

Recipe for Sarma

Go to your favorite Serbian grocery store to purchase the ingredients on the shopping list.

PREP THE SAUERKRAUT

Remove the leaves from the head of sauerkraut, then wash the leaves in cold water and let them drain. Once drained, use a paring knife to remove the large ribs off the leaves, being careful not to damage the leaves themselves. Stack the leaves on a plate and flatten them as much as possible.

MAKE THE FILLING

Heat a tablespoon of oil (or ideally bacon fat) over medium high heat. Then add the finely diced onion. Sauté for a few minutes until the onions are translucent. Add ground beef and cook until brown on all sides.

After the ground beef is browned, add a tablespoon of black pepper, Vegeta, allspice, salt and paprika. Sauté for another 1-2 minutes and then remove from heat. Transfer the mixture into a large bowl and let it cool slightly.

Then, add 1 cup of rice and the head of diced garlic. Mix until the rice and ground beef are well incorporated.

FILL THE POT

Take a large pot or dutch oven and line the bottom with a few sauerkraut leaves. (This prevents the sarma from burning.) Fill the sarma with two tablespoons of the ground beef and rice mixture and fold it into the shape of a blintz. Layer the sarma by arranging layers of leaves, diced smoked bacon and dried ribs into the pot.

Once you have filled the pot, cover the top with a final layer of leaves and then pour in enough water to completely cover the sarma. Cover tightly with a heavy lid.

Place the pot in an oven preheated to 400 degrees Fahrenheit and cook for 2–2.5 hours. Check the sarma periodically and top off with water.

Sarma is one of those foods that only gets better the longer it cooks, so take your time. Once done, take the pot off the heat. Let it rest for a few minutes before serving.

SHOPPING LIST

1 large whole head of pickled cabbage

1 large onion, diced

1 1/2 lbs of ground beef

1 cups of rice, rinsed

1 head of garlic, diced

1/2 lbs of dried ribs, cubed

1/4 lbs of smoked bacon, cubed

Spices: salt, Vegeta, allspice, black pepper, paprika