

Classic Varnishkes With Pasta Bowknots

Ingredients

3 tablespoons butter or olive oil, divided
2 cups finely chopped onion
1/2 cup diced red bell pepper
1 cup whole kasha
2 cups chicken broth
3/4 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper
2 cups uncooked bow tie pasta

Method

The traditional Eastern European manner for serving varnishkas is as an accompaniment to beef brisket - along with lots of gravy or meat juices. Contemporary cooks may prefer to skip the gravy and pair this healthful and satisfying combo with turkey or lamb kebobs, veal loin, grilled swordfish, roasted chicken or boneless duck breasts. Vegetarians who pay attention to complementary proteins can be assured that varnishkas make an appropriate and nutritious meatless entrée.

Variations:

Amounts of mushrooms, onions and pasta bows can be increased, if desired. Shiitake or porcini mushrooms (fresh or dried) intensify the flavor. Instead of butter, some cooks use a combination of butter and walnut or hazelnut oil to saute mushrooms and onions.

Seasoning options:

Fresh or dried herbs, such as thyme, oregano or chervil. Garlic.

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