

Recipe #1

A recipe for cooking small and very delicious dragons*.

These are a most delicate food. Nobody at first ventured to eat any because of their odour, until <redacted **> was persuaded by a lady named <redacted>, who favoured him, to taste a small morsel of the dragon flesh. Hardly had his palate savoured this succulent flesh than he began to eat it by the mouthful. Those of the crew who then joined him at the feast talked of nothing else than the exquisite flavour of these serpents, which they found to be superior to that of peacocks, pheasants, or partridges. If roasted as we do peacocks and pheasants, which are first larded and then roasted, the serpent's flesh loses its good flavour. Instead, as I can attest, first the young serpents shall be gutted, then washed and cleaned with care. Roll them into a circle, so that they look like the coils of a sleeping snake. Put them in a pot just large enough to hold them, and pour over them a little water flavoured with spices -- this cook's choice being generous amounts of ginger, long pepper, and crushed nutmeg imported from the distant east via Kyiv and the Baltic Sea. The pot is covered and then suspended over a reliable flow of lava so that it boils for several hours, and the meat gains a wonderful clean hot stone smell from that very same lava. Make sure that the lava does not have a sulphurous stench. When served, a juice as delicious as nectar runs drop by drop from the insides of these dragons. Slices of preserved angelica make an excellent accompaniment to this dish. It is reported that there are few dishes more appetizing than dragon eggs cooked over a slow fire, although this cook has not had an opportunity to try them. When they are fresh and served hot they are delicious, and it is said that if they are preserved for a few days they improve still further.

* Inspired by a passage in "De Orbe Novo" by Pietro Martire D'Anghiera, 1504, English translation by Francis Augustus MacNutt. Portions of the recipe above are borrowed, with appropriate modifications. Yes, the word 'serpent' appears directly in the translation. ** Names have been redacted to preserve anonymity for purposes of judging, though it may be said that the first name is that of the cook, the writer of these words.

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