

Vegetable Charlotte or Roulade

Serves 2-3

Ingredients:

- *4 tbs olive oil for cooking and ¼ cup for the pepper puree
- 1 red pepper (keep whole)
- 1 aubergine (cut into 1 cm thin slices)
- 1 courgette (cut into 1 cm thin slices)
- 1 sweet potato (cut into 1 cm thin slices)
- 10 cherry tomatoes
- Red wine or sherry vinegar
- Fresh basil or a pesto to garnish

Brousse:

- 500 ml of full cream sheep, goat or cow's milk (or 2/3 milk & 1/3 single cream)
- 1.5 tbs of lemon juice
- ½ tsp of salt
- 500 ml of liquid should yield about 100-120g of cheese)

Soy Tofu version:

- 1 litre soy milk or ½ milk and ½ cream
- ½ tsp of table salt
- 1 tsp of Nigari salt dissolved in 1 tbs water

Method:

Brousse

First make the brousse – it is best made the day before as the cheese will be firmer. Heat the milk on a medium heat with the salt until just below boiling – around 93C. The milk should start to foam on top and should simmer, not boil. Take off the heat and add the lemon juice. Stir and let sit until cold. The curds should form quickly, but if they don't, add a little more lemon juice. With a fine sieve, drain off the curds from the whey for about an hour (or give them a squeeze!). The whey can be kept and used in our Fougasse bread recipe!

Soft tofu

Dissolve 1 tsp of Nigari salt in a tablespoon of warm water. Heat the milk on a medium heat with the table salt until just below boiling – around 93C. The milk should start to foam on top and should simmer, not boil. Take off the heat and add the Nigari. Stir and let sit for about 5 minutes. The curds should form quickly, but if they don't, add a little salt or some lemon juice. With a fine sieve, drain off the curds from the whey using a piece of muslin, a clean J cloth or a fine sieve. For at least an hour (or give them a squeeze!). They can be left overnight for a firmer texture.



Vegetarian dishes are a rarity in France sadly.

However, taking the traditional ratatouille vegetables and adding a protein-based filling such as fresh brousse (fresh cheese) or tofu, flavoured with sun dried tomatoes or spinach makes an attractive and tasty option for vegetarians and cheese lovers alike!

The roulade can be made as a canape and sliced.

Peppers

Rub peppers with a little oil and bake whole at 200C until skins blacken and blister - around 15-20 mins. Put aside in a bowl and cover with plastic wrap to sweat and cool. When cool, gently pull out the stalk and core and remove any seeds. Drain and separate onto 2 plates – one for the charlotte/roulade and the other for the sauce. Keep any remaining liquid for the sauce.

For the sauce blend the pepper with 1tbs of red wine vinegar and salt to taste. (Add a little sugar if vinegar is too strong). Slowly add the oil in a stream while blending until you get an emulsion and the puree is thick enough not to run off the plate. Taste again and add seasoning and oil as necessary. Keep at room temperature – it will crack if you try to heat the puree.

Slice the remaining pepper in strips. If you are making a charlotte cut a disc of pepper the same size as the bowl.

Blanched or griddled, aubergine, courgette or sweet potato

Heat a griddle or frying pan to very hot or boil salted water if you prefer to blanch them. Slice each vegetable as thinly and evenly as possible. Blanch the sweet potato (if using) in boiling salted water for about 2 minutes, leave to cool. Brush or spray the aubergine and courgette with a little oil and then griddle each vegetable until they are flexible enough to roll. Griddle the sweet potato lightly so that you see the lines.

Charlotte

Oil a small pudding basin and line it with the sliced aubergine/and or courgette. Cut a ring of red pepper for the base. Chop a mixture of the vegetables to fill the Charlotte. At this stage, you could also layer any of the fillings below. Wrap tightly with cling film and put a weight on top and chill overnight to firm up. When ready to serve heat through in the basin and invert onto a plate. Use a skewer in the centre to check if the Charlotte is hot.

Roulade

Lay out a double thickness of cling wrap on a work surface. Lay four slices of eggplant vertically, then lay the zucchini and sweet potato (if using) on top each overlapping so that none of the filling can escape. Pipe or spoon strip of brousse, or artichoke pate or goat's cheese along the length horizontally. Lay a thin strip of red pepper on top of the filling horizontally.

Roll up the roulade in the cling wrap as tightly as possible and then chill or freeze so that it firms up and retains its shape. When ready to serve remove from the cling film and heat through on a tray – check with the skewer.

Options for fillings

Blend 2 artichoke hearts (canned or fresh work well) with equal amounts of chickpeas until you get a thick paste, season well and add lemon juice to taste.

Blend brousse, chick peas or soft tofu with sundried tomatoes in oil until you get a thick paste.

Blend soft goat's cheese with chopped chives or fine chopped sundried tomatoes.

Blend white beans with herbs or sundried tomatoes and use in the same way.

Presentation:

Serve 1 large roll or 3 smaller pieces cut on an angle as a main course, garnish with red pepper puree and roasted tomatoes, basil or a basil pesto.