

Culinary vocabulary #1

1. Au Sec—In French au sec means “nearly dry”. Au sec refers to a liquid that has been reduced by heating it. When reducing a liquid to au sec you generally use an acidic component. Au sec add minimal moisture with maximum flavor.
2. Ballotine—In French balle means “package”. A ballotine is a deboned thigh and leg portion stuffed with forcemeat and other ingredients. Forcemeat is a uniform mixture of lean meat with fat made by grinding the ingredients together. It is then tied up to look like its proper shape as a leg/thigh or a sausage. It often has a clean bone in the end. A ballotine is then cooked by roasting, braising, or poaching.
3. Beurre manie—In French it means “kneaded butter”. It is a paste made from equal parts softened butter and flour. It is used to thicken soups, stews, and sauces. This is a good alternative to using a roux and is added similarly. Beurre manie usually does not cause as many lumps as traditional roux can. Beurre manie can be added before or after cream is added to your recipe.

4. Caul fat—In French it is known as “greis de panse”. Caul fat is also known as lace fat, omentum, crepine, or fat netting. It is the greater omentum used as a wrapping to meats to keep their shape. The caul fat will melt away as the meat cooks, enhancing flavor and allowing the meat to retain its shape. Caul fat is the lace like membrane which surrounds the internal organs of animals including cow, sheep, and pigs. It is also used as a casing for sausage, roulades, pates, and other meat dishes.
5. Chutney—Chutney is a condiment associated with Indian cuisine. Chutneys are made in a wide variety of forms, Some raw, some cooked with sugar, and others with local fruits and vegetables. Chutneys are divided into two groups. Simple fresh preparations, that must be eaten immediately, or preserves, which are bottle and stored for later use.
6. Confit—In French it means to preserve. Confit is any type of food that is cooked slowly over a long period of time in fat. Confit is cooked at a lower temperature than deep frying. Confit is cooked in oil around the temp of 90 degrees Fahrenheit. Confit foods can last for several months or years when prepared and sealed properly. Confit needs to be stored in a cool dry place.

7. Duxelle—This is a french cuisine term that refers to a mince of mushrooms, onions, herbs, and black pepper. Duxelle is sauteed in butter and reduced to a paste. It is a basic preparation used in stuffings and sauces. Duxelle can also be put in pockets of raw pastry and baked. Some recipes using duxelle also include cream or sherry.
8. Gastrique—Gastrique is a caramelized sugar that is deglazed with vinegar or another sour liquid. It is used as a sweet and sour flavoring for sauces. Gastrique is added to a reduced stock or sauce. It can also be used to flavor savory fruit sauces or even tomato sauce. When adding gastrique to a sauce, it creates depth and complexity to a dish.
9. Squab—A squab is an immature domestic pigeon. It is usually under 4 weeks of age. Squab is considered a delicacy. It is tender, moist, and richer in taste than other commonly consumed poultry. There is relatively little meat, except on the breast. Squab is dark meat with fatty skin, which adds to the tenderness and sweetness of the meat. The meat is lean and rich in proteins, minerals, and vitamins. Many have described the texture of the meat as silk. It also has a milder

taste as compared to other game birds. Squab is generally baked in an oven.

10. Stewing hen—In French it means poule a bouillir. A stewing hen is also known as a boiling fryer. Stewing hens lived their lives as egg layers. Stewing hens range in age from 1 to 3 years of age. They are generally butchered when they no longer are producing an acceptable amount of eggs. Due to their age they are generally a tougher bird, however they are prized for their intense flavor. With stewing hens being a tougher quality of meat, they are generally ideal for stews, soups, and braising. This allows the tougher connective tissue to break down and form richer flavors. Stewing hens have tougher muscle tissue and higher connective tissue. Long simmering times break these tissues down and make them tender. Stewing hens are larger than younger chickens. Stock produced from stewing hens is much richer and flavorful than younger chickens.