

- Prep Time: 45 minutes
 - Cook Time: 1 hour 30 minutes
 - Total Time: 2 hours 15 minutes
 - Yields: 8-10 Rolls
 - Intensity Level: Medium-High (Requires dexterity for rolling and boiling water management)
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Ingredients

For the Cabbage & Filling

- 1 large head Green Cabbage (Savoy works well too)
- 1 lb (450g) Ground Beef (80/20 blend is best for flavor)
- 1/2 lb (225g) Ground Pork (adds moisture and richness)
- 1 cup Cooked White Rice (cooled)
- 1 medium Yellow Onion (finely diced)
- 2 cloves Garlic (minced)
- 1 large Egg
- 1 tsp Salt
- 1/2 tsp Black Pepper
- 1 tsp Sweet Paprika
- 1/2 tsp Dried Thyme

For the Sauce

- 2 tbsp Unsalted Butter
 - 1 large Onion (sliced)
 - 2 cans (15 oz each) Tomato Sauce
 - 1 can (14.5 oz) Diced Tomatoes (with juice)
 - 2 tbsp Brown Sugar (or to taste)
 - 2 tbsp Apple Cider Vinegar or Lemon Juice
 - 1 cup Beef Broth (or water)
 - Salt and Pepper to taste
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Instructions

Phase 1: Preparing the Cabbage (Time: 20 mins | Intensity:

Medium)

The goal here is to soften the leaves so they don't crack when rolled.

1. Core the Cabbage: Using a sharp paring knife, carefully cut a deep cone shape around the core of the cabbage head to remove it.
2. Boil the Head: Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Submerge the entire head of cabbage. Cover and cook for 10–12 minutes.
3. Peel the Leaves: Using tongs, carefully peel off the softened outer leaves. If the inner leaves are still hard, return the head to the boiling water for another 3–5 minutes and repeat.
4. Prep the Leaves: Transfer the soft leaves to a colander to drain. Once cool enough to handle, use a paring knife to shave down the thick, fibrous central vein of each leaf so it lies flat.

Phase 2: Making the Filling (Time: 10 mins | Intensity: Low)

Keep the filling raw; it will cook inside the roll.

1. In a large bowl, combine the ground beef, ground pork, cooled rice, diced onion, garlic, egg, salt, pepper, paprika, and thyme.
2. Use your hands to mix the ingredients until just combined. Do not overmix, or the meat will become tough.

Phase 3: Rolling the Cabbage (Time: 25 mins | Intensity: High)

This is the most technical part of the recipe.

1. Preheat your oven to 350°F (175°C).
2. Lay a prepared cabbage leaf flat on a cutting board, vein-side up.
3. Place about 1/3 to 1/2 cup of the meat mixture at the base of the leaf (near where the stem was).
4. The Fold: Fold the bottom edge over the meat, then fold in the left and right sides (like a burrito). Roll tightly away from you to seal.
5. Secure: If the roll feels loose, secure it with a toothpick or a small strip of extra cabbage leaf.
6. Repeat with remaining leaves and filling.

Phase 4: Assembling & Baking (Time: 1 hr 30 mins | Intensity: Low)

Layering is key to preventing burning.

1. The Bed: Spread a thin layer of tomato sauce on the bottom of a large Dutch oven or deep baking dish.

2. The Layers: Place a few extra cabbage leaves (the ones that tore) on top of the sauce. Arrange the rolls seam-side down in the dish, packing them tightly.
3. The Sauce: In a saucepan, melt butter and sauté the sliced onion until translucent. Add the tomato sauce, diced tomatoes, brown sugar, vinegar, and broth. Simmer for 5 minutes, then pour over the cabbage rolls.
4. The Bake: Cover the dish tightly with foil or a lid. Bake for 1 hour and 15 minutes.
5. The Finish: Remove the foil and bake for an additional 15 minutes to thicken the sauce.

Phase 5: Resting (Time: 15 mins | Intensity: None)

Crucial step.

1. Remove from the oven and let the rolls rest for 15 minutes before serving. This allows the juices to redistribute and the rolls to firm up.

Flavor Profile & Texture

- Flavor: Deeply savory and umami-rich from the meat, balanced by the sweet and tangy tomato sauce. The paprika adds a subtle warmth.
- Texture: The cabbage should be fork-tender, almost melting in your mouth, while the

filling remains moist and cohesive. The rice adds a pleasant bite.

- Aroma: The smell of simmering tomatoes, onions, and beef will fill your kitchen.

Nutrition Facts

Note: Nutritional information is an estimate based on standard ingredient measurements and a serving size of one roll. It does not include added salt to taste.

- Servings: 10 Rolls
- Calories: 240 kcal
- Total Fat: 12g (Saturated Fat: 5g)
- Cholesterol: 65mg
- Sodium: 520mg (without added salt)
- Total Carbohydrates: 18g (Dietary Fiber: 4g, Sugars: 8g)
- Protein: 14g

- Vitamin C: 45% DV

- Vitamin A: 15% DV

- Iron: 10% DV

- Calcium: 6% DV