



Bagna Cauda

From the landlocked region of Piedmont pressed against the Alps in north-western Italy, bagna càuda was originally a peasant dish that made the most of winter's limited vegetables by dressing them in a rich garlicky sauce. Bagna means 'bath' and càuda, 'hot', and this hot bath is made by blending anchovies and olive oil, traditionally imported from neighbouring Mediterranean Liguria or Provence, with local garlic and butter to make a delicious hot dip. Use whatever raw or blanched vegetables are in season including asparagus, finger fennel, baby radishes, turnips, carrots or green beans. Good crusty bread is essential to use as a plate when ferrying vegetables from the dipping pot to your mouth, the bread catches the drips then, once it's soaked in the bagna cauda, you eat it! Round out the feast with an assortment of salumi if you like. Barolo optional! If you don't have a small pot over a spirit burner or candle to serve in, warm ramekins or other heatproof serving bowls in the oven before adding the bagna cauda.

Serves 2

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 5 cloves garlic, crushed
- 12 large anchovy fillets in oil (about 60g drained weight)
- 100g cold butter, diced
- Baby vegetables, for serving
- Crusty bread, for serving



METHOD

1. Put oil, garlic, anchovies and their oil in a saucepan.
2. Place over the lowest heat possible for 5-10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until anchovies have broken down; as you'll be blending the mixture, it's fine if there are still pieces of anchovy.
3. Remove from heat and use a stick blender to blend in the butter, adding it a little at a time, to form an emulsion (it will separate a little in the pots).
4. Pour into warmed dishes and serve with a platter of baby vegetables for dipping and crusty bread to catch all the drips.