



ALAN HUGHES 24 ABOUT FISH

PARMESAN-CRUSTED SEA BASS WITH WHITE BEAN STEW

Ingredients for 4 servings

4 portions of sea bass 4 ounces each	2 fresh bay leaves
8 tablespoons grated Parmesan	2 sprigs of thyme
1 1/2 cup of great northern white beans	8 tablespoons olive oil
1 small carrot	3 - 4 cups of vegetable stock
1 celery stalk	Opal basil leaves for garnishing
1/2 onion	

Soak the white beans overnight. Chop finely the onion, carrot and celery. Drain the white beans and discard the liquid. In a small pot heat up half of the oil. Add the onion, celery and carrot, thyme and bay leaves and sweat for about 4 minutes stirring with a wooden spoon.

Add the drained white beans, cover with 3 cups of vegetable stock, cover the pot with a lid and bring it to a boil.

Once it is boiling reduce the heat and cook for about 40 minutes or until they become tender. Skim off any impurities rising to the top of the liquid.

If the beans are cooked but there's too much liquid left, take the lid off and cook an additional 5 to 10 minutes or until the liquid has reduced and reached the consistency of a light stew. The beans should be tender to the bite, not hard. Adjust the seasoning.

Season the portions of sea bass with salt and white pepper on all sides. Spread the parmesan on a plate, place each portion of sea bass on the top side against the Parmesan, lightly pressing with your hands until the Parmesan coats one side of the fish uniformly. Repeat with all the fish portions.

Place a large sauté pan with the remaining oil over medium-high heat, place each portion of fish

Parmesan side down first. The Parmesan on the fish will begin melting and sticking to the fish, creating a thin brown crust. Make sure the heat is not too high or it will burn the Parmesan.

Cook for five minutes or until the crust takes a light brown color. With a thin fish spatula carefully dislodge the fish from the pan so you can flip each one. This step is tricky so be patient and careful when doing so.

Flip the fish and cook on the other side for about 5 to 6 minutes or until when touched on the side of each portion it feels cooked through but not overcooked.

It is crucial how to flip the fish since the Parmesan will be hot and pliable. If when the fish is flipped some of its Parmesan crust becomes unstuck or untidy simply fix it with your hand right away while the Parmesan is still warm.

Place a ladle of bean stew in the bottom of the plate, place a portion of sea bass Parmesan side up and serve at once.

NOTE: Making the bean stew the day before will improve greatly the consistency of the stew. You can substitute sea bass with fluke or flounder.



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