

Cabbage Rolls

From the kitchen of Cheryl Goldscheid

1 large head green cabbage about 4 lbs
1/2 cup long grain white rice
4 cups canned crushed (finely chopped) tomatoes
1/3 cup dark brown sugar
1/3 cup lemon juice
minced ginger
1 1/2 lb ground beef
4-6 lbs short ribs, flanken with bones
2 chopped onions
4 cloves garlic, finely minced
1/3 cup soy sauce
1 Tablespoon garlic powder
1 Tablespoon onion powder
2 eggs
6 Tablespoons olive oil

In a dutch oven, warm 3 Tablespoons of olive oil. Rinse the short ribs and place in the pan to just sear the outside of the meat. Do not crowd the ribs. If you need to do this in multiple batches, that is fine. Place the short ribs aside and add the additional 3 Tablespoons of olive oil, if needed and saute the onions, garlic and ginger until softened.

To the softened onion mixture place your canned tomatoes and bring just to a boil. Add the lemon juice and brown sugar, tasting for a sweet and sour flavor. Add more sugar or lemon juice until you get the taste palette you desire. Add the short ribs back to the pot and cover with the sauce. Turn the heat down and keep on a gentle simmer.

Take the head of cabbage and place in a microwave safe bowl with about 1/3 cup of water. Cover lightly with a paper towel and microwave for 15 minutes. In the meantime, place your ground beef, eggs, soy sauce, garlic powder, onion powder, and rice in a bowl. Place approximately 1 cup of the seasoned tomato sauce in the bowl as well. Use your hands to combine the mixture.

Once the cabbage is done, remove it from the microwave and place on a cutting board. Detach as many leaves as possible, returning the remaining part of the cabbage to the microwave for 5 minutes to steam the remaining head. If you do not have a microwave, using a pot with water to steam the cabbage works just as well.

To form the cabbage rolls, spoon 2 heaping tablespoons of the meat filling 1/2 inch above the bottom edge of a cabbage leaf. Fold that 1/2 inch up over the filling, then fold each side of the leaf toward the center. Roll the cabbage leaf up and away from you, tucking the filling inside a neat package. Place the cabbage roll, seam side down, into the Dutch oven. Repeat with the remaining leaves and filling making sure they are covered with sauce and arranging them to comfortably fit with the short ribs.

Cover the pot and either cook the rolls on the stove top, very low heat, for 3-4 hours or until the short ribs are fork tender. Or, alternatively, you can place the pot in a 250 degree oven for 10-12 hours.

Although you can serve the cabbage rolls right away, they taste better if they sit in the refrigerator for 24 hours and then are reheated. They freeze well.