



MENU FROM NORMANDY-- FRANCE'S "GRANDE POMME"

It is described as a painter's landscape. Certainly the province of Normandy has been a magnet for artists for centuries. Its idyllic—lush, green pastures dotted with apple orchards, which, in spring, are festooned with pink and white blossoms, and everywhere cream-and-sun-dappled cows graze contentedly. One rosy-cheeked, blue-eyed farmer archly summed up Norman life style as follows: "We have nothing to do...the grass grows by itself and the apple falls by itself."

Loosely translated, that means milk and cream and apples in abundance. And also, cheese, cider and Calvados. Eating in Normandy is a Frenchman's dream. Its regional cuisine is justly famous throughout the world. It is based on cream and perfumed with apples.

Long before the Romans swept through Gaul, apple trees bloomed in Normandy. Cider has been produced since the early Middle Ages. A 1553 document proves cider was being distilled to make apple "brandy" by that time. Today we know it as Calvados. Actually the name is Spanish in origin. In 1589, when Phillip II of Spain's great armada was en route to vanquish England, one mighty galleon foundered off the coast of Normandy. The ship was called "El Calvador" which, in its Gallic form, became the name of this coastal area particularly known for apple orchards.

Appreciation for Calvados spread beyond its native Normandy right after World War I. A generation later, allied troops fresh from victory on the Normandy beachheads jubilantly celebrated with the regional spirit. But it was only about 10 years ago that Calvados established its own beachhead in the U.S. It is steadily winning new friends. In 1983 a total of 21,000 gallons were imported from France.

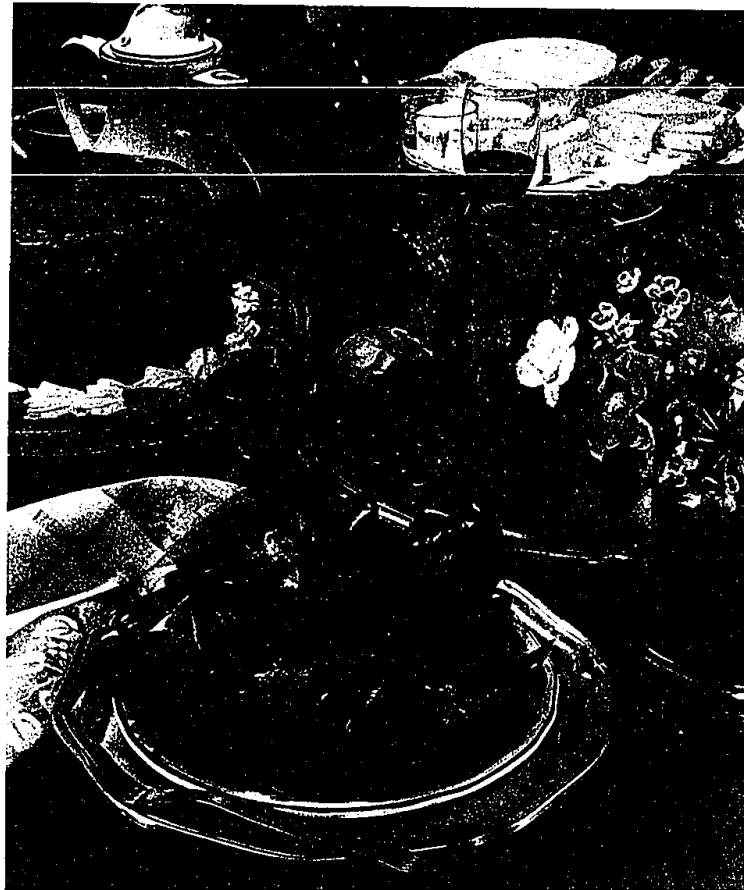
A fiery, flavorful spirit that tops off any meal with great panache, Calvados is classically served in a snifter to be warmed in the palm of the hand. Or, popular with Americans, at the beginning of an evening, it can be served on the rocks. In Normandy there is a custom called "le bon normand," a lot of Calvados between courses to prepare a hale ("trou") for what is to follow.

All Calvados is produced according to a formula established by French law. After the apple harvest, cider is made from the juice of tart, acidic apples—not the same as the eating varieties. The new cider, designated to become Calvados, ferments for about a month, then it is distilled. In 10 of the 11 Calvados-producing districts, the method is single distillation, as in Armagnac. In the eleventh district, the Pays d'Auge, the method is the same as in Cognac—double distillation in pot stills. The Pays d'Auge Calvados accounts for most of what is available in the U.S.

Ageing is not as important as, for example, in Cognac, because the end product must retain some of its apple taste. But minimum age stipulations require that the brandy remain in oak casks at least two years. In general, most Calvados is older than that, but the mellow aroma of apples never diminishes. This is one reason Calvados is as welcome in the kitchen as on the aperitif tray.

Our menu is inspired entirely by the fare offered daily in every auberge in Normandy—whether three-star or no-star. These dishes can even be found on the dining table of a typical Norman farmhouse. Fish and seafood are staples of the Norman diet, and mussels are often presented as a first course. Moules Dieppoises are delicious and simple to prepare—equally delicious when served in cream as a main course. Roast pork lends itself perfectly to a blending of a trio of traditional Norman ingredients—cider, apples and Calvados. And the addition of whole onions provides just the right touch of pungency to the sweet-tart apple flavors. Alternate main courses—trio Normand—are either grilled duckling or veal kidneys.

After a cheese course that, in keeping with our inspiration, features fromage from the heartland of Normandy—Cantembert, Pont l'Évêque and Brillat-Savarin—the dessert spectacular is a Charlotte aux Pommes. Again the succulent fruits are appropriately, yet subtly, perfumed with Calvados. Then, after the last crumbs, when cups of aromatic coffee are passed, what could be better than a glass of Calvados warming in your hand? And perchance, a fantasy of a small auberge in Normandy with a view outside the window of green meadows and apple blossoms stirring in the breeze...



MOULES DIEPPOISE Mussels, Dieppe Style (Makes 6 servings)

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| 6 dozen mussels | 6 scallions, trimmed and sliced |
| 1 4 cup (1 1/2 stick) butter | 1 cup chicken broth |
| 2 garlic cloves, minced | 1/3 cup Calvados |
| Juice of 2 lemons | 1/2 t. salt |
| 3 tomatoes, peeled, seeded and diced | |

Scrub mussels and remove black stringy beards. Place mussels in sieve, rinse and drain well. In large kettle, heat butter and sauté garlic 5 minutes. Add remaining ingredients and simmer 5 minutes. Add mussels, cover and simmer 8 to 10 minutes, or until shells open. Serve mussels in large bowls with some pan juices spooned over each serving.

Variation: Cook mussels as above. Remove mussels from kettle and keep warm. Boil pan juices until reduced by half. Beat 1 cup (1/2 pint) heavy cream with 1 tablespoon flour until smooth. Stir into pan juices and cook, stirring constantly, until sauce thickens. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Return mussels to sauce and reheat. Serve sprinkled with finely chopped parsley.

CANETON GRILLÉ Grilled Duckling Quarters (Makes 8 servings)

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| 2 ducklings, quartered, excess fat removed | 1/4 cup (1/2 stick) butter |
| Poultry seasoning | Juice of 2 oranges |
| Salt and pepper | 1/3 cup Calvados |
| 1/3 cup Calvados | 4 cooking apples, peeled, cored and quartered |
| 1/4 cup honey | 6 dried apricot halves, chopped, optional |
| Sliced rind of 1 orange | |
| Juice of 1 lemon | |

Rub duckling pieces with poultry seasoning, salt and pepper. Place bony side up under preheated broiler and broil 15 minutes. Turn, prick skin with fork several times, and broil another 15 minutes. Mix Calvados, honey, orange rind and lemon juice. Turn duckling and brush with some of Calvados mixture. Broil another 5 minutes. For sauce, heat butter and orange juice until butter melts. Stir in Calvados. Add apples, and apricots if using. Stir over medium heat until apples are plump but still hold their shape, about 8 to 10 minutes. Serve duckling glazed with remaining Calvados-honey mixture and pass sauce separately.

CHARLOTTE AUX POMMES (Makes one 1-1/2 quart charlotte)

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| 3 lbs. cooking apples, peeled, cored and thinly sliced | 1 T. water |
| 1/2 cup (1 stick) butter | 1 t. lemon juice |
| 1 T. cinnamon | 3/4 cup pecans |
| 2 t. nutmeg | 1 cup dry French biscotte crumbs |
| 1/2 cup sugar | 4 eggs |
| 1/3 cup Calvados | 1/2 cup heavy cream |
| 1/3 cup sugar | 1/3 cup raspberry preserves |
| | Whipped cream (garish) |

Combine apples and butter in large saucepan. Stir over medium heat until apples are soft and mushy, about 15 to 20 minutes. Stir in cinnamon, nutmeg, 1/2 cup sugar and Calvados. Let cool. In small skillet, combine 1/3 cup sugar, water and lemon juice. Bring to boil and boil until syrup is golden brown, about 5 to 6 minutes. Stir in pecans and pour mixture onto buttered cookie sheet. Cool until hard, then chop coarsely. Mix nuts with crumbs. Beat eggs with cream and stir into apple mixture. Butter 1-1/2 quart charlotte mold, then line with foil and butter again. Layer apples then crumb mixture into pan, ending with crumbs. Place charlotte mold into pan of water. (Water should be about 1 inch deep.) Bake in preheated 350° F. oven for 40 to 45 minutes or until firm to the touch. Cool and then refrigerate. When ready to serve, invert mold onto serving platter and carefully remove foil. Heat raspberry preserves, heating pot and brush over mold. Serve garnished with whipped cream and petals of apple peels.

ROAST PORK, NORMANDY STYLE (Makes 8 servings)

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| 1 4- to 5-lb. pork roast, bone removed | 32 small white onions, peeled |
| 1 t. each sage and thyme | 1/2 cup Calvados |
| 2 garlic cloves, minced | 2 T. (1/4 stick) butter, mixed with 2 T. flour |
| Salt and pepper | Chopped parsley or parsley sprigs (optional) |
| 2 cups apple cider | |

Rub pork with sage, thyme, garlic and salt and pepper. Place into roasting pan. Add cider and whole onions. Roast in preheated 350° F. oven for about 2 hours or until internal temperature registers 160° F. on meat thermometer. Add whole apples and Calvados and roast another 30 minutes or until temperature registers 170° F. Transfer roast, onions and apples to platter and keep warm. Pour pan juices into saucepan. Skim excess fat. Add butter-flour mixture and stir over medium heat until sauce thickens. Cut roast into thick slices, add apples and onions and spoon sauce over each serving. Serve garnished with chopped parsley or parsley sprigs.

ROGNONS AU CALVADOS Calvados Veal Kidneys (Makes 6 servings)

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| 5 veal kidneys | 1 cup apple cider |
| 1/4 cup (1/2 stick) butter | 1 cup (1/2 pint) heavy cream |
| 4 cooking apples, peeled, cored and quartered | Salt and coarsely ground black pepper |
| 1/3 cup Calvados | |

Skin kidneys and remove filaments and hard fat. Slice thinly. In large skillet, heat butter and sauté apples quarters until golden. Remove apples from skillet and add kidney slices. Sauté over high heat until browned, 3 to 5 minutes on each side. Add Calvados and set aflame. When flame dies, add apple cider. Cover and simmer until kidneys are tender and cooked through. Transfer kidneys and apples to serving platter and keep warm. Boil pan juices until reduced by half. Stir in cream and simmer 5 minutes or until thickened. Season to taste with salt and pepper. Spoon sauce evenly over kidneys and apples.

CALVADOS LABEL LANGUAGE

Calvados that comes from the heart of Normandy and uses the double distillation process, traditional in Cognac, states Appellation Calvados du Pays d'Auge on its label. Other Calvados from nearby districts or made by single distillation is called Appellation Calvados Régimentée.

According to French law, all Calvados must be aged at least two years in oak before being bottled. But, because Calvados is generally a blend of several years, age is rarely specified on the label. The following terms are used to indicate approximate age of the youngest brandy in the blend. However, it is possible for any Calvados to contain some brandies aged as much as 15 years.

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| • • • • • or • • • • • | 2 years |
| V.O. or Vieille Réserve | 3 years |
| V.S.O.P. | 4 years |
| Extra, Napoléon, Hors d'Age, or Age Inconnu | 5 years |
| | 6 years |