POUR KETCHEN

MY FAMILY TABLE by ANNA HURNING

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Acknowledgements

For Hanna,

so you never have to search for where you came from.



-Introduction -

This is my family table. It's a bit old; it has scratches and stains from family gatherings and early mornings when my daughter was little. You can see indentations of writing from when she was doing her homework as she got a little older. You can see cracks in the legs from when it was moved seven times during our life together. It carries our memories, family traditions, and secrets, and it represents our family going back four generations.

The red, flowery scarf belonged to my great-grandmother Józefa. I didn't know her. She was born and raised in a small village outside Sieradz, Poland. She passed away when my grandma was little, during WWII. I don't even know what she looked like, as there are no surviving photographs of her. The red scarf is the only material thing that is left from her. She, unknowingly, sits at our table. It's her recipes and the recipes passed down by her sisters that are being served here. Babcia Stasia, her daughter, sits here too. My whole knowledge of home cooking comes from her. It's the flavors that she produced that make me emotional and nostalgic. Her cooking is comfort food.

After moving from Poland to the US, away from my home town of Szczecin and my Polish family, I've developed my own style of cooking combing knowledge from both sides of my family. My paternal grandma, babcia Władzia, was an excellent home chef as well. She was the master of making something out of nothing. She was also very generous when ingredients were plenty. Her cooking looked so easy, even though she never took shortcuts and made everything from scratch. She is also present at our table.

This book represents influences of great-grandmothers, grandmothers, parents, and our take on traditional Polish recipes. It embodies the food of my family and dishes that are still prepared and served regularly. This book will allow my daughter to continue visiting with our ancestors at our table.

Pull up a chair and meet my family. This is my family table.

Anna Hurning





Bean Soup

-Zupa, fasolowa-

Thick and filling soup prepared with smoked sausage and vegetables.

Yields: 9-10 servings Prep time: 10 minutes Cook time: 20 minutes

4 oz / 120 g of smoked slab bacon (or a small smoked ham hock, a few smoked pork ribs, or a link of good quality smoked Polish sausage)

1 large onion, chopped

2 bay leaves

4–5 whole peppercorns and allspice berries (each)

1 tsp of salt

3 small carrots, peeled and sliced

2 c of diced potatoes

 $6 \text{ c} / 1 \frac{1}{2} \text{ l of water}$

Two 15 oz / 425 g cans of northern beans (or other white beans) ¹/₂ c / 120 ml of cold water 2 tbsp of all-purpose flour ¹/₂ tbsp of dried marjoram Place slab bacon in a medium pan and heat to release some grease. (If using ham hocks, place 2 tablesoons of butter in a medium pan instead to sauté the onion. Add ham hocks when adding water. If using smoked sausage, dice and sauté with onions.) Add onions and sauté for about 5 minutes.

SOUPS

Add bay leaves, peppercorns and allspice berries, salt, carrots, potatoes, and water. Drain and rinse beans and add to soup. Simmer on medium-low for about 15–20 minutes, until all veggies are soft.

To finish off the soup, whisk flour with cold water until well combined and add to hot soup. Bring to boil to thicken. Add marjoram, stir and taste. Add more salt, if needed.

Anna's note:

Let it rest a bit for flavors to combine (about 30–60 minutes). Serve hot with a slice of hearty bread.

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Anna's note:

Red barszcz loses it's color when boiled, this is why I recommend letting the soup sit overnight for flavors to combine. Limit boiling when reheating also. Vinegar will help with preserving the color.



Beetroot Vegetable Soup

-Barszcz ukraiński -

Beef-based broth with earthy tones of beets and aromatic vegetables.

Yields: 10 servings Prep time: 15 minutes Cook time: 1.5 hours

2 lbs / 1 kg / 6–7 small / medium beets

12–14 oz / 350–380 g beef soup bones or beef ribs

6 c / 1 ½ l of water 1 tsp of salt

2 carrots

 $\frac{1}{4}$ of an onion

5–6 whole peppercorns and allspice berries (each)

3 bay leaves

 $2\mbox{ c}$ / $8\mbox{ oz}$ / $240\mbox{ g}$ of fresh green beans

One 15.5 oz / 439 g can of white kidney beans

One 15.5 oz / 439 g can of navy beans

3-4 medium potatoes
3 c / 300 g / about ½ of a small head of fresh green cabbage
½ c of white vinegar
1 garlic clove, crushed
½ c of sweet cream
2 tbsp of all-purpose flour
Dill for garnish

Preheat oven to 350°F / 180°C. Cut stems off the beets (at the stem, not the bulb) and scrub them well under running water. Place in a baking dish, cover with aluminum foil and bake until soft (large ones will take 1.5 hours). Take out, cool, peel and grate on the largest vegetable grater—you may want to use gloves and protect your garments for this part.

While beets are baking, place beef bones in a large stockpot, add water, salt, peeled carrots, onion, allspice berries and peppercorns, and bay leaves. Cover and simmer for 1 hour. Remove carrots and set aside. Continue simmering for another 30 minutes.

In the meantime, wash fresh green beans, cut stem ends off and cut into about 1 inch / 3 centimeter pieces. Drain and rinse canned beans, set aside. Peel and cube potatoes (keep in cold water until ready to add to soup), set aside. Chop fresh cabbage, set aside.

After a total of 1 ½ hours of boiling beef broth, take out beef bones and add 2 cups / 500 milliliters of water. Next, add potatoes and green beans. Bring to boil and simmer for 10 minutes. Next, add canned beans, cabbage, and sliced carrots. Bring to boil and simmer for another 5 minutes.

At this time, turn heat off, add vinegar, shredded beets, and crushed garlic clove. I also added about ½ teaspoon of salt. Give it a stir and set aside for at least two hours (preferably overnight).

When ready to eat, mix sweet cream with flour and slowly add about 1 cup of soup to it to temper it. Stir well to combine. Add flour mixture to hot soup and heat until almost boiling. Taste and add a bit more salt, if needed.

Sprinkle with fresh dill and serve hot.

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PIEROGI & DUMPLINGS

Perfect Pierogi Dough

Yields: 55–60 dumplings Prep time: 5 minutes

-Traditional Pierogi Dough -

3 c / 375 g of all-purpose flour 1 tsp of salt 1 egg 1 ¼ c / 300 ml of warm water Start by placing egg and salt in a bowl and whisking lightly.

Add flour and water. Mix until ingredients combine and form a dough ball. Knead only until well combined (about 2–3 minutes).

-Vegan Pierogi Dough-

3 c / 375 g of all-purpose flour 1 tsp of salt 2 tbsp of oil 1 ¹/₄ c / 300 ml of warm water To make the dough, place flour and salt in a bowl first, whisk lightly.

Add oil and water. Mix until ingredients combine and form a dough ball. Knead only until well combined (about 2–3 minutes).

- Freezing & Reheating Pierogi-

TO FREEZE: spread boiled and cooled pierogi on a baking sheet (not touching), and place in the freezer. After they are frozen, transfer to a zip-top bag.

TO REHEAT: place in a shallow pan with a bit of butter and a small splash of water. Heat covered on low until dumplings are hot (about 5 minutes), then uncover and brown on each side.



Homemade Farmer's Cheese

-Twarbg-

Traditional soft cheese, tangy in flavor, is used in cooking (pierogi filling, cheesecake) or enjoyed as breakfast mixed with dill or chives.

Yields: 1 lb / 500 g Prep time: 72 hours Cook time: 60 minutes

1 gal / 4 l of full fat milk 1 c / 250 ml of buttermilk* ADDITIONALLY: Cheesecloth Strainer Disinfect a glass or ceramic container big enough to fit 1 gallon / 4 liters of milk + 1 cup / 250 ml of buttermilk using hot water. Pour milk and buttermilk into it and set on the counter covered with a clean kitchen towel for 72 hours (or more).

When milk becomes solid (and is no longer "slimy") to where you can slice it and it will stay separated, it is ready. Consistency should resemble sour cream or Greek yogurt.

Pour into a large soup pot, cover and heat on the lowest heat setting until whey separates from curds and the curds start hardening. Don't stir. Cook for about 1 hour. Curds should be a bit hard, kind of like cottage cheese. If still mushy, keep heating slowly.

When "cooked", place cheesecloth over a strainer and pour liquid through. Let sit for about 10 minutes to drain. To get rid of extra liquid, twist cheesecloth to squeeze it out. Leave some moisture though; you don't want it too dry.

When satisfied with the moisture level, transfer into a container and refrigerate.

Anna's note:

* If using unpasteurized milk, skip adding buttermilk.

PIEROGI & DUMPLINGS





Fruit-filled pierogi usually made during the summer using a favorite seasonal berry.

Yields: 55–60 dumplings Prep time: 25 minutes Cook time: 45 minutes

2 lbs / 1 kg of fresh (or frozen) blueberries or strawberries DOUGH: 3 c / 375 g of all-purpose flour 1 tsp of salt 1 egg 1 ¼ c / 300 ml of warm water ADDITIONALLY: Sour cream Sugar To make the dough, place egg and salt in a bowl first, whisk lightly. Add flour and water. Mix until ingredients combine and form a dough ball. Knead only until well combined (about 2–3 minutes). Take out a portion of it (about a third) onto a floured surface and roll out to about ½ inch / 2 millimeter thickness.

Cut out about 3 inch / 6–7 centimeter circles with the brim of a glass. Place 5–8 blueberries or 2–3 halves of strawberry on each circle and sprinkle with a pinch of sugar. Fold in half and seal the edges. Wet the edges lightly to help with the seal. Use a fork to go around the outside of the edge, if you'd like, or make a decorative edge.

Lay out on a floured surface until ready to boil.

Do the same with the rest of the dough.

Simmer on low in a large pot of water with a tablespoon of oil and a tablespoon of salt until they all float to the top. Don't place too many in the pot at a time.

Remove from pot and spread on a large surface to cool (not touching), or serve right away topped with sour cream and a sprinkle of sugar.



PIEROGI & DUMPLINGS

Braised Cabbage & Dumplings

-tazanki z kapustą -

Soft, large and flat dumplings mixed with cabbage and bacon.

Yields: 8-10 servings Prep time: 10 minutes Cook time: 45 minutes

6 oz / 175 g of good quality smoked bacon

- 1 large onion
- ¹/₂ head of medium cabbage
- 2 c / 500 ml of water
- 1 tbsp of salt

DUMPLINGS:

- 3 c / 375 g of all-purpose flour
- 1 egg
- Pinch of salt

ADDITIONALLY:

- 2 + 4 tbsp of butter 3 tbsp of all-purpose flour
- 3–4 tbsp of fresh dill

Dice bacon and onion. Heat medium pan, add bacon and sauté until fat has melted. Add onion and sauté until both golden brown.

In the meantime, chop cabbage into relatively small pieces. I cut it into thin slices first, then into smaller bits. Heat water in a large pot, add cabbage and salt and boil for 5–7 minutes, until cabbage is soft, but still a bit crunchy.

When bacon and onions are ready, add to pot with cabbage. Mix until combined, turn heat off.

Set a large pot of water on for boiling dumplings now. We want the water to be ready right when the dumplings are made.

To make dumplings, place flour, egg, and salt in a mixing bowl. Start adding water and mix until a ball forms; if it gets too wet, add a bit more flour.

When all ingredients combine, transfer dough onto floured surface and knead until smooth (about 3 minutes). Divide into three parts. Roll out with a rolling pin and cut into strips and then diagonally (see photos on next page).

Sprinkle dumplings with flour and, with the help of your knife, lift them off of your surface, so they do not stick together.

When water is boiling, slide them off your cutting board into the pot and **immediately** stir gently. We don't want them clumping together. Turn heat down and let simmer until dumplings float to the top. Drain and set aside.

Dump boiling water out, add a couple of tablespoons of butter to the same pot and add dumplings (this is a secret trick from my grandma; makes the dumplings even better)! Sauté for a few minutes, stir gently and often, until they get a little color.

Heat a small pan, add butter. Once melted, add flour. Mix until it becomes a smooth and bubbly roux, about 2 minutes.

Return cabbage to heat. Add roux to cabbage and mix well. Also add dumplings and mix. You might have to add a bit of water at this point. Cabbage should be moist but not saucy. You can easily add about a cup of water.

Taste, add a bit more salt and pepper, if needed. Sprinkle with chopped dill.

Serve hot.







Meats & Poultry Potrawy miesne i drotiowe



Bacon Spread

Slices of hearty bread, topped with aromatic "smalec", slices of sour pickles and onions is a popular but humble appetizer often served as a party starter.

Prep time: 15 minutes Cook time: 1–1.5 hours

2 lbs / 1 kg of pork fat
½ lb / 250 g of raw pork belly
4 medium onions (about 2 c diced)
2 tart apples
10 garlic cloves, minced
½ tsp of freshly ground pepper
1 tsp salt
1 tbsp dried marjoram
¼ tsp caraway seed

Have your butcher coarse grind the pork fat, if possible. Dice pork belly. Set a large pot to medium heat and add just the pork fat. Render until all white is liquid and the bits start turning brown. This may take about 30–45 minutes.

Then, add pork belly and continue rendering until meat bits start browning, another 30 minutes or so.

In the meantime, dice onions and grate the apples. When meat bits are starting to brown, add onions and apples. Sauté until onions are nicely golden brown.

Finally, add minced garlic, pepper, salt, marjoram, and caraway seeds, stir well and cook for a couple of minutes.

Transfer to jars or decorative dishes and set aside to cool completely. Refrigerate. It will stay fresh in the fridge for weeks.

Anna's note:

Serve with crusty bread. Top with slices of pickles and / or fresh onions.



Beans & Sausage

-Fasolka po bretvísku -

Large, white beans, cooked with smoky sausage and tomato-based sauce. This filling fall dish can be served as a main meal. We often prepare it when cooking outside, or enjoy while camping.

Yields: 4–6 servings Prep time: 10 minutes Cook time: 20 minutes

About $\frac{1}{2}$ lb / 250 g of smoked sausage

 $\frac{1}{2}$ lb / 250 g of smoked bacon

1 large onion 3–4 bay leaves

4–5 allspice berries, whole

One 29 oz / 822 g can of tomato puree / tomato sauce

2 tbsp of tomato paste ¼ tsp of salt

¹/₂ tsp of sugar

72 tsp of sugar

Two 15 oz / 439 g cans of white beans (great northern, navy beans or large lima beans) Dice sausage and bacon and, in a large pan, sauté until golden around the edges. Add chopped onion, bay leaves, and allspice berries. Sauté until onion is golden brown.

Add tomato puree / sauce and tomato paste, salt, and sugar and simmer on low for about 10 minutes, uncovered, to reduce.

Drain and rinse beans. Add them to the mixture, stir, and heat through.

Taste. Add a bit more salt, if needed.

Anna's note:

I encourage you to use a good quality sausage and bacon that's smoky and not super fatty.





Christmas Carp

-Karp bożonarodzeniowy -

Carp is a go-to fish served on most Polish Christmas Eve dinner tables. The flavor is quite unique, the meat tender and flaky. It is served only once every year and I cannot imagine Christmas without it.

Prep time: 2 hours Cook time: 20 minutes

Whole carp - about 2 lbs/ 1 kg (if you can't find carp, striped bass is a nice substitute) 2 tbsp of salt ½ tsp of ground pepper 4 tbsp of flour 3 tbsp of oil 2 tbsp of butter Clean and wash fish. Cut head, tail, and fins off. Cut fish into steaks.

Place fish in a bowl, add salt, cover with cold water and refrigerate for 2 hours. Remove, rinse and pat dry.

Sprinkle with pepper. Place flour in a shallow dish. Place each piece in flour to cover. Shake off any excess flour.

In a large frying pan, heat oil and butter. Place pieces of fish and sauté for a few minutes on each side on medium heat. Remove and place on a paper towel to soak up extra fat. If steaks are thick, finish in a 350°F / 180° C oven.

Serve immediately or keep in a warm oven until ready to serve.



Anna's note:

Pasteurized jars can be stored unrefrigerated and will keep for up to 6 months. Alternatively, you can place hot spread in jars, seal with the lid and refrigerate for up to 7 days.

- Paprykarz szczeciński -

"Paprykarz szczeciński" is an iconic symbol of the West Pomeranian region of Poland, and the city of Szczecin, where I'm from. It became famous in the 60s, developed by a local deep-sea fishing company to utilize all fish parts in their production process. It was inspired by the company's African journeys, and quickly became a favorite. It is quite popular nationwide; we mostly enjoy it on sandwiches.

Yields: Eight 8 oz / 220 ml jars Prep time: 20 minutes Cook time: 20 minutes + pasteurizing

¹/₂ cup / 100 g of uncooked rice 1 lb / 500 g of fish fillets (I'm using cod, but any kind of fish would do) Pinch of salt and pepper

3 medium onions 3 tbsp of butter

2 bay leaves

3–4 allspice berries

3 carrots

26 oz / 750 g of diced tomatoes (canned)

1 tsp of paprika

ADDITIONALLY:

Eight 8 oz / 220 ml canning jars

Cook rice in salted water and set aside.

Cook fish, sprinkled with a bit of salt and pepper, in a little grease. Set aside to cool a bit. Once cool, break up with a fork until pretty fine.

Dice onions and sauté in a large pot in a bit of butter for about 5 minutes on medium-high heat with bay leaves and allspice berries. Wash, peel and grate carrots on the largest side of a box grater, add to onions and sauté for another 5 minutes.

Add tomatoes and heat through. Add paprika, rice, fish, freshly ground pepper (about ¹/₄ teaspoon) and salt to taste (about a teaspoon). Mix well.

This recipe makes quite a bit, so I place it in jars and pull one out when I'm ready to eat. To do so, sanitize your jars and lids, place mixture into jars while still warm, place lids on and cool. Place in a shallow pot and fill with water just bellow the lid. Boil for 60 minutes. Take out and cool (unrefrigerated). After 24 hours repeat the process, but boil for 40 minutes. After another 24 hours repeat the process but boil for 30 minutes only.

I like this dish cold, so I place one jar in the fridge and store until cooled.

Serve cold, on bread.

Vegetables Warzywa



Beetroot Salad

- Surówka z buraków -

Salad made from roasted beets, with the addition of sharp, fresh onion, lemon, and spices. It makes a great side dish to saucy meat dishes.

Yields: 4 servings Prep time: 10 minutes + 1.5 hours for roasting beets

3 medium beets ¹⁄₄ of a small onion 1 tsp of oil Juice of ¹⁄₂ of a large lemon Pinch of salt ¹⁄₂ tsp of sugar ¹⁄₂ tsp white vinegar Preheat oven to 350°F / 180°C. Cut stems off beets and scrub to clean.

Bake covered for about 1 hour or until soft. Take out and set aside to cool.

Once cooled off, peel and grate on the largest side of a box grater. Add chopped onion, oil, lemon juice, salt, sugar, and vinegar. Mix and refrigerate to cool.



Buckwheat & Mushroom Cabbage Rolls

- Gotąbki z kaszą gryczaną i grzybami -

Vegetarian filling of earthy buckwheat and mushrooms, rolled in soft cabbage leaves.

Yields: 14–15 rolls Prep time: 60–90 minutes Cook time: 45 minutes

1 large savoy cabbage FILLING: $1\frac{1}{2}$ c / 250 g of uncooked buckwheat $1\frac{1}{2}$ c of diced onion ($\frac{1}{2}$ a large onion) 10 oz / 280 g of button mushrooms 2 tbsp / 30 g of butter 2 tsp of freshly ground pepper 2 tbsp of fresh thyme 1 tsp of salt 1 tsp of granulated onion 1 garlic clove or 1 tsp of garlic powder 1 egg

To prepare cabbage, insert a small knife around the core to remove. Some leaves may be loose.

Place the head in a large pot, with water to cover about 75% of the head, core down. Heat covered until water starts boiling. Carefully observe outer leaves and, with tongs, remove one by one when they become softened and pliable to the point that they don't break when lightly folded. You want a bit of crunch left in the leaf.

Keep unfolding cabbage leaves and removing them when they get soft, all the way to the core. Set aside until cool enough to handle.

To make the filling, cook buckwheat following instructions on the package with a teaspoon of salt. Once cooked, drain and place in a mixing bowl.

Dice onion, wash and slice mushrooms. In a medium sauté pan, heat butter, add onion and mushrooms and a pinch of salt. Sauté until golden brown around the edges. Add to buckwheat. Season with pepper, thyme, salt, granulated onion, and garlic. Taste, add a bit more salt to taste.

Add a whole egg. Mix well.

Once cabbage has cooled off, with a sharp knife, remove / shave off veins of each leaf (see picture).

Continued on the next page.

VEGETABLES

When ready to bake, preheat oven to $350^{\circ}F / 180^{\circ}C$. I'm using an oblong 12 x 8 inch / 30 x 23 centimeter baking dish, but a square 9 x 9 inch / 22 x 22 centimeter will work also.

To make rolls, place as much of the filling as you think you can fit onto a cabbage leaf (it will depend on the size; for a larger one it will be about ½ cup) and fold up from the stem end of the leaf up. Fold the sides in and keep rolling until you cover all of the filling. Place in the baking dish seam down.

Once your dish is filled with rolls, cover them with the remaining leaves too small to make rolls. You want the whole surface of the cabbage rolls covered. If you don't have enough leaves to cover all rolls, use tin foil when baking.

Bake for 45 minutes. While rolls are cooking, make sauce. I recommend tomato (recipe on pg. 118).





Desserts







Angel Wings

- Faworki / Chrust-

Thin fried cookies sprinkled with powdered sugar.

Prep time: 20 minutes Cook time: 45–60 minutes

4 ½ c / 585 g of bread flour
+ ½ c for dusting
Pinch of salt
7 eggs
3 tbsp of sour cream
1 ½ tbsp of butter, melted and cooled
2 tbsp of 75 % / 151 proof alcohol
Oil for frying
Powdered sugar

In a mixing bowl, place flour and salt. In a separate bowl, mix eggs with sour cream. Add to flour. Start mixing to combine. Add butter and alcohol and continue to mix until dough forms.

Sprinkle some flour onto a clean surface and transfer dough onto it. Continue kneading and punching the dough for no less than 10 minutes.

Cut a small section of the dough and roll out into a **thin** sheet. With a pizza cutter, cut into 1 inch / 3 centimeter strips, and then each strip into smaller pieces see photo.

Cut a small slit in the middle of each piece. Bring the bottom of the piece up toward the slit and pull it through to create the curly sides.

In a deep frying pan / cast iron skillet heat oil (enough oil to be about 2 inches in depth) and fry dough strips until golden brown. You will have to flip them. Remove and place on a sheet covered with paper towels. Once cool, sprinkle with powdered sugar.





Traditional shortbread-crust cake with apple filling, one of the most favorite of my cakes. Grandma made this almost weekly, to enjoy with Sunday dinner.

Yields: 10–12 servings Prep time: 1 hour Cook time: 45–50 minutes

CRUST:

1 whole egg 1 yolk (reserve the egg white) 1 c / 120 g of powdered sugar 2 ½ c / 315 g of all-purpose flour 1 tsp of baking powder Zest of ½ lemon 7 oz / 200 g of cold butter FILLING: 10 tart apples ¼ c / 50 g of granulated sugar Zest and juice of ½ lemon ¼ tsp of cinnamon To prepare the crust: whip the egg and an egg yolk with sugar. Add flour, baking powder, and lemon zest. Cut cold butter into small cubes and also add to the mixture. Mix and knead until just combined with the help of a utensil. Finished dough should have lumps of butter in it. Butter will make the crust flaky.

Wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate for 1 hour.

To make the filling: peel and core apples. Grate on the largest side of a box vegetable grater and place in a deep frying pan. Add sugar, zest, and lemon juice and cook on medium until all juice evaporates (about 30 minutes). Set aside to cool.

When ready to bake, preheat the oven to 400° F / 200° C.

Grease the bottom and sides of a 9×9 inch / 23×23 centimeter baking dish with butter (or line with parchement paper).

Cut the dough in half, place between two pieces of parchment paper and roll out to fit your baking dish. Make sure there is enough dough to cover the sides as well. Distribute evenly on the bottom and all the way up the sides. Scoop the cool filling onto the bottom of the crust. Roll out the remaining half of the dough and place on top of the filling.

Whisk the egg white and a teaspoon of water with a fork, and brush onto the top of the crust.

Bake for 45–50 minutes or until crust is golden brown.

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To Hanna: eat your vegetables. Love, mom.

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Anna Hurning is a home chef, mom, and wife. She is passionate about her blog, Polish Your Kitchen, where she presents classic and traditional recipes from her Polish home.



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