

Dish(es) Using Pig's Head, Milk, Chard, Anchovies, Lime and Bay Leaves

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STUFFED PIG'S EAR WITH CHARD AND CHEESE DUMPLINGS COOKED IN BAY LEAF STOCK WITH ANCHOVY SAUCE

Preliminary Thoughts

An entire pig's head

Just as in days gone by when slaughterhouses were located outside of the city in peripheral areas in order to keep the slaughter of animals out of the consciousness of consumers, those parts of the animal that remind us that it was a living being have gradually disappeared from our plates. It is true that offal has recently enjoyed something of a renaissance in premium gastronomy, but it has virtually disappeared from our day-to-day culinary practice. At most, you might see an animal's head on a spit roast.

As before, the animal's head separated from its body is considered a trophy, a symbol of power. The very life itself seems to be contained within the head hence, more than any other dish, an entire head prepared for the table has an inherently symbolic character: It is reminiscent of archaic sacrificial rituals and of days when the oven was still an altar.

Aside from this circumstance and the difficulty of its procurement, an entire pig's or calf's head would be rather too much for a small family or indeed a single household. Nevertheless using all the parts of an animal for human consumption represents a suitable appreciation of the slaughtered animal. Incidentally, in contrast to the entire head, the individual parts of it can be prepared in broadly different ways. Ears, skin (mask), snout, tongue, cheek, brain, chopped meat and various bits of gristle and bone form the basic ingredients for countless different dishes (due to the considerations already mentioned, the eyes are disregarded).

From a culinary perspective, one might first think of various forms of aspic in relation to the parts of the head. The brain can be poached and thus transformed into croquettes, beignets, omelets or pâtés. The mask is perfect for a ballotine or for slicing into strips and cooking in rolls by way of a homage to Alfred Walterspiel, who introduced this "prized home dish" to premium gastronomy. The tongue can be prepared in a multitude of ways and, thanks to their cohesiveness, the cheeks are not only an indispensable element of raw sausages, but in the last few years have also become something of a trend in the culinary world – albeit generally from the more "fancy" veal. The list could go on at length, but now let's turn to the pig's ear.

STUFFED PIG'S EAR

- 1 pig's ear per person
- Pig's caul

FOR THE FILLING

- 4 pig tongues, raw or pickled
- 500 g pig's cheek, raw
- Salt
- Pepper
- Vegetable broth or court bouillon
- Butter

The ears are first cleaned, any remaining bristles removed with the knife and the traces of the bristles singed off over an open flame. Then place the ears in a pan, cover with cold water and bring to the boil once. Remove with the skimmer, rinse in cold water and leave in cold water to cool. If required, slice the edges of the ear so they are straight and clean.

For each ear cut a cloth to size so the ear can be rolled up lengthways and bound up in the cloth so that it maintains its form during cooking. Put the rolled ears in a pan and allow to simmer covered with liquid for approximately three hours. The liquid used may be vegetable broth, a light court bouillon or even just saltwater with added vegetables and seasoning. At the end of the cooking time, take the rolled ears out of the broth, allow to cool and remove from the cloth. Then cover the ears with cloth and place in the fridge for approximately 3/4 hour.

Then prepare the filling:

Add the pig tongues to the cooking pot for the ears for approximately one hour. To ensure they do not roll up during cooking, they are laid on top of one another with opposing ends touching (tip to base) and tied together. The cooked tongues are subsequently cooled until lukewarm and the skin removed. Cured tongues are not cooked.

The pig's cheeks are rolled through the finest disks of the meat grinder twice and combined with the finely cubed tongue, the egg, breadcrumbs, salt and pepper to create a forcemeat.

Take the ears from the fridge and fill with the forcemeat, press together firmly and cool once again. Then wrap each ear in a piece of pig's caul, which can then be held together with a toothpick on

the underside of the ear. The little packages should then be browned all over in butter with a little liquid added, and finished off in the oven on a lower heat for approximately one hour. Baste with the liquid every now and again.

Alternatively you can do without the pig's caul and coat the filled ears with breadcrumbs, then baste them with liquid butter and finish them off in the oven. They will need to be basted regularly during this process.

STEAMED CHARD (COLD)

Chard
Olive oil
Salt

Remove the stalks and leaf clusters of the chard (and use elsewhere). Wash the leaves and dry well. Heat a little olive oil in a large pan, add the leaves, add salt and cover with the lid. Once the leaves wilt the lid can be removed for the rest of the cooking process. Use a spatula occasionally to push the chard together and be sure that nothing is burning. Ideally, there should be barely any liquid left with the cooked, wilted leaves. Once cooled they can be spread across a serving platter and drizzled with good-quality olive oil.

CHEESE DUMPLINGS COOKED IN BAY LEAF STOCK

12 liters of full-cream milk
or 1000 g Quark/cream cheese
2 eggs, 12 egg yolks
1 handful of flour
Salt
Bay leaf and laurel berries (dried)
Butter or lard

For the bay leaf stock, 4 medium-sized bay leaves are boiled in 5 liters of saltwater and allowed to steep until the desired level of taste intensity is achieved. Then the bay leaves are removed.

Full-cream milk must be used for the cheese dumplings. It is neither pasteurized nor homogenized and therefore still contains all the microbiological components and properties. Only milk of this quality can be "coagulated", i.e. allowed to become sour. This sour milk separates into whey and protein (casein). An alternative is heating the milk to 30–40°C and adding an acid (acid precipita-

tion). The curdled milk is then pressed through a tight mesh until a non-greasy mass remains that you can knead.

Anyone wanting to avoid the coagulation process can press Quark or cream cheese instead.

The dry, almost crumbly mass (of approx. 400 g) is combined with 2 eggs and 12 yolks, a handful of flour, the zest of one lime and 6 ground laurel berry kernels to form a homogeneous mass.

Using two large tablespoons and occasionally immersing them in hot water, form the mass into dumplings and simmer these in the bay leaf stock. Here the water should not be allowed to boil fully; rather the surface of the water should ripple gently – it should “smile”. In order to check the consistency and identify the cooking time, it is a good idea to prepare a test dumpling. A guideline for the cooking time is 10 minutes.

Once removed from the broth, drained and thus dried a little, the dumplings are browned in butter or lard.

This is also a way of reheating chilled dumplings prepared in advance.

ANCHOVY SAUCE

Anchovies preserved in oil

Butter

Flour

A decent quantity of oil-preserved anchovies are dried a little using kitchen towel and chopped up finely, then combined with room-temperature butter and passed through a fine sieve.

Using approximately the same (volume) quantities of butter and flour, create a pale roux, then deglaze with lukewarm water and allow the whole thing to cook through whilst stirring.

Shortly before serving add the anchovy butter to the cooled roux and heat the mixture, stirring continuously. A dash of lime juice adds the necessary acidity.

