

Plokfkiskur (Icelandic Fish Stew)

The cosiest meals often come from the simplest ingredients - this humble fish stew is an Icelandic go-to comfort food on chilly evenings when you want something warming.

Ingredients

1.5 lbs cod fillets
2 large yellow onions, thinly sliced
2 lbs Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled and cubed (these hold their shape beautifully)
4 cups whole milk (room temperature blends smoother with the roux)
4 tbsp unsalted butter
1/4 cup all-purpose flour
1/2 cup heavy cream
1 tsp white pepper (black pepper works too, but white keeps the colour pristine)
1 tbsp fresh dill, chopped (plus extra for garnish)
1 tsp salt

Instructions

1. Place cod fillets in a large pot and cover with cold water by 1 inch.
2. Bring water to a gentle simmer over medium heat and cook fish for exactly 8 minutes until flakes easily with a fork.
3. Remove fish with a slotted spoon, reserving 1 cup of cooking liquid, and flake into large chunks, discarding any bones.
4. Boil potatoes in salted water for 15 minutes until tender when pierced with a knife but not falling apart.
5. Melt butter in a Dutch oven over medium heat until foaming subsides.
6. Add sliced onions and cook for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until translucent and lightly golden.
7. Sprinkle flour over onions and cook for 2 minutes while stirring constantly to form a pale golden roux.
8. Gradually whisk in milk and reserved fish broth until smooth with no lumps remaining.
9. Simmer sauce for 5 minutes until thickened enough to coat the back of a spoon.
10. Gently fold in flaked fish, cooked potatoes, cream, salt, and white pepper.
11. Heat through for 3 minutes without boiling to prevent curdling.
12. Stir in fresh dill just before serving.

Serve this stew in shallow bowls with a extra drizzle of cream and buttery rye crackers on the side—the creamy texture against the firm potatoes and flaky fish makes every spoonful satisfying, while the subtle sweetness from the slow-cooked onions balances perfectly with the fresh dill finish.

Kjötsúpa (Icelandic Lamb Soup)

It's like a warm hug from the inside out, perfect for crisp fall days when you crave something hearty and wholesome.

Ingredients

2 lbs lamb shoulder, cut into 1-inch cubes
1 large yellow onion, diced
3 carrots, peeled and sliced into ½-inch rounds
2 potatoes, peeled and cubed into 1-inch pieces
4 cups low-sodium beef broth
2 cups water
1 tsp dried thyme (crushed between the palms to wake up the oils)
1 bay leaf
1 tbsp unsalted butter
Salt and black pepper, to season generously

Instructions

1. Place the lamb cubes in a large pot over medium-high heat and cook for 5–7 minutes, turning occasionally, until browned on all sides—this builds a deep flavour base.
2. Add the diced onion to the pot and sauté for 3 minutes, stirring frequently, until translucent and fragrant.
3. Pour in the beef broth and water, then bring the mixture to a boil over high heat.
4. Reduce the heat to low, cover the pot, and let it simmer for 45 minutes to tenderize the lamb.
5. Stir in the sliced carrots, cubed potatoes, dried thyme, and bay leaf.
6. Cover the pot again and simmer for another 25 minutes, or until the vegetables are fork-tender.
7. Remove the bay leaf and discard it carefully.
8. Stir in the butter until melted, which gives the broth a lovely richness.
9. Season with salt and black pepper, starting with 1 tsp salt and ½ tsp pepper, then adjust if needed.

Perfectly tender lamb and soft vegetables swim in a savoury broth that's both light and deeply satisfying. Serve it with a chunk of crusty bread to soak up every last drop, or top with fresh parsley for a pop of colour.

Pönnukökur (Icelandic Pancakes)

Thinner than American pancakes but just as satisfying, perfect for rolling up with your favourite fillings.

Ingredients

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons granulated sugar (reduce this by half if planning savoury fillings)
- 1/2 teaspoon salt (a good sea salt makes all the difference)
- 2 large eggs at room temperature
- 2 cups whole milk
- 2 tablespoons melted unsalted butter (plus extra for the pan – my cast iron loves this)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract (the real stuff, never imitation)

Instructions

1. Whisk together flour, sugar, and salt in a large mixing bowl until well combined.
2. Create a well in the centre of the dry ingredients and crack in both eggs.
3. Pour in 1 cup of milk and begin whisking from the centre outward, gradually incorporating the dry ingredients.
4. Add the remaining 1 cup of milk, melted butter, and vanilla extract, whisking until the batter is smooth with no lumps.
5. Let the batter rest for 15 minutes at room temperature – this allows the flour to fully hydrate and gives you more tender pancakes.
6. Heat a 10-inch non-stick skillet or crepe pan over medium heat (350°F if using an electric griddle).
7. Lightly brush the hot pan with melted butter using a pastry brush.
8. Pour 1/4 cup of batter into the centre of the pan, immediately tilting and swirling to create a thin, even layer.
9. Cook for 60-90 seconds until the edges begin to lift and the surface looks matte with small bubbles.
10. Slide a thin spatula under the pancake and flip carefully – these are delicate!
11. Cook the second side for 45-60 seconds until lightly golden spots appear.
12. Transfer to a plate and repeat with remaining batter, stacking finished pancakes with parchment between layers to prevent sticking.

Vinartera (Icelandic Layered Cake)

Ingredients

3 cups all-purpose flour
1 cup unsalted butter, softened
1 cup granulated sugar
2 large eggs
1 tsp baking powder
1/2 tsp cardamom (freshly ground if you have it)
1 lb pitted prunes
1/2 cup water
1/2 cup granulated sugar for filling
1 tsp vanilla extract

Instructions

- 1.** Combine prunes, 1/2 cup water, and 1/2 cup sugar in a medium saucepan.
- 2.** Cook the prune mixture over medium heat for 15 minutes, stirring frequently until prunes break down into a thick paste.
- 3.** Remove the prune filling from heat and stir in vanilla extract, then set aside to cool completely.
- 4.** Preheat your oven to 350°F and line two baking sheets with parchment paper.
- 5.** Cream together softened butter and 1 cup sugar in a large bowl for 3-4 minutes until light and fluffy.
- 6.** Beat in eggs one at a time, mixing thoroughly after each addition.
- 7.** Whisk together flour, baking powder, and cardamom in a separate bowl.
- 8.** Gradually add the dry ingredients to the butter mixture, mixing just until a soft dough forms.
- 9.** Divide the dough into 6 equal portions.
- 10.** Roll out one portion of dough directly onto parchment-lined baking sheet to form a thin, even 9-inch circle.
- 11.** Bake the first layer for 12-15 minutes until edges are lightly golden.
- 12.** Repeat the rolling and baking process with remaining dough portions.
- 13.** Allow all baked layers to cool completely on wire racks.
- 14.** Spread cooled prune filling evenly over 5 of the cooled cake layers.
- 15.** Stack the filled layers, placing the plain layer on top.
- 16.** Wrap the assembled cake tightly in plastic wrap.
- 17.** Refrigerate the wrapped cake for at least 24 hours before serving.

Cutting into this cake after its overnight rest reveals beautiful, distinct layers that have melded together perfectly. The cardamom adds a subtle warmth that complements the rich prune filling beautifully, while the tender cake layers provide the perfect textural contrast.

Keen to explore the culinary treasures of the Land of Fire and Ice? Icelandic cuisine is a fascinating blend of Viking heritage and Nordic simplicity, offering rustic comfort foods that warm both body and soul. From hearty lamb stews to unique dairy treats, these traditional recipes will transport your kitchen to Iceland's dramatic landscapes. Let's dive into these authentic dishes you'll love cooking and sharing!

All recipes found on [18 Traditional Icelandic Recipes Authentic – Recipe 4 Peace](#) courtesy of Barbara Rosenthal