



Sauerkraut Soup

INGREDIENTS

- 2 tbsp lard or vegetable oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- *2 lbs smoked ham hocks AND/or smoked pork ribs*
- *1 lb smoked Hungarian/Polish kielbasa, sliced into rounds*
- *0.5 lb smoked Venison kielbasa - Optional*
- *1lb pork shoulder*
- *25 oz (700 g) sauerkraut, undrained*
- *1 oz (30 g) dried mushrooms (porcini or shiitake), soaked in warm water for 15 minutes, then drained*
- 1 tsp caraway seeds
- 2 bay leaves
- ½ tsp black peppercorns
- 7 pints water or chicken/beef broth, plus more as needed
- ½ cup pitted prunes (optional)
- *2 tbsp paprika (sweet or smoked)*
- Salt to taste
- *Vegeta to taste*
- Sour cream and fresh parsley garnish

ALL ITEMS WITH AN ASTERISK CAN BE PURCHASED FROM SMOKEHOUSE OF THE CATSKILLS

DIRECTIONS

1. In a large, heavy-bottomed pot or Dutch oven, heat the lard over medium heat. Sauté the chopped onion until it is translucent, about 5 minutes. Add pork shoulder and cook about 12-15 min to brown the meat. Add the minced garlic and sliced kielbasa, cooking for 5 minutes to bring the flavor out of the kielbasa. Stir in the paprika and cook for another minute until fragrant.
2. Add the smoked ham hocks, sauerkraut with its juices, soaked mushrooms, caraway seeds, bay leaves, and peppercorns to the pot. Pour in 7 pints of water or broth, or enough to cover the ingredients.
3. Bring the mixture to a boil, then reduce the heat to low, cover, and simmer for at least 2 hours. For a more traditional, rich flavor, you can let it simmer for 3 to 4 hours. The meat on the ham hocks should be falling off the bone when it is ready.
4. Remove the ham hocks from the pot, shred the meat, and discard the bones and fat. Cut the whole kielbasa into bite-sized pieces if you added it whole and return the meat to the soup. If using prunes, stir them in and simmer for another 5 minutes.
5. Remove and discard the bay leaves. Taste the soup and season with salt and Vegeta as needed, keeping in mind that the sauerkraut and smoked meats are already salty. Ladle into bowls and serve hot. Garnish with a dollop of sour cream and a sprinkle of fresh dill or parsley. For an authentic touch, serve with fresh, crusty bread.