

# *What We Know*

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Inis Nua Theatre Company Play Reading Series

May 2022

Dramaturg: Chelsea E. Drumel





JO.

sweetheart. look at this. we have all of this...these...this...

ingredients, tools, this heat, these hands. and **they're all perfect. sort of.** they all work. we can put them together and make them work. we can do that. look at what we have, what the possibilities are. laksa. ceviche. sachertorte. kouloubiac. **beautiful things to say and make and eat.**

LUCY.

we're lucky.





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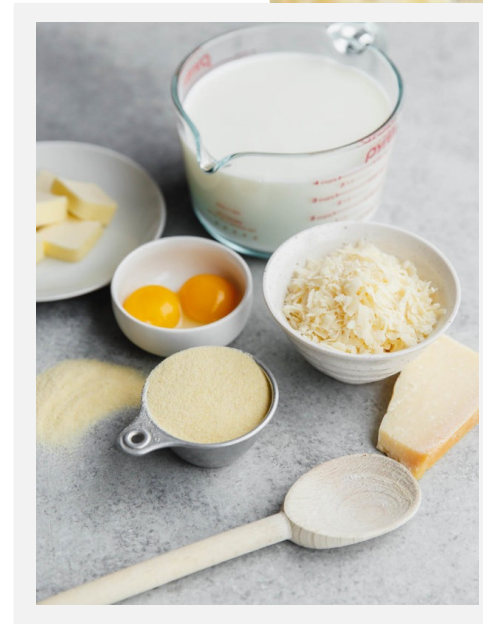
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# gnocchi alla romana (semolina gnocchi) *ingredients & description*

## ingredients

- 1 lt milk (2 pints)
- 250 g semolina (9 oz)
- 100 g butter (3.5 oz)
- 2 egg yolks
- 75 g parmigiano reggiano ( 2.5oz) grated
- 50 g pecorino romano (2oz) grated
- salt a pinch
- nutmeg grated, a pinch

*gnocchi alla romana has a slightly crispy outside and soft, buttery, cheesy texture in the inside. the semolina rounds hold their shape, but almost melt into each other. it is classic and elegant stick-to-your-ribs italian comfort food.*



# semolina gnocchi

## *directions*

1. heat the milk in a large saucepan over medium-high heat until tiny bubbles start to form around the edges of the pan and the liquid is just short of boiling.
2. reduce the heat to low and slowly add the semolina flour in a thin steady stream with one hand as you stir the mixture steadily with a large stiff whisk. cook the mixture for roughly 15 to 20 minutes total, or until it becomes very thick and begins to pull away from the sides of the pan. it will be very loose for the first few minutes and will thicken to the consistency of a loose pudding within about 5 minutes. once the mixture is thick enough that it becomes difficult to continue whisking, switch to a wooden spoon. continue stirring with a wooden spoon, scraping the sides of the pan as well, until the mixture begins to form a loose-ish mass and begins to pull away from the sides (approximately 15 to 20 minutes of total cook time ). remove from the heat. allow the mixture to cool for a minute or two.
3. stir in  $\frac{2}{3}$  of the grated parmesan cheeses, 2 tablespoons (30 g) unsalted butter, freshly grated nutmeg, and kosher salt. season to taste, adding more salt and freshly ground black pepper as needed. once the mixture has cooled just slightly, add the egg yolks and mix rapidly with a wooden spoon until fully incorporated.
4. moisten a half sheet pan with cold water over a sink and allow the excess water to drip off the pan. spoon the hot semolina mixture onto the moistened sheet pan, spreading it with an offset spatula into an even layer until it is just under  $\frac{1}{2}$ -inch thick. let cool for 30 to 40 minutes.
5. preheat the oven to 425°F (220°C) with a rack in the center position. grease the bottom and sides of an oven-safe baking dish (roughly 2 quarts in capacity) with unsalted butter. using a small biscuit cutter (roughly 2½-inch in diameter), cut the semolina into disks, dipping the biscuit cutter into water between each cut to prevent sticking. transfer and layer the semolina rounds into the greased baking dish, overlapping the slices slightly, so that each row resembles roof shingles. top with the polenta with the remaining 2 tablespoons (30 g) butter, cut into small cubes. sprinkle the dish with the remaining grated cheese.
6. bake uncovered for 15 to 20 minutes or until a light golden crust is formed. allow to cool for a few minutes before serving.







# puttanesca sauce

## *ingredients & description*

- 1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 3 garlic cloves, peeled
- 6 anchovy fillets
- 1/4 teaspoon crushed red pepper
- 1 tablespoon tomato paste
- one 35-ounce can whole peeled italian tomatoes with their juices, crushed by hand
- pinch of sugar
- 2 basil sprigs
- 1/4 cup chopped kalamata olives
- 1 tablespoons capers, drained
- salt and freshly ground pepper

the origins of puttanesca sauce are disputed, but food historians agree it was created in naples in the mid-20th century. the classic combination of anchovies, olives, garlic, chile flakes, tomatoes, and capers gives this sauce a robust flavor. it comes together quickly, and can be cooked in the time it takes to boil water and cook the pasta.





# puttanesca sauce

## *directions*

1. in a large saucepan, heat the oil. add the garlic, anchovies and crushed red pepper and cook over moderate heat, stirring occasionally, until golden, about 5 minutes.
2. add the tomato paste and cook, stirring, for 1 minute. add the canned tomatoes with their juices.
3. stir in the sugar, basil, olives and capers. season with salt and pepper and bring to a boil.
4. simmer the sauce over low heat, stirring occasionally, until it thickens and is reduced to 3 cups, about 30 minutes. season again with salt and pepper. discard the basil sprigs and garlic.



# blancmange

## *ingredients & description*

a traditional french dessert which, literally translated, means “white eating” (although historians generally agree that the etymology is “white dish.”)

### ingredients

- ½ cup hazelnuts or almonds
- 1 cup whole milk, divided
- 2 strips lemon peel, peeled off with a peeler
- 2 cardamom pods, lightly smashed once
- 1 ½ cups heavy cream, divided
- 1 (1/4-ounce) package unflavored gelatin
- ½ cup granulated sugar
- tiny pinch of salt
- a few drops vanilla
- flavorless vegetable oil
- amarena cherries marinated in syrup, or other candied fruit (optional)







# blancmange *directions*

1. grind the nuts in a food processor to medium fine. combine them with 2/3 cup of milk, lemon peel, cardamom and 1/2 cup of the cream in a small saucepan, and bring to just below a simmer, over medium heat. turn off heat. let steep 15 minutes. sprinkle gelatin over remaining milk in a wide shallow bowl or gratin dish. let bloom 10 minutes.
2. strain nut-milk-cream through a chinois or a sieve lined with a double layer of cheesecloth into a bowl. firmly press the liquid through the cloth.
3. return the liquid to a clean saucepan, add the sugar and salt and heat over low, stirring until dissolved. add the bloomed gelatin and stir well until thoroughly dissolved. don't let the mixture come to a simmer. stir in the vanilla. set pan into a bowl of ice and cold water, and stir occasionally until cooler than your finger and the consistency of egg whites. if it sets too much, remove from cold water and whisk well.
4. beat the remaining cup of cream to just past soft peaks. add a little of the whipped cream to the jelling nut-milk mixture to loosen, then add to the remaining whipped cream, folding thoroughly but gently. brush a 6-to-7-inch cake pan or mold completely with vegetable oil. add blancmange to oiled mold. cover the surface directly with plastic, and chill, at least 6 hours or overnight. to serve, remove the plastic wrap, and lightly run a sharp knife around the blancmange's edge. if you've used an old, pretty mold, you may have to dunk it briefly in hot water to get it to release. put an inverted plate over its top, and flip. top with cherries or candied fruit or nothing at all.

# laksa

## *ingredients & description & directions*

laksa is a spicy noodle dish popular in southeast asia. laksa consists of various types of noodles, most commonly thick rice noodles, with toppings such as chicken, prawn or fish. most variations of laksa are prepared with a rich and spicy coconut soup or a broth seasoned with sour asam.



## **ingredients**

- 1 1/2 tablespoons peanut oil, or other neutral oil
- 1 clove garlic, minced
- 1 teaspoon grated fresh ginger
- 1 (7-ounce) jar laksa paste, about 3/4 cup
- 3 cups chicken stock, unsalted or low-sodium
- 1 tablespoon brown sugar
- 1 pound boneless, skinless chicken breasts or thighs, cut into bite size pieces
- 8 ounces large shrimp, peeled and divided, or more chicken
- 1 (13.5-ounce) can unsweetened coconut cream, or full-fat coconut milk
- 1 cup tofu puffs, optional
- 3 tablespoons lime juice
- fish sauce, to taste
- 8 ounces rice noodles, flat or vermicelli
- 1 1/2 cups fresh bean sprouts
- lime wedges, cilantro leaves, scallions, fried shallots (for garnish, optional)





## ceviche

### *ingredients & description & directions*

ceviche is a south american seafood dish originally from the modern day country of peru, typically made from fresh raw fish cured in fresh citrus juices, most commonly lemon or lime.

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### **ingredients**

- 1 pound fresh, skinless snapper, bass, halibut, or other ocean fish fillets, cut into 1/2-inch dice
- 1 1/2 cups fresh lime juice
- 1 medium white onion, chopped into 1/2-inch pieces
- 2 medium-large tomatoes (about 1 pound), chopped into 1/2-inch pieces
- fresh hot green chiles (2 to 3 serranos or 1 to 2 jalapeños), stemmed, seeded and finely chopped
- 1/3 cup chopped cilantro, plus a few leaves for garnish
- 1/3 cup chopped pitted green olives (manzanillos for a typical mexican flavor)
- 1 to 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil (optional)
- salt
- 3 tablespoons fresh orange juice or 1/2 teaspoon sugar
- 1 large or 2 small ripe avocados, peeled, pitted and diced
- tostadas, tortilla chips or saltine crackers, for serving

# sachertorte

## *ingredients & description*

referred to as the world's most famous cake, sacher-torte is a dessert that nearly never happened at all and only came about due to a twist of fate! in 1832, austrian prince klemens wenzel von metternich tasked his head chef with the creation of an unforgettable dessert. his head chef fell ill and so the pressure went to the chef's teenage apprentice, franz sacher. using a combination of chocolate and preserves to create a delectable cake, the dessert was an instantaneous hit. to this date, the authentic original recipe is a well-kept secret, known only to the confectioners at the hotel sacher in vienna. any published recipe is only an approximation.

### **cake**

- 6 large eggs, separated
- 1 cup all-purpose flour
- 1/2 cup almond flour or 2 ounces blanched almonds (1/3 cup), ground
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/2 sticks unsalted butter, softened
- 1 cup sugar
- 5 ounces bittersweet chocolate, melted and cooled slightly

### **filling and glaze**

- 1 3/4 cups apricot preserves
- 2/3 cup light corn syrup
- 2 tablespoons rum
- 10 ounces bittersweet chocolate, chopped
- unsweetened whipped cream, for serving (optional)







# sachertorte

## *directions*

1. preheat oven to 170°C. line the base of a springform with baking paper, grease the sides, and dust with a little flour. melt couverture over boiling water. let cool slightly.
2. slit vanilla pod lengthwise and scrape out seeds. using a hand mixer with whisks, beat the softened butter with the icing sugar and vanilla seeds until bubbles appear.
3. separate the eggs. whisk the egg yolks into the butter mixture one by one. now gradually add melted couverture chocolate. beat the egg whites with the castor sugar until stiff, then place on top of the butter and chocolate mixture. sift the flour over the mixture, then fold in the flour and beaten egg whites.
4. transfer the mixture to the springform, smooth the top, and bake in the oven (middle rack) for 10–15 minutes, leaving the oven door a finger's width ajar. then close the oven and bake for approximately 50 minutes. (the cake is done when it yields slightly to the touch.)
5. remove the cake from the oven and loosen the sides of the springform. carefully tip the cake onto a cake rack lined with baking paper and let cool for approximately 20 minutes. then pull off the baking paper, turn the cake over, and leave on rack to cool completely.
6. cut the cake in half horizontally. warm the jam and stir until smooth. brush the top of both cake halves with the jam and place one on top of the other. brush the sides with the jam as well.
7. to make the glaze, put the castor sugar into a saucepan with 125 ml water and boil over high heat for approximately 5 minutes. take the sugar syrup off the stove and leave to cool a little. coarsely chop the couverture, gradually adding it to the syrup, and stir until it forms a thick liquid



# koulibac

## *ingredients and description*

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koulibiac is a traditional russian dish, which encases salmon, rice, eggs, and vegetables (typically spinach or mushroom) within puff pastry. often reserved for holidays or very special occasions, it is a dish that is guaranteed to impress guests. essentially, it is a fish pie with just enough sophistication to make it a delicacy. infrequently enjoyed in the united states, little information is available online in english.

### **ingredients**

- 2 sheets frozen pastry dough, thawed
- 1 egg yolk, beaten with 1 tablespoon milk, for egg wash
- 3 cups spinach, sauteed and squeezed dry
- 1/2 pound freshly sliced mushrooms sauteed and patted dry
- 1 (3 to 4-pound) side of salmon
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 hard-boiled eggs, chopped
- 1 onion, sliced
- 1 tablespoon fresh dill leaves



# koulibiac

## *directions*



- roll out 2 pastry sheets to 1/2-inch thickness and set aside in the refrigerator for 30 minutes to rest prior to assembly. (this will make it easier to handle). at this time preheat the oven to 350 degrees f.
- when ready to assemble, lay 1 of the pastry sheets on a flat floured surface. brush with egg wash and evenly spread the spinach on top. then cover the spinach with the sauteed mushrooms.
- lay the whole side of salmon on top of the spinach and mushrooms, making sure you have at least 1/2-inch of pastry left all around the salmon.
- preheat oven at 350 degrees f.
- season the salmon with salt and pepper and top with the chopped eggs and sliced raw onion.
- sprinkle with chopped dill and thyme and brush the egg wash liberally around the edges of the bottom pastry.
- place the other pastry sheet on top of the salmon and press the 2 sheets together so they seal tightly (the whole thing should look like a parcel). egg wash the top and sprinkle with little salt. transfer the salmon to a sheet pan and place in the preheated oven for 30 minutes.
- after 30 minutes check internal temperature by placing an instant-read thermometer into the center of the salmon. when it reads 125 degrees f remove from the oven and allow to rest for a further 10 minutes. it will continue to cook for a further 20 minutes or so.
- transfer salmon to a cutting board and using a serrated knife, slice into 2-inch pieces. place on a serving platter and enjoy!

# scottish meat pie

## *ingredients and description*



### **hot water pastry**

- 250g plain flour (2 cups)
- 100g lard (1/2 cup)
- 120ml water (1/2 cup)

### **filling**

- 300g lamb mince
- 1 small onion
- 1 tsp mixed herbs (usually a combination of oregano, marjoram, and basil. you could also use rosemary.)
- 1/2 teaspoon mace
- 4tbsp lamb stock, beef stock, or gravy (minimum amount, you may need more)
- salt and pepper



# scottish meat pie

## *directions*



1. start by oiling the pie tins with a little vegetable oil, or put cling film over the end of the glasses/jars you intend to use.
2. put the flour in a large bowl and make a well in the middle.
3. cut the lard into cubes and add to a small pot of hot water, stirring until it's melted. don't allow the water to boil.
4. pour the mixture into the flour well and mix together with a wooden spoon, until it's mostly combined. turn it out onto a floured surface and knead a little to make sure it's fully combined. as the hot water pastry cools it becomes harder to manage so you need to work reasonably quickly.
5. divide the pastry into 4 balls and then take a little from each ball to save for the pie lid. between a quarter to a third depending on the size of the pies you're making.
6. roll out the pastry balls to about 5mm thickness one by one and put them into the pie tins, ensuring there is a flat even edge to the top of the sides of the pie. we rolled to approximately 20cm each for our 10cm tins. if you're using a jar or glass then drape the pastry over and cut around it to ensure it has a flat edge where the top of the pie casing will be.
7. roll out the lids and put them on cling film or baking paper on a tray. the lids will need to fit inside of the pie casing so you'll want to make sure they are not the exact size of the tins/cases but slightly smaller.
8. put all of the pastry in the fridge to harden.
9. in the meantime, finely chop one small onion and fry in a pan. add the mace and mixed herbs, and then put in a bowl with the minimum amount of stock/gravy.
10. once cooled add to the lamb and mix through. add additional stock/gravy if the mixture isn't too wet. you don't want there to be too much liquid as it will leak out of the pie while cooking and make the pastry soggy.
11. divide the lamb mixture up and fill the pie cases about 3/4 full.
12. push the pie lids down into the pie casing, so they are around 1cm from the top of the pie.
13. cut a small hole in the top of the pies to let the air escape.
14. put the pies in the oven for around 45 minutes at 180°C or 356°F. check at 35/40 minutes as you want the pastry to be just golden-brown. you can remove from the tins as soon as they're cool enough to handle.

# *on food & grieving*

## **new york times**

## [for many widows, the hardest part is mealtime](#)

“taste itself can feel like a betrayal. one partner is left behind with the things of life — the smell of mushrooms sautéing in butter, a favorite chipped blue mug — while the other doesn’t get to anymore.”

## [reader’s response to the aforementioned article](#)

“when she passed, although i had some ability to fend for myself, the supermarket became my trigger. grief at the prospect of shopping for one, not picking up the things that she cared for, buying what i wanted instead — it just hurt. shopping for one is not easy. it’s all part of a piece. you never get over it. you get used to it.”

## **huffington post**

## [this is how different cultures grieve with food](#)

“words are woefully inadequate when dealing with death, whether you’re trying to express your own grief or offer sympathy to someone hurting after a loss. so people kept me fed. a plate with a grilled cheese and a side of salt-and-vinegar chips would appear beside me as i wept writing my eulogy.”

## **modern loss**

## [on father’s day, grief tastes like berry cobbler](#)

“it was on one of those mundane evenings when i turned on the oven light to watch the cobbler bake and realized that that’s how my grief is now — usually below the surface, but inevitably creeping up when certain ingredients are combined just so. each year when the season begins to change from summer to fall, i know the anniversary of my dad’s death is just around the corner. the ubiquitous falling leaves tend to provoke tearful reflections on death and decay, yet i’m grateful for the reminder that in the midst of change, there is still beauty.”