

Merluza a la Koxkera

Or, *Hake with Clams, Asparagus, Peas and Parsley*, if you prefer. The Spanish love their hake and this is a very pleasant way of serving it taken from the eminent Mr. Stein's book, *Spain*.

I'm lucky enough to be able to buy frozen clams, albethey from Thailand, in my local Waitrose. Mr. Stein says you can use frozen peas but I remain unconvinced. Naturally I've emodified it a little.

Planning

serves:	4
prep time:	10 mins
cooking time:	20 mins

Ingredients

4 x 200g pieces hake,
skinned
200g asparagus tips, in 4cm
lengths
250g fresh garden peas
(podded weight)
plain flour for dusting + 1 tbs
6 tbs olive oil
4 plump garlic cloves, finely
sliced
100g shallots, finely
chopped
175ml dry white wine
100ml fish stock
250g clams in the shell
1 tbs parsley, chopped
Salt & pepper

Method

Season the hake pieces with salt and set aside for 15 mins or so. Meanwhile, drop the asparagus tips and peas into well salted boiling water (modification - I use the fish stock for this) and simmer for 2 minutes. (We aren't cooking them completely at this point.) Drain the veggies and, if you've used the stock instead of water, keep it for later, of course.

Dust the hake pieces in flour and shake off the excess. Heat 4 tbs oil in a large frying pan on medium heat and fry the hake for 2-3 minutes on each side until lightly coloured and almost cooked through. Lift the hake onto a plate and set to one side.

Add 2 tbs oil to the pan and cook the garlic and shallots over medium heat until lightly golden. Stir in the 1 tbs flour then gradually blend in the wine and stock to make a smooth sauce. Bring to a simmer, return the hake to the pan and cook for a minute. Add the clams, peas and asparagus, cover and cook for 2-3 minutes until the clams have opened and the fish is cooked through.

Adjust the seasoning of the sauce, scatter over the parsley and serve.