

SERBIAN COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION OF AUSTRALIA
INC.



Traditional Serbian Recipes

Cookbook

For Aged Care Facilities



First Edition

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SUMMARY

This brochure was developed with the aim of providing an overview of Serbian culinary traditions and popular Serbian recipes which might be used in preparing meals for the Serbian elderly.

We hope it will be utilised by aged care facilities in order to deliver culturally appropriate meals to people of Serbian background.

We would like to acknowledge the diversity of our culture and we should not assume that all the features outlined in the brochure would apply to everyone. Therefore, it is important to treat each Serbian as an individual and appreciate everyone's individuality.

SERBIAN CUISINE

Serbian cuisine is derived from mixed traditions mostly influenced by the neighbouring *Mediterranean*, especially Greek, Hungarian, Turkish, Bulgarian and Austrian cuisine which makes it a heterogeneous one. Centuries of Austrian and Austro-Hungarian rule richly influenced Serbian cuisine, especially Serbian desserts.

General Characteristics of the Cuisine:

- Crust white bread is essential and it is eaten at every meal
- A traditional Serbian welcome is to offer the guest just bread and salt
- Bread also plays an important role in religious rituals. Some people believe that it is sinful to throw away bread regardless of how old it is.
- Although pasta, rice, potato and similar side dishes did enter the everyday cuisine, many Serbs still eat bread with these meals.
- Vegetables are never just boiled or steamed and served. They are often prepared with a sauce or fried with onion and garlic.
- Commonly eaten vegetables are potato (mashed, boiled or roasted), silver beet, cabbage, capsicum, beans, peas, sauerkraut, tomatoes, eggplant, pumpkin, cauliflower and corn. These vegetables are enjoyed cooked, as salads or relishes.
- Goulash is well liked, as are spiced meats.
- Soup is an important part of a main meal.
- Musakas, pastries and rice dishes are commonly eaten.
- Cornmeal dishes similar to polenta and pasta are also enjoyed.
- Salads are typically eaten with the main course and not as an appetizer for lunch.
- Fresh tomato sauce, olive oil, wine vinegar ,garlic, and onion are used commonly in cooking, as are paprika, dill, parsley, rosemary, basil and bay leaves.
- Sweet deserts and cakes are frequently eaten.

MEALS

Most people in Serbia will have three meals daily, breakfast, lunch and dinner, with lunch being the largest in the Mediterranean fashion.

BREAKFAST

Breakfast in Serbia is an early but hearty meal, although before breakfast most people usually take a cup of coffee. Pastries or bread are served with butter, jam, yogurt, sour cream and cheese, accompanied by bacon, sausages, salami and scrambled eggs. Dishes made of polenta are very popular, with either tea, milk or yogurt being served at breakfast.

Popara

Meal made with left over or fresh bread.

600 g homemade bread, baguettes or any crusty bread

100 g feta cheese or Mozzarella cheese

4 tsp of butter

500ml of water

500ml of milk

salt to taste

Method: Take a bigger bowl and put together water, milk and salt to boil. When it start to boil add bread broken into pieces, reduce heat and cook till it softens up about 2-3min. Pour out extra water, you only need about 2cm above bread line. Continue cooking for further few minutes mixing it gently on occasion.

Then, add cheese and mix through.

Serve on a plate with a teaspoon of butter on top of it.



Proja

Proja is a Serbian national dish of corn, known as corn bread.

General recipe for proja :

5 cups corn flour

3 cups flour

3 eggs

3 cups oil

1 baking powder

1 cup yogurt

1 glass mineral water

1 big slice cheese - crushed

salt

Mix it all together and bake in greased pan until golden. It should be 5 cm high. It is best served with sour cream or buttermilk.



LUNCH

SOUPS

There are two types of soups in Serbian cuisine: standard soups called *supa*, and soups with roux (browned flour) - called *čorba*. The most common are simple pottages made of beef or poultry with added noodles.

Chicken broth soup

1kg - 1.5 kg of chicken meat
2 onions cut in quarters
4 l of cold water
2 carrots (cut into large pieces)
2 celeries (stalks with leaves, root also can be used)
1 handful parsley
Thyme, salt and pepper

Preparation:

1. Place the meat and onions in the bottom of a large cooking pot and dry fry (fry without oil or fat) for a little while, until it changes color.
2. Add water and stir well to mix up the sediment at the bottom of the pot. Heat it up to boiling. Use a spoon to skim off any impurities that rise to the surface.
3. Add all remaining ingredients, partially cover the pot and cook over medium heat for about 3 hours.
4. Strain and leave it to cool down. Removed meat and vegetables can be served as delicious lunch (or dinner). Place broth in the fridge. When completely cooled, a layer of fat will appear at the surface. Remove it with spoon.

Tips: The only difference between chicken soup and chicken broth is in straining process. If you want to make a chicken soup, just skip the straining step, finely chop meat and vegetables and you will get a great soup to serve up for lunch or dinner. Strained soup – chicken broth (or stock) can be used as ingredient in many other dishes.

MAIN COURSE

The main course in Serbian cuisine is very often a meat dish. Here are some popular main courses:

Đuveč, stewed vegetables and pork or chicken similar to pilaf

Paprikaš (pork or chicken and pepper stew)

Podvarak (stewed sauerkraut, usually with meat and bacon pieces)

Prebranac, baked beans in sauce

Sataraš, stewed vegetables, similar to ratatouille

Sarma (sauerkraut rolls)

Pasulj (a thin bean stew)

Punjene paprike, peppers stuffed with ground meat, onion, rice and spices

Stuffed Peppers (Punjene Paprike)

A traditional Serbian recipe for a classic dish of peppers stuffed with meat and vegetables.

Again, there are many variations of stuffed peppers across Serbia but here is the basic recipe that you could modify by taste.

Ingredients (4 servings)

8 red peppers

400 grams beef/pork mince meat combo

100 grams of rice

1 big carrot, sliced

2 onions, chopped

1 egg

1 tbsp chopped parsley

Salt or Vegeta and pepper to taste

1 potato or tomato to close paprika

1 cup of tomato paste or tomato juice

10 tbsp of oil

2 tbsp plain flour

1 tsp of ground red paprika (hot if wanted)

1 tsp Vegeta or salt



Punjene paprike

Method

Fry finely chopped onions and sliced carrots on 5 tbsp of oil at high temperature. After a few minutes add mince meat. Add salt, Vegeta, pepper to taste and continue to fry it for another 5 minute pressing the meat with your spoon to make pieces smaller.

Take it off the heat and add rice and an egg. Stir the mixture well. Carefully spoon the mixture into the peppers to 2/3 of its height. Cover the top of each paprika with a slice of a potato or tomato, depending on a taste. Place filled peppers in a big pot or a deep pan.

In a saucepan, heat 5 tablespoons of oil and add 2 tablespoons of flour and stir it for about 3 min. Quickly stir in the minced garlic and ground red paprika. Mix to a thin paste. Add the saucepan mixture to the pot with paprika, add tomato juice or paste and cover it with the water. Add a little bit of Vegeta if desired and sprinkle chopped parsley on the top.

Put the pot into the oven and leave it for 1 hour on 250 degrees Celsius. You can also choose to boil it at a lower temperature for 40-45 minutes.

Bean Soup (Pasulj)

Pasulj used to be known as a poor people's food, but nowadays it's the very much beloved traditional Serbian dish.

There are a number of variations on the basic theme, so feel free to add other vegetables not mentioned in the recipe.

Ingredients (4 servings)

200g dried white Beans

300g smoked Pork Ribs (for non-vegetarian option)

1 large onion, chopped

1 large carrot, sliced

1 bay leaf

1 chilli paprika, optional

1 parsnip roughly chopped

1 tsp pepper or to taste

1 tsp Vegeta (or salt) or to taste

3 tbsp oil

1 tsp ground red paprika (hot if wanted)

2 tsp fresh parsley leaves

500ml-1l of water (depending if you want it thicker or thinner stew)

Method:

Put the beans in a pot, cover them with the water. Bring it to a boil. Leave it to simmer for 15 minutes.

Drain the water out. In the large pot (or express pot) put simmered beans.

Add smoked Pork Ribs, onions, carrot, bay leaf, parsnip, pepper and 1 chilli paprika (optional) and fresh parsley leaves. Fill it up with water and cook gently over a lower heat for 1-1.5 hours (30 min in the express pot), until the beans are soft.

In a saucepan, heat the oil, add 2 tbsp of flour and stir it for about 2min. quickly stir in the ground red paprika. Mix to a thin paste. Add the saucepan content to the pot; simmer for 5-10 minutes, until the soup is thick and rich. Try the soup, if not seasoned right add 1 tsp Vegeta (or salt) or to taste.



Pasulj

Paprikaš (chicken /pork and capsicum stew)

Ingredients (4 servings)

1 Chicken chopped into pieces

1kg Red Desiree potatoes

3 large onions

2 carrots

1 capsicum

2 tsp paprika

1tbsp of tomato paste

1tsp of tomato paste

2 Bay leaves

salt, Vegeta and pepper

Preparation

Sauté the onion with 2tbsp of oil, and chopped carrots, capsicum and continue to fry for another 5min. Add chicken pieces and simmer for about 15-20min covered. Now sprinkle with paprika, tomato paste bay leaves and add some water just enough to cover meat and cook further till meat is half cooked. If water evaporates, continue to add some more to keep the meat covered. Cook on low heat. When meat is half cooked add potatoes and more water, to make it like a stew rather, continue to cook till potatoes are ready. Then, add salt, Vegeta, pepper to taste and some parsley leaves if you like. Serve with fresh garden salad and crusty bread.



SALADS

In Serbia, salad is typically eaten with a main course and not as an appetiser. The simplest of salads are made of lettuce, cabbage, tomatoes, cucumber and potatoes. Oil, vinegar and salt are added as dressing.

Potato salad

1kg potatoes (Desiree)

1 large Onion

Salt, vinegar and oil

Peel and chop potatoes into squares. Boil some water with a salt in it and add potatoes. Cook till they softened. Cooled them down and add sliced onion, vinegar, salt and oil to your liking and chill it in the fridge before serving.



Cabbage salad

Half of one cabbage

5-7 tbsp of Vinegar

4tbsp sunflower or rice oil

1 tsp of salt



Prepare cabbage by taking out outer leave and pith. Sliced the cabbage finely or shredded it with a food processor. Place shredded cabbage in a large bowl, add salt vinegar and oil and mix it well. Taste it and if needed add some more vinegar, salt or oil. Leave it covered in the fridge for about 30min. The longer you leave it, the better it is.

DINNER

Dinner in Serbia is traditionally very light, like polenta and gibanica (cheese pie) served with fresh milk, buttermilk, sour cream or yoghurt.

Polenta

Ingredients:

750ml (3 cups) cold water

170g (1 cup) coarse polenta (cornmeal)

125ml (1/2 cup) thin cream

40g butter

Salt

Bring the water to the boil in a large heavy-based saucepan over high heat. Use a wire balloon whisk to stir the water. Gradually add the polenta in a thin steady stream, whisking constantly until all the polenta is incorporated into the water (whisking ensures the polenta is dispersed through the liquid as quickly as possible). Don't add the polenta too quickly or it will turn lumpy. Reduce heat to low (cook the polenta over low heat otherwise it will cook too quickly and you will need to add extra water). Simmer, stirring constantly with a wooden spoon, for 10 minutes or until the mixture thickens and the polenta is soft. (To test whether the polenta is soft, spoon a little of the polenta mixture onto a small plate and set aside to cool slightly). Rub a little of the polenta mixture between 2 fingers to see if the grains have softened. If the grains are still firm, continue to cook, stirring constantly, over low heat until the polenta is soft.) Remove from heat. Add the cream, butter, and stir until well combined. Season to taste. Serve immediately with milk, yoghurt, sour cream or buttermilk over it.

Gibanica

Ingredients:

450g filo dough (pastry) thawed

900g feta cheese

240g sour cream

6 eggs

225g melted butter

Half a cup of flour

1tsp of salt



Directions:

Beat eggs until foamy

Add sifted flour and salt

Beat well

Add sour cream and mix well

Add cheese and fold thoroughly

Grease a 13x9x2 inch pan

Place two sheets of filo in pan

Pour about 2tbsp of melted butter over dough and brush to edges

Spread about 6 large spoons of mixture on top of pastry

Repeat the dough and butter and continue to layer with cheese mixture until
2 sheets of filo pastry are left

Add two last sheets on top and pour remaining butter over dough.

Bake uncovered in 180 degrees Celsius oven for 30-45min.

Cut into squares and serve warm with glass of buttermilk, yoghurt, or fresh milk.

Gibanica

DESSERTS

Serbian desserts are mixture of other Balkan desserts and desserts native to central Serbia. Desserts served are usually Ustipci, Tulumbe, Doughnuts and Crepes. Slatko is traditional Serbian dessert popular throughout Serbia and it can be found in most Serbian restaurants in the Balkans and in the Diasporas.

Koh

Ingredients:

6 eggs

1l of milk

12 tbsp sugar

12 tbsp semolina

2 sachets vanilla sugar

Wisk the egg whites till it forms a soft peak, add 6 tbsp of sugar, egg yolks, semolina and 1 sachet of vanilla sugar. Pour the batter into greased and floured baking dish. Bake at 200C until golden on top. Boil milk with 6 tbsp of sugar and vanilla sugar. While the cake is still hot, pour milk over it. Cool it down and serve.



Cherry cake

Ingredients:

4 eggs

300 ml of sugar

2 vanilla sugar

200ml oil

600 ml yoghurt

800 g flour

1 baking powder (10g)

1 jar of pitted cherries



Method:

Mix together eggs and sugar, gradually add oil and yoghurt

Add flour mixed with baking powder

Mix all together and pour out in buttered and floured baking dish

On top of the cake place well drained cherries (dense if possible)

Bake in preheated oven at 160-180 C for 30 min. or until cake become golden on top.

Cool cake and dust with icing sugar on top

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