

Catalan Seafood Stew

2 dried pasilla pepper
¼ c. blanched almonds, lightly toasted
2 cloves of garlic
½ c. bread, grilled then chopped into small pieces
3 T. olive oil
1 c. onion, thinly sliced
3 cloves of garlic, minced
32 oz. canned whole tomatoes, roughly smashed or chopped
½ c. white wine
1½ c. clam juice
2 c. vegetable broth
2 t. paprika
½ t. smoked paprika
1 t. saffron threads
1# mussels, de-bearded and cleaned
10-12 clams, cleaned
½# shrimp, peeled and deveined
1# cod or monkfish cut into 2" pieces
1 t. sherry vinegar

Pour 2 c. boiling hot water over dried peppers and let them soak for about 30 minutes. After they are soaked discard the stems and seeds, and try to scrape as much of the skin off as possible.

Put the peppers, almonds, garlic and bread in a food processor and blend till fairly smooth paste. Reserve for later use.

Heat 3T. olive oil in a large thick pot, and sauté onions for 5 minutes, add garlic and sauté an additional minute. Deglaze pot with white wine and clam juice.

Add tomatoes, and seasonings to the pot and simmer for 10 minutes. After that increase heat to heat to bring to a rolling boil.

Ladle out about 4oz. of the hot liquid into the reserved pepper paste (picada) and mix well. Add that back into the pot and cook until broth is slightly thickened, about 5 minutes.

Reduce heat to medium low and keep at a nice simmer, and add the clams and mussels into the pot and cook until they start to open up. About 5 minutes. Add in the shrimp and the fish and cook an additional 5-7 minutes. Add the sherry and discard any unopened shellfish. Taste and adjust seasoning with salt and pepper as needed.