

Red mullet and squid with oven-dried tomatoes, wild fennel and pickled mushrooms

1-2 hours

preparation time

over 2 hours

cooking time

Serves 4

Ingredients

For the tomatoes

- 4 ripe but firm plum tomatoes
- 2 tbsp olive oil
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- ½ tsp caster sugar
- few sprigs fresh thyme
- 1 garlic clove, sliced

For the pickled mushrooms

- 2 tbsp olive oil
- 400g/14oz shimeji mushrooms
- salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 1 shallot, finely chopped
- 1 garlic clove, chopped
- 2 tbsp wild fennel tops, chopped, plus extra to serve
- 1 tbsp red wine vinegar

For the clarified butter

- 250g/9oz unsalted butter
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- handful wild fennel tops, chopped

For the red mullet and squid

- 2 medium whole squid
- 1 tbsp light olive oil
- 2 x 700-800g/1lb 8oz - 12lb 12oz whole red mullet, filleted and pin-boned
- salt and freshly ground black pepper, to taste

For the red wine reduction

- 1 red onion, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, chopped
- 50ml/2fl oz red wine vinegar
- 110ml/4fl oz red wine
- pinch sugar

Preparation method

1. For the tomatoes, preheat the oven to 110C/225F/Gas ¼.

By Nathan Outlaw**From** Saturday Kitchen

With this recipe it's easy to make a restaurant-quality meal at home. The tomatoes and mushrooms can be made in advance.

- 2. Bring a saucepan of water to the boil. Slash a cross at the base of each tomato using a sharp knife. Add the tomatoes to the boiling water and blanch for 10 seconds. Remove the tomatoes with a slotted spoon and refresh in a bowl of ice-cold water.**
3. Once cool, drain the tomatoes and peel off the skins. Cut them into quarters lengthways, then remove and discard the seeds.
4. Line a roasting tray with aluminium foil and rub it with one teaspoon of the olive oil. Season the tray with salt, freshly ground black pepper and sugar, then sprinkle over the thyme and garlic.
5. Place the tomatoes onto the tray and drizzle over the remaining olive oil.
6. Roast the tomatoes for one hour, turning them over halfway through cooking. Remove from the oven and set aside to cool, then remove the tomatoes from the tray. (If you don't wish to use them straightaway, the oven-dried tomatoes can be stored in the fridge covered with oil for 3-4 days.)
7. For the pickled mushrooms, heat a non-reactive frying pan over a medium heat, add the olive oil and, when it's hot, add the mushrooms. Fry the mushrooms for 1-2 minutes, then season, to taste, with salt and freshly ground black pepper.
8. Add the shallot, garlic and wild fennel tops, then deglaze the pan with the red wine vinegar. Transfer to a sealable jar and set aside to cool. (The pickled mushrooms can also be made in advance and stored in the fridge, covered in olive oil, for 3-4 days.)
- 9.
10. For the clarified butter, melt all of the clarified butter ingredients in a saucepan.
11. Once the butter takes on a nut-brown colour, remove it from the heat and set aside to cool for 10 minutes, then strain the mixture (discard the garlic, fennel tops and milk solids).
12. Keep the clarified butter warm or store in the fridge until you are ready to use it - you will not need all of it for this recipe.
13. For the red wine reduction, bring all of the red wine reduction ingredients to the boil in a non-reactive saucepan, then reduce the heat and simmer the mixture until it has thickened to a light syrup, about 5-8 minutes. Strain the mixture into a clean pan (discard the red onion and garlic).
- 14.
15. For the red mullet and squid, first clean and prepare the fresh squid. Pull the tentacles away from the body. Remove the quill from inside the body and discard. Clean the body by running it under a tap or cleaning it in a bowl of water.
16. Remove the 'ears' from either side of the squid body and pull off the purple membrane (or skin) with your fingers.
- 17.

- 18. Cut the tentacles just below the eyes, being careful not to cut into the ink sack. Be sure to remove the plastic-like 'beak' at the base of the tentacles.**
19. Cut the squid body into 0.5cm/¼in rings and cut the tentacles into pieces.
20. Heat a non-stick frying pan over a high heat and add a little of the olive oil.
21. When the oil is smoking, place the fish fillets into the pan, skin-side down, and fry for 1-2 minutes, then season, to taste, with salt.
22. Turn the fillets over and cook for a further minute, then remove the pan from the heat (the fish will cook through on the residual heat from the pan).
23. Heat a separate non-stick pan and add the remaining olive oil. When the oil is hot, add the squid and fry for one minute on each side. Season, to taste, with salt and freshly ground black pepper.
24. To serve, heat one tablespoon of the red wine reduction and five tablespoons of the clarified butter very gently in a saucepan until just warmed through. Add the pickled mushrooms and some chopped of the extra wild fennel tops.
25. Arrange some of the oven-dried tomatoes, squid pieces and pickled mushrooms on each of four serving plates. Place one fish on top of each portion, then spoon over some of the warmed sauce, followed by more oven-dried tomatoes and squid rings.