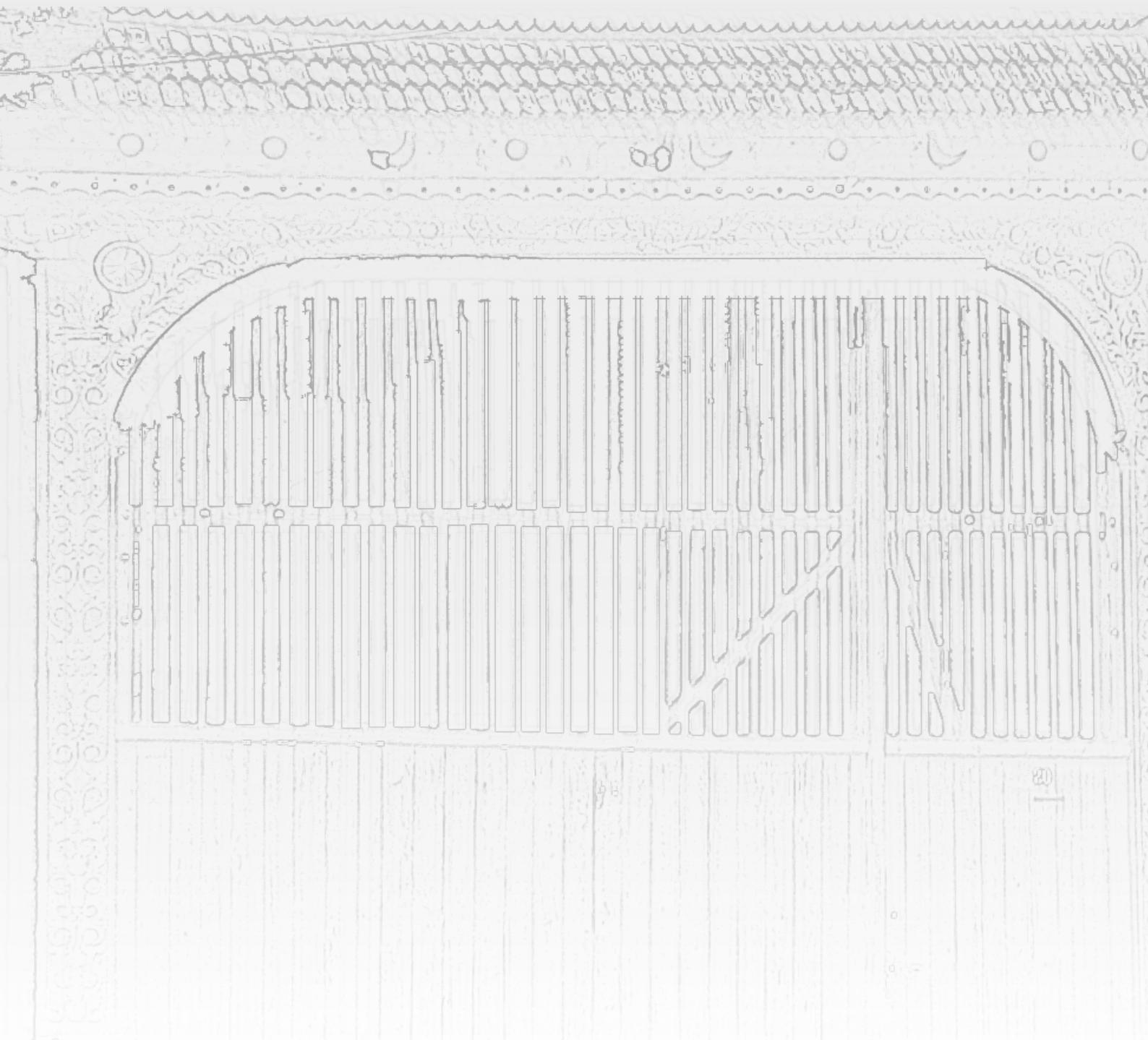


Food from Transylvania

Complementary book of
<http://transylvanian.recipes>



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Who are you?

Dear reader.

We expect you to enjoy cooking. It does not have to be your chosen profession, but you should definitely have a passion for food (but we do not advise professional chefs to not to browse this book either, because in traces it might contain a combination of herbs and spices, they might not be familiar with, yet).

However, for anyone to not be felt left out and excluded, for this book we have limited ourselves to recipes that are the easiest to make, and do not require too much time, neither special ingredients, nor expensive kitchen utensils. Even the most beginner of next generation of chefs can start and make a soup using the instructions presented.

We assume that you have a pot, a frying pan, a sharp knife to cut vegetables with, some spoons, forks, at least 1 wooden spoon to not to scratch the coating of your frying pan, and plates to eat the soups from. And of course, the ingredients for the recipe you want to make.

We also hope that you have some free time, some of these recipes can take an hour or more to make. On the plus side, you get to the stage where you can make (tasty) food from scratch using basic ingredients. We know that in todays' rushing world this hour might sound a luxury item, but it will be well spent time.

We appreciate if you like homemade food. Not that there is anything wrong with the one you buy ready-made from the store (and we must admit that even the authors of this book also like some of these), but from time to time it just gives you a good and warm feeling that you can make your own food.

We really appreciate if you are against food waste. Many of our recipes tell you specifically to use leftover food from yesterday, so that they do not end up in the landfill. This will not only help you with your budget, but also make you feel good when you know you have saved something. Even if it was just a piece of fried chicken from yesterday.

With this we welcome you on your new journey through culinary Transylvania.

Sincerely,
The Authors.

Who are we?

There are three of us who had a great influence on this book. The father, who was responsible for the writing, photographing, and cooking, the son who helped with tasting and approving all the food, and of course our grandmother, who is the source of the recipes, always ready to share her latest kitchen invention she came up with.

And many thanks to our grandfather who lead us through the garden in its various stages, in spring, summer and autumn while we picked vegetables and ate them in all our secrecy whiler pretending to be innocent admirers of budding vegetables, and many thanks to mother who with her constant feedback contributed greatly to the quality on the food we made, thus enhancing the taste of the recipes you can enjoy. For us to grow up and work in the garden among ripe vegetables was part of everyday life, possibly this is where we were



producer to our stew.

inoculated with the need for tasty produce and the need for vegetables with natural taste. Tomatoes in Transylvania taste like tomatoes, not like red water bombs, cucumbers are short, spiky and with a strong taste I could not find anywhere else. We have tried our best in our recipes to bring out the flavours in all the food we have prepared and published in our book. We value natural food, and we try our best to use all-natural products that have taken the shortest possible journey from

But the reality in countries which do not have the luxury of a warm and sunny summer is that sometimes you are forced to use certain canned goods, which however, are perfectly fine, because you cannot have everything ... such as some vegetables that do not belong in this latitude will not grow perfectly ... well, for them, just use canned.

About the recipes

While writing this book, we wanted to give you an authentic experience of Transylvanian cooking. Since we do not live in Transylvania anymore, some of these recipes needed certain grade of taming. They had to be adapted to the local market so as not to bankrupt you when buying the ingredients. They also had to be adapted to the taste buds of the locals, and we also had to consider the local market reality.

We have used our family's old recipe books and dozens of handwritten recipes from notebooks written down by our grandmothers. As a side note, we concluded that all around the world, there is a similarity between individual grandmothers' recipes. For example, if you have old beef, cook for long hours to make it tender. They contain not only the ingredients you use to make the dish, but also practical advice on how to survive your everyday dining experiences in the kitchen. For us, it was a tough mental exercise deciphering the old-fashioned, almost a century old handwriting, like cracking a code, but it was worth it because in the end we got another tasty dish we made and shared with you.

You see, most of the Transylvanian food is not about exact measurements, but mostly about getting the taste right and as tasty as you can get it to your liking. A recipe may say that you must have in cumin, but if you do not like cumin, do not spoil your food. Just leave it out. It is of the utmost importance that you like the food you make, use your common sense, and take with you something tasty from your ingredients.

Recipes in Transylvanian food do not resemble molecular gastronomy, you do not need expensive and fancy equipment, just the most basic of kitchen utensils you already might have. You do not have to turn your kitchen into a chemistry lab, and the most dangerous situation you will encounter is that you will burn the meat you planned to eat for lunch. But do not despair. Just scrape off the burned part and you are ready to go.

The recipes give you a great deal of flexibility when cooking because I cannot guarantee that we use the same ingredients. For example, the onions I have used, may not have the same size, shape nor taste as the onions you like.

You will find that having a bunch of basic ingredients and preparing them differently each day to experience different flavours, will contribute to your daily experience, to the point that cooking with natural ingredients from scratch, will be a joy and something to look forward to being one of your favourite daily activities.

Sadly, many traditional recipes could not be included because I simply did not find the necessary ingredients. In traditional Transylvanian cooking the distance of raw produce from the source to the pot is mostly a few meters. This, unfortunately, cannot be reproduced in todays' western society.

And of course, another bunch of recipes were not added to the book, because either they require long preparation time, or just their required skills are a little above average for a passionate home cook, who does this as a side project for fun (and of course to eat something tasty).

Where is Transylvania?

Transylvania is a historic region located in the central part of Romania. Surrounded by scenic mountains, it has a rich, long, and stormy history, for those who are fascinated by this domain will surely appreciate studying, but for the scope of this book, what is more important is the unique food culture that has developed there during of the last centuries.

Transylvania became known to the world by Bram Stoker's 'Dracula', and today these two things are mainly connected, but there is so much more in Transylvania than the gloomy world of classic horror movies and books. From tiny villages hidden in the mountains where time seems to have stopped a few centuries ago, to the last Gothic cathedrals in mainland Europe, from small cafes in cobbled streets in old Saxon cities, to modern music festivals, Transylvania is slowly becoming part of the mainstream world by using its unique culture as the main selling point. And of course, its unique cuisine.

In this book you will find little gems hidden among the recipes where we either present some of the interesting cities in Transylvania, or we attract your attention to something unique for this region, or it will just be something you cannot foresee for now. Let it be a surprise.

Transylvania was first mentioned in 1075 AD. under the Latin name "Ultra silvam", which means "beyond the forest" and just as the name was. Transylvania can be the land of the endless forests, and you are welcome to take a walk in them, but before you do, you are advised to check with local guides if the area you plan to visit is safe enough or not. You see, the forests of Transylvania are full of wildlife. Transylvania has one of Europe's last real wildernesses, where bears, wolves and other large predators roam free. There are no fences, and all these animals run faster than you. So be careful, the wilderness in Transylvania is not like the hills of Buckinghamshire. The wilderness of Transylvania is wild and dangerous.



About Transylvania – a cultural journey

For hundreds of years, Transylvania has been, and still is, the home of several cultures, living together: Romanians, Hungarians, Germans, Jews, Armenians, Gypsies, and several different other nationalities. This multicultural cooking pot has cooked some unique recipes that you simply will not find in other parts of the world, and we really hope to be able to present a small and tasty extract of this unique cuisine.

Each of the different nationalities who lives and has lived there during the centuries has left its unique mark on the cuisine of the region, without giving up its own heritage and customs. When we present a recipe, we will also include the local name of it, along with a small flag so that you can associate the food correctly with its origin.

In the **Hungarian** dishes, many similarities can be identified with the old French cuisine that was imported by the nobility from the old days and later adapted to suit the needs and tastes of the locals. Thickening of food with roux or other thickeners and the use of local herbs and plants gives an exquisite taste that you cannot find anywhere else.

Hungarian food from Transylvania is different from the one you can find in Hungary. It uses a decent quantity of red peppers, so your food will not float in a red sauce. It prefers quite a bit the usage of local herbs and spices, and the overall taste does not have to be very spicy. We do not want to burn our mouths and do not feel the taste of the food. The Hungarian flag denotes food of Hungarian origin: 



The **Romanian** dishes on the other hand are much more closer to a taste you would call natural. They contain lots of fresh

ingredients directly from the garden or food-market and are generally an easier experience for the stomach. Thin soups with lots of fresh vegetables and lightly fried or cooked meat with steamed vegetables give a natural taste to the typical dishes from this cuisine. Romanian flags next to the Romanian dishes look like: 

German dishes can be characterized by a pragmatic approach to life. The expertise of old German housewives has created some great flavours by reusing the already existing ingredients and not letting anything go to waste. It can be very



surprising how two completely unrelated foods combined can provide a good meal. German flag notes German recipe: 

Next to the three largest nationalities in Transylvania, several other nations also lived there, and all of them have influenced the cuisine and culture of this region. Unfortunately, the number of some of them has been declining over time, and with it their traditional tastes are likely to be forgotten, their written recipes slowly turned to dust, but since some of their methodologies and techniques have survived and were incorporated into the generic Transylvanian cooking practices we will mention it in the recipe. Sometimes it will be a name, other times it will be a note, so watch out for those little easter eggs.

Armenian food is characterized by complex procedures, lots of calories, long shelf life and a very innovative and unconventional way of processing ingredients. Their food is very tasty, extraordinarily rich in flavours, and requires a lot of work. Therefore, I have only presented a few simple Armenian recipes, perhaps leaving the rest to another book.

Jewish chefs have had to deal with the limitations of the religion, so their food is characterized by a handful of carefully selected ingredients that fit together perfectly, deliver the necessary flavour, have the necessary nutrients, but still obey the law of kosher food.

The lifestyle of **Gypsies** is about walking around, freedom from borders, and they preferred dishes that can be made while roaming the roads. The need to keep your kitchen in the back of your cart resulted in many techniques that unfortunately slowly will disappear, such as baking in clay and mud or using kitchen utensils that must be mounted on top of an open fire, perfectly suited for outdoor living. Their food is the same as their clothes: rich, colourful and (when we talk about food) very tasty.



Let's start cooking

When you read the recipes from another culture, you may find some techniques you are not familiar with. Do not panic, this is normal. It is called learning.

Here are some tips that will make it easy for you to successfully prepare your daily Transylvanian (and other) recipes. Some ingredients require a little advance planning, but once you have finished making them, you can use them for a long time.



Pork fat

If you want to experience the real taste of Transylvania, I really recommend that you prepare a good portion of pork fat and use it instead of oil once or twice, just to compare the results. Yes, I know it goes against every recommendation and trend you can read in any modern recipe book, but I do not tell you to sit down and eat it with a spoon. Use it moderately, just a spoon per dish, and it will add extra flavour to your dishes. Mentioning moderate again, please understand it as one teaspoon per recipe, nothing more.

Do the following to make a portion that will be enough for a while: Get a good portion of raw pork fat or fat bacon without meat (we prefer to use bacon from a breed called "Mangalica", originating from Hungary). Cut it into cubes, approx. 1 inch x 1 inch x 1 inch. Put the cubes in an iron frying pan and fry them slowly, stirring often. When they are light brown but not burnt, take out the cracklings (which you can eat with a little salt and spring onions with bread when they are cold), strain the liquid fat in a jar or in a metal container, let it cool down. Store in the refrigerator, and when you need to take out some lard use a strong metal spoon.



Thickenings

Thickening is used to thicken the soups or other dishes. We have several types of thickeners, some of them use flour, others only sour cream and eggs. At each recipe we mention what kind of thickening to use with the specific dish.

Roux

A typical French ingredient, also widely used in Transylvanian recipes, is a basic ingredient in a soup or some side dishes.

Roux is made by adding flour into hot oil (usually sunflower oil due to its more neutral taste than other oils) and frying it until it turns brown or light brown. French recipes also recommend the use of melted butter instead of oil, but Transylvania is not France, we use sunflower oil. For those who are not afraid of a small amount of fat, we recommend the use of lard if you want a characteristic taste for your soups and dishes. Do not use olive oil. It burns much faster than the usual (sunflower) oil, and your roux will be bitter. To make a good roux, do not let the oil burn hot, otherwise it will have a bitter taste. The roux should be nice golden brown for the best taste.

It is perfectly acceptable to make a large portion of roux and store it in a jar (with a lid) in the fridge (not the freezer).



Roux is used in half of the soups presented in this book. Follow the steps to dissolve the roux properly in the soup:

- If your roux is hot (just off the stove hot), mix it very quickly with cold water while in the frying pan, stir a bit, and instantly add it into the soup and stir very well so there are no roux lumps in it.
- If your roux is cold (for example, if you just took it out of the fridge), put the required amount of roux in a deep plate, and mix it well in the plate with a few good spoons of the boiling soup and then pour it in the soup. Stir well.

For some of the recipes a special treatment of roux is required, for example use butter or lard instead of oil, or for example adding some red paprika powder, for these directions see at the specific recipe on how to do it.

Thickening made of wheat flour and milk

Some soups require you to make a thickening of milk and flour. This is extremely easy to make, just put a tablespoon of flour in a deep plate and add milk gradually, mix it carefully so as not to have lumps in the mixture. Usually use approx. 1 good spoonful of flour to approx. 1 dl. of milk.

Before adding this to the soup, add some vinegar to the mixture, this will pre-process the milk so as for it to not to curdle in the soup when you add the vinegar at a later stage.

Some recipes use whipped cream or sour cream instead of milk.

Thickening of sour cream and egg yolk

Separate the egg and keep the egg yolk in a bowl, the egg white is not used for this, but feel free to use it in another recipe. If the egg yolk is small, it is okay to use 2 eggs for this. Put in a tablespoon of sour cream next to the yolks and mix very well. Put in a few spoons of the warm (but not boiling, this is important) soup and mix well. When you empty this thickening into soup, the soup must be hot, but it should not boil otherwise the yolk will boil which will produce an undesired side effect of having small, boiled yolks in the soup.

The soups that use this thickener should not be boiled again due to the presence of egg yolk, and must be consumed in 1 – 2 days, so I recommend keeping them in a cold place (fridge or balcony for example, definitely not next to the stove overnight).

Special ingredients you can prepare in advance

Some of the recipes require that you have a good handful of special ingredients, either prepared by you, or that you have purchased them beforehand. The recipe will tell you a good replacement if it is available.

Paprika sauce

This is used to give the food a special taste and colour. A good substitute is sweet “Sambal Oelek” (or well, hot if you like it hot), but here is a recipe you can follow to make yours:

- Ca. 400 gr. (2 pcs.) of Red Bell pepper – Finely chopped, processed on a meat grinder, or just simply thrown in a mixer and mixed till creamy.
- Ca. 400 gr. of Sweet Red Kapia pepper – Processed same as above.
- Ca. 100-150 gr. salt

Mix everything together and cook the sauce in a saucepan for 30 minutes. Now use a blender to mix it so that it is even. Boil again approx. 60-90 minutes. Put in a clean jar, seal it, pack it in several

layers of dry towels or put it under a pillow and allow to cool overnight. Put it in the fridge and take out the desired amount with a clean spoon each time you use it. This slow cooling will help you preserve it for a longer time. When using it in soups consider the amount of salt that is already in this sauce.

Flavoured vinegar

Some of the soups use vinegar that is flavoured with chili, chanterelle, or tarragon. To make them, take only the necessary flavour additive (the chanterelle must be boiled 20 minutes before), clean them, fill a jar with and pour over the strongest white vinegar you can get your hands on. The vinegar essence (> 20%) is a little too strong, but a good quality 9% or 10% will do simply fine. Do not use vinegar for this that was already flavoured.



Sauerkraut

A very commonly used ingredient in large parts of Eastern Europe is sauerkraut. It is the base of a lot of hearty winter dishes, by providing an exceedingly large amount of C Vitamin. Unless you can get your hand on some naturally fermented sauerkraut in a shop, which does not use vinegar as the replacement for the sour taste which occurs in a natural fermentation process, the best is that you will make your own. Transylvanian sauerkraut is sour, firm and uses a different set of spices than Polish, German, but the latter are also good replacements. But fortunately it is very easy to make sauerkraut. To make sauerkraut you will need:

- 1 head of a small winter cabbage. Do not use summer cabbage, that will result in a soft sauerkraut. And be careful if you make a larger portion to do not mix winter and summer cabbages.
- 1 horseradish
- Dried dill and summer savoury (*Satureja hortensis*) – or oregano
- Salt, Water



Cut the cabbage very thin and put it in a jar, press down hard. Put a decent amount of salt on top (usually as many good tablespoons of salt as big the jar is, for example a 3 litre jar will require 3 tablespoons of salt). Put dill and savoury on top of the cabbage. Clean the horseradish and cut it into several pieces lengthwise. Use the horseradish to press down the cabbage to the pot. Fill the glass with cold water. The water should cover everything in the jar. If the cabbages misbehave or the horseradish is not strong enough to keep

everything under him take a big and heavy stone, clean it thoroughly, several times and place it on top of the cabbage. It is particularly important that the cabbage does not come out of the jar when the fermentation process starts.

From this day on, empty the water from the jar every day into a clean container and pour it back into the jar. We do this so as not to allow blight (mould) to form on top of the water. Taste the water with a clean spoon every day, see if it is sour or salty enough. If the room where you store this jar is cold, it will take up to 3 weeks before the cabbage becomes sour, otherwise 1 – 2 weeks should be enough, but do not store it in a room where the temperature exceeds 25°C otherwise the cabbage will rot instead of fermenting itself.

When the sauerkraut is done, separate the sauerkraut juice from the cabbage and use it in the respective recipes or store in the fridge. The juice of the naturally fermented sauerkraut is extremely beneficial, just drink a small glass every day, it helps with stomach problems, delivers a large quantity of C Vitamin, or just consider it a tasty treat. There are also recipes which use this juice, so keep some for those too.

Onions, garlic, and shallots

Onions, garlic, or shallots are quite common ingredients, and almost all dishes need one or the other. Sometimes a recipe needs a small onion (the first from the picture), and sometimes they are just a decoration in some dish.

For vegetable soups that need onion, use two or three of the second or third onions from the picture, depending on how you like them, or one of the third, or a few shallots.

If you are making a casserole dish and want lots of sauce, you usually need to cut an onion into ridiculously small pieces, for this purpose using one or two from the last onions should be sufficient.

If you make onion soup, it is perfectly fine to have in a large onion sliced finely to have flavour, and a handful of whole small onions as decoration, together with chopped green or spring onions.

It is generally acceptable to mix white, yellow, or red onions in the same dish, but please take into consideration that from red onions your dish will yield a darker colour.



Spices and herbs

Dishes from Transylvania use a quite common combination of spices. Most of the recipes only need salt, pepper, and vinegar. Some recipes also use paprika powder. Usually, the recipes do not require extraordinarily strong chili, we do not like to burn our mouths, however this does not stop you from spicing up your dishes if you are a fan of spicy food.

When it comes to herbs, in Transylvania we use the most common herbs (parsley, dill), these you also can find available in any grocery shop, but there are a few others that are also used that you may have difficulty finding.

While reading our recipes, you might discover that we do not have the tendency to over-season our food. I have remarked this tendency in recent years that most of the times a huge quantity of herbs and spices are tossed into the dishes, presumably to give an abundance of flavours. Not in Transylvania. We never use a whole bunch of parsley into one soup, just a few leaves. The rest is put out to dry or stored in the freezer for later use. In Transylvania, the underlying taste of the basic ingredients is considered to be way too important for them in order to be suppressed by a bunch of herbs and spices. Herbs and spices are good but use them moderately.

Summer savoury

One of the herbs I found it difficult to find freshly available in grocery shops is summer savoury (*Satureja hortensis*). Many shops have it in dry form in larger jars, but having them fresh is difficult because it does not grow well in outdoor gardens, due to that it needs lots of heat and sun. The best replacement for summer savoury, is a pinch of oregano (*Origanum vulgare*), but since oregano is much stronger in taste, use half a serving. Summer savoury goes perfectly well with food that has cabbage, squash or in some sauces, and of course sauerkraut.

Lovage

Lovage (*Levisticum officinale*) turns out to be easily grown even in colder climates, not only in southern Europe, so if you can't find it in shops just order a few seeds from any online seed portal, and plant it somewhere in a sunny place, or even in a pot and when the leaves are green pick them before they turn to yellow, and dry them, or keep them in a freezer. In the winter it will survive freezing grades also if you cut the stems.

Lovage is mostly used in clear vegetable soups, or to make a flavoured vinegar.

Tarragon

Tarragon (*Artemisia dracunculus*) is not used raw in our recipes, but it is used to create a flavoured vinegar that is used in soups at a later stage. But since tarragon flavoured vinegar is already available in shops it should not be difficult to purchase.



Transylvanian breakfast

In Transylvania, breakfast is an opportunity to fill your stomach for the start of the day and get you in a good mood the remaining hours for lunch. I think it is pretty much the same everywhere else too.

On the contrary with a full English breakfast, the Transylvanian breakfast is mostly a selection of cold starters, usually "something next to bread", and there is a good chance that the cold starters are usually some kind of homemade food. The consumption of beans with hot sausages are mostly unknown, the tomatoes are never fried, but sometimes we do eat mushrooms for breakfast. But only in an omelette.

What can go next to bread is a very personal decision. Some like bacon with onions, some will have smoked sausage with seasonal vegetables, others will be happy with a boiled egg or two, with or without cheese. We also have sausages that are remarkably like Irish Black Pudding, and from time to time, especially during winter a lot of delicacies from a recently sacrificed pork may pop up also on the breakfast table. And bread of course. Or all the above together.

And let us not forget those who take the extra time to make an omelette or a good portion of polenta with cheese. Both are highly recommended for breakfast if you are not pressed by time.

For this part of the book containing breakfast recipes, we present a few simple recipes you can make without too much effort and are definitely not in the sandwich with ham and cheese category.



1. Furry bread

( Frigănele /  Bundás kenyér )

If you want a warm breakfast, prepared in record time, which is good even in the afternoon (if anything remains), this is a must-try recipe. After the bread is dipped and fried, the topping is up to you. Some people like to eat it with jam (cherries are our favourite, but raspberries are good too) others like to eat it with grated cheese and strong chili (sauce or cayenne pepper) while some others just want a sprinkle of sugar on top.

Ingredients

- Bread in slices
- A few eggs
- Milk
- Salt, pepper
- Oil for frying

And for the topping

- Jam
- Grated cheese
- Cayenne-pepper

In a deep plate, beat the eggs well and add a little milk (3 tablespoon / egg).

Put lots of oil in a frying pan and heat it up. Check with a drop of egg from the end of the fork whether it is hot enough or not. If it turns black in a second, it is too hot. If it does not start frying

immediately, it is not hot enough. Usually, I turn the heat up to the maximum, to heat the oil quickly, but then turn it down halfway to not to burn the food. Now put the slices of bread in the plate with eggs and milk, and soak for a few seconds, but not more than $\frac{1}{2}$ minutes (one by one, not at the same time). If they are too heavy, leak milk or break when you take them out, you have had them soaking for too long. Do not throw them away, just use them, they will take a longer time to fry, but will be good anyway. When the bread was soaked enough, put it in the hot oil, and turn constantly until both sides are fine golden brown. They tend to burn fast, be careful.

I cannot give you the exact amount of any of these since different types of bread need a different amount of egg / milk mixture. For example, two eggs and half a glass of milk is usually enough for two slices of white loaf, while the same amount of egg / milk is probably enough for at least four to five slices of dark wholemeal bread, since the darker the bread the more consistent it is. The golden rule is that if you feel that your slice of bread is not soaked enough, add more eggs, beat well, add more milk and dip them again.

Tips

- If your bread is older and a little on the dry side of life, I recommend that you arrange a two-plate layout, such as having the milk in the first plate, in the second eggs. Soak the bread in the first until it becomes soft, then place it in the second to get the fine coating of eggs, and further to fry it.



2. Bread-cake

( Prăjitură de pâine / Bundáskenyélapótya )

This recipe is perfect if you have some leftover bread from yesterday. The more variety of bread you have, the better the taste will be. I intentionally give no quantities below, since I do not know how many leftovers you have. Your goal is to make something like a batter that you can pour and bake in the oven.

Ingredients

- Leftover bread from yesterday
- Bacon
- Egg
- Milk
- Grated cheese
- 5 – 6 slices of cheese
- Salt, pepper

If you like

- Spring onion
- Red peppers
- Olives
- Sour cream
- Parsley

Cut the bread into small cubes. Whisk the eggs, and place the bread cubes in, mix well. Add salt, pepper, grated cheese, and the other ingredients from the **If you Like** section. When everything is mixed well, pour in milk to obtain something at the consistence of pancake batter, i.e. something you can pour easily out into a baking tray.

In a baking tray place the bacon slices on the bottom, pour the batter on top. Cover with cheese slices, and it is great if you can garnish with paprika slices, olives, chives, etc ...

Put it in the preheated oven at 190°C and bake for approx. 45 minutes.

Tips

- If you have muffin tray, you may want to make several breadcake muffins, instead of one large cake.
- If you have a baguette from yesterday, cut it into thin slices, not cubes, soak them in the eggs and layer them in the pan, pour the remaining egg on top, decorate as you desire.



3. Fried mushrooms

( Ciupercă prăjită / Sültgomba )

This delicacy is ideally made during the summer when you can pick fresh wild mushrooms. Our favourites are the saffron milk cap, but any mushroom with firm flesh will do it, such as champignon, but avoid boletus, they have the tendency to turn out very mushy while frying. Be careful, always pick mushrooms you are familiar with and always take them to a mushroom control. Do not pick obviously poisonous fungi, which, for example, are large, red with white spots.

Ingredients

- Mushrooms
- Spring onions
- A few garlic cloves
- Butter
- Salt, pepper

Melt the butter in a pan, toss in the garlic and spring onions cut into thin slices. Stir for a few minutes, but do not let it burn. Feel free to remove the garlic after a few minutes.

Put in the mushroom slices and stir continuously. Do not have in too many mushrooms at once, because they will release water and you will get a stew instead of fried mushrooms.

Season with salt, pepper and fry the mushrooms until they are done (Taste them if you are not sure if they are done. When you like the taste, they are done).



4. Jewish eggs

( Ouă evreiești / Zsidó tojás )

A perfect opportunity to bring out something new from a few boring boiled eggs. Can also be stored in the refrigerator for tomorrow, or the day after. This is an old Ashkenazi Jewish recipe, which was traditionally eaten before lunch on the Sabbath, but has not lost its popularity even today. It is quite easy to prepare, but it takes mastery to make it perfect.

Ingredients

- 5-6 hardboiled eggs
- A finely chopped small onion
- Salt, pepper
- Oil, 1 tablespoon for each egg

If you like

- Fried goose or duck liver

Clean the hard-boiled eggs and crush them with a fork in a bowl.

Mix in the finely chopped onion, oil and season with salt and pepper. Mix it very well and eat it with fresh bread.

If you make the luxury version, do not forget to mix in the liver as well.



5. Mushroom pancake

( Plăcintă cu ciperci / Gombapalacsinta )

Although this is nothing like a regular pancake and seems to be too complicated to prepare for a quick breakfast, do not despair. You can make it the day before, and then keep it in the fridge, because this is a food that has a rather good shelf life. Boletus or some other soft mushroom is recommended for this recipe, and do not use chanterelles or any of the other harder mushrooms. This food with Armenian origins also comes with a particularly good sauce if you like sauces.

Ingredients

- 1 medium red onion
- 250 – 300 gr. mushrooms
- 3 eggs
- Some butter
- Flour
- Oil
- Salt, pepper,
- Paprika powder
- Parsley

For the sauce

- Sour cream
- Vinegar
- 1 glass milk

Finely chop the onion and fry it in pan in a little oil. Add a little paprika powder, mix well, add the cleaned and diced mushrooms together with a glass of water.

Cook until the mushrooms are soft, then take them out of the water. Do not throw away the boiling water if you want to make the sauce as well. Chop the mushrooms into small pieces with a knife. You can use a blender, or a meat grinder too.

Mix the mushrooms well with 3 eggs, 3 – 4 tablespoons of flour, salt, pepper and chopped parsley. Divide the batter into several pieces, shape the parts into flat slices, and fry them in hot oil.

For the sauce, make a small amount of roux with oil and flour. Mix it with 1 glass of cold milk, season with vinegar, salt, and parsley. While cooking it, continuously add a few spoons from the boiling water until you get a sauce with a good consistency you like, and afterwards have in the sour cream. When serving, have sauce on, or next to it.

Tips

- For an extra taste, cook the mushrooms in leftover stock, or add in a stock cube in the cooking water.



6. Mashed aubergine

( Vinete / Vinetta )

This delicacy is the best when made from fresh grilled aubergines. But do not despair if you do not find any, there are already prepared varieties of the grilled eggplant you can buy from the store and then finish the cream at home.

Ingredients

- Aubergine, ca 300 gr.
- Sunflower oil (use only this), ca. ½ - 1 dl for each aubergine, but not more than ½ l altogether.
- Salt
- Onion
- Mayonnaise

If you like

- A few crushed garlic cloves
- Juice of ½ lemon

If you use raw eggplants, the first step is to grill them on a flame grill or in the oven, until all the purple skin is burnt to black, it is crispy, and you can peel it off in thin layers with your hands.

Since they will be hot, I recommend that you make a bowl of cold water, to dip your fingers in between pieces of peeled skin to cool them. Once all the aubergines have been cleaned from the burnt skin, let them rest for a few minutes so that all the bitter juice flows out of them (you can leave them on a flat surface, such as a butchers' block, at a slight angle and appeal to gravity to help with processes).

After that, using a wooden spoon, mash the inside of the aubergines in a bowl, starting from the end, and slowly scrape off towards the stem. Do not use a mixer for this, it will ruin the food, and do not use a spoon made of metal (iron, aluminium) as it will react with the eggplant, giving it a black colour and a bitter taste (a large plastic spoon is also a good choice if you do not have a wooden spoon).

When all the aubergines are scraped, mix them well in the bowl, and do not forget to still use your wooden spoon.

If you bought half-prepared aubergines from the store in a canned jar, you are already at this stage, so continue from the here.

Add a good amount of salt to your taste, this will be the basis of your cream.

Start adding oil to the eggplant cream, small amounts at a time and mix it thoroughly each time so that all the oil entirely dissolves in the eggplant.

Taste often while mixing, and when you feel you have a tasty enough cream, you can either eat it as it is on a slice of bread, or you can add more flavours to it as desired.

The taste should be creamy, not bitter, and not very oily.

For extra flavour, the following ingredient can be added, either together or separately:

- 1 finely chopped small onion
- 2-3 crushed garlic cloves
- Homemade mayonnaise
- A tiny amount of lemon juice

A few slices of tasty tomatoes go very well on top of the cream.

Homemade mayonnaise

This is the hard (but tasty) way to make mayonnaise. The easy way is that you buy the ready-made from stores.

Ingredients

- One egg yolk
- Sunflower oil
- Mustard. Preferably a tiny amount of Dijon or Savora mustard will do it.

The egg yolk should go in a deep and clean plate that is not very wide at the bottom and does not have a very steep margin. Something in the shape of a Chinese soup bowl is perfect.

Use a small clean wooden spoon (metal spoon can leave scratches on the plate, and some may even react poorly with the ingredients, and if you use a mixer the mayonnaise will be very hard) and use fast, constant, circular motions, mixing in approx. $\frac{1}{2}$ dl. (per egg yolk) sunflower oil, one teaspoon each time. It is of utmost importance that you do not stop mixing, otherwise the mayonnaise will just collapse and you will have to start from scratch again. When all the oil is mixed in, you can add a teaspoon of mustard, and from this point on, more oil can come in, and feel free to stop mixing when you think you have enough mayonnaise.



7. Boiled bacon

( Slănină fiartă / Abált szalonna )

For those who consider the fried bacon to be too hard for the stomach and cannot handle it in its raw, natural form, there is a third option: cook it. Slowly, with spices, then cool it. Then eat it.

Ingredients

- A good piece of fatty bacon, ca ½ kg, it is up to you to find your favourite piece.
- 4 – 5 big garlic cloves
- Paprika, salt, pepper, a few bay leaves, red paprika powder

Wash the bacon and put it in cold water with the finely chopped garlic and bay leaves. Boil the water (with the bacon inside) and lower the heat to a minimum so that the bacon continues to boil and simmer for 1 – 1½ hours, or even more, until the bacon and the skin on the bacon are soft.

Take the bacon out of the pan, cut shallowly over the surface in a grid layout with a sharp knife, put on salt, pepper and the rest of the garlic cut in thin slices and sprinkle on top with red paprika powder. Put it in a plate and let it cool. When it is cold, wrap it tightly in a plastic wrap and put it in the fridge overnight. You can eat it next morning, and the leftovers are good for up to a few days, if you keep it in the fridge.

Do not eat this bacon while still warm, it is not a light treat for the stomach.



8. Vegetable spread

( **Zacuscă / Zakuszka** )

This dish is known under various names in the southern parts of Europe, such as Ajvar, Lutenica, or others. Each country has its own recipe, some of them are spicy, some of them are creamier, some of them have chunky vegetables, but everyone swears that they have the original. Such is ours. Original, to our household, and if you dare to go to our neighbours, they will swear that theirs is the original. Because this happens with tasty dishes. Everyone owns them. Now you have your own recipe as well. Here I share with you the recipe that is made with beans, and in the tips section I will give some other variations and instructions on how to make them.

Ingredients

- Ca. 200 gr. of finely chopped onion.
- 200 – 300 gr. red peppers cut into strips.
- 300 gr. ripe tomatoes, or a box of crushed tomatoes
- 200 gr. large white beans, cooked.
- 10 – 15 whole black pepper seeds
- Salt
- 3 – 4 bay leaves
- Ca. 1 dl sunflower oil

Do not panic if you cannot measure out all the ingredients in grams, they are there just to give you a sense of proportion. In Transylvania we use 10 times as much of this amount, and the resulting cream goes in hermetically sealed jars, which should be eaten in the winter when vegetables are rare. But the luxury of Western civilization has taught us that all vegetables are always available at your fingertips, without extra effort and taste. So, you can afford to experiment.

An important thing is that in Transylvania the local variety of a red pepper is used (*Capsicum annuum* L. var. *grossum* of Solanaceae), which is a very meaty and sweet variety of the pepper, and which unfortunately is rarely available west of Hungary. For my recipe I have used a Bell pepper and a long and sweet "Kapia pepper", and the taste was close to satisfying.

If you have raw beans, soak them in water overnight, and boil them thoroughly in water with a little added salt (this means at least 3 – 4 extra hours of work) before you start making this dish.

Sauté the finely chopped onions in the sunflower oil over low heat until they become transparent, but do not let it brown or burn. This means that you must stir them very often, almost constantly.

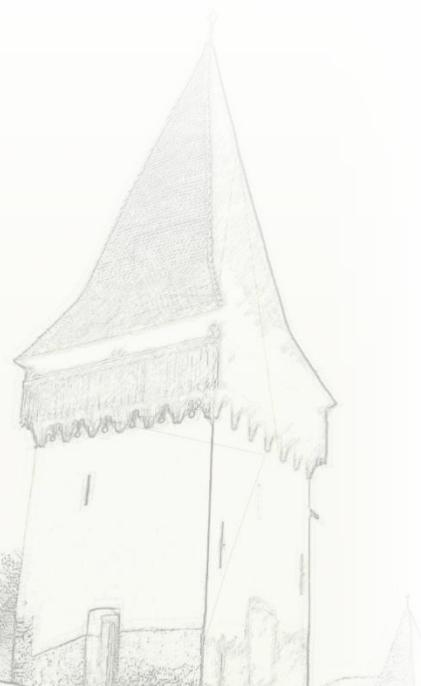
Meanwhile, cut the red peppers into long, thin slices and when done put them together to fry with the onions.

Let them simmer until the peppers are soft, and afterward add the tomatoes. Mix well and let it cook for at least 10 – 15 minutes.

While they are cooking, crush some of the beans with a fork, but not all of them. Crushed beans will make the food creamier.

Add the beans, season with a small amount of salt (do not forget that you have boiled the beans in salted water), add black pepper and bay leaf. Let it boil, still on low heat for 30 minutes or even 1 hour, and do not forget that you have to stir often, otherwise it burns.

When you are done, I recommend waiting for a while for it to cool down before you actually eat it, otherwise it will burn your mouth.



Tips

- This dish can also be made with aubergines. If you plan to do this, replace the beans with grilled aubergines, do not slice the peppers, but use a meat grinder and grind the peppers and onions before frying them, and do not use bay leaves.
- You can make this dish with mushrooms instead of beans. Chop and fry them and put them in your dish just as you would with the beans. All the rest stays the same.
- Use fried peppers instead of raw. Your food will be much creamier and closer to being a true Macedonian Ajvar.
- Instead of beans, you can also use squash. Clean, cut into cubes, boil in water, and have it in with the vegetables.
- Some family recipes also use a grated carrot and garlic. We leave it to you to try out these ingredients.
- And last but not least, for the really brave ... add hot chillies.



9. Homemade Pâté

( Pateu / Májpástétom)

Preparing a homemade liver pâté is a good way to get the required amount of vitamins A and B topped with a nice amount of iron. If you make a large amount, you can store it in the fridge for quite some time, and you will always have something tasty to eat in times of need ... or when you just must hurry somewhere.

Ingredients

- 30 dkg. pork liver, diced
- 60 dkg. Pork meat, diced. Feel free to use the neck without bones or any parts of pigs that have a little fat on.
- 60 dkg. fat bacon, diced
- 3 medium onions
- Some spices, such as: clove, allspice, nutmeg. Make your own mix from spices you like. Use a mortar and pestle.
- Salt, pepper
- Some pork fat/lard or oil

In a pan, add a little lard or oil, the bacon pieces, and fry until almost crispy. Add the finely chopped onions and let the onion simmer with the bacon until it is shiny and soft, but do not let it burn.

Add the diced meat and a little water, and let it cook until the meat is soft. Depending on the cut it may take 30 minutes or more.

While the meat is cooking, clean the liver of the membranes and veins and cut it into medium-sized pieces. When the meat is tender, put in the liver pieces. Cover and cook for approx. 5 – 10 minutes, but do not let the liver become hard and dry.

Remove from the heat and allow to cool. When it is cold, take everything out of the pan and use a meat grinder to grind everything together for at least 2 times. You can also use a food processor.

Put it back in the same pot you cooked it in and put it back on the stove. Season it with salt, pepper, and the spice mixture you have crafted before, and cook it for at least 20 – 30 minutes on low heat. When done, place it in a jar, seal it tightly, cover it with a kitchen towel and place it under a blanket overnight so that it cools slowly. When cool it is ready to be eaten, and from now on, store in the fridge.

If you want, you can make a good topping cream using it, by adding a little room temperature butter ($\frac{1}{4}$ part butter goes well with $\frac{3}{4}$ part liver pâté) and 1 teaspoon mustard. If you want a hardboiled egg cut into small pieces can go inside. It goes perfectly with pickles or tomatoes.



10. Transylvanian omelette

( Omletă /  Tojásrántotta)

Omelette in Transylvania is made with raw eggs, and a lot of other Ingredients. It is similar to scrambled eggs, because it is not fried on both sides and it must not be dried out on the stove, but it contains a large selection of fresh half-fried vegetables. If you are not allergic, use fatty bacon, otherwise oil will be enough.

Ingredients

- Egg. 2 – 3 – 4,
depending on how
hungry you are
- Bacon or oil, or lard
- Salt
- Bread

If you like

- Vegetables
 - Red pepper
 - Onions
- Mushrooms
- Cheese
- Spring onions

In a frying pan, put a thick slice of bacon cut like a cockscomb (or oil or lard) and heat it until the bacon is melted and you have enough fat in the pan. Cut the vegetables into thin slices and fry them in the pan. If using onions, they should be put in for at least 5 minutes before the peppers. If you use mushrooms, it should be the first into the pan, and should be fried well.

Whisk the eggs together with a little salt in a plate, and when the vegetables are done (or they are as fried as you like them) remove the pan from the stove and put in the eggs. With a thin slice of bread, dip the plate out of the eggs, and put it in the pan too. Put the pan back on the stove and mix thoroughly so that it does not burn on either side and does not dry out.

Put in some grated cheese, and fry, but be careful that the original omelette from Transylvania should not be completely fried, dry or burnt on one side or the other, should be always a little runny. Decorate with some spring onions. When the omelette is done, eat it with some salad, tomatoes, cucumbers, etc....



11. Beef salad

( Salată de boeuf)

A traditional Romanian dish for festive opportunities, “Salată de boeuf” has its origins in the French language, and it means “beef salad”. It can be perfectly made with the leftover vegetables from a clear meat soup (Recipe 14) and some of the meat from there, but also if you cook the vegetables separately and use a little leftover cooked meat from another dish it can come out decent. Worth mentioning is that this is also a very flexible recipe, so do not worry if you do not have all the ingredients below, just leave out the ones you do not have (or do not like). Except for one. Pickled cucumber. It is mandatory to have pickled cucumber in beef salad. We highly recommend making your own mayonnaise, it is a hundred times better than anything else you can get.

Ingredients

- Boiled carrots, parsnips, celery, parsley root
- Boiled potatoes, peas, green beans, turnips
- Pickled cucumber
- Olives
- Boiled meat (beef preferred, other goes well too)
- A large amount of mayonnaise, homemade preferred.

Dice all the vegetables and meat.

Make a good amount of mayonnaise (for instructions see Recipe 6) and mix all the vegetables and meat with the mayonnaise.

Use pickled cucumber and olives as decoration.

Store in the refrigerator approx. 1 hour before you want to eat it.



12. Polenta with cheese

( Mămăligă cu brânză / Túrós puliszka )

Polenta is such a simple, yet versatile food that it has countless ways of preparation. Here I present the most basic of all, with white, salty cheese, but this is without a doubt the easiest way to make it. Read the tips section below for inspiration and ideas. Try to get some coarse, Eastern European yellow cornmeal, because the one you can find in stores under the name "Polenta" is too fine to recreate the original taste of Transylvanian polenta.

Ingredients

- 600 ml water
- 200 gr. yellow corn flour (or Polenta flour)
- Salt
- White Cheese. We like Feta.

In a pot boil up the water, add a little salt, and slowly sprinkle in the polenta flour. Cook over low heat while stirring until the polenta has thickened. Cut the white cheese into cubes, place the polenta in deep plates and place on the white cheese.

Tips

The possibilities for polenta are endless. You can enjoy it with:

- White cheese and sour cream.
- Milk, kefir, fermented sour milk, or yoghurt.
- Fry the leftovers from yesterday and put it in an omelette.
- Polenta in layers: in a casserole add a layer of bacon, then repeat 1 layer of polenta and 1 layer of white cheese until you still have more and place it in the oven for 30 minutes.
- Fried in lard with onions.
- Next to many of our main courses (see recipes there).



Transylvanian cheese

Cheese is not considered an important part of Transylvanian cuisine. It is used, regardless but does not occupy a central part in or food repertoire. We do not have any internationally famous cheeses, such as cheddar or stilton, and honestly, still a few years ago cheese with mould on it ended in the garbage bin, but in any case, there are a large number of cheeses available in Transylvania which are famous locally, but which are still awaiting international recognition.

Given the myriad of modern variations of the same theme (i.e., yellow cheese in its innumerable incarnations), there are two traditional families of cheese in Transylvania: cheese made from sheep's milk which is usually salty, and cheese made from cow's milk, such as cottage cheese.

The most famous of the cheeses in Romania is a salty and soft cheese, traditionally made from sheep's milk, called "Telemea" bearing heavy similarities to the Greek cheese "Feta". It can be bought from the farmer's market, or if your way leads you to a supermarket, in the cheese section I am sure they have a great selection of it. It is a traditional Romanian cheese, with local variations all over the country, so try to taste a few different origins to get the best experience.

And last but not least, pictured is the basic cheese for everyone that can be used as a starting point for all the others, is simply called "Cheese" and is made from sheep's milk. It is a semi-hard, not very salty cheese, and it serves as the basis of all the varieties above. Light taste, not a life-changing experience, but it has potential. Readily available at farmers' market but sadly considered too rough and unsophisticated to be served in the shelves of supermarkets, it still finds its way into specific recipes, such as grind it in a meat grinder, add salt and use it to give some taste to some cooked tagliatelle.

But times are changing, and in recent years a lot of local artisan cheese makers have popped up around Transylvania so look out for their produce. They might surprise you.

Urdă / Orda is another traditional cheese you can find in the region. It is a soft and sweet cheese, often used in desserts, mostly in pancakes (mash with sugar and fresh dill, fill the pancake with it) or just eaten as is. The most similar cheese to it is the Italian variety of "Ricotta".

A delicacy when it comes to taste is the Romanian cheese "Brânză de burduf" which is a delicious salty cheese with an exceptionally strong taste. Traditionally, it was kept in sheepskin

or goatskin and fermented for a long time, where each week added an extra depth of flavour. This is the closest you can get to the strong taste you can discover in some of France's or Italy's most famous cheeses which have already won their international fame.



Soups from Transylvania

Transylvania has a unique soup culture you will not find in any other country. The combination and exchange of practices between the populations inhabiting it has created something unique. There is no major overlap, but more a complementary relationship between the food of Romanians, Hungarians, Germans, and other nationalities who have lived there over the centuries.

In Transylvania, all the vegetables that grow in our garden end up in a soup or another. There is no escape. What remains is that you add the corresponding herbs, and from that point on, only your imagination is the limit. And to not to only have boiled vegetables in water, we also use a corresponding thickening. And if you have some meat or bones lying around, that is just fine. Your soup will be even better.

When talking about soups, we clearly differentiate between the following categories:

1. clear meat soups
2. thick soups, made with thickening
3. soups that will make vegetarians happy
4. fruit soups
5. Romanian “Ciorbă”, a good selection of vegetable soups with a little extra

We really hope there will be something to satisfy your curiosity.

But before we continue, a warning. It is easy to make a soup. Making some soups that are easy to make in Transylvania, turned out to be difficult to impossible to make outside of it. It is of an uttermost difficulty to find high quality fresh tripe, which is the base of one of our most iconic soup, **Tripe soup** ( Ciorbă de burtă / Pacalleves ). Sadly, this soup did not make in this book.

Another category that is almost impossible to find due to various health and safety concerns are the offal of various animals. Due to this, the famous “Lamb lung soup” (which is a festive Easter dish served in our parts) proved exceedingly difficult to make again. But we had to accept reality. If you want to eat authentic Transylvanian soups, the best place to do this is in ... Transylvania.

13. Clear chicken soup

( Supă de pui / Tyúkhúsleves )

This soup is similar to a clear broth, but due to the fact that the chicken goes into dissolution after prolonged cooking, you do not need to cook this for half a day. To get the maximum flavour out of vegetables, I recommend cutting them into long thin slices. Homemade pasta is the jewel on the crown.

Ingredients

- Pieces of chicken, such as thighs, bones, wings.
 - Or a whole raw chicken, buy the fattest chicken you can find. Do not use the whole chicken breasts in the soup, they will turn dry. Separate them and use them in another dish.
- 1 carrot
- 1 parsnip
- 1 small celery
- 2-3 fresh mushrooms
 - Champignon or oyster mushrooms, no boletus, chantarelle, any other wildly coloured mushroom
- Salt, pepper, parsley leave.

For the homemade pasta

- 1 egg
- Flour
- Salt
- Water

Start by making the pasta: make a very hard dough from the egg, salt, some water, and flour. Stretch it out with a dough stretcher very thin (less than $\frac{1}{2}$ millimetres). If it becomes difficult to handle, just cut in half and work separately on the two dough sheets. When you think it is thin enough, take a knife and cut it into long very thin strips (like capellini), or use a pasta machine if you have one. Spread the strips on a flat surface and let them dry.

While the pasta dries wash and clean the chicken, leave the skin on, and divide into pieces of good size, making the cut at the joints. The fattier the chicken is, the tastier the soup will be. Drop the chicken pieces in boiling water and keep in for 1 minute, then remove them from the boiling water, wash in cold water and pat it dry. In a pot have in cold water (ca. 2 litres), put in the chicken pieces, and bring to a boil. Remove the foam when it rises, we want a clear soup.

When there is no more foam, put on the lid and let it simmer until the meat is half done. Depending on the age of the chicken this can take up to 30 minutes. Meanwhile, clean the vegetables and mushrooms and cut them into long thin pieces. If you want the soup to be cleaner, do not add the brown part of the mushrooms, use them in some other recipe, such as fried mushrooms.

When the meat is half done, add the vegetables together with the meat, add salt and pepper, and let it cook until everything is finely cooked and tender, and you also like the taste. Now, boil the homemade pasta in salty water (or water with vegeta), remove with a strainer, wash and either put it in the soup or when serving, put the pasta in a plate, pour on the soup, and on top add a little bit of finely chopped parsley.



14. Clear beef soup

( Supă de carne /  Húsleves)

Also known as broth, this food is not only a very healthy and tasty soup, but sometimes it is also used as a base for other more complex dishes. The real secret is to let the soup cook for long hours, on a very low heat.

Ingredients

- At least 1 large piece of marrowbone, or an oxtail or both
- Lean beef, diced or whole
- Whole pepper, ca. 2 – 3 teaspoons, and salt
- 10 – 15 carrots
- 2 – 3 pieces of parsley root
- 1 – 2 pieces of parsnip
- 1 (not so big) white onion
- 2 – 3 garlic boats

If you like

- 1 deseeded small green or yellow paprika
- 1 small kohlrabi or kale
- 1 small celery root

Since the meat and bones can come frozen, thaw them first. Do not use a microwave oven, it will damage the meat. Leave the meat in cold water overnight, or two – three hours before you start cooking.



When the meat is thawed use a kettle to boil some water, and when the water is boiled, pour it over the bones (only the bones, not the meat). Let them rest for a few minutes in the warm water. Discard the water. Repeat until the last water you throw away is clean.

Meanwhile wash the meat with cold water, several times.

Now put cold water in a large pot, put in the bones, the meat, salt, and pepper (use a pepper bag, or simply a clean tea holder) and allow to boil on low heat for at least an hour. Watch it eagerly, when brown foam rises, remove it from the top, so you get a clear soup. If you do not remove the foam, the soup will not be so clear, and will have an oilier taste. Decide what you want and it is ok to try out both varieties.

When you do not see more foam on top, it is time to put in the vegetables. If you go for the clearest meat soup, clean the inside of the pot with a clean cloth above the water level after reducing the heat so that it does not boil so heavily but do not stop the boiling process.



Peel and chop the vegetables, you can cut them into large pieces or keep them whole.

From now on, just let the soup boil for approx. 4-5

hours on the lowest possible heat, so that it does not evaporate rapidly, and the bones and pieces of meat are still well cooked to extract all the flavour. Strain before serving. When the soup is done, take out the vegetables and serve them with the soup, eat them as they are or make a salad (like salad de boeuf) with it.



Tips

- The vegetables will make the soup cloudy if they are not removed after cooking.
- If you do not have time to cook it 4 – 5 hours, make sure the meat is tender (after 1 – 1.5 hours cooking usually it is) and the vegetables are done and just put in a beef broth concentrate.
- If you want a dark-yellow soup have in the peeled skin from one or more purple or red onions (wash them of course).
- We recommend making a larger portion of this broth if you can afford storage (frozen for several weeks, in the fridge for several days), since some recipes require or recommend the use of this soup as cooking base instead of water.

Serving tips

- With homemade noodles (see recipe 13.), you boil them in another pot in salted water with a little vegeta. A small green or red strong chili goes well with it.
- With dumplings (see recipe 68. you can boil them in the soup or in salted water). You can also have the vegetables and meat in.
- Marrow from the bone marrow goes very well on a toasted bread.



15. Goulash soup

( Supă de gulaș / Gulyásleves )

The most misunderstood Hungarian dish that is always made thick as a stew is strangely enough, a soup. Indeed, a very thick soup, but a soup anyway. This soup has nothing in common with the goulash you find in Western Europe (or Scandinavia), where in most situations it was transformed into a stew with a lot of various vegetables and extra strong chili together with minced meat. Oh, the indignity.

Ingredients

- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- Beef, ca. 250 gr, diced
- Potato, ca. 1 kg, cut into cubes
- Salt, pepper
- Sweet red paprika powder
- Tagliatelle

If you like

- 1 big tomato
- Chili (if you like it spicy)
- Caraway seeds

Start in the same way as you would make a goulash (hence it is called a goulash soup): chop up the onion, have some oil in a bigger casserole, add the onion, and let it simmer, but do not let it burn.

Meanwhile, peel the potatoes and cut them into cubes. When the onion is done (approx. 10 – 15 min) put in the black pepper, then the meat, followed by the caraway seeds if you use, stir for a few minutes, and add the potatoes. I recommend adding a few pieces at a time, then stir well, add more, stir, and add more potatoes, as long as you still have potatoes.

Fill the pot with water, season decently with salt, sweet paprika powder (and spicy one if you use) and let it cook until the potatoes are done. Stir occasionally.

If you think it is not thick enough, add the tomatoes and cook until the tomatoes are disintegrated.

Now put in the tagliatelle and cook until the pasta is cooked through. This will make the soup thicker, and as you'll discover, tagliatelle is really fun to eat with a tablespoon.

A piece of nice, strong chili can be used to give an extra taste to the soup.



16. Fried meat soup

( Supă de carne prăjită / Brodeläwend )

This soup is another example of the practical ways of how ancient Saxons lived in Transylvania: let's reuse everything, nothing should be wasted. And they were right. This soup was made from a little grilled rib I bought 4 – 5 days ago and did no manage to finish, but which sadly today was too dry to be eaten as it is, instead, refurbishing it in a soup gave it a brilliant taste.

Ingredients

- Leftover roasted / grilled meat from pork, beef, or chicken. Ca. 500 gr.
- A few pieces of bacon
- 1 small onion or spring onion
- 2 bay leaves
- Flour
- Oil
- Sour cream
- Salt, pepper, vinegar (feel free to use the spicy chilli vinegar we presented in the introduction. It will add an extra flavour to the soup)
- 1 potato, diced

Put the bacon in a saucepan, if there is not enough fat on it put in a little oil as well, and fry the bacon till crisp. If you use raw meat, put it in now and cook until the meat is soft.

Meanwhile, clean, peel and finely chop the onion, and put in next to the bacon. Let it simmer for a few minutes. Add the fried meat and a little water, cook together for 5 minutes.

While stirring continuously add in 1 tablespoon of flour, and continuously stir, until the flour turns brown like a roux.

Now pour in approx. 1 – 1.5 litres of boiling van, add the bay leaves, salt and pepper and potato and cook until the potatoes are done.

Add the required amount of vinegar. Before serving, add 2 tablespoons of sour cream.

Tips

- Do not leave out the bay leaves, they bring the balance in the soup.
- If you have some leftover cooked potatoes, they also go well in the soup.



17. Stew soup

( Supă de tocană / Tokány leves )

The dish called “tokány” is a typical Hungarian dish made with meat fried in oil with onions, and is the basis of this tasty soup and other dishes. It can be translated as stew, but this would be a very bad translation for this food that is not stew because it does not contain a large amount of gravy. A “tokány” is actually more dry and meaty than saucy.

Ingredients

- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- Beef, ca. 250gr, diced. If you do not have beef, use lamb or pork
- Potato, ca. 1 kg, cut into cubes
- Red paprika powder or paprika cream
- Milk and wheat flour for a thickening
- Bay leaf – 2, 3 pcs.
- Salt, pepper, vinegar

Peel and finely chop the onion, add a little oil to the pot, add the onion, and sauté the onion until it is slightly browned but not burnt. When the onion is almost done, have a little ground pepper on the onion, mix well and put the meat in the pot. Stir, mix well so that it does not burn and add a small amount of water, put in the paprika powder (or paprika cream) and cook it up. Peel the potatoes, cut them into cubes (approx. 1 cm x 1 cm x 1 cm) and when the meat is almost done (after approx. 10 – 15 min) put in the potatoes in the pot, pour in 1 – 1.5 litres of water, put in the bay leaves and bring to the boil.

When the potatoes are done (depending on the potato variety it can take up to 30 minutes) make a thickening of milk and flour, add a little vinegar to the thickening and add the thickening to the soup. Bring to the boil. Remove the bay leaves, season with salt and pepper and serve hot.

Variations

- It gives another tasty soup if at the end you add in some pre-cooked green beans and season with dill.

Tips

- It is perfectly acceptable to use yesterdays’ “Pepper Tokány” (recipe 69) as a base for this soup.



18. Sauerkraut juice soup (Supă cu zeamă de varză murată / Savanyúkáposztalé leves)

This is a typical Transylvanian winter soup, when fresh pork is available, and the sauerkraut is already sour enough to be used. If you do not make your sauerkraut, I recommend buying a box that did not get fermented with the use of vinegar, but the best thing is to make your own. Of course, a combination can be used. Do not use sauerkraut that contains sugar, vinegar or added spices. For this recipe, you only need the juice from the sauerkraut, so be sure to squeeze out all the available juice from your sauerkraut, and use the remaining sauerkraut for another dish you can find in this book, or just eat them. They contain a healthy amount of vitamin C.

Ingredients

- Sauerkraut juice, approximately 1 litre
- Pork, with a little fat on - approx. 100 - 150 gr.
- 1 carrot
- ½ litre of tomato juice
- 1 small horseradish
- 1 small onion
- Oil, wheat flour to make a thin roux
- Salt, pepper

For the meatballs

- Minced pork (approx. 200-300 g)
- Rice, not too much
- 1 egg
- 1 small onion
- 1 garlic clove

In a large pot cook up 1.5 litres of cold water, put in the pork in cut in cubes, add a little salt and a peeled whole onion and cook approx. 30 minutes or until the meat is tender. Remove the foam that rises on top of the soup.

Meanwhile, make the meatballs: finely chop 1 small onion, put a little oil in a pan, and fry them until soft but not brown. Mix the minced meat with the onion, press the garlic clove in, add the egg and rice and season with salt and pepper and make the desired amount of meatballs from it. Do not make them larger than a nut. Cover the meatballs with flour (put some flour in a plate, and roll te the meatballs in) so that it does not fall apart while boiling in water. Put them in the boiling water one by one. Grate a carrot on the smallest hole in the grater and put it in the soup. Bring to the boil. Pour the sauerkraut juice into the soup, and bring again to boil.

Make a small portion of roux with oil and flour, dissolve with cold water and put it in the soup, bring it to a boil again. And pour the tomato juice into the soup, bring to the boil again. This soup should not be very thick.

Grate the horseradish on the smallest hole in the grater, put it in the soup, or on a plate next to the soup and eat them together.



19. Sauerkraut soup

(Supă de varză murată / Savanyúkáposzta leves)

This is not just your everyday soup, because in “ancient” times they said that this soup cures hangovers. Well, the legends may or may not be true, but this very tasty soup is how to make a proper soup using sauerkraut, that not only that is different, but also tastes very good

Ingredients

- Ca. 250 gr. Pork meat
- Ca. 10 cm Hungarian sausage with paprika or chorizo
- A little bacon
- 250 - 300 gr. Sauerkraut
- 1 carrot
- 1 parsley root
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 small red onion
- 2 garlic boats
- Flour and sour cream
- Red pepper cream (or paprika powder)
- salt, oregano (or summer savoury)

Cut the pork into cubes and place it in a saucepan with the bay leaves, the onion cut into thin slices and pressed garlic cloves. Cook for ca. 30 minutes.

While it is cooking, cut the bacon into cubes and fry them.

When the bacon is done, combine with the meat. While they are cooking, cut the carrot and parsley root into slices, and add them into the pot as well.

After 30 minutes put in the sauerkraut (if the sauerkraut is very sour just wash with a cold water a few times) and cook until the meat is soft enough.

Make a thickening with a tablespoon of sour cream, and half a tablespoon of flour. Dilute it with juice from the soup, and then mix it together with the soup.

Bring the soup to the boil and let it cook for 10 minutes.

Season with salt and paprika cream, a little oregano (or summer savoury) and when serving, add a little sour cream. The soup is ready.



20. Cabbage soup

( Supă de varză / Lucskoskáposzta )

This rich-tasting soup is a hearty soup, especially if a good quantity of meat is used in it. You can make it thicker or thinner, it just depends on the amount of cabbage you put in, and how thick you want to make the thickening in the end. I prefer it thick, so that the spoon stays put in it, but you can feel free to experiment out the one you prefer.

Ingredients

- Diced pork, with a little fat on, or with a little bone
- 1 small cabbage
- 1-2 carrots
- 1 small onion
- Milk and wheat flour to make a thickening
- Dill and summer savoury (or a little oregano)
- Salt, pepper, vinegar
- Red paprika powder or paprika sauce

Put in the pork to cook in approximately 2 litres of boiling water together in a casserole with a little salt and cook for approx. 30 – 45 minutes.

If you do not like the fatty parts, cut them off the meat and you can remove them later after you have cooked the flavour out of them.

While the meat is cooking, cut the cabbage and carrot into bite-sized pieces, finely chop the onion, and put them in the casserole together with the pork.

When the vegetables are cooked, make a portion of thickening with milk and flour, add a little vinegar into the thickening, and mix the thickening into the ice cream soup.

Bring to the boil, add a little red pepper (powder or sauce), pepper If you like, summer savoury (or oregano), dill and cook it again for approx. 10 minutes.

When serving you can decorate with a little dill.



21. Stuffed peppers

( Ardei umpluți / Töltött paprika )

Although the name does not suggest this, stuffed peppers is actually a soup... and it happens to be one of our favourite soups. In Transylvania this dish is a very thick soup, but in other parts of Romania you will be served only stuffed peppers with sour cream if you might order it in a restaurant.

Ingredients

- 4-5 small peppers, or more if you like, try to buy the smallest peppers you can find
- 250 grams of minced pork / beef, or enough to fill all the peppers
- Rice, ca. 10 grams / half glass
- $\frac{1}{2}$ liter of tomato juice
- Flour and sunflower oil to make a roux
- 2 small onions
- Parsley leaves



Wash the rice, and put in a saucepan, cook for a few minutes. Finely chop one of the onions, and fry in a little oil until light brown. Remove the rice from the pan, wash well with cold water, mix with the onion and minced meat. Season with salt and pepper.

Clean the peppers, cut out the seeds and the green parts, you should end up with a hole on top of it. This is the place you start to fill it with rice / meat mixture. Fill all the peppers with rice-meat mixture and put them in a large pot. Clean and put in the other onion in the pot, cover with water and cook it for 50-60 minutes, until the meat in the paprika is cooked.

While it is boiling, make a portion of roux with oil and flour and let it cool. When the meat is done add the tomato juice, let it boil and now it is time to mix the roux with the soup. Dissolve slowly the roux in the hot and boiling soup, and let it boil.

When the roux is in the soup, add the parsley leaves and cook for another 30 minutes.

Tips

- If you have not finished the filling make small meatballs, add them to the soup (and cook them), right before the tomato juice
- If you add a bit of a bone or fatty pork meat the soup will have more characteristic taste

22. Stuffed leaves

( Frunze umplate /  Töltike )

You can fill all kinds of leaves, like lettuce, cabbage, grapes, but the original recipe for this food requires kohlrabi leaves, so I will stick to them. You might find it difficult to actually get them in a shop (as per my current knowledge), but a visit to your local farmers' market might be worth a try, there you can discuss directly with the farmers to provide you the leaves required.

Ingredients

- Ca. ½ kg of minced pork or beef
- 10 - 15 large kohlrabi leaves (or lettuce, cabbage, grape leaves)
- Ca. 100 gr. rice
- Milk, wheat flour
- Dill
- Salt, pepper, vinegar
- Sour cream

Clean the leaves, boil some water and keep the leaves in for a few minutes to make them soft, but do not boil them. While the leaves are soaking, mix the minced meat with rice, salt and pepper.

When the mixture is done, take the leaves out of the hot water, wash them in cold and place the minced meat on each, in the form of a small sausage. If there are any leaves left, cut them thinly and put them in the pot you want to cook in. If there is meat at the end, make some meatballs or fill a kohlrabi (recipe 24) and place it next to the stuffed leaves.

Roll up the leaves, tuck in the edges so that they don't fall apart and place them in the pot (if the filled leaves are opening up vehemently, use a cooking twine to hold them in place, remove before serving).

Cover with water and cook until all the meat is done and all the leaves are done cooking. Put the dill in the pot and bring it to the boil again.

Make a thickening of flour, mix it with a little vinegar and add it to the soup. Bring to the boil, and when serving, add a little sour cream.



23. Stuffed squash

( Dovlecei umpluți / Töltött tök )

Once you have searched for stuffed squash on the internet, you will get thousands of recipes with beautifully cooked squash tossed in the oven and fried until golden brown. But this is a recipe book for Transylvanian food. For us, the stuffed squash is a soup. And may I say, a very tasty one, indeed.

Ingredients

- 2-3 zucchini or squash
- 250 gr. minced pork
- A handful of carrot, parsley root, parsnip mixture
- 1 soup spoon rice
- 2 small onions
- Wheat flour, milk
- Dill
- Salt, Pepper, Vinegar
- Sour cream

If you like

- Red paprika powder / cream
- 2 - 3 garlic cloves

Wash and cook the rice until it is almost done, approx. 8-10 minutes.

Put on to boil the carrots, parsley and parsnip pieces in a casserole. Finely chop one of the onions, mix it together with the minced, salt, pepper, and the half-cooked rice (and the crushed garlic if you use).

Clean and peel the squashes and cut them into two or three pieces. With a sharp but small spoon (grapefruit spoon works very well for me) hollow out the squash pieces and fill them with the minced meat mixture. If there is any meat left, make meatballs from them.

Put the squash pieces you carved out from the squashes together with the other onion and the carrot - parsnip - parsley root mixture in the casserole and cook until the squash pieces are soft (about 15 minutes).

Put on a plate some flour, dip the meaty part of the squash in, and put the squashes into the boiling water. If you have meatballs, roll the meatballs in flour before you have them in the water.

Cook together until everything is soft.

Make a thickening with milk and flour, add a little vinegar, and mix it into the soup, bring to the boil. Season with salt and vinegar, a little paprika powder or cream. Bring to the boil again and before serving, add a little sour cream to the serving plate. Serve with a little dill on.



24. Stuffed kohlrabi

( **Gulie umplută / Töltött karalábé** )

All kinds of vegetables can be filled with minced meat and then made into a soup. One of them is the kohlrabi, which in Western Europe is not used particularly, so I think this very tasty recipe will increase the curiosity of some home-cooks to try something new.

Ingredients

- 4-5 small and fresh kohlrabi. Do not buy those that are a little soft.
- Minced pork, approx. 150-200 gr.
- Rice
- Salt, pepper
- Oil and flour to make a thickening
- Parsley leaves, sour cream
- Sour cream for serving

Cook the rice until it is almost half done, approx. 5-8 minutes. Mix the minced meat with salt, pepper and the half-cooked rice.

Hollow out the kohlrabi with a sharp little spoon (grapefruit spoon works very well for me) and fill them with the minced meat.

The minced meat that did not fit in the kohlrabi should be used to make meatballs.

Put the stuffed kohlrabi, the carved out pieces, some parsley leaves and the meatballs in a large pot and cook them for approx. 45 - 50 minutes in salted water or until the kohlrabi is soft and the meatballs are cooked through.

Make a little roux with oil and flour and put it in the soup, cook 10 minutes to mix the flavours.

The soup is ready now, when serving have a little sour cream or sour cream and green parsley leaves on.



25. Stuffed onion

( Ceapă umplută /  Töltött hagyma )

One of the strangest combinations of flavours you can experience in this book, comes from this old Armenian soup, where you cook onions in wine and with different spices to bring out the perfect combination.

Ingredients

- A few large red onions
- 1/2 glass of wine per onion, white if you have
- about 200 gr. minced pork per onion
- a little rice
- 2 – 3 garlic boats
- salt, pepper, parsley leaves
- 1-2 litres of clear beef soup or broth
- sour cream (or whipped cream), flour
- 1 egg yolk

1 large red onion gives approx. 3 – 4 filled onions, which is enough for one person.

Clean the onions and cut down approx. 1/5 of the lower part (from the root part). Mix the wine with the beef soup/broth and cook the whole onions until you can separate the onion layers without breaking them. Take out the onions and keep the boiling liquid, you will use it later. Remove the 3 – 4 outer layers from each onion and set them aside, keeping them whole since you will fill them later. The inner parts chop finely and mix with the crushed garlic and the minced meat. Add salt, pepper, and finely chopped parsley to your taste. Add the rice and mix well.

Fill each of the outer onion layers with this meat mixture and place the stuffed onions on the bottom of a large casserole dish.

Pour the liquid you cooked the onions in, over the stuffed onions, just to cover them a little bit, and let them simmer on a low heat until all the meat is soft.

Make a thickening of sour cream / whipped cream, the egg yolks and 1 tablespoon of flour, and mix it into the soup. Let it simmer for 2-3 minutes before serving. When serving, put the onions in the plate, add a little of the soup around them and as a decoration use a little finely chopped parsley or spring onion.



26. Bean soup with tomato (Supă de fasole cu tomate / Paradicsomos fuszulykaleves)

The classic haricot bean soup is such a basic recipe in Transylvanian cuisine that each family of course has its own recipe. Ours is made with tomatoes and tomato juice, and we swear this is the best soup you can ever make. In case you decide to make this soup without any tomatoes in any form, you will still get a bean soup, except that it is not ours. It is from our neighbour, who swears his soup is the best. I am sure that when you finish this soup, you will swear that yours is the best.

Ingredients

- Beans, approx. 100-300 gr. I have used a mixture of large white, borlotti beans and black beans. You can find your own combination you like and of course you can use canned beans or dry beans as per your preference.
- Pork, ca 250 gr. and a tiny amount of smoked pork bone, or ribs.
- Bacon.
- 1-2 small onions
- Garlic, 2-3 cloves
- 1-2 carrots
- 2-3 tomatoes
- 1 red sweet pepper
- ½ litres of tomato juice or a small can of tomato puree.
- Wheat flour, oil.
- Vinegar, salt.
- Red paprika powder
- Green parsley

If you use dry beans, soak them in water for at least 12 hours before making the soup, otherwise they will not cook properly. In the same water add a little bacon and smoked pork if it is smoked to have a better taste. If the meat you use was prepared with artificial smoke flavouring do not have it along with the beans in the water, it will ruin the taste. If you use dry beans, put them in a large pot, in at least 3 litres of water and let it cook for approx. 1 hour. If you use naturally smoked pork bones and/or bacon, have it in the water together with the beans. After 1 hour, put the rest of the meat in and let it cook for another 1 hour. If you use beans from a tin, just put the meat in the water and cook for 1 hour, or until the meat is tender, and put the beans in afterwards. While the meat is cooking clean and peel the carrots, add to the soup. Afterwards clean and chop finely the onions and garlic, the red peppers, and add them to the soup too.

When the meat and vegetables are tender approx. have the tomatoes peeled, cut in thin slices, put them in the soup and cook for 10 minutes. Put in the tomato juice or tomato puree that was dissolved in 1/2 liter of water. Make a roux and when the roux is done mix in a little red paprika powder, add to the soup and cook everything well, for at least 20 minutes. Add a little finely chopped parsley and the soup is ready now.

In Transylvania, it is common to eat this soup with salted slices of red onion, or scallions.



27. Bean soup with tarragon

( Supă de fasole cu tarhon / Tárkonyos fuszulykaleves )

Only a handful of the world's kitchens depend on the heavy use of tarragon. One of them is the Transylvanian. In western parts of Europe the most common use is in sauces, but in Transylvania we use tarragon in a good portion of soups as an extra spice flavour. For this recipe you need one of our basic Ingredients I have presented in the introductory section: tarragon vinegar.



Ingredients

- A good piece of smoked bone, with meat on (pork bone is best, but be careful if it is pork bone with extra salt, soak it overnight)
- For extra flavour: bacon, the more fat, the better the taste will be
- A small onion, cut into pieces
- Beans. Dry or canned. If they are white beans the soup should have a light colour, if they are kidney beans or black beans the soup will be a little darker.
- Oil, wheat flour to make a roux (thickening)
- Salt, pepper
- Tarragon vinegar

If you like

- A small carrot, parsley root
- A tomato, small pepper, a piece of garlic, crushed
- Tomato juice

If you use dry beans, you must soak them in water for at least 12 hours before starting to prepare this dish, otherwise they will not cook. In the same water add a little bacon to have a better taste.

If you use beans from a tin life is easier, but the food will not taste so good.

Start by washing the meat / bone well and cook it together with the bacon approx. half an hour or more.

If you do not use beans from tin, put the beans in cold water at the same time with the meat and bacon, and let them cook for approx. 2-3 hours, or until the beans are done and soft.

While the meat is cooking, it is time to prepare a roux and let it cool down, for this soup we want to use cold roux.

When the meat is done add the onion, carrot, parsley root and cook until the vegetables are done. If you use beans from tin, now is a good time to have them in.



When the vegetables are done, dissolve the roux in the hot soup (add the soup one tablespoon at a time to the cold roux and mix well so that you get liquid, and have it in the soup). Boil it up.

After about 10 minutes of boiling, it is now time to add salt and tarragon vinegar. Not to forget, that the smoked bones also have a good amount of salt inside and use a spoon when you have in the vinegar. It is easy to have more vinegar in, but a little difficult to take it out of the soup. Taste the soup often, until you get the perfect taste.

When you serve the soup it is perfectly fine to have some fresh onion on the side, or some sour cream next to it.

28. Horseradish soup

( Supă de hrean / Tormaleves )

Surprising, but you can make a very tasty soup with horseradish and a few extra ingredients. Horseradish is also particularly good for colds and flu, it is loaded with vitamins, so we recommend that you use it often, not only in this soup, but also by making a salad from it, by grating it and mixing with vinegar, salt and a grated apple.

Ingredients

- Horseradish, 2-3 pieces, grated on the smallest hole on a grater
- A little rice
- 1 carrot
- 1 small onion
- A few slices of red pepper sausage (chorizo is fine) or smoked bone with meat (or both)
- Milk and flour to make a thickening
- Salt, pepper, vinegar

Add the rice and sausages (and bones if you use) into a large saucepan and cook for approx. 30 minutes in 1 – 2 litres of water.

When the rice is soft, add the sliced carrot, finely chopped onion, half of the grated horseradish, and cook together until everything is cooked through, the vegetables are soft, and the rice is done.

Make a thickening with a spoonful of flour and a glass of milk, add a little vinegar, and mix with the soup.

When serving, decorate with the other part of the grated horseradish.

Season with salt, pepper and a bit of vinegar and the soup is done.

Tips

- Of course a little sour cream will make this soup better too



29. Potato soup with tarragon

( Supă de cartofi cu tarhon/ Tárkonyos pityókaleves)

This basic recipe introduces you to how to make classic tarragon soups with milky thickening. This recipe uses lamb, but feel free to switch it to pork. This soup also tolerates a large variety of different vegetables, but do not use other spices in it apart from tarragon.

Ingredients

- ½ kg of lamb or pork, preferably with bones and fat on
- 5-6 potatoes
- 1-2 carrots
- 1 small onion
- Milk and flour to make a thickening
- Salt, pepper,
- Tarragon vinegar

If you like

- Parsley root, parsnips
- Red pepper, diced
- 1 tomato

If you want to use bones (to make a broth) put it in a large pot with a little salt and cook for at least 45 – 50 minutes in ca. 2 litres of water and discard the bones afterwards.

Cut the meat into cubes and put it in the pot (with a little salt if you are not using the broth you prepared) and cook approx. 30 minutes.

While the meat is cooking, peel the potatoes and cut them into cubes, the carrots into thin slices, the onion into large pieces and put everything into the soup with a few whole black peppercorns. If you use other vegetables, except tomatoes, have them in the soup now.

When the vegetables and meat are soft and ready, make a thickening with flour and milk, add a little tarragon vinegar to the thickening and mix the thickening into soup.

Bring to the boil. If you use tomato, now is the time to have it into the soup and cook the soup until the tomatoes disintegrate.

Season with salt, and the soup is ready.

Tips

- Of course a little sour cream will make this soup better too, use it in the thickener together with the milk



30. Lamb soup with tarragon

(Supă de miel cu tarhon / Tárkonyos bárányleves)

This soup does not require too many Ingredients, it will get its exquisite taste from the various thickeners that are added to it just before it is finished. When you are done, it must be creamy and soft.

Ingredients

- Lamb. About. ½ - 1 kg.
Feel free to use ribs with bones, some fat, and also some good quality lean meat
- 1 onion
- Salt, pepper,
- Fresh (or dry) tarragon
- Tarragon vinegar
- A little butter, approx. 1 teaspoon
- Whipped cream
- Sour cream
- The yolks from 1 egg (If the eggs are small use 2)
- Flour, butter

If you like

- Rice, a small potato

Wash the lamb and separate the bones from the meat. Have the bones, and ribs with a little fat and salt in approx. 2 litres of water (adjust the amount of water if you have more or less meat) and boil approx. 1 – 1.5 hours.

While it is cooking, cut the remaining meat into cubes.

When you have a strong lamb broth, filter the water into a saucepan, use a strainer (if you have a dog, it will be happy to get the boiled bones after cooling), and in the broth have in the lamb, a little butter, the whole onion, tarragon, and a few black peppercorns and cook on low heat until the meat is tender.

If you use a small canvas bag and put in it the vegetables, onion, tarragon and pepper you can take them out afterwards and have a clear soup.

When the meat is cooked, make a light roux from a little oil and flour, while hot dissolve it with cold water, mix it in the soup and cook approx. 10 minutes.

Add 1 tablespoon of sour cream, tarragon vinegar and bring to the boil again.

Before serving, whisk the egg yolks with whipped cream, mix it into the soup, and done.



31. Lettuce soup with meat

( Supă de salată cu carne / Salátaleves )

In ancient times, during cold winter days, it was common to make this soup from cooked salted lettuce leaves that were kept in a jar during the winter with the scope of preservation. Today, of course, fresh lettuce is available all the time, and we actually recommend using it.

Ingredients

- Pork, if you can, get fresh pork loin. It is fine to have some fat and bones on, the soup will have more flavour with this.
- Green lettuce, approx. 1 large iceberg lettuce or 4 – 5 little gem lettuce.
- Milk, flour
- Garlic, dill, a small onion and some rice.
- Vinegar, salt

Clean the onion and garlic and have it in a large pot have in approx. 2 litres of water and boil them up.

Add the diced meat, the washed and cleaned rice and cook for ca. 20 minutes, or until the meat is done. Wash, clean and divide the salad into leaves, chop them into small pieces, add to the soup.

While the soup is boiling, make a thickening of milk and flour, add a little vinegar, put it in the soup, and cook it up.

Clean the dill and put it in the soup. Boil for a few minutes, taste the salad. When you like how crunchy the salad is, the soup is done. Iceberg lettuce needs a little more time to finish cooking, little gem not so much.

Tips

- If you use nettle (*Urtica dioica*) instead of salad, you will get an exceptionally tasty and healthy soup.
- You can make the soup with sorrel also instead of lettuce.



32. Bean – lettuce soup

(Supă de salată cu fasole / Fuszulykás saláta leves)

You can make this unexpected soup with dry beans or tinned. If you use dry, put them in water 12 hours before you start cooking, and it will taste really good if you put bacon or smoked meat in the water.

Ingredients

- Beans. Preferably large whites, otherwise the soup may become darker.
- Pork that is slightly smoked, or ribs and some bacon.
- Lettuce. Iceberg lettuce is fine, little gem lettuce is better.
- Garlic, dill
- Wheat flour, milk.
- Vinegar, salt.

If you use dry beans that were soaked overnight, put them in a large pot, pour over ca. 2 litres of water and let them boil for approx. 1 hour. Afterwards, put the meat in and let it cook for another 1 hour. If you use beans from tin, just put the meat in the water and cook for 1 hour, or until the meat is tender.

Clean and cut the salad into small pieces, crush the garlic, and put them in the boiling water. Cook until the salad is done. If you use beans from tin, put the beans in the soup now and cook for an extra 10 minutes.

Now make a mixture of 1 tablespoon of flour and 1-2 dl of milk. Put some vinegar in it, and have it in the soup, let it boil afterwards.

Put the chopped dill on top, season with salt and vinegar. The soup is ready now.



33. Lettuce soup with eggs

( Supă de salată cu ou / Tojásos salátaleves )

A rich and tasty, but initially unusual soup due to the combination of lettuce and omelette, but you may be surprised at how tasty it can be, if done right. You can also use chanterelle vinegar instead of regular, it will make the taste even more interesting.

Ingredients

- 3 eggs
- Bacon, as much as you want, we recommend using a thick piece of fat bacon sliced down to the skin
- Salad (use 1 iceberg lettuce or 3 – 4 little gem lettuce, depending on how hungry you are)
- Garlic, approx. 4 – 5 cloves
- Paprika powder, salt, pepper, vinegar
- Oil, wheat flour

Cut into small pieces the cleaned and washed salad and put it in a large pot. Cook it in ca 2 litres of water with a little salt, along with the pressed garlic cloves. Separate the egg yolk from whites from 1 egg, keep the yolk.

Fry the bacon in a frying pan until crispy enough, take out the bacon and keep the fat in the pan. Make an omelette with the two remaining eggs and the 1 egg whites in the same frying pan, use a little oil if the bacon was dry and add a little milk if you like.

Put the omelette together with the lettuce, let them boil together a few minutes. When the lettuce is cooked, remove the pot from the heat and allow to cool slightly. Now take the egg yolk you have kept, whisk together with a little flour and a few spoons of soup from the pot, stir well and have it in the soup, and cook up the soup once more.

Taste with salt, vinegar, and when you serve it have the bacon and some strong chili on top.



34. Spinach soup

( Supă de spanac / Spenótleves)

From spinach you can make a very good soup similar to the previous salad soup with eggs, but the preparation and taste are very different, so I can recommend trying it out.

Ingredients

- 2 + 1 egg
- Fat bacon
- ½ kg of spinach
- Garlic, about 4-5 boats
- 1 small onion
- salt, dill, vinegar
- Oil, wheat flour
- Pasta
- Milk
- Butter

Put the bacon in a frying pan and fry until done. Take the bacon out of the frying pan, and make a hard omelette from 2 of the eggs and bacon fat in the same frying pan. When done, cut the omelette into cubes. In a large pot boil approx. 1 – 1.5 litres of water with a little salt, put in the spinach, garlic cloves and cook until done.

Take the spinach out of the pot, put in the omelette, bacon, the onions that were cut into pieces, the pasta and cook it until the pasta is done.

While they are cooking finely chop the cooked spinach, and in a second pot melt some butter, put in the spinach and half a glass of milk, and simmer for a few minutes.

When the onions are almost dissolved, and the pasta is well done and soft put the spinach back in the pot (along with all the juice that comes with it) and cook it for a few minutes.

While the soup is cooking, make a thickening in the following way: whisk together the third egg with flour, add a little milk (approx. ½ glass) and add a little vinegar. Mix the thickening with the soup, season with salt, add a little dill and cook for approx. 10 extra minutes. Ready.



35. Cauliflower soup

( Supă de conopidă / Karfiol leves )

This old recipe for cauliflower soup is my favourite way to prepare soup with cauliflower in. If you have a little fried goose liver or chicken liver to top it, then the taste is even better. This is one of the few occasions when a creamy soup sneaks into the traditional Transylvanian menu.

Ingredients

- 1 large cauliflower
- 1 potato
- 1 tablespoon rice
- Butter and flour to make a thickening
- Salt and pepper
- Yolk from an egg
- Sour cream
- Green parsley

We really recommend

- Fried duck or goose liver

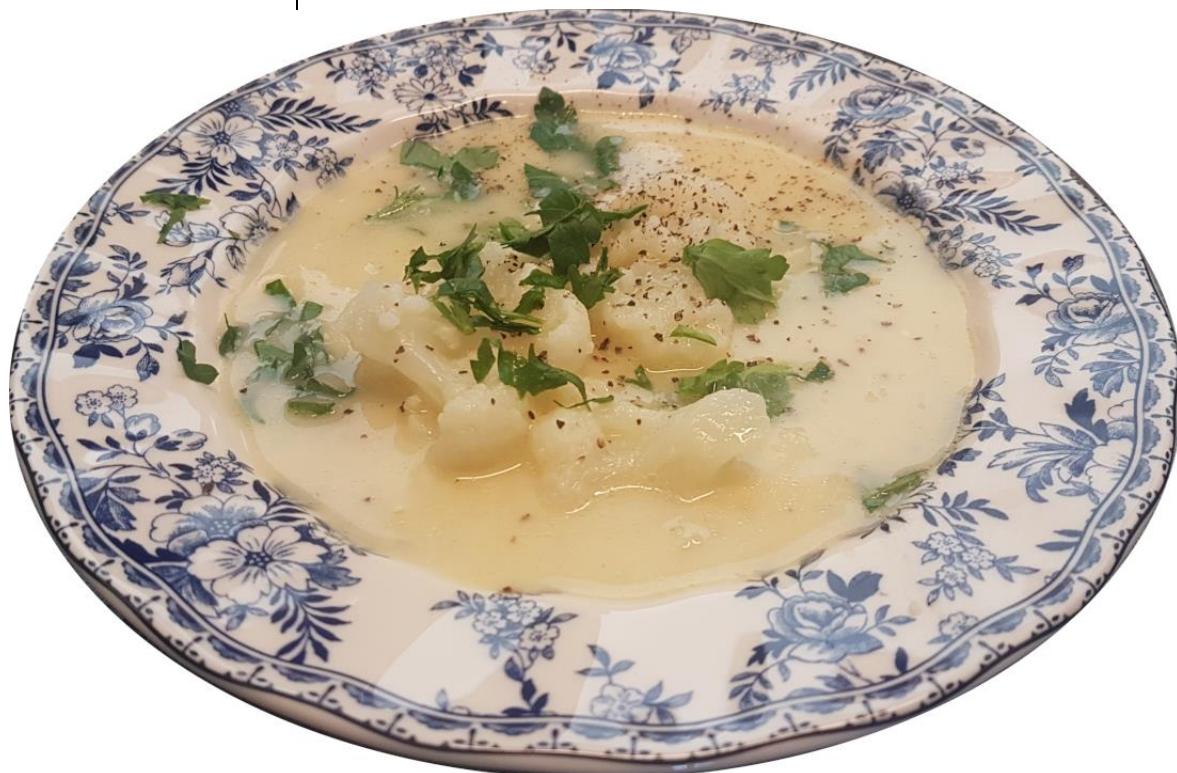
Add the rice with a little salt in a pot and bring to the boil in ca. 2 litres of water. While it is boiling, wash the cauliflower, and separate it into free-standing florets, cut the root into small pieces. Wash and peel the potato, cut into small cubes and put both in the soup.

While the vegetables are cooking, make a light roux with butter and flour. Do not let it burn and darken, and let it cool some space.

When the vegetables are soft, strain some water from the soup into a bowl and store it in a warm place. Take out some large and nice cauliflower florets (they will be decorations when you serve the soup) and have half of the soup in a blender, mix it and have it back in the soup. If you do not want to use a blender, use a fork, and press the large pieces to smoothen them out to make the soup thicker.

Now cook up the water you have filtered from the soup and then dissolve the thickener you made in it and have everything back in the soup. Mix well, bring to the boil again and then remove from the heat.

Whisk the egg yolk with sour cream, mix it into the soup, and done. If you would like a special taste, when serving put on strips of freshly fried liver next to the saved cauliflower florets, decorate with parsley leaves.



36. Garlic soup

( Supă de usturoi / Fokhagymásleves )

If we have managed to make a soup of onions, we can also make a soup with garlic. There are two known varieties of this soup, and a third which is a combination of the other two. The main difference is whether you eat meat or not. Please tame the recipe to suit your needs. The first variant is made with eggs, the second with chicken, and the third with both.

Ingredients

- Garlic cloves, at least 10, but best if you have around 20. Crush approx. half of them.
- Milk (or whipped cream), flour to make a thickening.
- Salt, vinegar
- Red pepper, or paprika cream
- Strong peppers to have some flavor
- Eggs, 2 – 3 – 4 to make an omelette, + 1 raw.
- Chicken. No specific parts, use the ones you prefer
- Spring onion, the green part to decorate

If you use meat: in a saucepan put in a little oil, and fry the meat in the oil for 5 minutes. Add a little of the crushed garlic cloves and paprika cream after the 5 minutes of frying. Continue from the next step.

If you do not use meat: In a saucepan put in a little oil, half of the crushed garlic cloves and paprika cream and fry for 1 minute. Continue from the next step.

Next step: Put in the raw egg now, stir very well and pour over boiling water, approx. 1 dl. Let them boil up and now is the time to fill the pot with water. While the soup is cooking, make a thickening with 1.5 tablespoons of flour, and milk and / or whipped cream. When the thickening is done, add a little vinegar to the thickening and add it to the soup. Bring to the boil, add red peppers as much as you like, season with salt and more vinegar. Put in all the remnants of the garlic (crushed and whole).

Now make a ridiculously hard omelette with the rest of the eggs, cut it into small cubes, and put it in the soup. Boil the soup for a few minutes, decorate with spring onions or green garlic leaves, and it's done.

Tips

- It is perfectly acceptable to use the remnants of a grilled chicken that was waiting in the fridge for a few days for this specific occasion.



37. Bread soup

( Supă de pâine /  Eiernbrock mit Fleischbrühe )

The ingenuity of old German housewives came up with this soup, which uses only basic Ingredients available all year round. Nothing is easier than making a tasty broth with meat, and hopefully there is some old bread around the house. Feel free to add strong chili on top if you handle the taste of it.

Ingredients

- 1-2 slices of dark wholemeal bread
- Clear meat soup / broth (recipe no. 1) sifted, without vegetables
- 1 small onion or spring onion
- 1 egg
- Salt, pepper to taste
- 1 strong chilli

Cut the bread into cubes and place them on the bottom of a deep plate. Cut the onions into thin slices and place them on the bread. Season the onion with salt and pepper and let it rest for a few minutes.

Put one raw egg on the onions and be careful that the egg yolk remains intact. Bring the meat soup to a boil, and carefully place the boiling soup in the plate using a ladle.

Season with a little sliced strong chili, a decent amount of pepper, and consume immediately (and be careful because if it was done properly, it is still burningly hot) or keep in a warm place for serving.

Variations

- In another variant of this soup, you must boil the onion in the meat broth and have it together in the plate.
- You can take out the onions from the soup if you do not like it.
- The original recipe only uses black pepper and did not use chilis, but since I have found it difficult to have a raw egg in my soup, I needed a little extra flavour to go well in this soup, that is why this soup has chili in it.



38. Thick vegetable soup

( Supă de vegetale / Rántásos zöldségleves )

A quick to make and very consistent vegetable soup with a little fried meat from yesterday, not only helps the budget, but if you manage to get the taste right, it also lifts the mood. And fills the stomach.

Ingredients

- Chicken meat (It is perfectly fine to use the rest from a grilled chicken or yesterday's fried chicken)
- 2 carrots
- 1 parsnip and parsley root
- Small celery
- 1 small onion
- 1 tomato
- Sour cream
- Salt, vinegar
- Oil, flour

Cook up 1 litre of water in a pot, add a little salt, and the meat, boil approx. 10 – 15 minutes or a little more until the meat is soft again.

Now peel, slice, and add the carrot, celery, parsley root and parsnip. After 10 minutes add the onions and cook until the onions are soft as well.

Add the tomatoes and cook until the tomatoes disintegrate.

Make a light and light roux from the oil and flour, and mix into the soup, bring to a boil.

Taste with salt and vinegar, and when serving, add a little sour cream to the plate.

This is a very flexible basic recipe. Feel free to add more vegetables (potato, kale, kohlrabi, pea, green beans), and you can even make it from different types of meat, such as veal, pork, etc, only your imagination is the limit.



39. The fastest lettuce soup ever

( Supă de salată / Öntött saláta )

Lettuce in Transylvania is frequently used in soups, and is not as often eaten raw as in the Western European taste connoisseurs are used to. It actually surprises visitors to Transylvania how tasty a never heard of lettuce soup can be.

Ingredients

- 1 lettuce
- Garlic, 10 – 15 cloves
- 1 egg
- Sour cream
- Salt, vinegar

If you like

- Bacon

Cook up 1 or 2 litres of water, add salt, throw in the cleaned garlic, half of them can be crushed. Let it cook for a few minutes.

Put in the lettuce that was cleaned and cut into bite-sized pieces. Boil for 1 minute.

Now break the egg, separate the egg yolk from the white, whisk the egg yolk well with 1 tablespoon of sour cream. Store the white in a cool place until you need it for another recipe (usually survives overnight in the fridge).

Add a few spoonful's of the soup to the egg yolk / sour cream mixture well, and pour it into the soup.

Season with vinegar and salt. If you like the taste of bacon, it is time to fry it and toss it over the soup.

Do not boil the soup from now on, just heat it gently because of the raw eggs, and eat it in a day or two. Keep it in a cold place.

This soup can be eaten even cold on hot summer days, and it is perfectly fine to have some polenta with feta on the side of the soup.



40. French bean soup

(Supă de fasole verde / Zöldfuszulyka leves)

A soup that is sometimes called French green bean soup, excellent in the summer when you have green beans around the store or if you are one of the luckier people, you even can grow them yourself.

Ingredients

- Green beans, about 0.5 – 1 kg. It is perfectly fine to use two or more bean varieties, for example french green /string / romano / wax beans together. Try using raw / fresh beans, the one from the tin does not have the real taste. (Do not use frozen beans to make this recipe).
- Carrots, 1-2 if small, or 1 large. Yellow or orange, do not use purple carrots.
- 1 small parsley, parsnip
- Green parsley leaves
- 1 small onion and tomato
- Red paprika powder
- Vinegar, sugar, salt, oil, and flour
- Sour cream

Cook up 2 litres of water with a small pinch of salt. Slice the carrot and parsley (and parsnip if you use) into small round pieces, throw them in the water, let them boil while you clean the green beans and pick off the ends. Break the beans into finger-sized pieces and put them in the water to boil. Clean the onion, chop it into small pieces and put it in the water as well. Let it cook until all the vegetables are done.

Now prepare a roux. When it is nice and golden brown, add a cup of cold water in it and dissolve it in the soup. You can put a nice amount of red sweet paprika powder in it now and bring it to boil and let it cook for 5-10 minutes. If you want tomatoes, now it is time to have them in the soup and cook for another 5 minutes.

Taste with salt, vinegar, and a little sugar. Chop the parsley leaves, toss them on the soup, and you are done. When serving, add a little sour cream.

To have a little extra colour you can also take a large spoonful of oil, heat it over the stove, put in a spoonful of red pepper powder and immediately throw it into the soup. If the pepper turned black (it burnt, because it was kept in hot oil for too long) do not use it, make a new portion.



41. Egg soup from Transylvania

( Supă de ouă /  Tojásleves)

A very tasty soup to make, with the least amount of ingredients possible to make a decent soup. Takes just a few minutes to cook and it has a wonderful taste. This soup is also called onion soup, but it has nothing to do with the French onion soup which is another recipe. And not in this book.

Ingredients

- A large onion (or 2, if you like onions), a tiny amount of spring onion
- A little sunflower oil and flour to make a roux
- 2 – 3 bay leaves, red paprika powder, vinegar, salt, pepper
- 2 – 3 eggs

Start by making the roux. Put the oil in a saucepan, heat it, and add in the flour. Constantly stir the roux all the time so that it does not burn, just let it brown. When it is brown enough, add 1 (or 2 – 3) litres of cold water, bay leaf and paprika, let it boil.

While the water starts boiling, chop the onion into thin slices. When the water boils, put in the onion slices and let it boil again for a few minutes. Now is the time to break the eggs one by one and put them in the boiling soup with a short break in between. Make sure to always put the egg in the boiling soup (In the same way as you would make poached eggs).

When the eggs are hard-boiled, the soup is ready.

It's recommended to serve with a little black pepper or spring onion on. Once you have eaten all the eggs from the soup it is fine to have a few more eggs in, and re-boil the soup.



42. Amazingly simple potato soup

( Supă de cartofi / Pityókaleves )

Nothing is easier to make than this soup. Just throw some potatoes in a pot and you can forget about it. Well, almost. You want to make it into a soup, not just a little boiled potato broth.

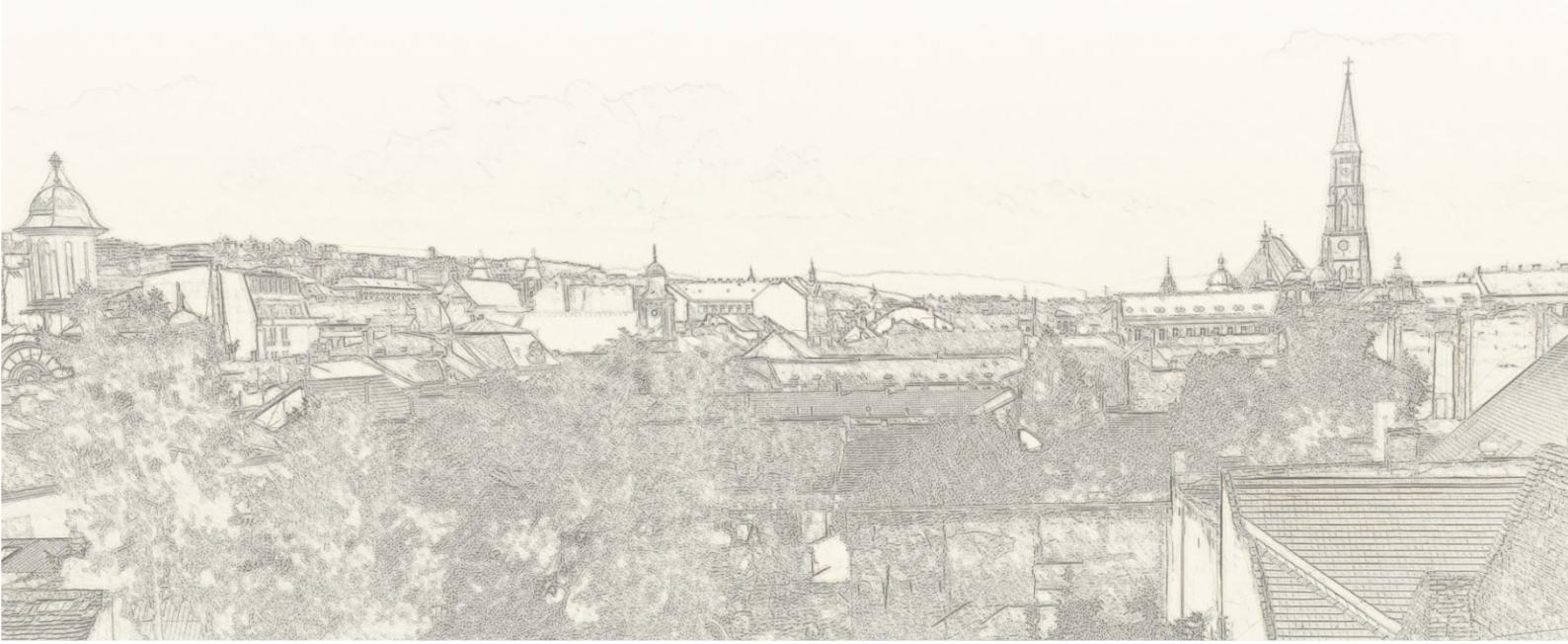
Ingredients

- Potatoes. As much as you are hungry for.
- 1 – 2 – 3 small onions
- Bay leaf, 1 – 2 pcs.
- Salt, red paprika
- Oil and flour

Peel and cut the potatoes into thick slices or cubes (both are fine, just do it the way you like it), and cook them in salted water together with the onions (whole, half-cut or finely chopped, this is also up to you) and the bay leaves.

When the potatoes are done, make a thickening (roux) of oil and flour, and put it in the soup.

In a soup spoon (or small frying pan) heat some oil, put in a teaspoon of red paprika powder, and pour it very quickly into the soup, before the paprika is to burn. Serve with some spring onions on top.



43. Cabbage-tomato soup (Supă de varză cu tomate / Paradicsomos lucskoskáposzta)

A few soups are suited for vegetarians in the Transylvanian cuisine, but this easy to make soup is perfect for vegetarians and does not require much time to make.

Ingredients

- 1 small cabbage
- 1 – 2 carrots
- 1 small onion
- 4 – 5 tomatoes
- A little oregano (or summer savoury) and dill
- Tomato puree
- A little oil and flour to make a roux
- Salt and vinegar

Cut the cabbage into good bite-sized pieces and put them in approx. 2 litres of boiling water together with a little salt. Slice the carrots and onions, put them in the water together with the cabbage. Let them cook for approx. 45 min, or until the cabbage and the other vegetables are soft.

Put in the tomatoes (cut into slices) and make a roux with oil and flour while the soup is boiling.

After approx. 15 minutes after the tomatoes were put in, dissolve the roux in the soup (do not forget: cold roux dissolves in hot soup, and if you have hot roux dissolve it in cold water and put in the soup just), boil the soup again, let it boil approx. 10 minutes.

Now is the time to have in the tomato puree, a little oregano (or summer savoury) and dill and cook the soup again for approx. 10 minutes until all the flavours are perfectly done.

And the soup is done now.

You can have a little extra dill on top if you like, as decoration.



44. Sour mushroom soup

( Supă de ciuperci acră / Savanyú gombaleves)

This unusual soup gets its distinctive taste from the mushroom mixture you use, so do not skimp on them. There is no specific recommendation for the mushrooms, just use what you like and the better the soup will be. I have used chanterelle, champignon, and oyster mushrooms, but also some boletus and other edible mushrooms will go great in this soup. Be careful, some mushrooms will leave a strong colour pigment on your food (orange milkcap for example).

Ingredients

- 1 carrot, 1 parsley root and a little celery (celery stick is good)
- 2 – 3 potatoes
- 1 Small onion
- Mushroom mixture. If you use dried mushrooms, leave them in water overnight or a few hours before starting. If you use frozen mushroom mixture, use frozen, do not let them thaw.
- Salt, pepper, vinegar and paprika
- Wheat flour, oil.

Serving tips

- On top: spring onion
- Sour/whipped cream makes it more smooth

Slice the carrot, parsley root, celery, and onion, and boil them in salted water, thus making a good vegetable broth. When the vegetables are cooked, either remove and use them in some other recipe, or leave them in the soup. I chose the second option.

Add the mushrooms to the soup, season with pepper and cook until all the mushrooms are soft and tender. Some mushrooms take longer to cook properly than other mushrooms (chanterelles can be very stubborn, put them in first and give them extra cooking time).

Take the mushrooms out of the pot and cut them into small pieces (take out the vegetables too if you keep them). Make a small amount of roux with oil and flour, add a little paprika and dissolve with cold water and add it in the soup. Bring to the boil, and while the soup is cooking, cut the potatoes into cubes and have them in the soup along with the mushrooms (and the vegetables), cook until the potatoes are done cooking.

The soup is done now. Season with salt, pepper and vinegar.

It is good to have a little sour cream or whipped cream and green spring onion on, as a decoration.



45. Mushroom soup

( Supă de ciuperci / Gombaleves)

A classic and light mushroom soup, without too many extra ingredients, just to bring out the taste of mushrooms and nothing else. A little sour cream on top of course makes the taste much better.

Ingredients

- Mushrooms. I have used fresh champignon, but of course you use the mushrooms you like
- Parsley
- 1 medium or 2 small onions
- 2-3 boats ah garlic
- Salt, pepper, paprika, vinegar
- Oil and flour
- Sour cream
- Rosemary, marjoram, fresh not dry

Wash and / or clean your mushrooms, and cut them into small cubes, slices or other geometric shapes you prefer. Pour boiling water over them, and soak for a few minutes. This will remove the brownness of the fungus if you use fresh mushrooms.

While the mushrooms are in the water, finely chop the onions and fry them lightly on the oil, together with the finely chopped parsley leaves, rosemary and marjoram. When the onion is brown but not burnt, put the crushed garlic on top, then the mushrooms, mix it well, and add a little water (ca 1 dl. should be enough), salt, pepper, paprika, and simmer until the mushrooms are soft enough for your taste. Stir often.

When the mushrooms are soft enough, pour enough water into the pot to get the amount of soup you are aiming for and let it boil. While the soup is boiling, make a roux of wheat flour and oil, and when the roux is done mix it into the soup, bring it to a boil again. Season with salt, pepper and vinegar. When serving, add a little finely chopped parsley and finish.

Tips

- If you are not making the soup with roux, but a thickening of flour and milk I recommend using a blender and mix half of the soup to get a creamy mushroom soup with chunky mushroom pieces, or just mix the whole soup to get a lovely mushroom cream soup.



46. Tomato soup

( Supă de tomate / Paradicsomleves )

The tomato soup from Transylvania is different from the tomato soups you can buy ready-made in a can from your favourite store. It is thick, it has nice pieces of vegetables in it and has a natural sour taste from the tomatoes. Like all the other soups, it also has a flexible recipe. Use that ingredient if you have it, otherwise it is good without too.

Ingredients

- Carrot, 1 – 2 or more
(Use a purple carrot to have a very unique colour to the soup that you see in the picture)
- 1 Small onion, finely chopped
- Green parsley leaf
- Tomatoes, about 4 – 5 large or more if they are small.
- Tomato juice 0.5 – 1 litre
- Rice or any type of pasta (penne, fettucine, fusilli, etc...)
- Oil, flour, salt

Start by making a roux with oil and flour in a small pan. Let it cool.

In a large saucepan, boil approx. 2 litres of water with a little salt and rice (if you use rice). Add the carrot and onion, cook until the vegetables are done. Add finely chopped tomatoes, cook again approx. 10 minutes. If you use pasta, now is the perfect time to have it inside the soup and wait until the pasta is done. Put the tomato juice in the saucepan, stir it together and bring to the boil again.

Now, in the pan with the roux start mixing the soup with the roux, by adding one soup spoon each time. When the mixture is thin enough, put the contents of the pan back in the soup, boil it up and add the parsley leaves.

Add the required amount of salt and it is done.

If it is not sour enough, use lemon juice, not vinegar.

Tips

- If you have some minced meat, it is perfectly fine to have in small meatballs.
- Semolina dumplings also go just fine in this soup.
- Or a hard-boiled egg, cut into pieces.
- Since not all the countries are blessed with the sun and warmth of southern Europe, which facilitates tomato growing, it is perfectly acceptable to use canned tomatoes for this soup



47. Tiny dumpling soup

( Supă de răzătoare / Reszelt leves )

Sometimes it only takes a little effort to turn water with an existential crisis together with boiled vegetables inside into a tasty soup. This recipe is one of those that gives you some basic tips on how to get extra flavour out of almost nothing, without the use of extra spices, and at the same time how to make a soup that is very tasty.

Ingredients

- 1 egg, flour, salt for the dumplings.
- 2 – 3 potatoes, 1 – 2 carrots,
- 1 spring onion (white part cooked in soup, green part as decoration)
- Green parsley leaves
- Red paprika powder
- Salt
- Oil

The first thing you need to make are the tiny flour dumplings: mix the egg with as much flour as it takes and make a very hard dough out of it. Make a ball out of it and grate it on the biggest hole on your grater you can find. Let it dry for a few minutes spread on a flat surface. It's ok if you want to make small dumpling balls out of some of them just for fun.



While the dumplings dry, cut the potatoes into cubes, and grate the carrot with the same grater as before, cut the white part of the spring onion into tiny pieces. Put the vegetables in boiling water with a little salt and vegeta, and let it cook until the vegetables are done. Put in the dry dumplings and cook until soft.

Take a large spoonful of oil, heat it over the stove (use a small pan), put in the green of 1 spring onion in small pieces fry for half a minute, and put in a little spoonful of red pepper powder and immediately throw it into the soup.

Decorate with parsley leaves and the green part from the spring onion.

Tips

- If you have not used all the flour dumplings, dry them well (for a few days) and then you can store them indefinitely in a jar, and only use as normal when you need it.



48. Apple soup

( Supă de mere / Almaleves)

Like all other fruit soups in this book, this one can also be enjoyed cold or hot, depending on how you like it. If you eat it cold, it's more like a dessert, but warm it more resembles a soup.

Ingredients

- 2 – 3 apples
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon malt cinnamon
- 1 – 2 small stick cinnamon
- 1 lemon slice and lemon juice
- 1 egg yolk (from one small egg) and sour cream to make a thickening
- $\frac{1}{2}$ glass of white wine
- Sugar, salt
- Fresh basil or parsley leaves

Boil approx. 1 litre of water together with the lemon slice, a little salt, ground cinnamon and the cinnamon sticks. While the water is boiling wash, peel and cut the apples into cubes, and put the cubes in the boiling water. When all the apple pieces are soft, make a thickening: whisk the egg yolks together with 2 teaspoons of sour cream. Remove the soup from the heat and put in the thickener.

Add a teaspoon of sugar, lemon juice and white wine, cook up and after add fresh basil or parsley leaves.

Tips

- The same recipe can be used when you want to make a soup from rhubarb or gooseberries.
- The thickening you can make with wheat flour and milk as well, it will result in a much creamier soup.



49. Sour cherry soup

( Supă de vișine / Meggyleves )

Strange as it may seem, you can make an exceptionally good soup from sour cherries. Do not confuse cherries with sour cherries. The sour cherries are... well ... sour. Cherries are not so sour, are bigger than sour cherries and they are more varied. Cherries (sour or not) are not so good for this soup, since they are sweeter than expected, but I recommend making the sweet variation of this soup with cherries. Sour cherries you can find in stores but if it is not season for cherries, you can buy canned Polish (or Romanian if you find) cherries from stores that offer it.

Ingredients

- Ca. ½ kg. cherries from canned. Do not throw the juice out of the box, we will use it later.
- A small onion
- Milk, flour (1 tablespoon of flour is enough) to make a thickening
- Parsley leaves
- Lemon juice

Do not pit the sour cherries, but if you managed to find a can with pitted sour cherries that is also great. Put 1 litre of water in a saucepan, add the onion and a little salt, bring to the boil for a few minutes. Add half the cherries, bring again to boil, and add the juice of the sour cherries. Make a thickening from flour and milk, add a little lemon juice, and mix with the soup. Bring to the boil, and now add in the other part of the sour cherries. Decorate with a little parsley.

Tips

- Since this soup can be made into a sweet soup, you are welcome to experiment with the following ingredients:
 - If you use vanilla pudding instead of wheat flour, you can make the sweet variation of this soup, but do not use onions or parsley in this case.
- A little cinnamon and 2 – 3 cloves give a good taste as well, and it is great to have some sugar in it.
- This soup (especially the sweet variation) can be eaten cold too.



50. Dried prune soup

( Supă de prune uscate / Gyergyói szilvaleves )

Prunes are not in the mainstream of soup production worldwide, except if you live in an area where you can get almost endless amounts of them, but not too much else. And then you must get creative. This soup comes from a region in Transylvania where the winters are long, the summers are short, they have many plum trees, and people are highly creative.

Ingredients

- ½ kg of pork, preferably with bones
- A good bit of smoked bacon
- 2 – 3 carrots
- 2 tablespoons of rice
- 2 eggs
- Oil, flour, red paprika cream
- Sour cream, sugar
- Salt, pepper, lemon juice
- A dozen dried prunes
- Lard if you have

Start by dicing the meat and bacon and cook them in a casserole until the meat is almost done. Boil no more than 20-25 minutes. While the meat is cooking, clean and cut the carrot into cubes and fry them in hot oil or lard. When the carrot is done, put them (and the oil you have fried them in) into the casserole with the meat, add 2 tablespoons of rice, add a little salt, and pepper and cook until the meat is soft.

While the soup is cooking, make a hard dough from the 2 eggs, a little water and flour. Stretch it up to half a finger thickness (approx. 0.5 cm) and cut it into cubes. In a frying pan, fry all the pieces in a small quantity of oil (fry them in small portions, so as not to have to use a lot of oil so that the soup does not become very greasy).

When the meat is soft, put it in a spoonful of paprika cream into the pot, bring to the boil. Make a roux of oil and flour and mix it well into the soup. Taste the soup once more with salt, pepper, lemon juice, put in the prunes and bring to the boil once more.

When serving add in some sour cream and sugar, a handful of the fried dough cubes, and done.



The Romanian soup “Ciorbă” is a generic vegetable soup, which is easy to make but difficult to define. Each house has its own recipe which they swear is theirs the best and the only “Ciorbă” you should try to make.

You can enjoy it with meat, or without, with fried vegetables or raw, with meatballs, with bones or without, whatever, it is a common thing in everything that is “Ciorbă”: it is a healthy and tasty food, which should have its place in your plates at least once a week.

In the end a well-made “Ciorbă” should be a little sour, and for this purpose in you can use lemon, and never vinegar. If you are in Romania, you can try the original “Ciorbă”, which is made with fermented wheat bran (and other ingredients) that gives its unique and characteristic sour taste.

Another common ingredient in “Ciorbă” is lovage leaves and stems. If you have difficulties finding fresh all the time, it is perfectly acceptable to buy a large quantity and freeze it until later, or just use dried ones.

How can I make “Ciorbă”?

Quite simple. Gather some of the ingredients below:

The vegetables you can use (washed and peeled):

- Carrot, parsnip, parsley root and onion (or green onion)
- Celery, turnip, diced potato, green peas, asparagus beans (frozen or fresh)
- Tomatoes, or tomato juice or tomato paste
- Dill, lovage, parsley or celery leaves

Meat:

- Chicken meat (chicken thighs with bones, wings, whole chicken, unused bone you intended to throw away from another chicken dish) or
- Lamb, pork (with or without bone, cut in bite size chunks) or
- Marrow bones (beef), or lean beef, fatty beef, basically every piece of meat you can find can go in.

And do not forget salt, pepper, lemon juice and of course for a little extra flavour you can use some vegeta or ready-made broth. If you are going to make a soup with meat, cook the meat (along with the bones if the meat comes with bones) approx. 45-50 minutes in water with a little salt in a large saucepan, before you start making the soup.

Prepare the vegetables, cut them into bite-sized pieces, lengthwise, cubes or whatever you want, (You can also sauté the vegetables in oil before cooking, we recommend that you try it out) and put them in the pot and cook until the vegetables are done (along with the broth if you use it).

If you make a “Ciorbă” with tomato / tomato juice / tomato paste, put it in the soup as the last of the vegetables and bring it to a boil.

Put in the green leaves (lovage, parsley, dill, celery all, or just a selection, don't skip the lovage, it will give an extraordinary taste), cook the soup for a few minutes and season with salt, pepper and lemon juice, and your first “Ciorbă” is done.

52. Meatball soup

(Ciorbă de perișoare / Húsgombóc leves)

This is a variety of Romanian “Ciorbă”, it is a very relaxed soup, does not specify a fixed amount of Ingredients, you can easily make your own with your favourite vegetables. In the end it should be a little sour, it is fine to use lemon juice, but not vinegar.

Ingredients

- A good portion of mixed vegetables:
 - Carrot
 - Parsley root and parsnip
 - Kohlrabi
 - Kale
 - Celery
 - Potato
 - 2-3 small onions, finely chopped
 - 1-2 diced potatoes
 - Peas, green beans (frozen is fine)
 - Tomato, paprika
 - Celery leaves, parsley leaves
 - Salt, maybe a little vegeta

For the meatballs:

- Minced pork or beef or a mixture of these two
- Rice
- 1 small garlic, crushed
- Salt, pepper

If you like>

- Bone, marrow bone
- Tiny amount of fatty or lean pork meat

If you use pork or beef bones, in a large saucepan put in the washed bones, cover with water, and boil them approx. 45 minutes. Remove the foam that comes to the surface. If you use meat, put it in the saucepan and cook approx. 30 minutes, remove the foam that comes up.

Put the root vegetables (carrot, parsley root, parsnip, kohlrabi, celery, kale) in the saucepan and start cooking them in water. The water must cover the vegetables.

After approx. 30 minutes you can have in the potatoes if you use.

The rest of the vegetables should be in 10 minutes after the potatoes. In the meantime, you can make the meatballs, and have them in boiling soup. Cook everything until the vegetables are soft and the meatballs are done. Season with salt, pepper and a little lemon juice, vegeta if you also use it.

Tips

- If you have made too many meatballs, you can freeze them and use them in another recipe.
- It is perfectly fine to use a thickener as shown in recipe 54, if you want a more soft-tasting soup.
- If you use broth or vegeta you want a stronger although a little more artificial taste.



53. Meatball soup with tarragon

( Ciorbă cu tarhon / Tárkonyos húsgombóc leves )

Although the name suggests that this is also a meatball soup, the preparation process is a little different, so is the end result. More creamy, sharper, souper. Just a demonstration on how varied one kitchen can be.

Ingredients

- 2 carrots
- 2 parsnips
- 1 small piece of celery
- 1 large onion
- A handful of green beans and peas
- Some sunflower oil
- Salt, red pepper powder

Meatballs

- 250 gr. pork mince
- 1 egg
- 1 white bun, not the sweet type
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- Salt, ground black pepper

Thickening

- 1 tablespoon of each sour cream, whipped cream, milk
- 1 large teaspoon of flour
- 1 tablespoon tarragon vinegar, fresh tarragon

Put the bun in water until it softens and squeeze out the water very well. Mix with the minced meat, garlic, eggs and enough salt and pepper.

Finely chop half of the onion and put it in a saucepan with a little sunflower oil, sauté for a few minutes, but do not let it burn.

Cut the other half of the onion and the other root vegetables into strips (do not cut very thin).

Put the vegetables in the pan and fry them together for 10-15 minutes otherwise until the vegetables are almost soft, stir often. Pour ca. 1½ litres of water in the pot with the vegetables and boil it.

While the water starts to boil, make the meatballs, they should not be excessively big nor too small.

When you have finished making the meatballs, roll the meatballs in flour, and put them in the boiling water (always). If the water stops boiling after one or two meatballs just wait until it boils again.

When all the meatballs are in the soup cook approx. 30 minutes.

Make the thickening by mixing together all the dairy products and add the flour gradually. When you have a thick thickening, add tarragon vinegar and tarragon leaves, and pour it into the soup.

Bring to the boil and the soup is ready.



54. Chicken soup with vegetables

( Ciorbă de pui / Becsinált leves)

Regardless that the name says chicken soup, you can make this type of soup with all kinds of meat, just replace chicken with pork, beef, lamb, duck, anything you like. Note that the cooking time for different types of meat is different.

Ingredients

- Chicken meat, feel free to use the pieces you do not want in another dish (for example wing tips, neck, sternum, lower part of chicken legs)
- Vegetable mixture, with carrot, parsnip, parsley root, potato, peas, green beans, turnip, kohlrabi
- 1 – 2 small onions
- 2 – 3 cloves of garlic
- Salt, pepper, lemon juice
- 1 egg yolk and sour cream (or whipped cream)
- It is perfectly fine to use a little vegeta or a chicken broth, but be careful with the extra salt these two should bring into the soup.

Put all meat and bones in a large saucepan and cook approx. 30 - 45 min in water with a tiny amount of salt.

While the meat is cooking, dice the vegetables into or cut them into some other form, and put them in the pot, cook until the vegetables are done. If you use a broth or vegeta have it in the soup along with the vegetables.

When the vegetables are done, take the pot off the heat and let it cool for approx. 10-15 minutes.

Make a thickening of sour cream (or whipped cream) and the egg yolk: whip the sour cream (or creme fraiche) with the egg yolks, have a spoonful of the soup into the thickening, mix and have the thickening in the soup.

This soup should not be boiled or heated anymore after this point.

Store the pot in a cold place, when you want to eat always take out the amount you want to eat in a second pot and heat it, do not boil.

Tips

- You can also make this soup with fish. Just choose the fish you like, cut them into cubes and have them in the soup after the vegetables are softly cooked, cook until the fish is soft, and afterwards you can have in the thickening with eggs.



A world of pickles

It has been a long-standing tradition in Transylvania to pickle the vegetables grown during the summer. Not only because they are tasty, but also because of the need to provide the required amount of vitamins and vegetables during the winter.

In contrast to Western Europe, Transylvania has a rich and very varied selection of pickled vegetables, and rarely will you be served a meal without the accompanying pickles. And most of the time, it is more a selection of carefully picked pickles, not just one piece.

You can simply pickle every vegetable you can find in your garden. From the classic cucumbers, peppers, squash, green tomatoes, cauliflower, onions, cabbages and basically, everything else can be pickled on its own, or chopped into a large pickle mixture, or goes into another form of preservation. We use two types of methods for pickling. One is the classic recipe for washing the vegetables, boiling water with vinegar and a good amount of salt, pour over the vegetables and spices and herbs you like the most, let it cool very slowly under a blanket and in half a year have crunchy pickled vegetables.

The second is much more like a natural fermentation, when you can have pickled vegetables ready in half time, by losing some of the acidity and achieving a fermented taste. The fermentation process is mostly used on cucumbers (in the short term), or mixed pickled vegetables where you prepare large quantities (and I mean a jar of 10 litres is a small amount for some of our family recipes are for barrels up to 120 litres of whole cabbages).

Recently there has been a very good choice of import of pickled vegetables from Eastern Europe (including Romania), so for the sake of nostalgia I will present just the secret behind making fermented cucumbers at home, because except for fresh fermented cucumber everything else you can buy from stores.

Leavened cucumbers

A long-forgotten recipe for pickled cucumbers, just like in the old days, hundreds of years ago because nothing drives innovation more than a nostalgic mood. You will need a clean, washed glass jar, at least 2 litres for this to work properly.

Ingredients

- 3 – 4 large cucumbers
- A handful of fresh dill
- 10 – 15 black peppercorns and red chili if you like it spicy
- A few garlic cloves
- 2 tablespoons of salt
- 2 litres of hot (but not boiling) water
- And a slice of bread, if possible, made with sourdough.

Put half of the dill on the bottom of the jar. Chop the cucumbers to length of around 10 cm and cut some deeper crosses on one side of the cucumbers so that the fermentation goes faster. Place the cucumbers, crossed side down in the jar. Use slight force if necessary.

Place on top of the cucumbers the other part of the dill, the black peppercorns, and garlic cloves (cut in half on long side), and the chili if you use. Pour over the salty water and place the bread on top, as the sourdough will speed up the fermentation process.

Depending on the temperature you put the glass in, it can take from two – three days (if it is hot and sunny outside) up to two weeks. When it is done, remove and discard the bread slices and store the cucumbers in the fridge until you eat it (You will know that it's done if the cucumbers are sour, but still tasty).

One week in Transylvania

Transylvania can be a white spot on the map for many of us. It is actually not a mainstream tourist destination, there are no daily charter flight there, and it's not an overly touristy place, but this can actually work to its advantage. On a visit there, you will not be sucked into a whirlpool by the tourist industry that aims to rip off your money and offer mainstream sensations to the masses. A visit to Transylvania can feel like an adventure, like exploring unknown territories, discover new food, experience the true nature of people who do not hide behind the smiling mask of an industry invented to make you feel good and do not offer anything of value in exchange.

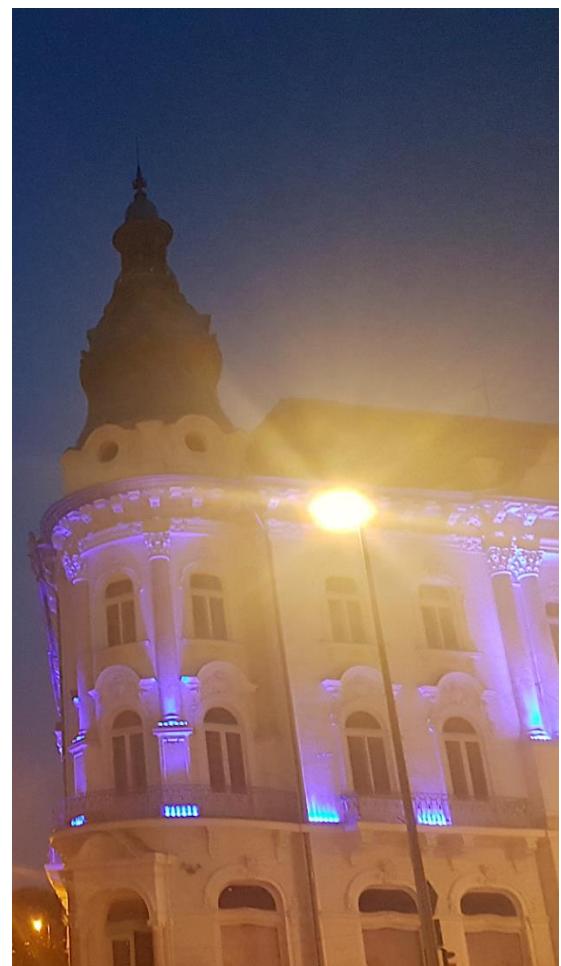
Here I will design a week's imaginary journey through the mountains and hills of Transylvania by planning a route for you through several of the cities and sightseeing worth visiting in the area. This will be a generic tourist tour, not specifically aimed at events, festivals nor a themed tour, but just a little bit of everything. I deliberately planned the whole trip for you to move between cities, with overnight stays in different places, so that you would see something new every day, and experience aspects of life from different parts of the country without raising problems that you have to drive back to the same place each time.

Before we continue, I just want to let you know that since Transylvania is such a multicultural place, cities have different names in each of the languages of the nationality that lives in them. When I introduce a new city (destination), I will adjourn to the following convention:  **Romanian name** ( Hungarian name / German name).

I assume that as entry point you will use the international airport at  **Cluj Napoca** ( Kolozsvár / Klausenburg ) – CLJ, one of the international airports in Transylvania with several connections to international aviation hubs, and I plan my trip from here. I also assume that from day 2 you have rented a good car, unless you want to use trains and / or buses as your main means of transport between cities.

Day 0. Arrival at Cluj Napoca, overnight. The airport is really close to the city and there is a good bus service going into the city, ask at the airport information for the one that takes you from the airport right into the city centre where your hotel might be. It is perfectly acceptable to use a taxi as well. After finding your hotel, it is time to take a walk in the beautiful city centre, possibly finding a place to eat something. There are many cafes and restaurants to choose from, and the staff usually speak quite good English. Try to find the building from the picture to the right :)

Day 1. Cluj Napoca - sightseeing in the city. The center is large, with many interesting things to see around. A walk in the botanical gardens, or just enjoy the architecture, relax on the terrace of a restaurant and enjoy a tasty meal. The largest city in



Transylvania, it is a buzzing cultural, academic, and industrial centre. With several architectural landmarks, cultural events, and festivals, it has something to offer everyone to their liking.

Whether you are in medieval Gothic churches and Renaissance houses, baroque palaces, or just want to be startled by the appearance of high-density communist apartment blocks, a walk in this city will not leave you untouched.

For lovers of contemporary music festivals, the Untold Festival brings together fans of electronic music from all over Europe, and those in film and art, the Transylvania International Film Festival offers a wide range of events to choose from. For those who want the green surroundings of nature, there is a large botanical garden in the city, next to an old cemetery where you can take a relaxing walk (Yes, we in Transylvania love to take a stroll in old cemeteries, they are peaceful places with ancient monuments, sculptures, beautiful gravestones, and other architectural masterpieces. Remember that if you decide to visit a cemetery in Transylvania, do not forget your manners, and treat the sacred sites with respect).

From an accommodation point of view, there are several international hotel chains in the city, along with dozens of local hotels, guesthouses, hostels, and you can even rent an apartment for a few days stay. Every budget can find the right place to stay.

Getting to Cluj Napoca is also quite easy, as it hosts the second largest airport in Romania, with several daily departures to the main European airport hubs, and it has a train station that connects it to Western Europe, and for those who are really brave, it has an extensive bus network that connects it to other big and small cities in Romania and Europe.

For foodies there is a large selection of restaurants serving local and international dishes, but the absolute must try is "Cabbage a'la Cluj", a tasty dish named after this city (also presented in this book) and "Vargabéles" a famous locally sweet made with capellini and cottage cheese (unfortunately this is a very exclusive and difficult to make recipe, so it is not presented in this version of our book). When you are there and feeling hungry, ask the host for recommendations. Romanians are very friendly people and will go the extra mile to keep guests happy.

Dag 2. Driving to  **Sibiu** ( Szeben / Hermannstadt ) We leave Cluj Napoca towards the south and include a stop at  **Alba Iulia** ( Gyulafehérvár / Karlsburg ) once the capital of Transylvania. With a stunning Vauban-style star-shaped fortress and well preserved downtown

area, a walk from the citadel this is a must for anyone visiting this ancient city. A recommended, but optional visit to the "Corvin Castle" in  **Hunedoara** ( Vajdahunyad / Eisenmarkt ) – picture to the left – just one hour of driving from Alba Iulia, is proposed for anyone interested in visiting a Gothic / Renaissance castle. From there in the evening you arrive in Sibiu, a beautifully preserved and recently renovated old Saxon town in southern Transylvania. Just a kind warning, the centre of Sibiu is a pedestrian area. If you booked a





room where you plan to park your car, you can ask your host for guidance.

Day 3. At leisure in Sibiu. A good time spent is exploring the old town, to find a traditional restaurant serving German food. The centre is literally packed with restaurants, cafes, and if you are in the mood to visit ancient churches, museums (Brukenthal National Museum is highly recommended) and other architectural jewels you are in the perfect place.

Sibiu, a former European Capital of Culture in 2007, was the cultural and economic centre of the Saxons in Transylvania for centuries. It is perhaps the most

touristy city in the region, and the wonderfully preserved old centre is home to countless medieval buildings, passages, churches, fortified towers, "houses with eyes" and one of the most beautiful Christmas markets in Europe.

The city is famous not only for its houses with eyes, dormitories in the form of eyebrows on the roofs of a few houses in the old centre, but also for its museums (including an old steam locomotive museum), and it can also be considered the gastronomic capital of the region. For lovers of art and music, there are many festivals held there during the summer, such as a medieval festival, and various music festivals that range from classical through jazz to rock.

If you do not land in Cluj Napoca the alternative is Sibiu (**SBZ**) which also has an international airport with daily flights to international European aviation hubs.

Sibiu can be considered as one of the starting points in your exploration of ancient Saxon architecture, medieval fortified churches, or if you are planning to take a trip to "Transfăgărăşan", the most famous road in Romania.

Dag 4. Drive to **Braşov** (Brassó / Kronstadt). If you are not afraid to choose the longer route which is more scenic on a non main road between Sibiu and Braşov, we really recommend that you visit the old medieval town of **Sighişoara** (Segesvár / Schäßburg) together with a few fortified Saxon churches from medieval times. The fortified church in **Axente Sever** (Asszonyfalva / Frauendorf) is just next to the road, just spend a few minutes there and the same goes for the church in **Seica Mare** (Nagyselyk / Marktschelken). The centre of **Medias** (Medgyes / Mediasch), an old Saxon town, is also worth a visit, and if you are in adventurous mood, you can drive off the main road, to the small villages of **Biertan** (Berethalom / Birthälm) and **Valea Viilor** (Nagybaromlak / Wurmloch). Another gem of ancient Saxon architecture



and also a recommended visit is to be found at the small village of **Viscri** (Viscri / Szászfehéregyháza / Deutschweißkirch) where even Charles, Prince of Wales, has bought a house.

Day 5. Relaxing in Brasov. Just enjoy the cobbled old roads, visit the Black Church, and when you are done you can go up to the ski resort “Poiana Brașov” to admire the surroundings (and if you are there in winter you can even go skiing). Brașov is a city with a history dating back to the early Middle Ages, located in picturesque surroundings between the mountains, has a beautifully preserved old Saxon center, beautiful nature trails around the city for those who want to walk, and it has a great connection both by rail and also by car to the surrounding areas. The old town, which is still partially enclosed in the original walls, has a great view from the small mountain “Tâmpa” accessible by hiking trails, or by cable car. For those



interested in medieval architecture, the old town has all the sights within walking distance. The Black Church (named after a major fire in 1689) is visible from the central square that houses the old Gothic town hall (which houses the museum today), from there it is a quick walk to Cathrines gate, the only surviving medieval city gate. Lovers of winter sports (such as skiing) can have a great time in “Poiana Brașov”, possibly the best ski resort in Romania. The resort is easily accessible by buses from the city centre. For lovers of contemporary music, the Golden Stag Festival is held in the city centre, but it has a bumpy history, so check if it is held before you actually plan to visit it. Brașov is the best city if you want to visit the architectural gems of southern Transylvania or if you are planning a hike in the southern Carpathian Mountains. From the city you can plan a few hours tour, from the overly touristy "Bran Castle" to the not so famous but very picturesque “Râşnov Citadel” and other castles and citadels found in the surroundings.



Dag 6. Driving to Sovata (Szováta). On the way don't forget to stop at **Corund** (Korond) to check out the local folk-art market where you can admire the pottery and other artifacts unique to this region. Sovata is a small and very touristy town, formed around several small and a larger salt lake with many hotels, guest houses, restaurants and a beautiful nature around the town. Taking a bath in one of the salt lakes is something you must do, but do not limit yourself to the larger one, called “Bear Lake”, ask for directions to the small salt lakes around the city. They may not be so crowded, and you may feel more relaxed. On the way there, I recommend visiting the salt mine in **Prajd** (Parajd) or combining this stage with a hunt for mineral water sources can be a very fun activity.

Day 7. Driving back to Cluj Napoca. If you drive via **Târgu Mureş** (Marosvásárhely), do not forget to check out the centre of this small but nice town, and maybe relax a bit on a terrace with a coffee on the main square. In addition to this, ending your trip will be very inevitable, but you will enjoy your last day in Transylvania and fly home, hopefully with fond memories, and plan your next trip.

Please note that it was not possible to include all the sightseeing in Transylvania on this trip. Feel free to plan your trip according to what you like, you can completely skip cities, areas, add what you consider interesting and just focus on what is important to you. You can of course extend or reduce the journey, what is important is that you feel good on the trip.

Main courses

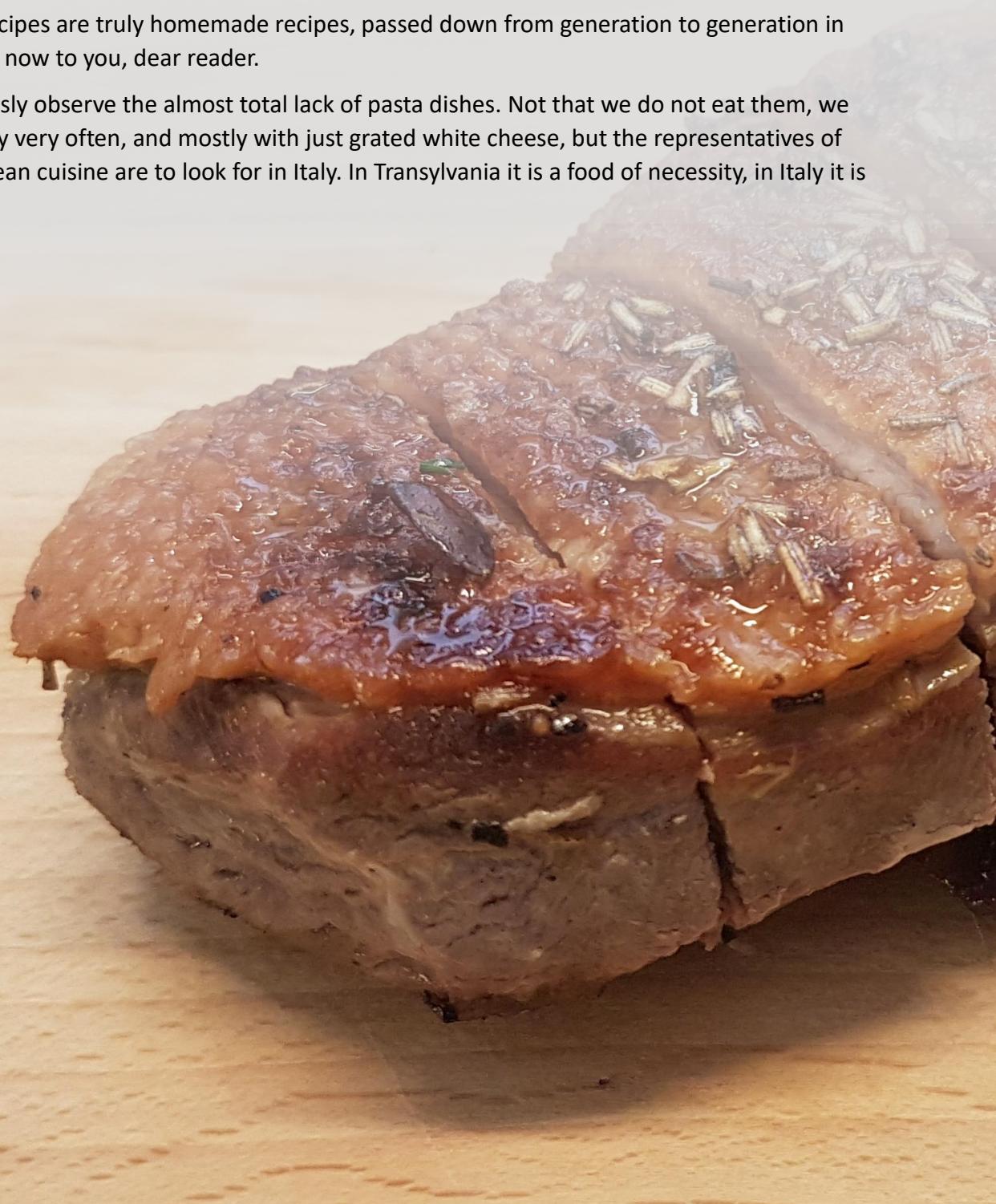
The main courses from Transylvania can be in two different categories. Either you can get a good portion of grilled meat, local fish that comes with matching side dishes and pickles (or one of the hundreds of other types of pickled vegetables), a pretty standard and safe approach, but what sadly you can get in almost any other country you visit, or you are served a local dish you have never heard of, which you must travel there for.

In this chapter we will try to present some of the most famous local dishes from Transylvania you can also make at home, and a few tips on how to get a more authentic taste to them when prepared far away from their origins.

Some of the recipes here have a long history behind them that stretches back several decades, I will try to present them as authentic as possible.

Some of the recipes are truly homemade recipes, passed down from generation to generation in our family, and now to you, dear reader.

You will obviously observe the almost total lack of pasta dishes. Not that we do not eat them, we do, and actually very often, and mostly with just grated white cheese, but the representatives of pasta in European cuisine are to look for in Italy. In Transylvania it is a food of necessity, in Italy it is art.



55. Ratatouille from Transylvania

( Tocană sărbească / Lecsó )

An extremely easy to make and flexible food recipe, with a unique taste, which does not require a large amount of TLC, but in any case, gives a surprisingly good taste you do not expect from looking at the simple ingredients you add. This food has many variations, I will present the traditional one suitable for vegetarians and also mention some other varieties with meat or eggs for those who want to experiment.



Ingredients

- Half a cup of rice
- 5 – 6 large onions, white or purple
- 7 – 8 red, green and yellow peppers, or whatever you find. California / Bell pepper is highly recommended because it is a very juicy species of pepper.
- 8 – 10 tomatoes, and piccolo tomatoes if the large ones have no taste
- Oil, salt, and pepper
- A hot chili If you like it.



Start by washing the rice and set it to boil in 2 – 2.5 cups of water and a little salt. While the rice cooks, put oil in a saucepan, warm it up, cut up the onions into good finger sizes and put them in the oil, which was heated in a saucepan. Stir often so that they do not burn, while cutting up all the peppers into large pieces. When the onions are half done and begin to become transparent (it takes about 15 minutes) put the peppers in the pot.

Stir the food often while cutting tomatoes. After approx. 10 – 15 minutes you can put the tomatoes inside the saucepan and continue to stir. If you think it is dry and has no juice just pour some water into the pot. When the rice is cooked, mix it with the vegetables and let it cook for approx. 10 minutes and the food is ready now. You can eat with strong chili or without.

Varianter

- In some regions, this recipe is made with sausages you put in after the vegetables are done. If you cannot find a piece of Hungarian paprika sausage, I recommend some chorizo for this.
- Others carefully lay a raw egg on top when it is almost done to get a boiled fried egg (do not stir after the egg is added)
- If you want, add a good deal of bacon to the oil before you start adding the vegetables. It gives an excellent taste.
- You can also fry some beef / pork in the oil before the vegetables, then remove, continue with the vegetables and put the meat back when the vegetables are almost done. It is not necessary to use rice in this situation.

56. Gipsy ratatouille

( Tocană țigănească / Cigánylecső )

Gipsy ratatouille is similar to the classic ratatouille, except that it has much more peppers, not so many tomatoes, a lot of other fillings (such as cabbage or mushrooms), a sharper taste if you use a little hot chili and of course it all starts with meat.

Ingredients

- Ca. 1 - 1½ kg. paprika.
Red, green, and yellow
together.
- 2 tomatoes
- 3 large onions
- 100 - 200 gr. cabbage,
mushrooms, or both
- A few chicken legs,
chicken wings and / or
chicken thighs
- Hot chili if you like
- Salt, pepper
- Red pepper powder
- Garlic, 2-3 boats
- Smoked bacon
- Lard

Cut the bacon into small cubes and put in a pan with a little oil. Cook until the bacon gets a little colour.

Finely chop one of the onions and put in the pot together with a little lard (if you use it) and sauté the onion until it is soft and brown. Add a little pepper, the crushed garlic cloves, add the chicken pieces and cook together for approx. 15 minutes. While they are cooking, cut the rest of the vegetables into cubes, except for the cabbage and mushrooms, which should be cut in thin slices.

Now put the onion pieces in the pot and cook until the onion pieces are almost soft. Now put in the paprika, cook until the paprika is almost done. Add the cabbage and mushrooms if you use, and after 10 minutes also the tomatoes.

Mix well, season with salt and pepper, chili if you like and let it cook until everything is soft, at least an extra 15 minutes.

Tips

- If you use chicken breast cut it in slices
- This dish goes well with polenta



57. Potato goulash

( Tocană de cartofi / Krumpligulyás - Pityókatokány )

As many houses as many habits, and as many recipe for this timeless dish. Every household in Transylvania has its own well-kept secret recipe for this food, which was passed down from generation to generation. But everyone agrees on one thing: it needs peppers. Lots of red peppers. Nothing else is more important. It can be as thick as a stew, or more diluted as a soup (do not misunderstand this for goulash soup, that is something else, a completely different recipe). Here I share the recipe I revised from the original using substitute ingredients that I discovered at the local food market.

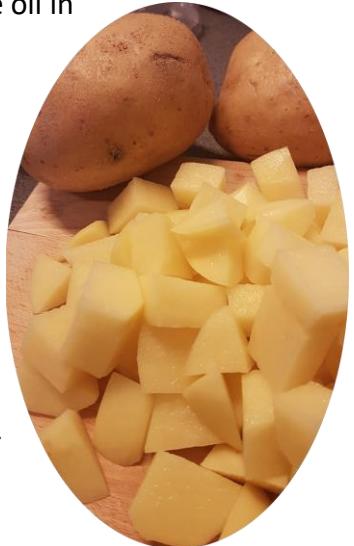
Ingredients

- 5 – 6 large potatoes
- 1 large onion
- Hungarian sausages with paprika (csabai, gyulai), but if you can't find Hungarian sausages a good bit of chorizo will do it
- meat sausages (If you like). Some good Polish kielbasa will be perfect
- some bacon and diced pork if you don't like sausages or it is possible to make the dish completely without meat
- pepper, salt, oil
- red paprika powder (not chili)
- strong pepper sauce If you like (some good quality Sambal Oelek will do the trick)



Chop the onion into very small pieces, put some oil in the pan, and add the onion. Fry the onion in oil on low heat for about 15-20 minutes, stirring occasionally so it does not burn. At the same time cut the sausages into slices. If you use a thick and large meat sausage, cut it in half lengthwise before.

Now add the ground pepper to the pot, stir well and put in the sausages. If you use meat sausage, bring it in approx. 2 – 3 minutes before the paprika sausage. Stir together, fry for approx. 10 – 15 minutes, or until you have finished peeling the first potato.



While the food is cooking, peel the potatoes, cut them into cubes, and when you have finished a potato, put it in the pot, stir together. After the first potato put in some water (about $\frac{1}{4}$ dl.) And of course stir again. Do it again (cut into cubes, put in the pot) until you have more potatoes.

When you run out of potatoes and the pot is full for your needs, pour as much water to fill half of the pot, but do not cover all the potatoes.

Now is the right time to put in salt, the paprika powder (at least two teaspoons of it). And if you like the strong pepper sauce to give a kick. From now on, until the food is done, every time you stir the food (and you have to do it often so as not to let it burn, every 2 – 3 min.), lift up the potatoes (and sausages) from the bottom of the pot to get all potatoes boiled properly, and do crush some of them to get a thicker sauce. You can have in more water if you think it is not thick enough.



Enjoy this food with pickled cucumber or a salad of tomatoes, onions, cucumbers and other vegetables with vinegar.

58. Mixed stew

( Tocană de carne / Marosszéki tokány )

This stew comes from a central part of Transylvania with gentle hills and rich fields crossed by Transylvania's longest river: Mureş. It has all the common characteristics of the people who inhabited the small villages, where everyone added what is best in this food.

Ingredients

- ca. ½ kg. beef tenderloin
- ca. ½ kg. pork tenderloin
- ca. 10 dkg. smoked bacon, diced
- 1 dl sour cream and some milk
- 1 large onion finely chopped
- 1 tablespoon flour
- 1 glass – about 2 dl. – white wine
- Ca. 10 dkg. mushrooms cut into large pieces
- Salt, pepper, marjoram, cumin
- Peppers or paprika cream
- Oil or lard

Cut the meat into a handful of large slices. In a saucepan put in the bacon cubes, and if they are not fat, a little oil or lard and fry them well until they are golden brown. Put in the finely chopped onion and cook for 5 minutes on a low heat. Put in a teaspoonful of paprika cream or paprika powder, half a glass of water and cook them together for a few minutes.

After a few minutes, add the beef tenderloin, salt, pepper, marjoram, cumin, and 1 dl white wine. Cover the pot with a lid, and cook for about 30 minutes on low heat.

Now put in the pork, and the other part of the white wine. Put on the lid, and cook on the smallest fire possible until the meat is soft and tender.

In a second frying pan, fry the mushrooms for a few minutes, and afterwards put them in the pot, cook together for a few minutes.

Make a thickening with flour, sour cream and a little milk and put it in the pot. It's fine to heat it up, but do not boil it afterwards.

Variations

- It is fine to have in a little pig kidney and heart
- Some recipes refrain from the use of paprika, but they add extra black pepper



59. Risotto a'la Transylvania

( Pilaf / Rizses hús)

Well, it's actually not risotto, but a very generic recipe for oriental pilaf (which is just plain meat with rice) that you can make with your favourite meat, whether it's pork, chicken or lamb. Enhance this very basic recipe with vegetables that you like, or maybe raisins, dried apricots and extra spices. It will not disappoint you. Giving you a specific recipe for a pilaf is actually pointless, since this is the food everyone can vary to their liking, and you can make this into your most personal food ever. So I'm just giving some directions, and from this point on it's up to you to come up with the world's best pilaf. For you, of course.

Ingredients

- A medium sized onion
- Your favourite meat ca. 500 gr., diced
- Rice, ca. 1 – 1½ glass
- Salt, pepper, vegetable oil

Also gives a good taste if you have in

- Chicken / beef broth instead of water to boil
- Mushrooms, pepper
- Carrot, parsley leaves, parsley root, celery
- Spring onions, peas, asparagus beans, tomatoes

For the brave ones

- Raisins
- Dried apricots
- Almonds, cashews
- Strong chili
- Oregano, thyme, rosemary and / or bay leaf.

Start by cleaning and washing the rice. Wash several times until the last water is clear. Let the rice stay in the water for a while, while you work with the meat.

Finely chop the onion, and sauté it in the oil in a saucepan, being careful not to burn it. Put in the meat, cook together for a few minutes until the meat starts to brown. If you use mushrooms, keep them in boiling water for a minute and put them in the pot with the meat.

When the meat is a little brown add the rice, water (or chicken / beef broth) and cook for approx. 10 minutes. You will need approx. 4 times more water than rice. For the first few minutes until it starts to boil, mix it often so that no rice sticks to the bottom of the pot.

Now wash, peel and cut all the root vegetables (carrot, parsley root, parsnip, celery) into cubes, and put them in the pot.

After 5 minutes add in the rest of the vegetables, extra spices and herbs, and all the other ingredients you decide to use, and cook until everything is soft. If you see that there is not enough water, just have a little more.



60. Schnitzel

( Șnițel / Prézlis hús)

Viennese Schnitzel is one of the most famous dishes from Austria, but it is prepared widely in Europe, also in Transylvania. Here you get our recipe we make at home.

Ingredients

- 2-3 eggs
- Wheat flour
- breadcrumbs
- boneless meat: chicken breast or pork (neck, tenderloin) or veal. The original recipe from Vienna uses veal
- Salt, pepper.
- Sunflower oil, about 1/2 liter. Do not use any other oil for this recipe.

Take 3 flat plates. In the first one of them, you put in the flour, in the second you put the breadcrumbs. In the third, you will have the Schnitzels when done. Take a deeper plate, large enough to fit in a piece of meat and whisk the eggs well in it. Place the plates as from left to right, next to each other: first with flour, then the plate with the eggs, then the breadcrumbs. Place them right next to the pan (which is on the stove) with the hot oil, and after the pan, the empty plate where you want to put the schnitzels.

Wash the meat, cut it into thin slices, add salt and pepper and use a meat tenderizer to flatten it. Now sprinkle salt and pepper on the meat, and place them in the flour, on both sides so that the flour covers it completely. You can pat the meat on the flour if it does not cover completely. The next step is to place the meat in the egg. Feel free to use tweezers if you do not want to get your hands dirty. Soak it well on both sides of the eggs.

After the eggs have the meat into the breadcrumbs, cover well on both sides and now it's time to fry it in the oil. When the colour is a nice brown / yellow the meat is done (it takes about 5-6 minutes). Take it out on the third flat plate. The oil should not be very hot, otherwise it burns the food, but it should also not be too cold, otherwise it dries out the meat until it becomes brown on the outside. Experiment until you find the perfect temperature.

Schnitzel goes well with french-fries and pickled cucumber, or potato salad.

Breadcrumbs

Use old white bread that is not mouldy yet, but you do not want to eat. Cut it up, put it in the oven at low temperature (40 - 50 degrees) for a few minutes (10 - 15). This will evaporate most of the water from the bread without burning it. Remove from oven, store in a dry place for a few days until it becomes bone dry. Use an almond / nut grinder to make sprinkles from the dried bread that was broken up into small pieces. You can also use a mixer or a rolling pin. The only bread that is good for making breadcrumbs is white bread. Do not use bread with seeds, bread with nuts, brown / dark rye bread, oat bread, bread with oil, sunflower, etc ... The natural oils and ingredients that make these breads very healthy and good to eat, do not behave well when the bread is stored for a long time in a container and tends to turn rancid after a few weeks.



61. Butter-fried chicken

( Pui prăjit în unt / Vajba sült csirke )

A very quick to prepare dish, just toss a few slices of chicken breast in melted butter. Perfect for those days when you do not have the time or mood to cook.

Ingredients

- Chicken – boneless chicken thigh / fillet or chicken breast, without skin
- Butter
- Pepper and salt

Wash the chicken meat, cut it into thin slices, add salt and pepper and use a meat tenderizer to flatten it.

Put a pan on the oven, put in a large soup spoon of butter, and fry the chicken slices until done, approx. 2-3 min on each side. Do not overcook, they will become dry.

This food goes just fine with rice, mashed potatoes, pickled cucumbers, squash stew, vegetable stew, etc ...

Tips

- If you want to experiment with other Ingredients on the chicken, just do it (for example roll it in Masala Powder for a definitely non Transylvanian taste). You can get some surprising and tasty results, unless the experiment burns.



62. Meat roasted with onions

( Carne prăjită cu ceapă / Hagymásrostélyos )

If you want to make this dish, do not let the meat dry out while you are frying. Cover the onion properly and make sure it has enough, but not too much water. Otherwise you will invent a soup.

Ingredients

- Ca. 1 kg big onions
- Ca. ½ kg small onions
- As many fillets of beef as many hungry people you cook for. We like entrecôte, feel free to use tenderloin too.
- Salt, pepper, sunflower oil and red sweet paprika powder..

In a large frying pan (only cast iron, Teflon will not work well here) put in a little oil, and quickly brown both sides of all the fillets, taking them out on a plate. Clean and cut large onions into slices, throw them in the oil, mix well. Clean the small onions, throw them all in the pan, mix well.

After 15 minutes of frying the onions, make a place in the frying pan for the meat, place them on the bottom of the pan, season with salt and pepper, and place the large onions on top of the slices, the small ones around the meat.

Put on some paprika powder, 1 glass of water and boil approx. 45 minutes or until the meat is tender.

This dish goes very well with boiled potato bites or polenta.



63. Roasted meat a'la Brașov

( Grătar Brașovean / Brassói rostélyos )

Roasted meat has many faces. One of them comes from the town of Brașov where it was fortified with liver, mushrooms, ribs and other goodies. And when all this is cooked together, you get a heavenly taste.

Ingredients

- ½ kg of pork chop
- 100 gr. pork liver
- 100 gr. ribs
- 100 gr. mushrooms (I have used chanterelle)
- 2 large onions
- 1 DL. Red wine
- ½ l. tomato juice
- Salt, pepper, parsley
- Flour, oil

Cut the meat into slices, for each person a slice, and use a meat tenderizer to flatten them. Cover each slice with wheat flour on both sides and fry in an iron frying pan for a few minutes in hot oil. While the meat is frying, finely chop the onions, and put them in the pan with the meat, and let them simmer together. While they are frying, cut the pork liver into cubes, the ribs into long sticks, and the mushrooms into slices, and when you are done cutting have everything into the frying pan. Add red wine, mix well and cover the frying pan with a lid. Boil for 15 minutes, and add the tomato juice. Cook for at least 10 minutes or until the meat is tender. When serving, add the finely chopped parsley, serve with hard boiled new potatoes..



64. Meatballs

( Chiftele / Fasirozott )

Each country has its own version of meatballs. In some they are small and round, in others they are large, fat, flat and are called burgers. In Transylvania, they are medium-sized, mildly spicy, and they should not go in between breads, because then they will be called burgers.

Ingredients

- Minced meat. Usually pork, but it's fine to have 50% of pork and 50% of beef.
- A small or medium-sized onion, if you have more than 500g of minced meat use a large onion.
- Garlic, crushed
- A medium-sized potato
- 2 – 3 slices of old bread without crust and some milk.
- 1 egg, or two if you want to make a large portion
- Salt, pepper

It's acceptable to put in

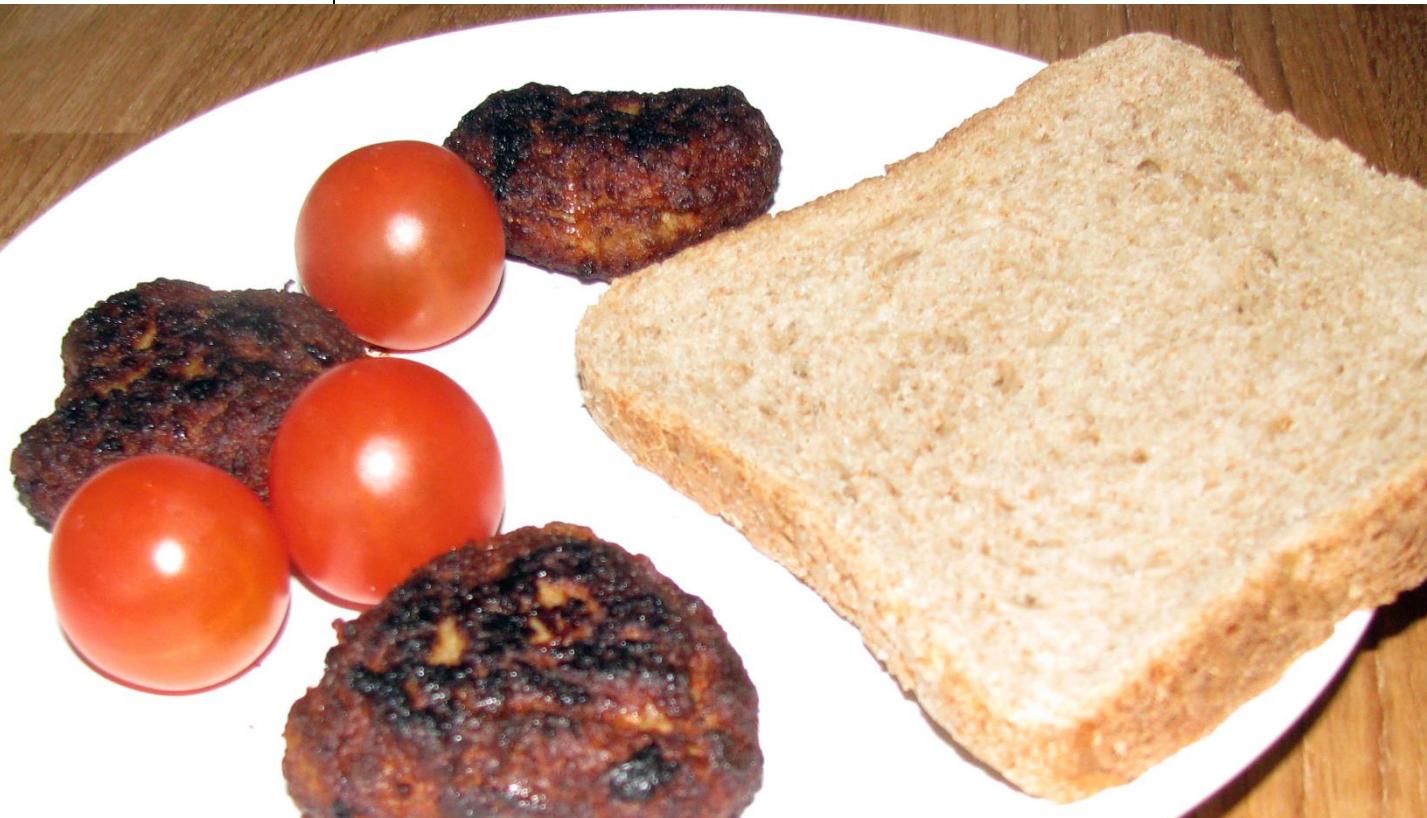
- 1 grated carrot
- Small amount of finely chopped parsley, dill, 2 – 3 tablespoons of breadcrumbs

Start by adding the bread to the milk until approx. 5-10 minutes to soften. Meanwhile, mix together the minced meat with the crushed garlic. Clean and grate the onion and potato, use the smallest hole on your grate, mix well with the minced meat. Add the bread and some of the milk, mix together. Now it's time to add the eggs, pepper and salt to taste. Mix well, at least 10 minutes, you will get a well homogenized taste by mixing for 10 minutes or more.

Keep it in the refrigerator for at least 30 minutes. Use a large frying pan, and have a little oil, approx. 200ml, or more. The meatballs need lots of oil to fry. The oil should not be extremely hot, because it will burn the outside of the meatballs, and leave the inside raw. Take the minced meat out of the fridge, put some oil on your hands (because the meat will not stick to your hands if they are oily) and start making round meatballs.

It is recommended for every meatball to be the same size, but it is actually up to you. When they are done, press them with the palm of your hand so as not to be round as a ball, but more flat so that the centre also fries well. Put them in oil, it is fine to have for 5 - 6 or more at a time, fry on both sides alternating 1-2 minutes, until they are brown.

You can enjoy meatballs with mashed potatoes, rice, or all the vegetable stews we have in this book. Or just with some tasty tomatoes and a slice of bread.



65. Smalls

( Mici)

"Mici" is a typical Romanian food you can find in a food stand at this week's farmer's market, or in a restaurant located in a big city. It is very common and very tasty, if freshly made, and the good news is that you can make it at home as well.

Ingredients

- 500 gr. minced pork or beef
- 500 gr. minced lamb meat
- Salt, pepper
- 1 teaspoon baking soda + a little lemon juice on
- 250 – 300 ml. cold water.

Mix the meat, salt and pepper well. Add baking soda and a little lemon juice, and mix for a few minutes, at least 10. Pour in the water, one small glass each time, and mix well after each glass of water. If you feel that the meat becomes soft do not use more water, it is done.

Put minced meat in the fridge for at least 1 hour. When you take it out of the fridge you can start making little sausages from the minced meat, approx. 10 – 15 cm long, 3 cm thick.

If you have a grill use it to grill the small sausages, if not, fry them in oil in a pan. The traditional fashion of eating Mici in Romania is with sweet mustard, Mujdei (see below for details) and white bread. If you have added more than you can eat, the "Mici" sausages can be kept in the freezer for up to a month or even more.

Spice mix for "Mici"

If you want, you can make a tasty spice mix you can use with "Mici". Use 1-2 teaspoons for the amount above, keep the rest in an airtight container.

- 1 teaspoon dry oregano
- 4 – 5 allspice
- $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon coriander seeds
- 2 teaspoons paprika powder

Put them in a mortar and pulverize well. Store it in a dry and dark place.

"Mujdei"

"Mujdei" is a strong sauce made with garlic and oil. In Transylvania we also use vinegar in the sauce, in the rest of Romania "Mujdei" is made without vinegar, and is more like a garlic sauce.

- Garlic, about 10 – 15 cloves.
- A little oil (almost 1 tsp.)
- Vinegar (about 4 – 5 soupspoons)

Crush the garlic cloves in a small but deep plate, put some oil on. Mix until you get a garlic sauce. Add the vinegar and mix well. Finished. Enjoy with food, such as "Mici" or grilled fish.

Unfortunately, "Mujdei" cannot be stored for more than an hour or two, so eat it right away.



66. Lamb-cake

(■■■ Drob)

This traditional Easter recipe for the Romanians in Transylvania is not only very tasty, but also incredibly difficult to prepare in the traditional way, due to the difficulty of finding the right ingredients. Basically, all the offals from lambs such as liver, kidney, lungs, spleen and heart is used, and all of these are wrapped in the peritoneum of the lamb and fried. What I have done here is to use a decent amount of lamb dough along with lamb liver that is available in stores. In Transylvania, every family has their own recipe they swear by.

Ingredients

- Minced lamb dough, approx. 1 kg
- Lamb liver, about 0.5 kg
- 2 eggs
- 1 large slice of bread softened in milk
- 1 small slice of bread
- Sour cream
- 1 large cup mixture of herbs: parsley leaves, dill, lovage, marjoram
- 5-6 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 onion
- salt, pepper

The original recipe needs

- only 0.5 kg of minced meat
- liver, kidney, lung, heart, and spleen of a lamb, about 0.5 kg
- peritoneum of lamb

Use a meat grinder and grind up everything that comes from the lambs, e.g. meat and liver (and the other Ingredients if you have found them in one store), along with the onion and all the herbs. Lastly, use a small slice of bread to clean the meat grinder and squeeze the meat out of it.

Mix together what you have grounded with the crushed garlic, the 2 eggs and the larger slice of bread from the milk, 1 tablespoon of sour cream and season with salt and pepper. Mix for at least 30 minutes to bring the flavours together and let it rest for 10 minutes. If using the lamb's peritoneum, wash it several times in a cold van. Place it in a high baking tray, making sure to cover all sides. Now place the mixture evenly in the baking tray, and fold over with the peritoneum. If you do not use the peritoneum, have some oil in the baking tray and just put the mixture in. Bake in the oven for approx. 30 minutes at 200C and then 15 minutes at 250C, turn off the oven and leave it in the oven until you are ready to serve it.

This food goes very well with potatoes, and because Easter was always around spring, there were not too many fresh vegetables, so you had to use lots of pickles or pickled peppers next to this food.

Variations

- In some recipes you place hard-boiled eggs in the middle and cover the eggs with meat mixture.
- In some areas of Transylvania, they fry all the lamb entrails in a little oil with onions, and then grind them.
- In other areas they make a dough of eggs and wheat flour that is stretched like a noodle sheet and that is used instead of the peritoneum.



67. Grill a'la Transylvania

( Grătar / Flekken )

In Transylvania, the grilled meat is mainly made from pork. Beef did not enter the culinary areas, due to the fact that cattle were more useful around the house than a pig, and lamb is used mostly around Easter. When the time came for a cow, it was already too old to grill, so the meat had to be used in different ways, such as long and slow cooking in a meat soup or other recipes where you can cook the meat long enough to become soft and edible.

Ingredients

- Pork in slices. Neck, tenderloin, ribs with meat or any other part you prefer,
- Salt, pepper
- Lard
- Oil, garlic
- Red wine

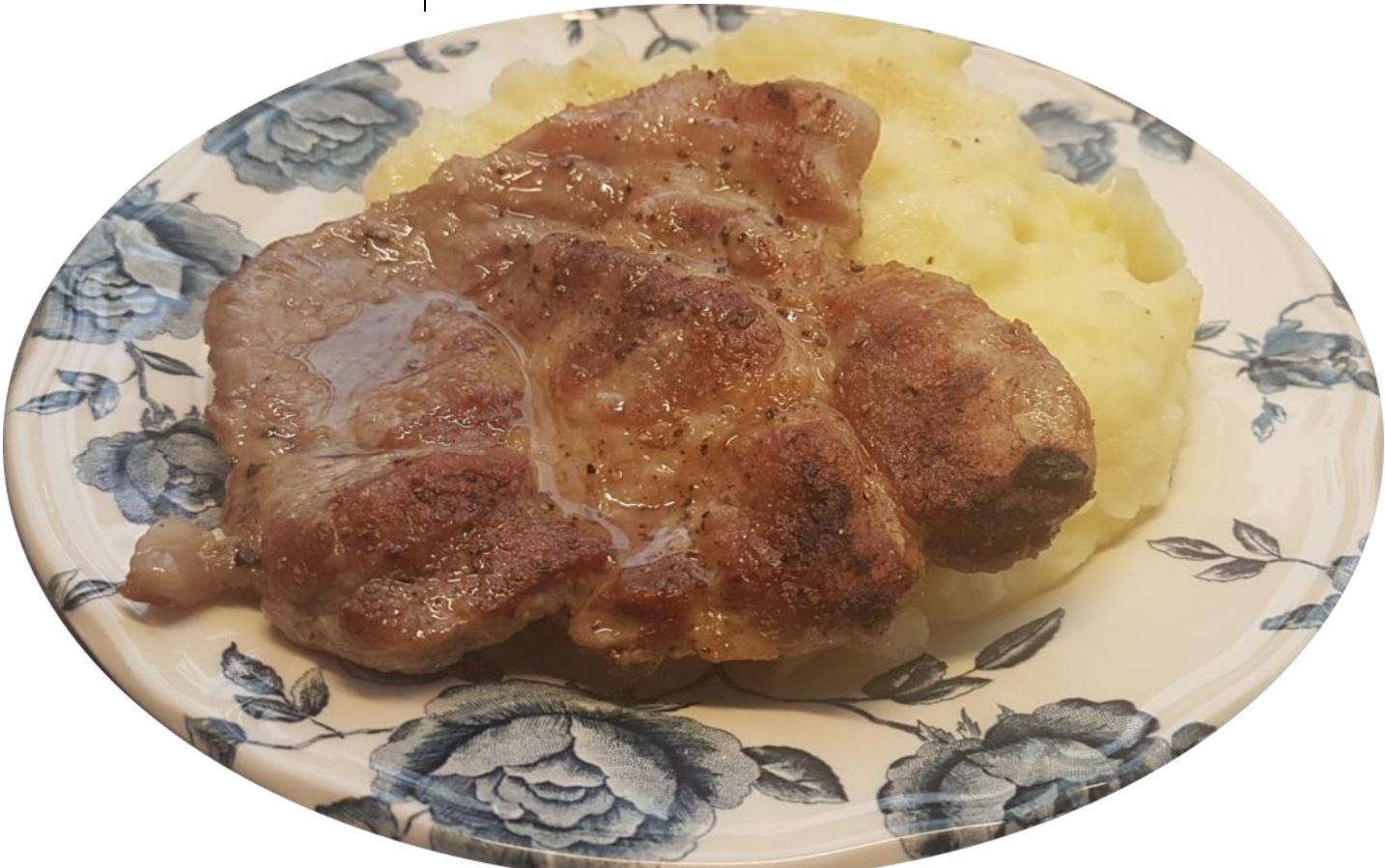
Wash and dry the meats before using them. I recommend marinating the meat in oil together with garlic for at least 12 hours, or overnight before making the grill, but it goes just fine without marinating as well. After marinating, remove the meat from the marinade, wipe dry and clean the marinade.

Add salt and pepper to the meat. Use a meat club to tenderize the meat. In a frying pan have some lard (or oil), heat it up and toss in the pork. Bake for a few minutes on both sides, add a little red wine and let it evaporate. Do not experiment with fancy techniques, such as a flambéing. Those are used in French recipes.

If there is fat on the side of the meat, rotate the meat so that only the fat part touches the bottom of the pan sometimes. When done, take it out of the pan, serve with the side dishes you prefer.

About the meat

It works just fine if you use neck chop, roast pork, pork fillet, tenderloin or other pork pieces. Each of these has a different taste, and since we do not make fast food, it is perfectly okay to experiment what you like more. If there is some fat next to the meat it is good, more flavor you will get.



68. Chicken “paprikás”

( Papricaş de pui / Csirkepaprikás)

This is a very classic Hungarian dish, and if you want to try it with other meats, such as veal or pork give it a try. The name “paprikas” is very difficult to translate, in Hungarian it means “with paprika”, but in fact it is a type of goulash made with paprika and thickening of milk and wheat flour. This recipe is different from the original from Hungary, because in our family in Transylvania we do not use red pepper and tomato either, instead we have 2-3 mushrooms cut into cubes.

Ingredients

- Chicken meat. Thighs, breasts or wings. Divide the thighs into 2 large pieces, breast cut into large cubes
- 1 large onion
- Red pepper powder, salt
- 1 large spoonful of paprika cream. Or two.
- 2 – 3 garlic boats, parsley
- Wheat flour (or whipped cream) and milk
- Oil or lard

Acceptable to have in

- A handful of mushrooms
- 1 red paprika, 1 tomato, sliced

Finely chop the onion, and brown it in oil (or lard) stirring constantly so that it does not burn, and when they are a little brown, but not soft yet, put in the mushrooms if you use. If you use mushrooms put in a little water and let them cook until done.

Now you can have in 1 large spoon of paprika cream, the chicken pieces and red paprika powder, the crushed garlic cloves and $\frac{1}{2}$ glass of water. Stir well and cook approx. 30 – 45 minutes, until most of the water has evaporated. If you use red pepper and tomato, put them in now and cook for 5 minutes. Now you can make a thickening with flour and milk (or whipped cream), stir it in, and cook for 10 – 15 minutes.

Serve this dish with dumplings, cooked pasta or mashed potatoes and pickled cucumber. This dish is perfectly fine to store until the next day, the taste will be better.

Dumplings

One of the most important side dishes in Transylvania is dumplings, which we can put together in a few minutes, and we can boil them in salt water.

Ingredients

- 50 dkg flour, 2 eggs, water, salt

Combine the eggs with flour, salt and enough water to get a smooth dough of medium density. Take out bite-sized pieces with a spoon or knife and throw them in hot boiling salted water, and cook them until they come to the surface. The water must boil continuously, so do not throw in too many at once.



69. Pepper "tokány"

( Tocană cu piper / Borsos tokány)

"Tokány" is very similar to the dish "paprikás", presented in the previous recipe, except that it must not have such a thick sauce, so you have to use less onions and water, and cook the dish until the water evaporates. Sometimes you can completely skip the peppers, and as in our case, you use black pepper.

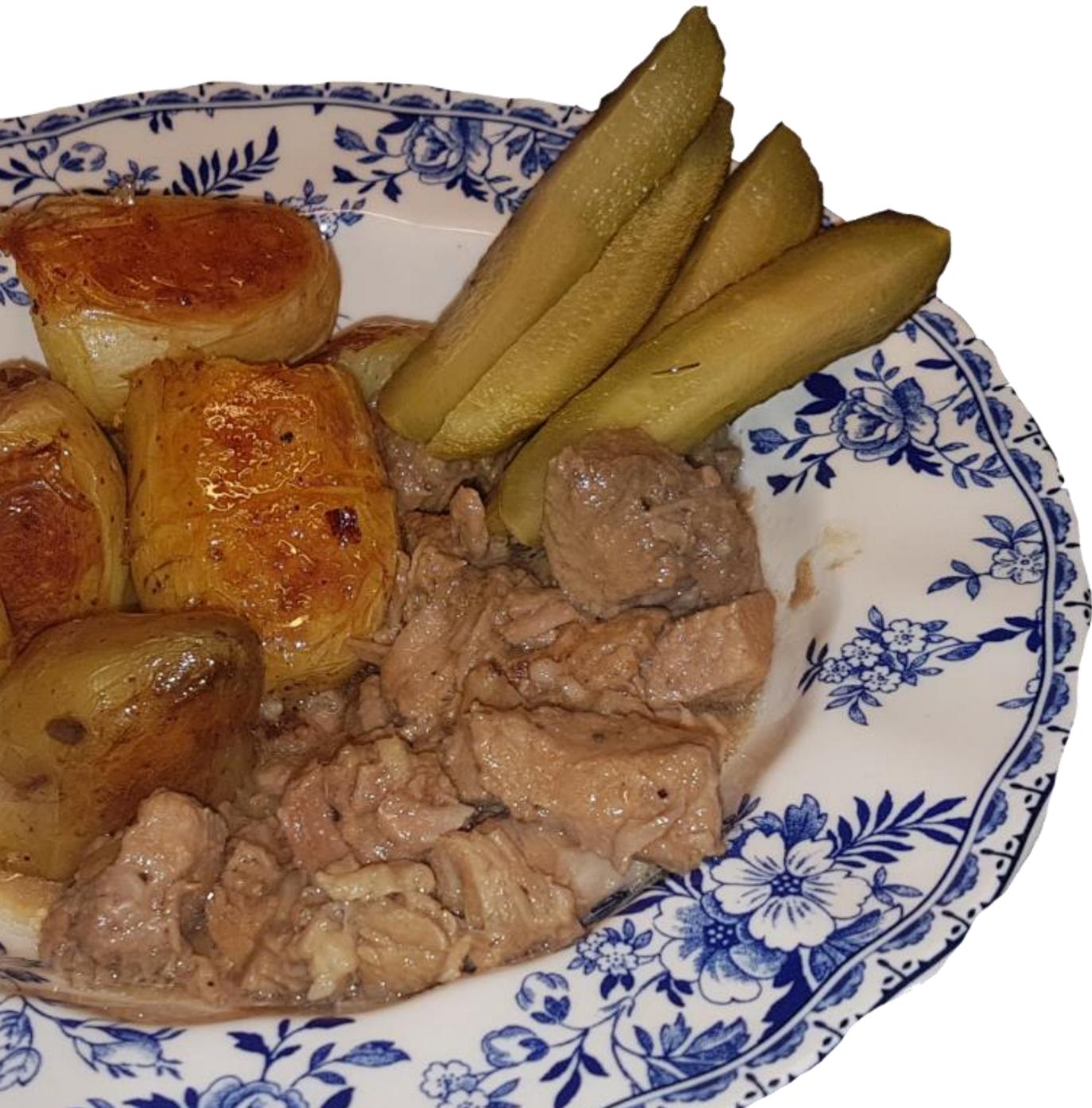
Ingredients

- Pork, approx. 500 gr. or more, cut into cubes
- 1 medium onion (or 2 if you use more meat)
- Oil, pepper, salt
- $\frac{1}{2}$ glass of dry white wine, not sweet

Finely chop the onions and fry them in oil until golden brown. Drizzle the ground black pepper on the onions, mix well and simmer for 1 – 2 minutes. Put the meat in the pot, with a little van, and put on the lid.

Cook until the meat is half cooked, it takes approx. 15 minutes, depending on the meat. Put the white wine in the pot, season with salt, extra pepper and cook until the meat is soft, and the onions disintegrated. Do not let it burn, if you see that there is not enough juice in the pot have in a little more white wine or water.

When done serve with fried or oven baked potatoes and pickles.



70. Mixed stew

( Tocană mixtă / Vegyes tokány)

Well, not exactly a classic English stew, but the Transylvanian variant of it, made with the tastiest ingredients you can get your hands on. And since this is also a make your own recipe, no specific quantities are given. Only use what you like best.

Ingredients

- Pork and/or chicken meat
- Chicken, pig, lamb, or beef liver
- A few harder mushrooms, nice, big and fresh, chanterelle, button mushrooms, or similar
- 2 – 3 large onions
- Oil (lard), salt, pepper

Cut the mushrooms into fine thin slices and fry them in small batches, in a small quantity of oil. Set them aside.

Finely chop the onion and sauté it in oil or lard, until light brown. Add a little pepper to the onion, cut the meat into cubes and add to the onion.

Mix together and add a little water. Bake on low heat under a lid, approx. 15 minutes, or until the meat is half done, then add the mushrooms along with the meat.

Cook without a lid, until the meat is tender, replace the water if it evaporates faster than anticipated.

Meanwhile, cut the liver into pieces, and when the meat is almost done, place it on the top.

Keep it boiling on low heat as long as the liver is tender, but do not cook it too well, otherwise the liver will be dry and tasteless.

Serve it with polenta, pasta, dumplings or similar.



71. Mushroom “paprikas”

( Paprikaş de ciuperci / Gombaparikás )

This recipe gives only basic instructions on how to make a “paprikás” that does not contain any meat, because sometimes we just do not want to eat meat. But we still want to eat something tasty. Preferably made from mushrooms, chanterelles, or other solid mushrooms, not boletus and its family.

Ingredients

- ½ – 1 kg of mushroom mixture. Fresh if you find, frozen also goes.
- 1 onion
- Milk, wheat flour
- Salt, pepper, red pepper
- Parsley

Wash the mushrooms, cut them into pieces the size you like and throw them in boiling hot water for at least 60 seconds, but no more than two minutes. Remove the mushrooms from the water, dry them.

Finely chop the onion and fry it in oil until golden brown in a frying pan.

Add a little black pepper, mix and put the mushrooms in the frying pan with the onion, add a little paprika and water, and simmer until all the mushrooms are soft enough.

Make a thickening of milk and flour, and put it on the mushrooms, bring to a boil.

Season with salt, paprika and parsley, and done.



72. Roast pork à la Transylvania

( Carne prăjită / Sült hús)

The fresher the meat you can get for this dish, the better the taste. Do not be afraid if there is a large piece of fat on the side, because after the fat has melted, it can be used in other recipes later, if you just store it in a cool place for a few days.

Ingredients

- Some pieces of pork, preferably with a little fat on, approx. 250 – 300 gr.
- 2 small onions or shallots
- 2 – 3 cloves of garlic, crushed
- Lard / oil
- Salt, pepper

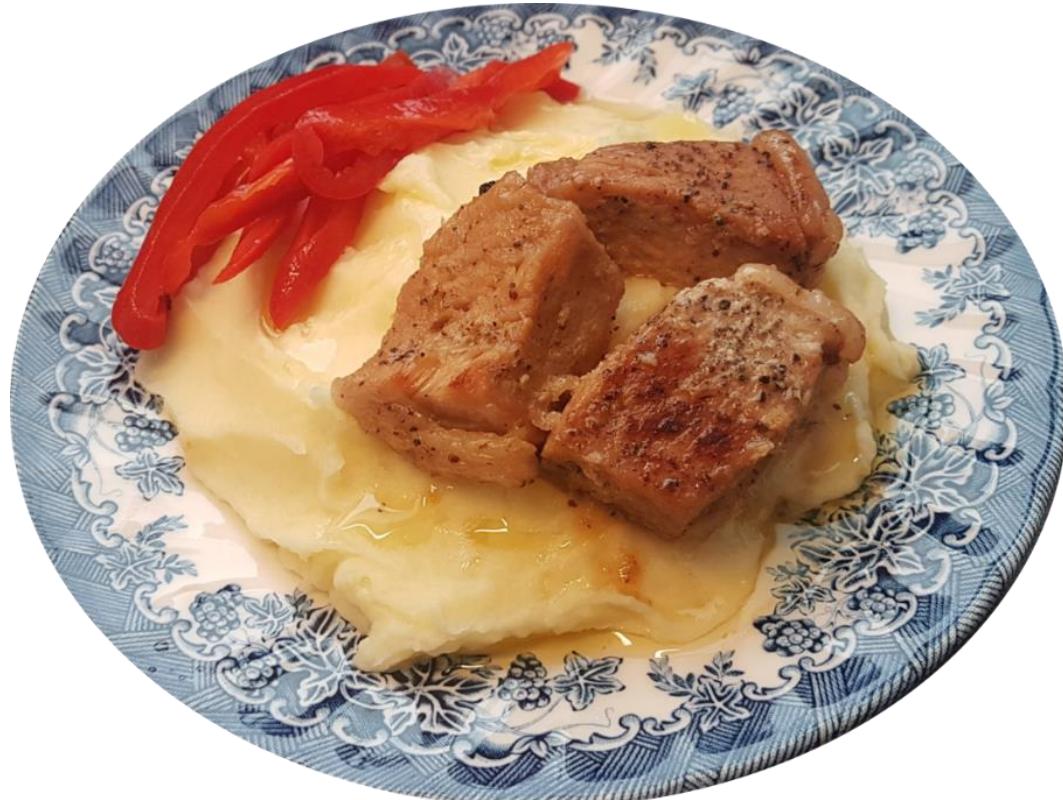
Put in the pork that was cut into large cubes together with the cleaned shallots, and the garlic boats in a casserole. Season with salt and pepper, add a little lard and / or oil, add a little water (enough to cover the garlic cloves) and put on the stove.

When the water starts to boil, turn down the heat, put the lid on the pot, and let it boil until you can stick a fork into the pieces of meat without too much effort.

If the water evaporates, add a little more water in order to not let it burn. Turn the meat a few times while it is cooking.

When the meat is soft enough, remove the lid from the pan, let the water evaporate, and brown both sides of the pieces of meat, but do not let them burn.

This dish goes very well with mashed potatoes, boiled rice or boiled potatoes. Feel free to eat with pickled cucumber or fried pepper.



Tips

- The fat that remains in the pan after cooling is very good on a slice of bread (put it in the fridge for a few hours before this), or you can use it instead of oil when making another recipe.



73. Fried chicken

( Pui prăjit / Sült csirke )

We have a special recipe for chicken thighs that gives you crispy skin, soft flesh, and a mild taste. It is not done on the grill, neither with frying in oil, but slowly fried in a pan in your oven.

Ingredients

- 4 – 5 chicken thighs with skin on
- 1 apple, divided into two. No need to be fresh, but do not use a rotten one either
- 2 – 3 small onions
- 5 – 6 garlic cloves
- Sunflower oil
- Salt, pepper

Wash the chicken thighs in cold water and place them in an iron pan you are not afraid to use in the oven. Pour a good amount of oil on the chicken thighs and season them with salt and pepper. Cut the onion into quarters, the apples in half and the garlic into thick slices if they are large, or in half if they are small.

Place the garlic slices on the chicken, the rest of the onions and apples next to it and put everything in a preheated oven at 180 degrees. You can stick some thin slices of garlic under the skin of the leg. Pour some water next to the chicken thighs.

The secret behind the success of this dish is that after 30 minutes of boiling you must sprinkle with the hot liquid from the pan on the legs at least once every minute (use a spoon) so that they do not become very dry and slowly get a nice crispy and brown skin on top of the soft flesh.

The cooking time is around 45 minutes, or until you get the desired colour on the legs. Serve with your favourite side and the fried apple and onion next to it.



74. Székely goulash

( Gulaş secuiesc / Székelygulyás )

Although this food has the same name as the Sekler people, who live in the middle of Romania, and are the largest Hungarian-speaking minority in the country, in fact this food has its origins in Budapest in the mid-19th century, from where it spread to all Hungarian speaking areas, and was happily integrated into the cuisine of neighbouring countries as well. And since the food is the name of a person with the family name "Székely", I cannot translate it, so it stays that way.

Ingredients

- 1 kg. sauerkraut. See observations at the beginning of the book about quality sauerkraut.
- 75 dkg. diced pork. It's okay if the meat has a little fat on it.
- 1 large onion finely chopped.
- Salt, pepper
- Sweet red paprika
- Cumin (If you like)
- Oil and crème fraîche

In a large casserole add the oil and the finely chopped onion, sauté the onion until soft. Add a little ground pepper, mix with the onion, add the pork, stir well, and let it cook for approx. 30 minutes or until the meat is almost done.

Add a small amount of water if it starts to burn.

If the sauerkraut is very sour, strain the juice through a sieve, press all the juice out and wash the sauerkraut a few times.

It is perfectly fine to drink the natural juice from sauerkraut (has huge amounts of Vitamin C), or you can use the juice in a second recipe (only if it was not sour with vinegar) for example recipe 18.

Now add the sauerkraut, mix well with the meat, add a little water, cumin, red paprika powder and cook until the sauerkraut is soft, it takes approx. 30 – 45 minutes.

When serving, add a little sour cream and it is ready to eat.



75. Layered cabbage

( Varză de Cluj / Rakott káposzta )

This easy-to-make but tasty sauerkraut food should be your introduction to the world of sauerkraut recipes. For our basic recipe, we only use a deep casserole and cook the food normally on the stove, but if you decide to put everything in a deep baking tray pan and fry it in the oven (with a good amount of sour cream on), you have instantly made one of the most iconic Transylvanian foods: Cabbage à la Cluj.

Ingredients

- Around 500 gr. pork or beef mince, or a mixture of them
- 1 large onion
- 4 – 5 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 kg of sauerkraut
- Rice
- Oil, paprika, salt, pepper

If you like

- Bacon
- Cumin, oregano

Finely chop the onions and put them in a frying pan with a little oil and a little black pepper on top. Put half a glass of rice with three glasses of water to boil.

When the onions are brown but not burnt, add the garlic, stir and sauté for 2 minutes, then add the minced meat, red paprika powder (cumin and oregano if you use) and fry them together, stirring constantly until the rice is done (approx. 20 minutes, depending on the rice).

When the rice and meat are done, in a deep casserole, prepare the following setup:

- 1 layer of sauerkraut
- 1 layer of rice
- 1 layer of meat (and bacon on meat if using)



Repeat until Ingredients are left. The top layer

must be sauerkraut. Pour some water into it, boil for 45 - 50 minutes. Do not let it burn. When serving, of course, you must use sour cream.

76. Stuffed cabbage

( Sarmale /  Töltött káposzta )

This is possibly the most complex recipe presented in our book, but this is a must try food for anyone who wants to experience real Transylvanian food in its full richness. Like every popular dish, this one also has a very varied method of preparation, each family has its own sworn recipe. This food is so popular that there is even a festival dedicated to it in the small village of  Praid /  Parajd which is held at the end of September every year, when the annual sauerkraut is at its best. This is our recipe, and yes, our grandparents come from the aforementioned small village.

Ingredients

- Finely shredded sauerkraut, about 1.5 – 2 kg. See our remarks about sauerkraut at the beginning of this book.
- Whole sauerkraut leaves, around 10 - 12 if you make a larger portion. Either you want to buy them from a store, or you have to make yours.
- About $\frac{1}{2}$ – 1 kg. of minced pork
- 1 finely chopped red onion
- 10 – 15 dkg. rice
- Salt, pepper
- Some slices of Hungarian sausages rich with paprika
- Smoked pork, sliced. It can be ribs, side, knuckle. The more varied you have, the better the taste.
- A few slices of bacon

If you like

- Red paprika powder
- 5 – 6 crushed garlic cloves
- 5 – 6 bay leaves
- Cumin

Start by mixing the meat, rice and onion with salt and pepper. If you use garlic and paprika powder, they should go into the mixture. When you have a good mixture, let it rest for 30 minutes, while you wash, clean and cut the right size the sauerkraut leaves. A small advice for the good size is that you should be able to wrap a small handful of meat from the meat mixture, and then roll it up without it opening again. About twice the size of the palms will be a good size. Lay on the side a few leaves you will use them later (to cover the pot).

When you are done with all the leaves, take a casserole and place a layer of bacon slices on the bottom, a thin layer of meat on the bacon and a layer of finely chopped sauerkraut. Place a layer of sausage slices on the shredded sauerkraut. If you use bay leaves, put them on the sausages.

Now make those rolls. Place a nice amount of meat on the side of a leaf, and roll up, starting from the side with the meat on, in a short sausage-like shape. Fold in the edges so that it does not open during cooking.

When you have finished a roll, place it on top of the sausages, and repeat until you are empty of meat or leaves (put the new one next to the previous roll in the pot). If you run out of leaves, make small meatballs from the rest of the meat, and place them on the side, we can use them later in another recipe or in this one as filling.



Now you should have a nice layer with the stuffed cabbage rolls, if there are any gaps between them, fill it with a piece of smoked meat or a meatball you may have made in between. Now place the remaining shredded cabbage on top of the rolls. If you use cumin, sprinkle the sauerkraut with it. Afterwards, place the remaining meat and meatballs on top of the shredded cabbage. If you use red paprika powder, sprinkle a good portion on, and cover all with the leaves you have set aside at the beginning.

Fill it with enough water to cover all the cabbage, put on the lid and cook for 2 – 3 hours on low heat (it should not burn), or until the cabbage and meat are done. Do not forget to add a good splash of sour cream when serving.

77. Fried liver

( Ficat prăjit / Májflekk)

When you make liver pate, you can save a nice slice of liver for this dish. It will not disappoint you. Do not fry too long, otherwise it will be too dry.

Ingredients

- Pork liver (Or beef liver, lamb liver, chicken or goose liver)
- Oil
- Pepper
- Salt

Cut the liver into 1 – 2 cm thick slices. In a frying pan put in oil, and when the oil is hot enough have in the liver slices. Bake for a maximum of 2 minutes on each side (if they are thick, cook a little more) and take them out of the frying pan. Season with salt and pepper now, not before frying.

Just eat, do not let it cool down otherwise it will become stiff.

If you make this food with a few sides (it goes great with mashed potatoes, French-fries or boiled rice), I recommend preparing all the sides, plates, table settings in advance, and just put these grilled liver pieces on the plate directly from the pan.



78. Layered potatoes

( Cartofi franțuzești / Rakott pityóka )

For this dish, you either use some leftover potatoes from yesterday, or just make a new portion and use them. Also feel relaxed about the ingredients. If you do not have white cheese, use yellow one, if you do not have sour cream, don't use sour cream. The eggs are kind of necessary. Meat is also optional, use it if you have / like, otherwise it is okay to just skip them.

Ingredients

- 10 – 15 boiled potatoes cut in slices
- 5 – 6 hard-boiled eggs, sliced
- White cheese (like feta), yellow cheese, grated cheese
- Sour cream
- Salt, pepper
- Butter, breadcrumbs
- Olives
- Sausages with paprika
- Bacon

Take a loaf pan and butter the bottom and sides with butter. Drizzle bread crumbs on the butter. If you use bacon, have a layer of bacon on the bottom.

Afterwards lay in the pan a layer of potato slices. On the potatoes put a little grated yellow cheese or white cheese bits and sour cream, and afterwards a layer of eggs. On the eggs add a little salt, pepper and grated cheese, and a new layer of potatoes on top.

Add more sour cream, cover with yellow cheese slices and place in the oven at 180 degrees, approx. 30 – 45 minutes. If you want to use some of the other "It's nice to have in" Ingredients just throw them in between the layers, there is really no rule for this. What is important is that in the end you get a good and tasty food.



79. Chulent

( Ciulent /  Sólet)

A very traditional Jewish recipe invented to circumvent the strict rules of cooking on the Sabbath, which also managed to bring a wide variety of flavours into the Sabbath in the daily Jewish life of Transylvania or for this purpose, no matter where they live in the world. Except that our incarnation of the recipe is anything but kosher. In Transylvania, this recipe was made with goose meat, stuffed goose neck, smoked beef

Ingredients

- Ca. 300 – 400 gr. dry large white haricot beans (100 – 150 gr. / person). Not from a tin.
- 1 onion
- 1 tablespoon of flour
- 2 - 3 garlic cloves
- Pork chop, 1 / person
- Beef tenderloin, 1 / person
- 5 – 10 smoked bacon slices or some other smoked meat if you prefer it that way
- Salt, pepper, tarragon, basil, oil, wheat flour, sour cream.

At least 12 hours before you start cooking have the beans in a large pot of water, leave them overnight. If you have naturally smoked meat (smoked without chemicals), not meat prepared with artificial smoky taste, add it to the water.

When you start cooking: finely chop the onion and sauté it in a good amount of oil until the onions are a little brown. Add 1 tablespoon of flour, stir together, put in the crushed garlic and 1 glass of wine. Bring to boil and remove from the heat when it boils. Put in the beans, stir well. Sprinkle with the remaining spices, place the meat slices on top and cover with water, have at least 5 cm. water over the meat.

Put the casserole in the oven and cook over low heat for at least 5 - 6 hours, until the meat is tender and soft. I have started cooking it at 180 C and slowly lowered the temperature to 120 C. Be careful, that there is always liquid on the beans. Once the pot is in the oven, do not stir this food, instead give the pot a quick circular shake.

Either you eat it the day you cook it or reheat it in the oven when you want to consume it.

And of course, a good spoonful of sour cream also turns this food into a delicacy.



80. Hunter's dish

( Mâncare de vânăt / Vadas)

This old recipe used to be made with game, but hunting is no longer a major activity in Transylvania (well, except bear hunting), so instead of deer, wild boar and wild rabbit, the more well-known varieties are beef, pork, chicken, and why not, if you can get your hands on it on, even a rabbit can be used to make this recipe.

Ingredients

- As many large slices of meat as many portions, feel free to use beef, pork, chicken, or rabbit, washed and cleaned
- 10 – 15 carrots
- 1 – 2 parsnips and parsley root
- Some celery, or kale
- 5 – 6 garlic cloves
- 1 small onion
- Bay leaves
- Salt, whole black pepper
- Lemon juice
- Wheat flour, oil to make a roux
- Macaroni, one serving portion for each slice of meat

Peel and cut the vegetables, put them together in a pot with the meat. Add the bay leaves, 10 – 15 black peppercorns, a little salt and cook until the meat is soft. When the meat is done take out the vegetables, strain off the water, do not throw it away, but put it somewhere to cool it down as quickly as possible, and now it is the time to put the macaroni to boil in salted water.

Using a sieve, mash the root vegetables through the sieve with a spoon. Do not use a mixer, you will get a way too creamy mash and the consistency of the food will not be as expected. Return the mashed vegetables to the meat and heat them over low heat until you make a roux with the flour and oil, being careful not to burn it, you can add some of the water you saved before. Make a roux and dissolve it with the cold cooking liquid and put it in the pot. Mix well with the vegetable mash, season with salt and a little lemon juice. The macaroni should be ready, divide them between the serving plates, put on a slice of meat on each and divide the sauce between the plates.

Tips

- If you want to use roux from the fridge, cook up some of the water you boiled the vegetables in and dissolve the roux in it. You can grill the meat and vegetables a little before cooking



81. Chicken with carrot

( Mâncare de pui cu morcovi / Vetece)

This is an incredibly old recipe, and nothing proves it more, that it is possibly the only recipe in the book that needs ginger. You see, ginger disappeared from our recipes and food during the communist regime, since it was impossible to find it in stores, but it was recently discovered as a basic ingredient, but not because of the old traditional recipes, but much more in fashionable modern recipes, you can find anywhere in the world.

Ingredients

- Chicken breast, 1 per serving
- For each chicken breast 1 large carrot and one large onion
- A little ginger
- Salt, pepper, oil
- Tarragon vinegar
- Oregano

Cut the chicken breasts into finger-sized stripes, sprinkle with oregano, ground black pepper and a little oil, mix and let it rest while you cut the carrot and onions into long stripes as well.

In an iron frying pan, add a little oil, put in the chicken breasts and fry on high heat until browned. Take out the chickens, add the onion and carrot, and a little water and simmer under a lid until the vegetables are soft.

When they are soft enough, remove the lid, let the water evaporate, and keep the fried chicken pieces in. Mix well, add a little salt and tarragon vinegar, and serve with boiled rice or polenta.

Tips

- This food can also be made if you use yesterday's fried meat instead of chicken.
- Leftovers from this food can be used to make a vegetable soup with chicken tomorrow.
- Use tarragon vinegar only if you like it.



82. Fish with vegetables

( Pește cu vegetale / Tárkonyos hal)

As you have observed so far, fish recipes are underrepresented in this book. The reasons for this are that there is not too much water in Transylvania, and definitely no sea, just fresh water. There are a few rivers, which are home to a few specific fish species (and they are certainly cooked in the most ingenious and tasty ways in Transylvania), but unfortunately these fish are not native to English speaking countries (for example asp) or difficult to find in stores (of course if you are the type who fishes in lakes and rivers, you may come across them, such as carp or pike), so sharing a recipe with a fish you may not be able to make would be inconsiderate at its best. There is obviously the generic "take a piece of fish and fry it" recipe, but that is not worth mentioning, so this fish recipe we present here is something you will not have problems making it, because you can make it with which any fish you like and can get your hands on, even a mix of different fish.

Ingredients

- 2 – 3 parsley roots
- 2 – 3 carrots
- Handful of peas
- 1 medium onion
- 2 – 3 pieces of fish. I used cod, of course you use your favourite fish
- 1 egg
- Sour cream
- 1 tablespoon butter
- Wheat flour
- Tarragon and oregano
- Salt, tarragon vinegar

Peel and cut the carrot and parsley lengthwise. Put in a saucepan approx. in 1 litre of clear beef soup (it is ok to use only water with salt in if you do not have it, or just throw in two cubes of beef broth) have in the carrot and parsley root, the cleaned onion and a handful of green peas.

While cooking, make a light thickening (roux) with butter and flour. When the vegetables are cooked and soft take the vegetables out of the water, place them on your serving plate and keep them in a warm place, and let the water still boil. When all the vegetables are removed dissolve the thickening in the vegetables' boiling water. Add the tarragon, tarragon vinegar, oregano, the fish and cook it over low heat so that the fish remains whole.

When the fish is cooked, take it out of the boiling water and place the fish on the vegetables, keep it at a warm place. Whisk the egg yolk with 1 tablespoon of sour cream, put them in the water, bring to the boil, reduce it till it is saucy enough for you and put on the fish.



A world of jam

If in Transylvania we pickle all the vegetables from the garden, then I can easily say that we make jam (or something else, with a higher level of alcohol, which is not covered in this book) from all the fruits that grow in the garden, on the trees, the bushes, and sometimes we go even further out into the woods for tasty berries. From this point of view, there are many similarities with how you handle your fruits (of course I am talking about making jam).

With one big exception.

Nowhere in the world did I find a jam of the consistency of a homemade plum jam. Maybe I did not search enough, or just I was not invited to enough homes that statistically speaking, a tasty plum jam appears in one of them. Thus I decided to quickly share our homemade plum jam recipe, maybe someone will be in the mood to make plum jam for themselves, and discover how tasty it can be.

Plum jam

Ingredients

- Plums. I have used 1 kg, they were not extra sweet, so I have added extra sugar.
- 20 gr sugar (to 1 kg plum, scale it up / down according to your needs)
- 1 teaspoon rum essence or 1 dl. of tasty rum

Wash the plums, cut them in half and remove the seeds from them, put them in the pot you are going to cook them in. Sprinkle over half of the sugar you use, pour over the rum (if you use the essence, you have to spread it evenly), mix a little, sprinkle again with the remaining sugar.

Let it rest for a few hours, even overnight.

Put them on the stove and simmer slowly on low heat for 5 – 6 hours, or until you get it to the desired thickness.

Put it in a clean jar, wrap it in a few dry clothes and towels, and let it cool down, this may take a day or two, depending on the amount of jam you made. Store it in a cool place, and when its time came, have it on bread, goes very well with unsalted butter on a fresh white loaf.

Side dishes

When you are in Transylvania and are served a main course in any self-respecting restaurant, it usually comes with one or two matching side dishes. In the main courses section, we have tried to recommend some sides that go well with the recipes, and here we present how to make them.

Most of these side dishes are made from a specific vegetable, but sometimes it is great to combine a few of them in the same dish. We will let you know the specific recipe.

In Transylvania we have a special category of food that is neither a soup nor a stew. It is either a very thick soup, or a very thin stew. And it contains only vegetables, usually thickened with roux or some other thickener. They are served with some of the main dishes here in the book, such as fried meat, but they also go well on their own, or with a fried egg on top. In the second part of this section, we present these recipes.



83. Fried potatoes with dill

( Cartofi cu mărar / Kaprosptyóka )

Just a few ingredients, and an amazingly simple way of preparing it, but the taste is just great. If you are not careful with this recipe, it will burn very easily, so do not use high heat..

Ingredients

- Potatoes. Small, fresh potatoes are the best, otherwise dice them up
- Butter
- Salt, pepper, dill

Wash and peel the potatoes and cut them into cubes. If the potatoes are fresh, it is fine to use them unpeeled. If the potatoes are small, you do not need to cut them up.

In a pan that has a lid, have for approx. 45-50 gr. butter, and melt it. Put in the potatoes, mix well with the melted butter. Put the lid on, cook for 30 seconds, remove the lid, mix, and repeat. It is of utmost importance that you mix them very often so that they do not burn, and between mixing keep on the lid that they boil soft.

When you consider the potatoes to be done (25 – 40 minutes, depending on the potato's type), remove the lid, sprinkle the potatoes with finely chopped dill, and mix constantly for the next minute so that the potatoes get a yellow-brown colour. Season with salt, pepper, and extra dill. This side dish goes very well with fried chicken, or any stew with meat that has a little sauce on.



84. Mashed potatoes

( Pireu de cartofi / Pityókapire )

The basic dish of mashed potatoes is a simple and versatile dish that can go together with many of the main courses. We present here a very flexible recipe, feel free to tame it for your needs.

Ingredients

- As much potatoes as you need, peeled, and cut into cubes.
- Salt
- Milk and butter
- It is fine to have in also a little Vegeta and / or a little olive oil.

Peel and dice the potatoes. Put the potatoes in a pot (and vegeta / olive oil if using) and cook them in salted water. When the potatoes are tender enough for you, pour off the water from the pot. Put in the butter, and mash the potatoes, the butter should melt into the mash. Use one or two forks to mash the potatoes. Add a little milk, mash more, and repeat with the milk, until you like the taste and consistence.

This site goes very well with everything that is made from meat.

Tips

- If you want to re-heat the mashed potatoes, use some milk and heat it on the stove top, not in the microwave.
- Yesterday's leftover mashed potatoes you can mix with one egg, a little wheat flour, make a soft dough, divide into small potato cakes and fry them in hot oil.

85. Potato with green parsley

( Cartofi cu pătrunjel / Petrezselymes pityóka )

To spice up the bland taste of plain boiled potato you can use different techniques. This is possibly the simplest of all. Simple as cooking a potato. I recommend making this dish when you have a main course with a strong taste. For example, fried liver, or a steak...

Ingredients

- 4 – 5 potatoes
- Butter
- Parsley
- Salt

Peel and dice the potatoes. Boil the potatoes in salted water. When they are done, take them out of the water. In a frying pan, heat a little butter and put in the parsley leaves that were finely chopped before.

Fry the parsley leaves a little, and after 1 minute put the potatoes in a frying pan. Done.



86. Fried potato with paprika

( Cartofi prăjiți cu paprika / Rántott pityóka )

Just a little more complicated than the previous recipe, it still delivers full flavour of potatoes with a little extra paprika and fried onions. Make this recipe if the main course is a little on the bland side of taste.

Ingredients

- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 1 little green of spring onion
- 4 – 5 medium-sized potatoes, or more if you are hungry.
- Oil
- Red paprika powder

Peel and dice the potatoes. Boil them in salted water. While they are cooking, in a frying pan put in a little oil, and sauté the finely chopped onions until it is soft brown, but not burnt.

When the potatoes are done, take them out of the water and put them in the frying pan. Stir and mix well with the onion, add a little red pepper, stir again, and serve with a little green spring on top.

Tips

- Do not throw away the water from the potatoes. You can use them when making a vegetable soup, potato soup or any other dish with vegetables.
- A simple recipe where you can use yesterday's fried potato (with paprika) is: boil 1 litre of water (or more if you have lots of potatoes) have in 1 bay leaf, some frozen (or fresh) vegetables, 1 onion, and the potatoes, and cook them until the vegetables are soft. Make a little roux, mix it into the soup, season with vinegar and salt and a new soup is ready.



87. Pommes frites

( Cartofi prăjiți / Szalmapityóka )

I do not think I can come up with a recipe easier than this, so just for fun, let's add it here because I do not think there is anyone out there who did not start his cooking career with french fries.

Ingredients

- Potatoes
- Oil. Huge amounts of sunflower oil.

Peel the potatoes and cut them into thin sticks. Or cut them into flat round slices. Or dice. Or, if the potatoes are small, have them whole.

Heat the oil. Some recipes say that you should heat up to a certain degree, but as mentioned in the introduction of the book, for us cooking is fun, it's not about using expensive tools and transforming our kitchen into a chemistry lab. Just heat it up. If you see that it does not fry the potatoes heat it more. If you see it burning the potato, or starting to smell, just lower the heat.

You can use any pot, casserole dish, frying pan, because in time you will know the difference. I personally like to use my half a hundred-year-old iron, 1 litre pot. Find your favourite casserole, and use it to fry potatoes, and for nothing else. You can actually keep the oil between two or three sessions of frying, and change it only when it gets smelly. Put the potatoes in the oil.

With a perforated spoon made of metal, turn the potatoes around occasionally so that they do not stick together.

Now it depends on how you like your fried potatoes. If you like them soft and moist, take them out when they are yellowish and soft to the touch of the spoon, or you can just stick them through with a fork. If you like them drier and crispier, leave them in more, until they are

golden brown.
If you have a lid
on the pot,
they will be
softer or they
will be crispier.

Take them out
in a bowl,
which has a
paper towel on
the bottom and
let the oil drain
well. Taste with
salt, and done.
Only with salt



88. Green peas

( Mâncare de mazăre / Zöldborsófőzelék)

There is more to green peas than mased peas. For example, you can make a very delicious side that goes well with meatballs, sausage and bacon or fried eggs.

Ingredients

- Green peas, fresh, frozen, or canned
- Oil and flour to make a roux
- Parsley
- Salt, sugar
- A little vinegar
- 1 teaspoon of tomato paste
- A little butter

Cook the peas in a little salted water until they are cooked through and soft. Make a roux of oil or use cold roux and mix it with the peas. Add a little butter and / or tomato puree If you like, season with salt, sugar and vinegar.

Add a little parsley and bring to the boil again. Serve with some meat or fried eggs.



89. Celery sides

( Mâncare de zelină / Zellerfőzelék)

This is one of those foods that you would not expect to be as tasty as it is only based on the look of it. However, this food can be one of your favourites If you like celery.

Ingredients

- Celery, ca. 500 gr
- 1 celery stick
- Sour cream
- Butter
- Salt
- Tarragon and parsley leaves

Peel and grate the celery on a grater. Wash the celery stick and cut into thin pieces. Mix the two celeries with 2 tablespoons of sour cream. In a saucepan melt some butter and put on the celery. Boil on low heat, and sometimes put on some water.

When the celery is soft, season with salt, tarragon, and a little parsley.



90. Squash

( Mâncare de dovleci /  Tökfőzelék )

A basic recipe made from squash, which goes well with pretty much anything, from fried meat, through meatballs to a fried egg. If you cannot get your hands on squash, just use zucchini.

Ingredients

- 1 – 2 – 3 squashes or zucchinis
- Dill and oregano
- Vinegar
- Flour and oil
- Salt, red paprika powder

Peel and grate the squash, and cook it in a pot in a little salted water. If you use squash that has a more firm texture, let them cook for 15-20 minutes, but for a zucchini you only need 10.

While the squash is cooking, make a small amount of roux from oil and flour (about 1 tablespoon should be enough) and when the squash is soft enough, mix the roux into the pot. Add red pepper, a little dill, a little oregano, and cook for 5 minutes (I recommend using a spice bag to have in the dill and oregano, so you can take them out later). Season with some vinegar and it's done.



91. Green beans

( Mâncare de fasole verde / Zöldfuszulyka főzelék )

This will be like a very thick green bean soup, so a surprise ... if any are left until tomorrow you can easily turn it into a ... green bean soup.

Ingredients

- Green beans, as much as you want
- A small onion
- 2 – 3 tomatoes
- Green parsley leaves
- Salt, sugar
- Vinegar

If you like it more thick

- One parsley root
- Flour, oil
- 1 – 2 Garlic cloves
- Red paprika powder

Clean the beans and break them into finger-sized pieces. Put them in a saucepan, pour in a glass of water and boil them together with the onion (and garlic if you use) and a little salt.

After 15 minutes, add the tomatoes and parsley leaves, and cook until the beans are soft.

If you want it a little thicker, make a roux with flour and oil, mix the roux into the beans, add a little red paprika powder, and cook together for 10 more minutes.

Taste with salt, a little vinegar and sugar.



92. Spinach

( Spanac / Spenót főzelék )

The all-time children's favourite food, spinach occupies a special place in our hearts. Not only is it full of iron and it is the healthiest food in the salads category, but also our parents considered it a great victory when the served portion of spinach was actually eaten.

Ingredients

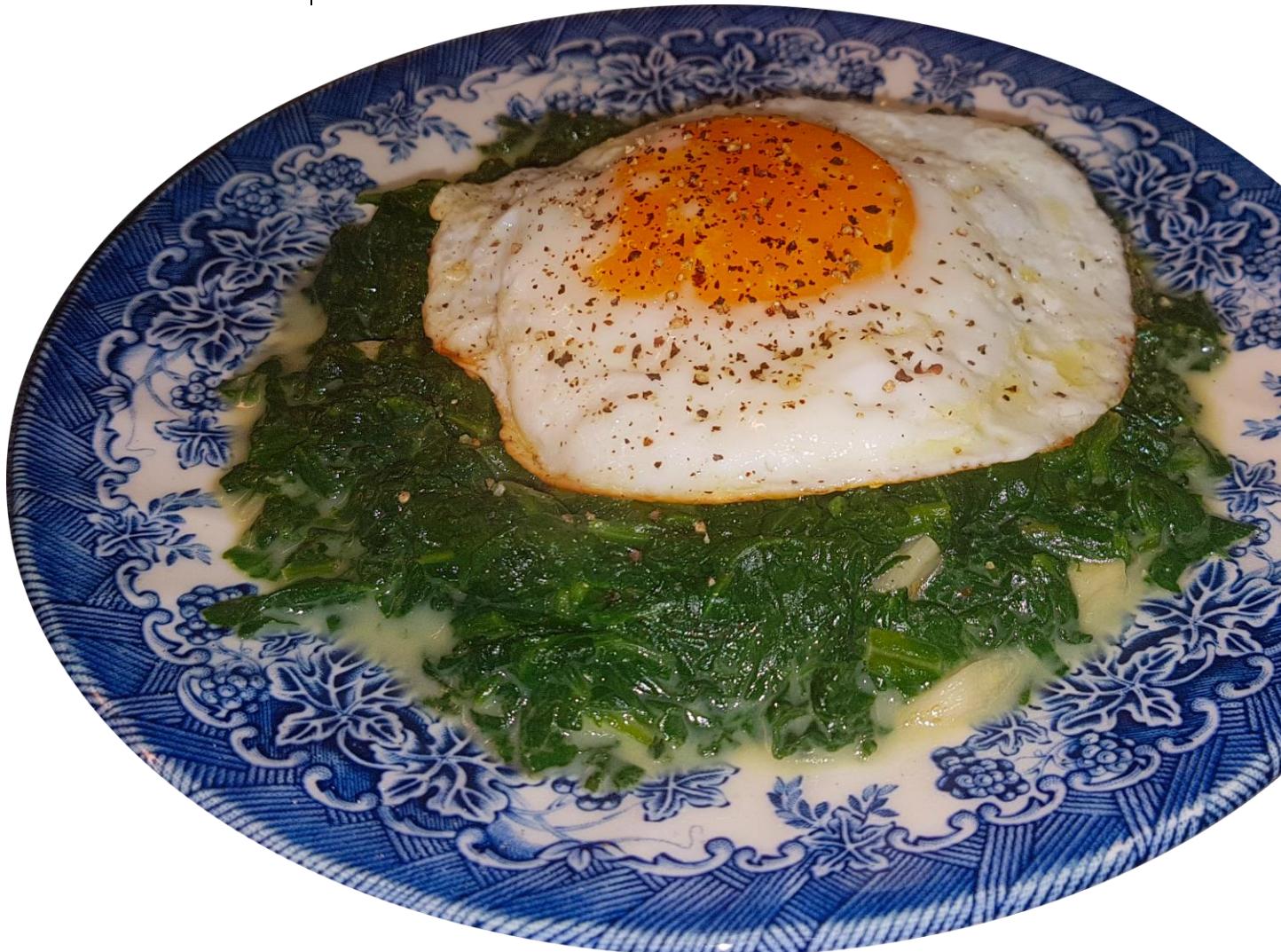
- Spinach, ca. 500gr
- 2 – 3 garlic cloves
- Milk, butter
- Oil, flour
- Salt

Gives an extra taste

- Garlic leaves

In a saucepan put in some water, and cook the spinach leaves together with the crushed garlic cloves and a little salt, until the spinach become soft. Strain the water (feel free to keep it for tomorrow's' spinach soup) and cut the spinach into long thin strips.

In a non-stick pan, melt some butter, and put in the spinach. Sauté for a few minutes, while they sauté, make a small quantity of light roux made of flour and oil, mix it into the spinach, cook for 5 minutes. Add some milk, approx. 2 - 3 tablespoons, and washed, finely chopped garlic leaves if you have found any, bring to a boil and the food is ready. Goes well with fried eggs, sausages, bland chicken meat.



93. Crushed beans

( Mâncare de fasole / Fuszulyka főzelék )

Looks like a very thick soup, but also it's not quite a soup, this is a solid dish that either goes well on its own, or accompanied by a piece of fried sausage or a nice splash of polenta. Or both.

Ingredients

- Ca. 250 – 300 gr. dry beans
- 1 small onion
- Bacon
- Oil and flour
- Salt, pepper, vinegar
- Parsley sour cream.

If you use dry beans, soak them in water for at least 12 hours before cooking to soak them, and approx. 3 hours before you start making this dish start boiling the beans in salted water, and cook them until they are completely soft. If the beans are from canned food, just jump up these steps.

In a small saucepan have in some diced bacon, fry approx. 5 minutes and then finely chop the onion. Simmer the two together for 5 minutes and put in the beans and some water. Cook together approx. 10 minutes, and while it's cooking make a small quantity of roux. Mix the roux with the beans, season with salt, pepper and vinegar and cook for a few minutes. Use a fork and crush some of the beans. Before serving, add sour cream and parsley leaves.



94. Cabbage

( Mâncare de varză / Káposztafőzelék )

Similar to a generic cabbage soup, but thicker, feel free to experiment with other spices as well, not just the ones I mentioned here. Try with tomatoes, cumin, instead of roux you use a thickening of milk and flour, etc ... I am sure that out there is a combination you will like.

Ingredients

- 1 small cabbage
- 1 big onion
- 2 tbsp flour, oil
- Sour cream
- Salt, pepper
- Paprika, oregano, dill

Clean and cut the cabbage into stripes. Peel the onion, finely chop and then fry it in the oil until light brown. Pull aside, sprinkle some paprika and pepper, add the cabbage, salt and pour over one glass of water, do not cover it and cook until the cabbage is soft. Add dill and oregano.

Make a roux of oil and flour, mix it into the cabbage. Bring to the boil for 2-3 minutes, then remove from the heat. Serve with a little sour cream, and it goes perfectly with sausages, meatballs, schnitzel, etc..



The hunt for hidden mineral water springs

There is something unique in Transylvania, and most possibly in the whole of Europe. In the south-eastern part, where the author's parents and grandparents live, there is such a large abundance of natural mineral water springs that each village has its own characteristic mineral water. In some villages you can find more than one spring, with a completely different taste. The unique thing about each of these mineral waters is that all of them contain different minerals, salts, and chemical compounds in very differing amounts, and thus each of them has a characteristic taste.

Some are very metallic like drinking liquid cold iron, some of them are salty, some of them have a taste that cannot be characterized due to the high combination of minerals in them, and some of them are simply fresh.

Some of these mineral waters are tapped directly at the source and sent far and wide, not only in Romania, but exported to everywhere in Europe. But most of them just flow out of the ground and have set up local filling stations where you can go and just fill your bottles.

These mineral waters are not only a good intake of necessary minerals, but also have healing properties. Not only by drinking them you can feel their power, but next to some of these springs the water gathers in small pools where you can take a dip, to cure rheumatism or just enjoy sitting in basins where the water is bubbling around you.

In case you decide to visit Transylvania, it would be a great loss if you could not try at least one of these mineral waters directly from the source. A day trip is more than enough for you to try out at least 4 or 5 different ones, so I want to take you on an imaginary trip through the hills of Transylvania in search of mineral water.

I would assume that you have set up your camp base in Brașov, because there you have found a nice hotel, walked through the tiny gates of the old Saxon city and now want to see something else. I recommend renting a car that handles the off roads as well, because some of these mineral water sources are way off the beaten track. But hey, you will also have the opportunity to see the less touristy side of Transylvania.

Your first stop is just 60 kilometers away in the small spa town  **Covasna** ( Kovászna). This is the most famous spa town in Covasna County, and the best mineral springs are just in the centre of town, really not hard to find, right next to a small but smelly mud volcano (GPS for the mineral water spring: 45.845348, 26.169487). The water here is fresh, has a pleasant taste and is generally recommended for daily use.

The second stop on our imaginary trip is a small village called  **Malnaș-Băi** ( Málnásfürdő) and be prepared to have the first shock to your taste buds. It is a famous mineral water source (called Maria) with extremely characteristic taste I would describe as salt meets sulphur and together they hit your taste buds (GPS: 46.031521, 25.823655). Be prepared, this is not a taste you expect from



water. But do not worry. A few metres from the main spring, there are several other springs with much more usual taste. And if you are visiting during the summer season, there is a small pool next



to the springs full of mineral water, just waiting for you to dip in.

We continue the trip, and we climb up and down the mountains on the way to a tiny, virtually unknown outside his valley, but regardless of his obscurity, an exceptionally tasty mineral water source in the small village of **Romania Bătanii Mici (Hungary Kisbacon)** (GPS: 46.117738, 25.706940). Here the water has a high percentage of iron, it is like drinking the liquid metal that comes from the depths of the

earth. Everything is orange due to the high deposition of minerals, and if you are brave enough there are several managed pools around the area where you can immerse yourself in ice cold mineral water that comes directly from the source, if you are hot (and if you have lots of time drive up further a few kilometres to the other end of the following village for another very strongly tasting mineral water spring).

From there, just a few minutes' drive on county road 122, and you come to another tiny village, called **Romania Biborteni (Hungary Bibarcfalva)**, with fresh and clean mineral water perfect for daily use. The source is on the GPS coordinates 46.093353, 25.657040, right by the main road. The village also has a mineral bottle factory where mineral water is tapped and sent over to shops all over the country. You can find it in the shops under the name "Biborteni".

Furthermore, we embark on the longest leg so far on our journey, and on a scenic route (do not forget to count the stork nests you find on the way, the person who counts the most wins) we come to the largest city in the region, called **Romania Odorheiu Secuiesc (Hungary Székelyudvarhely)** which is a nice little town about halfway through our day trip. After having some free time in this city (Use this opportunity to try the local Hungarian dishes in the region at one of the restaurants in the city), we should take the trip to the GPS coordinates 46.334018, 25.271728 where you can find the "Szejke" mineral water source with its salt-sulphur taste enriched with sodium, calcium and other minerals. Do not forget to check the mineral water museum, the Transylvania model exposition, and the szekler gates after you have tasted the water.

From this point on, it is actually up to you what you want to do.

The long trip

There are two famous places nearby that are worth visiting because they have some sights you can only see here and no other place in Europe, such as a large saltwater lake in **Romania Sovata (Hungary Szováta)** with a salt concentration of 250 g / kg, which means that you literally cannot sink in it, or a huge salt mine and salt water basin and spa used for therapeutic and medical purposes in **Romania Praid (Hungary Parajd)**. Both are very touristy places, so in case you decide to spend a night here and continue your mineral water trip the next day, it is a completely



understandable decision. This will also give you an opportunity to try some local dishes, such as fried fish, or some homemade goulash, or well, it is up to you :).

If you choose this relaxed option, the next day you will have the chance to check out the most famous of the mineral waters of Transylvania, further afield in the mountains, a good two-hour drive away in the small town  **Borsec** ( Borszék). Here you can taste one of the purest and strongest mineral waters, which was once called the queen of mineral waters in Transylvania, but not only. There are several sightseeing opportunities for tourism in the area, and in general this is a cute little town to visit. The mineral water sources are on GPS 46.975204, 25.566391 and around, just explore a bit the area. Since this was the last destination on our longer trip, you can continue to the next point from the short trip option.

The short trip

The trip continues to a not so well known today, but a century ago highly acclaimed old spa village, called  **Băile Homorod** ( Homoródfürdő), where you will have the opportunity to taste a metallic, salty and strong mineral water from the source “Lobogó”, found on GPS at 46.350005, 25.473313. You can also relax and enjoy some of the wild nature outside, grab a bite to eat and take a walk to the various mineral water sources in the area.

Our next and final stop on this mineral water tour will be in a small spa town called  **Băile Tușnad** ( Tusnádfürdő), where you will again encounter a clean, strong, and tasty mineral water at the GPS coordinates 46.143176, 25.859660, which you will also find in grocery stores around Romania.

When you feel like you're done here, it's time to get back in the car and drive back to your base, Brașov for now, where you can head back to your hotel rooms, after a day or two of driving around you deserve a great dinner, or just to relax with a glass of good Transylvanian wine.

Salads from Transylvania

Salads in Transylvania do not have the same meaning as salads in Western Europe. They have never been associated with a natural lifestyle, nor with the need to eat anything healthy, because the people who created these recipes lived and still live in harmony with nature, they spend a lot of time working in the fields, in forests, surrounded by nature. Of course, this hard work needs a good nutrition, which a salad can not really provide, so salads are more used as an extra flavour to supplement the main course that goes well with the side, and also as an extra intake of vitamins and flavours.

Salads in Transylvania are always made with fresh vegetables, preferably from your garden, but since sometimes this might prove to be difficult, it is okay to use vegetables you buy from your local grocery store. Be sure to choose the vegetables that taste best, since a salad that tastes like water is a little disappointing.

Salad dressings are practically unknown in Transylvania, the closest you get to this is when you pour a little vinegar on top of your salad.

Admittedly, during the last few years the tastes have also changed and adapted to recent trends, so if you go into a restaurant and order a salad with sour cream dressing, you will get it.



95. Potato salad

( Salată de cartofi / Pityókasaláta )

The potato salad can also be considered a side dish because of its consistency, but since it mixes so well the best of both worlds, I have decided to add it to the realm of salads. If you use it as a side it goes just fine with schnitzel or meatballs.

Ingredients

- 4 – 5 Potatoes
- 1 – 2 hard-boiled eggs
- A small onion
- 1 spring onion
- Salt, pepper, vinegar
- Black olives

Wash and clean the potatoes, but do not peel them and let them boil in salted water. If you peel the potatoes before cooking them, you will lose a good deal of the flavour. Simultaneously boil one (or two) eggs as well. It is perfectly fine to cook them together in the same pot. When the potatoes (and eggs) are done, cool them with cold water, peel them and cut them into thin slices. Both the potatoes and the eggs. While the potatoes are cooking, clean and peel an onion, put the onion in a serving plate and add a little salt. Let it rest.

When the potatoes and eggs have been cut, put them in a serving plate, add a little salt, pepper, and mix well with the onion that is standing there.

Put on some water, vinegar and some olives, the spring onions serve as decoration.



96. Cucumber salad

( Salată de castraveti / Uborkasaláta )

For those who love cucumbers, this simple and fresh cucumber salad goes well with almost every dish we have in this book. Or with the one you make according to your own recipe.

Ingredients

- 1 large cucumber
- 1 spring onion
- Salt, red paprika powder
- Vinegar. Use a high-quality vinegar, you will not regret it.

Cut the cucumbers into very thin slices. For making the salad on the photo I actually used a potato peeler. Cut the spring onion into thin slices as well. Mix the two together, and put on a good amount of salt, approx. 1 – 2 teaspoons. Let it rest for 10-15 minutes. Now, make small balls of vegetables and with your hand squeeze out any green liquid you can. This way you get rid of the natural bitterness of the cucumber.

Put the small balls in a serving plate, mix together a little, and pour a glass of water and a decent amount of vinegar on it.

Use some red paprika powder as a decoration.



97. Lettuce with sugar

( Salată cu zahăr / Cukrossaláta )

Lettuce is a very tasty vegetable, especially if it is grown by you. We have had success growing lettuce in a flowerpot, in a large box, in a tray, even in a shoebox. It seems that you can grow lettuce anywhere, so it may be a shame not to do so. Especially if you can make tasty soups with it, or just eat it naturally as in the recipe below.

Ingredients

- One iceberg lettuce or butterhead lettuce. Of course, you can try other varieties also.
- A good amount of good quality vinegar
- Sugar and water

Wash the salad thoroughly, chop it into bite-sized pieces, put it in a salad bowl, leek some vinegar on top, then some water and sprinkle with sugar. And that's it. Not really that complicated.



98. Mixed salad

( Salată mixtă /  Vegyessaláta)

The role of the mixed salad in the Transylvanian cuisine is to be an acidic accompaniment to the heavy and fatty main courses to help the stomach in the digestive process. Or at least that is what the older people say about it. And we listen to our eldest since they carry the knowledge of the world on their shoulders.

Ingredients

- A good mix of vegetables, such as:
 - Tomatoes
 - Cucumbers
 - Spring onions
 - Radishes
 - Peppers (multi-coloured)
 - Onions
 - Lettuce
- Salt, vinegar

Wash all the vegetables and start making the salad with the onions. Cut into slices, add a little salt, put in the salad bowl, and let them rest. Continue with the cucumbers and radishes. Cut them into slices, put them in the salad bowl and add a little salt, mix.

This will remove the bitter taste of these two vegetables. Proceed chopping all the other vegetables you want to use.

Press a little on the cucumbers to remove the juice, pour off the juice and put in all the vegetables in the salad bowl.

Mix well and pour some good quality vinegar on top.



Desserts

Desserts in Transylvania can be categorized into two main types: those that are made in the oven and those that are not. And of course, a few other categories that do not fit into any of the main categories such as desserts cooked, fried, dried, etc.

However, the list of sweets can be quite overwhelming, in old cookbooks the usual ratio of sweets versus “regular” food is three to one, of course, the winners are the sweets. So, we had a dilemma about which recipes to take into account, considering that we are neither bakers, nor do we have all the fine equipment you need to make a proper cake from Transylvania, and we also do not have the time, resources and experience to experiment with all the recipes that might suit an Englishman’s’ tastes.

As a compromise, in the book we have included a small selection of recipes that the author has enjoyed while growing up among the hills of Transylvania, and which are easy to make, so that you do not get scared. Unfortunately, not all the festive cake recipes, torts, creams, cakes made it into this book, but not all hope is dead. Maybe later there will be a book dedicated entirely to Transylvanian cakes, pies, biscuits, decorations, compotes, and all the other sweets that were not presented in this book.

A small advice: when you read the recipes, you will see that some of the cakes require the handling of a large and hard biscuit as a cake sheet. These must be baked on a flat surface, such as the bottom of a frying pan (yes, turn the frying pan, upside down). And do not worry, it is not as fragile as it looks, but anyway handle it with care.



99. Donuts from Transylvania

( Gogoașe / Pánkó )

This classic recipe for homemade donut is both simple and tasty. However, this is a basic recipe without filling, holes in the middle or other fancy things. You may want to change it according to your needs, for example by serving with jam, adding glasses, sprinkling it with sprinkles. We in Transylvania just enjoy our donut, which is not a ring, but a very airy bun.

Ingredients

- 250 gr. wheat flour + a little for kneading
- Icing sugar
- a little salt
- 1 egg
- 2 tablespoons sunflower oil
- ca. 20 – 25 gr. fresh yeast + 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 dl milk + 0.5 dl van

Put the yeast in warm milk (approx. 37 C) together with a teaspoon of sugar, stir well, let it rest until it starts to rise. Mix the flour, eggs, 2 tablespoons of sunflower oil and a little salt, add the yeast (with milk) and make a dough. Knead for at least half an hour, or until your hands are clean of the dough (do not hurry, otherwise the donuts will not be good). Cover with a clean cloth and leave it in a warm place for 1 – 1½ hours. It should almost double in size.

Using a dough stick, stretch the dough into a sheet, approx. 7 mm – 1 cm thick. Use a round gingerbread cutter (for the large ones use one with 6 – 7 cm diameter and for the smaller one with 3 – 4 cm or just a solid glass) and cut out the donuts. Knead the leftovers between the circles, stretch again and make more donuts.

Cover the donuts with a clean cloth and leave them in a warm place for 30 minutes. Fry them in hot oil, first the top side down, and then turn them until both sides are brown.

Enjoy it with a little icing sugar, or with jam.



100. Apple cake with meringue

( Prăjitură de mere spumoasă / Habos almástészta )

Another great example of the life of an apple after it has fallen off the tree, and ends up in your kitchen after it becomes ripe enough to be eaten. Or to have in a cake.

Ingredients

- Ca. 8 – 10 large ripe apples
- 300 gr. wheat flour
- 130 gr. butter at room temperature
- 1 teaspoon baking powder and lemon juice
- 4 tablespoons sweet (white) wine (I recommend Tokay, a sweet dessert wine from Hungary)
- 4 eggs.
- 200 gr. icing sugar
- Your favourite jam (we prefer apricot for this cake)
- A little sugar, cinnamon

The amounts are for a baking pan approx. 20x30 cm. If you have a larger one, you can increase the amount. Then you can go up to 500 gr. flour with 250 gr. with butter, by keeping everything else the same, if you need more softness after that, add an extra egg, a little extra wine until you get the consistency you can work best with. Start by separating 3 of the eggs and keep the egg whites in a bowl. Mix the flour with the butter. Put in the egg yolks from the 3 eggs and another 1 egg, mix well, make a firm dough. Put in 1 teaspoon of baking powder, and on the baking powder a little lemon juice. Let the two work together for a few seconds and mix again. Now gradually add 4 tablespoons of white wine, by keeping the consistency of the dough firm, but not hard. Make a good and firm dough that you would make for a loaf of bread. Now divide it into two equal balls.

Let the balls rest for a few minutes (clean the apples in the meantime and start the oven at 190 C), then take the first one and with a dough stick make a sheet of the dough, about 20x30 cm. Bake it on a baking tray (or on the bottom of your pan if you do not have a baking tray), it should take around 10 – 13 minutes. When you see it turn light brown take it out of the oven and set it aside, you will use it later.



Now make a dough sheet the same size as before, but this time you need to bake it inside your pan. While the dough sheets are baking, you can peel the apples (but if you have fresh and nice apples from your garden, do not peel them) and coarsely grate the apples on a grater in a large bowl. Mix the apples with a little sugar (1 tbsp. should be enough) and a little cinnamon If you like it. When the second sheet of cake is done, remove the pan from the oven, but leave the sheet in and do not switch off the oven. Take a handful of apples from the bowl with the apples and squeeze the juice from that handful of apples with your hands in a separate bowl. Arrange the dry apples on the sheet in a long pan, and slowly cover the entire sheet with the squeezed, grated apples. When there are no more apples left, place the second sheet on top of the apples. Cover the sheet thinly with your favourite jam. Whip the egg whites until the mass begins to become frothy and slightly white and add 200 gr. of icing sugar. Make a firm foam, and place everything on the jam. Put the cake back in the oven for approx. 10 minutes or more, until the foam on top begins to dry out and crack. The cake is ready now, you can eat it when it gets cold.

101. Classic apple cake

( Prăjitură de mere / Almástészta )

A standard apple cake, not too difficult to make, not too easy to store until the next day, very tasty and soft. The more apples you have, the better the taste.

Ingredients

- ½ kg flour
- 250 gr. butter at room temperature
- 2 eggs
- ½ dl. milk
- 1 packet of fresh yeast
- a little sugar
- 1 – 2 kg. apples
- Cinnamon

Take the apples and clean them, and if they are old peel them, cut out brown bumps and coarsely grate the apples with a grater (on the largest hole). When all the apples are done grating, mix them with a little cinnamon if you like, a teaspoon of sugar, and let them rest in peace until you work on the other parts of the cake.

Put the yeast in warm milk together with 1 teaspoon of sugar. Stir in the yeast until it is completely dissolved. Leave the mixture until the yeast begins to foam vigorously (5 – 10 minutes). Meanwhile, mix the butter with the flour. Mix milk with yeast with the flour and eggs, and make a dough. Divide the dough into 2, and using a dough stick, stretch the first part of the dough into a sheet, approx. 2 mm. thickness. Grease with a little butter the bottom of a baking pan, sprinkle approx. 1 tablespoon of flour and cover the bottom of the pan with a very thin layer of flour by moving the pan around.

Place the first sheet in the pan. If the sheet is larger than your frying pan do not panic, just cut off the sides with a knife.

Now, wash your hands, and take the grated apples and squeeze all the juice from them with your hands, a handful of grated apples at a time. Place the squeezed apple mass on the first dough lying in the pan, take the next handful of apples and repeat.

Your goal is to cover the first sheet of dough with a thick layer of apples, approx. 1 – 1½ cm thick. When you have covered the whole sheet, use your dough stick again and stretch the other part of the dough in another sheet, approx. 2 mm thick. Sprinkle the apples with a little sugar.

Place the second sheet of the cake on the apples, and using a fork make several holes on the top sheet (so that the steam from the apples can come out).

Put in the oven and bake at 180 C for about 30 – 45 minutes. When done put on some icing sugar and do not eat it hot

Tips

- As you have observed, I did not specify how big your pan should be. If you have some dough left after the cake is done, just keep it in the fridge and make another portion in a day or two. The amounts I have specified are usually enough for a pan 30x40, but since I do not know how many apples you have, do not be afraid to adapt this recipe to suit your pan.
- Do not throw away the apple juice you have squeezed out, it is 100% natural and very good. Just drink it.



102. Quick apple cake

( Prăjitură de mere ușoară / Szimpla almástészta )

The simplest of the three apple cakes we present here, needs no dough kneading, just a quick mix of Ingredients, and you're ready in a minute. Ok, not literally.

Ingredients

- 4 eggs
- 1 packet of vanilla sugar
- 1 packet of baking powder
- 5 tablespoons flour
- 1 teaspoon rum
- 10 tablespoons of milk
- a little salt and lemon juice
- 1 kg apple
- 2 tbsp. sugar
- Cinnamon

Mix the eggs with vanilla sugar, 2 tablespoons milk, a little salt and 4 tablespoons flour.

Add the baking powder, with a little lemon juice, stir well and mix in the rest of the ingredients, and mix until you have a batter that is similar in consistency to pancake batter.

Pour half of the dough into a pan and put it in the pre-warmed oven for 3 minutes (180 C).

Take it out of the oven and grate 1 kg of apple on it. Sprinkle with two spoons of sugar, a little cinnamon if you use, pour on the rest of the batter, and have the cake back in the oven.

Bake until nicely browned, remove, add a little icing sugar. Serve hot.



103. Lemon cake

( Prăjitură cu lămâie / Citromszelet )

This is a very old recipe, but it does not detract from the fact that this is one of our favourite cakes. Remember that the cream should be more sour than sweet.

Ingredients – for the sheets

- 250 gr. wheat flour
- 80 gr. room temperature butter
- 60 gr. sugar
- 4 tablespoons of milk
- 1 egg
- 1 teaspoon baking powder + a little lemon juice on

Lemon cream

- 3 dl milk
- 3 tablespoons flour
- 200 gr. room temperature butter
- 200 gr. icing sugar
- Grated peel of 1 lemon
- Juice from 1 – 2 lemons

Make the sheets first. Mix the flour, butter, add the eggs and sugar, and mix well. Add 1 teaspoon of baking powder, add a little lemon juice to the baking powder, and mix well again. Put in the 4 tablespoons of milk, and if you need more milk to have a dough you can roll out easily just use more. Divide the dough into three identical sizes, use a dough stick and make 3 sheets, each approx. 30x24 cm. Bake the sheets on a baking sheet or on the bottom of a pan.

Now you can make the lemon cream. Add 3 tablespoons of flour to 3 dl. milk, boil it while stirring it, careful about not getting lumps. Let it cool (keep the pot in cold water if you do not have much time). Use a hand mixer and make a cream of 200 gr. butter and 200 gr. icing sugar. Stir in the grated peel of 1 lemon. When the milk is completely cold, mix in the butter cream, and the juice from 1 or 2 lemons. When you taste the cream, it should be pleasantly sour, not sweet, that is the reason why I do not know how many lemons you should have them since I cannot taste the lemons you have. Divide the cream into 2 and spread them on the sheets you have made before (spread the first sheet, have cream on the first sheet also have on the second sheet, spread the second, put on the third, it is not rocket science).

Now comes something important: you cannot eat this cake today. It must rest at least overnight, place a heavy butchers' block on the cake, and let it rest in a cold place.

The next day cut it into squares, add some icing sugar and the cake is done.



104. Linzer cookies

( Linzer / Vaníliás koszorú )

Possibly the simplest of the cakes you bake in the oven is this old-time classic recipe for linzer. Perhaps originally from Austria, it spread in the empire more than a hundred years ago and was quickly assimilated into the kitchen of all who lived there. The good part is that it is very tasty and easy to make. The bad part is that it tends to disappear very quietly from the plates.

Ingredients

- 30 dkg flour
- 20 dkg butter
- 10 dkg icing sugar
- 1 egg
- Grated peel of 1/2 lemon

Separate the eggs, pour the flour into a bowl, add the butter, and mix together. Put in the egg yolk, icing sugar and grated lemon zest and mix again with quick movements. From the dough make a large ball and keep it in the fridge for at least 1 hour.

Use a dough stick and stretch the dough, approx. 0.1 - 0.2 cm. thickness. Use a round, large gingerbread cutter (or a strong large glass) and cut out large circles from the dough. Once you have cut everything out, lay them safely on a flat surface, gather all the rest of the dough and repeat the procedure. When you have no more dough left using a small gingerbread cutter, cut holes in half of the large circles. Use the freshly obtained dough to make several cakes (with holes as well). Wisp the egg whites a little.

Place the cakes on a baking sheet in a long pan, brush the ones with holes with the wisped egg whites. Bake in a preheated oven at 170 degrees for 15 – 20 minutes until golden brown.

Take them out of the oven, let them cool, and glue it together with jam, on top should be the one with the hole on. Be careful, this cake crumbles.



105. Pretzel

( Covrigi /  Sósperc)

Pretzel is a part of everyday life in Transylvania, and all ages favour it either as a small snack, as breakfast or both. You can find many varieties, some with sesame, some with salt, some with poppy seeds, some with something else. This recipe is the basic "Salt Pretzel", from this point you can vary it as you like.

Ingredients

- 500 g flour
- 1 glass / 250 ml milk
- 7 g yeast
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 2 tsp salt
- 3 tbsp cooking oil
- 1.5 tbsp baking soda
- 1 egg

Decoration

- Sea salt, poppy seeds, sunflower seeds or sesame seeds
- Ground walnuts
- Grated cheese

Salt cream

- 4 tbsp flour
- 2 teaspoons of salt
- Water

Put the yeast in warm milk and a spoonful of sugar, stir well, let it rest until it starts to rise. Mix the yeast (with milk) together with wheat flour and oil and make a hard but flexible dough. Let it rest for 10 minutes, and afterwards divide into as many parts, as many pretzels as you want to make. Roll them out for approx. 60 cm long rods, and then fold them into pretzel form.

In a large pot, add water and baking soda and bring to the boil. Put in the pretzels, one at a time and cook each for 30 seconds. Take them out of the water and let them rest for 15 minutes. While they rest, make the salt cream: mix 4 tablespoons of flour with 2 tablespoons of salt, and enough van to get a cream that is as thick as sour cream. Afterwards, beat the eggs and brush the pretzels with them.

If you want some decoration on them, now it's time to decorate.

Bake the pretzels in a preheated oven at 200 C for about 10-15 minutes otherwise until they lead golden brown. If you want to add salt cream, take out the pretzels after approx. 10 minutes (when they are not golden brown yet, but they are approaching), put on salt cream (use a small spoon) and have the pretzels back in the oven for a few minutes, no more than 5.



106. Walnut cake

( Cozonac cu nucă / Dióskalács )

Although that this in Transylvania is considered a traditional Easter and Christmas cake, there is nothing to stop you from making it, for example, halfway, why not in August. I recommend using everything at room temperature, so take them out of the fridge two to three hours before you start making the cake.

Ingredients

- 600 gr. wheat flour
- 100 gr. butter at room temperature
- 60 gr. sugar
- 4 dl milk
- 1 packet of yeast
- 4 egg yolks
- 2 teaspoons lemon or orange peel, grated, mixed with 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 packet of vanilla sugar

Walnut cream

- 120 gr. walnuts
- 100 gr. sugar
- 2 egg whites

Warm up 2 dl. milk (just a little, do not boil), add a teaspoon of sugar and crumble in the yeast. While waiting for the yeast to rise, mix the flour with the soft butter, 3 of the egg yolks, vanilla sugar and the grated lemon or orange peel. When the yeast is done, mix with the flour, add the sugar, and use the other 2 dl. milk to make a good dough. Knead the dough well. If it separates from your hand it is finished, put it into a bowl, cover and raise for approx. 40 minutes.

While the dough rests make the walnut cream. Grind the walnuts if you have not bought ground walnuts. If you do not have a walnut grinder, use a blender. Beat the 2 egg whites until the mass starts to become frothy and a little white and add 120 gr. sugar. Make a stiff foam. Mix the ground walnuts into the foam and mix well.

When the dough is almost double in size, knead it again, and afterwards use a dough stick and stretch the dough on a floured surface approx. 0.5 cm thick.

Apply the walnut cream to the dough sheet and roll it up. Put it in a long loaf pan, whisk the last egg yolk, and grease the top with the egg yolk. Put in a hot oven and bake until it turns nice brown at 170 degrees in about 35 minutes.



107. Cottage cheese dumplings

( Gălușcă cu prune / Tehéntúró gombóc)

This is one of the trickiest desserts from this book. You see, it all depends on the relationship between eggs and semolina whether it will come out as a delicacy or a disaster. It is supposed to be fluffy and airy, but at the same time it must be whole. No worries, after a few tries you will be able to make one you can eat with your hands. Until then, just use a spoon. If there is one.

Ingredients

- 250 gr. cottage cheese
- 2 eggs
- 30 gr. butter (room temperature)
- 1 pinch of salt
- ca. 50 - 75 gr. semolina
- oil
- ca. 50 gr. breadcrumbs
- a little sugar

Finely chop and mash the cottage cheese using a fork along with the butter, a little salt and egg yolk.

Make a hard foam from the egg whites and mix with the cottage cheese and semolina. Leave it in the fridge for about 1 hour.

Boil lots of water with a little salt. First, make one dumpling: form an egg-sized dumpling from the dough with your wet hand and place it in the boiling water (the dumplings, not your hands). If it falls into pieces during or after cooking, add more semolina. It will not be so airy anymore, but it will stay together.

When you have the right consistency, throw the dumplings in the boiling water. Cook approx. for 10 minutes, on moderate flame.

Fry the breadcrumbs in a little oil, take the dumplings out of the water and roll them in the fried breadcrumbs. Before serving, sprinkle with a little sugar.



108. Plum dumplings

( Gălușcă cu prune / Szilvás gombóc)

A typical Eastern European dish that is present in almost every country in the area, with recipes that differ from region to region, but they all somehow manage to bring out the best in plums.

Ingredients

- ca. 20 ripe plums
- 1 kg. small potatoes
- About 30 – 45 dkg. Of wheat flour
- Sugar, cinnamon, salt
- Butter, breadcrumbs

Wash the plums. If they are large, cut them in half, remove the pit. On each of the half plums, put a teaspoon of sugar (with a little cinnamon If you like cinnamon), and then put all the plums to rest. If they are small, just remove the seeds, but otherwise leave the plums intact and fill them with sugar (and cinnamon If you like).

If you do not own a potato press, clean and peel the potatoes, cut them into cubes, and put them in a pot, otherwise keep the potatoes with skin on in the pot. Boil the potatoes in water with a little salt until soft.

Put a large pot on the oven and let water boil in. In a frying pan put in the butter, melt it and put in the breadcrumbs. Mix often so that they do not burn.

Take the potatoes out of the water, if they are diced mash them with a fork, otherwise peel them and use the potato press to mash them. The potatoes need to get hot when you do, and you need to work very fast from now on.

Mix the potatoes with the flour to get a dough that is not soft, neither hard. Use a dough stick and stretch the dough, approx. 0.5 cm. thickness. Cut the dough into squares so large that you can put a plum in the middle, put a plum in the middle, and fold the sides up and make a ball, being careful not to have holes in the dumpling, otherwise the sugar will leak out.

When the dumpling is done, put it in the boiling water. Throw in one at a time so that the water does not stop boiling. Move it slightly in the water so that it does not stick to the bottom.

The following steps need to be done in parallel, so unless you can grow extra hands, you need to move fast in order to not to burn the breadcrumbs, to keep the water boiling and not let the dough cool.

When making the next dumplings, also check the boiling water in the pot with the dumplings in it. When you see that a dumpling has risen to the surface, remove it with a skimmer (a large spoon with lots of small holes in it) and put it in the pan with the breadcrumbs, move it around in there so that the breadcrumbs cover it completely and remove it from there , place it in a bowl where you plan to serve them. Do not leave it in the pan for too long. Do not



use the skimmer to move the dumpling in the pan around, breadcrumbs stick to it, and you will not have breadcrumbs in the boiling water.

And repeat as long as you have plums or dough left.

When all the dumplings are done, sprinkle them with a little sugar (not powdered sugar) and serve them on the spot.

This food is so popular in Transylvania that you can buy a steady side of the road from specialized sellers. Worth trying out and comparing the flavours of each one.

Tips

- If you find it difficult to work with hot potatoes, let them cool down and use an egg to make the dough sticky.
- If you have made a large amount of dough, only work on half of it, if the other part gets cold, add an egg, and mix again.
- If you have put too much and cannot eat them, it is perfectly fine to have them in a freezer.
- If you do not like plums, it is perfectly fine to use apricots.
- If it is not plum season, you can use from a can.
- It is perfectly fine to use jam instead of plums.
- Some recipes say you can mix the breadcrumbs with sugar and cinnamon, try it, let us know how it works out for you.



The favourite breakfast of all children (and not only) is extremely easy to make, and it does not require too much work. It is perfect for a rainy morning... or in fact when you prefer to devour them.

Ingredients

- 1/2 kg. wheat flour
- 2, 3 or 4 eggs
- Tiny amount of salt
- Milk
- Carbonated water

You start by mixing the eggs with flour, and when you have mixed a little, put in a cup of milk. Then mix until there are no lumps. If you wish, you can put in a large spoon of melted butter.

Then you add tiny glugs of carbonated water (not too much at the same time) and continue to stir together, till it is neither thin nor thick. While making the batter, try frying some pancakes with several thicknesses of batter, see which one you like best. You can fry the pancake in a frying pan, with a little melted butter, and enjoy them with jam.

Tips

- Use a little wheat bran with the flour, it will give more consistency to the pancakes.

Variations

- A local variation is that you mix the pancake batter with coarsely grated apple, cinnamon, and sugar.
- In addition to the classical fillings, you also can use:
 - Shred 200 gr. cabbage, add a little salt, and let rest. Fry in a little oil a finely chopped small onion. Squeeze the water out of the cabbage, put it on the onion and fry together until it turns brown. Add a little black pepper and paprika powder, season with salt.
 - Cook 200 gr. spinach, and when done mash it through a sieve. Mix it with 1 egg yolk, salt, pepper, and the hard foam of the egg whites. Fill the pancakes and put them in the oven (200 C) approx. 20 – 25 minutes.
 - Bland 125 gr. cottage cheese with 1 egg yolk, a little sugar, a few raisins, and the whipped egg whites.
- Make thick pancakes. Mix a good portion of rice porridge with melted butter, 4 egg yolks mixed with a little sugar, and 3 beaten egg whites. Part in 3. Make the cake: A pancake, rice porridge mixed with raspberry jam, pancake, rice porridge mixed with chocolate powder, pancake, rice porridge mixed with lemon peel and sugar. Repeat as long as you have pancakes and rice. Pancake on top. Whisk the last egg white with the icing sugar, when the foam mixes with the apricot jam, keep on top.

110. Fried pancake

( Plăcinte umplete / Kőttes palacsinta )

Similar to the classic and world-famous Hungarian food, called “Lángos”, but not exactly like the one you would expect to buy from a street food supplier, since the Transylvanian version is filled with cheese, rolled up and then fried.

Ingredients

- 400 gr. wheat flour
- 20 gr. yeast
- 1 egg yolk
- 2 dl. milk
- 250 gr. cottage cheese or feta cheese
- 2 tablespoons sour cream
- Some fresh dill, salt, 1 clove of garlic
- Lots of sunflower oil

Heat 1 dl. milk, add a teaspoon of sugar and crumble in the yeast. While waiting for the yeast to rise, mix the flour, a little salt, and the egg yolk. When the yeast is done, mix it with the flour, and enough milk to have a medium-hard dough.

Cover with a clean cloth and leave in a warm place for approx. 30 minutes otherwise until it is almost twice the size, but not more than 1 hour.

Using a dough stick, stretch the dough into a sheet, approx. 2mm. – 5mm. thickness. Use a round gingerbread form (approx. 20 cm in diameter) and cut out round pancakes. Use the remaining dough to make more pancakes.

Moss together 250 gr. cottage cheese with 2 tablespoons sour cream, a little salt and finely chopped dill.

On the middle pf each of the pancakes add a teaspoon of the mixture and roll it up like a pancake. Using the dough stick, gently stretch the pancakes so that they will be flat again, without squeezing out the cheese mixture. Let them rest for a few minutes and fry them in hot oil on both sides. While frying, make a garlic cream from the remaining cheese mixture by mixing it well with a crushed garlic and a little oil.



111. Bird's milk

( Lapte de pasăre / Madártej )

Not that birds can provide you with milk, but this dessert of French origin is highly popular in Transylvania, but when it was introduced from France, it demanded Ingredients so expensive that it was as rare as the famous bird milk. Today, vanilla is not an exquisite neither an awfully expensive ingredient, so you can make it at home as well. It is no less tasty than what you buy from a high-end patisserie.

Ingredients

- 4 egg whites + 4 egg yolks
- 2 tablespoons sugar
- 800 ml of milk
- 1 vanilla bean
- 40 gr. sugar
- 30 gr. vanilla sugar

Whisk the egg whites until they start to become frothy and slightly white, and add 2 tablespoons of sugar. Whisk until you get a very hard foam (about 10-15 minutes or more), and let it rest.

Scrape the vanilla seeds from the vanilla bean, put them in the milk, together with the bean and boil it in a non-stick pot (Teflon) you use to boil milk.

When the milk boils, cut out small dumplings with a spoon from the egg white foam, and boil them in the milk for 2 – 3 minutes on each side, then take them out in a large bowl. Wash the spoon in between if you notice that it becomes sticky.

Remove the milk from the heat, allow to cool slightly. Stir together the egg yolk with the sugar until it is well frothy, pour in some of the lukewarm milk and stir immediately until it is smooth. Add the remaining milk, add the vanilla sugar, stir together, and pour it all back into the milk bowl.

Cook over low heat, stirring constantly, until nicely thick, then allow to cool. Put the boiled egg white foam bowls on top and put it all in the fridge at least 2-3 hours before you want to serve.



That's all, folks

Thank you for reaching all the way to this page in the book. I hope you had a great experience reading through the pages of our culinary journey through the forests and hills of Transylvania. You could have enjoyed the presentation of the unusual soups, the very short list of sweets may have made you think what's next, and our non-culinary sections might have piqued your interest in visiting this faraway place.

We strongly advise you to do so, if hundreds of thousands of tourists did, you can do it too. You may find that some parts of it are a very relaxed part of Europe, without the usual tourist traps you may find in the more touristy parts of the world where you are treated as a resource piece.

You may even end up at one of the local food fairs or city festivities where you can try out real food made by real people, and food that you will not find anywhere else in the world. Not even presented in this book, as you have already realized, that this book cannot give a full overview of all the foods in Transylvania, that is simply impossible. Because in a small village hidden somewhere between the hills, there is a person who makes a soup with an ingredient we never thought would use. Because this is Transylvania. Something new to discover. Every single day.