

Pan-fried spiced sprats with a fennel salad

Serves 2

Takes 30 minutes



Ingredients

500g sprats

40g plain white flour (any type; wheat, spelt etc)

2 teaspoons coriander seeds

2 teaspoons cumin seeds

1 lime, sliced into wedges for squeezing

Vegetable oil, for frying

100g mixed leaves

4 medium tomatoes, sliced

1 bulb of fennel, sliced

3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil

1 tablespoon white wine vinegar

1 teaspoon dijon mustard

Directions

Clean the sprats in the following way:

- 1) Chop all of heads off, just behind the gills.
- 2) Slice the belly open from the hole to the rear of the fish to the front, and scrape out the guts.
- 3) Stand the fish 'upright', with its belly on the chopping board and press the spine down to the chopping board, from the front of the fish to the tail. Turn the fish over and lift the backbone out, leaving a 'butterflied' sprat.

Spread the salad leaves, tomato and fennel between two bowls. Mix the olive oil, vinegar and mustard in a glass/mug/shaker and pour over the salad.

Put the spices in a small saucepan over a low heat, until they become fragrant, then put in a pestle and mortar and grind to powder. Put the flour on a plate, add the spices and mix it all up until combined.

Heat a large frying pan over a high heat and add a few glugs of vegetable oil. Keep the bottle close by as you may need to add more to the pan if it becomes dry as you cook the fish. At this point, get your bowls close to the hob, plus a serving plate with a couple of pieces of kitchen roll on. Take a sprat, press both sides into the flour, so that it's covered in flour, then place it skin side down in the pan. Add more floured sprats to the pan in a clockwise direction until you have completed the circle. Leave for a minute then slowly turn them all over in the same direction that you added them to the pan and leave for another minute.

Remove from the pan and pile onto the plate with kitchen roll and squeeze the lime over the top when eating them.