

## COCKROACH PIE AND OTHER RECIPES

Most students do not know how to cook when they first arrive at university. Such cookbooks as there are for them are generally condescending in tone and lacking in imagination. The advantage of *Student Suppers* is that it is written *by* students *for* students: a selection of their most delicious recipes, economical and simple to make using the barest of facilities, tailored to the erratic eating habits which are an inescapable fact of campus life.

The idea for it came to us in a dingy rented kitchen. Despairing of having to cook on a low budget from an empty store cupboard, we thought it would be interesting – if not life-saving – to pool our favourite recipes with those of friends at other universities. The letters we sent out asked for their *pièces de résistance*. The recipe had to be original; it might be illustrated.

The responses poured in from as far away as Leningrad and San Francisco; we collected over 30 more on a single Saturday afternoon by raiding kitchens across Edinburgh from Toll Cross to the New Town. Many were unusual to say the least. Student hospitality at its most ambitious was represented by the following list of ingredients given to us by a Russian scholar at New College, Oxford:

### **Couscous for 200**

*30 kilos of couscous*

*60 cucumbers*

*Lots of mint and parsley*

*Lots of lemon juice*

*Olive oil*

At the other end of the spectrum was ‘Guaranteed the Cheapest Recipe on Campus’, which called for thirteen pasta shells per person and one Spanish tomato.

Thinking of a way to break-dance and boil an egg at the same time was the challenge set by one accomplished cook. An Italian barber in Connecticut introduced a student at Yale to a recipe for peach pie ‘in between overdoing it with the thinning shears and blinding me with talcum powder’.

Achieving a balanced diet did not seem high on our fellow students’ list of priorities. Living off honey, oatcakes, porridge, liver and whisky was recommended by one as a way to save money; another suggested Jordans Original Crunchy Bars and coffee as the perfect staple for exams. A sad fact is that the last known case of scurvy in Britain was contracted by a student in Aberdeen. Having blown his grant he boiled up quantities of porridge which he poured into his chest-of-drawers and left to cake. He ate this and nothing else until he was taken to hospital.

In view of this we decided to include various warnings, among them:

- \* Sauces should be cooked for at least five minutes after thickening.
- \* Underdone sausages can give you worms.
- \* Heating up a can of soup in the electric kettle will make all the posters peel off your walls.

But for every aberration there were a dozen wholesome and delicious recipes, from Pigeon à l’Antoine to Steve’s Mum’s Risotto, encapsulating the spirit of our happy, yappy, zappy student days

## **A BHOMPSTON TROUT**

**Charles Booth-Clibborn (Edinburgh)**

Ingredients

*1 trout*

*a teaspoon of butter*

*salt and pepper*

*small amounts of fresh rosemary or fennel*

- 1) First CATCH YOUR TROUT, preferably between 120z and 3lbs.
- 2) Gut it, leaving the head on. For this you need a very sharp knife and running water: stick knife into its bottom hole and slice up to the jaw; put

finger in, grip, rip, and tear until clean and fishmonger-looking. (If you are going to keep the trout overnight, it is better to remove the gills, which can be ripped or cut out. Since they are slightly acidic they can spoil the flavour of the flesh of the fish.)

- 3) Lay your trout in a greased baking tin of an appropriate size.
- 4) Sprinkle the outside and the inside of the trout with salt and pepper.
- 5) Insert small amounts of fennel or rosemary into the stomach (breaking the fresh herbs into slightly smaller pieces). Also put a teaspoon of butter inside and outside the fish.
- 6) Cover the trout with baking foil and put in a hot oven.

A 1lb fish should cook for approximately 25 minutes. The flesh should be solid but moist and should peel off the carcass easily, NOT taking any small bones with it. Do not forget the trout's cheeks – extremely tasty – found under the trout's cheek armour.

If you suspect the fish is muddy or if the flesh is very white (the better-tasting trout will have orange-pink flesh, having fed off fresh water crustaceans), salt the stomach overnight and be more generous with the chosen herbs.

## **GREVILLE'S BEEF AND APRICOT PACIFIC**

### **GLORY**

#### **Greville Worthington (Edinburgh)**

##### Ingredients

*1 packet of diced apricots (don't use fresh ones)*

*1.5 lbs casserole steak (cubed)*

*2 to 3 fresh young onions*

*1 cube beef stock*

*2 to 3 fresh young carrots*

The first time I cooked this I had a restaurant cook to dinner who was so taken by it she included it in the menu at McIntoshes restaurant, Stafford Street, Edinburgh, so I know it is a success and both looks and tastes like a

Hawaiian sunset.

I cooked it in a slow cooker during the day; if you don't have one, then just use a casserole dish and fend for yourself, or you could borrow mine I suppose.

- 1) Pre-soak the apricots for 3 hours (no more) making sure not to break the skins.
- 2) Chop the onions and soften in a little oil, making sure they don't go brown
- 3) Add the beef slowly and with a great deal of care to ensure it does not turn to rubber.
- 4) Place in a slow cooker with the stock and the chopped carrots and bay leaf. Cook the stew for as long as possible to allow the meat to become tender.
- 5) Add the apricots and leave to simmer on auto setting all until they are ready.

Serve with baked potatoes with a little butter and lots of black pepper.

Make sure everyone has enough apricots.

Only serve this recipe in the winter months as the idea is to fill up with good and nourishing food while at the same time enticing the palette with the apricots to evoke the splendours of a summer tropical paradise.