RECIPE

Clam and Tomato Fregola

A Sardinian-style dinner of small toasted semolina pasta simmered in tomato and fennel and topped with steamed clams in their shells, about 411 mg sodium a serving.

MAKES

4 servings US Metric

TOTAL

1 h

Ingredients

- [ ] 250 g (about 9 oz) dry fregola
- [ ] 3 lb clams in the shell (littlenecks or Manila), scrubbed
- [ ] 1 can (14.5 oz, 411 g) no-salt-added whole tomatoes with their juice, crushed by hand
- [ ] 2 cups sliced fennel bulb
- [ ] 3 tbsp olive oil, 2 for the pot and 1 to finish
- [ ] 1 tsp garlic powder
- [ ] ½ cup of the strained liquor from steaming the clams, measured
- [ ] 1 ½ cups water for the fregola
- [ ] 2 tbsp lemon juice
- [ ] ¼ cup chopped fresh parsley
- [ ] ¼ tsp black pepper
- [ ] ¼ cup water to steam the clams

Method

1. Scrub the clams under cold running water. Throw out any with a cracked shell or any that stay open when tapped (our kitchen practice; we hold no published source for it yet). Stir the salt into the 4 cups cold water in a large bowl, add the clams, and let them sit 20 minutes so they give up grit. Lift them out with your hands, leaving the grit in the bowl, and pour the water away.

2. Put the ¼ cup water in a wide pot over medium-high heat. Add the clams, cover, and cook until the shells open (the held home rule for clams, HHS/USDA/FDA/CDC). Lift the open ones into a bowl as they open and throw out any that stay shut (our kitchen practice).

- [ ] 1 tbsp salt in 4 cups cold water for soaking the clams, poured away

3. Pour the liquor left in the pot through a fine strainer lined with a clean cloth or paper towel into a measuring cup. Measure out ½ cup and pour the rest away; it is salty. Cover the bowl of clams to keep them warm. Wipe the pot clean.

4. Warm 2 tbsp of the olive oil in the pot over medium heat. Add the fennel and cook, stirring, until soft, about 5 minutes. Stir in the garlic powder and cook 30 seconds, until it smells sweet.

5. Add the tomatoes with their juice, the ½ cup liquor, the 1½ cups water and the pepper. Bring to a boil, stir in the fregola, turn the heat to a steady simmer and set the lid ajar. Stir often so the little pasta balls do not stick. Cook until the fregola is tender with a little bite. Taste one: at 5,430 ft water boils at about 203 °F, so it may need a few minutes more than the package says.

6. Stir in the lemon juice. Set the clams in their shells on top, cover, and heat 1 to 2 minutes, just until they are warm.

7. Take the pot off the heat and stir in the parsley. Ladle into 4 shallow bowls with the clams on top, and drizzle ¼ of the last tbsp of oil over each. Serve right away, with an empty bowl on the table for the shells.