



03 Allier is a predominantly rural area with a quiet and unique charm. There are many preserved medieval villages, castles and historic towns set against a scenic backdrop of hills, rivers and farmland. The department is in central France, towards the north of Auvergne and comprises the

northern end of the Massif Central. The department is in central France, towards the north of Auvergne and comprises the northern end of the Massif Central.

Some of the most attractive scenery in southern Allier is to west of Charroux, along the Gorges de Chouvigny following the course of the River Sioule. The north of the department includes the 'bocage Bourbonnais' region (named after the region of Bourbon) and is an area of forests, quiet countryside, farms, and small fields separated by traditional hedgerows.

Further north-west of the Allier, the Tronçais Forest around Isle-et-Bardais has several lakes and springs

Traditional dishes include truffade (a pancake made of shredded potato, cheese and sometimes bacon and garlic), potée Auvergnate (cabbage, potato, pork and sausage casserole, seasoned with parsley, bay leaves and/or cloves), pounti (a pork, swiss chard and prune terrine with herbs and onions) and aligot.

Bleu d'Auvergne is made from raw cow's milk. The aroma is intense and the flavours are pastoral, spicy, and salty, reminiscent of grass and wildflowers. The cheese matures for at least 2 years developing its moist and crumbly texture. It goes well with dessert wines giving a mellow contrast to Bleu's intensity.

Agneau du Bourbonnais are Bourbonnais lambs raised for their succulent meat marbled with firm, white fat.

Bourbonnais Lamb meat can be enjoyed in a number of ways: lamb shoulder is often marinated and prepared with broad beans or cooked in various stews, and lamb legs are typically roasted with vegetables.

Pair the Bourbonnais lamb meat with red or rosé wines.

Boeuf Charolais du Bourbonnais has a strong flavour and tender consistency and well marbled. Prepare the beef with mushrooms, wine sauces, rosemary, mint or wild fennel, or make a Carpaccio or Steak Tartare dish.

Saucisse Seche d'Auvergne is a variety of thick, dry cured sausage made exclusively with sows meat. They are handmade and matured for about two months. They are traditionally coarsely chopped into thick slices and enjoyed with home baked bread and a slice of Brie cheese.

Vichyssoise is a thick soup made with puréed leeks, onions, potatoes, cream, and chicken stock. The soup is traditionally served cold and is often garnished with fresh chopped chives.

Truffade is a thick potato and cheese pancake, using mild cheeses such as Gruyère, or Tomme fraiche de Cantal. Truffade is most commonly served as a side dish accompanying steaks or other meat dishes. Tomatoes often replace the cheese and is sometimes garnished with finely chopped parsley.

Strawberry Celestine with Vichy Pastilles

Vichy Pastilles are a French confectionery produced in the spa town of Vichy in central France recognizable as a white, octagonal type of sweet pastille bearing the word "Vichy".

Preparation time: 1h, Rest: 12h, Serves 8

Ingredients:

1 packet, 250 g of Vichy pastilles

1 egg white

1 punnet of 500 g of strawberries + 100 g for the coulis

40 cl of full fat UHT liquid cream, cold

40 g of icing sugar

40 g of caster sugar

a few fresh mint leaves.

Method

Feuillantines:

Crush the Vichy pastilles to obtain a powder.

Mix it with the egg white until the consistency of a homogeneous paste.

Spread it in several disc shapes on parchment paper.

Leave to dry in the open air for twelve hours.

Chantilly Strawberries:

Wash the strawberries and cut them into pieces.

Whip the very cold cream.

Add the icing sugar at the last minute.

Whip again.

Coulis:

Cook the 100 g of strawberries over low heat for 5 minutes, with the caster sugar and a little water added.

Blend to a fine, thin paste.

Presentation:

Individually prepare a millefeuille on a plate, alternating the feuillantines of Vichy pastilles, the strawberries and the cream.

Decorate with a few mint leaves