

Neapolitan Style, Mussels with Black Pepper

Michele Scicolone (June 18, 2015)



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Neapolitan cooks know that simple preparations are best when it comes to fresh seafood. With just a few ingredients, this classic recipe called “Impepata di Cozze” exemplifies the Neapolitan style. Fresh, briny mussels are steamed with olive oil, garlic, and parsley in a covered pot. Once the mussels pop open, a generous amount of black pepper and fresh lemon juice are added.

It takes only a few minutes and they are ready to eat. Serve the mussels over toasted bread or freselle, the hard crunchy biscuits that Neapolitans use to soak up the tasty cooking juices. When buying mussels, look for clean, unbroken shells. At home, remove the mussels from the plastic



bag. Store them in the refrigerator in a shallow pan covered with damp paper towels and cook them as soon as possible. L'impepata di cozze can be served as a first course or main dish for a light summer meal. Soak the mussels in cold water 30 minutes.

Cut or pull off the beards. Discard any mussels with cracked shells or that do not close tightly when touched. Pour the oil into a large pot. Add the garlic. Cook over medium heat until golden, about 1 minute. Stir in the parsley and pepper. Add the mussels and lemon juice to the pot. Cover and cook, shaking the pan occasionally, until the mussels begin to open, about 5 minutes. Transfer the opened mussels to serving bowls. Cook any mussels that remain closed a minute or two longer. Discard any that refuse to open. Pour the cooking liquid over the mussels. Serve hot with lemon wedges.

Serves 4 TO 6 n 6 pounds mussels n 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil n 6 garlic cloves, finely chopped n 1/2 cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley n 1 tablespoon freshly ground black pepper n 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice n Lemon wedges for garnish

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