



11 Aude comprises swathes of vineyards, Mediterranean coastline, a rich history and good food. Aude, is something of a hidden gem. Neighbouring the four Departments of Tarn, Hérault, Pyrénées-Orientales and Ariège, and nestled in the region of Occitanie.

Aude's numerous and varied landscapes, stunning scenery and pleasant weather all year round ensures a vacational paradise for families. Away from the Carcassonne and the Canal du Midi the department is largely unknown, yet it has much to offer whether you prefer a busy town, peaceful countryside or a stay near the coast, and most importantly, there is an abundance of good wine.

Aude is a region famous for its gastronomy and rich local produce such as the Castelnaudary

The Castelnaudary cassoulet is made with confit of duck, home-made sausage and haricot beans.

Terrine of Duck foie gras and foies secs (a traditional pork liver recipe)

Languedoc-Style snails.

Corbières Wild Boar Stew

Poultry or Lamb from Cathar country

Fricassée de Limoux, a pork-based dish served with white haricot beans and rind.

Lauraguais Capon and Chicken

Montagne Noire pork specialities

Tapenades and olives from Alpilles.

Pébradous de Limoux biscuits (a region also famous for its blanquette!).

Cargolades is a snail speciality from Corbières

Fougasse Bread with fritons and green olives.

Languedoc bouillabaisse

Mediterranean flavours influence the seafood specialities and fish, either smoked, baked or fried. Also, in abundance, are oysters, mussel brasucade, sea bream, Atlantic wolf fish, mullet, sole, brill and eels.

Cherry Clafoutis from the Argent Double valley.

Gragnottes Narbonnaises filled with a gianduja/hazelnut praline.

Petit Carcassonnais is a kind of madeleine or sponge cake.

Other dessert specialities include Saint-Jean du Minervois flan, nougats, torrone and Taps de Limos (a chocolate shaped like a Champagne cork), oreillettes de Lagrasse, fritters and Garriguet (a cake from Cathar country made from cereals, honey, almonds and raisins).

Best Known Aude wines are Fitou, Corbières, Limoux, Minervois, Cabardès, La Clape, Quatourze and Malepère.

French Fish Soup Bouillabaisse

Preparation Time; 1 hour, Cooking Time; 1 hour, Serves 6

Ingredients

1 leek, green top left whole, white finely sliced

Small bunch fresh thyme

3 bay leaves

1 Bunch parsley, stalks whole, leaves roughly chopped

2 strips of orange peel

1 mild red chilli

4 tbsp olive oil

2 onions, chopped

1 leek

1 fennel, fronds picked and reserved, fennel chopped

4 garlic cloves, minced

1 tbsp tomato purée

1 star anise

2 tbsp Pernod, optional, if you have it

4 large, ripe tomatoes, chopped

Large pinch ($\frac{1}{3}$ tsp) saffron strands

1 $\frac{1}{2}$ l fish stock

100g potato, one peeled piece

1kg of filleted Mediterranean fish, cut into chunks. (eg. red and grey mullet, monkfish, John Dory and gurnard)

300g mussels, optional

2 garlic cloves

1 small chunk of red chilli (optional)

Small pinch saffron

1 piece of potato, cooked in the broth, (see above)

1 egg yolk

100ml olive oil

1 tbsp lemon juice

$\frac{1}{2}$ baguette, thinly sliced

1 tbsp olive oil

Method

To make the croutons

Heat oven to 200C (180C fan) gas 6.

Lay the slices of bread on a flat baking tray in a single layer, drizzle with olive oil and bake for 15 mins until golden and crisp.

Set aside – can be made a day ahead and kept in an airtight container.

Use a layer of the green part of the leek to wrap around and make a herb bundle with the thyme, bay, parsley stalks, orange peel and chilli.

Tie everything together with kitchen string and set aside.

Heat the oil in a very large casserole dish or stock pot and throw in the onion, sliced leek and fennel

Cook for about 10 mins until softened.

Stir through the garlic and cook for 2 mins more

Add the herb bundle, tomato purée, star anise, Pernod if using, chopped tomatoes and saffron.

Simmer and stir for a minute or two then add the fish stock.

Season with salt and pepper, bring to a simmer, then add the piece of potato.

Bubble everything gently for 30 mins until you have a thin tomatoey soup.

When that piece of potato is on the brink of collapse, fish it out and set aside to make the rouille.

To Make the Rouille

Crush the garlic, chilli and saffron with a pinch of salt in a mortar and pestle.

Mash in the cooked potato to make a sticky paste

Whisk in the egg yolk and, very gradually, the olive oil until you make a mayonnaise-like sauce.

Stir in the lemon juice and set aside.

Once the chunky tomato broth has cooked you have two options

For a rustic bouillabaisse

Poach the fish in it along with the mussels, if you're using (just until they open) and serve.

For a Refined Version

Remove the herb bundle and star anise.

Using a handheld or table-top blender, blitz the soup until smooth.

Pass the soup through a sieve into a large, clean pan and bring to a gentle simmer.

Starting with the densest fish, add the chunks to the broth and cook for 1 min before adding the next type.

With the fish used in this recipe, the order should be monkfish, John Dory, grey mullet, snapper.

When all the fish is in, scatter over the mussels, if using, and simmer everything for about 5 mins until just cooked and the mussels have opened.

Use a slotted spoon to carefully scoop the fish and mussels out onto a warmed serving platter.

Moisten with just a little broth and scatter over the chopped parsley.

Bring everything to the table.

Some people eat it as two courses, serving the broth with croutons and rouille first, then the fish spooned into the same bowl.

Others simply serve it as a fish stew.

Whichever way you choose, the rouille is there to be stirred into the broth to thicken and give it a kick.

