

Cacciucco alla Livornese (Authentic Tuscan Seafood Stew Recipe)

Cooking Time & Yield

- **Preparation Time:** 20 minutes
 - **Cooking Time:** 50 minutes
 - **Total Time:** 70 minutes
 - **Servings:** 4
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Ingredients

- 14 oz mixed fish fillets (red mullet, monkfish, sea bass)
 - 12 prawns, cleaned
 - 1 cup clams, scrubbed and rinsed
 - ½ cup squid rings
 - 1 carrot, diced
 - 1 fennel bulb, diced
 - 1 medium potato (floury variety), diced
 - 1 stalk celery, diced
 - 1 onion, chopped
 - 2 garlic cloves, chopped
 - 1 small red chili pepper, deseeded and minced
 - 3 tbsp extra virgin olive oil
 - 1 pinch saffron (approx. ⅛ tsp or one sachet)
 - 1 tbsp tomato paste
 - ¾ cup dry white wine
 - 2 cups fish stock
 - 1 ¾ cups tomato purée
 - 1 tbsp fresh lemon juice
 - **Salt and black pepper**, to taste
 - 1 red bell pepper, diced
 - Fresh basil leaves, for garnish
 - Crusty bread, toasted and rubbed with garlic (for serving)
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Step-by-Step Method

1. Prepare the Seafood

Rinse the fish fillets and pat dry. Clean the prawns, scrub the clams, and rinse the squid rings well. Set aside.

2. Chop the Vegetables

Dice the carrot, fennel, potato, celery, and onion into small cubes. Mince the garlic and chili pepper.

3. Sauté the Base

In a large heavy-bottomed pot, heat the olive oil over medium heat. Add the chopped vegetables, onion, and garlic. Cook for about 5–7 minutes, stirring often until slightly softened. Add chili pepper, saffron, and tomato paste. Stir to coat.

4. Deglaze and Simmer

Pour in the white wine and let simmer until the alcohol evaporates and the liquid is reduced by half. Stir in the fish stock and tomato purée. Simmer for 10–15 minutes, allowing flavors to meld.

5. Add Citrus Depth

Season with salt, pepper, and lemon juice. Blend the soup base with an immersion blender until smooth (optional but traditional for a thick, velvety broth).

6. Add the Seafood

Add the bell pepper to the broth. Cut the fish fillets into chunks and add to the pot along with the prawns, squid, and clams.

7. Final Simmer

Turn off the heat, cover the pot, and let the seafood cook gently in the hot broth for 6–8 minutes until just cooked through.

8. Serve

Serve hot over slices of toasted rustic bread rubbed with garlic. Garnish with fresh basil.

Tips and Tricks

- **Seafood Variety:** Use what's fresh and available. Mussels, scallops, or small crab pieces work beautifully.
- **Make it ahead:** The base can be made the day before. Add seafood just before serving.
- **No blender?** Leave the base chunky—it's still delicious.
- **Bread Tip:** Use day-old sourdough or rustic Tuscan bread and toast until golden.