

Ciuppin (fish stew)

Ciuppin fish stew (a.k.a. Zuppa di pesce - Ciuppin)

Preparation: 20 minutes

Cooking: 50 minutes

Difficulty: Easy

This recipe is similar to the "ciuppin", the fish stew from the Liguria region of Italy. I have made it using only one type of fish, to make it simple. The ciuppin has to be brothy and the suggestion is to eat it with some slices of toasted country bread. The original ciuppin recipe differs from this one only in the fact that different type of fish are used together, so feel free to add whatever you like if you want this fish stew more consistent.

SERVES 4 PEOPLE

Ingredients:

- 4 Red Gurnard, weighting about 200 g (7 oz) each
- 60 ml (2 oz) Extra virgin olive oil
- 1 Onion (finely chopped)
- 1 Carrot (finely Chopped)
- 1 Clove of garlic (finely chopped)
- 150 ml (¼ pint) White wine (about a glass)
- 450 g (1 lb) Chopped tomatoes (usually 1 can)
- 1.5 Litres (2 ½ pints) Very light fish stock (dissolve 1 stock cube in 1.5 litres of hot water)*
- A Hanful of flat leaf parsley (roughly chopped)
- Salt and ground black pepper for seasoning
- Slices of Italian country bread , grilled and brushed with garlic

*First and foremost, before you start cooking, be sure that the first thing you do is prepare the stock so that is readily available when required.

Note: Red gurnard do not have scales so there is no need of scraping their body with a knife. Just gut the fish and rinse thoroughly under fresh water. Cut off and discard all the fins.

Directions:

Put the olive oil into a large sauté pan casserole and heat the oil over medium heat.

Add the chopped vegetables (onion, carrot, celery and garlic) into the casserole.

Stir and sweat them off until the onion become golden in colour.

Then, add the white wine, stir and let it evaporate (it probably takes a couple of minutes).

Next, add the chopped tomatoes.

Stir and cook for 5 minutes.

Then, add 1.5 litres of light stock and continue cooking for 15 minutes over low/medium heat.

Next, season with salt and black pepper and...

...add the fish into the casserole.

Continue cooking for about 15 minutes and avoid stirring because this may break the fish up.

After 15 minutes, gently remove the fish from the pan using a slotted spoon. Meanwhile keep cooking the rest of the contents in the casserole.

A bit of surgery here! Remove the main chunks from the fish, put them into a small bowl and set aside.

All the fish bone and fins go back into the casserole. Continue cooking for a couple of minutes, then...

...pass all the casserole contents into the food mill (a.k.a. Mouli).

The food mill should be positioned over a second pan, usually a saucepan, which will collect all the liquid (soup). All the bones and hard bits remaining into the mill have to be discarded.

Here, we should have a lovely boneless fish soup. Meanwhile you have put the saucepan over a low heat. Check the seasoning and add salt and black pepper according to your taste.

Add the fish chunks you previously set aside. At this stage, if you want more fish, you can add some prawns or scallops.

Simmer for 5 minutes.

Add the parsley (roughly chopped flat leaf parsley).

Serve it accompanied with slices of grilled country bread.

Buon appetito!