



Marjana Vršnik gathers just-picked greens at Govc, left. The Cigoj family share a meal at Arkade.

ŠTRUKLJI

FARMER CHEESE DUMPLINGS

Adapted from *Slovenian Cooking*,

by Andrej A. Fritz

SERVES 12 (SIDE DISH) OR 6 (MAIN COURSE)

ACTIVE TIME: 1¼ HR START TO FINISH: 2¼ HR

These unusual dumplings—fashioned with noodle dough—make a refined dish that isn't at all heavy. For more about making štruklji, see Kitchen Notebook, page 131.

FOR DOUGH

2 cups all-purpose flour plus additional for dusting

½ teaspoon salt

1 large egg

1 tablespoon vegetable oil

½ cup lukewarm water

FOR FILLING

15 oz farmer cheese (1½ cups)

1 cup sour cream (10 oz)

2 large eggs, separated

½ teaspoon salt

3 tablespoons fine fresh bread crumbs

½ stick (¼ cup) unsalted butter, melted

2 tablespoons chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

SPECIAL EQUIPMENT: a table at least 30 inches long and 24 inches wide; a 36-inch-square smooth cotton or linen tablecloth or sheet (preferably with a pattern); 2 (27- by 18-inch) pieces fine-weave cheesecloth (sometimes called heavy-duty); kitchen string

MAKE DOUGH: Stir together flour and salt in a bowl. Make a well in flour mixture and add egg, oil, and water, then gently beat with a fork, gradually incorporating shallow scrapings from inside flour wall to form a dough. Knead on a lightly floured surface, adding just enough flour to prevent dough from sticking, until dough is smooth and elastic, 6 to 8 minutes.

► Rinse a 2-quart bowl with hot water and dry it, then invert over dough. Let dough stand, covered, 30 to 60 minutes.

MAKE CHEESE FILLING: Stir together farmer cheese, sour cream, egg yolks, salt, and 1 tablespoon bread crumbs in a bowl. Beat egg whites in another bowl with an electric mixer at medium speed until they just hold stiff peaks. Fold whites into cheese mixture gently but thoroughly.

ROLL AND FILL DOUGH: Bring an 8- to 10-quart pot of salted water (see Tips, page 141) to a boil.

► Meanwhile, cover table with tablecloth, allowing cloth to hang over edges, and dust cloth lightly with flour (it isn't necessary to dust overhang). Lightly flour dough and roll out on cloth with rolling pin, as evenly as possible, into a 24- by 20-inch rectangle, so that a long side of rectangle is nearest you. Dough should be thin enough for you to see any pattern on tablecloth.

► Gently brush dough with 2 tablespoons butter and sprinkle with parsley and remaining 2 tablespoons bread crumbs.

Divide cheese filling into 2 mounds on dough on left and right sides. Spread filling into 2 side-by-side 18- by 10-inch rectangles (with a short side of each cheese rectangle nearest you), leaving a 2-inch space between rectangles and a 1-inch border around outer edges.

► Holding tablecloth edge nearest you tautly, lift up cloth to make dough roll over on itself (away from you). Continue rolling, lifting tablecloth and pulling it toward you until dough is completely rolled (there is no need to use your hands to roll the dough). Cut into 2 rolls through 2-inch space between fillings.

► Carefully transfer 1 roll using a metal spatula onto center of 1 piece of cheesecloth. Fold cheesecloth over roll to cover top and wrap roll, then twist ends of cheesecloth and tie with kitchen string about 1 inch from each end. (Excess cloth on ends helps in lifting roll when boiled.) Wrap second roll in same manner.

► Cook rolls in boiling water (rolls will float), partially covered, 15 minutes. Transfer with a large slotted spoon or skimmer to a shallow baking pan and cool 3 minutes. Cut off kitchen string and unwrap cheesecloth, then transfer rolls to a platter with a metal spatula. Trim off and discard ends of rolls, then drizzle rolls with remaining 2 tablespoons butter. Cut into 1½-inch-thick slices.

For ANOTHER RECIPE, see page 135.