

Basque-Style Seafood Stew (Marmitako)

Serves 4-6

Courtesy of L'Academie de Cuisine Chef Brian Patterson, for demo July 8, 2016

1 cup extra virgin olive oil, divided, plus 2 tablespoons
 1 large yellow onion, peeled and sliced into ¼-inch slices
 4 Anaheim peppers, sliced into ¼-inch rings
 1 cup dry white wine (preferably a Spanish white like Albarino or Verdeho)
 8 cloves garlic, sliced
 4 bay leaves
 12 threads saffron
 2 tablespoons *piment d'espelette*
 2 pounds Yukon potatoes, scrubbed and “broken” into ½-inch chunks, and held in a bowl of cold water
 3 cups fish or seafood stock
 2 pounds fresh high-grade tuna, sliced into 2-inch cubes
 1/2 cup finely chopped flat-leaf parsley
 2 fresh plum tomatoes, peeled, seeded, and diced
 2 slices of Pepperidge Farm thin-sliced white bread, diced into ¼-inch cubes
 Coarse sea salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

1. Heat a 2-gallon stew pot, “marmite,” *rondeau* or Dutch oven over medium heat for 1 minute. Add 1/2 cup of the olive oil, and then add the onions and sprinkle with a big pinch of salt. Stir the onions and salt into the olive oil, then cook, stirring frequently, for 5 minutes in order to sweat the onions. (This means to drive off their moisture and make the onions tender without taking color or scorching. Keep a measuring cup full of water on hand in order to prevent any incidental scorching.)
2. Once the onions are starting to become tender and translucent, add the sliced peppers, and cook for another 5 to 10 minutes, so that both the onions and the peppers are very tender.
3. Add the white wine together with the garlic, bay leaves, saffron and *piment d'espelette*. Continue to cook over medium heat until the wine is reduced to 1/4 cup, about 10 minutes.
4. Drain the potatoes of their water, and add the potatoes to the skillet. Add enough fish stock to just barely cover the potatoes, then bring the entire stew up to a simmer. Reduce the temperature just enough to maintain a simmer, then cover the pot loosely with a lid or with a piece of parchment paper cut to fit the inside of the pot. Cook for 15 minutes, until the potatoes are tender.
5. While the stew cooks, make the croutons: heat the remaining 2 tablespoons olive oil in a small skillet over medium heat. Add the cubed bread and season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes, until the croutons are toasted and golden brown on all sides. Remove the croutons to a paper-towel lined plate.

6. Sprinkle the tuna pieces with coarse sea salt. Add the tuna pieces to the potato mixture, cover loosely, and cook for a final 10 minutes, until the tuna is just cooked and there is a trace of pink in the center of each piece.
7. Serve the stew into bowls, and top with finely chopped parsley, diced tomato, croutons, and a drizzle of olive oil.

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