



**14 Calvados**, Rich in both history and natural beauty, Calvados is home to the Normandy landing beaches and the Bayeux tapestry, several very popular coastal resorts and lovely countryside. The attractive countryside of Calvados contains orchards, small

scale agriculture, and numerous attractive farmhouses, villages and small towns. The department is also well known for the high quality of the local farming produce, cheeses and famous local liqueur, so make sure you visit the local markets so you can sample these fresh products.

A slightly more dramatic landscape of craggy cliffs and wooded hills, and a lovely region to can be found along the Orne River in the region known as 'Swiss Normandy' to the south of Thury-Harcourt in southern Calvados.

Although few people now work in agriculture, the region retains a strongly rural character. Animal husbandry dominates, and western lands are given over to permanent pasture or the cultivation of forage crops. Auge in Calvados is a major producers of beef. Dairying is also widespread. Camembert cheese is produced in Orne, and other fine cheeses are produced in Pont-l'Évêque and Livarot in Calvados. Large numbers of horses are raised in Calvados and Orne. Farms are generally small in size, and fields are frequently hedge-lined. On the eastern lowlands around Caen, where farms are larger, cereal farming is important. In addition, many farms grow apples for the manufacture of cider and a cider brandy known as calvados. Vegetables are raised along the northern coast of Manche, and oyster farming is also a coastal activity. Port-en-Bassin and Cherbourg are the most important fishing ports.

William I (Guillaume le Batarde, the Conqueror) was born in Falaise in southern Calvados.

The flavours of Normandy range from coastal to country – think fresh seafood from the English Channel, rich cream from pastoral cows, and juicy apples from Pays d'Auge orchards. Mouth watering? Read on for the full run-down of dishes you need to try on your next visit to Normandy, France.

**Marmite Dieppoise** is a dish that doesn't discriminate against different types of

seafood. In a creamy, salty broth, combining butter, cider and crème fraîche, molluscs, crustaceans and fish unite.

**Meadow-Salted Lamb** (agneau de pré salé) comes from the Bay of the Mont Saint-Michel and parts of the Cotentin Peninsula. Ocean water permeates the fields the lambs graze, resulting in a naturally (very) salted cut of meat.

**Tripes à la Mode de Caen** is the French version of the Haggis. Traditionally, the dish used all four chambers of a cow's stomach, its hooves and bones. The entrails are simmered in the oven for up to 15 hours with root vegetables, garlic and peppercorns, a bottle of cider and a glass of Calvados.

**Trou Normand** is traditionally offered either between meal courses or as a dessert. In a small glass, typically the same type used for cordials, the local liqueur Calvados is poured over a tangy apple sorbet. Calvados serves as a digestif and helps to awaken the appetite, while the apple sorbet softens the flavour without compromising it.

**Omelette à la Mère Poulard** is renowned for its fluffy texture and speculative gourmards believe the white and yellow of the eggs are separated and whipped individually before being combined; cream and butter is then added to the mix and the contents souffléed over high heat in a copper skillet.

**Teurgoule** is a dessert made of rice, cooked in milk and sugar, and topped with nutmeg and cinnamon. The mixture is baked in earthenware for several hours to create a thick, caramelised crème brûlée-like crust.. Teurgoule pairs best with a local cider and fallue, a type of Norman brioche

**Cheeses of Normandy** The abundance of farmland, and its resident dairy cows, give way to some of the best cheeses in all of France. The four classics hail from the communes of Pont-l'Évêque, Livarot, Neufchâtel and Camembert, taking on their respective town's name. Cheese from Normandy tends to be smooth and creamy with a soft rind, is often enjoyed as dessert, and pairs well with the apple-based beverages the region famously produces.

**Andouille de Vire** is a sausage from the Vire region, made from pork, that is cut into strips and smoked over the wood of beech trees for weeks before being encased.

**Normandy Apple Tart** What better use of Normandy's abundance of apples than a good old-fashioned apple tart? The region's apple tart mostly follows a standard recipe, but it adds its own twist with a splash of Calvados and crème fraîche.

**Joue de Bœuf** is a melt-in-your-mouth meal comprising beef-cheek cooked with apples, cider, carrots, onions and a slew of spices and seasonings. The preparation is lengthy, spanning over two days with the finished product a tender and flavourful beef that makes for classic comfort food.

**Coquilles Saint-Jacques** is often eaten as a first course or appetiser, and is a baked-scallop dish served in a creamy sauce, often topped by breadcrumbs.

**Tarte Normande** is a favourite dessert in the region. It is a simple tart and is always a show-stopper thanks to its thinly sliced apples, dash of Calvados, and buttery shortcrust pastry filled with an egg and cream custard. The dish celebrates some of Normandy's finest ingredients, including its dairy and locally grown apples.

**Boudin Noir**, or blood sausage, is one of France's oldest and most revered dishes. Similar to the black pudding available in the UK, although softer and usually smaller, boudin noir is made from pork, spices and pig's blood, which gives the sausage its dark colour.

**Brasillé** is a traditional buttery pastry named after the French word brasier (hot coals or embers). It is brushed with beaten egg, sprinkled with sugar and baked but sometimes comes with a filling of fruit or chocolate.

**Crêpes Normande** are a classic French street food made from flour, eggs and milk that are believed to have originated in Brittany. The traditional Normandy recipe adds sugar to the crêpe batter and a tasty filling of apples cooked in sugar and butter, often served with a dollop of Calvados cream.

## Tarte Normande

Serves 6

### Ingredients

Shortbread

1 egg

200g plain flour

100g sugar

100g butter

pinch of salt

## **Filling**

1kg apples

2 eggs

100g sugar

50g almond powder

200g double cream

50ml Calvados

Flaked almonds

## **Method**

Start with the dough.

In a terrine, beat the egg with a fork.

Add salt and sugar.

Mix with a wooden spatula until it becomes frothy.

Add the flour all at once and mix together roughly with a spatula.

Crumble the dough between your fingers until it becomes granular.

Add the butter in small pieces and knead it.

The dough should no longer stick to your hands (otherwise add a little flour).

Roll out on a floured work surface then place it in your previously buttered tart pan.

If the dough tears, do not panic: reconstitute it with your hands directly in the mould.

You won't see anything once cooked.

If it is hot, reserve in the refrigerator while waiting.

Preheat your oven to 220°C (fan 200C).

Peel and core the apples.

Cut them into 2 to 3mm slices.

No need to pre-cook the apples.

Arrange them directly on the dough, overlapping them slightly.

Start on the outside and work towards the centre using the smallest slices for the centre

In a bowl, beat the eggs.

Add the sugar, then the almond powder, the cream and the calvados.

Pour the mixture over the apples.

Sprinkle with flaked almonds.

Bake in hot oven for 25 minutes.

Unmold and let cool on a rack.

To finish

Serve warm or cold, possibly flambéed with Calvados.

## **Marmite Dieppoise**

Preparation Time:10 mins, Cooking Time:30 mins, Serves 4

## **Ingredients**

500g mussels , cleaned and debearded (discard any that don't close when tapped on the sink)

300ml cider or white wine

Large knob of butter

2 leeks, cleaned and sliced

100g baby button mushroom halved

150ml crème fraîche

4 fillets skin-on sustainable white fish (plaice would be perfect)

Small bunch flat-leaf parsley , chopped

## **Method**

Place mussels and cider or wine in a wide, shallow pan.

Cover and place on a high heat for 3-4 mins, shaking pan a few times until mussels have opened.

Tip into a colander over a bowl to catch the juices.

Discard any that have not opened.

Place the pan back on the heat with a large knob of butter.

Sizzle the leeks for 8 mins until soft, then add the mushrooms.

Add the mussel cooking liquid and crème fraîche and bubble down for 5 mins to reduce by half.

Turn down the heat and add the fish.

Cover and gently poach for 10 mins until cooked, then carefully lift out.

Stir through the mussels and parsley and heat through.

If you want, place the fish back in the pan to serve from the table or place a piece of fish in each serving bowl and spoon everything else around it.

Delicious served with boiled waxy potatoes, such as Pink Fir Apple.