



Portuguese Recipes

Baby Clams Steamed in a Cataplana with White Wine and Tomato Sauce: Almeijoas Na Cataplana

In Portugal, cataplana refers to the metal pan that looks like a large clam shell with a hinged lid that is clamped shut for steaming and braising. If you can not obtain a cataplana pan, a wok with a lid or a large Dutch oven are fine substitutes.

1/4 cup extra-virgin olive oil

1 red bell pepper, cored, seeded, and cut in thin strips

1 green bell pepper cored, seeded, and cut in thin strips

2 large ripe tomatoes, seeded and diced

2 medium white onions, sliced thin

2 garlic cloves, minced

1/4 pound dry-cured ham, such as presunto or prosciutto, diced

1 pound hard, smoked sausage, such as linguica or chorizo, removed from the casing

1 generous tablespoon paprika

Pinch red pepper flakes

2 bay leaves

1 cup dry white wine

4 pounds small littleneck clams or cockles, scrubbed and rinsed well

1 lemon, juiced

1/4 cup chopped fresh flat-leaf parsley

Portuguese bread, as accompaniment

Coat a large Dutch oven with the olive oil and set over medium heat. When the oil forms a little haze, add the bell peppers, tomatoes, onions, and garlic; cook and stir for about 7 minutes until the vegetables are soft, but not browned. Add the ham and sausage and stir for 2 minutes to release some of the flavorful fat. Stir in the paprika, pepper flakes, bay leaves, and wine. Simmer and stir for 10 minutes to cook down the liquid a bit. (If using a cataplana, transfer the sauce into the vessel, and proceed as directed.)

Lay the clams in the sauce and toss with a large spoon so they are well coated and some of the sauce is on the top. Squeeze in the lemon juice and shower with chopped parsley. Tightly close the Dutch oven or cataplana and simmer over moderate heat for 15 minutes until the clams open – no peeking. Discard any clams that haven't opened at that point. Remove the cataplana from the stove and open it at the table.