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CULINARY SOS

Goulash from Blu Jam Cafe on Melrose Avenue



Kirk McKoy / Los Angeles Times

S.O.S REQUEST: Blu Jam's hearty goulash.By Noelle Carter
March 4, 2009

Dear SOS: I'm a first-generation Hungarian American born and raised in Los Angeles, and I recently had the pleasure of eating at Blu Jam Cafe on Melrose Avenue.

I was so delighted to see goulash on the menu. My grandmother passed away in 1987 and I've spent 20-plus years trying to find anyone who can make a goulash even remotely close to the one she made for us on cold days or after we had too much to drink.

I finally found authentic goulash at Blu Jam Cafe. I was hoping that you could post the recipe so that I don't have to spend another 20 years looking.

Andrew Ungvari Los Angeles

Dear Andrew: We haven't tested this as a hangover cure, but this hearty beef stew is sure to warm and fill you up on chilly days and cold nights. Rich with flavor and full of tender pieces of pork and sausage, this Hungarian specialty is perfect served on its own or ladled over noodles.

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Goulash from Blu Jam Cafe on Melrose Avenue

March 4 2009

Blu Jam Cafe's goulash

Total time: 1 hour, 35 minutes

Servings: 10

Note: Adapted from chef Kamil Majer of Blu Jam Cafe. We used equal amounts of hot and sweet Hungarian paprika; adjust the paprika to taste. The goulash tastes best the following day.

1 1/2 pounds boneless pork butt or shoulder trimmed of excess fat and cut into 1/2 - inch cubes

Salt, pepper

3 tablespoons olive oil, more as needed

1 pound Polish sausage or kielbasa, cut into 1/2 -inch pieces

1 large onion, chopped

3 cups sliced button mushrooms

1 tablespoon chopped garlic

1 1/2 teaspoons caraway seeds

2 tablespoons Hungarian paprika, more to taste

2 tablespoons tomato paste

1 1/2 quarts chicken broth, divided



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Goulash from Blu Jam Cafe on Melrose Avenue

March 4 2009

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1 cup flour

3/4 cup water

1 bunch parsley, chopped

2 baking potatoes, peeled and cut into 1/2 - inch pieces

1. Place the pork pieces in a large bowl and season with 1 teaspoon salt and one-fourth teaspoon pepper, tossing the pork so that it is evenly coated.

2. In a 4-quart, heavy-bottom pot, heat the oil over medium-high heat until hot. Add the pork and sauté, stirring frequently, until the pieces are browned on all sides, about 15 minutes. This may need to be done in batches. Remove the pork to a bowl and set aside.

3. Add the sausage to the pot and sauté until the pieces are lightly browned on all sides, 3 to 5 minutes. Strain and set aside with the sautéed pork.

4. Add the onions and mushrooms to the pot, along with a little extra oil if needed. Sauté the vegetables until the onions are lightly colored, stirring frequently. Stir in the garlic, caraway seeds and paprika and continue to cook, stirring constantly, until the garlic and spices become fragrant, about 1 minute. Stir in the tomato paste, coating the vegetables evenly, and cook for a minute or two until the paste just begins to darken in color.

5. Stir in 2 cups broth and increase the heat to high. Cook, stirring the contents of the pot and scraping any flavorings from the bottom of the pot, until the mixture comes to a good simmer. Add the pork and sausage back to the pot, along with the rest of the stock.

6. In a medium bowl, combine the flour and water to form a slurry, making sure there are no lumps. Whisk the slurry into the pot, and bring the mixture to a boil. Reduce the heat to a strong simmer and cook until the meat is tender and the pork almost falls apart, about 30 minutes. Stir frequently, making sure to scrape the bottom of the pot so the flour does not burn.

7. Stir in the parsley and potatoes and cook until the potatoes are tender but not falling apart, 10 to 15 minutes. This makes about 2 1/2 quarts stew.

8. Season to taste with additional salt, pepper and paprika before serving.

Each serving: 400 calories; 23 grams protein; 22 grams carbohydrates; 3 grams fiber; 25 grams fat; 8 grams saturated fat; 72 mg. cholesterol; 914 mg. sodium.