

Il Fornaio

Zuppa di Cozze con Fregola

- 1 # Fresh mussels, cleaned (about 24)
- ½ # Fregola
- 2 ea Garlic cloves, sliced
- 1 T Chopped Italian parsley
- 1 pinch Red crushed pepper (scant)
- 4 T Olive oil for cooking
- ½ C White wine
- ¼ C Yellow onion, diced
- ¼ C Fennel, diced
- 5 C Seafood or vegetable stock
- 2 pinch Saffron threads
- TT Salt and pepper, EVOO

Boil the Fregola in salted water until al dente, about 12 minutes depending on brand.

In a sauté pan with lid, cook the garlic briefly in 2 T olive oil. Add the mussels, parsley and red pepper and continue to cook. When the garlic is browned, add the white wine and cover. Simmer until all the mussels are open. Allow to cool, and strain the remaining liquid with cheese cloth or fine filter and reserve.

Cook the onions and fennel in a sauce pot with the remaining 2 T olive oil until tender. Add the fregola and cook briefly. Add the stock, saffron and reserved mussel liquid and bring to a boil. Reduce to a simmer and cook for 3 – 4 minutes. Add the mussels and return to a simmer. Adjust seasoning with s/p and serve immediately. Garnish with extra virgin olive oil and toasted ciabatta if desired.