



The Merluza in Spanish waters

Merluza, Hake or as we call it in northern Europe, are among the most popular fish in the Spanish kitchen. It is delicious to eat a little at cod side to the terms of flavor and texture. The body is spindle-shaped and gray with a white belly. The fish can be 140 centimeters tall and weigh up to 15 kg.

At our latitude the most fished with trawls. This time of year – February - these predators are gathering in large groups to feed mainly on sardines, but also squid and mackerel. During the day they stay in deep water but come to the surface at night to hunt. The latter can be seen along the coast where fishing boats drag their trawls few hundred yards out.

The meat has a few bones which are easy to remove. If you buy it filleted so ask for the head and legs and cook a good “caldo” with some vegetables to the sauce.

Because the fish is popular in Spain are many varieties to choose from, for example, from Madrid, where they cook the chops with hazelnut and garlic, from nearby Cadiz where they serve the fish with Dogsauce - caldillo de perro - a very special sauce of garlic, onion , and bread dipped in orange juice. Here in Andalusia, it is common to bind sauces and soups with bread, something you cannot find elsewhere in Spain.



The Monkfish

An ugly rascal with a flattened wide gap and a sharply tapered body. Belong to the family Anglerfish. In Andalusia, is the local variant called Rape. Above the eyes, those fishes a small gear that attracts fish prey fish. When the fish opens his mouth occurs, a vacuum that sucks in the prey fish. The fish can be nearly two feet long, but usually much shorter. The largest can weigh over 60 pounds. The Monkfish live in deep water from 20 meters to 1000 meters. The female lays a million eggs! floating in the water in long slimy ties.

This is a cutlet fish belonging to the best you can find. The fish has no scales, but a skin that can be difficult to release and have to be drawn off the fish. Ask the shop to get the head and legs to cook soup on.

The fish is well suited for aioli. Originally they made this sauce through the crushed garlic with a pinch of salt in a mortar and added the oil gradually. Today the base of the sauce is based on some egg yolks. These must be room temperature and oil to the beginning to be very slow.

At El Castillo, we have served Monkfish inspired by the French bouillabaisse with its traditional saffron flavored with homemade aioli, blanched beans and sweet peas and new potatoes. Enjoy your meal!