

# A CULINARY DICTIONARY

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# A

**Abalone** – A large sea snail with a shallow, ear-shaped shell. It lives close to the shoreline, clinging to the underside of rocks, ledges with a broad fleshy foot. Found throughout the world, abalone at one time became so rare in California that it was not allowed to be canned, dried or sent out of the state; the advent of farm-raised abalone eased these restrictions. In the Channel Islands, when seasonal low tides temporarily exposed the abalone's rocky haunts, the locals took part in a frenzied race to gather as many as possible before the waters rolled back in, leading to a decline in abalone numbers. In Australia, divers harvest them in southern waters.

The flesh is tough and must be tenderized by pounding before it can be eaten.

**Abbacchio** – The Italian term for meat from an unweaned baby lamb. Dishes based on it have been specialty of central and southern Italy since the time of the ancient Romans with garlic and rosemary, it is traditional Easter fare.

**Aberdeen Sausage** – A beef sausage that is wrapped in a cloth, boiled, and then coated in dry breadcrumbs.

**Acidulated Water** – Water with a little lemon juice or vinegar added, sprinkled on cut raw fruits such as apples, bananas and pears to prevent browning.

**Agar-Agar** – A white, semi-translucent, tasteless and odourless setting agent made from various Asian seaweeds. Agar-agar sets without refrigeration and is used in Asian cookery to thicken soups and to make jellies.

**Aïoli** – A garlic mayonnaise from Provence, which is sometimes, called the “butter of Provence”. In Marseilles it is said that aïoli should contain at least two cloves of garlic per person. Traditionally associated with poached salt cod, aïoli is also served with other fish, meat and vegetables, and is also added to soup.

**À la** – French for ‘in the style of’, e.g. à la niçoise, typical of the cooking style of the Nice region; à la vigneronne, prepared with grapes (in the manner of the wine grower).

**Al dente** – An Italian cooking term, literally ‘to the tooth’, which is used to describe food, particularly pasta, that is cooked until firm to the bite rather than soft.

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**Alfafa Sprouts** – The fine, short sprouts of alfafa seeds, with pale stalks and deep green tips, used in salads and sandwiches. The sprouts have a nutty taste and a particular affinity for cheese. The alfafa (or lucerne) plant was first grown by Arabs as food for their horses because its high protein and calcium content helped develop strong animals.

**Allemande, à l'** – A French term for food cooked in the German style: traditionally, dishes containing smoked sausages or garnished with sauerkraut and pork. It is also used to describe dishes served with allemande sauce, a white sauce made with veal or poultry stock.

**Allspice** – A spice made from the berries of a tropical tree, which grows throughout Central America and is especially abundant in Jamaica. Its aroma and flavour is similar to a blend of cloves, cinnamon, and nutmeg. The berries are picked while green and dried in the sun until dark red. Whole berries are used to flavour stews, pot roasts, and chutney; the ground spice is added to apple dishes, milk puddings, gingerbread, and tomato sauce. It is sometimes called pimento or Jamaica pepper.

**Almond** – The oval shaped seeds of a tree closely related to the peach and apricot. Originally from the Middle East, the almond is one of the most widely used and longest cultivated nuts in the world. It was eaten in ancient Babylon, is mentioned in Hittite writings and in the bible, and by Minoan times had spread west as far as the island of Crete. The ancient Greeks mixed the crushed nut with honey to make marzipan and it was popular with the Romans, who called it “the Greek nut”. The prevalence of the almond in medieval cooking is thought to be connected to religious fast days when it replaced forbidden meat and milk. There are two types of almond: the sweet almond, from a pink-flowering tree, the form widely used; and the strongly flavoured bitter almond, from a white-flowering tree, a broader and shorter nut which contain prussic acid and is poisonous if consumed in more than minute amounts. In some styles of cooking the two are mixed, in proportions of about one bitter to fifty sweet almonds.

California is the world's largest producer of almonds, followed by Italy and Spain, where the trees grow well on the poor soils of the Mediterranean hills. Almonds are eaten raw, roasted, or grilled and salted; pounded or ground, they are used in savoury stuffings and a variety of desserts, cakes, and confectionery.

**Almond Paste** – A mixture of finely ground almond, sugar and egg which is rolled out and used to cover rich fruit cakes with a smooth and even surface before they are iced. It also helps to preserve the cake and to stop it from discolouring the icing. It is used to make marzipan confectionery and filling for Danish pastries.

**Alum** – An astringent mineral salt used in pickling to maintain the crispness of cucumbers and onions and as a whitening agent in flour.

**Amaretti** – A crisp almond macaroon from Italy, where it was originally made with bitter almonds. The name comes from the Italian word *amaro* meaning bitter.

**Ambrosia** – A semi-soft cows milk cheese, originally from Sweden, with a slightly tart taste and a number of small irregular holes in the interior.

Ambrosia is also the name of a chilled dessert made with layers of fruit, usually sliced orange, banana, and fresh pineapple, and a mixture of desiccated (shredded) coconut and icing sugar.

**Americaine, à l'** – A French term for meat, seafood, eggs or vegetables served with a spicy, tomato-based sauce and often garnished with grilled bacon and tomatoes. The name was originally applied to a dish, created in the 1860s in Paris by a chef who had worked in North America, in which a cut lobster cooked in a tomato and wine mixture was served with a sauce made from the stock. Some say the term 'americaine' is a mistranslation of 'américaine', referring to *Armorica*, the ancient name for Brittany, and that this style of cooking originated there.

**American Food** – The cuisine of North America marries the diversity and abundance of the ingredients harvested from its vast lands (stretching from the tropics to the Arctic and along the coasts of two oceans) with the cooking styles and food habits of the many cultures from which its people are drawn. The style which has emerged was born in the basic

kitchens of the early European settlers, where the frying pan and cooking pot ruled (today most dishes are still either stewed or fried). It is characterized by numerous variations on a simple theme—the apple pie, for example, has several distinct regional forms, each reflecting local ingredients as well as cultural backgrounds.

Americans like iced water on the table and a salad (often with a choice of several dressings) before the main course which following the British traditions, usually consist of a relatively plain meat dish with two vegetables. Corn, native to the continent, features prominently in its cuisine, as does squash and rice. America gave the world the cocktail and is also the home of convenience foods and fast foods such as popcorn, the hot dog, and fried chicken. It has the highest per capita consumption of hamburgers in the world.

**Anchovy** – A small slender, herring-like saltwater fish with a slightly oily flesh and a strong, sardine-like taste. Although anchovies are eaten fresh in the regions in which they occur, they are probably known to most in their preserved form. Traditionally the whole fish, packed in brine in kegs, was used for flavouring and salting meat dishes. In Renaissance Italy a dish of anchovy fillets marinated in olive oil and vinegar was a popular first course, and for centuries salted anchovy fillets have been an important ingredient in the cooking of Provence. Today it is widely available as salted fillets marinated in oil and sold in jars or cans.

Sadly, pollution has largely banished the anchovy from its home in Mediterranean waters, although it is still netted off the coast of France and Spain in May. In the English Channel on moonless nights the artificial lights lure large numbers. The anchovy is caught in the Atlantic, and off the Pacific coasts of the Americas, and a similar species occurs in the coastal waters of Australia.

Preserved anchovy fillets are used in hors d'oeuvre, pizza toppings, in salads and as a garnish; boned anchovies are pounded into a paste which is the basis for many sauces.

**Angel cake** – a white-coloured cake with an airy texture resulting from the high proportion of beaten egg white in the mixture. The angel cake originated in North America, where it has been known since the late nineteenth century.

**Angelica** – An herb best known for its candied stalks, used to flavour and decorate cakes and desserts. It was once eaten raw, like celery, and its fresh leaves can be used in

salads. In parts of Iceland of Norway the dried root is ground into a form of bread.

Angelica seeds are used in the preparation of vermouth and chartreuse. Originally from northern Europe, angelica was brought to the warmer south by Vikings in the tenth century. There, because it was found to flower on May 8-St. Michael the Archangel's Day-it was believed to have supernatural powers and was used for protection against witches. In the seventeenth century the root was chewed or taken in a mixture called 'angelica water' in futile attempts to ward off the plague.

Preparations made from the root have been used to relieve colic and tooth ache and to treat deafness and bronchial disorders; a North American species was used for similar medicinal purposes by early European settlers. To Native Americans, angelica root was known as 'hunting or fishing root' and was rubbed onto the hands so the smell would attract fish and game.

**Angel on Horseback** – A popular savoury consisting of oysters wrapped in thin rashers of bacon and grilled or baked until the bacon is crisp.

**Anglaise, à l'** – A French term for boiled vegetables served with butter and chopped parsley, and for meat and poultry cooked in white stock. It is also applied to grilled fish served with melted butter.

**Anise** – The European anise (from which aniseed is derived) is a member of the parsley family and has a distinctive licorice-like flavour and fragrance. The plant is native to Egypt, it is still grown wild, and to Greece and parts of South-West Asia. The aromatic seeds are sprinkled on some types of bread, and are used to flavour coffeecakes, fruit salads, cooked cabbage, and chicken and veal dishes; oil extracted from them is used as a flavouring in confectionery and some alcoholic drinks, such as pernod and anisette.

The Romans ate anise cakes at the end of a meal as an aid to digestion. They also hung the plant near their beds in the belief that it would prevent bad dreams.

**Antipasti** – The Italian term for appetizers, literally 'before the meal'. The antipasto course was probably created during the Renaissance when it was customary to begin and end a meal with a series of cold dishes served from the sideboard. There are three main categories of traditional antipasti: affettati, consisting of sliced cured meats such

as hams and salamis and popular in northern and central Italy; antipasto misto, an assortment of dishes, often without meat, including mini pizzas, cheese and raw, cooked and marinated vegetables such as eggplant (aubergine); and antipasto misto mare, dishes of shellfish and small fish. [See also Canapés; Hors d'oeuvre]

**Anzac Biscuit** – A biscuit (cookie) that originated in Australia during the years of World War-1, when eggs were scarce. Made with oats, syrup, butter and desiccated coconut, they were sent in food parcels to troops stationed in Europe.

**Appetizers** – Food eaten before the main meal to simulate or excite the appetite. [See also Canapés; Hors d'oeuvre]

**Apple** – The most widely cultivated of all fruits. The tens of thousands of apple varieties available today are believed to have descended from a tree native to the Middle East and the Balkans. Where it was first cultivated is not known, but apples were certainly familiar to the ancient Egyptians who, by the middle of the second millenium BC, had planted orchards in the Nile delta. The Apple variety (still available today, and known in the United States as the Lady Apple), was developed by Etruscans more than 2000years ago.

The apple was the first introduced crop to flourish in North America, and during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries was an important staple for European settlers in the northwest. Nineteenth century folk hero Johnny Appleseed, credited with spreading the fruit across North America, did so by establishing a chain of apple orchards from Pennsylvania west to Indiana, and not, as popularly depicted, by randomly scattering seed. In Australia, Tasmania has long held the title 'Apple Isle'. Orchards planted in the southeast in the early 1840s supplied markets in India and New Zealand. The 1850s population boom caused by the gold rushes on the Australian mainland meant an increased demand for the fruit, and at one time some 500 varieties of apple were grown. Today this has diminished to fewer than ten varieties.

There are both eating and cooking varieties of apple. They are cooked in a range of sweet and savoury dishes, can be dried, and are made into apple juice and cider.

**Apricot** – The apricot was first cultivated in china more than 4000 years ago. It grew in Nebuchadnezzar's hanging gardens of Babylon

and was an expensive delicacy in ancient Rome. The Persians called the soft golden fruit 'eggs of the sun'. The apricot was taken to Britain from Italy in the mid-1500s by the gardener of Henry VIII.

Fresh ripe apricots are eaten raw or cooked as a dessert, made into jams, and in savoury dishes teamed with lamb and with chicken. Dried, canned and glacé apricots are available year-round.

**Arborio Rice** – A variety of rice, originally grown in the Po Valley in Italy. It has a short, plump, oval shape and is used in both sweet and savoury dishes, notably in risotto.

**Arrowroot** – A fine white powder obtained from the root of the maranta, a white-flowered plant of the Caribbean. An easily digestible starch, it is used as a thickener in sweet and savoury sauces. Because it thickens at a lower temperature than either flour or cornflour, arrowroot is often used in delicate sauces that should not be boiled.

**Arroz con Pollo** – A Spanish or Mexican dish consisting of rice, chicken, garlic, olive oil, and herbs and spices. Saffron gives it its characteristic yellow.

**Artichoke** – Two vegetables carry the name artichoke: the globe artichoke, which is the silvery-grey leafy bud of a large thistle-like plant; and the Jerusalem artichoke, the white-fleshed root of a relative of the sunflower. The globe artichoke probably originated on the coasts of the western Mediterranean. It was not widely eaten until the fifteenth century, when, under the patronage of the Medicis of Florence, it emerged as a culinary aristocrat with a reputation as an aphrodisiac. By the sixteenth century the globe artichoke was well established in Italy and France, where it remains popular today. In North America it is not mentioned until the late 1800s when, introduced by Italian settlers in California, it was called the French artichoke. Globe artichoke can be pickled whole when small; both heart and bases are sold canned or frozen. Despite its name, the Jerusalem artichoke has nothing at all to do with the Middle Eastern city: "Jerusalem" is a corruption of girasole, the Italian word for sunflower, to which this plant is closely related. It comes in fact, from North America, where it was cultivated by Native Americans (in that part of the world it is also known as Canadian artichoke). In the early 1600s Samuel de Champlain, the founder of Quebec, noted in his diary that the roots had

a taste somewhat like the heart of the European globe artichoke, hence the name.

By 1620 the vegetable was available in the street markets of Paris. It was first grown and eaten in England at about the same time and not long afterwards appeared in Italy. Its reception was generally subdued, many regarding it as fit only for swine, its role in Europe today.

**Arugula** – See Rocket.

**Asafoetida** – A bitter, garlic-smelling condiment, prepared since the time of ancient Rome, and now used mainly in Indian and Middle Eastern cooking. The dried and powdered resin of a plant native to Afghanistan and Iran, it has been used medicinally for many centuries to treat flatulence.

**Asparagus** – The edible, delicately flavoured young shoots of a member of the lily family. There are two basic types: the slender-stalked green asparagus, harvested when the stems are about 20 centimeters (8 inches) above ground; and white asparagus, of the same variety as the green, but pale because it is harvested while the stalk is still below ground. Although asparagus has been known since ancient times—the Egyptians thought it a suitable offering for their gods and Julius Caesar liked his served with melted butter—it was not widely used until the seventeenth century, when it became popular in France. By the eighteenth century it was well established in North America.

**Aspic** – A clear, savoury jelly, prepared from clarified stock made from the gelatinous parts of meat, chicken, or fish and usually flavoured with vegetables and herbs. It is used to glaze cold dishes, and to coat savoury moulds.

**Avgolemono** – A soup made from chicken stock flavoured with lemon juice and thickened with egg yolk, popular in Greece and the Balkans. The name also refers to a sauce based on the same ingredients, which is served with poached fish or steamed vegetables.

**Avocado** – A leathery-skinned fruit with a large seed and pale, buttery flesh with a slightly nutty flavour. The avocado comes from a tree originating in Central America. Avocado was once called 'midshipman's butter' by the English, a name probably dating from its use as crew food on far flung sailing ships. Avocado is the main ingredient of

guacamole and is used in many other Mexican dishes. Usually served raw in salads, sandwiches, and as a first course, it can be cooked – it is mashed onto a piece of toast with crumbled grilled bacon, sprinkled with grated cheddar and heated.

## B

**Baba (au Rhum)** – A dessert cake made of yeast dough containing raisins, which is soaked in rum or Kirsch syrup after cooking. The cake has its origin in the sweetened yeast cakes, called gugelhupf, of Central Europe. The Polish King Stanislaus enlivened his cakes with a liberal splash of rum and Malaga wine and called his invention Baba, for the hero of his favourite work of literature, The One Thousand and One Nights.

**Baba Ghannouj** – A dish from the Middle East, consisting of puréed eggplant (aubergine) flavoured with tahini, garlic, and lemon juice, served as a dip.

**Babaco** – The cylindrical fruit of a native to tropical America. It has soft yellow flesh that tastes like a mixture of banana and pineapple. The babaco is related to (papaya) and is similarly used to tenderize meat and aid digestion.

**Bacon** – Fat and lean meat, from the side and back of the pig, which has been preserved by dry salting (curing) and is usually, smoked as well. Bacon is sold in thin slices called rashers. Middle cut or prime bacon is cut from the middle rib area and contain a large eye lean meat; streaky bacon, with alternating strips of lean and fat, is cut from the tail end of the loin. Canadian bacon, in England called back bacon, is cut from the loin and is leaner than other cuts. [See also Gammon; Speck.]

**Bagel** – A ring of non-sweet, baked yeast dough with a characteristic shiny, hard crust, the result of being boiled in water before baking. The bagel originated in Eastern Europe in the sixteenth or seventeenth century, and became popular with the Jewish community in Vienna, which began producing it commercially. The name comes from a Yiddish word meaning 'ring'.

**Bagna Cauda** – A garlic and anchovy flavoured sauce served hot as a dip for raw vegetables. Originally from Piedmont, in Italy, the sauce is associated with the grape harvest and the rituals and celebrations that accompany winemaking. Its name mean 'hot bath'.

**Baguette (French bread)** – A long thin crusty loaf of bread made of bleached white flour. The baguette originated in Paris and is the every day bread of France – it appears on the table at every meal and its price is set by law.

**Bake blind** – To partially or fully bake a pie shell before filling with a mixture, which would otherwise make the bottom soggy, or with fruit that does not need to be cooked. The pastry should be weighted with dried beans, rice, or macaroni to prevent it from rising during baking.

**Baking Powder** – A raising agent consisting of bicarbonate of soda (baking soda), an acid (usually cream of tartar) and starch or flour, used for cooking cakes and biscuits. The bicarbonate of soda reacts with the acid to produce bubbles of carbon dioxide, causing the mixture to rise and become porous.

**Baking Soda** – See Bicarbonate of soda.

**Baklava** – A cake consisting of alternate layers of filo pastry and chopped nuts, which is doused in syrup while still hot and then cut into triangular pieces. Of Greek origin, baklava first appeared during the time of the Ottoman Empire, about AD 1300. It is popular in the Middle East.

**Balsamic Vinegar** – A richly flavoured, dark-coloured vinegar. It has a bittersweet taste, is almost syrupy in consistency, and is used in salads, on berries, or as a meat marinade. The vinegar is made from unfermented sweet Trebbiano grapes, which are slowly boiled to thick syrup, to which strong wine vinegar is added. The mixture is aged in a series of aromatic hardwood casks for atleast five years and sometimes a century or more. It is a specialty of the Italian Modena region. Less expensive products attempt to imitate the flavour by adding caramel to red wine vinegar.

**Bamboo Shoots** – The young, tender and slightly crunchy cone-shaped shoots of an edible bamboo plant found throughout tropical

Asia. Their use as food dates from sixth century China and they are also an important ingredient in Japanese and Korean cooking.

**Banana** – The yellow-skinned, crescent-shaped fruit of a tall, long-leaved plant (actually a giant herb, not a tree) cultivated throughout the tropics and probably native to the region between India and the island of New Guinea. By the fourteenth century they grew in Africa. Bananas have been grown in tropical America since their introduction by the Spanish and Portuguese in the sixteenth century. However, only with improved transport methods in the mid-twentieth century did the fruit become common in Europe and North America.

As a general rule, the smaller the banana variety, the sweeter the flesh. The fruit can be eaten raw or used in a variety of cooked dishes. A relative the green skinned plantain, contain less sugar and more starch and is cooked as a vegetable accompaniment of West Indian, South American and African dishes.

**Banbury Tart** – A small tart consisting of puff or flaky pastry filled with mincemeat (finely chopped dried and fresh fruit) and sometimes flavoured with rum and grated nutmeg. The cake originated in the seventeenth century in the English market town of Banbury.

**Bannock** – A flat cake originated in Scotland, made with oatmeal, barley or wheat flour and cooked on a griddle or in a frying pan.

**Bap** – A light, white bread roll with a soft, floury crust. It is split open and spread with butter and a filling while still hot. The bap originated in Scotland where it has been known since the sixteenth century.

**Barbecue Cookery** – Roasting or grilling (broiling) food over an open fire is the oldest form of cookery. Meat, poultry, fish, shellfish, vegetables, and even fruit can be cooked in this way. Flavour can be enhanced by basting with marinades and sauces during cooking, and by the fragrant smoke from aromatic woods and herbs thrown on the coals.

**Barley** – A grain related to wheat, barley originated in the hilly areas of the Middle East. It was the chief grain of the ancient Greeks and in Rome was used to make bread as well as being the main food of the gladiators. Pear barley, the shiny grains that have been hulled

and milked until they resemble small pearls, has been used in cooking since ancient times, probably moistened with oil and water and flavoured with the juices from cooked poultry or lamb, it is still used in soups and stews. Barley water, prepared from the grain, was a favourite beverage of the Greek physician Hippocrates and is still a popular health drink. Today, barley is mostly used to make malt for beer brewing and as a stock food.

**Barley Sugar** - A brittle confectionery (candy), traditionally made with water in which barley has been simmered for several hours (barley water) and sugar. Today it is made of boiled sugar, without barley and with various flavourings.

**Barquette** – A small, boat shaped tart made of either shortcrust or puff pastry, shaped in a small tin mould and baked blind before being filled with sweet or savoury ingredients.

**Basil** – A pungent herb related to mint. Its flavour combines particularly well with tomatoes, zucchini (courgettes) and spinach, it is also used in salads, sauces and stuffing's and as a garnish for pasta. The Greeks, who used it for cooking in the third century BC, regarded basil as a royal herb, as reflected in the specific scientific name for sweet basil, basilicum, derived from the Greek word for king. Basil originated in tropical Asia.

**Basmati** – An aromatic, long-grained textured rice much used in India. It has been grown for thousand of years in the Himalayan foothills.

**Baste** – To moisten food while it is cooking by spooning over or brushing with pan juices melted fat or a marinade.

**Batter** – A mixture of flour and liquid, which can be cooked by it-self, in pancakes, waffles, doughnuts and Yorkshire pudding, or used to coat foods such as fritters and battered fish before they are fried. The practice of dipping fish in batter before deep frying probably originated in china. In North America the term is also used for a cake mixture. The word comes from the French battre, to beat.

**Bavarois (Bavarian Cream)** – A dessert made from egg custard and whipped cream, flavoured with pureed fruit, chocolate, coffee or liqueur. Its name may be linked to the numbers of French chefs who worked at the

Bavarian (German) court during the time of the Wittelsbach kings (1806 to 1918).

**Bay** – The bay tree, also known as the laurel, is a native of the Mediterranean region. In ancient Greece, wreaths of its aromatic leaves crowned victors in both cultural and sporting endeavours (the term ‘laureate’ comes from this practice) In the Middle Ages bay leaves were used as a strewing herb to banish stale odours and it is only in later centuries that their culinary qualities have been appreciated, the leaves can be used fresh or dried, crushed or powdered, to enliven soups and casseroles, they are always a component of a bouquet garni.

**Bean curd** – A processed extract of the soy bean obtained by soaking boiling and sieving the beans to produce a liquid which, after the addition of a coagulant, is similar in appearance and texture to fresh cheese. It takes on the flavour of what it is cooked with, and is valued for its high nutritional content. The use of bean curd is believed to date from the dynasty in China (about 206 BC to about AD 220), it was introduced into Japan by Buddhist priests in the eighth century. Bean curd is also known by its Japanese name, tofu. In Japan, it is added to sweet and savoury dishes, used in soups, sukiyaki, and seafood dishes and diced or crumbled with noodles and other vegetables.

**Bean Sprouts** – The sprouts of the mung bean and less commonly, the soy bean, used in salads or as a stir fry vegetable. Bean sprouts are very low in kilojoules (calories).

**Beans, Dried** – The dried seeds of various beans, which, with dried peas and lentils, are usually classified as pulses. There are many varieties of dried beans – haricot, cannellini, lima, borlotti, red kidney beans, mung beans and soya beans. All are highly nutritious, all contain soluble dietary fibre which helps to control the level of cholesterol in the blood. The Romans made cakes from ground dried beans in times of cereal shortage, as did the peasants of Western Europe in later centuries. Traditionally dried beans have played an important role in the diet of the peoples of central and South America and Middle East, providing low-cost high protein meals, Dried beans require slow cooking.

**Beans, Green** – Green beans are the edible pods of a number of bean varieties which actually range in colour from pale yellow to deep purple. They include the French bean

(called haricot vert in France and string-bean in North America), the yellow wax bean, and the runner bean, which has purple pods that turn green when cooked. Green beans can be steamed, boiled, stir fried (on their own or with other food) or cooked for salads.

The green bean is native to tropical America where it has been cultivated for many thousands of years. By the time of European

contact it had spread both north and south, and was often found planted with corn. At first only its seeds were used, but by the late eighteenth century whole pods were eaten.

The long, deep green Chinese or snake bean has been cultivated and eaten since ancient times and features in South – East Asian Cooking.

**Béarnaise Sauce** – A creamy sauce made of butter and egg yolk with tarragon vinegar that is served hot with grilled and roast meat, fish and chicken. It appeared in France during the reign of Henri IV and is named after his birthplace, Béarn, in the Pyrenees.

**Béchamel Sauce** – A creamy sauce made with flour, butter and milk and served hot. The original Béchamel sauce was named for the Marquis de Béchameil, a French financier, noted art lover and gourmet, who in the late 1600s became chief steward in the household of Louis XIV. The sauce was a marked departure from the coarse mixtures in use at the time, and has since become the basis of many other sauces. Béchamel is also known as white sauce.

**Beef** – The meat from cattle raised for food. Although the domestication of cattle began some 10,000 years ago, they were bred primarily as working animals (in India the cow is sacred and its meat is not eaten). In the Middle Ages roast beef made its appearance in the banquet halls of England, the term ‘Beefeater’, now used for the Yeomen of the guard in the Tower of London, originally described a well-fed live-in servant. In France, the eating of grilled beef seems to date from when English troops crossed the channel for the Battle of Waterloo. The French today are the greatest per capita eaters of beef in Europe, while the Americans hold the world record for both production and consumption.

Good quality beef has a rich red colour, a fairly fine texture, shiny appearance, is firm to the touch and in the thicker parts has flecks of fat (marbling). Cuts vary from country to country. In general, the most tender meat comes from the upper-back, and cuts requiring



longer cooking come from the more heavily muscled areas of the legs and rear.

**Beef Tea** – A nutritious drink prepared by slowly heating minced (ground) lean beef in water then straining off the juice.

**Beef Wellington** – A cut of tender beef that is browned, topped with pate, wrapped in pastry and baked. A popular dish for dinner parties.

**Beer** – An alcoholic drink obtained from the fermentation of extracts of malted cereals, mainly barley, and flavoured with hops. A form of beer was known to the Sumerians an ancient Babylonians, who brewed a cloudy version from barley or wheat, or a mixture of the two. In the Middle Ages almost all monasteries had breweries and the ale they make provided income for the orders (the monks were most likely the first to add hops, which turned thick brown ale into clear beer). Millet and rice beers are made in Africa an Asia, and cassava is used in South America. Beer is used in cooking to add flavour to marinades stews and sauces and to make a light batter.

**Beer Bread** - Bread made using beer, instead of yeast, as a raising agent.

**Beetroot (Beet)** – A bulbous root vegetable with sweet, purple-red flesh. It is native to the region between the Mediterranean and the Caspian seas, and originally it was the leaves, and not the root, that were eaten (they can be cooked in the same way as spinach). The present varieties are thought to have been developed by German gardeners. By the fifteenth century it was known in France and England. It is the chief ingredient in the eastern European soup borscht and is also used as a salad vegetable.

**Beignet Soufflé** – Small, fluffy fritter made of deep-fried choux pastry, usually served with a sweet sauce. The term 'beignet' also refers to food that has been coated in batter and fried, such as beignets d'aubergines, eggplant fritters, and beignets de pommes, apple fritters.

**Bel Paese** – A soft creamy, mild-tasting, cow's milk cheese first made in the Lombardy area of Italy in the 1920's and now produced in other European countries and in North America. The name comes from the Italian for 'beautiful country'.

**Besan Flour** – A pale yellow colour flour made from dried chickpeas (garbanzo beans) and used in Indian cooking. Besan flour is a source of protein and is most often used to make a batter for pakoras, the Indian vegetable fritters.

**Beurre Manié** – A paste of butter and flour, kneaded together, used to thicken soups, stews and sauces by whisking it in pellets into simmering liquid.

**Bicarbonate of Soda (Baking Soda)** – A fine white powder that is the alkaline component of baking powder. When used on its own it has no leavening properties, but when combined with an acid or acid salt (such as cream of tartar, the other main ingredient of baking powder) and then moistened, it produces carbon dioxide.

**Bigarade, Sauce** – An orange flavoured sauce served with roast duck. Bigarade is French for the bitter Seville orange.

**Bind**- To make a dry mixture hold together by moistening it with egg, milk, cream or sauce.

**Biryani (Biriani)** – A Mongol dish from India consisting of layers pilaf rice and spicy lamb or chicken.

**Biscuit (cookie)** – A dry, flake cake, either sweet or savoury. The name comes from the French bis twice, cuit cooked, because they were originally returned to the oven to make them crisper and thus improve their keeping properties, in the United States the term biscuit is used for small, light, bread-like cakes (similar to plain scones) which are served warm, split open and spread with butter. Savoury biscuits are called crackers in United States and other parts of the world. Biscuits have come a long way since their dear use as a staple (but apparently barely edible) item in the provisions of soldiers and sailors (Pliny felt that those issued to the Roman legions would last for centuries and in the army of Louis XIV biscuit rations were called pain de pierre 'stone bread'.)

**Bisque** – A rich, thick soup made of pureed shellfish, stock and cream. Originally bisques were made of boiled game or fowl, and it was only after the seventeenth century that shellfish became the principal ingredient of the dish. The most popular bisques are crabs, lobster, prawn (shrimp) and especially in the

United States, clam. They are served as a first course, not a main meal.

**Bitter Melon** – A cucumber like melon with wrinkled skin that is native to South-East Asia. In India it is usually pickled, in Chinese cooking it is peeled and sometimes parboiled before being added to stir-fry dishes, it is often cooked with beans or meat to off-set its somewhat bitter flavour.

**Blackberry** – The black, juicy berry of a prickly shrub. Freshly picked they can be eaten with a dusting of sugar and a little cream, or can be cooked as jams, jellies, preserves and fillings for tarts and pies. The blackberry is also known as a bramble.

**Black Bread** – See Rye Bread.

**Blackcurrant** – The black, rather sour juicy fruit of a northern European shrub. The blackcurrant is the basis of the French liqueur cassis, flavours cordials and syrups, and is cooked as jams, jellies and fillings for tarts.

**Black Forest Cake** – A rich chocolate cake moistened with Kirsch, filled and topped with whipped cream and decorated with cherries and shaved chocolate.

**Black pudding (Blood Sausage)** – A sausage traditionally made of seasoned pig's blood and fat mixed with finely ground cereals, cooked, and then either re-boiled or sliced and grilled (broiler), or fried. It dates from the time of ancient Greece.

**Blanch** – To lightly cook food in boiling water. This is done to preserve the colour of green vegetables before home freezing, to remove excess salt, fat, strong tastes and odours, or to remove bacteria, the term is also used for the process of covering fruit and nuts with boiling water in order to loosen skins for peeling.

**Blancmange** – A dessert made from a mixture of cornflour (corn starch) and milk that has been cooked, sweetened and flavoured, and set in a mould.

**Blanquette** – A stew, usually of veal, lamb, or chicken, in which braised meat is covered in a white sauce and enriched with milk or cream and egg yolk.

**Blend** – To combine two or more ingredients into a smooth mixture.

**Blini** – A small, thick pancake made from a yeast dough containing buckwheat flour. Originating in Russia, traditionally it is served topped with sour cream and caviar or smoked salmon.

**Blintz** – A pancake with either a savoury or sweet filling. It is first cooked on one side until just set, the filling is placed in the centre, and the pancake is folded over the edges pressed together, the whole is refried. Blintzes are a traditional Jewish food.

**Blueberry** – The small dark, purplish-blue berry of an evergreen shrub related to heather, native to North America. It is also known as a huckleberry can still be collected in the wild. North America produces some 75 percent of the world's blue berry crop. They can be eaten raw, cooked as a pie filling or added to muffin batter.

**Blue Vein Cheese** – A soft, usually cow's milk, cheese with veins of blue-green mould culture criss-crossing the interior. It is made by adding mould spores to maturing curds, and then aiding their spread by salting and perforating the curds. This type of cheese was first made in the tiny French village of Roquefort some two thousand years ago. The many varieties include Gorgonzola, Danish Blue, Roquefort, and Stilton.

**Bok-Choy** – A leafy vegetable with thick, fleshy white stalks. It is native to southern China, where it has been cultivated for more than 3000 years. Bok-Choy is used there as the staple green accompaniment for meat, poultry and bean curd dishes. Its name comes from the Chinese words Bok, white, and Choy, vegetable, it is also known as Chinese white cabbage.

**Bolognese Sauce** – A thick meat and tomato sauce, served with pasta (usually spaghetti), originally from the city of Bologna in the Northern Italy. In Italy the sauce is known as ragù and traditionally contains chopped ham, beef, lean pork, chicken livers, several vegetables, and white wine.

**Bombay Duck** – A variety of fish found in the Arabian Sea, particularly in the waters off Mumbai. It is a predatory shoal fish caught in larger numbers during the monsoon season, when it swims close to the surface (a habit said

to be the origin of the 'duck' in its name). In India it is eaten fresh, in the west it is best known in its dried and salted form deep-fried and served as a curry accompaniment.

**Bombe** – A frozen dessert set in a mould, usually consisting of an outer layer of ice-cream and a centre of custard, mousse, fruit puree, or cream. It is named after the spherical mould in which the dessert was originally made.

**Borage** – A herb with long, pointed, grayish-green leaves, native to the Middle East and the Mediterranean region, where it still grows wild. Borage has a cucumber-like taste. Young leaves are added to drinks and used in spring salads, more mature leaves are cooked like spinach. The blue, star-shaped flowers are often used as garnish.

**Bordelaise, á la** – A French term for a dish of roasted or grilled (broiled) meat served with a sauce made from a reduction of red wine, bone marrow, chopped shallots, thyme, bay leaf and pepper, a sauce made with white wine is served with seafood. The cooking style originated in the Bordeaux region of France.

**Borek** – A pastry with a savoury filling, traditionally a cheese mixture, served hot as an appetizer, Boreks are usually in small cigar shapes and tiny half moons, and are originally from Turkey.

**Borlotti Bean** – A dried bean, slightly kidney-shaped and pale brown in colour with darker speckled markings. It has a smooth texture and ham-like flavour when cooked, and is used in soups, stews or casseroles or cooled, dressed and mixed with onion rings or tuna and served as a salad.

**Borscht** – A beetroot (beet) soup, originally from Eastern Europe, which became popular in France following the arrival of Russian émigrés in 1920s. Served hot or chilled, traditionally it is topped with sour cream.

**Bouchée** – A small round, puff or choux pastry case, filled shortly before serving with a hot or cold savoury or sweet mixture.

**Bouillabaisse** – A soup made from a variety of fish (traditionally white-fleshed rock fish) and shellfish and usually containing tomato, onion, garlic, herbs, wine, and saffron. The name of the dish refers to the rapid cooking method used and comes from the French

*Bouillir*, to boil, and *abaisser*, to reduce: 'when it boils, lower the heat'. It was originally served as two courses, first the broth, usually poured over dried homemade bread, than the seafood.

**Bouillon** – An unclarified stock or broth made by simmering meat, chicken, fish, or vegetables in water. The strained liquid may be served as is, or used as a base for soups and sauces.

**Bouquet Garni** – A bundle of herbs, either tied together or enclosed in a small muslin (cheesecloth) bag, used to flavour soups, stews, and casseroles and removed after cooking. It usually contains thyme, bay leaf, and parsley, other ingredients can include rosemary, garlic, leek, fennel or sage.

**Bourguignonne, á la** – French term for a dish slowly cooked with red wine, onions and mushrooms, as *boeuf bourguignonne*.

**Boysenberry** – The large, juicy, purplish-black fruit of a hybrid of the blackberry, loganberry and raspberry developed in California in the 1920s by Rudolph Boysen. It is cultivated in North America, Australia, and New Zealand. Boysenberries can be eaten fresh, cooked jam or as a filling for pies and tarts.

**Brains** – A white offal or variety meat, usually lamb and calf brains, which provide a soft pale meat with a high fat content.

**Bran** – The husk or inner casing of wheat and other cereal grains, removed during the refining of white flour. Bran is a source of dietary fibre and has a high vitamin B and phosphorous content.

**Brandade** – A puree of salt cod, olive oil and milk, eaten hot, it was a specialty of the town of Nîmes, in southern France. Garlic added to the mixture in some regions. Its name comes from a Provençal word, *brandar*, to stir.

**Brandy** – A spirit distilled from wine and used in cooking to flavour a variety of sweet and savoury dishes including sauces, casseroles, pâtés and terrines, consommés, fruit cakes and fruit desserts, and in *flambés*.

**Brawn** – A mixture of stewed boned meat flavoured with seasonings and spices, and set in aspic, prepared from the cooking liquid. It

is sliced and served cold. Brawn was originally made solely from the meat from a pig's head (excluding the brain) – hence its French name *fromage de tête*, headcheese.

**Brazil Nut** – The hard-shelled, creamy-fleshed, nut of a tall tree native to tropical South America. Most of the world's supply comes from trees growing in the wild along the Amazon. Brazil nuts can be eaten fresh cooked in fruitcakes or coated in chocolate or toffee.

**Bread** – A food made of a kneaded mixture of flour and water, usually with the addition of leaven (raising agent), which is then baked. Flat cakes of grain pastes cooked on hot stones (unleavened bread) are the oldest known form of prepared food, dating from more than 10,000 years ago, varieties of unleavened bread are still made in India and the Middle East. The Egyptians are thought to have been the first to make leavened bread, discovering the aerating effects of fermentation on dough. In the Middle Ages became common throughout Europe.

**Brie** – A soft creamy yellow whole cow's milk cheese with a thin white, edible skin. It is aged from the outside in by moulds and bacteria that grows on the rind. Brie is made in a large flat wheel shape and is cut into wedges for serving. The cheese has been made since the eighth century when Charlemagne ate it in the priory of Reuil-en-Brie and pronounced it one of the most marvelous of foods.

**Brine** – A strong salt solution used for pickling and preserving meat, fish, and vegetables.

**Brioche** – A slightly sweet bread roll with a soft, spongy texture made from a yeast dough enriched with butter and eggs. Brioche is a popular breakfast in France, where it is eaten warm, spread with butter and jam. It is often baked in the shape of a plump cup-cake with a smaller 'head' on top—the brioche à tête of Paris.

**Broad Bean** – A bean with a flat green pod containing large, pale green seeds. The broad bean was a staple of the poor in ancient Egypt. Usually as a bean cake called *tamia*, forerunner of the *tamiya* of Egypt today, the ancient Greeks ate the beans green, in the pod, and also used the large dried seeds as voting tokens in the election of magistrates, in Italy bean

dishes were eaten as part of the funeral ceremony. During the middle ages when grain was scarce the beans were ground into flour to make bread. The broad bean has been grown in China for more than 4000 years and China is now the main producer.

**Broccoli** – A member of the cabbage and cauliflower family. The most common variety, sprouting, or heading broccoli has deep green heads of tightly clustered buds and thick, juicy stalks. It was known to the ancient Romans, and was taken to France in the sixteenth century by Catherine de Medici. The name comes from the Italian word *broccoli*, sprout or arm.

**Broth** – The clear liquid in which meat, fish, or vegetables have been cooked. It can be eaten as clear soup or thickened with vegetables, meat, and grain.

**Brownie** – A rich chocolate cookie popular in North America. It ranges in texture from heavy and chewy to light and cake-like.

**Brown Sauce** – A sauce made from meat stock thickened with flour and butter and flavoured with onions, mushroom, and tomatoes. Also known as *sauce Espagnole*, it is the basis of a number of sauces such as *Bordelaise*, *Madeira* and *Périgeaux*.

**Brussels Sprouts** – A green vegetable that resembles a tiny cabbage. Although its name suggests a Belgian origin, the Belgians themselves believe it was brought to their country in ancient times by the Romans. In Britain it was not widely grown or eaten until the mid nineteenth century.

**Bubble and Squeak** – A dish made from cooked leftover meat and vegetables named for the sound it makes while sizzling in the pan.

**Buckwheat** – The triangular seeds of a plant native to Central Asia. It did not appear in Europe until the Middle Ages, probably introduced by the Arabs, for in many regions it was known as 'Saracen Wheat'. The seeds are roasted and made into flour used in pancakes (especially the Russian *Blini*), crisp thin cakes, and Asian *soba* noodles.

**Bun** – A small, round yeast roll, usually slightly sweetened and sometimes containing spices and dried fruit. Typically are the hot cross buns traditionally eaten on Good Friday.

**Burghul** – Cracked wheat, made by cooking wheat then drying and cracking to it absorbs twice its volume in water when soaked or briefly re-cooked before use. Burghul includes the wheat germ, and so is rich in protein. It is much used in Middle Eastern cooking, notably in the salad dish tabouli.

**Burrito** – A dish consisting of a flat bread (tortilla) made of wheat flour, wrapped around a filling of shredded meat, beans and sometimes cheese, which after the ends have been turned in to seal it, is either eaten immediately or baked. The burrito is of Mexican origin, its name comes from burro, a small pack donkey, because the modest tortilla wrapping can accommodate a generous load of filling. A deep-fried burrito is called a chimichanga.

**Butter** – A dairy product made by churning cream into a solid fat. In most countries, by law, butter must contain at least 80 percent fat and more than 16 percent water. Butter is used as a cooking medium and as an ingredient in a wide range of savoury and sweet dishes. It is salted to improve its keeping qualities. Unsalted (sweet) butter is also available. Clarified butter has been heated to remove the water content by evaporation and then strained to remove any non-fat solids.

The first to make butter from cow's milk were probably the Sumerians, although most early butter was made from the milk of goats and sheep, as cattle which were worked hard as draught animals gave little milk. The ancient Greeks and Romans did not use butter in their cooking, preferring olive oil, but appreciated its medicinal properties as an ointment. Butter was produced by the Gaul's, and its use was spread throughout northern Europe by the Norman's.

**Butter Bean**- See Lima Bean.

**Buttermilk** – Originally the thin liquid left over cream has been churned into butter. Today buttermilk is made from pasteurized skim milk, to which a culture has been added to thicken it and increase its lactic acid content. It is used as a drink (usually mixed with fruit juice), in baking and confectionery, and it can be added to hot soups and casseroles or used as a low fat substitute for oil or cream in salad dressings.

**Butternut Pumpkin (squash)** – A member of marrow family, shaped like a long pear. It has smooth buff-coloured skin and bright

orange flesh and is widely used as a cooked vegetable.

**Butterscotch** – A slightly cloudy boiled sweet (candy) made with water, sugar and butter.

## C

**Cabanossi** – A thin spicy, precooked sausage made from seasoned minced (ground) pork or beef, or a mixture of the two, Cabanossi originated in Poland as a snack for hunters far from home. It can be served as finger food and packed in lunches.

**Cabbage** – A vegetable with pale green leaves formed into a tightly packed head. It can be eaten raw finely chopped in salads, or thinly sliced and steamed, boiled or micro waved and served as a vegetable, or added to soups, stews, and casseroles; the smooth, curved outer leaves are used as wrappings for savoury fillings. Native to Europe and Western Asia, cabbage is one of the oldest cultivated vegetables. Ancient Greeks and Romans believed it could prevent drunkenness. Cabbages were first eaten for the stems, rather than the leaves; from the Middle Ages cabbage leaf dressing were applied to wounds and open fractures. The high vitamin C content of cabbage was recognized by eighteenth-century navigators, who carried crates of cabbage on board to prevent scurvy among their crews.

**Cabécou** – A soft textured goat's milk cheese made in small cakes, originally produced on farms in the Quercy region of the western France. It can be eaten fresh, or at varying stages of ripening. Its flavour becomes more intense with age.

**Cabinet Pudding** – A pudding made from cubed bread or cake, and butter and raisins. It is either steamed in a mould or baked, and served hot with custard.

**Caerphilly** – A crumbly, semi-hard, cow's milk cheese with a mild, slightly flavour. It is almost white in colour and takes only two weeks to mature. Caerphilly takes its name from the Welsh town and, perhaps because of its easy digestibility or because it stayed fresh and moist, it was a popular ingredient in the packed lunches of local coal miners.

**Caesar Salad** – A salad of cos or romaine lettuce, croutons, Parmesan cheese and sometimes anchovies, dressed with olive oil, vinegar and coddled egg. The salad is named after its inventor, Caesar Cardini, who served it in his Tijuana, Mexico, restaurant in the 1920s. It became popular with the fashionable Hollywood set and soon appeared on menus in Los Angeles. It is now considered a classic American dish.

**Café au Lait** – Hot black coffee mixed with scalded milk, usually in equal proportions. A traditional breakfast beverage in many other European countries, it came to France in the seventeenth century. It was reputedly the favourite drink of Marie Antoinette.

**Caffè Latte** – An Italian style of coffee in which very strong espresso coffee is combined in a glass with very hot milk. It is generally drunk at breakfast.

**Cajun Food** – Cajun country takes in the bays, bayous and hinterland of southern Louisiana. In the mid 1750s it was refuge of the French Huguenots expelled by the English from Acadia, in Nova Scotia, Canada ('Cajun' is derived from 'Arcadian'). Cajun food is earthy and robust; its roots are in the peasant cooking of rural France, but its distinctive style comes from a combination of Native American uses of local herbs and roots, ingredients introduced by African slaves (okra, sesame seeds, melons and hot spices) and the culinary legacy of earlier Spanish settlers. Cajun cooking features simple, one-pot meals using fresh farm produce – onion, peppers (capsicum), both hot and sweet, okra, celery, chicken and pork, bacon and ham (pigs were easier to raise than sheep or cattle), as well as the bounty of both the backish bayous and the waters of the Gulf of Mexico – crayfish (always called crawfish in Louisiana), prawns, lobster, crab, oyster and fish. Many dishes are based on a brown roux; rice or beans are served at most meals. Filé powder, made from dried sassafras leaves, adds a distinctive flavour. Cajun specialties include spicy gumbos, peppery jambalayas (fragrant rice, pork, sausage, ham and shellfish) étouffée (shellfish cooked in a seasoned sauce and served over rice) and custard tarts.

**Cake** – A term that covers a variety of sweet, baked, usually made from flour, sugar, eggs and a liquid. Cakes are grouped according to the relative proportions of these basic ingredients and the method by which they are

made. Many cakes have a ceremonial or symbolic significance, such as that of the rich Christmas cake (originally part of a religious feast), the wedding cake (which dates from the time of ancient Greece), christening cakes and birthday cakes.

**Cake Decorating** – The technique of covering cakes with icing (frosting) and other sweet, edible trimmings, usually for festive occasions such as a wedding, birthday or Christening.

**Calamari** – The Italian name for squid, a saltwater mollusk related to the octopus and cuttlefish and prized for its delicately flavoured flesh.

**Camembert** – A cow's milk cheese, produced in small, flat disc shapes with a tangy, creamy flavour. Like Brie, Camembert is ripened from the outside by surface moulds that form a soft white skin encasing the creamy center. Originally from Normandy, it has been known since the seventeenth century, but the modern cheese is credited to Marie Harrell, a farm-woman who during the French Revolution is said to have sheltered a fugitive priest from the Brie region and learned cheese-making methods, which she combined with local techniques to produce an improved version. In the 1890s the cheese came to a wider audience when packaging in small wooden boxes allowed it to be sent without the risk of spoilage into new markets for a field.

**Camomile (Chamomile)** – A plant of the daisy family, native to Western Europe. It has been used since the days of ancient Egypt either eaten or applied, to treat sprains, muscle strain, cramps, and colic. In the Middle Ages the aroma of its crushed leaves was used to rid homes of foul odours. Camomile tea, made from flower heads, is a soothing drink.

**Canapé** – A bite-sized piece of bread, covered with a savoury butter or spread to which is added a topping such as crab, caviar, smoked salmon, ham, or asparagus tips and a garnish such as stuffed olives, pimento, capers, or gherkin. Canapés are served either hot or cold as finger food. The name comes from the French word for couch, because canapés were originally eaten before the evening meal, while sitting in the drawing room.

**Cannellini Bean** – A dried bean, white slightly kidney-shaped and larger than the haricot. It is mildly flavoured and fluffy when

cooked and used in soups, stews, casseroles or cooled for salads. The cannellini bean is from tropical America; it was taken to Europe by the Spanish in the sixteenth century and is now the most popular white bean in Italy. It is available dried or canned.

**Cannelloni** – An Italian dish consisting of long tubes of pasta filled with meat, vegetables, or cheese and served topped with cheese or a sauce.

**Canola Oil** – also known as rapeseed or colza oil, the pale yellow, almost colourless and odourless oil extracted from the seed of the rape or colza plant. It is used as a salad oil, a cooking oil and in the manufacture of table margarine. Canola oil is mainly monounsaturated fat and a source of vitamin E.

**Cantaloupe** – Another name for rockmelon, derived from Cantaloupo, near Rome, the summer residence of the popes, whose monks developed the melon in Renaissance times.

**Cape Gooseberry** – The edible berry of a tropical plant native to Peru, but widely grown in warm countries throughout the world, especially in the Cape region of South Africa, hence its common name. Golden in colour, the fruit is the size of a cherry and is encased in a gauzy sac, which must be removed before use. The Cape gooseberry has a tart flavour and may be eaten as a fresh fruit, pureed and added to sorbets and ice-creams, or cooked in syrups and jams. It is also known as golden berry, strawberry tomato, winter cherry, and ground cherry.

**Caper** – The unopened, olive-green flower bud of a prickly shrub native to the Mediterranean, the Middle East and northern Africa, preserved in jars of seasoned vinegar or packed in salt in wooden boxes. The buds range in size from very tiny to pea size and, because the flower will open with the sun, must be gathered before sunrise. Capers have been used as a condiment since the time of ancient Greece. Their sharp, sour taste adds flavour to fish, cheese and creamed dishes as well as white sauces, salads and mayonnaise. They are also used as a garnish on appetizers, pizzas, and open sandwiches. Salted capers must be rinsed thoroughly in cold water before use.

**Capon** – A male chicken that has been neutered to produce tender flesh. It has a

higher proportion of white breast meat to dark meat.

**Cappuccino** – Espresso coffee topped with which has been frothed by passing steam through it.

**Capsicum** – See Sweet Pepper.

**Carambola** – The fruit of a tree originally from Indonesia and Malaysia and now grown throughout South East Asia, China, India, the Caribbean and parts of South America. The small, oval, golden-yellow fruit has five prominent ribs which result in star shaped slices when the carambola is cut crosswise – hence its common names, star fruit and five corner fruit. It has a sharp, sour-sweet taste, and can be eaten fresh, added to fruit and savoury salads, served with cheese, used as a garnish, pureed for use in sorbets and ice-creams, or cooked in South-East Asian dishes.

**Caramel** – Sugar heated until it melts into a brown syrup. It is used in cakes, sweet sauces and puddings, to line moulds for puddings and custards, as a sweet, brittle coating for fruit such as strawberries, and to colour soups, stews and gravies.

The term caramel is also used for a rich, chewy confectionery (candy) made from sugar, butter, and cream or milk.

**Caraway** – A plant related to parsley and native to southern Europe, the Mediterranean, and parts of western Asia. Its highly aromatic, hard, brown, crescent shaped seeds were used by the ancient Egyptians to treat stomach complaints and flatulence; they were first used as a flavouring by the Arabs, and for centuries have been added to cakes, rye bread, cheeses, casseroles, potatoes, salads and sauerkraut. Oil from the seed flavours the liqueur known as Kümmel.

**Carbonnade de Boeuf** – Thin slices of beef, browned quickly over a high heat, then cooked with beer and onions. The dish is originally from Belgium, but its name comes from Italian word carbonata, charcoal-grilled. In France the name carbonnade is also given to grilled (broiled) pork loin and in the south of France to a beef stew prepared with red wine.

**Cardamom** – The aromatic, rounded seed pod from a shrub native to tropical Asia, but also present from ancient times in parts of Europe, used as a spice. The pods, containing tiny black seeds, are picked before they ripen,

and dried. They should be stored, unopened in airtight container, and the seed ground as required. Cardamom is one of the ingredients in curry powder and is also used in pickles, rice, and sweet dishes. Seeds have been found in Neolithic Lake settlements in Switzerland. In Arab countries, seeds are often added to coffee beans before grinding. As each pod has to be picked by hand, it is the most expensive spice in the world after saffron.

**Cardoon** – Native to southern Europe and related to the artichoke, cardoon's celery-like stalk is eaten as a vegetable, boiled, steamed or fried, usually served with a sauce. Most tender and delicate in flavour are those that have been wrapped in paper as they grow, to produce white stalks.

**Carob** – The fruit of the carob tree, native to the Mediterranean region. The long, leathery pod contains hard, reddish seeds in a brown pulp. Both the fresh pods and pulp can be eaten raw and have a sweet, chocolate-like taste. A powder made from the dried and ground pod and pulp can be used in cooking in the same way as cocoa powder.

**Carpaccio** – A dish of paper-thin slices of raw meat, usually beef, dressed with oil and lemon juice or a creamy vinaigrette made with olive oil, and served as a first course. It was named by its inventor the proprietor of Harry's Bar in Venice, after Vittore Carpaccio, a fifteenth-century Venetian painter.

**Carpetbag Steak** – A thick piece of tender steak with a pocket cut into it which is filled with raw oysters. The steak is then pan-fried or grilled (broiled).

**Carrot** – A root vegetable, related to parsley, parsnip, and celery, with crisp, orange flesh, that is eaten raw in salads or cooked in both savoury and sweet dishes. Its ancestor was a wild plant. It was introduced to Europe by the Dutch during the Middle Ages. Baby carrots (sometimes known as Dutch carrots) and young carrots need only to be scrubbed clean with a stiff brush before use. Tiny carrots can be cooked whole. Older carrots should be scraped or peeled and then sliced, diced or cut into julienne strips for cooking. If carrots are to be used raw, grate for salads and sandwiches or cut into strips for dips.

**Cashew Nut** – The creamy, kidney shaped nut of a tall tree native to South America. The hard-shelled nut develops inside an apple-

shaped, fleshy fruit (used to make a liquor) and protrudes from the end of the fruit when ripe. The shell contains caustic oils, which must be rendered harmless by heating before the nut can be extracted. Cashew nuts are sold shelled. They are eaten roasted and salted, and used to make cashew nut butter. The raw nuts are added to curries dishes. They can also be used in stuffings for chicken, or as a salad ingredient. The cashew nut has a high fat content (46 percent).

**Cassata** – An iced dessert of Italian origin usually consisting of ice-cream, at least one of which contains chopped nuts and glazed fruit, and sometimes also a layer of sweetened, whipped cream. Sicilian cassata consists of strips of sponge cake soaked in a liqueur or sweet dessert wine, encasing ricotta cheese mixed with nuts and glazed fruit and then chilled. Both types are traditionally made in a rectangular mould-hence the name, which is derived from the Italian word for 'little brick'.

**Cassava (Manioc)** – A plant native to tropical America and grown throughout the Pacific Islands, Indonesia, the Philippines and Parts of Africa. The starchy, tuberous roots can be prepared and cooked in the same way as the potato, the tender leaves cooked like spinach and the larger tougher ones used as wrappings for food to be baked. A powder prepared from the dried root is used as a thickener in the cooking of South-East Asia.

**Casserole** – A selection of meat, poultry or fish, and vegetables, herbs, seasonings and liquid, cooked slowly in a covered dish in the oven. It is usually served from the dish at the table. The term is also used both for the covered utensil and for the cooking method. It becomes from the French casse, meaning pan or ladle.

**Cassoulet** – A hearty bean and meat stew originally from Languedoc in Southern France. Recipes vary, but the essential ingredient is a haricot bean, to which various meats are added.

**Cauliflower** – A member of the cabbage family with a large head of tight flower buds that range in colour from creamy white, to green and purple. Cauliflower can be eaten raw, cut into small sprigs and dipped in various dressings, or it can be steamed, boiled, or stir-fried. It was first grown in western Asia.



**Caviar** – The roe (eggs) of the sturgeon fish, salted and served as a delicacy. Caviar ranges in colour from grey to yellow-brown to shiny black, and in size from eggs as small as pinheads (Sevruga) to the highly prized seed pearl sized eggs of the Beluga sturgeon. Pressed caviar is made from ripe eggs, salted and pressed into a block.

Commercial quantities of caviar are harvested in the Caspian Sea. Salmon and lumpfish roe are sometimes called 'red caviar'. It should be well chilled and served on a bed of crushed ice for spreading on thin triangles of toast.

**Cayenne Pepper** – A fiery spice made from the dried and powdered pods and seeds of several varieties of small red chilli peppers, used exceedingly sparingly to flavour cheese and fish dishes.

**Celeriac** – The bulbous white-fleshed root of a variety of celery. It became popular in Italy in Renaissance times, and by the eighteenth century had spread to France, Germany, and Italy. Peeled like a potato, it can be served in salads (raw, grated and mixed with dressing), or steamed or boiled and served hot with a sauce.

**Celery** – A vegetable valued primarily for its long, juicy stem, although the leaves and seeds are also eaten. The ancient Egyptians gathered shoots of wild celery from seaside marshes; the Greeks used it as a seasoning. In seventeenth-century France, celery was used to flavour soups and stews; the technique of 'blanching' (heaping earth against growing stems to make them paler) dates from the time of Louis XIV and was first used in the royal garden at Versailles, outside Paris. The stringless salad vegetable popular today was developed in Utah, in the United States.

Celery can be eaten raw, cooked in soups, stews, and casseroles, or boiled, steamed or braised to be served as a vegetable.

**Cep** – A large, wild, edible mushroom of southwestern Europe. It has a bulbous stalk and fleshy brown cap, and is gathered in autumn from the leaf litter around oak and chestnut trees. Highly prized in France for its subtle, earthy flavour, it is available dried or canned.

**Cereal** – Plants cultivated for their edible grains and seeds, such as wheat, rye, oats, corn (maize) and barley. Cereals provide protein, vitamins, and minerals and have a high carbohydrate content. In one form or another

they are the basic food of most of the world's people.

**Ceviche** – A dish of raw fish or raw scallops marinated in lemon or lime juice until the flesh becomes opaque. It is often served with raw onion rings and tomatoes. Ceviche is popular in South Pacific.

**Champignon** – The cultivated common mushroom, picked when very young before the gills are visible. Also known as button mushroom, the champignon is valued for its delicate flavour. It is available throughout the year. Champignons can be eaten raw, in salads or with dips; or sliced or whole, they can be fried, stir-fried, grilled (broiled), baked or microwaved.

**Chapati** – A flat unleavened bread from India. It is made from whole-wheat flour and cooked on a hot griddle. Chapattis are served with curries and other savoury dishes, and are sometimes used like edible plates to hold the food eaten with them.

**Charlotte** – A dessert consisting of pureed fruit (usually apple) cooked in a mould lined with thin slices of buttered bread. It is served warm with cold custard. Charlotte russe is a cold dessert made by lining a mould with sponge fingers, then filling it with bavarois (bavarian cream), creamy mousse or whipped cream.

**Chateaubriand** – A thick slice of beef steak, grilled (broiled) or sautéed, and served with sauces, traditionally béarnaise. It was reputedly the favourite dish of the eighteenth century French statesman, writer, and gourmet, Vicomte Francois René de Chateaubriand, for whom it is named.

**Chayote** – See Choko.

**Cheddar** – A semi-hard cow's milk cheese with a close, creamy texture and rich, nutty flavour that can range from mild to very sharp, depending on the age of the cheese. It varies from near white for young cheeses, to deep yellow for mature, full flavoured cheddars. Traditionally made in a large cylindrical shape, cheddar takes its name from the Somerset village of Cheddar where it was first made; today it is duplicated in factories around the world; most of the cheese produced in the United States is of the cheddar type. Cheddar is an all-purpose cheese, used for cooking, in sandwiches and snacks.

**Cheese** – A nutritious food prepared from curdled milk that has separated into curds (milky white solids) and whey (a cloudy liquid). Most of the world's cheese is made from cow's milk, but it can be made from the milk of sheep, goats, buffaloes, reindeer, camels, and other domesticated grazing animals. The type of milk used (skimmed, partly skimmed, whole or enriched with cream) is the main determinant of texture and flavour; other factors include the additive used to curdle the milk, the culture used in the fermentation process, and the methods of processing the curd. It categorized by texture, cheese falls into four types: fresh, unripened cheeses (cottage cheese, cream cheese, mozzarella and ricotta); soft briefly ripened cheeses, spread-able and with a high moisture and fat content (brie, camembert, feta and the blue cheeses); semi-hard or firm cheeses matured with less moisture (cheddar, colby and gruyère); and hard cheeses, dry, long matured and sharp tasting (Parmesan, Pecorino, and Romano).

Curd cheese has been made for thousands of years. Nomadic peoples in the Middle East may have discovered the cheese-making process when the milk carried in containers made of animal stomachs turned to curds. In Europe until the Middle Ages, curd were drained in wicker baskets and then compressed into a wooden box (the mould was called a forma, the origin of fromage, the French word for cheese).

**Cheesecake** – A rich dessert in the form of an open pie. The sweet, crumbly pastry shell is filled with a custard-like mixture based on a fresh, unripened cheese, such as cottage cheese, ricotta, or cream cheese. There are two types of cheesecake: in one the cheese mixture is baked in a cool oven; in the other the cheese mixture is chilled in the refrigerator.

**Chelsea Bun** – A bun made from rich yeast dough rolled out, spread with butter, sprinkled with currants and sugar, then rolled up, and cut into slices.

**Cherimoya** – See Custard Apple.

**Cherry** – The small, juicy fruit with a single stone (pit) of several species of tree related to the plum. It probably originated in Asia, but in prehistoric times spread to Europe and North America and was introduced to Britain by the Romans. From medieval times the cherry fair marked the start of summer and was a time of general merry-making.

Raw, they are eaten as fresh as possible. Cherries are available for a very short season in early summer.

**Chervil** – A small herb, similar in appearance to parsley, with lacy, bright green leaves and a delicate aniseed flavour. In ancient Rome it was valued not only as a remedy for hiccoughs. An important ingredient in fine herbes, it flavours many sauces, such as béarnaise. Chopped chervil leaves are added to egg dishes, poultry, fish, salads, mashed potatoes, sauces, soups are mornays. Best used fresh; it loses its flavour if cooked.

**Cheshire Cheese** – A hard, crumbly, slightly salty cow's milk cheese, similar to cheddar. It can be either red, white or blue in colour. The oldest of the English cheeses, it has been made in Cheshire since the twelfth century.

**Chestnut** – A round, heavy, whitish-fleshed nut covered with a thin brown skin and encased in a glossy brown shell. When cooked the nut has a sweet, floury taste. The chestnut tree is thought to be native to southern Europe and western Asia, and since prehistoric times the easily gathered nutritious nuts have been valued as a food. Unlike most nuts, which are rich in fat and low in starch, the chestnut kernel contains less than 3 percent fat and has a high carbohydrate content. Roasted in the shell, they are a traditional winter snack. The shelled kernels can be simmered in stock and served as vegetable, puréed and used in soups, stuffings and cakes, or sweetened and mixed with cream as a dessert. They are also used for the French dish marrons glacés (glazed or candied chestnuts). Available dried and canned.

**Chèvres** – The French term for cheese made from goat's milk. Fresh chèvres is soft and mild in flavour; more mature cheeses are harder and have a sharp, biting taste.

**Chickpea (Garbanzo Bean)** – The round, pale-golden, pea-like seed of a bushy plant of southern Europe and western Asia. The chickpea has a nutty flavour and is much used in soups and stews. Boiled and then ground to a paste, it is the basic ingredient in the Middle Eastern dip, hummus. In India it is ground to make besan flour, or dry roasted and seasoned with spices as a snack food. The Phoenicians are said to have introduced it to Spain where it has been staple food ever since. Chickpeas can be added to stews or cooled, tossed in salad.

**Chicken** – The flesh of the domestic hen, one of the most widely used of meats, featuring in national cuisines around the world. All breeds are descended from the red jungle fowl of India (where the bird is still found in the wild). It was domesticated some 5000 years ago and taken by humans to every part of the world, first to China and the Pacific Islands and then to the Mediterranean. At first it was kept for its eggs rather than its flesh, which was considered tough, but the Romans discovered that hand-fed birds had tender and tasty meat. The basic cuts are breast, thigh, drumstick, and wing. The breast contains the most tender meat; breast fillet is the thin strip of meat next to the breast bone. Thigh meat, although more fatty, can sometimes be used as a substitute for breast. The drumstick is the upper part of the leg; a Maryland is the thigh and drumstick.

**Chicken Kiev** – A boned and flattened chicken breast wrapped around a mixture of butter and chives, dipped in egg and breadcrumbs, and then fried until crisp and golden.

**Chicory** – Also known as Belgian endive and witloof, chicory (*cichorium intybus*) is a vegetable with compact, cone-shaped heads of long, pale, yellow-tipped leaves which are eaten cooked, or raw and sliced as a salad vegetable. It was first cultivated for its roots which when roasted and ground are used as a coffee substitute. There is much confusion attached to the use of the terms 'endive' and 'chicory' in different parts of the world. In Belgium and Australia, chicory or Belgium endive is often called witloof. In the United States the term chicory is used for salad vegetable, curly endive. See Endive, curly.

**Chilli** – The small smooth-skinned, elongated pods of a plant of the capsicum family. Chillies are smaller and far hotter in taste than sweet peppers; the hundreds of species vary greatly in size, shape, colour, and most importantly, in their fieriness. Domesticated chillies were present in Peru from 8000 BC. They are an important ingredient in the cooking of Mexico, and following their introduction to Africa and Asia in the late sixteenth century are now also closely identified with the dishes of those regions.

**Chilli Con Carne** – A spicy dish of cubed or minced (ground) meat, red kidney beans and thinly sliced onions, seasoned with chilli peppers. Chilli con carne has its origins in the cooking of the Incas, Mayas, and Aztecs, who

were aware of the preservative properties of hot peppers on meat. Today it is popular dish, especially when served with corn chips.

**Chilli Powder** – A blend of dried chilli peppers and seasonings. It has a hot, spicy, peppery taste, and is most commonly used to flavour chilli con carne. Available commercially, it is best purchased in small quantities as it rapidly loses its flavour and becomes unusable. Chilli powder should not be confused with paprika, which looks similar but is mild in flavour.

**Chinese Broccoli** – A vegetable related to the broccoli of Europe and the Middle East, with long, smooth stems, large leaves then its western cousins and cluster of small, white flowers. Stem, leaves, and flower heads are eaten, either steamed or boiled until they are only just tender and served with oyster sauce; or used in stir-fry dishes.

**Chinese Food** – The cooking and presentation of food is a central part of Chinese culture. It requires a harmonious combination of colour, aroma, flavour, and texture, and the balancing of the five basic flavours – sweet, sour, salty, bitter and piquant. A Chinese meal starts with a soup course, followed by dishes of rice, meat, fish, poultry and vegetables all placed on the table at the time; each diner has a small eating bowl and a pair of chopsticks.

Dessert is usually fruit; dairy products are rarely eaten. Tea is the main drink.

Regional cuisines have been shaped by the diversity in terrain and climate over the vast lands, dictating not only local ingredients but also, because of a general lack of fuel, cooking techniques: most food is chopped into small pieces and quickly cooked, either stir-fried in a wok or steamed.

Cantonese cooking, the style best known outside China uses stir-fried pork, fish or shellfish, crisp vegetables, steamed dumplings with fragrant dipping sauces and rice as an accompaniment to every meal.

**Chinese Gooseberry** – See Kiwi Fruit.

**Chinese Parsley** – See Coriander.

**Chiplota** – A small sausage, about finger length, made from pork or a mixture pork and beef. It is often served as a garnish for roast meat or poultry, or as a cocktail snack.

**Chive** – An herb related to the onion and leek with hollow, grass-like stems, thought to have

originated in north-eastern Asia. Chives are used fresh and finely chopped to impart a delicate onion flavour to vegetable, cheese and egg dishes, to salads and savoury dips; they are also an ingredient in fines herbes. Chopped chives freeze well and can be used in the same way as fresh chives. Chives are available fresh and freeze dried.

**Chocolate** – A food made from the seeds of the cacao tree native to Central America. The white seeds grow in a pod and are fermented to develop the flavour, dried, roasted and ground to a dark brown paste which is solidified into blocks of pure chocolate, also called bitter or unsweetened chocolate. More than half of the weight of pure chocolate is the vegetable fat as cacao butter; cocoa powder is ground from the solids left if this fat is extracted.

The Maya people of Central America were first to cultivate the cacao tree and to process its seeds. Columbus knew of the beans but not the preparation methods needed to rid of its bitterness. The Spanish explorer Cortez brought back the beans as well as the knowledge of how to treat them. They were ground to a paste and mixed with cane sugar to produce a food quickly appreciated in Spain, and latter in the rest of Europe. The main types of chocolate are pure, dark and milk.

**Choko (Chayote)** – The pale green, pear-shaped fruit of a climbing vine related to the gourd. It is peeled and boiled as a vegetable or used as an ingredient in chutney. The plant originated in Central America.

**Chop Suey** – A dish developed by immigrant Chinese cooks in the United States and often served in Chinese restaurants in Western countries. It consist of a mixture of bean sprouts and finely sliced vegetables and meat (usually chicken or pork), stir-fried then simmered in sauce. The name is from the Chinese and means 'mixed bits'.

**Chorizo** – A coarse textured, dried, spicy sausage of Spanish origin, heavily flavoured with garlic and chilli. It is added to many Spanish dishes, such as cocido (Spanish stew) and paella. Any spicy salami may be used in its place.

**Choux Pastry** – Also called chou paste, a light pastry used for making éclairs, cream puffs, profiteroles and croquembouche. It is cooked twice: first in the saucepan, where water, flour, butter and sugar for sweet choux – are mixed before the eggs are whisked into

produces a smooth, shiny paste; the mixture is piped onto greased trays and cooked for a second time in the oven. The egg causes the mixture to swell, resulting in almost hollow logs or balls. When cool, they are split open and filled with custard or cream.

**Chow Mein** – A Chinese dish consisting of strips of meat (usually chicken, pork or seafood) and vegetables, stir-fried and served with fried noodles. The name comes from the Cantonese dialect and means 'fried noodles'.

**Chowder** – A thick soup, usually milk-based, made with seafood, fish, vegetables or chicken. The name comes from the French chaudière, a copper pot in which fisherman's wife cooked a communal soup from the share of each man's catch to celebrate the safe return of the fishing fleet from the sea.

**Churro** – A fritter made of deep-fried choux pastry, sprinkled with sugar and served as a dessert. The churros originated in Spain where it is often also served at breakfast with a large cup of hot chocolate or coffee.

**Chutney** – A sweet and sour condiment of fruits and vegetables cooked with sugar, spices, and vinegar until thick. Chutney is served as an accompaniment to hot and cold meat, with cheese platters, with fish dishes and with Indian curries.

**Cider** – An alcoholic drink made from the fermented juice of apples (sometimes pears); it can be still or sparkling. Cider is used in cooking to flavour meat, poultry and fish dishes, and in desserts.

**Cilantro** – See Coriander.

**Cinnamon** – The light brown, aromatic, flaky bark of a small, evergreen tree native to Sri Lanka. The inner bark is taken from thin branches and dried in the sun to form curled tubes called 'quills'. The palest, from young shoots, are superior.

**Cinnamon Sugar** – A combination of equal parts of sugar and cinnamon sprinkled on coffeecakes and buttered toast.

**Citron** – A pear-shaped citrus fruit resembling a lemon, but larger and with thicker, fragrant rind. A native of china, it is grown mainly for its peel, which is candied or

preserved and used in the making of fruitcakes. It is the traditional topping to Madeira cake.

**Citrus Fruit** – A family of tropical fruits that includes the orange, lemon, grapefruit, lime, tangerine, mandarin, clementine and cumquat.

**Clam** – A saltwater shellfish with edible flesh protected by two large hinged shells marked by fine circular ridges. Clams are opened like oysters, and, like oysters, the flesh can be eaten fresh on the half shell, dressed with a squeeze of lemon juice. The East Coast of North America is famous for its summer clambakes and its New England clam chowder. In Italy, tiny clams (vongole) are often part of pasta sauces; in Japan clam broth is served at wedding banquets.

**Clarify** – To clear a liquid from impurities or sediments. Stocks and broths are clarified for use as clear soups by whisking egg white into the cold liquid: as the mixture is heated the egg white coagulates, trapping any opaque particles in a scum on the top which can then be strained off.

**Clove** – The fragrant, sundried flower bud of an aromatic evergreen tree native to the Moluccas, of Spice Islands, of Indonesia. Cloves have a sweet, peppery aroma and a warm, fruity, slightly bitter flavour. Its use, both medicinal (it was believed to ward off the plague) and culinary (as a preservative of meat and a flavouring for a wide range of dishes), was widespread in the Middle Ages. Cloves are used in stewed fruit, spiced cakes, and breads, in pork and ham dishes, and sauces, pickles, chutneys, marinades, wines, and liqueurs. They are available whole or ground as a powder.

**Cock-a-Leekie** – A thick Scottish soup consisting of chicken pieces simmered in stock with chopped leek, thickened with barley and traditionally served with stewed prunes.

**Cocktail** – An alcoholic drink usually made from a mixture of spirits and liqueurs, often with fruit or vegetable juice, sometimes sweetened, and blended either by shaking the ingredients in a closed container or by stirring. A cocktail is usually served chilled as a pre-dinner drink. Non-alcoholic versions combine juices and aerated drinks. The cocktail is American invention.

**Cocoa** – A dark brown, powder made from seeds of the cacao, a tree native to tropical

America. The seeds are roasted and ground into a paste of pure chocolate. Cocoa powder is ground from the dry solids left when the vegetable fat known as cacao butter is removed.

**Coconut** – A large nut, the fruit of the coconut palm. Grown throughout the tropics, it is an important food, providing oil-rich white flesh, and a refreshing liquid. The soft pulp of a young coconut can be eaten with a spoon and in some areas is the first solid food given to an infant. The coconut probably originated in Melanesia but this is uncertain because the huge nut can float across oceans and then take root wherever it beached. Desiccated coconut is used in cakes, biscuits (cookies) and confectionery (candy).

**Coconut Milk** – The liquid pressed from coconut flesh. It is used in many Asian dishes, especially curries. Coconut cream is obtained by chilling coconut milk then scooping off the oily surface 'cream' and is used similarly. Both are available canned.

**Cod** – A fish with moist, creamy-white, firm flesh that when cooked separates into large flakes. An inhabitant of cold waters, it is known especially in the northern Atlantic. Cod has been eaten since prehistoric times; in its dried form it provisioned the Vikings on their sea voyages. It was the first fish to be caught and salted commercially.

**Coddle** – To cook an egg in the shell just below boiling point until the white turns opaque and the yolk is heated.

**Coeur à la Crème** – A dessert of unripened fresh cheese, such as cream cheese or fromage blanc, mixed with fresh cream and sometimes sugar, and drained in a perforated mould, traditionally heart shaped-hence its name. It is served chilled with fresh fruit.

**Coffee** – The roasted and ground beans of a tropical tree, made into a beverage and also used as a flavouring. The 'beans' are the seeds of a red berry (two of each fruit); when roasted they develop the characteristic coffee aroma and flavour. The coffee tree, native to Ethiopia and the Sudan, is now cultivated in New Guinea, the Americas, and Africa. Drinking coffee did not become fashionable in Europe until the seventeenth century. Coffee is available as whole or ground beans and as instant powder or granules.

**Colby** – A soft-textured cow's milk cheese similar to cheddar. It has a mild, sweetish flavour, is yellow in colour, and has tiny holes.

**Colcannon** – A dish of Irish origin consisting of chopped cooked cabbage, chopped onion and mashed potato, beaten together with butter and hot milk.

**Coleslaw** – A salad of finely shredded cabbage and other vegetables, such as carrot, celery, capsicum, and onion, dressed with mayonnaise.

**Compote** – A preparation of fresh, canned or dried fruits, poached in syrup to preserve their shape and serve hot or cold in the syrup as a dessert.

**Confectioners Sugar** – Name used in the US for icing sugar.

**Confit** – A portion of duck, goose, or pork which has been preserved by simmering in its own fat. A specialty of southwest France, confit was traditionally stored in sealed jars.

**Conserve** – Whole berries or sliced fruit preserved by boiling with sugar. It is richer and sweeter than jam, the pieces of fruit have retained their shape. It is used as a spread or filling.

**Consommé** – A rich, clear soup made of meat or chicken stock which has been reduced and clarified. It can be served hot or cold, often with the addition of finely sliced meat or vegetables or paste shapes.

**Coq au Vin** – Chicken cooked in red wine. As the dish was traditionally made with a rooster which was at least twelve months old, the wine was needed to tenderize the meat; nowadays a chicken or boiling fowl may be substituted.

**Coquilles St. Jacques** – A dish in which scallops poached in white wine are returned to their shells and served topped with a rich sauce.

**Coriander** – An annual herb, member of the carrot family, which has green, lacy leaves and a pungent aroma and flavour. The leaves also known as cilantro and Chinese parsley are used fresh; the roots finely chopped have a similar, but stronger flavour. Both are important ingredients in the cooking of Southeast Asia,

China, Central America, and the Middle East. The roasted and ground seeds are used in curries; in northern Europe coriander seeds are used in pickling, chutneys and marinades.

**Corn (Maize, Sweet Corn)** – The round, yellow kernels borne on long, cone-shaped 'ears', encased in a green husk and growing on a plant native to the Americas. First domesticated more than 7000 years ago in Mexico, it was a staple throughout the Americas showed English settlers in North America how to plant and use it.

**Corn Bread** – A bread, leavened with baking, made from cornmeal (polenta) and flour.

**Corned Beef** – A cut of beef, which has been preserved (cured) by soaking and injecting it with brine. The treatment causes the flesh to turn pink. Cooked corned beef can be served hot, with vegetables and an onion sauce; or cold, sliced as a salad meat.

**Cornflour (Cornstarch)** – A fine, white powder obtained from corn kernels. It is used as a thickening agent for sauces, gravies and puddings, and is the main ingredient in blancmange.

**Cornish Hen** – A specially bred small chicken valued for its tender meat.

**Cornish Pastry** – A mixture of finely chopped meat and vegetables in a turnover of short crust pastry. It originated in Cornwall as a meal for tin miners.

**Cornmeal** – A yellow-white flour made from finely ground dried corn kernels. Cornmeal is an important food in northern Italy, where it is called polenta, and in the United States and Latin America. It is used to make cornbread, muffins and as a coating for fried food.

**Cornstarch** – See Cornflour.

**Corn Syrup** – See Syrup.

**Cottage Cheese** – A soft, fresh, usually low-fat cheese made from milk curds. It was first made using soured milk. Creamed cottage cheese is made from washed curds.

**Cottage Pie** – See Shepherd's Pie.

**Coulibac** – A pie of Russian origin filled with salmon, rice, mushroom, eggs, and seasonings.

**Coulis** – A liquid puree of cooked vegetables or of cooked or fresh fruit.

**Courgette** – See Zucchini.

**Court Bouillon** – An aromatic mixture of water or stock, and a dash of vinegar, wine or lemon juice and spices, herbs and chopped vegetables, in which fish or shellfish is poached.

**Couscous** – A cereal made from semolina and wheat flour pressed into tiny grains. It is cooked in water or stock until soft, butter is added and it is served hot as a side dish (in much the same way as steamed or boiled), or as part of a dish of stewed meat. Couscous is a staple in the cooking of North Africa.

**Crab** – Species vary in colour when alive, but when cooked all turn red-orange; the flesh is white, moist, and sweet. Found in sheltered coastal waters around the world, crabs can be purchased fresh, frozen or in cans.

**Crabapple** – A small, sour tasting apple, grown mainly for its ornamental qualities. Crabapples are used to make jellies and preserves.

**Cracked Wheat** – Whole-wheat grains that have been soaked, cooked, dried, and then crushed into small pieces.

**Cranberry** – A small, round, red berry too tart to eat raw, but best known for cranberry sauce, the traditional accompaniment to roast turkey.

**Crayfish** – A freshwater crustacean that looks like a miniature lobster. Most of the meat is in the tail and when cooked is white, sweet and moist.

**Cream** – The fatty part of milk rises to the top when milk is allowed to stand. It is made into butter and many varieties of cheese, and used on its own as an accompaniment to fruits and desserts, as a filling for cakes and pastries, or to add richness to sauces, soups and custards. Whipping, double or heavy cream is the richest form, with a fat content of 48 percent; it is used as a rich pouring cream has a minimum fat content of 35 percent and will double its

volume when whipped. Reduced or light cream (known in Britain as Single Cream) has a fat content of between 18 and 25 percent and cannot be whipped; it is used in coffee and with desserts.

**Cream Cheese** – A soft, white, fresh cheese or a mixture of milk and cream. It is smoother in texture and has a higher fat content than cottage cheese.

**Cream of Tartar** – A white powder obtained by the fermentation of grape juice and used as one of the raising agents in baking powder. Cream of tartar is often added when whipping egg whites.

**Crème Brûlée** – A rich baked custard topped with a shell of hard, caramelized sugar.

**Crème Caramel** – A vanilla-flavoured baked custard coated with thick caramel sauce.

**Crème Chantilly** – Sweetened whipped fresh cream, which has been flavoured with vanilla.

**Crème Fraîche** – A mature cream with a nutty, slightly sour flavour. It is available in cartons or can be made by mixing pure fresh cream with sour cream, yoghurt, or cultured buttermilk. Crème fraîche is used in savoury sauces for game, poultry, fish, and vegetables; in salad dressings; as a garnish for soups; and in confectionery (candy).

**Crème Pâtissière** – A stirred custard lightened with whipped egg whites. Flavoured with coffee or chocolate, it is the traditional filling for éclairs; flavoured with vanilla or orange, it is used to fill cream puffs.

**Crêpe** – A light, thin pancakes made with a batter of milk, eggs, and flour on each side until golden. They can be eaten with a topping of lemon juice and sugar, or rolled around sweet and savoury fillings or topped with sauces.

**Cress** – Any of several plants of the mustard family. Eaten while still seedlings, their tiny leaves and slender stems give a peppery flavour to a salad, and sandwich fillings, and can be used as a garnish for meat.

**Croissant** – A soft, flaky, buttery, crescent-shaped roll of yeast milk dough, baked until

crisp and golden and served warm as part of a traditional French breakfast. Croissants can be eaten either on their own or split open and spread with butter and jam or preserves. They can also filled with ham, cheese, mushroom or chicken.

**Croque Monsieur** – A hot sandwich of gruyère or emmenthal cheese and ham between slices of toasted bread.

**Croquembouche** – An elaborate pastry made up of a number of individual choux puff pastries, each filled with cream piled into a cone shape, glazed with toffee and topped with sugar.

**Croquette** – A small patty of minced (ground) meat, poultry, fish, or shellfish, bound with a thick white sauce, coated with breadcrumbs and deep-fried until crisp.

**Crostini** – Slices of bread that have been toasted, fried, or quickly dipped in broth, and then spread with a savoury topping such as pâté.

**Croustade** – A case made out of fried, hollowed bread, puff pastry, or duchess potato, which is used to hold preparations of, cooked meat or vegetables.

**Croûte** – A small, thick slice of bread, fried in butter or oil or dried in the oven, which is served with soup, casseroles or mornays.

**Croûte, en** – A French term for food cooked, wrapped or encased in pastry or dough.

**Croûtons** – Small cubes of bread, fried or toasted and served as crisp accompaniment to soup or salads.

**Crown Roast** – Two racks of lamb curved around and secured in the shape of a crown. The centre is usually filled with stuffing.

**Crudités** – Raw vegetables cut into strips or grated, served as finger food accompanied by dips and cold sauces.

**Cucumber** – The crisp, juicy, pale-fleshed fruit of a vine of the melon family. Cucumbers can be used raw, as a salad vegetable, as well as cooked or pickled.

**Cumberland Sauce** – A sauce, made with redcurrant jelly and port, which is served cold with ham, lamb, beef or game.

**Cumin** – A spice made from the seeds of a plant, similar in appearance to parsley; the long, aromatic, yellow-brown seeds have a pungent flavour (similar to caraway) and are used whole or ground in a range of savoury Middle Eastern or Indian dishes.

**Cumquat** – A berry-sized, orange-coloured citrus fruit with bitter flesh and sweet tasting, edible, thin skin. Native to China it is used to make marmalade, or preserved in sugar syrup or brandy.

**Currant** – A small, round, smooth-skinned, tart berry; there are red, white (rare) and black varieties. Red currants can be eaten fresh, with sugar and cream or in salads; red currants and blackcurrants are used in jams, jellies, and sauces; blackcurrants are used in cordials and the liqueur cassis. They are not related to dried currants.

**Currant, Dried** – The dried fruit of a small, purple, seedless grape; used in cake, biscuit (cookie) and pastry mixtures; for stuffings in game or fish; and in savoury sauces and rice dishes.

**Curry** – A savoury dish of meat, poultry, fish, or vegetables, flavoured with tangy spices and served with rice, pappadams or Indian bread and a variety of accompaniments. Curries, most strongly identified with India, are also part of the cooking of Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, and the West Indies.

**Curry Leaves** – The small, shiny, aromatics leaves from a tree native to South-East Asia, used whole in cooking in much the same way as bay leaves. Available fresh, dried or fried in oil, they add a curry-like flavour.

**Curry Paste and Curry Powder** – Blends of ground spices used to flavour savoury dishes. A basic Indian curry powder includes ground dried red chillies, coriander, mustard, black peppercorns, fenugreek, cumin, and turmeric; other spices that can be included are cardamom, cloves, cinnamon, allspice, ginger, and garlic. The addition of oil, vinegar, or water gives a curry paste, or wet massala. The green and red curry pastes of Thai cooking are both based on a blend of fresh coriander



leaves, chillies, garlic and other spices and fresh herbs.

**Custard** – A mixture of egg and milk, sweetened, cooked and served hot or cold as a dessert. Baked custard is cooked in the oven; stirred custard, cooked over simmering water, is often used as a sweet sauce and is also the basis of many other desserts.

**Custard Apple** – Also known as cherimoya, the large, round, green-skinned fruit of a tree native to Peru and now cultivated in many tropical regions. Its sweet-scented, creamy-white flesh taste likes a combination of banana, pineapple, and strawberry and is scooped out and eaten with a spoon.

**Cuttle Fish** – A saltwater mollusk closely related to squid, but with a broader, thicker oval body. It has been eaten for centuries around the shores of the Mediterranean, either stuffed or cut into rings and fried in batter.

## D

**Daikon** – A variety of radish grown in Japan with a long, almost cylindrical, fleshy root and a mild, peppery taste. It is eaten raw/either grated or sliced in salads), cooked (steamed or stir-fried) as a vegetable and, in its pickled form (takuan) is served with almost every meal. Spicy tasting daikon sprouts (Kaiware) are used in salads and as a garnish. Daikon is also known as Japanese radish and mooli.

**Daiquiri** – A cocktail made from white rum, lemon or lime-juice and sugar, served in a chilled glass. The drink is named after a small village near Santiago, on the Cuban coast. Fruits such as peaches, strawberries or Kiwi fruit are sometimes added.

**Damper** – Unleavened bread made from simple dough of flour and water. It was a staple food for early European settlers in outback Australia. Traditionally the dough was cooked directly in the hot ashes of an open fire (with this method the encrusting ashes must be knocked off before the bread can be eaten), or wound around a green stick, which was placed over the fire (the result was known as a Johnnycake). In later years camp ovens were used and, after they became available, baking

powder and powdered milk were added to the mixture. Today the term damper refers to leavened bread, round in shape, with a crunchy crust and a taste, and texture similar to white bread. The name comes from a British dialect word meaning ‘something that takes the edge off the appetite’.

**Damson**- a small, dark purple variety of European plum with a thick skin. It is also known as a prune plum. The fruit is too tart to eat raw but is delicious cooked in compotes, jams, and jellies and as a pie filling. The name is a contraction of Damascus, ‘from Damascus’.

**Dandelion** – A flowering plant well known as a weed. Its young leaves can be added to mixed green salad; their peppery bite also combines well with beet root and with bacon. The leaves should be picked before the plant flowers (otherwise they can be tough and bitter), cut them off at the root crown. Dandelions can also be blanched by covering the growing plant with an inverted flowerpot; the result is a crisp pale leaf with a milder flavour.

**Danish Blue** – A soft creamy white, cow’s milk cheese with fine blue veining, and a sharp, sometimes salty, taste. It has a buttery texture and can be either spread or sliced. Modelled on the blue-veined Roquefort cheese of France, it was developed in Denmark in the early 1900s to compete in the United States with Roquefort sales. The cheese is also known as Danablu.

**Danish Open Sandwich** – A thin slice of bread, buttered right to the edge to seal the bread from the topping which can include generous mounds of fresh salad vegetables, cold meats, smoked fish, cheese, mayonnaise, pickles, gherkins, and relishes, garnished with fresh herbs such as parsley, dill, chervil and cress. A Danish Open Sandwich is best eaten with a knife and fork. The Danish word is Smørrebrød, meaning buttered bread.

**Danish Pastry** – A sweet, light pastry consisting of a buttery yeast dough encasing a filling such as stewed fruits, custards, preserves, nuts and cheese. The dough is shaped into rolls and twists, then glazed with spices and sprinkled with coarse sugar before being baked. Danish pastries are usually served with coffee.

**Dariole** – The name given to both a small, steep-sided mould and the preparation cooked in it. Dariole moulds are used to make pastries, individual fruit cakes and puddings. They can also be lined with aspic jelly, filled with a savoury mixture and topped with more jelly. When the mixture has set, it is turned out onto a platter for serving.

**Dashi** – A fish and Kelp stock, which gives Japanese cooking its distinctive ‘sea’, flavour. It is made by heating konbu (large leaf kelp) in water to boiling point then removing the kelp and adding *hans-katsuo* (flakes of dried bonito, a member of the mackerel family never used fresh) the mixture is stirred until the flakes sink and then strained. Dashi is also eaten as clear soup and is used as a dipping sauce and marinade. It is available from Asian food stores in small, ready-to-use infusion bags (*dashi-no-moto*), as a liquid concentrate, and in granule form.

**Date** – The oblong amber to dark brown, sweet-fleshed fruit of the date palm. A French author described it as being ‘to the people of the Sahara what wheat is to the French and rice to the Chinese’. In the hot deserts of western Asia and northern Africa, the date palm is the tree of life, fringing every oasis and thriving in conditions where virtually nothing else can grow. Date palms have been known to bear fruit for up to a century.

Dates travel well and were exported (mostly from Egypt) to ancient Greece and Rome where they were sold on the streets and in the theatres as a sweet snack food, as they were again fifteen hundred years later in medieval Europe.

The fruit is available fresh or dried. Iraq is the main exporter of dried dates; Israel, Lebanon and the United States export ‘fresh’ frozen dates. The name comes from the Greek *daktylos*, meaning finger.

**Daube, en** – A French Term for a method of cooking meat by braising it in red wine seasoned with herbs.

**Deep Fry** – To cook pieces of food by immersing them in very hot fat or oil. Deep-frying creates a crust around the food, which seals in the flavour and juices. Food should be cooked in small batches so as not to lower the temperature of the frying medium. Fish, chicken, croquettes, or soft vegetables should be protected with a coating of batter or breadcrumbs before being fried. Peanut and

corn (maize) oils have a high smoking point and so are most suitable for deep-frying.

**Deglaze** – To add water, stock, or wine to the cooking juices and cooked on sediments left in the pan after roasting or frying meat. The mixture is then heated, stirred, and reduced to make a sauce or gravy. The name comes from the French *déglaçer*, to dissolve into liquid.

**Dégorger** – A French term (meaning ‘disgorge’) for the process of soaking meat, poultry, offal or fish in cold water to free it of impurities and blood, or to eliminate any ‘muddy’ flavour from freshwater fish. The term is also used for the process of removing excess water and strong flavours from certain vegetables.

**Demarara Sugar** – A white cane sugar treated with molasses to produce large, slightly sticky, pale brown crystals. It is often served with coffee and is used for making biscuits (cookies), cakes, and confectionery. Brown sugar or raw sugar can be substituted. It was first produced in the Demarara region of Guyana, West Indies.

**Demi-Glaze** – A basic brown or espagnole sauce reduced to rich, thick, glossy syrup. It is used to coat meat and game dishes as well as to enrich other sauces.

**Dessert** – A sweet course eaten at the end of a meal. It can range from simple compote of fresh fruit to ice-creams, jellies, custards, sweet pies, steamed puddings, and elaborate cakes. In ancient times a meal was likely to have been rounded off with fruit, honey, or cheese. In medieval Europe it was customary at banquets to serve jellies and sweet tarts between meat courses. In the seventeenth century, sweet ices and sherbets (which originated in Spain and Sicily) made an appearance, as did chocolate, brought back from the Americas. Ideally, a light, fruit-based dessert should follow a heavy meal, while a sweet pie or rich pudding is appropriate often a light meal. Nowadays, a dessert can also mean cheese and biscuits. The word comes from the French *desservir*, to remove all that has been served: at a formal dinner, everything, including the tablecloth, was removed and the table re-laid for dessert.

**Dessert wine** – A sweet, full-bodied wine served at the end of a meal and with the dessert. Dessert wines include Muscat,

Madeira, Sauternes, and Tokay; champagne can also be served with the dessert course.

**Devilled** – The term applied to food, such as meat, poultry, fish, and shellfish, with a sharp flavour that has been imparted by using seasonings or marinades before grilling (broiling) or frying. Flavourings (which are often brushed on during cooking) can include mustard, Tabasco, or Worcestershire sauce, cayenne pepper, and lemon juice

**Deviled Butter** – Softened butter mashed with Tabasco sauce, Worcestershire sauce or dry mustard, and chopped onion and parsley, formed into a roll and then chilled. Serve sliced on grilled (broiled) meat or fish.

**Devil on Horseback** – An hors d'oeuvre consisting of stoned prunes wrapped in bacon, which is grilled until the bacon is crisp.

**Devonshire Tea** – Scones, jam, and clotted cream served with a pot of tea as a light mid-morning or mid-afternoon meal. Clotted cream, also known as Devonshire cream, was originally made by slowly warming fresh cream in an earthenware bowl which was then left on a cold stone floor to cool, allowing the cream to thicken. The process originated in the country of Devon, in Southwestern England.

**Dal** – An Indian dish of lentils cooked with garlic, ginger, and seasonings and then pureed. It has a consistency similar to porridge and can be eaten on its own, served with boiled rice or Indian breads, or as an accompaniment to a meat dish.

**Diable** – A cooking vessel containing of two unglazed clay pots, one of which fits the other as a lid. It is used for cooking foods such as potatoes, onions, beetroot, and chestnuts without water; halfway through cooking the Diable is turned upside down. The vessel can be used in the oven or, with a heat diffuser, on an electric hotplate or gas ring. A Diable should never be washed.

**Dibs** – A chocolate flavoured syrup made from the carob pod. In Syria and Lebanon it is mixed with tahini and used as a spread.

**Dibs Roman** – Also known as grenadine molasses, a thick, dark, purple-red syrup with a strong, sour-sweet flavour. Made from concentrated pomegranate juice, it is used in the cooking of the Middle East to sharpen the flavour of lamb fillings for pies as a marinade

for lamb and to add a tart sweetness to soups and stews. It is also the basis of a drink. The name is derived from the Arabic word for 'pomegranate sugar'.

**Dijonnaise** – French term for a dish prepared with Dijon mustard, one of the traditional French mustards. This creamy condiment, paler than some mustard seeds that have been soaked in the acidic, fermented juice of unripened grapes. Dijonnaise is also the name given to a mustard-flavoured mayonnaise served with cold meats. Both are called after Dijon, capital of the Burgundy region of France, an ancient city famous for its castles and museums, an annual International Food Fair, and the blackcurrant syrup cassis.

**Dill** – An aromatic herb, similar in appearance and related to fennel, that is a native of southern Europe and western Asia. Both its feathery green leaves and small brown seeds are used as flavouring (the leaves in soups, egg dishes, salads, soft cheeses, and sauces to accompany fish; the seeds in breads, pickles and for flavouring vinegar and cooked cabbage). Dill is widely used in the cooking of northern Europe, where it flavours sauerkraut and potato salad, fish and vegetable dishes and pickled gherkins. Dill water was for many years given to babies to soothe them to sleep. The leaves are also known as dillweed.

**Dim Sim** – A tiny parcel of finely chopped meat and cabbage wrapped in a wonton wrapper (a thin sheet of dry pasta dough) and then either deep fried until crisp and golden, or steamed. The name from the Cantonese word *tim-sam*, little snack, and is sometimes applied to a range of similar bite sized morsels such as *gow gee* and spring rolls.

**Dip** – A dish of pureed or finely chopped food blended with a moist or oily base to form a creamy mixture; it is served as a snack or appetizer. Bread, crackers, corn chips, or crisp raw vegetables cut into pieces are eaten with dips. Popular for entertaining, dips are often thought of as recent invention; however the practice of using a firm food to scoop up a softer food is far from new and is found in all parts of the world. The ancient Romans snacked on pieces of coarse bread dipped in goat's milk; the chick pea mixture hummus has been made for thousand of years in the Middle East; taramasalata, a paste of mullet roe, has a long history around the Aegean; the Mayas of the Central America enjoyed guacamole for many centuries before the arrival of the

Spanish in the Sixteenth century; and in India, dal, made from pureed lentils, is often eaten with chapattis, roti or one of the many other types of flat bread.

Nowadays a variety of commercially prepared dips can be found on the shelves of most supermarkets.

**Dolmades** – Small cylindrical packages consisting of rice, minced (ground) lamb, finely chopped onion, nuts and seasonings wrapped in partially cooked grapevine leaves, braised in a little stock or wine and then sprinkled with olive oil and lemon juice. The mixture can also be wrapped in cabbage leaves. Dolmades are usually eaten cold as a first course. Of Middle Eastern origin, the dish is served throughout Greece, Turkey, and Lebanon. The name comes from the Persian *dolme*, meaning stuffed.

**Doner Kebab** – Lamb slices and salad sprinkled with a tahini-based sauce and wrapped in a piece of unleavened bread to form a meal that can be eaten in the hand. Even sized rounds of boneless lamb, marinated for up to 24 hrs in a mixture of olive oil, salt, pepper, onion, rigani (a variety of oregano), thyme, parsley and sometimes mint, are threaded, tightly packed and interspersed with fat from the tail, onto a heavy spit. Traditionally the spit was turned over a charcoal fire; today it is usually a vertical mortar driven rotisserie. When the surface of the lamb cooks to a warm brown it is removed in thin slices; the remaining meat continues to cook. The salad usually consists of tabouli, raw onion rings, lettuce, and tomato; the sauce can be hummus bi tahini, chilli, or barbecue sauce. The doner kebab originated in Turkey and is very popular throughout the Middle East; it is known as chawarma in Lebanon and *grass* in Iraq.

**Double Gloucester** – A firm-textured, straw yellow cows milk cheese, with a mellow cheddar-like flavour. It is also available layered with Stilton cheese. Originally made in England from the milk of the cow virtually extinct. Gloucester cattle, it has more recently been made with full cream milk from the herds of adjoining countries such as Somerset, Dorset, and Wiltshire. The cheese almost becomes a casualty of the disruption caused in Britain by World War II. When peace returned it seemed that traditional methods of making Double Gloucester had been lost, and the situation was saved only by the appearance of an ancient farm woman who before her death

was able to instruct cheese factory workers in the craft and so keep the cheese alive.

**Dough** – A mixture of flour and liquid, usually water, to which other ingredients (butter, margarine, seasonings, or sweeteners) are often added before it is baked into bread or poultry. Although the ingredients are basically the same as for batter, the proportions are different (dough has far less liquid and is thick enough to be kneaded). There are two main types of dough: soft dough, with a slightly higher liquid content, is used for scones and doughnuts; stiff dough, with less liquid, is used for pastry, pie crusts and biscuits (cookies). Fermented dough, called sourdough, called sourdough, was originally used instead of yeast as a raising agent when baking bread. The word probably comes from the Anglo-Saxon *deawain*, meaning to wet or moisten.

**Doughnut** – A small usually ring-shaped cake, made of deep-fried yeast dough, which is dusted with spiced sugar or iced (frosted). It has a moist, bread-like texture. Doughnuts can be made in twisted and round shapes, and are sometimes filled with jam or custard. The ring doughnut is of modern North American origin and is attributed to John Blondel, who in the 1870s patented a doughnut cutter, which cut a hole in the centre.

**Drambuie** – A liqueur, made from whisky and honey, which originated in Scotland.

**Dredge** – To coat food (by dusting, sprinkling or rolling) with a dry ingredient, such as flour or sugar.

**Dresden Sauce** – A cold sauce made from sour cream, mustard, and horseradish. It is generally served with smoked or boiled fish.

**Dressing** – A liquid used to moisten and flavour a variety of foods, from salads or cooked vegetables to raw meat or fish dishes. Dressings can be based on olive oil, lemon juice, wine, or vinegars, with various flavourings, or contain richer ingredients such as eggs (as in mayonnaise), cream, or yoghurt.

**Dripping** – The fat that drips from beef or lamb during roasting. Dripping should be strained from the roasting pan and left to set so that the jellied meat juices can be removed from the bottom. Dripping can also be purchased, packaged in solid blocks, from the butcher or supermarket.

**Duchess Potatoes** – A puree of potatoes blended with butter, egg-yolk, and seasonings and piped into various individual shapes. Used as a garnish for roasts or as a decorative border for fish and savoury dishes, the mixture is glazed with beaten egg yolk, then browned in a hot oven or under the grill. It is said to have been created especially for the Duchess of Bedford.

**Duck** – A large, long bodied water bird with dark, moist, richly flavoured flesh. Duck has been part of the human diet since the time of the earliest hunters. Always in plentiful supply on rivers, lakes, ponds, and marshlands around the world, the bird and its eggs were there for the taking. It was the first to be domesticated, probably by the Chinese some 4000 years ago, although some claim the first duck farmers were the Incas of South America.

Domesticated breeds are now kept in all parts of the world; even so, some of the duck eaten today is, by preference, still taken from the wild. Ducks bred for the table include the large and lean Barbary duck of Europe; the English Aylesbury and Gladwell; the French Nantais, which is often reared semi-wild, and the Rouenais; and the Peking duck of China. In Australia the most common breed is a cross between the Peking and the Aylesbury.

The ancient Egyptians ate the ducks of the Nile. The Romans feasted on the breast and brains of wild duck and throughout Europe until medieval times the bird, although eaten regularly, seems always to have been caught in the wild and not reared in the fowl yard.

Duck is a favourite in the cooking of France and China. The art of drying duck meat (to preserve the flesh and intensify its flavour) has been practiced in China for more than 2000 years (traditionally the flattened, deboned, salted, and seasoned carcass were suspended from bamboo racks to dry in the sun).

Because of its fattiness (it has more fat and, for weight less meat than chicken) duck should be roasted or braised. It is often served with fruit to offset its greasiness, as in the famous French dish, duck à l'orange. Very little of the bird need go to waste. The carcass can be used to make stock and the liver to make pâté. In France there is an increasing market for foie gras made from duck liver to supplement the traditional product made from goose liver. Duckling, a young duck aged between six weeks and two months, is best grilled (broiled) or roasted and does not need stuffing. Older ducks are more strongly flavoured. Duck is available fresh or frozen.

**Dumpling** – A small ball of dough, either savoury or sweet, poached and served as an accompaniment to meat dishes and desserts. Savoury dumplings simmered in meat stock or stew are traditionally served with roast or boiled beef. In Asian cooking, mixtures of finely chopped pork or beef and vegetables wrapped in dough and steamed are called dumplings. Sweet dumplings are simmered in either a dessert sauce or fruit juice. The name is also given to a piece of fruit encased in sweet pastry dough and baked.

**Dundee Cake** – A butter cake flavoured with dried fruit and nuts. Before baking the top is closely covered with blanched and halved almonds. The cake is named for Dundee, a seaport on the East Coast of Scotland.

**Durian** – A large, ovoid fruit covered with an armour of close-set, short, hard spikes. The durian is native to Southeast Asia, where it is grown mainly in Malaysia, the Philippines, and Vietnam. In Thailand it is so highly regarded that some orchardists employ security guards to delete fruit thieves. The sticky, cream-coloured pulp of the durian is noted especially for the contrast between its putrid odour and delicious taste. In this respect its appeal has been compared by both the French and English to that of cheese. The flesh of the durian is eaten raw, as a dessert, either on its own or with sugar and cream or ice-cream. Chilling the fruit reduces its smell. In Java the durian is made into fruit jelly. The seeds can be roasted and eaten like nuts. Canned durian pulp is also available.

**Durum Wheat** – A variety of wheat milled to produce semolina flour, a more durable flour, than that used to make bread. It is ideal for pasta making. The wheat is noted for its extreme hardness and yellow colour.

**Duxelles** – The French name for a mixture of mushrooms finely chopped with a little spring onion (scallion), then sautéed in butter until soft and dry. Duxelles add a strong mushroom flavour to stuffings, gravies and sauces and they can also be used as a garnish.

# E

**Eccles Cake** – A traditional English small cake of currants, chopped peel, brown sugar and spices encased in puff pastry. The cakes were originally made to sell during the Eccles wakes, festival days once held in the Lancashire town of Eccles.

**Éclair** – A finger-shaped bun made by piping lengths of choux pastry onto greased baking trays and baking them until crisp. The cooked pastry is split open and filled with cream or custard and topped with chocolate or coffee icing (frosting).

**Edam** – A semi-hard cow's milk cheese of mellow flavour, made from a combination of full cream and skim milk. Edam is made in shape of a sphere and coated in red wax. In Holland ripening cheeses are assessed by rapping knuckles against the sphere (a dull thump is the sign of a well-cured cheese ready for eating).

**Eel** – A long, snake-like fish with a smooth, slippery, olive green or silvery skin, found throughout the world. Most commons eaten are fresh-water varieties; saltwater eels are larger and include the moray and the conger. The eel has firm, white, fatty flesh, which deteriorates rapidly and so must be cooked as quickly as possible after killing. For this reason, in many parts of the world, eels are kept in large tanks and sold live. Smoked eel is also available, and in Britain and northern Europe is a popular appetizer, served either in thin slices or as fillets lifted off the bone, dressed with lemon juice on a round of rye bread. The matchstick-thin finger-length, transparent young are called elvers or glass eels and are a delicacy in parts of Italy, France, and Belgium.

**Egg** – A roundish reproductive body enclosed in a protective shell. Most commonly eaten by humans is the egg of the domestic hen, but duck, goose, quail, pheasant, guinea fowl, partridge, plover, ostrich, and emu eggs are also used. In some parts of the world the fish-flavoured, soft-skinned egg of the sea turtle is an important food. The egg is a highly nutritious and well-balanced package: two eggs provide half of the body's total daily protein and vitamin needs. The yolk, about

30% of the total weight of the egg, contains more than 80% of its protein.

Most eggs are from hens caged in large, temperature – controlled and artificially lit sheds. Free-range eggs are from birds with access to outside runs and are reckoned by many to have a better flavour.

Eggs are best used as fresh as possible. Two simple, age-old methods of testing freshness are based on the fact that the little weight and moisture lost each day by evaporation through the porous shell is replaced by air in the sac at the round end of the egg. To assess the freshness of egg either put it in a bowl of water (a fresh egg will sink to the bottom) or hold it up to a strong light (the larger the air sac the older the egg). Alternatively, a fresh egg broken onto a plate will have a well-rounded yolk centered in a thick, sticky white; in an older egg the white is runny and the yolk flattened.

Other eggs besides that of the hen are also used. The more richly flavoured duck egg is eaten in England, Holland, and Belgium and in parts of Asia. The famous 'thousand-year' or 'hundred-years' eggs of China are usually raw duck eggs, kept for several months buried in a mixture of salt, lime, ash and tea leaves until the shell is marbled black, the white firm and pale brown, and the yolk-veined with a texture of creamy cheese.

The Egyptians ate both ostrich (a single ostrich egg, about twenty times the size of a hen egg, can make an omelette for ten people) and pelican eggs. Peahen eggs were eaten in ancient Rome. In modern time's pheasant, quail, partridge and plover eggs are used hard-boiled in salads, pickled in brine or preserved in aspic.

Many rites are associated with the egg. From the time of ancient Rome eggshells were crushed to prevent evil spirits from hiding in them. The egg has long been a symbol of fertility and renewal. The brightly wrapped Easter egg of modern times has its origins in the coloured eggs that were a feature of spring festivals of medieval Europe.

**Egg Noodle** – A type of pasta made from wheat flour, egg and water and cut into long strips.

**Eggplant (Aubergine)** – A fruit used with smooth shiny, purple skin and creamy white, pithy flesh studded with numerous tiny, soft, pale brown edible seeds. It may be egg-shaped (from which it takes its common name), round, or long and thin; some varieties are white-skinned.

The eggplant originated in Southeast Asia, where varieties still grow wild, and in antiquity was cultivated in India, China, and Turkey. By the fifteenth century it was known in Italy and by the seventeenth century had reached France. The Eggplant is widely used in Mediterranean cookery and in the Middle East, particularly by the Syrians and Turks. It can be steamed, boiled, grilled (broiled), sautéed or stuffed, added to salads or made into dips. It is the basic ingredient in classic dishes such as the French Ratatouille and Greek moussaka.

**Eggs Benedict** – A dish consisting of a poached egg, a slice of ham, and a dollop of Hollandaise sauce, all perched on an English muffin.

**Eggs Florentine** – A light luncheon dish consisting of two soft poached eggs in a nest of cooked spinach topped with mornay sauce and grated cheese.

**Emmenthal** – A hard, pale yellow, cow's milk cheese, with mild, nutty flavour. Made in huge, flat wheels and characteristic, large, regularly spaced, spherical holes. It is the cheese most identified with Switzerland.

**Empanada** – A pie or pastry shell filled with meat or fish. The dish originated in Spain where empanadas are now usually made with flaky pastry and are often eaten cold. The dish is now also popular in parts of Central and South America, where it often features spicy meat filling and is served hot as an appetizer.

**Enchilada** – A dish of Mexican origin consisting of a corn or wheat flour tortilla, dipped in a chilli and tomato sauce, wrapped around a meat, vegetable or cheese filling and then with more sauce. In Mexico they are sometimes served at breakfast. The name comes from enchilar, to cover, wrap or coat with chilli.

**Endive, Belgian** – Also known as chicory (in England and some other parts of Europe) and witloof (in Belgium and Australia), Belgian endive (*Cichorium intybus*) is a vegetable with compact, cone shaped heads of long, pale leaves which are eaten cooked (steamed or boiled) or raw (either whole leaves or thinly sliced) as a salad vegetable.

**Endive, Curly** – Curly endive (*Cichorium endiva*) is a salad vegetable with frilly, dark green leaves and a mildly bitter taste. It is a native of the Mediterranean. It can be used in

salads in the same way as lettuce, or cooked like spinach. In the United States and France curly endive is called chicory (the term used in England and some parts of Europe for the cone shaped, pale-leaved winter vegetable also known as Belgium endive and witloof).

**English Food** – The food of England has a reputation for being stodgy and uninteresting, but the best English food is peerless. Poached salmon with cucumber salad and mayonnaise, steak and kidney pie, baked ham, summer pudding, and Chelsea buns are a few examples. An English breakfast has always meant bacon and eggs with grilled tomato, and perhaps sausage or kippers, with toast and marmalade and a cup of tea. The ploughman's lunch, another famous English meal, consists of good country bread, a piece of cheddar or local cheese, and some pickled onions. Tea is an English institution and usually takes place at 4p.m. A 'proper' tea starts with bread and butter and homemade jam, or little sandwiches. A fruitcake or rich gateaux, an iced teacake, or little cakes may also be served, with plenty of hot tea.

Nowadays, eating a 'proper' tea would probably eliminate the need for dinner. The English dinner often starts with soup, followed by a main course of meat or fish with vegetables, a dessert, and then cheese. (The English, in contrast to the French, eat cheese at the end of the meal, rather than before the dessert.) A 'savoury' – anchovy toast or devils on horseback – often finishes a meal, although they are generally offered nowadays at old fashioned tables.

**English Muffin** – A round, flat, unsweetened yeast bun served split and toasted, buttered and spread with jam or honey or a savoury topping.

**Entrecôte** – A piece of beef from between the ribs, a tender and flavoursome cut.

**Entrée** – Generally regarded as the first course of a meal, traditionally a dish served with sauce. In the United States the term refers to the main course of a meal.

**Escabèche** – A spicy marinade used to preserve fish.

**Escalope** – A thin piece of boneless white meat, usually from veal or pork. Slices are beaten until thin, then usually coated with breadcrumbs before frying. Known in Italy as scallopine, and in Germany as schnitzel.

**Escargot** – The French term for snail.

**Escarole** – A vegetable with long, flat, irregularly shaped, pale green leaves. It has a slightly bitter taste and is used either in salads, mixed with milder flavoured lettuces; warmed and served in wilted salads; or as a cooked vegetable. It is part of the endive family and is also known as broadleaf endive and Batavian endive.

**Espagnole, Sauce** – Another name for brown sauce.

**Espresso Coffee** – Made by forcing steam under pressure through finely-ground coffee beans; served in small cups.

**Estouffade** – A dish which is slowly stewed, most usually applied to beef in wine sauce. The name is also used for beef stock.

## F

**Falafel** – Deep-fried balls of ground and spiced chickpea, a snack of Middle Eastern origin.

**Feijoa** – An oval, green-skinned, egg-sized tropical fruit. The pale yellow flesh is similar in flavour to a mixture of pineapple and strawberry. Some times called pineapple guava, the feijoa is now cultivated in New Zealand, California and Australia. It can be eaten raw (when fully ripe, scooped from the skin with a teaspoon or served with cheese boards; poached for use in fruit salads; or used to make jellies, jams and sorbets.

**Fennel** – A tall, feathery, aromatic plant; its finely divided, blue-green leaves have a slightly bitter anise taste and are similar in appearance to dill. Fresh leaves can be used as stuffing for baked fish, or wrapped around seafood to be grilled (broiled), or added to court bouillon. Chopped leaves are used in sauces, stuffings, dressings, and seafood salads. The small brown seeds, also tasting of anise, are also used.

**Fenugreek** – A small plant of the pea family. Its tiny, squarish, brown, aromatic seeds have a spicy, slightly bitter flavour; they are very hard and can only be ground with a mortar and pestle or a special grinder. Lightly roasted and powdered, they are an essential ingredient in curry powders and pastes.

**Feta** – A soft, white, crumbly cheese originally made from ewe or goat's milk, but now often made from cow's milk. Feta has been known in Greece since ancient times, and was probably first made by shepherds in the mountain region outside Athens. It is an important ingredient in Greek salads and savoury pastries.

**Fettuccine** – Pasta cut into long flat ribbons. It can be made at home from egg-rich pasta dough or bought fresh, frozen or dried. Sometimes coloured and flavoured with tomato or spinach, fettuccine is especially identified with Rome and the surrounding region; name is the roman word for 'noodles'.

**Fig** – A small, soft, pear-shaped fruit with sweet pulpy flesh studded with small, edible seeds. Varieties of fig tree grow in warm climate throughout the world. Fig is the sweetest of all fruits. When in season, in summer, it is served raw wrapped in prosciutto slices as a first course, in fruit salad, on cheese boards or baked as a dessert. The dried fruit, its sugar concentrated and sweetness intensified by the preservation process, can be stewed or used in cakes and puddings. The fig probably originated in the Middle East, where it has been eaten for 5,000 years or more. Figs were grown in the hanging gardens of Babylon; ripe figs were covered with hot desert sands to dry and preserve them. Dried figs were sold in the markets of Paris from the fourteenth century.

**Filé Powder** – The ground dried leaves of the saffrafrs shrub used in Cajun cooking as a thickener and to add a thyme-like flavour to gumbos. Filé should not be cooked in the pot (as it will turn stringy), but added at the table or just before serving.

**Filet Mignon** – A small, tender steak cut from the narrow end of a fillet of beef. It is often cut thick and then gently beaten to the required thickness and width. The name comes from the French for 'little fillet'.

**Fillet** – A piece of boneless meat, poultry, or fish, with little or no fat. Beef fillet, also known as tenderloin, is prized for its tenderness and delicate flavour. A chicken



fillet is the small strip of flesh near the breastbone. A fish fillet is the side of the fish cut along the length of the body; it contains few if any bones.

**Filo Pastry** – Also known as phyllo, pastry made with dough of high gluten flour, water and oil that is stretched until tissue thin, then cut into sheets. Filo is widely used in the cooking of the Middle East, Turkey, Greece, Austria, and Hungary. Each sheet is lightly brushed with oil or melted butter before being topped with another. The layered sheets can be twisted or wrapped around a sweet or savoury filling; baking results in light, crisp, flaky layers. Filo can be made at home, but as it requires skill and time, commercially made filo, available chilled or frozen, is most often used.

**Fines Herbes** – A mixture of finely chopped, subtly flavoured fresh herbs, usually parsley, tarragon, chives and chervil, used to flavour omelettes, sauces, and fish. Fines herbes mixtures are commercially available in dried form.

**Finger Food** – Small portions of hot or cold savoury food that can easily be eaten held in one hand. Finger food is served at drinks and cocktail parties. (Hors d'oeuvre)

**Finnan Haddie** – Haddock that has been gutted, split, flattened and immersed in brine before being smoked (traditionally over peat smoke) until the flesh is pale golden. Finnan Haddie can be grilled (broiled), poached, or baked before being baked with a rich egg sauce, or flaked and used as an omelette filling; it is also an ingredient of the fish and rice dish, kedgeree.

**Fish** – Fish is valued especially for its low kilojoule (calorie) and cholesterol counts, its high protein content and its easy digestibility. Fresh fish deteriorates quickly and is best cooked on the day of purchase. It can be grilled (broiled) and baked; poached in water or stock; battered and deep fried; steamed; cooked wrapped in foil or buttered paper; or microwaved. Fish is cooked when the flesh becomes opaque and flakes easily and the juices are milky white. Some dishes, such as ceviche (from Mexico and the South Pacific) and sashimi (from Japan) features raw fish. Fish is preserved in several ways. Smoked fish is first soaked in brine and then hung or put on a rack in a compartment filled with smoke produced by smouldering sawdust. Cold

smoking is a slow process performed at low temperatures; the smoke has cooled down before it reaches the fish at temperatures high enough to cook it. Salt cured fish are split and gutted and packed in coarse salt. Unsalted dried fish are gutted and hung in an air current for about six weeks.

**Fish Sauce** – See Nuoc Mam.

**Five Spice Powder** – A fragrant spice mixture used in Chinese and Vietnamese cooking, consisting of ground star anise, Szechwan pepper, cinnamon, cloves, and fennel seeds.

**Flambé** – To ignite a spirit, such as brandy to burn off its alcohol content and at the same time create delicate flavours. The spirit must be warmed to release sufficient fumes to set alight; then ignite with a taper and poured over the food. Alternatively, cooking juices containing a spirit can be flambéed in a shallow pan. Sometimes fresh fruit is sautéed in butter and sugar, then flambéed in a shallow pan. Sometimes fresh fruit is sautéed in butter and sugar, then flambéed with brandy or rum.

**Flan** – A shallow, open, round pastry case. The pastry, usually short-crust, can be either baked blind or with a filling (sweet or savoury) or served hot or cold. Flan tins, with fluted sides and a removable base, are available.

**Flapjack** – A thin pancake. Buttered, stacked in a pile, and topped with maple syrup, flapjacks are a popular breakfast food in North America. They are also known as griddlecakes, flannel cakes, hot cakes, and wheat cakes. In Britain the term is also used for a mixture of rolled oats, brown sugar and melted butter pressed into a shallow tin, baked, and while still warm, then cut into fingers or squares.

**Fleuron** – Small pieces of puff pastry, traditionally crescent-shaped but also made in oval or diamond shapes, used as decoration on pie crusts or to garnish fish and chicken dishes served in a rich sauce. The shapes are cut from thinly rolled trimmings of puff pastry, glazed and baked or fried.

**Florentine** – Very thin biscuits (cookies) containing dried fruit and nuts and coated on one side with melted chocolate that has been decorated with the lines of a fork to create wavy lines on its surface.

**Florentine, à la** – A French term for a dish featuring fish, poultry, or eggs, served on a bed of spinach, sometimes with a mornay sauce.

**Flour** – Finely ground cereals, seeds, or roots. Cereals commonly ground into flour include wheat, corn (maize), barley, oats, rye, and rice; in Western countries the term generally refers to wheat flour. Dried chickpeas are ground into besan flour; arrowroot is ground from the tuber of a plant; and soybeans are also ground into flour.

**Flower, Edible** – Fresh whole flowers or petals bring touch to salads, sorbets, and drinks; when crystallized (candied) they are used to decorate cakes and desserts.

Not all flowers are edible; if in doubt, check with the local poisons centre or agriculture department. Make sure that flowers have not been treated with pesticides or other harmful chemicals. Flowers commonly added to salads include the petals of yellow and white chrysanthemums, whole nasturtiums, marigold and calendula petals, whole blooms of violet, heartsease, pansy, honeysuckle and cornflower, and herb flowers such as borage and chive. A salad dressing light in vinegar or lemon juice should be used, and the flowers strewn across the top after the greens have been tossed, as the dressing will affect their colour. Pumpkin, zucchini (courgette) and squash flowers can be stuffed or dipped in batter and fried. Crystallized candied petals (rose and violet are most commonly used) can be made by dipping (use tweezers) clean dry petals into beaten egg white and then into sugar until evenly coated; dry on a cake rack and store in an airtight containers.

**Flummery** – A dessert of fruit, fruit juice and cream or milk, thickened with gelatin and whipped until fluffy, then poured into a wetted mould and chilled until set. It is of Welsh origin and was originally thickened with oatmeal.

**Focaccia** – A flat bread made from yeasted dough, sprinkled with coarse salt and baked in a shallow, well-oiled pan. It is originally from Italy. Flavourings and baked toppings (such as herbs, tomatoes, onions, garlic, and olives) vary according to the region. Warmed and filled with salads and cheese or meat, focaccia is popular as a snack or light meal.

**Foie Gras** – Literally 'fat liver', the enlarged liver of a specially fattened goose or duck. Foie Gras, seasoned, poached, and often

studded with truffles, is served cold at the beginning of a meal or is made into a smooth paste, Pâté de Foie Gras.

**Fondant** – A sweet, smooth confectionery (candy) made from sugar, water, and a pinch of cream of tartar. Fondants, with flavourings added is used for many chocolate centres and to make moulded fruits, flowers, and icings.

**Fondue** – Food that is cooked at the table by being immersed in simmering sauce or oil kept hot in a specially designed fondue pot. Diners using individuals long-handled forks dip or retrieve the food from the communal pot. There are several types of fondue: cheese fondue (originally from Switzerland), a mixture of melted cheeses and white wine into which pieces of crusty bread are dipped; meat fondue, in which cubes of meat, poultry, or fish, as well as vegetables, are cooked in oil or stock; and dessert fondue, where pieces of cake, pastries, fruit, or marshmallow are dipped into a sweet sauce, often made from chocolate.

**Fool** – A dessert of fresh or cooked fruit, which has been puréed, sweetened, chilled, and just before serving, mixed with, whipped cream or custard.

**Forcemeat** – A mixture of finely chopped or minced (ground) meat, herbs and seasonings, used as stuffing.

**Four Spices (Quatre Épices)** – A spice mixture of ground white peppercorns, nutmeg, cloves, and ginger, used to flavour pâtés, terrines and some slowly cooked meat and poultry dishes.

**Frankfurter** – A lightly smoked sausage made from spiced meat, either pork, a beef and pork mixture, or poultry meat. Frankfurters are sold contained in a casing, or skinless; they are pre cooked and need only to be reheated in simmering water (boiling may split them), or by making several slashes in the skin and grilling (broiling), or barbecuing until they are lightly browned. Frankfurters range from the tiny cocktail to bun-length hot dog franks.

**Frappé** – The French term for 'iced'. It is used to describe both a drinks that is poured over crushed ice and a refreshing dessert made of partially frozen sweetened fruit juice.

**Freezing** – A method of preserving food by storing it at or below the freezing point.

Freezing halts the growth of bacteria, yeast, and moulds.

**French Dressing** – Also called vinaigrette, a salad dressing consisting of one part vinegar to three parts olive oil, seasoned with salt and freshly ground black pepper.

**French Food** – French cooking is still considered by many to be the finest in the world. It has become so universally accepted that many dishes we take for granted are French in origin: the humble omelette, pâté, mayonnaise, quiche, fruit tart, beef stews, fish soups, and soufflés. Over the past decade, classic French food has given way to a more casual style of eating. Conscious of weight and health, people are eschewing rich egg-and cream-based sauces in favour of simpler French food, brasserie style. The essence of French food has not changed, but a cheese soufflé is now more likely to be served as a main course with a salad and a chunk of bread than as a first course to a big dinner. There will always be a place for French desserts such as profiteroles, tarts, crêpes, and gateaux. Croissants, served with café au lait, are fast becoming an international breakfast food; in some countries they're served for lunch with ham and cheese.

**French-Fries** – Also known as potato chips, thin strips of potato, which are deep-fried until, pale golden. They are a very popular vegetable accompaniment in France, where they are known as pommes frites.

**French Toast** – Slices or fingers of bread, dipped in an egg and milk mixture and fried in butter until crisp and golden-brown on both sides. French toast is served hot, topped with sugar and cinnamon, syrup or jam for breakfast or dessert.

**Fricassée** – A dish of meat or poultry (usually veal or chicken) first fried in butter without browning, then cooked slowly in white stock thickened with flour; cream is added just before serving. A fricassée is usually garnished with small onions and lightly cooked mushrooms.

**Frikadell** – A small fried meatball, usually served hot, garnished with sour cream or as a tomato-based sauce.

**Frittata** – A dish using beaten eggs, frittata is similar to an omelette but the filling (diced vegetables, cheese, meat, chicken, and

seafood) is stirred into the egg mixture before it is cooked.

**Fritter** – Food dipped in or mixed with a batter of flour, egg, and liquid and then deep-fried until crisp and golden.

**Fritto Misto** – Literally 'mixed fry', a dish of Italian origin consisting of assorted vegetables, seafood or meat, dipped in a light batter, deep-fried, served piping hot. Perhaps best known is the mixed seafood fritto misto, a Neapolitan specialty, which usually includes baby squid and calamari rings; a version of the dish from Florence consist of chicken rabbit and vegetables such as artichokes and zucchini (courgette); in the Piedmont region of northern Italy savoury fritters (brain, sweetbreads and veal) are popular.

**Fromage Blanc** – A soft, white, unripened fresh cheese. It has a slightly sour, tangy taste and in France is widely used in sauces, as a topping for steamed or boiled vegetables, a dressing for salad vegetables, a dip for crudités and a topping for fresh fruit.

**Frosting** – A cooked topping for cakes, consisting of water, sugar, cream of tartar, and egg white. In North America the term covers all sweet cooked and uncooked toppings for cakes and cookies.

**Fruit** – Botanically, a fruit is the pulp that covers the seeds of various flowering plants. This includes nuts and some fruits principally eaten as vegetables, such as the eggplant (aubergine), tomato, corn, olive, and avocado. In general usage the term is restricted to fruits that are fleshy, sweet and sometimes juicy. Low in fat and high in fibre, fruit is an essential part of a healthy diet. It is eaten fresh, but can also be cooked.

**Fruit, Diced** – Fruit that is preserved by having its natural water content reduced by exposure to the sun in the open air or by heating. Such dehydration slows the growth of bacteria, allowing most dried fruit to be stored for up to a year. Fruits most commonly dried include apples, apricots, bananas, dates, figs, grapes (as currants, raisins, and sultanas), and peaches, pears and plums (as prunes). Dried fruit mixtures, for use in rich fruitcakes, fruit minces and boiled fruit puddings are also available.

**Fruit Cake** – A rich moist cake containing dried and crystallized (candied) fruit, crystallized fruit peel, nuts and spices. Well wrapped in muslin (cheesecloth), soaked in brandy, rum or fruit juice and stored in an airtight container, a fruit cake will keep for several months, its flavour deepening and maturing with each passing day. Fruit cakes are traditional holiday and celebration fare (weddings, christenings and Christmas). Forms of fruit cake have been made since ancient times, when the Greeks and Romans baked cakes containing honey, walnuts, pine nuts and dried figs.

**Fruit Cocktail** – A mixture of fruit chunks doused with lemon juice and sprinkled with a little sugar, chilled and served as a first course or dessert. Use fruits that contrast in colour and texture, such as grapes and rockmelon (cantaloupe), strawberries and orange.

**Fruit Cup** – A refreshing drink made of a mixture of fresh fruit juices, sometimes mixed with iced water, soda, lemonade, or alcohol and sweetened to taste. Serve in a stemmed glass garnished with a slice of lemon and a sprig of mint.

**Fruit Leather** – A chewy confectionery (candy) made by boiling down pureed fruit (such as apricot, peach, apple, plum, strawberry, or raspberry) and sugar until it forms a thick paste. This is spread on a lightly greased flat surface to dry and then cut into strips. Fruit leather has a sweet, tangy taste; it can be served after a meal with coffee or included in a packed lunch.

**Fruit Salad** – A combination of chopped, sliced or small whole fruits served as a dessert accompanied by cream, ice-cream, or custard. Fresh fruit (raw or poached and cooled), dried fruit (soaked, poached, and cooked) or canned fruit can be used. The fruit is generally first sprinkled with sugar (for canned fruit use the syrup instead of sugar) and steeped in fruit juice, liqueur or sweet wine, and is served chilled with the flavoured juices poured over. Fruit salad as a dessert was developed in France, in the early nineteenth century, prompted by the appearance in the Paris markets of numbers of new, exotic fruits.

**Fry** – To cook a food in very hot vegetable oil or fat over a direct heat. This cooking method usually results in a crisp, golden-brown crust. Deep-frying requires sufficient fat to immerse the food. Shallow frying involves enough fat

or oil to cover the bottom of a shallow pan and is often used for foods coated with batter. Pan-frying uses less fat again, and is suitable for foods that have a light coating of flour or breadcrumbs.

**Fudge** – A soft, sweet confectionery (candy) made with sugar and milk or cream to which dried fruits, nuts, and other flavourings, such as chocolate and coffee are added. The mixture is poured into a shallow tin and when cold, it is cut into squares. Fudge originated in the nineteenth century.

## G

**Gado-Gado** – A salad from Indonesia consisting of a mixture of cooked and raw vegetables garnished with sliced hard-boiled eggs and dressed with a thick, spicy peanut sauce.

**Galangal** – the spicy root of two plants closely related to ginger and used in the cooking of South-East Asia. Greater galangal, the more delicately flavoured, is a knobby root with creamy white flesh. The lesser galangal has orangered flesh a stronger flavour and is cooked as a vegetable.

**Game** – Animals traditionally hunted for their meat, though many are now bred for the table. Often classified as: game birds (wild duck, grouse, partridge, pheasant, and quail); small game (rabbit and hare); and large game (buffalo, deer, wild boar, kangaroo, and emu). In general game meat has a darker colour, stronger flavour and less fat than the meat from domesticated animals. Cuts of large game are often marinated before cooking, otherwise methods are the same as for similar cuts of beef or poultry. Tougher older game is braised, stewed or casseroleed and made into pies and pâtés. Young game birds can be roasted; small game is braised, stewed, or casseroleed.

**Gammon** – The lower end of a cured side of bacon. Gammon is eaten hot, either boiled and served with parsley sauce, or sliced into thick steaks and grilled (broiled) or gently fried.

**Garam Masala** – A spice mixture of northern Indian origin used to flavour curries and other dishes. The basic ingredients are

cumin, coriander, cardamom, cinnamon, pepper, and cloves.

**Garlic** – A member of the onion family. Its strongly scented bulb provides a distinctive flavouring integral to the cooking of Asia, the Middle East, and the Mediterranean. Each bulb is made up of a number of segments called cloves. The pungent flavour is released when a clove is cut; if it is crushed or pounded greater quantities are released and the flavour is even more powerful.

**Garnish** – An edible trimming added to a dish before serving to enhance its visual appeal and complement its flavour. Garnishes used on savoury dishes include sprigs of parsley (fresh, fried or chopped) and coriander; dill and fennel (in sprigs or finely chopped); small bunches of watercress; leaves of basil; celery curls and young leaves; raw carrot in long, fine strips; onion rings, curls of spring onion (scallion) and finely chopped chives; slices of hard boiled egg; small wedges of tomato; edible flowers, such as nasturtiums; slices of lemon, orange or cucumber. Croûtons and small pastries often garnish soups and stews, as do bits of bacon. Crystallized (candied) flower petals, fruit, and fruit rind are used on sweet dishes.

**Gâteau** – A rich, elaborately decorated cake, often a liqueur-flavoured sponge layered with cream. A gâteau can be served as dessert, for a special celebration or with coffee. Gâteau is the French word for 'cake'.

**Gazpacho** – A spicy chilled soup of Spanish origin. It varies from region to region, but usually contains ripe tomatoes, red peppers (capsicum), cucumber, olive oil, and breadcrumbs or garlic croûtons.

**Gelfitte Fish** – Poached fish balls, a traditional Jewish dish made from chopped fish fillets, finely diced onion, breadcrumbs or matzo meal, egg and seasonings. The mixture is formed into balls and cooked in simmering fish stock. Gelfitte fish can be eaten warm or chilled.

**Gelatin** – A setting agent prepared from a natural animal protein, collagen, extracted from the bones and cartilage of animals. Available as powdered granules or thin leaves, gelatin is odourless, virtually tasteless and creamy white in colour. When mixed with hot water it forms a viscous liquid, which sets as a jelly, as it cools. Gelatin is used in sweet and

savoury dishes, and can be used with almost all foods apart from some raw fruits, which contain an enzyme, which prevents setting. These include pineapple, Kiwi fruit (Chinese gooseberry) and pawpaw (papaya).

**Gelato** – Italian ice-cream, made with sweetened milk or cream, egg yolks and flavourings. It is firmer and thus less sweet than British and American ice-creams.

**Gennoise Cake** – A light sponge cake. Eggs and sugar are whisked over a low heat until warm and thick; and melted butter is added after the mixture has cooled. Gennoise cake is used for layered cakes, sponge fingers and bombe Alaska.

**Ghee** – Clarified butter, much used in the northern India. Because the milk solids have been removed, it can be heated to a higher temperature than butter without burning. To make ghee, melt butter until frothy, scoop off the foam, then gently pour the liquid butter into a heatproof glass container, leaving milk solids in the pan. When set, discard any solids from the base, reheat and repeat the process, straining through fine muslin (cheese cloth).

**Gherkins** – The small rough-skinned fruit of a variety of cucumber pickled for use as a condiment to accompany hot boiled beef, cold meats, pâtés and cheese, and as a cocktail savoury.

**Giblets** – The edible inner parts of poultry (the heart, liver, and gizzard, sometimes also the neck). Giblets can be used for stock, gravy, soup, or stuffings.

**Ginger** – A spicy tasting root much used in Asian cooking in both savoury and sweet dishes. The length of the root indicate its maturity (older roots tend to be hotter and more fibrous). Fresh ginger root is peeled, then grated, finely sliced, or crushed to season meat, poultry, fish, and vegetable dishes. Ground dried ginger is used in desserts. Ginger is also available pickled, preserved and crystallized.

**Ginger Beer** – A sweet aerated drink made by fermenting sugar, water, ginger and yeast.

**Ginger Bread** – An aromatic, sticky cake flavoured with ginger, treacle (light molasses) and cinnamon.

**Glacé** – A term applied to food that has been coated with sugar syrup that hardens into a hard, glossy surface. Glacé cakes, such as petit fours, have smooth, thin layer of shiny icing.

**Glacé Fruit** – Fruit that has been preserved in syrup; it is moist and sticky on the inside and has a glazed surface achieved by a final dipping in a very strong syrup. Glacé fruit has four times as many kilojoules (calories) as its fresh equivalent.

**Glaze** – A thin glossy surface on a food, which enhances its visual appeal and stops it from drying out. Glazes are used on both sweet and savoury dishes; some are applied before cooking, others are brushed onto cold food. Pastry can be glazed with egg white before cooking and biscuits (cookies), cakes, and breads are often sprinkled with a sugar and milk mixture before going into the oven. Hot vegetables are glazed with sugar and melted butter. Cold savoury food can be brushed with aspic jelly, and fruit sauce can serve as a glaze for ham. Fruit tarts and flans are coated with a glaze made of jam or jelly.

**Globe Artichoke** – See Artichoke.

**Gnocchi** – Small savoury dumplings made with potato, semolina flour, or puff pastry. Gnocchi are poached and served with a sauce or melted butter and grated cheese as a first course, accompanied by a salad as a main course or served as a side dish to roast meat or grilled (broiled) chicken. The word is Italian for 'lumps'; similar dumplings knödel, noques, and knepfe are found in the cooking of Austria, Hungary and northeastern France.

**Goats Cheese** – See Chèvres.

**Goats Milk** – Milk from goats is whiter and sweeter than cow's milk and can be used by those allergic to cow's milk.

**Golden Syrup (Light Corn Syrup)** – A smooth clear syrup derived from the processing of sugar cane, used in cooking and as a sweetener for porridge and desserts.

**Goose** – A large water bird with sweet-tasting gamey flesh; compared with other poultry, goose has a lot of fat and a low meat yield. Gosling (young goose) is usually roasted; older birds are best braised or casseroleed. Goose liver is used to make pâté de foie gras.

**Gooseberry** – A small, firm, tart-flavoured fruit; skin colour can be yellow, green or red-black, depending on the variety. The gooseberry originated in the cooler part of northern Europe. The American gooseberry comes from the East Coast of North America. Gooseberries can be served fresh or stewed; they are also available frozen and canned.

**Gorgonzola** – A semisoft, creamy textured, blue-veined cow's milk cheese with a rich, strong flavour; its veining is more green than blue. Named after the northern Italian village where it was first produced more than a thousand years ago, Gorgonzola can be served with fresh fruit (especially apples or pears) or used in cooking.

**Gouda** – A semi-hard Dutch cow's milk cheese with a mild, buttery flavour that depends as the cheese matures. Gouda is made in wheel shapes, which are coated, with red or yellow wax; the interior of the cheese is dotted with small unevenly shaped holes.

**Gougère** – Choux pastry flavoured with cheese, baked in a ring shape and served either sliced as a finger food with drinks (in Burgundy it is traditional in wine-tasting cellars) or, with a chicken or meat mixture, as a first course or light luncheon dish.

**Goulash** – A rich meat stew of Hungarian origin containing beef or veal and onions and seasoned with paprika. It is served topped with chopped parsley and accompanied by sour cream.

**Granadilla** – See Passion fruit.

**Granita** – A sorbet made with fruit juices, soft fruit, coffee, wine, or liqueur, sweetened with a little sugar, and frozen until grainy crystals form. It is served between courses or as a dessert.

**Grape** – A small, sweet-fleshed, smooth-skinned fruit that grows in tight cluster on vines. Varieties range in colour from pale green to dark purple-black, some with seeds, others seedless. Grapes are eaten fresh as a dessert fruit or with cheese; dried as raisins, sultanas, and currants, and used in wine making.

**Grapefruit** – A large round citrus fruit with juicy segmented flesh and yellow to golden-pink skin. It is a popular breakfast fruit, cut in

half crossways, and served in the skin (the segments can be loosened from the membrane with a special knife). It is cooked as marmalade and grapefruit juice is used in cooking and as a drink.

**Gratin** – The crisp golden crust formed when breadcrumbs and /or grated cheese are spread over already cooked food, dotted with butter, and then browned.

**Gravlax** – Salmon fillets cured in a marinade of sugar, salt, and dill. Traditionally served with caraway Scandinavian spirit aquavit (Gin, Vodka, or Brandy can be substituted).

**Gravy** – A sauce made in the pan from the juices released by roasting meat or poultry, thickened with flour, diluted with stock, wine or water and served over meat, poultry or vegetables.

**Grecque, à la** – A French term for food cooked in a marinade flavoured with olive oil and lemon juice and served cold.

**Greek Food** – In the early evening, sitting in outdoor cafes, the Greeks enjoy a glass of ouzo and a selection of little morsels, collectively called *mezze*. The selection may include *taramasalata*, *tsatziki* (a mixture of yoghurt, cucumber, and garlic), *dolmades*, marinated vegetables, cold meats, octopus and fish. It is served with *pitta* bread. Greek yoghurt, thick and creamy, is often eaten for breakfast with honey. And *feta*, the famous goats' milk cheese, is crumbled over many dishes, not just the familiar Greek salad. Lamb (or more often mutton) plays an important role in Greek cooking, especially in the north of the country. It is slowly roasted until very tender and served with baked potatoes. The Greeks like to serve their food tepid rather than hot. Greek vegetables are often marinated: the most common are eggplant (aubergine), zucchini (courgette) and artichokes. Vegetable *à la grecque* are among the most delicious of summer vegetable dishes. Greek desserts are rich and sticky. Pastries filled with nuts and honey (*baklava*) are traditionally served with a glass of cold water and a cup of very strong sweet coffee.

**Greengage** – A variety of plum with pale yellowy green skin and sweet, fragrant yellow flesh. It is eaten fresh, cooked as jam or stewed as a filling for tarts.

**Green Goddess** – An anchovy-flavoured mayonnaise used on fish and shellfish. It gets its green colour from the addition of finely chopped parsley.

**Green Peppers** – See Peppers.

**Gremolata** – A mixture of finely chopped parsley, finely grated lemon zest, crushed garlic and sometimes chopped anchovy, traditionally sprinkled over the veal dish *Osso Bucco* just before serving; a specialty of the Italian city of Milan.

**Gribiche Sauce** – a cold sauce similar to mayonnaise, but using the yolk of a hard-boiled egg instead of a raw yolk; Capers, gherkin, chopped egg white and *fines herbes* can be added; serve with fish and cold meat.

**Griddle Cake** – Small flat cakes, either sweet or savoury, cooked on a griddle (a thick, flat iron plate), but now also cooked on a hot plate or on a frying pan.

**Grill (Broil)** – To cook food quickly by direct heat, either under a griller (broiler) or on a barbecue; only on one side of the food at a time is exposed to the heat source.

**Grissini** – Long, thin sticks of crisp, rusk-like bread. In Italy bread sticks are served along with bread at meal; they are often to be seen bunched in tumblers on restaurant tables.

**Grouse** – A small, mostly ground dwelling game bird. Young birds can be roasted or grilled (broiled); older birds are best casseroled or braised. In Scotland roast grouse is traditionally served with bread sauce and red currant jelly.

**Gruel** – A thin porridge made by boiling meal, usually oatmeal, in water, vegetable broth or milk. It is one of the oldest forms of cooked food – the Egyptians made millet, barley and wheat gruel.

**Gruyère** – A Swiss hard cow's milk cheese, pale in colour and with a sharp but creamy nutty flavour. The curd is 'cooked' in heated whey and then pressed into wheel-shaped moulds to mature; its interior is dotted with small holes. Gruyère is served on the cheeseboard at the end of a meal or is cooked in *fondues* and *quiches*.

**Guacamole** – A Mexican dish consisting of mashed ripe avocado, finely chopped onion, lime or lemon juice, coriander and sometimes tomato, and seasoned with chilli. It is served with corn chips or as a dip.

**Guava** – The fruit of a tree native to Central America and the Caribbean. It is about the size and shape of a small apple with a thin green to yellow skin and a pulpy flesh that ranges in colour from off-white to red, is studded with tiny edible seeds and has a flavour reminiscent of pineapple and lemon. Guavas can be eaten fresh (scooped from the skin with a teaspoon), added to fruit salad, pureed for use in ice-creams and sorbets or cooked as jam and jelly. Guava juice is a popular drink in Hawaii.

**Gugelhopf (Kugelhupf)** – A yeast cake containing almonds with sultanas, currants or raisins, and the cherry liqueur Kirsch, and baked in a high fluted ring mold.

**Gumbo** – A thick, spicy soup-stew. It is made from vegetables and seafood, meat, poultry or sausage and is often served with rice. The dish is named for the gumbo, or okra (ladies fingers), an African vegetable introduced into the Americas in the days of slavery. Okra thickens and gives a distinctive, slightly gelatinous texture to the stew, but is not used in all gumbos; filé powder is also frequently added. The gumbo is a specialty of the Louisiana region.

## H

**Haddock** – A fish of northern Atlantic waters, related to the cod. Fresh haddock has firm, white, delicately flavoured flesh. It can be baked whole or its fillets braised, poached, grilled (broiled) or fried. Smoked haddock is usually poached in milk (this is a traditional breakfast dish in Britain) but can also be baked, grilled or gently fried. Haddock is the main ingredient in the Anglo-Indian classic kedgeree.

**Haggis** – A traditional Scottish dish, served on Burns Night and Hogmanay, and considered by many to be the national dish of Scotland. The minced (ground) heart, liver and lungs of a sheep are mixed with minced beef or

mutton, suet and oats, seasoned with cayenne pepper and finely chopped onion, and boiled in the stomach of the sheep. It is served hot, scooped out of its casing, and accompanied by pureed turnips and potatoes. Made from animal parts, which might otherwise be discarded, haggis is nevertheless enjoyed by many as a great delicacy.

**Haloumi** – A sheep's milk cheese with a firm texture and a sharp, creamy taste similar to feta. Made in Cyprus, Syria and Lebanon for at least 2000 years, haloumi is available fresh or vacuum-packed.

**Halvah** – A sweetmeat from the Middle East made with tahini, butter, sugar, honey, and nuts and flavoured with rosewater or saffron.

**Ham** – Meat from the hind leg of a pig, salted, usually smoked and sometimes aged to intensify the flavour. The many forms include: the strongly flavoured, salt-cured raw ham such as Parma, Prosciutto and Westphalian, which are often served thinly sliced as a first course; and the cooked hams which can be baked and served hot, but are also served cold in salads, sandwiches or cooked in a variety of other dishes. York ham, lightly smoked, is a British specialty; also known as country hams, Virginia (sugar-cured and smoked) and Kentucky (smoked over hickory and apple wood) are firmer than other hams and very salty and need to be soaked and simmered before they are baked.

**Hamburger** – A flat round cake of minced (ground) meat, usually beef, seasoned, fried and served with salad vegetables and condiments on a soft bun, usually lightly toasted. The hamburger evolves in the United States in the early years of the twentieth century.

**Hare** – An animal similar to rabbit, but darker flesh and a rich and gamey flavour. Young hare can be roasted. Older meat is usually 'jugged' (marinated overnight in red wine then slowly casseroled with bacon and mushrooms).

**Haricot Bean** – (Navy Bean) Fresh haricot beans are eaten green, pod, and all. The small, white dried seed is used in casseroles, soups, and stews and is processed into canned baked beans.

**Harissa** – A fiery paste from Morocco served as an accompaniment for couscous and saffron-flavoured soups; used as a marinade



for chicken, lamb, or fish. Available from specialty shops. The main ingredients are chillies and olive oil.

**Hash** – A fried mixture of diced vegetables and meat, originally a way to use up leftovers.

**Havarti** – A semi-hard cow's milk cheese with a tangy flavour that deepens with age; usually made in a loaf shape; the interior has small, irregular shaped holes.

**Hazelnut** – A small round hard-shelled nut and mild sweet flavour; it can be eaten fresh, or roasted and salted. The filbert is a large cultivated hazelnut.

**Head Cheese** – See Brawn.

**Heart** – Dark red lean muscle surrounded by fatty tissue. Lamb and calf hearts are preferred. Heart requires long slow cooking such as stewing or braising.

**Heart of Palm** – The tender, pale-coloured interior of certain palm trees.

**Herb** – The leaves and stems of various aromatic plants used in cooking to enhance the flavour and colour of food. Among the most often used herbs are parsley, mint, thyme, rosemary, sage, basil, dill, marjoram, tarragon, oregano and bay leaf. Some herbs have a particular affinity with certain foods.

**Herring** – A saltwater fish of the north Atlantic with dark, richly flavoured, soft-textured, oily flesh. Fresh herring, sold whole or in fillets, is best grilled (broiled) or fried, but can also be baked and poached. Because of its high fat content the herring is well suited to smoking and pickling.

**Hoisin Sauce** – A sweet and spicy, red brown sauce made from a paste of fermented soy beans, flour, salt, sugar, garlic, and red rice, a natural colouring responsible for the red glaze of many meat dishes in Chinese cooking. Hoisin is used when cooking pork and chicken, as a seasoning for braised dishes and, sparingly, in stir-fried dishes.

**Hollandaise Sauce** – A rich, golden yellow sauce made with butter, egg yolk, lemon juice or vinegar and seasonings, it is served warm with poached or steamed chicken and fish, with egg dishes and with steamed or boiled vegetables.

**Hominy** – Dried corn kernels that has been hulled and the germ removed – this is done by soaking in slaked lime or lye. Ground hominy is called grits or hominy grits; coarsely ground hominy is sometimes called pearl hominy. Hominy can be served as a vegetable, added to casseroles, soups and stews or mixed with egg and flour, fried as cakes.

**Honey** – a sweet viscous fluid made by the bees from flower nectar and stored sealed in wax honeycombs. Colour and flavour depends upon the species of flower the nectar came from – in general, the darker the colour, the stronger the flavour.

Thyme honey is clear and dark golden and ranked by some as the finest in the world; orange blossom yields an amber – coloured citrus flavoured honey. Clover honey, the most common in North America, is pale, clear and mild.

Liquid honey is the honey as extracted from the honeycomb. Candied, creamed or whipped honey has some of the moisture removed and is finely crystallized (all honey will crystallize and harden with age).

Honey is used as a spread, in baking, as a sweetener for beverages and cereals and in the making of confectionery.

**Honeycomb** – A waxy structure made by bees consisting of rows of adjacent hexagonal cells in which they store honey, lay eggs and allow larvae to develop. Resembling this in its structure is a brittle confection (candy) with an aerated interior made by adding bicarbonate of soda (baking soda) to boiling syrup of honey and sugar.

**Honeydew Melon** – A round, pale skinned melon with honey-scented, juicy, pale green flesh and slender, pale seeds. The flesh can be eaten raw on its own, added to fruit salads or served with prosciutto as a first course.

**Hors D'oeuvre** – A French term meaning 'outside the main body of work', used to describe small portions of hot cold savoury foods served with drinks prior to meal. Cold hors d'oeuvres can range from olives and nuts to pâtés, spreads, dips and crudités, vegetable à la grecque, marinated and smoked seafood and caviar. Hors d'oeuvres include croquettes, vol-au-vents, tiny pizzas, and bacon-wrapped tidbits.

**Horseradish** – A plant of mustard family native to eastern Europe and now cultivated

around the world for its pungent hot-flavoured root, which is grated to flavour sauces (such as those served with roast beef and seafood dishes) and soups. Grate horseradish just before use, as it quickly loses its bite. Fresh horseradish is available from specialist greengrocers and is also sold preserved as a relish. Horseradish cream is a preparation of grated horseradish root, oil, and white vinegar and sugar. The young leaves of the horseradish plant can be added to salads.

**Hot Cross Bun** – A small bun made with a yeast dough flavoured with spices and dried fruits. It is slashed on top with a cross and glazed with a sugar syrup. Nowadays it is traditionally eaten on Good Friday, but the hot cross bun was originally baked to honour the pagan goddess of spring – the round shape representing the moon and the cross the four seasons.

**Hot dog** – A hot frankfurter served on a split soft bread roll of the same length and garnished with mustard, sauce, pickles, relish, chopped onion, or cheese (or a mixture of any of these). The frankfurter is said to have been brought to St. Louis, in the United States, in the 1880s where it was served on a bread bun for the first time at the 1904 St. Louis World Fair.

**Hotwater Pastry** – A pastry made with hot water, lard, flour and salt that even before baking sets into a shell firm enough to stand by itself. The pastry must be used while still warm, as it becomes brittle when cold. Hot water pastry is used for traditional English raised pies such as game, veal, and ham, and pork pies, all usually served cold.

**Huckleberry** – See Blueberry.

**Huevos Rancheros** – Eggs served on tortillas topped with a tomato salsa, a traditional breakfast throughout the Southwest of the United States. Traditionally, the eggs poached in the salsa; they can also be fried or scrambled. The name is Spanish for ‘ranch-style’ or country-style eggs,

**Hummus bi Tahini** – A dip of Middle Eastern origin made from cooked and ground chick peas (garbanzo beans), tahini (a paste of ground roasted sesame seeds), garlic and lemon juice. Hummus can be served with pitta bread or chopped vegetables as a dip, topped with olive oil mixed with paprika or cayenne pepper.

**Hushpuppy** – A deep-fried dumpling or fritter made from a cornmeal batter, often served with fried fish. It is said to have originated in the south of the United States, from the practice of tossing fried batter to the dogs to keep them from barking.

## I

**Ice-Cream** – A frozen dessert made of sweetened cream or rich milk, sometimes thickened with egg or gelatin, variously flavoured and churned while partially frozen until of a smooth consistency. Ice-cream is available commercially in many forms and flavours (include low-fat versions) or it can be made at home. It can be flavoured with vanilla, chocolate, caramel, honey, coffee, spirits, or liqueurs; chopped nuts, pieces of honeycomb or pureed fruit can be stirred through.

A home made ice-cream will freeze harder than commercial one; if too hard, move it from the freezer to the refrigerator half an hour before serving; home made ice-cream is best eaten within 48 hours of being made.

Ice-cream is descended from the flavoured ices eaten in China some 3000 years ago, the semi-solid iced fruit drinks of ancient Persia (the word ‘sherbet’ comes from sharbia, the Arab word for ‘drink’) and the ice sorbets of the Moghul emperors of the sixteenth century India. Thirteenth-century Venetian traveler Marco Polo returned from China with tales of frozen sweet cream dish; kulfi is an ancient Indian dish made with milk boiled until thick and then frozen. In sixteenth century the Florentine cooks of Catherine de’ Medici, bride of France’s Henri II, introduced the French to the frozen cream confection gelati; it was quickly taken up by fashionable Parisian cafés who served it in small silver bowls. The ice-cream churn invented by American Nancy Johnson in 1846 enabled good quality ice-cream to be made at home; it also made it possible to mass produce ice-cream and sell it commercially. The best ice-cream churns are electric or hand operated with salt and ice placed around the outside of the bucket containing the ice-cream. When the paddle stop, the ice-cream is ready.

**Iced Coffee** – Strong black coffee, sweetened, chilled and served in a tall glass with milk or topped with Chantilly cream. If

required, the coffee can be sweetened before being chilled; alternatively, a small jug of cooled sugar syrup (made by dissolving sugar in an equal quantity of hot water) can be served with it. Iced coffee is said to have been first concocted in Vienna in the seventeenth century, following a windfall booty of coffee beans left behind by the vanquished Turkish army which had unsuccessfully besieged the city.

**Iced Tea** – Tea brewed strong, stirred, sweetened to taste, strained and chilled. Serve in a tall glass, pour over ice cubes, and garnish with a slice of lemon and a sprig of mint. For a stronger mint taste, add bruised mint leaves to the brewing tea, sweeten, strain and chill; serve with ice cubes in a tall glass. Iced tea originated in St. Louis, in the United States, as a cool and refreshing drinks for patrons of the 1904 World Fair.

**Icing** – A sweet coating usually made with icing (confectioners') sugar and butter, used to decorate cakes and biscuits (cookies).

**Icing Sugar** (Confectioners' Sugar) – finely powdered granulated sugar use to make icings and frostings and in confectionery. Icing sugar mixture has a small amount of cornflour added to prevent it from drying out and turning lumpy during storage.

**Île Flottante (Floating Island)** – A dessert consisting of rich custard topped with an island of baked meringue coated in toffee or caramel. It is some times decorated with crushed praline (a confection of nuts and caramelized sugar) or toasted slivered almonds.

**Indian Food** – Although most people think of hot curries when they think of Indian food, many Indian dishes are not hot at all (although those from the south generally are). Some curries and rice dishes, especially from the northern regions, have a rich deep flavour and are spicy but not at all pungent.

Indian food differs according the region it originates from and according to the religious practices of its people. Hindus will not eat beef; Muslims will not eat pork. Southern Indians are the most part vegetarians this is partly because vegetables grow very well in the hot climate.

Rice is eaten in the south, chapattis (made from wheat flour) in the north. Delhi is famous for its tandoori dishes, Kashmiri for its lamb, Madras for its vegetarian dishes and Bombay for its fish.

Curry powder is never used in traditional Indian cooking: fresh spices are ground into a powder, mixed together and fried. Nearly every family cherishes its own recipes for spice mixtures. In India, meals are eaten with the fingers – of the right hand only. Chapattis are always torn with fingers and used to scoop up small quantities of food. When serving an Indian meal, be generous with the rice – an Indian meal uses a lot more rice and less meat or vegetables than a western meal would. Snacks are popular especially fried dishes. They are served as a first course or sometimes at tea-time.

**Indonesian Food** – In an Indonesian meal, all the food is laid out at once. The soup, if there is one, is not eaten first, but sipped between mouthfuls of the other food. Rice is the most important part of the Indonesian diet; it is eaten with every meal. Indonesians make good use of fresh, aromatic seasonings such as chillies, galangal, lemongrass, turmeric (both root and leaves), basil, mint, and curry leaves. The food is ready mixture of spicy and salty, pungent and sweet. The sweetness of the dishes comes from limes and tamarinds, and texture from candlenuts and peanuts. Indonesian dishes the most famous are rijsttafel and nasi goreng. Tempeh is a typically Indonesian ingredient, which is gaining popularity in the west. Made from soybeans, it is cut into thin matchsticks and fried with peanuts, onions, chillies, and tamarind. Tempeh is used in the same way as tofu and added to many dishes – vegetable, meat, and fish.

Satay is made by threading small pieces of meat onto a skewer, cooking them over coals and serving with a peanut sauce. Sambal, a fiery mixture of ground fresh chillies, salt and sometimes lime juice, tomatoes or brown sugar, is served with almost every meal. In poor families a meal might consist of just rice and sambal.

**Irish Coffee** – A mixture of Irish Whiskey and freshly brewed coffee, sweetened with sugar, topped with a layer of chilled cream and served at the end of an evening meal. It should be served in a tall coffee cup or a heatproof glass. Do not stir once the cream has been added: the hot beverage should be sipped through the layer of cream. The drink is said to have been invented in the 1950s by a barman at Dublin's Shannon Airport. Irish food – The traditional cooking of Ireland is more functional than fancy and is intended to sustain rather than excite. The style is straightforward and has been little influenced by the cuisines

of France or other European countries. None the less, the sheer quality of many of its ingredients (salmon fresh from the streams, high quality dairy products, succulent lamb, and excellent bacon) are a delicious compensation for any lack of culinary sophistication. In Ireland the day begins with a substantial cooked breakfast of porridge, bacon and eggs or fish, followed by toast and marmalade and tea and coffee. The midday meal, known as diner, is the main meal of the day. A light supper is eaten in the evening. The history of Ireland has been greatly influenced by the potato, the humble 'pratie', said to have been introduced to the island by Sir Walter Raleigh in the late sixteenth century. It was a godsend to a country constantly on the edge of famine, for when planted with potato, Ireland's poor soil yielded upto six times as much nourishment as when sown with grain. Ireland became one crop country, with both people and stock dependent for substance upon the vegetable. The failure of the blight infested 1845 potato harvest triggered a national disaster, and families across the land faced starvation. It was time when many of Ireland's people, her greatest export, were forced to flee to move fruitful soils. Potatoes remain a staple throughout rural Ireland. There are many traditional potato dishes – pratie cakes are scones made from mashed potato cooked on a griddle and served, buttered, for supper; champ is fluffy mashed potatoes enriched with milk and butter and sprinkled with chopped spring onions (scallions). The potato is also a basic ingredient in soups, stews, breads and pastry, and is predominant in Irish stew, traditionally made from a neck of mutton or lamb, onions and potatoes. Soda bread, made with buttermilk and raised with bicarbonate of soda, is found throughout Ireland. A fine array of seafood can be had in the fishing villages and the fish markets of the towns; delicious smoked mackerel is available throughout the year. Regional specialties include crubeen, pig's feet, from Cork and coddle, pork sausage and potato, from Dublin.

Ireland is also known for its black stout, introduced to the world in 1759 by Arthur Guinness. A favourite in the pub, it also features in the kitchen as a slightly bitter flavouring for beef stew and a rich fruitcake. Irish Whiskey, made from barley malt and wheat or oats and matured for seven years, is the secret to a successful Irish coffee. The Irish were the first to make whiskey, which they called uisce breatha, 'blessed water'. Legend has it they were taught the art of distilling, in which alcohol is produced from cereal grain instead of grapes, by St. Patric, patron saint of

Ireland, in the fifth century; it seems certain that Irish monks were busy at their skills long before they began selling the warming spirit outside the monasteries in the eleventh century.

**Irish Soda Bread** – Bread made with buttermilk or sour milk and leavened with bicarbonate of soda (baking soda). Currants, raisins, and caraway seed are often added. Soda bread is a specialty of Ireland and is baked in homes and bakeries throughout the country.

**Irish Stew** – A hearty stew in which mutton or lamb is arranged in alternate layers with sliced potatoes and onions, moistened with water and simmered. It is called a 'white stew' because the meat is not browned before being cooked with vegetables. There should be more potato than meat; during the long, slow cooking the potatoes break up and thicken the gravy. To serve, first lift out the potatoes, place the meat on top, cover with the gravy, and garnished with chopped parsley.

**Italian Food** – Italy produces some of the best-loved food in the world. The culinary difference between northern and southern Italy have become hazier – with pizza napoletana eaten not only in Naples but also in the north and all over the world, and risotto à la Milanese being enjoyed in Sicily as well as Milan. But it is the fact that Italian food is regional – and it is uses fresh local produce – which has made it so popular. From the south come olive oil, olives, tomatoes, and wheat. The cooking reflects this: pizza with tomato sauce, mozzarella, olives, anchovies; pasta with rich tomato sauce, olives, and fresh oregano. Eggplant (aubergine) dishes are popular, as are red peppers (capsicum) and artichokes. Seafood is prepared simply, usually grilled, or fried. The food of the north is more sophisticated. More meat is eaten, especially beef, – the charcoal-grilled bistecca of Florence is thought to be the best beef dish in Italy – and while pasta is popular all over Italy, rice in the form of risotto is a northern specialty. In northern Italy butter is used in preference to olive oil, and many cheeses are made there, notably Gorgonzola, mascarpone, and bel paese. The most famous cheese of the south, mozzarella is made from ewe's milk. Polenta is a batter made from cornmeal and is one of the favourite accompaniments of northern Italy. It is cooked, cooled, cut into squares, fried and served with quail and other meat and poultry dishes.

# J

**Jackfruit** – A large, barrel-shaped fruit with yellow-green knobbly skin and sweet, pungent-smelling creamy white flesh and numerous large white seeds.

A relative of the breadfruit and native to the rainforests of tropical India and Malaysia, it is now grown throughout tropical Asia and Africa. The crunchy flesh can be eaten on its own, added to fruit salad or pureed for use in ice-cream; it can also be boiled, deep-fried, or added to curries. The seeds can be cooked in the same way as chestnuts; in Africa they are ground into flour. Jackfruit is in season in summer; it is also available canned or preserved.

**Jalapeño Chilli** – A small, tapered, thick-fleshed, fiery-tasting chilli, the most common variety in North America. Fresh Jalapeño chillies are usually sold green, but bright red, fully ripe and slightly sweeter tasting forms can also be found; both green and red are available pickled in brine.

**Jalousie** – A pastry dessert of French origin consisting of a layer of thinly rolled puff pastry spread with a sweet filling such as marzipan (almond paste), stewed fruit or jam, then topped with a second layer of pastry which is glazed with beaten egg yolk and milk and cut into fine slats before baking.

**Jam (Jelly)** – A sweet spread made by cooking fruit in sugar and water until set. The setting power depends on the pectin content of the fruit (pectin occurs naturally in many ripe fruits, but commercial pectin can be added if there is insufficient in the mixture). The fruits that are abundant in pectin include apples, blackberries, lemons, oranges, quinces, and redcurrants. One of these can be combined with a strong-flavoured fruit, which is low in pectin to produce a good-setting jam. Jam is made from whole fruit that is either crushed or chopped and so differs from conserve, in which the fruit pieces remain intact, and from fruit jelly, which is made from fruit juice strained to remove all other matter and then boiled with sugar. Marmalade is similar in preparation to other jams, but only citrus fruit (either a single fruit or a mixture) is used.

**Jambalaya** – A peppery Cajun dish featuring rice, chicken, prawns (shrimp) and ham and derived from the Spanish paella. It is a specialty of Louisiana; the name is thought to come from jamón, the Spanish word for 'ham'.

**Japanese Food** – Rice is the staple food and a meal without rice is not considered a meal – it is a snack.

The three major ingredients used in Japanese cooking are fish stock, rice, and soybean products.

Sashimi (raw fish) is a delicacy considered the high point of any Japanese meal. The fish must be absolutely fresh, it is sliced, and served with a dipping sauce into which a little wasabi (green horseradish paste) is mixed.

Sushi are little rolls of vinegared rice wrapped in seaweed with a filling of fish and vegetables.

Tempura is probably the best-loved Japanese food in the West. It is made by dipping prawns (shrimps) and vegetables in a very light batter, deep-frying and serving immediately. Miso soup can be sipped through the meal or eaten at the beginning or the end. One-pot dishes such as sukiyaki are favourite restaurant dishes, where everyone cooks their own meat and vegetables in a central pot of stock. Food cooked on a teppan is also popular in the West. In teppan bars you sit at the bar and watch the chef cook the food for you on a hot griddle. He usually shows wonderful skill with his knife as he slices through vegetables and omelette rolls, so it's a bit of a show as well as a feast. Japanese food is among the most visually beautiful in the world. Appearance is rated as highly as taste.

**Jarlsberg** – A deep yellow, semi-hard, cow's milk cheese with a sweet nutty flavour. It is made by the hard cooked process (curd 'cooked' in heated whey is poured into a wheel-shaped mould to mature). The interior is dotted with large irregularly shaped holes sometimes called 'eyes'; the rind is covered with yellow wax. Jarlsberg is good eating cheese (let it reach room temperature before serving) and can be used on cheeseboards, in sandwiches and salads; it is also cooked in fondness and sauces. The cheese was developed in the late 1950s at the Jarlsberg estate in Norway.

**Jelly** – A clear or semi-clear food preparation with a soft elastic consistency due to the presence of gelatin or pectin.

There are several types of jelly; a spread made from fruit juice boiled with sugar to which

commercial pectin is often added; a cold dessert made with sugar and fruit juice and sometimes flavoured with a liqueur, then set with gelatin, often in a mould; aspic, made from meat, fish or vegetable stock set with gelatin and used as a garnish and glaze; and jellied confectioneries (candies) such as marshmallow, Turkish delight and jujubes, made from thick syrup set with gelatin.

**Jerky** – Meat, usually beef, which is cut into thin strips, salted and then cured by smoked or dried. It is one of the earliest methods of transforming meat into a non-perishable and easily transportable food.

**Jerusalem Artichoke** – See Artichoke.

**Jewish Food** – Although Jewish food comes from many different countries and has been influenced by the local produce of these diverse regions, a surprising number of the dishes are quite similar. Jewish cooking is closely linked to religious feast days. Plaited bread (challah), honey and eggs are all parts of feast day food, and they all have biblical connotations.

All fruits and vegetables are kosher (permitted) but there are strict rules regarding meat, fish, and dairy products. Pork is forbidden, as is game, shellfish and fish without scales. Dairy products may not be eaten in the same meal as meat dishes, nor prepared using the equipment. Many Jewish traditions have been taken up by non-Jews. For example the cooking of fish in olive oil. The oil must be fresh and hot, the fish is dusted with flour and cooked until brown on both sides. Even non-orthodox Jews eat traditional dishes on feast days: soup with matzo balls and charoseth (fruit and nut with red wine) at Passover and teiglach (honey cake) at Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year).

**Johnny Cake** – In North America the term refers to a flat, round unleavened bread made from a dough of cornmeal, water or milk and salt and cooked on a griddle; eggs and butter are sometimes added. In Australia, Johnny cakes are made from a flour, water and salt dough either cooked as small flat cakes on the embers of a camp fire or formed into strips, wound around a green stick and cooked over the fire.

**Julienne** – Food, especially vegetables such as carrot, turnip, celery, leek cut into thin, matchstick-sized pieces; they can be used in raw in salads or lightly cooked to serve as a garnish in soup or as a vegetable with main

courses. Cooked meat for salads can be cut the same way, as can citrus peel.

**Juniper Berry** – The aromatic, slightly resinous-flavoured dark berry of a small evergreen tree. Juniper berries are used to flavour gin (the word ‘gin’ comes from the Dutch jenever, ‘juniper’) and other spirits. Dried berries are added to marinades for wild boar, pork, and venison; used in stuffings for poultry and game birds and in the curing of hams; and often add flavours to slowly cooked meat dishes and sauerkraut. Crush berries before cooking to release the spicy pine aroma. Juniper berries are sold in small jars.

**Junket** – A sweet milk pudding, often flavoured with chocolate or vanilla, that is set by the curdling action of the enzyme rennet and served topped with grated nutmeg or cinnamon or garnished with crystallized (candied) lemon rinds. Junket is easily digested and is often served to invalids.

**Jus, au** – A French term applied to meat served in its own juices and it is boiled until reduced and concentrated. Au jus means ‘with the juice’.

## K

**Kale** – A strong flavoured leaf vegetable native to the Mediterranean. It is prepared and cooked in the same way as silver beet (Swiss chard).

**Kangaroo** – A lean, dark, high-protein meat similar in taste to venison. Kangaroo meat can be pan fried, roasted, barbecued, or casseroleed.

**Kasha** – An Eastern European dish made from buckwheat, butter, and milk.

**Kebab** – Small pieces of meat, poultry or seafood often marinated), threaded on a skewer and grilled (broiled) or barbecued.

**Kedgerie** – A mixture of rice and flaked white or smoked fish. Of Indian origin.

**Kibbi** – A Middle Eastern dish made from lean lamb, burghul (cracked wheat), and minced onion.

**Kidney** – Classed as offal, the kidney of lamb, calf, beefs, and pig vary in colour from light to deep red-brown. Lamb kidney can be cut in half and grilled (broiled); calf kidney can be cubed and braised; pork kidney is best slowly casseroled.

**Kidney Bean** – Dried, red-brown, kidney shaped seed of the haricot bean used in Mexican cooking and salads.

**Kipper** – A herring, split, gutted, and soaked in brine then dried and smoked. They are a favourite British breakfast.

**Kiwi Fruit** – Also known as Chinese gooseberry, an egg-shaped hairy fruit with sweet, juicy flesh and tiny black seeds. Eat fresh, peeled and sliced or cut in half; add to fruit salads or puree, ice-creams and sorbets.

**Kofta** – A dish popular in Asia and the Middle East consisting of ground meat or chicken balls cooked in a spicy sauce.

**Korma** – An Indian dish consisting of lean meat or chicken braised in a spicy yoghurt or cream sauce.

## L

**Ladies' Fingers** – A term used for several different foods, all slender and finger-shaped. Okra, a vegetable much used in North Africa and Caribbean dishes is known in some places as ladies' fingers, as are a small variety of bananas. A small, finger-shaped, crisp sponge biscuit (cookie) also carries the name. In Middle Eastern cooking the name can refer to thin rolls of filo pastry filled with either a spicy meat mixture or crushed nuts and honey.

**Lamb** – Meat from a sheep under one year old; milk fed or baby lamb is under 3-months old; spring lamb, 3-9 months. Lamb should be firm with fine-grained, reddish-pink meat with an edge of white fat; it is generally succulent and is suitable for roasting, grilling (broiling) and barbecuing. It features in the cuisines of

many countries. In Greece it is slow roasted in *kleftico*; in the Middle East kebabs are cubes of lamb marinated and grilled and the feast dish *mansaf* in lamb simmered in a spicy yoghurt sauce; *mechoui*, eaten in North Africa and the Middle East, is whole lamb roasted on the spit; in France roasting joints of lamb are basted with buttery stock; in Iran lamb is stewed; spicy-sauced Mongolian lamb is a Chinese favourite; and in the British Isles lamb is the essential ingredient in the Irish stew and Lancashire hot pot. In India lamb is the main meat.

**Lamington** – A small cube of sponge or butter cake dipped in the thin chocolate icing and then coated in desiccated coconut. The Lamington originated in Australia and is said to be named often after Lord Lamington, governor of Queensland from 1895 to 1901,

**Lancashire Hot Pot** – A warming stew of lamb, onions, and potatoes, topped with a crust of overlapping potato slices. It originally also contained mushrooms and oysters and was cooked in a special earthenware pot.

**Langue de Chat** – A crisp, flat oblong biscuit (cookie) served with iced desserts, fruit salad, dessert wines and champagne. Its name in French for 'cat's tongue', a reference to its shape.

**Lard** – Rendered pork fat, pure white in colour and virtually odourless, used to make pie – crusts and biscuits or as a frying and roasting medium.

**Larding** – The process of inserting strips of pork or bacon fat into cuts of lean meat and game to add additional juiciness and flavour during cooking. The strips, called *lardoons*, are inserted with a larding needle, a hollow stainless steel skewer.

**Lasagne** – A variety of Italian pasta. It is flat and wide with either straight or wavy edges. Lasagne sheets are boiled in water, drained, then combined with cheese, and baked. There is a pre-cooked Lasagne, which does not need boiling.

**Lassi** – A refreshing yoghurt drink popular in India and the Middle East. It is made by blending plain yoghurt with iced water and traditionally is seasoned to taste with salt and pepper, although for a sweetened version this can be replaced by sugar. Serve in a tall glass with ice cubes.

**Lebanese Food** – The ingredients that predominate in Lebanese cooking are sesame seeds, pistachios, burghul (cracked wheat), filo pastry, chickpeas, and yoghurt. Outside of the country, the most famous Lebanese dishes are tabouli – a salad made from burghul, parsley, mint, and tomatoes; falafel – little balls of crushed chickpeas; and hummus, a dip made from pureed chickpeas, sometimes with tahini (sesame seed paste) added. These three are often rolled into a round of pitta bread, the result of which is universally known as a falafel sandwich. In fact, like the food of many Middle Eastern countries, it is a subtle and elegant cuisine. Kibbeh, one of Lebanon's most famous meat dishes, is made from lamb and there are many varieties of lamb pastries too. The most common vegetables in Lebanese cooking are those of the Mediterranean eggplant (aubergine), zucchini (courgette), and tomatoes. But okra features as well, as do broad beans (fava beans) and cucumbers. The Lebanese are fond of sweet, fragrant desserts and use orange flower water and rose water, honey, nuts and spices.

**Leek** – A member of the onion family valued for its fleshy, mild-flavoured stem. When preparing leeks, remove the outer layers, cut off roots and base and tough dark green tops; thoroughly wash to remove all dirt and grit. Leeks can be steamed, boiled or braised as a hot vegetable; cooked in soups, pies, tarts and stir-fries; or served cold, as a salad with a mayonnaise or vinaigrette dressing. They are in season in winter. The leek was grown in ancient Egypt, and 3500 years ago was mentioned in a Chinese food guide. The emperor Nero is said to have supped daily on leek soup, believing it would strengthen his voice for delivering orations. In Celtic Britain the vegetable patch was called a leactun, 'leek enclosure'; it has a particular association with Wales and is that country's national emblem. On St. David's Day, pieces of leek are worn in the buttonhole to commemorate the famous seventh century victory over the Saxons by the Welsh warriors of king Cadwallader.

**Legumes** – A group of plants which bear their seeds in pods, especially beans, peas, and lentils. Legumes are a good source of protein in meatless diets. They have been used since the earliest times, from the soybean of Asia to the lentils of ancient Egypt and the beans of the Americas.

**Leicester** – A semi-hard cow's milk cheese with a moist, crumbly texture and mellow

flavour; its deep orange colour comes from Annatto dye. A good snack and sandwich cheese, it goes well with fruits and salad vegetables and is an excellent cooking cheese. It originated near the village of Melton Mowbray, in Leicestershire, England.

**Lemon** – An oval yellow-skinned citrus fruit with pale yellow, tart tasting flesh. Although not usually eaten on its own, it is the most versatile and widely used of all fruits as its juice and fragrant rind are used to flavour a wide range of sweet and savoury dishes, and in drinks, marinades, sauces and icings. Slices and wedges of lemon is a common garnish. Its juice stops cut fruit from turning brown when exposed to the air. The lemon is a good source of vitamin C. fresh lemons are available throughout the year; lemon juice can be tough frozen or as a concentrate. The lemon probably originated in northern India, from it spread to China and to the Middle East.

**Lemon Balm** – A member of the mint family with crinkle edged, heart-shaped, lemon-scented leaves. The leaves can be added to almost any dish using lemon juice. They are also used to make a soothing tea. The sweet scented flowers are the basis of the cordial eau des Carmes. Lemon balm is easy to grow and is best-used fresh.

**Lemon Butter** – Also known as lemon curd and lemon cheese, a sweet spread made from lemon juice, lemon rind, egg, butter and sugar. It is also used as filling for tarts cakes and biscuits (cookies).

**Lemon Grass** – A tall, tufted, sharp-edged grass with a strong citrus flavour, common in tropical South-East Asia. The whitish, slightly bulbous base of the stem is used especially in the cooking of Thailand and Vietnam; it flavours curries, soups, stews, and casseroles, particularly those made with chicken and seafood. To prepare lemon grass for adding fragrant juices, or make cuts down the stem, leaving the bottom intact remove the stalk before serving. Lemon grass is available fresh. Dried ground and shredded stalks are also available (ground stalks can be added directly to the dish, shredded stalks must first be soaked). Lemon grass is very easy to grow. Grated lemon rind and a pinch of finely shredded ginger can be substituted for fresh lemon grass.

**Lentil** – The tiny, flat disc-shaped seed of an annual plant of the legume (pod bearing)



family. Lentils are a good source of vegetable protein and have been used as a food since prehistoric times. The brown lentil (sometimes called the continental lentil) has a bland, nutty flavour when cooked; it is often added to stews and casseroles, and can be used in salads. Red lentils (which can be yellow or orange and are also known as split lentils) are much used in Asian cooking; they have a subtle spicy flavour and are used for the Indian dish dal. Both brown and red lentils are used to make vegetarian loaves and patties. Lentils are sold in dried form or pre-cooked in cans; they are also processed into flour. In ancient Egypt, lentils were grown, eaten and exported in large quantities, mainly to Greece and Rome, where they provided protein in the diets of the poor.

**Lettuce** – A plant valued for its large, succulent leaves which are mainly used in salads, although they are sometimes braised or steamed and served as a hot vegetable. Today's lettuces descend from loose-leaved plants native to the Middle East and they have been cultivated there since ancient times. Lettuce was eaten by the Greeks, Persians and Egyptians; by 500BC it was one of the most popular vegetables in Italy and remained a favourite with the Romans over the following centuries. In its wild form it spread into northern and western Europe, where it was gathered but, until the ninth century, not cultivated. In China lettuce has been cultivated since the fifth century; Christopher Columbus introduced it into the Americas.

There are three main types of lettuce: butterhead (including the mignonette and butter) with soft-textured, loosely packed leaves; crisphead (including the iceberg and bibb) with crisp, tightly packed leaves; and cos (romaine), with long dark green leaves. Lettuce, either a single variety or a mixture, can be made into a green salad or can be made into a green salad or can be used as the basis of a number of other salad dishes.

**Leyden** – A semi-hard cow's milk cheese with a tangy taste and a dark-yellow, dryish texture. It is usually spiced with caraway seeds; varieties flavoured with cumin and cloves or a mixture of the three spices are also available. Leyden is made in cylinder shapes, is coloured with annatto dye, and has a dark yellow rind covered in red wax stamped with two crossed keys, the symbol of the Dutch City of Leyden.

**Lima-Bean** – A bean with pale green or white slightly kidney-shaped seeds. They are mainly used in their dried form (added to

soups and casseroles or served in salads), although they can also be cooked fresh as a vegetable. The lima bean does not come from Lima (in Peru) but from Guatemala. It is available fresh, dried, canned, and frozen.

**Limburger** – A semi soft cow's milk cheese with a powerful aroma, distinctive, tangy taste, and a yellow, creamy textured interior covered by a thin, red brown rind. It should be served at room temperature on the cheeseboard, accompanied by dark bread and strong flavoured vegetables such as onion and radish.

**Lime** – A green skinned citrus fruit about the size of a small lemon with tart greenish-yellow pulp. Its juice and grated zest adds a piquant flavour to both sweet dishes (ice-creams, sorbets, mousses, soufflés and pie fillings) and savoury dishes (curries and stews, especially chicken and fish), it is cooked as marmalade and its juice is used in cordial and other drinks. The lime is native to the tropics and is much used in the cooking of those regions; the Spanish introduced it to the Caribbean in the sixteenth century. In South America and the Pacific Islands lime juice is used to 'cook' raw fish in the dish ceviche. Its sharpness is the key lime pie (named for the lime variety that grows semi-wild or the Florida Keys) gives an agreeable bite to the sweet creamy filling. Pickled lime is served with meat and fish dishes; the peel can be crystallized (candied) for a garnish. Fresh limes are in season in spring and autumn.

**Linzer Torte** – A rich jam tart consisting of a cinnamon and nut flavoured shortbread base filled with raspberry jam and covered with a lattice of pastry strips. It is served in thin wedges. The Linzer torte takes its name from the Austrian town of Linz.

**Liqueur** – An alcoholic syrup distilled from wine or brandy and flavoured with fruit, herbs or spices. Liqueurs are available in a wide variety of flavours and alcoholic content. Crème de cacao is made from the cocoa bean; Kümmel is flavoured with caraway seed and Ouzo with aniseed. Cointreau gets its strong orange tang from orange peel, while many other fruit liqueurs are made by macerating the fruit with spirit and adding sugar. Some liqueurs are flavoured with herbs or spices. Liqueurs are used to flavour a range of sweet dishes and savoury dishes; they are also served in special small glasses to be sipped with coffee after a meal.

**Liver** – Classified as offal, the liver of lamb, sheep, calf, ox (beef), pig, poultry, and game are eaten. Liver is the organ that purifies the blood of an animal. It is red brown meat with a distinctive flavour. To prepare liver for cooking, first wash and pat dry; remove the thin outer skin and cut away any fat, gristle and veining. Slice thinly and uniformly and cook until the pink colour disappears (care should be taken not to overcook as the meat toughens easily). Liver can be fried, grilled (broiled), braised or casseroled. Calf liver or lamb's liver (sometimes called lamb's fry) sautéed with bacon is a popular breakfast. Goose and chicken liver are used to make pâté.

**Liverwurst** – A soft sausage containing a smooth mixture of liver, ground pork, onion, and seasonings. Liverwurst is used as a spread on bread or savoury biscuit (crackers) and can be added to stuffings. It has a long history in many regions of Europe and was often used to garnish roast meats on festive occasions.

**Lobster** – A large saltwater crustacean related to the crayfish and crab. The shell of the living lobster is bluish green to pinkish-brown, depending on the species; the shell of the cooked lobster is bright red. The lobster has a huge pincers or claws (actually modified legs) and uses its tail to move through the water in quick, backward movements. Lobster can be boiled or grilled (broiled). The cooked meat is firm-textured, white, sweet, and moist; it is usually served in the shell with various sauces. The coral-coloured roe (sometimes called coral butter) present in the female lobster is considered a delicacy and should either be served with the meat or added to the sauce. Most of the meat is in the claws and tail; use a nutcracker to break open the claws. Live lobsters are available throughout the year (keep live lobster in a damp hessian bag until ready to use) or frozen and uncooked either whole or as tails. Precooked whole lobsters should have bright eyes, a curled tail that springs back when raised and all limbs intact; pre-cooked tails are also available. Cooked meat is available frozen or in cans.

**Loganberry** – A large, soft, pink to red berry fruit. The loganberry is a hybrid between the blackberry (from which it takes its shape) and raspberry (from which it takes its flavour). It was developed in the 1880s by Scottish-born Californian judge and amateur horticulturist James H. Logan and was first exhibited in England in 1897. The loganberry can be eaten fresh, served whole as a dessert topped with

cream, ice-cream or liqueur; pureed for use in ice-cream, sorbets, soufflés, mousses or foofs; or cooked as a filling for pies and tarts or as jam.

**Longan** – An oval-shaped fruit of Asian origin. It is similar to the lychee, but smaller, and has a dull, red brown skin and sweet, firm, translucent flesh surrounding a dark brown stone. The Longan can be eaten fresh, added to fruit salad or savoury salad, or poached for use in sweet and savoury dishes. Longan is in season in late summer and early autumn; it is also available canned (preserved in syrup) and dried. Dried longan can be eaten as it is, as you would other dried fruit, or added to braised and sweet and sour Chinese dishes. The fruit's Chinese name is lung-yen means 'dragons – eye'.

**Loquat** – The pear shaped fruit of a small evergreen tree native to Asia and nowadays grows in the lands of the Mediterranean. It is the size of a small plum with glossy yellow-orange skin and crisp, juicy, tart-sweet yellow flesh. It can be eaten fresh on its own, added to fruit salads or other desserts (in Asia it is often set in a jelly of agar-agar) or cooked as jellies and jam.

**Lotus** – A type of water lily native to China and India. All parts of the plants are edible, but it is the crunchy, reddish – coloured root that is most widely used: stir-fried, braised, coated in batter and deep-fried or simmered in stock. The root is perforated with holes and when sliced in cross-section makes an attractive garnish, much utilized in Japanese cooking. Lotus seeds can be eaten raw, boiled or grilled (broiled) or, cooked, sweetened and mashed, used as a filling for Japanese and Chinese pastries and cakes. Dried lotus leaves are used as food wrappers (they impart a leafy flavour to food, but are tough and not meant to be eaten). Lotus root is available fresh and canned; lotus seeds are available dried and canned.

**Lychee (litchi)** – A small oval fruit about the size of a large cherry with sweet, pale pink flesh similar in flavour to a grape, and thin, knobbly, reddish skin. The flesh surrounds a shiny brown stone. The flesh surrounds a shiny brown stone. Lychees can be eaten fresh on their own, added to fruit salads and to savoury salads or served as a dessert with cream or ice-cream; poached, they can be added to both sweet and savoury dishes. Lychees are in season in summer; the fruit is also available

canned and dried. The lychee is native to southern China and has been cultivated there for some 4,000 years.

**Lyonnaise, à la** – A French term for food cooked with chopped and sautéed onions, a style characteristic of the Lyonnaise region of eastern France.

## M

**Macadamia Nut** – The round, hard-shelled, creamy-fleshed nut of a tree native to Australia. Fresh or roasted nuts are eaten as a snack; crushed nuts can be added to ice-cream or used in biscuits (cookie), cakes or breads; whole nuts are coated with chocolate as a confectionery (candy).

**Macaroni** – Pasta in the form of short, dried, hollow tubes.

**Macaroon** – A small, flat, round biscuit (cookie), crunchy on the outside and soft and moist on the inside, made from ground almonds mixed with sugar and egg white. Macaroons originated in France and are a specialty of the Nancy region.

**Mace** – The fibrous, lacy skin that envelops the nutmeg, but which has its own distinctive flavour and is used as aspic. It is made up of numerous tendrils called blades; the spice is also sold in ground form. Blade mace is used to flavour clear soups, jellies, and pale sauces; ground mace is used to season English potted meats, pork dishes, and béchamel sauce.

**Mackerel** – A saltwater fish with oily, dark, firm-textured flesh. It is suitable for baking, grilling (broiling), pan-frying, and poaching.

**Madeira Cake** – A rich cake flavoured with lemon or orange juice and baked with a slice citron peel on top. In Victorian England the cake was traditionally served with a glass of Madeira wine.

**Madeleine** – Small cake baked in shell-shaped mould and served dusted with finely

powdered sugar. They are a specialty of the town of Commercy, is northeastern France.

**Madrilène** – A clear soup (chicken or vegetable) thickened and flavoured with tomato pulp and usually served chilled.

**Maître d'hôtel Butter** – Softened butter mixed with chopped parsley, lemon juice and freshly ground white pepper, then chilled until firm. It is served on top of grilled (broiled) steak and fish.

**Maize** – See Corn.

**Malt** – The term given to a grain, usually barley, which has been soaked, sprouted, roasted, and crushed. During this process the starchy content of the grain is converted by partial fermentation into sugar. Further processing of malt produces beer; distillation results in whisky. Malt extract, which comes in syrup or dried form, can be added to drinks, cakes, puddings, and bread dough.

**Mandarin** – A small, loose-skinned citrus fruit with sweet, juicy, easily separated segments. It can be eaten as a fruit, used in fruit salad, or made into marmalade. The fruit is also known as the tangerine, after the seaport of Tangier in Morocco where it has long been grown.

**Mange Tout** – See Snow Pea.

**Mango** – A tropical fruit with juicy, sweet, golden flesh clinging to a large seed. Mangoes are delicious eaten fresh; perhaps the least messy way into slice a cheek from each side of the seed, score the flesh into small squares then push the skin upwards so that the cubes bristle like a porcupine.

Mango is sometimes cooked in curries and other savoury dishes (it goes well with chicken). It is also made into chutney and pickles, which are often served with curries. Mango pulp can be used in ice-cream, mousse, and sorbet. Mangoes are in season in summer; they are also available canned.

**Mangosteen** – A tropical fruit, about the size and shape of an apple, with a shiny, thick, purple skin containing four to six segments of soft, white, lychee-like flesh. It is eaten fresh as a fruit. To prepare, cut in half, then scoop out the flesh with a tea spoon.

**Manioc** – See Cassava.

**Maple Syrup** – The sap of various species of maple tree, boiled down into a syrup that varies in colour from pale amber (considered the finest) to dark amber (used mainly in cooking). Maple syrup is poured over pancakes, waffles, ice-cream, and other desserts. Maple-flavoured syrup is a blend of pure maple syrup and corn syrup.

**Maraschino** – A liqueur made from a bitter black cherry called marasca. Maraschino cherries are sweet cherries that have been bleached, stoned, then steeped in a sugar flavoured with maraschino liqueur; they are used in baking and as a garnish for cocktails.

**Marble Cake** – A cake which, when sliced, has a marble-like appearance, achieved by colouring the portions of the batter (pink, chocolate and plain) then mixing them in the pan before baking.

**Marengo** – A dish of chicken cooked with tomato, mushroom, garlic, and wine. It was created for Napoleon in 1800, following his victory over the Austrians at the battle of Marengo, and cooked for him on the battlefield.

**Margarine** – A butter-like spread made from vegetable oil or a combination of vegetable and animal oils. In most recipes margarine can be substituted for butter. Polyunsaturated and monounsaturated margarines are made from a refined and purified vegetable oil and have a smooth, easy-to-spread consistency. Cooking or block (stick) margarine is firmer, contains saturated animal fats and vegetable oils, and is used like butter for frying and baking.

**Marinade** – A seasoned mixture in which raw meat, poultry, fish or seafood is steeped (or marinated) before cooking, both to tenderize by softening the fibres and to add flavour.

**Marjoram** – Also known as sweet marjoram, an aromatic herb with spicy flavoured, small grey-green leaves, which are, used in meat, poultry, egg, cheese, cabbage, green bean, and tomato dishes. Oregano, a similar but more strongly flavoured herb, is also known as wild marjoram.

**Marmalade** – A thick, jam-like spread made from citrus fruit and peel (either a single fruit

as a combination). It is usually eaten at breakfast, on hot buttered toast.

**Marrow, Bone** – A fatty tissue found in the centre of animal bones. It is pale-coloured and when cooked and cooled, has a smooth, jelly like texture. Raw marrow extracted from larger beef bones may be chopped and added to stuffings; cooked marrow is spread on toast as an hors d'oeuvre or cooked in dishes such as Milanese risotto.

**Marrow, Vegetable** – A sausage-shaped vegetable belonging to the same family as the zucchini (courgette). Young marrows have the best flavour and most delicate flesh and can be cooked in the same way as zucchini. Large older marrows have a high water content and bland flavour and are best stuffed with a savoury filling and baked, or cooked gently in butter and their own juice.

**Marshmallow** – A whipped confectionery (candy) with a springy, puff texture made from gelatin, sugar, flavouring, and colouring. It is commercially available in bite-sized, sugar-dusted portions or can be made at home.

**Marzipan** – A confectionery (candy) made from a sugar and water syrup, almond paste, and sometimes egg white cooked, cooled, and then kneaded into a smooth firm paste. It is cut or moulded into small shapes, which are used to decorate cakes, or it is boxed as gift confectionery; it is used as a coating under the top icing of rich fruitcakes.

**Mascarpone** – A fresh unripened, soft, creamy cheese, made from cow's milk cream, with a high fat content and a rich, buttery taste. It is usually served as a dessert with sweetened fruit or mixed with brandy or liqueurs.

**Matzo** – A thin sheet of unleavened bread, usually made with wheat flour, and only. It is traditionally eaten during the Jewish Passover when only unleavened products are eaten. Matzo meal, made from ground matzo crackers, is used in place of breadcrumbs at Passover.

**Mayonnaise** – A cold uncooked sauce made by whisking oil and egg yolk into an emulsion. It is flavoured with lemon juice, vinegar, or mustard and seasonings.

Mayonnaise is served as a salad dressing and accompaniment to cold meat, fish, and egg dishes; it is the basis of many other cold sauces.

**Meat** – The flesh of animals used for food. The term often refers only to lamb, beef, pork and some game and not to poultry, fish, and seafood.

**Meatballs** – small balls made of minced (ground) beef, lamb, veal, or pork seasoned and bound with beaten egg or breadcrumbs. Meatballs can be steamed, simmered, shallow-fried or deep-fried and served either as finger food (with a dipping sauce) or as a first or main course.

**Meatloaf** – A mixture of minced (ground) beef, pork or veal (or a combination of these), seasoned, bound together with beaten egg, breadcrumbs or rice, formed into a loaf shape and baked; it can be eaten hot or cold and is usually served with sauce or gravy.

**Medlar** – A plum-sized fruit with yellowish-brown skin and firm greyish flesh borne on a tree native to Central Asia. Edible only when over-ripe it has a wine like flavour. It can be made into preserves.

**Melba Toast** – Thin crisp slices of crust less bread served with dips, pâtés, and creamy soups. It was originally created for the Australian opera singer Dame Nellie Melba.

**Melon** – Large fruit with a thick rind and juicy flesh. The many varieties fall into three main groups: round with netted, bark-like skin, fragrant orange flesh and a cluster of pale seeds in the centre, such as the cantaloupe (rockmelon), gallia melon and Persian melon; oval and smooth-skinned with creamy white to dark green sweet flesh and a central cluster of seeds such as the honeydew, casaba, charentais, crenshaw, ogen melon

**Microwave** – These ovens produce microwaves which are absorbed by food molecules; they cause the molecule to vibrate rapidly, creating friction which provides the heat that cooks the food. Microwave cooking is much faster than conventional cooking. It is best used for foods that are usually boiled, steamed, or poached and is particularly successful with vegetables, fruit, and fish. The microwave oven is an excellent way to defrost or reheat food.

**Mille-Feuille** – A pastry consisting of layers of crisp puff pastry interspersed with layers of whipped cream or crème pâtissière and jam (usually strawberry or raspberry). The top pastry layer is glazed or dusted with finely

powdered sugar or glazed with icing (frosting). Savoury mille-feuille, with a filling of creamy salmon or shellfish, may be served as a first course or as a buffet or luncheon dish.

**Mincemeat** – Finely chopped dried fruit and fresh apple, mixed with suet or butter and sweet spices and soaked with brandy, rum or Madeira; used as a filling for tarts and pies, traditionally served at Christmas.

**Minestrone** – A hearty soup of Italian origin. Minestrone varies from region to region, but basically contains fresh vegetables and dried beans, simmered slowly in beef stock and thickened with pasta or rice.

**Mint** – A herb with a strong fresh scent and flavour. There are many varieties. Most used in cooking is spearmint, which is made into jelly and sauce to accompany lamb, goes well with peas, and boiled potatoes, is finely, chopped as an ingredient in Middle Eastern salads and dips, and flavours drink. Apple mint, lemon mint and pineapple mint are often added to fruit salads. Peppermint oil is used in the confectionery (candy) industry.

**Miso** – A thick, salty, nutty-flavoured paste made from mashed and salted soybeans mixed with rice, barley, or wheat grains, then fermented. Light or yellow miso, made with rice, is sweet and creamy and is used as flavouring for soups, casseroles, and general cooking. When using miso in hot dishes, add just before serving and do not allow to boil.

**Mixed Grill** – A dish consisting of several varieties of grilled (broiled) meat and vegetables, such as lamb chops, steak, sausages, kidney, liver, bacon, tomato, onion, and mushroom.

**Mixed Spice** – Also known as pudding spice, a traditional English blend of sweet spices, generally nutmeg, cinnamon, cloves and ginger, but sometimes also including allspice and coriander, used in rich fruit cakes, puddings and biscuits (cookies).

**Mocha** – A strongly flavoured Arabian coffee bean, originally grown near the Red Sea named after the Yemenite seaport from which it was exported. In cooking, 'mocha' refers to food (such as ice-cream or cakes) flavoured with coffee or a chocolate mixture.

**Mock Cream** – A fresh cream substituted used as a filling for cakes and buns. It is

generally made by beating together icing (confectioners) sugar and butter until stiff and fluffy.

**Molasses** – A thick, dark syrup produced in the manufacture of cane sugar.

**Monosodium Glutamate** – A sodium salt with little flavour of its own. It occurs naturally in many foods and is manufactured for use as an additive (mainly in Asian cooking) to enhance the natural flavour of a dish.

**Monetary Jack** – A cheddar-style, cow's milk cheese, and pale yellow in colour.

**Mornay Sauce** – A béchamel sauce flavoured with gruyère or parmesan cheese and used to coat seafood, egg and vegetable dishes to be browned under the griller (broiler) or in the oven.

**Moroccan Food** – Unlike its North African neighbours Moroccan food is spiced with subtlety. Lemon is a favourite flavour and preserved lemon peel is used in many of its most famous dishes. Cinnamon, coriander, and orange flower water are also common. The exception to this subtle flavouring is harissa, a fiery condiment used in Algeria and Tunisia as well. Its main ingredients are chillies, garlic, and coriander and it is served with couscous and soups.

Couscous is probably the most famous dish from North Africa. It is made from semolina and steamed over a rich stew of meat and vegetables traditionally in a couscoussier, a metal pan topped with a steamer. The meat and vegetables cook in the bottom while the cook in the top. In Morocco couscous is sometimes served as a sweet dish, flavoured with cinnamon. An example of the Moroccans' penchant for sweet dishes is Tangine. It is a slow-cooked stew, often made with lamb or mutton flavoured with quinces and honey. In Morocco, food is eaten with the fingers.

**Mortadella** – A large, lightly smoked sausage made of pork or mixtures of either pork and beef or veal and ham, mixed with coarsely diced pork fat, seasoned, flavoured with parsley and studded with green olives and pistachio nuts. It is served, thinly sliced, as an hors d'oeuvre, salad meat, or sandwich filling.

**Moussaka** – A baked dish consisting of eggplant (aubergine), minced (ground) lamb or beef and a topping of cheese sauce. It is

throughout the Middle East and, despite its Arabic name, most likely originated in Greece.

**Mousse** – A rich, light sweet or savoury dish that derives its smooth, foamy texture from whisked egg white, whipped cream, or both. It may be served hot or cold. The name comes from the French word for froth or foam.

**Mousseline** – A mousse like dish in which meat, seafood, or poultry is folded into a beaten cream and egg white mixture and cooked in small moulds.

**Mozzarella** – A rind less, unripened curd cheese, with a soft, plastic texture and a mild slightly sweet, milky taste. It was originally made from buffalo milk; for two three days only, it should be used within a few days of purchase. Mozzarella is primarily a cooking cheese, used in pizza and pasta, and melted as a topping.

**Muesli** – A breakfast food of mixed raw cereals, bran, wheat germ, nuts, and dried fruit eaten with milk or yoghurt.

**Muffin** – also known as American muffin, a light, sweet, soft bread baked in small, deep, round moulds. Basic muffins are made from a batter of egg, milk, flour, and sugar. Sweet or savoury flavouring can be added.

**Mulberry** – A juicy berry, similar in appearance to a blackberry. Mulberries may be eaten fresh dusted with sugar and accompanied by cream, can be pureed for sorbets and ice-cream, stewed as a pie filling or made into jam. They are not usually commercially available (the berries are easily crushed), but the tree is common in gardens and bears a copious crop each summer.

**Mulligatawny** – A spicy, soup like dish of boiled rice topped with peppery, curry-flavoured chicken or meat broth. The dish dates from the days of British Raj in India.

**Münster** – A soft cow's milk cheese with a texture that varies from smooth and waxy to dry and crumbly. It has a distinctive pungent taste and aroma.

**Mushroom** – Edible fungus found in a variety of shapes and sizes and ranging in taste from mild and nutty too strong and meaty. The may be eaten raw, in salads, or cooked. The most widely cultivated is the common

mushroom with an umbrella-shaped cap that opens out as the mushroom grows. The youngest are sold as button mushroom or champignons; next in size are cups (popular for stuffing); largest and with the most developed flavour are flats. The cap is a round-capped and stalked mushroom valued for its earthy flavours. The chanterelle or girolle, an apricot coloured, firm-fleshed, trumpet-shaped mushroom has a meaty flavour. The morel has a pointed, spongy, golden brown cap with a meaty flavour. Asian mushroom varieties include the matsutake or pine mushroom, which has a dark brown cap and a thick meaty stem and, lightly grilled, is considered a great delicacy in Japan. Also used in Japanese cooking is the Enokitake or Enoki, a tiny mushroom with a round cap atop a slender stem. Mild-flavoured and crisp in texture, the Enokitake is used in soups and stews. The large floppy cap of the shiitake mushroom, usually sold dried, is used in Chinese and Japanese cooking.

**Mussel** – A mollusk with a smooth almond shaped shell. Like oysters, mussels are filter feeders, and so are subject to contamination. They should not be collected from areas where pollution is suspected. Mussels are available live in the shell or canned (cooked, smoked or in various sauces).

**Mustard** – A pungently flavoured spice derived from the seeds of three members of the cabbage family and usually prepared as a condiment. White mustard, the mildest in flavour, is used in American mustards; brown and black mustard have more pungent seeds than white mustard. Black mustard seeds are used in Indian cooking and in pickles and chutneys. Brown or black mustard seeds (alone or in combination) are ground into mustard powder (used to make English mustard) or made into French-style mustards. Prepared mustard is made by macerating mustard seeds in a liquid (grape juice, wine, vinegar, or water) and then pounding them to a paste. It is as an accompaniment to meats, poultry, and fish and as flavouring in vinaigrettes, sauces, and some hot dishes.

**Mutton** – The meat of a mature sheep, best suited to moist cooking.

## N

**Naan** – A tear-shaped, flat leavened Indian bread, traditionally baked plastered onto the inside walls of the Tandoor, an urn-shaped clay oven.

**Nam Pla** – See Nuoc Mam.

**Napoleon** – A small pastry consisting of three layers of puff pastry filled with crème pâtissière or sweetened whipped cream, and topped with glacé icing decorated with lines of melted chocolate.

**Nashi** – A golden green pear the shape and size of an apple. The translucent flesh is crisp, juicy and sweet and the fruit may be eaten on its own or served with cheese. The nashi is also known as Asian pear, apple pear, and Chinese pear. It is in autumn and early winter.

**Nasi Goreng** – An Indonesian dish consisting of fried rice garnished with chillies, thinly sliced meat, fried onions and slices of omelette.

**Navarin** – A French term for a rich stew of lamb or mutton cooked with root vegetables, usually small onions and potatoes. It can also be the name given to a ragout garnished with turnips.

**Nectarine** – A round shiny, reddish skinned fruit with fragrant juicy flesh surrounding a large stone; it is a variety of peach. Nectarines can be eaten fresh, added to fruit salads, stewed or baked; they are in season in late summer.

**Nesselrode Pudding** – A chilled custard dessert made from chestnut puree, egg yolk, cream and sometimes glacé (candied) fruit.

**Neufchâtel Cheese** – A fresh unripened, soft, white cow's milk cheese made from whole or partly skimmed milk. In taste and appearance it is similar to cream cheese, but is softer in texture, more moist and has a lower fat content. Neufchâtel can be eaten fresh with fruit or used for cheesecakes, mousses, icings, and cake toppings.

**Newburg** – Shellfish, usually lobster, sautéed and served with a rich sauce of cream, sherry, and egg yolk.

**Niçoise, à la** – A French term for dishes which have tomato, garlic, black olives, anchovy and olive oil in the sauce. This style of cooking originated around Nice, in southern France.

**Noisette** – A French term for dishes flavoured with or made of hazelnuts. It is also used to describe a thick slice from a boned loin of lamb, rolled, and secured with a thin band of fat, like a tournedos.

**Noisette Butter** – A sauce made by slowly heating butter until foaming and nut-brown, adding lemon juice, then immediately pouring over fish, brains or cooked vegetables.

**Noodle** – A dough of flour and water (sometimes made with egg yolk or whole egg) cut into long, ribbon like strips and fried or boiled. Noodles originated in Asia and also feature in the cooking of the Mediterranean, particularly Italy, and northern Europe. The name comes from the German Nudel.

**Nougat** – A chewy confectionery (candy) traditionally made of honey, sugar, egg white, and nuts.

**Nouvelle Cuisine** – A style of cooking which emphasizes fresh, natural ingredients and flavours, simple cooking based on reduced stocks and purees rather than fats and flour.

**Nuoc Mam** – Also called nam pla; literally 'fish water', a clear, amber-coloured seasoning sauce with a pungent, salty flavour. It is used in Vietnamese and Thai cooking to bring out the flavour in other foods. Vietnamese nuoc mam is darker in colour and has a stronger fishy taste than other types.

**Nut** – A hard-shelled seed, particularly one with an edible kernel. They are among the earliest of human foods. Nuts are at home in cakes, desserts, and confectionery (candy) as well as in curries and stir-fries; roasted nuts are a popular snack food.

**Nutmeg** – A hard, brown oval seed which is ground into a pungent spice; it a most fragrant when freshly grated.

# O

**Oat Bran** – The coarse outer layer of the oat, removed in the milling process. Oat bran is used in cooking and is regarded as a good source of soluble fibre. It can be added to bread, muffin, and biscuit (cookie) dough's, to hamburgers, rissoles and meat loaves, and is often eaten at breakfast sprinkled on cereal or chopped fruit.

**Oat Cake** – A cake of unleavened bread made from oatmeal, water, and a small amount of fat. Traditionally in northern England dallops of dough were cooked on a hot griddle until firm, then hung up until crisp and dry. In Scotland and Wales thin rounds of oatmeal paste were cooked slowly in a cool oven.

**Oatmeal** – Ground oats used as a breakfast cereal and in baking. Coarse and medium oatmeal is used for porridge (as is rolled oats) and in sausage mixture, such as the Scottish haggis. Fine oatmeal is used in pancakes, muffins, and other baked goods.

**Octopus** – A tender fleshed saltwater mollusk with eight tentacles, a large head with a strong beak, a small sac like body and no internal backbone; best for eating are the small varieties. Octopus should be either cooked slowly – simmered in wine or its juices or stuffed and baked – or cooked rapidly over a high heat. Popular in Mediterranean countries, Asia and especially in Japan. Fresh octopus is usually sold whole and already by beating; it is also available frozen, dried and pre-cooked in cans.

**Oeufs à la Neige (Eggs in the Snow)** – A dessert of French origin consisting of egg-sized spoonfuls of meringue poached in vanilla-flavoured sweetened milk, drained and placed on top of a rich custard sauce made from the poaching milk.

**Offal** – Also called variety meats, the general term used to describe the edible internal organs of an animal – heart, liver, tripe, kidneys, sweetbreads and brains – as well as the tongue, tail, feet, and head.

**Oil Vegetable** – The clear liquid extracted from various seeds, nuts and fruit, including



almond, avocado, canola, coconut, cottonseed, hazelnut, maize, olive, peanut, pumpkin seed, sunflower seed, sesame seed, soybean and walnut. Fine-flavoured oils, such as olive, walnut, hazelnut, almond and pumpkin seed, are generally used to flavour cold foods (such as salads) and are added to hot foods (pasta, fish or cooked vegetables) just before serving to preserve the oil's aroma and taste. Oils used primarily for cooking include maize, peanut, coconut (high in saturated fats), cottonseed, sunflower, and vegetable (a blend of oils sold as an all-purpose cooking oil).

**Okra** – Also known as ladies' fingers, a long, rigid, five-sided, green seedpod, pointed at one end and containing numerous small white seeds. Okra has a gelatinous quality when cooked and its role in a dish is often that of a thickener. In Middle Eastern and Greek cooking the pod is usually left whole; in Cajun cooking it is cut into wheel-like disc and is often partnered with tomato. Okra is native to tropical Africa; its introduction into America dates from the slave trade days and it is the characteristic ingredient in many soups and stews in the south of the United States and the Caribbean. Okra is in season from summer to autumn and is also sold frozen, dried and in cans.

**Olive** – The small, oval, oil-rich fruit of an evergreen tree native to the Mediterranean region. Olives are picked unripe (green) and ripe (black). The flesh is treated to remove its bitterness and is then soaked in brine. Oil pressed from the ripe fruit has cosmetic and medicinal uses as well as an acclaimed culinary role. Green olives have a tart and come from fruit picked before fully mature. Olives are served as a finger food with drinks (a practice that goes back to Roman times), and in cooking sauces, stuffings, pizzas, breads, salads and as a garnish.

The olive is the oldest tree in continuous cultivation and has been grown in the eastern Mediterranean for some 6,000 years. Egyptian painting shows olives being picked; ancient Crete, about 3,800 years ago, became the centre of an export trade shipping olive oil to Egypt and Asia Minor. The olive was virtually indispensable in ancient times, valued for its fruit and the multi-purpose oil it provided, as well as for its close-grained hardwood. Olives are sometimes available fresh but more usually are sold pickled whole (either loose or in jars or cans), pitted and stuffed with pimiento or almonds or salted and dried (either loose or in vacuum-sealed packs).

**Olive Oil** – A pale yellow to deep green, mono-saturated vegetable oil pressed from the pulp of ripe olives. It has a fruity flavour and in cooking adds both flavour and nutrition to any dish in which it is an ingredient. Cold-pressed olive oil is produced by pressure only. Heat allows more oil to be extracted, but affects the flavour. Olive oil is graded according to its level of acidity: the finest, extra virgin, with less than 1% acid and deep green in colour has the fullest flavour – use it drizzled on pasta, salads, and vegetables; next are fine virgin olive oil (less than 3%). Pure olive oil, made from a blend of virgin oil and refined olive oil, has the same acid content as virgin olive oil. Refined olive oil is made by removing impurities from oils that do not meet the standards for extra virgin or virgin oil: such blends have a milder flavour and are often labeled as 'light'.

Spain and Italy lead in the production of fine olive oil. It is available in bottles or large cans.

**Omelette** – A dish of beaten eggs cooked in a frying pan and often folded over a filling. Omelette can be served at breakfast or as a light luncheon or supper dish; a sweet filling transforms it into a dessert. Omelettes have been known in France since the Middle Ages.

**Onion** – The bulb of a member of the lily family, related to garlic and leek, with pungently flavour flesh encased in thin, close outer layers. There are many varieties, varying in colour, shape, and intensity of taste, but in general the onion is sharp in flavour when raw and mellow when cooked. Onions can be used as an ingredient in salads or added as a garnish; they can be boiled, fried or baked as a vegetable; or cooked in a wide variety of dishes. Simmered slowly in butter, they provide an almost sweet filling for the classic French onion tart and are also made into a famous French soup; onion rings dipped in batter and deep-fried are a popular first course in India cooking; and studded with cloves, the onion flavour sauces and casseroles. The birthplace of the ancestor of today's onion was probably central Asia. It was a food of the poor in ancient Greece and Rome and since the Middle Ages has been adopted throughout Europe.

Fresh onions are available throughout the year, but are best from early autumn to late spring; onions are also frozen and pickled. Spring onions (scallions) are onions when immature.

**Orange** – A round citrus fruit with a bright orange skin and juicy, orange-coloured,

segmented flesh. Orange is eaten fresh as a fruit, chopped and added to fruit salads, cooked in both sweet and savoury dishes and made into marmalade; its juice is a favourite at breakfast; and its rind is used fresh or dried to flavour desserts, cakes and savoury sauces. There are three main types of orange: sweet oranges, including the large, thick-skinned navel (named for the navel-like growth at the blossom end) and the smaller, thin-skinned Valencia, are used for juicing and as a snack and dessert fruit; bitter oranges, including the Seville, which used to make marmalade and tangy sauces; and blood oranges, with sweet, juicy, blood-red flesh, eaten as a dessert fruit and used for juicing.

The orange originated in southern Asia and has been cultivated in China for at least 4,000 years. The fruit was known to the Romans and grew in the ancient Middle East, where bitter oranges preserved in their skins in sugar may well be the forerunner of today's marmalade. The Moors planted orange orchards in Spain from the eighth century on. The Spanish planted oranges in America in Florida in the sixteenth century. The fruit is now grown in tropical and subtropical regions worldwide. Oranges are available fresh all year-round, and are also sold canned; orange juice can be bought freshly squeezed or as a concentrate; orange peel is sold dried and candied.

**Orange Flower Water** – A fragrant liquid made from neroli, an essential oil extracted from sweet-scented blossom of the bitter orange tree. Intensely flavoured, it is added sparingly to sponge cakes and confectionery (candy) and is popular in the Middle Eastern cooking in pastries and syrups.

**Oregano** – Also known as wild marjoram, oregano is a hardy perennial herb similar in appearance and related to marjoram, but with a more robust flavour. It is used to flavour pizza toppings, tomato-based sauces, zucchini (courgette), eggplant (aubergine) and stuffings. Its name comes from the Greek for 'joy of the mountain', for the Mediterranean slopes where it still grows wild. Oregano is a popular garden herb; it is also available fresh and dried.

**Osso Buco** – A dish of braised veal shin, with bone and marrow intact, which before serving is sprinkled with gremolata (a mixture of chopped parsley, garlic and grated lemon rind). The tasty bone marrow can be taken out with a toothpick. Osso buco is a specialty of Milan, in northern Italy. The name means 'bone with a hole'.

**Oven Fry** – To bake food in a hot oven so that it has the appearance and taste of fried food, but not the fat content. The food is brushed lightly with oil, butter, or margarine or coated with seasoned flour or breadcrumbs before cooking.

**Oxtail** – A flavoursome cut of meat consisting of the skinned tail of an ox or cow, which requires long, slow cooking and is used to make soups and stews. Oxtail soup is regarded as a traditional British dish although some claim it crossed the English Channel with French émigrés at the time of revolution.

**Oyster** – A marine mollusk with a soft creamy-grey to creamy-tan body, encased in rough, blue-grey irregularly shaped hinged shell. It is found adhering to rocks in shallow tidal waters around the world. Oysters are eaten raw, with a squeeze of lemon juice, bread and butter and a touch of freshly grated black pepper or they can be fried, grilled (broiled) or poached or incorporated in soups, stuffings and sauces. Oysters have been gathered and eaten since the time of the earliest humans. There are ancient mounds on the coasts of North America (where the Native Americans seem to have always cooked them) and Australia; the shellfish was abundant along the European coastline from Scandinavia to the Mediterranean. Oysters are filter feeders, and so are subject to contamination; they should not be collected from where pollution is suspected. Fresh oysters are available from September to April (months with 'r' in the name) in the Northern Hemisphere and all year round in the Southern Hemisphere. They are sold unshelled on the half shell or bottled in fresh water; oysters are also available canned, either plain or smoked.

**Oyster Sauce** – A thick dark brown sauce originally made from oysters fermented in brine and then ground to a paste, but now usually thickened with cornflour (cornstarch) and darkened with caramel colouring. It has a strong, salty, slightly fishy flavour and is used as an all-purpose seasoning in Chinese cooking, especially stir-fries and braised dishes. It is a popular dressing on steamed Chinese vegetables, and is often used with other sauces, particularly soy. Oyster sauce originated in Canton (now Guangzhou), a seaport in southeastern China and was traded far inland, taking the taste of the sea to towns far from the coast. It is available in bottles, jars and cans (transfer to glass jar after opening).

# P

**Paella** – A dish of Spanish origin consisting of short-grained rice, olive oil, shellfish, chicken or rabbit and vegetables, seasoned with garlic and coloured with saffron. It is traditionally cooked. Paella originated in the Valencia region of eastern Spain.

**Palm Heart** – A thin, flat cake made from a batter of flour, egg and milk cooked quickly on each side in a greased frying pan or on a griddle and then served hot, usually folded over or rolled around a filling which can be either sweet or savoury. Pancakes are similar to, but thicker than crêpes. In North America pancakes stacked one upon the other and covered with maple syrup are a popular breakfast dish. Pancakes were traditionally cooked and eaten on Shrove Tuesday, also known as Pancake Day, a day of revelry and merrymaking before the fasting of lent.

**Pancetta** – Un-smoked bacon from the belly of the pig, cured with spiced, salt and pepper. It is usually sold rolled into a sausage shape, and is served cut into thin slices.

**Panettone** – A cake made from sweet yeast dough enriched with egg yolks (which give it its colour), candied fruits and raisins. It is usually in the shape of a tall, round loaf. Panettone is a specialty of Milan, in northern Italy, where it is now made commercially for sale around the world. It is served with coffee for breakfast and is traditional Christmas fare.

**Panforte** – A flat, very rich cake with nougat like texture containing nuts, honey, candied fruit, and spices. It is a specialty of Siena, in Italy and, because of its energy-giving properties is said to have been carried by the Crusaders on military expeditions.

**Pan-Fry** – To cook food in a pan smeared with a little fat.

**Pan-Grill (Pan-Broil)** – Also called dry frying. To cook food in an un-greased pan. Fat released from the food is poured off as it accumulated. This method is used for fatty foods such as bacon or sausages and in low-fat diets.

**Papaya** – Also known as pawpaw, a large, oval-shaped tropical fruit smooth green to yellow skin, juicy golden flesh with a melon like texture and a central cavity filled with small black seeds. Serve fresh and fully ripe with a sprinkle of lime juice for breakfast or add cubes to fruit salad (it combines especially well with passion fruit). Under-ripe papaya can be cooked as a vegetable. The fruit is native to the Americas and is thought to have been taken to Europe by Portuguese explorers; it now grows in tropical regions throughout the world. Its name comes from the Caribbean name ababai. Papaya is in season in early summer.

**Papillote, en** – A French term for a cooking method in which individual portions of food – meat, fish, poultry or vegetables – are wrapped in strong, greased paper or aluminium foil (often cut into a heart shape) and then baked or grilled (broiled). This technique preserves juices and flavour. Papillote is also the name of the paper frill used to decorate the bone end of a lamb or veal chop or a chicken drumstick.

**Pappadam** – A thin, crisp wafers of Indian origin made from lentils, potato or rice flour. Fry in hot vegetable oil one at a time; hold down with tongs for 3 seconds, then turn over and cook for another 3 seconds; the pappadam will swell, bubble, and turn golden brown. Lift out and drain on absorbent paper. Pappadams are best served hot, as an accompaniment to Indian meals. They are sold dried in packets.

**Paprika** – A savoury made from the dried, ground flesh of a variety of sweet red peppers (capsicum). It is piquant, rather than hot, and is used to flavour goulashes, ragoûts, stuffings, and sauces and is sprinkled on dips and egg, cheese and seafood dishes. The red pepper comes from a shrub native to Central America and has been known in Europe since the time of Columbus. The form used to make paprika developed in Hungary and is smaller and more pungently flavoured than Spanish paprika, which is made from a milder red pepper. The name comes from the Hungarian word for 'sweet pepper'.

**Parantha** – An unleavened, rich, flaky Indian bread made from a dough of whole meal flour, ghee, salt, and water, formed into a disc shape and fried on both sides; the dough can be folded around a vegetable mixture to make a stuffed version. Paranthas are usually reserved for special occasions; they are generally made

at home but are sometimes available from Indian restaurants.

**Parfait** – A chilled dessert served in a tall glass and eaten with a long-handled spoon. It usually consists of layers of custard, jelly, and ice-cream and whipped cream. The term also refers to a frozen rich custard dessert.

**Parma Ham** – Fine quality ham also known as prosciutto made from the hind legs of a variety of pig raised on controlled farms in the Parma region of the northern Italy and cured in the traditional manner. Hams are rubbed with salt, left in a cool place for several weeks, then washed and allowed to dry out and mature in a cool, well-ventilated atmosphere for ten to twelve months. Rosy pink, marbled with lines of white fat, and only mildly salty, Parma ham sliced wafer thin and served with melon or fresh figs is a popular antipasto not only in Italy but around the world. Hannibal, on his way from Carthage to Rome is said to have been served salt-cured ham at a banquet in Parma in 217 BC.

**Parmesan** – A very hard cow's milk cheese with a strong taste and grainy texture, famous as a grating cheese. Parmesan is made by the cooked curd method (the curd is 'cooked' in heated whey) and is matured for up to three years. Because of its extremely low moisture content Parmesan can be stored at low temperatures almost indefinitely. It is used, grated, in cooking (it does not become stringy as most cheeses do) and as garnish; young Parmesan can also be served as a table cheese with fruit. The cheese has been made in Parma, in northern Italy, for some eight hundred years and now is made around the world by the same method. Cheese carrying the stamp 'parmigiano reggiano' comes from a select area of northern Italy. Parmesan is available in black and is best used freshly grated; it is also sold grated in vacuum-sealed packs.

**Parsley** – A herb with bright green, fern-like leaves and a mild, celery-like flavour, widely used as a seasoning and as a garnish. There are two main varieties – curly leaf and the flat leaf or Italian parsley. Curly leaf is best used as a garnish, either in sprigs or sprinkled, finely chopped, on food. The more flavoursome flat leaf is preferable for cooking; it is the main ingredient in the Middle Eastern salad tabouli. Parsley combines particularly well with salads, egg dishes, stews, vegetables, rice, and pasta; deep-fried sprigs are used to garnish grilled meats and fish. Parsley is an ingredient in the

flavouring bouquet garni and the seasonings gremolata and persillade. The herb originated in southern Europe and has been cultivated since ancient times. Long valued for its medicinal as well as its culinary properties, it is rich in vitamin C and minerals and is sometimes called the herb of health. The ancient Romans wore wreaths of parsley to ward off the effects of alcohol.

**Parsnip** – A root vegetable with a carrot like shape and creamy white flesh. When cooked it has a strong, slightly sweet flavour, which goes well with roast meats. The parsnip originated in Eastern Europe and was developed in Germany; for many centuries it was the food of the poor in Europe. The vegetable was introduced into North America in the early years of the seventeenth century.

**Partridge** – A ground-dwelling game bird related to the pheasant and native to Europe and the British Isles. Partridge is hung un-plucked and un-cleaned for three to four days after killing to develop its flavour and to tenderize the flesh. Young birds can be grilled (broiled) or roasted in the same way as chicken; older birds are best slowly casseroled.

**Passion Fruit** – Also called granadilla, the egg-shaped fruit of the passionflower vine with sharp-sweet, juicy, fragrant orange pulp studded with small black edible seeds. The leathery skin varies in colour from pale yellow-green to pink, to deep purple-brown; it is smooth and shiny when immature and deeply dimpled when ripe. Passion fruit can be eaten fresh (scooped from the shell with a spoon) or the pulp can be added to fruit salads, yoghurt and ice-cream, mousse and dessert sauces, it is the traditional topping for pavlova. The passion fruit vine is native to tropical America. It was named by Spanish Jesuit priests in South America for its large flower in whose form they saw all aspect of the crucifixion of Christ (the three nails, the five wounds, the crown of thorns and the apostles). Passion fruit is in season in late summer but can usually be found fresh through the year; passion fruit pulp is available canned.

**Pasta** – A dough or paste made of wheat flour, water, salt, and sometimes egg, cooked in boiling water and served with many different sauces. Pasta is cut and shaped into a wide variety of shapes – ribbons, bows, strings, rings, tubes, spirals, and shells – each one known by a particular name. It can be home-made or bought either fresh (pasta

freshca) or dried (pasta secca). There are two main forms of fresh pasta; pasta liscia (strips of smooth or flat pasta) and pasta is often regarded as the national food of Italy. Simple to make and to cook, economical, healthy, and versatile, it has been the food of rich and poor alike. Roman writer Horace was fond of a type of lasagne seasoned with leek and chickpeas (a similar dish is still made in southern Italy); medieval manuscripts have many references to macaroni, including mention of macaroni cooked with cheese; a fifteenth-century cookbook gives instruction for sun-drying vermicelli; and tagliatelle has been cooked from at least the sixteenth century. From the end of the eighteenth century street stalls selling pasta were common; pasta was cooked on the spot and eaten hot with the fingers. The first pasta factories date from the nineteenth century. Egg pasta is associated with northern Italy; pasta made with durum wheat flour is from the south.

**Pastrami** – Lean beef, cured, spiced and rubbed with dried chilli and black peppercorns. It is deep red in colour and is served sliced as a cold meat or sandwich filling.

**Pastry** – An unleavened dough made from fat (butter, margarine or lard), flour and sometimes sugar, and bound with water. Different types of pastry result from the kind of fat used and variation in the proportions of the ingredients. Shortcrust pastry forms the containers for sweet and savoury pies, flans and tarts; crisp, filo pastry and flaky puff pastry are used for dishes ranging from sausage rolls to delicate desserts; hot water crust pastry is used particularly for English game pies. Pastry is also a general term for sweet baked foods made with pastry dough.

**Pastry Cream** – See Crème Pâtissière.

**Pâté and Terrine** – Preparations of minced (ground) meat, poultry, game, fish, or vegetables. In general, pâté is a fine-textured paste or spread; the name 'pâté' comes from the French pâté en croûte, a rich savoury meat, poultry or game mixtures that have been baked or sautéed, then pureed to a creamy consistency. A terrine is usually coarser in texture and is served sliced. Pâté is usually served at room temperature, either spread on bread or dry biscuits (crackers) as finger food, or cut into thick slices as a first course. A type of pâté was made in the days of ancient Rome, chiefly with pork, but sometimes including

other ingredients such as spiced and marinated bird's tongues.

**Pâté Brisée** – A shortcrust pastry made from a dough of flour, butter, margarine, or lard (or a mixture of these), sugar, egg, and water. It is mixed directly on the surface by placing the wet ingredients in a well formed in the centre of the dry ingredients and, using the fingertips, first mixing together the wet ingredients, then gradually drawing in the dry ingredients. It is called pâté brisée, literally 'broken dough', because the ingredients are 'broken' into one another. Pâté brisée is used in French cooking for both sweet and savoury dishes.

**Pâté Sucrée** – Literally 'sugar dough', a sweet, crisp, shortcrust pastry made from butter or margarine (lard is never used), sugar and egg yolk and used in French cooking for flan cases and tartlets. It is mixed in the same way as pâté brisée.

**Paupiette** – A thin fillet of meat, poultry, or fish spread with a stuffing mixture of finely chopped meat, herbs, and seasonings and then rolled up, secured with string or toothpicks and braised. Beef paupiettes are usually referred to as beef olives.

**Pavlova** – A dessert consisting of a meringue case filled with whipped cream and topped with fresh fruit (usually including strawberries and passion fruit pulp). The dish is attributed to Herbert Sachse, chef at a leading hotel in Perth, Western Australia, who created it in 1935 and named it in memory of the 1929 visit to the city, by the ballerina Anna Pavlova.

**Pawpaw** – See papaya.

**Peach** – A round, yellow to rosy pink, downy skinned, stone fruit with pale, fragrant, sweet, juicy flesh. There are two main types: slipstone or freestone (the flesh of which separates, easily from the stone), and clingstone (the flesh clings to the stone). The name comes through the French from the Latin *Persicum malum*, Persian apple. Peaches are in season from summer to autumn; they are also available canned, in syrup.

**Peanut** – Also called groundnut, the edible seed of a legume encased in brittle, pale brown pods that develop and ripen below ground. Peanuts can be eaten raw, roasted and salted as a savoury snack, or coated in toffee or chocolate as a confectionery (candy). Peanuts are important in the cooking of South East Asia as satay sauces are added whole to dishes.

Peanuts are made into peanut butter and peanut oil is extracted from them.

**Peanut Butter** – A spread made from roasted peanuts and used in sandwiches (it combines well with celery, crisp bacon, raisins, honey and jam), on toast or as an ingredient in homemade satay sauce. It is available as either a smooth, creamy paste or a crunchy version containing pieces of crushed nut. Peanut butter was popularized in North America in the twentieth Century.

**Peanut Oil** – An oil made from peanut kernels, used for frying and to make salad dressings. Mildest in flavour is the European version; it is almost flavourless and used for dressing delicately flavoured salads. American peanut oil has a more nutty taste. Asian oil is darker and more flavoured. It can be heated to a very high temperature, so is good for frying.

**Pear** – A tear-drop shaped fruit with yellow, green or light brown skin and juicy flesh. It can be eaten fresh, added to both fruit salads (it blends particularly well with raspberries and black currants) and savoury salads poached in syrup or wine and used in many other desserts such as mousses, soufflés, and tarts. The pear originated in Asia. It was introduced into Europe by the ancient Greeks and was popular fruit in ancient Rome.

**Peas, Dried** – The seeds of several varieties of the common garden pea grown specifically to be dried. They were an important vegetable before peas become commonly available. Dried peas may be whole with wrinkled skins intact, or husked and split in two at the natural division (split peas). In India whole dried peas are roasted and spiced as a snack food; in England, where they are known as ‘mushy peas’, they are soaked, simmered and served either with fish and chips or poured over hot meat pies. Split peas are prepared from the green and yellow field pea varieties of the common garden pea; they are sweeter and less starchy than whole dried peas. Split peas are used for pea soup, pease pudding and in Germany they are often baked with sauerkraut and sour cream.

**Peas, Green** – Small round, juicy green seeds encased in a green pod, a popular vegetable throughout the world. In most varieties the pod is discarded, although it can be used to make pea soup; some varieties such as the snow pea (*mange tout*) have very tender pods that need only to be tailed before cooking

whole. *Petits pois*, a variety of tiny, sweet tasting green peas popular in France, are shelled before use. Peas may be boiled, braised, steamed or microwaved and served hot as a vegetable or added to soups, casseroles, and salads. The familiar green peas grown to be eaten fresh was developed in Italy in the seventeenth century; from there it was introduced into France. Christopher Columbus is said to have planted the first peas in America. Fresh green peas are available for most of the year; green peas are also sold frozen and freeze dried.

**Pease Pudding** – Split peas, soaked, boiled, mashed, and traditionally served with boiled salt pork. In bygone days butchers in the north of England sold slabs of pease pudding along with pork for reheating at home.

**Pecan Nut** – An elliptical smooth-shelled nut containing a ridged kernel (similar in appearance to a walnut kernel) with a sweet buttery flavour. Whole pecan kernels can be eaten as a snack (either raw or roasted and salted) and are used whole in biscuit (cookies), cakes, breads and the American favourite, pecan pie; chopped and ground nuts may be sprinkled on ice-cream, used in pastry fillings are added to confectionery (candy). The pecan tree is native to Central North America. The nuts are available in the shell or shelled in airtight packs.

**Pêche Melba** – A dessert consisting of peaches poached in vanilla syrup, chilled, then served with vanilla ice-cream and fresh raspberry puree. The dish was created for Australian diva Dame Nellie Melba by the esteemed French Chef Auguste Escoffier. It was inspired by Melba’s performance in the opera *Lohengrin*. The peaches and ice-cream were originally served between the wings of an ice-carved swan and covered with spun sugar.

**Pecorina** – A sheep’s milk cheese made by the cooked curd method (curd in ‘cooked’ in heated whey). There are two varieties, *pecorino romano*, a hard, grating cheese (first made near Rome), similar in taste and texture to parmesan and used mostly in cooking; and *pecorino fresco*, a young, soft and mild-tasting version that can be used as a table cheese. *Pecorino* originated in southern Italy nearly 2,000 years ago and was traditionally made by shepherds; the name comes from the Italian word *pecora*, ewe.

**Pectin** – A natural gelling agent that occurs in some fruits. When pectin-containing fruits are cooked with sugar they set into a firm jam and jelly. Blackcurrant, red currants, citrus fruits, cooking apples, quinces, gooseberries, and plums are high in pectin; strawberries and pears have very little. Under ripe or just contains more pectin than over-ripe fruit. Commercial pectin is available in powdered form.

**Pepperoni** – A sausage of Italian origin made from ground fat and flavoured with ground chilli pepper and other spices. Pepperoni is ready to eat without further cooking; its most common use is as a pizza topping.

**Pepino** – Also known as melon pear and tree melon, an apple-sized, melon-shaped vine fruit with smooth yellow-green skin streaked with purple and pale juicy with a central cluster of edible seeds. Pepino can be eaten fresh in the same way as melon, diced and added to fruit salad, or lightly sautéed and served as an accompaniment to fish and meat. The fruit is native to Peru and Chile and was introduced into Florida in the late nineteenth century. It is in season from autumn to spring.

**Pepper** – A pungent spice derived from the dried berry like fruit (peppercorn) of a tropical climbing vine. Both white and black pepper come from the same plant but are picked at different stages of maturity. Black pepper is pickled while the berries are still unripe; white pepper comes from the berries that are allowed to ripen before being harvested. They are then soaked in water to remove their skins. Black and white pepper is used to flavour all types of savoury food.

For the best flavour ground pepper should be added to hot dishes towards the end of cooking time; in long cooking dishes tie peppercorns in a muslin (cheesecloth) bag and remove before serving. Green peppercorns are the berries picked while still green; they are usually preserved in brine and are used, sparingly, to flavour soups, stews, pâtés, and sauces. Pink peppercorns are the soft, almost ripe, berries of an unrelated South American tree; they are used more for their colour than their flavour. Pepper is best used freshly ground, as it goes stale very quickly.

**Peppermint** – A herb of the mint family grown mainly for the oil distilled from its leaves and flowers. Peppermint essence, it is used to flavour confectionery (candy), chocolate filling, cake icings, and the liqueur

*crème the menthe*. The leaves can also be made into herb tea or chopped and sprinkled over fruit salad. Rats are said to detest peppermint.

**Pepper, Sweet** – Also called Bell Pepper or capsicum. A large, mostly hollow, shiny skinned fruit of a shrub native to tropical South America. Although a member of the same family as the fiery chilli pepper, its crisp, moist flesh is mild in flavour and is used as both a salad and a cooked vegetable. Varieties include the red (the sweetest), green, yellow, orange, and black. The stalk, white membrane, and seeds should be removed before use. Sweet pepper is used raw and thinly sliced in salads and crudités, is cooked in casseroles, grilled (broiled) or filled with various stuffings. It is an important ingredient in the cooking of Central America, the Mediterranean, and the Middle east and Asia. Sweet peppers are available fresh throughout the year; sun-dried peppers in oil are sometimes available. Paprika is the ground and dried flesh of a variety of sweet peppers.

**Persimmon** – A smooth-skinned, tomato shaped fruit with yellow to orange coloured flesh that is soft, sweet and jelly-like when fully ripe, but otherwise has a sharp astringent taste. Ripe persimmon pulp can be eaten plain, as a fruit, added to fruit salad, mousses, and custards, or used to top ice-cream; it is also made into jam. The persimmon is native to Japan and china, where it has been cultivated for more than a thousand years. Sharon fruit, a persimmon variety developed in Israel, can be eaten raw, even when firm and under ripe. Persimmon is in season in late autumn and early winter; it is also available dried.

**Pesto** – A thick, uncooked sauce made by blending together basil leaves olive oil, garlic, pine nuts, and Parmesan cheese. Traditionally it was made with a mortar and pestle, but can also be made in a food processor. It is usually served over pasta, although in Genoa, where it originated (the sauce is also known as Pesto alla Genovese), it is also added to minestrone. Pesto is the Italian word for paste.

**Petits Fours** – Fancy bite sized biscuit (cookies), cakes, or confectionery (candy) usually served with coffee at the end of a meal.

**Pheasant** – A game bird with delicately flavoured white flesh, now raised commercially in many parts of the world. Young birds can be roasted (baste frequently to

prevent the flesh from drying out). Pheasant can also be larded or covered with a layer of fat or bacon strips to keep the meat moist. Older birds should be casseroled or pot-roasted.

**Pickles and Relish** – Preserves made of vegetables such as onions, cucumber, cauliflower and sweet pepper, sliced if necessary, soaked in brine, then rinsed, put into jars and covered with spiced vinegar. Eggs and walnuts can also be pickled.

**Pie** – A sweet or savoury mixture topped with a pastry crust and baked; quite often pies have a bottom crusted as well – these completely enclosed pies are called double-crust pies in North America. The term ‘pie’ is also used in North America for a bottom crust with a filling; in Britain this is usually called a tart.

**Pigeon** – A small game bird with rich dark meat; a squab is a baby pigeon with milder flavoured meat. Commercially raised squab can be grilled (broiled) or roasted and the breast meat served rare, thinly sliced, topped with a sauce; the flesh of a older birds and wild pigeons or dove birds tends to be tougher and long, slow cooking is best, either casseroled or roasted wrapped in brown fat or stuffed with sausage. Pigeons have been a popular food since medieval times, when dovecots on the top of large houses provided meat throughout winter.

**Pikelet** – Also known as Scottish pancake, a small, thick, sweet pancake served warm or cold with butter and jam or honey.

**Pilaf (Pilau)** – Rice lightly browned in oil, or butter then cooked in spiced stock; vegetables, meat, poultry or fish may be added halfway through the cooking process. The rice is served either fluffed with a fork and piled onto the plate or pressed into an oiled ring mould, which is turned onto a serving plate. Pilaf can be main dish or an accompaniment. The dish is of Middle Eastern origin (the name is derived from Persian word for ‘boiled rice’); rice is prepared in a similar way in India & Pakistan.

**Pimento** – Also known as allspice and Jamaica pepper, the dried and ground berries of a tree related to the myrtle and native to Jamaica. The term is sometimes also applied to the dried and ground flesh of the pimento, a sweet pepper grown in Spain.

**Pimiento** – A sweet pepper, long and thin in form and with mild-flavoured flesh that is cut into strips and used to add colour to a range of foods. Skinned strips are used to add colour to a range of foods. Skinned pimiento strips are used in salads as an accompaniment to cold meats, as a garnish and as stuffing for pitted olives. Pimiento ranges in colour from green to red, depending upon the ripeness of the fruit when picked; it is available bottled or canned in oil or brine. Its dried and ground flesh, pimentón, is a spice similar to paprika, much used in Spanish cooking.

**Pineapple** – A large, cylindrical tropical fruit with thick skin, a crown of cactus-like leaves and fragrant, sharply sweet, juicy, yellow flesh. Peeled, cored, and sliced, pineapple can be eaten fresh, as a fruit; diced, it is added to fruit salad, savoury salad and is an ingredient in sweet and sour dishes; chopped pineapple is used in cakes; grilled (broiled) pineapple rings are a traditional accompaniment for ham steaks (pineapple also combines well with chicken, pork and duck); pureed pineapple can be used in drinks and sorbets; and pineapple can also be made into jam. Raw pineapple contains an enzyme similar that found in papaya (pawpaw) which means it will not set in gelatin preparations; however, the enzyme is not present in the cooked or canned fruit. Pineapple is in peak season in spring, but can be usually be bought fresh throughout the year; it is also available canned, juiced and glacéed (candied). The fruit was named for its resemblance to a large pinecone.

**Pine Nut** – The small, slender, soft, pale seed shed by the fully mature cone of certain types of pine tree. Pine nuts add richness to stuffings, sauces (such as Pesto), salads, vegetable dishes, stews, cakes and biscuits (cookies) and are often used to garnish rice dishes.

**Piroshki** – Tiny filled Russian savoury pastries, served hot as a finger food, as a first course or as an accompaniment to soup. They can be made with yeast dough, choux pastry, short crust or puff pastry, and are filled with cream cheese, smoked pork, fish, chopped vegetables, game or poultry. They can be baked or deep-fried.

**Pissaladière** – A savoury flan with a filling of onions simmered in olive oil, garnished with anchovy fillets and black olives, and then baked. Pissaladière is a specialty of the Nice region of southern France and it is similar to



the Italian Pizza – the cooked onions are placed on a circle of bread dough and coated with a paste made of anchovy puree, olive oil, cloves, thyme, bayleaf and pepper.

**Pistachio Nut** – A small, oval nut with a brown shell and a green kernel with a mild, slightly sweet taste. The nuts may be eaten from the shell, salted or unsalted as a snack; shelled pistachio nuts are added to pâtés, terrines, stuffings and spiced sausages and are used to garnish rice dishes; they are also used in confectionery (candy), ice-creams, cakes, sweet pastry fillings and biscuits (cookies). The shells are sometimes dyed red, a practice that began in the United States in the 1930s to cover blemishes. The pistachio nut is the fruit of a tree native to the Middle East which is now cultivated widely in the lands of the Mediterranean and in the south of United States.

**Pistou** – A vegetable and pasta soup, similar to minestrone. It is seasoned just before serving with a condiment of pounded basil leaves, mixed with oil and Parmesan cheese. A specialty of Provence, in southern France, pistou is closely related to the minestrone with Pesto alla Genovese served across the Lingurian Sea in Northern Italy. The name pistou is derived from the Italian word for 'pestle', and the soup is traditionally served with the basil sauce in a mortar in the centre of the table to allow to diners to season their soup to taste.

**Pitta Bread** – A slightly leavened soft, flat, and wheat flour bread baked until puffed and hollow. Pitta can be either cut in half across the middle or slit open at the edges; either way a pocket is formed which can then be filled with hot meat (such as lamb cubes), vegetable mixtures (such as falafel) or with salad. Cut or torn into smaller portions, pitta bread is the traditional accompaniment to dips such as hummus bi tahini and baba ghannouj. It can also be used as a pizza base. Pitta is of Middle Eastern origin.

**Pizza** – A flat base of bread dough spread with various savoury toppings (tomato puree, cheese, salami, ham, seafood, chopped vegetables, anchovy and olives), seasoned with herbs and garlic, brushed with olive oil and baked, traditionally in a wood fired oven. Pizza is eaten hot, as first course; small portions or miniature pizzas can be served as finger food. Pizza originated in Naples, in southern Italy, where nineteenth century street vendors vied

with each other to attract customers to their tasty fare – the classic Neapolitan pizza has a thin, crisp crust with a topping of tomato and mozzarella cheese. In Rome pizza is made in large, rectangular pans, cut into pieces and sold by weight. Sicily is the home of the thick-crust or pan pizza, rolled thicker than the Neapolitan original and baked in a greased pan.

**Plantain** – A tropical fruit closely related to the banana, but plumper and longer, with thick green skin and firmer, more fibrous flesh. Plantain is grilled (broiled), fried or barbecued and served as a vegetable, or it can be diced and added to curries, soups, casseroles and omelettes; it can become bitter if overcooked. Raw plantain is never sweet, even when fully ripe. Young leaves can be used in soups and salads.

**Plum** – A round fruit with smooth shiny skin that ranges in colour from deep purple to green, yellow or red, depending on the variety; it has sweet, juicy flesh and a flat stone. Raw plums can be eaten un-skinned as a snack; stoned, sliced and added to fruit salad; or pureed for use in sauces, ice-creams, and deserts. Plums may be stewed or poached, made into fillings for pies and tarts, cooked in fruit puddings and cakes or made into jam; spicy plum sauce combines well with roast meats (especially pork) and poultry. The plum is thought to have originated in western Asia. They grew in the Hanging Gardens of Babylon; the Romans imported plum trees from Damascus and improved the quality of the fruit by grafting and cross-fertilization. Plums are in season in summer and early autumn; they are also available canned and dried as prunes.

**Plum Pudding** – A rich steamed or boiled pudding made with dried fruit (prunes, raisins, sultanas and glacé cherries), nuts, suet and rum or whisky. It has a dense, moist, cake-like texture. Plum pudding, decorated with holly flamed with brandy and served with brandy butter, traditional Christmas fare. Ice-creams, whipped cream, or custard can also accompany the pudding.

**Poach** – To cook food by gently simmering it in liquid in a shallow pan.

**Polenta** – Cornmeal (maize flour) cooked in butter until the consistency of thick of thick porridge. It can be eaten hot, on its own, or mixed with Parmesan cheese and baked, grilled (broiled) or fried and served in wedges

as a vegetable dish. The mixture can be varied with the addition of chopped meat or vegetables; slices of cold polenta are often fried in butter and served topped with tomato sauce. Polenta has been a staple food in northern Italy since the arrival of corn from the Americas in the sixteenth century. Corn, the boiled grains (usually millet) fed to the early Roman soldiers.

**Pomegranate** – A round, reddish-golden skinned fruit about the size of an orange. It is divided by walls of bitter-tasting pith into several chambers, each containing numerous seeds embedded in sacs of sweet, deep pink, jelly-like pulp. The seeds and pulp can be scooped from the shell and eaten or may be added to fruit salad; pomegranate juice is used to make grenadine syrup (a bright red, non-alcoholic drink used as a colouring and flavouring for cocktails, ice-cream, fruit salad and other desserts). The pomegranate is of Asian origin and spread west to the African shores of the Mediterranean many thousand of years ago. It was cultivated by the ancient Hittites, Persians, and Egyptians. It has long been regarded as a symbol of fertility. In Greek mythology Persephone, Goddess of spring, was condemned to spend half of each year in Hades for eating six forbidden pomegranate seeds – when she emerged from the shades the land quickened with the first sign of spring and, on her return to the underworld, stilled with autumn. The pomegranate is in season in late autumn.

**Popcorn** – A snack made by heating the kernels of a type of corn known as popping corn. The moisture in the kernels changes to steam, swelling the soft starchy interior until it bursts through the skin as a puffy white ball. Popcorn is eaten as a snack, either with melted butter and salt or with a sweet coating. Packs of popping corn for cooking on the stovetop (add to a little heated oil in a heavy lidded pan: it should start to pop in a minute or so and be ready in another minute) and a special pop-in-the-bag product for microwave ovens is available.

**Popover** – An airy batter pudding or quick bread made from a batter of flour, egg, and milk (very similar to the mixture used to make Yorkshire pudding). Popovers are baked in greased muffin tins or cups in a very hot oven so they rise quickly, forming a crisp, golden shell while the inside remains moist and mostly hollow. Popovers should be eaten hot, either with butter and jam or honey, or split open and filled with a savoury preparation of

meat or vegetables; herbs, grated cheese, or sugar may be added to the batter.

**Poppy seed** – The fine grey-blue seeds of the poppy plant. Poppy seeds have a strong, nutty flavour. They are often sprinkled on bread and savoury crackers, before baking; are added to pasta and potato dishes, and are used to make the traditional Jewish poppy seed cake. The poppy is native to Asia.

**Pork** – The meat of the domestic pig. Pale and succulent, it has long been prized for its richness and flavour. Suckling or sucking pig is an animal slaughtered at two months of age. Top quality pork should be pale pink, smooth and finely grained with fat and smooth thin skin. Pork is suitable for roasting, grilling (broiling), barbecuing, pan-frying, and casseroling; pork joints can also be pickled. It is healthiest to choose lean cuts and trim off excess fat.

Pork is the main meat in the cooking of China and South East Asia. In China and Vietnam the plump pig is a symbol of prosperity. The animals also known for their fecundity – a sow can have up to a dozen young litter. For centuries pork was virtually the only meat eaten by the communities of Europe – nothing of the carcass was wasted, from the ears to the trotters.

Nineteenth-century gastronomic writer Charles Monselet described the pig as ‘nothing but an immense dish that walks while waiting to be served’. Pork is available fresh, cured in brine or pickling solution or cured and smoked. It is complemented by the flavours of sage and juniper berries.

**Porridge** – Oatmeal or rolled oats cooked in water or milk until thick and creamy. Porridge is usually served hot with milk and sugar, for breakfast, but it can also be eaten cold, with salt. Porridge is descended from gruel – which was a staple of peasant diets.

**Port** – A rich, sweet, fortified wine used to flavour duck and game dishes, sauces (such as Cumberland sauce), Pâtés, and desserts such as jellies, creams and syrups for poached fruit. True port is made from a variety of grapes grown in northern Portugal and shipped through the town of Oporto.

**Port Salut** – A semi-soft, pasteurized cow’s milk cheese with a smooth, savoury taste, a creamy texture, a reddish-orange rind and a golden interior with a few tiny holes. Port Salut (literally “Port of salvation”) originated

in Brittany, north-western France, created by Trappist monks who found haven in a local abbey after years of exile in Switzerland following the French revolution. The cheese found instant popularity when it reached the markets of Paris in the 1870s. In the years following World War II the monks, unable to keep pace with demand, sold the brand name Saint Paulin to commercial dairies to produce a similar cheese. Port Salut should be served at room temperature on cheese boards with fresh or dried fruit, as a snack cheese and in sandwiches; it is also cooked in savouries.

**Potato** – A starchy, tuberous root vegetable with crisp white or yellow flesh and smooth brown, russet, yellow or purple skin. A remarkably versatile vegetable, it can be boiled, roasted, fried, baked or barbecued it is the classic accompaniment to fish and meat courses or can itself form the basis of a main course. New potatoes are small, young potatoes; they have pearly translucent skin (which need not be removed and slightly waxy flesh and are boiled whole and served with melted butter or used for making potato salad. Old potatoes are floury and are best for boiling and mashing or for baking in their skins; they can also be used in soups and as pie topping. Slightly waxy potatoes roast well and are also made into chips and French fries. Very waxy potatoes are ideal for potato salad. The potato is native to South America and was first cultivated high in the Andes as early as 5,000 years ago. When introduced into England by Sir Francis Drake in the sixteenth century it soon found favour in Ireland, where it flourished in the poor soils where other food crops failed; Sir Walter Raleigh is said to have planted the first potatoes in Ireland in 1586. Early in the eighteenth century the potato re-crossed the Atlantic to the American colonies. However the acceptance was slower in continental Europe. The French regarded it as ‘unsuitable for food’ and the vegetable was shunned until the work of French agronomist Auguste Parmentier in the late eighteenth century promoted it in a more favourable light – it is now a staple food in France. Fresh potatoes are available throughout the year; they are also available frozen, dehydrated and canned.

**Poultry** – Domestic birds bred for their meat and eggs, such as chicken, duck, goose, guinea fowl, and turkey. Chicken is the most widely eaten of all poultry, next is turkey. Poultry are available whole or in portions, fresh, frozen or cooked.

**Praline** – A confectionery (candy) made from almonds cooked in caramel, then cooled and crushed to a powder and used as a decoration for desserts. Praline can also be sprinkled over ice-cream or custard, or baked into biscuits (cookies), slices, and cakes.

**Prawns (Shrimps)** – A small claw-less crustaceans with long antennae, slender legs and a long plump body. Prawns vary in size and colour (from yellow, green, bluish-brown to pale grey) according to species, but most become reddish-orange when cooked. Varieties are found from the tropics to the temperate and cold water, in both fresh and salt water. The most widely eaten of all shellfish, their firm, moist, sweet flesh forms the basis of numerous dishes in the cooking of many lands. They are eaten boiled and cold with dipping sauce as finger food and in salads; they are barbecued, battered and deep-fried, made into soups, curries, and stews, added to omelette, served with a variety of sauces and used as a garnish. Prawns are available raw, cooked (either in their shells or with shells removed), frozen and canned.

**Pretzel** – A savoury snack made with a yeast-leavened dough that is formed into the shape of a loose knot, boiled in water, drained and then brushed with egg and sprinkled with coarse salt before baking. It may be either crusty, soft centered bread or a crunchy biscuit (cracker). The pretzel originated in the Alsace region on the German borders where it was traditionally served with beer. Commercially available pretzels are sometimes also made in the form of long sticks.

**Profiteroles** – A small, choux pastry puff with a sweet or savoury filling. Profiteroles are probably best known as a dessert filled with crème pâtissière or Chantilly cream and topped with chocolate, caramel, or coffee sauce.

**Prosciutto** – An Italian ham from the hind leg of the pig, rubbed with salt and other dry seasonings and matured for eight to ten months. It is deep pink, has a slight sheen, and is usually served sliced wafer thin as a first course, although it may also be cooked as part of another dish. Best known varieties are Parma Ham (this particular curing process originated in Parma, in northern Italy) and Daniele ham from the friuli region in the north-east, reckoned by many to be the finest.

**Provençale, à la** – A French term for dishes, sauces and garnishes containing olive oil,

garlic and tomatoes, typical of the Provence region of southern France.

**Provolone** – A soft yellow, cow's milk cheese with a mild to sharp taste (depending on age) and a smooth-textured interior free of holes. Provolone is made by the pasta filata or stretched curd method in which the curd is kneaded and manipulated under hot water or whey. The cheese originated in Campania, in southern Italy, and is descended from similar cheeses made in Roman times. Provolone can be served with fruit and on cheese boards, and is also a good cooking cheese.

**Prune** – The dried fruit of certain varieties of plum tree. Prunes have a dark, wrinkled appearance and sweet, rich flavour. They are generally soaked and then gently stewed, and served as a dessert or with breakfast cereal or as a filling for tarts and pastries. Prunes can be wrapped with bacon and grilled to serve as finger food or can accompany main course savoury dishes, such as pork, rabbit, and game. They can also be eaten as a snack (without the need to soak first). Sun-dried prunes have been known since the times of the ancient Romans; today dehydration is usually by artificial heat. Prunes are sold (either pitted or un pitted) in vacuum-sealed packs and cans.

**Puddings** – A hot, sweet dish, traditionally steamed or baked, eaten at the end meal. Puddings are many and varied and range from the rich fruit puddings eaten on festive occasions to rice pudding and bread and butter pudding. The term originally referred to all boiled dishes, and this tradition lives on in the name of several savoury mixtures such as steak and kidney pudding and black pudding.

**Puff Pastry** – A rich, crisp, flaky pastry used for both sweet and savoury dishes. Its airiness is achieved by a lengthy procedure of repeatedly rolling and folding the dough to give it a multi-layered form. During baking the pastry rises up four to five times its original thickness. Although its invention is widely attributed to seventeenth century French landscape painter Claude Lorrain (who in his youth trained as a pastry cook), it seems that pastry was made in the fourteenth century (the Bishop of Amiens listed puff pastry cakes in 1311) and may even have been known in ancient Greece. Puff pastry is commercially available frozen in sheets.

**Puftaloon** – Small cakes made by deep-frying rounds of a type of scone (biscuit)

dough. They are served hot with butter, golden syrup or light corn syrup, or honey.

**Pulses** – The edible seeds, usually dried, of pod bearing plants; they include lentils, beans, and peas. They are a rich source of protein, vitamins, and minerals, making them important in a vegetarian diet. Pulses have been a staple food in many parts of the world for thousands of years and today feature in the cooking of many regions – China, the Middle East, Egypt, Africa and Central and South America.

**Pumpernickel** – A solid, dark-coloured, strongly flavoured bread made from a mixture of rye flour, rye meal and cracked rye grains.

**Pumpkin** – In north America called winter squash, the large, hard skinned fruit of a trailing vine with golden, nutty-flavoured flesh and a central cavity filled with flat, oval seeds. There are many varieties ranging from small, round golden nuggets, to bell-shaped butternuts, pear-shaped hubbards, cylindrical banana pumpkins and plump, ribbed Queensland blues. Pumpkin can be served as a vegetable-steamed, boiled (and mashed) or baked; it can be stuffed, made into soups, scones (biscuits), pancakes, sweet pies, cheesecake, bread and chutney. The fragrant, trumpet-shaped blossoms can be chopped into salads, fried in batter or stuffed; pumpkinseeds can be toasted, tossed in salt, and eaten as a snack. Pumpkins are native to the Americas and were cultivated perhaps as early as 10,000 years ago, predating by several thousands of years the domestication of corn (maize) and beans. They reached Europe in the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries when their properties of easy cultivation and long storage life made them valuable as winter fare.

**Punch** – A hot or cold beverage consisting of a mixture of fruit juice, water, often carbonated liquid and sometimes alcohol. Apart from fruit juices, ingredients can include champagne, wine, spirits, lemonade, soda, and mineral water.

**Puree** – A thick, creamy liquid or paste made by processing a solid food in a blender or food processor or pushing it through a sieve.

**Puri** – A flat, unleavened deep-fried whole meal Indian bread. The dough is rolled thin, cut into rounds and then deep-fried until puffed and golden brown.

# Q

**Quail** – A small game bird with mottled brown plumage found in flat open country in Europe, Asia, North America, Africa, and Australia. Quail can be roasted with a veal – or pork-based stuffing, split, flattened and grilled (broiled), barbecued, pan-fried with grapes), or casseroled. It has delicate flesh and care should be taken not to dry it out-cover with bacon fat, wrap in vine leaves or baste frequently to keep the flesh moist. In northern Italy quail is often marinated in wine, sage, rosemary, and pepper, then simmered in the marinade and served on slices of grilled (broiled) polenta. Quail is best in autumn, when the bird is plump, and the flesh is full-flavoured.

Quail eggs are plump shaped, greenish-beige with dark brown marking, and about one-third the size of hen's eggs. They may be served hard-boiled in salads or in aspic, and are available pickled.

**Quark** – Low fat curd cheese made in Austria and Germany. It can have a smooth consistency or be in the form of small curds, like cottage cheese.

**Quatre Épices** – See Four Spices.

**Queen of Puddings** – A baked dessert popular in nineteenth-century England consistency of a layer of breadcrumbs, milk and egg yolks, spread with strawberry jam, cooked and cooled, then topped with meringue made from the egg white and returned to the oven until meringue is crisp.

**Quenelle** – A small, light, savoury dumpling made from finely chopped or pureed fish, meat or poultry, bound with egg and flour, formed into an egg or sausage shape and poached. Quenelles are usually served with a rich sauce as a first course; small quenelles can also garnish soup. The name comes from knödel, dumpling.

**Quiche** – An open tart with a thin pastry shell (usually short crust) filled with a rich savoury egg custard flavoured with ham, cheese, onion, leek, spinach, mushroom, asparagus or seafood. Quiche is usually served warm as a first or a light main course; miniature versions are often served as finger food; and cold

quiche is a popular picnic food. The quiche originated in Nancy, in Lorraine, on the French-German border, where it has been known since the sixteenth century and was originally made with bread dough Quiche Lorraine, with a filling of egg and ham or bacon, is a specialty of the region; true Quiche Lorraine should never contain cheese, which is thought to be Persian addition. The name comes from the German Kuchen, cake.

**Quince** – A large, fragrant, yellow-skinned fruit, round to pear-shaped and usually too hard and sour to eat raw, but which when cooked has soft, pink, delicately sweet flesh with the slightly grainy texture of stewed pear. It is related to the apple and the pear. Quince is stewed slowly as a filling for pies and taste, baked whole as a dessert, made into quince paste to serve with soft ripe cheese, roasted whole as an accompaniment for game; and, pectin-rich, is often into jellies, jams and conserves (the pectin level is highest if fruit is picked when greenish-yellow). Quinces preserved in syrup are an old-time dessert favourite in northern Italy. In Middle Eastern cooking it is often stuffed with pears, beans or minced (ground) beef and spices.

The quince originated in Asia, and reached the eastern Mediterranean in ancient times. It was popular with the ancient Greeks, who ate it hollowed out and baked with honey. As fruit traveled north and west, so its name changed – in southern France kydonia became cydonia, in northern France, coing, and across the channel, quince.

In Greek mythology the quince was the famous golden apple awarded by Paris to Aphrodite, goddess of love. Since the time of the ancients the fruit has been a symbol of love, marriage and fertility and in medieval Europe a gift of quinces was regarded as a declaration of some ardour.

# R

**Rabbit** – A small, furred animal of the hare family. Young rabbit bred for the table has lean and tender white flesh similar to chicken; wild rabbit has darker and more stringy meat. Rabbit is often marinated in wine seasoned with shallots, garlic and thyme before being sautéed, stewed or casseroled; it can also be roasted (care should be taken during cooking that the flesh does not dry out).

**Radicchio** – A salad vegetable with white stalks and crisp, reddish-purple, peppery flavoured leaves; the two main varieties are Verona (small and round with compact wrinkly leaves) and Treviso (long leaves). Radicchio adds an interesting bitter bite to mixed-leaf salads or it may be braised or grilled and served with meat or poultry. A variety of chicory (endive), radicchio is available fresh throughout the year.

**Radish** – A root vegetable with peppery tasting crunchy white flesh. The roots range in size, shape, and skin colour from small, round and red to long, thin, and white. Radish is eaten raw with dips, in salads and as a garnish; it can be boiled or steamed as a vegetable. Daikon, a giant white radish, is an important ingredient in the cooking of Japan and China. The radish has been grown in China more than 3,000 years; it was a favourite of the ancient world. Radish is available fresh throughout the year; Daikon is sold pickled.

**Ragoût** – A French term for a stew from cubes of meat, poultry, fish, game or vegetables cooked in a thickened, well-seasoned broth.

**Raisin** – A group of a sweet variety dried either naturally in the sun or artificially. Raisins are sprinkled on breakfast cereal, can be added to rice and salads, are used in fruitcakes, biscuits, and puddings, and can be served with cheese at the end of a meal. There are varieties with or without seeds.

**Rambutan** – A small oval fruit encased in a thick red skin covered with soft spines. Its pale coloured translucent flesh has a similar taste to a grape. Peeled and stoned, the rambutan is added to fruit-salad, green salad or fish salad, and can also be served on a cheese board. The rambutan is related to the lychee and longan and is available canned (in syrup).

**Rapeseed Oil** – See Canola Oil.

**Rarebit** – Also known as Welsh rarebit, a hot snack consisting of cheese melted with beer, seasoned with mustard or Worcestershire sauce, spread on toast and browned under a griller.

**Raspberry** – The soft, fragrant, juicy fruit of a thorny plant related to the rose. Raspberries can be served fresh, with cream or ice-cream, added to fruit salad, pureed for use in desserts and sauces or cooked as a filling in tarts. The

raspberry originated in the cold climate of northern Europe, Asia, and America. Raspberries are available fresh from mid summer to autumn, and can also be bought frozen.

**Ratatouille** – A stew of summer vegetables originally from the Provence region of southern France and traditionally consisting of eggplant (aubergine), zucchini (courgette), onion, tomato and garlic. Sometimes red pepper (capsicum) is added and the mixture is simmered in olive oil.

**Ravigote Sauce** – A seasoned spicy sauce. Cold ravigote, a vinaigrette mixed with capers, chopped herbs and onion, is served with cold meat and fish. Hot ravigote is made by cooking chopped shallots in wine vinegar, then adding veal velouté sauce, and chopped parsley, tarragon, chives, and chervil. Ravigote butter is flavoured with chopped shallots, herbs, and sometimes mustard.

**Ravioli** – Small squares of pasta dough filled with meat, cheese, or vegetable mixtures then boiled in water and served with a sauce (usually sprinkled with grated Parmesan cheese) as a first course or main dish. Ravioli can be made at home or bought fresh or frozen.

**Red Cabbage** – A red-leafed cabbage, similar in taste to green cabbage. Stewed with apples, bacon, sugar, and nutmeg it is traditionally served with game and roast beef. It is also pickled or served raw in salads.

**Red Currant** – See Currant.

**Reduce** – To boil down a sauce or gravy in order to concentrate its flavour and thicken its consistency.

**Refresh** – To plunge lightly boiled vegetables into cold water to halt the cooking process and maintain their colour.

**Rémoulade Sauce** – A mayonnaise-based cold sauce flavoured with chopped tarragon, chervil, parsley, gherkin, capers, and sometimes anchovies. Rémoulade is served with cold poultry, fish, shellfish (particularly crab and lobster), meat and eggs.

**Rendang** – A hot and spicy curry of Indonesian origin consisting of cubed beef, mutton or chicken fried with spices and then

cooked slowly in coconut milk until the meat is tender and the gravy thick and paste-like.

**Rennet** – A substance made from the stomach lining of unweaned calves. It is used to coagulate milk in the making of junket and hard cheese. Rennet is available in tablet form (often in a variety of flavours) for junket making.

**Rhubarb** – The pink, fleshy stalks of a leafy vegetable cooked, sweetened, and eaten as a dessert or breakfast dish. The trimmed stalks are cut into short lengths and stewed, poached or baked in a sugar syrup until tender; serve warm or cold or use as a filling for pies, tarts and crumbles. The leaves contain poisonous oxalic acid and must not be eaten. Rhubarb is sold fresh but is best in autumn and winter.

**Rice** – The small oval grain from a semi-aquatic grass cultivated in warm climates. An important food (it is the staple of more than half the world's people), it is always eaten cooked, either hot or cold. Brown rice is the whole kernel with just the inedible husk removed; it has a chewy texture and a slightly nutty flavour. White (polished) rice is the inner kernel. Types of rice include long grain, with long narrow kernels; sometimes called Indian rice (it includes aromatic varieties such as basmati), this is the variety used in China and South East Asia – when cooked the grains remain separate and it is used for plain boiled rice, rice salads and in stuffings. Medium-grain rice has plump oval kernels which when cooked are moist enough to hold together yet are still distinct; it can be used in place of long-grain rice. Short-grain rice, also called pearl, round or pudding rice, has almost round kernels that become sticky and cling together when cooked; it is the rice grown in Italy, and includes arborio, used to make risotto; in Spain it is used in paella. It is suitable for puddings and moulded rings and an Asian short-grained variety called glutinous or sticky rice is the preferred rice for sweet dishes in Asia. Converted rice has been parboiled and then dried; the starch content is reduced and the cooked grain is especially fluffy. Wild rice is the seed of an aquatic grass native to the Minnesota lakes of North America.

**Rice Flour** – Also called rice powder, a flour ground from milled rice; used in Asia to make rice noodles and used commercially as a thickening agent in cakes and puddings.

**Rice Paper** – A thin, almost transparent edible paper made from the straw of rice. It is used to wrap sweet and savoury foods; macaroons are often baked on rice paper, as it doesn't need to be removed before the cakes are served.

**Rice Vinegar** – A mild flavoured, pale yellow liquid distilled from fermented rice and used in Chinese and Japanese cooking, and sometimes in salads dressings. It is sold in small bottles.

**Ricotta** – A soft, smooth moist, white cheese with a bland, sweetish flavour. Traditionally ricotta is made from whey, which when heated coagulated in the same way as the white of an egg; sometimes skimmed or whole cow's milk is added, giving the cheese a creamier consistency and a fuller flavour. Ricotta can be served as a dessert with fruit or warm honey, used as filling for cheesecake, or mixed with a sharp-tasting soft cheese as a savoury spread or filling for cannelloni. Ricotta is bought fresh and must be used quickly.

**Rigani** – A variety of the herb oregano, which is mostly used, dried rather than fresh. Much used in Greek cooking, rigani is available dried in bunches or as crumbled leaves in small packages.

**Rillettes** – Also known as potted pork, a spread made from pork (or sometimes rabbit, goose or poultry), seasoned with garlic, onions and herbs, cooked slowly in lard and then pounded to a paste. It is served spread on bread or toast.

**Risotto** – Short-grained rice (arborio is best) sautéed in butter or oil and then simmered gently in stock until thick and creamy. A range of ingredients (especially shellfish, chicken liver, beef marrow, savoury sausages and vegetables) can be added. Risotto with Parmesan cheese and extra butter is served in Italy as an alternative to pasta. Risotto means 'little rice'.

**Rissole** – A small ball of minced meat, poultry, fish, or shellfish, coated in breadcrumbs and fried or baked.

**Roast** – To cook food in the dry heat of an oven, a method most often used for larger cuts of meat, poultry, or game. Roasting results in a browned, crunchy crust and a moist interior. Spit roasting involves rotating the food over a naked flame.

**Rock cake** – A small individual cake with firm texture and rough, rock like appearance containing dried fruit. Rock cakes are eaten warm or cold, buttered or plain.

**Rockefeller Oyster** – Oyster in the shell topped with a sauce of pureed spinach, onion, and celery, flavoured with a dash of either Pernod or Tabasco, sprinkled with breadcrumbs and cooked under a griller until the top begins to brown. The Rockefeller oyster was created at Antoine's a famous New Orleans restaurant, and allegedly came by its name when a customer described the dish 'as rich as Rockefeller'.

**Rocket (Arugula)** – A salad green with slender deep green leaves similar in shape to radish tops. Its spicy, bitter flavour complements other leaves in a mixed green salad. The older (and larger) the leaf, the more pungent the flavour.

**Rockmelon** – See Melon.

**Roe** – Hard roe is the massed eggs of the female and includes sturgeon roe (better known as caviar), lump fish roe and salmon roe. Milt or soft roe is the sperm of the male fish; soft herring roe has a creamy, smooth texture and is often fried in butter and served with lemon juice; the soft roe of cod and mullet is blended with cooked potato, olive oil and lemon juice to make the Greek dip taramasalata.

**Rollmop** – A boned herring fillet rolled around a slice of onion or a gherkin, secured with a wooden toothpick and pickled in spiced vinegar. Rollmops are available in jars.

**Romaine Lettuce** – Also known as cos, a lettuce with long, crisp leaves; the outer leaves are dark and pungent, the inner leaves pale and mild in taste. Romaine lettuce is the favoured variety used to make Caesar salad and is valued for its crispness.

**Romano** – A hard grating cheese, usually made from cow's milk, similar in taste and texture to Parmesan. When made with sheep's milk the cheese is called pecorino Romano.

**Roquefort** – A creamy-textured, blue-vein, ewe's milk cheese with a pronounced aroma and a pungent, salty flavour. The cheese is matured for three months in the damp limestone caves of Roquefort-sur-Soulzon in

southeastern France. It is best served at room temperature.

**Rose Water** – A liquid distilled from fragrant rose petals and used particularly in the cooking of India and the Middle East. It flavours Indian desserts such as gulabjamun (rich, fried dumplings soaked in rose water syrup) as well as creams, jellies and ices. Rose water essence is much stronger than rose water and should be used sparingly.

**Rosemary** – The long, thin, aromatic, grey-green leaves of a perennial shrub used fresh or dry as a herb. Rosemary combines well with lamb, veal, pig, poultry, and rabbit dishes. Fresh young leaves can be chopped and added to stuffings or leafy twigs can be placed in the roasting pan or thrown on the barbecue fire, a sprig in a bottle of vinegar gives flavour to salad dressings; and the tiny, star-shaped, blue flowers can be added to salads or crystallized. Rosemary is easily grown.

**Rough Puff Pastry** – A variation of puff pastry, faster to prepare, which has crisp layers of flaky pastry but does not rise as much as puff pastry. It is used for sausage rolls, pasties and meat pies.

**Rouille** – A fiery sauce made from dried red chilli pepper, olive oil, breadcrumbs and saffron pounded together. Rouille is served with bouillabaisse or grilled fish.

**Roulade** – A food rolled around a filling. It can be meat, poultry or fish rolled around vegetables or other stuffing, a lightly cooked savoury or sweet soufflé mixture baked, spread with a filling and rolled; or sponge cake wrapped around a sweet filling.

**Roux** – A mixture of butter and flour cooked over a low heat and used to thicken many sauces. Blended with milk it forms the basis of béchamel sauce; blended with veal or chicken stock it makes - velouté sauce. Brown roux, used to thicken espagnole and demi-glace sauces, is made by cooking the flour and butter mixture until it turns brown.

**Rum** – A spirit distilled from sugarcane and used in cooking to flavour sweet foods such as rich fruit cakes, pancake batters, dessert creams and mousses. Rum combines well with vegetable such as sweet potato & plantain.

**Rum Baba** – See Baba au Rhum



**Rutabaga** – See Swede.

**Rye** – A cereal grain used to make bread cakes and crisp breads. Cracked rye is cooked with milk or water as a breakfast food.

**Rye Bread** – A dark-coloured, dense-textured bread with a slightly sour taste. It is commonly served with shellfish.

## S

**Sabayon Sauce** – A light, foamy sauce made with whipped egg yolks, sugar and a liquid (usually dry or sweet white wine or champagne) and served warm and foaming with puddings, cakes or fruit; it is a French variation of the Italian dessert Zabaglione.

**Sacher Torte** – A dense chocolate cake with two layers separated by a thin filling of apricot jam and the whole covered with smooth chocolate. Created by Franz Sacher, chief pastry cook to the Austrian statesman Metternich during the congress of Vienna (1814-15), the cake was later the cause of a protracted argument between Sacher's descendants and Vienna's famous Demel patisserie as to whether in its true form it had two layers or was simply a cake spread with jam and then iced.

**Saffron** – A spice made from the dried, threadlike stamens of the saffron crocus. It is strongly fragrant and dark orange in colour. Saffron is very expensive – the small crocus flower has only three stamens and each must be plucked by hand; it takes more than 1,50,000 fresh flowers to produce 1 kilogram (2.2 pounds) of dried saffron. Fortunately only scant amounts are needed to impart its unique flavour and colour. Saffron is used in fish dishes, such as bouillabaisse, with rice (as in the Spanish dish, paella, and saffron rice, popular in Indian and Asian cooking), in poultry and beef stews, in curries, tomato-based sauces, sweet breads and biscuits (cookies). Saffron is best purchased as threads (to use, pound in a mortar and steep in warm liquid to bring out the flavour).

**Sage** – A herb with grey-green aromatic leaves with a pungent, slightly bitter flavour,

originally used medicinally but now used in cooking especially in stuffings for poultry and pork and as a traditional flavouring for cottage cheese. In Italian cooking it flavours veal and other meat dishes; in Germany it is used in eel dishes; and in Greece sage tea is a popular beverage. Sage is native to the northern shores of the Mediterranean. It is available fresh or dried.

**Sage Derby** – A close textured cow's milk cheese flavoured with fresh sage leaves, which give it a green hue with darker green streaks. It is a variant of the English cheese, Derby. Serve at room temperature on a cheese platter and as a snack cheese.

**Sago** – tiny balls of starch prepared from the starchy inner bark of the sago palm, a tree native to the swamps of Malaysia, the Philippines, and India which, just before flowering at 15 years of age, builds up a large reserve of starch. Sago is used mainly as a dessert, cooked until transparent in sweetened milk, flavoured water, or coconut milk.

**Saint Paulin** – A pasteurized cow's milk pressed curd cheese with a semi-soft texture and a flavour ranging from buttery and slightly sweet to tangy. Now factory-made all over France, it is derived from Port Salut, a cheese first made in the early nineteenth century in the Port-du-Salut monastery in Brittany.

**Sake** – A Japanese alcoholic drink made from fermented rice. A sweet sake, mirin, is an important flavouring in Japanese cooking; sweet sherry can be substituted.

**Salad** – A mixture of foods, either savoury or sweet, such as vegetables (raw or cooked) and salad greens, fresh fruits, seafood, poultry, meats, egg, pasta, and grains. Savoury salads are usually served with a dressing. In North America a green salad is often served after the first course and before the main course; in many parts of Europe it is served with the main course; in France it is served after the main course. Salads featuring green beans, corn, rice, tomato, potato or cabbage are often served as side dishes, while first and main course salads include Caesar salad, and salads of cheese, seafood, chicken, pasta, and meats. Fruit such as grapefruit segments, grapes, and cantaloupe (rockmelon) are added to savoury salads.

**Salad Dressing** – A flavoured liquid used to moisten and flavour a salad; it can be a

sprinkling of lemon juice, or can be a mixture of olive oil and vinegar or a cold sauce such as mayonnaise. The dressing can be served mixed through the salad or as an accompaniment.

**Salami** – A cured dry sausage made from minced (ground pork and seasoned with garlic and other herbs and spices; it is sometimes smoked and can be flavoured with red wine. Salami is served thinly sliced as finger food, in salads and sandwiches and as a pizza topping. The sausage is thought to have originated in the ancient city of Salamis, in Cyprus, but is now commonly associated with Italy; distinctive types of salami are also made in Denmark, Hungary, Austria, Spain, and Germany.

**Salmon** – A large fish that depends most of the year in Cooler Ocean waters, but swims up rivers to spawn in fresh water. It has delicately flavoured fatty pink flesh. Salmon may be grilled (broiled), baked or poached; the flesh may also be smoked or salted. It is used in many traditional dishes such as the Scandinavian gravlax (raw salmon salted and marinated with dill and pepper) and the Russian Koulbiac (a fish and vegetable pie). Smoked salmon is served cold, thinly sliced, with lemon and capers, or with cream cheese or horseradish sauce, and often accompanied by bread, toast or blinis, it can also be incorporated in various hot and cold dishes; including mousses, dips, crêpes, omelettes and scrambled eggs, and tossed through steaming pasta.

Salmon was once abundant in northern Atlantic waters; it was the most commonly eaten fish in the medieval Europe and by the seventeenth century the fish was still so plentiful in Scottish streams that employers were forbidden by law from feeding it to their servants more than three times a week. Salmon is now farmed in many parts of the world. Fresh salmon can be bought whole, or as cutlets or fillets; it is also available smoked and in cans.

**Salsa** – A highly seasoned, chunky sauce based on tomato, chilli, garlic, and onion, served as an accompaniment to Mexican and Tex-Mex dishes. Salsas can be fresh or cooked and range in flavour from mild to fiery. Commercially made varieties are available from supermarkets and specialist food stores. Salsa is now often used as a generic word sauce.

**Salsify** – A long, thin root vegetable with a delicate, oyster-like flavour. The most common variety has pale, almost white, flesh and light brown skin. A black-skinned variety, known also as scorzonera, has cream-coloured flesh. Salsify is usually boiled or sautéed and served tossed in butter and parsley or with a béchamel or cream sauce.

**Salt** – A white odourless and sharp-tasting crystalline powder, sodium chloride, used as a seasoning and preserving agent. Salt can be mined from seams of rock salt trapped underground (it is then boiled down and crystallized) or obtained through the evaporation of seawater or from inland salt pans. Table salt is finely ground rock salt with additives to make it free flowing. Kosher salt is an evaporated salt with large, irregularly shaped crystals free from additives and iodine. Bay and sea salt, in the form of small, brittle chunks and flakes, is produced by evaporation and has an intensely salty taste; it should be crushed in a mortar or mill before use. In North America 'rock salt' refers to non-edible salt used for ice-cream machines.

**Saltimbocca** – A dish consisting of thin slices of veal sautéed in butter, then topped with ham or prosciutto and sage and gently braised in white wine (rolled up or left flat, either way secured with a toothpick).

**Sambal** – An accompaniment to an Indonesian curry or rice meal. Sambals are made with chilli peppers; minced onion, oil and lime juice and they are often varied by the addition of other ingredients such as shrimp paste or tomato.

**Sambal Oelek** – A hot chilli relish used in Indonesian cooking. Sambal Oelek is commercially available; it can also be made at home in a food processor by blending about 20 fresh chillies, roughly chopped, with 1-2 tablespoon vinegar. Place in a sterilized jar and store in the refrigerator for up to one month. You can use it to replace fresh chillies in almost any dish. Take care when handling chillies – wear plastic gloves and keep hands away from the eyes.

**Samosa** – A small savoury snack of Indian origin consisting of a spiced and seasoned mixture of minced (ground) meat and chopped vegetables encased in a semi-circle of pastry and fried in ghee or oil. Samosa should be served hot, accompanied by mint or coriander chutney.

**Sandwich** – In its simplest form a sandwich is a savoury or sweet filling or spread contained between two slices of bread to make an eat-in-the-hand meal. There are many variations, including Danish or open sandwiches, with substantial toppings piled high; rolled sandwiches, with the bread rolled around a filling; ribbon sandwiches made from three layers of bread (alternate slices of white and brown bread; and sandwiches with hot filling (bacon, roast beef, grilled steak). In France the name has been adopted for a length of crusty baguette, split and opened and filled with pâté, ham or cheese. The sandwich takes its name from the Earl of Sandwich (1718-92) who, during a long gambling session, asked his servant to keep him supplied with sliced beef between two pieces of bread.

**Sapodilla** – a round fruit with thin, leathery green to brown skin and pale, sweet flesh with a custard-like texture tasting somewhat like soft brown sugar. It can be eaten scooped from the shell, chopped into fruit salad, or pureed and added to ice-cream. The sapodilla tree is native to Central America and the Caribbean and was taken to the Philippines by the Spanish. A milky latex obtained from its bark is used as the basis for chewing gum.

**Sapote** – A tropical fruit from Central America. The black sapote, also known as the pudding fruit, is similar in size and shape to a persimmon. It has green skin and soft, sweet, dark brown flesh. It can be eaten scooped straight from the skin, pureed as a sauce or added to ice-cream. The white sapote, also green-skinned, has pale yellow, buttery-textured sweet flesh.

**Sardine** – A small, silvery, saltwater fish with tender, strong-flavoured, dark, oily flesh. Fresh sardines are best grilled (broiled) or dusted with flour, quickly pan-fried and served hot with boiled potatoes and wedge of lemon. The sardine is a member of the herring family. From ancient times in southern Europe it was salted for use in inland areas. In medieval France, sardines preserved in oil or vinegar were packed into earthenware jars distribution in areas far from the sea. The fish is named after the Mediterranean Island of Sardinia, once centre of a fishing industry based on this small fish. Sardines are available fresh, frozen and canned.

**Sashimi** – A dish of Japanese origin consisting of slices of raw, very fresh fish cut into cubes (tuna or salmon) or sliced paper thin

(flounder and sea bream), garnished with grated daikon (giant white radish), shredded lettuce, cucumber, thin strips of carrot or finely chopped ginger and accompanied by a dipping sauce of wasabi (a pungent horseradish sauce), dark soy sauce and sweet cooking wine. Sashimi is generally served as a first course.

**Satay** – Small morsels of marinated beef, lamb, pork, poultry, or seafood, threaded on bamboo or wooden skewers and grilled. Satays are served hot, accompanied by peanut sauce and cubes of cucumber as a first course. Satays are found in the cooking of South East Asia, especially Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore, where they are often cooked on small charcoal braziers by street vendors.

**Sauce** – A hot or cold seasoned liquid served with a dish to add flavour to it. A sauce may be thick or thin, strained or chunky. Classic French sauces may be based on a roux of butter and flour (béchamel, brown sauce), on a butter emulsion (béarnaise, hollandaise), or on a cold emulsion of oil and egg yolks (mayonnaise); all can be varied with addition of a great variety of other ingredients. Other sauces are based on pureed vegetables or fruit (coulis), groundnuts (satay sauce), cooked tomato (ketchup), cream, yoghurt, cream cheeses and oils. Sweet sauces include custards, rich cream sauces and fruit purees. Many sauces are commercially available, either bottled, canned or dry in packets, to be mixed with water, milk or stock.

**Sauerbraten** – A dish of German origin consisting of beef or pork marinated (for one to three days) in a spiced vinegar or red wine mixture, then cooked slowly in the mixture. It is served hot and thinly sliced, traditionally accompanied by the thickened marinade, dumplings, and red cabbage.

**Sauerkraut** – White cabbage, sliced wafer thin, salted to draw out moisture then fermented in brine for four to six weeks. Braised or stewed (sometimes with additional ingredients such as sliced apple, onion or juniper berries) sauerkraut is the classic accompaniment to roast goose, boiled pork, frankfurter and smoked sausage. Workers on the Great Wall of China ate fermented cabbage more than 2,000 years ago. In ancient Gaul, food, including cabbage, was salted for the winter and by medieval times salted fermented cabbage was a staple throughout central and Eastern Europe.

**Sausage** – Minced meat or poultry, seasoned and mixed with a little ground cereal or crumbled bread and usually stuffed into a tube-like casing. Sausages are an ancient way of making sure that every edible part of the carcass was used (including the cleaned intestine, traditionally used as casing). The mixture was often preserved by salting – the word ‘sausage’ comes from the Latin *salsus*, salted.

**Sausage Roll** – A roll of minced meat, seasoned with herbs and spices, encased in puff or flaky pastry and baked. Sausage rolls are eaten hot as a snack or finger food. They originated as a way of using up leftovers.

**Sauté** – To cook food in a frying pan in a small amount of hot butter or oil until brown.

**Savarin** – A large ring-shaped cake made of baba dough without raisins. After cooking it is soaked with rum-flavoured syrup and the centre filled with *crème pâtissière* (confectioners custard) or Chantilly cream and fruit.

**Saveloy** – A small, plump sausage made with pork, seasoned with pepper and garlic and sometimes smoked.

**Savory, Summer and Winter** – Two similar aromatic herbs with a delicate, peppery flavour slightly reminiscent of sage and mint. They are used in stuffings and often added to cooked broad beans. Summer savory, an annual, has silvery green leaves and a sweeter taste. Winter savoury is a perennial with stiffer leaves.

**Scald** – To heat a liquid, especially milk, to the temperature when tiny bubbles appear at the edge of the pan. The term also means to plunge fruit or vegetables into boiling water to remove impurities or make peeling easier.

**Scallop** – A mollusk with a distinctive, ribbed, fan shaped, hinged shell. It propels itself by using a large muscle to successively open and shut its shell; it is this muscle, creamy-white to creamy pink in colour, that is eaten – the pinky-orange roe, also edible, is sometimes discarded. Scallops are generally cooked and served on the shell. Cold poached scallops can feature in a seafood salad.

**Scaloppine** – A small thin slice of boneless veal cut across the grain and flattened (in France known as *escalope*, in Germany as

*Schnitzel*, used in the famous dish *Wiener Schnitzel*). The term ‘scaloppine’ is often extended to include a dish of northern Italian origin in which the slices are coated in flour, fried in butter or oil and served with a tomato or wine sauce.

**Scampi** – The Italian name for a large marine Prawn (shrimp) with long, thin claws. When cooked they have delicately flavoured white flesh and are often served cooked in butter, garlic, white wine, and herbs or fried in batter (*scampi fritti*). The French name is *Langoustine*.

**Schnitzel** – See *Scaloppine*.

**Scone** – A small plain cake made from a simple flour and milk dough raised with baking powder or bicarbonate of soda (baking soda); in North America such a cake is known by the term ‘biscuit’, and the term ‘scone’ refers to a plain or sweet quick bread made from a richer dough that usually contains egg. Scones are served freshly baked, split in half, with butter or cream and jam or honey as a light mid-morning or mid-afternoon meal; scones with clotted cream and strawberry jam are the basis of Devonshire tea. Dried fruit can be added to the dough or, for a savoury scones (biscuits) are often served as an accompaniment to a meal or may be split open to sandwich fillings such as smoked turkey and ham.

Scones originated in Scotland and were originally cooked on a griddle (a thick flat iron with a handle).

**Score** – To make incisions on the outer surface of a food in order to decorate it to allow the penetration of a marinade, or in the case of some fruits (such as an apple) to prevent the skin from splitting during baking.

**Scotch Egg** – A hard-boiled egg, shelled and encased in sausage mince, coated with breadcrumbs and deep-fried. Scotch eggs may be eaten hot or cold.

**Scottish Food** – Scotland is popularly identified with the uncomplicated and sustaining foods needed before facing its bracing air. Steaming porridge, warming broths, oatmeal cakes and haggis – traditional fare of Highland crofting communities – are a response to the climate, which, although inhospitable in so many ways, is ideal for growing the staple oats. The region is also the home of some exceptionally fine food, based

on high quality local ingredients and in its preparation showing the influence of the old alliance between Scotland and France – for centuries the kitchens of Highland landed gentry have produced dishes such as cream soups, game braised in wine, rich sauces and pastries; estate streams teem with salmon and trout, the heaths supply grouse and the forests and fields venison and hare. In the Lowlands and the cities of Glasgow and Edinburgh, where wheat flour has always been more widely used, there are delicious breads, buns, scones (small cakes known as biscuit in North America) and cakes. In Scotland the day begins with a nourishing cooked breakfast of oatmeal porridge (traditionally eaten without sugar), fried ham and eggs, or fresh fish, kippers or perhaps finnan haddie (smoked haddock, a specialty of the north-eastern coast and delicious poached in milk), followed by toast, oat cakes or warm baps with marmalade and tea or coffee. The main meal of the day is taken at midday and usually includes soup (which, if it is thick broth or a meat soup, may be served over a boiled potato as the main course) and fish (such as trout, salmon, haddock, halibut or cod), meat (beef or lamb), game or meats prepared in sausages (such as haggis), pies or black puddings. Steamed and baked puddings or fruit (especially berry) tarts complete the meal. A light supper called ‘high tea’, of foods such as cold meats, shepherd’s pie, fish and chips or bacon and eggs is eaten in the evening. Cakes, scones, buns, and biscuits (cookies) are always on hand, and specialties include butter rich shortbread and the almond encrusted Dundee cake. The national drink, of course is whisky.

**Seafood** – A collective term for edible fish and shellfish. A mixture of seafood, usually including squid (calamari), peeled prawns (shrimp), crab meat and baby octopus is often sold under the name ‘marinara mix’ and is used for adding to a tomato sauce for spaghetti marinara or sprinkling on a dough to make a seafood pizza. A mixture of two or three types of seafood is often served accompanied by a mayonnaise-based sauce and bread and butter.

**Sear** – To quickly brown the surface of a food, usually meat, using a very high heat. It is done to seal in the juices.

**Seasonings** – An ingredient added to a food to heighten its natural flavour.

**Sea Urchin** – A marine animal with a soft body encased in a hard, spherical shell with

radiating needle-sharp spines; it is an echinoderm, not a mollusk. The edible part is the bright red-orange roe, which has a salty taste and the consistency of raw egg.

**Semolina** – A food made by coarsely grinding hard durum wheat. Semolina is used to make milk puddings, cakes, custards, and biscuits (cookies). Semolina flour, milled from the heart of durum wheat, is used to make pasta.

**Sesame Oil** – A strongly flavoured amber-coloured oil pressed from roasted sesame seeds. It is used in Chinese cooking, mainly as a flavouring; in Japan sesame oil is blended with other oils to fry tempura. When heated sesame oil loses much of its flavour. Cleopatra is said to have used it as a skin oil; thirteenth-century Venetian traveler Marco Polo praised it as the best oil he tasted during his journeys. Sesame oil is available from supermarkets and Asian food stores.

**Sesame Seeds** – Also known as benne seeds the small oval seeds of a semi-tropical plant. Lightly toasted seeds can be tossed through salads, vegetable dishes, stuffings, and stews; raw seeds are often sprinkled on bread, buns, and biscuits (cookies) before baking. In the Middle East ground sesame seeds are used to make the confectionery (candy) halva and the dressing tahini. In Africa the seeds are roasted and eaten like peanuts and are also ground into a flour. In Japan and Korea freshly roasted then lightly crushed seeds are added to dips and dressings; in China whole roasted seeds are used as a garnish and are ground into a brown and nutty flavoured paste.

**Shallot** – A small onion, similar in shape to a clove of garlic, with a reddish-brown skin and purple-tinged white flesh with a mild flavour. Shallots bulbs and leaves are used raw, finely chopped in salads, and are cooked; they are widely used in the cooking of northern France to flavour sauces to flavour sauces and casseroles.

**Shashlik** – The Russian name for cubes of mutton or lamb marinated in vinegar and oil flavoured with thyme, nutmeg, onion, and bayleaf, then grilled (broiled). Shashlik is similar to the Middle – Eastern kebab.

**Shellfish** – An edible water animal with a shell or carapace. There are three main classes: crustaceans, including lobsters, crabs, prawns (shrimps) and crayfish; mollusk, including

oysters, scallops, mussels, clams and whelks; and caphalopods (with a reduced internal shell and technically classed as mollusks) namely, squid, cuttle fish and octopus.

**Shepherd's Pie** – A dish consisting of finely chopped or minced (ground) cooked lamb, fried onion and stock, seasoned with worcestershire sauce, thickened with flour and simmered, the mixture is transferred to a pie dish, topped with mashed potato and then browned under a grill (broiler). Cottage pie is a similar dish using beef. Both were created to use leftover roast meat.

**Sherbet** – A smooth, iced dessert consisting of milk, sugar, sometimes gelatin or egg white and a sharp-tasting fruit flavouring, usually citrus. Sherbet is softer and less rich than ice-cream and although similar, lacks the biting fruity tang of sherbet (which does not include milk. It can be served topped with a few spoonfuls of champagne or liqueur and accompanied by sliced fresh fruit. Both sherbet and sorbet have their origins in ancient Persia – the word 'sherbet' comes from sharbia, the Arabic word for 'drink'. Sherbet is commercially available or can be made at home.

**Sherry** – A fortified wine produced in Spain and usually taken as a pre-dinner drink. Both dry sherry and sweet sherry are used in the cooking of savoury dishes (especially sauces, game stews, and chicken dishes – usually added just before serving), and sweet dishes (such as trifle and other cold desserts). Sherry was imported into England after the sixteenth century from the Spanish port of Jerez de la Frontera – the name sherry derives from attempts to render jerez into English.

**Shish Kebab** – See Kebab.

**Shortbread** – A rich buttery, slightly sweet, thick biscuit (cookie) made from flour, sugar and butter only. Shortbread originated in Scotland; it is usually baked in a round pan, scored into segments before baking but can also be cut in rectangular fingers. In Britain it is a traditional Christmas fare.

**Shortcake** – A cake made from a dough similar to that used for scones (biscuits) but enriched with butter, sugar and milk or cream. Sponge cake can also be used. Shortcake is usually served as a dessert, split horizontally and filled with sweetened whipped cream and sliced fruit (usually strawberries, but also

blueberries or peaches); the top is also spread with cream and fruit. Shortcake is American in origin and gets its name from the 'short' (rich and crumbly) dough used in its preparation.

**Shortcrust Pastry** – A simple, rich, crumbly pastry made by rubbing fat (butter, margarine or lard) into flour, then stirring in just enough liquid – usually water – to hold the mixture together; the dough should be chilled before use. Shortcrust is used for pie crusts and tart bases. It can be sweetened with sugar, enriched with egg or made into a savoury crust by the addition of herbs or grated cheese. Readymade frozen shortcrust pastry is available.

**Shortening** – A fat used for frying and baking, usually made from vegetable oils although animal fat is sometimes added. Shortening is used in doughs, pastries (especially to make crisp shortcrust pie crusts), breads and cakes.

**Short Soup** – Also known as wonton soup, a Chinese soup consisting of chicken stock, noodle dumplings filled with minced (ground) meat mixtures and sometimes garnished with chopped spring onion (scallion).

**Shrimp** – A small prawn; pink shrimps are found on the Atlantic coasts of northern Europe as well as the West Coast of North America; grey shrimps are caught off Britain and northern France. Both are used in bisques and salads. In North America the term is used for all prawns, whatever the size.

**Shrimp Paste** – An extremely pungent seasoning paste made from sun-dried, salted prawns (shrimps). In the cooking of South-East Asia in flavours curries and dipping sauces; use sparingly.

**Siena Cake** – See Panforte.

**Silver Beat** – Also known as Swiss Chard, a leaf vegetable with large bubble – textured, spinach-flavoured leaves and fleshy white celery like stems. The green leaves are cooked and eaten like spinach, or finely chopped may be added to salads.

**Silverside** – A large cut of beef, the boneless outer part of the top of the hind-leg (butt). Silverside is usually prepared as corned beef, but fresh cuts can be roasted or pot-roasted.

**Simmer** – To cook food in a liquid that is just below boiling point. When a liquid is simmering bubbles form but usually burst before they reach the surface.

**Simmel cake** – A rich fruit cake sandwiched and coated with almond paste and now traditionally associated with Easter, although it was originally made for Mothering Sunday, in May.

**Sirloin** – A cut of beef from between the rump and the ribs. Sirloin, porterhouse and T-bone steaks are taken from it; it may also be divided into roasting pieces.

**Smørrebrød** – See Danish Open Sandwich.

**Snail** – A small, soft-bodied, land-dwelling mollusk. Some snails are prized as food, especially in Europe. They are usually cooked with garlic butter and served in the shell. Snails are commercially raised, often on a diet of cabbage, wheat, or oats. Most highly regarded in France is the Burgundy or Roman snail, fed on vine leaves from the Burgundy vineyards. The Romans were probably the farm snails, snails are available canned; the shells are sold separately. Snails are called escargots in France.

**Snow Peas (Mange Tout) and Sugar Snap Peas** – Bright green varieties of pea with sweet, delicately flavoured pods, which are eaten whole. Snow peas are harvested when the peas are still immature; sugar peas are fully mature but the pod is so tender that they can be cooked and eaten unshelled. Both can be added, raw to salads. To prepare either pea, break off the stalk end and remove any string; lightly boil or steam and serve while still crisp. Snow peas are popular in Asian cooking.

**Soda Bread** – A bread in which the leavening agent is a combination of bicarbonate of soda (baking soda) and buttermilk (or some other acid ingredients), which react together to generate bubbles of carbon dioxide. Traditional Irish soda bread contains only local wholesome flour, buttermilk, bicarbonate of soda (baking soda) and salt; it is scored with a deep cross for even baking.

**Sorbet** – A smooth, sharp tasting iced dessert which consist of sugar syrup and fruit juice or sometimes a liquor (such as Calvados) or champagne.

Sorbets can be served in a tall glass or shallow dish, and topped with a few spoonfuls of liqueur or champagne, garnished with frosted fruits or accompanied by a pureed fruit juice. Sometimes a small scoop is served between courses to refresh the palate; a savoury sorbet (such as thyme, rosemary, avocado, or olive) can be served as an accompaniment to a meat course.

Both sorbet and sherbet reached Europe through ancient Persia – the word sherbet comes from sharbia, the Arabic word for 'drink' – although iced fruit drinks may have originated in ancient China. 'Sorbet' is the French version of the word.

**Sorghum** – A cereal which is a staple food in parts of Africa and Asia where it is cooked like rice, or ground into a flour and made into porridge and flat cakes. A fermented drink is also made from its seeds. Ground sorghum is available for use in stews or as a porridge.

**Sorrel** – A green, leafy plant with a bitter, slightly lemony flavour sorrel is usually cooked, like spinach; it can be pureed as an omelette filling or made into a soup; very young and tender leaves can be added (sparingly) to a green salad; and it is often used as a stuffing for fish.

Sorrel is native to Europe; in ancient times it was eaten to offset the richness of some foods. It is especially popular in the cooking of Provence, in southern France. The name is derived from the Greek word for sour.

**Soufflé** – A light and fluffy egg dish, either savoury or sweet. There are two types: hot and cold. The airy texture of a hot soufflé is achieved by folding stiffly whisked egg whites through a warm sauce or puree; air trapped in the white causes the soufflé to rise when baked. Hot soufflé must be served immediately. A cold soufflé is a mousse-like mixture lightened with whipped egg-whites; it is set in a mould with sides extended by foil.

**Soup** – A liquid food made from meat, poultry, or fish, usually with vegetables, or from one or more vegetables and usually served hot. A soup course is often served at the start of a meal, or, if thick and hearty, may be a meal in itself. The wide range of soups includes clear consommés with cream, meat and vegetable mixture thickened with a roux and cold soups.

**Sour Cream** – Cream to which to which a special culture has been added to give it a

sharp, slightly sour taste. It is thicker than pure fresh cream. Sour cream is used in soups, savoury dips, and salad dressings; as filling for jacket potatoes and in cheesecake. It is used particularly in eastern European cooking.

**Sourdough** – Fermented dough, saved when making a batch of bread and used instead of yeast as a starter when making the next batch.

**Soursop** – Also called prickly custard apple, the green-skinned, heart-shaped fruit of a small tree native to tropical America.

**Soy Bean** – An oval bean, about the size of the common pea, borne in hairy pods on a bush native to China. Most common is the creamy-yellow variety, but they can also be red, purple, brown, or black. Soy beans are valued for their high vegetable protein content and can be eaten in a number of ways: fresh, dried, sprouting, ground and as bean curd and soy-bean milk. Miso, widely used in the cooking of Japan, is a paste of fermented, salted soy-bean. Dried soy-beans are used in soups, stews, and casseroles.

**Soy Sauce** – A dark, salty sauce of Chinese origin made from fermented roasted soy beans, another grain (usually wheat) and brine; the mixture is aged for up to two years, then filtered and bottled. Dark soy sauce is aged longer and towards the end of processing is tinted and flavoured with molasses. Soy sauce is indispensable in Asian cooking; it is used as a seasoning and marinade and adds flavour and colour to many dishes. Chinese cooking uses both dark and light soy sauce: light is used with seafood, chicken, vegetables, soups and in dipping sauces; dark soy sauce is used in red meat dishes. Japanese soy sauce, shoyu, is usually sweeter and less salty than the Chinese variety; in Indonesia, kecap manis, a thick, dark, sweetened soy sauce, is often used.

A seasoning made from fermented soy beans, known as shih, was in use in China more than 2,000 years ago. A strained sauce similar to the version in use today has been made since the sixth century.

**Spaghetti** – Pasta in the form of long strands, made from a flour and water dough. It is best with oil-based sauces that allow the strings to remain slippery and separate. Spaghetti has been made in southern Italy for many hundreds of years; commercially made spaghetti is available in dried or fresh, refrigerated and frozen forms.

**Spanish Food** – Spain shares with its Mediterranean neighbours access to a myriad of fish and shellfish, the use of aromatic hillside herbs and the Roman legacy of olives. From the Phoenicians came the chickpea (garbanzo bean) and the salting of fish. However what makes Spanish cuisine distinct is the Muslim/Arab influence of the Moors, who ruled the country from the eighth to the fifteenth century. From this period comes the emphasis on spices and seasonings, with an array introduced including nutmeg, cloves, saffron, cumin, cinnamon, turmeric and vanilla. The Moors were keen agriculturists; they built irrigation systems to open up farming lands and planted citrus groves, especially the orange, throughout Spain; they also introduced eggplant (aubergine) and asparagus, apricots and pomegranates, almonds and pistachios, rice and sugar; Arab culinary influence is also seen in Spain's syrup-soaked pastries.

The next major strand in the development of Spanish cuisine was the introduction of new foods from the Americas – sweet pepper (capsicum), chilli and tomato, all now firmly identified with national dishes, and potato and chocolate (chocolate drinks were long favoured in Spain as a daily energizer before coffee became widely available). Regardless of all these influences Spanish cooking is still fairly basic, relying on quality fresh produce and natural flavouring—garlic, onion, pepper (capsicum), olive oil, saffron and cumin—rather than complicated techniques. Pork is the common meat of the region.

The traditional start to the day is a breakfast of churros (sugared twists of fried pastry) with coffee or thick, chocolate-flavoured milk. At midday most Spaniards meet friends in cafés pick at tapas (platters of finger food that can include olives, pickled vegetables, fried and marinate seafoods and savoury pastries) before taking the day (comida), a leisurely affair that can stretch over several hours. The Spanish traditionally begin a meal with a green salad, a habit that seems to date from the time of Moorish rule. In the early evening the cafés again fill and the tapas ritual is repeated.

**Spareribs** – Pork spareribs are cut from the belly area and consist of long narrow strips with small bones and layers of fat and tasty lean meat. The term is also used for breast ribs after the outer the outer cuts have been removed (available in sets or as individual slices), valued for the sweet, nutty flavour of the meat that clings to them.

**Spatchcock** – A small chicken or game bird that has been split down the back and flattened,



then often treaded onto a pair of skewers before being grilled (broiled) or roasted.

**Spearmint** – The most commonly used member of the mint family. It is used in mint sauce to accompany lamb, adds flavour to boiled peas and potatoes and is also an important ingredient in Thai cooking. Mint leaves dry well, keeping their colour and smell.

**Speck** – The fatty top part of a leg of bacon, usually smoked and salted. It is available in small pieces and can be sliced as a cold snack or cut into small cubes and used to add flavour to cooked dishes. It is Austrian in origin.

**Speculaas** – Thin, crisp biscuits (cookies) spiced with ginger, cinnamon and allspice and topped with slivered almonds, often made in the shape of legendary and traditional characters. Speculaas are popular in the Netherlands and southern Germany – from where they originated.

**Spice** – The aromatic seeds, fruit, bark, roots, or flowers of trees and shrubs, almost always dried, used to flavour both sweet and savoury preparations. Most spices grow in tropical and semi-tropical climates, especially in India and South-East Asia (the Moluccas, a group of islands off Indonesia and original home of the clove and nutmeg trees, were long known as the Spice Islands). For thousands of years spices reached Europe along trading routes through southwestern Asia. Among the first to reach the Mediterranean were pepper and cinnamon. Spices were rare and expensive; they were used in innumerable dishes and sauces, both sweet and savoury. For centuries the lucrative trade was monopolized by Venetian merchants. It was the desire to find the source of the spices that launched the fleets of Dutch and Portuguese ships. These voyages of discovery not only found their goal, the fabled Spice Islands of South-East Asia, but also reached the shores of the Americas. Spices are available whole or ground; because ground spices lose flavour quickly it is best to grind in small quantities as needed or regularly replace commercially ground spices.

**Spinach** – Also called English spinach, a vegetable with dark green leaves. It is often served with butter and a sprinkle of nutmeg, as an accompaniment to poultry and veal; used in stuffings, soufflés and quiches; and raw leaves may be added to salads. It probably originated in south-western Asia and was taken by the Moors to Spain in the eleventh or twelfth

century. Spinach grows best in cool climates. It is available fresh most of the year and can also be bought frozen, preserved in glass jars, or canned.

**Split Pea** – The dried pea, yellow or green in colour and with husks removed, split in two at the natural division. Split peas are used to make pea and ham soup and pease pudding. In India yellow split peas are made into dal.

**Sponge Cake** – A fluffy, light-textured cake which achieves its airiness from stiffly beaten egg white. There are several distinct types. Sponge cakes may be flavoured with vanilla, grated citrus peel, cocoa or orange flower water; after baking, the cake may be moistened with a liqueur or thin syrup. Sponges are often used for layer cakes, filled with jam and cream and topped with a dusting of icing (confectioners) sugar.

**Sponge Fingers** – Airy finger-shaped biscuits (cookies) made using sponge cake mixture; they are firm on the outside and soft in the centre. The tops are dusted with icing (confectioners) sugar before baking. Sponge fingers are served with chilled cream desserts, ice-cream, and fruit purees and can be used as a border for cold charlottes.

**Spotted Dick** – A Steamed or boiled suet pudding studded with currants, sultanas or other dried fruit, usually served hot; a traditional English dessert.

**Spring Onion** – Also known as scallion and green onion, a variety of onion with small, white, mild-flavoured bulbs and long, green, grass-like leaves. They are eaten raw and finely sliced in salads. The name comes from Scallion, a port in ancient Palestine.

**Spring Roll** – A layer of thin dough wrapped around a filling of cooked vegetables and meats, rolled up and deep-fried until crisp and golden. Spring rolls are usually served with a dipping sauce, as finger food or a first course. Variations are eaten throughout South-East Asia. They are traditionally served during Lunar New Year Celebrations.

**Spring Roll Wrapper** – Pliable, paper thin sheet of white rice flour dough usually sold frozen in packs 20-30. When using, keep wrappers covered with a cloth.

**Sprout** – A grain, seed, or pulse, germinated to grow as a plant and used as a food. Sprouts most commonly used include mung beans, soy beans and alfalfa. Small and crunchy, sprouts can be added to salads and are often an ingredient in Chinese stir-fries. It sprouting seeds at home use dried seeds sold as food (seeds sold for gardening have often been treated with fungicides). Sprouts are also available fresh or canned.

**Spumone** – An Italian frozen dessert is consisting of ice-cream layers assembled in a mould and then frozen. Spumone usually has a layer of chocolate ice-cream, a strawberry or raspberry ice-cream layer and a green layer of pistachio ice-cream; the inner layers can also consist of whipped cream or liqueur-soaked fruits. The dessert is served sliced.

**Spun Sugar** – Also known as angel's hair, gossamer-fine threads of syrup made from sugar boiled to a light caramel. Spun sugar is used as a decoration or garnish for ice-creams, special desserts, and festive cakes. Croquembouche, the traditional French wedding cake, is a high pile of choux pastry puffs glazed with spun sugar.

**Squab** – A small, young pigeon, about four weeks old. Its dark, sweet, succulent flesh, which is served rare, can be grilled (broiled) or roasted. Care should be taken not to over cook it.

**Squash** – A general term for edible members of the gourd family, native to the Americas. They are usually divided into summer squash and winter squash. Summer squash, soft-skinned and quick-growing, are picked young and include zucchini (courgette), patty pan squash, scalloped squash, baby marrows and custard squash; small summer squash may be steamed or boiled. Winter squash are the larger, slow-growing, hard-skinned varieties, such as pumpkin.

**Squid** – Also known as calamari, a saltwater mollusk with a long cylindrical body, and ten tentacles surrounding a parrot like beak. It is prized for its delicately flavoured, firm, white flesh. Squid is found in temperate waters throughout the world. It has long been an important ingredient in the cooking of Asia and the Mediterranean.

**Star Anise** – The dried, star-shaped fruit of a tree native to southern china, used as a spice. It has a strong aniseed flavour. Star anise has

long been used in Asian cooking to flavour meat and poultry dishes and is one of the components of five-spice powder; it has been in Europe since the early seventeenth century. It is available whole or ground.

**Star Fruit** – See Carambola.

**Steak** – A slice of meat, usually beef, taken from between the rump and the rib. Steak cuts include T-bone, porterhouse, and sirloin; fillet or tenderloin (the most tender) comes from beneath the lower backbone. Steak can be grilled (broiled), barbecued or pan-fried, and is usually served with a sauce.

**Steam** – To cook food by using the concentrated moist heat of steam given off by steadily boiling water. Steaming can be done in a double saucepan the top half of which has a perforated base; in a covered basin set in a pot of boiling water; or, as in China and South-East Asia, multi-layered metal or bamboo steamers.

**Steamboat** – A Chinese meal consisting of small portions of meat and seafood cooked at the table in simmering stock. Each diner uses chopsticks or a long handled small wire basket to add or retrieve food; when cooked, each portion is dipped in sauce and eaten. Meat is cooked first, then seafood, than vegetables. As a final course, noodles are cooked in the remaining broth and served with it as soup. The dish is traditionally cooked in a Mongolian fire pot, a table-top cooking device which has a moat (for the stock) around a chimney-like funnel and is set over glowing coals; a fondue set or saucepan and gas ring may be substituted. This style of cooking is believed to have originated with the nomadic Mongolians of northern China.

**Steamed Pudding** – A British specialty, the steamed pudding is cooked in a deep covered basin over boiling water. The basic pudding mixture usually consists of flour, fat, sugar, and eggs; dried or fresh fruits, spices and flavourings such as coffee, vanilla, and chocolate, may be added. Steamed pudding range from the dense and fruit-rich plum (or Christmas) pudding to light, cake-like, soufflé puddings. Steamed ginger pudding, a warming winter favourite which probably evolved as a less expensive version of the traditional plum pudding, is made with a layer of honey or golden syrup (light corn syrup can be substituted) at the bottom of the basin; this

soaks into the batter and forms a syrupy topping sauce when the pudding is unmoulded.

**Stew** – A selection of meat, poultry or fish and vegetables, with herbs and seasonings added, which is cooked slowly with liquid in a covered container (either on the cook-top or in the oven) until the meat and vegetables are tender. Many less expensive, tougher cuts of meat are suitable for stewing.

**Stilton** – A creamy-textured, blue-veined, semi-firm cows milk cheese. It is creamy white to amber in colour and has a strong aroma reminiscent of pears. Stilton dates from the seventeenth century, when it was sold to coach passengers who stopped at the Bell Inn in the village of Stilton in eastern England. The cheese should be served at room temperature at the end of a meal.

**Stir-Fry** – To rapidly and uniformly cook chopped food (vegetables, meat, poultry or seafood) in a little hot oil, in either a wok or a frying pan (skillet), over a high heat, all the time turning the mixture with a spatula. Stir-frying seals in flavours and the food also retains its crispness.

**Stock** – A thin, clear, flavoured liquid obtained by simmering vegetables, herbs and spices with meat, poultry or seafood. The liquid is then strained and chilled so that any fat, which rises to the top, can be removed. Stock is used to enrich soups, casseroles, and sauces. Stock can be homemade but is also available in cans and long-life cartons, as a powder and as a moist cube.

**Stollen** – A German yeast cake made with dried fruits, candied peel and almonds, and sprinkled with sugar before baking. It is traditionally eaten at Christmas.

**Strawberry** – The red, heart shaped, juicy berry of a ground-hugging plant related to the rose, now cultivated throughout the world. Strawberries can be added to fruit and savoury salads, eaten with a little cream or a dusting of sugar and a squeeze of lemon juice, and used or sliced to garnish a range of cakes and desserts. They are pureed for use in ice-cream and sorbets, and cooked as jams, jellies, preserves, and fillings for tarts and pies. Strawberries have been cultivated in Europe since the thirteenth century. At the beginning of the eighteenth century the scarlet Virginia strawberry reached France from North

America – it is the ancestor of the large varieties commercially available today. The wild strawberry has a more intense flavour.

**Stroganoff** – A traditional Russian dish consisting of strips of fillet beef, lightly sautéed and coated with a sauce of sour cream; it sometimes contains mushroom and onions. Stroganoff is often served over noodles. It has been known since the eighteenth century and is said to have been created for a member of the stroganoff family, wealthy merchants originally from Novgorod.

**Strudel** – A dessert or savoury dish consisting of a wafer-thin pastry dough wrapped around a filling, then baked (traditionally bent into a crescent or horseshoe shape). It is usually served warm. Sweet fillings can include apple, sour cherry, and cream cheese mixtures. Savoury strudels with fillings such as chopped, boiled beef with bacon and onions are popular in Austria.

**Stuffing** – A savoury mixture of breadcrumbs, rice, minced meat, poultry or fish, with chopped fruit or vegetables, herbs, spices and other flavourings, which is bound with milk or egg and used to add bulk and flavour to meat, fish, poultry and vegetables. Stuffing often serves the dual purpose of filling a cavity created by the removal of innards or seeds, and so preserving the shape of the food. Any leftover stuffing can be cooked separately on a greased baking dish.

**Succotash** – A dish of North American origin consisting of a mixture of corn kernels and Lima beans. It is served as an accompaniment to meat or poultry. Succotash descends from the misickquatash of the Narraganset Indians, made with corn and kidney beans cooked in bear fat.

**Suckling Pig** – Also known as suckling pig, a young pig slaughtered when no more than eight weeks old, prized for its sweet, rich, succulent meat. Suckling pig may be spit-roasted whole over a barbecue or oven roasted.

**Suet** – The white fat which lies around lamb and beef kidneys. It is firm, dry, and non-greasy to handle and is used as fat in the cooking of pastries and rich boiled puddings. Suet is available in solid form from butchers or can be bought packaged, shredded, and ready for use from supermarket.

**Sugar** – A sweet-tasting food used mainly as a following. It is extracted from many plants, principally sugar cane (in tropical regions) and sugar beet (in cooler climates); lesser quantities are obtained from certain maple and palm trees and the sorghum plant. To process sugar from cane the juice is extracted and boiled until it crystallizes (candies); centrifugal machines are used to separate the raw sugar crystals from the liquid molasses. For beet sugar the juice is extracted from the root. There are various types of sugar. Brown sugar is soft and moist with a characteristic flavour that comes from a film of molasses surrounding each crystal; it is used especially in baking chewy biscuits (cookies) and dark cakes. Raw sugar, made directly from the classified juice of sugar cane, has coarse, straw-coloured crystals. White or granulated sugar, with medium-sized crystals, is refined from sugarcane and is used as a general sweetener. Caster (superfine) sugar has finer crystals and dissolves more quickly than white sugar and so is best for meringues, and some cakes and puddings. Powdered or icing (confectioners) sugar is granulated sugar milled to a fine powder. Palm sugar, or jaggery, is extracted from a species of low-branched palm tree and has a strong, treacle-like flavour; it gives Indian, Malaysian and Indonesian dishes.

Sugarcane, a perennial grass, probably originated in southern India. The plant spread from there south to Malaysia and Indonesia, and north and west to ancient Persia. The 'sweet reed' and crystal that could be obtained from its juice, were also known to the Greeks and Romans. Sugar reached Europe with the Crusaders returning from south-western Asia in the thirteenth century but it did not displace honey as a general sweetener until the eighteenth century, when it inspired the development of elaborate French confectioneries (candies) and patisseries.

**Sukiyaki** – A stew-like dish of Japanese origin consisting of finely sliced meat (usually beef, but pork, chicken can also be used) and vegetables, soy sauce and sake cooked at the table (this can be done in an electric frying pan). Traditionally each diner breaks a raw egg into an individual bowl, beats it with chopsticks, and then dips the hot food into it before eating.

**Sultana** – The dried fruit of a white grape, softer and sweeter than both the raisin and currant. Sultanas are baked in cakes, biscuits (cookies), puddings, and slices, added to stuffings, casseroles and curries, sprinkled on

breakfast cereals or tossed through salads. They originated in Crete, where in ancient times sweet, seedless grapes were sun-dried and exported throughout the Aegean.

**Summer Pudding** – A cold dessert made by lining a basin with slices of bread, filling it with a lightly poached soft fruit (such as raspberries, redcurrants, blackcurrants, loganberries and blackberries) then chilling it overnight, until the juice soaks into the bread, flavouring and colouring it. The whole is turned out and served with whipped cream. Summer pudding is a traditional English dessert.

**Sundae** – A dessert or sweet snack consisting of ice-cream topped with a flavoured syrup and sometimes fruit, often sprinkled with crushed nuts and whipped cream and served in a long, shallow glass dish. It originated in the United States in the nineteenth century where it was special Sunday treat.

**Sunflower Seed** – Small, flat, oval seed from the centre of the huge yellow flower head of the sunflower plant. The seeds can be used raw in soups, stir-fries, pasta, and rice dishes. Roasted, they add crunch to salads and cooked vegetables; boiled, they can be added to cakes, biscuits (cookies) and puddings. Sunflower seeds are often used as bird feed. A flour ground from the roasted seeds is available. Oil pressed from the seeds is used in cooking, and in salad dressings, margarines, and shortenings. The sunflower plant is believed to have originated in Central America. It was taken to Spain in the sixteenth century and spread throughout Europe.

**Supreme of Chicken** – The breast and wing of a chicken, removed and cooked in one piece, and often served with a rich cream sauce.

**Sushi** – A dish of Japanese origin consisting of small rolls of seaweed containing cooked rice and savoury fillings such as a thin slice of raw fish (usually tuna) or omelette, or a vegetable. Other shapes are also made. Sushi featuring seaweed is called maki, which made with fish or seafood, nigiri, and with omelette fukushu. In Japan sushi is sold in small specialty restaurants or at a separate counter in larger restaurants. Sushi is served cold, with wafer-thin slices of pickled ginger, and is usually eaten with the fingers. The dish originated as a fishermen's snack.

**Swede** – Also known as rutabaga, a fleshy root vegetable, larger than a turnip and with a

stronger, cabbage-like, flavour. Swedes can be boiled, baked or roasted with meat and are often pureed for use in savoury puddings and pies.

**Sweet and Sour Sauce** – A sauce of Chinese origin which combines sweet and tart ingredients, such as sugar and vinegar, usually thickened with cornflour (cornstarch) and often also containing fruit juice, pineapple pieces or sweet pepper (capsicum). It is available ready made in jars.

**Sweetbreads** – Classed as offal or variety meat; sweetbreads can be either the thymus gland (in the throat) or the pancreas (near the stomach) of calves and lambs. They are valued for their delicate flavour. Sweetbreads must be soaked in several changes of water than blanched before use. They may be poached, sautéed, braised, grilled (broiled) and served with a sauce.

**Sweet Corn** – See Corn.

**Sweet Peppers** – See Peppers, Sweet.

**Sweet Potato** – A starchy tuber, no relation to the potato. There are three main varieties, which differ in colour: white, orange (also known as kumara) and red. All are cooked in the same way as the potato, although sugar is sometimes added to emphasize their natural sweetness.

**Swiss chard** – See silver Beet.

**Swiss Roll** – A thin sheet of sponge cake spread with a sweet filling then rolled up. The finished cake is sprinkled with icing (confectioners) sugar and sliced.

**Syrup** – A sweet liquid, usually a solution of sugar and a liquid. Corn syrup is the liquid form of sugar refined from corn. Light corn syrup is less sweet than sugar; dark corn syrup has caramel colouring and flavoring added and tastes similar to molasses. See also Golden Syrup and Maple Syrup.

**Szechwan Pepper** – Also known as Chinese pepper, a fragrant, intensely flavoured (but not fiery hot) spice made from the dried berries of the Chinese prickly ash.



**Tobasco** – A thin, red, fiery-tasting sauce made by fermenting chilli peppers with salt in oak barrels for four years, then straining it and adding vinegar. Tobasco sauce is used sparingly to add a hot flavour to sauces, salad dressings, tomato juice, meat, crab and lobster dishes, and is an essential ingredient in Cajun cooking. It was first made in Louisiana in 1868 and is named for the tobasco region in Mexico, original home of the chilli peppers used. The sauce is sold sound the world in distinctive, small bottles.

**Tabouli** – A salad of Middle Eastern origin made with burghul (cracked wheat), finely chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley, diced tomato, olive oil, mint and lemon juice. Traditionally wrapped in cos (romaine) lettuce leaves and eaten with hands, tabouli is often served as an accompaniment to grilled meat and poultry.

**Taco** – A tortilla which has been folded and fried until crisp and which is traditionally served with a spicy meat filling, refried beans, grated cheese, chopped tomato, shredded lettuce and chilli-based sauce may be added. Ready-made taco shells are available.

**Taffy** – A confectionery (candy) made from boiled syrup which is pulled and worked into long strands (this incorporates air and gives taffy its characteristic light and creamy texture) then twisted and cut into bite sized pieces and wrapped for storage. Taffy is popular in North America; saltwater taffy, a feature of New Jersey seaside resorts, has a little added salt (not saltwater).

**Tagine** – A highly spiced Moroccan stew of meat vegetables or fruit, often served at banquets.

**Tagliatelle** – Long, flat ribbon pasta, often coloured and flavoured with spinach or tomato, boiled in water and served with a sauce. It is a specialty of northern and central Italy and is

said to have been inspired by the flaxen hair of Lucrezia Borgia.

**Tahini** – A thick, smooth, paste of roasted, ground sesame seeds. In the Middle East it is mixed with lemon juice, garlic and chickpeas (garbanzo beans) to make a dip served with flat bread. Tahini is also used in cakes, biscuits (cookies) and the confectionery (candy) halva; it is available in jars.

**Tamale** – A sweet or savoury cornmeal cake steamed inside a cornhusk. A Mexican specialty, it is often served hot as a first course. The tamale is made by spreading a dough of ground dried corn and water (called masa) on a corn husk, adding a sweet or savoury filling, then wrapping it up and steaming until cooked. Banana leaf or cooking foil may be substituted for the cornhusk. Tamales are a traditional festival food and were once considered to be a gift from the gods.

**Tamarillo** – An egg-shaped fruit with glossy, deep red skins and soft, tart tasting flesh with tiny seeds. The bitter skin is removed by blanching; the flesh can be added to sweet and savoury salads or sweetened and cooked for use in tarts and hot puddings. The tamarillo is native to Peru; there are also yellow varieties.

**Tamarind** – Sour-sweet pulp from the seedpods of a tropical tree, used to give a bite to curries, stews and chutneys and as an ingredient in Worcestershire sauce. It is available in the form of dried pulp or a paste.

**Tandoori** – A traditional Indian method of cooking, in which chicken or lamb is marinated in a spicy red paste, threaded onto long skewers and cooked in a tandoor or clay oven.

**Tangelo** – A citrus fruit which has pale, yellow to orange, sharp-tasting, juicy flesh. The fruit has orange coloured peel that is easily removed. It is produced by crossing the grapefruit with the tangerine (or mandarin).

**Tangerine** – Also called mandarin, a small, loose-skinned variety of orange with sweet, juicy, easily separated segments. The fruit is named after the seaport of tangier in Morocco, where it has long been grown.

**Tapas** – Platters of hot or cold bite-sized savoury snacks – olives, nuts, pickles, stuffed or grilled (broiled) vegetables, sliced meats and dry sausages – eaten with drinks, especially sherry. Tapas originated in Spain.

**Tapenade** – A savoury spread made by pureeing pitted black olives with anchovies, capers, garlic, lemon juice, and olive oil. It is served with crusty bread, or can be diluted with olive oil and used as a dressing for grilled sweet pepper (capsicum) or eggplant (aubergine). Tapenade originated in Provence in southern France and the name derives from the local word tapeno, capers.

**Tapioca** – tiny balls of starch prepared from the tuberous root of the cassava plant (grown in tropical America, the Pacific Islands, Indonesia, the Philippines and Africa). It is cooked in sweetened milk or water as a dessert or used to thicken soups and stews.

**Taramasalata** – A creamy dip made by pureeing tarama, the dried, salted and pressed roe of mullet, with bread, garlic, onion, olive oil and lemon juice. A Greek and Turkish specialty, taramasalata is served chilled on thin toast or pitta bread. Tarama is available in jars and cans from gourmet stores.

**Taro** – The starchy tuber of a tropical plant with rough, brown, hairy skin and firm, pale flesh. It is widely used in the cooking of the Pacific and South East Asia, either boiled or baked and served as a vegetable, or steamed and made into a pudding.

**Tarragon** – An herb with a subtle liquorice-like flavour. It combines well with chicken and is mixed with chervil, chives, and parsley to make the classic fine herbes blend. Tarragon vinegar is an important ingredient in béarnaise sauce. French tarragon has the most intense flavour and aroma; Russian tarragon, is inferior in flavour. The dried form of the herb loses its flavour quickly.

**Tart** – A sweet or savoury flan, either full-sized or made in an individual serving size.

**Tartare Sauce** – A cold, mayonnaise-based sauce containing finely chopped chives, spring onion (scallion), parsley, gherkin, and capers. It is served with seafood.

**Tarte Tatin** – An upside down apple tart. Caramelized apples are topped with a layer of pastry; when baked the tart is inverted and

served hot, fruit-side up. The dish is named for the Tatin sisters, who ran a restaurant in the French town of Lamotte – Beuvron; they are said to have created it to repair a baking error (although similar upside down fruit tarts are an ancient specialty of the region).

**Tea** – A drink made by steeping tea leaves (the dried leaves of a shrub in the *camellia* family) in just boiled water. It is served hot, with or without milk, or iced. Tea cultivation is thought to have originated in China some 5,000 years ago. Herb teas or tisanes are infusions made with fresh or dried leaves or blossoms and include mint, rose, hip, hyssop, sage, and comomile.

**Teacake** – A light cake eaten warm, sliced and buttered. The traditional English teacake is a round, yeast dough bun, split open and grilled or toasted, then served hot with butter; other versions are sprinkled with sugar and spices or other toppings.

**Tempura** – A Japanese dish consisting of seafood and vegetables dipped in batter and deep-fried. Tempura is served hot with soy sauce for dipping.

**Tenderloin** – See Fillet.

**Teriyaki** – A Japanese dish of meat, poultry or fish marinated in mirin and soy sauce then grilled (broiled) or barbecued. Teriyaki sauce is sold in bottles.

**Terrine** – A preparation of minced (ground) meat, poultry, game, fish, or vegetables cooked in a deep, straight-sided earthenware container lined with thinly sliced pork fat to keep the mixture moist, and sealed with a tight-fitting lid. Terrine is served at room temperature (chilling dulls the flavour), cut into slices and accompanied by gherkins and pickled onions, usually as a first course.

**Thai Food** – The cooking of Thailand is characterized by subtle blending of hot, sweet, salty, bitter and sour flavours. It shows influences from China (especially in the use of ingredients), from India, Java, Cambodia, and Sri Lanka. The chilli pepper, native to the Americas, did not reach Thailand until the sixteenth century when it was introduced by the Portuguese; now, with mint, basil, spring onion (scallion), coriander and coconut milk, it is one of the central flavours of Thai cuisine.

A traditional Thai meal consists of a variety of dishes (usually a soup, a curry, a steamed dish, a fried one and a salad) selected for a balance

of flavours, textures and colours. All are served at the same time and eaten warm or at room temperature, using a spoon and fork; rice is always served. Fresh tropical fruits follow the main meal and cakes and desserts made of mung bean flour, rice, coconut, palm sugar, and eggs. Water and tea accompany the meal.

**Thyme** – A fragrant herb with small, oval, greyish green leaves that have a strong aroma and a pungent, clove-like taste. Thyme is used in marinades for lamb, beef, and poultry; with bay leaf and parsley, it is part of a bouquet garni; it is added to stuffings and tomato-based sauces, and combines well with rabbit. Thyme leaves can be bought fresh, dried or ground.

**Tilsit** – A smooth, semi-hard, cow's milk cheese, pale yellow in colour, with a fruity, mild to medium-sharp flavour. It is a good snack cheese, teaming well with fruit and salad vegetables can also be used in sandwiches and on cheese boards, and melts well for use in sauces.

**Timbales** – A custardy mixture of meat, poultry, seafood, or vegetables cooked in individual moulds and usually served with a sauce as a first course. Timbales are named after the deep, round moulds in which they are cooked.

**Tipsy Cake** – A dessert, similar to trifle, consisting of sponge cake liberally sprinkled with sherry, brandy or sweet white wine, decorated with slivered blanched almonds and topped with whipped cream.

**Tiramisù** – A rich Italian dessert consisting of sponge fingers (ladyfingers) dipped in Marsala or brandy and topped with layers of zabaglione, coffee-flavoured mascarpone cheese and whipped cream; it is served chilled. Tiramisù was created in Sienna, where it was called Zuppa del Duca, the Duke's soup; because of its popularity with the expatriate English in nineteenth century Florence it became zuppa inglese, English soup; tiramisù – pick me up – is a relatively recent name.

**Tisane** – A herbal tea, usually drunk for its medicinal properties. Tisanes include angelica (to help digestion), comomile (for an upset stomach and to aid sleep), lemon balm (to calm the nerves and aid digestion), peppermint tea (believed to ward off colds) and rose petals and violets with honey (for soothing a cough).

**Toast** – To brown or crisp food by exposing it to dry heat. Toasting will develop a fuller flavour in nuts and seeds. The term also refers to a slice of bread exposed to heat so that its surface become brown and dry. Toasted bread spread with butter or other spreads, is served at breakfast, or used to make toasted sandwiches.

**Toffee** – A rich, sticky, usually brown confectionery (candy) which is made by adding butter to a boiled mixture of sugar and water. It can be soft and chewy or hard and crunchy, depending on cooking time and temperature.

**Tofu** – Soybean curd, a white to cream coloured, smooth-textured and bland-flavoured food made by adding a setting agent to a thin liquid of ground boiled Soya beans and water. It is valued for its high vegetable protein content and is widely used in the cooking of China, Japan, and South-East Asia. Tofu absorbs the flavours of foods cooked with it. Tofu, either soft ('silken') or firm is available fresh and in long-life packs.

**Tomato** – A round smooth-skinned, juicy, seed-filled fruit with a rich, slightly sweet flavour, used as a vegetable. It is eaten raw as a salad vegetable, cooked in a variety of sauces and dishes, or made into juices. Types include the common tomato, used in salads; plum tomatoes with dense, flavoursome flesh, good for soups and sauces; the tiny cherry tomato, used whole in salads and as a garnish; and pear-shaped yellow tomatoes, noted for low acidity and used in salads and preserves.

**Tongue** – Classed as offal usually beefs, but lamb's tongue is also eaten. Tongue is poached in court bouillon and served hot with a brown or fruit sauce. Cold, pressed tongue is served sliced accompanied by pickles and chutney.

**Torte** – A rich, dense textured cake, often layered with custard, fruit, whipped cream, and groundnuts.

**Tortellini** – small rings of pasta, usually stuffed with finely chopped seasoned meat, often served with a cream or tomato sauce.

**Tortilla** – A paper-thin Mexican flat bread made from corn or wheat flour quickly cooked (but not browned) on a griddle or in a pan. Tortillas may serve as a wrapper for fillings, or as an edible scoop or plate.

**Tournedos** – Also known as filet mignon, a small, round, thick steak cut from a fillet of beef, usually pan-fried and served on a round of fried bread accompanied by a rich sauce.

**Treacle** – A thick, dark, strong-tasting syrup, a by-product of cane sugar refining. It is used in baking and in the production of confectionery (candy).

**Trifle** – A traditional English dessert consisting of layers of sponge cake sprinkled with sweet sherry, interspersed with fruit or fruit jam, cream, rich egg custard and crushed nuts.

**Tripe** – The stomach lining of cattle, ranging from quite smooth textured to deeply honeycombed. Tripe is blanched, then boiled in water and milk. It can be served with onions in parsley sauce, in a tomato sauce, or sautéed with onions.

**Trout** – A freshwater fish of the salmon family with delicately flavoured fresh, frozen and smoked.

**Truffle, Chocolate** – A small, very rich confectionery (candy) made from chocolate, butter, cream, and liqueur, formed into small balls and rolled in cocoa powder or chopped nuts. Truffles are usually served with coffee. They are named for their similarity in appearance to the fungi, black truffle.

**Truffle, Fungi** – An edible fungus that grows underground in forests in France and Italy. Truffles are prized for their musky fragrance and delicate flavour; they are used in pâtés, tossed through pasta and as a filling for omelettes. There are two types of truffle: the black truffle, available fresh (in France) bottled or canned; and the white truffle, found in Italy.

**Truss** – To secure the legs, wings and front opening of poultry, before roasting, to maintain the bird's shape and prevent the loss of stuffing during cooking.

**Tuile** – A thin, curved crisp biscuit (cookie) made of sugar, slivered almonds, butter, and eggs, shaped by draping the hot pliable biscuit over a rolling pin.

**Tuna** – A large salt-water fish with dark, compact meat, which turns pink when, cooked and has a rich, garney flavour. Fresh tuna may be poached, baked, grilled (broiled) or



barbecued; it is also served raw – diced or sliced wafer thin – as in the Japanese dish sashimi. In ancient times the fish was a favourite of the seafaring Phoenicians, who smoked and salted it; in ancient Greece and Rome it was roasted sprinkled with salt and oil; pickled tuna was common in medieval times. Tuna is available fresh and frozen, usually as boneless steaks, also as cutlets and fillets, and cooked and canned.

**Turkey** – A large, heavy-bodied domestic fowl native to the Americas and now bred throughout the world. It is valued for its plump breast, which provides a higher proportion of white to dark meat than other poultry. Whole turkey can be stuffed and roasted; it is also available as boneless roasts, rolled, tied and ready to cook; as breast slices and steaks (which can be sautéed like a veal escalope); and thighs drumsticks and wings. The meat can be prepared as turkey pastrami, turkey salami, turkey ham, and smoked turkey sausage. In the United States roast turkey with cornbread stuffing is traditionally eaten on Thanks giving Day (the last Thursday in November).

**Turkish Delight** – A confectionery (candy) with a firm, smooth texture made by thickening a sugar and lemon juice syrup with cornflour (cornstarch) and flavouring it with rose water or peppermint. When cool the mixture is cut into cubes and coated with icing (confectioners) sugar. Its Turkish name is rahat lokum, ‘giving a rest to the mouth’.

**Turmeric** – A bright yellow powdered spice ground from the dried roots of a tropical plant related to ginger. It has a mild, bittersweet flavour. Turmeric is an essential ingredient in curry powders and pastes and is used in pickles, chutneys and prepared mustard.

**Turnip** – A globe-shaped, white-fleshed root vegetable with a distinctive flavour used in soups, stews, and casseroles. In Italy caramelized sliced turnip is served as a dessert.

**Turnover** – A square or circle of pastry turned over a filling, sealed and baked or deep-fried. Turnovers can be large or individual-sized sweet or savoury and may be eaten hot or cold as a finger food, snack, or main meal.

**Tzatziki** – A tangy yoghurt and cucumber dip of Greek origin. It is served as finger food or a first course with toasted pieces of flat bread, or crudités (thinly sliced raw vegetables); as a salad dressing or as accompaniment to fried or grilled fish or barbecued meat.

## U

**Upside-Down Cake** – A fruit topped cake as a dessert. A layer of poached fruit (traditionally pineapple rings, but also peaches, apricots, apples, pears or cherries) and sometimes nuts is arranged in the bottom of a cake pan, covered with a butter and sugar syrup, topped with cake batter and baked. The cooked cake is inverted and served warm with cream.

## V

**Vacherin** – A cold dessert consisting of a ring or basket of meringue filled with layers of softened ice-cream and fruit (usually fresh, such as strawberries or peaches, but crystallized (candied) fruits and chestnut puree may also be used), and topped with sweetened whipped cream. Sometimes ice-creams of various flavours are used as the filling instead of fruits.

**Vanilla** – The fragrant, slender seed pod, called a ‘bean’, of a climbing orchid. Vanilla is used to flavour creams, sweet sauces, custards, syrups, cakes, and drinks (especially milk-based chocolate drinks). Vanilla beans can be used more than once – they are infused in hot liquid until the desired strength of flavour is reached, then removed, rinsed and dried for further use. Vanilla sugar is made by burying vanilla bean in a jar of sugar – the longer it is left, the stronger the flavour becomes.

The vanilla orchid is native to Central America. The pods are gathered, drenched repeatedly in hot water, and left in the sun to sweat and then dry out. They shrivel, darken and produce a coating of vanillin, the strongly scented crystalline substance which gives vanilla its distinctive aroma and flavour. The finest beans are deep brown, pliable, and covered with a frosting of vanillin. Vanilla

essence (a liquid made from the bean which is very powerful and should be used sparingly) and vanilla sugar are also available; imitation vanilla essence is a chemical attempt to synthesize the flavour of true vanilla.

**Variety Meats** – See Offal.

**Veal** – The meat of a young calf, unweaned or just weaned, reared for slaughter. The meat of milk-fed veal is very pale pink and delicately grained, with a little satiny white fat, meat from animals that have started to eat grass is darker and coarser, but lacks the rich flavour of beef. Veal is a lean, tender meat; it has little natural fat and is best cooked slowly. Braising and moist heat cooking methods are ideal; roasting and grilling (broiling) should be at a lower heat than for other meats. Like chicken, veal has no strong flavour of its own but absorbs those of the vegetables and herbs cooked with it. It is also good with tangy sauces. Thin slices of veal cut across the grain (in France known as escalope, in Italy, scaloppine and in Germany, Schnitzel) can be fried in butter and served with various sauces or garnishes; rolled around a flavoursome filling and braised; or, with sage and prosciutto, cooked in butter and white wine as in the Italian dish saltimbocca.

**Vegetable** – Any edible parts of a plant-leaf, stem, bud, flower, seed, root, and bulb or tuber-cultivated as a food. Some fruits are used as vegetables, including the tomato, pumpkin, and squash, zucchini (courgette), eggplant (aubergine) and sweet pepper (capsicum). Seed and pod vegetables include peas, beans and lentils; spinach, lettuce and cabbage are leaf vegetables; celery is a stem; carrots, turnips and parsnips are fleshy roots; yams and potatoes are tubers; bulb include onions, shallots and fennel; and broccoli and cauliflower are heads of tightly massed flower buds. Mushrooms and other fungi are generally included with vegetables. Vegetables are eaten raw as salads and cooked either as a soup, an accompaniment to a main course, or a dish in their own right. They are also often pickled as a condiment.

**Vegetable Marrow** – A sausage shaped vegetable belonging to the same family as the zucchini (courgette). Young marrows have the best flavour and most delicate flesh and can be cooked in the same way as zucchini. Large older marrows have a high water content and a bland flavour.

**Velouté Sauce** – A basic white sauce made with lightly browned roux and a well flavoured reduced veal, chicken, or fish stock. The name comes from the French word for velvety.

**Venison** – Meat from any kind of deer; it is a dark red, very lean meat with a fine grain. Farm-raised venison is milder in flavour and more tender than the game venison. Game venison should be larded before roasting; it can be braised and casseroled. Farm venison can be roasted, pan-fried, or grilled – allow to rest for 5-10 minutes before serving – added to stir-fries, or made into kebabs and barbecued. Care should be taken not to overcook venison, as it will dry out. Forequarter cuts are best slowly simmered to make casseroles, curries, and ragoûts.

**Vermicelli** – Italian Vermicelli – long, thin strands of pasta dough, sometimes coiled into nests – is boiled and served with a sauce or broken into short lengths and added to soup. In Chinese cooking vermicelli made with soya bean flour is boiled or fried for use in soups and vegetable dishes and fine strands of pearly white rice flour vermicelli are added to soups or fried in oil for use as a garnish. The name comes from the Italian fir 'little worms'.

**Vermouth** – A wine used as an aperitif or as a cocktail ingredient, made by infusing a base wine (red or white) with herbs, spices, barks or peels, then fortifying the result with distilled spirits. It can be used to flavour stuffings, sauces and poaching stock, and in place of wine in some chicken dishes.

**Verte Sauce** – Literally 'green sauce', a mayonnaise containing a blend of finely chopped herbs and leaf vegetables (such as spinach, watercress, tarragon, parsley and chervil). Sauce verte is served with cold fish, eggs, and vegetable dishes.

**Vichysoisse** – A soup made by cooking potatoes and the white part of leeks in chicken stock, pureeing the mixture and adding cream. It is usually served chilled, topped with chives. The soup was created in the early 1900s at New York's Ritz – Carlton Hotel.

**Victoria Sponge** – A sponge cake used as the base for queen cakes, jam sandwich cake and castle pudding. The sponge is named after Queen Victoria, who spent part of each year on the Isle of Wight, where the cake was served regularly at tea parties.

**Vinaigrette** – A thin oil and vinegar dressing, often containing herbs, spices, mustard or finely chopped onion. Vinaigrette is served especially with green salads, and also be used to dress some vegetable, meat, poultry and fish dishes.

**Vine leaf** – The leaf of the grapevine, much used in Greek and Middle Eastern cooking; it has a slightly bitter flavour, which is lessened by blanching. Leaves for cooking should be medium-light green and not too young; they are used to wrap fish and small game birds before braising (imparting a slightly lemony taste), and are probably best known for their use in dolmades, small cylindrical packages of rice, minced lamb, finely chopped onion, nuts and seasonings. Vine leaves are available fresh or preserved in brine.

**Vinegar** – A sharp-tasting liquid obtained when the alcohol in wine, or alcoholic solutions from grains, apples and other sources, is chopped by fermentation into acetic acid. Wine vinegar is fermented from fresh wine, cider vinegar from apple cider, malt vinegar from malt liquor and sweet-sour vinegars from rice wine; the quality of the vinegar depends upon the quality of the wine or other alcohol from which it has been made.

Vinegar is used in salad dressings, mayonnaise, mustards, mint and horseradish sauces, and in marinades; to add to soups, sauces and stews, and for pickling and preserving.

Flavoured vinegars, which have herbs or fruits added, are also available, or can be made at home.

Red wine vinegars are used to make demi-glace sauces for the game, beef, and lamb dishes, and in vinaigrette; white wine vinegar can be made into dressings for fish dishes and used in vinaigrette, mayonnaise, and hollandaise sauce, and as a base for herbed vinegars. Raspberry vinegar can be used in vinaigrette, teamed with cream to dress fruit, or used in place of lemon when cooking veal or chicken. Lemon balm vinegar can be used in salad dressings. Tarragon vinegar is an essential ingredient of béarnaise sauce. It is also used in mayonnaise and in marinades for chicken, fish, and seafoods. Rosemary vinegar is good in lamb stew and in sauces for fish and shellfish. Dill vinegar is used in sauces for fish, in sour cream and yoghurt sauce and dressings, and for pickling cucumbers. Sherry vinegar smooth, rich and slightly tart, makes flavoursome gravies and combines well with nuts oils in vinaigrette. Balsamic vinegar,

made from the juice of sweet Trebbiano grape and aged in aromatic hardwood casks, is deep-coloured and mellow-flavoured; it is used to dress berries, to deglaze roasting pans for gravy, and as a salad dressing. Cider vinegar, slightly sweet and with a faint apple flavour, is used to make sauces for roast pork and roast duck, in vinaigrettes, and can be substituted for rice vinegar in Chinese cooking. Malt vinegar, dark-coloured and too strongly flavoured for use in salad dressings, is used as a condiment on fish and chips, is an ingredient in worcestershire sauce, and is used for pickling onions and walnuts. White or distilled vinegar (usually distilled malt vinegar) is colourless and sharp-flavoured; it is used in the pickling of gherkins and cocktail onions and in the manufacture of sauces and chutneys. Spirit vinegar, the strongest of all vinegars, differs from distilled vinegar in that it contains a small amount of alcohol; it is used for pickling. White rice vinegar, mild-flavoured, pale and clear, is distilled from fermented rice; it is used to flavour the rice in the Japanese dish sushi and can be used as a dressing for raw vegetables such as cabbage and carrots, in vinaigrettes and as a marinade for fish and chicken. Chinese black vinegar, usually made from wheat, millet, or sorghum, has a mild flavour and is widely used in the cooking of northern China, especially in long-braising dishes. Chinese red vinegar is a wine vinegar with a delicate, tart flavour; it is used mainly as a dipping sauce.

In Roman times vinegar diluted with water was the common drink of Roman soldiers. The name comes from the French *vin aigre*, sour wine.

**Vol-au-Vent** – A round pastry case of puff pastry filled after baking with chicken, seafood, veal, or mushrooms bound with a creamy sauce. It is served hot as a first course or in bite-sized portions as finger food. The cases should be filled just before serving or the pastry will lose its crispness. The vol-au-vent was created by nineteenth-century Parisian Chef and pastry cook Carême, who wanted a puff pastry first course of such delicacy that ‘it flew away in the wind’. Ready-cooked vol-au-vent cases are available.

# W

**Wafer** – A small, thin, crisp biscuit (cookie) often served with ice-creams; while hot, they are sometimes shaped into rolls or cones.

**Waffle** – A flat, crisp-surfaced cake made by cooking batter in a special hinged iron with a honeycomb-patterned grid. Waffles are served hot, topped with jam, honey or maple syrup, and cream or ice-cream.

**Waldorf Salad** – A salad made with chopped apples, celery and walnuts or pecans, with a mayonnaise dressing, usually served on lettuce as a side dish. It was created at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel.

**Walnut** – A nut encased in a hard, round shell and consisting of two deeply ridged lobes of creamy-white, mild-flavoured flesh. Walnuts can be eaten as a snack, chopped and added to stuffings and savoury salads or used in cakes, biscuits (cookies) and confectionery (candy). They are available in the shell, shelled (in packs or cans) and pickled.

**Walnut Oil** – A fragrant, clear, pale golden oil pressed from walnut kernels and used mainly in dressings for salads and cooked vegetables.

**Wasabi** – A pungent, powerfully flavoured root, not unlike the horseradish root, used in Japanese cooking as an ingredient in sushi and, mixed with soy sauce, as an accompaniment to sashimi. Wasabi is available in powdered form (to be reconstituted with a little sake or cold water), or as a pale green paste in tubes; the fresh root can sometimes be bought from stores, which specialize, in Japanese food.

**Water Chestnut** – A crisp, white-fleshed, delicately flavoured root vegetable valued as an ingredient in Chinese cooking because it remains crunchy after it is cooked. Water chestnuts can be bought canned, and sometimes fresh.

**Watercress** – A plant with small, deep green, peppery-tasting leaves and stems which are used in salads and soups, and as a garnish. Watercress is available fresh throughout the year.

**Watermelon** – A large melon with a hard, smooth, mottled-green skin and sweet, juicy, reddish flesh studded with dark seeds; it is eaten fresh as a fruit and added to fruit salads. Watermelons grow on a trailing vine and are available for most of the year.

**Waterzooi** – A stew made with chicken or fish; the liquid is sometimes served separately as a soup and the solids served over rice.

**Welsh Rarebit** – See Rarebit.

**Wheat** – A cereal grain, staple for half the world's population. It is ground into flour and used to make bread, pasta, cakes and as a breakfast cereal.

**Whitebait** – Tiny, matchstick-length silvery fish (the young of several species), generally cooked whole, dusted with flour and deep-fried, as a first course.

**White sauce** – A sauce based on a roux of butter and flour with milk (béchamel sauce) or chicken, veal, or fish stock (velouté sauce).

**Wholemeal** – A coarse-textured flour ground from the entire wheat kernel and used to make bread, cakes, biscuits (cookies) and pasta.

**Wild Rice** – The long, dark-brown, nutty-flavoured grain of an aquatic grass, which grows in the Minnesota lakes of North America. Wild rice is boiled or steamed and served with poultry or fish; sautéed onions, mushrooms, or nuts are sometimes added for flavouring. Because it is expensive, it is often extended with cooked brown or white rice.

**Wine** – The fermented juice of grapes, used in cooking to add flavour to both savoury and sweet dishes.

**Witloof** – See Chicory.

**Wanton** – A Chinese snack made of a savoury filling inside a small square of paper-thin dough. Wantons can be steamed or deep-fried. Wrappers can be made like pasta and rolled out until almost transparent.

**Worcestershire Sauce** – A thin, brown-black, piquant sauce made from a secret recipe but thought to contain soy sauce, anchovy sauce, vinegar, molasses, chilli, ginger, tamarind, shallots and garlic.

## Y

**Yabby** – Freshwater crayfish found in creeks, rivers, waterholes and dams across Australia and related to similar species native to France (*écrevisse*) and North America (crawfish). Its cooked meat (mostly in the tail and claws) is white, sweet, moist and delicately flavoured; it is best served with a mild-flavoured sauce or just a splash of extra virgin olive oil, freshly grated black pepper and a squeeze of lemon juice. Yabbies commercially farmed in Australia are exported live around the world. Yabbies are best cooked live. Stun them for 20 minutes in the freezer. They are available live or cooked.

**Yakitori** – A Japanese dish consisting of small pieces of chicken threaded on bamboo skewers and grilled (broiled) over glowing coals while being basted with soy sauce-based marinade.

**Yam** – The starchy tubers of a tropical vine which originated in China and now found throughout the Pacific, Africa and the Caribbean. Yams have brownish skin and yellow to white flesh and can be baked (whole in the skin), boiled or fried. Cooked yam has a taste similar to cooked potato.

**Yarrow** – A member of the daisy family that grows wild in Britain and Europe. Its slightly bitter leaves can be steamed or braised and eaten as a vegetable, made into soup, or chopped finely and added to salads.

**Yeast** – A tiny, single-celled organism that multiplies rapidly in warm and moist environments. Bakers yeast is used as the raising agent in various kinds of dough, where it ferments the sugar in the dough to produce

the bubbles of carbon dioxide gas, which make the mixture rise. Yeast has been used in bread making since its accidental discovery more than 4,000 years ago. It is available in two forms: compressed (fresh) yeast, which is partially dried and formed into a cake, and dried or granular yeast. Yeast is also used in brewing and winemaking.

**Yoghurt** – A thick creamy, tangy-tasting milk product made by coagulating milk with a bacterial product. Yoghurt can feature in all parts of a meal. It is the base of a number of Middle Eastern dips and is used to thicken and enrich soups, stews, and curries. Yoghurt has a cooling effect on the palate and is often served with chopped cucumber as an accompaniment to a spicy meal; it is also used in salad dressings and in sauces for hot cooked vegetables. Tenderizing yoghurt marinades are used in many Indian dishes, particularly in tandoori dishes and korma curries. As a dessert, yoghurt can be sweetened with honey or mixed with fresh or stewed fruit, or it can be baked in cakes, cheesecakes, and biscuits (cookies).

Natural yoghurt containing cultures such as *Lactobacillus acidophilus* and bifidobacteria bacterium is considered to have beneficial effect on the digestive system. These cultures are believed to help restore balance in the intestine by re-establishing bacteria which are normally present but may have been destroyed by infections or drugs such as penicillin.

Yoghurt has been used in the Middle East for many thousands of years, and its therapeutic properties are often cited as the reason for the famed longevity of the people of the Caucasus. Commercially available yoghurt may be made from fat free, reduced fat or full-cream milk, and may be either natural, flavoured with vanilla or other sweeteners, or mixed with fruit. Flavoured frozen yoghurt and drinking yoghurt are also available.

**Yorkshire Pudding** – A light, crisp baked batter served with roast beef. In Yorkshire, in the north of England, where it originated, the pudding is traditionally served before the meat.

**Young Berries** – A sweet, purple fruit, which is a cross between several types of blackberry.

**Yule Log** – Also called *Bûche de Noël*, a traditional French Christmas cake with a number of popular variations in other countries. A rolled sponge is filled and coated

with chocolate butter cream and the surface decorated to resemble bark.

# Z

**Zabaglione** – A foamy Italian dessert sauce made with whole eggs, egg yolk, sugar and Marsala. These are whisked together over gentle heat in the top of a double boiler. Zabaglione can be served warm with sweet, crisp biscuit (cookies) or spooned over strawberries, or chilled. It is an ingredient in some versions of the rich dessert tiramisù. Zabaglione can also be made with other dessert wines or liqueurs; in Spain it is made with sherry, and in France a similar sauce made with sweet white wine or champagne is known as sabayon. The name zabaglione is derived from a Neapolitan dialect word, which means 'to foam'.

**Zest** – The thin, coloured, outside rind of a citrus fruit. It contains volatile oils that add fragrance and concentrated flavour to both sweet and savoury foods.

**Zucchini** – Also known as courgette. A small, slender vegetable marrow, botanically a fruit but used as a vegetable. It has thin skin (green or yellow) and pale flesh with a central cluster of small, soft edible seeds. Very young zucchini are the sweetest and most tender. Zucchini can be eaten raw in salads or cut into lengths and served with dips; they are steamed, braised or boiled and served as a vegetable, and can be stuffed and baked. Zucchini combines particularly well with tomato. The male flower can be picked while still firmly closed and used in cooking, usually stuffed then dipped in batter and fried, or stuffed and baked (the female flower, recognizable by its thicker stem, is left to mature into the vegetable). The zucchini was developed in Italy from seeds brought back from the Americas by Christopher Columbus. It is available fresh throughout the year.

**Zwieback** – A rusk made from slightly sweetened yeast dough (sometimes flavoured with lemon or cinnamon) baked then cut into thin slices and returned to a slow oven until crisp and golden.