

Bouillabaisse

Traditional French Bouillabaisse recipe from Marseille. Rich seafood stew with saffron broth, fresh fish, shellfish, and homemade rouille sauce.

1h

PREP

1h

COOK

2h

TOTAL

6

SERVINGS

Medium

DIFFICULTY

Bouillabaisse

Ingredients

- 1 leek
- 3 bay leaf
- 4 tbsp olive oil
- 2 onion
- 1 fennel
- 4 clove garlic
- 4 tomato
- 1 tsp saffron
- 1 cup potato

Instructions

- 1 Prepare the Base Vegetables**

Heat 4 tablespoons olive oil in a large heavy-bottomed pot or Dutch oven over medium heat (180°C/350°F). Add the diced onions, sliced leeks, and chopped fennel. Cook for 8-10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until vegetables are softened and translucent but not browned.
- 2** Add 4 cloves minced garlic and cook for 1-2 minutes until fragrant. Stir in 1 teaspoon saffron threads and cook for 30 seconds until aromatic.
- 3** Add 1 cup white wine and bring to a boil. Let it bubble vigorously for 2-3 minutes to cook off the alcohol.
- 4 Build the Broth**

Add the canned tomatoes, crushing them by hand as you add them to the pot. Add the bay leaves and thyme sprigs. Pour in enough fish stock or water to cover ingredients by 2 inches (about 6-8 cups). Bring to a boil, then reduce heat to maintain a gentle simmer.
- 5** Simmer the broth uncovered for 20-25 minutes until flavors are well blended and liquid has reduced slightly. Season with salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste.
- 6 Add the Seafood**

Add the firmest fish pieces first and cook for 3-4 minutes. Add the mussels and clams, nestling them into the broth. Cover and cook for 3-4 minutes until shellfish begin to open.
- 7** Add the remaining delicate fish and shrimp to the pot. Cook uncovered for 2-3 minutes until fish is opaque and flakes easily, shrimp are pink and curved, and all shellfish have opened. Discard any shellfish that remain closed.

8 Finish and Serve

Remove bay leaves and thyme sprigs. Taste and adjust seasoning with salt, pepper, and a squeeze of lemon juice if needed. Ladle into warmed bowls, ensuring each portion has a variety of seafood.

Tips

Use the freshest seafood available and buy from a reputable fishmonger. If possible, ask for fish scraps to make your own stock for even deeper flavor.

Don't skip the saffron - it's essential for authentic flavor and color. Buy whole threads rather than powder for the best quality and steep them in a little warm broth before adding to the pot.

Build your flavor base slowly by properly sautéing the vegetables until they're soft and fragrant. This sofrito foundation is crucial for developing the complex taste of the final dish.

Keep different types of seafood separate and add them to the pot according to cooking time. Firm fish like monkfish need longer cooking than delicate fish like sea bass or shellfish.

Make the rouille with a mortar and pestle if possible - the traditional method creates better texture and helps release more flavor from the garlic and spices.

Serve immediately after adding the seafood to prevent overcooking. Have your bowls warmed and accompaniments ready before you begin the final cooking stage.

Taste and adjust seasoning throughout cooking, especially after adding the fish stock. The saltiness can vary significantly depending on your stock preparation.

If your bouillabaisse tastes too fishy, it usually means the seafood wasn't fresh enough. Fresh fish should smell like the ocean, not overwhelmingly fishy.