



18 Cher The department of Cher is part of the Centre Region of France. It is said to lie at the true heart of the country. It is renowned for its natural unspoilt beauty, fine food and good wine. It takes its name from the river of the same name which passes through it.

It is an area of diverse landscapes as it includes the vineyards of the Sancerre hillsides, the canals and river valleys of Le Pays de Vierzon, the Marais de la Voiselle (marshlands) near its principle city, Bourges.

Berry's name remains famous throughout France for its vegetables, freshwater fish, cheeses, snails, and wines. Local restaurants will always include at least one dish with their famous green lentil, the Lentille Verte du Berry and their cheeses will include one their five famous goat's cheeses.

Coq au Vin à la Berrichonne – Coq au Vin made with one of the red wines of Berrichonne.

Crème de Lentille Verte du Berry - A cream of lentil soup made with the green lentils of Berry with a mild chestnut flavour,

Cuisses de Grenouilles Flambées à la Crème d'Ail Persillée – Frogs' legs in a cream of garlic sauce flavoured with parsley and flambéed before serving.

Fricassée de Lumas à la Berrichonne is the local Petit Gris snail fried in butter and flavoured with garlic, parsley, sea salt, and pepper, often made with an added local white wine.

Rognon à la Berrichonne, En Croûte – Sweetbreads and kidneys, cooked in a pastry covering in the manner of Berrichonne.

Salade de Lentilles Vertes du Berry au Chaud - A salad made with the green lentils of Berry and warm goats' cheese.

Salade Berrichonne is a warm goat's cheese served with toast, on top of a poached egg, bacon, and tomatoes. The salad is flavoured with nuts, cider vinegar, walnut oil, and a small amount of mustard.

Tarte Berriaude is an apple tart flavoured with a cinnamon cream sauce. Occasionally this dish may be served flambéed with Calvados.

Crémants de Loire are excellent whites and rosés sparkling wines.

Local chefs take full advantage of the freshwater fish from the National Park of Brenne which include carp, pike, eels, pike-perch, freshwater perch, and frogs.

The five most famous cheeses of Berry are

Crottin de Chavignol

Pouligny Saint Pierre

Selles sur Cher

Sainte-Maure-de-Touraine

Valençay

Coq au Vin Rouge

Preparation time; 30 mins, Cooking time; 1 hour, Serves 6

Ingredients

25kg of free-range chicken

24 Onions (small)

2 Garlic cloves

200g bacon

1 tbsp Oil

80g Butter

50ml Cognac

1l Red wine

1 Bouquet garni

200g Paris mushroom

1tbs Flour

Salt

Pepper

Method

Cut the chicken into pieces.

Make a marinade with 1 litre of wine, oil, crushed pepper, chopped parsley, bay leaf, thyme and crushed garlic.

Marinate the pieces of chicken in it for at least 12 hours.

Peel the onions and garlic, crush the latter.

Plunge the bacon in cold water, bring to the boil and cook for 2 minutes, then drain.

Heat 1 tablespoon of oil and 40 g of butter in a casserole dish.

Brown the bacon bits and onions.

Remove them and set aside.

Replace them with the pieces of chicken.

Flip them several times until lightly golden.

Drain them.

Discard the fat from the casserole.

Add the onions, bacon and chicken.

Heat the Cognac, pour it into the casserole dish and flambé .

To Finish

Add the red wine, the bouquet garni and the garlic.

Slowly bring to a boil, cover and simmer for 1 hour.

Meanwhile, clean and finely chop the button mushrooms.

Sauté them in 20 g of butter and add them to the pan.

Continue cooking for 20 minutes.

Prepare a kneaded butter with the flour and the rest of the butter.

Dilute it , in a bowl, with a little hot sauce, then pour little by little into the casserole, stirring.

Cook for another 5 minutes and leave to thicken for 5 minutes, stirring constantly.

Taste and adjust the seasoning.

Serve very hot.

Here`s a Challenge

Cuisses de Grenouilles Sautées a l'ail et au Persil

Preparation time; 20mins, pour 2 personnes

Ingrédients

15 cuisses de grenouilles

2 gousses d'ail pilées

150 g de beurre

50 g de farine

1/2 bouquet de persil finement haché

Préparation de la Recette

Choisir de belles cuisses de grenouilles.

Parer les cuisses de grenouilles.

Préparer tous les éléments. écraser l'ail et hacher le persil.

Fariner les cuisses.

Saisir au beurre noisette. Le mieux est le beurre clarifié.

Retourner lorsqu'on observe la coloration...

... et sauter dans la poêle sans violence.

Ajouter l'ail, mélanger délicatement.

Ajouter le persil et mélanger tout aussi délicatement.

Couvrir et cuire à feu doux pendant 5 minutes.

Servir chaud.

Quelques mots sur cette recette de plat principal

Servir sur assiette, persiller légèrement et envoyer chaud.

On s'abstiendra de surenchérir en beurre.

Se mangent "à la Barbare", avec les doigts... !

Mais avec un rince-doigt pour faire bonne figure...

Comme la panse de brebis farcie, le gigot à la menthe, les sauterelles grillées, les larves, le rat à la broche, le chien en ragoût... chaque peuple aime à montrer devant les autres sa spécificité ancestrale.

De nombreux sociologues ont déjà écrit et continueront encore sur la nourriture dans sa globalité et ses spécificités.

Ceci dit, la chair de la cuisse de grenouille ressemble à une viande volaille et ne provoque aucune extase gustative... toute la saveur réside dans l'assaisonnement A vous de voir !