

EASTER RECIPES

After six weeks of Lenten fasting, everyone looks forward to the traditional Easter brunch which is served on Easter Sunday, after the family comes home from Mass. Brunch includes a sour soup called *Zurek*, followed by eggs, ham, sausage, patés, cold roasts, salads, and relishes, accompanied by airy *babkas*, tasty cheesecakes, *serniki*, and special flat shortbread cakes served at Easter called *mazurki*. The Easter brunch is called *Swiecone* which means Blessed Food since a lot of the food served on this day had been blessed in church on Holy Saturday. The Easter brunch starts with the sharing of a blessed Easter egg- everyone takes a piece of the egg from the head of the household as they exchange best wishes with one another.

Easter Lemon Cake



1 cup unsalted butter, at room temperature
2 cups granulated sugar
4 large eggs, at room temperature
3 cups all-purpose flour
1/2 teaspoon baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 cup buttermilk
Grated zest of 2 large lemons
Juice of 1 large lemon (about 2 1/2 tablespoons)

For the Glaze:

2 cups confectioners' sugar
Juice of 1 large lemon (about 2 1/2 tablespoons)

Directions

Preheat oven to 325 degrees F. Grease a 10-inch Bundt pan and set aside. Using a wooden spoon or the paddle attachment of an electric mixer, cream the butter and sugar together in a large bowl until fluffy and pale. Add the eggs, one at a time, beating well after each addition, and scraping down the sides of the bowl.

Sift the flour, baking soda, and salt into a small bowl. Add the flour mixture to the creamed mixture in 3 additions, alternating with the buttermilk in 2 additions, beginning and ending with the dry ingredients. Don't overmix; just fold gently until the batter looks well blended. Fold in the lemon zest and juice.

Scrape the batter into the prepared pan, smoothing the top with a rubber spatula. Bake the cake for 1

hour to 1 hour and 15 minutes, or until a tester inserted into the center comes out clean, and the cake has begun to pull away from the sides of the pan. Transfer the pan to a wire rack and cool for 10 minutes.

For the glaze: in a medium bowl add the lemon juice to the 2 cups of confectioners' sugar, mixing vigorously to get rid of any lumps of sugar. If the glaze isn't thick enough to coat the cake, add more sugar 1 tablespoon at a time, mixing well between additions. The glaze should be thick but pourable.

Invert cake onto a wire rack set over a baking sheet. Spoon the glaze over hot cake and allow to cool completely before cutting.

Jaja Faszerowane **Polish Deviled Eggs**



8 large hardboiled eggs, shelled, and cut in half
8 ounces Polish ham, very finely chopped or ground
4 tablespoons grated Swiss cheese
4 tablespoons sour cream
2 teaspoons mustard
Salt and pepper to taste
2 teaspoons chopped chives
1 cup bread crumbs
4 tablespoons melted butter

Gently remove the egg yolks from the egg halves and place in a bowl. Mash the yolks with a fork. Add ham, cheese, sour cream, mustard, and chives. Mix well. Add salt and pepper to taste. Spoon the mixture into the egg halves, filling them generously. Place the filled egg halves in a shallow casserole or baking dish. Sprinkle with bread crumbs and drizzle with melted butter. Place under a broiler for about 3 minutes or until the topping is crisp and golden brown. Serve warm or at room temperature.

Zurek Wielkanocny **Easter Sour Soup**



Crust of one loaf of unsliced rye bread
2 cups rolled oats
2 cups warm water
1 1/2 lb. Polish sausage
1 1/2 quarts water
1 tablespoon prepared horseradish
Salt and pepper to taste
1 tablespoon brown sugar
8 hardboiled eggs, quartered
1 cup sour cream
1/4 cup chopped dill

In a large mixing bowl, combine the oats with two cups of warm water. Add the bread crust and cover with a dishcloth. Let the mixture stand until it sours, at least 24 hours. Strain the mixture and reserve the liquid. Cook Polish sausage in 1 1/2 quarts water for one hour. (You can substitute white, raw Polish sausage in this recipe, if you prefer.) Remove the sausage to cool and skim the fat from the broth. Combine the broth and oatmeal liquid. Add horseradish, brown sugar, and salt and pepper. Slice the sausage into bite-sized pieces and add to the broth. Bring the mixture to a gentle boil, then reduce the heat and simmer for about an hour. Serve over hardboiled egg quarters placed in soup bowls. Garnish with sour cream and fresh dill.

Beet Horesradish Relish **Cwikla**



4 cups cooked sliced fresh or canned beets
4 tablespoons wine vinegar
4 teaspoons prepared horseradish
2 teaspoons salt
2 teaspoons sugar
1 teaspoon caraway seeds (optional)

Grate the beets in food processor or on the smallest holes on your box grater. Toss with wine vinegar in a medium-sized bowl. Add horseradish, salt, sugar, and optional caraway seeds. Mix well. Cover and refrigerate overnight. Before serving, taste and add more horseradish or sugar as needed. Serve with Easter ham.

Creamy Horseradish Sauce **Sos chrzanowy**



2 hardboiled eggs
4 oz. fresh horseradish, finely grated
(or 4 tablespoons prepared horseradish)
1-2 teaspoons Dijon mustard
1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
1 teaspoon sugar
3/4 cup sour cream or crème fraiche
1/4 cup finely chopped dill
salt and pepper to taste
whipping crème or half and half

Take out the yolks and place in small mixing bowl. Mash with fork until smooth and add mustard to make a paste. Finely dice the egg whites. Add horseradish, vinegar, sugar, sour cream, and dill to the egg yolk paste and blend well until you have a smooth sauce. Add whipping cream or half and half cream teaspoons if the sauce is too thick. Season to taste and chill. Serve with Easter ham.

Polish Vegetable Salad **Salatka po polsku**



3 Russet potatoes, peeled, cooked, and diced
2 medium carrots, peeled, cooked, and diced
2 medium parsnips, peeled, cooked, and diced
2 sticks celery, diced
1 small cucumber, peeled and diced
1 small onion, peeled and diced
2 small dill pickles, drained and diced
4 hardboiled eggs, peeled and diced
1 small can green peas
1 apple, peeled, cored, and diced
4 tablespoons mayonnaise
6 tablespoons sour cream
1 teaspoon ketchup (optional)
salt and pepper to taste
3/4 cup chopped dill

This traditional salad is very popular in Poland and is part of every holiday or party menu. It is the perfect accompaniment with the cold meats served at Easter. Mix the finely diced vegetables, eggs, and apple in a large bowl. In a small bowl, blend the mayonnaise, sour cream, and ketchup. Add dressing to salad along with salt and pepper to taste and toss gently. Cover and refrigerate. Before serving, add chopped dill and toss.

Polish Easter Sausage Kielbasa swiateczna



1 large onion, diced
2 plus 2 tablespoons canola or olive oil
1 small cabbage, quartered, cored, shredded
1/2 cup water
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
1/4 teaspoon whole caraway seeds
1 can (14-z) shredded sauerkraut, rinsed and drained
1 can (14-ounce) diced tomatoes
2 tablespoons sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt
1 1/2 lbs. raw Polish sausage or mild Italian sausage cut in 1-inch lengths
2 cups sour cream for serving, optional

In a large stainless steel pot, fry the onions in 2 tablespoons oil, stirring frequently, until softened and just starting to brown. Add cabbage and raise heat. Braise, stirring often, until it starts to brown. Add water, pepper, and caraway seeds. Cover, and reduce heat. Simmer, stirring occasionally, for another 10-15 minutes, until cabbage is tender. Add drained sauerkraut, tomatoes, salt, and sugar. Simmer 15-20 minutes, covered, stirring occasionally until heated through. Add more water, as needed.

In the meantime, in a large frying pan, cook the raw sausage in the remaining oil for 10-15 minutes until browned. Add to the pot with cabbage, mix, cover, and simmer, for 30-40 minutes, stirring occasionally. Taste cabbage. Add salt, if necessary.

Serve with boiled potatoes and horseradish or mustard on the side. Sour cream can be spooned over sausage and cabbage just before serving.

Polish Easter Baba Babka Wielkanocna



1 package dry yeast
1/4 cup lukewarm milk
1/4 cup lukewarm water
1/4 cup sugar
1/4 cup softened butter
3 eggs
3 cups flour
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 cup raisins
1/4 cup slivered almonds

Dissolve yeast in milk and water. Add 1/2 teaspoon sugar; stir and set aside in a warm place. In a large bowl, combine butter, remaining sugar, eggs, flour and salt. When yeast mixture bubbles, add to flour mixture and beat until smooth. Cover with a damp cloth and let rise in a warm place until doubled in bulk. This should take an hour or more. Gently stir the raisins and almonds into the dough and turn onto a lightly floured board. Knead for one or two minutes. Place dough in a buttered 2-quart loaf pan. Cover. Let rise until doubled in bulk, about 45 to 60 minutes. Bake 40 minutes or until the top is golden brown and an inserted toothpick comes out clean. Remove from pan immediately. Before serving, top with powdered sugar or icing.

Nut Mazurek with Meringue Topping Mazurek Orzechowy



Mazurek is a flat cake that is traditionally baked at Easter. The base is made of shortbread; the toppings include chocolate, meringue, nuts, raisins, dried fruit, marzipan, or marmalade. It can be colorfully decorated and often the words "Wesołego Alleluja," which means Happy Easter, along with drawings of pussywillows, flowers, or Easter eggs are iced on top. A mazurek can also be cut into squares and will keep for 2 - 3 weeks in a tightly covered container.

Dough:

2 cups flour
1 cup powdered sugar
4 egg yolks, hard-boiled
1 cup ground walnuts

1 teaspoon vanilla extract
3 tablespoons heavy
2 sticks unsalted butter, softened
1 tablespoon unsalted butter, softened
2 tablespoons flour

Meringue Topping:

2 egg whites
pinch of salt
1 cup powdered sugar
1 teaspoon vanilla extract

Sift 2 cups flour and powdered sugar together into a deep mixing bowl. Use a spoon to push the egg yolks through a fine sieve into the flour mixture; mix well. Add the almonds, vanilla, and cream to flour mixture and beat in 2 sticks (1/2 lb. of butter), a few tablespoons at a time. Knead with your hands until dough is smooth and can be formed into a compact ball. Wrap in waxed paper and refrigerate for at least 1 hour.

Grease a large cookie sheet with the remaining tablespoon of butter; sprinkle with remaining 2 tablespoons of flour, covering the pan completely. Shake off any excess flour. On a lightly floured surface, roll the dough out to a thickness of 1/4 inch and place on buttered cookie sheet, spreading dough with fingers so it completely covers the bottom of the pan.

Prepare meringue by beating egg whites with salt until soft peaks are formed. Gradually add powdered sugar and vanilla extract, continuing to beat the egg whites until stiff. Spread over dough. Bake in 375 F preheated oven until pastry is golden brown (20-25 minutes). Remove from oven, and with a lightly buttered knife, cut in half to make two cakes. (Or cut into 2 inch x 1 inch squares.) Carefully transfer to a wire rack and let cool to room temperature.

**Grandmother's Cheesecake
Sernik Babci**



Dough:

1-1/4 cups flour
3/4 teaspoon baking powder
1/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 cup unsalted butter
1 egg
3 tablespoons sour cream
1/3 cup powdered sugar

Filling:

6 eggs
2 cups powdered sugar
1 1/2 teaspoons vanilla extract
1 lb. farmer's cheese or ricotta cheese
2/3 cup melted butter
1-1/2 cups mashed potatoes (cooled, not seasoned)
2 teaspoons baking powder

1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 cup grated orange or lemon peel

For the dough, combine the flour, salt and baking powder in a bowl. Cut in the butter with a fork. Beat the egg into the sour cream. Stir into the flour mixture then add in the sugar. Knead the dough until well mixed and smooth. Roll dough on a floured surface into a rectangle. Line a 13 x 9 inch pan with the dough and bring the dough halfway up the sides.

For the filling, separate 1 egg and set aside the white. Beat the remaining yolk and 5 whole eggs with the sugar for 5 minutes at high speed of an electric mixer. Add the vanilla and beat at high until the mixture is soft. Press cheese through a sieve and blend with butter add the potatoes, baking powder, nutmeg, and salt. Stir in orange peel. Fold into the egg mixture. Turn into prepared crust in pan. Bake in a pre-heated 350 degree oven for 45-55 minutes or until set. Let cool before cutting.