

A Light and Colourful Lobster Stew

Makes: four servings

2 live lobsters, about 1-1/2 pounds/675 g each

3 tablespoons butter

1 onion, chopped

Salt and pepper

1 tablespoon tomato paste

2 tablespoons Cognac

12 asparagus tips

12 slices yellow zucchini

6 radishes, halved

2 handfuls freshly shelled peas

Lemon juice

A small handful of chopped fresh chives and tarragon, for garnish

Bring a large pot of water to the boil, add the lobsters, cover, and cook for 5 minutes. Drain, and rinse under cold water. Remove the claw and shell meat, and set aside. Chop the claw and tail shells, and discard the body.

Melt half the butter in a sauté pan over medium heat and gently fry the onion, seasoned with salt and pepper, until soft. Stir in the tomato paste and add the lobster shells. Pour over the Cognac and set alight. When the flames have died down, pour over 3 cups/750 ml water and boil to reduce by half. Strain the juices into a bowl, discard the shells, and return the liquid to the sauté pan.

While the sauce is reducing, cook the vegetables, one at a time, in a pot of boiling salted water until tender. When each is done, lift to a strainer with a slotted spoon, and

plunge into ice water to preserve the colour. Drain. Bring the stock to a simmer, add the lobster meat, and poach for three minutes. Add the vegetables to heat through.

To serve, arrange half a tail and a claw into each of four soup plates. Divide the vegetables evenly around the meat. You should have about a cup/250 ml of sauce left in the pan. Whisk the remaining butter into it. Taste, and season with salt, pepper, and lemon juice. Ladle the broth over the lobster and vegetables, then scatter over the herbs, and serve.

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