

Another important point is that at the end you add the melted shortening with the paprika. This will give the color of the soup that homemakers always admire in restaurants.

BEEF GOULASH SOUP WITH PINCHED PASTA (CSIPETKE)

8 servings

For the soup:

2 pounds cubed boneless beef chuck or similar cut
2 cups finely minced onion
6 tablespoons lard or bacon drippings
1 quart 3/4- to 1-inch potato cubes
1 small carrot, sliced
1 bell pepper, cut in pieces
1 large ripe tomato, peeled and chopped, or
4 tablespoons canned tomato puree or
2 tablespoons canned tomato paste
1/4 cup flour

2 tablespoons salt
1/2 teaspoon garlic salt or 1 small pinch
garlic powder
1 teaspoon caraway seeds
1 small bunch green parsley
1 whole bay leaf

For the Csipetke:

1 small egg
1 cup flour
1 pinch salt plus additional flour, if necessary

1. Mix the 1/4 cup of flour with 1 tablespoon of the Hungarian paprika, 2 tablespoons of salt, the black pepper, garlic salt or powder, and the caraway seeds.

2. Tie the parsley and bay leaf securely together.

3. Saute the onions over medium heat in a heavy skillet in 4 tablespoons of the lard or bacon drippings. When they become glossy, pour in a cup of water and add the carrot and bell pepper. Cover and simmer over low heat for 15 to 20 minutes.

4. Spread out the meat on a cookie sheet and sprinkle half of the spice-flour mixture over it. Turn over the pieces of meat and coat them evenly.

5. Increase the heat to high. Lift the lid and let the water evaporate, so that the onions start to fry.

6. Quickly add the meat to the onions, one-fourth at a time. Keep turning the meat with a spatula after each addition, waiting until the red color leaves before adding more meat.

7. When all the meat is added, decrease the heat to low. Cover the pot tightly and let it simmer for 5 minutes. Add 1 2 cup of water and scrape the bottom of the pan. Cover again and let simmer for 45 minutes to 1 hour, stirring once in a while.

8. From the remaining flour and spice, make a slurry by adding a little water. Be sure that it is completely smooth and without lumps. Keep it at room temperature.

9. Pour 2 quarts of water over the meat and increase the heat to medium. Add the fresh or canned tomato, parsley, and bay leaf. Once the liquid comes to a boil, stir in the slurry, pouring it in a slow even stream.

10. Cover and again bring the mixture to a boil. Add the potatoes and simmer over low heat until the meat is tender and the potatoes are cooked.

11. Just before serving, remove the parsley and, in a small saucepan, warm up the remaining 2 tablespoons of lard or bacon drippings. Add the remaining 1 tablespoon paprika and stir constantly until it warms and turns a vivid red. Put this in the soup.

12. To prepare the pinched pasta, mix the egg, pinch of salt and flour in a small bowl with your hands. When the ingredients are thoroughly mixed, remove from the bowl and knead on a pastry board until the dough becomes somewhat shiny and elastic from the constant pressure you apply with the lower part of your palm, turning the dough all the time with a circular motion until it turns into a firm ball. Cover a tray with a paper or kitchen towel, and holding the dough in one hand, with the other hand pinch with the tip of the thumb and index finger pieces of dough the size of a raisin. Perhaps you will need some extra flour to dip your fingertips in while you are doing this. Put the pinched dough pieces far enough apart on the towel so that they don't touch. Let them dry until their surface is somewhat rigid.

13. When the dough is ready, bring to a boil 1 quart of water with 1 teaspoon of salt in 2- or 3-quart pot. When it gets to a boil, add all the dough, a small handful at a time, and keep stirring with a wooden cooking spoon after each addition. Decrease the heat and cook the dumplings, covering about two-thirds of the pot with a lid. Depending on the pot, and the size you pinched the dough, it will take 4-5 minutes to cook the dumplings. They will all rise to the top of the water. Stir, and rinse in a sieve with cold water, discarding cooking liquid.

About ten minutes before serving, add to the soup, heat it through, and serve.