

Out-of-this-world cuisine

December 1 2006



Volaille épicée, sauté de légumes à la Thaï. Credits: ADF - Pierre Desgrieux

A French master chef has taken his meals to a new location this week. London? Tokyo? New York? Not far enough for Alain Ducasse. Last Sunday his meals were served to the astronauts living on board the International Space Station.

Alain Ducasse teamed up with ESA and the French National Centre for Space Studies, CNES, to create special gourmet food that could be used for celebratory meals in space, such as New Year, birthdays and the arrival of a new crew.

Many different recipes were available to the resident Expedition 14 crew, with dishes including typical Mediterranean ingredients such as olives, tomatoes, aubergine, quails and swordfish.

Packaged in tins, each dish was prepared according to the same stringent hygiene requirements applied to space food provided by the Americans and Russians. All that was required of the crew was to heat the tins in the Station's oven.

Speaking from on board the International Space Station, ESA astronaut Thomas Reiter, who arrived at the Station nearly five months ago, was delighted with the meal. "It was absolutely delicious," said Reiter. "It was a really nice treat for a Sunday evening."

Life on the Space Station is not always easy and something like food can provide the astronauts with a real morale boost. "Food is really something which gives us a break", explained Reiter. "It is something where we find some joy and we are really trying to take some time for our meals."

There was just one thing missing to complete a perfect meal. "We all agreed that we are enjoying this food," Reiter clarified. "But we have no doubt that it would taste much better if we had some wine with it as well!"

Alain Ducasse's space menu

Main dishes:

Effiloché de volaille en Parmentier
Shredded chicken Parmentier

Dos d'espadon façon Riviera

Riviera style swordfish

Volaille épicée, sauté de légumes à la Thaï
Spicy chicken with stir-fried Thai vegetables

Cailles rôties au Madiran
Quails roasted in Madrian wine

Magret de canard confit, condiment aux câpres
Duck breast 'confit', with capers

Side dishes:

Carottes de sable au goût d'orange et coriandre
Sand carrots with a hint of orange and coriander

Céleri rave en délicate purée à la noix de muscade
A light puree of celery with a hint of nutmeg

Caponata
Tomato, aubergine and olive dip

Desserts:

Gâteau de semoule de blé fine aux abricots secs
Semolina cake with dried apricots

Morceaux de pommes fondantes
Apple fondant pieces

Far de l'espace
Space 'far' (a Brittany tart)

Rice pudding aux fruits confits
Rice pudding with candied fruit

Source: ESA

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