



50 Manche is a pretty and wild area of Normandy stretching from Mont St Michel to Cherbourg at the tip of the Cotentin Peninsula. Home to charming seaside towns, a rich maritime heritage and many remnants from D-Day and the battle of Normandy. Manche has a lot of

Norman history to offer visitors. 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. Eastern Manche is a major producer of beef. Dairying is also widespread. Farms are generally small in size, and fields are frequently hedge-lined. On the eastern lowlands, 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 providing sole, mussels, oysters, scallops and lobster.

Cream is essential in several Normandy recipes, such as sole à la Normande, moules à la Normande, and poulet à la Normande. If à la Normande is in the recipe name, it generally means cream is featured in the recipe.

Calvados, a locally made apple brandy recognized as one of the world's best spirits if well matured. It is a very popular apéritif in Normandy as well as a digestif. Pommeau is made from unfermented apple juice and Calvados aged together in oak barrels.

Fresh Oysters and Mussels make the ideal entrée to kick off a meal and are plentiful round the coast. Muscadet makes for the ultimate wine pairing

Coquilles Saint-Jacques are King Scallops harvested in Normandy from October through May.

Andouille de Vire is a flavourful sausage made from the large intestines of pigs cut into thin strips to make the sausage, salted and marinated in brine, smoked and boiled. Typically enjoyed cold, finely sliced, and served with crusty bread. Can be served warm on a salad with cooked apples and Beaujolais

Marmite Dieppoise is a seafood stew featuring mussels, scallops, fish, and crustaceans. The stew is flavoured with butter, cider, a mixture of herbs in a bouquet garni, and crème fraîche. Pairs well with Chablis

Moules à la Normande is a sauce of onions, garlic, parsley, cider, butter, and cream to which the moules are added and served with fries or bread. Chenin Blanc is a good wine with moules

Moules Marinières are steamed in a broth of white wine, garlic, onions, parsley, and other fresh herbs. Match with a vibrant Sauvignon Blanc.

Agneau de Pré Salé has white flesh and a unique, delicate flavour as a result of grazing on the salt marshes. Pinot Noir is a good match

Tripes à la Mode de Caen is made from the cow's stomach cut into strips, layered in a clay pot called a tripière. Cider, Calvados, root vegetables, garlic, and peppercorns are added. Once the lid is sealed it is cooked in the oven for up to fifteen hours until tender and is typically served with boiled potatoes and accompanied by a Merlot

Joue de Bœuf is the cheeks of cow cooked with cider, apples, carrots, onion, and an assortment of spices. Best accompanied by a good Bordeaux wine like Pauillac or Margaux

Camembert is Normandy's most famous cheese. It is soft, creamy, and known for earthy, nutty, grassy, and even fruity flavours.

Livarot is a pungent washed-rind cheese with a rich and nutty taste

Pont l'Évêque is a soft, square-shaped cheese whose earthy, chalky, delicate flavours come from the damp fields where the cows graze.

Crêpes Mylene are made with flour, milk, eggs, and a pinch of salt, filled with sliced pears, rolled, then coated in a sauce of orange juice, lemon juice, almonds, butter, sugar, and plum brandy. Finally, the crêpes are flambéed in plum brandy before serving.

Tarte Normande is made with shortcrust pastry, filled with a sweet, almond-flavoured custard infused with Calvados and topped with slices of apples and baked until golden brown.

Teurgole is a French rice pudding prepared by cooking rice in milk, sugar, nutmeg and cinnamon for a few hours.

Marmite Dieppoise

Preparation Time; 20mins, Cooking Time; 25mins, Serves 4

Ingredients

16 large mussels, scrubbed, bearded

2 tbsp dry white wine

50 g butter, chopped

1 leek, white part only, thinly sliced

½ onion, finely chopped

1 celery stalk, chopped

125 ml dry apple cider

600 g firm fish fillets (red snapper, flathead), cut into 6 cm pieces

12 green prawns, peeled, cleaned

12 scallops, roe on

100 ml pouring cream

chervil sprigs, to serve

N.B. Oven temperatures are for conventional ovens. If using fan, reduce the temperature by 20°C.

1 teaspoon equals 5 ml; 1 tablespoon equals 15 ml; 1 cup equals 250 ml.

All herbs are fresh (unless specified) and cups are lightly packed.

All vegetables are medium size and peeled, unless specified.

All eggs are 55-60 g, unless specified.

Method

Place mussels and wine in a large saucepan over high heat.

Cover and bring to the boil, shaking pan occasionally.

Cook for 6 minutes or until mussels have opened.

Strain, reserving 60 ml cooking liquid.

Remove mussel meat from shells, discarding shells, and set aside.

Melt butter in a large deep frying pan over medium heat.

Add leek, onion and celery, and cook for 5 minutes or until softened.

Add 60 ml cider and place fish on top of onion mixture.

Cover with a large sheet of baking paper and cook for 6 minutes, turning fish halfway, or until fish is just cooked.

Transfer fish to a serving plate and keep warm.

Add remaining 65 ml cider to the pan with reserved mussel liquid.

Top with prawns and scallops, cover with baking paper and cook for 4 minutes or until prawns are just cooked.

Transfer prawns and scallops to plate with fish.

Add cream to the pan and bring to the boil.

Cook for 2 minutes or until sauce starts to thicken.

Season with salt and pepper, add mussel meat and cook for a further minute or until heated through.

Serve fish, prawns and scallops topped with mussel and onion mixture, and scattered with chervil sprigs.

A bottle or two of Muscadet Sur Lie from the Loire is a great accompanying wine with this recipe,