

THE
ORLANDO
CONSORT

'The Food Album' - Recipes

Starters and Snacks

Split Pea Soup thickened with Spicy Bread and served with Confit Chicken

Ref.: Track 12 - 'Adieu ces bons vins de Lannoy'. The singer tells of his departure from Laon, lamenting "I depart all bent over by my load of nuts, for I cannot find beans or peas". The reference is not to the commonest peas available today, the green variety which are the fruit of 'pisum sativum' and which became fashionable in the 18th century. To get closer to a medieval taste, split peas are recommended.

The recipe is closely based on one taken from 'Le Ménagier de Paris' written by a French landowner of approximately 60 years of age for the benefit of his 15 year old bride. The 'old' man not only offers his wife the benefit of his moral insights; he also gives essential practical instruction on how to handle servants and tradesmen, how to cope with the garden, and how to cook.

Serves 6

600g (1½lb) Split Peas
4 Thick slices of crusty bread (stale)
1 Cooked confit chicken leg
1 Large onion
1 Clove of garlic
250ml (1 cup) milk
2 Cloves
1 Star anis
Sprinkle of saffron
1 bay leaf
½ teaspoon of cinnamon
1 Sprig thyme
1 Sprig rosemary

Method

1. Soak the peas overnight in cold water
2. Chop and sweat the onion and garlic in a saucepan
3. Add the split peas
4. Pour over half the milk and top up with water to just cover the peas
5. Season with salt and pepper allow to cook slowly for three hours or until the peas are soft
6. Blend the soup and pass through a sieve
7. In a separate pan bring the remaining milk to boil and add all the above spices and herbs
8. Allow this to infuse
9. Add the bread and allow to soak for 1 hour

10. Remove the bread and spices- puree and pass
 11. Add a little of the bread mixture to the soup- this will thicken and flavour the soup.
(The thickness of the soup should be like porridge consistency)
 12. Take the cooked chicken leg, remove the skin and bones and flake in to the soup bowls
 13. Pour the soup over the top and sprinkle with a little saffron for garnish.
- Serve immediately.

Jean-Christophe Novelli

Frittata with Wild Leaves

Ref.: Track 10. “Give me a little of that mazzacocca”! Speculation has it that a ‘mazzacocca’ was a long breadstick with a knob on the end and a 15th century audience would have been fully aware of the obscene connotations. This recipe from Rose Gray and Ruth Rogers uses more freely available Italian bread in an innocent but delicious way.

Use a mixture of wild and cultivated greens - dandelion, borage, sorrel, wild chicory, wild rocket, cultivated rocket, small beet leaves and/or Swiss chard leaves, mint and marjoram leaves.

Serves 4

1.5kg (3½lb) leaves (see above), washed
1/2 ciabatta loaf, bottom crust removed, torn into 3-4 pieces
300ml (1 1/3 cups) milk
Sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
150g (6oz) Parmesan, freshly grated
8 large, organic, free-range eggs
2 garlic cloves, peeled
olive oil

Preheat the oven to 230 C, 450 F, Gas 8. Soak the ciabatta in the milk for 20 minutes until soft, then squeeze out excess milk and chop finely.

Bring a large saucepan of water to boiling point, add some salt, the garlic and then the leaves. Cook for 5 minutes, then drain well and squeeze out all the water. Chop finely, using a mezzaluna. Mix well with the chopped bread, and season with salt, pepper and half the Parmesan.

Break the eggs into a large bowl, season generously, and beat. Mix in the greens mixture and stir to combine.

Use two 20-25cm (8-10 inch) frying pans with ovenproof handles. Heat 2 tablespoons olive oil in each pan, and when hot, pour half the mixture into each pan. Reduce the heat and cook for a few minutes until just set, but still quite runny. Scatter with the remaining Parmesan, drizzle with olive oil, and place in the hot oven. Leave until the frittata becomes crisp at the edges and slightly brown on top, a minute or two only. Remove from the oven, loosen with a long spatula, and place on warm serving plates. Cut into wedges to serve.

Rose Gray and Ruth Rogers

Mushroom Pasties

Ref.: Track 3. This recipe comes from the ‘Goodman of Paris’, an anonymous book written at the time of Chaucer and Guillaume de Machaut. The author, apparently a civil servant and landowner, advises on how to handle servants, how to manage a garden, and how to shop effectively in the

Parisian markets, as well as assembling a comprehensive selection of recipes. These are sophisticated little pasties which would be perfect for 'al fresco' dining or even the kind of picnic scene depicted in Adam de La Halle's 'Jeu de Robin et Marion'.

450g (1lb) shortcrust pastry, made with half butter, half lard
450g (1lb) mushrooms (Paris mushrooms are best)
2 tbsp olive oil
Salt and black pepper
55g (2oz) cheddar cheese (grated)
¼ tsp dry mustard
1 egg, beaten

With two thirds of the pastry, line small deep patty pans. Chill. Preheat oven to 200 C, 400 F, Gas 5/6. Trim off mushroom stalks. In a sieve dip mushrooms into boiling water for 2 minutes. Drain them, then pat dry and chop them. Put them into a bowl and mix with the oil, cheese and seasonings. Fill the pastry cases with the mixture. Roll out the remaining pastry and make lids for the cases. Seal the lids with the beaten egg. Make a small cross in the centre of each lid. Bake in the oven for 15-18 minutes. Serve warm.

Clarissa Dickson Wright

Asparagus in Sherry Sauce

Ref.: Track 17 - 'Ave color vini clari'. To mark this hymn of praise to the virtues of wine, a dish from Spain which utilises another closely related product of the grape - sherry. The recipe is entitled '*Qui parla con se ffa esparaguat*' and can be found in the 'Libre de sent soví' (Recipe No.117), an early 14th century Spanish cookbook.

Serves 4

2 bunches medium size asparagus (20-24 pieces)
2 tbsp plain flour
1 tbsp olive oil
1 cup sherry (Fino or Manzanilla)
1 tsp dry tarragon leaves
1 tsp salt

Peel the asparagus, cutting all dead and woody ends off.

Bring some water to the boil in a pot or large pan (so that the asparagus is not bent while boiling) and blanch the asparagus to a crisp. Keep this water.

In a small pot put the tarragon leaves and the sherry until reduced, then add two cups of the water kept from the asparagus and let it boil for 2 or 3 minutes.

Heat the olive oil in a frying pan and when hot add the flour, working it into a 'roux', then add the boiling mixture of tarragon and sherry together with the salt, stirring this into a creamy consistency. (More water can be added until the required texture is achieved). Cook for about 10 minutes. The sauce is ready.

To serve, bring the remaining water back to the boil, put the asparagus back in, and finally cook to the required crispness. At the same time warm up the sauce and place in a sauce-pouring pot ready for serving. Finger bowls may be necessary!

Félix Velarde

Orange Omelette for Pimps and Harlots

Ref.: Track 19 - 'Von Eyren'. The song celebrates the versatility of eggs and the recipe here is certainly unusual and imaginative. The creator of this dish, the German chef John of Bockenheim, may well have known Guillaume Dufay (Track 12) as they were both in service to Pope Martin V in Rome around the year 1430. We can only speculate as to why this dish should be considered suitable for 'Pimps and Harlots'!

Sweet omelettes have fallen out of favour somewhat in the 20th-21st century. A pity because they make excellent quick desserts. You can make this the suggested way with a fresh orange, adding grated zest to pep up the flavour. However if you are feeling slovenly in the mould of a 'pimp' or 'harlot' use a spoonful of light marmalade instead. Ideal for leisurely breakfasts in bed, one omelette is enough for two to share.

Serves 2

1 sweet orange or heaped tablespoon light orange marmalade
2 large or 3 medium free range eggs
a good pinch of salt
1 tablespoon caster sugar
1 teaspoon light olive oil
a good knob of butter

If using fresh orange, grate the zest finely, then halve and squeeze the juice.

Beat both juice and zest with the eggs, salt and sugar. Or if using marmalade beat that with the eggs instead.

Heat the oil and butter in a medium size omelette pan, about 20cm (8 inch) diameter until you can feel a good heat rising. Make sure the butter doesn't burn.

Pour in the orange-y egg and swirl to coat the base. Cook on a medium heat, drawing the lightly set egg mixture in towards the centre with a fork or spatula to let the runny egg slip over and cook.

Repeat until the whole mixture is lightly set. Hold the pan over a warmed dinner plate and roll the omelette onto the plate, or flip over in half with a spatula and slide out. Serve with 2 forks to share.

Roz Denny

Pasta

Tortelloni with Ricotta, Lemon and Pine Kernels

Ref.: Track 11 - 'Canto di donne maestre di far cacio'. The lady cheese-makers from Chianti would unquestionably approve of this stunning pasta dish, not least for the delicious use of other dairy products in the sauce.

Serves 6

Fresh pasta (see below)
semolina flour for dusting
Sea salt and freshly fround pepper

Filling:

400g (1lb) buffalo ricotta cheese
1/3 nutmeg, freshly grated

150g (5oz) Parmesan, freshly grated
2cm (1 inch) freshly peeled ginger
75g (2½oz) pine kernels, lightly toasted
peel of 1 lemon, white pith removed

Sauce:

juice of 2 large lemons
200ml (1 cup) double cream
75g (2½oz) softened butter
100g (3½oz) Parmesan, freshly grated

To make the filling, break up the ricotta with a fork, and add the nutmeg, Parmesan, ginger and generous salt and pepper. Crush the pine kernels and carefully stir into the mixture. Finely chop the lemon peel and add to the ricotta. Stir in a little double cream if the mixture seems very stiff. Dust your work surface with semolina flour. Divide the pasta dough into quarters. Roll the pieces out one at a time to the finest setting on your pasta machine, to form long strips the width of your machine. Cut into 8cm (3 inch) squares. Place a teaspoon of the filling in the centre of each square and fold in half to form a triangle. Gently press to seal the dough around the filling. Bend each triangle around your finger, joining the folded ends to slightly overlap, and press to seal, leaving the third point sticking up - rather like tying a headscarf around your head.

To make the sauce, heat the cream gently, then add the softened butter, lemon juice, Parmesan and salt and pepper. Keep warm over the gentlest possible heat.

Bring a large saucepan of water to the boil, season with 1 tablespoon of salt, and add the tortelloni. Simmer gently until the tortelloni are tender but firm to the bite, about 8-10 minutes. Drain, keeping a little of the pasta water. Place the tortelloni carefully into the thickened sauce. Add a little of the hot pasta water to liquefy, and serve with extra grated Parmesan.

Fresh Pasta

500g Tipo '00' pasta flour, plus extra for dusting
1 teaspoon sea salt
4 large organic free range eggs
6 large organic free-range egg yolks
50g (1/4 cup) semolina flour for dusting

Put the flour and salt in a processor, add the eggs and egg yolks, and pulse blend until the pasta begins to come together into a loose ball of dough. Knead the pasta dough on a flat surface, lightly dusted with the semolina and a little extra flour, until the mixture is smooth, about 3 minutes. If the dough is stiff and very difficult to knead, you may have to put it back in the processor and blend in another whole egg. Cut the dough into 8 equal-sized pieces and briefly knead them into individual balls. Wrap each ball in cling film and allow to rest in fridge for at least 20 minutes (and up to 2 hours).

Prepare your pasta machine, setting it on the widest setting. Scatter the work surface with more flour, and push each piece of pasta flour through the rollers ten times, folding the sheet into three each time to return it to a short strip then turn it by a quarter and push it through the rollers again. This process introduces air into the dough and stretches it to develop the texture. After ten such folds at this setting the pasta should feel silky. Only then reduce the setting gradually down to thin, as required.

Rose Gray and Ruth Rogers

Main Courses - Meat

Boiled Beef and Mutton with Spicy Bread Sauce

Ref: Track 2 - 'Chançonette / Ainc voir / A la cheminee / Par verité'. This dish is surely exact what the singer of 'A la cheminee' would have had in mind when he told of his wish for salt meat. The inspiration for this version of the dish is a similar one to be found in 'Le Viandier de Guillaume Tirel, dit Taillevent'. Tirel was cook to King Charles V (1364-80) and King Charles VI (1380-142) of France.

Serves 4

1 Shin of beef
1 Shoulder of mutton
1 Neck of mutton
3 Onions
3 Carrots
2 Leeks
1 Clove of garlic
2 Ltrs (4 pints) of meat stock
Rosemary
Thyme
Bay leaf
4 Slices of thick stale crusty bread
2 eggs
Cinnamon
Clove
Juniper berries
Coriander seeds
Cardamom seeds

Method

1. Bring the stock to the boil
2. Add the shin, shoulder, and neck and all vegetables.
3. Add the thyme, bay leaf, and rosemary
4. Season and allow to slowly simmer for 2 hours until the meat becomes extremely tender and flaky
5. Roast all the spices in a pan, add a quarter of the cooking liquid
6. Allow to infuse and reduce by half and pass
7. Grate the bread, mix with the eggs to form a paste
8. Slowly add the reduced and infused cooking liquid until you have a bread sauce consistency.

To serve:

Slice the different meats and arrange a small selection on each plate. Pour over a little of the cooking liquid and serve the spicy bread sauce on the side.

Jean-Christophe Novelli

Roast Pork with Spiced Red

Ref.: Track 6 - 'Nowell, nowell: The boarës head'. This dish comes from the *Curye on Inglysch* collection (see Spinach recipe below) and was originally known as 'Cormarye'. It was specifically designed with pork in mind, but it would definitely be worth using the same marinating technique if you can track down a butcher who can lay his hands on boar.

Serves 4-6

(allow at least 2 hours to marinate the meat)

1.35kg (3lb) piece loin of pork with skin
2 medium onions, sliced
1 clove of garlic
1 bay leaf
1 level tablespoon fennel seeds, roughly crushed in a pestle and mortar
Freshly milled black pepper
250ml (½ pint) red wine
Freshly ground sea salt
25g (1oz) flour
About 250ml (½ pint) vegetable or chicken stock
2 teaspoons quince or apple jelly

Ask your butcher to chine the loin of pork and score the skin well, but ask him not to remove the bone and not to tie or roll the joint up with string.

Place the meat in a china or earthenware dish. Combine the onions, garlic, bay leaf, fennel seeds and black pepper with the red wine to make a marinade. Pour over the meat and leave to marinate for at least 2 hours.

Remove the joint, reserving the marinade. Dry the skin of the pork with kitchen paper, then sit the joint upright, resting on the bones, in a shallow roasting tin. Sprinkle the scored surface of the skin generously with salt to give it a thick coating, then cook for 20 minutes in the oven at 240 C, 475 F, Gas 9. Lower the heat to 190 C, 375 F, Gas 5 and continue roasting for 1hr and 10mins. (To make sure that the meat is cooked, test with a skewer - the juices should run clear, not pink). Place the pork on a serving dish and leave to rest in a warm place, while you make the gravy.

To make the gravy, remove most of the fat from the roasting tin. Stir the flour into the pan juices and cook for a few minutes. Pour in the strained marinade and continue to stir over heat until smooth.

Add the stock and allow to bubble for about 15 minutes until rich and glossy. Stir in about 2 teaspoons of quince or apple jelly and adjust the seasoning as necessary.

To serve, carve the meat into thick slices, including the crackling, and pour over the red wine sauce.

Sara Paston-Williams

Stuffed Chicken

Ref.: Tracks 16 and 18 - 'La Tricotea' and 'Oy comamos y bebamos'. With its discreet use of wine, this dish recreated from the 'Libre de sent sovi' would appeal to the revellers portrayed in these two Spanish songs. You may also wish to experiment with the same technique for cooking goose, a dish traditionally associated with St. Martin's Day celebrations ('La Tricotea').

Serves 4

1 Whole chicken
55g (2oz) Cured ham - diced (fatty bits preferable)
220g (8oz) Minced pork
The chicken giblets (chopped)
30g (1oz) Parsley (finely chopped)
1 medium sized onion (chopped)
1 clove of garlic (finely chopped)
110g (4oz) grated cheese
1 hard boiled egg (chopped)
Olive oil

1 glass white wine
1 cup of water
Salt and Pepper

Remove the giblets and bone the chicken. Sprinkle salt and pepper and leave aside.

Put some olive oil in a saucepan with the ham and when hot enough add the onions and garlic and fry until they turn gold in colour. Add the minced pork, the giblets, parsley and egg, stirring periodically until it is slowly cooked into a 'paste'. Mix with the grated cheese to form the final stuffing.

Create an opening and press some of the stuffing between the flesh and skin of the chicken breast.

Place all remaining stuffing inside the chicken, close the opening with metal skewers, rub a little oil on its skin, place it on a baking tray, add the water and roast in a pre-heated oven 180 C, 350 F, Gas 4 for an hour, then pour the wine over the chicken, increase the oven temperature to 190 C, 375 F, Gas 5 and cook for another 30 minutes.

Remove all skewers and let the chicken settle for 15 minutes.

Félix Velarde

Pheasant cooked in Red Wine with Spices and Parsley

Ref.: Track 13 - 'Je ne vis onques'. This song is known to have been sung at the 'Feast of the Pheasant' in 1453 and one must imagine that pheasant would have featured on the menu. This recipe is based on one to be found in 'Le recueil de Riom', a collection compiled at least in part by M. Chavillat in 1466. A bottle of good Burgundian red wine would form the perfect accompaniment to this dish.

Serves 4

2 Prepared Pheasants
8 Onions
1 Head of celery
8 Large carrots
1 Head of garlic
250g (10oz) Parsley
Clove
Cinnamon stick
1 Bottle red wine
1 Lt. (2 pints) Chicken stock
1 Bay leaf
Rosemary
Thyme
Juniper berries

Method

1. Peel and prepare all vegetables
2. Pan fry all the vegetables until golden brown
3. Seal the pheasants and place in a large saucepan or braising dish
4. Add the vegetables to the pheasants
5. Add the red wine, all the herbs and spices, and the parsley stalks
6. Pour the chicken stock over so the pheasants are completely covered in liquid. (A glass of port could be added for extra flavour)
7. Cover with a lid and place in a warm oven, braise for an hour and a half or until the pheasant is completely cooked

8. Remove from the oven, cut the pheasant into portions, chop the vegetables in half, and reduce the red wine cooking liquor by half.

To serve:

Place the vegetables in the bottom of a dish, arrange the pheasant on top
Pass the cooking liquor and pour a little over the pheasant. Sprinkle with freshly chopped parsley and serve immediately.

Jean-Christophe Novelli

Main Courses - Fish

Haddock in Ale

Ref.: Track 5 - 'Apparuerunt apostolis'. A very appropriate dish for the monks of Fountains Abbey, who brewed their own ale and who would have been expected on important holy days to eschew meat in favour of fish. This recipe has been adapted from an anonymous 15th century cookbook (Laud Ms 533), but any firm-fleshed white fish can be used. The best results have been achieved using good quality lagers as they tend to be closer in texture to medieval ales than modern bitters and stouts, the heavy taste of which can sometimes mask the flavour of the fish.

Serves 4

450g (1lb) thick piece of skinned and filleted haddock
2 onions, finely sliced
65g (2½oz) butter
Generous pinch of saffron
Freshly milled black pepper
Freshly ground sea salt
250ml (½pint) lager
Flat-leaf parsley, roughly chopped

Gently stew the onions with the saffron in 25g (1oz) butter for about 20 minutes, or until very soft but not browned. Spoon them into the bottom of a shallow ovenproof dish in which the fish will just fit. Lay the fish on top and season it well. Pour in the lager, then cover the dish with foil. Bake in a moderate oven 180 C, 350 F, Gas 4 for about 20 minutes until the fish is just cooked through. Strain off the liquor into a small pan and reduce rapidly by fast boiling to intensify the flavour. Divide the fish and onions between 4 shallow bowls (old-fashioned soup plates are ideal) and keep warm.

Whisk the remaining butter into the liquor and pour over the fish. Sprinkle with plenty of parsley and then serve with fresh crusty bread.

Sara Paston-Williams

Roasted Sea Bass

Ref.: Track 8 - 'Cacciando'. The markets of medieval Europe would have been brimming with fish and this recipe combines one variety with a particular favourite of the times - fennel.

The grilling of the skin before baking gives the bass a distinctive and interesting flavour.

Serves 4 - 6

1 x 2.25kg (5lb) sea bass, scaled and cleaned but not filleted
2 tablespoons fennel seeds
sea salt and coarsely ground black pepper
2 red onions, peeled and sliced thinly
2 lemons, sliced
a few parsley stalks
2 fresh fennel bulbs, trimmed and sliced
juice of 1 lemon
5 tablespoons olive oil
75 ml (1/3 cup) white wine

Preheat the oven to 190 C, 375 F, Gas 5. Preheat the grill.

Put half the fennel seeds and some salt and pepper inside the cavity of the fish, brush the skin with a little olive oil and grill for about 5-6 minutes on each side until the skin is lightly charred. Place half the onion and lemon slices, parsley stalks, fennel slices and the remaining fennel seeds in a large ovenproof dish, lay the fennel on top and cover with the remaining onion, lemon parsley and fennel. Pour over the lemon juice, olive oil and white wine, and bake in the oven for about 30 minutes, or until the flesh is firm to the touch. Serve either hot or cold with Green Sauce (see below).

Rose Gray and Ruth Rogers

Vegetables and Sauces

Fried Spinach

This simple recipe for spinach has been adapted from the *Curye on Inglysch* collection, compiled by royal command for use by the chefs at the court of King Richard II (1377-1399). According to the chronicler Hollingshead, Richard had 2,000 cooks in his service - possibly a slight exaggeration!

450g (1lb) fresh spinach
1 tablespoon olive oil
sea salt
freshly ground black pepper
freshly grated nutmeg
a pinch of ground ginger

Pick over the spinach leaves and wash in at least two changes of water to remove any grit. Remove all the central tough stalks and tear the leaves into manageable pieces, unless they are small, in which case leave them whole. Drain well.

Bring a pan of salted water to the boil and drop in the spinach leaves. Bring back to the boil, then strain immediately through a colander to get as much moisture out of the spinach as possible.

In a clean pan, heat the olive oil until smoking, then add the spinach. Cook over a high heat for a few minutes until the spinach is dry, then season with salt, pepper, nutmeg and ginger.

Sara Paston-Williams

Leeks and Beetroot in Raisin Sauce

This dish was a great favourite in medieval times but the recipe probably comes originally from Roman times. Leeks are an ancient vegetable which grew well all over Europe and were especially prized in France, Italy and Spain. The beetroot was much prized at the dinner table for its clear rich purple colour as well as its taste. This dish with its reduced sauce would be easily eaten in the fingers or with a spoon.

2 leeks, sliced.
225g (½lb) young whole beetroots
1 tsp coriander seeds
¼ tsp cumin seeds
55g (2oz) raisins
600ml (2 2/3 cups) vegetable stock
olive oil
white wine vinegar
flour
salt

Grind together the cumin and coriander. Heat the stock and add the raisins and spices. Put in the vegetables, add salt and simmer until the vegetables are tender (about 25 minutes). Remove the vegetables from the sauce to a warm dish. Reduce the sauce, adding a little flour to thicken and a dash of oil and vinegar. Pour over vegetables and serve.

Clarissa Dickson Wright

Green Sauce

Ref.: Track 8 - 'Cacciando'. An exceptionally popular sauce in medieval times and often sold in markets in ready-made form, as is made clear by the text of the song. Rose Gray and Ruth Rogers' version uses many ingredients that feature in the street-vendors cries.

1 large bunch flat-leaf parsley
1 bunch fresh basil
a handful of fresh mint leaves
3 garlic cloves, peeled
100g (4oz) salted capers
100g (4oz) salted anchovies
2 table spoons red wine vinegar
5 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 tablespoon Dijon mustard
sea salt
freshly ground black pepper

If using a food processor, pulse-chop the parsley, basil, mint, garlic, capers and anchovies until roughly blended. Transfer to a large bowl and add the vinegar. Slowly pour in the olive oil, stirring constantly, and finally add the mustard. Check for seasoning.

This sauce may also be prepared by hand on a board, preferably using a mezzaluna.

Rose Gray and Ruth Rogers

Desserts

Pear Tart

Ref.: Track 15 - 'La plus grant chière'. With the Burgundian fondness for pies and pastries this might even have been one of the 'fine dishes' served at the party hosted by the composers Morton and Hayne. From 'Le Viandier de Guillaume Tirel, dit Taillevent'.

Serves 6

Ingredients

3 Ripe pears
1 Sweet pastry case
250g (9oz) Frangipan
150g (5oz) Caster sugar
Saffron
100g (3½oz) Butter
100g (3½oz) Flour
1 Egg
100 ml (½ cup) double cream
Rum (optional)
50g (2oz) Brown sugar

Method

1. Peel the pears remove the cores and slice into quarters
2. Bake blind your pastry case
3. Place the frangipan in the bottom of the pastry case
4. Mix the egg, double cream, sugar, saffron and a splash of rum together
5. Place pear on top of frangipan
6. Pour over the egg, cream and sugar mixture
7. Place in a warm oven approx 150 C, 300 F, Gas 2, for an hour and fifteen minutes until the pears are soft and the egg mixture has set
8. Crumb together the butter, flour and brown sugar and sprinkle over the tart
9. Place the tart back in the hot oven or under a grill until the topping is golden brown.

Serve immediately.

Jean-Christophe Novelli

Saffron Cake

Saffron, taken from the stamen of the crocus, was beloved by people in the Middle Ages, especially for its vivid colour. This is a sophisticated dish: saffron was and is horrendously expensive and baking in the 15th century was no easy matter, requiring as it did a brick oven heated by lighting a fire to raise the bricks to the right temperature. The fire was then raked out and the baking could begin. (I have used such an oven and can vouch for the fact that it is not easy to get it right!). As a consequence, yeasted cakes with a shorter cooking time were much favoured. Sultanas and raisins were dried in the sun, the finest coming from Cyprus. The mace in question was the herb mace, as the West Indies had not yet been discovered, but for your own purposes West Indian mace is just as good and certainly easier to come by.

450g (1lb) plain flour
12½g (½oz) yeast
110g (¼lb) butter

55g (2oz) castor sugar
55g (2oz) each sultanas and currants
150ml (2/3 cup) milk
1 tsp salt
1 tsp each powdered mace and mixed spice
½ tsp saffron filaments
For glazing, 2 tbsp milk and 1 tbsp sugar.

To prepare the saffron and the yeast. Take half the milk and heat to boiling point. Put the saffron filaments on a dish and put in a hot oven for 5 minutes. Crumble into a cup, pour over a little hot milk and leave to infuse. Pour the remaining hot milk, which by now will be luke warm, over the yeast and mix to a cream.

Put the flour, sugar and salt in a warmed bowl. Sprinkle in the dry spices and stir in the creamed yeast. Now mix in the softened butter with your hands, and when it is well mixed add the saffron infusion and the remainder of the milk. The dough should be soft but not runny. Mix in the fruit, cover and leave to rise for a couple of hours. When it has doubled in volume, knock it down lightly. Sprinkle with flour, transfer to a buttered tin, and leave to rise for a second time. It is a slow rising dough and will take a minimum of 45 minutes to 1 hour to return to life and reach almost to the top of the tin. Bake in the centre of the oven at 200 C, 400 F, Gas 5/6 for 15 minutes. Move to a lower shelf and cook for a further 15 minutes. Remove from oven, glaze, and leave for 15 minutes before turning out. Although saffron cake is best enjoyed when freshly cooked, it can be reheated in a very low oven. It is a subtle accompaniment to a sweet Sauternes, a dessert wine, or a glass of Madeira.

Clarissa Dickson Wright

Bread, Almond and Saffron Pudding with a Fig and Raisin Crust

Ref.: Track 1 - 'In paupertatis predio'. The opening song provides a lovely image of St. Francis tending his vineyards and fig trees and this recipe employs the produce of both. Also, it is impossible to overstate the importance of almonds in medieval cooking; they were used both in their natural state and to form a 'milk' which could be used in all manner of dishes. This recipe is also taken from 'Le Viandier de Guillaume Tirel, dit Taillevent'.

Serves 4

8 thick slices of brioche (Sweet bread)
300ml (1 1/3 cups) of milk
130g (2/3 cup) Caster sugar
100g (3½oz) flaked almonds
4 Dried figs (diced)
100g (3½oz) raisins
1 tbsp. Brown sugar
40g (1½oz) butter
1 Measure of rum
1 teaspoon of ground cinnamon
2 eggs plus one yolk
Stock Syrup- 100g (3½oz) caster sugar

Method

Prepare the stock syrup...

1. Put the caster sugar in a pan with 300ml (1 1/3 cups) of water. Stir to dissolve and bring to the boil.
2. Add the raisins, figs and the rum and remove from the heat.
3. Cover with cling film and leave to infuse for at least 2 hours

4. Remove half of the figs and raisons (no juice) from the mix and reduce the remaining mixture by half to produce thick syrup
5. Pre-heat the oven to 180 C, 350 F, Gas 4
6. Spread the brioche slices thinly on both sides with butter and cut into cubes. Put into a bowl with half the drained raisons and figs, the cinnamon and the brown sugar
7. Put the milk and the saffron in to a pan and bring to the boil
8. In another bowl mix together the eggs, egg yolks, and the caster sugar and beat until pale.
 1. Pour the milk slowly over the eggs and sugar mixture, beating all the time until smooth. Pass through a sieve and add to the bowl containing the brioche and fruit. Mix to combine well.
 2. Butter your four moulds and add the drained remains of the raison and fig mixture. Divide the brioche mixture evenly between them
11. Bake in a bain-marie in a preheated oven for thirty minutes until golden brown and well risen

To Serve

Turn the puddings out of their moulds and pour a little of the raison and fig syrup over the top. In modern day, cream or ice cream would be served.

Jean-Christophe Novelli

Baked Apples for a Drinking Session

Ref.: Track 21 - 'Trinkt und Singt'. Given the admirable German fondness for beer and apples, it seems only natural to link this song and this dish. The recipe - *Pachen Oppheln* - has been adapted from a German manuscript now to be found at the Biblioteca del Seminario Maggiore, Bressanone, Italy.

Few modern kitchens will have a wooden spindle with a knob as originally demanded in this recipe, although baking on a spindle is preserved in Germany with the 'Baumkuchen', or 'Treecake' made by pouring a cake batter on a horizontal spit revolving in front of an open heat. But, none the less one is able to recapture the essence of this recipe in one of two ways. Either wrapping the apple and pear filling in a sweet pastry for an oven dumpling, or dipping fruit slices sandwiched with a puree in a thick batter which is then deep fried into fritters.

Serves 4 – 6

4 medium size firm pears e.g comice or conference
 5 dessert apples
 about 100g (3½oz) sweet seedless grapes
 50g (¼ cup) caster sugar
 a good pinch saffron strands or ½ teaspoon ground mixed spice
 Either 500g (1lb 2 oz) sweet shortcrust pastry, thawed if frozen
 1 egg yolk beaten with 2 teaspoons water
 Or for fritter batter
 125g (1 cup) plain flour
 50g (¼ cup) caster sugar + extra for serving
 2 eggs, 1 separated into yolk and white
 1 tablespoon sunflower oil or melted butter
 150ml (2/3 cup) milk
 oil, for deep frying

Peel, core and chop the pears. Peel and core and chop one of the apples. Place both fruits in a saucepan with the grapes, 50g (¼ cup) sugar and crushed saffron or spice. Add a splash or two of water if necessary.

Heat until the fruits sizzle, then cover and cook gently for about 12 minutes until pulpy and soft. Uncover and cook for another 5 minutes to reduce down to a thick puree. Beat well with a wooden spoon so it is smooth. Set aside to cool completely and chill.

Using an apple corer, remove the cores from the 4 remaining apples. Peel the skin then cut the apples horizontally into thin slices.

If making the dumplings, divide the pastry into four then roll each portion out to a 22cm square.

Brush the edges with some egg glaze.

Now spread the fruit puree in between the apple slices, reassembling the apple. It doesn't matter if it is a bit messy. Make the filling as thick as you can without it oozing out.

Place each layered apple in the centre of a pastry square. Bring the sides up all round the apple to wrap it up and press the edges together firmly so they stick into a rosette. Trim the top to neaten to look like a carnation. Repeat with the remaining apple, filling and pastry. Place each dumpling on a non-stick baking sheet.

Chill for at least half an hour to firm.

Meanwhile, heat the oven to 200 C, 400 F, Gas 6. Brush the outside of the pastry with more egg yolk and bake first for 20 minutes, turning if the pastry burns. Then reduce the heat to 180 C, 350 F, Gas 4. Bake for another 10 minutes.

Cool the dumplings for 15 minutes at least before serving. Good with lovely thick cream.

To make fritters, beat the batter ingredients in a food processor to a thick batter, or beat in a bowl with a metal balloon whisk. Get the fruits ready. Heat a pan or wok a third full of oil to about 180 C, 350 F, or until a cube of day old white bread browns in 30 seconds.

Sandwich just two apple slices at a time with filling. Dip quickly into the batter and lower gently into the fat. Cook about 3 at a time for 2-3 minutes until golden brown and crisp. Drain on kitchen paper towel and keep warm, uncovered so they remain crisp. Dredge with caster sugar to serve.

Roz Denny