

COOK ROMA STYLE!

INTRODUCTION

We are six university students from Hungary who are not just Hungarian but Roma people as well. We were thinking about how we could introduce our Roma culture in different settlements and countries. We all come from different places but we all have the same goal, besides graduating, to put an end to hatred, which has been formed because of stereotypes. We want to show and also prove to others who we actually are.

As a first step, we believe that this cookbook is a way to achieve our goal. We have learned from our parents and grandparents that we could influence men through their stomach and also that the biggest decisions in life were made on a great lunch or next to a fantastic dinner. Both lessons revolve around cooking.

The Roma or gypsies' situation is a serious problem nowadays in Hungary. Many people don't know our culture or where we come from, not to mention the fact that we are actually colorful characters. According to history Roma people come from India. The Roma culture is rich with its own language, music, traditions, and of course, cuisine. As students of the Jesuit Roma Szakkollégium (dormitory), we have been provided an opportunity to learn more about ourselves and our culture. We are surrounded in a community that fosters a healthy self-image and helps form out the "double identity" that many Hungarian-Roma students deal with here.

We would like to thank Andrew Gatti for the possibility to establish and edit this cookbook. We have tried to convey all of the practices and skills that we have learned from our relatives and also from that specific prowess, which is the Roma people's possession. Enjoy cooking, eating, and discovering the Roma culture. Jó élvágyat!

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VAKARÓ (ROMA FLAT BREAD)

This is a type of flat bread that is burnt on the outside. It can be made with fat but it is not necessary. It is often called the poor man's bread because of the simple and cheap ingredients used.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 kg of flour
- 1 tspn of baking soda
- 1 tspn of salt
- Water

PREPARATION

First, preheat the oven to high heat. Mix the flour, salt, and baking soda in a large bowl. Next gradually add enough water so the dough becomes soft and sticky. Mix it until the dough is soft enough to roll with a pin. Put oil or butter on the baking sheet then sprinkle flour on top. Place the dough flatly onto the baking sheet and into the oven on low heat for 45-60 minutes. Take out the bread when it appears brown on the outside and set aside. Next, soak two kitchen towels in water and ring them out until they are only slightly damp. Wrap them completely over the bread and cover them with another dry towel for at least thirty minutes. Lastly, unwrap the bread and enjoy with fat spread over the top.



TÖKFŐZELÉK (PUMPKIN POTTAGE)

This is a traditional pottage with pumpkin best served on a cold winter day. This vegetarian dish is easy to prepare but still delicious. It has been made by many mothers and grandmothers alike for children of all ages.

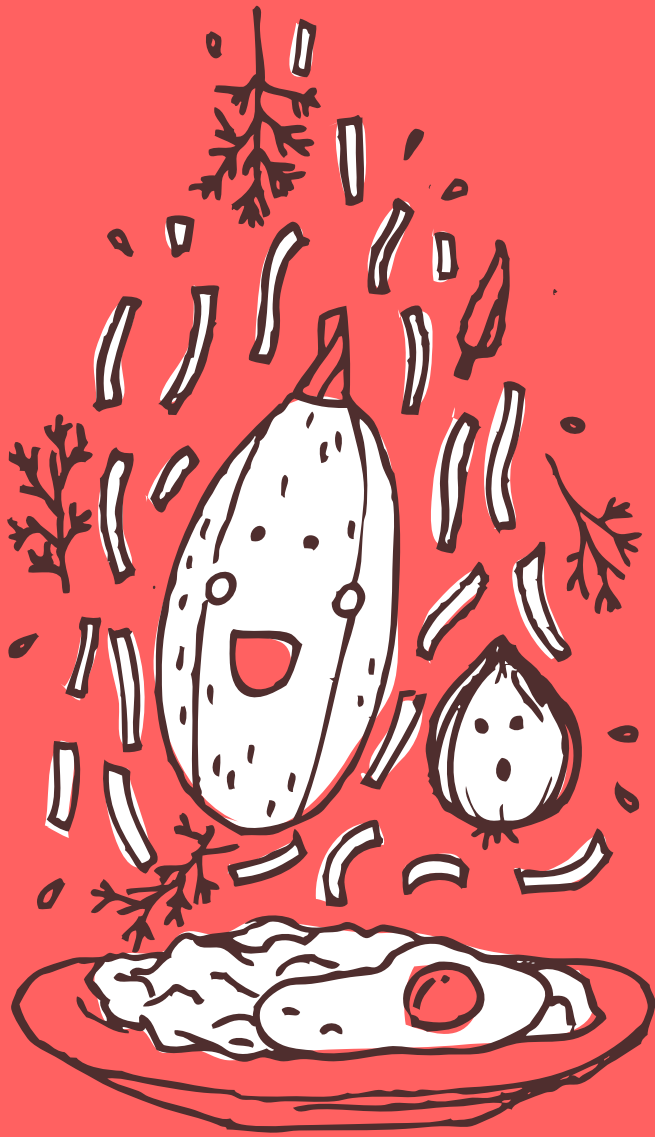
INGREDIENTS

- 1 white pumpkin (1.5kg)
- 1 onion
- 1 large bunch of dill
- 1 tbsp of cooking oil
- 4 tbsp of flour
- 2 dl milk
- 1 cup of sour cream
- vegetable seasonings (to taste)

PREPARATION

First, wash and peel the pumpkin, cut it in half, scrap the seeds and grate the flesh. Then clean the onion and cut it into very small pieces. Wash the dill and chop it into very small pieces. Heat up a small amount of oil in a large pot and add the onion. Once the onion becomes translucent add a small amount of water along with half of the dill and steam for 5 minutes on medium heat. Next, add the pumpkin, seasonings and a cup of water. Steam them for an additional 20 minutes on medium heat with a cover on.

In a small bowl, mix the flour, milk, and sour cream carefully. Add them to the frying pan making sure to stir everything thoroughly. Finally, add the remaining dill and steam it for 10 minutes on low heat with the cover on. Enjoy as is or serve with your choice of meat.



CIGÁNY TYÚKHÚSLEVES (CHICKEN SOUP)

This recipe for a filling chicken soup is often served at weddings. It is not only full of rich ingredients but also hearty nutrients.

INGREDIENTS

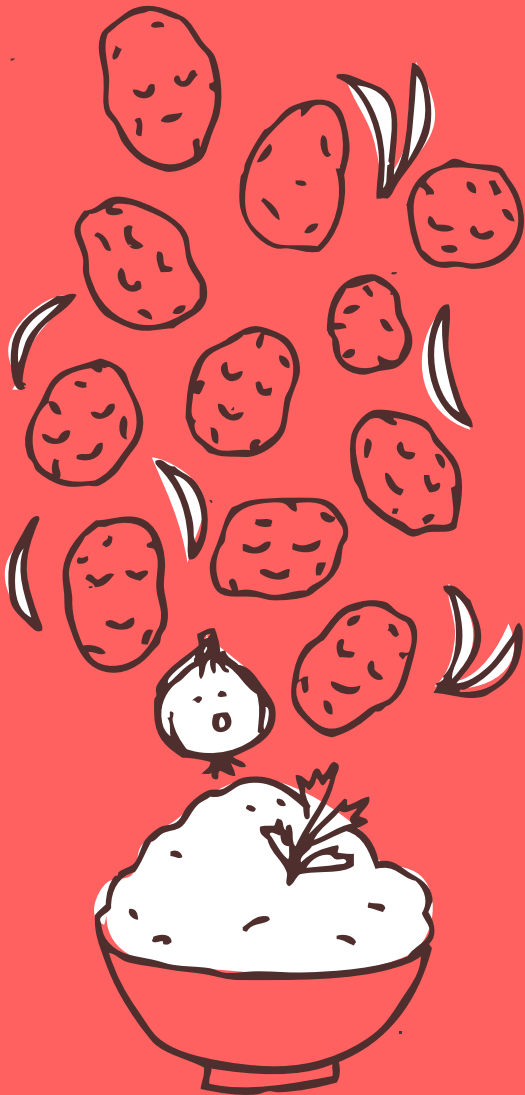
- 1 whole chicken
- 2 liters water
- 5 carrots
- 1 onion
- 1 yellow pepper
- 1 small bunch of Parsley
- 2 white carrots
- ½ celery root
- 1 tspn of salt
- 1 tbsp of vegetable seasoning
- 1 bouillon cube
- 1 package of egg noodles

PREPARATION

First, wash and peel all the vegetables, and cut the chicken into small pieces. Next put 2 liters of water into a large pot, add the meat, and cook on low heat for half an hour with the cover on. After half an hour, add the vegetables, all the spices and the bouillon cube. Cook until everything becomes soft, this could take up to 30 minutes. If necessary you can skim off the extra foam from the soup and discard it. Make sure to test the vegetables, especially the carrots. Once they are soft the soup is done.

Next drain the soup and put the meat and vegetables in a separate plate. Finally, cook the pasta in a separate pot, drain and add to the soup before serving.





GANCA (MASHED POTATOES)

This Roma recipe is often served as a side dish, which can be enjoyed with or without meat. A typical Hungarian dish of mashed potatoes uses much heavier ingredients, such as cream or butter. However, the Roma Ganca dish is simple and cheap. It is made with few ingredients for a cost effective, yet delicious dish.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 kg of potatoes
- 20-25 dkg of flour
- 1 large onion

PREPARATION

First wash, peel, and cut the potatoes into small cubes and boil them on medium heat in a large pot. Once the potatoes become soft to the touch (you can use a fork to test them) drain a third of the water and crush them in pot with a potato masher, make sure to leave to water in. Next, gradually add the flour and mix well. Once the potatoes look uniform, add 2 cups of water and boil again for 5-10 minutes. While the potatoes are cooking, cut the onion and fry it with vegetable oil in a large frying pan until they are translucent and soft. Finally, add the fried onion to the potatoes and serve. This dish is especially delicious when served with bacon.

SÁRGATÚRÓ (YELLOW SWEET COTTAGE CHEESE)

This is a traditional dish usually enjoyed for the Easter holiday. It is a sweet dish that is served during breakfast or dinner. It is often served with boiled ham or boiled eggs. Depending on who you ask it can contain raisins.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 liter of milk
- 5-7 tbsp of sugar
- 10 eggs
- 1 packet of vanilla sugar
- 1 cheese cloth

PREPARATION

Pour 1 liter of milk into a large pot and boil over medium heat, making sure that you stir frequently. While the milk is boiling beat the 10 eggs in a large bowl. Next, add the sugar and vanilla sugar to the eggs and mix thoroughly. Once the milk starts to boil, turn down the heat and slowly start adding the egg mixture. It is important that you add the eggs slowly and stir well. After the mixture has been stirred thoroughly, turn the heat back to medium. Continue stirring until the mixture begins to look like cottage cheese. Once this happens, pour the cheesy mixture through a cheese cloth and tie the cloth tightly into a ball. Allow this ball to cool over a bowl and the additional whey to drip into it. This dripping process can take as long as 2 or 3 hours so be prepared to wait. Once the ball is somewhat dry, cut the cheese cloth and serve by cutting slices off.



TÖLTÖTT KÁPOSZTA (STUFFED CABBAGE)

This is a hearty meal that is both nutritious and delicious! It has been a favorite in the Roma and Hungarian kitchen alike. This dish is best served as a main course. It is often cooked on special occasions such as Christmas as this recipe is intended to serve a large group of people.

INGREDIENTS

- ½ kg ground beef meat
- ½ kg ground pork (your choice of cut)
- 1 kg pork side
- 2 onions
- 4 cloves of garlic
- 1 liter of tomato juice
- 2 medium heads of cabbage (about 2.5 kg)
- 20 kg smoked ham or bacon
- 2-3 tbsp cooking oil
- ½ kg sauerkraut
- Spices to taste (vegetable seasoning, salt, pepper, crushed red pepper)

PREPARATION

First, add the ground beef and ground pork to a bowl along with the vegetable seasoning, salt, pepper, minced garlic and a little crushed red pepper and mix them thoroughly by hand. Set the bowl aside and begin dicing the onion and the bacon. Wash 8-10 cabbage leaves and set aside for later. Next, pour enough oil into a frying pan to coat the bottom and add the onion and the bacon and fry on medium heat for a few minutes. This is just a quick step to soften the onion and bacon, don't worry about completely cooking them. Next, separate the bacon into a small bowl and save for later.

Now take your bowl of meat and add about 1 dl water, 1dl tomato juice and the fried onion and stir everything together. In a larger saucepan you should boil water and add the cabbage leaves to cook for 5-10 minutes until they become very soft. Remove them from the water and after cooling off the leaves, one by one fill them with the meat and onion stuffing and roll it up sealing them by pushing back their ends. Pour off the water from the cabbage pot and fill the bottom of the same pot with chopped raw cabbage to form a "cabbage bed". Next, add the pieces of chopped pork sides, bacon, sauerkraut, and the stuffed cabbages to the cabbage bed. Continue to layer the meat, sauerkraut, and stuffed cabbages. Finally, add 0.5L water and 0.5 L tomato juice then slowly, on low heat, cook under a cover for at least an hour. Check the pot periodically to make sure there is enough water so the bottom does not burn. Before you serve, take care to remove the cover and allow the excess water to cook off on low heat. Serve with Gypsy bread (Vakaro).





LECSÓ (RATATOUILLE)

This is a simple, traditional Roma and Hungarian dish similar to pörkölt without meat. However, if you want to try the true Roma version of Lecso, enjoy this dish with a little smoked, fried bacon and Vakaro.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 onion
- 1 kg of tomatoes
- 1.5 kg of peppers (preferably yellow)
- A pinch of salt
- A pinch of pepper
- A pinch of vegetable seasoning
- Water

PREPARATION

First, clean and cut all the vegetables. Slice the tomatoes into small pieces and the peppers into strips. Next, dice the onion. In a large frying pan, heat a small amount of oil. Add the sliced onion to the frying pan and cook on medium heat for 2-3 minutes or until the onion becomes translucent. Then put the sliced peppers into the pan and cover to allow the vegetables to steam until the peppers are soft. This may take about 15 minutes depending on the freshness of the vegetables. Next add the tomatoes with a cup of water and some salt, then steam them for another 15 minutes. Serve hot with some bread or, preferably, Vakaro.

PACAL (TRIPLE STEW)

Pacal is a stew made with tripe, the stomach lining of a cow. This is a time consuming recipe, with many steps involved. However, it has also stood the test of time as a traditional dish of the Roma and Hungarian people.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 kg cleaned tripe
- 1 onion
- 2 cloves of garlic
- 1 tomato
- 1 green pepper
- 5-10 potatoes (depending on the size)
- 5 tbsp oil
- 1 tbsp red pepper flakes
- 1 pinch of cumin
- 1 tspn marjoram

PREPARATION

First, wash the tripe several times thoroughly. Then put it into a large pot and add just enough cold water to completely cover the tripe. Cook the tripe on medium heat, and as soon as the water starts boiling, drain it and wash again with cold water. Cook it again in salted water for 3-4 hours or until the tripe becomes completely white and soft. While the tripe is cooking clean the onion, garlic, tomato, and pepper. Cut them all into small pieces.

Next, drain the tripe and slice it into long strips the size of a pinky finger. Now, put some oil in a frying pan and fry the onion for 2 or 3 minutes. Add the red pepper next, mix it and add 1 dl water. Then add the tripe, garlic, a pinch of salt and pepper, cumin and marjoram. Cook it for half an hour on low heat with the cover on.

In another pot put 1 liter of salted water, boil it and cook the peeled potatoes until soft on medium heat. Serve the Pacal with the boiled potatoes.



KAKAS PÖRKÖLT TÚRÓS CSUSZÁVAL (ROOSTER STEW WITH COTTAGE CHEESE)

This is a type of Roma stew made with the meat of a rooster. It is served with a variety of side dishes such as rice or potatoes. Here we included a traditional Roma and Hungarian side dish, pasta with túró, a type of Hungarian cottage cheese.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 rooster (breast or thighs will suffice)
- 1 onion
- 2 cloves of garlic
- 2 yellow peppers
- 2 tomatoes
- 500 gr túró (cottage cheese)
- 2 large cups of sour cream
- 1 tbsp red pepper
- salt, pepper, cumin, oil (to taste)

PREPARATION

First, to prepare the pörkölt, wash the meat, peppers and tomatoes. Peel the garlic and onion and cut them all into small pieces. Put a small amount of oil into a frying pan and fry the onion and the red pepper for 1 or 2 minutes. Next add 2.5 dl of water and then add the diced meat, place a cover over the frying pan and cook until it is soft. Then add the tomatoes, garlic, a dash of pepper, salt, and cumin. Mix them and cook for an hour on very low heat, with the cover on. In another pot, bring 1 liter of salted water to boil and add 1 teaspoon of oil and 1 bag of pasta. Cook and drain the pasta and place it in a separate bowl. Mix the cottage cheese and the sour cream together in a small bowl and add a pinch of

salt. Next, add the cottage cheese mixture to the pasta and mix well. Finally, serve the pasta and pörkölt on a plate and enjoy.





CIGÁNY TEA (ROMA STYLE TEA)

A basic tea made with simple and cheap ingredients. This tea was popular in the ancient Roma times, especially because of its easy preparation and use of limited number of ingredients.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 liter of water
- Sugar (prepare to taste)

PREPARATION

First pour as much or as little sugar as you wish to the bottom of a large pot. Cook the dry sugar over a medium flame until it has caramelized to a dark brown/black color. Add water and enjoy this cheap but basic tea.

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