GINETTE MATHIOT

CLASSIC FRENCH RECIPES

PHAIDON

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EGGS IN MEURETTE SAUCE

ŒUFS EN MEURETTE

Preparation time: 10 minutes
Cooking time: 25 minutes
Serves 6

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This specialty from Burgundy consists of poached, soft, or hard-boiled eggs served in a red wine sauce and garnished with fried garlic-rubbed bread. The name of the sauce, including the bread garnish, was codified by the chef and food writer Auguste Escoffier in 1928. The name's origin is debatable: among other possibilities, it may derive from the Latin *moretum*, a Roman sauce mentioned by Ovid (only quite different), or from the archaic adjective *moret*, meaning "dark." The eggs can be poached in the wine before the sauce is made, and kept warm in a bowl of salted warm water. Select a Mâcon red or Beaujolais wine to make the sauce and accompany the dish.

For the eggs
6 eggs
3 tablespoons white wine vinegar (optional, if poaching the eggs)

For the meurette sauce
3 cups/25 fl oz (750 ml) red wine
1 small onion, finely chopped
1 shallot, finely chopped
1 sprig of thyme
1 bay leaf
2 sprigs flat-leaf parsley
5 tablespoons/2½ oz (70 g) butter
2 tablespoons/½ oz (15 g) flour
salt and pepper

For the fried bread
6 slices bread
butter, for frying
½ clove garlic

Make the eggs: Bring a small pan of water to a boil and add a pinch of salt. Gently lower the eggs into the boiling water and boil for 10 minutes to hard-boil, or for 5 minutes to soft-boil. Remove the eggs with a slotted spoon and plunge into cold water. Peel and discard the shells. Alternatively, poach the eggs: pour 12 cups/5¼ pints (3 liters) of water and the vinegar into a pan and bring to a boil, then reduce to a gentle simmer. Crack each egg into a cup or ramekin, then let it slide into the water so that it is just covered. If necessary, spoon the white back over the yolk. Simmer gently for 3½ minutes. Meanwhile, prepare a bowl of salted warm water. Remove the eggs with a slotted spoon and keep warm in the salted water.

Make the meurette sauce, put the wine, onion, shallot, thyme, bay leaf, and parsley in a pan. Bring to a boil, then reduce the heat and simmer until reduced by half.

Place the flour and 2 tablespoons/1 oz (25 g) of the butter into a small bowl. Work the butter into the flour to make a smooth paste, called a "beurre manié." Whisk this into the wine and then boil for 1 minute to thicken. Whisk in the remaining butter. Strain the sauce through a sieve into a fresh bowl. Discard the solids. Season the sauce with salt and pepper.

Make the fried bread: Melt a little butter in a skillet or frying pan and place one or two slices of the bread in the pan. Fry on both sides for a few minutes, then rub the slices with the garlic. Repeat for the remaining slices of bread.

Place the eggs on top of the fried bread and coat with the sauce.



PÂTÉ IN PASTRY

PÂTÉ EN CROUTE

Preparation time: 1½ hours,
plus resting time
Cooking time: 1½ hours
Serves 6

Pâté en croûte—or *pâté-croûte* in Lyon and the Champagne region—is meat and stuffing encased in pie dough (shortcrust pastry). It's a glorious addition to a buffet spread or picnic. A generous slice can also be served at lunch with a green salad. The dish probably originates from medieval times, when a then-nonedible crust simply helped cook and preserve the meat. It was later that scrumptious pastry started to be used as a vessel, blending the traditional arts of charcuterie and pâtisserie. Cooks often take pride in pinching the edges in pretty patterns and shaping decorations with the cuttings.

For the pie dough (shortcrust pastry)
4¼ cups/18 oz (500 g) flour, plus extra for dusting
scant 1 cup/7 oz (200 g) chilled butter, diced, plus extra for greasing
2 teaspoons salt
about ⅔ cup/5 fl oz (150 ml) ice-cold water, to bind the dough

For the filling
7 oz (200 g) thin bacon slices (rashers)
1½–2½ cups/14 oz (400 g) stuffing of your choice (pages xxx–xxx)
11 oz (300 g) ham, sliced
11 oz (300 g) veal, cut into strips
1 egg yolk, whisked, to glaze
salt and pepper

Preheat the oven to 400°F/200°C/Gas Mark 6.

First, make the pie dough (shortcrust pastry): Place the flour in a bowl, make a well in the center, and add the butter and salt. Rub together with your fingers until the mixture has a breadcrumb-like texture. Add enough ice-cold water to just bring the dough together, mixing with your hands. Turn out onto a floured counter and knead well for 5 minutes until the dough is smooth. Form the dough into a ball shape, then place in a clean bowl. Cover and allow it to rest for 12 hours in the refrigerator.

Grease a 12 x 3½ x 3½-inch (32 x 8.5 x 8.5 cm) pâté dish or terrine with butter. Roll out two-thirds of the dough and use it to line the dish, leaving ¾ inch (2 cm) of dough above the rim.

Assemble the filling: Place a layer of bacon slices (rashers) at the bottom, then a layer of stuffing, a little of the ham, then a layer of the veal, seasoning each layer well with pepper. Continue making layers until you have used all the ingredients.

Roll out the remaining dough to create a lid slightly larger than the dish, and use to cover the filling. Pinch the edges of the dough together to seal. Brush with the whisked egg yolk to glaze, and make a hole in the center of the lid, keep it open during cooking with a small funnel made of cardboard. Bake in the oven for 1½ hours, or until deep golden brown.

Remove from the oven and cool completely before serving.



BOILED BEEF (POT-AU-FEU)

BŒUF BOUILLI (POT-AU-FEU)

Preparation time: 25 minutes
Cooking time: 3½ hours
Serves 6

Although its principle is universal, the specific combination of vegetables and accompanying condiments make pot-au-feu unmistakably French, so much so that it has become a symbol of French cooking and a winter favorite in many households. It takes time and must be cooked very slowly, but it does not require much attention. It is comforting but light and vegetable rich. Ideally, choose a mixture of on-the-bone and gelatinous stewing cuts of beef.

2½ tablespoons/1 oz (30 g) fine salt
1¾ lb (800 g) stewing beef on the bone
1⅓ cups/7 oz (200 g) roughly chopped carrots
scant 1 cup/4½ oz (125 g) roughly chopped turnips
¾ cup/3½ oz (100 g) roughly chopped leeks
⅓ cup/2 oz (60 g) chopped parsnips
1 celery stalk, chopped
coarse salt, to serve
Dijon or other mustard, to serve
pickles (gherkins), to serve

Put 12 cups/5¼ pints (3 liters) water and the fine salt in a large Ducth oven (casserole) over high heat and bring to a boil. Carefully put the meat and bones into the boiling water, then reduce the heat and simmer for 15 minutes.

Skim off the fat, and add the vegetables. Bring back to a boil, then lower the heat and simmer for 3 hours.

Just before serving, skim off the fat again and transfer the beef to a serving platter. Pour the soup into a tureen, leaving the vegetables in the pot. Serve the beef in a separate dish, surrounded by its vegetables, with coarse salt, mustard, and pickles (gherkins).



STUFFED CABBAGE

CHOU FARCI

Preparation time: 45 minutes
Cooking time: 2¼ hours
Serves 6

Stuffed cabbage is an example of rustic yet substantial sophistication. Making it requires some time and care, and the result is truly a beauty. Stuffed cabbage leaves exist in many culinary traditions, but in France, the whole cabbage is used. Once ready, it is cut into slices and shared among guests. You could serve it as a family meal but also at a dinner party, accompanied with some simple rice and a red wine from the Loire Valley or Beaujolais. Begin the meal with a light vegetable starter and perhaps Pears in Wine (page 270) for dessert.

For the cabbage
1 × 3¼-lb (1.5-kg) head of cabbage
4½ oz (125 g) bacon slices (rashers)
1 onion, sliced
1 carrot, sliced
scant 1 cup/7 fl oz (200 ml) any broth (stock)
⅓ cup/3½ fl oz (100 ml) white wine
salt and pepper

For the stuffing
¾ cup/4½ oz (125 g) finely chopped unsmoked bacon
¾ cup/4½ oz (125 g) finely chopped pork
1 handful flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped
1½ tablespoons Cognac
salt and pepper

Begin preparing the cabbge: Trim the cabbage, removing any wilted or damaged leaves. Cut a deep cross in the bottom. Bring a large saucepan of salted water to a boil and blanch the cabbage in boiling water for 10 minutes. Drain the cabbage, remove some of the core to expose the ends of the leaves, and drain again with the bottom facing downward.

Prepare the stuffing: Mix all the ingredients, seasoning with salt and pepper.

Stuff the cabbage: Beginning in the center of the cabbage, slip a little stuffing into the bottom of each leaf without pulling the cabbage completely apart. Wrap the bacon slices (rashers) around the cabbage and tie with kitchen twine (string). Put it in a heavy Dutch oven (casserole) with the onion and carrot, and pour on the broth (stock) and wine. Season with salt and pepper, cover with a lid, and bring to a boil, then reduce the heat and simmer gently for 2 hours.

Serve warm.



CLAFOUTIS

CLAFOUTIS

Preparation time: 30 minutes
Cooking time: 35 minutes
Serves 6

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Clafoutis is a pudding from the region of Limousin, in south-central France, but variants exist in neighboring regions. There is a debate in France on whether to pit (stone) the fruit or not: some say it's best not to because the stones yield a lot of extra taste and the cherry juices won't be lost in the pudding; but it's easier to eat the dish without. Clafoutis batter is a little like a pancake batter, which is poured over fruit and then baked. Cherries are the most classic flavor, but other fruits work well too, such as mirabelle prunes, raspberries, or pan-fried slices apples.

butter, for greasing
scant 1 cup/3½ oz (100 g) flour
6 eggs
1 cup/8 fl oz (250 ml) milk
3 cups/1 lb 10 oz (750 g) black cherries, pitted (stoned)
1 tablespoon kirsch
3½ tablespoons/1½ oz (40 g) superfine (caster) sugar
salt

Preheat the oven to 400°F/200°C/Gas Mark 6 and butter an ovenproof dish.

Mix the flour with the eggs and a pinch of salt in a bowl. Add a little of the milk and beat into the batter until light and smooth. Add the remaining milk, a little at a time, beating between additions until the batter falls like a ribbon from the spoon, like crêpe batter.

Stir the cherries and kirsch into the batter. Pour into the prepared dish and bake for 35 minutes until set and top is golden brown.

Remove from the oven, then sprinkle with the sugar. Serve warm or cold.



SAINT-HONORÉ

SAINT-HONORÉ

Preparation time: 1 hour 15 minutes,
plus chilling and cooling time
Cooking time: 45 minutes
Serves 6

Saint-Honoré is the patron saint of pastry chefs. His name was given to this pastry in 1846 by its creator, a *pâtissier* named Chiboust whose store was on the rue du Faubourg-Saint-Honoré, in the center of Paris. Making it is a bit of a pastry masterclass, since it's an architectural dish involving five essential elements of French pastry: choux pastry; pie dough (shortcrust pastry)—or sometimes puff; pastry cream; Saint-Honoré cream; and caramel. If you master Saint-Honoré you can probably make almost any other French pastry. It has also recently enjoyed renewed popularity in France.

For the base
butter, for greasing
1 quantity Choux Pastry (page 42)
flour, for dusting
1 quantity Basic Pie Dough (page 41), chilled
1 egg, beaten
½ quantity Crème Pâtissière (page xxx)
1 cup/7 oz (200 g) superfine (caster) sugar
whipped cream or vanilla ice cream, to serve (optional)

For the Saint-Honoré Cream
2 gelatin leaves or 1 teaspoon/¼ oz (6 g) powdered gelatin
2 egg yolks
¼ cup/1¾ oz (50 g) superfine (caster) sugar
1 tablespoon/¼ oz (10 g) flour
½ cup/4 fl oz (125 ml) milk, warmed
1 teaspoon vanilla extract
2 egg whites

Make the base: Preheat the oven to 400°F/200°C/Gas Mark 6 and grease 2 baking sheets with butter.

Place the choux pastry into a pastry (piping) bag fitted with a large plain tip (nozzle).

Dust a work counter with flour and roll the pie dough (shortcrust pastry) out to a thickness of ¼ inch (5 mm). Cut into a 9-inch (23-cm) round and place on one baking sheet. Prick all over with a fork and brush with the egg.

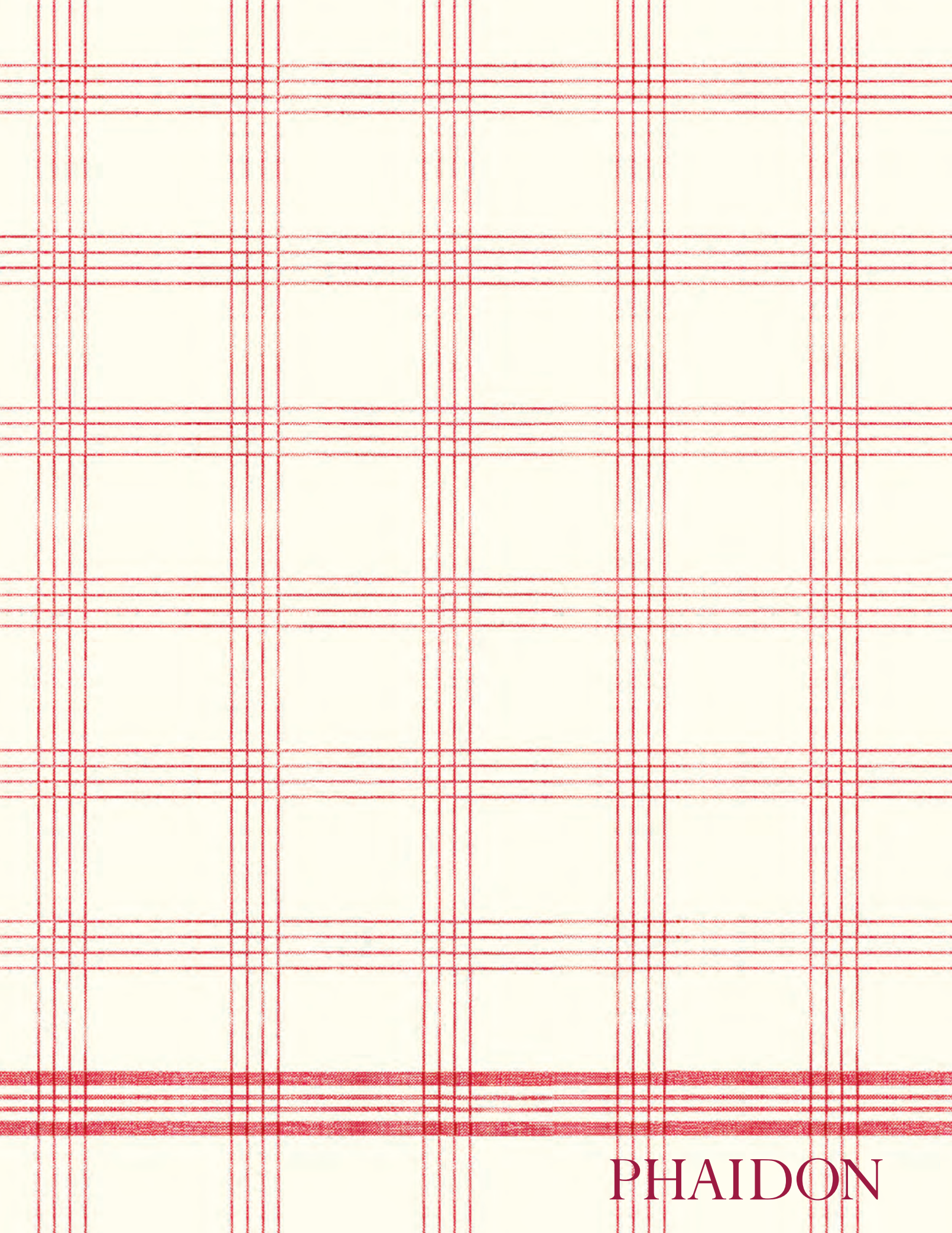
Starting 1 inch (2.5 cm) inside the edge of the round and using half of the choux pastry, pipe it in a spiral onto the pie dough, finishing in the center, leaving space between the lines to allow it to puff up in the oven. Use the remaining choux pastry to make small choux buns, piping them onto the other baking sheet. Place both in the oven and bake for 15 minutes, then remove the choux buns and continue cooking the dough round for another 5–10 minutes until golden and cooked through. Once cooled, fill the small choux buns with the crème pâtissière.

With 1 cup/7 oz (200 g) superfine (caster) sugar, make a light caramel (see page 49). Carefully dip the buns in the caramel, then immediately stick them around the outer edge of the dough round.

Make the Saint-Honoré cream: Soak the gelatin leaves in a cold water for 5 minutes, or if using powdered gelatin, sprinkle it into ¼ cup/2 fl oz (60ml) cold water, and leave to bloom for 5 minutes. Place the egg yolks and sugar in a heatproof bowl set over a pan of barely simmering water. Whisk for 2–3 minutes until pale and thick, then add the flour, milk, vanilla, and the well-drained gelatin leaves or the softened powdered gelatin. Cook the custard until it has thickened, without allowing it to boil. Remove from the heat and let cool. Whisk the egg whites until they form stiff peaks and fold them gently but thoroughly into the lukewarm custard.

Fill the center of the cake with the Saint-Honoré cream. Serve immediately.

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