

Treasured Polish Recipes



Sophie Zembo

Polish food has long been part of every holiday tradition in our family. Cabbage and cheese pierogi, golumbki, kapusta, kielbasa, and rye bread have always filled our menu at Easter and Christmas time.



The matriarchs of the family, in our case, our Babcias and mothers spent hours on end preparing this food for our many family celebrations.



When they no longer could do it, the task passed on to the children. It took me until age 66 to finally learn how to make all this Polish food. I wrote out all the recipes in detail in hopes that you will not wait as long as I did to try your hand at making this Polish food and carrying on this very special tradition.

In honor of all our Polish ancestors who have cooked these meals with love...



Golumbki (Polish Cabbage Rolls)



Ingredients:

Three medium cabbage (Note: Look for cabbages with a flat top, not pointed. Also...look for about 15 dark green leaves to line the roasting pan and cover the golumbki while cooking. I try to choose heads that have these on the outside or you will find them discarded in the vegetable bin.)

3 lbs. hamburger (a combination of 85%-90% lean)

2 boxes of Herb-Ox--beef flavor...use about 8 packets (one box reg., one box low sodium)

Carolina rice

White vinegar

Salt and pepper

Directions:

- Remove core from center of cabbage. (The more you cut out, the easier it is to remove the leaves as they cook.)
- Place each cabbage in an 8 qt. pan filled with water to cover. Bring to a boil.
- As leaves become “pliable,” remove and stack leaves on a plate. Shave the thick core down the center. It should be “thin” like the rest of the leaf.



Stack cabbage leaves on plate



Shave down thick core



Thin core

- Break up 3 lbs. of hamburger in a bowl. Place aside.
- Measure 3 cups of Carolina rice. Rinse several times to remove extra starch. Add 4 ½ cups water. Bring to a boil and simmer until water evaporates and rice cooks. (approximately 10 min.) Rice should be firm, not too soft and mushy.
- Mix hot rice, hamburger, Herb-ox seasoning (4 packets low sodium, 4 packets regular) and 3 tsp. pepper together. (I do it in small batches to make it easier to blend all ingredients.) To limit excessive salt, I use half “low sodium” beef bouillon and half regular beef bouillon packets. Keep adding ingredients until well mixed. Taste meat mixture and adjust to your own taste. (Note: If using more than 3 lbs. of meat, add more bouillon flavor.)
- Line bottom and sides of large roasting pan with dark green cabbage leaves. Save several leaves to cover the top layer of golumbki at the end.



- Form cabbage rolls. Lay cabbage leaf down to form a cup-like shape. Place about a heaping Tablespoon of meat mixture in center. Roll the end of the leaf once to cover meat. Fold each side over to the center to make the shape narrow. Continue to roll to the end. Place seam side down in the roasting pan.



Place mixture in center



Roll leaf over meat



Fold right side over



Fold left side over



Roll to end

- Lay golumbki down on bottom of pan. (Seam side down) Pour 1/3 cup of vinegar over golumbki once bottom layer done. Continue to put a second layer on top. Pour 1/3 c. white vinegar over the second layer.
- Pour 2/3 c. water all along the “edge” of the pan. (Not directly on the rolls.)
- Cover top layer with additional cabbage leaves so golumbki are completely covered.
- Bake at 350 degrees for one hour. Lower heat to 325 degrees and bake for an additional hour. (I like to remove the pan and baste the golumbki with the juice at the bottom of the pan before cooking the second hour.)
- Makes about 40-45 golumbki depending on size of cabbage leaves.
- Cool and refrigerate. I pour the juice over the golumbki when I reheat them later.



Enjoy! 😊



Polish Cheese/Cabbage Pierogi

Cheese Filling:

Two blocks of farmer's cheese

One large or extra-large egg

Two Idaho potatoes

2 medium yellow onions

Pepper

3 T. Unsalted butter or margarine to sauté onions

***Important: The cheese has to be "dried out" overnight so it is not watery.

Line an 8"x 8" cake pan with paper towels. Take 2 blocks of farmer's cheese and press into pan. Place paper towels on top. Place another cake pan or dish on top and add anything heavy to help squeeze out the water. Place in refrigerator overnight. Check on paper towels after a few hours. They should be changed if they are very wet.



Directions:

- Cut onions thinly (small pieces) and sauté in butter or margarine.
- Cube two Idaho potatoes. Boil, drain, and cool potatoes.
- Mash potatoes with a potato masher. Add sautéed onions to potatoes.
- Remove cheese from refrigerator. Place in bowl and break apart. Add one beaten egg to cheese.
- Add cheese to potato/onion mixture. Mix well. Add salt and pepper to taste.



Sautéed onions



cubed potatoes



mashed potatoes



cheese/potato/onion mix

Dough:

2 ¼ c. flour

1 tsp. salt

1 extra large egg (should equal about ¼ c...if necessary, add one T. water)

½ c. water

½ tsp. vegetable oil

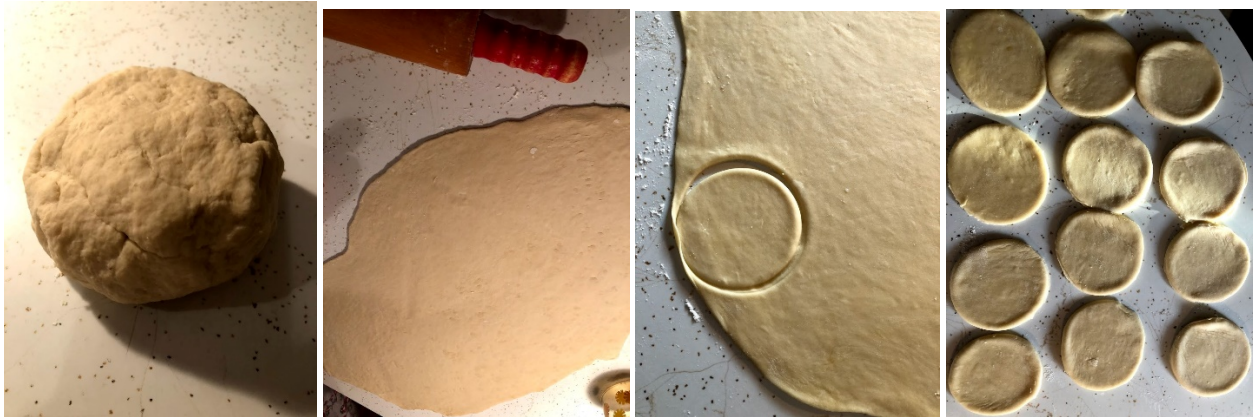
Directions:

- Mix flour and salt in bowl.
- Beat egg and one T. water. Add into center of flour mixture.
- Mix ½ tsp. oil with ½ c. water. Add to flour mixture. Mix with a fork, then your hands. Knead and form a ball. Cut in half. Place one half of the dough in plastic wrap while you are working with the other half.

Making the pierogi:

- Spread a little flour on a pastry cloth.
- Roll out one half of dough with a rolling pin to desired thickness...about 1/8 inch.
- Using a glass with a 3 in. diameter, cut circles into the dough. Keep circles covered with plastic wrap or dish towel so they do not dry out.

- Roll out each circle. Place about a teaspoon of cheese mixture into center of the circle. Fold the circle over and pull dough to the top so it resembles a half circle. Pinch at the top and all along the edges. Press the dough hard and thin out at the edges so it is completely sealed. This is important so they do not open when boiling. If the dough gets dry and will not seal, I just add some water on my fingers and moisten the dough along the edges.



Cut this dough in half Roll out using rolling pin Cut circles using a glass Fill circles with cheese mix

- Fill an 8 qt. pan $\frac{3}{4}$ full with water and bring to a boil. Turn down to simmer. Add pierogi (I do about 8-10 at a time) and cook for about 10-12 minutes. (Do not let it boil rapidly. Otherwise, the pierogi will open up.) Remove with a slotted spoon, place in a colander and immediately put into a bowl with cold water. Remove after a few minutes and lay on paper toweling to dry.
- Melt butter or margarine and brush on both sides of the pierogi. They can be warmed up and eaten this way but most people like them fried. To store: layer in a plastic container putting wax paper between the layers.
- You will still have the other half of the dough left and more of the cheese mixture to make another batch of pierogi.



Form pierogi Put in water and simmer Put in cold water bath Brush on melted butter



ENJOY! 😊

Cabbage pierogi filling:

One large cabbage

Two medium yellow onions

Unsalted Butter

Pepper

Directions:

- Shred and finely chop one large cabbage. (Note: Cabbage must be cut fine.)
- Boil in water. Cook until tender.
- Drain. Once cooled, squeeze cabbage with cheese cloth until it is dry. Take small amounts of cabbage and cut fine again.
- Sauté two thinly chopped and cut yellow onions.
- Add cabbage, onions, salt and pepper to taste. Mix well.
- Follow same directions for dough for the cheese pierogi.

Kapusta (Polish Cabbage Soup)



Note: The first thing you need to make is the stock for the soup. This is done by making a boiled dinner with a smoked shoulder and vegetables.

Ingredients for boiled dinner:

Smoked shoulder (about 12 lb.)

Vegetables: Cabbage (sliced in quarters), onions, potatoes, carrots

Directions:

- Cover smoked shoulder with water. Bring to a boil and simmer for 2 ½ -3 hours. (Add enough water as the stock is used for the kapusta.) Remove meat. *Save bone and meat on it for soup. Any remaining meat after eating the dinner can be added to the soup.
- Add vegetables to stock and cook until tender...about ½ hour.
- Save stock to use to make kapusta.

Ingredients for kapusta:

Two large cabbages

Piece of salt pork (about 1/3 of the slab)

Package of yellow split peas

Salt, pepper, white vinegar

Directions:

- Cover smoked shoulder bone with remaining meat on it with stock. Add 1/3 piece of salt pork sliced into several pieces. Bring to a boil and cook for 45 minutes.
- Remove meat from bone and set aside. Strain remaining stock.



- Cut both cabbages very fine. Fill an 8 qt. spaghetti pan and a 6 qt. pan with the cabbage. Cover with water. Bring to a boil and simmer until tender. Drain cabbage.



- Put split peas in pan. Cover with water. Bring to a boil, cover pan, and simmer until very soft. Keep close watch, stir and add water as necessary. Once split peas are soft enough and water has been absorbed, mash peas.



simmer till soft



add water if necessary



mash peas when done

- Combine cabbage, split peas, small pieces of meat, and stock to pan. Add small amount of water if there is not enough stock.
- Add 1 ¼ tsp. salt and 1 ¼ tsp. pepper (more to taste)
- Add 8-9 T. white vinegar. (Add a little at a time and taste as you add it.)



Like most soups, kapusta always taste better the next day!

ENJOY! 😊 By Jane Zembo Dufault