

do polish

Bigos is a very traditional Polish dish that used to be served during hunting; one pot dish - a combination of sauerkraut, fresh cabbage, different kinds of meats (sometimes bits and pieces of whatever is left in the fridge), selection of spices - simple, yet distinctive; all cooked for a long time - re-cooked the following day is even better; you can find different schools of cooking this dish - depending on region.

Bigos may be purely made of sauerkraut without any fresh cabbage (like my mum's); some would add tomatoes or tomato sauce (that reminds me of enormous pots of bigos served with a piece of fresh light rye sour bread by soldiers at the community events in seventies and eighties); some would enhance it with red wine. My personal choice, though, is probably based on a mixture of memories from childhood and pursuit of the perfect flavour. So far so good - its unique texture and flavour make it a pretty popular dish at the Polish Jester.

- Beata.



Serve with potatoes or a piece of fresh rye bread or a fried or cooked Kransky or knuckwurt. Delicious and filling.

Thanks to Beata at the Polish Jester

do Bigos

Ingredients

4- 5 jars of Polish sauerkraut
half of hock
1-2 kilos of keiserfleisch (a proper bacon - if it's a bit fatter it gives more flavour; you also use the skin which cooked is tender)
optional - pieces of chopped, fried beef - shoulder blade is good)
- pieces of venison or lamb
- cooked or fried chicken
3-4 pieces of different sausages
1/4 of fresh cabbage
3-4 grated carrots
5 prunes
3-4 bay leaves
few seeds of all-spice pigmento
pepper (I love pepper steak mix)
salt
sugar
chilli
majoram
garlic- optional
onion - optional

1. Take the sauerkraut out of the jars and rinse it thoroughly but not completely - you have to get rid of the "sourness" and "saltiness"
2. Once rinsed, you cook it on a slow fire in water - occasionally check and add water to prevent from burning; stir often
3. Add hock and keiserfleisch and spices as bay leaves, all-spice, majoram, garlic, pepper;
4. Cook for few hours - sauerkraut has to be soft and tender but not watery
5. Meanwhile, chop the fresh cabbage and cook until tender;
6. Fry, cook and chop/ dice different meats;
7. slice the sausages and fry slightly with spices - like pepper steak mix (I love it) or special spices for bigos (I do not use them as they tend to have MSG)
8. Grate carrots
9. When the hock and keiserfleisch are cooked take them out of the pot, cool and dice into small pieces (do not forget the skin - it enhances the flavour)
10. Keep cooking the sauerkraut, add grated carrot, prunes and more spices
11. When it's nicely cooked, add cooked cabbage, and cook together for another half an hour
12. Add all the meats, keep cooking - at this point you have to be very careful as it has a tendency to burn, you cook very slowly, stir often, add water occasionally
13. Add sugar, salt and more spices for flavour - it shouldn't be too sour but at the same time it still should have the nice "sourness" of the cabbage
14. The dish should start getting darker in colour, but not burnt.

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