



10 Aube The axis of the department is the Seine valley. The natural divisions are perpendicular to it. The north western half extends over the chalky Champagne region and is an area of major crops, on large farms. The valleys are wide, wooded and green corridors, especially that of the Seine.

To the south, the chalk hills of the Pays d' Othe are crowned by flinty clay. The hills are both wooded and heavily cultivated The south-east is a land of ponds, forests and meadows while the Paris Basin is wooded with arable farms and champagne vineyards Cereals dominate with oil seed, hemp production, textiles and protein crops.

Unusually, pigs trotters and potée champenoise (a simple stew) are traditional favourites.

Andouillette de Troyes is a specialty sausage made with pork meat and intestines, onions, wine, pepper, and other seasonings. The sausage can be served hot or cold, barbecued, boiled, or pan-fried. It is traditionally accompanied by vegetables in red wine sauce or roasted potatoes with a fresh salad on the side.

Pain d'épices is a classic French honey cake often described as a cross between bread and a dessert. It can be made with honey, rye or wheat flour and spices such as cardamom, anise, cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves. It is usually baked into a loaf and served with savoury dishes, such as foie grass or gourmet cheeses.

Le jambon de Reims is shredded and used to make a delicious terrine with jelly. and often enjoyed as a starter.

Pieds de Porc à la Sainte-Menehould – pigs' trotters, a speciality from Sainte-Menehould in the Marne.

Champagne Sauerkraut goes well with pork. Aube is the second largest producer of cabbage in France

Haute-Marne Truffles – in season from mid-September to mid-March.

Potée Champenoise is a hearty stew made from pork, sausages and root vegetables.

Rocroi is a soft, square shaped cow's milk cheese low in fat and covered in a brown rind.

Prunelle de Troyes is a digestif made from sloe berries.

Champagne – brut (fairly low in sugar) is the most popular type of champagne.

Marc de Champagne is a brandy made from champagne grapes.

Ratafia is a blend of grape juice and Marc de champagne.

Pain d'épices

This pain d'épices recipe is full of warm, comforting flavours thanks to the generous amount of honey and mixed spice in the bread's batter. A classic French loaf that's simple to make and requires no kneading.

Preparation time; 45 mins

Ingredients

350g of honey, use a very good quality variety

40g of soft dark brown sugar

125g of plain flour

125g of rye flour

1 tbsp of mixed spice (ground ginger, nutmeg, cinnamon, mace, cloves)

1 tsp star anise

20g of baking powder

2 medium eggs

100g of whole milk

20g of butter, for greasing the tin

Equipment

25cm long loaf tin

Method

Preheat the oven to 180°C (fan 160°C) gas mark 4

Gently heat the honey in a pan with the sugar, stirring until the sugar melts

Remove from the heat

Combine the plain flour, rye flour, mixed spice, star anise and baking powder in a bowl

In a separate bowl beat together the eggs and milk, and then stir in the honey and sugar mixture.

Stir this into the dry ingredients to form a batter

Melt the butter in a small pan and use to brush the inside of a 25cm long tin

Fill the tin with the batter, transfer to the preheated oven

Bake for 35 minutes until the top is dark brown and a skewer comes out clean