

Mussels with Chorizo and Chickpeas

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To me, summertime means time for seafood. This recipe celebrates one of the most versatile types of shellfish: mussels. A bit of a surf and turf, *Mussels with Chorizo and Chickpeas* is a recipe influenced by my travels through the Catalan region of Spain, namely Barcelona.

For this recipe, I recommend using a cured Spanish chorizo, preferably one made from venison or wild boar, if you can find them, but a good quality pork chorizo works just as well. Get your hands on some Alhambra beer (specially brewed in Spain) and enjoy the fruit of the season!



Ingredients:

2 pounds of mussels, scrubbed and de-bearded*
½ cup minced shallot
½ pound chorizo, finely diced
2 cloves garlic, minced
1 cup cooked chickpeas (if using canned peas, be sure to rinse them well)
1 cup dry white wine
¼ cup medium dry sherry
½ cup parsley finely chopped
2 tablespoons Spanish extra virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons unsalted butter
Salt and pepper to taste

*Purchase mussels that are free of barnacles and with shells that are unbroken. The “beard” of a mussel is what the animal uses to hold on to its living environment. It will be found along the outer edge of the shells where they meet. To remove the beard, grasp it firmly and pull toward the hinge of the shell.

Directions:

Discard all mussels with cracked or broken shells or that are not tightly closed prior to cooking. This is very important as a cracked or open uncooked mussel is one that will be unsafe to eat once cooked. Over medium heat, gently warm a pan that is large enough to hold all of the ingredients. A cast iron or enameled Dutch oven works best.

Once the pan is hot, add the olive oil and sauté the chorizo for about a minute. Add the shallots and sauté gently until the shallots just begin to soften. By now the chorizo will have rendered some of its fat and will begin to brown. Add the chickpeas and garlic. Sauté them for 3-4 minutes or until the garlic is softened.

Add the white wine and the sherry. Bring the mixture to a simmer, add the mussels, stir, and cover. Increase the heat to medium high and let the mussels steam for 5 minutes.

Remove and reserve any mussels that have opened completely. Cover those still in the pot and steam for an additional 2 minutes or until the remaining mussels open. Discard any that remain unopened as these are unsafe to eat.

Add the reserved mussels to those remaining in the pot and add the butter, stirring until the butter is almost melted. Scoop out the mussels with a slotted spoon and place them into a serving dish.

Taste the cooking liquid and adjust the seasoning with salt and pepper. Add the parsley and pour the liquid over the mussels. Serve either hot or at room temperature.

Enjoy!