

Cagliari-style fish cassola by Teresa Mundula Crespellani

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English version - Versione italiana

Teresa tells us how to prepare a fish cassola in the following poem:

**Cagliari-style fish cassola**

Fish soup is, in Cagliari,  
a welcome and delicious dish:  
well-lived and well-chosen fish is needed,  
freshly caught fish with scales and black eye.

Freshness is the first quality,  
the second is great variety.  
Almost any fish from the sea is good  
to put in the soup.

In a rich soup, capon is called for,  
redfish and mullet cut into slices,  
the "cow" open-mouthed but speechless,  
the eel, octopus and purple dye murex.

Cooking is done in tomato sauce,  
with olive oil and a clove of garlic,  
salt and pepper in just the right amount!  
in twenty minutes the soup is ready.

What a taste of the sea in that soup!  
It goes down your throat smooth,  
even if it scrapes a few spines.  
Is a comforting experience of life!

If you've gotten the urge to eat a good cassola, here's the recipe.

They say at least seven varieties of fish, shellfish and crustaceans are needed to make cassola; cuttlefish and redfish cannot be missed. It should be pointed out that cassola is made with what can be found at the market.

The following are needed for four people:

- . 200 grams of clams
- . 200 g. of mussels
- . 300 g. sea bream
- . 400 g. of redfish
- . 250 g. mullet
- . 400 g. of cuttlefish
- . 250 g. octopus
- . one golden onion
- . three cloves of garlic

- . a hot pepper
- . a glass of white wine
- . 400 g. of peeled tomatoes
- . olive oil
- . salt
- . parsley
- . basil
- . toasted bread.

It takes, more or less, an hour and a half to make cassola: 45 minutes of preparation and 45 minutes of cooking.

First you put the clams in a bowl of water and salt to let them purge for a couple of hours, and you clean the mussels. Then you clean the fish, remove the bones and cut it into chunks. You also clean the cuttlefish and cut and strip.

Heat some oil in a large saucepan and put in the sliced onion, whole garlic cloves, and chopped chili pepper; sauté a few minutes and add octopus and cuttlefish. When these take color, pour in the wine and let it evaporate, then add the peeled tomatoes, crushing them lightly with a wooden spoon, and add water as needed. Then put in the fish - redfish, sea bream and mullet - and continue cooking for about five minutes.

Meanwhile heat another saucepan and add mussels and drained clams, add a half cup of cold water and cover. When the mussels and clams are open, add them to the cooking fish, together with their sauce, and stir for a few more minutes, removing the lid and raising the heat.

When finished cooking, adjust the salt, finish with chopped parsley and basil, and present the cassola with toasted bread.

The preparation of cassola is also told to us by Giampaolo Loddo singing.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AiMgYTAC57E>

(1) Presentaimao la poesia con la grafia Su Sardu Standard – SSS – con qualche licenza poetica, soprattutto la paragogiva (dato che non è opportuno accorciare le parole) e la ‘d’ e la ‘t’ volte a ‘r’, alla cagliaritana, per lasciare al lettore il suono voluto dall’autore.

Sources:

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