



Jacques's Mediterranean Seafood Stew

Featured on August 17th, 2018 for "Julia Child's Legacy" demo with Chef Lynne Just

This Mediterranean Seafood Stew could also be identified as "bouillabaisse"—a fish soup closely associated with the city of Marseille in Provence, France. Julia Child lived in Marseille and in Provence for many years and tried many versions of the city's iconic dish. What makes a bouillabaisse a bouillabaisse? In Julia's own words, it is the base of the soup and the kind of fish. She notes in her memoir, My Life in France that the soup base of a typical bouillabaisse will contain "garlic, onions, tomatoes, olive oil, fennel, saffron, thyme, bay, and usually a bit of dried orange peel."¹ And the fish will be "lean (non-oily), firm-fleshed, soft-fleshed, gelatinous, and shellfish."² Julia noted, though, that there was much debate in Marseille about what goes into and what does not go into an "authentic" bouillabaisse that there is no singular definition or recipe.

Jacques's Mediterranean Seafood Stew

Original recipe by Julia Child and Jacques Pepin

Ingredients

Soup

- 1 ½ pounds fish fillets, a mixture of 2 or 3 fish, or all one kind (cod, halibut, haddock, hake, monkfish, sea bass, snapper)
- 1 ½ pounds small clams, littlenecks, or cherrystones
- ½ pound scallops
- 3 tablespoons olive oil
- 5 large scallions, white and green parts, thinly slices (about 1 cup)
- 1 tablespoon chopped garlic (2 or 3 cloves)
- 2 cups fresh or canned tomatoes, cored and chopped into ½-inch chunks, with skin, juice, and seeds (about 1 pound of fresh tomatoes)
- 1 cup of white wine, like Chardonnay
- 4 cups of fish stock
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh thyme
- ½ teaspoon of salt, or more if needed
- ½ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
- 1 teaspoon saffron threads, or less if you wish
- 1 ½ tablespoon chopped fresh tarragon leaves

Rouille

- 1 slice firm, home-style white bread
- 6 to 8 large garlic cloves, peeled

¹ Child, *My Life in France*, 174.

² Child, *My Life in France*, 174.

⅓ cup cooked potato (1 small potato)
¼ cup canned pimiento pieces
¼ cup broth from the soup pot
1 egg yolk
½ teaspoon salt, plus more to taste
⅛ teaspoon freshly ground black pepper
⅛ teaspoon cayenne, or to taste
¾ to 1 cup of olive oil

24 slices of baguette, about ¼ inch thick, cut on the diagonal

Directions

Soup

Skin the fillets if you wish, and cut them into even chunks about an inch thick. (If you want the skin on, make sure it has been scaled.) Scrub the clams and rinse, if necessary. Wash the scallops to remove any sand.

Preheat the oven to 400°F and toast the croutons on a baking sheet until they are crisp and starting to color on both sides, about 10 minutes. Set aside until serving.

Heat the oil in the sauce pan and stir in the onions, scallions, and garlic. Cook over medium heat until soft, about 5 minutes.

Add the tomatoes, wine, and fish stock, and then stir in the thyme, salt, and pepper. Bring quickly to a boil; meanwhile, taste and adjust seasonings. Cook at a gentle boil for 10 to 15 minutes, partially covered, while making the *rouille*.

With the soup base at a boil, add all the clams and saffron and cook for about 2 minutes. Add the fish and scallops, return to a gentle boil, and cook for 2 to 3 minutes, just until the fish pieces are cooked through and opaque, and all of the clams have opened (discard any that remain closed after sitting in the hot broth for several minutes). Stir in the chopped tarragon, taste, and adjust the seasonings for a final time.

Spoon some of the *rouille* on half of the croutons (or on 2 or 3 per serving). Ladle portions of the seafood and broth into large soup bowls and place some *rouille*-topped croutons alongside each serving – or set them in the broth, if you like. Serve hot, with extra croutons and *rouille* on the side.

Rouille

Tear the bread slices into pieces and put them in the work bowl of the food processor with the garlic cloves. Process until very finely chopped. Add the cooked potato, the canned pimiento, and ¼ cup of broth from the soup pot, and process until completely smooth. Add the egg yolk, salt, black pepper, and cayenne, and process until smooth. With the machine running, pour in the olive oil in a slow, steady stream - taking 30 seconds or more - as the emulsion is formed and the sauce becomes completely smooth. Taste and adjust seasonings. Scrape the *rouille* into a bowl.

Recipe originally published in *From Julia and Jacques Cooking at Home*, page 378-384. Copyright © 1999 by Julia Child and Jacques Pepin. Published by Alfred A. Knopf, an imprint of Penguin Random House, LLC.



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