



## INGREDIENTS

Serves 2

- 12 King prawns
- 400 g (14 oz) conchiglie pasta shells

## Sauce

- 300 ml (10 fl. oz) olive oil
- olive oil for frying
- 1 ripe plum tomato, chopped
- 12 vine cherry tomatoes, halved
- ¼ bulb of fennel, roughly chopped
- 1 tbsp fresh chives, coarsely chopped
- 1 tbsp fresh tarragon, coarsely chopped
- 1 tbsp fresh chervil, coarsely chopped
- 1 red chilli, finely chopped

## METHOD

- 1 Preheat the oven to 140°C/275°F/Gas mark 1.
- 2 Peel the prawns and remove the heads, but do not discard them. Then butterfly the prawns by cutting vertically along the spines. Clean out the brown waste.
- 3 Season the vine tomatoes, then put them on a baking tray and into the oven for up to 1 ½ hours until dried.
- 4 Heat a little olive oil in a pan and fry the heads and shells of the prawns. A red colour will seep from the shells.
- 5 Add the plum tomato, fennel and olive oil and allow to simmer for 5 minutes. Remove from the heat and crush the shells and heads into the oil with a potato masher.
- 6 Leave the mixture to infuse in a warm area in the kitchen for 20 minutes.
- 7 Strain the oil through a conical strainer/sieve. The sediment should come through but not the bits of shell. You'll be left with a delicious shellfish oil, which can be stored in a lidded jar in the fridge and used over the next couple of days.
- 8 Cook the pasta according to the instructions on the packet, drain and add 4-6 tbsp of the shellfish oil.
- 9 Fry the prawns lightly in a little olive oil for 2 minutes, until fully (but not over-) cooked.
- 10 Add the prawns, oven-dried tomatoes, chervil, tarragon and chives to the pasta. Finally, add the chilli and serve immediately.



# ABOUT SEAFOOD



- Along the coasts of some tropical countries, like Bangladesh, Vietnam and Indonesia, mangrove swamps that are the natural coastal vegetation have been uprooted to make way for prawn farms in the shallow water. Mangrove swamps protect the area inland from storms and tsunamis by absorbing a lot of the energy of the waves. If mangroves are removed, then there is a much greater risk of damage.
- Crab shells were used as a medicinal substance in the eighteenth century.
- Prawns are the world's favourite shellfish. Total prawn consumption (including shrimps) in the world is estimated at 4 million tonnes, which, at consumer level, is worth approximately US\$ 20 000 million.
- Prawns are the most popular shellfish sold in Great Britain too, with consumers spending nearly £240 million in 2004.
- Prawns, crabs and lobsters are a blue-grey colour when alive, which helps them to blend into the sea floor. But they change colour to pink when cooked. When alive, they create their protective coloration by attaching bright carotenoid pigments from their diet to protein molecules on their shell. This mutes and alters their colouring, allowing them to be camouflaged. When cooked, the proteins are denatured freeing the carotenoids to reveal their true colour.

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.

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