

Sarde in saor (Venetian-style sardines)

Ingredients

For the Scappi marinade

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 300g/10½oz onions, finely sliced
- 4 tbsp white wine
- 4 tbsp wine vinegar
- 6 tbsp vino cotto (strongly reduced red wine); if unavailable, eliminate the wine, wine vinegar and vino cotto from the ingredients and use 10 tbsp balsamic vinegar instead
- 100g/3½oz sugar
- pinch saffron powder

For the sardines

- 1kg/2lb 3oz very fresh sardines, cleaned, gutted and scaled
- salt, to taste
- plain flour, for dusting
- olive oil, for shallow frying

To serve (optional)

- lemon wedges
- chopped fresh parsley

Preparation method

1. For the marinade, heat the oil in a pan and fry the onions until softened. Transfer the onions to a large bowl and mix with all the remaining marinade ingredients. Set aside.
2. For the sardines, lay the sardines on a board and sprinkle with salt. Dust with flour.
3. Heat a generous amount of oil in a pan and fry the sardines until golden-brown on both sides.
4. Place the sardines into the bowl with the marinade and stir to coat.
5. You can eat the sardines immediately, with lemon juice or finely chopped parsley sprinkled on top. Otherwise, for proper 'sarde in saor', leave the sardines in the marinade for a day to absorb all the flavours. They'll keep in the fridge for a few days.

over 2 hours

preparation time

10 to 30 mins

cooking time

Serves 4

By Antonio Carluccio
From Carluccio and the
Renaissance Cookbook

A Venetian must is 'sarde in saor', still available today in many Venice restaurants, but Scappi's version has some additions. This is one of his more down-to-earth dishes - not only reserved for cardinals, but enjoyed by all Venetians.