Aubergines au gratin with tomatoes – Vinete gratinate cu roșii

Ingredients

1 large aubergine
3 tomatoes
200 g cheese or mozzarella
oregano
salt

1. Wash and peel the aubergine. Slice it about 1 cm thick. Sprinkle salt on both sides of each slice and let them drain on a paper towel for 30 minutes.

2. Slice the tomatoes in 1 cm slices. If you want, you can remove the skin: dip them in boiling water for 30 seconds. Now, you can peel them easily. Slice the mozzarella in pieces large enough to cover the aubergine slices.

3. Use a tray large enough for all the slices. Put a tomato slice on top of each aubergine slice then sprinkle some oregano on top. Cover with slices of mozzarella.

4. Preheat the oven at 350°F (175°C). Bake them for approximately 20 minutes or until done. If you wish, you can bake the aubergine slices beforehand in a non stick pan, until they soften a little bit, which I recommend. That way they are done quicker and the mozzarella doesn’t melt too much.
Head cheese and caltabosi (meatloaf) – Tobă și caltaboși

Ingredients

the organs from one pig (liver, kidneys, heart, ears, tongue) 
 stomach and sausage skins 
 2 lb meat with lots of fat 
 1/2 lb onion 
 salt and pepper 
 1/4 tsp allspice 
 4 bay leaves

1. Wash the organs well in cold water, cut them in 2 inch cubes, clean them of skin, blood clots, etc. Soak the pieces in 3 parts water and 1 part vinegar for 10-15 minutes to remove any possible smell. Use a pressure cooker with enough water to cover the meat. Lock the lid in place and bring to pressure, then lower heat and cook for two hours. Set aside for 10 minutes to cool (until you can handle them). Keep the broth.

2. Cube the meat in 2-3 cm cubes. Divide the meat in two - one part to contain the ears and tongue and organs. This part you are going to use it to make the head cheese. Take the caul, a needle with butchers string and make a „bag” with a 5 cm opening. Add the organs and enough broth to fill the „bag”. With the remaining string seal the bag.

3. Put the head cheese to simmer for one hour in the remaining broth, just to cover it. Make about 30 holls with a toothpick, from place to place. When it’s done press it between two board with something heavy on top.

4. For the caltabos, saute the onion, and mince the second half of the organs. Mix with the sauteed onion and fill the casings. In the same broth, simmer them for 30 minutes after it started to boil. Sting the sausages from place to place to prevent any accidents. You can keep them refrigeratored or you can freeze them.

5. Second option: In the caltabos casings stuff the cabbage rolls filling, without the tomatoes sauce. Make tiny holes with a toothpick in casings to avoid cracks. Boil for
an hour, over a slow fire. Add in the water some pepper corns, all spices and bay leaves.

**Lamb Meatloaf for Easter – Drob de miel**

**Ingredients**

the *organs* from one lamb (spleen, liver, kidneys and heart)

5-7 *spring onions*

4 *garlic chives*

3-4 *eggs*

1 cup *italian parsley*

1 cup *dill*

the *caul fat* from one lamb or *bread crumbs*

*salt* and *pepper*

2-3 *eggs*, boiled hard (optional)

1. Wash the *organs* well in cold water, cut them in 1.5 inch cubes, remove any gristles, blood clots etc. Put the pieces in 3 parts water and 1 part vinegar to remove any possible smell.

2. Put the dices organs in cold water and boil them for 20-30 minutes. Remove the foam several times while they boil. Throw out the water. Set aside for 10 minutes to cool (until you can handle them).

3. Ground the boiled organs together with all the other *ingredients* (except the eggs). Taste it; add *salt* and *pepper* as needed. Beat the *eggs* with a fork, add them to the mixture and blend them in. It should look like a thick paste. If still crumbly, add 2-3 spoonfuls of sour cream or another egg. If you don’t have the caul fat, grease the pan and coat with bread crumbs.

4. Preheat the oven 350°F. Rinse the *caul fat* very well in cold water. If you think it has too much fat, remove some with a knife of with your hand. Lay it on the bottom and sides of the tray in one layer, leaving the edges hang outside the tray. Add the meat
and cover with the rest of the caul fat. Bake for 50 minutes until it has a nice color. Let it cool down, then take it out of the tray. Keep refrigerated in plastic wrap.

Mushroom Cake – *Chec de ciuperci*

**Ingredients**

3 medium onions, chopped (400 g)
2 cans of mushrooms or 450 g (1 lb) *fresh mushrooms*
5 eggs at room temperature
100-125 g (1 cup) *all purpose flour*
100 ml *sour cream*
1/2 cup chopped *dill*
3 tablespoons *oil*
salt and pepper

1. Drain the canned *mushrooms*, or clean the fresh ones, and dice them. Heat the *oil*, add the *onion* and a couple of tablespoons of water. Sauté the onion, add the mushrooms, add *salt* and *pepper*. Let them cook. Transfer to a bowl and set aside.
2. Preheat the oven to 350°F. Grease two small loaf pans with oil and coat them with flour.
3. Separate the eggs. Beat the *egg whites* with an electric mixer until firm. Mix the mushrooms with the *egg yolks*, *sour cream*, chopped *dill*. Fold in the stiffly beaten *egg whites* and the *flour*. Gently stir from bottom up. Pour the mixture into the pans.
4. Bake for 50 minutes until golden-brown. Don’t open the oven for the first 30 minutes. Test the mushroom cake with a toothpick. Insert the toothpick in the middle; if it comes out clean, it’s done. Let it cool on a wire rack. Keep it in the fridge in plastic wrap.
Mushroom spread/dip – Zacusca

Ingredients

2 medium size aubergines/eggplants (1 kg)
3 bell peppers (1 kg)
1 big onion (200 – 250 g)
225 ml tomato sauce
60 ml vegetable oil
200 g canned mushrooms
2 bay leaves
salt and pepper
1 tsp honney (optional)

1. Grill the aubergines and bell peppers in the oven or on the barbecue. Hot, from the grill, put the bell peppers in a covered pot. Let them rest for 15 minutes before peeling and removing the seeds. Peel the aubergines and let them drain in a colander.

2. Mince the bell peppers and aubergines. You can use a meat mincer or the food processor.

3. Dice the onion. Sauté the onion in 60 ml of oil, until in becomes translucent. Add the minced aubergines and bell peppers, the tomato sauce, salt, black pepper and bay leaves.

4. If the zacusca doesn’t have enough liquid to simmer add 100 ml of water or some of the juice from the mushroom can. Simmer for 30 minutes and stir from time to time.

5. Add the mushrooms, sliced or diced according to preference. Simmer for another 45 minutes. Taste it, and if it seems sour, add one or more teaspoons of honey.
SOUPS

Lentil Soup – Supă de linte și pui

Ingredients

2 teaspoons butter
1 carrot
1 onion
1 celery stalk
1 cup chopped mushrooms
2 tablespoons dry white wine
1 liter chicken stock (broth)
1/2 cup lentils
1 chicken breast, cooked
1 bay leaf
1 tablespoon dry thyme

1. Chop the onion, carrot, celery stalk and the mushrooms. Melt the butter in a pan, add the chopped vegetables. Cook 5 minutes until became soft at T 5-6.

2. Chop the chicken in 1 inch pieces.

3. Add the chicken broth and wine. When it boils remove the foam. Reduce the heat and boil 30 minute until vegetables are tender. Add the lentils and boil another 35 minutes until softened.

4. Add the chicken and stir one more minute. Seasoning and serve.
Romanian Meatballs Soup – Ciorbă de perișoare

Ingredients

For soup:
1 medium onion, cut in thin strips
2 medium carrots, chopped finely
1 handful of rice (about 1/2 cup)
2 Tbsp oil, for sautéing
1-2 Liters water,
tomato juice about 2 cups or to taste
Romanian „borș” to taste

For meatballs:
1/2 Kg ground meat
1 handful rice
1 egg
1 slice of bread (without the crust), soaked in water and well-drained
chopped onion and parsley
salt and pepper to taste

1. To make the meatballs, mix together all the ingredients. Then take a little of this mixture and make little balls (the size that you like).
2. Fry the chopped onion in oil.
3. Add the chopped or grated onion, carrot, parsley and celery root.
4. Add the water, salt and leave to boil for 10 - 15 minutes, then add the meatballs to the soup, one by one.
5. Simmer until the meatballs rise – about 30-45 minutes.
6. Add the parsley.
7. Turn off the heat and cover for 15 minutes.
8. This step is optional: In a separate bowl, mix 2 egg yolks with the sour cream. Add the egg/sour cream mixture into the soup.

9. To season the soup add romanian „borș” adjusting to taste.

10. Add the chopped parsley, the celery and the lovage leaves.

11. Serve with sour cream.

MAIN DISHES

Romanian Cabbage Rolls – Sarmale

Ingredients

3 lbs heads of cabbage
1 ½ lbs ground pork
4 tablespoons vegetable oil
4 medium onions, finely chopped
1 ½ cups celery, finely chopped
½ lb bacon, finely diced
1 tablespoon salt
½ tablespoon black pepper
½ tablespoon sweet paprika
2 tablespoons fresh parsley, finely chopped
1 cup rice
1 cup tomato sauce
1 cup tomato juice
1 quart sauerkraut
1 bay leaf
1 sprig fresh dill (optional)
1 smoked ham

1. Remove core from cabbage. In a large pot, bring to boil enough water to cover cabbage. Add 2 tablespoons salt and 1/4 cup vinegar to boiling water. Immerse
cabbage in boiling water. Cover and cook over medium-high heat 5 to 7 minutes. With fork or tongs, gently remove leaves as they become tender. Drain well; let cool. Trim main leaf vein so it is flat like rest of cabbage leaf.

2. In a large frying pan over medium heat, add oil, onions, celery, bacon, salt, pepper, paprika, parsley leaves and sauté until light golden brown. Remove from heat and let cool for 1/2 hour.

3. Add ground pork, rice and sauteed onions together along with 1/2 cup water, and mix well. This is the meat filling.

4. Place 1 to 2 tablespoons of the meat filling in center of cabbage leaf. Fold right hand side of leaf over filling, then roll from base to bottom of leaf, then with index finger gently tuck left hand side of leaf into cabbage roll to make a nice neat roll. Squeeze juice out of sauerkraut and place 1/2 of jar on bottom of pot. Chop any leftover cabbage and place on top of sauerkraut. Place pork hock on top of sauerkraut. Arrange cabbage rolls, seam side down in pot in neat layers. Place them loosely touching each other and layer on top of one another. Sprinkle with salt between layers. Place second half of sauerkraut on top of cabbage rolls. Spread tomato sauce and tomato juice over kraut and place 1 bay leaf (and optional dill sprig) on top. Cover rolls with water just enough to cover rolls. Place heavy dish on top making sure there is a couple inches between plate on top of pot. Cover pot and bring to boiling and reduce heat to simmer and cook for about 2 hours.

5. Serve with sour cream and mămăligă (romanian polenta) for a real romanian dish.

**Romanian Mitch – Mititei**

**Ingredients**

- 7 garlic cloves, peeled
- 0.25 cups water
- 1 lb ground beef
- 2/3 lb Coarsely ground pork
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 0.5 teaspoon dried thyme, whole
0.5 teaspoon dried basil
*salt and black pepper* to taste
0.5 cups *beef broth*

1. Make a paste of the *garlic* and *water*.
2. Mix the everything except the *beef stock* together in a large bowl.
3. Then add *beef Stock* and mix well.
4. Oil a large flat container to put the sausages in.
5. Wet hands in cold water to prevent the mixture from sticking to them.
6. Form the *sausage/mititei* into cylindrical sausage shapes using 1/3 cup of the mixture to make each sausage about 4 inches long.
7. Put sausages next to each other in a container and cover.
8. Refrigerate overnight. If you are in a hurry you can try refrigerate for four hours but overnight is best.

**Chicken and mushroom ciulama – Ciulama de pui cu ciuperci**

**Ingredients**

2 lb boneless and skinless *chicken breast*

7 tbsp *sunflower oil*

**For the sauce**

1/2 cup plain *flour*
2 cups *cream*
7 tbsp *milk*
1/2 tsp *paprika*
2 tbsp chopped fresh green *dill*
2 cups mixed wild *mushrooms*, sliced
*salt* and freshly ground *pepper*
a little chopped fresh green *dill* and *paprika* to garnish
1. The chicken breast, washed before, is cut into small pieces, then seasoned with salt and pepper. In a large pan heat the sunflower oil, then place the chicken breast and brown gently on all sides for 10 minutes. Remove from the pan, place in an ovenproof dish and keep hot.

2. For the sauce, add the flour to the pan and cook for about 1 minute, or until just soft. Pour in the cream, mixing gently then bring to the boil. If the sauce is to thick, add 7 tbsp of milk.

3. After about 10 minutes add the paprika, salt, pepper and green dill. Cook over a gentle heat, for a further 8-10 minutes, stirring occasionally.

4. Add the sliced mushrooms and chicken breast and cook over a very low heat, stirring occasionally, for about 15-20 minutes, so that the flavours interwine. Five minutes before the end of the cooking, stir in the chopped green dill and paprika and serve with mămăligă.

DESSERTS

Romanian traditional sweet bread – Cozonac

Ingredients
1 kg flour OO
200 gr sugar
125 gr butter+oil
3 yolks
1 egg
1/2 teaspoon salt
400-500 ml milk
25 g fresh yeast
a little grated lemon peel
50 gr raisins

1. before you start, all
the ingredients must have the same temperature and all the windows must closed, the room (kitchen must be warm) because the cold air could damage the dough

2. prepare the dough starter: mix the yeast with 2 teaspoons sugar add 100 gr flour and 100 ml milk and cover with a cloth, leaving it until it rises

3. mix the rest of milk (warm) with the rest of the sugar (to dissolve it)

4. mix all yolks with the salt

5. take a larger bowl and place the flour, the warm milk (with sugar), the egg white, the yolks (with salt) and dough starter (after it rises). And knead, adding the melted butter combined with oil, a little at a time, until the dough starts to easily come off your palms. Butter, oil and the dough must be kneaded until air bubbles can be seen in it.

6. add the raisins (after we keep it in rhum or in warm milk) and knead again. Cover with a cloth. Leave in a warm place to double in bulk. (If during kneading the dough seems too hard, you may add a little milk. If, on the contrary, the dough seems too soft, you may add a little flour.)

7. when the dough has risen well, divide it in two parts. The first part divide it again in two, roll a sheet of dough about one finger thick and roll it. Make the same with the second. After that fold the two rolls together into a rope (braid the two pieces together)

8. the baking pan (it is similar with the plumcake baking pan) the baking pan should be previously greased with butter or covered with baking paper. Fill only 1/3 or 1/2 of the pan with dough. Cover and leave in a warm spot until it almost fill the whole pan.

9. before you put it in the oven wash the surface with egg or only yolk or put sugar.

10. first bake at high temperature until the dough rises, then decrease the temperature at medium. On the average, it should be baked for 1 hour or less (depend of the dough quantity).
Plum Dumplings – Găluște cu prune

Ingredients

1 lb/500 g potatoes
2 eggs
2 – 3 tablespoons flour
salt
1 lb/500 g plums
3 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons bread crumbs
½ cup confectioner's sugar

1. Boil well washed potatoes in their jacket.
2. When done, peel them and crush with the potato press or grind them.
3. Place the potato paste in a bowl and mix with the eggs, flour, one teaspoon of sugar and a little salt.
4. Make a three finger thick roll from this paste.
5. Cut one finger thick pieces from it.
6. Flatten these pieces with your hand and place one pitless plum onto each of them.
7. Then roll into a ball with your floured hand.
8. When all the dumplings are made, boil in salt water.
9. When they rise to the surface, they are done.
10. Remove with the slotted spoon and roll in breadcrumbs previously fried in butter, so that each dumpling is completely covered in breadcrumbs.
11. Place on a serving plate and powder with vanilla confectioner's sugar.
12. Serve warm.
Green Walnut Preserves – Dulceată de nuci verzi

Ingredients

2 lbs/1 kg sugar
3 cups water
22 oz/650 g peeled green walnuts
½ cup honey
½ vanilla stick
juice from ½ lemon

1. Remove the green peel from the walnuts and as you peel, place in a bowl with cold water lest they darken.
2. Then place the walnuts in a pot with boiling water and leave for 15 minutes.
3. Drain and place in a pot with cold water, also for 15 minutes.
4. Repeat this procedure (hot water to cold water) three times.
5. In the meantime, make the syrup, remove foam, add honey and vanilla.
6. When the syrup starts to thicken, add the walnuts and lemon juice, letting simmer until the preserves are done.
7. Remove from heat, cover with a wet cloth and place in jars when cold.

Caramelized Sugar Cream – Cremă de zahăr ars

Ingredients

6 eggs
6 tablespoons sugar
3 cups milk
3 tablespoons of sugar for caramelizing
vanilla (stick)
salt
1. Boil the milk with vanilla at slow heat.
2. After the first boil, cover and keep aside.
3. Beat the eggs with the sugar and the latter dissolves.
4. Heat the milk again, add a little salt and pour, a little at a time, into the egg and sugar mixture, constantly stirring, until it is almost cool.
5. Take a 3 qt pan and put 3 tablespoons of sugar in it.
6. Heat until the sugar melts and becomes yellowish.
7. Remove from heat and tilt the pan in such a way, that the melted sugar spreads all over the interior walls of the pan.
8. Stir the cream a little and then pour into the pan.
9. Cover and set this pan into a larger pan filled with boiling water.
10. The boiling water must be \( \frac{3}{4} \) of the height of the pan with the cream.
12. The cream is ready when it comes off the pan walls quite easily.
13. Remove from the water and keep in a cool place.
14. After it has cooled completely, refrigerate.
15. Before serving, take a large round plate and cover the pan with it.
16. Then turn the pan upside down.