

Delicious and Easy Authentic French Recipes

Bacon and Onion Quiche (Quiche aux Oignons et Lardons)

Serves 8 | Prep. time 30 min | Chilling time 1h 30 min | Cooking time 2 h

Ingredients

For the pastry

- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper
- 1 ½ cups cold unsalted butter, cut into small pieces
- ½ cup cold water

For the filling

- 4 thick slices bacon
- 1 large onion, sliced
- 3 large eggs
- ¾ cup whole milk
- ½ cup crème fraîche (or full fat sour cream)
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1 ¼ cups cheddar cheese, shredded
- 2 tablespoons chopped fresh dill

Preparation

1. Make the pastry. In a mixing bowl, combine the flour, salt, and pepper. Cut in the butter until it is pea-sized.
2. Add the water, and mix with a fork just to combine. When it can be formed into a ball, wrap it in plastic and refrigerate for 1 hour.
3. Roll out the dough on a lightly floured surface to about a 12" circle, and fit it into your quiche pan or pie plate. Trim the edges, and refrigerate for 30 minutes.
4. Heat the oven to 375°F. Cover the pastry with foil, and fill it with dried beans or pie weights. Bake for 45 minutes, and remove the weights and cook for 20 minutes longer, until nicely browned. Remove it to a cooling rack and reduce the heat to 325°F.
5. In a skillet over medium heat, cook the bacon. When it is crisp, remove it to a plate lined with paper towels.
6. Clean out the pan except for 2 tablespoons of drippings. Sauté the onion until it is very soft, about 10 minutes. Remove the pan from the heat and let it cool.
7. In a medium bowl, whisk the eggs and add the milk. Mix in the sour cream or crème fraîche and the salt and red pepper flakes.
8. Spread the onion in the pastry, and layer on the bacon and cheese. Pour in the egg mixture.
9. Bake for 35 minutes, or until the eggs are set. Remove it from the oven and let it cool before serving. Sprinkle with dill before serving.

French Black Olive Spread (Tapenade)

Serves 8 | Prep. time 10 minutes

Ingredients:

- 2 cups olives niçoises, or a dark olive
- ½ cup capers
- ¼ cup anchovy fillets
- ¼ cup shallots, chopped
- 1 tablespoon fresh thyme
- 1 teaspoon fresh oregano
- 1 tablespoon lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest
- 1 teaspoon coarse ground black pepper
- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil (approximate)
- Crackers or toasted baguette slices for serving

Preparation

1. Begin by thoroughly rinsing the olives, capers, and anchovy fillets to remove excess salt.
2. Gently pat each dry and place in a blender or food processor.
3. Add the shallots, thyme oregano, lemon juice, lemon zest, and ground black pepper.
4. Blend or chop, slowly adding in the olive oil just until a spreadable paste forms. Use more or less olive oil depending upon personal preferences.
5. Remove from the blender or food processor and place in a serving bowl.
6. Serve with crackers or toasted baguette slices.

Chicken Cordon Bleu (Poulet Cordon Bleu)

Serves 4 | Prep. time 15 minutes | Cooking time 25 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 cup bread crumbs
- 2 tablespoons butter (melted)
- 2 teaspoons fresh thyme, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 4 (5-ounce) boneless, skinless chicken breasts
- 4 large, thin slices ham
- 1 cup Gruyere cheese, grated
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- ¼ teaspoon cayenne pepper
- ¼ teaspoon ground sage
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 3 eggs

Preparation

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F and coat a baking pan with cooking spray.
2. In a mixing bowl, combine the breadcrumbs with the melted butter, thyme, and garlic. Set aside.
3. Place the chicken pieces on a cutting board, and pound them to ¼-inch thickness.
4. Layer a slice of ham on the chicken, and cover with a quarter of the cheese. Starting at the small end, roll the chicken up tightly, and secure with toothpicks. Repeat with the other three chicken breasts.
5. In a mixing bowl, combine the flour, cayenne pepper, sage, salt, and pepper.
6. Crack the eggs into a clean bowl and beat well.
7. One at a time, dredge the chicken in the flour mixture and shake off any excess. Dip them into the egg, and then the breadcrumb mixture. Arrange them on the baking pan.
8. Bake for 25 minutes, or until the chicken reaches an internal temperature of 165°F.

Duck Breast in Sweet Lavender Sauce (Maigret de Canard Parfumé à la Lavende)

Serves 4-6 | Prep. time 10 minutes | Cooking time 20 minutes

Ingredients

- 4 duck breasts
- ½ teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon coarse ground black pepper
- 2 tablespoons lavender honey
- 2 tablespoons shallots, diced
- ½ cup sweet white wine
- 2 cups homemade duck or chicken stock
- 2 teaspoons fresh thyme
- 1 sprig fresh rosemary
- 1 teaspoon dried lavender flowers, finely crushed
- 1 tablespoon sweet cream butter

Preparation

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F.
2. Liberally brush the skin sides of the duck breasts with lavender honey and season with salt and black pepper.
3. Heat an oven proof skillet over medium heat and add the duck breasts, skin side down. Brown the duck on both sides until lightly caramelized.
4. Transfer the skillet to the oven and bake for 7-10 minutes, or until the inside reaches a warm pink, and reaches 160°F.
5. Remove the duck from the pan and let rest.
6. Add the shallots to the pan over medium heat. Cook, stirring gently, until the shallots just begin to caramelize, approximately 3-5 minutes.
7. Add the white wine and let it reduce for 2 minutes, stirring frequently.
8. Add the duck or chicken stock, thyme, rosemary, and lavender flowers. Cook, stirring frequently over medium-high heat, until the sauce has reduced and thickened slightly.
9. Remove from the heat and stir in the butter.
10. Slice the duck breasts into thin pieces and arrange them on a serving platter.
11. Drizzle the sauce over the duck right before serving.

Skirt Steak with a Red Wine and Shallot Sauce (Bavette à l'Échalotte)

Serves 2 | Prep. time 25 minutes | Cooking time 15 minutes

Ingredients

- 2 8-ounce skirt steaks
- Kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 6 shallots
- Unsalted butter
- Olive oil
- 2 tablespoons balsamic vinegar
- 1 cup red wine

Preparation

1. Take the meat out of the refrigerator. Season generously with kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper and let rest for 10-15 minutes to bring to room temperature.
2. In the meantime, prepare the shallots. Peel and cut them into thin slices.
3. Warm a little butter and a little olive oil in a heavy bottomed frying pan over medium-high heat. The pan should become hot enough to sear the meat. Place the steaks in the pan. Cook for 2 minutes or 2 min 30 to brown the meat well, then turn over. Let cook another 2-3 minutes. Reduce the heat to medium and cook for another minute. Remove the steak from the pan and then let the steaks rest on a plate. Cover loosely with foil just to keep warm.
4. Meanwhile, add olive oil and butter to the pan and fry the shallots to a medium-high heat for 2 minutes to color them well. Then lower the heat to low heat and continue cooking for 3-4 more minutes, or until tender. Remove the shallots from the pan and place them with the steaks. Deglaze the pan with the balsamic vinegar and the red wine. Add a little butter to bind the sauce. Let the sauce reduce by half on high heat, about 3 minutes.
5. Serve the steaks with the shallots and pour some of sauce on top.

Spinach Souffle (Soufflé aux Épinards)

Serves 4 | Prep. time 20 minutes | Cooking time 10-15 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 pound fresh spinach, washed and trimmed
- ¼ cup Parmesan cheese, grated
- 8 egg whites
- ¼ teaspoon salt
- ⅛ teaspoon black pepper
- Unsalted butter, for greasing

Béchamel sauce

- 3 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 1 cup whole milk
- Pinch nutmeg
- 2 egg yolks

Preparation

1. Set out a large bowl of water with some ice cubes in it.
2. Boil some salted water and blanch the spinach for 30 seconds, and then transfer it to the ice water. Drain well.
3. Process the spinach in a blender until it is smooth, and then spoon it onto some clean cheesecloth and squeeze out as much water as possible.
4. Make the sauce. Melt the butter in a medium saucepan and sift in the flour. Whisk until it begins to cook and lower the heat. Cook for 3–4 minutes.
5. Whisk in the milk and stir until smooth. Bring it to a boil. Add the nutmeg and salt. Whisk in the egg yolks, cover the pot, and set it aside.
6. Preheat the oven to 400°F and butter the ramekins. Sprinkle the insides with Parmesan and shake out any excess.
7. Spoon 4 tablespoons of the Béchamel sauce into the spinach and combine.
8. Whisk the egg yolks until they are stiff, and gently fold them into the spinach mixture, just until combined.
9. Pour the mixture into the ramekins, and bake for 10–15 minutes, depending on the size of the dishes.

Crème Brûlée (Crème Brûlée)

Serves 4 | Prep. time 20 minutes | Cooking time 45 minutes

Ingredients

- 1 ¾ cups heavy cream
- 4 egg yolks, cold
- 1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract
- ¼ cup granulated sugar, plus 4 teaspoons for topping
- Pinch kosher salt

Preparation

1. Place the oven rack in the middle of the oven, and preheat to 300°F. Boil 4–6 cups of water, and arrange 4 ramekins in a baking dish that is as deep as the ramekins.
2. Pour the cream into a saucepan, and heat it until it begins to simmer. Cover, remove it from the heat, and set it aside for about 10 minutes.
3. In a medium mixing bowl, combine the egg yolks, vanilla, ¼ cup of sugar, and salt. Whisk gently just to combine.
4. Check the temperature of the cream. When it reaches 165°F, slowly pour half a cup into the yolk mixture, whisking constantly. Stir gently for 30 seconds, taking care not to beat air into the mixture.
5. Add the rest of the cream to the yolk mixture, stirring gently.
6. Strain the custard mixture into a large glass measuring cup, and divide it among the ramekins. Do not to fill them all the way to the top.
7. Pour the hot water into the baking pan around the ramekins until it reaches two-thirds of the way up the sides. Transfer the pan to the oven.
8. Bake for about 45 minutes. The edges of the custards should be set, while the center is still jiggy. The pudding temperature will be about 150°F in the middle.
9. Carefully remove the ramekins to a cooling rack and let them cool for a while before transferring them to the fridge. Cover, and refrigerate for at least 4 hours.
10. Before serving, evenly sprinkle up to 1 teaspoon of granulated sugar on top of each custard. With a kitchen torch held about 3 inches away, carefully heat the sugar until it caramelizes. Let it harden before serving.

Note: if you don't have a kitchen torch, you can place the ramekins on a baking sheet under the oven broiler for about 1 minute, keeping an eye on them not to burn.

*****These recipes and more can be found in Sarah Spencer's A Taste of France: Traditional French Cooking Made Easy with Authentic French Recipes. To order your copy, click on the cover or click [here](#).**

