

Le Refuge

This tucked-away restaurant is a real find! It's a popular *gîte d'étape* for walkers on the Mare a Mare Sud; otherwise it's likely that only



Le Refuge

locals and French tourists make their way here (it's mentioned in the Routard and Michelin Guide Verte). The ambiance is very casual and rustic, but the food is brilliant — really high-class cooking of Corsican specialities, all supervised by Marie, who founded the restaurant some 15 years ago.

LE REFUGE

Forêt de l'Ospédale, Cartalavonu
(04 95 70 00 39

closed 6/11-15/3 and Sun in winter,
otherwise non-stop service from
noon; no credit cards €€

entrées include the delicious *salade refuge* (Corsican charcuterie and sheeps' cheeses, pine nuts and pickles — often called *salade bergère*; see page 103), *salade de croustillant* (grilled goats' cheese), marinated leeks, terrine of wild boar with onion chutney

traditional main courses feature cannelloni with *brocciu* cheese, aubergines stuffed with *brocciu* and basil, veal or wild boar sautéed in a sauce of Corsican wine and tomato, Corsican-style tripe (in a tomato/wine sauce with herbs), pasta with Corsican veal, grilled steaks or pork

sweets like chestnut cake (not wheat-free, alas), *fiadone* (see page 123), nougat glacé with raspberry sauce, crème brûlée with a chestnut sauce — and of course a selection of Corsican cheeses

good **wine list** — try the Costa Rossa Figari red

The dishes are all à la carte. We've shown some offerings from the *winter* menu — the summer list is double this size and also offers a special 'menu' at 45 € per person. While this is quite pricey, it is rather special. It is only available by reservation, for a minimum of four people, and is centred around *porcelet* (suckling pig) or *agneau de lait* (baby milk-fed lamb), which is flamed at the table, then removed to the kitchen and carved. The price also includes a sweet or cheese course and a bottle of wine.

Served with the cheese is the very typical Corsican fig chutney — very easy to make at home. Walnuts are a nice touch too.

Corsican fig chutney (*confiture de figues*)

Wash the figs in cold water, drain and dry. Pierce them liberally with a small skewer. Place in a heavy-bottomed casserole and add the sugar, being sure to cover all the fruit.

Split the vanilla pod in two and cut into pieces. Sprinkle over the fruit, then add about two glasses of water. Bring just to the boil, then take off the scum. Cook over a very low heat for about 3 hours, removing the scum from time to time.

Drain the figs and ladle them into sterilised jam jars, pour the syrup on top and let them cool.

Ingredients (for about 4 jars)

- 1.5 kg green figs
- 600 g caster sugar
- 1 vanilla pod



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