



Cristinia M. Fletes/St. Louis Post-Dispatch-TNS

Loryn Nalic, co-owner of BalkanTreat Box, holds up a freshly baked pan of sirnicaco-owner of BalkanTreat Box.

GIBANICA

Continued from Page 2B

There’s no one way to make gibanica, the same way there isn’t a single way to make a hamburger. Almost every Balkan or Slavic country has a version of the dish or something similar to it. Many countries make Burek, a phyllo dough-based pie stuffed with beef and sometimes cheese. Greeks have their spinach pie, spanakopita.

The word gibanica itself is a combination of two separate languages: the Croatian verb “gibati” and Serbian verb meaning “to fold, sway, rock.” Altogether, it means “folded pie.”

When I asked Balkan Treat Box’s owner and chef Loryn Nalic about the dish, she knew it as “sirnica.”

“It’s one of my kids’ favorite dishes,” Nalic says. “It was the first thing I learned to make when Edo and I were together because he loves it so much.”

Loryn and her husband, Edo, turned their food truck into a brick-and-mortar restaurant last year to national acclaim. They invited me into their restaurant on a Monday afternoon, when the day was dim but the wood fire in their oven burned bright.

Everyone makes gibanica and its variants differently. Nalic makes hers with fresh dough and cheese she makes herself. I use store-bought phyllo dough and cottage cheese. Loryn lines dollops of cheese and rolls the filling with the dough into one big coil. I sprinkle oil and cheese on layer after layer of dough.

“It’s a pretty universally loved dish,” Nalic says.

Despite that, it’s not on the menu at Balkan Treat Box — yet. Nalic says the restaurant recently got a few new ovens and may start serving it. As a special treat, the restaurant will serve it Wednesday and Thursday.

It’s a very simple dish once you get the technique down. There’s a certain way to handle the dough, whether you’re making it



Cristinia M. Fletes/St. Louis Post-Dispatch-TNS

Loryn Nalic, left, co-owner of BalkanTreat Box, laughs with Monica Obradovic, features intern at the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, as they make Balkan cheese pie at Balkan Treat Box.

yourself or buying it from a store.

Nalic says the first time she watched someone make phyllo dough from scratch, it brought tears to her eyes. “It is an art form,” she says.

When I saw Nalic and her mother-in-law, Zeta, make and stretch the phyllo dough, I was near tears, too. The way she expertly expanded the dough on a table brought to my mind the countless generations of Balkan women teaching their daughters how to make it and how that knowledge spread to my Baba through a great-grandmother I never met, and now me.

Each time I ask Baba for a written recipe (there have been many times), she’ll recite the ingredients and say, “Just make it.” I asked her to teach me how to make it again for this article, with pen and paper in hand.

Now, I’m the one making the neighborhood smell like Serbian food..

GIBANICA

Yield: 10 servings

- 2 pounds phyllo dough, preferably the thickest, “country style” type
- 7 eggs
- 1½ pounds cottage cheese



Cristinia M. Fletes/St. Louis Post-Dispatch-TNS

A slice of Balkan cheese pie made by Loryn Nalic, co-owner of BalkanTreat Box. Nalic made the Bosnian version of the dish, called sirnica.

- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- ½ pound farmers’ cheese or feta, crumbled
- 3 tablespoons soda water
- 2/3 cup corn oil, divided

Notes: Use the deepest metal baking pan you have, preferably at least 2½ inches.

1. Thaw phyllo dough according to package instructions. Grease bottom of an extra-large baking pan, preferably 11-by-16-inches (available at European markets). Preheat oven to 425 degrees.
2. Whisk eggs in a large

bowl, then stir in the cottage cheese, salt, baking powder and farmers’ cheese. Stir in the soda water.

3. Cover the bottom of the pan with a single layer of phyllo dough, making sure some of the pieces hang over the sides. Evenly sprinkle 1 tablespoon oil over the dough.
4. Take a piece of phyllo dough and wrinkle it into the dish with as many bumps as possible so it doesn’t lie flat. Depending on the size of your pan, use 2 to 3 pieces of dough for each layer. Evenly sprinkle 1 tablespoon oil on the dough, including the

sides and corners. Do not allow the oil to pool.

5. Sprinkle ½ to ¾ cup egg-and-cheese mixture on the dough, including the sides, enough to make sure the edges and crevices are covered. Do not allow the mixture to pool.
6. Repeat laying down 2 to 3 pieces of wrinkled dough and sprinkling them with oil and the egg-and-cheese mixture until you have 1 layer of dough left. Cover the top of the dish with that last remaining layer, folding in any excess on the sides. Cover the top with a final layer of the egg-and-cheese mixture and oil, but do not dump any mixture leftovers on top.
7. Bake 40 minutes or until the top turns golden brown and the sides separate from the pan.

carbohydrate; 4 g sugar; 2 g fiber; 1,139 mg sodium; 260 mg calcium

— Recipe by Monica Obradovic

Per serving: 568 calories; 30 g fat; 9 g saturated fat; 43 mg cholesterol; 21 g protein; 53 g

Person-Centered Care

Our unique patient visit ensures everything we do focuses on the patient and their family and nothing is missed.

BAKER CITY
(541) 524-7688

LA GRANDE
(541) 624-5800

Aluminum Full-View Doors

Wayne Dalton GARAGE DOORS

Model 451

NE-HI ENTERPRISES

Big enough to do a large job. Small enough to care.
2122 10th St, Baker City • 541-523-6008 • ccb#155399

BLUE MOUNTAIN RV REPAIR

Dealer & Factory Certified Technicians

Discount for All Military & First Responders

Rick
360.601.2067

Todd
541.786.5095

627 E. Arch St, Union, OR 97883

APPLIANCES & MORE

Jay & Kristin Wilson, Owners
2036 Main Street, Baker City
541-523-6284 • ccb#219615

KitchenAid

Subscriber ONLY Presale

Only \$6.00 Each (reg. price \$8.00 ea.)

If you are a subscriber to The Observer you can purchase your tickets at The Observer office

Friday 1/17/20 - Wednesday 1/29/20

Offer good thru 1/29/20. Advance ticket purchase is highly recommended.

Featuring the
EOU Chamber Choir
& EOU Music
Department

OPPOSITES ATTRACT

McKenzie Theatre
Fri., Jan. 31st - 7:30 p.m.
Sat., Feb. 1st - 4:00 and 8:00 p.m.

Adults \$8.00 Seniors/Students \$7.00
Group tickets are \$6 each when you purchase 10 or more. Online tickets available at eou.edu/music for \$8.

Tickets available at Red Cross Drug, The EOU Bookstore and online at eou.edu/music
Advanced ticket purchase is highly recommended.

A Popular Music Song and Dance Show

Presented by
Red Cross DRUG STORE