

Mousseline, so named after the delicate texture of muslin (cheesecloth), is an egg-based French sauce that usually includes cream, and is served with dainty foods such as asparagus and fish. This version, similar to a hollandaise, skips the cream and uses orange confit for a citrus flavour.

ASPERGES SAUCE MOUSSELINE

ASPARAGUS WITH MOUSSELINE SAUCE

SERVES 2

10–12 large asparagus spears
2 confit oranges (bergamot-flavoured, if possible), with their juices; you'll find these sold in jars, in specialist providores
2 egg yolks
pinch of ground sichuan pepper
20 g (¾ oz) unsalted butter, for pan-frying
borage flowers, or pea and bean flowers, to garnish

VERVEINE BUTTER

125 g (4½ oz) butter, cut into cubes
12 fresh verveine leaves (see glossary) or Thai basil leaves

Prepare the verveine butter a few days ahead. Place the butter in a bowl, mix the verveine through, then cover and chill in the fridge overnight. The next day, gently melt the butter in a saucepan over medium heat. Turn the heat off, cover with a lid, then allow the flavours to infuse overnight at room temperature.

Place the asparagus spears on a board, then use a vegetable peeler to remove all the green skin. Test the ends of each spear by bending them gently, then break them at a length where the spear snaps easily.

Tie the asparagus spears together so they don't snap during blanching, then place upright in a clean, empty tin to keep them straight. Add to a saucepan of simmering water and cook for 4 minutes. Remove the asparagus from the tin and immediately refresh in a bowl of iced water.

Slice the confit oranges into quarters or wedges. Place half in a small saucepan with about 80 ml (2½ fl oz/⅓ cup) of the confit orange juice. Add the egg yolks, then place over low heat. Using a hand-held blender, carefully blend the ingredients together.

Slowly add the infused verveine butter to make a nice smooth sauce. Season with sichuan pepper and a pinch of sea salt. Keep warm while finishing the asparagus.

Melt the butter in a frying pan over high heat. Sauté the asparagus for 2–3 minutes, or until browned. Season with a pinch of sea salt.

Arrange the asparagus on a plate and spoon the mousseline over. Serve garnished with flowers and the remaining confit orange.



Many French recipes ask to cook fish in baking paper. I prefer to use banana leaves, as they impart a unique aroma and flavour to the fish, and also retain all the juices of the ingredients the fish is cooked with.

*SARDINES GRILLÉES DANS DES FEUILLES DE BANANIER
AVEC OLIVES ET TOMATES CERISES*

SARDINES ROASTED IN BANANA LEAVES WITH OLIVES & CHERRY TOMATOES

SERVES 4–6 AS PART OF A SHARED MEAL

4 fresh banana leaf portions, each 20 cm (8 inches) long
4 whole fresh sardines, cleaned
4 thyme sprigs
60 ml (2 fl oz/¼ cup) extra virgin olive oil
2 garlic cloves, very thinly sliced
150 g (5½ oz) cherry tomatoes, halved
4 anchovies, from a jar
2 teaspoons fish sauce
10 small black olives
4 slices of lemon

Preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F). Run the banana leaves across a hot large pan a few times until softened and workable.

Place a sardine on each softened banana leaf. Season the sardines with sea salt and freshly ground black pepper. Place a thyme sprig in each cavity, then drizzle with 1 tablespoon of the olive oil.

Heat the remaining olive oil in a saucepan over medium heat. Add the garlic and sauté for a minute or two, until fragrant. Stir in the tomatoes, anchovies and fish sauce. Cook for a few more minutes, until the tomato has softened, then stir in the olives. Remove from the heat.

Place a slice of lemon over each sardine. Spoon the tomato mixture over the sardines, then fold all the edges of the banana leaves over, securing all sides with toothpicks.

Place the parcels in the oven and bake for 10–12 minutes, or until the fish is just cooked through.

Transfer the banana leaf parcels to a platter. Cut through the top layer of each banana leaf and serve.





One of the greatest things the French introduced to Vietnam was coffee! Today, Vietnam is one of the world's biggest coffee producers, and there are coffee shops on every corner. The locals like to drink their coffee with sweetened condensed milk, so here I have used condensed milk and Vietnamese coffee beans to make delicious coffee custard cups.

CRÈME DE CAFÉ VIÊTNAMIEN

VIETNAMESE COFFEE CUSTARD CUPS

SERVES 8

25 g (1 oz/⅓ cup) finely ground Vietnamese coffee (such as the Trung Nguyen brand, available from Asian supermarkets)
80 ml (2½ fl oz/⅓ cup) boiling water
700 ml (23½ fl oz) milk
2 tablespoons condensed milk
8 free-range eggs
150 g (5½ oz) sugar
1 teaspoon Dutch (unsweetened) cocoa powder, for dusting
small violets, to garnish (optional)

Preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F). In a heatproof bowl, combine the coffee and boiling water, stirring to dissolve the coffee. Now add the milk and condensed milk and mix well.

In a separate mixing bowl, whisk the eggs and sugar until the sugar has completely dissolved.

Stir the egg mixture into the condensed milk mixture, then strain the entire mixture through a fine sieve, into a jug. Skim any bubbles off the surface.

Slowly pour the custard into eight small coffee cups. Place the cups in a roasting tin, then transfer the roasting tin to the oven. Pour enough hot water into the roasting tin to reach two-thirds up the side of the cups. Bake for 45–60 minutes, or until the custards have set and have a jelly-like consistency.

Remove from the oven and allow to cool, then chill in the refrigerator for 3 hours. Dust with cocoa powder before serving and garnish with violets if desired.



CHEF PIERRE BASSO
MORO TAKES ME OUT
FORAGING, PICKING
SORREL, CUCKOO
FLOWERS AND OTHER
LEAVES FOR HIS REFINED
MENU AT THE CHÂTEAU
DE GERMIGNEY.

