BASCO
GOURMET SPAIN TO YOUR DOOR

Baked Spider Crab Recipe



PREP TIME
1H

COOK TIME
35 MINS

TOTAL TIME
1H 35 MINS

SERVES 4 PEOPLE

EASY

Ingredients

1.5Kg cooked spider crab
2 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
1 tbsp of unsalted butter
2 shallots, finely chopped
1 large spring onion, finely sliced
1 leek, only the white part finely sliced
2 large tomatoes, peeled and deseeded
150ml tomato sauce
50ml brandy
1 ladle shellfish stock
Breadcrumbs
Few knobs of butter
1 tbsp flat-leaf parsley

Method

If you are cooking the crab yourself, place a large pan of water on to boil and add about five tablespoons of salt. Once the crab is submerged, wait until the water returns to the boil and only then start your timer. You'll need around 15 minutes for a large crab (2lb/1kg) and 10 minutes for smaller crabs. Drain in cold water and allow the crab to cool naturally.

To prepare the crab, it's a good idea to have two bowls ready. Into one bowl, pull all the legs and claws off the crab and set aside. Then on a board, turn the crab on its back and 'pop' the shell off from the body, this is done by holding the crab upside down with its eyes facing away from you. Use your thumbs to push the shell off and the body will come away. Once the body and shell are separated, first clean the shell thoroughly and set aside for filling it with the sauce. Secondly you must remove the rich brown meat from inside the shell and pour it into the other bowl. Moving back on to the main body, you'll see two rows of feathery 'fingers' – these are called 'dead man's fingers and they are the crab's gills and MUST be removed. They act as the crab's main barrier to bacteria and can make you ill should you consume one – they simply just pull off. You'll notice the centre of the body also contains some more brown meat. Using the handle of a tea spoon or a crab picker, you can now work your way around the carcass, picking out all the white meat into the bowl. For the claws and legs, you will need to use a hammer and the crab picker to go one by one. Lightly crack the shells with the help of the hammer and open each part of the leg and claw and pick out the white meat. Be careful of the translucent cartilage parts in between the joints of the legs and claws as they need to be removed. Now you need to check all the white meat for any shell. Just . work through the bowl with your fingers, ensuring that there is nothing sharp or any hard bits in there.

Warm the oil and butter in a medium sized pan, add the onions and leek and poach very slowly for 20 minutes, add the cognac and flambé. Add the tomato sauce, chopped tomatoes and cook slowly for a further 15 to 20 minutes, wet the sauce with the ladle of shellfish stock and add the crab meat, cook for a couple of minutes and stir well.

Pour the filling into the crab shell, the sauce should not be too liquid or too dry, sprinkle the top of the shell with the breadcrumbs and place a couple of knobs of butter on top.

Place the crab shell into a pre-heated oven at 200?C/400?F/Gas Mark 6 for 12 minutes or until the breadcrumbs are golden brown.

<Remove from the oven, sprinkle with parsley and serve immediately.

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