

Latvian National Food



By «Sandis Pērkons»

Rye Bread

- ☞ Rye bread is commonly eaten with Soup and Sour Cream, It is also Cooked on a pan with oil and then thrown into a pot with garlic to make a delicious snack.



Homemade Rye Bread Recipe

- ☞ 1. In a large bowl, combine the spelt, rye, oats, cocoa, and salt. Add the dry yeast to the dry ingredients as well if that's what you're using.
- ☞ 2. If you're using fresh yeast, stir it into the water with a fork to dissolve it before adding it to the flour mixture. Add the water and maple syrup/honey to the dry ingredients and stir to combine. The dough will seem wet and shaggy looking, but that's good. Cover the bowl with a lid, cutting board, or plastic wrap and let it sit for 12-15 hours at room temperature. It will at least double in size during this time.
- ☞ 3. In the morning, grease* a 30 cm / 12 inch bread pan or line it with paper. Scrape the dough into the pan, and then press it down evenly with wet hands. Sprinkle flour overtop and cover with a clean dish towel. Let the dough sit for 1-2 hours at room temperature.
- ☞ 4. Heat the oven to 200C / 400F. Once the oven is hot, place the bread on a middle rack and bake for 40-45 minutes. The crust will be hard and sound hollow when tapped once the bread is done baking. Remove it from the oven and place the pan on a metal rack to cool for 20-30 minutes before removing it from the pan to cool completely. The loaf will keep well for a week at room temperature, stored in a bag or plastic wrap.

Rye Bread Pudding

A popular way to finish a meal in Latvia is by tucking into maizes zupa (rye bread pudding), a soupy dessert made from sweetened rye bread, apples, cinnamon, raisins, plums, cranberries, and whipped cream. The dark rye bread is dried out in the oven before being boiled which gives the pudding a thick, comforting texture.



Rye Bread Pudding Recipe

- ☞ Separate the rye bread into small crumbs. In a large skillet, heat the 8 tablespoons of butter over medium heat, then add in the bread crumbs.
- ☞ Fry them in butter for 5 minutes, then remove from heat and add the wine, lemon juice, cream, sugar, orange rind, and vanilla, mixing it together thoroughly.
- ☞ In a mold or a large pie dish (the pudding will not stick together, it is merely to provide a place for it), layer a spread of the bread on the bottom. Then place a layer of apples over that, spicing them with nutmeg, cinnamon, ground cloves, and a dash of salt. Provide another layer of bread crumbs, then an apple layer, repeating the same spices as previously. Finally place the remaining bread crumbs over the top.
- ☞ Bake at 300 degrees f for 60 minutes. Preferably serve hot, with whipped cream or vanilla ice cream.

Grey Peas

- ☞ This healthy and hearty national dish is typically served at Christmas as Latvians believe that eating peas brings luck and money but you'll see Grey Peas on menus throughout Riga.



Grey Peas, Cooked with Bacon

- 1. Soak gray peas overnight to shorten the cooking time. But soaking isn't entirely necessary.
- 2. Cook gray peas in salt water until tender.
- 3. Heat oil in the frying pan and fry chopped onion. Stir-fry until golden brown.
- 4. Add chopped smoked bacon and stir-fry until combined and heated through.
- 5. Serve gray peas topped with bacon & onion mix (and a glass of kefir).