Pan-Fried Sole with Cornichon Brown Butter Sauce & Parsnip Purée

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A riff on the classic French dish sole meunière, this version finds balance from tart cornichons and briny capers. While there are a few components to this dish, there's no need to feel rushed. The parsnips rewarm on the stovetop, the sole keeps warm in the oven, and the sauce comes together à la minute.

Serves 6

PARSNIP PURÉE

2 lbs (905 g) parsnips, about 8 medium, trimmed, peeled, cut into 1-inch (2.5-cm) pieces

1/4 cup (60 mL) unsalted butter, diced

Salt, freshly ground pepper and freshly grated nutmeg to taste

SOLE

1/2 cup (125 mL) all-purpose flour

6 sole fillets, about 140 g (5 oz) each, patted dry

Salt and freshly ground pepper to taste

3 tbsp (45 mL) sunflower oil, divided

BROWN BUTTER SAUCE

1/2 cup (125 mL) unsalted butter, diced

2 tsp (10 mL) fresh strained lemon juice

12 mini cornichons, thinly sliced lengthwise

1 tbsp (15 mL) drained capers

1 tbsp (15 mL) roughly chopped dill, plus extra for serving

Salt to taste

Lemon cheeks to serve

1. For the parsnip purée, bring a medium pot of salted water to a boil then add parsnips. Cook until very tender when pierced with a paring knife, 10 to 12 minutes. Drain well, then transfer to bowl of a food processor along with butter and salt. Process, scraping down sides occasionally, until smooth, 2 to 3 minutes. Return mixture to same pot and season with pepper and nutmeg. Cover with a lid and set aside.

2. For the sole, position rack in centre of oven. Preheat to 200°F (93°C).

3. Add flour to a shallow dish or plate. Season both sides of fish with salt and pepper. Working one piece at a time, coat with flour, shaking off excess. Transfer to a baking sheet.

4. Heat 1 tbsp (15 mL) oil in a large, nonstick frying pan over medium-high heat. Add two pieces of fish and cook until golden and cooked through, about 2 minutes per side. Transfer to a clean baking sheet and keep warm in oven. Repeat two more times with remaining oil and fish.

5. To make sauce, start by browning butter: Melt butter in a medium saucepan over medium heat, stirring often, until beginning to foam. Once foaming, stir continuously until butter smells sweet and nutty and turns golden brown, 3 to 4 minutes. Remove from heat and immediately stir in lemon juice—careful, as mixture will bubble up. Stir in cornichons, capers and dill. Season with salt.

6. To serve, warm parsnip purée over medium heat, then scrape into a serving bowl. Arrange sole on a platter along with lemon cheeks. Spoon over brown butter sauce and garnish with additional dill. Serve immediately.

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