

Filet of Branzino, Humus, Salad of Chick Peas, Preserved Lemon and Dill Broth



For Four Servings
Preparation Time: 30 minutes
Cooking Time: 10 minutes

- 2 Whole Branzinis or Small Striped Bass
- 3 Cups Cooked Chick Peas
- 1 Shallot, Peeled and Sliced Thinly
- 2 Cloves Garlic, Sliced Thinly
- ¼ Cup Lemon Juice
- ¼ Cup Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- ½ Cup Tahini
- ¼ Cup Water
- 3 Lemons
- 1 Bunch Fresh Dill, Leaves Picked
- ¼ Cup Vegetable Stock
- 1 Tsp Anchovy Paste
- 1 Small Red Onion, Diced
- ¼ Cup, Black Moroccan or Kalamata Olives
- ¾ Cup Canola or Grape Seed Oil
- ¼ Cup Kosher Salt
- 1 Tsp Granulated Sugar
- 2 Tblsp Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- A Small Pinch of Saffron
- Couple Sprigs of Fresh Thyme
- Salt and Pepper to Taste

For Preserved Lemons

Cut the lemons in thin slices, take out any seeds, and place them in a small metal or ceramic bowl. Add the kosher salt along with the sugar, sprigs of thyme and the olives oil. Toss well, cover with plastic wrap and put aside. Toss occasionally. This can be done a day ahead. Allow the lemon mixture to marinate for at least an hour, then place the whole mixture in a blender and blend well. Add some water if needed to obtain a smooth mixture. Strain the mixture through a fine sieved strainer and put it in the refrigerator.

For the Hummus

Place 2 cups of the chick peas, along with the ¼ cup of the lemon juice, ¼ cup of the olive oil, tahini, shallots, garlic and a dash of salt in the bowl of the food processor. Blend the mixture well until you obtain a smooth paste. Add the water gradually to obtain a mixture that is not too thick. Taste for seasoning and adjust accordingly. This can be done a day ahead.

For the Dill Broth

Bring to boil 3 cups of water in a sauce pan. Once the water comes to a boil, blanch most of the picked dill leaves for about two minutes. (Put a small amount of the leaves aside for the chick pea salad). Strain the blanch dill and rinse them under cold running water until chilled. Place ½ cup of the canola or grape seed oil in the blender along with the anchovy paste. Turn the blender on, and slowly add the dill into the mixture. Allow to blend well. Pour the dill oil in a bowl and put in the refrigerator. This can be done a day ahead.

For the Chick Pea Salad

In a small bowl, toss the remaining chick peas, with the diced onion, dill leaves and the olives. Add a teaspoon of lemon juice and olive oil and set aside.

For the Branzino

Filet and take out the bones. Place a heavy bottomed sauté pan over high heat, and when the pan is hot, add the remaining canola or grape seed oil. Season the files on both side, and place the fish in the pan with the skin side down. Press the fish down with either with you hands or a spatula, and allow for the skin to crisp. Lower the heat to medium and allow the fish to continue cooking.

Mean while, place a small mound of the hummus and the chick pea salad on the plate. Drizzle a small amount of the preserved lemon puree on the side of the plate. Gently heat the dill oil and add the ¼ of the vegetable stock.

Flip the fish over onto its flesh side, and after about a minute take the fish out and place it on the mound of chick peas. Blend the dill oil mixture and taste for seasoning. Adjust accordingly and drizzle some of it on each plate and serve.