

Lobster in Champagne Sauce with Green Grapes

For the Poaching

2 live 2-pound lobsters	6 parsley sprigs
1 bottle Champagne or Prosecco	1 bay leaf
1 large onion	6 sprigs tarragon
1 carrot	6 sprigs of thyme
1 celery stalk	8 peppercorns

Simmer the Champagne, vegetables, herbs, and peppercorns in a large kettle with a tight-fitting lid for 15 minutes. Bring to a boil and add the lobsters. Cover and boil for about 20 minutes. Remove the lobsters.

Boil down the liquid until it has reduced to about 1½ cups. Strain, pressing down on the vegetables to extract as much liquid as possible. Set the liquid aside.

Sautéing Lobster Meat

3 tablespoons butter
¼ cup cognac or brandy

Remove lobster meat from the shells and cut into 1-inch pieces. Sauté in butter over moderate heat for about 5 minutes until the meat turns a rosy color. Add the cognac and boil until the liquid is nearly evaporated. Set aside.

For the Sauce

5 tablespoons butter	1 cup heavy cream
5 tablespoons flour	Drops of lemon juice
1½ cups milk	Salt and white pepper
1½ cups lobster-poaching liquid	2 beaten egg yolks

Combine the milk and the lobster-poaching liquid in a saucepan and bring to a boil. In a separate saucepan, melt the butter and stir in the flour, whisking for several minutes, without allowing it to color. Whisk in the boiling liquid, then simmer for several minutes. Beat the egg yolks with the heavy cream, then gradually add it to the sauce, being careful not to let it boil. Add drops of lemon juice, salt and white pepper to taste.

Assembling and Gratinéing

½ cup grated Swiss cheese	1 cup sliced green grapes
2 tablespoons butter, cut in bits	

Bring the sauce to the simmer. Spread a layer of the sauce in a baking dish. Add the lobster meat and the sliced grapes to the remaining sauce, and spoon into the baking dish. Sprinkle with cheese and dot with butter. Put in the upper third of a 400° oven until it begins to bubble. Run under a moderate broiler just until the top is nicely browned. Serve immediately.