

BIGOLI ALLA PESCATORA

Fisherman Style Bigoli Pasta

Ingredients:

2 hakes, about 1 pound each, or substitute cod
2 potatoes, boiled and mashed
3 sprigs marjoram, chopped, divided
2 sprigs thyme, chopped, divided
salt and freshly ground white pepper
breadcrumbs for dredging
3 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil, divided
2 pounds clams, soaked and rinsed, water reserved
2 cloves garlic, minced, divided
1 hot red pepper
10 basil leaves, chopped, plus extra for garnish
½ cup dry white wine
1 shallot, chopped
6 tomatoes, peeled and seeded
peel of 1 lemon
1 pound fresh spaghetti alla chitarra

Preparation time: 1 hour

Fillet both hakes. Remove the skin, debone each fillet and roughly chop into 1-inch pieces. In a blender, combine the fish with the mashed potatoes, 1 sprig of chopped marjoram and 1 sprig of chopped thyme. Season with salt and freshly ground pepper and blend until well-combined.

With clean hands, shape the mixture into balls. Dredge the fish balls lightly in the breadcrumbs, shake off any excess and set aside.

In a skillet over medium-high heat, warm 1 tablespoon of olive oil. Add the clams along with their strained soaking water, the garlic, hot pepper, and half of the basil. Bring to a simmer and deglaze with the wine. Strain the cooking juices and set aside. Shell half of the clams, keep them warm and set them aside.

In a wide skillet, warm 2 tablespoons of olive oil. Add the remaining garlic, shallot and thyme, and sauté until the shallot is translucent and the garlic is golden. Add the tomatoes and cook until the sauce starts to thicken slightly. Stir in the clam cooking juices and bring to a boil. Add the hake balls and boil until cooked through, about 3 to 4 minutes. Add the shelled clams and stir well.

Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add salt and the lemon peel and the spaghetti and cook until al dente. Drain the pasta, remove and discard the lemon peel, and pour the pasta into the skillet. Toss the spaghetti with the sauce to coat evenly. Season with salt and freshly ground white pepper. Sprinkle with the remaining marjoram and basil. Transfer to a large serving platter, garnish with the half-shelled clams and chopped basil leaves and serve immediately.

Serves 6.