Borsch – Beet Soup (Russia)

1 lb. beef or pork, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
2 qts. water
1 bay leaf
Parsley and other herbs to taste (optional)
Beef or pork bouillon to taste (optional)
2 1/2 lbs. beets, grated
2 medium (5 inches long) carrots, grated
1 medium (2 inch diameter) yellow onion, chopped
1 Tbsp. olive or vegetable oil
1 Tbsp. sugar
2 Tbsp. vinegar
1/2 lb. white cabbage, grated or chopped
3 medium (3 1/2 inches long) white potatoes, peeled and chopped
1/4 lb. tomatoes, chopped, or 2 Tbsp. tomato sauce
1 tsp. salt, or to taste
1/2 tsp. ground black pepper, or to taste
1 c. sour cream

In a large pot, boil meat in water with bay leaf, and with other herbs and bouillon if using, for 1 1/2 hours. Skim fat from the surface. While meat is cooking, put beets, carrots, onion, oil, sugar, and vinegar into a large skillet, and stir-fry over medium high heat until not quite thoroughly cooked, no longer crisp but not yet soft.

Add cabbage and potatoes to pot with meat and boil 10 minutes. Add stir-fry mixture, tomato or tomato sauce, salt, and pepper to pot. Simmer 30–40 minutes. Add sour cream to soup for flavor, either while it’s in the pot, or after it has been served in bowls. Makes 4 or more servings.

Olga V.