

Irish Cuisine

MEAT & POULTRY

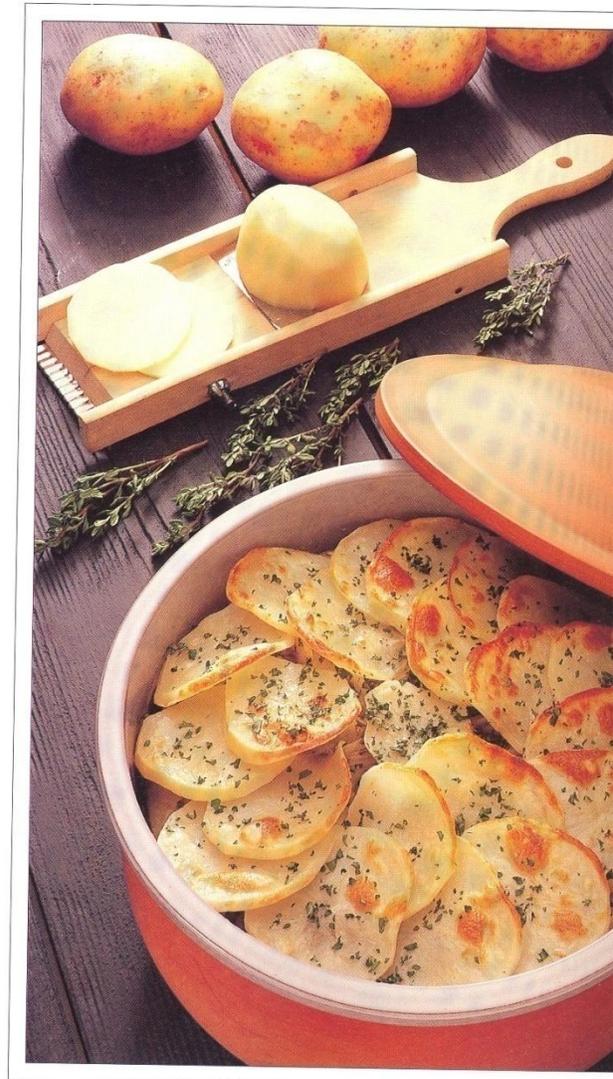
Irish Stew

INGREDIENTS

2 lbs boned lamb or 3 lbs rib chops
2 lbs potatoes
2 large onions
Salt and pepper
1 tbs fresh, chopped thyme and parsley or
1 tsp dried thyme
1½ cups water
Chopped parsley for garnish

Trim the meat, leaving a little of the fat on. Peel and slice the potatoes and onions. Season the meat and vegetables with salt, pepper and herbs. Then, starting and finishing with a layer of potatoes, layer the potatoes, meats and onions in a large saucepan or casserole. Add the water and cover tightly. Either simmer on a very low heat on the top of the stove for 2-2½ hours or cook in a slow oven, 275°F, for the same length of time. The pot or casserole should be shaken occasionally to prevent the potatoes from sticking and you should check that the liquid has not dried out. The finished stew should not be too runny, and the potatoes should thicken it enough. Brown the top potato layer under a hot broiler and serve sprinkled with chopped parsley.

Serves 4



Corned Beef & Cabbage

Ingredients:

- 5 lb Corned-Beef brisket
- 2 Whole cloves
- 2 Bay Leaves
- 8 Medium Potatoes, pared
- 1 Medium cabbage, cut in wedges
- Chopped parsley
- 1 Clove Garlic
- 10 Whole black Peppers
- 8 Medium Carrots, Pared
- 8 Medium yellow onions, peeled
- 2 lb Butter



Directions:

Wipe corned beef with damp paper towels. Place in large pan, cover with water. Add garlic, cloves, black peppercorns, and bay leaves. Bring to boiling. Reduce heat; simmer 5 minutes. Skim surface. Cover pan; simmer 3 to 4 hours, or until corned beef is fork-tender. Add carrots, potatoes, and onions during last 25 minutes. Add cabbage wedges during last 15 minutes. Cook vegetables just till tender. Slice across the grain. Arrange slices on platter with cabbage. Brush potatoes with butter, sprinkle with chopped parsley.

Beef Braised in Guinness

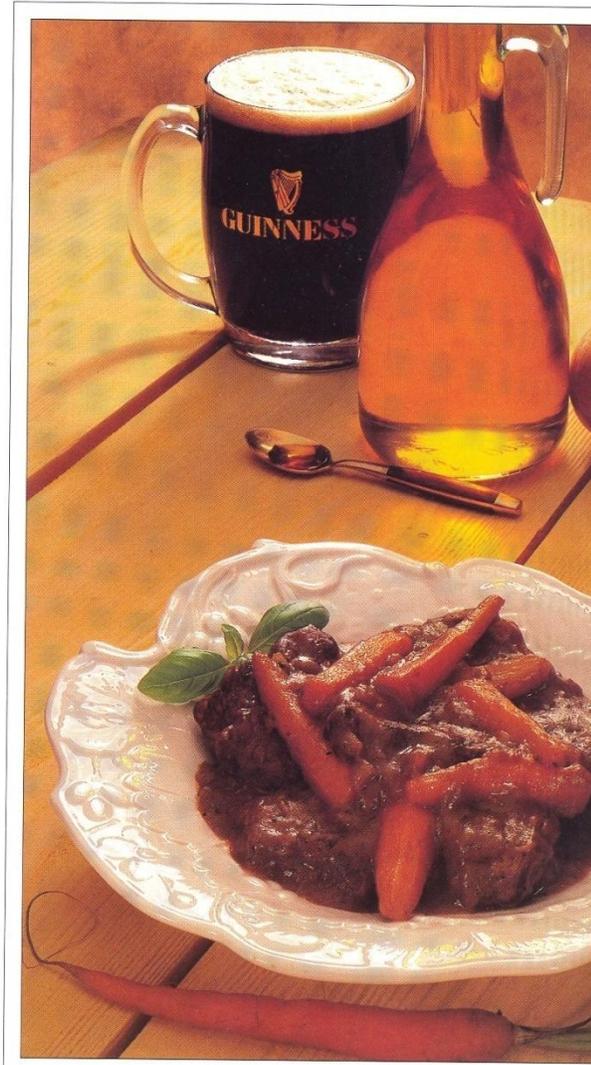
INGREDIENTS

1½ lbs chuck or round roast
 2 medium onions
 ½ lb carrots
 2 heaping tbsps all-purpose flour
 Salt and pepper
 2-3 tbsps cooking oil
 ½ tsp fresh basil, minced
 ⅔ cup Guinness
 1 tsp honey
 ⅔ cup stock or water

The roast should be about 1-inch thick and cut into about twelve pieces.

Peel the onions and chop them fairly small. Peel the carrots and slice them into pieces about the size of your little finger. Place the flour in a flat dish and mix in a tsp of salt and a sprinkling of pepper. Heat the oil in the pan, add the onions and cook until soft. Transfer them with a slotted spoon to a large, shallow, greased, ovenproof dish. Dip the pieces of meat in the seasoned flour and brown them in the fat in the pan. Remove these as they are cooked and place in the dish on top of the onions, in a single layer. Arrange the carrots around them. If necessary, add a little more oil to the pan and stir in the remainder of the seasoned flour. Cook for a minute or two, stirring constantly, then add the basil and the Guinness. Allow to boil for a minute or two and then add the honey and the stock. Return to a boil and pour over the meat. Cover the dish either with a lid or with foil and cook in the oven at 325°F for 1½ hours. This dish tastes even better if you cook it the day before and heat it up again in the oven for about 45 minutes. If the gravy looks as though it needs thickening, mix 1 tsp of cornstarch with 2 tbsps of cold water and stir into the gravy 15 minutes before cooking time is up.

Serves 4



Right: a shepherd's cottage in the mountainous Inishowen Peninsula, Donegal, Ireland's most northerly county.

Irish Chocolate Cake

The "Irishness" of this lovely chocolate cake is thanks not only to the wonderful liqueur used in the filling, but also to a certain, very Irish, ingredient in the cake mixture itself, which contributes to its moistness.

Sponge

- 175g/ 6oz self-raising flour
- 1/2tsp salt
- 50g/ 2oz dark chocolate
- 110g/ 4oz butter
- 175g/ 6oz caster sugar
- 80g/ 3oz cooked mashed potato
- 2 eggs, beaten
- 4tbsp milk

Filling

- 110g/ 4oz dark chocolate
- 125ml/ 4fl oz double cream
- 50g/ 2oz icing sugar
- 3tbsp Irish cream liqueur



Method:

Preheat oven to gas mark 5/ 190°C/ 375°F, and grease and line two 20cm/ 8 inch cake tins. Sift flour and salt into a mixing bowl. Melt chocolate in a bowl placed over a saucepan of hot water.

In a separate bowl, cream butter and sugar together until fluffy, then beat in the chocolate and mashed potato. Gradually beat in the eggs, adding a little flour with each addition. Fold in the rest of the flour and stir in the milk.

Divide mixture between cake tins and bake for 25-30 minutes or until top is firm but springy to the touch. Remove from oven and after a few minutes, turn out on a cooling rack.

While the cake is cooling, make the filling. Melt the chocolate as before, stir in the other ingredients and mix well. Use the filling to sandwich the sponge layers together and coat the top and sides of the cake.

Irish Scones

Makes 6 Scones

Ingredients:

- 1 cup white flour
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 pound butter, softened
- 2 ounces sugar
- 1 egg, slightly beaten
- 2 ounces milk
- Sultanas (white raisins) optional
- Walnut halves (optional)



Method:

1. Mix flour and baking powder. Add butter, blending until mixture is butter-colored. Add sugar and continue to mix well. Add half the beaten egg and all the milk.
2. Add raisins or some nuts, if desired, mixing well to make a sticky dough. Turn dough onto floured board and knead at least 5 minutes or longer.
3. Cut dough into rounds and place on greased baking sheet or hot frying pan. Brush tops of scones with remainder of beaten egg. Place walnut halves on top, if desired.
4. Bake at 350 to 375 degrees for 15 to 20 minutes, or until brown.

Brown Bread

Ingredients:

- 4 Cups of coarse ground whole wheat flour
- 4 Cups of plain white flour
- Three tea spoons of salt
- Two rounded teaspoons of baking soda
- 3 - 4 Cups of Low fat cultured buttermilk



Method:

Mix all the dry ingredients together in a large bowl. Make a well in the center and add some buttermilk. Work the mixture with your hand till the dough is soft and not too sticky. On a floured board, turn out the dough and knead into a circular shape about three inches thick.

Place in a very hot pre heated oven (475 F) for 20 minutes and then turn down oven to 400F for another 20 minutes. Bread should sound hollow when you tap id on the back when fully cooked.

Shepherd's Pie

- 2 tablespoons butter
- 1 medium chopped onion
- 2 sliced carrots
- 4 tablespoons flour
- 600ml/1 pint browning stock
- chopped parsley and thyme
- 450g/1lb cooked minced beef
- 675g /1.5# mashed potatoes
- Kerrygold Dubliner Irish cheese



1. Melt the Irish butter in a saucepan and add the chopped onion cover and let sweat for a few minutes, Add the carrots
2. Stir in the flour and cook until it is slightly browned then add the stock and herbs.
3. Bring to the boil and reduce it a little by boiling for about 5 minutes. Add the meat and bring back to the boil. Place in a pie dish and cover with the mashed potatoes put into a medium hot oven (180c/350f/ gas4) for about 30 minutes. For extra taste you can grate some Dubliner Irish cheese on top 10 minutes before the end of cooking.

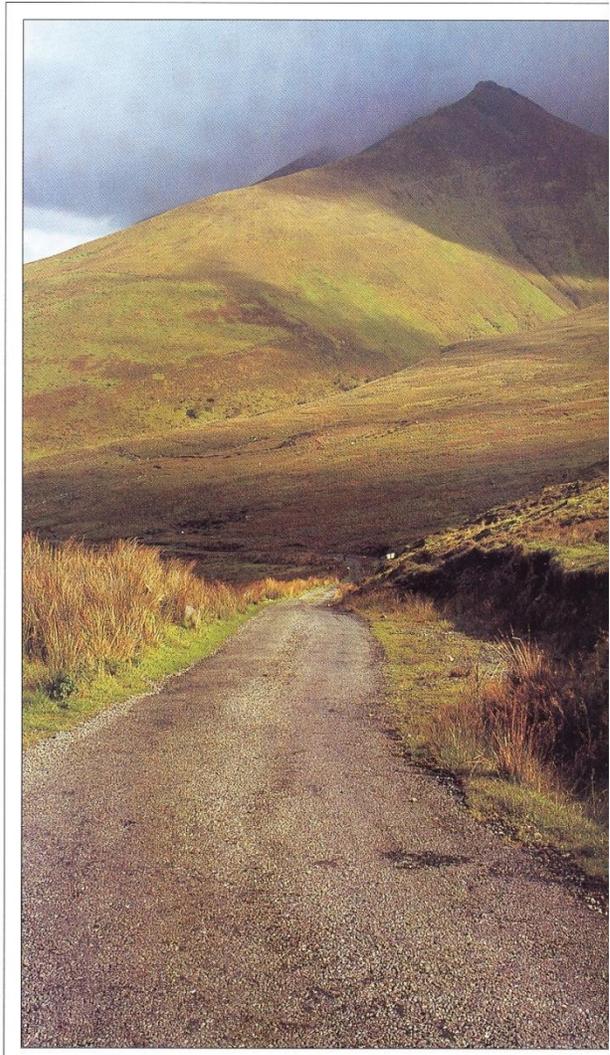
Champ

INGREDIENTS

1½ lbs cooked potatoes
4 oz scallions
½ cup milk
Salt and pepper
4 large pats butter

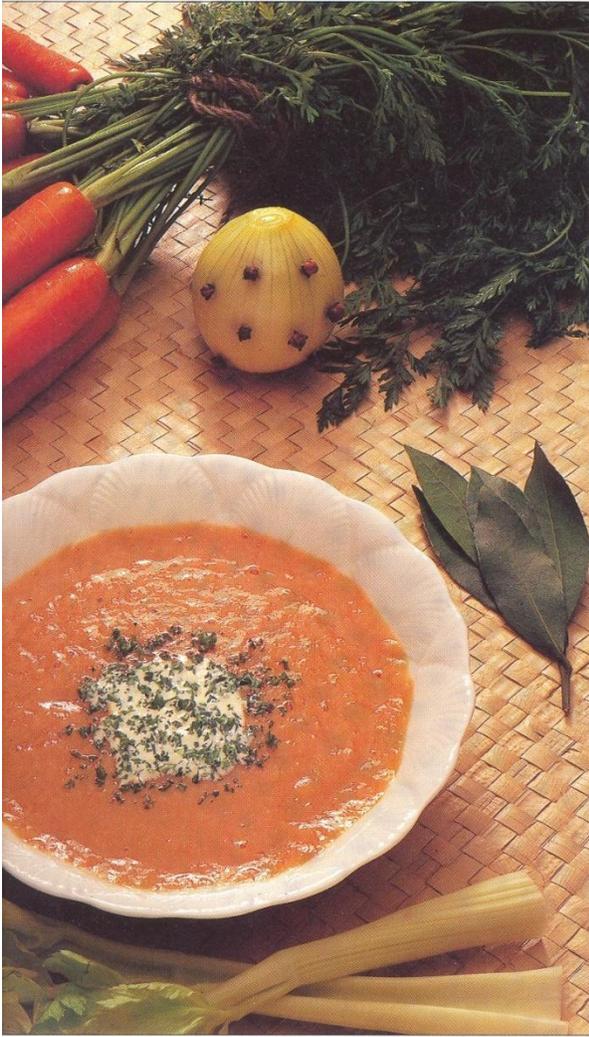
Peel the potatoes and boil them in salted water. Drain them well and allow to dry out completely. Meanwhile, trim and wash the scallions. Slice them finely, including the green part, and put them in a saucepan with the milk to simmer gently until soft. Drain the scallions, reserving the milk, and beat them into the potato, gradually adding the hot milk until you have a nice fluffy mixture. Season well with salt and pepper and divide between four bowls, shaping each serving into a mound with a dent in the top into which you put the butter. It is eaten by dipping the potato into the melted butter.

Serves 4



It is the constant interchange between sun and rain that gives Ireland its pastures.

Smoked Salmon Bisque



INGREDIENTS

Skin and trimmings of a side of smoked salmon
1 carrot
1-2 sticks of celery
1 onion, studded with cloves
Bay leaf
1 tsp salt
Few peppercorns
¼ cup butter
½ cup all-purpose flour
1 tbsp tomato paste
1 glass white wine
4 tbsps cream and 1 tbsp parsley for garnishing

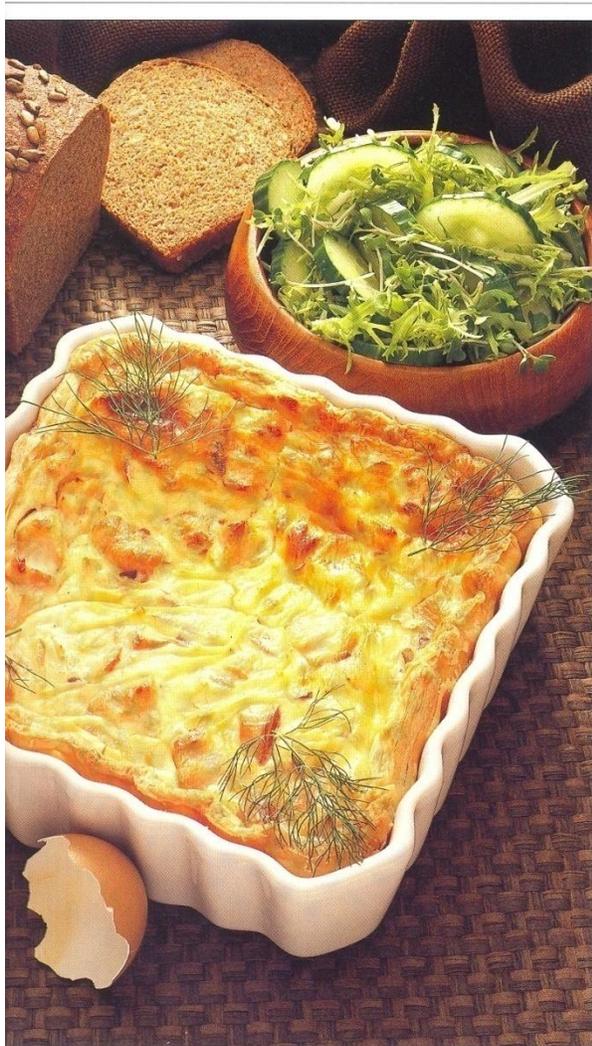
Put the skin and trimmings in a saucepan. Cut the carrot and celery into chunks. Add these to the pan with the onion. Cover with cold water, add the bay leaf, salt and peppercorns. Cover the pan and simmer for about 30 minutes. Remove the bay leaf. Take out the onion, remove the cloves and return the onion to the pan. With a slotted spoon, remove the fish skin and scrape off any remaining flesh, which should also be returned to the pan. Strain half the liquid into a bowl.

In another large pan melt the butter, stir in the flour and make a roux. Stir in the tomato paste and gradually add the strained stock, stirring constantly until it thickens. Add a glass of white wine, or a glass of sherry will do very well! Put the rest of the stock, containing the fish and vegetables, in a blender and run it for half a minute. Add this to the soup. Test for seasoning. You can either stir a spoonful of cream into the soup before serving or put a spoon of cream on top of each bowl. Garnish with a little chopped parsley.

Serves 6-8

*: sunset over Donegal Bay, which
near the north end of the Irish west
it where the River Eske flows into
bay.*

Salmon Flan



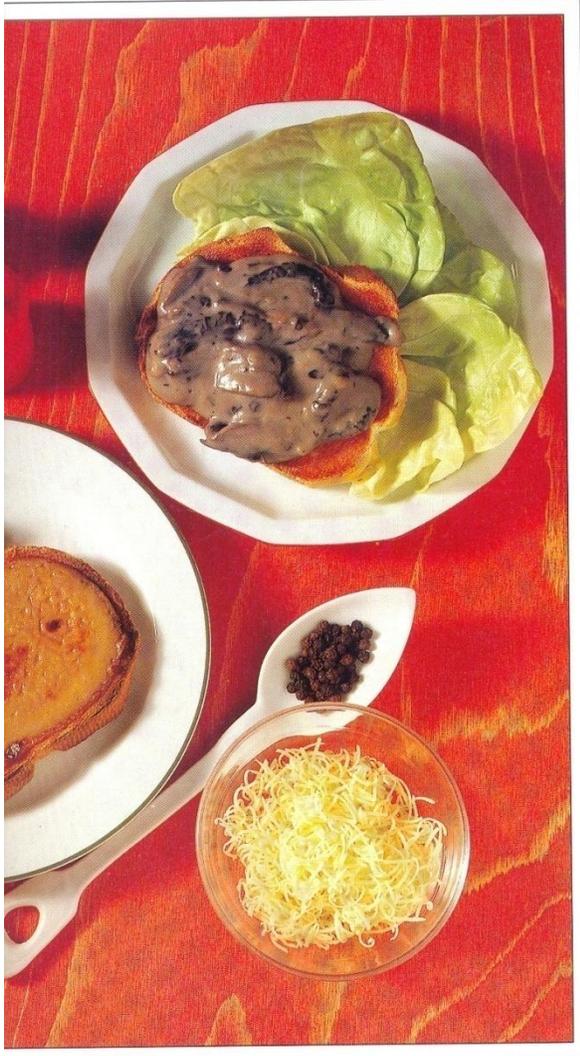
INGREDIENTS

6 oz frozen puff pastry
2 tsp cornstarch
½ cup milk
Salt and pepper
6 oz cooked fresh salmon or 7½ oz can of salmon
1 egg, lightly beaten
Dill for garnish

Thaw the pastry. Roll out into a square large enough to line a greased 8-inch flan dish. Trim off the excess pastry and crimp the edges. Mix the cornstarch with 1 tbsp of the milk, bring the rest to a boil, pour into the cornstarch mix, stir well and return to the pan. Return to a boil and cook for 1 minute, stirring constantly. Season well with salt and pepper. If using canned salmon drain the liquid from the can into the sauce. If using fresh salmon add 1 tbsp of butter. Remove the pan from the heat and add the egg, beating it in thoroughly. Flake up the salmon, removing any bones and skin, fold it into the sauce and turn into the pie shell. Bake in the oven, 375°F, for 35-40 minutes. Serve garnished with dill sprigs.

Serves 4-6

Irish Rarebit



INGREDIENTS

2 tbsps butter or margarine
2 tbsps all-purpose flour
½ cup milk
1 tsp Dijon mustard
1 tsp honey
½ cup Guinness
1 cup Cheddar cheese, grated
Salt and pepper

Melt the butter in a heavy pan and stir in the flour to make a roux. Cook on a low heat for a further minute without allowing the roux to brown. Remove pan from heat and gradually beat the milk into the roux. Return to heat and stir until the mixture thickens. Stir in mustard and honey and finally the Guinness. Cook this mixture fairly rapidly for 2-3 minutes then add grated cheese and stir over very low heat only until all the cheese has melted. Spread thickly on four slices of toast and brown under the broiler.

Serves 4

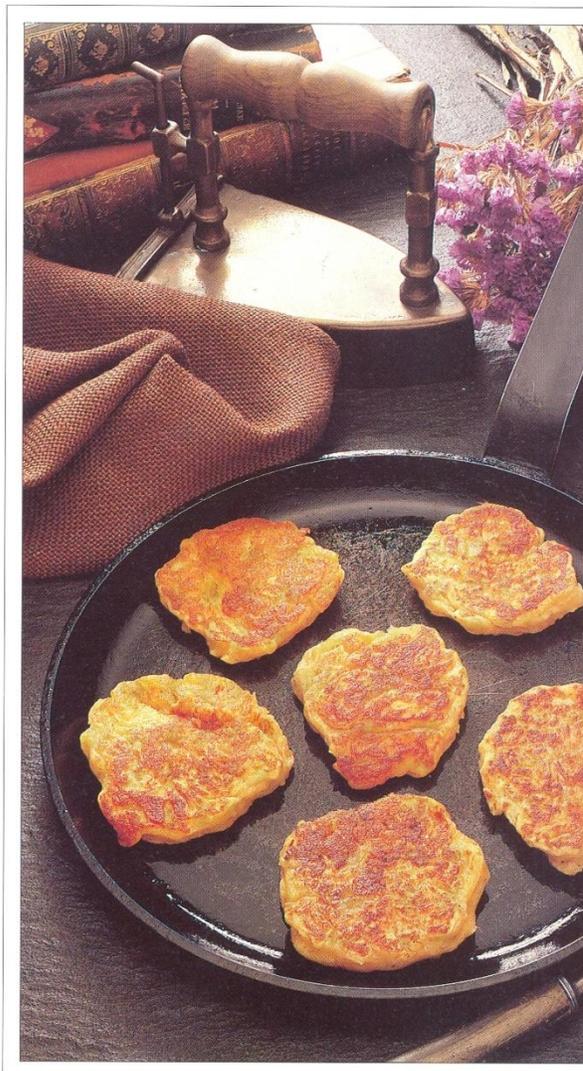
Boxty Pancakes

INGREDIENTS

½ lb raw potatoes
8 oz mashed potatoes
1 tsp salt
1 tsp baking soda
2 cups all-purpose flour
Pepper
¼ cup butter, margarine or bacon fat
Milk

Peel and grate the raw potatoes. Wrap them tightly in a cloth and squeeze over a bowl to extract as much of the starch liquid as possible. Thoroughly blend the grated raw potato into the cooked mashed potato. Pour the liquid off the bowl of potato starch and scrape the starch into the potato mixture. Sift the salt and baking soda with the flour and add to the potatoes, mix well. Add the melted fat and mix again. Add as much milk as necessary to make the mixture into a batter of dropping consistency, season with pepper and cook in spoonfuls on a greased griddle or heavy pan until crispy and golden on both sides.

Serves 6



Bananas with Irish Mist

INGREDIENTS

¼ cup butter

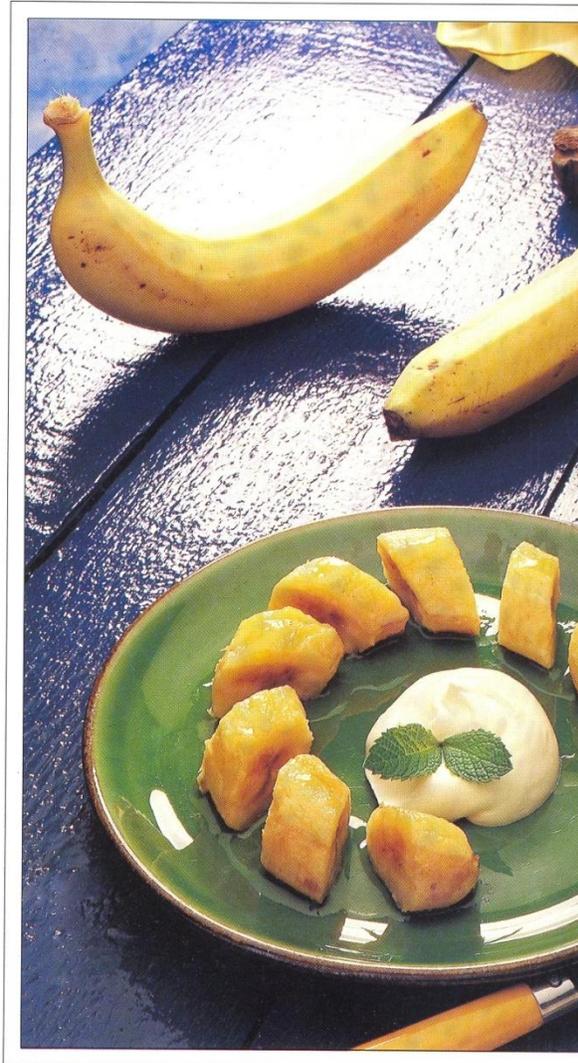
4 bananas

4 tsps superfine sugar

4 tsps Irish Mist (whiskey liqueur)

Melt the butter in a heavy frying pan. Peel the bananas and place them whole in the pan, turning them carefully in the melted butter. Cook them over a low heat for about 3 minutes on each side until they are heated through. Place them on individual plates and keep them warm while you make the sauce. Add the superfine sugar to the remaining butter in the pan. Stir over a low heat until dissolved. Add the Irish Mist, stir well and bring the mixture to a boil. Slice the hot bananas and then spoon the sauce over them.

Serves 4

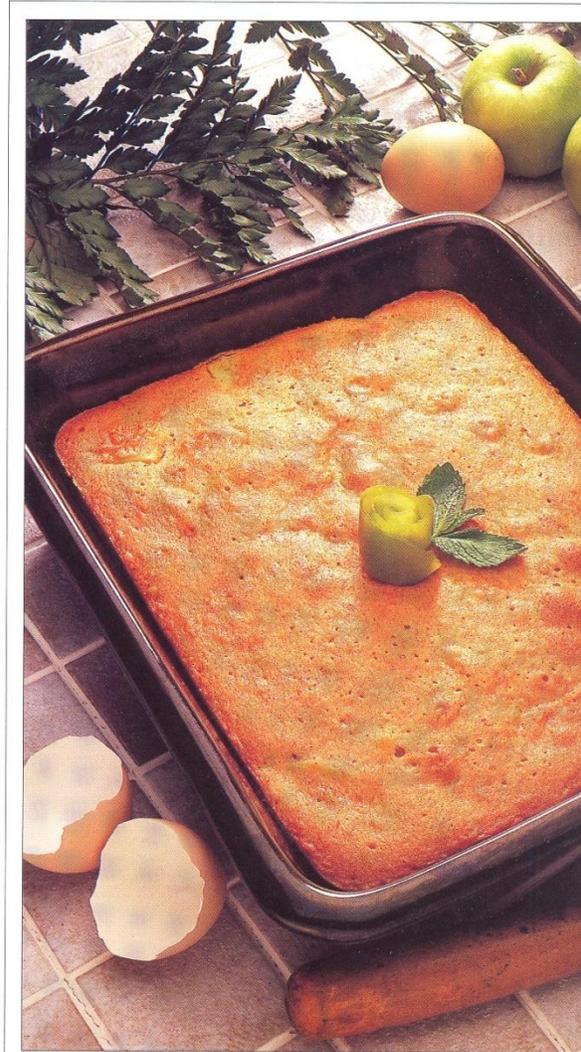


Apple Cake

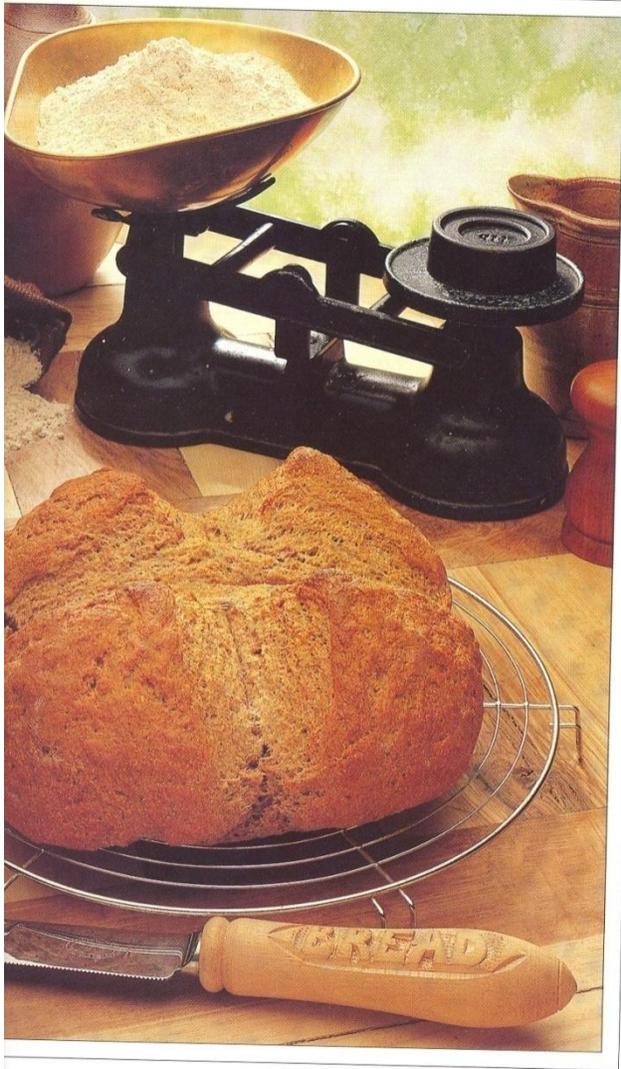
INGREDIENTS

1 tsp cinnamon
1½ cups self-rising flour
¼ cup butter or margarine
¼ cup superfine sugar
3 eggs
2 tbsps milk
2-3 eating apples, peeled, cored and thinly sliced

Add the cinnamon to the flour and sift into a bowl. Cream butter and sugar until light and soft. Beat in one egg then add a tbsp of the flour and beat in another egg. Repeat this once more then fold in two-thirds of the remaining flour. Stir in the milk, then fold in the last of the flour. Grease either a lasagne dish or a roasting pan approx. 11 x 8½ inches. Spread half the batter in the bottom, distribute the apple slices over it and cover with the rest of the batter. Bake in the oven at 350°F for 15 minutes and reduce heat to 325°F. Continue baking for 30 minutes until golden brown and firm to the touch.



Irish Soda Bread



INGREDIENTS

- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tsp sugar
- 1 heaping tsp cream of tartar
- 1 heaping tsp baking soda
- 2 cups all-purpose flour
- 4 cups whole-wheat flour
- 2 cups sour milk or fresh milk mixed with
1 tbsp yogurt

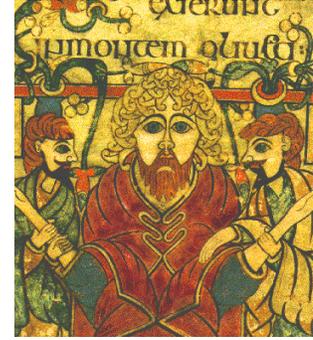
Add salt, sugar, cream of tartar and baking soda to the all-purpose flour. Sift into a large mixing bowl. Add whole-wheat flour and mix thoroughly with a round-ended knife, using a lifting motion to aerate the mixture. Make a well in the center and add milk, mixing until the dough leaves the sides of the bowl clean. Knead into a ball, flatten slightly and place on a greased cookie tray. Cut a cross into the top of the loaf. Brush the top with a little milk and bake in a preheated oven, 400°F, for 40 minutes. Remove from the oven, turn loaf upside down and return to the oven for another five minutes. The loaf is done when it sounds hollow when tapped on the base. Wrap it in a slightly dampened cloth and stand on its side to cool. Cut into quarters, slice and butter generously.

Excellent with shrimp, smoked salmon or fish pâté, or at tea time with strawberry jam.

History

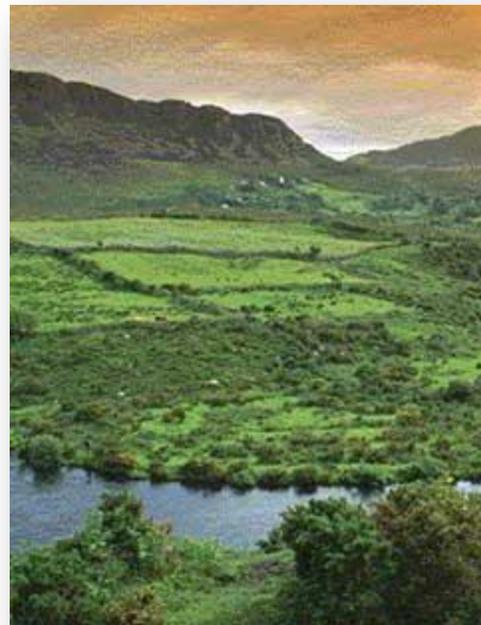
*The Book of Kells is one the most beautiful and ornate manuscripts ever produced. IrishAbroad's **Dermot O'Gara** looks at its origins.*

The Book of Kells is one of Ireland's best-known attractions. It is currently housed in the Long Room of the Old Library in Trinity College, Dublin. The Book is an illuminated manuscript, which means it was written and illustrated by hand, and exquisitely adorned with colour. The text consists of the four gospels of the New Testament, written in Latin.



While much research has been undertaken on the book, surprisingly little is know about its origins. Historians have speculated that it was written by St Columba's monks on the island of Iona, off the coast of Scotland, around 797AD to mark the second centenary of his death. This however is far from certain. In 805, Iona was the plundered by Viking raiders. While the manuscript survived this particular threat, the gold and silver binding in which it was probably set, was stolen by the raiders, who in all likelihood melted it down to make coins. The fleeing monks probably sailed back to Ireland, to set up a new monastery in Kells, and although this was repeatedly plundered throughout the tenth, this time at the hands of the Danes, somehow the book survived. It was kept in the monastery until the 17th century, when fearing for its safety the governor of Kells sent the book to Trinity College, to protect it from Cromwell's soldiers.

The pages of the book are made from the skins of an estimated 185 calves. It's likely that several monasteries pooled their resources, and shared their calfskins in making the book. The pigments used come from variety of sources, and the geographical spread of sources, point to a fairly sophisticated trade system being used by the monks. While many of the pigments were made using locally available materials, some of the ingredients came from sources such as pregnant Mediterranean insects, flowers from northern Europe, and even precious stones found only in Afghanistan!



But it is the beauty of the lavish decorations that embellish the text, which sets the Book of Kells apart from similar manuscripts. The illustrations number in their thousands, and range from the elaborated initial letters on each page, to full page, or 'carpet' illustrations. The monks drew heavily on animal imagery, lending an almost pagan quality to the book. Historians believe that the monks had access

to artwork from the east, and the influences these had on the illustrations in the book is apparent.

Dermot O'Gara, IrishAbroad.com

Ireland's location and proximity to Britain have in large measure shaped her history. As an island to the west of continental Europe, Ireland, which has been inhabited for approximately 7,000 years, experienced many incursions and invasions, resulting in a rich mixture of ancestry and traditions.

The first settlers, mostly hunters from Britain, brought a Mesolithic culture. They were followed around 3000 BC by farmers who raised animals and cultivated the soil. After these Neolithic settlers, around 2000 BC, came prospectors and metal workers. By the 6th century BC the waves of Celtic invaders from Europe began to reach the country.

While Ireland was never unified politically by the Celts, they did generate a cultural and linguistic unity. The introduction of Christianity in the 5th century is traditionally credited to Saint Patrick, though there is evidence that there were Christians on the island before his arrival.

Ireland never experienced the barbarian invasions of the early medieval period and, partly as a result, the 6th and 7th centuries saw a flowering of Irish art, learning and culture centring on the Irish monasteries. Irish monks established centre of learning and Christianity in many parts of Europe in the period before 800 AD.

During the 9th and 10th centuries, the Vikings regularly raided Ireland. The Vikings were also traders and they did much to develop town life at Dublin, Cork and Waterford. Following the defeat of the Vikings by Brian Boru, the High King of Ireland, at Clontarf in 1014, the Vikings influence faded.

In the 12th century, such progress as had been made towards the creation of a centralised State under a single High King was shattered by the arrival of the Normans, who had earlier settled in England and Wales. The Normans quickly came to control some three-quarters of the land of Ireland, which then came under the political authority of the King of England.

Irish cuisine

Irish cuisine can be divided into two main categories – traditional, mainly simple dishes, and more modern dishes, as served in restaurants and hotels.

Colcannon is a good dish made of potato and one of wild garlic (the earliest form), cabbage or curly kale, (compare bubble and squeak). Champ consists of mashed potato into which chopped scallions (spring onions) are mixed.

Other examples of simple Irish meals are [Irish stew](#), and also [bacon](#) and [cabbage](#) (boiled together in water). [Boxty](#), a type of potato pancake, is another traditional dish. A dish mostly particular to [Dublin](#) is [coddle](#), which involves boiled pork [sausages](#). [Ireland](#) is famous for the [Irish breakfast](#)^{[[citation needed](#)]}, a fried (or grilled) meal generally comprising [bacon](#), egg, sausage, black and white pudding, fried tomato and which may also include [fried potato farls](#) or fried potato slices.



While [seafood](#) has always been consumed by [Irish people](#), shellfish dishes have increased in popularity in recent times, especially due to the high quality of shellfish available from Ireland's coastline, e.g. [Dublin Bay Prawns](#), Oysters (many oyster festivals are held annually around the coast where oysters are often served with [Guinness](#), the most notable being held in [Galway](#) every September) as well as other [crustaceans](#). A good example of an Irish dish for shellfish is Dublin Lawyer - Lobster cooked in whiskey and cream. [Salmon](#) and [cod](#) are perhaps the two most common types of fish used.

Traditional Irish breads include [soda bread](#), [wheaten bread](#), soda farls, and [blaa](#), a doughy white bread roll particular to [Waterford](#).

Food in early Ireland

There are many references to food and drink in early [Irish literature](#). [Honey](#) seems to have been widely eaten and used in the making of [mead](#). The old stories also contain many references to banquets, although these may well be greatly exaggerated and provide little insight to every diet. There are also many references to [fulacht fiadh](#). These were sites for cooking [deer](#), and consisted of holes in the ground which were filled with water. The meat was placed in the water and cooked by the introduction of hot stones. Many fulacht fiadh sites have been identified across the island of Ireland, and some of them appear to have been in use up to the 17th century.

Excavations at the Viking settlement in the [Wood Quay](#) area of Dublin have produced a significant amount of information on the diet of the inhabitants of the town. The main meats eaten were [cattle](#), [sheep](#) and [pigs](#). [Poultry](#) and wild [geese](#) as well as fish and shellfish were also common, as were a wide range of native berries and nuts, especially [hazel](#). The seeds of [knotgrass](#) and [goosefoot](#) were widely present and may have been used to make a [porridge](#).

From the [Middle Ages](#), until the arrival of the potato in the latter half of the 17th century, the dominant feature of the rural economy was the herding of cattle. The meat produced was mostly the preserve of the [gentry](#) and [nobility](#). The poor generally made do with [milk](#), [butter](#), [cheese](#), and [offal](#), supplemented with [oats](#) and [barley](#). The practice of bleeding cattle and mixing the [blood](#) with milk and butter (not unlike the practice of the [Maasai](#)) was not uncommon^[1]. [Black pudding](#), made from blood, [grain](#) (usually barley) and [seasoning](#) remains a breakfast staple in Ireland.

The potato in Ireland

Potatoes form the basis for many traditional Irish dishes

The [potato](#) was introduced into Ireland in the second half of the 16th century, initially as a garden crop. It eventually came to be the main food crop of the poor. As a food source, the potato is

extremely valuable in terms of the amount of energy produced per unit area of crop. The potato is also a good source of many vitamins and minerals, particularly [vitamin C](#) (especially when fresh).

Potatoes were cultivated by much of the populace at a subsistence level and the diet of this period consisted mainly of potatoes supplemented with [buttermilk](#). Potatoes were also used as a food for [pigs](#) that were fattened-up and slaughtered at the approach of the cold winter months. Much of the slaughtered [pork](#) would have been [cured](#) to provide [ham](#) and [bacon](#) that could be stored over the winter.

The reliance on potatoes as a staple crop meant that the people of Ireland were vulnerable to poor potato harvests. Consequently several famines occurred throughout the 16th and 17th centuries. The first [Great Famine](#) of 1739 was the result of extreme cold weather but the famine of 1846 to 1849 (see [Great Irish Famine](#)) was caused by [potato blight](#) which easily spread throughout the Irish crop which was heavily dependent on a single variety, the Lumper. Nearly 1,000,000 people died and another 2,000,000 emigrated, and some 3,000,000 people were left destitute.

Fresh meat was generally considered a luxury except for the most affluent until the late 19th century and chickens were not raised on a large scale until the emergence of town grocers in the 1880s allowed people to exchange surplus goods, like eggs, and for the first time purchase a variety food items to diversify their diet.

Traditional foods such as stews are sometimes disparagingly referred to as "famine food" – suitable for basic sustenance only.

In the 20th century the usual modern selection of foods common to [Western culture](#) has been adopted in Ireland. Europe's dishes have influenced the country, along with other world dishes introduced in a similar fashion to the rest of the western world. Common meals include pizza, curry, Chinese food, and lately, some West African dishes and East European (especially Polish) dishes have been making an appearance. Supermarket shelves now contain ingredients for traditional, European, American (Mexican/Tex-Mex), Indian, Chinese and other dishes.

The proliferation of [fast food](#) has led to increasing public health problems including [obesity](#), and one of the highest rates of [heart disease](#) in the world. Traditional Irish food and diet is also somewhat to blame, with a large emphasis on meat and [butter](#). Government efforts to combat this have included television advertising campaigns and education programmes in schools.

In tandem with these developments, the last quarter of the 20th century saw the emergence of a new Irish cuisine based on traditional ingredients handled in new ways. This cuisine is based on fresh vegetables, fish (especially [salmon](#) and [trout](#)), [oysters](#), [mussels](#) and other shellfish, traditional soda bread, the wide range of hand-made [cheeses](#) that are now being made across the country, and, of course, the potato. Traditional dishes, such as [Irish stew](#), [coddle](#), the [Irish breakfast](#), and potato bread have enjoyed a resurgence in popularity. Schools like the Ballymaloe Cookery School have emerged to cater for the associated increased interest in cooking.

Misconceptions

While [corned beef](#) and cabbage is a traditional St. Patricks Day dish in America, bacon and cabbage was historically more commonly had among the Irish not of noble rank due to pork's greater availability than beef to most Irish. Corned beef, rather than bacon, became far more popular in [Irish-American](#) households than it ever was in Ireland since beef was more readily available than it would have been in [Ireland](#) and immigrants had difficulty obtaining bacon or pork. ^[2]