



# Maramureș, Romania

*Poftă bună* ('Bon appétit')  
from Maramureș!

15 recipes



Taste of  
Maramureș

# Poftă bună ('Bon appétit') from Maramureș!

Maramureș is renowned as the place where you eat and drink 'like at grandma's'— in other words, the food here will bring back the flavours of your childhood. The taste of the meat, the milk products, and the fruit and vegetables — most of them old varieties and grown organically — is unforgettable.

The ethnic and cultural diversity of the region has left a profound mark on the traditional gastronomy, as have traditional religious norms. The proverbial conservatism of the locals means that you will taste some simple, healthy, country dishes here that are no longer easy to find anywhere else. On top of that, many Maramureș households still produce almost all the food they need.

Maramureș cuisine can offer something to suit both the 'carnivore' and the vegetarian or vegan.

The most typical local dish is *mămăliga* (maize polenta, also known locally as '*tocană*' or '*coleşă*') with cheese, cream, pork greaves (*jumări*), or pork stew. The shepherds' version, *balmoș*, made from maize flour boiled in ewe's milk, is delicious but rarely to be found except at sheepfolds.

Then you can take your pick from a wide variety of soups (potato, bean—dried or green, pumpkin, lettuce, spinach, nettle, onion, tomato, cumin, egg, chicken, beef, pork, vegetable, etc.), *sarmale* (cabbage rolls), fried trout, green beans or potatoes with garlic, fried cabbage, or *laște* (pasta) with various sauces. And for something sweet to follow, there you have *cozonac* (yeast cake) or *pancove* (also called *gogoși*: fried pastries), not to mention various jams, fruit preserves, and many other delights.

Out of the countless recipes to be found in this legendary region, we have selected just a few. As for the rest, we invite to discover them here for yourself...





## *Pită de mălai* (maize bread)

**Ingredients:** 3 cups of maize flour, white flour to taste, a little oil, 1 tablespoonful of baking soda dissolved in yoghurt, some milk or yoghurt, salt, one or two eggs or boiled potatoes if desired.

**✂ Preparation:** The ingredients are mixed thoroughly together and baked on a tray in the oven. *Pită* can be served with any meal.

## Maramureş cold plate

**Ingredients:** *slănină* (bacon fat), ham, sausages, *tobă* (mosaic salami), *caltaboş* (a pork liver sausage, similar to haggis), meat balls, schnitzel, *zacuscă* (vegetable spread), aubergine salad, fish roe, boiled eggs, *caş* (curd cheese), *urdă* (whey cheese), salted cheese, horseradish sauce, pickles, onion, garlic, radishes, cucumbers, tomatoes, peppers, etc.



## Brozdi (spring leaf soup)

**Ingredients:** 1 pile of leaves (nettles, beetroot, patience dock, wild garlic, sorrel, motherwort, wild lovage, etc.), freshly gathered and washed, 2 cloves of garlic, 1 tablespoonful of flour, 1 tablespoonful of oil, salt, water, optionally a little yoghurt or clotted cream and 1 or 2 egg yolks.

- ✂ **Preparation:** Boil the leaves, then drain and chop finely. Fry the flour in oil, and if desired cool with the yoghurt and mix with the egg yolks. Put the flour sauce, the chopped leaves, and the garlic in a pot with water, add salt to taste, and bring to the boil briefly.

## Zamă de usturoi (garlic soup)


**Ingredients:** 5–6 cloves of garlic, 3 tablespoonfuls of oil, 3 tablespoonfuls of wheat flour, paprika, salt, pepper, water.

- ✂ **Preparation:** Peel and crush the garlic. Fry the flour in the oil until it turns golden brown. Add the garlic to the flour, season the mixture, and add water to taste, stirring as it boils to avoid lumps forming.



## Zamă de curechi (cabbage soup)

**Ingredients:** 5–6 cloves of garlic, 3 tablespoonfuls of oil, 3 tablespoonfuls of wheat flour, paprika, salt, pepper, water.

 **Preparation:** Peel and crush the garlic. Fry the flour in the oil until it turns golden brown. Add the garlic to the flour, season the mixture, and add water to taste, stirring as it boils to avoid lumps forming.





## *Tocană de pârgă* (polenta made with roasted maize flour)

Ingredients: 1 kg *pârgă* (maize roasted and ground), salt, water.

- ✂ **Preparation:** As for any polenta, the difference being the special crunchy taste. Serve in layers (one layer of cow's or ewe's cheese and one of polenta, baked together in the oven), or with cheese, cream, milk, *pomana porcului* (see below), omelette, etc.

## *Pomana porcului* (the pig's offering)

**Ingredients:** about 1 kg fat pork, optionally pieces of pork rib and sausages, 2 large onions, salt, pepper, paprika, water.

- ✂ **Preparation:** Fry the meat in its own fat, then add the onion, finely chopped, and the rest of the ingredients (plus a little wine if desired). Cover and boil at low heat for about 1 hour. We recommend serving *pomana porcului* with polenta and pickles.



## *Pecie aită* (stewed meat with garlic)


**Ingredients:** 1 kg stewed meat (preferably beef or mutton), 100 ml oil, a few cloves of garlic, salt, pepper, parsley leaves, optionally also root vegetables, potatoes, beans, or peas.

- ✂ **Preparation:** The pieces of stewed meat are browned in oil, then covered with crushed garlic and seasoning. May be served on its own or with potatoes or boiled vegetables.



# Stuffed hen

**Ingredients:** 1 kg stewed meat (preferably beef or mutton), 100 ml oil, a few cloves of garlic, salt, pepper, parsley leaves, optionally also root vegetables, potatoes, beans, or peas.

-  **Preparation:** The pieces of stewed meat are browned in oil, then covered with crushed garlic and seasoning.  
May be served on its own or with potatoes or boiled vegetables.





## *Piroşte* (stuffed dumplings)

**Ingredients:** for the dough: 400–500 g wheat flour, 2 eggs, 1 tablespoonful of oil, water; for the savoury filling: mushrooms, potatoes, salty cheese, fried onion, fresh or pickled cabbage, spinach, with salt and pepper; for the sweet filling: jam, whole fruit (cherries, apples, pears, plums, strawberries, blueberries), sweet cheese, with sugar (and optionally vanilla and cinnamon).

**✂ Preparation:** Prepare a dough as if for noodles. It should not be sticky. Roll it out and cut it into little cubes. Press the stuffing into each piece, then stick the edges together and boil in salted water.

Serve either with cream (for all types), fried onion (for savoury versions), or jam or fruit syrup (for sweet versions).

# Brozbuță (cabbage rolls) with coarse-ground maize and porcini mushrooms

**Ingredients:** 400–500 g coarse-ground maize, 400–500 g porcini mushrooms, 3 onions, 3 carrots, 1 large pickled cabbage, salt, pepper, water, optionally a few tomatoes and peppers or some thyme or dill.

✂ **Preparation:** Finely chop the onions (and the tomatoes and peppers, if included) and grate the carrots. Fry them in oil, then add the porcini mushrooms (washed and finely cut). At the same time, scald the maize with boiling water. Mix all the ingredients together. Wrap in the pickled cabbage leaves, and bring to the boil.

Cabbage rolls are popular all over Romania. The standard Romanian word for them is *sarmale*, but the people of Maramureș call them by a variety of local names: *brozbuță*, *haluște*, *holoți*, *piroște*—or simply *curechi umplut* (stuffed cabbage).



# Mushroom stew

**Ingredients:** 1 pile of mushrooms—*hribi* (porcini mushrooms), *ghebe* (honey fungus), *gălbiori* (chanterelles), *vinețele* (edible varieties of *Russula*), etc., 1 onion, 2 or 3 cloves of garlic, parsley, salt, pepper, water, optionally milk.

✂ **Preparation:** Boil the mushrooms in salted water, then drain. Fry the onion mixed with the salt and pepper, then add the garlic, crushed, and the mushrooms (and milk if desired). Finally, add the parsley, chopped.

Mushroom stew can be served with polenta or as a garnish to other dishes.



## Hrenzăle (kremzli)

**Ingredients:** 5 large potatoes, 1 onion, 2 cloves of garlic, 2 tablespoonfuls of cream, 2 eggs, 2 tablespoonfuls of wheat flour, 1 tablespoonful of sugar, salt, pepper, baking powder, cooking oil.

- ✂ **Preparation:** peel and grate the potatoes, onions, and garlic. Then add the rest of the ingredients and, with the help of a spoon, shape the mixture into flattened balls and deep fry them in hot oil.

*Kremzli* (also known as *latkes*) are a Jewish dish, recalling the time when Jewish people made up a fifth of the population of Maramureş. They can be served on their own, with cream, or as a garnish.



# Codru-style pies

**Ingredients:** for the dough: 1 kg flour, 15 g yeast, sugar, salt, oil, water; and for the filling: either cheese, green onion, dill, or: mashed potatoes, fried onion, pepper, etc.

- ✂ **Preparation:** Make a hollow in the middle of the flour and pour in the yeast mixed with a pinch of sugar and a little hot water. After 10 minutes, add salt, slowly add warm water, and mix the dough for about another 10 minutes. Cover with a towel and leave for about an hour to rise. Roll out a thin layer of dough, put the filling in the middle, and wrap the dough around it. Then bake the pie in a pan lightly greased with a little oil, until it turns golden brown.



# Gomboți

**Ingredients:** 1 kg white potatoes, 10–20 blue plums, 200–300 g wheat flour, 2 eggs, salt, 250 g breadcrumbs, 100 g butter or oil, 100 g sugar, optionally cinnamon or vanilla, water.

- ✂ **Preparation:** Boil the potatoes in their skins, then peel and mash them. Mix with the flour and eggs. Pull off pieces of the resulting dough and wrap them round the plums to form balls the size of tennis-balls or smaller. (Do not remove the stones, so as not to lose juice.). Boil the balls one by one in salted water until they rise to the surface. Fry the breadcrumbs in the butter or oil and sugar and roll the balls in them. If desired, sprinkle them with cinnamon or vanilla sugar.



# Drinks

When it comes to drinks, Maramureș also has plenty to offer, starting with its delicious mountain water — strong and pure as champagne - and the local mineral waters, known as borcut and drawn from springs in many places.

In many households, depending on the season, delicious soft drinks are made from elderflowers and from the juice of apples, tomatoes, grapes, etc. Then there are syrups prepared from fir tree tips, raspberries, blueberries, acacia flowers, dandelions, and elderflowers, not to mention homemade beer.

The local wine is produced either from Isabella and Noah grapes, which are grown all over the region, or from noble varieties—Fetească, Riesling, Roscă, etc.—to be found especially in the vineyards of the Cicârlău–Seini area, belonging to GI Dealurile Sătmăruului.

Almost every house has its own homemade blueberry, sweet cherry, or sour cherry liqueur.

Last but not least, for it is an essential aperitif before every meal in Maramureș, we must mention *horincă* (also known as *pălincă*), the legendary double-distilled fruit brandy distilled from plums, pears, apples, cherries, etc., a clear, scented drink, minimum 50 'fires' in strength, a veritable local institution of which much could be said—especially over a glass or two.

Can food and drink offer a truly unforgettable feast for the senses of smell and taste? The answer can only be: 'Yes! In Maramureș!'

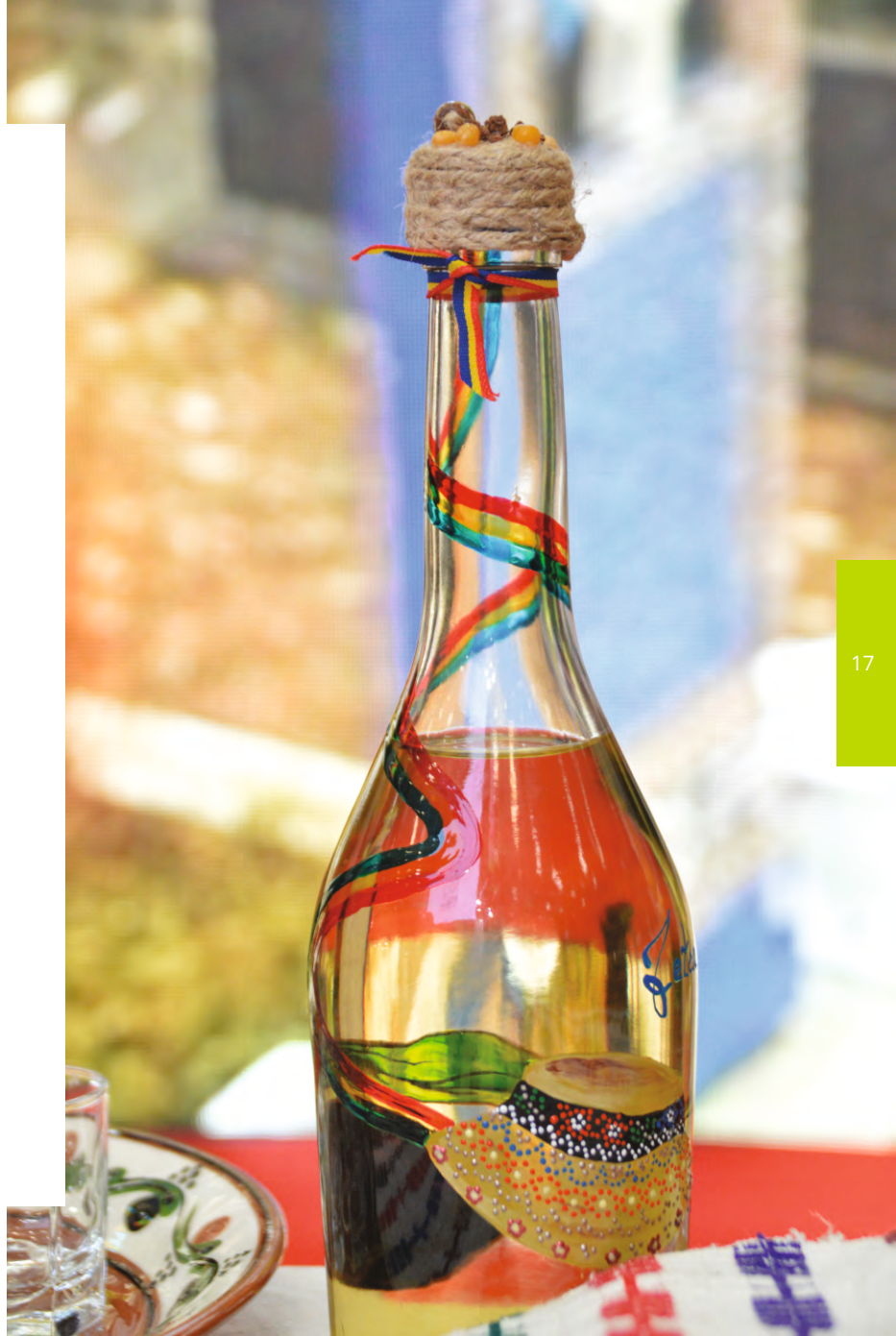


Restaurants

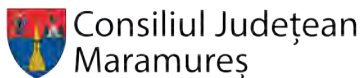


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