

Food at Sea – Eating and Drinking with Sailors 1500 to 2000 **ISBN 0 642 708185**

Note : *R.M.S. Queen Mary* – 3 September 1939 & *S.S. Orsova* - 14 June 1959 along with the article on *RMS Titanic* (see separate *Titanic Dinner* file) were written for this publication. The *S.S. Orsova* article was not used.

R.M.S. Queen Mary – 3 September 1939

On Sunday 3 September 1939 war was declared on Germany and Australia entered into World War II. In Sydney the *Queen Mary* graced the Harbour and the Chefs on board carried out a normal day's work and served a luncheon that would do credit to any first class restaurant based on land.

Passengers could choose from a dozen Hors d'oeuvre, three soups, 7 fish, egg or pasta dishes, 6 meat dishes, seven salads, six deserts followed by cheese and fruit and finishing with tea or coffee. Alternatively they could select dishes such as Roast Grouse, Virginia Ham or Pigeon Glacees Richelieu, from the cold buffet. The menu was created by a Chef trained in the classic style and recipes of Auguste Escoffier who also had some Italian and English influences.

A number of the dishes on the menu were a la carte or cooked to order and the rest were ready to serve. To guide passengers and presumably to ease the pressure in the kitchen and possibly help ensure leftovers were kept to a minimum the menu included a suggestion of the day. All dishes suggested were ready to serve:

Hors d'oeuvre: Parma Ham with Gherkins

Soup: Minestrone Milanaise

To 4.5 litres of chicken or veal stock in a large pot, add 250g of chopped bacon, a shredded cabbage and three cups of fresh haricot beans (or soaked dry beans). Bring to the boil and let bubble for approx 25 min. Add 2 cups of each of the following: chopped tomato, diced celery, green peas, fresh broad beans and either chopped spinach or asparagus. Add 400g of rice as well as two Milan sausages. Bring back to the boil and briskly simmer for about 15 minutes or until the rice is done. To serve, remove sausages and slice, return to the soup. Serve with grated Parmesan cheese.

Fish: Fillets of Plaice, St Germain

Dip fillets in melted butter and then breadcrumbs, brush with melted butter and then grill gently. Serve with small potatoes sauteed in butter and bearnaise sauce.

Bearnaise sauce

To 6 tablespoons of tarragon vinegar add 2 teaspoons chopped shallots and a pinch of chopped tarragon. Reduce by two thirds. Over a very low heat, whisk in 3 egg yolks and then gradually add 250g softened butter, piece by piece until the sauce is thick and creamy. Strain then add one tablespoon of chopped tarragon before serving.

Entrée: Beef a la Mode

Season a piece of topside, approx 2 kilos, place in a large pan. Add 2 cups of white wine and 6 tablespoons of brandy. Cook over a low heat until the liquid is reduced by two thirds. Add 2 calf's feet, bouquet garni, an onion stuck with a few cloves and sufficient

stock to just cover the beef. Simmer gently for approx one hour, add 20 small carrots and 20 small onions then simmer. Remove onions and carrots when tender and glaze with a 150g of butter and 2 teaspoons of sugar in a separate pan. Remove beef from stock and put in a warm place. Skim and then reduce stock by approx one half. Serve slices of beef with carrots and onions and moisten with the strained stock.

Sweets: Sherry Fruit Trifle

Cut 500g of sponge cake into 2.5 cm squares, place in a glass bowl and sprinkle with sherry. Add poached peaches or pears or the fruit of your choice.

Make a vanilla custard by scalding 750 ml of milk, allow to cool slightly, while steeping a vanilla bean in the milk. Cream 6 egg yolks three tablespoons of sugar and two tablespoons of cornflour. Add warm milk to egg mixture, after removing vanilla bean. Stir over a low heat until thickened.

Pour warm custard over the fruit /sponge mixture in the glass bowl, leave to cool then chill for a least 12 hours. Serve decorated with whipped cream and toasted chopped almonds.

S.S. Orsova - 14 June 1959

World War II was long over and the Korean War was six years in the past. Construction of the Sydney Opera House had just started and Australians were travelling in greater and greater numbers. The Menu offered to passengers for dinner on Sunday 14 June reflects that over the intervening years between Queen Mary in 1939 and the Orient Line S.S. Orsova in 1959 menus had been simplified. World War II food shortages and travel being more widely available were among the many reasons. The menus were reasonably modest in scope and gave less choice but tried to maintain an atmosphere of first class dining particularly in the items offered for soup, entrée and sweet courses. These particular items were more inclined to be French in origin, while the main courses offered were good, comforting roasts and grills; lamb, sirloin steak and calf's liver and bacon.

Soup: Consomme Celestine

Chicken consomme garnished with small round slices of rolled pancakes stuffed with chicken forcemeat and chervil leaves.

Entrée: Fillet of Turbot, Bonne Femme

Place fillet of fish on a bed of one tablespoon of chopped shallots, one tablespoon of chopped parsley, 125g thinly sliced mushrooms. Add one tablespoon of white wine and four tablespoons of white sauce made from fish stock.

White Fish Sauce

Melt tablespoon of butter mix in one tablespoon of flour gently cook for 2 minutes, then whisking all the time add approx 2 cups warmed fish stock. Cook gently over low heat until thickened.

Sweets: Pears Bourdalou

Peel 4 or 5 pears, halve and core, simmer in a vanilla syrup; cup of sugar to one and half cups of water and a vanilla bean. When tender cool and place pears on a bed of frangipane (pastry cream) in a pre-cooked shortcrust pastry shell. To glaze, brush with warmed apricot conserve and decorate with chopped toasted almonds

Frangipane

Heat 500 ml milk to boiling point. Whisk 6 egg yolks with 100g castor sugar then whisk in 30g flour. Strain the scalded milk into the egg mixture whisking continuously until smooth and lump free. Return the mixture to the stove, bring to the boil again whisking continuously and then over a gentle heat cook for two minutes. Add 1 teaspoon vanilla essence and allow to cool.