Main dishes / France

Moules Marinière

The classic French mussel pot — live mussels steamed open in dry white wine with shallots and a final knob of cold butter, the broth drunk greedily with a spoon or a torn piece of bread. Simple, oceanic, and done in twenty minutes.

Time 20 min **Servings** 4

What you'll need.

- ☐ 2000 g Fresh mussels, scrubbed and debearded
- ☐ 80 g Shallots, finely minced
- ☐ 10 g Garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- ☐ 200 ml Dry white wine (Muscadet or Chablis)
- ☐ 40 g Unsalted butter, cold
- ☐ 20 g Flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped
- ☐ 1 pcs Bay leaf
- ☐ 3 g Freshly ground black pepper

Let's make it.

01 Scrub each mussel under cold running water with a stiff brush to remove any barnacles and grit. Pull off the beard (the fibrous string protruding from the seam) by gripping it and pulling sharply toward the hinge end — pulling the other way tears the mussel. Tap any open mussel sharply on the counter: if it does not close within 10 seconds, discard it — it is dead. Discard any with cracked or broken shells. The mussels should smell purely of the ocean — clean, briny, and cool.

02 In a large, wide pot with a tight-fitting lid, melt half the butter over medium heat. Add the shallots, garlic, and bay leaf. Cook gently for 3–4 minutes, stirring, until the shallots are completely soft and translucent — they should not color at all. This short, gentle sweat is the flavor base and the moisture from the mussels will build on it. Season with pepper — no salt yet; the mussels will season the broth.

03 Raise the heat to high. Pour in the wine — it will spit and steam instantly. Let it boil hard for 1 minute to drive off the raw alcohol. Tip in all the cleaned mussels at once. Clamp the lid on tightly and cook on high heat for 3–4 minutes, shaking the pot vigorously once or twice by gripping the handles and swirling it in a circle. Open the lid after 3 minutes — nearly all mussels should be open. Cook another minute if needed. Discard any that remain closed after 5 minutes.

04 Remove the pot from heat. Add the remaining cold butter and swirl the pot to melt it into the broth — do not stir, just swirl, which emulsifies the butter into a slightly creamy, glossy broth. Add the parsley and give one final swirl. Taste the broth and adjust for pepper — the mussels will have seasoned it with salt. Divide into warmed deep bowls, making sure the broth is ladled over each portion generously. Serve immediately with crusty bread or frites.

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