



**Manoir with a mission.** For Raymond Blanc, quality of food is the key to quality of life. His Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons is a celebration of this tenet, with a Michelin-starred restaurant, a top-notch cooking school and a luxury hotel experience. What's more: it's 100% organic – and serves Nespresso.



It's no secret that Raymond Blanc wants to change the way people think about food. For years, he has been admonishing the British about their poor eating habits and disconnection from the food chain – a symptom of western society working against its own interests.

In answer to civilisation's malaise, the passionate expatriate has been his own best example. Long before it was popular, RB (as he is endearingly known in the kitchen) made a point to use organic ingredients in his eclectic, self-taught cuisine. Blanc's international symposium "The American Food Revolution" in 2004 met with such resonance that a second event on Slow Food is in the works for next year.

And for the past 20 years, Raymond Blanc has been nurturing the place that embodies the synthesis of his ideals, Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons.

Set in the opulent corridor between Oxford and London, Le Manoir is well removed from urban stress. Acres of decorative and organic produce gardens sooth the soul and stock the kitchen. The cooking school demystifies haute cuisine for professionals and lay enthusiasts alike. Musical events, and seminars on food, wine, nutrition and home gardening are offered throughout the year. "With Le Manoir, I wanted to create a place where one comes to celebrate oneself, celebrate life, and celebrate what is beautiful in life," explains the consistently two-starred chef. "And for that you need the proper ingredients. This value – a purity of food – is the cornerstone on which Le Manoir was built."

Blanc traces his driving passion to formative years in Besançon, said to be France's "greenest" city: "I was a hunter-gatherer from a very early age," he boasts, recalling forages for ingredients from which his mother would craft a feast. "We were working class, but we ate like kings!" The experience ingrained values that feed his vision to this day: the integrity of nature's life cycle, the irreplaceable taste of local produce, and the ritual of the table. Despite his polemics against fast food culture, Blanc sees the tide shifting toward a new awareness – that is reflected in the success of his hotel. Clients are younger and more diverse. The organic wave has helped Le Manoir flourish – plans are underway to add a spa and expand the produce gardens. "We will have our own farmer's market!" he enthuses.

The veritably French Raymond Blanc may forever be a bit of an outsider in Oxford – but when it comes to the future, the father of two passionately speaks in terms of "us". "I think now we understand that food connects with health, environment, and with what kind of society we want," muses Blanc. "We are going back to a more thoughtful food chain, bringing intelligence into world production ... Morality and ethical values are beginning to touch everything. This is now a fact that is irreversible – and that's exciting!"

*Nespresso can be enjoyed by Le Manoir Private Dining guests.*



## ORGANIC PIONEER



## PISTOU SOUP



**4 portions**

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes. **Cooking time:** 1 hour. **Planning Ahead:** The soup can be prepared a few hours in advance. The coco beans can be cooked 1 day in advance. The pesto sauce can also be prepared one day in advance. **Special Equipment:** Liquidiser.

### The Coco Beans: (optional)

200g Fresh coco beans or haricots blancs (\*1, if dried soak for 12 hours and discard water)  
30g Olive oil (\*2)  
50g Onion, chopped finely  
30g Garlic cloves – whole, peeled  
1 Bouquet garni (1 bayleaf,  
2 Sprigs of thyme, a few stalks of parsley strung together)  
400g Water, boiling (\*3)  
4g Sea salt  
1g Black pepper, freshly ground

### The Pesto Sauce:

30g Basil leaves; blanched for 5 seconds and refreshed (\*4)  
15g Garlic, pureed  
10g Pine nuts, roasted  
100ml Olive oil, extra virgin  
3g Sea salt  
1g White pepper

### The Soup:

200g Fresh cooked coco beans or soaked dried haricot blanc beans (see recipe above)  
30ml Olive oil  
100g Onion, chopped finely  
80g Carrot, peeled and chopped finely  
50g Celery, peeled and chopped finely  
50g Leek, chopped finely  
50g Fennel, chopped finely  
50g Courgette, finely diced  
50g Peas  
800ml Water, boiling  
12g Sea salt  
1g Freshly ground white pepper

### To Finish:

100g Fresh pesto sauce  
40g Grated parmesan  
40g A few croutons

**Cooking the beans:** Sweat the onions, garlic, bouquet garni in olive oil for 4 minutes. Add the beans and continue to sweat for a further 2 minutes. Add the water, bring to the boil; season to taste and simmer gently for 40 minutes (\*5). Continue cooking until the beans are tender (approx half an hour). Cool down and reserve in the cooking liquid.

**Making the Pesto Sauce:** Puree all the ingredients in the liquidiser, taste and season with salt and pepper and reserve. Keep in the fridge until required.

**Making the soup:** In a large pan sweat the onions, celery, carrot, leek and fennel in 4 tbsp of olive oil for 2 minutes (\*6). Add the boiling water (\*7), season with salt and pepper, and cook for 2 minutes. At the last moment add the peas, courgette and the cooked haricot beans; cook for a further 1 minute. Taste and correct seasoning.

**To Serve:** Serve in a large warmed tureen, pour in 100g of pesto sauce and serve to your guests. Place parmesan and croutons on the table so guests may help themselves.

### Wine Accompaniment:

Provence White,  
Light Rhone Wines (white),  
Varietal Marsanne California,  
Viognier/Chardonnay California

### Chef's Notes:

\*1 Coco Beans – I do not know my American beans but I am sure your varieties will suit this dish very well. This can be done with any beans.

\*2 Olive Oil – when you cook olive oil most of the molecules of flavours go away, so use a good but inexpensive oil. Use extra virgin olive oil for dressings or added at the last moment.

\*3 Boiling water – this will shorten the cooking process retaining all nutrients, clear flavours and textures.

\*4 Basil - I blanch the basil, to retain its vivid colour.

\*5 Simmer Gently – too aggressive cooking will destroy the texture of the delicate beans, they will burst and be very powdery.

\*6 Sweating – the sweating process will bring the sugar out of the vegetables and enhance the flavour of the soup.

\*7 Boiling Water – I use boiling water to shorten the cooking and preserve both the vivid colours and fragrance of this soup.

**4 portions**

### Lemon Oil:

400g Olive oil  
30g Lemon zest

### Salmon:

200g Salmon fillet, de-boned, skinned and cut into 4 x 50g portions  
4g Salt  
4g Sugar, caster  
1g Pepper, white  
4g Dill, chopped  
4g Lemon, chopped

### Horseradish Sauce:

60g Creamed horseradish  
20g Water  
40g Sour cream  
2g Salt  
2g Sugar  
Cayenne pepper

### Cucumber Salad & White Wine Vinegar Dressing:

1 Cucumber, peeled, deseeded and sliced into 12cm x 1cm x 2mm ribbons  
2g Sea salt  
2g Dill chopped

*mixed together:*

30g Olive oil  
10g White wine vinegar  
2g Sea salt  
1g Sugar, caster

### Cauliflower Florets:

80g Cauliflower florets  
200g Water  
5g Sea salt  
10g Horseradish sauce (see recipe above)

### Mizzuna Salad:

16g 1 handful Mizuna leaves  
4g White wine dressing (see recipe above)

**Planning Ahead:** The sauce and lemon oil can be prepared 24 hours in advance. The salmon can be marinated 8 hours in advance and cooked at the last minute. **Special Equipment:** Mandolin and thermometer.

**Preparing the Lemon Oil:** Heat the olive oil gently to about 50°C (\*1). Add the lemon zest and infuse for 24 hours, strain the oil through a fine sieve and reserve. **Marinating the Salmon:** Evenly distribute the seasoning (dill and lemon zest) over the salmon fillets. Marinate for 1 hour. Wash off marinade, pat dry and reserve. **Preparing the Horseradish Sauce:** Mix all the ingredients and push through a fine sieve. Taste and correct seasoning if necessary. **Method for Cucumber Tagliatelle:** Salt the cucumber strips and marinate for 25 minutes (\*2) Squeeze the cucumber to remove excess water. Add the dill and white wine vinegar dressing (reserving a little of dressing for the salad leaves) Taste and correct the seasoning if necessary. **Method for the Cauliflower Florets:** Boil the cauliflower in salted water for 5 – 10 seconds. Refresh in iced water. Drain, removing all excess water. Mix with



## CONFIT OF WILD SALMON WITH CUCUMBER SALAD AND HORSERADISH SAUCE

horseradish sauce reserve. **Cooking the Salmon:** Heat the lemon oil to 42°C, cook the salmon maintaining the temperature for 10 – 12 minutes (\*3). Lift the salmon, drain and place on absorbent kitchen paper. **Serving:** Arrange the cucumber tagliatelle, cauliflower florets, some dressed mizzuna salad leaves around the plate. Place the salmon in the middle and top with salmon eggs. Spoon the horseradish sauce around the plate.

### Chef's Notes:

\*1 The warmth will help to create the infusion of flavours.

\*2 Cucumber contains a lot of water. The salt draws the water out of the cucumber, improving the texture for the salad.

\*3 Here I use the word cooking quite loosely. 42°C will not cook the salmon fillet, but will denature the proteins giving it a wonderful texture and flavour.



**ROASTED GROUSE IN A BLACKBERRY & RED WINE SAINT EMILION SAUCE**

**4 portions**

**Ingredients for the Grouse:**

- 4 Young grouse (350g each), cleaned and oven ready
- 15g Unsalted butter
- 15g Non-scented oil
- Sea salt
- Freshly ground black pepper

**Bread Sauce:**

- 200ml Milk, whole
- 1 Clove
- 10g Onion, finely sliced
- ½g Thyme
- 30g Smoked bacon trimmings
- 10g Butter, unsalted
- 30g Onion, finely chopped
- 30g Brioche / bread crumbs (crust removed)

**Red Wine Saint Emilion Sauce:**

- 15g Unsalted butter
- Chopped wing bones from the grouse
- 200g Ripe blackberries, marinated in 20g of sugar for up to 2 hrs
- 15g Red wine vinegar, reduced by ¾
- 100ml Ruby port, reduced by ½
- 1 Crushed juniper berry
- 100ml Brown chicken stock
- Sea salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- A pinch of caster sugar (optional)

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes. **Cooking time:** 35 minutes.  
**Planning Ahead:** Order the grouse well in advance. They must be fresh and should not have been hung for more than 2 days. Ask your butcher to pluck and draw them and to remove the wishbones.  
**Special Equipment:** Blender or food processor.

**Cooking, resting and carving the grouse:** (This can be done ½ hr in advance.) Preheat the oven to 200°C/400°F/gas 6. Season the birds inside and out with salt and pepper. In a large frying pan, on medium heat, heat the butter and groundnut oil until the butter reaches foaming stage, put in the birds on their thighs and sear for 30 seconds each side. Lay them on their backs and cook in the preheated oven (for rare 7-8 minutes, 10-12 minutes medium or well done 15 minutes). Remove from the oven and leave to rest in the pan for 5 minutes. Whilst resting, the grouse will release some juice, reserve and strain into the sauce.

**Preparing the bread sauce:** Bring the milk, clove, onion, thyme and bacon to a gentle simmer, remove from the heat and let it infuse for 20 minutes. Strain and reserve the infused milk. On a medium heat sweat the onions in the butter for five minutes until soft and translucent without any color.

On a blender add the cooked onion, brioche crumbs and the infused milk. Blitz until smooth, pass through a chinois and correct the seasoning.

**Preparing the red wine Saint Emilion sauce:** On a medium heat, in a small saucepan, heat the butter until foaming stage and colour the chopped wing bones from the grouse until golden brown. Mix in all the other ingredients, bring to the boil, skim & simmer for 7-10 minutes.

Push the mixture through a sieve, to extract all the juices. Taste, season with salt and freshly ground black pepper.

**Serving:** On a large plate display the carved grouse, garnished with braised Savoy cabbage with bacon lardoons and ripe blackberries. Spoon the bread sauce and the red wine sauce around.

**Chef's Notes:**

Hanging the grouse for too long distorts its natural richness into an overpowering flavour.

A thin caramelized croustade pastry (a specialty from the SW of France) topped with a rosace (rose shape) of caramelized braeburn apples. Served with vanilla apple sauce and honey & ginger ice cream.

**Preparation time:** 30 minutes. **Cooking time:** 30 minutes.

**Making the apple rosace:** To make the Calvados butter, add onto the warm clarified butter, the Calvados, sugar and lemon juice, mix and reserve. Peel & core the apples (leaving them whole) and slice them 2mm thick. Place greaseproof paper on a baking tray brushed with Calvados butter and line the apple slices tight in an approximately 15cm diameter rosace, brush more Calvados butter on the top. Cook for 40 minutes in a 200°C preheated oven, until golden colour. Reserve to cool covered with clingfilm.

**Making the apple sauce:** Bring water, sugar, lemon juice and vanilla to the boil, add the chopped Granny Smiths and cook for 2 minutes. Mix it well in the blender and sieve it through a fine conical strainer and reserve.

**Making the caramelized croustade base:**

*Step 1:* In the mixer, combine together the flour, egg yolk, water and sugar. Add the slightly whipped egg white with a pinch of salt. Fold the oil in by hand and let it rest cling filmed, in the fridge overnight.

*Step 2:* Warm up the croustade dough to about 40°C sitting next to a hot stove (to make it easier to stretch). On a table cloth, stretch gradually the croustade dough, using a little flour, until see through thickness. With a brush, flick on some clarified butter evenly and sprinkle caster sugar over the top. Cut the dough in 15cm square and shape in a 7cm diameter mould overnight to dry out. Caramelize the croustade next day, in a pre-heated oven, at 250°C.

**Serving:** Warm the apple rosace upside down on a tray in the hot oven at 250°C for 3 up to 4 minutes. Flip it on a large hot plate. Place the caramelized croustade on top, pour the apple sauce around and finish with a scoop of honey & ginger ice cream on the croustade.



**4 portions**

**Ingredients for the Apple Rosace:**

- 600g Braeburn apples (5 to 6 apples)
- 50g Clarified butter
- 5g Calvados
- 15g Sugar, caster
- 5g Lemon juice

**Apple Sauce:**

- 125g Granny Smith apples (1 to 2 apples)
- 100g Water
- 50g Sugar, caster
- 12g Lemon juice
- ½ Vanilla pod

**Caramelized Croustade Base:**

- 250g Flour, strong
- 1 Egg, white (med organic)
- 1g Table salt
- 1g Sugar, caster
- 110g Water, hot
- 1 Egg yolk, (med organic)
- 18g Groundnut oil