



Open Fillo Sandwich with Garlic, Tomato & Anchovy

This simple starter is inspired by one of my favourite MG Garage entrées. I love the idea of sandwiching chopped olives between 2 sheets of fillo ... and wonder what else might work in this way. Janni used to make a triple stack of the olive-studded fillo sheets with the other ingredients sandwiched in between, using witlof instead of fennel. This is a great dish for entertaining as the Anchovy Sauce can be made, garlic poached, fennel and tomato sliced and fillo cooked ahead of time. Bring everything to room temperature then, just before serving, warm fillo in the oven and assemble.

Serves 6 as a starter

INGREDIENTS

- 18 cloves garlic, peeled
- Extra virgin olive oil, for poaching
- 1 bulb baby fennel
- ½ lemon
- 2 sheets thick fillo pastry
- ¼ cup pitted black olives, finely chopped (about 30g/1oz)
- 9 grape tomatoes, quartered

Anchovy Sauce

- 30g anchovy fillets in olive oil (1oz)
- 1 small clove garlic, crushed
- 2 teaspoons strained lemon juice (10ml)
- Freshly ground white pepper, to taste



METHOD

1. Put garlic in a small saucepan with just enough oil to cover it.
2. Place over the lowest heat possible for about 15 minutes until it's very soft and only slightly coloured. Watch it closely as it will burn easily, if it's colouring too quickly move the pan so that it's only partially on the heat. Set oil and garlic aside.
3. Meanwhile, preheat oven to 175°C (345°F).
4. Shave fennel finely using a mandolin or sharp knife, rub with lemon to prevent it discolouring. Set aside, reserving the fronds.
5. Make Anchovy Sauce: Use a stick blender to blitz all ingredients together with 2 tablespoons (40ml) of the garlic poaching oil to form a smooth sauce. Set aside.
6. Place one sheet of fillo pastry on an oiled baking tray. Brush with some of the poaching oil and sprinkle with the olives, distributing them as evenly as possible.
7. Place a second sheet of fillo on top and press down gently, brush with more oil.
8. Cut fillo lengthways, then across twice to make 6 squares (a pizza cutter is handy for this).
9. Bake for about 10 minutes, until golden.
10. Place a fillo square on each of 6 plates.
11. Add a little Anchovy Sauce, 3 garlic cloves, 6 tomato quarters, and a couple of pieces of fennel to each.
12. Top with more Anchovy Sauce, garnish with fennel fronds and serve.