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## Magical Rooster

Zolotoy Petushok (The Golden Rooster) serves up old world fare.

In true Russian style, the name of this restaurant/deli comes from Pushkin's tale of *Zolotoy Petushok (The Golden Rooster)*.

The story goes as follows. Tsar Dadon the Glorious took a magical rooster from a soothsayer to protect his kingdom from marauders with the promise of a favor returned. It works. After his sons' deaths, Dadon is wracked with grief and inconsolable until he wanders into the tent of the enchanting Shamakha Queen. The Tsar falls in love with her and they plan to wed. But the soothsayer sees and wishes to take the Queen as his favor returned. Tsar Dadon refuses the request and kills the soothsayer in the street. The golden rooster swoops down and pecks the Tsar to death for not keeping his end of the bargain. The Queen disappears.

The establishment at 3163 W. 11th with the same name, **Zolotoy Petushok**, is somehow less tragic and much more filling. Sampling the menu was a delight.

The Pirozhki (appetizer pastries with fillings of veggies, rice and meat) were tender, delicious and almost a meal in themselves. Solyanka (soup with sausage, sauerkraut, onions, potatoes and sour cream) has an amazing amalgam of taste and is a must try. Golubtsy (cabbage leaves filled with meat and rice) were my favorite part of the meal — heartbreakingly tender and delectable with every bite utterly reminiscent of the Tsarmas my Croatian Staddababba (grandmother) would hand-make for every family gathering. Meat Sonics (meatballs with rice and spice) are tender additions to this hearty meal.

The deli portion of the business offers Pelmeni (Russian tortellinis served with dill and sour cream), pieces of Madonna and Black Prince cake, and a loaf of Georgian Ararat bread. You can have the homemade Pelmeni served fried and/or cooked in-house or you can get them frozen to take home and prepare like I did. They are a welcome respite from the ordinary filled pasta. The desserts were light, nutty and not too sweet. The layers of cake and divinity-esque filling squished in every layer left me feeling gluttonous and were so good I needed a Sobranie (Black Russian cigarette).

Other menu selections include dolmas, borsch (veggie or not), kasha, blinchiki (like blintzes, crepes filled with veggies, meat, or sweets).

The grocery and deli section has an astonishing array of items you cannot find elsewhere in Eugene and include not just Russian food, but many different Slavic and Eastern Bloc offerings.

There isn't much seating in-house, but the food is neatly and conveniently wrapped up to enjoy at your abode. For \$30-\$35, you can enjoy a variety of selections for 3+ adults. The deli has an astonishing selection and



someone is there to answer your questions (I certainly had plenty).

Zolotoy Petushok cuts a wide swath through the local unique cuisine/deli/grocery business. Thank goodness. Being a good young Slavic gal myself, parts of me (I'm not telling which parts) yearn for chopped sausage, sauerkraut, hearty rye bread, cabbage, potatoes and spice combinations right out of the Kremlin.

### Recipe for Pelmeni:

- One bag frozen Pelmeni = 25
- 6 cups water
- 7 whole (ish) Bay leaves
- 3 Tbs olive oil
- 3/4 cup Russian style sour cream

Bring water to rolling boil at med.-med. high.

Add bay leaves, let simmer for 5 minutes. Add 1 Tbs olive oil to boiling water.

Gently place frozen Pelmeni into the boiling mix.

Stir with slotted scooper.

Prepare frying pan with 2 tbs oil. Heat slowly (med.-med. low) while Pelmeni cook.

When Pelmeni float, scoop out one by one and pat dry on lintless cloth, then place into heated oil in pan.

Using tongs, frequently (and gently) turn Pelmeni frequently until golden brown on both sides.

Serve with large dollop of Russian sour cream as dip/sauce.

If you would prefer to go lower fat, skip the sauté, gently heat sour cream and mix the Pelmeni right into it.

Serves 2.