



34 Hérault is surrounded by the Departments of Aude, Tarn, Aveyron, Gard, and the Mediterranean on the south. The department is geographically very diverse. with beaches in the south.

the Cévennes mountains in the north, and agricultural land in between. Hérault is often described as an open amphitheatre facing the sea. The geography of Hérault is marked by the diversity of its geology and its landscapes. These range from the southern foothills of the Massif Central, to the Mediterranean Sea, through the areas of garrigue and the low plain of Languedoc. It is crossed by several rivers. Along the coast are successive lagoons. The hinterland of the lowlands of Bas-Languedoc is where the vineyard, olive groves and orchards predominate.

Agriculture covers nearly 30% of the department while viticulture, olives, chestnuts, walnuts, plums, apples, vegetables and cereals cover the majority of the rest of the usable land.

Hérault is the second French wine department behind the Gironde, representing 14% of the total area of the department. Well known wines are Saint-Chinian, Faugères, Minervois, Coteaux-du-languedoc, Clairette du Languedoc, Muscat de Frontignan, Muscat de Lunel, Muscat de Mireval, Muscat de Saint-Jean-de-Minervois and Picpoul de Pinet

The Étang de Thau is a Mecca for growing mussels and oysters in the Mediterranean

Artichoke Gratin (Gratin d'artichauts) is made with a combination of artichokes, stale bread, olive oil, garlic, parsley, lemon juice, cayenne pepper, salt, and pepper.

Cargolade is prepared with the local variety of snails stuffed with lard, garlic, and parsley, then seasoned with paprika and salt before they're placed on the grill.

Rouille de Seiche consists of pieces of cuttlefish doused in a tomato-based sauce with onions, white wine, and garlic. The dish is usually finished off with the addition of aioli, which thickens the sauce and provides the typical velvety texture. It is usually served over pasta or alongside rice or polent.

Clapassade can be prepared in many different ways, but all of them contain slowly simmered lamb, honey, olives, and star anise. When cooked it has a liquorice undertone with a slight sweetness from the honey.

Pouteille is made with a combination of pig's trotters, lard, beef, onions, potatoes, shallots, garlic, red wine, grape marc, and bouquet garni. It was traditionally prepared in the baker's oven on Sundays and holidays.

Salade de Poulpe is usually made with tenderized octopus, potatoes, white wine, onions, fennel, capers, parsley, paprika, salt, pepper, olive oil, lemon juice, and vinegar.

Encornets Farcis is a seafood dish consisting of squid stuffed with breadcrumbs, milk, butter, carrots, celery, onions, thyme and parsley. When served, stuffed squid are sometimes accompanied by a delicious sauce consisting of stock, shallots, and butter, flavoured with bay leaves.

Boles de Picolat is meatballs and olives are simmered in a rich sauce with carrots, garlic, ceps mushrooms, tomato purée, and olive oil. The meatballs are often prepared with a combination of pork and beef mince, flour, eggs, and onions fried in olive oil then combined with the sauce. Once prepared, the dish is served with white beans, chickpeas, or rice on the side.

Bourride is made with white fish such as mullet, mackerel, sea bass, scallops, mussels or any other type of shellfish. Leeks, onions, celery, and carrots are also added.

Cassoulet comes from the name of the dish used to prepare it, called a cassole and is braised for hours at a low temperature until the meat and beans are soft.

Cargolade

Preparation Time; 15 mins, Cooking Time; 12 mins, Serves 6

Ingredients

72 snails (count 12 snails per person or less if you plan other grills)

salt

Sweet paprika

Thyme powder

150 gr of lard

Method

Melt the lard and set aside.

Prepare a large bowl half filled with fine salt, a quarter of a chili and a quarter of thyme, mix.

Dip the cleaned snails in this mixture and shake them to remove the excess.

Prepare a barbecue with vine shoots, until a very hot embers are obtained, without flames.

Arrange the snails side by side on a fine grill and put them to cook.

Sprinkle them gently with a few drops of melted lard.

Cooking lasts between 10 and 12 minutes, depending on the size of the snails and the power of your fire.

Encornets Sarcis à la Sétoise

Preparation Time; 30mins, Cooking Time; 30mins, Serves 6

Ingredients

1 onion

75cl tomato sauce

25cl de vin blanc dry

1 bay leaf + thyme

2 branches parsley

1 pinch saffron powder

2 cloves crushed garlic

olive oil

1 tsp

mustard

pepper

Salt

cognac

12 frozen medium squid

200g minced veal

400g sausage meat

1 egg + 1 yolk

1 slice bread soaked in a little milk

Method

Defrost the squid. Rinse and dry well.

Mix the ground veal, sausage meat, egg, breadcrumbs, salt, pepper and parsley.

Fill the squid with this stuffing and close with a wooden toothpick.

Brown in a pan with a little olive oil then flambé with cognac.

Set aside.

In a casserole, brown the chopped onion, add the tomato sauce then the white wine, thyme and bay leaf, saffron, salt and pepper.

Add the stuffed squid. They must be well covered with the sauce. If necessary, add a can of tomato sauce.

Cover and simmer for 30 minutes over low heat.

Just before serving, prepare a rouille (mayonnaise + crushed garlic + 1 ladleful of sauce and gently mix until all incorporated).

Mix with the squid.

Serve with white rice.