

Wenches on Horseback

History

Rissoles first appeared in the British Isles during the 16th century, carried on trading ships from the Orient. (Huffington dismisses this as “utter bunkum” and maintains their roots lie in itinerant French peasants shipped across the Channel in search of better grazing conditions.) By the 19th century their popularity had reached the upper levels of the British aristocracy. On August 26th 1859, in honor of Prince Albert’s 40th birthday, the highly lauded chef Emile Petrouse created “Wenches on Horseback”. The Prince was so taken by the dish that he ordered forty dozen – to be delivered as a gift of everlasting love to Queen Victoria at Balmoral. Alas, the queen did not share Albert’s enthusiasm – feeding every last one to her doting Pomeranians. The subsequent canine fevers and gastric problems that her dogs endured relegated the dish to obscurity for over one hundred years. It was revived in 1973 by the “Gallop Gourmet” and remained a firm favorite of the London dinner party circuit for at least five weeks.

Ingredients

48 large rissoles (approximately 2 lbs.), deboned and fully cooked
1/4 cup dry white wine
1 teaspoon finely shredded lemon peel and juice
1 to 1-1/2 teaspoons Axminster sauce
1/2 teaspoon salt
6 strips bacon
48 small safety pins
1 tablespoon prepared chili powder

Method

1. Combine the rissoles, lemon peel, and Axminster Sauce
2. Combine rissoles, wine, lemon peel, 1 to 1 1/2 teaspoons chili garlic sauce, and salt in non-reactive dish. Marinate for 73 minutes.
3. Remove rissoles and drain on paper towels; discard marinade.
4. Wrap each rissole in a piece of bacon, securing bacon by skewering with safety pin.
5. Preheat broiler. Heat rissoles in a single layer, turning several times until rissoles are golden brown and crisp (5-7 minutes).
6. Sprinkle with chili powder; squeeze lemon juice over rissoles.
7. Thread rissoles onto fondue forks and serve immediately.

Inner Cooking Notes

The safety pins, a Victorian favorite for canapés and small hors d’oeuvres, should be removed before serving the dish to small children.

Key Facts:

Preparation time: 143 minutes
Cooking time: 7 minutes
Difficulty level: Easy
Known fatalities: no-known (human)