

Antipasti di Frutti di Mare

Seafood antipasto



Anywhere in Italy there is seafood, there is “frutti di mare”, the “fruits of the sea”. And nowhere is seafood more bountiful than Sicily. In this recipe, the “fruits” are marinated overnight with a acidic dressing to “cook” the seafood. This is similar to a Spanish ceviche except that the ingredients are lightly boiled first. The biggest tip for this recipe is to not overcook the seafood. It will cook further in the marinade.

Recipe for 6.

Ingredients and equipment:

Marinade

- Juice of 2 to 3 lemons
- ½ cup extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tablespoons red wine vinegar

Seafood (choose some or all of the following)

- 1 pound small squid, cleaned
- ½ pound medium shrimp (shelled and de-veined or use shrimp with shells and clean after boiling)
- ½ pound small bay scallops
- 1 pound baby or full size octopus
- 1 dozen mussels
- 1 dozen clams

Salad

- 1 red bell pepper
- 1 red onion
- 4 cloves of garlic
- ¼ cup chopped flat-leaf parsley
- Salt and pepper to taste

Note: You can add a little salt and pepper to the marinade for the overnight preparation but don't add too much. Adding salt at this stage can make the seafood mushy when it's finished marinading. Add salt and pepper at the end to taste.

Directions:

In a non-metal bowl, whisk the marinade ingredients together and set aside.

Choose a container that you can use to marinate the seafood overnight and set on the

counter.

In a large pot, bring 6 quarts water to boil and set up an ice bath (a bowl with cold water and ice) nearby.

Slice the calamari bodies into rings. Cook all the shrimp for 1 1/2 minutes and plunge into the ice bath. Cook the calamari for 1 minute, and plunge into the ice bath. Repeat with the bay scallops cooking 1 minute and add to the ice bath. Thoroughly drain the seafood from ice bath and transfer to the container for overnight marination.

In the same pot and water used to boil the seafood, add a wine cork (not the synthetic kind; this is a myth disproved by science but why mess with tradition), bring to boil and add the octopus. Reduce to a simmer and cook for 45 minutes, or until tender. Octopus will shrink in size by one-half. Drain and cool and slice to a bite size and add to the container for overnight marination.

In a 10-to-12-inch saute pan, place mussels and clams with 1 cup of water and bring to a boil. Cover the pan and let the seafood steam, removing each shellfish as it opens until they are all cooked and removed from the pan. Discard any shellfish that do not open. Let shellfish cool, remove mussels and clams from the shells and add to the overnight marinade bowl.

Prepare the “salad” components for the overnight marinade.

Dice the red peppers to a ¼ inch size, removing all the internal ribs and seeds. Add to the overnight marinade bowl. Chop the red onion into ¼ inch pieces and add to the overnight marinade bowl. Peel garlic, crush with the side of a knife and add to the overnight marinade. Coarsely chop the parsley and add to the overnight marinade.

Add the the prepared marinade dressing to the entire mixture in the overnight marinade bowl and toss well. Cover and place in the refrigerator. Stir and mix the antipasto several times while it is marinating.

Before serving, remove from the refrigerator and allow the antipasto to warm up a bit and re-toss all the ingredients. Pick out the crushed garlic and discard. Salt and pepper to taste. Serve in a nice clear glass dish so all the colors can be seen by your guests.

Serving suggestions:

 Serve in a martini glass to make a nice hand held antipasti for guests.

 Serve in a lettuce leaf on a dish to provide a nice green backdrop.

 Add a slice of brushetta (thinly sliced toasted bread rubbed with garlic) as a crispy counterpoint to the antipasto.