



2A Corse-du-Sud is an island in the Mediterranean Sea embracing (from 1976) the départements of Haute-Corse and Corse-du-Sud. Corsica is the fourth largest island in the Mediterranean. It lies 170 km from

southern France and 90 km from north western Italy and it is separated from Sardinia by the 11km Strait of Bonifacio. Ajaccio is the capital.

For the most part, the terrain of Corsica is mountainous. About two-thirds of it consists of an ancient crystalline massif that divides the island on a northwest-to-southeast axis. The mountains descend steeply in parallel ranges to the west and to the east the massif falls in broken escarpments to extensive alluvial plains bordering a lagoon-indented coast.

Corsica's vegetation is luxuriant. Much of the island is covered with a scrubby underbrush, or maquis, that is composed of aromatic shrubs, together with holm oak and cork oak in the south. The flowers of the maquis produce a fragrance that carries far out to sea and has earned for Corsica the name the "Scented Isle." Chestnut forests occur at slightly higher elevations, while the Corsican, or laricio, pine dominates the higher elevations. In all, forests cover about one-fifth of the island.

Corsicans take their food and drink very seriously

Meat Dishes

Wild Boar is possibly the island's most celebrated dish -

Civet de Sanglier (Wild boar casserole) is a rich, hearty casserole with the "gamey" flavour of boar, mixed with onions, carrots, garlic, chestnuts, fennel and generous quantities of eau de vie and red wine.

Veau aux Olives (Veal with olives) is a slow cooked stew, full of flavour with tender veal, olives, tomatoes, onions and herbs from the maquis as well as a generous dash of white or rosé wine

Agneau Corse (Corsican lamb) is slow roasted with whole garlic cloves, fresh rosemary and potatoes.

Seafood

On the coast you will find a good selection of fish and seafood. Look out for red mullet (rouget), sea bream (loup de mer) and crayfish (langoustine). Oysters (huitres) are particularly recommended in the east and trout caught in the unpolluted rivers is a good alternative to meat inland.

Dairy

Much of the mountain cooking is based around the locally produced dairy products and in particular the ewe's cheese brocciu which is similar to goat's cheese.

Brousse is a cow's milk alternative which is often available in the summer but is not nearly as good.

Charcuterie

Cured meats are very popular and a wide selection are usually available:

Prisutu - smoked ham

Figatellu/fitonu - liver sausage

Salamu - salami-style sausage

Valetta - cheek

Boudin - black pudding

Fromage de Tête - "head cheese" made from seasoned pigs' brains

Desserts

Most traditional Corsican desserts are milk or egg based:

Beignets - chestnut flour doughnuts, sometimes stuffed with cheese.

Fiadone is a traditional recipe using Corsican brocciu cheese, eggs and chestnut flour that is then flavoured with lemon zest and eau de vie, normally served chilled.

Flan a la Farine de Chataigne (Chestnut tart) - A very simple, yet tasty dessert combining chestnuts, eggs and eau de vie.

Corsican Wine & Beers. Corsica produces several very good wines, which are hardly known outside the island. As a quick guide, wines from Patrimonio, Ajaccio and from near Sartène are outstanding, and the Domaine Vico wines are notable.

The local fortified wines, such as Muscat made from the Muscat grape, or the darker, sweetish herb-rich Cap Corse. Both can be drunk as apéritifs. The island also has its own beers.

Civet de Sanglier Facile

Serves 4

Ingredients

1.5 kg wild boar shoulder, cut into cubes of around 70 g each

Wild Boar Marinade

4 garlic cloves

200g onions

400g carrots

½ head of garlic cut in 2

200g shallots

1 sprig of thyme

1 bay leaf

12 black peppercorns

6 white peppercorns

4 juniper berries

Cloves

1.5 l of good full-bodied red wine

30 cl wild boar juice or poultry juice

1 tablespoon peanut oil

20g butter

Salt, ground pepper

Finishing the Sauce

3 tablespoons of blood

10g 70% sugar free chocolate

20g butter

Garnish

200 g button mushrooms

120g smoked bacon

20g butter

1 teaspoon of oil

Method

Two days before

Marinade

Marinate the wild boar meat.

In a large container, place the wild boar, onions cut into 6, carrots cut into rings, unpeeled crushed garlic cloves, shallots, thyme, bay leaf, peppercorns, juniper berries and the cloves.

Cover with red wine and leave to marinate for 36 to 48 hours.

The day before

Wild boar

Preheat the oven to 150°C (fan 130C)

Drain the wild boar and the aromatic garnish, separating the two well.

In a cast iron casserole dish, heat a tablespoon of peanut oil (quite hot).

Season the wild boar cubes with salt and freshly ground pepper, then brown them in the pan on all sides.

This is an operation that can take between 6 to 10 minutes.

Remove the wild boar from the casserole, degrease, then put the casserole on a low heat.

Add the butter and the well-drained aromatic garnish and sweat for about ten minutes.

Replace the wild boar cubes, sweat for 4 minutes, then deglaze with the red wine from the marinade.

Add the wild boar juice, bring to the boil, cover with a lid, then bake at 140°C.

Leave to cook for at least 2 and a half hours.

Check the cooking of the wild boar

The pieces should be tender and you should encounter no resistance when you prick them with a knife.

Remove the wild boar from the casserole and set aside.

Sauce

Pass the sauce through a strainer in a saucepan, bring to the boil, then reduce by about a quarter.

Garnish

Cut the earthy part off the button mushrooms.

Wash them and cut them into 6.

Cook in a pan with a knob of butter.

Salt and pepper.

Blanch the bacon (starting with cold water), then cool and drain.

Sauté the bacon bits in a pan with a teaspoon of oil: brown them, then drain them on an absorbent cloth.

Bring the Sauce to a Boil

Remove the pan of sauce from the heat, stir in the blood and the square of chocolate.

Stir well with a wooden spatula.

Whip the sauce with 20 g of butter, adjust the seasoning and pour the sauce over the meat.

As soon as the blood is incorporated into the sauce, it should no longer boil.

If the sauce boils at this point, the sauce may end up with small bits of clotted blood and full of lumps.

Finishing

When serving the stew, make sure the meat is hot, as well as the garnish.

Place the meat on a serving platter.

Add the aromatic garnish to the meat and serve immediately.