

Yugoslavian Cabbage Rolls

Here it is, heading into the holiday season once again and this year my gift to all of you is this recipe. Every year, my daughter-in-law, Nikki makes these for our holiday dinner. We can't resist them. They do require a commitment of time to produce but luckily, they are made ahead and just heated slowly on the day they're served. And they are so good. If you want to make this part of your family's festivities, here's the recipe.

This is Nikki's traditional Croatian recipe. But you don't have to be Croatian to enjoy them. This recipe produces a dish that is an act of love. Don't plan to eat them the day you cook them as it takes about three days for the flavor to set and for them to be perfect.

What you need:

2 lb ground beef
1 cup uncooked rice
1 egg, beaten
4 -5 cloves of garlic, smashed and chopped
4 tablespoon paprika
1 teaspoon salt or to taste
1 teaspoon pepper or to taste
1 large onion finely chopped
2 large heads cabbage
1 large jar 32oz. sauerkraut
Vinegar

How to assemble:

Mix ground beef with rice, egg, garlic, salt and pepper, onion and 2 tablespoons of the paprika and let sit

Boil the cabbage, one head at a time in a mixture of 1 part vinegar to 4 parts of water. Vinegar/water should cover head.

When the outer cabbage leaves become opaque and flexible carefully cut them loose and remove them from the pot to cool

When all the large leaves have been cooked and removed, discard the rest of the cabbage head and prepare the second head in the same manner.

Forming the Cabbage Rolls:

Select a cabbage leaf and cut the thick core out

Spoon about 1/3 cup of meat mixture into each cabbage leaf

Fold the bottom of the leaf over the meat then roll the leaf loosely around the mixture to allow for the meat and rice to expand in cooking

Tuck the top of the leaf down into the roll

Continue with this process until all the meat has been used

Cooking instructions:

In a large cooking pot place ½ of the cabbage rolls in a layer on the bottom

Put ½ the jar of sauerkraut on top of the cabbage rolls

Add the rest of the cabbage rolls and then another layer of sauerkraut

Add the juice from the sauerkraut and enough water to reach the top of the cabbage rolls

Sprinkle the remaining two tablespoons of paprika over the top

Simmer for 3 hours

Refrigerate over night

Next day simmer 2 hours and refrigerate again

When serving bring to a slow simmer and then serve.

Cabbage rolls should not be served until the third day as the flavors need that time to meld and develop.

Notes:

NEVER STIR this dish as it only breaks the cabbage rolls apart. Just heat slowly and then enjoy.