

# Latviešu Pīrāgi (Latvian Piragi) - Vic Ratnieks

*As learnt from his Mum Rita and Tante/Auntie (Mum's sister) Ausma Jurevics*

These instructions accompany the YouTube video at <https://youtu.be/GK4FPxeMuTg>

People often ask if these are the same as Russian Piroshki. They are probably related but not the same. From my understanding, piroshki use a variety of fillings like beef mince and cabbage. I have only ever seen my mum use pork bacon in pīrāgi but would love to hear what other people use.

## Ingredients (makes about 60-70)

This is what my tante used in the video but I have a larger mixer so I use 1 Litre of milk, 1 Kg of bacon and 1Kg of Plain Flour which is much easier to remember!

- 750mL Full Cream Milk
- About 750g Plain Flour (Sift the flour)
- 3 teaspoons yeast (Lowan Instant Dried Yeast or Premium Bakers Yeast)
- 4.5 teaspoons white sugar
- Salt (pinch only needed)
- About 1 Cup of Canola Oil
- 2 Brown Onions
- 1.5 Tablespoons Caraway seeds (adjust to your taste)
- 750g Bacon pieces (e.g. Don's Premium Bacon Pieces, comes in 250g packets, get 3). I prefer to find a butcher now that has nice smoky bacon
- 2 Eggs

Other:

- A mixmaster with dough hooks or you can knead the dough by hand if you're keen and want to build your muscles!
- Glad Baking Paper

For 1Kg bacon use these measurements: (This makes about 90 but you need a larger bowl and stronger dough mixer)

- About 1Kg Plain Flour
- 1L Milk
- 4 teaspoons yeast
- 6 teaspoons white sugar
- 2 tablespoons caraway seeds (adjust to your taste)

# Instructions

Steps 2 and 3 are reversed in the video but this is the sequence I follow now.

## Step 1 - Prepare the mixture before you make the dough

Warm 750ml of full cream milk so it's lukewarm only, not hot. In a saucepan over the stove or in your microwave - About 2 minutes.

Pour the milk into your mixer bowl

Sprinkle 3 teaspoons of dry yeast evenly spread over the milk

Sprinkle 4.5 teaspoons of sugar evenly spread over the mixture

Sprinkle 2 tablespoons of plain flour evenly spread over the mixture

**DO NOT STIR THE YEAST, SUGAR AND FLOUR IN. JUST LEAVE IT SPREAD OVER THE MILK**

Place plastic glad wrap over the bowl and a dry tea towel on top and place in a warm area e.g. in sunlight or near the oven.

Perform Step 2 while waiting till bubbles form on top of the mixture. About 30-45 mins, but can take longer depending on the temperature of the house. In winter I sometimes put it on the dash of the car under the windscreen in sunlight, but not if the temperature in the car is over about 27C/80F.

## Step 2 - Make the bacon, onion and caraway seed filling

Have a beer or glass of your favourite wine.

While the yeast is doing its work in the mixture, dice 750g/27 ounces of bacon pieces into small squares. I have found that using a Nutribullet to quickly (1-2 seconds) dice the bacon works well and is quicker than cutting with a knife.

Dice up 2 brown onions (or 1 large one) and add to the bacon pieces

Add a little bit of salt and pepper to taste

Add approx 1.5 tablespoons of caraway seeds to taste

Mix it all up well, cover with glad wrap and put in the fridge

## Step 3 - Make the dough

Grab another beer or wine!

When the milk, yeast, sugar and flour mixture has bubbled from Step 1 - Add a pinch of salt (like my tante said!)

Add 3/4 cup of canola oil

Put in a mixer with dough hooks

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20 June 2022

Add a few tablespoons of the sifted plain flour and start the mixer on slow speed

Continue to add plain flour (I don't measure it, just keep adding flour until the mixture is right) Keep adding flour until you get the correct consistency. You should be able to grab the dough and roll it in your fingers and it should not be sticky. It's ok if it's slightly oily from the canola oil. If too sticky, add more flour and if needed a small amount of canola oil (just a teaspoon at a time). It should be elastic and easily come off the blade, then knead by hand. Remove and hand knead the dough to remove all bumps and make it nice and smooth. The dough should be slightly shiny from the canola oil. If too dry, add a small amount of canola oil and keep kneading.

Make into a ball and cover with glad wrap and a tea towel, then put in a warm place and allow to double in size (about 45mins - 1.5 Hours).

Put Oven on Hot to about 210C for fan forced, 220 if not fan forced

Whisk 2 eggs for basting

Sift 750g of plain flour into a bowl

#### **Step 4 - Making the Pīrāgi**

Another beer or wine? Why not, you've got to the best part and tasting them is not far away!

When the dough has risen to about double its size, take some out at a time and roll it on a light base of canola oil on your bench top into a long sausage and cut into approx 1" balls, spread, insert bacon mixture, seal (like a pasty) and put on a tray with baking paper. Some people roll the dough into a round pizza shape then use a round egg ring to make consistent sizes but I'm not that particular and the varied sizes make them unique!

Let them settle until puffy (about 10 mins) and place a tea towel over them.

Spread the egg coating over the top and sides of the pīrāgi and fork each one 3 times diagonally just before putting them in the oven that has been pre-heated to around 220C/430F (210C/410F fan forced).

Rotate the trays ½ way through cooking (about 6 minutes mark). You might not have to do this. It depends on how good your oven is and if it heats consistently around the sides, front and back.

Remove when brown and let cool, if you can wait that long!

Bag them up and freeze them if you have any left over after everyone has stolen them.

I've had some in the freezer for over a year and they still tasted great. When removing from the freezer, microwave for about a minute then place in a warm oven (approx 200C/400F) for about 5 minutes.

**Labu apetīti - Enjoy!**