

Raisin Bread (Vianočka)

1 pack of yeast
8 cups flour
two handfuls sugar
water
1tbsp baking powder
oil
raisins



This sweet raisin bread is prepared for both Easter and Christmas. In fact, its name comes from *Vianoce*, the Slovak word for Christmas.

Start by preparing leavened dough from all the ingredients except the raisins. Dissolve in water and stir until you get a smooth dough that doesn't stick to the wooden spoon. Work in enough water so the dough is like honey. Let rise covered for few hours. Then scoop the dough onto a floured board. Dust top with flour and gently roll out. Brush top with oil and fold over. Repeat this rolling, brushing, and folding two more times.



Cut the dough into three pieces. Each will be used to make a loaf. Or you can use the other ones to make other Slovak treats like the poppy seed roll, cheese cake, or fruit-filled dumplings. Knead in raisins, and roll out to a rectangle about one inch thick. Cut into into 6 strips. Take 4 of these and join them at one end. Braid them until you run out of dough. Then twist the remaining two strips and place on top. Bake in a an oven preheated to 375F until nicely brown.



Slovak Traditions

Despite its small size, Slovakia is full of wonderful traditions and tasty foods. These two often go hand-in-hand. And Christmas and Easter top the list of holidays famous for delicious treats.



In fact, the name of Christmas Eve in Slovak is *Štedrý Večer*, meaning Bountiful Eve. The old tradition says that as one does on Christmas so will he or she do the rest of the year. Having a variety

of dishes and treats on the table meant to bring the family a good upcoming year. This is why the Slovak Christmas dinner consists of a multitude of courses. First there are the thin wafers (*oblátky*) eaten with honey and garlic, then come poppy seed dough balls called *bobalky*, and only then does the actual dinner begin. The courses vary from region to region, but often consist of a sauerkraut soup *kapustnica* and a fried fish.

And what cannot be absent is a table full of fruits and cookies. Similar cookies are also often baked for Easter. The Slovak Easter tradition calls for boys to pour buckets of cold water on girls and whip them, lightly, with whips made of young willow branches. Perhaps bit barbaric these days, but it was believed this will keep the girls pretty and healthy. To reward the boys for the "trouble", the girls offered them freshly baked cookies and decorated Easter eggs.



SlovakCooking.com was started in the summer of 2009 by Luboš Brieda. Luboš was born in Banská Bystrica and came to the U.S. in '94. He is not cook - but like most of us, he likes to eat good food. You can find out more about him on his personal site iamlubos.com and on his company website, particleincell.com.

Slovak Cookies (and other treats)



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Bear Paws (Medvedie Labky)



1 yolk, 2 cups flour, 2 sticks margarine, 100g ground walnuts, 100g powdered sugar, 1 packet of vanilla sugar

Mix all ingredients until you get a sticky dough with the consistency of play-dough. Grease and dust with flour crescent-shaped metal baking forms. Press the dough into the forms and bake for 8 minutes at 375F. Coat with powdered sugar or dip ends in chocolate.

Hearts (Srdiečka)



4 cups flour, 2 cups powdered sugar, 1.5tsp baking powder, 200g margarine, 2 eggs

Knead the dough until you get a smooth texture. Then roll out and cut out various shapes. Bake for for 12 minutes at 350F. Join two matching halves with jam (raspberry and red currant work great) and sprinkle with powdered sugar.

Rings (Venčeky)



250g flour, 250g margarine, 100g ground hazelnuts or almonds, bit of salt, half a spoon of cinnamon, 1 teaspoon of orange zest and juice, 1 egg, 5 spoons of white wine

Combine the ingredients to make the dough. Roll out and use dough circle cutters of two different sizes to cut out the ring. Bake for 15 minutes at 350F. Coat in powdered sugar combined with vanilla and cinnamon. Combine the cut out dough and repeat.

Rum Balls (Rumové Guľky)



2 cups powdered sugar, 2 cups ground walnuts, 1 yolk, shot of rum

Mix all ingredients together and roll into a ball. Coat in powdered sugar, chocolate, or coconut shavings. That's it, no baking required!

Walnuts (Oriešky)



Dough: 150g ground walnuts, 5 cups flour, 1.5 sticks butter, 1-2 eggs, 0.8 cups sugar, 2 tbsp cocoa

Cream 1: 4 eggs, 0.5 cups powdered sugar, 1 packet vanilla sugar. Cream 2: 1.5 sticks butter, 0.5 cups powdered sugar

Mix the dough ingredients together and bake in a greased and floured metal form for 8 minutes at 375F. Whisk ingredients for Cream 1 in a double boiler until it becomes like honey. Let cool down. Whip Cream 2 ingredients together and add to Cream 1. Use the cream to join two halves to make a delicious walnut.

Chocolate Truffles (Šuhajdy)



Chocolate: 150g chocolate, 3/4 stick of Crisco, 3 tsp cocoa
Filling: 100g of ground nuts, 150g powdered sugar, 1/2 stick of Crisco, 2 teaspoons of cocoa, 0.4 cups milk

Melt the chocolate in a double boiler or on low heat. Stack paper cups on a tray and pour quarter inch of chocolate into each. Save half the chocolate for later. Let cool. Cook the ingredients for the filling on low heat. Spoon onto the chocolate. Top off with the remaining chocolate and a walnut for decoration.

Easter Treats!

Fánky

2 cups flour, 1/2 tsp baking powder, 1/2 tsp salt, 2 yolks, 2 tbsp powdered sugar, half a stick unsalted butter, 4 tbsp cream, 2 tbsp white wine (or rum), 1/2 cup of milk

Mix the ingredients and place the dough in a fridge to cool. Then roll out to 1/6th inch. Cut into rectangles the size of your palm. Cut two slits near the short edges. Tread the ends through the slits to make bow ties. Fry in hot oil until golden brown. Top with powdered sugar.

Šišky (Donuts)

2 cups flour, one yolk, 3/4 cups milk, one packet yeast, 2 tablespoons powdered sugar, 1/5 stick unsalted butter, dash of salt. Topping: jam filling and powdered sugar



Mix all ingredients to get a smooth dough. Let rise. Then roll out on a dusted board to one inch thick. Dust the rim of a drinking glass with flour and use it to cut out circles. Fry in oil. Top with jam and sugar.