

Gratinated Pasta Casserole

Gratinated pasta casserole known as Šunkofleky are easy, quick and cheap dinner. It tastes best with pickled gherkins. You can use all types of small pasta and improve recipe with cheese or meat of your choice.

Ingredients

- 500g of pasta (quadretti, macaroni)
- 5 eggs
- 300g of smoked meat or ham/sausage
- oil
- salt, pepper

Directions

1. Boil pasta in salted water with few drops of oil.
 2. Meanwhile cube boiled smoked meat or sausage.
 3. Mix pasta and meat together in a pan.
 4. Put to preheated oven for 15 minutes at 220°C.
 5. Whisk eggs and season with salt and pepper. Pour eggs over pasta. Reduce temperature to 180°C and bake for another 10-15 minutes.
 6. Serve with pickled gherkins.
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Homemade Liver Sausage

Jitrnice (liver sausage) are essential product of every pig slaughter and they are produced in all of Czech Republic. Depending on region, their preparation changes. In some parts of Moravia, people add semolina instead of buns. Boiled rice is also used and groit. During boiling we watch carefully if the water is not boiling heavily – sausages could tear up.

Ingredients

- 1 kg of brisket
- 350g of pork jowl
- 500 g pork lungs
- 350 g pork livers
- 500 g buns
- 0,5 l pork broth
- 80 g salt
- 3 g marjoram
- 1,5 g ginger
- 1,5 g minced allspice
- 45 g minced garlic
- 1 g pepper
- 8 m of sausage casings
- wooden sticks (skewers)

Directions

1. Boil brisket and jowl until semitender and lungs until tender. Cube buns.
2. Grind boiled lungs and grind raw livers twice. Remove bones and cartilages from brisket and cube brisket

and jowl.

3. Put cubed buns in a bowl and pour part of broth, add livers, garlic, lungs and rest of broth. Salt and season and mix thoroughly.
 4. Then add meat from brisket and jowl and mix again. Season to taste if necessary.
 5. Cut thin casings to 20 cm (8 inch). Close one end of casing with skewer and fill with mixture. Then close the second end with skewer.
 6. Boil in hot water (90°C) for about 15-20 minutes. Wash boiled sausages in cold water and let cool of on wooden plate. Turn them after 15 minutes.
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Pork Greaves Spread

Greaves spread is typical for pig slaughtering. Main ingredient are well sputtered greaves. The best are homemade, freshly made. Their making is pretty simple and you'll also get delicious homemade lard. You can use lard for frying or you can put part of greaves into glass and pour with lard. When it's cold, it's a delicious snack to bread, that can last in fridge for a very long time. Greaves spread on its own has many variations. Here's basic recipe, that can be enriched by boiled eggs or pickles and garlic.

Ingredients

- 3 kg of lard
- 2 large onion
- 3 spoons of mustard
- 100 ml of water

- caraway
- salt

Directions

1. Cube lard to 1 cm large pieces. Put them in large pot and pour water, so it doesn't burn at start. Fry lard very slowly and stir a lot, till greaves are about half the size and brown.
2. Then we take the greaves out and squeeze the oil to glass. Season with glass and caraway.
3. Ground cold greaves add chopped onion, mustard and mix together.
4. Put spread on fresh bread and garnish with chopped chives.

Potato Dumplings Filled with Smoked Meat and Sauerkraut

Filled potato dumplings are quite popular meal in Czech Republic, and it's very easy to prepare. The most common filling is smoked meat, which can be enriched with bacon. Interesting alternative can be pork scratching. Potatoes for dough can be boiled a day before. But once you make the dough, try to work with it immediately. In time it begins to thin and then it would tear up and be sticky.

Ingredients

- 1 kg of potatoes
- 500 g of fine wheat flour
- 2 eggs
- tbs of salt
- 500 g of smoked meat
- 1 onion for topping

Sauerkraut

- 1 kg of sauerkraut
- 1 onion
- salt, caraway
- 1 spoon of flour
- lard or oil

Directions

1. Boil whole unpeeled potatoes. Let cool off, then peel them and grate finely. Add eggs, flour and salt and knead into dough.
2. Roll into 0,5 cm thick layer and cut to squares of 10 cm x 10 cm.
3. Put chopped smoked meat on every square. You can season them with salt and pepper. Then put the corners together and make into a round dumpling.
4. Boil in steam for 25 minutes. Pinch with skewer after boiling and butter up with lard or oil. Sauerkraut
5. Fry chopped onion on lard and add sauerkraut with pickle. Season with caraway and salt. Sauté for 15 – 20 minutes. If the sauerkraut is too sour you can sweeten it with sugar. At the end thicken with flour mixed with

a little water.

6. Fry chopped onion on lard for final garnishing.

Roasted Goose with White and Red Cabbage and Dumplings

Once upon a time

there was a cute town

and it's people knew

how to have some fun

when st. Martin's day

finally has come.

In a town surrounded by Beskydy's mountains, in the town where I grew up we celebrate St. Martin's day every year. He's the patron of the town.

Anyway, eating roasted goose and drinking St. Martin's wine is whole republic tradition. But for us it means whole weekend ritual starting on Friday with something like outdoor alcoholic special drinks market and ending on Sunday with light headache and completely full stomach. But calm down, it's not just about drinking and eating. Mainly it's about meeting friends, spending time with family. Maybe this spirit is common for whole nation during St. Martin's day, but mostly for other people it's about eating something they don't

usually eat and drinking special occasions kinds of wine.

But for us it's about meeting on the main and only square, talking to friends you haven't seen for a long time, trying to walk through the crowd and walking from stall to stall... and drinking vařonka, hot wine and warm mead.

Vařonka is north Moravian history leftover. But it's awesome. You know – very cold winters, tough work, no money. People needed to warm up somehow. Vařonka is combination of caramel, water, spices like clove, cinnamon (it's possible to use badian (star anise) or allspice) and a shot of booze for a cup. You may use vodka, but we use režná (it's made from anise, it has about 35% of alcohol) or rum. In the end you put to the cup just a little bit of butter and perhaps slice of lemon or orange for decoration. It's very sweet. And you get drunk very fast. There is also a competition who made the best vařonka. And competitors really care about it because it is a big pride to win and they will be well known to whole town. In the end of the evening there is lot of drunk people. But they are still capable to get up early next morning so they can see their patron.

On Saturday square looks like a medieval market with different kinds of food, drink and handmade stuff.

And this day is about best roasted goose competition and St. Martin's coming. He is supposed to ride on a white horse which means snow. So he's supposed to bring snow and winter and cover the country with snowy blanket and let it rest to the spring. For the last few years it's not working. No snow. Or more likely no snow in November. Maybe we are going to be content just with November. Tomorrow I'm going to buy some moustache. I'll be very pretty girl.

Maybe I could compare our roasted goose and our St. Martin's celebration to thanksgiving turkey or something like that. When it's really about tradition you just want to be with your

closest. This year I loved making goose (ok, it wasn't really a goose, but it wasn't a duck, it was a hybrid, something in between – gooseduck. Meat is not so dry as goose use to have and it's not so tough as duck use to have, it's tender and juicy) because it was whole family cooperation. My father made goose, my mother made white Czech cabbage and I made savory red cabbage and awesome butter dumplings. And together – lovely tender meat, tasty moist dumplings and bittersweet combination of cabbages – together it was heaven.

So bellow it's not going to be just one of the meals recipe but recipe for the whole course.

Of course you can make roasted goose on orange and honey or plums, make savory both white and red cabbage or make red cabbage with apples and cranberries and it's going to be great. But let it be simple and you will know for 100% it's going to be the best.

Roasted Goose

Ingredients

- 1 goose without giblets
- bunch of celery leaves
- 4 sprig of fresh rosemary
- 2 onions, finely diced
- 5 garlic cloves, finely sliced
- salt, pepper, generous amount of whole caraway

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Rinse goose inside and out with cold running water, and pat it dry with paper

towels.

2. With the point of the knife make carefully few cuts to the skin of the goose. Generously sprinkle the cavity with salt, pepper and caraway and insert most of the celery leaves and half of the rosemary sprigs (instead of celery you may use parsley).
3. From both sides also sprinkle the goose with salt, pepper and caraway. Put the goose into large roast pan breast side down, pour there about a cup of water and roast it covered for about 2 or 3 hours, when it's fine and crispy.
4. Then turn around breast side up. Sprinkle goose with salt and caraway again (don't be afraid to use caraway, even a whole package for the goose, it makes the taste) and bake covered. Now it's good during the two or three hours long baking to take the goose out of the oven and pour some juice over the breast. Maybe 3 times during baking.

When the skin is brown and crispy, put to the pan chopped onion, sliced garlic and the rest of leaves and rosemary.

I know, it takes time but it definitely worth it. And you have time to do rest of it.

Cabbage

The most complicated thing is the Czech cabbage. You can cook this cabbage day ahead so it "sits" and tastes even better. I love the smell when my mother cooks it, it simply smell delicious.

Ingredients

- 1 medium head white cabbage (about 2 and half pounds),

chopped

- water
- salt
- 1/2 tsp whole caraway
- 1 tbsp pork or goose fat (grease one)
- 1 big onion finely diced
- 1 not even full tbsp of all purpose flour
- 1 tsp sugar
- 1 tsp white vinegar
- generous amount of fresh ground pepper

Directions

1. Put the cabbage into the pot and press it then pour in the water so the cabbage is just slightly covered and braise it so it's just "al dente".
2. It's not supposed to be completely cooked. It's hard to tell how long it takes because it depends on how fresh cabbage is. So it may take 10 minutes but also half an hour. So watch it. Then pour off half of the water of the pot but keep it aside.
3. In pan, add fat. When it's hot add onion and sauté until turned slightly brown and add flour.
4. Now stir with wooden spoon. It's something like the starter for béchamel.
5. Add the mix to the pot with cabbage. If the cabbage is too thick pour in some of cabbage broth. It depends just on you how thick you want to have it.
6. Stirring boil the cabbage for the last ten minutes so it doesn't burn. Finally add sugar and vinegar and fresh ground pepper.

Ingredients

- about 2 and half pound savory red cabbage, the best you can buy (when you buy already made it saves time)
- about a cup of goose juice from the goose roasting in your oven or goose that finished roasting in your oven – juice and fat, but it doesn't have to be a full cup
- 1 medium onion, finely diced
- fresh ground pepper

Directions

1. Add the juice into the pot and heat.
2. When it's hot add onion and sauté until golden brown.
3. Next add the cabbage and let it boil until almost all liquid is gone.
4. Finally add pepper.

Dumplings

And finally... the best dumplings I've ever ate. For now, of course. They are moist, with taste of butter and supper easy to make.



Ingredients

- about 14 oz white toast bread, cubed
- 3 and half oz warm butter
- 2 and half cups milk
- 4 eggs
- 5 and half oz plain whole-wheat flour
- bunch of chopped parsley
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 8 cups greased with butter
- bit pot with a lid for

Directions

1. Add the water into the pot and boil.
2. When you put all the cups to the pot water should reach an inch under the top of the cups.
3. Mix the cubed bread with all ingredients and let it absorb the liquid.
4. Then divide it into the greased cups.
5. Put cups into the pot, cover with a lid and cook for about 45 minutes.

Shopska salad

Shopska salad is originally a Bulgarian salad made from tomatoes, cucumber, onion, pepper and feta cheese. It's popular across Eastern and Central Europe. Shopska salad is

easy summer salad recipe, which can be served as main course or a healthy side with meat.

Ingredients

- 2 cucumbers
- 3-5 tomatoes
- 2 peppers
- 200g of Balkan feta cheese
- 1-2 onions
- oil

Directions

1. Dice peeled cucumbers, tomatoes and peppers.
2. Chop onion and cube feta cheese.
3. Put in bowl and mix together with spoon of oil.
4. Serve with bread.