

RED MULLET WITH TAPENADE & FENNEL SALAD

Filets de rouget poêlé à la tapenade, salade de fenouil

FROM THE PROVENCE REGION | BY PHILIPPE MOUCHEL

Red mullet is a really tasty fish and greatly loved by gourmets. It goes well with strongly flavoured ingredients such as olives, anchovies and fennel. I love it.

80 g (2¾ oz) black olives,
pitted

1 teaspoon capers,
rinsed

3 anchovy fillets

60 ml (2 fl oz/¼ cup)
olive oil

1 garlic clove, finely
chopped

3 basil leaves, finely
chopped, plus 3 whole
leaves

juice of 1 lemon

1 bulb baby fennel,
trimmed and thinly
sliced

¼ medium red (Spanish)
onion, thinly sliced

4 cherry tomatoes,
quartered

2 sprigs fennel leaves,
chopped (or use dill)

salt

freshly ground black
pepper

6 red mullet fillets

To make the tapenade, combine the olives, capers and anchovy fillets in a small food processor and blend to a paste. Continue blending while adding 1½ tablespoons of the oil. Transfer the paste to a bowl and stir in the garlic, chopped basil and a little less than half of the lemon juice. Set aside.

Place the fennel, red onion and cherry tomatoes in a bowl. Roughly tear the whole basil leaves and add them to the bowl with the chopped fennel leaves. Season with a little salt and pepper, half of the remaining oil and the remaining lemon juice. Mix well and set aside.

Heat the remaining oil in a non-stick frying pan over a medium-high heat and cook the red mullet fillets, skin side down, for 2 minutes. Turn the fish and cook for 10 seconds.

Divide the salad between two plates. Arrange three fish fillets on each salad and top with a little tapenade. Serve immediately.

Serves 2



BRIOCHE FROM VENDÉE

Brioche Vendéenne

FROM THE VENDÉE REGION | BY PIERRICK BOYER

As with many cakes, this special treat of Brioche Vendéenne is usually bought at the local pâtisserie or boulangerie by French families to serve to visitors. It's served with coffee and is often dunked in the coffee. Skilful home cooks will derive great pleasure from making brioche.

500 g (1 lb 2 oz) plain (all-purpose) flour
 10 g (¼ oz) salt
 150 g (5½ oz) caster (superfine) sugar
 15 g (½ oz) dry yeast
 4 eggs, at room temperature
 1 teaspoon orange flower water
 300 g (10½ oz) unsalted butter
 2 egg yolks mixed with 1 tablespoon water
 3 tablespoons sesame seeds

In the bowl of an electric beater, place the flour, salt, caster sugar, dry yeast, eggs and orange flower water and beat on medium speed until it forms a smooth, elastic dough.

Reduce to low speed, add the butter bit by bit and beat until well incorporated. This takes about 10 minutes.

Remove the dough from the bowl and form it into a long piece. Place it on a baking tray lined with baking paper, cover with a damp tea towel and leave to rise for 2 hours.

Flatten the dough into a long rectangle and cut it into three long pieces. Roll each piece into a long baguette shape and form a plait with the three pieces of dough. Place on another baking tray lined with baking paper and leave to prove for about 1 hour in a warm place.

Preheat the oven to 160°C (320°F).

Brush the risen dough lightly with the egg yolk mixture and sprinkle with sesame seeds. Bake in the preheated oven for about 30 minutes.

Cool the brioche before slicing.

Serves 10-15



RASPBERRY MILLEFEUILLES

Millefeuilles aux framboises

FROM THE ÎLE-DE-FRANCE REGION

I love caramelised puff pastry and can never resist these delicious raspberry millefeuilles when I see them on display in the best Parisian pâtisseries.

about 500 g (1 lb 2 oz)

puff pastry

50 g (1¾ oz) caster
(superfine) sugar

30 g (1 oz) icing
(confectioners') sugar

30 g (1 oz) finely
chopped pistachio nuts

2 tablespoons Calvados
liqueur

300 ml (10 fl oz) whipped
cream

400 g (14 oz) raspberries

Preheat the oven to 200°C (400°F).

Line a flat 25 x 35 cm (10 x 13½ in) baking tray with baking paper and lightly brush the paper with water.

Roll the puff pastry out to about 2 mm (⅛ in) thick and to fit the size of the baking tray. Carefully lift the pastry onto the tray and chill in the refrigerator for 30 minutes.

Dust the pastry with caster sugar, then bake in the preheated oven. After about 8 minutes, top the pastry with a grill or heavy tray to prevent it from rising too much, then bake it for a further 5 minutes.

Remove the pastry from the oven and remove the grill. Turn the pastry out onto a second baking tray lined with baking paper and dust the top with 10 g (¼ oz) of the icing sugar. Increase the oven temperature to 250°C (480°F) and bake the pastry for a further 8 minutes to glaze it. Remove the pastry from the oven and allow it to cool.

Cut the pastry into three long strips, then cut each strip into six equal pieces.

Mix the pistachio nuts with the remaining 20 g (¾ oz) of icing sugar.

Whisk the Calvados into the cream, then mix in the pistachio nuts.

Place 12 pieces of pastry on a dish and spread the top with some pistachio cream. Top six of the pastry pieces with raspberries, then place the six remaining cream-topped pastry pieces on top. Garnish with raspberries and top with the pastry pieces (without cream).

Serves 6



APPLE TART FLAMED WITH CALVADOS

Tarte aux pommes flambée au Calvados

FROM THE NORMANDY REGION | BY ANGIE GATÉ

*Normandy is famous for its cream, apples
and a beautiful apple liqueur called Calvados*

8 apples (red delicious,
granny smith or another
variety of your choice)
2 tablespoons water
250 g (9 oz) puff pastry
1 egg yolk
1 tablespoon water
2 tablespoons pouring
cream
2 tablespoons caster
(superfine) sugar
3 tablespoons Calvados

Preheat the oven to 200°C (400°F). Line a baking tray with baking paper.

Peel 4 of the apples, then cut them into eighths and remove the cores. Cook with the 2 tablespoons of water in a covered saucepan until tender. Mash the apple to a purée and leave it to cool.

Roll out the pastry on a floured surface until it is about 30 cm (12 in) round and about 3 mm (1/8 in) thick.

Carefully lift the pastry onto the prepared baking tray. Prick the pastry with a fork to prevent shrinkage. Use the tip of a knife blade to trace a smaller circle on the pastry, leaving a 2.5 cm (1 in) edge. Mix the egg yolk and water together and use to brush the edge.

Spread the apple purée over the pastry, leaving the edge free. Spread the cream over the purée.

Peel, quarter and core the remaining apples and cut each quarter into four wedges. Starting at the outer edge, arrange the apple wedges on top of the purée, forming a spiral towards the centre. Overlap the slices a little and make sure you leave no gaps.

Sprinkle on the sugar and bake for about 20 minutes. Reduce the oven temperature to 150°C (300°F) and bake for a further 30 minutes. The tart is cooked when the pastry is golden brown and crisp and the edges of the apples are lightly browned. The pastry base should be dry and lightly browned.

Carefully transfer the tart to a serving platter.

In a small saucepan, bring the Calvados to the boil. Remove the pan from the heat and away from the stove, then carefully flame the Calvados. Carefully pour the flaming liqueur over the tart and serve when the flames have subsided.

Serves 8

