

Skate with Beurre Noisette

The classic skate recipe. The aroma of the black butter is guaranteed to get the digestive juices flowing.

Planning

serves:	4
prep time:	15 mins
cooking time:	45 mins

Ingredients

1½ ltr water
75 ml white wine vinegar
2 bay leaves
12 whole black peppercorns
1 onion, peeled & thinly sliced
2 carrots, peeled & thinly sliced
2 sticks celery, peeled & thinly sliced
1 tsp salt
4 x 225g prepared skate wings
175g lightly salted butter
30 ml red wine vinegar
2 tbs brined capers, drained

Method

First, make a court bouillon. Put all the ingredients down to and including the salt together in a large pan. Bring this to the boil then reduce the heat and simmer for 30 minutes. Strain the liquid off the vegetables, discard the vegetables, and return the liquid to the pan.

Add the skate wings to the court bouillon and bring to the boil. As soon as it boils, turn the heat off, cover the pan and leave the skate to poach in the hot liquid for about 10 minutes. The actual length of time they take to cook will depend upon their thickness - 10 minutes is about right for wings approximately 2½cm (1 inch) thick. Remove the skate wings and drain them on kitchen paper, then put them on warmed serving plates while you make the beurre noisette.

Melt the butter (salted butter browns more readily) in a frying pan over moderate heat. Agitate it gently while it is cooking and watch it carefully. When it is foaming and turning brown it should begin to smell quite nutty. At this point, toss in the red wine vinegar and boil it for a minute. (This is where the gastric juices start going mad.) Turn off the heat and stir in the capers. Immediately, pour the beurre noisette over the skate wings, giving everyone a fair share of the capers of course, and serve immediately.