

Whole Lobster Thermidor (Serves 4)

This dish is perfect all year round for impressing your friends at dinner parties or romantic evenings in, can be served with seasonal vegetables and Dauphinoise potatoes or the simple, rustic chips and salad.



Ingredients:

4x 1lb (450-550g) Lobsters
Fresh grated parmesan for grilling
1 lemon cut into 4 for serving

For the sauce:

300ml semi skimmed or whole milk
200ml double cream
10 peppercorns
2 bay leaves
50g plain flour
50g unsalted butter
1 banana shallot – finely chopped
1 table spoon white wine
2 table spoons wholegrain mustard
1 shot decent brandy (Courvoisier or similar)
Handful finely chopped parsley
250g grated emmental cheese, maybe more
Salt and pepper to taste

Method:

Lobster:

The lobsters should be cooked with enough time to cool.

1. Bring a large saucepan of seawater (or salted water if you haven't access to seawater) to the boil.
2. From alive, boil the lobster for approximately 8 minutes. Remove lobsters from the pan and leave to one side to cool.
3. Once cooled place lobsters on a chopping board, using a sharp knife, remove bands from claws, find the cross on the lobsters head (this is a good indication for a starting point) and chop through the back and tail lengthways, spin the lobster round and chop through the head, leaving you with two half lobsters.
4. Crack the claws with the back of the knife to break the shell and remove the meat, you will find a fin in the claw meat, discard the fin.
5. There is more meat in the arm so again crack the arm with the back of the knife to open and remove the meat.
6. Remove the meat from the tail of the lobster halves and discard the head and digestive system. Keep the shells for later.
7. Chop up the meat into rough chunks and leave to one side.

For the sauce:

1. Put milk and cream together in a saucepan with the peppercorns and bay leaves, bring to the boil and let simmer for 15 minutes to infuse, remove the peppercorns and bay leaves.
2. In a separate saucepan soften the shallots in the butter for 5 minutes, add the flour and stir into a paste (this is called a Roux), add the wine and continue to cook for 2 minutes.
3. Whilst on a low heat, slowly add the infused milk and cream, stirring continuously.
4. Once all milk and cream combined, add the mustard, brandy and parsley, continue heating until nearly boiling.
5. Remove pan from heat and stir in the grated emmental, Add more cheese if desired, season to taste.

These steps can be done ahead of time, the meat and sauce can be chilled separately and kept for up to 3 days.

To serve:

1. Turn grill to full
2. In a saucepan, add the sauce and the lobster meat and heat on low for approx 10 mins. Spoon the meat and sauce mix evenly into the half lobster shells, sprinkle each half with parmesan and grill for 3-5 minutes or until parmesan golden brown.
3. Serve straight away with a lemon wedge and sides of your choice.