



Snails in Garlic & Herb Butter

Escargots à la Bourguignonne ... Is there anything more French than escargot? In this classic dish from Burgundy, the snails are really just a vehicle for the delicious garlic and herb butter, so ensure you have plenty of crusty bread to soak it all up. Ideally you'll have special snail plates and tongs - they aren't essential but do add to the sense of theatre. Use toothpicks to extract the snails from their shells if you don't have small cocktail forks. This is a great dinner party entrée as the shells can be filled ahead of time and refrigerated until ready to serve; remove them from the fridge to come to room temperature about 30 minutes before putting them into the oven. As this is a Burgundian dish, a white burgundy like Louis Latour Mâcon-Villages Chameroy is an ideal wine pairing.
Serves 4 as an entrée

INGREDIENTS

- 24 canned snails
- 24 snail shells (see FAQ on website for details)
- 500ml dry white wine, more or less (see below)
- 150g salted butter
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1 golden shallot, finely chopped
- 1/3 cup finely chopped flat-leaf parsley leaves
- 1 teaspoon salt flakes, crushed
- Freshly grated nutmeg, to taste
- Crusty bread, for serving

This is one occasion where you can waive the general rule about only cooking with wine you'd be prepared to drink; as the wine is simply used to soak the snails and is then discarded, any inexpensive dry white wine will suffice, as long as it isn't faulty.

METHOD

1. Drain the snails and rinse well under cold running water.
2. Place them in a lidded container and add enough wine to cover them. Refrigerate for 2-3 hours.
3. Drain, rinse well, discarding the wine, cover with more wine and refrigerate for at least 2 hours (overnight is fine).
4. Drain, rinse well, and pat dry.
5. Preheat oven to 200°C.
6. Place butter, garlic and shallot in a small saucepan over a low heat, stirring regularly until butter is just melted.
7. Transfer to a bowl, stir in parsley, salt and nutmeg and set aside until semi-solid.
8. Spoon some garlic butter into a snail shell, press a snail into it and fill up with more butter.
9. With the opening facing upwards, place the shell in a snail dish or on a baking tray lined with crumpled foil or baking paper to stabilise it.
10. Repeat with remaining snails and butter.
11. Place in the oven for 10 minutes.
12. Serve immediately with bread on the side.