

## RECIPES FOR MARDI GRAS - FAT TUESDAY

Deep-fried pastries in the days leading up to Ash Wednesday are a very old tradition in Poland. People fill up on these tasty and rich delicacies before the fasting of Lent begins in earnest. Paczki or jelly-filled doughnuts, sometime called "little pillows," and chrusciki or crullers, sometimes called "angel wings," are the two most popular pastries prepared during Fat Week. Two recipes for paczki (one using mashed-potato dough) and one recipe for chrusciki follow. Enjoy!

### PACZKI



2 cakes yeast  
1 1/3 cup milk, scalded then cooled till lukewarm  
1 cup sugar  
2 whole eggs  
2 egg yolks  
2/3 cup butter, melted  
5 1/2 cups all-purpose flour  
1 tsp. salt  
1 tsp. vanilla  
1 shot glass rum  
1 cup prune or other fruit filling  
powdered sugar  
Shortening or vegetable oil for frying

Crumble yeast into bowl and add lukewarm milk. Add half of flour; mix well. Beat eggs and egg yolks with sugar and salt; add to first mixture. Add melted butter, vanilla and rum. Work in remaining flour. Allow to rise in warm place until spongy, about 2 hours.

Turn dough out on floured surface and cut into even sections with juice-size glass. Spread the dough apart enough to fill with prepared prune or other filling and seal the filling into the dough. Allow paczki to rise in warm place until double in bulk.

Then fry in hot, deep shortening until brown. Turn just once. Drain on absorbent paper. While still warm, sprinkle with powdered sugar.

## PACZKI



1 1/2 cup mashed potatoes  
1/2 cup potato water  
2 packages dry yeast  
1/2 cup sugar  
1 egg  
3 egg yolks  
1 tsp. vanilla  
1/2 cup milk  
1/2 tsp. mace  
1/2 tsp. nutmeg  
1/2 cup butter  
6-7 cups flour  
1 tsp baking powder  
1 TBS rum (more optional)

Peel and boil potatoes. Mash or puree in blender. Scald milk, stir in butter, sugar and mashed potatoes. Add flavorings. Sprinkle yeast over 1/2 cup lukewarm potato water. Stir. Mix together with above mixture and beaten eggs. In another bowl, combine flour, baking powder, and spices.

Gradually stir flour mixture into egg mixture, blending well to make soft dough. Knead by hand or using a mixer with dough hook. Let rise till double in a buttered bowl, 1 to 2 hours. Punch dough down and roll out on floured board to a thickness of 1/2 inch. Cut rounds with water glass. Separate to add a teaspoon of filling or preserves. Place on waxed paper, let rise about 30 min.

Heat shortening in a heavy pan, adding one tablespoon of water to the cold shortening. When melted, it should fill the pan about halfway up the sides. Test fat by dropping a cube of bread in -- if it browns in 1 minute, it is hot enough, and the fat should not smoke. Paczki can be turned when brown (only once). Drain on absorbent paper. Sprinkle with powdered sugar while warm.

## CHRUSCIKI



5 large egg yolks, at room temperature  
1 large whole egg, at room temperature  
1/2 teaspoon salt  
1/4 cup powdered sugar  
1/4 cup heavy cream

1 teaspoon vanilla  
1 tablespoon rum or brandy  
2 cups all-purpose flour  
Canola or vegetable oil  
Powdered sugar for sprinkling

Combine egg yolks, whole egg and salt in bowl of mixer. Beat at high speed until thick and lemon colored, about 5 minutes. Beat in sugar, cream, vanilla, and rum. Add flour and beat until blisters form, about 5 minutes. Turn dough out onto a floured board, divide in half, cover with plastic wrap and let rest for at least 20 minutes.

Working with half of the dough at a time, roll out to 1/8-inch thickness. Cut into 2-inch-wide strips. Cut these strips on the diagonal at 4-inch intervals. Heat 2 inches of oil in a large, deep skillet to 350 degrees. Make a slit in the center of each strip of dough. Then pull one end through the slit to form a bow.

Fry 6 chrusciki at a time for 1 minute or less per side or until golden. These fry quickly, so watch closely. Drain on paper towels. Dust with powdered sugar.

## LENTEN RECIPES

Try one of these recipes for a light and tasty meatless lunch or supper -- during Lent -- or anytime!

### SPINACH LASAGNA



12 to 16 dried or fresh lasagna noodles  
3 to 4 cups tomato sauce  
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil  
3 cups cooked spinach, squeezed dry and chopped  
1 1/2 cups ricotta  
1 1/2 cups coarsely grated mozzarella  
2 cups grated Parmesan  
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

If you're using dried pasta, bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. If you're using fresh pasta sheets, cut them into long wide noodles approximately 3 inches by 13 inches, or a size that will fit into your lasagna dish. Cook the noodles (6 at a time for dried noodles) until they are tender but still underdone (they will finish cooking as the lasagna bakes); fresh pasta will take only a minute. Drain and then lay the noodles flat on a towel so they won't stick.

Heat the oven to 400 degrees. Grease a rectangular baking dish with the olive oil, add a large dollop of tomato sauce and spread it around. Put a layer of noodles (use four) in the dish, trimming any overhanging edges; top with a layer of tomato sauce, one-third of the spinach, and one-fourth of the ricotta (use your fingers to spread it evenly), the mozzarella and the Parmesan. Sprinkle some salt and pepper between the layers of tomato sauce and spinach if desired.

Repeat the layers twice, and top with the remaining noodles, tomato sauce, ricotta, mozzarella and Parmesan; the top should be covered with cheese; add more ricotta and Parmesan as needed. (The lasagna may be made ahead to this point, wrapped tightly and refrigerated for up to a day or frozen. Bring to room temperature before proceeding.)

Bake until the lasagna is bubbling and the cheese is melted and lightly browned on top, about 30 minutes. Remove from the oven and let rest a few minutes before serving, or cool completely, cover well, and refrigerate for up to 3 days, or freeze.

## **EASY BAKED FISH FILLETS**



1 1/2 pounds grouper or other white fish fillets  
Cooking spray  
1 tablespoon fresh lime juice  
1 tablespoon light mayonnaise  
1/8 teaspoon onion powder  
1/8 teaspoon black pepper  
1/2 cup fresh breadcrumbs  
1 1/2 tablespoons butter or stick margarine, melted  
2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

Preheat oven to 425 F. Place fish in an 11 x 7-inch baking dish coated with cooking spray. Combine lime juice, mayonnaise, onion powder, and pepper in a small bowl, and spread over fish. Sprinkle with breadcrumbs; drizzle with butter. Bake at 425° for 20 minutes or until fish flakes easily when tested with a fork. Sprinkle with parsley.

Note: Haddock or cod would make good substitutes for the grouper. Adjust the baking time depending on the thickness of the fish.

## **NALESNIKI** **Stuffed Crepes**



These thin crepes or blintzes can be stuffed with sweet fillings (jam, apples, cheese) or with savory fillings (cabbage, mushrooms, meat). The meatless ones are ideal for light Lenten suppers - but they are a popular comfort food in Poland any time of the year.

## SWEET CREPES

### Batter

3 eggs  
3-6 tablespoons flour  
1/2 cup milk  
1 tablespoon sugar

### Filling

1 cup raspberry preserves; or 1 cup stewed apples; or 1 cup farmers or dry cottage cheese, blended with 1/2 teaspoon vanilla, 1 egg yolk, and 4 tablespoons sugar.

### Topping

1/2 to 1 cup sour cream  
1-4 tablespoons sugar to taste  
powdered sugar for sprinkling

### Directions

Blend sour cream and sugar for the tipping and chill. Prepare batter by blending eggs in a blender, then slowly adding flour, followed by milk. Let sit 5 to 20 minutes. Heat butter or spray cooking spray in frying pan. When pan is hot, pour in a small amount of batter (only enough to make a paper-thin pancake), turning pan to coat the bottom. When crepe is golden brown on one side, flip for a 30-40 seconds to cook on the other side. Use medium-high heat.

If using jam spread thinly with the preserves, roll, top with sweetened sour cream and or dust lightly with powdered sugar, and serve. If using apples or cheese, spread the filling, roll, and place crepes in lightly buttered baking dish. Optional: Drizzle with melted butter before placing in oven. Warm in 350-degree oven for 20-30 minutes. Sprinkle with powdered sugar and serve.

## SAVORY NALESNIKI



### Batter

1/2 cup all-purpose flour  
1/2 cup milk  
1/4 cup lukewarm water  
2 large eggs  
2 tablespoons butter, melted  
1/2 teaspoon salt

### Mushroom Filling

1 cup finely chopped fresh mushrooms  
1 small finely chopped onion  
2 tablespoons butter  
2 tablespoons fine dry bread crumbs  
Salt and pepper to taste

### Directions

In a large skillet, sauté mushrooms and onions in butter until onion is tender. Remove from heat and cool.

Add remaining ingredients, mixing well. Spread filling on crepes, roll tightly, place in buttered baking dish and heat in 350-degree oven for 30 minutes. Nalesniki can also be heated in butter in a frying pan, just before serving.

## **LAZY PIEROGI** **Leniwe Pierogi**



To get the taste of pierogi with much less work, try this casserole for an easy Lenten supper.

1 lb. kluski-style noodles  
2 large onions, diced  
4 cups mashed potatoes  
2 cups cheese (farmer's cheese, dry cottage cheese, shredded cheddar, or ricotta)  
Salt and pepper to taste  
2 tablespoons butter.

Cook potatoes and let cool (or use leftovers). Cook noodles according to package directions, drain, and cool. Sauté 1 large diced onion in butter and added to cooled mashed potatoes. Add 2 cups of cheese and mix well. Add salt and pepper to taste. In a large buttered casserole, spread 1/3 of the noodles on the bottom of the pan, add 1/2 of the potato and cheese mixture, followed by another 1/3 of the kluski, followed by the rest of the filling, and topped with the rest of the kluski. Dot with butter, cover dish, and bake in 350-degree oven for 1 hour.

## **POLISH TUNA SALAD** **Salatka z tunczyka**



Adding more vegetables, eggs, and fresh dill to the tuna gives a new twist on tuna salad sandwiches.

### **Salad**

2 cans of tuna fish in olive oil  
1 small can of corn niblets  
1/2 small can of baby green peas  
4 hardboiled eggs, chopped  
1 or 2 dill pickles, diced

1/2 red bell pepper, diced  
salt and pepper to taste

### **Dressing**

1/3 cup mayonnaise  
1/3 cup sour cream  
2 tablespoons fresh dill, copped

Mix tuna, vegetables, and eggs in medium bowl. In small bowl, mix ingredients for the dressing. Add to salad and mix well. Spread on slices of dark rye bread or pumpernickel.

### **CREAMED HERRING FILLETS WITH BAKED POTATOES** **Sledzie w smietanie z ziemniakami**



1 large or 2 small jars of herring fillets in cream  
4 large russet potatoes  
1 large sweet onion, sliced  
1 large Granny Smith apple, peeled and sliced  
1/2 cup sour cream

Place herring fillets in large bowl. Add onions, apples, and sour cream. Mix well and refrigerate until ready to use. Scrub potatoes, rub with oil, wrap in foil paper, and bake in a 350-degree oven for 60 minutes. When a fork pierces the potatoes easily, remove from oven, remove foil, place potatoes on plates, top with herring mixture, and serve