

THE COATES FAMILY COOKBOOK

By Clive Coates

with the generous help of his family, friends, professional chefs and cookery writers

In Memory of Sonja Coates (1914-1995), Mother, Mother-in-Law and Grandmother.
A Very Good Cook

The Coates family lay no claim to being professional chefs, but we do enjoy eating and drinking.

We are:

The late Colonel Kay Coates, of the Parachute Regiment, his wife Suzie, and their daughter Ceci Jenkinson, children's book writer; Clive Coates MW (Master of Wine), retired wine merchant and semi-retired wine writer, now only commenting on Burgundy (see his web-site, clive-coates.com), his children Emma Gibbins, urban designer, and Dr. Ben Coates, historian; Dr. Paul Coates, Professor of Philosophy at the University of Hertfordshire, his wife, Jenefer, editor and expert in Russian literature, and their children Tigran and Joanna; and Guy Coates, herbalist and sculptor, and his daughter Camilla.

To Friends and Friends of Friends

We hope you enjoy this book and find it useful. Please feel free to disseminate it further.

However it is a condition of regular use that a token fee is charged: £10.00, € 10.00, US \$ 15.00. This should be donated to a medical charity (don't send it to us): (Cancer, Alzheimer's, Multiple Sclerosis, etc).

We leave this to your conscience.

Any comments and suggestions are gratefully received. Please send them to clive.coates@orange.fr or to Clive Coates, Les Petits Baronnets, 71430 Saint-Bonnet de Vieille Vigne, France

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HOUSEKEEPING

The late Fernand Point, chef proprietor of the renowned restaurant, La Pyramide, in Vienne in the 1950s, said 'all you need is the finest butter and lots of time'. Obviously he was right. I would only add:

a sharp knife and some very good chicken stock is all you need to start cooking well.

To simplify your life as a cook, ensure that most of your pots and pans, baking trays, quiche platters etc. etc., are made from Teflon coated metal and are non-stick. (Obviously not those you are going to whisk things in.) This avoids the bore of having to grease everything before use. Buy heavyweight pans. They are more stable, cook more evenly and efficiently, and are easier to clean. Moreover much less oil or butter is required in the cooking process if they are non-stick.

Earthenware and Le Creusot dishes (or the equivalent) will generally have to be well-buttered (for dishes such as gratin dauphinois). But not if the cooking contents are more liquid.

Give yourself plenty of time. To cook successfully you need to be relaxed and in a good mood. If you have had a hard day, sit down and have a glass of wine first. Your *mis-en-place* can be done well in advance, as can much of the cooking itself. Read the recipe properly and have everything to hand, cooking utensils as well as ingredients, before you start.

Keep your cooking knives as sharp as possible. You will cut yourself less, and chopping an onion will be less tearful. Do not put kitchen knives in the dish-washer. It blunts their sharpness.

When you cook something (for instance, pieces of fish), do not crowd the pan. This will ensure that the fish or whatever fries or sautées rather than boils in the steam generated by the cooking. If necessary cook in two lots.

A Larder is a god-send. Find a cupboard or annexe near the kitchen which can be kept cool. Here you should store things for which the fridge would be too cold: cheese, eggs, tomatoes, etc.. You also have the convenience of a space you can put half empty dishes in after a meal, for dealing with later, without having to fight for space in the fridge.

The Spice Rack. Every New Year's Day, as one of your resolutions, throw out all your little pots and jars of herbs, spices, and other bits and pieces that have been hanging round too long. And start afresh – in all senses of the word.

The Fridge. Like the spice rack, you will have all sorts of old and used half-empty jars. Throw them out and start again.

The Freezer. While pastry (see below) and stock, and other bought-in goods keep well, left-overs don't. They just go stale. Have a clean out of anything like this that you have added every six months.

By the way: Don't forget to date everything you put in the freezer. Oil. Use Sunflower Oil for deep frying, otherwise good Olive Oil. Oil, and for that matter, vinegar, if aromatised with herbs, or nuts, or even truffles, loses the pungency of this addition after six months.

Duck Fat. The simplest way to obtain this is to buy a can of *confit de canard*. Grill the duck, and use the fat which remains for cooking elsewhere. Marvelous for roast potatoes. You can use the fat again and again; but after three months it begins to get a bit stale, so throw it out and start again.

Clarified Butter. Butter burns at a much lower temperature than oil. To avoid the butter burning in the pan too quickly it should be clarified first. As butter keeps well in the fridge it is efficient to clarify 250g at a time. Chop up the butter and melt it gently. When it starts frothing strain through a muslin into a bowl. Throw away the curds which have not strained through. Many recipes call for a mixture of butter and oil to avoid the burnt butter problem.

All the recipes which follow use non-salted butter, clarified where appropriate (i.e. when frying or sauté-ing).

Many recipes for sautées ask you to sweat the onions and garlic on a low heat before raising this heat to brown off the chicken pieces or whatever. I feel this is the wrong way round and leads to burnt onions and garlic. So I suggest you brown the chicken first, then remove the pieces from the pan, lower the heat and then sweat the onions etc. When this is done, pour off the excess oil, re-introduce the chicken and proceed with the recipe.

Salt. Use sea salt crystals (such as Maldon or *gros sel* from the Camargue) in a grinder rather than commercial free flowing salt. It tastes nicer and fresher. American recipes call universally for Kosher salt. Never having encountered Kosher salt in Europe I am not qualified to assess the difference between this and other salts.

Pepper. Similarly, use peppercorns in a grinder. Have several grinders of different peppers, and indeed use a grinder for coriander seeds and cloves.

Herbs. Even if you live in an apartment, you must have at least a few pots of herbs. These can go on the window sill. Bay and thyme are perennial; parsley, tarragon, chives and marjoram (oregano is best dried) can be planted from seed, or bought as baby plants in the late spring. Flat leaved parsley has a much more interesting flavour than the curly-leaved version.

Fines Herbes are parsley, chives and chervil, finely chopped. If you have tarragon, add this as well.

Vegetables. While most are at their best simply fresh and cooked briefly in water and butter, some are best bought frozen. We all know about peas. But, we also suggest spinach, a bore to wash really clean of the grit, and then to squeeze dry after cooking to eliminate excess water. Frozen spinach retains all the flavour, and is much more convenient. Moreover one can now buy frozen, podded and peeled broad beans, and even artichoke hearts (as opposed to baby artichokes).

Blanching and Refreshing. Two terms which you will find frequently used in the following recipes. Blanching means plunging things (usually vegetables) in boiling water for a few minutes. Refreshing means then plunging them in cold running water to stop any further cooking.

Tomates Concassées. Pour boiling water over the tomato, which has been scored with a cross at both ends. Leave for thirty seconds, remove from the water, allow to cool for a bit and peel away the skin. Place in a bowl, quarter, deseed, eliminate the unripe, stalky bits and chop up the rest. The seeds, bits and liquid can be strained to the stockpot.

Do not add cream to sauces and soups which are too hot; the cream will only curdle. Let the liquid cool a bit.

To keep your oven clean it is best to put quiches and other dishes on top of an already warmed baking tray. This will avoid leakages and seepages from over-filled dishes from dripping all over the oven. 4

Pasta. Good dried pasta, if made using eggs, is as good as fresh – unless it is really, really fresh. Don't buy quick-cook pasta. Do not invest in a pasta making machine. They are noisy, not very good, and the devil to clean.

Pastry. Shirley Conran is credited with the quote: Life is too short to peel a mushroom. Equally, life is too short to make your own pastry. Today you can buy Feuilletée (Flaky), Brisée (Short-Crust), Sablée (Sand i.e. pastry made with sugar), Pizza dough, and even Filo Pastry and Chinese Pancakes. The first four rolled out and rolled up, conveniently measure 32 cm in diameter, which is just right for a 25 cm quiche pan. The only other things of this order you have to make for yourself are suet pastry (for steak and kidney pie), choux pastry and the smaller, thicker pancakes for chinese dumplings and pot stickers. Pastry freezes well.

Baking Pastry Blind.

Some dishes, where you will be baking the ingredients in the pastry later, require partial baking in advance. (While if no further cooking is needed the pastry will need to be fully baked). The easiest way to do this while preventing the sides from collapsing is as follows:

Prepare strips of foil, three or four thicknesses thick, and of a width one-and-a-half as high as the side of the quiche platter. Insert your pastry, pressing well into the corrugated side, cutting away the surplus. Over the pastry on the edge press in your strips, folding over the top over onto the outside. Only with flaky pastry (*pâte feuilletée*) will you have to use the dried beans we were brought up to employ.

Don't forget to prick the base so that the steam can escape. Bake at 180° C for 10 minutes for partial baking, 20 for full baking. Allow to cool before removing the foil strips, which you can put away for the next time.

Thickening sauces.

There are several ways to thicken a sauce. The first is by reduction. Ideally this should be a slow, almost day-long process; the pan gently simmering away. For practical reasons we often have to speed things up and reduce at a fast boil. Some of the flavour will just boil away, but not too much.

Secondly we can thicken a sauce using a roux. Melt butter, add sufficient flour and stir in to form a sort of wet sandy paste. Add boiling milk or stock and whisk vigorously to avoid lumps – reboiling helps. Leave to stand for 15 minutes at least to make sure the flour is allowed to cook out.

A simpler alternative to the above, especially useful if you only need a small quantity, is Beurre Manié. This is a paste of flour and butter, mashed up with a fork (use a wooden one so as not to scrape your Teflon pans). Add the paste little by little to the sauce until it gets to the right thickness and coats the back of a spoon.

Cornflour can be used instead of wheat flour. Dissolve a spoonful or two (look at the instructions on the packet) in cold liquid, and then gradually assemble into the hot sauce. Cornflour has the advantage of needing only a minute or two to cook out. So this is useful for last minute dishes such as a stir fry.

Double cream can be used to thicken a sauce. Do not reboil or the cream will curdle.

Finally gelatine. This is usually employed in desserts or aspics. Soak the gelatine in cold liquid (again refer to the instructions on the packet) before adding it to something warmer to dissolve.

WEIGHTS, MEASURES, AND TEMPERATURES
A Comparison

(NB There are all approximations)

Temperatures

Celsius	Fahrenheit
240° C	470° F
220° C	425° F
200° C	390° F
180° C	355° F
160° C	320° F
140° C	285° F
120° C	250° F
100° C	212° F
80° C	175° F
40° C	100° F

Weights and Measures

Grammes	Ounces
1000 (one kilo)	36 (2.2 lbs)
500	18
454	16 (I lb)
250	9
150	5
125	4
100	3.5
75	2.5
50	2
25	1

Capacities

Centilitres	Pints/Fluid Ounces
100 (I litre)	1.75/33
60	1.00/20
50	90/17
25	45/9

BASIC STOCKS AND SAUCES

FISH STOCK OR FUMET

For One Litre.

One kilo Fish Heads, Bones, Skin and Trimmings.
One large Onion, roughly chopped.
One large Carrot, roughly sliced.
One piece Celery, roughly sliced.
Half the white of a Leek, roughly chopped.
Peppercorns, Coriander seeds, Parsley, Thyme, Bayleaves. (NB no Salt).
Half a bottle of Dry White Wine.
One and a half litres of Cold Water.

Open the window and shut the door between the kitchen and the rest of the house. Bring everything to the boil in a saucepan. Skim off the scum which will have risen to the surface. Simmer gently, skimming occasionally, for 40 minutes. Allow to cool. Strain into another saucepan and continue to simmer to reduce. Pour into a plastic bottle if you are going to refreeze, or, as one usually needs only a little at the time, freeze initially in an ice-cube tray.

COURT BOUILLON

500 cl Water.
500 cl Dry White Wine.
Dash White Wine Vinegar.
2 Medium Carrots, sliced.
Equivalent of Celery, sliced.
One Large Leek, sliced.
One Dessertspoonful Crushed Peppercorns.
2 Bouquets Garnis or the equivalent in loose herbs, (Bayleaves, Parsley, Thyme).

Simmer all the above for 30 to 40 minutes. It is now ready for use. You can also sieve out the vegetables etc., and freeze it. But if using immediately it is also convenient to decant off the vegetables into a clean pan.

CHICKEN STOCK

Good stock is essential for successful cooking. Never waste an opportunity to make a good stock whenever you roast a chicken or any other bird.

One Very Large Pan, with lid.

2 tablespoonsful Olive Oil.

The carcass and other remains of a roast Chicken.

3 Onions, quartered

6 cloves of Garlic, roughly chopped.

3 decent sized Carrots, cut into chunks.

Similar quantity Celery, ditto.

Fennel, ditto (This is optional; you may not like fennel as a separate vegetable, but it does add a certain something – a sweetness - to the stock.)

1 good sized Leek, cut into chunks.

2 glasses Wine or one glass cooking Madeira.

4/5 Litres Water.

6 large Tomatoes, quartered.

Cracked Coriander Seeds and Cloves.

Dessertspoonful good Dijon Mustard.

Large Handful Herbs: Parsley, Thyme, Oregano/Marjoram, Tarragon and Bay-Leaves.

Any left-over Gravy.

Pepper. (No Salt at this stage: that's for later).

Split up the carcass. Add this and the bones to the hot oil, and brown over a high heat, stirring regularly. Add the onions, garlic, carrots, celery, fennel (if used) and leeks. After all this has been thoroughly browned and mixed up, add the wine or madeira and allow to bubble away. Add the water. Bring back to the boil. Add the tomatoes and everything else. Bring back to the boil. Give it a good stir. Turn down the heat to the lowest possible, put a lid on the pot and simmer very gently for 3 or 4 hours, stirring every now and again. Turn off the heat. When cooler, adjust the seasoning.

The next day, bring to the boil and bubble vigorously for 3 or 4 minutes. Turn off the heat and allow to cool. Adjust the seasoning again. When cold, decant the stock into plastic milk bottles or the equivalent. These can safely be left in the freezer until required for as much as two years.

This should give you 2 to 3 litres of good strong stock.

N.B. You can use beef or veal bones (but not lamb or pork), and also duck or geese carcasses. In these latter cases, put the stock in the larder or the fridge before decanting so that the fat can solidify and be scooped off the surface.

TOMATO SAUCE

I have only been making this since I started living in France (Clive writes) and began to grow my own tomatoes, but it has been so successful and versatile that I urge everyone to make it for themselves, even if they have no vegetable garden themselves. Choose a time in high summer when there is a glut of tomatoes, and buy fresh, firm, ripened-on-the-vine fruit.

The whole point of this is that it gives you utterly pure juice.

Several kilos of good tomatoes, quartered.
Two tablespoonsful olive oil.

Gently warm up the oil. Add the tomatoes, and on top of a low heat, gently stirring from time to time, allow to gently become a mush. Turn off the heat and allow to cool. Liquidize the mush, and then pass through a tough conical sieve, to eliminate the seeds. Now you have your juice. It freezes for up to two years.

The possibilities of this tomato sauce are endless, from Bloody Marys, via Gaspacho, to the use – perhaps in the ratio one to four – with stock, if you are making a Sauté or Sauce Bolognese. Small boys have even been known to prefer this to Heinz Tomato Ketchup.

PESTO SAUCE

250 g Butter.
125 g fresh Basil.
50 g Pine Nuts.
6 large Cloves Garlic.

Peel the garlic. Put all the ingredients in a liquidizer and blend until you have a smooth paste. Taste and adjust for seasoning. Scrape out into a plastic tub.

The point of the butter (rather than olive oil, as in other recipes) is that it freezes better. Keep the pesto in the freezer, taking it out to scrape some off with a hot spoon when required. It will keep two years.

CHEESE SAUCE

For every Half Litre of Milk or Milk/Stock mixture you need roughly (see below) 25-30g each of butter and flour.

Grated Cheese.

French Mustard.

Dollop concentrated Tomato Purée or Tomato Sauce (optional).

Salt and Pepper.

Nutmeg (optional but delicious).

Bayleaf and a piece of Onion pricked with a clove.

Melt the butter over a medium heat. Add the flour, stir to make a roux, take off the heat for a few minutes to allow the flour to cook a bit. Meanwhile boil the milk or milk/stock mixture. As soon as it has come to the boil, pour over the roux (yes, all at once; none of this incorporating in stages) and return to the heat. Apply the electric whisk until smooth. Add a generous amount of grated cheese, and the seasonings. Whisk up again, bringing the sauce up to the boil. Turn off the heat, and put away for the future, having added the bayleaf and onion pricked with a clove. In the meanwhile the flour will cook through properly as the sauce cools off. Don't forget to adjust the seasoning before use.

N.B. You will find this sauce evaporates as it cools, so err on the side of too much liquid in the first place. If you are intending to use this for Macaroni Cheese you will need a less thick sauce than one used as a cover for, say, Cauliflower Cheese.

Note: The above, minus the Cheese, optional Tomato Sauce and Mustard, is the basic white sauce, Béchamel.

BEURRE BLANC

For 30 cl.

One dessertspoonful White Wine Vinegar.

One dessertspoonful Dry White Wine.

One dessertspoonful finely chopped Shallot or Spring Onion.

Salt and Pepper.

Lemon Juice.

750 g Butter, straight from the fridge.

Cut up the butter into sugar lump sized bits and put back into the fridge until ready for use. Boil the liquids and onion until the volume has reduced to a spoonful. Take off the heat and whisk in two lumps of butter. Gradually beat in the rest, one by one, returning the pan to a very low heat from time to time. It is important that the temperature remains tepid (blood heat or equivalent) and does not rise any further (or the sauce will not cream). The consistency and colour should be that of a light hollandaise. As soon as all the butter is incorporated, remove from the heat and stand the pan in a bowl of water at blood heat. Adjust the seasoning and sharpen with a few drops of lemon juice. Serve in a barely warmed sauce bowl. Leftover beurre blanc will congeal and cannot be resurrected, but substitutes admirably for ordinary butter over grilled fish.

HOLLANDAISE SAUCE

To make about about 60 cl sauce, serving 4 to 6 people.

200 g Butter, melted, apart from 15 g.
3 Egg Yolks.
One Tablespoonful Cold Water.
One Tablespoonful Lemon Juice.
Salt.

Melt most of the butter and set aside. Whisk up the egg yolks until light in colour and creamy. Add the water, lemon juice and salt and continue whisking. Then, using a double boiler, but without letting the water boil, gently warm up the sauce, continuing to beat it until it begins to thicken. If it seems to be thickening too fast, take the pan out of the water and let it cool off a bit. When thick – as in double cream – remove from the boil and quickly whisk in the unmelted butter. This will stop it cooking further. Pour in the melted butter very gradually. Season to taste.

Note: should the sauce begin to curdle, add a tablespoonful of cold water and whisk up again very energetically.

Cheat's Corner: Restaurants often add a tablespoonful of Béchamel to stabilize their Hollandaise. This way it can be kept warmer for longer.

Serve warm or cold.

MAYONNAISE

To make around 60 cl of Mayonnaise. It will keep for two weeks or so in the fridge.

3 Egg Yolks.
One Tablespoonful White Wine Vinegar.
One Teaspoonful Dijon Mustard.
Salt.
30 cl good Olive Oil.
2 Tablespoonful Boiling Water.

Beat up the egg yolks until light in colour and creamy. Add the vinegar, mustard and salt. Continue to whisk. Add the oil, at first very slowly indeed, whisking all the time, and waiting until the first lot is properly absorbed before adding more. If it gets too thick add a bit of lemon juice or water. Finally, when all the oil is absorbed, beat in the boiling water. This protects against curdling. Taste and adjust the seasoning if necessary.

Serve cold.

AIOLI

The above with the addition of three large crushed garlic cloves.

VINAIGRETTE

Everyone has their own recipe for vinaigrette. Most have more than one, for we all like to ring the changes. There is only one basic rule: the ratio of three-and-a-half or four to one of oil and vinegar. Use good olive oil and wine vinegar. I incorporate balsamic vinegar, but on a one to three or four ratio with 'ordinary' vinegar. Some people like to use lemon juice or even lemon and orange juice instead of vinegar. Most people add Dijon Mustard. I add a little sugar. Some of us occasionally add a bit of curry paste. Others ginger up their vinaigrette with Worcester Sauce, Tabasco, Cayenne or some such.

If you are infusing garlic or tarragon or something in your vinaigrette, remember that these vegetables/herbs will go mushy and rank after only a few weeks. Otherwise make the vinaigrette in bulk and store it in a wine bottle. It will last three months.

Remember that a little vinaigrette goes a very long way. Just the merest dribble on your salad is sufficient.

A suggested recipe:

Salt.

Pepper.

Sugar (one teaspoonful).

Dijon Mustard (two teaspoonsful).

Three dessertspoonsful vinegar, of which one is balsamic.

Twelve dessertspoonsful olive oil.

Mix The dry ingredients together with a little vinegar and then add the rest of the vinegar and the oil.. Pour into an empty wine bottle for future use.

Add to your salad vegetables at the very last minute.

A more interesting sauce, based on vinaigrette, for adding to avocado halves is made up as follows.

Take one spoonful each finely chopped baby dill cucumbers (*cornichons*), celery, capers and parsley. Put them in a bowl, add vinaigrette to cover and offer it to your guests to put on top of the avocado.

SAUCE BRETONNE

Melted Butter
Cream
Lemon Juice to taste
Salt and Pepper
Parsley, Chives and other herbs

Mix together while the melted butter is still warm. Allow to cool. Very good with pan sautéed fish.

SAUCE TARTARE

4 tablespoonsful Mayonnaise
2 tablespoonsful chopped Flat-Leaf Parsley
2 tablespoonsful chopped Capers
1 tablespoonsful chopped Gherkins
Salt and pepper to taste

Mix the ingredients together and leave in a cool place to amalgamate. NB This will not last as long as Mayonnaise does (the vegetable additions start to get a bit rank), so prepare to order.

CREME ANGLAISE

100 g Sugar
4 large Eggs
50 cc Milk
Vanilla extract

Warm the milk until boiling point. Meanwhile whisk up the sugar and the eggs. Add the milk slowly, keeping the pan on a low heat, until the sauce begins to thicken and coats the back of a wooded spoon. Do not heat to much or the mixture will change to sweet scrambled eggs (ugh!). Flavour with vanilla essence, chocolate melted in the boiling milk, orange liqueur or (concentrated) coffee. When finished, pour into a jug. You can then warm this up in due course, if you wish, in the microwave.

This will produce a sauce of pouring consistency.

For a thicker sauce – suitable for the base of a fruit tart – add 75 g flour to the sugar/egg mixture and beat well in. This is CREME PATISSIERE.

GRAVY

If you have good stock in your possession you no longer have to fiddle-faddle about with the roasting tin, stock-cubes and so on at the last minute. Merely gently simmer the stock (do not boil vigorously, because you will lose all the flavour), having added a good slurp of wine or cooking madeira, as well as some tomato juice or tomato paste, for an hour or three, until the thickness of the sauce coats the back of a wooden spoon. This is your gravy, and you can do this concentrating down in advance. Adjust the seasoning at the very end.

Demi-glace. This is your gravy even further reduced. If you leave it in the fridge it will solidify like a jelly. Useful if you want just a bit of meaty sauce to add to something without diluting it too much.

BATTERS

BATTER FOR PANCAKES

For 12 pancakes in a 15 cm frying pan.

100 g plain flour (or chickpea flour)
A half teaspoonful salt
1 Egg
Yolk of one egg
25 cl Milk
50 g Melted Butter

Put all the ingredients in the liquidizer and blend thoroughly. Sieve into a jug and allow to cool (at room temperature) for at least half an hour.

YEAST BATTER

For coating fish, etc.

You need plenty of volume of batter in order to coat the fish properly. So there will be a surplus after you have finished which you can always preserve for the next time.

This amount will coat 4-6 pieces of fish.

240 g plain flour
A level teaspoonful salt
30 cl tepid water
15 g fresh or dried yeast

Allow the yeast to 'dissolve' in the water. Then assemble as above. Leave it to settle. Two hours here is better than half an hour.

TEMPURA BATTER
(Richard Stein's Recipe)

This, however, is best made at the last minute.
Volumes as above.

Well-cool all the ingredients first in the refrigerator for an hour. If the water is freezing so much the better.

120 g plain flour
60 g cornflour
Half a teaspoonful salt
1 Egg
20 cl water

Assemble as above, but do not over-amalgamate. And do this at the last minute.

NIBBLES – OR AMUSE-BOUCHES

CHEESE STRAWS

A useful way of using up left-over puff pastry.

Assemble the left-over pastry into a ball and roll out into a rectangle half a centimetre thick. Sprinkle grated cheese (gruyère or emmenthal for preference) plus an anchovy or too (optional) on the top and fold up twice (so you have three layers of pastry). Repeat twice adding more cheese each time. This time roll out so that the rectangle is about a little finger's length wide on the narrow side. Cut into strips about a centimetre wide and allow to relax and cool in the fridge.

Bake in a hot oven for 5 to 10 minutes at 220°C.

GOUGERES

People imagine making choux pastry to be a troublesome bore. Not so.

To make one kilo of choux pastry (20 small gougères).

Scant quarter litre water.

100 g Butter, cut into pieces.

Salt, pepper, nutmeg.

125 g Flour.

4 Eggs.

Large Handful (100 g) Grated Cheese (Emmenthal or Gruyère for preference).

Gently bring to the boil the water, butter and seasonings. Remove from the heat and add the flour and stir up with a wooden spoon to make a loose paste. Return to a high heat and continue stirring for a minute or so until the mixture makes a more firm paste which leaves the side of the pan. Allow to cool for a few minutes. Press down the centre of your paste to form a well, add the first of the eggs and beat it in to incorporate. Repeat until all the eggs have been absorbed. (You'll find this takes increasingly longer and longer). Then incorporate the cheese.

Allow to cool a little. Then spoon – or use a forcing bag – onto a baking tray, to form circular mounds roughly 3 cm in diameter by 1 and a half high. Brush with beaten egg. Bake in a hot oven for 15 to 20 minutes until they have doubled in size and are golden brown. Take them out and pierce the sides to let the steam out (otherwise they will go soggy). Turn off the oven, put your gougères on a rack and leave for ten minutes in the oven with the door ajar. Serve warm. If made in advance they can be gently re-heated.

Note: you can make the puffs without the cheese and stuff the insides with all manner of mousse-y sort of things. (Here the forcing bag makes life much easier). Examples of stuffings include: cream cheese, mushrooms, crab, shrimp, salmon (fresh or smoked), other smoked fish and chicken livers. Serve cold.

CHAUSSENS (TURNOVERS)

Another use for left-over pastry, this time short crust.

Roll out the dough into a rectangle about 3 mm thick. Cut into 6 cm squares.

Onto these you can put a number of things such as the various mousses mentioned above. Add a teaspoonful to the centre of each square, brush the sides with beaten egg, fold over into a triangle and press the edges down. Brush the top with beaten egg. Bake at 220° C for about 15 minutes. Prick them after cooking to allow the steam to escape. Serve hot.

This works very well using quality bought-in sausage meat – or the meat from high quality sausages.

But fry the meat for a few minutes first.

BACON AND CHEDDAR TOASTS

A good recipe for using up ends of good Cheddar.

This will make 25 toasts. They can be kept, before cooking, a couple of weeks in the freezer.

125 g grated Cheddar.

125 g leanish streaky bacon, finely chopped.

One heaped-up tablespoonful finely chopped onion.

One heaped-up tablespoonful horseradish sauce;

Salt, pepper (cayenne is a good idea).

Thin sliced wholemeal bread.

Cut the crusts off the bread. Mix the ingredients well together and spread generously and evenly on the bread. Cut the bread into bite-sized squares. Place on a baking tray and freeze for 20 minutes.

Bake directly from the freezer at 200° C for 20 minutes or until beginning to brown at the edges. Serve hot.

SPINACH AND CHEESE TOASTS

This will give you 20-24 bite-sized toasts.

125 g frozen leaf Spinach, defrosted and left to drain.

40 g Butter and one tablespoonful Oil. (More if needed). For frying the toasts.

100 g grated Cheese (Emmenthal or Gruyère for preference but mature Cheddar will do fine).

One tablespoonful Good Stock.

Two tablespoonsful fresh Breadcrumbs.

30 g melted Butter

4-6 Slices Granary Breadcrumbs

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Fry the bread in the butter/oil mixture until golden brown. Drain on kitchen paper. Add the stock and half the cheese to the spinach and gently warm, stirring, until the cheese has melted in and the stock has evaporated. Spread generously on the toasts. Sprinkle the remaining cheese on top and then the breadcrumbs. Cut off the crusts. You can do all this in advance. Keep in a cool place. When required, pour over the melted butter. Heat up and brown under a medium grill for 5-10 minutes. Cut up into bite-sized pieces and serve hot.

SESAME PRAWN TOAST

This will give you 20-24 bite-sized toasts.

175 g Cooked Prawns.

One small Garlic clove.

Flat teaspoonful grated fresh Ginger.

Two small Spring Onions.

One Egg White.

One teaspoonful thick Soya Sauce.

One teaspoonful Sesame or Olive Oil.

Salt and Pepper (Sichuan Pepper, ideally).

Corner of a teaspoon Quatre Epices (clove, cinnamon, ginger and nutmeg), or a pinch of all these separately.

Two drops Tabasco.

Whizz all the above up in a food processor until smooth. Taste and adjust the seasoning if necessary. Transfer into a bowl and cool for half an hour.

Slices of good Bread.

Oil.

Sesame Seeds.

Meanwhile cut 4 to 6 slices (depending on the size of your loaf) of good Granary bread (French Pain aux Cerales) and toast on one side. Cut off the crusts and leave to cool. Brush the untoasted side lightly with oil and then spread the prawn paste generously on top. Sprinkle with sesame seeds so that the spread is firmly into the toast. Press down with the flat of your spatula. Cut into bite-sized pieces. Put them on a baking sheet and store in the fridge until required.

Bake for 8 to 10 minutes at a high heat, 240° C. Serve hot.

SHRIMP AND SPRING ONION FRITTERS (Based on a Richard Stein Recipe)

Makes 16 fritters

175 g raw peeled Prawns, or 300 g raw unpeeled Prawns
175 g Flour
Half a teaspoonful Baking Powder
25 cl Water
1 tablespoonful dry White Wine
2 Spring Onions, thinly sliced
1 tablespoonful chopped Flat-Leaf Parsley

Olive Oil for frying

Cut the prawns slant-wise and length-wise depending on their size. Make a batter out of the flour, baking powder, wine and water. Fold in the prawns, spring onions and parsley.

Shallow fry, making sure the oil is hot enough first, a spoonful at a time, flattening the fritters down until they are golden and crispy. Do this in batches. Do not over-crowd the frying pan. Remove with a stotted spoon onto kitchen paper to drain.

Serve immediately with a lemon wedge and salt and pepper to taste;

CRAB IN FILO PASTRY WITH GINGER AND LIME

For 24 Amouse-Bouches

100 g White Crab Meat
Half a teaspoonful finely chopped Fresh Ginger
Zest and Juice of half a Lime
15 g butter, plus more, melted, for brushing the Filo leaves
Pinch of Cayenne
2 leaves Filo Pastry about 40 x 30 cm

Mix the crab meat with the ginger, lime, cayenne and butter. Lay out the first leaf of filo pastry and brush that with butter. Lay the second leaf on top and brush that with butter too. Cut the leaves into squares with sides about 6 cm. Place a teaspoonful of crab mixture in the centre of each square and fold one corner over into the opposite corner to form a triangle. Press the edges together to seal. Put these triangles on a baking sheet and bake in the oven for 6 to 8 minutes.

WELSH RABBIT

(Yes, it really should be Rabbit, not Rare Bit)

For 2 People.

125 g grated Farmhouse Cheddar.
3 tablespoonsful Beer, preferably Brown Ale.
30 g Butter.
One teaspoonful French or English Mustard (to taste).
Dribble of Worcestershire Sauce.
Salt, Pepper.
2 slices toasted Bread.

Melt the cheese with the beer in a pan. When it makes a thick cream, add the butter, mustard, Worcestershire sauce, salt and pepper. Warm it up until it is very hot but not boiling. Pour over the two slices of toast, already on a baking tray, and place under a very hot grill until browning and bubbling. It will of course overflow the bread. *Tant pis!* A bit of extra washing up. Allow to cool a little. Slice the toast into bite sized quarters and serve while still warm.

FURTHER SUGGESTIONS

FIGS AND HAM. As well as serving this as a starter, quarter the figs, wrap a piece of ham round each piece, and secure with a cocktail stick. Be sure to use good quality Bayonne, Serrano or Parma ham.

PRUNES AND BACON. Grill rashers of bacon. Enclose each prune with a rasher and secure as above.

CHICKEN LIVERS AND BACON. Chop the chicken livers into large pieces. Cook fast, leaving the inside cooked but pink. As above.

SOUPS

CURRIED PARSNIP SOUP (Adapted from Jane Grigson's Recipe)

One of the most delicious winter soups. Serves 6.

100 g Butter.
400 g Parsnips (Two medium-sized ones), sliced roughly.
One large Onion, chopped finely.
Two cloves Garlic, chopped finely.
Tablespoonful Flour.
Heaped teaspoonful Curry paste.
One Litre good Stock (hot).
125 g Cream.
Salt and Pepper, if required.
Chives.

Gently sweat the parsnips, onion and garlic in the butter with the lid on the pan for 10 minutes or so until soft but not coloured. Add the flour and curry paste. Stir round and allow the flour to be absorbed. Gently add the hot stock and mix in so there are no lumps. Simmer for 40 minutes or so until the parsnip is cooked. Allow to cool for a bit and then liquidize. Return to a clean pan, adding a little more stock if it seems a bit too solid. Take off the heat. Allow to cool for a minute or so before adding the cream. Season if necessary. Sprinkle the chives on top of the soup when you serve. Serve hot.

Please note: the curry effect should be deliberately subtle, not dominating – or you won't be able to taste the parsnip.

WATERCRESS AND SPRING ONION SOUP

From an original suggestion from Russell Hone. Spring Onions add an intriguing almost lemon touch.

Serves 4-6.

One bunch Watercress (250 g)
1/2 bunches Spring Onions (when cleaned you should have about half as much spring onions as watercress).
100 g Potatoes.
One Litre good Stock.
50 g Butter.
Salt and Pepper;
20 cl Double Cream.

Sweat the chopped up watercress and spring onions in the butter over a low heat, stirring occasionally, for about 10 minutes. Add the stock and bring to the boil. Add the chopped up potatoes. Simmer for 20 minutes. Turn off the heat and allow to cool. Liquidise, and return to a clean pan. Check the seasoning and the consistency, adding a bit more stock if the soup is a bit too thick. Before serving whisk in the cream.

SPINACH AND CORIANDER SOUP

Serves 6. The proportions between spinach and coriander are a question of personal taste. This is mine.

Spinach is one of those vegetables which is both a nuisance to prepare, and also freezes excellently. So keeping life simple: -

One 450 g pack frozen Leaf Spinach.

Small Handful Coriander Leaves, i.e. about one quarter the amount of the spinach.

One large Shallot, finely chopped.

Two Litres good Stock.

Salt and Pepper.

25 g Butter.

Single Cream (optional).

Defreeze the spinach. Sweat the shallot in the butter without browning. Add the spinach, coriander and stock. Bring to the boil. Turn the stove down to its lowest point and simmer for 30 to 40 minutes. Allow to cool. Liquidize. Return to the pan and adjust the seasoning. Finish with cream if you wish. Serve hot.

SOUPE AU PISTOU

A meal in a soup dish. Serves 6 to 8.

50 g Butter.

One large Onion, finely sliced.

3 cloves of Garlic, finely chopped.

2 or 3 Carrots, depending on their size, sliced and chopped.

The equivalent of Celery, chopped.

One Leek, sliced.

Small can Haricots Verts.

Large can chopped Tomatoes.

Handful Green Beans, chopped.

2 or 3 tablespoonsful dried Macaroni.

2 litres good hot Stock.

Glass of Wine or half a glass of cooking Madeira.

4 Cloves

Fresh Herbs.

Dijon Mustard.

Salt and Pepper.

As you serve the soup, add a generous teaspoon of Pesto Sauce and a sprinkling of grated Parmesan cheese (fresh is so much better than ready grated) to each soup bowl.

Melt the butter in a large saucepan. Add the onions and garlic, and after a few minutes the carrots, celery and leek. Sweat over a low heat for 10 minutes. Then add the wine, tomatoes and stock. Bring to the boil. Then turn down and allow to simmer. Add the haricots verts, herbs, mustard and cloves. Season lightly. After 30 to 40 minutes add the french beans and the macaroni. Leave for 10 minutes. Serve hot with the pesto sauce and parmesan.

VICHYSOISE – A VARIATION

For 4 to 6 people.

30 g Butter.
300 g peeled, chopped, waxy Potatoes.
One large Leek, chopped.
One litre good Stock.
Half a Cucumber, peeled and chopped.
Salt and Pepper.
Single Cream.
Chopped Chives.

Prepare a leek and potato soup using all the above ingredients except for the cucumber. Refrigerate overnight. Before the usual liquidizing add the cucumber. Adjust the seasoning before serving. Add a teaspoonful of cream and the same of chopped chives to each serving. Serve cold.

FOIE GRAS SOUP

(As served at Le Vieux Presbytère Restaurant, Montagne-Saint-Emilion c. 2000)

Serves 6 to 8.

250 g fresh (i.e. uncooked) Duck Foie Gras.
One Shallot, finely chopped.
2 Cloves Garlic, finely chopped.
Wineglassful good Sauternes, (but it doesn't have to be Château Yquem).
One and a half litres Good Stock.
Salt and Pepper.
Half a glass Single Cream.

Chop up and pick over the foie gras to eliminate sinew etc.. Very gently sweat the onions and garlic for 5 to ten minutes or until soft. Put aside. Take another heavy bottomed pan, put it over a very high heat. When as hot as you dare add the foie gras. Immediately the fat will begin to run (you'll be surprised how much there is !) Encourage this by pressing down on the foie gras pieces to squeeze out as much fat as possible. Take off the heat, empty out the fat, and turn the heat down to normally high. Using an electrical whisk or one of those metal whizzers (even better, if you've got one) break up the foie gras to make a mush. Add the sweated onions and garlic and the glass of Sauternes. Deglaze and reduce by half or more. Gradually add the hot stock until the constituency coats the back of the spoon. Adjust the seasoning. Allow to cool for half a minute, whisk in the cream, and serve at once.

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Note 1. This is a very rich soup indeed. Serve only a *demi-tasse* full per head, unless your guests are feeling truly Rabelaisian.

Note 2. It is worth getting quality Sauternes, produced from nobly rotten grapes. The noble rot (or botrytis) gives the wine a special tang. Without this the soup's sweetness – and, yes, it is a sweet soup - can be a little bland.

TOMATO SOUP

For 6 People.

One Shallot.

3 cloves of Garlic.

50 cl White Sauce (Béchamel) made with Stock, not milk.

One and a half litres of Tomato Sauce.

Salt and Pepper;

A splash of Balsamic Vinegar, or Worcester Sauce to ginger it up, if required.

Several generous spoonfuls of Basil, coarsely chopped.

Sweat the onions and garlic. Add the Béchamel, and stir. Pour in the tomato sauce. Bring to the boil and simmer for 15 minutes. Season, taste and serve; hot or cold, stirring in the basil at the last minute.

HOT AND SOUR CHICKEN NOODLE SOUP

For 6 People.

2 Shallots, finely sliced.

4 cloves of Garlic, finely sliced.

One Red Chilli Pepper, deseeded and sliced.

One tablespoonful Fresh Root Ginger, finely chopped.

50 g left-over breast of Roast Chicken, very finely shredded.

One and a half litres Good Stock, hot.

One tablespoonful Dry Sherry or Rice Wine.

One tablespoonful White Wine Vinegar.

One tablespoonful Lime Juice.

One tablespoonful Thick Soy Sauce.

50 g Linguine (Angel Hair Pasta).

One beaten Egg.

Pepper.

Sweat the onions and the garlic in a saucepan for 5 minutes. Add the chilli and root ginger. Sweat for another 3 minutes. Add the shredded chicken and the stock. Bring to the boil and reduce to a simmer;

Mix in the sherry/rice wine, vinegar, lime juice and soy sauce. Season to taste. Add the pasta and allow to cook for as long as it suggests on the packet (probably 3 minutes). Turn off the heat and stir in the beaten egg gradually, stirring all the time. Serve hot.

If you like, you can add a small can of well-drained sweetcorn to the soup above.

THAI SOUP

For 4 People.

One skinned Chicken Breast, finely sliced.
125 g Mushrooms, finely sliced.
125 g peeled Prawns.
One 6 cm piece of fresh Root Ginger, grated.
One small Green Chilli, finely chopped (seeds discarded unless you like things really hot).
One stick Lemongrass, sliced into 3 pieces.
50 g Chinese Rice Noodles, (see pack for cooking instructions).
Handful of Green Beans, baby Corn or other Chinese vegetables (optional).
One tablespoonful Green Curry Paste.
30 cl Good Stock.
40 cl Coconut Milk.
One tablespoonful Thai Fish Sauce (Nam Pla).
One tablespoonful Soy Sauce.
Handful chopped Coriander.

Prepare the noodles. Stir fry the mushrooms in hot sunflower oil, or similar, for a couple of minutes. Add the ginger, lemongrass and chilli, and continue to stir fry for a couple of minutes. Stir in the curry paste. Add the stock, coconut milk, fish sauce and soy sauce. Bring to the boil and add the chicken and optional vegetables. Simmer on a low heat for 20 minutes. Finally add the prawns and softened noodles and simmer for another 4 to 5 minutes. Add the coriander when serving.

FOIE GRAS AND NOODLE SOUP WITH TRUFFLES

This is more of a main dish than a soup. For 6 People

200 g fresh Duck Foie Gras.
One litre Good Stock.
125 g Butterfly Noodles.
2 tablespoonsful podded and peeled Broad Beans (optional).
One Truffle (or dried Cèpes or dried Morilles).
One tablespoonful chopped Parsley.

Pick over the foie, eliminating any sinew, etc. Divide it into bite-sized pieces about the size to fully occupy a table spoon. You should have two per person. Sear these pieces, in series, in a very hot pan, for half a minute each side. Take them out and put them on a grid, pressing down with a spoon to encourage more fat to escape. Boil up the noodles (usually 9 minutes, but follow the instructions on the packet). Warm up the stock separately. Adjust for seasoning. Assemble everything, adding the finely chopped up truffle and the parsley. Serve hot.

Should you not have access to a truffle – or consider it extravagant – you can substitute dried cèpes or dried morilles. I have also added a spoonful or two of podded and peeled broad beans. Just let them warm up in the hot juice: you don't have to cook them first. You could also substitute tiny new potatoes for the noodles, but in this case we feel you really must have truffles. Truffles and potatoes go splendidly with each other.

CAMELIZED CAULIFLOWER SOUP

For 6 People.

This is something I much enjoyed at the Côte d'Or, Saulieu, circa 1999. I asked the late Bernard Loiseau for the recipe, but he was always infuriatingly vague. So I started experimenting ...

One Cauliflower.

One litre Good Stock.

Two or so tablespoonsful Caster Sugar.

Salt and Pepper.

Double Cream

Cook the cauliflower for approximately 15 minutes, until more or less soft. Blanch and refresh. Remove from the water and allow to dry on kitchen paper or a tea towel. Take some of the cauliflower and liquidize up to a paste with a little double cream. Put this in an ovenproof dish. Smooth the top with a palette knife and sprinkle with sugar (as if you were making a crème brûlée). You can also pour hot liquid sugar over the liquidized cauliflower. The amount you need, for a decent sized cauliflower is about a side plate full in size. Place under a very hot grill to caramelize. Meanwhile whisk up the remainder of the cauliflower in a food processor with some of the stock. Pour into a saucepan with more stock, enough to have the consistency of a good rich soup, mix it up, season and add the rest of the cream. At the last minute, having crunched up the brittle of the caramelised cauliflower, scrape this into the soup. Reheat and serve.

PATES, MOUSSES AND TERRINES

SALMON RILLETTES (Alice Brinton's Recipe)

Serves 4 as an entrée.

One Shallot.
Butter for cooking.
150 g Salmon, boned and skinned.
One glass Dry White Wine.
50 g Smoked Salmon (buy off-cuts).
A few drops Lemon Juice.
One heaped tablespoonful Horseradish Sauce.
Two heaped tablespoonsful Crème Fraiche.
Pepper.

Chop a shallot finely and sweat until soft (about 5 minutes). Add the salmon and cook it gently in the wine, breaking it up, for 10-15 minutes until done through and the wine is nearly evaporated. Tip this into a food processor and add the smoked salmon bits, lemon juice and horseradish sauce. Blend until well mixed. Add the crème fraîche and blend again. Season to taste. Scrape into the serving bowl and keep cool until required. You can also freeze it. Serve with warm toast.

SARDINE RILLETTES (Judith Dietrich's Recipe)

Serves 6 as an amouse-gueule

One 120 g can Sardines in Olive Oil, drained
60 g Cream Cheese or Crème Fraiche
2 Shallots, finely chopped
2 Spring Onions, finely chopped
Juice of two limes, to taste
2 tablespoonsful mixed herbs, chopped finely
Salt, pepper, cayenne

If the sardines have not been boned, dig out the backbone and the tail. Mix up all the remaining ingredients in a bowl, holding back some of the lime juice and the condiments. Then add the sardines and mix well. Serve with crackers or as a filling for hard boiled eggs or cherry tomatoes.

BUCKLING PATE

This serves 4 to 6 as an entrée.

200 g Buckling (Buckling is Herring which has been hot smoked and therefore partly cooked).

150 g Butter, soft.

50 g Thick Cream.

Lemon Juice.

Cayenne Pepper.

Scrape the fish off its skin and pick out any small bones. Place in the liquidizer with 125 g of the butter and the cream and whizz up until smooth. Season with lemon juice and cayenne pepper. Check the seasoning. Scrape out into a small bowl, cover the surface with the rest of the butter, melted first, and store in the fridge until required. Serve with warm toast.

You can make this recipe with almost any smoked fish you can get hold of: trout, salmon, kippers, cod's roe, or mackerel, though the amount of butter and cream need not be as much as this. Smoked haddock requires advance cooking for a few minutes in milk.

CHICKEN LIVER PATE

This serves 4 to 6 as an entrée.

250 g Chicken Livers.

One tablespoonful finely chopped Shallots.

100 g Butter.

One quarter of a wine glass Madeira (or Cognac).

One tablespoonful Thick Cream.

Salt, Pepper, Allspice

One tablespoonful fresh or dried Thyme leaves.

Pick over the chicken livers and cut out any sinew. Chop them roughly. Using just a little of the butter, gently sweat the shallots for a few minutes. Raise the heat and add the chicken livers. Cook for 2 to 3 minutes until the outsides are done but the insides still rosy. Scrape into the liquidizer. Deglaze the pan with the madeira, allow to reduce a little and scrape this too into the liquidizer. Add all the rest of the ingredients (having melted 25 g of the butter first and put this aside) and whisk up at top speed for half a minute. Check the seasoning. Scrape into a bowl, pour the melted butter over the top, and store in the fridge until required. Serve with warm toast.

TERRINE DE CAMPAGNE

(Adapted by Jenny, and we think Sonja, from Elizabeth David)

Serves 8 to 10.

450 g Chicken Livers, picked over, as above.
450 g lean minced Pork.
450 g Smoked Bacon or Gammon.
450 g lean minced Beef.
2 glasses White Wine.
Half a glass Brandy.
Half a glass Olive oil.
4 cloves Garlic, finely chopped.
3 or 4 Bay Leaves, plus more for decorating.
8 to 10 Juniper berries, finely chopped, plus more for decorating
One Orange, peeled and seeded.
Pepper.

Trim off the surplus fat from the meats and put them through a food processor in batches, leaving the chicken livers to the end (don't over blend these). Mix all this up in a bowl with the garlic and juniper berries. Mix in the wine, brandy, oil and pepper (no salt is required because of the bacon/gammon). Insert the bay leaves. Place the bowl in the fridge to marinate overnight. The next day, heat the oven up to 150° C. Add water to a large baking dish, to fill to 5/6 centimetres. Empty the marinated terrine into one or two bread tins, having removed the bay leaves, smooth down the top, and decorate it with slices of orange and more bay leaves and juniper berries. The water should come half way up the sides of the tins. Cook for one to one and a half hours, (or more if necessary), basting with the juices half way through, until the top has a brownish glazed look, the terrine has come away from the side and the inside is pinkish, but not too raw. Leave to cool overnight before serving.

AVOCADO MOUSSE

Serves 4 to 6 as an entrée.

Two dessertspoonsful Good Stock.
One packet Gelatine.
2 Avocados, removed from their skins and roughly chopped. (Then brush with lemon juice to avoid them discolouring).
One level dessertspoonful very finely chopped shallot.
Worcester and Tabasco Sauce, to taste.
Lemon Juice, to taste.
Salt and Pepper.
One Dessertspoonful Mayonnaise.
One Dessertspoonful Thick Cream.
2 Stiffly Beaten Egg Whites.

Heat the stock, but not up to boiling point, and dissolve the gelatine in it. When fully dissolved pour over the chopped avocado, add the shallot and blend to a smooth paste. Season well (remember the later addition of the mayo, cream and egg white) with the Worcester, Tabasco and lemon juice, and the salt and pepper. Put this in the fridge. When it has begun to set (err on the later rather than the sooner), blend in the mayo and cream and finally fold in the beaten egg whites. Check the seasoning again. If you have a decorative mould, scrape the mousse into it and leave in the fridge until properly set. You can later turn this out. Otherwise leave it in the bowl. Either way protect the surface with cling film. Serve cold, and finish up at one sitting. This is a dish that rapidly loses its delicacy.

SOUFLEES

CHEESE SOUFLEE

For 4 People.

40 g Butter, plus more to grease the soufflée dish.

35 g Flour, plus more to dust the souffée dish.

4 Egg Yolks.

6 Egg Whites.

20 cl Milk.

175 g grated Gruyère, Emmenthal or even Mature Farmhouse Cheddar.

50 g freshly grated Parmesan (best if you grate your own lump, rather than buying a packet).

2 tablespoonsful Dijon Mustard.

One teaspoonful Salt.

Ground Black Pepper.

With the flour, butter and milk make a smooth and quite thick Béchamel sauce. Beat in the gruyère. Let it cool. Beat in the egg yolks and mustard. Add salt and pepper to taste. Whisk up the whites in a separate bowl to stiff peaks and fold in, using a metal table spoon, into the cheese mixture. Don't overdo this or you will lose the air. Pour into a greased and flour dusted soufflée dish. Cut a circle round the top to make a crown and sprinkle with the parmesan. Bake at 180° C for 25 minutes. Test with a skewer to check that it is not still too runny. Serve at once.

SONJA'S AUSTERITY CHEESE SOUFLEE

(As produced in the time of Rationing)

(but it is delicious)

For 2 People.

60 g White Breadcrumbs.

60 g Milk.

One Onion, cut in two.

100 g grated Cheese.

One Egg.

One tablespoon Butter.

Salt, Pepper, Mustard Powder (or French Mustard for those who do not have dried English Mustard powder).

Leave the milk to soak with the onion for about an hour. Bring the milk to the boil. Add the butter and the breadcrumbs, stir and leave to soak for 10 minutes. Remove the onion for future use elsewhere. Add the cheese and stir over a low flame until absorbed. Season well. Separate the egg. Whisk up the yolk and beat into the soufflée. Whisk up the white and fold it in. Pour into a shallow baking dish. Bake at 190° C for 30 minutes.

NB For sweet soufflés dust with icing sugar rather than flour, but don't forget to butter the dish first. 31

QUICHES

All these quiche recipes are for the normal, 25 cm diameter quiche baking tray. This will serve 4 or 6.

ONION QUICHE

One and a half kilos Onions.
75 g Butter.
One tablespoonful fresh Thyme.
Two tablespoonsful Dijon Mustard.
Salt and Pepper.
Three Eggs, beaten.
125 g (45 cl) Cream

Short Crust Pastry, already baked for 20 minutes in your quiche baking dish.

Cut up the onions finely and let them sweat in the butter without browning in a large pan. You'll have to stir from time to time to get the onions evenly cooked. Add the thyme, and salt and pepper to taste. Allow the onion mixture to drain for 15 minutes. It avoids the quiche from getting too soggy. Whisk up the eggs with the cream. Add this to the onions and blend well. Check the seasoning. Spread the mustard over the base of the quiche. Add the mixture of onions, cream and eggs.

Bake in a moderately hot oven, at 180° C for 25 to 30 minutes. Quiches are not at their best immediately you take them out of the oven. They need to settle. Serve them after half an hour, warm rather than hot. Or cold. They can also be re-heated.

With today's fan ovens, 25 minutes is usually quite enough. Remember that the quiche will continue to cook and set after you take it out of the oven. If you cook it too much it gets 'eggy'.

You can make delicious quiches with lots of different ingredients: fines herbes and tarragon, leeks, spinach, cheese and bacon (Quiche Lorraine), asparagus, mushrooms, crab, smoked salmon and other seafood, etc., etc.. The mustard is optional in these variations.

FRESH TOMATO QUICHE

The recipe follows the above, but you use uncooked, chopped-up fresh, ripe tomatoes (*tomates concassées*) and lots of chopped basil. Ginger up with a few drops of balsamic vinegar, or lemon juice.

You will require 1.5 kilos of tomatoes.

Serve cold.

RED PEPPER QUICHE
(Based on Simon Hopkinson's Recipe)

6 Red Peppers.
6 Egg Yolks.
125 g Thick Cream.
One Large Clove of Garlic.
Salt and Pepper.

Short crust pastry, already baked in your quiche platter.

Simplicity itself, apart from the minor inconvenience of cremating off the pepper skins. But Very Delicious.

Halve the peppers, cut out the pith and wash away the seeds. Place on a baking sheet under a very high grill. The skin will blacken and the peppers go a bit limp. You will need to wait 10 minutes. Allow to cool. When still warm, pull off the blackened skin under the cold tap. Whisk up all the ingredients in the liquidizer. Adjust the seasoning. Pour into the quiche base. Bake for 35 to 40 minutes at 160-165° C. The top of the quiche must not brown. Serve cold.

LEEK AND BLUE CHEESE QUICHE

One Good-Sized Leek.
75 g Blue Cheese such as Dorset Blue Vinney or Fourme d'Ambert (nothing too salty).
200 ml Single Cream.
2 Egg Yolks.
15 g Butter.
Salt and Pepper.

Short Crust Pastry, already baked in your quiche platter.

Gently sweat the leeks in the butter for about 10 minutes. Take off the heat and allow to cool. Stir the seasoned, whisked-up cream and egg yolk mixture into the leeks and place in the quiche dish. Crumble the cheese on top. Bake for 25-35 minutes. Allow to settle for half an hour if serving immediately. It also heats up well.

Another variation of this recipe calls for the addition of sliced ripe pears as well as the cheese.

PISSALADIERE

This is not a quiche, for there is no cream and egg mixture baked in with it. Start as for the onion quiche, above, however. Add the onions, 8 tinned anchovy fillets, cut up, 16 firm black olives, finely chopped, and a generous shake of herbes de Provence to the half baked quiche base. Sprinkle olive oil over the top and bake for 10 to 15 minutes at 220° C. Serve hot.

COOKING EGGS – FAST OR SLOW?

There are two ways of cooking eggs: fast – as in an omelette, or slow - as in scrambled eggs.

Both produce a delicious dish; but they taste quite different. In order to get both right, follow the following instructions.

Omelettes: Add your clarified butter to the pan at a quite high heat, i.e. 7 or 8 if the maximum on your hob is 9. Only when the butter is sizzling fast add the beaten egg (beat these up at the last minute). Quickly, with a wooden spoon, move the sides to the middle and allow the uncooked egg to slop over onto the sides. Shake it around, letting the uncooked egg mixture get down on the pan. Cook for barely a minute until firm. Fold over the sides to the middle and pour onto a plate. The essence is the speed. Serve immediately.

This is a lunch dish. Brilliant with pommes frites and a side salad.

Scrambled Eggs: This is Slow Cooking - very fashionable these days. Place a knob of clarified butter in to a saucepan on a low heat. When it has melted add the beaten egg. Cook very, very slowly, stirring constantly to avoid the egg sticking and cooking on the side of the pan. It will take ten minutes or so before the egg mixture begins to solidify. The longer the better. Continue to stir. Just before it gets too solid, spoon off onto fresh toast or whatever.

This is a breakfast dish. Eat with crispy bacon and perhaps grilled mushrooms on the side.

ENTREES AND LUNCH AND SUPPER DISHES

SUZIE'S CARAMELIZED ONIONS

25 Button Onions, peeled.
3 tablespoonsful Oil.
Half a wine glass Port.
One glass Wine Vinegar.
2 tablespoonsful Brown (Demerara) Sugar.
Salt and Cayenne pepper to taste.

Put all the ingredients into a saucepan and simmer slowly, without a lid, for about half an hour until the onions are soft and the sauce has turned into a thick syrup. Remove from the heat and allow to cool.

Delicious with cheese or ham.

POTTED SHRIMPS

This is included because we find that non-Brits have never encountered it.

By the way, what we call shrimps are what the French call *crevettes*. Americans call everything shrimp, (without the second S). When we Brits encounter large shrimps we call them prawns.

For 4 People.

250 g baby Shrimps (crevettes), out of their shells, and cooked..
Pepper, Lemon Juice.
Chopped up Parsley.
Clarified Butter (see below).

Mix the shrimps, a squeeze of lemon juice, pepper and the parsley in a bowl. Meanwhile melt the butter and strain through a fine sieve (this is Clarified Butter). Put the shrimps into individual ramekin dishes and press down hard with the back of a spoon. Pour the clarified butter on top and put in the fridge. Take out 15 minutes before the meal and serve with warm toasts, a wedge of lemon and circulate the pepper-mill.

SMOKED EEL
(As Served at the Mirabelle Restaurant, London, c. 1998)

For 4 People

400 g Smoked Eel (the thin ones, no wider than your thumb, are the best), skinned.
8 rashers Grilled Bacon, hot.
12 thickish (4 to 5mm) slices Cucumber, gently sauced with vinaigrette.
8 slices Fried Potato, crisp and hot.

All you have to do is assemble this. Arrange all the ingredients on your plates. Sprinkle the eel with lemon and pepper. Serve with horseradish sauce. Encourage your guests to eat all four items together.

BAKED AVOCADO WITH SEAFOOD

For 4 People.

2 Avocados.
Juice of half a Lemon
3 generous tablespoonsful thick Béchamel (White) Sauce.
3 heaped tablespoonsful grated Cheddar Cheese.
2 heaped tablespoonsful thick Cream.
150 g White Crabmeat (or Prawns or Ecrevisses, which should be chopped up).
Salt, Pepper.
Cayenne Pepper, Tabasco, to taste.
Breadcrumbs.
Melted Butter.

Cut out most, but not all, of the avocado, leaving a few mm still in the 'shell' of the skin. Put some of the lemon juice on what you have cut away, chop this up and store in the fridge for a while. Brush the rest on the shells, so as to avoid discolouration. Warm up the béchamel in a pot, without boiling, and blend in the cheese. Mix in the crabmeat and avocado. Season to taste. Add this mixture to the four half avocados. Put a teaspoon of breadcrumbs on the top, and pour over the melted butter.

Bake for 15 minutes at 200° C., but for no longer. If you want to brown the tops a bit more, do this under the grill. Avocado doesn't overcook satisfactorily. Serve hot.

CHICORY AND (PARTLY-COOKED) APPLE SALAD

For 2 People.

One large chicory.

One medium-sized crispy Apple (Cox's Orange Pippin would be excellent).

Water; a knob of Butter; a teaspoonful of Apricot Jam or Jelly.

Peel, core and chop up the apple into sizes about as large as a lump of sugar. Place into a small frying pan, add water to half cover, the butter and the jam, and boil vigorously until the water has evaporated. The apple should still be *al dente*. Scrape into a bowl and allow to cool. Add this to the lightly vinaigretted, chopped-up chicory and serve as a starter or as a salad on the side.

RED PEPPERS AND SMOKED HADDOCK

For 4 People.

4 medium-sized Red Peppers.

125 g Smoked Haddock.

2 heaped tablespoonsful Thick Cream.

One teaspoonful Horseradish sauce.

Salt, Pepper, Tabasco, Lemon Juice.

Chopped up Parsley.

Slice the stalk end off the red peppers, cut out the inside pith and wash away the seeds. Dry. Place on their sides under a very hot grill to cremate off the skin, which will blacken. When the upside is done, turn it over and blacken the reverse side. Cool and remove this blackened crust under cold water. The pepper shells will now be a bit limp, but they will be cooked.

While this cremation is going on, prepare the smoked haddock paste. Place the fish in a frying pan, cover with milk, bring to the boil and take off the heat. Take out the fish (you can use this milk for a cheese sauce for fish), scrape the flesh off the skin, discarding any small bones, and put this into a bowl. Blend in the cream, horseradish, parsley and seasonings. Taste.

Spoon this paste into the pepper shells. Serve cold.

You could ginger this up (literally) with the addition of a little finely chopped fresh ginger.

SMOKED HADDOCK, SPINACH AND CHEESE

For 4 People as a main dish. But it is added here for convenience.

450 g pack Frozen Leaf Spinach.

300 g Smoked Haddock.

250 cl Cheese Sauce.

Nutmeg

Lemon Juice

Unfreeze the spinach overnight and empty into a baking dish. Do this in advance, and pour off any water which has oozed out. Grate liberally with nutmeg. Prepare the fish as above and use the milk to make the cheese sauce. Place the flaked-up fish on top of the spinach, add a sprinkle of lemon juice, and pour the cheese sauce over the top.

All this you can do in advance.

Bake at 180° C for 25 to 30 minutes. Serve hot.

For a complete meal, boil some baby waxy potatoes (Anja, Rattes) until just about done, cool them, dry them and place them round the side of the dish, under the cheese sauce before you bake.

SCALLOPS WITH FRISEE OR MACHE

For 4 People.

4 to 6 Scallops.

25 g Butter.

Frisée (Endive) Lettuce or Mache (Lamb's Lettuce) – or both, gently vinaigretted.

Sesame Seeds.

This is a dish which can only be done at the last minute. Make sure your guests are already at the table.

Eliminate the coral and the muscular bit in the opposite side from the scallops, slice into two or three, depending on thickness. Have the salad ready on the four plates. Into the bubbling butter add the scallops. Hardly have you put them in when you will need to turn them (scallops over-cook fast). Add a generous shake of sesame seeds. Scrape all out, including the juices, over the lettuce and serve at once.

KEDGEREE

For 4 People.

One Large fillet (500 g) Smoked Haddock.
Milk to cover
Olive Oil.
One large Onion, finely chopped.
175 g Long Grain Rice (n.b. not Risotto Rice).
One teaspoonful Curry Paste.
Butter.
3 Hard-Boiled Eggs, chopped.
Chopped Parsley.
Salt and Pepper.

Put the haddock in a pan, add water just to cover, warm up until boiling and turn off the heat. Let it cool. Take out with a flat slatted spoon (keep the milk), and take the haddock off the skin, eliminating any small bones you may come across. Don't break up the fish more than you have to. Put the fish aside. Sweat the onion in the oil until soft but not browned, then add the rice and cook over a low heat until it is transparent, stirring regularly. Add the curry paste. Pour 50 cl of the haddock milk over the rice and cook over a medium heat, continuing to stir regularly, until the rice is *al dente*. Mix up the haddock flakes with a large knob of butter. Add to the rice and mix it about. Season with salt (probably not necessary) and pepper. At the last minute before serving, add the chopped up hard-boiled egg and mix this in. Scatter with chopped parsley and serve hot.

Jenny's recipe, which she calls Davina's Divine Kedgerree, uses brown rice, cooked in advance, and curry powder instead of paste, and she adds fresh coriander leaves, some slivered almonds and some petit pois. The recipe is finished off with a little cream and lemon juice.

MUSHROOMS WITH CRAB

Two medium-sized (80 to 100 mm diameter) Mushrooms per head.
400 g White Crab meat will do for 8 mushrooms. Bind it with some cream and a little mayonnaise.
1 tablespoonsful finely chopped Cucumber per 2 mushrooms.
Cayenne Pepper
Salt.
Lemon Juice.

Chop up the mushroom stalks finely and sauté until soft. On a low heat gently fry the mushrooms, top downwards, until more-or-less cooked. Remove and season. Mix up the mushroom stalks and cucumber with the crab salad. Season to taste with the salt and cayenne, and add a few drops of lemon juice. Spoon this into the mushrooms. Bake at a medium to high temperature (200° C) for 10 to 15 minutes.

Can be served hot or cold.

BROUILLADE AUX TRUFFES

For 4 People.

At least once in your life you have to have this. It is the best way to enjoy truffles. Be sure that your truffle is fresh, and the real southern France Black Truffle – *tuber melanosporum* - (not Chinese, nor Burgundian, nor English - they just don't have the same pungency of flavour)

12 Eggs, beaten gently

Salt and pepper.

25 g Butter.

One Truffle, as large as you like (or can afford), very finely chopped.

4 slices Toast.

Very slowly scramble the eggs, the slower the better. Meanwhile prepare the toast. Allow to cool and butter. Just before the eggs are ready, season them and add the chopped truffle, not wasting the slightest granule. Spoon over the toast and serve immediately. Have an orgasm.

POACHED EGGS

Have on hand, as well as the small saucepan in which you are going to poach the eggs, one pan of cold water, and, if you intend to serve the the eggs immediately, one pan of hot, but not boiling, water to re-heat the eggs.

Heat water in the first pan together with a dessertspoonful of vinegar (it helps keep the eggs in shape) to simmering point. Crack your eggs into a teacup. Make a small whirlpool by stirring the water round, pour in the egg, and simmer for four minutes. Remove with a slatted spoon into the cold water. This will stop any further cooking and wash off the vinegar. You can do this in advance. Re-heat by transferring the egg into the hot water and leaving it there for 30 seconds. After you take it out, pat it gently with kitchen paper to remove excess water.

The possibilities then are endless: from simply placing on a buttered piece of toast or English muffin; on top of a salad of frisée lettuce and crisp lardons; to serving on top of smoked haddock or Arbroath Smokies; to adding to a warm fond d'artichaut and topping with hollandaise sauce.

Rose Prince, of the Daily Telegraph, has her own ingenious way of poaching eggs:

Lay a large 25 cm square of clingfilm over a ramekin or teacup and push it all the way down. Crack the egg into it and twist up the surplus clingfilm forming a pouch. Lower this into the simmering water until cooked and then plunge into a bowl of very cold water to prevent further cooking. Unwrap carefully and serve. NB No vinegar is required.

OEUF A LA MEURETTE

A classic Burgundy dish.

For each person: one poached egg, as above; one dessertspoonful of chopped bacon (lardons); three or four button mushrooms, halved or quartered; four button onions, glazed; reduced stock and red wine; parsley to sprinkle on top; triangles of toast fried in butter and garlic.

For four people start off with a litre of stock into which you have added half a bottle of red wine. Bring to the boil and simmer to reduce. Meanwhile fry the lardons to crisp up. Set aside. In the same pan, fry the mushrooms and set aside. Again in the same pan gently sauté the button onions in a little of the stock into which you have added a knob of butter. After 20 minutes or so the onions should be getting soft, the stock will have evaporated and the onions will begin to glaze. While this is cooking, fry the triangles of bread in butter into which a couple of cloves of garlic have been squeezed.

Meanwhile the stock/wine should have reduced to a quarter of its original volume, and should have begun to thicken up. Thicken further if necessary with *beurre manié* (forked up butter and flour). Add the bacon, mushrooms and onions and reheat until just under boiling temperature. Taste and adjust the seasoning. Place each poached egg into a soup bowl, pour over the Meurette sauce, allow to stand for 30 seconds to allow the eggs to re-heat, and serve with the fried bread with a sprinkle of parsley on the top.

OMELETTE WITH POTATOES AND SAFFRON

For 2 People.

6 Eggs.

Salt and Pepper.

120 g New Potatoes.

Pinch of Saffron.

Clarified Butter.

Wash, peel and cut the potatoes into small cubes about the size of a small sugar lump. Cook them in boiling water until just done. Drain. Meanwhile beat up the eggs with a fork, season and add the saffron. Cook the eggs as for a Spanish omelette. When the base is cooked, invert a plate over the frying pan, overturn, slide the omelette off the plate back into the pan to finish cooking the reverse side. Serve immediately with another pinch of saffron to decorate the top.

CHANTERELLES ON TOAST

When we were young we used to go chanterelle scavenging in the Hurtwood, north of Ewhurst, Surrey. No one else was interested, and we picked basket-fulls. An aunt, an uncle and cousins lived nearby. They all said we would be dead in our beds. Even when we weren't, they were still reluctant to partake of the following.

For 4 people.

250 g Chanterelles, or Girolles.

25 g Butter.

150 g Béchamel Sauce, quite thick, to bind.

A squeeze of Lemon Juice.

Salt and Pepper.

A big handful chopped Parsley.

This is simple enough. Chop the sandy ends off the stalks of the Chanterelles. Clean them. Chop them roughly. Leave them to dry. Melt the butter in a large pan. Turn up the heat and quickly fry the Chanterelles, stirring continuously. When *al dente*, i.e. just cooked, reduce the heat, add the lemon juice, and blend in the Béchamel. It should not be too runny. Season, add the parsley and give it a good stir, spoon on to the toasts and serve immediately.

This is a recipe for Chanterelles and Girolles in August and September, when they are in season. You could also make this with Cèpes.

PUFF PASTRY MUSHROOM PIE

For 4 to 6 People.

One large Shallot.

2 or 3 cloves of Garlic.

450 g Button Mushrooms, washed, dried, and halved or quartered.

A splash of Cooking Madeira to deglaze the pan.

50 g Butter.

250 g Béchamel Sauce.

Juice of Half a Lemon.

Salt and Pepper.

125 g Chopped Parsley.

One Sheet Puff Pastry.

Beaten Egg for the egg wash.

Chop finely and sweat the garlic and shallots for 10 minutes without colouring. Deglaze the pan with the madeira. Allow most to evaporate. Add the mushrooms. Cook them quickly and mix in the white sauce and parsley. Taste and adjust the seasoning if necessary. Allow to cool, and then pour into a baking dish. Cut out a piece of the puff pastry to fit the baking dish. With the remainder cut this into strips and build up the top of the sides of the dish, using egg wash to make them stick together. Place the piece of pastry on top and press the sides firmly together. Egg wash the entire top. Use the remaining bits of pastry to make a nice decoration on the top.

Bake for 20-25 minutes at 220° C. It should be golden brown on the top.

CAULIFLOWER CHEESE

For 6 people.

One Cauliflower.

Half a litre Cheese Sauce, a little on the thick side.

Nutmeg, Pepper and Salt.

Breadcrumbs

Cook the cauliflower for 12 to 15 minutes in simmering water with the lid on. Refresh under cold water until the cauliflower itself is stone cold. Take it out of the cold water and break it up a bit with your fingers. If the central stalk isn't quite cooked or if there is a bit too much stalk for your taste this is your opportunity to cut some off. Put the cauliflower pieces on top of kitchen paper and allow them to dry out for an hour or so (This is the important bit. It avoids watery juice at the bottom of the dish). Eventually arrange the cauliflower pieces in a baking dish. Season. Pour the cheese sauce on top, and the breadcrumbs on top of that. Bake for 25-30 minutes at 180° C, until beginning to brown on top. Serve hot..

MACARONI CHEESE

For 6 People.

Sliced Tomatoes, salted, peppered and with Garlic squeezed over them.

6 rashers Streaky Bacon, grilled and broken up.

250 g Macaroni.

Half a litre Cheese Sauce, a little on the thin side.

Salt and pepper.

Prepare the tomatoes and bacon in advance. Add the macaroni to boiling water and boil for as long as it says on the packet for *al dente* (usually 9 minutes – do not use 'quick cook' pasta). Drain and season.

Pour into a well-buttered baking dish, mix in the cheese sauce, and then the bacon. Place the tomatoes over the top. Sprinkle more grated cheese on top. Bake for 25-30 minutes at 180° C, until the dish is beginning to brown on the top. Serve hot.

CHICORY, HAM AND CHEESE SAUCE

For 4 People.

One or 2 Chicories per head, depending on the occasion and appetites.

2 Thin Slices Good Ham per Chicory.

Half a Litre Cheese Sauce.

Obtain the very best cooked and smoked ham. Often this comes from Westphalia in Germany. Cheap old boiled shoulder will not do.

Add the chicory to boiling water and simmer for 15 minutes. (Or you can braise the chicory in butter in a covered dish – 170° C for an hour or more) Refresh in cold water, and when cool, squeeze vigorously to eliminate as much of the liquid as possible. Wrap each chicory in two slices of ham. Arrange in a baking dish. Pour the cheese on top. Bake at 180° C for 25-30 minutes, until beginning to brown on the top. Serve hot.

VEGETARIAN MOUSSAKA

For 4 to 6 People.

One large Aubergine.

One Onion, finely chopped.

2/3 cloves of Garlic, finely chopped.

One Red Pepper, finely chopped.

200 g Button Mushrooms, finely chopped.

750 g tinned chopped Tomatoes

One litre Good Stock.

One glassful Wine or half a glassful Madeira.

One teaspoonful Dijon Mustard.

Sprinkle of Herbes de Provence

Salt and Pepper.

Half a litre of Cheese Sauce.

Chop the aubergine into 75 mm slices, discarding both ends. Fry quickly in stages in a non-stick pan, using only the barest minimum of fat, until browning. Ladle out on to a plate and leave aside. Please note: you no longer have to sprinkle salt on your aubergine slices in advance. Moreover, if you use an ordinary pan the aubergines will absorb more fat than is good for them (and you). Sweat the onions, garlic and red peppers. Deglaze the pan with the wine, reduce this by half and add the hot stock and the chopped tomatoes. Add the mustard and seasoning, bring to the boil and simmer for 40 minutes. Then add the mushrooms. Cook a further 10 minutes. Taste and adjust the seasoning if necessary. Spoon a little of the sauce into a baking dish, put in a layer of aubergines, and repeat, finishing up with a layer of aubergines. Pour the cheese sauce over the top. Bake at 180° C for 25-30 minutes, until beginning to brown on the top. Serve hot.

PASTA PENNE

A quick stand-by for 6 people, says Jenny. Speed of assembly is of the essence with this dish, she adds.

500 g Egg Pasta Penne.

Lots of fresh Basil leaves (150 g minimum), chopped or shredded.

450 g Thick Tomato Sauce..

450 g chopped Tomatoes (both of these with Basil).

2 to 3 tablespoonsful Olive Oil.

150 g freshly grated Parmesan (grate your own from a lump).

One ball (125 g) Mozzarella per person, chopped.

Salt and plenty of ground black pepper.

Cook the pasta gently in plenty of boiling salted water for 9 minutes. Drain well. Meanwhile in another pan heat up the tomato juice, the chopped tomatoes, the oil and some of the salt and pepper. While this is going on, grate the parmesan, chop up the drained mozzarella, and shred the basil leaves. Return the drained pasta to its empty and steam-dried dish, pour over half the grated parmesan and stir round so that the cheese adheres to the pasta. Pour over the tomatoes, add the basil and mix well. Fold in half the mozzarella. Turn out into the largest and shallowest flameproof dish you have (a paella pan?) Sprinkle the rest of the mozzarella and parmesan and more black pepper over the top. Place under a hot grill until you have a glistening, sizzling, crispy, golden-brown top.

CLASSIC TAGLIATELLE CARBONARA

For 6 People.

12 'nests' of Dried Egg Tagliatelle.

12 or 15 rashers of Streaky Bacon, depending on the size of the rashers.

6 Eggs, mixed in with

60 g Double Cream (six heaped up dessertspoonsful)

Salt, Pepper.

Liberal amounts of chopped Flat-leaf Parsley.

Grill the bacon in advance, when cool, break up into bits. Cook the tagliatelle according to the packet until *al dente*, usually 9 minutes. Drain and season. Pour back into the pan and mix in the egg/cream mixture. Return to the heat and let the sauce warm up and thicken a little. Adjust the seasoning. Add the bacon. Serve having sprinkled liberally with chopped flat-leaf parsley.

TAGLIATELLE CARBONARA WITH PEAS AND HAM

For 6 People.

12 'nests' of Dried Egg Tagliatelle.
10 g Butter and One tablepoonful Olive Oil.
One Onion, finely chopped..
200 g de-frosted frozen Petit Pois.
4 thin slices good Ham (smoked as well as cooked), finely shredded.
100 ml Double Cream.
3 Eggs, beaten up with the cream.
40 g Freshly Grated Parmesan Cheese.
Salt and Pepper.

Sweat the onion in the butter/oil mixture until soft. Add the peas and continue to cook on a very low heat for 5 minutes. Meanwhile cook the tagliatelle in plenty of boiling water. Add the cream/egg mixture and cook for a further 5 minutes, and then add the ham. Re-heat and then add the well-drained noodles, stirring to incorporate. Add salt and pepper to taste and serve immediately, sprinkling liberally with the grated parmesan.

SPINACH GNOCCHI (From Elizabeth David's Italian Food)

For 4 to 6 people.

450 g frozen Leaf Spinach, defrosted and drained in a colander.
250 g Ricotta.
50 g grated Parmesan.
2 Eggs.
3 tablespoonsful of Flour.
Butter, Salt, Pepper, Hutmeg.

Gently heat up the spinach, ricotta, and seasonings, together with a knob of butter. Remove from the heat and beat in the eggs, parmesan and flour. Leave to stand in the fridge. (ED recommends overnight). On a floured pastry board, using a bit more flour, form the mixture into little croquettes about the size of a cork. Drop them into a large pan of salted barely simmering water. Do not overcrowd the pan, so you will have to do this in stages. (ED says not to worry if the mixture seems a bit soft: the eggs and flour will hold it together and it will firm up a bit as it cooks). After 5 to 8 minutes the croquettes will be ready and float to the top. Take them out with a slotted spoon, allow the water on them to evaporate, and ease them into a warm dish to which you already have added more parmesan and melted butter. Put this into a low oven. When all the croquettes have cooked, add more butter and parmesan, grind some more black pepper over the top, warm it all up a bit more in the oven, and then serve.

EXOTIC RISOTTO WITH CHICKEN LIVERS AND MUSHROOMS

For 6 People.

Two tablespoonfulls of Olive Oil, one for each pan.

600 g Risotto Rice, the round Arborio type.

One large Shallot, or medium-sized Onion, very finely chopped.

Three cloves Garlic, very finely chopped.

250 g Chicken Livers, sinew eliminated and chopped finely.

A glass of Wine or half a glass of cooking Madeira.

One litre of Good Stock.

250 g Button Mushrooms, chopped.

125 g Tomato Concassée.

A tablespoonful each of Pine Nuts (grill them first for 5 minutes or so to crisp up without seriously browning), Raisins and Currants.

Salt and Pepper.

For this you will need 2 large frying pans.

In the first, sweat the shallots/onions and garlic without colouring. Push to the side and add the chicken livers. Turn up the heat. Stir the livers round to cook evenly. Add wine or madeira to deglaze. And then some of the stock. Turn the heat down low and let it gently cook. Meanwhile, in the other pan gently sweat the rice in the oil until it is translucent. Add this to the first pan. Start adding the stock, bit by bit as the rice absorbs the liquid. Keep at a simmer. Taste the rice from time to time, and keep stirring. It will take about 20-25 minutes for the rice to get *al dente*. Towards the end add the mushrooms, tomatoes and all the other ingredients. Taste for seasoning. Serve hot with grated parmesan sprinkled over the top of each dish.

A VARIATION ON TOAD IN THE HOLE

For 4 People.

Batter for Yorkshire Pudding.

250 g Flour.

Half a teaspoonful Salt.

3 Eggs.

60 cl Milk.

Whisk all this up in a liquidizer until smooth and creamy. Pour into a bowl and let it rest in the fridge for at least two hours.

One Red Pepper, chopped finely and sweated in butter or duck fat for 10 minutes until soft.

One small can (250 g) Sweetcorn, fully drained.

8 good quality Pork Sausages, (500 g).

Duck Fat for frying.

Fry the sausages in the duck fat in a smallish roasting tray, turning over from time to time, until golden brown. Pour all the fat away except one tablespoonful's worth. Mix up the red peppers and sweetcorn into the batter. Pour over the sausages and bake in the oven at 230° C for 20 minutes. Serve hot with Dijon mustard.

POT STICKERS OR FRIED DUMPLINGS (Based on Judith Dietrich's Recipe)

For 24 Dumplings.

For the Stuffing.

125 g good Pork Sausage meat.
One and half tablespoonsful thick Soy sauce.
2 tablespoonsful Sesame Oil.
One tablespoonful Fresh Ginger, finely chopped.
One teaspoonful Yellow Bean Sauce.
4 cloves of Garlic, finely chopped

You can also substitute shrimp/prawns. (And, we suggest, in his instance, as a variation, add broken up, not mashed, pieces of cooked chestnut to the mixture.)

For the Pancakes.

300 g Flour.
250 ml Boiling Water.
Sesame Oil.

Mix up all the stuffing ingredients in a bowl and leave to cool. Meanwhile prepare the pancakes. Whiz up the flour and the boiling water in the food processor until it forms a ball. No more kneading is necessary. Turn out and leave to cool. Roll out to form a roll 3 cms in diameter, and cut into slices 75 mm thick. Put one flattened slice on top of another, with a brush of sesame oil to separate them, and roll out into a circle 12 cm in diameter. Separate the two and continue to produce all the panakes. Leave them for 15 minutes to relax. Add a spoonful of stuffing to each pancake and fold in half, pressing the edges closely together to seal. Heat one tablespoonful of sesame oil and 20 cl (a glassful) of water in a non-stick frying pan until simmering and add the dumplings. You'll have to do this in stages. As the water evaporates the dumplings will brown on the downside. Keep the first batch warm while you cook the remainder in a fresh batch of oil and water. Serve immediately.

A simple serving sauce can be made up from half soy sauce, half balsamic vinegar. But even better is:

ASIAN DIPPING SAUCE

6 tablespoonsful Lime Juice
3 tablespoonsful Mirin (sweet sake)
3 tablespoonsful Water
1 and a half teaspoonsful Soy Sauce
1 teaspoonful freshly grated Ginger
1 teaspoonful Salt

Mix well. Season to taste. If you can't get the Mirin, Sake and a little sugar will do fine.

ANOTHER POT-STICKER DISH

And another Judi Dietrich idea

Grated Parmesan and Fontina cheese (or substitute Gruyère for the latter)
A teaspoonfull of Creme Fraiche
Pine Nuts
Parsley
A little chopped Garlic
Salt and Peppercorns

Mix up the above – it should not be too liquid – and stuff the pancakes, as above. Use chicken sauce instead of water in the cooking pan.

PARMA (OR SERRANO ETC.) HAM WITH FIGS

As an alternative to Melon, Figs are delicious. Spike up this combination, if you wish, with a condiment made with equal quantities of Dijon mustard and creamed horseradish.

SALAD NICOISE

Salad Nicoise in a restaurant is often a disaster. All the main ingredients are piled on top of the lettuce. You tend to pick these out first, leaving you with often over-vinaigretted limp lettuce to finish up at the end. Much better is to put each of the constituent parts in their own separate bowls, and then plate up on a flat dish or allow your guests to serve themselves. Essential are:

Tuna. One 160 g can will serve 2 or 3.

Hard-Boiled Eggs (two halves per person) lightly covered with mayonnaise and a few capers or anchovies.

Potato Salad, mixed with mayonnaise and Chives.

Tomato and Cucumber Salad, lightly vinaigretted, with chopped Basil.

French Beans, cooked *al dente* (9 minutes), and lightly vinaigretted.

Lettuce.

In fact the lettuce can be considered superfluous.

And if you like, and this is intended as a main dish, why not add grated Carrots, and Celery (root) Remoulade (grated and mixed with a very mustardy, creamy mayonnaise).

FISH DISHES

CURRIED MOULES MARINIERE

For 6 People.

3 kilos Mussels.
4 Shallots, finely chopped.
4 cloves Garlic, crushed.
Two tablespoonsful chopped Parsley.
50 cl Dry White Wine.
50 g Butter.
Salt and Pepper.
50 cl Single Cream.
3 or 4 teaspoonsful Curry Paste.

Clean the mussels. Scrape them free of barnacles. Pull out the beard-like threads. Wash in plenty of cold water. Discard any with cracked shells or which are already open. Put the shallots, garlic, half the parsley and wine into a large pot (with a lid). Simmer for 6 minutes. Add the mussels. Bring back to a simmer, place the lid on and allow the mussels to steam for about 5 minutes until the shells are all open. Don't overcook. Transfer the mussels to a serving dish and keep warm. Strain the liquid into a clean saucepan (eliminating the sandy sediment which is always left). Whisk in the butter and correct for seasoning. In a separate saucepan warm up the cream (don't let it boil), add in the curry paste and then add this mixture to the mussel liquor. The sauce should coat the back of a woden spoon. Pour over the mussels. Sprinkle with the rest of the parsley and serve immediately.

MOUCLADE

As above, but without the curry paste. Instead add a large wine glass of pastis.

SCALLOPS WITH MUSHROOMS, CREAM AND SAFFRON

For 4 People.

12 to 16 Scallops, the coral and the muscular bit on the opposite side removed, each sliced laterally into two or three flat discs.
One Shallot, very finely chopped.
Small knob of Butter.
3 wine glasses Dry White Wine or dry Vermouth.
150 g Button mushrooms, sliced.
250 g Single Cream.
Pinch Saffron.
Salt and Pepper.
Chopped Parsley.

Gently sweat the shallots in butter until soft. This will only take a couple of minutes. Do not overcook. Scrape out into a bowl. Warm up the wine/vermouth in a pan and gently simmer the scallops and mushrooms for 4 or 5 minutes, depending on their thickness. Remove the scallops and mushrooms and place into the bowl with the shallots, and keep warm. Turn up the heat and let the wine reduce to one third of its volume. Take off the heat and let the pan cool. Add the cream, saffron, salt and pepper, and taste. Add back the scallops, mushrooms and shallots, warm it up (don't let it boil) and serve immediately, adding a teaspoonful of chopped parsley to each serving. Have chunks of crusty bread handy to mop up the sauce.

CURRIED SCALLOPS (A Jane Grigson Recipe)

For 4 People.

12 to 16 Scallops, prepared as above.
Two glasses Dry White Wine
Bouquet Garni.
50 g Butter.
One teaspoonful Curry Paste.
40 cl Thick Cream.
2 Egg Yolks, beaten up in a little Milk.
Salt, Pepper.

Simmer the scallops and bouquet garni in the wine for 4 or 5 minutes, depending on their thickness. Remove them and sauté them gently in the butter and curry paste for 4 minutes. Remove and keep warm. Add the wine to the pan and reduce vigorously for 2 minutes. Add the cream and the seasonings, continue reducing. Turn down the heat. Allow to cool for half a minute before adding the egg. Add back the scallops. Re-heat gently (it must not get back to the boil). Serve with plain boiled rice.

KEDGEREE

For 4 People.

One Large fillet (500 g) Smoked Haddock.
Milk to cover
Olive Oil.
One large Onion, finely chopped.
175 g Long Grain Rice (n.b. not Risotto Rice).
One teaspoonful Curry Paste.
Butter.
3 Hard-Boiled Eggs, chopped.
Chopped Parsley.
Salt and Pepper.

Put the haddock in a pan, add water just to cover, warm up until boiling and turn off the heat. Let it cool. Take out with a flat slatted spoon (keep the milk), and take the haddock off the skin, eliminating any small bones you may come across. Don't break up the fish more than you have to. Put the fish aside. Sweat the onion in the oil until soft but not browned, then add the rice and cook over a low heat until it is transparent, stirring regularly. Add the curry paste. Pour 50 cl of the haddock milk over the rice and cook over a medium heat, continuing to stir regularly, until the rice is *al dente*. Mix up the haddock flakes with a large knob of butter. Add to the rice and mix it about. Season with salt (probably not necessary) and pepper. At the last minute before serving, add the chopped up hard-boiled egg and mix this in. Scatter with chopped parsley and serve hot.

Jenny's recipe, which she calls Davina's Divine Kedgerree, uses brown rice, cooked in advance, and curry powder instead of paste, and she adds fresh coriander leaves, some slivered almonds and some petit pois. The recipe is finished off with a little cream and lemon juice.

TROUT WITH CEPES AND PASTIS (Another Jane Grigson Recipe)

This calls for fresh ceps. For 4 People.

4 Trout.

Seasoned Flour.

60 g Clarified Butter.

150 g Ceps.

One clove Garlic, crushed.

One dessertspoonful Pastis.

3 tablespoonsful Thick Cream.

Melt half the butter in a frying pan at medium heat. Add the trout which have been dusted with seasoned flour. Sauté for four minutes on each side. Transfer to a serving dish and keep warm. Add the rest of the butter to the pan, turn up the heat a bit, and fry up the ceps and the garlic for five minutes. Take them out and arrange them round the trout. Add the pastis to the pan and bring to the boil, scraping up the brown bits and juices. Stir in the cream. Reheat, stirring it up until it thickens. Add more salt, and especially, pepper. Pour over the trout and serve.

POACHED SALMON

One Whole Fresh Salmon.

A Fish Kettle to fit.

Court Bouillon to cover.

Cucumber, Tomato and Lettuce Salad.

Boiled Baby New Potatoes (Jersey Royals for preference, but otherwise Anja or Rattes), hot.

Mayonnaise or Hollandaise.

Poaching fish such as salmon is very simple. Put the fish into the kettle. Cover with the court bouillon, bring to the boil and then switch off the heat. As the fish cools in the liquid it will cook perfectly, no matter what its size, or how long you keep it in the liquid. Lift out the fish carefully and put it on a tray. Let it rest there for 10 minutes. Pour away, back in to the court bouillon (which, don't forget, having decanted off the vegetables, etc., you can preserve for future use) any liquid which has seeped out. Gently peel off the skin. Transfer to a serving dish. Decorate the top with slices of cucumber. Serve with the salads and hot new potatoes, with mayonnaise or hollandaise on the side.

SALMON BAKED IN PUFF PASTRY WITH CURRANTS AND GINGER

This mediaeval dish was re-invented by George Perry-Smith of the Hole in the Wall Restaurant, Bath.

The recipe below is based on Jane Grigson's version.

Serves 6.

One kilo fillet of Salmon, skinned.
Salt and Pepper.
125 g soft Butter.
4 Balls of Crystallised Ginger, chopped finely.
30 g (one handful) Currants.
230 g (one quiche roll out) Puff Pastry.
One Beaten Egg for Egg Wash.

Cut the salmon piece in two, widthwise. Season. Mix up in a bowl the soft butter, the ginger (rinse this first, otherwise the dish gets a bit too sweet) and the currants. Roll out the puff pastry. Spread the middle of this with one third of the butter mixture. Place one of the fillets, backside downwards, on top. Spread this with another third of the butter mixture. On top of this place the second fillet, the other way around, and inside down wards, to make a sandwich. Spread the remainder of the butter mixture on top. Egg wash the sides, to seal where the pastry joins itself and parcel up the fish, cutting off the surplus pastry. Egg wash the rest of the pastry. Then turn it over, egg wash the top, and use the surplus pastry to make a pretty decoration on the top.

Place on a baking tray and bake at 230° C for 30 minutes. Serve hot.

SALMON STEAKS IN CREAM AND WATERCRESS

For 4 People.

One Salmon Steak per head, about 3 cm thick.
Salt, Pepper, Butter.
60 g Single Cream.
Large Handful Watercress, including, ideally, Tarragon.
A Squeeze of Lemon Juice.

Very briefly blanch (15 seconds only) and refresh the watercress. Squeeze dry. Roughly chop it up. Season the fish. Butter the baking dish. Arrange the salmon steaks in this dish so they are thickly packed without touching. Mix the watercress in with the cream and pour over. Add a little more pepper and a squeeze of lemon juice.

Bake at 180° C for 20-25 minutes, spooning the cream over the salmon steaks half way through. Serve hot.

SOLE AU VIN BLANC A LA CREME

You may well agree that there is no finer (nor indeed simpler) way of cooking sole than plainly grilling it or gently frying it in butter. But here is sole in a sauce, which leads its way to a hundred and one variations.

For 2 People.

The four fillets from one large (500 g) Sole. (Keep the bones, etc. for stock.)

Butter.

A tablespoonful of finely chopped shallot.

A half glass of Dry White Wine.

Fish Stock.

Salt and Pepper.

2 Egg Yolks.

15 cl Thick Cream.

Lemon Juice.

Chopped Parsley.

Butter and season a shallow oven-proof baking dish. Sprinkle with chopped shallot. Place in the fish, Add the wine, and enough stock to barely cover the fish. Bring to a simmer on the top of the stove. Cover with buttered paper (not foil, it will give the fish a taint). Transfer to a pre-heated oven at 180° C

and bake for 8 minutes. Take the fish out and keep it warm. Strain the liquid into a saucepan.

Reduce the sauce by at least two-thirds until it begins to thicken. Whisk up the egg yolks and the cream. And, off the heat, mix this slowly with the fish liquid. Stir it gently over a low heat until it thickens once again. Adjust the seasoning. Put the fish into the cleaned oven-proof serving dish and pour the sauce on top. Heat the dish up gently without allowing the sauce to boil. Spike the sauce with a few drops on lemon juice. Sprinkle over with the chopped parsley. Serve at once.

I have tried this using Vin Jaune from the Jura. Delicious!

SAINT-PIERRE (JOHN DORY) WITH ORANGE SAUCE
(Based on Jane Grigson's Recipe)

This can also be made with any firm white sea fish: brill, sole, turbot, even whiting, plus sandre (pike-perch) which is a delicious fresh-water fish from the Sône and other rivers in eastern France. Ideally this should be made with the bitter Seville oranges you make marmalade from, in season in February. Otherwise, as in the recipe, oranges and lemons.

For 4 people;

4 fillets Saint-Pierre (two fishes).
3 Seville Oranges or 2 Oranges and one Lemon
3 Egg Yolks.
One glass Dry White Wine.
4 tablespoonsful Thick Cream.
Salt, Pepper, Cayenne Pepper.
Seasoned Flour.
125 g Butter.
Chopped Parsley.

Sprinkle one third of the orange/lemon juice over the fish, and leave in a cool place. In a large bowl beat together the rest of the orange/lemon juice, the egg yolks, the wine and the cream. Heat this in a double boiler until it thickens to more than cover the back of a wooden spoon, but does not boil. Season with the salt and the two peppers (go easy at this stage) and beat in half the butter. Take off the heat and keep the sauce warm.

Dip the fish fillets in seasoned flour and fry in the remaining butter until golden brown, turning over half way through. Add the juice it has been marinading in to the pan. Plate up pouring the sauce on top with a sprinkle of parsley. Serve immediately.

CRAB LINGUINE
(Based on an Angela Hartnett recipe)

Serves 4 as a starter, 2 as a main dish

350 g Linguine (cook al dente as per the packet instructions)

6 tablespoonsful Olive Oil
2 cloves Garlic, finely chopped
Half a small Red Chili, finely chopped
350 g picked White Crab Meat
50 cl Dry White Wine
1 tablespoonful chopped Flat-Leaf Parsley
1 tablespoonful chopped Basil
Juice and grated zest of half a Lemon
Salt and Pepper

While the linguine is cooking heat the olive oil in a large, deep frying pan and add the garlic and chili. Fry gently without colouring for a minute. Stir in the crabmeat and heat through for another minute. Add the wine and allow to reduce by half. Drain the linguine and add to the the pan together with the parsley. Then add the lemon juice and zest. Test for seasoning and serve immediately.

As a suggestion to spice this up further, add some ginger at the same time as the chili

NB I find this recipe has a tendency to dry ou and stick to the pan. Have a little chicken stock to hand and add after the wine has reduced if you think this is happening.

CRAB CAKES

Felicity Cloake's Recipe

For Four People

40 g Breadcrumbs
Half a teaspoonful Mustard Powder
Half a teaspoonful Salt
Half a teaspoonful Grated Pepper
Nutmeg
Paprika
2 tablespoonsful Chopped Parsley
250 g White Crabmeat
One beaten Egg
Flour to coat
Vegetable oil to cook

Put all the first seven ingredients in a bowl and still well. Add the crab meat but be careful not to break it up too much. Bind with the egg. Check the seasoning. Divide into four and shape into four flat cakes. Dust with he flour. Chill in the refridgerator. Cook in a frying pan for about four minutes on each side or until golden brown. Serve hot.

SMOKED SALMON FISH CAKES

Makes 16 to 18 Fish Cakes

I tablespoonful Butter
Pinch of Turmeric
Half a teaspoonful grated Fresh Ginger
170 g Floury Potatoes, boiled and mashed.
2 tablespoonsful chopped Flat-Leaf Parsley
A splash Chili Sauce
1 Beaten Egg
100 g hot Smoked Salmon, flaked
2 teaspoonsful Flour
Salt and Pepper
Oil for frying.

For the dip: One Spring Onion, finely chopped, mixed in with plain yoghurt or crème fraiche.

Melt the butter, add the turmeric and ginger, allow to amalgamate and then add the potatoes. Mix in the parsley, a little salt and lots of pepper, as well as the chili sauce. Beat in the egg and the smoked salmon. Put a tablespoonful of the flour in a bowl and start adding the fishcake mixture, using a teaspoon, to shape up the individual cakes. These should be in the form of flattened balls about five centimetres in diameter. Transfer these to a plate and allow to rest and cool, preferably for several hours.

Shallow fry in batches until golden brown. Drain on kitchen paper. Serve with plain yoghurt or crème fraiche

DEEP-FRIED LEMON SOLE

Serves 2

Two Lemon Soles, filleted and skinned (about 500g)

100g Fresh Breadcrumbs

150g Flour

2 Beaten Eggs (Note: it makes life much easier if you have more of these than you really need)

Salt, Pepper and a pinch of Cayenne Pepper, to add to the flour.

Oil for deep frying, Sunflower is the best

Cut the fish into bite-size pieces. You'll end up with 15 or so. Set out three large plates or shallow bowls. Place the flour in one, the beaten egg in the second and the breadcrumbs in the third. Using two forks, and three or so pieces of fish at a time, flour, then egg then breadcrumb the fish, shaking off any surplus. You can do this a hour in advance, provided you keep the fish pieces apart in a cool place.

Fry the fish in batches and leave those first cooked to drain on kitchen paper until you have finished. Serve at once with a lemon wedge and tartar sauce.

POSH FISH PIE

For 4 people

500 g Fish in bite-sized pieces (Sole fillets and Salmon, in equal proportions, works very well).

One large Shallot, finely sliced.

One clove Garlic, finely chopped.

One small Leek, finely sliced.

One medium sized Carrot, finely sliced.

50 g Button Mushrooms, halved and quartered.

Two heaped up tablespoonsful Frozen Peas, thawed.

Two heaped up tablespoonsful Broad Beans, podded and peeled.

Two dessertspoonsful Dry White Wine.

125 g Single Cream.

Small pinch Saffron.

Salt and Pepper.
230 g (one quiche roll out) Puff Pastry.
One beaten Egg for Egg Wash.

Divide the Puff pastry 60:40. Use the large portion to line a medium sized oval baking dish, leaving an overhang at the sides. Prick the bottom a few times to allow the steam to escape. But you don't have to pre-bake it. Roll out the remaining pastry to form the top and set aside.

Sweat the shallot and garlic. Add the carrot, and later the leek, and finally mix in the mushrooms, peas and broad beans, which should hardly cook at all. Scrape out of the pan into a bowl, add the wine to the pan to de-glaze and reduce by half. Take off the heat to let the pan cool. Add the cream, saffron and seasoning. Return the vegetables and the pieces of fish, without any further cooking. There should be enough liquid to bind, but not so much it looks soggy. Allow to cool before scraping onto the pastry in the baking dish. Fold the pastry overhang over the sides of the fish mixture. Egg wash this overhang and place the second oval of pastry on the top. Press the sides together. Egg wash the entire top, using any surplus pastry to make a pretty pattern.

Bake at 230° C for thirty minutes. Serve hot.

PEPPER AND SALT PRAWNS

For 4 People.

500 g Raw Prawns, of a decent size, cleaned and shelled apart from the tails. Flatten them out a bit. Extract the black sinew along the back.
One slice Fresh Root Ginger, finely chopped.
Two cloves Garlic, finely chopped.
2 Eggs.
75 g Flour.
One heaped teaspoonful Salt
4 tablespoonsful Water.
Sunflower Oil for cooking, enough to fill a saucepan to a depth of 6 cm.

Dipping sauce for serving:

Mix up 4 tablespoonsful soy sauce, 2 tablespoonsful dry sherry, one tablespoonful Hoisin sauce, one tablespoonful tomato sauce, and one of hot chilli oil. Add shreds of root ginger and garlic.

Beat up the eggs, add the ginger, garlic, flour and salt and mix to a smooth paste. Heat up the oil until boiling. One by one, dip each prawn into the mixture by its tail, lower into the oil and fry for 3 minutes. Do this in batches of 6 or so at a time. Remove with a slatted spoon and allow to drain its fat on kitchen paper. Keep warm. Continue until all the prawns have been cooked. Season with salt and pepper and serve immediately with the dipping sauce.

STIR FRY WITH PRAWNS/SHRIMP

For 4 People.

400 g Chinese Noodles.

400 g Raw Prawns.

Sesame Oil for cooking.

One Shallot, finely sliced.

4 cloves Garlic, finely chopped.

One dessertspoonful Fresh Root Ginger, chopped up.

One Red Chilli Pepper, seeded and finely chopped.

3 tablespoonsful Celery, finely chopped.

One teaspoonful Dry Sherry.

A little Stock.

Squeeze of Lemon.

Pepper.

Soak the noodles in boiling water in a pan off the boil for 5 minutes. Drain and set aside. Add the prawns to a little oil at a high heat and sear on each side for 30 seconds. Remove the prawns and set aside. Add a bit more oil and then the shallot, garlic, ginger, chilli and celery. Stir fry for 3 minutes. Return the prawns to the pan. Add the soy sauce and the sherry and season with pepper. Add the drained noodles. Add a little stock to moisten, if necessary. Drizzle with lemon juice to taste. Correct the seasoning and seasoning. Serve hot.

POULTRY

COQ AU VIN Raymond Blanc's Recipe

It doesn't have to be an old cockerel, though you would be surprised how delicious they can be, but you do need a decent sized bird.

Serves four

1.5 kg free range Chicken, cut into 10 pieces
1 teaspoonful plain flour, heaped
2 teaspoonsful Olive Oil
Salt, Peppercorns

For the Marinade

One Litre full bodied Red Wine
3 medium Carrots, roughly sliced
2 Celery sticks, roughly sliced
20 baby Onions, peeled but left whole
One teaspoonful crushed Black Peppercorns
Parsley stalks, sprigs of Thyme, Bay leaves

For the Garnish

One teaspoonful Olive Oil
200 g Streaky Bacon, diced
400 g Button Mushrooms
One tablespoonful Chopped Parsley

Bring the wine to the boil and reduce by half. Allow to cool. Add the chicken and marinade vegetables. Put into a cool place for a few hours, preferably overnight. Drain the marinade. Take out the chicken pieces and pat dry with kitchen paper. Set aside the vegetables. Turn your oven on to 200 C. Toast the flour in the oven until lightly browned. Turn the oven down to 150 C. Set aside. In a casserole dish fry up the chicken pieces until golden brown. Pour off most of the oil. Add the vegetables from the marinade and the toasted flour. Stir it all up. Add the wine little by little, skimming any impurities from the surface. Cover with a lid and cook in the oven for 45 minutes. Take out the chicken pieces and keep them warm. Drain the sauce into a pan. Reduce this by one third. Meanwhile fry up the bacon, adding the mushrooms at the end. Incorporate the chicken pieces and the sauce. Adjust the seasoning, sprinkle with parsley and serve at once.

CHICKEN POT PIE

For 4 People.

200 g Roast Chicken Breast Meat.

One Shallot, sliced.

One clove of Garlic, finely chopped.

One large Leek, sliced.

One small glassful Cooking Madeira or Red Wine.

200 g Button Mushrooms, halved or quartered.

50 g Frozen Peas, thawed.

50 cl Béchamel, made with Stock instead of Milk.

2 tablespoonsful Thick Cream.

Squeeze of Lemon.

Flat-Leaved Parsley and Tarragon, roughly chopped.

Salt and Pepper.

Puff Pastry (For the pastry part of this recipe follow the instructions under Posh Fish Pie, page 58).

One Beaten Egg for Egg Wash.

The simplest way to obtain the chicken is to roast two the previous day or so, and then to place an embargo on consumption of the second chicken's breast meat. Remove this from the cold chicken the next day, roughly chop it up and set it aside for this recipe. Prepare the Béchamel in advance.

Sweat the onion and the shallot, without browning, adding the leek after a few minutes. When all is soft (10-15 minutes from the start), scrape out into a bowl and set aside. Deglaze the pan with the wine/madeira. Quickly fry up the mushrooms. Add the Béchamel, the leeks etc., the peas and the chicken. Add the cream. Mix it up and add salt and pepper. Add the lemon juice. Taste and adjust the seasoning if necessary. It should be gooey but not too runny. Allow to cool before you put the mixture into the puff pastry. Just before you do this add the herbs.

Bake at 220° C for 30 minutes.

OGLANDIA CHICKEN IN GINGER AND LIME

Oglander Road, in south-east London, was where Emma and Andy used to live. This recipe was passed on from neighbour to neighbour.

For 4 People

Grated zest and juice of 2 large (or 3 small) Limes.

6-8 cm piece of fresh Root Ginger, grated.

4 cloves Garlic, crushed.

8 tablespoonsful Olive Oil.

2 tablespoonsful thick Soy Sauce.

Ground Black Pepper.

4 skinned Chicken Breasts, each sliced into 3 or 4 pieces.

Put all the ingredients into a shallow dish, mix together and make sure the chicken is covered. Marinade for at least 2 hours, preferably longer. Bake uncovered for 25-30 minutes at 190) C. Serve hot with plain or egg-fried rice.

POULET A LA CREME AU VIN JAUNE ET AUX MORILLES

For 4 People.

8 Free-Range Chicken Thighs, on the bone.

Pepper, Salt, Flour.

40g Clarified Butter.

Three glasses Vin Jaune.

60cl. Thick Cream.

15g dried Morilles, re-constituted by soaking in tepid stock, just enough to cover.

Lemon Juice.

In an over-proof casserole (with a lid), melt the butter over a medium heat. Add the seasoned and floured chicken pieces, and brown gently, turning so all the sides become golden. Add the wine, bring to the boil, cover and place in an oven at 160° C, stirring up once or twice, for about 40 minutes, or until the chicken is cooked and no more pink juices flow out of it. Remove the casserole from the oven. Take out the pieces of chicken and keep them warm. Put the casserole dish back on the hob over a low heat and add the cream. Lift out the morilles from their stock and set aside. Add this stock (but not the sand/dust which will have sunk to the bottom) to the casserole. Stir without letting it boil and let it thicken. Add back the chicken, plus the morilles. Adjust the seasoning, adding a few drops of lemon juice to sharpen the sauce if necessary. Serve with plain boiled rice.

SAUTEE DE POULET A L'ESTRAGON

For 4 People.

50 g Butter.

One Shallot, thinly sliced.

Three cloves Garlic, thinly chopped.

One medium Carrot, thinly sliced.

The equivalent of Celery, finely chopped.

8 Free-Range Chicken Thighs, on the bone.

Salt and Pepper.

A dusting of Flour.

One glass Dry White Wine, or half a glass of Cooking Madeira.

75 cl Good Stock, hot.

A Handful of Tarragon, stalks and all, saving plenty (two tablespoonsful) of the leaves for adding at the last minute.

Sweat the vegetables in the butter for about 5 minutes, push to the side, raise the heat and add the chicken pieces. Let them cook to golden, turning them over from time to time. Lower the heat, cover the pan, and cook for another 10 minutes, turning the chicken pieces once. Take off the lid. Add salt, pepper and give the pieces a liberal sprinkling of flour on both sides. Cook further for 5 minutes. Add

the wine/madeira, turn up the heat and reduce this liquid by half. Then add the stock and most of the tarragon. Bring to the boil, and turn down to a simmer. There should be just enough liquid to cover the chicken. Cover the pan and cook for 25 to 30 minutes. Take out the chicken pieces and set aside somewhere warm. Strain the liquid into a fresh pan and reduce until the sauce is thick enough to coat the back of a spoon. Test for seasoning. Place the chicken pieces in a serving dish (one you can put on top of the hob), pour over the sauce and add the extra tarragon which you have kept aside. Warm the dish up until it is piping hot. Serve immediately.

There are almost limitless variations of this recipe. For instance, leave out the tarragon and add tomato concassée, or mushrooms, or onions, or any combination of the three. Or you could use paprika or curry paste.

CHICKEN IN TARRAGON AND MUSTARD SAUCE

Another variation on the above. For 4-8 people;

4 boneless Chicken breasts, cut in half.
3 teaspoonsful Oil.
3 teaspoonsful Butter.
4 Portobello Mushrooms, quartered and sliced.
2 tablespoonsful Flour.
50 cl Good Stock.
One wineglass dry Vermouth.
4 tablespoonsful chopped Tarragon.
40 g Single Cream.
5 teaspoonsful Dijon Mustard.

Season the chicken and fry over a medium heat in the butter/oil mixture until golden brown. Remove chicken and set aside. Add the mushrooms and sauté for two minutes, stirring continuously. Reduce the heat to low. Sprinkle over the flour. Add the stock, then the vermouth and tarragon. Blend it all together. Return the chicken pieces. Bring to the boil, cover and simmer for 30 minutes. Mix together the cream and the mustard. Add to the casserole. Reheat gently (it must not boil). Correct the seasoning. Serve.

SUPREME DE VOLAILLE A LA MILANAISE

For 4 People.

4 Suprêmes of Chicken, the Breasts, without any bit of the wing.
Salt and Pepper.
Flour, seasoned.
One Beaten Egg.
Fresh Breadcrumbs.
Freshly Grated Parmesan Cheese (not a packet).
3 Tablespoonsful Clarified Butter.

Season the chicken well, particularly with pepper. Roll each one in flour (shake off the excess), beaten egg and the breadcrumb/parmesan mixture. Put on a plate under greaseproof paper in the fridge to 'set'.

Sauté in just a modicum, the merest bubble, of the clarified butter. No more than 3 minutes each side. The chicken should be not too soft, but springy, and not too hard either, or it is overcooked. The breadcrumbed outside should be nice and crisp. Take out and keep warm. Add the rest of the butter to the pan and brown it gently. Plate out the suprêmes and pour the butter over them. Serve immediately.

SUPREMES DE VOLAILLE WITH MUSTARD, CREAM AND ONIONS

For 2 People.

2 Supèmes of Chicken.

Salt, Pepper.

Seasoned Flour.

Clarified Butter.

100g finely sliced Onions.

One glass Good Stock.

One glass Dry White Wine, or Madeira.

40 cl Cream.

One dessertspoonful French Mustard.

Lemon juice.

2 dessertspoonsful chopped flat Parsely.

Cook the suprêmes as in the recipe above (though obviously they are not breadcrumbed). Set aside and keep warm. Plunge the onions in boiling water for one minute, refresh and drain, and then sauté them gently in more of the butter until soft and beginning to brown. Set aside. Boil up the stock and wine vigorously until reduced by two thirds. Add the cream, the mustard and the onions. Reheat and stir until the juice has thickened. Turn down the heat. Add the chicken. Adjust the seasoning. Sprinkle with the chopped parsley and serve.

There are endless variations on this dish: for instance, mushrooms, tomatoes, paprika, and so on.

LEMON CHICKEN

for 4 People.

One Beaten Egg.

2 cloves Garlic, roughly chopped.

2 slivers Lemon Rind, very finely chopped.

500 g Chicken Breasts, cut into thin strips (half a cm x 3 cm).

Sesame Oil for cooking.

Juice of One Lemon.

Sesame seeds, grilled for a few minutes to crisp up.

Two Spring Onions, finely sliced.

Marinate the chicken in the beaten egg, garlic and lemon rind for several hours. Take out the chicken, pieces with a slatted spoon and add to the hot oil. Stir fry for two minutes. Then reduce the heat and continue to stir fry for a little more. The chicken will now become golden brown on the outside. Turn up the heat again and add the lemon juice. Serve immediately, sprinkling the sesame seeds and spring onions on top.

CHICKEN SALTIMBOCCA

(Based on Elizabeth David's recipe for real, veal-based Saltimbocca)

Saltimbocca means 'jump into the mouth'.

For 3 people.

2 Chicken Breasts.

3/4 slices good smoked and cooked Ham.

9 Sage leaves.

Dijon Mustard.

Salt, Pepper, Butter, Madeira.

The difficulty with chicken breasts is that if you divide them you will get one large portion and one smaller from each breast; so the solution here is that the third person gets two halves, so to speak, and the other two one whole.

Flatten out the chicken breasts between two sides of kitchen paper. Season them. Spread them with Dijon mustard, layer on top of them a slice of the ham to fit exactly and then the sage leaves. Roll them up, chicken on the outside, and secure with a toothpick. Add to melted butter over a medium heat and cook for three to five minutes on each side, until gently browned. Turn up the heat. Pour over a generous slurp of madeira, let it reduce by half. Turn down the heat. Cover the pan and simmer for 8 to 10 minutes until the chicken is springy to the touch but neither too yielding or too firm. Serve immediately.

Note: the classical recipe, with veal, omits the mustard and needs 12-15 minutes simmering.

JENNY'S RIKI CHICKEN

For 4 to 6 People.

One large Chicken Breast per person, skinned and boned.

2 large unwaxed Lemons.

25 cl sweet Vermouth or medium-dry Sherry.

50 cl Single Cream, half-fat Crème Fraiche can be substituted, but watch out for the starch thickener in some brands).

Clarified Butter to fry the Chicken Breasts.

100 g Grated Parmesan (grate your own).

Salt and Pepper.

Melt the butter and fry the chicken over a medium flame on both sides to seal. Reduce the heat to low

and cook for about 15 minutes, turning once. (if you cook at too high a heat the chicken will get tough and stringy). Meanwhile wash and dry the lemons, grate the peel and chop it finely. Squeeze out the juice. Heat up the juice, peel and vermouth/sherry and let it reduce slightly and burn off the alcohol. Turn off the heat and let this liquid cool slightly. Add the cream and seasoning. It is meant to curdle, says Jenny. Pour over the chicken breasts in a shallow baking dish. Sprinkle with the grated parmesan and a few shavings of butter. Place under a grill to get brown.

OVEN-FRIED CHICKEN (with Parmesan, Curry and Paprika)

For 6 People.

One Chicken Breast per person, with the skin on.

2 heaped tablespoonsful Plain Flour.

2 heaped tablespoonsful grated Parmesan (grate your own).

One tablespoonful sweet Paprika.

One tablespoonful hot Curry powder.

40 to 60 cl Single Cream (or Crème Fraiche – see above).

Pepper.

125 g Clarified Butter.

Mix all the dry ingredients together (parmesan and spices) in a shallow bowl. Fry the chicken breasts gently in the butter, skin side down at first, turning over to seal. Take each one out of the pan and coat it on all sides in the dry mixture. Place these pieces skin side down in a shallow baking dish. Cook in the oven at 220° C for 15 minutes and then turn them over and cook for 10 minutes more. Do not over cook or the chicken will dry out. Take the chicken out and keep warm. Scrape everything out of the baking dish into a saucepan. Break up any caramelized bits, add in the residue left over from the coating at the beginning, and stir in the cream, warming it up to produce a thick curried flavoured sauce. Add the pepper and simmer. If too thick, loosen with a spoonful or two of stock. Serve separately from the crispy chicken pieces.

STIR FRY CHICKEN

For 6 People.

150 g (dry) Chinese Noodles.
One tablespoonful Sesame Oil.
One Shallot, finely sliced, or the equivalent in Spring Onions (even better).
Two cloves Garlic, finely sliced.
One Red Chilli Pepper, seeded and thinly sliced.
One tablespoonful Fresh Root Ginger, finely grated or chopped.
250 g Chicken Breast, finely sliced. Put this into a bag with a teaspoonful of cornflour and pepper and salt and shake up to incorporate the cornflour with the chicken pieces.
2 tablespoonsful Thick Soy Sauce.
One tablespoonful Dry Sherry or Dry Wine.
20 cl Chicken Stock.
125 g Baby Mushrooms, sliced
150 g Fresh Beansprouts.
Salt and Pepper.

Pour boiling water over the noodles and set aside. Drain after 3 minutes and refresh. Season. Set aside.

Heat the oil in a pan. At a low heat add the shallot (or spring onions), garlic and chilli pepper and stir fry for a couple of minutes until soft. Scrape out into a bowl and set aside. Raise the heat and add the chicken breast and all the surplus cornflour, continuing to stir, for 3 minutes. Scrape out into the bowl containing the shallots, garlic, etc. and set aside. Add the sherry, and raise to the boil. Add the stock and soy sauce and allow to reduce by half. Add the drained noodles and mushrooms and mix in. Add the chicken, etc.. Add the beansprouts. Stir it around. Check the seasoning. After one minute the bean sprouts will be done. Serve immediately.

CHICKEN KURMA (MURG KURMA) (One of Paul's Delicious Curries)

For 6 People.

6 Suprèmes of Chicken, cut into pieces approx. 4 x 4 centimetres.
2 medium Onions, cut small.
3 to 4 centimetres Ginger, chopped fine.
3 to 4 cloves Garlic, chopped fine.
15 cl Plain Yoghurt.
15 cl Single Cream (optional).
3 Green or Red Chillies, pricked with a fork.
One teaspoonful Paprika.
Half to One teaspoonful Coriander powder.
Half a teaspoonful Sugar.

3 Cloves.
3 to 5 Cardomom seeds, ground fine.
8 cms Cinnamon stick.
One teaspoonful Rose Water.
Pinch of Saffron (optional).
Garam Masala, half a teaspoonful.

Fry the onions in the oil very slowly until a golden brown. Add the ginger and half the garlic and fry a little. Add the paprika, coriander and sugar in a paste and fry gently for half a minute. Add the yogurt (and cream), cloves, cinnamon and chillies, stir together and fry very gently. Add a little water if necessary to avoid sticking. Seal the chicken in a separate pan (don't brown) and then add to the onions. Now add the ground cardomom, rose water, the rest of the chopped garlic and garam masala (and the saffron, if used). Stir in the cream and a little (more) water, a little salt, and keep frying gently for a further 7 minutes. It only takes a total of some 15 minutes to get the chicken just right. Cooking too long or too fiercely just makes it tough.

BRAISED DUCK WITH QUATRE EPICES

For 4 to 6 People

2 Duck Magrets (Breasts).
One Litre Good Chicken Stock.
One rounded tablespoonful Quatre Epices (Cinnamon, Cloves, Nutmeg and Ginger).
One rounded tablespoonful finely chopped up Garlic.
One rounded tablespoonful fresh Ginger, finely chopped.
One rounded tablespoonful concentrated Tomato Purée.

Warm the stock together with the spices, garlic, ginger and tomato purée, stirring the while so that it all makes a smooth sauce. Allow to cool. Strip the fatty parts (including the skin) from the duck magrets. Put into a pan with a lid and pour over the sauce. Marinade overnight. The next day remove the magrets, scape away any garlic, ginger etc. and cut up into bite-sized pieces. Place in a Le Creusot type dish (with a lid) and strain the marinade juices over the top. Bring to a boil and then put the covered dish into the oven at 160° for an hour or so. The duck should be able to be cut with a fork. If the sauce is still too liquid, take out the duck and concentrate the sauce over a hot hob. Serve with rice.

CRISPY AROMATIC DUCK

Compared to most Chinese Restaurants, where the duck is overcooked in deep fat to crisp it up, this is a revelation. The duck actually has a taste ! And it is a lot less fatty.

Serves 4 People.

One and a half litres of Good Stock, into which you have added: 2 tablespoonsful of shredded Fresh Root Ginger; One crushed Star Anise; One tablespoonful thick Soy Sauce; One tablespoonful crushed Szechuan Peppercorns; One tablespoonful Quatre Epices (Cloves, Ground Ginger, Cinnamon and Nutmeg); One tablespoonful Cumin powder.

2 large breasts of Duck, the magret with the skin on – one kilo or so in total.

Serve with Chinese Pancakes, sliced up Spring Onions and Cucumber and Hoisin sauce.

Marinate the duck in the stock and additions overnight. The next day, bring up the the boil and allow to gently simmer for an hour or more. There should be enough stock to amply cover the duck. Leave the duck in the sauce while it cools. The duck should be 'falling off the bone' in the sense that you could tear it apart using two forks. Err on the side of overcooked rather than undercooked. Take the duck out of the stock, drain and dry with kitchen paper. (Bottle up the stock for use again, but let it cool in the fridge first so you can scoop off the duck fat). Prick the skin all over. Turn on the grill at maximum. Place the magrets on a rack on top of a baking tray underneath and crisp up for 8 to 10 minutes. It doesn't matter if it burns just a little. Take them out. Put them on a serving dish and then tear them apart with two forks. Serve immediately, accompanied by the pancakes (defrost and steam in a double boiler for 10 minutes), cucumber, spring onions and Hoisin sauce.

PHEASANT CASSEROLE WITH CEPES AND MORILLES AND CHESTNUTS

For 4 to 6 people.

Cèpes and Morilles are easily available dried. This dish can also be made with guinea fowl.

One Hen Pheasant (they are juicier than cocks; but cocks will work very well too).

One wine glass Cooking Brandy.

One Onion, sliced and softened in butter..

125 g Butter.

100 g fresh Chestnuts.

10 g dried Cèpes.

10 g dried Morilles.

30 cl Dry White Wine.

30 cl Good Stock.

Bouquet Garni.

Salt, Pepper, Lemon Juice.

Brown the pheasant in the butter, in a close-fitting stewing pan (with a lid), on all sides. Heat up the brandy in a soup ladle, set fire to it and pour it over the pheasant. When the flames have died down, pack the softened onions under and on the sides of the pheasant, which should be breast side down, add the wine and the stock and the bouquet garni. Season gently (not the lemon juice at this stage). Bring to a simmer. Cover with foil and the lid and put the dish in an oven at 190° C for 40 minutes. Meanwhile soak the cèpes and the morilles in medium-hot water. Prepare the chestnuts by putting a cross with a knife across the top and boiling them for five minutes. They are then easier to peel. After the 40 minutes, take the pheasant out of the stewing dish and joint it. Keep the carcass for stock. Return the pieces to the dish, together with any juice which has escaped while you have been cutting it up (it'll still be a little pink), add the chestnuts, cèpes, morilles and the water they have been seeping in. Put the dish back into the oven for a further 20 minutes. Then check that the pheasant is cooked (there should not be any pink juice by now) and check the constituency of the cooking juice. If necessary thicken it by pouring most of the liquid into another pan and boiling vigorously to reduce it before pouring it back. Adjust the seasoning. Here a few drops of lemon juice come in useful. If not serving immediately (because you are eating the first course), turn the oven down to 125° C.

MEAT

THE SIMPLE AND EASY BEEF STEW

This is not the classical Boeuf Bourguignonne. It is composed of raw ingredients. So it can be assembled in 12 minutes. But it is surprisingly successful.

For 4 to 6 People.

4 rashers Bacon, cut into one cm slices.

600 g Lean Braising or Rump Steak (it is best to buy this in one piece so you can cut out all the muscle, sinew, fat that you desire), diced into bite sized portions.

One Onion, coarsely chopped.

3 cloves Garlic, coarsely chopped.

One or Two Carrots, thickly sliced.

The equivalent of Celery, thickly sliced.

One tablespoonful Dijon Mustard.

One or two tablespoonsful Flour.

One can (450 g) chopped Tomatoes.

Two generous glasses Red Wine (30 cl).

Half a litre Good Stock.

Generous shake of Herbes de Provence.

Salt and Pepper.

125 g Button Mushrooms, halved or quartered.

Assemble in a Le Creuzot dish, or equivalent, with a lid, in layers, the bacon, the vegetables, and finally the diced up meat, interspersed with the flour. Add the tomatoes, mustard, wine, stock (there should be enough to cover the ingredients), and the herbs and seasoning. Do not stir. Put on the lid. Bring to the boil on top of the hob and place in the oven at 160° C. After an hour give it a stir and check there is enough stock. Cook for a further two hours, stirring (and checking) every half an hour. Add the mushrooms half an hour before the end. Check the meat is very tender and the seasoning is correct. The liquid should cover the back of a wooden spoon. If too runny, take out and concentrate the juice on top of the hob at a highish temperature.

Serve hot with buttered noodles.

BOEUF BOURGUIGNON
(The Real Thing – But Rather More Complicated)

For 6 People.

Olive Oil for frying.

One kilo Lean Braising or Rump Steak (it is best to buy this in one piece so you can cut out all the muscle, sinew, fat that you desire), diced into bite sized portions.

125 g Shallots, sliced.

250 g Button Mushrooms, sliced.

Half a bottle of Red Wine.

Half a litre Good Stock.

One tablespoonful Dijon Mustard.

Generous shake Herbes de Provence.

Salt and Pepper;

To finish:

Butter for cooking

250 Button Onions.

250 g small Button Mushrooms, small enough to be cooked whole.

250 g Bacon, chopped into one cm slices and blanched in boiling water.

Heat a little oil in a large pan, and, in stages, fry the meat over a medium heat, browning the outsides. Remove the meat and put into a colander over a bowl to collect the juices. In the same pan, if necessary adding a bit more oil, gently sweat the shallots, without colouring, for 8 to 10 minutes until soft. Add the mushrooms, turn up the heat and fry them for 3 minutes. Add the meat, meat juices and the wine. Cook until the wine is reduced to one third. Add the stock, the mustard and the herbs, bring to the boil, and cook in the oven for 2 to 2 and a half hours, until tender. Allow to cool. Strain into a colander, remove the meat for later, and discard the shallots and mushrooms. (Put them in the stock pot). Reduce the liquid until it coats the back of a wooden spoon. Adjust the seasoning, and blend in a knob of butter to give the sauce a shine. Replace the beef.

Cook the onions in a pan with butter, a little water and a teaspoonful of sugar until soft and beginning to produce a browning glaze. Cook the mushrooms in a separate covered pan, in butter, quite fast. Lightly fry the blanched bacon. Add all these three to the beef stew. Serve hot.

STEAK AND KIDNEY PIE

This is prepared on the same lines as the above, cooking the kidneys (half the amount of the steak), alongside the meat, in the casserole dish for an hour and a half. Leave to cool. Thicken the liquid, as above, and place the meat, together with a fresh supply of quickly fried mushrooms, in a baking dish. Add enough of the sauce to barely cover the solid ingredients. Cover with a puff pastry lid (see Posh Fish Pie, page 58) and bake in a hot oven (220° C) for 40-45 minutes.

STEAK AND KIDNEY PUDDING

For the Suet Crust.

300g Self-Raising Flour.
One level teaspoonful Baking Powder.
One Quarter teaspoonful Salt.
Freshly Ground Black Pepper.
One teaspoonful Thyme leaves.
150g Chopped Suet.
Cold Water.

Mix all the dry ingredients in a bowl. Stir in the water to make a firm dough. Roll out about a quarter on a floured pastry board, into a circle, for the lid. Roll out the rest and line a buttered one and a half litre pyrex dish leaving enough to overhang the sides. Proceed with the steak and kidney mixture as above. Fill the dish but leave a couple of centimetres leeway at the top. Fold over the surplus sides, wet the surface and press on the lid to seal it firmly. Top this with a circle of foil to protect the top. Secure this with string. Put it to steam for one and a half to two hours. If you do not possess a steamer, place it on a trivet in a large saucepan with about 10 cms of water in it. The water should come two-thirds of the way up the dish. Bring the water to the boil, place in the dish, lower to a simmer and place a lid on the top of the saucepan. In both cases check from time to time to make sure the water does not dry out.

Both these dishes can be made with the addition of oysters. (Add at the same time as the second lot of mushrooms). No cooking adjustment is required.

CLIVE'S FAMOUS LASAGNE

This dish has this presumptuous title because when he lived in London, Clive would hold a party for, *inter alia*, visiting Burgundians, on the eve of the annual Burgundy tasting, sponsored by the Domaines Familiaux and organized by the Institute of Masters of Wine. Clive would cook lasagne for 40. Dominique Lafon pronounced it the best lasagne he had ever tasted and had three helpings.

For 6 People.

One large Onion, finely chopped.

4 cloves Garlic, finely chopped.

One Red Pepper, inside pith and seeds removed, finely chopped.

250 g Chicken Livers, sinew etc. removed, finely chopped.

250 g Lean Ground Beef.

2 glasses Red Wine or One glass Madeira.

One can (450 g) chopped Tomatoes.

One teaspoonful Dijon Mustard.

Generous shake of Herbes de Provence.

Salt and Pepper.

Lasagne that doesn't have to be pre-cooked. You will need most of a packet.

75 cl Cheese Sauce.

Sweat the vegetables gently for 10 minutes on a low heat. Push to the sides of the pan, turn up the heat and fry the chicken livers, stirring from time to time. When no longer pink, push these to one side too, and fry up the minced beef. When this is no longer pink either, mix up, add the wine/madeira and reduce this liquid by half. Add the tomatoes and enough stock just to cover. Add the mustard, herbs, salt and pepper. Bring to the boil, reduce to simmer, and very gently cook on the top of the hob at the very lowest heat, with the lid nine-tenths on the top of the pan. Return from time to time to give the sauce a stir and to ensure that it is not drying out, but it must never be too liquid.

The longer the sauce cooks – and it is really a Bolognese Sauce – the better. Cook it gently for at least 2 or even 3 hours. It is yet better if you make it the day before and re-heat it. This, and the fact that you have used chicken livers, is the open secret about the best Bolognese.

To assemble, ladle a spoonful of the sauce into a baking dish, put a layer of dried lasagne on top, breaking the edges so that they fit snugly. Then more sauce, another layer of lasagne and so on. Coat the top with cheese sauce, which should not be too runny, and bake for 50 minutes at 160° C, turning up the oven to 200° C for the last 10 minutes or so to brown on the top.

STIR-FRIED BEEF WITH PEPPERS AND MANGE-TOUT

For 6 People.

450 g lean Beef (Rump Steak is good), thinly sliced, 5 cm long.
2 teaspoonsful Soy Sauce.
2 teaspoonsful Rice Wine or Dry Sherry.
2 teaspoonsful Sesame Oil.
Salt and Pepper.
2 teaspoonsful Cornflour.
One Red Pepper, cored, de-seeded and sliced.
3 tablespoonsful Sunflower Oil.
225 g Mange-Tout.
15 cl Good Stock.
2 tablespoonsful Oyster Sauce.

Put the sliced beef in a bowl with the soy sauce, rice wine/sherry, salt, pepper and cornflower. Stir it up and let in marinade in a cool place for 2 hours at least.

Heat up the sunflower oil in a wok or equivalent until the oil is beginning to smoke. Remove the beef from the marinade juices with a slotted spoon and stir fry for three minutes. Remove the beef and keep warm. Pour all except one tablespoonful of the oil away, reheat it and add the red peppers and mange-tout and stir fry for 2 minutes. Add the stock and oyster sauce. Bring up to the boil. Add the beef and stir well. Serve hot with plain boiled rice or egg-fried rice.

NEW MEXICAN CHILE CON CARNE

For 6 to 8 People.

One and a half kilos Red Kidney Beans, soaked overnight, drained and simmered for one and a half to two hours in advance, or
4 cans ready cooked, but well drained Red Kidney Beans (wash off the starchy gunge).
400 g minced, lean, organic Beef.
2 cans chopped Tomatoes.
2 medium Onions, finely chopped.
4 to 8 (you choose, says Jenny) Garlic, finely chopped.
2 to 3 tablespoonsful Oregano, (Greek Rigani has the best flavour).
2 tablespoonsful Cumin powder.
One teaspoonful Chilli powder.
Olive Oil.
A walnut sized cube of Butter.
One cupful Stock.

Fry the onions with oil and butter over a moderate heat until golden. Add the garlic and soften for a further few minutes. Add the meat, gently breaking it up and stirring as it cooks. Brown slowly for 10 minutes. Stir in all the dried herbs and spices, and continue to cook for another 10 minutes. Add the beans and the tomatoes, scraping up all the juices from the base of the pan. Add the stock. Simmer for a further 30 minutes. If it looks as if it is getting a bit dry, add more stock or another tin of tomatoes. 76

BEEF WELLINGTON

Felicity Cloake's recipe

For four people

10 g Dried Porcini Mushrooms
50 g Butter
2 Shallots, finely chopped
300 g mixed Mushrooms, roughly chopped
1 desertspoonful Thyme leaves
200 ml Madeira
2 teaspoonsful Double Cream
1 leaspoonful Olive Oil
500 g Beef Fillet
250 g Puff Pastry (made with butter)
1 beaten Egg to glaze
1 tablespoonful Poppy Seeds

Place a baking sheet in the oven and pre-heat it to 200 g. Soak the dried porcini in 150 cl boiling water for 15 minutes. Chop the porcini up when soft, keeping the water. Soften the chopped shallots in the butter, add the mixed mushrooms, the porcini and the thyme and soften this, before adding three quarters of the madeira. Turn up the heat a little until all the madeira has evaporated. Allow to cool. Mix up three quarters of this mixture with the double cream. Taste for seasoning and set aside. Warm the oil in a frying pan and sear the meat on all sides. Season well. Keep the pan. Roll out the pastry to a rectangle 25 cm by 30 cm by 3 mm thick. Brush all over with the egg. Spread with the mushroom mixture. Put the beef on one side and carefully roll up, positioning it seam-side down and tucking in the ends to seal the parcel. Paint what is now the outside with egg, sprinkle with the poppy seeds, put on the hot baking sheet and cook for 30 minutes or until golden. Set aside to rest for five minutes before serving. Meanwhile deglaze the beef pan with the remaining madeira, add the remainder of the mushroom mixture and the porcini juice. Bring this to the boil, adjust the seasoning and serve as a sauce with your beef.

RISSOLES, MEAT BALLS OR POLPETTE

For 6 People.

500 g Lean Beef or Veal, minced finely. (You may well prefer to buy your meat in one piece, sort it through, and mince it yourself).
3 cloves Garlic, roughly chopped.
Small Handful Flat-Leaved Parsely, roughly chopped.
Two thin peelings of Lemon Rind, finely chopped.
One Egg.
Salt, Pepper, Nutmeg.
Four tablespoonsful fresh Breadcrumbs.
Flour for assembling.

Put everything in the food processor for 15 seconds. Adjust the seasoning. Flour a board and your hands and form balls the size of ping-pong balls with your fingers, rolling them in a dusting of the flour and flattening slightly (it makes them easier to cook). Use as light a touch as possible. Lay the balls out in a baking sheet and allow them to rest in the fridge for at least half an hour.

Fry them over a medium heat until golden brown - two and a half minutes on each side. Take them out of the pan and let them release their fat onto kitchen paper. Serve hot with tomato sauce.

Note: A number of similar recipes leave out the egg, but instead ask you to soak the breadcrumbs in a little milk before adding this to rest of the ingredients. The meatballs are lighter as a result.

STUFFING BALLS FOR SERVING WITH ROAST CHICKEN

This makes a more individual accompaniment than the usual stuffing cooked within the bird.

To make 4 to 6 Stuffing Balls.

200 g Pork Force Meat, or the meat from 4 large quality sausages.

125 g Chicken Livers (about 4 large ones), picked over to remove sinew and very finely chopped.

2 Shallots, very finely chopped.

2 cloves Garlic, very finely chopped.

2 peelings of Lemon rind, very finely chopped.

One tablespoonful Thyme leaves.

125 g Fresh Breadcrumbs.

2 Beaten Eggs.

Oil to cook the Shallots and Garlic.

Salt and pepper.

Sweat the shallots and garlic in the oil, until soft. Scrape out into a bowl, add the pork meat, chicken livers, lemon rind, thyme leaves and breadcrumbs and mix up. Season with salt and pepper. Bind with the beaten egg. Rest for 15 minutes. Spoon out into the troughs of an individual cake baking tray.

Cook in the oven at 220° C for 20-25 minutes. Serve hot.

LEG OF LAMB WITH 60 CLOVES OF GARLIC (Russell Hone's Recipe)

Sixty cloves of garlic may seem outrageous. Yet one's breath is less garlicky after this than if one had had one clove of raw garlic. Nevertheless we recommend that co-habiting couples both partake.

For 8 people, depending on the size of the *gigot* (leg of lamb).

One Leg of Lamb.
60 Cloves of Garlic, peeled but whole.
Duck Fat for cooking.
One glass Cooking Brandy;
Two glasses Sauternes or equivalent sweet wine.
Salt and pepper.

For this you need a sufficiently large Le Creusot dish (or equivalent) with a lid.

Add enough boiling water to cover the lamb and simmer for 15 minutes. Take out, allow to cool and pat dry with kitchen paper. Throw away the cooking water. This eliminates much of the fat of the leg, outside and in. Brown the lamb on all sides in the duck fat. Pour the brandy into a hot ladle, set alight and pour over the lamb. Wait until the fire consumes all the brandy. Pack the cloves of garlic into the casserole dish, under the *gigot* as well as on the sides. Pour over the Sauternes, add salt and pepper. Replace the lid.

Bake in the oven at 150 ° C for 4 hours. Correct the seasoning before serving. The garlic will have formed a mush with the Sauternes and meat juices. The leg itself will be falling off the bone, and chunks rather than elegant thin slices is the only way to serve it.

QUASI-GOULASH OF PORK FILLET

For 6 People.

One large Pork Fillet (Pork Tenderloin), approx 750 g.
Duck Fat for cooking.
4 Shallots, finely sliced.
4 cloves of Garlic, finely sliced.
One Red Pepper, cleaned and sliced.
25 g Flour.
2 glasses Red Wine.
One can Chopped Tomatoes (450 g) or the equivalent of home made Tomato Sauce
50 to 75 cl Good stock.
One teaspoonful Dijon Mustard.
One flat teaspoonful Herbes de Provence.
3 flat teaspoonsful Paprika.
Half a teaspoonful Quatre Epices (Nutmeg, Cloves, Ginger and Cinnamon) or the edge of a spoonful of each separately

Half an hour before the end: Add 250 g Button Mushrooms, halved or quartered, already fried up on a high heat for 3 minutes.

Examine the pork fillet, and cut away all the muscle and sinew and any extra fat. Chop into circular slices, one cm. thick. In a Le Creusot-like dish, with a lid, but on the hob at first, sweat the vegetables for 10 minutes. Scrape out of the pan and set aside. Turn up the heat and add the pork fillet pieces. Don't crowd the pan. You will probably have to do this in two or more stages. After a minute or two on each side the pork pieces will be browned. Take the out and leave them aside for the time being. Add 25 g flour and mix in with the fat. Deglaze the pan with the wine and reduce the volume of liquid by half, scraping the bottom of the dish to dislodge any bits. Re-introduce the vegetables, and the meat and add the tomato juice, the stock, the mustard, the herbs and the spices. Do not drown the meat in the stock; just cover it. Bring up to the boil. Taste and add salt and pepper.

Replace the lid, and cook in the oven for 60 minutes at 180 ° C. Check from time to time that it is not drying out, and give it a stir. After 45 minutes add the mushrooms. The sauce should coat the back of a wooden spoon. Serve hot with buttered noodles.

Paprika can be a bit bitter, though one can now purchase paprika doux. To alleviate this add a little red-currant jelly. But a little of this goes a long way.

PORK FILLET WITH CREAM AND MUSTARD

This is a variation on the above.

Follow the recipe, eliminating the tomato, red pepper, paprika and quatre epices. Use white wine instead of red, and increase the amount of stock to one litre. After the hour's cooking in the oven, add 50 cl single cream into which you have stirred two heaped up tablespoonsful of grain Dijon mustard.

Then just warm the sauce up. Do not boil or the cream will curdle.

LENTIL CASSOULET

Every summer we hold a 'ten year on' tasting in Burgundy. The growers arrive with examples of their wines – the vintage being the one which is ten years old. Clive provides champagne, a couple of sides of smoked salmon and a very big hunk of good English Cheddar. Russell Hone cooks industrial quantities of the following.

For 8 People.

2 Duck Confit.

200 g Salt Belly of Pork, with its rind.

250 g best pure Pork Sausage or Garlic Sausage.

One large can (820 g) Lentils (The best are 'cuisinées à la Auvergnate').

3 smallish Onions, spiked with cloves.

4 Bay Leaves.

Salt and Pepper.

Grill the confit. When ready, discard the bones and any fatty bits. Break up the meat and set the bones aside. Pour the loose fat back into the can for use later. Meanwhile simmer the sausage in water for 30 minutes. Allow to cool and chop up into discs about one cm width. Sweat the belly of pork in a large saucepan so it can release some of its juices. Add the lentil, pork sausage, onions and bay leaf and let it all heat up gently. After about 30 minutes add the confit. Adjust the seasoning. Warm it up again. Serve hot.

The only trouble with this dish is that it looks like a brown sludge. We suggest you liven this up with gently sweated red and green peppers and glazed carrots on the side.

VEGETABLES

Most vegetables should be cooked quickly and simply, for instance:

Peas. Thawed frozen peas can be tastier than fresh. Put into a saucepan. Add salt, pepper and a knob of butter. Pour over just the minimum of boiling water, barely to cover. Boil vigorously so that after 3 minutes the water has evaporated. The peas will be ready, and gently buttery.

Broad Beans, podded and peeled. Cook in the same way;

Carrots. As above, but add a teaspoonful of sugar, and boil from cold water. Needs 10 minutes for the water to evaporate, and the carrots to cook.

Green Beans (Haricots Verts) and Brussels Sprouts. Plunge into boiling water for 9 minutes. Drain well, season and add a knob of butter.

Spinach. Spinach is best thawed from frozen. It tastes just as good, and avoids all the repeated cleaning. Pour out into a bowl to let it thaw. Eventually pour away any moisture which has oozed out. Merely gently warm until it is properly hot and season with salt, pepper, and, especially, nutmeg.

Celeriac. Perhaps at its best as so-called 'Rémoulade' (raw, grated, mixed with mustardy mayonnaise) but delicious also turned into olive shapes and cooked in good stock.

RATATOUILLE

Elizabeth David's recipes called for gentle cooking in olive oil for 40 minutes, 'until the oil has been absorbed'. Too often this results in a mush. It is more preferable to cut the vegetables finer, cook them faster in less oil, so that all except the onions remain *al dente*.

For 6 People.

2 Onions, finely sliced.

3 cloves Garlic, finely sliced.

One Red Pepper, finely chopped.

One Aubergine, unpeeled, cut into fine cubes.

One Courgette, unpeeled, cut into fine cubes.

2 Tomatoes, *concassées*.

Two tablespoonfuls Olive Oil.

Herbes de Provence.

A dash of Balsamic Vinegar, (optional).

Salt and Pepper.

Sweat the onion, garlic and red pepper for ten minutes. Turn up the heat to medium. Add the aubergine and courgette. Cook for 5 minutes. Add the tomatoes and herbs. Cook for 3 minutes or so. Taste to ensure the mixture is *al dente*. Season, adding a dash of balsamic vinegar if you think it needs a bit of bite, and serve hot. It is also delicious cold the next day.

RED CABBAGE

Even half a red cabbage goes a long way. But it can be frozen.

For 6 to 8 People.

8 slices Streaky Bacon, roughly sliced.

Duck fat to cook the bacon.

Half a Red Cabbage, finely sliced.

Salt, Pepper, Nutmeg.

Herbes de Provence or a Bouquet Garni.

One tablespoonful Brown, or, preferably, Demerara Sugar.

4 Cloves and 2 Bayleaves.

Two peelings of Orange Rind, very finely chopped.

Dash Balsamic Vinegar.

25 cl Good Stock.

One glass Cooking Brandy.

To add later: 2 fresh, ripe crispy Apples (Cox's Orange Pippin, Reinettes, not a month old Granny Smith, let alone a wooly Golden Delicious), peeled, cored and sliced.

Brown the bacon. Pour this and the duck fat into a Le Creusot type pan (one with a lid). Cover with the cabbage (don't stir it up) and add all the rest of the ingredients except for the apple. Bring to the boil on the hob. Cover with a round of kitchen paper or foil and bake in the oven at 165° C for an hour and a half. Check from time to time that the liquid has not evaporated, but do not stir up. All this can be done the previous day. Half an hour before service add the apples and stir it up. Taste for seasoning. If too watery pour off a little liquid, don't boil it up. Do not cook it for too long after this or the apples will disintegrate. Serve hot.

SWEET AND SOUR RED CABBAGE

Emma's take on the above. For 4 People.

Half a Red Cabbage, finely shredded.
55 g Butter.
2 tablespoonsful Balsamic Vinegar.
40 g Brown Sugar.
One glass Red Wine.
2 Bay Leaves.

Melt the butter in a pan (with a lid), add the cabbage, and let it sweat gently, stirring occasionally, for 5-7 minutes. Add the sugar and balsamic vinegar and cook to let the latter evaporate. Add the red wine and bay leaves. Put a lid on the pan, turn the heat down and braise for 15-20 minutes, stirring from time to time. The cabbage should not be too soft.

SEA SPICE AUBERGINE

(As served at the North China Restaurant, Acton, London)

For 6 People.

One large Aubergine.
Olive Oil to cook.
5 cloves Garlic.
3 slices Fresh Root Ginger, peeled and finely chopped.
1 Red Chilli, seeds removed (if you prefer it mild) or not (to give you more spice), finely sliced.
One teaspoonful crushed Star Anise.
3 tablespoonsful Good Stock.
One tablespoonful Yellow Bean Sauce.
One tablespoonful Dry Sherry or Rice Wine.
One teaspoonful Soy Sauce.

To thicken, if necessary: One teaspoonful Cornflour, mixed into a little water.
Optional extra: a teaspoonful of sugar.

Roast the whole aubergine, whole, in the oven at 200° C for 30 minutes. Allow to cool slightly. Cut up into bite sized pieces, including the skin. Remember that it will still be cooked further, so it should not be too soft. Put aside. Stir-fry the garlic, ginger, chilli and star anise for one minute. Stir in the stock, yellow bean sauce, sherry/rice wine and soy sauce. Bring to the boil. Add the aubergine, turn down the heat and simmer for 5 minutes. Thicken with cornflour if necessary. Serve hot.

BRAISED CHICORY

For 4 People.

Two small Chicory per head (approx. one kilo in total).

30 g Butter.

15 cl Good Stock.

15 cl Single Cream.

Salt, Pepper, Lemon Juice.

Grated Nutmeg.

Chopped Parsley.

Cook the chicory in boiling water for 5 minutes. Drain, cool and squeeze to remove excess water. Melt the butter in a oven proof shallow dish and cook the chicory very gently, turning over from time to time, until the chicory is tender. This will take about 10 minutes. Take out the chicory and keep warm. Add the stock and reduce it by half. Allow to cool. Add the cream, salt, pepper and a squeeze of lemon juice. Re-introduce the the chicory and shake the pan around so that the chicory is covered. Grate nutmeg over the top. You can cook this dish up to here and then leave it warm in the oven (heat off, door open) for 10 minutes while you have your first course; but it's best fresh. Sprinkle with chopped parsley before serving.

GRATIN AUX TOPINAMBOURS (Jerusalem Artichoke Gratin) (Raymond Blanc's Recipe)

For 4 People.

700 g Jerusalem Artichokes.

One knob Butter.

25 cl Thick Cream.

Salt and Pepper;

Lemon Juice, to prevent the Artichokes from discolouring.

Wash and peel the Jerusalem Artichokes, removing the knobbly bits. Slice thinly (5 mm) and store under acidulated water (cold water with a squeeze of lemon juice). When ready pat dry with kitchen paper and season with salt and pepper. Llghty butter a gratin dish, season it as well. Layer the slices of artichoke in the dish so that they overlap. Pour over the double cream. Bake at 200° C for 15 minutes and then turn the oven down to 180° C for a further 25 minutes. Serve hot.

CELERIAC AND POTATO GRATIN

For 4 to 6 people

This is a less common version of the above.

Use about half potatoes, half celeriac, which you peel and slice in the same way. Add plenty of lemon juice to the water to avoid the celeriac from discolouring. Cook for 20 -30 minutes at 180°C

ROAST TOMATO LENTILS

Serves 4 as a supper dish on its own, or 6 to 8 as a side dish with a main course.

For the tomatoes

400 g Cherry Tomatoes
One and a half tablespoonsful Olive Oil
Half a tablespoonful Balsamic Vinegar
1 and a half tablespoonsful Sugar
Salt and Pepper

For the Lentils

One can 225 – 250 g Lentils 'cusinées à l'Auvergnate'
Half a small Onion, finely chopped
Small piece of Celery, finely chopped
One large clove of Garlic
One glass dry White Wine
2 tablespoonsful finely chopped Flat-Leaf Parsley.
Salt and Pepper
One tablespoonful Sauce Vinaigrette (Optional)

Oil for cooking

Halve the tomatoes, arrange them in a baking dish and dredge with the oil and vinegar, sugar and seasonings. Place in a pre-heated oven at 180° for 20 - 30 minutes until well shrunk but still whole. Meanwhile gently sauté the onions, garlic and celery until soft but not coloured. Add the wine and reduce this liquid by half. Add the lentils, juice as well, and gently warm up. Add the parsley and season well. Gently stir in the roast tomatoes. Taste. Add a bit of vinaigrette sauce if you deem this necessary.

PEKIN CELERY
(A Jane Grigson Suggestion)

Trim the celery. Cut the sticks into three centimetre pieces. Add to hot oil in a frying pan, and stir for four minutes. Pour out almost all the oil (leave a dessertspoonful). Turn down the heat to medium. Add a good dash of Soy sauce and a generous grind of black pepper. Stir until the sauce is absorbed. (About five minutes, but taste to check whether the cooking is to your liking). Serve.

LULU'S SHORT-CUT DAHL
(Lulu Banu hepled set up the state of Bangla Desh. Her daughter passed this on to Paul)

For 4 People as a side dish with one of Paul's curries.

100 g Red Lentils.
One small Onion, finely chopped.
One dessertspoonful Sunflower or light Olive Oil.
2 cloves of Garlic, sliced.
One teaspoonful grated Ginger.
One teaspoonful Tumeric powder.
One or 2 teaspoonsful Chilli powder, depending on how hot you want it.
One small Tomato, chopped (optional).
One handful fresh Coriander leaves, chopped.
Salt.

Wash the lentils until the water runs clear. Pour into a saucepan, cover with water and bring to the boil. Skim off the foam which will rise to the surface. Add tumeric, chilli, garlic, tomatoes and half the onions. Bring to the boil and simmer until the lentils are cooked. If it's a bit bulky add more water, but if you do, simmer for a further 10 minutes. Add the rest of the chopped onions and cook for a further 10-12 minutes. Check salt. Add the coriander leaves. Remove from the heat and serve.

GRATIN DAUPHINOIS

For 4 to 6 People.

500 g Waxy Potatoes.

Butter for the gratin dish and also for putting on the top of the potatoes.

2 or 3 cloves Garlic, crushed.

Salt, Pepper and Nutmeg.

25 cl Single Cream.

You can use Two Beaten Eggs and 15-20 cl Scalded Milk instead of the cream.

Peel and slice the potatoes very thin using a food processor and put them in a bowl under cold water. Meanwhile butter and season the gratin dish and sprinkle it with the garlic. Dry the potatoes thoroughly, put them in a clean bowl and add more salt, pepper and grated nutmeg. Thoroughly blend in the cream or the eggs and milk mixture. Pour into the gratin dish. Add small knobs of butter all over the surface.

Bake at 220° C for 40 minutes and until brown.

Some recipes suggest baking at a lower temperature for longer, (50 minutes at 200° C, for instance) but the above works best, in our experience.

There are variations on this dish, though not considered 'classic'. You can use cheese sauce instead of cream or eggs and milk. This works very well if you are only cooking for two people. In which case try blanching the slices of potato in boiling water for 3 minutes, and refreshing properly in cold water, beforehand. The potatoes will then cook faster, which suits the smaller baking dish.

GRATIN SAVOYARD

Instead of milk and eggs or cream substitute good stock (30 g) and 125 g grated Cheese (Emmenthal, Gruyère or Parmesan);

CLIVE's NOT DAUPHINOISE

Even more simple is to cook the above without the cheese. But add plenty of nutmeg.

GRATIN PROVENCALE

For 4 to 6 People.

500 g waxy Potatoes.
3 large Onions.
300 g Tomatoes Concassées.
Olive Oil.
6 drained Anchovies. (If you don't like anchovies you can leave this out).
2 cloves crushed Garlic.
Basil, Thyme, Salt, Pepper.
30 g grated Cheese.(Emmenthal, Gruyère or Parmesan).

Sweat the onions gently until soft. Scrape into a bowl. Add the tomatoes, blend together, season with salt and pepper and leave aside. In another bowl mash the anchovies into a paste with the garlic, herbs and seasoning. Slice the potatoes in a food processor. Dry the potatoes using a clean kitchen cloth.

Spread layers of onion/tomato mixture, potatoes, and anchovy mixture, in that order, in the baking dish, finishing up with the onion/tomato mixture. Sprinkle the cheese over the top. Drizzle a little more olive oil over the dish and bake at 210° C for 40 minutes. Look at it after 25 minutes or so. If it seems to be getting too brown cover with a sheet of foil.

MESHWEYA – TUNISIAN ROAST SALAD (Based on Claudia Roden)

Emma's compensation for never having been (yet!) to North Africa or the Middle East.
For 4 People.

3 Onions, cut into wedges.
3 Green and Red Peppers, cut into large slices.
3 large Tomatoes.
200 g can of Tuna, in brine.
2 hard-boiled eggs, quartered.
50 g Anchovies in oil.
4-5 tablespoonsful Olive Oil.
Juice of one Lemon.
Half a teaspoonful caraway, fennel or cumin seeds, *à choix*.
Salt and Pepper.

Firstly you need to heat your oven to maximum. Bake the onions on a baking sheet for 20 minutes. Add the peppers. After another 15 minutes add the tomatoes. After another 15 minutes take the baking dish out and allow to cool. Plate up. Mix up the oil, lemon juice and seasonings and drizzle over. Can be served warmish or colder.

PEPERONI MANDORLATI

Pan-roasted Peppers with Almonds, an Antonio Carluccio Recipe

For 4 People.

6 yellow and/or Red Peppers.
6 tablespoonsful Olive Oil.
2 cloves Garlic, crushed.
One tablespoonful Brown Sugar.
2 tablespoonsful Raisins.
2 tablespoonsful roasted flaked Almonds.
3 tablespoonsful White Wine Vinegar.
Salt and Pepper.

Core and de-seed the peppers and cut into strips. Heat the oil in a large pan and fry the peppers gently until they begin to caramelise – about 20-25 minutes. Add the garlic, sugar, raisins and almonds and stir-fry together for another few minutes. Add the vinegar and continue to cook until the vinegar has evaporated. Serve hot or cold.

PICKLED VEGETABLES

A great summer dish for poached salmon, says Emma.

For 4 People.

A handful – 125 g each – of Carrots, Asparagus, Red Onion and Cucumber.
2 heaped tablespoonsful chopped Dill.
6 Peppercorns.
3 Juniper berries, crushed.
2 teaspoonsful Brown Caster Sugar.
15 cl light Rice Vinegar, (White Wine Vinegar can be substituted).

Finely slice the onions. Put them in a bowl and let them soak in boiling water to soften slightly. Cut the carrots and cucumber into matchsticks. Trim the asparagus and cut into 3 cm lengths. Blanch the carrots and asparagus for 2 minutes. Drain and refresh. Put all the vegetables in a bowl with the dill juniper and peppercorns and mix up. Add the sugar and vinegar and toss again. Leave for at least two hours. Pour off the excess vinegar before serving.

DESSERTS

CREME BRULEE

For 4 People.

60 cl Double Cream.

6 Egg Yolks (save the whites for meringues).

Caster Sugar.

Whisk up the egg yolks in a large metal bowl. Bring the cream to the boil and simmer for half a minute.

Pour over the eggs and whisk vigorously. Pour into a double boiler and continue to beat it up until the sauce begins to thicken and coats the back of a wooden spoon. Pour into ramekin dishes (you will get about 4 and a half's worth) and put into the fridge overnight to set.

The next day, turn the grill on to maximum (or have a small blow-torch handy). Sprinkle one teaspoonful of caster sugar over each of the tops of the pots, shaking to get an even surface. Put the pots on a baking tray and place under the (very hot) grill, as near to the red-hot top as possible. The sugar should caramelize fast to a brittle sheet, but not burn. As soon as you reach this point, remove the tray, take off the pots and allow to cool. When cold enough return to the fridge. Eat them that evening. They don't keep.

PANNACOTTA

For 4 people.

60 cl Double Cream.

Caster Sugar.

Gelatine (follow the instructions on the packet).

Pannacotta is dead easy and delicious.

Warm the cream gently. Add the sugar and softened gelatine (soak for ten minutes in tepid water first). Stir until the sugar and gelatine are fully incorporated into the cream, and the mixture has begun to thicken. This will take about 5 minutes. Pour the mixture into individual serving bowls. Allow to cool and set in a cold larder or in the fridge.

Top the pannacotta with soft berries and their coulis. And more whipped cream if you are feeling really greedy and indulgent.

Unlike Creme Brulée Pannacotta can be made a couple of days in advance.

MERINGUE, SWEET CHESTNUT PUREE AND WHIPPED CREAM

For 6 or 8. It is very rich and filling.

6 Egg Whites.

A pinch of Cream of Tartar.

A pinch of Salt.

340 g Caster Sugar.

One teaspoonful Vanilla Essence.

Whisk up the egg whites and the cream of tartar and salt in the food processor to the 'soft peak' stage.

Add vanilla essence and the sugar a spoonful at a time continuing to whisk until all has been incorporated and the mixture gets to 'stiff peak'. Pour out onto kitchen paper which is itself lying on top of a baking tray, and smooth out into a circle about 15 mm high using a spatula dipped in hot water. Cook for 40 minutes 120° C (very low).

For the topping: A 225 g can of sweet chestnut purée and 40 to 50 cl whipped double cream.

Allow the meringue to cool. Spread the sweet chestnut purée liberally over the meringue and the whipped cream liberally on top of that. Keep in a cool place until required

MERINGUE, CREME ANGLAISE AND WHIPPED CREAM

For 6 to 8 People.

This is a variation on the above.

Crème Anglaise. (The following will produce about 40 cl).

The usual recipe goes as follows: Beat 125 g Sugar in with 6 Egg Yolks until smooth. Gradually blend in 75 cl scalded (not boiling) milk. Return the mixture to the pan, or use a double boiler. Gradually warm it up (it should never boil) until it thickens and coats the back of a wooden spoon. Strain the custard through a fine sieve, adding, where required, a teaspoonful of vanilla essence, almond essence, kirsch, orange liqueur, coffee etc., etc.

For the above recipe, where you want a thick custard, you can either reduce the milk to 50 cl, or you can add 50 g flour. This then becomes Crème Pâtissière. (But make sure the flour is cooked enough or the custard gets very stodgy). Grill up 50g of flaked almonds and sprinkle these over the custard before spreading on the whipped cream.

CUSTARD TART

For 6 people.

230 g Pâte Sablée (Sand Pastry).

450 g Cream.

Mace, Cinnamon stick.

2 Eggs and 2 Egg Yolks.

30 g Sugar.

2 teaspoonsful orange-flower water or rose water (optional).

Nutmeg.

Half bake the pastry blind. Leave it to cool. Bring the cream, plus the mace and cinnamon stick, to the boil. Stir in the beaten eggs and sugar, and whisk everything thoroughly together. Taste and add the orange or rose water if used. Pour into the pastry case, sprinkle grated nutmeg over the top and bake at 160° C for 30 minutes until the custard is just set. It will firm up further as it cools. Do not overcook or it will get 'eggy'.

TARTE NORMANDE

For 6 People.

230 g Pâte Feuilleté (Puff Pastry).

8 best quality crisp juicy Apples.

Juice of half a Lemon.

50 g melted Butter.

2-3 tablespoonsful Sugar.

Unroll the pastry onto a lightly buttered baking tray, prick the surface and place in the fridge for 30 minutes. Meanwhile peel, core and thinly slice the apples, putting the slices in a bowl with the lemon juice. Take the pastry on its tray out of the fridge and layer the apple slices attractively over it in concentric rings, leaving a gap of about one cm at the edge. Coat the apples with the melted butter and replace the tray in the fridge. Heat the oven to 220° C. Dredge the apples with the sugar and bake for 20 minutes. Serve with whipped cream or good vanilla ice-cream.

TARTE TATIN

For 6 People.

8 best quality crisp juicy Apples.
Juice of half a Lemon.
125 g Sugar.
One or 2 teaspoonsful ground Cinnamon.
125 g Butter, most of it melted.
100 g Pâte Sablée (Sand Pastry).

Peel, core and slice the apples (not too fine), mixing them in a bowl with the lemon juice, the sugar and the cinnamon. Butter a small transparent pyrex casserole dish (8 cm high, 18 cm in diameter), especially on the base. Place in layers of sugar, apples and melted butter, starting and finishing with the sugar. Roll out the pastry to form a circle a few centimetres larger than the top of the dish. Place this on top and tuck the surplus into the inside. Prick the surface to allow the steam to escape. Bake at 190° C for 45-60 minutes, until the juice of the mixture inside has turned to a deep brown. (If the pastry looks like browning too rapidly cover it with a disc of foil. Unmould the tarte onto a fireproof dish (pastry underneath). If the colour of the apples still looks a bit anaemic, sprinkle them generously with icing sugar and place under a hot grill to caramelize somewhat. Eat warm, with whipped cream or good vanilla ice-cream.

PECAN PIE (Becky Wasserman's Recipe)

For 6 to 8 People.

230 g Pâte Sablée (Sand Pastry).
25 g Butter.
125 g Demerara Sugar.
150 g Golden Syrup (One Teacup).
3 Beaten Eggs.
One teaspoonful Vanilla Essence.
150 g shelled Pecan Nuts, crisped up in the oven for 5 to 10 minutes.

Line a quiche pan with the sand pastry, prick the base to let out the steam and half pre-bake (10 minutes at 200° C). Allow to cool. Meanwhile cream the butter with the sugar, and add the syrup, eggs and vanilla essence. Mix thoroughly. Add the pecans. Pour into the crust and bake at 180° C until firm (40 to 50 minutes).

Instead of Pecans you can, of course, use Walnuts (but it is not as good).

NB It is very important that you have no gaps or holes in your pastry base. Otherwise you will find it the very devil to unmould the tarte from the quiche pan.

CRISPY ALMOND TART

Pate Sablée, fully baked blind (20 minutes at 180°C)
200g crisped-up Flaked Almonds
Half a litre Crème Patissière

125g melted Demarara Sugar
Two heaped-up serving-spoonsful Crème Fraiche Epaisse or 3 serving-spoonsful double cream
One teaspoonful Vanilla Essence
One dessert-spoonful Cointreau or Lemon Juice

Roll out and bake the Pate Sablée in a quiche tin. Bake blind for 20 minutes at 180° C.

Brown the flaked almonds in the oven, stirring up occasionally so that all browns equally. Pour into a mixing bowl and allow to cool.

Make the Crème Patissière: Beat 3 egg yolks into 100 g castor sugar until you get to the ribbon stage. Add one heaped dessert spoonful sifted flour. Pour in half the half litre boiling milk. Mix up well and return to the pan with the rest of the milk. Heat up gently (it doesn't matter if it boils) until really quite thick. Add the vanilla essence and allow to cool

All this can be done in advance.

Pour the sugar into a pan and warm up, stirring out the lumpy bits until you have a smooth liquid; Meanwhile mix in the Crème Patissière, the cream and the Cointreau/lemon juice into the flaked almonds. Pour over the melted sugar, stirring vigorously so the ingredients do not stick to the sides. Pour into the pastry base. Smooth over the top and allow to cool. Serve cold.

As with the Pecan Pie, this Crispy Almond Tart will retain its crunch for four or so days.

CHOCOLATE MOUSSE

For 6 to 8 People.

4 Egg Yolks.
125 g Caster Sugar.
One desertspoonful Cointreau, or another orange-based liqueur.
200 g high quality Plain Chocolate, chopped up.
One demi-tasse strong Black Coffee.
180 g softened Butter.
2 peelings Orange Rind, very finely chopped.
4 Egg Whites.
Pinch of Salt.
One tablespoonful Caster Sugar.

In a double boiler, but away from the base pan and the water, beat the eggs and sugar to a ribbon (or do this in a food processor and then pour into the double boiler). Add the Cointreau. Place the pan over the simmering water and continue beating for 3 to 4 minutes. Take off the heat and continue beating until cool, and back to the ribbon stage. Leave aside. Melt the chocolate with the coffee over the hot water. Remove from the heat and gradually beat in the butter. When you have a smooth cream blend into the egg yolks and sugar. Add the orange zest. Beat up the egg white to soft peak. Add the sugar and beat up to stiff peak. Fold this in to the chocolate mixture. Pour into individual ramekin dishes and put them in the fridge to firm up. All this can be done the day before.

MR. FROST'S CHOCOLATE CAKE (Based on the Recipe by Jane Grigson)

For 6 to 8 People.

In fact this is not, strictly speaking, a cake. It does not require cooking.

125 g Very Good Quality Cooking Chocolate.
125 g Butter.
125 g Digestive Biscuits.
175 g Mixed Nuts, crisped up (in the oven). Almonds and Hazelnuts are best (but the latter you have to skin. This can be done by rubbing them with kitchen paper).

Coarsly chop the biscuits, but keep all the crumbs. Chop the nuts too. Melt the butter. Break up the chocolate and melt this in to the butter. (Don't cook it too much). Mix in the nuts, biscuit pieces and crumbs. Put into a shallow pan, smoothing the surface. Chill in the fridge. Serve by cutting into slices and with whipped cream.

CHOCOLATE TART (Simon Hopkinson's Recipe)

For 6 to 8 People.

230 g Pâte Sablée (Sand Pastry).
3 Egg Yolks.
2 Whole Eggs.
40 g Caster Sugar.
150 g Butter.
200 g Best Quality Dark Cooking Chocolate.

Fully bake blind the sand pastry in a quiche platter. (20 minutes at 180° C). Let it cool. Blend the eggs and sugar in a food processor. Gently melt the butter and chocolate in a double boiler and add to the eggs and sugar mixture while this is still warm. Blend it all together. Pour into the cooked pastry crust. Bake for 5 minutes at 190° C. Leave to cool. Serve with whipped cream.

TREACLE TART WITH CRYSTALIZED GINGER

For 6 to 8 People.

230 Pâte Sablée (Sand Pastry).
100 g Fresh, but toasted Breadcrumbs.
150 g (One Cupfull) Golden Syrup.
4 to 6 cubes Crystalized Ginger, finely chopped.
2 Beaten Eggs.

Half bake blind the sand pastry in a quiche platter (10 minutes at 180° C). Let it cool. Assemble the syrup, breadcrumbs, crystalized ginger and beaten eggs in a bowl and pour this into the pastry shell. Bake for 25-30 minutes in the oven at 180° C. Serve with whipped cream.

RASPBERRIES AND REDCURRANTS

Simple and delicious. Add a generous slurp of Cointreau to make it even more delicious. And serve with whipped cream, of course.

WHITE PEACHES IN RED WINE

Allow one peach per head.

To be prepared the day of consumption. The wine should be youthful and unoaked.

Skin the peaches by placing them in a boil of boiling water for a couple of minutes, as you do for tomatoes. Halve them and place them in the serving dish. Take about 25 cl of the wine, warm it up and dissolve a couple of tablespoonsful of caster sugar in it. Pour over the peaches. Pour over the rest of the wine after that. Taste that the sweetness is correct. Store in the fridge until required. Serve with whipped cream.

GOOSEBERRY FOOL

For 6 to 8 People.

Technically, this is not a fool but a bavarois, because it has gelatin in it.

Stew 500g gooseberries in a pan with 125 g caster sugar until quite soft. Sieve them into a bowl. Melt a sheet of gelatine in warm water and add this to the gooseberry purée. Whip up 25 cl double cream and fold it into the purée. Taste and add a bit more sugar if necessary. Allow to set in the fridge.

Other bavarian creams (for instance raspberries, strawberries, etc.) are made in the same way, but most soft fruit does not need cooking first.

LEMON BAVAROIS

4 Lemons.

4 Sugar lumps.

15 g Gelatine (or follow the instructions on the packet).

6 Egg Yolks.

160 g Sugar.

2 teaspoonsful Cornflower.

50 cl Boiling Milk.

6 Egg Whites.

Pinch of Salt.

25 cl chilled Thick Cream.

2 tablespoonsful Cointreau.

Rub the sugar lumps against the lemons to impregnate them with the oil. Peel the lemons and chop up this peel very finely. Squeeze out the lemon juice. Put all this into a bowl and add the gelatine to soften. Make a *crème anglaise* with the egg yolks, sugar and milk, adding the cornflower at the end. Gently stir over a low heat until the custard thickens. Remove from the heat and add the lemon juice, gelatine mixture and stir until the latter is properly dissolved. Allow to chill. Whip up the egg whites to a peak and fold in. Do the same for the cream. Pour into a mould, for eventual demoulding, if you wish, or just leave it overnight in the bowl you intend to serve it in.

SYLLABUB
(Based on Jane Grigson's Recipe)

For 4 to 6 People.

One wine glass Dry White Wine.

2 tablespoonful Cooking Brandy.

Juice and finely chopped up zest of one Lemon.

60 g Caster Sugar.

30 cl Double Cream.

Nutmeg.

Amalgamate the first three ingredients. Stir in the sugar until it has dissolved. Put the bowl in the fridge for half an hour. Take out when cold and start beating in the cream. Don't beat too vigorously or go on too long or the syllbub will curdle. Finally add the grated nutmeg. Spoon into wine glasses. Store in a cool space until required, but it is best on the same day.

CHUTNEYS

GREEN TOMATO CHUTNEY

A Suggestion from Becky Wassermann

One and a half kilos Green Tomatoes.
500 g Cooking Apples.
500 g Onions.
250 g Sultanas.
250 g Demerara Sugar.
One teaspoonful Salt.
50 cl Maly Vinegar.
One small piece of Root Ginger.

Thinly slice the tomatoes. Peel, core and chop up the apples. Peel and thinly slice the onions. Put all three plus all the other ingredients in a large pan (with a lid), bring to the boil and simmer gently until the sugar has dissolved. Continue to simmer for about another hour until the chutney is thick and well blended. Remove the root ginger. Pour into hot jars, cover and seal.

Other variations – and there must be as many recipes for chutney as there are different French cheeses – leave out the apples, add raisins as well as sultanas, use allspice or cinnamon, and even red wine vinegar instead of malt.

WINE AND FOOD PAIRINGS

Clive writes: While I have great respect for the knowledge shown by the top sommeliers (MS, Master Sommelier, is an equivalent qualification to MW, Master of Wine), I think sometimes what you read in print can be too specific and therefore misleading.

It is different if you go to a restaurant. In that situation the competent wine waiter will know the dishes that are on offer and he or she (forgive me, I am not going to repeat the he/she bit endlessly; it's too boring) will know the wine list too. He will have discovered, both personally and indirectly through the feedback he will have received, which combinations are a success and which are not.

But just because this particular vintage and supplier works with a dish does not mean that another vintage from a neighbour (however well respected) will marry with the same facility. And especially with ostensibly the same dish cooked by someone else.

So in the home situation there should be guide-lines, not fixed rules.

Yes, of course, white wine with fish; red wine with red meats; either for chicken and things which lie in between.

Yes, as well, to the pairing of robust wines with robust foods, and the concept that with a very rich dish you need a wine with a crisp acidity as well as body to cut into the richness.

While semi-sweet wines are hard to match, smoked fish and ham and bacon dishes marry well with either rich dryish Alsace Gewurztraminer and Riesling (as does Chinese food) or German kabinett and spatlesen. A bit of bottle age in the wines improves the marriage no end.

These semi-sweet wines, especially German Rieslings, and also spicy wines such as Gewurztraminer, Grüner Veltliner, Pinot Gris, and even demi-sec Vouvray, are delicious – and perhaps at their best – as aperitif wines.

And yes to the pairing of wine and food from the same country or region. They have evolved alongside each other.

But that's about it. Many are very happy to have a light red wine with salmon. Or vintage champagne throughout the meal, even with red meat.

Food-friendly wines always have good acidities. Bland wines, especially very oaky ones, do not go with food.

If you have a grand wine, serve a lesser wine of the same ilk alongside it, to set it off. Drink the junior bottle with the main course and let the grand wine be enjoyed on its own.

Wines are better carafed than straight out of the bottle. All wines benefit from a bit of aeration. Moreover it gives you the chance to separate the wine from its sediment, as well as to show off your decanters. White wines also benefit by decanting (though it does look a bit like a doctor's sample – someone should produce a dark green glass decanter especially for white wines).

And a few other observations:

It is the custom in France to serve a sweet wine with foie gras. I consider this a mistake. Not necessarily because the two don't go together but because a palate saturated with sweet wine will be unable to cope with any subsequent red wines. Unless you rinse the mouth out with a least two glasses of champagne, of course.

Dry white wines, especially those with a bit of bottle age, work much better with smelly French cheeses than do red wines.

Some foods are just simply wine-unfriendly: salads with vinaigrette, chocolate, even very strong blue cheeses such as Roquefort.

Everyone says sweet wines with desserts – and blue cheese. I'm unconvinced. I'd rather have nothing, particularly if I have any red wine left (or if there is any left in the decanter).