

Besotted Gourmet



Moules Marinere with Crusty Bread, Serves 2 as a Main Dish, 4-6 as an Appetizer

Ingredients:

2 lbs. Mussels
2 Tbls. Olive Oil
3 Tbls. Butter
1 Large Red Onion
4 Cloves Garlic, Chopped
1 ½ Cup White Wine
2 Sprigs Thyme
1 Bay Leaf
2 Tbls. Parsley, Chopped
1 Loaf Crusty French Bread

Preparation:

Prepare the mussels by washing them under cold water and removing their beards (the stringy bit hanging out of them). Check to make sure that the mussels are all closed; if they are a bit open, tap on the shell; if they start to close, they are good, if they don't move at all, discard them.

Heat the olive oil and 2 tbs. of the butter in a large stock pot on medium heat until the butter has melted. Add the onion and garlic and cook for 8-10 minutes.

[Use this down time to cut the French bread into slices. You can opt to toast them, add a little extra virgin olive oil (the best that you have), or leave them as they are for dipping in the sauce.]

Add the wine, bay leaf, and thyme to the pot, and bring to a boil. Turn the heat down to medium-low, add the mussels, cover the pot, and let them cook for 2-3 minutes. Remove the mussels with tongs and discard any that haven't opened.

Return the pot, with the liquid to the stove and boil over medium-high heat for 2-3 minutes. Remove from the heat and whisk in the remaining 1 Tbls. of butter.

I like to serve these family style – one big pot in the table – with toasted bread for a big group. The disappointment of finding ourselves halfway through our pile of mussels is tempered by the fact that we've uncovered this spectacular sauce for dipping our bread at the bottom of the pot.

For just 1 or 2 of us, I serve a portion to each person in their own bowl, sauce poured over the mussels, bread on the side, and an extra dipping bowl with sauce reserve to share.