



A CHEF OF DISTINCTION

Passionate, dedicated, committed, skilled...all words used in giant helpings to describe renowned French chef Philippe Mouchel.

A protege, trusted colleague and friend of one of the towering international figures of French cuisine, Paul Bocuse, Philippe Mouchel learnt his trade as a young man in his native Normandy before joining the Bocuse empire and taking the master's food all over the world.

He plied his considerable talents at some of the great restaurants in the US, Japan and China before opening the restaurant Paul Bocuse in Melbourne, the city he now calls home.

His first cookbook, *More Than French*, aims to adapt recipes refined in restaurant

kitchens for use by keen home cooks. Here, he shares three favourites with us. One is pumpkin soup, which is exceptional on its own but Philippe likes to add crisp pancetta, croutons and chestnuts that are in season in autumn at the same time as pumpkins. "Cooking soup helps me keep track of the seasons," he says. Soups also remind him of his mother, his grandmother and his father, plus the vegetables they grew in their garden in Normandy. Another favourite is his mouth-watering macarons. "If I leave the table without something sweet, it feels like something is missing," he says.



PUMPKIN SOUP WITH CHESTNUTS, CROUTONS AND PANCETTA

Main ingredients

- 40g butter
- 1 brown onion, peeled and finely diced
- 1 leek (white part only), finely sliced
- 3 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
- 1 kg Japanese pumpkin (peeled and seeded weight), diced
- salt and pepper
- 1 litre chicken stock
- 200ml cream
- For the chestnuts, croutons and pancetta, and to serve:
- 3 slices pancetta
- 12 slices sourdough baguette
- 150ml cream, or crème fraîche
- 18 chestnuts, cooked and peeled

Serves 6

1. Heat the butter in a saucepan and add the chopped onion, leek and garlic. Gently cook until the onion has softened but not coloured. Add the pumpkin, stir well and season with salt and pepper.
2. Add 750ml of the chicken stock, bring to the boil, cover with a lid and simmer until the pumpkin is very tender, about 15 to 20 minutes.
3. Allow the soup to cool for a few minutes, then puree with a stick blender. If the soup is too thick, add the remaining stock.
4. Add the cream and, if the soup is too thin, reduce it a little.
5. The soup can be made ahead to this point. When you're ready to serve, gently reheat while preparing the garnish.

How to peel chestnuts

There is no easy way, although the larger and fresher the chestnuts the better. With a short and sharp knife, cut the flat side of the chestnuts deep enough to penetrate the skin under the shell. Put the slashed chestnuts in a pot of boiling water and remove them, one at a time, after at least two minutes' cooking. While the chestnuts are hot, use the cut part to pull away the two skins from the chestnut. Vacuum-packed peeled chestnuts are available at some specialty stores.



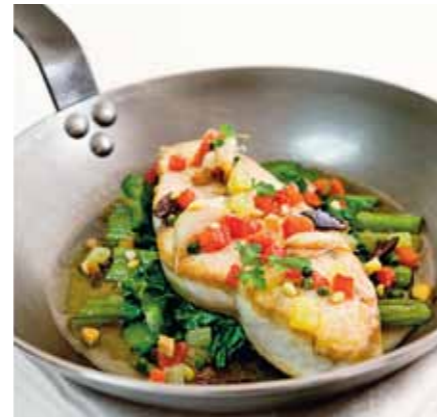
FILLETS OF SWORDFISH WITH MEDITERRANEAN FLAVOURS

Main ingredients

- 4 stalks of silverbeet
- 2 lemons, peel and pith removed, and flesh diced
- 1 tbsp pine nuts, toasted
- 2 tbsp baby capers
- 1 medium tomato, skin removed and diced
- 2 tbsp diced black olives
- a big handful of basil leaves, washed and torn
- 1 tsp curry powder
- 4 swordfish steaks, about 180g each salt and pepper
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 70g unsalted butter

Serves 4

1. Place a pot of water to boil. Remove the leaves from the silverbeet and cut the stalks into 5cm lengths. When the water comes to the boil, cook the silverbeet stalks for about 5 minutes or until they are tender.
2. In the same pot of water, cook the silverbeet leaves until they have wilted, then refresh in cold water and squeeze out the water. Shred the leaves.
3. In a bowl, mix together the lemon, pine nuts, capers, tomato, olives, basil and curry powder for the sauce. Cover with plastic film and set aside.
4. Season the swordfish steaks with salt and pepper.
5. Heat 2 frying pans over a medium heat. Divide the olive oil between them and add the swordfish steaks. Cook for about 3 minutes on each side, then remove to warm plates.



6. Using only one of the pans, immediately add the butter. Once the butter has turned nut brown, add the combined sauce ingredients and the cooked silverbeet stalks and leaves.
7. Stir well for a minute over medium heat, then season with pepper and a tiny amount of salt (the olives are salty). Spoon the sauce on top of the fish and serve.

MACARONS

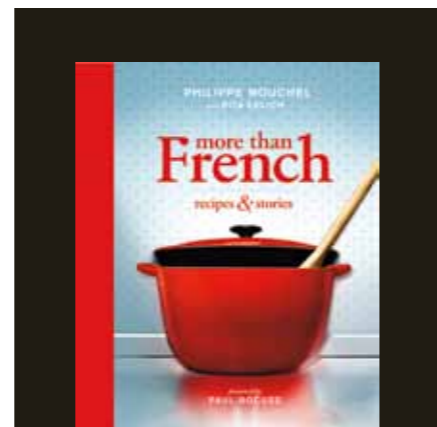


Main ingredients

- 125g almond meal
- 225g pure icing sugar
- 3 egg whites
- 1 tsp lemon juice, or a pinch of salt
- 30g caster sugar

Makes approximately 40 macarons

1. Preheat the oven to 150°C and line 2 trays with baking paper.
2. Place the almond meal and icing sugar in a blender or food processor for a few seconds, then sift into a bowl.
3. Whip the egg whites with the lemon juice or salt (either helps to stabilise the whites) until peaks form. While the egg whites are beating, gradually add the caster sugar.
4. Using a rubber spatula, fold in a little of the almond and icing sugar mix, then gently fold in the rest and mix well. The mixture should be shiny.
5. Transfer the mixture to a piping bag with a small round (8-10mm) nozzle, and pipe mounds on to the baking paper, about the size of a 10¢ coin. Leave to rest for at least 30 minutes, and up to an hour. A kind of skin should form on the surface (but don't fret if it doesn't appear).



From More Than French, Philippe Mouchel with Rita Erlich, Slattery Media Group, 2011 RRP \$65

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