



Share Your Foodways



Holubtsi (Ukrainian Stuffed Cabbage Leaves)

by Roman V Kovbasniuk

Ingredients

- large head of cabbage
- 2 cups of rice
- 1 medium white onion
- 1 slice portobella mushroom
- 1 peeled adult carrot
- 1 pound of meatloaf mix (beef, pork, veal)
- 4-5 tablespoons of cooking oil
- Salt and pepper to season (I personally use Vegeta seasoning)
- 1 quart (32 oz) of vegetable broth

Note: this recipe can be adapted to fit any diet by omitting meat and/or changing the vegetables included. Use your imagination!

Directions

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil. The pot should be large enough to hold the entire cabbage head with room at the top.
2. Wash and rinse the rice; add to a small pot with four cups of water (the water should be only 1 finger knuckle deep). Cook on high heat until the water boils, and continue to cook for one minute after the water boils. Remove from heat.
3. Place the cabbage on a sturdy surface and carefully remove the core. Be careful not to cut yourself! Place the cored cabbage into the pot of boiling water, core side up. (Water should not spill over the top of the pot.) Ladle some water into the cored-out hole in the cabbage, this will make removing the leaves easier. Boil for approximately 10 minutes or until the leaves begin to pull away from the center.
4. Chop the onion, mushroom, and carrot finely. Heat up a large pan, add 4-5 tablespoons of cooking oil, then add the onion and cook it until it is tender and begins to look translucent. Add the finely chopped mushroom and meat. Mix well. Continue to stir until all the meat is browned but not fully cooked. Add the carrot, stir, and remove from the heat.

5. Mix the meat and vegetable mixture with the rice. Season to taste with salt and pepper or a seasoning of your choosing. Fold everything together, blending well. Set aside to cool.
6. Carefully remove the cabbage from the pot with a large fork. Be sure to turn the head upside down to drain the hot water. The cabbage is ready if the first layer of leaves has started to peel from the cabbage. Grabbing each leaf by its thick center vein, gently pull each cabbage leaf away from the head. Save any torn leaves or small pieces that pull away.
7. Preheat oven to 400°F. Assembly! Coat the bottom and sides of a large baking pot with cooking oil. Roll the holubtsi into “burritos”: take a leaf that is not torn, and lay it flat. Use a sharp knife to slice through the thick vein at the base of the leaf. Take 1-2 spoonfuls of the rice and meat mix and place it in the center of the leaf. **DO NOT OVERFILL!** Fold over the side nearest you until it just covers the mixture. Next fold over both the right and left sides. Now roll away from you neatly until you’ve reached the edge. After rolling, congratulate yourself for rolling your first Holubets! Repeat with the rest of the mixture and leaves, lining the finished rolls neatly in the baking pot.
8. Line the finished rolls neatly in the baking pot, filling as much space as possible. Take any torn leaves to create a layer of leaves between the first and second layers of rolls. Continue layering the finished rolls into the pot, creating neat rows of Holubtsi. Cover the second layer of rolls with torn or extra leaves. Fill any open space on the top layer with any remaining cabbage leaves. Finish by pouring vegetable broth into the pot; the broth should reach just below the top of the second layer of Holubtsi, so that both layers can infuse with all of the flavors of the stuffing and seasoning.
9. Cover the pot and place in the oven; bake for 1 hour. Serve warm.

Optional: You may top the finished Holubtsi with sour cream or any topping of your choice.



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This episode of Share Your Foodways was produced in collaboration with the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress as part of their Homegrown Foodways in Central New Jersey series. You can watch the video with Spanish subtitles at the QR code link above, or find the original video on the American Folklife Center’s blog **Folklife Today**.

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