

STRIPED BASS WITH POACHED MUSSELS

4 PIECES OF STRIPED BASS OR COD, SKIN ON ONE SIDE
16-20 BLACK MUSSELS
1 LEEK
2 CLOVES OF GARLIC
1 SMALL FENNEL BULB
WHITE WINE
20 SMALL FINGERLING POTATOES
FRESH THYME, CHIVES, AND ITALIAN PARSLEY

PLACE POTATOES IN A STEAMER WITH A LID AND PLACE OVER MEDIUM FLAME. THEY SHOULD COOK IN ABOUT 12 MINUTES.

TRIM LEEK, LEAVING WHITE PART ONLY. SLICE LENGTHWISE IN HALF AND RINSE IN WARM WATER TO REMOVE ANY GRIT. CUT INTO 2-INCH PIECES

TRIM GARLIC CLOVES AND SLICE THINLY.

PEEL OFF ANY DISCOLORED AREAS FROM THE FENNEL BULB. CUT LENGTHWISE IN HALF. CUT OUT SMALL TOUGH WEDGE AT THE BASE. SLICE CROSSWISE INTO 1/2 INCH PIECES.

MELT 2 TBSPS OF BUTTER WITH 3 TBSPS OF OLIVE OIL IN A SAUCEPAN. ADD LEEKS, FENNEL, GARLIC AND A SPRIG OF THYME. REDUCE THE HEAT TO A SIMMER. COVER AND SWEAT FOR 2 MINUTES, STIRRING OCCASIONALLY MAKING SURE THE LEEKS DO NOT BURN.

ADD THE MUSSELS. SALT AND PEPPER. POUR IN 1/2 CUP OF WHITE WINE. COVER AND SIMMER UNTIL THE MUSSELS OPEN. ABOUT 5 MINUTES. TURN OFF THE HEAT, COVER AND RESERVE.

MEANWHILE, PLACE A SAUTE PAN ON HIGH HEAT FOR 2 MINUTES. ADD A SPLASH OF GRAPESEED OR CANOLA OIL.

THOROUGHLY DRY FISH PIECES BETWEEN PAPER TOWELS. SALT AND PEPPER. PLACE SKIN SIDE DOWN IN THE PAN. SHAKE IT TO MAKE SURE THE FILLETS DON'T STICK.

AFTER ONE MINUTE, REDUCE THE HEAT TO LOW. CONTINUE COOKING FOR ABOUT 3 MINUTES OR UNTIL YOU CAN SEE THAT THE FISH IS COOKED MOST OF THE WAY THROUGH.

RAISE HEAT TO HIGH AND FLIP THE PIECES. ADD 2 TBSPS OF BUTTER. AGAIN, SHAKE THE PAN TO KEEP FROM STICKING.

AFTER ONE MINUTE, REDUCE HEAT TO LOW. COOK ANOTHER 2 MINUTES BASTING CONSTANTLY WITH BUTTER AND PAN JUICES.

THE FISH IS DONE WHEN A KNIFE INSERTED IN THE THICKEST PART FEELS WARM AGAINST YOUR LOWER LIP.

PLACE FISH SKIN SIDE UP ON INDIVIDUAL PLATES. SPOON MUSSELS AND VEGETABLES AROUND THEM. SCATTER WITH PARSLEY LEAVES AND CHOPPED CHIVES.

SERVES 4