

Souper spicy lobster

Looking for something tasty to warm up a cold January day? Then try this recipe for chef and restaurateur Vivek Singh's seafood bisque

(or if you want it the easy way, visit his Cinnamon Kitchen restaurant in Oxford's Westgate centre where guests can have it prepared tableside)



Keralan Lobster bisque flamed with brandy

Serves four

- 1 lobster, cut in half lengthwise and cleaned
- 200g shrimps, peeled and de-veined
- 200g squid, cleaned and cut into rings ½ cm thick
- 1 teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon red chilli powder
- 25g salted butter

For seafood stock

- 1L water
- 300g prawn or lobster shells
- 200g fish bones, cleaned under cold water
- 1 carrot, roughly diced
- 100g button mushroom, roughly cut
- 1 onion, peeled and roughly dices
- 1 teaspoon black peppercorns
- 1 bay leaf
- 100g green coriander root, fennel trimmings or celery trimmings

For the spice mix

- 2 garlic cloves
- 1 tablespoon coriander seeds
- 1 teaspoon cumin seeds
- 1 teaspoon black peppercorns

For the soup

- 3 tablespoons vegetable or corn oil
- 10 fresh curry leaves
- ½ teaspoon red chilli powder
- 3 ripe tomatoes, quartered
- 800 ml seafood stock
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 tablespoon chopped fresh coriander
- 2 tablespoons coconut milk
- 1 tablespoon single cream
- ½ teaspoon sugar
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 2 tablespoons brandy

Cut open the lobster and remove all the meat. Use the shell for making stock and cut the meat into ½ inch cubes. Keep all the trimmings aside for use in the soup.

For the stock, clean the shells and bones, add the vegetables, vegetable trimmings and spices and the water and bring to a simmer. Carefully remove the scum as it rises to the surface, taking care not to let the liquid boil vigorously at any stage. Simmer for 20 minutes, strain and reserve the liquid.

To make the spice mix, pound all the ingredients together using a mortar and pestle to a coarse paste.

Heat half the butter and oil in a sauce pan, add the spice mix and curry leaves and sauté until the garlic turns golden brown. Add the red chilli powder and lobster trimmings and sauté for a minute. Add the tomatoes and salt and stir till they become soft. Now add the stock and bring to a simmer. Lower the heat and simmer the soup for about 30 minutes. Add the coconut milk and mix well. Remove from heat and blend the soup

with a hand blender and pass through a strainer.

Heat the butter in a sauce pan, add the lobster meat, shrimps and squid and sauté for 2 minutes. Add the soup and bring to a simmer. Stir in the cream, sugar, lemon juice and coriander leaves. Remove from fire and keep aside. Take the brandy in a ladle, warm it over low flame until it catches fire. Pour the brandy over the soup and keep covered for two minutes.

Transfer the soup with the seafood into four soup plates and serve hot with naan bread.