

## **Mackerel with curried mussels and cumin carrots**

**Prep 15 min**

**Cook 45 min**

**Serves 6**

**2kg live mussels, cleaned**

**6 mackerel fillets, pin boned, if need be**

**Salt and pepper**

**For the sauce**

**60ml olive oil**

**120g unsalted butter**

**4 shallots, peeled and very finely diced**

**1 celery stalk, trimmed and very finely diced**

**1 leek, trimmed and very finely diced**

**1 sprig fresh thyme**

**1 bay leaf**

**30g curry paste**

**A pinch of cayenne pepper**

**1 big pinch saffron strands** (I would be inclined to add a lot more, but use only what you can afford)

**15g white peppercorns, crushed in a mortar**

**120ml Noilly Prat, or other good white vermouth**

**375ml white wine – viognier or sauvignon blanc, ideally**

**3 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed**

**90ml good fish stock**

**120ml double cream**

**30ml lemon juice**

**For the carrots**

**25g unsalted butter**

**20 chantenay carrots**

**2 pinches sea salt**

**50g caster sugar**

**1 tsp cumin seeds**

**100ml white wine**

Put the oil and half the butter in a pan on a gentle heat and cook until the butter melts. Add the shallots, sweat gently for three to five minutes, just to soften, then add the celery, leek, thyme and bay leaf, and cook, stirring, for two minutes more. Stir in the curry paste and cayenne, and cook gently, stirring, for another five minutes. Add the **saffron**, crushed peppercorns and Noilly Prat, then turn up the heat and reduce, stirring all the while, until reduced to the consistency of a syrup. Pour in the wine, bring to a boil, reduce by half, then stir in the garlic. Add the fish stock and bring slowly to a boil.

Meanwhile, get on with the carrots. Heat the oven to 200C (180C fan)/390F / gas 6. Melt the butter in an ovenproof pan on a medium heat, then stir in the carrots, salt, sugar, cumin and wine, and transfer to the oven for 10 to 15 minutes, until the carrots are cooked but still have a good crunch.

Wash the mussels thoroughly in cold water (discard any with cracked or open shells), then stir into the sauce pot, turn up the heat to maximum, cover and cook for about eight minutes, until they are all cooked and open (discard any that stay shut). Using a slotted spoon, lift the mussels out of the sauce, remove from their shells and distribute between six shallow soup bowls.

Cook the mackerel fillets skin side up under a very hot grill for a couple of minutes, until the skin is blackened and the fish is cooked through.

Strain the sauce into another saucepan, bring to a boil, then add the cream and reduce until it has thickened enough to coat the back of a spoon. Stir in the lemon juice, whisk in the remaining butter a cube at a time, until smooth and emulsified, then season to taste.

Ladle the sauce over the mussels in the bowl, lay a mackerel fillet on top of each portion, and serve with the carrots in a bowl alongside.