

*Churston Traditional*

# **FARM SHOP**

*Where you'll find the West Country's finest food and drink...*

## CHURSTON FARM SHOP RECIPES OCTOBER 2018

Saying the Roscoff onion is just a vegetable is like saying an Aston Martin is just a car. These pink, sweet-fleshed onions have been highly prized for generations by chefs.

They were the original sort peddled by the 'onion johnnies' who started sailing across to England to sell them from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century onwards – because it was quicker and easier to do so than to get them to the central market in Paris, some 350 miles distant.

Economics dictated the end of that particular trade some years ago but the Roscoff onion is still produced – both planted and harvested by hand, remarkably – and has its own EU protection, while the August harvest is signalled by Roscoff's impressive annual onion festival.

Interest in the Roscoff onion has taken off again in this country and the good news is that not only has the export trade been restarted but that we have secured a decent supply.

So here is chef Raymond Blanc's onion soup recipe – which only really works, he says, with the Roscoff product – plus a couple of other ideas for unlocking the delightful flavour of this unique vegetable.

### FRENCH ONION SOUP

Ingredients. 50g butter, four medium Roscoff or Spanish onions, halved and thinly sliced, tablespoon plain flour, 250ml dry white wine, boiled for 30 seconds, 1.5 litres boiling water, sea salt, freshly-ground black pepper.

Method. Melt the butter in a heavy pan and soften the onions for five minutes, stirring frequently. Add a teaspoon of salt and 10 grindings of black pepper, then turn down the heat and continue cooking for 35 minutes, stirring occasionally. You need the onions to be really reduced and a deep brown colour. Meanwhile heat the oven to 200C gas mark 6, spread the flour on a baking sheet and bake until golden brown. Stir into the onions then add the wine and, gradually, the water. Bring to the boil, skim off any froth then cover and simmer very gently for 15 minutes.

### ONION AND PORT JAM

Excellent with cheese or cold meat. Ingredients. 500g Roscoff or Spanish onions, tablespoon sunflower oil, five tablespoons caster sugar and four of balsamic vinegar, 200ml port, two close, generous pinch each nutmeg and thyme, good pinch of salt.

Method. Halve the onions, slice thinly and cook gently in the sunflower oil until softened. Add the sugar and balsamic vinegar mix well and cook for 10 minutes until caramelised. Add the port, cloves, nutmeg, salt and thyme, cover and cook on a very low heat for 40-45 minutes, stirring frequently, until virtually all the liquid has evaporated. Remove the cloves, allow to cool and either refrigerate until needed or store like jam in sterilised, sealed jars.

### ONION TART

Ingredients for four. Kilo of onions, 200g shortcrust pastry, 125g bacon lardons, 10g butter, 300ml crème fraiche, two tablespoons sunflower oil, two good pinches ground nutmeg, three eggs, sea salt, freshly-ground black pepper.

Method. Slice the onions very finely and cook gently in the oil in a large pan with plenty of salt and pepper for 25-30 minutes until lightly caramelised. Heat the oven to 220C gas mark 7. Butter a tart tin, line it with the pastry and prick the base several times with a fork. Arrange the lardons evenly around. Whisk the eggs in a bowl and incorporate the crème fraiche, nutmeg and plenty of salt and pepper. Place the onions in the tart, spreading evenly with a palette knife then pour in the egg mix and bake for 40 minutes. Allow to cool slightly in the tin before turning out carefully onto a serving plate.

**Churston Farm Shop Dartmouth Rd, Brixham TQ5 0LL**

**Tel: 01803 845837 | Email: [postmaster@churstontraditionalfarmshop.org.uk](mailto:postmaster@churstontraditionalfarmshop.org.uk)**