

# 89 Yonne



**89 Yonne** is the first taste of the countryside when you leave Paris. Yonne occupies the north-western part of Burgundy, and includes many of the most important highlights of the region.

The town of Auxerre is the capital of the department. The landscape of the Yonne is one of hedgerows and small fields, of vineyards and forests, and small scale agriculture on the undulating landscape.

There are numerous rivers and small lakes that enhance the landscape and also provide opportunities for swimming, fishing etc.

In the northwest the undulating lowlands of the Paris Basin give way progressively to plateaus of Jurassic origin that stretch in a broad arc from the Nivernais Plateau in the west to the Langres Plateau in the east. They surround the crystalline uplands of Monan and Charolais. These different upland areas are cut by a series of depressions and river valleys that form an important watershed; the Loire and Seine rivers flow northward to the Atlantic Ocean, whereas the Saône has its outlet in the Rhône and ultimately the Mediterranean.

Agriculture is varied. Beef cattle are raised in the upland areas in Nièvre and the western part of Saône-et-Loire, noted for the Charolais breed. Dairy cattle are raised in the east. Large-scale cereal farming is practiced in Yonne and the northern portion of Côte-d'Or.

Along the lower slopes of the Côte-d'Or are the vineyards of Beaune and Nuits producing Clos-Vougeot, Gevrey-Chambertin, Nuits-Saint-Georges, and Pommard. The Yonne valley also produces fine wines, especially Chablis.

**Auxerre** is classified and the town bears the "Ville d'Art et d'histoire" (Town of Art and History) label. On your exploration of this town, you can expect to see the magnificent half-timbered houses, churches and other remarkable buildings. The river Yonne also flows through Auxerre, and the riverbanks are perfect places to relax and try water sports.

**Joigny** is surrounded by the Côte Saint-Jacques vineyard and is a town full of gourmet delights. Don't miss a tasting of the great wines and some delicious dishes at the restaurant bearing the same name. This establishment is run by chef with two Michelin stars, Jean-Michel Lorain. You can expect some exquisite cuisine! The art-de-vivre of Joigny can also be experienced in the superb historic centre and on a walk alongside the river Yonne.

**Sens** is another urban treasure of the Yonne. Gothic-style cathedral (the 1st of many in France!), medieval houses, manors, you're likely to get a stiff neck from admiring all these superb places. If your legs need a break from all the walking, go and relax at the Parc du Moulin à Tan: a remarkable garden with animals, arboretum, greenhouses and even two rivers.

**Saint-Florentin** is a cheese made from cow's milk with a slightly salty centre and a very fine texture, usually eaten fresh. Its size is similar to that of a Camembert. You can spread it on bread, adding fine herbs or spices. In the kitchen, it can be used in many savoury and even sweet recipes, such as verrines, veloutés and cakes. When fresh, it is white with no rind. Its mild and tangy taste asserts itself early on. It can also be enjoyed aged, after a few weeks in a damp cellar and regular washing of the rind with salt water. It then becomes much more full-flavoured, its aroma more powerful, and develops a light, beige-orange rind.

**Soumaintrain** is a soft farmhouse cheese made from unpasteurized cow's milk left to mature for 6 weeks and regularly washed with brine and Marc de Bourgogne brandy. Its flavour is powerful, rich, slightly salty and strong, but becomes sweet in the mouth, with hints of beef and garlic. Enjoy Soumaintrain in green salads, sprinkled with black pepper, accompanied with sliced pears and crusty bread, or with Belgian beer or white wine.

**Dôme de Vézelay** is made from raw goat's milk. Underneath its natural rind, the texture is fine, mellow, soft, and creamy and the flavours are subtle at first, with a spicy aftertaste. Pairs well with Dôme de Vézelay with fig jam, honey, and fruity, aromatic white wines such as Meursault or Chablis.

**Gougères** are tiny, hollow pastry puffs made from choux dough and cheese, most commonly grated

**Comté, Emmentaler**, or Gruyère. Can be served cold or at room temperature as an accompaniment to champagne or wine.

**Morvan Ham** is a cured ham with a golden rind, cut into dark pink slices, salted by hand, flavoured with spices and condiments and cured in a drying room for several months.

**Chablisienne Ham** consists of slices of superior ham and a sauce made of Chablis wine, shallots, tarragon, tomato concentrate, crème fraiche and a little flour. Once prepared, the sauce is served piping hot on the ham slices. It's all served with spinach, rice, fresh pasta or potatoes, with a glass of premier cru Chablis wine.

**Chablis Andouillette** is a handmade sausage encased in pig intestine up to three metres long. It has a tender texture with a spicy flavour and is enjoyed grilled, fried, with mustard or Chablis. It can also be an aperitif time, when sliced and served with chilled Chablis.

**Burgundy Snail**, also known as **gros blanc** has a cream-coloured shell and light-coloured flesh both tender and firm. After being cooked in a court-bouillon, the snails are returned to their shells, which are then filled with a mixture of butter, garlic and parsley, then baked for a few minutes, just long enough for the butter to simmer.

## Escargots à la Bourguignonne

The garlicky sauce in this dish is almost as delicious as the escargots themselves; it's hard to think of a better use for crusty bread than sopping up this luxurious "snail butter." But the main event is the escargots' tender texture and clean, woody flavour.

Preparation Time 25 min, Total Time; 30 min, Serves 4

### Ingredients

1 small garlic clove  
Pinch of table salt  
125g unsalted butter, softened  
10ml teaspoons finely minced shallot  
1 tablespoon finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley  
Large pinch of black pepper  
1 tablespoon dry white wine  
12 to 16 snails  
Accompaniment: French bread

### Special Equipment

12 to 16 sterilized escargot shells  
Escargot serving dishes

### Method

Put oven rack in middle position and preheat oven to 230C (fan 210C) 450°F.

Using a heavy knife, mince and mash garlic to a paste with a pinch of table salt.

Beat together butter, shallot, garlic paste, parsley, remaining 1/4 teaspoon table salt, and pepper in a small bowl with an electric mixer until combined well. Beat in wine until combined well.

Divide half of garlic butter among snail shells.

Stuff one snail into each shell and top snails with remaining butter.

Bake snails until butter is melted and sizzling, 4 to 6 minutes.

Serve immediately.

**N.B.** The escargots can be prepared, but not baked, up to 30 minutes ahead and kept at room temperature until ready to bake

If you don't have an escargot serving dish, serve the snails on a bed of kosher salt (to stabilize shells) on a platter. The amount of garlic depends on taste

## **Jambon Persillé**

Parsley ham is a Burgundian recipe that is generally served at Easter time since the 14th century. To make it, you can use different parts of the pig, such as the ham, pig's trotters or shoulder (the blade). It is a dish that can be served as a starter accompanied by a salad or as an appetizer cut into squares.

Preparation; 30 mins, Cooking; 1 hour 45 minutes, Serves 6

### **Ingredients**

1kg Smoked palette

1 Foot Pork

1l Water

500ml White wine

1 Onion

2 Cloves of garlic

Garnish

1 bouquet Parsley

### **Method**

In a casserole dish, pour the water and the wine.

Add the bouquet garni as well as the meat.

Close the pressure cooker then cook for 1h30 after the pressure cooker whistles.

In the meantime, chop the parsley and garlic.

Once the meat is well cooked, remove the pork trotter and the bouquet garni.

Drain the meat and filter the water by pouring it into a container. This is the broth.

Shred the meat using a fork.

Line the bottom of a terrine with the parsley, cover with a layer of meat, then more parsley.

Repeat the operation until the ingredients are used up.

Pour the broth over the meat and place in the refrigerator for 24 hours.

### **Tips**

To make the terrine even better, prepare it at least 48 hours before serving it. It must be very fresh. You can serve it with bread and pickles. You can add a sheet of gelatin to firm up the texture.