



73 Savoie is dominated by the Vanoise mountain range, the second most important one in France after that of Mont Blanc. The Val d'Arly and beautiful Beaufortain (renowned for its Beaufort cheese) form the link between Savoie and Haute-Savoie. The Isère valley circles the Vanoise to the north, the Arc valley to the south.

Savoie, like Haute-Savoie, is famed for its world-class ski resorts including Courchevel, Méribel and Val Thorens and Val d'Isère. Situated just south of Switzerland's Lake Geneva, the region is almost purely Alpine mountain landscape.

Much of the region's limited farmland is devoted to cattle raising and dairying, and cereals, vines, and fruit (apples).

Forests are an important resource, and cheese making and sawmilling are important industries. Traditional chalets in the northwest of Savoie are built of wood, while the chalets in the high Alps are largely built of stone. Farms tend to be highly fragmented.

The regional cuisine relies heavily on cheese, freshwater fish, crayfish, mushrooms, potatoes, and fruit. Cheeses are known as *tommes* and are packaged in tight balls with a tough rind.

Gratins are prepared with potatoes, eggs, and bouillon.

Saint-Jean-de-Port and Montmélian produce distinctive red wines; the Marc de Savoie is a fine gentian bitters.

Savoyarde cooking relies exclusively on products and ingredients from the area and, because of this, is unmistakably authentic. Staple ingredients include potatoes, which were grown over the summer and stored during harsh winters, and cheeses.

Cheeses include Beaufort, Tome and Reblochon.

Cured meats also form a large part of the Savoyarde fare and feature in a number of traditional recipes. **Gratin de Crozets** is made with onions, lardons, crème fraîche, chicken stock, grated cheese such as Gruyere, Comte, or Beaufort, and crozets – a local pasta.

Tomme de Chèvre is made from raw goat's milk with a creamy, pliable, and smooth texture. The aromas are pungent, barnyardy, earthy, and goaty, while the flavour is fruity, sweet, citrusy, and nutty on the finish.

Diot is a traditional sausage made from minced pork seasoned with salt, pepper, and nutmeg. There are small and large, fresh and smoked diots, and they can be boiled, grilled, or braised.

White Vermouth is somewhere between dry and sweet. Typical aromas include vanilla, herbaceous and floral notes. White vermouth can be used in cocktails, but it also makes a great aperitif, preferably served on the rocks.

Chocolate Truffles are made with ganache shaped into a ball, dipped in chocolate, and rolled in cocoa powder. Additional flavours such as peanut butter, cognac, champagne, caramel, fruits, or nuts are added to the ganache.

Fondue Savoyarde is made with melted cheeses, usually Gruyère, Beaufort, Emmentaland Comté.

Tartiflette is made with medium-sized potatoes, white wine, Reblochon cheese, onions, smoked salt pork (lardons fumés), and often crème fraîche. The dish is baked in the oven until the cheese browns and melts.

Beaufort is a hard cheese made from raw cows milk, matured for four to five months. It`s rind dressed with salt and brine. There are three types produced, depending on the time of year.

Chocolate Truffles

These chocolate truffles are extra creamy with the addition of butter. After mixing the ingredients together, let the mixture set in the refrigerator, then roll into balls. You can coat in your favourite toppings and add lots of fun flavours, too. The mixture gets a little sticky.

Ingredients

250g quality chocolate bars

160ml double cream

Optional: 1 Tablespoon unsalted butter, softened to room temperature

Optional: 2 teaspoon pure vanilla extract

Toppings: unsweetened cocoa powder, sprinkles, crushed nuts, melted or tempered chocolate

Method

Place the chocolate in a heat-proof bowl.

Set aside.

Heat the double cream until it is simmering. (You can heat it on the stove or in the microwave).

Add the butter, if using, to the chocolate and pour the heavy cream evenly on top.

Let the warm cream and chocolate sit for 5 minutes.

Add the vanilla extract then stir until the chocolate has completely melted.

Place a piece of plastic wrap directly on the surface and refrigerate for 1-2 hours.

Tip: Pour into a flat shallow dish, such as a 200 x 200mm baking pan, so the mixture evenly and quickly sets.

Scoop the set truffle mixture into walnut-sized mounds.

Roll each into balls. This gets a little sticky.

Roll each into toppings, if desired.

Truffles taste best at room temperature! Cover tightly and store truffles at room temperature for 3-4 days or in the refrigerator for up to 2 weeks.

Notes

Freezing Instructions

For longer storage, freeze up to 3 months with or without toppings.

Thaw in the refrigerator, then bring to room temperature, if desired, before enjoying.

Make Ahead Instructions

Prepare the truffle mixture and spread in tray.

The mixture must chill in the refrigerator for 1-2 hours or up to 3 days. If chilling for longer than 4 hours, let the mixture sit on the counter for several minutes to soften into scoop-able consistency.

Chocolate: Use pure high quality chocolate at least 70% pure

Full Cream: Full cream or whipping cream is the only liquid that will melt the chocolate into the proper truffle consistency.

Butter and Vanilla Extract: Both are optional, but butter makes truffles extra creamy and vanilla extract adds wonderful flavour.

Flavours: Instead of vanilla extract, use 1/2 teaspoon raspberry, coconut, orange, peppermint, or strawberry extract. Or leave out the extract and add 1-2 Tablespoons of your favourite liqueur.

Halved/Doubled: Recipe can easily be halved, but **do not** double. Instead, make 2 separate batches.

Tarteflette

This tartiflette recipe is a traditional dish from the French Alps. Salad and pickles are essential accompaniments, and charcuterie will turn it into a proper meal.

Ingredients

1.2kg (peeled weight) floury potatoes such as maris piper or King Edward, very finely sliced

300g un-smoked free-range bacon lardons, finely chopped

Knob of butter

2 onions, finely sliced

2 garlic cloves, crushed

350g reblochon cheese (from larger supermarkets or cheese shops), cut into long strips

550ml double cream

75ml dry white wine

Charcuterie, pickles and green salad to serve

Method

Drop the sliced potatoes into a large pan of boiling water, cook for 3 minutes, then drain and spread out on kitchen paper.

Allow to steam dry until cool enough to handle.

Set a large frying pan over a medium-high heat and fry the bacon lardons, tossing, until crisp.

Remove and drain on kitchen paper, leaving the fat in the pan.

Add the butter and turn the heat down to low. Add the onions and cook, stirring occasionally, for 10 minutes or until softened and light golden, then add the garlic and cook for 2 minutes.

Kill the heat and stir in the lardons.

Heat the oven to 170°C (fan150°C) gas 3.

Arrange a generous layer of potatoes in a 2 litre gratin dish.

Scatter over some of the bacon and onion mixture, then lay some cheese slices over the top.

Pour over some of the cream and wine, season well with black pepper and a little salt, then repeat the layers until everything is used up.

Don't worry if the mixture isn't completely even on each layer, but you should end up with a top layer of potatoes covered with cream.

Sprinkle with a little sea salt.

Cook the tartiflette for 1 hour 20-30 minutes until golden and crisp on top with the cream bubbling through.

Remove from the oven and leave for 10 minutes before serving.

Serve with charcuterie, pickles and a sharp dressed salad.

Delicious Tips

Make the tartiflette, cook for 50 minutes, then cool and keep in the fridge, covered in cling film, for up to 24 hours. To serve, bring back to room temperature for 3-4 hours, then reheat at the original temperature for 40 minutes or until the cream is bubbling and the top is foaming.