



13 Bouches-du-Rhône is a department of vast contrasts. It ranges from mountains (the Alpilles to the north, Sainte Baume and Sainte Victoire to the east) to the plains and wilderness areas of the Camargue to the west. Densely populated areas such as Marseille, forests and a diverse

coastline of creeks, beaches and harbours add to this wide variety of Provençal landscapes and culture.

Agriculture is of limited importance in the economy but has become increasingly specialized, with irrigation playing a major role. The focus is on the production of fruits, vegetables, and wines. Fruits and vegetables are intensively cultivated especially in the Comtat-Venaissin to the east of Avignon, as well as in the major river valleys such as the Durance. Vineyards cover many of the hillsides of Var and Alpes-Maritimes. The vineyards of the Côtes du Rhône in Vaucluse are renowned for such wines as Châteauneuf-du-Pape. Rice is grown in the marshy delta below Arles, known as the Camargue. Flower crops, including lavender, roses, and jasmine, are also significant and are used by the perfume-manufacturing industry centred in Grasse. The raising of sheep and dairy cattle has become less important.

Navettes are French biscuits from Marseilles that are flavoured with orange-flower water.

Gardiane de Boeuf is made with a combination of Camargue beef, garlic, onions, red wine, bay leaves, thyme, dried orange skin, vinegar, salt, and pepper. The meat is cut into cubes, and marinated in chopped onions, red wine, vinegar, thyme, bay leaves, and orange skin. Next day it is strained, browned, the meat and place in a casserole with the marinade.

Pieds Paquets is a specialty of Marseille and Sisteron, consisting of stewed lamb's feet and tripe filled with parsley, garlic, onions, and salt pork.

Soupe de Poisson à la Rouille is usually prepared with white fish that is cooked in a flavourful broth that mostly incorporates tomatoes, olive oil, garlic, saffron, and various herbs. The soup is then strained and served with rouille, a classic

Provençal sauce that usually incorporates bread, garlic, spices, egg yolks, and olive oil while some versions can also include monkfish liver, tomatoes, or potatoes.

Noilly Prat (Original Dry) is made from dry fortified white wines infused with various herbs and orange zest, chamomile, gentian root, and nutmeg.

Noilly is pale golden and light vermouthe aperitif with a bitter finish and herbal and floral aromas.

Calissons are diamond-shaped sweets made with almonds and candied melons, covered in icing.

Ricard is best appreciated as an aperitif, served cold and diluted with cold water, which produces a slightly opaque drink that has a strong fresh flavour of anise and liquorice.

Bouillabaisse is a traditional Provençal fish stew

Camargue Salad

Ingredients

400g long grain rice

1 cucumber

1 green pepper

6 firm tomatoes

120g black olives

Roasted red peppers (without oil)

2 onions, 1 clove of garlic

3 tbsp capers

4 tbsp oil

1 tbsp vinegar

3 tbsp mayonnaise

1 small tin anchovies in oil

2 small tins of tuna in oil

Method

Cook the rice in boiling salted water.

Remove from heat when still firm, rinse under cold water and drain.

Cut the cucumber into 12 very thin round slices for the garnish.

Cut the rest into small chunks.

Cut the 4 tomatoes, green pepper and some roasted red peppers into small chunks.

Finely chop the onion and the garlic.

Mix all ingredients together with the capers, half the olives and the finely chopped anchovy.

Dress the Camarguaise salad with the oil and vinegar, pepper to taste.

Let sit 30 minutes.

Put the Camarguaise salad in a serving dish on a bed of lettuce after adding the mayonnaise.

Decorate with cucumber slices, the rest of the olives and some red pepper.

Surround the salad with tomato slices, alternating each with a quarter tin of tuna.

Bouillabaisse

Serves 10

Ingredients for the soup:

2 kg of rock fish (for a less expensive option, you can also use fish heads/bones//shellfish remains),

1 conger eel head

200g small green shore crabs

400g onions

200g leeks (use the white part)

100g fresh fennel

800g ripe tomatoes

2 cloves of garlic

fennel seeds

3 tbsp olive oil

40g tomato concentrate

2g saffron

fine salt.

Ingredients for the Bouillabaisse:

2 to 2.5 kg assorted fish (such as whiting, anglerfish, sea bass, scorpion fish, eel, John Dory, langoustine)

2 onions

2 tomatoes

2 cloves of garlic

parsley, fennel sec, thyme

100 ml olive oil

salt, pepper,

Orange peel.

Ingredients for the Rouille and Croutons:

1 or 2 cloves of garlic

3 or 4 chili peppers

50 g sandwich bread

12 sea urchins

250ml olive oil

salt

milk

2 day-old French loaves

Preparation of fish

Gut the bigger fish (not necessary for the small ones),

Wash and cut up the bigger fish

If possible, start marinating the fish the day before (onions, fennel, garlic, saffron, olive oil, tomatoes).

The marinade will then be used as aromatic garnish.

Preparation of the Aromatic Garnish

Peel and wash the onions, leeks and fresh fennel

Chop finely and set aside.

Chop the garlic

Wash and cut the tomatoes into quarters, set aside.

Cook the Fish Soup

Heat the olive oil

Add the leek, fennel and onion and let sweat without browning.

Add the crabs and cook until red,

Add the fish and let sweat 5 to 6 minutes with the aromatic garnish.

Add the fresh tomato, chopped garlic, and tomato concentrate.

Let cook for a few minutes.

Add 2.5 l cold water.

Add the fennel seeds and some of the saffron.

Season with salt and ground pepper.

Boil for 25 to 30 minutes, stirring from time to time.

When done, pass through a sieve, pressing well and bring back to a boil, stirring from time to time, then set aside.

Preparation of the Croutons

Rub the French loaves with one clove of garlic and cut into slices

Drizzle with the olive oil and put in oven until toasted.

Set aside.

Preparation of the Rouille

Soak the sandwich bread in milk.

With a mortar and pestle, grind the garlic and the chili pepper, add the flesh of the sea urchins.

Drain and squeeze the bread and add to mixture.

Mix well to obtain a purée.

Slowly add the olive oil and mix with the pestle to obtain a mayonnaise consistency.

Salt to taste.

Preparation of Fish

Pare and remove the scales from the fish.

In a casserole, bring 3 l of water to a boil.

In a casserole, add chopped onion, garlic, peeled, deseeded and chopped tomatoes, parsley, thyme and fennel,

1 orange peel.

Place on it all the fish (except the John Dory if using)

Add 100 ml olive oil.

Cover with boiling water and cook over high heat for 5 minutes.

Add the John Dory and continue to boil over high heat for another 5 minutes.

Remove from heat.

Remove fish and arrange on a serving dish.

Spread the rouille on the croutons, place in soup plates and ladle on the soup and finally the fish.