



59 Nord Flatlands predominate in the north, with much of the land lying below sea level. The hills of Cambrais and Avesnois rise to the southwest and southeast, respectively, but elevations rarely exceed 200 metres. The area is drained by the Canche, Schelde and Sambre rivers. A mild and humid climate prevails.

Agriculture is highly mechanized and employs only a small percentage of the workforce.

Farmland in the north tends to be enclosed, while that in the south tends to be open. The leading crops are wheat, barley, sugar beets, and potatoes. More specialized crops include flax, vegetables, and hops. The region is a leading producer of pork. It also has an important dairy industry. Boulogne is a major fishing port, but the activity declined in the late 20th century.

Mimolette is a semi-hard cheese also known as boule de Lille made from cow's milk. It is characterized by its orange colour, fruity aroma, and chewy texture, while the flavour is nutty, salty, and buttery with a fudgy finish.

Palets de Dames are typically covered with apricot jam and lemon-flavored sugar icing, while some varieties are flavoured with rum, vanilla, or aniseed or studded with currants

Maroilles is a soft cheese made from cow's milk with a reddish-orange rind, a nutty, mushroomy taste and the texture is soft and oily. As it is a strong cheese (nicknamed "old stinker"), pair it with red wine, light beer or a French cider.

Bêtise de Cambrai is a popular candy originally with minty flavour, but now there is apple, chocolate, violet, and cherry. The candies are usually decorated with a caramel stripe which gives them extra sweetness.

Ail Fumé d'Arleux is a pink spring garlic smoked to preserve the bulbs. Arleux garlic cloves are dark pink and after being smoked for at least seven days, develop a unique, pleasant smoky aroma. Some of the favourite local recipes include .roasted garlic chicken, garlic soup and garlic bread

Le Potjevleesch (small jar of meats) consisting of four different types of meat marinated in white wine or beer, before cooking. It is served cold wrapped in a delicate jelly, served with French fries and a variety of salad leaves.

Le Potjevleesch

Preparation Time; 15mins, Cooking Time; 3hrs, Serves 6

Ingredients

- 500gr onion
- Bunch of thyme
- pepper
- salt
- white wine or wine vinegar
- water
- 300g chicken
- 300g of veal (flank)
- 300g rabbit
- bacon
- laurel

Utensils

- 1 salad bowl
- 1 saucepan

Method

Cut the onions into rings.

In the bottom of the saucepan, put a layer of onion rings, salt, pepper, thyme and bay leaf.

Then alternate the layers of meat (chicken, rabbit, veal or lean bacon).

Add a layer of onion and condiments.

Continue like this, alternating onions/meat.

Pour a mixture of water and white wine or water and vinegar in equal proportions (the meat must be completely covered).

Bring to a boil and cook over low heat.

If necessary, add a little water/white wine or water/wine vinegar mixture.

Let cool.

Then place the terrine in the fridge for at least 12 hours so that the jelly can set properly.

Waterzooi

This traditional Flemish fish dish from Ghent straddles that notional territory between a soup and a stew. Some modern versions use both chicken and fish, but this Waterzooi recipe follows a deliciously old-fashioned all-fish formula. Serve with fresh, crusty bread to mop up the deeply flavored broth.

Preparation Time: 30 mins, Cooking Time: 20 mins, Serves 2

You will need:

A mixing bowl

A frying pan

A saucepan

A stock pot or large Dutch oven

The shrimp are brown shrimp called Hollandse garnalen, a species found in the northeastern Atlantic Ocean and North Sea.

Ingredients

300 gr potatoes, peeled

2 tablespoons (30 grams) unsalted butter

1 stalk celery, finely sliced

1 carrot, finely sliced

1 onion, finely sliced

1 leek, finely sliced

200 ml fish stock

150 gr plaice fillet, skinless, cut into pieces

150 gr haddock fillet, skinless, cut into pieces

100 gr mussels, cleaned, see tips below

1 large egg yolk

100 ml cream

100 gr shrimp, peeled, or 300 gr unpeeled shrimp

1 tablespoon finely chopped chives
Salt, to taste
Freshly cracked black pepper, to taste.

Method

Boil the potatoes in salted water until cooked.

Heat the butter in a frying pan.

Add the celery, carrot, and onion and cook the vegetables for 3 to 5 minutes, or until they are soft and glazed.

Now add the leeks and cook for another 2 minutes.

Add the stock to the vegetable mixture and allow it to infuse for 3 minutes.

Gently poach the fish fillets in the broth for 3 to 5 minutes.

Add the mussels after 1 minute.

Remove the seafood from the pan once the mussels have opened and set aside.

Strain the stock into a saucepan.

Set the vegetables aside to use later.

Whisk the egg yolk with the cream in a bowl.

Put the stock back on the heat and, once it reaches boiling point, add the cream and egg mixture to thicken the stock and create a sauce.

Now mix well with a whisk and make sure the sauce does not come to the boil again.

Tip: Most mussels sold today have already been cleaned and debearded. If your mussels haven't been cleaned, simply use a knife or wire brush to scrape off any barnacles on the shells. Debeard the mussels by pulling off any strands. Place the mussels in a colander and rinse thoroughly under cool water. Discard any that have broken shells. Tap the open mussels on a hard surface and if they do not close within a few moments, throw them out too.