

TIPS FOR KOLACH MAKING & BAKING

- Make sure yeast is active (not old).
- Use eggs (and other ingredients) at room temp
- If dough made the night before and refrigerated, it is easier to roll into balls, but takes longer to rise.
- Beat last cup of flour into dough manually.
- Hand beat dough until silky, a long time, to get air incorporated
- Put rising dough near tub of hot water; warm moisture helps the dough raise
- Make sure the dough doubles when rising
- Roll dough balls from the same batch of dough for a baking pan (i.e. don't mix batches on one pan as they may not bake uniformly.)
- Baste dough balls thoroughly.
- Use all of one filling on one pan as fillings cook differently
- Parchment paper makes kolach bottoms more evenly colored
- Bake one pan at a time in the middle of oven instead of switching pans from upper to lower racks.
- Some women use oven temps of 450 to 475 degrees. Higher temps make softer kolaches.

TIPS FOR MAKING KOLACH FILLINGS

- Crumble Topping: you can add a bit of cinnamon and/or vanilla to the crumble topping
- Consistency: All fillings need to “look heavy” when you drop it from a spoon (quite thick and holds its shape when dropped.)
- Adjust flavor: don't be afraid to add sweeteners and/or seasonings to get the right taste
- You can put some of the topping in the kolach to be filled first, then the cherry or strawberry filling; this will soak up extra liquid in the filling.
- Commercial thickening: can be sprinkled lightly on top of the bowl of filling, about a teaspoon; mix in, then let it sit to see if it will be thick enough; you can mix sugar with the thickening before you add it; once you have added thickener, if it looks lumpy, that's ok; it will bake out
- Made-up fillings can be frozen (except cottage cheese)
- Purchased pie fillings: usually need to be thickened and adjusted for taste.
- Apricot filling: can be mixed with applesauce; can be mixed with dry apricot jello,
- Peach filling can be mixed with dry peach jello
- Strawberry filling can be mixed with dry strawberry jello
- Rhubarb filling: can be mixed with dry strawberry jello; with pears; with pineapple; can use a rhubarb pie filling recipe to make it
- Cherry filling: may thin down as it sits, so check it before you use to fill kolaches. You can put almond extract in cherry filling for taste
- Poppy seed filling: thin with applesauce; can add vanilla to taste; if too thin, add crushed graham cracker crumbs; can buy it at Kalona or Stringtown but need to ask for it because they keep it in the back
- Prune filling: add applesauce and cinnamon or vanilla for flavor
- Apple filling: make applesauce; add whole (pre-soaked) raisins, cinnamon & vanilla

- Cottage Cheese Filling: it is best to mix it right before you fill the kolaches; put thickening in right before you bake them; add sugar, vanilla, lemon, orange or whatever you like for taste; put a maraschino cherry on top!
- Pear filling: can add pineapple to enhance the taste.

TIPS FOR MAKING SOUP

- It is best to make the soup ahead of time so it can be cooled and the fat removed.
- All soup needs to have the fat taken out!
- The preferred method of making soup is to use the church recipe and to strain out the spices and vegetables (the vegetables have given up their goodness to the broth.)
- Broth should be strained to remove vegetables and spices that you cooked with (discard them)
- Soup should have no skin, no bones, no gristle, no reddish vein meat, no fat.
- Cool broth well before you put the lid back on; cool it quickly by placing the soup container in a big bowl with ice in it. Once cool, remove the fat.
- Some people return the cleaned chicken meat to the broth before they freeze it
- Do not add the noodles until right before you bring to church; eggs in the noodles cause soup to ferment; noodles sitting too long in hot broth get mushy
- If using “fat “noodles, use less of them or add broth after they are cooked. (Some soup comes in mostly noodles and very little broth!)
- If you still use frozen vegetables, put them in not long before you bring the soup to church as they quickly get mushy.
- Soup should be brought to the church hot. The “soup warmers” do not have time to heat up cold or frozen soup.
- Taste your soup and adjust for taste; add bouillon cubes, granules or paste to taste; add purchased broth if it is too thick.

VEGETABLES

- Celery and carrots should be brought to church already cleaned and cut in lengths (i.e. ready to put on the serving plates.