

LES LABORATOIRES DU DR ZIZINE from Richard Law

Admirers of Edouard de Pomiane will know a booklet of recipes called *Le Carnet d'Anna* subsidised by Les Laboratoires Zizine, a pharmaceutical company which in the 1920s had an address at 24 rue de Fécamp, Paris, not far from the old Entrepôts Bercy. Another, bulkier publication was *Le Trésor de la Cuisine du Bassin Méditerranéen*, a delicious book of recipes contributed by 70 doctors and edited by Prosper Montagné. Both books were produced for free ('offert') distribution to the medical profession, but neither carries a publication date.

Le Trésor contains between pp 16 and 17 an insert with on one side a letter to the recipients signed 'Dr. P. Zizine', and on the other side a list of the 'Préparations digestives du Dr. Zizine', some of them so bizarrely named ('Entéropanement', 'Gastropanement', etc) that my wife at first thought the firm and its products must be a fiction devised by Messrs de Pomiane and Montagné to amuse their readers.

However, this is clearly not so, and I should be grateful both for evidence of the publication dates of the two books referred to, and also information about Dr Zizine and his firm, its history, fate and products. One must regret that today's manufacturers of aids to digestion do not follow Dr Zizine's enlightened lead. Perhaps, alas, they feel that dyspepsia rather than contentment is in general more to their advantage.

My address is: 53 Gloucester Crescent, London NW1 7EG.

TWO QUERIES: (1) ON MORTARS and (2) ON TROPICAL FRESHWATER FISH AS FOOD from Ove Fosså

In many modern kitchens, mortars and pestles are degraded to ornaments. After making a provençal aioli for the first time, my interest in the history and use of mortars has grown. I have started to collect not only the mortars themselves, but any information about them, including recipes. I would be grateful for any help.

There seems to be very little written about the use of tropical freshwater fishes as food. Several species are known to be used, including *Tilapia*, *Haplochromis* and *Lates* spp in Africa, *Arapaima gigas* and *Cichlasoma* spp in South America, and *Pangasianodon* and *Osphronemus* spp in Asia. Recipes and other information regarding these and other species will be appreciated.

My address is: Parkveien 11, N-4300 Sandnes, Norway.

PISH PASH from Jenny Macarthur

Do any readers know the true origin and/or etymology of the dish called pish-pash? I have three recipes under this name. Two credit the dish to India

(Anglo-India?). Harvey, Day (*The Complete Book of Curries*, Kaye and Ward, various editions 1966 to 1978), fries onions and then adds chicken, rice, ginger and bay leaves and simmers all to a soupy porridge. Robin Howe, (*Rice Cooking*, André Deutsch, 1959), omits the frying and simply simmers chicken, rice, onion etc., into a porridge and adds butter at the end. Both these are described as food for sick people. Fair enough, but I can find no recipe under this name in any Indian cookery book. Further I have a recipe for pish pash, described as a dish for the not-so-passionate-cook and also as nursery fare (with the bones removed) in *The Daily Telegraph's Cook's Book* (Bon Viveur, Johnnie and Fanny Craddock, 1954). This cooks the chicken and rice in milk.

I might have let the matter rest there but then I came across a recipe for Piche-pache in Theodora Fitzgibbon's *Food of the Western World* (Hutchinson, 1976), which is a Spanish dish of stewed turkey giblets, without rice, served with tomato sauce. I do not think there is any link with pish pash but there may be a connection here with the Italian Picchipacchio, a tomato sauce without any particular association with poultry as far as I know. (Claudia Roden gives a dish of pasta with picchi-pacchi in her *Food of Italy*, Chatto and Windus, 1989). Finally I have discovered a Norwegian dish called Puss-pass in *Norway's Delights* (Elise Sverdrup, Johan Grundt Tanum, Oslo, 1957) which is a braised stew of mutton with carrots and cabbage.

It seems highly unlikely that pish-pash is related to piche-pache or puss-pass but until I can discover the etymology of the original names the mystery continues. Can anyone help?

My address is: 13 Wavell Road, Maidenhead, Berks SL6 5AB.