



05 Hautes-Alpes is located in the heart of the French Alps, after which it is named. Hence its main economy is winter sports. It is adjacent to Alpes-de-Haute-Provence, Isère, Drôme and Savoie. It has an average elevation over 1000 m. Italy borders it on the east and the highest elevation

over 4000 m. The only three sizable towns are Gap, Briançon, and Embrun.

The Drac, Durance, Guisane, Buëch, and Clarée. flow through the department: The Durance has been dammed to create one of the largest artificial lakes in Western Europe. The Queyras valley is located in the eastern part of the department and is noted by many as being an area of outstanding beauty.

Hautes-Alpes is now one of the most committed to organic farming in France. Around 40 % of its farming land is organically certified. The land produces wine, cured products, cheese, vegetables and fruit such as the famous Alpes-de-Haute-Durance apples all according with the organic charter.

Organic Food is everywhere, and mushrooms are no exception. Shiitake and oyster mushrooms grow in an exceptional environment inside the Caserne Rochambeau.

Blue Cheeses of Queyras, soft cheeses from Monbardon, La Grave-La Meije, Chartreuse, tourtons du Champsaur, oreilles d'âne du Valgaudemar, fontu du Queyras and the famous farcis niçois are all produced organically.

Tourtons du Champsaur called “Little Jesus Cushions”. This little pillow of thin, fried pastry, generally stuffed with mashed potato, fresh tomatoes and onions with variations such as apple, spinach or prunes Can be served as a starter with green salad and garlic vinaigrette, or meat, or as a dessert.

Oreilles d'âne du Valgaudemar is a traditional Valgaudemar dish taking its name from the wild spinach leaf used to prepare it. This must be picked when it reaches the size and shape of a donkey's ear.

Fontu du Queyras is a cooked pressed paste type cheese with a washed rind. There are two types of Gruyère Fontu: Summer Gruyère Fontu made with milk from mountain pastures, which gives a creamier and more colourful paste with a

more fragrant taste and Gruyère Fontu d'Hiver made with milk from hay-fed cows. The Gruyère will be softer.

Farcis Niçois, also known as Petis Farcis à la Provençale is a classic dish of French Riviera cuisine. Tender garden vegetables, filled with a sausage and herb mixture and baked to create an incredibly comforting and filling dish

Les Petits Farcis Niçois

Preparation time: about 45 minutes. Cooking time: 1 hour and 5 minutes, Serves 6

Equipment Needed

2 rectangular baking dishes

2 mixing bowls

Sharp knife

Ingredients

Olive oil

1/2 tsp of dried oregano (or 1 tbsp fresh chopped finely)

1/2 tsp of dried thyme (or 1 tbsp fresh chopped finely)

2 bay leaves

4 garlic cloves

3 large tomatoes

3 bell peppers (green, red or yellow – your preference!)

4 zucchinis

2 large white onions

250 g of minced pork sausage

250 g of minced beef

1/8 teaspoon of nutmeg

1 bouquet of parsley

125 ml of bread crumbs

1 teaspoon of salt

1/2 teaspoon of ground pepper

N.B. Take the time to sear the vegetables before baking them .Not only will they hold up better while baking, the blistered vegetables add a depth of flavour to the dish.

In this recipe zucchinis, tomatoes, peppers and onions are used. Petits Farcis are also great with eggplant, potatoes and mushrooms. If you are using eggplants, slice them in half and to let them cook 30 minutes in the oven before scooping out the inside. Place in the pan with the zucchini – they take longer to cook!

Make sure to use the scooped out insides of the vegetables in your meat mixture.

Chop them up finely and they will bring extra flavour to the mixture.

This can also be used as a great recipe for kid-friendly healthy meatballs!

Make sure you heap the meat mixture into each vegetable.

It makes for a beautiful presentation but also a hearty meal.

Petits Farcis ready to go in the oven

Petits farcis are also great the next day.

Method

Preheat the oven to 190C (fan 170C) 375F degrees

The Tomatoes

Rinse the tomatoes with cold water.

Dry them and cut off the top a quarter of the way down.

With a spoon, scoop out the insides and put the insides to the side in a mixing bowl.

Sprinkle a pinch of salt inside.

On medium high heat, drizzle some olive oil in the pan and lightly sear the tomatoes for 3-4 minutes, turning once they begin to blister.

Place the tomatoes in a baking dish set aside with a sprinkle of olive oil

The Zucchini

Rinse and dry the zucchini.

Cut the top quarter off of the zucchini length wise.

Sear the zucchini on both sides in the frying pan as with the tomatoes.

Scoop out the insides with a spoon to create a little boat.

Add the zucchini insides to the bowl set aside with the tomato insides.

Place in a separate baking dish with a sprinkle of salt.

The Peppers

Rinse and dry the peppers.

Cut off the top quarter of the peppers length wise.

Scoop out the insides with a spoon to create a little boat leaving the stem for visual effect.

Add the tops of the peppers to the bowl set aside with the tomato tops and zucchini.

Sear the peppers on both sides in the frying pan as with the tomatoes.

Place in the baking dish with a sprinkle of salt next to the tomatoes

The Onions

Peel the onions and place them in a sauce pan of boiling water with the bay leaves for about 15 minutes until they become tender.

Slice in two lengthwise from the top to the bottom.

Take out the centre part of the onion and place with the other vegetable pieces in the side bowl.

N.B. You can also use potatoes and eggplants for this dish

Stuffing Les Petits Farcis Niçois

In the second mixing bowl, add together the minced pork sausage and beef.

Rinse and dry the parsley bouquet.

Finely chop the leaves and the stems together and add to the meat mixture.

Peel and finely chop the garlic.

Finely chop the set aside vegetable insides and add together with garlic to the meat mixture.

Add salt, pepper and nutmeg along with half of the bread crumbs to the meat mixture and mix well together.

Here I like to roll up my sleeves and dig in there with my hands!

Take a soup spoon and generously fill each seared vegetable with the meat mixture.

The mixture should be heaped over each vegetable.

Sprinkle the remaining bread crumbs on the top of the stuffed vegetables.

Baking Les Petits Farcis Niçois

Place the baking dish with the onions and the zucchinis in the oven first (they take longer to cook).

Bake for 20 minutes then add the second baking dish with the tomatoes and peppers. Bake both dishes together uncovered for 45 minutes