

WHOLE ROASTED SEA BASS WITH ROSEMARY, LEMON AND POTATOES

SPIGOLA AL FORNO CON ROSMARINO, LIMONE E PATATE

I love serving a large, whole roasted fish with potatoes like this at the table – it's so theatrical somehow. It also tastes superb – the fish is succulent and moist, and the potatoes are crisp with a wonderful flavour, having absorbed the juices from the fish. It's a real favourite with my children, Luciano, Rocco and Mia. The only drawback is portioning the fish, but once you've tried it a few times it will become easier, I promise!

1 Preheat the oven to 180°C/gas mark 4. Rinse the fish under cold running water and pat dry with kitchen paper.

2 Grease a large roasting tin (about 35 x 40cm) with oil. Place the sea bass diagonally in the tin and brush with 2 tablespoons of the oil. Stuff the stomach cavity with the lemon, rosemary and garlic. Set aside.

3 Put the potatoes in a large bowl and drizzle over the remaining 3 tablespoons of oil. Sprinkle over the oregano, and season with salt and pepper. Mix with your hands to ensure the potatoes are completely coated in the seasoned oil.

4 Arrange the potatoes around the fish. Roast for 40 minutes.

5 Meanwhile, prepare the dressing. Put the lemon juice, 2 tablespoons of cold water and some salt in a small bowl. Gradually add the oil and whisk thoroughly until well combined. Set aside.

6 To portion the fish, remove and discard the lemon, rosemary and garlic and carefully transfer the fish to a board. Cut off and discard the tail. Using a thin-bladed knife and starting just behind the head, carefully cut along the backbone towards the tail end. Gently pull away the skin.

7 Using a palette knife, carefully lift the top fillet and place it skinned-side down alongside the fish. Scrape away any tiny bones and remove any dark flesh. Carefully lift the spine from the bottom fillet and discard. Remove any stray bones and dark flesh from the bottom fillet. Cut off and discard the head. Slice each fillet in half.

8 To serve, divide the potatoes among 4 warm plates and place a fish portion alongside. Drizzle over the dressing and serve immediately.

Serves 4

1 whole sea bass (about 1.3kg), gutted and scaled
5 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil, plus extra for greasing
2 slices of lemon, about 1cm thick
2 rosemary sprigs
2 garlic cloves, peeled
600g medium potatoes (e.g. Maris Piper), peeled and very thinly sliced
1 teaspoon dried oregano
Juice of 1 whole lemon
5 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
Salt and freshly ground black pepper

