



Cozze Gratinata

Cozze gratinate is a recipe that busts the myth that seafood and cheese don't go together in Italian cuisine. A good parmesan cheese – Grana Padano, young Parmigiano-Reggiano or an Italian pecorino – combine with the mussel cooking liquor to give these cozze gratinate a delicious umami hit.

Serves 2 as a starter



INGREDIENTS

- 12 blue mussels, scrubbed
- $\frac{3}{4}$ cup fine fresh breadcrumbs (90g/ $3\frac{1}{4}$ oz)
- $2\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, plus extra for drizzling (50ml)
- 2 tablespoons freshly grated parmesan (7g/ $\frac{1}{4}$ oz)
- $1\frac{1}{2}$ tablespoons finely chopped flat-leaf parsley
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- Pinch of cayenne pepper
- 1 lemon
- Salt flakes, to taste
- Rock salt, for grilling and serving

METHOD

1. Shuck and debeard the mussels over a bowl to catch the liquor (see website for details).
2. Strain mussel liquor and set liquor and mussels on the half shell aside.
3. Place breadcrumbs, oil, parmesan, parsley, garlic and cayenne in a mixing bowl.
4. Finely grate lemon zest over the top.
5. Add 2 tablespoons of the mussel liquor and mix to combine everything well.
6. Taste and add salt if needed, remembering that the mussel liquor and parmesan are both quite salty.
7. Pack breadcrumb mixture into the shells covering the mussels well.
8. Arrange mussels on a bed of rock salt on a baking tray.
9. Drizzle with a little extra oil.
10. Preheat overhead grill to high.
11. Place mussels under it and grill for 3 minutes or so, until well-coloured.
12. Arrange cozze gratinate on a bed of rock salt and serve with a small fork.