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The French Kitchen

Written by Michel Roux Jr.

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the
French
Kitchen



200 RECIPES FROM THE
MASTER OF FRENCH COOKING



*the
French
Kitchen*

**MICHEL
ROUX JNR**

RECIPES FROM THE
MASTER OF FRENCH COOKING

WEIDENFELD & NICOLSON

Croque monsieur

TOASTED HAM AND CHEESE SANDWICH

Properly made with béchamel sauce, this classic French hot sandwich is a delight but it is all too easy to find disappointing versions. Try preparing your own to enjoy the croque in its full glory.

Lightly toast the bread on both sides, then butter one side of each slice.

To make the béchamel sauce, melt the remaining butter in a small pan, stir in the flour to make a roux, then whisk in the milk. Keep whisking it well to avoid lumps and bring the sauce to the boil. Season with salt, pepper and nutmeg and cook for 3–4 minutes, then remove from the heat.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/Fan 180°C/Gas 6. Spread a little mustard on the buttered side of a piece of toast. Add a generous amount of béchamel, followed by grated cheese and a slice of ham. Spread some more béchamel on the dry side of another piece of toast and place on top of the ham, pressing a little to stick it down. Spread a little more béchamel on top of the sandwich and sprinkle with grated cheese. Make all the sandwiches in the same way.

Put the sandwiches on a baking tray and bake them in the preheated oven for 6–8 minutes until crisp and golden. Serve at once.

SERVES 4

8 slices of good sourdough
bread
2 tbsp unsalted butter
1 tbsp plain flour
400ml milk
freshly grated nutmeg
Dijon mustard
280g grated cheese
(a mixture of Emmental,
Gruyère and Cheddar is
good)
160g good-quality, sliced
ham
salt
black pepper



Boeuf Bourguignon

BRAISED BEEF IN BURGUNDIAN WINE

Some recipes suggest marinating the beef for 24 hours or more, but I find this makes for a gamey flavour that's not entirely true to the original. Like all braised dishes, this is best eaten a day or two after it's made – simmer gently to reheat and add the garnish just before serving so that it's bright and fresh. Boiled potatoes are the classic accompaniment but mash is more to my taste.

Pour the wine into a saucepan and boil until reduced by half. Trim the beef and cut it into 3cm cubes, then dust with flour. Heat a frying pan until very hot, add a dash of oil and brown the beef well on all sides. Do this in batches so you don't overcrowd the pan. Preheat the oven to 160°C/Fan 140°C/Gas 3.

Once all the beef has been browned and set aside, discard the oil and add a tablespoon of clean oil, the sliced onion and crushed garlic. Cook until the onion is brown and caramelised, then put the meat back in the pan. Add the brandy, followed by the reduced wine, and simmer for 2–3 minutes.

Pour everything into a cast-iron casserole dish, then season and add the bouquet garni and stock. Bring to a simmer, skim well to remove any surface scum and cover loosely with a lid or greaseproof paper. Place in the oven and cook until the meat is tender – this should take 1½–2 hours, depending on the cut. Leave to cool, then take the meat out of the dish and set aside. Skim to remove any fat, then pass the liquid through a sieve into a pan. Boil until it thickens to a sauce, then add the meat. Cover and chill until needed.

To prepare the garnish, melt a tablespoon of butter in a saucepan and add the onions, seasoning, 2 tablespoons of the sauce from the beef and 4 tablespoons of water. Braise the onions until they are shiny and cooked through. Put the carrots in a pan with just enough water to cover and most of the rest of the butter. Season and bring to a gentle boil, then cook until almost all the liquid has evaporated and the carrots are tender and shiny with butter. Brown the strips of bacon in a frying pan. Sweat the mushrooms in a little butter until cooked but still firm and add seasoning and lemon juice.

To serve, gently reheat the boeuf bourguignon on the hob while you prepare the garnish. Add a couple of knobs of cold butter to enrich and shine the sauce, then garnish with the onions, carrots, bacon and mushrooms. Take the dish to the table for everyone to admire, then serve in wide bowls.

SERVES 4

1 bottle of red Burgundy wine
700g braising beef (chuck is good but cheek is best)
plain flour, for dusting
vegetable oil
1 onion, peeled and sliced
2 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed
60ml brandy
1 bouquet garni, made up of thyme, bay leaf and parsley stalks (see page 342)
400ml beef or veal stock (see pages 322–323)
2 tbsp cold unsalted butter
salt
black pepper

GARNISH

3 tbsp unsalted butter
12 brown-skinned cocktail or button onions (or small shallots), peeled
12 young carrots, peeled
120g smoked streaky bacon rashers or ventrèche, cut into thin strips
12 button mushrooms, wiped
juice of ½ lemon



Tarte aux poires Bourdaloue

PEAR AND ALMOND TART

Probably my favourite fruit tart, this is simply irresistible – especially when served warm. The name may come from a street in Paris, rue Bourdaloue where there was a famous pâtisserie, and the street in turn was named after Louis Bourdaloue, a 17th-century French Jesuit. Whatever the origins of its title, this confection of poached pears, almond cream and crisp pastry is an absolute delight.

Peel the pears, cut them in half and remove the cores. Pour about 300ml of water into a large pan and add the vanilla pod, cinnamon stick and sugar. Bring to the boil, then add the pears and simmer them for 20 minutes. Leave to cool. You can do all this the day before making the tart if you like.

To make the pastry, cut the butter into small pieces and leave it to soften at room temperature. Sift the flour and salt, place them on the work surface and make a well in the centre. Add the butter and sugar and gently work together with your fingertips. Add the egg yolk and gradually draw in the flour, adding drops of water as you go. When all the flour has been incorporated, shape the dough into a ball, but do not overwork it. Wrap the pastry in cling film and refrigerate for at least 2 hours before using.

For the almond cream, whisk the butter and sugar until pale, then add the ground almonds. Whisk in the eggs, one at a time, and finally the rum.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/Fan 180°C/Gas 6. Roll out the pastry on a floured surface to a thickness of about 3mm and use it to line a greased 28cm flan tin. Prick the pastry base with a fork, line it with greaseproof paper and fill with baking beans, then bake blind for 20 minutes. Remove the paper and beans and put the pastry back into the oven for another 5 minutes or until the base has cooked but not taken on too much colour. Leave the oven on.

Spoon the almond cream into the tart base, then arrange the sliced, drained pears on top, with the pointed ends towards the centre. Bake in the preheated oven for 40 minutes.

When the tart is cooked, warm some apricot jam with a little water and brush it over the surface. Sprinkle the tart with toasted sliced almonds and serve warm.

SERVES 8

POACHED PEARS

4 pears (Williams are good)
about 300ml water
1 vanilla pod, split
1 cinnamon stick
250g caster sugar

SWEET PASTRY

80g unsalted butter
130g plain flour, plus extra
for dusting
pinch of salt
30g sugar
1 free-range egg yolk
1 tbsp water

ALMOND CREAM

125g softened unsalted butter
125g caster sugar
125g ground almonds
3 medium free-range eggs
2 tbsp rum

TO FINISH

apricot jam warmed with a
little water
1 tbsp sliced almonds



To Gisele and Emily – food tastes better when I am with you

Thank you all

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