

Romanian Stuffed Cabbage

This recipe for Romanian Stuffed Cabbage or **sarmale** is adapted from Nicolae Klepper's "Taste of Romania" (Hippocrene Books, 2005). Sarmale are enjoyed year-round in Romania, but especially for holidays.

Makes about 20 stuffed cabbage rolls or Sarmale

Vegan Cabbage Rolls

Substitute Quinoa or tofu for Meat.

Ingredients (gluten free and dairy free)

- 1 whole head cabbage, about 4 lbs.
- 6 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 finely chopped medium onion
- 2 minced garlic cloves
- 2 ½ tablespoons raw rice
- ¼ cup hot water
- 1 ½ lbs ground beef
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill
- 1 teaspoon thyme
- 1 to 2 teaspoons salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 1 cup sauerkraut juice reserved from drained sauerkraut (see below)
- 2 cups vegetable broth
- 10 black peppercorns
- 4 bay leaves
- 3 cups sauerkraut, drained (reserve 1 cup juice), rinsed and squeezed dry
- 6 strips bacon
- 6 fresh dill sprigs
- 2 pounds sliced tomatoes (to be roasted separately)

Prep time: 30 minutes

Cook time: 120 minutes

Directions:

1. Remove core from cabbage. Place whole head in large pot filled with boiling, salted water. Cover and cook 3 minutes, or until softened enough to pull off individual leaves. About 20 leaves.
2. When leaves are cool enough to handle, use a paring knife to cut away the thick center stem from each leaf, without cutting all the way through. Chop any remaining cabbage and set aside.
3. In a large skillet, saute chopped onion, garlic and rice in 1 tablespoon olive oil, stirring frequently, until onion is translucent. Add hot water, bring to a boil, reduce heat and simmer 10 minutes. Remove from heat, cover and let stand 5 minutes or until rice has absorbed all the water. Let cool.
4. Place meat in a large bowl along with onion-garlic-rice mixture, combining thoroughly. Add dill, thyme, salt, pepper, red pepper, if using, and 2 tablespoons water. Mix completely but lightly so as not to toughen the meat.
5. In a medium bowl, mix 2 cups vegetable broth with sauerkraut juice, peppercorns and bay leaves, and set aside.
6. Place about $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of meat mixture on each cabbage leaf. Roll away from you to encase the meat. Flip the right side of the leaf to the middle, then flip the left side. It will look something like an envelope. Once again, roll away to create a neat little roll.
7. Using 2 tablespoons of the remaining olive oil, coat a large, lidded Dutch Oven or casserole dish. Mix reserved chopped cabbage with drained sauerkraut and place some in the bottom of the Dutch oven.
8. Place 3 strips bacon across sauerkraut and cover with a layer of stuffed cabbages. Add another layer of sauerkraut, bacon strips and stuffed cabbage. Then top with remaining sauerkraut. Spread dill sprigs on top and sprinkle with remaining olive oil. Pour sauerkraut juice-vegetable broth-water mixture over all.
9. Heat oven to 375 degrees. Place Dutch oven over high heat and bring to a boil, lower heat to medium low, cover and simmer about 20 minutes. Transfer to oven and cook 2 hours.
10. When ready to serve, remove bay leaves. (optional: accompany sarmale with pasta or mamaliga (polenta) or boiled potatoes.) Optional is not to be served at 2015 Texas Camp.