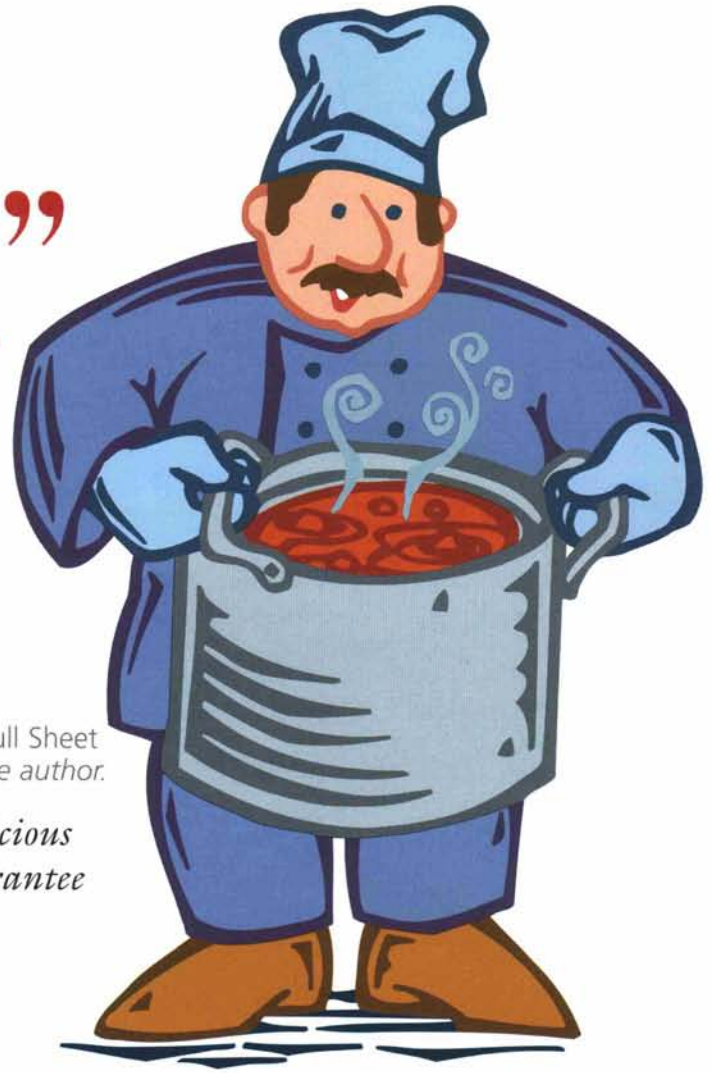


# "Soul Food"

## Voykin's Russian Borscht



*Editor's Note: A version of this article appeared in the Bull Sheet many years ago. We reprint here with the blessing of the author.*

*As golfing season winds down, I present a delicious soup recipe, a famous Russian one that I guarantee will stick to your soul.*

The recipe is secret and has been handed down from Voykin to Voykin for hundreds of years. It was given to me and my healthy brothers by my dear mother just before we left Canada, where her borscht was famed far and wide for feeding not only a big Russian family, but a wandering Romanov or two.

Reading "special occasion" recipes makes me laugh, especially those by celebrities and famous chefs, who do their conjurings with meats and vegetables for our very commercialized holidays. These recipes are frustrating and expensive to prepare; another example of the "keeping up with the Joneses" syndrome. But now, dear friends, your worries are over. From now on, instead of keeping up with the Joneses, you'll just have to keep up with the Voykins. And that, I assure you, will be easy and inexpensive because we enjoy Russian borscht for all the important holidays, and also in between. Frankly, our Russian borscht is a soup for all seasons.

A little-known but true fact is that Russian borscht is a delicious and powerful aphrodisiac. Coin-

identally, it is also a well-known fact that Russian families never number less than five children. And so it is with the interests of the many love-starved and hungry greenkeepers in my heart that I pass on my recipe for Romantic Russian Borscht. And I do this at the end of the golfing season because I feel strongly that Midwest wives would welcome a little tender recreation.

However, before I relate this recipe, I must clear up what I regard as a serious misconception throughout the Western world. My recipe is for Russian borscht, which is made with a basic ingredient of sweet cabbage with pieces of meat, and not for Ukrainian borscht, containing red beets in a broth. You can perhaps understand my amazement and frustration in New York one January at the Russian Tea Room, the gathering place for many years for Manhattan's elite in the arts. Unfortunately, what the Tea Room called Russian borscht was actually Ukrainian borscht. This "goulash" mixture of beets and cabbage



topped with sour cream is a good soup, but not a great one. Except for this major mistake, the other food in this famous restaurant was authentic Russian. (If you ever go there, be sure to order their cream of chicken soup, called Roszolnick, made with chicken giblets, potatoes and numerous vegetables.)

### Okay, here's the recipe.

#### Ingredients


6 quarts water  
4 pounds lean beef short ribs  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 medium cabbage, coarsely chopped  
1 large green pepper, seeded and chopped  
1 bunch green onions, sliced  
6 medium potatoes, diced  
2 cloves garlic, crushed  
1 stick butter  
2 large cans stewed tomatoes  
black pepper to taste  
2 teaspoons fresh dill or dried dill weed

*In a large stock pot, bring the water to a boil and add the short ribs. When water returns to a boil, add salt, reduce heat to a simmer. Cover and allow to simmer for 1-1/2 hours, or until meat is tender and falling off the bone. Skim off fat from the surface.*

*In a large skillet, melt the butter. Add the chopped cabbage, green pepper, onions, potatoes, garlic and canned tomatoes. Saute to coat the vegetables with butter, and allow the cabbage to become translucent, about 20-30 minutes. Do not overcook, as the potatoes will become mushy. Add to meat and broth. Adjust with salt to taste, add black pepper and dill weed.*

*The mixture should be thick, but water may be added if desired. Crushed red pepper may be added if a spicier soup is desired.*

Now bring out your borscht bowls (any large deep bowls will do), ladle a generous portion in each, and start to eat with Russian rye, black or pumpernickel bread. Then, for an ecstasy shot, put that chilled bottle of Stoli vodka on the table. Open it and pour down a shot, and immediately lift yourself right into the borscht ethos. In this manner, you are ready for the most elite and sumptuous meal you will ever taste. Hopefully, after enjoying this super soup – Russian borscht – a romantic evening will follow.

For an added bonus, put any leftover borscht in the refrigerator. To reheat, place in saucepan and simmer until heated through. Never, never reboil leftover borscht. I find borscht tastes even better the second day after flavors have a chance to settle. 

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