

XCentric Ideas

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A tongue-in-the cheek issue!

- Leipoldt's Cape Cookery -

I treasure this cookery book, because it reads like a novel. You're welcome to try these recipes, but I do think you might have a difficult time finding the ingredients...

'My interest in cookery dates from the time when, as a little boy in the late eighties of the last century, I assisted, in a very minor and suppressed capacity, at the culinary operations of a very expert Coloured woman cook who bore the reputation of being one of the best in the Cape Colony.'



C. LOUIS LEIPOLDT, December 1946
LEIPOLDT'S CAPE COOKERY

1880 - 1946

Soup

Tortoise soup*

The tortoise was killed, thoroughly scrubbed in warm water, and then boiled in slightly salted water to which herbs and spices had been added according to taste. The boiling lasting until the animal had practically fallen to pieces.



Blood soup

Take the fresh blood of a fowl and mix it with sifted flour, vinegar, powdered white pepper and salt. Stir this mixture slowly into a boiling chicken stock.

Fish-roe soup (viskuite)*

Soak the roes in water and remove all membrane. Simmer them slowly in a mixture of vinegar, onions, green ginger and herbs; take them out and cut them up into small pieces, which you then place, with a cupful of green peas, in some good bouillon (broth); simmer gently; add a glassful of white wine, grate nutmeg over and serve with toasted bread.



Personal note:

- * Years ago, my 'ouma Anna' made tortoise soup and served it in the shell.
- * My 'Van Dyk' family in Gansbaai, W-Cape, introduced us to 'viskuite'. I know you can buy them today at a shop in Paarl.

Vegetables



Potatoes with tail fat *

Put peeled potatoes in a flat pot with sufficient sheep's tail fat to cover the bottom; strew salt and a little marjoram over the potatoes. Put on the lid and let the potatoes stew till they are well done, shaking the pot occasionally.

Artichokes with penguin eggs

Puree cooked artichokes and mix it with the mashed yolks of hard boiled penguin eggs. Add salt, pepper, a little powdered chilli, a blade of mace (herb), a glass of sherry; let it simmer on the fire, stirring constantly, till it no longer cleaves to the side of the saucepan. Take out and serve on a dish with the jellied white of the eggs as a decoration.



Purslane (porseleinblaar) *



Grows profusely in every Cape garden in late winter and spring, and was, in the old days, and should be today, a favourite vegetable. Its little succulent leaves were gathered, washed and braised with ginger powder, mace (herb), pepper and salt in fat; a tiny sliver of garlic was added, a wineglassful of wine was stirred in, and the result was an amazingly delicate, luscious and sapid (geurig) puree, and was served with rice and potatoes.

Personal note:

- * We used to braai sheeps' tails on a farm outside Napier, W-Cape.
- * Purslane grew in our back garden. We had it quite a few times and it tasted like 'waterblommetjebredie' (water hawthorn stew).

Meat

Sheep's tongue with celery

Take half a dozen sheep tongues; clean and trim them. Put them in a stewpot with a cup of wine, the white part of six young celery shoots, a few young onions chopped up, a blade of mace (herb), grated nutmeg and pepper and salt. When the tongues are soft, add a large lump of butter, a tablespoonful of lemon juice and a handful of young carrots; stew for no longer than a few minutes and serve.



Ox and sheep's hearts

Were always stuffed, parboiled and then braised with onions, spices, herbs and a little rum or wine, after having been cut in moderately thin slices.

Stewed pig's trotters (feet) *

Half a dozen pig's or sheep's feet, which you must carefully clean, scrape and wash well in salt water. Cut them up into pieces and boil them in salt water till the flesh comes off the bone. Take the flesh and put it into a shallow pot with three large onions sliced, a blade of mace (herb), a sprig of rosemary or the top leaves of a sprig of mint, some pepper and some salt and a few tablespoonfuls of wine; stew gently for half an hour and add some breadcrumbs; stir well and let it stand for a few moments; then whisk in a couple of egg yolks beaten up with the juice of a large lemon; serve at once with a grating of nutmeg over all.



Personal note:

* My mom used to make brawn (sult) with pig's trotters.

Game (1)



Pigeon with crayfish

Salt and pepper the carcass inside and out and stuff with pounded crayfish mixed with ginger, mace (herb), marjoram, pepper and salt; stew gently in white wine, keeping the pot closely covered.

Porcupine crackling

Plunge the animal, as you would a sucking pig, into boiling water; scrape off the pens and the hairs; scrub the skin till it is perfectly smooth and white. Now skin the animal and discard the meat, which is not very nice to eat. Put the skin in a jar in salt water to which you have added a little vinegar, and let it lie in it overnight.

Take it out the next day, dry it, rub it with a clove of garlic and put it in a saucepan with a little boiling water. Boil till it is tender enough to allow a fork to pierce it easily. Take it out and cut it up into pieces about the size of flattened apricots which you may either grill or fry in a pan with a little fat. Serve with rice and halved lemons.



Python

The flesh of the python is tender, savoury and like that of a well-fed pig, but is generally so fat that it needs preliminary broiling, to separate from it some of its oily extravagance. It can then be roasted in a pot in the ordinary manner.

Game (2)

Fried locusts

Nip off their wings, heads and legs, after you have plunged them into boiling water mercifully to kill them. You dust them with a mixture of pepper and salt and shallow-fry them in fat till they are crisp and brown.



Partridge in clay



Let the partridge be freshly killed. Do not draw or pluck it. Cut off its legs just below the feathered part and its head at the top of the neck. Coat the bird with a thick layer of clay that you have made into a dough, so that it is wholly covered. Place it on hot coals and shovel coals and ashes over it, replenishing them when they are no longer hot. When the clay has become hard and baked, rake out the bird and let the clay get cold. Then crack it with a stone, take out the partridge and serve.

Brain cakes

The brains of the buck are extracted, par-boiled, mixed with a little minced onion, salt and pepper, and baked in a pan with a little fat.

Or they are shaped into thicker cakes and rolled in flour and then fried.

Another way is to dip them in a fairly thick batter, and fry them in fat.



Odds and Ends



Milk brawn

Into a cupful of sea-weed liquid stir two cupfuls of hot milk, which you have boiled up with a feathering of cinnamon, a cupful of sugar and a blade of mace. Pour into a wetted mould, and when set turn out and serve with cream.

As-koek (Ash Cake)

It is better to sift your meal (flour), for that makes the cake whiter, but if you cannot do so you may use unsifted meal.

Mix it with enough salt to give it a good taste and stir it into milk or buttermilk till it is firm enough to knead. Add to it some tail fat and knead it well.

Let it stand awhile. Form it into cakes the size of your palm and about half an inch thick, and bake it on the fire grid. Eat with fat/butter and syrup.



Recipes

Some of these original recipes do not give the amounts; few of the Malay cooks stipulated how much of each ingredient should be used and the reader was left in doubt on this point.

It was presumed, apparently, that the intending maker of the dish knew for how many guests it would have to serve and could apportion the quantities as desired.

Hungry, anyone?