

**A Repast from the Iberian Peninsula**  
**Being a redaction of 5 recipes by Ruperto de Nola from his 1529**  
**cookbook**

*Sauce called Garlic-Pine Nut Sauce*  
*Armored Capon*  
*Pottage of Onions called Cebollada*  
*Chopped Spinach*  
*Mirrauste of Apples*

An entry for Kingdom Arts & Sciences Competition  
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Also, thanks to Master Eric for taking time to give me some pointers on presentation for cooking entries.

## The Recipes with My Redactions

### Sauce Called Garlic-Pine Nut Sauce (translation by Cuenca)

In order to avoid copyright issues, the translation portion of this documentation has been removed. The book I used is available for purchase from Poison Pen Press. There is also a translation available online in Stefan's Florilegium ([www.florilegium.com/files/FOOD-MANUSCRIPTS/Guisados2-art.html](http://www.florilegium.com/files/FOOD-MANUSCRIPTS/Guisados2-art.html)).

#### My Redaction

½ cup each pine nuts and sliced almonds	1 head garlic
1 ¼ cup chicken broth	1 ½ Tbsp. Parmesan cheese
2 egg yolks, cooked	1 Tbsp. Sugar
½ Tbsp. White wine vinegar	½ Tbsp. Spice & Wine mixture

Spice & Wine Mixture (to replace rosewater):

4 Tbsp. White wine	
¼ tsp. cinnamon	1/8 tsp. each cloves, pepper, ginger

- ❖ Prepare the spices and wine the night before and refrigerate.
- ❖ Bring chicken broth to a boil with individual, cracked garlic cloves in it.
- ❖ Boil 15 minutes.
- ❖ Remove garlic cloves.
- ❖ Process pine nuts, almonds, garlic, and egg yolks.
- ❖ Add vinegar, sugar, and spice water to broth.
- ❖ Add nut mixture to broth and bring to a boil, stirring constantly.
- ❖ Boil 5 minutes.
- ❖ Reduce to a simmer, add cheese, and cook until thickened.
- ❖ Makes 8 servings.

### Armored Capon (translation by Cuenca)

#### My Redaction

5 ½ # Chicken	¾ # salt pork, flattened
1 cup fresh parsley	3 tsp sugar
6 egg yolks	2 tsp liquid smoke
½ cup each pine nuts & sliced almonds	Fresh cracked sea salt

- ❖ Preheat oven to 375 degrees.
- ❖ Flatten salt pork into a thin sheet.
- ❖ Rinse and clean chicken. Crack a very little sea salt over the chicken.
- ❖ Cover the chicken with the salt pork.
- ❖ Bake 45 minutes.

- ❖ Chop parsley finely. Add sugar.
- ❖ Beat eggs with liquid smoke.
- ❖ Mix eggs, parsley, sugar, and nuts.
- ❖ After 45 minutes, peel back salt pork, and baste bird with egg mixture.
- ❖ Replace salt pork and bake an additional 45 minutes.

**Chopped Spinach** (translation by Cuenca)

**My Redaction**

40 oz. spinach	1 cup almond milk
5 slices bacon	¾ cup Parmesan cheese
1 tsp. freshly ground sea salt	

- ❖ Blanch spinach in boiling, salted water for 4 minutes.
- ❖ Drain in colander. Press out extra water.
- ❖ Chop very small.
- ❖ Fry the bacon and remove strips from the pan. Crumble into small pieces.
- ❖ Sauté spinach with bacon grease.
- ❖ Add almond milk, bacon, and cheese.
- ❖ Simmer to melt cheese and absorb milk.
- ❖ Serves 8.

*Smaller version for competition:*

<i>9 oz. Fresh Spinach</i>	<i>4 slices Bacon</i>
<i>¾ cup Almond Milk</i>	<i>1/3 cup Parmesan Cheese</i>

**Pottage of Onions Called Cebollada** (translation by Cuenca)

**My Redaction**

1 tennis ball sized onion for each 2 people (3)	
2 tsp. Bacon grease	4 cups almond milk
8 oz. cheddar cheese, diced	2 egg yolks per onion (6)

- ❖ Peel, clean, and slice each onion in ¼ inch slices to form rings.
- ❖ Bring a pot of water to a rolling boil.
- ❖ Drop onion rings into boiling water. Return to boil. Boil 15 minutes.
- ❖ Drain rings in colander.
- ❖ Place drained rings between 2 cutting boards and press out any remaining water.
- ❖ Fry pressed rings in bacon grease.
- ❖ Add almond milk and bring to a boil. Boil until slightly reduced.
- ❖ Add cheese and continue to boil until well melted.
- ❖ Remove from heat and allow to cool slightly.
- ❖ Whisk in egg yolks. (Whisk constantly to prevent curdling.)
- ❖ Return to heat and bring to boil (stirring constantly) to thicken soup and cook egg.
- ❖ Makes 6 (1/2 cup) servings.

*Smaller version for competition:*

2 tennis ball sized onions

3 cups almond milk

4 egg yolks

5 slices bacon (for grease)

4 oz. cheddar cheese cubes

### **Mirrauste of Apples** (translation by Cuenca)

#### **My Redaction**

3 pounds Pink Lady Apples

1 cup Almonds

3 Slices of Multigrain Bread

1 teaspoon Cinnamon

2 Tablespoons Sugar

- ❖ Toast almonds for 15 minutes at 350 degrees to release the natural oils and flavor.
- ❖ Lightly toast the bread.
- ❖ Peel, core, and quarter the apples. Place in a pot of boiling water so that the apples are floating freely. Boil for 15 minutes or until fork tender.
- ❖ In a food processor, combine almonds, toast, 2 cups broth from cooking the apples, sugar and cinnamon. Blend until smooth and slightly watery.
- ❖ Transfer almond mixture to a pan and heat to a boil while stirring constantly to prevent sticking. Continue boiling until mixture is reduced slightly and thickened.
- ❖ Place well-drained apples on serving dish. Spoon almond mixture over them.
- ❖ Serve this dish warm.
- ❖ Makes 8 portions.

*Smaller version for competition:*

3 Pink Lady Apples

1 slice Seven Grain bread

1 tsp cinnamon (bumped up from  $\frac{3}{4}$ )

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup almonds

1  $\frac{1}{2}$  tsp sugar

$\frac{1}{4}$  cup almond milk\*\*\*

\*\*\*I had already dumped my apple broth when I realized I needed more liquid to use while heating this sauce. I poured in the last of the almond milk I had made earlier. In retrospect, I should have used apple juice.

## **History of the Cookbook**

According to the Historia Viva website, there were 16 editions of de Nola's Libre de Coch, 6 in Catalan and 10 in Castilian. Of these, only 3 are preserved: 1520 Catalan, 1525 & 1529 Castilian. The 1520 Catalan version is available online at: [www.cervantesvirtual.com/servlet/SirveObras/bc/628460875747518031062082](http://www.cervantesvirtual.com/servlet/SirveObras/bc/628460875747518031062082). It appears to have been so popular in its own time that later authors plagiarized it in their works.

Very little is known about Ruperto de Nola other than that he was the cook for Fernando I of Naples. According to Cuenca's preface, even this last name might be either a reference to the town of Nolla in Italy or a contraction of "no lo hay" ("there isn't one"). Considering that it was first published in Catalan, it is possible that Ruperto was a Catalan.

Master Ruperto's prologue is "Directed to the most serene king, Don Fernando of Naples. Composed by master Ruperto, his cook." This leads me to believe that this cookbook was prepared even earlier than the first publication in 1520. Don Fernando, also known as Ferrante I of Naples, lived from 1423 – 1494, and was king of Naples from 1458 – 1494. He was the illegitimate son of Alfonso V of Aragón. (Alfonso V of Aragón was the brother of Juan II who fathered Ferdinand the Catholic who later married Isabel the Catholic and united a large part of "Spain".) During this period, the kingdom of Naples was also part of the crown of Aragón, which encompassed, Aragón, Valencia, Catalonia, Sicily and Naples, although Naples was heavily contested during this era and the preceding and following ones.

## **Discussion of Spanish Culinary Culture**

So, what do the Spanish eat during the course of their meals? The only hard and fast rule that I seemed to find in my research is that there is no rule. Since I did all my redactions from de Nola, I will first mention the order of serving as he lists them: Fruit, Pottage or Blancmange, Roast, Pottage, Cooked things, Fritters (optional), then Fruit. However, he also mentions that some lords prefer to first eat all that is cooked and then all that is roasted. I find it interesting that he also adds, "And because there are so many novelties each day in the manner of the service of the table, I finish what deals with this, for it is so common to all."

The Madrone Culinary Guild published in their pamphlet, "A Brief Overview of Early Spanish Cuisine," a translation (by Robin Carroll-Mann) of a meal for the Archbishop Juan de Ribera, Viceroy of Valencia. The order of service in that meal was: Bread & Fruit (oranges), Roasted meats, Meatballs, Boiled meats with Turnips, Apples, Cardoons, and ended with Olives, Cheese, and Walnuts.

Teofilo Ruiz in his book, Spanish Society 1400-1600, has one chapter dedicated to the differences in class structure as emphasized by eating and dressing standards. Poultry and veal or suckling pigs were reserved for the upper classes, while meat such as mutton or beef was generally consumed by the servants and poor. This was augmented by the vegetables and fruits that were commonly available to the Spaniards such as onions, eggplants, apples, pears, and oranges to name a few. He also notes the provision in wills of the time for feeding the poor. One such will from 1289 allocates wheat bread, mutton, wine, and side dishes be given to feed fifty-four poor people on the "feast day of the Virgin".

Although these recipes are definitely not Lenten in nature, as they all contain some meat product—usually in the form of bacon grease, almond milk is specified in some recipes to replace the milk in recipes for Lent. The bacon grease serves another purpose. It sets these aside as Christian recipes. During this period leading up to the Inquisition, it was very important to demonstrate one's Christianity by eating pork and pork products which neither the Muslim or Jewish communities in the country would do. These groups would have used olive oil in place of bacon grease.

## **Redaction Process**

I started with the instructions given by Cindy Renfrow in Take a Thousand Eggs or More (Volume 2) in the section “So Now What?” By following those instructions, I found that everything simply fell into place as far as making some easy first guesses for proportions.

I read the recipe in Cuenca’s translation carefully writing down the ingredients with notes on quantities and action steps. Then, I also consulted Robin Carroll-Mann’s translations as found on the web in Stefan’s Florilegium, <http://www.florilegium.com/files/FOOD-MANUSCRIPTS/Guisados1-art.html> and <http://www.florilegium.com/files/FOOD-MANUSCRIPTS/Guisados2-art.html>.

### Garlic and Pine Nut Sauce:

I first looked for something to substitute for the rose vinegar and rose water. I never found the rose vinegar available locally and rose water was extremely costly. I found several websites that explained how to make it, but our roses won’t bloom for several months yet. I substituted a Riesling white wine and white wine vinegar. It was very difficult to balance the sugar and vinegar combination. I am still not happy with the redaction for this reason.

### Armored Capon:

First, I took note of the difference in translation between Cuenca and Carroll-Mann. One said to “lard” the capon; the other, to “bard” the capon. Carroll-Mann’s footnotes say that to bard is to cover the meat with a wide, thin piece of bacon or pork fat. There is another recipe in de Nola that deals with this process. As translated by Cuenca, it is simply called “Larding for Peacocks or Capons.” It specifies that good fat bacon should be cut into thick slices the size of the breast and tied onto the peacock or capon breast. The terms seemed to mean the same thing.

The recipe itself seemed very straight forward. I consulted Betty Crocker to determine a modern cooking time and temperature (375 degrees for 1 ½ hours for a 4 to 5 pound chicken). The first redaction followed what was in the original except that I used a modern oven rather than roasting on a spit. I did make two errors of a sort. First, I used modern bacon slices. These were fine in the first 45 minutes, but burned severely in the second 45 minutes. Secondly, it was very bland because two flavors were missing: the salt from salt cured bacon and the smoke from roasting on a spit. For these two reasons, I switched to salt pork and liquid smoke in subsequent trials.

Also, in subsequent trials, I found that if I mixed the nuts in with the egg yolks and parsley, they stuck to the chicken much more efficiently. I also switched to using sliced almonds. They stick better and, I think, are easier to eat. In earlier attempts, they simply fell off when applied after the eggs as the original recipe calls for.

### Chopped Spinach:

I found several redactions of this recipe or similar ones. The Madrone Culinary Guild made the version using currants (raisins). Marianne Perdomo has redacted the same version I did and has it posted on her Historia Viva website. Again, this is a very

straightforward recipe. It simply involves picking from the many options available and then determining what proportions taste best to you.

One determination that I had to make was what cheese to use. I opted for Parmesan because it gives the dish a slightly sharp tang. However, the recipe simply specifies “fresh cheese” and then later mentions “Aragon cheese” or “cheese from Aragon”. I did find modern references to Aragon cheese, but I couldn’t find references to how long this type of cheese has been around. I do wonder if maybe the fresh cheese is meant to be fresh goat or sheep’s cheese as one of the options is to use sheep or goat milk instead of the almond milk.

#### Cebollada:

The first task here was to find out what “pottage” meant. For some reason, I read this recipe and thought it was going to be a casserole of sorts. It turned out that pottage means “a thick soup or stew” according to the glossary in *Take a Thousand Eggs or More*, volume 2. Because there were very few ingredients involved, the only difficulty was in determining how much liquid would be needed.

#### Mirrauste of Apples:

\*\*\*\*\*This was actually my first redaction. I redacted and prepared this dish for the Candlemas (AS 40, 2006) event in Dragonsspine. These notes are from that process. The only change made to it between events was to change to using Pink Lady apples to get closer to a period variety of apple.\*\*\*\*\*

My first step was to look at other recipes for mirrauste dishes. There are a total of four such recipes in de Nola’s book: “Mirrauste”, “Mirrauste in Another Fashion”, “Mirrauste of Pears and This Can be Given to the Sick”, and “Mirrauste of Apples”.

The recipe simply titled “Mirrauste” gives a more detailed explanation of making the almond sauce. This recipe calls for one pound and four ounces of almonds, which are a ground with a piece of broth-soaked bread and strained with one ounce of cinnamon. This is to be cooked with half a pound of sugar stirred constantly with a wooden spoon. This yields a cinnamon to sugar ratio of 1:8. (If one uses modern weights and measures. Cuenca has a discussion in his preface about weights and measures of the period. He has determined that an apothecary scale is used so one pound of sugar would be 13.2 ounces. That would make the ratio 1:6.6.)

“Mirrauste in Another Fashion” uses the almond milk with sugar and cinnamon, which is thickened at the end of its cooking cycle with a little grated bread. “Mirrauste of Pears” is made in a similar fashion to the apple recipe I have chosen.

Next, I looked at a redaction in Duke Cariodoc’s 4<sup>th</sup> Edition of A Miscellany. That redaction is based on Platina’s cookbook and is titled “Mirause of Catelonia”. -- De Nola’s book being originally published in Catalan, I felt this would be a good starting place.-- For that redaction, ¾ cup finely chopped, roasted almonds, ¼ cup breadcrumbs, 1 tablespoon vinegar, ½ teaspoon cinnamon, ½ teaspoon ginger, and 1 tablespoon sugar are mixed with 10.5 ounces chicken broth and cooked together with some chicken (that was previously baked) for 15 minutes. This is a cinnamon to sugar ratio of 1:6.

Finally, I looked at other recipes both in translation and redaction to get a feel for the cuisine of late period Iberia before attempting by trial and error to reproduce a modern equivalent of this recipe.

I consulted Betty Crocker to determine which apples are considered “sweet” and are good for cooking as well as to get a first guess at cooking time. For my first attempt at cooking from a period recipe I did not attempt to locate an Old World apple variety to use instead I used what was readily available. For Candlemas, I chose to use Gala apples. They are smaller and cook more quickly. They have a crisp texture and are not mealy. For Kingdom A&S, I chose to use Pink Lady Apples. They have a pleasant sweet-tart taste.

The bread that I used was a Seven Grain from Grant’s Farm. My almonds are Fisher Chef’s Naturals. I chose to use a food processor in order to hasten preparation time and ensure a finer grind on the product. The translation specifies using a mortar and pushing through a strainer. Due to old wrist and hand injuries, I felt that I lacked sufficient strength to work with this tool.

## **Cook’s Notes**

### Garlic Pine Nut Sauce

1. The first thing that I discovered to my chagrin was that pine nuts go to paste rather rapidly if over processed!
2. When I made this for my taste testers, I accidentally forgot to put in the sugar, vinegar, and wine mixture at the end. I preferred it that way since I am not found of sweet and sour taste combinations. They were very happy with the results, too, although they had no basis for comparison.
3. I am still not happy with the whole sweet and sour taste involved in this dish. I would back off on the vinegar to at least 1 tsp and maybe only ½ Tbsp of sugar.
4. I am a garlic lover; therefore, the redaction is far heavier on the garlic than the proportions in the original recipe seem to indicate.
5. If the Armored Capon has dried out, this sauce will give it a little moisture. If the chicken is fine as is, this sees to compliment it well.

### Armored Capon

1. The salt pork is hard to flatten to a thin sheet and will shrink up greatly in the oven. It should be tied in place perhaps.
2. Although the liquid smoke is not period, it does provide a flavor that is missing if this dish is not prepared on a spit.
3. The other recipe to which I referred, adds that you can also cover the capon with white paper, well tied over the bacon. I am not sure what this would have referred to in period, but I’m wondering if in our current ages, aluminum foil would be a good thing to use in this recipe because I had difficulty in keeping the pine nuts from burning.

### Chopped Spinach

1. Although it would be quicker to substitute frozen spinach in order to skip the first blanching step, I recommend against it as the texture and color just aren’t the same (to me).
2. I really like to use unstrained almond milk in this recipe. It gives a little crunch that is surprisingly pleasant.



3. Hickory smoked bacon goes a long way towards adding a pleasant smoky flavor.
4. The version made with currants or raisins is also quite tasty. It is different because it gives a much sweeter outcome than this savory version.
5. The next time I try to redact this recipe, I believe I will use goat cheese and goat milk. I imagine that the tang of the goat cheese, especially, will be an excellent compliment to the taste of the spinach.

### Cebollada

1. Again, I prefer to use a mixture of strained and unstrained almond milk to put a little extra crunch into this recipe.
2. I found that this does not reheat well.
3. I tried to keep this in a crock pot for several hours before adding the eggs to thicken it (I was cooking this for my taste testers and didn't have enough burners). I found that the cheese had melted into nothingness; the onions had turned to mush; and, the soup was tasteless. It is best prepared fresh and just as ready to serve.

### Mirrauste of Apples

1. Most of my taste testers agreed that it would be improved by bumping up the amount of cinnamon used in the almond sauce. I, personally, am not a huge cinnamon fan, which is why I kept it closer to the period ratio for my redaction of the full size recipe. I did try using a little more cinnamon in the smaller version that I did for the A&S competition.
2. If I had used true cinnamon, rather than what is commercially marketed as cinnamon, I am sure this would have produced an even better result.
3. Since I was preparing this as part of a course for my taste testers that required costly almonds in each dish, I reused some of the almonds that I had made almond milk out of to prepare this dish. I found that it gave a more delicate flavor due to the almond oil being leached out previously. I liked this even better than my original redaction. I wouldn't do that for competition, though.
4. When not serving this for an SCA function, it goes fantastically well with French Vanilla ice cream!

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