

Ukrainian-Russian Borschtsch

Ingredients:

2l water

550g meat
(e.g. 350g beef, 200g pork)

2 – 3 bay leaves

3 – 4 juniper berries

3 black peppercorns

1 corn of pimento

300g beetroot

200g white cabbage

200g carrots

300g potatoes

1 onion

clarified butter / butter

1-2 tbs. tomato purée (concentrated)

2 tbs. vinegar

1 tbs. sugar

1 tbs. caraway (important!)

1 garlic clove

Salt & pepper

Fresh dill and parsley

Sour cream

tbs. = tablespoon

Preparation:



Fill a cooking pot with 2 litres of water, add meat, bay leaves, peppercorns, pimento and juniper berries, bring to a boil, remove the floating foam, and let simmer for 1-2 hrs. depending on type of meat, until the meat is done.

Meanwhile clean and peel the vegetables. Carrots and beetroots should be julienned (cut into thin strips of ~4cm length), the potatoes cubed, onion finely chopped, and the white cabbage cut into thin strips.

Now pour the meat stock through a strainer into a big cooking pot to remove the depleted spices and bay leaves.



Cut the meat into mouthfuls and put it somewhere for adding back into the borscht at the end.





Heat the clarified butter in a pan. Brown the chopped onions.

Meanwhile add salt to the meat broth and cook the potatoes and the white cabbage in it.



Reduce the heat for the pan and add beetroots and carrots. Add some butter, to taste. Steam the ingredients at low heat for a few minutes. Then add vinegar and sugar. Take a small cup of the meat broth, add the tomato concentrate to it and pour into the pan. Add a lid to the pan and steam-cook it gently at low heat for 20 to 30 minutes.



(Too much heat destroys the beautiful color of the beetroots, the vinegar's acid helps protect it)



Now put everything from the pan into the cooking pot. Finely chop a bit of the parsley and dill, add it. Chop the garlic clove and add it as well as the caraway. Add salt and pepper, to taste. Let rest for a bit, reduce heat and serve it.

It is vital(!) to the borscht that at least a dollop of sour cream is put into every bowl, as well as more finely chopped parsley and dill!

Different sorts of dark / full-grain bread are a good accompaniment to the borscht - you could also increase the amount of potatoes to make it less like a soup and more like a stew.

For a more intensive colour and beetroot aroma, or if you cooked it too long/hot, you can add beetroot juice. You can also replace the white cabbage with sauerkraut.

In the summer months, one can use fresh tomatoes instead of concentrate.

Regional variations in Eastern Europe include paprika pepper, beans, mushrooms and fish as alternative ingredients.