

Food Beyond Borders



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Balkan cuisine is a synonym for slow food: home-cooked food, based on traditional recipes and using traditional kitchenware and ingredients from autochthonic breeds and varieties.

The Western Balkan countries are a cradle of agrobiodiversity – assortment of traditional autochthonic animal breeds and plant varieties with exceptional quality and nutritional value, which represent the richness of the region, its culture and its tradition. Usually, these products attract customers that appreciate culture, tradition, environment protection, healthy food and novelties.

The Balkan culinary fairytale – ‘Food Beyond Borders’ is an art and science product, both a practical guide for gastronomic alchemy and a collection of descriptions of typical traditional specialties, autochthonic animal breeds and plant varieties.

It provides the readers with a range of various recipes of alluring, nutritionally rich, colourful and affordable dishes be they vegan, vegetarian, pescatarian, meat dishes or desserts from all six Western Balkan countries.

We hope that you will enjoy the reading, cooking and the exceptional taste of the Western Balkans.

Cheers!



Food Beyond Borders

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Regional project: Support to Economic Diversification of Rural Areas in Southeast Europe (SEDRA)

Responsible person: Mr. Benjamin Mohr, Team Leader



Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in SEE (SWG)
Blvd. Goce Delcev 18, MRTV Building, 12th floor, 1000, Skopje
Republic of North Macedonia

Authors: Ms. Sonja Ivanovska, PhD, Ms. Mirjana Jankulovska, PhD, Mr. Sokrat Jani, PhD, Ms. Gordana Đurić, PhD, Mr. Ervin Zecevic, PhD, Ms. Suzana Dordevic Milosevic, PhD, Mr. Zoran Jovovic, PhD, Mr. Shukri Fetahu, PhD.

Photos by: Mr. Milosh Dedic, Mr. Robert Atanasovski, Ms. Suzana Dordevic-Milosevic, PhD, Mr. Slobodan Milosevic, Ms. Sandra Dordevic, Mr. Igor Manov, Mr. Josip Grabovac, Mr. Marijan Antolovic, Mr. Gvozden Micic, Mr. Arben Elshani, Mr. Armand Habazaj, Mr. Kocho Porchu, PhD, Association of producers and processors of Futog cabbage

Editors: Ms. Sonja Ivanovska, PhD, Ms. Irena Djimrevska, PhD

Language proofreading: Mr. Jason Brown, Ms. Jana Vasilevska, MA

Art-science concept development: Ms. Jana Vasilevska, MA, Ms. Irena Djimrevska, PhD

Graphic Design: Mr. Darko Stojoski

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Slow Food® Kliment Ohridski Str
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Macedonia



The Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food
Str. 16-ta Makedonska brigada No 3, 1000 Skopje

Preface

The Balkan culinary tale begins with the firmly held belief that a good everyday diet should contain homemade meals, prepared from fresh agricultural products which are regularly obtained from particular domestic or autochthonous plant varieties and livestock breeds. This authentic agricultural assortment of genetic resources has been preserved over generations, and it is specific and passed down from generation to generation in every single family, along with the long-established recipes for using the precious foods.

As a region historically threaded with distinctive nations and religions, followed by their cultural and folkloric benchmarks, the Balkans became the homeland to an innumerable quantity of diverse vegetables, grains, fruits and grapevine varieties. Some are exclusively specific for a small area within a single country, while others are dispersed throughout several countries or across the entire region. Southeastern Europe is considered as the primary centre of origin for many fruits, berries and nuts, olives, and leafy and root vegetables. Consequently, the astonishing diversity of their local varieties are autochthonous for the Balkans. Many crops were introduced here in ancient times, domesticated and wisely selected into local varieties by their guardians – the farmers themselves. The selection of superior plants was inspired by their adaptability to specific growing conditions, the appealing flavour and the possibility for continuous consumption of their products, fresh or preserved throughout the year.

The nomads, and later Balkan farmers, applied similar domestication to the breeding of cattle, sheep, goats and poultry, creating several strains and breeds that are clearly recognisable for this region. The habit of preserving meat by drying, salting, and smoking, and to produce various dairy products from milk is still largely practiced, especially in the smaller cities and villages.

Fresh-water fish from the natural lakes and rivers is also cooked in different ways and almost regularly prepared during times of fasting throughout the Balkans, while seafood is typically limited to the Montenegrin and Albanian menus.

Balkan cuisine is a synonym for slow food: home-cooked food, based on traditional recipes and using traditional kitchenware. The quickest dishes, at first glance, seem to be prepared or cooked in a matter of hours. They are alluring, nutritionally rich, colourful and affordable. All lasting efforts lead to one purpose – to enjoy the food for hours in a family atmosphere. The lunch starts with fresh vegetables or dip appetizers such as meze, accompanied by different pastries and strong rakija. The main course is a perfect combination of local vegetables, dairy and meat products, often purchased from countryside farms. It is cooked in the form of soups, broths, stews, roasted or grilled meat and enjoyed with wine or beer. Desserts are heavy in calories, and combined with local fruits or nuts.

Almost all Balkan dishes are the result of a kind of gastronomic alchemy that combines and uses to great effect the different cultural influences of the past. Full of many oriental flavours borrowed from the Middle East or Ottoman cuisine as well as styles from Hungarian and Mediterranean kitchens, Balkan food offers a dizzying array of tastes and smells. Similar dishes are prepared throughout the region with only minor differences in their recipes and names.

Balkan food is recognized and appreciated by even the most demanding gourmets, and attracts tourists from around the world. Its authenticity will give you an unforgettable sensory impression.

In order to promote the Western Balkan treasure of genetic resources in agriculture and culinary specialties the project 'Support to Economic Diversification of Rural Areas in Southeast Europe (SEDRA)', implemented by the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH and the Regional Rural Development Standing Working Group in South-East Europe (SWG) developed the cookbook of Balkan cuisine which you now hold in your hands.

The cookbook was prepared in cooperation with the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Food, University St. Cyril and Methodius, Skopje and experts on genetic resources in agriculture from the Western Balkan countries.

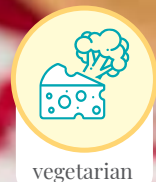
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Suloza Corn Pie

Casserole with Spinach

(Pispili with Suloza Corn)



Country of origin: Albania

Serves: 8

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Cooking time: 40 minutes

Calories in 100 g: 323 kcal

Ingredients:

² 500 g of <i>Suloza</i> corn flour	² 1 egg
² 1 kg fresh spinach	² 60 g butter
² 200 ml olive oil	² 1 bunch of chopped fresh dill
² 150 g feta cheese	² salt by taste

Preparation:

- In a large bowl mix 450 g of corn flour (the best flavour comes from Suloza local corn variety) with 50 ml of olive oil and salt by taste. Add hot water as needed (about 200 ml) to get a mass with a thick consistency, manageable by hand.
- Roughly chop the spinach, squeeze it slightly by hand to drain the juice and add it in the bowl. Add chopped dill, more salt, egg, cheese, 100 ml of olive oil and any other greens if desired. Mix by hand and squeeze the spinach as you prepare the mix. This process makes the flavours combine with each other.
- Sprinkle the baking tray with butter. Separate the corn dough into two pieces: one about $\frac{3}{4}$ size and the other $\frac{1}{4}$ size. Start spreading the larger piece on the bottom of the tray.
- Spread the dough evenly in the tray (usually less on the tray sides) by hand or with spoon.
- Sprinkle a few teaspoons of olive oil over it and place the spinach filling.
- Chop the cheese and spread it over the spinach filling.
- Place the smaller dough piece in a bowl. Add 2-3 teaspoons of hot water and mix it well to make it runny. Spread it over the spinach. This dough layer will be much thinner than the bottom one.
- Lastly, sprinkle a handful of corn flour over the pie.
- Sprinkle the remaining olive oil on top of the pie and add small butter scoops on the surface to get a better flavour. It might seem like a lot of oil but both the corn and spinach absorb it during baking, so don't worry... the pie won't be too greasy!
- Bake at 180°C for 15 minutes, then lower to 160°C and cook for a further 20 minutes until golden brown.

Sulova Corn Pie Casserole with Spinach

(Pispili with Sulova Corn)



Pispili is a traditional Albanian dish said to have originated from the city of Gjirokastra, but has been known for centuries throughout the southeastern regions of the country (Korçe, Berat, Permet, Elbasan, etc.). It goes by different names (*lakror*, *shapkat*, etc.) in different regions across Albania. Corn pie casserole filled with spinach is a vegetarian dish and

highly nutritious because of the amount of spinach per serving. In Albania, this dish is usually served warm with yogurt and seasonal salads. It's a perfect vegetarian meal.

There are slightly different preparation methods for this dish, usually every family has its own recipe. This recipe is suggested by the Centre of Culinary Education's.



Sulova Corn

Sulova corn is a landrace which is very old and has been cultivated in the Sulova area of Elbasan since the seventeenth century. *Sulova* has long been known for cultivating corn of the same name, a corn with low yields of about 2 t/ha, but preferred for the quality of the bread that it is used in making.

Sulova has an excellent white grain whose production is entirely used for flour. This corn is cultivated in the hilly regions and is of particular

social and economic importance to the inhabitants of the area. The plant has a short cycle, about 80 days. Most farmers plant it in small plots of about 0.1 to 0.3 ha. Market demand has been steadily increasing due to increased consumer demand. Sulova maize is cultivated in the area according to traditional agronomic practices, using low agricultural inputs. The corn flour is preferred for the production of bread, spinach corn pie casserole and special desserts such as 'Ballakume', a dessert often prepared for special holidays and special occasions.

Carp Fish Casserole of Shkodra with Drishti Onion

(*Tavë Krapi Shkodrane with Drishti Onion*)



pescaterian

Country of origin: Albania

Serves: 6

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Cooking time: 1 hour

Calories in 100 g: 167 kcal

Ingredients:

² 1 fresh carp (4-5 kg, ideally a male)	² 2-3 tbsps plum jelly
² 1-1.5 kg of onion, <i>Drishti</i> variety	² 3-4 tbsps grape vinegar
² 100-150 g of garlic	² 3 tbsps flour
² 120 ml olive oil	² 3-4 laurel leaves
² 4 tbsps concentrated tomato sauce	² 1 tsp ground black pepper
	² 1 tsp salt
	² 1 bunch of fresh parsley

Preparation:

- Clean the fish of scales, intestines and, in particular, a bone in the shape of a triangle, which gives a bitter taste to the casserole.
- Carefully cut the carp into pieces 2-3 cm thick, up to the tail (which, incidentally, may also be used if desired). The head piece should have small part of the fish body.
- Wash the fish and put it on a tea-towel to dry off the water.
- Transfer it to the kitchen table or onto a kitchen board. Salt, sprinkle with oil, and then sprinkle with a little flour and place it in the casserole dish.
- Clean and finely chop the onions and put them to one side. Peel the garlic cloves and place them in a small bowl.
- Add oil to a large pot on medium to high heat. Once the oil has warmed up, add the onions and garlic and cook over a medium heat, then add the laurel leaves. Cook until the onion is fully softened and begins to go reddish in colour. Add the tomato sauce and plum jelly and continue cooking until it becomes a uniform thick mass (the onion should be completely dissolved). Add salt, parsley and vinegar. Depending on the vinegar, some sugar may be added. This mass is called *ici* in Skadar.
- Pour the *ici* over the carp in the casserole dish.
- Bake it in a preheated oven (140-150°C) for about 30-40 minutes.
- The meal is ready when the fish pieces become coloured on both sides, and the *ici* is thoroughly combined with the carp flesh in its own broth.
- Top it with some parsley before serving.
- Serve each dish with a piece of carp and 2-3 dried plums as a garnish decoration.

Carp Fish Casserole of Shkodra with Drishti Onion

(*Tavë Krapë Shkodrane with Drishti Onion*)



This casserole dates back to the birth and development of the Shkodra bazaar (Skadar market), when the *akshijte* (the chefs - as they were called at the time) developed fish processing in general and carp in particular. There are even documents in Skadar that indicate that the chefs cooked this casserole during the Bushatlin Dynasty in the second half of the eighteenth century.

For the people of Skadar the carp casserole was their pride, because carp is one of the special fish that lives in Lake Skadar. Family tables and feasts in Skadar are incomplete if they are not served with carp casserole.

It is called 'Carp Casserole of Shkodra', not only because it was first cooked in

Skadar, but also because its ingredients are related to the Skadar area. One cannot complete this carp casserole without the onion of *Drisht* (area northeast of Skadar), strong grape vinegar, Skadar garlic and the famous *pistil* (jelly) made of plums growing in Skadar. So, without these rare assorted ingredients, there is no 'original' carp casserole.

The most appropriate season to enjoy this casserole is to get fresh carp between May and June, or, as the people say, at the time when berries ripen.

It is served with toasted corn and white wine. If not, the carp in Skadar says to the man: 'Eat me with wine, or drop me where I have been'.



Drishti Onion

The *Drishti* onion is one of the most popular and widespread local onion varieties in Albania. The onion is named after the village of Drisht in the Scadar district which has been cultivated the onion for over 700 years, since the Balshaj Dynasty. Currently, it is being cultivated in almost the entire northern region of Albania. The seeds have been maintained, conserved and passed down from generation to generation by gardeners. It is currently planted in about 30-35% of the onion planting surface of the northern region. It is a full-flavored onion and copes easily with long-term storage. It is characterised by plants with many leaves. They are long, light green

in colour and covered with a thin layer of wax. Bulbs of dry onion have an average weight of 130-150 g, and some individuals cases have been recorded at between 350-400 g. The outer scales which cover the bulb are tiled yellow, sometimes darker, sometimes lighter. The inner scales are thick and the flesh is solid with a milky white colour. They contain 12-16% dry matter and are highly combustible.

Drishti onion has two main forms: 1. the onion has conical bulbs and thick outer scales. This onion lasts longer after harvest, and 2. the onion has round compressed bulbs and thin outer scales. This onion lasts only for a relatively short period after harvesting.

Octopus with Opari Grass Pea

(Oktapod me Kockulla from Opari Grass Pea)



pescatarian



gluten free



Country of origin: Albania

Serves: 6

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Cooking time: 1 hour and 40 minutes

Calories in 100 g: 130 kcal

Ingredients:

² 1 kg octopus

² 600 g grass pea seeds (*Opari* variety)

² 120 ml olive oil

² 3-4 garlic cloves

² 1 bunch of fresh sorrel

² 1 tsp ground chili pepper

² 1 tsp salt

² 0.5 tsp ground black pepper

Octopus cleaning

Thoroughly wash the octopus in cold, running water, rubbing it well, both outside and inside its head and tentacles. Put it on a clean tea-towel to dry it. Transfer it to the kitchen table or chopping board. With the tip of the knife remove the eyes and the beak, the round part resembling a strong bone at the bottom of the octopus's head.

Beat with meat pounder for about 10 minutes, to break the muscle fibres and to soften the meat. Place it again under cold, running water. Remove any internal scab residue and continue to wash carefully. Put it on the sink's draining board and leave it to drain.

Preparation:

1. Add water to a tall pot and set on medium to high heat. Bring the water to boil, add the octopus and simmer for between 45-60 minutes. Remove the foam that will form on the surface with spoon. Once it has boiled (test it with fork), transfer it to the kitchen table and allow it to stand for few minutes to cool.

2. Cut the octopus, first the head in strips and then the tentacles in pieces, in sizes you desire.

3. Add olive oil to a pan on medium to high heat. When the oil has warmed, add the octopus pieces, crushed garlic and chili pepper, and stir continuously until it turns slightly reddish.

4. Clean the grass pea seeds and wash them well.

5. Place the seeds in a pot. Add salty boiled water, and simmer on medium heat until softened.

6. Remove the pot from the stove and drain the seeds.

7. In a pot of boiling water, soak the sorrel leaves for 2 minutes, then quickly dip them in cold water and, after draining, heat them in the pan with olive oil, garlic and chili.

8. Prepare the grass pea puree in a blender. Add olive oil and black pepper and the mix prepared with sorrel leaves.

9. Lay the purée on the dish and pour over the warm pieces of cooked octopus.

10. Optionally, you can add flavoured oil and fresh oregano to the dish.

Octopus with Opari Grass Pea

(*Oktapod me Kockulla from Opari Grass Pea*)



Seafood is commonly consumed in the Mediterranean regions, but Albanians living in the coastal cities are very passionate about their specialties. Octopus is one of the most delicious and valued mollusks in the seaside cuisine. It is considered to be an aphrodisiac, but only when properly cooked. Its flesh becomes tender with rich paradisiac flavor, slightly sweet, meaty and mild tasting. Generally, smaller and younger octopi are favored in the cuisine as they are tenderer. It is often prepared in the summer season, when a fresh octopi with purplish or brownish grey color and compact pulp can be found.

Like nearly all seafood, it is lean and low in calories, considered a staple in the Mediterranean diet. Octopus packs a lot of nutrition, it is a low-calorie protein source rich with vitamin B-12, iron and selenium. Very often the octopus is grilled or cooked and then served over a puree made of various vegetables or legumes.

This recipe, locally referred to as *Oktapod me Kockulla*, is based on an old tradition to combine octopus with a puree of grass pea, mostly from a local *Opari* variety. The seeds of this fodder crop are full of proteins and taste good, contributing to the flavor of the meal. Best served warm.



Opari Grass Pea

Grass Pea is one of the hardest but most underutilized crops for its adaptation to fragile agro-ecosystems, because of its ability to survive under extreme climatic conditions such as drought, water stagnation and heat stress. It was first domesticated some 7000–8000 years ago in the eastern Mediterranean region and has a history of cultivation in southern parts of Europe, cultivated for food, feed and fodder in different countries. By the old civilizations, grass pea was considered a special food to be offered to kings, in contrast to the present-day reputation of being the survival food of the poorest of the poor. Ancient civilizations included this crop in diets with well-balanced composition in essential amino acids. It is a nutrient-dense food crop, with high (18–34%) protein content in the seeds. Moreover, grass pea is highly suitable for human consumption because about 60% of the fatty acids are polyunsaturated. Grass pea, like other underutilized

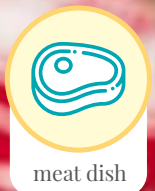
legumes, is still an untouched treasure for compounds that can contribute to human health. Therefore, as nutraceutical, grass pea is an excellent example of a potential functional food.

In Albania, the grass pea is mainly cultivated in the southern areas of the country and it is used for cooking delicious soups, pies, etc. The *Opari* grass pea has been known and cultivated on limited surfaces since the mid-nineteenth century, mainly in low fertility soils in the hilly-mountainous areas of Korça, Berat and Skrapar.

The *Opari* grass pea forms an average plant mass. The flowers are butterfly-shaped and white colour. The fruit is a plate-shaped pod, about 2.5–4.0 cm long, 0.6–0.8 cm wide, containing 2–3 seeds. The seeds may be of cream to brown colour with a compressed or irregular shape, 4–7 mm in diameter.

Consumption of this legume is limited, only in some southeastern and southern areas of the country, and is in steady decline.

Dukati Black Goat Meat in a Milk Bin (*Dukati Black Goat Mish Keci me Qumësht*)



meat dish



gluten free



Country of origin: Albania

Serves: 8-10

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Cooking time: 4 hours

Calories in 100 g: 128 kcal

Ingredients:

² 5-6 kg kid goat's meat	² 1 kg fine corn flour
² 1 kid goat's offal	² 10-12 laurel stalks
² 4 l goat milk	² 1 tbsp black peppercorn
² 2 l white cheese whey	² 1 bunch of chopped fresh dill
² 200 ml olive oil	² 1 bunch of chopped fresh mint

Preparation:

Meat

1. Clean and chop the meat into large pieces.
2. At the bottom of a large pot with a tightly fitting cover, place the laurel leafless sticks. Place the pieces of meat over the sticks, add milk and set it on low heat. Add a tablespoon of peppercorn and salt.
3. Simmer for about 4 hours, until the meat is fully cooked and the meat comes easily away from the bone.
4. Remove the meat from the pot and transfer it in an earthenware pot.
5. Pour the obtained broth aside in a large bowl.

Harapash

1. Pour two litres of water and two litres of white cheese whey into a pot on medium heat.
2. When it starts boiling, add the offal, previously cooked (liver, kidney and heart can also be used) and stir them well.
3. Add 1 kg of corn flour and continue to stir, to prevent lumps forming. Once it thickens, continue stirring for a few minutes until the corn flour is fully cooked.
4. At the end add olive oil, salt and fresh spices, such as dill or mint by taste.

Dukati Black Goat Meat in a Milk Bin (*Dukati Black Goat Mish Keci me Qumësht*)



Simmered kid goat's meat in milk bin is a perfect meal for a special weekend occasion, holiday event or family celebration.

This recipe can be prepared quickly and easily at home. Cooked this way, the kid goat's meat gets a wonderful taste, it becomes completely soft and creamy. The meat simmered in milk is accompanied by

Harapash (a traditional dish from Labëria, an area in the south of the country), which is prepared with corn flour and the offal from the kid goat.

Usually, the meat is served with boiled green vegetables and a few spoons of *Harapash*. The broth obtained from the meat can be also served at the table.

Dukati Black Goat

It is a unique, old and indigenous ecotype that grows in the Dukat area and the Karaburun peninsula, about 25 km south of Vlorë. This ecotype has a genetic closeness to the goat of Muzaka (known in the mid-thirteenth century). Characteristic of this breed is the presence of horns, both in males and females. Dukati black goat has a small body, short legs, a height of between 55-65 cm, and an average weight 38-45 kg. The coat is predominantly black, but there are individuals with some white spotting, or even beige colouration.

The meat of this breed is highly sought after, especially in May, when it has its maximum nutritional value. This is due to the characteristics of the breed, but is also due to the environmental and feed conditions, which are based on the natural resources of the grazing, completely excluding concentrate in the feed.

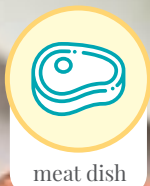
Dukati black goat produces 150-180 litres of milk per year, and its fertility goes up to about 110%. The goat kids are born with an average weight of 2-2.2 kg and have a dynamic weight gain of about 140 g per day. The kids are traded when they have reached an average weight of 8-10 kg.

At the start of this century, as a result of unregulated slaughter, this goat breed was in danger of extinction. Currently, genetic erosion has been reduced and this ecotype is gradually emerging from the 'endangered' status it presently has. At present, around 6,500 goats are estimated to exist throughout the territory.



Ram Meat with Tropoja Plum Jelly

(Mish with Tropoja Plum Pistil)



meat dish



gluten free

Country of origin: Albania

Serves: 6

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Cooking time: 1 hour and 45 minutes

Calories in 100 g: 176 kcal

Ingredients:

² 600 g ram meat	² 1 bunch of fresh parsley
² 2 kg medium size onions	² 1 tsp salt
² 250 g plum jelly	² 0.5 tsp black pepper
² 120 ml olive oil	² 2 cups of water
² 4 garlic cloves	

Preparation:

- Clean and finely chop the onions and put them aside. Peel the garlic cloves and place them in a small bowl.
- Add oil in a large pot on medium to high heat. Once the oil has warmed up, add the cleaned and finely chopped onions, garlic and simmer over a medium heat, stirring constantly, until the onions are caramelised and slightly browned.
- Cut the ram meat into pieces, and season with salt.
- In another pot, put the pieces of meat. Add two cups of water, and leave to simmer for 40 minutes.
- If you wish to make the dish more aromatic, add a laurel leaf.
- Once the meat is almost cooked, add the fried onion and continue to simmer over low heat until the meat is fully cooked.
- Add the jelly previously softened (dissolved) with water, stir and continue simmering, let the meat cook with everything else for about 10-15 minutes.
- Add the chopped parsley, black pepper and a little salt to the pot. Transfer the mixture to a clay casserole dish.
- Put the casserole dish in the oven for 20 minutes at 250°C, just long enough for the meat to take a reddish hue. Turn off the oven and leave the pot inside the oven for another 10 minutes.

Ram Meat with Tropoja Plum Jelly

(Mish with Tropoja Plum Pistil)



Ram meat with *pistil* (*Mish me pistil*) is a traditional Albanian dish that originated in the city of Elbasan, but has been known for centuries throughout the mountain regions of the country (Tropoja, Kukesi, Puka, Dibra, etc.). The ram meat, with pistil in a clay casserole is a main course and highly nutritious. In Albania, this dish is usually served during autumn and winter. There are slightly

different methods of cooking this dish and each region has their recipe. The given recipe is according to the Centre of Culinary Education's (*Qendra për Edukim Kulinar*) recipe.

This dish is cooked with pistil (type of jelly), prepared from plum fruits of the Tropoja local variety. It is served warm with additional side dishes as desired, along with red wine.



Tropoja Plum

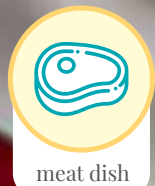
Tropoja plum is local variety of *Prunus domestica*. It has been grown in northeast Tropoja (*Tropojë*) since the early sixteenth century. This fruit has been and remains a significant part of the lifestyle and well-being of many families in the area with the plum commonly used for the preparation of jam, marmalade, hoshafi, compost, pistil, rakia, etc. by the local population. The area of cultivation has increased, moving into other districts, yet its cultivation has remained mainly in the north of the country (in the area of Tropoja, Has, Kukesi, Dibra, Shkodra, etc.).

It is a late ripening variety. The tree has strong growth, the crown shape is

pyramidal, and in some cases it presents periodicity. It is self-pollinating, but it likes cross-pollination. The best conditions for growth and development are found in areas with a cool climate. The leaf is of medium size, oval and oblong. The flower is of medium size, the fruit is of medium size and it has an elliptical shape which is rounded at the apex. The skin is moderately thick, blue in colour, with a blue wax layer on the skin. The pulp is yellow, with a compact consistency, and slightly softened at the full ripening stage. It has good sweetness, taste and aroma. The nucleus of the fruit is completely separated from the pulp. It ripens in mid-September until early October. It is suitable for fresh consumption and industrial processing. It is durable in terms of harvesting and transport.

Pork Meat with Postriba Cabbage

(Mish with Postriba Cabbage)



meat dish

Country of origin: Albania

Serves: 4-6

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 1 hour and 15 minutes

Calories in 100 g: 269 kcal

Ingredients:

² 500 g raw pork fat	² 1 tbsp tomato sauce
² 150 g pork belly meat	² 200 ml water
² 1 head of white cabbage (<i>Postriba</i> variety)	² 2 laurel leaves
² 1 large onion bulb	² 1 tsp sweet red chili powder
² 2 carrots	² 1 tsp black pepper
² 6 tbsps olive oil	² 1 tsp salt

Preparation:

1. Clean and chop the pork fat into medium pieces and cut the belly meat into small cubes.
2. Clean the vegetables. Finely chop the onions, chop the cabbage into thin strips and the carrots into cubes and put them aside, in separate bowls.
3. Add oil to a large pot and place on the stove at medium to high heat. Once the oil has warmed up, add the pork fat and fry until it begins to extract its fat and get a little colour. Then add the belly meat and continue frying until the meat turns red. Remove the meat from the pot and put it aside.
4. In the same pot at medium to high heat, in the remaining warm fat, add the onion and laurel leaves. Then add the cabbage and continue frying until the cabbage has softened and reduced in volume. Add the tomato sauce, meat, carrots and a little water. Add water as needed to get the stew to the desired consistency. Towards the end, when the cabbage has completely boiled, taste and add salt and spices to taste.
5. If preferred, you can put it in the oven for 15-20 minutes, until it becomes lightly browned.

Pork Meat with Postriba Cabbage (*Mish with Postriba Cabbage*)



Pork meat with cabbage (*Mish me lakër*) is a traditional dish cooked in the highland areas, especially in Tropoja (*Tropojë*) with *Postriba* white cabbage. It has been prepared for generations because it simply uses a few basic ingredients to make stew, requires just a few minutes of preparation, and it's a healthy main course. It is usually said that it tastes even better when re-heated after 2 or 3 days. The

taste of softened fresh cabbage deliciously complements the fragrant aroma of fatty pork meat. This meal is rich in protein, fibers, micronutrients and vitamin A and C. The given recipe can be cooked using any variety of cabbage, but it is particularly delicious when prepared with *Postriba* cabbage, which has thin white leaves with an excellent mild taste. It is served warm and as a main dish.



Postriba Cabbage

This local variety of white cabbage has been known and cultivated in the *Postriba (Postribë)* area of the Scadar (*Shkodra*) region for more than 300 years. The seeds of this cabbage have been maintained, preserved and passed down from generation to generation by gardeners. It currently occupies about 5-10% of the area of head cabbage planting in the northern region of Albania, and is a rare cultivar and at risk of extinction.

It is an early variety, suitable for cultivation in mountainous areas. The plant has average leaf mass. The leaves have visible nervature. It forms medium-sized, compact heads with an average weight of 4-5 kg. They are round and light green in colour. The inner leaves are thin, white and taste sweet. Therefore it is used for cooking and for fresh consumption in salads. It is suitable for production between October and November. Cabbage heads can stay in the field until mid-December.

Poljak Bean Grass Pea Broth

(Čorba from Poljak Bean Grass Pea)



vegan



gluten free



Country of origin: Bosnia and Herzegovina

Serves: 4

Preparation time: 15-20 minutes

Cooking time: 2.5-3 hours

Calories in 100 g: 103 kcal

Ingredients:

² 0.5 kg poljak bean seeds

² 3-4 small carrots

² 1 garlic clove

² 2 onion bulbs

² 1-2 parsley, roots and leaves

² 1/3 of smaller root celery root with leaves

² 4-5 laurel leaves

² 15-20 g rosemary

By taste

² olive oil

² salt

² ground red pepper

² ground black pepper

Preparation:

1. Soak the beans in a pot of lukewarm water overnight.

2. The next day, drain the water and refill with fresh water. Boil for 15 minutes.

3. Drain the water and transfer the beans to an earthenware pot.

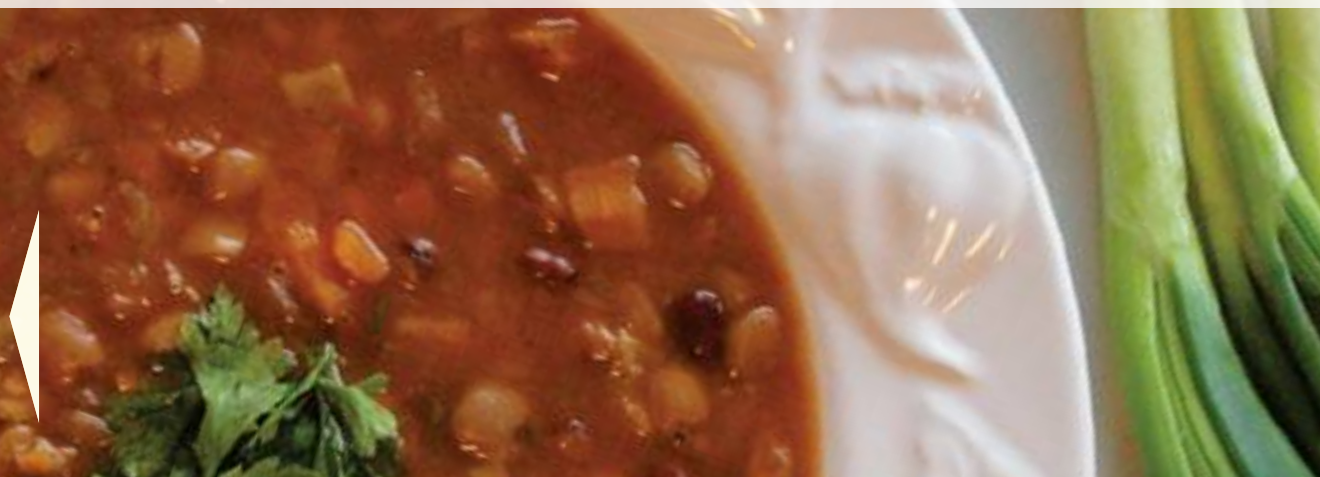
4. Add warm water to the pot,

and then add the chopped vegetables (carrots, garlic, onion, parsley, celery (leaves and roots), laurel leaves, and rosemary).

5. Add the olive oil, ground black and red pepper and salt by taste. Simmer for about 2.5 hours on a low heat.

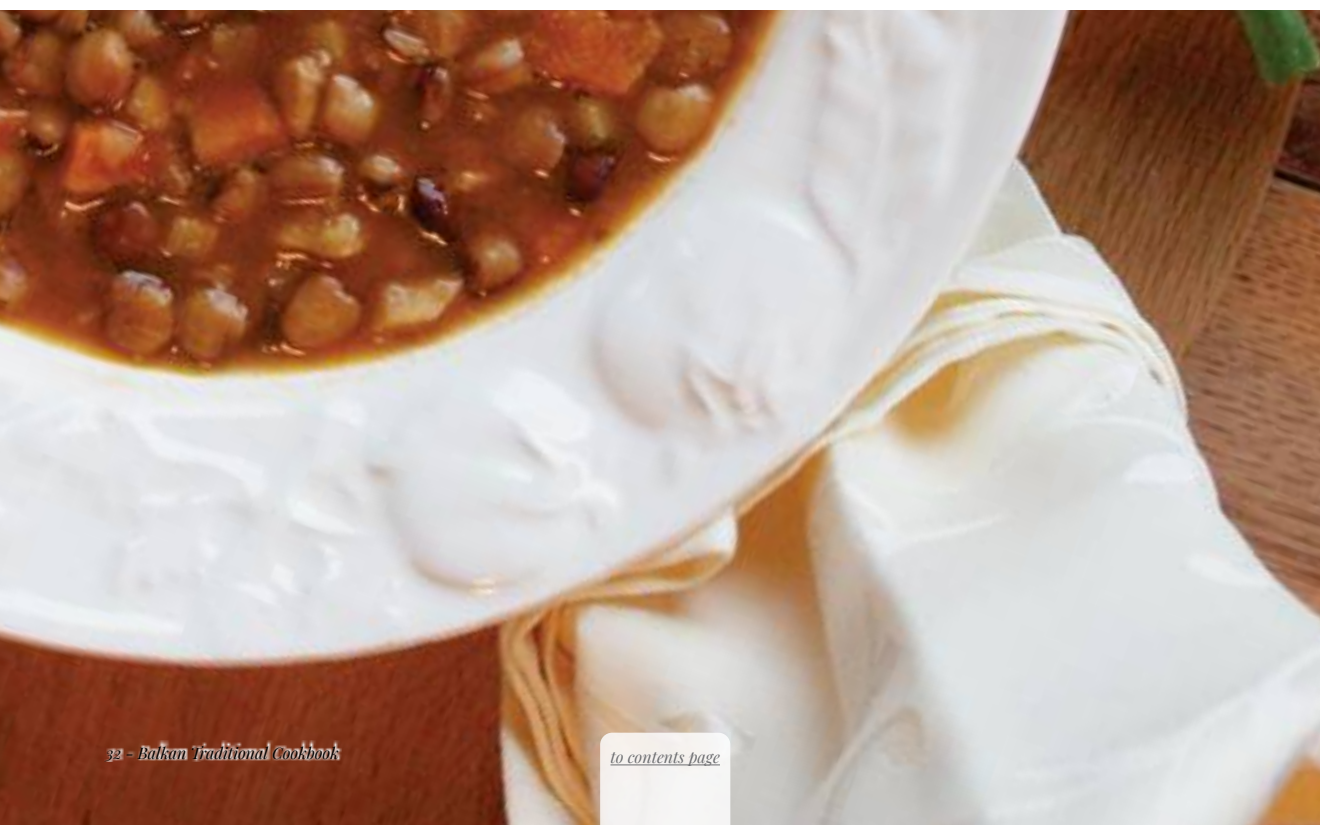
6. Remove from the stove and allow to cool for 15-20 minutes before serving.

Poljak Bean Grass Pea Broth (Čorba from Poljak Bean Grass Pea)



There are no history books or other documents about the dishes made with this legume. However, there are two traditional recipes in the local cuisine that do use it. One recipe is a broth (soup)

prepared using local vegetables and olive oil. The other recipe is based on the same vegetables and a little bit of smoked pork or sheep meat.



Poljak Bean Grass Pea

Poljak bean (*Grah Poljak*) is local variety of grass pea, a member of the *Lathyrus sativus* family (field beans), and is one of the historical crops in the Trebinje area. Due to its ability to grow in adverse climatic and soil conditions, its suitability for long-term storage and, above all, its rich nutrients (primarily proteins), the Poljak bean has been one of the area's staple food items for centuries, and it has even been given the honorary title of 'meat of poor people'. However, changes in lifestyle and diet during the post-World War II period meant that this indigenous species was almost lost and forgotten. Thanks to the established Republika Srpska Genetic Resources Conservation Program and the great efforts of the Slow Food Convivium Trebinje, this bean has been returned to fields and tables of the Trebinje area, proving to be one of the most important representatives of agrobiodiversity in the region. There are a smaller number of local populations that have only

recently become the subject of scientific research.

The Poljak bean is an authentic legume of the Trebinje region, used in the diet and as a medicinal beverage. It is small and irregular in shape, never larger than 1 cm in size, and with a colour range from brown to dark grey, ochre to light sand.

In alternative medicine, it is recommended that diabetics consume it. Also, it is unusual that this bean can be fried, ground and consumed as an alternative to coffee and for this purpose it is prepared by roasting in a similar fashion to the way coffee beans are. The best aroma is achieved when seeds are roasted in a *shisha*, or over a fire, all the while being careful not to burn them. When the sound of slight crackling is heard, remove the seeds from the fire, ground them in manual mill and cook the powder like ordinary coffee. It is also believed to cure heart diseases, to help with paralysis, sclerosis, depression and vertigo.

Bosnian Pot with Pramenka Lamb

(Bosanski lonac with Pramenka Lamb)



meat dish



gluten free



Country of origin: Bosnia and Herzegovina

Serves: 8

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Cooking time: 5 hours

Calories in 100 g: 94 kcal

Ingredients:

² 200 g veal with bone	² 100 g celery root
² 400 g beef meat with bone	² 150 g onion
² 200g lamb meat with bone	² 50 g garlic
² 500 g cabbage	By taste
² 500 g potatoes	² plant oil
² 200 g carrots	² celery leaf
² 200 g fresh peppers	² parsley leaves
² 300 g fresh green beans	² salt
² 50 g dry okra	² ground black pepper
² 200 g zucchini (gourd)	² ground red pepper
² 100 g peas	

Preparation:

1. Clean and peel all the vegetables, cut them into large pieces and drain.
2. Arrange the meat pieces in a large greased cooking pot and bake for 15 minutes in a preheated oven.
3. Place the vegetables over the meat.
4. Pour water into the pot, so that the whole content is submerged and add the spices.
5. Bake in a covered pot for about 5 hours at about 100-150°C, checking periodically and adding water if needed.



Bosnian Pot with Pramenka Lamb (Bosanski lonac with Pramenka Lamb)



Bosnian pot is a traditional dish in Bosnia and Herzegovina, more specific for the territory of Bosnia since it contains more fat, while the dishes from the Herzegovina region are closer in style to Mediterranean cuisine, often with less fat. The dish takes its name from the type of cookware used in its preparation - a pot. Traditionally, it is prepared over a hearth or on a wood stove. Today, it is best prepared in the oven in a large ceramic pot.

Bosnian pot is a dish consisting of numerous vegetables and three types of meat. It is traditionally prepared in Bosnia, both on a daily basis and for special occasions and celebrations. In general, there are two variations of this dish: the winter variant and the summer variant. In the winter variation, more fat and fatty dry

meat is added, as well as more commonly available winter vegetables such as cabbage, potatoes, carrots and possibly a small amount of beans. The summer variation is slightly lighter, again with with seasonal vegetables, but is less fatty and has no smoked meat. This dish is characterised by a long cooking process, and stays fresh for several days.

There is a noticeable simplicity in the preparation of Bosnian pot, which is common for all Bosnian traditional dishes. Considering this, as well as the abundance of healthy ingredients, nutritional value and its delightful taste, Bosnian pot is the ideal choice for a healthy meal, to celebrate holidays, or a great dinner to serve to friends.



Pramenka Sheep

Pramenka sheep are a highly valued sheep breed from Bosnia and Herzegovina. They are well suited to a region in which livestock breeding is difficult. Historically speaking, Bosnia and Herzegovina has a very rich history of shepherding. It has been calculated that there are only a few thousand purebred sheep of this sort left today, following a general trend of decreased sheep numbers. There were four million sheep in Bosnia and Herzegovina in 1939, while in 1990, total sum was around 1.3 million. Today's total estimation is half that number. The value of the *Pramenka* breed rests in the fact that it is an indigenous breed of sheep in Bosnia and Herzegovina. This allows all the products from this sheep to be protected by quality marks. The breeding area of this sheep is in Central Bosnia and Herzegovina, but various sub-varieties of this breed are reared in different parts of the country. Usually, during the springtime, sheep are led to pasture in the mountains where they remain until the autumn, before they are returned back during the winter. The body weight of the grown

up sheep ranges from 25-32 kg, with males weighing about 30% more than females. The height is around 49-55 cm. The length of the trunk is around 50-58 cm. Life expectancy of the sheep is nine years. The first impregnation is when sheep are eight or nine months old. The birth weight of a lamb is 2.5 kg, and daily growth for a lamb is 0.15 kg. Ewes are hornless, rams are horned or polled. The fleece colour is white, through sometimes, albeit rarely, black and the head is overgrown with short hair which is white with tiny black freckles. Its legs are slim and black, or freckled with white. Milk production in this breed is low. Milk from Pramenka is usually used for cheese production (Livno cheese, Vlašić/Travnik cheese). One of the most important factors is the high-quality characteristics of Pramenka milk, which has a huge influence on the flavour and quality of locally produced cheeses. The owners of these sheep can easily sell the lambs of this breed better than the lambs of other breeds, as they are lighter and more compact, and that is exactly what local market demands.

In Bosnia and Herzegovina four strains of Pramenka are reared: *Dubška*, *Kupreška*, *Privorska* and *Hercegovačka*.

Bosnian Kebab in Sauce with Busha Beef

(Bosanski Sitni Ćevap with Busha Beef)



meat dish



gluten free

Country of origin: Bosnia and Herzegovina

Serves: 4

Preparation time: 40 minutes

Cooking time: 2 hours 15 minutes

Calories in 100 g: 213 kcal

Ingredients:

² 1 kg beef lean meat containing some fat	² parsley
² 200 g onion	² celery
By taste	² ground black pepper
² plant oil	² ground red pepper
	² salt

Preparation:

1. Cut the meat into small cubes.
2. Finely slice the onion.
3. Place the onion in heated oil and simmer for 5-10 minutes.
4. Add the meat cubes, chopped parsley, celery, salt, black and red pepper by taste.
5. Simmer all ingredient for about 5 minutes.
6. Gradually add lukewarm water to cover the meat.
7. Simmer for about 2 hours on a low heat, until the meat gets tender.



Bosnian Kebab in Sauce with Busha Beef

(Bosanski Sitni Ćevap with Busha Beef)



This dish is typical for central area of Bosnia, in particular Sarajevo. It is customary to prepare it for family celebrations and festivities. Bosnian *kebab* is popular due to the ease of preparation

and the suitability with which it goes with a large number of side dishes. Originally, rice was used as a side dish, but nowadays it is frequently prepared with mashed potatoes or pasta.



Busha Cattle

Busha (*Buša*), or as it was earlier called in some parts of the country, *Domarac*, belongs to the group of short horned cattle or Boss *brahyceros europeaus*. By the colour of its coat it is mostly considered to be one-coloured as, black, tan, cream, white, dark grey or red. Over the head, neck and body they typically have a 1 – 2 cm wide, parallel dark or black stripes. The Bosnian Busha is a relative of modern European breeds of cattle, and is a small animal. Adult animals measure from 90 – 112 cm to the top of the shoulders, with their body length measuring from between 116 – 132 cm. Their body mass usually varies between 150 and 300 kg. The productivity of the Bosnian Busha cow is generally modest and it is considered to be a beef – diary – draft type of cattle. Milk production which

is on average 800 – 1,200 kg of milk (4% fat) per lactation period is relatively low. However, it has been established that the amount of milk production may go as high as 1,000 kg or even 2,000 – 3,000 kg.

Traditional cattle production is strongly connected with this breed. Thanks to its modest requirements when it comes to feeding and farming Busha has long been the dominant cattle breed that was bred. With modernisation the situation has changed so this breed has been added to the list of endangered breeds. The meat of this breed belongs to the category of harder types of meat. This is why dishes for which this meat is used are cooked a little longer. Dairy products are characterised by a specific taste and fat content thanks to the mountain grazing, which is rich in aromatic herbs.

Collard Rolls with Raštika

(*Ćaprak (sarma) with Raštika Collard*)



meat dish



gluten free

Country of origin: Bosnia and Herzegovina

Serves: 6

Preparation time: 40 minutes

Cooking time: 2 hours

Calories in 100 g: 190 kcal

Ingredients:

² 500 g collard	² 50 ml plant oil
² 500 g minced meat	² celery
² 100 g white rice	² salt
² 100 g onion	² ground black pepper

Preparation:

1. Wash the collard and place it in a larger pan with boiling water. Boil for 2-3 minutes, being careful not to overcook.
2. In a large bowl, mix the meat with rice and the finely chopped onion. Add spices and some oil by taste. Mix until uniform.
3. Separate the boiled collard leaves.
4. On a cutting board remove the hard part at the base of each leaf with a sharp knife to get smooth rollable leaf surface.
5. Place a spoonful of the prepared mixture for stuffing. First overlap the both leaf sides over the mix, then roll the leaf from its base towards the end.
6. Lay collard leaves at the bottom of a deeper pot, than arrange the rolls over the leaves.
7. Add 350-400 ml of water and about 50 ml of oil and press the rolls with a plate smaller than the pot to prevent unrolling during cooking.
8. Cook over low heat for about 2 hours.



Collard Rolls with Raštika

(*Ćaprak (sarma) with Raštika Collard*)



Collard rolls (*Ćaprak*) is more typical dish for Herzegovina. It is a light meal prepared with collard, a vegetable which features quite a lot in the traditional recipes of Herzegovina. This

dish is part of an everyday menu, but it is also an indispensable dish at the Christmas table and at special occasions during the summer.



Raštika Collard

Collard has long been the only staple vegetable growing in certain areas of the Herzegovina soil, even as a native wild-growing plant. For that reason collard has been predetermined to be the favourite vegetable of Herzegovina residents. The fact that it was often the only available vegetable in winter, especially in the past, means that it has become almost a synonym for vegetables. The specificity of the collard in fields of Herzegovina is ensured by the local population that maintains its own seeds, meaning that commercial seeds are not available for purchase like for other crops.

Native and cultivated collard greens, known as *raštika* or *raštan*, are often consumed in various meals in other Balkan countries too, mostly in Montenegro and Croatia.

The plant belongs to the family of *brassic*as and it has a herbaceous stem that can grow up to 1 m long. It grows well in warm areas that are partially or fully illuminated by sunlight, but it is also resistant

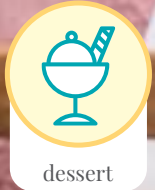
to frost and well tolerant to drought, growing in the most extreme conditions.

The leaves are large, thick, fleshy and smooth, having a dark-green colour and tough stems. They have a slightly bitter-sweet taste. The leaves may be consumed all year around, but are most delicious and nutritive during the winter. The texture of the leaves is best when harvested before their full maturation. It is highly appreciated as food ingredient due to its low calorific value and the richness of vitamins and minerals. Primarily, it provides more than the recommended daily amount of vitamins K and A. In addition to its significant role in human nutrition, collard is of great importance as livestock feed, especially for poultry.

The appreciation the people of Herzegovina have for the collard is exemplified with the festival dedicated to this vegetable, the so-called 'Raštikijada'. This celebration is held during the autumn. As part of the festival's activities there is a competition for the best dishes prepared from collard greens.

Jam from Požegača Plum

(Bestilj from Požegača Plum)



dessert



gluten free



vegan

Country of origin: Bosnia and Herzegovina

Makes: 10 large jars (700 g) of jam

Preparation time: 1-2 hours

Cooking time: 5-6 hours

Calories in 100 g: 120 kcal

Ingredients:

² 20 kg of plums

By taste

² cinnamon, rum, honey (or sugar)

Preparation:

1. Select ripe and healthy plum fruits.
2. Wash the fruits and remove the stones. No grinding of fruits is required.
3. Add small amount of water to a big pot (just enough to cover the bottom) with a stand (ideally a cauldron) heated over a wood fire. Add the plums to the cauldron.
4. Cook over a moderate heat, stirring constantly to prevent the mixture from burning, preferably with a large wooden spoon with a long handle, until the jam is thick and dark. It should be so thick that the spoon is able to stand upright in it.
5. Add a cup of rum and a little cinnamon towards the end of cooking, by taste. Depending on the conditions during growing, the fruits may be not sweet enough. If so, add sugar, but not more than 1 kg per 50 kg of fresh plums, or honey by taste.
6. Prepare jars before cooking. The jars should be clean and sterilised previously by heating them in the oven.
7. Carefully pour the jam into the jars.
8. Place a cellophane on top of each jar before covering with a lid.
9. Seal the jars, turn them upside down and place them in a wooden crate.
10. Cover the jars with a warm blanket, and let them to cool gradually for a day.
11. Return the jars to their normal upright position after cooling.
12. Store the jars in a cool and dark place. They can be stored for several years.

Jam from Požegača Plum (Bestilj from Požegača Plum)



Bestilj plum jam is the cooked fruit pulp of unpeeled or peeled plum fruits, with or without a little sugar or honey. The word *bestij* originates from the Turkish word *pestil*, meaning dried fruit pulp. Alija Lakisic in the "Bosnian Cookbook" of 1945 says of bestij: "*Begmaz*, jam in Persian, means drink, wine, fermented grape juice, apples, plums and alike. *Bestij*, *bestilj*, *šogolj* are synonyms for thick jam, cooked from fruit without sugar." For this purpose, the author states that the plums must be overripe, using fruits that have already started to dry in the tree.

In some parts of Bosnia, the *šogolj* is called the first pulp to be obtained while cooking, as soon as the plums are dissolved. This first pulp is usually consumed as such, and the jam continues to cook.

The best cultivar for homemade plum jam is *Požegača*. The amount of fruits for the jam without sugar and added preservatives depends on the need and size of the cauldron in which the jam will be cooked. This jam is very thick and sticky so that when used as a filling for strudel, buns, salty flats and alike, it does not leak during baking.



Požegača Plum

Požegača is a plum variety also called Hungarian, *Bistrica*, Blue plum and *Čustendil* plum (*Čustendilska šljiva*). It is originally from Asia, but was introduced to Europe (Greece) before the new era (287 B.C., Vavra, 1965) and then became widespread in Europe and North America.

The fruits are small, with an average weight of about 17 grams, irregularly egg-shaped with a typical blue colour, covered with a grey ash appearance. Their flesh is golden yellow in colour, firm, juicy, sweet acidic, aromatic, and of excellent quality. The stone is small and easily separated from the flesh, a typical splitter.

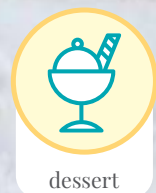
Plum fruits have multiple uses such as for fresh consumption, drying, food processing and

brandy production.

Požegača had its largest expansion in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. In 1917, the *Šarka* plum virus was discovered in Kyustendil, Bulgaria. Since then, there has been a declining number of trees and production. Due to its great susceptibility to this virus, a virus transmitted by aphids, this variety, despite its remarkable properties became highly endangered even before its disappearance. There have been several clonal selection programs to isolate tolerant types, but none have been successful. Today, this variety is still present in areas at higher altitudes (over 700 m) where there is less danger of aphids. Regardless of the danger that infected trees pose to other varieties in the surrounding environment, lovers of the true plum taste still choose to maintain it.

Poached Stuffed Kolačara Apples

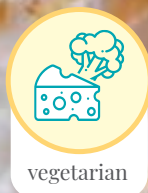
(Tufahija from Kolačara Apples)



dessert



gluten free



vegetarian

Country of origin: Bosnia and Herzegovina

Serves: 6

Preparation time: 1 hour

Cooking time: 30 minutes

Calories in 100 g: 149 kcal

Ingredients:

² 1 kg apples (or 6 apples)	² 3 tbsps of honey
² 500 g of sugar	² 2 egg whites
² 6-8 dl of water	² 1 lemon
² 100-150 g of walnuts	² 1 vanilla sugar

Preparation:

1. Grind the nuts, add 2 tablespoons of honey and mix.
2. Separate the egg whites from the yolks and beat the egg whites.
3. Add sugar to the egg whites and mix while to produce the whipped cream.
4. Pour water into a pot, add sugar, vanilla sugar and a lemon slice and let it boil. From this mixture, the sweet water, or so-called *agda or shulc*, is brewed after the apples are removed.
5. Peel the apples, remove the core with the seeds, making sure not to hollow through the bottom of the apple – this will keep the filling mixture from leaking out. It is best to make the hollows with a narrow-leaf knife, or with a knife with a slightly rounded tip.
6. Place the apples into the boiling water and let them cook for 10 minutes. You can check if they are sufficiently cooked by poking them softly with a fork. Do not allow them to become too soft because it will cause them to fall apart when taken out of the water.
7. Remove the apples with a slotted spoon and arrange them side-by-side, on a tray and let them cool.
8. After removing the apples, keep the water boiling, add a spoonful of honey. Let it boil until it's pasty with adequate viscosity, remove from the stove and let it cool.
9. Fill the apples with the mixture of whipped egg whites, ground nuts and vanilla sugar.
10. Bake the apples in a preheated oven to 180°C for 15-20 minutes.
11. Take them out of the oven, let them cool down and garnish them with egg whites, sugar and chopped nuts.
12. Pour the cooled agda (shulc) into an apple-filled bowl, so that the tuffahias soak in it.
13. Serve tuffahias cold.

Poached Stuffed Kolačara Apples (Tufahija from Kolačara Apples)



Tufahija is a popular dessert in Bosnian–Herzegovinian cuisine, although it is not originally from Bosnia and Herzegovina. Tufahija originates from Persia and was brought to this region by the Ottomans. The word *tufahija* itself comes from the Arabic word *tuffaha* which means apple. *Tufahija(s)* are apples cooked in sweet water and filled with a sweet mixture of ground nuts. They are served cold, decorated with whipped cream made from egg whites and sugar. The amount

of sugar and nuts may be added by taste. Nonetheless, the cold-served apples prepared in this way are refreshing and delicious.

Tufahijas can be prepared from all varieties of apple. But the best taste and aroma come from sweet-sour juicy apple varieties. Of the newer varieties, Granny Smith and Golden Delicious are mostly commonly used. The indigenous apple varieties best suited for Tufahija are *Dedovača*, *Gospoinjača* and *Kolačara*.



Kolačara Apple

Kolačara is a domesticated apple variety, widespread in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but of unknown origin. The fruits are harvested in mid-October and are available for fresh consumption in November. They can be stored until spring in home basements. The fruits are excellent for fresh consumption as well as for processing. The flesh of the fruit is white, firm, with a greenish tinge, juicy, sour with a wine taste which becomes more palatable upon harvesting during the storage. The fruit

skin is thin and firm, shiny, greasy, green, with burgundy stripes that often extend throughout the fruit. Fruits are medium sized, sometimes asymmetrical, flat and have ribs. They easily tolerate transport and can be stored in poor conditions. *Kolačara* is particularly interesting for its nutritional values, primarily the content of phenols, flavonoids and free radical scavenging ability, but also for its suitable storage characteristics due to the soluble dry matter content and firmness.

Pie from White Kosovo Corn

(Leçenik from White Kosovo Corn)



vegetarian



gluten free



Country of origin: Kosovo

Serves: 10

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 30 minutes

Calories in 100 g: 293 kcal

Ingredients:

² 400 g white Kosovo corn flour (fine pale yellow flour)	² 3 eggs
² 300 g milk cream	² 200 g white Sharri cheese
² 200 ml yogurt	² 200 g butter
² 200 ml milk	² 50 g salt

Preparation:

1. Add water and salt to the corn flour, stir it to form dough.
2. Gradually add the milk, yogurt and eggs, stirring constantly.
3. Add melted butter until a thin porridge is formed.
4. Crush the cheese into small pieces; add it to the porridge by stirring until the porridge becomes slightly thicker.
5. Preheat the oven to 200-250°C.
6. Pour the porridge into a baking pan greased with melted butter, and flatten out the mixture with a spoon.
7. Bake for 30 minutes at 200°C, until golden.
8. Remove from oven and spread with milk cream.
9. Cover it with a tea-towel for 5 minutes, so that milk cream can melt and the pie can cool. The pie will absorb the cream, creating a soft and smooth texture.
10. Cut the pie into pieces and serve.

Pie from White Kosovo Corn (Leçenik from White Kosovo Corn)



Leçenik is a corn pie with a long history in Kosovo. In the past, it was a food for the rural population, especially for the farmers spending the spring through autumn period in the highlands along with the livestock, and having an abundance of dairy products available to them. It is still highly regarded and popular for its taste, high nutritional value and mostly for the short preparation time. As such, it is also named 'guest pie', to honour the guests arriving late in the evening, because it could be prepared quickly for unexpected guests!

This meal is a simple combination of Kosovo white corn flour and dairy products (butter, milk and *Sharri* cheese) combined in a ratio of 1:2. *Sharri* cheese is a hard white sheep cheese with yellowish fatty

appearance and taste. It is made from milk of sheep that are bred in Sharri Mountains, a mountain range that extends from Kosovo, and the northwest of North Macedonia to northeastern Albania. The word *leçenik* means round and flat shape, but over the time the composition has undergone modifications due to the enrichment of a number of ingredients. It can be prepared with or without cream and spinach.

Traditionally, Leçenik is served as main dish with a piece of white soft cheese and yogurt, with vegetable salad (in the summer), and with pickled peppers or peppers stuffed with milk cream (in the winter). This meal is often served at family celebrations and in restaurants as a main dish.



Kosovo White Corn

Kosovo white corn is an old local variety cultivated in rural areas throughout the country, especially in the mountain regions because it is early maturing with a short vegetation growth of 100–110 days. Kosovo white corn comprises approximately 5–10% of the cultivated corn fields. It is also planted in the small gardens of village households, together with beans. In some rare instances, the plants develop two to three cobs with an average length of 15–20 cm and 250–350 grains per cob. It is named white corn by the local population because their grains have non-uniform off-white and pale-yellow colour. Aside from the early maturity which is important for the extreme growing conditions in the mountain climate, this type of corn is preferred and maintained by village folk for its

quality and taste, something that is incomparable with the newer varieties and hybrids. The grains are much sweeter and possess a higher content of sugars and dry matter.

Historically, this corn is used for human consumption and for animal feed. It is harvested in its milky phase for boiling fresh corn on the cobs or for grilling. Their alluring aroma when grilled attracts many customers in the cities. The remainder of the cobs are harvested when fully mature. Dry grains can be boiled during the winter using a traditional method with ash that makes the grains tender, or they are milled into high quality corn flour which is used for making bread, pies, porridge and other meals. White corn is rich with carbohydrates, proteins, essential minerals, while being low in fat.

Pie with *Kmetoci* Cabbage

(*Lakror* with *Kmetoci* Cabbage)



vegetarian



Country of origin: Kosovo

Serves: 5

Preparation time: 35 minutes

Cooking time: 45 minutes

Calories in 100 g: 219 kcal

Ingredients:

² 1 kg bread wheat flour

² 500 ml lukewarm water

² 250 g butter

² 1 medium sized *Kmetoc* cabbage

² 200 ml milk

² 2 tbsp salt

Preparation:

Filling

1. Remove the outer cabbage leaves, wash and cut in two equal parts, remove the middle hard core and shred the cabbage.

2. Squeeze the excess liquid from the cabbage shreds.

3. Add 200 ml of milk, 200 g of melted butter and salt by taste to a pan. Simmer for 10–15 minutes, stirring until soft and pale yellow. Let it cool for 5 minutes before placing over the dough layer.

Dough

1. In a large bowl, slowly add the salty water to the flour, mixing to get soft elastic dough.

2. Divide it to 16 small pieces, each weighing 100 g to 150 g.

3. Flatten the pieces in a round shape and cover them with a tea-towel to rest for 10 - 15 minutes.

4. On a wooden table board stack 8 dough pieces over each other

brushing each with 1 tbsp. of melted butter and roll them using a rolling-pin to form a thicker layer with a size larger than the baking pan.

5. Repeat the step with the other 8 dough pieces.

6. Place the first layer in a pan greased with melted butter, extending the layer so that it hangs over the pan's edge.

7. Distribute the filling equally over the first layer.

8. Cover the filling with the second layer and join the edge with the hanging part of the first layer into a spiral to wrap the filling.

9. Brush the top with melted butter.

10. Bake in preheated oven at 250°C for 30–35 minutes until golden brown.

11. Remove the pie from the oven, cover it with a tea-towel and let it cool for 15 minutes before serving.

Pie with Kmetoci Cabbage (Lakror with Kmetoci Cabbage)



This pie with white cabbage (*Lakror me lakër të bardhë*) is prepared mainly in the autumn with fresh Kmetoci cabbage, and during the winter with sour cabbage. The basic name, Lakror, has remained almost unchanged over the centuries as a synonym for pie with thin layers. Traditionally it is baked in a clay baking pan - *çerep*, and today is a regular on the menu of the rural festival 'Etno Fest'.

At present, it is often prepared with different fillings including onion, leek, tomatoes, spinach, potatoes, cheese or mince meat.

Traditionally, the whole pie was cut into equal portions and served as the main dish in the baking pan at family table, the *sofra*, a rare practise today. The pie goes well with fresh or pickled tomatoes or cucumbers, yogurt and sweet or hot peppers.



Kmetoci Cabbage

Kmetoci cabbage (*Lakra e Kmetocit*) is a local cabbage variety, well known in Kosovo, especially in the Morava region. Its name originates from the village of Kmetoc (Kmetovce) where it has been cultivated for centuries. Agro-ecological conditions, especially the river passing through the village, are main factors contributing to the development of this variety and its specific quality.

It is a white type of cabbage, moderately late with a vegetation period of 120-140 days and relatively stable at low temperatures. It is grown for fresh consumption and for pickling into sour cabbage, creating shiny, tasty juice during the winter season. The head is enlarged and flat, with an average weight of more than 5 kg. The leaves are large, thin and resilient, with slightly pronounced nervature. Therefore, the sour Kmetoci cabbage is tenderer and more suitable for wrapping stuffed rolls and for pie filling than the other varieties.

Grits with Pikalorja Chicken

(*Qervish with Pikalorja Chicken*)



Country of origin: Kosovo

Serves: 5

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 60–90 minutes

Calories in 100 g: 200 kcal

Ingredients:

² 1 village/free-range chicken

² 1-1.5 l water

² 150 g of wheat flour

² 100 g of corn flour

² 200 g butter

By taste

² ground red pepper

² ground black pepper

² salt

² seasoning

Preparation:

1. Clean the chicken with lukewarm water and cut it into whole pieces. Legs, wings, breasts, back and neck.
2. Place them into a pot, add 1-1.5 litres of water and a spoonful of salt.
3. Place the pot on the stove at medium heat for 45-60 minutes, depending on the age of the chicken.
4. In a preheated frying pan melt the butter and gradually add wheat and corn flour, constantly stirring while frying for 10-15 minutes until the flour thickens and turns a light-brown colour.
5. Gradually pour the sauce from the boiled chicken over the flour while stirring to obtain a homogeneous melted soft mass – the *qervish* (grits).
6. Place the grits in an earthenware pot, top it up with the chicken pieces, garnish with butter and red pepper, and bake it in a preheated oven for 10-15 minutes.

Grits with Pikalorja Chicken (Qervish with Pikalorja Chicken)



One of the traditional Kosovo recipes with a delicious taste and unique content is the Grits with domestic chicken (*qervish me pulë fshati*). Grits is a coarsely ground cornmeal, very similar to polenta, which with this recipe takes on a dazzlingly creamy flavour from the broth of the chicken. It is traditionally prepared in rural areas where the farmers produce all of the ingredients on their own farms.

In urban areas it can be cooked with any type of chicken, although many families maintain a stock of chicken meat obtained from a village farm.

Because it is easy to prepare, healthy and low in calories, it is also offered in traditional restaurants. This dish is served for lunch or even for dinner, warm and accompanied by a plate of sour milk with garlic.



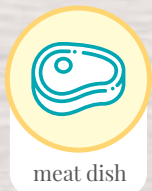
Pikalorja Chicken

One of the most common types of domestic chicken breeds is the very elegant *Pikalorja*. Domestic breeds are represented by heterogeneous genetic material with different strains, as well as also having also different body sizes. This breed has characteristic feathers which vary in colour from white to different colours and hues. Egg production begins after the age of 4-5 months with 100-150 eggs produced during the year, depending on the feed quality. The average body weight is 2-3 kg. They maintain the instinct of a hen and take good care of

the chicks. During the hen phase, they are aggressive, protecting the chicks from predators, until they become independent, which is normally at about the age of 6 weeks. Chickens are free-range, as they are kept in the countryside backyards, feed on household food leftovers, grass, insects, seeds, roots, flowers and fruits. Therefore, their cultivation is kept at a lower economic cost, while the market price is two to three times higher. Because of the natural nutrition and the free-range cultivation method, their eggs and meat have a specific flavour and taste and are highly sought after on the market.

Bardhoka Lamb in Milk

(*Qengj në Qumësht from Bardhoka Lamb*)



meat dish



gluten free



Country of origin: Kosovo

Serves: 5

Preparation time: 20 minutes

Cooking time: 90-120 minutes

Calories in 100 g: 127 kcal

Ingredients:

² 1-1.5 kg lamb meat

² 1-1.5 l water

² 500 g potatoes

² 5 carrots

² 200 g milk cream or butter

² 1-2 l milk

By taste

² salt

² black pepper

² onion

² garlic

² basil or parsley

Preparation:

1. Clean the meat, rinse with cool water and cut it to medium pieces.
2. Place the meat in a pot with 1-2 litres of water, add salt and cream or butter.
3. Cook the meat for 1-1.5 hours on the stove at low heat of 120-150 °C.
4. Reduce the temperature to 60-75°C and take out about 1 litre of the meat sauce. This will be used for boiling the vegetables.
5. Clean and peel the potatoes, cut them into long pieces, cut the carrots into circular slices and place them in a pot.
6. Add 1 litre of meat sauce, sliced onion, minced garlic and spices as desired and boil them for 15-20 minutes at 220°C.
7. Transfer both the boiled meat and vegetables in and earthenware pot, add milk, milk cream, black pepper and salt by taste.
8. Bake in a preheated oven at 190°C for 20-25 minutes, until the milk evaporates and the meat and potatoes turn to reddish-brown.

Bardhoka Lamb in Milk (*Qengj në Qumësht from Bardhoka Lamb*)



One of the traditional Kosovar recipes, with unique ingredients and taste, is lamb meat cooked in milk with delightful and nourishing taste.

Traditionally, the recipe was prepared for special family occasions, or for national or religious festivities. However, it also represents a level of the social status in society at various events.

In was the custom in the past, still practiced today as well, that after a wedding, the newlyweds' parents prepare this dish as a symbol of youth, happiness, high moral standards, prosperity and for a lasting legacy.

Apart from the festive occasions, this recipe is often prepared as an everyday meal in the family or even at weekends in traditional restaurants. Despite its long preparation time, lamb in milk is very much preferred because the meat has a tender and soft texture, characteristic colour and delicious taste.

The meat is served warm, on clay plates. This recipe is accompanied by fresh seasonal salads, light soups, sauces and various cheeses... and, of course, with a glass of red wine as well.



Bardhoka Sheep

This strain of *Pramenka* sheep breed, domesticated in Kosovo, is the most milk productive sheep among the long-tail breeds. It is predominately present in the *Dukagjini area (Rrafshi i Dukagjinit)*, in the territory of Prizren, Gjakova, Peja, Istog and Klina. Therefore it is also called the White Dukagjini sheep or White Sheep of Dukagjin. Bardhoka sheep strain is also popular in some regions of Montenegro, Serbia and Albania.

It is adaptable to extreme environmental conditions, especially to low temperatures, but sensitive to high humidity. The animals are well suited to a grazing

production system, calm, easily milked and easy to work with.

The name *Bardhoka* originates from the word *bardhe* (white in Albanian) referring to the sheep's coat colour which is completely white. On average, mature rams weigh between 50-65 kg and ewes 40-50 kg with a withers height of 70 cm in rams and 60 cm in ewes. The lactation period lasts approximately 270 days, providing over 200 litres of milk with 6% fat content. The average wool production is 3 kg. The grease fleece weight for females and males averages between 2-2.5 kg and 2.5-3.5 kg, respectively. Generally, the males are horned and the females are polled.

Dessert from Junik Chestnuts

(*Ëmbëlsirë me Gështenjë from Junik Chestnuts*)



dessert



vegetarian



Country of origin: Kosovo

Serves: 5

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 45 minutes

Calories in 100 g: 122 kcal

Ingredients:

² 1 kg chestnuts

² 1 tbsp wheat flour

² 2 cups of milk

² 1 tbsp butter

² 2 tbsp sugar or honey

² 1/2 tbsp salt

Preparation:

1. Make a small slit on each raw chestnut with a knife in one half of the shell.
2. Soak the chestnuts in a bowl of water for 1-2 hours.
3. Drain the water, then add fresh water and boil the chestnuts for 5 minutes at medium heat.
4. Peel the chestnuts, place them in a saucepan and add milk.
5. In a large bowl combine butter, flour, milk, salt and sugar, and 250 ml of water, stirring constantly to form a homogeneous paste for 5-10 minutes.
6. Add the paste to the chestnuts, then mix well and boil for 30 minutes, until a thick puree is formed and add milk cream if desired.
7. Distribute the dessert into several small serving bowls and allow to cool before serving.
8. Top with whipped cream if desired.

Dessert from Junik Chestnuts

(*Ëmbëlsirë me Gështenjë from Junik Chestnuts*)



This dessert, a sweetened chestnut puree has a nutty, subtle flavour and can be consumed plain, or it can be topped or combined with whipped cream. It can also be used as a filling for other desserts. When prepared with *Junik* chestnuts, aside from its delicate flavour it is completely natural and free of any

chemicals. For the people of Junik, the chestnut is an identifying mark, therefore this simple dessert recipe has a very old tradition. Due to its seasonal availability, this recipe is often prepared during the late autumn and winter.

It is usually served on small plates, accompanied by tea or other refreshments.



Junik Chestnuts

Chestnut forests are located mainly in the southwest part of Kosovo and are used for nut consumption and for timber. Local chestnuts within the Junik territory, having trees between 25–35 m in height with a crown diameter of 4–6 m, are of great importance for this area. These trees bloom later than the others and in early summer remain almost the only source of nectar for bees. Chestnut orchards are a very important environmental factor, preventing erosion and normalising extreme climatic conditions. Junik chestnuts are very popular, appreciated by consumers for their quality and origin, because the products are

completely natural, ecological and free of chemicals. The nuts themselves are large, flattened, with a sweet taste and easy-to-remove inner skins.

For the people of Junik, the chestnut is considered to be a sacred tree, cultivated for centuries, and it represents an identifying mark. Harvesting chestnuts is an old tradition, especially from mid-October to mid-November, celebrated with a traditional festival 'Chestnut Days'.

Fresh chestnuts are used roasted, boiled, or used as an ingredient for different desserts and soups, while dry chestnuts are milled into flour which is gluten-free and has high nutritional value.

Sweet Preserve from Dumoshi Pumpkin

(Reçel from Dumoshi Pumpkin)



dessert



vegan



gluten free

Country of origin: Kosovo

Serves: 15

Preparation time: 30 minutes

Cooking time: 3 hours

Calories in 100 g: 256 kcal

Ingredients:

² 1 kg pieces of pumpkin

² 100 g lime

² 1 kg sugar

² Honey by taste

² 2 l limewater

² 200 g walnuts

Preparation:

1. Peel the pumpkin and cut into small cubes as desired.
2. Dissolve lime at room temperature in water for at least 24 hours before use, then take 100 g from the lime paste and dissolve it into 2 litres of water to get limewater. The limewater should be clear and colourless, with a slight earthy smell and a bitter taste.
3. Pour the limewater into a large bowl, add the pumpkin cubes and let them soak for 2 hours.
4. Take the cubes out of the limewater. Rinse and drain them in freshwater. Repeat 4 to 5 times.
5. Prepare the syrup with 1 kg of sugar dissolved in 500ml of water and simmer on a medium heat until the liquid has slightly thickened.
6. Place the pumpkin cubes in the syrup and boil them at medium heat for 1 hour.
7. Add the walnuts, and honey by taste and simmer for another 15 minutes.
8. Allow to cool and then fill pre-sterilised jars with the mix.
9. Canned sweet can be stored for 3-6 months in a cool, dry place.

Sweet Preserve from Dumoshi Pumpkin

(Reçel from Dumoshi Pumpkin)



Sweet preserves were prepared in each house in the past as a method of preserving fruits for the winter, but also due to the custom of welcoming guests with a preserve and glass of water. One of the best sweet preserves is made of pumpkins, traditionally with the use of limewater. It is called pumpkin reçel or sweet preserve. This sweet preserve is prepared in autumn when the pumpkins and other ingredients are readily available at the market. A same or similar recipe is prepared in other Balkan countries as well, mainly in North Macedonia where it is called racheli. In Kosovo, this recipe may be prepared with various pumpkin varieties, but the local variety of pumpkin, Dumoshi vidim (Dumosh pumpkin),

gives the preserve an excellent taste. The traditional recipe was very popular in the past, but due to a rather complicated preserving technique using limewater, today this recipe is not frequently made at home. However, the limewater is important because it keeps the pumpkin pieces whole and gives them a crunchy taste on the surface while also making them tender and juicy in the middle. They are always accompanied with whole or halved walnuts, and a few raisins may be added as well, which makes the preserve very healthy and nutritious.

Because of its delicious taste, pumpkin reçel can be bought in shops and enjoyed in restaurants.



Dumoshi Pumpkin

One of the local winter pumpkin populations cultivated in Kosovo is *Dumoshi vidim*, meaning pumpkin from the village of Dumosh. There are various synonyms for the pumpkin (*Kungulli I Misirit*) in Kosovo: *vidim*, *hotin* and *qulah*. The fruits of Dumosh pumpkin are slightly elongated, medium-sized being 15-35 cm in diameter and between 5-10 kg of weight. The skin is smooth and firm, light green to blue-green, with shallow ribs.

The rind is tough, while the flesh is smooth, intensely orange in colour, aromatic, and subtly sweet with a deeply nutty flavour. It is able to be stored for long periods of time.

Traditionally, pumpkins in Kosovo are cooked or baked, or combined in various soups and stews, but are mostly used in the preparation of sweet pies and preserves with nuts.

Winter pumpkin is a low-calorie food and an excellent source of dietary fibres, vitamins, minerals and beta-carotene.

Polenta with Yellow Jarik Corn

(Kačamak with Yellow Jarik Corn)



gluten free



vegetarian



Country of origin: Montenegro

Serves: 4

Preparation time: 10 minutes

Cooking time: 1-1:15 hours

Calories in 100 g: 150 kcal

Ingredients:

- ² 1 kg potatoes
- ² 0.6 kg corn flour
- ² 0.25 kg old *kajmak* (type of clotted cream)
- ² 0.3 kg fresh cheese
- ² about 2 l water
- ² 1 tbsp salt

Preparation:

1. Peel the potatoes, cut into quarters and cook in salted water. Pour in more water than is normally needed to cook potatoes.
2. After 30 minutes when the potatoes are well cooked, pour out 2-3 dl of water and add the corn flour. The flour should not be mixed, but left on the surface of the water in the form of a cone. Through the middle of the cone, make a dent with the wooden spoon and cook on low heat for about 20 minutes.
3. When the flour disappears from the water's surface, the kačamak should be battered over low heat in order to obtain a homogeneous mass from potatoes and flour. A traditional tool, a *kačamalj* (wooden hammer specially designed for this dish only) is used, although a wooden spoon can also be used. This takes about 10-15 minutes.
4. At the very end of the preparation of the kačamak, into a separate pot put both the grated cheese and kajmak to melt over a low heat.
5. Once the potatoes and flour are well mixed, top the kačamak with the melted cheese and kajmak and stir for another 10 minutes until the melted mass is well combined with the potatoes and flour.
6. The dish is always served warm, with soured milk or sauerkraut.

Polenta with Yellow Jarik Corn

(Kačamak with Yellow Jarik Corn)



Kačamak is a traditional Montenegrin dish, very simple, nutritive, tasty and very high in calories. It is usually prepared with homemade corn flour, although wheat flour can also be used. Corn flour is produced from local maize populations belonging to the type of typical Montenegrin flint corn. Due to its excellent flour quality, Yellow Jarik (Žuti Jarik) is

one of the most cultivated local maize populations and is therefore the most widely used for preparation of Kačamak. This dish is prepared with kajmak – a creamy dairy product similar to clotted cream with a delightful taste and aroma. It is usually cooked on weekends in home when the whole family is together.



Yellow Jarik Corn

Maize has always been of great economic importance in Montenegro. Until the end of World War II it represented an unrivalled food item in people's lives. It is grown on all types of soil and locations, from the sea coast up to 1,000 m above sea level and higher. In some mountain settlements, old and early local varieties of maize were grown up to 1,300 m above sea level.

Almost all maize genotypes in Montenegro are native or domesticated and belong mostly to a type of Montenegrin flint corn (with harder kernels). This corn type represents a particular agro-ecological group of maize that is quite different from the corn types grown in other areas of the former Yugoslavia. Because kernels of the flint corn type have a harder outer layer, less soft starch and lower water content than the dent corn type, it is more resistant to freezing. Previous research has shown that Montenegrin flint corns can be a valuable material for creating new early-maturing and quality maize hybrids intended for

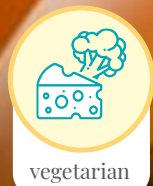
cultivation in mountain areas. Montenegrin flint corns, along with Mediterranean flint corns and Kosovo's semi-flint corns are considered to be the oldest corn types in the Balkans.

All local populations belonging to the flint corn type are mostly of early maturation. They are characterised by a powerful root system and solid, insufficiently uniform stems resistant to breaking and lodging. The cobs are small or very small, very well grained, while the kernels are yellow, vigorous, solid, and vitreous, firmly compacted, well filled and mostly oval.

Yellow Jarik is one of the most cultivated from the local populations of flint corn in Montenegro. It is characterised by high genetic purity. The colour of the grain and cob is dark yellow. The kernels are firm, vigorous, and oval. The cobs are small, firm, compact, attractive and uniform, usually with 12 straight rows of grain. It is sown from May 1st to May 10th and harvested in early October. It is quite resistant to drought and is often grown with beans and pumpkin. This local variety gives good grain yields and an excellent quality of flour.

Pie with Buckwheat Golubica

(Heljdija from Golubica Buckwheat)



Country of origin: Montenegro

Serves: 6

Preparation time: 10-15 minutes

Cooking time: 1 hour

Calories in 100 g: 244 kcal

Ingredients:

For crepes

- ² 100 g buckwheat flour
- ² 200 g wheat flour
- ² 3 eggs
- ² 1 dl milk
- ² 3 dl sparkling water
- ² some oil to grease pot
- ² salt to taste

For filling

- ² 150 g kajmak
- ² 150 g cheese
- ² 100 g sour cream
- ² 100 ml yogurt
- ² 1 egg
- ² some oil to brush

Preparation:

1. Add buckwheat flour, wheat flour, eggs, sparkling water, milk and some salt in a bowl and stir all together for crepes mix. The best pie is obtained when the ratio of buckwheat to wheat flour is 1:2. The buckwheat crepes mix should be a little thicker than the regular crepes mix. For easier frying, add some oil to the mixture.
2. In another bowl, whisk together kajmak, cheese, sour cream and yogurt.
3. Crepes should be fried in the crepe pan of the same diameter of the pot where the buckwheat pie will be baked.
4. Place the first crepe layer and spread the filling between each

crepe layer. Repeat the process until all the pancakes are used. Do not use all the filling, but leave some for the final coat.

5. In the remaining filling add one egg and mix well.
6. Layered crepes should be cut into pieces (preferably as a cake), placed in a baking dish and covered with the remaining filling.
7. Bake in the oven for 20 minutes at 200°C until the pie has lightly yellowed.
8. The pie is served warm, on its own or with a little sour cream.

Pie with Buckwheat Golubica (Heljdija from Golubica Buckwheat)



Buckwheat pie (*Heljdija*) is a very popular dish in the continental region of Montenegro, where buckwheat is mostly grown. For the preparation of buckwheat pie, the flour used comes predominantly from cultivated buckwheat

local populations *Golubica* and *Ruska heljda* (Russian buckwheat). These two local varieties form a large grain and give excellent yields, often better than the commercial varieties. The flour is of excellent quality.



Golubica Buckwheat

Buckwheat, also known as black wheat, is a crop that has been grown in Montenegro since ancient times. It is mainly used for human consumption in the form of peeled fruits or flour. Buckwheat bread is of poor quality due to the lack of protein glue, therefore it is often used as a supplement to other types of flour. Because it does not contain gluten, buckwheat is an excellent food for patients with celiac disease. Buckwheat is an energetic food, low in fat and calories, which is why it is recommended for those wishing to lose weight. It has a long flowering period, representing the main late pastures for bees.

Buckwheat production in Montenegro is based on the cultivation of primitive varieties, adapted to local production conditions. These local varieties differ from each other in terms

of vegetation length, lodging, vegetative growth, branching intensity, yield, protein content, and quality and other traits. The most popular local varieties are *Golubica* and *Ruska Heljda* (Russian buckwheat).

Golubica is of the early maturation period, so it can be grown as a main or second crop. It forms a tree of medium height, which is firm and does not lodge. It has very modest requirements in terms of soil quality and agricultural technology practices and is quite resistant to diseases. This variety gives satisfactory grain yields, often higher than the commercial varieties. The fruit is medium-large to large and the flour is of excellent quality. Unpeeled fruit, integral flour or buckwheat shells are sold on the market and used in various dishes in an everyday diet because these products fit perfectly with programs that promote healthy lifestyles.

Beaten Olives from Domestic Žutica

(Tučene Masline from Domestic Olive Žutica)



vegan



gluten free

Country of origin: Montenegro

Prep time: 10 days

Cooking time: 130 kcal

Ingredients:

² olives	² parsley
² water	² rosemary
² salt	² olive oil
² garlic	

Preparation:

1. Wash the green and healthy olives and drain the water.
2. Gently beat the olives with a wooden meat mallet to crack slightly, or cut with a knife lengthwise (3 to 4 times) to the seed.
3. Place the olives in a larger jar, and add water or brine.
4. Water should be changed regularly for the next 9 days in order for the fruit to lose its bitterness.
5. Prepare the brine by dissolving coarse sea salt in water (100 g salt per 1 litre of water)
6. After this period, soak the olives in brine and store in a cool place.
7. Olives prepared in this way can be consumed after 20-30 days. After removing from the brine, season the olives with a little olive oil, chopped garlic, parsley and rosemary by taste.
8. Given that the season olives are quickly spoiled, it is best to put beaten olives in the freezer and use later. When removed from the freezer, they should be salted slightly and defrosted in order to release water.

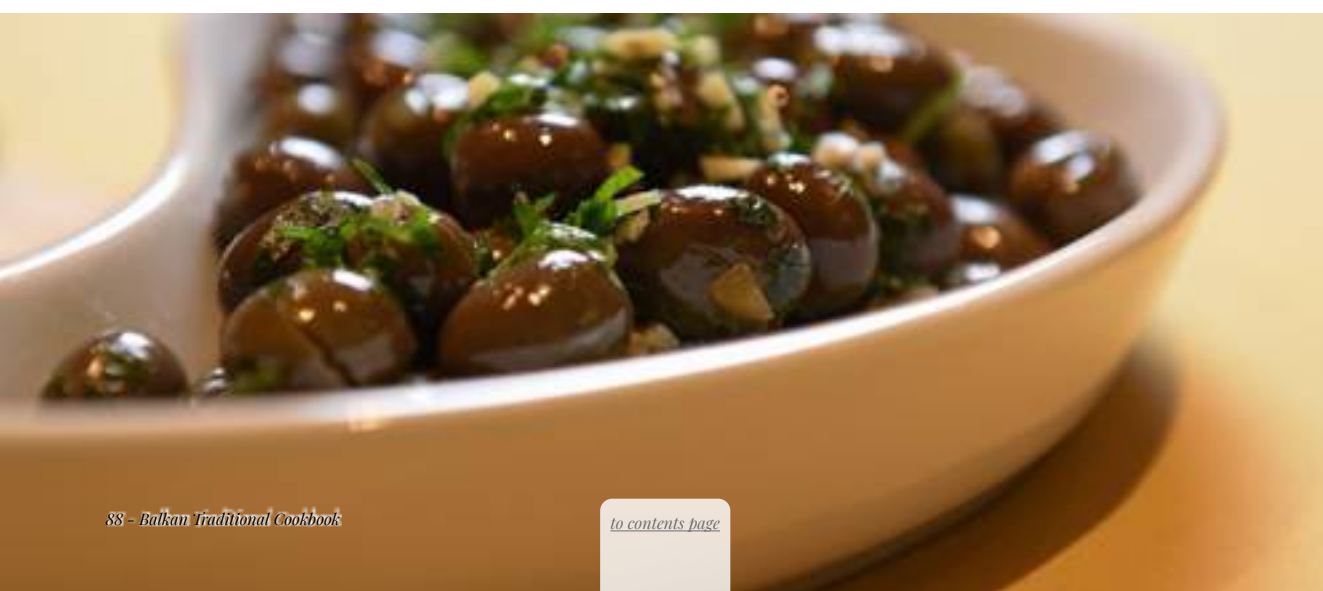


Beaten Olives from Domestic *Žutica* (*Tučene Masline* from Domestic Olive *Žutica*)



The beaten olives (*tučene masline*) represent an important segment of the culinary delights on offer along the Montenegrin coast. It is mainly made from the old olive variety *Žutica* (yellow), often referred to as *Domaća* (domestic). It is grown along the entire Montenegrin coast and represents about 65% of the total

assortment. It produces high-quality olive oil, with a harmony made in comparison between chemical and organoleptic properties. Due to its medium-large to large fruit, aside from oil, it is also used for canning. Beaten olives are the best and thus its preparation is characteristic of the Montenegrin coast.



Žutica Domestic Olive

The first grown region of olives in Montenegro is not known, but the tall tree of Old Olive in Bar and the tree of *Velja* olive in Budva point to a period of several thousand years ago. Therefore, it is considered that *Žutica* has been grown in Montenegro since ancient times. Research so far has shown that it either originated in this region or was introduced a very long time ago. Indigenous varieties dominate in the olive production with more than 90%. Of all the local varieties cultivated by the farmers, *Žutica* has the highest importance, represented by about 65% in the total assortment. Therefore it is commonly referred to as 'Domestic'. Although the demand for domestic olive products is high, current production is not nearly meeting

the needs.

Žutica is a vigorous variety forming a large tree with upright branches and a medium dense tree top. The fruit is oval in size and symmetrical. The oil content is high, about 21%, and is characterised by high oleic acid content. Depending on climatic conditions, *Žutica* blooms in the second half of May, while ripening begins in October. Because it is susceptible to diseases and pests, early harvesting is recommended for good quality oil. It is prone to alternative fertility. As an old variety, it is also very interesting material for breeding programs.

Žutica is mainly grown for the production of oil, but it is also used for canning, both green and black fruits. Canned fruits of the *Žutica* variety are a real treat and can be bought at the local markets.

Smoked Skadar Carp

(Dimljeni Skadarski Krap)



pescatarian



gluten free



Country of origin: Montenegro

Serves: 4

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 1 hour

Calories in 100 g: 138 kcal

Ingredients:

- ² dried carp about 1.5 kg
- ² 2.5 l of water
- ² 1 cup alcoholic vinegar
- ² several whole black peppercorns
- ² 1 laurel leaf

For dressing

- ² 1 lemon (squeezed juice)
- ² 1/2 cup dry white wine
- ² 1/2 cup olive oil
- ² 50 g chopped parsley
- ² 1 bulb of chopped garlic

Preparation:

1. Wash the smoked carp in warm water to remove soot and excess salt. Such preparation is sufficient if the carp has been recently and briefly smoked. If the smoking was long and done much earlier, then the carp should be left in warm water for a while (change water if necessary).
2. Remove the head, tail and fins of the carp, and cut into larger pieces.
3. Put the carp in a deep pot with water, vinegar, laurel leaf and peppercorns to cook. It should be cooked on a low heat for 20-30 minutes after the water boils, which depends on its dryness. The carp is cooked until the meat turns white and easily separates from the bones.
4. While the carp is cooking, prepare the dressing from the listed ingredients. Chop garlic and parsley, put in olive oil and add dry white wine and lemon juice.
5. When the carp is cooked, drain the water, cover the warm carp pieces with the dressing and allow to cool.
6. Smoked carp is usually served as a cold appetiser or as a main course with cooked potatoes.

Smoked Skadar Carp (Dimljeni Skadarski Krap)



Smoked carp (*Dimljeni krap*) is a dish that Montenegrin cuisine is particularly proud of. Carp is indigenous to, and the most famous fish species of, Lake Skadar. Many agree that the carp prepared in this way does not smell like fish at all and that it more closely resembles dry pork meat. Smoked carp is a fasting dish, but it

is highly caloric and it is quite easy to cook if you have dry carp. By a process of drying, the carp loses a lot of water and the smoke preserves the fish, giving it a specific taste and colour.



Skadar Carp

Carp is a widespread fish species, native to Asia, but it has been introduced worldwide. Today, it is farmed in ponds in most European and Asian countries. In Montenegro, it lives in Lake Skadar (*Skadarsko jezero*) and Lake Šas (*Šasko jezero*), as well as in the River Bojana. Skadarski carp is an indigenous and the most famous fish species of Lake Skadar. It prefers lowland, calm and fresh waters overgrown with vegetation and it is a very adaptable species. The carp spends the winter in large shoals, in sheltered places.

In Lake Skadar, it grows to over 1 m in length and its weight reaches over 30 kg. Its life span is slightly longer than 20 years,

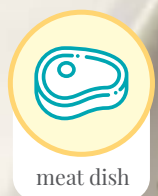
although individual specimens may live much longer. Adult carp individuals feed on insect larvae, worms, molluscs, plants, as well as on the debris of dead plants and animals.

Carp matures at the age of two to four years. It spawns in late April and early May, when the water temperature rises above 18°C and spawning ends at temperatures above 26°C. It is characterised by high fertility and one female can lay 26,000–1,600,000 eggs.

In an economic sense, Skadar carp is a very significant species, the second one for the Lake Skadar basin. About 200 tonnes are caught annually. It is mostly used fresh and smoked, while only a small portion is processed or canned.

Cooked Dried Meat from Domestic Balkan Goat

(*Kaštradina from Domestic Balkan Goat*)



meat dish



gluten free

Country of origin: Montenegro

Serves: 4

Preparation time 10-15 minutes

Cooking time: 1:45 -2 hours

Calories in 100 g: 97 kcal

Ingredients:

² 500 g of kaštradina (dried goat meat)	² 2 medium carrots
² 1 kg of collard	² 1 bulb of onion
² 500 g of potatoes	² a couple of garlic cloves
	² ground black pepper

Preparation:

1. *Kaštradina* should first be thoroughly washed in warm water (if necessary, leave it to sit overnight in water).
2. Put the meat into the pot, add finely chopped onion and carrots, pour over the water and cook for about an hour.
3. Then add potatoes cut into cubes and collard sliced into stripes and cook for another 45 minutes to one hour.
4. Season the meal with pepper and chopped garlic



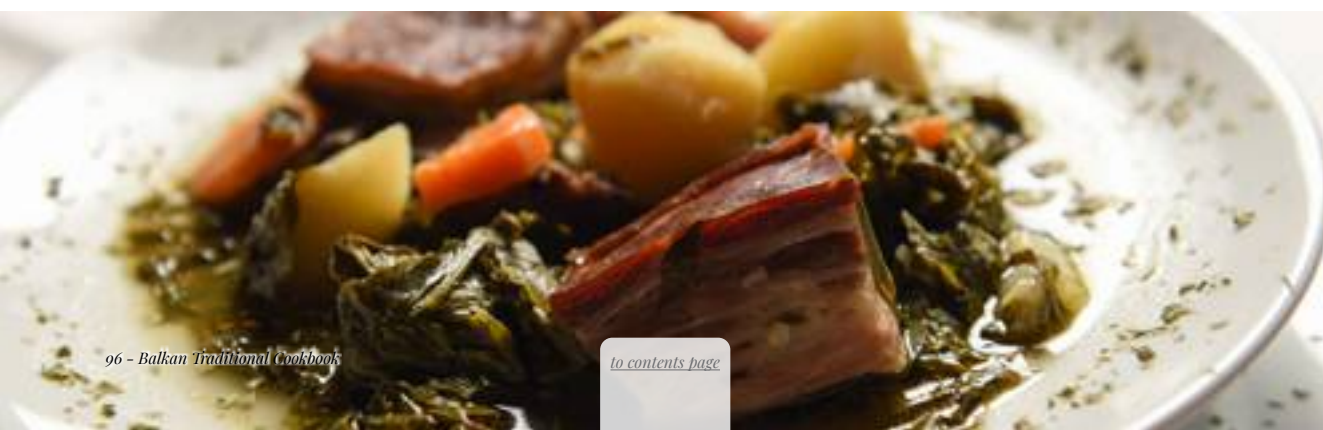
Cooked Dried Meat from Domestic Balkan Goat

(Kaštradina from Domestic Balkan Goat)



Kaštradina is the dried, smoked meat of a castrated ram or a buck. This dish has been traditionally prepared in Montenegro since ancient times and is offered in many traditional cuisine restaurants. It can be stored for much longer than ordinary stews, so this is one of the reasons why it has been widely used in the past. As Montenegro has always been richer in small ruminants than cattle, traditional cuisine has been more associated with dishes made from sheep meat. When you order this specialty at one of the traditional cuisine restaurants, you

will most often get cooked dry sheep meat, although in a small number of restaurants, this dish is also prepared from dried goat's meat. If Kaštradina is prepared in the traditional way, then it is cooked in a cooking kettle above the hearth over an open fire. The meat comes mainly from local breeds of sheep (*Pivska Pramenka*, *Žuja*, *Ljaba*, *Sora*, *Bardoka* and *Sjenička*) and goats (Domestic Balkan goat). Kaštradina has a strong, specific smell and taste. Most often it is combined with collard (*Raštan*), but kale and cabbage can be used for this purpose as well.



Domestic Balkan Goat

Domestic Balkan goat breed is a typical primitive breed, mostly reared in the Karst area of Montenegro (south-western area and the coastal regions) where natural preconditions for breeding other ruminant species (cattle and sheep) are significantly less favourable. The main characteristics of this breed are animals with a rough constitution with long, thick and shiny coats. According to coat colour, there are several different strains of domestic Balkan breed: red-brown, considered to be an authentic representative of the domestic Balkan breed in Montenegro; reddish/bay; even black, white or spotted. The majority of animals (male and female) are horned. This domestic breed makes up about 30% of the total goat population in Montenegro (about 8,000), while the share of red strain is about 50%. In

the last 15 years, there has been a growing tendency to improve the production capacity of indigenous goat populations by crossing them with highly productive breeds (Alpine and Saanen). Therefore, the share of crossbreeds has been increased, while the population of the purebred Domestic Balkan goat breed is rapidly decreasing.

The average weight of the live animals is about 45 kg, height to withers is 65 cm and the lactation period lasts about 217 days. The average milk yield is 140 kg with 3.4% fat content. Fertility is 1.2 to 1.3 kids per partum. In good conditions, this breed reacts very quickly by increasing the performance of fertility and milk yield. Goat milk has favourable nutrient content, is higher in proteins, calcium and 'prebiotic' carbohydrates, while it's lower in lactose compared to cow's milk. Similarly, goat meat has been established as nutritious and lean, therefore it is preferred in a healthy diet.

Roasted Lamb with Russian Potatoes

(Fagnjetina with Russian Potatoes)



meat dish



gluten free



Country of origin: Montenegro

Serves: 6

Prep time: 15-30 minutes

Cooking time: 2 -2,5 hours

Calories in 100 g: 138 kcal

Ingredients:

- ² 1.5 kg lamb meat
- ² 100 ml vegetable oil
- ² 400 ml white wine
- ² 500 ml water
- ² ½ leek stalk
- ² 3 medium onion bulbs
- ² 1 garlic bulb
- ² 2 carrots
- ² 1-2 kg of potatoes

By taste:

- ² salt
- ² ground red pepper
- ² ground black pepper
- ² rosemary
- ² parsley

Preparation:

1. Finely salt the lamb meat and place it in an earthenware baking dish.
2. Peel the potatoes and cut them into large pieces.
3. Cut the leek, carrots and onions into large pieces.
4. Add all of the vegetables and spices to the dish, then cover with water, oil and wine and mix well.
5. Bake in a preheated oven at 200°C for at least 1 hour in a covered pan. After 1 hour, remove the lid and continue baking for 1 more hour until the meat is tender and separates easily from the bone. Baste the potatoes and the lamb with pan juices while they are cooking. Baking time will depend on the quality of the meat.



Roasted Lamb with Russian Potatoes (*Fagnjetina with Russian Potatoes*)



During the weekend or feast days in the spring, traditionally roasted lamb meat with potatoes is a synonym for the taste of home. In the Balkans, this dish is often called *Ispod sača* (under the cloche pan) describing the old traditional preparation mode. *Sač* is a bell-shaped shallow metal or ceramic tightly covered dome, surrounded with ash and hot coals. Its shape allows the circulation of steam during the process of slow-roast-stewing so that the flavors of the meat, potatoes and vegetables can blend together. It results in a fall-off-the-bone tender meat and soft, juicy, aromatic vegetables. It is said that the only ingredient tastier than the meat

cooked this way is the potato baked in meat juice. The Russian potato variety is an especially suitable variety for roasting with lamb, due to its high content of dry matter that contributes to the aftertaste of melted potatoes.

At home, the steps for cooking the lamb are similar and the best results are achieved when the lamb is baked in an oven, in a suitable pot with a tight lid. Aside from the longer cooking time, this recipe is very popular for various occasions due to its short and simple preparation. It is always served warm with any kind of seasonal salad.



Russian Potato

Over a long period of potato cultivation in Montenegro, under the influence of local growing conditions and specific traditional cultivation practices, numerous distinctive local, autochthonous potato populations were developed by the farmers. The intensification of the agricultural production, based on uncontrolled replacement of the old varieties and the adoption of new technologies, has contributed to the disappearance of a significant part of the potato genetic resources. Today, these old varieties are cultivated in very small rural areas, mostly in villages that sit at higher altitudes. Predominantly, they are maintained by the elderly inhabitants, because of their superior culinary qualities and better adaptability to harsh conditions.

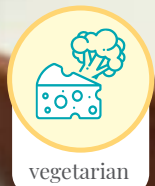
Out of all local populations, *Ruska krtola* (Russian potato or tuber) is of greatest importance. This variety has been grown under the given name from

the time of Petar I Petrović Njegoš (1782-1830). The plants form a vigorous above-ground vegetative mass that supports the establishment of a large number of tubers. The tubers have an oval shape, smooth pale red skin and light yellow flesh with a smooth texture. They contain a high content of dry matter, which gives them a unique quality and widens the range of their use – from steaming to baking. There is a saying that Russian tuber melts in the mouth – it's that good! When cooked for a longer time, the tubers break down completely, making this variety very suitable for mashed potatoes.

It is an early maturing variety that gives high yields in years with a favourable distribution of rainfalls. The plants are moderately sensitive to leaf and tuber late blight. The Russian potato is grown in traditional production systems, primarily for household consumption but small quantities are also sold on the local markets.

Pie with Zrnovski Leek

(Komat with Zrnovski Leek)



vegetarian

Country of origin: North Macedonia

Serves: 6

Preparation time: 1 hour

Cooking time: 30 minutes

Calories in 100 g: 312 kcal

Ingredients:

² 2-3 leek stalks	² 150-200 ml sunflower/corn oil
² 300-400 g salty white cheese	² 300-400 ml water
² 2-3 eggs	² 1 tbsp white sugar
² 1 kg bread flour	By taste
² 20 g fresh yeast	² salt

Preparation:

Filling

1. Cut the leek bundles into small slices.
2. Fry the leek in 50 ml of oil for 10-15 minutes, stir until it gets tender. If needed, add water during frying.
3. In a separate bowl, mash the cheese.
4. Remove the pan from the stove and add the cheese. Stir it, beat in the eggs and add them, then stir again. Add salt to taste. Allow to cool.

Dough

1. Place 1 kg of flour in a mixing bowl and make a hole in the centre of the dough. Drizzle in 350 ml of lukewarm water, yeast, sugar and 1 tbs of salt. Mix until the dough comes together and transfer the dough ball to a lightly floured work surface.
2. Knead until dough is smooth and elastic

and let it sit for 10 minutes.

3. Split the ball into 7 pieces, out of which one should be a bit larger than the others.
4. Roll the larger ball with a rolling pin into a layer as thin as possible, with a diameter larger than the baking pot bottom of nearly 10 cm.
5. Place the layer into the pot glazed with oil and make slight ruches at the bottom. Let the excess hang over the pan.
6. Sprinkle the layer with 3-4 tbsp of oil.
7. Roll 3 more balls into layers the same diameter as the bottom of the pot, stack them over the first one, sprinkling 3-4 tbsp of oil on each layer.
8. Dust the fourth layer with flour and distribute the cold filling equally over it. Dust the filling with flour.

9. Roll the remaining 3 balls and stack the pastries over the filling, sprinkling 3-4 tbsp of oil on each layer.

10. Brush the last pastry with oil.
11. Overlap the extra pastry hanging over the pot and with the excess, make an inward spiral at the edges. Brush the spiral edge with oil.
12. Allow to sit for 10 minutes.
13. Bake it for 5-10 minutes in preheated oven (250°C), and then 25-30 minutes on reduced heat of 200°C, until it gets golden brown.
14. Mix 50 ml of water with 2 to 3 drops of oil.
15. Take the pie out of the oven and brush it with the oily water.
16. Cover it with a tea-towel and allow to cool.

Pie with Zrnovski Leek

(Komat with Zrnovski Leek)



Leek *komat* is a traditional pie made of several layers of dough or phyllo, filled with leek. As an addition to the leek, cheese or eggs, or both can be added. This type of pie can be filled with minced meat, sour cabbage, white cheese/sorrel or with spinach. There is also a sweet version with pumpkin or apple filling. It is often called *Zelnik* (usually refers to pie with green leafy vegetables), but originally *Zelnik* has all of the filling placed in the middle

of the baking pan, while the dough layers sprinkled with cheese circle are around the filling.

Macedonian people have a passion for the smell of a freshly-baked homemade pie. Different types of pie that are delightfully velvety and crispy are sold on almost every corner of the country's cities. The pie is usually served with yogurt or sour milk cream and it is best eaten warm.



Zrnovski Leek

This local variety is well-known in the eastern region of the country, while it is almost unknown in other regions of the country. Usually, traders and the consumers that are familiar with the quality and taste of *Zrnovski* leek make the purchase directly from the fields in the village. Its name is taken from leek (*praz*) from the village of Zrnovci and the seeds are preserved for at least 100 years.

The quality of *Zrnovski* leeks is as a result of the specific variety and the composition of soil rich in organic matter with optimal water drainage in the fields of Zrnovci.

It belongs to *Kamush* leek type (meaning high leek), being

more than 2 m in height and possessing a slightly lighter-green colour than the other varieties. The blanched stem is short (up to 10 cm), with 17 wrapped layers in average. The edible light green stalk is long and very tender, and is easily broken if not handled carefully. This variety is sweet with a less distinctive odour, but it does have a strong aroma of leek. The stalk's tenderness means that the *Zrnovski* leek is the perfect pie filling as there is no need of frying. It can be cut into small pieces, squeezed by hand and directly drizzled over the phyllo. Its consistency and flavour are perfect to use when preparing freshly smoked sausages, too.

Leek is often used fresh in Macedonian cuisine, and is added to salads, or cooked in different stews and pastries.

Pie with Orchepolka Sheep Dried Meat

(Pastrmajlija with Orchepolka Sheep Pastrma)



meat dish

Country of origin: North Macedonia

Serves: 6

Preparation time: 2 hours

Cooking time: 20 minutes

Calories in 100 g: 302 kcal

Ingredients:

² 1 kg pork meat

² 150 g *pastrma* (dried sheep meet)

² 750 g bread flour

² 400 ml water (approximately)

² 200 ml sunflower/corn oil

² 3-4 tbsp lard

² 30 g fresh yeast

² 1.5 tbsp white sugar

By taste

² salt

² ground red pepper

² ground black pepper

² mixed vegetable spice

Preparation:

1. First, prepare the meat. If possible, use soft meat from the front part of the pig (ribs). It's best to prepare it at least one day prior to cooking, so the meat can soak up the salt and soften. Cut the meat into 1 cm cubes and mix with a lot of salt, 1 tbsp of ground red pepper and black pepper if desired. Taste the cubes, they should be very salty. Leave the meat in a covered pot overnight. However, it is more delicious if it stays in the pot for between 2 and 3 days.

2. In a small dish combine yeast, 40 ml lukewarm water and 1.5-2 tbsp of flour. Mix the contents and let it sit for 15 to 20 minutes.

3. In a large bowl place 750 kg of flour, the yeast mixture, 1 tsp of salt, 1.5 tbsp of white sugar, 200 ml oil and around 350 to 400 ml lukewarm water. Mix until medium-soft

elastic dough.

4. Transfer the dough into a separate large bowl brushed with oil, cover it and place on a warm place for approximately 2 hours or until it triples in size.

5. Transfer it to a lightly floured surface and knead it briefly until smooth.

6. Divide the dough into 6 pieces (one for each serving) and form them into cylindrical shapes.

7. On a wooden kneading board dusted with flour press each of the cylindrical-shaped pieces of dough by hand to flatten it and stretch the dough. Start pressing from the middle with repeated movements going into a circle towards the edges, to get canoe-like shaped dough 7 mm thin. Leave the edges 1.5 cm thick to get the crust.

8. Place the dough shapes on to a baking pan dusted with flour.

9. Equally distribute the pork meat and pastrma over all pies.

10. With a tablespoon distribute small lard scoops over the meat. The lard should be room temperature.

11. Brush the dough edges with melted lard.

12. Bake for 20 minutes at 250°C in a preheated oven.

13. If you wish to add eggs, then bake the dough with the meat for 10 minutes until the meat gets golden red and take it out of the oven. Pour 1 egg on each *Pastrmajlija*. The eggs should not be beaten, but gently mixed by hand or fork. Continue baking for another 10 minutes.

14. Mix 20 ml of water with 2-3 drops of oil.

15. Take the pies out of the oven and immediately brush the crust with the oily water.

16. Cover with a tea-towel and allow them to cool.

Pie with Ovchepolka Sheep Dried Meat (Pastrmajlija with Ovchepolka Sheep Pastrma)



Pastrmajlija is a traditional Macedonian dish, typically a baked oval-shaped dough pie, topped with cubed and salted meat. In many ways it is similar to a pizza, but the dough pie has a narrow oval shape that tapers to a point at each end, a bit like the shape of a canoe. In the past it was prepared with *pastrma* – salted and dried meat. The family tradition, dating back many generations, of preparing pastrma for the winter, is slowly disappearing. Generally, this term in the Balkan countries refers to any dried meat, but in North Macedonia it means dried sheep or goat meat. The meat is left to drain, then cut into large slices and salted with sea salt. The salting process lasts between 3 and 4 weeks, with the pieces repeatedly turned and salted from side to side during the process, so that the salt can penetrate equally. After the salting process, the meat is left to dry at a windy location in cold weather for at least 1.5 months, so the salt falls off. In the past, *pastrma* was used

for cooking various meals or for roasting. Presently, it is only used for *Pastrmajlija*.

Nowadays, *Pastrmajlija* is rarely prepared with pastrma only, due to the strong taste and aroma of the sheep meat. Usually, if pastrma is used at all, it is mixed with pork or chicken, but the name of the pie has remained unchanged.

The most famous *Pastrmajlija* comes from Shtip, a city in the eastern part of the country. There's a national festival for this dish which proves how good *Pastrmajlija* is. Every year since 2006, to celebrate Shtip's signature dish, the traditional festival of *Pastrmalijada* takes place in the city during September and October. The Municipality of Shtip trademarked the name *Shtipska pastrmajlija* in 2010. Shtipska pastrmajlija is prepared without eggs, while the neighbouring cities of Sveti Nikole and Veles, prepare it with eggs. It is always served with topped pickled pepperoni, hot or sweet.



Ovchepolka Sheep

Ovchepolska sheep is a strain of *Pramenka* sheep breed, originating from Ovche Pole region in the eastern area of North Macedonia. The name of this region means sheep's (*ovche*) plateau (*pole*). In the past, this plateau was populated with different nationalities and ethnic groups, attributing to the diversity of sheep breeds. Three different postulates are related to the origin of *Ovchepolska* sheep. According to first theory, the native Ilir tribe raised its own breed. The second one is related to the Slavic tribe introducing their long-tailed sheep, and the third theory is related with the Ottoman Empire when the Turks settled in Ovche pole along with their long-tailed sheep.

A typical animal of this strain is white coated, always has a completely or partially pigmented head which is black or brown. Face pigmentation haze is a shapeless spot spanning up to horn root, and both visage sides up to mouth. Between this spotted head parts white irregular pigmentation appears. This type of pigmentation is known as *kalesha*, a synonym for pretty. There are animals with fully black or dark pigmented heads,

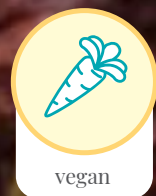
known as *karabashi* (meaning black head). The snout is always black pigmented, sometimes even the interior of the mouth. The head is narrow and long with well developed horns in rams, while ewes are always polled. Legs are strong, pigmented in black with white spots or sometimes plain white. The tail has is getting near to the hock joints. The average weight of the animals is 35–48 kg in rams and 25–48 kg in ewes.

Ovchepolska sheep, as an indigenous breed, has modest productivity, with good fertility and low twining occurrence (5–6%). The average lactation period of 191 days and milk yield of 72.49 litres varies greatly from 38.7 litres to 91.3 litres with 4.6–6.3% milk fats. Lamb meat has delicious taste, as well as the cheese obtained from the milk of this strain.

Presently it is breed on two-thirds of the territory of North Macedonia comprising 60% of the *Pramenka* breed and 30% (pure or cross breeds) of the total sheep production. The effective population size has increased over the last few years, so the current status of the breed has been changed from endangered to vulnerable.

Potato Mash with Macedonian Embroidered Peppers

(*Makalo (Kl'chano) with Macedonian Embroidered Peppers*)



vegan



gluten free



Country of origin: North Macedonia

Serves: 6

Preparation time: 1 hour

Cooking time: 30 minutes

Calories in 100 g: 190 kcal

Ingredients:

² 10 dry sweet embroidered peppers

² 2 leek bundles (stalks)

² 3 large potatoes (500-600 g)

² 300 ml sunflower/corn oil

² 1-2 garlic cloves

By taste

² salt

² ground black pepper

² mixed vegetable spice

Preparation:

1. Thoroughly wash the potatoes and peppers.
2. Boil the unpeeled potatoes in a pot with a lot of water for 30-40 minutes until they are well-boiled. Drain the water and leave the potatoes to cool.
3. In another pot boil the whole dried peppers for 20-30 minutes. If you prefer a spicy taste, you can replace several sweet peppers with hot ones of the same pepper type. Drain the water and peel them on a wooden cutting board with a fork. Mash them.
4. Peel the potatoes and mash them with a fork.
5. Mix the potatoes and peppers into a mash.
6. Cut the leek bundles and peeled garlic cloves into small slices, then mash them in a wooden bowl.
7. Mix all of the ingredients, thoroughly stir and distribute the mash evenly in a bowl.
8. Heat the oil in a frying pan for 2-3 minutes and pour it over the mash. Stir slightly to better allow the oil to mix into the mash.

Potato Mash with Macedonian Embroidered Peppers

(*Makalo (Kl'chano) with Macedonian Embroidered Peppers*)



Makalo is a well-recognised recipe from Macedonian cuisine. It is essentially a potato mash, with some added ingredients that give the dish a striking taste. It serves as a testament to the simplicity and culinary art of Macedonian cuisine. The word *Makalo* means to dip a piece of bread in the food.

The other word *Kl'chano* refers to the preparation, meaning smashed in wooden mortar. Routinely, it is made during the autumn and winter when there is an abundance of dried embroidered peppers. Primarily, it is served as a side dish along with salad, but it can be a substitute for the main course as well.



Macedonian Embroidered Pepper

The embroidered pepper (*Vezen piper*) is a unique type of Macedonian pepper with a unique fruit-like appearance, flavour, taste and use. This pepper type has not been studied and described in detail as yet, but it is commonly grown in many gardens. It's made up from a number of diverse local varieties with significant variation of fruit characteristics. It is so widely used in the kitchen that each family always has stock of few dried peppers to hand. It is also often cultivated in the border regions of the neighbouring countries Kosovo, Albania and Serbia, i.e. in the regions with frequent fluctuations of Macedonians. However, only Macedonian folk have an accentuated preference for using this pepper in various dishes, which has subsequently led to the creation of so many local varieties, although a synonym for the embroidered pepper is the sweet or hot long-fruited pepper with strong striations.

The name of this unusual pepper refers to the light coloured striations on the red peppers themselves, so the outside of it gives the distinct embroidered appearance. There are many variations of the name, like engraved, carved, striated, firebrand for the very pungent ones and *Badzanaci* (meaning husbands of two sisters) for a separate group with much smaller and very



hot peppers.

The peppers have 2 to 4 chambers with their colour turning from green or dark green to light red, red or dark red. They can be long (up to 35 cm) or short (5 to 8 cm) and 2 to 5 cm wide, weighing 5–90 g. When dried they are dark red and some can be almost black. The striations have off-white to cream colour, oriented mostly horizontally, wide and thick to very narrow and thin, sometimes completely covering the whole pepper or just a small part of the pepper. The skin has a rough texture when consumed fresh or dried, but not unpleasant. The skin is tight to the flesh of the pepper. The flesh is not crispy, but juicy and soft, up to 5 to 6 mm thick, with a higher content of dry matter and sugar than the other peppers. Its fruit flavour is rich and appealing with lots of aromatic components, ranging from sweet, mild to extremely pungent, or sweet but with a strong

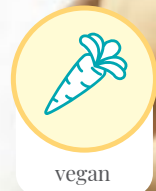
pungent aroma. Roasting softens the skin, increases the sweetness and decreases the hotness. When compared to other types of pungent pepper like *feferoni* and *chily*, embroidered peppers may have less total content of capsaicinoids, but the distribution of different capsaicines is in favour of dihydrocapsaicin, which most probably contributes to the specific flavour.

Peppers are usually threaded on strings and dried in attics or on balconies.

Dried peppers are used for the preparation of a spice, *bukov piper*, a roughly crushed dry pepper with the seeds of the pepper, too. Whole dry peppers are cooked in various stews, omelettes, dips and spreads. Fresh fruits can be frozen or processed in different ways with baked peppers pressed and stacked in jars filled with brine or oil. More recently, embroidered peppers are used for preparation of a well-known spread - Ajvar.

Baked *Tetovski* Beans

(*Tavche Gravche* with *Tetovski* Bean)



vegan



gluten free

Country of origin: North Macedonia

Serves: 6

Preparation time: 15 minutes

Cooking time: 2-3 hours

Calories in 100 g: 115 kcal

Ingredients:

² 500 g dry white <i>Tetovski</i> beans	By taste
² 250-300 g onion	² salt
² 3 garlic cloves	² ground red pepper
² 3 fresh peppers	² ground black pepper
² 3-6 dry red peppers	² mixed vegetable spice
² 50-100 ml sunflower/corn oil	² chopped fresh mint and parsley

Preparation:

- Soak the white beans in a pot with lukewarm water for between 5 and 6 hours, usually overnight before preparation. Make sure the beans are covered with water.
- Drain the water, add fresh water and boil the beans for 15 minutes.
- Drain the water again and add fresh water. Add the fresh peppers, peeled onion bulbs and garlic cloves, half of the oil and leave it to simmer slowly on very low heat. The cooking time depends on the variety of bean used, but it usually takes about 1.5 hours for the beans to be completely tender, but not mushy. The mixture needs to have a stew-like consistency.
- Before the beans are completely boiled, add the salt, spices and chopped mint or parsley if desired.
- Remove the peppers from the pot, peel them.
- Discard the peel and place the flesh of the peppers in a dish.
- Remove the onion and garlic from the pot, add them to the dish with the peppers.
- Mash all of the ingredients in the dish with a fork, and place the mix back in the pot and stir. If the stew does not reach a gravy-like consistency, remove several beans from the pot, mash them and place them back into the pot. Optionally, fry the mushy beans for 5 minutes and then place them back into the pot. This will give the dish extra flavour.
- Pour the contents of the pot into a large earthenware pot for baking, add almost all of the remaining oil and ground red pepper and stir thoroughly. The stew has to be thick with enough water to barely cover the beans. If you have extra water in the pot, simply remove it.
- Taste for salt and spices.
- Place between 3 and 6 whole dry red peppers on top. If the stew is to be distributed into 6 small pots, top them with one red pepper each. Alternatively, dried red peppers can be pre-boiled for 20 minutes, peeled, mashed and stirred into the stew.
- Prepare the roux. Gently heat 1 tbsp of oil in a frying pan over a medium heat. Add the ground red pepper and keep stirring until it has just thoroughly combined and has become fragrant (about 1 minute).
- Pour the roux over the stew in the earthen baking pot and do not stir again.
- Bake the beans for between 30 and 40 minutes in a preheated oven (250°C), or until it looks juicy with a crusty top layer. Do not allow to dry completely.
- Let it to cool for 15 minutes before serving.

Baked *Tetovski* Beans

(*Tavche Gravche* with *Tetovski* Bean)



Tavche Gravche is truly *the* quintessential Macedonian food, with a long and well-preserved tradition. The traditional preparation method, of which today's recipes differ slightly, and the tradition of having this meal on a Friday, go back centuries ago. Friday fasting is still observed by many Christians in North Macedonia, done in commemoration of the crucifixion of Jesus Christ on Good Friday, and the original Tavche Gravche dish is prepared without meat. However, during the winter it is often enriched with smoked meat or ribs. It can also be prepared with leek instead of onion. The best taste and aroma come from using the local variety *Tetovski* beans (from

the Tetovo region of North Macedonia), but it can be prepared with any type of bean with large, compressed, kidney-like white seeds. The dish is normally baked in a large earthenware baking pot, or in several smaller one-serving pots. The latter custom is practiced at homes to celebrate religious holidays, but can also be found in some restaurants. *Tavche Gravche's* name originates from the serving tradition – beans (*gravche*, the diminutive from of grav or bean) served in a baking pot (*tavche*, the diminutive from tava, or pot). It can be enjoyed as a main course with fresh salad and crusty bread or as a side dish to accompany another meal.



Tetovski Bean

The *Tetovski* bean is one of the oldest local bean varieties, originating from several centuries ago. Its name refers to the area of cultivation, the Tetovo region in the north-western part of the country which has optimal growing conditions for this variety of bean. It is very popular across the Balkans, and therefore it is cultivated over large areas.

This variety is easily distinguished by its white, large, compressed, kidney-shape and shine. There are other local varieties which are similar, but the *Tetovski* bean is preferred by many primarily for its taste and cooking properties. Cooked beans are tender and silky-smooth, remain firm and not pulped, they have superior flavour, taste and shorter cooking

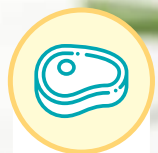
time to other bean varieties. These characteristics are probably due to the favourable amino acids composition of the proteins, which also causes less flatulence.

The *Tetovski* bean is a climbing bean type with long herbaceous and twining stem that needs support and is traditionally cultivated jointly with maize. The pods are green turning to the colour of straw when mature. It is a high yielding variety (up to 1 t /ha) with excellent tolerance to diseases.

In 2006 this variety was named as protected with the Protected Designation of Origin (PDO). To promote the significance and the product of the *Tetovski* bean, a national festival, Bean Days has been held annually in the village of Tearce since 2010.

Liver Roll from Karakachanka Sheep

(Drob Sarma from Karakachanka Sheep)



meat dish



gluten free

Country of origin: North Macedonia

Serves: 6

Preparation time: 1 hour

Cooking time: 1 hour

Calories in 100 g: 181 kcal

Ingredients:

² 1 lamb's offal: caul fat, lungs, liver, heart, tripe

² 100 g white rice

² 1 onion bulb or 2 bunches of spring onion

² 50 ml sunflower/corn oil

By taste

² mixed vegetable spice

² ground black pepper

² ground red pepper

² chopped garlic

² chopped parsley

Preparation:

1. Boil all the ingredients from the lamb, *except the caul fat*, in a pot for 10 minutes.

2. Drain the water, add fresh water and boil them again for 10 minutes. Repeat this step 2 to 3 times until the strong odour is reduced. The last boil should be for 20 minutes in salted water.

3. Drain the water from the last boiling in another pot, taste for salt and keep for later.

4. Cut the boiled ingredients into small cubes (1 cm).

5. Slice the onion and fry, stirring frequently, until it is tender.

6. Add rice and salt to the onion and continue frying and stirring for 5 minutes. Add ground

red pepper and fry, being sure to stir for 1 minute.

7. Remove the pan from the stove and add the vegetable spice, black pepper, diced offal, as well as garlic and parsley if desired. Stir the content thoroughly. Taste for salt.

8. Boil fresh water in another pot.

9. Place the caul fat in the boiled water for 1 minute. Afterwards, you will be able to stretch it.

10. Stretch the hot caul fat in a baking pan.

11. Place the mixture over the caul fat. Wrap the extra fat over the mixture carefully and fasten the caul with wooden toothpicks. An alternative, should you wish for smaller portions, is to make several smaller wrapped pieces

instead of one large. 12. Preheat the oven to 250°C.

13. Heat up the water preserved from the last boil and pour it into the pot. Approximately 1 cm of the pan bottom should be covered with water.

14. Place in the oven in a covered pan and bake for 10-15 minutes at 250°C, then remove the cover and continue baking for 30-40 minutes at 200°C.

15. Every 10-15 minutes pour some of the water in the pan over the caul fat.

16. The meal is ready when the caul fat turns golden brown.

17. If desired, 5 minutes before it is ready, pour 2 to 3 beaten eggs over the caul fat. The eggs will absorb the odour and the oil.

Liver Roll from Karakachanka Sheep

(Drob Sarma from Karakachanka Sheep)



Drob Sarma is a traditional dish prepared with lamb offal, and was regularly cooked in the past at the time of year when lambs were slaughtered. Today, it is customary to prepare drob sarma for Easter, often accompanied by roast lamb meat. It is also a popular side dish in the restaurants. The word drob in Macedonian is used for both liver (black drob) and lungs (white drob). The word sarma represents a wrapped filling, usually minced meat wrapped in sour cabbage

leaves. Drob Sarma is wrapped in a caul fat, the lacy fat membrane or fat netting that surrounds the animal stomach, which is used in cooking because of its casing capabilities.

It is prepared in all regions, with slight differences in the recipe across different regions. The most noticeable difference is seen in the eastern region of the country where the filling for Drob Sarma is stuffed into a whole lamb's stomach. Then, the stuffed lamb is baked in a wood-fired oven.



Karakachanka Sheep

There are three Pramenka breed strains in the Republic of North Macedonia: Karakachanian, Ovchepolian and Sharplaninian. The name Pramenka is derived from *pramen* (hair strand) referring to the sheep's coat appearance. *Karakachanka* sheep is recognisable by its dark coloured coat. Its name originates from the *Karakachans* - a nomadic Balkan people. It is considered that due to their extremely conservative shepherding, Karakachans saved the most primitive and pure domestic forms of animal breeds. This tradition has been abandoned over the years and nowadays a pure Karakachanka sheep is rarely found. The name has other variations associated with the word Vlahian, derived from Vlachs - an ethnic minority in North Macedonia, the breeders of this strain.

Karakachanska sheep strain has no specific breeding region, and it was maintained in the most extensive areas. Today, it can be found in the areas surrounding the cities of Shtip, Strumica, Veles and Bitola. The sheep strain is shared with the

neighbouring countries of Bulgaria, Albania and Greece.

The colour of the coat is grey-black or brown-black, while all uncovered body parts (head, ears and legs) are overgrown with black hair. The head is small with spiral horns on rams, whereas most of the ewes are hornless (about 90%). The legs are short, strong and well-developed. The wool is coarse, rough, up to 26 cm long. The average weight of ewes is up to 33 kg and of rams is up to 44 kg. This breed belongs to the group of short-tailed sheep with an average tail length of 24 cm.

It is very lively and energetic, tough, modest, highly adaptable to extensive mountain breeding conditions, durable and very resistant, almost never falling ill, and with a highly developed sense for being part of a flock. Twining percent in this strain is low, between 3-5%. The Karakachanian strain has a low milk yield (24-26 litres) per lactation. In the past, the main income was derived mainly from milk processed to cheese. This indigenous strain gives a delightful taste to the meat and dairy products.

Mariovo Village Meat with Brazdanski Pogachar Onion (*Mariovsko Selsko Meso with Brazdanski Pogachar Onion*)



meat dish



gluten free

Country of origin: North Macedonia

Serves: 6

Preparation time: 1 hour

Cooking time: 2.5-3 hours

Calories in 100 g: 187 kcal

Ingredients:

² half a pig's liver	pogachar)
² both lungs of the pig	² 5-7 dry red peppers (with long fleshy fruits)
² 1 heart	By taste
² 500 g fresh pork belly	² salt
² 1 kg lean pork meat	² mixed vegetable spice
² 700-800 g. onion (a variety for cooking, such as Brazdanski	² ground black pepper

Preparation:

1. Cut the dried peppers into 2-3 cm pieces.
2. Peel and cut the onion bulbs into shorter slices.
3. Cut the whole meat, liver, lungs and heart into 2-3 cm cubes.
4. Put the bacon in a preheated large frying pan without oil and fry, stirring constantly.
5. When the fat begins to spit, add the onion and salt and fry for 5 minutes until golden.
6. Add the remaining ingredients, except the liver. Fry for about 20-30 minutes.
7. Preheat the oven to 250°C.
8. Transfer the contents of the pan to a large earthenware baking pot without adding water. Taste for salt and bake, uncovered, for between 2 and 3 hours, stirring every 20 minutes. The baking time will depend upon the quality of the meat, so bake until the lean meat becomes tender.
9. Add the liver cubes and continue baking for another 20-30 minutes. Taste to ensure the liver remains soft. If overbaked, it will become firm. Leave some stew in the pot, so that the meal is juicy and not dry.

Mariovo Village Meat with Brazdanski Pogachar Onion (*Mariovsko Selsko Meso with Brazdanski Pogachar Onion*)



This meal was prepared traditionally during the pig slaughter season in the villages, a time that coincided with winter time, when the liver and lungs are fresh. For that reason, the meal is called Village Meat (*Selsko meso*). The given recipe originates from Mariovo, an area in the southern part of North Macedonia, in the vicinity of Bitola and Prilep. Today, Village Meat refers to a dish with various type of meat in it together with mushrooms and onion. This original recipe for Village Meat is rarely used to cook the dish today, but doing so gives Village Meat a special flavour

and aroma. Much of the flavour comes from the peppers and onion. Therefore, an onion variety for cooking, like Brazdanski pogachar, is used for preparation of Village Meat.

It is served in an earthenware pot, traditionally with *turshija* as a salad. *Turshija* is a mixture of pickled vegetables, such as pepper, green tomatoes, carrots, gherkins and cauliflower. The acidic taste of the *turshila* goes well with the pungent fatty taste of the meat.



Brazdanski Pogachar Onion

This local variety, often named *Melnik* in the past, originates from an area of Skopje, and is grown in the villages of Brazda, Gluvo and Sandevo. Due to its distinct taste and sharp aroma it is primarily used for cooking. The bulbs are large, more or less flattened with light to dark copper-coloured outer scales and is easily recognisable. The name of this onion comes from its place of origin (the village of Brazda), and shape – *Pogacha*, meaning pie. It was cultivated over a much larger area in the past and exported in the regional countries. In Serbia it is registered as a domesticated old variety.

It is biennial crop, produced by sets – small immature onion bulbs. In the first year, the seeds are sown in beds covered with sludge or very fine sand and harvested when the

majority of sets reach about 1 cm in diameter. The sets are stored in cold rooms until the planting the next year. The plants are 70 cm high, with nine medium-waxy ash green leaves. The bulbs are formed from scales, they are generally flat, slightly elongated at the neck, reaching a diameter of up to 10 cm and weight of about 100 g. The inner scales (the edible part) are of milky to snowy white colour, with very high content of dry mater (up to 17%).

Due to these characteristics, the bulbs are very firm and appropriate for drying and storing until the next crop. Under the irrigation the yield potential is 36.5 t/ha.

The Macedonian diet largely depends on home-cooked meals, so this variety is regularly used for flavouring various meals. For medicinal purposes, the outer scales are cooked and used for treatment of bronchial diseases.

Cheese Curd with Beli Osmak Corn

(*Svrljiški Belmuž with Beli Osmak Corn*)



Country of origin: Serbia
Serves: 6
Preparation time: 1 hour
Cooking time: 1 hour
Calories in 100 g: 249 kcal

Ingredients:

² 1 kg one-day old full-fat unsalted cheese (milk curd)
² 500 g white corn flour
² 100 g whole grain wheat flour

By taste

² salt

Preparation:

1. Ground the curd and place it in a heated pan on the stove, stirring gently while it melts and becomes completely liquid, with a similar consistency to milk.
2. Remove the cheese from the stove and gradually add the corn and wheat flour, and 1 tablespoon of salt, constantly stirring to avoid the formation of lumps.
3. Continue boiling the mass being sure to continue stirring, until the molten milk releases milk fat.
4. When cheese and flour dough compactly rotate at the bottom of the pan remove the pan from the stove.



Cheese Curd with Beli Osmak Corn (Svrljiški Belmuž with Beli Osmak Corn)



Belmuž is prepared in Eastern Serbia, primarily in mountainous regions. It can also be found in the Bulgarian mountains and other Balkan mountain regions. *Svrljig belmuž* (*Svrljiški belmuž*) originates from the eastern part of the Svrljig municipality, specifically from the territory bounded by Svrljig, Tresibaba and Gramada Mountains. This dish is common for the nomadic shepherds of the Balkans and it's mainly connected to sheep milk production. Belmuž is enlisted on the Serbian cultural heritage list (<http://nkns.rs/cyr/popis-nkns/belmuzh>). The Belmuž we know today was actually developed later in the sixteenth century after corn was introduced in Serbia. It is also related to old white corn varieties, suitable for growing at higher altitudes, and with a shorter vegetation period.

Belmuž is a generic name for a simple shepherds' dish prepared from white corn ground on a stone mill and whole fresh cheese curd. The cheese curd is mainly made from sheep's milk, but it could be also made of cows' or mixed milk. In that case it would have a lower fat content. The

most common sheep breeds which milk is used for *Belmuž* are *Pirot zeckel*, *Svrljig* and *Krivovirska* sheep, while the best cow milk, due to its high fat content is obtained from the autochthonic Busha cattle breed and the domestic spotted cattle breed Simmental.

Svrljig belmuž is protected with a Protected Designation of Origin (PDO) label for its geographic origin as full-fat melted cheese intended for cutting with at least 48% dry matter. It is made of one-day-old full-fat cheese from the pure sheep's or cows' milk or a mixture of the two in different ratios, with a minimum of 4% milk fat and low acidity, up to 7.6 degrees. Its colour is yellow-white, with a uniform soft-dough consistency, without lumps. The dough is surrounded with molten milk fat of yellow colour. The amount of fat depends of the percent of fat contained in the curd. *Belmuž* has a pleasant, slightly acidic taste. It is somewhat elastic-stretchable and soluble in the mouth. It is served as a warm appetiser or as a main course. High fat and carbohydrate content make this product high in energy, so one needs to be careful regarding how much is consumed.

Beli Osmak Corn

Osmak is a legendary old corn variety that was once widespread throughout the Balkans. Today it is mostly to be found in the mountainous areas of Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Slovenia. Corn was brought to Serbia by Greek merchants in 1576, and the same year it was sown in the gardens of Serbs. At that time, and even a century later, the use of corn was prevalent for livestock feed. In the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries corn became the main raw material for making bread, as wheat was sown in small quantities for feasts. At the end of the nineteenth century, with an increasing population, the demand for corn increased. The corn gives high yields to the farmers in relation to the amount sown, but they were also attracted to the various other uses of the corn. In addition to being exceptional in nutrition for both humans and livestock, peasants in the past believed in the magical properties of corn believing that they could stop even clouds with their *Osmak* corn. They drank the water in which corn was boiled as a medicine to prevent coughing, used corn flour to heal burns, and used silk to improve urine excretion and the like. Corn spread was also affected by the relative ease of processing, most notably by the fact that the feudal lords did not pay tithes for it. *Osmak* remained in Serbia for centuries, up until the 1980s, when it was still practically the only variety used for human consumption. With



the arrival of hybrids, *Osmak* was completely suppressed. It is difficult to find it today, especially the yellow *Osmak* which has almost disappeared.

Osmak corn or Serbian *krivak*, *tvrdunac*, is named after the number of rows of kernels there are on each ear of corn. *Osmak* is a word derived from *osam* (eight). It has eight, rarely 10 or 12 rows, unlike hybrids, which have 18 to 20 rows. The cobs are slightly curved - hence the name *krivak* meaning bent or curved. It is 30 cm long, with large and hard-to-ground grains. The grains are white, yellow and orange, though the most famous corn is white, which can still be found in some households in hilly regions, and is well-adapted to harsh climatic conditions. This variety is two times less productive than today's hybrids but is extremely tasty and resistant to drought and other extreme climatic conditions. The rural population is also familiar with native hybrids,

but still opts to grow *Osmak* for their own needs, as it is tastier and sweeter for making home-cooked dishes. *Osmak* is almost ritually milled in water-mills along rivers and creeks, and as such it is very often an exclusive gift, a souvenir for guests. New white grain hybrids are descendants of white *Osmak*. *Osmak* is also wanted by anglers because it is loved by carp.

Osmak is grown only for the private needs of households, on small areas, often in combination with beans. It is rarely protected with pesticides and fertilised mostly with manure. It is harvested in October, usually by hand. The best corn cobs with seeds are left for sowing each year. The pruned cobs are dried in barns, crowned by hand, poured into burlap bags and carried into a mill for 'cold milling'. Demand for so-called organic food has increased interest in *Osmak* and milling in the old fashioned way on stone mills.

Sjenica Sheep's White Cheese

(Sjenički Orčiji Sir)



Country of origin: Serbia

Makes: 4 kg of cheese

Preparation time: minimum 60 days

Calories in 100 g: 400 kcal

Ingredients:

² 40 l fresh, unpasteurised sheep milk

² 4-5 ml rennet (an enzyme used to coagulate milk)/ l milk

² salt, as needed

Traditional method of production:

Sjenica cheese was originally produced in households or in high summer mountain shelters (*stanovi*) immediately after milking. If the evening milk is mixed with the morning milk, then it has to be slightly heated (30-32°C) because the evening milk is chilled. Curd is produced with the assistance of rennet for 1-2 hours at 28-30°C. The whey is drained by gravity. The curd is carefully, without breaking, transferred by a dipper to a cheese cloth, which hangs freely. In 2-3 hours in summer, and longer in winter, the whey is completely drained. The block of cheese is thus formed and is pressed for about 30 minutes under the load of 1 kg / kg of cheese. The load is then increased to 2 kg / kg for

the next 1-1.5 hours. The room temperature must not be below 20°C.

The block is cut crosswise into slices which are left to stand for about 10 minutes, covered with a cheese cloth. The slices are then salted with dried salt, up to 5% by weight of the cheese, and then the cheese is put into the pans whose bottom is salted beforehand. After stacking the slices, the cheese is covered with a lid under the load of 5-10 kg. The cheese ripens for at least 60 days in its own salty whey, which is occasionally topped up so that the cheese is always covered. The slices of cheese are triangular or square, 10 x 10 to 15 x 15 cm and 3-5 cm thick. The weight of a slice is 250-350 g.

Sjenica Sheep's White Cheese (Sjenički Orčiji Sir)



Sjenica white cheese is produced in the Sjenica and Tutin Municipalities, a highland territory of Pešter-Sjenica Plateau, 1,000–1,200 metres above sea level. It is in south-western part of Serbia in an area which belongs to Zlatibor and Raška county. Sheep were bred in this area even before the Roman Empire. The first written evidence of sheep trade from this area with Dubrovnik traders is from the thirteenth century.

Sjenica white cheese is traditionally made from fresh, unpasteurised milk obtained from Sjenica *zeckel* sheep, bred in extensive pastoral systems of high nature value. The meeting point of specific climate, soil type, and natural vegetation of the Sjenica-Peshter Plateau, together with the method of breeding of Sjenica *zeckel* sheep makes the difference between Sjenica sheep's cheese and other soft brine cheeses.

The milk fat content in the dry matter of Sjenica sheep's cheese is at least 50%, the water in the fatless matter is at least 67% and the salt 2–3.5%. The colour is extremely white, glossy and even. The dough is medium solid, gentle, with porcelain-like

fractures, associated with a smaller number of cavities. The smell is typical lactic acid and slightly spicy. The taste is pleasant, aromatic, milky-sour, moderate to salty.

On the cheese market, Sjenica white cheese faces unfair competition of cheeses with plant fats, which meets the current demand from poorer costumers for any edible product of this kind. Being disorganised and with little power to invest in dairies as required by regulating authorities, highlanders producing cheese have difficulty in continuing to produce cheese in the challenging conditions of remote mountain areas. Their extensive production is characterised with high-nature value farming and maintains high biodiversity value of the Pešter highlands, yet this production is not supported. Therefore pastoral communities of the area dealing with dairy production are slowly giving up of production and leaving the area. Nevertheless, Sjenica cheese still keep its high position on the market. Although this cheese has its geographical origin and name protected, inferior copies still exist on the market.

Sjenica Zeckel Sheep

The Sjenica strain is mostly bred in the territory of the Raška district, but it has spreads over the whole region of Western Serbia and Northern Montenegro (Sandžak area). Its predominant area belongs to the Sjenica and Tutin Municipalities, a highland territory of the Pešter-Sjenica Plateau. The area is 35 km in diameter and is located at an altitude of 1,000–1,200 metres.

Over the centuries, a special sheep strain has been grown in the municipalities of Sjenica and Tutin, which is bred for the production of milk, meat and wool. It is named after the town of Sjenica (*Sjenička*) and is also called *Pešterska* or *Sjenichko-Pešterska* sheep. Sjenica sheep originate from Asia *Minor Arkali* (*Ovis arcar*). The Turks bred these during their five hundred year period of Ottoman rule over the Serbian territory. With historical migrations of population from the Middle East to Central Serbia, Sjenica sheep were brought to this area and now it is the predominant breed and strain in Soth Western, Western and Šumadija Regions. In the highlands it was used in transhumance pastoral systems for combined meat, milk and wool production, while in different growing conditions in lowlands and hilly terrains of Shumadija, due to a lack of pastures, it was reared in small flocks or individually for mainly subsistence meat



consumption in households (orchards and small fenced grasslands in the vicinity of, or within, households).

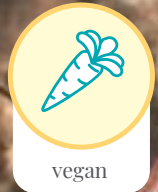
Sjenica sheep are a strain of the *Zeckel* sheep breed. It is one of Serbian biggest *Zeckel* sheep strains. The harsh climate, high altitude, vast pastures lacking adequate water, and the scarce winter diet have created extreme resilience in these sheep. It is a sheep that requires little and gives a lot. The average weight of a ram is about 60 kg, and of sheep 55 kg. The average withers height of the adult animals is 70 cm for males and 65 cm for females. It is overgrown with white wool, and very rarely has any black colouration. Typical types of this strain have dark rings around the eyes that look like eyeglasses, dark muzzles and ears. Sjenica sheep are one of the most common and well-known domestic breeds of sheep with triple combined production traits in Serbia. Lactation period lasts 6–7 months, usually from January to mid-March. The average yield is quite

variable, with an average of 80 to 100 kg of milk in one lactation. Of this amount, 40–50% is suckled by lamb and the rest is processed to make Sjenica cheese.

The sheep are bred in a similar way to as it is done in other areas, in herds of about 10–50 sheep. In the municipalities of Sjenica and Tutin, sheep farming conditions are very modest. In the spring or in the grazing period, the sheep are moved from the village to the summer habitats – the *stanovi*. During the summer period, sheep graze on semi-natural pastures the whole day, while during winter they are fed with hay from meadows. This hardy breed is adapted to harsh climatic conditions, producing efficiently high-quality raw milk and meat on karst highland/marginal lands. Milk and meat products from Sjenica sheep, processed in pristine nature to produce delicious food, has been sold for a long, long time along Dubrovnik trade roads from the seaside to the Pannonian plains.

Lean Dry Red Stuffed Vrtka Peppers

(Plnene Posne Šušpe with Vrtka Peppers)



vegan



gluten free



Country of origin: Serbia
Serves: 10
Preparation time: 3 hours
Cooking time: 1 hour
Calories in 100 g: 275 kcal

Ingredients:

² 15-20 dry red peppers	² 50 g grated potatoes
² 400 g long grain rice	² 150 ml vegetable oil
² 200 g onions	² 200 ml tomato juice
² 200 g leek	By taste
² 400 g ground nuts	² Spices: salt, ground red pepper and ground black pepper
² 50 g grated carrots	

Preparation:

1. Soak the dried peppers in hot water to soften them. Remove the pedicel, calyx and seeds.
2. Chop and fry onions and leek to a glassy appearance.
3. Add grated carrots and potatoes, then the ground nuts, rice, ground red pepper, salt, parsley and ground black pepper and continue frying.
4. When the rice is almost cooked add the chopped garlic.
5. Fill the dried peppers with the prepared mix, while leaving space for the rice to expand.
6. Seal the tops of the peppers with a slice of potato or with flour.
7. Arrange them side by side in an oil-greased earthenware pot, pour in tomato juice, oil, and water until the peppers are almost covered.
8. Cover the pot and bake at 200°C until the water evaporates, about 30-45 minutes.
9. Turn off the oven, remove the lid and continue baking for about 30 minutes.

Lean Dry Red Stuffed Vrtka Peppers (Plnene Posne Šušpe with Vrtka Peppers)



Dry red stuffed peppers is a traditional Serbian dish, and there are a number of varieties adapted to various occasions, as well as the local availability of the ingredients. Dried in the sun and wind, long red peppers stuffed with a mix of nuts/mushrooms, rice/wheat, onions/leek, potatoes, carrots etc. are the most common ways Orthodox Christians celebrate *Slava*, family patron saints' days during fasting days. A common daily dish could include a variety of combinations with or without meat and diverse starchy alternatives such as beans or potato.

Stuffed dry red peppers is a traditional meal in many parts of Serbia, mainly central, south and east where conditions for the production of peppers are favourable (lowlands and hills).

It is most likely that the pepper entered Serbia in the seventeenth century, together

with some ideas regarding methods of preparing it. Natural drying was the first way of preserving it in rural areas. It is debatable whether the diverse recipes that exist today are autochthonic or adopted.

Recipes for stuffing dry peppers are locally specific. The oldest stuffing recipe was obviously simple: meatless with wheat, potato or beans, since rice was less available. Later, chopped meat (pig, cattle, sheep or venison) was introduced (and later replaced by minced meat). Recently, dry peppers are also stuffed with sour cabbage, white cheese and eggs, etc.

Served warm or cold, as a main dish or as a starter, with crusty bread and hot rakija, there is almost no festive dinner in the south and east of Serbia that is without stuffed dried peppers. This dish is suitable for vegetarians. Lean stuffed dried peppers are regularly served on Christmas Eve.

Vrtka Pepper

When preparing dry stuffed peppers in Serbia, every region used to have its own local variety. The most common are *Vrtka* from the Bela Palanka region in Eastern Serbia, *Lakošnička paprika* from the Leskovac region in South Serbia, and *Pirot black paprika* from Pirot area in Eastern Serbia. In Central Serbia one will hear of about the *Paprika nizača* and *Paprika venčara* varieties. These varieties differ, while local agro-ecological conditions produce slightly different tastes of fresh product, fermented and dried ones even between peppers of the same variety in different regions. An interesting fact is that the pungency (spiciness or 'heat') of a pepper is not specific for the variety, but an individual characteristic of every pepper itself. Every pepper can be hot or not, so the presence of one single hot pepper in the dish spices up the whole dish, yet who will get the hottest one on the plate? It is a kind of 'Russian roulette', who'll get the hottest pepper.

The old pepper variety *Vrtka* is grown only in Bela Palanka and its surroundings. According to locals, it is not overly demanding when it comes to soil and fertiliser, and is quite resistant to diseases, making it suitable for organic production. This variety is well known and considered in Serbia as one of the best for natural drying. *Vrtka* is also locally used in producing *Ajvar*



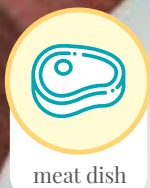
due to its taste and thick skin, which makes it easy for peeling. The painstaking process of preparing *Ajvar*, however, is further aggravated by the fact that this pepper has a rather thin flesh, which makes the preparation of delicious and good quality *Ajvar* a difficult task.

For drying and stuffing in Eastern Serbia local inhabitants use very similar *Pirot black paprika*. It is a small to medium sized pepper, triangular, red, glossy, and with a relatively thick skin and relatively thin flesh. They are produced from seedlings made in the spring by local rural households. It requires plenty of water and plenty of sun. This variety dries quickly. Wreathed, it dries from late summer to late autumn, i.e. from August to October.

All these varieties of pepper are good for stuffing and are also used for producing ground red spice; but only *Lakošnička paprika* has a large economic potential since it is produced in huge quantities. One can learn locally about more varieties; however, their importance is localised often to the territory of one village. There is no scientific data confirming whether or not they are really different varieties or the differences in their appearance and taste derive just from local agroclimatic conditions. Another interesting fact is that some varieties appear suitable for growing in specific mountain areas and are capable of satisfying the need for drying material for stuffing. For example, the *Arnautska šušpa* pepper is locally mentioned as the only pepper successfully grown in the village of Brlog, West Balkan Mountain.

Stuffed Futog Sour Cabbage Rolls

(Sarma with Futog Sour Cabbage)



meat dish



Country of origin: Serbia

Serves: 10

Preparation time: 3 hours

Cooking time: 2 hours

Calories in 100 g: 252 kcal

Ingredients:

² 1 cabbage head of *Futog* sauerkraut

² 600 g minced meat (mixed half pork and half beef meat)

² 400 g rice

² 400 g onion

² 2 eggs

² 20 g wheat flour

² 300 ml vegetable oil

² 300 g smoked ribs

² 200 g smoked bacon

By taste

² salt

² ground red pepper

² ground black pepper

Preparation:

1. Separate the leaves from the comb and wash so that the sarma is not too sour or salty.
2. Mix the meat with the sliced onions, add the spices and the rice.
3. Put some stuffing on each leaf and wrap.
4. Place a few cabbage leaves and chopped smoked bacon on the bottom of the pan in order to prevent the *sarma* sticking to the bottom of the pan and burning.
5. Stack the sarmas upright in the pot in a circular pattern.
6. Place smoked ribs on the compound sarma and cover in cold water.
7. Press the top with a lid smaller than the pan.
8. Cook over a moderate heat for at least three hours, adding water occasionally.
9. Prepare the roux: heat 2 dl of oil in a frying pan, add 1 tbsp of flour, stirring all the time. After one minute add 1 tbsp of ground red pepper, stir and immediately remove from the heat.
10. Gradually add the roux to the sarma until the saft turns to sauce.
11. Continue cooking for another 30 minutes.
12. Sarma is usually served hot with mashed potatoes.

Stuffed Futog Sour Cabbage Rolls

(Sarma with Futog Sour Cabbage)



This is a traditional Serbian dish made from rice and minced meat stuffing wrapped in the leaves of Futog sour cabbage (*Futoški kupus*) or sauerkraut, simmered in sauce and flavoured by smoked pork meat on bones/ribs and bacon.

It is most commonly cooked during the winter, when sauerkraut is produced by many families as a winter preserve. In addition to sauerkraut, during vegetation season, fresh cabbage, vine leaves, dock and spinach leaves may also be used for stuffing. There is also a lean version of sarma which uses nuts instead of meat.

Sarma is a common dish made all across Serbia. Sarma recipes vary from region to region in Serbia, often from household to

household. The basic difference is that in the north, raw meat is used for the stuffing and in the south the meat is fried in oil with onion prior to stuffing. The difference is also in the consistency of the dish and number of starchy components.

The name sarma derives from the Turkish verb *sarmak* - to wrap. The '*jarpak sarma*' in Turkish culinary heritage is a dish made of vine leaves with stuffing, most often made of rice with vegetables, rarely rice with meat or just meat. Sarma was first mentioned in Serbia in the nineteenth century, solely as a dish served during festive periods, namely at the *Slava* (family patron saints' day) celebrations. Since then, it has remained a representative dish to welcome the guests.

Futog Cabbage

Futog is a settlement in Serbia near Novi Sad, located on the most fertile part of Panonian lowland, on the north side of the River Danube. The area where the fresh, as well as the sour futog (*Futoški*) cabbage is produced is the cadastral community of Futog. Cabbage has been cultivated in Futog since the eighteenth century. There are written documents from 1760 describing the export of cabbage to Vienna. The long-term cultivation since that time has resulted in the creation of the Futog cabbage – a type of quality cabbage with properties different from the others. Also, the suitable agro-ecological conditions and geographic location of the production area contribute to the Futog cabbages' qualities.

The leaf rose of the Futog cabbage has a deep green color, and on average 10 leaves per rose. It has a half-vertical form, with a flat, slightly jagged leaf periphery. The leaves are thin, elastic and easily flexible. The nervature of leaves is not strongly expressed. The diameter of the rosette is on average 90.2 cm. The average height of the head is about 18.9 cm, and its average diameter is about 22.6 cm. Inside of the head a stalk with an average length of 9.4 cm is located.

The Futog cabbage is primarily used for sour cabbage making, for which its sugar content and light structure is suited. Sugar content from the top of the head to its root is about 3.1-3.4% making this cabbage passing process of soaring by about 21 days, which is a half time of other types and varieties of cabbage.

Futog sour cabbage must be produced using the autochthonous Futog cabbage



variety and should contain the following: salt content must be between 1.5% and 3.5%, total acids content (expressed as lactic acid) must be between 0.5% and 2% and volatile acids content (expressed as acetic acid) shall not be higher than 0.7%. As the preservative, only K-sorbate can be used, and its analytically determined content must not be higher than 0.13%.

After fermentation, the head of the Futog sour cabbage has a uniform, amber-yellow colour, which is popular on the market with customers. The head has a slightly oblate form. The leaves overlap in such a way that the next leaf from the opposite side is situated of the preceding one, so that the separation of leaves must be performed gradually and with attention to detail, in order to avoid damaging them. The leaves have a slightly ellipsoid form and are thin. The central part of the leaf with which the leaf is connected to the stalk is not thick, being elastic and flexible.

Sour Futog cabbage is

produced mainly in Futog village and in the Vojvodina Province in the north of Serbia, but it is recognised on markets in the much wider region. Today, Futog cabbage production is not anymore limited to households and marketed on the fruit and vegetable markets of Novi Sad, the capital of Vojvodina, but it's also become an artisan product distributed through large supermarket networks all over the country. Futog cabbage, despite its higher price in comparison to other Serbian cabbage varieties, has managed to conquer the urban markets of Central Serbia, where households no longer prepare winter preserves. It's advantage in preparing sarma is due its leaf morphology: a thin midrib, soft and elastic leaves. This allows the whole leaf blade to be used and wrapping to be done without requiring any special skill.

Fresh Futog and sour cabbage's geographical origin is protected in Serbia and listed in the Serbian Registry of Geographical Indications.

Srem Dry Sausage from Mangalitsa Pig

(Suva Sremska Kobasica from Mangalitsa Pig)



meat dish



gluten free

Country of origin: Serbia
Makes: 7 kg of sausages
Preparation time: 45-60 days
Calories in 100 g: 387 kcal

Ingredients:

² 7 kg pork ham meat	² 130 g spices (black pepper, ground red dry pepper, garlic)
² 3 kg back bacon	² 20 m salted small intestines (artisan product)
² 40 g sugar	
² 0.26 kg salt	

Preparation:

1. Mince the meat and bacon and add the sugar, salt and spices.
2. Mix together well and allow to rest.
3. Stuff the minced meat in the separately prepared natural small intestine and dry for a day.
4. Smoke the raw sausages in the cold natural smoke of deciduous wood a few hours each day for up to 10 days.
5. Place the smoked sausages in a special/traditional airy room to mature and dry the sausages to about 75% of dry matter (the time will depend upon weather conditions, but normally between 45 and 60 days. Ideally, the best period is during cold winter, but without frost).

Srem Dry Sausage from Mangalitsa Pig (*Suva Sremska Kobasica from Mangalitsa Pig*)



The rearing of pigs for consumption began in Serbia in the fourteenth century (King Dušan's Law). However, intensive farming really began at the start of the nineteenth century with the opportunity to export live pigs to Hungary and further afield to the West. Between the two World Wars, farming was mostly extensive, based on particular autochthonic breeds (*Mangulitsa*, *Resavka*, *Moravka*) and in some cases even included the very primitive and close to the wild boar (*Sus scrofa*) from the area (*Šiška*). Home processing was common and the rural population was skilful in utilising every part of the pigs' body. Artisan processing kept pig production reasonable despite lower yields of primitive breeds. Further intensification started between 1955 and 1960 with the introduction of new breeds with less fat, and development of industrialised processing. Pig production in Srem and Mačva was already modernised at that time following the availability of concentrated food produced

in these most intensive crop production areas. Mangalitsa pig had already been replaced across the majority of the Srem territory and limited production based on silvo-pastoral systems remained scattered and just in the most marginalised areas which had significant areas of oak forests and communal wetland pastures.

Mangalitsa was traditionally processed (and still is) in mainly small rural households and artisan shops, which produce products of exceptional quality. Later, traditional recipes from small producers entered into industrial facilities. Being popular on the market some products such as Srem domestic sausage, which was originally made from Mangalitsa, become protected (1992) with its geographic indication on the national scale, but this protection was never placed on autochthonic breeds, although original recipes from which the inspiration came actually included their meat. This caused Mangalitsa to almost vanish from the region.

A recent rise of interest for Mangalitsa products, due to its meat quality and considering its fat content, is encouraging farmers to increase number of Mangalitsa pigs. This is increasing chance for the Mangalitsa pig population to grow in number and become safe of extinction and for original products to be revived. A number of producers have recently been introducing their own versions of dry Srem sausage made from Mangalitsa on to the market, and these products have fetched good prices on the market. These producers keep more or less secret their versions of recipes; however, fake products are pushing them to seek and try to obtain official protection for their recipes and products so as to allow for adding value to their products where possible.

Srem dry Mangalitsa sausage is traditionally made from two-year-old pigs weighing about 150 kg. The pigs should be healthy and not stressed. The sausages have mild taste, although spicy versions (hot) are also available.

Swallow Bellied Mangalitsa Pig

The Mangalitsa pig breed is bred in Vojvodina and Central Serbia. Srem swallow bellied (*Sremska crna lasa*) Mangalitsa strain is most common in Srem region, while the Subotica strain dominates in the Bačka region.

The breed of Mangalitsa pig originated about two centuries ago. The Serbian prince Miloš Obrenović, as a token of appreciation, and to encourage for good neighbourly relations (but also for commercial interests) donated to the Austrian Archduke Joseph, Palatine of Hungary, several specimens of autochthonous pigs of the *Šumadinka* breed. In Hungary, *Šumadinka* was crossed with *Bakonyi* and *Szalantor* breeds on the Kish Jenó estate, producing the new Mangalitsa breed. The Mangalitsa spread rapidly across the Pannonian Plain as it successfully united the good features of its ancestors. It was able to make good use of grazing, it was resistant to diseases and parasites, and it was capable of long walks to a particular target market. This ensured the breed's safe survival until a change in market habits and a fall in the consumption of lard meant that leaner breeds of pig became more popular and displaced the Mangalitsa breed.

Mangalitsa is a domestic primitive, autochthonous breed. Boars on average weigh about 180 kg, and sows 150 kg. The average withers height of an adult boar is 76 cm and sow 68 cm. In Serbia there are three strains: White (Blond), Black sremska lasa (Swallow Bellied or *Budjanovci* pig) and the Subotica strain. Mangalitsa is characterised by powerful legs with solid hoofs



which allow it to satisfy its own great need for marching. The woolly coat protects it from bad weather, but also from ectoparasites. Sows are good mothers and take good care of their piglets. The main advantages Mangalitsa has over other breeds is its adaptation to harsh climates, and its ability to survive on pastoral land and in forests, feeding on acorns. It is resistant to non-specific diseases' agents and is an energetic pig.

The meat of the Mangalitsa is darker than the meat of other pig breeds, strong and with a pleasant smell and an exceptional taste. The light, unsaturated fat structure makes the meat light, soft and tender, and completely different from the meat of other pigs considering the hard fatty feeling which remains in mouth and stomach, which in this case doesn't exist. Assessment of the nutritional value of the meat samples shows that the protein content in 100 g is

high, ranging from 15% to 22% depending on the body part. The average fat content of meat is about 33%, and about 86% in bacon. The cholesterol content in Mangalitsa meat is 50-75% lower compared to other breeds. Its favourable content of 'good cholesterol' HDL and low content of 'bad cholesterol' LDL makes it suitable for people with coronary issues. The meat is suitable for the production of dried, smoked, baked and cooked products.

Mangalitsa is a late-maturing breed, with slow growth and relatively high levels of feed conversion. Because of that, it can be cost-effective only if bred in free-range environment. Feed requirements are modest, but feed diversity can be satisfied only through free grazing. Mangalitsa gains around 80 kg per year in the traditional free-range system of breeding, without additional feeding and up to 200 kg with additional feeding.

Patron Saints' Festivity grain from Belija Wheat

(*Slavsko žito – Koljivo from Belija Wheat*)



dessert



vegan



Country of origin: Serbia

Serves: 10

Preparation time: 14 hours

Cooking time: 20 minutes

Calories in 100 g: 230 kcal

Ingredients:

² 500 g whole grains of Belija wheat

² 500 g sugar or 160 g of honey

² 500 g ground or chopped walnuts

² Water to cover the grains

Preparation:

1. Clean the wheat grains and wash with cold water.
2. Place the grains in a pot, add water, and bring them to boil in a half-covered pan. Reduce the heat to medium and continue boiling for no more than 20 minutes.
3. Remove the pot from the stove, wrap it in a thick cloth and let the grains absorb the water for 12 hours.
4. Drain the excess water (the oldest way is without milling grains; the modern method is with).
5. Mix the grains with walnuts and sugar or honey to get homogeneous mass. If honey is used instead of sugar, the quantity should be at least three times less.
6. Place the mix on a serving plate in bread form and garnish with ground or whole walnuts.

Patron Saints' Festivity grain from Belija Wheat

(*Slavsko žito – Koljivo from Belija Wheat*)



Koljivo is prepared in all orthodox families in Serbia, a custom that exists in orthodox communities of the region and worldwide. *Koljivo* is the Greek word for cooked grain. The Roman Emperor Julian Flavius Claudius (360–363 CE), who received Christianity at a young age, but became a great persecutor of Christians as an adult. Before Lent, he ordered the warden of Constantinople to sprinkle everything on the food market with the blood of animals sacrificed to idols, thus defiling the food for Christians. But St. Theodore Tyrone, through the patriarch of Evdoxi of Constantinople, tells Christians not to buy anything at the market for food, but to cook wheat with honey – and eat it. To commemorate this, the

Orthodox Church introduced the cooking of wheat, and it is given to people on Friday and Saturday on the first week of Lent after service. It was later introduced for the glorification of the saint-protector of the family – the celebration of *Slava* (celebration of a saint-family patron, a Serbian traditional heritage inscribed in 2014 on the UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity).

Koljivo is prepared as a sacrifice of thanksgiving to God for the fruits of the earth, and to commemorate the saints who are celebrated, as well as for the memory of those ancestors who lived in faith and those who gave their lives for the faith. Honey (nowadays more often sugar), blended with boiled wheat, signifies a blissful life – the life of the heavenly

sweetness of the righteous Christians after death, who have earned this through their life and work on earth. Before the beginning of the rite of consecration, a small, thin beeswax candle is put into the middle of the grain, which lights up and burns throughout the rite. When finished, the candle is extinguished and removed. When the main candle is lit in the house, the host is first blessed and served with grain, and then the rest of the household. Every guest who comes to fame is first served with 1 teaspoon of *Koljivo*.

There are many recipes for making *Koljivo*. Regarding the grain, different compositions and various additives are allowed, as well as different methods for cooking the grain. *Koljivo* is served on a small or large glass plate.



Belija Wheat

Old varieties of Belija wheat (*pšenica Belija*) type are produced across all of Serbia on small areas where growing of foods is intended for home consumption. Recently, it has become common to use the name Belija for any variety that is intended to be used for cooking, since customers still connect this name with the quality of the wheat they want for *Koljivo*, or various new dishes which claim to be healthy.

Analyses of macro-plant residues from the prehistoric site of Beška-Kalakača have shown that in Serbia one and two-grain wheat, bare wheat and so-called wheat of a 'new type' have been grown ever since prehistory. Later, Serbia as a Roman province, would become one of the biggest granaries of the Roman Empire, and it continues today to produce grain on a huge scale. There are no precise data on the quality of seeds found in underground storage facilities and grown later throughout history, since the majority are carbonised seeds

that allow the species to be identified, but not the grain content to be analysed. What is known is that the Belija type of wheat was definitely present after the Ottoman Empire conquered this territory, since the varieties the Turks introduced most likely came from Asia where white wheat dominated.

In modern Serbian selections, the desire to cultivate white wheat was not shown for decades, as there was a preference for the red grain varieties. It is possible that old varieties survived thanks to the peasants' habit of safeguarding seeds they like and sowing their fields with these reserves 'from the stumps' for personal use. Nevertheless, the first variety of white (*albidum*) wheat selected in Serbia was called *Pahulja*.

White wheat is a biologically valuable food. It has a larger grain of floury structure of the endosperm that cooks quickly without boiling and turning into a mushy mass. Wheat grain is rich in nutrients and represent a complete diet with characteristics of functional

food. Whole wheat grain is a rich source of vitamins and minerals and contains more protein than all other cereals. It contains B complex vitamins, beta carotene, vitamin E, potassium, calcium, magnesium, phosphorus and iron. Fats are found in germs and minerals are in the grain sheath, so consuming the whole grain is of the highest health value.

Primarily, Belija wheat is used for cooking. When the pericarp of the grain starts firing at the belly suture, it is a sign that cooking can stop. During cooking, the wheat mass absorbs water about 160% and after cooking the mass increases by 70%. Cooked wheat has a diverse possibilities for daily use. It can be a finished product prepared in different ways and with different additives or raw materials for the production of bread, pastries and various treats. In addition to this purpose, white wheat is also used to make flour suitable for making bread, pastry (biscuits, tea cakes, waffles, crackers, etc.) and various household products (cakes, pastry, pie crust, crumbs, etc.).

Description of the dishes and short overview of used plant varieties and livestock breeds per country

COUNTRY		LOCAL NAME OF DISH	TRANSLATION OF THE NAME	SHORT EXPLANATION	VARIETY/BREED DESCRIBED
Albania	1	Pispili me Spinaq e Miell Misri	Corn Pie Casserole with Spinach	Vegetarian highly nutritious pie made from corn flour, filled with spinach and feta cheese, usually served with yogurt and seasonal salads	Sulova Corn
	2	Tavë Krapit Shkodrane	Carp Fish Casserole with Onion	Baked carp with plenty of onion, tomato sauce, plum jelly and assorted spices	Drishti Onion
	3	Oktapod me Koçkulla	Octopus with Grass Pea	Low-in-calories dish made with boiled octopus served with grass pea puree	Opari Grass Pea
	4	Mish Keci në Qumësht	Goat Meat in a Milk Bin	Kid goat's meat simmered in a milk bin served with porridge made of goat's offal, corn flour and cheese whey	Dukati Black Goat
	5	Mish Dashi me Pistil	Ram Meat with Plum Jelly	A traditional meal with ram meat cooked with assorted spices and plum jelly (pistil) in a clay pot	Tropoja Plum
	6	Mish Derri me Lakra	Pork Meat with Cabbage	Typical mountain dish made with pork fat meat cooked with cabbage	Postriba Cabbage
Bosnia and Herzegovina	1	Çorba od Graha Poljaka	Poljak Bean Grass Pea Broth	Broth from grass pea seeds cooked with vegetables and different spices	Poljak Bean Grass Pea
	2	Bosanski Lonac	Bosnian Pot	Traditional dish prepared from three types of meat: lamb, veal, and beef, cooked with potato, cabbage, carrots, green beans, zucchini, okra, garlic, and onions	Pramenka Sheep
	3	Bosanski Sitni Ćevap	Bosnian Kebab	Small cubes of beef meat slowly cooked with onions and assorted spices	Buša Cattle
	4	Japrak (Sarma) u Raštici	Collard Rolls with Raštika	Stuffing prepared with minced meat, rice, onion, and spices, wrapped in collard leaves	Raštika Collard
	5	Bestilj (Pekmez od Šljiva)	Plum Jam	Jam made from plums, slowly cooked without sugar	Požegača Plum
	6	Tufahija	Poached Stuffed Apples	Cooked apples stuffed with a mixture of grounded nuts and honey, poached in sugar syrup	Kolačara Apple
Kosovo	1	Leçenik (Krelan Misri)	Corn Pie	Highly nutritive baked porridge from corn flour, fat cheese, milk cream, yogurt, milk, eggs, and butter	Kosovo White Corn
	2	Lakror me lakër të bardhë	Pie with Cabbage	Thin-layer pie from wheat flour with cabbage, milk and butter filling	Kmetoci Cabbage
	3	Qervish me pulë fshati	Grits with Chicken	Boiled chicken with grits made with corn and wheat flour, baked in an oven	Pikalorja Chicken
	4	Qengj në qumësht	Lamb in Milk	Lamb meat cooked with milk cream, baked in milk with potatoes, carrots, onion, and garlic	Bardhoka Sheep
	5	Ëmbëlsirë me gështenjë	Dessert with Chestnuts	Puree from boiled chestnuts, mixed with milk, butter, and honey	Junik Chestnut
	6	Reçel kungulli	Sweet Preserve from Pumpkin	Sweet preserve made from squash soaked in limewater, than boiled in sugar syrup, walnuts, and honey	Dumoshi Pumpkin

COUNTRY		LOCAL NAME OF DISH	TRANSLATION OF THE NAME	SHORT EXPLANATION	VARIETY/BREED DESCRIBED
Montenegro	1	Kaçamak	Polenta	High in calories, a nutritive dish made with flint corn flour and potato porridge, topped with melted old kajmak and cheese	Yellow Jarik Corn
	2	Heljdija	Buckwheat Pie	Layered pie made with buckwheat and wheat flour filled with cheese, kajmak, sour milk and yogurt	Golubica Buckwheat
	3	Tučene Masline	Beaten Olives	Culinary delight made with olives beaten with a wooden meat mallet and kept in brine to lose the bitterness and preserve	Žutica Domestic Olive
	4	Dimljeni Krap	Smoked Carp	Slowly simmered smoked Skadar carp with lemon dressing from white wine, olive oil, garlic, and parsley	Skadar Carp
	5	Crnogorska Kaštradina	Cooked Dried Goat Meat	Dried goat meat cooked with potatoes, carrots, and collard	Domestic Balkan Goat
	6	Jagnjetina Ispod Sača sa Krompirom	Roasted Lamb with Potatoes	Lamb meat roasted in a traditional manner, cooked with potatoes, carrots, leek, onion and garlic	Russian Potato
North Macedonia	1	Komat so Praz	Pie with Leek	A traditional thin-layers pie filled with leek, cheese and eggs	Zrnovski Leek
	2	Pastrmajlija	Pie with a Sheep Dried Meat	Traditional thick pizza-like pie filled with pastrma - salty dried sheep meat	Ovechepolka Sheep
	3	Makalo (K'chano) so Vezeni Piperki	Potato Mash with Embroidered Peppers	Special kind of mash from boiled potatoes and dried embroidered peppers, mixed with leek	Macedonian Embroidered Pepper
	4	Tavche Gravche	Baked Beans	Baked beans with onion, dry red peppers, and assorted spices	Tetovski Bean
	5	Drob Sarma	Liver Rolls from Sheep	Stuffing from fried lamb offal and rice, wrapped in lamb's caul fat, baked in an oven	Karakachanka Sheep
	6	Mariovsko Selsko Meso	Mariovo Village Meat	Fried pork pluck (heart, liver and lungs), meat and bacon, baked in plenty of onion and dry red peppers	Brazdanski Pogachar Onion
Serbia	1	Svrliški Belmuž	Cheese Curd with Corn	Simple shepherd's dish prepared with white corn ground on a stone mill and fresh cheese curd	Osmak Corn
	2	Sjenički Ovčiji Sir	Sjenica Sheep's White Cheese	White soft ripened cheese in a wooden dish made with milk from Sjenica sheep on Peshter highlands	Sjenicka zeckel Sheep
	3	Suva Punjena Posna Paprika - Plnena Sušpa	Lean Dry Red Stuffed Peppers	Long red papers, dried on sun and wind, stuffed with a mix of nuts, rice, mushrooms, and onions, typically prepared during fasts	Vrtka Pepper
	4	Sarma od Kiselog Kupusa	Stuffed Sour Cabbage Rolls	Cooked dish made from sour cabbage leaves filled with rice and minced meat stuffing and flavoured by smoked pork on bones/ribs and bacon	Futog Cabbage
	5	Suva Sremska Kobasica od Mangalice	Srem Dry Sausage from Mangalitsa Pig	Dried and ripened on smoke sausage made from a local breed of mangalitsa pig	Swallow Bellied Mangalitsa Pig
	6	Slavsko Žito - Koljivo	Patron Saints' Festivity Wheat Grain	Sweet dish made with cooked wheat grains, nuts and honey served on the beginning of Slava, celebration of family saint patrons, (UNESCO Serbian Slava)	Belija Wheat

Albania
 Bosnia and Herzegovina
 Kosovo
 Montenegro
 North Macedonia
 Serbia

Content of dishes

Vegan dishes	Baked Tetovo Beans	
	Potato Mash with Macedonian Embroidered Peppers	
	Beaten Olives from Domestic Žutica	
	Lean Dry Red Stuffed Vrtka Peppers	
Vegetarian dishes with dairy products	Sulova Corn Pie Casserole with Spinach	
	Pie with White Kosovo Corn	
	Pie with Kmetoci Cabbage	
	Pie with Zrnovski Leek	
	Polenta with Yellow Jarik Corn	
	Pie from Golubica Buckwheat	
	Cheese Curd with Beli Osmak Corn	
	Sjenica Sheep's White Cheese	
Pescatarian dishes with fish and seafood	Octopus with Opari Grass Pea	
	Carp Fish Casserole of Shkodra with Drishti Onion	
	Smoked Skadar Carp	
Dishes with meat	Pork Meat with Postriba Cabbage	
	Ram Meat with Tropoja Plum Jelly	
	Dukati Black Goat Meat in a Milk Bin	
	Collard rolls with Rashtika	
	Bosnian Pot with Pramenka Lamb	
	Bosnian Kebab in Sauce with Busha Beef	
	Poljak Bean Grass Pea Broth	
	Bardhoka Lamb in Milk	
	Grits with Pikalorja Chicken	
	Pie with Ovchepolka Sheep Dried Meat	
	Mariovo Village Meat with Brazdanski Pogachar Onion	
	Liver Roll from Karakachanka Sheep	
	Cooked Dried Meat from Domestic Balkan Goat	
	Roasted Lamb with Russian Potatoes	
	Srem Dry Sausage from Mangalitsa Pig	
	Stuffed Futog Sour Cabbage Rolls	
	Deserts	Poached Stuffed Kolačara Apples
		Jam from Požegača Plum
		Dessert from Junik Chestnuts
		Sweet Preserve from Dumoshi Pumpkin
Patron Saints' Festivity Grain from Belija Wheat		

Diversity of presented plant varieties and livestock breeds

Fodder	Grass pea	Opari	Poljak Bean			
Cereals	Buckwheat	Golubica				
	Corn	Sulova	Yellow Jarik	Beli Osmak	Kosovo White	
	Wheat	Belija				
Oil crop	Olives	Žutica Domestic				
Vegetables	Leek	Zrnovski				
	Onion	Drishti		Brazdanski Pogachar		
	Cabbage	Postriba	Futtog	Kmetoci		
	Collard	Raštika				
	Pepper	Macedonian Embroidered Pepper		Vrtka		
	Bean	Tetovski				
	Pumpkin	Dumoshi				
	Potato	Russian				
Fruit	Chestnut	Junik				
	Plum	Tropoja		Požegača		
	Apple	Kolačara				
Livestock	Goat	Domestic Balkan Goat		Dukati		
	Cattle	Buša				
	Sheep	Ovchepolka	Pramenka	Karakachanka	Sjenica Zeckel	Bardhoka
	Pig	Mangalitsa				
	Chicken	Pikalorja				
Fish	Carp	Skadar Carp				