

The Titanic Menu

by Gloria Davenport

"Everything was against us that night"

The 15th April 2012 will be the 100th anniversary of the sinking of the Titanic, a tragic event that remains embedded in Anglo-American consciousness even a century later. Much Titanic memorabilia is up for auction at the moment, including the menus, so I thought I would give you a sample. No one knows the exact recipes but, as they were not unique to the Titanic, some research has been carried out to see how the cooking was done on other White Star liners. As some passengers paid the present day equivalent of \$124,000 for their trip, they expected a luxurious experience. For dinner they experienced a lavish ten course meal followed by cheeses and spirits. The second class and steerage passengers were offered simpler fare in a three course meal. These recipes are adaptations from the last dinner menu of 14th April 1912.

Consomme Olga

This is a beautiful dish which was originally served garnished with sturgeon products, hence the Russian name. This deeply flavoured soup should be strained at the end of cooking to produce a delicate consomme. However, we like it with all the ingredients left in, making it a much heartier soup.

Ingredients

200g Aberdeen Angus stewing steak -finely minced
1.5 litres beef stock - good quality
3 carrots very finely diced
3 leeks very finely diced
3 sticks of celery very finely diced
2 large tomatoes, chopped
3 tbs olive oil
75ml cognac

Method

Heat the oil in a soup pan, add the vegetables and gently soften. Then add the meat and brown. Pour in the cognac and stock. Simmer gently for 30 minutes. Season to taste and serve with hot crusty bread.

Filet Mignons Lili

This is an extremely rich dish in terms of both flavour and cost. To make it even more extravagant, truffles and foie gras would have been used - typical of the "upstairs" in the Edwardian era. It makes a very fine dinner party dish.

Ingredients

4 beef fillets
4 slices of fine white bread, (about the size of each fillet)
4 slices of duck liver and orange pate

Sauce

100g mushrooms, finely sliced
3 small shallots, finely chopped
400ml good quality beef stock
1/2 tsp dried thyme
75 ml cognac
75 ml red wine
150 ml port
2 tbs butter
1 1/2 tbs tomato puree
1 tbs olive oil

Method

First make the sauce by heating 1 tbs of butter and 1 tbs of oil in a large saucepan, add the shallots and cook until soft. Add the mushrooms, tomato paste and thyme and stir until soft, adding more butter if necessary. Pour in all the alcohol, turn the heat up and add the stock. Simmer until reduced - about 15 minutes. In a frying pan heat up the rest of the butter and oil. Then cook your steaks as you like them, remove them from the pan and keep them warm. Then de-glaze the pan with an extra 2 tbs of port. When the alcohol has burnt off, put in the slices of bread and cook on both sides, soaking up the juices. Place a slice on each of the four plates. Cover each piece of toast with a slice of pate and place a steak on each slice. Cover each one with the sauce. Serve with boiled potatoes (on the Titanic menu it said Potatoes Anna) and a green salad.

Waldorf Pudding

There is no known recipe for this dessert which was on the menu. I have devised this, based on the three ingredients in the Waldorf salad - walnuts, apples and raisins.

Ingredients for apple mixture

500g finely diced and peeled Bramley apples (weight after peeling and coring)

100g caster sugar

6 tbs water

55g raisins, soaked in brandy for a few hours

Ingredients for Cake

125g butter softened

125g caster sugar

2 medium eggs

100g ground almonds

50g walnuts, finely chopped

2 tbs demerara sugar

Method

Pre-heat the oven to 180 C. Put all the ingredients for the apple mixture in a pan and heat gently until the apples become soft and break down. Then make the cake mixture by beating the butter and sugar together, whisk in the eggs, then fold in the almonds and walnuts. Place the apple mix in the bottom of a dish (I use a round one litre Pyrex dish). Gently spread the cake mix on top of the apple mixture, then sprinkle with the demerara sugar. Place in the oven for approx 50 minutes until the cake mix is springy to the touch. Delicious served either with hot custard or cold double cream.

These recipes will certainly make your dinner party a night to remember. If you choose to make any of these dishes, please make a donation to RNLI in memory of the 1,517 lost souls.