

# Brodetto- Italian Fish Soup

## Ingredients

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## Instructions

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Fillet the fish, cut the flesh into uniform sized chunks to assure they cook evenly. Set them aside. Remove the gills and any traces of blood from fish heads; thoroughly wash bones, and cut them to fit into a 12-quart stockpot. Place heads and bones in a large bowl, and set aside.

Shrimp would have been too valuable to make it into an authentic brodetto, but if you are using some remove the heads legs and peels, adding them to the bowl with the bones. Set the shrimps themselves aside separate from the fish.

Quarter leek lengthwise; cut into 1/4-inch-thick slices. Transfer to a bowl of cold water; let stand 5 minutes to rid leek of sand. Lift out of water; drain in a colander; set aside.

Make a bouquet garni by placing bay leaves, parsley, thyme, cloves, fennel seeds, and peppercorns in a 12-inch-square piece of cheesecloth. Form a bundle, and tie with kitchen twine; set aside.

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Melt 2 tablespoons butter in a 12-quart stockpot over medium heat; add cut leek, onion, celery, and half of the fennel slivers; cook until vegetables are tender, 8 to 10 minutes. Increase heat to medium high, and add fish heads, bones etc. Cook, stirring often, 5 minutes. Add wine, bouquet garni, and 2 1/2 quarts water, covering the bones. Bring liquid to a boil. Reduce heat to low, and simmer 30 minutes, skimming any scum that rises to the surface. Turn off the heat, and let cool slightly.

Then using an immersion blender puree the mixture until very smooth. Pour the puree through a fine mesh sieve, pressing on the solids to extract as much liquid as possible. Discard solids and add additional water making about 2 quarts. It should be a slightly thickened, brothy consistency.

Melt 1 tablespoon butter in a large saute pan set over medium heat. Add the garlic and shallots, stirring until softened about 3 minutes. Add the clam juice to the pan

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along with the clams. Raise the temperature to medium-high cover the pan with a lid and cook 3 or 4 minutes shaking the pan once or twice during cooking until the clams open. Remove the clams to a plate, discarding any that do not open. Add the mussels to the same pan and its liquid and cover them cooking them as with the clams, about 3 minutes. Mussels typically take less time than clams to cook, so watch them. Set the open mussels aside with the clams. Discarding any unopened ones. If you are using the shrimp lower the heat on the pan to medium-low. Then add the shrimp in one layer poaching them in the broth you cooked the shellfish in. Cook until barely pink and still slightly under cooked. Set them aside with the shellfish. Repeat this process with the calamari, setting them aside when finished as well. Strain the cooking broth into the stockpot with the fish broth taking care to keep any gritty sediment out of the stock pot.

Wipe the saute pan clean and heat the vegetable oil in it over medium-high heat. Add the remaining fennel bulb slivers in as close to a single layer as possible. Cook them, undisturbed until they begin to brown. Then turn them over and cook another two

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minutes. Remove them from the pan and set them aside.

Add the tomato paste to the fish stock and set the stock pot over medium-high heat, once it comes to a simmer and the paste is incorporated, taste for seasoning and adjust with salt and pepper. Bring the seasoned broth to a boil. Then lower the heat to a simmer. Add the tomato dice and the reserved fish (not the shellfish or the shrimp). If you are using multiple kinds of fish start with the meatiest varieties adding the more delicate fish as needed to try and get it all cooked through at the same time.

Once the fish is cooked, turn the heat off and add the reserved shellfish, shrimp (if using), calamari and fennel bulb slivers to the stock pot. Garnish with chopped parsley. Place a slice of rustic bread onto the bottom of each of 6 low sided soup bowls. Ladle the broth and a variety of fish and shellfish on top. Serve warm with a drizzle of very good olive oil.

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