

Devilled Crab Mayonnaise on Toast

Makes: 6

Ingredients

8 slices white bread (for the Melba toast)
1 carrot
1 onion
2 sticks celery
1/2 bunch tarragon
2 shallots
1 live, large cock crab (weighing about 2kg)
sea salt and freshly ground black pepper
1 bay leaf
10 peppercorns
¼ quantity Lemon Mayonnaise
10 drops Tabasco
10 drops Worcestershire sauce
juice of half a lemon
25ml brandy

Preparation

Make the Melba toast. Toast the bread on both sides, then cut off the crusts. Cut through the thickness of each slice of toast from one side to the other to give you 2 thin slices. Cut these into triangles and place under a preheated grill until they curl up. Watch carefully because they can burn very quickly. If you are not using the Melba toast the same day, store it in an airtight container once cool. It will keep well for a few days.

Peel the carrot and onion and chop into large pieces. Trim the celery and chop into large pieces. Pick the leaves from the tarragon and chop them. Peel and finely chop the shallots.

Put the crab in the freezer for an hour or so before cooking.

Method

1. Bring a large saucepan of water to the boil and salt the water well so that it tastes like the sea. Add all of the vegetables except the shallots, then add the bay leaf and peppercorns to complete the boiling pan. Now drop the crab into the water, cover the pan with its lid and bring back to the boil.
2. Remove the pan to a cool place and leave the crab in the water until it is cool enough to handle before cracking the shells to remove all of the white meat. This can be done effectively by breaking off the large claws, then cracking the shells with a hammer and removing the meat. There is also good meat to be had in the first joint of the small legs, again simply crack these with a hammer. There is also meat inside the head: simply split this in two with a large knife and use a lobster pick to remove the fleshy white meat from the cavities.

3. Mix the chopped tarragon leaves with the crab meat. Add the mayonnaise, Tabasco, Worcestershire sauce and lemon juice. Slug in the brandy and season to taste with salt and pepper, then stir the shallots through. In the final mix you should be able to taste all the ingredients and get a good salty hit of the crab with its amazing texture.
4. Spoon the crab mix on the Melba toast and enjoy. Devillishly good!

Tips

The devilled crab can be kept in the fridge for up to 3 days, but for the best flavour my advice is to buy the crab and cook it and serve it on the same day. If you do refrigerate it, be sure to remove it an hour or so before serving.