

Fillets of Sole Véronique

Ingredients

2 good-sized Dover or lemon sole, each about 12-16 oz (350-450 g), skinned and filleted

3 oz (75 g) Muscat-type grapes

½ oz (10 g) butter, plus a little extra

1 heaped teaspoon chopped fresh tarragon

6 fl oz (175 ml) vermouth or dry white wine

½ oz (10 g) plain flour

5 fl oz (150 ml) whipping cream

salt and freshly milled black pepper



Method

First peel the grapes well in advance by placing them in a bowl and pouring boiling water over them. Leave them for 45 seconds, then drain off the water and you will find the skins will slip off easily. Cut the grapes in half, remove the seeds, then return them to the bowl and cover and chill in the refrigerator until needed.

When you are ready to start cooking the fish, begin by warming the serving dish and have a sheet of foil ready. Then wipe each of the 4 sole fillets and divide each one in half lengthways by cutting along the natural line, so you now have 8 fillets. Season them and roll each one up as tightly as possible, keeping the skinned side on the inside and starting the roll at the narrow end. Next put a faint smear of butter on the base of a medium frying pan and arrange the sole fillets in it. Then sprinkle in the tarragon followed by the vermouth.

Now place the pan on a medium heat and bring it up to simmering point. Cover, then put a timer on and poach the fillets for 3-4 minutes, depending on their thickness. While the fish is poaching pre-heat the grill to its highest setting.

Meanwhile take a small saucepan, melt the butter in it, stir in the flour to make a smooth paste and let it cook gently, stirring all the time, until it has become a pale straw colour. When the fish is cooked transfer the fillets with a fish slice to the warmed dish, cover with foil and keep warm. Reserve the poaching liquid.

Next boil the fish-poaching liquid in its pan until it has reduced to about a third of its original volume. Stir in the cream and let that come up to a gentle simmer, then gradually add this cream and liquid mixture to the flour and butter mixture in the small saucepan, whisking it in well until you have a thin, creamy sauce. Taste and season with salt and freshly milled black pepper.

Pour the sauce over the fish and pop it under the pre-heated grill (about 4 inches from the source of the heat) and leave it there for approximately 3 minutes, until it is glazed golden brown on top.

Serve each portion on to warmed serving plates, garnished with grapes.