

Never mind the sailing, let's eat

The essentials are -

There must be enough to fill the bellies.

Quality is a close second.

Any member of the crew must be able to prepare it. We do not all have resident chefs!

Most people are only interested in one course.

The preparation and cooking should be no more than an hour and a half, and preferably less than an hour. Not all of us can cook while sailing. In any case, at Easter it should be prepared before it gets dark. In the summer we frequently finish sailing late, and no-one wants to eat after closing time. (There was the famous time at Berney in the middle of March. We moored at 6.15. The meal was put in the oven. Robert supplied a beer crate and a plank to get ashore. At 8.00 the water was half way up the steps. At closing time we returned to the boat. The skipper got rid of his beer. One crew member went straight to bed. The other, now a vegetarian, scoffed the whole of the chilli - or so he claimed!)

The ingredients should be readily available. Norwich, Beccles, Yarmouth, Stalham and Wroxham provide all that can be required. Brundall (in the village), Loddon, Acle, Ludham (village not bridge) and Horning are a bit more restricted. Most of the 'riverside' stores only provide basics. Beware! The Thurne is a desert. Unless you walk to Martham or Catfield - who the hell wants to walk to Martham or ever goes up Catfield Dyke anyway - there is NOWHERE to buy food.

Planning is important. In one week in 1995 there was an omnivore (me), a carnivore who doesn't eat fish, a vegetarian who eats fish and a vegetarian who doesn't eat fish. And we started from Somerleyton!

As a result of all this, I offer a selection of modern(?) recipes all of which have been successfully prepared on the river by skipper, mate and crew. I have been told that when offered at home they have been a great success; or perhaps I have been buttered up. Whatever, here they are, in no particular order. All of the recipes are for 4, but make more or less if you like. Remember, quantity first: these recipes give you quality. The recipes are -

Basic Mince (M)
Shepherd's Pie (M)
Spaghetti Bolognese (M)
Chilli-con-Carne (M)
Puck Special (Veggie with prawns) (F)
Salmon Steak in Herb Sauce (F)
Chicken a la Puck (M)
Vegetable Rissotto (V)
Sausage & Mash (M)
Basic Savoury White Sauce (V)
Cauliflower and Leek Cheese (V)
Braised Liver.(M)
Smoked Haddock in Cheese Sauce (F)
Lamb and Red Peppers (M)
Pasta Bake (V)
Stuffed Aubergine (V)
Ratatouille (V)
Cauliflower & Broccoli or Macaroni Cheese (V)
Hotpot (M)
Chicken in Wine (M)
Chicken & Coconut Curry (M)
Ham & Mushroom Lasagne (M)
Vegetable Lasagne (V)
Vegetable Curry (V)
Pancakes (V)
Spinach & Ricotta Canneloni (V)
Courgette Medley (V)

(M) = Meat

(F) = Fish

(V) = Vegetarian

Basic Mince

At least 1lb mince, better 1.5 lbs (lamb, of course, or beef if you must)

2 or 3 Onions

Oil

A good squeeze of Tomato Puree

A little salt and more black pepper

2 cloves of garlic, chopped or crushed. (Puck has a crusher)

Stock cube

A little water

1. Chop the onions and fry in a little oil. Don't be heavy handed, You can always put in a little more; you can't take it out. Don't burn the onions!
2. Put in the mince and garlic and fry to brown the meat. Add the tomato puree, salt (only a little), pepper, stock and enough water to keep it moist - no more than half a mug Stir well. Bring to the boil and simmer as gently as your cooker will allow. The longer you cook it the better, so it's a good thing to get this far as soon as possible after you have moored.
3. Bubble away on a low heat for as long as you like. The longer the better, but half an hour will do if you are pushed for time.

Shepherd's Pie

Basic Mince above.

8 oz mushrooms at least

1.5 lbs of potatoes (Baking potatoes are much the best)

Lots of butter (Buy a tub! It kept even in the summer of '94. Use margarine if you must)

12 teaspoon of parsley or thyme, fresh if possible, dried if necessary. More if you like.

More black pepper.

Other things, eg carrots, can be added. I prefer to serve them separately.

1. Add the mushrooms to the basic mince after it has been simmering for 5mins.
2. Meantime, peel the potatoes and cut them up small so they will cook quickly. Boil them in salted water until they are quite soft. Drain them and mash them with plenty of butter, I mean lots of it, and black pepper.
3. While the potatoes are boiling prepare another vegetable. Carrots are a good idea - 1 large one each, sliced, but you might prefer to open a tin of peas. Or cabbage, but not soggy boiled!
4. Taste the mince and add more pepper and tomato puree if you think fit. Drain and save the liquid so that it is not absorbed by the potato at the next stage.
5. Put the mince in a casserole and spread the potato on top. The potato should be about the same thickness as the mince. A little milk may be sprinkled on top to help it brown. Or you could use grated cheese if you are not in too much of a hurry.
6. Put the casserole in the oven on high, put the other veg on a low ring, and go to the pub for half an hour.
7. Collect your starving crew, heat the drained liquid from 4 above and serve it as a sauce.
- 8 You will be asked to cook tomorrow as well.

Total time: 1 - 1.5 hours.

Spaghetti Bolognese

As made in Bologna!

Basic mince above.

4 tomatoes, at least, skinned by putting in boiling water and peeling Roughly chop.

Parmesan cheese. (The most expensive cheese in the world, but you might find it on some boats. You might even buy some.)

1 heaped teaspoon of flour blended with a little water. (This is to thicken it, but may be regarded as a troublesome luxury)

Spaghetti (93 strands per person. The cabin boy - male or female - can count them. Or perhaps the skipper will!)

- 1 Use the basic mince above, adding the tomatoes after a little while.
2. Boil a pan of water with salt and a little oil (to separate the spaghetti) added. Put in the spaghetti, stir once and boil for as long as the packet tells you to. If in doubt throw a piece at the well coaming If it sticks it is OK. (Do not do this on Puck please.)
3. Drain, preferably into another pan or you might have to start again, serve on plates, put bolognese sauce on top and sprinkle generously with Parmesan.

Time: Probably an hour, perhaps a little longer.

Chilli-con-Carne

Use the basic mince above

Can of tomatoes - you decide how big. I suggest 6" x 3".

Can of Red Kidney Beans the same size as the beans.

Chilli powder (How much depends on how strong it is and how hot you like it)

4 teaspoons of Cumin. (I use Cayenne pepper. Again, taste is important.)

Rice- half a mug per person. Be more generous if you like

1. Once the basic mince is going add the tomatoes and the kidney beans. It is important to drain the can of beans first.
2. Cook the rice as instructed on the packet. If you have to drain it, don't empty it in the river; another pan would be better. Use a colander.
3. When the rice is ready, taste the sauce. Add more spice if necessary but remember that it takes a littler time to hit the taste buds.

And don't forget the tastes of your crew! Put a bed of rice on the plates, serving the sauce on top. You will be a hero.

Time: about an hour.

Puck Special

2 very large onions. This is important. Do not stint on the onions

Half a mug of flour

1 pint milk

Salt and pepper to taste (This means not much salt but quite a lot of black pepper)

2 large red peppers

Almost a mug of rice

8oz of peeled and cooked prawns (frozen. If you buy a packet twice the size, either use it, have the meal twice, or sell the left overs to another boat)

Breadcrumbs - real or in a readily available box.

1. Chop the onions finely and soften in a large dollop of butter on medium heat. Do not burn. You can put the lid on if you like. This will take about 10 minutes.
2. Boil the rice as per instructions on the packet. Drain when cooked.
3. Add half mug of flour to the onions and mix well
4. Add milk to onion sauce and bring to boil gently. You may not need the whole pint. Remember; you want a gooey mess, not a runny liquid. You can always add more milk. You can't take it out.
5. Add salt and black pepper to taste. Not much salt, lots of pepper.
6. Put half the onion sauce in the bottom of a casserole. On top put the sliced red peppers followed by the drained rice. Then sprinkle the prawns. The rest of the sauce goes on top and the whole collation is sprinkled with breadcrumbs.
7. Put in the oven (which you have already heated of course) for 20 minutes to cook the peppers and to heat the prawns. Don't over do it.

Time: three-quarters of an hour at most. Over-cooking spoils it. Give the crew very clear instructions, especially the skipper who may have to leave a pint behind. It will be worth it!

Salmon Steak & Herb Butter Sauce (Sounds grand, doesn't it)

8oz carrots in Julienne Strips (That means you cut them length ways as finely as you can. Or you can buy them already cut like that from super-markets)

salt and pepper

dollop of butter

dash of oil

4 Salmon Steaks. (It is only 10p per lb more expensive than cod)

1 Cucumber peeled

Quarter pint of white wine. (Buy a super-market bottle, You can drink the rest while you are cooking. All the best chefs do!)

1 dessertspoon of chopped tarragon (I use dried, easily obtainable, and not as much as that. It is quite a strong herb)

1 tablespoon of Chervil (If you can find any let me know. Better still; buy some for me. I never use it)

1 tablespoon of chopped chives.(or dried) These you can get from most super-markets. You might even grow them at home. I do.

Potatoes, preferably new, which are readily available in super-markets. They may be a little expensive, but what the hell.

Green salad (optional)

1. Boil carrots in salted water for 1 minute. Drain
2. Put the potatoes on to boil in salted water. (Not too much salt)
3. Melt small dollop of butter in pan with a tablespoon of oil. (The oil is to prevent the butter burning)
4. Salt and pepper the Salmon and fry on each side for about 7 minutes. (Borrow the skipper's watch if you must, but you probably have a better one than him/her) Transfer to serving dish and put in oven to keep hot. Of course, the oven will already be alight.
5. Cut the peeled cucumber in half length ways, de-seed, and cut into half inch slices cross-ways Add to pan with carrot and wine. Cover and cook for 5 minutes. Remove with slotted spoon (every boat should have one. Puck does) and arrange around fish.
6. Boil pan until reduced to 2 tablespoons. (If it is a bit more don't worry too much. See next step)
7. Beat the herbs and a larger dollop of butter in a basin or whatever comes to hand. Beat in the reduced liquid (or 2 tablespoons of it) until a smooth and thick sauce is obtained. Spoon onto Salmon and serve when the potatoes are cooked. A green salad goes well too.
- 8 .Ask the skipper for a suitable drink for serving such a delicious meal.

Time: About an hour

Chicken a la Puck

I am told that this is a genuine Genoese dish, but as far as the GW is concerned it is a Puck speciality. Of course, the vegetarians lose out.

4 pieces of chicken. Expensive breasts or cheaper pieces.

Dollop of butter

2 tablespoons (4 dessertspoons) of oil

1 heaped dessertspoon of flour

1 pint (2 mugs) of chicken stock (1 Cube) approx. Don't put it all in if you don't need to.

1 lemon

2 egg yolks

2 tablespoons of chopped parsley. (It is worth buying some on the first day. It may be useful during the week. It is readily available. Or bring some from home, I even grow it in, or rather outside, my flat.)

Sufficient potatoes. (Don't stint. Too many rather than too few)

Other veg. A can of garden peas, drained, are easy.

1. Melt the butter in a pan with the oil. (Remember the oil is to prevent the butter burning. However, mine always does so don't worry about it too much.). Season the chicken with salt and pepper and fry on both sides until golden brown - you should be so lucky.
2. Remove the chicken. Add the flour to the pan and stir into a smooth paste. Add the stock gradually, eliminating all lumps and gradually bring to the boil. Replace the chicken and simmer as gently as your cooker will allow.
3. In the meantime put the potatoes on to boil. When these are cooked, the chicken will be as well.
4. Pare the lemon with a peeler, and cut the peel into thin strips to use as a garnish.
5. Squeeze the lemon into a mug, separate the egg yolks from the whites and mix with the lemon juice.
6. When the chicken is about cooked, put the peas in with the potatoes, or use another pan if you like washing up, remove the chicken to plates, put the lemon juice/egg yolk mix into the sauce and stir well over a low heat. It should not boil
7. Drain and serve the potatoes and peas, put the sauce over the chicken, garnish with lemon peel and chopped parsley, and stick your chest out in pride having earned yet another drinki from your skipper. But don't forget to eat your share.

Time: Threequarters of an hour

Vegetable Rissotto

Timing is vital. This must not be overcooked at any stage. This is all about textures and flavours. Ensure that your crew are aware of the time they must be on the boat to eat.

2 very large onions, chopped quite small.

Several cloves of garlic (crushed or chopped)

A quarter of a slab of butter

6 ozs of mushrooms.

1 mug of rice (a little more may be OK)

3 Mugs of water

Salt (a little) and black pepper

6 ozs of peas (a tin or frozen will do)

1 large green pepper, sliced.

4 Tomatoes cut into quarters

Almond flakes (buy a packet and use what you think)

4 ozs of grated Cheddar (more or less) (Puck has a grater)

Chopped Parsley (Optional, but an enhancement)

You can add a tin of sweet corn if you like.(not the liquid)

1. Melt the butter in a large pan (probably the largest on board), put in the onions, garlic and mushrooms and fry until the onions are soft, probably about 7 minutes.
2. Add the rice and mix well. Add the water and cook for 10 minutes
3. Add the seasoning, peas, sweetcorn, tomatoes and green peppers. Mix well but not violently and cook for 5 minutes.
4. Add half the almonds, half the cheese, half the parsley. Mix and cook for 3 minutes.
5. Serve and sprinkle with the rest of the almonds, cheese and parsley

Time: A little more than half an hour including preparation. Remember; do not overcook. If your crew are not there and it spoils, it is their fault. Be angry with them, particularly the skipper.

Sausage & Mash

This is particularly useful for the first evening when there is uncertainty about the time of arrival of crew and time seems to be at a premium.

2-3 large onions

4 large baking potatoes

12 sausages

other vegetable - cabbage? carrots?

Stock cube or bisto

1. Peel, slice and roughly chop the onions. Heat about 3 tablespoons of oil in frying pan. Put in onions and fry on low heat, stirring regularly, for about 20 minutes until they are soft and slightly brown. Too much heat will burn them
2. Peel potatoes and cut into bite size pieces. Put in saucepan of salted water and boil until soft. When cooked, mash with plenty of butter and black pepper.
3. Grill the sausages, turning frequently to obtain an even brown all over. I can never manage to do this but you might.
4. Prepare another vegetable and cook on either the onion or potato gas ring whichever of those two happen to be cooked first. The onion one is preferred because the onions can be put in the oven, alight of course, to keep warm.
5. A stock cube or some suitable substance added with water (not too much) to the onions does the trick.

Time: A little over half an hour.

Basic White Sauce

Butter - just more than half an inch off the end of a 250 gm slab

About 2 rounded dessertspoons of flour

Milk - at least half a pint

Salt & Pepper

1. Melt the butter in a saucepan on a fairly low heat. Do not burn it!
2. Take off the heat and stir in the flour. Cook very gently for a few minutes stirring all the time.
3. Take off heat and gradually add most of the milk stirring all the time and one addition being absorbed before another is added. This prevents lumping.
3. Return pan to heat and stir until boiling when it will thicken. If too runny, continue to boil. If too stiff stir in more milk until the required consistency is obtained.
4. Add a little salt and pepper to taste.
5. Add the flavouring required by the recipe you are using.

Cauliflower & Leek Cheese

Use the Basic White Sauce above.

A bigish cauliflower

3 or 4 leeks

Sufficient new potatoes - say 6 per person if fairly small.

Mature cheddar

Perhaps a tin of garden peas

1. Beak the cauliflower in florets and set to boil in a pan of salted water.
 2. Chop the root end from the leeks and discard the tatty leaves from the top. Chop into pieces about an inch long. Add to the cauliflower when it has been boiling for a few minutes. (Leeks do not take as long)
- Do not overcook, There is nothing worse than overcooked cauli & leek. Remember that they will have a little more cooking in the oven. They can be quite hard at this stage.
3. Wash the potatoes and scrape if necessary. Boil in a pan of salted water.
 4. Grate the cheese until there is quite a large pile on a plate.
 5. Remove the cauli & leek from the gas but do not drain yet. It will keep warm and cook a little more.
 6. Light the oven.
 7. Prepare the Basic White Sauce (see above) and add the grated cheese, stirring well to mix and melt. Drain the cauli & leek and put in casserole. Pour the sauce over it and put in oven for about 10 minutes or until the potatoes are cooked, and while you heat a tin of peas perhaps.

Time: This regularly takes me 45 minutes.

Braised Liver

1 lb Lamb's Liver

3 tablespoons of flour seasoned with salt and pepper.

2-3 inches of butter

1 stick of celery, chopped, if you have some.

1 onion sliced and chopped.

1 clove of garlic chopped or crushed.

4 rashers of bacon

Half pint of stock (Use whatever cubes are available, more or less)

About 1.5 lbs of potatoes

6 small carrots

1. Wash, dry and cut the liver into slices something less than an inch thick. Coat with seasoned flour.
2. Melt butter in frying pan and fry liver with celery and onions quite slowly, until browned and turning regularly. Place in a greased casserole. Add garlic. Place bacon with the rinds removed on top. Pour in the stock at the side. Cover and bake in the oven for about 30 minutes.
3. Parboil the potatoes and carrots. Slice them fairly thinly, add to the casserole and continue baking until the vegetables are tender about 15 minutes.
4. Serve another delicious meal.

Time: Probably more than 1 hour 15 minutes.

Smoked Haddock in Cheese Sauce.

There are lots of ways of preparing smoked haddock. This is my favourite

2 lbs = 900 gms of Smoked Haddock

1 Bayleaf

Black pepper

Slice of onion

2 stalks of parsley if you have any

4 Eggs

Mature Cheddar

Potatoes

Small tub of Coleslaw, or other vegetables

1. Place haddock in saucepan with bayleaf, pepper, onion and parsley. Add milk to cover. Bring to boil and simmer for about 10 mins
2. Hardboil the eggs with the potatoes. Grate the cheese until you have a good pile
3. When ready, remove and flake the haddock discarding as much of the skin as you can. Keep warm in the bottom of the oven.
6. Strain the milk and use as much of it as necessary to make the Basic White Sauce (see above) Add the grated cheese, stirring well to mix and melt.
7. Slice the hard boiled eggs and fold them and the fish into the sauce. (Fold means gently. You don't want to break everything up)
8. Hope the potatoes are cooked and serve up , not forgetting the coleslaw.

Time: 1 hour

Lamb & Red Peppers.

1 lb 8 oz of lamb cut into large cubes, or 4 chump chops (not stewing meat)
 Salt and pepper
 1 inch of butter
 4 tablespoons of oil
 2 medium onions finely chopped
 1-2 tablespoons of red wine vinegar (Go on. Buy some, and leave it behind for the next crew)
 3 red peppers, seeded and sliced.
 2 cloves of garlic crushed.
 Cayenne pepper
 Potatoes

1. Lightly season the meat. Heat the butter with 2 tbs of oil in a wide saucepan and fry the meat until sealed and starting to brown. Add the onions, cover and cook gently for about 5 minutes, stirring occasionally to mix Stir in the vinegar and put to one side.
2. Heat 2 tbs of oil in a frying pan and saute the peppers for a few minutes. Add the garlic and cook slowly for 7-8 minutes, stirring occasionally.
3. Combine with the meat and onions, add a pinch or two or three of Cayenne pepper, cover pan and simmer for 10 minutes or until the meat is tender and cooked
4. Serve with boiled potatoes. A bottle of red wine goes well too.

Time: about 40 minutes

Pasta Bake

(Quantities were not supplied with this recipe)

Pasta
 Onions
 Garlic
 Courgettes
 1 Tin Chopped Tomatoes
 Tomato Puree
 1 Tin Kidney Beans (drained)
 2 Small Tins of Tuna (drained) – Presumably 1 big tin will do!
 Grated Cheese

New Potatoes
 Salad

1. Cook required amount of Pasta in accordance with the instructions on the packet.
2. Fry chopped onions and garlic in oil in a large saucepan
3. Add halved mushrooms, sliced courgettes, chopped tomatoes, kidney beans, tuna and tomato puree. Season as required. Cook gently and not too thoroughly, stirring occasionally.
4. Drain Pasta, put into casserole, add sauce, sprinkle with cheese. Put into hot oven for about 15 mins or until the cheese is really gooey.
5. Serve.

Stuffed Aubergines

2 large Aubergines
 2 Peppers - green? red? (optional)
 1 Egg
 2 tins of Tuna, or Smoked Cod, Haddock, Herring
 1 Packet of flaked Almonds
 4 oz Cheese
 1 mug of Rice
 1 tablespoon Mild Curry Powder
 Chopped Parsley (optional)
 2 large Onions

Salt & Pepper

1. Cut Aubergines in half lengthways and scoop out flesh with spoon. Chop the flesh and fry in oil with the chopped onions until cooked.
2. Add 2 tins of Tuna (contents of), curry powder, parsley and a beaten egg. Stir well. The consistency should be 'a glutinous mass'.
3. Cook the rice in accordance with the instructions on the packet. Drain if necessary. Add to the mixture, season and stir. Fill the aubergine shells with the mix. Add grated cheese and almonds on top.. Use any surplus to stuff the Peppers in the same way.
4. Place in hot oven for up to 30 mins or when the cheese is toasted. The peppers may take a little longer.
5. Serve with new potatoes & salad.

Ratatouille (for 4)

250g Italian tagliatelle verde
½ red pepper
½ green pepper
1 small aubergine
1 small courgette
2 large onions;
2 tins tomatoes
large handful of mushrooms
tomato purée
2-3 cloves garlic
grated cheese;
basil
oregano.

1. Chop the onions, peppers and garlic. Fry in a large pan with some oil. Add the mushrooms and fry until the onions brown.
2. Thickly slice and then dice the aubergine. Add to the pan quickly (otherwise it discolours). Fry for a further 5-10 minutes, then add the tomatoes and purée.
3. Bring back to the boil, during which add basil and oregano.
4. Add a little water to stop burning if necessary and let simmer for ¾ hr. Serve with pasta and plate of grated cheese.

Cauliflower and broccoli or macaroni cheese (for 6)

9 oz macaroni
1½ dessert spoon margarine
1½ tbsp flour
4½ oz grated cheese
1½pt milk
broccoli
cauliflower
garden peas
potatoes.

Do in advance: boil water

1. Cook the cauliflower and broccoli or macaroni in boiling salted water (a few minutes). When just cooked, drain and keep hot. Meanwhile, prepare the cheese sauce.
2. Cheese sauce (7-10 minutes cooking time)
2 oz butter or margarine' 2 oz flour; seasoning; 1-1½ pints milk.
 - a. Heat the butter gently; remove from the heat and stir in the flour.
 - b. Return to the heat and cook gently for a few minutes, to ensure the roux does not brown.
 - c. Remove the pan from the heat again and gradually blend in the cold milk (add further milk only when the mixture is consistent).
 - d. Bring to the boil and cook, stirring with a wooden spoon until smooth. Optionally, add parsley, paprika, nutmeg & coriander.
 - e. Season well. If any small lumps have formed, whisk sharply.
 - f. Stir in grated cheese.

Back to main menu again:

3. Turn into a shallow oven dish and mix in the vegetables/pasta. Sprinkle with cheese and place under a hot grill until golden brown. Serve with potatoes and peas.

Hot-pot (for 6)

1½ lean minced beef
6 rashers streaky bacon
1 chopped onion;
1 large tin sliced tomatoes
3tbsb Worcester sauce
1½tbsb tomato purée;
pinch mixed herbs
1 pint beef stock
1½lb potatoes (~4 average sized)
1½ oz melted butter.

Do in advance: beef stock; heat oven; part-boil potatoes (10-12 minutes)

1. Remove the bacon rinds, chop the bacon and place in a pan. Cook over a low heat until the fat runs; add the onion and sauté for 5 minutes. Stir in the beef and sauté until evenly browned.
2. Add tomatoes and juice, Worcester sauce, purée, herbs, seasoning and stock. Bring to boil, reduce, cover and simmer for 20 minutes.
3. Peel and thinly slice the potatoes. Spoon half the meat mixture into an oven dish, cover with half the slices. Sprinkle with salt. Spoon in the rest of the meat and cover with the rest of the slices, overlapping.
4. Sprinkle with salt and brush the potatoes with melted butter. Cook, uncovered for ~1hr.
5. Serve with green vegetable.

Chicken in wine (for 4)

4 chicken breast fillets
2 medium onions
2 chicken stock cubes
1½ cups hot water;
4 glasses white wine (or cider);
4 tsp flour
herbs - I found Basil to be particularly suitable
seasoning.

1. Defrost the chicken. Peel & chop the onion; dissolve the stock cubes in 1-1½ cups hot water.
2. Heat 4 tsp oil, a large knob of butter in casserole or thick saucepan & fry chicken gently for a few minutes, turning to brown all over.
3. Remove from pan. Add the onions to the pan and stir over a moderate heat for a few minutes to soften. Pour most of the wine into the onion, stir well and allow to bubble for a minute.
4. Return chicken to the sauce & stir in stock, herbs. Cover pan and simmer very gently for 30-45 minutes until the chicken is tender.
5. Mix the flour with the rest of the wine to make a smooth paste. Gradually stir into the chicken sauce until thickened.
6. Serve with potatoes, peas and carrots.

Chicken & coconut curry (for 4)

1 tbsp oil
1 sliced onion
1 chopped cooking apple
1 tsp ground ginger
1 tbsp curry powder
1½lb boneless skinless chicken breasts
½ pt chicken stock
2 oz creamed coconut
2 tbsp desiccated coconut
1 tbsp mango chutney.

1. Gently heat the oil in a saucepan & cook for 2-3 mins. Add the apple, ginger and curry powder and cook for 2 mins. Cut the chicken into 1" cubes and add to saucepan. Cook until lightly browned. Add stock and simmer gently for 40-45 mins, stirring occasionally.
2. Crumble the creamed coconut into the saucepan and stir until dissolved. Stir in the desiccated coconut and mango chutney.

Vegetable gougère (for 4)

Sauce: 2 tsp olive oil
1 large onion, chopped
4 oz celery, chopped
1 green pepper, chopped
1 small cauliflower, cut into small florets
1 clove garlic, peeled & crushed
400g can tomatoe
2 bay leaves
Choux paste: 150 ml water
4 oz margarine
2½ oz plain wholemeal flour
2 eggs, beaten
Topping: 2 oz cheddar cheese, grated
1 oz fresh wholemeal breadcrumb
¾ oz walnuts, chopped

1. To make the sauce, heat the oil and sauté the onion, celery and pepper for 3 minutes. Add the cauliflower and garlic and cook for a further 3 minutes. Stir in the tomatoes with their juice, seasoning and bay leaves. Bring to the boil, cover and simmer for 20-25 minutes. Preheat the oven to Gas Mark 6/200C.
2. To make the choux paste, place the water and margarine in a pan and bring to the boil. Remove from the heat and quickly add all the flour, beating well with a wooden spoon until the mixture leaves the sides of the pan clean. Cool slightly. Add a little seasoning to the eggs, then gradually beat into the flour mixture, blending well. Spoon the paste around the edge of a greased, ovenproof 9 inch flan dish. Remove the bay leaves from the sauce and spoon into the centre of the pastry.
3. For the topping, mix together the cheese, breadcrumbs and walnuts then spoon over the vegetables. Cook in oven for 30-40 minutes

until well risen and bubbling.

4. Serve with potatoes and peas.

Ham and mushroom lasagne (for 4)

2 medium onions, chopped 1 oz margarine

1 oz flour

½pt chicken stock

½pt milk

8 oz button mushrooms, sliced

4 oz ham, diced;

12 sheets oven-ready lasagne

2 oz grated cheese

1. Sauté the onion in the margarine until soft but not browned. Add the flour and cook for 1 minute. Remove from the heat and gradually add the stock and milk. Bring slowly to the boil, stirring until the sauce thickens, then season.

2. Reserve about a quarter of the sauce and a few mushroom slices and put to one side. Add the ham and the remaining mushrooms to the sauce.

3. Cover the base of a greased 7x11 inch oven dish with a little sauce. Cover with lasagne. Repeat layers, ending with lasagne.

4. Pour the reserved sauce over the top and sprinkle with grated cheese. Decorate with the reserved mushroom slices. Bake in the oven at Gas Mark 5/190C for approximately 30 minutes.

5. Serve with potatoes, peas and broccoli.

Vegetable lasagne (for 4)

4 oz oven-ready green lasagne

1 tsp vegetable oil

1 lb fresh spinach, trimmed (or 8 oz chopped frozen spinach)

8 oz cottage cheese

100g chopped walnuts;

2 tbsps grated Parmesan

2 oz margarine

2 oz plain wholemeal flour

1 pint skimmed milk;

4 oz cheddar cheese, grated

Thick tomato sauce: 1 tbsps vegetable oil; 1 medium onion, peeled and chopped; 1 clove garlic, peeled and crushed; 1½x400g cans Italian plum tomatoes; 4tbsps tomato purée; pinch of sugar; ½ bay leaf; 2 tsp chopped basil

Thick tomato sauce:

1. Heat oil in a broad pan. Sauté onion slowly until softened (do not let onion colour more than a pale yellow). Add the garlic towards the end. Pour in canned tomatoes (with juice) and tomato purée.

2. Chop roughly in pan with edge of palette knife. Add seasoning, sugar and bay leaf. Simmer slowly for 1 hour with the lid off, until reduced to a thick sauce, stirring occasionally. Add chopped basil for last few minutes of cooking only.

Main dish:

1. Grease a shallow rectangular or square ovenproof dish and preheat oven

2. Cook the spinach with a minimum of boiling salted water until completely softened. Drain and finely chop. (If using frozen spinach, cook according to the instructions on the packet and drain thoroughly.) Combine the spinach, cottage cheese and walnuts together to make a thick paste.

3. Make cheese sauce using 1 pint of milk.

4. Line the ovenproof dish with half the lasagne. Layer the thick tomato sauce, the cheese sauce, spinach mixture and remaining lasagne. (Alternatively, use more than two layers of lasagne.) Sprinkle the top with Parmesan cheese and bake in the oven for 30 minutes.

5. Serve with potatoes and peas.

Vegetable curry (for 4)

4 oz potatoes (~2 small), diced

4 oz cauliflower sprigs

4 oz carrots, sliced

4 oz green beans

2 medium sized onions, peeled and chopped

2 medium sized cooking apples, peeled, cored and chopped

1 large can sliced tomatoes

1 large can red kidney bean, drained;

1 tbsps turmeric

1 tbsps flour

4 tbsps vegetable oil

2 tbsps curry powder (or cumin, coriander, ginger, fenugreek etc)

Do in advance: boil water to cook rice

1. Toss vegetables in flour and turmeric until well coated. Heat oil in a pan and cook the vegetables (except the onions and tomatoes) for about 5 minutes. Remove the vegetables and put to one side.

2. Add the chopped onion and apple to the pan and cook for about 2 minutes. Add the curry powder and cook for another 3 minutes. Add the tomatoes to the pan and the red kidney beans and vegetables. Bring to the boil and add seasoning to taste.

3. Cover and simmer for 30 minutes or until the vegetables are tender. Stir occasionally to prevent sticking and add a little water if the

sauce becomes too thick.

4. Serve with rice.

Pancakes (makes 6-8) (Serve with Courgette Medley below)

6 oz plain flour; 3 large/size 1 eggs; 300ml milk (just over half a pint); 125 ml water; 2 oz butter

1. Sift the flour into a bowl. Make a well in the centre and add the eggs and a pinch of salt. Whisk the eggs and flour together - do the eggs first and then slowly incorporate the flour. Mix together the milk and water and slowly add to the mixture. Half way through mixing, scrape the excess flour from the side of the bowl with a spatula. Melt the butter in a saucepan and add 2 tbsp to the batter.
2. Heat a dry pan to a high heat. With kitchen paper, smear more butter over the hot pan. Reduce the heat to medium. Add 2 tbsp of the batter to the pan and spread around immediately. Wait for 30 seconds, flip the pancake over and wait for another 30 seconds. Serve immediately or keep warm wrapped in a clean tea towel. (N.B. The first pancake may spoil.)

Spinach and ricotta cannelloni (for 4)

1 pint Béchamel sauce (1 pint milk boiled with a small peeled onion, a carrot, parsley and nutmeg; 1 oz butter; 1 oz flour; optional 2 tbsp single cream)

8 oz fresh spinach; 8 cooked pancakes; 6 oz ricotta cheese; 6 oz mozzarella cheese, chopped; 4oz parmesan. Optionally, 2 medium sized tomatoes, chopped

1. Cook the spinach in butter/boiling water (just the water still clinging to the leaves after washing) with a pinch of salt. Squeeze out the excess moisture and chop finely. Mix in the ricotta cheese and a quarter of the sauce. Optionally, also add the tomatoes.
2. Form the cannelloni with the pancakes and the spinach mixture. Lay the cannelloni in an ovenproof dish, cover with the mozzarella then the remaining sauce. Sprinkle with the parmesan. Bake at Gas Mark 6/200C for 20 minutes.
3. Serve with new potatoes and courgette medley. (See below)

Courgette medley (for 4) (Serve with Spinach and ricotta cannelloni, above)

1 small/medium sized onion

1 clove garlic, peeled and crushed

1 tbsp (olive) oil

2 tbsp chopped parsley (try also basil and oregano)

1 tsp chopped thyme or sage

8 oz French beans

8 oz courgettes, sliced

2 large/3 medium tomatoes, quartered

2 tbsp water

1. Sauté the onion and garlic in the oil. Season to taste and add the herbs. Cut the beans into lengths and the courgettes into chunks.
2. Add the beans, courgettes, tomatoes and water to the pan and simmer, covered, for 10 minutes or until just tender.