

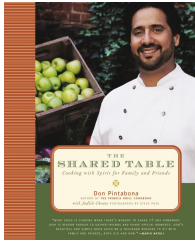


O R I E L

SEA BASS MESSINA
Don Pintabona, 'The Shared Table'

WINE PAIRING: JASPER

SERVES 6



Many of my relatives still reside in and around Messina, an important port on the east side of the island from which you can almost touch the Calabrian coast. This is, therefore, a Pintabona family classic. You can use almost any type of firm fish, either in fillets or steaks, to prepare this dish. We often make it when we expect a crowd, as it is easy to put together and the sauce keeps the fish from drying out if it has to sit out on the dinner table.

PREPARATION

1/2 cup olive oil	1/4 cup salt-packed capers, well rinsed and dried
2 cloves garlic, peeled and minced	1/4 cup raisins
1 large onion, peeled and diced	3 tablespoons pine nuts, toasted
1 rib celery, well washed, trimmed, and diced	Coarse salt and freshly ground pepper
1 cup dry white wine	1 cup all-purpose flour
1 cup canned diced Italian plum tomatoes	Six 6-ounce pieces boneless, skinless sea bass (or other firm white fish)
1 cup clam juice	1/4 cup chopped fresh basil
1/2 cup julienned pitted green olives	

1. Heat 1/4 cup of the oil in a large, shallow, nonstick, ovenproof casserole-type pan over medium heat. Add the garlic, onion, and celery and sauté for about 3 minutes, or just until the vegetables have softened. Raise the heat and add the wine. Bring to a boil, then lower the heat and simmer for about 5 minutes, or until the wine has reduced by half. Add the tomatoes and again bring to a simmer. Simmer, stirring occasionally, for 10 minutes. Add the clam juice, olives, capers, raisins, and pine nuts and again return to a simmer. Season with salt and pepper to taste and cook at a bare simmer for 10 minutes.
2. Preheat the oven to 375° F
3. While the sauce is cooking, prepare the fish. Place the flour with salt and pepper to taste in a shallow bowl. Cut each piece of fish into 3 equal portions. Dip the fish into the seasoned flour, coating both sides evenly. Shake off any excess flour.
4. Heat the remaining 1/4 cup oil in a large saute pan over medium heat. When very hot but not smoking, add the fish and sear for about 3 minutes, or until the bottom is golden brown. Using a slotted spoon, transfer the fish to the sauce, browned side up. Place in the preheated oven and bake for 10 minutes, or until the fish is firm and cooked through. Remove from the oven, sprinkle the top with the basil, and serve hot, directly from the pan.

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