



Poisson d'avril

As the French have 'Poisson d'avril' in place of April Fool's Day I shall start with one of my more popular fish dishes, *Trio des Poissons gratinee...*

by Lynda Gee

Three Fish Bake

For each person, allow

80 - 100 g each of salmon and cod fillets (or any other white fish)

4 or 5 cooked peeled prawns

2 or 3 champignons de Paris

pinch of chopped parsley

freshly ground black pepper

approx. 200 g of waxy potatoes

25 g of butter

½ teaspoon of flour

20cl of mixed milk and cream

1 soup spoon of grated cheese.

Firstly poach the fish fillets for around 8 minutes for the cod and 6 for the salmon, drain and leave to one side whilst preparing their 'bed'.

Boil the potatoes until cooked but still firm and allow to cool until it's possible to slice them about 1/3 cm thick. Slice the mushrooms and very quickly brown them in hot butter with a little parsley and ground black pepper. (Mushrooms can be replaced by leeks if preferred.)

Prepare a roux with the butter and flour, when smooth stir in the mixed milk and cream and bring to the boil to make a light sauce adding the grated cheese at the last minute.

Pre-heat your oven to around 180°C.

Line an oven-proof dish (individual or large if you have increased the ingredients to make a family size meal!) with the cooked mushrooms and a few of the sliced potatoes. Break the fish fillets into good bite sized pieces add the prawns and arrange on the bed of mushrooms, spoon a little of the sauce on top and then use the sliced potatoes to cover the fish before pouring the rest of the sauce evenly over the top. Extra grated cheese or light bread crumbs can be sprinkled over the top at this stage if you like.

Place the dish or dishes into the oven and cook for around 20 -25 minutes taking care not to over brown the top.

Serve with crisp green salad and a glass (or two) of white wine.



Fish bake © Flickr/46137

Lynda is better known as 'Ginger's Kitchen' and provides a full at-home catering service. (See advert on P.24)

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Chic Peas

Cheesy Chick Peas (serves 2)

one 400 g tin of chick peas,

30 g butter,

1 rounded teaspoon flour,

20 cl milk,

50 g of strong flavoured cheese (eg. mature cheddar, gruyere, beaufort).

Add fresh water to the tin of chick peas, place in a saucepan, bring to the boil and then simmer for around 10 minutes before draining thoroughly.

Make a roux, melting the butter and stirring in the sieved flour until smooth before slowly adding the milk, stirring all the time. Once the sauce has started to thicken, gradually add the grated cheese and keep stirring until it has melted.

Pre heat the oven to 180 – 200° C.

Mix the chick peas into the cheese sauce until fully coated and then place into a gratin dish. Cook in the oven for around 15 minutes until the sauce is golden brown.

These make an unusual alternative to cauliflower cheese and are delicious served with grilled gammon.

Pain d'épices © Flickr/Frédérique Voisin-Demery



Toffee Toast

An easy and tasty dessert using a bought cake as it's base.

1 pre-sliced 'Pain d'Epices' or light ginger bread

1 heaped table spoon of brown sugar

1 teaspoon of butter

boiling water to mix

Firstly place the brown sugar into a cup with the butter cut into small pieces on the top. Pour over enough boiling water to dissolve the sugar and melt the butter stirring the two together. Be careful to make sure that the sugar is dissolved but that the mixture is more toffee than liquid. This is best prepared a few hours or the day before and left to cool and set a little.

Allow 2 or 3 slices of cake per person.

Lightly toast the slices of cake, (more on one side), then, spread the toffee onto the lighter side and place back under the grill just until hot and melted. Take care not to brown (or even burn !) the toast too much.

Serve immediately with a scoop of caramel, vanilla ice cream or just cream.