

Caramelised Red Onion and Goats Cheese Tart

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

- 25 ml olive oil
- 3 red onions, finely sliced
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 5 ml fresh thyme leaves • 15 ml clear honey
- 6 x 1 cm thick slices goat's cheese log
- 150 ml fresh cream
- 2 free-range eggs
- 12.5 ml grated Parmesan cheese
- salt and freshly ground black pepper



Buttermilk pastry

- 120 g self-raising flour
- 5 ml baking powder
- 2.5 ml cayenne pepper
- pinch of salt
- 12.5 ml grated Parmesan cheese
- 75 ml buttermilk
- 25 ml sunflower oil

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 180 °C.
2. To make the caramelized onions, heat the olive oil in a heavy-based pan.
3. Add the sliced onions, garlic and thyme and stir gently for 2-3 minutes.
4. Reduce the heat and cover with a lid. Cook gently for 5-8 minutes.
5. Add the honey and stir then replace the lid, cooking over very low heat for a further 4-5 minutes.
6. When the onions are ready, switch off the heat and leave to cool.
7. For the buttermilk pastry, sift the flour, baking powder, cayenne pepper and salt into a bowl.
8. Add the Parmesan cheese and make a well in the centre.
9. Pour in the buttermilk and sunflower oil and mix lightly, bringing together the ingredients to form a dough. Take care not to over mix.
10. Lightly oil a 10 x 30 cm rectangular tin (shape optional) and neatly line with the pastry, pressing it down.
11. Refrigerate the pastry case for 15 minutes.
12. To assemble the tart, spread a layer of onions over the pastry base, then top with a layer of goat's cheese.
13. Beat together the cream and eggs, and add salt and pepper.
14. Pour the cream mixture over the goat's cheese and onions.
15. Sprinkle the Parmesan cheese over and place the tart into the oven for 7-9 minutes if using a convection oven, or 11-12 minutes if using a conventional oven. The tart is cooked when the egg mix is firm to the touch and the goat's cheese is golden brown on top.
16. Serve warm with a honey-mustard dressed salad.



It's February and it's Carnival

ARE YOUR radiators at maximum setting? Are you wearing more layers than an onion? If you are longing to venture back outdoors after the winter hibernation and looking forward to a little sunshine to beam gently upon your brow, then it's time to brush away the cobwebs and get ready for one of the largest outdoors parties in Europe!

A mere 1 hour 20 minute flight will take you a world away from the winter blues. It's time for the annual Carnival of Nice!

The Nice Carnival is the top winter event on the French Riviera. The city comes alive during a fortnight of festivities, with carnival processions, flower parades, concerts and fireworks, attracting over a million people.

This year's theme is Roi des Ratapignata et Rats masqués, translating as "King of Bats and Rats". Spectacular processions will take place along the seafront 'Promenade des Anglais' and include the 'Bataille des Fleurs', a huge parade of flowers accompanied by marching bands and twirling majorettes.

The culmination of the carnival sees the papier mâché giants dance their last dance as their carnival king is taken down to the beach on his throne and ceremonially set alight, bringing the event to a close among a flurry of fireworks.

If you are looking for an ideal base to enjoy your winter escape, then it is well worth trying to book a few nights at the renowned Hotel 'Beau Rivage'.

The Beau Rivage is the most perfect base not only for the Carnival but also for the heart of the Old town itself, with the

flower market just a mimosa's throw away!

You will also be surrounded with a wonderful selection of restaurants, bars and shops offering regional cuisine from snacks to French gastronomy.

Patisseries fill the air with the aroma of fresh-baked goods such as the local Pissaladiere consisting of a gently caramelised onion tart with local anchovy fillets and black olives, or the other local speciality "La Socca" which is a huge very thin pancake cooked in a very hot wood burning oven and liberally coated in local 'Olive de Nice' olive oil a wonderful oil that like wine has an 'AOC' (Appellation d'origine controlee).

Nice is the home of provincial cuisine that uses the finest freshest of ingredients offering a true taste of the Mediterranean.

So if you're feeling like a fat cat looking to party with a fat rat then this is a purrfect opportunity to trim your whiskers brush down your tail and party the blues away.

I leave you with a recipe of my own version of Pissaladiere to try.

Bon appetit!



Chef Alan Coxon lives in Worcestershire and is the food doctor on BBC Hereford and Worcester radio. He spends much of his time in South Africa where he presents cookery TV shows for BBC Food. Alan launched his Historic Vinegar ranges covering the Ancient Greek, Roman and 15th Century Medieval English periods at the World Trade Fair in Paris. www.alancoxon.com