



Ireland doesn't really have a cuisine of its own. I remember trying desperately to argue that we did to someone visiting here - I'm not sure who it was, actually come to think of it that might because it's an argument I had a few times with a few different people. Even though ultimately I concede that we don't really have a set of dishes with flavours that sets us apart still when I feel like our national pride is being attacked it tends to bring out my "listen, Ireland's the bestest country in the entire history of the entire universe, right!?!". And one of the dafter assertions I've made during one these arguments is that seafood is Ireland's cuisine - while it may not work as an argument it does completely (and quite satisfyingly) exasperate and confound my opponent. No, we don't have a national cuisine but we do have great produce. Which makes this an even stranger introduction to a seafood chowder made with tinned fish...

I love seafood chowder. I've ordered it and enjoyed it many times but I've never cooked it. Basically I was always worried it was too easy to mess up. But with tinned fish, while it's never going to taste as good as fresh fish, it's not so easy to mess up. So for my first attempt I cheated and used tinned fish and a selection of fresh cooked seafood. It's cheating - but it's still really good.



The way I cheat make Seafood Chowder is Ingredients

Serves 2 - 4

- 1 leek, trimmed and sliced
- 2 carrots, diced small
- 1 potato, diced small
- 1 onion, chopped
- 8 button mushrooms, quartered
- 150g cooked seafood
- 180g tinned red salmon, skinless & boneless (*bones will harden when cooked so make*

sure it's boneless

- 1 kipper(smoked herring - *make sure it's tinned in brine not oil*)
- 2 tbsp oyster sauce
- 15g fresh tarragon
- 3 garlic cloves, halved and bruised with flat side of knife
- 450ml hot water
- 1/4 whole nutmeg
- 2 tbsp plain flour
- 125ml single cream
- salt & white pepper
- 1 tsbp sunflower oil
- 1 large pat of butter

Instructions

1. The oyster sauce, tarragon, garlic, nutmeg and hot water is used as a substitute for fish stock. In a deep bowl add the two tablespoons of oyster sauce, the tarragon, the nutmeg and the garlic. Pour over 450ml of hot water. Stir till the oyster sauce is completely blended with the water. Leave to infuse while you make the rest of the soup.

2. Heat the oil in a saucepan, reduce heat, add the butter and when it melted add in the leek, onion, carrots, potato and mushrooms. Cover the saucepan and leave veg to sweat for 15 minutes

3. When the veg has softened some, sprinkle over a good pinch of salt and white pepper and stir around.

4. Add the flour and stir around so that all the veg is covered. Keep stirring for about 2 minutes to cook the flour.

5. Strain the "stock" and pour into the pan, stirring all the time.

6. Turn heat up to high and bring to the boil, stirring to avoid the base burning or sticking.

7. Reduce heat and simmer for a further 5 minutes.

8. Open the tin of salmon and pour the juice into the soup (*but do not do this with the smoked kippers as the smoky flavour could overpower the dish*).

9. Divide the salmon into 4 chunks and add to the pan. Reduce heat to the lowest setting and leave to simmer for a further 2 minutes.

10. Divide the kipper into chunks also and add to the pan. Stir around and season to taste.

11. Stir in the cream. Move pan off the hob.

12. Wash and drain the prepared seafood and stir into the soup.

13. Leave for a couple of minutes so that the seafood is warmed by the hot soup.