

## Essence of St Kilda

### A recipe

The manner of producing this essence was for many years kept a profound secret. Now however, although time consuming, this unique preparation can be made at home.

First take a curve of good sea country. Add Kulin people and let ingredients settle undisturbed for over 30,000 years. Add a fleet of foreign settlers (commonly British, often wealthy, definitely racist), and rub into original contents. Sift mixture, separating ingredients until desired colour is obtained. Set Kulin aside while stirring in imported head of cattle. Re-name this land, St Kilda. Pasteurize.

Prepare a chiffonnade of railway lines and lay tracks toward Melbourne Town while making sure to garnish St Kilda generously with lavish mansions and hotels. Fold in a score of churches being careful to include most denominations, adding a pinch of racetrack (behind the Village Belle) for recreational purposes. Pour mixture into a well-greased casserole and place in a moderate oven. Allow city visitors to flock by horse-drawn omnibus to enjoy this most fashionable and opulent seaside resort. Continue cooking to a well-heeled consistency for a sumptuous few years.

Extend mixture by seasoning with a handful of synagogues and a sprinkling of schools. Taste. Stir in a land boom with plentiful flocks of social elite, making sure your equipment can accommodate an abundant hoard of even more extravagant homes and hotels of grandeur. Reclaim wetlands if necessary, making sure to move any remaining indigenous

people away from the preparation area entirely. When land boom has risen to form stiff peaks, construct a palatial town hall. Add enough gaiety and halcyon days for mixture to double in size.

Careful handling is now required as too much expansion could cause a financial crash, resulting in your budding St Kilda plummeting rapidly to its economic demise. If your recipe appears to be sinking, work swiftly to pick off all burnt upper crust, promptly selling off their mansions. These can be salvaged later as boarding houses and diced into flats. There is also a great risk of being left with a hodge-podge of substandard quality. To prevent this, graciously extract all surviving rich folk and move them on to Brighton. Sell off their gardens immediately. But fear not, the situation is far from gloomy as your now slightly unsavory and declining St Kilda can be effectively dished up as a seaside playground for an equally unsavory and declining working class.

Remove from oven and to cool to room temp, skimming any fat from the surface.

Deglaze cooking pan on stovetop being sure to include a royal visit. Create a football team. Use generously to raise spirits.

Now - Only a master chef of highest esteem would possess the genius for the next vital stage in perfecting the essence of St Kilda - Appoint an Italian. Spread Carlo Catani liberally to tastefully flavour the foreshore into a carnival resort catering for the amusement and pleasure of the masses. Place in a large copper based saucepan.

Make a *Bouquet Garni* by bundling together the *Bioscope Theatre*, *Luna Park* and the *Palais de Dance* with a large bay leaf, parsley stems and

dried thyme. Tie ingredients together and leave to float freely in broth, being careful not to cause fire. Cook foreshore to a perfect al dente. Meanwhile, slice and dice residential areas into a profusion of flats and boarding houses. Continue subdividing with reckless abandon for at least another ten years.

Make sure your broth is at a gentle simmer before adding a depression. Lower heat, watching hard times float to the surface along with sly grog trading, cocaine smuggling and organized crime. Taste. If more spice is required add mock Moorish sea baths, Spanish mission flats and a picture theatre. Set aside. Allow to cool, skimming off scum that might later sour your stock.

Now briskly whisk through a second world war, being careful not to let half the male population split. If separation does occur, season liberally with extra drugs and crime along with a generous measure of prostitution. If this fails, build an ice-skating rink.

If your brew has become somewhat unpalatable, it can be thankfully restored with a healthy amount of post-war optimism. New ingredients are definitely required. Try Bodgies if they're available, and local Widgies. Imported ingredients are also a must. Add lashings of European migrants and allow a portion of your creation to become a thriving Jewish community. Add a blamange of cafes and cake shops down Acland Street and continue to sweeten until whole mix tastes undeniably, *cosmopolitan*.

Add an extra handful each of synagogues, artists and musicians.

Place broth back on flame and open Melbourne's first Italian restaurant down Fitzroy Street. Strict RED lighting is required to complement the

emerging flavours of many seedy entertainment venues – Add a dash of *Whisky A Go Go*, an ounce of *Les Girls* and a pinch of *Vanessa the Undresser*. Intensify artistic flavours with a giant slug of Mirka and Georges Mora in a vibrant Tolarno's stock cube. Bring to a fervent boil, being sure to challenge social ideals of morality as much as possible.

Meanwhile, use your earlier slice and dice to provide cheap housing to the clustering assortment of artists, prostitutes, musicians, crims and pimps. Don't forget the lost, the romantic, the addicted, the misfits, the hopefuls, the holy, the degenerates, the lonely, the intellectuals, the runaways, the philosophical, the helpless and the poor. Allow ingredients to ferment until ensuing culture can only be described as *Bohemian*. Turn up the music. Gradually strain off jazz, add Rock 'n' Roll, and later - Punk.

Spoon in festivals for every occasion and persuasion, and toss through a Sunday market. Taste. Add rollerblades and Techno music until the sea breeze carries aromas appealing enough to reach the noses of aspiring young professionals keen on inner city living. Start calling flats, *apartments*. Renovate furiously, sloshing generously with waves of tourists as you go. Strain. Soak saucepan to remove unsightly rooming houses along with the majority of poor, disadvantaged or homeless that may have clung to the bottom. Put strained stock into a clean saucepan, season well with chic and increase the cost of accommodation until artists and musicians quietly evaporate off. Continue adding fresh ingredients (girls groomed like newsreaders, boys resembling footballers), until another property boom coats the back of a silver spoon. Flame with festivals, alcohol, more visitors and a plethora of good times. Add Becton, continue developing to create a rich, even stock, replacing pawnshops, cake shops and delis with fashion chains, and pet accessories. Gentrify on

high until nearly fully gentrified, while ensuring your beloved St Kilda remains fully VIBED. Remove from heat. Set Aside.

Finally, locate a tract of land in the shape of a triangle. Keeping away from arguments, scour the area for a large pothole into which you will pour your reduction, allowing it to merge deeply with the spirit of the earth. Now sit in quiet contemplation, closing your eyes and infusing the near complete recipe with your own St Kilda experiences and memories.

The enduring refuge of a thousand perfect spanakopitas, sticky nights on rooftops, in bars and hippy share-house back yards. Finding love. Swollen-footed heat waves. Petrol heads down Marine Parade. Bony winter trees. Grey seas. Losing love. Poetry nights. Philosophy nights. Sepia citrus twilights, yoga, art, EXCESS, the singing mooch who calls me *Princess*. Failing French. Afternoon Galleon discussions melting to summer night-market percussions. Community. Baker D, the Espy, trams dressed up like bumble bees, drumming in the park, walking home drunk at dark by the lap, lap, lap of a whispering sea. St Kilda. Here I anchored me a nest and waited while my soul dog-paddled home at last, to rest. When I think of my only life, most lived in St Kilda – I think *blessed*.

The Essence of St Kilda is now ready for bottling and storage. Simply decant into amber glass vials and keep away from direct heat and sunlight.

Four drops of Essence of St Kilda should be taken daily as a tonic for vim, vigor, fortitude, and the ability to endure great change. Or, if traveling, dissolve up to 10 drops of the Essence of St Kilda under the tongue to promote party vibes and relieve homesickness.

1350 words

**5 pages in total**