

Course Two

To cook stuffed eggplant in Lent

Get eggplants and peel them. Through their small end dig out the inside – which can be done most easily after bringing them to the boil in hot water. Take that and beat it with knives along with aromatic herbs, old walnuts and almonds, both ground, a little grated bread, pepper, cloves, cinnamon, and a small clove of garlic, ground up adding in a little oil and verjuice. Stuff the eggplants with that mixture and set them on end, their opening upwards, in a pot of a suitable size. In that pot there should be oil, water, salt, saffron and some of the above spices, with enough liquid to come more than halfway up the eggplants. Seal up the pot and boil it gently. When they are almost cooked, add a little grated bread and beaten fine herb in to the broth, ensuring that the broth has a spicy tang and a touch of bitterness. When they are done, serve them hot with the broth over them. (Scappi, III, 230, p. 361)

My redaction to serve 6

Ingredients

Eggplants

3 eggplants

¼ c of chopped herbs e.g parsley, mint, sage

150gm of walnuts and almonds

¼ c of breadcrumbs

3 t each of pepper, cinnamon and ginger

1½ t of cloves

3 cloves of garlic

1T olive oil

1T verjuice

Broth

1T oil

1t salt

Pinch of saffron

1t each of pepper, cinnamon, ginger and cloves

¼ c bread crumbs

A handful of same herbs as stuffing

Method:

1. The trick to cooking this is in the preparation of the eggplants. It is easier to get out the flesh if you cook them first but if you boil them too long they are too mushy to stuff. I made this mistake so the valiant Angus went out a got three new eggplants which we hollowed out with an apple corer when they were raw. Although Scappi recommends peeling them, if you are planning to stuff the same eggplants this means they will lose structural integrity, so I would skip this step.
2. Put the eggplant innards, nuts, herbs, spices, garlic, oil and verjuice in to a food processor and blend. I would avoid getting too fine as texturally it is odd. I did this and wish I had left greater pieces of the nuts in the mix. Perhaps blend all ingredients and then add the nuts. Not cooking the eggplant first will also add some texture to the final product.
3. We stuffed the eggplants using a long handled spoon and gravity.
4. I half-filled a pot with water and added the broth ingredients to this
5. Scappi's eggplants must have had flat ends as I am not sure how he managed to get them to stay upright in a pot of water. We used wooden skewers to create an eggplant raft that

floated in the broth. I also put tinfoil over the ends in case they got water in them.



6. Put the pot on a low heat to cook until the filling is warmed through. One difficulty here that if the eggplant is cooked too long it will split and leak filling but cold filling is nasty! If you follow Scappi and peel, then boil your eggplants twice you will get mush. Baking should help or keeping a close eye on them on the stove. My ones for the dinner party did split and were hard to serve so I chose not to put the broth over them as well. They were not exactly picturesque (as you can see from the image below) to look at but tasted delicious. Agnes was very jealous that I had leftovers for lunch!



To prepare a Lombard herb tourte

Chop chard greens small with knives and wash them in several changes of water, letting them drain by themselves in a colander because if you press them their juice will come out and that is their goodness. Then get a pound of grated fresh Parmesan cheese or else Ligurian cheese, an ounce of pepper and cinnamon combined, a quarter ounce of cloves and nutmeg combined, four ounces of fresh butter and six eggs. When everything is mixed together, get a tourte pan, greased with butter and lined with a shell of dough made of wheat flour, rosewater, sugar, butter, egg yolks and warm water. Put the mixture into the pan, covering it with a rippled sheet of dough. Bake it in an oven or braise it, and serve it hot. It is optional whether you put sugar into the filling and over the top. (Scappi, V, 92, p. 479)

My redaction which makes a pie that can serve 6 as a side dish

Ingredients

2x 120gm bags of spinach

1T butter

½ cup of grated Parmesan Cheese

2 sheets of short crust pastry

1t of both pepper and cinnamon

½t of both cloves and nutmeg

½ cup of grated Colby cheese

Method

1. I chose to chop the spinach, which I used as it was easily available, and sauté it in the butter. This is done in both the two following recipes, 93 and 94, in Book V of Scappi. I did this as the spinach I had was looking a little sad and I felt it was better to reduce it before turning it in to the pie.
2. I then mixed this cooked spinach with the cheeses and spices. I used grated Colby cheese rather than eggs as one of my guests has a severe egg allergy but I find the grated hard cheese acts as a binder in a similar manner to eggs.
3. I used store bought pastry rather than the sweet rosewater pastry indicated in the recipe. I felt this would be a bit odd for modern eaters and I wanted this to be a savory pie to go with the lamb for dinner. I also hate making pastry and prefer to use store bought. I didn't parbake the pastry base but wish I had as because of the cheese and butter the base ended up rather soggy.
4. I did not put a rippled top on it as I wasn't too worried about presentation.
5. It was a delicious pie and it all disappeared. The parmesan added a nice flavour.



Baroness Agnes looking excited about pie!

To roast a shoulder of wether on a spit or on a grill

Should you wish to roast a should of wether, it has to be somewhat tenderized, especially if the wether is old. It needs to be put on a spit without blanching, rubbing it with beaten cloves of garlic, and salt, so it will take on their flavor.

Before mounting on a spit you can also stuff it with beaten pork fat, garlic, common herbs, grated cheese, eggs and common spices. Cook it on a spit over a low fire. It needs to be served hot.

Should you want it on a grill, first half cook it boiling, then sprinkle it with salt and fennel flour. Grill it until it has browned on both sides. Serve it hot with a garnish of rose vinegar, sugar, cinnamon, cloves and a small clove of garlic.

(Scappi, II, 64 p. 167)

My redaction to serve 4

Ingredients

800gm deboned lamb roast

3 cloves garlic

1T salt

Stuffing

20gm lardo

3 cloves garlic

1T each of rosemary, mint, parsley

½ cup grated cheese

1 egg

1t each of cinnamon, cloves, mace

Sauce

1t Rose Water

¼ cup of white wine vinegar

1T sugar

1t each of cinnamon, cloves

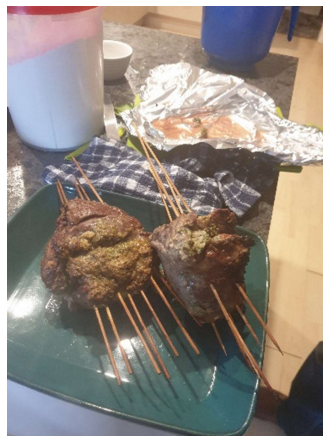
1 clove of garlic

Method

1. I chose to use a butterflied lamb leg as it was the easiest to find. A shoulder and a slightly older sheep would have been more in keeping with the recipe but not as available.
2. In a mortar and pestle I ground the garlic and salt together. A more coarsely ground sea salt is good here. I then used this garlic salt as a rub on both sides of the roast.
3. In a food processor I combined the stuffing ingredients and then put it in the middle of the roast and wrapped the meat around it. You can use any combination of herbs and spices that you prefer as Scappi just says 'common'. I chose parsley as I had some on hand and then rosemary and mint as they go well with lamb. I included cinnamon and cloves as they featured in the other Scappi recipes I used and mace for a bit of warmth in the mix.
4. I then realized I didn't have any suitable oven string so Angus and I used a series of bamboo skewers to keep the lamb together.
5. I roasted it in the oven propped up strips of tinfoil for 50mins at 200°C. Although this doesn't give the same taste as spit roasting it does allow for better air circulation around the roast. Once cooked I rested the meat for 10 minutes.



6. I put all the sauce ingredients in a blender and mixed them. You may want to add more rose water depending on how strong you want the rose taste. I served as a sauce on the side of the meat.



Serving Course Two

I chose to include a salad of herbs which was just bag of mixed greens with a white wine vinegar and olive oil dressing. Similar salads can be found in 16th century England in Thomas Dawson's *The Good Housewife's Jewel*, p 111. This gave a fresh element to the course to counteract the heavier pie and meat dishes.

