



Prawn Bisque

Classic French bisque gets its flavour from the shells (mainly heads) of shellfish, making it a very inexpensive soup. Crab, lobster, and freshwater crayfish (such as yabbies and marrons) can all be used to make bisque, but prawn bisque (bisque de crevettes in French) is the most popular.

Serves 6 as a starter



INGREDIENTS

- 50g salted butter (1¼oz)
- 1 red onion, finely chopped
- Salt flakes and freshly ground white pepper, to taste
- 550g green prawn shells (1lb 3½oz)
- ¼ cup plain flour (35g/1¼oz)
- 1 cup dry white vermouth (250ml)
- 400g Italian canned tomatoes, crushed (14oz)
- 1 litre water (2 pints)
- ⅓ cup single cream (80ml)
- A few chives, finely sliced
- 250g stracciatella (optional)

METHOD

1. Melt butter in a large saucepan over low heat.
2. Add onion and 1 teaspoon salt, cover and cook for 10–15 minutes, stirring occasionally, until tender but not coloured.
3. Add prawn shells, increase heat to medium and fry for about 6 minutes, until they turn red all over, regularly crushing them well with a potato masher or wooden spoon.
4. Add flour and stir for 3 minutes, continuing to crush the shells.
5. Add vermouth and stir to remove the bits stuck to the base of the pan. Cook for a minute or so until it boils and thickens slightly.
6. Reduce heat, add tomato and cook for 3 minutes, crushing often.
7. Stir in water and return to the boil.
8. Reduce heat, cover and simmer for 20 minutes.
9. Strain into a clean saucepan, pushing through a fine sieve to extract as much liquid as possible.
10. Stir in cream and return to a simmer.
11. Taste, add salt and pepper, and serve garnished with chives and stracciatella if you like.