

Hungarian Kolosvari Rakott Káposzta or Layered Cabbage, The Hungarian “Lasagna”

It is interesting to note that Hungary probably has more recipes for cabbage than any other country. The Hungarian names rarely indicate whether the intended ingredient is cabbage or the more popular sauerkraut, assuming that the true connoisseur would know which was intended (a little like performance practices for Baroque music – where and whether to embellish in the notation.)

For sauerkraut:

1 can sauerkraut, 28 ozs

or 1 ½ LBS

¼ cup vegetable oil

1 large onion chopped

4 ripe fresh tomatoes chopped or 1-pint grape seed tomatoes halved

1 red pepper diced

1 TBS sweet paprika

salt and pepper to taste

Caraway seeds (optional)

1 cup tomato or V-8 juice.

For Meat layer:

*1 ½ pounds lean ground beef

¼ cup vegetable oil

1 large onion chopped

1 bell pepper chopped

½ yellow pepper and ½ red pepper chopped

4 ripe fresh tomatoes, chopped or 1 pint grape seed tomatoes halved

1 TBS sweet paprika (or if you like a little spice mix part sweet and part spicy paprika)

salt and pepper to taste

2 cloves minced garlic

2 cups cooked rice

2 cups sour cream (if used) mixed with one TBS flour

chives, parsley, or fresh dill for garnish and some paprika

Pre-heat the oven to 350 degrees.

Sauerkraut layer: Squeeze out the juices of the sauerkraut. Rinse the sauerkraut for several minutes in cold water to reduce the sour and salty flavors. Drain. Heat the oil in a large Dutch oven pan. When it is hot add the chopped onion and fry the onion until golden brown almost caramelized. Add the tomatoes and pepper and simmer 2 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and add the paprika and other spices and mix well. Return the pan to the heat and add the sauerkraut. Mix well until it is well coated with the tomato/pepper mixture. Add some of the tomato or V-8 juice to keep

the sauerkraut from sticking. Lower the heat cover the pot and simmer for 20 minutes stirring often.

Meat layer: Meanwhile in another Dutch oven or deep pan, heat the oil for the meat. When it is hot add the chopped onion and fry the onion until golden brown almost caramelized. Lower the heat and add the tomatoes and bell peppers and simmer 2 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and add the paprika and other spices and mix well. Return the pan to the heat and add the ground meat. Mix well and mash to eliminate any lumps. Add a little water if the consistency is not moist. Cook 30 minutes. Adjust the seasoning to taste.

Layering:

Oil a 13 ½ X 8 ¾ X 1 ¾ (or deeper) pyrex baking dish Divide the sauerkraut into three equal portions. Remove any large evident tomato or pepper skins. Using a slotted spoon so the excess liquid drains, spread one third of the sauerkraut across the bottom of the pan in a thin even layer. Use half of the rice for the next layer spreading it evenly over the sauerkraut. Divide the meat in two and use half of the meat spreading evenly over the rice. Repeat a layer of sauerkraut, rice, meat and top with the last third of the sauerkraut* Spread the sour cream, if used, as the final layer*. The dish should be relatively firm with not too much sauce. If necessary, add a small amount of water to prevent scorching. Bake in the oven for 30-40 minutes. Remove from the oven and garnish with the greens and a sprinkling of paprika. Cut the dish into squares and serve very hot directly from the pyrex pan.

*Non- Jewish people would often use ground pork in this recipe instead of the beef and would garnish the top over the sour cream with thin slices of spicy Hungarian sausage called kolbasz before baking.

Serves 8