



INGREDIENTS

Serves 2

- 1 kilo (2 lb) of mussels
- 100 ml (4 fl. oz) white wine
- 300 ml (10 fl. oz) of chicken stock
- 1½ shallots, peeled and sliced
- 1 garlic clove, peeled and chopped
- 170 ml (6 fl. oz) double cream
- 1 dsp flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped
- 1 white French breadstick
- salt and pepper

METHOD

- 1 Before starting to cook, remove and throw away any mussels which are open.
- 2 Heat a pan with nothing in it until it's red hot. Now add the shallots, garlic and mussels. Put the lid on the pan and shake vigorously.
- 3 Take the lid off and pour in the wine.
- 4 Let the mussel mixture cook for a minute with the lid on and then again shake vigorously.
- 5 Add the stock and bring the mussel mixture to the boil with the lid on. You'll see the shells opening.
- 6 Meanwhile heat the double cream until just boiling and add it to the mussel mixture. Let the mixture come to a boil.
- 7 The sauce will look lightly creamed and stocky in consistency.
- 8 Pour the mussels and sauce into a bowl and serve immediately, finishing the dish off with finely chopped parsley. (Do not eat any of the mussels that are still closed after cooking. Throw these away).
- 9 Serve with a crusty French breadstick.



ABOUT SEAFOOD



It is best to cook mussels in a broad, shallow pan so that they can cook in a single layer. This avoids toughening the mussels and allows you to remove the ones that open early to avoid them overcooking.

- The word mussel comes from the Indo-European word *mus* which means *mouse* and *muscle*. Their dark oblong shapes must have prompted the comparison.
- *Chitin*, from crustacean shells, is used to make *chitosan* which is used:
 - in moisturiser and hair-care products
 - for wound dressings
 - to deliver medication at a controlled rate
 - to coat wheat seeds to protect them from bacteria and fungi and hence to increase crop yields.
- Scallops are the only bivalve that can swim.
- The scallop shell is the badge of St James, the patron saint of one of the great pilgrimages to Santiago de Compostella in Spain.

If these facts have inspired you to learn more about the animals we eat as seafood, then you might like to take our science short course, *Life in the oceans: exploring our blue planet* (\$180), which is based around videos of the BBC *Blue Planet* TV series.