

# GOLUMPKI

## Stuffed Cabbages Leaves

Makes 3 to 4 dozen.

By Dennis W. Viau; modified from a recipe by Sue Bajek.

This polish food has many variations. The recipe I use here belonged to the late aunt of a fan of my web site. He wanted the recipe preserved because eating these golumpki was among his favorite childhood memories. I can see why. They're delicious.



### **Ingredients:**

2 to 3 heads of cabbage, depending on size

#### ***For the Filling:***

1 pound (450g) ground pork

2 pounds (900g) ground beef (chuck or round)

2½ cups (14 oz./400g) cooked rice (1 cup (6½ oz./185g) dry rice cooked in 2 cups (475ml) water yields more than enough)

¼ pound (115g) lightly browned bacon, drained of fat (I started with 12 oz. (340g) raw)

2 medium onions, diced and sautéed until tender

2 large eggs

Salt to taste

Generous gratings of fresh pepper

Optional: 1 to 2 tablespoons chopped fresh parsley

Optional: 3 to 5 cloves garlic, minced

#### ***For the Sauce:***

½ cup (75g) brown sugar

1 teaspoon salt

½ teaspoon pepper

½ cup (120ml) lemon juice

2 28-ounce (800g) cans crushed tomatoes (or whole, crushing the tomatoes with your hands)

### **Directions:**

Fill a large pot about half full with water. Bring to a boil. With a sharp knife, carve out the core of the cabbage head. Carefully lower the whole cabbage into the boiling water. Return the pot to a boil, cover, and reduce the heat to medium-low. Cook 15 to 20 minutes.

While the cabbage is cooking, combine all the filling ingredients. Mix well, cover, and refrigerate until needed.

Combine the sauce ingredients in a skillet or medium pan. Heat to a boil. Reduce the heat to low and simmer, covered, until the tomatoes are tender, 15 to 20 minutes.

Carefully remove the cabbage from the pot (keep the water) and allow the cabbage to cool enough to be safe to handle. Remove the outer leaves and set aside. Remove the larger leaves for stuffing. Cover if not used immediately. Retain any remaining cabbage. If the inner portion of the cabbage head is uncooked, return it to the pot and cook until tender. (1 minute in the microwave oven worked well for me.)

Carefully shave off most of the leaf rib without cutting all the way through. Using a large spoon, place some of the meat mixture on one cabbage leaf, close to the stem edge. Roll up the filling in the leaf, tucking in the sides, encasing the meat. It should look like a short thick egg roll. Continue, using all the filling, cooking more cabbage as needed for additional leaves.

Heat the oven to 325°F.

Using some of the remaining cabbage leaves, cover the bottom of a large baking dish or enameled cast iron pot (Dutch oven). Arrange a layer of cabbage rolls on the leaves. Cover with some cabbage leaves and sauce. Add a second layer of cabbage rolls. Cover the top with any remaining leaves and then drape with the remaining sauce. Season with salt and pepper. Note: If the baking dish is narrow, this step can be done in three layers.

Cover the casserole dish and bake 2 hours. Remove the cover and bake an additional ½ hour.

Serve warm, with some of the extra cabbage leaves from the casserole dish on the side. Golumpki can also be served with potato pancakes on the side.

## STEP-BY-STEP

1



Using a sharp knife, carve out the core.

2



Heat a large pot of water to boiling. Carefully lower the cabbage inside (it will float), cover, and boil over medium-low heat 15 to 20 minutes.

**3**

Carefully remove the cooked cabbage, transferring to a bowl to drain and cool. Meanwhile, a second head of cabbage can be cooked, as needed.

**4**

Combine all the filling ingredients and blend well without crushing the rice or meat.

5



To test for salt, shape a small patty of the filling and cook in a small skillet. Adjust seasoning as needed.

6



Remove the outer cabbage leaves and save. These will be used to line the baking pan.

7



To make rolling easier, shave off some of the rib from the back of a leaf.

8



Place a large dollop of meat filling on a cabbage leaf, near an edge, and begin rolling the filling up in the leaf.

9



Continue rolling, tucking the sides into the roll, finishing to the final edge.

10



The finished cabbage roll should resemble a thick egg roll. Set them aside until needed.

11



If using whole tomatoes, crush them with your hands. Tomato puree works well too.

**12**

Add the remaining sauce ingredients, blend, and heat to boiling. Cook over low heat 15 to 20 minutes.

**13**

Line the bottom of a large baking pan with some of the cabbage leaves removed earlier.

**14**

Arrange a layer of cabbage rolls in the bottom of the pan. Drape with some of the sauce and a layer of cabbage leaves. You can use the small leaves from inside the head of cabbage.

**15**

Arrange a second layer of cabbage rolls in the pan. If the pan is small, you might need to add a third layer.

**16**

Finish with any remaining cabbage leaves on top and drape with the remaining sauce.

**17**

Cover and bake at 325°F (163°C) 2 hours (maybe longer if three layers). Remove the cover and bake an additional 30 minutes. Some recipes say to let the cooked golumpki rest 30 minutes after baking.



## Conclusion

The flavor of these cabbage rolls is mild but meaty. They can be served as a meal course. Smaller golumpki can be set out as appetizers. They are often plated with potato pancakes or mashed potatoes.