



Amêijoas com Vinho Branco (Portuguese Clams in White Wine)

Clams are very popular in Portugal, especially cooked over an open fire in a traditional cataplana; a metal vessel made of two concave halves that clip together to tightly enclose and steam the ingredients. Pork is often added in the form of chouriço, ham or bacon – but you can create a delicious pescatarian version with the same smoky flavours and aroma with some extra smoked paprika and garlic. Clams are usually sold purged to remove sand and grit, however if you buy them loose it's still a good idea to place them in a large bowl of cool water and sea salt (30g salt/litre water) for several hours or overnight at room temperature to get rid of any remaining sand; don't refrigerate them or they'll close up and won't 'spit out' the sand. Packaged clams are already purged and best stored in their bags until ready to use.

Serves 2

INGREDIENTS

- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 brown onion, finely diced
- Salt flakes, to taste
- 3 cloves garlic, crushed
- 1½ teaspoons smoked paprika
- 500g small clams (vongole), purged
- ⅓ cup dry white wine
- 2 fresh bay leaves, torn
- ¼ cup chopped coriander or parsley leaves
- 1 tablespoon Piri-Piri Sauce [link to recipe](#)
- Crusty bread, for serving



METHOD

1. Heat oil in a high sided frying pan over medium heat, add onion and a small pinch of salt (the clam juice will be salty) and stir well. Cover and cook for 5 minutes, stirring occasionally.
2. Stir in garlic and paprika and cook for a further 3-5 minutes, stirring often, until onion starts to colour, increasing heat slightly if need be.
3. Meanwhile, rinse clams to remove any sand or grit.
4. Increase heat to high, add clams, wine and bay leaves to the pan, cover and cook for a few minutes, shaking the pan occasionally, until the shells start to open.
5. As each shell opens, remove it to a bowl (if cooking clams from frozen, leave them in the pan for 30-60 seconds after they open before removing).
6. If there are any stubborn shells that won't open, remove them from the pan and pry them open over the sink with a blunt knife, if they smell good, add them to the others, if not, discard them.
7. When all the shells are open, return them to the pan with any of their juice.
8. Stir through coriander and Piri-Piri Sauce.
9. Serve with bread for dunking, plus a large bowl for empty clam shells.