UKRAINIAN

Borscht with Short Ribs

COMPLEXITY	SERVES	PREP	COOK	TECHNIQUE	CUT
Involved	**6**	**30 min**	**2 hr 30 min**	**Simmer**	**Braising ribs**

Ingredients

- 1 kg (2¼ lb) beef braising ribs, cut into 2-rib pieces
- 2.5 litres (10 cups) water
- 2 tsp salt, plus more to taste
- 2 bay leaves
- 5 black peppercorns
- 3 medium beets (about 500 g / 1 lb), peeled and grated
- 2 tbsp vinegar or lemon juice, divided
- 3 tbsp sunflower or neutral oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 2 carrots, grated
- 2 tbsp tomato paste
- 3 potatoes, cut into 2 cm (¾ in) cubes
- ¼ small green cabbage (about 250 g / 9 oz), shredded
- 4 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tsp sugar
- Dill, sour cream and rye bread, to serve

Steps

1. Put the ribs, water, salt, bay and peppercorns in a large pot. Bring to a boil over high heat, skim off the foam, then lower to a gentle simmer.
2. Cover partly and cook for 1 hour 45 minutes, until the meat is tender. Lift out the ribs and shred the meat off the bones, then return the meat to the pot.
3. Toss the grated beets with 1 tbsp of the vinegar; this keeps their colour bright.
4. Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Cook the onion and carrots for 6 minutes until soft. Add the beets and tomato paste and cook for 8 minutes more, stirring, until the beets soften.
5. Add the potatoes to the broth and simmer for 10 minutes.
6. Add the cabbage and the beet mixture. Cook for 15 minutes, until the potatoes and cabbage are tender.
7. Stir in the garlic, sugar and the remaining vinegar. Taste and balance with salt, sugar and acid, so it is sweet-sour. Rest for 15 minutes off the heat.
8. Serve with a spoonful of sour cream, dill and bread.

Notes

- **Do not boil hard** once the beets go in or the colour turns dull.
- **Make ahead:** borscht is famously better the next day. Fridge 3 to 4 days; freezes 3 months. Reheat to steaming hot.
- **Vegetarian:** skip the ribs and use mushroom stock.
- **Slow cooker:** simmer the ribs, water, salt, bay and peppercorns on low 8 hr or high 4 to 5 hr (no browning needed), shred, then add the potatoes, cabbage and beet mixture and cook on high 1 hr.

- **Twist:** stir 1 tbsp prepared horseradish into the sour cream for a sharp, Eastern European-style kick (not part of the classic recipe).