Main dishes / Italy

Italian Acqua Pazza

Fish poached in 'crazy water' — a bubbling broth of cherry tomatoes, white wine, and olive oil that drives itself to a boil in the pan, perfuming the fish with the sea breeze of the southern Italian coast.

Time 35 min **Servings** 4

What you'll need.

- ☐ 1000 g Whole fish (sea bream, snapper, or sea bass), cleaned
- ☐ 250 g Cherry tomatoes, halved
- ☐ 150 ml Dry white wine
- ☐ 20 g Fresh flat-leaf parsley
- ☐ 2 g Dried peperoncino (red chili flakes)
- ☐ 80 ml Extra-virgin olive oil
- ☐ 4 cloves Garlic cloves, bruised
- ☐ 200 ml Water or light fish stock
- ☐ 8 g Fine sea salt
- ☐ 20 g Good-quality caper berries or capers

Let's make it.

01 In a wide, lidded skillet or shallow casserole, warm the olive oil over medium heat. Add the bruised garlic and peperoncino and cook gently for 1 minute until fragrant. Add the cherry tomatoes cut-side down and cook for 3 minutes until they begin to blister and collapse. Add the white wine and let it bubble for 1 minute. Add the water or fish stock and the capers. Season with salt. Bring to a vigorous simmer.

02 Score the fish 3 times on each side. Season inside and out. Lower the fish into the simmering broth. Cover the pan and cook over medium heat for 8–10 minutes per 500g of fish. Spoon the broth over the fish every 3 minutes. The fish is cooked when the score cuts have opened and the eye of the fish has turned white and opaque — this is the Neapolitan fisherman's traditional indicator of doneness.

03 Scatter torn fresh parsley leaves over the fish and drizzle a final thread of raw olive oil over the broth. Serve directly from the pan at the table. Provide good crusty bread for the broth — the acqua pazza (crazy water) is the real treasure: a light, herb-bright, tomato-scented essence that should be drunk from the bowl at the end.

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Servings are an estimate; check quantities in the source recipe.
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