



**81 Tarn** is a quiet and peaceful department and very much a 'transition' between the Mediterranean region to the south-east and the greener, if cooler, regions of south-west France. There is much to enjoy among the towns and villages, set in the steep forested valleys and rolling fields of the region, with highlights including the historical town of Albi and the hilltop village of Cordes-sur-Ciel.

The department is to the east of Toulouse and to the north of Carcassonne in southern France. The region is quiet and peaceful, and has several highlights for visitors, including part of the Natural Regional Parc of the Haut-Languedoc which falls in the south-east of the department.

The transition from north-west to south-east across the department is quite marked in both the scenery and the architecture of the Tarn which changes from the red-brick typical of the Toulouse region to the white stone of the Carcassonne region as you head towards the south-east.

Agriculture is highly varied, reflecting in part the range of different natural conditions found in the area. Beef and dairy cattle raising is widespread, although concentrated primarily in the upland areas of the Pyrenees and the Massif Central. Sheep farming, for the production of Roquefort cheese, is practiced in the Pyrenees and Aveyron. Cereals, predominantly corn (maize), are cultivated in the central lowland areas around Toulouse and in Gers. The districts of Fronton in Haute-Garonne and Cahors in Lot specialize in viticulture. Gers is known for the production of Armagnac. Vegetable and fruit cultivation has developed on a large scale in Tarn-et-Garonne, while the fattening of geese and ducks for the production of foie gras is widespread.

**Chasselas de Moissac** is a white grape. Its flavour is sweet with honey aromas. It is very juicy, has a golden colour. They can be eaten as they are or juiced, for aperitifs (such as the Quercy des îles, with rum, vanilla and spice), and for jams and jellies. It can be served with oysters, quail, in desserts and tarts. Tarn specialities are wide-ranging and full of flavour. Why not try specialities such as Truffles, Cepes, Wild Boar, Veal, Pink Garlic, Echaudés Biscuits, Jambon de Lacaune, Pumpkin Pancakes, Cheeses which can all be accompanied by wines from Gaillac.

On most rivers and lakes (plan d'eau), fishing in the Tarn is popular. Pike (brochet), pike, perch or zander (sander), carpe (carp), roach (gardon), silurid (silure), which apparently tastes like monkfish), faro, rainbow or salmon trout (truite faro, arc-en-ciel or saumon de fontaine).

**The Quercy Melon** has a green skin, turning yellowish. It has a sweet and fruity smell. To enjoy it, simply slice it. You can also make small balls of melon and serve them with a dry white wine.

**Garlic of Lomage** is a big, fleshy white garlic with a strong rich flavour. It is sold either as a garlic braid, individually or in a net. It is a condiment that can be cooked in many ways.

**Pears, Apples and Plums** are plentiful as are kiwi, table grapes, kiwi, melon, apricot and peach  
**Lacaune Ham** can be found whole, in slices or portions. It is from local pork, fed with the grain of the southwest. Finely marbled, it is salty.

**Squash** is a good accompaniment for Lacaune ham. A velvety squash soup sprinkled with diced ham is very tasty.

**Veal of Lauragais** is light and savoury. The best veal comes from the Blonde d'Aquitaine and Limousine breeds.

**Sureau (elderberry)** can be made into jellies, jams, syrups. It is delicious on bread, or with cheese. The syrup is made into an aperitif with white wine or champagne (kir).

**Local Cheeses** include raw milk goats' cheeses. There is the **Secret du Berger**, a light mousse type sheeps' cheese made from raw milk, the ash covered **Pyramide de Brebis** which is square in shape, the **Rouelle du Tarn**, with a hole in the middle, a savoury soft mild cheese, Cabécou, Rondouilié, logs and bricks and small cheese aperitifs.

**The Black truffle** of the Périgord often grows around the roots of oak trees and is approximately 1 to 20cm under the ground.

### **Albigeoise Saffron Tripe**

Preparation Time; 30mins, Cooking Times; 4hrs, Serves 4

#### **Ingredients**

1 onion studded with cloves

1 bouquet garni

2 cloves garlic

1 tbs of oil

1 pinch saffron

1 bunch parsley

flour

capers and pickles

1kg veal or mutton tripe

1 country ham

1 calf's foot or 1/2 pig's foot

#### **Method**

Cut the tripe into squares.

Put them in a pot with the trotters, the studded onion, a piece of ham heel, salt (be careful as the ham is salted), pepper and bouquet garni.

Cover with cold water and cook until all is tender

Do not cover to prevent overflow overflows

Do not use a pressure cooker for the same reasons.

When the tripe begins to soften, drain and strain the cooking liquids.

Reserve a little hot cooking liquids in a cup and add the saffron.

Cut the leg flesh into cubes the size of the tripe pieces.

Dice the ham heel very finely.

Fry it in oil with the diced garlic.

When the aromas become strong, mix in a little flour to thicken.

When the roux is blond add the broth, let it thicken a little

Then add the saffron infusion and chopped parsley as desired.

Finally add the tripe and the foot.

Let cook.

Serve very hot.

Chopped gherkins and capers can be served separately in a bowl.

Steamed potatoes can be added at the very end of cookin