

CUL-MAR-Skills



” MARitime Soft Skills for Onboard
Healthy Nutrition and CULinary
Arts in Seagoing Services”



CPMR
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INTRODUCTION

The project "Maritime Soft Skills for Onboard Healthy Nutrition and Culinary Arts in Seagoing Services – CUL-MAR-Skills," (<https://www.anmb.ro/cul-mar-skills/>) has been implemented during November 2024-November 2025, under the Erasmus+ program, key action KA220-VET - Cooperation partnerships in VET, project no. 2023-1-RO01-KA220-VET-000156711, by the Naval Academy "Mircea cel Bătrân" (coordinator) in partnership with the Piri Reis University (Türkiye), Naval Academy "Nikola Y. Vaptsarov" (Bulgaria), University of the Aegean (Greece), and Conference Des Regions Peripheriques Maritimes (France).

The project main objectives were focused on developing a professional curriculum in the field of maritime nutrition and the logistics of victualling services for crews onboard maritime ships.

The present cooking manual is a result of the team project efforts within work package 4 and has mainly aimed to comprehend a collection of various traditional recipes from Black Sea and Mediterranean maritime areas, being assigned as origin to the larger pool of European maritime countries and not to a specific country, with the major objective of promoting the maritime healthy nutrition, by suggesting numerous dishes not only with cooking instructions, but also with historical considerations, with caloric specifications and further recommendations to enrich the onboard cooking practices for seafarers.



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FISH & SEAFOOD



AVGOTARAHO TOSSED IN PASTA

1. Origin and History

Avgotaraho (Greek: αυγοτάραχο) is a delicacy made from grey mullet roe that is salted, cured, and sealed in beeswax. It is Greece's version of bottarga, known across the Mediterranean in similar forms.

In classical Greece, various forms of salted and dried fish products were widely consumed. While not always described exactly as modern avgotaraho, cured roe was part of the Greek artisanal seafood tradition. The Greek diet historically emphasized:

fish from lagoon and coastal environments
simple preservation methods (salt-drying, smoking, wax sealing)

2. Cultural Aspects

Avgotaraho is deeply tied to the Mesolongi–Aitoliko lagoon.

For locals, it represents:

- the rhythm of lagoon fishing
- generations of artisanal craftsmanship
- pride in a unique regional product
- Families involved in mullet-roe curing often trace the craft back many decades.

Avgotaraho symbolizes:

- Greek coastal heritage
- the blending of ancient preservation techniques with local environment
- minimalist Mediterranean gastronomy (few ingredients, bold flavor)

It represents a product that changed little over thousands of years, preserved—literally and figuratively—through tradition.

- stressed and emphasized freshness — key values in Roman gastronomy.



3. Ingredients

- 200 g (7 oz) spaghetti or linguine
- 2–3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 small garlic clove, lightly crushed (optional)
- Zest of 1 lemon
- Juice of 1/2 lemon
- 20–30 g Greek avgotaraho (semi-dried roe), grated or shaved
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1–2 tbsp chopped fresh parsley or dill (optional)
- A pinch of chili flakes (optional)

4. Preparation

Cook the pasta

- Bring a pot of well-salted water to a boil.
- Cook pasta until al dente.
- Reserve 1/2 cup pasta water, then drain.

Prepare the dressing

In a large pan (off the heat), place:

- olive oil
- lemon zest and a squeeze of lemon juice
- crushed garlic (just for scent — remove before tossing if you prefer)
- Add a splash of the hot pasta water to warm and emulsify the sauce.

Toss the pasta

- Add the drained pasta to the pan.
- Toss until it becomes glossy, adding a little more pasta water if needed.
- Remove the garlic clove.
- Off the heat, mix in half of the avgotaraho so it melts into the pasta.

Finish & serve

- Plate the pasta.
- Sprinkle the remaining avgotaraho on top (shaving works beautifully).
- Add black pepper, fresh herbs, and chili flakes if using.
- Add an optional final drizzle of olive oil.

5. Nutritional Values

Per portion serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: 520-560 kcal
- Protein: 20-24g
- Fat: 22g
- Saturated Fat: 4g
- Carbs: 70-75g
- Sugar: 2g
- Fiber: 3g
- Sodium: 900-1200mg

Nutritional profile:

Omega-3 fatty acids: ~600–900 mg

High-quality protein

Low sugars

Mediterranean-style healthy fats

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

Maritime crews face unique challenges:

- Long work hours
- Limited space and storage
- Irregular meal schedules
- Physical and mental fatigue
- Multi-national crew food preferences

A well-planned nutrition program supports alertness, safety, performance, morale, and long-term health.



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BAKED FISH AND VEGETABLES

1. Origin and History

- Baking whole fish with vegetables is one of the oldest cooking traditions in the Mediterranean, dating back thousands of years. Early fishing communities in Greece, Italy, and along the Levantine coast cooked their daily catch using simple, local ingredients — olive oil, herbs, and seasonal vegetables.
- Ancient Greece (5th century BCE): Fish was considered the most prized food among the wealthy. Recipes from writers like Archestratus mention fish baked with olive oil, herbs, and onions — precursors of the modern “baked fish with vegetables.”
- Roman Empire: Romans refined the technique, baking fish in clay or stone ovens with olive oil, leeks, garlic, and wine, often served with garden vegetables. This method preserved moisture and emphasized freshness — key values in Roman gastronomy.



2. Cultural Aspects

- Fish has always symbolized life, sustenance, and renewal for maritime cultures. From the Aegean islands to the Iberian coast, coastal families and sailors relied on daily catches — cooked simply, often with what they had on hand: olive oil, vegetables, and herbs.
- Greek culture: Psari sto fourno (fish baked in the oven) reflects the sea's bounty and the philosophy of “filoxenia” — hospitality through shared, home-cooked meals.
- Italian culture: Pesce al forno is a family Sunday meal, highlighting freshness, balance, and seasonal produce.
- Spanish and North African traditions: Baked fish (dorada al horno, samak bil forn) symbolizes coastal identity and communal eating.

3. Ingredients

- 2 tomatoes
- 2 potatoes, medium
- 1 onion
- 1 fennel bulb
- 2 lemon
- gilthead seabreams, scaled and gutted
- salt
- pepper
- 7 sprig(s) thyme, finely copped
- 170 g olive oil
- star anises
- 100 g white wine
- 7 sprig(s) rosemary

4. Preparation

- Preheat oven to 180°C (350° F) Fan.
- Peel the potatoes and cut into thin slices. Cut the tomato, onion and finochio into thin rounds. Cut the lemons into thin slices.
- Transfer the potatoes, onions and finochio to a bowl. Drizzle with some olive oil and season with salt, pepper and some fresh thyme. Toss to coat.
- Spread the vegetable mixture onto the bottom of a baking pan 30x40 cm.
- Season the fish with salt and pepper and drizzle with some olive oil. Fill the belly cavity with lemon slices and some fresh rosemary.
- Place the fish over the layer of vegetables in the baking pan. Cover with 3 tomato slices. Add the wine, olive oil and spices.
- Bake for 50-60 minutes.
- Remove from oven and serve.

5. Nutritional Values

Per portion serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: 456 kcal
- Protein: 31 g
- Fat: 25g
- Saturated Fat: 3g
- Carbs: 21g
- Sugar: 6.2g
- Fiber: 4.1g
- Sodium: 0.59g

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

Protein Source

- Use lean white fish (e.g., sea bream, cod, haddock, or tilapia).
- Rich in omega-3 fatty acids — essential for cardiovascular and cognitive health.
- Substitute with frozen fillets if fresh supply unavailable.

Vegetable Variety

- Include potatoes, onions, tomatoes, carrots, and zucchini for balanced micronutrients.
- Vegetables add fiber, vitamins, and hydration — important for seafarers in warm climates.

Healthy Fats

- Use olive oil as the primary fat — aligns with Mediterranean dietary guidelines.
- Avoid heavy butter or cream sauces.

Conclusion:

Baked Fish and Vegetables is one of the most practical, nutritious, and culturally adaptable dishes for maritime catering.



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BAKED FISH WITH TOMATO, GARLIC, AND ONION

PLACHIE DE PEŞTE

1. Origin and History

The Baked Fish with Tomato, Garlic, and Onion - Plachie is a dish with Byzantine and Balkan roots, related to Turkish and Greek fish stews. In Romania, it was adapted to local freshwater fish (carp, catfish, zander) and became a staple of religious fasting meals, especially in Dobrogea and Moldova.

The Romanian plachie uses caramelized onions, garlic, and tomatoes, sometimes with white wine, creating a sweet-sour, slow-baked sauce. It's traditionally served cold or warm, often with mămăligă.



2. Cultural Aspects

The Baked Fish with Tomato, Garlic, and Onion - Plachie is widely associated with Orthodox fasts that allow fish, such as Annunciation (Buna Vestire) or Palm Sunday. In coastal and river regions, it is a common Sunday dish. Unlike fried fish, it emphasizes flavor layering and is seen as healthier and more elegant.

3. Ingredients (for 4 servings)

- 800 g fish fillets or steaks (carp, trout, catfish)
- 3 onions, sliced
- 4–5 garlic cloves, sliced
- 300 ml tomato passata or diced tomatoes
- 1 bay leaf
- 100 ml white wine (optional)
- 50 ml oil
- Salt and pepper
- 1 tbsp sugar (optional)
- 1 tbsp vinegar or lemon juice
- Fresh parsley
- Optional: chili flakes or olives

For serving:

- Mămăligă or rice
- Lemon wedges

4. Preparation

Prepare the fish

1. If using steaks, score the skin to avoid curling.
2. Salt lightly and set aside 15–20 minutes. Pat dry.

Prepare the sauce

1. In a deep pan, sauté onions in oil until soft and lightly golden (10–15 min).
2. Add garlic, tomato passata, bay leaf, wine, vinegar, and sugar.
3. Simmer 10 minutes. Season with salt and pepper.

Bake

1. Preheat oven to 180°C.
2. In a baking dish, lay the fish. Cover with tomato-onion sauce.
3. Bake uncovered for 30–35 minutes, basting once or twice.
4. Garnish with parsley. Serve warm or cold with lemon.

5. Nutritional Values (per serving with polenta)

- Calories: ~480 kcal
- Protein: ~36 g
- Fat: ~24 g
- Carbohydrates: ~28 g
- Omega-3: high (if using fatty fish like carp)
- Salt: ~1.3 g

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition

- Use frozen fish fillets for consistency and cost efficiency.
- Can be prepared in advance and served cold, increasing flexibility.
- Tomato and garlic base is rich in antioxidants and highly palatable.
- Serve with polenta, boiled potatoes, or whole grains for balance.
- Lean, easily digestible — great for hospital, maritime, or summer menus.

Conclusion

The Baked Fish with Tomato, Garlic, and Onion - Plachie blends the freshness of fish with the depth of a sweet-tangy tomato-garlic sauce. A dish of subtle elegance and nutritional value, it is one of Romania's best examples of simple, healthy, and traditional cuisine.



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BOURDETTO

Bourdetto (also spelled Bourdetto or Burdetto) is a traditional spicy fish stew from Corfu, Greece, with Venetian roots. It's known for its deep red color, bold peppery heat, and simple seasoning—the flavor comes mainly from sweet and hot paprika, garlic, and lemon.

1. Origin and History

Bourdetto (Bourdetto, Burdetto) comes from Corfu, a Greek island in the Ionian Sea.

Its name is derived from the Venetian word “brodetto”, which means “broth” or “stew”. Venice ruled Corfu from the 14th century until the late 18th century, and during that time they introduced many culinary traditions, including fish stews.

The dish shows Venetian influence but adapted to local Greek ingredients—primarily fresh fish from the Ionian Sea.

Venetian Rule (1386–1797)

The Venetians brought their cuisine, especially seafood stews like brodetto, which was popular in Northern Italy.

Corfiots adapted it using local fish and Mediterranean spices, giving it its characteristic bold, peppery flavor.

Evolution in Corfu

Original Venetian versions used tomatoes or wine; the traditional Corfiot Bourdetto uses no tomatoes, relying instead on paprika for color and flavor.

It became a staple dish for fishermen, easy to cook after a day at sea.



2. Cultural Aspects

Bourdetto isn't just a dish—it's a cultural emblem of Corfu. Its preparation, consumption, and traditions around it reflect the island's history, social life, and identity.

3. Ingredients

1 kg firm white fish, cut into large pieces

- 2–3 tbsp sweet paprika
- ½–1 tsp hot paprika or cayenne (adjust to heat level)
- 3–4 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 1 large onion, sliced (optional—some versions omit it)
- Juice of 1–2 lemons
- Olive oil
- Salt & pepper
- 1–2 cups water or fish stock

4. Preparation

Sauté aromatics

Heat olive oil in a pot, add the onion (if using) and garlic, and cook until soft but not browned.

Add paprika

Stir in the sweet and hot paprika. Allow it to bloom in the oil for 20–30 seconds.

Add liquid Pour in water or fish stock and bring to a simmer.

Add the fish

Place the fish pieces gently into the pot. Season with salt and pepper.

Simmer gently

Let the fish cook on low heat for 15–20 minutes without stirring (to avoid breaking the fish).

Finish with lemon

Add lemon juice at the end, adjusting to taste.

Serve traditionally served with crusty bread or boiled potatoes.

5. Nutritional Values

Per portion serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: 496kcal
- Protein: 26g
- Fat: 11g
- Saturated Fat: 5.7g
- Carbs: 69g
- Sugar: 16g
- Fiber: 7.9g
- Sodium: 1.2g

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

Ensuring proper nutrition onboard ships is essential for crew health, energy, and overall performance during long voyages.



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DANUBE DELTA CREAMY FISH SOUP

STORCEAG

1. Origin and History

A specialty from the Danube Delta village of Sfântu Gheorghe, the Delta Creamy Fish Soup is made with sturgeon and a creamy egg-lemon sauce. With Lipovan roots, it's unique for its silky texture and mild acidity, standing apart from most Romanian soups.

2. Cultural Aspects

Once a festive dish due to the rarity of sturgeon, it now features in regional gourmet menus. Delta Creamy Fish Soup symbolizes refined Delta cuisine and local biodiversity. Its creamy broth is prized for elegance and flavor.



3.3. Ingredients

- 500 g sturgeon (or firm white fish)
- 1 onion, 1 carrot, 1 parsnip, 1 celery stalk, 2–3 potatoes
- 2 egg yolks
- 100 ml cream
- 2 tbsp lemon juice
- Salt, pepper
- Dill or parsley

4. Preparation

1. Simmer diced vegetables and potatoes until soft.
2. Add fish chunks, simmer gently for 10–12 min.
3. Mix yolks and cream. Temper with hot broth.
4. Stir into pot without boiling.
5. Add lemon, season, and garnish with herbs.
6. Serve with toast or polenta.

5. Nutritional Values (per ~350 ml bowl)

- Calories: ~340 kcal
- Protein: ~28 g
- Fat: ~18 g
- Carbohydrates: ~14 g
- Salt: ~1.3 g

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition

- Luxury protein for high-nutrition planning.
- Adapt with frozen fish or powdered cream.
- Elegant soup for morale-boosting meals or officer menus.
- Offers satiety with low glycemic load.
- Avoids sourness—good for sensitive stomachs.

Conclusion

Delta Creamy Fish Soup merges elegance with sustenance—a creamy, protein-rich soup well-suited for institutional menus with a cultural or celebratory dimension.



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FISHERMAN'S SOUR FISH SOUP

CIORBĂ DE PEŞTE

1. Origin and History

Originating in the Danube Delta, this sour fish soup traditionally uses a mix of freshwater fish (carp, perch, catfish). Its flavor base comes from fish heads, bones, and root vegetables, with sourness from borş or vinegar. It reflects the culinary resourcefulness of Delta fishermen.

2. Cultural Aspects

A vital dish in Delta communities, especially among Lipovan Russians. Often cooked in large kettles outdoors, it's traditionally followed by fried fish and garlic sauce. Its preparation is ritualized and varies by household or ethnicity.



3. Ingredients

- 1 kg assorted freshwater fish (carp, perch, catfish)
- 2 onions, 2 carrots, 1 bell pepper, 2 tomatoes, 2 potatoes
- 2–3 L water
- 500 ml borş or vinegar
- Salt, pepper
- Parsley and lovage

4. Preparation

1. Boil vegetables in water until soft.
2. Add fish heads and bones; simmer 20 minutes.
3. Strain and return broth to pot. Add fish fillets for 10–12 minutes.
4. Boil borş separately and add to soup.
5. Adjust seasoning. Garnish with herbs.
6. Serve with polenta and garlic sauce.

5. Nutritional Values (per ~400 ml serving)

- Calories: ~280 kcal
- Protein: ~30 g
- Fat: ~10 g
- Carbohydrates: ~12 g
- Salt: ~1.5 g

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition

- Excellent lean protein source with omega-3s.
- Can use frozen fish or canned broth.
- Dehydrated vegetables maintain flavor.
- Low-fat, suitable for heart-healthy menus.
- Highly reheatable; pair with fiber-rich polenta.

Conclusion

The Fisherman's Sour Fish Soup balances cultural heritage with modern lean protein needs—ideal for coastal operations or healthy meal cycles.



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MIRMIZELI

Mirmizeli (Μίρμιζελι) is a traditional dish from Kalymnos, one of the Dodecanese islands in Greece. Its origin and history are deeply tied to the island's culture, geography, and maritime lifestyle.

1. Origin and History

Kalymnos Heritage: Kalymnos is historically known for sponge diving, fishing, and small-scale agriculture. The local cuisine reflects these resources: seafood, preserved fish, legumes, and simple vegetables. Name: "Mirmizeli" likely derives from a local dialect or colloquial adaptation of words related to mixing or mashing ingredients. It's essentially a mixed salad with vegetables, bread/paximadi, cheese, and sometimes fish.

Purpose: Traditionally, it was a practical, hearty dish for fishermen and islanders, combining preserved ingredients (paximadi, salted fish, cheese) with fresh vegetables. It could be eaten at sea or at home, providing sustenance and flavor from limited resources.



2. Cultural Aspects

- Mirmizeli is described as "the Kalymnian Greek salad" — a rustic, islandstyle salad.
- It typically includes barley rusks ("kritharokouloura" / "paximadia" of the island), fresh vegetables (tomatoes, cucumber or eggplant), olives, preserved fish (like sardines or mackerel), local cheese (often Kopanisti), olive oil and herbs (oregano/"throumbi").
- Because of its ingredients and style, Mirmizeli reflects the seafaring and selfsufficient heritage of Kalymnos: simple, hardy, flavourful — foods that make sense for islanders and fishermen, including historic spongedivers and sailor

3. Ingredients

- 2–4 medium tomatoes
- 1 cucumber, sliced or diced
- 1 medium eggplant, cut into cubes
- 1 barley rusk or 1–2 small paximadia (traditional hard bread), broken into pieces
- 100–200 g kopanisti cheese (or spicy feta/xiynomyzithra)
- 4–6 fillets of salted fish (e.g., salted mackerel, sardine, or anchovy)
- 5–8 black olives (optional)
- Olive oil
- Dried herbs (oregano, thyme, or savory) – optional

4. Preparation

Prepare the Eggplant

Cut the eggplant into small cubes.

Option A (traditional): Fry lightly in olive oil until soft.

Option B (lighter): Roast or grill in the oven until tender.

Prepare the Rusk / Paximadi

Break the rusk into small chunks.

Optional: sprinkle lightly with water or olive oil to soften it.

Mix half of the cheese into the rusk for flavor absorption.

Prepare Vegetables

Dice tomatoes and cucumber into bite-size pieces.

If you like, grate one tomato to mix with the rusk for extra moisture and flavor.

Assemble the Salad

In a large bowl, combine softened rusk + grated tomato + half of the cheese + a drizzle of olive oil. Mix well so the rusk absorbs moisture.

Add the rest of the ingredients: diced vegetables, roasted/fried eggplant, olives, and salted fish fillets.

Finish & Season

Sprinkle remaining kopanisti on top.

Drizzle with more olive oil.

Add dried herbs like oregano or thyme if desired.

Mix gently, being careful not to break up the fish too much.

Serve

Serve fresh and slightly chilled.

Perfect as a main summer dish or as a side with grilled fish or meat.

5. Nutritional Values

Per portion serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: 250-350kcal
- Protein: 15g
- Fat: 20g
- Saturated Fat: 7g
- Carbs: 30g
- Sugar: 8g
- Fiber: 4-6g
- Sodium: 600-900mg (depends on salted fish and cheese)

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

When it comes to onboard nutrition for maritime ships, especially for long voyages where access to fresh food is limited, planning meals like Mirmizeli can be very effective. Crew members often perform physically demanding tasks. Meals should provide adequate calories from carbohydrates, protein, and healthy fats.



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RIBNIK

1. Origin and history

Ribnik, a traditional Bulgarian fish dish, is closely tied to the celebration of Nikulden (Saint Nicholas Day) on December 6th. Its origin is rooted in the reverence for St. Nicholas, the patron saint of sailors, fishermen, and bankers. The dish is a festive centerpiece that holds deep cultural and spiritual significance, particularly for families and communities near seas, rivers, and lakes. The practice of eating carp (sharan) on Nikulden is based on a folktale about Saint Nicholas. According to one story, a violent storm broke out at sea, cracking a ship's hull. To save the vessel and its crew, St. Nicholas miraculously plugged the hole with a live carp he pulled from the sea. This act solidified the carp's status as the saint's servant and a sacred offering. Because of this legend, carp is the traditional fish served on Nikulden. In some regions, the dish is prepared as ribnik, where the carp is stuffed with a filling of walnuts, rice, and herbs, then completely wrapped in a dough crust and baked.

2. Cultural aspects

As a dish deeply connected to Nikulden (St. Nicholas Day), ribnik is rich with cultural significance in Bulgaria. The traditions surrounding its preparation and consumption are tied to religious beliefs, folklore, family gatherings, and maritime life. Ribnik is the centerpiece of the Nikulden feast, celebrated on December 6th. The preparation of this meal is an act of reverence for St. Nicholas, the patron saint of sailors, fishermen, merchants, and bankers. The carp (sharan) used in ribnik is considered a sacred offering to St. Nicholas. The belief that St. Nicholas once used a carp to patch a damaged ship's hull has imbued the fish with a special status in Bulgarian tradition. Nikulden is a major family holiday where relatives and friends gather to share the festive meal. A tradition of open hospitality dictates that the door of the host's house is left open for guests. The traditions surrounding ribnik showcase the blend of Orthodox Christian beliefs with folk customs, celebrating both faith and the importance of family, prosperity, and the natural world.

3. Ingredients

For the carp

- 1 whole carp, approximately 1–1.5 kg (2–3 lbs), cleaned and scaled
- 1–2 teaspoons salt

For the stuffing

- Black pepper, to taste
- 1 cup long-grain rice
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 1 cup walnuts, chopped
- 1 cup parsley, finely chopped
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika (sweet)
- 1/4 cup cooking oil
- Salt and pepper, to taste

For the dough

- Approximately 500 g (1 lb) all-purpose flour
- 1 cube (approx. 25 g) fresh yeast or 1 packet (7 g) active dry yeast
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 cup lukewarm water
- Extra oil for brushing

4. Preparation

1. Ensure the carp is thoroughly cleaned and scaled. Make sure to remove any gills or fins. Rub the inside and outside of the fish generously with salt and pepper.
2. In a pan, heat the oil over medium heat. Sauté the chopped onion until it is soft and translucent.
3. Add the rice to the pan and stir for a few minutes until it becomes transparent. Pour in 1 cup of hot water and stir. Reduce the heat, cover the pan, and let the rice absorb the water completely.
4. Once the rice is cooked, remove it from the heat. Stir in the chopped walnuts, fresh parsley, paprika,
5. In a small bowl, dissolve the yeast and sugar in the lukewarm water. Let it sit for 5–10 minutes until it becomes frothy.
6. In a large bowl, combine the flour and salt. Create a well in the center and pour in the activated yeast mixture. Add more lukewarm water as needed and knead the dough until it is soft, smooth, and elastic. Cover the bowl with a clean cloth and let the dough rise in a warm place for about 30 minutes.
7. Fill the carp with the prepared stuffing. If necessary, you can use a kitchen thread to sew the belly closed to keep the filling secure.
8. Divide the dough into two pieces. Roll out one piece into a thick, flat sheet large enough to cover the bottom of your baking dish.
9. Place the dough in an oiled baking dish. Place the stuffed carp on top.
10. Roll out the second piece of dough and drape it over the carp, completely enclosing it. Press the edges of the dough together to seal.
11. You can decorate the top of the dough to look like a carp by drawing scales with a knife or adding a head and tail.
12. Brush the dough with oil and bake the fish in a moderately hot oven (around 180°C or 350°F) for about two hours, or until the dough is golden brown and the fish is cooked through.
13. Serve the ribnik warm, and enjoy this symbolic and delicious festive meal.

5. Nutritional Values

Per ~100 g serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: ~ 170-250 kcal
- Protein: ~ 10-15 g
- Fat: ~ 10-18 g
- Carbohydrates: ~ 15-20 g



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6. Nutritional profile:

- Ribnik is a calorie-dense dish that combines protein from the fish, carbohydrates from the rice and dough, and healthy fats from the walnuts. This provides sustained energy for mariners who perform physically demanding work.
- The combination of savory carp, aromatic stuffing, and a baked dough crust is a substantial and satisfying meal that can offer a welcome change from standard ship fare.
- Nutrient-dense: Carp is a good source of protein, vitamin D, and B12. Walnuts add essential omega-3 fatty acids, magnesium, and antioxidants. The rice provides carbohydrates for energy.

7. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

- Ingredient sourcing: A ship's cook would likely use frozen or vacuum-sealed carp, which maintains its quality over long periods. Dried herbs can replace fresh parsley, and nuts and rice are long-lasting pantry staples.
- Cooking in a galley: While the traditional recipe calls for baking, a ship's oven is well-suited for this. For safety during rough seas, a cook would need to use a deep baking dish and secure it properly.
- Simplified dough: For efficiency in a ship's galley, the dough recipe can be simplified or replaced with a pre-made dough.
- Storage and serving: Ribnik is a complete meal that can be prepared in one dish and served over several days, making it convenient for large crews and minimizing prep work.
- Regional variations: The recipe can be adapted to other types of fish if carp is not available, maintaining the spirit of the dish even with alternative ingredients.

Conclusion:

Ribnik, the traditional Bulgarian dish of carp baked in dough, can be a highly suitable and beneficial meal for mariners, with some adaptations for a ship's galley. While it holds special significance for the feast of St. Nicholas (the patron saint of sailors), its ingredients and preparation methods make it a practical and morale-boosting meal for life at sea.



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RISOTTO WITH CLAMS

1. Origin and History

Risotto with Clams (Risotto alle Vongole) has its roots in Italian coastal cuisine, particularly in Veneto, Campania, and the southern regions like Naples and Sicily, where fresh seafood is abundant.

Medieval Times: Rice was introduced to northern Italy around the 14th century, primarily in Lombardy and Piedmont, becoming a staple for northern dishes.

Renaissance: Rice dishes like risotto evolved with local ingredients. Coastal communities experimented with seafood, creating early forms of risotto alle vongole.

20th Century: The dish spread beyond local regions and became part of Italian culinary identity internationally, especially in restaurants serving “seafood risotto”.



2. Cultural Aspects

Here's a focused look at the cultural aspects of Risotto alle Vongole—how it fits into Italian life, traditions, and dining habits:

1. Reflection of Italian Culinary Philosophy

Simplicity and Freshness: Italian cuisine values minimalism—fresh clams, good-quality rice, olive oil, and a touch of wine or garlic. The flavor comes from the ingredients themselves, not heavy sauces.

Seasonality: Traditionally, clams are used when in season (spring to early summer in many regions), reflecting the Italian respect for seasonal eating.

2. Regional Identity

Northern Italy (Veneto, Lombardy): Focus on creamy risotto texture, often using butter and cheese sparingly. In coastal areas near Venice, seafood risottos are common.

Southern Italy (Campania, Naples, Sicily): Emphasis on olive oil, fresh herbs like parsley, and bright flavors. Sometimes tomatoes are lightly incorporated.

These differences show regional pride and how geography influences Italian cuisine.

3. Ingredients (Serves 4)

For the clams:

- 1 kg (2.2 lbs) fresh clams (preferably small, like littleneck or Manila)
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 small bunch of parsley, finely chopped
- ½ cup dry white wine
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- Salt to taste

For the risotto:

- 320 g (1 ½ cups) Arborio or Carnaroli rice
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 L (4 cups) fish or vegetable stock, kept warm
- 3 tbsp olive oil or unsalted butter
- ½ cup dry white wine
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- Fresh parsley, chopped, for garnish
- Lemon wedges, optional

4. Preparation

Prepare the clams

Rinse clams thoroughly and soak in cold salted water for 20–30 minutes to remove sand.

Heat 2 tbsp olive oil in a large pan over medium heat. Add crushed garlic and sauté briefly until fragrant.

Add the clams and pour in ½ cup white wine. Cover the pan and cook for 5–7 minutes, shaking occasionally, until clams open.

Discard any clams that do not open. Remove clams from the pan, reserving the cooking liquid. Chop some clams roughly if desired; leave some whole for garnish.

Make the risotto

In a large pan, heat 3 tbsp olive oil or butter. Sauté chopped onion (and garlic if using) over medium heat until translucent.

Add the rice and toast for 1–2 minutes until the edges become translucent.

Pour in ½ cup white wine and cook until mostly absorbed.

Add warm stock, one ladle at a time, stirring constantly. Wait until the liquid is mostly absorbed before adding the next ladle. This should take about 18–20 minutes.

About 5 minutes before the rice is done, stir in the reserved clam cooking liquid (strained) for extra flavor.

When the rice is al dente and creamy, gently fold in the clams. Adjust seasoning with salt and pepper.

Serve

Serve immediately, garnished with chopped parsley and a drizzle of olive oil or a squeeze of lemon.

For an extra touch, you can grate a tiny bit of lemon zest over the top.



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5. Nutritional Values

Per portion serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: 350-400kcal
- Protein: 20g
- Fat: 12g
- Saturated Fat: 3g
- Carbs: 55g
- Sugar: 3g
- Fiber: 2-3g
- Sodium: 500-700mg (varies with added salt and clam brine)

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

Here's a comprehensive guide for onboard nutrition on maritime ships, particularly relevant for dishes like risotto with clams and other meals for seafarers. Shipboard nutrition has unique challenges due to long voyages, limited fresh supplies, and physically demanding work.

Adequate Energy Intake

Crew often performs physically demanding tasks, requiring 2,500–3,500 kcal/day depending on activity level.

Meals should include complex carbohydrates (rice, pasta, whole grains) for sustained energy.

Protein for Muscle Maintenance

Fish, seafood, poultry, legumes, eggs, and dairy help maintain muscle mass and recovery.

Clams and other seafood are excellent lean protein sources.

Healthy Fats

Use olive oil, vegetable oils, nuts, and fatty fish.

Avoid excessive saturated and trans fats, which are common in pre-packaged foods.

Micronutrient Sufficiency

Ensure vitamins and minerals for immune function and bone health.

Vitamin C (fruits/vegetables), iron (red meat, seafood), iodine (seafood) are particularly important at sea.

Hydration

Encourage 2–3 liters of water daily.

Limit sugary drinks, as dehydration can exacerbate fatigue.



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TSATSA

1. Origin and History

Odesa-style Tsatsa is a traditional, simple dish of small, deep-fried Black Sea fish (like sprat, anchovy, or ferina), coated in seasoned cornmeal or flour for crispiness and often served with lemon as a popular appetizer or street food, perfect with beer. The key is to get a golden, crispy exterior while keeping the tender fish inside, often eaten whole, bones and all, as a casual snack.

2. Cultural Aspects

Tsatsa is a reflection of regional flavor profiles. Serving Tsatsa is often a way for families to express culinary skill, since a well-balanced paste requires the right mix of heat, acidity, and aroma.



3. Ingredients

- 5–6 fresh red chili peppers (or a mix of red and green for milder spice)
- 2–3 cloves garlic
- 1 small onion
- 1 teaspoon ginger (optional)
- 2 tablespoons palm oil or vegetable oil
- Salt to taste
- 1 teaspoon ground crayfish or shrimp powder (optional, for traditional flavor)
- 1–2 tablespoons lemon juice or vinegar

4. Preparation

Prepare the ingredients: Wash the peppers and remove the stems. Peel the garlic and chop the onion.

Blend: In a blender or mortar and pestle, combine the peppers, garlic, onion, and ginger. Blend until smooth.

Cook: Heat the oil in a pan over medium heat. Pour in the blended mixture and fry for 5–10 minutes, stirring often. The paste should thicken slightly and the raw smell should disappear.

Season: Add salt, ground crayfish (if using), and lemon juice or vinegar. Stir well and cook for another 2–3 minutes.

Cool and store: Let it cool and transfer to a clean jar. It can be stored in the fridge for up to 2 weeks.

Serving: Tsatsa is often used as a condiment for rice, grilled fish, meats, or as a spicy flavor base in soups and stews.

5. Nutritional Values

Per portion serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: 60-90kcal
- Protein: 2g
- Fat: 8g
- Saturated Fat: 3g
- Carbs: 5g
- Sugar: 2g
- Fiber: 2g
- Sodium: 100-250mg

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

Crew members need sufficient calories for physically demanding tasks, typically 2,500–3,500 kcal/day, depending on workload and body size.

Special Considerations

Shelf-Life Management

Focus on non-perishable or long-shelf-life foods (canned, vacuum-packed, frozen).

Use proper cold storage to maintain nutrient content.

Balanced Meal Planning

Aim for 3 main meals 1–2 snacks per day.

Include a mix of macronutrients at each meal to sustain energy levels.

Spices and Flavor

Use spices like Tzatsa or other condiments to improve palatability, which encourages adequate intake.

Supplements

Consider vitamin D, especially in long voyages with limited sunlight exposure.

Multivitamins may help cover gaps in fresh produce.

Preventing Illness

Minimize high-sodium and high-fat foods to reduce cardiovascular risk.

Ensure safe food handling to prevent foodborne illness.



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MEAT & POULTRY



BAKED WHITE BEANS WITH SAUSAGES

IAHNIE DE FASOLE CU CÂRNAȚI

1. Origin and History

This hearty stew is Romania's answer to baked beans — iahnie refers to the slow cooking of beans in aromatic sauces, typically served with smoked or grilled sausage. Closely linked to the military and worker's canteen menus, it remains a symbol of Romanian endurance.

2. Cultural Aspects

Frequently served on December 1st (National Day) and during winter holidays, often free in public squares. It's a winter staple, known for its satiety, protein content, and affordability.



3. Ingredients (6 servings)

- 500 g white beans (or 2 cans)
- 500 g smoked sausages (or pork sausage)
- 2 onions
- 1 carrot
- 1 tbsp tomato paste
- 3 garlic cloves
- 2 bay leaves
- Salt, pepper, paprika, thyme
- 3 tbsp oil
- Optional: smoked paprika or chili

4. Preparation

1. Soak beans overnight. Boil and discard first water. Simmer until soft (~1–1.5 hr).
2. In a pan, sauté chopped onions, garlic, carrots. Add tomato paste, seasonings.
3. Mix sauce with cooked beans. Transfer to oven-safe pot.
4. Add sliced sausages on top. Bake uncovered at 180°C for 30–40 min.
5. Serve hot with pickles or mămăligă.

5. Nutritional Values (per portion)

- Calories: ~620 kcal
- Protein: ~30 g
- Fat: ~28 g
- Carbs: ~52 g
- Fiber: ~10 g

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition

- High in fiber, iron, and protein — ideal for cold climates.
- Can be made vegan without sausage.
- Freeze well; reheats without loss of quality.
- Use canned beans for rapid prep.
- Add fresh herbs for variation (tarragon, lovage).

Conclusion

The Baked White Beans with Sausages is the soul food of Romanian winter — deeply satisfying, nutrient-dense, and filled with tradition.



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BOB CHORBA

1. Origin and history

Bob chorba, a hearty and traditional bean soup, has a long history in Bulgaria. Its roots trace back centuries, and it is considered one of the country's national dishes. The history of bob chorba is particularly linked to Bulgarian monasteries, where it was a staple food. The vegetarian version of the soup, known as bob chorba po manastirski (monastery-style bob chorba), was a common and important part of the monks' diet. Because of its association with monasteries, bob chorba came to symbolize simple, wholesome, and nourishing food. Over time, bob chorba moved from being primarily a monastery dish to a regular and beloved part of the everyday Bulgarian diet, particularly during the colder months. Its simple yet flavorful character and its ability to be made with easily stored ingredients made it a practical and comforting meal for families across the country.

2. Cultural aspects

Bob chorba is one of Bulgaria's most significant national dishes, carrying deep cultural resonance related to tradition, simplicity, and community. Its consumption is tied to specific holidays and evokes strong feelings of home and comfort for many Bulgarians. Bob chorba is a fixture in Bulgarian cookbooks, restaurants, and tourism promotions, recognized both nationally and internationally as a key part of the country's culinary heritage. It is a testament to how simple ingredients can come together to create a dish with deep cultural meaning, celebrated through food, holidays, and shared meals.

3. Ingredients

- 2 cans of white or kidney beans (rinsed) or 1 pound of dried beans, soaked overnight
- 1 large onion
- 2-3 carrots
- 1-2 bell peppers (use dried, canned, or fresh)
- 3-4 tablespoons of olive or sunflower oil
- 1 can of diced tomatoes or tomato paste
- A few cloves of garlic (fresh or powdered)
- 1 tablespoon of sweet paprika, and herbs like mint (dzhodzhen) or savory (chubritza) (dried is fine)
- 1-2 liters of water or broth
- 150-200g of diced smoked sausage, bacon, or chorizo can be added for a richer flavor and protein boost

4. Preparation

1. Sauté aromatics: Heat the oil in a large pot. Add the diced onion, carrots, and peppers. Cook until softened.
2. Add beans and liquids: If using dried beans, add them along with water or broth. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat and simmer until the beans are tender. If using canned beans, add them with the liquid after sautéing the vegetables.
3. Add seasonings: Stir in the canned tomatoes, garlic, paprika, and other dried herbs. Continue to simmer.
4. Incorporate meat (optional): If using sausage or bacon, add it to the pot to cook through.
5. Finish and serve: Once the beans are tender and the flavors have blended, season with salt and pepper. Serve with fresh bread.

5. Nutritional Values

Per ~100 g serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: ~ 65-85 kcal
- Protein: ~ 4-5 g
- Fat: ~ 2 g
- Carbohydrates: ~ 9-11 g
- Fiber: ~ 5 g
- Salt: ~ 0.75 g

6. Nutritional profile:

- Beans are an excellent source of both soluble and insoluble fiber.
- Soluble fiber helps lower cholesterol levels by trapping and removing it from the body.
- Insoluble fiber promotes healthy digestion and regular bowel movements.
- Beans are a significant source of plant-based protein, which is essential for muscle maintenance and promoting satiety.
- The basic recipe is naturally low in fat, making it a heart-healthy choice.
- Bob chorba is packed with nutrients from its vegetables and beans, including:
 - Iron and magnesium: These minerals support energy production and healthy muscle function.
 - B vitamins: Beans are especially rich in B vitamins like folate, which are crucial for energy metabolism.
 - Antioxidants: Tomatoes and beans contain antioxidants like lycopene and anthocyanins, which protect against chronic diseases.
- The beans provide complex carbohydrates that are broken down slowly by the body, providing sustained energy and maintaining satiety for longer.

7. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

- Hearty and filling: As a thick, high-fiber bean soup, bob chorba provides sustained energy, crucial for the physical demands of life at sea.
- Utilizes shelf-stable ingredients: The core ingredients of dried beans, onions, and canned tomatoes are non-perishable and easy to store.
- One-pot meal: The entire meal is prepared in a single pot, minimizing cleanup and saving space in a compact galley.
- Adaptable: The recipe is highly flexible, allowing the cook to substitute ingredients based on available provisions.

Conclusion:

Bob chorba is an excellent meal for mariners due to its high nutritional value, energy-dense ingredients, and ability to be adapted with pantry staples. Its one-pot preparation is ideal for a limited galley, and it can be made in a large batch and reheated. Bob chorba is a well-balanced meal, especially in its traditional form, providing a good mix of carbohydrates, protein, and fiber. This makes it a satisfying and healthy dish that can be enjoyed as a main course or as part of a larger meal.



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BRAISED CABBAGE WITH SMOKED PORK

VARZĂ CĂLITĂ CU COSTIȚĂ

1. Origin and History

Rooted in peasant winter cooking, the Braised Cabbage with Smoked Pork uses simple ingredients preserved through traditional methods: fermented or fresh cabbage and smoked pork. It's especially popular in southern and eastern Romania, where the smoked pork belly/ribs was a staple for cold months.

2. Cultural Aspects

This is a weekday or festive winter dish, often cooked in large pans for family meals. It reflects Romanian resilience and zero-waste cooking: the entire cabbage and cured meats are used fully. Served with mămăligă and pickled chilies, it's comforting and rustic.



3. Ingredients

- 1 large cabbage (~1.5 kg) or 800 g sauerkraut
- 500 g smoked pork (ribs, belly, or ham)
- 2 onions
- 2 tbsp tomato paste
- 1 tsp paprika
- 2 bay leaves
- 200 ml water or broth
- Oil, pepper
- Optional: dill, thyme, peppercorns

4. Preparation

1. Chop cabbage, rub with salt if fresh. Let rest 10 min.
2. Sauté chopped onions in oil. Add tomato paste and paprika.
3. Add diced pork and brown slightly.
4. Add cabbage and water/broth. Simmer covered ~1.5 hours.
5. Uncover to reduce liquid and caramelize edges slightly.
6. Serve with mămăligă or bread and hot peppers.

5. Nutritional Values (per ~400 g portion)

- Calories: ~520 kcal
- Protein: ~28 g
- Fat: ~35 g
- Carbs: ~20 g
- Fiber: ~5 g
- Salt: ~2.5 g

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition

- Easy to batch cook and hold warm.
- Substitute pork with Türkiye for leaner versions.
- Can be made vegetarian using only caramelized cabbage.
- Great for fiber-rich, satisfying winter menus.
- Pairs well with polenta or barley.

Conclusion

The Braised Cabbage with Smoked Pork is bold, filling, and nostalgic. A classic Romanian pairing of sweet cabbage and smoky meat, it provides warmth, protein, and soul.



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BRAISED SPRING LAMB WITH GREEN ONIONS AND GARLIC

STUFAT DE MIEL

1. Origin and History

The Braised Spring Lamb with Green Onions and Garlic - Stufat is a uniquely Romanian spring dish, rooted in ancient practices of combining young lamb meat with seasonal green onions and garlic. It is traditionally cooked around Easter, celebrating renewal and abundance. The name derives from "a stufui" – to stew or steam gently.

2. Cultural Aspects

The Braised Spring Lamb with Green Onions and Garlic is served after Lent as a symbol of revival and prosperity. It contrasts with heavier winter dishes, using fresh spring greens and lamb from young flocks. Often prepared for Easter Sunday or in the week following, it's festive, pastoral, and delicate.



3. Ingredients

- 1.2 kg lamb shoulder or ribs
- 3 bunches green onions
- 2 bunches green garlic
- 2 tbsp tomato paste
- 200 ml broth or water
- 2 tbsp oil or lamb fat
- 1 tsp sugar
- Salt, pepper
- Dill or tarragon (optional)

4. Preparation

1. Brown lamb pieces in oil or fat until golden. Remove and set aside.
2. Cut onions and garlic into 5 cm pieces. Sauté gently in same fat.
3. Add tomato paste, sugar, salt, and pepper.
4. Return lamb to pot. Add broth and cover.
5. Simmer gently or bake at 170°C for 1.5–2 hrs.
6. Add fresh herbs in final 10 minutes. Serve warm with polenta or bread.

5. Nutritional Values (per ~350 g serving)

- Calories: ~550 kcal
- Protein: ~38 g
- Fat: ~35 g
- Carbohydrates: ~15 g
- Iron: ~4–5 mg
- Salt: ~1.3 g

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition

- Best suited for seasonal or celebratory menus.
- Lamb can be substituted with veal or poultry in restricted settings.
- Green onions/garlic can be replaced with leeks or dehydrated greens.
- Suitable for low-carb high-fat (LCHF) plans.
- Rich in iron, zinc, and B12 for energy and recovery diets.

Conclusion

The Braised Spring Lamb with Green Onions and Garlic is a seasonal masterpiece — delicate yet rich, deeply symbolic, and ideal for high-protein, celebratory institutional meals in spring or Easter menus.



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CREAMY CHICKEN GIZZARD AND HEART STEW

CIULAMA CU PIPOTE ȘI INIMI DE PUI

1. Origin and History

The Creamy Chicken Gizzard and Heart Stew - Ciulama is a dish of Ottoman origin, related to Turkish çullama. In Romania, it evolved into a creamy, flour-thickened stew, traditionally made with poultry, mushrooms, or offal. Gizzards and hearts were common in peasant homes as a way to use the whole animal.

2. Cultural Aspects

Popular in rural areas, especially in Moldova and Muntenia, ciulama represents economic, zero-waste cooking. Though once humble, it's become a favorite in Romanian restaurants. It's usually paired with mămăligă or bread and served warm on rainy or cold days.



3. Ingredients

- 600 g chicken gizzards and hearts
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 tbsp oil or butter
- 2 tbsp flour
- 400 ml chicken broth
- 100 ml cream or milk
- Salt, pepper
- Parsley for garnish
- Mămăligă or bread for serving

4. Preparation

1. Clean and rinse pipote and inimi thoroughly.
2. Simmer in salted water or broth ~1–1.5 hrs until tender.
3. Sauté onion in butter/oil. Add flour and cook to a blond roux.
4. Gradually add broth, whisking until smooth.
5. Add offal and simmer in sauce for 10 min.
6. Stir in cream, season, and cook 5 more minutes. Garnish with parsley.
7. Serve hot with mămăligă or toast.

5. Nutritional Values (per ~400 g portion)

- Calories: ~480 kcal
- Protein: ~32 g
- Fat: ~25 g
- Carbohydrates: ~28 g
- Iron: ~5–6 mg
- Salt: ~1.6 g

6. Recommendations for Institutional or Onboard Nutrition

- Cost-effective offal usage provides micronutrients and protein.
- Suitable for large-batch cooking and freezing.
- Can be made with mushrooms for vegetarian variant.
- Offer with fortified polenta or high-fiber bread for balance.
- Soft texture, ideal for elderly or clinical settings.

Conclusion

The Creamy Chicken Gizzard and Heart Stew is resourceful, rich, and nutrient-dense — a testament to Romanian culinary ingenuity and sustainability.



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GREEK CABBAGE ROLLS

LAHANODOLMADES

1. Origin and History

Cabbage Rolls, a seemingly simple dish, boast a rich history deeply rooted in ancient cultures for over 2,000 years. It is said that the earliest form of Cabbage Rolls originated in Ancient Rome, where they were known as Dolma. These ancient dolmas featured a variety of fillings, including grains, vegetables, rice, offal, or sometimes even seasoned meat with herbs and spices. Over time, the popularity of Cabbage Rolls spread with the expansion of the Roman Empire. The Romans were very fond of Cabbage Rolls and regularly prepared them, making them a familiar local dish. Consequently, this culinary practice soon spread to other parts of Europe, particularly in Eastern Europe and Central Asia, regions where cabbage was widely cultivated.



2. Cultural Aspects

The Greek version differs from others as it is not tomato based. The rolled cabbage (lahanodolmades) have a filling of rice, ground beef and fresh herbs. After they are cooked, they are topped with the Queen of Greek sauce, a delicious lemony avgolemono.

3. Ingredients

For the cabbage rolls

- 1 cabbage, large
- salt
- 500 g ground beef
- 200 g Carolina rice
- 1/2 teaspoon(s) cumin
- 1 onion
- 1 clove(s) of garlic
- 1/3 bunch dill
- 1/3 bunch mint
- 1/3 bunch parsley
- 3 sprig(s) rosemary
- pepper
- 3-4 tablespoon(s) olive oil

For the sauce

- 70 g butter
- 70 g all-purpose flour
- 700 g water
- 1 chicken bouillon cube
- lemon zest, of 1-2 lemons
- lemon juice, of 1-2 lemons
- pepper
- 1 tablespoon(s) olive oil

4. Preparation

For the cabbage rolls

- Place a pot with water on heat, add salt, and let it boil.
- Cut the stem of the cabbage and then, put the cabbage inside the pot with the stem side facing down.
- With a ladle, remove the outer leaves of the cabbage slowly and carefully. Follow the same process for 10-15 minutes until we remove all of the leaves.
- Transfer the leaves onto a baking pan to drain and cool.

For the stuffing

- In a bowl, add the ground beef, rice, and cumin.
- Finely chop the onion, garlic, and add them to the bowl with the ground beef.
- Finely chop the dill, mint, parsley, and add them to the bowl. Keep their stems aside.
- Add salt, pepper, olive oil, and mix well.

To assemble

- Take the stems of the herbs and place them on the pot's bottom.
- Cover the stems with 2-3 cabbage leaves. It would be better to use the smallest or the most "broken" leaves.
- Take one cabbage leaf and cut the central nerve with a knife.
- Add 1 tablespoon of the filling and roll. Follow the same process for the rest of the leaves.
- Place the cabbage rolls into the pot, one next to the other. Make sure that you do not leave a gap between them, so they do not open while boiling.
- Cover with a few cabbage leaves and place a dish on top in order to keep the cabbage rolls stable.
- Fill the pot with water up to the dish's height level. Transfer over medium heat and boil for 1 1/2 hours. While they are boiling, if needed, refill the water. You need to always keep the water level up to the dish.



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For the sauce (Avgolemono)

- Place a pot on heat and add the butter.
- As soon as it melts, add the flour and sauté.
- Add the water in batches, by constantly stirring with a hand whisk until the sauce thickens. Remove from the heat.
- Add the bouillon cube, the lemon zest and juice, pepper, olive oil, and mix.

To serve

Spread the sauce over the cabbage rolls, add finely chopped dill, olive oil, lemon slices, pepper, and serve.

5. Nutritional Values

Per portion serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: 214kcal
- Protein: 8.9g
- Fat: 12g
- Saturated Fat: 4.8g
- Carbs: 16g
- Sugar: 2.5g
- Fiber: 1.9g
- Sodium: 0.3g

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

Macronutrient Balance

- Pair with a light soup or salad to maintain variety.
- Use lean ground meat (beef, Türkiye, or plant-based mince).
- Reduce salt if crew hypertension or cardiac health concerns exist.

Nutritional Enhancement Options

- Add grated carrots or onions for fiber and taste.
- Replace white rice with brown rice or bulgur for added fiber.
- Fortify avgolemono sauce with olive oil for heart-healthy fats.

here less physical work is done, a lighter version may be preferable. Ensure hydration and fresh salad sides to boost vegetable intake.



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GREEK MEATBALLS SOUTZOUKAKIA

1. Origin and History

The name “Soutzoukakia” (Σουτζουκάκια) comes from the Turkish word “sucuk”, meaning “spicy sausage.” The suffix “-akia” in Greek means “small” — so Soutzoukakia literally translates to “little spicy sausages.” They are shaped like elongated meatballs, seasoned with aromatic spices (especially cumin), and cooked in rich tomato sauce.

2. Cultural Aspects

Soutzoukakia Smyrneika means “spiced meatballs from Smyrna (İzmir)”, and its name immediately evokes the history of Greek refugees from Asia Minor (modern-day Türkiye).

For these refugee families, Soutzoukakia became:

- A culinary symbol;
- A cultural bridge between old and new lives.

Even today, the dish represents nostalgia and identity — especially for descendants of Asia Minor Greeks.



3. Ingredients

- 50 ml olive oil
- clove(s) of garlic
- 250 g ground beef
- 250 g ground pork
- 200 g sandwich bread
- 100 ml whole milk
- 1 egg
- salt
- 1 pinch chili flakes
- 1 1/2 teaspoon(s) cumin
- 1 pinch pepper
- mint
- 20 ml ouzo
- 100 g all-purpose flour, for dredging
- 500 ml seed oil, for frying

For the sauce

- 1 tablespoon(s) olive oil
- 1 onion, medium
- 1 tablespoon(s) tomato paste
- 2 bay leaves
- 250 ml water
- 1 chicken bouillon cube
- 400 g canned tomatoes
- 1/2 teaspoon(s) granulated sugar
- 1 stick(s) cinnamon

4. Preparation

- Beat the pieces of bread in a food processor. Transfer to a bowl.
- In the food processor beat olive oil, garlic, cumin, chili flakes and finely chopped mint. Add to the bowl and add the milk, ouzo, the egg, the ground beef and pork .
- Whisk for 30 seconds to combine well.
- It is better to wear disposable gloves when handling the mixture and the raw meat.
- Mash the mixture together with your hands, until the bread breaks up completely.
- Add a generous amount of salt and pepper.
- Mix again with your hands until all of the ingredients are completely combined.
- Shape the mixture in to long oval shapes, which is the traditional shape of these meatballs. They should weigh about 30-50 g each.
- Add a generous amount of flour to a container. Add the meatballs and dredge them in the flour.
- Place a nonstick pan over medium to high heat.
- Add the vegetable oil and let it heat for 1 minute.
- Shake off excess flour and add the meatballs to the pan one at a time.
- Brown them on both sides for about 5 minutes total. They will cook further on the stove.
- When ready, remove from pan and place them on a plate lined with paper towels so they can drain from any excess oil.
- Set aside until needed.



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For the sauce

- Place a pot over medium heat.
- Coarsely chop the onion.
- Add the tablespoon of olive oil to the pot.
- Add the onion and sugar.
- Stir and sauté until the onion caramelizes nicely.
- Then add the tomato paste and sauté for at least 1-2 minutes.
- Sautéing the tomato paste helps give it a nicer flavor and helps the sauce thicken better.
- Add the cinnamon, bay leaves, bouillon cube, tomato and water.
- Stir and add the meatballs.
- Lower heat, cover pot and simmer for 10 minutes, until the sauce thickens and the meatballs are ready. Serve with basmati rice and finely chopped fresh mint.

5. Nutritional Values

Per portion serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: 487 kcal
- Protein: 24g
- Fat: 27g
- Saturated Fat: 7g
- Carbs: 32g
- Sugar: 8.6g
- Fiber: 3.4g
- Sodium: 1.1

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

Protein Source

- Use lean ground beef, chicken, or mixed beef-pork blend for flexibility.
- Provides complete amino acid profile essential for seafarers' endurance and recovery.

Sauce Composition

- Tomato-based sauce is rich in lycopene, vitamin C, and antioxidants.
- Supports cardiovascular health and immune function.
- Avoid excessive oil or sugar additions to maintain health standards.

Healthy Fats

- Cook with olive oil rather than animal fats — promotes heart health and aligns with Mediterranean diet principles.

Conclusion:

Greek Meatballs (Soutzoukakia Smyrneika) are a highly suitable dish for onboard catering due to their nutritional value, cultural appeal, and practical galley preparation.



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GREEK RABBIT STEW

STIFADO

1. Origin and History

While the exact dish “stifado” as we know it didn’t exist in ancient Greece, stews combining meat, onions, and wine were common. Ancient Greeks used clay pots (“chytra”) to slow-cook meats with herbs, vinegar, and wine — precursors to later stews. By the Byzantine era (c. 4th–15th century CE), the Greek table featured many dishes with sweet-sour sauces, often including vinegar, wine, and spices — characteristics that still define stifado today.

2. Cultural Aspects

- Kouneli stifado is deeply rooted in rural Greece. For centuries, most Greek families raised rabbits in their courtyards — they were easy to feed and a reliable source of lean protein.
- Because rabbits reproduced quickly, they symbolized self-sufficiency and domestic prosperity.
- Serving rabbit stifado was a sign of hospitality and care — an offering one’s best homegrown meat for guests.
- In traditional villages, food wasn’t just sustenance — it was a language of generosity. Preparing stifado for visitors or feast days showed respect and pride.

3. Ingredients

- 1 rabbit
- salt
- pepper
- 50 g all-purpose flour
- 50 g olive oil
- 1 kilo pearl onions
- 1 tablespoon(s) cumin, seeds
- 1 tablespoon(s) coriander, seeds
- 2-3 bay leaves
- clove(s) of garlic
- 1 stick(s) cinnamon
- 1 tablespoon(s) tomato paste
- 100 g red wine
- 3-4 tablespoon(s) balsamic vinegar
- 2 tablespoon(s) honey
- 400 g canned tomatoes
- 1 chicken bouillon cube
- 1 liter water
- 2 sprig(s) rosemary

4. Preparation

- Place a pan over high heat and add 2 tablespoons olive oil.
- Cut the rabbit into 8 portions. Season with salt, pepper and flour. Spread over whole surface of rabbit.
- Transfer to pan and sauté on both sides until golden. Remove from pan and set aside.
- Place a pot over high heat.
- Add 2 tablespoons of olive oil and the pearl onions. Sauté until golden.
- Add the cumin, coriander, bay leaves, garlic, cinnamon stick and tomato paste. Mix with a wooden spoon.
- Add the red wine and then add the balsamic vinegar and honey. Mix until all the ingredients are combined.
- Add the chopped tomatoes, bouillon cube, water, rabbit, rosemary, salt and pepper.
- Cover pot with lid, lower heat to medium and simmer for 1 ½ hours.
- Serve with slices of bread, olive oil and thyme.

5. Nutritional Values

Per portion serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: 352 kcal
- Protein: 24g
- Fat: 12g
- Saturated Fat: 2.8g
- Carbs: 33g
- Sugar: 23g
- Fiber: 5g
- Sodium: 1.2

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

- High protein & low fat (supports muscle maintenance)
- Iron- and B12-rich — ideal for fatigue prevention
- Long cooking time = stable for galley prep
- Excellent reheating stability (improves flavor next day)
- Uses shelf-stable or long-lasting ingredients (onions, tomato paste, wine, spices)

Conclusion:

It's nutrient-dense, lean, and flavorful — well-suited for shipboard conditions if properly managed.



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GREEK STUFFED VEGETABLES WITH RICE YEMISTA

1. Origin and History

Gemista or Yemista is a dish of stuffed vegetables with rice, that's light and flavorful with naturally sweet flavors and herby aromas. These Greek stuffed vegetables get baked in the oven with potatoes on the side and plenty of extra virgin olive oil.

2. Cultural Aspects

Gemista transcends its status as a mere dish; it embodies the spirit of Greek cuisine itself. The use of fresh, seasonal ingredients, the emphasis on simplicity and flavour, and the passing down of recipes through generations all point to the core values that define Greek food. Preparing and sharing gemista becomes a celebration of family, tradition, and the bounty of the Mediterranean land.



3. Ingredients

You only need fresh ingredients to make these Greek vegetarian stuffed peppers stuffed peppers and tomatoes. What you need is:

6 tomatoes
2 red bell peppers
2 yellow bell peppers
2 green bell peppers
For the filling
1 onion
1 clove(s) of garlic
1 leek
60 g olive oil
1 tablespoon(s) granulated sugar
300 g round grain rice
1 chicken bouillon cube
50 g white wine
500 g ground beef
400 g water
salt
pepper
1/3 bunch dill
1/2 bunch parsley
1/2 bunch mint

To assemble

500 g potatoes
2 tablespoon(s) olive oil
salt

pepper
1/2 bunch parsley
1/2 bunch mint

To serve

herbs, fresh

mint

feta cheese

oregano, dry

1 tablespoon(s) olive oil

Bread

4. Preparation

For the stuffed vegetables

- Remove the stems from the tomatoes and cut the top part to make a kind of "lid". Carefully remove the flesh from the tomatoes, using a teaspoon.
- Transfer to a 36x28 cm baking pan.
- Cut the tops of the green peppers in the same manner and remove the seeds and ribs. Slice off a little of the base so they can be positioned upright, but make sure not to create a hole at the bottom. Add them to the baking pan along with the potatoes.

For the filling

- Preheat oven to 180° C (350°F) Fan.
- Place a deep pan over heat, let it get hot and add the olive oil.
- Finely chop the onion, garlic, leek and the edges from the green peppers.
- Add to the pan along with the granulated sugar and sauté.
- Add the rice, bouillon cube, white wine and ground beef.
- Mix with a wooden spoon and break up the ground beef.
- Add the water, lower heat and season with salt and pepper.
- Squeeze the tomato flesh you removed, with your hands and transfer to pan. Sauté for 10-15 minutes, until all the moisture evaporates.
- When the filling is ready, remove from heat.
- Finely chop the dill, parsley and mint. Keep some of the herbs aside and add the rest to the filling.
- Taste the filling and make sure it is to your liking. Season to taste and add the olive oil.
- To fill the vegetables, begin by drizzling the interior with some olive oil and then seasoning with salt and pepper.
- Fill the vegetables to the rim, cover with their "lids" and set aside.



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To assemble

- Place a pan over heat and let it get hot.
- Peel the potatoes and cut them into wedges.
- Add the olive oil, pepper, salt and butter. Saute until golden. When ready, distribute in the baking pan among the stuffed vegetables.
- Add the water, cover with parchment paper and then aluminum foil.
- Bake for 1 hour, remove coverings and bake again for 20-30 minutes, until nice and golden.

To serve

- On a serving plate, add the stuffed vegetables, potatoes, fresh herbs and mint leaves.
- Serve with feta cheese, dry oregano, olive oil and bread.

5. Nutritional Values

Per portion serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: 496 kcal
- Protein: 26g
- Fat: 11g
- Saturated Fat: 5.7g
- Carbs: 69g
- Sugar: 16g
- Fiber: 7.9g
- Sodium: 1.2g

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

- Energy and carbs: The rice-stuffing provides sustained energy (helpful for crew on watch or physical tasks). For example, one version: ~50 g carbs per serving.
- Vegetable micronutrients: The hollowed vegetables (tomatoes, peppers, zucchini) supply vitamins A, C, fibre and antioxidants — beneficial for health at sea.
- Fats and healthy oils: Olive oil is a key component in traditional Yemista — giving monounsaturated fats which support cardiovascular health (important in confined ship environments).
- Protein: Standard vegetarian versions may be modest in protein (~6-8 g per serving) so if crew workload is high, consider adding extra protein (e.g., lentils, chickpeas, or small amounts of minced meat) to meet higher needs.
- Dietary variety and special diets: Because the dish is naturally vegetarian/vegan (unless meat is added) it is flexible for crew with dietary restrictions. One article states it is “naturally gluten-free, dairy-free ... packed with colour, flavour and nutrients.”
- Portion sizing: Given the caloric variation, decide portion size to meet energy needs of crew: e.g., if doing watch rotation with high physical work, portion might need to be larger or paired with a side-carb (bread, potatoes) or protein.
- Sodium and seasoning: Onboard meals tend to be higher in sodium; ensure you moderate salt and monitor for crew hydration and cardiovascular health.
- Vegetable quality & storage: Choose firm, undamaged tomatoes, peppers, zucchini etc. Store in a cool, ventilated area. On a ship, ambient temperatures may vary — keep vegetables away from heat sources.
- Rice and dry goods storage: Rice has long shelf-life; ensure dry-goods storage is dry and pest-free.

Herbs and fresh ingredients: Fresh parsley, mint or dill can add flavour — but storage on board may shorten shelf-life. Consider using portioned frozen chopped herbs if fresh supply is uncertain.

- Pre-stuffing and batch cooking: For large crew numbers, you might partially prepare stuffing ahead. Note: Some sources emphasise that rice should be partially cooked or soaked so it finishes properly inside the vegetable. For example: “Raw rice won’t cook evenly ... use long-grain rice ... check liquid during baking.” [The Picky Eater](#)
- Cooking/baking logistics: Onboard ovens or galley baking trays need to accommodate large volumes. Ensure baking dish fits and heat distribution is good. Use foil to help steam/cook rice inside the vegetables

Conclusion:

Aim to offer a balanced portion: e.g., for crew with moderate physical activity, you might target ~400-600 kcal for a main meal. Using the nutrition examples: the lighter version (~250 kcal) may be suitable for lighter duty shifts, while the ~500 kcal version is better for higher workload. Example: Recipe lists “Calories: 502.8, Carbohydrates: 58.1 g, Protein: 8.2 g, Fat from fat ~43% of calories” for one version. If crew require more protein (e.g., after heavy physical work), you may offer a side of lean protein (fish/chicken) or adapt the recipe to include some meat/legumes in the stuffing. Monitor fat (olive oil) and portion size; on shifts where less physical work is done, a lighter version may be preferable. Ensure hydration and fresh salad sides to boost vegetable intake.



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GREEK-STYLE MEATLOAF AND POTATOES

ROLO KIMA



1. Origin and History

There are some dishes that instantly transport you back home – to the clatter of pans in a warm kitchen, the sound of mum humming, and the scent of something amazing wafting through the house. For us, that dish is Pólo – Greek-style meatloaf, lovingly baked alongside leamy, herby potatoes. It's simple, hearty, and full of the flavours we grew up with.

A specialty of my mum's, this recipe is pure comfort. A soft, juicy meatloaf filled with feta and hard-boiled eggs, nestled between golden wedges of lemon-drenched potatoes. Every bite is zesty, meaty, and irresistibly satisfying.

This is the kind of meal that makes you want to linger at the table a little longer.

2. Cultural Aspects

Rolo Kima literally means “rolled minced meat.” Is a staple comfort dish worldwide and works extremely well in maritime catering due to its nutritional balance, ease of preparation, and cost efficiency. The dish represents:

- Home and hospitality: Traditionally, meatloaf is shared family-style, symbolizing warmth, togetherness, and care — values deeply rooted in Greek culture (philoxenia).
- Resourcefulness: The recipe reflects Greece's long-standing tradition of using simple, affordable ingredients (ground meat, breadcrumbs, herbs) to create filling, satisfying meals.
- Continuity and adaptation: Every region or household may have slight variations — some stuff it with boiled eggs, cheese, or vegetables, highlighting regional creativity.

3. Ingredients

- 1 kilo ground pork
- 1 kilo ground beef
- onions
- 2 clove(s) of garlic
- ½ bunch parsley
- 250 g bread
- 2 level tablespoon(s) salt
- ½ level tablespoon(s) pepper
- 1 tablespoon(s) oregano, dried
- 100 g whole milk
- 4-5 tablespoon(s) olive oil
- 2 eggs, medium
- 30 g all-purpose flour, for the eggs
 - eggs, medium, boiled

For the potatoes

- 1,5 kilo potatoes
- 4-5 tablespoon(s) olive oil
- salt
- pepper
- 1 tablespoon(s) mild mustard
- 1 tablespoon(s) honey
- lemon juice, of 1 lemon
- tablespoon(s) oregano, dried
- 300 g water

4. Preparation

For the meatloaf

- Put the ground beef and the ground pork into a bowl.
- Grate the onions using the large holes of a box grater, and the cloves of garlic using a hand grater, and add them to the bowl.
- Add the parsley, 40 g bread, salt, and pepper to a chopper blender, and beat them well.
- Add the mixture to the bowl with the ground meat and then add the oregano.
- Beat the rest of the bread in the chopper blender to make breadcrumbs and put them in a second bowl.
- Add the milk to the bowl with the breadcrumbs and transfer the mixture to the bowl with the ground meat.
- Add 5 tablespoons of olive oil along with the eggs, and mix them together with your hands -wearing gloves- until homogenized.
- Refrigerate the ground meat mixture for at least 1 hour until it is firm.
- Remove the ground meat from the refrigerator.
- Place one parchment paper piece on your worktop, drizzle it with 1 tablespoon of olive oil, and spread it with your hand over the whole surface.
- Put the ground meat on the parchment paper, and press it down with your hand to spread it well over the parchment paper, leaving a small border around the edges.
- Dust the boiled eggs with a little flour and place them -horizontally- at the center of the ground meat.
- Use the parchment paper to wrap the meat into a roll, giving it a candy shape. Make sure the seam side of the parchment is on the bottom so it does not open during baking.
- Place a piece of aluminum foil on your worktop and put the meatloaf with the parchment paper on it, seam-side down.
- Wrap the meatloaf with the aluminum foil.



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For the potatoes

- Peel and cut the potatoes into irregular small pieces, and transfer them to a 30x40 cm baking pan.
- In a bowl add the olive oil, salt, pepper, mustard, honey, lemon juice, and oregano, and mix them well with a spoon.
- Pour the marinade over the pan with the potatoes, and mix well with the spoon.
- Add the water and mix again.

For the baking

- Preheat the oven to 180°C (350° F) set to fan.
- Transfer the meatloaf to the pan with the potatoes, seam-side down, and cover the pan with aluminum foil.
- Put the pan in the oven and bake the meatloaf with the potatoes for 60 minutes.
- Remove the pan from the oven, take out the aluminum foil, uncover the meatloaf, put the pan back into the oven, and bake it for another 40-50 minutes.
- Remove the pan from the oven and set it aside for a few minutes.
- Cut the meatloaf into pieces, transfer it to a platter along with the potatoes, and serve.

5. Nutritional Values

Per portion serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: 572 kcal
- Protein: 40g
- Fat: 34g
- Saturated Fat: 11g
- Carbs: 24g
- Sugar: 4.7g
- Fiber: 2.9g
- Sodium: 2.4g

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

- Moisture Retention: Add a small amount of milk or grated vegetables to prevent dryness.
- Flavor Variations: Use tomato paste, herbs, or Worcestershire sauce for depth.
- Presentation: Serve sliced with garnish (parsley, gravy, or lemon wedge).
- Nutrition Boost: Offer with a side of mixed vegetables for vitamins and fiber.

Conclusion:

Universally recognized comfort food. Can be easily flavored for multicultural crews (e.g., Mediterranean herbs, Asian spices, or tomato glaze).



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GREEN PEA STEW WITH CHICKEN

MÂNCARE DE MAZĂRE CU PUI

1. Origin and History

The Green Pea Stew with Chicken is a home-cooked staple, especially during spring and early summer, when fresh peas are abundant. It is a quick stew, often cooked in under 30 minutes, showcasing the sweetness of peas in a tomato-onion broth.

2. Cultural Aspects

Associated with weekday lunches and school meals, this dish is mild, colorful, and child-friendly. In villages, it's often cooked with free-range chicken and thickened slightly with flour or roux.



3. Ingredients

- 500 g chicken pieces (bone-in or boneless)
- 500 g green peas (fresh or frozen)
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 carrots, diced
- 1 tbsp tomato paste
- 400 ml broth or water
- 2 tbsp oil
- 1 tsp flour (optional)
- Salt, pepper, dill

4. Preparation

1. Brown chicken lightly in oil. Remove.
2. Sauté onion and carrots. Add tomato paste.
3. Return chicken, add broth and simmer 20 min.
4. Add peas and cook 10 more minutes.
5. Optional: stir in flour slurry to thicken.
6. Add dill and serve hot.

5. Nutritional Values (per bowl)

- Calories: ~450 kcal
- Protein: ~32 g
- Fat: ~18 g
- Carbs: ~28 g
- Fiber: ~6 g

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition

- Quick to cook and freezer-safe.
- Peas add fiber, folate, and sweetness.
- Can be made vegetarian with soy or mushrooms.
- Serve with polenta, rice, or bread.

Conclusion

The Green Pea Stew with Chicken is a balanced, nutritious, and bright dish — perfect for spring menus and child-friendly meal plans.



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GRILLED ROMANIAN SAUSAGES WITH FRIED POTATOES MICI CU CARTOFI PRĂJIȚI

1. Origin and History

Mici (or mititei, meaning “little ones”) are Romania’s national street food, believed to have originated in late 19th-century Bucharest. According to legend, a chef at a bustling inn ran out of sausage casings and decided to grill the seasoned meat directly — inventing the casing-less sausage.

Traditionally made from a blend of beef, lamb, and pork, mici are seasoned with garlic, thyme, and baking soda for tenderness. Over time, they evolved into a national culinary symbol, especially during outdoor events, May 1st (Labor Day), and football matches.

2. Cultural Aspects

Few things are more Romanian than the smell of mici sizzling over charcoal, served with mustard, fries, bread, and a cold beer. They are outdoor cooking essentials, linked to leisure, camaraderie, and informality. Mici are associated with national pride and often referenced in literature, satire, and pop culture.



3. Ingredients

For the mici (approx. 12 pieces / 4 servings):

- 500 g minced beef (15–20% fat)
- 250 g minced pork (or lamb for traditional version)
- 3–4 garlic cloves, minced
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1 tsp sweet paprika
- 1/2 tsp thyme
- 1/4 tsp ground cumin (optional, traditional)
- 100 ml cold beef stock (or sparkling water)

For serving:

- 800 g potatoes, peeled and sliced
- 500 ml oil for frying
- Mustard (classic yellow)
- Bread or buns (optional)
- Pickles (optional)

4. Preparation

Prepare the mici mixture

1. Mix all meats and spices thoroughly. Add garlic, baking soda, and half of the stock.
2. Knead well until sticky (5–10 minutes). Gradually add remaining stock for smoothness.
3. Refrigerate for 12–24 hours for flavor development and texture.

Form and grill

1. Wet hands and shape mici into 8–10 cm long sausages. Avoid over-packing.
2. Grill over medium-hot coals or cast-iron grill for 8–10 minutes, turning every 2–3 minutes for a uniform crust. Baste lightly with stock or water as they cook.

Prepare fries

1. Slice potatoes into sticks. Soak in cold water 30 min (removes starch).
2. Fry in two stages:
 - First at 150°C (softening stage)
 - Then at 180°C for crisping.
3. Salt immediately and serve hot.

5. Nutritional Values (per serving with fries and mustard)

- Calories: ~780 kcal
- Protein: ~28 g
- Fat: ~52 g
- Carbohydrates: ~42 g
- Salt: ~2.5 g

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition

- Pre-form and freeze mici for rapid grill service in mass feeding settings.
- Use air-fried or oven-roasted potatoes to reduce oil and fat load.
- Substitute lamb with lean Türkiye or beef for lighter versions.
- Serve with fiber-rich pickled vegetables or cabbage salad to balance richness.
- Excellent for cultural events, outdoor buffets, or morale menus.

Conclusion

The Grilled Romanian Sausages with Fried Potatoes are not just food — they are a national ritual. Juicy, smoky, and satisfying, they transform any gathering into a celebration and adapt well to scaled preparation.



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GYUVECH

1. Origin and history

Gyuvech is a traditional Balkan stew with origins tracing back to the Ottoman Empire. The name itself comes from the Turkish word güveç, which refers to the earthenware clay pot in which the dish is traditionally cooked. The recipe and name evolved to suit local customs, with each region developing its own unique twist. Over time, gyuvech became a staple in Bulgarian cuisine, valued for being a hearty and nutritious meal packed with vitamins and protein. The dish is especially popular during autumn, using a bounty of fresh vegetables.

2. Cultural aspects

In Bulgarian culture, gyuvech is more than just a dish—it is a cherished tradition that embodies warmth, hospitality, and resourcefulness. Its preparation and consumption are deeply tied to family gatherings, history, and a celebration of seasonal ingredients. The seasonal nature of gyuvech is a central cultural aspect. It is a dish that makes the most of the autumn and winter harvest, utilizing vegetables like peppers, tomatoes, and eggplant. This focus on fresh, seasonal ingredients reflects a history of sustainable and frugal cooking.

3. Ingredients

- 600g beef or pork shoulder, or 3 sausages (can be pre-cooked and stored)
- 2 cans of diced tomatoes and 1 can of "gyuvech vegetables" (often including peppers, peas, and green beans)
- 2-3 medium potatoes
- 1-2 onions
- 2 carrots
- A few tablespoons of sunflower or olive oil
- Paprika, black pepper, and salt
- A few tablespoons of feta cheese and 1 egg per portion

4. Preparation

1. Chop ingredients. Dice the meat and chop the vegetables into similar-sized pieces.
2. Arrange layers. Layer the meat, then the hard vegetables (carrots, potatoes), and finally the softer vegetables (onions, canned vegetables) into a cooking pot.
3. Add liquid and season. Add water and oil to the pot, ensuring the vegetables are just covered. Season generously with paprika, salt, and pepper.
4. Slow cook. Bake in a galley oven for 1–2 hours until the meat and vegetables are tender. In a traditional clay pot, this would take longer.
5. Add final touches. If using, crumble feta cheese on top of the stew and crack an egg over each portion. Return to the oven until the egg whites are set and the cheese is melted.
6. Serve: Garnish with parsley and serve hot with bread.

5. Nutritional Values

Per ~100 g serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: ~150-250 kcal
- Protein: ~10-15 g
- Fat: ~7-15 g
- Carbohydrates: ~4-10 g
- Fiber: ~1-3 g
- Salt: ~ 0,25-0,75 g

6. Nutritional profile:

- With a mix of vegetables, gyuvech provides a wide range of vitamins and minerals, including vitamin A, vitamin C, potassium, and iron.
- The meat or legumes provide a high-protein content, which is important for muscle maintenance and satiety.
- The vegetables in gyuvech provide a good source of dietary fiber, which is beneficial for digestive health.
- Compared to other Balkan dishes that use fatty meats or high-fat cheeses, gyuvech can be a relatively lower-fat option, especially if prepared with lean meat or as a vegan version.

7. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

- Hearty and filling: As a slow-cooked stew, gyuvech provides a satisfying and high-energy meal, which is important for the physical demands of life at sea.
- Ingredient flexibility: It can be made with almost any ingredients available, allowing the cook to adapt to the ship's provisions, which can change depending on the port and voyage length.
- One-pot preparation: A small gyuvech pot (gyuveche) or a larger vessel is perfect for a limited galley space and cooking with limited resources.
- Adaptable to storage: Mariners can utilize a mix of fresh, canned, and preserved ingredients, which is ideal for voyages where fresh produce is not always available.

Conclusion:

A gyuvech is a practical and nutritious option for mariners, especially when adapted with shelf-stable ingredients suitable for a ship's galley. The long cooking time is less demanding than other recipes, and the ability to use a variety of preserved vegetables and proteins makes it an ideal onboard meal.



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KAPAMA

1. Origin and history

The name of the traditional Balkan dish kapama comes from the Turkish word kapanmak, meaning "to cover," and its origin reflects the cultural and culinary influences that shaped the region during the Ottoman era. The cooking technique—sealing a clay pot to slow-cook the ingredients—is central to the dish's identity. While variations exist across the Balkans, the most famous version is Bulgarian and is strongly associated with the town of Bansko and the surrounding Razlog region.

2. Cultural aspects

Like many traditional dishes, kapama is deeply rooted in Bulgarian culture and has strong social and festive associations. Its cultural significance is closely linked to its preparation, ingredients, and the region it comes from. The preparation of kapama is a tradition for festive occasions, especially for Christmas. The process of slow-cooking in a sealed pot is a ritual passed down from generation to generation. Sealing the pot symbolizes the preservation of warmth and family well-being. In Bansko, serving kapama to guests is a gesture of hospitality. The rich combination of different meats and the traditional method of preparation show respect for guests and a desire to offer them the best. The traditional cooking in a clay pot sealed with dough is reminiscent of past times when food was cooked slowly on a hearth or in an oven. This method is a symbol of patience, skill, and dedication.

3. Ingredients

- 1.5 kg (3.3 lbs) sauerkraut
- 750 g (1.6 lbs) pork, cut into large chunks
- 500 g (1.1 lbs) veal or beef, cut into large chunks
- 500 g (1.1 lbs) chicken, whole or cut into pieces
- 300 g (0.6 lbs) raw or dry sausage
- 200 g (0.4 lbs) bacon, sliced
- 1/2 to 1 cup long-grain rice, rinsed
- Salt, to taste (be mindful of the salty sauerkraut)
- Black pepper, to taste
- Paprika, to taste
- Cumin, to taste
- 1 cup (240 ml) white wine
- 1/2 cup (120 ml) sunflower oil
- 2–3 bay leaves
- Finest, largest sauerkraut leaves, set aside from the main cabbage
- Remaining ground meat (beef, pork, or a mix) from the kapama, mixed with rice
- Flour and water, mixed into a soft dough

4. Preparation

1. Cut the pork and beef into large, roughly equal-sized chunks. Cut the chicken into pieces. Slice the bacon and sausage.
2. Prepare a filling by mixing ground meat with rinsed rice and spices. Roll the mixture tightly into cabbage leaves.
3. Arrange a few of the largest sauerkraut leaves on the bottom of a large clay pot (gyuvech).
4. Create layers by adding ingredients in a specific order:
 5. A layer of chopped sauerkraut.
 6. Arrange the sarmi (cabbage rolls) on top.
 7. Add the large chunks of pork and beef, followed by the sausage and bacon.
 8. Sprinkle black pepper, paprika, and cumin between the layers.
 9. Finish with another layer of chopped sauerkraut, covering the meat entirely.
10. Place a few bay leaves on top and cover with several whole sauerkraut leaves to prevent the rice and meat from burning.
11. Form a dough from flour and water. Create a long rope and press it around the rim of the pot to create a tight seal for the lid.
12. Pour the white wine and a little extra water over the top of the kapama. The mixture should not be completely submerged.
13. Place the clay pot in a cold oven. Gradually increase the temperature to 180°C (350°F) to prevent the pot from cracking.
14. Cook at this temperature for 3 to 5 hours, or until the meat is incredibly tender.
15. Once done, allow the kapama to rest for a few hours before unsealing and serving.

5. Nutritional Values

Per ~100 g serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: ~ 150-250 kcal
- Protein: ~ 8-12 g
- Fat: ~ 8-18 g
- Carbohydrates: ~ 10-20 g

6. Nutritional profile:

- Kapama is exceptionally high in protein, containing multiple types of meat, such as pork, veal, chicken, and sausage. This is essential for muscle growth and repair.
- The use of fatty meats (pork, bacon, sausage) and oil contributes to a high total and saturated fat content.
- The dish's main source of carbohydrates is the rice, which soaks up the flavors from the meat and sauerkraut during cooking.
- Sauerkraut is a significant source of vitamin K, with fermentation increasing its bioavailability.
- Uncooked sauerkraut is a good source of vitamin C. The long cooking time in kapama may reduce this vitamin content, but the dish will still offer some nutritional value from the cabbage.
- The different red meats provide iron and B vitamins, particularly B12.
- Both the processed meats (sausage, bacon) and the sauerkraut contribute to a high sodium content, which should be considered by those on a salt-restricted diet.



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7. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

- Long-lasting ingredients: The use of preserved foods like sauerkraut, bacon, and cured sausages, along with frozen meat, aligns perfectly with the need for non-perishable ingredients on long voyages.
- Safe storage: In a ship's galley, all ingredients must be securely stored to prevent spills or damage, especially during rough seas.
- Galley space: The large clay pot can be a challenge in a cramped kitchen. Smaller or more robust metal pots are a practical alternative.
- Cooking method: While traditionally baked in a clay pot, the recipe can be adapted for a pressure cooker or Dutch oven, which are more common and safer in a marine environment.
- Saltiness: The cook should be mindful of the high sodium content from the sauerkraut and processed meats, and adjust seasoning accordingly.
- Serving: Like musaka, kapama is a large-batch dish that can be served over several days, offering a convenient and flavorful meal option.

Conclusion:

The hearty, high-energy nature of kapama, combined with its use of preserved and frozen ingredients, makes it a suitable and practical meal for mariners. While not a traditional shipboard meal, its core characteristics are well-suited to the demands of life at sea.



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KURBAN CHORBA

1. Origin and history

Kurban chorba is a dish with deep cultural and religious roots, originating from the Islamic tradition of animal sacrifice during Eid al-Adha and blended with pre-Christian and Orthodox Christian rituals in the Balkans. The word kurban itself is a loanword with origins in Arabic, indicating a sacrifice or offering. The term chorba, or soup, was borrowed into Balkan languages from the Ottoman Turkish çorba, which in turn came from the Persian šōrbā. The recipe and preparation of kurban chorba evolved to reflect this history. The practice of animal sacrifice to appease higher powers existed in the Balkans long before the arrival of Christianity. Early peoples, including the Thracians, Slavs, and Proto-Bulgarians, made blood sacrifices for purification, protection, and to strengthen communal bonds. With the Christianization of Bulgaria, these rituals were adapted rather than abandoned. Sacrifices began to be made in honor of Christian saints, such as St. George or St. Elijah. The custom transformed from a pagan rite into an expression of Christian piety and charity.

2. Cultural aspects

Kurban chorba is a dish steeped in cultural and religious significance, particularly in the Balkans. The modern kurban chorba tradition is a vivid example of syncretism, where older, pagan practices of animal sacrifice were adapted by the Orthodox Church rather than being completely erased. The church acknowledges and blesses the ritual meal, allowing ancient customs to continue as expressions of both piety and communal solidarity. The serving of the soup brings together elements of the secular and the sacred, creating a social and spiritual event deeply embedded in local folk customs.

3. Ingredients

For the broth

- 1 kg lamb meat (with bone)
- 3–4 liters of water
- 2 medium onions (~200 g), roughly chopped
- 10–15 whole peppercorns
- Salt to taste
- 1–2 bay leaf

For the soup

- 50–70 g oil or butter
- 1 large onion (~150 g), finely chopped
- 2 carrots (~200 g), diced
- 200 g tomatoes (peeled or canned)
- 100 g rice
- 1–2 tsp sweet paprika:
- 1 small hot chili pepper (optional)
- Salt and black pepper to taste

For the final thickening (optional)

- 2 eggs
- 100 g (or 2-3 tbsp) yogurt or sour cream
- 1 bunch of fresh mint and parsley, finely chopped

4. Preparation

1. Wash the lamb meat thoroughly and place it in a large pot with cold water.
2. Bring the water to a boil, then reduce the heat to a simmer. Skim off any foam that rises to the surface.
3. Add the roughly chopped onions, black peppercorns, and bay leaf.
4. Simmer the broth for 1.5–2 hours, or until the meat is very tender.
5. Remove the meat from the pot and set it aside to cool.
6. Strain the broth and discard the whole onions and bay leaves.
7. In a separate pan, heat the oil or melt the butter. Add the finely chopped onion and sauté until soft and translucent.
8. Add the diced carrots and sauté for a few more minutes. Stir in the tomatoes, paprika, and hot pepper (if using).
9. Once the meat is cool enough to handle, remove it from the bones and chop or shred it into small pieces.
10. Add the sautéed vegetables and the cooked meat back to the strained broth.
11. Bring the soup to a simmer and add the rice. Cook until the rice is tender, about 15–20 minutes.
12. In a bowl, whisk the eggs and yogurt together. To temper the mixture, slowly add a few ladles of the hot soup while whisking continuously.
13. Slowly pour the tempered egg-and-yogurt mixture back into the pot while stirring constantly. Do not let the soup boil after adding the liaison, as it may curdle.
14. Garnish and serve:
15. Season with salt and pepper to taste.
16. Stir in the fresh mint and parsley just before serving.

5. Nutritional Values

Per ~200 g serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: ~ 60-130 kcal
- Protein: ~ 4-13 g
- Fat: ~ 2-5 g
- Carbohydrates: ~ 6-12 g



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6. Nutritional profile:

- Lamb provides high-quality protein essential for building and repairing muscle tissue. A good source of iron, zinc, and B vitamins, particularly B12, which is crucial for red blood cell formation.
- Vegetables Contributes dietary fiber, which aids digestion. Provides vitamins, such as the vitamin C found in carrots. Carrots also provide carotenoids, which the body converts into vitamin A.
- Rice serves as a source of energy. Provides small amounts of minerals like magnesium and manganese.
- The long-simmering process extracts nutrients and minerals from the lamb bones and meat, creating a nutritious and hydrating base for the soup. Lamb bone broth contains collagen, which supports joint health.
- Thickening the soup with eggs and yogurt increases the fat and protein content.
- Yogurt is an excellent source of calcium.

7. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

- Galley safety: When cooking in a moving galley, always use pot holders to secure pots and pans to the stove. Avoid overfilling pots to minimize spills.
- Storage of provisions: Use stackable, sturdy containers to store dry ingredients and ensure all galley items are securely fastened to prevent shifting during rough weather.
- Waste management: Proper waste management is essential on a vessel, and food waste must be disposed of properly to avoid attracting pests or causing sanitation issues.
- Utilize a pressure cooker: A pressure cooker is an invaluable piece of galley equipment for preparing kurban chorba, as it can tenderize meat and cook the entire dish more quickly and efficiently. This also reduces energy consumption, a vital consideration on a vessel.

Conclusion:

A bowl of kurban chorba can be an excellent addition to a mariner's diet, offering a hearty, nutritious, and adaptable meal. Its slow-cooked nature and use of meat and vegetables align with many principles of onboard cooking, particularly for maintaining health and morale during long voyages.



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LAMB OFFAL TERRINE WITH HERBS

DROB DE MIEL

1. Origin and History

The Lamb Offal Terrine with Herbs - Drob is a sacred Easter dish, made after the Ignat-like slaughter of the Easter lamb. It uses lamb liver, heart, and kidneys, finely chopped and mixed with eggs, herbs, and green onions. It is baked in caul fat or pastry. The dish reflects Romanian thrift, respect for the animal, and celebration.

2. Cultural Aspects

Eaten cold on Easter morning, drob is often served with mustard, eggs, or bread. It symbolizes new beginnings and is rarely made outside springtime. Recipes are guarded in families and reflect regional twists.



3. Ingredients

- 600 g lamb offal (liver, kidney, heart)
- 4 boiled eggs (whole)
- 2 raw eggs
- 2 bunches green onions
- Dill, parsley, thyme
- 1 onion
- 1 tbsp oil
- Salt, pepper
- Optional: caul fat or puff pastry

4. Preparation

1. Boil offal with onion, bay leaf. Let cool and chop finely.
2. Mix with chopped greens, raw eggs, salt, pepper.
3. Line a tray with caul fat or pastry. Fill half mixture, place boiled eggs, cover with rest.
4. Bake ~45 min at 180°C until golden. Cool before slicing.

5. Nutritional Values (per ~150 g slice)

- Calories: ~380 kcal
- Protein: ~25 g
- Fat: ~26 g
- Carbs: ~6 g
- Iron: very high

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition

- Use Türkiye liver or chicken liver outside lamb season.
- Serve cold in buffet or packed rations.
- Excellent source of B12, iron, and selenium.
- Culturally resonant for Romanian diaspora or Orthodox events

Conclusion

Lamb Offal Terrine with Herbs is tradition baked into a loaf — a once-a-year expression of renewal, taste, and ancestral roots.



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MEATBALLS IN TOMATO SAUCE WITH MASHED POTATOES

CHIFTELE MARINATE CU PIURE DE CARTOFI

1. Origin and History

A post-Ottoman evolution of the Turkish kofte, Romanian meatballs - chiftele became a staple of household cuisine. The marinated version, where meatballs are simmered in a sweet-sour tomato sauce, likely developed in the 19th century with increased tomato use in Romanian kitchens.

2. Cultural Aspects

The Meatballs in Tomato Sauce with Mashed Potatoes - Chiftele marinate are among the most nostalgic school and family dishes. Served with mashed potatoes and pickles, they evoke cafeteria meals, Sunday lunches, and homemade flavor. They're beloved by all ages and commonly featured in meal plans due to their universality and adaptability.

3. Ingredients

For chiftele:

- 500 g minced pork or pork-beef mix
- 1 egg
- 1 onion, finely grated
- 2 tbsp breadcrumbs
- 2 garlic cloves
- Salt, pepper, thyme
- Oil for frying

For marinade sauce:

- 1 tbsp flour
- 2 tbsp oil
- 300 ml tomato juice or passata
- 1 tsp sugar
- 2 tbsp vinegar
- 200 ml water
- Bay leaf

For mashed potatoes:

- 800 g potatoes
- 30 g butter
- 100 ml milk
- Salt to taste

4. Preparation

1. Mix meatball ingredients and shape into balls. Fry or bake until browned.
2. In another pan, heat oil and flour, whisk to form a roux. Add tomato, water, vinegar, sugar, and bay leaf. Simmer 10–15 min.
3. Add meatballs to sauce and simmer 10–15 more minutes.
4. Boil potatoes, mash with butter and warm milk. Season.
5. Serve 3–4 meatballs over mash, topped with sauce.

5. Nutritional Values (per full portion)

- Calories: ~620 kcal
- Protein: ~28 g
- Fat: ~30 g
- Carbohydrates: ~55 g
- Fiber: ~4 g
- Salt: ~2 g

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition

- Highly scalable: meatballs can be batch-cooked and frozen.
- Tomato sauce offers natural preservation, reduces spoilage.
- Potatoes can be replaced with instant mash or rice for versatility.
- Popular across ages, easy to adapt with spices or textures.
- Balanced macronutrients — ideal for military, hospital, or school menus.

Conclusion

The Meatballs in Tomato Sauce with Mashed Potatoes are proof that simple food can be deeply satisfying and nutritionally balanced. When paired with mash and pickles, they become a culinary hug — versatile, filling, and familiar.



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MESHANA SKARA

1. Origin and history

Meshana skara (mixed grill) is a traditional Bulgarian dish whose origin is rooted in the shared culinary traditions of the Balkans and the broader Ottoman Empire. It reflects a history of grilling meat over an open flame, a practice influenced by centuries of cultural exchange in the region. The words kebabche and kyufte, key components of meshana skara, come from Turkish and Persian words for grilled or minced meat. The Ottoman presence in the Balkans introduced the culinary tradition of grilling spiced minced meat over an open fire. Over time, these dishes evolved into distinct local variations across different Balkan countries. In Bulgaria, the mixed grill typically features specific items like kebapche (an elongated minced meat sausage), kyufte (a round meatball), pork skewers (shishche), and a pork steak. During the communist era in Bulgaria (pre-1989), meshana skara became a fixture on restaurant menus. This made it a widespread and familiar dish for generations of Bulgarians. The availability of more diverse meats and spices after the fall of communism led to new variations, but the classic mixed grill remains a beloved national comfort food.

2. Cultural aspects

As a culinary staple, meshana skara is deeply embedded in Bulgarian culture and identity. Beyond being a hearty meal, the communal nature of the mixed grill makes it a centerpiece for social gatherings, celebrations, and traditional feasts. Meshana skara is a dish made for sharing. It's typically presented on a large platter piled with various grilled meats, encouraging a convivial dining experience with family and friends. This communal aspect is central to Bulgarian social gatherings, bringing people together around the "skara" (grill). For many Bulgarians, meshana skara represents a celebration of the country's rich culinary traditions. The dish is a modern expression of the region's long history of cooking meats over a fire, a practice influenced by centuries of cultural exchange in the Balkans.

3. Ingredients

- 4 to 6 pork neck or shoulder steaks (approx. 150–200 g each)
- 4 to 6 elongated pieces of minced meat (beef, pork, or a mix)
- 4 to 6 round meatballs, similar to kebapche but often with more seasoning and sometimes onion
- 4 to 6 skewers with cubed pork meat
- Salt
- Black pepper
- Cumin
- A small amount for greasing the grill

4. Preparation

Preparing the minced meats (kebapche and kyufte)

1. Combine minced beef, pork, or a mixture in a bowl.
2. Add a generous amount of cumin, salt, and pepper. For kyufte, you can also add a finely grated onion.
3. For best results, knead the meat mixture vigorously for 10–15 minutes. This helps develop the proteins, making the finished product juicier and holding its shape better.
4. Shape the mixture into elongated cylinders for kebapche and flat, round patties for kyufte.
5. Refrigerate the shaped meat for at least a few hours, or preferably overnight. This firms up the meat and allows the flavors to meld.

Grilling the meshana skara

1. Preheat a charcoal or gas grill to a medium-high temperature. Brush the grates with a small amount of oil to prevent sticking.
2. Place the pork steaks on the grill first, as they typically take the longest to cook. Turn them periodically.
3. Once the steaks are partially cooked, add the kebapche and kyufte to the grill. Cook until they are browned on all sides and cooked through.
4. The skewers cook relatively quickly, so place them on the grill last. Turn them until the pork is cooked through and lightly charred.
5. Once all the meat is cooked, let it rest for a few minutes before serving. This allows the juices to redistribute, ensuring a tender and moist result.

5. Nutritional Values

Per ~100 g serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: ~ 250 kcal
- Protein: ~ 20 g
- Fat: ~ 15 g
- Carbohydrates: ~ 5 g

6. Nutritional profile:

- Meshana skara is an excellent source of high-quality animal protein, which is essential for building and repairing muscle tissue.
- The dish has a substantial fat content, with some of it being saturated fat. The fat composition depends on the types and cuts of meat used.
- The meat itself contains minimal carbohydrates.
- The meats in meshana skara are a good source of essential vitamins and minerals, including: B-vitamins: Particularly B12, Iron, Zinc.



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7. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

- Storage: A ship's kitchen, or galley, relies heavily on frozen or preserved foods. To serve meshana skara at sea, the meats (kebapche, kyufte, pork steak, pork skewer) would need to be frozen or vacuum-sealed before the voyage.
- Cooking: While traditional meshana skara is grilled over an open fire, modern ship galleys have electric or gas stoves and ovens. A cook could pan-fry, broil, or bake the meats, potentially using a grill pan to get the desired char and flavor. Rail-mounted barbecue grills are also an option for cooking on deck in fair weather.
- Sides: Traditional side dishes like lyutenitsa (a relish) and bean salad with onions can be easily made with preserved or shelf-stable ingredients. French fries, a common side, can be made using fresh potatoes or frozen pre-cut varieties.
- Space and safety: A ship's galley is a compact workspace, so storage of ingredients and cooking equipment is crucial. All items must be secured to prevent spills or injury during rough seas.

Conclusion:

The hearty, grilled nature of meshana skara makes it a suitable and practical meal for mariners, with some adjustments for a ship's galley and storage. While not traditionally associated with sailors in the same way as fish or hardtack, its components are well-suited to the physical demands and communal eating culture on board a vessel.



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MOLDAVIAN PORK STEW TOCHITURĂ MOLDOVENEASCĂ

11. Origin and History

The Moldavian Pork Stew - Tochitură is one of Romania's most iconic traditional stews, particularly in the Moldavia region of Romania. Its name comes from the verb "a topi" meaning "to melt," referring to the slow rendering of pork fat during cooking. Originally prepared after the pig slaughtering ritual (Ignat, around Christmas), tochitură was a way to use various pork cuts, organs, and fat in a rich, slow-cooked dish. Over time, regional variants emerged—some with tomato sauce, others without—and it became a symbol of festive, rustic Romanian cuisine.



2. Cultural Aspects

The Moldavian Pork Stew is more than a dish—it's a culinary ritual, served during holidays, weddings, or Sunday family meals. It's commonly paired with mămăligă (Romanian polenta), fried eggs, and brined cheese (telemea), symbolizing abundance. The meat used varies from simple pork cubes to an assortment of pork liver, kidneys, sausages, and smoked meat. The dish reflects Romania's agrarian heritage, where nothing was wasted and meals were shared communally.

3. Ingredients

- 700 g pork shoulder or mixed pork cuts (including some smoked meat or sausages)
- 2 tbsp pork lard or sunflower oil
- 1 medium onion (optional, not always traditional)
- 3–4 garlic cloves
- 1 tsp sweet paprika
- 1/2 tsp chili flakes (optional)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 200 ml dry red wine
- 100 ml water or pork broth
- (Optional) 2 tbsp tomato paste (in some modern interpretations)

For Serving:

- 300 g mămăligă (polenta)
- 2 eggs (fried)
- 100 g telemea or feta cheese
- Pickles (gherkins or sour cabbage)

4. Preparation

1. Cut the meat into 2–3 cm cubes. If using sausage or smoked meat, slice accordingly.
2. Render the lard (or heat oil) in a heavy pan or cast iron pot.
3. Add the meat and sear until browned on all sides. Reduce heat and let it cook slowly to release fat and juices (~20 min).
4. Optionally add chopped onion and sauté until soft.
5. Add minced garlic, paprika, chili, salt, and pepper. Stir for 1 minute.
6. Deglaze with red wine, allow alcohol to evaporate.
7. Add water or broth. Simmer covered on low heat for ~45 minutes until meat is tender. Add more water if needed.
8. (Optional) Add tomato paste in the last 10–15 minutes for a saucier version.
9. While the stew simmers, prepare mămăligă: boil 1 L water with salt, add 300 g cornmeal slowly, stirring continuously until thick (~20 min).
10. Serve stew hot with mămăligă, fried eggs on top, crumbled cheese, and pickles.

5. Nutritional Values

Per ~400 g serving (with sides):

- Calories: ~680 kcal
- Protein: ~38 g
- Fat: ~42 g (depending on meat cuts and cooking fat)
- Carbohydrates: ~35 g (from polenta)
- Fiber: ~3 g
- Salt: ~2.2 g

Nutritional profile:

- High in protein and fat from pork and eggs, providing sustained energy.
- Polenta adds complex carbohydrates, low in gluten, ideal for digestion.
- High sodium if using smoked meat and cheese—moderation recommended.
- Rich in B-vitamins and minerals from organ meats and pork.

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition

- Energy-dense and satisfying: Ideal for cold environments or high-energy jobs.
- Storage: Use canned pork, long-life cheese (e.g., vacuum-sealed telemea), and instant polenta for longer shelf life.
- Protein variety: Alternate pork with chicken liver or Türkiye sausage for reduced fat.
- Salt-conscious version: Limit smoked products or cheese when sodium control is essential.
- Cultural adaptation: Embrace Mediterranean variants by swapping mămăligă with couscous or bulgur.
- Hydration: Serve with acidic or hydrating sides like pickles or beetroot salad

Conclusion

The Moldavian Pork Stew is a flavorful, deeply rooted Romanian dish that balances richness, tradition, and adaptability. When modernized with leaner meats and salt moderation, it becomes a nutritious, morale-boosting meal suitable for remote operations, communal kitchens, or festive occasions alike.



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MUSAKA

1. Origin and history

The history of musaka is complex and multifaceted, tracing its roots from the Middle East through the Ottoman Empire and into the culinary traditions of the Balkans and Greece. While the creamy béchamel-topped version is widely recognized as Greek, many countries in the region have their own distinct variations. The word musaka is believed to derive from the Arabic word *musaqqa'a*, meaning "moistened" or "soaked". Bulgarian musaka is most often made with potatoes and ground pork or beef, not eggplant. It is typically topped with a simple yogurt and egg mixture, rather than a thick béchamel. Summer savory is a common spice used in the Bulgarian preparation.

2. Cultural aspects

Musaka is more than just a dish; it's deeply rooted in the culture and national identity of several Balkan and Eastern Mediterranean countries. Its cultural significance varies greatly depending on the region, reflecting different histories, traditions, and tastes. Bulgarian musaka is regarded as a quintessential homemade dish. It's often prepared for a family lunch or dinner, and its taste is closely associated with childhood and family traditions in Bulgaria. It is prepared with potatoes and minced meat, is considered warm and hearty comfort food, ideal for colder months. It evokes a feeling of coziness and home. The use of chubritsa (summer savory) in Bulgarian moussaka is a distinctive feature that reflects local culinary practices and tastes.

3. Ingredients

- 1 kg (2 lbs) potatoes, peeled and cubed
- 700 g (1.5 lbs) ground meat (mixed pork and beef is traditional)
- 1 large onion, minced
- 1 large carrot, cut into small cubes or grated
- 1 tomato, or a few tablespoons of canned tomato cubes
- 4–6 tablespoons vegetable oil
- 1 tablespoon summer savory (chubritsa)
- 1 tablespoon fresh parsley, minced
- 1 teaspoon paprika, sweet or hot
- Salt and black pepper, to taste
- 1 cup of water, or enough to partially cover the potatoes
- 3 large eggs
- 1 cup plain yogurt (full-fat Greek yogurt works well)
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- A pinch of baking soda
- Salt, to taste

4. Preparation

1. Peel and dice the potatoes into small, uniform cubes. Finely chop the onion and grate the carrot.
2. In a large, deep frying pan, heat about half the oil. Add the onions and sauté until soft and translucent. Add the carrots and cook for a few more minutes.
3. In the same pan, add the remaining oil and brown the ground meat, breaking it up with a spoon as it cooks. Once it changes color, remove it from the heat.
4. In a large baking dish, combine the potatoes, browned meat, and sautéed onions and carrots. Add the diced tomatoes, summer savory, paprika, salt, and pepper. Mix everything well to ensure even distribution.
5. Pour enough water into the dish to partially submerge the potato mixture. Bake in a preheated oven at 180°C (360°F) for about 40–50 minutes, or until the potatoes are cooked and most of the water has been absorbed.
6. While the moussaka is baking, prepare the topping. Whisk the eggs and yogurt together in a mixing bowl. Stir in the flour and a pinch of baking soda until the mixture is smooth and without lumps.
7. Carefully remove the moussaka from the oven. Pour the yogurt and egg mixture over the top, spreading it evenly.
8. Return the dish to the oven and bake for another 10–15 minutes, or until the topping is golden brown and puffy.
9. Allow the moussaka to cool slightly before cutting into squares and serving. It pairs wonderfully with a side of plain yogurt.

5. Nutritional Values

Per ~100 g serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: ~ 120 kcal
- Protein: ~ 4.9 g
- Fat: ~ 2.5 g
- Carbohydrates: ~ 25 g

6. Nutritional profile:

- The yogurt-and-egg topping in Bulgarian musaka is lower in fat and calories than the rich, butter- and flour-based béchamel sauce in Greek versions.
- Using potatoes (Bulgarian-style) results in a higher carbohydrate content, while eggplant (Greek-style) lowers the total carbohydrates.
- The type and fat content of the ground meat significantly affect the dish's fat and calorie count. Frying the vegetables or browning the meat in extra oil will further increase these values.
- The amount of salt added during preparation and to the topping impacts the overall sodium content. For those monitoring salt intake, it is important to add it judiciously.

7. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

- Shelf-stable ingredients: The galley cook can use shelf-stable or frozen items to adapt the traditional recipe. For example:
- Milk: UHT (ultra-high-temperature) milk or powdered milk can replace fresh milk for the yogurt and egg topping.
- Tomatoes: Canned tomatoes are a standard and reliable ingredient on a ship.
- Pressure cooker: For quicker preparation, a pressure cooker could be used to tenderize any meat or cook the potatoes before assembly. This also helps contain heat and strong aromas within the galley.
- Secure equipment: For safety during rough seas, high-sided baking dishes and non-slip mats are essential. The cook can prepare and bake the moussaka during calm periods and then reheat it as needed.
- Storage: Leftover moussaka stores well and can be served over several days, minimizing the need to cook from scratch for every meal.

Conclusion:

Moussaka is an excellent dish for mariners, combining satisfying protein, carbohydrates, and vegetables into a hearty and convenient-to-serve casserole. The Bulgarian version, made with potatoes and ground meat, is particularly well-suited for a ship's galley due to its use of common, long-lasting ingredients.



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OLD-FASHIONED GREEK EASTER SOUP

MAGIRITSA

1. Origin and History

The Taste of Easter - discover how the Greeks prepare the traditional Easter soup made from offal. Magiritsa is prepared exclusively for Easter in Greece and is eaten right after the midnight liturgy, as it holds a special symbolism - it marks the end of the Great Lent, which lasts for 40 days.



2. Cultural Aspects

The traditional soup that Greeks eat on the evening of Holy Saturday! This foolproof recipe features lamb pluck, vegetables, herbs and a zingy egg-lemon sauce for a hearty dish!

4. Ingredients

1 kilo lamb pluck
2 bay leaves
1/2 lemon
2-3 sprig(s) rosemary
3 tablespoon(s) olive oil
1 onion
1 clove(s) of garlic
1 bunch dill
6 spring onions
75 g brandy
1,5 liter water
1 chicken bouillon cube
salt
pepper
2 lettuces
For the egg-lemon sauce
2 eggs, medium
lemon zest, from 2 lemons
lemon juice, from 2 lemons
1 teaspoon(s) corn starch

Preparation

1. Place a pot over high heat, add water, salt, and bay leaves, and bring it to a boil.
2. Add the lamb pluck to the pot, juice the lemon, and then put the lemon shell into the pot as well.
3. Add the rosemary and boil the lamb pluck for 15-20 minutes. Occasionally immerse the pluck into the water with a serving spoon.
4. Remove the pot from the heat, transfer the lamb pluck to a chopping board, and then finely chop it.
5. Place a second pot over high heat, add the olive oil, and let it heat up well.
6. Finely chop the onion and garlic, add them to the pot, and sauté them for 1-2 minutes.
7. Finely chop the dill stems, add them to the pot, and set the leaves aside.
8. Finely chop the white part of the spring onions, add it to the pot, and set the green part aside.
9. Add the lamb pluck, mix with a wooden spoon, and sauté it for 7-8 minutes until nicely browned.
10. Deglaze the pot with the brandy, add the water, chicken bouillon cube, salt, and pepper, and mix well.
11. Lower the heat, put the lid on the pot, and simmer the soup for 20-30 minutes.
12. Finely chop the lettuce, dill, and green part of the spring onions you set aside, and add them to the pot.
13. Put the lid on the pot again and simmer the soup for another 10 minutes.

For the egg-lemon sauce

- Put the eggs, lemon zest, lemon juice, and corn starch into a bowl, and whisk them well.
- Place a sieve over the pot, dip it in, and use a ladle to take the “filtered” water, slowly add it to the bowl, and whisk vigorously. In total, add 5-6 ladlefuls.
- Pour the whole egg-lemon sauce into the pot and stir with the ladle.
- Remove the pot from the heat.
- Serve with olive oil and pepper.

5. Nutritional Values

Per portion serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: 263 kcal
- Protein: 26g
- Fat: 11g
- Saturated Fat: 2.9g
- Carbs: 12g
- Sugar: 2.3g
- Fiber: 1.6g
- Sodium: 0.71g



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Nutritional profile:

- Magiritsa is relatively nutrient-dense
- providing protein, iron, and B-vitamins from the lamb offal, as well as vitamins A, C, and K from the fresh greens.
- it can be high in cholesterol and saturated fats due to the organ meat, making moderation key for those managing heart health or cholesterol levels.
- This hearty soup is a comforting dish deeply rooted in Greek culinary tradition, symbolizing renewal and breaking the Lenten fast with its rich, restorative ingredients.

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

- **Protein & iron boost:** The offal in magiritsa provides good amounts of protein and iron — useful for crew who may have physically demanding tasks. For example, one standard recipe lists ~21 g protein per portion.
- **Energy & fat:** Because offal is rich in fat (in one recipe: 40 g fat, saturated fat ~11 g) per serving. On a ship where crew may be less active or on watch schedules, monitor fat/energy balance.
- **Greens & vegetables:** Ensure enough fresh greens (lettuce, dill, parsley) to provide vitamins, fibre and balance the richness of the offal.
- **Portion size:** Scale portions properly so that the meal is satisfying but not overly heavy before a watch or high-alert operation.
- **Dietary variety / alternatives:** Some crew may avoid organ meats for preference or health reasons — consider a “lighter” version (see below) to accommodate dietary needs.
- **Sodium & seasoning:** Onboard meals often trend saltier; given the richness, you might moderate salt to reduce risk of over-consumption of sodium (important at sea, where hydration and circulation are key).
- **Simplify offal mix:** Some recipes call for full offal mix (liver, lungs, intestines). Onboard, you might simplify to liver + heart or just liver if supply is limited or crew preference low.
- **Option for “lighter version”:** A vegetarian or “reduced offal” version may help—one blog offered a mushrooms + greens version for those avoiding offal.
- **Rice or no rice:** Some versions include rice to extend the soup (helpful for feeding more crew) while others omit.
- **Batch size:** Plan pot size, macronutrient breakdown, and serving portions according to number of crew on watch vs off-watch.
- **Accompaniments:** Serve with bread or crusty roll (to provide more carbohydrate). On a ship, ensure accessible portion of carbohydrate for energy.
- **Flavor balance:** Consider the crew’s palate—lemon and dill brighten the rich offal. Onboard, if crew accustomed to mild flavours, ensure sufficient lemon/herb to offset heaviness.

Conclusion:

High protein from offal helps with repair/maintenance of muscle (useful for physically active crew). Iron & B-vitamins from organ meats support fatigue resilience. Greens/herbs supply micronutrients (vitamins A, C, K) and fibre. Egg-lemon sauce gives a lighter creamy texture and some fat for satisfaction, but should be managed given richness.



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PORK KNUCKLE WITH BEANS

CIOLAN CU FASOLE

1. Origin and History

The Pork Knuckle with Beans - Romania's national dish for December 1st, this meal originated from traditional slow-cooked rural winter fare. It combines smoked pork knuckle (ciolan afumat) with white beans, offering durability, satiety, and flavor. Once seen as "poor man's food," it is now a festive staple.

2. Cultural Aspects

Served at military canteens, festivals, and national celebrations, it's often eaten in winter and linked with communal events. The generous portion of meat over creamy beans signals abundance and heritage.



3. Ingredients

- 1 smoked pork knuckle (~1.2 kg)
- 500 g dry white beans (or 3 cans)
- 1 onion, 1 carrot, 1 parsnip, 1 bay leaf
- 1 tbsp tomato paste
- Salt, pepper, thyme
- Fresh parsley

4. Preparation

1. Soak beans overnight. Boil and discard water twice.
2. Simmer pork knuckle for ~2 hours with spices. Set aside.
3. In a pot, sauté chopped onion, add tomato paste.
4. Add beans, vegetables, some pork stock. Cook until tender.
5. For serving: place whole knuckle over a bed of beans. Grill knuckle for crispy skin.

5. Nutritional Values (per portion with 300 g ciolan)

- Calories: ~740 kcal
- Protein: ~40 g
- Fat: ~42 g
- Carbs: ~38 g
- Salt: ~3 g

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition

- Protein- and iron-rich, great for recovery or cold climates.
- Use pre-cooked beans and smoked pork for efficiency.
- Highly reheatable, ideal for military or event catering.
- Can be deconstructed into soup and stew variations.

Conclusion

The Pork Knuckle with Beans is both rustic and ceremonial. A hero dish of national pride, it balances smoky indulgence with fiber-rich sustenance.



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RĂDĂUȚI-STYLE CHICKEN SOUP

CIORBĂ RĂDĂUȚEANĂ

1. Origin and History

The Rădăuți-Style Chicken Soup (Ciorbă Rădăuțeană) was first created in the 1970s by a chef named Cornelia Dumitrescu in the town of Rădăuți, Suceava County, Romania. It was designed as a milder alternative to "Ciorbă de burtă" (Tripe Soup), aimed at those who found tripe unappetizing but enjoyed the creamy, garlicky flavor profile. By replacing tripe with tender chicken breast, the dish gained widespread popularity across Romania and is now considered a modern classic, especially in restaurants and family meals.

2. Cultural Aspects

This soup is highly appreciated for its balance of comfort and flavor. It's a go-to Sunday dish and frequently served during holidays or family gatherings. The use of chicken instead of offal makes it more universally appealing. Its creamy, slightly sour, and garlicky taste is beloved across generations, and its consistent texture makes it especially suited for children and older adults. It symbolizes culinary creativity within Romanian tradition, showing how chefs innovate with local tastes.



3. Ingredients

- 500 g chicken breast (or thighs for more flavor)
- 1 onion
- 1 carrot
- 1 celery stalk or small root
- 1 parsnip
- 3–4 garlic cloves
- 3 egg yolks
- 200 g sour cream (20–25% fat)
- 1 tbsp vinegar (adjust to taste)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 tsp whole peppercorns
- Optional: parsley for garnish

4. Preparation

1. In a large pot, boil chicken in 2.5–3 L of water with a pinch of salt, bay leaves, and peppercorns. Skim off foam regularly.
2. Add peeled whole vegetables (onion, carrot, celery, parsnip). Simmer for 1 hour until meat and vegetables are tender.
3. Remove the meat and vegetables. Strain the broth for clarity.
4. Shred the chicken into thin strips. Dice the cooked carrot and celery if you want to re-add for texture.
5. In a bowl, mix sour cream, egg yolks, and crushed garlic.
6. Temper the mixture by gradually adding hot broth while stirring constantly.
7. Pour the tempered cream mixture into the broth slowly, stirring to prevent curdling. Do not boil.
8. Add the shredded chicken back. Season with salt, pepper, and vinegar to taste.
9. Optionally, sprinkle with chopped parsley before serving.

5. Nutritional Values

Per ~350 ml serving:

- Calories: ~300 kcal
- Protein: ~28 g
- Fat: ~18 g
- Carbohydrates: ~6 g
- Fiber: ~1.2 g
- Salt: ~1.5 g

Nutritional Profile:

- High protein, low carb: Ideal for light, balanced meals.
- Moderate fat from sour cream and eggs contributes to satiety.
- Good digestibility, suitable for recovery diets or light dinners.
- Collagen and minerals from simmered chicken bones (if used) boost skin and joint health.

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition

- Gentle on the stomach: Suitable for recovery meals or light-duty shifts.
- Shelf adaptation: Use dehydrated vegetables, powdered sour cream, and pasteurized egg mix for field kitchens.
- Customization: Easily made vegetarian (swap meat with tofu and use veggie stock).
- Morale-friendly: Comfort food with a clean, pleasant flavor profile—ideal for mixed-age crews.
- Salt control: Offer vinegar separately to help reduce total sodium in broth.

Conclusion

The Rădăuți-Style Chicken Soup is a brilliant evolution of Romanian culinary tradition—blending comforting textures with a bright, clean flavor. It showcases how traditional recipes can be adapted for health, taste, and simplicity without losing cultural value. Suitable for wide audiences, it remains one of the most beloved soups in Romania today.



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ROMANIAN CHICKEN SOUP WITH TOMATOES

SUPĂ DE PUI CU ROȘII

1. Origin and History

The Romanian Chicken Soup with Tomatoes is a lighter variation of traditional chicken soup, enriched with the sweetness and acidity of tomatoes. While Romanian in identity, it reflects Mediterranean and Balkan influence, particularly in summer when tomatoes are abundant. Known for its bright color and mild flavor, this soup is popular in southern regions like Oltenia and Dobrogea.

2. Cultural Aspects

A staple in summer menus, this soup is loved for its light, refreshing character. It's a go-to meal during hot months, especially served lukewarm with crusty bread. Often used to ease digestion or as a first course at larger meals, it's ideal for children and elderly. Some variations include rice or orzo, while others keep it fully clear.



3. Ingredients

- 1 whole chicken or 500 g chicken thighs/wings (with bone)
- 2 carrots
- 1 onion
- 1 parsnip
- 1 bell pepper
- 3–4 ripe tomatoes or 1 can diced tomatoes
- 1–2 tbsp rice or orzo pasta (optional)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1–2 L water
- Fresh parsley or dill
- Optional: 1 tsp sugar to balance acidity

4. Preparation

1. Simmer chicken in salted water. Skim foam and cook for ~1 hour.
2. Add whole or sliced vegetables: carrots, onion, parsnip, pepper.
3. After 20 minutes, add peeled, chopped tomatoes or canned equivalent.
4. Add rice or orzo if using. Simmer until grains are tender.
5. Adjust seasoning. Add sugar if tomatoes are too acidic.
6. Remove meat and slice or shred it. Optionally, return to soup or serve on the side.
7. Garnish with fresh dill or parsley. Serve hot or warm.

5. Nutritional Values

Per ~350 ml bowl (with rice):

- Calories: ~260 kcal
- Protein: ~22 g
- Fat: ~9 g
- Carbohydrates: ~18 g
- Fiber: ~2.5 g
- Salt: ~1.5 g

Nutritional Profile:

- Lean and digestible: great for recovery or hydration.
- Tomatoes provide Vitamin C, lycopene, and fiber.
- Low calorie, low fat, and mild enough for all ages.
- Rice adds complex carbs for energy balance.

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition

- Highly reheatable and storable, even in frozen form.
- Tomato paste or canned tomatoes offer shelf-stable flavor.
- Excellent starter or light main on hot days or tropical missions.
- Can be veganized by omitting chicken and using chickpeas or tofu.
- Easy to prepare in bulk with consistent quality.

Conclusion

The Romanian Chicken Soup with Tomatoes is a gentle, vibrant, and nourishing dish—a reflection of Romanian seasonality and health-focused simplicity. Ideal for diverse settings and dietary needs, it brings color and balance to any menu.



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ROMANIAN CHICKEN SOUP WITH SEMOLINA DUMPLINGS

SUPĂ CU GĂLUŞTE

1. Origin and History

The Romanian Chicken Soup with Semolina Dumplings (Supă cu găluște) is a cornerstone of Romanian comfort food, often served during Sunday lunches, holidays, or to soothe ailments. Its roots lie in Central and Eastern European cuisines, with influences from Austrian and Hungarian culinary traditions. Romanian versions are known for their light chicken broth base and delicate semolina dumplings (găluște de gris), prized for their fluffy texture. Over generations, this dish became a household favorite across all Romanian regions due to its simplicity, digestibility, and warming qualities.



2. Cultural Aspects

This soup is symbolic of home-cooked care—often the first thing served to children, convalescents, or guests. Making fluffy dumplings is considered an art passed down through generations, and mastering them is a point of pride for many Romanian cooks. Unlike heavier soups, supă cu găluște is light yet nourishing, often used as a starter before festive main courses. It emphasizes minimalism and balance in Romanian rural cooking.

3. Ingredients

For the soup:

- 1 whole chicken or 600–800 g chicken parts (with bone, e.g., wings, back)
- 2 carrots
- 1 parsley root
- 1/2 celery root or 2 stalks
- 1 onion
- 2 bay leaves
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2.5–3 L water
- Fresh parsley for garnish

For the dumplings (găluște):

- 2 eggs
- 6–8 tbsp fine semolina (gris)
- 1 pinch salt
- 1 tsp oil or melted butter (optional)

4. Preparation

1. Boil chicken with salt and bay leaves in water. Skim foam and simmer for 1–1.5 hours.
2. Add whole peeled vegetables and simmer until tender (~40 minutes).
3. Remove meat and vegetables. Strain broth for clarity and return to low heat.
4. Prepare dumpling batter: beat eggs lightly, then slowly add semolina, salt, and oil. Let rest for 10–15 minutes.
5. When broth is simmering, form dumplings by dropping small spoonfuls into the pot.
6. Cook on low heat, covered, for 10–12 minutes until dumplings expand and float.
7. Optional: Add sliced cooked carrots or shredded chicken before serving.
8. Garnish with chopped parsley. Serve hot.

5. Nutritional Values

Per ~350 ml serving (with 3 dumplings):

- Calories: ~250 kcal
- Protein: ~20 g
- Fat: ~10 g
- Carbohydrates: ~15 g
- Fiber: ~2 g
- Salt: ~1.3 g

Nutritional Profile:

- High-quality protein from chicken and eggs.
- Complex carbs from semolina provide sustained energy.
- Low fat if skinless chicken is used.
- Low to moderate calorie option, good for lighter diets.
- Rich in vitamins A, B12, and iron.

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition

- Easily digestible: Perfect for recovery meals, children, or sensitive diets.
- Customizable: Use dehydrated veggies and powdered egg mix for field kitchens.
- Protein boost: Add shredded chicken or tofu for vegetarian alternatives.
- Portion control: Light soup that fits within low-calorie or diabetic meal plans.
- Cultural versatility: Popular across various cultures; well-received in multicultural crews.
- Storage: Dumplings can be frozen raw or pre-cooked and reheated in broth.

Conclusion

The Romanian Chicken Soup with Semolina Dumplings is the embodiment of Romanian comfort and care—a light, balanced, and soulful soup that transcends generations. Loved for its simplicity and warmth, it remains an ideal choice for both everyday meals and formal settings where a gentle yet nourishing start is needed.



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ROMANIAN PORK ASPIC / HEAD CHEESE PIFTIE DE PORC

1. Origin and History

Known as “răcituri”, this gelatinous meat dish was designed to preserve pork without refrigeration, especially head, ears, and trotters. The natural gelatin from the bones creates a cold jelly, set without additives.

2. Cultural Aspects

Always made for Christmas or New Year, piftie is eaten cold, often with horseradish or mustard. In Orthodox culture, it is served on St. John's Day (Jan 7). Its preparation is communal and symbolic.



3. Ingredients

- 1 pig's head (or ears, trotters)
- 5 garlic cloves
- Salt, peppercorns, bay leaf
- Optional: chili, boiled egg for garnish

4. Preparation

1. Boil meat for 4–5 hours until gelatin is released.
2. Strain broth, add crushed garlic.
3. Distribute meat in molds. Pour broth over.
4. Refrigerate overnight.
5. Serve cold with horseradish or pickles.

5. Nutritional Values (per ~250 g portion)

- Calories: ~280 kcal
- Protein: ~22 g
- Fat: ~20 g
- Collagen: very high
- Salt: ~2 g

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition

- Shelf-stable when chilled, perfect for festive buffets.
- Use beef shank or poultry for lighter gelatin dishes.
- Collagen-rich: supports joint health.
- Flavor profile may be strong for non-native palates.

Conclusion

The Romanian Pork Aspic is a culinary relic of pre-refrigeration Romania — preserved in flavor, function, and seasonal tradition.



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ROMANIAN SOUR BEEF SOUP CIORBĂ DE VITĂ

1. Origin and History

The Romanian Sour Beef Soup is a traditional Romanian sour soup made with beef, root vegetables, and a fermented souring agent like *borş* (fermented wheat bran liquid). It likely evolved from Ottoman and Balkan culinary traditions, enriched with local produce and fermentation methods. Throughout the countryside, it was common in peasant diets due to the availability of home-raised cattle and fermented *borş*, used both for its taste and probiotic qualities.

2. Cultural Aspects

This soup reflects seasonal cooking and agricultural lifestyle, being adaptable to whatever vegetables are available. It is sour, savory, and warming—served all over Romania, especially in Moldavia and Muntenia. It's considered one of the most robust and balanced ciorbe, providing a complete meal when served with bread or hot chili. Often featured in family gatherings or weekend meals, it is appreciated for its depth of flavor and nutritional value.



3. Ingredients

- 500–700 g beef (brisket, shank, or rib – with some bone)
- 2 carrots
- 1 parsnip
- 1 celery root or 2 stalks
- 1 onion
- 2 potatoes (optional)
- 2 tomatoes or 1 tbsp tomato paste
- 1 bell pepper
- 2 tbsp rice (optional)
- 1.5–2 L water
- 500 ml *borş* (or lemon juice/vinegar if not available)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 bay leaves
- Parsley or lovage (leuștean) for garnish

4. Preparation

1. Boil beef in salted water with bay leaves. Simmer for 1.5–2 hours until tender. Skim foam.
2. Remove meat, dice it, and return to the pot.
3. Add chopped carrot, onion, celery, pepper, and rice if using. Simmer until soft (~30 minutes).
4. Add chopped tomatoes or paste, diced potatoes if using, and cook for another 15–20 minutes.
5. In a separate pot, boil the *borş*, then add it to the main soup. Simmer for 5 more minutes.
6. Season with salt and pepper. Remove from heat.
7. Garnish with chopped lovage or parsley before serving. Offer sour cream or chili on the side.

5. Nutritional Values

Per ~400 ml serving:

- Calories: ~300 kcal
- Protein: ~28 g
- Fat: ~12 g
- Carbohydrates: ~15 g
- Fiber: ~3 g
- Salt: ~1.7 g

Nutritional Profile:

- Balanced protein-fat-carb meal.
- Collagen-rich from beef cuts with bone.
- Fermented *borş* may aid digestion with natural probiotics.
- Low glycemic index, suitable for diabetics if rice/potatoes are limited.

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition

- Use frozen beef cuts or canned beef for longer storage.
- *Borş* substitute: Lemon juice or citric acid can mimic acidity if fermentation isn't feasible.
- High in protein and excellent for cold-weather operations.
- Salt-conscious when paired with pickles or bread.
- Can be portioned and reheated without losing texture.

Conclusion

The Romanian Sour Beef Soup combines Romanian heritage and nutritional integrity. Sour, warming, and complete, it remains one of the top choices for traditional meal planning in institutional or shipboard kitchens.



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ROMANIAN SOUR MEATBALL SOUP CIORBĂ CU PERIȘOARE

1. Origin and History

The Romanian Sour Meatball Soup is a staple in Romanian home cooking. It originated as a fusion between the Ottoman köfte soups and local sour "ciorbă" styles, evolving into a well-balanced, complete meal. The hallmark of this soup is the combination of light meatballs (perișoare) and a sour, herby broth enriched with vegetables. Over time, it became a signature first course in Romanian family dinners and holiday feasts.

2. Cultural Aspects

This soup is deeply associated with childhood, holidays, and home care. Making the perișoare is often a shared ritual, passed from grandparents to grandchildren. It appears frequently in multi-course meals, including weddings and religious feasts. In many households, the ability to make tender, flavorful meatballs without breaking them is a marker of culinary skill.



3. Ingredients

- 500–700 g beef (brisket, shank, or rib – with some bone)
- 2 carrots
- 1 parsnip
- 1 celery root or 2 stalks
- 1 onion
- 2 potatoes (optional)
- 2 tomatoes or 1 tbsp tomato paste
- 1 bell pepper
- 2 tbsp rice (optional)
- 1.5–2 L water
- 500 ml borș (or lemon juice/vinegar if not available)
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 2 bay leaves
- Parsley or lovage (leuștean) for garnish

4. Preparation

1. Boil beef in salted water with bay leaves. Simmer for 1.5–2 hours until tender. Skim foam.
2. Remove meat, dice it, and return to the pot.
3. Add chopped carrot, onion, celery, pepper, and rice if using. Simmer until soft (~30 minutes).
4. Add chopped tomatoes or paste, diced potatoes if using, and cook for another 15–20 minutes.
5. In a separate pot, boil the borș, then add it to the main soup. Simmer for 5 more minutes.
6. Season with salt and pepper. Remove from heat.
7. Garnish with chopped lovage or parsley before serving. Offer sour cream or chili on the side.

5. Nutritional Values

Per ~400 ml serving:

- Calories: ~300 kcal
- Protein: ~28 g
- Fat: ~12 g
- Carbohydrates: ~15 g
- Fiber: ~3 g
- Salt: ~1.7 g

Nutritional Profile:

- Balanced protein-fat-carb meal.
- Collagen-rich from beef cuts with bone.
- Fermented borș may aid digestion with natural probiotics.
- Low glycemic index, suitable for diabetics if rice/potatoes are limited.

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition

- Use frozen beef cuts or canned beef for longer storage.
- Borș substitute: Lemon juice or citric acid can mimic acidity if fermentation isn't feasible.
- High in protein and excellent for cold-weather operations.
- Salt-conscious when paired with pickles or bread.
- Can be portioned and reheated without losing texture.

Conclusion

The Romanian Sour Beef Soup combines Romanian heritage and nutritional integrity. Sour, warming, and complete, it remains one of the top choices for traditional meal planning in institutional or shipboard kitchens.



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ROMANIAN TRIPE SOUP

CIORBĂ DE BURTĂ

1. Origin and History

The Romanian Tripe Soup is a traditional Romanian sour soup made from beef tripe, known for its rich, creamy broth and tangy flavor. Its roots trace back to Ottoman and Balkan cuisines, influenced by dishes like Turkish *işkembe çorbası*. In Romania, it evolved with local flavors—using sour cream, vinegar, and egg yolks for richness and garlic for intensity. Widely popular since the 19th century, it became a staple in restaurants, particularly as a “hangover cure” due to its hearty, restorative qualities.

2. Cultural Aspects

The Romanian Tripe Soup holds a prestigious place in Romanian culinary identity—served at weddings, festive events, and Sunday family meals. Loved across social classes, it symbolizes warmth, tradition, and culinary pride. It's also a “test dish” for many restaurants and home cooks: mastering it shows skill in balancing strong ingredients like vinegar and tripe while achieving the signature creamy texture.

3. Ingredients

- 1.2 kg cleaned beef tripe (precooked if possible)
- 500 g beef bones (for broth)
- 2 carrots
- 1 parsley root
- 1 celery stalk or small root
- 1 onion
- 4–5 garlic cloves
- 3 egg yolks
- 250 ml sour cream (20–25% fat)
- 2–3 tbsp vinegar (adjust to taste)
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 tsp peppercorns
- Salt to taste
- Optional: chili pepper for serving



4. Preparation

1. Boil the beef bones in ~3 L water with a teaspoon of salt, bay leaves, and peppercorns. Simmer for 1.5–2 hours, skimming foam.
2. Add chopped carrots, celery, parsley root, and onion. Continue simmering for another 45 minutes.
3. If using raw tripe, boil separately until soft (1–2 hours). If precooked, rinse well and slice into thin strips (1 x 5 cm).
4. Strain the broth and discard vegetables and bones. Return the clear broth to the pot.
5. Add the sliced tripe to the broth and simmer for 15–20 minutes.
6. In a bowl, mix egg yolks, sour cream, and crushed garlic. Temper by adding a ladle of hot broth while stirring continuously.
7. Slowly pour the mixture into the pot while stirring to avoid curdling. Heat gently—do not boil.
8. Adjust seasoning with salt, vinegar, and additional garlic to your taste.
9. Serve hot with sour cream, vinegar, or chili pepper on the side.

5. Nutritional Values

Per ~400 ml bowl:

- Calories: ~370 kcal
- Protein: ~30 g
- Fat: ~22 g
- Carbohydrates: ~8 g
- Fiber: ~1.5 g
- Salt: ~1.8 g

Nutritional Profile:

- High protein from tripe and egg yolks.
- High in collagen due to slow-boiled bones—beneficial for joints and skin.
- Moderate fat content, mainly from sour cream and egg yolks.
- Low in carbs, making it a good option for low-carb diets.
- Sodium may be high depending on added salt and vinegar.

6. Recommendations for Institutional or Onboard Nutrition

- Hydration support: Ideal after physical exertion or cold-weather exposure due to its warmth and salt content.
- Shelf-stable version: Use canned tripe, powdered sour cream, and egg substitute for shipboard kitchens or field stations.
- Salt moderation: Reduce salt in the broth and offer vinegar on the side to allow personal adjustment.
- Vegetable balance: Pair with fresh salad or pickled vegetables for fiber and vitamins.
- Cultural significance: Ideal for Romanian crews or teams in international missions where traditional comfort foods can boost morale.

Conclusion

Romanian Tripe Soup is a richly textured, flavor-packed Romanian classic that blends hearty tradition with nutritional benefits. Adaptable to institutional kitchens and deeply tied to Romanian identity, it delivers comfort and sustenance in one satisfying bowl.



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SARMA

1. Origin and history

Sarma is a popular dish in the Balkans, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East, with a history rooted in the Ottoman Empire. The name comes from the Turkish word sarmak, meaning "to wrap" or "to roll". Different regions adapted the dish to their local ingredients and preferences, and it is known by various names, including sarmale in Romania, dolmades in Greece, and sarmi in Bulgaria. Countries like Bulgaria, Serbia, and Romania often use fermented (sour) cabbage leaves, giving the dish a distinct tangy flavor. The filling is typically a mix of minced pork, beef, and rice, seasoned with local spices. The history of sarma is a story of culinary exchange and adaptation, with different regions putting their own unique spin on the core concept of wrapping a savory filling in a leaf.

2. Cultural aspects

Sarma is deeply embedded in the culture of the Balkans, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East, serving as much more than a simple meal. It is a powerful symbol of hospitality, family gatherings, and national identity, with rich traditions surrounding its preparation and consumption. The time-consuming and careful preparation of sarma is seen as a sign of great respect for guests. A generous serving of the hearty dish is a traditional way to welcome friends and family into the home. In some traditions, the rolled shape of the sarma is associated with a swaddled infant or the roundness of the sun. This can symbolize a wish for fertility and abundance for the coming year. Sarma is a dish of many variations, and the specific version prepared is often a point of local pride and identity. Different regions use distinct ingredients and techniques. During fasting periods, such as Christmas Eve or Lent, vegetarian versions of sarma are prepared without meat, using fillings like rice, walnuts, and herbs.

3. Ingredients

- 850 g (500 g minced beef, 350 g minced pork)
- 1 large yellow onion (diced)
- 3–4 garlic cloves (minced)
- 60 g rice (uncooked, short-grain)
- 100 g smoked bacon or pork ribs
- 2 tsp sweet paprika powder
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste
- 1 large head of pickled cabbage (approx. 1.8 kg)
- 50 ml oil or lard (to sauté the onions)
- Water or broth: Enough to cover the sarma

4. Preparation

1. Separate the leaves from the cabbage or grapevine head. If using fresh cabbage, remove the core and blanch the leaves in boiling water until pliable. For pickled cabbage, rinse the leaves to reduce excess saltiness. Cut out the thick, tough stem from each leaf.
2. Mix the ground meat, uncooked rice, chopped onion, garlic, and seasonings in a large bowl.
3. Place a spoonful of the filling near the base of a prepared leaf. Fold in the sides and roll tightly to form a neat log or "cigar". The goal is to make a compact package so the filling does not escape during cooking.
4. Line the bottom of a large pot or Dutch oven with leftover, shredded cabbage leaves or any discarded parts. This prevents the sarma from sticking or burning. Arrange the rolls snugly in layers, along with pieces of smoked meat, if desired.
5. Pour the cooking liquid over the layers, ensuring the rolls are covered. Place an inverted plate or heavy lid on top to keep the rolls submerged and from unrolling. Bring the pot to a boil, then reduce the heat to a low simmer. Slow-cook for at least 2 to 3 hours, or until the cabbage is very tender and the filling is cooked.
6. Some traditional recipes call for preparing a paprika-based roux in a separate pan and stirring it into the liquid during the final 15–30 minutes of cooking. Let the sarma rest slightly before serving warm, often with a dollop of sour cream or yogurt. The dish is famously delicious as leftovers.

5. Nutritional Values

Per ~100 g serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: ~ 126 kcal
- Protein: ~ 13 g
- Fat: ~ 4.2 g
- Carbohydrates: ~ 11 g

6. Nutritional profile:

- Cabbage: Provides a good source of dietary fiber, as well as vitamins C and K. If fermented cabbage is used, it also offers probiotics that are beneficial for gut health.
- Meat: The ground meat, especially beef, is a source of high-quality protein, iron, and vitamin B12, which is crucial for red blood cell formation and preventing anemia. Pork adds protein and B vitamins.
- Rice: This grain contributes to the carbohydrate content and provides some B vitamins and minerals like iron, manganese, and magnesium.

7. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

- Preparation: Can be prepared on board in a well-equipped galley. Recipes may call for fresh or pickled ingredients.
- Preservation: Relies on freezing cooked or uncooked sarma in airtight, vacuum-sealed bags or containers.
- Storage: Frozen, pre-portioned containers allow for reheating only what is needed, avoiding waste.
- Serving: Served as a hot, comforting meal. Fresh ingredients could be added, or the dish could be served with sour cream.

Conclusion:

For mariners of the past, sarma would have been an exceptional meal. Compared to the hard, unappetizing food of long voyages, a flavorful, cooked meal with fermented vegetables would have been a nutritious and welcome relief from monotony. For a modern mariner, a pot of homemade sarma could offer a taste of home and a satisfying, wholesome meal during a long journey.



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SAUTÉED CHICKEN LIVERS WITH ONION AND MASHED POTATOES

FICĂȚEI DE PUI CU CEAPĂ ȘI PIURE

1. Origin and History

A classic post-war and 20th-century comfort dish, especially popular in urban Romania. Chicken livers were widely accessible and nutritious, and pairing them with onion and mashed potatoes made for a filling, low-cost meal.

2. Cultural Aspects

Often seen in school cafeterias, hospitals, and homes, this dish was both nutritious and economical. It is served with pickles or beetroot salad and is rich in iron and B vitamins.



3. Ingredients

- 500 g chicken livers, cleaned
- 2 onions, sliced
- 2 tbsp oil or butter
- Salt, pepper, thyme
- 50 ml white wine (optional)
- 800 g potatoes
- 50 ml milk
- 25 g butter
- Salt

4. Preparation

1. Soak livers in milk 30 min to remove bitterness. Drain.
2. Sauté onions in oil until soft. Push aside and sear livers ~5–6 min per side.
3. Add thyme and wine; cook another 5 min.
4. Boil potatoes, mash with milk, butter, and salt.
5. Serve hot with pickles.

5. Nutritional Values (per portion)

- Calories: ~540 kcal
- Protein: ~34 g
- Fat: ~24 g
- Carbs: ~42 g
- Iron: very high (~12 mg)

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition

- High in heme iron and vitamin A — good for clinical or elderly menus.
- Can be pre-portioned and frozen.
- Ideal for low-cost protein delivery.
- Add green peas or spinach for enhanced nutrition.

Conclusion

Sautéed Chicken Livers with Onion and Mashed Potatoes offer an old-school Romanian flavor that balances frugality and nourishment — perfect for weekly menus needing iron-rich options.



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SEASONED RICE İÇ PILAV

1. Origin and history

İç pilav, meaning “stuffed rice,” is a traditional Turkish dish with roots in Ottoman cuisine, often prepared with rice, organ meats (commonly liver), nuts, currants, and aromatic spices like allspice and cinnamon. Historically, it was considered a festive or ceremonial dish due to its rich ingredients and complex flavors, reflecting the opulence of Ottoman culinary traditions. Beyond its celebratory role, iç pilav was practical for long journeys and military provisioning, as rice stored well and, combined with protein and fats, provided a hearty, nutritious meal. Over time, it became a staple in Turkish cuisine, celebrated for its balance of flavor, texture, and sustenance, and continues to appear in traditional and ceremonial settings, including special menus at institutions like the Turkish Naval Academy.



2. Cultural aspects

İç pilav's cultural significance has clear connections to maritime traditions. As a nutrient-dense dish combining rice, protein, nuts, and spices, it was practical for sailors, providing sustained energy and durable ingredients suitable for long voyages. Beyond its nutritional value, iç pilav played a ceremonial role in naval life, served on inspection days or formal occasions to reflect discipline, hierarchy, and prestige. Its composition and preparation also reinforced Turkish culinary identity, allowing sailors and naval cadets to maintain a connection to homeland traditions even at sea. In this way, iç pilav symbolizes a balance of practicality, nourishment, and cultural heritage, mirroring the values and needs of life in maritime settings.

3. Ingredients

- 2 cups of rice
- 150–200 g beef liver (cleaned and cut into small cubes)
- 1 medium onion (finely chopped)
- 2 tablespoons butter or vegetable oil
- 1/4 cup pine nuts (optional)
- 2 tablespoons currants (optional)
- 3 cups hot water or beef stock
- Salt, black pepper, allspice, cinnamon (to taste)

4. Preparation

1. Soak the rice in warm water for 15–20 minutes, then drain.
2. Melt the butter in a pot and lightly toast the pine nuts.
3. Add the onions and sauté until golden.
4. Stir in the currants and cook for a few minutes.
5. Add the liver and sauté quickly until it changes color but is not overcooked.
6. Add the rice and stir for 2–3 minutes to coat the grains.
7. Season with salt and spices, then pour in the hot water or stock.
8. Cover the pot and cook on low heat for 15–20 minutes, until the rice absorbs the liquid.
9. Remove from heat and let it rest for 5 minutes before fluffing and serving.

5. Nutritional Values

Per ~350 g serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: ~683 kcal
- Protein: ~58 g
- Fat: ~18 g
- Carbohydrates: ~63 g
- Fiber: ~8 g
- Salt: ~1.2 g

Nutritional profile:

- Very high in protein: thanks to the liver (or meat) and nuts included in the pilaf.
- Balanced carbohydrate content: from the rice, providing sustained energy for long hours or demanding activity, such as naval duties.
- Moderate fat: mostly from butter, oil, and nuts used in preparation.
- Salt: moderate, around 1.2 g per 350 g serving—lower than the example you provided, but still something to monitor, especially for long voyages, where reducing added salt could be beneficial.



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6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

- Balance: Ensure each meal contains a mix of carbohydrates, protein, and healthy fats to support physical activity, mental focus, and overall health of crew members. Include vegetables and fruits when possible, for vitamins, minerals, and fiber.
- Protein: Include high-quality protein sources like meat, poultry, fish, eggs, legumes, or dairy to maintain muscle mass, repair tissues, and support immune function, especially during long voyages.
- Salt Control: Monitor and limit added salt, bouillon, or processed foods. Excess sodium can contribute to dehydration and hypertension, so onboard meals should aim for moderate salt levels, ideally under 2g per portion.
- Energy Density: Meals should provide sufficient calories for sustained energy, using nutrient-dense ingredients like whole grains, nuts, and healthy oils. Avoid empty-calorie foods with little nutritional value.
- Storage: Prioritize foods with long shelf life that resist spoilage, such as rice, dried legumes, canned goods, and vacuum-packed proteins. Proper storage and packaging are critical for food safety during extended voyages.
- Cultural Adaptation: Include familiar and culturally meaningful dishes to maintain morale and connection to home traditions, while ensuring they meet nutritional requirements. For example, traditional dishes like iç pilav can provide both comfort and sustenance.
- Hydration: Encourage regular intake of water and hydrating foods. Limit high-sugar beverages and excessive caffeine. Onboard, water should be readily available, and electrolyte-rich fluids may be provided during heavy activity or hot weather.

Conclusion:

This rich and flavorful iç pilav combines rice, nuts, and tender liver to create a nourishing, energy-packed dish. Historically served to sailors and naval cadets, it provided sustenance for long days at sea while preserving a taste of home. Even today, it reflects the balance of practicality, nutrition, and tradition valued in maritime life.



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SHKEMBE CHORBA

1. Origin and history

Shkembe chorba is a tripe soup with origins in Ottoman cuisine that is popular throughout the Balkan Peninsula, Eastern Europe, Türkiye, and the Middle East. While its specific inventor is unknown, the name itself comes from the Turkish words for "tripe" (ışkembe) and "soup" (çorba). The use of offal like tripe was common in agrarian societies across these regions, reflecting a "nose-to-tail" approach to eating. In Bulgaria, the soup is known for its strong flavor and is traditionally made with milk, garlic in vinegar, and hot red pepper flakes. In the 20th century, particularly in the 1930s and 40s, many eateries in Plovdiv specialized in serving tripe soup, especially in the Catholic district. Historically, tripe was an affordable source of protein, making the soup popular with the working class. In communist Bulgaria, the soup was widely available, and special restaurants called (shkembedzhiynitsa) served only tripe soup. Today, while many of these dedicated tripe soup restaurants have been replaced by fast-food chains, the soup remains a highly regarded and comforting dish.

2. Cultural aspects

Beyond its taste and preparation, shkembe chorba holds significant cultural importance in Bulgaria and the surrounding Balkan region. It is associated with hospitality, social gatherings, the working class, and its renowned status as a hangover cure. Shkembe chorba is often served at festive social gatherings, such as weddings and holidays, as a gesture of hospitality. The act of sharing a bowl of this hearty soup is a deeply social experience. For some, trying the pungent and flavorful tripe soup for the first time is a rite of passage into adulthood. In some social circles, the soup is viewed as a "man's food," though this perception has been challenged. One anecdote recalls a web post claiming that a wife's cooking is "destroyed" by the garlic aroma of tripe soup, announcing "heavy adultery" because it was food from "the men's world".

3. Ingredients

- 700 to 1000 g (about 1.5 to 2.2 pounds), beef tripe, pre-cleaned and blanched
- 1 liter of whole milk for a creamy texture
- 40 to 60 g, such as beef tallow or butter, for the roux. Alternatively, use about 100 ml of sunflower oil
- 15 to 30 g all-purpose flour for thickening
- 5 to 10 g sweet or smoked red paprika. Smoked paprika adds a deeper, more robust flavor
- 10 to 20 g salt or to taste
- 1 to 1.5 liters, for boiling the tripe

4. Preparation

1. For uncleaned tripe, you must first wash it thoroughly. Boil it briefly in water with some vinegar, then drain and scrape it clean. Rinse well and repeat as needed until it is completely clean.
2. In a pressure cooker or a large pot, cover the tripe with cold water. For extra flavor, add a coarsely chopped onion, carrot, and a few peppercorns.
3. Pressure cooker: Cook on high pressure for about 1.5 hours. Regular pot: Simmer on low heat for 3 to 5 hours, or until the tripe is fork-tender. Add more water as needed to keep it submerged.
4. Once cooked, remove the tripe from the pot. Strain the broth and reserve it. Once the tripe has cooled, chop it into small, bite-sized pieces.
5. In a separate pot, melt butter or tallow over low-to-medium heat. Add flour and stir continuously until the mixture is lightly golden.
6. Remove the pot from the heat and stir in sweet or smoked paprika. Add the cold milk and some of the reserved tripe broth, whisking vigorously to prevent lumps. Avoid burning the paprika, as this will make the soup bitter.
7. Return the pot to the stove. Add the chopped tripe to the broth mixture and bring it to a boil. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Simmer for another 5–15 minutes, stirring frequently.
8. In a small bowl, combine finely mashed or pressed garlic with white wine vinegar. Some recipes also add a little water to this mixture.
9. Ladle the hot soup into bowls. Serve with the garlic-vinegar mixture and hot red chili flakes on the side, allowing each person to customize their seasoning to taste.
10. Serve with fresh, crusty white bread for dipping.

5. Nutritional Values

Per ~200 g serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: ~ 146-148 kcal
- Protein: ~ 17 g
- Fat: ~ 5 g
- Carbohydrates: ~ 8 g
- Salt: ~ 2 g
- Vitamins: B, B12
- Minerals: It provides key minerals like sodium and potassium.

6. Nutritional profile:

- Shkembe chorba is a hearty, protein-rich dish that provides sustained energy for a sailor's demanding physical activity.
- Tripe is a source of vitamins and minerals, including niacin, zinc, and Vitamin B12, that are vital for overall health.
- Tripe is an inexpensive source of lean protein, making it an ideal choice for sailors who needed a high-calorie, nutritious, and cost-effective meal during long voyages.
- As a hearty, hot dish, the soup would have provided essential warmth and comfort to sailors working in cold and damp conditions at sea.
- The savory broth, rich with salt, fat, and fluid, could aid rehydration and recovery, providing a practical solution for hangovers after shore leave, a reputation the soup still holds today.
- With its strong garlic, vinegar, and paprika flavors, the soup is highly satisfying and could help flavor the often bland diets common on ships.



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7. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

- Use frozen or canned tripe: Fresh tripe requires extensive and smelly cleaning, making it impractical for a ship's limited resources. Frozen, pre-cleaned tripe is a more practical option. For even longer voyages, canned tripe can be used, although the texture and flavor may differ.
- Shelf-stable dairy: Instead of fresh milk, which has a short shelf-life, onboard versions can substitute shelf-stable UHT milk or powdered milk to achieve the creamy broth.
- Non-perishable flavorings: The crucial seasonings of garlic, vinegar, and hot pepper should be sourced in a shelf-stable format. Garlic powder or garlic in oil can replace fresh garlic, while wine vinegar is a durable pantry item.
- Use a pressure cooker: Preparing tripe on a ship is much more efficient using a pressure cooker. This shortens the long boiling time and, more importantly, keeps the heat and strong odor contained within the galley, which is essential in a confined space.
- Meal planning: The cook must plan for the full meal, including accompanying items like fresh bread, which can either be stored for long periods or baked onboard.
- Preventing cross-contamination: Maritime regulations require strict food hygiene practices to prevent illness. This includes using separate cutting boards for raw tripe and finished ingredients, and meticulously cleaning all work surfaces.
- Safety during rough seas: To prevent spills, the cook should use a high-sided pot when preparing the soup and use non-slip mats under equipment. The soup should be cooked ahead of time and reheated as needed during very rough conditions to prevent injuries.

Conclusion:

Although there is no documented tradition of shkembe chorba being specifically for mariners, its characteristics—including affordability, high energy content, and use as a hangover remedy—suggest it would have been a practical and nourishing food for sailors. Historically, tripe has been a staple in working-class communities, which often included sailors. The familiar, warm, and flavorful soup can boost crew morale during long or difficult voyages, providing a taste of home and variety from monotonous, preserved meals.



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SMOKED MEAT AND BEAN SOUR SOUP

CIORBĂ DE FASOLE CU AFUMĂTURĂ

1. Origin and History

This rustic soup combines dried white beans with smoked pork—typically ribs, hock, or sausages. Rooted in Romanian rural traditions, particularly in the mountainous and Moldavian regions, it was historically consumed during the colder months as a high-protein, high-energy dish. The souring agent varied by region—borș, vinegar, or cabbage brine (zeamă de varză).

2. Cultural Aspects

This dish is emblematic of Romanian peasant cooking—hearty, nourishing, and deeply flavorful. Frequently enjoyed on Romania's National Day and during cold seasons, it is served with raw red onion or hot chili and sometimes inside a bread bowl in traditional inns. It embodies communal values and is part of wintertime rituals.



3. Ingredients

- 300 g dried white beans (or 2 cans pre-cooked)
- 400–500 g smoked pork hock, ribs, or sausage
- 1 onion, 2 carrots, 1 parsnip, 1 bell pepper
- 1 tbsp tomato paste
- 2 bay leaves
- 500 ml borș (or vinegar or cabbage brine)
- Salt and pepper
- Lovage or parsley for garnish

4. Preparation

1. Soak beans overnight. Boil, changing water twice to reduce bloating compounds.
2. Simmer smoked meat in 2 L water for 1.5 hours. Skim foam.
3. Add beans, chopped vegetables, tomato paste, and bay leaves. Simmer ~30 minutes.
4. Boil borș separately, add to soup. Adjust seasoning.
5. Garnish with fresh lovage or parsley. Serve hot with raw onion or chili.

5. Nutritional Values (per ~400 ml serving)

- Calories: ~420 kcal
- Protein: ~28 g
- Fat: ~20 g
- Carbohydrates: ~28 g
- Fiber: ~9 g
- Salt: ~2.2 g

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition

- High-protein and fiber-rich: ideal for workers in cold climates.
- Pre-soaked beans or canned beans reduce cooking time.
- Substitute cabbage brine or citric acid for souring in storage-limited environments.
- Freeze in batches; reheats well.
- Reduces food waste using preserved meats.

Conclusion

The Smoked Meat and Bean Sour Soup offers protein-dense, fiber-rich sustenance with deeply comforting flavor, ideal for onboard kitchens during the winter season.



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SPATCHCOCK ROASTED CHICKEN AND POTATOES

1. Origin and History

The term “spatchcock” is most likely an 18th-century Irish abbreviation of the phrase “dispatch the cock,” which meant to quickly kill and prepare a chicken for cooking. It’s a wonderfully efficient term for an equally efficient culinary technique. Essentially, it describes the process of preparing a bird for faster, more even cooking by removing its backbone and flattening it out.

2. Cultural Aspects

Greek Spatchcock Chicken with Potatoes is smothered in an herby, lemon and garlic marinade then roasted until perfectly tender on the inside and crispy on the outside. Familiar, “home-style” dish favored across many cultures. Easy to adapt: Mediterranean (lemon–oregano), Asian (soy–ginger), or Caribbean (spicy jerk).



3. Ingredients

1 chicken, 1.500-1.700 g
1,5 kilo potatoes
1 clove(s) of garlic
2 tablespoon(s) mustard
1 tablespoon(s) oregano, dried
lemon zest, from 1 lemon
lemon juice, from 1 lemon
300 g water
4 tablespoon(s) olive oil
2 pinches salt
pepper

4. Preparation

- Preheat the oven to 190°C (370°F) set to fan.
- Peel the potatoes, cut them into small pieces, and transfer them to a baking pan.
- Wear gloves and place the chicken on a cutting board, backbone facing up.
- Use a pair of kitchen scissors or a sharp knife to cut along both sides of the backbone (right and left, parallel to the backbone). (You can use the backbone to make chicken stock.)
- Turn the chicken over, breast-side up, and press between the breast with your hands to break and flatten it.
- Tuck the wings underneath the legs to prevent them from burning during baking.
- Transfer the chicken over the potatoes and take off the gloves.
- Finely chop the garlic and add it to a bowl.
- Add the mustard, oregano, salt, pepper, lemon zest, and lemon juice, and mix them well with a spoon.
- Add the olive oil and mix until it is incorporated into the marinade.
- Transfer the marinade to the pan, wear gloves again, and spread it with your hands all over the chicken and potatoes.
- Carefully pour the water at the edge of the pan.
- Put the pan in the oven and roast the chicken and potatoes for 1 hour.
- Remove the pan from the oven and serve.

5. Nutritional Values

Per portion serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: 422 kcal
- Protein: 29g
- Fat: 18g
- Saturated Fat: 3.9g
- Carbs: 35g
- Sugar: 2.6g
- Fiber: 4.1g
- Sodium: 2.5g

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

High in protein and energy — ideal for crew working in physically demanding roles (engineers, deck crew, stewards). High – suitable for active crew. Its full protein, B vitamins, iron, potassium favorable with olive oil

Conclusion:

Is a highly practical and nutritious meal for shipboard catering: it's simple, protein-rich, well-balanced, and easy to scale for large crews.



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SPICY CABBAGE AND RICE PILAF

The Spicy Cabbage and Rice Pilaf is a dish that blends elements from Middle Eastern, Mediterranean, and Balkan cuisines, though its exact origin is difficult to pinpoint because it is a type of comfort food that evolved in several regions independently.

1. Origin and History

Rice pilaf (cooked rice with aromatics, sometimes broth or spices) has ancient roots in Persian cuisine, spreading across the Middle East, the Mediterranean, and into Eastern Europe.

In the Ottoman Empire, pilaf became a common base dish, often combined with vegetables, legumes, or meats depending on local availability.

Cabbage is native to Europe and the Mediterranean and has been cultivated since Roman times.

It was a staple in peasant diets because it grows well, stores long in winter, and is inexpensive.



Fermented cabbage (sauerkraut) and cooked cabbage dishes are common throughout Europe and the Middle East.

In countries like Greece, Türkiye, Bulgaria, and Serbia, cabbage and rice dishes were often combined in simple, affordable meals.

Spices such as paprika, cumin, and red pepper flakes were gradually incorporated as trade routes brought new ingredients.

2. Cultural Aspects

The Spicy Cabbage and Rice Pilaf carries rich cultural significance, reflecting local agriculture, trade, and culinary traditions across several regions, particularly the Mediterranean, Balkans, and Middle East.

- Accessibility: Cabbage and rice were inexpensive, widely available, and easy to store.
- Nutritional Value: Provided essential carbohydrates, fiber, and vitamins for working families.
- Adaptability: The dish could be vegetarian or enriched with meat, fish, or legumes depending on resources.
- Social Context: Often prepared in large quantities for families, making it a communal, home-centered dish.

3. Ingredients (serves 4)

- 1 medium head of cabbage (green or Savoy), shredded
- 1 cup long-grain rice (basmati or jasmine work well)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil or vegetable oil
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 2–3 cloves garlic, minced
- 1–2 fresh chili peppers, finely chopped (adjust to taste)
- 1 teaspoon smoked paprika (or regular paprika)
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- ¼ teaspoon ground black pepper
- ½ teaspoon red chili flakes (optional, for extra heat)
- 2 cups vegetable or chicken broth (or water)
- Salt to taste
- Fresh herbs (optional: parsley or cilantro) for garnish

4. Preparation

Prep the Cabbage

Remove the outer leaves, core the cabbage, and shred it thinly.

Rinse and set aside.

Sauté Aromatics

Heat oil in a large pan or pot over medium heat.

Add chopped onion and sauté until translucent (~3–4 minutes).

Add garlic and chopped chili peppers, cook for 1 minute until fragrant.

Add Spices

Stir in paprika, cumin, black pepper, and chili flakes.

Toast the spices for ~30 seconds to release aroma.

Cook Cabbage

Add shredded cabbage to the pan.

Sauté for 5–7 minutes until the cabbage begins to soften.

Add Rice & Broth

Stir in the rice, coating it with the oil and spices.

Pour in the broth, season with salt, and bring to a gentle boil.

Simmer

Reduce heat to low, cover, and cook for 15–20 minutes until the rice is tender and liquid is absorbed.

Do not stir too often to avoid mushy rice.

Finish

Fluff the rice with a fork.

Garnish with fresh herbs, if desired.

Adjust seasoning with extra salt or chili if needed.



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5. Nutritional Values

Per portion serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: 180-250kcal
- Protein:6g
- Fat: 10g
- Saturated Fat:2g
- Carbs: 35g
- Sugar: 5g
- Fiber:4-6g
- Sodium:200-400mg (depends on added salt)

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

For maritime ships, especially during long voyages, nutrition needs to balance energy, preservation, and practicality. A dish like Spicy Cabbage and Rice Pilaf can fit well into a shipboard menu if adapted properly. Crew often performs physically demanding work, so meals must provide sufficient calories, mainly from carbohydrates, protein, and healthy fats.



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STUFFED CABBAGE ROLLS SARMALE

1. Origin and History

Stuffed Cabbage Rolls - Sarmale are a cornerstone of Romanian cuisine, believed to have originated from the Ottoman Empire's influence during its centuries-long presence in Southeastern Europe. Derived from the Turkish word "sarma" (meaning "to wrap"), the dish spread across the Balkans, with each nation adapting it to local tastes. In Romania, sarmale took on a unique character, using sour cabbage leaves, minced pork (often mixed with rice and herbs), and slowly simmered in tomato sauce and smoked meat. Though historically tied to holiday feasts and winter celebrations, especially Christmas and Easter, sarmale have become a symbol of national identity, served at weddings, funerals, festivals, and Sunday family meals. In Moldavia and Bucovina, sarmale are smaller and more refined, while in Oltenia and Transylvania, they're larger, heartier, and more tomato-forward. They can also be made with grape leaves (especially in summer) or adapted for fasting periods using mushrooms, lentils, or nuts.



2. Cultural Aspects

The Stuffed Cabbage Rolls - Sarmale are deeply ritualistic: their preparation often involves multiple generations cooking together before major holidays. Rolling the cabbage leaves is considered both an act of care and a culinary rite of passage. In Romanian Orthodox households, sarmale are often prepared in massive clay pots or Dutch ovens and left to slowly bake for hours — their aroma signaling celebration and togetherness. The dish embodies values of frugality, preservation, and abundance: using brined cabbage from fall harvests, rice for stretch, and pork from home-butchered animals (Ignat, Dec 20). Its structure mirrors Romanian community spirit — individual units (rolls) working in harmony within one pot.

3. Ingredients

(For 6–8 servings; ~25–30 rolls)

For the rolls:

- 1 medium sour cabbage (fermented whole) or 15–20 large sour cabbage leaves
- 700 g minced pork (shoulder or belly for fat content)
- 100 g rice (short or medium grain)
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp oil or lard
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 tsp sweet paprika
- 1 tsp dried thyme or dill (optional)
- 1 tbsp tomato paste (optional in filling)

For layering and sauce:

- 200 g smoked bacon, pork ribs, or smoked sausage (optional but traditional)
- 250 ml tomato passata or crushed tomatoes
- 2 tbsp tomato paste
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tsp sugar (optional, balances acidity)
- 500 ml water or broth
- Fresh dill or thyme (optional)
- Oil or lard for greasing the pot

Optional sides:

- Mămăligă (polenta), sour cream, pickled chili peppers

4. Preparation

Prepare the cabbage

- If using whole fermented cabbage: carefully separate leaves, trim thick veins, and keep them pliable.
- If leaves are too salty or sour, rinse or soak in cold water for 30–60 minutes.
- Reserve smaller or torn leaves to line the pot and top the rolls.

Prepare the filling

- Sauté chopped onion in oil/lard until translucent (not browned).
- Add uncooked rice, stir 1–2 minutes until slightly pearly.
- Mix cooled onion-rice mixture with minced pork, salt, pepper, paprika, and herbs.
- Optional: add a spoon of tomato paste for flavor depth.

Roll the sarmale

- Place 1 tbsp of filling on each cabbage leaf.
- Fold in sides and roll tightly like a small burrito.
- Ensure no exposed filling — if leaf tears, double wrap or patch.



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Step 4: Assemble in pot

- Line pot base with chopped cabbage or leftover small leaves.
- Place a layer of smoked meat or bacon if using.
- Arrange sarmale in concentric layers, tightly packed.
- Between layers, optionally add more chopped cabbage and smoked meat.

Step 5: Add sauce

- Mix tomato passata with water or broth, tomato paste, bay leaf, salt, pepper, and sugar.
- Pour over rolls until almost covered. Top with cabbage scraps or herbs.
- Drizzle oil or add a small spoon of lard on top.

Step 6: Cooking

- Stovetop: Cover and simmer on low heat for 2.5–3 hours.
- Oven: Bake covered at 170°C (340°F) for 2–3 hours. Uncover last 30 min to brown slightly.
- Clay pot: Traditional method — slow cook for 4–5 hours in oven or hearth.

Step 7: Rest and Serve

- Let sit 20–30 minutes before serving — flavors deepen.
- Serve with mămăligă, a dollop of sour cream, and optionally chili or pickles.

5. Nutritional Values (per 3–4 rolls / ~400 g serving)

- Calories: ~580 kcal
- Protein: ~28 g
- Fat: ~34 g (can be reduced with lean meat)
- Carbohydrates: ~40 g
- Fiber: ~4 g
- Salt: ~2.5 g (varies depending on cabbage and smoked meat)

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition

- Energy-dense and highly satiating, perfect for long shifts, cold environments, or high-exertion tasks.
- Ideal for bulk preparation and freezing — flavor improves over time.
- Can be made in layered casserole style for efficiency (no rolling).
- Fasting-friendly variation: use mushrooms, rice, grated carrots, and walnuts.
- Adaptable to multicultural crews: grape leaves for Mediterranean versions, or spiced rice for Eastern influence.
- Use vacuum-packed sour cabbage leaves and pre-cooked rice for time-saving in shipboard or mobile kitchens.
- Serve with hydrating sides like sauerkraut juice or soup to balance salt.

Conclusion

Sarmale are the heart of Romanian cuisine — humble yet sophisticated, communal yet individual, rustic yet celebratory. Their preparation reflects history, geography, and identity. Perfectly suited for modern catering or institutional menus, they offer deep cultural resonance, excellent nutrition, and the satisfaction of generations.



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STUFFED MEAT ROLL

DALYAN KÖFTE

1. Origin and history

Dalyan Köfte is believed to trace its name from “Talyan Köfte,” perhaps a Turkish-language transformation of “Italian” meat roll, though its exact origins are lost in folk history. Over time, its rich ingredients and visually impressive presentation made it a favored dish for special occasions in western Türkiye. While there is no documented evidence that it was invented by the Turkish Navy, its qualities — being feasible to prepare in large quantities, its decorative rulo form, and its status as a prestige dish — have made it an apt choice for naval inspection days and ceremonial menus.

2. Cultural aspects

Dalyan Köfte, with its neatly rolled shape and colorful cross-section, mirrors the discipline, order, and sense of ceremony central to naval life. Practical to prepare in bulk yet elegant in presentation, it has become a fitting choice for inspection days at naval institutions. Its possible Mediterranean roots also echo the maritime tradition of cultural exchange, where foreign influences are adapted and proudly carried under a Turkish identity.



3. Ingredients

- 1 kg medium-fat ground beef
- 2 onions
- 5 tablespoons galette flour
- 1 tablespoon salt
- 1 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 teaspoon red chili powder
- 1 teaspoon cumin
- 1 large clove of garlic
- 1 egg yolk, the white of which will be applied
- 4 eggs
- 2 carrots

For the vegetable sauce

- 3 tablespoons of olive oil
- 1 onion
- 300 g mushrooms
- 1 bowl of frozen peas
- 1 teaspoon salt
- Half teaspoon black pepper
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 4-5 large tomatoes
- 1 cup of water

4. Preparation

1. First, peel the carrots and boil them in a pan until they are slightly soft.
2. In a separate pan, cook two eggs with two cups of water for 4 minutes.
3. Knead the minced meat well with all the ingredients.
4. Roll it out on the greaseproof paper in the size of a tray by pressing it with your hand.
5. At the beginning of the minced meat, place the boiled carrots longitudinally where you will roll the minced meat and place the boiled eggs next to it and roll the minced meat completely.
6. Spread the reserved egg white on the meatballs.
7. Bake in the preheated oven at 180° for 20 minutes on the lower and upper setting.
8. Meanwhile, for the sauce, cut the onion into cubes and fry it in oil.
9. Then add the peas, mushrooms, tomatoes, tomato paste and tomatoes and cook for a while, add the spices and water and cook for a while.
10. After 20 minutes, remove the meatloaf, pour the sauce into the gaps around the edges and bake in the oven for another 20 minutes. I served this dish with mashed potatoes and you can serve it according to your desire.

5. Nutritional Values

Per ~350 g serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

Protein: Mainly from meat and egg; very high.

Carbohydrates: From breadcrumbs and vegetables; moderate.

Fat: Mostly from meat; moderate to high depending on meat fat content and added oil.

Salt: Can vary a lot depending on added salt or bouillon; roughly 1.5–2 g per 350 g serving (~30–35% of WHO daily recommendation).



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Nutritional profile:

- Very high in protein (~28–32g) due to the ground beef/lamb and egg, supporting muscle repair and sustained energy.
- Moderate (~18–22g), primarily from breadcrumbs and vegetables, providing steady energy release.
- Moderate to high (~20–25g), mostly from meat fat and a small amount of added oil; saturated fat is ~8–10g.
- Relatively high (~1.5–2g per portion), about 30–35% of the WHO daily recommendation. Careful seasoning or reduced salt options are advisable for frequent consumption.

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

- Balance: Include protein, complex carbs, healthy fats, and fiber for sustained energy and overall health.
- Protein: Rotate animal and plant proteins to cover essential amino acids and maintain muscle mass.
- Salt control: Limit high-sodium foods; use herbs, spices, or low-salt alternatives.
- Energy density: Offer calorie-dense foods for physical demands and lighter options to avoid fatigue.
- Storage: Use shelf-stable, frozen, and fresh foods; rotate stock and control temperature.
- Cultural adaptation: Respect dietary preferences and rotate cuisines to maintain morale.
- Hydration: Provide safe water; encourage 2–2.5L daily and limit caffeine or sugary drinks.



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STUFFED ZUCCHINI WITH MEAT AND RICE

DOVLECEI UMPLUȚI

1. Origin and History

Stuffed vegetables have deep roots in Ottoman cuisine, which heavily influenced Romanian cooking. Dovlecei umpluți (stuffed zucchini) is a light summer variant of sarmale, typically made in July–August, using the plentiful zucchini harvest from Romanian gardens. It is common in Muntenia and Oltenia.

2. Cultural Aspects

Seen as a seasonal home-cooked dish, it's often prepared in large quantities during the summer and preserved with light tomato sauce. It reflects Romanian peasant ingenuity: seasonal ingredients, one-pot cooking, and family-centered meals.



3. Ingredients (for 4–6 servings)

- 4–5 medium zucchinis
- 400 g minced pork or pork-beef mix
- 1 small onion, finely chopped
- 80 g rice
- 2 tbsp oil
- 1 egg
- Salt, pepper
- Dill, parsley
- 1 tbsp tomato paste
- 400 ml tomato juice
- 1 bay leaf

4. Preparation

1. Wash zucchinis. Cut in halves or thirds and core to form tubes.
2. Sauté onion in oil, add rice, then meat. Cook 5–6 min. Cool.
3. Add herbs, salt, pepper, and beaten egg to filling.
4. Stuff zucchini cavities and seal top with tomato slice or leftover pulp.
5. Place vertically in pot, pour over tomato juice + bay + paste + 200 ml water.
6. Simmer covered for 40–50 min or bake at 180°C for 45 min.
7. Serve with sour cream and bread.

5. Nutritional Values (per 2 stuffed zucchinis)

- Calories: ~460 kcal
- Protein: ~28 g
- Fat: ~20 g
- Carbohydrates: ~36 g
- Fiber: ~5 g

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition

- Ideal for seasonal, low-fat menus.
- Can be made vegetarian with mushrooms and rice.
- Easy to bulk prepare and portion.
- Excellent when paired with sour cream, yogurt sauce, or polenta.
- Use pre-cored zucchini for efficiency.

Conclusion

The Stuffed Zucchini with Meat and Rice combine seasonality, simplicity, and satisfaction — perfect for light summer menus with high fiber and low cost.



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SUDZHUK

1. Origin and history

Sudzhuk is a dry, spicy, and fermented sausage that has a long and storied history tracing back to the Ottoman Empire. The word's origins are rooted in Turkic, with "sujuk" meaning "dried meat". Historically, sudzhuk was a method of preserving meat for extended periods before refrigeration was available. In Bulgaria, the tradition of making dried sausages dates back centuries, with notable examples from the Bulgarian National Revival period (early 18th century).

2. Cultural aspects

Sudzhuk is a deeply ingrained and significant part of Bulgarian culinary culture, representing more than just a food product. It embodies tradition, craftsmanship, regional identity, and hospitality. Its consumption and production are tied to family traditions and national pride. For many generations, making sudzhuk has been a craft passed down through families, especially in regions known for their production, like Gorna Oryahovitsa. This artisanal knowledge includes understanding the right blend of spices, the aging process, and the specific mold that develops on the casing. Different regions, and even individual families, have their own distinct recipes and production methods for sudzhuk. This creates a sense of local pride and identity, with regional variations often fiercely defended as the "authentic" version.

3. Ingredients

- 1.2 kg pork shoulder
- 800 g veal shoulder
- 40 g salt
- 1 tsp fennel seeds
- 1 tsp black pepper
- 1 tsp thyme
- 1 tsp cumin
- 1/2 tsp coriander
- 1/2 tsp dried garlic
- 1/2 tsp dried onion
- 1/2 tsp allspice
- 1/2 tsp sumac
- pork intestines - for filling

4. Preparation

1. Use fresh, high-quality beef, and sometimes pork or mutton. The meat should be chilled or partially frozen before grinding to ensure it remains cold, which is crucial for preventing spoilage. Clean the meat by removing any sinew and tendons. Cut the meat into pieces suitable for your grinder. For a richer texture, add frozen and ground tail fat or beef tallow to the meat.
2. The precise blend of spices is what gives sudzhuk its characteristic flavor. Mix ground meat with salt, black pepper, and cumin. Other traditional spices include savory (chubritza), paprika, allspice, garlic, and fenugreek. To ensure safety and preservation, most modern recipes call for both salt and a curing agent like Cure #2 (a mixture of sodium nitrite and sodium nitrate). For a consistent and safe fermentation, a starter culture is often used. It is dissolved in water and mixed with the other ingredients.
3. Combine the ground meat, spices, curing agents, and starter culture. Mix the ingredients thoroughly and vigorously by hand or with a food processor for 2–3 minutes. This is a critical step that helps the sausage bind well and develop its firm texture.
4. Soak natural or collagen casings in warm water to make them pliable. Stuff the meat mixture firmly and evenly into the casings using a sausage stuffer, ensuring as few air pockets as possible. Prick any visible air pockets with a sterilized needle. Form the stuffed sausage into its traditional horseshoe shape and tie it securely.
5. Fermentation is the initial stage of ripening. It takes place in a warm, humid environment to activate the starter culture. Hang the sausages in a controlled room at 22–25°C (72–77°F) with high humidity (85–100%) for about 48 hours. The sausages will firm up and turn a dark red.
6. After fermentation, move the sausages to a cooler, less humid room for drying. The ideal conditions are 13–18°C (55–64°F) with a relative humidity of 70–80%. During the drying process, the sausages are periodically pressed to achieve their characteristic flattened shape. This is typically done with wooden boards and weights. The entire process can take several weeks, during which the sausages should be checked for a coating of beneficial white mold. The sudzhuk is ready when it has lost about 45–55% of its original weight.

5. Nutritional Values

Per ~100 g serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: ~ 350-450 kcal
- Protein: ~ 25-32 g
- Fat: ~ 25-32 g
- Carbohydrates: ~ 3 g
- Fiber: 0 g
- Salt: ~ 7.5-11 g

6. Nutritional profile:

- The high protein and fat content make sudzhuk a very energy-dense food, capable of providing sustained energy. This is a key reason for its historical importance for mariners and travelers.
- The most significant nutritional drawback of sudzhuk is its high sodium content. The high salt levels are part of the curing and preservation process.
- The high saturated fat content, particularly in versions with beef and tail fat, should be considered for dietary balance.
- The absence of carbohydrates makes it suitable for low-carb or ketogenic diets.
- Sudzhuk can be a source of essential minerals like iron and zinc, and vitamins such as B12, but these levels can vary.



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7. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

- Long shelf life: The curing process, involving salt and spices, removes moisture, which inhibits bacterial growth. This makes dried sudzhuk a long-lasting, reliable source of protein that can be stored for months without refrigeration.
- High energy density: Sudzhuk is high in protein and fat, providing a large number of calories relative to its weight. This is ideal for mariners who need energy-rich food to sustain them during demanding work.
- Convenience: Cured and dried sudzhuk is ready-to-eat and can be enjoyed without any preparation, making it a convenient and time-saving snack.
- Flavor enhancement: The rich, savory, and spicy flavor of sudzhuk can enhance otherwise simple or monotonous onboard meals.
- Hydration: The high salt content of sudzhuk can increase thirst. Mariners should compensate for this by drinking plenty of fresh water to maintain proper hydration.
- Moderation: Consume sudzhuk in moderation as part of a balanced diet. A typical 100g serving can contain over 4g of salt, or a significant portion of a person's recommended daily intake.
- Preparation: While often eaten raw, sudzhuk can be cooked. Cooking it in a stew or soup can help distribute its flavor and allow for smaller portions to be used.
- Variety: Rotate sudzhuk with other protein sources to ensure a varied and balanced diet.

Conclusion:

Sudzhuk is an excellent provision for mariners, particularly dried, cured varieties, because it is shelf-stable and requires no refrigeration. Its high protein and calorie content provides sailors with sustained energy and nutrition. However, given its high sodium and fat content, it should be consumed in moderation.



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SWEET AND SOUR PORK CHOPS WITH ARTICHOKE PUREE

1. Origin and History

This dish is not an ancient traditional recipe but rather a modern Mediterranean adaptation that merges:

- The sweet-and-sour flavor balance rooted in classical and Renaissance Mediterranean cooking, and
- The artichoke, a historic ingredient in Greek, Roman, and Italian cuisine.
- It represents the evolution of Mediterranean cuisine toward lighter, balanced dishes that respect tradition while embracing modern taste and presentation.



3. Ingredients

- 1/2 kilos pork steaks, chops
- 1 onion
- 1 clove(s) of garlic
- orange zest, of 1 orange
- orange juice, of 1 orange
- grapefruit zest, of 1 grapefruit
- grapefruit juice, of 1 grapefruit
- lime zest, of 1 lime
- lime juice, of 1 lime
- 3-4 tablespoon(s) olive oil
- 50 g mustard, mild
- tablespoon(s) honey
- 2 tablespoon(s) oregano
- 1 teaspoon(s) chili flakes
- 1 orange
- 2-3 sprig(s) rosemary
- salt
- pepper

For the artichoke puree

- Put the artichokes into a pot with boiling water and boil them for 20-30 minutes.
- Drain and transfer them to a food processor until mashed.
- Add the butter, truffle oil, salt, pepper, lemon juice, and process until you get a velvety puree.
- Serve with pepper, oregano and olive oil.

5. Nutritional Values

Per portion serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: 616 kcal
- Protein: 55g
- Fat: 37g
- Saturated Fat: 14g
- Carbs: 14g
- Sugar: 10g
- Fiber: 1.2g
- Sodium: 2.8

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

- High-protein meals are essential to sustain energy and muscle maintenance for physical tasks.
- Controlled sodium levels prevent water retention and hypertension, especially in long voyages.
- Balanced carbohydrates support steady energy release through work shifts.
- Vegetable purées like artichoke provide fiber and micronutrients to prevent digestion issues common at sea.



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TRADITIONAL GREEK MOUSSAKA

1. Origin and History

Greek gourmands craft their own special recipe, as does just about every Greek family. There are so many variations of it across the world. There's no doubt it is known as a Greek food but it is also considered a favorite dish in other Balkan nations, the Middle East and in Türkiye. So, where exactly did this fantastic casserole dish originate?

It is widely believed that the Arabs introduced moussaka to the world when they introduced the eggplant. Greek moussaka Arab origins may be related to the Levantine musakhhan. It seems even the word moussaka probably derived from this Arab word. One food historian claims a 13th-century Arabic cookbook known as the Baghdad Cookery Book details a recipe which could very well be the ancestor of moussaka. Today, moussaka is a common dish in Lebanon and the Arab world, a version that consists of eggplants, olive oil, garlic, onions and tomatoes.

In 1910, Nikolas Tselementes, one of the most influential Greek chefs, published Greek recipes including a moussaka featuring French béchamel sauce on top. His version is the moussaka Greeks know and love.



2. Cultural Aspects

Moussaka is to the Greek what Lasagna is to Italians. A rich tomato meat sauce layered with eggplant instead of pasta sheets, and topped with a thick layer of béchamel sauce, this traditional Greek recipe takes time to assemble – but it's well worth the effort! This is serious comfort food – a low carb one at that!

3. Ingredients

1. Ingredients

For the vegetables

- 3 eggplants, 750 g
- 3 zucchinis, 450 g
- 4 potatoes, large (750 g)
- 100 g all-purpose flour
- 1 liter sunflower oil

For the ground beef

- 800 g ground beef
- 1 onion
- 1 clove(s) of garlic
- 2-3 tablespoon(s) olive oil
- 1 level teaspoon(s) cinnamon
- ½ teaspoon(s) ground cloves
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 tablespoon(s) tomato paste
- 200 g water
- 400 g canned tomatoes
- 3 pinches granulated sugar
- ½ bunch parsley
- Salt
- pepper

For the bechamel sauce

- 170 g butter
- 170 g all-purpose flour
- 1,5 liter whole milk, at room temperature
- 150 g gruyere cheese, grated
- 3 egg yolks, from medium eggs
- 1 pinch ground nutmeg
- salt
- pepper

To assemble

- 100 g gruyere cheese, grated
- 30 g dry breadcrumbs
- salt
- pepper



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4. Preparation

For the vegetables

- Thinly slice the eggplants, zucchini, and potatoes, and set them aside.
- Place a deep frying pan over medium heat, add the sunflower oil, and let it heat up well.
- Spread some paper towels in a baking pan, and set it aside.
- Put the flour into a bowl, dredge the eggplants in it until they are completely coated, and transfer them to the frying pan in 3 batches.
- Fry them for 3-4 minutes until they are tender, and transfer them with a slotted spoon to the baking pan.
- Follow the same process for the zucchini and the potatoes, and then remove the pan from the heat.
- Pat the vegetables gently with some paper towels to soak up the excess oil, and set them aside.

For the ground beef

- Place a frying pan over high heat and let it heat up well.
- Finely chop the onion and the garlic.
- Add the olive oil, onion, and garlic to the pan.
- Use your hands to break up the ground beef into pieces, and add it to the pan.
- Add the salt, pepper, cinnamon, cloves, and bay leaf, and sauté the beef and the onion until nicely browned.
- Mix with a wooden spoon and keep sautéing for another 5-6 minutes.
- Add the tomato paste and mix with the spoon.
- Add the water, canned tomatoes, and sugar, and mix well.
- Bring the sauce to a boil, lower the heat, and cook it for 10-15 minutes, stirring regularly until it thickens.
- Finely chop the parsley, add it to the sauce, mix well, and remove the pan from the heat.

For the béchamel sauce

- Place a small pot over medium heat and add the butter.
- Let it slightly melt and then add the flour.
- Whisk them well until you have a thick paste (roux).
- Lower the heat and add the milk in 5-6 batches, whisking constantly for 3-4 minutes until the mixture comes to a boil and you have a creamy, smooth béchamel sauce.
- Remove the pot from the heat and set it aside to slightly cool.
- Add the gruyere cheese, salt, pepper, egg yolks, and nutmeg, and whisk well until completely combined.

To assemble

- Preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F) set to fan.
- Arrange the potatoes in a 28x36 cm baking pan, covering the whole surface of the pan.
- Sprinkle them with salt, pepper, and a little gruyere cheese.
- Follow the same process for the eggplants and the zucchini, creating in total 3 layers of vegetables.
- Add 200 g of the béchamel sauce into the ground beef sauce, mix well, add it on top of the vegetables, and spread it well.
- Add the rest of the béchamel sauce on top, making sure to cover the whole surface of the pan, and then sprinkle with the remaining gruyere cheese and all of the dried breadcrumbs.
- Put the pan in the oven and bake the moussaka for 30-35 minutes until nicely golden.
- Remove the pan from the oven and let it cool well for 1 hour.
- Cut the moussaka into 12 pieces, and serve.

5. Nutritional Values

Per portion serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: 639kcal
- Protein: 27g
- Fat: 40g
- Saturated Fat: 19g
- Carbs: 41g
- Sugar: 12g
- Fiber: 4.5g
- Sodium: 1.3g

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

- Energy and protein: Moussaka provides a satisfying main-meal energy package. For example ~547 kcal with ~22 g protein (in one version) per serving. For crew doing physical tasks, this is helpful.
- Vegetable content: The eggplant (and sometimes potato or zucchini) provide fibre, micronutrients and volume which help satiety and digestion.
- Fat content: The béchamel layer and meat sauce raise the fat content significantly. One version: fat ~23 g per serving. For onboard crew where activity may vary (e.g., watch rotations vs heavy labour) you may want to moderate portion size or adjust fat.
- Carbohydrates: Depending on how many potato slices or whether rice is used, carbs vary. Typical ranges: ~25-45 g carbs per serving.
- Dietary variety / restrictions: Some crew may have dietary restrictions (e.g., leaner diet, less fat, avoid potatoes, vegetarian). Moussaka is adaptable (see below).
- Serving timing: Because it's rich, you may want to serve it as a main dinner for off-watch crew, rather than just before a high-alert shift when a lighter meal may be ideal.

Conclusion:

For a ship crew requiring moderate physical activity, you might plan for ~500-700 kcal for a main dish meal. So you could serve standard portion plus side salad or bread to reach that range. Monitor fat and saturated fat intake (béchamel and meat contribute significantly).



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TRANSYLVANIAN CABBAGE AND MEAT CASSEROLE

VARZĂ A LA CLUJ

1. Origin and History

A Transylvanian reinterpretation of sarmale, the Transylvanian Cabbage a la Cluj was developed to simplify preparation without sacrificing flavor. Instead of rolling cabbage leaves, this version layers cooked cabbage with a meat and rice mixture in a baking dish. It became popular in the 20th century as an urban dish that echoes rural flavors with reduced labor.

2. Cultural Aspects

Popular in Cluj-Napoca and central Transylvania, this dish is now common in restaurants and home cooking. It is often served at winter family gatherings, especially in December and January. The use of baked sour cream topping gives it an indulgent flair.



3. Ingredients (6 servings)

- 1 medium cabbage (or 800 g sauerkraut)
- 500 g minced pork
- 100 g rice
- 1 onion
- 1 tbsp tomato paste
- 200 ml tomato juice
- 2 tbsp oil
- Salt, pepper, thyme
- 200 g sour cream
- 2 eggs (optional, for topping)

4. Preparation

1. Sauté chopped cabbage with salt until softened (~20 min).
2. Cook rice halfway, sauté onion and mix with minced pork, rice, tomato paste, and seasoning.
3. In a greased baking dish, layer half cabbage, all meat mixture, then remaining cabbage.
4. Pour tomato juice over.
5. Mix sour cream with eggs (optional) and spread on top.
6. Bake at 180°C for 45–60 min until golden.

5. Nutritional Values (per slice)

- Calories: ~560 kcal
- Protein: ~26 g
- Fat: ~34 g
- Carbs: ~34 g
- Salt: ~2 g

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition

- Easier to prep than sarmale — no rolling needed.
- Can be prepared in deep trays and portioned easily.
- Use low-fat sour cream or yogurt topping for light variants.
- Good source of fiber, protein, and comfort.
- Freezer-friendly.

Conclusion

The Transylvanian Cabbage a la Cluj brings together the essence of Romanian comfort food with modern practicality — an efficient, flavorful, and filling option.



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TRANSYLVANIAN PORK SOUR SOUP

CIORBĂ DE PORC ARDELENEASCĂ

1. Origin and History

This Transylvanian specialty features pork, root vegetables, sour cream, and vinegar. Influenced by Hungarian and Saxon cuisines, it uses flour and cream for thickening, differentiating it from broth-based ciorbă. It reflects the multicultural heritage of Transylvania.

2. Cultural Aspects

Common in Sunday meals and New Year gatherings, it signifies abundance and warmth. Its creamy texture and paprika notes are widely appreciated across age groups. A hallmark of Transylvanian hospitality, it pairs well with fresh bread and sour cream.



3. Ingredients

- 500 g pork shoulder
- 1 onion, 2 carrots, 1 parsnip, 1 celery root, 1 bell pepper
- 1 tsp sweet paprika
- 2 tbsp tomato paste
- 200 ml sour cream
- 1 tbsp flour
- 2 tbsp vinegar
- Salt and pepper
- Fresh dill or parsley

4. Preparation

1. Simmer pork in salted water for 1 hour.
2. Add diced vegetables and cook until tender.
3. Mix flour, paprika, and sour cream. Temper with hot broth.
4. Slowly stir mixture into soup. Do not boil.
5. Add vinegar and adjust seasoning.
6. Garnish with fresh dill.

5. Nutritional Values (per ~350 ml serving)

- Calories: ~380 kcal
- Protein: ~30 g
- Fat: ~20 g
- Carbohydrates: ~18 g
- Salt: ~1.8 g

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition

- Use frozen pork and powdered cream in mobile kitchens.
- Thickened format makes it ideal for cold weather.
- Serve with bread for added satiety.
- Add root vegetables or beans for fiber.
- Versatile across multicultural settings.

Conclusion

Creamy, rich, and regionally distinctive, the Transylvanian Pork Sour Soup offers satiety and tradition in a single bowl, easily adapted to large-scale kitchens.



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VEGETARIAN



AJARIAN KHACHAPURI

1. Origin and History

Ajarian Khachapuri has a fascinating history deeply rooted in Georgian culture.

Region: Ajara, a coastal region in southwestern Georgia along the Black Sea.

The word “khachapuri” literally means “cheese bread” in Georgian (“khacha” = cheese, “puri” = bread). Cheese-filled breads have existed in Georgia for centuries, long before the modern nation-state existed.

While cheese breads existed across Georgia, the Ajarian version with an egg on top is more recent—likely 19th–20th century. The egg and butter addition makes it richer and more of a meal than a snack.

Some historians suggest it became popular among seafaring communities who wanted a portable, hearty, high-energy meal. Today, it's a signature dish of Georgia, often considered the pinnacle of khachapuri. In Ajara, it's not just food—it's part of hospitality and celebration. There's even a playful “Khachapuri Index,” which Georgians sometimes jokingly use to measure inflation and economic well-being, showing how integral it is to national culture.



2. Cultural aspects

In Georgia, food is central to hospitality, called “supra” (a traditional feast). Serving khachapuri, especially Ajarian style, is a way to welcome guests warmly. The act of tearing bread from the boat together fosters sharing and community. Khachapuri represents regional pride, with each area of Georgia having its own variant. Ajarian Khachapuri is instantly recognizable due to its boat shape and egg topping, signaling Ajara specifically. Locals often associate it with childhood, festivals, and family gatherings.

3. Ingredients (for 4 servings)

For the dough:

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- ½ tsp salt
- 1 tsp sugar
- 1 tsp instant yeast
- ¾ cup warm water
- 1 tbsp olive oil

For the filling:

- 1 ½ cups shredded sulguni cheese (or a mix of mozzarella + feta if unavailable)
- 1 egg per khachapuri (4 eggs total)
- 2 tbsp unsalted butter (per khachapuri)

4. Preparation

Step 1: Make the dough

In a small bowl, dissolve yeast and sugar in warm water. Let it sit 5–10 min until foamy.

In a large bowl, combine flour and salt. Gradually add yeast mixture and olive oil.

Knead 5–7 minutes until smooth and elastic.

Cover with a towel and let rise 1–1.5 hours until doubled in size.

Step 2: Prepare the filling

Shred the cheese and set aside.

Preheat oven to 475°F (245°C).

Step 3: Shape the khachapuri

Divide the dough into 4 equal parts. Roll each into an oval or rectangle.

Roll the long edges toward the center to form a boat shape, pinching the ends.

Place on a parchment-lined baking sheet.

Step 4: Add cheese

Fill the center of each “boat” with shredded cheese, leaving the edges free.

Bake 12–15 minutes until the dough is golden and cheese is bubbly.

Step 5: Add egg and butter

Remove from oven and immediately crack 1 egg into the center of each khachapuri.

Add 1 tbsp butter on top.

Return to oven for 2–3 minutes, just until the egg white sets but yolk stays runny.

Step 6: Serve

Mix the yolk and butter into the cheese and tear the crust to dip.

Enjoy hot—this is best eaten fresh!

5. Nutritional Values

Per portion serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: 700-850kcal
- Protein: 30g
- Fat: 50g
- Saturated Fat: 25g
- Carbs: 70g
- Sugar: 5g
- Fiber: 2-3g
- Sodium: 900-1200mg

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

Here's a comprehensive guide on onboard nutrition for maritime ships, combining practical considerations for long voyages with health, safety, and morale:

Core Principles

Balanced Meals: Ensure protein, carbohydrates complex, healthy fats, vitamins, and minerals.

Energy-Dense Foods: Seafarers perform physical and mental work; high-calorie options are necessary but should be balanced.

Shelf-Stable Options: Many ingredients need to last weeks or months without spoiling.



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BRIDE EZO SOUP EZO GELIN SOUP

1. Origin and history

The story of Ezo Gelin soup dates back to the early 20th century in a village near Gaziantep, based on the life of Ezo Gelin, whose beauty was legendary. According to legend, when Ezo Gelin went to distant lands as a bride, she prepared this soup out of homesickness, adding lentils, bulgur, rice, and spices to create a filling and comforting flavor. When associated with seafaring, there is a great similarity in this story. Just like Ezo Gelin's homesickness, sailors also long for home during long voyages. At such times, a warm bowl of Ezogelin soup not only fills the stomach on the ship; it also brings back memories of home and loved ones. This soup, simmering in the ship's small kitchen, provides a sense of "home" even on distant seas. Furthermore, Ezogelin soup, made from lentils and grains, provides sailors with the energy they need during long shifts. Thus, Ezogelin soup becomes a dish that embodies resilience, unity, and homesickness not only in Anatolia but also on the seas.



2. Cultural aspects

Ezo Gelin soup is a beloved symbol of Turkish culture, named after the legendary Ezo Gelin of Gaziantep and embodying themes of longing, resilience, and the comfort of home. Traditionally served as a gesture of warmth and hospitality, it bridges everyday meals with cultural rituals, from family dinners to Ramadan gatherings. Its humble ingredients—lentils, bulgur, and rice—make it both nourishing and practical, reflecting Anatolia's resourcefulness. For seafarers far from their homeland, a bowl of Ezo Gelin soup can evoke the feeling of home, restore morale during long voyages, and provide both physical sustenance and emotional comfort, turning a simple meal into a cultural anchor at sea.

3. Ingredients

- 1/2 cup red lentils (~100 g)
- 2 tablespoons fine bulgur (~30 g)
- 2 tablespoons rice (~30 g)
- 1 medium onion, finely chopped
- 2 tablespoons olive oil or butter
- 1 teaspoon tomato paste
- 1 teaspoon paprika (optional)
- 1 teaspoon dried mint
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 6 cups water or low-sodium broth (~1.5 L)
- Optional: lemon wedges for serving

4. Preparation

1. Sauté the aromatics:

Heat olive oil or butter in a pot over medium heat.

Add chopped onion and cook until soft and translucent.

Stir in tomato paste and paprika, cooking 1–2 minutes.

2. Add grains and legumes:

Rinse lentils, bulgur, and rice and add them to the pot.

Stir to coat with the aromatic mixture.

3. Simmer the soup:

Add water or broth and bring to a boil.

Reduce the heat and simmer for 20–25 minutes, stirring occasionally, until lentils and grains are soft and the soup thickens.

4. Season and finish:

Add salt, pepper, and dried mint. Adjust seasoning to taste.

Blend partially with a hand blender if you prefer a smoother texture.

5. Serve:

Ladle into bowls and serve with optional lemon wedges for added freshness.

5. Nutritional Values

Per ~350 g serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: ~4075 kcal
- Protein: ~105g
- Fat: ~224g
- Carbohydrates: ~438g
- Salt: ~0.8g



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Nutritional profile:

- Protein: Lentils provide high-quality plant-based protein, supporting muscle maintenance during long shifts.
- Carbohydrates: Bulgur, rice, and lentils give sustained energy, ideal for seafarers on active duty.
- Fat: Moderate amount from olive oil, providing healthy unsaturated fats.
- Fiber & Micronutrients: Lentils, bulgur, and vegetables add fiber, B-vitamins, iron, and magnesium.
- Salt: Controlled to prevent excessive sodium intake, important for long voyages.

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

- Portion Control: Serve ~300–350g per person to provide energy without excess calories.
- Energy Supply: Use as a light but nourishing meal, ideal for lunch or dinner during long shifts.
- Protein Balance: Complements seafarers' protein intake with plant-based protein; can be paired with yogurt or cheese for additional protein.
- Fat Management: Use moderate olive oil to maintain healthy fat intake without overloading calories.
- Salt Control: Limit added salt, especially if using pre-seasoned ingredients, to prevent excessive sodium intake.
- Storage & Shelf Life: Dried lentils, bulgur, rice, and spices store well; fresh onions or vegetables can be substituted with dried or canned forms.
- Cultural Adaptation: Traditional Turkish flavors provide comfort and morale for Turkish crew, while the recipe can be slightly adapted to suit multicultural crews.
- Hydration Consideration: The soup's water content contributes to hydration; encourage crew to drink additional fluids during long watches.

Conclusion:

Ezo Gelin soup is a nourishing and comforting dish that brings a taste of home to seafarers on long voyages. Packed with lentils, bulgur, and rice, it provides sustained energy, plant-based protein, and fiber while remaining light and easy to digest. Its warm, traditional flavors not only support physical well-being but also boost morale, making it an ideal, practical, and culturally meaningful meal onboard.



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ELARJI

1. Origin and History

Elarji is a traditional Georgian dish, and its origins are deeply tied to the mountainous regions of Svaneti, in northwest Georgia. Svaneti, a mountainous area of Georgia known for its hardy cuisine suited to cold climates.

Corn Introduction: Corn (maize) was brought to Georgia from the Americas in the 16th–17th centuries. It quickly became a staple in rural areas because it was easy to grow in mountainous terrain.

Cheese: The traditional cheese used, Sulguni, is a brined, semi-soft cheese with a slightly elastic texture. Combining cornmeal and cheese allowed for a high-energy, filling dish.

Everyday & Festive Dish: While originally a staple, elarji also became part of local celebrations. It was considered a comfort food and often served with butter or additional cheese.



2. Cultural Aspects

Elarji is closely associated with the Svan people, a mountain-dwelling subgroup in northwest Georgia.

It reflects the resourcefulness and resilience of the Svans, who relied on simple local ingredients like corn and dairy to survive harsh winters.

Serving elarji is a way to honor traditional Svan cuisine, which values hearty, energy-rich foods.

3. Ingredients (Serves 4)

- 1 cup cornmeal (medium or coarse-ground)
- 3 cups water
- 200 g (about 7 oz) Georgian Sulguni cheese (or mozzarella as a substitute)
- 2 tbsp unsalted butter
- 1 tsp salt

4. Preparation

Boil the water: In a medium pot, bring 3 cups of water to a boil. Add 1 tsp salt.

Add cornmeal gradually: Reduce heat to medium-low. Slowly pour the cornmeal into the water while continuously stirring to avoid lumps.

Cook the cornmeal: Keep stirring for 10–15 minutes until the mixture thickens and starts to pull away from the sides of the pot.

Add cheese: Grate the Sulguni (or mozzarella) and stir it into the hot cornmeal. Mix until fully melted and incorporated.

Add butter: Stir in the butter for extra creaminess.

Serve: Spread on a plate or mold into shapes. Elarji is best served hot, sometimes with a little extra cheese on top.

5. Nutritional Values

Per portion serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: 350-400kcal
- Protein: 15g
- Fat: 15g
- Saturated Fat: 9g
- Carbs: 55g
- Sugar: 2g
- Fiber: 2-3g
- Sodium: 400-600mg (depends on cheese and added salt)

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

Key Principles

Energy-Dense Foods

Crew members often perform physically demanding tasks; meals should provide adequate calories without being overly heavy.

Include complex carbohydrates (rice, pasta, whole grains) and healthy fats (nuts, seeds, olive oil).

Adequate Protein

Supports muscle maintenance and overall health during long voyages.

Sources: canned/frozen fish, poultry, eggs, dairy, legumes, soy products.

Micronutrient Sufficiency

Vitamins and minerals are crucial, especially Vitamin C, D, B12, iron, and iodine.

Supplementation may be necessary due to limited fresh fruits and vegetables.

Hydration

Seawater exposure and physical labor increase fluid needs.

Provide safe drinking water and encourage regular intake.

Limit excessive caffeine and sugar-sweetened drinks.



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FLAT BREAD MINI PIDES

1. Origin and history

Mini pides (flatbread) have been an indispensable part of Turkish culinary culture since the Ottoman period, when dough-based foods became widespread. Their small size makes them both practical and easy to portion, making them popular on daily tables and among street foods. In the context of seafaring, mini pides have become an ideal snack during long shifts and voyages on ships. Sailors, especially during night shifts, preferred small pides to quickly boost their energy, staying full and keeping their spirits high with cheese, minced meat, or vegetable varieties. Their portability and shareability on ships have made mini pides not just a food item but also a symbol of solidarity and sharing in maritime culture. In short, mini pides have maintained their importance throughout history as both a part of traditional Turkish cuisine and a practical, energy-boosting favorite snack for sailors.



2. Cultural aspects

Mini pides hold a special place in Turkish culture, symbolizing hospitality, sharing, and community, while reflecting regional flavors through fillings like cheese, minced meat, or vegetables. Traditionally served during gatherings, celebrations, or as snacks for guests, they carry both culinary and social significance. At sea, these small, practical pastries become an ideal food for seafarers, providing quick energy during long shifts or night watches. Sharing mini pides among crew members reinforces camaraderie and teamwork, turning a simple snack into a symbol of community at sea. Their adaptability to available ingredients on long voyages also highlights how cultural foods can maintain their traditional essence while meeting the practical needs of maritime life.

3. Ingredients (makes ~8–10 mini pides):

For the dough:

- 3 cups all-purpose flour (~360 g)
- 1 cup warm water (~240 ml)
- 1 packet (7 g) instant yeast
- 1 tsp sugar
- 1 tsp salt
- 2 tbsp olive oil

For the filling (examples):

- Cheese: 150 g feta or kasar cheese, crumbled
- Minced meat: 150 g beef or lamb, sautéed with onion, salt, pepper, and optional spices
- Vegetable: chopped tomatoes, peppers, or spinach with olive oil and seasoning

Optional toppings:

- Egg yolk for brushing
- Sesame or nigella seeds

4. Preparation

1. Prepare the dough:

Mix warm water, yeast, and sugar; let sit 5–10 minutes until frothy.

Add flour, salt, and olive oil; knead until smooth (~8–10 min).

Cover and let rise for 30–60 minutes (dough will rise faster in warm ship cabins).

2. Prepare fillings:

Drain canned vegetables or pre-cooked meat.

Mix cheese or meats with a little oil and season lightly.

3. Shape the mini pides:

Preheat oven (or ship's galley oven) to 220°C (428°F).

Divide dough into 8–10 pieces; roll into ovals (~15 cm long).

Spread filling in the center; fold edges slightly inward to create a boat shape.

4. Optional topping:

Brush edges with egg yolk if available; sprinkle sesame or nigella seeds.

5. Bake 12–15 minutes until golden. Serve warm.

5. Nutritional Values

Per ~350 g serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: ~900 kcal per ~350 g serving
- Protein: ~29 g
- Fat: ~31 g
- Carbohydrates: ~138 g
- Salt: ~0.8–1 g (depending on added salt and filling)
- Purpose: Provides quick, sustained energy for seafarers during long shifts and night watches
- Preparation: Can be made with shelf-stable or canned ingredients; easy and practical for onboard cooking
- Fillings: Adaptable—cheese, pre-cooked or canned meat, and vegetables
- Cultural/Maritime Value: Supports camaraderie and community when shared among crew; a practical and morale-boosting snack



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Nutritional Profile:

- Energy-dense: Provides substantial calories, ideal for night watches or long shifts.
- Protein-rich: Moderate protein from cheese or meat fillings supports muscle maintenance.
- Balanced macros: Carbohydrates supply quick energy; fats give sustained energy.
- Low-to-moderate salt: Safe for controlled sodium intake if additional salt is minimized.
- Adaptable fillings: Cheese, meat, or vegetables can adjust nutrient content slightly.

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

- Portion Control: Serve in moderate portions (~100–150 g) to provide energy without excessive calories.
- Energy Supply: Use as a high-energy snack or small meal during night watches or long shifts.
- Protein Balance: Pair with protein-rich foods (yogurt, milk, or nuts) to complement the moderate protein from fillings.
- Fat Management: Use moderate amounts of butter or oil when preparing to avoid excessive fat intake.
- Salt Control: Limit added salt; fillings like cheese or canned meat can already contribute sodium.
- Storage & Shelf Life: Use shelf-stable or canned fillings and store dough ingredients properly to prevent spoilage.
- Cultural Adaptation: Adjust fillings according to crew preferences and dietary restrictions (vegetarian, halal, etc.).
- Hydration Consideration: Encourage drinking water or milk alongside mini pidés, as they are dense in carbs and fats.

Conclusion:

Mini pidés are a versatile and nourishing option for seafarers, offering quick energy and satisfying flavors during long shifts. Their adaptable fillings make them easy to prepare with available ingredients, while their shareable nature supports camaraderie onboard. With mindful portioning and balanced accompaniments, mini pidés can be both a morale booster and a practical staple at sea.



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GREEK SPINACH PIE

SPANAKOPITA

1. Origin and History

Greeks have been eating these pies since ancient times. One of the earliest references to one comes from the poet Philoxenos in the fifth century B.C. Philoxenos writes that at the end of a banquet the hosts served a cheesecake made with milk and honey that was baked like a pie. That sounds similar to my recipe for Melopita from Sifnos, and it bet it was spectacular. Other ancients were fond of cheese pies wrapped in fig leaves, which is starting to resemble the leaves of dough that encase our modern day pies; the literal translation for phyllo is leaf.

2. Cultural aspects

Spanakopita is one of Greece's signature dishes. It is ubiquitous all over the country, but some of the most famous versions come from the northwestern region of Epirus. Historically master foragers, Greeks in that region and beyond, have used wild greens as the backbone of their diet. It was only a matter of time before they started finessing them into pies. But when did the actual spinach arrive? Spinach originated in the Middle East and merchants brought it to Spain. Finally, during the Byzantine Empire it arrived in the rest of Europe. Farmers in the area that comprises present-day Greece discovered that they could cultivate this leafy green very easily.

3. Ingredients

For the dough

- 500 g hard flour
- 100 g olive oil
- 20 g vinegar, white wine
- 10 g granulated sugar
- 1 pinch salt
- 210 g water

For the filling

- 1,2 kilos spinach
- ½ bunch spring onions
- 2 leeks
- 1/2 bunch parsley
- 1/2 bunch dill
- 60 g olive oil
- lemon zest, of 1 lemon
- salt
- pepper

4. Preparation

For the dough

- Put the flour, olive oil, vinegar, sugar, salt, and water into a mixer's bowl, and beat them with the hook attachment at medium speed, for 5 minutes, until you have a soft and elastic dough.
- Transfer the dough into a bowl, cover the bowl with plastic wrap, and let the dough rest for 30 minutes.

For the Filling

- Clean the spinach and finely chop it.
- Finely chop the spring onions, leeks, parsley, and dill.
- Place a pot over medium-high heat and let it heat up well.
- Add the olive oil, spring onions, and leeks, and sauté them for 2-3 minutes until softened and caramelized.
- Add the spinach in 3-4 batches, and sauté it for 10-15 minutes until it is wilted and all the moisture is evaporated.
- Remove the pot from the heat and add the parsley, dill, lemon zest, salt, and pepper.
- Mix and set the filling aside.

To assemble

- Put the flour and corn starch into a bowl, and mix them well.
- Place the dough on your worktop and divide it into 6 even pieces.
- Dust your worktop with the flour-corn starch mixture.
- Use a rolling pin to roll out each dough piece into a 40-50 cm round sheet, turning the pin toward you as you roll. (If the dough sticks, add more flour. For the first 5 sheets, the shape does not matter much; only the last one needs to be neat as it will be used to cover the pie.)
- Brush a 34 cm round baking pan with olive oil.
- Spread the first phyllo sheet over the whole surface of the pan, leaving quite an overhang.
- Lightly drizzle the phyllo with olive oil, being careful not to touch the phyllo directly with the brush.
- Follow the same process for two more phyllo sheets, drizzling each with olive oil.
- Add the filling, spread it evenly with a spatula, and fold the overhanging edges of the phyllo inward.
- Place the remaining 3 phyllo sheets on top in the same way, drizzling each with olive oil, and make sure the top sheet is neat. (Set aside a little olive oil for later.)
- Fold the edges of the phyllo inward with your hands.
- Refrigerate the pie for 20 minutes to rest.



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- Preheat the oven to 190°C (370°F) set to fan.
- Remove the pie from the refrigerator, score it into 8 pieces with a knife, and drizzle with the remaining olive oil.
- Put the pan in the oven and bake the pie for 55-60 minutes until it is crispy and nicely golden.
- Remove the pan from the oven and let the pie cool for 20 minutes.
- Cut the spinach pie into pieces, and serve.

5. Nutritional Values

Per portion serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: 690kcal
- Protein: 13g
- Fat: 41g
- Saturated Fat: 5.9g
- Carbs: 63g
- Sugar: 6.2g
- Fiber: 9.3g
- Sodium: 0.66g

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

Energy balance for crew:

- Excellent option for medium-duty days (not too heavy on fat or carbs).
- High in micronutrients — good for long voyages with limited fresh produce.

Dietary inclusivity:

- Vegetarian-friendly.
- Can make vegan version (omit cheese/eggs, use tofu or vegan feta).
- Works for religious fasting menus if dairy-free version prepared with olive oil and herbs only.

Hydration & digestion:

- Serve with fresh salad or tomato side — aids digestion.
- Encourage adequate fluid intake (high sodium in feta can increase thirst).

Conclusion:

It's nutrient-dense, offering vegetables, calcium and protein. It can be made in bulk, portioned easily, and served hot or cold. It's versatile — can be vegetarian, with cheese or vegan variants. Stores and reheats well for multiple shifts.



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GREEK STYLE MIXED LEGUME SOUP

FASOLADA

1. Origin and history

Initially, it was a basic vegetarian concoction of beans, vegetables and grains. Fascinatingly, this humble dish played a role in religious ceremonies, offered to Apollo, the Greek god of sun and light, during the Pyanopsia festival.

2. Cultural aspects

This mixed legume soup is greek soup called (fasolada) is the perfect way to combine 3 different kinds of legumes: beans, chickpeas and lentils. A nutrient-rich dish that is perfect on cold winter days!

3. Ingredients

200 g beans, white
200 g chickpeas
200 g lentils
2 onions
2 carrots
3 stick(s) celery
3 tablespoon(s) olive oil
1 tablespoon(s) tomato paste
1 tablespoon(s) thyme, fresh, finely chopped
2 liters water
500 g tomatoes, grated
2 teaspoon(s) granulated sugar
1 vegetable bouillon cube
salt
pepper



4. Preparation

Put the beans and the chickpeas into a bowl and then fill the bowl with water.
Add 1 level teaspoon of salt, stir gently, and set the legumes aside to soak for 8-12 hours.
Coarsely chop the onions, cut the carrots into cubes and the celery into 1 cm thick slices, and set them aside.
Place a pot over medium heat and add the olive oil, onions, carrots, and celery.
Saute the veggies for 3-4 minutes until they are caramelized.
Add the tomato paste and thyme, and keep sauteing for 1 more minute.
Add the water, grated tomatoes, salt, pepper, sugar, and vegetable bouillon cube, and bring the mixture to a boil.
Drain the beans and chickpeas, and add them to the pot.
Put the lid on the pot and simmer the soup for 40 minutes.
Add the lentils and boil the soup for another 30-40 minutes, until the legumes are tender and the soup thickened.
Divide the soup into plates and serve with olive oil and pepper.

5. Nutritional Values

Per portion serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

Calories: 238 kcal
Protein: 12g
Fat: 5.9g
Saturated Fat: 0.8g
Carbs: 30g
Sugar: 8.4g
Fiber: 7.1
Sodium: 0.77g
Nutritional profile:
No cholesterol
Low in Sodium
Healthy recipe

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

The traditional Greek mixed-legume offers numerous advantages:

Legumes are high in plant-protein, fibre and slow-digesting carbohydrates, making them sustainable and satiating. For example, for a Greek lentil soup: ~15-20 g protein and ~15-20 g fibre per serving.
The recipe is relatively simple, uses storable dry legumes and typical vegetables, making it suitable for shipboard provisioning.
The Mediterranean flavour profile (olive oil, legumes, vegetables, lemon) is broadly acceptable and fits a Greek-style menu.
It can be adapted for vegetarian/vegan servings (important for diverse crew dietary requirements).

Conclusion:

Provide portion size, for example ~350-400 g per person to meet ~400-500 kcal. Offer salad side to increase fresh vegetable intake.
Hydration: ensure crew have water available, beans and fibre may increase thirst. Monitor leftovers: track how much consumed vs wasted, adjust portion size next time if excessive leftovers



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LENTIL SOUP

1. Origin and history

Lentil soup is one of humanity's oldest dishes, dating back over 9,000 years in the Fertile Crescent, and it quickly became a traveler's staple because dried lentils were light, long-lasting, and nourishing. As early maritime traders like the Phoenicians and Greeks carried goods across the Mediterranean, they also carried lentils, which sailors boiled into simple soups aboard ships. The Romans, too, provisioned their galleys with lentils, turning them into broths that sustained crews on long voyages. Through the medieval spice routes and later European exploration, lentil soup spread across seas to port cities from Alexandria to Goa and the Americas. Its ability to adapt to local spices and ingredients—whether cumin in the Middle East, herbs in Europe, or chilies in India—reflects centuries of maritime exchange. In this way, lentil soup not only nourished sailors and monks but also became a humble, enduring dish shaped by the movement of ships and the meeting of cultures.



2. Cultural aspects

From a maritime perspective, the cultural aspects of lentil soup revolve around its role as a food of sustenance, adaptability, and symbolism in port cities and seafaring life. Because lentils are lightweight, keep well when dried, and cook quickly, they were a natural staple for sailors who needed nourishing meals on long voyages. This practicality gave lentil soup a cultural identity as a "sailor's food"—simple, hearty, and reliable. At the same time, lentil soup reflects the exchange of flavors across maritime trade routes. Arab traders brought spiced versions to Mediterranean ports; European explorers carried lentils to the Americas; and in coastal India, lentil stews absorbed Portuguese and local influences. Port cities became melting pots where the dish took on regional character, yet it always kept its humble, communal essence. Thus, lentil soup embodies a shared maritime culture: a meal that crossed seas, sustained crews, and evolved wherever ships made harbor, linking distant communities through a common bowl.

3. Ingredients

- 3 tablespoons of sunflower oil
- 1 onion (coarsely chopped)
- 1 tablespoon of flour
- 1 carrot (coarsely chopped)
- 1 potato (large, coarsely chopped)
- 1 teaspoon of salt
- 1 teaspoon of black pepper
- 1,5 cups of red or yellow lentils
- 6 cups of hot water (prepared with 1 meat water tablet)

For the topping of the lentil soup:

- 3 tbsp oil, 2 tbsp butter, 1 tsp red pepper powder

4. Preparation

1. Add 3 tablespoons of oil to a deep pot for the lentil soup. Roast 1 large chopped onion with oil.
2. Add 1 tablespoon of flour to the roasted onions and continue roasting until it smells and turns color. Add one carrot and a potato chopped into large pieces into the pot and continue to mix.
3. Add salt, black pepper, and 1.5 cups of lentils that you have drained after washing in plenty of water, and mix well for the last time.
4. Add 6 cups of hot water to the pot.
5. Then close the lid and cook for about 40 minutes, stirring occasionally until the potatoes and carrots are soft.
6. After the lentil soup is cooked, pass it through a hand blender to get a smooth consistency. After cooking for 5 more minutes, remove from the stove.
7. Heat 3 tablespoons of oil and 2 tablespoons of butter in a pan. Add 1 teaspoon of crushed red pepper and remove from the stove after heating the oil for 2 minutes.
8. Put the lentil soup in a bowl and serve it after pouring the hot oil over it.

5. Nutritional Values

Per ~350 g serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: ~230–280 kcal
- Protein: ~15–18 g
- Carbohydrates: ~35–40 g
- Fiber: ~12–14 g
- Sugars: ~5–6 g
- Fat: ~4–7 g
- Saturated fat: ~0.5–1 g
- Vitamins & Minerals (approx.)
- Iron: ~5–6 mg (about 30% of daily needs)
- Folate: ~150–200 mcg (40–50% of daily needs)
- Potassium: ~800–900 mg
- Magnesium: ~60–70 mg
- Vitamin A & C (if vegetables like carrots/tomatoes are used)



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Nutritional profile:

- High in plant protein (lentils provide ~16 g per portion, supporting muscle repair and satiety).
- Rich in complex carbohydrates and fiber, mainly from lentils and vegetables, giving steady energy release and good digestive support.
- Low to moderate in fat, mostly unsaturated from olive oil, with little saturated fat.
- Micronutrient dense: excellent source of iron, folate, magnesium, and potassium, important for energy metabolism and heart health.
- Sodium content can vary widely depending on broth or added salt (250–800 mg/portion). For long-term consumption, reducing added salt or using low-sodium broth is advisable.

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

- Balance: Lentil soup naturally balances protein, complex carbs, and fiber. Adding a small amount of olive oil or serving with whole-grain bread enhances healthy fats and energy balance.
- Protein rotation: Lentil soup provides strong plant protein. To avoid repetition, rotate with animal proteins (fish, chicken, eggs) or other legumes (chickpeas, beans, peas). It can also be enriched with yogurt or cheese for variety.
- Salt control: The base soup can be low in sodium if cooked from scratch. However, if bouillon cubes or canned stock are used, sodium rises quickly. Opt for low-salt broth and season with spices, garlic, or lemon juice instead.
- Energy density: On its own, lentil soup is moderate in calories. For crew with high energy needs, serve it with rice, bread, or a drizzle of oil. For lighter meals, it works well as a starter or paired with fresh salad.
- Storage: Lentils store dry for years and are resistant to spoilage—ideal for long voyages. Soup can be batch-cooked and frozen for easy reheating, though fresh vegetables add variety when available.
- Cultural adaptation: Lentil soup is highly versatile: it can be flavored Middle Eastern-style with cumin, Indian-style with curry spices, or Mediterranean-style with tomato and herbs. This makes it adaptable to diverse crew preferences.
- Hydration: As a liquid-based meal, lentil soup contributes to daily fluid intake. However, it should complement, not replace, regular water consumption. A well-hydrated crew benefits from both soups and plain drinking water.

Conclusion:

“Hearty yet simple, lentil soup has long been a sailor’s ally—nourishing, easy to store, and adaptable to any voyage. Its balance of protein, fiber, and warmth makes it a reliable dish to keep crew satisfied and steady at sea.”



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LUTENITSA

1. Origin and history

Lutenitsa is a vegetable spread or relish deeply associated with Bulgarian cuisine, but also popular throughout the Balkans. While its roots are tied to regional agricultural practices and home cooking, its familiar form developed during the 20th century, coinciding with the rise of industrial food production. The word lutenitsa comes from the Bulgarian word *ljut*, which means "spicy" or "hot". While the name suggests a fiery condiment, it comes in both mild and spicy variations, with some recipes including chili peppers and garlic to produce a bolder flavor. The practice of preserving vegetables like peppers and tomatoes is an ancient one in the Balkan region. However, the specific combination and preparation that define lutenitsa are a more modern development. The widespread popularity of lutenitsa can be traced to the mid-20th century in Bulgaria.

2. Cultural aspects

Today, homemade lutenitsa remains a powerful culinary symbol of Bulgaria. The annual tradition of preparing lutenitsa at the end of summer or beginning of autumn is a cherished ritual passed down through generations. The process of roasting and preserving vegetables captures the essence of the harvest season. The making of lutenitsa is a cherished communal activity that takes place during late summer and early autumn when vegetables are ripe. Families and neighbors gather to help with the time-consuming process of roasting, peeling, grinding, and simmering the vegetables. The event often occurs over an open fire, filling the neighborhood with the smell of roasting peppers.

3. Ingredients

- 1.5 kg red peppers
- 1 kg ripe tomatoes, preferably plum or Roma tomatoes
- 200 g carrots, finely grated
- 150 g onion, finely chopped
- 12 g garlic (about 4 cloves), minced
- 1 small chili pepper, to taste
- One large eggplant, roasted and peeled
- 120 ml sunflower oil
- 20 ml apple cider vinegar
- 10 g sugar, to balance acidity
- 1 g black pepper
- 1 g cumin
- 1 tbsp fresh parsley, chopped

4. Preparation

1. Arrange the peppers on a baking sheet and broil or grill them until the skins are blackened and blistered on all sides. This process can take 20–30 minutes.
2. Once roasted, transfer the hot peppers to a bowl and cover them tightly with a lid or plastic wrap. Let them steam for about 15 minutes. This makes the skin easier to peel. Once cooled, peel off the skin, remove the stems and seeds, and drain off any excess liquid.
3. Boil the carrots until tender.
4. Grate the ripe tomatoes using a box grater, leaving the skins behind.
5. Sauté the onions in a wide pot with a portion of the sunflower oil until softened.
6. Roast the eggplant (if using) and remove its flesh.
7. Add the grated tomatoes to the pot with the sautéed onions and cook over medium-high heat until the liquid has evaporated and the sauce is thick.
8. Use a food processor, immersion blender, or a hand grinder to blend the peeled peppers, carrots, and eggplant (if using) into a chunky or smooth puree.
9. Add the pepper mixture, along with the rest of the sunflower oil and the other seasonings, to the pot with the thickened tomato sauce. Simmer the lutenitsa over low heat for 1–2 hours, stirring frequently to prevent it from sticking or scorching. The longer it simmers, the thicker and richer it will become.
10. The lutenitsa is done when you can run a wooden spoon across the bottom of the pot and the mixture doesn't immediately flow back to fill the trail.
11. For long-term storage, fill sterilized jars with the hot lutenitsa, seal them, and process them in a boiling water bath for 10–15 minutes.

5. Nutritional Values

Per ~100 g serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: ~ 100-150 kcal
- Protein: ~ 1-2 g
- Fat: ~ 4-9 g
- Carbohydrates: ~ 8-17 g
- Salt: ~ 1.3-1.7 g



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6. Nutritional profile:

- The tomatoes and roasted red peppers are excellent sources of lycopene, a powerful antioxidant that increases with processing, and vitamin C.
- As a good source of vitamins, lutenitsa can help boost the immune system.
- Many of the vegetables in lutenitsa, such as peppers, eggplants, and carrots, are rich in dietary fiber, which aids in digestion.
- The healthy monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats come from the sunflower oil used in the preparation.
- Making lutenitsa at home provides better control over the salt and sugar content, allowing for a healthier and more natural product without artificial additives.
- Lutenitsa can serve as a healthier alternative to high-sugar and high-sodium condiments like ketchup and barbecue sauce.

7. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

- Longevity and storage: Traditionally canned in jars, lutenitsa has a long shelf life and is stable in the ship's dry stores. It does not require refrigeration before opening, and its compact nature maximizes limited storage space.
- Use airtight containers: Always store opened jars of lutenitsa in the refrigerator and consume them within about 10 days to prevent spoilage.
- Control sodium levels: Many preserved foods, including canned lutenitsa, can have high sodium content. For mariners who need to manage their salt intake, it's best to use lutenitsa in moderation or opt for homemade versions with reduced salt.
- Avoid contamination: Ensure food handling practices are safe and hygienic, especially with opened jars, to prevent spoilage and foodborne illness.

Conclusion:

Lutenitsa is an excellent provision for mariners, offering a concentrated source of vegetables that is easy to store and versatile to serve. Its traditional preparation method of canning makes it particularly suitable for long sea voyages.



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MENEMEN

1. Origin and history

Towards the end of the 19th century, tomatoes, brought from America and gradually introduced into Ottoman cuisine, grew so abundantly in these lands that people began to use them in every meal. Initially, simple stir-fries were made with tomatoes, onions, and peppers. Then, to feed the workers who went to the fields early in the morning more quickly and satisfactorily, the villagers began adding eggs to this mixture. As the eggs cooked on top of the stir-fried vegetables, both their aroma and appearance brought a special joy to the table. This is how the first steps of menemen were taken. In the early years of the Republic, the district of Menemen was like the vegetable garden of the Aegean. The immigrants and villagers living here embraced this dish because the ingredients were easily accessible and it was practical to make. Slowly but surely, "menemen," synonymous with the district's name, spread throughout Anatolia. Menemen pots began to simmer at breakfasts, lunch breaks, and even dinner tables. Thus, a simple peasant dish gradually became one of Türkiye's most renowned flavors. Menemen is not just tomatoes, peppers, and eggs; it is a story of Anatolia's abundance, migrant culture, and spirit of sharing reflected on a plate.



2. Cultural aspects

When we look at the ingredients of menemen – tomatoes, peppers, eggs – they are all easily accessible, inexpensive, and simple foods. So it's not surprising that sailors were also interested in it. Historically: In the Ottoman navy and during the Republican era, sailors' staple foods were generally dry foods (legumes, bread, salted fish, canned goods). But on short voyages or when fresh vegetables were available at port, dishes similar to menemen were prepared. From the mid-19th century onwards, cooks on Turkish merchant ships in particular frequently prepared practical dishes like menemen. This is because it is quick, filling, and the ingredients are easy to store. Its practicality made it very suitable for sailors: Eggs are a product that can be stored for a long time. Tomatoes and peppers can be obtained from port to port, and even canned versions can be used. It cooks quickly in a pan, so it can be made even on rough seas. Even today, it is possible to find references to "menemen for breakfast" in the memories of sailors serving in both the Turkish navy and merchant ships. In other words, menemen has established itself as an "energy-boosting" meal at sea, just as it is on land.

3. Ingredients

- 3 tbsp olive oil (or butter)
- 2–3 green peppers (Turkish sivri biber or similar mild peppers), sliced
- 3 medium ripe tomatoes, peeled and diced (or grated)
- 4 eggs
- Salt, to taste
- Black pepper, to taste
- (Optional) Red pepper flakes or a pinch of paprika
- (Optional) 1 small onion, finely chopped (depending on your preference—some regions add it, some don't)

4. Preparation

1. Prepare the vegetables: If you prefer, peel the tomatoes by blanching them briefly in hot water, then dice or grate them. Slice the peppers into thin rings.
2. Cook the base: In a wide pan, heat the olive oil. If using onion, sauté until soft and lightly golden. Add the sliced peppers and cook until softened.
3. Add tomatoes: Stir in the tomatoes and cook until they break down into a saucy consistency (about 8–10 minutes). Season with salt and pepper.
4. Add the eggs: Crack the eggs directly over the tomato-pepper mixture. Stir gently if you like them scrambled, or leave them whole for a shakshuka-style look. Cook until the eggs are just set—soft and slightly runny is traditional.
5. Serve hot: Sprinkle with black pepper or chili flakes. Serve immediately with fresh bread for dipping.

Menemen is usually eaten straight from the pan in the middle of the table, with everyone dipping bread. It's simple, comforting, and perfect for breakfast—or any meal of the day.

5. Nutritional Values

Per ~350 g serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Protein: ~18–19 g Adequate, but for sailors doing heavy manual labor, it may need to be paired with extra protein (fish, beans, or cheese).
- Fat: ~40 g Provides energy, but too much fat—especially if fried or with added processed meats (sucuk, sausage)—can increase risk of cardiovascular issues, a common health concern in long-term seafaring.
- Carbohydrates: ~9 g Very low. On ships, menemen would usually be eaten with bread, which balances the energy profile by adding carbohydrates.
- Salt (sodium): depends entirely on added salt. Needs careful management. Seafarers often face high rates of hypertension due to salty preserved foods. Keeping menemen low-salt can make it a healthier onboard option. On ships, cooks often use more salt for preservation and taste, so intake can easily exceed safe limits.



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6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

Nutritional Balance: Menemen provides a balanced mix of protein from eggs, healthy fats from olive oil, and vitamins from tomatoes and peppers.

- Protein Rotation: Pair menemen with cheese, beans, or fish on alternate days to ensure varied protein intake.
- Salt Control: Limit added salt in menemen and season with herbs or spices to reduce sodium intake.
- Energy Density: Serve menemen with bread or potatoes to increase carbohydrate content for sustained energy.
- Storage: Use fresh or refrigerated eggs, and frozen or canned tomatoes and peppers to ensure safe storage onboard.
- Cultural Adaptation: Adjust menemen ingredients to accommodate crew preferences, such as omitting or adding onions, or including halal/vegetarian options.
- Hydration: Encourage drinking water alongside meals, as menemen alone provides minimal fluid contribution.

Conclusion:

Menemen is a simple, nutrient-dense dish that provides protein, healthy fats, and vitamins, making it ideal for seafarers' energy needs. Quick to prepare and adaptable to available ingredients, it can be served with bread or potatoes for sustained energy. By controlling salt and rotating accompaniments, menemen becomes a versatile, wholesome meal for life at sea.



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PRESSURE COOKER LENTIL SOUP

FAKES SOUP

1. Origin and History

Lentils were unearthed in the Paleolithic and Mesolithic layers of Franchthi Cave in Greece (13,000 to 9,500 years ago), in the end-Mesolithic at Mureybet and Tell Abu Hureyra in Syria, and at sites dating to 8000 BC in the area of Jericho. Aristophanes (5th – 4th centuries BC) called it the "sweetest of delicacies". Remains of lentils were found in royal tombs in the Theban Necropolis in Egypt, dating to 2400 BC. The Roman cookbook Apicius, compiled in the 1st century AD, includes a recipe for lentil soup with chestnuts.

Lentil soup is mentioned in the Bible: in Genesis 25:30-34, Esau is prepared to give up his birthright for a pot of fragrant red lentil soup being cooked by his brother, Jacob. This narrative indicates that lentil soup was eaten in ancient Israel. In Jewish tradition, lentil soup has been served at times of mourning; the roundness of the lentil represents a complete cycle of life.



2. Cultural Aspects

Greek lentil soup (Fakes soup) is one of the most popular winter Greek dishes, and with good reason! High in nutritional value, simple to prepare with an exquisite taste, this traditional Greek dish is the best way to promote healthier eating habits for you and your family!

3. Ingredients

- 250 g lentils
- tablespoon(s) olive oil
- 1 onion
- 2 carrots
- 2 stick(s) celery
- 2 clove(s) of garlic
- salt
- pepper
- 1 teaspoon(s) cumin
- 400 g canned tomatoes
- 2 bay leaves
- 1 liter water

To serve

- vinegar
- olive oil
- pepper
- salt-cured anchovies
- olives

4. Preparation

- Put the lentils in a bowl and add some cold water.
- Rinse the lentils well with your hands and drain them into a second bowl.
- Place the pressure cooker over high heat and allow it to heat up well.
- Finely chop the onion, the carrots, and the celery.
- In the pressure cooker add the olive oil, the finely chopped vegetables, garlic, salt, pepper, and cumin, stir with a wooden spoon, and sauté them for 2-3 minutes.
- Add the lentils, canned tomatoes, bay leaves, and water, stir, seal the pressure cooker with the lid, and turn the safety valve to the proper pressure indicator.
- Lower the heat and simmer the lentil soup for 15-20 minutes.
- Depressurize the pressure cooker, turn off the heat, and open the lid.
- Divide the lentil soup among plates and serve with vinegar, olive oil, pepper, anchovies, and olives.

5. Nutritional Values

Per portion serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: 320 kcal
- Protein: 17
- Fat: 8.1g
- Saturated Fat: 2.9g
- Carbs: 39g
- Sugar: 11g
- Fiber: 9.2g
- Sodium: 0.56g

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

- Portion size: If planning as main meal for crew with moderate physical demand, aim for ~400-600 kcal, ~20-25 g protein, high fibre.
- Example nutrition: 354 kcal / 19 g protein in one recipe.
- Another: 263 kcal / 16 g protein in a lighter version.
- For crew on heavy duty shifts: Consider enhancing protein by adding lean meat (e.g., Türkiye mince) or legumes/beans, or serve with side bread + yoghurt.
- Since lentils are moderate fat, add olive oil but monitor overall fat load if crew duty is lighter (to avoid sluggishness).
- Work hydration: Rich soup plus warm environment means crew should have water available.
- Salt moderation: Stock or seasoning may add sodium; ships meals can become high sodium—monitor accordingly.
- Dietary variety: This soup covers vegetarian/vegan needs; useful for inclusive menu.

Conclusion:

It uses lentils as primary ingredient: these provide good plant-protein, fibre, iron and minerals. For example one recipe gives ~19 g protein and ~23 g fibre per serving. It's hearty, warming and comforting — large benefit for morale in a maritime environment.



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ROASTED EGGPLANT & PEPPER SPREAD

ZACUSCĂ DE VINETE

1. Origin and History

The Roasted Eggplant & Pepper Spread - Zacuscă comes from the Slavic word “zakuska” (appetizer) and has deep roots in Balkan preservation traditions. The Romanian zacuscă de vinete evolved as a way to store summer vegetables — eggplants, peppers, tomatoes — for winter. Originally prepared post-harvest in autumn, it's a slow-cooked vegetable spread, jarred for the cold months. It became especially widespread during the communist era, when meat was scarce.

2. Cultural Aspects

Zacuscă is a symbol of Romanian pantry culture — every household has a few jars made with family recipes. It's eaten for breakfast, snacks, or fasting meals, spread over bread, sometimes with pickles or cheese. The cooking process is ritualistic: roasting vegetables outdoors, stirring large pots for hours. It embodies patience, frugality, and flavor.



3. Ingredients (for 6–8 jars)

- 2 kg eggplants
- 1.5 kg red bell peppers (or kapia)
- 500 g onions
- 500 g tomatoes or 400 ml tomato paste
- 250 ml sunflower oil
- 2 bay leaves
- Salt, pepper
- Optional: chili, sugar, or garlic for variation

4. Preparation

1. Roast eggplants and peppers over flame or in oven until charred. Peel and drain well.
2. Finely chop or blend roasted vegetables.
3. Sauté chopped onions in oil until golden.
4. Add peppers, cook 10 min; then eggplants. Stir regularly.
5. Add tomato paste/passata, bay leaves, salt, and pepper.
6. Simmer uncovered for 1.5–2 hours on low heat, stirring often.
7. Taste and adjust seasoning. Spoon hot into sterilized jars.
8. Seal and boil jars for 30 min or oven-process for winter storage.

5. Nutritional Values (per 100 g)

- Calories: ~110 kcal
- Protein: ~2 g
- Fat: ~7 g
- Carbohydrates: ~9 g
- Fiber: ~2 g
- Salt: ~0.9 g

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition

- 100% vegan, allergen-safe, and shelf-stable.
- Ideal for breakfast bars, field kits, or meatless menus.
- High in fiber and antioxidants (especially lycopene from tomato).
- Serve with bread, crackers, or cooked grains.
- Cost-efficient and culturally meaningful.

Conclusion

The Roasted Eggplant & Pepper Spread - Zacuscă is more than a spread — it's a preserved essence of summer, rich in flavor and history. A perfect plant-based solution for modern menus that value authenticity and shelf stability.



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ROMANIAN CLEAR VEGETABLE SOUP

SUPĂ DE LEGUME

1. Origin and History

The Romanian Clear Vegetable Soup is among the oldest dishes in Romanian rural households. It embodies seasonal, local, and frugal cooking: every farm family had vegetables in the garden, and this soup offered a simple way to feed many with minimal cost. Over time, it evolved into a light, clear soup emphasizing the freshness and flavor of vegetables, often used as a starter or during fasting (post) periods.

2. Cultural Aspects

This soup is highly versatile—it's eaten during Orthodox fasting (vegan version), offered to children and the elderly, and used as a palate cleanser before heavier dishes. In many families, it's a year-round staple, adapting to seasonal vegetables. Its preparation honors simplicity, freshness, and natural flavors.



3. Ingredients

- 2 carrots
- 1 parsnip
- 1/2 celery root or 2 stalks
- 1 onion
- 1 bell pepper
- 1–2 potatoes (optional)
- 2 tomatoes or 1 tbsp tomato paste
- 2 tbsp noodles, pasta, or rice (optional)
- 1–2 L water or light vegetable broth
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Herbs: parsley, dill, lovage

4. Preparation

1. Chop vegetables evenly into small cubes.
2. In a pot, sauté onions and carrots lightly to enhance sweetness.
3. Add all remaining vegetables and water. Simmer gently for 30–40 minutes.
4. Add pasta, rice, or noodles during the last 10–15 minutes (optional).
5. Season with salt and pepper. Stir in herbs before serving.
6. Serve clear or with some of the veggies mashed for texture.

5. Nutritional Values

Per ~300 ml serving (with noodles):

- Calories: ~130 kcal
- Protein: ~4 g
- Fat: ~4 g
- Carbohydrates: ~20 g
- Fiber: ~4 g
- Salt: ~1 g

Nutritional Profile:

- Low-calorie, fiber-rich, and digestive-friendly.
- Excellent source of vitamins A, C, and potassium.
- Can be made gluten-free or vegan.
- Hydrating and cleansing, especially during detox or post-illness.

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition

- Ideal as a starter or light meal option.
- High yield, low cost: Suitable for bulk preparation.
- Easily adapted to seasonal or preserved vegetables.
- Vegan-friendly, perfect for fasting menus or diverse dietary needs.
- Add fortified pasta or legumes for a protein boost.

Conclusion

The Romanian Clear Vegetable Soup is the purest form of Romanian rustic cuisine—simple, nourishing, and adaptable. It delivers hydration, fiber, and micronutrients in a form that suits all diets, making it a must-have in any rotational menu or nutrition plan.



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ROMANIAN VEGETABLE STEW

GHIVECI DE LEGUME

1. Origin and History

This dish reflects Balkan slow-cooking traditions. The Romanian Vegetable Stew was developed as a way to preserve the garden's bounty — over 15 vegetables cooked in layers and baked or stewed slowly. Its roots are peasant and monastic.

2. Cultural Aspects

Typically eaten during Orthodox fasting periods, The Romanian Vegetable Stew is both austere and celebratory, showcasing nature's abundance. It's a family-sharing dish, sometimes eaten cold, and celebrated especially in harvest season (late August–October).

3. Ingredients (basic version, 6 servings)

- 2 onions
- 2 carrots
- 1 bell pepper
- 1 eggplant
- 1 zucchini
- 2 potatoes
- 1 handful green beans
- 1 handful peas
- 200 g cabbage
- 2 tomatoes
- 3 garlic cloves
- 100 ml oil
- Salt, pepper
- Thyme, dill
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 tbsp tomato paste

4. Preparation

1. Chop all vegetables uniformly.
2. In a deep pot or clay dish, layer vegetables starting with onions and carrots.
3. Sprinkle salt and herbs between layers.
4. Mix tomato paste with 200 ml water and pour over.
5. Cover and bake at 170°C for 1.5–2 hours.
6. Drizzle with oil and let rest before serving.

5. Nutritional Values (per 300 g serving)

- Calories: ~260 kcal
- Protein: ~5 g
- Fat: ~12 g
- Carbohydrates: ~28 g
- Fiber: ~8 g
- 6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition
- Ideal vegan and allergen-free option.
- Can be reheated or served cold.
- Low-cost and high in fiber, vitamins A, C, K.
- Add chickpeas or lentils for protein enrichment.
- Use frozen vegetable mixes for year-round prep.

Conclusion

The Romanian Vegetable Stew is Romania's vegetable celebration — rich, filling, and customizable, perfect for clean-eating or fasting menus.



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SAILOR'S STYLE DRIED BEAN

1. Origin and history

In Turkish maritime history, kuru fasulye (dried beans) became a defining element of sailors' diets, dating back to the Ottoman Navy. Dried legumes were cheap, nutritious, and easy to store, making them indispensable for long voyages alongside staples like salted meat andhardtack. By the early 20th century, in the modern Turkish Navy, "sailor's style beans" had become iconic: a simple, hearty stew of beans, onions, tomato paste, and fat, usually lighter and plainer than land-based versions. Cooked in huge cauldrons on ships, this dish not only sustained crews but also fostered camaraderie and a shared sense of identity among sailors. Beyond nutrition, beans took on cultural symbolism. For veterans, kuru fasulye evokes memories of discipline, endurance, and communal life at sea. The dish's prominence in naval life also reinforced its popularity on land, where it is now celebrated as one of Türkiye's national comfort foods, often served with rice or pickles. Much like pea soup in the British Navy or bean stews in other maritime traditions, Turkish sailors' beans reflect both practicality and identity, bridging naval heritage with everyday culinary culture.



2. Cultural aspects

Since the living conditions on board ships are different from those on land, a number of reasons have made the dry bean meal more special. Eating dried beans on Mondays is a naval tradition in the Turkish naval forces. There are two main reasons why Mondays are chosen and why the dish cooked is dried beans: Firstly, the ships receive their weekly rations on Monday. This is because Monday is turning day and the start of the weekly shift. Each day's meal is prepared the day before (legumes must be soaked the night before). Since there are not enough fresh provisions to prepare meals on Sunday, dried legumes are used to cook for the next day. Dried beans, which are easier to prepare than others, are the most logical option at this point. They are easily digested and do not spoil easily. Since there were no refrigerators on board ships in the past, the most traditional one is the one cooked without meat and with small grains. The second reason is that warships undertake long voyages lasting weeks or even months. Since being at sea for long periods weakens the perception of time, dry beans are served on Mondays to remind the personnel of the beginning of the week. Additionally, since being constantly at sea reduces freshwater consumption beyond a certain point, the consumption of artificially distilled water increases. Since pure water is not rich in minerals, personnel may suffer from indigestion. at this point, dried beans have become an indispensable and traditional dish on Mondays, as it is both a meal that facilitates digestion and a source of protein and fiber.

3. Ingredients

- 2 cups of dried beans
- 2 tablespoons of olive oil
- 1 tablespoon of butter
- 1 large onion
- 2 medium-sized tomatoes
- 3-4 sweet green peppers
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1 tea glass grated tomato
- 1 bay leaf
- 1 clove of garlic
- salt
- black pepper
- 5-6 cups of water

4. Preparation

1. Soak 2 cups of dried beans in the evening. In the morning, drain the soaking water and boil for about 25 minutes by adding enough water to cover the beans with 2-3 fingers.
2. Chop the onion. Cut the pepper into rings.
3. Cut the peeled tomatoes into cubes.
4. Put the olive oil and butter in a pot and heat it. Add the onions and roast until they turn pink.
5. Add the peppers and continue roasting. Add the tomato paste and fry until it starts to smell.
6. Add the tomatoes and tomato puree and continue roasting.
7. Add the water, bay leaf, and 1 clove of garlic and stir.
8. Add the half-boiled beans. Cover the lid and cook until the beans are soft.
9. Add salt and pepper and boil for a while more.
10. Remove the bay leaves and serve hot.

5. Nutritional Values

Per ~350 g serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Protein: ~18–20 g
- Fat: ~9–12 g
- Carbohydrates: ~55–60 g
- Fiber: ~14–16 g
- Salt (sodium): ~2.0–2.5 g (varies depending on salt added + tomato paste)

Nutritional profile:

- Protein comes mainly from beans (a strong plant-based source).
- Fat depends heavily on how much oil is used; the navy style tended to use less than modern restaurant dried beans
- Carbohydrates are high because beans are starch-rich.
- Fiber is abundant, making it very filling and good for digestion.
- Salt content at sea was often high because salted ingredients (tomato paste, preserved meats, pickles) were common, so actual naval versions may have been saltier than the modern home recipe



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6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

- Protein Balance Beans provide ~18–20 g protein per 350 g serving, good for muscle repair and endurance. To improve amino acid balance, pair beans with rice, bulgur, or bread — a traditional Turkish navy practice. Occasional inclusion of lean meat, fish, or eggs in rotation ensures complete protein intake.
- Energy & Carbohydrates Beans are rich in complex carbs (~55–60 g), giving sailors sustained energy for long shifts.
- Fiber & Digestive Health. High fiber (~14–16 g) supports digestion but can cause bloating if eaten in excess. Recommendation: serve beans as part of a rotating menu (not daily), alternating with lighter legumes like lentils.
- Fat & Cooking Method. Navy style traditionally uses minimal oil (~9–12 g per portion). Using olive oil or sunflower oil ensures healthier fat intake compared to animal fats.
- Salt & Hydration. Historically, salt levels were high due to preserved ingredients. For modern crews, reduce sodium to <2 g per serving to support cardiovascular health. Ensure adequate hydration since beans + salt increase fluid needs, especially in hot maritime climates.

Conclusion:

Hearty and sustaining, sailor's style dried beans were long valued aboard ships for their durability and nourishment. This humble yet flavorful dish reflects the resourcefulness of maritime life, offering sailors both comfort and strength during long voyages.



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SHOPSKA SALATA

1. Origin and history

The Shopska salata, a quintessential Bulgarian dish, has a surprisingly modern origin. Instead of an ancient folk recipe, it was developed during the mid-20th century by the state-owned tourism agency, Balkantourist, to attract foreign visitors. The salad was invented around 1955–1956 in the "Chernomorets" restaurant at the Druzhba resort (now St. Constantine and Helena) on Bulgaria's Black Sea coast. The arrangement of the main ingredients—white cheese, green cucumbers, and red tomatoes and peppers—conveniently mirrors the colors of the Bulgarian national flag. This was a "happy coincidence" that was seen as a patriotic bonus.

2. Cultural aspects

While a modern invention, Shopska salata has become a deeply ingrained and celebrated part of Bulgarian culture. Its cultural significance stems from its association with hospitality, national identity, and summer traditions. The most overt cultural aspect is the visual representation of the Bulgarian flag. The red from the tomatoes and peppers, the green from the cucumbers, and the white from the grated sirene cheese create a tricolor salad that evokes national pride. In 2014, Shopska salata was voted Europe's most recognizable Bulgarian dish in a European Parliament initiative, further cementing its international status as a Bulgarian symbol.

3. Ingredients

- 4 medium, ripe tomatoes, diced
- 1–2 cucumbers, diced. They can be peeled or left with the skin on
- 1 green or red bell pepper, finely chopped. A roasted pepper can also be used for a richer flavor
- 1 small onion, finely chopped. Some prefer red onion, but yellow works just as well
- 1/3 bunch of fresh parsley, finely chopped
- 100–150g Bulgarian sirene cheese, grated or crumbled
- 2–3 tablespoons of oil (traditionally sunflower or olive oil)
- 1–2 tablespoons of vinegar (wine or apple cider)
- Salt to taste

4. Preparation

1. Prepare the vegetables: Wash and dice the tomatoes, cucumbers, peppers, and onion into roughly equal-sized pieces. For roasted peppers, peel and slice them into strips.
2. Combine the vegetables: Place the chopped vegetables in a large bowl and stir gently.
3. Prepare the dressing: In a separate small bowl, mix the oil and vinegar. You can add a little salt here if needed.
4. Dress the salad: Pour the dressing over the vegetables and stir gently again to distribute it evenly.
5. Add the cheese: Grate or crumble the sirene cheese over the top of the salad to create the characteristic "snowy" layer. Traditionally, the cheese is not mixed in to maintain the visual appearance of the Bulgarian flag.
6. Garnish: Sprinkle the finely chopped parsley on top.
7. Serve: Serve the salad immediately to enjoy its freshest taste. It can also be served with a few olives or a hot pepper for extra flavor.

5. Nutritional Values

Per ~100 g serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: ~76-101 kcal
- Protein: ~2-4.4 g
- Fat: ~5.7-10 g
- Carbohydrates: ~6-10 g
- Fiber: ~1-2.5 g
- Salt: ~ 0.363-0.888 g
- Calcium: ~ 74-122.9 mg
- Iron: ~ 0.5-1 mg
- Potassium: ~ 270-382 mg

6. Nutritional profile:

- The salad provides essential vitamins, such as vitamins A and C, even with canned ingredients.
- Tomatoes and cucumbers help maintain hydration.
- The cheese is a good source of calcium.
- The olive oil dressing provides an energy boost.

7. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

- Separate preparation: To extend shelf life, prepare ingredients separately and mix them just before serving.
- Adapted ingredients: Instead of fresh, use canned diced or whole cherry tomatoes, which have a longer shelf life. Substitute fresh cucumbers with pickles or quickly dried slices, which last longer. Replace fresh peppers with jarred, roasted peppers for durability and a more intense flavor. Use red onions, which last longer than regular onions and store well in dry conditions. Opt for a harder, vacuum-sealed, or wax-sealed cheese instead of a soft one. These store easily and can be added just before serving. Use dried parsley instead of fresh if fresh herbs are not available.
- Portion control: Prepare the salad in smaller portions to reduce food waste.
- Proper storage: Store prepared vegetables in airtight containers to keep them fresh longer.

Conclusion:

A Shopska salata can be adapted for mariners by using long-lasting ingredients and controlling portions. While the fresh version is best, there are ways to preserve its flavor and nutritional value during long voyages.



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TURSHIYA

1. Origin and history

Turshiya is a type of pickled vegetable dish common across the Balkans, Middle East, and parts of Central Asia. The origin of the name can be traced to the Persian word torsh, meaning "sour". In Bulgaria, turshiya became a fundamental part of culinary culture and an economic necessity for food preservation. Throughout the 20th century, home canning and pickling played a crucial role in household food security, especially for winter months when fresh vegetables were scarce. In socialist Bulgaria, the practice of home preserving continued and even took on new social functions. Due to shortages of quality goods in state-run stores, families would grow and preserve their own produce. Jars of homemade turshiya often served as gifts exchanged between urban and rural family members, strengthening family networks. Even after the collapse of the socialist system and the availability of diverse food products, the tradition of making turshiya persists. For many, it's a way of honoring family traditions and enjoying the taste of homemade, seasonal food.

2. Cultural aspects

As a widespread practice of food preservation, turshiya holds deep cultural significance in Bulgaria and across the Balkan region. Its importance goes beyond being a simple side dish; it represents resourcefulness, community, and the connection between seasons. For generations, making turshiya has been a family tradition, often passed down from mothers and grandmothers. It's a rite of passage for many young adults to learn how to prepare and preserve vegetables for the winter. The preparation of turshiya was often a communal event, with neighbors and family members coming together to help chop, blanch, and jar the harvest. This turned a laborious task into a social gathering.

3. Ingredients

- 4 kg mixed vegetables, such as cauliflower, carrots, and red peppers
- 2.5 liters of water
- 1 liter of vinegar (white wine or apple cider)
- 200g of salt
- 400g of sugar
- 1 bunch of dill
- 1 bunch of celery
- 10–15 black peppercorns
- 10–15 mustard seeds
- 5–6 bay leaves

4. Preparation

1. Wash all the vegetables. Chop the cauliflower into small florets, slice the carrots and red peppers, and roughly chop the celery.
2. Combine water, vinegar, salt, and sugar in a large pot. Bring to a boil, stirring until the salt and sugar are dissolved.
3. Add the vegetables to the boiling brine and cook for 5–10 minutes, or until they start to soften slightly but are still crunchy.
4. Remove the blanched vegetables from the brine and pack them tightly into sterilized jars.
5. Add the spices and herbs to each jar.
6. Pour the hot brine over the vegetables, ensuring they are completely submerged. Seal the jars tightly.
7. Invert the jars for a few minutes to ensure a good seal. Let them cool, then store in a cool, dark

5. Nutritional Values

Per ~100 g serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: ~ 15-30 kcal
- Protein: ~ 1 g
- Fat: ~ 0.5 g
- Carbohydrates: ~2-5 g
- Fiber: ~1-2 g
- Salt: ~ 0.75-1.5 g
- Probiotics: Present in fermented versions, which contain beneficial bacteria that support gut health
- Vitamins and minerals: Contains small amounts of vitamins C and K, and minerals like potassium, depending on the vegetables used

6. Nutritional profile:

- All varieties of turshiya are high in sodium due to the brine. This should be managed, especially for mariners or people with hypertension.
- Historically, pickled vegetables were crucial for preventing scurvy, a disease caused by vitamin C deficiency during long sea voyages.
- Turshiya is very low in calories, making it a good, flavorful snack or side dish for managing weight.
- Fermented turshiya is rich in probiotics, which support a healthy gut microbiome, aid digestion, and boost the immune system.
- While the high salt content can increase thirst, the vegetables themselves contribute to hydration. It is crucial to balance turshiya consumption with sufficient fresh water.
- The brine in turshiya contains electrolytes, which help replenish essential minerals lost through sweating, a common issue in hot climates on a ship.
- Pickling helps preserve the vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants in the vegetables, offering a concentrated source of nutrients when fresh produce is unavailable.
- Turshiya's flavor and crisp texture can enhance simple meals, making it a valuable addition to an onboard galley.

7. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

- Use sturdy jars: Ensure the vegetables are packed tightly into sealed, sturdy jars to prevent shifting and damage during rough seas.
- Store in a cool, dark place: Storing the jars away from direct sunlight and heat will help preserve the quality of the turshiya. Below the waterline in a ship's hold is often an ideal location.
- Secure storage: Store jars in a well-secured area to prevent them from breaking or falling during heavy motion.
- Control salt content: While the salt in turshiya acts as a preservative, a low-sodium version can be made by rinsing the vegetables and using less salt in the brine. This can help manage sodium intake, which is important for hydration.
- Check frequently: Regularly check the jars for any signs of spoilage or pressure buildup, especially if the turshiya is still actively fermenting.

Conclusion:

Turshiya, as a form of pickled vegetables, is an excellent onboard food for mariners. It is well-suited for voyages because it is long-lasting, requires no refrigeration, and provides essential nutrients that can be scarce on long journeys.



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DESSERTS



AŞURE

11. Origin and history

Aşure, also known as Noah's Pudding, is a traditional Turkish dessert with deep historical and cultural roots. Its origin is linked to ancient Mesopotamian and Anatolian culinary traditions, where grains, legumes, and dried fruits were combined into hearty, long-lasting dishes. According to Islamic tradition, Noah prepared this pudding after the flood using the ingredients left on his Ark, giving it a symbolic connection to sustenance at sea. For seafarers, aşure embodies the same practical and symbolic values: it is nutrient-dense, shelf-stable, and easy to share, making it ideal for long voyages where ingredients are limited. Preparing or enjoying a bowl of aşure onboard not only provides energy and essential nutrients but also evokes comfort, community, and a connection to home, much like Noah's Ark story symbolizes survival, patience, and solidarity at sea.



2. Cultural aspects

Aşure carries deep cultural meaning as a symbol of sharing, community, and resilience, rooted in the story of Noah preparing the pudding from the limited ingredients left on his Ark. From a maritime perspective, this symbolism resonates strongly with seafarers, who spend long periods away from home and rely on practical, shelf-stable, and nourishing meals. Preparing or sharing aşure onboard not only provides sustenance but also recreates a sense of home, tradition, and solidarity among the crew. Just as Noah's Ark represented survival and cooperation at sea, a communal bowl of aşure on a ship fosters camaraderie, morale, and cultural continuity, making it both a practical and emotionally meaningful dish for life at sea.

3. Ingredients

- 1 cup whole wheat or hulled wheat (~200 g)
- 1/2 cup chickpeas, pre-cooked or canned (~100 g)
- 1/2 cup white beans, pre-cooked or canned (~100 g)
- 1/2 cup rice (~100 g)
- 1 cup sugar (adjust to taste)
- 1/2 cup dried fruits (apricots, raisins, figs, etc.)
- 1/4 cup shelled nuts (walnuts, hazelnuts, almonds)
- 1 tsp cinnamon (optional)
- Water (~2.5–3 L)
- Optional toppings: pomegranate seeds, crushed nuts

4. Preparation

Prepare grains and legumes:

- If using dry chickpeas or beans, soak overnight and cook until tender.
- Rinse wheat and rice.

Cook the base:

- In a large pot, combine wheat, rice, chickpeas, and beans with water.
- Bring to a boil, then simmer gently for 45–60 minutes until grains are soft.

Add sweeteners and fruits:

- Stir in sugar and dried fruits; cook another 10–15 minutes until softened and integrated.
- Add cinnamon if desired.

Finish and serve:

- Portion into bowls; top with nuts and pomegranate seeds if available.
- Can be served warm or cooled.

5. Nutritional Values

Per ~350 g serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: ~350–400 kcal
- Protein: ~10–12 g
- Fat: ~8–10 g (from nuts)
- Carbohydrates: ~65–70 g (from grains, legumes, and dried fruits)
- Salt: ~0.2–0.5 g (mostly from added ingredients; typically low)

Nutritional profile:

- High-energy: Provides sustained energy for seafarers during long shifts.
- Protein-rich: Legumes and nuts supply plant-based protein for muscle maintenance.
- Fiber & Micronutrients: Grains, legumes, and dried fruits offer fiber, iron, magnesium, and B-vitamins.
- Healthy fats: Nuts provide unsaturated fats beneficial for heart health.
- Low salt: Suitable for controlled sodium intake on long voyages.



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6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

- Portion Control: Serve ~300–350g per person to provide energy without overloading calories.
- Energy Supply: Use as a high-energy dessert or snack, ideal for long shifts or night watches.
- Protein Balance: Complements protein intake from other meals, thanks to legumes and nuts; can be paired with dairy for additional protein.
- Fat Management: Nuts supply healthy fats; keep portions moderate to avoid excessive calorie intake.
- Salt Control: Typically low in salt; ensure any added ingredients (like canned legumes) are not overly salted.
- Storage & Shelf Life: Use dried fruits, nuts, and pre-cooked or canned legumes for long shelf life and minimal spoilage.
- Cultural & Morale Aspect: Preparing and sharing aşure reinforces team cohesion, cultural connection, and morale, providing comfort during long voyages.
- Hydration Consideration: The soup-like consistency contributes to fluid intake, but additional water should still be encouraged during shifts.

Conclusion:

Aşure is a nourishing and symbolic dessert that brings both energy and cultural comfort to seafarers. Packed with grains, legumes, nuts, and dried fruits, it provides sustained energy, protein, and fiber while remaining shelf-stable and easy to prepare onboard. Beyond its nutritional value, sharing a bowl of aşure fosters camaraderie, morale, and a sense of home, making it an ideal, meaningful treat during long voyages.



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BAKLAVAS

1. Origin and History

Baklava has a rich and layered history, much like the dessert itself! Its origin is somewhat debated because similar layered pastries exist across the Middle East, the Mediterranean, and the Balkans. Here's a detailed overview:

Ancient Roots: The concept of layered pastry with nuts and sweeteners dates back to ancient Mesopotamia (modern-day Iraq) around 2000 BCE. They baked thin layers of dough, stacked with nuts and honey.

Ottoman Influence: The modern form of baklava is largely credited to the **Ottoman Empire** (15th–17th century). In the imperial kitchens of Topkapi Palace in Istanbul, chefs perfected the technique of layering **phyllo dough**, butter, nuts, and syrup. This became a symbol of luxury and celebration.

Regional Variations:

- **Türkiye:** Uses walnuts or pistachios, often flavored with rose water or lemon.
- **Greece:** Typically uses walnuts and cinnamon, baked in large sheets and cut into diamond shapes.
- **Middle East:** Pistachios are common; sometimes flavored with orange blossom water.
- **Balkans & Armenia:** Variations exist with different nuts, syrups, and layering techniques.



2. Cultural Aspects

Baklava isn't just a dessert—it's deeply woven into the cultural and social fabric of many countries. Its preparation, consumption, and symbolism vary across regions, reflecting local traditions and values. Baklava is a staple at weddings, religious holidays, and family gatherings. Middle East: Served during Ramadan and Eid, often as a sweet treat to break the fast. Greece and Cyprus: Common during Christmas, Easter, and name-day celebrations. Offering baklava to guests is a gesture of welcome and generosity. In many cultures, presenting a sweet dessert symbolizes respect and warmth.

3. Ingredients

For the Baklava:

- 1 package phyllo dough (about 16 oz), thawed
- 2 cups unsalted butter, melted
- 2 cups walnuts, finely chopped (or a mix of walnuts, pistachios, almonds)
- 1 tsp ground cinnamon
- ¼ tsp ground cloves (optional)
- ¼ tsp salt

For the Syrup:

- 1 cup water
- 1 cup granulated sugar
- ½ cup honey
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp lemon juice
- ½ tsp ground cinnamon (optional)

4. Preparation

Prepare the filling:

In a bowl, mix chopped nuts, cinnamon, cloves, and salt. Set aside.

Layer the phyllo:

Preheat oven to 350°F (175°C).

Brush a 9x13 inch baking dish with melted butter.

Place 1 sheet of phyllo in the dish, brush lightly with butter. Repeat 8–10 sheets, brushing each with butter.

Sprinkle a thin layer of the nut mixture.

Add 2–3 more buttered phyllo sheets.

Repeat layering nuts and phyllo until all nuts are used.

Finish with 8–10 sheets of buttered phyllo on top.

Cut the baklava:

Using a sharp knife, cut into diamonds or squares before baking.

Bake:

Bake at 350°F (175°C) for 45–55 minutes until golden and crisp.

Make the syrup:

In a saucepan, combine sugar and water. Bring to a boil.

Lower heat, add honey, vanilla, lemon juice, and cinnamon. Simmer 10–15 minutes.

Let syrup cool slightly.

Add syrup to baklava:

Pour syrup evenly over hot baklava. Let it soak for several hours or overnight for best results.



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5. Nutritional Values

Per portion serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: 430-450kcal
- Protein: 6g
- Fat: 28g
- Saturated Fat: 1g2
- Carbs: 50g
- Sugar: 25-30g
- Fiber: 2-3g
- Sodium: 100-150mg

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

Principles of Onboard Nutrition

- Balanced Meals: Ensure each meal provides carbohydrates, proteins, fats, vitamins, and minerals.
- Energy-Dense Foods: Crews often perform physically demanding tasks; caloric needs are higher.
- Shelf-Stable & Storage-Friendly: Due to limited fresh food storage, rely on long-lasting foods without compromising nutrition.
- Hydration: Ensure access to clean water; dehydration is common at sea.



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BANITSA

1. Origin and history

The most iconic Bulgarian pastry, this delicious dish consists of layers of filo dough filled with a mixture of eggs and sirene (a white brine cheese similar to feta). It is baked until golden and crispy and can be enjoyed for breakfast or as a snack. Regional variations may use fillings like spinach, leek, or meat. This classic pastry can be served for breakfast, as a snack, or for festive occasions.

While delicious and culturally significant, a traditional cheese banitsa poses nutritional challenges for onboard consumption, primarily due to its high salt, saturated fat, and low fiber content. For sailors, who require sustained energy, hydration, and cardiovascular health, a modified banitsa and controlled portion sizes are recommended.

Origin and etymology

Banitsa is a traditional Bulgarian pastry with roots in the Balkans and Middle East, its history shaped by the interplay of cultures in the region over centuries. The name "banitsa" derives from the ancient Proto-Slavic word гъбанica, meaning "to fold" or "to bend," which describes the preparation method of folding thin layers of pastry. Some culinary historians trace the modern phyllo-style pastry back to the Ottoman Empire, which had a significant cultural and culinary influence on the Balkans. Similar layered pastries, such as börek in Turkish cuisine and gibanica in Serbia, are found across the region.

History

Medieval origins: While difficult to pinpoint the exact date, layered cheese pastries have been a fixture on Bulgarian tables since at least the Middle Ages. The practice of making thin, layered pastry sheets from flour, water, and salt is an ancient tradition in the region.

Festive and daily food: Initially, banitsa was a special occasion food, often prepared for major holidays like Christmas and New Year's Eve. Over time, it transitioned into a staple of the Bulgarian diet, enjoyed for breakfast or any meal.

Symbol of Bulgarian identity: Today, banitsa is considered a national symbol of Bulgaria, representing its culinary heritage and traditions. It holds a cherished place in Bulgarian folklore and is celebrated internationally as a unique culinary masterpiece.

2. Cultural aspects

The banitsa holds a significant place in Bulgarian culture, acting as a symbol of tradition, hospitality, and family. It is often tied to significant life events and holidays, where it is used to tell fortunes and bring good luck. The most culturally important aspect of banitsa is its use during the winter holidays, especially Christmas and New Year's Eve.

3. Ingredients

- 400 g filo pastry sheets
- 200 g feta-style cheese (sirene)
- 3 whole eggs
- 150 g yogurt
- 50 ml sparkling water
- 50 g melted butter

4. Preparation

1. In a bowl, whisk together the eggs, yogurt, and sparkling water.
2. Crumble the cheese and add it to the mixture.
3. Lay one sheet of filo pastry on a flat surface and brush with melted butter. Place another sheet on top and repeat.
4. Spread a portion of the cheese-egg mixture over the sheets.
5. Roll the sheets into a tube shape and coil it into a baking pan.
6. Repeat the process with the remaining sheets until the pan is full of coiled pastry.
7. Brush the top with any leftover butter.
8. Bake at 180°C for about 30–40 minutes, or until golden brown.

5. Nutritional Values

Per ~100 g serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: ~350-450 kcal
- Protein: ~10-15 g
- Fat: ~20-30 g
- Carbohydrates: ~30-40 g
- Fiber: ~1-2 g
- Salt: ~1.5-2.0 g
- Calcium: ~ 225-270 mg

6. Nutritional profile:

- High calories for a 100g serving, making banitsa a satisfying, energy-rich food.
- A substantial portion of the fat comes from butter and cheese. A significant amount is saturated fat.
- The eggs and cheese in the filling provide a good amount of protein.
- The high sodium content is primarily from the brined sirene cheese used in the filling.
- Thanks to the generous dairy content, banitsa is an excellent source of calcium.

7. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

- **Meal planning:** Include banitsa as part of a varied and balanced menu plan, not as the only meal.
- **Portion control:** Serve banitsa in appropriately sized portions to avoid overconsumption of calories and sodium.
- **Proper storage:** To maintain freshness and prevent foodborne illnesses, store leftovers in an airtight container in the refrigerator for no more than a few days. Reheat it in an oven to restore some of its crispness.
- **Consider freezing:** Baked or unbaked banitsa rolls can be wrapped and frozen for longer storage, allowing for easy preparation on longer voyages.
- **Hydration:** Serve with yogurt. While the filling already contains yogurt, serving banitsa with an extra dollop of fresh yogurt can add moisture. Pair with beverages: Pair banitsa with water or ayran (a savory yogurt drink) to help maintain hydration, especially given the dry ship environment.

Conclusion:

For sailors, the most suitable banitsa variation is likely a vegetable-filled or marine banitsa, such as spanachnik (spinach banitsa) or ribnik (fish banitsa). These options offer a better balance of nutrients, including higher fiber and less saturated fat than the traditional cheese version, while still providing a satisfying and tasty meal. Paired with a simple salad and a hydrating drink, they can be a welcome and nutritious treat.



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FRIED COTTAGE CHEESE DOUGHNUTS WITH SOUR CREAM AND JAM PAPANAŞI

1. Origin and History

The Fried Cottage Cheese Doughnuts with Sour Cream and Jam (Papanaş) are one of Romania's most iconic desserts, known for their fluffy yet rich texture, a combination of fresh cow's cheese (brânză de vaci), eggs, flour, and semolina. Their name is derived from the Latin *papa* (to eat), and they exist in both fried and boiled forms. Originating in northern Moldavia and Bucovina, they've become a staple across Romania, particularly in traditional restaurants and holiday meals.

2. Cultural Aspects

Papanaş are typically served warm, topped with cold sour cream and a tangy fruit preserve (usually cherry, blueberry, or sour cherry). The contrast between crispy fried exterior, creamy interior, and fresh toppings makes them universally beloved.



3. Ingredients (for 6 servings / ~12 doughnuts)

- 500 g fresh cow's cheese (or ricotta, drained)
- 2 eggs
- 100 g sugar
- 1 packet vanilla sugar or 1 tsp extract
- Zest of 1 lemon
- 1 pinch of salt
- 100 g semolina
- 200–250 g flour (depending on moisture)
- 1 tsp baking soda or baking powder
- 500 ml oil for frying

For serving:

- 300 g sour cream (high fat, cold)
- 200 g fruit preserve (cherry, blueberry, or raspberry)

4. Preparation

1. Mix base: Mash the cheese with sugar, eggs, vanilla, lemon zest, and salt.
2. Stir in semolina and baking soda. Gradually add flour until soft, non-sticky dough forms.
3. Shape: Form doughnuts ~6–8 cm wide with a hole in center. Shape small balls from leftover dough for topping.
4. Fry: Heat oil to ~170°C. Fry papanaş and "hats" until golden brown (3–4 min per side). Drain on paper.
5. Assemble: Top each doughnut with cold sour cream and a spoon of jam. Crown with small ball.

5. Nutritional Values (per serving)

- Calories: ~520 kcal
- Protein: ~13 g
- Fat: ~30 g
- Carbs: ~46 g
- Calcium: high

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition

- Serve immediately after frying for best texture.
- Use pre-measured portions for consistency.
- Baked versions possible (for lighter menu variants).
- Substitute with ricotta + lemon zest if brânză de vaci unavailable.
- Ideal for Sunday meals or festive events.

Conclusion

Papanaş represent Romanian indulgence at its best: crispy, creamy, fruity, and unforgettable.



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GREEK CLASSIC RICE PUDDING

1. Origin and History

Greek rice pudding — known as Rizogalo (Ρυζόγαλο, from rizi = rice + gala = milk) — is one of Greece's most beloved comfort desserts, simple yet deeply tied to the country's rural traditions and family life.

Although Rizogalo as we know it today is a relatively modern version, its origins trace back thousands of years through the shared culinary history of the Eastern Mediterranean and Middle East.

- Ancient Greece: Greeks were already cooking grain-based porridges (maza, puls) made from barley or wheat boiled in milk or water. Sweet versions with honey were considered nourishing and even used in religious offerings.► While rice was not yet common, the concept of a sweet, milky grain dish existed.

Rice arrives later: Rice was introduced to the Greek world via Alexander the Great's campaigns (4th century BCE) and later through Arab and Ottoman trade routes. By the Byzantine era, rice was known but expensive — used mainly in royal or monastic kitchens.

During the Byzantine and Ottoman periods, sweet milk puddings became widespread across the Eastern Mediterranean.

- The Ottomans popularized “sütlaç”, a sweet rice pudding made with milk, rice, and sugar — the clear ancestor of modern Rizogalo. Greek cooks adopted and localized it, adjusting the flavor to local tastes:
 - Using cow's milk instead of buffalo or goat milk.
 - Adding cinnamon and lemon zest (aromatic touches typical in Greek sweets).
 - Serving it cold, often thickened naturally by slow simmering rather than cornstarch.



2. Cultural aspects

- Rizogalo represents the Greek virtue of simplicity and frugality — turning basic ingredients into something comforting and satisfying. It's a humble luxury, proving that comfort and warmth don't require extravagance. Rizogalo is often described as a “mama's or yiayia's (grandmother's) dessert.”
- Nearly every Greek has memories of eating it at home, often warm from the pot, sprinkled with cinnamon.
- It's one of the first solid foods given to children — soft, mild, and nourishing.
- Families prepared it not for guests or celebrations, but for everyday comfort, making it deeply personal and nostalgic.

3. Ingredients

- 1 liter water
- 100 g round grain rice
- orange peels, of 1 orange
- 1 stick(s) cinnamon
- 1 liter whole milk
- 180 g granulated sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon(s) vanilla powder
- 60 g corn starch
- 1 pinch salt

4. Preparation

- In a pot add the water, rice, orange peels, cinnamon, and transfer over medium heat. Simmer for 20-25 minutes.
- Drain and set aside.
- Place the same pot over medium heat and add 700 g of the milk, the sugar, and bring to a boil.
- In a bowl add the rest of the milk, the vanilla powder, the corn starch, and stir to dissolve the corn starch.
- Add the rice, the corn starch mixture, and the salt into the pot, and stir with a silicone spatula for 3-4 minutes until the mixture thickens.
- Remove the orange peels, the cinnamon, and divide the rice pudding into bowls. Cover with plastic wrap and refrigerate them to cool.
- It is consumed cold from the refrigerator with cinnamon or hot with fresh berries, cape gooseberries, orange zest, honey, and mint.

5. Nutritional Values

Per portion serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: 307 kcal
- Protein: 6.5g
- Fat: 6.2g
- Saturated Fat: 3.8g
- Carbs: 55g
- Sugar: 38g
- Fiber: 0.6g
- Sodium: 0.27g

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

- Energy Supply: The rice and milk provide a steady release of carbohydrates, ideal for maintaining energy levels during long shifts.
- Protein Source: Milk contributes high-quality protein essential for muscle maintenance and repair.
- Calcium and Vitamins: Rich in calcium, vitamin D (if fortified milk is used), and B vitamins, supporting bone health and metabolism.
- Digestibility: Rizogalo is gentle on the stomach, making it suitable for crew members who may experience gastrointestinal discomfort at sea.

Conclusion:

Rizogalo is a traditional Greek rice pudding made from rice, milk, sugar, and cinnamon. It is a nutritious, comforting dessert that can serve as both a snack and a light breakfast onboard maritime vessels. Its mild flavor, easy digestibility, and balanced macronutrient composition make it particularly suitable for seafarers who require sustaining energy and comfort foods during long voyages.



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IRMIK HALVA

1. Origin and history

Semolina halva is one of the oldest and most beloved desserts of Ottoman cuisine; its origins date back to the 15th–16th centuries, particularly to palace and peasant tables. Initially, its basic ingredients—semolina, sugar, and oil—spread rapidly among the people due to its delicious taste and energy-boosting properties. Over time, this dessert also became a favorite among sailors. During the Ottoman and Republican periods, it became indispensable because it could be easily prepared with dry ingredients, even when fresh ingredients were limited during long voyages on ships. Sailors used semolina halva both as a dessert and as an energy boost, enjoying it at breakfast or in the evening to relieve their fatigue. Especially for sailors on long voyages, semolina halva became not just a dessert, but also a symbol of sharing, solidarity, and maritime culture. Each spoonful, like a warm memory mingling with the sound of the waves, satisfied both the sailors' stomachs and their souls.



2. Cultural aspects

Semolina halva is a symbol of sharing and hospitality. In Turkish and Ottoman culture, semolina halva is prepared when hosting guests, on special occasions, or during commemorative ceremonies; sharing it at the table strengthens social bonds. It also has value in terms of ceremonies and rituals. For example, its preparation as funeral halva to commemorate the dead or for celebrations at weddings shows that halva is not just a dessert, but a cultural ritual. Its preparation in different regions of Anatolia with different recipes reflects cultural diversity with local ingredients and cooking methods. It has an important place in maritime culture. Prepared as a practical and energy-boosting dessert on long voyages, it symbolizes solidarity and shipboard kitchen culture among seafaring communities. In short, beyond its taste, semolina halva holds an important place in Anatolian and maritime culture as a symbol of sharing, ritual, and social bonds.

3. Ingredients

- 1 cup semolina (about 150 g)
- ½ cup butter or vegetable oil (about 100 g)
- 1 cup sugar (about 200 g)
- 2 cups water (or 1 cup water + 1 cup milk for creamier texture)
- Optional: pine nuts or almonds for garnish
- Optional: cinnamon or shredded coconut

4. Preparation

Prepare the syrup:

- In a saucepan, combine water (and milk if using) and sugar.
- Heat until sugar dissolves completely and set aside.

Toast the semolina:

- In a wide pan, melt butter or heat oil over medium heat.
- Add semolina and stir continuously for 8–10 minutes until it turns golden brown and releases a nutty aroma.

Combine semolina and syrup:

- Carefully pour the hot syrup into the toasted semolina while stirring constantly (it will bubble).
- Reduce heat to low and cook for another 5–10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the halva thickens and absorbs the liquid.

Optional additions:

- Stir in toasted pine nuts or almonds.
- Sprinkle cinnamon or shredded coconut on top for extra flavor.

Serve:

- Spoon warm into bowls or onto a serving plate. Halva can also be allowed to cool slightly; it will firm up as it rests.

5. Nutritional Values

Per ~350 g serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

Protein: ~15.5 g

Fat: ~64.2 g

Carbohydrates: ~239.6 g

Salt: ~0.2 g (variable, depending on added salt)

Nutritional profile:

High-energy dessert: Very rich in carbohydrates and fat, ideal for quick energy, especially during long voyages.

Moderate protein: Provides some protein from semolina, but additional protein may be needed for balanced nutrition.

Low salt naturally: Salt content is minimal unless added during preparation.

Micronutrients: Contains small amounts of B vitamins, iron, and magnesium from semolina; adding nuts can increase micronutrient content.



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6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

- Portion Control: Serve in moderate portions (~100–150 g) to provide energy without excessive calories, since halva is very energy-dense.
- Energy Supply: Use as a high-energy snack or dessert to support seafarers' calorie needs during long voyages.
- Protein Balance: Pair halva with protein-rich foods (e.g., milk, yogurt, or nuts) to improve overall protein intake.
- Fat Management: Use moderate amounts of butter or oil when preparing to avoid excessive fat intake.
- Salt Control: Limit added salt; halva's natural ingredients provide minimal sodium.
- Storage: Store dry ingredients (semolina, sugar) in a cool, dry place; use milk or butter that can be refrigerated or substituted with shelf-stable alternatives if needed.
- Cultural and Taste Adaptation: Add nuts, cinnamon, or coconut according to crew preferences to enhance flavor while maintaining nutritional value.
- Hydration Consideration: Since halva is dry and rich in carbs and fat, encourage drinking water or milk alongside to aid digestion and hydration.

Conclusion:

Semolina halva is a quick, energy-dense dessert that provides seafarers with sustained calories from carbohydrates and healthy fats. Easy to prepare with shelf-stable ingredients, it can be enjoyed as a snack or dessert during long voyages. By controlling portion size and pairing with protein or fluids, halva becomes a practical, nourishing, and morale-boosting treat for life at sea.



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PLUM DUMPLINGS IN POTATO DOUGH WITH CINNAMON BREADCRUMB GĂLUŞTE CU PRUNE

1. Origin and History

The Plum Dumplings in Potato Dough - Găluște come from Austro-Hungarian culinary traditions, widespread in Transylvania, Banat, and Maramureș. Romanian cuisine adopted and refined this dessert by using a potato-based dough, turning it into a soft, sticky wrap around ripe plums — boiled and rolled in sweet, toasty breadcrumbs.

2. Cultural Aspects

Usually prepared in late summer or early autumn, during plum harvest. They are commonly eaten as dessert or even a main meal in some rural households. Elderly women often hand-make them in large batches and freeze them for winter.



3. Ingredients (for ~15 dumplings)

- 600 g potatoes (boiled, peeled)
- 2 eggs
- 2 tbsp semolina
- 250 g flour (as needed)
- 2 tbsp oil or butter
- 1 pinch salt

Filling:

- 15 small ripe plums or halves
- 1 tbsp sugar mixed with cinnamon

Breadcrumb coating:

- 150 g breadcrumbs
- 4 tbsp sugar
- 1 tsp cinnamon
- 50 g butter

4. Preparation

1. Boil & mash potatoes. Let cool.
2. Mix with eggs, semolina, salt, oil, and enough flour to make a soft dough.
3. Roll into log, slice into discs. Flatten each and wrap around a pitted plum with $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp sugar-cinnamon mix.
4. Boil in salted water ~10 min until dumplings float.
5. Meanwhile, brown breadcrumbs in butter and mix with sugar + cinnamon.
6. Roll hot dumplings in breadcrumb mixture. Serve warm.

5. Nutritional Values (per dumpling)

- Calories: ~160 kcal
- Carbs: ~30 g
- Fat: ~5 g
- Sugar: moderate
- Fiber: good

6. Recommendations for Institutional or Onboard Nutrition

- Best served fresh, but can be pre-shaped and frozen.
- High fiber, low cost, vegetarian-friendly.
- Adaptable to apple or apricot filling.
- Offer as dessert or meatless main during Lent.
- Portion size: 2–3 dumplings per serving.

Conclusion

The Plum Dumplings in Potato Dough are soft, cinnamon-kissed dumplings that offer sweet comfort and seasonal joy — rustic elegance at its best.



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ROMANIAN APPLE PIE WITH CINNAMON AND VANILLA

PLĂCINTĂ CU MERE

1. Origin and History

This rustic dessert is Romania's take on the Old World apple pastry, usually made in sheet trays and cut into squares. Apples are stewed with cinnamon, sugar, and lemon, and the dough is either leavened, shortcrust, or filo-like depending on the region. Common throughout Transylvania and the south, this is a favorite during autumn apple harvest and Lenten fasts.

2. Cultural Aspects

Often served cold or warm with powdered sugar, the Romanian Apple Pie is lunchbox comfort food, a staple at church events and school bake sales. It's one of the easiest Romanian desserts to scale for crowds.

3. Ingredients (for 1 tray, ~12 pieces)

Dough (classic butter-based):

- 500 g flour
- 200 g butter or margarine
- 100 g sugar
- 2 eggs
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1–2 tbsp sour cream or yogurt
- Pinch of salt

Filling:

- 1.2 kg apples, grated and drained
- 100 g sugar (adjust to apple sweetness)
- 1 tbsp cinnamon
- 1 tbsp semolina or breadcrumbs (absorbs moisture)
- Zest of 1 lemon

4. Preparation

1. Make dough: Rub butter into flour + baking powder. Add sugar, eggs, vanilla, sour cream. Knead into soft dough. Chill 30 min.
2. Cook filling: Sauté apples in dry pan with sugar, cinnamon, lemon zest until liquid evaporates.
3. Assemble: Divide dough in two. Roll out bottom layer and place in greased tray. Prick with fork. Spread filling. Cover with second sheet.
4. Bake: At 180°C for 35–40 min until golden. Cool and dust with powdered sugar.

5. Nutritional Values (per slice)

- Calories: ~300 kcal
- Fat: ~14 g
- Carbs: ~40 g
- Fiber: ~3 g
- Sugar: moderate

6. Recommendations for Institutional or Onboard Nutrition

- Use seasonal or local apples for cost-effective prep.
- Can be made vegan using margarine and flax egg.
- Keeps well for 2–3 days at room temp.
- Bake in sheet pans and portion into equal squares.
- Excellent for breakfast, snack, or dessert menus.

Conclusion

The Romanian Apple Pie is a nostalgic, fragrant dessert that brings out childhood memories and autumn warmth in every bite.



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ROMANIAN SWEET BRAIDED YEAST BREAD WITH NUTS, COCOA COZONAC

1. Origin and History

The Romanian Sweet Braided Yeast Bread - Cozonac is the crown jewel of Romanian holiday baking — a rich, sweet bread baked during Christmas, Easter, and other major holidays. It has origins in Balkan and Mediterranean baking traditions, likely influenced by Italian panettone and Greek tsoureki. Over time, it became uniquely Romanian, featuring elaborate fillings such as walnut-cocoa paste, poppy seeds, raisins, or rahat (Turkish delight).

2. Cultural Aspects

Making cozonac is considered a family ritual, passed from grandmother to granddaughter. It's not just dessert — it's ceremonial. Homes fill with the scent of yeast and vanilla, and baking it successfully is seen as a culinary rite of passage. Cozonac is often placed on the Easter table alongside Pasca, or served to guests during Christmas with red wine.



3. Ingredients (for 2 cozonaci – large loaves)

Dough:

- 1 kg flour (sifted)
- 50 g fresh yeast (or 14 g dry)
- 400 ml milk (lukewarm)
- 5 eggs (room temp)
- 200 g sugar
- 150 g butter (melted)
- Zest of 1 lemon & 1 orange
- 1 tbsp vanilla extract
- 1 tbsp rum essence (optional)
- 1 tsp salt

Filling (walnut-cocoa):

- 300 g ground walnuts
- 100 g sugar
- 2 tbsp cocoa
- 2 egg whites
- 1 tbsp milk (if needed)
- Optional: raisins, Turkish delight cubes

Finishing:

- 1 egg yolk + 1 tbsp milk (for brushing)
- Optional: poppy seeds or sugar crystals

4. Preparation

1. Activate yeast: Mix with 1 tsp sugar, 100 ml warm milk, 2 tbsp flour. Let foam 10–15 min.
2. Mix dough: In a large bowl, beat eggs with sugar, zest, vanilla. Add yeast, salt, and flour gradually, alternating with warm milk.
3. Knead: Slowly pour in melted butter while kneading. Dough should be elastic and slightly sticky.
4. Let rise covered in warm place for 1.5–2 hours until doubled.
5. Prepare filling: Mix walnuts, cocoa, sugar, egg whites into a spreadable paste.
6. Divide dough into 4. Roll out each piece, spread filling, and roll. Braid two rolls for each cozonac.
7. Place in greased loaf pans. Let rise another 30–45 min.
8. Brush with egg wash. Bake at 180°C for 40–45 min.
9. Cool slowly on side to avoid collapse.

5. Nutritional Values (per slice)

- Calories: ~420 kcal
- Carbs: ~52 g
- Fat: ~18 g
- Protein: ~9 g
- Sugar: high

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition

- Cozonac can be baked, frozen, and sliced ahead of time.
- Nutritionally dense — ideal for holiday treats or calorie-rich meals.
- Can be portioned by weight (~60–80 g per slice).
- Versions with less sugar or poppy filling can fit diabetic menus.
- Use industrial mixers and fermentation trays for bulk prep.

Conclusion

Cozonac is not just bread — it's memory, family, and celebration wrapped in dough. It speaks to Romania's festive soul like no other dessert.



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SAMSA DESSERT

1. Origin and history

Samsa dessert, a sweet pastry with origins in Central Asia, was incorporated into Ottoman and Turkish cuisine as a popular treat for feasts and celebrations. Filled with nuts and sugar or honey, it was valued for its durability, portability, and energy content, making it particularly suitable for long journeys and naval life. In the context of the Turkish Navy, Samsa provided sailors with a convenient, individually portioned, and nutritious dessert. Serving it on inspection or ceremonial days at the Naval Academy and Naval War College highlights its role in preserving cultural heritage, connecting the discipline of naval tradition with the comforting flavors of traditional Turkish cuisine.



2. Cultural aspects

Samsa dessert embodies a rich blend of cultural heritage and practical tradition. Originating from Central Asia and refined in Ottoman cuisine, it has long been associated with celebrations, feasts, and hospitality, symbolizing abundance and shared joy. Its durable, individually portioned form made it ideal for long journeys and naval provisioning, linking it to life at sea. Beyond practicality, Samsa serves as a comforting reminder of home and cultural identity, and its inclusion on ceremonial menus in the Turkish Navy reflects a fusion of discipline, maritime tradition, and culinary heritage.

3. Ingredients

- 500 grams of flour
- 200 grams of butter or margarine
- 1 cup of liquid oil
- 1 packet of baking powder
- 1 teaspoon of salt
- 2 eggs
- 1 cup of yogurt
- 1 cup of powdered sugar (for the filling)
- 300 grams of walnut or hazelnut pieces (for the filling)
- 1 teaspoon of cinnamon (optional)

4. Preparation

1. Preparing the Dough: - Place the flour in a large mixing bowl and make a well in the center. - Add the butter, vegetable oil, eggs, and yogurt. - Add the baking powder and salt, then knead all the ingredients together to form a soft dough. - Wrap the dough in plastic wrap and let it rest for about 30 minutes.
2. Preparing the Filling: - Finely grind the walnuts or hazelnuts in a food processor. - Mix with sugar and cinnamon to prepare the filling.
3. Shaping the Samsa: - Divide the rested dough into mandarin-sized pieces. - Roll out each piece with a rolling pin and place some filling in the center. - Seal the edges of the dough to form a triangle or half-moon shape.
4. Baking: - Bake in a preheated 180°C oven for approximately 25-30 minutes until golden brown.
5. Serving: - Sprinkle powdered sugar over the hot Military Samsa and serve warm or cold.

5. Nutritional Values

Per ~350 g serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Protein: ~12–15g – mainly from nuts and flour.
- Carbohydrates: ~140–160g – primarily from flour and sugar.
- Fat: ~20–25g – mostly from butter/oil and nuts.
- Salt: ~0.5–1g – depending on the added salt in the dough.

Nutritional profile:

- High in carbohydrates, mainly from pastry dough and sugar, providing quick energy.
- Moderate protein content, thanks to the nuts used in the filling.
- Moderate to high fat, coming largely from butter, oil, and nuts.
- High in sugar, which adds sweetness and energy but should be consumed in moderation.
- Salt is generally low, though it may increase if salted nuts or dough are used, making it suitable for long-term storage and consumption at sea.

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

- Balance: Meals should provide a balanced mix of carbohydrates, protein, and healthy fats, with fruits and vegetables included whenever possible to supply essential vitamins, minerals, and fiber.
- Protein: Ensure regular intake of high-quality protein sources such as fish, poultry, legumes, dairy, or eggs to support muscle maintenance, immune function, and recovery during demanding naval duties.
- Salt Control: Limit excessive use of salt, bouillon, and processed foods, since high sodium can contribute to dehydration and hypertension; aim for moderate levels that meet but do not exceed daily needs.
- Energy Density: Prioritize foods that are nutrient-dense yet energy-rich, such as whole grains, nuts, and dried fruits, which provide long-lasting fuel for sailors without relying on empty calories.
- Storage: Focus on foods with long shelf life and safe storage properties, such as rice, legumes, canned goods, dried fruits, and vacuum-packed proteins, to ensure both practicality and food safety at sea.
- Cultural Adaptation: Incorporate familiar and traditional dishes, like iç pilav or Samsa dessert, to maintain morale and reinforce cultural identity, while adjusting recipes to meet nutritional standards for naval life.
- Hydration: Encourage regular water intake and ensure a safe onboard water supply; supplement with electrolyte-containing beverages in hot climates or during heavy physical activity while limiting sugary drinks and excess caffeine.

Conclusion:

Nutritious, warming, and simple to prepare, this lentil soup has long been a sailor's comfort on shore and at sea. Its hearty character makes it both practical for maritime life and symbolic of the strength and endurance required in naval tradition.



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SUTLIASH

1. Origin and history

Sutliash is a creamy, milk-based rice pudding with a long and storied history that traces its roots back to the Ottoman Empire and possibly further to Asia and the ancient world. The dish is a staple dessert across the Balkans, Middle East, and Türkiye, where it is known as sütlâç. The dessert's recipe likely traveled from Central Asia to the Ottoman palace kitchens, where it was considered a prestigious dish. In Bulgaria, the dish is commonly referred to by its Bulgarian name, mliako s oriz (milk with rice). However, the Ottoman name sutliash was also widely used, especially by older generations. The core ingredients of sutliash—rice, milk, and sugar—are simple, readily available, and inexpensive. This makes it a perfect example of a dessert that emerged from a history of resourcefulness, turning basic staples into a satisfying and comforting treat. In the past, when elaborate store-bought sweets were not common, desserts like sutliash were a staple of the home kitchen.

2. Cultural aspects

For many Bulgarians, the flavor and aroma of sutliash instantly evoke childhood memories. It is a humble dessert, but its rich, creamy texture and comforting sweetness have made it a beloved classic. It represents the simple, wholesome, and delicious food often prepared by a mother or grandmother, embodying warmth and security. The preparation of sutliash is often a multigenerational tradition. The recipe is passed down through families, with each home having its own slight variations in ingredients, proportions, and techniques. This oral tradition connects younger generations to their elders and helps keep a simple, delicious tradition alive. The recipe for a simple dessert like sutliash is a small but meaningful piece of **family history**.

3. Ingredients

- 1 cup white, uncooked rice (short or medium-grain is best, but any will work)
- 4–5 cups of water
- 1–1.5 cups of powdered milk
- 1/2 to 3/4 cup of sugar, or to taste
- 1 tablespoon vanilla extract and 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 cup raisins or dried fruit (optional)

4. Preparation

1. Combine the rice and water in a pot and bring it to a boil. Reduce the heat and simmer until the rice is tender and the water is mostly absorbed.
2. In a separate container, whisk the powdered milk into 1.5–2 cups of cold water until fully dissolved. Add this mixture to the pot with the rice.
3. Add the sugar to the pot and continue to simmer over low heat, stirring constantly, until the pudding thickens to your desired consistency.
4. Remove from heat and stir in the vanilla and optional dried fruit.
5. Let the sutliash cool slightly before serving. Sprinkle with cinnamon for garnish. It can be served warm or chilled in the ship's refrigerator.

5. Nutritional Values

Per ~100 g serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: ~ 115-150 kcal
- Protein: ~ 3-5 g
- Fat: ~ 2-4 g
- Carbohydrates: ~ 20-25 g
- Fiber: ~ 1 g
- Calcium: Sutliash is a good source of calcium, which is important for bone health. The calcium content will vary depending on the type and amount of milk used

6. Nutritional profile:

- Sutliash provides a significant amount of carbohydrates, which offer a quick source of energy. This is particularly beneficial for mariners who need sustained energy during demanding work.
- Made with milk, sutliash contributes to calcium intake, which is essential for bone health.
- The ingredients in sutliash can be adjusted to create a healthier version. For instance, using low-fat milk can reduce the fat and calorie content. Reducing the amount of sugar can make it a healthier option for those monitoring their sugar intake.
- As a simple, warm, and creamy dish, sutliash is not just a source of nutrition but also a source of comfort and mental well-being, especially for those away from home for long periods.

7. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

- Utilizes pantry staples: The core ingredients—rice, shelf-stable or powdered milk, and sugar—are non-perishable and easy to store for long periods.
- Simple preparation: The recipe requires minimal equipment and can be made in a single pot, which is ideal for a limited galley.
- High energy content: The simple carbohydrates from the rice and sugar provide a quick and comforting energy boost, which is useful for sailors during demanding work shifts.
- Customizable: The basic recipe can be enhanced with raisins, dried fruits, or spices like cinnamon, which also have long shelf lives.
- Versatile serving: It can be enjoyed warm for comfort in cold weather or chilled for a refreshing treat in hot climates.

Conclusion:

As a dessert for mariners, sutliash (or mliako s oriz) offers a comforting, high-carbohydrate meal that can be easily prepared with shelf-stable ingredients. The recipe can be adapted to suit conditions on a ship, providing a delicious and energy-rich treat during long voyages.



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SWEET CHEESE PASTRY – BAKED PLĂCINTĂ CU BRÂNZĂ DULCE

1. Origin and History

Dating back to monastic recipes and shepherd traditions, this dessert uses fresh cheese mixed with sugar, raisins, eggs, and vanilla, wrapped in pastry and baked. Popular during Easter, but also a year-round treat. In Moldavia and Bucovina regions, it is closely linked to holiday and Sunday meals.

2. Cultural Aspects

It's often made in round or square form, served sliced with powdered sugar or a dollop of jam. The cheese must be fresh, not salty, and sometimes it is flavored with rum or lemon.



3. Ingredients (for 1 large tray)

For dough (or use puff pastry):

- 500 g flour
- 200 g butter or lard
- 100 ml milk
- 1 egg
- 50 g sugar
- 1 packet dry yeast or 25 g fresh
- Salt

For filling:

- 500 g brânză de vaci (fresh cow's cheese or ricotta)
- 2 eggs
- 100 g sugar
- Zest of 1 lemon
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 50 g raisins (soaked)
- 1 tbsp semolina (optional)

4. Preparation

1. Dough: Mix warm milk, yeast, sugar. Add to flour + salt + butter. Add egg and knead until elastic. Let rise 1 hr.
2. Filling: Mix cheese, eggs, sugar, vanilla, lemon zest, raisins.
3. Roll dough into square or rounds. Place filling in center, fold or top with another layer.
4. Bake at 180°C for 35–40 min. Cool and dust with powdered sugar.

5. Nutritional Values (per serving)

- Calories: ~370 kcal
- Protein: ~14 g
- Fat: ~20 g
- Carbs: ~35 g
- Calcium: high

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition

- Use pre-made dough to reduce prep time.
- Can be baked in individual portions or trays.
- High in protein and great post-meal option.
- Add fruit compote for enhanced fiber.
- Serve at room temperature or warm.

Conclusion

The Sweet Cheese Pastry offers sweetness, softness, and dairy richness — it's a favorite for both everyday and ceremonial Romanian meals.



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THE SPEEDIEST GREEK SWEET BREAD TSOUREKI

1. Origin and History

Tsoureki (Greek: τσουρέκι) is a traditional Greek sweet, braided bread that holds deep cultural and religious significance, particularly during Easter celebrations. Its origins trace back to ancient bread-making traditions that symbolized rebirth, fertility, and the renewal of life.



2. Cultural Aspects

The concept of sweet, enriched bread dates to ancient civilizations. In Byzantine times, festive breads were often prepared with fine flour, milk, butter, and aromatic spices to mark important religious or seasonal events. These early forms evolved into what is now known as Tsoureki, symbolizing celebration, prosperity, and continuity of life. In Greece, Tsoureki is most closely associated with Easter (Pascha). It is traditionally baked on Holy Thursday, often decorated with red-dyed eggs that symbolize the blood of Christ and the renewal of life through resurrection. The braided shape represents the Holy Trinity or the continuity of life and resurrection, depending on local tradition.

3. Ingredients

- 200 g whole milk
- eggs, medium
- 120 g granulated sugar
- orange zest, from 1 orange
- 550 g hard flour
- ½ teaspoon(s) salt
- 14 g yeast
- 4,5 g mahlab
- 1,5 g mastic
- 100 g butter, at room temperature
- 1 egg yolk, diluted with 1 tablespoon of milk
- 30 g almond slivers
- seed oil, for brushing

4. Preparation

- Put the milk, eggs, sugar, orange zest, flour, salt, yeast, mahlab, and mastic into a mixer's bowl.
- Cut the butter into cubes and add it to the mixer's bowl.
- Beat the ingredients with the hook attachment at medium speed, for 15 minutes, until you have a smooth and elastic dough.
- Put a little seed oil on your hands and give the dough a round shape.
- Grease a bowl with seed oil and then put the dough in it.
- Cover the bowl with plastic wrap and leave the dough in a warm place to rise for at least 1 hour or until it doubles in size. The waiting time depends on how warm the room where you have the bowl is.
- Shape the dough into a ball again and transfer it to your worktop.
- Cut the dough in half with a knife, shape each half into a long and narrow piece, and then cut it into 3 equal dough pieces.
- Use your hands to roll out the dough pieces into 20-22 cm long strips, moving from the center to the edges.
- Arrange 3 of the 6 strips vertically in front of you, one next to the other, and connect the top edges.
- Start making a braid (taking the outer strip and folding it over the middle) from top to bottom, connect the bottom edges, and tuck them inwards.
- Follow the same process for the second tsoureki.
- Lightly grease a 28x36 cm baking pan with seed oil, and put the two tsourekia in it.
- Cover the pan with plastic wrap and leave the tsourekia in a warm place to rise for 1-1 ½ hours or until they double in size.
- Preheat the oven to 160°C (320°F) set to fan.
- Use a pastry brush to spread the egg wash over the tsourekia and then sprinkle them with slivered almonds.
- Put the pan in the oven and bake the tsourekia for 25-30 minutes at the top oven rack position. (Make sure to not open the oven door)
- Remove the pan from the oven and serve.

5. Nutritional Values

Per portion serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: 261kcal
- Protein: 7g
- Fat: 8.6g
- Saturated Fat: 4.6g
- Carbs: 38g
- Sugar: 9.5g
- Fiber:1.3
- Sodium:0.36g

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

- High Energy Content: Provides a good source of carbohydrates and fats for crew members with high physical energy demands.
- Protein Contribution: Eggs and milk supply quality protein, supporting muscle maintenance and recovery.
- Micronutrients: Contains small amounts of calcium, iron, and B vitamins (especially if enriched flour and milk are used).
- Psychological Benefit: Sweet, aromatic, and festive foods like tsoureki help maintain crew morale and offer a sense of comfort and normalcy.

Conclusion:

Tsoureki" is suitable for a ship's catering manual, maritime nutrition plan. Alternating tsoureki with other international sweet breads (e.g., challah, brioche, or panettone) keeps menus diverse and inclusive.



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TIKVENIK

1. Origin and history

Tikvenik is a traditional Bulgarian dessert that is a sweet version of the savory pastry, banitsa. Its history is a blend of Slavic tradition, the influence of the Ottoman Empire, and the seasonal availability of ingredients. The name tikvenik comes from the Bulgarian word for pumpkin, "tikva". The pumpkin itself originated in the Americas and was introduced to Europe after the voyages of Columbus. Over time, local cooks embraced its sweetness and versatility. The dish is part of a broader Slavic tradition of using seasonal produce like pumpkin in hearty, comforting meals. This is reflected in similar pastries found in neighboring countries. Tikvenik's history is a testament to how local ingredients and traditions can merge with broader cultural influences to create an iconic dish that remains a cherished favorite in the region.

2. Cultural aspects

Tikvenik is a deeply rooted part of Bulgarian culture, serving as more than just a dessert. It is a symbol of autumn and winter, festive traditions, and a cozy home. Tikvenik is an obligatory part of the festive table on Christmas Eve (Badni vecher). Since only vegan dishes are traditionally eaten on this holiday, tikvenik, made with pumpkin, walnuts, sugar, and cinnamon, is the ideal dessert. Like many traditional Christmas dishes, the pumpkin in tikvenik symbolizes fertility and abundance. The sweet, warm spices like cinnamon also evoke a sense of festive comfort. The preparation of tikvenik is often a family tradition passed down through generations. The aroma of baked pumpkin and cinnamon is associated with childhood, coziness, and a warm family atmosphere. In modern times, many people are reconnecting with traditional recipes like tikvenik as a way to connect with their cultural heritage. Tikvenik is more than just a dessert; it's a symbol of tradition, family, and celebration that brings generations together.

3. Ingredients

- 1 kg (about 2 lbs) pumpkin or winter squash, peeled and grated
- 100 g (½ cup) granulated sugar, or to taste (adjust based on the pumpkin's sweetness)
- 100 g (¾ cup) walnuts, coarsely chopped
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- A pinch of ground cloves (optional)
- 2 tablespoons fine semolina or dry breadcrumbs (optional, to absorb extra moisture)
- 400–450 g (1 package) thin filo dough sheets, thawed
- 120 ml (½ cup) sunflower oil or melted butter
- Powdered sugar for dusting

4. Preparation

1. Peel the pumpkin and coarsely grate it into a large bowl.
2. Add the sugar, chopped walnuts, cinnamon, and cloves to the grated pumpkin.
3. Let the mixture sit for about 10–15 minutes. This will draw out some of the liquid from the pumpkin. If it seems very watery, squeeze out the excess liquid by hand.
4. For extra crispiness and to prevent the filling from being watery, you can mix in the semolina or breadcrumbs.
5. Set your oven to 180°C (350°F). Grease a round baking pan.
6. Unroll the filo dough and lay it on a clean, dry surface. Cover it with a slightly damp tea towel to prevent the sheets from drying out and becoming brittle.
7. Take one sheet of filo, brush it lightly with oil or melted butter, and sprinkle a thin, even layer of the pumpkin filling over it.
8. Starting from the long end, roll the sheet tightly into a log.
9. Place the first log in the center of your greased baking pan, coiling it into a spiral. Continue making rolls and adding them to the pan, connecting them to form a continuous spiral.
10. Once all the rolls are in the pan, brush the top generously with the remaining oil or butter.
11. Place the pan in the preheated oven and bake for 30–40 minutes, or until the pastry is golden brown and crispy.
12. Remove the tikvenik from the oven and let it cool slightly.
13. Before serving, dust the top with powdered sugar.
14. Cut the tikvenik into slices and serve warm.

5. Nutritional Values

Per ~100 g serving - approximate, depending on ingredients:

- Calories: ~ 200-300 kcal
- Protein: ~ 3-6 g
- Fat: ~ 10-20 g
- Carbohydrates: ~ 30-40 g
- Fiber: ~ 2-4 g
- Sugar: ~ 15-25 g

6. Nutritional profile:

- The type of fat used (e.g., butter vs. vegetable oil) and the quantity of sugar and walnuts added will directly affect the total calories and macronutrient distribution.
- The method and amount of oil or butter brushed onto the filo sheets significantly impact the fat content. Pre-cooking the pumpkin can also help remove excess water, ensuring a crispier pastry.
- As a high-calorie dessert, portion control is crucial. A single slice can contain a substantial amount of calories, fat, and sugar.
- The ingredients contribute valuable vitamins and minerals: Pumpkin: a good source of Vitamin A, Vitamin C, potassium, and fiber. Walnuts: provide heart-healthy omega-3 fats, along with fiber, protein, magnesium, and other minerals. Cinnamon: adds flavor and potential health benefits, such as aiding digestion.

7. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition (Maritime Ships)

- Ingredient sourcing: A galley cook would need to use frozen, canned, or fresh pumpkin, depending on availability. Nuts, spices, and filo dough are durable pantry items.
- Safety during rough seas: To ensure safety during rough seas, a cook would use a deep baking dish and secure it properly in the ship's oven.
- Dietary considerations: For mariners with dietary restrictions, the recipe can be adjusted by reducing the amount of sugar and fat. Some substitutions may be made, such as using whole-grain flour in the dough.

Conclusion:

A dessert like tikvenik can be a practical and morale-boosting addition to a mariner's menu. While not a staple of a typical ship's diet, its ingredients and preparation methods make it well-suited for life at sea. Tikvenik offers a delicious and practical treat that can boost morale and provide energy, especially during holidays or for special occasions.



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VANILLA CRESCENT COOKIES WITH JAM OR WALNUT FILLING

CORNULEȚE CU GEM

1. Origin and History

These crescent-shaped cookies are a staple of holiday cookie platters in Romanian households, particularly during Christmas, weddings, and name days. With Ottoman and Viennese influences, the Vanilla Crescent Cookies use buttery, soft dough filled with jam, nuts, or Turkish delight, then rolled in powdered sugar.

2. Cultural Aspects

Every region has its version — some use pork lard, others yogurt, butter, or sour cream. The Vanilla Crescent Cookies with Jam or Walnut Filling are often made in large batches, packed in boxes, and gifted. A symbol of hospitality and warmth, they often accompany coffee or tea.



3. Ingredients (for ~40 pieces)

- 500 g flour
- 200 g butter or lard
- 2 egg yolks
- 100 g sugar
- 1 tsp vanilla
- 150 ml sour cream or yogurt
- 1 tsp baking powder
- Zest of 1 lemon

Filling options:

- Thick plum jam (magiun)
- Ground walnut + sugar
- Turkish delight pieces

Finishing:

- Powdered sugar with vanilla

4. Preparation

1. Make dough: Rub fat into flour. Add yolks, sugar, vanilla, zest, and sour cream. Knead gently. Chill 30 min.
2. Roll dough ~3 mm thick. Cut into small squares or triangles. Add ½ tsp filling and roll into crescents.
3. Place on baking sheet. Bake at 180°C for 12–15 min (light color, not brown).
4. Roll warm cookies in powdered sugar.

5. Nutritional Values (per piece)

- Calories: ~110 kcal
- Fat: ~6 g
- Carbs: ~12 g
- Sugar: moderate

6. Recommendations for Onboard Nutrition

- Perfect for bulk production and dry storage.
- Make in advance and store airtight up to 2 weeks.
- Use low-sugar jam or nut fillings for variation.
- Easy to portion by weight.
- Offer on festive trays or holiday buffets.

Conclusion

The Vanilla Crescent Cookies are delicate, nostalgic, and festive — the little bites that turn Romanian holidays into culinary memories.



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CUL-MAR-Skills



” MARitime Soft Skills for Onboard
Healthy Nutrition and CULinary
Arts in Seagoing Services”



PROJECT RESULTS

1 research survey and 1 follow up report

5 training modules (1 WP2, 3 WP3, 1 WP4):

- Onboard Healthy Nutrition
- Supply Chain Management and the Victualling Services Onboard
- Entrepreneurial Opportunities in Seagoing Procurement Services
- Sustainable Development and the Green Transition to Effective Galleys Services Onboard the Ships
- Onboard Cook Skills

1 Cook Manual for Seafaring Cuisine Services Onboard the Ships

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