

## Finnan Haddie

1½ pounds boneless finnan haddie  
2 cups milk  
4 sprigs fresh thyme  
1 bay leaf  
1 small onion, sliced thinly  
5 tablespoons butter  
¼ cup flour

¼-½ cup heavy cream  
Freshly grated nutmeg  
Drops of Tabasco sauce  
1 large red pepper  
2 hard-boiled eggs  
Fresh toast  
Salt and pepper to taste

Place the fish in a large Dutch oven. Add the milk, thyme, bay leaf, and sliced onion. Let it stand for an hour or more. Simmer over low heat until the fish begins to flake, about 10 minutes or more.

Remove the fish, and allow it to cool. Reserve the poaching liquid. If the fish has skin, carefully remove it. Flake the fish and set aside.

In another heavy pot, heat 3 tablespoons of the butter until foaming. Add the flour and whisk for a few minutes, not allowing the mixture to brown. Strain the reserved poaching liquid into the roux, and continue to whisk until the mixture has thickened. Whisk in the cream. The larger amount gives a richer sauce. Grate in the nutmeg and add drops of the optional Tabasco sauce to taste. Taste to see whether the sauce requires salt. Grind some fresh pepper into the sauce.

Cut the red pepper into thin slivers. In a skillet, melt the remaining 2 tablespoons of butter and gently sauté the red pepper just until tender. Do not brown.

Stir the flaked fish into the sauce, then gently stir in the red pepper, heating over a low flame until hot.

Cut the hard-boiled eggs into quarters.

Place slices of toast on a plate, and top each slice with two quarters of the hard-boiled egg. Spoon a generous portion of the finnan haddie over the toast and egg. Decorate with minced parsley.

Serves 4