

Bratwurst with Braised Sauerkraut

Serves 4-6

Hearty brats paired with onions and sauerkraut form the basis of a fabulous tailgate, or autumn party. Our method for cooking the brats preserves their moistness and deliciousness. We've infused the brats with apple cider (or beer) and onions for an extra flavor dimension. The sauerkraut preparation transforms something sour into something silky and full of flavor. If you've never enjoyed sauerkraut in the past, try this one – you'll discover that you love it after all!

Braised Sauerkraut Ingredients:

2 quarts sauerkraut (64 oz.)
1/2 lb. bacon, diced
1 lb. button mushrooms, finely diced
1 cup sliced carrots
1 bay leaf
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
2 cups chicken stock
4 tablespoons butter
1 tablespoon chopped parsley

Bratwurst Ingredients:

4 tablespoons butter
2 large yellow onions, sliced
4 cloves garlic
4 cups apple cider (or beer)
10 bratwurst

Directions:

1. Begin by preparing the braised sauerkraut. Drain and rinse the sauerkraut. Allow continued draining by setting aside in the colander.
2. In a large (3 qt.) sauté pan, fry the bacon pieces until crispy. Remove the pan from heat. With a slotted spoon, remove the bacon crumbles from the pan and place on a paper towel-lined plate. Reserve the bacon fat by pouring into a heatproof glass measuring cup or bowl.
3. In the same pan, add the chopped mushrooms and sauté until all the liquid has evaporated. Add two additional tablespoons of the bacon fat, then add the carrots, bay leaf, pepper, and chicken stock to the pan along with the mushrooms. Add the drained sauerkraut, stir to evenly combine all the ingredients. Simmer at the lowest setting possible for 1 hour. Check periodically, stirring gently.

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5. To prepare the brats, melt the butter in a braiser or other low, broad pan over medium heat. Add the sliced onions and sauté until tender and translucent, about 15-20 minutes, or until they just begin to caramelize. In the last few minutes of sautéing, add the garlic, sauté for an additional minute.
6. Add the apple cider (or beer) to the onions, followed by the brats. Cover and simmer over low heat for 10-15 minutes, or until the brats have reached an internal temperature of 160F.
7. Heat a grill pan (or outdoor grill) over medium heat. Transfer the brats to the heated grill pan and roast turning to achieve a nice brown color and grill marks on all sides. Once grilled, transfer the brats back into the braiser, with the onions and apple cider (or beer) and hold over the lowest heat setting until ready to serve.
8. The brats may be served in a variety of ways. (a) Serve the brats with a generous helping of onions and a side of the braised sauerkraut topped with the bacon crumbles, or (b) Serve the brats in a bun topped with the braised sauerkraut and a good smear of mustard.