

DESCRIPTIONS OF FOOD IN THE LANGUEDOC

STARTERS

Aligot. A puree made from potatoes and cheese, and seasoned with garlic.

Cargolada. A regional snail dish.

Escargots Catalans. Snails in tomato sauce.

Olives. Several varieties of olives are grown in the Languedoc, the most important of which are Picholine (native of the Gard Department but also cultivated in the Aude département) and the Lucque (cultivated in the West of Languedoc-Roussillon).

Saucisse de Toulouse à la languedocienne. Sauteed in goose fat and served with tomato, parsley and capers).

Hammon. Like fine sliced smoked ham, only a hundred times times better.

FISH AND SEAFOOD

Anchovies. Fresh, in salt or in oil, still processed by hand. Collioure is the centre of production. The "anchoieurs" of this Catalan port will show you how they are prepared.

Anchoïade. Anchoïade is a subtle sauce which combines anchovies, garlic, onion, basil and olive oil. Spread it on bread lightly toasted over a fire of vine shoots. It is best served with local Picholine green olives.

Oysters. from Bouzigues - a small, typically Mediterranean, fishing village, the cradle of shellfish farming. You can visit the conchylicole farms, see the oyster beds, and meet the "sea farmers", and sample their products. Although oysters are a delicacy and eaten for special feasts they do not share the exclusivity they have in the Anglo-Saxon world. At New Year an ordinary fishmonger will typically offer at least six varieties of oyster available in a choice of sizes. They are mostly eaten raw with a squeeze of lemon or a shallot and vinegar sauce in portions of about a dozen. Oysters are typically accompanied by chilled white wines. . Oysters can be bought at any fishmonger or supermarket. At Barcares on the coast there is an oyster bar village by the waters.

Brandade de Nîmes. A Gard speciality made with cod and olive oil. The ingredients are thoroughly mixed to form a white, creamy paste which is usually combined with a touch of garlic and olive oil and boiled, mashed

potatoes. Served with a green salad or as a gratin. It can also be served as petits-fours or spread on toast.

Bourride de Sète Monkfish is seared in olive oil, then simmered in white wine and thickened with a good strong aioli (garlic mayonnaise). It is served on a bed of toasted bread, with small, finely chopped vegetables. Ingredients vary from place to place - it can also be made using cuttlefish or squid.

Gigot de mer à la palavasiennne. Another monkfish dish. Flavoured with garlic and served on a bed of tomatoes, aubergines, courgettes and peppers.

Encornets farcis. Stuffed squid, a Sète speciality that originated in Italy. Generally served with rice. The squid are filled with a stuffing made from meat, soaked bread, egg, garlic and parsley. They are seared in olive oil and sometimes flambéed in cognac, before being simmered in a tomato sauce. In some recipes, the sauce is thickened with aioli, a garlic mayonnaise.

Local Seafood Platters. Featuring snails, sea urchins, mussels, clams, Thau basin oysters.

Morue Catalane. Cod with tomatoes and pepper.

Tielle. a kind of seasoned seafood pie, made with a golden pastry, soaked in the cooking juices. Popular at Sète.

Tellines. Little clams.

Ttoro. Fish Stew

MAIN COURSES

Camargue beef. The meat of the Camargue bull is the only beef to have been protected by an 'appellation d'origine contrôlée' (registered designation of origin) in recent times. This meat comes from two breeds of fighting bull: the local Camargue bull (related to the Spanish fighting bull) and the 'brave' breed (descended from Camargue fighting bulls). Bulls are bred in the hills and plains of Lauragais, in the region of the Camargue, and in the mountainous regions of the Pyrenees, Aubrac, Cévennes and Margeride. Stuffed with Camargue rice, it is a speciality of Grau du Roi.

Ollada, or ouillade Beef stew.

Gardiane. A Camargue speciality, this is a 'daube' (a slow-cooked beef stew) made with bull's meat. Cut into cubes and seared in olive oil, the meat is then

added to the other ingredients: vegetables, black olives, garlic and smoked bacon, doused in red wine. This dish is usually served with Camargue rice.

Cassoulet. One of the "crowning glories" of Languedoc's cuisine. Cassoulet is a casserole with beans and meat, often including duck, or Toulouse sausage, or both. For details [click here](#)

Lamb 'sous la mère'. Suckling lamb. The lambs are raised in the mountains of Lozère and the Pyrenees. Before they are fully weaned, they are fed on grass from the meadow and cereals, as well as their mother's milk. They are sold throughout the region under several local brand names.

Boles de picolat. A Catalan speciality, 'boles de picolat' are little balls of finely minced beef and pork mixed with garlic and parsley. They are browned in oil, then onions, cinnamon, salt, pepper and chilli peppers are added. The meatballs are then simmered in a tomato sauce with olives and ham.

VEGETABLES

Asparagus. Green asparagus is cultivated in light, sandy soil in Hérault, Gard and Roussillon. Steamed or boiled, it is served cold with sauces (olive oil vinaigrettes) or cooked in soups, flans or simple omelettes. A tasty variety of asparagus grows wild in the Languedoc.

Pardailhan turnips. These black-skinned turnips are grown exclusively on the Pardailhan limestone plateau in Hérault. Their sweet, white flesh has a characteristic flavour. Served with roast meat or cook in stews and gratins. Fried in goose fat with caramel, they make an interesting sweet and savoury dish.

Camargue Rice. Almost all French rice is produced in the Camargue.

Sweet onions of Languedoc. Sweet onions are grown on the terraces of the southern slopes of the Cévennes hills. These onions are round in appearance and have a soft satin texture. They melt in the mouth with a delicate flavour. These onions can be eaten raw in a salad, pickled or used in cooking. Lézignan onions have been cultivated since at least the 17th century on the light, rugged earth of Lézignan-la-Cèbe (in Occitan the word, *ceba* means onion). They are white, quite large, some weighing up to 1 kg, and may be cooked or used as a condiment.

Potatoes. Potatoes from the Plateaux de Sault are the best in France, and therefore the best in the world.

FRUIT

Languedoc-Roussillon has perfect conditions for fruit-growing, and many varieties of fruit are cultivated here. Particularly notable are:

Red apricots from Roussillon

Almonds

Cherries from Céret

Figs

Peaches from Roussillon

Pears from Conflent

Pippins from Le Vigan

Grapes from Clermont-Hérault

PUDDING DESSERTS and SWEETS

Berlingots de Pézénas. - boiled sweets.

Rousquilles. Ring-shaped cakes made all year round in the Vallespir region. The shortbread-style pastry, flavoured with lemon or aniseed, melts in the mouth. It is eaten at breakfast with coffee, in the afternoon with tea, before a meal with a glass of local wine, preferably a Banyuls or a Muscat, and also as a dessert.

Oreillettes. Oreillettes are very lightly browned and dusted with icing sugar. They are dry and brittle and deliciously flavoured with orange or lemon blossom. 'Oreillettes', 'merveilles' and 'bunyetes' are the different names for fritters. In the weeks before and after Carnival, you can buy 'oreillettes' from most bakeries and cake shops in Languedoc.

Limoux nougat. Whole almonds toasted in their skins are covered by a milky-coloured mixture of glucose, honey and eggs. Limoux nougat is eaten all year round, but especially during Carnival.

Villaret croquants. This recipe has always been kept secret, passed down by word of mouth through generations of the Villaret family, the only producer in Nîmes. Croquants, which contain orange blossom, almonds and lemon essence, glazed and therefore very crunchy, appear at traditional and family celebrations. They can only be bought locally.

Crème Catalan. Like Crème Brûlée, except bigger and better.