

Sea Bass with Slow-cooked Fennel and Tomatoes

Ingredients

For the sea bass:

4x170g fillets of sea bass, skin on

1 tbsp olive oil

salt and freshly ground black pepper

For the slow cooked fennel and tomatoes:

4 fennel bulbs, tough outside leaves removed

175ml extra virgin olive oil

400g can of chopped tomatoes

1 head of garlic, split into cloves and peeled

150ml boiling water

120ml oz dry white wine

2 tbsp chopped fresh oregano leaves

24 black olives, stoned and halved

2 tbsp balsamic vinegar

12 basil leaves

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 170C/325F/Gas 3.

2. Slash the skin of the sea bass fillets and place in the fridge.

3. Cut the fennel lengthways into quarters. Heat the olive oil in a heavy-based ovenproof pan and add the fennel. Cook the fennel over a medium heat, turning frequently, for 20 minutes or until starting to brown.

4. Add the tomatoes, garlic, boiling water, wine, oregano and some black pepper. Bring to the boil, cover and cook in the oven for 1½ hours.

5. Remove the pan from the oven and add the olives, balsamic vinegar and basil leaves. Place on a low heat, season and simmer gently.

6. Take the sea bass from the fridge, rub the surface with the olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Heat a large frying pan. Add the sea bass fillets, skin side down and cook for 3-4 minutes until the skin is crisp. Turn the fillets over and cook for a further minute or until the fish is just cooked through.

7. Place a spoonful of the fennel and tomatoes into the centre of each plate and top each with a piece of sea bass.