

Squid and Potato Stew with Rouille

By Rick Stein from Rick Stein's French Odyssey

This is a dish local to Sète, which is often made with octopus. However, squid is much easier to get hold of here, and if anything it's nicer. This is a hearty seafood stew in the tradition of bouillabaisse and I'm particularly pleased with my addition of a small amount of star anise, which is in no way out of tradition with what the French themselves do in that part of the country.

Ingredients

- 750g unprepared large squid
- 5 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 medium onion, halved and thinly sliced
- 3 garlic cloves, sliced
- 60ml cognac
- 1 red pepper, seeded and thinly sliced
- 2 medium tomatoes, skinned and sliced
- 1 tbsp tomato purée
- 1 pared strip of orange peel
- 1 sprig of thyme
- 1 bay leaf
- 2 'petals' of star anise
- 180ml dry white wine
- 600ml chicken stock
- 250g small evenly sized waxy potatoes, such as Charlotte, peeled and quartered lengthways
- 5 tbsp rouille (see below)
- Salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 tbsp chopped flat-leaf parsley, to serve
- Slices of pain rustique (rustic white bread), to serve

For the Rouille

- 25g slice day-old crustless white bread
- A little fish stock (or water)
- 2 tbsp harissa paste
- 3 fat garlic cloves, peeled
- 1 egg yolk
- 250ml olive oil

Method

1. Prepare the squid: Clean the squid and cut the pouches across into 1cm-thick rings and the tentacles and wings into similar-sized pieces.

2. Start the base: Heat 3 tablespoons of the olive oil in a large deep frying pan. Add the onion and garlic and fry gently until soft but not browned. Add the cognac, light it with a match and shake the pan until the flames have died down. Then add the red pepper, tomatoes, tomato purée, orange zest, thyme, bay leaf, star anise, white wine and stock and bring up to a simmer.

3. Cook the squid: Heat another tablespoon of olive oil in a frying pan, add half the squid and a little seasoning and stir-fry over a high heat for 2 minutes until lightly browned. Add to the sauce and repeat with a little more oil and the rest of the squid. Season to taste with salt and pepper, part-cover the pan and leave the stew to simmer gently for 1 hour, until the squid is tender and the liquid has reduced and thickened.

4. Cook the potatoes: Meanwhile, put the potatoes into a pan of well-salted water (1 teaspoon per 600ml), bring to the boil and simmer for 7-10 minutes until just tender. Drain well and set aside.

5. Combine: When the squid is tender, remove the orange zest and pieces of star anise from the stew, add the potatoes and simmer for 5-10 minutes so that they take on some of the flavours.

6. Make the Rouille: Meanwhile, make the rouille. Cover the slice of bread with the fish stock or water and leave to soften. Squeeze out the excess liquid and put the bread into a food processor with the harissa, garlic, egg yolk and remaining ¼ tsp of salt. Blend until smooth. With the machine still running, gradually add the oil until you have a smooth, thick mayonnaise-like mixture. Store in the fridge until needed.

7. Serve: Take the pan of stew off the heat and add 2 spoonfuls of the liquid from the stew to 5 tablespoons of rouille. Mix well and stir it back into the pan, but don't put the pan back over the

heat or it might curdle. Adjust the seasoning if necessary, sprinkle with parsley and serve with plenty of bread.