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RIVIERA

Don't know your trulle from your tourte de blettes? It can be hard to navigate your way through a Niçois menu and its many obscure dishes known only to locals. To complicate things, the best Niçois restaurants are unlikely to provide translations of their hand-scribbled blackboards, though the waiters will often surprise you with good English. If tête de veau (jellied calf's head) is not something you wish to order by accident, keep this list on hand to help guide you through your next meal in Nice.

Aioli – fish (traditionally salt cod) with garlic mayonnaise and an array of boiled or steamed vegetables.

Anchoïade – a potent anchovy dip served with raw vegetables.

Brandade – salt cod mashed with potatoes, olive oil and cream, then baked until the surface is crusty.

Daube – the Provençal version of beef bourguignon, scented with mountain herbs and a strip of orange zest.

Fleurs de courgettes – courgette blossoms, which may be served *en beignet* (dipped in batter and fried) or *farcies* (stuffed with ricotta or vegetables and baked).

Lentilles-saucisses – sausages (often flavoured with garlic, pepper and/or fennel) stewed with brown lentils.

Panisses – Chickpea polenta, cut into strips and fried like chips. Often served next to *daube*.

Petits farcis – small stuffed vegetables, usually filled with meat (most likely pork, veal or beef, or a mixture of all three) and chopped vegetables.

Pissaladière – caramelised onions spread over a slightly sweet bread dough, topped with anchovies and baked.

Pistou – a pesto-like sauce made with basil, garlic, oil and Parmesan and/or Emmental but no pine nuts.

Porchetta – a whole pig, deboned and stuffed with its meat, tripe, liver and herbs, and served cold.

Salade niçoise – a salad of raw seasonal vegetables (no potatoes or green beans!), tuna (usually tinned), anchovies, hard-boiled egg and olives.

Sardines farcies – deboned sardines topped with a mixture of chard, breadcrumbs, and Parmesan and baked.

Socca – a pancake made of chickpea flour, water, olive oil and salt, eaten as a snack at any time of day.

Soupe au pistou – vegetable minestrone served with *pistou* sauce (see above).

Soupe de poissons – a puréed soup made with small rock fish, tomatoes, onions, saffron and chilli pepper, and served with *rouille*, mayonnaise spiked with garlic, chilli pepper and saffron.

Stockfish – salted fish and its tripe stewed with tomato and pepper.

Tête de veau – jellied meat from the calf's head, usually served with *sauce gribiche* containing mustard and pickles.



Tripes à la niçoise – tripe cooked very slowly with tomatoes and bell peppers.

Tourte de blettes salée – a double-cruste pie filled with Swiss chard, rice and bacon.

Tourte de blettes sucrée – a sweet double-cruste pie filled with Swiss chard, raisins, pine nuts and rum. Recognisable by its coating of icing sugar.

Trulle – the Niçois take on black pudding, made with chard, rice and pig's blood.



Once you have mastered the vocabulary, the challenge is finding restaurants that make these time-consuming dishes with real care. The best Niçois chefs often buy directly from the small farmers at the market to ensure freshness and seasonality. Here are a few of my favourites:

Acchiardo – Unpretentious and friendly, serves home-style Niçois dishes. 38 rue Droite, 04.93.85.51.16.

Le Bistrot d'Antoine – For lentilles-saucisses and the best salade niçoise in Nice. 27 rue de la Préfecture, 04.93.85.29.57.

Chez Pipo – Since 1923, the best socca in town. 13 Rue Bavastru, 04.93.55.88.82.

Lu Fran Calin – Reliably good despite the touristy location. The pasta dishes are particularly hearty and delicious. 5 rue Francis Gallo, 04.93.80.81.81.

La Merenda – The place to go for some of the more robust Niçois classics, including trulle, stockfish and tête de veau. The pâtes au pistou are extraordinary. 4 rue Raoul Bosio (no phone; reserve in person).

Au Rendez-Vous des Amis – If you have a car, make your way up to the hills of Nice for a great-value Niçois meal under the linden trees. 176 avenue de Rimiez, 04.93.84.49.66.

Food writer Rosa Jackson leads market tours and teaches a hands-on cooking class in her Old Town apartment.
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