

Cozze al Vino Bianco

Mussels in White Wine

Mussels (*cozze*) are popular all along the coastal (Adriatic, Ionian) regions of Italy. One of the most common shellfish in the world, they are used widely in the cooking of Italy, especially in the south, but also up north near Venice. In Italy they are sold by the litre. They are commonly cooked (steamed) in some liquid, usually wine with the addition of herbs and spices, sometimes they are stuffed and baked (sprinkled with garlic and breadcrumbs), and may also be added to pasta dishes.

Ingredienti

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2-3 kg fresh mussels
80g butter
extra butter
1 onion, *chopped*
1 garlic clove, *crushed*
3-4 tomatoes, *chopped*
300ml white wine
100ml water
1 tablespoon lemon juice
½ small fresh chilli, *seeded, chopped*
4 tablespoons parsley, *chopped*
salt and freshly ground pepper

Come si Prepara

Method of Preparation

1. **Prepare the mussels:** Scrub mussels with a hard brush. Remove 'beards' (the bits that hang out of the shell) and wash mussels in several changes of cold water. All the mussels must be closed. If they are open give them a sharp tap, if they don't close they must be discarded. It is also important to discard any broken ones as well. Scrubbing the mussels is important to get rid of any sand, mud and barnacles. Use

a sharp small knife to pull away the 'beards'.

2. **Preparing chillies:** When handling fresh chillies, always protect your hands (wear gloves), it is possible they may irritate the skin. Never touch your eyes afterwards. When cutting, halve lengthways and discard the seeds (the seeds are fiery hot). Slice and finely chop accordingly.

3. Melt half the butter in a large saucepan. Add the onions and garlic and sauté, over low heat for 4-5 minutes, stirring occasionally. The garlic must be soft but not coloured.

4. Add cleaned mussels, white wine, water, lemon juice and seasoning to pan. Cook mussels over high heat, covered with a tight fitting lid, for about 5-6 minutes until mussels have opened, shaking the pan from time to time. When ready, discard any mussels that have not opened.

5. Add the chopped tomatoes, mix well.

6. Transfer mussels to a large serving dish and keep warm.

7. Reduce the liquid over medium heat until slightly thickened, over moderate heat, adding extra butter and lemon juice.

8. Pour sauce over mussels.