



- Ingredients:**
- 500 g cottage cheese
  - 2 eggs
  - a few drops rum aroma
  - 75 g granulated sugar
  - 1 sachet vanilla sugar
  - 230 – 250 g all-purpose flour
  - 1 teaspoon baking soda (regular teaspoon, not measuring one)
  - cooking oil for frying the doughnuts
  - 250 g sour cream (crème fraîche) to serve
  - whole fruit runny blueberry jam to serve (or sour cherry, blackberry, black currants jam, etc)

**Instructions:**

Drain the excess water from the cottage cheese. Give the cottage cheese to a bowl. Add the eggs and the rum aroma, the granulated and vanilla sugar. With an immersion blender, blend the ingredients until you obtain a rough paste. The cottage cheese should not be turned into a smooth paste, just blended a little bit in order to make the cheese balls a little finer.

Mix about 230 g of the flour and the baking soda and give them to the cheese mixture. Mix with a spoon. Flour the working surface and your hands generously. Turn the dough onto the floured surface and knead it lightly to form a ball. The dough should still be somewhat sticky, yet manageable. Add the remaining flour only if absolutely necessary, only if the dough sticks so much that you will not be able to work it at all.

Divide the dough into 9 balls. Roll 8 of the balls into thick sausages and unite the sausage ends to get a circle with a hole in the middle. Use the last ball to make 8 little balls, which will be used to top the “papanăși”. In the meantime, heat the oil in a pot. Use enough oil to have about 5-6 cm of it in the pot. To check if the oil has reached the right temperature, insert a toothpick in the oil, if there are blisters forming around the toothpick, you can start frying the “papanăși”.

Only fry two or three of them at a time, depending on the size of your pan, do not overcrowd the pan – they should be able to move around freely. Turn the heat down to medium-low. Turn the doughnuts with a slotted spoon a few times in between and fry until the “papanăși” are golden brown. The little balls will need less time, about 3-4 minutes or so.

Place them on plates lined with kitchen paper and pat them dry in order to absorb some of the excess oil.

Serve warm topped with blueberry jam and sour cream. Place the little balls on top and top them with a little sour cream and jam as well.



# CHEZ LAZAR

## Menu of the day

## RUSTIC DEEP FRIED SALTY PORK GREAVES

This traditional appetizer can be served with fresh bread, cheeses, raw onion, tomatoes, bell peppers or other vegetables

Ingredients:

- pork skins with the subcutaneous fat layer attached and, if possible, a little layer of meat at the bottom.
- salt

Preparation:

Cut the skin and fat layer off the meat. Leave a little meat on them.

Then wipe the skin clean. The skins are hard to cut, even with a sharp knife, so put the skins in the freezer for 30 to 45 minutes and they will stiffen and be easier to cut. Cut the skins into strips about 1" wide.

In a large pot, cover the skins with water and boil for about 30 minutes with the lid on. This step renders a lot of fat and breaks down the fibers that make the skin impenetrably hard. Discard the water and rendered fat.

Salt the wet skins with a generous hand.

Place the now puffed up strips fat side down in a smoker or grill and smoke over indirect heat at about 225°F for an hour. Then crank it to about 400°F indirect heat to render more fat for 45 minutes. You can cook them until they are really crispy, or you can remove them when they are still moist and juicy.

Let them cool for about 15 minutes and cut them into squares if you cooked them as strips.

You can store them in the refrigerator in zipper bags for a week or two.



## PLUM BRANDY

Because Romania is the world's second largest plum producer, its traditional spirit is made only by plums, a strong alcoholic drink that contains 24–65% alcohol by volume (usually 40–55%). “Țuică” is drunk only before the meal.

Sieve the remaining flour over this mixture and stir with a spoon as long as possible. Start kneading the dough and keep doing it for about 15 minutes until the dough starts to slightly detach itself from the bowl. It won't properly detach itself at this point, it should just begin to do so. The best way to knead this dough is to form a fist and knead with the fist, bringing the dough from the walls of the bowl in the middle every now and then. The dough will be very sticky in the beginning, but it will get a bit better after about 15 minutes. Don't add more flour, the dough is supposed to be so soft and sticky and this point. It will remain very soft but it will stop sticking after you add the rest of the butter.

Now you can add the rest of the melted and cooled butter and continue kneading. You will now beat the dough with the back of your open hand and keep folding the edges of the dough over the middle. Keep doing this until all the butter is incorporated. This stage of the kneading is quite easy by comparison, the dough will not stick anymore – it will be very slippery.

Cover the bowl with a kitchen towel and let rise for 15-20 minutes or until doubled in volume in a warm place. This can take a shorter or a longer time, depending on the temperature in your kitchen. In the meantime preheat the oven to 180 degrees Celsius. Butter two loaf pans, 30-35 cm long. To make the filling, whisk 2 egg whites until stiff. Slowly add the sugar and the rum and continue whisking until the mixture is stiff again. Very carefully fold the ground walnuts into the egg white mixture, do not over mix.

Roll the dough on a lightly floured surface, about 3-4 mm thick and about 35 x 60 cm large. Spread the filling on top. Using a sharp knife divide the dough in the middle, so that you would be able to roll two breads. Start rolling the breads beginning in the middle where the dough was cut. Form the bread, press well at the ends and immediately place the roll into the prepared pan. Repeat with the second roll.

Let rise for 10 minutes in a warm place. Place in the oven and bake for about 50 or 60 minutes or until golden brown and cooked through. Check after 30 minutes, if the top of the bread becomes dark, cover it loosely with aluminum foil. Remove the breads from the pans, wrap them well in thick kitchen towels and let them cool. Apparently if they would cool down unwrapped in towels they would become soggy.

## FRIED CHEESE DOUGHNUTS WITH JAM

The “papanashi” are one of the best known desserts in Romania. They are quick and easy to make and utterly delicious, something that both children and grown-ups will love.



## SWEET BREAD WITH WALLNUT FILLING

The taste of this Romanian sweet bread is incredible, especially when it's warm out of the oven. Super aromatic, fluffy and simply delicious, this sweet bread will sure win you over. It tastes like a celebration!

### Ingredients:

#### For the dough:

- 500 g all-purpose flour
- 4 egg yolks (2 egg whites are needed for the filling)
- 300 ml milk
- 1 ½ tbsp vegetable oil
- 30 g fresh yeast
- 100 g butter
- 100 g granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon rum
- zest of ½ organic lemon
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon vanilla sugar

#### For the filling:

- 2 egg whites
- 100 g granulated sugar
- 1 tablespoon rum
- 80 g ground walnuts



### Instructions:

Place 50 g of the flour in a large bowl. Bring the milk to a boil and pour 100 ml of the milk over the flour in the bowl. Let the rest milk cool down a bit for later. Mix very quickly until the mixture is smooth. Leave to cool.

Crumb the yeast in a small bowl and stir it with ½ teaspoon sugar until it becomes liquid. When the flour-milk mixture is almost cold, pour the yeast over it and mix until incorporated. Cover with a kitchen towel and let rise in a warm place for about 15-20 minutes or until doubled in volume.

In the meantime melt the butter and let cool down a little. Mix the egg yolks and the salt together. Add the sugar, lemon zest, vanilla sugar, rum, oil and only 50 g of the butter. Mix very well with a spoon and pour this mixture over the yeast-flour mixture. Add the rest of the lukewarm milk and stir very well.

## TRIPLE SOUP

This traditional Romanian soup could be prepared in 2 ways: one of them is by making it with sour cream, and the other way is being served with garlic sauce and vinegar. Besides tripe, this soup contains carrots, turnip cabbage, celery roots and beef hocks. Depending on preference, sometimes people eat it with hot peppers.

### Ingredients:

- 3-4 kg of veal tripe (that has not been pre-boiled)
- 1 cow bone ( 600-800 g just the bone, with no meat)
- 1 spoon unground pepper
- 4 bay leaves
- 2 carrots
- 2 tbsp oil
- 1 garlic head
- 8 egg yolks
- 500 g sour cream
- salt, pepper, vinegar



### Preparation:

Cut the tripe in pieces as big as a palm, and boil it with the cow bone, the bay leaves, the unground pepper and a spoon of salt.

You have to make sure there is enough water in the pot, the tripe is difficult to boil, and even with a pressure pot it will take around 2 hours. After it is boiled, strain the water, remove the pepper and the bay leaves as well as the cow bone and let it cool. Cut it into stripes 8-10 cm long and 0.5 cm thick.

Put the water back on the fire and add the tripe stripes. Clean the carrots, grate them and fry them until they are soft, together with the 2 tbsp of oil. Add the carrots to the soup and boil for a couple of more minutes and then set the pot aside.

Prepare the garlic sauce: cut it in very thin slices and then smash it together with a few spoons of very cold water.

Add it to the soup. Add salt and pepper to your liking. Mix the egg yolks and the sour cream together, dilute it with a ladle of soup and add it to the soup pot.

Serve with vinegar and hot peppers (fresh or pickled).

## STUFFED CABBAGE ROLLS SERVED WITH POLENTA AND SOUR CREAM

One of the most beloved dishes in Romania and also a tasty specialty is the cabbage rolls (“sarmale”) which are made of ground meat (usually pork, but also beef, sheep, poultry, or even fish) mixed with rice and other ingredients and rolled into cabbage leaves. Cabbage rolls are sometimes served with polenta (“mămăligă”) and sour cream. Gourmets consider that cabbage rolls are much tastier if they are cooked in a cast iron cauldron over a small fire. Also, they need to sit for 2-3 days to gain a special flavor.

### Ingredients:

- cabbage leaves
- 2 heads green cabbage
- 2 x 850 g jars sour cream drained and juice reserved

### Stuffing:

- 750 g mix of pork and beef mince
- 250 g smoked streaky bacon or pancetta, finely chopped
- 60 ml sunflower oil
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 8 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 200 g uncooked rice (Basmati works well)
- 60 ml hot water
- 115 g tomato paste (optional)
- 30 ml fresh dill
- 10 ml fresh thyme
- 30 ml fresh flat-leaf parsley
- 5 ml paprika or Tabasco sauce (optional)
- salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

### Instructions:

Preheat the oven to 180°C.

For the cabbage, remove the large outer leaves from the cabbage heads, blanch in boiling water for two minutes and drain. Remove the hard central stems from the leaves, discard the stems and set the leaves aside. Remove the tough core from the remaining inner cabbage hearts. The core goes quite far down, so dig deep and remove as much as possible.

### Cooking liquid:

- juice of 2 lemons
- 1 l water (+ extra if needed), to cover the cabbage rolls
- 250 ml dry white wine
- 10 black peppercorns
- 4 bay leaves

### Between layers:

- 60 ml oil
- 500 g smoked streaky bacon or pancetta
- 4 large ripe tomatoes, sliced
- fresh dill

### Polenta:

- 2 l water
- salt, to
- 500 g taste polenta
- knob of butter
- 250 ml sour cream
- paprika, to serve
- 500 g feta cheese, crumbled, to serve
- 250 ml sour cream, to serve

Heat water in a large pan and place the cabbage heads, hole-side down, into the pan. Cook for two minutes. Then remove the cabbage heads and drain. Strip the cabbage leaves, one by one, from the core – they should come away easily once they have been cooked. Remove as many as you can and set aside.

Shred the remaining cabbage heart and mix with the drained sauerkraut. Set aside. For the stuffing, mix together the pork and beef mince and the bacon and set aside. Heat the oil in a pan, add the onion, garlic and rice and cook gently, about 10 minutes. Add hot water and simmer until the water has been absorbed. Set aside to cool. Add the meat, tomato paste (optional), dill, thyme, parsley, paprika, and seasoning. Use your hands to mix very well.

For the cooking liquid, combine the lemon juice, water, wine, black peppercorns and bay leaves. This liquid should be enough to completely cover the stuffed cabbage rolls. If it’s not enough, add more water.

To stuff the cabbage rolls, stretch open the larger cabbage leaves and add 15 ml of the stuffing to cover half of each leaf. Keep a distance of approximately two fingers between the edge of the leaf and the filling. Cover the filling with the edge from the base of the cabbage leaf. Fold the two side edges so that the filling is completely enveloped by the leaf, then roll. Repeat until all stuffing has been used.

Cover the base of a large casserole dish with 30 ml sunflower oil and add a layer of the drained sauerkraut. Top with a layer of streaky bacon and tomato slices. Add a layer of stuffed cabbage rolls. Repeat in this order until the casserole dish is almost filled to the top, finishing with a layer of sauerkraut. Sprinkle the dill on top of the final layer of sauerkraut and then pour over the cooking liquid. Finally, cover with the smaller cabbage leaves and the large outer leaves that were set aside.

Drizzle with 30 ml sunflower oil, cover with foil or a lid, place on the stove and simmer gently, about 10 minutes.

Put the casserole dish in the preheated oven and cook for 2 hours. Remove the foil or lid and cook for another hour, uncovered. Ensure that there is enough liquid, adding water if necessary. Remove the outer cabbage leaves and cook for another hour. Again, make sure there is enough liquid. Remove the stuffed cabbage rolls from the casserole dish and set aside until ready to serve.

For the polenta, add the water and salt to a pot. Slowly add the polenta over a medium heat until the mixture thickens. Remove from heat and stir in the butter and sour cream. Serve hot. Preheat bowls and fill with the cooked cabbage rolls topped with a little paprika and crumbled feta cheese. Serve with polenta and sour cream.