

Mirrauste of Apples

A Redaction of the 1529 Recipe by Ruperto de Nola
As Translated by Vincent F. Cuenca

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).

My Redaction

3 pounds Gala Apples

1 cup Almonds

3 Slices of 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 from sticking. Continue boiling until mixture is reduced slightly and thickened.
- ❖ Add well-drained apples to almond mixture.
- ❖ Serve this dish warm.

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. (Note: Cuenca's preface asserts there were 14 editions over 57 years.) 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 It appears to have been so popular in its own time that later authors plagiarized it in their works.

Cuenca's preface points out that little is known about Ruperto de Nola other than that he was the cook for Fernando I of Naples. Even his last name might be a reference to the town of Nolla in Italy or a contraction of "no lo hay" ("there isn't one").

Redaction Process

After looking at the history of the ingredients, 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 4th 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, $\frac{3}{4}$ cup finely chopped, roasted almonds, $\frac{1}{4}$ cup breadcrumbs, 1 tablespoon vinegar, $\frac{1}{2}$ teaspoon cinnamon, $\frac{1}{2}$ 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. In this case, I choose to use Gala apples. They are smaller and cook more quickly. They have a crisp texture and are not mealy.

My almonds are Fisher Chef's Naturals. I choose 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. Although I have never used a mortar and pestle, due to old wrist and hand injuries, I felt that I lacked sufficient strength to work with this product.

Bibliography

❖ Primary Source

❖ Secondary Sources

Cuenca, Vincent F. Translator. Master Ruperto de Nola, Libro de Cocina, 1529 Logroño. 2001 Self-Published

Friedman, David, and Betty Cook. A Miscellany 4th edition, 1988 Self-Published

Gitlitz, David M. and Linda Kay Davidson. A Drizzle of Honey: The Lives and Recipes of Spain's Secret Jews 1999 St. Martin's Griffin, New York, NY

Rain, Eden Editor. A Brief Overview of Early Spanish Cuisine 2001 Madrone Culinary Guild, Barony of Madrone, Seattle

❖ Tertiary Sources

Betty Crocker's New Cookbook 1996 McMillan, New York NY

Green, Donna. Class Notes for Late Period Iberian Food 2005 Available on the World Wide Web in the files section of http://groups.yahoo.com/spaniards_sca

www.historiaviva.org/cocina/Libros_Nola_Como.shtml

Tannahill, Reay. Food in History 1973 Stein and Day, New York NY