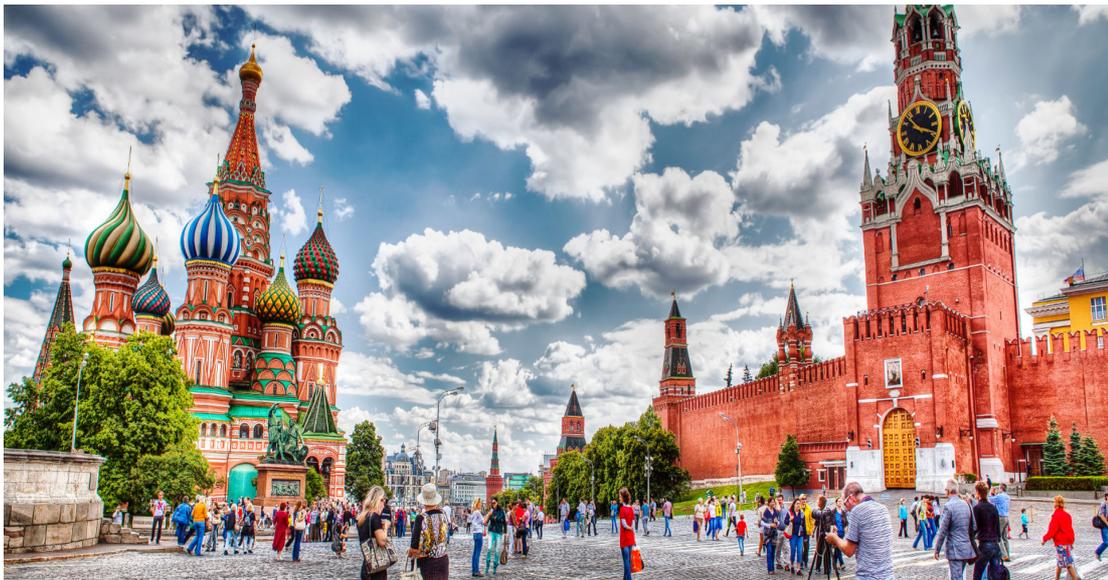


RUSSIAN CUISINE AND TRADITIONAL DISHES



Russian cuisine is a collection of the different cooking traditions of the Russian people. The cuisine is diverse, with Northern and Eastern European, Caucasian, Central Asian, Siberian, and East Asian influences.[1] Russian cuisine derives its varied character from the vast and multi-ethnic expanse of Russia. Its foundations were laid by the peasant food of the rural population in an often harsh climate, with a combination of plentiful

fish, pork, poultry, caviar, mushrooms, berries, and honey. Crops of rye, wheat, barley and millet provided the ingredients for a plethora of breads, pancakes, pies, cereals, beer and vodka. Soups and stews are centered on seasonal or storable produce, fish and meats. Such food remained the staple for the vast majority of Russians well into the 20th century. Soviet cuisine had a separate character of its own.



The 16th through 18th centuries brought more refined culinary techniques. It was during this time period that smoked meats and fish, pastry cooking, salads and green vegetables, chocolate, ice cream, wines, and juice were imported from abroad. At least for the urban aristocracy and provincial gentry, this opened the doors for the creative integration of these new foodstuffs with traditional Russian dishes



OLIVIER SALAD

Olivier salad (also known as Russian salad), a mayonnaise-based potato salad distinguished by its diced texture and the contrasting flavors of pickles, hard-boiled eggs, boiled carrots, boiled potatoes, meat, and peas. This dish is one of the main New Year

buffets.

SHCHI



Shchi is a Russian-style cabbage soup. When sauerkraut is used instead, the soup is called sour shchi, while soups based on sorrel, spinach, nettle, and similar plants are called green shchi. In the past, the term *sour shchi* was also used to refer to a drink, a variation of kvass, which was unrelated to the soup.



OKROSHKA

Okroshka is a cold soup based on kvass or lime milk. Okroshka is also a salad. The main ingredients are two types of vegetables that can be mixed with cold boiled meat or fish in a 1:1 proportion. Thus

vegetable, meat, poultry, and fish varieties of okroshka are made.

There are typically two types of vegetables in okroshka. The first must have a neutral taste, such as boiled potatoes, turnips, rutabagas, carrots, or fresh cucumbers. The second must be spicy, consisting of mainly green onion as well as other herbs—greens of dill, parsley, chervil, celery, or tarragon. Different meat and poultry can be used in the same soup. The most common ingredient is beef alone or with poultry. If it is made with fish, the best choice would be tench, European perch, pike-perch, cod, or other neutral-tasting fish.

Okroshka is mostly served in summer because the soup combines the refreshing taste of kvass and the lightness of a salad. Salt and sugar can be added according to taste.

The Borscht



Borscht is a typical Russian soup that is mainly prepared with beets, which give it its typical bright red color. The borscht can be served either hot or cold, depending on the season. In addition to beets, the ingredients used for the preparation are beef, cabbage and in some versions even potatoes.

The pel'meni



The pel'meni is a main course that is very similar to a recipe for Italian ravioli: they are prepared with a thin sheet of pasta with a meat filling. The meats used for this dish are usually those of beef, lamb and pork, which are often mixed together: in fact, the traditional custom requires 45% beef, 35% lamb and 20% pork. Garlic, pepper and onion are also mixed in the filling.

THE PIROZHKI



Pirozhki are stuffed scones and can be either sweet or savory. They can accompany the courses, but they can also be prepared as a dessert, simply by varying the filling. In

fact, pirozhki are leavened dough buns that are baked or fried. The filling can vary depending on the need: served as a dessert they can be filled with fresh fruit, ricotta or jam; instead if they accompany a course, the filling consists of mashed potatoes, mushrooms, onions, eggs, meat or fish.

THE BLINIS



The blinis are round buns that are prepared with flour or buckwheat and yeast, with a diameter of no more than 15 centimeters. In Russian cuisine they are served to accompany caviar and salmon. In the Russian tradition it is spread with

sour cream on the bliny, then caviar or salmon and finally rolled up to be eaten.

THE PASHKA



Pashka is a typical Russian dessert that is prepared mainly during Easter. This cake is a kind of cheesecake that is made with fresh cheese, sour cream, butter, eggs and sugar. The dough is placed in a half-cone-shaped mold,

left to rest in the refrigerator for 24 hours and then decorated with almonds and candied fruit.

RECIPE: PASHKA

Ingredients:

2 (8 ounce) packages cream cheese, softened

1 (8 ounce) container cottage cheese

1 (8 ounce) container sour cream

1/4 cup butter, melted

1 cup white sugar

1/4 teaspoon lemon extract

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1/2 cup finely chopped blanched almonds

1/2 cup currants

Methods:

In a medium bowl, thoroughly blend cream cheese, cottage cheese, sour cream and butter.

Gradually fold in sugar, lemon extract, vanilla extract, almonds and currants.

Transfer the mixture to a shallow medium dish. Cover with a cloth, and chill in the refrigerator 8 hours, or overnight.