

**Grandma Katie's
German-Russian Recipes**
By Sylvia Long



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Introduction

Katie Switzer Long, my husband's grandmother, was a charming lady. I met her Christmas of 1979 when my husband took me home to meet his family. She was barely taller than the back of a chair and sparkled with enthusiasm and humor when she talked.

She told me about her ancestors who immigrated from the German state of Hesse to Russia in the 1760s. They lived in the Black Sea area for generations, farming the wide, fertile prairies in secluded settlements.

Political persecution came for the immigrant families in the 1800s, so the family moved back to Germany. Political unrest and famine came a few years later and the Switzer family immigrated once again; this time to the United States.

Katie was born soon after the Switzer family landed in New York. They made their way by covered wagon to North Dakota, then to Nebraska, and finally to Colorado.

She passed her family's recipes on to her children and grandchildren. Some of these are traditional German farmer's recipes and some were influenced by her ancestor's time in Russia.

Grandma Katie shared these with me over the years. We make them with our children and grandchildren as we pass on her stories.

It is my pleasure to share Katie's recipes with you!

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Mount Vernon, Missouri

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Baroke

This main-dish meal is a family favorite. It can be found in many communities of German-Russia heritage. You may find this dish called Beirocks, Bierochs, Runza, or Pierogi.

There are variations, but the basic recipe includes fried cabbage, onions, and hamburger wrapped in homemade yeast bread. Grandma Katie added mashed-potatoes to her bread dough and sausage to the meat mixture.

Makes 12 Baroke

Time:

Dough: 2-3 hours

Filling: 1 hour

Baking: 15-20 minutes.

Ingredients

Filling

1 pound of hamburger

1 pound of sausage

1 onion

1 head of cabbage

1 T. of garlic powder

1 T. of salt

Potato-Yeast Dough

12 cups white flour (or as much as needed)

5 cups warm water (110 degrees F / 45 degrees C)

3 (.25 ounce) packages active dry yeast

2 cups of prepared instant mashed potatoes

¼ cup granulated sugar

¼ cup of vegetable cooking oil

4 T. of melted butter to brush on top of the baroke

Directions for the Filling

1. Fry the hamburger and sausage together in a large skillet until it is browned.
2. Strain the meat and set it aside.
3. Chop the onion and the cabbage. Put the cabbage, onion, sausage, garlic powder and cooked meat together into a large pot with a heavy bottom.
4. Cook the mixture on medium heat, stirring until the cabbage and onion are steamed through with the meat.
5. Season it to taste.

Directions for the Dough

1. Mix warm water, yeast, and 1 teaspoon sugar in a large mixing bowl. Add 7 cups of white bread flour and stir to combine. Cover with a dishtowel and let set for 30 minutes, or until the yeast starter has proofed (is foaming).
2. Mix in oil, salt, cooled mashed potatoes and remaining sugar. Stir in small amounts of flour until you cannot add more (should be about 2-4 cups). The dough should hold together and be easily handled.
3. Sprinkle flour on a flat surface and begin kneading the bread. Sprinkle flour on the bread as you turn and knead it, until it begins to pull away from the flat surface. It is ready when the bread is elastic but not sticky. This process may take an additional 1-2 cups of flour.
4. Grease the bowl and turn your dough into it. Cover it with a dishtowel and let rise in a warm place until it has doubled (30 minutes to one hour).
5. Punch the dough down and divide it into thirds. Roll it out until it is $\frac{1}{4}$ " thick. Cut the dough into 6-8" squares for the filling. Continue to roll out the dough

until you have 12 squares of dough.

Directions for Assembling and Baking

1. Lay out two baking sheets. Spray them with cooking spray.
2. Spoon 1/3 cup of filling into the middle of each square of dough.
3. Take opposite corners of dough and pinch them together. Pinch the remaining edges together, making a 'dough package'.
4. Place the 'dough package' edges side down on the baking sheet.
5. Brush the tops of the baroke with melted butter.
6. Bake at 350 degrees F (175 degrees C) for 15-20 minutes. Serve hot.

Notes: Leftover filling is great eaten alone. Cool any leftover baroke on wire racks before storing them so the bottoms don't get soggy. Baroke freeze and reheat beautifully.

Potato Dumpling Soup

Potato dumpling soup was a staple at Grandma Katie's in the winter. The soup is inexpensive to make so many families had it for dinner during hard times. It's a favorite comfort food on cold nights.

Makes 10 servings

Time: 1 hour

Ingredients

4-6 medium potatoes, peeled and cubed into 3-inch pieces
4 large eggs, slightly beaten
1 large onion cut into small pieces
2 cups all-purpose flour
2 cups of milk
3-5 T. of butter
3 - 4 t. of dried parsley
1/2 t. of pepper
Salt to taste

Directions

1. Rinse, peel, and cube the potatoes.
2. Chop the onion and sauté it in butter, slowly on low heat.
3. Fill the pot 2/3rds full of hot water and set it to boil.
4. When the water boils carefully pour the potatoes into the water and set the timer for 8 minutes.
5. Put the flour in a large mixing bowl and make a well in the middle of the flour .
6. Crack one egg at a time into the middle of the flour, beating each in before adding another.

7. When all the eggs are added the flour should be incorporated, and the dough should not be sticky. If it's sticky sprinkle a little flour into the dough, rolling carefully, until the stickiness disappears.
8. Boil the potatoes for 8 minutes, then start dropping spoon size balls of the noodle dough into the boiling water.
9. Cook until all of the noodles are floating, then add the milk and butter. Stir and serve the soup hot.

Notes: If you feel the soup is thin, you can thicken it. Take 2 cups of the soup broth and put it into a large serving bowl. Slowly stir in instant mashed potato flakes until the broth is very thick but still liquid. Whisk the thickened broth back into the hot soup. Potato Dumpling soup is good served hot with a pat of butter on top.

Varenyck

Varenyck is homemade noodle dumpling that is filled with fruit, cream cheese, or vegetables (usually potatoes) then boiled. These are also called *vareniki*. We usually fill them with the fruit filling you put in pies.

The first time I experienced these, Grandma Katie and my husband's mom were making them for dinner. I was delighted this family had dessert for dinner!

Makes 6 pastries

Time: about 1 hour

Ingredients

1 stick of butter

1 teaspoon of salt

2 cans of premium pie filling (Cherry, Apple, Blueberry, and Strawberry Rhubarb are our favorites!)

2 cups of flour

3-4 medium eggs

Directions

Creating the dough

1. Pour pie filling into a strainer and let the excess liquid drain as you are assembling the noodle dough.
2. Mix flour and salt in a mixing bowl.
3. Make a well in the middle of the flour.
4. Crack the eggs, one at a time into the well, mixing each with a fork before cracking the next one.
5. When all of the eggs are incorporated, roll it until you have a ball of noodle dough that is elastic, but not sticky. If it is, sprinkle flour over it, incorporating it, until the stickiness is gone.

Rolling out the dough and forming the varenyck

1. Roll the dough out about 1/4th inch thick. Cut the dough into six-inch squares.
2. Spoon the drained fruit into the middle of each square (1/3 cup per square).
3. Pinch the corners of the dough together, then pinch the remaining sides, sealing all of the edges tightly.

Cooking the Varenyck

1. Set the oven to the lowest setting to warm it.
2. Carefully slide the varenyck, one at a time, into the boiling water. Cook for 8-10 minutes.
3. Take the finished varenyck out with a slotted spoon and set them in a covered bowl in the warm oven until all the varenyck are done.
4. Melt the stick of butter and pour it into a bowl.
5. Serve the varenyck with warm melted butter poured on them.

Notes: These make fabulous leftovers, warmed in the microwave or a skillet.

Grebbeel

Grebbeel or German Doughnuts are like raised doughnuts sprinkled with powdered sugar. Grebbeel was often made for birthdays and other special occasions.

Time:

3 hours in the refrigerator

45 minutes assembly and frying

Ingredients

3 eggs beat well

3 cups of flour

1 cup of whipping cream

½ cup buttermilk

2 T. of sugar

1 t. of salt

1 t. of baking powder

½ t. of baking soda

Directions

1. Add cream to beaten eggs and mix well.
2. Add the rest of the ingredients, one at a time, stirring well between each addition.
3. Chill covered in a refrigerator for 3 hours.
4. At the end of 3 hours, take the dough out and let it warm up for 20 minutes.
5. Heat cooking oil to 360-370 degrees.
6. When the dough is warm, roll it ½ inch thick.
7. Cut the dough into 3 x 5-inch pieces and cut two small slits in each piece.
8. Pull one corner through the opposite slit in each piece and twist it.
9. Fry the grebbeel in hot oil until they are light brown. Use tongs to carefully pull them out of the hot oil.

10. Drain them on paper towels and sprinkle them with powdered sugar before serving.

Cover Page Graphic Credit

1. Pattke, Jens. “Flag of the Territorial Association of the Russian Germans”. Flags of the World Website, Loeser, Pete, 26 June 2020, www.fotw.info/flags/de%7Dlm_ru.html. 6 April 2021.