



Smithsonian Associates

## In the French Kitchen: Yesterday and Today

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### Recipes

#### BÛCHE DE NOËL

This wonderful holiday cake has many moving parts, but you'll see that each one is very simple. Consider it like putting together a piece of furniture from you-know-who...it's a step-by-step process! And what you get as a result is so impressive and delicious, you'll wish for the holidays all year round! I recommend making this early in the morning of the day it is to be served, so the flavors have a chance to mellow.

For the pastry cream:

5 egg yolks  
6 tablespoons (75g) vanilla sugar  
¼ cup (35g) all purpose flour  
Pinch of fine sea salt  
1-1/2 to 1-3/4 cups (375-425ml) milk, preferably whole  
1 cinnamon stick (3-inches; 7.5cm) long

For the ganache:

1-1/4 cups (310ml) heavy cream or crème fraiche  
10 ounces (300g) semi-sweet chocolate (52-54%)

For the cake:

7 large eggs, separated, at room temperature  
1 cup (200ml) vanilla sugar  
1-1/4 cups (185g) all-purpose flour  
1 teaspoon baking powder  
½ teaspoon fine sea salt  
1 teaspoon vanilla extract  
1 tablespoon confectioner's sugar

1. Make the pastry cream: whisk the egg yolks with the sugar in a medium-sized bowl until they are thick and le mon-colored. Whisk in the flour and the salt and set aside.
2. Make the ganache: place the cream in a small saucepan over medium heat. Add the chocolate and stir it into the cream. Melt the chocolate and the cream together, stirring often. As the chocolate melts stir it continually until the mixture is homogeneous. Remove from the heat.

3. Place 1-1/2 cups (375ml) cups of the milk and the cinnamon stick in a medium-sized saucepan over medium-high heat. Scald the milk by heating just until little bubbles for around the edge of the milk. Remove the pan from the heat, cover, and set aside to infuse for 15 minutes.
4. Return the milk to the scalding point over medium-high heat, and then gradually whisk it into the egg yolk mixture. Return this mixture to the saucepan, and cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until it comes to a boil. Continue cooking for at least 2 minutes, until the pastry cream thins slightly and the flour taste has cooked out of it. Remove the pan from the heat, transfer the pastry cream to a bowl, cover, and set aside to cool.
5. Preheat the oven to 375F (190C). Line a 17 x 11 x 1-inch (42.5 x 27.5 x 2.5cm) jelly roll pan with parchment paper. Dust the parchment lightly with flour.
6. Prepare the cake: Whisk together the egg yolks and  $\frac{3}{4}$  cup (150g) sugar until the mixture is thick and lemon colored.
7. Sift the flour, baking powder, and the salt together onto a sheet of waxed paper. Remove the whisk and using the paddle attachment, add the dry ingredients to the egg mixture at low speed, mixing until just incorporated. Add the vanilla, mix quickly and thoroughly, and set aside (the mixture will be quite thick).
8. In a separate bowl, whisk the egg whites with a pinch of salt until they are foamy and beginning to turn white. Gradually add the remaining  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup (50g) sugar and continue whisking until the egg whites are glossy and form stiff points.
9. By hand, fold one fourth of the egg whites into the batter until incorporated, then fold in the remaining egg whites, being careful not to overmix, but making sure they are thoroughly incorporated.
10. Spread the batter over the parchment paper in the jelly roll pan. Place the pan in the center of the oven and bake until the cake is golden and the top springs back when lightly pressed, about 8 minutes.
11. While the cake is baking, sift the tablespoon of confectioners' sugar onto a clean kitchen towel that is spread out on a counter.
12. Remove the cake from the oven and immediately invert it onto the sugar-dusted towel. Peel off the parchment paper from the cake, and starting from one short side, roll up the cake in the towel. Allow it to cool for about 30 minutes.
13. When the cake has cooled, unroll it. Trim off about 1-inch (2.5cm) from each end (or to the size you want your bûche) and save the trimmings!
14. If necessary, reheat the pastry cream just until it is spreadable consistency, remove and discard the cinnamon stick, and spread an even layer on the cake. Carefully re-roll the cake and place it, seam side down, on a work surface or a platter.
15. Now the fun begins! Spread an even, and fairly thick, layer of the ganache over the cake, making sure to frost the ends., reserving about  $\frac{1}{4}$  cup (60g) of the ganache. Take one of the trimmed ends of the cake (which should still be in a round) and

place it on the top of the cake but right at the edge, pressing it gently into the ganache. Frost it with ganache, which will harden as it cools and become the “glue” which holds the little whorl on the cake.

16. Using a fork, make striations the length of the cake, and in rounds at either end and on the top of the “whorl” to mimic tree bark! Have fun with this!
17. To decorate with mushrooms, gently make a hole in the bottom of several mushroom caps (use a chopstick or the point of a knife) and fit stems into the mushroom caps. If necessary, use some ganache to “glue” the caps to their stems. Decorate with the mushrooms while the ganache is still slightly soft, so you can gently press them into it to make sure they remain upright.
18. Once the ganache is set, your bûche de Noël is ready to serve, though it is best if it sits a few hours so the flavors have a chance to mellow.

## CHICKEN IN THE POT WITH FRESH FARM VEGETABLES POULE AU POT

For the Chicken:

One large 4 to 4-1/2lb. (2 to 2.25kg) chicken or stewing hen  
2 good-sized (about 7 ounces; 210g each) carrots, peeled  
2 leeks (each about 4 ounces; 125g) white and pale green parts only, well rinsed  
20 sprigs fresh thyme  
1 fresh or dried, imported bay leaf  
12 ounces (375g) celery root, trimmed, peeled, and diced  
8 cups (2 liters) chicken stock (see page xx)  
5 black peppercorns  
1 tablespoon coarse sea salt

For serving:

12 ounces (375g) celery root, cut into 2 x 1/4 inch (5 x 1/2cm) sticks  
2 fat leeks or 4 thin leeks, white parts only, well rinsed and cut into 2-inch (5cm) lengths  
10 sprigs fresh thyme  
Herbs, for garnish

1. Remove the giblets from the bird and reserve them for another purpose. Salt and pepper the cavity and truss the bird.
2. Tie the carrots and leeks, thyme sprigs and the bay leaf into a bundle, using kitchen twine. Add it to the stockpot along with the chunks of celery root. Add the chicken stock, then enough water to just cover the bird. A small part of the chicken will be sticking above the water, but it will sink below the surface as the vegetables cook. Add the peppercorns and the salt and bring to a boil over high heat. Reduce the heat so the liquid is boiling gently, above a simmer but not at a full boil, partially

cover, and cook until the chicken is cooked through and the vegetables are tender, about 2 hours.

3. Remove and discard the bundle of vegetables. Discard the celery root as well. Add the remaining celery root, leeks, and carrots to the stockpot holding the chicken, along with the thyme sprigs, pushing them under the liquid. Cook until the vegetables are nearly tender, about 30 minutes. Remove from the heat.
4. Remove the chicken from the stockpot and remove the trussing string from the chicken.
5. Remove the meat from the chicken breast and cut it on the bias into 1-inch thick (2.5cm) slices. Much of the meat may fall from the rest of the bones if the chicken. Arrange these, along with any pieces of the chicken that are still intact, and the breast meat, on a warmed platter. Strew the vegetables over the meat, moisten with a bit of the broth, and keep warm.
6. Serve bowls of broth and then follow with the chicken and vegetables, which you've meanwhile garnished with the herb sprigs.

6 to 8 servings

## POTAGE

Iconic, heart-warming, the beginning of most winter meals in the French family home, potage is nourishing, comforting, economical. Use the vegetables YOU have on hand. The French cooks makes this fresh every day; if you're making it for the week, avoid brassicas and roots like turnips and rutabaga. They get bitter overnight.

4 leeks, trimmed, cleaned, diced  
2 medium carrots, peeled, trimmed, diced  
1 medium starchy potato, peeled, diced  
1 fennel bulb, trimmed, diced  
3 Jerusalem artichokes, peeled, diced  
1 small onion, peeled, diced  
3 fresh or dried, imported bay leaves  
3 cloves garlic, peeled, green germ removed  
10 sprigs fresh thyme  
10 black peppercorns  
Coarse sea salt  
Extra virgin olive oil or crème fraîche

1. Place all the vegetables, herbs, and peppercorns in a large saucepan and cover by 2-inches with water. Add 2 teaspoons coarse sea salt, stir, and bring the water to a boil over medium-high heat. Reduce the heat so the water is simmering, partially cover and cook until the vegetables are tender through, about 25 minutes.

2. Remove the bay leaves, and purée the vegetables using a wand blender. If the potage is too thick, add water to get the consistency you prefer. Taste and adjust the seasoning. Serve, drizzled with olive oil or with a dollop of crème fraîche.

6 to 8 servings