

## Skate with Chilli Beans

A wonderful, interesting way to cook skate from the pre-eminent Mr. Stein's *Seafood* (based upon his cookery school). I've no idea of the provenance of this dish but it seems to be Mexican/Spanish to me, given the use of chillies, paprika and sherry vinegar. Wherever it's from, if you like a little spiciness, this is definitely for you. The beans are so moreish!

Let's face it, buying fresh fish is a spur-of-the-moment thing and rarely affords planning ahead time for the soaking dried beans. Go ahead and use tinned cannellini beans; they are perfectly fine. I usually use two tins for two people and have some left over for lunch. Just miss out the soaking and pre-cooking stages.

### Planning

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

### Ingredients

350g dried cannellini beans,  
soaked overnight  
2 tbs olive oil  
1 clove garlic, crushed  
2 medium red chillies,  
deseeded & finely  
chopped  
1 medium onion, peeled &  
finely chopped  
350ml chicken stock  
3 medium tomatoes  
(skinned, if desperate) &  
chopped  
2 tsp chopped tarragon  
4 x 225g prepared skate  
wings  
1 tsp ground paprika  
1 tsp ground black pepper  
50g butter  
3 tbs sherry vinegar  
salt & pepper

### Method

Drain the cannellini beans and put them in a pan with plenty of fresh water to cover. Bring them to the boil, skim off any scum which rises, cover and leave them to simmer gently until just tender (about 1 hour). Drain the beans and set them aside.

Pre-heat the oven to 200°C/400°F/gas 6. Dry the skate wings with kitchen paper and sprinkle on both sides with paprika and black pepper.

To make the chilli beans, heat the olive oil together with the chillies and garlic in a pan. When sizzling begins, add the onion and fry for about 5 minutes until soft but not brown. Add the beans and 300ml of the chicken stock. Bring this to simmering point and cook for 10 minutes. Stir in the chopped tomatoes and cook for a further 10 minutes. Stir in the chopped tarragon and season to taste with salt and pepper. Turn off the heat and cover to keep these warm while you cook the skate.

Melt the butter in a roasting tin on top of the stove and add the skate wings, lightly browning them for 1 minute on either side. Sprinkle with a little salt and roast them in the top of the oven for 10 minutes.

Divide the chilli beans among four warmed serving plates and place a skate wing on top of each pile. Place the roasting pan over moderate heat and deglaze it with the sherry vinegar and remaining 50ml chicken stock. Boil it briefly scraping all the flavour from the bottom of the pan into the liquid. Season the juice to taste then strain it over the skate wings.