

CAPE BRETON POST

Proud • Strong • Local

Cape Breton Post > News > Local

Age-old recipes featured at Ukrainian dinner in Whitney Pier

[Greg McNeil](#)

Published on August 06, 2014



Published on August 06, 2014

Dishing out cabbage rolls was among the jobs for Josie Savitzski and Theresa Serwatuk during the Ukrainian dinner fundraiser on Wednesday. The meal also included cabbage rolls and kielbassa and was a fundraiser for the church.

Greg McNeil - Cape Breton Post

WHITNEY PIER — The air was thick with Ukrainian spices and music for Wednesday's edition of the Whitney Pier Melting Pot Festival.

The Ukrainian dinner, highlighted by cabbage roll, perogies and all the fixings, took centre stage for the festival that has also featured Lebanese, Caribbean and Italian dishes this week.

Michael Mischiek travelled from Dominion for the meal Wednesday to celebrate his Ukrainian heritage.

"I always cook at home, usually cabbage rolls and perogies for Christmastime and Easter," he said while waiting in a long line for his meal.

"The cabbage rolls are time consuming, but the perogies are worse. You have to make the potatoes and cheese, then the dough, roll it out and then put them into the pan with butter and onions. It takes about four hours to make four dozen."

While the amount of work for one family like Mischiek's is much, imagine making 700 meals, which was the case for Wednesday's fundraiser for the Holy Ghost Ukrainian Parish.

"It is quite an operation," said organizer Peter Mombourquette. "Cabbage rolls were made over two weekends and then perogies had to be made over another weekend."

At one home the dough for the perogies is made, before it was cut at another.

After the potatoes are boiled and mashed, cheese is added and a group of five men takes a weekend to roll it all in the dough.

As for the cabbage roles, the meat is cooked with onions and spices while the cabbage is boiled.

"You have to get the leaves of the cabbage off and then nip a part of it so it is easier to roll," Mombourquette said.

"A couple of spoonfuls of that mixture is put in the cabbage and then they roll it. It's work."

Though the fundraiser is more than 10 years old, the recipes used are as old as the church and community itself, he said.

"These recipes were with the Ukrainian women and they go way back. We started here in 1912. The church celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2012."

The work to recreate those age-old recipes reached its peak Wednesday morning when

Mombourquette said a "Henry Ford assembly line" put it all together in a meal package with kielbasa, coleslaw and desert.

With groups of three on either side of a table, cabbage rolls and perogies went into the package first, followed by the tomato sauce. Kielbasa, coleslaw, rolls and desert are the final additions.

Volunteer Marilyn Bates said although it's hard work, as a church member she enjoys joining friends and neighbours for the fundraiser.

"You have to do it for the church," she said. "My grandparents, they came here from the old country. There are 80- and 90-year members of the parish. We are trying to keep it all together. The church means everything to many people."

For Bates, helping her church meant a day that began Wednesday at 9 a.m. and some work well in advance of the day of the fundraiser.

"I started (Tuesday) doing the coleslaw. I also took cabbage rolls home to be cooked at my place. All ovens in the area were occupied."

Some of her work on the assembly line went out the back door to various businesses that bought the meals in advance. The rest went upstairs to the church hall where long lines waited to be served.

For Mischiek, who likes his perogies with onions and fried in butter, all that effort was appreciated.

"It smells like home," he said. "It's a good meal and a good time."

gmcneil@cbpost.com