



Our Family Wigilia Cookbook



Traditions

Luke 2: 1-20

And it came to pass in those days that a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.

This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria.

So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.

And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child.

So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered.

And she brought forth her firstborn child, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night.

And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.

Then the angel said to them "Do not be afraid, for I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people."

"For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord".

"And this will be the sign to you: You will find a Babe wrapped in swaddling cloths, lying in a manger".

And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men!"

So it was, when the angels had gone away from them into heaven, that the shepherds said to one another, "Let us now go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has come to pass, which the Lord has made known to us."

And they came with haste and found Mary and Joseph, and the Babe lying in a manger.

Now when they had seen Him, they made widely known the saying which was told them concerning this Child.

And all those who heard it marveled at those things which were told them by the shepherds.

But Mary kept all these things and pondered them in her heart.

Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.

Toronto Star, 1968 or 1969



● **The Polish Christmas**, celebrated with Canadian adaptations by the Henry Lopinski family of Port Credit starts on Christmas Eve, and continues until Lent. Christmas Eve is a holy day, celebrated within the family. A 12 course meatless dinner is the focus of the evening. It takes days to prepare and includes three or four fish courses, red beet soup, cabbage rolls, dumplings, stewed dried fruit, pastries, and braided yeast bread. A little straw is put under the table cloth, symbolizing the manger and an extra place is always set at the table in case of a visitor. The meal doesn't begin until the first star comes out. Then a thin white wafer, obtained from the church, the "oplatek", is broken and shared as good wishes for the coming year are exchanged. Small pieces of the wafer are sent with the Christmas letter to relatives in Poland. When the meal is over, the carols sung and the presents opened, the family goes to midnight mass.



Preparing to read the Gospel aloud
(Luke 2:1-20).



Sharing the
opłatek, with
good wishes
for the year
ahead.

The courses on the Wigilia table



*I always enjoyed and anticipated each course that was served at wigilia. I like the slow pace, the formality that serving one course at a time brings to the meal. Plus how delicious it all is! I also will always remember the group effort of wigilia - everyone helping prepare food and the stół wigilijny. And it was always joyful .
You could always count on a laugh!
- Alicia*

Ryba po Zydowsku w Galarecie

Gefilte Fish in Aspic

*Traditionally served as the first course at Wigilia.
Best made a few days in advance to allow time for
the aspic to set. Also see Polish Touch, p. 27*



Filling:

3-4 pounds whitefish or pike
3-4 onions, chopped
3 slices dry bread
1/3 cup ground almonds
1 tsp. salt
1/3 cup breadcrumbs
½ tsp sugar
1 tsp pepper
¼ cup olive oil
3 eggs

Remove skin of raw fish, take meat off bones. Put meat, onion, and bread through meat chopper. Add almonds, salt, breadcrumbs sugar, pepper, and olive oil, eggs. Combine well and form mixture into 2-inch balls.

In a large saucepan, boil the bones, tail etc. in the 3 cups water with the quartered onion, carrot, salt, and pepper. Simmer for ½ hour, strain: reserve liquid and carrot. Simmer fish balls for about 20 minutes in the broth. Remove the fish balls from the liquid using a slotted spoon.

Skim impurities from the broth or clear by adding an egg white while it is still boiling. Add gelatin which has been softened in 1/3 cup cold water. For individual portions, using custard cups, dessert bowls or sour cream containers, place 2 or 3 balls in container, decorate with boiled carrot and sprigs of celery, cover with liquid and refrigerate overnight to set. To serve, invert on plates and accompany with lemon wedges, vinegar and vodka.

This is Babcia Koszulinska's recipe and she used to make this by putting the fish mixture back into the skin of the fish, placing this in a mould and then pouring the liquid and gelatin over the fish. While this made for a festive and dramatic presentation, this method of preparation came to a end one year when after much work making the dish it was placed in the garage to cool. But before it could be served at Wigilia, the neighbour's cat found it and had himself a delicious meal. Ever since, Babcia Hania has always made fish balls.

Broth:

3 cups water
1 onion, quartered
1 carrot
Salt and pepper, to taste
1 pkg. unflavored gelatin
1/3 cup cold water

Sledzi e



However you like it:

- Straight from the jar (in wine marinade with onions)
- With sour cream, apples and dill...



Serve with vodka..

Because

“ryba musi pływać ”
(fish gotta swim)!

- Strong white bread flour, 240 grams (or 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups)
OR All-purpose flour, 250 grams (or 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups)
- Red fife flour, 60 grams (or $\frac{1}{2}$ cup)
- Filtered or distilled water, warm (105 F) 240 grams
(or 2 $\frac{3}{4}$ cups)
- Mature sourdough starter, 60 grams (or $\frac{1}{4}$ cup)
OR SUBSTITUTE dry active yeast. 4 grams (or 1 tsp)
- Table salt, 6 grams (or 1 tsp)



Konrad's Christmas Bread

1. Stir dry yeast or starter into water until dissolved
2. In a large bowl, mix flours and salt together
(make sure it's a big bowl)
3. Mix dry ingredients and yeast mixture together until just incorporated
4. Cover with a clean tea towel and let rise in a warm place for 45 minutes
5. Gently stretch the dough and fold it over itself a few times to help
develop the dough
6. Repeat last two steps 4 times, ideally at 45 minute intervals
7. Shape bread, dust with flour and let rise in a basket or bowl for 45
minutes
8. Leave in fridge overnight, covered with a clean tea towel
9. Preheat oven to 450 F
10. Carefully transfer dough to cast iron pan, pizza stone, or Dutch oven
11. Score dough with a razor blade, lame, or knife
12. Bake in steamed oven or lid closed Dutch oven for 20m
13. Uncover Dutch oven or remove steam and reduce temperature to 425F:
bake until desired level of brownness, at least 10 additional min
14. Let sit on cooling rack for at least 30 min before slicing perpendicular to
score
15. Enjoy within 48 hours.

Barszcz



Different every time you make it!

The essentials:

1. Cook beets in water.
2. Reserve cooked beets for another purpose.
3. To the beet water, add other ingredients to taste.

The details:

1. Peel and quarter **beets**. Cover with **water** in a large pot. Simmer gently till tender - i.e. can be easily pierced with a fork, but not mushy. (Vigorous boiling causes loss of colour!)
5 lb of beets makes about 8 cups of broth.
2. Examples: salad, or chunky veggie barszcz
3. **Kristina** adds: **beef or turkey/chicken or vegetable broth**. (usually home-made, but have resorted to tetra-paks in a pinch!) Some **vinegar** for tanginess, a bit of **commercial barszcz concentrate** - but not too much, it tends to be sweet) **black pepper** and some **herbes de Provence**. Can be seasoned with some **Maggi**.

Anna adds: **Tomato juice**; **dry onion soup mix** (about a tbsp); **Polish mushrooms, presoaked and boiled** are essential for me. When I boil the mushrooms for uszka I reserve the liquid plus a few pieces of the mushrooms to add to the barszcz, if not making uszka just boil a few specifically for it. Like Krysia, I do add some concentrate, adds taste and colour. **Garlic powder, salt & pepper** and some **Maggi** spice to taste.



Mushroom Filling

½ lb mushrooms
1 onion, minced
1 tbsp vegetable oil
1 ½ tbsp bread crumbs
1 tbsp water
Salt, to taste
Pepper, to taste



Also see Polish Touch, p. 31

Dough: 3 ways

2 c flour
1 egg
2 tbsp vegetable oil
(*Polish Touch p.31*)

OR

3 c flour
1 c water
1 egg
2 tbsp vegetable oil

OR

3 c flour
1 ½ tsp salt
1 egg
¾ c water
2 tbsp vegetable oil

Mix flour, egg, and oil. Knead slightly. Cover and refrigerate while preparing filling.

Filling: Wash mushrooms and grind finely in blender or food processor. In hot oil, fry the onion until tender; add mushrooms and saute until tender. Add remaining ingredients. Saute 5 minutes longer. Cool mixture before filling dumplings.

For meat filling (non-Wigilia) brown ½ lb beef with mushrooms.

Assembly: Roll dough very thin. Cut into 1 ½ inch or 2 inch squares. Place ½ tsp filling on each square. Pinch edges together to form a triangle. Bring corner 1 under the triangle to meet corner 2 and pinch, to form a “ring” (see picture).



Drop into rapidly boiling salted water. Cook for approximately 5 minutes or until dumplings float to the top. Toss lightly with melted butter. To serve place 2 or 3 in a bowl and pour hot barszcz over top.

Ingredients

- Salmon, skin on, as thick as possible, 4 to 5 lbs for full recipe
- Shrimp, fresh, or frozen, peeled and pre-cooked, 1 lb for full recipe
- Heavy cream, or whipping cream, 1 cup
- White mushrooms, finely chopped, 1 cup
- Garlic, finely chopped, 4 – 5 cloves
- White wine, dry, ½ cup
- Olive oil
- Parmesan or Grana Padano cheese (freshly grated), 1 cup, give or take
- Salt, pepper, herbs
- Lemon
- Fresh parsley for garnish



Wigilia Salmon Bake

For Wigilia or a family gathering, this recipe works best using a big piece of “skin on” salmon (4-5 pounds) or can also work well with smaller pieces (fillets). As the salmon is baked twice, a thick cut brings the best results.

- Janet

Instructions

1. Prepare the salmon: Wipe the skin with a damp paper towel. Rub skin with light olive oil, and place in baking dish. Season with salt, pepper and a gentle sprinkling of herbs (oregano, parsley, thyme) and a squeeze of lemon. Bake at 350 for 8-10 minutes (or longer if you are using a very thick piece.) Do not overbake.

2. Prepare the sauce: Finely chop the mushrooms and garlic. Saute in olive oil over low heat until soft – but not crisp or brown. Add white wine and simmer. Stir in cream, and gradually work in grated cheese, to taste and until the sauce is thick and creamy.

Season to taste (salt, pepper – not much else is needed) and add shrimp once sauce is ready. You can pull the tails off the shrimp if you wish.

3. Pour the sauce over the salmon, and bake again for 8-10 minutes, until sauce is bubbling. Again, be careful not to overbake so the salmon remains soft and juicy. Serve on large platter, garnished with lemon and parsley.

Ingredients

- Tilapia fillets
- Flour
- 2 eggs, beaten, with a splash of milk
- Breadcrumbs
- Parmesan cheese, grated
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Vegetable oil



Fried Tilapia

We often make this during the year as well. At Wigilia, served with potato salad.

- Anna/Babcia Hania

Instructions

1. If necessary, cut the tilapia fillets into pieces about 3 x 4 inches.
2. Combine breadcrumbs, parmesan, salt & pepper.
3. Dredge tilapia fillets in coatings, in this order: flour; egg & milk mixture; breadcrumb mixture.
4. Fry in oil till golden brown.

14

May be made several hours ahead and warmed in oven before serving.

A photograph of a white plate with a gold rim, filled with pierogi (dumplings) topped with sautéed onions and mushrooms. A silver fork is visible on the left side of the plate. The plate is set on a white lace tablecloth. A text box with the word "Pierogi" is overlaid on the center of the image.

Pierogi

Dough

3 c flour (Five Roses brand)

1 c water, lukewarm

1 egg, large, room T

2 tblsp vegetable oil

15

Combine and knead using dough hook on electric mixer, until the dough forms a smooth ball and detaches from the side of the bowl. If making multiple batches, wash and dry the bowl between each batch.

- Anna / Babcia Hania



Peel approx. 12 medium to large potatoes (russet or white cooking potatoes, not the yellow-fleshed kind).

Boil in heavily salted water until tender. Drain. Mash.

While potatoes are boiling, finely chop 3 medium yellow (cooking) onions. Sauté at low heat in $\frac{1}{4}$ cup butter (preferably salted) until softened but not browned.

Crumble 750g of Polski Twarog (dry cottage cheese), using fingers. Press it through a fine sieve. Mix cottage cheese with mashed potatoes.

- *Alternative to pressing cheese through a sieve is mix it with potatoes first, then squeeze through a ricer to remove all lumps and create a uniformly smooth consistency.*

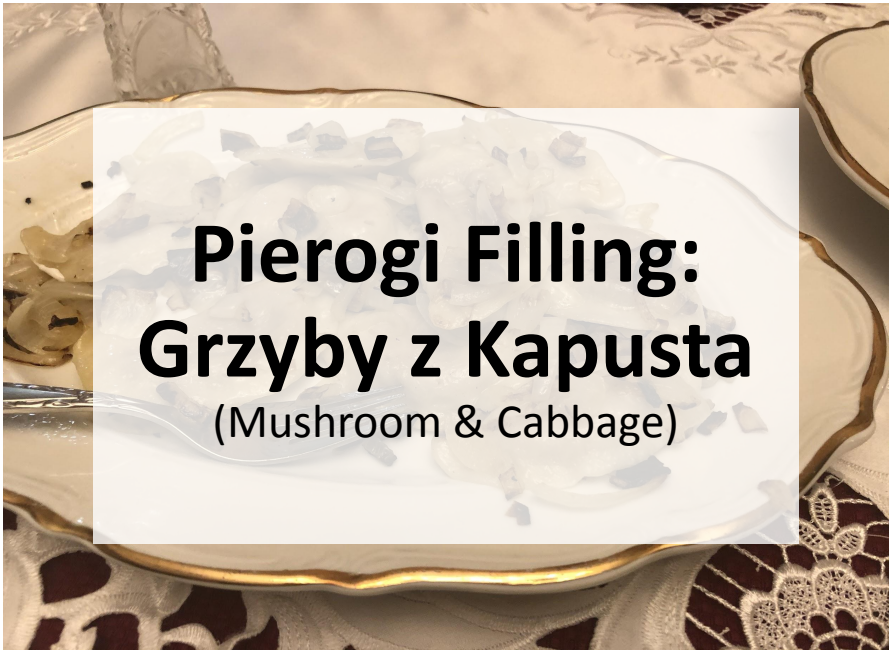
Add softened onions in butter and two heaping tablespoons¹⁶ of sour cream to the potato-cottage cheese mixture.

- *Babcia Iza adds the sour cream, Babcia Hania does not. Babcia Hania adds some parmesan to give the filling added spice.*

Salt and pepper to taste. Don't be afraid to make the filling quite salty – it will be cooked inside a bland dough!

Makes approx. 150 pierogi, depending upon size.

- *Krysia and Alicia*



Pierogi Filling: Grzyby z Kapusta

(Mushroom & Cabbage)

- 227gm (½ lb) white mushrooms, ground raw.
- 40 gm Polish dried mushrooms (more if you wish).
Rinse, soak overnight, bring to boil, simmer about 10 min., grind with other ingredients.
- 1 medium onion,ground.
- 1 lb sweet cabbage, parboiled and squeezed dry.
- ¾ lb sauerkraut, rinsed and squeezed dry.

Cover cabbages with water, cook abt 20 min., drain well. In meat grinder or food processor, grind all ingredients. Put one slice of dried white bread through at the end. Saute all ingredients in sauce pan with 2 TBS oil, 1 TBS butter., stirring often to prevent burning, about 15-20 minutes. Add liquid from Polish mushrooms, stir until absorbed. Season with salt, pepper, cayenne & Maggi. Chill well before forming pierogi using standard dough recipe. Boil 12 min.
Smaczego!!

- Anna / Babcia Hania

- 1 kg cranberries, fresh or frozen (3 x 340g bags)
- 1 litre vodka
- at least 250ml 95% spirytus (up to 500 ml if you like it stronger or if using 76% spirytus)
- 3 cups sugar
- 250 ml water
- 1 tbsp honey



1. Finely chop cranberries using food processor or blender. Place in a large jar (or two). Cover with vodka and close the jar(s). Set aside in a cool dark place for 2 weeks, stirring occasionally.
2. After 2 weeks, strain through a sieve lined with cheesecloth. Squeeze macerated berries with back of spoon to get all the juice.
3. Bring water to a boil. Dissolve sugar and honey in the water. Cool to room temperature.
4. Add sugar syrup and spirytus to the cranberry-vodka juice. Mix well.
5. Store in bottles for at least 1 month to allow flavours to develop.
6. Makes approx. 3x 750 ml bottles.

- *Krysia & Stan*

A healthy treat to refresh
the appetite for dessert!



In a pot, prepare a mixture of **dried fruit**-- pitted prunes, apples, apricots, pineapple, cranberries etc, and a few **lemon wedges**.

Cover with **water** entirely, and let soak for a few hours or overnight.

Bring to boil, simmer about 5 minutes.
Add **sugar** to taste.

Better made a day or so ahead. Stores in fridge for a couple of weeks.

- Anna / Babcia Hania

Baking



Whipped Shortbread

1 lb (454 g) butter, at room temperature
1 c icing sugar
½ c cornstarch
1 tsp vanilla
3 c all-purpose flour
½ c chocolate chips
½ c chopped pecans

Preheat oven to 325 degrees F. Cream butter and icing sugar until very fluffy.

Beat in cornstarch, vanilla, and then flour. Beat until mixture is very light and fluffy. Stir in chocolate. Drop by teaspoonfuls onto a lightly greased baking sheet. Bake 20 to 25 minutes or until golden. Makes 60 cookies.

While it is not a Polish recipe – for quite a few years it has been Dziadzia's favoured cookie. It is very simple to make and gives little ones a great chance to help – using the fork to flatten. That is not in the original recipe but makes nicer cookies. - Anna / Babcia Hania

Christmas Cake



1. Combine raisins, coconut, citron, cherries, almonds. Dredge with flour, pour sweet sherry over them.
2. Cream butter and sugar until light and fluffy.
3. Add eggs, one at a time, beating after each addition.
4. Sift flour, baking powder together and add to butter-egg mixture alternately with crushed pineapple. Add vanilla and almond extracts.
5. Add fruit and nuts and combine well.
6. Pour into two 8" x 8" x 4" pans that have been lined with 2 thicknesses of well-greased brown paper.
7. Bake in 275-degree-F oven for 3 hours.

Makes 8 pounds.

- Anna / Babcia Hania

- 2 pounds bleached sultana raisins
- 1 pound shredded coconut
- ½ pound chopped citron peel
- ½ pound candied cherries, halved
- ½ pound blanched almonds, halved
- 1 cup all purpose flour
- ½ cup Canadian sweet sherry
- 1 cup butter
- 2 cups fruit or berry sugar
- 6 eggs
- 1 ¼ cups all purpose flour
- 2 tsp baking powder
- 1 ¼ cups crushed pineapple (not drained)
- 1 tsp vanilla extract
- 1 tsp almond extract

Grand Marnier Cake



Preheat oven to 300 F. Grease and flour a 10- or 11-inch tube pan (a Bundt pan is not large enough).

In a large mixing bowl, cream together butter, sugar and egg yolks until light and fluffy. Beat in $\frac{3}{4}$ c Grand Marnier, orange extract and orange peel. Dissolve baking soda in 1 tbsp warm water. Add to mixture.

Toss flour with raisins, pecans, and salt. Fold flour mixture into butter/sugar mixture.

Whip egg whites with cream of tartar until stiff, then fold in. Pour mixture into prepared pan and bake for 1 $\frac{1}{4}$ hours.

Cake is done when a toothpick inserted in the centre comes out clean. Turn out while still warm onto a wire rack. Drizzle with remaining Grand Marnier. Cool.

Wrap tightly and let mellow for at least 1 week. This will keep well for at least a month.

Serves 18 to 20.

*Note: 1 cup raisins = 1 lb.

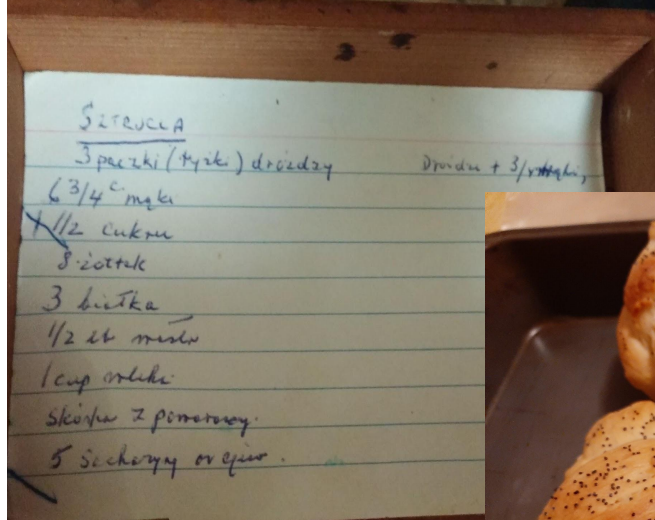
- 1 lb (500 g) butter
- 2 cups sugar
- 6 eggs, separated
- $\frac{1}{4}$ c plus 3 tbsp Grand Marnier
- 1 tsp pure orange extract
- 3 tbsp grated orange peel
- 1 tsp baking soda
- 3 c all-purpose flour
- 1 lb (500 g) golden raisins
- 1 lb (500 g) chopped pecans
- 1 tsp salt²³
- Pinch cream of tartar

*Received this recipe from Wanda Kalinowski
after sampling how great it was!*

- Anna / Babcia Hania.

Strucła

(makes 4 loaves)



Starter:

3 packages dry yeast

$\frac{3}{4}$ c flour

1 c milk

5 packets of saccharine
(e.g. Sweet & Low)

Dough:

8 egg yolks

3 egg whites

$\frac{1}{2}$ c sugar

Zest of 1 orange

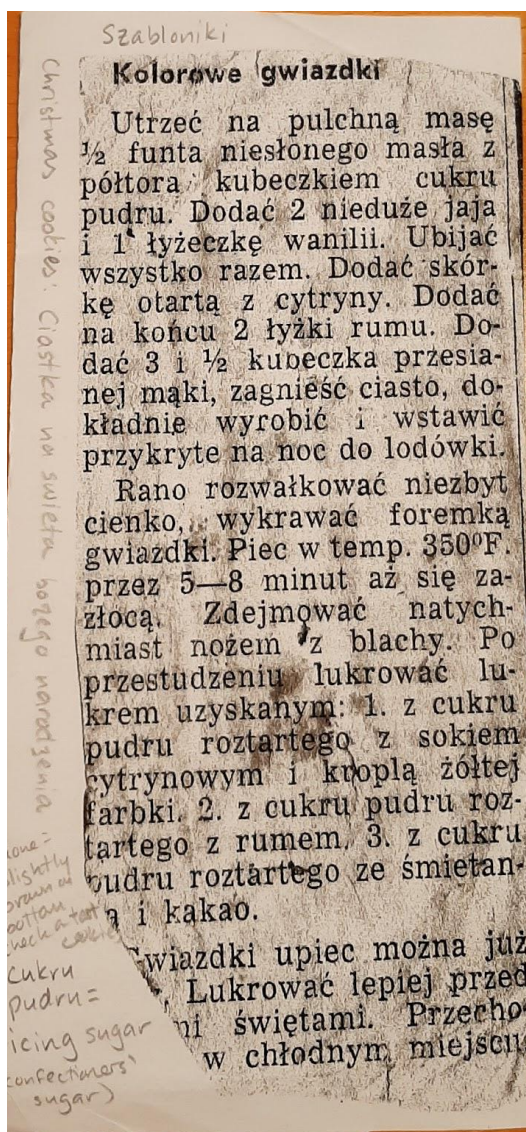
6 c flour, divided

$\frac{1}{2}$ lb butter, softened

1. In a small bowl, combine ingredients for starter. Let stand at room T until bubbly.
2. In the mixing bowl of your stand mixer, use the flat beater to beat together the egg yolks, egg whites, and sugar until pale yellow and thick. Add starter and orange zest, and continue beating.
3. Add flour and butter in three alternating portions, mixing after each one. Use the dough hook when the dough starts to come together.
4. Knead till dough forms a ball and detaches from side of bowl.
5. Let rise till doubled.
6. Divide dough into 4 pieces. Shape each piece into a braid. Place each in a loaf pan lined with parchment, or two can go in a larger pan, with 1 inch of space between.
7. Let rise till almost doubled.
8. Brush with milk and sprinkle with poppyseeds.
9. Bake at 350 F until golden.

- Anna / Babcia Hania

Szabloniki and/or cutout cookies (kolorowe gwiazdki)



Source: Polish newspaper
Translation: Greg

1. Dough

Cream together $\frac{1}{2}$ lb unsalted butter and $1 \frac{1}{2}$ c icing sugar. Add two eggs (not too large) and 1 tsp vanilla. Mix till combined. Add the zest of 1 lemon. Add 2 tblsp rum.*

Add $3 \frac{1}{2}$ c flour in intervals, first beating it in, then kneading carefully. Cover and refrigerate overnight.

Shape the cookies (see next page).

Bake at 350 degrees F for 5-8 min or until golden (very lightly browned). Remove from pan immediately, using a knife**

25

**A decadent alternative: omit lemon zest; substitute Cointreau or Grand Marnier for rum!*

*** if using parchment paper or a nonstick cookie sheet, knife usually not necessary.*

-An & Greg



Szabloniki and/or cutout cookies (kolorowe gwiazdki)

2. Shaping the cookies

Kolorowe gwiazdki

After the cookies cool, decorate with icing.

Icing recipe:

- i. Mix icing sugar, lemon juice and edible gold.
- ii. Mix icing sugar and rum.
- iii. Mix icing sugar with cream and cocoa.

You can bake the cookies well in advance and ice them closer to Christmas. Store in a cool dry place.

Szabloniki

Extrude the dough through cookie press, adding food colouring as desired. Suggested order of colours:

No color: snowmen, reindeer

Red: Candy canes, presents

Green: wreaths, trees, presents

Cocoa powder (Brown): snowman hats, tree trunks, reindeer

To get the last bits of dough out of the cookie press (for easier cleaning later!): extrude some dry bread. The resulting mixture of bread and cookie dough can be shaped into clumps and baked. We use these as “test cookies” to check the doneness of each batch.

- An and Greg

The szabloniki press



Anna writes: *It is actually an ancient hand meat-grinder, purchased by my mother shortly after World War II, I think around 1947. It was one of the few household items she brought when we came to Canada by ship in 1949. She used it until she could afford to buy a larger, also hand operated grinder, and left the little one to use with the cookie making attachment. I used it faithfully when I inherited it- It became a tradition that Greg made them when he came home from grad school for the holidays- it is hard work to turn that handle- and it was only fair that it should be passed on to An & Greg-- as long as we get some when they come visit!*



Serious cookie baking!



1 c butter, softened
1 c white sugar
½ c packed brown sugar
1 egg
1 tsp grated orange zest
2 tblsp orange juice
2 ½ c all-purpose flour
½ tsp baking soda
½ tsp salt
2 c chopped cranberries
½ c chopped walnuts (optional)
½ tsp grated orange zest
3 tblsp orange juice
1 ½ c confectioner's sugar



Cranberry Orange Cookies

1. Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C)
2. In a large bowl, cream together the butter, white sugar, and brown sugar until smooth. Beat in the egg until well blended. Mix in 1 tsp orange zest and 2 tblsp orange juice.
3. Combine the flour, baking soda and salt; stir into the orange mixture. Mix in cranberries, and if using, walnuts, until evenly distributed.
4. Drop dough by rounded tablespoonfuls onto ungreased cookie sheets. Cookies should be spaced at least 2 inches apart.
5. Bake for 12 to 14 minutes in the preheated oven, until the edges are golden. Remove from cookie sheets to cool on wire racks.
6. In a small bowl, mix together ½ tsp orange zest, 3 tblsp orange juice and confectioner's sugar until smooth. Spread over the tops of cooled cookies. Let stand until set.

- Janet

1 cup butter
½ cup icing sugar
2 tsp vanilla
1 1/3 cups flour
¼ tsp salt (optional)
1/3 cup each ground almonds,
pecans & filberts



Nut crescents

1. Preheat oven to 300 F.
2. Cream butter with sugar and vanilla.
3. Add flour, salt, then nuts until well incorporated.
4. Chill the dough at least 3 hours or overnight.
5. Use a teaspoon to “cut” chilled dough from the bowl. With fingers, form into a crescent about the size of two knuckles on a woman’s pinkie finger (!) Do not flatten.
6. Place crescents on parchment-lined cookie sheet. Bake 18-20 minutes.
7. Remove from baking sheet to a rack to cool enough that the cookies are firm and easy to handle.
8. Roll in additional icing sugar mixed with a packet of vanilla sugar. Fully cool on wax-paper lined tray before packing into tins.

- *Krysia (from neighbour Mary Schmidt)*



Chocolate Almond Thins / Almond Triangles

Krysia notes: I have been making these annually since I sourced the recipe in Canadian Living, December 2003 edition. I have always made a double batch, and spread the mixture on 3 x 7 ½ inch circles or 4 x 6 inch circles – rather than the 9 inch circle described in the original. The original recipe is for a single batch.

1 tsp butter
¼ cup granulated
sugar
2 tbsp flour
1 egg white
1 tsp almond extract
(I use generous
spoon!)
¾ cup sliced
almonds, lightly
toasted
4 oz bittersweet
chocolate, chopped
1 tsp shortening

Line baking sheet with parchment paper. Draw a 9-inch circle on paper. Turn paper over. Set aside.

In saucepan, melt butter over medium-low heat. Add sugar, flour, egg white and almond extract. Stir in almonds. Spread evenly over circle(s).

Bake in 325 degree oven until pale golden in centre and darker on edge, about 20 minutes. Let cool on rack for 5 minutes.

Transfer with parchment to cutting board. Using sharp knife (or pizza cutter wheel) cut into wedges. (9 in circles = 16; 7 ½ in. circles = 12; 6 inch circles = 8 wedges each.) Separate wedges. Transfer with parchment back to rack; cool for 30 minutes.

Meanwhile, in bowl over saucepan of hot (not boiling) water - or double boiler, melt shortening and chocolate. Dip/ coat each wedge with chocolate on a diagonal, from mid-point on one long edge to wide base. Place on wax paper-lined tray or cookie sheet. Refrigerate until set, approx. 30 minutes.

Original recipe suggests drizzling melted white chocolate over the dark, or dipping/ coating in white and drizzling with dark. Lots of work, for no additional taste, says our home cook!

To store, layer between wax paper in cookie tin or other airtight container.

3 egg yolks
2 c butter, softened
 $\frac{3}{4}$ c sugar
1 $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp vanilla
2 $\frac{1}{4}$ c flour (all-purpose)
about $\frac{1}{2}$ c jam

Jam Thumbprints

1. Beat butter w/electric mixer (flat beater) on high speed 30 sec. Add sugar. Beat till combined, scraping sides of bowl occasionally.
2. Beat in egg yolks and vanilla till combined.
3. Beat in as much of the flour as you can. Switch to the dough hook to knead in the remaining flour.
4. Cover and chill the dough 1 hour or till easy to handle.
5. Preheat oven to 375 degrees F. Prepare cookie sheet with parchment paper. Shape dough into 1-inch balls, 1 inch apart on cookie sheet.
6. Using thumb, make a dent in each dough ball.
7. Fill the dent with jam.*
8. Bake cookies 10-12 min or until the bottoms of the cookies are light brown.

**Our favourites: Crofter's Morello Cherry Jam (room T) or Farm Boy³² peach jam (cold from fridge). If jam is stiff, consider melting it in the microwave before filling cookies.*

-An & Greg

Recipe modified from Better Homes & Gardens Cookbook

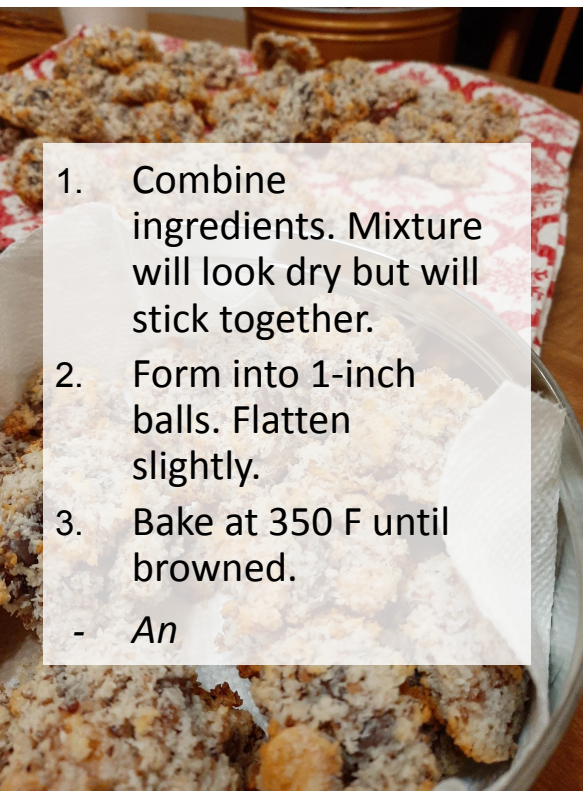
1. Line baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. In medium bowl, combine peanut butter and 1/2 cup butter; beat together until blended. Gradually stir in sugar and vanilla.
3. On cutting board or flat surface, knead peanut butter mixture until smooth.
4. Shape mixture into 54 3/4-inch balls.
5. Arrange balls on baking sheet. Refrigerate 30 minutes.
6. Meanwhile, in 1-quart saucepan, melt chocolate chips and remaining 1/4 cup butter over low heat, stirring occasionally.
7. With two forks, dip balls into chocolate and return to baking sheet.
8. Drizzle leftover chocolate over peanut butter balls.
9. Refrigerate 1 hour or until firm.
10. Store in tightly covered container in refrigerator.

- Janet



Peanut Butter Balls (gluten free)

1 c creamy peanut butter
 3/4 c butter, divided
 2 c confectioners sugar
 1 tsp vanilla
 1 c semisweet chocolate chips



1. Combine ingredients. Mixture will look dry but will stick together.
2. Form into 1-inch balls. Flatten slightly.
3. Bake at 350 F until browned.

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Coconut Pecan Macaroons (gluten free)

- 300 g (about 3 c) unsweetened finely shredded coconut
- 100 g (about 1 c) crushed pecans
- 2 c chocolate chips, butterscotch chips, or dark chocolate chunks
- 1 can (300 mL) sweetened condensed milk

Almond Meringue

3 egg whites
125 g almond flour
210 g icing sugar
30 g (2 tblsp)
granulated sugar

S (gluten
free)



1. In a food processor, pulse the almond flour and icing sugar till well-combined.
 2. **Make meringue:** In a large bowl, using an electric mixer, beat the egg whites on high speed about 1 min till foamy. While still beating, add the granulated sugar 1 spoonful at a time. Continue beating till the mixture is just past the stiff-peak stage (firm, glossy peaks).
 3. Carefully, in 3 additions, **fold the almond mixture into the egg whites**, rotating the bowl and scraping down the sides of the bowl as you fold. The final mixture should be homogenous, flowing off the spatula in a ribbon that doesn't immediately dissolve back into the mixture.
 4. Line baking sheet with parchment paper.
 5. **Drop batter in teaspoonfuls** onto sheet.
 6. Tap the baking sheet on the counter to remove large air bubbles.
 7. Let the cookies rest 30-45 mins. Meanwhile preheat the oven to 300 degrees F.
 8. **Bake** 12-14 mins or until the sides are firm when lightly tapped.
- *These are rustic versions of French macarons, omitting the filling & steps that are only for looks (e.g. sifting the flour, piping shapes).*
 - *Variations: in step 1, add 1-2 tblsp dehydrated citrus zest, finely chopped (pictured) or substitute shredded coconut for some or all of the almond flour; in step 2, substitute maple sugar for granulated sugar.*
 - *Make these on a dry day and store in an airtight container separately from other cookies. Humidity makes them chewy but they can be rehabilitated in a warm oven.*
 - *Surprisingly un-fussy to send by mail. Cushion in wax paper and include a teabag full of white rice in the airtight container.*

Candied Ginger

(gluten free)

1 ¼ lb ginger root
about 2 c maple syrup
(or 2 c granulated
sugar + 2 c water)
1-2 c granulated sugar
for coating & storage

1. Peel and thinly slice the ginger.
2. Place the ginger in a small saucepan, cover with water, and simmer till tender, about 30-40 mins.
3. Drain, reserving the liquid for another use*
4. Repeat steps 2 & 3 for a milder-tasting candy.
5. Cover the drained ginger pieces with maple syrup (or sugar & water). Simmer until the liquid has nearly boiled away, about 1½ to 2 hours.
6. Meanwhile, line two rimmed baking sheets with parchment paper.
7. Drain well, reserving the syrup for another use**
8. Toss the pieces of ginger in granulated sugar to add sparkle & soak up excess liquid.
9. Arrange on baking sheets and let dry for 24-48 hours or until completely dry to the touch.
10. Store in a jar with a generous amount of granulated sugar to absorb any remaining moisture. A teabag filled with white rice also helps keep them dry for extended storage or mailing.

35

**Step 3 also yields strong ginger tea. Store this in a jar in fridge. Add this as-is to soups; dilute with hot water for tea; add soda water for ginger ale.*

***Step 7 also yields sweet ginger syrup. Store at room T. Use in marinades or desserts, or for ginger ale.*

- An & Greg,
modified from *The Joy of Cooking*



Making the dough



Leftover dough rolled thinly may become noodles (*kluski*)or art!



The production line



Boiling



Coating the finished pierogi in butter

Burst pierogi, while slowing down productivity, may be used to feed the hard-working people on the production line.

Pierogi masters in training



Annex: Recipes for the Christmas season

While the Wigilia menu is meatless, other occasions during the Christmas season offer the opportunity to enjoy a wider variety of dishes.

Meat Filling

1 cup cooked chicken, cubed or in pieces
1 cup cooked ham, cubed or in pieces
About 700 grams fresh mushrooms – white or cremini – quartered or sliced
1 cup coarsely chopped onion
¼ to ½ cup reconstituted dry European mushrooms (boiled, cooled and strained)
½ cup sauerkraut, steamed 3 min to soften (optional)

Best with a cup of Barszcz!



Paszteciki

Dough:

Starter: ¼ cup warm milk

1 tbsp sugar

1 tbsp flour

25 grams active (wet) yeast

Mix the milk, sugar and flour.

Crumble yeast on top.

Set aside for 15 minutes.

In large bowl place remaining ingredients:

3 cups flour

¾ cup milk (warm)

¼ cup vegetable oil

1 tsp salt

1 egg, beaten with a fork

Add starter, and knead into a ball. You'll know it's ready when the dough comes away from the sides of the bowl and is soft with no lumps remaining. Let rise for 1 hour, covered with a tea towel.

Filling:

Sautee the onion in a tsp of butter until softened.

Fry the fresh mushrooms to remove liquid.

Put everything through a meat grinder on fine setting. Use 2 slices of dry bread or toast to clear the machine. Don't worry if the mushrooms and onions generate liquid when put through the grinder – let it moisten the filling – excess moisture will evaporate during the next step.

Melt about ¼ cup butter on a large frying pan. Add ground ingredients. Sautee on medium heat until cooked through and "dry". Add ¼ cup sour cream and incorporate into filling. Season to taste with salt, pepper, Maggi, garlic powder if desired. Remove to a bowl and cool to room temperature.

Assembly:

On a floured surface, roll out $\frac{1}{4}$ of the dough to a thickness between $\frac{1}{8}$ and $\frac{1}{4}$ inch – depending on how much dough you like relative to filling. Cut into rectangles approx. 2 x 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches for small, or larger if you prefer. Working with 1 piece at a time, place generous amount of filling in the center. Fold opposing long sides toward the middle and crimp to seal. Fold the crimped edge over so that it lies flat. Stretch each of the 2 remaining ends and crimp to close. Fold to underside (where the long crimped edge was folded.) As they are made, place the paszteciki on a parchment-paper lined cookie sheet, leaving 1 inch between them.

Baking:

Heat oven to 350 degrees F. Beat 1 egg with a tbsp of water. Using a pastry brush, apply egg wash. Bake until golden in colour and feel light when picked up. Depending on the size of your paszteciki and thickness of the dough, this will take approx. 12 – 16 minutes. Remove to a cooling rack. Once fully cooled, can be stored in an airtight container in fridge for up to 4 days, or frozen for up to 3 months. (Freeze the paszteciki individually, set out on a tray or cookie sheet, and once frozen, place in a freezer bag or container.)

To serve, reheat in oven (preferred) or microwave.