

<http://food.winetrail.net/codmussels.html>

## **Sautéed Cod With Potatoes in Chorizo-Mussel Broth**

### *For the Mussels*

- 2 cloves garlic, thinly sliced
- 3 large shallots, thinly sliced
- 1 TB extra virgin olive oil
- 1/2 cup dry white wine (or in a pinch, decent Dry Vermouth)
- 1 1/2 pounds mussels

### *For the Broth*

- Don't forget you'll have reserved cooking liquid from the mussels.
- 2 TB extra virgin olive oil
- 1/4 cup minced shallots
- 3 cloves minced garlic
- 4 oz. Spanish Chorizo, peeled and sliced thin
- 1 cup clam juice
- 1-2 TB Italian parsley, chopped
- 1-2 TB lemon juice (to taste)
- 1 branch each thyme and rosemary

### *For the Potatoes*

- 1 large head of garlic
- 1 tsp or so olive oil for roasting the garlic
- 2 pounds Yukon Gold potatoes, peeled
- 4 TB butter (or less to taste)
- 5 TB extra virgin olive oil (or less to taste)
- 3-4 TB Italian parsley, chopped
- 1 TB lemon juice (or more to taste)
- Salt to taste

### *For the Fish*

- 20 to 24 ounces skinless cod fillet, in 4 portions. Try to get them really thick. (OK, we admit that our portion sizes were more like 8oz each.)
- Olive Oil for frying (we used about 2TB but really depends on size of pan and what you like)
- salt and white pepper (though actually we used black)
- 4 branches each thyme and rosemary as garnish

## Instructions

### *Roasted Garlic*

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Cut off the top of the head of garlic such that all cloves are exposed (we find this makes it easier to extrude the garlic when cooked). Discard the top. Drizzle the olive oil over the exposed cloves. Wrap in foil and bake until soft, about 40 minutes.

Remove the cloves of roasted garlic and squeeze out the garlic. Sometimes you can get most of it just by squeezing the whole head. Set aside. You'll use it in the potatoes.

TIP: Since for us we halved the recipe, we had 1/2 of the garlic left over. We spread it on toast and had it as an appetizer before the fish. We also had some spiced olives and some really good smoked sardines from a jar. We *did say* this was going to be a fancy meal

**At this point you have a decision to make.** If you are making the mussels and broth earlier in the day or even the day before, which we think is a pretty good idea, you don't need the potatoes yet. If you are making it all in 'real time' then you'll want to get started on the potatoes about now. We have those steps below.

### *Mussels and Broth*

Heat 1 tablespoon olive oil in 3-quart saucepan. Add the sliced shallots and sliced garlic (or minced, if you read what we said in the online version) and cook over low heat until soft but not colored, Add the wine, bring to a simmer and add the mussels. Cover and cook until mussels open, about 3 minutes. (Make sure to read about what happens if they don't open in the online version) Shuck mussels and reserve, covered. Drain the cooking liquid through a fine sieve and reserve. Clean the pan, or, of course, use another one!

We are keeping the mussels and the broth separated so that when you reheat the broth you can get it hot *then* add the shucked mussels. This way they'll get reheated without really cooking them any longer.

Place 2 tablespoons of oil in what was the mussel pan (or a new pot/pan if using). Add the minced shallots and minced garlic. Sauté until soft. Add the chorizo slices, and sauté until they start to brown. Add the clam juice and reserved mussel cooking liquid. Bring to a simmer, add 1 branch each thyme and rosemary, remove from heat.

The recipe *says* sauté the chorizo until it starts to turn brown. We found that with the product we were using, by the time it was turning brown it was also burning. Maybe we should have gone more slowly or maybe more oil or maybe...? In any event take care not to burn it. As it turned out it didn't taste burned in the end, but we thought it was going to be a close call. Let's just say fry them ... *some*. (Maybe your chorizo will act differently.)

**TIP:** If you want to do the mussels ahead of time, take the broth and the mussels (covered) and put them in the fridge until you need them. Reheat the broth then add the mussels. This means you can actually cook the mussels earlier in the day (or even the day before) when you bring them home from the store and you don't have to worry about keeping them alive. And you've already done about 85% of the cooking when its time for dinner

### *Potatoes*

*Mr. Ripert's Way:* Place the potatoes in pot of salted water to cover, bring to a boil, and cook over medium heat until very tender, about 30 minutes. Drain the water.

*Our Way:* As we've talked about elsewhere on this site, we love to use our pressure cooker for potatoes. We cut them into pieces about 2 or 3" wide and put them in the steamer tray that came with the pressure cooker. We don't have an instant pot, but we assume it has the same stuff. We put 1 1/2 cups of water into our rather large pressure cooker. Put the steamer tray into the cooker, fasten the lid and let it come to high steam. We cook them 8 minutes then quick release the pressure. Since the whole process only takes about 10 minutes you have a lot of leeway in deciding at what point to cook them. Admittedly the time difference isn't all **that** great, but somehow we feel like we're more in control.

To finish the potatoes, Mr. Ripert has you use the same potato pot. But since we had cooked the potatoes in the pressure cooker, we opted for another, smaller, non-stick pot that meant less muss and fuss on cleanup (and we have a nylon potato masher so as not to harm to pot). So even if you did it Mr. Ripert's way, you might still consider another pot.

Add the oil, butter, parsley, and reserved roasted garlic to the cooked potatoes in the pot. Mash. Add the lemon juice and salt to taste. Stir to incorporate everything. Set aside over very low heat.

From the picture it looks like we added some black pepper, not called for anywhere. Force of habit. Didn't hurt! We'd probably do it again.

**NOTE:** We're not in the habit of using **this** much oil and butter in our mashed potatoes, but this is a special dish and deserves the full treatment. However, you probably could cut down on the fat if you prefer.

## *The Fish*

Pat fish dry, and season with salt and pepper on both sides. It is really important to get the fish as dry as possible as you will get far better browning. Put the oil in a heavy skillet large enough to hold the fish without crowding. Place over high heat. When oil is hot, sauté fish, turning once, until golden brown.

You'll notice that we've got 2 big pieces and some little ones. The cut that we purchased was about 1.1 lbs. It was also tapering a bit at the end, so we trimmed it so that the main pieces would be a bit smaller and would cook at the same rate. And, we ended up with a nice sandwich from the little pieces the next day.

NOTE: A lot of the cod we see around is pretty thin. You want to get nice thick pieces. Too thin and the fish will be overcooked by the time you have gotten it nicely browned. So how long to cook? The original recipe said 4 to 5 minutes a side. On our stove and in our (really nice carbon steel that gets really hot--you could also use cast iron, or of course whatever you've got) pan that was **way too long**. One of the **worst things you can do** in cooking is to overcook fish. We strongly suggest a good instant read thermometer (our favorite being the ThermoPen from Thermoworks. After going through tons of quick read thermometers we've found it to be the fastest and best (and no, we don't get paid for the plug). Look for a temperature of about 125-130 deg. F. for thick cod. Another trick is to get one side (the one you are going to show off) nicely browned then flip over and finish the fish till done and not worry about being totally browned. You'll be showing off the browned side and the other side is going to be sitting in potatoes and broth anyhow. Remember that the fish is going to keep cooking somewhat after you take it out of the pan, especially since you are putting it on top of hot potatoes with a hot broth. We've picked 125-130 as being at the very low end of doneness. You might like yours cooked slightly more (another 5 -10 degrees) but we find that is overcooked to our taste. At 140 deg. while still in the pan you're heading for a bad result as far as we're concerned.

Reheat the chorizo broth. Over low heat immediately add the mussels and lemon juice. Remove thyme and rosemary, and add the parsley. This just before serving.

To serve, place a portion of potatoes in the center of each of four large shallow soup plates. Place a portion of fish on potatoes. Spoon the chorizo-mussel broth around the potatoes. Garnish with thyme and rosemary. Of course the garnish is completely unnecessary, but the odds are you would have bought more than you needed (and yes **you must use fresh**). Ours came from the garden.