



Moules frites

1. Tip the mussels into a large bowl of cold water. Discard any that remain open when tapped, then drain well and pull away any 'beards'. (Fresh mussels look black and shiny and should only smell pleasantly of the deep sea - the vast majority should be tightly closed. Avoid any that smell 'fishy', look dry or are mostly open.)
2. Thinly slice the vegetables and garlic. Roll the chilli in your hands to loosen the seeds, then slit in half and shake out the seeds. Slice the flesh into thin sticks, then stack together and finely chop. Pick over the thyme sprigs, discarding the thick stalks, and pick the parsley leaves from the stalks. Prepare the chips (see recipe, below right).
3. Place a large, heavy-based sauté pan (with a lid) on the hob and heat until you can feel a strong heat rising. Pour in the oil, then immediately toss in all of the vegetables, chilli and thyme. The thyme sprigs will crackle if the pan is hot enough. Cook for about 1½ mins, shaking the pan and stirring the vegetables until they start to wilt.
4. With the heat still on high, toss in all the mussels and shake the pan so they form an even layer. Cover with a lid and cook for another 1-2 mins, shaking the pan once or twice.
5. Uncover the pan and pour in the wine and Pernod. Shake and cook for another 1½ mins so the wine reduces by half, then cover again and cook for another min. Place a large colander over a bowl and tip the mussels and vegetables into the centre. Discard any mussels that remain closed. Fry the chips.
6. Pour the strained liquid back in the pan, reheat and stir in the crème fraîche and whole parsley leaves. Check the seasoning; you may not need any salt. Return the mussels and vegetables to the pan and reheat, shaking the pan, then divide between two large soup bowls. Serve the chips and mayonnaise (recipe below) alongside.

MODERATELY EASY

Serves 2



Prep 20 mins



Cook 10 mins

A bistro classic

Ingredients

- 1kg fresh [mussels](#), (see try below)
- 3 large [spring onions](#)
- 1 large [shallot](#), peeled and halved
- 1 carrot, peeled and halved lengthways
- 2 fat [garlic cloves](#), peeled
- 1 fresh red chilli
- 1 bunch [thyme](#)
- handful flat-leaf parsley
- 100ml [olive oil](#)
- about 150ml dry white wine (ideally Muscadet)
- 1 tsp Pernod
- 2 tbsp crème fraîche

FOR THE CHIPS

- 2 large [potatoes](#), about 300g each, peeled (preferably Maris Piper, King Edward or Weltje)
- about 3 tbsp plain flour
- ½ tsp cayenne pepper
- oil, for deep frying, (ideally light olive oil)

FOR THE MAYONNAISE

- 2 egg yolks
- ½ tsp [mustard](#) powder
- 150ml light [olive oil](#)
- 1 tsp white wine vinegar

7. TIP: Make the mayo and prepare the chips before you start the mussels. Fry the chips after you have cooked the mussels and while they are still draining in the colander, then finish the sauce.



Fresh mussels

Mussels should feel heavy for their size. Any that feel suspiciously light or sound hollow should be thrown out. Choose the smallest mussels you can find, as these will have the sweetest flavour and softest texture.

Blender mayonaise

Put the egg yolks, mustard powder, vinegar, some seasoning and 2 tsp oil into a small blender and whizz for a few secs. Then, with the blades still whirling, slowly trickle in the remaining oil until you have a thick, golden emulsion. Spoon into a small bowl, cover and chill.

Gordon says...

I think some people are still scared to cook mussels, but as long as you buy them really fresh, there is nothing to fear. This is bistro cooking at its fastest. The mussels literally take minutes, and you end up with two courses in one - a fish course and all the wonderful juice as a soup.

A promotional banner for the BBC Summer GoodFood show. On the left is a circular logo with 'BBC Summer GoodFood show' text. To the right, the text reads 'Everyone loves Summer!', '► Book now', and 'Birmingham 10-14 June 2009'. On the far right is a photo of four people (three men and one woman) holding plates of food.

Web link

<http://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/3856/>