

Blackened Catfish w. Pontchartrain Sauce



Blackened Catfish

Ingredients:

- 12 Catfish fillets (about 2 lbs)
- 6 tbsp fresh Oregano leaves, chopped
- 6 tbsp Paprika
- 3 tbsp Cajun seasoning
- 6 tsp Sugar
- 3 tsp Cayenne Pepper
- 3 tsp kosher Salt
- 3 tsp freshly ground black Pepper
- 6 tbsp Vegetable Oil, plus more if needed

Directions:

- Preheat the oven to 175°.
- Put the catfish fillets on a rimmed baking sheet and pat dry.
- Combine the oregano, paprika, Cajun seasoning, sugar, cayenne, salt and pepper in a small bowl. Completely coat the fillets generously with the spice mixture.
- Set aside for 10 minutes to allow the rub to penetrate.
- Heat the vegetable oil in a large cast-iron skillet over high heat until almost smoking.
- Lay 2 fillets in the skillet and cook until deep golden brown and starting to turn black, 3 to 5 minutes depending on the thickness of the fish.
- Flip and cook another 3 to 5 minutes.
- Remove to a clean baking sheet and place in the oven to keep warm.
- Repeat with the remaining fillets, adding more vegetable oil if necessary.

Pontchartrain Sauce

Ingredients:

3 sticks unsalted Butter
5 tsp Cajun seasoning
1½ tsp Red Pepper flakes
6 cloves Garlic, minced
3 stalks Celery, diced
3 small Onion, diced
1½ green Bell pepper, diced
24 oz Cremini Mushrooms, stemmed & sliced
3 tbsp Creole Mustard
1½ cup dry White Wine
3 tbsp all-purpose Flour
24 oz med Shrimp, peeled, deveined and cut into ½" pieces
12 oz lump Crabmeat
¾ cup fresh Parsley leaves, chopped
Juice of 1½ Lemons
Lemon wedges, for serving

Directions:

Melt 1 stick of the butter in a large skillet over medium heat.
Cut the remaining butter into small pieces and refrigerate.
Add the Cajun seasoning, red pepper flakes, garlic, celery, onions and bell peppers to the skillet, and cook until the vegetables are soft, about 10 minutes.
Add the mushrooms and cook until they have released their juices, 10 minutes.
Add the mustard and stir to coat.
Pour in the wine and cook until almost completely absorbed, 5 minutes.
Sprinkle with flour and cook, stirring, about 1 minute.
Whisk in 2 cups of water, and then add the shrimp and crabmeat.
Simmer until the shrimp are pink, 5 minutes.
Whisk in the cold butter pieces, one piece at a time, whisking until each piece melts before adding another.
Stir in half of the chopped parsley and the lemon juice just before serving.

To Serve:

Add Dirty rice to plate, Ladle about ½ cup of the Pontchartrain sauce into each of plate, top with a catfish fillet, sprinkle with the remaining parsley and serve with lemon wedges.

Chef's Note:

Resist the urge to flip the catfish too soon; allow the seasonings to blacken and burn onto the fish. Catfish is meaty, so make sure it is fully cooked through.