

Daurade poêlée avec sauce Vierge

1 sea bass or sea bream per person

Fish fumet (stock)

250 g white fish bones, clean any
blood or offal from your fish
½ shallot or onion, 5 cms white of leek,
celery

Note: white vegetables only

Knob of butter

1 bay leaf, few peppercorns, parsley
stalks

75 ml dry white wine

500 ml water

Salt

Sauce Vierge

1 tbs of quality olive oil per person

½ tbs of finely chopped and skinned
fresh tomato per person

½ tsp of capers per person

Salt and pepper to taste

Filling: a handful of finely chopped soft
herbs (parsley, tarragon, basil, mint,
chervil, chives and/or sorrel)

Olive oil and lemon juice to blend

You can use any white fish for this recipe. We use a whole fish like sea bream or sea bass in our class to teach filleting skills. You can use cod, haddock or turbot if you prefer fish steaks



Fish fumet is a simple fish stock which can be made in 20 minutes using the cleaned fish bones from white fish (no heads or offal) and vegetables. It can be frozen and used whenever you want a tasty sauce or as a poaching liquid for fish.

Sauce Vierge is usually made by warming olive oil, lemon juice, chopped tomato and chopped basil or soft herbs such as chervil, chives and parsley. Our recipe makes a smooth blend of herbs to spread over the fish fillets. The sauce is made simply by warming olive oil and adding capers and tomato concassé, thus avoiding too much liquid in the fish.

Method:

Filleting the fish

There are several ways to approach this - tail first or head first... thick slender round fish (mackerel) lend themselves to a tail start with the fish intact! With flatter round fish (Bream, Sea Bass) a head start is better....

Take a whole fish which has been gutted, scaled and rinsed - run the back of a knife over the skin to make sure there are no scales - pat dry with paper towel so it isn't too slippery (or dip your fingers in salt). (If baking whole cut off all the fins and trim the tail with scissors). Remove the head by cutting just behind the gills under the pectoral fin.

With the tail towards you and the dorsal fin on your knife hand side, run the knife down the spine from the head end to the tail in a gentle slicing - not sawing - action - work the blade between the spine and the flesh and 'run' the blade along the bones to minimise wastage. Don't try to go all the way in the first movement as you can adjust your cut if you are not deep enough. When you get to

the rib bones, let the knife follow the shape of the fish and slice over the bones. When you've gone the full length stop and pass the knife through the fish at 90° to the spine (knife away from you) and take the knife all the way along the spine to the tail – this cuts the other side of the fillet. Go back to the 1st cut and continue to work the knife along the other side of the spine and into the stomach cavity until the fillet is removed. Hold the fillet back to see how you are going. Set the fillet aside.

Now flip the fillet so the tail is away from you repeat the same exercise as above by running your knife along the spine bones in single slices until you feel the rib bones. As above insert the knife at 90° to the spine (knife away from you) and take the knife all the way along the spine to the tail. Go back to the main fillet and lifting as you go slice the filet away from the bones and the stomach cavity.

Cut a V slit along the fillet (either side of the bones) from tail to head – be careful not to cut through the skin. Run your fingers along the flesh to remove the bones in the “V”. Identify any other bones and remove them with tweezers. Trim any ragged edges to give the fish a good shape and lay out flesh side down on kitchen paper to dry out.

Optional: Lightly salt the fish with about 1 tsp of salt crystals/flakes per 100g of fish for 5 minutes. A light covering will revive the eating qualities of fish by extracting the water and condensing and concentrating it, while lightly seasoning it.

Sauce Vierge filling

Blend a mixture of any soft herb such as parsley, basil, mint, chervil or chives, with olive oil and lemon juice to taste, until you have a spreadable paste. DO NOT salt if you have already salted the fish.

Fill the “V” trench of one fillet with about a tsp of the mixture and spread lightly over the fillet. Place the together- skin side out - and tie with two or three pieces of kitchen string.

Tomato Concassé

Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Cut an X in the bottom of each tomato with a knife. And place the tomatoes in the pot of boiling water and cook until the skins begin to peel off, 10 to 40 secs. Transfer tomatoes to a bowl of cold water and cool for 2 to 3 mins. When cool enough to handle, peel the skin off each tomato. Cut each tomato in half crosswise and remove and discard the seeds and finely dice the flesh.

Sauce Vierge

We allow 1 tsp of very best quality olive oil per person. Gently warm through with the finely chopped tomato and capers, season but remember that the capers may be quite salty already!

Fish fumet (stock)

Sweat the sliced vegetables in butter without colouring then add the peppercorns and herbs. Add the cleaned fish bones and cook for a few minutes (a pair of scissors works well to cut out the pieces that you don't want!). Add the white wine and reduce until almost dry; add the water, season with salt and bring to a simmer for 20 minutes.

Drain through a sieve - the stock should have a jelly like consistency when chilled in the fridge. It will keep for up to 3 days in the fridge - it can be frozen for up to 3 months.

Pan fry the fish

Rub flavourless oil (sunflower, grape seed or similar – olive oil will not reach a high enough temperature) onto each side of the tied fillets.

Heat a frying pan until very hot (a drop of water should evaporate instantly). Put the fish skin side down in the pan and hold it down with four fingers so that the skin makes contact with the pan rather than curl up.

Cook for about 2-3 minutes and gently turn the filet and cook for a further 2-3 mins.

Add a knob of cold butter to cool the pan and stop the fish overcooking.

Rest the fish for a few moments before serving

Fennel fondant

Trim the fennel of any of the long stalks and cut in half and cut out any of the hard core (usually a little triangle).

Heat equal amounts of butter and white wine (50 g / 50 ml) is usually enough for 2 fennel bulbs. A splash of Pastis is optional but very tasty! Cover with baking paper with a little hole cut in the middle (this is called a cartouche and keeps the steam in so that the fennel cooks evenly). Cook with the lid on until tender and then take off the lid and paper. Remove to a warm serving dish and reduce any remaining cooking liquid to a syrup and pour over the fennel. Serve warm.