

# Travel the World without Leaving Your Kitchen

## International Cooking Series

### The Gastronomy of French Food

Most of us can passionately describe a delicious recipe or meal that someone in our family has passed down for generations and the ensuing joy of sharing the dish around the table. Exploring, learning, and embracing cultural food traditions, both our own and others', can broaden our perspectives about history and cultures from around the world. Whether you experience these cultural differences in eating while traveling, while visiting a restaurant in your community, or by preparing them at home, it can help you celebrate the cultural diversity found in all our communities. So, let's travel the world without leaving our kitchens, and see what the French have in store for us.

There is an intrigue about France - the romance of the language, the high culture of society, and the food, which is world-famous for its fancy preparations, served with elegance. But while you might not have attempted to prepare a recipe for croissants, chocolate soufflé, Toulouse-style cassoulet, or gougères (savory cream puffs), you have probably watched one of these well-known movies, *The Hundred Foot Journey* (2014), *Julie & Julia* (2009), or *Ratatouille* (2007). The movies themselves give you a sense of how intimidating French cooking can be. But also that anyone can enjoy success in the kitchen and it can be fun! Food is art! And the French showcase this as well as anyone.

### History of Food

In the mid-15th century, a young woman of Italy, Catherine de Medici, moved to France to marry



the future King Henri II. She brought her Florentine-educated cooks with her. The king discovered he loved the magic of innovative flavors and banquets that were a feast to the eyes. Dishes were elaborately presented to impress guests, and the importance of presentation is maintained in French cooking today.

This is precisely why the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) gave recognition to the gastronomic meal of the French. It emphasizes togetherness at the table, the use of fresh products whose flavors blend well together, and the diversity of French regions, all combined for dining in celebration with good food and family and friends. The UNESCO designation is more about the traditional haute cuisine (grand cuisine), food that is world-renowned for its extravagant preparations and meticulous presentations.

Auguste Escoffier is known as the king of chefs or the grandfather of classical French cuisine. He updated French cooking methods and simplified recipes in the late 1800s and early 1900s, including a group of sauces known as the mother sauces. Still acknowledged by chefs today, they are the basis for other sauces and well used in many recipes.

1. The béchamel sauce is a white sauce that consists of milk thickened with equal parts flour and butter, also known as a roux. Macaroni and cheese and chicken pot pie use a béchamel sauce.
2. The espagnole sauce is reduced brown stock thickened with a brown roux (the roux is cooked to a golden-brown color). The brown stock typically includes roasted bones, bacon, and tomatoes. Today, espagnole is considered to have a strong flavor so it is used to make a variety of other sauces, such as lyonnaise and mushroom sauces. If you combine espagnole sauce with beef or chicken stock, you have a demi-glace, commonly found in soups, stews, and stir-fries to boost flavor.
3. Tomato sauce usually includes a mire poix of onion, carrot, celery, tomato, and garlic, thickened with a roux made with salt pork instead of butter. Veal or chicken broth is usually the liquid. The sauce simmers until it thickens, making it perfect for pasta dishes.
4. Velouté sauce is a velvety clear sauce. In a velouté sauce, the bones are unroasted to make the clear stock; then the clear stock is thickened with a white roux and reduced to its smooth texture. In America, Swedish meatballs are covered with velouté sauce.
5. Hollandaise sauce is a warm emulsion of egg yolk, clarified butter, and lemon juice. Besides the popular eggs benedict, hollandaise is also used on broccoli.

Escoffier also elevated the profession, organizing the kitchen and demanding high standards of cleanliness and food quality.



Other French chefs, too numerous to name, made huge contributions to the French culinary world. But probably no one was as influential in elevating French cookery in America as Julia Child. Living in Paris with her husband, she graduated from the famous Le Cordon Bleu cooking school in 1951. She began collaborating with Simone Beck and Louisette Bertholle in writing a French cookbook for their American friends. After a lot of research and a subsequent return to America, her debut cookbook was published in 1961. Mastering the Art of French Cooking and recipes such as Coq au Vin and Beef Bourguignon became household names. The book's popularity led to a subsequent television program that debuted in 1963 and many other published works. Her kitchen and kitchen tools can be viewed at a National Museum of American History exhibit, *Bon Appetit! Julia Child's Kitchen*.

In the 1970s, classical French cuisine saw the rise of new cuisine (nouvelle cuisine). It focused on fewer ingredients with fewer sauces. Today's French cooking is more flexible in preparation methods and includes more experimentation with nontraditional flavors. So, let's look at how you can be successful in the kitchen presenting traditional French dishes for friends and family.

# Classical French Dishes

## French Crepes

The authentic French crepe you would eat in France has a thin, flexible texture and a crispy edge. Serve sweet crepes for breakfast or snacks; these use all-purpose flour as the base. Or try the thicker, savory crepes using buckwheat flour for a heartier meal. Crepes are easily rolled around a filling or folded to present an elegant triangle shape. But you don't have to wait for February 2, the Day of the Crepe, to join French families as they celebrate a once-religious holiday by eating crepes.

## French Crepes

Yield: 6 filled crepes

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cook time: 10 minutes

*Nutritional analysis per one filled crepe:* 320cal, 24g fat, 130mg cholesterol, 70mg sodium, 20g carbohydrate, 5g protein

### Crepe Ingredients

- 2 large eggs
- ¼ cup melted, unsalted butter
- ½ cup 2% milk
- ⅛ cup water
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 2½ tablespoons sugar
- pinch of salt
- ½ cup all-purpose flour

### For the filling

- 1 cup heavy whipping cream
- 2 tablespoons powdered sugar
- ½ teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 cup sliced strawberries

### Instructions

1. In a small bowl, stir all the crepe ingredients together, except the flour. Gradually add the



flour, until the batter is smooth. Allow the batter to rest for 10 minutes.

2. Using a lightly greased 6-inch skillet, over medium heat, lift the pan at a slight angle and pour about 3 tablespoons of batter into the pan, tilting the pan to spread the batter to the edges. Return the pan to the heat and cook each side about 30 seconds before gently loosening and lifting the crepe from the pan. If it doesn't lift easily, cook 10 to 15 more seconds, and try again.
3. Remove from the pan and cool before filling. Repeat with each crepe, making sure to grease the pan lightly each time.
4. For the filling, in a medium, chilled bowl, using a whisk attachment with a mixer, beat the cream until soft peaks form, or when pulling the whisk up, the cream forms a point at the top and falls back onto itself. Start on slow speed and gradually increase the speed to medium. Add in the remaining ingredients, and beat on high speed until stiff peaks form, or when pulling the whisk up, the cream forms a point and leaves whisk marks in the cream.
5. Spread ⅓ cup of cream and 2 to 3 tablespoons of strawberries onto one side of each crepe and roll the crepe or fold into a triangle.



**Note:** A crepe pan makes the process easier but is not necessary. Crepe pans usually make 8-inch crepes, so additional batter may be needed. Practice make perfect, but an ugly crepe is still a tasty crepe! For fillings, there are so many possibilities: Nutella®, sweetened ricotta or cream cheese, jam, or fruit salsa. Try them all!

## Savory Crepes

Yield: 6 filled crepes

Prep time: 20 minutes + 2 hours set time

Cook time: 15 minutes

*Nutritional analysis per filled crepe:* 420cal, 20g fat, 95mg cholesterol, 900mg sodium, 36g carbohydrate, 25g protein

### Crepe Ingredients

- *2¼ cups buckwheat flour*
- *3 cups water + ⅓ cup to adjust the batter consistency, if needed*
- *1 large egg*
- *½ teaspoon salt*

### For the Filling

- *12 ounces thinly sliced Black Forest ham*
- *6 ounces thinly sliced Gruyère cheese*

### Instructions

1. In a blender, add all ingredients and blend for 30 seconds or until smooth. Cover the batter. Place in the refrigerator for at least 2 hours or overnight.
2. Remove from the refrigerator when ready to make the crepes. Thin the batter if needed, with up to ⅓ cup water. It should have the consistency of melted ice cream.
3. Because buckwheat crepes are thicker, they are harder to spread. Test your batter consistency with the first crepe. The French discard the first crepe, but an ugly crepe is still a tasty crepe!
4. For the filling, lay the crepe flat. Add 2 ounces of ham and top with 1 ounce of cheese. Fold into quarters and repeat with the remaining crepes and filling. In the same pan, lightly grease, and over medium heat, add the crepes. Cook about 1 to 2 minutes per side, until cheese begins to melt. Serve immediately.



Using a lightly greased 8-inch pan, over medium heat, lift the pan at a slight angle and pour ⅓ cup of batter into the pan, tilting the pan to spread the batter to the edges. Return the pan to the heat and cook until the crepe is golden underneath, 1 to 3 minutes. Flip and cook on the other side for an additional 1 to 2 minutes. Remove the crepe from the pan and set aside until ready to fill. Repeat with each crepe, making sure to grease the pan lightly each time.

4. For the filling, lay the crepe flat. Add 2 ounces of ham and top with 1 ounce of cheese. Fold into quarters and repeat with the remaining crepes and filling. In the same pan, lightly grease, and over medium heat, add the crepes. Cook about 1 to 2 minutes per side, until cheese begins to melt. Serve immediately.

**Note:** Practice makes perfect! And there are so many possibilities for fillings. A crepe pan makes this process easier but is not necessary.



## Herbs

There are several herbal blends that are traditionally used in French cooking. These herb blends can be purchased already blended or you can make your own, personalizing them to meet your needs, usually in a one-to-one ratio.

- A bouquet garni is a generic term used when a variety of ingredients are tied together or wrapped in cheesecloth to flavor soups, stews, and stocks. It may contain basil, marjoram, thyme, rosemary, bay leaf, sage, parsley, or peppercorns. Once the bundle of herbs is used, it is removed before serving.
- The most robust of herbs is known as Herbes de Provence, a blend of herbs native to Provence, France. It may contain lavender, fennel, basil, and thyme. This mixture is added most often at the beginning of cooking with meat, poultry, fish, soups, and stews, but sometimes even vegetables.
- Fines herbes usually includes tarragon, chives, chervil, and parsley. These are known to contain delicate flavors, so are added at the end of cooking instead of during cooking, to lighter dishes, such as fish, eggs, or vegetables.
- Persillade is a mixture of chopped parsley and garlic, sometimes with oil and vinegar, which is cooked or added raw at the end of cooking. This is a classic addition to roasted potatoes.
- Quatre epices, or four spices, contains pepper, cloves, nutmeg, and ginger. Sometimes, it also has mace and cinnamon. It originated in Brittany, France, in the 17th century. This spice blend is perfect for every dish but is often used in sausage and pâté recipes.

## French Omelette

Yield: 1 serving

Prep time: 10 minutes

Cook time: 5 minutes

*Nutritional analysis per omelet:* 280cal, 24g fat, 375mg cholesterol, 160mg sodium, 2g carbohydrate, 14g protein

### Ingredients

- 2 large eggs
- 2 tablespoons 2% milk
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped fines herbes
- 1 tablespoon olive oil, for the pan

### Instructions

1. To a small bowl, add all ingredients except olive oil, and whisk until several small bubbles form.
2. In a 6-inch nonstick sauté pan, over medium heat, add oil and swirl to coat the bottom of the pan. Pour the egg mixture into the center of the pan and gently swirl so the egg goes onto the edges of the pan. Using a heat-resistant spatula, gently stir the eggs, continuing to swirl the pan. As the eggs start to turn creamy and bubble, reduce the heat to low. Lift the pan and tilt the egg to one side to easily slide it onto a large spatula. Flip the egg onto the other side. Continue swirling the pan back and forth.
3. Add any fillings into the center of the omelette. Allow to heat, if desired, before using your spatula to gently fold one side of the omelette over, then fold the omelette one more time over itself. The omelette will be folded into thirds. Serve immediately, garnishing with chopped herbs of your choice.

**Note:** There are endless possibilities for fillings and adding sautéed vegetables can be a great way to increase your daily intake of vegetables.

## Onions

Onions are easy to grow, easy to store during colder months, and hold up well during slow cooking. In 1873, Alexandre Dumas published seven versions of French onion soup, but the gratin version, with stale bread and cheese melted on top, was invented by Parisian cooks. The gratin version was quite popular in the second half of the 19th century because late night drinkers needed to steady their stomachs to be ready for early morning work. But it's just as delicious when you're sober!

### Parisian Onion Soup

Yield: 4 servings

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cook time: 1 hour

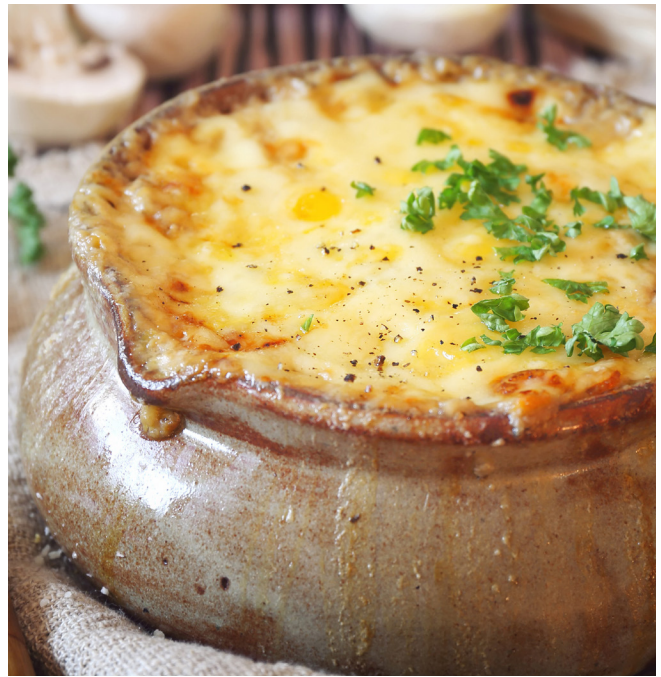
*Nutritional analysis per 1¼ cup serving:* 170cal; 2.5g fat; 10mg cholesterol; 740mg sodium; 18g carbohydrate; 4g protein

#### Ingredients

- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 1 tablespoon extra-virgin olive oil
- 1¼ pounds thinly sliced yellow onions
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- ½ cup dry white wine or dry red wine
- 4 cups low-sodium beef stock
- 1 tablespoon red wine vinegar
- 3 sprigs fresh thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- 4 slices crusty artisanal bread, ½- to 1-inch thickness
- 1½ cups freshly grated Gruyere cheese
- Grated nutmeg, if desired

#### Instructions

1. In a large, heavy saucepan, melt the butter and oil, over medium-low heat. Add the onions,



salt, and pepper. Sauté the onions, stirring occasionally (between 5- to 10-minute intervals), about 30 minutes, or until onions are a dark caramel color, but not burned. Stir in the flour.

2. Add the wine to deglaze the pan, scraping the bottom of the pan to remove cooked food particles. Bring back to a simmer and cook the wine for about 3 minutes to reduce the liquid slightly and allow the alcohol to evaporate.
3. Add the beef stock, vinegar, thyme, and bay leaf. Simmer for about 30 minutes.
4. While the soup simmers, toast the bread slices and grate the cheese.
5. Turn the oven to broil. As the broiler heats up, ladle the soup into oven-safe bowls, removing the thyme and bay leaf. Set the bowls on a sturdy baking pan. Top the soup with a slice of toasted bread and about 6 tablespoons grated cheese. Sprinkle with freshly grated nutmeg, if desired.
6. Place the baking pan with bowls under the broiler, watching the cheese closely as it browns. Carefully, remove the pan when the cheese melts, bubbles, and turns golden brown, about 4 to 5 minutes. Remember the bowls will be piping hot.



## Green Salad

Salade verte or green salad is often served with the main dish in France. The variety of fresh lettuce greens means no two salads will be alike. Favorite salad greens include arugula, endive, chicory, escarole, watercress, lamb's lettuce, dandelion leaves, and mesclun. Mesclun greens are comprised of a mix of lettuce varieties and flavors. Often referred to as spring mix, it adds color and nutritional value to a meal. Sometimes, French salads are served hot with eggs, chicken gizzards, figs, or potatoes, giving them a twist from the American salad. Salad niçoise originated in the city of Nice, which is in the south of France. It literally translates into Nice-style salad. Vary the ingredients to include favorite flavors.

## Salade Niçoise

Yield: 4 servings

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cook time: 10 minutes

*Nutritional analysis per salad:* 370cal,  
21g fat, 210mg cholesterol, 810mg sodium,  
23g carbohydrate, 24g protein

### Salad Ingredients

- 4 small, chopped tomatoes
- 4 large, quartered, hard-cooked eggs
- 4 ounces pitted black olives
- 1 medium sliced cucumber
- 2 chopped green onions
- 2 (5-ounce) drained cans tuna in spring water
- 1 cup whole cooked green beans
- 1 cup sliced cooked new potatoes, optional
- 1 5-ounce bag spring mix

### Vinaigrette Dressing Ingredients

- 1 finely chopped clove of garlic
- 6 large, chopped basil leaves
- ¼ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

### Instructions

1. Either compose the salad with individual ingredients in layers and drizzle the top with dressing OR combine all ingredients in a large bowl and toss with the dressing. Serve immediately.



## Coq au Vin

Coq au Vin, or chicken in wine, is a classic French stew. It's easy to prepare and has a rich sauce laced with smoky bacon, mushrooms, and pearl onions. Traditional recipes call for a whole cut-up chicken, but using all dark meat keeps you from overcooking the white meat. If you prefer all white meat, prepare the dish adding the chicken in the last 30 minutes of simmering. This recipe can also be prepared in the slow cooker, but just know that much of the wonderful flavor comes from the caramelization and sautéing of all the ingredients before adding them together to simmer. Julia Child's first demonstration on her popular cooking show *The French Chef* was Coq au Vin.

## Coq au Vin

Yield: 4 servings

Prep time: 30 minutes plus marinade time

Cook time: 1 hour 45 minutes

*Nutritional analysis for 1 leg and 1 thigh per serving:*

680cal; 32g fat; 245mg cholesterol; 620mg sodium; 20g carbohydrate; 54g protein

### Ingredients

- 4 chicken thighs, skin on, bone in, about 1 pound
- 4 chicken legs, skin on, bone in, about 1 pound
- 2 cups full-bodied red wine, such as Burgundy, Cabernet Sauvignon, or Pinot Noir
- 2 tablespoons cognac, optional
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 teaspoon ground pepper
- 8 ounces thick-sliced bacon, cut into 1/2-inch pieces
- 1 finely chopped medium onion
- 4 thinly sliced garlic cloves
- 8 ounces small cremini or button mushrooms
- 3 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2 tablespoons tomato paste
- 2 bay leaves
- 5 fresh thyme sprigs



### Instructions

1. In a large bowl, place the chicken and cover with wine. Cover and refrigerate overnight.
2. Preheat the oven to 325 degrees F. Remove the chicken from the wine, and pat dry; reserve wine. Season chicken with salt and pepper.
3. In a large, heavy skillet or in a Dutch oven, over medium-low heat, cook bacon until crisp, about 15 to 20 minutes. Remove bacon to a plate, leaving about 3 tablespoons in the skillet.
4. Using the same skillet, increase the heat to medium-high. Cook the chicken, turning once, until golden brown, about 4 to 5 minutes on each side. Move the chicken to the bacon plate.
5. Add onion and cook until translucent, about 4 to 5 minutes. Add garlic and cook about 2 minutes. Add pearl onions and mushrooms, cooking until brown, about 3 to 4 minutes. Stir in flour and tomato paste, cooking about 2 more minutes. Add cognac, if desired, and cook another minute.
6. Add the bacon, chicken, and reserved wine back to the vegetables. Add the herbs and bring to a simmer. Cover, and place in oven until chicken has cooked through and vegetables are tender, about 45 minutes to 1 hour.

A meat thermometer should read 165 degrees F when inserted into the chicken.

7. Remove bay leaves and thyme sprigs. Skim excess fat off the top of the sauce. Serve with mashed potatoes or crusty bread.

**Note:** For additional color, add 4 medium carrots, sliced into ½-inch pieces. You will find many different Coq au Vin recipes on the internet. One of my favorites is from Half Baked Harvest Easy Coq au Riesling. It uses chicken breasts prepared with white wine and cream. The recipe can be accessed at <https://www.halfbakedharvest.com/easy-coq-au-riesling/>.

## Sole Meuniere

While Sole Meuniere is a delightful delicacy, overfishing and availability in only certain regions of the world make Dover sole hard to come by. Sole is a flatfish that is extremely expensive. It is known for its mild, sweet flavor and firm texture. When it is cooked, it becomes flaky and tender. Maybe save the real experience for overseas, and substitute any whitefish, such as halibut, flounder, turbot, pollock, or cod for a light fish dish.

## Sole Meuniere (using cod)

Yield: 4 servings

Prep time: 15 minutes

Cook time: 10 minutes

*Nutritional analysis per fillet:* 300cal, 15g fat, 100mg cholesterol, 460mg sodium, 8 g carbohydrate, 32g protein

### Ingredients

- 4 6-ounce cod fillets, skinless, about 1-inch thick
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon pepper
- ½ cup 2% milk
- ¼ cup all-purpose flour
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter



- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 tablespoon chopped parsley

### Instructions

1. In a shallow bowl, add the milk. On a large dinner plate, add the flour, salt, and pepper.
2. Rinse fish under cold water and pat dry. Dip both sides of the fish in the milk and transfer to the flour. Rub flour into both sides of the fish. Shake off excess flour.
3. In a large pan, over medium-high heat, add the oil and heat until shimmering. Add the fish and cook for 4 minutes, then flip the fish to the other side and cook for another 3 to 4 minutes, or until fish is golden brown and beginning to flake. Remove the fish from the pan to add to your dinner plates.
4. Carefully discard the oil and wash the pan. Return the pan to medium-high heat, and melt butter. When the butter is melted, carefully add the juice, and swirl the pan to combine. Remove the pan from the heat.
5. Pour the butter sauce over the fish and sprinkle with parsley.

**Note:** Any whitefish will perform beautifully in this dish.

## Beef Bourguignon

Beef bourguignon is a slow-cooked beef stew, in which the beef is braised in red wine with hearty vegetables and a bouquet garni. It originated in the province of Burgundy, which is famous for excellent beef and exceptionally good wine. It dates to the Middle Ages as peasant food. The longer it cooks, the richer the flavor and more tender the meat becomes. The first recipe appeared in 1903 by Chef August Escoffier. Julia Child was quoted in her book that boeuf bourguignon is “certainly one of the most delicious beef dishes concocted by man.”

## Boeuf Bourguignon

Yield: 8 servings

Prep time: 30 minutes

Cook time: 40 minutes

*Nutritional analysis per 1½-cup serving:* 430cal, 20g fat, 175mg cholesterol, 290mg sodium, 8g carbohydrate, 56g protein

### Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 3 pounds beef chuck or beef rump roast, trimmed of fat, cut into 2-inch cubes
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 1 clove minced garlic
- 10 peeled white pearl onions, or 8 ounces canned or frozen
- 1 pound button mushrooms
- 2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
- 2 cups low-sodium beef stock or dry red wine
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- 1 teaspoon dried thyme
- 2 bay leaves
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ¼ teaspoon black pepper



### Instructions

1. In a large stock pot with lid, add oil and heat over high heat until shimmering. Sear beef well on all sides, in batches, until brown, stirring often to prevent sticking. Remove from pan.
2. Reduce heat to medium. Add butter to the pot and melt. Add onions, garlic, and mushrooms, and cook until onions are lightly browned, stirring often to prevent sticking, about 5 to 7 minutes.
3. Sprinkle flour over onions and mushrooms and cook until flour thickens and bubbles, stirring to prevent overbrowning. Carefully and gradually, add stock and wine, stirring until the mixture boils and thickens. Add tomato paste.
4. Return beef to pot. Add seasonings. Bring to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer covered, about 2 hours or until beef is tender, stirring every 30 minutes. The beef should reach a minimum of 145 degrees F with a meat thermometer.
5. Remove from heat and remove bay leaves before service.

**Note:** This is great served with boiled parsley potatoes, a green salad, and French bread. This can also be done in a slow cooker by adding all the ingredients together and cooking on low for at least 6 hours, following the manufacturer's instructions.





## Ratatouille

Ratatouille is a thick stew made of vegetables, primarily consisting of eggplants, zucchini, and tomatoes, with Herbes de Provence used for flavoring. The beauty of ratatouille is that you use whatever vegetables are in season or that you have on hand. The vegetables can be cut into chunks for a stew or thinly sliced and layered for a more delicate appearance. It can be served hot or cold and as a side or main dish.

## Ratatouille

Yield: 6 servings

Prep time: 20 minutes

Cook time: 45 minutes

*Nutritional analysis per ¾-cup serving:* 130cal, 8g fat, 340mg sodium, 13g carbohydrate, 2g protein

### Ingredients

- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 large chopped onion
- 3 finely chopped garlic cloves
- 2 large chopped tomatoes
- 1 cup of tomato juice
- 1 diced green pepper
- 1 large ½-inch cubed eggplant
- 2 medium ½-inch cubed zucchini

- ½ bunch fresh thyme leaves
- 6 chopped fresh basil leaves
- pinch of crushed red pepper
- ½ teaspoon salt

### Instructions

1. In a large pan, over medium heat, add oil and heat until shimmering. Add onions and cook until tender, about 5 to 7 minutes.
2. Add the garlic and cook for 3 more minutes.
3. Add tomatoes, juice, and seasonings, except for basil. Cook until tomatoes fall apart, about 15 to 20 minutes.
4. Add peppers and cook for 5 minutes.
5. Add eggplant and zucchini. Cook until squash is soft and tender, about 15 to 20 minutes. Stir in basil right before removing from heat. Serve warm or at room temperature.

**Note:** Add any favorite vegetables. This is great used as a sandwich spread; simply blend in a blender until smooth.



## Profiteroles

Also known as cream puffs or choux pastry, profiteroles are a classic French dessert. The pastry is usually found as rounded shells or elongated eclairs. The pastry can be filled with a custard, cream filling, or savory fillings, such as ham or egg salad. This recipe uses ice cream with chocolate sauce drizzled over the top, but can be filled with anything tasty.

## Profiteroles

Yield: 24 servings

Prep time: 30 minutes

Cook time: 30 minutes

*Nutritional analysis for 1 profiterole without filling:*  
60cal, 4.5g fat, 40mg cholesterol, 20mg sodium, 4g carbohydrate, 2g protein

*Nutritional analysis for 1 profiterole with filling:*  
240cal, 16g fat, 70mg cholesterol, 55mg sodium, 20g carbohydrate, 4 g protein

### Cream Puff Ingredients

- 1 cup water or 2% milk
- 1/2 cup butter, cut into 1/2-inch cubes
- Pinch salt
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 4 – 5 large eggs, at room temperature
- Pinch of ground cinnamon or sugar
- Ice cream

### Chocolate Sauce Ingredients

- 1 cup semisweet or dark chocolate chips or chopped bar
- 3/4 cup whipping cream
- 1 teaspoon butter

### Instructions

Special equipment: Pastry bag fitted with large straight tip or number 24 scoop (3 tablespoons) or number 30 scoop (2 1/4 tablespoons); use #24 or #16 scoop (1/4 cup) for the ice cream or filling. The scoop size will determine the size of your shells.

1. Preheat oven to 425 degrees F.
2. In a small saucepan, over high heat, combine water, butter, and salt. Bring to a boil.



3. Reduce to low heat and add flour all at once, stirring vigorously. Keep stirring and cook until the mixture forms a ball and has a slight sheen to it, about 2 minutes. It should pull away from the pan. If a spoon pressed into the pastry leaves a smooth impression, it is ready.
4. Remove from heat and add to a medium mixing bowl. Cool for 5 minutes, or until the mixture is no longer releasing steam.
5. Using a mixer with the paddle attachment, beat eggs into cooled mixture one at a time, until fully incorporated before adding the next egg. If the mixture does not look thick and glossy, add and incorporate the fifth egg.
6. Add in the cinnamon and beat until combined.
7. Transfer the mixture to a pastry bag with a large straight tip. On a parchment-lined sheet pan, pipe 1-inch balls, about 2 inches apart. Using a wet finger, smooth the top of each ball.
8. Bake in preheated oven for 20 to 25 minutes, rotating the tray halfway through the cooking time to ensure even cooking, until golden brown and hollow when tapped. The puffs will be light, airy, and dry inside. Cool on a rack.
9. In a small microwave-safe bowl, add chocolate and cream, and microwave for 30 seconds, stirring with a heat-resistant spatula. Continue to microwave in 10- to 15-second intervals until most of the chocolate is smooth. Dark chocolate takes longer to melt than milk or white chocolate. Add vanilla and stir well to combine.
10. When ready to serve, cut the profiteroles in half horizontally and fill with ice cream or filling of your choice. Top with about 1 tablespoon of warm chocolate sauce.

Regionally, traditional French foods can change dramatically as you travel across the country. And there are so many traditional foods not included in this publication. The Basics of French Cookery by The Cuisine Net (<https://www.cuisinenet.com/articles/the-basics-of-french-regional-cooking/>, accessed April 2022) has a wonderful listing of where the traditional foods originated and offers encouraging exploration of foods that are familiar, such as quiche Lorraine, French baguettes, and madeleines, or foods that are unfamiliar, such as duck confit or cassoulet. There are also many French recipes available at your local library or from websites and food blogs. Not all will be authentic or traditional. But exploring the culture and foods of modern-day France will lead you to many gastronomic treats!

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