

Recipes from our pub kitchen

By Amanda Pritchett

La mouclade – mussels with spices, wine and cream

This recipe comes from the Charentes-maritime region of France, on the coast just north of Bordeaux.

I guess the spices came from the trade in the Port, but I like to imagine that one day, a slightly hungover commis chef, fed up with endlessly cooking mussels in wine and cream, thought to herself - “putain de merde, aujourd’hui je vais mettre du curry dans les moules ”.

However it happened, it’s a great combination, and can brighten the dullest of days.

Pineau de Charentes would be authentic for this, or if not , maybe a Gewurtztraminer or Riesling which would also be lovely to drink alongside.

Ingredients for 2 or 4 as a starter

Sauce

1 large shallot or an onion finely chopped

25g butter

1 tsp flour - 2.5g

100ml pineau de charentes or white wine

100ml fish stock or veg stock

150ml double Cream or crème fraiche

1 tsp curry powder

For the mussels

1kg mussels

125ml white wine

2 bay leaves and a few thyme sprigs

Parsley to serve

Method

Wash the mussels, removing beards and knocking off any barnacles., but don’t leave them sitting in water.

Assemble 2 pans, 1 large one with a lid to cook the mussels, and 1 small one to make the sauce.

Put 125ml wine and the herbs in the large pan.

In the small pan, melt the butter and sweat the shallots, garlic and spices.

Add the flour, stir well for a minute, then add the pineau/wine, stock and cream.

Simmer for 2 minutes then turn off the heat.

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Turn the heat on high under the large pan and when the wine is simmering, pour in the mussels and put the lid on.

Steam the mussels shaking the pan every now and then, you need to build up heat so don't take the lid off until the mussels have opened. Ok you can have a quick peak. This should only take 2 or 3 minutes.

Pour the sauce into the mussel pan, give it another shake, put on the lid and simmer for a minute before spooning the mussels into bowls.

Add the parsley to the sauce and divide it between the bowls of mussels.

Serve with bread.