

FUMET DE POSSON

(FISH STOCK)

Nothing brings back my culinary wanderings in the South of France like the aroma of a simmering fumet. Often I would set up a small fire along the shore near Marseilles and cook up some fish bones, waiting for Rick to return from town with a couple bottles of decent plonk. Those baguette and broth meals were heavenly -- meager in substance but rich with spirit and promise. Or was that the wine? Or both the meals and the wine? Anyways, use this recipe in chowders, mushroom or seafood risotto, to poach fish, or as a delicious broth on its own - with a baguette.

You will need about 3 lbs of fish spines, fins and heads. Get them at any decent fishmonger. Remove the gills, they will make your stock bitter. Wash the fish well under cold water and set to the side.

Prepare the following:

1/2 of a large parsnip and a large carrot, scrubbed and cut into 1/2 inch rounds
1 leek, washed well and sliced thin
2 celery stalks, sliced thin
fennel bulb greens, or 2 fennel stalks, sliced thin
10 button mushrooms, wiped and sliced thin
a 1 inch piece of ginger, peeled and sliced
a garlic clove, smashed

Heat up a large skillet; then add two good shots of olive oil and reduce heat to medium. Add your fish bones and shake and stir them frequently for 5 minutes. Let the bones get a little happy, a little giddy in that hot oil, but DO NOT BROWN them! Remove and set aside.

In a large stockpot bring a bottle of dry white wine to a rolling boil; reduce it by half. Add the fish from the skillet, turn off the heat and let rest.

Heat the skillet to medium and add your prepped vegetables. Shake and stir frequently, until the leeks become translucent and the roots are tender. Add them to the stockpot, along with 2 bay leaves, a small bunch of parsley and a sprig of thyme.

Bring your stock to a simmer on a medium low heat. Do not boil, as this will cloud your fumet. Fish stocks, it should be noted, have the shortest cooking time of all stocks. Simmer for approximately 40 minutes.

Remove from the heat and let cool. Strain the fumet through a fine sieve lined with cheese cloth. This stock will keep for 3 days in the fridge, or in the freezer for a month.

